



THE PIPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

NUMBER 49 SPRING 2018

'Lo here a little volume – but a large book'

Richard Cranshaw 1612–49

BEN. JONSON'S WORKES.

We wait for Spring but the long Winter has encouraged us perhaps to read more or even reduce the pile of the unread to manageable height. The Friends have been involved in acquiring an important volume of Ben Jonson's Plays not only for the Library but for the nation as interest was shown by American collectors. The volume is special as its annotations show us how his plays were performed. The coup of acquisition was eagerly pursued by Joseph Marshall and achieved by generous donations by the Friends who contributed £13,500 (£5,000 from our Reserves and £8,500 from very generous individual contributions) This was highlighted in articles in both *The Times* and the *Guardian* mentioning the Friends' part in saving this book from export. We are delighted to have achieved this and are happy to have a talk about both the volume and its acquisition later in the year.

Books also feature in the Exhibition in the Main Library Gallery 'How? Why? What?' which is a nostalgia trip for many of us if not to our own childhood then to our children's. How far we have now come to tablets and iPhones ... or have we? I am reminded of Alice's Wonderland plea 'What is the use of a book without pictures and conversations?'

There are other exhibitions to relish in CRC, showing the life of books is still alive and kicking. The Library is a hub of university activity in which we all play a part. I want to thank you all for supporting not only our purchases but our own activities and look forward to not only sunshine but sharing ideas and discoveries with you in the coming year.

Lady Caplan,
President, Friends of Edinburgh University Library



Before **Principal Sir Timothy O'Shea** departed from the University he generously agreed to have a conversation about his life at the University of Edinburgh. This was filmed and can be viewed on Wordpress at Friends of EUL go to: <https://friendsofeul.wordpress.com> and then look for the relevant recent post on the right side menu.

However, as the conversation was a request from the Friends we are including an edited transcript in this issue of *The Piper*.

How did you find the transition from research in your own academic subject to working with others across academe? Was it a difficult process?

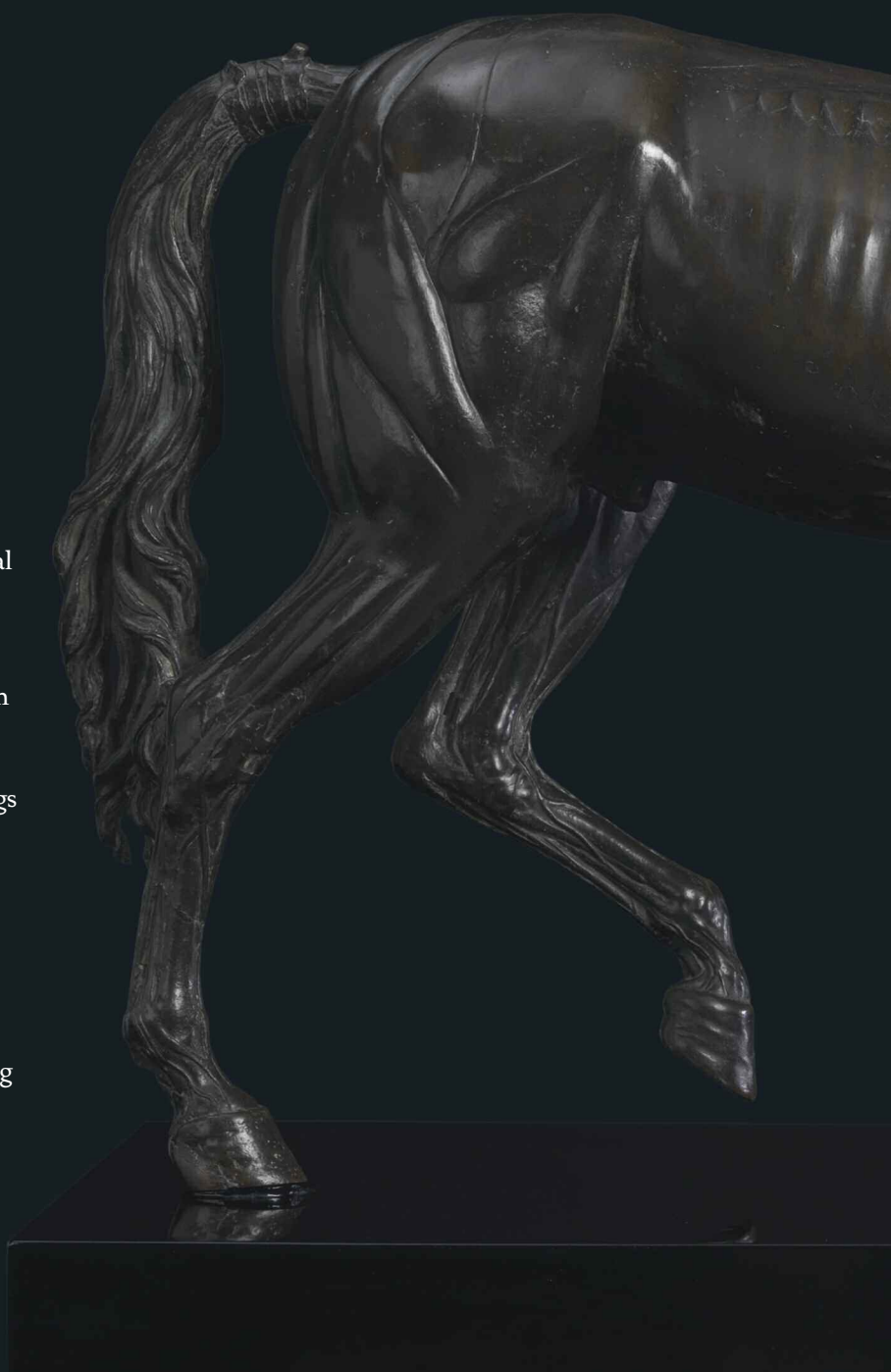
It was not difficult as I didn't have such a transition and have been able to do research since I arrived here.

