FREE

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Marian Evans's letters

EXECUTION BROADSIDES
Tales from the gallows

DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland • www.nls.uk • No.43 Spring 2020

The grace race

Saving Scottish Ballet's video archive before it disintegrates

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WELCOME

Evolving collections

Digital drive puts focus on future

In our previous issue, we looked back to the 1980s. This issue has a definite forward focus thanks to one word that keeps coming up throughout this magazine – digital.

Technology and the internet have opened up the Library over the past 30 years in ways we would never have thought possible back in the 1980s. And the kind of projects we're undertaking are preserving the written, visual and aural record of our nation for future generations to research and use at a distance.

In our cover story, we talk about how we're helping Scottish Ballet save hundreds of performances that were captured on video tape, a format that was turning to mush. The full digitised record will be available at our National Library at Kelvin Hall facility in Glasgow, with clips to watch online.

Turn a few pages and you come to more preservation work taking place in Glasgow, this time by our Sound Team. The team is turning fragile formats into digital files, giving the soundscape of our nation new life. Then there's our Data Foundry, where our digital resources are being examined and reused by artists and researchers – arriving at new insights and interesting perspectives, and finding a place where creativity and data meet.

We now have one foot firmly in the physical world and the other in the expanding digital world. It couldn't be a more exciting time to be the National Librarian!

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Angela MacDonald

Major step forward for Gaelic digitisation project

We're delighted to welcome Angela MacDonald (Angela MacEachen) as our Gaelic Arts Access Project Officer – a post which is funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig and supported by An Comunn Gàidhealach to open up access to our Gaelic collections.

Angela is working on tracing rights owners, such as authors and composers, for Gaelic literature as well as music published by An Comunn Gàidhealach – the organisation that promotes Gaelic language and culture and organises the annual Royal National Mòd.

This material is already held in our collections, but obtaining permission from rights owners means we can digitise this body of rich Gaelic material and add it to our website for all to use.

It also gives us an opportunity to collect some stories behind the work from the people who created it or their families. Older An Comunn publications have already been digitised and are available on our website.

PRÒISEACT DIDSEATACH ÙR GÀIDHLIG

Tha sinn toilichte fàilte a chur air Angela NicDhòmhnaill (Angela NicEachainn), a bhios air cùmhnant goirid, mar Oifigear Inntrigidh Ealainean Gàidhlig. Fhuair an obair seo maoineachadh fialaidh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig agus taic cuideachd, bhon Chomunn Ghàidhealach. Bi Angela ag obair air lorg fhaighinn air feadhainn – mar ùghdaran is sgrìobhaichean-ciùil – aig a bheil còirichean leth-bhreacachaidh an-dràsta, air ceòl is stugh litreachais, a tha An Comunn Gàidhealach air fhoillseachadh, thairis air na bliadhnachan.

Tha e cuideachd a' tabhainn cothrom 's dòcha, sgeulachdan fhaighinn bhon fheadhainn a chruthaich an stugh, no bho teaghlaichean.

Mar bhuidheann, tha An Comunn Gàidhealach a' brosnachadh na Gàidhlig agus dualchas nan Gàidheal agus 's iad cuideachd a tha a' cur a' Mhòid Nàiseanta Rìoghail air adhart gach bliadhna. Tha an stugh ris am bithear a' coimhead mar-thà anns an Leabharlann againn ach, le bhith a' faighinn cead air còirichean bhon fheadhainn aig a bheil iad, faodar an uairsin an dìleab bheartach seo a dhidseatachadh agus sin a chur air an làraich-lìn againn. Gu dearbha, bhiodh sin gu mathas gach neach aig am biodh ùidh agus, bhiodh e cuideachd a' ciallachadh nach fheumte tighinn a-staigh dhan Leabharlann, airson sealltainn ris na bhiodh ann.

Tha stugh bhon Chomunn, a chaidh fhoillseachadh bho chionn ùine, air a bhith air a dhidseatachadh mar-thà 's tha e air an làraich-lìn againn.

Public Talks and Events
National Records of Scotland

Reassessing Tartan History

16 April 2020, 12.30-1.30pm

New Register House, 3 West Register Street, Edinburgh EH1 3YT

Dr Sally Tuckett, Lecturer, Dress and Textile Histories, University of Glasgow

The history of tartan is a complex one that touches on rebellion and loyalty, royalty and non-elites, and fashion and function. Its association with Jacobitism and its more recent use as an indicator of national identity means that it is also often ascribed with many romanticised meanings and messages, but its popularity can also be attributed to its versatility and aesthetic qualities. This talk will use the records of William Wilson & Son of Bannockburn, pre-eminent tartan manufacturers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to explore how and why tartan became so popular in this period.

British Sign Language Interpreter available upon request.
Please contact education@nrscotland.gov.uk by 2 April 2020 if you would like this service.

The social networks of the Declaration of Arbroath

20 May 2020, 5.30-6.30pm

New Register House

Dr Matthew Hammond, Research Associate, King's College London

Defending the Declaration – tackling misrepresentation

10 June 2020, 5.30-6.30pm

New Register House

Dr Laura Harrison

The Archivists' Garden – Open Gardens of Scotland

Saturday 25 July 2020, 2.00-5.00pm

HM General Register House, 2 Princes Street, Edinburgh EH1 3YY

Admission £3, children free

Join National Records of Scotland in our unique Archivists' Garden, planted with 57 plant species, including: heather, iris, birch, hawthorn, rosemary and the Scottish thistle. All the plants connect in some way to Scotland's collective memory, whether through myth and folklore, heraldry, or association with famous Scots. Visit the garden and find out the role that plants play in our national heritage.

National Records of Scotland

Learn more at www.nrscotland.gov.uk/events

@NatRecordsScot

A DANDY ADDITION TO THE NATIONAL COLLECTIONS

We have filled a crucial gap in our collection of *The Dandy* weekly comic following our acquisition of the first issue. *The Dandy Comic* was launched in December 1937, costing two pennies for 28 pages. It was an instant success, selling more than 480,000 copies.

Ian Scott, General Collections Curator, said: "In many ways, it was the first modern British comic, and should be of great interest to anyone researching popular literature.

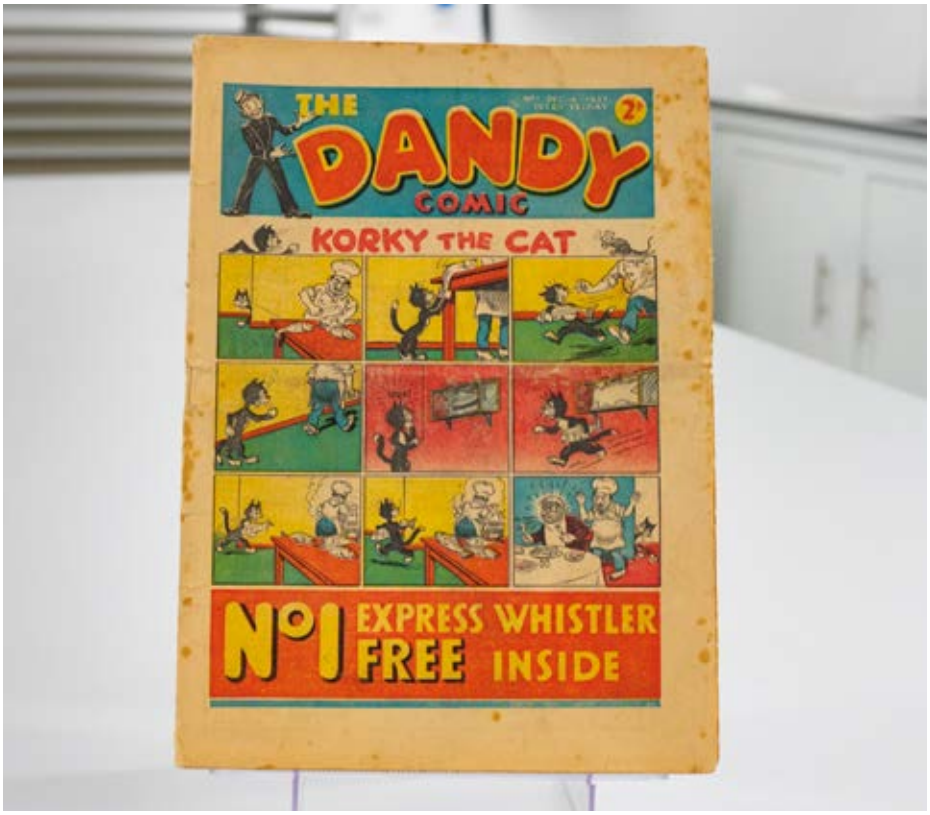
"Today, it is estimated there are only around 20 copies of the first edition known to be in existence, which makes this copy one of the rarest items in the Library's collections.

"We were pleased to add this first issue to our holdings – ensuring its preservation for future generations. We're actively filling the gaps in our holdings of British comics and annuals. They tell us so much about the social mores of the time."

However, significant gaps of *The Dandy* in the national collections remain, particularly from 1937 – when the first *Dandy* was published – up until the 1970s. Ian added: "We appeal to anyone who may have pre-1970 editions of *The Dandy* – or indeed its sister publication, *Beano* – to consider adding them to the national collections."

The first editor of *The Dandy* was 25-year-old Albert Barnes, who remained as editor until he retired 45 years later in 1982. He had a large chin, which led many to speculate that his was the inspiration for Desperate Dan's jawline.

As well as the character Desperate Dan, which was illustrated by Dudley D Watkins, issue one of *The Dandy Comic* featured Korky the Cat and Keyhole Kate. It was the first time most readers had ever seen dialogue contained in speech bubbles – up until then, dialogue was mostly found in the text below the illustrations in British comics.



Watkins's illustrative work on *The Dandy, Beano, Oor Wullie* and *The Broons* was deemed of such importance to public morale that he was excused war service, but still served as a reserve police constable in Fife during the Second World War.

Dundee-based publisher DC Thomson was known for the 'Big Five' text-based adventure story papers for boys: *Adventure, The Rover, The Wizard, The Skipper* and *The Hotspur*, which were launched in the 1920s and early 1930s.

It was decided to branch out into humour comics, with *The Dandy Comic* planned to be the first in a second suite of titles, followed by *Beano* in 1938, and *The Magic Comic* in 1939. *The Magic Comic* was put on hold in 1941 due to paper shortages during the Second World War. Its editor, Bill Powrie, was killed on active service aged 26. It was relaunched in the 60s as a nursery title.

The Dandy and *Beano* were reduced to bi-weekly frequencies during the war, and reverted to weekly in 1949.

It is believed *The Topper* and *The Beezer* were the two other titles suggested for the 'Big Five', but the idea never came to fruition.

The Library holds complete sets of *The Dandy* and *Beano* annuals, which are perennially popular Christmas gifts. Anyone can view these annuals, and early editions of the comics, at our Reading Rooms.

WORDS:
MScR students
The University of Edinburgh

SCROLL REVERSAL

Juxtaposing the digital and physical contributions women make to the Library forms the centre of the *Who Taught Her That?* exhibition celebrating Women's History Month

The National Library of Scotland prides itself on providing free and easy access to its collections. As technology advances, the digital world has not only become an important part of our everyday lives, it has affected the Library's established practices as more and more of its legal deposit intake is received digitally.

The main question then is how to display something born digital (i.e. material that has been created as a digital resource rather than digitised after creation) as part of a public exhibition? In search for a solution, the Library invited us, a group of Master's students by research following the Collections and Curating Practices Programme, to approach the display of the Library's collections from a digital perspective.

