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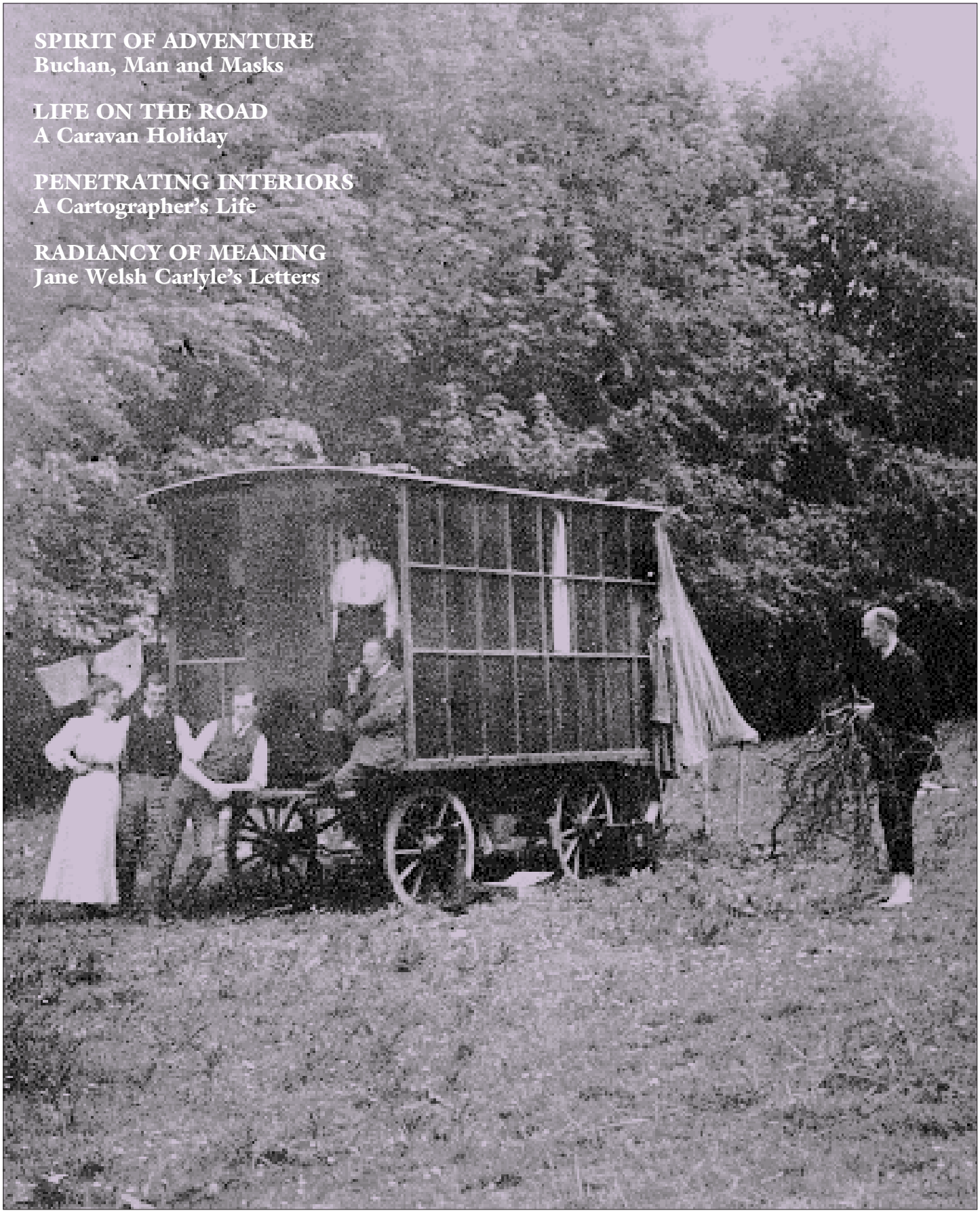
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‘Our Famous Caravan Holiday’

Elsie Jollyman’s visit to Scotland of 1909

Nearly twelve months ago I had been asked to join some friends this summer for a fortnight’s holiday. The original intention had been to row down the Thames but as time went on our thoughts turned northwards and in October it was decided that our projected trip should take the form of a caravan holiday in the highlands of Scotland.
(Elsie Jollyman, 29 May 1909)

Olive Geddes

Scotland has welcomed numerous visitors over the years. Some came on business, perhaps as soldiers, merchants, or diplomats, while others were students at Scotland’s universities. Later, travellers came to explore the countryside, experience a different culture, or simply out of curiosity. Many recorded their experiences in personal journals, made sketches, took photographs or sent postcards home to their loved ones. These travellers may not be household names, but their informal accounts, pinpointed in time, provide glimpses of the changing face of Scotland through the eyes of others.

In the summer of 1909, Elsie Jollyman and six friends toured the west of Scotland in a horse-drawn caravan. After travelling by train from Liverpool to Glasgow, they arrived at Dumbarton railway station to collect their caravan, ‘Imogen’, and ‘Rosinante’, the horse. In the next two weeks they covered 186 miles, rarely staying anywhere for more than a day, and visiting Luss, Arrochar, Inveraray, Lochgilphead and Oban. At the end of ‘one of the best if not the best holiday any of us had ever had’, they reluctantly parted with Imogen and Rosinante at Balloch before returning home by train.

Elsie Jollyman’s journal, beautifully illustrated with hand-coloured photographs, provides a remarkable record of what must have been a real adventure. Little is known about Elsie. Her holiday started and finished in West Kirby, near Liverpool, but she was born in 1877 in Hackney, the daughter of William Jollyman, manager of a firm of tobacco manufacturers in London. At the time of the 1901 Census, she was in Bromley, Kent, with her widowed mother, Ellen.

There were seven in Elsie’s party, four men and three women. Belinda, described as ‘the moving spirit’, and her husband, ‘Don Carlos’, had visited Scotland before. With their friend Miranda Hazlewood, they made up ‘the Hoylake contingent’. Belinda’s brother, ‘Artichoke’, was the principal driver. ‘The Motorist’ and ‘Don Quixote’ completed the party. No indication is given of their relationship to the others, and the composition of the group seems to have raised some eyebrows. At Tyndrum an elderly lady remarked, ‘And why did ye no’ bring another lady for the other puir gentleman?’

By the time of Elsie’s tour, Scotland was well established as a holiday destination. The country’s image as a remote, barbarous land peopled by noble savages had long lured the educated gentleman of taste. In the early nineteenth century, Sir Walter Scott’s novels and verse, which portrayed Scotland as a romantic, tartan-strewn wilderness, with majestic scenery, magnificent castles and splendid country houses, had done much to attract wealthy cultural and literary tourists. Sporting tourists also came in their droves to hunt, shoot and fish. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who were regular summer visitors, gave the royal stamp of approval.

With the advent of steamboat services and the coming of the railways, travel became faster, easier and cheaper, opening up Scotland to the prosperous middle classes anxious to follow in the footsteps of their monarch. Many made their own arrangements, but from the 1840s package tours across the Border were organised by Thomas Cook for those of a less enterprising disposition. It became common practice for railway and steamboat companies to produce brochures promoting Scotland as a holiday destination, while picture postcards bearing images by photographers such as George Washington Wilson were disseminated far and wide. By the 1900s holidays away from home had become an attainable dream even for those on a modest income. Working-class people from urban centres in the west of Scotland often enjoyed day trips ‘doon the watter’ to Rothesay and Dunoon in the west, while on the east coast resorts such as Portobello and North Berwick flourished. Elsie Jollyman’s journal makes frequent reference to the scenic beauty around her. Not for her a holiday among the seaside crowds, in the cities, or visiting grand country houses. She writes: ‘The road along the banks of Loch Lomond from Luss to Tarbet is almost beyond description – sloping woodlands on one side, the trees wearing their dainty spring costumes of many hues ... Ben Lomond towering over all.’ Glen Croe she found ‘magnificent’, while the ‘Pass of Awe’ was ‘exceedingly wild and grand and fully lived up to our expectations’.

Then, as now, novelty in choice of venue and activity was important to those travelling for pleasure. Across Europe during the 1880s there was something of a reaction to the increasing commercialisation of tourism, which expressed itself in a movement towards simple, flexible holidays in the open air, cycling, camping and caravanning.

Houses on wheels probably originated in France around 1800. In Britain, caravans were originally used by gypsies, circus performers, surveyors, market traders, and those who worked at race meetings. Caravanning purely for pleasure was virtually unheard of before the 1880s. One of the pioneers of the concept of the caravan holiday was Gordon Stables, a Scottish surgeon and naval officer who was a popular author of boys’ adventure stories. After seeing a row of gypsy caravans at Great Marlow, he decided it would be fun to try life on the road for himself. He commissioned a solid mahogany caravan from the Bristol Wagon Company and commenced to travel around Britain in style, accompanied by a motley entourage of servants and pets – a coachman, a valet who rode ahead on a tricycle, a dog and a cockatoo. One expedition took him

The horse-drawn caravan and holiday makers in an unidentified village street.





