

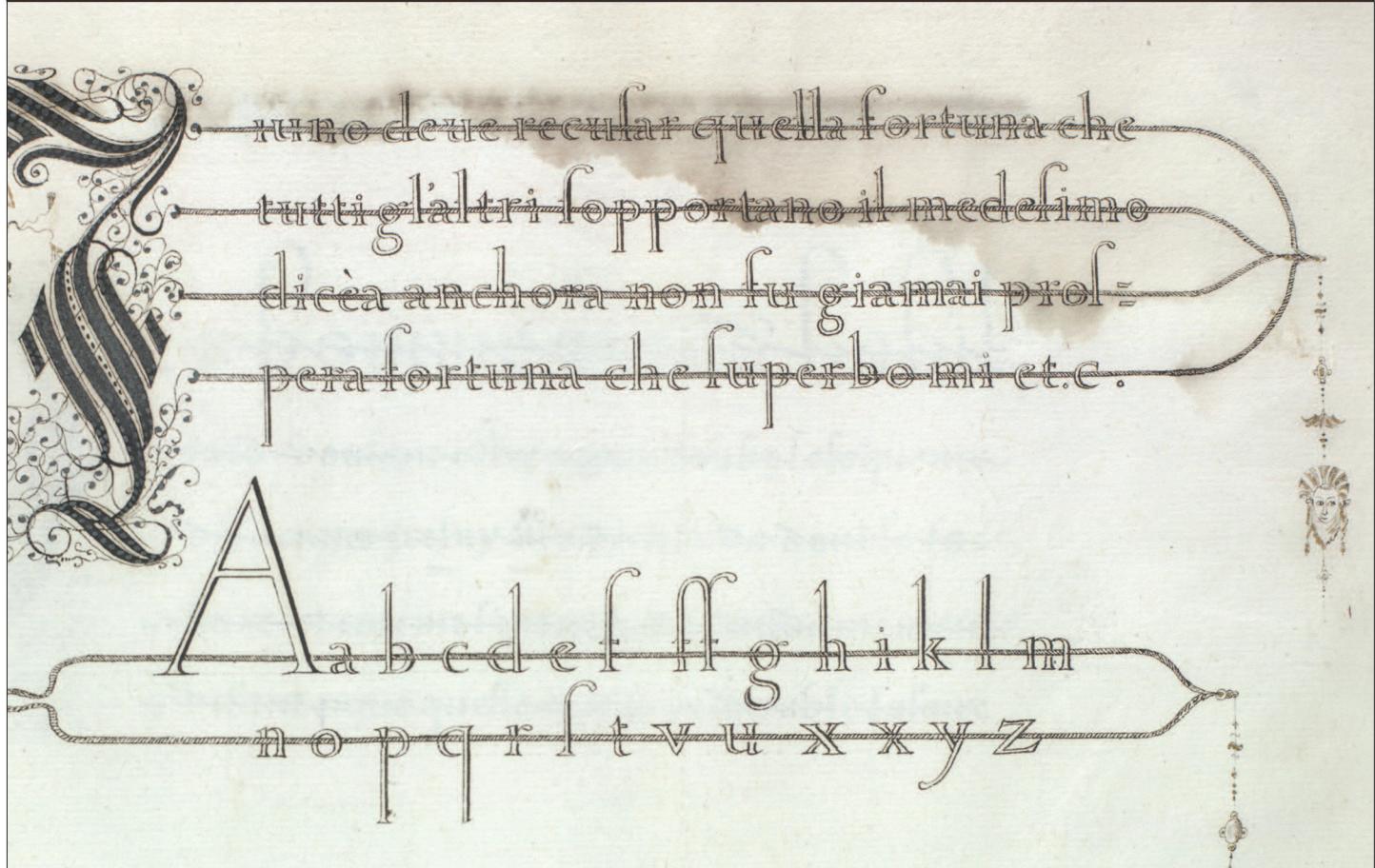


Engaging, promoting, collecting since 1962

# THE PIPER

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

NUMBER 62 AUTUMN 2024



## Esther Inglis, 1570–1624 (Scottish calligrapher)

Esther Inglis (1570–1624) is a uniquely important writer and artist. A refugee from religious persecution, she and her family moved initially to England before settling in Edinburgh during her childhood; here she acquired the skills in calligraphy, drawing, and embroidery that combined to create the extraordinary manuscript books for which she is still famed, and which grace the collections of some of the finest libraries in the world.

