

THE Pioneer



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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Good Books, the precious life-blood

Etched against the light on the sixth floor, the new glass panels have a procession of important dates in the life of the Library. One of these, '1962', marks the birth of the Friends.

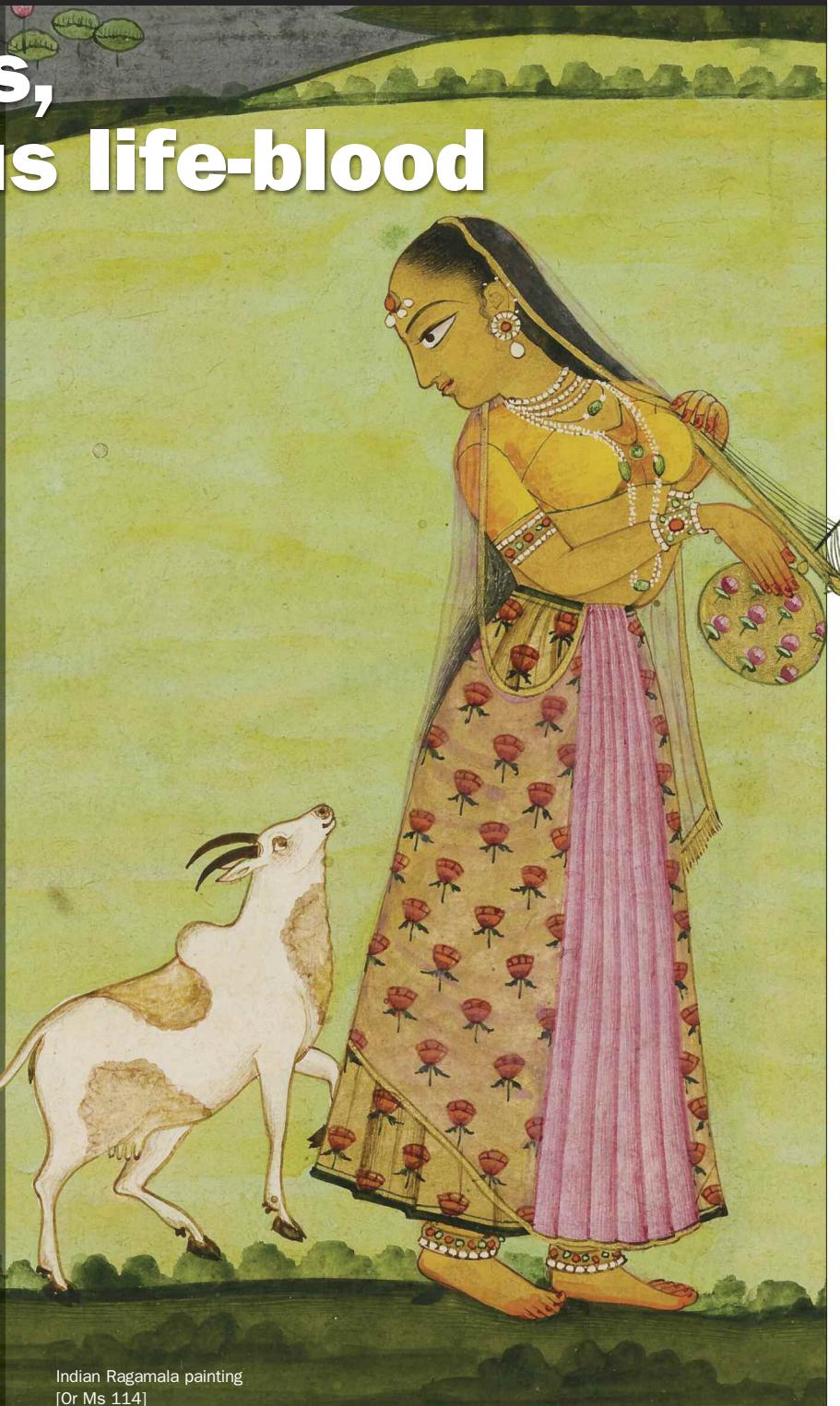
Now we have the opportunity for another new beginning: to establish an exhibition space on the ground floor with museum quality cases and curatorial support to display our Special Collections. This special space will be a true show case for the treasures the Friends have funded – a chance for these many fine acquisitions to be shown to a wider audience. However we need money to create this bibliographic crucible.

