

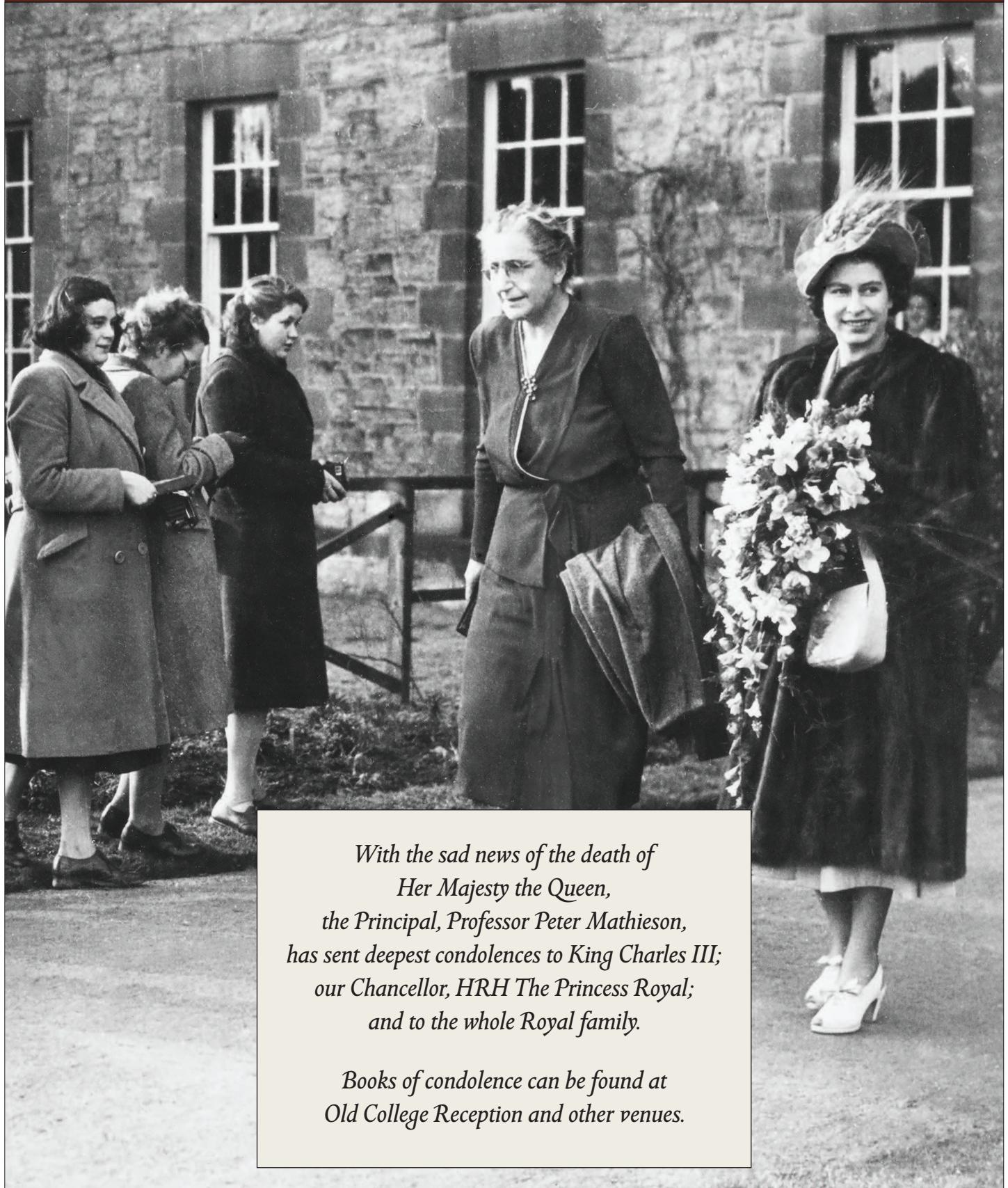


Engaging, promoting, collecting since 1962

THE PIPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

NUMBER 58 AUTUMN 2022



*With the sad news of the death of
Her Majesty the Queen,
the Principal, Professor Peter Mathieson,
has sent deepest condolences to King Charles III;
our Chancellor, HRH The Princess Royal;
and to the whole Royal family.*

*Books of condolence can be found at
Old College Reception and other venues.*

*'I think of those who were truly great . . .
 The names of those who in their lives fought for life . . .
 Born of the sun, they travelled a short while towards the sun,
 And left the vivid air signed with their honour.'*

