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THE BEAUTY OF BOOKS
Elegant texts on display

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DISCOVER

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland • www.nls.uk • Issue 30 Winter 2015



PLAGUE!

Experience the terror of disease and death down
the centuries in our winter exhibition

WHERE BOOKS COME TO LIFE



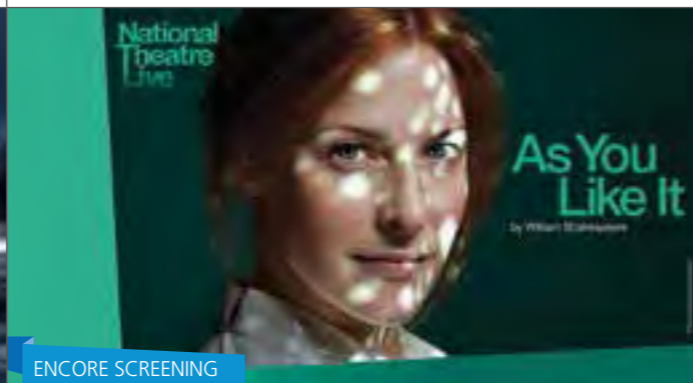
Sat 5 to Thu 31 December FESTIVAL THEATRE



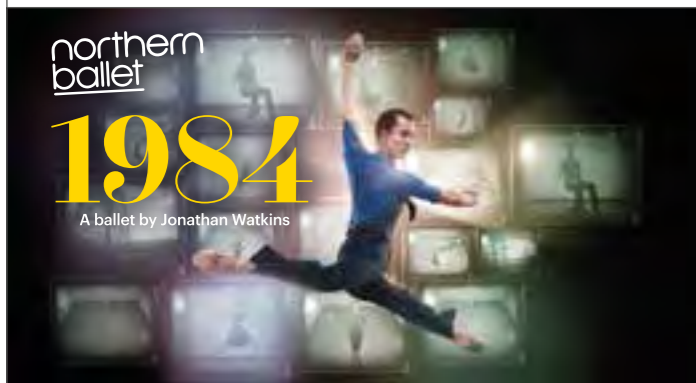
Mon 1 to Sat 6 February KING'S THEATRE



Mon 29 February to Sat 5 March KING'S THEATRE



Tue 8 March FESTIVAL THEATRE



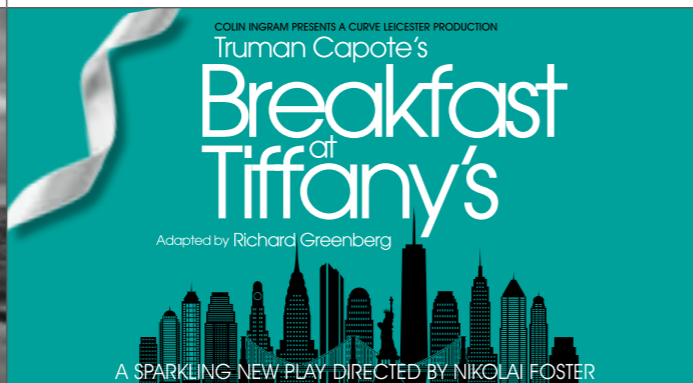
Thu 31 March to Sat 2 April FESTIVAL THEATRE



Tue 19 to Sat 23 April KING'S THEATRE

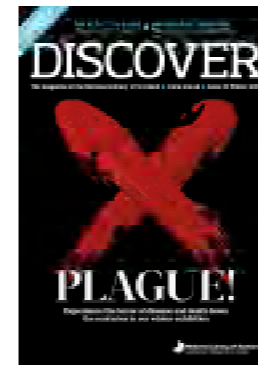


Tue 26 to Sat 30 April KING'S THEATRE



Mon 30 May to Sat 4 June KING'S THEATRE

WELCOME



DISCOVER
ISSUE 30 WINTER 2015

CONTACT US
We welcome all comments, questions, submissions and subscription enquiries. Please write to us at the National Library of Scotland address below or email discover@nls.uk

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Get up close to the horror of the bubonic plague – as well as a host of other contagious diseases – without risking your health

Catch it while you can

In our modern world, it's hard for us to comprehend the horror of an epidemic so severe it could wipe out a fifth of the urban population. That, however, is exactly what happened when the plague swept across Scotland 370 years ago.

The epidemic was among the most serious ever to strike the country, but certainly not the last.

From 11 December, Plague! the National Library of Scotland's winter exhibition will tell the story of how the country has coped with outbreaks of the Black Death, cholera, typhus, smallpox and other feared infectious diseases.

Our Rare Books Curator, Anette Hagan, has called upon our diverse collections of printed books, pamphlets, manuscripts, maps, photographs, illustrations and moving images to show the impact of contagious diseases from the 14th century through to the 20th century.

Elsewhere in this issue, we showcase our recent acquisition of delightful intricate pencil sketches from the mid-19th century by a German artist on his tour of Scotland.

The Library is also involved in publishing two new books of historical maps, one based on Glasgow through the ages and the other on the Scottish railway network.

And if you were in any doubt about the beauty of the printed word, take a look at our feature on beautiful books, including the products of the private presses of the late 19th century arts and crafts movement.

Enjoy your issue of *Discover* and all the events coming up at the Library over the winter.

Dr John Scally, National Librarian
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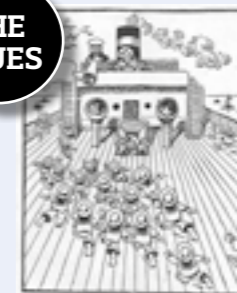


THE ANSWER IS IN OUR ARCHIVE...

What remedy for anaemia, advertised in a magazine for First World War soldiers, is still manufactured today?
Email your answer to discover@nls.uk or tweet us @natlibscot using the hashtag #natlibquizz



THE CLUES



WIN A BOOK!
A winner will be picked at random to win a copy of *Rax Me That Buik*, a lively book highlighting the Library's eclectic Scottish collections, by Iain Gordon Brown. To be in with a chance, send your answer by 31 January, 2016.

Lose yourself in our maps.
Discover David Livingstone.



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Discover the world in one place.

www.nls.uk

National Library of Scotland
Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba

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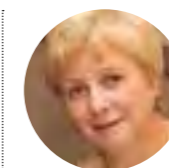


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Love later life

Age Scotland's aim is to help Scotland's people enjoy a better later life. We inspire and support everyone in Scotland to make the most of later life and build communities for all ages.

We help develop and mentor local groups and projects, creating places and activities that bring people together as a community. This, in turn, helps combat loneliness and isolation, and brings joy and a renewed sense of purpose into older people's lives and support to others who need it most.

We create vital, free information on a range of issues such as community care and benefits, to help older people make informed choices in their lives.

We also provide opportunities for older people to challenge disadvantage and unfairness - ensuring that their ideas for a better Scotland reach the ears of those who need to hear them.

However, almost half of our work would not be possible without people remembering Age Scotland in their wills. When you visit your solicitor, and you have taken care of your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift in your will to Age Scotland.

Find out more about us at www.agescotland.org.uk

**Age Scotland
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Causewayside House
160 Causewayside
Edinburgh
EH9 1PR**

Charity No: SC010100



NEWS

GAELIC MOD ANNOUNCEMENT + WINTER DEMENTIA EVENTS + STRATEGY UPDATE + CURATOR'S CHOICE + SCOTS SCRIEVER

From America to our archives

The Library has welcomed its first Fulbright scholar, who begins a six-month residency in our archives, working on his new book.

Kirk McAuley, a native of upstate New York and Associate Professor in the English Department at Washington State University, overcame stiff competition to secure a prestigious Fulbright scholarship to fund his research. The rigorous selection process began almost a year before Kirk's arrival, and was overseen by the Fulbright Commission and the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES).

"It's a great honour to be here as a Fulbright scholar, and a pleasure to be based in Scotland," said Kirk. "Obviously, there's the strength that the Library has in Scottish literature and culture, but it's also just a really wonderful environment. I've worked in other archives and this one is particularly pleasant and accommodating."

In what will be his second book – tentatively titled *Invasive Species: The Economy and Ecology of British Empire Writing* – Kirk will offer 'eco-critical' readings of select 18th and 19th century texts, supported by material in the Library's extensive archive.