In her own day, she was known to be one of the finest calligraphers then working, sometimes called the 'mistress of the golden pen', and the regard in which her skills were

held made her books valuable components in the pursuit of personal, religious and political interests. But while Inglis's life and work are far from unfamiliar to both academic and wider audiences today, and she continues to inspire contemporary writers and artists, there is still much to be done to understand the multiple forces and contexts which shaped her activity and her own singular place within the culture of her time.

See page 8 for details of a FoEUL talk.

# BOTANY WITHOUT PICTURES

## Enlightenment Science from Behind the Screen

The three volumes of *Calendrier De Flore, Ou Études De Fleurs D'après Nature*, by Mme. Victorine de Chastenay, recently purchased by FoEUL for Heritage Collections using a bequest intended for botanical books, do not look particularly distinguished from the outside, but tell a fascinating story.

In eighteenth-century France women were excluded from membership of universities and scientific organisations, and were generally expected to marry and devote themselves to their families and household management, but Victorine de Chastenay (1771–1855) was one of a small number, with a truly enlightened family and financial means, who managed to devote her life to intellectual pursuits and participation in Enlightenment intellectual culture, leaving a legacy of several published

books, and a large collection of manuscripts now in the local archives in Dijon.

Both her parents were impoverished aristocrats, but with intellectual interests and connections. They hired tutors to educate Victorine alongside her brother; both children were precocious and Victorine acquired early a habit of systematic note taking which lasted throughout her life. When she was 14 she was enrolled as a *chanoinesse* in an ancient religious foundation for noble ladies, the *Chapitre d'Épinal*. There were some duties attached to the role, including residing in Épinal for part of the year (where each of the canonesses maintained her own house), but she was placed under no permanent personal restrictions, and received an income and the honorific title 'Madame', thus gaining both social and financial

## CALENDRIER DE FLORE, OU ETUDES DE FLEURS d'après nature.

PAR MADAME V. D. C\*\*\*\*\*.

—  
Jam violas puerique legunt hilaresque puellæ,  
Rustica quam nullo terra serente gerit:  
Prataque pubescent variorum flore colorum,  
Indocilique loquax gutture vernal avis.

OVID, *Trist. Lib. 3. Eleg. 12.*

TOME I.

—  
DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE CRAPELET.

A D A D I C

independence. Although the religious order did not survive the French Revolution, Chastenay's education and social confidence enabled her to maintain her status as a respectable and serious intellectual woman, and continue her studies after the worst of the Revolution was over.

She was able to attend the large-scale public classes at the Jardin Royal des Plantes in Paris, which offered botany, chemistry and anatomy. She also took private lessons, and through her social contacts with René Desfontaines the director, had access to the laboratories and the scholars based at the Jardin des Plantes. While the majority of her notes remain unpublished, during her lifetime she published translations of Oliver Goldsmith and Ann Radcliffe, three historical works, her memoirs, and this collection of botanical descriptions of plants.

The book is in the form of a series of letters, introducing an unnamed recipient to the science of botany, Linnaean classification, and to a series of individual plants, whose appearance and habits are described in detail, one in each letter. Chastenay was consciously a product of the French philosophical Enlightenment, preferring to use text to describe the plants, rather than illustrations and diagrams, priding herself that it was possible to describe anything entirely in words, vividly

enough to convey as much information as she could had she used illustrations. This results in a book which is as much a work of literature as science, and is one of few scientific works written by a Frenchwoman of the period. We have been purchasing French writing by women of this period, in order to support a course in the French department: this acquisition has enabled us to broaden the scope of the collection into an area which we hope might be fruitful for student dissertations and further study of the subject.

