

THE Piper



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NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

'As on this whirligig of time, we circle with the seasons' Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Another Festival ended. Autumn begins, the leaves already turning. The inevitable cycle of change and regeneration.

The library also changes. Many new faces, new roles for existing staff and an expansion of services and remit: the lively evolving hub of University life.

We say a fond, if sad, farewell to Dr Scally who has managed his role of procurer with skill and grace, enabling us to be involved in the purchase of many items that now enhance the Library Special Collections. It has been a pleasure to work with such an enthusiastic and

persuasive colleague. We wish him success and fulfilment in his new role as National Librarian.

I know Dr Joseph Marshall, as the new Head of CRC, will keep us, as ever, up to speed with exciting and unique purchases, supported by his new Deputy Jacky Macbeath who has also worked with us in her other role as Head of Museums.

We welcome Francesca Baseby, Steven Skeldon, Emma Davey and Emma Smith and look forward to including them all in our future.

It was sad to attend the funeral of Douglas Grant TD, FRSE. Hon D. Litt (St Andrews) who was

on our Committee for 20 years after being a University Court Assessor.

His experience of publishing as MD of Oliver and Boyd and the Scottish Academic Press was invaluable. We will miss him and his calm and informed advice.

There is a new academic year to engage us, a series of talks for the Friends, Exhibitions in the Library and, most important of all, the books and manuscripts themselves, waiting for all of us to bring them alive.

Lady Caplan

**President, Friends of
Edinburgh University Library**



Above. Jami' al-Tawarikh or 'Compendium of Chronicles' by Rashid al-Din (Or.Ms 20 f.119r, detail: fighting between Mahmud and Isma'il, sons of Sebuktigin, the Turkic-Persian ruler of the Ghazavid Empire)



A rich haul at the London Olympia Bookfair

The high point of the year for many collectors of rare books and manuscripts is the London International Antiquarian Bookfair, held at the Olympia exhibition centre in Kensington. Managed by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association (ABA) in partnership with the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers (ILAB), it attracts around 200 of the world's leading dealers, each of whom gets a stall to display star items from their

stock. The atmosphere can be electric, as dealers and collectors haggle over prices, greet old friends and gossip about commercial rivalries.

As a rare books librarian I have been going to Olympia for about 12 years and over that time it has become an increasingly important part of our annual purchasing cycle. As one of the few librarians to visit the fair regularly, I am now recognised by a good number of booksellers, many of whom will have items put aside for me to inspect.

The fair in May 2014, in particular, produced a rich haul of books and manuscripts to add to Special Collections. In total £32,448 was spent, using funds provided by the

College of Humanities and Social Science. As usual, when purchasing items through CHSS, I have to try to buy a wide range of material relevant to different areas of humanities research. This year we have made some particularly unusual purchases which add a new dimension to Special Collections.

This year being the anniversary of the outbreak of World War One, it seemed appropriate to acquire *The War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon* (1919), which is also a strong fit with our collections of modern poetry. Sassoon spent time at Craiglockart Hospital in Edinburgh which provides an additional local connection. The Edinburgh theme is also reflected in our purchase of the script for the film of Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, which famously revealed the seedy side of 1980s Edinburgh. This typescript reflects an intermediate state of the script and shows interesting differences from the version finally used for production.



Left. One of the 'Forty-Seven Ronin', from *The Portraits of the Forty-seven Ronins*, edited and published by Tanaka Usaburo, Yokohama, 1886.