Already we have an offer of £50,000 from a Friend (who at this time wishes to remain anonymous), the University will contribute another £50,000, but only if the Friends raise the final £50,000. This matched funding will secure this space as a permanent place for the display of the Friends'-given legacy of fine books.

With your financial support we can create another significant marker in the history of the Friends of Edinburgh University Library, one that will enlighten the future, for, as I'm sure you will agree, A good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose... (from 'Areopagitica', by John Milton).

If you wish to know more about contributing please email: philippa.sheail@ed.ac.uk or tel: 0131 650 9220.

**Lady Caplan, President,
Friends of Edinburgh University Library**



Indian Ragamala painting
[Or Ms 114]



Making an exhibition of ourselves: the new display spaces in the redeveloped Main Library

For many years we have craved, even dreamed about, an exhibition space on the ground floor of the Main Library which would measure up to the stature of the collections we have in our possession. Too often, we have had to pass on great opportunities to promote the collections due to a lack of adequate exhibition space and curatorial capacity to programme events. The University Library has been a regular lender to high-profile exhibitions around the world (New York, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Prague and London) where we have seen our great treasures alongside the best in the world. Yet, ironically, we have lacked the proper facility in the University to showcase this material to an audience at home.

The Main Library Exhibition Room project offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to achieve these objectives by providing two

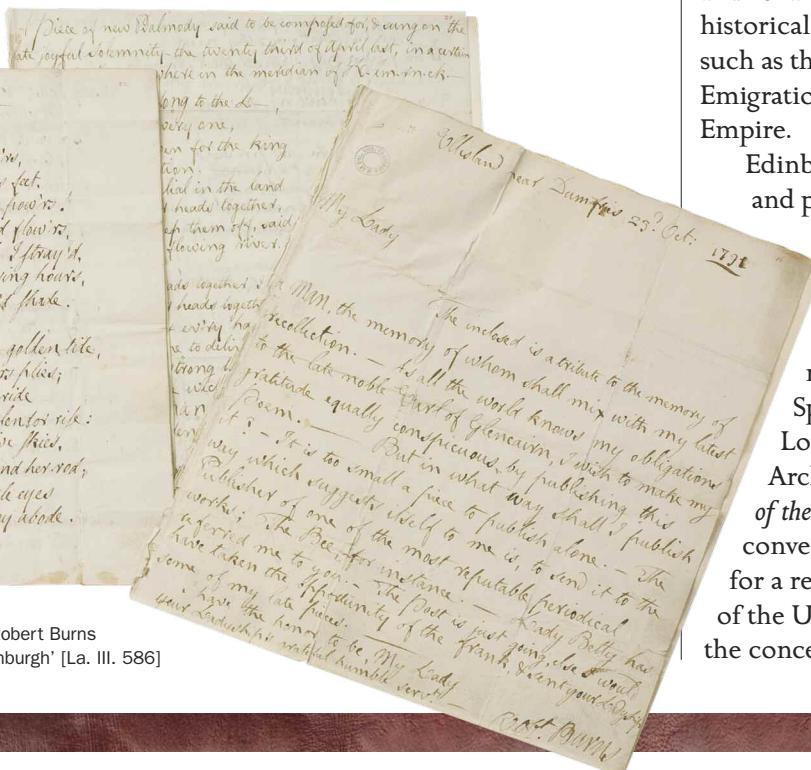
things: state-of-the-art exhibition cases in a bespoke environment and a three-year post of Programme Manager for the exhibitions working out of the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) on the fifth and sixth floors of the Library. Linking the ground floor space to the CRC will allow us, on occasion, to suite the shows with the exhibitions wall in the CRC to create a unique visitor journey in the Library. Once in place, this package offers the possibility of mounting a range of exciting exhibitions, each with an unrivalled scholarly underpinning provided by our curators, academic colleagues and students in the University, designed to attract an audience from both the University and the wider public.

