150 years ago this year, on the 16th of May, the great Victorian novelist, Charles Dickens, appeared on stage at Aberdeen’s Music Hall to read extracts from two of his most popular novels. It was his second, and turned out to be his final visit to the city. The writer died in 1870, exhausted by the punishing reading tours he had embarked on since mid-career. The Special Collections Centre’s Summer exhibition ‘An Audience with Charles Dickens’, which was generously supported by the Friends of Aberdeen University Library, looked at this great writer as a performer of his own work, his visits to Aberdeen and the reaction he received from the press.
Research into the subject was assisted by the University’s Dickens expert, Dr Paul Schlicke, who is chairman of the Aberdeen Branch of the Dickens Fellowship, past president of the Dickens Society of America, and past chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Charles Dickens Museum in London.

Dr Paul Schlicke said: ‘Dickens visited Scotland many times throughout his life and had many Scottish friends and connections, not least in Aberdeen. It is cause for celebration that, 150 years after his second visit to Aberdeen, the University Library is mounting a splendid exhibition of materials selected from its Dickens collection, one of the jewels in the crown of Aberdeen University.’

**The Dickens Archive in Aberdeen**
The University’s Special Collections Centre has one of the most distinguished collections of books by and about Charles Dickens anywhere in the world. This includes rare first editions of all his novels, of his two travel books and three of his five Christmas stories, including *A Christmas Carol*. It holds important later editions of all of the writer’s major works as well as complete runs of the four periodicals he edited. The exhibition was the first time that all 15 first volume editions of Charles Dickens’s novels had been displayed together, beginning with the author’s first novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), and ending with his last, unfinished work, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870).

**Dickens’s visits to Aberdeen**
The fact that Dickens travelled to Aberdeen to give readings of his works provided the main theme of the exhibition. His first visit in 1858 came at a difficult time. A few months earlier, his 22-year marriage had come to an acrimonious end and the writer had attempted to explain his actions by writing an article in his journal, *Household Words*. The very announcement was also on display in the exhibition. The local press were unimpressed with the author’s explanation and Dickens arrived in Aberdeen expecting further criticism. However, the theatrical brilliance of his performance won round the audience and local newspaper reviewers.
By the time of his second visit in 1866, the writer was 54 years of age and in poor health. He travelled up to Scotland by train with his tour manager George Dolby, and gave a gruelling two-hour performance that included a dramatic rendition of the storm scene from *David Copperfield*, followed by the comedic trial scene in *The Pickwick Paper*. Dickens loved performing and was a talented mimic, lending an impressive range of voices to his popular characters. Contrary to Dolby’s assessment that this had been ‘the least-well received of any of Dickens’s readings’, a review in *The Aberdeen Journal* was gushing in its praise of the celebrity writer:

‘The numerous and highly respectable audience, which greeted Mr Dickens in the Music Hall on Wednesday night, gave abundant evidence, if such were necessary, to the popularity and esteem in which the most genial English writer of the day is held … The great novelist, though turning over to years, retains all the fire and energy of expression, facial and vocal – all the juvenility and vigour of spirit necessary to a true and vivid delineation of the best creations of his genius. Even those whom the effort to hear – sitting at the extreme end of the hall – under other circumstances would have abandoned the attempt, were irresistibly carried along through the “six chapters of David Copperfield,” fascinated by the reader’s style and gesticulations, which in many instances almost rendered words unnecessary.’ (*The Aberdeen Journal*, 22 May 1866)

A sense of Dickens’s love of the theatre ran throughout this visually engaging exhibition from the reproduction tickets at the door, through to the 3D theatre audience tableau created from an illustration in *Nicholas Nickleby* and the entertaining column of nineteenth-century billposters. Life-sized images of eight of Dickens most recognisable characters further brought the space to life and the effect was completed by a recording by the University’s Dr Tim Tricker reading extracts from the very pieces that Dickens read 150 years ago.
A Sure Foundation

The Summer exhibition ‘An Audience with Charles Dickens: Writer, Performer, Celebrity’ saw the introduction of a new kind of support for the books on display. Part of the work of the conservation department at the Sir Duncan Rice Library is to make sure that items are fit for display and are displayed in appropriate conditions, including suitable supports.

