

THE

Piper



NUMBER 31 SUMMER 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Preserve the past: be part of the future

The Library is changing and while we might agree with Dr Johnson's maxim that 'change is not made without inconvenience' it is an exciting and creative time. *The Piper* has also undergone a metamorphosis to become a more attractive, relevant and modern publication, one we hope will reflect the pleasure and pride you have as a Friend in your relationship with the Library and Special Collections.

We have employed the talents of Fiona Graham – who works on cultural and arts projects, and is managing a project on the University Collections – as our editor and Mark Blackadder as designer, and this edition is both handsome and informative. There are updates on the Main Library Redevelopment, details of the magnificent material in our Special Collections and an introduction to Dr Joe Marshall, the new Rare Books Librarian. We also have current information on the Friends' activities and purchases.

You are an essential part of the Library and we welcome your comments and ideas. Enjoy reading *The Piper*, come to our meetings – it is a wonderful way to preserve the past and be part of the future.

Lady Caplan,
President, EUFL

Lynx (from Audubon,
*Quadrupeds of North
America*, [JZ 422])





Invaluable support for Special Collections

Many people often assume that Special Collections are something static – treasures locked away in secure rooms where they can be preserved unchanged. In fact, our collections are changing all the time. A strong programme of collection development is one of the most important ways of keeping a collection alive. For instance, were I to buy a book because it has a fine 18th-century gold-tooled Edinburgh binding, I would do some research into our existing collection of bindings, and think about what gaps we had. By adding to our collections we are saying that they are still current – rare books and

manuscripts are not fossils or antiques, but resources to be discovered and read. New items, whether a medieval book of hours or a piece of modern experimental verse, can challenge assumptions, provoke debate, and transform the existing collections. We are delighted that the support of the Friends has helped us continue to build up our holdings.

We acquire new material in a variety of ways. We receive a large number of booksellers' catalogues, but most of our purchases come through quotations from dealers who know our collection strengths. Sometimes we bid for items for sale

at auction. We also attend bookfairs in Edinburgh and London – a highly recommended way of getting to see nice books and meeting the dealers. Many offers of donations are made, which we greatly appreciate, although we cannot accept everything and we have to make sure that all additions are in line with the library's collections policy. We do not have the space to take everything.

The earliest item purchased since January, is an unrecorded book by a doctor of Scottish descent, James Primrose, *De vulgi in medicina erroribus* (London, 1640, [JA 4193]). We are always on the

Books and manuscripts purchased so far by Special Collections in 2008.





RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Primrose, James

De vulgi in medicina erroribus. (London, 1640) [JA 4193]

Robertson, Dyonisius

Pferd-Arznaykunst, (Frankfurt und Leipzig [...] 1759). [SD 9593]

Kinloch, G. E.

Collectanea Scotica. [E2008.08]

Goldsmith, Oliver

The good-natured man: a comedy. (Perth, R. Morison, Junior, 1792). [SD 9510]

Condorcet, Marquis de./Casa, Marques de.

Compendio de la obra inglesa intitulada riqueza de las naciones. (Madrid, 1792) [JA 4191]

Eutropius

Eutropii historiae romanae breviarium. (Edinburgh, Bell & Bradfute, 1794). [SD 9541]

Smith, Adam

Essays on philosophical subjects. (Basil, 1799) [JA 4192]

Vigor, North

[Manuscript] *A treatise of the Materia Medica in which the Virtues of all the Simples of the three Kingdoms are truly described [...] by [...] the learn'd Dr Charles Alston [...].* [E2008.02]

Ross, Thomas

A compendious system of geography, as connected with astronomy. (Edinburgh, 1804). [SD 9544]

Hope, Thomas Charles

Collection of accounts books, vellum certificates, and letters. [E2008.03]

University of Edinburgh, Moral Philosophy Class List ... 1823 and 1824. [UEA]

[Report]

Report of the speeches at the constitutional meeting in the George Street Assembly Room, Edinburgh [...] 1831. (Edinburgh, 1831). [SD 9549]

Buckingham, James Silk

The coming era of practical reform, not 'looming in the distance', but 'nigh at hand'. (London, 1853). [SD 9599]

Graham, James

Hydatid Disease (Sydney, 1891). [SD 9472]