'Folding the bedding.'



'Camp at Loch Feochan.'



'Cooking and chopping wood.'

1,300 miles on the round trip from Twyford to Inverness. Stables became known as the 'Gentleman Gypsy' and where he led, others followed.

More and more people bought caravans, but since they tended to use them for only a few weeks of the year many offset the expense of purchase by hiring them out to fellow enthusiasts. The Caravan Club was founded in 1907. Based in London, it provided members with facilities and services, putting owners in touch with those wishing to hire. Elsie Jollyman and her friends may well have used this service for their 1909 trip; we know that their horse and caravan were waiting at Dumbarton for them, but she gives us no details of how these arrangements were made, except to say there had been regular planning meetings during the winter months.

In early twentieth-century Scotland, horse-drawn caravans were very much a novelty and at Dumbarton the friends found that theirs had drawn 'a small crowd of interested spectators'. This scene was to be repeated throughout the holiday. Imogen's appearance caused quite a stir wherever they went. When arriving in a village or passing a coach, 'Don Carlos was always very anxious to proclaim our presence and indeed none of us, I think, liked to hide the light of our caravan under a bushel so to speak'.

At Inveraray they became a tourist attraction themselves, when steamer passengers saw their caravan parked by the pier and asked for guided tours. But it was at Lochgilphead that they caused the greatest sensation: 'When we entered the town it appeared quite deserted but as soon as Don Carlos blew a blast on his bugle, out rushed men, women and children from every doorway to see what was coming and soon the main street was swarming with people.' The caravanners were asked if they were travelling salesmen, if the caravan was a prison van, and if there was a dog in the larder. Don Carlos told the swarm of inquisitive children that there were 'three lions and a tiger' inside. By the later stages of the holiday, being the centre of attention was beginning to pall. Elsie comments that their roadside camp at Dalmally 'would have been better had it not been quite so public as there were pedestrians patrolling up and down the road all evening moved by curiosity to come and see our caravan'.

The caravan 'far exceeded our expectations in every way, being capacious and comfortable, well planned and tastefully furnished'. There was a seating area for driver and passengers at the front. This doubled as the kitchen and was separated from the bed-sittingroom by a curtain. There were well-stocked cupboards for crockery and silver, and a 'housemaid's cupboard'. Underneath the caravan was a storage compartment and larder, together with hooks for the tents, an array of buckets, and a paraffin can. The three women took the beds inside the caravan, while the men slept in the 'lean-to' tent, and a separate, surprisingly modern, igloo-like tent.

Rosinante, 'a large and powerful animal, sleek and plump and in good condition', proved a placid workhorse and a great favourite. At the Pass of Melfort she 'rose to the occasion and pulled our beloved caravan up to the top of the hill without any trouble'. However, on the harder climbs, over Glen Croe and 'the long Salachary Hill', additional 'trace horses' were hired. Distances covered varied from eleven to nearly twenty miles a day, with the party 'walking the greater part of the way ourselves and pushing behind up the steep hills or pulling back when going down'.

Although they met no other caravans, Elsie mentions coaches, carriages, horses and pedestrians and a few motor cars on the road. The motor car had arrived in Scotland in the 1890s and by the time of Elsie's holiday, motoring was becoming a fashionable, if expensive, pastime. A collision was narrowly avoided on the road from Ardlui to Luss: 'We were wending our way round a particularly sharp headland when a motor-car nearly ran into us, the driver having only just had time, after hearing our bugle-call, to draw into his own side of the road and put on his brakes for all he was worth'.

Each evening an 'advance party' would walk ahead to 'prospect for a suitable camping ground'. Their requirements included 'a level surface, and also a fairly hard one so that the wheels would not sink in during the night: then the gateway must of course be wide enough to allow our caravan to pass through it and the ground must be large enough to leave room for it to turn'. There had to be a stream nearby for water for drinking, cooking and washing, and a farm where Rosinante could be stabled. Once a site was identified, the owner had to be found and permission asked. At Cairnbaan they camped by the Crinan Canal, while at Brig of Awe they found 'the most lovely field beautifully wooded with birch and beech trees within earshot of the river Awe'.

Undoubtedly, one of the attractions of caravanning was freedom from normal rules of behaviour. Elsie writes, 'We stopped for lunch close against the Loch Awe Hotel and felt sorry for the poor visitors having their grand table d'hôte lunch inside while we were enjoying our meal in the fresh air'. Lunch in an Oban café 'seemed so horribly civilised … we did not at all like putting on our society manners'.

Generally, the friends cooked their own meals at their campsites or picnicked on the open road. Inevitably, much time was spent in food preparation. When their oil stove proved unreliable, they cooked over an open fire. There was firewood to be gathered and chopped, water fetched, food prepared and cooked, and washing up to be done. Shifts for the daily chores were organised in rotation, in teams of one man and one woman. All were expected to do their share.

Some provisions had been bought in advance – a hamper from Cooper's is mentioned – but additional groceries were bought in Luss and Oban. Finding fresh meat, milk and bread was part of the daily routine. Sometimes there was a nearby shop or an obliging farmer; on other occasions they knocked on doors until someone took pity on them. Their efforts were usually rewarded. Elsie considered their menus varied and interesting. At Loch Lomond, dinner consisted of steak, onions and fried potato chips with 'stewed rhubarb and junket for the second course'; the next day they had 'chops, tomatoes and fried potatoes, tinned peaches and junket and oranges for dessert'.

Although much of their day was spent travelling and carrying out chores, there was still time for relaxation. The weather was hot, dry and sunny for most of the fortnight, and the women enjoyed early morning dips in Loch Lomond and sunbathing at Loch Craignish while the men went fishing. They paddled together in the sea at Garraron, rowed on the River Falloch, and amused themselves at cards, particularly Piquet, Patience and Animal Snap. Elsie writes:

> We usually had great fun before turning in for the night. Sometimes Don Carlos and Artichoke would give us an impromptu scene in grand opera style, the words usually bearing on some topical event of our caravan life ... Sometimes Don Quixote and Artichoke would issue from their tent or wigwam, as they called it, with wild war-whoops, wrapped in rugs and with feathers in their hair and make a raid on us squaws in the caravan with wet sponges and bunches of iris leaves while the two pale-faced papooses in the lean-to would come out and join in the fight.
>
> Sometimes the singing continued after they had all retired to bed.



'The cooks stood in the brook while they washed up.'



'Camp at Cairn Dow.'



'Au Revoir.'

Photography was the friends' shared passion. Six of the seven had cameras, and Elsie's journal is illustrated with hand-coloured photographs. They are shown 'Cooking the breakfast' at Tyndrum, 'Chopping wood', 'Folding up the bedding', and 'Having tea by the side of the road'. A 'Whale spouting in the loch', and a shoal of porpoises on Loch Fyne are also captured on camera. At the Crinan Canal, they raced to get shots of the steamer *Linnet* and at Loch Feochan, a herd of beautiful shaggy Highland cattle 'demanded to have their photographs taken, standing in a group and posing in front of my camera'. Plate-changing proved 'a rather difficult matter as the light was penetrating into every part of the caravan even at ten o'clock', but 'by dint of wrapping ourselves up in rugs and having blankets hung over us until we were nearly stifled we at length managed it satisfactorily'. The photographs are the work of one or more talented amateurs. Photography was still in its infancy and although increasing numbers had their own cameras, they were expensive; this was still largely a hobby for the wealthy.

When Elsie Jollyman compiled her journal, it was essentially a private document, a light-hearted record, perhaps to be shared with friends and family. Now, as part of the National Library's collections, its significance for the history of tourism in Scotland is being explored. For Elsie and her friends it was, above all, fun. Let's give her the last word:

> The freedom from conventionality had appealed to us, the open air life, pleasant companionship, magnificent scenery, the restfulness of having no trains or boats to catch: no jarring sounds to strike our ears: having all our time at our disposal; being able to stop when we liked, go on when we liked; walk when we liked, ride when we liked ... If any readers should consider ... a caravanner's holiday altogether too strenuous I can only advise them to try it for themselves and unless they are of the hothouse plant variety they will find the delights of caravanning far exceed any small discomforts or difficulties.

Note on sources

Elsie Jollyman's journal is National Library of Scotland MS.29499. The Library's Manuscripts collection includes numerous journals of travellers in Scotland dating from the early 1700s to modern times. Many, especially those written by Scots travelling in their own country, form part of family and estate archives. Others, such as that written by Elsie Jollyman, have been presented or purchased. The Library's manuscript travel journals were the subject of the summer 2003 exhibition, *Wish You Were Here! Travellers' Tales of Scotland*. Six postcards of photographs from Elsie Jollyman's journal are available either singly or as a set from the Library shop.

A Fast-paced Narrative

John Buchan's Intriguing Life

ANDREW LOWNIE

John Buchan was a master of suspense and intrigue in the league of Arthur Conan Doyle, Joseph Conrad, Ian Fleming and John Le Carré. Alongside a successful writing career, Buchan was also a player on the stage of world diplomacy, becoming Governor-General of Canada in 1935. From his youth in the Scottish Borders he was always drawn to myths and legends and took delight in tales of the supernatural. But who was the man behind the public masks?

