

# THE P'yper



NUMBER 43 SPRING 2015

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY



**Above.** Nameboard of double-manual harpsichord by Jacob Kirkman, London, 1755, MIMEd 4330 (Russell Collection)



# ‘And time remembered is grief forgotten’

Algernon Swinburne

It is seems appropriate that I write about Ivor Guild who died in January while on holiday in Berlin with friends. Ivor was a founder member of the Friends of the University Library and a Committee member for 20 years. A well kent face around Edinburgh his quiet but forceful presence was manifest at many organisations. His lean brisk figure walking the town between his engagements was a familiar, courteous sight. His dry wit and careful analysis was always welcome and helpful and I found his advice thought provoking and pertinent. Characteristically, he wanted no ‘fuss’ over his death, but there are many who wish to celebrate his life. The New Club (where he lived for many years) have hosted a Members’

Dinner to coincide with what would have been his 91st Birthday. St Mary’s Cathedral are incorporating memories of him in words and music in the regular choral evensong on Sunday, May 3rd at 3.30pm, and all who wish to attend are warmly invited by the Provost of St. Mary’s.

The New Club has given permission for an article of Ivor’s on his unique perspective of New Club History to be reprinted in the June 2015 issue of the Edinburgh University Journal.

From a sad departure to a warm welcome when, in April, we welcome our new Director of Library and Collections, Jeremy Upton, who was a student at the University of Edinburgh, graduating with a BMus. (hons), and later went

on to work in the Library before leaving to be deputy Director of Library Services at the University of St Andrew’s. He joins our Committee and will make a ‘guest’ appearance in a future issue of the Piper.

The crocuses have now beribboned the Meadows. The daffodils are springing (despite the squalls of snow) and we look forward to the arch of cherry trees flowering again and a new year of Friends and Library events where I hope to see and speak with you and share the engagement with the University that the Friends gives us.

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

*And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,  
And in green underwood and cover  
Blossom by blossom the spring begins*

Algernon Charles Swinburne



# ‘If music be the food of love, play on’ William Shakespeare

The Musical Instrument Collection at the University of Edinburgh was founded in the 1840s by Professor John Donaldson, and has, from that time, always been used as a teaching collection within the University. From its beginnings of several hundred instruments it has grown over the years – largely through gift and bequest – to presently number approximately 5500 objects, ranging in date from the mid-sixteenth century to instruments presented to the University by their makers in the past several years. Since 1859 the Collection has always had a public face – the original Reid School of Music (now Reid Concert Hall) in

Bristo Square had a room with glass-fronted showcases for the display of the Collection, and the gift of the Russell Collection of early keyboard instruments in the 1960s was matched by the purchase of St Cecilia’s Hall to house and display that Collection.

The Russell Collection gift was perhaps the first of the major musical instrument collection gifts to come to the University. Consisting of 19 instruments of various types (harpsichord, virginal, spinet, clavichord) and assembled by Raymond Russell – the author of the still-standard introductory book on early keyboard instruments – it includes a number of examples which are

iconic amongst early keyboard aficionados. The 1769 Pascal Taskin harpsichord is the most-copied harpsichord in the world – reproductions of it appear on radio every day, and was also the model for the first ever ‘revival’ instrument, built in the 1880s. The 1638 Ioannes Ruckers harpsichord is even more important – the Ruckers family is the keyboard equivalent of Stradivarius, and this instrument is the only double manual which still has its original, unaltered keyboards.

The University has been very fortunate with the collections it has been gifted. In addition to the Russell Collection it has the



Back view of guitar, c1630, MIMEd 284  
(Macaulay Collection)



**Below.** Clarinet in A, Simiot & Brelet, Lyons, c1845, MIMEd 132 (Rendall Collection)

**Bottom.** Tenor recorder, possibly from the Bassano workshop, c1520-c1610, MIMEd 3921

Collections of Rodger Mirrey, Sir Nicholas Shackleton, Geoffrey Rendell, Anne Macaulay, James Blades, Frank Tomes, and H I Brackenbury, as well as others on loan to the University. These individual collections are usually the result of many years of research and collecting by people who are often passionately interested in specific instrument types.

The Mirrey Collection also focuses on keyboard instruments, and is a collection that is entirely complimentary to the objects in the Russell Collection. Again it contains several iconic items – one is an unassuming small clavichord, an instrument often glossed over by visitors yet it is the oldest non-Italian

clavichord to survive, and is also regularly copied. Another is an Italian harpsichord by Bernardinis de Trasuntinus, dating from 1574, thus being, almost a decade, older than the University itself.