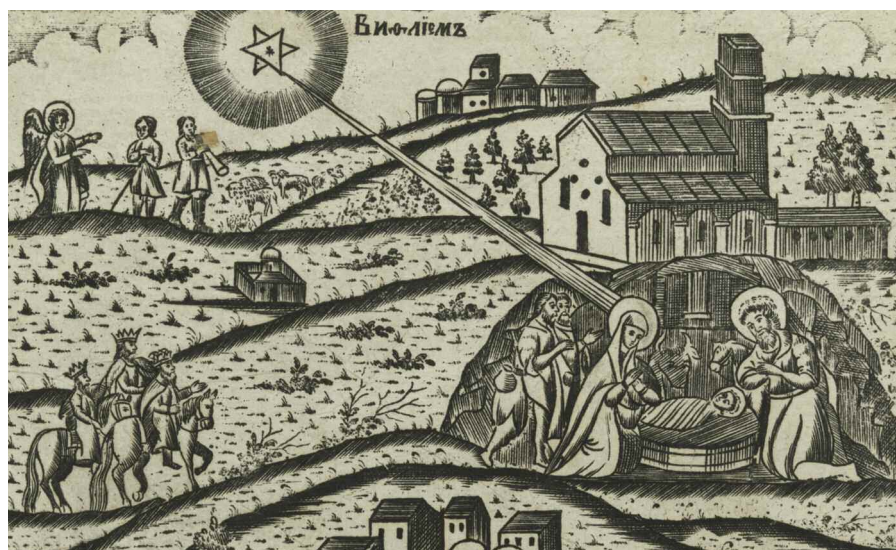
Opposite. Thomas Watson *A Copy Book Enriched With Great Variety of the Most Useful and Modish Hands*, 3rd impression (London: [1707?]) This copy came from the collection of the Earls of Macclesfield at Shirburn Castle.



Right. Nativity scene from: Simon Simonovich *Opisanie Svyatogo Grada Ierusalima* [Description of the Holy Town of Jerusalem], Moscow, [1840s], illustrations by Hrestafor Zhefarovich.

It will be of interest to our students of media, film and television. Other items of Scottish significance purchased include a manuscript of a tragic elopement to Gretna Green, a printed notice about the sailing of a ship from Leith and Robert Louis Stevenson's copy of the the life of James Watt.

Other purchases reflect the wider world. From a Russian dealer we acquired a beautiful manuscript of liturgical music produced by the religious movement known as the Old Believers, as well as a striking blockbook showing sites of pilgrimage for the Orthodox church. A collection of pamphlets printed in India includes several items of which no other copies are currently known. To strengthen the Japanese collections we bought a fine set of screen-printed kimono designs and a volume recounting heroic samurai exploits, with dramatic colour illustrations. The Chinese collections are seeing particular attention at present as we await the outcome of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to build



up these holdings, and at Olympia we bought several items including a fine volume of photographs of Chinese ports produced in 1908 and a Chinese military manual with illustrations of military devices and vehicles. With all these purchases, we think about the teaching and research needs of the University, as well as the potential of the items for attracting wider interest through digitisation and exhibition.

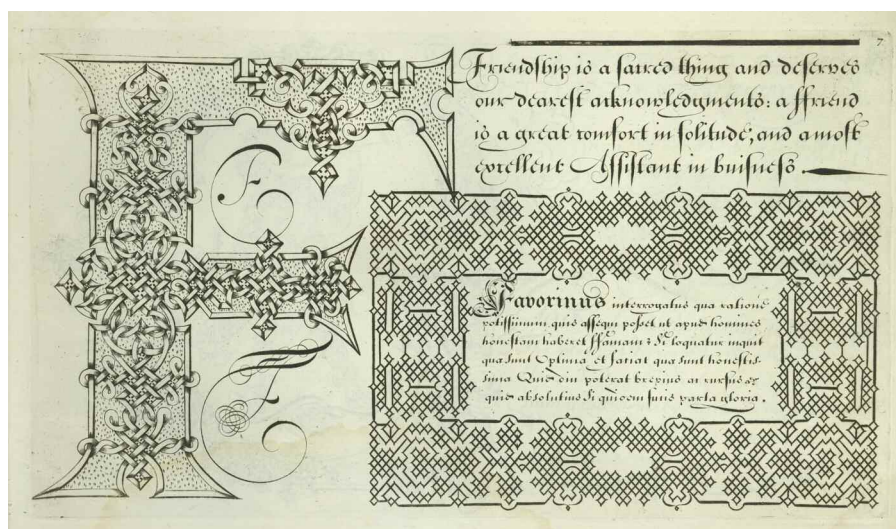
Some of this year's most important purchases are English in origin. Thomas Watson's *Copy Book* (1707) is a printed manual for calligraphers, with finely engraved plates. It is highly relevant to the study of design and typography as well as being an extremely rare book, with

only two other copies known. A Victorian manuscript commonplace book largely devoted to the works of the Bronte sisters is a remarkable piece of evidence for the reception of works like *Jane Eyre* before they were fully accepted into the canon of English Literature. Given that Edinburgh was the first university to formally teach English as an academic discipline, this seemed like a highly appropriate purchase. Other English purchases included a very fine illuminated manuscript of the 19th century and an outstanding piece of private press work by the Pear Tree Press.