This article takes a closer look at the mounts on which the first editions of Dickens’s 15 novels were displayed.

Each book mount, known as a cradle, is individually made to fit a specific book opened at a particular page. This makes sure that the book is well supported in all the right places. Because they are individually made for each book, cradles cannot often be reused for other books.

At the Sir Duncan Rice Library prior to each exhibition we consider what we need from the cradles and mounts we will use. Strength and stability are always important. If we wish the binding to be visible, we will use a Perspex® mount as this is strong enough to provide sufficient support but is also transparent allowing the binding to be seen. Where viewing the binding is not considered important, we use cradles made from archival quality board. In light of recent research into the use of certain adhesives, we revisited our existing mounting methods and got creative with the mounts for the Dickens exhibition. The new cradles are entirely non-adhesive and made of pieces of archival box board which slot together. This means that the cradles can be relatively quickly constructed because there is no need to wait for glue to dry. While they form a strong support when assembled, they can easily be dismantled into their five component parts for economical storage. Being made of board, they can also be recycled.

This is just one aspect of the work that goes into creating an exhibition. Next time you visit the gallery you might wish to take a moment to look at the mounts as well as the objects on display.

Brannah Mackenzie
Rare Book Acquisitions Supported by the Friends

**Rare Prussian editions of Walter Scott**

In September 2015, an award of £500 enabled the purchase of two extremely rare items for the University’s Bernard C Lloyd Walter Scott Collection. They are translations into German by F. W. Moser of two of Scott’s poems, respectively *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (as *Der letzte Minstrel*) and *Rokeby* (as *Redmund und Mathilda oder der Verrath*). Both books were printed by J. T. J. Sonntags Buchhandlung in Merseburg, then in Prussia, in 1823. According to Professor Alison Lumsden, Chair in English and Co-Director of the University’s Walter Scott Research Centre, Mr Lloyd’s collection is recognised as being ‘one of the finest collections of print material relating to Scott anywhere in the world’. The purchase of these volumes has helped us address an important gap in coverage of first editions of Scott’s work in languages other than English.

**Book owned by Dr James Cargill (1565-c.1616), Aberdonian botanist and physician**

The Friends have also met the purchase cost of €1,350 for a sixteenth-century duodecimo with Aberdeen connections, from a vendor in the Netherlands. The book was printed in France and consists of classic early medical works: an edition of Hippocrates’ *Aphorismi* et al (1530), bound with Galen’s *Hippocratis Coi De natura humana liber* (1534). The Library does not have a copy of either of these particular editions. However, the book is really distinguished for the University by virtue of its provenance. It was owned by the early and eminent Aberdonian botanist, James Cargill, a physician thought to have studied medicine at Marischal College prior to further studies in anatomy and botany at Basel, Switzerland, under the eminent botanist, Casper Bauhin. Dr Cargill was also a prominent local benefactor: in his will, he bequeathed funds to the magistrates and council of Aberdeen for the maintenance of four poor scholars, and left additional legacies to the city’s grammar school and hospital.

The Library presently holds only a handful of volumes formerly owned by Dr Cargill. Acquisition of this item enhances our already strong holdings of early scientific and medical books, and meets our collecting policy criteria with respect to reconstituting, so far as this may be possible, the libraries of individuals who have played a significant role in the University’s past.

Keith O’Sullivan
In 2014 a new awards scheme was launched to enable scholars from across the globe to access the University of Aberdeen’s rich archives and rare books collections. The awards are funded by a collaboration between the Aberdeen Humanities Fund, the Friends of Aberdeen University Library and the Special Collections Centre. The 2015 awards were also supported in part by the gift of Henry Doss and Chris Arvidson.

The three recipients of the awards in 2015 concluded their visits. Here we are presenting their reports upon completing their projects in Aberdeen.