Stephen Spender

Below. Untitled, 1967
 ©The Estate of Robert Blomfield



In times of change we want certainty. After the pandemic restrictions some of us came blinking into the sunlight to a confusing new landscape, not only personal but political. Our long-reigning monarch died. We don't know whether to look with nostalgia to the past or stare into an unclear future. However, the University is open for business again with students new and old thronging George Square. The Library lifts are very full as I recently discovered and desks hard to find. We are celebrating this new life with our ebullient AGM on November 16th with a world premiere of four songs exclusively written for us by Alexander McCall Smith with music by Tom Cunningham. This is taking place in the suitable and delightful venue of St Cecilia's Hall. We also have Richard Ovendon, one-time head of CRC and now in charge of the Bodleian Library talking about his much-acclaimed book *The Burning of the Books* which was serialised on Radio 4. It is also the launch of our specially created digital exhibition displaying many of the purchases we

have made possible over six decades. It is a unique occasion for us – so come along and as it is an open meeting bring a friend. I promise it will be the most entertaining AGM ever!

This edition of *The Piper* also looks to the past with Peter Freshwater's article on our history and to the future with Jeremy Upton's optimism about the continuing need for communal learning space. We also learn about the vital opportunities the internships we sponsor give to our students.

So we do have much to celebrate in these not very celebratory times.

Your support and involvement has made all this possible for which I thank you. Long may it continue.

May we, to misquote the words of the poet Stephen Spender, 'have left the vivid air signed with our honour.'

Lady Caplan,
 President, Friends of Edinburgh University Library

Future of University Libraries after Covid

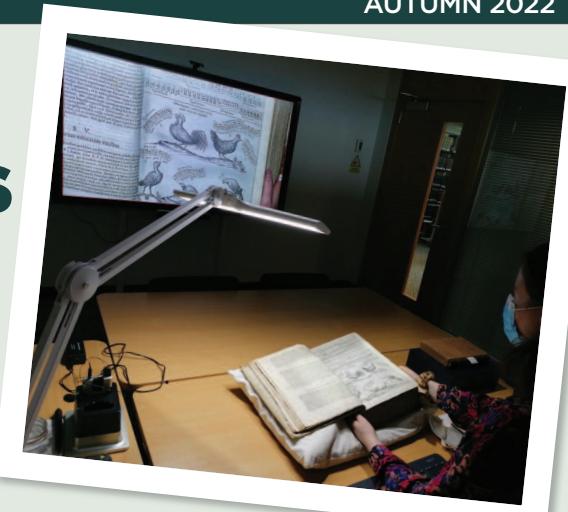
When I started my last job as Collections Manager at the University of St Andrews in 2005, it was at the time when there was much talk about the likely decline in the importance of libraries as the impact of digital access to content began to be felt. Within a couple of years, most institutions across the UK were investing in and extending their library facilities as the demand from students wanting to use library services grew beyond existing capacity. This experience has made me very wary about making predictions about the future of libraries. However, in 2022, I believe we can reasonably safely identify a number of key trends and most importantly, say that libraries will continue to have a critical role to play in supporting the goals and ambitions of their institutions.

The last two years of the COVID pandemic have taught us many things about our libraries. The experience has confirmed that some traditional services remain as important as ever, and has accelerated change we saw happening before the pandemic. The idea of the library as a space to come and study and work remained as important as ever during this period. Students need and benefit from good quality supported space where they can work away from distractions or perhaps limited spaces at home. Our expectation is, as the impact of the energy and cost of living crisis kick in, this need will increase. We will have to change some of our study space to meet the new needs of hybrid or flexible work.

Our University has committed to offering campus based education when we see more learning delivered online and flexibly. I would argue that our on campus spaces will play a more important part in the lives of our students in the future. We already see the Library as the heart of the University, a space where all parts of the community, internal and external, meet, to share ideas and feel part of the institution.

The pandemic accelerated the move to digital delivery of teaching and learning content and this will not reverse. The impact on us is the need to be better at supporting the acquisition and access to this digital content. Where we want to get to is a world where our students and academics can make the most of the new opportunities that learning from digital content provides. We have an important role in supporting this through our Library Academic Support team.

The pandemic also accelerated the awareness of the value of open as it applies to content. At a time when it was vital that information about the latest developments around treatment were shared quickly, the open model with easy and quick access to content came to the fore.



There are still many questions around how we can best deliver a new infrastructure for open science or open scholarship. What we know for certain is that librarians will be heavily involved in the debates and discussions as we have the skills and knowledge to make significant contributions to all aspects of this complex topic. We will apply the open philosophy to all aspects of our work from how we consider providing access to our buildings to our approaches to the digitisation of our heritage content.