Why 'behind the screen'? Because, as with any woman of her age, in order to write Victorine de Chastenay had to create space and privacy within shared domestic spaces. In her case she used a moveable screen to partition her writing space from other members of the family, and from social visitors to the household.

Victorine de Chastenay, *Calendrier De Flore, Ou Études De Fleurs D'après Nature.* (A Paris, chez Maradan, 1802–03.) 3 volumes, 8vo.

**Elizabeth Quarby Lawrence**

Rare Books Literary Collections Curator,  
Heritage Collections

|  |
|--|
| BLE DES NOMS LATINS:   |
| T-UNIÈME CLASSE.   |
| MONOCIE.   |
| TÉTRANDRIE.  |
| 1. a <i>Buxus semper virens.</i> Buis. page 375                      |
| POLYANDRIE.  |
| 2. a <i>Corylus avellanea.</i> Noisetier. 267                        |
| 2. b <i>Poterium sanguisorbe.</i> Pimprenelle. 87                    |
| SYNGÉNÉSIE.  |
| 6. b <i>Bryonia alba.</i> Bryoïne. 292                               |
| G-T-DEUXIÈME CLASSE.   |
| DIÖCIE.  |
| PENTANDRIE.  |
| 36. b <i>Cannabis sativa.</i> Chanvre. 385                           |
| ENNÉANDRIE.  |
| 38. a <i>Mercurialis perennis.</i> Mercuriale. 195                   |
| G-T-TROISIÈME CLASSE.  |
| POLYGAMIE.   |
| MONOCIE.   |
| 46. b <i>Valantia cruciata.</i> Croisette. 109                       |
| G-T-QUATRIÈME CLASSE.  |
| CRYPTOGAMIE.   |
| TOUGÈRES.  |
| 48. a <i>Asplenium trichomanes.</i> Polytrich,<br>ou Capillaire. 245 |
| 126. b <i>Asplenium ruta.</i> Rue des Murailles. 526                 |

## CALENDRIER DE FLORE.

### LETTRE PREMIÈRE.

19 Prairial an x.

AUJOURD'HUI, j'en suis sûre, vous vous occupez de fleurs; vous voulez faire une herborisation, et tâchant de suivre la nature avec vos livres, vous courez sans rien obtenir. Je viens vous offrir, ma chère amie, un guide qui n'a pas en ses lumières beaucoup de confiance; mais la vôtre me donne de l'amour-propre, et je lui devrai peut-être quelques-uns de ces succès que le talent ambitionne, et que je ne voudrois obtenir que pour les consacrer à l'amitié.

# Die Träumenden Knaben

## (the Dreaming Boys), Oscar Kokoschka, 1908



Oscar Kokoschka's *Die Träumenden Knaben* (*the Dreaming Boys*) is a key piece of work made by a major 20th Century artist.

Held in high regard, this artist's book, through its imagery and content marks the transition towards Expressionism in Austrian art in the early 20th Century and is an incredibly valuable addition to the University of Edinburgh's Heritage Collections.