The project explores resonances between these materials and contemporary ecological crises. "It looks at what these texts tell us about



● I will focus mainly on Scottish authors who composed their texts at the so-called edges of the British empire ●

KIRK MCAULEY (PICTURED ABOVE)

pressing environmental issues such as biological invasion, crop monoculture, and soil erosion and depletion, among others," Kirk said.

"I will focus mainly on Scottish authors who composed their texts at the so-called edges of the British Empire: the Caribbean, Africa, and the South Pacific. So, for example, one key figure is James Grainger, a Scottish physician who migrated to St Christopher in the West Indies and wrote a lengthy poem about the



cultivation of sugar cane. This particular piece is interesting because it both propagandises British investment in the sugar revolution and laments the accidental introduction of non-native species, including rats and monkeys."

The Library has entered an agreement to take in one Fulbright scholar a year for the next four years. It is hoped the programme will raise the Library's profile in the United States and strengthen links with academia.

Chris Taylor (pictured left), who is in charge of the Library's international collections, said: "We're honoured to be associated with Kirk's research. The hope is that scholars will go back and speak positively about their experience at the Library, and more generally about their time in Scotland."

Youth employment from the perspective of a young journalist

For young people today, finding employment is both difficult and frustrating, writes Morag Robertson. It's a problem that is recognised at government level as well as in organisations – and families – across Scotland.

In order to play its part in the wider youth employment strategy, and to introduce younger people to a library career, the Library asked young people how they viewed library work and a potential career. This revealed a stereotype: librarians read books, drink coffee and tell people to be quiet. It was clear that the Library had to engage with the stereotype. It commissioned Caitlin Delves, a young film maker, to make short films about the work of the Library. Library staff went out to career fairs and brought young people into the Library to see for themselves what happens. Staff also use commercial contracts to ask suppliers to offer work experience to young people. The Library has recognised the difficulties and is constantly implementing strategies to help boost employability.



Watch our videos at www.youtube.com/user/NLofScotland



Library Social

A programme of free events for people affected by dementia

From October 2015, the National Library of Scotland has been involved in developing and implementing a new programme of free events across four major heritage sites in Edinburgh for people affected by dementia.

Library Social is part of an initiative developed by the Library in partnership with National Galleries of Scotland, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and National Museums Scotland. Once a month, each site invites visitors with dementia, along with their friends, families and supporters, to attend a special session.

The programme started in October, with storyteller Allison Galbraith facilitating a session about the history of food and drink in Scotland, relating to the Library's 'Lifting the Lid' exhibition. In November, the theme was Good reads: Robert Louis Stevenson, John Buchan and other favourite writers, with participants encouraged to bring their own books to form an impromptu and alternative reading group.

The next Library Social event takes place on 11 December, with a look at Football: Scotland's dream team, 1945-1980, and future events will include a celebration of the poetry and songs of Robert Burns in January, a look at some of the Library's most beautiful books in February, and a journey through the world of comics in March.

Contact each venue for more details about their own events, and check www.nls.uk/events/workshops-and-tours for information about Library Social events.

TO BOOK
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@NLS.UK

RARE GAELIC 15TH CENTURY MANUSCRIPT IS TRANSFORMED

The unique volume is now fit to be digitised safely

A unique volume of Gaelic text from the National Library of Scotland's collections has undergone an extensive conservation treatment, repairing centuries of wear and damage.

The Glenmasan manuscript is a 15th century Gaelic manuscript, containing various Scottish Gaelic literary texts, and is considered particularly significant because of its age and rarity.

Although it had been identified as a priority for digitisation, the poor condition of the manuscript meant that it needed extensive repair and stabilisation work before this process could be carried out in order to preserve this item for future generations.

The manuscript was taken apart, cleaned, relaxed, flattened and repaired using



BEFORE

several techniques, some of which were created specifically for this project.

Arguably the most challenging aspect of the process was repairing the large holes near the spine, the edges of which were curled and discoloured.

The conservation treatment has allowed the manuscript to be digitised safely. It has also put the manuscript in a condition that is much more legible for future readers and can be handled safely without causing damage to the volume.



AFTER

Our Mod Fringe success

Online announcement

A major project to digitise hundreds of Gaelic items and make them available online has been completed by the National Library of Scotland in a move that will help to strengthen the language.

It has resulted in every known out-of-copyright Gaelic item in the National Library's collection being digitised. That amounts to some 600 newly digitised items dating back to the 17th century that will now be free to consult and download by anyone who visits the Library's website.

The new resource was launched at the Royal National Mod in Oban by the Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, Dr Alasdair Allan. This was part of the Library's participation in



Jennifer Giles (left) with a member of the public at the Library's information stand

the annual celebration of Gaelic linguistic and cultural heritage.

Two public events were held as part of the Mod Fringe and the Library had an information stand in the main venue for five days.

This gave an opportunity for Library staff to demonstrate what can be found in the new digital resource and to explain

how current Gaelic and local publications are added to the collections. People attending the Mod were told how they can help by informing staff of any local leaflets, newsletters, websites and information on social media so they can be collected for the national published archive.

An Comunn Gàidhealach recently donated its archive

to the Library, and the event gave the Library an opportunity to thank An Comunn for this very generous donation to the nation. A creative writing and Gaelic language skills workshop was also held as part of an ongoing partnership between the Library and the Moniach Mhor Creative Writing Centre.

Jennifer Giles, General Collections Curator, said: "These events, along with our information stand, gave the Library a wonderful opportunity to work in partnership with An Comunn Gàidhealach and Moniach Mhor, and also to raise the profile of our Gaelic collections within the Gaelic community. They also generated lots of excellent ideas for future collaborative work, and we thank both organisations for their help."

[The newly digitised Gaelic books can be found at bit.ly/gaelicbooks](http://bit.ly/gaelicbooks) and email j.giles@nls.uk with any information about Gaelic materials

We're going global

The National Library of Scotland is gearing up to put a third of its collection of 24 million items online in the next 10 years, as part of The Way Forward: 2015-2020 strategy.

The aim is to make the centuries of knowledge and learning held within the National Library available online to everyone, as part of the plan to develop into a global digital destination.

The process of digitising not only manuscripts and rare books, but maps, sound archives, and business information and databases, will be one of the biggest programmes of its kind anywhere in Europe. The Library's long term aim is to make as much material available online as possible.

"The internet has created a revolution in how people expect to be able to access information," said National Librarian, Dr John Scally. "We want them to be able to connect to our collections from wherever they are. We are committed to removing as many barriers as possible that prevent people

accessing our collections and services."

The Library already has a strong online presence and has digitised a number of its iconic items, including the last letter of Mary Queen of Scots, the Order for the massacre of Glencoe, the first books printed in Scotland in the 16th century, the first atlas of Scotland and First World War official photographs.

Traffic to its website has doubled in the past five years to more than three million visits annually. This new digital strategy will attract even more visitors. It will also mean that fragile items that can be damaged

through physical contact can be viewed safely with the original being preserved.

"At no time has it been easier to share the story of Scotland with a global audience," said Dr Scally.

"This new strategy seeks to harness technological developments to achieve the central aim of the National Library – to provide access to knowledge that is inspiring, accessible and relevant to anyone, whether living in or interested in Scotland."

More information is available at www.nls.uk/the-way-forward

A look inside the First World War

CURATOR'S CHOICE – ALISON METCALFE, MANUSCRIPTS CURATOR

A stunning album of photographs taken by a young officer during the First World War serves as an extraordinary account of the experience of participants of the campaign in East Africa. Alison Metcalfe took a look in more detail...

Dressed in uniform, cigarette in hand and gazing confidently at the camera, Lieutenant Archibald Clive Irvine is a typical young officer of the First World War. The son of a United Free Church minister from Aberdeen, Irvine joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) on graduating in medicine from the city's university in March 1917. His photograph albums, now part of the Library's archive and manuscript collections, contain around 450 snapshots covering Irvine's journey to war, scenes at training camp, weapons drills and posed close-ups of fellow officers and men. What makes the albums particularly noteworthy is that the backdrop against which Irvine took these photographs was not that of the mud and trenches of the Western Front, but of the campaign in East Africa.