Our Friends need hardly be reminded of the vast range of the collections we hold. Since the 1960s, you have helped us to enrich our

holdings in many areas, including the Scottish Enlightenment, 20th-century Scottish poetry, travel and topography, Africa, manuscripts, fine and rare books. We have been building our collections since 1580: the range and quality of exhibitions we could put on is almost limitless.

A 'Treasures of the Library' series could comprise a programme of various items of early books, illuminated manuscripts, and music covering key themes. We might also inaugurate exchange exhibitions with University Libraries in Scotland, and further afield. A focus on subjects would allow us to pursue a rich vein covering vital areas which are alive in the University's curriculum. Rhetoric and Belle Lettres, or English Literature, as it is now known, offers a number of productive avenues to explore, particularly exposing our magnificent holdings in medieval and renaissance literature. Similarly, historical angles could be traversed such as the Covenanters, Emigration, and Scotland and Empire.

Edinburgh University's rich past and present in the area of medicine is a story waiting to be told using the deep seams of archives, books, manuscripts and objects in Special Collections and the Lothian Health Services Archive. James Hutton's *Theory of the Earth* (1785) presents a convenient jumping-off point for a review of the contribution of the University to introducing the concept of modern geology.



Manuscripts in the hand of Robert Burns including his 'Address to Edinburgh' [La. III. 586]

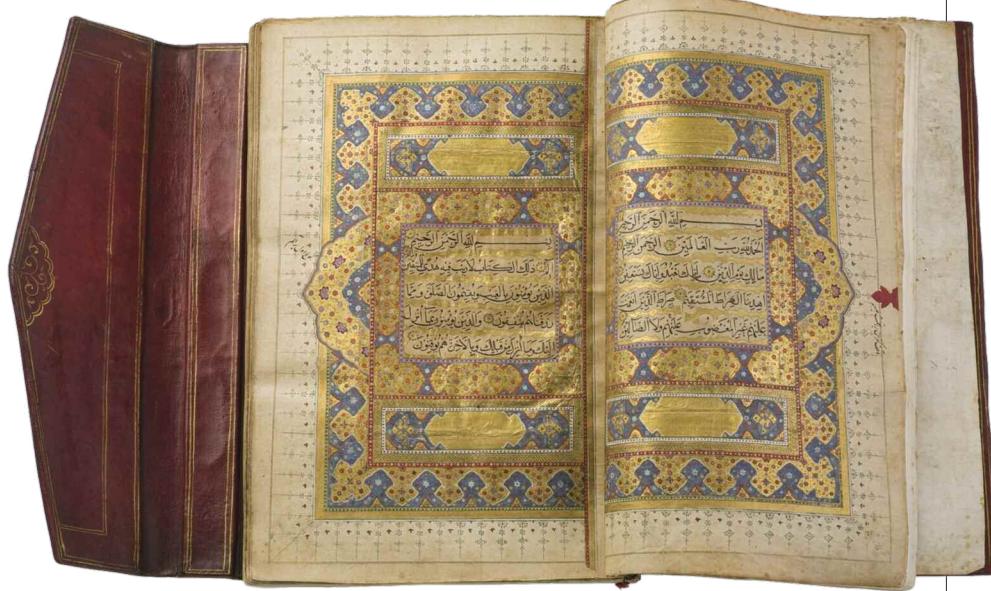


Right: A 17th-century illuminated manuscript of the Qur'an which once belonged to Tippu-Sahib, Sultan of Mysore. Presented to EUL by the Court of Directors of the East India Company, 1805 A.D.