I understand you would like to talk about the Collections across all disciplines. For example, within the world class collection of musical instruments at St Cecilia's there is a harpsichord by a Venetian maker, Bernardinis de Transuntinis, (which we heard at the Edinburgh International Festival concerts) and which is dated 1574 – even slightly older than the University itself.

Yes, for me the two standout events at last year's Festival were the concerts at St Cecilia's. The Collections are an extraordinary asset. The Oriental Collections are very important too and the 'Highlands to Hindustan' was a brilliant exhibition telling stories about the University's history.

It is fabulous to take distinguished visitors from abroad and show them these inspiring artefacts. The single thing that has engaged me most is the Torrie Collection; these wonderful Dutch paintings and extraordinary bronzes and the late 19th and 20th century wonderful items there. Here we are sitting in a room with Picasso's 'Going to the Fair'!

In a University like ours there are three functions: supporting students and supporting research, but I think that curating key objects is very important as they are part of the University's cultural identity and they really do matter in telling





Left: Giovanni da Bologna; *Anatomical Figure of a Horse (ecorche)*.

ourselves and other people the story of who we actually are . . . and to me that works through different ways.

One thing I found interesting was when we renovated the George Square Library and I went in the day before the opening. We had some wonderful big pieces of modern art which related in a nice way to the Spence building but I wondered where the portraits of the great Protestant Reformers had gone. So I talked to senior colleagues in the Library who said they didn't really fit in, and I said, 'we're not going to re-open without these portraits.' There is a continuity which goes back to the 16th century and the University Library started in a building which is now in the Old Quad and always had these portraits. In fact the only Principal to have been dismissed from the University was dismissed because he had cause to take down these portraits!

For me there is an aesthetic fit. I can understand why librarians did not want small images of men in black who were Protestant Reformers; on the other hand it is such a part of the University's cultural identity that, like the Torrie Collection, they do say really important things about the University.

Do you feel that the Collections should be put on display to as wide an audience as possible?

Yes, as much as possible. I'm delighted by the way that the exhibition space in the Library has been reaching out to the public to get into easily and I'm thrilled how St Cecilia's made its Collections more available and I think we should really do that.