Considered by many as something of a sideshow to events on the Western Front, in reality the impact of the East Africa campaign on the regions in which it was conducted was truly devastating. It is estimated that well in excess of 100,000 men lost their lives during the campaign, a figure similar to the number of Scots

thought to have died during the Great War as a whole. The bulk of these deaths came from Africans serving as carriers, many as conscripts, and one in five of the British East African Carrier Corps is thought to have perished.

Archival material relating to African participants in the campaign is particularly scarce. As such, Irvine's photographs serve as an extraordinary account of the experience of those serving as carriers, medical staff and soldiers. Detailed captions written by Irvine alongside his photographs provide additional context to the narrative.

Irvine arrived in Tanzania in summer 1917, and as part of the RAMC, his role was to provide medical care for members of the Carrier Corps. Irvine spent his first few months at casualty clearing stations, where his photographs show the application of dressings, queues of

Column crossing river, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, August 1918



Orderlies, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 1918



Lieutenant A. C. Irvine SS Durham Castle Cape Town June 1917

What makes the albums particularly noteworthy is that the backdrop against which Irvine took these photographs was the campaign in East Africa

carriers waiting for vaccinations, and the distribution of food and water. They also illustrate carriers going about their work, ferrying the injured on stretchers or transporting ammunition and supplies.

By early 1918, Irvine was attached to the 4/4 King's African Rifles, who were trailing German troops south through what was then Portuguese East Africa.

During this period there were many skirmishes with German forces in the area, and Irvine described his responsibility as 'chiefly walking 12-20 miles a day and looking after 800 odd porters' medical needs'.

Comments in the albums hint at the challenges posed by providing medical care on such an enormous scale. Disease

and lack of beds, medical supplies and rations are known to have contributed significantly to the high mortality rate of carriers.

When the war ended, Irvine settled in Chogoria, Kenya as a medical missionary. He continued his keen interest in photography as a means of recording the development of Chogoria into a thriving community with a hospital and schools.

Irvine's photographs have been digitised and are available on the International Mission Photography Archive: bit.ly/IrvineMission

Nou is a propitious moment fir the Scots language

MEET OUR SCOTS SCRIEVER – HAMISH MACDONALD

Gie'in the reenge o classical works that hae been owersert intae Scots, frae Gavin Douglas's translation o Virgil's *Aeneid* (1513), tae William Neill's *Tales Frae the Odyssey o Homer* (1992) and Matthew Fitt's *Hercules: Bampots and Heroes* (2005), possibly the idea o follae'in the gowden skein o the Scots language through the labyrinth o the National Library o Scotland's archive is an apposite yin. As the recently appyntit Scots Scriever such is the excitin, if somewhit dauntin, task ahead.

Nou is a propitious moment fir the Scots language, sittin as it does, eftir lang years o neglect, rightfully in Education Scotland's Curriculum fir Excellence. This has taken years o work bi writers, teachers, academics an enthusiasts o various airts wha hae grasped that an unnerstaunin o native speech an literature is a positive an healthy thing, leadin tae higher attainment in language skills an improvin self-esteem. Tae borrow frae a philosopher – Wittgenstein – wha wrocht wi the question o language mair than maist: 'The limits of my language means the limits of my world.'

It is fittin that the National Library o Scotland, wi its treasured archive, can contribute tae oor unnerstaunin o this beautiful, if occasionally misunderstood an aft times maligned language. The idea is tae no ainly reveal some o these treasures tae the public throu an online platform, but tae develop this rich resource tae be yaised in schuils in a way that kin complement the



Curriculum fir Excellence.

Follae'in a period o intense if enjoyable media scrutiny when the post wis announced – wha wid hae thoct that Scots wid've attracted articles in the *Financial Times* or a live interview oan Sky News – it wis guid tae settle in an focus oan vital aspects o the wark ahead. Eftir attendin Education Scotland's conference at Stirling in early September, then a cross party group oan culture at the Scottish Parliament wher Scots wis the sole focus, an introductory week at the Library, meetin wi staff, departments an curators o the various archives, meant gettin an elementary grasp o hou the Scriever's role micht progress in relation tae the Library. A further week in October helped refine these intial ideas an impressions. It is proposed that we create oor online Scots resource in an original an imaginative way. The idea is that the human voice, whether throu representations in print, audio or film, will demonstrate no jist interestin examples o Scots, but alsae show linguistic pathways that link past tae present. The proposed stertin pynt is the advent o print in Scotland throu the Chepman and Myllar press, Scotland's first producer o printed buiks, foondit in Ednbra in 1508, while the end pynt is the hear an nou. Let the journey begin.

The Scots Scriever post is funded for two years by Creative Scotland. It is based at the Library and aims to raise awareness, appreciation and use of Scots across the country.

THE BOOK BEAUTIFUL

James Mitchell writes about the elegant typefaces and imaginative layouts of two of the most beautiful books ever printed

A

rtistry was at the heart of the European invention of printing with moveable type from its beginnings in the mid-15th century. When looking at models for his own private press, the polymath William Morris (1834–1896) observed that the earliest printed books “were always beautiful” because of their elegant typefaces, imaginative layouts, and the incorporation of the finest raw materials.

Influenced by the British Arts and Crafts movement, private presses in the late 19th century were typically modest operations devoted to the production of small quantities of finely printed books. They rejected mechanised mass production and took as their inspiration the methodologies and high standards of 15th and early 16th century printers. By conceiving the book as a unified whole in which format, page design, type,

illustration, binding and paper all work together harmoniously, the people who worked with these presses designed books which were to be read slowly, appreciated and treasured. At their best, they produced works which transcended their medium to become works of art.

The Library’s ‘Book Beautiful’ display (November 26, 2015 – March 13, 2016) explores the influence that early printing had upon the aesthetic choices made by the founders of 19th and 20th century private presses. To illustrate these connections, choice private press books have been matched with some of the very earliest printed titles in the National Library of Scotland’s collections. One special pairing is at the heart of the display: the 1545 edition of Francesco Colonna’s *La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo* and William Morris’s 1896

ON DISPLAY

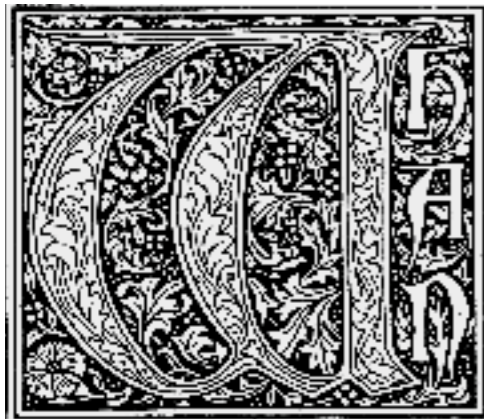
The images on the facing page (bottom left and top right) are from *La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo* by Francesco Colonna, (died 1527), Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1545. The images top left, middle and bottom right are from *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1896. **Photographer: Stewart Hardy**

edition of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* are, arguably, the two most beautiful books ever printed.

William Morris was a man of many gifts: he excelled as poet, writer, artist, craftsman and designer. He rejected industrialisation and mass production in furnishing, fabrics and the arts and was especially disheartened by the use of cheap materials and shoddy design in the book production of his day. He actively collected examples of early European printing and viewed incunabula (books printed before 1501) as the pinnacle of book design, in which fine materials, imaginative design, and skilled craftsmanship had created products of lasting beauty.