Our response – *Who Taught Her That?* – took the form of an exhibition, located in the Library's George IV Bridge Board Room. Coinciding with Women's History Month and International Women's Day, it celebrated women's contributions to the Library's collections, how the digital age has transformed the manner in which women express themselves, and how audiences can engage with this material.

As a team of five women curators who also enjoy using social media and online platforms to share thoughts and engage with our peers, we noticed that much of women's use of digital resources comes in various forms of advice and so we began exploring the history of different forms of instruction and guidance through the Library's extensive collections. When putting together the exhibition checklist, we aimed to include as many areas of women's lives as possible, using artefacts which addressed politics, sexuality, health, home life, and growing up.

We were particularly keen to feature the experiences of women living in Scotland and Britain, focusing on the ways in which culture and customs have been passed down to subsequent generations, as well as how they have evolved over time. By placing digital and physical items next to each other, we aimed to highlight and emphasise the contrasts, similarities, and partnerships that exist between different formats as well as the possibilities of each.

One of our main goals was to inspire visitors' participation at the exhibition, which was designed to appeal to every person who identifies as a woman from across all generations and backgrounds. Exhibitions can be associated with glass cases that form a barrier, systems of security, institutional language, and limited opportunities to leave feedback. We wanted to show just how wrong that perception can be. To make the space as welcoming and inclusive, as possible, we used a live feed of advice contributed via Twitter by our guests, held workshops, and created a Conversation Corner, where visitors could engage with inspirational women guest speakers we had invited to talk about their accomplishments in different spheres of life.

The idea was to encourage people to react to the objects on display and create a discussion around them, which helped the Library and our group better understand what the public would like to see in future exhibitions. One of the main advantages of using digital content to encourage these conversations was its ability to accommodate the inclusion of new perspectives. We could see ideas and discussions evolve in real time.

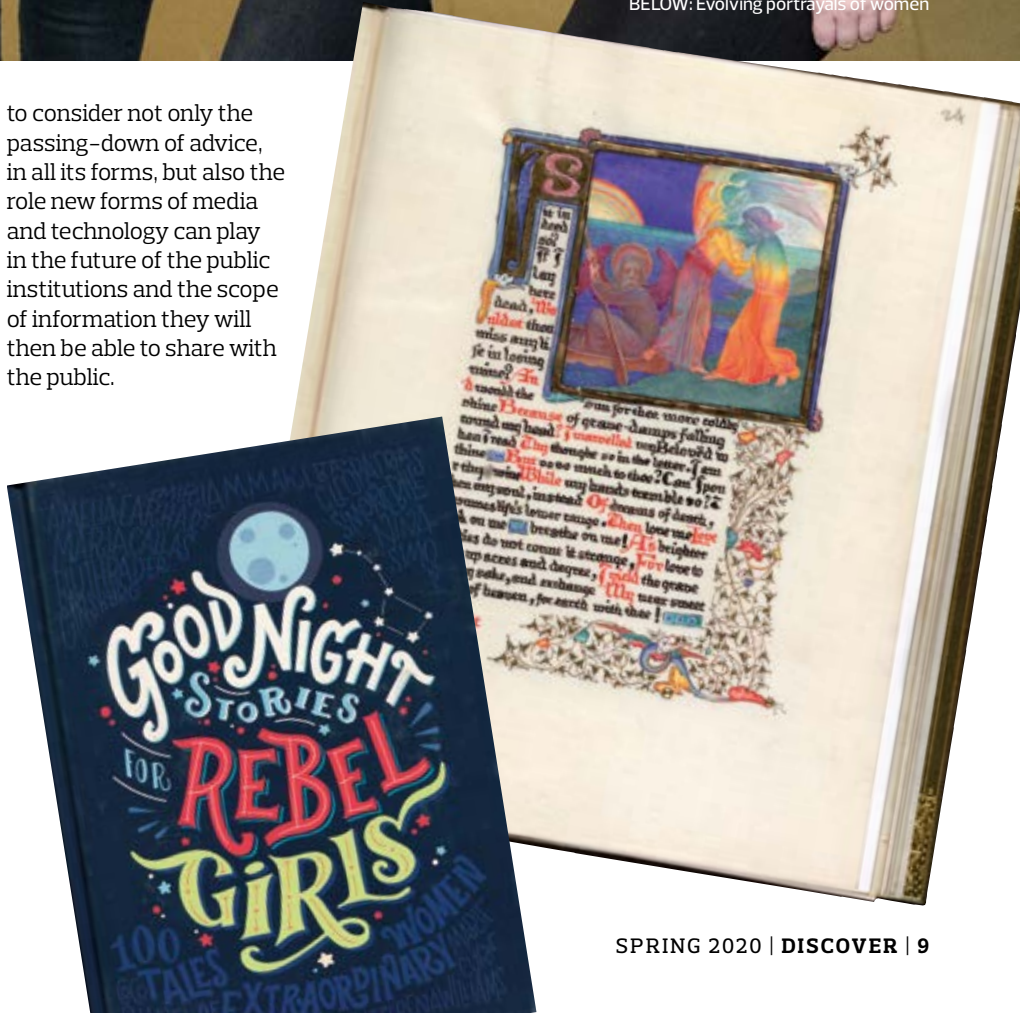
Visitors walked around the exhibition, exploring the different possibilities for

One of our main goals was to inspire visitors' participation at the exhibition, which was designed to appeal to every person who identifies as a woman from across all generations and backgrounds

CURATORS
Left to right: Aija Cave, Meg Dolan, Amy Trantum, Rada Kuznetsova and Melanie Magolan.
BELOW: Evolving portrayals of women

display of the digital and the physical materials, after which they were encouraged to join the Conversation Corner, as well as leave some feedback or share advice of their own and interact further on our corresponding exhibition website. We encouraged people to think about the difference in their perception and treatment of the information they encountered or acquired through both formats. Additionally, we wanted to explore questions regarding the perceived value of physical items in comparison to the digital content, and the reactions people have to them.

This exhibition was a preview to the possibilities that digital now provides for the curators and the public. It explored how in the future, curation could be a more open discussion with the audience at each stage of its production. Social media gives us an opportunity to vocalise our thoughts, experiences, and hopes, offering a greater than ever opportunity to institutions to hear what the public has to say to them. It is our hope that *Who Taught Her That?* encourages viewers to consider not only the passing-down of advice, in all its forms, but also the role new forms of media and technology can play in the future of the public institutions and the scope of information they will then be able to share with the public.



Execution Broadsides were the first draft of Scotland's history of capital punishment. **Simon McFadden** takes a look at these bloodthirsty 'tabloid tales' from a bygone age

WORDS:
Simon McFadden
MRes student, Edinburgh Napier University

NO NOOSE IS BAD NEWS:
OPPOSITE PAGE: Image contained in a broadside concerning the execution of Elizabeth McNeil in 1835.

Before capital punishment for murder was abolished in 1969, the last execution in Scotland was the hanging of a man named Henry John Burnett in 1963.

The death of Burnett marked the end of what was a widely used practice throughout Scottish history, ranging from beheadings to hangings. Public executions were carried out for diverse crimes, from witch-hunts in the 16th century to the punishment of thieves in the 18th century. A version of this history of capital punishment in Scotland is told in 18th and 19th century broadside literature.

Long before the days of social media, 24-hour news channels and radio, ordinary Scots relied on single sheets of paper (broadsides), costing one penny, in order to find out what was going on. For around 200 years, up until the mid-19th century, broadsides were the tabloids of the day in Scottish society, an affordable alternative to newspapers for working-class Scots.

Over the past century, the National Library of Scotland has acquired a number of these precious sheets and most of them are now available online through The Word on the Street on the Library's Digital Gallery. This digital resource enables contemporary readers to delve into the past and discover just exactly what the "word on the street" was in bygone days in Scotland. This collection contains broadsides relating to crime, politics, religion and much more.

Public executions were events which Scots attended in large numbers and with great enthusiasm in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some cities got the opportunity

A PENNY A HANGING

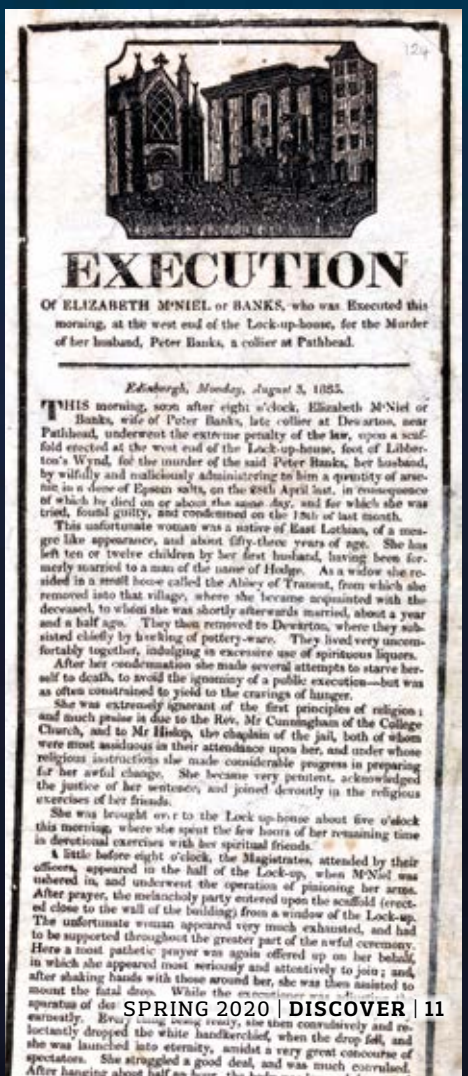
to witness executions more often than others. However, not everyone had the chance to attend public executions and thus they relied on broadsides for details of convicts and the events leading to their execution. The Word on the Street contains 147 broadsides relating specifically to executions and executioners.

There was more than one way to tell the story of an execution. A number of capital cases concern convicts with very different backgrounds, crimes and circumstances. Public opinion varied, depending on each case, hence these stories of execution could at times be presented differently. Broadsides used key adjectives to dictate who was and who was not worthy of public sympathy. While some broadsides told the story of a "melancholic" crowd gathering to witness the end of an "unfortunate" young convict, others told the story of an "ignominious" end of an evil wretch. My findings in the course of research for an MRes degree at Edinburgh Napier University on the history and cultural representation of capital punishment in Scotland indicate that age, gender, religion and nationality were all factored into representation of the person being

> Public executions were events which Scots attended in large numbers and with great enthusiasm in the 18th and 19th centuries

executed. Certain themes, moreover, were consistently prevalent in broadsides, such as the use of religious rhetoric, moral messages and warnings to the public against evil temptations.

Broadsides offer insights into attitudes that existed at the time pertaining to execution and not all are perhaps what we would expect. Executioners had the unenviable task of carrying out the death sentences. Because of their special status, their own deaths warranted more than a formulaic line in a newspaper. Based on the representation in broadsides, hangmen were held in high regard and their deaths were reported



EXECUTION

OF ELIZABETH M'NIEL or BANKS, who was Executed this morning, at the west end of the Lock-up-house, for the Murder of her husband, Peter Banks, a collier at Pathhead.

Edinburgh, Monday, August 3, 1835.