I have already alluded to the increasing use of digital technologies in libraries. We will have a bigger role to play in developing knowledge of and skills related to digital technologies as we know this is going to be an increasing part of all our lives in the future. We are doing this through our maker space which allows any member of the community to learn about and use digital making technologies. We will use digital technologies to enhance our services. During the pandemic we introduced our remote reading room service. Using cameras and scanners connected to the network, our staff and academics can now provide real time access to our heritage collections to large classes of students at the University or individual scholars across the world. We will commit to ensuring our staff have the time and resources to develop their digital knowledge so we can continue to improve our services.

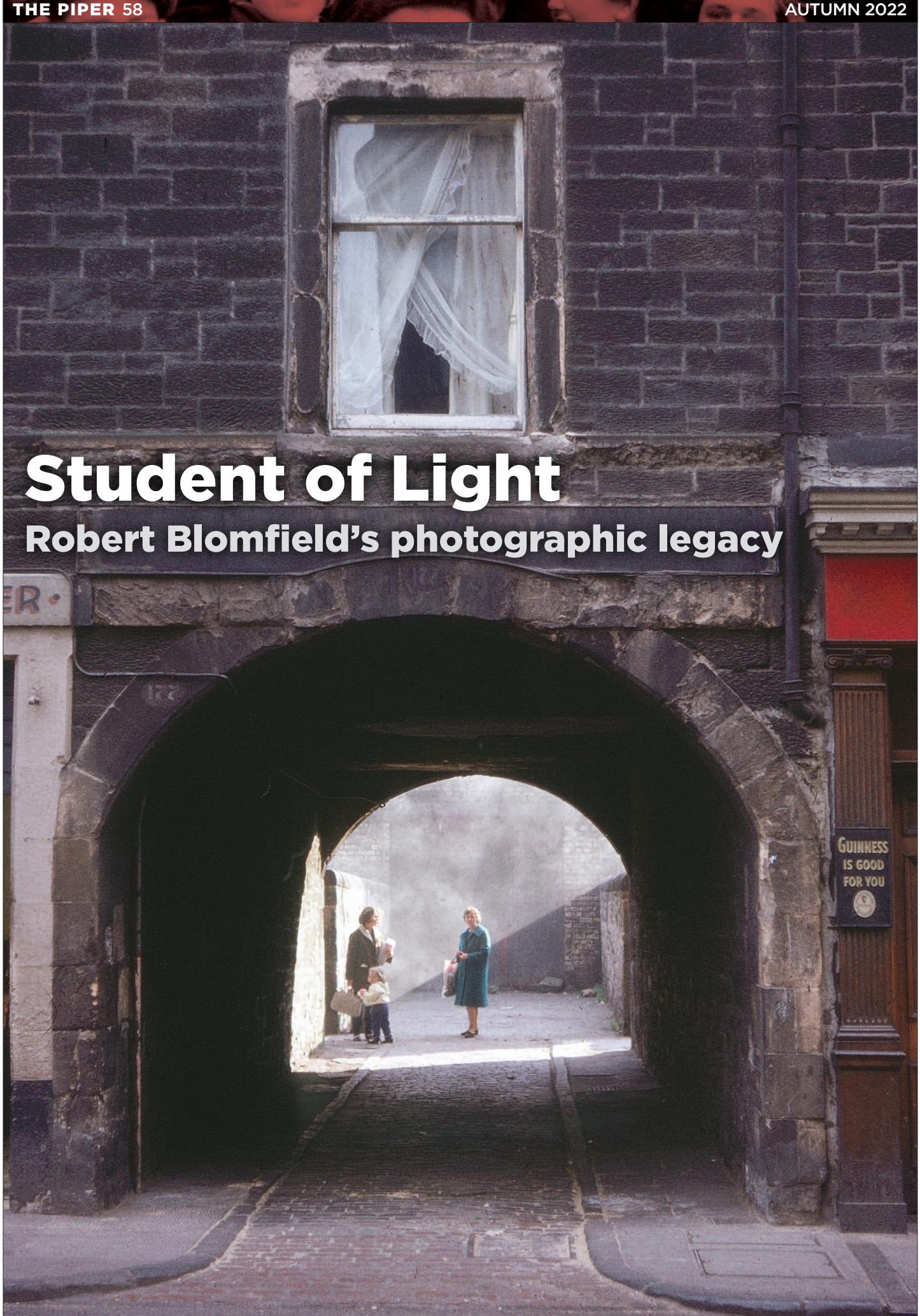
The last two years has also reminded all of us of the importance of our heritage, how it can enrich the life of our institution and wider community and why we need good infrastructure to support the management of our collections. At a time when we were forced to live apart, our heritage collections and the stories and exhibitions built on them were able to bring people together. They have a huge potential to foster stronger belonging to the University through increased awareness and understanding of the institution's history. We are able to support wellbeing through our heritage based social prescribing services. The University is taking more interest in its own history as it comes under closer scrutiny. We will need to continue to invest in the infrastructure that delivers good access to our archives and collections: curators, metadata creation and professional long term preservation both for our physical and digital collections.