‘Evenings Out in Urban Scotland, c.1870-c.1940’

by Dr Jane McDermid

(University of Southampton)

This project examines urban associational activities during the period roughly equivalent to the first two watches (6.00pm-12.00am) of Peter Baldwin’s *In the Watches of the Night: Life in the Nocturnal City, 1820-1930* (2012). The project assesses over seven decades why in the four main cities of, and a sample of towns across, Scotland the sexes and social classes met publicly either together or separately; whether the notion of the city as a theatre of social action is also applicable to smaller towns; and how local, national and imperial identities were projected.

I made two visits of one week each in October and in December 2015. I sampled a variety of records including education (especially for evening classes and women’s guilds), trade unions, societies and associations (religious, philosophical, horticultural, mutual improvement, women’s) and clubs (sports and field). I also consulted the local collection of publications related to Aberdeen life, including histories of education, cinema and theatre.

My work so far has confirmed the importance of local concerns and elites for civic life, but also revealed ‘outside’
influences, notably cultural and artistic with visiting musical and theatrical performers and companies from other parts of Scotland and from England, notably London.

Most of the associations whose papers I read were predominantly male, while the role (if any) women played conformed to the traditionally supportive ones of providing and serving the refreshments and arranging the flowers and other decorations at annual general meetings and soirees.

Nevertheless, they viewed their contribution as significant, with the votes of thanks suggesting that the men saw such domestic activities as essential for the harmony of the organisation, part of the glue holding associational life together.

Given the involvement of women in the civic life of Aberdeen, this is an area I want to pursue further to assess how, why and to what extent gender roles changed over the period, and how porous the boundaries between the domestic and the public spheres were. Most of these associations were middle class while those which were, or were directed at, the working class – men and women but usually separately – often had middle-class input (e.g. through philanthropy and the churches). One theme I hope to develop is the mingling of the classes in social spaces, and not simply sites of leisure such as music halls.

Not all the records I consulted covered the whole of my period of 1870-1940, but those which did suggest a widening of public engagement between classes and between women and men through local charitable as well as leisure and political activities. I aim to build on this to examine the image which the leading inhabitants of Aberdeen wanted to project, how they set about achieving it and what the popular response was, thus also complicating the notion of ‘social control’ of public spaces.

Only a few of the records consulted so far gave more than a glimpse of the international connections of the city, but they did show some of the city’s influence on civic life in the region, notably through education, sport, and women’s guilds, which will help me examine how gendered associational activities were and whether that changed over the period.

Two other areas which I would like to explore are political societies and activities, and the Scottish Catholic Archives for the Church’s work in Aberdeen.

My work on Aberdeen forms part of a larger book project which I hope to publish in 2017. I wish to thank the staff in Special Collections for their professional support during my visits.
I began my research at Aberdeen with a series of questions about library formation at the Royal Scots College (RSC), Valladolid, in the late eighteenth century, as informed by studies of Anglo-Spanish cultural transfer in the period. Thus, while my primary focus was on the movement of books, both as an organised activity of the clandestine Scottish Catholic hierarchy and as a private activity reliant on individual agency to convey print to friends or relatives (or, indeed, for private use), I was equally interested in the uses to which English-language print was put once housed at a culturally Scottish but politically Spanish institution. Did it produce translations? Did it attract Spanish readers from the University of Valladolid or the local Spanish Catholic hierarchy? Did the Spanish king's ministers who had contributed to the Scots College's rebooting and rebranding call upon John Geddes or later rectors for expertise?

Ancillary questions had more to do with cultural transfer as a circuit: what would the Scots College, its former students and staff, send back to Scotland and carry into the Scottish diaspora of their experience of Spanish book culture?