Special Collections grows in many ways, through donation and transfers as well as purchases, and the support of the Friends of Edinburgh University Library has been instrumental in allowing us to expand since 1962. Hopefully there will be many more visits to Olympia in the years to come, and watch this space for more spectacular and important acquisitions.

A full end-of-year acquisitions report is in preparation and will be mounted on the CRC website.

Dr Joseph Marshall
Head of Special Collections and the
Centre for Research Collections



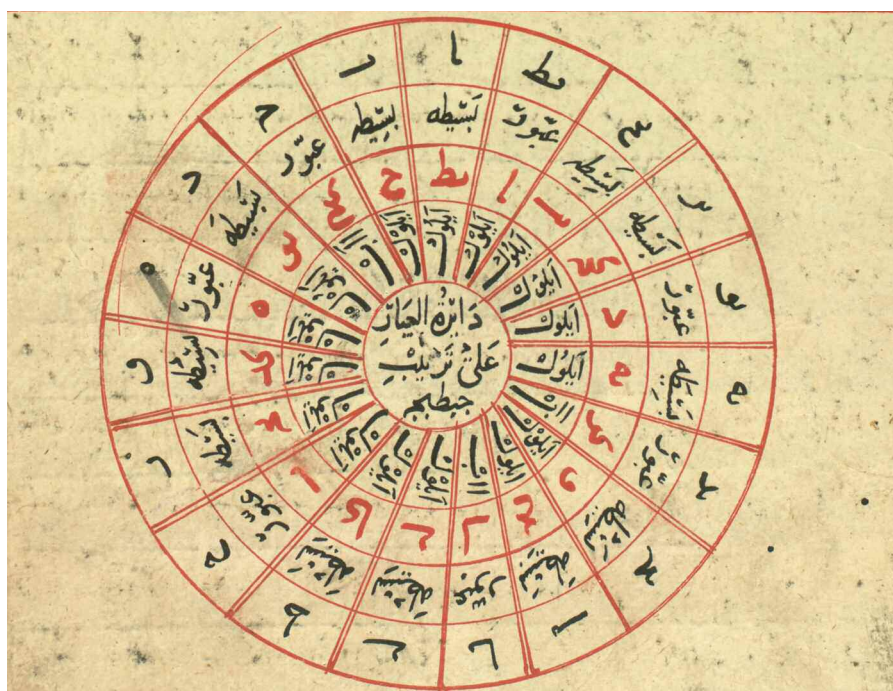


Back to the Future

Below. f.66v from 'Chronology of Ancient Nations' by the famous astronomer and polymath, Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni (Or. Ms 161)

It was with a mix of happiness and a heavy heart that I signed a contract a few weeks ago to become the next National Librarian and CEO of the National Library of Scotland (the institution where I learned my trade as a young curator). Having been caught up in a very searching recruitment process, I had not fully appreciated what a wrench it would be to leave the University, a place that I have been immersed in for over a decade. In that time, the Main Library has been transformed, the Murray Library built, a slew of research and learning projects funded and delivered, and annual library collections expenditure on digital content has exceeded 85% of budget. The pace of change and the challenges that we faced have been thrilling and the next period looks just as absorbing, with Open Access, Research Data Management services rolling out, and an increasing focus in the Library and Museums on adding real and measurable value to the research and teaching activity of the University.

Another highlight during my time at the University has been the support of the Friends of the University Library. Over the last decade they have been a constant source of ideas, financial support and brought a critical focus to our creation of an Exhibition Gallery in the Main Library. Their talks and visits programme was always varied, with many memorable moments, including Professor Carole Hillenbrand discussing our Al Biruni Islamic manuscript and Philippa Gregory talking about her published work and use of libraries. The visits to the Blackford Observatory



Crawford astronomy collection and to the Freemasons Hall library in George Street have both left a lasting impression. The meetings of the Friends' Committee was an 'event' that I approached with considerable relish, for it was on that occasion I was expected to persuade the Committee to purchase items for the Library's Special Collections. There was always a feeling of quiet satisfaction when the pitch was successful and our President, Lady Caplan, agreed to release the funds. All in all, the Friends are a fine example of how our University Library can motivate people to give generously of their time and money to ensure the Library continues to be relevant and successful.