Along with a keyboard collection that is unsurpassed by any other in the world, the Musical Instruments Collection can also make similar claims about its holding of clarinets. The vast majority came to the University as part of the Sir Nicholas Shackleton Bequest, but others came from the Geoffrey Rendell Collection. An unsigned instrument from c1740 is a particular star example, being a second-generation example, made within 30 or so years of the clarinet's invention.

The University also has an excellent collection of early plucked stringed instruments – lutes, guitars, mandolins and so on. Although the earliest were built in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, including examples by Sellas and Railich (both from Venice), perhaps the most important are a group of later instruments dating from around 1820 – 1845. It is a period from which many examples survive, yet the University of Edinburgh has the only set of examples representing the best makers from the five major guitar-making schools to be found in a public collection.

Another instrument is, although comparatively modern also very important. Part of the James Blades





Double-manual harpsichord by Luigi Baillon,  
France, 1755, MIMEd 4478 (Mirrey Collection)

Collection is a tam-tam or Chinese gong, made in 1934. In itself it appears rather unassuming, but according to the donor – an internationally acclaimed musician and Professor of Percussion at the Royal Academy of Music from 1964 – 1976 – it was this instrument which sounds at the start of all of the Rank films from the mid-twentieth century. It is also a surprise to visitors who know the image of the strongman hitting a large gong with a large mallet. The 'instrument' in the film is a *papier-mâche* mock-up, and is twice the diameter of the actual tam-tam that was used.

Not all of the important instruments are the result of gifts, of course. One can think of a group of three instruments all attributed to the





Bassano family – a group of makers who worked in Venice and London from the early sixteenth century. One of the instruments collected by John Donaldson was a violin, catalogued for many years as a 'mute violin' and believed to be from the early nineteenth century. Research carried out in the late 1990s showed that it was much older and it included an inked-on decoration of silkworms – the symbol of the Bassano family. It is likely the instrument dates from the mid-sixteenth century from before the violin was standardised into its present form. A second instrument from the same family was purchased at auction several years ago, giving the University two of the three known examples by this family. Added to the violins is a tenor recorder made of a single (huge) piece of ivory, about two feet long. If

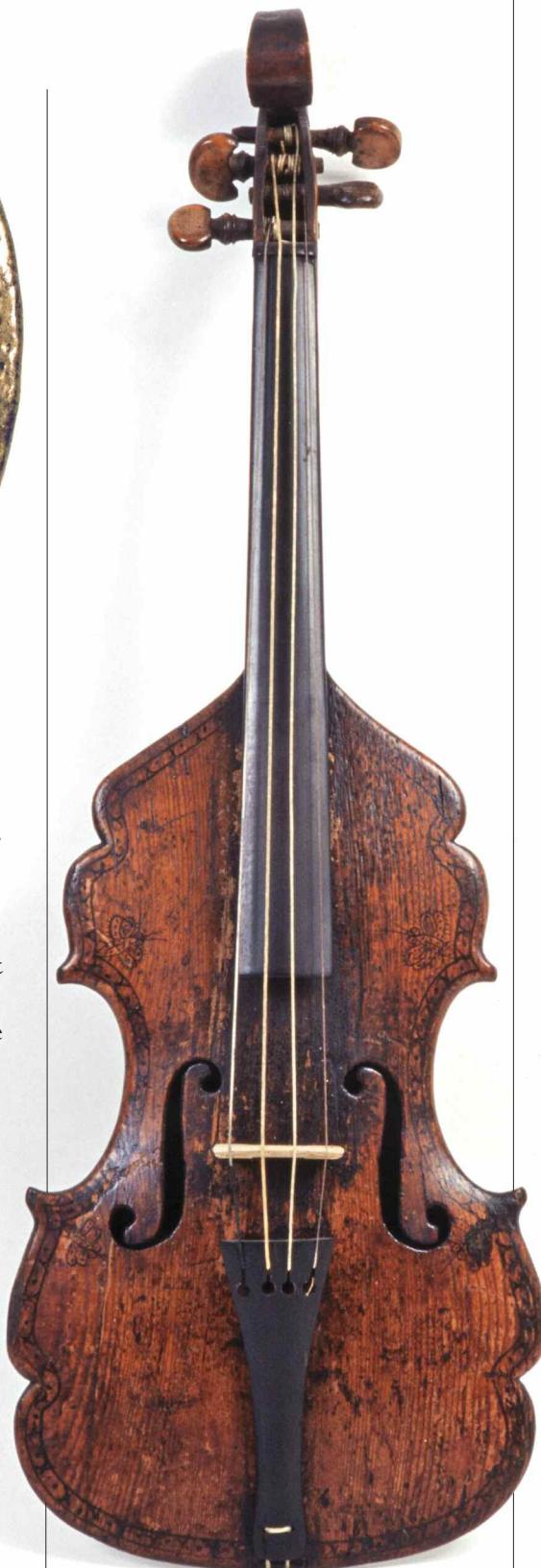
the instrument was made in wood, like all other tenor recorders, it would still be a highly significant object, but made of ivory it must stand as one of the most important pieces from the sixteenth century, and is an object which inspires awe for those who see it.