JOHN BUCHAN is now largely remembered for his 'shockers' and especially *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, which has never been out of print since first publication during the First World War and has been filmed three times – most memorably by Alfred Hitchcock in 1935. The book introduced his best-known character, Richard Hannay, who was to feature in four more adventures, and set the unmistakable Buchan style in which he used his knowledge of the world of international affairs to craft sophisticated thrillers with a fast narrative pace and sharply-defined characters.

The Thirty-Nine Steps was in fact Buchan's twenty-seventh book out of over a hundred, which included volumes of essays and poetry, collections of short stories, four major biographies, children's stories, several works of military history and a handbook on taxation law. In a writing career of forty-five years, that is an impressive achievement; it becomes staggering when one realises that Buchan was also a barrister, publisher, colonial administrator, Assistant Editor of the *Spectator*, 'Atticus' on the *Sunday Times*, war correspondent, intelligence officer, Director of Information during the First World War, Deputy-Chairman of Reuters, helped found the British Film Institute, a confidant and speech writer to two Prime Ministers, Member of Parliament and, as Lord Tweedsmuir, Governor-General of Canada. When he died in February 1940 he was described by his friend Lord Lothian as 'the most versatile man of his generation'. In modern British history, only Disraeli and Churchill have had such successful careers as both public servants and Men of Letters.

The National Library of Scotland has always had close links with John Buchan, now regarded as one of Scotland's greatest twentieth-century writers. He was involved in the setting up of the Library, joined the Board in 1925 and served on it until his departure to Canada as Governor-General ten years later. In 1975, the centenary of his birth, the Library mounted a major exhibition on his life and writings.

In his will, Buchan stipulated his collection of books on the Marquis of Montrose should be left to the Library and, as a result of subsequent family donations and the aid of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, it now holds the most comprehensive single collection of his papers. These include microfilm of the papers bought by Queen's University, Ontario, after his home, Elsfield, was sold in 1955 (Acc.7214), letters to and from his wife Susan, his mother, his mother-in-law, his sister Anna and brothers Walter and William, his children Alice, Johnnie, William and Alastair, copies of his manuscripts and countless newspaper cuttings about aspects of his life. Finally there are several boxes of condolence letters from around the world, obituaries and various orders of service. (Acc.6975, Acc.11627, Acc.9758).



John Buchan with falcon. (Acc.11627/76)

One of the most interesting collections is Acc.6542, which includes copies of the original manuscripts of many of Buchan's novels written in his spidery and illegible writing, an unfinished novel, *The Mountain*, some poems, his commonplace book and an outline of a project for a film with Anthony Asquith. Often the novels had several draft titles which were never used. For example, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* was originally *The Black Stone* and then *The Kennels of War*, while *The Three Hostages* was to be called *The Enchanter's Nightmare*. Buchan had a habit of writing the date he commenced and finished the book and it is staggering to see how quickly he wrote them (generally in under a year), especially given his busy public life and the fact he often wrote several books simultaneously. What is also interesting is to note how few corrections he made.

It was after my biography, *John Buchan: The Presbyterian Cavalier* (Lit.S.33.B), was published in 1995 that Janet Adam Smith left her research to the National Library (Acc.11164). Fortunately, much of this material had been used in her earlier biography of Buchan, and was therefore available to me, although there was some additional material that I would have used, had I had access to it.

Her papers, consisting of twenty-five boxes, include full interviews with many of Buchan's contemporaries (all of whom had died before I began my own research). There are also letters to her from Susan Buchan, and friends including Lord Leconfield, their Best Man, Lillian Hawley, Buchan's secretary at Nelsons and later in Canada, and from the Canadian surgeon Wilder Penfield, who operated on him towards the end of his life, and correspondence from that

other great master of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock.

The Library recently purchased an extensive collection of papers from the estate of Buchan's eldest son, the 2nd Baron Tweedsmuir, and they add detail, in particular, about family relationships (Acc.11628). Running to over three hundred files they include family letters, correspondence concerning his father's literary estate, film rights and magazine articles relating to his father up to the present day and the original manuscripts of his own autobiographies.

Though in my biography I draw on over sixty different collections of papers, the whole story of John Buchan's writing and rise as a son of the manse through Hutcheson's Grammar School, Glasgow, Glasgow and Oxford Universities, the Bar, journalism, imperial administration and politics can be traced through the collections at the National Library. Here are his schoolboy notebooks with plans for future books, his papers from his two years in South Africa with Lord Milner including his passes and war medal ribbons, his First World War diplomatic permits and passport together with an album of photographs and the commission from Albert, King of the Belgians in 1917 as an Officier de l'Ordre de la Couronne, correspondence relating to his directorship of the Edinburgh publisher Thomas Nelson, scripts of the film and television adaptations of his books, copies of his printed books and his 1939 appointment



Bookplate of Lord Tweedsmuir. (Acc.11627/77)

diary as Governor-General of Canada.

There are, of course, also many omissions. Where are the appointment diaries for other years? Where are the letters to and from his daughter Alice, with whom he had a close relationship? Neither side of Buchan's correspondence with Lord Beaverbrook, in a vain attempt to secure an honour for his First World War work, are to be found in the National Library collection, but are extensively documented in Beaverbrook's own papers. Are there scores of other letters in other archives, or that were destroyed, which might present a slightly different picture?

As well as gaps in his own papers at the National Library, there are revelations difficult to corroborate elsewhere. For example in May 1932, Buchan wrote excitedly to his wife:

John Buchan and his daughter taking part in a historical pageant. (Acc.11627/77)



Now here is something important which I want you and Alice to talk over before I come back on Friday. They are going to separate Burma from India, and make it a separate Dominion under a Governor-General, and since the Burmese are a reasonable and docile people, they believe that if self-government succeeds there, it will be a model for India. I was sent for last night, and they asked me to be the first Governor-General. I have been whistling 'Mandalay' while shaving for some weeks, and that seems to have been an omen. What do you think about the old 'Moulmein Pagoda'? This would not be like Canada, a quasi-royal affair, but a piece of solid and difficult work. There is no hurry about a decision, for I have only been sounded, but I wish you would turn it over in your mind. Are we too old for a final frisk? (31 May 1932. Acc.6975)

In the event, Burma was not separated and the suggestion came to nothing, but I've found nothing elsewhere to confirm the offer was made.

There are lots of letters to and from writers such as Hugh Walpole, John Galsworthy, Ezra Pound, Conan Doyle, Hilaire Belloc, Thomas Hardy, J.B. Priestley and H. Rider Haggard, as well as politicians such as Ramsay Macdonald, Neville Chamberlain, Winston Churchill, Stanley Baldwin, A.J. Balfour, Herbert Asquith and Lord Rosebery.

His friendship with T.E. Lawrence can also be traced through the collection. As a propaganda expert during the First World War, Buchan had arranged for the American journalist Lowell Thomas to be attached to Allenby's headquarters in the Middle East, where Lawrence's guerrilla exploits were already beginning to attract notice in official circles. It was Thomas who brought Lawrence's name to a wider public when he published *With Lawrence in Arabia* (S.76.e), but Buchan who helped propagate the legend after the First World War, and Buchan who helped secure Lawrence's transfer from the Tank Corps to the RAF by writing to Stanley Baldwin. Lawrence remained grateful to both men and sent two copies of the limited edition of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* to Buchan – one for him and the other to pass to Baldwin.

The last time Buchan saw his friend was a few weeks before Lawrence's fatal motorcycle accident. Buchan wrote to his son Johnnie:

We had him for the whole day and he has become one of the most delightful people in the world. He has lost all his freakishness, and his girlish face has become extraordinarily wide and mature. He relies a

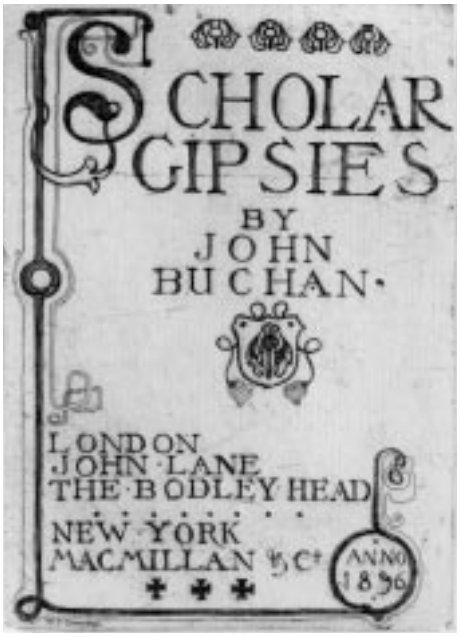
good deal on my advice, but I don't know what can be done with him, for he won't ever touch public life again, and yet he is one of the few men of genius living. (5 March 1935. Acc.11267)