THIS morning, soon after eight o'clock, Elizabeth M'Niel or Banks, wife of Peter Banks, late collier at Dewarton, near Pathhead, underwent the extreme penalty of the law, upon a scaffold erected at the west end of the Lock-up-house, foot of Libberton's Wynd, for the murder of the said Peter Banks, her husband, by wilfully and maliciously administering to him a quantity of arsenic in a dose of Epsom salts, on the 28th April last, in consequence of which he died on or about the same day, and for which she was tried, found guilty, and condemned on the 15th of last month.

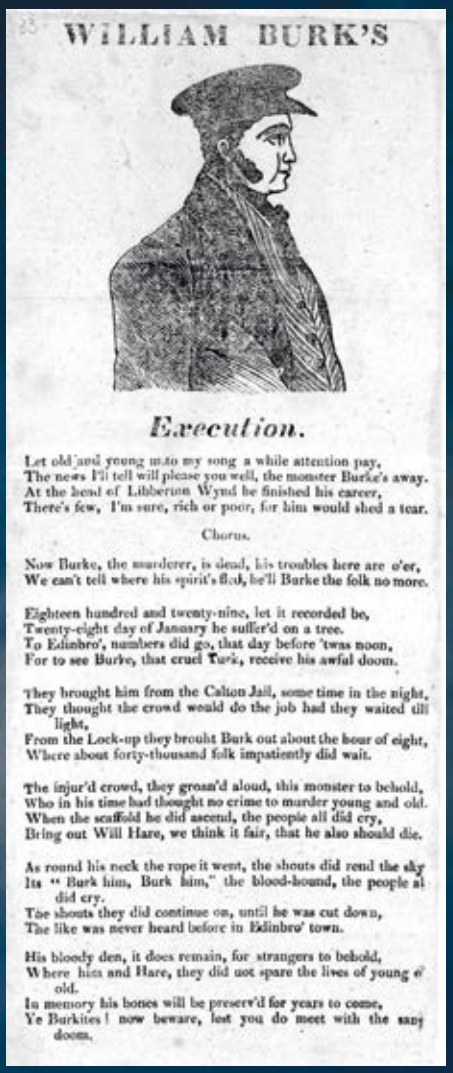
This unfortunate woman was a native of East Lothian, of a meagre like appearance, and about fifty-three years of age. She has left ten or twelve children by her first husband, having been formerly married to a man of the name of Hodge. As a widow she resided in a small house called the Abbey of Tranent, from which she removed into that village, where she became acquainted with the deceased, to whom she was shortly afterwards married, about a year and a half ago. They then removed to Dewarton, where they subsisted chiefly by hawking of pottery-ware. They lived very uncomfortably together, indulging in excessive use of spirituous liquors.

After her condemnation she made several attempts to starve herself to death, to avoid the ignominy of a public execution—but was as often constrained to yield to the cravings of hunger.

She was extremely ignorant of the first principles of religion; and much praise is due to the Rev. Mr Cunningham of the College Church, and to Mr Bishop, the chaplain of the jail, both of whom were most assiduous in their attendance upon her, and under whose religious instructions she made considerable progress in preparing for her awful change. She became very penitent, acknowledged the justice of her sentence, and joined devoutly in the religious exercises of her friends.

She was brought over to the Lock-up-house about five o'clock this morning, where she spent the few hours of her remaining time in devotional exercises with her spiritual friends.

A little before eight o'clock, the Magistrates, attended by their officers, appeared in the hall of the Lock-up, when M'Niel was ushered in, and underwent the operation of pinioning her arms. After prayer, the melancholy party entered upon the scaffold (erected close to the wall of the building) from a window of the Lock-up. The unfortunate woman appeared very much exhausted, and had to be supported throughout the greater part of the awful ceremony. Here a most pathetic prayer was again offered up on her behalf, in which she appeared most seriously and attentively to join; and, after shaking hands with those around her, she was then assisted to mount the fatal drop. While the executioner was adjusting the apparatus of death, she prayed fervently, she then convulsively and reluctantly dropped the white handkerchief, when the drop fell, and she was launched into eternity, amidst a very great concourse of spectators. She struggled a good deal, and was much convulsed. After hanging about half an hour, the body was cut down and



WILLIAM BURK'S

Execution.

Let old and young unto my song a while attention pay,
The news I'll tell will please you well, the monster Burke's away.
At the head of Libberton Wynd he finished his career,
There's few, I'm sure, rich or poor, for him would shed a tear.

Chorus.

Now Burke, the murderer, is dead, his troubles here are o'er,
We can't tell where his spirit's fled, he'll Burke the folk no more.

Eighteen hundred and twenty-nine, let it recorded be,
Twenty-eight day of January he suffer'd on a tree.
To Edinbro', numbers did go, that day before 'twas noon,
For to see Burke, that cruel Turk, receive his awful doom.

They brought him from the Calton Jail, some time in the night,
They thought the crowd would do the job had they waited till light,
From the Lock-up they brought Burk out about the hour of eight,
Where about forty-thousand folk impatiently did wait.

The injur'd crowd, they groan'd aloud, this monster to behold,
Who in his time had thought no crime to murder young and old.
When the scaffold he did ascend, the people all did cry,
Bring out Will Hare, we think it fair, that he also should die.

As round his neck the rope it went, the shouts did rend the sky
Its "Burk him, Burk him," the blood-hound, the people all did cry.
The shouts they did continue on, until he was cut down,
The like was never heard before in Edinbro' town.

His bloody den, it does remain, for strangers to behold,
Where him and Hare, they did not spare the lives of young & old.
In memory his bones will be preserv'd for years to come,
Ye Burkites! now beware, lest you do meet with the same doom.

BURKE & HARE:
ABOVE: Image contained in a broadside concerning William Burke, noticeably Burke is misspelt "Burk".

BELOW: An illustration of Burke's hanging at the head of Libberton's Wynd in Edinburgh's Old Town

Unfortunately, not every story told in broadsides can be deemed accurate, and some were riddled with spelling mistakes

as particularly sad occurrences. Scots of bygone days had a particular appreciation of a hangman who could get the job done right. This is evident in the fond report about former Edinburgh hangman Jock Heigh's (John High) death, noting he never botched an execution throughout his career. The same broadside takes aim at an incompetent hangman who was responsible for bungling an execution.

Contemporary audiences can rest assured that dubious news reporting predates modern times. Unfortunately, not every story told in broadsides can be deemed accurate, and some were riddled with spelling mistakes. There is no record to support a number of executions which were reported in broadsides.

Additionally, representations of real executions often blurred the lines between fiction and reality. Having the monopoly on what the majority of the general public knew about convicts and executions, the usually anonymous broadside authors took liberties through presenting sensationalised accounts. They wrote poetic, often humorous lamentations, presented as having been spoken by the convict, as well as songs written to be sung aloud, thus indicating that broadsides served equally to entertain as well as to inform the readership.

The Word on the Street collection contains fascinating broadsides concerning one of Scotland's most notorious criminals, namely those relating to the execution of William Burke in 1829. Burke is perhaps the most infamous convict to be executed in Scottish history for his involvement in 16 murders, with his accomplice William Hare, in order to supply bodies to the anatomist Dr Robert Knox for money.

The case attracted immense attention and provoked outrage. No other convict in Scotland was the subject of such widespread vilification in print. Whilst some broadsides offered a sympathetic account of convicts, broadsides concerning Burke told the story of Scots reacting to the execution of a monster with a loud "huzza". In fact, the only reported dissatisfaction of the Edinburgh crowd attending his execution was the fact that Hare, having turned King's evidence, had escaped punishment.

Among the other notable cases covered in the broadsides is the one of Mary McKinnon, an innkeeper executed in 1823 for murder. In contrast to the representation of Burke, the press's impression of McKinnon was more likely to elicit compassion through focusing on her troublesome personal history. As detailed in one broadside, she had been disowned by her father, abandoned by her lover and left to raise a child on her own, which placed her in difficult circumstances. Inclusion of these details effectively humanised her and contextualised her crime.

Capital punishment may be a fading memory in Scotland, but it has left its mark on Scottish society. In Edinburgh for example, former execution sites are still marked as historic sites of interest and have inspired the names of several pubs. In addition, stories featuring executed convicts, such as William Burke, Maggie Dixon, Robert Johnston and John Chiesley have stood the test of time and have inspired endless stories that have been told and retold in literature, movies and walking tours.

Burke's skeleton has previously been on display in the University of Edinburgh's anatomical museum. Also, other capital convicts of bygone centuries, such as Johnston, are reported to have been seen roaming the streets of the city as ghosts!

EXECUTION of the notorious WILLIAM BURKE the murderer, who supplied DR KNOX with subjects.

THE GRACE RACE

Time was running out for Scottish Ballet to save delicate videos of past performances... until it formed a partnership with our Moving Image Archive

WORDS:
Stewart Hardy
Marketing Officer

Scottish Ballet holds a fond place in the nation's cultural life and is one of the world's leading ballet companies. Founded by Peter Darrell and Elizabeth West as the Western Theatre Ballet in Bristol in 1957, it subsequently moved to Glasgow in 1969 and was renamed Scottish Theatre Ballet, changing to Scottish Ballet in 1974.

In its lifetime, Scottish Ballet has amassed a large video archive. As its 50th anniversary approached in 2019, thoughts turned to preserving this precious history. The archive not only contains unique performances from the first 30 years of the company's history, but glimpses 'behind the scenes' at rehearsals and community events.

Scottish Ballet contacted the Moving Image Archive at the Library for our expertise in preserving this important

Constance Devernay and Andrew Peasgood in Scottish Ballet's world premiere of Christopher Hampson's *The Snow Queen*. © Andy Ross

record and making it available to as wide an audience as possible.

THE DIGITISATION PROJECT

Digitising these videos to the highest quality for preservation means that these amazing performances will be saved for posterity. If it is not digitised soon, it will be lost forever. For the Library, this is an opportunity to preserve and make available a unique archive, and also to fill a gap in the national collections – we have no other ballet footage from years past.

Working in partnership, the National Library and Scottish Ballet project team brought in staff including a video preservation technician and a cataloguer. Equipment was purchased, including three high-specification computers and tape playback machines that enabled an efficient digitisation workflow. The project was made possible with funding from donors including the William Grant Foundation and the Foyle Foundation.

Tapes were prioritised for digitisation from an initial visual appraisal using the information on the labels or in the tape boxes, and drawing on the knowledge of colleagues at Scottish Ballet. The digital files will be preserved in perpetuity by the Library with full-length copies available online on our premises to view and enjoy. Clips from each tape are also being selected and digitised to offer a 'taster' of the collection to online visitors who may not be able to visit the Library.

THE RECORDINGS

"When I first saw the digitisation of Margot Fonteyne dancing in *La Sylphide* I was astonished," said Scottish Ballet's Digital Archivist, Sophie McCormick-Gow. "I had never seen this footage of her dancing. Having been at Scottish Ballet when we produced Matthew Bourne's *Highland Fling* (based on *La Sylphide*) I was instantly able to identify the original choreography, story and style. Fonteyne, whom I had seen in so many photos, was instantly recognisable. She truly is an amazing dancer."

The archive consists of hundreds of video tapes containing more than 500 hours of recordings. Most are of ballet performances, from classical ballets on stage to short contemporary dance films. There is also behind-the-scenes footage, showing how productions come to life on stage, together with footage of rehearsals, interviews and Scottish Ballet's community engagement programme.

The collection offers an exciting opportunity for research, as people can compare and contrast the same ballet performed in different decades, locations or with different dancers. Studio or dress rehearsal recordings complement the performances, occasionally with feedback notes and commentary by the dancers. Kirsteen Connor, Project Cataloguer, has been working with our curators and the Scottish Theatre Archive at the University of Glasgow to enhance the catalogue's descriptive detail.

