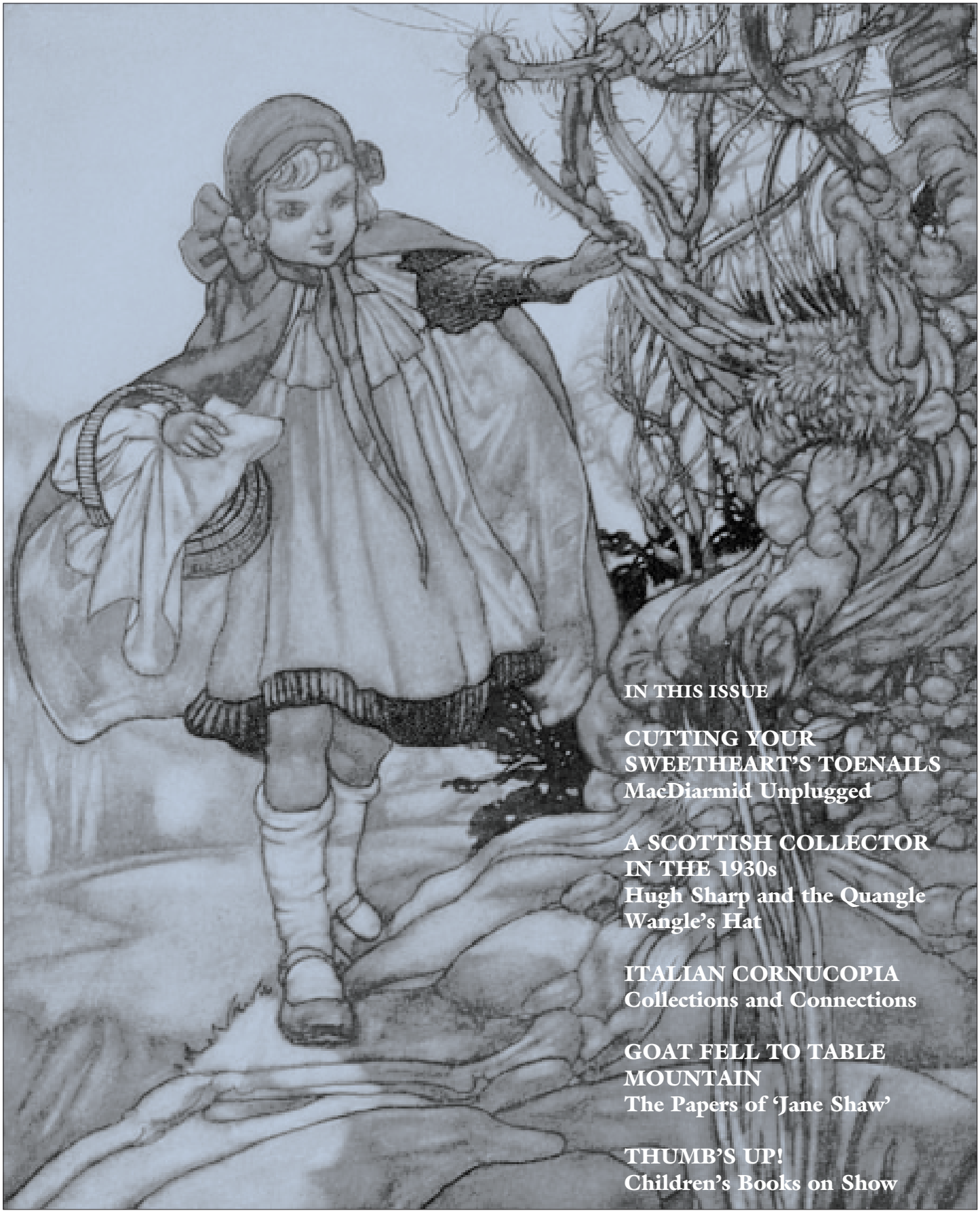
FOLIO

National Library of Scotland

Collections • Research • Events at the National Library of Scotland

ISSUE 4 SPRING 2002



IN THIS ISSUE

CUTTING YOUR SWEETHEART'S TOENAILS
MacDiarmid Unplugged

A SCOTTISH COLLECTOR IN THE 1930s
Hugh Sharp and the Quangle Wangle's Hat

ITALIAN CORNUCOPIA
Collections and Connections

GOAT FELL TO TABLE MOUNTAIN
The Papers of 'Jane Shaw'

THUMB'S UP!
Children's Books on Show

Crying Out to be Written

MacDiarmid History in the Making

Alan Riach

How far did the public persona of 'Hugh MacDiarmid' differ from the private man Christopher Murray Grieve? An icon of Scottish identity and one of the great writers of the twentieth century, Hugh MacDiarmid was dauntingly outspoken in his political views and no stranger to controversy and confrontation. In private life, however, Christopher Murray Grieve was a passionate, warm and vulnerable man who inspired intense admiration and love in his friends. The many facets of this complicated individual are expressed with uninhibited immediacy in his correspondence. As Alan Riach and his fellow editors of the New Selected Letters *discovered, the MacDiarmid material at the National Library of Scotland illuminates an extraordinary life.*

MacDiarmid is important for two reasons: he is a major poet and his writing has had an incalculable influence on the cultural and political life of twentieth-century Scotland. Both aspects of his work are vital and, like so much Scottish literature, massively under-researched. The Library has yielded crucial cross-references to MacDiarmid's relationships with contemporaries such as Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Neil Gunn, Naomi Mitchison, Helen Burness Cruickshank, John MacNair Reid, Sorley MacLean, Norman MacCaig – they all knew each other and wrote to each other. There is no comprehensive social literary history of their period. Why are we so reluctant to put personal anecdote into print? The history of the relationships of these writers and others – the composers and artists of the period – is crying out to be written. The archives of the Library are full of material demanding to be sifted and creatively interpreted. These were people whose lives were full of passion, intensity and difficulty. Their poetry and novels may be the lasting yield but a great deal more might be made of their biographies. For example, it is surely worth knowing that, probably just after his demobilisation, a young Christopher Grieve met Joseph Conrad in London, introduced by Edward Garnett. MacDiarmid mentions this in a radio talk on Conrad (MS.27058) but it isn't in Alan Bold's biography or anywhere else, as far as I know. Similarly, it's worth noting the speeches MacDiarmid gave on occasion: for example, the funeral oration, for James Barke; the speech on Polaris and the possibility of nuclear war in 1960 (both MS.27073). What were MacDiarmid's responses to key events in modern history? In an undated article (MS.27061) headed 'A Scottish Boy's Reading' he notes: '… at Easter 1916 [when he was twenty-three and in British uniform] in an English barracks I felt that I had suffered the sudden brutal and wanton loss of some of my best friends … and was seized with an overwhelming and permanent abhorrence for the uniform in which I was then parading.'

MacDiarmid's eager interest in the technological developments in popular culture, the idiosyncrasies of his friendships and acquaintances, his intimate personal responses to contemporary political events: knowledge of these helps humanise MacDiarmid and might subvert the process by which a poet becomes a caricature and a caricature becomes an icon. And in a culture so prone to unquestioning reliance on iconic self-representation (think of Burns or Scott), a more humanised comprehension of identity would help.

Sidelights illuminate features otherwise indistinct: it's valuable to remember that MacDiarmid championed the work of the Orkney film-maker Margaret Tait (MS.27058) and the actor Duncan MacRae (MS.27060), and wrote fugitive ephemera on such genuinely abstruse topics as 'The Drowned Man, in Literature' (Shakespeare, Milton, Swinburne, Hopkins), or 'The Joys of Guddling' and 'The Joys of Angling', or 'The Onychiomatic Test' (MS.27061) – an essay on the literature of fingernails or toenails, the test being whether you can endure the thought of cutting your sweetheart's toenails. There are many items that didn't get into the comprehensive selection of prose published by Carcanet – essays on 'The Libel About Scotland's Weather' or 'The Place of Photography in a Nation's Culture' or 'The Twelve Greatest Scotswomen' (MS.27061).

I had the chance to explore some of the Library's MacDiarmid holdings while working on my PhD. I was also lucky enough to gain the support of Michael Grieve, the poet's son, who put me through to Colin Hamilton and Kulgin Duval, who had been MacDiarmid's benefactors, and whose collection of manuscripts and rare items I was generously allowed to consult. This archive is now housed in the Library and formed much of the basis of what was to become the MacDiarmid 2000 project – the 'Collected Works' which Carcanet Press began publishing in August 1992, on the centenary of MacDiarmid's birth.

I'd moved to New Zealand by then, to teach at the University of Waikato, and when Carcanet took on the MacDiarmid project, thus began a kind of global, long-term rhythm of research. For ten years, the essential shape of this rhythm was that I would plan what had to be done in New Zealand, set off to Scotland to see the necessary people, go to the archives and dig up what I had to find, then go back to New Zealand and sort it out, prepare it for publication and present it. It was a productive time and the National Library of Scotland became the central locus of work – a uniquely exciting kind of work. The MacDiarmid project had to be balanced between scholarship and the immediate appeal to a neglected readership. For various reasons a significant hinterland of readers had been denied access to MacDiarmid's work. Many of his books were published by small presses in limited print-runs. More troublingly, political antipathy to his membership of the Communist Party seems to have led certain influential people to direct readers away from him; some readers have been put off by his use of the Scots language; his insistent nationalism led directly to his exclusion from some otherwise valuable accounts of twentieth-century poetry in English. Addressing an international readership through the agency of Carcanet Press – who not only publish Sorley MacLean, Edwin Morgan, Iain Crichton Smith, but also Les Murray and John Ashbery – dictated an ideal of accessibility.

When the first volumes in the series – a new *Selected Poems* and *Selected Prose* – appeared, they were reviewed on BBC Radio 4's Kaleidoscope programme by Joy Hendry and Peter Porter. Joy Hendry memorably said that MacDiarmid was 'the most important single figure in Scottish life in the twentieth century' but Porter seemed distanced from that kind of recognition, and was surely speaking for many readers when he said that for the first time MacDiarmid was being presented to him as 'a poet of great thinking capacity … The whole vision that I get from this new selection of MacDiarmid is that … few poets are so certain that the mind is the property of poetry, and few have been paid back so well for that trust, for putting that trust into it.'