Jeremy Upton

Director of Library and University Collections

Student of Light

Robert Blomfield's photographic legacy



GUINNESS
IS GOOD
FOR YOU

Opposite. Wynd scene, 1967
©The Estate of Robert Blomfield

Below. Student Union, Teviot Row House, 1961
©The Estate of Robert Blomfield



In November of 2021, a remarkable collection of photographs arrived at the University. On a sunny autumn day, Will and Ed Blomfield, two of Robert Blomfield's three sons, brought into the CRC Conservation suite hundreds of rolls of 35mm negatives, several boxes of original enlargements, and a collection of colour Kodachrome transparencies, all created by their father during his time as a student and medic at the University of Edinburgh and the Royal Infirmary in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s.

Robert Blomfield (1938–2020) was born in Leeds into a family of journalists and medics, a base which would serve him throughout his life. His father, George Blomfield FRCS FRCOG FFR, a pioneering figure in the field of radiotherapy, harboured a keen interest in photography and was often found with a pre-war Leica or Zeiss Contax II camera

around his neck. Robert and his younger brothers would often help their father develop and print films in a makeshift darkroom in the family scullery. In many ways, Robert was born with a camera in his hand.

His father gave him his first camera on his 15th birthday, an identical Contax II, which began a stream of photography and developing that sustained him throughout his life. Robert would go on to set up makeshift darkrooms in the basements of his boarding school in Derbyshire and eventually in his various Edinburgh flats while studying medicine at the University. By the early 1960s he was sporting one or more Nikon F SLR cameras while he walked the streets of the city, climbed with the University Mountaineering Club, and on his numerous trips throughout Europe. He continued to document city life around him as he moved to London to

Below left. Union Canal, coxed University rowing boat, 1961 ©The Estate of Robert Blomfield

Below right. Waiting for Prince Philip, 1958
©The Estate of Robert Blomfield



pursue his medical career, offering unique insights into London, Sheffield, Glasgow and beyond.

Often described as having a shy personality, Robert preferred to hide behind the lens and capture what was happening around him on the street, in the classroom or on the road. However, there was also a gregarious side to Robert, many of his street-portrait subjects are clearly disarmed and mid-laugh with Robert behind the camera, and he was known for leading expeditions to climb everything from the Matterhorn to the Forth Road Bridge. In his photography, though, Robert almost always worked alone – he never found a community in the photographic societies at home or in the University, preferring to pour over his weekly copies of *Amateur Photographer*, learning from his heroes: Robert Doisneau, Dorothea Lange,

Henri-Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa. Robert also harboured a life-long passion for fine art; influences of the Impressionists, his favourite, can be seen in some of his best compositions. It is through art, too, that Robert met his second wife, Jane Alexander, who had graduated with an Art History degree from Edinburgh in 1964.

Despite his never-ending passion and his habit for regularly giving away his prints to his circles of friends, Robert's photographic opus remained largely unknown and unseen throughout his life. His wife, Jane, championed his work and helped bring order to a house full of negatives, prints and slides. Robert's family, including his younger brother, Johnny, and his three sons Will, George and Ed, carried on Jane's work after she died in 2011 and achieved the first public airing of his photographs in a blockbuster exhibition of Robert's work at the City Art

Below. Old College, student battle, Rectorial Elections, 1960
©The Estate of Robert Blomfield

Right. Gerald Dean (1962) finds himself in the *Student of Light* exhibition



Centre in 2018. Thousands of people were able to see his work for the first time and its beauty and significance immediately struck chords.

Since 2018, family members have further promoted his work and they began discussions with the University in late 2020 to provide a permanent home for this richly important archive. Robert died in December 2020, passionate about photography until his last days.

His archive of original prints, film and colour slides from Scotland form the first deposit of his work with the University's Heritage Collections in late 2021. As his vast archive slowly comes into light, it is clear that Robert was Edinburgh's quiet answer to Glasgow's Oscar Marzaroli, to Paris's Brassai. The archive of his work that the family has entrusted to the University provides a rich and complex record of how he developed his eye and his skills

in the darkroom, how he became a student of light.