Performances feature choreography by Robert North, Ashley Page, Robert Cohan, Jiří Kylián, Frederick Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan, Michel Fokine and George Balanchine with dancers including Ivan Nagy, Adam Cooper, Daria Klimentova and Elaine McDonald.

THE PROBLEM

Magnetic media such as video tape relies on machines working sufficiently well to display and copy the material. These machines get harder to effectively maintain as time passes, while the tapes slowly degrade.

The archive footage is on Betacam, VHS, U-Matic and SVHS tapes, which are fragile and impermanent formats. Each viewing shortens a tape's life and they deteriorate whether viewed or not. Some of the older tapes are in danger of being unplayable, even just once for digitisation.

An example is *The Prisoners*, one of

Preserving video is a race against time

ANN CAMERON, CURATOR OF MOVING IMAGE

Scottish Ballet presents *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, choreographed by Helen Pickett. © Jane Hobson

Peter Darrell's early works based on music from Bartok's *Four Hungarian Folksongs*, and performed by Scottish Ballet in 1982. One particular tape of this performance required 101 separate captures! It took a whole day to nurse this one tape through the tape player and careful cleaning was required due to tape shedding. Ironically, it is in fairly good visual condition and although there is significant dropout, visually it is not as poor as some other tapes.

THE TECHNICIAN

Jess Cooling is the Video Preservation Technician for the project. Digitising tape presents many technical challenges that haven't been encountered before, which encourages a creative problem-solving approach.

As Jess explains, "everyone has VHS tapes lying around the house, but what people might not know is that their VHS tapes have a limited lifespan".

Jess has used a number of techniques to facilitate digitisation. "One technique we use to improve digitisation and playback is 'baking' – placing the video tapes in a special oven that heats them to 50°C and removes any moisture that might interfere with playback," she said.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE

- 60 hours of the work of Scottish Ballet's founder, Peter Darrell.
  - o *Giselle* (1971)
  - o *Nutcracker* (1975) This was revived in 2013 and is now toured every three years
  - o *Mary, Queen of Scots* (1976)
  - o *Such Sweet Thunder* (1987)
  - o *Economy in Straitjacket but Still Room for Movement* (1978)
  - o *Five Ruckert Songs* (1978)
- *The Waters Edge* (1979) Choreographed by Robert North for the Company's 10th anniversary
- *To the Last Whale* (1982) Peter Royston's experimental ballet, set to songs of the humpback whale
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1993)
- *Swan Lake* (1995) With costumes by Jasper Conran

Jess has also had to deal with 'sticky-shed syndrome', where the recorded material sheds from the tape's plastic backing as a result of water damage.

It's often slow and painstaking work, but it's necessary so this footage can be kept for the nation.

THE RESULTS

The project has resulted in more than 200 Scottish Ballet performances being preserved for the nation. It offers a unique record of the development of classical and contemporary ballet in Scotland and the development and history of the national ballet company.

Ann Cameron, Curator of Moving Image, said: "Preserving video is a race against time. This project heralds the start of a continuing relationship with Scottish Ballet where we will receive further works as they are made."

Visitors to the National Library of Scotland at Kelvin Hall can now browse almost 50 years of ballet alongside more than 7,000 other film titles and all the Library's digital collections.

Scottish Ballet is also now raising funds to restore 75 audio tapes of orchestral recordings dating back to 1969, which would sit alongside our digitised ballet performances.

Come and view the Scottish Ballet footage at the National Library of Scotland at Kelvin Hall from 26 March

MEET THE MAN WHO HELPED US MAKE A SUPERB EXHIBITION OF OURSELVES

Gordon Yeoman has retired after a whole career spent preserving knowledge for future generations

Accepting a job he knew nothing about turned out well for Gordon Yeoman. He retired from the Library in March having played a vital role in changing the way we plan, produce and present our exhibitions.

Our former Exhibitions Conservator explained: "When I left school in 1976, I had plans to become a compositor, the job my grandad did.

"I applied to Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) where there were two posts up for grabs; a compositor and a bookbinder. I had no idea what a bookbinder did, but they offered me that job and I took it. Fortunately, I loved it from the first minute."

In those days, HMSO bound every type of publication, including magazines and books. The organisation carried out work for the Library (eventually Gordon and his colleagues would become direct Library employees). "We had to deal with new bindings and repair old leather-bound books. It was intricate work, part of which involved the gold tooling and letter finishing. That became an area I specialised in.

"I believe bookbinding is an art form, especially when it comes to conservation. It's extremely satisfying to take a sorry-looking book, strip it down, repair, resew while keeping most of its original features and turn it back to a recognisable book."

TURNAROUND

Circumstances changed in 1981 when part of the team relocated from the HMSO premises in Sighthill to the building adjacent to the Library on George IV Bridge. Gordon became part of that relocated section and was based in George IV Bridge until he retired, the team moving to its current location in the Library in 1986.

The change in his career took place in 1996. "I was happily involved in conservation when the person who made stands for Library exhibitions retired and I was asked to take that on," Gordon said. "Soon after, the exhibition side of work at the Library took off and since 1996 that's all I've concentrated on."

Although Gordon's original task was to make stands, it struck him quickly that the Library could improve the way it staged exhibitions. He said: "I'd seen other organisations operate and noticed they were extremely thorough and careful. No one was allowed to handle items except their specially trained staff. This was something we didn't necessarily do.

"We have extremely valuable material that is affected by its environment, temperature, humidity, light levels, and so on. It's essential that all of these elements are carefully controlled if we want to conserve our collections.

"I strongly believed that it should only be those with the right training and skills, that is, those in the conservation department, who should handle the pieces." That soon became standard practice, and numerous other developments have taken place since.

"Every step is taken to make sure conditions are right," Gordon said. "Among other things, there are meters in every case to constantly measure the environment. We make bespoke cradles for every exhibit, specially designed for that particular book and the pages it's opened at.

"Above all, we plan every exhibition meticulously and make sure we're prepared for any eventuality; if the heating or air conditioning breaks down in the building, we're ready to respond.

"Teamwork is essential. We work with some incredibly clever people; curators, designers, set builders, lighting experts and our own reprographics and exhibition team who always come up with brilliant ideas."

DIFFERENT CHALLENGE

Experience has told Gordon that every exhibition provides a different challenge.

"I remember we borrowed the John James Audubon book *Birds of America* from Renfrewshire Council," he said. "It's extremely rare and valuable and,

physically, it's a massive publication. I had to come up with a bespoke stand while the people from Paisley Museum anxiously looked over my shoulder."

He also recalled exhibiting Mary Queen of Scots' last letter, which brought queues to the Library, and *Lifting the Lid* from 2015, which focused on 400 years of Scotland's food and drink. "It was a bright exhibition with brilliant graphics that appealed to people of all ages."

A significant development Gordon regrets he will miss is the opening of the Library's new treasures gallery. He said: "There are some very special items such as the *Gutenberg Bible*, and the Chepman and Myllar prints, the earliest printed books in Scotland, which only go on show occasionally. The new area will provide the chance to show these items more often."

And he has no doubt he will miss the job and his colleagues. "I'm lucky to have made lots of good friends over the years."

Gordon began his 44-year career with a job he knew little about. However, he can retire knowing he's helped the Library gain international recognition for its ability to exhibit – and protect – its culturally priceless artefacts.

FROM SUNLIGHT TO SNOWBOUND

As Exhibitions Conservator, Gordon's job involved couriering Library material loaned to overseas exhibitions. He remembers several occasions very well:

"One large shipment was in 2014 when I took 92 items to Asia. They related to James Stewart Lockhart, 19th century Registrar General and Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong who had attended George Watson's College in Edinburgh. Many of the items were large and they included beautiful handwritten Chinese posters printed on rice paper.

"With every loan, we receive a report from the location telling us about the conditions. On that occasion, everything had gone well until the day I was due to return. For the most part the weather had been dull, but suddenly the sun came out and light was streaming through the glass ceiling directly on to one of our books. After much to-ing and fro-ing the staff, who were mightily embarrassed, agreed to paint over the ceiling.

"The Library has two books signed by George Washington and I've had to escort them to the United States on two occasions.

"One took place at the Washington family home at Mount Vernon, Virginia. It was an impressive exhibition and I felt very proud during the opening, which focused on links between Scotland and the US, and I shared the stage with the First Minister of Scotland.

"On the other occasion, the exhibition took place at George Washington Museum. I was staying on campus but on the day the books were to be installed I received a call asking me to look outside; five feet of snow had fallen overnight. I was yards from the site but conditions were so bad my hosts had to send a pick-up with plough attached to ferry me there. After which I had to dig out my hire car for my flight home, which was later that same day. Luckily, I made it."

George Eliot, by Sir Frederic William Burton, chalk, 1865, NPG 669

An echo in the READER'S MIND

Marian Evans's correspondence with her Scottish publisher gives an insight into the complex relationships that created her alter ego, the literary great George Eliot.

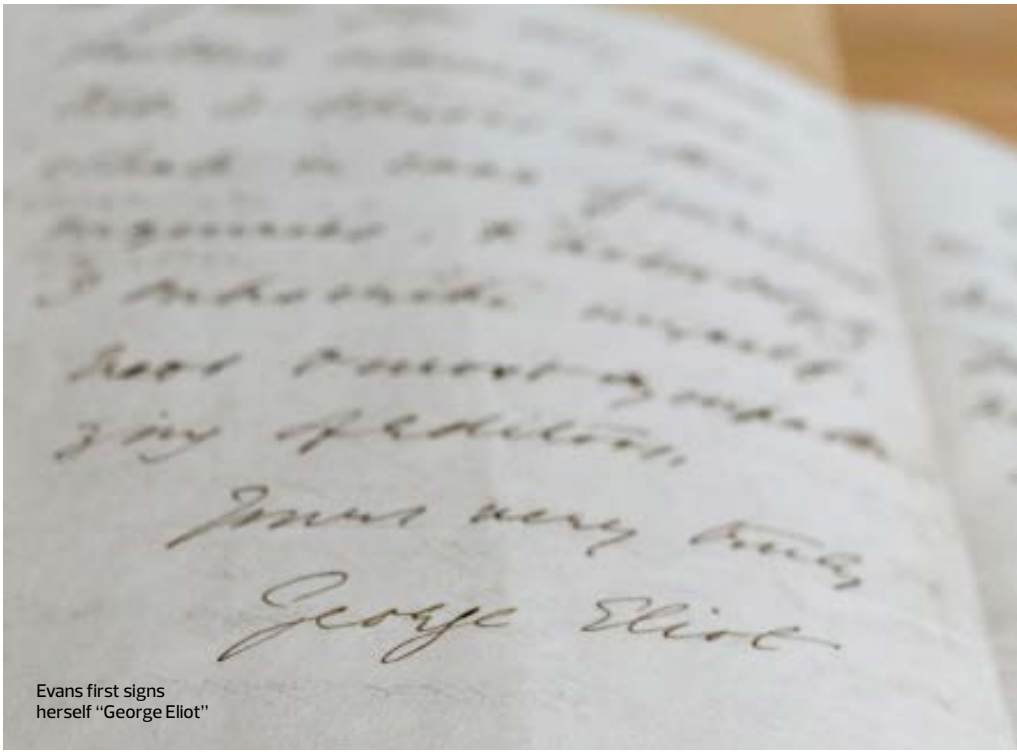
WORDS:
Kirsty McHugh
John Murray Archive and Publishers Collections Curator

The author Marian Evans was born in November 1819. But Evans did not become the novelist 'George Eliot' – famous for realistic and sympathetic portraits of provincial life – until 1857.

