

The magazine of the National Library of Scotland

Discover

FREE

THE TIES THAT BIND US

Professor David Olusoga delves into the Library's collections for his new TV series, 'Union' – and tells us why we can't shy away from facing "shameful" chapters in history



**National Library
of Scotland**

Leabharlann Nàiseanta
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No.49 Winter 2023



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Scottish Handwriting, 1500-1700, a self-help pack (NRS and SRA)
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Celebrating our role in TV historian's BBC series 'Union'

Professor David Olusoga filmed in the Library while researching his new show

We were thrilled to welcome the Bafta-winning historian, writer and broadcaster Professor David Olusoga to the Library last year and support his research for his latest BBC TV series, 'Union'. He kindly agreed to tell 'Discover' all about the items from our collections that he examined during his time with us, and discussed how the four hour-long episodes of his series delve into the past and present of our Union of four nations.

Professor Olusoga, author of the award-winning book 'Black and British: A Forgotten History' also tells us that history is not a "safe space" populated only by heroes and that we should learn from mistakes of the past.

During his visit to our George IV Bridge building, he examined our copy of Union Flag designs presented to James VI/I and a ledger of investors to the ill-fated Darien scheme, the failure of which helped bring about the Act of Union of 1707.

Read all about his research with us and 'Union' on pages 10–13.

Elsewhere, talented young band Duan tell us about how they are bringing traditional Gaelic music to new audiences and why it is important to preserve and grow the language.

The band performed at the Library for the opening of our first dual-language exhibition, 'Sgeul | Story', and their set was magical. Learn more on pages 18–21.

We also look at the story of mapmaker Joan Blaeu and his famous 'Atlas Maior', published in the 1660s. It was the first of its kind and the most expensive book money could buy at the time (pages 26–29). Blaeu's maps of Scotland can be viewed in our exhibition, 'Treasures of the National Library of Scotland'.

Our 'Treasures' exhibition also now has one of the Hyakumantō Darani on display, and we look at this fascinating item in more detail on pages 14–17.

The Hyakumantō Darani, also known as the 'One Million Pagodas and Darani Prayers', were a million miniature wooden pagodas containing scrolls with Buddhist prayers, called darani.

They were commissioned by the Empress Shōtoku in AD 764 following the suppression of a rebellion. The pagodas and scrolls are thought to be a form of atonement for the deaths caused by the rebellion.

The scrolls are among the earliest known printed works and our scroll is the oldest printed item in our collections.

Sometimes the most battered books in our collections have the most interesting provenance. That is certainly the case with one recent acquisition, a pocket Bible once owned by radical martyr John Baird, a key figure of the Radical War of 1820. Read his story, penned by Rare Books Curator Graham Hogg, on pages 22–25.

We're also happy to unveil our new Scots Scriever and Gàidhlig Storymaker (pages 8–9) and tell you about our annual appeal – supported by Sir Ian Rankin – to help catalogue and curate the archives of Alasdair Gray, George Mackay Brown and James Kelman. We recently acquired more material to add to these archives, and you can help us make these fascinating documents available to the public as soon as possible (pages 6–7).

We also have information about our exhibitions (pages 30–31) and ideas for Christmas gifts from our Library Shop (page 33).

I hope you enjoy these stories.

Amina Shah
National Librarian and Chief Executive



Sometimes the most battered books in our collections have the most interesting provenance

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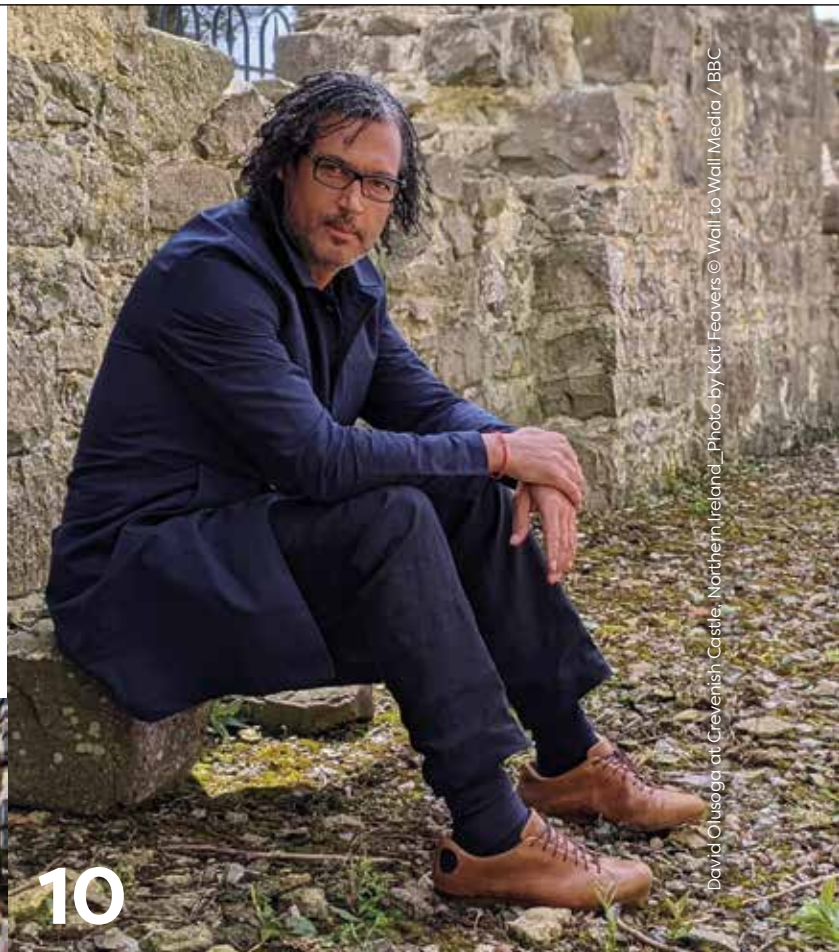
Discover more about Joan Blaeu's masterpiece, the 'Atlas Maior', and the Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, which is on display in our 'Treasures of the National Library of Scotland' exhibition.

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Find out what's on with this preview of our exhibitions, including 'Sgeul | Story'.

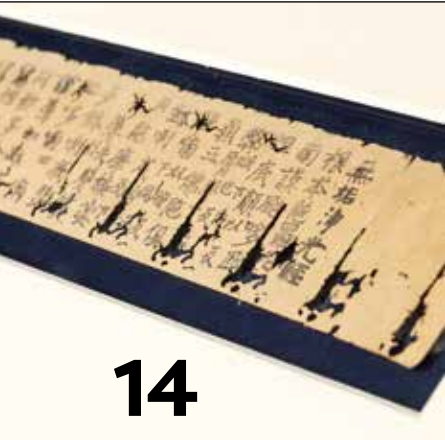
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David Olusoga at Grevenish Castle, Northern Ireland. Photo by Kat Feavers © Wall to Wall Media / BBC

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Map Curator



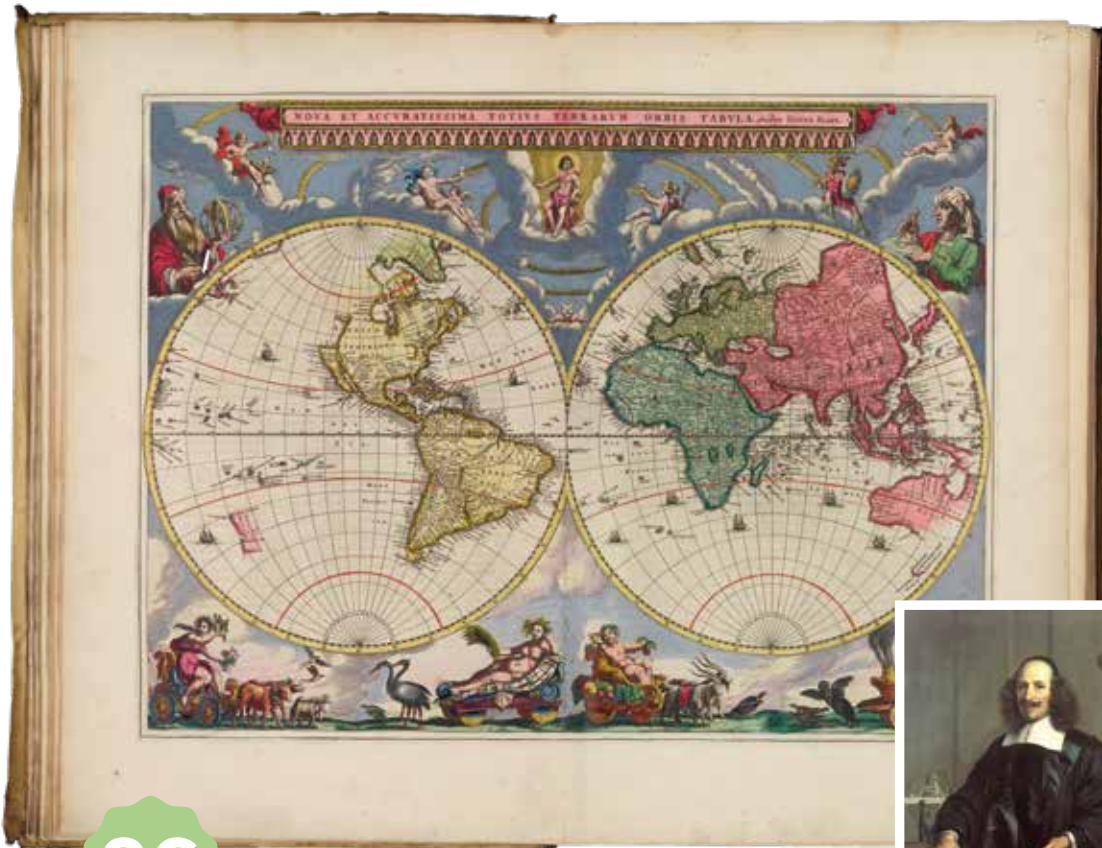
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Helping Scotland's writers to be an open book

Alasdair Gray, James Kelman and George Mackay Brown – three of Scotland's greatest modern writers, whose work has thrilled readers and influenced new generations of authors, artists, playwrights and poets. We have their archives, which provide unique insight into their real lives as well as their literary genius, through their personal papers, diaries, doodles, lists and letters.

We recently acquired more of their archival material for the national collections, so the items inside remain in the receptacles in which they arrived, including cardboard folders, cardboard boxes and disintegrating plastic bags. To make these archives available to the public, such as in our reading rooms or exhibitions, we have to put in many hours of meticulous cataloguing and curatorial work. And this is where you can help.

