



As you may remember, with Christine Miller's retiral and thus resignation as Editor of the *Newsletter*, the Friends are now only able to produce this reduced content *News*.

With this issue you should find the brochure for this season's lectures at Marischal Museum – most Tuesdays at 7.30 pm; all are welcome. There's also a flyer for Colin McLaren's new book, *Aberdeen Students 1600-1800*; see also p2.

As Friends you are entitled to 10% off George Washington Wilson items from Queen Mother Library CopyShop – we hope to have a selection of these available at our November meeting.



Reception at Chanonry Lodge, Old Aberdeen on 20 June by kind invitation of the Principal

More than 50 Friends and their guests took up Professor C Duncan Rice's invitation to a reception at Chanonry Lodge on a sunny June afternoon.

The setting provided an ideal venue for a relaxed mingling of Friends old and new, leavened by refreshments, and with addresses from the Principal, from Professor Chris Gane, Vice-Principal with responsibility for library and information services within the University, and from our Chairman, Roy Thomson.

It was the occasion for a reminder to us all of the value and importance to both current and former staff and students of how much so many of us owe to the opportunity of such easy access to the extensive and many unique resources which the University has within its Library. You will all know of the Principal's current campaign to provide information facilities and services worthy of the centuries of standing to which the University is heir and his desire to have suitable buildings for this within the next few years.

The Friends will be making an important contribution to the Principal's request for assistance, primarily from the very handsome bequest to the Friends in 1998 from Lewella Keith, wife of the late Alexander Keith. However, Roy Thomson was also able to announce that we have this year received another most generous bequest from Fred Murray, a former member of staff, and we are now able to double our financial contribution to £200,000, with the assurance that there are guarantees from the University and appropriate acknowledgement of the Friends' contribution. We shall, of course, always retain enough funds to carry on the work we have been able to do in the last few years.

We are immensely proud to be able to contribute in this way to the University's ambitious and exciting plans, which demonstrate its future commitment to the Library. Those of you who have been Friends for any length of time will know that this project has been in the pipeline for quite some time and we are all highly encouraged to see that it should come to fruition over the next few years.

We were especially delighted to have with us at the Principal's Reception one of Fred Murray's cousins and to be able to add several more members as a result of the evening. Thank you all for your support – and other Friends for their longstanding interest. We extend a very warm welcome to you all. Do join us at our other events when you can and make yourselves known to the Committee.

Many thanks indeed to the Principal from us all for once again inviting the Friends into his charming home for such a pleasant occasion.

FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

Date for your Diary

THE FRIENDS OF
ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Autumn / Winter Meeting

*Queen Mother Library
Seminar Room*

Aberdeen University Library
Bedford Road, Aberdeen

Thursday 17 November

7.00 pm

an illustrated talk :

**The Black Paintings in the
University's Elphinstone
Hall Collection**

by

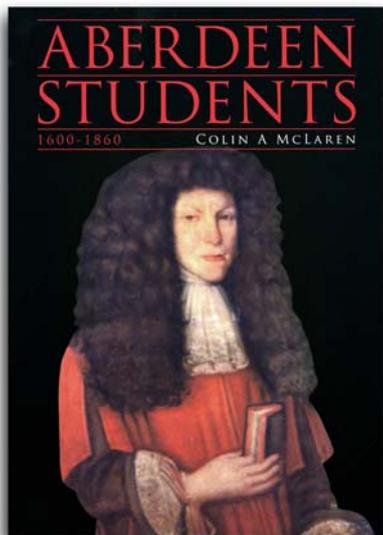
**Dr Mary Pryor
Honorary Teaching Fellow,
Department of History of
Art**

All Welcome

*Light Refreshments will be
served after the meeting*

***Please remember to bring
your barcoded Library ticket
with you to gain access to
QML***

**Launch of
Aberdeen Students
1600-1860
by Colin A McLaren**



Some of you may have noticed in the press reviews of Colin A McLaren's latest work, the concluding volume in the *Quincentennial Studies in the history of the University of Aberdeen* series.

