



The Alumni News section of the June issue of the University's *Aberdeen Magazine* had a short feature about the Friends and we hope that it will attract new members for us.

With this copy of the Friends' *News* you should find the brochure for this season's lectures at Marischal Museum – most Tuesdays at 7.30 pm; all are welcome.

Bonus: Remember, that as Friends you are entitled to 10% off George Washington Wilson items from Queen Mother Library CopyShop.



Our new University Library Building

Those of you who receive the University's *Aberdeen Magazine* : *intelligent conversation from the University of Aberdeen* will have read of the Principal's enthusiastic support for our plans for a new building.

In his address, *Global ambitions*, C. Duncan Rice talks fervently of his belief that we must 'raise our game and be more ambitious than we ever have before'. He goes on to state:

'The flagship of our plans is a new library, to open in 2010. It will meet the needs of 13,000 students instead of 5,000. It will be the platform for caring for and exploiting our priceless collections of rare material. It will be a building for the whole community.

For centuries, libraries have been the physical embodiment of learning. Our library is also the symbol of a new ambition to make Aberdeen a great northern global university for the 21st century.'

Later in the *Aberdeen Magazine* in the 5-page article, 'Boldness has genius, power and magic in it', readers can see early proposals for what the new building will look like – a white cube, "ice cube"? We are promised a building which will make an iconic statement on the Aberdeen skyline.

Further details of "A Library for our Sixth Century" project including images of the proposed building can be found on the web at <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/newlibrary/>



IS! Magazine

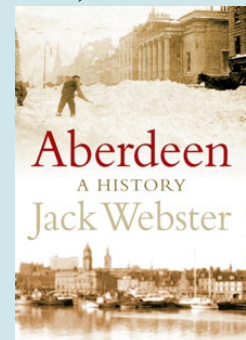
This recently launched free "glossy lifestyle magazine" features an article about the new Aberdeen University Library building in its inaugural Aberdeen issue, published in June 2006. The IS! Magazine website can be found at <http://www.ismagazine.co.uk/>

FRIENDS' ACTIVITIES

Date for your Diary

Those of you who heard our President, Jack Webster, when he first took up his position with the Friends in 2001, or if you have heard him at one of the countless other times he has addressed gatherings of all kinds in Aberdeen, will know what a delightful speaker he is. We feel privileged that he has agreed to make time in his busy schedule to address us again at our Autumn / Winter meeting.

His topic is his forthcoming book *Aberdeen: a history*. Birlinn Ltd (19 Oct 2006) ISBN: 1841584789



THE FRIENDS OF ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Autumn / Winter Meeting

Queen Mother Library Seminar Room

Aberdeen University Library
Bedford Road, Old Aberdeen

Thursday 2nd November
at 7.30 pm

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

Three Scots Biddies in the Land of Bin Laden: the road to Tarim Library, Yemen

by Dr Jane Geddes, Senior Lecturer in the Department of History of Art, University of Aberdeen.

Report on our Summer meeting after the AGM in May.



The remote library of Tarim in Yemen, filled with ancient manuscripts, has been the seat of Islamic studies for centuries. The road through the harshest desert is newly built, revealing a society of slaves, bandits, and splendid architecture. Three ladies went there, seeking adventure ... and perhaps books.

And what an adventure it was, as Jane revealed to us in her absolutely enthralling, gripping and wonderful story. She herself was less than revealed, initially bewildering the large audience by appearing enveloped in the robes worn by the women in the area. We sat aghast and completely absorbed in her often quite terrifying account, told in Jane's most amusing style, to discover at the end that when the three adventurous ladies did at last reach the Library, lo and behold, it was shut, and the line of black-robed figures they had seen far away in the distance a few days earlier were, in fact, the librarians, on pilgrimage ...

So if you ever find Aberdeen University Library unexpectedly shut, bear in mind that librarians here may also be legitimately elsewhere (or at the beach on a far-too-hot-to-work-day, as I write this).

Altogether a most thrilling evening. Thank you, Jane.