On 6 May 2022, the University opened an exhibition celebrating the arrival of this collection, *Robert Blomfield: Student of Light*, which has had over 10,000 visitors since its opening. Robert's work has had a deep impact on the University community, a number of alumni have recognised themselves or their friends in the photographs displayed. A further display of Robert's photographs of University life has been launched on our online exhibition platform timed with World Photography Day 2022: <https://exhibitions.ed.ac.uk/exhibitions/student-of-light>

Daryl Green

Head of Heritage Collections (Research and Curatorial)
Co-Director of the Centre for Research Collections

The Friends of Edinburgh University Library

a Brief History



Opposite. Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles: An historical Description of the Land of Britain and Scotland*, volumes 1-3, bound in two (1587)

Below left. Frontispiece to *The Works of Ben Jonson* (1640)

Below right. Sir Charles Lyell, Notebook No2 Italy 1828

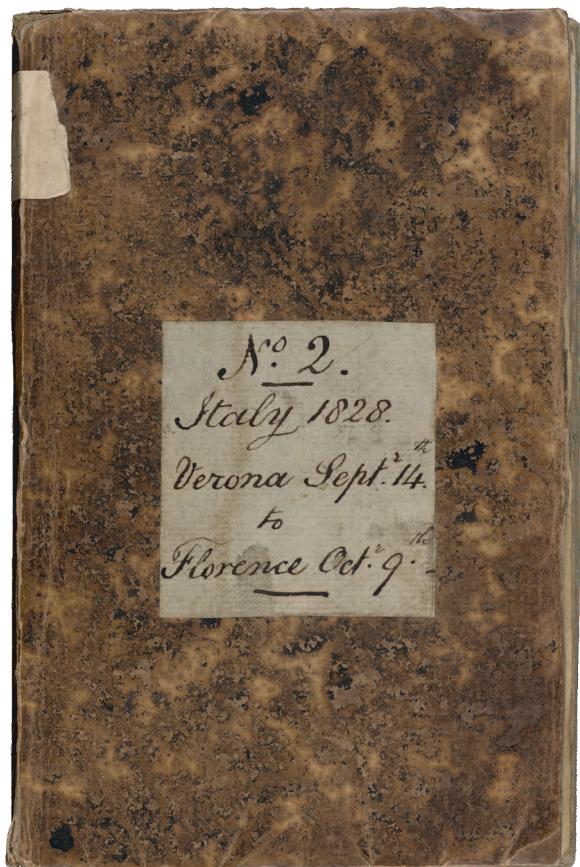
Edinburgh University Library is, quite simply, unique. It is older than the University which it now serves, and whose name it bears, and has been in continuous use for nearly 440 years. It is the oldest post-Reformation university library in Scotland and the UK. It is also the oldest civic university library in Scotland and the UK. It was founded by a two-stage benefaction: the bequest in 1580 by the Edinburgh lawyer Clement Litill of 280 books to the City of Edinburgh, who transferred it in 1584 to the newly established College of King James, which was to become the Tounis College and later still the University of Edinburgh. The Library was soon augmented by more donated collections, many from early graduates, and notably by William Drummond of Hawthornden, 'the greatest Scots poet of his time,' who presented some 1,400 books from his own library between 1624 and 1636, and the Reverend James Nairn, minister at Holyrood and later of Wemyss, Fife who bequeathed his collection of 1,838 books in 1678.

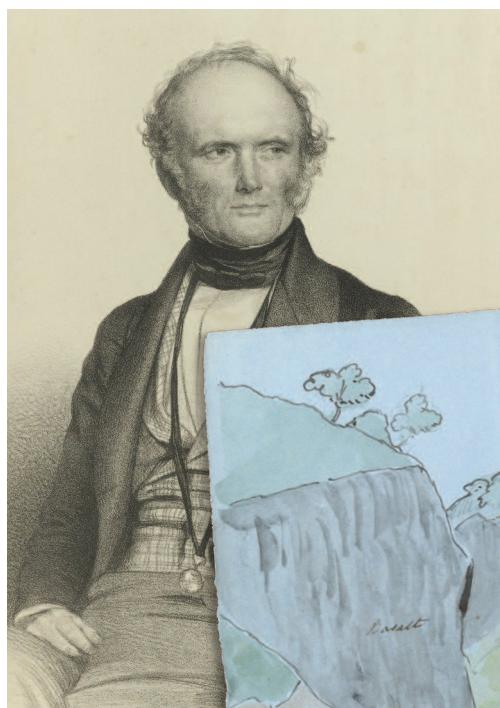
The Library began, and was established, by benefactions. For its first 130 years, it continued to depend on benefactions – donations and bequests in kind and in

coin, matriculation and graduation fees, and occasional deposits – for the acquisition of more books for its collections. These sources were augmented by the new *Copyright Act 1710* which allowed the University to claim one copy of any book printed in the UK and Ireland, and continued until the *Copyright Act 1836*, when this facility was replaced by, and subsumed in, an annual government grant to the University.

