



# THE PIPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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## ‘it was the best of times, it was the worst of times’

Having weathered the challenging restrictions of the pandemic, we now seem to have competing doomsday scenarios surrounding us at home and worldwide.

However, we have also learnt a new sense of community with help offered to the marginalized and dispossessed. Students are able to congregate again and the Library is buzzing with their presence and enthusiasm, with user numbers at a peak. The CRC has hosted over 200 taught courses and the recent Lyell exhibition had over six thousand people viewing it. The new exhibition on Panoramas is a delight and it was the Friends who purchased the first of these for the CRC. Another new

acquisition was acquired with help from the Friends and is detailed here in the *Piper* – a very rare and unusual volume of 17th-century European lute music some of which we hope will eventually be turned into performances.

The Library has also created a Carer and Child Room which will enable wider possibilities for potential Library users who need support for access.

The New College Library is now splendidly open again after a major refurbishment including the new Funk Reading Room.

So we have a lot to celebrate and recreate the sense of community that hopefully welcomes us all again.

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



Robert and Henry Aston Barker's *Panorama of Edinburgh from Calton Hill* (detail), 1788, aquatint, hand-coloured, 1792. University of Edinburgh, Heritage Collections: Coll-1709



Lute Labelled Mathias Buchenberg, c.1620,  
MIMed 3249



An





# important lute manuscript

## in Edinburgh University's Heritage Collections

The University of Edinburgh's Heritage Collections are delighted to be the new home of an important manuscript of lute music dating from c.1620. Thanks to generous donations from external supporters and the University's own acquisitions funds, the manuscript joined the Rare Books and Manuscripts section in 2022 having had an export bar placed on it by the Government. The manuscript was probably written in Bavaria. It is known to have been in German book shops in the later 19th and early 20th century and was in the Collection of early music pioneer Arnold Dolmestch prior to its recent auction.

The volume contains a mixture of French, Italian and British lute music written mostly in French lute tablature. Of the 320 pieces, 89 are not found in any other known source. Works by 26 composers have been identified, including pieces by Nicolas de la Grotte, Michelangelo Galilei (brother of Galileo), and perhaps most famously, John Dowland. The pieces are mostly dances – courantes, galliards, voltes and ballets – but there are also some

song tunes and 3 fantasias. The small landscape volume (c.15 × 18.3cm) contains 285 leaves and is bound in blind-tooled alum-tawed pigskin, a typical south-German binding of the period. There are various notations and markings that have been added over the years, including what may be a contemporary Latin inscription inside the cover, *Ignavia est ignavia est iacere ubi possis surgere* (it is lazy to lie down where you can get up).

Lute tablature notation is different from modern staff notation as it shows players what to do with their hands rather than the notes they are to play: the horizontal lines represent the strings; the letters written on these lines represent the frets, with 'a' being the first, 'b' the second, and so on. The rhythms of only the shortest notes, usually the melody, are shown above the strings, thus leaving a great deal of interpretation for the player to enjoy. Types of lute tablature were specific to different regions, but by the 17th century, French notation was popular around Europe and some players travelled extensively, sharing repertoire.



Early seventeenth-century manuscript of Italian and French lute music in French tablature, c.1620, Galilei, Michelagnolo; Dowland, John (c.1620) – page f.75v.  
CRC Gallimaufry (Miscellaneous Images) (ed.ac.uk)

European lutes were developed from the Arabic Uds that were brought into Spain between the 700s and 1400s. As well as being used as solo instruments, lutes were important in accompanying singing and supporting larger ensembles as part of continuo groupings. Their ability to play melodies, bass lines and harmonies makes them versatile and useful in a range of musical settings and genres.