In a letter to her publisher dated 4 February 1857, which is held in the National Library's archives, Evans first signed herself 'George Eliot'. *Amos Barton*, the first of a series of short stories which made up *Scenes of Clerical Life*, had been offered to William Blackwood & Sons via Evans's partner George Henry Lewes for use in *Blackwood's Magazine*, a publication to which Lewes was a contributor. Lewes hid the identity of the author, but it became necessary to include a name on the title page of *Scenes* when the collected tales were issued in book form in 1858.

Evans chose a pseudonym in order to have her writing judged fairly. Biographers have suggested a number of factors which contributed to her choice of a male pen name. Most importantly perhaps, Evans did not want critics and readers to be influenced by her (then seen as unacceptable) relationship with the married George Henry Lewes, and to keep her novel writing separate from her career as a critic and essayist. Some commentators have pointed out that despite discrimination in the literary world, by the mid-19th century women were accepted as novelists. However, her experience as an editor at the *Westminster Review* would have made Evans acutely aware of the way in which an author's gender affected the reception and reputation of their work.

Blackwood's Magazine was founded in 1817 by Edinburgh publisher William Blackwood and was a respected literary journal for a middle-class family readership. The Blackwood brothers did not know the real identity of the author of *Scenes* until 1858, although they guessed it was Marian Evans. John Blackwood, Evans's editor, entered the family business in 1840 and was involved in setting up the firm's London office in Pall Mall, before returning north to Edinburgh to take over the editorship of the magazine, and later run the publishing house with his brother Major William Blackwood. After Major Blackwood's death in 1861, his son William took his place in the firm and the business – based



Evans first signs herself "George Eliot"

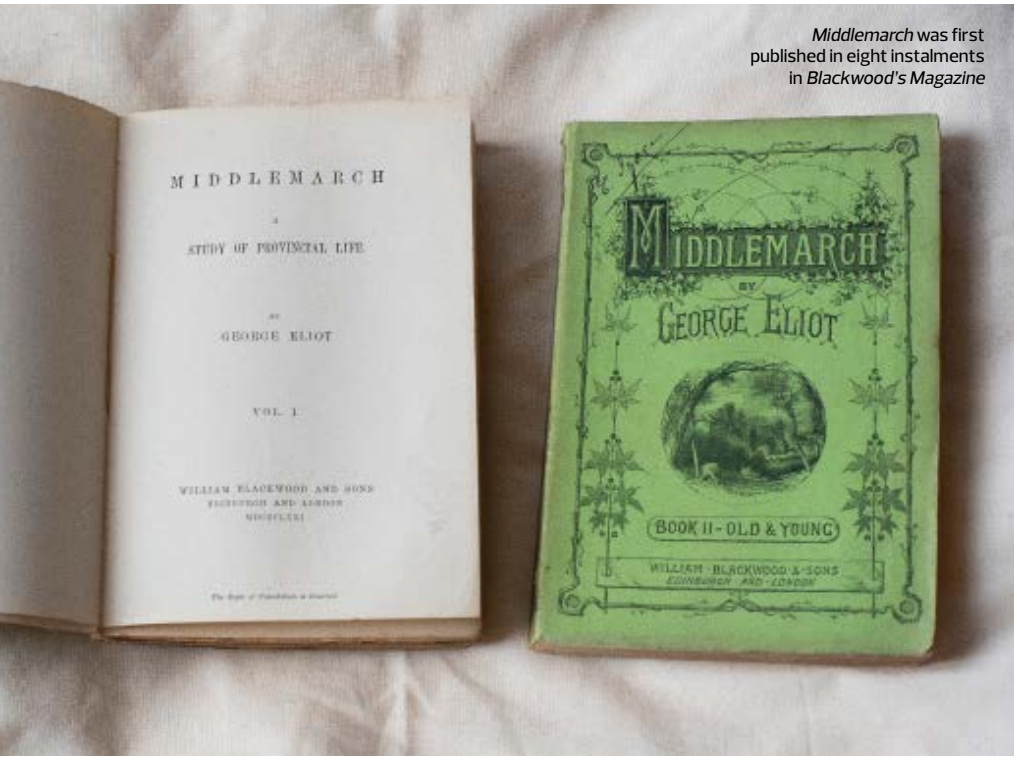
at 45 George Street in the New Town – stayed in family hands until 1976.

Correspondence between Evans and her publisher, preserved in the William Blackwood & Sons archive here at the Library, offers unique insights into Evans's writing career and how she negotiated being George Eliot.

John Blackwood recognised Evans's talent and was tactful and patient with an author who was often depressed and anxious about her work. Blackwood understood the need to bolster his author's confidence but, as their professional relationship progressed, he came to know that she also appreciated honesty and sincerity. Evans confided her fears to Blackwood over completing *Middlemarch*: "I am thoroughly comforted as to the half of the work which is already written – but there remains the terror about the unwritten."

In his letters, John Blackwood relates his initial reaction to reading instalments of her novels in manuscript, and relays feedback from authors and critics, family members and employees. Evans's circumstances (particularly her socially unacceptable cohabitation with Lewes) made her isolated, and Blackwood went

> It is a most wonderful study of human life and nature. You are like a great giant walking about among us and fixing every one you meet upon your canvas. In all this lifelike gallery that you put before us every trait in every character finds an echo or recollection in the reader's mind that tells him how true it is to Nature
>
> JOHN BLACKWOOD ON *MIDDLEMARCH*



Middlemarch was first published in eight instalments in *Blackwood's Magazine*

RECORDS OF PUBLISHING AND THE BOOK TRADE AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

The importance of Edinburgh as a centre for printing and publishing is reflected in the Library's internationally significant archive and manuscript collections in this field. Papers of Scottish publishing houses (or those founded in London by Scots) including William Blackwood & Sons, W & R Chambers, John Murray, Smith Elder, Oliver & Boyd, and Canongate are rich resources for literary and book history. We also hold papers of stationers, booksellers, and printers such as James Thin, R & R Clark, W & A K Johnston and George Waterston & Sons. We continue to collect actively in these areas.

out of his way to offer support through letters, presents, dinner invitations and other friendly gestures.

Speculation over the identity of George Eliot in the press, however, did lead to tensions between author and publisher. Evans's suspicion that John Blackwood was putting business above her best interests, worries about money and rocky negotiations over *The Mill on the Floss*, contributed to an uneasy relationship in the late 1850s. He was aggrieved too, feeling that Evans was over-inflating the critical and financial success of her works, and being manipulative in threatening to find a new publisher.

In 1862, after publishing four works with Blackwood, Evans accepted an offer of £10,000 (about £500,0000 in today's money) from Smith Elder for her Italian historical romance, *Romola*. The work, however, was stressful to write and financially unsuccessful for the publisher, and Evans returned to Blackwood for the publication of *Felix Holt* (1866) and all her subsequent works including her most famous, *Middlemarch* (1871).

Publisher and author knew the reciprocal benefits of working together to grow George Eliot's literary reputation and maximise sales. Evans understood that her realistic fiction was not necessarily suited to all readers' tastes and she might appear inflexible: "incapable of bending myself to their tastes," as she expressed it to Blackwood. He saw the difficulties of promoting her novels to a mass audience, noting of *Adam Bede* that his only reservation was "really to enjoy it I required to give my mind to it and trembled for that large section of novel readers who have little or no mind to give". Working together, Evans, Lewes and John Blackwood turned George Eliot into a novelist not only admired by critics, and fellow authors like Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell, but a popular and widely read author.

When John Blackwood died, Marian Evans wrote to Charles Lewes:

"He has been bound up with what I most cared for in my life for more than twenty years and his good qualities have made many things easy to me that without him would often have been difficult."

Letters in Evans's hand from the Blackwood archive

National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

"I discovered the WW1 trench in which my grandfather was killed."

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Experience your ancestors at:

www.nls.uk/family-history

Locations: George IV Bridge, Edinburgh and Kelvin Hall, Glasgow.

WORDS:
Graham Hogg
Rare Books Curator

Two centuries after impoverished weavers were manipulated into rising up, we look back on...

SCOTLAND'S RADICAL WAR

200 years ago, the last armed uprising on British soil took place, led by radical reformers in Scotland. The events of April 1820, and their aftermath, are not widely known today, but profoundly influenced the political history of Scotland in the 19th century.

The years leading up to the Radical War of 1820 were grim for the Scottish working classes. The Napoleonic Wars had exhausted Britain's finances. Food was short due to poor harvests, and the Corn Laws prevented imports of cheap foreign wheat. The increasing use of steam-powered machines led to skilled workers, such as weavers, feeling their livelihoods were threatened.

Moreover, there was growing public frustration with the undemocratic British political system, where the vote was denied to the vast majority of the population, and cities such as Glasgow did not have a single MP. The unpopular King George IV, who had ruled as regent until his father's death in January 1820, was regarded as a dissolute spendthrift.

Radical political ideas regarding democracy and reform of the political system had been circulating in British society since the late 1700s, inspired by the French Revolution. From 1815, unrest had grown in England, culminating in 1819's Peterloo Massacre in Manchester and the Cato Street conspiracy.

Scotland had also been swept up in the movement for reform. Large protest meetings were held, mainly in weaving areas in the Central Belt. A rally in Paisley in September 1819 led to a week of rioting, and cavalry was used to control about 5,000 radicals. With the country seemingly on the brink of a revolution, members of the Scottish establishment, such as Sir Walter Scott, were keen to raise armed volunteer forces to counter any potential uprising. In December 1819, Scott wrote to his son: "I am sure the dogs will not fight and I am sorry for it – One day's good kemping [fighting] would cure them most radically of their radical malady."

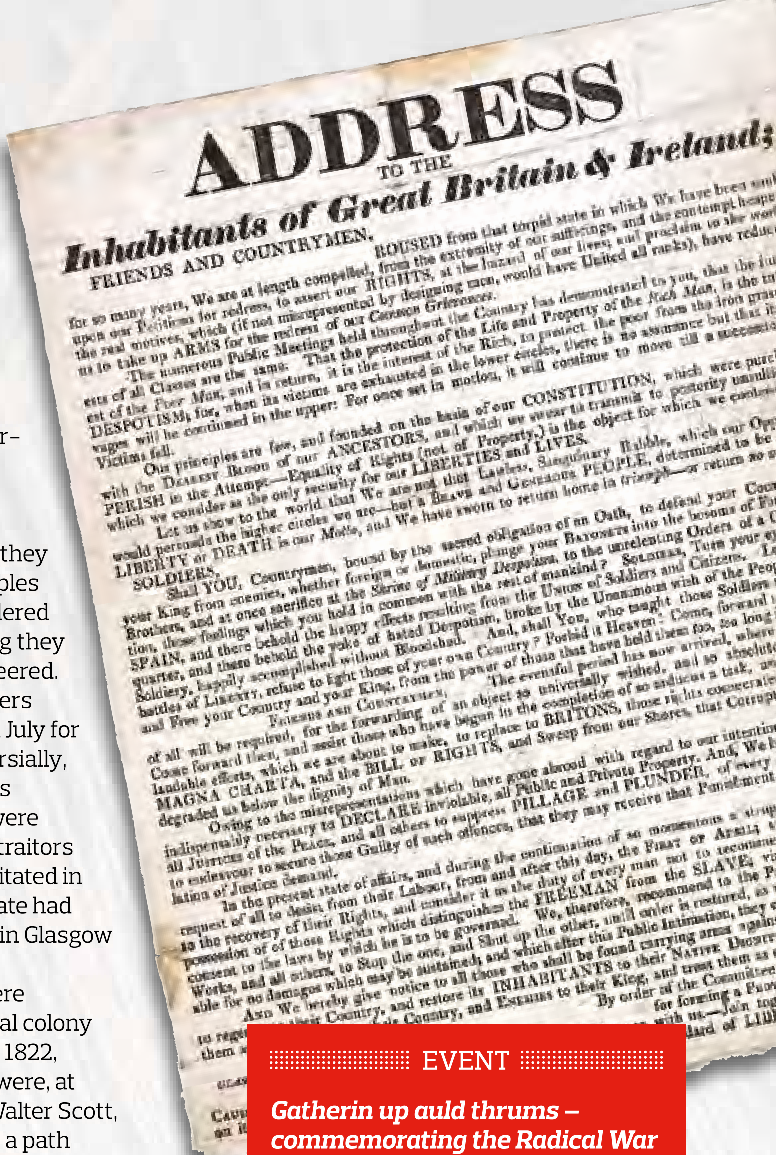
Scott's prognosis was wrong; preparations were under way for an armed uprising of Scottish radicals in early 1820. A Committee for Organising a Provisional Government had been formed to coordinate nationwide action for the formation of a Scottish republic. However, government spies and provocateurs had infiltrated the radicals' meetings. The committee convened in a tavern in Glasgow's Gallowgate on 21 March, only to be arrested and detained in secret.