The letters to his wife Susan, particularly the early courtship correspondence, paint a picture that belies Buchan's rather dour reputation (Acc.11627). Through the letters to her and his friends and family one can trace his feelings for her from their meeting at a party in July 1905 through to his unexpected death in 1940. Their courtship was slow, complicated by the fact she was already unofficially engaged to an officer in the Irish Guards, Viscount de Vesci. Three months after meeting, Buchan, signing himself 'John Buchan', sent her a copy of his short story collection *The Watcher by the Threshold* (Vts.150.d.4), apologising that 'the stories are rather crude' and, as if by way of explanation, 'they were written at Oxford'. (21 October 1905. Acc.11627)

She quickly replied to 'Mr Buchan' thanking him for the book. 'I have just finished devouring it and I must tell you how awfully good I think the stories. They are so well sustained and interesting … I hope we are going to see you again soon. If you would come in for tea or later any day you would always find us.' (5 November 1905. Acc.11627)

By December, signing himself 'JB', he was inviting her to join him at country weekend parties and calling her 'Miss Clara'. Eighteen months after their first meeting, Buchan proposed. Everyone was delighted, except Buchan's mother, who was suspicious of a woman who represented two of her greatest prejudices – the Church of England and the aristocracy. It was to be a lifelong love affair, even though he sometimes forgot her birthday and they were often apart. For him she was 'My darling Susie', 'my own little angel', 'Susan Cat' and 'Little Mouffs'. To her he was always 'My darling John'.

The collection is also very revealing about his relationship with his children, a relationship which can be traced by different letters from various members of the family describing their reaction to the same events. Generally the relationship was good, but there are occasional signs of tension. Shortly before Buchan left to take up his post as Canadian Governor-General, Alastair Buchan wrote to his eldest brother Johnnie about their father, who had just had all his teeth removed in the hope that this might help his gastric trouble:



John Buchan's first book, a collection of essays entitled *Scholar Gipsies* (ABS.2.85.73), published by John Lane in 1896, has a striking cover design showing Pan piping to three nymphs.

The colonel also makes life very difficult. He is so cantankerous and one notices his filthy eating and his eternal boasting more than ever now. I hope things will be different in Canada and don't answer for anybody's sanity if it isn't. (1 August 1935. Acc.11627)

Buchan's physical indignities continued and in November 1937 he confided to his brother Walter:

My stomach is a most ridiculous thing. I am perfectly well in everything else except that. Like a baby with no teeth I swallow air with my food. The diagnosis has now established that beyond a question. This trouble of wind all began after my teeth were pulled. The only thing is to eat very slowly and to eat with my mouth shut. I am much better, but every now and then I have a baddish day. It is a ludicrous affliction to suffer from. (1 November 1937. Acc.11627)

Later that month he claimed to him: 'that both Roosevelt and Cordell Hull have shown a most unpleasing desire to ask the British and Canadian Governments to have me transferred to Washington as Ambassador in order to see through the trade treaty and the debt settlement'. He added: 'I simply won't go. I will never desert Mr Micawber. My work in Canada is only just beginning'. (29 November 1937. Acc.11627)
Buchan is now regarded as one of Canada's greatest Governor-Generals but his continuing ill health – a product of stress and a First World War ulcer – limited his activities and by the end of 1939 he weighed only nine stone. At the end of January 1940 he wrote to his eldest son: 'I think my own health is a little better, and I am putting on a certain amount of weight. It is a slow business, but I have little to complain of, compared with many people'. (31 January 1940. Acc.11627).

Less than a week later he slipped while taking his morning bath and struck the back of his head. For an hour he lay undiscovered, bloody and unconscious. He immediately underwent emergency surgery and within twenty four hours he had regained consciousness but a secondary development of pressure had taken place. Further operations took place over the next few days but they were unsuccessful. The telegram sent to Bank House, Peebles, on 11 February said it all – 'John died in perfect peace at 7.13 this evening'. Seven days of State mourning were declared and flags flown at half mast. After several services and a cremation his ashes were taken to Elsfield, his home outside Oxford, and buried in a corner of the churchyard. They lie under a headstone designed by Herbert Baker with a Latin inscription roughly translated as 'Here, in his own earth, lies a man of letters, who served his country and enjoyed the affection of countless friends'.

Note on sources

Complementing its extensive holdings of John Buchan's printed books, the Library has a large archive of related papers, correspondence, photographs and ephemera. These include Acc.6975: papers of John and Susan Buchan, 1894–1940, presented by John, 2nd Lord Tweedsmuir in 1977; Acc.11627: personal correspondence and papers of John Buchan and his family, including the novelist, Anna Buchan ('O. Douglas') and J. Walter Buchan, 1905–45 (bought in 1998, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund); and Acc.11828: papers of John, 2nd Baron Tweedsmuir, 1931–96 (also bought in 1998). Acc.7214 comprises reference-only microfilm copies of the collection of John Buchan Papers in Queen's University, Ontario, and in Acc.6572 reference-only photocopies of six Buchan novel manuscripts, 1916–40; a commonplace-book, 1896; and thirty letters to him, 1893–1940; all reproduced from originals in Queen's University Archives, Ontario, Canada. Further information from the Library website: www.nls.uk/collections/manuscripts

Journey into Africa

Searching for Keith Johnston

'… the sparks sent forth by the flames rose high in the air, like embers shot from the crater of a volcano … showers of burning flakes fell upon the densely assembled crowd … The spectacle was awfully sublime.'

So said the *Scotsman* of 17 November 1824, recording 'The Great Fire of Edinburgh', which started in Old Assembly Close (coincidentally, not a stone's throw from the devastating conflagration of November 2002), in the premises of James Kirkwood and Son, engravers. This was the workplace of two apprentices, William Johnston and his brother, Alexander Keith Johnston. As a result of being put out of work, they set up their own business – and so it might be said that the great cartographic house of W. & A.K. Johnston came into being because a pot of linseed oil boiled over on a hot stove.

I knew none of these details of the firm's inception three years ago, when the Royal Scottish Geographical Society invited me to examine the unpublished expedition diary of Alexander Keith Johnston's son, Keith. At the time, my interest was in Joseph Thomson, who accompanied Keith Johnston on a Royal Geographical Society expedition in 1879 to find a feasible trade route to the Central Lakes of Africa and the country lying between them. After his leader's death only weeks into the expedition, Thomson carried it through to a successful conclusion, covering a distance of over 2,500 km and making his own name in the history of African exploration.



Alexander Keith Johnston Jnr, as a boy. (Acc.5811/3)

The transcription of the minute and often faint script of Johnston's diary proved a considerable challenge in itself. In its pages are the last words he ever wrote, but overall it revealed little about what made this fine geographer tick. Determined to find out more about him, I turned to the W. and A.K. Johnston Archive (Acc.5811) at the Manuscripts Division of the National Library of Scotland. Three large albums of papers, photographs and family memorabilia include a few pictures of Keith Johnston as a boy and one of him as a young man, as well as a group photograph of the family – his parents had eleven children, but he was the only son to survive infancy.

The albums contain four faded sepia photographs taken by Johnston himself in Africa, developed from negatives which had been returned to Scotland after his death. There are also newspaper cuttings of obituary notices on his death from dysentery at Behobeho at the age of thirty-four. The *Courant* records that Johnston was educated at Merchiston Castle School, Edinburgh, and 'received a scientific geographical training under his father'.