My ambition for the National Library is to bring that sense of excitement and sheer pleasure in delivering excellent services to a

diverse audience. It is a good time to be going to the National Library since there are so many opportunities to develop the digital and physical collections, deliver an outstanding research portfolio and build on an already accomplished public engagement programme. The relationship between the National Library and Higher Education is another area to which I will be paying particular attention, so it is likely that I will continue to be seen around the University.

I would like to end on a personal note by thanking the Friends for their constant support and good cheer during my time at the University. I intend to stay on as an ordinary member of the Friends and therefore look forward to attending future talks, events and exhibition openings.

Dr John Scally



New Faces

A restructure of the Library and University Collections Division (L&UC) at the University of Edinburgh followed the appointment of a new Director of Library and University Collections in 2012, and led to four sections being formed (Research and Learning Services, Collections Development and Access, Special Collections & Archives, and Museums). The four heads of sections along with the Director form the Senior Management Team. Out of this restructure came a vision of an ambitious and dynamic service with discovery of the collections at the heart of it.

The Centre for Research Collections (CRC) encompasses Special Collections & Archives and Museums, and has had a major re-organisation with several new posts created. The people who are involved with the Collections are as important as the Collections themselves as, without these specialists the Collections would not exist in the way they do. So in this issue we introduce to you the 'new faces' and also give you a brief overview of other members of CRC moving into new posts.

Dr Joseph Marshall, formerly Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarian, now takes over as Head of the CRC. Jacky MacBeath, in addition to her post as Head of Museums, is also Deputy Head of CRC.

Francesca Baseby is the Service Delivery Curator. She manages the front desk team and is responsible for user services at the CRC. The intention is for the CRC reception

to be a rich source of information about Special Collections, Archive and Museum activities across the University. Francesca will be carrying out a Service Review during 2014 which will assess the CRC's current services and devise a scheme of improvement, with a focus on research and education support and increased engagement. Francesca is also responsible for liaising with special collections at the university's site libraries and developing increased academic engagement with both staff and students.

Francesca ran the Friends when she worked at The Fleming Collection, London and is very familiar with such organisations.

As she says: 'I have given numerous talks and tours to membership organisations during my work at Dovecot and my research on the tapestry studios there.'

Steven Skeldon is the Administrative Secretary for the CRC, Library & University Collections. As the departmental administrator, Steven reports directly to Head of Museums, Jacky MacBeath, and provides administrative and secretarial support to the division. You're most likely to hear from Steven when the University's next exhibition is opening. Tasked with organising and promoting collections based events is a complex and strategic affair engaging internal

Below.

Nine gastropods in a square box inscribed: *Cluricula Vulprina*, St Helena, Collected by Charles Darwin Cockburn Museum





curators, external design agents, catering teams, and key stakeholders such as the Friends of Edinburgh University Library and the Friends of St Cecilia's Hall.

It is a diverse role, from facilities and joiners required to hang portraits in Old College, to organising staff and collections travel to the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, the contact made in working for the university is truly global. Insurance, air travel, and dealing with agents is a lot more fun than it seems!

Steven says: 'Walking alone into the Treasures Room in the Library, disabling the alarms and security, and clapping eyes on the manuscript of Rashid al-Din for the first time, is an almost religious experience. Awe-inspiring, and magical – simply laid out there on a table. Not many staff involved in admin have this trust, excitement, and variety in their