With the committee out of the way, Government agents decided to entice the radicals out into the open by printing a proclamation, supposedly from the committee, calling for an uprising. The proclamation, dated Glasgow 1 April 1820, urged workers to withdraw their labour and recover their rights: "Liberty or Death is our motto and we have sworn to return in triumph – or return no more!" It was distributed by enthusiastic radicals, unaware that they were actually instruments of a Government plot.

By 3 April there was a widespread strike in central Scotland.

In Glasgow, an undercover Government agent, John Craig, led a small group of armed radicals on a march to the Carron ironworks

WILLIAM HOWATT:
One of the Strathaven radicals (pictured right) who took part in the march from Strathaven to Glasgow with James Wilson. Howatt managed to return to Strathaven safely, having hidden his gun and bandolier when he saw soldiers on patrol and then pretending to be an ordinary weaver going about his business. He was never arrested. The original photograph must have been taken 30 to 40 years after the Radical War but Howatt is supposedly dressed and armed as he would have been in April 1820.



Large protest meetings were held, mainly in weaving areas in the Central Belt

near Falkirk to capture some arms and cannon, only for them to be scattered by a police patrol before they left the city.

Events took a more dramatic turn on 4 and 5 April. Duncan Turner, the spy who had issued the proclamation, mustered a group of men in Glasgow to march to the Carron works. He was careful to avoid participating in the march, asking a young weaver and ex-soldier, Andrew Hardie, to lead it. Turner gave Hardie half a piece of card, which would match exactly with a half card held by another radical leader and ex-soldier, John Baird, waiting for him in Condorrat, Dunbartonshire.

Hardie brought only 25 men to Condorrat, Baird only had around 10 with him, but they continued with their march, believing reinforcements were waiting for them near Falkirk. On 5 April, the men reached Bonnymuir, a moor near the village of Bonnybridge, Stirlingshire, only to be met by a small group of cavalry who had come to intercept them. The ensuing 'Battle of Bonnymuir' was a minor skirmish; the tired, hungry and poorly armed radicals were no match for trained soldiers, who routed them. Two soldiers and four radicals were wounded and 18 radicals, including Hardie and Baird, were taken prisoner and held at Stirling Castle.

Meanwhile, in the Lanarkshire town of Strathaven, a spy conned local radicals led by James 'Purlie' Wilson into thinking that a rising was successfully under way. The following morning Wilson left for Glasgow with a force of 25 men, carrying a banner that declared "Scotland Free or a Desart [sic]". They were tipped off that an army ambush lay between them and their destination at Cathkin. Wilson, sensing that the radicals had been betrayed, returned to Strathaven, while his men avoided the ambush and reached their destination to find nothing was happening in Glasgow. By the following evening, the authorities had discovered the identities of 10 group members, including Wilson, and arrested them.

There was one final act to what became known as the 'Radical War'. On 8 April the authorities tried to move a group of the prisoners from Paisley to Greenock. The citizens of Greenock, who had not been involved in any riots or demonstrations, attacked the soldiers escorting the prisoners. The soldiers had to fight their way out of the town as the crowd pelted them with stones. They opened fire, killing eight people, including an eight-year-old child, and injuring 10 others.

The Government's retribution was harsh; they wanted to make examples of the men they considered ringleaders of the rising they themselves had engineered. The Bonnymuir prisoners were tried in Stirling in July for high treason, controversially, under English not Scots law. Hardie and Baird were sentenced to death as traitors and hanged and decapitated in September. A similar fate had befallen James Wilson in Glasgow the previous month.

Nineteen radicals were transported to the penal colony of New South Wales. In 1822, unemployed weavers were, at the suggestion of Sir Walter Scott, employed to construct a path around the base of Salisbury Crags in Edinburgh's Holyrood Park which became known as the 'Radical Road'.

Scotland did not experience such widespread political unrest during the rest of the 19th century, but the underlying movement for change did not go away. In 1832, the Government was forced to pass a Scottish Reform Act which extended the vote from 5,000 to 65,000 adult men (out of a population of around two million) and ensured that Scottish towns and cities had some representation in Parliament. In 1835, the Government granted an absolute pardon for all the transported men.

Over the last 200 years, the radicals have been commemorated in Scotland. Monuments to the '1820 Martyrs' were put up in Glasgow, Paisley and Strathaven in the 19th century, with a memorial to the Battle of Bonnymuir erected in 2007.

In 1978, the Scottish novelist James Kelman wrote a radio play *Hardie and Baird*. Interviewed for *Scottish Review of Books* in 2012, Kelman noted: "There's also the fact that to some extent Scottish history is a radical history, it's a history in opposition to the mainstream. And radical history is marginalised, and not necessarily taught... In other countries everybody would know who Wilson, Baird and Hardie were."

EVENT

Gatherin up auld thrums – commemorating the Radical War

- **1 APRIL 6–7.30pm, Kelvin Hall, Glasgow**
- **9 APRIL 2–3.30pm, George IV Bridge, Edinburgh**

Join Mairi Breslin, Director of Coorie Creative CIC, and Rhona Alcorn, Director of Scottish Language Dictionaries, to explore the tradition of handloom weaving and the significance of the psychology of the weavers' lifestyle during their Rising. These events will be illuminated by wonderful film and song, and will also feature a live demonstration of hand weaving on a modern loom. There will also be an introduction to the Dictionary of the Scots Language as a unique record of the language – and of the history, culture and traditions – of Scotland's weavers and their compatriots. For details and booking visit our website.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT SCOTLAND'S SOUND HERITAGE?

In Scotland's story, the spoken word is as precious the written. That's why the Library allocates significant time, effort and energy to preserving and promoting the nation's sound heritage.

And it's not just spoken word but song, music and the sounds of nature.

Alistair Bell is Sound Collections Curator and he explained how the Library's sound collection is built up: "Sound and moving images are not covered by our status as a legal deposit library. Publishers don't provide us with copies of the material they produce, as is the case with written and electronic formats. We don't currently have a procedure for active acquisition but we do ask for donations or people offer us material. We receive all sorts of formats, from wax cylinder to digital audio tape."

Although the Library has a substantial and diverse collection there is, in fact, no national sound archive. Alistair said: "A few years ago, it was suggested we address this situation since material was in danger of being lost. For example, magnetic tape is becoming increasingly expensive and difficult to digitise. So, along with others, we developed Scotland's Sounds Network. It has more than 100 organisations, including libraries, museums and archives as well as community groups and individuals who have an interest in recorded sound and their own collection."

Alistair and his colleagues organise projects, conduct training and are involved in knowledge exchange, as well as profile-raising through the media.

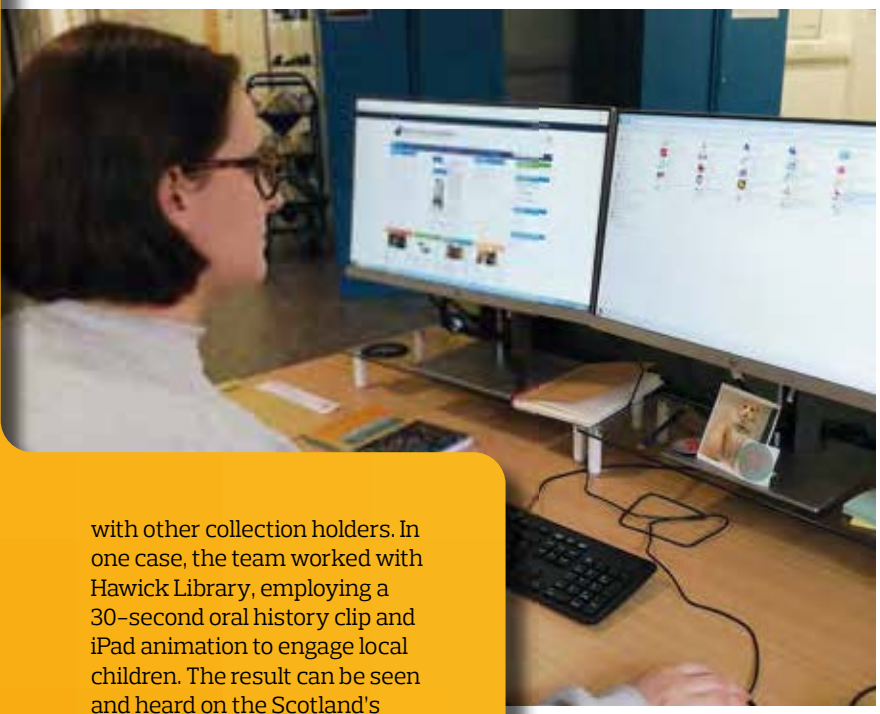
Connecting Scotland's Sounds was one project. It ran in 2016 and 2017 and saw training delivered to people in organisations that held sound collections. The aim was to build knowledge, confidence and digitisation skills. It covered everything from identifying and playing formats such as open reel tape to applying for funding for digitisation projects.

The project also involved promoting public engagement

WORDS: Stewart McRobert

MORE THAN PEOPLE

Scotland's sound heritage is about more than people. One collection in the archive is from the Scottish Ornithologist Club. It includes nature and bird recordings, many of which are from the 1960s. Notably, they illustrate the enormous environmental change there has been over the past 40 or 50 years. "You can visit a spot where an original recording was made and find today's sound environment is completely different," said Alistair.



with other collection holders. In one case, the team worked with Hawick Library, employing a 30-second oral history clip and iPad animation to engage local children. The result can be seen and heard on the Scotland's Sounds website*.

In another project, they arranged a special evening at the Scottish Fisheries Museum in Fife. A researcher picked out fishing songs to be played in the museum space, a former boatyard. Most who attended were friends of the museum. It was the first time they had gone through the museum with an accompanying soundtrack and it helped them see the exhibits in a new light.

Alistair said: "Sound is engaging, emotive and can fire people's imagination. It's our task to engage people and communities across the country so they can enjoy and make the most of our outstanding sound heritage."