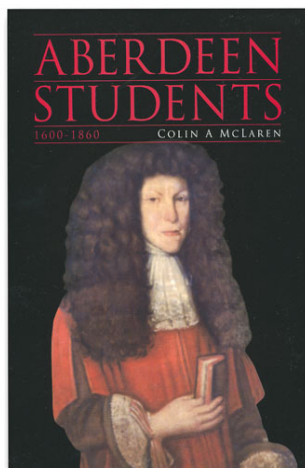
To see the project in English go to:

http://www.manuscriptyemen.org/index_4.htm

[Friends will note how indebted we are to the University's History of Art Department for stimulating speakers at our meetings. Many thanks indeed.]



Aberdeen Students 1600-1860



Colin McLaren's new book, left, about which he spoke to us so captivantly in March, is still available from the CopyShop in Queen Mother Library:

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

Membership Review

Graham Hunter reports on the recent survey of Friends' membership details.

Earlier this year I wrote to all of you in an attempt to update our list of members and their addresses. Thank you for your excellent level of response. As a result of that exercise I can confirm that, at the time of writing this report in August 2006, our total membership would appear to be 213. I say "would appear to be" because, although your response was excellent, there are still quite a few of you from whom I have not heard.

To date I have received 157 replies, which represents almost exactly 75% of our total membership. There are 3 members for whom we do not have an address at all; 3 whose letters were returned through the post marked "Gone Away", and 50 from whom I have not heard.

I appreciate that some of those 50 may have moved house and that the new occupiers of your old address may have binned your letter, but if you did receive it I would be most grateful if you could rescue it from the "to be attended to heap" and let me hear from you.

For your information the geographical split of our membership is as follows: - City of Aberdeen-103; Aberdeenshire-27; Rest of NE Scotland-21; Rest of Scotland-25; England-26; Abroad-8. For those amongst you who are mathematically minded, the missing 3 are those for whom we do not have an address.

One or two of you did raise some points with your replies and I am trying to rescue them from my "to be attended to" heap after an absence of more than five weeks from QML. I hope that they will all have been attended to by the time you receive this Newsletter. If yours has not, then please accept my apologies and my assurance that I will be replying.

Graham C. Hunter, Honorary Treasurer



Honorary Doctorate for Professor Bill Nicolaisen

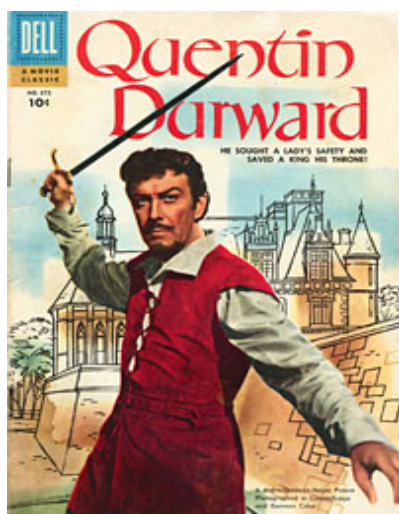
In the Summer graduations the honorary degree of Doctor *Honoris Causa* (DHC) was awarded to Professor W.F.H. (Bill) Nicolaisen, distinguished scholar in folklore and contemporary urban legends.

Bill Nicolaisen has been an Honorary Research Professor at the University of Aberdeen since 1992. Bill's scholarly interests include folklore and place names. An authority on contemporary urban legends, Bill Nicolaisen is a former President of the Folklore Society. He has also been a Visiting Professor at the Ohio State University, the University of Aarhus (Denmark) and the University of Edinburgh. A graduate of the Universities of Tuebingen and Glasgow, his academic career began in 1951, serving on the faculties of the University of Glasgow, University College Dublin, the University of Edinburgh and the state University of New York at Binghamton from which he "retired" in 1992 as a Distinguished Professor

Emeritus of English and Folklore. Professor Nicolaisen is one of the most respected and popular scholars working in onomastics, the study of proper names of all kinds and the origins of names, and is the author of several works on Scottish Place-Names. In addition to these books, he has published more than 700 articles and reviews.

Bill is, of course, also a stalwart member of the Friends' Executive Committee and we are continually grateful to him for his perceptive and constructive contributions to our meetings and discussions.