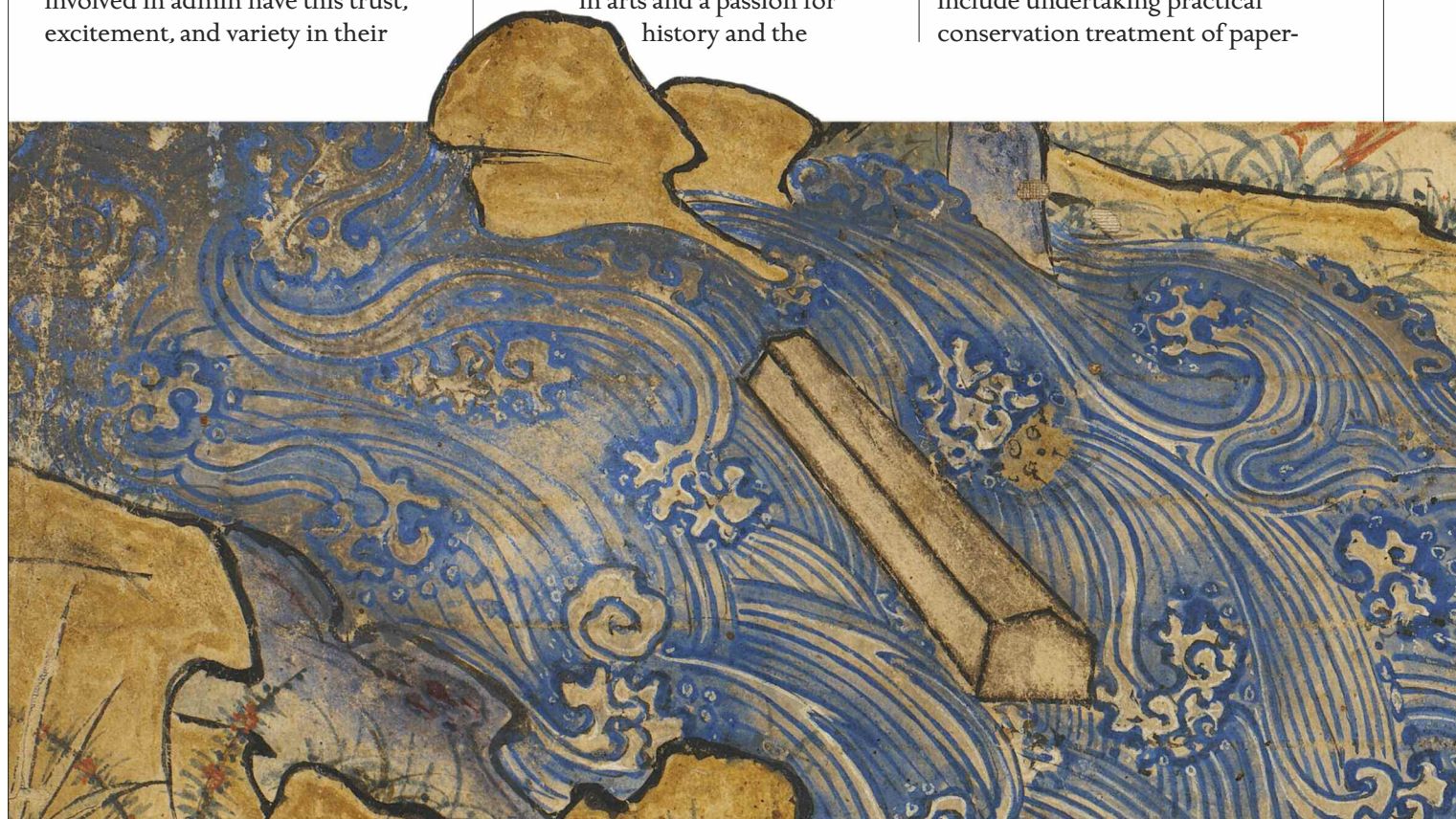
work. Who would have thought manuscripts get their own seats on planes?'

Besides event planning, Steven administers two collections based committees where the shape of future museums and libraries evolves. He works with curators across the Schools of Geosciences, Chemistry, Natural History, the School of Scottish Studies, Classics, and Anatomy. He updates the university website, and promotes social media activity. He looks after the staff human resource, managing absence, and recruiting new muscle. Being responsible to the heads of departments means not being last to know about change. And being first to share it!

Like most library support staff, Steven has an undergraduate degree in arts and a passion for history and the

university. 'It is a fantastic team to work with and an institution with an astounding past and a bright future. I hope to complete my master's in archives and records management, and this is the perfect place to do it – learning from the people who make the collections. No two days are without challenge and reward. The staff are devoted in a way I've never seen elsewhere.'

