Read all about it!

‘A good newspaper, I suppose, is a nation talking to itself.’ Arthur Miller 1961

You can view the nation’s many voices in the Library’s summer exhibition Read All About It! which explores the story of the news in Scotland, over the last four centuries.

The exhibition gives a flavour of the wide output of the Scottish press, from the first short-lived paper of 1661 to current tabloid news stories of today. While the look and feel of papers has changed radically in this time, what interests the readers – politics, scandal, sport, celebrities, crime – has changed surprisingly little.

A popular anonymous rhyme of several centuries ago still holds true today:

Tickle the public, make ’em grin,
The more you tickle, the more you’ll win;
Teach the public, you’ll never get rich,
You’ll live like a beggar and die in a ditch.
From the 17th to the early 20th century, these broadsides delivered to the general public all the news of the day, via a nationwide band of hawkers or pedlars who sold them in their thousands for a penny or halfpenny. Ballads, songs, scaffold speeches, as well as political and crime stories, were covered and all are now available in full text form on the website. Each broadside comes with a detailed commentary and transcription of the text, plus a downloadable PDF facsimile.

Eoin Shalloo, of the Rare Books Collections Division, says, ‘For almost 300 years the broadsides filled the place that is occupied today by the tabloid press. It’s a wonderful resource and everyone from schoolchildren to journalists to historians will find something of interest.’

Associated Events
Printing workshops
Under the direction of the Curator of Robert Smalls Printing Works (now in the care of the National Trust for Scotland), there will be five printing workshops throughout the exhibition’s run:
15 June, 20 July, 17 August, 21 September and 19 October: 10.00-16.00 (with 30-minute lunch break). Space is limited, so book in advance to avoid disappointment.

Have I got very old news for you!
A quiz based on the book Reportage Scotland, hosted by author Louise Yeoman with a team of contestants and some questions for the audience.
Thursday 12 August 19.00

How to produce your own community newspaper
Workshops each Friday morning throughout September and the first week of October will take place under the guidance of newspaper journalists.
3, 10, 17, 24 September and 1 October: 10.00-13.00. Places are limited, so booking in advance is essential.

And now over to sport …
Stuart Cosgrove, sports commentator and Head of Programmes and Regions, Channel 4, discusses how sports reporting has developed over the years.
Wednesday 15 September 19.00

Read all about it!
5 June – 31 October 2004

Opening hours:
Monday – Saturday 10.00 – 17.00
(Festival 10.00 – 20.00)
Sunday 14.00 – 17.00

ADMISSION FREE TO EXHIBITION AND ALL EVENTS

For further information, or to book for events, contact 0131-226 4531 or 0131-622 4807, or email events@nls.uk. Tickets for events can also be obtained from the Library Shop at George IV Bridge.
THE LIBRARY has, over the years, amassed a considerable and very special collection of Polish material which reflects Poland's history and culture and the centuries-old links between Scotland and Poland – which were at their strongest during the 16th and 17th centuries when many thousands of Scottish soldiers, traders and adventurers sought their fortunes there. During the Second World War another link was forged when a large contingent of Polish forces was based in Scotland, stationed at various points along the east coast.

The Polish collections have been enriched by some significant donations among which are a collection of 143 books – presented to the Signet Library in 1820 by a group of exiled Polish counts – and a gift of some one thousand volumes from the Polish community in Edinburgh to mark the millennium of the Polish state in 1962.

The first book was printed in Poland as early as 1474, two years before Caxton brought printing to England. In 1517 Hieronymus Vietor, a famous printer from Silesia, set up a printing business in Krakow. There he printed Maciej's *Chronica Polonorum* (1521), a chronicle of Poland, which has a delightful woodcut of Polish kings and their descendants. This item is one of the oldest in the Polish collection originally presented to the Signet Library: it was given to the National Library of Scotland by the Society of Writers to her Majesty's Signet in 1962.

The Polish Eagle Ensign, which was displayed at the various Company Headquarters of the 7th Workshop Company of the Polish Army in Great Britain as an ongoing symbol of Polish independence, c.1940. Acc.6174

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The papers of the 7th Workshop Company of the Polish Army in Great Britain were deposited in the Library in 1972 and provide a fascinating insight into the creation of a Polish Army in exile.

Poland had been invaded by Germany and Russia in September 1939. Retreating to France, they formed a provisional government in Paris, under General Sikorski. By June 1940, Paris too had fallen to Germany and the widely dispersed Polish troops escaped to both neutral Switzerland and to Britain.

After the evacuation of Dunkirk, the bulk of the Polish troops (17,000) were dispatched to Scotland. The papers held in the Library cover the years 1940-47, during which time the Poles became responsible for the defence of a large sector of the east coast of Scotland. These seven years saw a great deal of integration between the Poles and their adopted country – many married Scots girls and remained here after the war.
THE OUTSTANDING literary and publishing archive of the historic John Murray publishing firm could soon be joining the Library’s collections at George IV Bridge.