Walker, Archibald Stodart

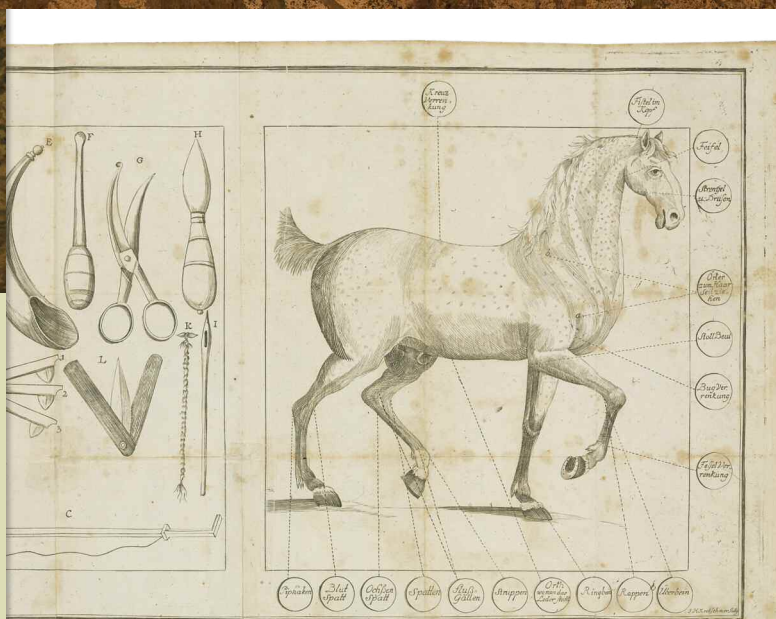
[Anthology] *A beggar's wallet containing contributions [...] from certain workers in art and letters.* (Edinburgh and London, Dobson, Molle & Co. Ltd, 1905). [SD 9511]

Moulin, Jeanine

Christine de Pisan. (Paris, 1962). [SD 9542]

Chelkowski, Peter J.

The scholar and the saint. (Albany, New York University Press, 1975). [SD 9523]



Far left. The arms of the Royal High School on a special binding of *Eutropii historiae romanae breviarium*, 1794

Left. A plate from *Pferd-Arznaykunst* by Dyonisius Robertson, 1759

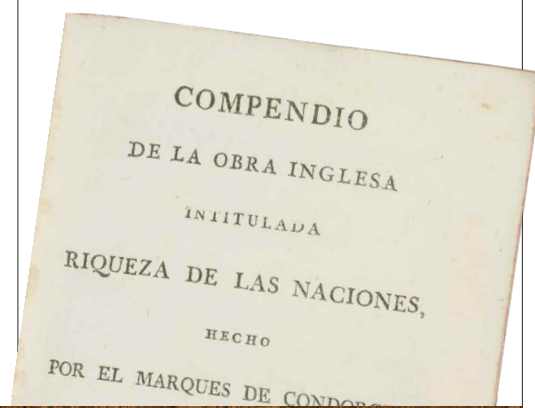
Below. The title page of a 1792 Spanish edition of *The Wealth of Nations* by Adam Smith

lookout for unrecorded items. Many books are now available digitally, but to see this particular edition you have to come to Edinburgh University Library. We also acquire items with other unique features such as a special binding, provenance or annotations: for example, a book given as a prize by the Royal High School (Edinburgh) in 1794, with a note that the successful pupil was one George Tait (Eutropius, *Historia*, Edinburgh, 1794, [SD 9541]), or a book on Christine de Pisan from the library of French artist René Magritte (Moulin, *Christine de Pisan*, Paris, 1962, [SD 9542]).

'Landmark' works relating to Adam Smith have also been acquired, including the first appearance of *The Wealth of Nations* in Spanish (Condorcet, *Compendio*, Madrid, 1792, [JA 4191]). Smith is one of our Edinburgh own, and we have the bulk of his library. Other foreign acquisitions relate to Edinburgh's historic strengths in medicine and veterinary studies: a 1759 work on farriery in German by a Scot with the amazing name of Dyonisius Robertson (*Pferd-Arznaykunst*, [SD 9593]), and an 1891 work on *Hydatid Disease* published in Sydney

by a doctor from Edinburgh, James Graham. These publications mark the influence of Scotland, and particularly Edinburgh University, on the wider world.