Continues overleaf





CHANCE. Aprile with his absyres sweete
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Alban Zephyrus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne



From previous page>

M

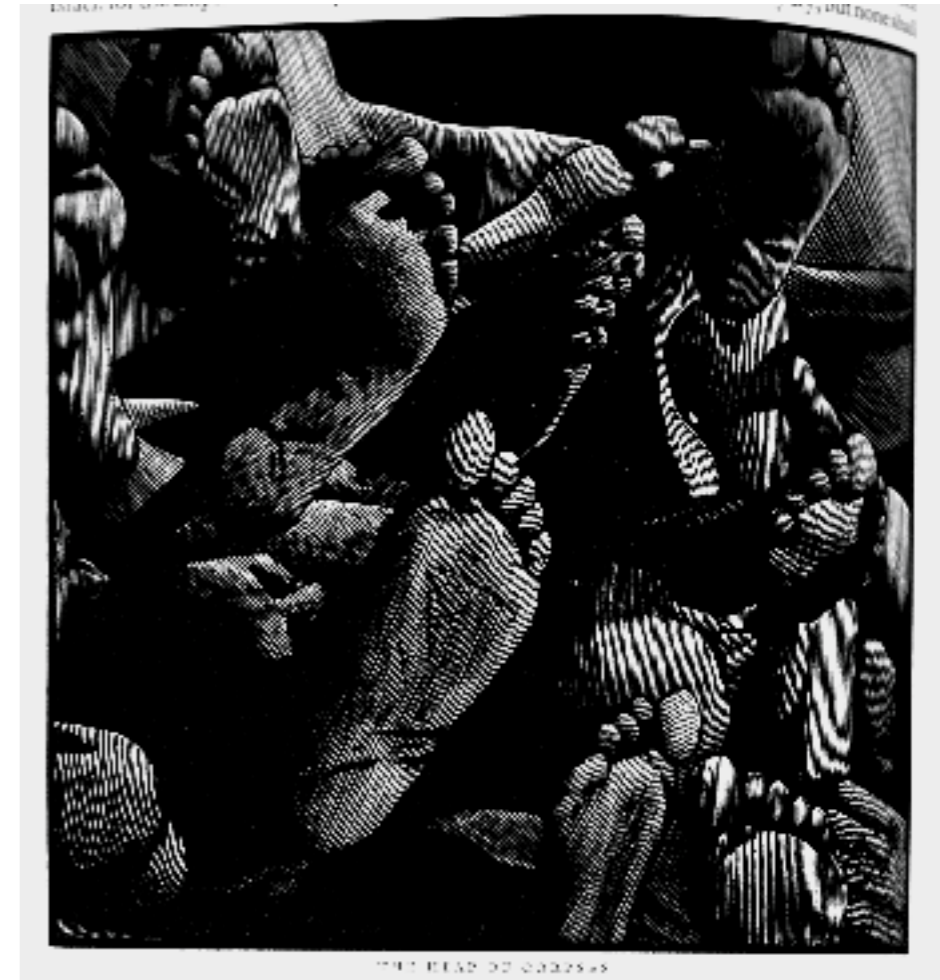
Morris established the Kelmscott Press at Hammersmith in 1891 as a counterforce to the perceived inadequacies of contemporary printing houses. He insisted on the basic principle that all the materials used at Kelmscott were to be of the finest quality and, if possible, handmade. The press began production in 1891 and produced 53 titles before closing seven years later shortly after Morris's death.

The 1896 edition of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* represents the pinnacle of the press's production. Morris's goal was to produce not just a book, but a work of art, achieving or surpassing the quality of early Renaissance books. It features 26 large initial letters designed by Morris and 87 woodcut illustrations designed by the artist Sir Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) who stated: "Indeed when the book is done, if we live to finish it, it will be like a pocket cathedral - so full of design and I think Morris the greatest master of ornament in the world".

La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo was first printed in Venice in 1499 and is widely considered to be the most beautiful of all pre-1501 printed books. Its authorship has been attributed to the Italian Dominican monk Francesco Colonna (died 1527). It was published by Aldus Manutius (1449-1515), the most celebrated scholar-printer of the Renaissance. After a successful career studying and teaching, Aldus turned to book production at the age of 40 with the goal of making available in printed form the classic texts of the ancient world.

He worked closely with the type cutter Francesco Griffo (1450-1518) who designed all of his major fonts. The typeface Griffo created for the *Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo* was greatly influenced by the proportions of letters on ancient Roman inscriptions and is a type especially noted for its quality and clarity.

The title can be poetically translated as the "struggle of love in a dream".



THE HOLY BIBLE (above), North Hatfield, Mass.: Pennyroyal Caxton Press, 1999 will also be included as part of 'The Book Beautiful' Treasures display. (Engraving by Barry Moser (born 1940)). Images from *The Holy Bible* are also shown opposite, top right and middle left. The other images on the facing page (top left and bottom left) are from *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, Hammersmith: Kelmscott Press, 1896, the *Biblia Pauperum* (middle right), Netherlands, ca. 1460 and *La Hypnerotomachia di Poliphilo* (bottom right) by Francesco Colonna, Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1545

The story is a complex, sometimes inscrutable, allegory in which the hero Poliphilo pursues his love Polia through a dreamscape. The story is made even harder to follow as it is written in a mixture of Italian, Latin and Greek together with original words invented by the author using Latin and Greek roots. The incorporation of Greek, Hebrew and Arabic words probably made the whole as unintelligible to ordinary 15th century Venetians as it is today.

The *Hypnerotomachia* is illustrated with over 160 outstanding woodcuts which are arranged in imaginative and sympathetic ways within the text: images seamlessly glide into settings of copy, many of which taper to a centre point or

adopt shapes like goblets and bells. The overall effect is gentle on the eye through the generous use of white space in the margins. Although the creator of the woodcuts is anonymous, scholars have associated their design with a number of famous artists such as Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), Gentile Bellini (1429-1507), or even the young Raphael (who would have been 16!).

The Library does not own a copy of the 1499 edition of the *Hypnerotomachia*. However, we have a copy of the much rarer 1545 second edition which was a page-for-page reprint by the heirs of the Aldine Press who used most of the original series of woodcuts from the 1499 edition.

● Scholars have associated their design with artists such as Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506), Gentile Bellini (1429-1507), or even the young Raphael ●

P.B.F.A.
BOOK FAIRS
IN SCOTLAND 2015 AND 2016

DECEMBER 2015
Sat 5
EDINBURGH
Radisson Blu Hotel,
80 High Street,
Royal Mile,
Edinburgh EH1 1TH
10am-5pm. £1

MARCH 2016
Fri 4 and Sat 5
EDINBURGH
PREMIER FAIR
(WITH ABA)
Radisson Blu Hotel,
80 High Street,
Royal Mile,
Edinburgh EH1 1TH
Fri 12pm-7pm
Sat 10am-5pm. Free

MAY 2016
Sat 28
SCOTTISH BORDERS
The Corn Exchange,
Market Square,
Melrose TD6 9PN
10am-5pm. £1

JUNE 2016
Sat 18
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Arthur Melville, *The Sapphire Sea*, 1892 © Private Collection.
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NEW EXHIBITION

1
PLAGUE MASK
(pictured right)
The long, beaked mask, filled with juniper, was worn by plague doctor George Rae as he went to the aid of the infected



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PLAGUE!
SCOTLAND'S OUTBREAK

For centuries Scots lived in terror at the threat of infectious diseases. *Bryan Christie* investigates the cultural history of contagion

Rats scurry from the tramp of a leather boot in a dark, fetid close of old Edinburgh in 1645. The white sheet at the window screams a warning to stay away. Those inside are in the grip of the plague. What little hope there is rests with the figure standing at the door. With the head of a bird and wrapped in a shell of

protective clothing, his appearance is almost as terrifying as the pestilence he is being well-paid to try to treat. Enter George Rae, the plague doctor. He has just taken over from John Paulitius, the town's first plague doctor, who died of "the pest" within weeks of tending the sick. Rae wears a long, beaked mask filled with juniper, a cloak

Continues overleaf



2

DOCTOR'S ORDERS
(pictured above)
A plague doctor traditionally wore a beaked mask filled with juniper and a cloak of waxed cloth

OUTBREAK

PLAGUE

1349-62

This was when Scotland suffered from the Black Death that had swept through continental Europe. It is thought to have entered Scotland by ship, carried by rat fleas. The rodents moved into people's homes. Around a third of the Scottish population lost their lives.

From previous page>

of waxed cloth over leather trousers, topped with a hat and leather gloves. Although "putrid air" is thought to be the cause of the infection, it is Rae's clothing which protects him from the flea bites that are the real origin of the bubonic plague.

The story of how Scotland coped with outbreaks of the Black Death, cholera, typhus, smallpox and other infectious diseases is told in the winter exhibition at the National Library of Scotland. *Plague!* is a cultural history of contagious diseases in Scotland that takes visitors on a 600-year journey.

At the heart of the exhibition is an area that resembles an old, cramped and cobbled Edinburgh close, with the dull light of a street lamp flickering above the entrance. It has been designed to create a claustrophobic and unsettling environment as visitors learn about the main epidemic diseases that ravaged through the land.