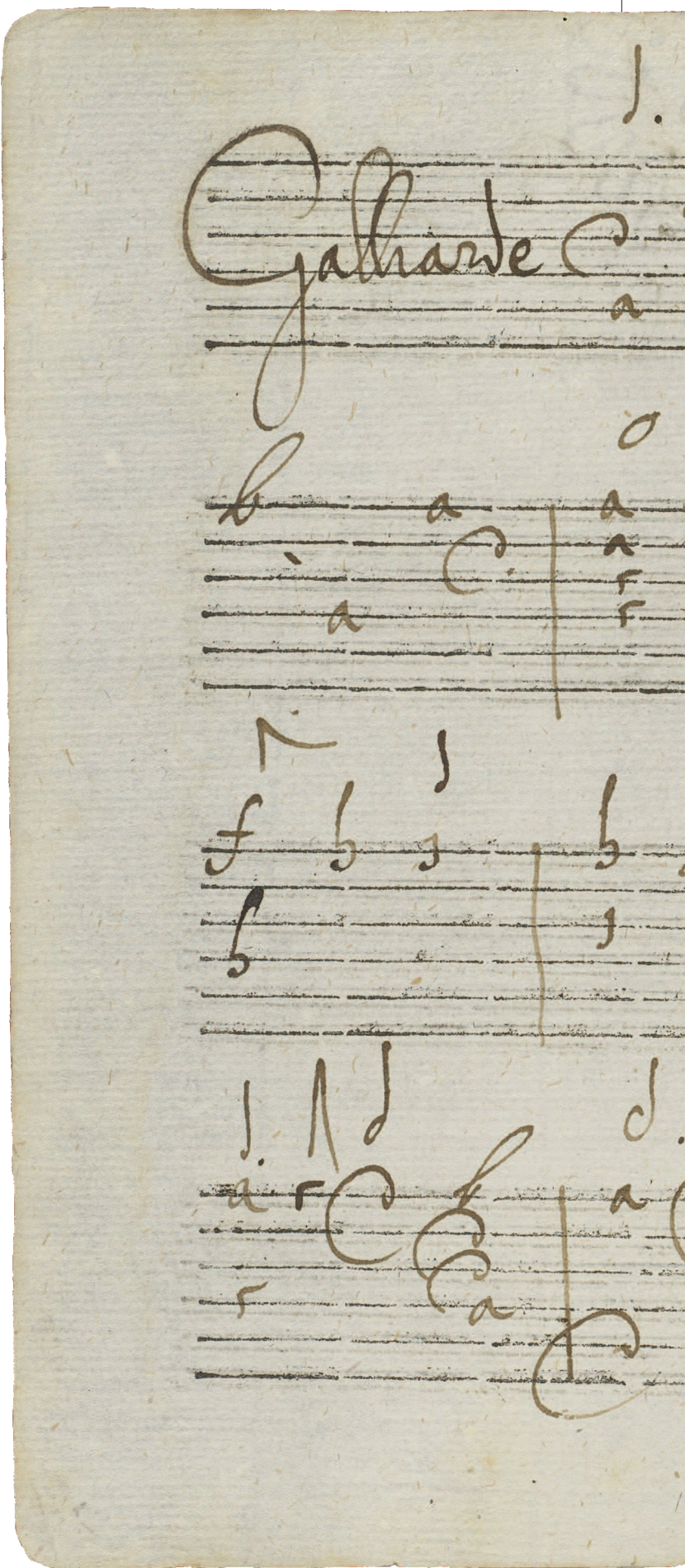
Lutes typically have a pear-shaped body with a flat spruce front and a vaulted back made from individual ribs (anything from 7 to 65). The necks are fretted and finish with a peg head that is angled backwards. The number of strings, often played in pairs or 'courses', varies between periods and places, so not all lute music is playable on all lutes. This manuscript contains pieces for instruments with from six to ten courses.

Southern Germany became a particularly important centre of lute making in the 16th and 17th centuries: the town of Füssen was the home to numerous families of makers. Due to the strict guild regulations that limited the number of masters here to 20, the influence of this school spread as makers moved away to find work. Southern Germany remained important in being a source for the yew tree wood typically used for the ribs. Yew works well for this as it is strong but flexible, with the heart wood and sap wood being of two different shades. Makers often make ribs from strips that are partly light and partly dark wood, creating a striped effect.