However, the Library continued to enjoy benefactions for many of its major acquisitions. Most magnificent of all is the David Laing Collection (1878), the depths and extent of which are still being plumbed. The network of Library benefactors was eventually brought together by the inauguration in 1962 of the Friends of Edinburgh University Library, and the later introduction of an online Gallery of Benefactors (<http://www.docs.is.ed.ac.uk/docs/lib-archive/bgallery/Gallery/index.html>), now complemented by the publication of Joseph Marshall's comprehensive *Directory of Collections* (2016). The Friends are now celebrating their 60th Anniversary.

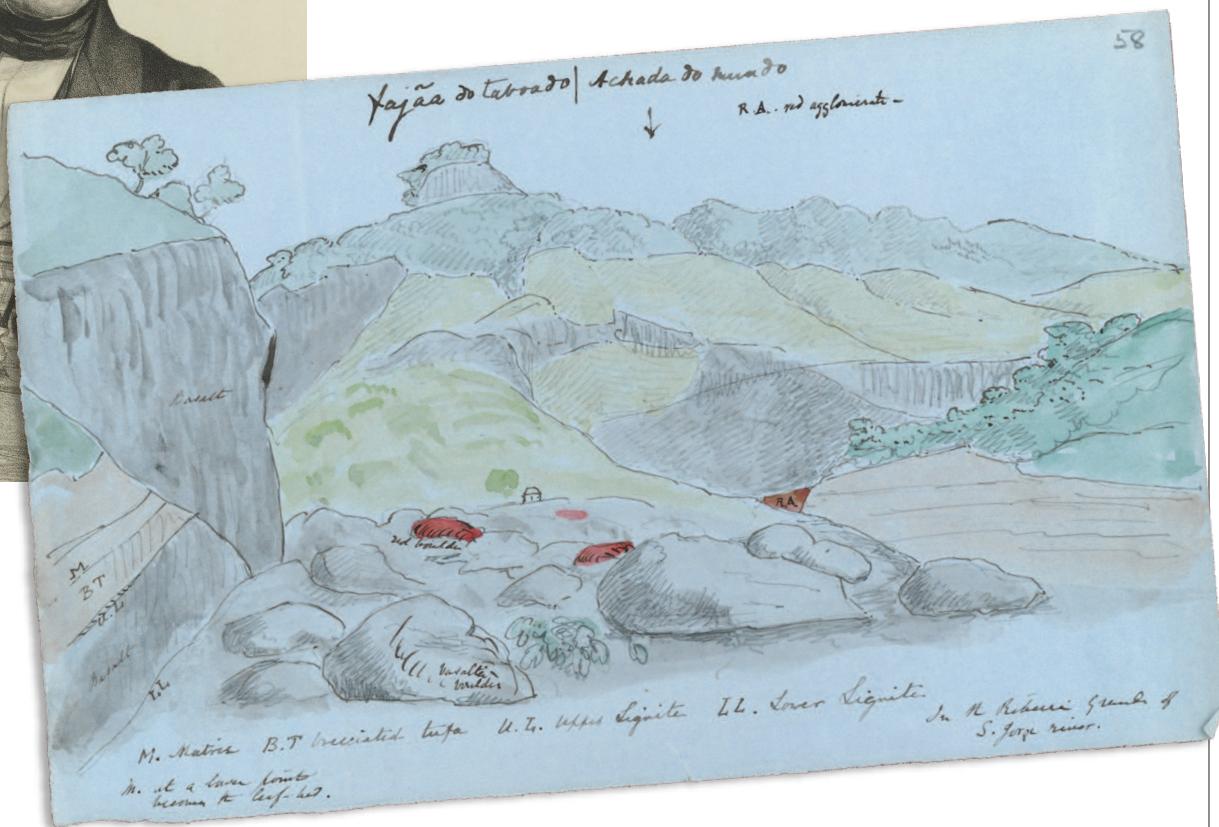
The importance of the Friends of EUL is that they are here, are active, and are dedicated to putting the Library





Left. Sir Charles Lyell, 1823-1873

Below. Sketch of the geological formations of the Fajaa do Taboada and the Acheda do Mundo, 1850s