Many congratulations, Bill.



Cheap chaps, broads and comics

Richard Turbet (r.turbet@abdn.ac.uk)

While the heading above may look like a typical evening's viewing on TV, it does in fact it reflect the collections *Special Libraries & Archives* have been cataloguing over the last year: *chapbooks*, *Cheap Repository tracts*, *broadside*, and new material for the *Walter Scott Collection*. **Richard Turbet, Special Collections Cataloguer, tells us more.**

One of the joys of cataloguing special collections – and I appreciate that cataloguing is not everyone's cup of tea – is the variety of material within individual collections. After two years spent cataloguing *Bernard Lloyd's Walter Scott*

Collection, turning to chapbooks was both a change and a challenge.

Chapbooks

Chapbooks are pamphlets which were hawked by chapmen travelling from village to village. Although the heyday of the chapbook was the 16th century, they remained popular well after then, and our collection dates from the first half of the 19th century.

Today, chapbooks are of more scholarly interest than ever. They are studied bibliographically for their role in the history of printing and publishing; historically for their social significance; and by literary scholars for their textual content in respect of popular culture. A typical chapbook consists of half a dozen ballads, songs or poems, spread over eight pages, the text headed by a woodcut which is often incomprehensible or hilariously inappropriate. The print tends to be shoddy, the quality of the paper low, and the woodcuts so bad that their very ineptitude becomes quite endearing. There is a rawness and energy that springs off the pages.

At the other extreme, there is interest in the variety of places of publication – otherwise unfamiliar venues such as Falkirk, Paisley, Stirling, Kilmarnock and Dumfries rub shoulders with Newcastle and Glasgow – and in the multiplicity of printers cum publishers. Not many are dated, challenging the cataloguer's ingenuity and detection.

Our previously uncatalogued collection is in three main sections: *garlands*, which are collections of poems and ballads; *histories*, which recount historic events and heroic feats;

and *songs*, for which the music is never provided, either because the relevant tune is named in the text, or it was expected that the readers would supply their own tune.

Cheap Repository tracts

Slightly earlier than the chapbook, from the last decade of the 18th century, are the *Cheap Repository tracts*.

The journey from the raucous world of the chapbook to the gentility of the Cheap Repository tract is not as distant as it might seem. The tracts were a response by evangelical Anglicans to the spread of printing and literacy among the hitherto unlettered classes, and to its potential to circulate disruptive social and religious ideas. Subsidised by members of the Clapham Sect, they were the brainchild of the novelist *Hannah More*, and were designed deliberately to resemble chapbooks in order to appeal to just such a readership. A typical title is *The story of Sinful Sally, told by herself. Shewing how from being Sally of the Green she was first led to become Sinful Sally, afterwards Drunken Sal, and how at last she came to a most melancholy and almost hopeless end; being therein a warning to all young women both in town and country*. Note the 'almost'.

Although they were indeed inexpensive, the 'cheap' refers to Cheapside in London, where they were first published. Some were also published in Bath and Edinburgh. None are dated.

Broadsides

Related to the chapbooks and tracts, but from an earlier period, are the *broadsides*. Originally sheets of paper printed only on one side, broadsides were often used for royal proclamations and official notices. They quickly became a vehicle for political agitation and for the dissemination of speeches from the scaffold by those about to be executed, and the term was soon applied to a variety of publications, printed on one or both sides.

Most of our broadsides are from the late 17th and early 18th centuries, covering the last days of Charles II, the truncated reign of James VII/II, the brief interregnum, the joint reigns of William III and Mary II, and the reign of Anne. The collection contains the full spectrum of broadside material: ballads praising William of Orange, scaffold speeches, letters from nobility to royalty, celebrations of the marriage of William and Mary, satires, elegies, denunciations, patriotism, royal pardons and proclamations for thanksgivings, to name but a few topics.

Scott Comics

But what goes around comes around, and most recently I have been working on a collection of material relevant to *Scott*, donated by *Bernard Lloyd*, and added to his named collection.