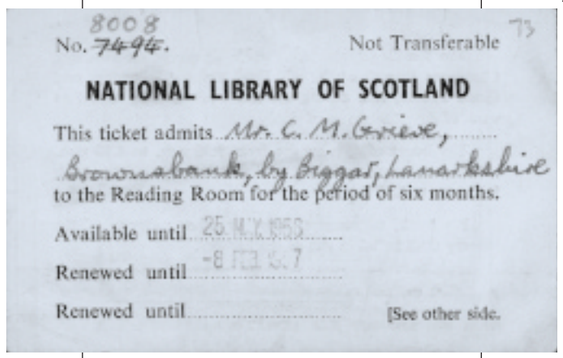
As an argumentative poet, as a poet of ideas, he comes over very strongly indeed. His reputation in Scotland has changed too. The American influence of the Beats and Black Mountain writers of the 1950s and 1960s led some Scottish writers to stigmatise MacDiarmid as no more than a nationalist fogey, when, in fact, as research into the Library archives has shown, MacDiarmid was reviewing William Carlos Williams and Wallace Stevens as early as the 1920s, and wrote welcoming Robert Creeley, Charles Olson and others in the late1950s – well before the 1960 publication of Donald Allen's influential anthology, *The New American Poetry.*

The 1960s saw MacDiarmid's status recognised by critics like Duncan Glen and Kenneth Buthlay but there was also a backlash of criticism. Good critical work came through in the 1980s but there was another critical reaction in the 1990s, especially from ostensible feminists unwilling to analyse and understand the complexity of the profoundly sexist world MacDiarmid came out of. Even more to the point would be an investigation of the women in MacDiarmid's life undertaken on their terms, rather than his. In the National Library of Scotland, the letters of Valda, his second wife, are a wonderful, daunting repository, displaying her vulnerability and her protective devotion to her husband and son as well as her independence of spirit and fierceness. In MS.27149 she talks of her Aunt Jane reading MacDiarmid's story 'Five Bits of Miller', reaching the bit about 'the ear' and becoming violently sick – 'she has definitely come to the conclusion that you're mad'. Yet there is also a letter of 1934 that includes these lines: 'life isn't worth living in my opinion – if only I had the pluck … suicide would be an easy way out … just swim out and out … beautiful blue sea … can go no further … arms up … a few gurgles and all is over … it sounds so easy but …' In the story of the Grieves' life together, so much hangs from that little word 'but'. If the pressures of living with MacDiarmid were great at times, the weight of the man's work was also felt by



Hugh MacDiarmid at Brownsbank, September 1976. (MS.27213/33)

Christopher Murray Grieve's National Library card, 1956–57. (MS.27214/73)



8008 No. 7494. Not Transferable 73

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

This ticket admits Mr. C. M. Grieve, Brownsbank, by Biggar, Lanarkshire to the Reading Room for the period of six months.

Available until 25 MAY 1957

Renewed until -8 FEB 57

Renewed until [See other side.

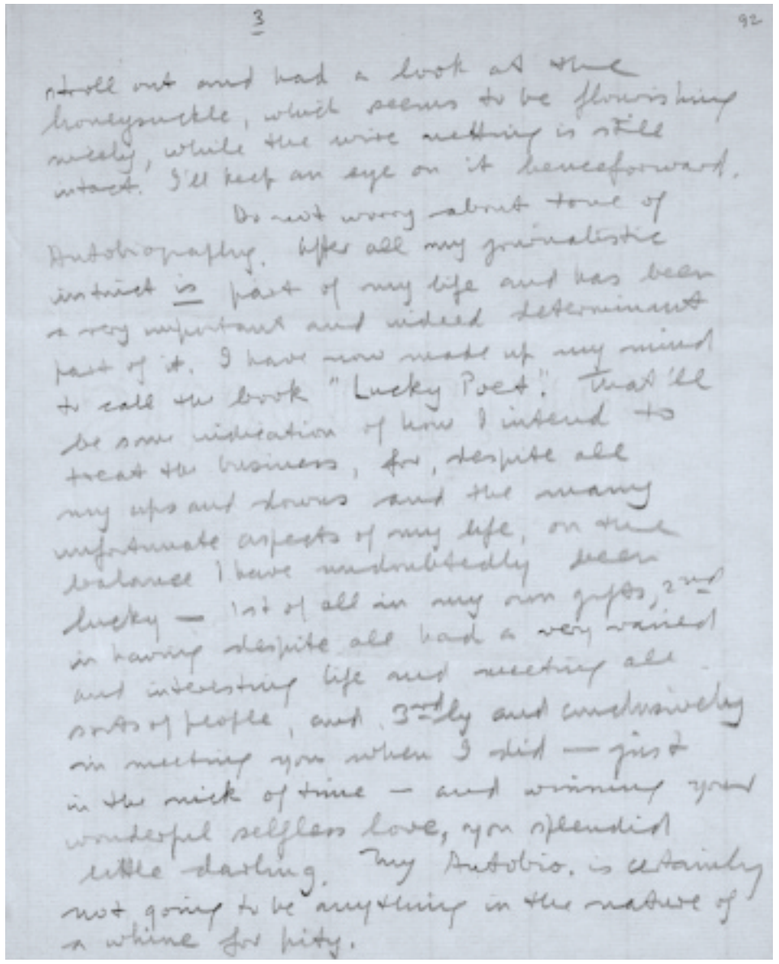
Chris and Valda Grieve. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the Hugh MacDiarmid estate.)



a number of Scottish writers of later generations, some of whom simply wished it would go away. So, in a sense, part of my work was to free up interpretation by providing the texts in a definite form – by making MacDiarmid history.

There was an urgency involved in this project particular to the moment. In another hundred years, perhaps, variorum editions will proliferate on CD-ROM or whatever technology might prevail then. How much time has had to pass before definitive editions of Shakespeare, Dickens, Scott or Stevenson could be prepared, if they ever can? How much closer and more dangerous was a project like this! MacDiarmid opens more doors into a greater number of disciplines, areas of interest, histories, landscapes, ways of understanding how the northern European world changed from the late-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century, than any other major modern writer. The Carcanet *MacDiarmid* really only begins to show this – there are many roads and byways still requiring exploration.

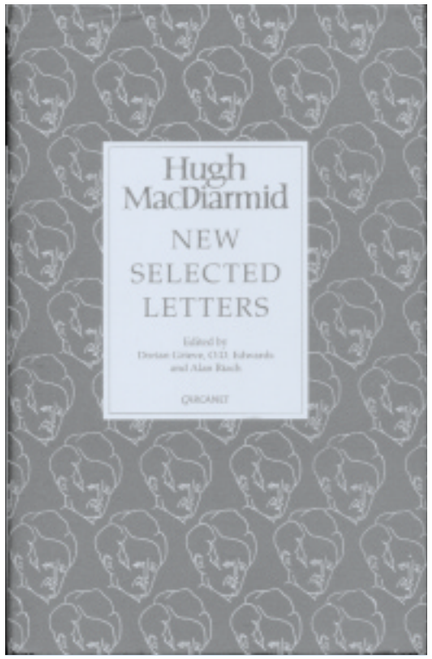
The Library offered two major resources: the printed items in newspapers, journals and books, and the manuscript archives in the Special Collections Division. The periodicals and newspapers were a revelation. We take so much for granted, reading our daily paper: we don't consciously keep in mind the evolution of the press, the way newspapers looked four years or forty or eighty years ago. I read the polemical essays and exhortations penned by C.M. Grieve or 'Mountboy' or 'A Special Correspondent' or a dozen other pseudonyms alongside contemporary advertisements for farmers' chicken-feed or washing-up powders or the latest cure for lumbago. What would his first readers have made of him, as they turned the page from an article summarising the latest town council pontifications or local church luminaries' ruminations to the punchy aggression of 'The Present Position of Scottish Arts and Letters'? Newspapers and periodicals provided a wealth of material well beyond all previous bibliographies. The pseudonyms were a problem. One series of articles was promised, advertised, begun but never completed; tracking through later issues of the journal in which they appeared, a second series on a different but related



3 92

stroll out and had a look at the honeysuckle, which seems to be flourishing nicely, while the wire netting is still intact. I'll keep an eye on it henceforward.

Do not worry about tone of Autobiography. After all my journalistic instinct is part of my life and has been a very important and indeed determinant part of it. I have now made up my mind to call the book "Lucky Poet". That'll be some indication of how I intend to treat the business, for, despite all my ups and downs and the many unfortunate aspects of my life, on the balance I have undoubtedly been lucky — 1st of all in my own gifts, 2nd in having despite all had a very varied and interesting life and meeting all sorts of people, and 3rdly and undivisively in meeting you when I did — just in the nick of time — and winning your wonderful selfless love, you splendid little darling. My Autobio. is certainly not going to be anything in the nature of a whine for pity.



MacDiarmid explains that he has decided to call his autobiography *Lucky Poet*: 'That'll be some indication of how I intend to treat the business, for despite all my ups and downs and the many unfortunate aspects of my life, on the balance I have undoubtedly been lucky… My Autobiography is certainly not going to be anything in the nature of a whine for pity.' Letter to Valda, c. 1936. (MS.27221/92)

Carcanet's *New Selected Letters* (H3.202.0408) draws extensively from MacDiarmid correspondence at the National Library of Scotland.

subject began but then the first series seemed to be resumed, in a much less polemical style and under a more anonymous pseudonym – two initial letters. I was pretty certain this was MacDiarmid at work again, but couldn't be one hundred per cent sure. I showed photocopies to W.R. Aitken, MacDiarmid's bibliographer and the first editor of the *Complete Poems*. He smiled in recognition: 'Oh, there is no question,' he said. 'That's him all right.' The newspaper editor would have stopped the series when it became too hot to handle – too many establishment figures getting egg on their faces. Then MacDiarmid would have infiltrated again after a break, saying the same sort of thing in a more reasonable tone.

There were important discoveries in Edinburgh University Library, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and the New York University Library at Buffalo (with help from Robert Creeley and the poetry curator Robert J. Bertholf). But crucially, for three months in 1995, I worked almost exclusively in the National Library of Scotland's Special Collections.