Plague! looks at the way governments tried to deal with epidemics through proclamations, laws and, later, public health regulations; at personal responses in letters and diaries; at literary reactions



It is easy for us to forget how unprotected people were and how fearful they felt

ANETTE HAGAN, RARE BOOKS CURATOR



in fiction and poetry; at newspaper and cheap print responses plus the role of religion, folklore and medical and scientific exploration of the diseases.

"It is easy for us to forget how unprotected people were and how fearful they felt against the spread of contagious diseases during a time of medical helplessness and ignorance about the causes of infection," said Anette Hagan, Rare Books curator, who has put the exhibition together. "We hope people who visit the exhibition will get a real sense of the terrifying impact of these diseases."

The plague of 1645-49 was among the most serious ever to strike Scotland and estimates suggest it may have killed around a fifth of the country's urban population. George Rae was not one of them. Unlike many of the people he tried to help, Rae survived. He spent his remaining years fighting the town

council to be paid what he had been promised. They had offered him a large salary but never expected him to live to be able to claim it.

In today's safer and more medically sophisticated world, a plague spread by rats may seem a throwback to the Middle Ages but the last outbreak to strike Scotland happened as recently as 1900. That was when bubonic plague was found to be responsible for a series of deaths in Glasgow, leading to calls for the disinfection of all trams, ferries and even all the coins in people's pockets. Sixteen people died before rat-catchers were deployed and other measures introduced to halt the spread of the disease. Contemporary newspaper accounts tell the story of the Glasgow outbreak.

While the plague takes centre stage

Continues overleaf>

OUTBREAK

PLAGUE

1568-69

Edinburgh and surrounding towns suffered. The first medical work by a Scotsman (Dr Gilbert Skeyne's book, displayed in the exhibition) was written in Scots to make it more accessible and help people combat the infection.

OUTBREAK
SMALLPOX

1823-31

There was a high death rate from this epidemic, particularly in poor and overcrowded towns, and it spread as far as Shetland. The vast majority of deaths were among infants and young children.



3
UNDER THE SKIN
(pictured right)
A skull ravaged by the effects of syphilis. Image: Otis Historical Archives National Museum of Health & Medicine/Wikimedia Commons

4
SPREAD THE WORD
(pictured right)
A proclamation from 1665 calling people to observe a fast throughout Scotland. Churches were advised 'to exhort all their parishioners to a sober and devout performance of the fast and humiliation'

From previous page>

in the exhibition, the supporting cast is every bit as frightening being made up of cholera, typhus, tuberculosis, syphilis, smallpox and influenza. One of the strengths of the exhibition comes from case studies and reports from various parts of Scotland – Haddington, Wick, Burntisland, Stornoway, Coldstream and Paisley among many others – on the impact of deadly infections on the local population. There are also accounts of those affected by or who lived through epidemics, including Samuel Pepys, George Orwell and the Perth poet, William Soutar.

Plague! provides visitors with the opportunity to view two unique items from the Library's collections. One of these is an anthology of poetry compiled by George Bannatyne in 1568, as he hid away in a country retreat to try to avoid the outbreak of plague that affected Edinburgh at that time. It contains some of the best works of Scotland's most important mediaeval poets and includes Robert Henryson's *Ane Prayer for the Pest*. The other is *Ane breve descriptioun of the pest* by Gilbert Skeyne, Medicinar to His Majesty James I. This was written in Scots and published in 1568 and is the first medical text printed in Scotland. The Library holds the only known copy.

The Science Museum in London, the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh,

the National Museum of Scotland and the Hunterian Museum at the University of Glasgow are among a number of partners who have agreed to loan items for the exhibition. These include a specimen of skin affected by smallpox; a skull showing the classic symptoms of syphilis; a hand in a glass jar from an individual who died from leprosy and various medical items, such as a gauge to measure smallpox pustules and a field-testing kit for typhoid. A stuffed black rat will also feature to represent one of the principal sources of plague infection.

Most of the exhibits will come from the Library's diverse collections to show the impact of contagious diseases on Scotland up to the foundation of the National Health Service in 1948.

A major feature of the exhibition relates to how society responded to the threat. Over the centuries, governments and town councils passed acts and

bye-laws and published proclamations to try to prevent epidemics from spreading. These included enforcing quarantine arrangements for incoming ships and sailors to burning clothes and establishing hospitals outside town boundaries. Later, public health measures were introduced, such as the creation of reservoirs to ensure a sufficient supply of clean drinking water.

In the absence of medical knowledge, plague in the past was seen as God's judgement on sinners and the "cure" was to repent and mend one's ways. One of the most unusual exhibits is a penitent's spiked belt, complete with metal teeth, that would have been strapped to the wearer's waist to inflict pain. These devices were worn during times of plague as acts of repentance.

"The oldest item in the exhibition dates from the 14th century and we take things right through to the 20th



century," said Anette. "There are some fascinating exhibits which tell amazing stories of the risk from diseases whose causes people did not know, which they could not prevent and had no way of curing."

The exhibition ends with a reminder that, although society is a lot safer today, infectious diseases have not gone away. Popular modern responses are not so different from those in times past: zombies – much loved by movie-makers and graphic novel writers – are today's expression of the primal fear of unconquerable evil.

"What we are dealing with here is the past," said Anette "but it's clear from modern-day films and books that the fear of pandemics still fires the imagination. Let us hope that these accounts remain in the realm of fiction as no one would want to return to the fear of untreatable epidemics of the past."



OUTBREAK
TYPHUS

1836-40

Louse-borne typhus fever spread throughout Scotland in these years. Typhus thrives in conditions of poverty and overcrowding. Admissions for typhus fever at Glasgow Royal Infirmary quadrupled during 1835-37, from 1360 to 5390.



German artist Julius Jacob the elder visited Scotland in 1846 and his drawings allow us to step back in time, writes Olive Geddes

THE SKETCH BOOK

'Pencil sketches to commemorate my journey to Scotland in the summer and autumn of 1846', Julius Jacob the elder [1811-1882]

Tourism was already well-established when German artist Julius Jacob arrived in Scotland in the summer of 1846. The advent of the railways from the late 1830s had made travel easier and faster and, although a visit to Scotland was still an adventure, guides and organised excursions were available and there were standard tourist routes.

A century earlier, Scotland had attracted few visitors. To most people outside the country, it was 'remote as the moon', not a place to visit for pleasure. Communications were primitive and travel over land could be difficult, on horseback or foot. Those who did come tended to be on business, but they returned to tell of a mountainous and barren, if fascinating, country.

After the Jacobite Risings of 1715 and 1745, the British Government built garrisons in the Highlands, including Fort William and Fort George. These fortifications were connected to the south by more

than 1,000 miles of new roads and bridges; many built by Marshal Wade. The death of Rob Roy and the arrest of his sons also helped end lawlessness in the Highlands. Elsewhere, the coming of Turnpike Trusts resulted in more new roads and upgrading of others. With a more peaceful land, better roads and faster travel, more pleasure-seekers were attracted to Scotland.

TEMPTING THE INTREPID
By the 1780s, travelling in Scotland was becoming fashionable. The once-forbidding mountains now fascinated and inspired. They might still be frightening, but they were romantic and their sheer magnificence was thrilling. This change in attitude came about because of a growing interest in raw nature and the noble savage as objects of study for educated gentlemen of taste. Published accounts of tours in Scotland made by celebrities such as Samuel Johnson added to the attraction.

With the turmoil in Europe caused by the French Revolution, much of the continent was effectively closed for travel until Napoleon's defeat in 1815. With the days of the European Grand Tour numbered, British travellers turned to their own country to satisfy their wanderlust, exploring the remoter areas, including Scotland.



CALTON HILL
(pictured top)
This finely detailed depiction of Edinburgh from Calton Hill is one of the highlights



Sir Walter Scott's romantic poem of 1810 about clan rivalry, 'The Lady of the Lake', added to the mystery and allure of Scotland for the connoisseur tourist.

Scotland's popularity as a destination was encouraged by George IV's visit of 1822. Stage-managed by Sir Walter Scott, this further promoted the romanticised, tartan-strewn image of Scotland in his novels. Queen Victoria's visit to Scotland in 1842 was the first of what was to become an annual event, giving the country the royal stamp of approval as a holiday destination.

It was against this background that professional artist Julius Jacob made his extended visit to Scotland. Jacob was born in Berlin in 1811 and is known for his society

portraits and landscapes. He lived in London between 1844 and 1855 and it is during this period that he made an extended visit to Scotland, recording scenes from his travels in a small oblong notebook recently added to the Library's Archives and Manuscript Collections with generous support from the Graham Brown Fund.