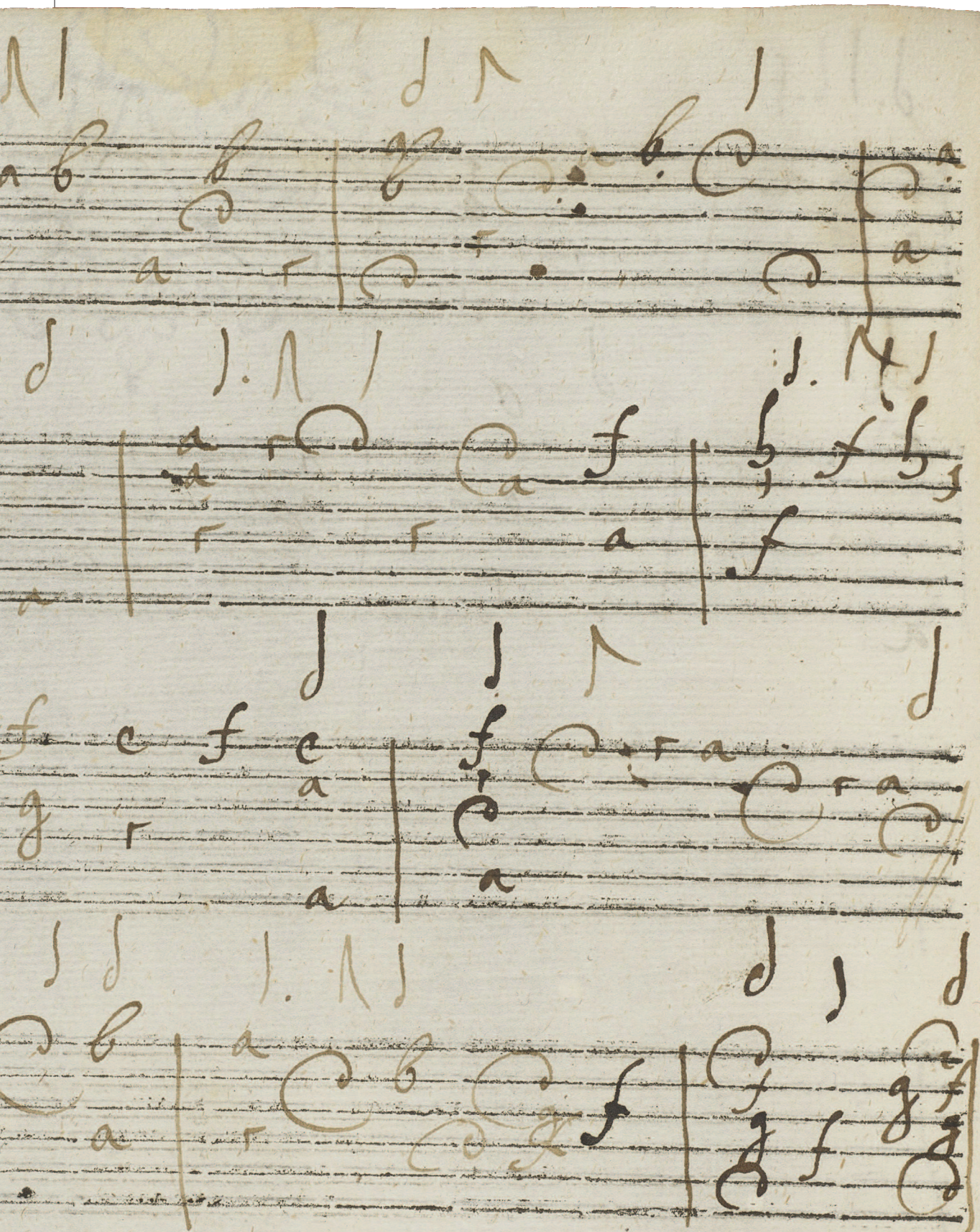
Since arriving at the University of Edinburgh, the manuscript has been catalogued (Coll-2073) and displayed at St Cecilia's Hall adjacent to a lute of the same date labelled Matheus Buchenberg (MIMEd 3249). It has undergone conservation to ensure its stability and has been photographed in its entirety. The digitised images are all freely available at [www.images.is.ed.ac.uk](http://www.images.is.ed.ac.uk). Plans are well under way for an 18-month programme to deliver engagement activities led by a designated researcher, involving transcription, performance and publication in order to understand better the contents of this important manuscript and to share this with a wide range of different audiences.