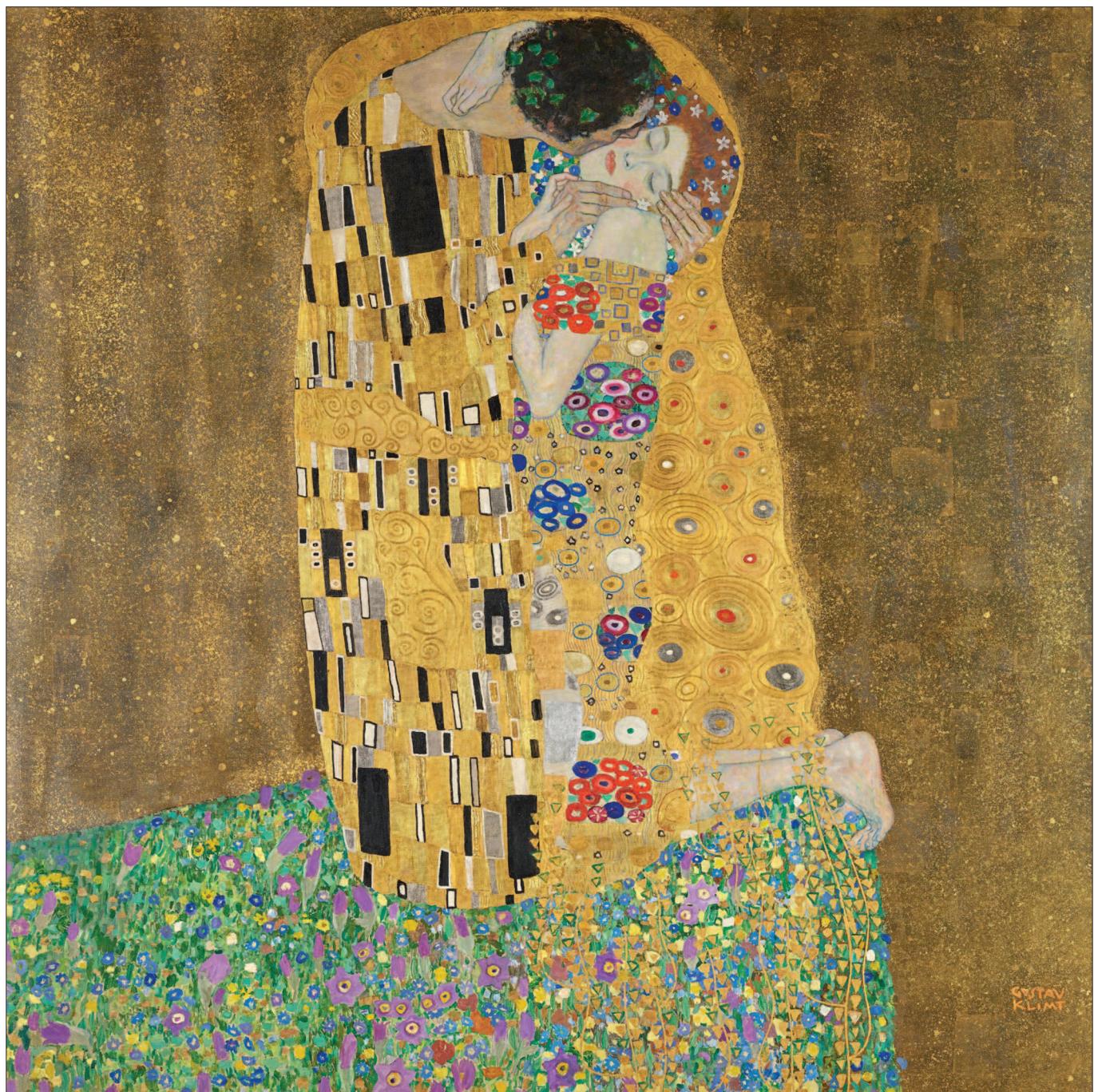
*Die Träumenden Knaben* was commissioned by the Wiener Werkstätte in 1907 while Kokoschka was a student at the Vienna School of Applied Arts. The brief asked for a children's book which Kokoschka is said to have abandoned after the first page to instead create a work that tells a tale of desire, one inspired by Kokoschka's unrequited love for fellow student, Lilith Lang. The images depict a character, Li and a young boy in a dreamlike garden surrounded by flora and fauna, much of it with symbolic meaning and the text is a stream of consciousness moving through different states of perception.

The book is therefore highly inappropriate for children both through the inaccessible style of the writing but more so because the content describes and depicts themes of an erotic and violent nature. This led to a controversial reception and in turn a poor reception until its reissuing in 1917.