Although the notebook is entitled *'Pencil sketches to commemorate my journey to Scotland in the summer and autumn of 1846'*, the latest sketches are dated February 1847.

The sketchbook opens in mid-August with a panorama of the Isle of Arran viewed from the sea. Jacob returned to the island in September. This time he stepped ashore and there are sketches of



LOCH LOMOND
(pictured above)
Jacob's depiction captured the village of Luss and the loch's many islands. A present-day view can be recreated from the shoulder of Blenn Dubh on a walk known as the Glen Striddle Horseshoe

Brodict Bay and Castle, Corrie and Lamlash, as well as the Black Glen, Goat Fell and Glen Sannox.

Jacob first saw the mainland from the Clyde and the views are interrupted by Greenock's smoking chimneys.

The Trossachs inspired Jacob and Loch Lomond features in several drawings. There are also sketches of Loch Awe, Inverary and Loch Etive. He also visited Fingal's Cave on Staffa, a popular tourist destination since Joseph Banks' account of his visit appeared in Pennant's *Tour in Scotland* of 1772.

DRAMATIC SCENES

Jacob was fascinated by dramatic scenery and his pencil drawings provide a topographical record of the time. Ben Nevis

appears several times, as do the spectacular falls at Invermoriston. Important buildings are depicted with sketches of Stirling Castle, Fort Augustus and Dryburgh Abbey.

But the lasting impression is of the extraordinarily detailed drawings of Edinburgh in February 1847. Soldiers can be seen drilling on the Castle Esplanade and tiny figures ascend the Mound.

This charming volume draws to a close with a series of drawings, from Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle to panoramic views across the city, making a fitting end to a remarkably evocative record.

Q Julius Jacob's sketchbook is Acc.13646.

The National Library of Scotland is home to many maps, old and new. The Library has teamed up with Birlinn to showcase some of them in two new books – *Glasgow: Mapping the City* and *The Railway Atlas of Scotland*. Here, the authors take us on their writing journeys...

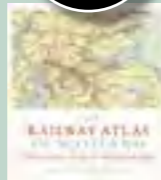
OFF THE SCALE

THE RAILWAY ATLAS OF SCOTLAND
DAVID SPAVEN
PRINCIPAL AT DELTIX
TRANSPORT CONSULTING

I was brought up in a 'maps family' and have spent my working life in and around the rail industry, but not until two and a half years ago did I dream that I would produce the first historical railway atlas of Scotland. I came late to writing books – although many hundreds of thousands of words had been written by me as a

railway manager and consultant – but my baptism into the world of publishing proved to be life-changing. In 2011, Times Books published *Mapping the Railways*, co-written by established railway author Julian Holland and myself – and it turned out to be a phenomenal success. It became clear that lots of people across Britain are fascinated by maps, over and above the long-known public enthusiasm for railways.

So, in 2013, my thoughts turned to Scotland's railways and maps. During early exploration of the



PRICE: £30
The Railway Atlas of Scotland, Two Hundred Years of History in Maps is available to buy now from www.birlinn.co.uk/Railway-Atlas-of-Scotland.html

book concept, I was surprised to find no evidence that a specialist railway atlas had ever been produced focusing on the territory north of the Border – so *The Railway Atlas of Scotland* is designed as a work of education, enjoyment and reference, and should appeal to readers who are interested in railways and maps in particular, or by the geography and history of the country in general.

I have many favourite maps within the atlas, but if forced to choose one, I would select the clean, crisp and colourful map of the North British Railway network in 1896 (shown on the facing page, right) – one of many produced by the famous Edinburgh mapmaking company, John Bartholomew.

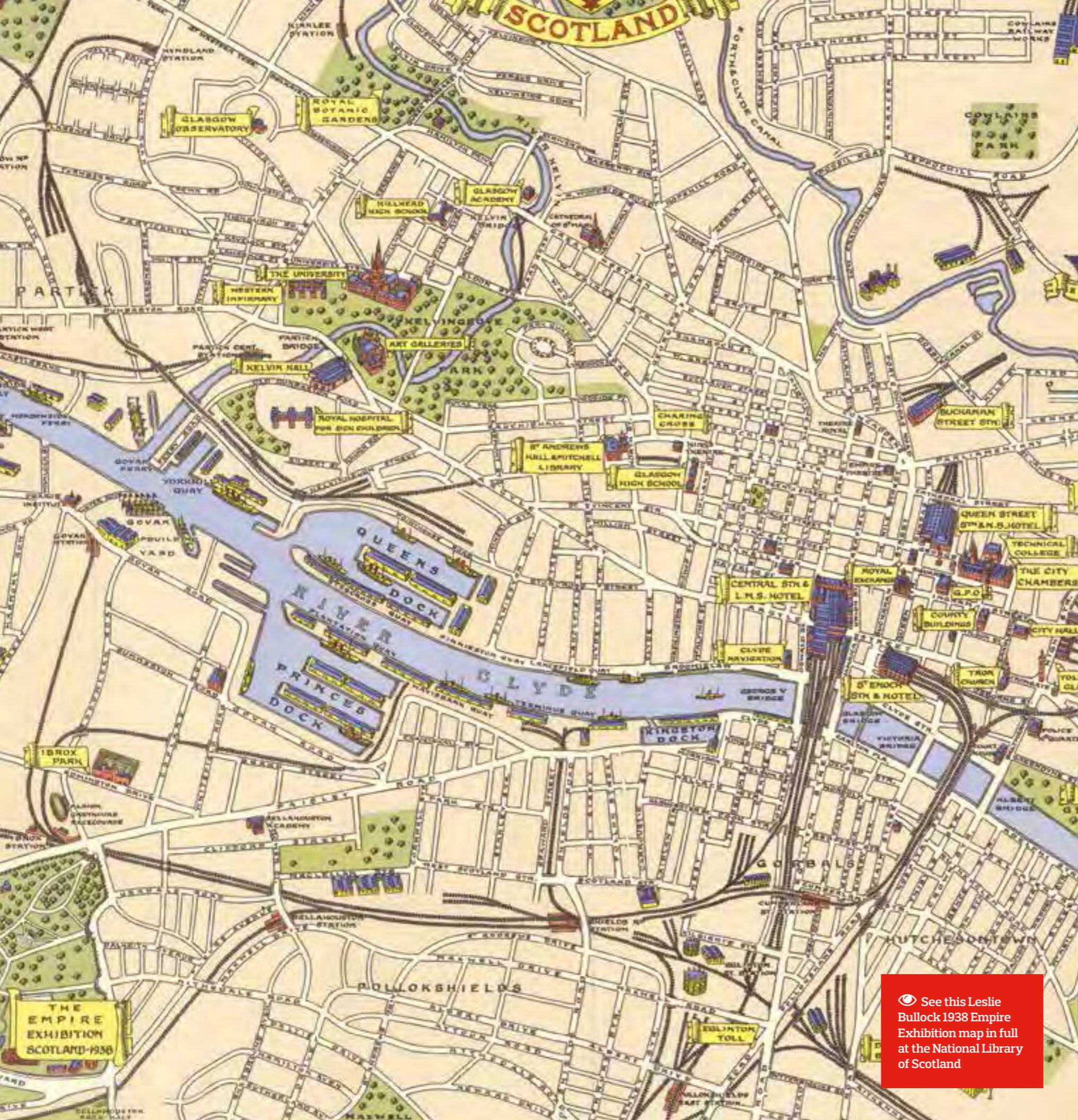
My research initially took six months – primarily in the wonderful Maps Reading Room of the National Library of Scotland, on Causewayside in Edinburgh – but several more months were required to update material when it was decided to delay publication from 2014 to autumn 2015, suitably soon after the opening of the Borders Railway. This is the longest railway to be built in Scotland since the Fort William–Mallaig line in 1901 – so it's a very good time to be surveying 200 years of railway history in maps.

Continues overleaf>



Browse the National Library of Scotland's extensive collection of digitised maps online at maps.nls.uk





From previous page>

GLASGOW: MAPPING THE CITY
JOHN MOORE
 COLLECTIONS MANAGER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW LIBRARY

I have lived with maps all my life. My father's whole working career was with the Ordnance Survey and I grew up just around the corner from W. & A.K. Johnston's Edina Works. Since 1999, I have been in charge of the Map Collection at the Library of the University of Glasgow and, being a keen hill-walker, I use maps on a very regular basis in my leisure hours.