We are appealing for your support to help fund the cataloguing and curation of these precious papers – many of which have not been seen by anyone other than the authors – and make them available to the public.

Manuscripts Curator Dr Colin McIlroy said: “A writer's archive gives us insight into their lives and creative process beyond what we read in their books – it's the story behind the stories.

“Writers can reveal a lot about themselves in their diaries and papers. Alasdair Gray, for example, has the ability to transfer whatever is in his mind on to the page. His archive also includes original artwork

for 'Lanark', one of the most influential novels of the 20th century. We want people to see these archives and others like them, and discover more about the writers themselves.

“There is something to appeal to everyone in archives, from letters to unpublished works and early drafts of books. There are discoveries to be made. You can see drafts with notes around the margins giving suggestions to the printers, and back and forth correspondence with editors over changes. You may know the final book, but here's the director's cut, arguably the original intention. You can see a book in a new way.”

Dr McIlroy added: “We acquire these archives for the Scottish people and to preserve them for the nation. It's so important that we catalogue these wonderful collections so that we can learn what is there and make them available to the public.

“These collections are an integral part of Scottish culture. They deal with recent and contemporary events, reflecting on life in Scotland and beyond. Archives such as these also influence other writers. Kelman showed new generations they could write in their own voice, while Sir Ian Rankin was inspired by Muriel Spark's work before going on to write what is probably the best-selling Scottish crime series in Rebus.”

Our appeal has been backed by Rankin, who donated his own archive to the Library in 2019 and funded a post to catalogue its contents, to ensure the items were available at our reading rooms as soon as possible. This donation also enabled us to curate a display last year relating to Rankin's life and work, 'The Rankin Files'.

He said: “Cataloguing is a large (and largely invisible) job that remains absolutely indispensable to the Library's work. I know from first hand how a skilled cataloguer can create order from a chaos of files, folders and scraps of paper.



Dr Colin McIlroy

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Photos by Alison Gibson



I know from first hand how a skilled cataloguer can create order from a chaos of files, folders and scraps of paper. It's why I support the appeal. Please do join me.

– Sir Ian Rankin



Sir Ian Rankin with his own archive, which he donated to the Library in 2019. Photo by Neil Hanna

That's why I support NLS's fundraising drive – please do join me.”

Some of the acquired material – many boxes, bags and briefcases full of diaries, drawings, drafts, letters and ideas – has been assessed by Assistant Curator Jamie McIntosh, who described the items as a “treasure trove”. He said: “The archives show you not only these authors’ whole creative process, but also who the person is. We want to be able to tell their stories and share insight about who they were.”



Jamie McIntosh



His work so far with the archives has been revealing. He said: “George Mackay Brown’s diaries are very informative and are filled with the minutiae of his day, including the weather, his meals, and the books he is reading. There’s also hand-written poetry, some of which has never been published. “A few letters are about his nomination for the Booker Prize in the same year as Kelman (1994) and his anxiety around the publicity and increased attention this brought.”

“Alasdair Gray’s archive contains ledger-books with drawings and handwritten notes, and even a sketch created while working here in the Library. The books also include handwritten pages from his ‘Dante’s Divine Trilogy’. You are offered real insight into his mind and methods. “James Kelman’s archive includes correspondence and personal papers, such as a list of jobs he had. The archive highlights his community and political engagement and promotion of women and underrepresented writers, like Agnes Owens. There’s also a letter from the publishers of Douglas Stuart, the only other Scot to win the Booker, asking Kelman for a review of ‘Shuggie Bain.’”

Stuart told ‘Discover’ last year he would be “forever indebted” to Kelman.

McIntosh also noted that interest in Gray is rising among the general public and a new generation thanks to a new Hollywood movie based on his novel ‘Poor Things’. The film stars Oscar-nominated actors Emma Stone, Mark Ruffalo, and Willem Dafoe.

Our collections include manuscript drafts of ‘Poor Things’, from its inception as ‘Poor Creatures’.

McIntosh added: “But to keep making these remarkable archives available to the people of Scotland, we need your help to fund the work.” *

To donate, please visit
nls.uk/writers-archives

“Fàilte don sgeulaiche ùr Ghàidhlig!” – Gaelic storytymaker starts exciting new role

Writer and broadcaster Kirsty MacDonald has been awarded the prestigious position of the inaugural Gàidhlig Storymaker.

The post was inspired by the Library’s current dual-language exhibition, ‘Sgeul | Story: Folktales from the Scottish Highlands’. Drawing from a centuries-old oral storytelling tradition, the role aims to promote Gaelic language through creative storytelling practice.

MacDonald has more than 20 years of experience in creative cultural projects. As well as storytelling this includes directing, presenting and producing for television. With family links to North Uist, she has a wealth of knowledge in using archival and cultural materials to tell compelling stories and engage diverse Gaelic audiences and communities. This focus has been at the heart of her work throughout her career.

She said: “I’m excited to be the Gàidhlig Storymaker for the National Library of Scotland. I’m looking forward to undertaking research, learning new stories, and sharing my Storymaker journey with you all over the next year.”

National Librarian Amina Shah, said: “The National Library of Scotland holds one the largest collections of Scottish Gaelic material in the world. As well as holding these collections for the nation, it’s also our job to bring these stories to life for new and diverse audiences. This exciting new role builds upon our current dual-language exhibition. Generously funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig, the role will support both the traditions and history of Gaelic storytelling as well as contemporary and modern themes.”

Ealasaid MacDonald, Bòrd na Gàidhlig Ceannard (CEO), said: “Bòrd na Gàidhlig are pleased to provide funding to the National Library to establish this new role. Stories are so important in Gaelic culture, and we have a strong and profound storytelling heritage. We are excited to see the work Kirsty will create and are sure she will engage people from all over the country, and beyond, in



Kirsty MacDonald.
Photos by Neil Hanna

our stories and culture, making use of her wealth of experience in the cultural arts.”

The Storymaker’s role will work to raise the profile of Gaelic throughout Scotland and will deliver a range of events and workshops

in community settings around the country as well as at the National Library in Edinburgh and Glasgow. She will also develop her own creative practice in Gaelic.

The 12-month Gàidhlig Storymaker position is funded by Bòrd na Gàidhlig. ✨



“Fàilte don sgeulaiche ùr Ghàidhlig!”

Sgeulaiche Gàidhlig a’ tòiseachadh air dreuchd ùr inntinneach

Chaidh an dreuchd chliùiteach mar a’ chiad Sgeulaiche Ghàidhlig a bhuileachadh air an

sgrìobhadair agus craoladair Curstaidh NicDhòmhnaill.

Chaidh an dreuchd a bhrosnachadh le taisbeanadh

Introducing the new Scots Scriever

Poet and author Susi Briggs ‘deeply honoured’ to take on role

Susi Briggs has been announced as the 2023/24 Scots Scriever. The residency, a partnership with Creative Scotland, aims to support the creation of original writing in Scots as well as the promotion of the language with communities throughout Scotland. This year, we specifically sought applicants working in Dumfries and Galloway.

Briggs is a poet, author, storyteller and musician with a passion for the Scots language.

She said: “I am deeply honoured tae be the new Scots Scriever and tae represent Dumfries and Galloway. I hae dedicated my creative career tae makkin shair oor leid is visible and validated by creatin contemporary Scots warks that inspire Scot literacy and positive public engagement.

“The role o Scots Scribever will open up new exciting opportunities fer me tae create new Scots language wark in aw the airts I currently wark in and beyond.

“I canna wait tae explore the archives fer inspiration and wark wi the team at the National Library o Scotland.”

The 12-month residency is funded by the National Lottery through Creative Scotland. *



Photo by Kim Ayres

dà-chànanach làithreach an Leabharlann ‘Sgeul | Story: Sgeulachdan bho Ghaidhealtachd na h-Alba’. A’ tarraing air dualchas beul-aithris a tha a’ dol air ais fad linntean mòra, tha an dreuchd ag amas air a’ Ghàidhlig a bhrosnachadh tro sgeulachdan cruthachail.

Tha còrr is 20 bliadhna de dh’èòlas aig Curstaidh ann am pròiseactan cultarach cruthachail. A bharrachd air sgeulachdan tha seo a’ gabhail a-steach stiùireadh, preasantadh agus riochdachadh airson telebhisean. Le ceanglaichean teachlaich ri Uibhist ri Tuath tha beairteas de dh’èòlas aice ann a bhith a’ cleachdadh stuthan tasglainn is cultarail gus sgeulachdan inntinneach innse agus airson a bhith ag obair le diofar luchd-èisteachd is coimhearsnachdan Gàidhlig.

Tha am fòcas seo air a bhith aig cridhe a cuid obrach fad a cùrsa-beatha.

Thuirt i: “Tha mi air bhioran a bhith nam Sgeulaiche Gàidhlig airson Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba. Tha mi a’ coimhead air adhart ri bhith a’ dèanamh rannsachadh, ag ionnsachadh sgeulachdan ùra, agus gur toirt leam air an turas agam mar Sgeulaiche fad bliadhna.”

Thuirt an Leabharlannaiche Nàiseanta Amina Shah: “Tha fear de na cruinneachaidhean as motha san t-saoghal de stuth Gàidhlig na h-Alba aig Leabharlann Nàiseanta na h-Alba. A bharrachd air a bhith a’ cumail nan cruinneachaidhean dhan dùthaich, tha e mar dhleastanas oirnn na sgeulachdan sin a thoirt beò do luchd-èisteachd ùr agus eadar-mheasg. Tha

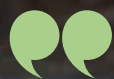
an dreuchd ùr inntinneach seo a’ togail air an taisbeanadh dhà-chànanach a th’ againn an-dràsta. Le maoineachadh falaidh bho Bhòrd na Gàidhlig, bheir an dreuchd taic do dhualchas is eachdraidh seachas na Gàidhlig a bharrachd air cuspairean co-aimsireil agus an latha an-diugh.”

Thuirt Ealasaid Dhòmhnallach, Ceannard Bhòrd na Gàidhlig: “Tha Bòrd na Gàidhlig air leth toilichte maoineachadh a thoirt dhan Leabharlann Nàiseanta agus an cuideachadh gus an dreuchd ùr seo a stèidheachadh. Tha sgeulachdan cho cudromach do chultar na Gàidhlig, agus tha dualchas brèagha, làidir againn a thaobh sgeulachdan. Tha sinn air bhioran an obair a nì Curstaidh san dreuchd seo fhacinn agus tha sinn

cinnteach gun tarraing i daoine bho air feadh na dùthcha, agus nas fhaide air falbh, an sàs sa chultar agus na sgeulachdan, a’ cleachdadh a beairteas eòlais anns na h-ealainean cultarail.”