Among the manuscripts purchased is a significant collection relating to Thomas Charles Hope (1766–1844), Professor of Chemistry here and a leading figure in Edinburgh society [E2008.03]. The collection includes a curious volume listing students invited to supper with him. Hope was, according to the ODNB, 'reputed to be capable of eating eight plates of turtle.' Researchers can now find out who shared his extravagant meals! We hope, with the continued support of the Friends, to acquire similarly intriguing material over the next few years. **Joseph Marshall**





A treasury of rare books

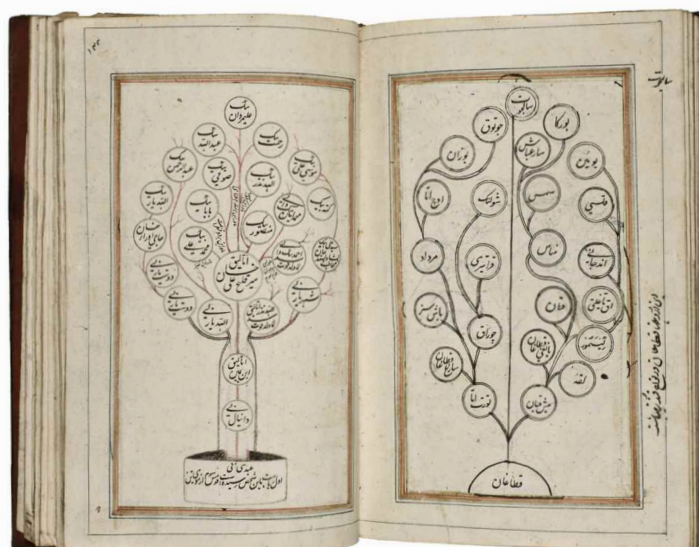


Main frieze and above. Detail from Sama scene with Dervishes dancing. From a magnificent copy of the *Kulliyati Sadi*, the complete collected works of the Persian poet, Sadi. Transcribed AD 1556 (AH 964) [Or MS 104, f.199]

Edinburgh University Library has something in the region of 250,000 rare books, so it is a little surprising that I am the first member of staff to have a post with the title of Rare Books Librarian. There's no 'official' definition of what is a rare book but it tends to mean anything that has to be read under supervised conditions and stored securely, because it is valuable, early, scarce or of great importance. I am part of the Special Collections team, which deals with the historic archival, printed and manuscript material in the Main Library. Special Collections is itself part of University Collections, which includes the Museums and Galleries Collections. While I provide advice and support to other libraries with rare books, such as New College library, my focus is on the outstanding collections in the Main Library. I joined EUL in January 2008 from the Rare Books Division of the

National Library of Scotland: it says much about Edinburgh's status as a centre for cultural and academic activity that it supports two libraries with world-class collections of rare books.

A large part of my job is, as the title suggests, being a librarian. I have to make sure that the right books are in the right place and can be retrieved for our users. That's not as simple as it sounds! At the moment we are preparing to move the special collections into new purpose-built accommodation on the top two floors of the Main Library. This means I have to measure all the rare book collections and decide where they can fit in the new strongrooms. As I walk round with my tape measure I'm gradually seeing every book in the collection, and it's pleasing to see how many fascinating and important books we have, many in excellent original condition.



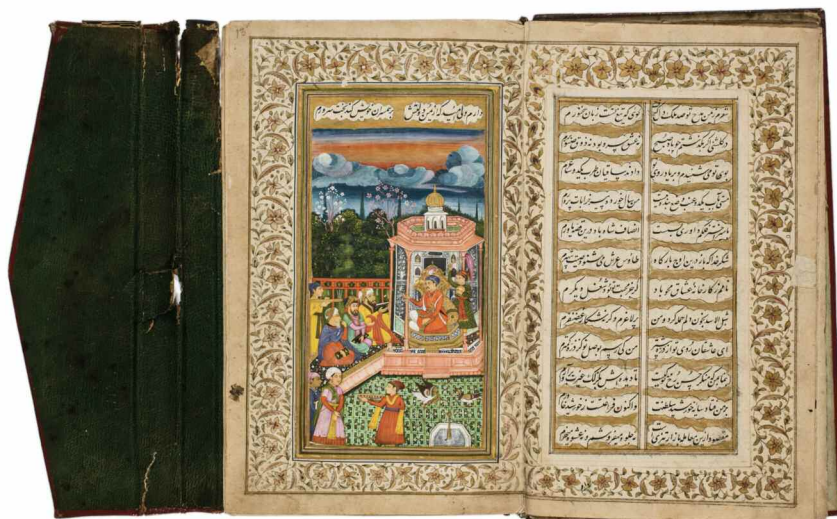
Far left. Islamic gilt-stamped leather binding, front cover. *Safar-nama-i Mir Izzat-allah*, an account of a journey for the British from Delhi through Kashmir and Tibet, etc, completed in 1813. [Or MS 91]

Left. Genealogies from *Safar-nama-i Mir Izzat-allah*, an account of a journey for the British from Delhi through Kashmir and Tibet, etc, completed in 1813. [Or MS 91]



Another hat I sometimes wear is that of curator. I am responsible for ensuring that our books survive for future generations to study. That means taking decisions about conservation work, training staff and educating users on how to handle books, and planning the collections for the future. People often assume that the oldest books are the most fragile – in fact, the reverse is generally true; 19th- and 20th-century books are often printed on poor quality paper and held together with a thin smear of glue. As time passes, these books will be even more rare and vulnerable than many of the very early books. It is always a delight to show someone one of our incunabula (a book printed before 1501, of which we have nearly 300) and point out that its crisp white paper, sharp black ink and robust leather binding should make it last indefinitely.