Accordingly, my use of the collections at Aberdeen centred on RSC students’ and staff’s correspondence from the time John Geddes was charged with a mission to Spain in the wake of the expulsion of the Spanish Jesuits until the disruption of College life by the outbreak of the Peninsular War in 1808, a period of forty years. I devoted less time to calling up early modern and eighteenth-century Spanish works in Aberdeen collections, particularly where the records indicated Blairs College or its immediate antecedents as provenance, to check for inscriptions and marginalia.
The holdings at Aberdeen proved to be particularly rich – nearly unparalleled, in fact – for the history of English as a language of culture in old regime Spain. Together with the archives at the RSC (now of Salamanca) and the old-stock library there, they should form the basis of a unique narrative case study of both library formation and cultural transfer in every sense – language acquisition and foreign-language reading habits, cross-linguistic sociabilities, translation, diasporic readerships, and cross-cultural print culture.

They also point to larger issues of cultural history, such as the robustness of cosmopolitanism relative to the waxing or waning of religious or national identity.

My preliminary findings were shared with an audience at York University in Toronto in October 2015 in a lecture titled ‘Cosmopolitans and their Books in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World’. Furthermore, I’m planning to publish a number of papers based on my research in the collections at Aberdeen.

Wolfson Reading Room in the Special Collections Centre
I am extremely grateful to the Special Collections Centre library and academic staff who selected my proposal for this award.

My research addresses the relationship between mind, place and ecology in the works of Lewis Grassic Gibbon (James Leslie Mitchell) and Nan Shepherd. I am examining these authors’ depictions of the lives of individuals in rural communities in the North East, in the context of Scottish modernist literary activity and in light of current scholarly approaches in the health humanities and environmental humanities.

In the wider book-length project in which this research is involved, interdisciplinary research angles will enable me to extend recent work on the ‘ecological tradition’ in Scottish literature, and to describe more precisely how Shepherd’s and Grassic Gibbon’s innovative representations of lived experience was connected to changing understandings of the organisation of the mind and human-nature relations in Scottish literature during the 1920s to 1950s.

The Visiting Scholars Award has been of tremendous value. It has provided access to precious and vital archives, and a serene and supportive environment in which to focus on research. I have been able to access the correspondence, non-literary writing and personal papers of Shepherd and Grassic Gibbon, which include Gibbon’s high-spirited letters to Jean Baxter, essays by Shepherd published in the Aberdeen University Review, and correspondence between Agnes Mure Mackenzie and Shepherd, which includes Mackenzie’s reflections on Shepherd’s draft manuscripts of The Quarry Wood.
The correspondence reveals a mutual relationship of intellectual, professional and emotional support between Mackenzie and Shepherd, and has suggested new directions for my research into literary communities and the publishing history of women’s writing in the early twentieth century.

Wider archival research into the work of contemporary Scottish writers, including Hugh MacDiarmid and Neil Gunn, has contributed enormously to my task of establishing the intellectual context for Shepherd’s and Grassic Gibbon’s writing, in particular their engagement with environmental affairs and Scottish Literary Renaissance culture.

Research conducted as a Visiting Scholar will contribute to three planned publications. Firstly, an article for the *Journal of Medical Humanities* concerning environmental therapies and Scottish interwar fiction (in press); secondly, an article on Nan Shepherd focused on self and environment, which I aim to complete this year. Finally, this research will contribute to a book-length research project bringing environmental humanities perspectives to the study of British literature and rural culture, beginning in the interwar years.

It has been a great assistance, honour and pleasure to be able to conduct research as a Visiting Scholar. It was particularly enriching to be in Aberdeen itself, as it is the university that Shepherd attended and that she portrayed from the perspective of a young female student in *The Quarry Wood*. I benefitted enormously from the opportunity to discuss my research with experts at the university, in particular Professor Alison Lumsden, who has published on Shepherd’s work and has taught *The Quarry Wood* for many years, and Siobhán Convery, Head of Special Collections, who shared insights into Gibbon’s writing and reflections on contemporary interpretations of his work. The librarians have been of incomparable assistance in searching for hard-to-find documents and helping me negotiate the extensive archives. I only wish I could have stayed longer.
Special Collections Centre Visiting Scholar Awards 2016
The three recipients of the awards in 2016 are Elizabeth Edwards, Emeritus Professor of Photographic History, De Montfort University, Leicester (UK); Dr Helge Wendt, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin (Germany); and Dr Matteo Binasco, CUSHWA Center, University of Notre Dame, Rome (Italy).