‘S e an obair a bhios aig Curstaidh NicDhòmhnaill a bhith ag obair gus ìomhaigh na Gàidhlig a thogail air feadh na h-Alba agus a bhith a’ libhrigeadh raon de thachartasan agus bùithtean-obrach ann an suidheachaidhean coimhearsnachd air feadh na dùthcha cho math ri a bhith gan cumail san Leabharlann Nàiseanta fhèin an Glaschu is an Dùn Èideann. Leasaichidh i cuideachd a cleachdadh cruthachail fhèin sa Ghàidhlig.

Tha an dreuchd 12-mhios mar Sgeulaiche Gàidhlig air a maoineachadh le Bòrd na Gàidhlig. *



It's been difficult for people who have been taught a certain history at school to cope with the fact historians and activists are saying, actually, there's another side – a less celebratory one

Professor David Olusoga at the former Ravenscraig steelworks in Motherwell. Photo by Stephen Robinson © Wall to Wall Media / BBC.
Cover photo by Stephen Robinson © Wall to Wall Media / BBC

A United Kingdom?

The history – and future – of the Union has come under the scrutiny of Bafta-winning historian Professor David Olusoga in his latest TV show, with our collections aiding his research

He has become the face of a growing movement in Britain to acknowledge and accept the injustices and atrocities committed throughout our history, and has helped to inspire countless conversations about empire, slavery, complicity, culpability and the airbrushing of the past.

For British-Nigerian Professor David Olusoga, history is not – and should not be claimed as – a “safe space” populated only by heroes who have fought off enemy threats and helped Britain grow in power and wealth.

Parts of the country’s history are shameful and tragic and we should not shy away from confronting such facts if we are ever to learn not to repeat them, warns the eminent historian, writer, presenter and Bafta-winning filmmaker, who carried out research

in the Library’s archives for his latest BBC TV show, ‘Union’, which examines both the formation and the future of the United Kingdom.

“We have to ask ourselves what history is for,” he explained. “Does it exist to make us feel good? If so, you would need to edit out the bits that aren’t comfortable.”

“Chapters of our past are shameful but aren’t widely taught. Do people only want histories about great men and exceptionalism?”

“It’s been difficult for people who have been taught a certain history at school to cope with the fact historians and activists are saying, actually, there’s another side – a less celebratory one.”

Some of this less celebratory side was covered in Olusoga’s ground-breaking book ‘Black and British: A Forgotten History’ and its accompanying TV show, which were comprehensive and



→ unflinching examinations of parts of our collective past that have long been overlooked – or denied.

For 'Union', the University of Manchester professor has been delving deeper into the history of the UK's four nations, the role of each in the creation of the Union and in the British Empire, and what lies ahead.

His research included examining items in the Library's collections, including early designs for a Union Flag, items relating to the Darien scheme – including the Act of Parliament founding the Company of Scotland (1695), a ledger of subscribers and a letter from Captain Robert Drummond reporting on the colony – plus the film 'Make Way for Steel' from our Moving Image Archive, about the construction of Ravenscraig and Gartcosh steelworks.

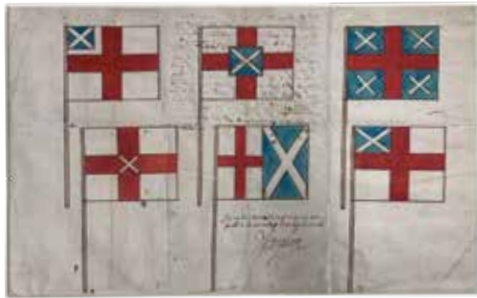
"I'm trying to give the historical background and look to the future of this Union of four nations," Olusoga said. "The politics of the decisions facing all four nations often don't talk about the history."

"I'll be looking at the whole story, from the 1603 Union of Crowns to the present day, explaining how we got to where we are now. It's an amazing history – the UK is a strange country, a unique multi-nation state. It's a country that's not up on its nations' long history and the Union itself."

The series is ambitious – it will cover 400 years of history in four hour-long episodes.

"There are many aspects to this," said Olusoga. "But how do you tell stories that reflect all four nations?"

One of the "key elements" of the Union is the use of symbols, he explained, adding: "Images of 'Britishness' like the Union Flag. The creation of the flag reflects those stories."



FLYING THE FLAG The original designs presented to James VI/I – part of our collections – feature in Olusoga's latest TV show

"A key document is the flag designs that were presented to James VI/I. The original designs are held at the Library. Audiences really want to see original documents. That piece of paper was held in the hand of King James – the legitimacy is the real power of the object. That drama comes across on TV."

"The unveiling of that document is important [to show]. This is not an image, this is an artefact, and that is something we really wanted to get across. These things are in our archives and libraries."

"My job is to think about what the audience feels and try to get across that the document tells an important story, it's tangible."

Olusoga pointed to the BBC's hit series 'Who Do You Think You Are?' – created by Scots TV producer, journalist and Library supporter Alex Graham – as proof of how viewers are fascinated by history, and as a great example of how historical documents can captivate and inform audiences when presented as part of a wider story.

It's embarrassing that we name our national honours after an Empire that doesn't exist

David Olusoga visited Edinburgh and the Library to conduct research. Photo by Stephen Robinson © Wall to Wall Media / BBC

"You tap into the drama," he explained. "You remind people what they are seeing isn't an image, it's a real artefact. That document has had a life, it's not always been in an archive."

Olusoga noted that "we're living in a moment when history is front-page news", amid debate over the future of the Union, the future of the monarchy and the acts and legacy of the British Empire.

"What's happening in England, the confrontation with its history, is really important," he added.

"Where this moment is going is making a great number of people uncomfortable."

"I'm not sure there's much difference in the four nations and the ability to confront this history."

In Scotland, such "uncomfortable" conversations have included this country's role in the Empire, including involvement in plantation slavery and India. Olusoga noted that "we can never tell a story of the UK" without Scotland and its "deep involvement with the Empire and its role in the Empire".

"Glasgow was quite an important port," explained

Olusoga, with slave-grown tobacco and sugar shipped in by the city's merchants from their plantations. Some 62 streets in the city remain named after people and places linked to the slave trade, including Buchanan Street and Glassford Street.

The Union of Parliaments gave Scotland access to the transatlantic slave trade and merchants began to settle in colonies. The Union also offered compensation, 'the Equivalent', following the catastrophic failure of the Darien scheme.

For 'Union', Olusoga also visited Panama to examine documents related to Darien, the disastrous attempt by Scottish merchants to set up a trading colony, New Caledonia, and further involve themselves in the transatlantic slave trade. Amid disease, poor planning and war with the Spanish, the scheme collapsed and cost Scotland a quarter of its capital, while 2,000 people died.

"We filmed in Panama to see documents there. They are remarkable documents. People were putting their faith in this venture."

Despite Darien's failure, by the 18th century, there were



“a number of Scottish slave owners” and Scots working as overseers, the historical records show.

Olusoga’s work on race, slavery and the Empire has led to criticism, notably by appearing in the Duke and Duchess of Sussex’s documentary series for Netflix, and following his expert testimony helping to clear four protesters who toppled

the statue of slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol in June 2020.

So what is his response to those critics attacking what they call his ‘woke’ history?

“I can’t take people who use that word seriously. It’s political theatre. A lot of the debate is disingenuous,” he said.

“Monuments and statues are not history,” he added. “They’re about memorialisation, exceptionalism. They say that this man is a great man. But a statue tells you almost nothing.”

Given he challenges the often narrow, romanticised visions of Britain’s past and his showcasing of the Empire’s violent history – plus his own experiences of racism while growing up on a council estate in North-East England, the son of a white British mother and black Nigerian father, as described in ‘Black and British’ – did he feel any conflict about accepting an OBE (Order of the British Empire)?

“It was really difficult,” he admitted. “Everyone who is not white is put in a dilemma.

I had lots of reservations but I talked to other people who had been in the same position, like [campaigner] Baroness Doreen Lawrence [whose teenage son Stephen was killed in a racially motivated attack in London in 1993].

“But a lot of my work is trying to influence debates. So I’d be turning down something that gives you influence.”

He also accepted because the contributions of non-white people have been under-represented and because, “I am still of British descent”.

But he added: “We need to update the names of our honours system. It’s embarrassing that we name our national honours after an Empire that doesn’t exist.”

As well as his English and Nigerian roots, Olusoga found some Scottish ancestry.

“They were from Tranent,” he said. “Millions of people will have family history across the borders for generations.”

When it comes to Scotland’s future in the Union, he believes this is something “the people of Scotland need to decide for themselves”.

“It saddens me but I can see reasons why people would vote for independence,” he said.

“The Union has allowed a concentration of power on the four nations by England. The dominance of London is off the scale – very few countries have anything like this. The whole UK is affected by London’s dominance. What would it take to convince people this is a Union [of equals]? I’d like to see a profound review of the Union in a desperate attempt to see if it can be saved.

“Our history is never as simple as we might imagine,” he added. “We need to have more conversations about this nation.” *

OLUSOGA’S TOP READS:

History books dominate Professor Olusoga’s reading list.

“I haven’t read novels in quite a while but I try to go to the theatre,” he said. “I’ve just seen ‘Best of Enemies’ at the Noël Coward Theatre.”

But what has been on his reading list lately – and what does he recommend if you want to learn more about the history of the Union?

WHAT HE’S READING NOW

‘Legacy of Violence: A History of the British Empire’ by Caroline Elkins

This unrelenting violence of the British Empire through the 20th century is laid bare in this study, which draws on more than a decade of research on four continents. The book outlines that when Britain could no longer maintain control over the violence, it retreated and tried to hide the evidence.

BOOKS ABOUT THE UNION

‘The British Isles: A History of Four Nations’ by Hugh Kearney

is a “brilliant book”, said Olusoga, who also praised **‘The Isles’ by Norman Davies** and **‘The Price of Scotland’ by Douglas Watt**.

‘Union’ is available on BBC iPlayer. You can view ‘Make Way for Steel’ at movingimage.nls.uk/film/2244



THE DARIEN DISASTER

The Darien scheme was supposed to enrich Scotland. But the plan to establish a trading colony at Darien, Panama, ended in disaster.