My co-editors in the MacDiarmid project were Angus Calder, Owen Dudley Edwards, Dorian Grieve, Glen Murray, Roderick Watson; John Manson and others gave invaluable contributions. However, as we acknowledged in the *New Selected Letters*, 'Librarians make work such as ours possible,' and it is no exaggeration to say that the work simply could not have been completed without the assistance of Library staff. It was a ten-minute walk from my flat in Edinburgh to the Reading Room, and, once there, practically no time before the manuscripts were on the table. There is an intense sense of connection when you interpret from written manuscript. The poems, stories, articles, journalist's notebooks and letters among MacDiarmid's papers all revealed aspects of the man. There are jottings, plans for unwritten books and short stories, collections of poems and notes for speeches at events unrecorded hitherto in the critical accounts. Such papers are also



Christopher Grieve and his son Michael on Whalsay. (Reproduced with the kind permission of the Hugh MacDiarmid estate.)

highly suggestive of the preoccupations of day to day life.

Perhaps the most revealing manuscripts, though, are the letters. There are letters written in white anger – full of raging dashes and broken sentences – and there are the long, formulaic, eloquent letters of polite formality yet containing hints of other stories working through the man's life in deeper strata. Nowhere does the extent of pain Chris Grieve suffered become more apparent than in the letters to his first wife, her lover and, most terribly, the children Chris had with her, whom she took with her when she left him. In MS.27148 a letter addressed to his first wife begins: 'My dear Peggy, Valda's courage is perhaps indeed beyond comprehension to you, for it turns on the little word "love" of which you know nothing. This must be my last letter to you.' It wasn't, though, and memories of Peggy and his hopes for his first love continued to haunt him terribly, as the *New Selected Letters* volume shows.

Yet there is an emergence. The long sequences of letters to Valda and to their son, and then, much later in his life, the letters to his daughter and son from his first marriage after he was reconciled with them, tell a profoundly moving story of loyalty growing through and beyond the passions of youthful love.

Ardour was never lacking in MacDiarmid's emotional bank but what comes through the letters published in 2001 is, in the end, a sustaining trust in the resources of nature, a joy in remembering and a willingness to face the unknown with courage – confident, despite whatever risk. In his last interview, MacDiarmid said that he'd been told that he'd published over a hundred books and pamphlets and would 'hate like hell to see them all lined up in front of me!' Perhaps he would have disapproved of the 'Collected MacDiarmid' but I cannot imagine that he would disapprove of the extent to which our humanity stands so revealed in his story. And there is yet so much more to be told …

Note on sources

At the National Library of Scotland, the main body of the correspondence of Hugh MacDiarmid (1892–1978) is catalogued as MSS.27001–27246 and MSS.26031–26035; other accessions and MacDiarmid-related material too numerous to detail here may be identified through the Library's catalogues of manuscripts and printed books. MacDiarmid biographer Alan Bold drew extensively from Library holdings for *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid* (1984). Further correspondence that has since come into the public domain forms the basis of *Hugh MacDiarmid: New Selected Letters* (2001) edited by Alan Riach, Owen Dudley Edwards and Dorian Grieve, who have drawn on correspondence covering every aspect of his life, including many personal letters, some passionate and tender, others electric with invective.

‘No Battered Derelicts’

Hugh Sharp and his Books

On the afternoon of 10 December 1937, Hugh Sharp was travelling by train from Dundee to Glasgow to visit his fiancée. Just after 4.30 the train drew to a halt at Castlecary, west of Falkirk. A snowstorm was raging and the driver of the Edinburgh train did not see a vital red signal in the darkness and murk. Disaster struck. The express train from Edinburgh to Glasgow ploughed into the back of Sharp’s train and he and thirty-four others lost their lives.

Hugh Sharp had been born into rather privileged circumstances and was brought up in splendid surroundings. In 1904, his father, proprietor of John Sharp and Sons, jute spinners in Dundee, had purchased Wemyss Hall near Cupar in Fife, changed its name to Hill of Tarvit, and commissioned the Scottish architect Robert Lorimer to transform the late-seventeenth-century mansion. The house was filled with Chinese porcelain, pictures and tapestries, and fine furniture, including new pieces designed by Lorimer himself. (The house and contents are today preserved as a National Trust property.)

Sharp junior went to school at Rugby and was seventeen when World War I broke out. In 1915 he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Royal Field Artillery Special Reserve, and ended the war as a Lieutenant and Acting Staff Captain. Mentioned twice in despatches, he was awarded the Military Cross in October 1917, and by the Armistice, had also received the French Croix de Guerre and the Italian Order for Valour. After the war he spent some terms at Oxford, but soon left university to embark on a business career.

His business activities thrived despite the 1929 crash, around which time he started book collecting, no doubt aware of the investment potential of rare books and manuscripts, particularly in the context of a ‘bear’ market. Sharp went into book collecting with firm aims. He wanted first issues and material in the finest original condition possible: ‘There must be no battered derelicts which, although technically correct, are neither pleasant to read nor suitable as bibliographical specimens’, as he writes in his introduction to *The Short-Title Catalogue of the Hugh Sharp Collection*, Edinburgh, 1954 (H.S.1245). The main subjects he covered were literature, history and sport, concentrating on British and American material. He accumulated around 1,500 volumes, with many fine examples of important books.

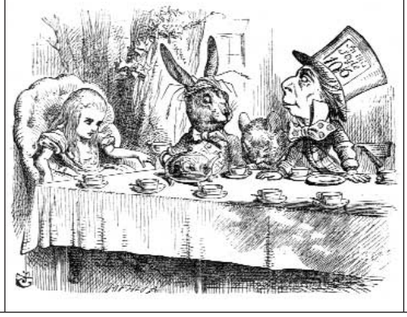


Hugh Sharp (1897–1937)

Hugh Sharp, a successful Dundee businessman and book collector, met a tragically early death in a railway accident in 1937. Subsequently, his private book collection was donated to the National Library of Scotland by his family. Here Murray Simpson discusses some of the high spots of the Hugh Sharp Collection and interprets the collecting approach of the man who assembled it.

MURRAY C. T. SIMPSON

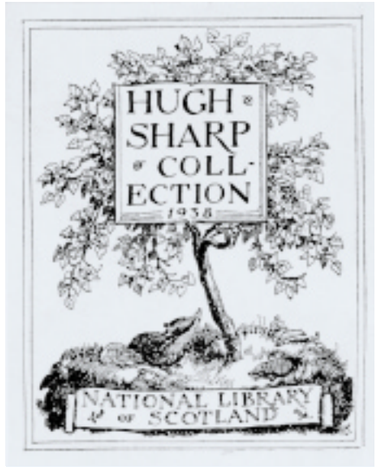
Below: Tenniel’s illustration of the Mad Hatter’s tea party for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*; the Hugh Sharp collection includes the rare first issue of 1865 (H.S.255), which was recalled from circulation shortly after publication.



There are various clues as to how he went about acquiring his books. In the Sharp Collection there is a letter from Charles des Graz of Sotheby’s, dated 15 June 1933, discussing his purchase of a superb first edition (1813) in original boards of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (H.S.146-148). This copy had come from the Bellew family mansion in the west of Ireland, where it had lain undiscovered in a locked cupboard for over a hundred years. From the same source came Sir Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy* (1818) (H.S.80-82), also in the original boards – this pristine copy is shown in the frontispiece of Greville Worthington’s *Bibliography of the Waverley Novels* (1931) (H.S.975). Also acquired in 1933 was the magnificent Huth-Rosebery copy of the 1611 Authorized Version of the Bible (H.S.385), which was on display at the Library’s *Scotland’s Pages* exhibition in the summer of 2000.

In January 1936, the great American book dealer Dr Rosenbach acquired at auction, on Sharp’s behalf, Washington’s own copy of his *Official Letters to the Honorable American Congress* (1795) (H.S. 597-598), containing marginal notes in the hand of the editor, John Carey, and with Washington’s signature on the title page of each volume; Rosenbach described this as ‘the finest book from Washington’s library’.

Some of Sharp’s incoming correspondence reflects the contacts he made with others in the world of rare books. There is a letter from the Philadelphian collector, Morris Longstreth Parrish, whose obsession with original condition mirrored Sharp’s, and who visited him in 1935. In a letter to Sharp, Flora Livingston of the Harry Widener Library declared: ‘“Parrish” condition is proverbial here’. There are also letters from some other collectors, librarians, dealers and bibliographers (including Percy Muir, Michael Sadleir and Geoffrey Keynes), discussing matters of mutual interest. The Muir letter is loosely inserted into *Points, 1874–1930* (H.S.973). The book is inscribed ‘For