Colin McLaren was, of course, Archivist and latterly Librarian for the University until his early retirement in 1999. While at Aberdeen he produced an impressive array of publications relating to the history of the University, including, of course, the very readable *Crown and Gown 1495-1995: an illustrated history of the University of Aberdeen*, written in conjunction with Dr Jennifer J Carter in 1994 (£6.95).

Colin dedicates his volume to: '... colleagues, past and present, who have cared for the special collections, manuscripts and archives of the University of Aberdeen'. The University's new *Aberdeen Magazine* reviews it as, '... a fascinating book, full of sharp and memorable detail', as anyone who knows Colin or his work would expect.

Few studies of student life before the mid-19th century offer more than an occasional glimpse of what it was like to be an undergraduate student. Colin's book illuminates the daily life for students at the Universities of

Aberdeen between 1600 and 1680. We see how they were taught and how they learned, how they worshipped, how they relaxed, how they behaved in and outside the classrooms, where they came from and what they did afterwards. Drawing in detail on the careers of 127 students, the book is augmented by several hundred counted heads. Based on many years of work in the University's archives, it is enriched by a wide range of other sources.

The journal *Scottish Economic and Social History* has commented that, 'Aberdeen University is certainly one of the best-served universities as regards published histories' and Colin's input has been a major contribution to this over many decades, culminating in his latest work.

We very much hope that at our next Friends' meeting, in the Spring, Colin or Dr Carter, will be able to introduce the work to us. Friends have the opportunity to buy the book at the special offer price of £10.95 (normally £12.95).

McLaren, Colin A. *Aberdeen Students 1600-1860*
Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen,
2005 ISBN 1 85752 300 8 (pbk)

Available from: Booksales,
University of Aberdeen,
Queen Mother Library,
Meston Walk, Aberdeen, AB24 3UE
£12.95 + p&p
m.craig@abdn.ac.uk
or at our November meeting.

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Directorate News

At the end of June 2005 Graham Pryor, Director of Information Systems and Services for the University of Aberdeen decided to take early retirement. He announced his decision in the following message to Directorate staff,

"The approaching end of another academic year is an appropriate time to reflect on what has been achieved and what might be one's best new goals for the future. Having gone through such a

process of reflection I have decided to take early retirement in order to seek out new and different challenges.

After almost nine years of existence, the Directorate has both witnessed and been the agent of many changes. I find it extremely satisfying to be departing at a time coincidental with the Enhancement Led Institutional Review, which last month identified the Directorate's integrated approach to learning support services as a key facilitator of the University's supportive environment."

We wish Graham well for the future and thank him for all that he has done since library and computing services were brought together to form the Directorate nine years ago.



Library Moves

In June 2005 the Education Library at Hilton Campus closed and Library staff on both sites had a busy few weeks in the run up to and following the closure.

There have been major moves of stock within Queen Mother Library to accommodate everything. Hilton's Teaching Resource Centre material is now on Floor 1 (with 'TRC' given as the location in the catalogue). Collections of former Education Library material can be found with the appropriate subject collections in Queen Mother Library. Some less-used material is in an off-campus store in Aberdeen, but can be requested for collection in the same way as is material held in King's Stack.

As well as physically moving thousands of items much work has also been done in updating catalogue records and shelving guides to reflect the new locations.

Staff from the Education Library are now integrated with other University Library staff, contributing their expertise in Queen Mother, Taylor and Medical Libraries.

A Brief History of a vast Collection: the University's Archives and Manuscripts

This year's AGM, held on 9 June, was followed by an illustrated talk by **Siobhán Convery**, Senior Curator in Historic Collections, on some of the material in the University's Historic Collections.