In January of this year, **Emma Davey** began her new job as Conservation Officer at the University of Edinburgh. Her overarching role within the university is to support conservation and preservation activity at the Centre for Research Collections, and across the rare and unique collections. The main responsibilities in this new position include undertaking practical conservation treatment of paper-





Below. Jami' al Tawarikh or 'Compendium of Chronicles' by Rahsid al-Din (or. Ms 20, f.7v, detail: The infant Musa (Moses) being found by women from the emperor's household)

based items, as well as the preventive care of the wider collections.

Over the last 6 months Emma has found it a privilege to work with these diverse and extensive collections and to have the opportunity to collaborate and work closely alongside those who care for them. As Emma says: 'No two days are ever the same – whether it involves carrying out interventive conservation treatment or focussing on preventing or minimising deterioration by implementing appropriate housing, storage and display conditions, or holding training sessions in the care and handling of collections. I can never be quite sure what will come through the doors of the conservation studio next.'

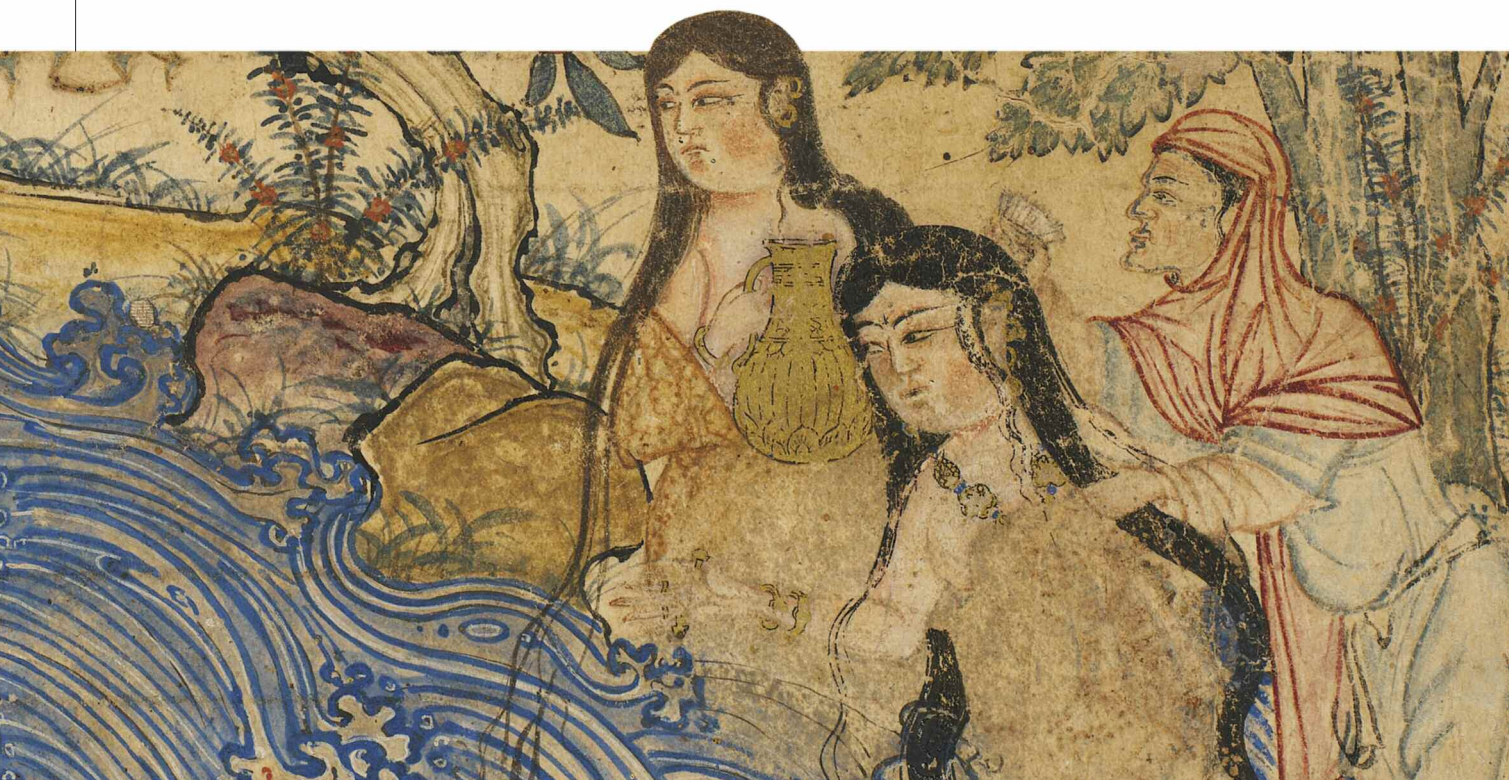
Having graduated from the University of Edinburgh with a degree in Architectural History, followed by a postgraduate Master's