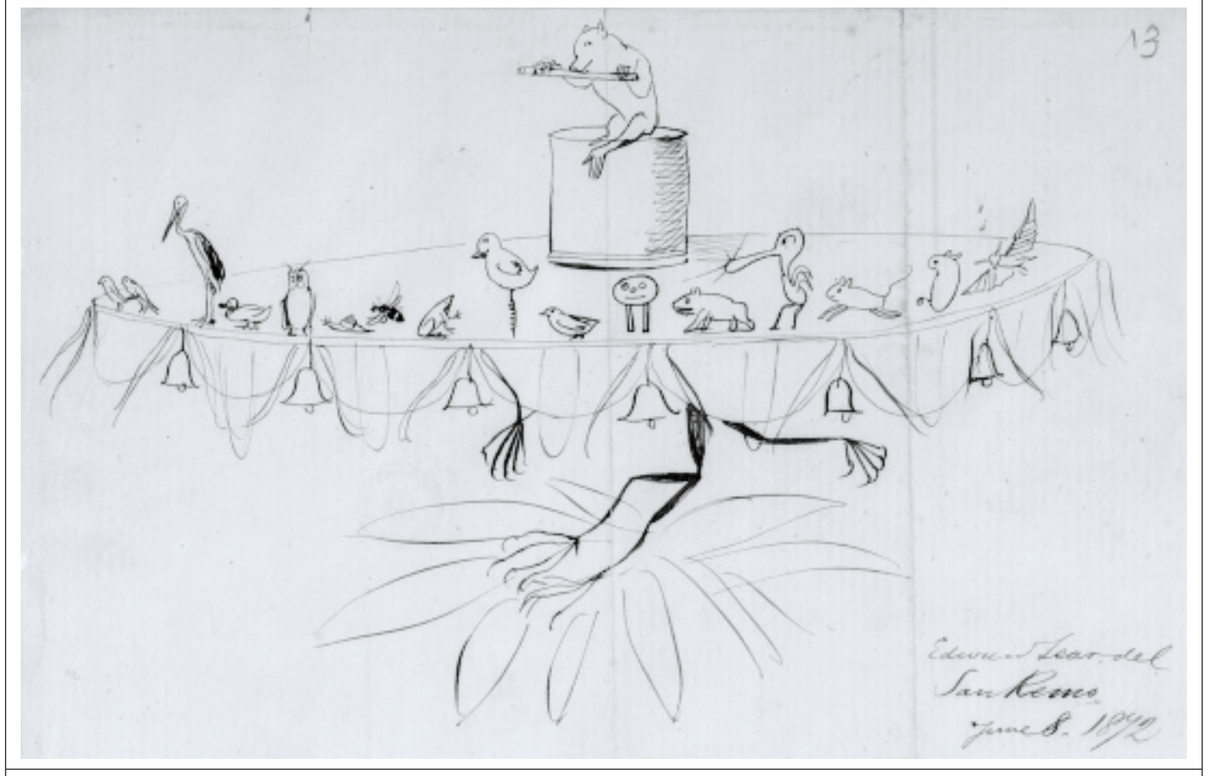
E.H. Shepard was commissioned by the Sharp family to design the bookplate for the Hugh Sharp Collection. Placing the plate in each volume was a specific condition of the bequest.

Hugh Sharp. Hoping these points will be blunted by the impeccability of his library’. The Muir letter is relatively formal, but the two notes by Geoffrey Keynes, also written in 1931, show real frienship and urge Sharp to visit. The Sadleir letter, dated 1935, is likewise warm in tone, asking when Sharp would next be in London, as he was keen to have ‘bibliographical chat’ with him. Sharp’s copy of the first edition of Elizabeth Gaskell’s *Cranford* (1853) (H.S.128) bears the Sadleir bookplate.

The Sharp Collection includes first issues of work by most major British and American writers from the eighteenth century onwards, including Fielding, Sterne, Hazlitt, Hogg, Scott, Galt, Austen, the Brontës, Dickens, Thackeray, Stevenson, Conrad, Poe, Whitman, Melville, Twain and so on, right up to a signed copy of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* (1936) (H.S.705). Among highlights worthy of particular mention are the 1532 Chaucer (H.S.215), Isaak Walton’s *Life of John Donne* (1658) (H.S.6) with corrections in Walton’s hand, and a copy of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) (H.S.203) gifted by Scott to Dorothy Wordsworth. There is also some French literature, including *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1865) (H.S.776-793), all eighteen volumes in original wrappers.

Sharp’s Americana includes Richard Curle’s *Collecting American First Editions* (H.S.710) and other such specialist works. He had both a first issue of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) (H.S.480–481) and her *Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, published the following year (H.S.632/1), which is is stored at the Library along with two poignantly evocative items – a deed of sale (H.S.632/2), for Lettice and Winney, slaves, sold for $278 in 1829 in the county of Edgecombe and a notice printed in jaunty typography on lilac paper, announcing the ‘Sale of Sugar Plantation and Slaves’ at the St Louis Hotel Rotunda, on 12 January 1852. The 129 slaves include three twelve-year-old children and a man of seventy.

Hugh Sharp did not collect much manuscript material. However, an album (H.S.389) of miscellaneous documents includes a letter signed by Bonnie Prince Charlie as ‘Prince Regent’, bearing his seal, its bright red wax fresh and uncracked, the impress crisp and fresh. The single-page folio missive, dated 7 September 1745, appoints ‘a captain of his Majesty’s forces in the regiment commanded by Euan McPherson of Clunie’. The auction catalogue



Edward’s Lear’s pen and ink drawing of ‘The Quangle Wangle’s Hat’. (H.S.389 /13)

description of this item, also bound into the volume, states:

McPherson held command of a company in Lord Loudoun's regiment, and, although the clan had fought for the Pretender in 1715, he professed his determination to support the Government. On 28th August, 1745, he was seized in his own house during the night by a large party from the Young Pretender's army, and brought as a prisoner to their camp.

It seems that McPherson was persuaded to support the Jacobite cause and subsequently aided the Prince in his escape to France.

The album also contains original manuscripts of Edward Lear's 'The Pobble who had no Toes' (this version consists of ten verses, four more than the original printed version), and of 'The Quangle Wangle's Hat' with Lear's pen and ink drawing. Two letters in the album relate to the Lear acquisitions. A letter from Angus Davidson dated 4 February 1936 notes difficulties he encountered in tracing Lear papers that were apparently dispersed at auction in 1929 and 1932; thanking Sharp for the loan of certain Lear items, Davidson requests permission to reproduce the hitherto unpublished part of 'The Pobble'. Sharp's album also contains a letter, dated 8 August 1933, from George Lushington, explaining that the 'Quangle Wangle' poem and drawing had been given to his elder sister, Louisa Gertrude, who was Lear's god-daughter. Davidson's *Edward Lear: Landscape painter and Nonsense Poet (1812–1888*) (NC.259a.17), published by John Murray in 1936, contains the variant stanzas of Sharp's 'The Pobble'.

'The Old Man of Leghorn' from *A Book of Nonsense* by Derry Down Derry (H.S.949-950). The extremely rare first edition of Edward Lear's first book of nonsense verse will be on display at the Library's summer exhibition of children's books.

Also of Lear interest is a small sketchbook (H.S.954) kept by the artist, containing vividly depicted birds and butterflies – the latter cut out and mounted on pencil drawings of foliage to give a '3D' effect. The collection includes both the rare 1846 first published edition of Lear's *A Book of Nonsense* (H.S.949-950), and the Privately Printed edition (H.S.948) of the same year, as well as first editions of *More Songs, Stories, Botany and Alphabets* (1871) (H.S.952), *More Nonsense* (1872) (H.S.951) and *Laughable Lyrics* (1877) (H.S.953).

Album H.S.389 contains a poem written in the hand of Andrew Lang on Royal and Ancient Golf Club notepaper, which opens:

Forget me not, although I broke your putter
Beating your dog; and cheated you at pool,
And sent you homeward senseless on a shutter
And very often bullied you at school;
Forget me not, although the maid who loved you
Prefers my own congenial caress,
Remember how I was the man who shoved you
Into the Harbour once, in evening dress!

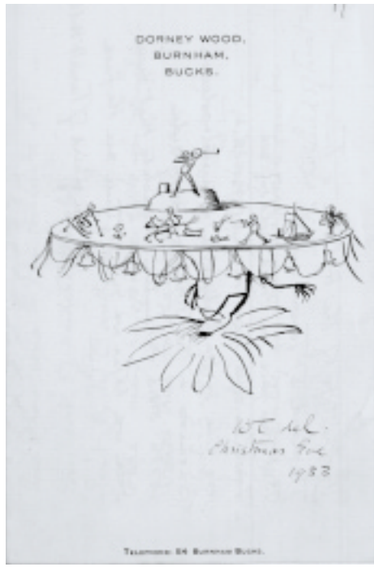
Sharp was a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, St Andrews – golf being one of his many sporting pursuits.

The Sharp Collection includes some notable 'Lewis Carroll' items including the rare 1865 edition of *Alice in Wonderland* (H.S.255) and a copy of the 1869 edition of *Phantasmagoria* inscribed by the author to Dean Liddell of Christ Church, Alice Liddell's father (H.S.260). The collection also includes two specially produced Christmas cards: the 1930 card features, in facsimile, a poem inscribed by 'Lewis Carroll' on the fly-leaf of Sharp's copy of *The Hunting of the Snark* (H.S.262); the other card, described by Sharp as his 'Christmas Carroll' for 1931, shows a poem written in his 1866 *Alice* (H.S.257). In both cases the dedicatee of the verse was Marion Bessie Terry, younger sister of the more famous Ellen. Sharp sent a copy of the 1930 card to T.J. Wise, the bibliophile who four years later would be exposed by John Carter and Graham Pollard as an audacious forger of collectors' desiderata. Wise's reply thanks Sharp 'for the gift of this most interesting and attractive little waif'.

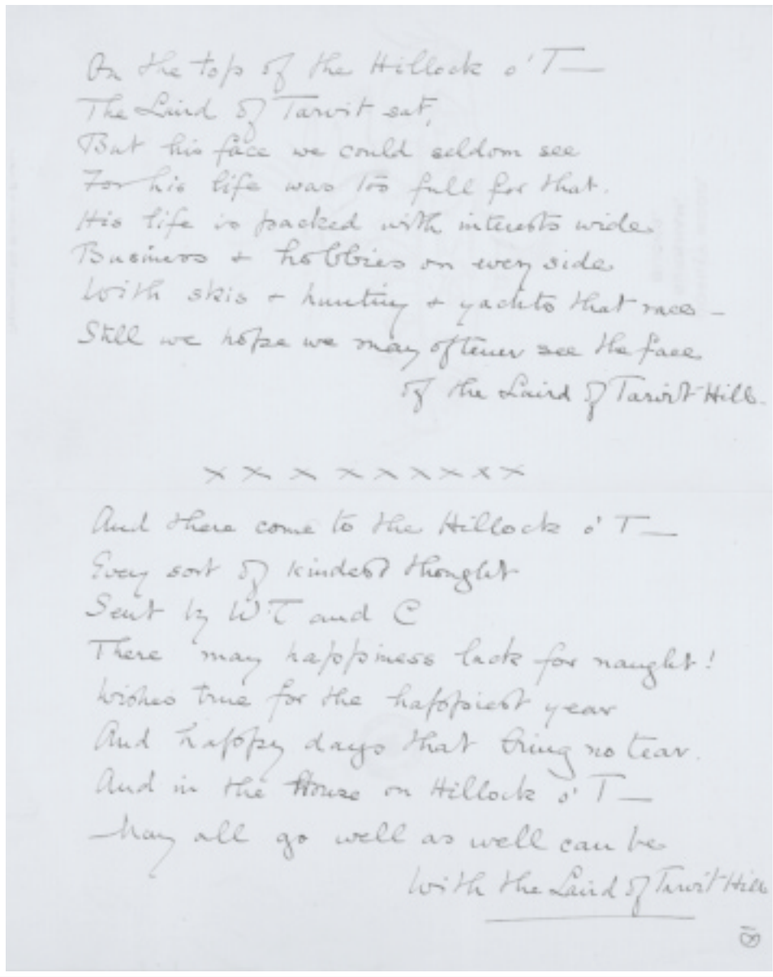
Only 1,240 of Sharp's collection of 1,500 volumes actually came to the Library. This discrepancy is not explained in any extant documentation. The Library has two typescripts of Sharp's own catalogue of his collection: one came with the gift, whilst the other, longer version, arrived in 1981, presented by Sharp's surviving executor. Both are full of notes recording 'points' establishing primacy of issue, such as 'reversed comma on page 235', or 'with "and" for "an" on page 168', and the like. The cataloguing seems to have been kept up to date until the latter half of 1936. In these typescripts, certain items are scored through in pencil, but not always the same items in the two copies. The present whereabouts of nearly all the items scored through remains a mystery.