I also manage staff who run the Special Collections reading room and enquiry service and (at present) the Music Service, and I coordinate the cataloguing of rare books. Other areas which fall under my remit to one extent or another are: the library's early map collection, our archive copies of EU theses and the output of Edinburgh University Press. The magnificent collections of Western medieval manuscripts and Oriental manuscripts are yet other areas of responsibility. In my first week in post I guided a student through two of our treasures: the beautifully illuminated Hours of St Ninian [MS 42] and the Aberdeen



Top. Miniature in Indian style. From *Diwan-i Hafiz*, the collected poetical works of Hafiz of Shiraz (d. AD 1389) [Or MS 106, f.13]

Above. Hours of the Virgin and St Ninian, [MS 42]

Left. Rich illumination. From *Shah-namah*, the famous epic poem composed in AD 998. [Or MS 265]. Donated by Graham of Airth.



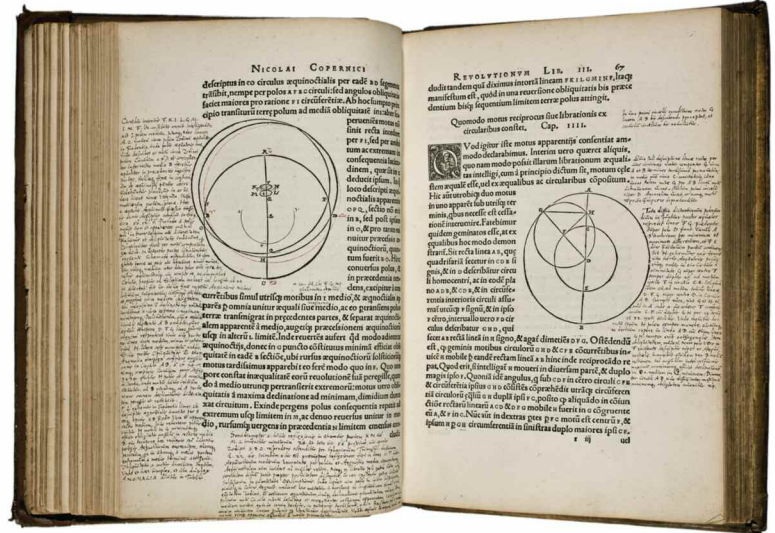
From top left to right. Book label of Adam Smith

Binder's label of James Scott of Edinburgh

Binding by James Scott of Edinburgh

Copernicus, *De revolutionibus*, 1543, [JY 730]

Bottom. Selection of books from the library of Adam Smith



Breviary [De.1/1.53-4], the finest surviving copy of the first substantial book printed in Scotland. It's at moments like these when you feel the sense of responsibility and privilege that comes with managing such a wide area.

The rare book collections have

been growing since 1580 and they will certainly grow in the future; already this year we have made a number of exciting purchases at auction and through bookdealers, as well as receiving some significant donations. What are researchers going to want to see in five, ten, fifty

or even five hundred years' time? It's a fascinating guessing game which I'll be playing over the next few years, working closely with library colleagues, academic partners and hopefully the Friends of Edinburgh University Library.

Joseph Marshall



Joseph Marshall was born in Leeds in 1974 and studied at Durham University before moving to Edinburgh to study for a PhD. He was awarded his doctorate in 2000 for his thesis on the writings of King James VI of Scotland. He then worked for Edinburgh University Library Special Collections and then the National Library of Scotland, where he was a curator of rare books from 2000 to 2007. He returned to Edinburgh University Library in January 2008.

Moving to centre stage

This summer marks an important point in the Main Library Redevelopment Project when the heritage collections will move back to the top of the building.

Edinburgh University Library has one of the most important collections of rare books, manuscripts and archives in Europe, and now a new area on the fifth and sixth floors – the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) – will provide an innovative way of presenting the collections for teaching, learning, research and outreach.