The venue was moved from the usual one of the Seminar Room at Queen Mother Library to the Old Senate Room on the opposite side of Old Aberdeen's High Street. The proximity of the Old Senate Room to the Historic Collections building allowed easy and secure access for the priceless and irreplaceable items on display, but the move also proved to be a blessing in disguise.

Such is Siobhán's deserved reputation that more than 60 members and friends attended. There would not have been room for all of these in the Seminar Room but we should like to apologise to those Friends who dutifully followed the instructions which gave the Seminar Room as the venue.

We were rewarded by a fascinating and instructive evening.

Siobhán opened her talk by indicating that she could only hope to give a broadbrush sketch of over two kilometres of manuscript holdings in the Collections and the evening's

review must use an even broader brush!

Aberdeen University is one of only five institutions of Higher Education in the English-speaking world to have experienced fully the period from the Renaissance through to the Enlightenment. This is reflected by a fine collection of medieval and modern manuscripts, outstanding 17th-19th century collections relating to science, medicine, Scottish Enlightenment philosophy, and Jacobitism, as well as an important collection of oriental manuscripts, papyri, and ostraca.



The material has been acquired by gift, deposit and purchase since the University's Foundation in 1495. The tradition of gifts was established by Bishop Elphinstone, by the first Principal Hector Boece, and by the early grammarian and friend of

Erasmus, John Vaus. Special Collections has over thirty books identified as having come from Elphinstone's own library, many with autograph inscriptions and bearing corroboratory notes in Boece's own distinctive hand.

It has been estimated that almost a quarter of a million manuscript and archive items relating to the history and culture of North-East Scotland are in the Collections, and Siobhán split these into three major categories.

These were, firstly, the institutional records of the University from the original Senatus books and charters of 1495 to the present day. Secondly, papers of, or relating to, members of the Colleges or the University such as the Burnett Psalter, the Aberdeen Bestiary, lectures by William MacGillivray, and writings of the Scottish philosopher, Thomas Reid. Thirdly, family, estate and business records including those of 100 prominent North East families, papers relating to the Trades Union movement and local companies such as Culter Paper Mills, John Fyffe, Granite Merchant, and Aberdeen Journals.

These collections are available to the public to consult in the Reading Room. Siobhán emphasised that she wants to bring the Collections to new audiences, by offering seminars within the University, by workshops for children and by electronic access.



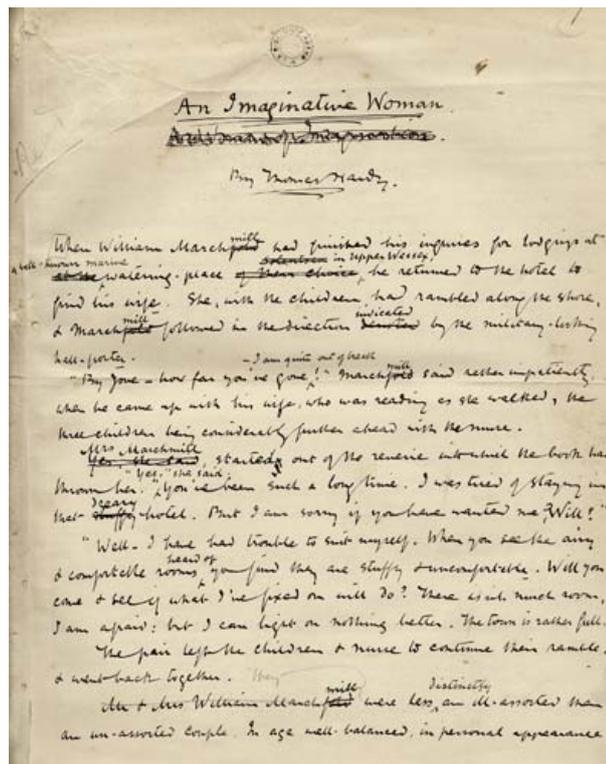
Siobhán then took us on a fascinating guided tour of the items on display on tables round the Senate Room. These included:

- * An inventory of College property in 1542 and the Foundation Book of 1514 which stipulates where students should board, when they should get up, say prayers, return at night, how they should dress, the arms they could carry and the punishments they might expect if they broke the rules!
- * Lecture notes from a Morayshire student studying at Louvain in 1467, with some delightful illustrations.