degree in the Conservation of Fine Art on Paper from Northumbria University, she feels fortunate to be able to return to her alma mater, and now be part of the ever-growing conservation presence within the university.

'I feel honoured to have been given the opportunity to work with such important collections, not only helping to preserve them for the future, but also by promoting and improving their accessibility to students, researchers, staff and the wider public.'

Emma Smith first started working for the CRC in March 2013 on a voluntary basis. In June of the same year she undertook a two month internship which resulted in the exhibition 'Collect.ed: Curiosities from the University's Collection' in the Main Library Exhibition Gallery,

which ran from December to March 2014. Since then she has worked in a temporary exhibitions role before taking up the post of CRC Exhibitions Officer in June this year for a 2.5 year fixed term contract working 3 days a week. Alongside this work she hopes to undertake a Master's degree programme in Museum and Gallery Studies. Her main responsibility is the organisation and implementation of the Library and University Collections exhibitions schedule, which is planned over two years in advance and covers primarily the Main Library Exhibition Gallery and the display areas at the CRC. Emma says: 'I am delighted to be involved in this work for the Library & University Collections, and hope to increase awareness of the breadth of collections across the full range of university users.'





The World History of Rashid al-Din: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting

Closes 31st October 2014
Monday – Saturday
10.00am – 5.00pm

A truly magnificent exhibition has opened in the Main Library.

The World History of Rashid al-Din: A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting, highlights the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* ('World History' or 'Compendium of Chronicles') of Rashid al-Din, one of the masterpieces of Islamic manuscripts. Celebrating the 700th anniversary of its production in 1314, the exhibition features 17 folios from the manuscript (Or.MS.20), complemented by loans relating to

the material culture of fourteenth-century Iran from the National Museum of Scotland. The 1314 Arabic copy of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* represents a history of the world as it was then known and offers a fascinating insight into the multi-cultural, multi-religious society of the Islamic Iranian world under the Mongols.

This manuscript is an indication of the magnificent material within the Oriental Collections of the University of Edinburgh and the exhibition has been jointly curated and organised by the Alwaleed Centre for the Study of Islam in the Contemporary World and the Centre for Research Collections.

Events for the Friends

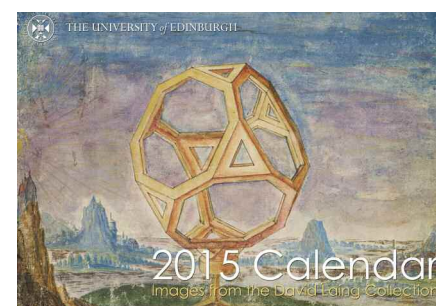
Tuesday, 7 October 2014 at 17.30: talk on Artists' books (preceded by optional tour), Edinburgh College of Art Library, Evolution House, West Port

Tuesday, 25 November 2014 at 15.30: AGM and talk (preceded by optional tour), New College Library, The Mound

Thursday 19 February 2015 at 14.00: talk and visit to Digital Imaging Unit, and viewing of Barker's Panorama, Main Library, George Square

Wednesday 20 May 2015 at 15.00: visit to Murray Library, King's Buildings

Christmas Cards and Calendar



Previous Christmas cards will be available for purchase at the AGM or by contacting the Friends' administrator, Alason Roberts, email: A.Roberts@ed.ac.uk

A new Calendar (October 2014 – December 2015), with images from the David Laing Collection, will also be available at the AGM, or can be purchased from the CRC Reception Desk, for £8.00.



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