The book is dedicated to fellow artist and influence, Gustav Klimt and its foray into the dream world sets it in historical context close to the time Freud published his *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

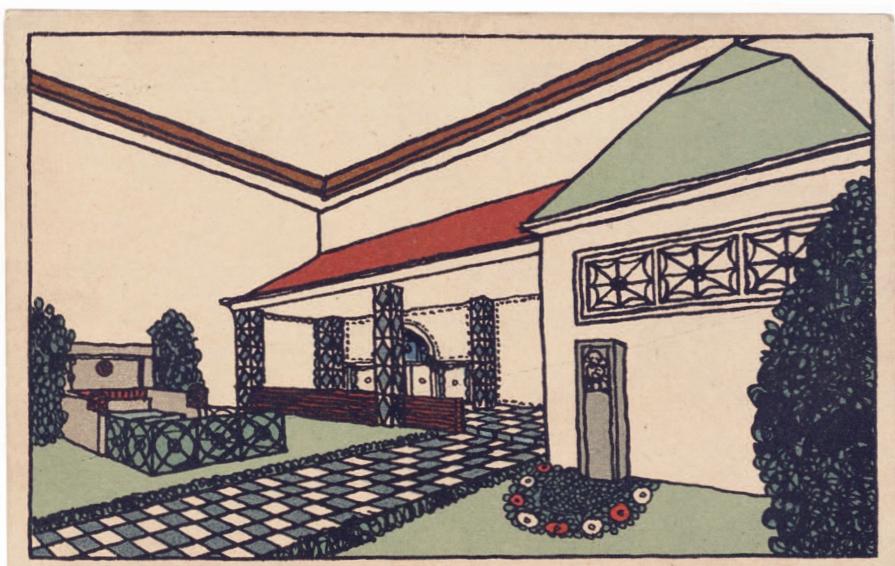
The imagery and text are both intriguing and rather intoxicating. Immediate answers are not offered and this keeps the viewer/reader guessing which is engaging and looking at the book can feel as if one is held under a spell. Images and text draw influence from traditional folk tales, Japanese woodblocks melding these together in a contemporary way. Compositions are highly considered and images are balanced very carefully with the writing set within narrow text

Art Show Poster by Rudolf Kalvach (artist), 1908.  
Albertina, Austria. Public Domain



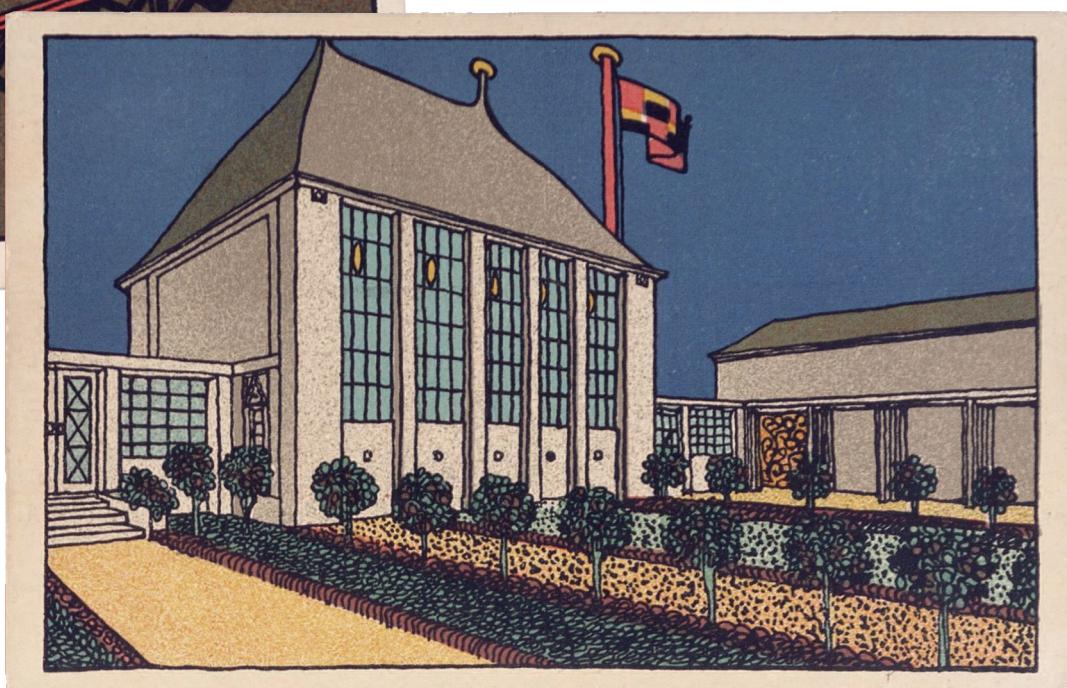
**Above.** Gustav Klimt, The Kiss (Lovers), 1908