Continued overleaf

Top: Hendrick ten Oever; *Canal Landscape with Figures Bathing.*

Bottom: William van de Velde; *Fishing Boats in a Calm.*



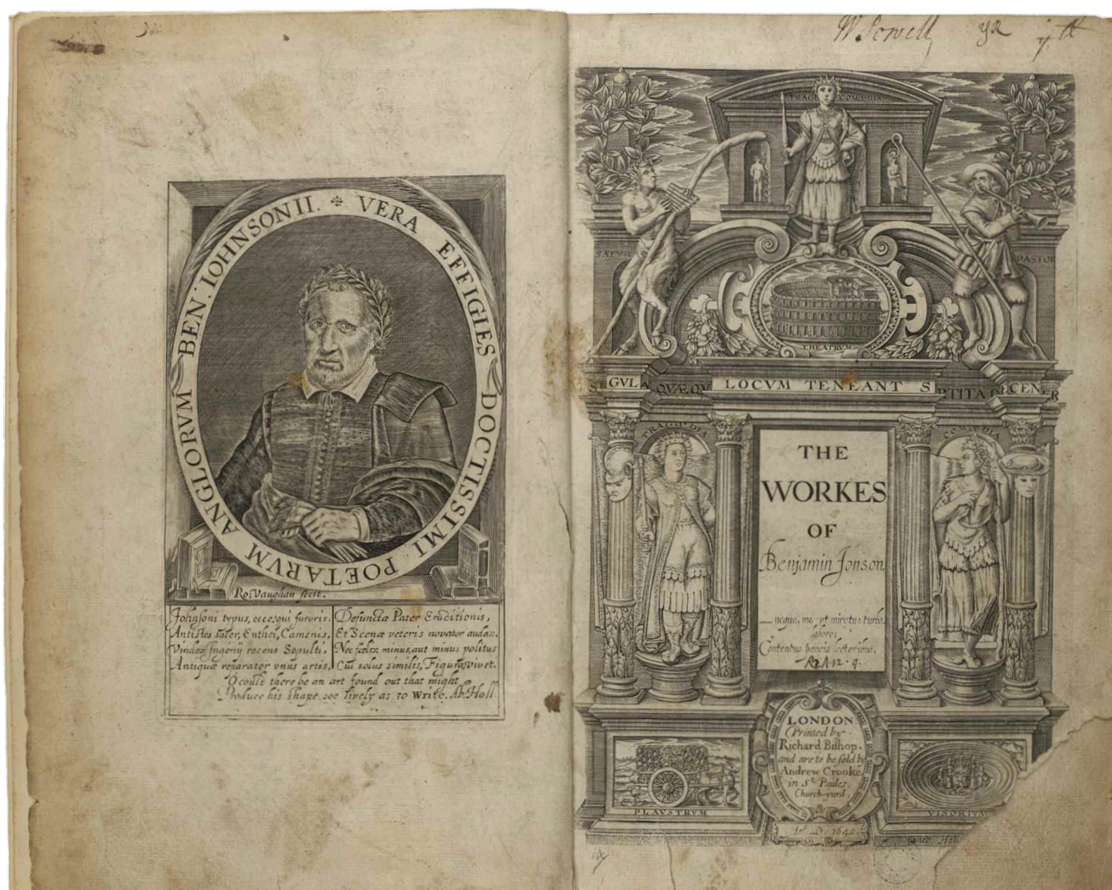
What do you hope your greatest legacy will be?

I think the thing that is most striking is that when I came to the University less than 20% of our students were from outside the UK. Now there are more than

40% and over the last fifteen years we have been internationalising the students and the staff. I am very proud of that. Brexit is, of course, a challenge but we are working with the Government to ensure that we also get the best students and staff from outside the EU.



TREASURED VOLUME OF RENAISSANCE PLAYS SAVED FOR NATION



Annotated plays by influential English dramatist Ben Jonson – earmarked for sale in North America – have been acquired by the University of Edinburgh.

Experts say no other editions of Jonson's works show how they were actually performed in this significant age of English theatre.

The rare book was printed in 1640 and features manuscript annotations from the time, such as stage directions, details of props and textual corrections.

An export bar was imposed on the book by the UK Government to give British libraries the chance to acquire it on the condition that they met the purchase price of £48,000.