Scots of all circumstances raised large amounts to fund the scheme, which was the brainchild of Dumfriesshire’s

CATASTROPHIC FAILURE

The ledger of Darien investors

William Paterson (1658–1719), also a co-founder of the Bank of England. But amid disease, poor planning and war with the Spanish, the venture was a catastrophic failure – some 2,000 people died and about a quarter of Scotland’s assets were lost.

Darien crippled the economy to such an extent that it led to the Act of Union of 1707, with Scotland paid a sum known as ‘the Equivalent’ in compensation, £398,000.

The Library has a number of items relating to Darien, including Paterson’s scheme for Darien, 1700.

One in a million: Empress Shōtoku's 'Hyakumantō'



Image: Alamy

Woodblock printing began in China, hundreds of years before it was practised in Europe, and by the 8th century had spread to Japan. On display at our 'Treasures' exhibition at George IV Bridge is one of the 'Hyakumantō Darani', or the 'One Million Pagodas and Darani Prayers', produced in Japan between 764 and 770.

Returning to the throne in 764 following a rebellion, the Japanese Empress Shōtoku commissioned one million wooden pagodas, each containing a printed prayer scroll. These Hyakumantō Darani were distributed in groups of 100,000 to 10 temples in Japan. They symbolised the Empress's authority and repentance for the violence of the rebellion. Shōtoku contributed to the spread of Buddhism across Japan; a good deed through which she could improve the quality of her next life.

Here, **Dr Halle O'Neal**, Reader in History of Art and Co-Director of **Edinburgh Buddhist Studies** at the University of Edinburgh, tells us more...



Hyakumantō Darani scroll, above, and pagoda, left



The unassuming structure and appearance of the modest wooden object on display at the Library belies its intriguing history as part of the one million pagoda and darani (Hyakumantō Darani) commissioned from circa 764 to 770.

The pagodas were crafted in Japan from cedar wood and originally painted white. Although the number of storeys can vary from three or seven to 13, the example stored in the Library's collections is the more common three-storey variant.

While one million might sound like a grand exaggeration, particularly given their 8th-century origin, this was indeed an extraordinary and very real project commissioned by Empress Kōken (c.718–770; r. 749–758, who later ruled under her Buddhist name Shōtoku, r. 764–770).

Shōtoku's time as sovereign of Japan was productive but fraught, and between the years 758–764 she abdicated the throne for Emperor Junnin (733–765; reign 758–764).

Another of her rivals, her cousin Fujiwarano Nakamaro (706–764), also enjoyed an unmitigated rise in power. However, as Kōken assumed increasing levels of command and authority during Junnin's reign, Nakamaro staged a short-lived uprising known as the Emi Rebellion to wrest back power from Kōken.

Shōtoku was to be one of the last female sovereigns in Japan... not until nearly 860 years later did another ascend the throne

Ultimately, Nakamaro was killed in battle, Junnin was forced to abdicate and Kōken was re-enthroned under the name Shōtoku.

Very likely Shōtoku, as a Buddhist nun, felt deeply about atoning for the sins of killing committed in the suppression of the insurgence as well as a need to offer gratitude for her victory. As a result, in around 764 she commissioned one million pagodas to be made from wood and one million short slips of sacred text to be printed and inserted within the reliquaries. Ten imperially sponsored temples in the Kansai region each received 100,000 pagodas. Of course, such a grand project also functioned as overwhelming displays of Shōtoku's Buddhist and socio-political authority.

Shōtoku, however, was to be one of the last female sovereigns in Japan's long imperial history. Not until nearly 860 years later did another woman ascend the Chrysanthemum throne (Meishō, 1624–1696, r. 1629–1643) and even then, only one more woman followed her (GoSakuramachi (1740–1813, r. 1762–1771). Indeed, a law in 1889 prohibited women from occupying the throne again.

Moreover, Shōtoku's reign has been overshadowed by what was felt to be an inappropriately close relationship to the Buddhist priest Dōkyō (700–772).

At this time in history, religious rites served not only spiritual goals but also medicinal ones too. Having fallen ill, Shōtoku was cured by the Buddhist rituals performed by the skilled priest Dōkyō and, from that point, →

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→ he experienced a quick rise in the ranks, something that unnerved and provoked the jealousy of other powerful court figures.

Later retellings of this history painted their relationship as sexual, accusations that have tainted the account of her impressive rule. But it is important to remember that in the prehistory of Japan, women frequently served as leaders of communities and even as empresses. The disturbing trend in contemporary scholarship which minimised the roles of women in power has been persuasively countered by Japanese feminist historians.

So why did Shōtoku choose the pagoda and small rolls of scripture as her offerings? The answers lie in the intersection of relics and reliquaries, on the one hand, and merit generation and notions of the Buddha's body on the other.

Pagodas functioned both as reliquaries housing the relics of the Buddha, from corporeal shards to written scripture, and as manifestations of the Buddha's body itself. As such, they were incredibly potent beacons of religious authority.

The teachings of the Buddha (dharma) were also conflated with the body of the Buddha and, when ritualistically transcribed, they were worshipped as a powerful category of relics known as dharma relics.

The exact writing enshrined within the Library's pagoda comes from the scripture 'Darani of the Pure Immaculate Light Sutra' (Mukujōkō daidaranikyō). Darani are distillations of sacred text encoded as mantras which, by and large, retain the orality in their Sanskrit origin. This means the original semantic meaning was largely lost when converting them into classical Chinese because the translation concentrated on capturing the sounds of the Sanskrit syllables and not necessarily their meaning. Like scriptural text, darani were also seen as manifestations of the body of the Buddha in the form of dharma relics.

Up to seven different darani from the 'Darani of the Pure Immaculate Light Sutra' were selected for the one million pagoda project. The example in the Library's collections is known as the 'Sōrin darani'.

The interment of sacred text within pagodas, and



Foretory for enshrining Buddha's Relics. Wood with lacquer. Muromachi period, 15th century. From the Collection of the Nara National Museum. Photo by Sasaki Kyōsuke © Nara National Museum

Stupa-shaped clay sutras (excavated from sutra mound at Chishaku-ji, Tottori). Fired clay, Kamakura period, 13th-14th century. From the Collection of the Nara National Museum. Photo by Sasaki Kyōsuke © Nara National Museum



within sculptures, was a common ritual practice. And although the text is rendered invisible within the icon, it is not forgotten; though it is unseen, it retains its potency and efficacy.

While printed as text, the darani do not lose their inherent orality. Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that despite the role of silence and quiet meditation in Buddhism, the practice of the religion was often intended to engage the senses of the devotee through sounds such as sonorous chanting and ritual music, through visuals such as golden sculptures and splendid paintings and through scents such as smoky incense in fragrances such as sandalwood.

Joining together these architectural, printed and oral manifestations of the bodies of the Buddha gives us a sense of the significance of embodiment in Buddhist material culture, which frequently sought to manifest the tangibility of the Buddha, who had long since passed from our world.

These extraordinary objects, therefore, play with the themes of body, sound and concealment.

Key to Shōtoku's aims, this potent combination of pagoda reliquary and printed darani at such a monumental scale would have generated incredible amounts of merit.

Ultimately, this pagoda can claim several astonishing connections. It remains one of the grandest examples of Buddhist patronage throughout history, it was commissioned by one of Japan's few female sovereigns and within its simple exterior, it conceals one of the earliest examples of printed material in all the world. *

Our pagoda and scroll from the Hyakumantō Darani are on display until March 2024 at George IV Bridge as part of our permanent exhibition, 'Treasures of the National Library of Scotland'. Learn more at nls.uk/treasures/explore/hyakumanto-darani

Celebrating Gaelic culture

Meet the young Scottish band bringing traditional music to new audiences

It is a bright and crisp early autumn evening in a city park, dappled sunlight filtering through tree leaves that are clinging on to their summer greenery before the seasonal browns and golds take hold. Dog walkers amble past, along with students on their way up the hill to the university, breathless joggers, black-clad skateboarders and smiling families out for a stroll.

All stop in their tracks to listen when the breeze carries in a gentle, lilting Gaelic song that is as heartfelt and melodious as it is skillfully performed.

Following the music to its source reveals an impromptu performance by young band Duan (Gaelic for a little ditty or song), who also delighted guests at the launch of our dual language exhibition 'Sgeul | Story: Folktales from the Scottish Highlands' earlier this year – a set hailed as “magical” by National Librarian Amina Shah.

The group is due to play at the Library again in February for another event linked to the exhibition, about 19th-century folklorist John Francis Campbell, which runs until April.

They were ideal to help us launch 'Sgeul | Story', not only because they play and sing beautifully, but because the exhibition invites visitors to hear and learn about folktales told for centuries in Gaelic-speaking areas of Scotland – stories that Duan help keep alive and share through their performances.

The band – pianist Laura Penman, 21; guitarist Finlay Lawson, 22; clàrsach player Martha Cunniffe, 22; accordionist Calum Murray, 21; and vocalists Tawana Maramba, 21, and Iris MacLeod, 21 – met

at Tollcross Primary School in Edinburgh. Each of them has won a string of competitions and accolades in the years since.

“We’d always done a lot of Gaelic music at school,” Laura said. “It was Gaelic medium, so we didn’t really do any English music. We started just doing what we knew. We didn’t always play as a band but came back together for a competition at the Mòd in 2019.

“As much as it was a hobby before that, we all really enjoyed it and thought it was something we’d want to take more seriously at some point, so it felt like a natural progression.”

They have been playing together ever since, juggling performing with university. Finlay and Martha recently graduated from the University of Glasgow, in Gaelic and Computing (what he jokingly described as “that classic combination”) and Gaelic and History, respectively, and Finlay is now taking music classes for a year at Skye’s Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the National Centre for Gaelic Language and Culture. Tawana is studying English Literature and Linguistics at Glasgow and Iris is studying History at Glasgow, while Calum is studying Gaelic at the University of Edinburgh. Laura is studying traditional music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

All of them have taught at and are involved in the Edinburgh Fèis. “Lots of us went there too, so it’s nice to come full circle and teach there,” Laura added.

When they spoke to ‘Discover’, they were preparing to perform at a ceilidh as part of this year’s Mòd in Paisley, held from 13–21 October.



EVENT

You can see Duan perform at the Library at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh, on 29 February next year. Tickets will be available from early January. Subscribe to our newsletter or keep an eye on our website, nls.uk, for details.



From left, Duan's Laura Penman (keyboard), Iris MacLeod (vocals), Calum Murray (accordion), Tawana Maramba (vocals), Martha Cuniffe (clàrsach) and Finlay Lawson (guitar)

"We're helping out and some other people are performing as well," said Tawana. "It's not part of the competitions."