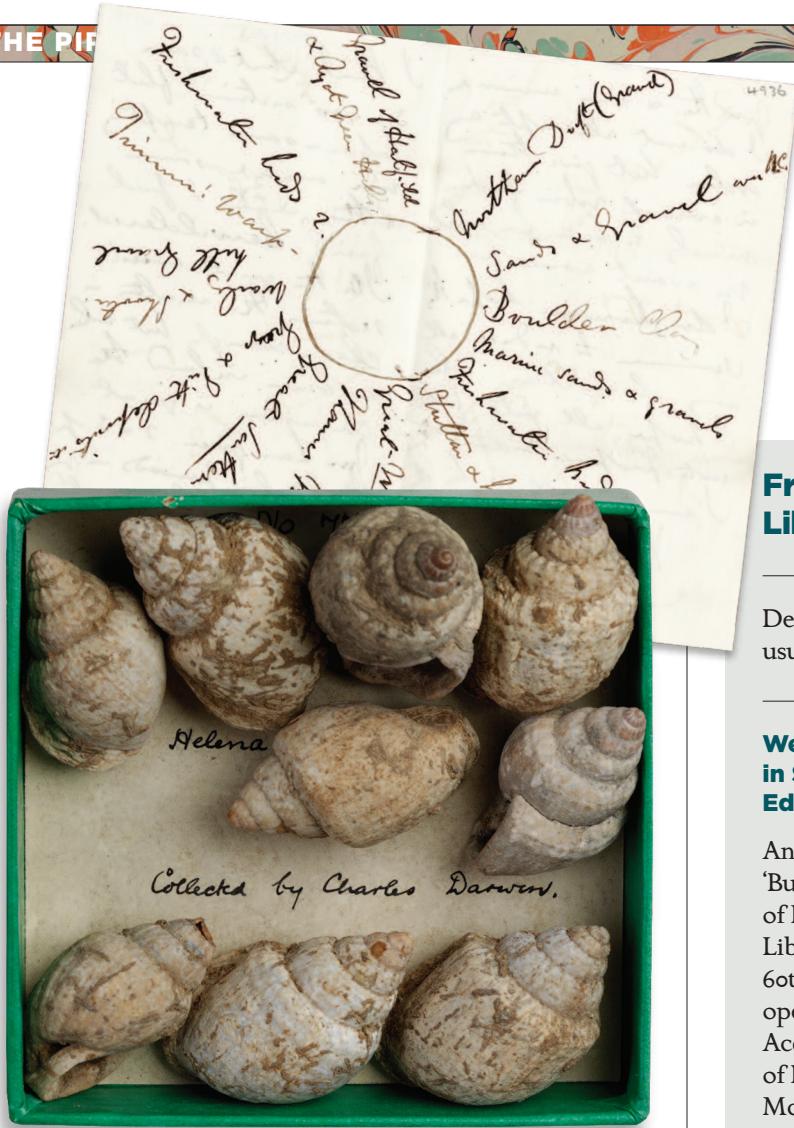
first. They are able to channel funds, including specific bequests, towards the purchase of important and identified books, manuscripts and, occasionally, equipment such as display cases that enhance and help to publicise the Library and its collections. They work independently of the Library Committee and are therefore able, on the advice of the Head of Library Collections, to acquire important items for collections that are not currently used for research and teaching, but which need to be maintained as and when the opportunities arise. Important acquisitions over the years have included such diverse subjects as diaries and letters of Edinburgh-trained missionaries abroad; C17 correspondence on the manufacture of soap from herrings; the first publication, in a very limited (1986) edition, of Andrew Jackson Grayson's *Birds of the Pacific Slope* (1853-1869); a complete set of the 75 volumes of *Picture Post*, a major photographic archive of British society from 1938 to 1957; a rare treatise on bullspERM for the Veterinary Library; the only surviving copy of the plans and photographs compiled to illustrate the *Edinburgh Boundaries Extension and Tramways Bill* 1920; and 20 pictorial boards by Erno Goldfinger and Ursula Blackwell on *Planning your Neighbourhood for Home, for Work, for Play* (1944). A recent bequest of books by Stanley and Andrena Dobbin have added significantly to the Library collections of Kelmscott Press and Golden Cockerel books, and of children's literature. Details of the Friends' most recent acquisitions can be found on their

website at <https://friendsofeul.wordpress.com>

That the Friends are able and prepared to do this provides the basis for major partnership funding for the purchase of major Library research resources and collections. These have included the second Halliwell-Phillipps Collection of Elizabethan, Jacobean and Restoration drama in 1964; literary papers of C20 Scottish writers such as Hugh MacDiarmid, Norman MacCaig and George Mackay Brown; and during the last ten years, an important early edition of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, the one on which Shakespeare is known to have drawn; an early copy of *The Works of Ben Jonson* (1640) contemporarily and extensively annotated with manuscript stage directions; and perhaps most spectacularly, the papers and notebooks of the Scottish geologist Charles Lyell (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/cultural-heritage-collections/crc/sir-charles-lyell-collection>).

The acquisition of these latest items has confirmed Edinburgh's position in the premier league of libraries on C16 and C17 literature and on the history of geology. The significance of the Friends' contributions to these purchases has been lauded in the national press.