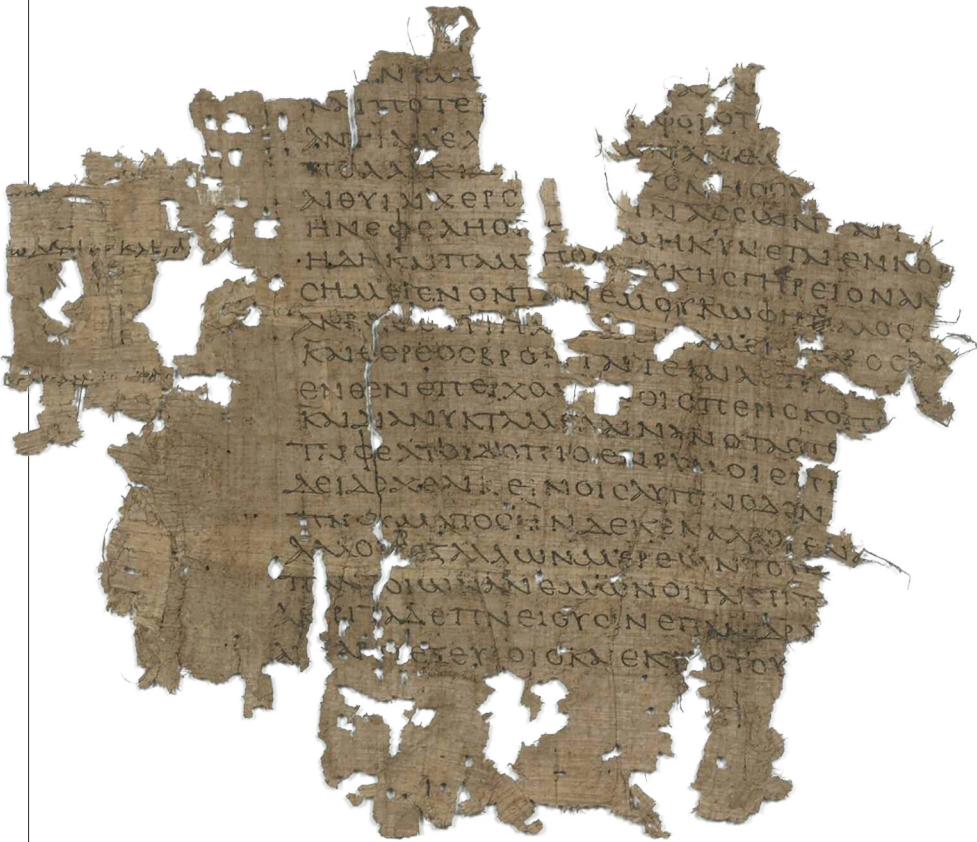
Below: 4th-century Greek papyrus [No. 1807]

Nor should the study of Natural History be overlooked, with the prospect of a thrilling exhibition based on an exploration of the accumulated material from the time of Robert Sibbald, appointed in 1685 as the first Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh to Aubrey Manning, Professor of Natural History between 1771 and 1997.

It is easy to imagine a number of personality-driven exhibitions on figures such as Robert Burns (1759–1796), Joseph Black (1728–1799), Hugh Blair (1718–1800), Alexander Monro *primus* (1697–1767), and Charles Darwin (1809–1882), the latter one of our most famous alumni. We can easily see a jostling queue of great figures calling for the



attention of an exhibition in the new space! A growing area of interest and scholarly endeavour is on material culture and the history of the book, which offers endless opportunities to display our rich heritage in book illustration, printing techniques, bindings, and the move from manuscript to print.



We adore anniversaries and birthdays, and the gravitational pull of significant dates within our sphere of interest is irresistible. Next year it is 250 years since the birth of Robert Burns, our national poet, and 500 years since the publication of the *Aberdeen Breviary*, the first substantial book published in Scotland. The Library has a breathtaking collection of poems in Burns' hand and possesses the best surviving copy of the *Aberdeen Breviary*. In 2010–11 we may wish to note that the Scottish Reformation is 450 years old, perhaps by mounting an exhibition on the Wode Part-books, a collection of beautifully illuminated volumes of medieval Scottish music. The fact that 2011 is 300 years since the birth of David Hume (1711–1776), a giant of the Scottish Enlightenment, should not go unnoticed. Before slumping exhausted onto a chaise longue at the thought of yet another anniversary, it may restore the spirits to finish with a reminder that in 2012 we shall surely wish to celebrate 50 years of the Friends with a block-buster exhibition and recruitment drive.