Given the prestige of the Mòd, do they feel nervous?

"Performing in a group means you've got less nerves," said Calum.

"We all know each other and feel comfortable with each other," added Laura. "So it just feels like we're going and playing some tunes on stage."

"But it depends how prepared we are," laughed Iris. "I get scared of getting the giggles."

"Our greatest weakness," added Finlay, as they all burst into those giggles.

Performing Gaelic music and keeping Scotland's traditional songs alive is important to the band. Even though they are all from the Central Belt, many of their parents and

grandparents come from the Highlands and Islands and they are keen to preserve and share that heritage.

"There's definitely more bands that come from the Highlands and Islands that sing in Gaelic but there's an audience for it everywhere and there's a lot of Gaelic happening, you just have to find the places," said Laura. "There's a lot of Gaelic in Glasgow and Edinburgh now through schools, it's become a new hub. Hopefully that will continue."

"Gaelic has always been such a big part of our lives," added Tawana. "It's important to us to use it."

"Gaelic and music have always been very connected for us," said Iris. "Probably the reason I kept on with Gaelic was doing the music."

While they would not rule out giving

a Bowie or Beatles pop hit a traditional Gaelic makeover, the band is more keen to find older Gaelic songs and poems that have been lost, forgotten or rarely performed and bring those to a new audience.

"We really enjoy bringing our own style to the traditional Gaelic song and changing it up a bit, so taking those older songs and adding a bit of what we like and modernising them a little, bringing them to another audience," said Laura.

"We try to do that with all the songs we play," added Finlay.

Favourites to perform include the Puir-t-a-Beul (mouth music). "It's faster and has some energy," said Laura. "It's quite funky," added Finlay.

"We'll try to write some of our own music in the future, definitely," Finlay said. "We all have a passion for the Gaelic community



→ and music community,” added Laura. “We like to show other people how much we enjoy that.”

None of the band members feel quite enough is being done to promote and preserve Gaelic and Scots languages, although things are improving.

“There are a lot of good things being done but more is needed, definitely,” said Finlay.

“Even if it’s not fully through Gaelic medium education, just once a week teaching kids some Gaelic, that would be good,” added Calum.

“Me and Martha were teaching Gaelic in English-speaking schools,” Iris said. “Gaelic teaching and songs with them. The music makes it more fun.”

“You get more culture from the music than if you’re just taught the language,” Martha added.

“Gaelic and Scots are the history of Scotland, so it’s confusing why they weren’t always taught in schools. But things are being done about it, just not enough.”

“A lot of regional Gaelic has already been lost,” Finlay said.

“There would have been dialects in Perthshire and Easter Ross and various other places but I don’t think there are any speakers any more, when there would have been maybe 50 years ago.

“So it’s important to keep what we do have, to make sure that the Gaelic medium education we do have is not just about getting as many people doing it as possible but that the quality is high.” *



We really enjoy bringing our own style to the traditional Gaelic song

‘Sgeul | Story: Folktales from the Scottish Highlands’ is open at George IV Bridge until April. Entry is free. You can also watch a video of Duan performing at bit.ly/Duanband

A’ cumail traidisean beò

Coinnich ris a’ chòmhlán òg Albannach a tha a’ toirt òrain thraidiseanta Ghàidhlig gu luchd-èisteachd ùr

THA e na fheasgar soilleir fionnar tràth as t-fhoghar ann am pàirc ann am baile mòr, le solas na grèine a’ sìoladh tro dhuilleagan craobhe a tha a tha uaine air èiginn goirid mus tig dathan donn agus òr na ràithe. Tha daoine air cuairt le coin a’ coiseachd seachad, còmhla ri oileanaich air an t-slighe suas am bruthach chun an oilthigh, luchd-ruith le an anail nan uchd, luchd-spèileabòrd le aodach dubh agus teaghlaichean toilichte a-muigh air cuairt.

Stadaidh iad uile gus èisteachd ri òran sèimh, siùbhlach Gàidhlig a tha air a ghiùlan air a’ ghaoith a tha cho cridheil agus binn ’s a tha e air a chluich gu h-ealanta.

A’ leantainn a’ chiùil chun an tùs aige chithear an còmhlan òg Duan a’ cluich, a thug toileachas cuideachd ri aoiaghean aig foillseachadh ar taisbeanadh dà-chànanach ‘Sgeul | Story: Sgeulachdan bho Ghaidhealtachd na h-Alba’ na bu thràithe am-bliadhna – seata a bha “draoidheil” a rèir an Leabharlannaiche Nàiseanta, Amina Shah.

Tha an còmhlan gu bhith a’ cluich anns an Leabharlann a-rithist sa Ghearran airson tachartas eile co-cheangailte ris an taisbeanadh, mun eòlaiche beul-aithris bhon 19mh linn, Iain Òg Ìle, a bhios a’ ruith chun a’ Ghiblein.

Bha iad air leth freagarrach airson ar cuideachadh le bhith a’ cur ‘Sgeul | Story’ air bhog, chan ann a-mhàin air sgàth gu bheil iad a’ cluich agus a’ seinn gu brèagha, ach air sgàth gu bheil an taisbeanadh a’ toirt cuireadh do luchd-tadhail sgeulachdan beul-aithris a chaidh innse bho chionn linntean ann an sgìrean Gàidhlig na h-Alba a chluinntinn agus ionnsachadh – sgeulachdan a bhios Duan a’ cuideachadh gus a chumail beò agus a cho-roinn tro na cuirmean aca.

Choinnich an còmhlan – piàna Laura Penman, 21; giotàr Fionnlagh Lawson, 22; clàrsach Martha Cunniffe, 22; bogsa-ciùil Calum Moireach, 21; agus seinneadairean Tawana Maramba, 21, agus Iris NicLeòid, 21 – ann am Bun-sgoil Chrois na Cìse ann an Dùn Èideann. Tha gach fear air sreath de cho-fharpaisean agus dhuaisean a chosnadh anns na bliadhnaichean bhon uair sin.

“Bhiodh sin daonnan a’ dèanamh tòrr ceòl Gàidhlig san sgoil,” thuirt Laura. “Bha sinn ann am foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, agus mar sin cha do rinn sinn ceòl Beurla idir. Thòisich sinn air a’ cheòl a dhèanamh air an robh sinn eòlach. Cha robh sinn daonnan a’ cluich mar chòmhlán ach thàinig sinn air ais còmhla airson farpais aig a’ Mhòd ann an 2019.



From left, Duan’s Laura Penman (keyboard), Finlay Lawson (guitar), Iris MacLeod (vocals), Tawana Maramba (vocals), Calum Murray (accordion) and Martha Cunniffe (clàrsach) perform at the Library at Glasgow’s Kelvin Hall

“Ged nach robh e ach na chur-seachad roimhe sin, chòrd e rinn gu mòr agus bha sinn den bheachd gun robh sinn airson barrachd a dhèanamh leis san àm ri teachd, agus mar sin bha e a’ faireachdainn mar adhartas nàdarra.”

Tha iad air a bhith a’ cluich còmhla bhon uair sin, ag obair eadar a bhith a’ cluich ceòl agus a’ dèanamh chùrsaichean oilthighe. Cheumnaich Fionnlagh agus Martha bho Oilthigh Ghlaschu bho chionn ghoirid, ann an Gàidhlig agus Coimpiutaireachd (“am measgachadh clasaigeach sin” a thuir e mar fhealla-dhà) agus Gàidhlig is Eachdraidh, agus tha Fionnlagh a-nis a’ gabhail chlasaichean ciùil airson bliadhna aig Sabhal Mòr Ostaig san Eilean Sgitheanach, an t-Ionad Nàiseanta airson na Gàidhlig agus a Cultar. Tha Tawana a’ dèanamh Litreachas agus Cànanachas na Beurla ann an Glaschu agus tha Iris a’ dèanamh Eachdraidh ann an Glaschu, agus tha Calum a’ dèanamh Gàidhlig ann an Oilthigh Dhùn Èideann. Tha Laura a’ dèanamh ceòl traidiseanta aig Conservatoire Rìoghail na h-Alba.

Tha iad uile air teagasg aig, agus tha iad uile an sàs ann am Fèis Dhùn Èideann. “Chaidh mòran againn ann cuideachd, agus mar sin tha e math a bhith air ais agus a’ teagasg ann,” thuir Laura.

Nuair a bhruidhinn iad ri ‘Discover’, bha iad a’ dèanamh deiseil airson cluich aig cèilidh mar phàirt de Mhòd na bliadhna-sa ann am Pàislig, eadar 13 is 21 Dàmhair.

“Tha sinn a’ cuideachadh agus tha cuid de dhaoine eile gu bhith a’ cluich ann cuideachd,” thuir Tawana. Chan eil e mar phàirt de na farpaisean.”

Le cho chiùiteach ‘s a tha am Mòd, a bheil iad iomagaineach?

“Chan eil thu a cheart cho nearbhasach ma tha thu a’ cluich ann an còmhlan,” thuir Calum.

“Tha sinn uile gu math eòlach air a chèile agus tha sinn a’ faireachdainn cofhurtail le chèile,” thuir Laura. “Mar sin tha e dìreach a’ faireachdainn gu bheil sinn a’ dol ann agus a’ cluich beagan phuirt air an àrd-ùrlar.”

“Ach tha e a’ crochadh air dè cho ullaichte ‘s a tha sinn,” thuir Iris le gàire. “Tha an t-eagal orm gum bidh mi gam chall fhìn a’ gàireachdainn.”

“Ar laigse as motha,” thuir Fionnlagh, agus iad uile a’ tòiseachadh air lachanaich.

Tha a bhith a’ cluich ceòl Gàidhlig agus

a’ cumail òrain thraidiseanta na h-Alba beò cudromach dhan còmhlan. Ged a tha iad uile à Meadhan na h-Alba, tha mòran de am pàrantan agus an sean-phàrantan às a’ Ghàidhealtachd agus às na h-Eileanan agus tha iad airson an dualchas sin a ghlèidheadh agus a cho-roinn.

“Gu cinnteach tha barrachd còmhlain às a’ Ghàidhealtachd is na h-Eileanan a bhios a’ seinn sa Ghàidhlig ach tha luchd-èisteachd ann air a shon anns a h-uile àite agus tha tòrr a’ tachairt a thaobh na Gàidhlig, feumaidh tu dìreach na h-àiteachan sin a lorg,” thuir Laura. “Tha tòrr Gàidhlig ann an Glaschu agus Dùn Èideann a-nis tro na sgoiltean, tha e air a thighinn gu bhith na mheadhan ùr dhan chànan. Tha mi an dòchas gun lean sin.”