Preparation of a printed catalogue of the Hugh Sharp Collection began in 1949 and proofs were ready in 1954, but a decision against publication was made, partly for financial reasons but also because, according to a Library memo, 'a small collection of books of such disparate character can hardly be extensive enough within any one field to be of significance to any single branch of serious study …' Another memo, dated 22 May 1962, from the Keeper of Printed Books, D.M. Lloyd, to the Librarian, Dr W. Beattie, went further: 'The publication of the catalogue might even be hurtful to the reputation of Hugh Sharp. He died a young man of 35 [*sic*] and, with increasing experience, would probably have sold many of his books and specialised in certain kinds of Americana and the English novel. It is hardly fair to draw undue attention to such unfinished ends as the collection presents in its present state.'

While it is true that the Sharp Collection may be too diverse and small to be considered truly first-rate, it contains some wonderful examples of major works in first issue state. Its value as a piece of social history has emerged with the passage of time, in that it can now be perceived as illuminating the efforts of a Scottish collector in the 1930s who had at his disposal considerable wealth and the services of top flight book dealers. As a result of the 1937 tragedy, we will never know whether Hugh Sharp's collecting zeal was destined to peter out or to develop in a seriously thematic way. That the National Library of Scotland has benefited from the generous bequest of the Hugh Sharp Collection is beyond dispute.



A family card with affectionate spoof verse and picture based on 'The Quangle Wangle's Hat'. (H.S.389/17)



Note on sources

The Hugh Sharp Collection comprises over 1,200 volumes, including many fine first editions of the classics of English and American literature. The collection was gifted to the Library by Hugh Sharp's mother and sister with the proviso that each volume in it should bear Hugh Sharp's memorial bookplate. The shelf-mark of all volumes in the collection bears the prefix 'H.S.'. Further detailed information may be gleaned from *H.F.B. Sharp, Books of American and Canadian Interest, 1613–1932*, Privately Printed [1932] (H.S.1242). *The Short-Title Catalogue of the Hugh Sharp Collection*, Edinburgh, 1954 (H.S.1245), compiled by Hugh Sharp, contains his own notes about many of the works. Inscriptions, letters and papers inserted in the printed books are described and indexed in volume 2 of the Library's *Catalogue of Manuscripts*. A concise overview of the Library's Special Collections is available in *Special and Named Printed Collections in the National Library of Scotland* (1999) edited by Graham Hogg (GNE.2000.2.1), and an online directory is available on the Library's website at www.nls.uk/catalogues/online/snpc/.

From Boccaccio to Berlusconi

The *Bel Paese* and the National Library of Scotland

The great strength of the Library's Italian collection is its astonishing scope and depth. Books and manuscripts from the fifteenth century through to contemporary times reflect Italian life and the influence of its writers, artists, politicians and thinkers. The collection demonstrates the key cultural role still played by Italy in a Europe moulded by Roman Emperors, medieval Florentine writers and bankers, Renaissance Venetians and twentieth-century Sicilian intellectuals. In highlighting the many facets of Scotland's relationship with Italy through the ages, it advances understanding of Scotland's identity in an international context.

CHRIS TAYLOR

Italian literature, art, music, philosophy and politics have greatly influenced Scottish life and letters. Think of Gavin Hamilton, Allan Ramsay, Christopher Whyte, Allan Massie and Muriel Spark – full interpretation of the work of these and many other Scots would not be possible without reference to the Italian connection. Correspondingly, in Italy there is a lively interest in things Scottish. For instance, books by and about David Hume, Adam Smith, Thomas Carlyle and Adam Ferguson feature regularly on scholarly publishers' lists; Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson are enduringly popular, while the work of Gaelic poet Kevin MacNeil is currently being well received in translation as part of *Dalle Ebridi a Malta* (HP1.201.3902).

The Italian collection's origins lie in the Library's foundation inheritance of the non-legal holdings of the Advocates' Library. These included substantial European collections built up from the 1680s onwards, reflecting Scotland's cultural and economic ties with the rest of Europe: French was the most strongly represented of the foreign languages, and there was also a strong emphasis on Latin. Two famous Florentines, Giovanni Boccaccio and Francesco Gucciardini, adorned the first Advocates' Library catalogue in 1692 and Italian language books continued to be added under the auspices of early keepers such as Thomas Ruddiman. In 1752 came the keepership of the great philosopher David Hume, who clashed with the directors over the purchase of various foreign books. The Library catalogue of the late eighteenth century showed a strong presence of Italian authors. However, the twilight of the Enlightenment saw a decline in the purchase of European books and as French revolutionary armies marched victorious, the Edinburgh advocates became more insular and fearful of importing republican ideas. As the nineteenth century advanced, lack of space and funds compounded the trend. From the perspective of Italian studies this was all the more disappointing and ironic because Italy was enjoying a literary and political renewal.

When the National Library of Scotland was established in 1925, overseas purchasing once more became an essential activity. Several significant purchases were made including the library and papers of John Purves (one of the founders of the Italian department at Edinburgh University), which contained late early nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature that was missing from the collections.

During the 1970s and early 1980s Italian book purchasing reached a new golden age, with budgets at an all-time high and a specialist curator appointed in 1971. New subscriptions were taken out to journals and monograph series, and connections were forged with people such as Renaissance scholar Professor Denys Hay, who served as a trustee of the Library, and sculptor and designer Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, part of whose archive (Acc.11632) is a component of the present collection.

Several manuscript collections at the Library include interesting Italian material. For instance, among the Cockburn Papers there are letters from the exiled writer Ugo Foscolo to Lord Jeffrey on topics as diverse as Dante and rheumatism. On 15 May 1818, he criticises Italian literary historians,

who, being court academicians, priests, and monks, have written under the dictation of princes, prejudices and the Inquisition. They have adopted and practised with a scrupulous fear the maxim of extracting literature from politics and religion, and they have never dared talk, or deal with, or even examine the influence of revolutions against governments or customs that have exercised on the genius of our writers. (Acc.3521 no.47)

Extraordinary insight into the political and social situation in mid-nineteenth century Italy is to be found in the papers of the 2nd Earl of Minto, one of the most internationally important manuscript collections at the Library. In 1848, Minto led a British diplomatic expedition to Italy. An ardent supporter of Italian unity, his papers include propaganda leaflets, broadsides and newspapers as well as correspondence with key figures such as Cavour and D'Azeglio. (Elsewhere in the Library's collections, items can be found in the handwriting of Garibaldi and Mazzini.) Vice-Admiral William Parker wrote to Minto on 29 January 1848 regarding the rebellion in Sicily:

I do myself the honour of transmitting for your Lordship's information, the latest accounts that I have received from Commander Key of the Bulldog, *relating to the revolt and proceedings at Palermo, in which he appears to have acquitted himself very satisfactorily.*

I also enclose the copy of a letter from Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Catania, reporting on an outbreak at that place on the 24th instant, and I have been since informed by a small vessel from Syracuse, that an insurrection is expected to take place there tomorrow.

I have detached the Hammer *to the former and the* Harlequin *to the latter point, for the due protection of British subjects and property.*

In this state of affairs I have ordered HMS Vanguard *to Corfu, and she will be followed in a few days by the* Rodney, *as I deem it expedient to have a naval force at the entrance of the Adriatic to meet any exigency their captains will be instructed to appear off the Neapolitan and Papal coasts, when the weather is favourable for their doing so: – the* Vengeance *is gone to Palermo.* (MS.12078)



***Amorosa: Visione di M. Gio Bocc Novamente Ri* published in Venice by Giolito di Ferrarii, 1549 ([AF].8/12a): title page, woodcut initial letters and decorative publisher's device.**

The British Vice-Consul in Catania had written to Parker on 25 January, 1848:

I beg to enclose you a despatch just received from Palermo, which ought to have arrived three days ago, but the courier was twice arrested on the road.

On the news of the events in Palermo reaching this place, the inhabitants took up the national cause and with the exception of two posts, the castle and prison, the city may be said to be in the hands of the Civic Guard and a committee elected by the inhabitants: – this was effected without bloodshed, with the exception of a skirmish last evening between a patrol of the Civic Guard and some soldiers.

I am enabled to add a few lines this morning to say that a regular attack has begun between the armed inhabitants, assisted by people from the neighbouring villages and the troops.

There is firing in every part of the city. The inhabitants have procured two canons from a native merchant vessel, and are making or about to make an attack on the Collegio Cutelli, one of the points still in possession of the troops.

There seems to be a great deal of enthusiasm on the part of the people. The Collegio Cutelli is close to my house and I can consequently see the whole proceedings. (MS.12078)

The immediacy of such eye-witness accounts of the Italian scene – though not usually of such dramatic events – is to be found in the Library's journals of the Grand Tour undertaken by Scots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In one particularly interesting collection of correspondence between the engineer Sir John Rennie and his equally eminent engineer father, John Rennie, Sir John eagerly reports back on civil engineering projects in Italy, as well as the country's transport, life, culture and food, not to mention the infamous bandits of Puglia in the early nineteenth century.