John Scally
Director of University Collections



'An eternal cycle of love, longing and fulfillment'

The 'display wall' exhibition cases that flank the entrance doors to the CRC have been designed to allow us to promote some of the iconic items in our collections. The first display shows some 20 facsimiles, produced by our own Digital Imaging Unit, of fine Indian Ragamala paintings – visual illustrations of Indian classical musical themes (*ragas*). These paintings are representations of rather complex concepts in Hindu philosophy, but can be loosely described as the interaction of gods, princes and aristocratic women in an eternal cycle of love, longing and fulfillment.

The origins of the Ragamala can be traced back to the 15th century. Under the patronage of the aristocracy, the Ragamala art form soon became a vibrant movement,

making music and dance the subject of art through colour and mood. Usually in sets of 36 or 42 paintings, the images joined together Indian musical, artistic and literary traditions. Ragamala painting reached its peak during the 17th and 18th centuries, by which time various regional centres of production were operating, each with a characteristic style and complex iconography.

On display are facsimiles from two manuscripts: a fine, recently conserved set from the Deccan (probably Hyderabad), produced in the mid to late eighteenth century [Or Ms 114], and two examples from a later set

[Or Ms 437.2]. The latter, including one of an original that was intended to be presented as a gift to Queen Victoria, were presented to the University by the brilliant and wealthy Bengali entrepreneur Dwarkanath Tagore (1794–1846, grandfather of the poet and philosopher, Rabindranath Tagore) who visited Edinburgh in 1842 and was made a Freeman of the City.

Andrew Grout

An example of an Indian Ragamala painting
[Or Ms 114]





What is the Centre for Research Collections (CRC)?

An interview with John Scally

The Centre for Research Collections (CRC) is a multi-purpose space which brings together special materials and specialist people. It's a dynamic place that is open to all – student, academic, public – to support research and teaching using the collections.

Q. Why was change needed to Special Collections?

J.S. We only need to see the way libraries have changed in recent years with the internet and electronic information – new changes in pedagogy, the learning experience, the advance of social group learning and evidence-based learning, at various levels – to see that the physical spaces needed to alter.

In recent years we have been involved in a number of enhancements to alter the traditional spaces of 1967 to accommodate these new teaching, learning and research experiences.

We held conversations with relevant groups to assess their needs and when the fabric of the building required updating we seized that opportunity to bring to fruition the model required to support a 21st-century university.

So what is that model?

Multi-purpose, interconnecting spaces were required, with proximity to the Digital Imaging Unit, Conservation, Seminar Rooms, and to professional curators who could help find pathways into the collections for both academics and students.

Bringing people together in such a space was the way forward – from the traditionally quiet reading room to a place where they could meet and discuss matters while researching.

Our role was to provide this with three main sections closely linked: a public space for multi-purpose requirements, repositories, staff spaces.

There are 11 strong rooms in the CRC constructed to the highest British standard (BS5454:2000) and these contain the most important of the University's print, manuscript and archive collections. For the first time, the collections are close to the user, to the curator, to the digital camera operator and conservator. Proximity is the key.

What are the outcomes?

We have had very positive feedback about these spaces. Glass-walled areas provide a sense of openness, of light and good sightlines for security. The curators are very happy with the repositories and with the level of security.

How will this further facilitate and support research?

There has been a comeback in evidence-supported teaching and a large part of that experience is here; the interactive spaces, study area, seminar room, and break-out room, all provide a layered approach. Put simply, as you progress through your studies at Edinburgh University, the further up the Library building you go – from the HUB (high-use book collection) to support undergraduate courses on the ground floor to the CRC at the top of the building. Of

'Display Wall' and entrance to CRC



course, any user can use all of these collections and spaces at any time.