Established in 1768, the firm of John Murray was one of the great British family publishing houses with an unrivalled list of authors. Lord Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Washington Irving, Benjamin Disraeli, Herman Melville, William Ewart Gladstone, Charles Darwin, David Livingstone, Isabella Bird and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle were all published from their London offices in Albemarle Street.

The present John Murray has offered the archive to the Library for £35 million, some £10 million less than its current estimated market value. Not only would the archive be purchased at a significant discount, but neither Mr Murray nor his family will benefit personally from the sale. It has always been Mr Murray’s intention to establish a charitable trust with the proceeds, with the future care of the archive one of its aims. A gift of £3 million would be made immediately to endow the archive.

The Scottish Executive has already shown its support by giving the Library £6.5 million towards the acquisition, and an application for £22 million has also been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Should the HLF decide in favour of the bid this summer, a public appeal will be launched to raise the outstanding £6.5 million.

Why should this archive come to the National Library of Scotland? The connections are considerable. This unrivalled collection of items represents a microcosm of 19th-century British life and would fit perfectly into, and complement, the existing collections. The archive is a link to the critical role that Scots have played in the development of ideas and imagination through the centuries. Its founder, John Murray I, went to London from Edinburgh in 1768. The second John Murray married the daughter of a leading Edinburgh bookseller, and established business alliances with William Blackwood and Archibald Constable, among others, as well as befriending and publishing James Hogg and Sir Walter Scott. John Murray III was sent to Edinburgh University. There he met others who would become part of the John Murray publishing business, and he added scientists, explorers, travellers, archaeologists and social reformers to the distinguished list of authors.

The Library possesses much Byron material, a considerable David Livingstone archive and has the largest collection of Scott material in the world. It also holds a large part of the

Mr Murray says: ‘I am offering the Murray Archive to the National Library of Scotland as my ancestor the first John Murray… also came from Edinburgh. It therefore seems appropriate that the archive should return home’.

The collection has huge national and international importance. To secure it for Scotland and its people would significantly raise the country’s profile abroad, and attract visitors from across the globe for decades to come.

For up-to-date news on the archive or the campaign, go to www.nls.uk/jma/
Annotated proofs of Lord Byron’s poem, Don Juan.

Manuscript of David Livingstone.

Isabella Bird’s travels were the subject of a number of John Murray publications.

Virginia Murray with the archive in Albemarle Street.

Culture Minister Frank McAveety announces the Executive’s grant.
New education initiatives at NLS

The newly-created NLS Education team is committed to making the National Library a life-long resource for learning and public enjoyment of the library’s unparalleled collections through exhibitions, partnerships, cultural events, outreach and education activities of all shapes and sizes.

A new year-round programme of exhibitions heralds the first phase of a series of developments to improve public facilities. With a strong emphasis on showcasing the best of the library’s collections, the programme will deliver exhibitions on a wide range of topics, to appeal to an equally wide range of audiences. The team plans an equally diverse and exciting programme of events, including everything from lectures and music recitals to hands-on workshops.

For the first time, the Library has a dedicated education service. Over the next five years, the team plans an ambitious programme of service development, including the development of new resources for schools and the creation of a new Education and Access Centre. Through these new resources, and enhanced by the development of e-learning opportunities at www.nls.uk, the Library will continue to break new ground as a truly inclusive and life-long resource for all the people of Scotland.

The new members of the Education and Interpretative Services team are Nat Edwards, Carol Stobie and Laura Murphy. If you would like to know more about the new team’s plans, e-mail Nat Edwards at n.edwards@nls.uk or call 0131-226 4531.

The Private Lives of Books

Much of the charm of buying second-hand books lies in deciphering the handwritten inscriptions which are often found inside. This hint of a secret past gives a book a special fascination. Books with hidden stories of their own are explored in an exhibition at the Library later this year. The Private Lives of Books features famous books with anonymous owners, as well as less well known books owned (or borrowed) by famous people - but all have their own history to tell.

The Library owns a copy of Martin Martin’s A Description of the Western Islands of Scotland (1703) containing an inscription by James Boswell explaining that he had borrowed this book and carried it with him when he accompanied Dr Johnson on their travels around the Western Isles. A children’s book given to Robert Louis Stevenson by his nurse a few months before his fifth birthday shows childish pencil marks which could well have been made by the young RLS himself. There are also famous books owned by famous people: Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species (1859) owned by the disapproving Thomas Carlyle, and a book which research shows may have been owned by no less than four British Prime Ministers.

Season’s Greetings!

For the first time ever, young artists are being invited to design the Library’s 2004 Christmas card. Information about the competition was sent to all head teachers in Scotland this month. Education Manager Nat Edwards said: ‘We thought that the best way to move on from the traditional seasonal card was to trawl the young artistic talent of Scotland. The artist’s name and school will appear on the winning design which will become the Library’s official card for 2004.’