In terms of Italy in modern times, one of the most remarkable manuscript collections in the National Library is the papers of John Purves, who met and corresponded with many leading writers internationally. He kept notebooks of hand-written contributions by writers from the twentieth century including Montale, Palazzeschi, Landolfi, Soffici, Papini, Gadda, Luzi and Quasimodo. (Incidentally, *Incontri alle Giubbe Rosse* (H2.202.0001) published by Polistampa in 2000 is a record of the life of a café frequented by many of these writers and artists.) The second anthology notebook (Acc.7175) includes a contribution from Alberto Moravia, who wrote:

I will always hold the fond memory of the black and gold houses, of the clear sky, of the poetic profile of Edinburgh.

We are lucky to have this precious item. Later in 1948, Purves sent it to Dylan Thomas, who almost lost it. He writes to Purves:

Enclosed at last, your book. You have every reason to cherish it; its [sic] *a most remarkable collection; and I can imagine how you must have felt when you thought a nasty man, me, had lost it. I can't tell you how upset I was to realise how much I had upset you by my irresponsible carelessness.*

Thomas provided a handwritten poem, 'In My Craft or Sullen Art'. Edwin Muir and Norman MacCaig are among the Scottish contributors to Purves's anthologies, but appropriately the last word was left to the Sicilian poet and Nobel prize-winner, Salvatore Quasimodo, who dedicated his poem 'I Soldati Piangono di Notte' / 'The Soldier's Cry During the Night' to his 'dear friend, John Purves, 22 March, 1960'. This was to be the final entry in the Purves manuscript anthologies.

The Library continues to build its unique archive of material on the Italian Scots, a project which gained new momentum following the very successful exhibition on the subject in 1991 curated by Alison Harvey Wood.

Ten years later, an Italian Cultural Institute study day on Gabriele D'Annunzio held in the National Library was the occasion of a remarkable donation (Acc.12028) from an Italian Scot whose father had served in the Italian army during World War One and subsequently with Gabriele D'Annunzio at the infamous invasion of Fiume. Of Italian immigrant family, Libero di Folco was brought up in St Andrews and went to fight for the Italian Army in 1918, seeing action on the front around the river Piave. His diary and notes give vivid accounts of his wartime experiences that detail the misery of being bombarded, gassed and wounded, as well as daring forays to lay ambushes for the Austrians. This donation also includes photographs of Fiume at the time of D'Annunzio's expedition, three early editions of D'Annunzio's works, and di Folco's First World War and Fiume medals.

Allies in the First World War, Britain and Italy were military antagonists in the Second. The impact of this twist of international affairs on the happily integrated Scottish-Italian community was dramatic. The Library has a collection of fascinating notes (Acc.12029) by a St Andrews man of Italian origin, made during his internment in Saughton Prison, Edinburgh. (He was later transported to Australia.) It shows that, to keep up their spirits, the internees mounted various entertainments, including a boxing tournament; well-known surnames such as Paolozzi and Crolla appear among the entertainers.

Evidently, its manuscript holdings alone put the National Library of Scotland on the map for researchers into Italian matters. But its printed collections





Two recent additions to the Italian collections at the National Library of Scotland: *Le Metamorfosi di Venezia: da Capitale di Stato a Città del Mondo a cura di Gina Benzoni*. Florence: Olschi, 2001; and Arnaldo Pini's *Incontri alle Giubbe Rosse,* Firenze: Polistampa, 2000 (H2.202.0001) which describes a hub of artistic and literary life in the 1930s, the café where John Purves met many leading Italian writers.

contain equivalent treasures and reflect a similar scope. The Library holds a fine selection of Italian incunabula, including the complete works of Renaissance humanist Angelo Poliziano printed in Venice in 1498 by Aldus, and a 1481 Florentine edition of Dante. Early Scottish printers occasionally produced Italian-language books and in the eighteenth century Foulis of Glasgow printed editions of Tasso in 1753 and 1763. The Blairs College Collection contains books from the Scots College in Rome, and the Crawford Borghese Collection – currently on deposit – is a fine resource of documents relating to the administration of the Papal States. Other early printed collections include Newhailes, Newbattle and Tyninghame.

Most readers come to the Library in search of modern publications, and their needs are served with Library purchases of around 500 books a year from Italy. It also subscribes to more than 100 Italian journals, supplemented by British and Irish publications about Italy, ranging from *Critica Marxista* (QJ2.36.SER) to *Corriere della Sera* (Mf.N.19.SER).

As for book purchases in the fields of literature and philosophy, emphasis is placed on more established authors. Scholarly editions, complete works and critical studies of writers such as Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Bruno, Leopardi, Verga and Carducci have been acquired. Boccaccio, of course, still features strongly, with a subscription to the series *Studi sul Boccaccio* and the recent purchase of the luxury 1999 Vittore Branca edition of the Decameron, which contains superb reproductions from various medieval illustrators. Virtually all leading Italian twentieth-century writers are on the shelves; purchase of contemporary authors is focused on key writers such as Dacia Maraini, Dario Fo, Antonio Tabucchi, Mario Luzi and Umberto Eco. The Fellini, Pasolini and Benigni holdings have recently expanded, reflecting increasing interest in Italian cinema.

Political parties, trade unions, the evolution of the Left, the legacy of fascism, the Mafia, relations with Europe, constitutional crisis and the influence of the Catholic Church and the Mafia are all covered. Among recent purchases are books on the assassination of judges investigating the Mafia and the murder of former prime minister Aldo Moro by terrorists; studies of the legacy of Antonio Gramsci, whose political philosophy has been so well documented by the celebrated Scottish writer and folklorist, Hamish Henderson, who as Commander in Chief officially accepted the Italian surrender at the end of the Second World War. Acc.10528 contains an annotated typescript of his translations of Gramsci's letters.

Recent arrivals include the memoirs of long-serving former prime minister Giulio Andreotti, together with works surrounding his trial for Mafia connections, the parliamentary speeches of Italy's current Prime Minister, media-magnate Silvio Berlusconi, several books about the Northern League Italian separatists and their leader Umberto Bossi's role within the Berlusconi government.

As well as general works on the nation of Italy, there is detailed material on specific regions or cities: the history and culture of Sicily, Florence, Bologna, and Venice, in particular, are popular topics in the reading room. Scotland boasts a number of experts on these subjects, and as the only library in Scotland to have maintained its subscription to the important journal *Studi Veneziani*, the National Library of Scotland is vital to such Scottish researchers.

The works of publishers such as Einaudi, il Mulino, Polistampa, Marsilio, Olschki, and Bulzoni are well represented. The Library holds over 700 examples from the renowned intellectual publishing house Laterza, founded in Bari in 1901, including texts by Benedetto Croce, Rocco Scotellaro and Gaetano Salvemini, and publications on William Gladstone, David Hume and Thomas Carlyle. A generous donation of a further hundred volumes was made by Alessandro Laterza during his visit to the Library to mark his firm's centenary. Similarly, following the 2001 study day on Gabriele D'Annunzio, a number of books were donated by the Regione Abruzzo and associated publishers about this flamboyant figure – covering his genius as a poet, his posturing as a military hero, his love of fast cars, boats and planes, and his insatiable appetite for amorous adventure.

A recent survey showed that one reader in thirty-four in the Main Reading Room was researching Italian topics or using Italian publications. In many instances the Library holds the only publicly accessible copy of an Italian work in Scotland (sometimes in the United Kingdom), making it an essential resource for all those interested in the *bel paese*. Overall, the Library's Italian collection is indicative of the long-standing Scottish interest in overseas culture and the ongoing exchange of ideas and knowledge through the ages. It can truly be said to range from Boccaccio to Berlusconi. Hopefully, the Library will continue to develop the Italian collection in David Hume's spirit of a Scotland within Europe.

Note on sources

The internationally recognised UNESCO guidelines of 1987 state that a national library should collect a representative sample of foreign published material. Part of the National Library of Scotland's chosen sample is Italian publications. This is based on a long tradition of Italian book purchasing dating back to the days of the Advocates' Library collections. The main body of the John Purves Papers are catalogued under MSS.15560-901; Acc.7203 contains further papers and notebook Acc.7175/4 contains writers' contributions, as mentioned above. The National Library of Scotland has a unique and diverse archive of Italo-Scottish heritage that demonstrates Scotland's political and cultural relationship with Italy. Curator of the Italian collections, Chris Taylor, welcomes requests for information from researchers.

This book belongs to me

From Tom Thumb to Harry Potter

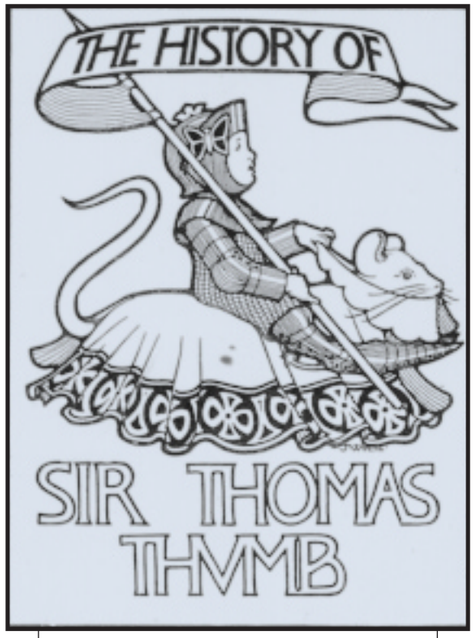
The genesis of children's literature from the seventeenth century through to the present day is the theme of the summer exhibition at the National Library of Scotland. Exhibits have been drawn from all over the Library, notably from the Hugh Sharp, Eudo Mason and Lauriston Castle Collections. *This book belongs to me: from Tom Thumb to Harry Potter* will offer a spectacular display of books expressing the development of the genre, assembled by guest curator, children's book expert Brian Alderson. To everyone's delight, Joanne Rowling has generously loaned her manuscript of the Quidditch chapter from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* – its first time on show in Scotland.