It is a great honour to be involved with such world-class collections and I am extremely proud to be the Principal Curator. As the Collections are so considerable this is a general introduction and we look forward to presenting other related articles in the run-up to the re-opening of St Cecilia's Hall next autumn after the completion of the redevelopment project.

**Darryl Martin**  
Principal Curator, Musical Instruments Collection

**Left.** Tam-tam, China, c1930, MIMEd 2889  
(Blades Collection)

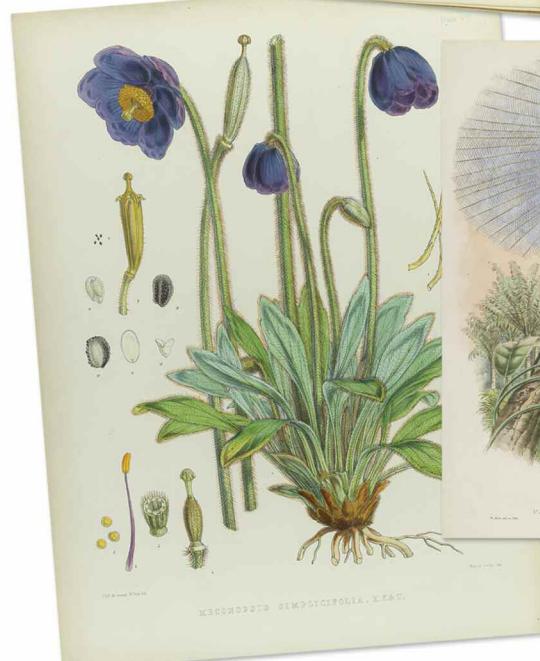
**Below.** Violin without ribs attributed to Bassano, 16th or 17th century, MIMEd 329





# ... Something Blue

2 April – 27 June 2015 in the Main Library Exhibition Gallery



Blue has delighted and captivated humanity for thousands of years. It is used to describe immeasurable concepts, such as the depth of the sea or the colour of the sky. Despite this, it only occurs in nature very rarely and is the most difficult natural pigment to obtain.

This exhibition in the Main Library Exhibition Gallery presents an exploration of the University's Collections on the colour and concept of blue. From blue stockings and opals to lullabies and rhapsodies, this exhibition offers new opportunities for academic and abstract associations.

'The blue colour is everlastingly appointed by the Deity to be a source of delight; and whether seen perpetually over your head, or crystallised once in a thousand years into a single and incomparable stone, your acknowledgment of its beauty is equally natural, simple, and instantaneous.'

John Ruskin  
(1819–1900)





## Recent Acquisitions made by Dr Marshall with some financial assistance by the Friends

*Edinburgh boundaries extension and tramways bill, 1920: plans and photographs*

£1,364

This volume appears to have been compiled to illustrate the Tramways Bill of 1920 – surprisingly, no other surviving copies have been traced.

John Buchan  
*The Thirty-Nine Steps*  
1915. £800

The Library already has extensive correspondence by John Buchan in the Thomas Nelson archive so it seems appropriate we should have the first edition of his most famous 'shocker', 100 years after its first publication.

**Venice**  
a poem in Latin by James Crichton 1560–1582 with an English version by Robert Crawford and eight photogravures by Norman McBeath. £1,800

This is a fine private press publication, based on the Latin text in the *Delitiae poetarum Scotorum* published in Amsterdam in 1637. It is one of 20 copies.



### There have also been other contributions from individuals

Tessa Ransford, founder and former director of the Scottish Poetry Library (and an Edinburgh alumna) has presented her own collection of modern Scottish poetry to the Library.

Two recent new donations include books from the library of the late Professor Horst Drescher and books from the library of our own former Deputy Librarian Peter Freshwater. The Drescher collection includes some 150 books relating to the Scottish novelist Henry Mackenzie

and his literary circle. The Freshwater collection includes some 180 books, primarily decorative bindings from the 19th century. Both collections fill significant gaps in our Special Collections and will be useful for teaching and research.

### Next Event for the Friends

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



*The Piper* is the newsletter of the Friends of Edinburgh University Library, and is published twice a year.

ISSN 0963-4681

Scottish Charity Number:  
SC001518

Articles are copyright  
© the Friends of EUL  
and individual contributors.

Managing editor:  
Fiona Graham

Photography:  
Edinburgh University Library  
Digital Imaging Unit

Design:  
Mark Blackadder

Print:  
University of Edinburgh  
Printing Services