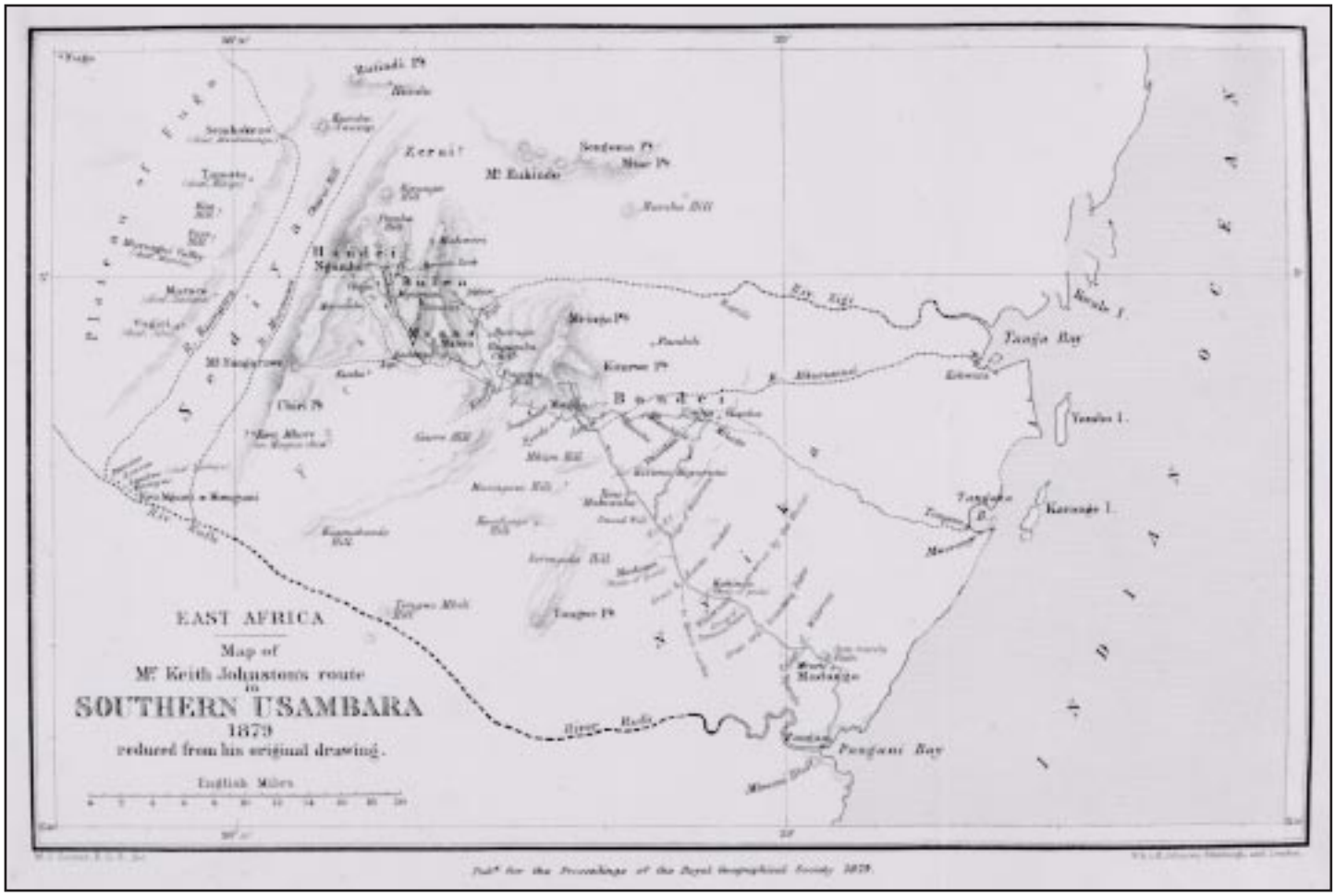
In *One Hundred Years of Map Making* [1925] (R251.e), Johnston is described as having 'inherited a large share of his father's scientific genius. He was trained as a draughtsman with his father's firm, and afterwards in London and Germany. He was author of a number of geographical works and papers and carried out exploration work in Paraguay', before embarking on his fateful African expedition. It is also suggested in this publication that his father's inspiration to become a map maker came when, 'in 1830, in the course of a walking tour in the West



Alexander Keith Johnston Snr, pictured in 1844 aged 30. (Acc.5811/3)

James McCarthy

The very first globe of the physical geography of the world was made in 1851 by the Edinburgh firm of W. and A.K. Johnston. In the next generation, cartographer Keith Johnston became one of the many Victorian explorers who attempted to fill in the detail of uncharted territories. A new book by James McCarthy has drawn Johnston's story out of the shadows of history and here the author describes how a series of connections and coincidences gave shape and substance to Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer 1844–79.



Map showing the proposed route of Johnston's trial expedition in Southern Usambara, 1879. (Acc.5811/1)

Highlands, he found so many inaccuracies in the best maps of Scotland then obtainable that it urged on him the idea of producing better maps himself'.

Although I did manage to locate various scientific papers written by Johnston and his father, I was still no closer to Keith Johnston, the man. As something of a last resort, I advertised in the press for information and as a result obtained the services of a professional genealogist who, working from the barest information and nineteenth-century census data, located a grand-niece of Johnston's. We had struck gold. It turned out that she lived only a few minutes walk from my own house in Edinburgh. We soon met and I was delighted to discover that she was the guardian of the family papers. After so much fruitless searching, I could hardly believe my eyes when she produced two beautifully bound, unpublished volumes, *Recollections of the Keith Johnstons*, written by Keith's sister Grace, herself a successful minor author. To my relief, these *Recollections*, clearly typed and organised chronologically, contained much that shed light on a beloved brother, and indeed on the whole family background. The jigsaw was beginning to take shape.

I next checked the route of the 1879 expedition and the location of the village where Keith died. The settlement, now long gone, was in what is now the Selous game reserve, which in the early 1960s I had explored in my capacity as district forest officer, commissioned to survey the timber resources available to build a proposed trans-Tanzania railway.
If I still needed convincing that I should write a biography of Johnston, then the next 'coincidence' made up my mind. Through a chance meeting in the Map Library with John Bartholomew of the famous Edinburgh map-making firm, I began to explore the Bartholomew Archive. Here I found some correspondence which brought Joseph Thomson back into the picture and became an important element in Johnston's biography. The search was beginning to hot up.

In her *Recollections*, Grace Johnston speaks of the 'nobility of nature' that lay behind her brother's 'extremely reticent manner'. She characterises him as 'sensitive, proud, fastidious to a degree he only showed his real self to those who understood him'. She adds, 'his ultra-refinement of feeling did not make for happiness. Like all those whose standard is high, he suffered in a world not created for sensitive souls, and it was hard for him, maybe, that he could only suffer in silence'.

In her anguish at Keith's unexpected early death, she had looked for a scapegoat, and found Thomson:

> … it added poignancy to our grief that the last months of his life should have been passed in the society of one who was the very antipodes of himself. For, to his fingertips, in tradition, in looks, in learning, Keith was a gentleman, while the man picked … to accompany the expedition, was in every sense the opposite. As the son of a small tradesman in Dumfries it is no disparagement to him to say that he had never had any opportunity of entering refined society, but to one who knows the ways and habits of the Scotch Peasant, it will be readily apparent that there could be no equality of intercourse.

Thomson, the most brilliant student of his year at Edinburgh University, perhaps did not meet the Johnstons' notions of gentlemanly comportment, but he certainly came from a literate family. But then, none of Johnston's family ever actually met him.

Letters in the Bartholomew Archive from Mrs Kirk, the wife of the British Consul in Zanzibar, eloquently identify the differences between the two

explorers. These letters were initially addressed to Johnston's mother after the loss of her son, and some also went to Grace.

Despite his 'extreme reticence', during the long wait for the end of the seasonal rains prior to the start of the expedition, Johnston had apparently found a soul mate in Mrs Kirk. She shared his love of music and the arts and was clearly a sympathetic listener, notably on the vexed topic of the twenty-one-year-old Thomson. What was the problem with Thomson?

Mrs Kirk wrote to Grace, 'T. was so entirely lacking in tact, so absolutely certain at all times of his social desirability that even the snub was powerless as a weapon … I feel so savage when I remember how many pleasant walks he spoiled … you know, generally speaking "Two's company and three's none" and it was specially so with your dear brother, reserved as you know he was. I never got a comfortable talk with him unless I got him quite to myself'. She conveys that they shared the view, 'how tiresome it was to see Mr Thomson in the distance bearing down upon us at the rate of ten miles an hour as he so constantly did, joining us with a beaming smile…'

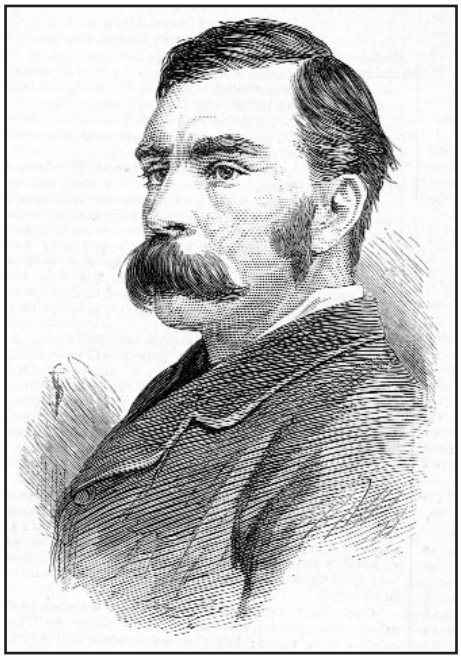
One imagines Thomson somewhat like an over-energetic puppy gambolling around his master, while in the eyes of the latter he was unfit to be brought into the drawing rooms of the mannered, expatriate society of Zanzibar.

For Johnston, things seem to have come to a head on their short trial expedition to the Usambara Mountains in Northern Tanzania when the fastidious cartographer realised that he was going to have to tolerate his companion in close proximity for as much as a year. Thomson was tough, resilient, a more than competent naturalist and geologist, and would demonstrate all too soon his ability as a charismatic leader of men. It seems almost unbelievable that, on the basis of a difference in style and manners (he even complained that Thomson 'ate like a horse'!), Johnston formally requested the Royal Geographical Society to withdraw him from the expedition. Evidently, his wish was not granted. From my point of view as biographer, this contretemps fortuitously revealed much about Johnston's character.