My interest in Glasgow maps was first sparked by a conversation with Margaret Wilkes, formerly Head of Maps at the National Library of Scotland, after completing a bibliography on the history of Scots cartography. From this initial idea, I went on to complete post-graduate research on the city's maps up to 1865.

When Birlinn asked me to write this book, I saw it as an opportunity to continue my investigations but, in truth, I also found it a little frightening to follow in the footsteps of Chris Fleet and Daniel MacCannell's excellent work on Edinburgh maps.

Fortunately, when I was approached, some of the material was already at hand for me to build



PRICE: £30
Glasgow: Mapping the City is available to buy now from www.birlinn.co.uk/Glasgow-Mapping-the-City.html

on but I knew I wanted to try and extend the coverage to more than just the city itself. I also wanted to try and include as many local sources as possible to extend the readers' awareness of what is available on their doorstep. It was a tight schedule and it took a little more than a year to have the work completed.

While many cities have a far longer heritage of mapping associated with their development and growth, the story of the cartography of Glasgow is fascinating, inspiring and distinctly unique.

The opportunity to cover a more extended period allowed me to introduce many of the maps created when Glasgow was 'Second City of the Empire'. Several of these reflect the municipal confidence of the period. I hope that those who are interested in the city will find something of interest and pride in the text, for it reflects the highs and lows of the Glasgow story.

Every map has something unique about it and there will be a different appeal to different folk. My own favourites almost straddle the whole period, for they include John McArthur's 1778 plan, when Glasgow was still very much a small city on the threshold of growth, and Leslie Bullock's colourful pictorial plan of the city produced for the 1938 Empire Exhibition.



ENTER OUR COMPETITION TO WIN A COPY!

We've teamed up with Birlinn to offer six lucky readers the chance to win a copy of either *Glasgow: Mapping the City* or *The Railway Atlas of Scotland*. To enter this competition, all you have to do is answer the question below, fill out the coupon (right) and post in an envelope marked 'Discover Competition' to Connect Publications, Studio 2001, Mile End, Paisley, PA1 1JS or email your answer, name and address to lauren@connectmedia.cc by 31 January 2016. Don't forget to include which book you'd like to receive if you are a winner.

QUESTION: In which year did the Kilmarnock and Troon Railway - the first public railway to be established in Scotland by Act of Parliament - open?

Your Answer:

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Glasgow: Mapping the City or *The Railway Atlas of Scotland*



See this Leslie Bullock 1938 Empire Exhibition map in full at the National Library of Scotland

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NAT KARTA

PULP FICTION

An overnight success, Nat Karta was writing pulp fiction faster than he could sell it, writes *Andrew Martin*

DAMES AND DOLLARS

Glasgow's Bath Street might not seem the natural home of hard-boiled fiction, but in the late 1940s and early 1950s it housed the office of Muir-Watson, publishers who specialised in faux American thrillers.

Genuine American magazines and pulp fiction were practically unobtainable then, so publishers like John Watson, a former RAF pilot and Glasgow Herald journalist, stepped in with a series of surprisingly racy titles.

Watson created the Nat Karta persona in 1949 when he wrote *The Merry Virgin*.

The success was immediate – soon his distributors wanted 50,000 copies of every new title per month. To keep up with the demand, other writers, including Norman Lazenby, shared being Nat Karta.

Lazenby was responsible for *A Guy Named Judas*.

In 1952, Watson sold the Karta name, along with his other 'authors', Hans Vogel and Hyman Zoré, to a London imprint which continued to churn new copies out with the assistance of Lazenby and other authors.

Not long after Watson sold the name there was a spate of destruction orders by local

authorities claiming the titles were a 'corrupting influence'.

Fines and even prison sentences were given to some publishers and as fewer people wanted to be seen handling this type of print, the Nat Karta titles became harder to find.

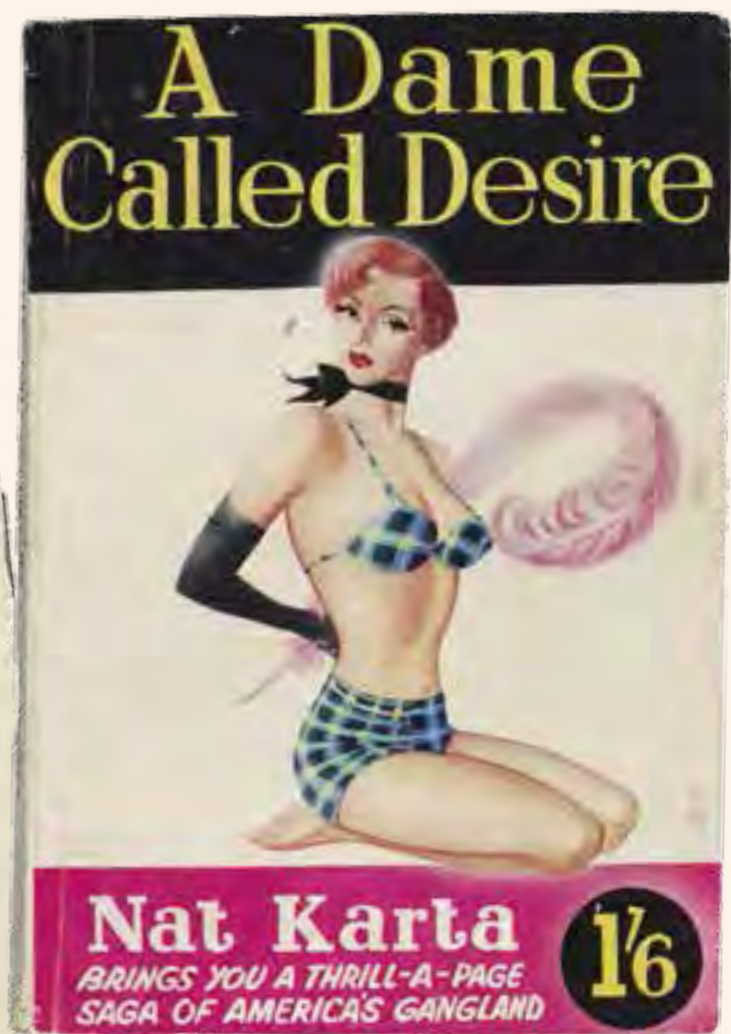
Most of these titles failed to make it into the National Library of Scotland at the time... today these rare items cost rather more than 1/6.

THE REAL NAT KARTA

(pictured above right)
 Nat Karta was the persona of John Watson, a former RAF pilot and journalist



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databases. Many of these resources are available on the internet to customers resident in Scotland, although additional conditions may apply in line with our licence agreements.

Your first port of call to access the Library's licensed digital collections is <https://auth.nls.uk/ldc>

Additionally, recent legislation has given the Library and the other five legal-deposit libraries in the UK the legal right to collect, store and preserve the nation's memory in the digital age. There will be a mixture of electronic content available including websites in the UK domain web archive, and articles/chapters from e-books and e-journals. This material can be viewed on Library computers within the reading rooms if you are a registered user.

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The Visitor Centre at the George IV Bridge building features an exhibition space, a shop selling books, stationery and gift items, a café and PC terminals with access to Library catalogues and other digital facilities.

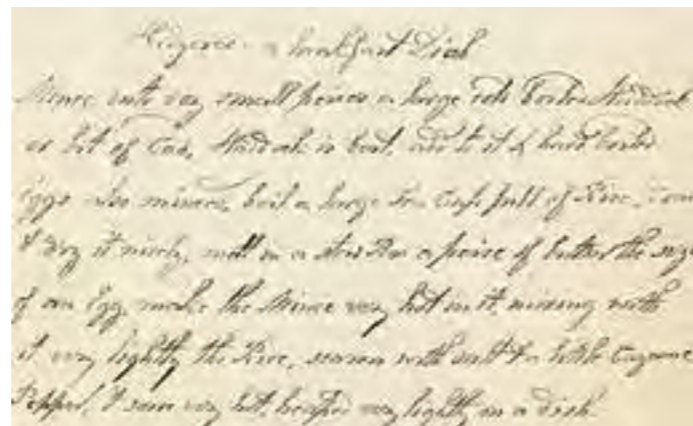
IN FOCUS

Join us for breakfast

The National Library of Scotland is celebrating the Year of Food and Drink Scotland 2015 by publishing historical recipes from our archives. A new recipe has been published on the Library website every month and October's is 'Kedgerie – a breakfast dish'.