**Right.** Postcard from the Wiener Werkstätte No. 3: Art Show Klimtgruppe Vienna 1908 by Emil Hoppe, Austria. Public Domain





Postcard from the Wiener Werkstätte No. 3: Art Show Klimtgruppe Vienna 1908 by Emil Hoppe, Austria. Public Domain



boxes, almost like annotations, running vertically down each page to ensure each has its own presence and a comfortable, equal balance is struck throughout.

The quality of the prints is extremely high, by the work's very nature, they have been kept hidden from the light and the colours are incredibly bright and impactful with the turn of every page. The binding is simple, pared back and efficient allowing the content to shine without interruption.

The fact that Kokoschka was a student when he made this work adds weight when presenting it to students,

Postcard from the Wiener Werkstätte No. 1: Art Show Klimtgruppe Vienna 1908 by Emil Hoppe, Austria. Public Domain

setting a high bar as to what might be achieved. It has already provided valuable learning opportunities for student projects in Art and Illustration and will no doubt be used more widely across the University in this way.

It also offers scholars in many fields and at all points in their careers a tantalizing research resource to be treasured for years to come.

#### **Jane Hyslop**

**Lecturer in Art and Illustration  
Edinburgh College of Art, The University of Edinburgh**

# Leisure Reading Collection (Libby)

Earlier this year, *The Reading Agency* charity published the results of a survey which revealed that half of UK adults do not currently read for pleasure. More than a third of those surveyed described themselves as lapsed readers who used to read regularly for leisure, but rarely or never do so now.

Some of the reasons the survey respondents gave for this decline in leisure reading included the distraction of social media, lack of time, difficulty finding interesting or relatable books and problems focusing, with others reporting mental health reasons, such as depression or anxiety.

Friends of the Library will be aware of the benefits of recreational reading which include higher levels of wellbeing and mental health due to factors such as improved sleep, concentration, creativity, and empathy.

As part of the Library's commitment to supporting the wellbeing of students and staff, a new curated recreation and leisure e-book/audiobook collection has been

introduced and this has been made possible by Library endowment funding.

This specially curated collection sits alongside the 2.4 million e-books which the Library provides to support teaching and research, meaning that current students and staff can now dip in to a range of popular fiction and non-fiction e-books and audiobooks by a wide range of authors covering many genres using the *Libby* platform.