In the children's department of any modern bookshop, a starburst of images beckons youngsters to visit imagined worlds. How very different it was for children born into the seventeenth century. Before 1650, virtually no books were published for children; most could not read or write – the lucky few would learn from horn books made of bone and wood, showing the alphabet.

The first publications in conventional book form specifically aimed at children were moralistic works. The earliest children's book in the exhibition, *The Proverbs of Solomon: Newly translated out of the original tongue. Very commodious for the use of young children*, Edinburgh, 1672 (RB.s.441) is hardly recognisable as a children's book in today's terms: a manual of religious instruction, devoid of illustrations, reflecting austere Puritan values. Yet, as one of the earliest books printed in English for the use of children, this dull-looking volume is one of the Library's real treasures.



***The Famous History of Tom Thumb* (L.C.2734/7) published in London *c.* 1750. From the Lauriston Castle Collection.**



Jean Wylie's illustration in art-nouveau style for *Hop o' my Thumb and Other Fairy Tales*, Grant Richards *c.* 1903. (T.149.h)

The more fabulous and imaginative themes in children's literature have their roots in oral tales. Many such popular tales first appeared in print in chapbook form, sold around the country by itinerant peddlars. Of around 15,000 chapbooks printed in Scotland, the National Library has over 4,000; most are to be found in the Lauriston Castle Collection (L.C.2716–L.C.3193). A woodcut from one of them provides an amusing image of Tom Thumb, a character who has popped up in various guises over the years. *The Famous History of Tom Thumb* (L.C.2734/7) was published in London around 1750. Under the heading 'Of Tom's running at Tilt', it shows a side view of our vertically challenged hero astride a gorgeously plumed steed, clutching a miniature lance. A hint of a smile on the horse's face suggests that the absurdity of the situation appeals to the equine sense of humour.

Petit Poucet (or 'Hop o' my thumb') is another character who transmogrifies through the ages in a most fascinating way, starting out in the pages of Charles Perrault's collection of fairy tales (the first collection of fairy tales for children), published in Paris in 1697. 'Hop' seems to be related to Molly Whuppie (Maol a Chliobain), who appears in *Popular Tales of the West Highlands* (1860–62) collected by John Francis Campbell of Islay (1825–85). The J.F. Campbell Collection at the Library includes 610 printed items bound into 270 volumes (many of which bear the Gaelic scholar's annotations) – as well as his correspondence, journals, papers and maps.

The Library's collections (augmented by items from other sources) illustrate the exhibition's focus on the evolution and transformation of children's literature, through themes such as fairy tales, nonsense and wonderlands, desert islands, school stories, worlds beyond, fabulous animals and magic. *This book belongs to me: from Tom Thumb to Harry Potter* is mounted jointly by the National Library of Scotland and the Museum of Childhood, Edinburgh (see *Diary* column on the back page of *Folio*).



Cheeky and full of fun, one of Catherine Sinclair's own watercolour illustrations for her *Holiday House* (1839). (MS.24640)

A Woman with Ideas

The Papers of Jean Evans, 'Jane Shaw'

Alison Lindsay

The National Library of Scotland has collections of papers from publishers such as W. & R. Chambers and authors including Joan Lingard, Mollie Hunter and Allan Campbell McLean, which shed light on the inner workings of the world of children's publishing in the twentieth century. Its most recent acquisition in this area is the papers of Jean Evans, author of the 'Susan' series, who wrote numerous books for children, mainly under the pseudonym 'Jane Shaw'.

When I was at school, my class library included an abundance of Collins Children's Press hardbacks; it was amongst these shabby green copies that, at the age of nine, I first encountered 'Jane Shaw'. By fortunate coincidence, my initial choice fell on her first novel, *Breton Holiday* and from then on I delighted in each discovery of a new Jane Shaw title. She wrote school and adventure books and stories for children, set in Britain and abroad, many featuring Scottish characters; her characters are regularly plunged into a series of chaotic events and unexpected encounters, all with a highly comic flavour. But in the end, everything is happily resolved.

As an adult my interest developed, focusing as much on the author as on the books. I wanted to find out what I could about her life, and my research eventually led me to the author herself (in private life, Jean Evans). I was fortunate to enjoy her friendship for the last seven years of her life, and following her death her family allowed me to look through her literary and business papers. These have now been deposited in the National Library of Scotland where, along with the papers of other twentieth-century children's writers and publishers, they form part of a valuable resource for researchers into the history of writing for children.

'Jane Shaw' was born Jeannie Bell Shaw Patrick in Glasgow on 3 December, 1910. Her impressive collection of surnames provided her with two of her pen names: Jean Bell was used for two small paperbacks published in the Collins Spitfire series in the 1960s. Educated first by a governess and then at the Park School, Jean moved on to Glasgow University in 1928 and graduated with Honours in English Literature and Language in 1932. Amongst her papers are a bundle of class tickets, the acquisition of which was an essential requirement before students were allowed to sit their examinations, and a number of references written by her tutors, who are warm in their praise of her 'considerable critical ability', 'poise and confidence' and 'literary taste and judgement'.

Despite completing a teacher-training course in London, she realised that teaching was not for her. London however, she loved, and she spent a couple of years at the Times Book Club before moving back to Glasgow to work for William Collins and Sons, who in 1938 published her *My Own Book of Baby Beasts* and *My Own Book of Other Lands*, both written 'in-house'. At around this time, an editor at Collins, Jocelyn Oliver, encouraged her to pursue her own writing, spurring her on to complete *Breton Holiday*. This was published in 1939, a year after her marriage to Robert Evans, an accountant from Glasgow. The couple settled in London, taking the top floor flat at 11 College Road, Dulwich, (which, as 12 Tollgate Road, later appeared as the Carmichael family's home in the 'Susan' books). Jean and their two children – born during the war years – were forced to move around as a result of the Blitz, staying with friends in Bath and Kent, (settings later employed in her books), and returning to Dulwich after the war. The only letter which survives from this period is from her father, written in January, 1941. He mentions the bombing of Collins' premises in London and the possible loss of the typescript of *Highland Holiday*; however, the book was safely published in 1942. During the war, Jean built up contacts at the BBC, and many of her short stories were broadcast on *Children's Hour* and *Listen with Mother*.

Jean Evans c. 1940. (Private collection.)



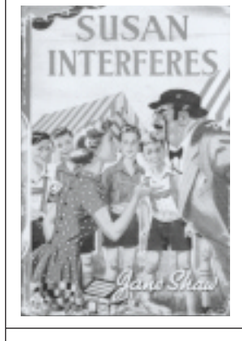
In 1952 Robert took a job in South Africa and the family sailed out on the *Warwick Castle* to join him. This journey to a new life was recreated in *Venture to South Africa* (1960) (NG.1630.b.17), which contains clearly autobiographical elements. An account book kept from 1950 to 1961 reveals that this book, under the title *Venture to Africa*, was first sold to Lutterworth in 1953 for £90; Lutterworth later sold it on to Thomas Nelson and Sons. Jean also detailed transactions with the BBC and *Die Brandwag*, a South African newspaper, and kept in regular touch by letter with her UK publishers. Fan letters indicate her growing popularity with readers. Her correspondence with Jocelyn Oliver, who by this time had moved to Nelson's, was one of the constants of her life. His nicknames for her – 'dear wee Jean' and 'my Trilby' – show his affection. Writing to her on 9 January, 1958, he expressed his pride at being immortalised in *Crooked Sixpence* as Mr Parfitt, 'a tall, gaunt old man with a close beard and savage eyebrows'.

In Johannesburg, Jean found work at the Children's Bookshop and spent over twenty-one years there. This full-time occupation meant that she could only write in the evenings and weekends; her son Ian remembers her sitting in the living room, balancing a notebook and pencils on her knee. She would eventually type the final manuscript on a flimsy portable on the dining room table. Amongst her papers are several of these manuscripts written in her round hand, and showing that she made very few alterations between first draft and finished typescript. Plots were evidently worked out before she started a book or story, and changes are usually limited to the introduction or substitution of the occasional phrase.

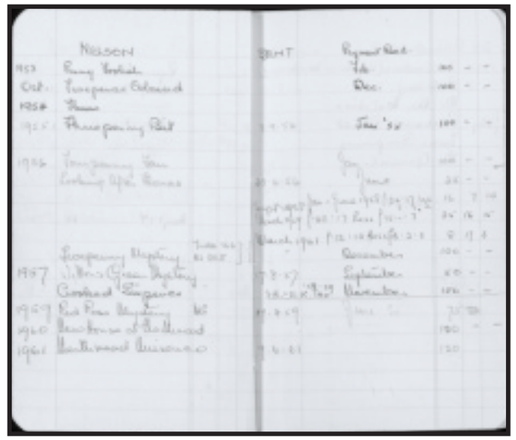
The colourful single sheet of notes for *Fivepenny Mystery* (Nelson, 1958) shows Jean employing pencil, red ink and blue ink, and writing both along and across the lines. The correct spelling of Innsbruck's main street appears alongside a verse of treasure-seeker's doggerel and a timetable of her heroine's journey from Johannesburg to Innsbruck. The reverse side of the page carries a draft of part of Chapter Two, 'What Happened in Athens', written in the first-person – a narrative style that was abandoned for the finished work.

Fivepenny Mystery formed part of the 'Penny' books, Jean's other main series, which began with *Penny Foolish* (1953) (N.F.1160.b.31) set on Arran, where she and Robert had both spent holidays as children. *Bernese Holiday* (1940) (V.312.d) was set in Grindelwald, where they spent their honeymoon. The Library has a diary of a return trip to Switzerland in 1955; outings taken by the Carmichaels in *Susan Interferes* (1957) correspond closely to Jean's own excursions around Lucerne; she has taken her journal observations and woven them into a comic drama. There were eventually eleven books in the 'Susan' series, published between 1952 (*Susan Pulls the Strings*) and 1969 (*A Job for Susan* (NG.1075.g.46), as well as a number of short stories published in Collins' annuals.

The Library has nine typescripts of short stories as well as radio scripts, including 'The Cat, the Owl and the Scottie Dog', broadcast on the School Service of the BBC Home Service on 28 October, 1964. Letters dated between 1964 and 1977 include correspondence with Collins concerning Swedish translations of the 'Susan' books, and their possible publication in Armada paperback; two letters from Collins press her to complete 'A Girl with Ideas'. As far as I know, Collins never published this classic school story, which appears in *Susan and Friends* (Bettany Press, 2002).