'This is a very exciting time,' says Sheila Cannell, Director of Library Services, 'as the heritage and research collections will now be housed in state of the art conditions which comply with the official standard (BS5454:2000). New cutting-edge digitisation and conservation units have been included to bring key services closer to the staff and users.'

'The intention was to fashion a space which corresponds to the new approaches to teaching, learning and research, and after much consultation with academic staff and students a space has been designed where users can interact with the rare material while also

consulting digital resources related to their subject of study.'

Dr John Scally, Director of University Collections, emphasised that 'this newly-fashioned and unique space allows the virtual and the real to come together in a dynamic space which offers comprehensive support and services to the 21st-century user.'

Another key destination in the CRC complex will be the Treasures Room and Viewing Gallery, an important space where scholars, students and other guests will be invited to view material from the collections within an area specially designed to accommodate small groups of people. 'This is a novel development and one which came out of our experience of showing visitors our treasures from the collections. The Viewing Gallery is a room which matches the quality of the items being shown,' says John Scally.

The Ground Floor has now been closed and any members who have not been in the building since the end of May should be warned that the entrance to the Main Library can be accessed by a staircase at the



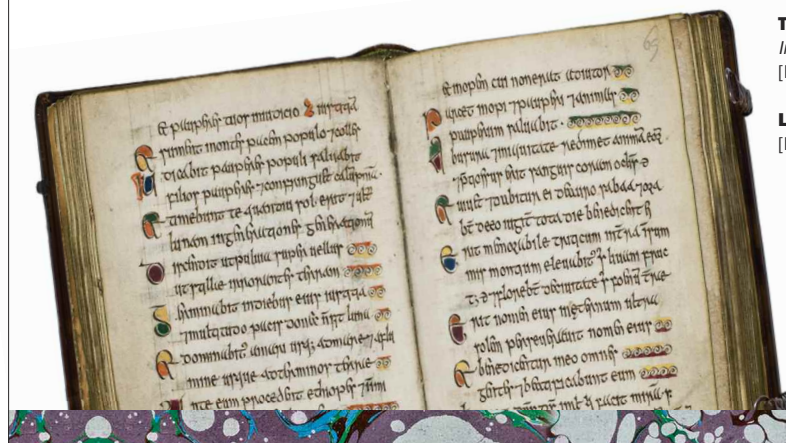
side of the building next to George Square Lecture Theatre, and from mid-July by a lift at that side entrance.

The Director of Library Services would like to pay 'a special tribute to the dedication and hard work of the many members of staff who have helped make this move happen so smoothly. Members of the University staff together with the contractor Interserve, and Lewis & Hickey Architects, have all worked magnificently to make this happen with the least of inconvenience to library users.'

When this area re-opens in the spring it will accommodate a gateway to the library, with undergraduate study space, general reference books for courses and a café for all. Another exciting aspect of this transformation of the ground floor will include a public access Exhibition Room with a magnificent display area for special treasures. 'For the first time,' says Sheila Cannell, 'we shall have an appropriate space integrated within the public area with cutting-edge display cases properly built and suited to the special needs of our historic collections.' **Fiona Graham**

Top right. Eliot, *The Indian Primer*, 1669, [Df.7.98]

Left. Celtic Psalter, [MS 56]





Christmas card

Here is a sample image for the 2008 Christmas card. The finished design will be available to view at EUL and order forms will be sent to you in the usual way. Cards cost 45p each, including envelope.



Laplanders' (Sami) mode of travelling with child. From: Johannes Scheffer, *Histoire de la Laponie: sa description, l'origine, les mœurs, la manière de vivre de ses habitants, leur religion, leur magie, & les choses rares du pays* (A Paris: Chez la veuve Olivier de Varennes, 1678), plate 14, p. 281. EUL Special Collections: [E.B.9 (4717) Sch].

Forthcoming events

Next year's programme will include presentations by a novelist on the use of libraries for research and by Joe Marshall on buying rare books for the Library; a visit to the new Centre for Research Collections with a 'show and tell' in the new Treasures Room, Conservation and Digitisation suites. The meetings in December and February will repeat this year's successful experiment of lunchtime events.



Virdung, *Musica getuscht*, 1511, [C.186]

You can make a difference

By becoming a Friend you can help to support the existing collections of Edinburgh University Library and fund new acquisitions.

You could even be remembered eternally by leaving a legacy to the Friends – find out more in the next issue.

Don't hesitate – join now!

For a membership form, contact Sheila Gove on 0131 650 3381 or write to:
Friends of Edinburgh University Library,
Edinburgh University Library,
George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LJ
www.lib.ed.ac.uk/about/friends



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