With support from Friends of Edinburgh University Library, Friends of the National Libraries and John R Murray Trust, the University of Edinburgh was able to purchase the volume.

Ben Jonson, who lived from 1572 until 1637, is arguably the most important writer of the English Renaissance after Shakespeare. He lived and worked in an age of great

social change that produced some of the finest works of English literature.

Leading Ben Jonson scholar Professor James Loxley, of the University of Edinburgh, has described the acquisition as potentially 'the most extraordinary addition' to the University's collections.

Dr Joseph Marshall, Head of the Centre for Research Collections, said: 'We are delighted to purchase this landmark collection of works, and are grateful to our supporters for helping us save this volume of recognised cultural importance.'

'Some 400 years ago Jonson famously walked from London to Edinburgh meeting Scottish poets such as William Drummond on his travels. Now this remarkable volume is making the journey north too.'

'The arrival of this book in Edinburgh 2018 is a great moment for our collections, our students and researchers who will now have access to it through our Centre for Research Collections.'

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH COLLECTIONS EXHIBITIONS

MAIN GALLERY

How? Why? What? Educational Illustration from University Collections

Filled with illustrated school texts, how-to-guides, scientific diagrams, and children's picture books, *How? Why? What?* explores the many ways in which drawn and painted images were used to enhance different forms and stages of learning in the mid-20th century.

Admission Free

Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm

30 March – 30 June 2018

MAIN GALLERY

Astronomy Victorious

Humans have been fascinated by space for millennia. With objects spanning Copernicus' 1543 *On the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres*, a revolutionary work on the movements of the planets, to Katie Paterson's contemporary artwork *Timepieces*, this exhibition charts our fascination with, exploration of, and responses to, outer space.

Admission Free

Monday – Saturday 10am – 5pm. The gallery will also be open on Sundays throughout August

27 July – 27 October 2018





BINKS TRUST WALL

Dawn of a New Era

On 5 July 2018, the National Health Service will be 70 years old. Celebrating this landmark birthday, this exhibition charts its early origins, through to birth, early services, medical breakthroughs, challenges and new practices in hospitals today. The display is drawn from the collections of Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA), one of the largest medical archives in the UK.

Admission Free

Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm

13 April – 15 August 2018

Left: Susini after Michelangelo; *Dawn*.

Above: Adam Frans van der Meulen; *A Cavalcade* (detail).

Right: Jan Steen; *The Doctor's Visit*.

CRC FOYER

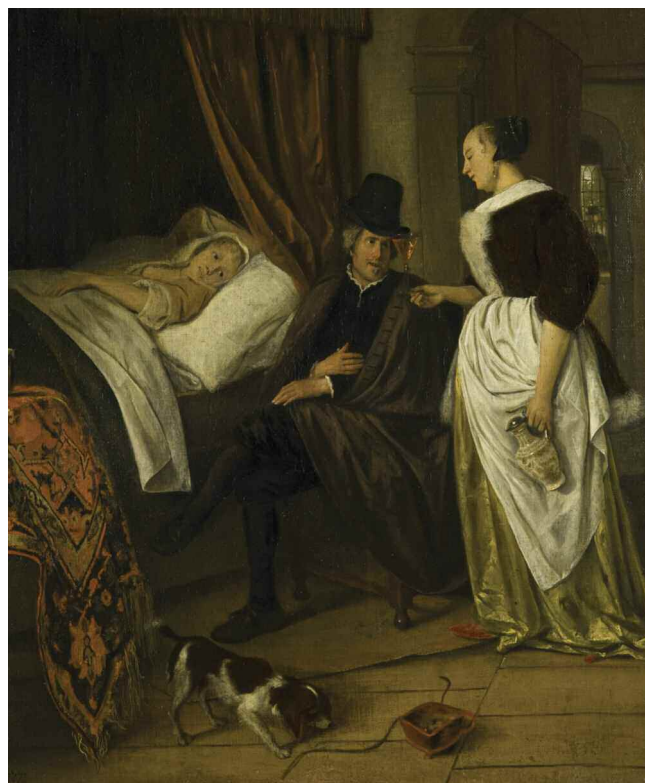
Travelling Images: Venetian Illustrated Books at the University of Edinburgh

During the Renaissance, Venice was one of the most important European centres for book production and trade. Writers, scholars and artists worked there in collaboration with specialised artisans and craftsmen to produce perfected editions, which were often lavishly illustrated. In this small display we present three of the most interesting Venetian illustrated books preserved in our collections and trace the paths they took in their travels from Venice to our own institution.