- * A book of early 15th century medical prescriptions, in English and Scots, recommending 'leek juice' for nosebleeds, remedies for snake bites, toothache, yellow or black teeth and bad breath!
- * An exquisite tiny book written about 1600 by a Huguenot woman, Esther Inglis, an accomplished calligrapher, poet and miniaturist, with different specimen hands on each page.

- * The manuscript of Thomas Hardy's *An Imaginative Woman* presented by the author in 1911. He had received an LLD in 1905 and wished the University to have something of his original writings.



- * From the papers of William Shand (1776-1845) of the Burn, Fettercairn, a list detailing the names, occupations and conditions of the slaves on the estate of Kellits in Jamaica in 1818.
- * The Minute Book of Aberdeen Philosophical Society (1758-1773).
- * A Hebrew Bible dating from 1493/94.



The talk and display were so interesting that most of the audience were reluctant to leave and the staff had to encourage them to go at the end of the evening.

At the beginning of her paper Siobhán said that she very much hoped that this would be the first of a number of talks to the Friends on the Collections. So interesting and informative was the evening that we look forward to hearing her again in the not too distant future.

PS Since her talk, Siobhán has added to her own 'Special Collection' with the birth of her son, Luca Benedict!
Congratulations!

Graham Hunter



Donations from James Frederick Murray and John I Mitchell

Fred Murray

We were saddened to hear last October of the death of James Frederick Murray (Fred).

Fred was a graduate of the University of Aberdeen (M.A., 1969). He had been a valuable member of the Library since 1977, when he came to us after a period of teaching in Edinburgh.

He joined the staff as one of several taken on as part of the national 'Job Creation Project'. With the extra hands available we were able to prepare the million plus items in the Library for the electronic system we planned to introduce. This would both reduce thefts and provide simpler access to information about and circulation of each item. Previously we had had no means of identifying every individual item – shelfmarks were not unique to each book in the catalogue; adding a barcode to each revolutionised many aspects of stock control and circulation.

Fred was the main contributor to this mammoth project and, of course, barcodes are still vital to our system today.

After completing this task Fred was kept on the staff in the Processing Department before transferring to the Cataloguing Department, later the Bibliographic Processing Unit. Here he was responsible for the acquisition and processing of the scores of Aberdeen University theses which come to the Library from our postgraduate students every year. An intrinsic part of this work was liaison with academic departments and with the British Library regarding microfilming of each thesis for their central lending store.

Fred gave dedicated service to an often unheralded backroom area of the Library until his early retirement

in 2001. He was very much an individual and we all missed his unique contribution to library life.

Fred had been a member of the Friends since coming to the Library but the most generous bequest of his estate for the Library came as a complete surprise. We were thus particularly pleased that one of his cousins was able to join us at the Principal's reception and feel sure that using much of his unexpected donation for the new Library building is appropriate to remember and thank Fred.

John I Mitchell

A donation at a happier point in life came to us earlier this year from John I Mitchell, of Penn, High Wycombe. He graduated from Aberdeen with an MA Hons in 1958 and had a career as an English teacher in Cornwall and High Wycombe until his retirement in 1972. He has been a life member of the Friends since 1993.

His gesture is very much appreciated and it is particularly gratifying that we can thank him publicly while he is still very much alive and well. His letter, from which we quote, expresses his feelings.

"I have been redrawing my will, and decided to give some bequests before my earthly dissolution, as a kindness to my executors.