* https://scotlands-sounds.nls.uk

HEAR TO HELP

Clockwise from top left: Whether it's a vinyl record or a reel-to-reel tape, the treasures of the sound archive require careful handling. They are delicately cleaned and dilligently assessed before going through the digitising process and being added to the Library's catalogue. There are further checks before anything is made available for streaming or public performance.

Though most of the Sound team is based at Kelvin Hall in Glasgow there is one member, Angie Cook, based at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. She is the Scotland's Sounds coordinator and focuses on communication and building partnerships within that network.

UNLOCKING OUR SOUND HERITAGE

Several members of the Sound team have been specifically recruited to work on this project, which is led by the British Library. There are hubs across the UK dedicated to digitising, cataloguing, clearing rights and providing access to sound recordings.

The Library represents Scotland and has drawn in collections from 17 organisations around the country. Its partners range from Gairloch Heritage Museum and Western Isles Libraries to National Trust for Scotland, the BBC and others.

A substantial amount of digitisation has been completed and some cleared clips are on the Scotland's Sounds website.

Alistair said: "Among other things, we're ensuring all magnetic tape is digitised over the next 10 years. The cost of digitising tape will become prohibitive as machines become rarer and more expensive, parts are harder to buy and the skills and knowledge to maintain the equipment is dying out."

The team members include:

JENI PARK
HUB PROJECT MANAGER

Jeni liaises with collection partners and is the line manager for cataloguing, rights and sound engineering. She's responsible for learning and engagement, volunteers and the project outputs. She said: "Volunteering is a major part of the project. The National Lottery Heritage Fund, which supports the project, has given us a specific volunteering target.

"As part of our learning and engagement activity we've recruited an artist in residence who will use recordings from the Scottish Ornithology Club. The artist – Val O'Regan from Birdhouse Studio in Argyll – will work with children and staff from Inellan Primary School near Dunoon as well as Benmore Botanic Gardens."

CONOR WALKER
AUDIO PRESERVATION ENGINEER

Conor converts material from analogue to digital. He operates from a uniquely equipped studio at Kelvin Hall.

He said: "A lot of this material is approaching obsolescence and requires a certain amount of preservation. But we need to balance that with the need to process a huge amount in a limited timescale.

"The open reel tape machines we use are from the late 1970s and they include former BBC machines that are very robust."

ROB SMITH
CATALOGUING COORDINATOR

Rob catalogues material that has been digitised using a method developed by the British Library.

"One big challenge is keeping pace with the amount of material being digitised," he said. "If we want to put material online we need a high level of detail in the cataloguing, which usually means listening to most of the recording.

"Another challenge is the level of specificity. If it's a group conversation, I might not be able to identify all the people involved. Luckily, on occasion, the collection comes with associated documentation."

MEL REEVE-RAWLINGS
RIGHTS OFFICER

Mel gains clearance for recordings that will go online.

"As well as copyright clearance, we need to comply with data protection legislation," she explained.

"I contact the rights holders, who can include the interviewer, interviewee, and any organisation involved in the recording, to gain permission.

"For data protection, I assess the recordings for 'damage and distress'. If a recording we put online features someone who is identifiable, we must make sure the recording does not cause that person damage or distress."

NICOLA READE
ALEXANDER GRAHAM TRAINEE

"Before we digitise any shellac or vinyl recording, we have to clean it," explained Nicola. "That's one of my tasks.

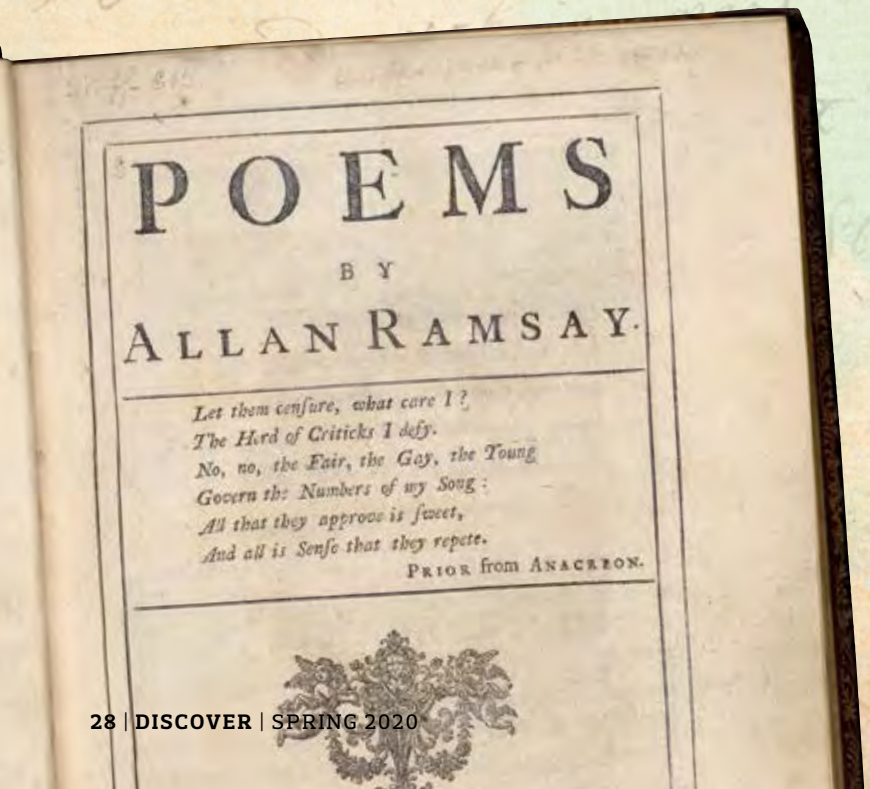
"The next stage involves selecting the stylus. When you are transferring the recording, you have to establish who originally cut the disc; that determines the best parameters for the sound.

"I also work creatively with the archive. One aim is to create 'listening stations' that get sounds back into their original environment. That might mean having a listening station playing puffin sounds at the site of a former puffin colony, or a recording of a music hall act playing at the site of a former theatre."

A lot of this material is approaching obsolescence and requires an amount of preservation

Writing the Scots Enlightenment

Poet Allan Ramsay played a vital role in keeping the Scots language alive at a time when some of his fellow countrymen and women were becoming embarrassed with their "Scotticisms". The literary foundations that he laid were later built upon by Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns.


POEMS

BY

ALLAN RAMSAY.

Let them censure, what care I?
The Herd of Criticks I defy.
No, no, the Fair, the Gay, the Young
Govern the Numbers of my Song:
All that they approve is sweet,
And all is Sense that they repeat.

PRIOR from ANACREON.

The Union between Scotland and England was yet to take place when Allan Ramsay (1684–1758) arrived in Edinburgh at the turn of the 18th century to train as an apprentice wigmaker. While this profession would sustain him financially, it was a love of literature that was his true calling. In the bustling but cramped Scottish capital, Ramsay met with like-minded individuals who came together to discuss literature and politics.

Clubs were hives of intellectual activity during the Enlightenment, and Ramsay was an active participant in one of the most significant Edinburgh clubs of the period, the Easy Club. Founded in 1712, it was self-consciously modelled on the great periodical of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, with members taking literary names as their aliases.

However, in 1713 there was a suggestion to change the pseudonyms of the members from predominantly English to Scottish literary figures as this would demonstrate "a dutiful respect to the heroes and authors of their own nation by choosing them for their patrons". Ramsay adopted the name of Gavin Douglas, who had completed a Scots translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* in 1513.

Years later, as a testament to his own literary contribution to Scottish letters, Ramsay became the subject of critical debate among the next generation of clubbable Scots. In 1779, the Pantheon Club of Edinburgh debated "Whether have the Exertions of Allan Ramsay or Robert Fergusson done more Honour to Scotch Poetry?" Such was the admiration for Ramsay that out of seven members who took an active role in the debate, only one argued the case for Fergusson.

Ramsay's commitment to Scots as a means

of literary expression was outlined in his preface to *Poems* (1721) where he stated: "That I have exprest my Thought in my native Dialect, was not only my Inclination, but the Desire of my best and wisest Friends." He also had an eye on the literary market beyond Scotland as he noted that: "The Scotticisms, which perhaps may offend some over-nice Ear, give new Life and Grace to the Poetry, and become their Place as well as the Doric Dialect of Theocritus, so much admired by the best Judges."

In 1724 Ramsay published *The Ever Green*, which was a collection of Scots poems "wrote by the Ingenious before 1600". For his source material, Ramsay used the *Bannatyne manuscript* (now held at the National Library of Scotland) which had been compiled by the Edinburgh merchant George Bannatyne in the 1560s. However, Ramsay did not remain editorially neutral, and instead made a number of alterations, which included an addition to William Dunbar's *Lament for the Makaris* to incorporate a prophecy relating to himself. Indeed, Ramsay also made a contribution to the original manuscript, where he added a poem at the end of one of the volumes.

POWERFUL WORDS: Allan Ramsay paved the way for other greats of Scottish poetry. Above, his collection *The Ever Green* gathered Scots poems from before 1600 and contained a glossary to aid understanding

As his reputation grew, Ramsay turned his hand to drama and wrote *The Gentle Shepherd* (1725). The play tells the tale of Patie, a poor but virtuous shepherd, who falls in love with Peggy, a shepherdess. Although it could be read as a simple pastoral work celebrating rustic manners and characters, it also contained elements of Jacobitism, with the exiled Sir William Worthy returning to his rightful inheritance as metaphor for support for the Stuart cause. It was soon converted into a ballad opera (1729) and remained popular throughout the 18th century and into the early 19th century, in both Scotland and England.

Ramsay was a literary innovator, but he was also an innovator in the delivery of literature itself. Around 1725, he established the first circulating library in Britain from his premises at the Luckenbooths on the High Street. The endeavour was not universally celebrated however, and there was some Presbyterian pushback against the library after he stocked it with several translations of French plays in 1736.

Ramsay was eager to promote the stage in Edinburgh and believed that it would bring a number of economic benefits to the city. Between 1735 and 1736 a theatre was constructed in Carrubber's Close, but the 1737 Licencing Act was to cause Ramsay significant problems in staging plays. In an attempt to censure political expression in performances, it banned plays outside London except during the king's residence. This was seized on by the local authority in Edinburgh who zealously enforced the Act.

Although he continued to defend the stage vigorously and to enlist the support of key patrons, Ramsay was forced to close his theatre in 1739 after several of his actors were fined £50 by the Court of Session. Such were the debts of the theatre that Ramsay was required to sell the wood furnishings in order to raise sufficient capital.

Despite these setbacks to his cultural ambitions, Ramsay remained committed to Scottish cultural development. His son, also named Allan Ramsay (1713–1784), would go on to become one of the most prominent portrait painters of the Scottish Enlightenment and ultimately attain the position of Principal Painter in Ordinary to the King in 1767.

Before Ramsay Jr reached these heights, in the 1730s his father actively sought aid from the provost of Edinburgh and other patrons such as Sir John Clerk of Penicuik to help raise funds and use their influence to send his son to Italy to improve his artistic talents. Ramsay Jr left for Italy in 1736, where on his travels he met the exiled Stuarts, including the Old Pretender James and the Young Pretender Charles Edward Stuart.

Shortly before his son left for Italy, Ramsay Sr purchased land on the Castlehill to build a new house on a site which is still called Ramsay Garden. The house became known as Goose Pie House owing to the octagonal shape of the building, which resembled 18th century goose pie tins. It was taken over by Ramsay Jr in 1741, but still used by his father as a place to enjoy his retirement until his death in 1758, by which time Ramsay the poet had firmly secured his literary reputation in the Scottish Enlightenment.