By far the most exotic addition to the collection as a whole has been a new section of comics. These are exactly what most of us today understand as comics: stories told in garishly depicted strips with text bubbles emanating from the mouths of the characters. All the comics are based on characters or stories from Scott's novels – *Rob Roy*, *Castle Dangerous* etc. – and most originated in the United States during the 1950s.

Comics are well off the radar of most cataloguers, and wedging them into such a scholarly context is challenging. Bibliographical details, particularly imprints, are often not apparent. Fortunately these comics were supplied with full details about dates, and so were presumably obtained through a reliable specialist.

A further challenge for the cataloguer is that while many of the comics contain the same illustrations, the texts are in different languages, and so we have comics published in Dutch, Flemish, Swedish, Danish and, most exotic and challenging of all, Greek!

For more information about the University's *Special Libraries Archives and Collections*, see www.abdn.ac.uk/historic



A Flying Visit to Special Collections

Graham Hunter writes about a recent interesting, albeit rather short-lived, addition to the ornithological section of Special Collections. You could call it a flying visit.

Those of you who are not able to visit King's regularly will not know that, for the last six months or so, it has looked more like a very large building site than a University campus. The main reason for this is that a completely new heating system is being installed to serve the whole campus, the old system having reached the end of its useful life. One bonus point from this will be the eventual disappearance of the very tall and unsightly chimney presently situated near the entrance to the Queen Mother Library.

The downside has been that two new pipes, each at least a foot in diameter, with associated pipes and connections, have had to be installed approximately four feet underground all over the campus. This has necessitated the digging of a huge continuous trench winding its way all round the campus like a massive snake, with branches off to the various buildings and groups of buildings. It has had to go under roads, paths, car parks and lawns. Nothing stands in its way.

One such branch stretched from Regent Walk through the car park/access road which runs along the rear of Elphinstone Hall, the Old Senate Room and the Special Collections building. At the beginning of this year the contractors, Chap Construction, excavated a huge trench approximately six feet wide and four feet deep and then fenced it in and moved off to another part of the campus. In spring a pair of blackbirds saw this as an excellent spot to build their nest and did so. In due course the eggs were laid and then five or six chicks were hatched. So far so good.

Then the contractors' schedule meant that they had to return to this part of the works to lay the two huge pipes, fill in round about them with cement and earth and lay back the large concrete slabs on top, thus sealing it off. The workmen saw the nest and the chicks and were reluctant to disturb or endanger them, but had to get on with the works. This involved pneumatic drills, mixing and laying of concrete and the lifting and installing of the pipes and the concrete slabs with mobile cranes.

They decided that their only course was to start at the end furthest away from the nest and gradually work towards it in the hope that the birds would become acclimatised to the movement, noise and dust. Their strategy worked. As they gradually worked closer and closer to the nest the birds continued to fly quite happily in and out, feeding their chicks. When I was shown the nest in June the chicks were still in place, seemingly oblivious to all the noise and activity around them. The installation of the two pipes and the sealing of the trench were almost complete. I asked the foreman how they were going to finish off the work with the nest and chicks still in place. He explained that there was always going to be an inspection chamber for future access and maintenance with a large metal lid at ground level. They had constructed the chamber round the nest and they would simply leave the metal lid open in the meantime to allow access for the parents and for the chicks to fly away eventually. At that stage the lid would be closed and the work completed.

I am glad to report that when I last checked the foreman confirmed that the young birds had recently flown away, with their parents, and the metal lid had been finally closed. Full marks to the workmen for their care and ingenuity!

*Graham C. Hunter,
Honorary Treasurer*



Postcards of Treasures from the Library's Collections

Contribution of up to £1,000 from the Friends

Professor Peter Davidson made a request for sponsorship of 6 new postcards depicting items from Special Libraries. These are 6" x 4", in colour, and the Friends' involvement will be noted on the back of each.