“Bha a’ Ghàidhlig riamh na pàirt cho mòr de ar beatha,” thuir Tawana. “Tha e cudromach dhuinne a bhith ga cleachdadh.”

“Bha a’ Ghàidhlig agus ceòl riamh fìor cheangailte dhuinn,” thuir Iris. “Is dòcha gun do chùm mi orm leis a’ Ghàidhlig mar thoradh air a bhith an sàs sa cheòl.”

Ged nach canadh iad nach dèanadh iad tionndadh Gàidhlig traidiseanta air òran ainmeil aig Bowie no na Beatles, tha an còmhlan nas deònaiche seann òrain is dàin Ghàidhlig a lorg a chaidh air chall, air dhìochuimhne no nach eil air an seinn ach ainneamh agus gan toirt gu luchd-èisteachd ùr.

“Tha e a’ còrdadh rinn gu mòr a bhith a’ cur ar stoidhle fhìn air òrain Ghàidhlig thraidiseanta agus gan atharrachadh beagan, agus mar sin a’ gabhail nan òran as sine sin agus a’ cur beagan de na rudan as toil leinn agus gan ùrachadh beagan, gan toirt gu luchd-èisteachd eile,” thuir Laura.

“Feuchaidh sinn ri sin a dhèanamh leis a h-uile òran a chluicheas sinn,” thuir Fionnlagh.

Am measg nan rudas as fheàrr leotha a bhith a’ cluich tha Puirt-a-Beul.

Tha iad nas luaithe agus làn spionnaidh,” thuir Laura.

“Tha iad gu math funcaidh”, arsa Fionnlagh cuideachd.

“Feuchaidh sinn ri beagan dhen cheòl againn fhèin a sgrìobhadh san àm ri teachd, gu cinnteach,” thuir Fionnlagh.

“Tha sinn uile dealasach

a thaobh coimhearsnachd na Gàidhlig agus coimhearsnachd a’ chiùil,” thuir Laura. “Is toil leinn a bhith a’ sealltainn do dhaoine eile cho mòr ‘s a tha sin a’ còrdadh rinn.”

Chan eil gin de bhuill a’ còmhlain a’ faireachdainn gu bheil gu leòr ga dhèanamh agus Gàidhlig is Scots a bhrosnachadh agus a ghlèidheadh, ged a tha cùisean a’ dol am feabhas.

“Tha tòrr rudan math gan dèanamh ach tha feum air barrachd, gu cinnteach,” thuir Fionnlagh.

“Fiù ‘s mura h-eil e gu tur tro fhoghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig, dìreach a’ teagasg beagan Gàidhlig do sgoilearan uair san t-seachdain, bhiodh sin math,” thuir Calum.

“Bha mi fhèin agus Martha a’ teagasg Gàidhlig ann an sgoiltean Beurla,” thuir Iris. “Bha sinn a’ teagasg Gàidhlig agus òrain còmhla riutha. Tha an ceòl ga dhèanamh nas spòrsaile.”

“Gheibh thu barrachd cultar bhon cheòl na bho dhìreach a bhith a’ teagasg a’ chànan,” thuir Martha.

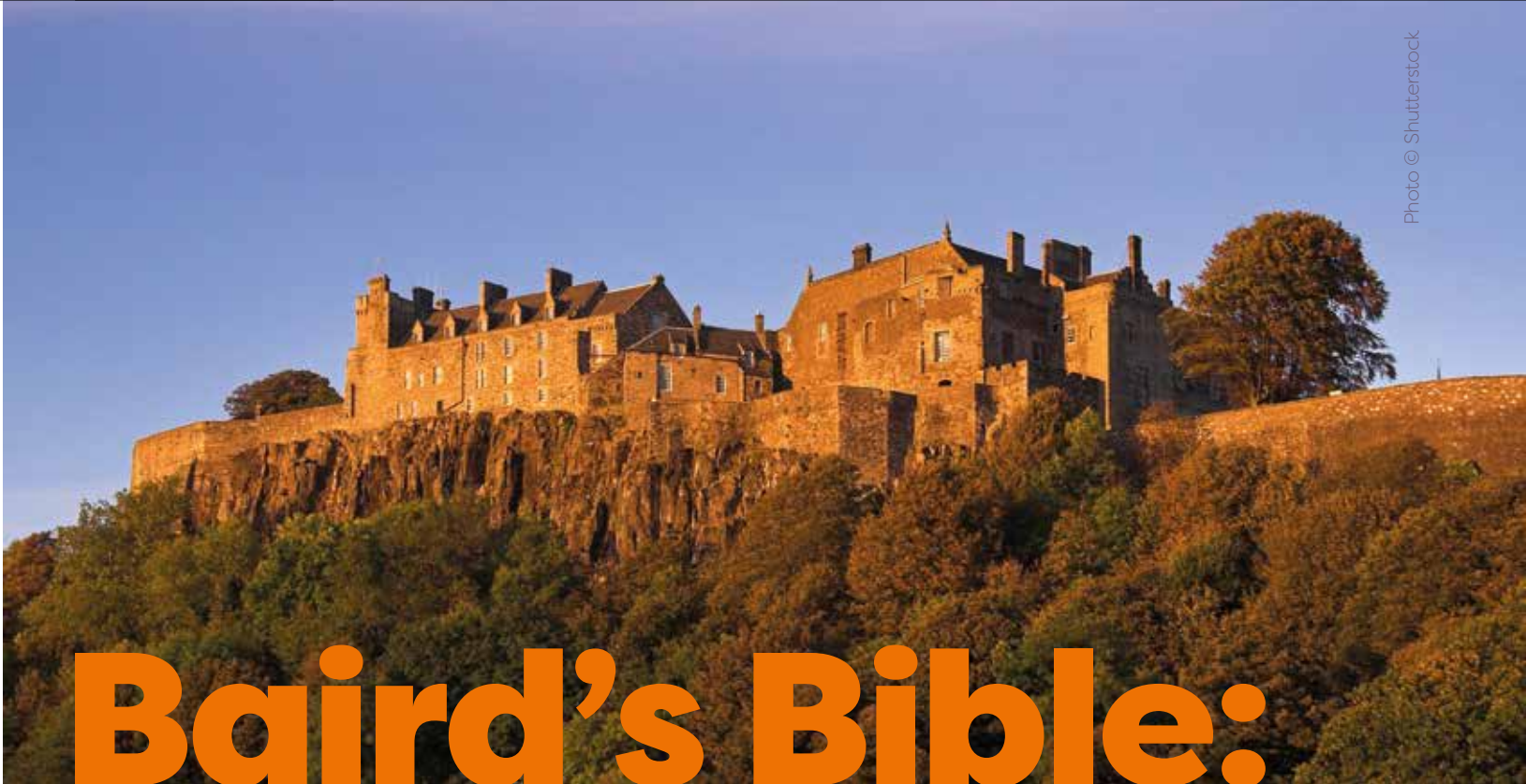
“S iad Gàidhlig agus Scots eachdraidh na h-Alba, agus mar sin tha e na iongnadh nach robh iad daonnan gan teagasg anns na sgoiltean. Thathar a’ dèanamh rudan mu dheidhinn, ach ‘s e an rud a th’ ann nach eilear a’ dèanamh gu leòr.”

“Chailleadh tòrr dhualchainntean Gàidhlig sgìreil mar-thà”, thuir Fionnlagh. “Bhiodh dualchainntean ann an Siorrachd Pheairt is Taobh Sear Rois agus grunn àiteachan eile agus chan eil mi a’ smaoinichadh gu bheil luchd-labhairt ann tuilleadh, ged a bha is dòcha 50 bliadhna air ais.

“Mar sin tha e cudromach a bhith a’ cumail na th’ againn, agus dèanamh cinnteach gu bheil foghlam tro mheadhan na Gàidhlig a th’ againn chan ann a-mhàin mu dheidhinn a cur ris an uiread de dhaoine a tha ann ach gu bheil a’ chàileachd àrd.” *

Chithear Duan a’ cluich aig an tachartas againn san togalach againn air Drochaid Seòras IV sa Ghearran. Airson tiogaidean, tadhail air nls.uk

Tha ‘Sgeul | Story: Folktales from the Scottish Highlands’ fosgailte aig Drochaid Seòras IV chun a’ Ghiblein. Tha intrigeadh an-asgaidh. Faodaidh tu cuideachd coimhead air bhidio de Duan a’ cluich aig bit.ly/Duanband



Baird's Bible:

A relic of the Radical War of 1820

Sometimes, the most battered and imperfect books in our collections have the most interesting provenance. One example is one of our recent acquisitions, a volume of a pocket Bible once owned by Scottish radical martyr John Baird, who was a key figure of the Radical War of 1820. This Bible brings to life a tumultuous but largely forgotten period in British history...

It is the late morning of Friday, 8 September 1820. In the dungeons of Stirling Castle, John Baird prepares to meet his end on a scaffold erected on Broad Street, outside the Tolbooth jail in the town. He will be hanged in public but will also, as someone found guilty of treason, be subsequently decapitated in front of the crowd. He and his fellow radical, Andrew Hardie, who will also be executed on this day, will be the last people in Britain to suffer this gruesome mutilation.

He clutches a volume of the Bible, volume two of a two-volume set printed in Edinburgh

in 1813–14. It comprises part of the Old Testament and the New Testament and Psalms. He has decided to bequeath it to his nephew John Walker and has taken the time to write an inscription to John in a neat hand on one of the blank leaves at the front of the volume.

The spelling is erratic and the punctuation non-existent – Baird was a largely self-taught man who probably had little, if any, formal schooling – but the sentiments are clear: “Dear Nephew I hope you will read this book with much care I hope you will pray to God night and morning and keep the Sabbath and obey your Mother this is the wish of your

dying uncle and may God lead you into all grace by His spirit and from all evils guard you & sick [seek] after God and his way as he deractes [directs] you in this book if you do not you will after a that [...say] I had dan [should have done] it, John Baird.”

Baird has spent much of the last few hours of his life in prayer. The numbers one to 20 written by Baird in the top left-hand corners of the pages of the Old Testament may indicate his planned reading during his final days in prison. His Christian faith remains devout, despite the grisly fate he is about to endure for a cause he still believes to be a just one. It is probable he still has the Bible with him as he is dragged to the scaffold on a hurdle (a kind of wooden sledge used to transport traitors through the streets to execution) at around quarter to two.