I am grateful to the University for four mostly happy years, and especially to the privileges we used to get at the Library. No coffee bar, of course, but we could go next door to the Elphinstone. What we did have ... is a seat of our own in the final honours year, free access to the collections, including the Stack. I read many of my 18th Century literature works in 18th Century editions.

I am hopeful that the Library will continue to flourish ...".

Mike Smethurst Appeal

Friends may be interested to know details of the British Library's appeal in memory of Mike Smethurst, University Librarian at Aberdeen 1992-86. Our own tributes were paid to him in the previous two issues of the Friends' newsletter.

With the approval of the British Library, and of Mary Smethurst and her family, it has been decided to launch an appeal to raise money to honour Mike's contribution to librarianship in general and to the British Library in particular.

The money raised will be used to buy an art work for the British Library's new building. This is considered particularly appropriate because of Mike's association with gearing up services to move into the building and his role in making sure it was delivered. It was an abiding regret of Mike's that money designated for art was cut from the project's budgets in the drive to reduce costs.

Mike's career covered many sectors of librarianship and his international vision, particularly the foundation of the Consortium of European Research Libraries, brought him into contact with librarians from many countries both in Europe and in North America.

It is intended to keep the costs of fund raising to a minimum. Cheques should be made out in dollars, euros or sterling, payable to The British Library (Smethurst Fund) and sent to The Development Office, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB.

The appeal closes at the end of the year.

*Mike Crump, Appeal Co-ordinator,
British Library*

Thanks to you ...

Walter Scott, *Redgauntlet*. 3 vols. 1824.

Corrected second proofs of the first edition of *Redgauntlet*, with revisions mostly in the hand of James Ballantyne, who was Scott's close friend, associate and printer.

Early this year, we were presented with the nigh on unrepeatable opportunity to purchase this significant set of proofs, which make an important contribution to our understanding of the transmission of, and emendations to, the text of this novel, from manuscript to final published form.

As colleagues in Historic Collections wrote in their request to to the Friends' Executive Committee:

"For any scholar following the transmission of a text from manuscript to published form, material of this kind is both rare and hugely important and it is quite possible that this pre-publication copy is unique.

In this instance, the item has particular significance, in that its acquisition would strengthen and enhance our Bernard Lloyd Walter Scott Collection (which the University has chosen to promote in a recent issue of its new *Aberdeen Magazine*) and would provide a further significant research tool for work being undertaken on Scott and his writings in our Department of English.

We liaised closely with Professor David Hewitt and Dr Alison Lumsden, of the English Department, who were understandably very interested in acquiring the proofs for Aberdeen's collections, and we arranged for the set to be sent up to Aberdeen for closer examination and assessment." Members of the Friends Executive were also given opportunity to view the material.

Our negotiations with the sellers, Bernard Quaritch Ltd, antiquarian booksellers, were completed in spring this year, and the volumes bought for a total price of £6,750.

Friends may remember that at our meeting in November '03 David Hewitt, Professor of Scottish Literature at Aberdeen and Editor-in-Chief of the Edinburgh edition of Scott's Waverley novels, gave a most absorbing introduction to the Collection, which the University had just purchased.

Total cost of *Redgauntlet*: £6,750

This has been raised from the following sources:

National Fund for Acquisitions: £2,500

Friends of Aberdeen University Library: £2,000

A private individual, via the University's Development Trust: £1,538

Historic Collections: £712.

Reminder ... Friends on the Web



<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/friends>

Friends of Aberdeen University Library

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Mr Jack Webster

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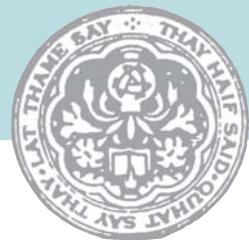
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QML, Taylor and the Medical Library

Monday - Saturday 9.00 am - 10.00 pm
(all close at 8.00pm on Fridays)
Sunday 11.00 am - 10.00 pm

Special Libraries

Monday - Friday 9.30 am - 4.30 pm