In my search for Keith Johnston, the institution of the Royal Geographical Society has been central. At the age of twenty-four he may well have been their youngest Fellow, while his father before him had been awarded their highest honour, the Victoria Medal. Perhaps more than any other scientific institution in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Royal Geographical Society was at the hub of a series of social, scientific, and political circles – a nexus which embraced many complementary interests, such as engravers, publishers, cartographers, explorers, philanthropists and missionaries. However, the Society was very much an Establishment one, closely linked to the centres of British imperial power and political influence, notwithstanding its role as a scientific association. Its upper echelons were largely drawn from the landed gentry and the military, and this strongly influenced its culture and style. A typical example was its President at this time, Sir Roderick Impey Murchison, a distinguished soldier, avid fox hunter and wealthy landowner who, with the help of Alexander Johnston, founded the first Chair of Geology at Edinburgh University (awarded to Sir Archibald Geikie). As Geographer to the Queen in Scotland, Keith Johnston's father – and by extension, he himself – would have



Joseph Thomson pictured in his *Through Masailand: A journey of exploration among the snowclad volcanic mountains and strange tribes of Eastern equatorial Africa* ... Revised edition, 1887. (K.128.e)



'The Late Mr. Keith Johnston', *Illustrated London News*, 1879. (NJ.677)

Behobeho Village, *Illustrated London News*, 1880. (NJ.677)



been more than acceptable within this well-demarcated circle.

The Society's *Proceedings*, for which the Johnstons wrote papers, were avidly read for the doings of the great Victorian explorers. Reading them now reminds one of what an exciting age of world-wide discovery this must have been. As the assistant maps curator to the Society in the mid-1860s, Johnston was required to draw maps of these explorers' journeys and he would have known many of them personally, including Sir Richard Burton, Henry Morton Stanley, and the idolised David Livingstone, who claimed that Keith, from his meticulous researches, knew more about the geography of central Africa than he did himself – a remarkable accolade, given Livingstone's usual contempt for what he labelled 'armchair geographers'.

Johnston had in fact volunteered to take part in the search for Livingstone when he disappeared in 1871, while Thomson had tearfully begged his parents to allow him to do likewise – at the age of ten! That search and its conclusion has been immortalised in the famous meeting in the jungle with Livingstone's 'rescuer', Stanley. (It should be said that the great missionary explorer was never really 'lost'.)

Both Livingstone and Stanley, two of the iconic figures of African exploration, keep surfacing in the Keith Johnston story. While Livingstone was a long-standing family friend, Johnston had a distinct distaste for Stanley. (Among the British Establishment, Stanley was sometimes disparaged with snobbery similar to that which was visited on the young Joseph Thomson.) When they met in Zanzibar, Stanley had hinted that he, the more experienced traveller, might decide to beat him to his goal. Johnston confided in Mrs Kirk that he had nightmares that when he reached Lake Nyassa, Stanley would be there, smiling cynically, uttering the words: 'Mr Johnston, I presume?'. This anxiety suggests that fame may indeed have been the spur for Johnston.

Towards the end of writing my biography of Johnston, a much earlier brush with Stanley was revealed. In 2003, as a result of seeing a web page on Keith Johnston and the RGS expedition (created by my colleague Mike Shand, Senior Cartographer at Glasgow University, who has greatly assisted this research throughout), the Koninklijk Museum voor Midden-Afrika in Belgium drew my attention to some unpublished correspondence between the two men, dating from 1872. In one letter, Johnston strongly refutes Stanley's



A selection of W. and A.K. Johnston atlases from the Map Library of the National Library of Scotland.

claims that in a published map he had underplayed Stanley's discoveries and that he had profited financially from Livingstone's discoveries – charges which, knowing Johnston's circumstances and undoubted probity, were certainly untrue. While acknowledging his esteem for Stanley as an explorer, Johnston makes it clear that he would consider going public with his response to these accusations in order to protect his own reputation.

My biographical quest was considerably facilitated by the temporary transfer for my benefit of the Johnston expedition diary from the Royal Scottish Geographical Society in Glasgow to the Map Library of the National Library of Scotland. It has been marked by a series of serendipitous coincidences and while writing *Journey into Africa* I sometimes felt as if Keith Johnston's ghost was sitting on my shoulder.

In 2001, Mike Shand and I retraced the route of his last, fateful expedition. We re-read, with some emotion, the last pages of his diary: 'June 11 Boma [camp] in jungle. Still unable to move. Get a sort of hammock made to convey me tomorrow as to get forward. Have had to send men back to Msangawapani for food.' On the following day, still recording accurate route details, Johnston says:

Still very unwell was carried out of boma by Chuma and Sululu on hammock. Go winding W by S and SSW. 9.20 marsh acacia, and small-leaved many twigged trees. Cross a stream 2 feet deep going SSW and halt. All this morning's march was made in a hammock, Mabub and Maribu, Mabouku etc. relieving one another in carrying me painfully along at a sort of jog which must resemble a camel trot and which frequently gave great pain, so much so that I turned out more dead than alive … very ill still, no rest at night.

Our attempt to locate his grave, cutting traces through thick bush over several days, did not meet with success, nor did Mike on another expedition the following year. (At the time of writing, Mike, with additional cartographic information, is making his third – and final – effort to find this grave.) Even today, with modern transport, equipment and medical prophylactics, the intractable bush environment poses unpredictable challenges and hazards. Keith Johnston's journey into Africa was a venture into danger and the unknown – a venture which cost this hitherto unsung hero his life. At least now we can say that his memory lives on.

Note on sources

Expedition to East Africa: The Diary of Keith Johnston, transcribed with explanatory notes by James McCarthy, is available at the Library (Acc.11937), as is a microfilm (Acc.11969) of the original manuscript, held at the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, Glasgow. Joseph Thomson gives his account of the expedition in *To the Central African Lakes and Back: The Narrative of the Royal Geographical Society's East Central African Expedition, 1879–80*, London, 1881 (K.128.e). The papers, documents, memorabilia and photographs contained in the W. and A.K. Johnston Archive (Acc.5811) illustrate the endeavours and interests of successive generations of the family. Examples of the many fine maps and atlases produced by the firm can be consulted in the Map Library, which also holds the vast Bartholomew Archive, described as 'much more than the record of one world-famous mapmaking firm. As Bartholomew was a jobbing printer, working for others to provide maps and illustrations, the Archive relates to their work for many map producers (and general publishers) from the mid-nineteenth to the late twentieth century'. The Archive includes books and other reference materials as well as extensive business records and correspondence. The process of indexing, recording and conserving it is ongoing; Map Library staff can advise as to accessibility status.

Living with Jane Welsh Carlyle

Editing and Insights

AILEEN CHRISTIANSON

The Duke-Edinburgh edition of The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle *was initiated in the 1950s by Charles Richard Sanders at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. From the beginning it has been firmly connected to Edinburgh because of the National Library of Scotland's major holdings of both Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle's letters. Aileen Christianson, one of the team of editors working on the project, here describes its genesis and explores developing perceptions of Jane Welsh Carlyle as a writer.*

VIRGINIA WOOLF attributes 'the incomparable brilliance' of Jane Welsh Carlyle's letters to 'the hawk-like swoop and descent of her mind upon facts'. She is speaking of a much admired writer whose literary reputation does not rest on work published within her own lifetime, and whose chosen medium, letter writing – essentially a private exchange – is also an important art form. As I point out in the forthcoming *Carlyle Encyclopedia*, 'the public life was the wife of the "genius", patient, thrifty, clever, self-denying, with a gallant suffering of illness. The private self, just as visible in the letters, is vigorous, ironic, humorous and egotistical'.

In October 1967 I began a two-year appointment as a research assistant for Kenneth J. Fielding, Saintsbury professor of English Literature at Edinburgh University, on the Duke-Edinburgh edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*. There followed a succession of short-term appointments, of varying degrees of insecurity, but from then till now my life has been lived with both Carlyles.

We are currently working on volume 31 (January to September 1856, at post-page proof stage), volume 32 (October 1856 to July 1857, at copy editing stage) and volume 33 (August 1857 to June 1858, at early typescript stage). Where we used to publish a set of three volumes every few years, since 1997 we have published a volume each year and it sometimes feels as though we are editing the Carlyles' lives and letters at a slower rate than they were lived. However, a benefit of this intense immersion in their world is that, beyond detailed knowledge of the daily minutiae of their lives, one sees the nineteenth century unroll through the lens of this oddly brilliant pair and their friendship circles.

Born in Haddington in 1801, Jane Baillie Welsh received a rigorous education; in 1821 she was introduced to historian and essayist Thomas Carlyle by one of her former tutors, Edward Irving. Carlyle wooed her mainly by letter. When they married five years later they lived in Comely Bank, Edinburgh, until 1828, and then moved to Craigenputtoch in Nithsdale, an isolated spot, where Jane was daunted by her domestic circumstances:

> [W]e were very poor and, further and worse, being an only child, and brought up to 'great prospects', I was sublimely ignorant of every branch of useful knowledge, though a capital Latin scholar and a very fair mathematician!! … So I sent for *Cobbett's Cottage Economy* and fell to work at a loaf of bread. But knowing nothing of the process of fermentation or the heat of ovens, it came to pass that my loaf got put into the oven at the time myself ought to have been put into bed, and I remained the only person not asleep, in a house in the middle of a desert! … That I who had been so petted at home, whose comfort had been studied by everybody in the house, who had never been required to do anything but cultivate my mind, should have to pass all those hours of the night watching a loaf of bread! which mightn't turn out bread after all!