‘Photographs, Sites, Monuments: The Emergence of Public Histories 1850-1950’
by Elizabeth Edwards

Elizabeth Edwards is a visual and historical anthropologist, Emeritus Professor of Photographic History, De Montfort University, Leicester, and Emeritus Curator, Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford. She was elected Fellow of the British Academy in 2015. She works on the relationships between photography, history and anthropology, on their social and material practices, and on photography and institutions. She directed the PhotoCLEC project on photography, museums and colonial memory in contemporary Europe. Her most recent monograph is *The Camera as Historian: Amateur Photographers and Historical Imagination 1885–1912* (2012). She is currently working on further aspects of the relationship between photography and history and on photography and the emergence of ideas of ‘public heritage’ 1850-1950.

Her time in Aberdeen will be spent on this latter project, working especially in the archives of Aberdeen photographer, George Washington Wilson. Wilson was one of the major players in the nineteenth-century ‘views trade’. Producing photographs especially for the tourist market, and in formats suitable for home albums, his firm’s photographs of views, abbeys and cathedrals became very widely disseminated and were an integral part of an increasingly visualised sense of the past in the late nineteenth century.
‘Coal in the Scottish Enlightenment: Contributions to a History of Science’ by Helge Wendt

In the second half of the eighteenth century, coal was a subject which was written about regularly. In French, German, Spanish and Italian publications, coal was discussed from various perspectives such as that of geology, chemistry, utility in production processes, mining and medicine. British publications on coal ranged from mining handbooks, early works on geology, economy and chemistry to treatises concerning social and environmental issues.

In the history of science, there is a proliferation of writings dealing with the new mathematics, medicine and the economy of the Scottish Enlightenment. Coal, the most important resource to enable the industrialisation and economic development of the nineteenth century and the global expansion of the British Empire, has received much less attention. This could be one of the reasons why the writings on black coal of the Aberdonian physician David Skene are still largely unknown, in contrast to his medical, ‘psychological’, religious and botanical works.

During my stay at the Special Collections Centre of the University of Aberdeen, I wish to research several geological studies of David Skene, which, among other themes, also deal with black coal. Skene, who was in contact with Europe’s leading natural scientists, was an important figure in the development of the Aberdonian economy. My research aims to bring to light the knowledge Skene had on the various issues related to coal in the fields of geology, chemistry and the environment, on its use in industrial production and the effects it had on human health.

The research forms part of a research project on coal as a matter of history of science (1750-1850) which investigates the development of knowledge about coal in different scientific disciplines and institutional contexts in West European countries (France, the German states, the British Isles and Spain) and their colonial empires. The results of this project will be presented in a book publication and several articles published in scientific journals.
After completing his BA in history at the University of Genoa, Matteo Binasco earned his Master’s degree at Saint Mary’s University of Halifax, Canada. He completed his PhD in history at the National University of Ireland in Galway. From 2010 to 2013 he was a research fellow at the Instituto di Storia dell’Europa Mediterranea of Italy’s National Research Council. Since September 2014 he has been a post-doctoral research fellow at the CUSHWA Center for the Study of American Catholicism at the Rome Global Gateway, University of Notre Dame. His main area of interest is the development of the clerical networks within the Atlantic area during the early modern period. He has authored Viaggiatori e missionari nel seicento, edited Little Do We Know and published twenty-nine articles and essays. The Visiting Scholar award will enable Binasco to examine the records pertaining to the Scots College of Rome held in the Scottish Catholic Archives at the Special Collections Centre. His research will focus on the material relating to William Lesley, the procurator of the Scots clergy in Rome and the first official archivist of the Sacred Congregation ‘de Propaganda Fide’.