This is an Edinburgh approach. We have a strong tradition of humanities-based teaching and this space fits well with that. As the whole Main Library Redevelopment progresses there will be further linkages with the CRC.

How will the CRC be introduced to others?

There is a big public engagement-element which is crucial in all of this. On the ground floor, near the Hub Collection, there will be a space for exhibitions, open to the public and targeted to a wide audience while based on scholarly research and with curatorial expertise. This does not come cheap but it is vital to our vision of what a Library should be in the 21st-century. We are all very pleased with the CRC and the plans for the rest of the building and we hope it draws our Friends and users to us.



The world of Reformation Britain as seen and heard in the Wode Psalter: a new project

The Reformation of 1560 was a major event in Scottish history. It involved the approval of a Protestant Confession of Faith, the repudiation of the Pope's authority, and the prohibition of the Mass. The new intellectual and cultural climate that this event engendered encouraged new ways of thinking and doing, and the University itself has its roots in that new environment. Church life was transformed, and for the newly promoted congregational singing a metrical Psalter containing Old Testament Psalms was employed.

These texts were presented in relatively plain music settings that would appeal to, and be understood by, everyone in the congregation.

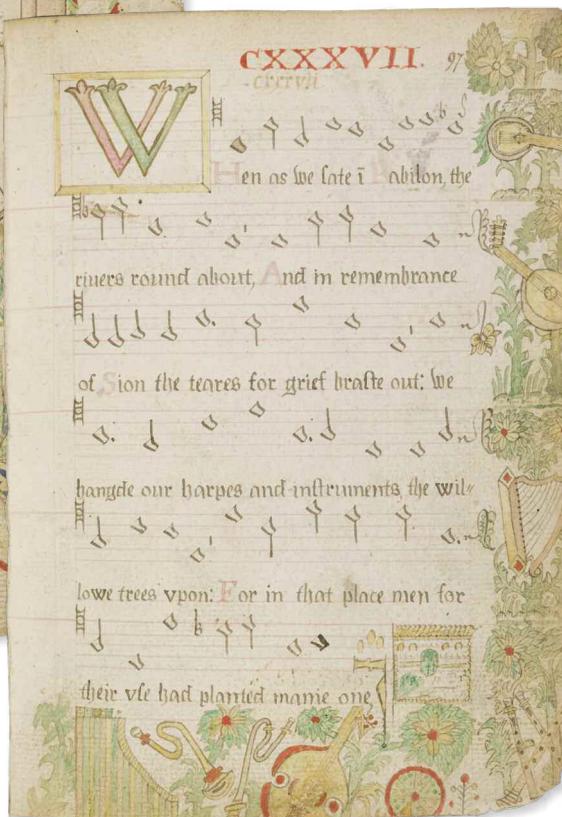
The Wode St Andrews Psalter comprises an important collection of manuscript musical part books of the Psalms. It is named after Thomas Wode, vicar of St Andrews, who, under the patronage of James Stewart, Earl of Moray, copied and compiled the books between 1562 and 1592. And, as can be seen in the accompanying images, he illustrated them beautifully. The books also

contain a few additions by other hands made between 1606 and 1625.

These harmonisations of 106 metrical psalms from the Anglo-Genevan Psalm Book and other songs created the 'gold standard' for post-Reformation worship in Scotland, and one set of Parts was probably intended for use in the Chapel Royal. As well as commissioning and copying much 16th-century music, Wode added numerous comments to his manuscripts, resulting in the largest body of annotations found in any



The five volumes of the Wode Part-books, or Scottish Psalters [DK. S. 14-15]



early modern British musical manuscript. Together they constitute an illustrated 'diary' for the second half of the 16th century.