Reduced to tears, she suddenly had an epiphany in the shape of an image of Bevenuto Cellini 'sitting up all night watching his Perseus in the oven'. She asks herself, what 'in the sight of the upper powers … is the mighty difference between a statue of Perseus and a loaf of bread …?', deciding that the statue of Perseus was the 'mere chance expression' of Cellini's will, energy and patience, and concluding: 'If he had been a woman living at Craigenputtoch, with a dyspeptic husband, sixteen miles from a baker, and he a bad one, all these same qualitites would have come out most fitting in a good loaf of bread'. This 'germ of an idea' spread consolation



Craigenputtoch. (Acc.11477)



Jane Welsh Carlyle. From a picture reproduced in *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle* by Charles Brookfield, 1905. (S.151.b)



The young Thomas Carlyle. (MS.2884/168)

'over an uncongenial life, during five years we lived at that savage place'. Their next home, at 5 Cheyne Row in London, to which they moved in 1834, was a very different ambience: there they became the centre of a lively circle of writers and intellectuals.

Novelist Margaret Oliphant was not alone in admiring her 'power of narration, the flashes of keen wit and sarcasm, occasionally even a little sharpness, and always the modifying sense of humour under all'. Her letters, too, have the structure and rhythm of the best oral storytelling. Welsh Carlyle had her own contemporary reputation as a sharp and witty storyteller.

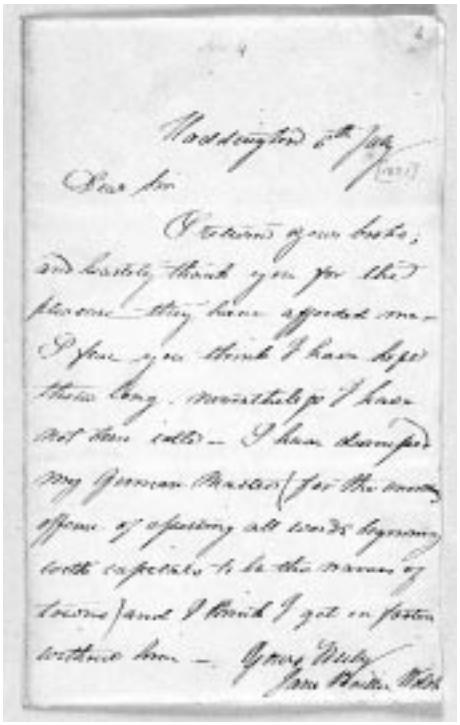
Thomas Carlyle, of course, is famous for more than his letters; he was known in his own time as the Victorian monolith, historian, essayist and pronouncer of doom on his society. Thomas was utterly overwhelmed with sorrow after his wife's sudden death in 1866. He immediately set about contacting friends and acquaintances, requesting the return of letters they had received from Jane. On 8 July 1866, he noted:

The whole of yesterd*y* I spent in reading and arranging the Letters of 1857; such a day's *reading* as I perhaps never had in my life before. What a piercing radiancy of meaning to me in those dear records … [C]onstantly there is such an electric shower of all-illuminating brilliancy, penetrat*n*, recognit*n*, wise discern*t*, just enthusiasm, humour, grace, patience, courage, love, – and in fine of spontaneous *nobleness* of mind and intellect, – as I know not where to parallel! (MS.533/151)

Thomas also sorted out his photographs of her, noting with care every nuance – whether the resemblance was strong, the expression typical, etc.

Although Thomas's letters have been described by Dick Sanders (founder of the Duke-Edinburgh edition of their letters) as containing 'tedious passages', he says such longeurs occur in Jane's 'almost never'; in both, 'brilliance of metaphor and vigor of expression' are the rule and he accurately characterises their letters as a 'vivid and invaluable record of a changing world from 1812 to 1879':

Taken as a whole, the letters have a vital unity and unfold a story resembling that of an enormous multi-volumed, crowded canvas, cross-section-of-life, realistic novel, swarming with major and minor characters, containing much dialogue, and having a moving and complex plot with subplots and auxiliary anecdotes, and with many bright



Letter to Thomas Carlyle from Jane Baillie Welsh, 6 July 1821. (MS.529/4)

comic colors providing relief for some deeply tragic shadows.

The publication by J.A. Froude of Carlyle's *Reminiscences*, 1881 (ABS.2.80.98), with Thomas's assessment of the writing talent shown in her letters as equalling and surpassing 'whatev*r* of best I know to exist in that kind' (MS.533/151), contributed to her posthumous valuation. This was further confirmed by Froude's publication in 1883 of *Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* – these being the letters collected and edited to an extent by Thomas.

The Duke-Edinburgh *Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* seeks as comprehensive a publication of their letters as is possible. This inevitably involves an imbalance, given Thomas's surviving 6,000 or so letters and extensive published work, set against Jane's 2,000 letters, plus some short prose pieces: 'Much ado about Nothing' (1849), '*The simple Story* of my own first Love' (1852), '*BUDGET of a Femme incomprise*' (1855), an anecdotal notebook (1845–52) and her journal (1855–56).

In their correspondence during their married years, Jane typically presented herself in counterpoint to Thomas, making possible his central position as the 'genius' around whom the household must revolve; at the same time, she constantly deploys satire to make her point, as in this letter of 10 August 1845, interrogating Thomas's tendency to belittle her:

Monsieur le President! I begin to be weary of the treatments I experience here! – Always my 'bits of letters' and 'bits of letters' as if I were some nice little Child writing in half-text on ruled paper to its Godpapa! – Since [Francis] Jeffrey was pleased to compliment me on my 'bits of convictions'; I have not had my 'rights of WOMAN' so trifled with! He payed the penalty of his assurance in losing from that time forward my valuable correspondence; with you I cannot so easily cease to correspond, 'for reasons that which it may be interesting not to state': but a woman of my invention can always find a legitimate means of revenging herself on those who do not 'treat her with the respect due to Genius' – who put her off with a pat on the head or a chuck under the chin, when she addresses them in all the full-grown gravity of five feet-five-inches-and-three-quarters – without her shoes! So let us hear no more of my bits of letters, unless you are prepared to front a nameless retribution! (MS.603/107)

Her technique of rhetorical challenge to Thomas takes the shape of an ostensibly humorous assault on his reductionism of her 'bits of letters' – those letters that have since become the basis of her reputation as a writer.

My own developing critical journey in relation to Welsh Carlyle began in 1987. Before then, I had been entirely devoted to the rigours of editing both Carlyles' letters. My essay, 'Jane Welsh Carlyle and her Friendships with Women in the 1840s', was mainly biographical in its use of the letters, but it led on to engagement with the more difficult question of identifying where her power as a writer lay, and constructing an evaluation of how self-conscious or reflexive a writer she was. I realised that as long as her writing was mined principally for biographical information or for evidence as to her state of mind, it would be all too easy to dismiss her, much as she accused Thomas of doing, as someone who wrote 'bits of letters' – however witty they might be. It seemed essential to begin to articulate a critical perspective.

In the 1990s there was something of a sea change in the world of literary criticism, a return to a more eighteenth-century inclusiveness in the concept of what literature can be. Letters were once more considered as literature, and their analysis for technique and skill was endorsed. Welsh Carlyle's chosen medium came into its own.

In parallel to this development, work on other 'lost' women writers was being enthusiastically pursued. In this context, Welsh Carlyle could at last be evaluated

as a writer in her own right, rather than being lauded or dismissed as an appendage of her husband's. It became necessary to set aside the image of her as long-suffering wife, a role she herself assiduously, if equivocally, constructed – and that her husband perpetuated in his reminiscences of her, written between 22 May and 28 July 1866.

This radical re-evaluation has meant that Jane Welsh Carlyle can take her place in the tradition of Scottish women writers, something that was recognised when Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan included her in their *History of Scottish Women's Writing* (H4.97.740). This collection represented a ground-breaking exploration of many previously underexposed Scottish women writers. In my contribution, an essay on 'Jane Welsh Carlyle's Private Writing Career', I took the opportunity to explore her work through detailed analyses of particular letters. As well as highlighting the technical bravura of Welsh Carlyle's methods, I presented evidence of her awareness of her own skill at manipulating her material for effect. By focusing on complete letters, rather than extracting entertaining or informational passages, I made sure that the shape of her pieces could also be appreciated.