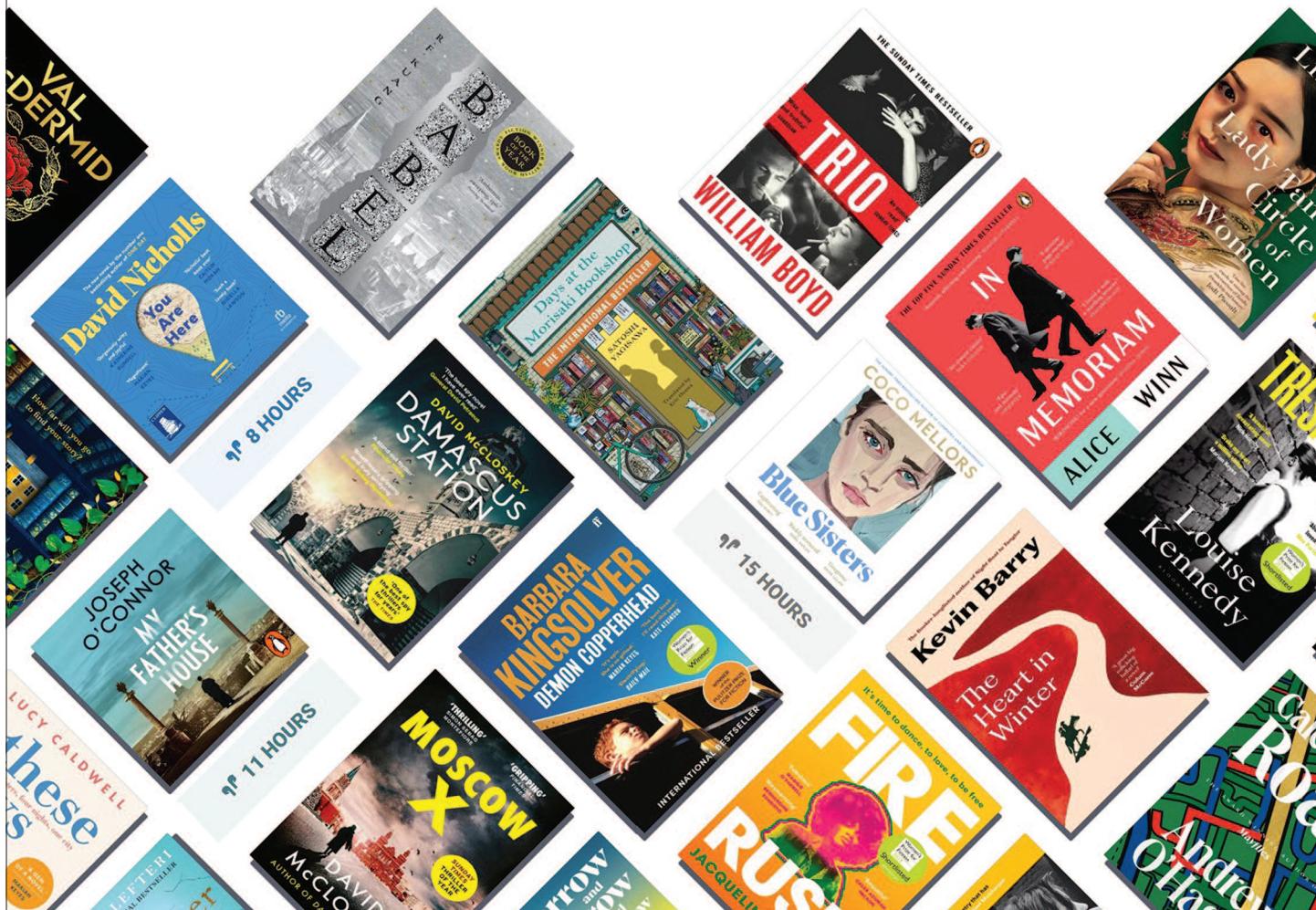
Many public library services across the UK provide a similar version of this service with large collections of popular reading and Friends may be familiar with one of these.

The Library will be developing and curating the University of Edinburgh *Libby* collection in response to the interests of our unique community, and we aim to kickstart many new leisure reading adventures.

**Elize Rowan**

Content Acquisition Access Manager

<http://library.ed.ac.uk/leisure-reading-collection-libby>





The title page of *Les Quatrains du Sieur de Pybrac dediez a tres illustre et tres noble Seigneur, Monseigneur le Conte de Salisberrie pour ses estrennes de l'an 1607; Escript et illumine par moi Esther Inglis.*

## FoEUL Events Programme

### 1 October 2024, 15.00-16.30

Main Library, talk on Esther Inglis in celebration of her life and the 400th anniversary of her death.

### 23 November 2024, 15.00-17.00

AGM and talk on the Futures Institute.

## 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.

## Library updates newsletter

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

<https://library.ed.ac.uk/library-news-events/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.



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

ISSN: 0963-4681

Engaging, promoting, collecting since 1970

Scottish Charity Number:  
SC001518

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

Managing editor:  
Fiona Graham

Images from the Centre for Research  
Collections and Digital Imaging Unit  
(pages 1–3 and 8)

Design:  
Mark Blackadder

Print:  
University of Edinburgh  
Printing Services