The King’s College Archive Project: An Update

The King’s College Archive Project is now at the mid-way point and progressing well. The project aims to make available online a comprehensive catalogue to promote the accessibility of the collection to researchers. The project has been generously supported by the Friends of Aberdeen University Library and project archivist, Mary Sabiston, has the following update:

The project so far …

One of the first tasks of the project was to create a user-friendly catalogue structure which would enable researchers to find what they are looking for effectively. After the catalogue structure was finalised, the next stage was to create comprehensive catalogue records for all the documents.
Cataloguing this collection has proved challenging due to the varied nature and age of the material. A single box of documents can contain documents dating from 1630 to 1763 and subject matter ranging from a licence to eat fish during Lent to an agreement with a craftsman to repair the college clock. Over 20 boxes of this type of material, previously described with only a general title, have now been individually listed to over 260 sub-folders. The resulting catalogue has revealed some wonderful documents for future researchers.

College travelled to King’s College to ‘reclaim’ a student who had transferred to the rival college. The students were armed with dirks, cudgels, clubs, batons, iron pykes and pistols. The result of the incident was a large amount of vandalism and injuries to students and innocent bystanders alike. One of the items found is a list of injuries incurred, which include fractured ribs and skulls. A similar demonstration of disobedience amongst the students is a small page of anonymous notes, titled ‘Description of the useless, needless, heidless, defective, elective masters of the K college of Abd, 1709’. This is a single folio of rhymes, which are not complimentary to the masters. One of the verses reads:

‘From a new made regent it is not too handy,  
And can drink som wine but little of brandy,  
But if he live long he’l be more cannie,  
And learn from Bower that little wise mannie.’

These fascinating documents are accompanied by the more technical legal and financial documents, making this a rich collection of material for a wide range of researchers to utilise. By the completion of the project all documents will have descriptive catalogue entries, which researchers will be able to search within our online catalogue, available at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/search-catalogues/

Mary Sabiston
Parts of the collections of NHS Grampian Archives are now held in the Special Collections Centre within the Sir Duncan Rice Library. The collections were moved from their previous home at Woolmanhill Hospital and can now be accessed via the Wolfson Reading Room.

The history of hospital provision in the Grampian area is complex and doesn't really begin expanding until the latter half of the nineteenth century. When Dr Gray's hospital in Elgin opened in 1819 it was only the third hospital in the Grampian area, following Aberdeen Infirmary and Aberdeen Asylum. The nineteenth century saw many changes, including the expansion of healthcare provision. Hospitals were opened in Banff, Stonehaven and Fraserburgh while Aberdeen saw the opening of dedicated hospitals such as the Aberdeen Hospital for the Relief of Persons Labouring under Incurable Diseases, Aberdeen Sick Children's Hospital and Aberdeen City Hospital.

The Archives' records provide a fascinating insight into the way hospitals were run and of the patients themselves.

NHS Grampian Archives hold records dating back to 1739 when Aberdeen Infirmary was founded. This is one of the most complete archival collections of an NHS body in the UK. The records tell us about the development of health provision in the North East of Scotland and the various different aspects which eventually fell under the control of the NHS following its creation in 1948.

The patient records for Aberdeen Infirmary for the nineteenth century were mostly pulped during World War II, but there are surviving journals for the latter part of the eighteenth century which provide excellent information on the diagnosis and treatment of various illnesses. This includes William Castell, a 17-year-old from Fyvie who was admitted in August 1752 following severe pain in his knee after spraining
it a few months previously. Following consultation, it was decided that the best course of treatment was amputation of his leg above the knee, which was then carried out. The operation was initially successful and William was recovering well but fell ill in May of 1753 having been in hospital the whole time. It was noted that there was a ‘fluctuating mass’ which was causing him some pain and while it’s not entirely clear what was actually wrong, William unfortunately died in hospital on 14 June 1753.

Also included in the collection are some excellent photographs of the various hospitals across the Grampian area as well as maps and plans. The records can be searched on the University of Aberdeen’s online catalogue, although please note that images of the documents themselves are not available. If you see anything which you might wish to access, please don’t hesitate to get in touch by emailing grampian.archives@nhs.net

Fiona Musk

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**The Land Endures: Bringing Sunset Song to Life**

A new student-curated exhibition that explores the local heritage of North East Scotland through Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s novel *Sunset Song*.