A crowd of several hundred, maybe as many as 2,000, are gathered outside the jail to witness the awful spectacle. The mood of the crowd is tense and one of sullen resentment against the authorities.

As a result of the disturbances at the execution and decapitation of another radical, James 'Purlie' Wilson, in Glasgow on 30 August, the authorities in Stirling have taken steps to avoid public disorder. Armed troops guard the scaffold and keep an eye on the crowd. The people involved in carrying out the execution – the hurdle man, hangman, headsman (decapitator), even the horse dragging the hurdle – have all been brought in from Glasgow, rather than have local people involved. On mounting the scaffold, Baird sees the hangman and decapitator, wearing masks and long black robes to disguise their identities.

As he waits to give a final speech to the crowd, Baird has had time to reflect on the events that have led him to the scaffold. He was born in 1790 into a family of weavers in the village of Condorrat, in what is now North Lanarkshire. Rather than work with his father and brothers in the family trade, the teenage Baird elected to serve king and country. In 1806 he joined the British Army, enlisting in the 2nd battalion of the 95th Rifles in Glasgow. He went with his battalion in the expeditionary force to attack Napoleon's Spanish allies in Buenos Aires and later saw action during the Peninsular campaign under Wellington.

In March 1813, Baird returned from Spain to Glasgow on furlough. He was due to report back to his unit on 22 May but obtained a certificate from the district surgeon in Glasgow, stating that he was ill. On 22 June 1813 he was posted as a deserter. Baird was somehow able to evade the authorities and returned to his family in Condorrat, where he went to work as a weaver.

The period after the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 was marked by economic depression and political unrest throughout Britain, leading to events such as the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester in 1819 and the Cato Street Conspiracy in London in early 1820. Artisan workers such as weavers were particularly badly hit by the depression and by the Industrial Revolution, which had led to

the replacement of cottage industries by large-scale manufacturing in factories.

Groups of impoverished working men desperate for radical political reform began to meet in secret in the towns of the Central Belt. Baird, a member of his local circulating library who presumably had access to radical literature, joined the Condorrat radicals.

In April 1820, growing public unrest in central Scotland erupted during a few days of armed civil disturbances known as the Radical War. Baird, who had been elected commander of the Condorrat radicals because of his military experience, led a march of 35 men, armed with muskets and pikes, to attack the Carron Iron Works near Falkirk and seize arms manufactured there.

Baird, like his deputy, Andrew Hardie of Glasgow, had been tricked by an undercover government agent into believing that a larger contingent of radicals would join them. In fact, a troop of the 10th hussars and the Stirlingshire yeomanry were on their way to intercept them.

At dawn on 5 April, Baird's men were attacked by the hussars in the area known as Bonnymuir, near the village of Bonnybridge, in what became known as the 'Battle of Bonnymuir'. Hardie later wrote in a letter that "Mr Baird defended himself in a most gallant manner". After a brief skirmish, which resulted in a few casualties but no

deaths, Baird realised the hopelessness of the radicals' situation and agreed to surrender. The prisoners were marched to Stirling Castle (pictured left), where Baird told the commander, Major Preddie: "Sir, if there is to be any severity exercised towards us, let it be on me. I am their leader and have caused them being here. I hope that I alone may suffer". Preddie later observed: "Throughout, he [Baird] never shrunk from the position he assumed."

The Radical War fizzled out within a week and there were mass arrests of radicals in Scotland. Initially, 88 men were charged with high treason. The trial of Baird and Hardie, with the other Bonnymuir prisoners, began on 13 July at Stirling. The trial was covered in a contemporary broadside, with Baird described as a "stout, smart looking, little man".

The two leading radicals of Bonnymuir were convicted on two of the four counts of high treason charged against them. Twenty other men had their death sentences commuted and 22 men from Scotland were transported to the penal colony in Australia. The other trials in Scotland resulted in only one other death sentence, for James 'Purlie' Wilson, a weaver from Strathaven, who had been involved in organising an abortive march on Glasgow by radicals from his town.

The radicals had been tried under English law, much to public concern. Traditionally, the punishments for high treason in England had been severe, involving hanging, drawing and quartering in public. This sentence was amended in 1814 so that the mutilation of the offender's body was to be carried out posthumously. Perhaps for fear of serious public disorder, the Cato Street conspirators executed for high treason in London in May 1820 were simply hanged then decapitated in public, and this was the same fate that Wilson, Baird and Hardie suffered a few weeks later.

The execution of Baird and Hardie is described in two contemporary broadsides in our collections. The broadside printed by John Muir of Glasgow gives the fullest account of their end: "The prisoners then went on the platform at a quarter before three o'clock.



Baird's volume of the Bible was printed in Edinburgh in 1813-14





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Baird and Hardie were posthumously pardoned, along with James Wilson and the other radicals

→ On their appearance the crowd set up a faint cheer. Baird then addressed the crowd in a very appropriate manner, and begged them to read and study their Bibles as the Word of God... Hardie then addressed the audience, but was not so distinctly as Baird; he said, 'I die a martyr to the cause of truth and justice.'

At 20 minutes to 3pm, they were launched into eternity. They exhibited hardly any struggle. After hanging 25 minutes, their bodies were taken down by sheriff officers and placed on their respective coffins, with their heads on a block and their faces downwards.

When the necks were bared, the decapitator came forward and was assailed by the crowd with hisses, yells and cries of "murder". He next turned round to the corpse of Baird and took his aim apparently with less trepidation – the first stroke the axe cut the neck slightly and stuck fast in the wood, but the second severed the head from the body. He then held it up, streaming with blood, and made the proclamation, "this is the head of a traitor" and retired. The bodies were then taken inside the jail and the crowd dispersed.

Both men had been led to believe that their bodies would be released to their families for burial but they were interred instead that evening in paupers' graves in the graveyard of Stirling's Church of the Holy Rude.

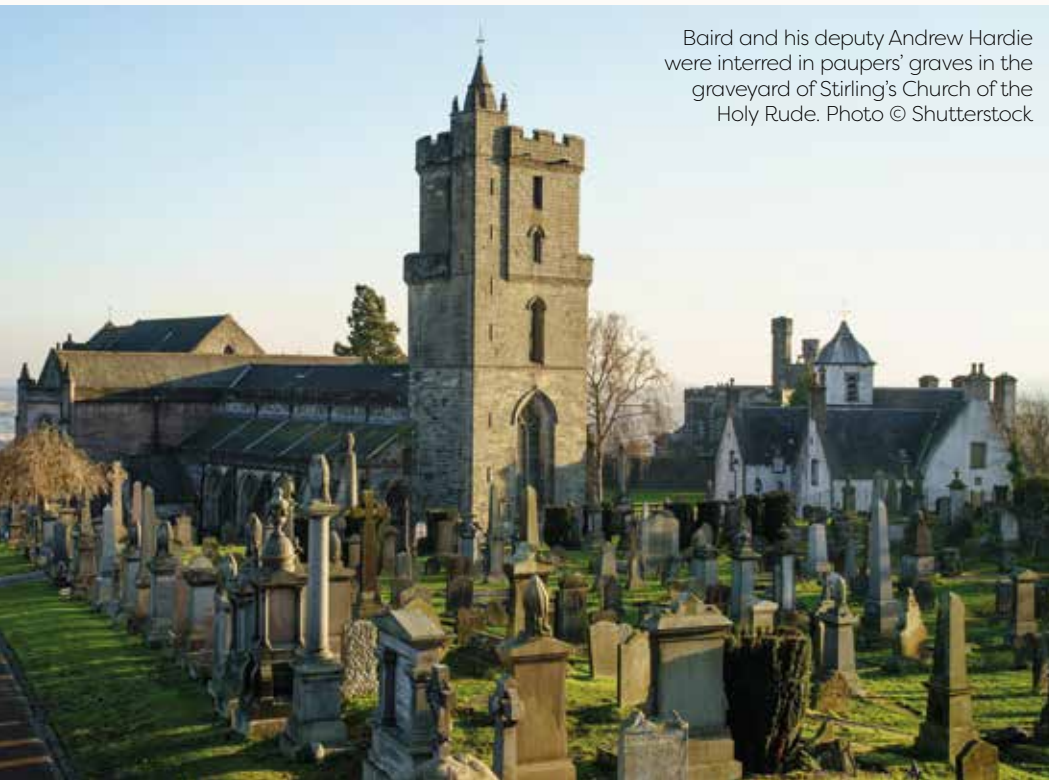
In 1835, Baird and Hardie were posthumously pardoned, along with James Wilson and the other radicals who had been transported to Australia. Baird and Hardie's bodies remained in Stirling until 1847, when they were removed and re-interred at Sighthill cemetery in Glasgow, where a monument to them and James Wilson had been erected by public subscription.

Baird's Bible made it safely to his nephew after the execution. It is tempting to think of him still clutching it as the noose was put around his neck. The book appears to have passed down through his nephew's family until at least the late 19th century.

The whereabouts of the first volume of the set, if Baird ever possessed this, are unknown. It was preserved as a symbol of Baird's martyrdom to the cause of freedom and justice. A wooden box, dating from the late 19th or early 20th century was made to house it and press clippings, relating to Baird and the Radical War, were stored in the box.

According to one clipping, a letter to the editor from a Mr John Young of Ardgowan Street, Glasgow, the Bible was carried in procession at a 'Franchise demonstration' in Glasgow in September 1884. Several thousand people thronged the city streets in support of the Representation of the People Act of 1884, which further extended adult male suffrage in the UK. They regarded themselves as successors to the cause championed by Baird and his fellow radicals. *

Baird and his deputy Andrew Hardie were interred in paupers' graves in the graveyard of Stirling's Church of the Holy Rude. Photo © Shutterstock



FURTHER READING:

Contemporary broadsides on the trial and execution of Baird and Hardie can be found on our 'Word on the Street' digital resource:

digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=14664

digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=15292

digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=14670

digital.nls.uk/broadsides/view/?id=15293

Stirling Castle's blog on the Castle and the Radical War:

blog.stirlingcastle.scot/2020/04/03/stirling-castle-1820-radical-rising

Maps, money and power

Blaeu and his 'Atlas Maior'

When Joan Blaeu (1596–1673) published the fifth volume of his 'Atlas novus' in 1654, Scotland became one of the best-mapped countries in the world. The volume included 49 stunningly attractive, hand-coloured maps of Scotland, which collectively included more than 20,000 place names, depicting the country in unprecedented detail.