**Dr Jenny Nex**

Curator of the Musical Instrument Collection  
and Lecturer in Musical Instruments









# The new Funk Reading Room at New College Library

In January 2024 the new Funk Reading Room opened at New College Library on Mound Place. The reading room provides dedicated Heritage Collections services at New College for the first time. Heritage Collections staff, working closely with the New College Library team, provide access to collections via reader appointments, seminars and events. The original Funk Reading Room, which provided consultation space, but not dedicated collections staff, opened in 2010 following a generous donation from New College alumnus Dr Robert A. Funk.

In January 2020, all New College Library collections were moved off-site as part of a major University Estates project to improve the fire safety of the historic building on the Mound. During the closure period, the new Funk Reading Room was developed, providing similar reading room standards to the Centre for Research Collections (CRC) in the Main Library. As the result of careful planning and preparation by Heritage Collections teams during the closure period, the most sought-after New College Library special collections were accessible to researchers via the CRC.

After a tremendous effort by Library and University Collections teams, New College Library re-opened in September 2023. Some special collections, including all of the New College Library archive collections, and many of the most significant rare books, returned to the Mound in December 2023. At the time of writing, some of the rare book collections remain off-site, due to on-going work to improve environmental conditions in storage spaces.

We are delighted that the new Funk Reading Room will enable improved levels of access and engagement with these outstanding collections for many years to come.

Funk Reading Room opening times:

Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 – 16:00. Readers should allow 2–5 days for Collections consultations appointments.

For all enquiries please contact [heritagecollections@ed.ac.uk](mailto:heritagecollections@ed.ac.uk).

**Ross McGregor**  
Research Services Manager





# Carer and Child Room

## Main Library



**Above.** The children's area.

**Right.** The buggy park, to the east wall

We are delighted to announce that the new Carer and Child Room in Main Library (room 1.09 as pictured above and right) opened on 4th December 2023.

The Carer and Child Room has been specially designed and constructed to be suitable for users studying while accompanied by a child, and was developed in response to feedback from EUSA Student Parent Representatives. The room has been set up to support both independent study and collaborative work for eight adults, while children can learn and play in a dedicated section of the room. Following registration, the room can be used during normal Main Library opening hours. Users are required to sign in and out when entering and exiting the library whenever making use of the Carer and Child Room. The room is exclusively available to users accompanied by children.



For more information about the room and how to register for use, please visit: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/students/study-space/carer-child-room>.

**Barry Croucher**  
Head of Help Services, Information Services





Robert and Henry Aston Barker's *Panorama of Edinburgh from Calton Hill* (detail), 1788, aquatint, hand-coloured, 1792.

University of Edinburgh, Heritage Collections: Coll-1709

## Current exhibition

Now open until 28 September 2024

### Panoramas: the World in 360°

University of Edinburgh Main Library (Ground Floor)  
George Square Edinburgh EH8 9LJ

Monday – Saturday, 10am–6pm

Robert Barker's Panorama rotunda in London's Leicester Square created a sensation in the early 1790s. This exhibition explores the panorama's history and gives you a chance to taste the experience of its very first visitors.



## FoEUL Events Draft Programme for 2024/2025

### September 2024

A talk by the Special Collections interns whose positions have been supported by the Friends of Edinburgh University Library.

### October 2024

A talk on Esther Inglis, in advance of an online exhibition on her work.

### November 2024

The Friends' AGM, to take place at the recently opened Futures' Institute, followed by a talk on the concept behind the establishment of the Institute by its previous director, Prof. Lesley McAra.

## Gift aid

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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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