***Susan Intereferes* (Collins, 1957). Much background detail for *Susan Interferes* was recorded by the writer in a journal of a visit to Lucerne in 1955: Susan orders '2 Weggli und ein Gipfel' because, 'she liked the sound of it'.**



Account book (Acc.12060/7(7)) kept by Jean Evans from 1950–61. This page notes payments from Nelson's for various titles in the 'Penny' series.

In 1978, Jean and her husband retired from South Africa to Arran, the setting for some of her books. Robert died in 1988. In conversation with me, Jean Evans was modest about her writing, which she evidently regarded as a minor part of her very full life. Nevertheless, she was highly professional in her approach and frequent reprints of her titles attest to her popularity. She still has a considerable following.

For researchers at the National Library of Scotland, Jean Evans's papers provide significant insight into one writer's experiences. More broadly, they add to our store of knowledge of the world of commercial children's fiction through a period of almost forty years.

Note on sources

The Jean Evans papers include notebooks, correspondence, manuscripts and typescripts as well as some printed items 1928–94, some undated. (The Library also holds twenty-eight copies of her titles.) The collection (Acc.12060) has been arranged into six categories (detailed below), each with sub numbers. To call up specific items, the entire shelf mark should be cited, for example Acc.12060/1(1)).

Category 1, Typescripts – short stories, undated unless otherwise mentioned: 1(1) 'A Girl With Ideas' an unpublished novella by 'Jean Bell'; 1(2) 'The Cookie Bun'; 1(3) 'The Cat, the Owl and the Scottie Dog' radio script, 1964; 1(4) 'Jumble Sale'; 1(5) 'Crooks Limited'; 1(6) 'Family Trouble'; 1(7) 'Susan and the Spae-Wife'; 1(8) 'The Picture'; 1(9) 'Adventures of a Mouse'. Category 2, Manuscripts (undated): 2(1) 'Great Excitements', chapter 1 of *Susan in Trouble*; 2(2) chapters 1 and 2 of *The Man at Villa Carlotta*; 2(3) an early draft of *Patches McGee*; 2(4) notebook containing draft of 'Family Trouble'; 2(5) list of chapter titles for *Fourpenny Fair*; 2(6) list of chapter titles for *Fivepenny Mystery*; 2(7) notes for *Susan's Trying Term*. Category 3, Printed Material: 3(1) *Chippy, Teddy, Tidy Twinkle* and *Golly*; 3(2) 'Die Man Langsaan' by 'Mary Shaw' in *Die Brandwag*, (an Afrikaans newspaper), 10 December 1954. 3(3) *Books and Bookmen*, 1964, with a review on page 50 of *Anything Can Happen*. Category 4, Items Relating to the University of Glasgow, 1928–34: 4(1) *Glasgow University Magazine*, 1934; 4(2) class tickets 1928–32; 4(3) letters of recommendation, 1933. Category 5 Newscuttings Book (5): from 1939–c. 1965, includes pages from the *Radio Times* with details of story broadcasts. Category 6: Correspondence 1941–94 and undated: 6(1) letter to Jean from her father, regarding Blitz damage to Collins' London office; 6(2) letters 1964–77, mostly from publishers, including correspondence with Collins concerning the paperback publication of the Susan series and Swedish rights for 'A Girl with Ideas'; 6(3) nine fan letters, 1962–70; 6(4) four fan letters, 1994 and undated; 6(5) correspondence 1952–71 with publishers and fans. Category 7, Notebooks: 7(1) journal of visit to Lucerne, 1955; 7(2) *Susan in Trouble* first draft and notes on plot; 7(3) notes on trips in South Africa, 1960, 1961; 7(4) first draft of *The Man at Villa Carlotta*, notes for *Murder Perhaps*; 7(5) notes on characters, visits to safari parks; 7(6) notes on various locations, draft of scene at end of *Venture to South Africa*; 7(7) account book 1950–61.

Notes on contributors

ALISON LINDSAY is editor of *Susan and Friends: The Jane Shaw Companion* (ISBN 0 9524680 6 9), published in spring 2002 by the Bettany Press. The book gathers together short stories originally published in annuals as well as unpublished stories from Jane Shaw's personal archives, now deposited at the National Library of Scotland; it also includes critical essays on the books and their settings, biographical information and a full bibliography. Alison Lindsay, Publications Officer at the National Archives of Scotland, has spent several years researching Jane Shaw's life and writings.

ALAN RIACH, Head of the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow is author of *Hugh MacDiarmid's Epic Poetry* (Edinburgh University Press, 1991) and *The Poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid* (Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1999). He has also written several volumes of poetry and numerous essays and chapters on Scottish and other literatures. He is the General Editor of the Carcanet Press *Collected Works of Hugh MacDiarmid*, of which the most recent volume is *New Selected Letters*, co-edited with Owen Dudley Edwards and Dorian Grieve.

MURRAY SIMPSON is Director of Special Collections at the National Library of Scotland, a department which covers Manuscripts, Maps, Music and Rare Books. Prior to that he was in charge of Special Collections at Edinburgh University Library. He is particularly interested in the contents of Scottish private libraries, and has written on examples dating from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries.

CHRIS TAYLOR is curator of French and Italian collections in the Collection Development Division of the National Library of Scotland, where he is responsible for the acquisition and promotion of material relating to French- and Italian-speaking countries. He is currently planning several co-operative projects with the Italian and French Institutes in Scotland following the success of the Library's Laterza and d'Annunzio round tables last year. He regularly contributes to the journal *Reference Reviews*.

NLS diary dates

May 2002
'*Mr D.O. Hill Presents his Compliments . . .*'
A small display of the correspondence of David Octavius Hill goes on show as part of a nationwide series of events to mark the bicentenary of the Scottish photography pioneer's birth.
29 April to 24 May.

The winner of the *Callum Macdonald Memorial Award* for the publication of poetry pamphlets is announced.

Muriel Spark – *'Scottish by Formation'*
An appreciation of Scotland's most celebrated literary emigré by authors Alan Taylor and Allan Massie. Free but ticketed.
Tuesday 21 May at 7.30pm.

Robert Louis Stevenson – Still Travelling Hopefully
An illustrated talk by RLS biographer Jenni Calder on one of Scotland's most internationally appealing authors, with additional contributions by Owen Dudley Edwards. Free but ticketed.
Wednesday 22 May at 7.30pm.

The above events form part of the Festival of Scottish Writing: please note that while they take place in the National Library of Scotland, tickets are only available from the Lending Enquiry Desk at the Edinburgh Central Library in George IV Bridge.

June 2002
This Book Belongs to Me: from Tom Thumb to Harry Potter
The Library's summer exhibition, celebrating the appeal of children's books through the centuries, is launched by the Children's Laureate, Anne Fine. The exhibition is open from 1 June to 31 October, and features regular storytelling sessions and a programme of children's book events throughout its run. More information is available at www.nls.uk/tomthumb.

From Accession to Coronation
To mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee, the Library presents a small display of material relating to the period of the accession and Coronation in 1953. 4 June to 3 August.

August
Conference of Directors of National Librarians
Over 100 National Librarians from around the world hold their annual conference at the National Library of Scotland on 21 August.

In the next *Folio (Autumn 2002)*

DUNCAN GLEN explains the significance of the resources of the National Library in his research for his extensively illustrated *Printing Type Designs: A New History from Gutenberg to 2000*. This 306-page work was launched in the Library in March 2001 when guests came to hear him introduce the book and see the display mounted by the Library. Duncan Glen is poet, editor, publisher and emeritus Professor of Visual Communication. The National Library of Scotland has an extensive holding of his literary papers, including those of Akros Publications, the literary imprint that Duncan and Margaret Glen founded in the early 1960s.

RODERICK GRAHAM, author of *John Knox – Democrat*, describes the journeys he undertook while researching the book in the National Library of Scotland. A self-confessed romantic and bibliophile, he also reflects on the joys of unexpected discovery as bibliographies lead the researcher further down the paths and byways of memoir and history. A good bibliography is like an Ordnance Survey map, but it has no morals and can invite you to explore quite irrelevant areas, which are often more fun, but less directly useful. The feeling of irresponsibility while reading quite unnecessary books is delightful – but a wanton misuse of the book-fetchers time and effort. It takes a Scottish upbringing to feel guilt reading in the National Library of Scotland!

MICHAEL NIX, a curatorial assistant at the National Library of Scotland, pieces together the story of how 100,000 books were imported from the continent in 1820 for the Advocates' Library. While pursuing research into emigration from Leith to Australia he came across documents relating to the importation of the Dieterichs Collection's, which was purchased in Leipsig, taken by river to Hamburg, and from there, by sea, to Leith. Examining Customs records for 1820, he came across two letters referring to the Advocates' efforts to avoid paying import duties. Delving further into the subject he discovered an enthusiasm, following the ending of the Napoleonic Wars, for collecting from overseas involving private individuals and institutions in Scotland.

CHRISTOPHER WHYTE, in preparing an all but complete edition of Sorley MacLean's *Dain do Eimhir* for the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, made valuable use of the Library's extensive Sorley MacLean holdings, many of them only recently acquired. These include unpublished poems and translations, letters to and from the poet, and a rare joint pamphlet with Robert Garioch. Poet, novelist and Gaelic scholar Christopher Whyte talks about his work on the edition, the problems he faced, and the rich store of manuscript material he was able to draw on. Previously unpublished poems from the *Dain do Eimhir* cycle have been incorporated into the new edition.

National Library of Scotland
George IV Bridge
EDINBURGH
EH1 1EW
Tel 0131-226 4531
Fax 0131-622 4803
www.nls.uk

If you have any comments regarding *Folio*, or would like to be added to the mailing list to receive it, please contact Jackie Cromarty, Deputy Head of Public Programmes, by telephone on 0131-622 4810 or via e-mail at j.cromarty@nls.uk

Folio is edited by Jennie Renton

ISSN 1475-1151

Front cover image by permission of Pollinger Ltd and the estate of Charles Robinson