The AHRC has recently awarded the University £303,000 for a three year project: *The world of Reformation Britain as seen and heard in the Wode Psalter*. The project team is led by Professor Jane Dawson (Divinity), with Dr John Scally, Director of University Collections, and Dr Noel O'Regan (Music) as co-investigators, Dr Andrew Grout (EUL) managing the digital images and Dr Jessie Paterson (Divinity Computing) responsible for the project website.

The project will co-ordinate multi-disciplinary research on the Psalter, produce a series of musical concerts, and mount an interna-

tional exhibition at the Library during the 2011 Edinburgh International Festival.

Of the eight extant Wode Part-books, Edinburgh University Library is fortunate to possess five, including three in the Laing Collection. The remaining three books are located in libraries across the world that are collaborating with us in the project: The British Library, Trinity College, Dublin, and Georgetown University, Washington, DC. For the very

Far left. A shawm player [Ms La.III.483.2, facing p.1]

Left. Psalm 137, with musical instruments drawn by Thomas Wode [Ms La.III.483.3, p.97]

Below. detail

first time this exhibition will bring together all the existing Part books. This will act as the focus for a wider examination of post-Reformation Scotland. Thus, in addition to music, the exhibition will reveal new insights about religious worship and devotion, painting, poetry, patronage and material culture.

Although the exhibition and associated concerts will be transitory, the exhibition's legacy will be permanent. A recording of the Psalter's music will be published and the project website will make available high-quality digital images of the complete contents of the Part-books. In these varied ways the Wode Psalter will allow the world of Reformation Scotland to be seen and heard once again.

Andrew Grout and Jane Dawson





Christmas card

Have you bought your Christmas cards? If not, you are still in time to acquire the FoEUL specially designed card for 2008. Either purchase them at the AGM on 2nd December or contact Sheila Gove (sheila.gove@ed.ac.uk, tel: 0131 650 3381). Do not miss this wonderful opportunity: buy a unique card and support FoEUL. Card and envelope cost 45p.

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].



You can make a difference

The University Library has been an essential part of education and inspiration for many since it was established in 1580 with a bequest from Edinburgh advocate, Clement Litill. Since then, many graduates and friends have made both lifetime gifts and provisions in their wills to support the Library. In this way, they have helped to enhance Library collections and facilities for future generations. Recently, for example, Dr Henry Adam, a founder of the Friends, bequeathed a substantial part of his estate for this purpose:

'Dr Adam's generous legacy gift will be used over a number of years to support our work here at the Library. We have already been able to fund the work of an excellent archivist, who has undertaken important project work in the University archives that would otherwise just not have been possible. We are so grateful for such donations; they are of tremendous significance to the history, and indeed the future, of this Library.'

Dr John Scally, Director of University Collections

In the 21st century, legacies to the University Library remain an extremely important way of supporting this wonderful resource at the heart of University life. Not only in caring for the University's rare books and manuscripts, but also in ensuring that the University has access to the very latest research publications, whether in print or online.

If you would like to know more about supporting the Library with a legacy gift, please contact Morag Murison, the University's Legacy Officer, on 0131 651 4404 or at morag.murison@ed.ac.uk for a confidential discussion.

Forthcoming events

2nd December (1pm in St Cecilia's Hall)

AGM; The novelist James Robertson: 'Using libraries to write novels.'

2009

10th February (1pm in EUL)

Rare Books Librarian, Dr Joseph Marshall: 'Buying rare books for EUL'

14th April (5.30pm)

Professor James Laidlaw: 'Christine de Pizan and the making of Queen Isabeau's Manuscript (BL, Harley MS 4431)'.

9th June

Visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens Library

EDINBURGH BOOK HISTORY SEMINAR

12th December (1-2pm)

From Travel Narrative to the Printed Page: Robyn Davidson's Desert Trek (1977) Michelle Smith (CHB/SSHRC Postdoctoral Fellow)

Organised by *The Centre for the History of the Book* and *Edinburgh University Library*
<http://www.hss.ed.ac.uk/chb>

6th Floor, Edinburgh University Main Library



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