The Friends of EUL are always glad to welcome new members to help continue this work. In return for modest subscriptions (£20 p.a. for adults, £35 for two people at the same address, £10 p.a. for students; life memberships are



Left. Correspondence of Sir Charles Lyell

Below left. Gastropods in a square box inscribed:
Cluricula Vulpina, St Helena, collected by Charles Darwin

Friends of Edinburgh University Library forthcoming events

Details of each event will be sent out to members as usual.

**Wednesday 16 November 2022, 3.00 pm,
in St Cecilia's Hall, 50 Niddry Street,
Edinburgh**

Annual General Meeting, followed by a talk on 'Burning the Books and the Deliberate Destruction of Knowledge' by Richard Ovenden OBE (Bodley's Librarian, Oxford); and the launch of the Friends' 60th Anniversary programme, including the opening of the Online Exhibition of Friends' Library Acquisitions, and the World Premiere performance of Edinburgh University Library Songs by Alexander McCall Smith and Tom Cunningham.

**Tuesday 14 February 2023, 3.00 pm,
in the Centre for Research Collections,
Main Library, George Square, Edinburgh**

'Exploring the Friends' Anniversary Online Exhibition,' with Bianca Packham (Engagement Officer, Exhibitions) and Lydia Wiernik Partenio (Exhibition Curator) in conversation with Peter Freshwater (FoEUL)

**Wednesday 19 April 2023, 3.00 pm,
Main Library, George Square**

'The Legacy of the 1962 International Writers' Conference,' a talk by Eleanor Bell (University of Strathclyde) and Angela Bartie (University of Edinburgh) to mark the 60th anniversary of the groundbreaking conference held in 1962 in Edinburgh University's McEwan Hall.

**June 2023, date, time and venue
to be announced**

A visit to one of the University's Faculty Libraries in Edinburgh

Peter B Freshwater

Honorary Secretary, of the Friends of Edinburgh University Library and a former Deputy University Librarian

Internships

Over the course of the past year we have hosted a range of internships within the Centre for Research Collections. Our internships have offered paid opportunities for students and early career professionals to learn specialised skills within the libraries, museums, archives and conservation sectors. Our internship programme took on a different format in the early days of the pandemic when all of our interns worked remotely, and then as the restrictions have relaxed we have been able to bring many of our student opportunities back to work more directly with the collections. This has had a huge positive impact on the programme as working on the collections is such an integral part of so many of the internships and allows the development of a more comprehensive range of skills.

Our student internships have covered a wide range of topics over the past twelve months, including the following:

- Research on the University and city links to transatlantic slavery and research on the colonial ties of the instruments at St Cecilia's Hall
- Work on the development of a Geo-mapping system for an online catalogue which will facilitate access to the collection of audio fieldwork recordings as part of the EERC Regional Ethnology of Scotland Project
- Two students have created descriptive catalogue records of rare books and pamphlets as part of the University Collections Facility Insurance Project, improving researcher access to the rare book collections while learning Book History research skills
- One student has worked on converting an index to 17th and 18th century library donations, made on paper in the 1920s, to structured electronic data, to enable it to be used for a number of forthcoming projects
- Over the summer we have hosted three undergraduate students, one working on the Friends 60th Anniversary programme, one supporting the Blomfield exhibition programme and one gaining customer service experience as the front line of the Centre for Research Collections

The Friends of Edinburgh University Library 60th Anniversary Curatorial Intern, Lydia, has said of her experience:

'I've been so grateful for the opportunity to curate the Friends' 60th anniversary exhibition. As an aspiring archivist, working with the Friends and CRC has been a dream; I've gained invaluable insight and direction from my colleagues and broadened both my professional and interpersonal skillsets. It has been an honour to explore as phenomenal a collection as the Friends', and I'm so proud to now share this work with the community.'



Aside from the part time student opportunities we are able to offer, we also host a number of full time internships throughout the year. These roles often require a professional qualification, and can support the intern in gaining the practical experience they require before finding their first full time paid role in their chosen sector. Over the past year we have supported two conservation interns working on the recently acquired Lyell collection and a further intern working on producing textile covers for the instruments at St Cecilia's Hall.

Library updates newsletter

Library Updates is a monthly online newsletter, sharing the latest news on library services, resources and projects.

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/library-museum-gallery/library-services-update/library-updates-newsletter>

Gift aid

If you have already given us a Gift Aid Declaration, thank you. Please let us know if you want to cancel this declaration, or change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you have not previously provided a Gift Aid Declaration and now wish to do so, please complete the appropriate section of the Membership Application Form on the Friends' website. Please send the signed form to the Friends' Administrator.



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