Entries are to be inspired by images from the Library’s digital collections: www.nls.uk/digitallibrary/index.html. Designs for the card can be any format, any size, colour or black and white, and in any media. The competition is open to anyone under 16 years of age and the deadline for entries is 30 September 2004.

The best designs will be exhibited at the Library in December.

We have also invited some living celebrities to each lend a book that has some special significance for them, and we will be showing books from the libraries of J.K. Rowling, Alex Ferguson, Kirsty Wark, Alexander McCall Smith, David McLetchie, and others. To see what they have chosen, be sure to come to our exhibition! The Private Lives of Books opens on Saturday 13 November and continues to 30 January 2005.
Blue Sky, Green Grass

A poem celebrating a day in the life of a primary school in North Ayrshire has won this year’s Callum Macdonald Memorial Award. The pupils of Lawthorn Primary School, in collaboration with poet Gerry Cambridge, created a poetry pamphlet of words, drawings and photographs which was described by the judges as ‘a unique collaborative poem which links poetry with nature, full of clarity, energy and fun.’ Gerry spent a three-month residency at the school and incorporated the pupils’ work with his own ‘to acknowledge their part in the project and to emphasise the quality of their own work’. Runner-up was Alison Prince – best known for her children’s writing – whose submission The Whifflet Train was published by Mariscat Press. Both winner and runner-up received their prizes from Lady Marks, the sponsor of the award through The Michael Marks Charitable Trust. All the shortlisted pamphlets are now on sale in the Library Shop or through the Award website at www.scottish-pamphlet-poetry.com.

The Robert Louis Stevenson Memorial Award 2005

Jointly administered by the Library and the Scottish Arts Council, the Award gives writers the opportunity to develop their work during a two-month stay at Grez-sur-Loing in France, where Robert Louis Stevenson frequently stayed in the 1870s and met his wife, Fanny. Previous winners include Louise Welsh, Dilys Rose and Gordon Legge.

Applications are now invited for the 2005 Award (closing date 30 September 2004). The Award leaflet and application are available at www.nls.uk/news/awards or in the Library Shop.

Beware eating your greens...

The health risks of genetically modified (GM) foods and biotech farming were the subject of a talk at the Library on 5 May by Jeffrey M Smith, a renowned campaigner who ran for US Congress to raise public awareness of the health and environmental impact. Founder and director of the Institute for Responsible Technology in the USA, he is also the author of The Health Dangers of GM Foods and their Cover-up. The event, hosted by Mark Ruskell MSP, launched Smith’s latest book Seeds of Deception, an exposé of ‘corporate and government lies’. 
The Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Competition 2004

This annual competition has been in existence since 1993. It was initiated by the Library to promote the practice and development of craft binding skills and to encourage originality and creativity in bookbinding. Bookbinders are invited to submit entries for the 2004 competition: the deadline is 1 October 2004. Rules of entry and application forms are now online (and you can also view the 2003 bindings) at www.nls.uk/news/awards.

Top: Belgian bookbinder Jan Camps, winner of last year’s Elizabeth Soutar Bookbinding Award.
Bottom: Berdien Van Lieshout from the Netherlands won the student prize.
Photos: Mark K Jackson

In her prime

A new website devoted to the career of one of Scotland’s most famous novelists has just been launched by the Library. From an Edinburgh childhood, through her early jobs, to getting published, the creation of her finest and most famous novels and her many translated editions, this website covers everything the general enquirer could possibly want to know about Dame Muriel’s life and work. The source materials for this website were the immaculate records of her personal and professional life kept by Spark from the 1940s onwards. Thus, the Muriel Spark Archive is now one of the largest and most comprehensive personal archives held by the Library.
www.nls.uk/murielspark/

From top to bottom

Charts showing the depths of freshwater lochs in Scotland are the latest addition to the Maps section of our website’s Digital Library. Produced as a result of the Bathymetrical Survey of the Fresh-water Lochs of Scotland – the first comprehensive survey of 562 inland lochs – between 1897 and 1909, these charts and the reports published with them placed Scotland at the forefront of organised lake studies (‘limnology’) and are still of major value today. Environmentalists, crannog researchers, and anglers have all benefited from the information contained within the charts – though it is not known if the English angling team who requested copies of the chart of the Lake of Menteith actually won their competition as a result!
www.nls.uk/maps/

Be a Friend!

The Friends of the National Libraries is dedicated to helping the libraries and record offices of Britain acquire books, manuscript treasures and archives for the nation, especially those which might otherwise be exported. It has been doing this valuable work since 1931, and has helped the National Library of Scotland on many occasions. Annual membership is £15: contact Dr Iain G Brown of the Manuscripts Division for information on joining the Friends.

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