But while Scots rightly celebrated this major publishing achievement, for Blaeu, Scotland was only a component of a much grander project – to produce the largest atlas the world had ever seen.

Joan Blaeu was brought up in Amsterdam at a time when the city was emerging as the

global centre for map production. This was the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic, when it enjoyed a major economic, cultural and artistic boom.

Helped by the growth of its overseas empire, its domination of seaborne trade and continued technological innovation, Dutch economic, political and intellectual life flourished. Joan not only inherited a thriving printing and map publishing company from his father Willem, but also the title of chief cartographer to the Dutch East India Company. This highly lucrative position also brought Blaeu into direct contact with the very latest geographic discoveries from around the world.

Until the late 1620s, the European market for world atlases had been dominated by the widely respected maps deriving from Gerhard Mercator, published by the Hondius-Janssonius family. They exploited something



Top, portrait of Joan Blaeu, by J. van Rossum, ca. 1660. Image courtesy of Instituut Collectie Nederland

Right, the Blaeu Atlas of Scotland, on display as part of our 'Treasures' exhibition





With more than 3,000 text pages, 12 volumes and nearly 600 maps, the 'Atlas Maior' was the most expensive book money could buy at the time. Nothing like it had ever been published before

of a monopoly position, publishing ever-expanding folio atlases of the world. To their surprise, however, Willem and Joan Blaeu

suddenly emerged with their own rival world atlas in the 1630s, initiating a battle with each publisher trying to outdo their rival by bringing out ever-larger atlases.

Although progress was initially slow, Blaeu succeeded in publishing new volumes of maps for Italy in 1640, one for England in 1645 and another for Scotland in 1654. Eventually, by the 1660s, Blaeu finally beat his rival through the publication of his the 'Theatrum Orbis Terrarum' (or 'Atlas Maior'). With more than 3,000 text pages, 12 volumes and nearly 600 maps, it was the most expensive book money could buy at the time. Nothing like it had ever been published before.

Blaeu recognised that the wealthy patrons who could buy such atlases were interested in their presentational value as a status symbol. Aesthetic considerations such as sumptuous bindings, fine engraving, bright colour and beautiful typography were emphasised. Some of the finest copies of the 'Atlas Maior' survive today within specially carved cases of walnut or mahogany. →



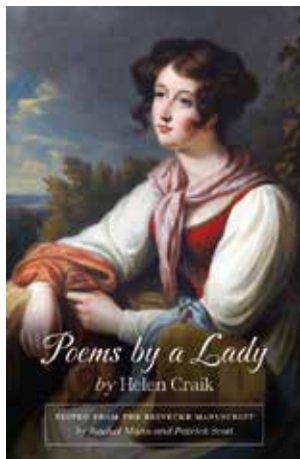
Above, Blaeu's map of the Lothians (1654), on display in our 'Treasures' exhibition

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by Helen Craik

EDITED FROM THE BEINECKE MANUSCRIPT

by Rachel Mann and Patrick Scott



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→ The maps often presented old information – many of them (as for Scotland) had been drafted more than a half-century earlier – and they formed an inconsistent, geographic spread across the known world. There was no defining intellectual principle to the work but, in its sheer bulk, it was awesome.

Blaeu's printing presses became the largest in the world at the time; impressive industrial-scale operations, described in glowing terms by visitors from far and wide. His main older press was located on Bloemgracht in Amsterdam with nine presses for books and six presses for maps, employing around 80 men working full-time.

In 1667, Blaeu acquired a second press at Gravenstraat, where most of the map plates were probably printed. It is estimated that 650 copies of the 'Atlas Maior' were printed with text in Latin, 400 in French, 300 in Dutch and 200 in Spanish (our copy is in Latin).

Collectively, this amounts to printing some 950,000 map pages, and 5.4 million text pages for one work – a staggering



achievement, even when spread over several years.

Joan Blaeu's career mirrored the success of his map publishing. From 1651 to 1672 he served on the Amsterdam City Council without a break, holding several public offices. Blaeu used his wealth to invest in Dutch colonial activities in North America, owning sugar plantations on the Virgin Isles. He had married in 1634 and by the 1660s had three sons and three daughters. However, disaster was about to strike.

In February 1672 a fire broke out in the printing press at Gravenstraat. There are conflicting accounts of the episode but the damage was enormous, destroying not only thousands of paper sheets and printed maps but also metal for type and copper plates which "stacked in the corners, melted like lead in the flames".

Left, a detailed 'Atlas Maior' storage cabinet, courtesy of the Allard Pierson, University of Amsterdam

Above, the Blaeu World Map – 'Nova Et Accvratissima Totius Terrarvm Orbis Tabvla' (1665)

Although his other press at Bloemgracht limped along, it was a painful and bitter blow for Blaeu.

The disaster was made worse by Blaeu's fall from political office under the new regime of William III (of Orange) later that year. Many of his surviving copper plates were soon sold

and in December 1673, Blaeu died, leaving his 22-year-old son in control of the company.

The Blaeu press continued to publish maps and other works, but its heyday was over, and the firm ceased operations in the early years of the 18th century. *

You can view our copy of the Blaeu Atlas of Scotland in the 'Treasures of the National Library of Scotland' exhibition at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. It is on display until March 2024.



Aesthetic considerations such as sumptuous bindings, fine engraving, bright colour and beautiful typography were emphasised



Sgeul | Story:

Folktales from the Scottish Highlands

Our first dual language exhibition celebrates the work of John Francis Campbell, a 19th-century figure who saved Gaelic folktales from dying out



A keen comparative mythologist, Campbell (pictured left) was inspired by other significant collections such as folktales written during the Islamic Golden Age (often referred to in the English-speaking world as 'Arabian Nights'), as well as the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm in Germany.

Convinced Scotland had as rich a resource of folktales owing to its Celtic and Nordic influences, he made it his life's work to ensure Gaelic tales endured.

Campbell documented his travels by making many notebooks but he was also a keen visual artist and captured the essence of people, communities, sites and landscapes through sketches and paintings.

This exhibition highlights his own personal library (a collection held at the Library) and the manuscripts and published works of his endeavours.

Visitors can also experience Campbell's work through a range of mixed media – his artworks as well as Gaelic folktales brought to life via sound recordings made for the exhibition.

The images of Campbell of Islay's diaries and sketchbooks are also available to view on our website, nls.uk.

The exhibition opened in June this year and runs until April 2024, at our George IV Bridge building in Edinburgh. Entry to all of our exhibitions is free.

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The display is the result

of workshops with the University of Newcastle on the topic of political texts. The project was funded by an AHRC Research Network Grant.

'Encountering Political Texts' opens on Friday 8 December and runs until Saturday 20 April 2024 at George IV Bridge, Edinburgh. Open Monday to Saturday. Free entry.



Front and back covers of 'The Life of John Milton' (1761)



Sgeul | Story: Sgeulachdan bho Ghaidhealtachd na h-Alba

Fo-cheann-sgrìobhadh: Seo a' chiad taisbeanadh dà-chànanach againn a-riamh a tha a' comharrachadh obair Iain Frangan Caimbeul - Iain Òg Ìle - fear bhon 19mh linn a rinn a dhicheadl gus sgeulachdan Gàidhlig a bha ann an cunnart dol à bith a shàbhaladh.

Bha an Caimbeulach na fhaoin-sgeulaiche coimeasach dealasach, agus e air a bhrosnachadh le cruinneachaidhean cudromach eile leithid sgeulachdan a chaidh a sgrìobhadh aig an àm Òir Ioslamach (ris an can saoghal na Beurla na 'h-Arabian Nights'), a bharrachd air na sgeulachdan sìthe a chruinnich na Bràithrean Grimm anns a' Ghearmailt.

A' creidsinn gun robh stòras cho beairteach de bheul-aithris aig Alba ri linn na buaidh Ceiltich is Lochlannaich a bha oirre, dh'obraich e fad a bheatha gus dèanamh cinnteach gum maireadh sgeulachdan Gàidhlig.

Rinn an Caimbeulach cunntas air na tursan aige le bhith a' dèanamh mòran leabhraichean de nòtaichean, ach bha e cuideachd na neach-ealain lèirsinneach dealasach, agus ghlac e brìgh dhaoine, choimhearsnachdan, àiteachan agus cruthan-tìre tro sgeidsichean

agus dealbhan. Bidh an taisbeanadh a' coimhead gu sònraichte air an leabharlann phearsanta aige (cruinneachadh a tha air a chumail anns an Leabharlann Nàiseanta) agus air na làmh-sgrìobhainnean agus na h-obraichean foillsichte aige.

Gheibh luchd-tadhail eòlas cuideachd air obair a' Chaimbeulaich tro raon de mheadhanan measgaichte – na h-obraichean ealain aige agus sgeulachdan beul-aithris Gàidhlig air an toirt beò tro chlàraidhean fuaim ùra a rinneadh gu sònraichte airson an taisbeanadh.

Tha inntrigeadh do na taisbeanaidhean againn uile an-asgaidh.

Tha na dealbhan de leabhraichean-latha agus leabhraichean-sgèidse Iain Òg Ìle rim faicinn air an làraich-lìn againn cuideachd.

Fosglaidh an taisbeanadh san

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Campbell's sketch of Rory Rum, storyteller, Mingulay. Top: Sketch of characters from Gaelic folktales, drawn by Campbell using peat



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those on pages 29–31), attend one of our many events, or even just enjoy a coffee at the café or explore the shop.

If you have a Library card you can use our reading rooms to consult the fascinating items in our collections.

As well as our main building in the Old Town, there is also a map reading room in Causewayside in Edinburgh, while you can access our film, sound and digital collections at the Kelvin Hall in Glasgow.

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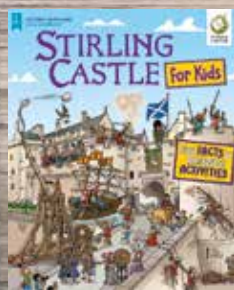
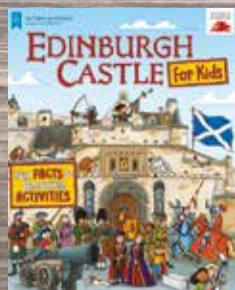
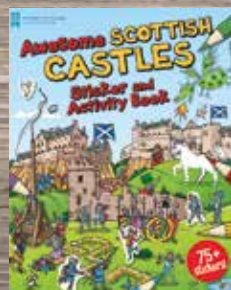
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