An incidental pleasure of my work as an editor is the fact that both the Carlyles show a real appreciation of the skill involved in good editing. Sanders remarked of Thomas Carlyle that he 'liked editing, both the textual problems and the elucidation', and indeed much of Carlyle's work was either as an actual editor, for example, *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (T.145.b), or included a fictional editorial persona, as in *Sartor Resartus* (RB.s.685). But Welsh Carlyle also introduces into her work her own awareness of editorial approaches. The manuscript of '*The simple Story* of my own first Love' includes, as part of the text, inserted underneath inked lines, three notes expanding on specific aspects. In a reference to 'my whole pamphlet … on *the Marriage-question*' she states that she is *not* going to write as it is 'too much in advance of the Century for being committed to writing; so long at least as the mania for *editing and publishing* everybody's papers, however come by, holds out'. In a wry letter to Thomas dated 16 July 1858, she makes fun of manuscript worship:

Surely, Dear, the shortest most unimportant note *you* can write is worth a bit of paper all to itself! Such a mixed *ms*, with *flaps* too, may be a valuable literary curiosity 'a hundred years hence'; but is a trial of patience to the Present Reader, who, in *eagerly* opening a letter from you, had not calculated on having to go thro' a process like seeking the source of the Niger – in a small way! (MS.606/488)



Picture of the elderly Jane Welsh Carlyle, with handwritten note by Thomas Carlyle: 'Indistinct and in fact distorted, yet expressively like.' (Acc. 11477 P5v.)

There is consistency of style between Welsh Carlyle's letters and the rest of her writing, including her 1845–52 notebook and 1855–56 journal. Her prose pieces also contain epistolary references: she describes 'Much ado about Nothing' as being like a letter from the 'present Mrs Carlyle' to 'myself', that is, her younger self in Haddington; '*BUDGET of a Femme incomprise*', given in the form of an address to Parliament, pointing out the shortfalls and shortcomings of the budgetary allowance of 5 Cheyne Row – 'I don't choose to *speak* again on the *Money Question*' – was left for Thomas to find, and add his own note: 'thy £30 more shall be granted, thy bits of debt paid, and thy will *done*! – T.C. 12 feby 1855'. '*The simple Story*' ended with a reference to a young preacher who, not knowing how otherwise to end, signed off his sermon as if it were a letter to God: 'my dear Sir, your obedient servant'. Welsh Carlyle initialled it 'J—', also giving it the appearance of a letter.

Here is a woman who chose a private writing career. She dedicated her creative energies to working within an epistolary tradition, of which she was a supreme exponent. In his courting days, Thomas wrote to her: 'I shall yet "stand a-tiptoe" at your name. Not write! I declare if I had known nothing of you but your letters, I should have pronounced you to be an excellent writer' (6 April 1823: MS.529/53). 'Excellent writer' is what Welsh Carlyle was. Her texts provided an incomparable picture of the life of a man *and* woman of letters, in a literal and literary sense. A final illustration of the interconnections between the two writers can be seen in Welsh Carlyle's own critical analysis (written to Thomas on 23 July 1857, when she was suffering from depression) of her letter-writing style:

What a shame! when you are left alone there with plenty smoke of your own to consume, to be puffing out mine on you from this distance! It is certainly a questionable privilege one's best friend enjoys; that of having all one's darkness rayed out on him! – If I were writing to – who shall I say? *Mr Barlow*, now – I should fill my paper with '*wits*' and elegant quotations, and diverting anecdotes; should write a letter that would procure me laudation sky-high on my 'charming unflagging Spirits'!! and my 'extraordinary freshness of mind and feelings'! but to *you* I cannot for my life be anything but a bore! (MS.606/446)

Note on sources

The largest portion of the Carlyles' surviving letters are in the National Library of Scotland, the natural first point of enquiry being the Duke-Edinburgh edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* (1970– ongoing; general editor: Charles Richard Sanders); the twenty-eight volumes published so far cover the period from 1812 to June 1855. (Lit.S.29.C). Other collections of correspondence include *Thomas Carlyle's Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* edited by J.A. Froude (ABS.2.92.34) and *Thomas and Jane: Selected Letters from the Edinburgh University Library Collection*, edited by Ian Campbell (H3.80.5824). Among a wealth of biographical information and critical appraisals available at the Library are *Thomas Carlyle's Reminiscences* edited by Kenneth Fielding and Ian Campbell (HP1.98.1423), *The Carlyles at Home* by Thea Holme (HP1.79.5895) and *Thomas Carlyle* by Ian Campbell (HP2.93.6629). Aileen Christianson's essay 'Jane Welsh Carlyle and her Friendships with Women in the 1840s' is published in *Prose Studies.* 10, December 1987 (HJR.509). The typographical presentation of the Carlyle manuscripts follows the conventions of the Duke-Edinburgh edition.

Notes on contibutors

AILEEN CHRISTIANSON is one of the editors of the Duke-Edinburgh edition of *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* and also writes critically on Welsh Carlyle. She is a senior lecturer in Scottish Literature at Edinburgh University; co-editor of *Scottish Women's Fiction, 1920s to 1960s: Journeys into Being* and author of *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*. She is currently writing a book on Willa Muir. Her broad research interests are in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Scottish women's prose, fiction and non-fiction, and in post-1979 Scottish cultural history, particularly the women's movement.

OLIVE GEDDES is Senior Curator in the Manuscripts Division of the National Library of Scotland. She was curator of the Library's summer 2003 exhibition *Wish You Were Here! Travellers' Tales From Scotland*. She is currently working on an edition of Stephen Place's journal of his visit to Scotland of 1832 as footman to the future 1st Duke of Sutherland. Olive Geddes is the author of *A Swing Through Time: Golf in Scotland, 1457–1743* and *The Laird's Kitchen: Three Hundred Years of Food in Scotland*.

ANDREW LOWNIE is John Buchan's most recent biographer and has edited the first complete collections of Buchan's short stories and poetry. He is also the author of *The Literary Companion to Edinburgh* and is presently compiling an Edinburgh anthology. Born in 1961 and educated at Fettes, Magdalene College, Cambridge, and Edinburgh University, he has been a bookseller, journalist, publisher and for the last eighteen years a literary agent. He is married with two children and now lives in London. His biography of the spy Guy Burgess, *Stalin's Englishman*, is to be published next year.

JAMES MCCARTHY is the former Deputy Director (Scotland) of the Nature Conservancy Council. Consultancy, writing and lecturing commissions have taken him to the USA, Canada, Australia, East Africa, Eastern Europe and Iceland. He is the author of *Wild Scotland* and *An Inhabited Solitude: Scotland, Land and People*. Regarding his new book, *Journey into Africa: The Life and Death of Keith Johnston, Scottish Cartographer and Explorer (1844–79)*, he emphasises that the Johnston story could not have been told without the courteous assistance of the staff of the Map Library of the National Library of Scotland.

***Cover:* 'Camp at Cairn Dow', from Elsie Jollyman's journal. (MS.29499)**

A new strategy for the Library

The National Library of Scotland has published a new strategy for public consultation. The strategy looks at issues such as how the Library should widen access to the collections, and the challenges posed by developing technology and electronic publications.

Copies of the strategy can be requested by writing to the Library at the address below, or can be downloaded at www.nls.uk/strategy.

Comments, queries or feedback about the strategy can be sent to Martyn Wade, National Librarian, at the address below, or by e-mail to strategy@nls.uk, by 20 February 2004.

Hector Berlioz 1803–2003

The French composer Hector Berlioz was born two hundred years ago this month. To celebrate the bicentenary, the Library is displaying a selection of music and documents from its renowned Berlioz collections, from Wednesday 17 December to Wednesday 21 January (closed 25, 26 December and 1, 2 January) in the Exhibition Hall, George IV Bridge Building.

BE A FRIEND

The Friends of the National Libraries

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

Spring 2004

ANGELA LEMAIRE, a printmaker and writer, describes the archive she recently donated to the Library, including lively letters to her from Fr. Brocard Sewell, a Carmelite friar and controversial writer who founded the *Aylesford Review*; drawings, prints and beautifully scripted letters from wood-engraver Michael Renton; and examples of her own relief and etched work, related drawings, and artists' books, as well as much other correspondence.

JAMES MILLS, author of *Cannabis Britannica: Empire, Trade, and Prohibition 1800–1928* and a senior lecturer in History at the University of Strathclyde, discusses the India papers at the National Library of Scotland, and focuses on the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission report on cannabis carried out by the British colonial Government of India in the 1890s. The National Library's copy contains unique photographs showing cannabis users in India as well as the modes of production of the drug.

TRACEY S. ROSENBERG, a postgraduate student at Edinburgh University, discusses her research for her doctoral thesis '*The Priestess of Revolt': Rediscovering the Life and Work of Mona Caird*. Mona Caird (1854–1932) was a controversial writer of fiction and essays whose opinions on the subject of marriage caused a furore when they appeared in the *Westminster Review* in 1888. How did the press portray this outspoken individualist, and how did Caird use the press to make her voice heard?

EOIN SHALLOO, Curator in the National Library's Rare Book Collections division, looks at 'astonishing' and 'incredible' stories from broadsides and newpapers of the past. Tales of monsters, mermaids, cannibals and transvestites have intrigued people for centuries. The strange and the surreal constitute just one of the themes of the Library's 2004 summer exhibition *Read All About It!*, an exploration of the production, distribution and consumption of news in Scotland from the seventeenth century to the present day.

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

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