A new exhibition curated by this year’s Museum Studies students at the University of Aberdeen’s King’s Museum explores the local heritage of North East Scotland through interpretation of themes highlighted in Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*.

*The Land Endures: Bringing Sunset Song to Life* follows the stories of the main characters of Lewis Grassic Gibbon’s iconic novel and explores realities of early twentieth-century North East Scotland.

Objects from the University of Aberdeen Museums collections are used to link the fictional Kinraddie with historic North East Scotland and musical compositions by local artist Paul Anderson enhance the atmosphere, bringing *Sunset Song* to life.
Friends of Aberdeen University Library Events 2016-17

Join us for the Friends' Events 2016-17. Our free evening talks are open to all and are held in the Special Collections Seminar Room, Lower Ground Floor at the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

Thursday 27 October 2016, 6pm
Professor Jane Geddes, The Aberdeen Bestiary: Made in Bridlington?
The new Aberdeen Bestiary website, with images of startling clarity, prompts a new enquiry into the source of the manuscript. Can tiny clues within the book point towards its place of production? Why suggest Bridlington Priory?
This lecture examines shreds of evidence within the manuscript, and the overwhelming interest in bestiary lore and making books at Bridlington.

Thursday 19 January 2017, 6pm
Mary Sabiston, King’s College Archives Project: A Tale of the Devoted, Distinguished and Sometimes Disreputable Scholars of the King’s College of Aberdeen
Sharing the results of a year-long project cataloguing and working with the King’s College Archives, this talk will focus on the rich and diverse lives of the scholars of King’s College – from the student riots of the seventeenth century to the politer battles of university politics. It’s all in the Archives.

Thursday 27 April 2017, 6.30pm
Professor Patience Schell, The Life and Travels of the Intrepid Maria Graham
This talk examines the life of Maria Graham (1785-1842), a travel writer, editor, historian and naturalist, whose journeys took her from Enlightenment Edinburgh to India and Dundee to the emperor’s court in Rio, experiences which she vividly depicted through her books, her art and her correspondence.
The 52nd Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Aberdeen University Library was held on Thursday 26 May. At the meeting, we reviewed the activities of the Friends throughout the year, including our substantial support of the King’s College Archives project and the ongoing success of the Special Collections Centre Visiting Scholar scheme. We also heard the Treasurer’s Report, which noted that the Friends’ finances remain in good health.

Two of our committee members, Graeme Nicol and Phil Astley have decided to step down from their roles. I would like to thank them for their services to the Friends over recent years. The meeting elected two new committee members, Andrew Dilley of the University of Aberdeen Department of History and Fiona Clark, Library and Information Services Manager at Aberdeen City Council. We look forward to working with them. I am also very grateful to the other members of the committee for the work that they give to the Friends. Please join us for next year’s AGM on Thursday 27 April 2017 at 6pm in the Special Collections Seminar Room at the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

Professor Hazel Hutchison
Chair of Friends of Aberdeen University Library
Remembering W.H.F. (Bill) Nicolaisen (1927-2016)

In February this year Professor W.F.H. (Bill) Nicolaisen passed away. He was a distinguished scholar in folklore, place names and contemporary urban legends, and an Honorary Research Professor at the University of Aberdeen from 1992 on. In 2006 he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor Honoris Causa (DHC) from the University.

A graduate of the Universities of Tuebingen and Glasgow, Bill’s academic career began in 1951. He served on the faculties of universities in Scotland, Ireland, Denmark and the US, and ‘retired’ as a Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English and Folklore in 1992.

Bill was one of the most respected and popular scholars working in onomastics, the study of proper names of all kinds and the origins of names. He is the author of several works on Scottish place names. In addition to these books, he published more than 600 articles and reviews.

From 1996 to 2008 Bill was a stalwart member of the Friends’ Executive Committee. He is remembered for his perceptive and constructive contributions to the Committee’s meetings and discussions during those years.

Follow the latest news of the Friends of Aberdeen University Library on the Facebook page of the Sir Duncan Rice Library.

www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/friends-of-the-library/