Until 16 May, a Collections in Focus display at the National Library of Scotland will showcase some of the highlights of our collections relating to Allan Ramsay drawn from the Library's Manuscript and Printed Book collections.

Computing power can find connections, trends and even beauty where the human eye might not. Digital Scholarship Librarian **Sarah Ames** explains how the resources of our Data Foundry are being used in some unusual ways.

THE DATA FOUNDRY

WORDS:
Sarah Ames
Digital Scholarship Librarian

We recently launched our Data Foundry website, the Library's open data platform for digital scholarship. Home to the Library's 'collections as data', it includes digitised material, metadata collections, organisational data and geospatial information – all made available as 'datasets'. There are plans to include audio-visual data and web archive data in the future.

WHAT IS DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP?

Digital scholarship is a broad term encompassing the use of computational or digital methods to enable new forms of research, learning, teaching or creative outputs. This is why we are making our collections available in machine-readable form – as data – to support and encourage these new uses of the collections.

Digital scholarship could involve carrying out text and data mining (TDM) on collections, for example: using computers to analyse texts at scale to uncover broad changes over time, which the human brain wouldn't be able to compute, or which we wouldn't have the time to find out. Or it could mean using artificial intelligence and machine learning for creative purposes to make new works based on the collections. It might mean geolocating places within texts and visualising them on maps. Some people produce new, digital editions of texts using mark-up languages such as the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI); others turn digitised material into computer games.

When we use computers to analyse collections, we can begin to explore the collections at a scale that we haven't been able to do previously. These techniques also open the collections up to new uses for research, as well as exciting creative interpretations.

3,000 SCOTTISH CHAPBOOKS... AS MUSIC!

Shawn Graham (Associate Professor of Digital Humanities at Carleton University) spotted the release of our Scottish Chapbooks (small paper-covered booklets) dataset on social media. Spanning 1671–1893, and containing nearly 11 million words, this collection provides some exciting opportunities for analysis.

Shawn used computational techniques to identify and group the chapbooks into broad topics. Then, using the TwoTone app, he transformed this data into music, creating a 'Song of Scottish Publishing'. Different instruments represent different topics, so, for example, the trumpet represents chapbooks which feature the 'fortune-making' topic; the double-bass relates to 'histories'; the harp is for chapbooks with themes of love. The result is a musical 'data visualisation' covering more than 200 years of Scottish chapbooks.

LEFT: Martin Disley's Tay and Forth bridges art project
BELOW: Yifeng Gao, Bibo Tian and Xue Feng's Minecraft based on the Encyclopedia Britannica

> When we use computers to analyse collections, we can begin to explore the collections at a scale that we haven't been able to do previously

HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING MEETS ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Melissa Terras (Professor of Digital Cultural Heritage, University of Edinburgh and a member of the Library Board) and Rosa Filgueira (The Alan Turing Institute and Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre, EPCC) have used EPCC's supercomputer facilities to produce some exploratory analysis of the first eight editions of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, as part of a collaborative project to create a text and data mining platform.

Text mining historical text has a number of challenges, including the quality of the data, changes in page layouts, and the size of the dataset. Nearly 100 years of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* takes a normal computer a long time to 'read'!

To produce useful outputs, there are a number of stages the computer must run through, including 'normalising' the data (turning letters to lowercase and removing everything that isn't a letter) and calculating word frequency by taking into account the changing lengths of the different editions. Topics searched for included sports, Scottish philosophers, Scottish cities and animals, showing the changing focus of *Britannica* as more editions were produced. And now this infrastructure is in place, the team can begin to ask more complex questions of data, and work with historians to see how this changes what they can ask of the sources.

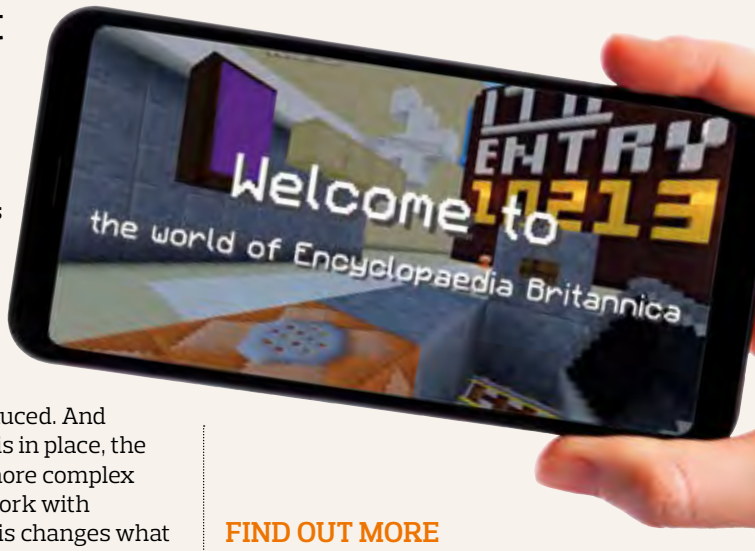
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Martin Disley is the Library's artist-in-residence until summer 2020. As a new media artist, Martin has experience of using digital methods to create art installations. Funded by the Creative Informatics AHRC project, Martin is exploring the use of generative adversarial networks (GAN) – a form of machine learning – with the collections, to create new artworks based on the Library's digitised material. One early work explores the Tay and Forth Bridge photographic collections, creating haunting images of ghostly bridges.

DATA VISUALISATION PROJECTS

We have been working with the University of Edinburgh's Design Informatics students, who have been using Library datasets to learn about, and create, data visualisations. Projects include analysis of 100 years of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; visualising the spread of disease in A Medical History of British India; and exploring late-19th century spiritualist newspapers.

One group (Yifeng Gao, Bibo Tian and Xue Feng) mapped their data analysis of *Encyclopaedia Britannica* into a Minecraft world, which you can explore on a rollercoaster. Another group (Vaida Plankyte, Haonan Li and Wan Erh Hsieh) produced a website with extensive analysis of the encyclopaedias over time, as well as a game, through which you can interact with the data.



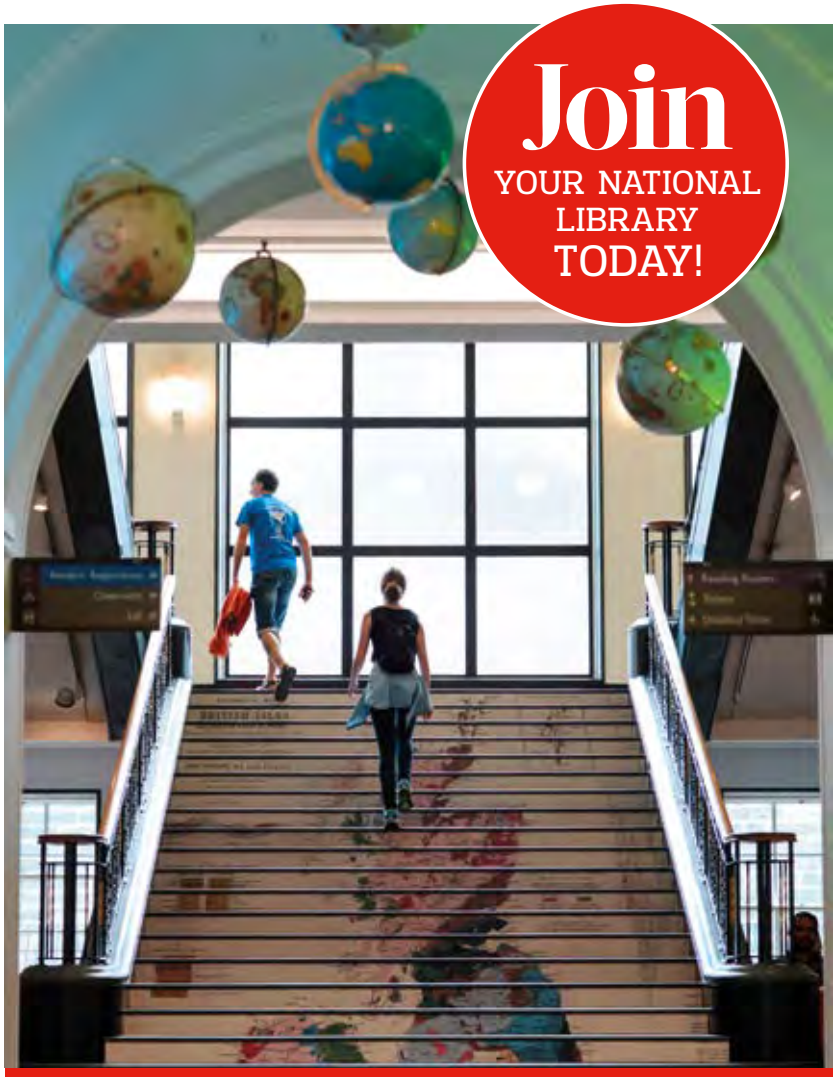
FIND OUT MORE

These projects, and many others, are featured on the Data Foundry website. Find out about a project to LiDAR-scan the George IV Bridge building; how students are learning about digital humanities through the A Medical History of British India dataset; and how the Library's collections are being used to teach text and data mining around the world.

https://data.nls.uk/projects

For more information, or if you have any questions, contact sarah.ames@nls.uk

Great Library resources...



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Pantomimes on the pitch

A recent acquisition by the National Library of Scotland is a team photograph of women footballers – the only clue, the date 1918 scrawled on the front of the image.

There are few records of women's football in Edinburgh during the First World War, but two matches held during 1917 and 1918 stand out.

The games were part of the Vaudeville Sports Carnivals organised by the impresario Fred Lumley to raise money for war charities. The first carnival was held on 30 January, 1917 at Powderhall to benefit the services canteen at Waverley Station. The women's football match was between the casts of the pantomimes *Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella*.

During the contest, referee for the day, the boxer Tancy Lee, contrived to score both goals in a 1–1 draw. With theatrical stars such as Maudie Frances and Belle Mora taking part, the bulk of the press coverage centred on Marie Brayman, who they confusingly named Gladys Ford.

Pictures from the game were published abroad, with one US paper identifying Brayman as Grace Ford – a former starlet of the Lubin film studios of Philadelphia. This seems to be a case of mistaken identity but it is hard to prove as few of Seigmond Lubin's films have survived. Production notes for *Red Riding Hood* refer to Brayman as a pantomime star and comedienne, who had toured South Africa during the autumn of 1911. No mention is made of film appearances in the States.

Such was the success of the 1917 event that a second carnival at Powderhall was held on 31 January, 1918. In the build-up, aircraft flew over Edinburgh dropping leaflets advertising the event. There would also be a fly past on the day itself.

The match was between the casts of *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Humpty Dumpty* and the picture in the Library's possession is of the Theatre Royal XI, who were appearing in *Humpty Dumpty*.

From publicity pictures, it is possible to put names to some faces in the line-up. Aida Mozelle, one half of the Sparkling Mozelles, stands second from the left. Sister Millicent sits just below her. Their father was showman Theodor Reed.

Julia de Lacy, then a rising star in London's West End, stands third from the left holding a football while Madge White, who had leading roles in London and Edinburgh, is on the far right. There were no reports of the 1918 carnival – only a picture feature in the *Daily Record*.

Within a few years, the Edinburgh Ladies team would form. The crowd attracted to Tynecastle for their match with Dick Kerr in 1921 would not see a novelty featuring panto stars but a real sport, played by proper athletes.

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