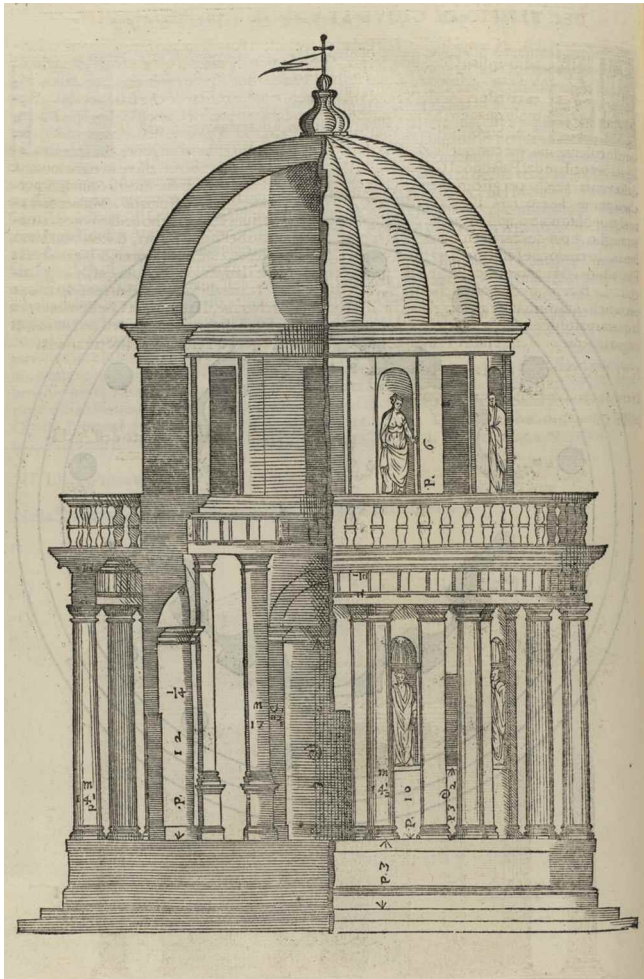
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Andrea Palladio



An image from a volume of the famous and influential Andrea Palladio: *I quattro libri dell'architettura: ne quali, dopo un breue trattato de' cinque ordini*, in the small exhibition: 'Travelling Images: Venetian Illustrated Books in the University of Edinburgh'.

Contact details

If you have not yet supplied your email address, please do so now to the Friends' Administrator: Alason Roberts: a.roberts@ed.ac.uk



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Become a part of library archives by sharing your memory



As you may know, our Main Library on George Square has been celebrating its 50th anniversary and as the library's history has been made up of passionate staff, students and visitors – we'd like to tell your stories! Your stories will come full circle – as part of the library's archives, they will be posted on our online interactive memory timeline and may be shared elsewhere on our social media channels.

If you'd like to share your highlights from your time at the library, your favourite/funniest memory, why you're passionate about the building and why you'd recommend it to new staff/students – we'd love to film your story!

You can choose from a selection of times in the afternoons of 7–9th May – which are 15 minutes long filming sessions. These times will go fast so don't delay in booking. Should you not be able to make the suggested times, do send the coordinator an email on heatherirish@ed.ac.uk.

You can book your memory filming time here (please give your first and last name):

<https://doodle.com/poll/22k9yq9cwcfsizw9>

Events and outings

Tuesday 5 June: Visit to McEwan Hall: 12.30 followed by visit to the Anatomy Museum at 3.30pm

24 October 3pm: IASH Fellow, Dr Elizabeth Ford, on 'The musical culture of taverns in 18th-century Scotland'

Wednesday 14 November: AGM and talk by Louise Boreham on the Lorimer Papers: 2.30pm