Recipe: Mince into very small pieces a large, cold-boiled haddock or bit of cod, haddock is best. Add to it four hard-boiled eggs, also minced. Boil a large tea cup full of rice, drain and dry it nicely, melt in a stew pan a piece of butter the size of an egg. Make the mince very hot in it, mixing with it very lightly the rice, season with salt and a little cayenne pepper and serve very hot, heaped very lightly on a dish.

For more recipes visit www.nls.uk/year-of-food-and-drink



With our online digital archive, you can access The Scotsman from 1817 through to 1950

Surf Scotland via The Scotsman



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THE SCOTSMAN DIGITAL ARCHIVE

For the past 200 years The Scotsman newspaper has played a key role in forming opinion and reporting on events, both internationally and in Scotland. For members of the Library, The Scotsman Digital Archive provides full access to all the pages of the newspaper from 1817 through to 1950. The archive provides reporting, information and analysis of world events in a time of extraordinary change, from the death of the author and publisher Sir Walter Scott, the Tay Bridge disaster, the US stock market crash and both World Wars. The

Scotsman Digital Archive is an ideal research tool for those researching Scotland and the impact that local and global events had on the nation and its people. <http://bit.ly/1MUFzhl>

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Karen Lury, professor of film and television studies at the University of Glasgow, was mesmerised by the Library's Moving Image Archive

Moving pictures

A university project, which turned into a BBC documentary series, led Karen Lury deep into our Moving Image Archive where she uncovered a host of treasures

Karen is a professor of film and television studies at the University of Glasgow and a suggestion from her to the BBC led to the programme Scotland's Home Movies, first broadcast in August 2015.

This provides a nostalgic look at home movie making in Scotland. Here, Karen talks about some of the fascinating home movies she uncovered in the National Library of Scotland's extensive Moving Image Archive...

"Some of the films are incredibly beautiful and the talent of both the filmmakers and sometimes the wee, young actors is just gobsmacking. One film we found in the archive was of the Vietnamese boat refugees from the early 1980s. An uncanny moment is when

there is this beautiful little Vietnamese girl (pictured below) in a sunny garden in the south of Scotland and she's singing 'I'm only a poor little sparrow' and 'When Santa got stuck down the chimney', with an incredibly strong accent! She's probably barely learned to speak in English but she's doing this song with the strongest Scottish accent you can imagine.

"Some of the films have these moments where you think 'oh, that was real history and how it happened and how it was experienced by ordinary people'. We all know about kings and queens and wars and politics but actually, decisions people make at a bigger level just crop up in people's everyday lives, and that's how people change their behaviour.



That's how people looked out for other people and how they wanted to present themselves to their family. It's that kind of information you get from those films that you can't get anywhere else.

"It was also interesting to witness the subtle differences in the way people's bodies were.

"Looking at films from holiday camps in the 1950s, there were very few overweight people. There were also big extremes in the weather because people would tend to film on a beautiful sunny day or during a big snowfall. There are apparently no rainy days in November (well, of course, we know that there are, it's just that the films present a world in which these are not captured!).

● **Accessing the Moving Image Archive really did change the way I thought about what film is** ●

PROFESSOR KAREN LURY

"For me as a film person, accessing the Moving Image Archive really did change the way I thought about what film is and how I teach film. In terms of the actual material, quality of film and how you look after film and how you might interpret it, all of those things suddenly made me realise that I've got a very narrow view of how you go about understanding film. For my job, in some senses, I think it had a really revolutionary impact."

It was the thriller that 'amused' Scots author John Buchan as he lay ill in bed soon after the outbreak of the First World War. More than a century later, his best-known novel remains an enthralling read, writes Andrew Martin

Early steps

John Buchan (1875-1940) had been a published writer for nearly 20 years when, in 1914, he started the novel which would make his name. The country was at war, and he found the writing of his slim spy thriller a welcome distraction from illness and the world crisis. He wrote to his publisher "I have amused myself in bed writing a shocker ... It has amused me to write, but whether it will amuse you to read is another matter." The result - *The Thirty-Nine Steps* - proved an immediate success. Published first as a serial in the US and Britain in the summer of 1915, the book edition came out in October, and over 25,000 copies were sold in the first three months.



● **Buchan's original plot does not feature the Forth Rail Bridge, which arrived in 1935, courtesy of Alfred Hitchcock** ●

Sales of 1,000 were then considered a success for novels. It has remained in print ever since.

The book is a contemporary thriller set very precisely in a few weeks during May and June 1914, before the outbreak of war. The hero is Richard Hannay, fresh from the Empire. A man is killed in his London flat, and he heads off to Scotland pursued by spies.

The 10 chapters of the novel remain as fast-paced and exciting as ever a century on, though Buchan's original plot does not feature a cool blonde heroine or the Forth Rail Bridge, which arrived in 1935, courtesy of Alfred Hitchcock.

Buchan went on to write better novels - with and without Hannay - but the original tale of a man pursued by dark forces remains his most famous and has been hugely influential.

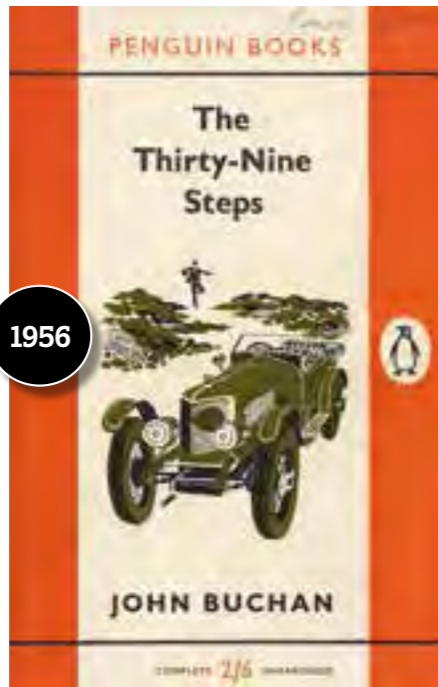
What thriller on page or upon the movie screen would be complete without an innocent hero on the run?

We have the genius of Buchan to thank for that.

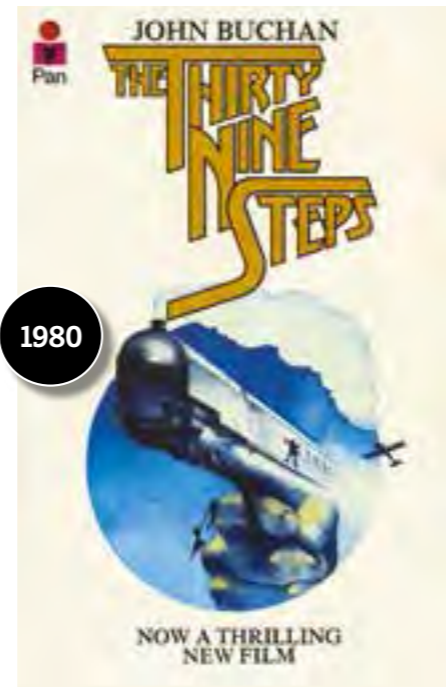
One hundred years on and Richard Hannay still keeps running - off the page and into our imagination.



1949



1956



1980

Safe Delivery

A History of Scottish Midwives

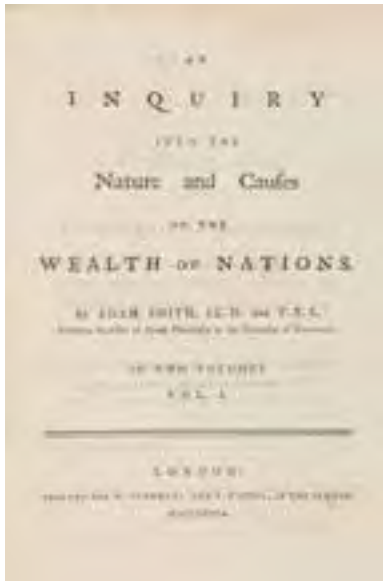


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