Produced by the Library's Reprographic Unit

available from the
Queen Mother Library Copyshop



Vicentius Placcius



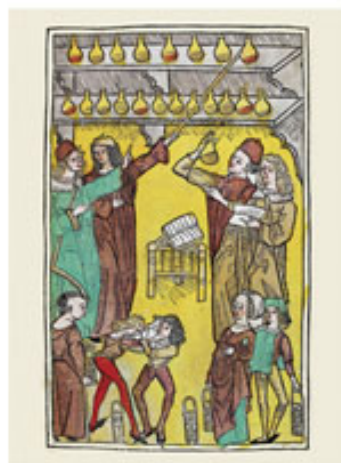
Book of Isaiah



Book of Hours



Aberdeen Bestiary



Hortus Sanitatis

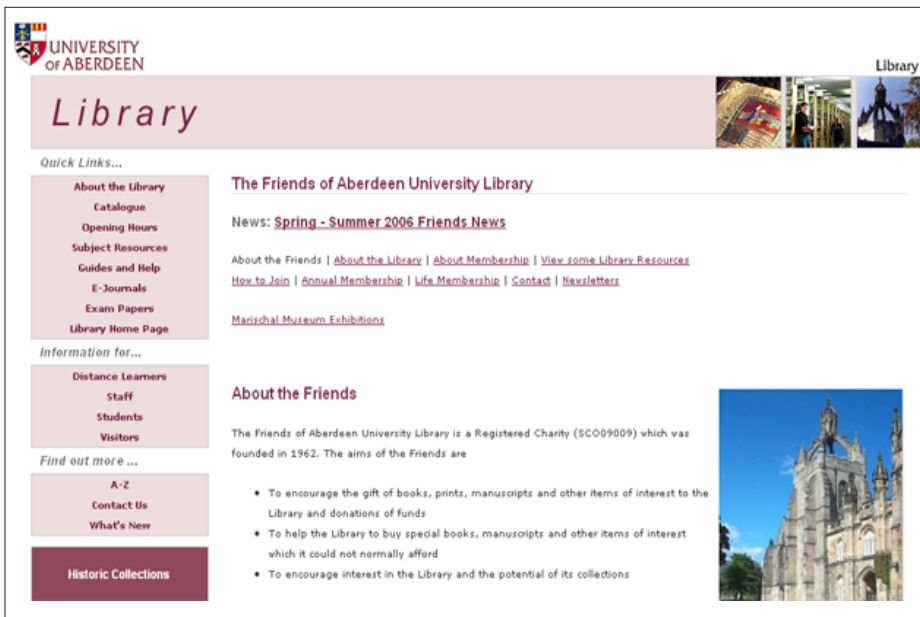


Tam o' Shanter



Note change to friends website URL

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



The screenshot shows the website interface for the Friends of Aberdeen University Library. At the top left is the University of Aberdeen logo. The main header features the word 'Library' in a large, stylized font. Below this, there are several navigation menus: 'Quick Links...' with links like 'About the Library', 'Catalogue', and 'Library Home Page'; 'Information for...' with links for 'Distance Learners', 'Staff', 'Students', and 'Visitors'; 'Find out more ...' with links for 'A-Z', 'Contact Us', and 'What's New'; and 'Historic Collections'. The main content area is titled 'The Friends of Aberdeen University Library' and includes a news section for 'Spring - Summer 2006 Friends News' with links to 'About the Friends', 'About the Library', 'About Membership', 'View some Library Resources', 'How to Join', 'Annual Membership', 'Life Membership', 'Contact', and 'Newsletters'. There is also a link to 'Marischal Museum Exhibitions'. A section titled 'About the Friends' states that the organization is a Registered Charity (SC099009) founded in 1962 and lists three aims: to encourage the gift of books, prints, manuscripts, and other items; to help the library buy special books, manuscripts, and other items which it could not normally afford; and to encourage interest in the library and its collections. An image of a Gothic building is shown on the right side of the page.

Friends of Aberdeen University Library

Executive Committee

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Chairman

Mr Roy H Thomson

Honorary Treasurer

Mr Graham Hunter

Honorary Secretary

Miss Christine A Miller

Membership Secretary

Miss Sheona C Farquhar

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Professor Bill Nicolaisen

Professor Derek Ogston

Mrs Wendy Pirie

(Acting Librarian)

Miss Eilidh M Scobbie

Mrs Helen Stevenson



Note – change to



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

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 (QML)

1.00pm - 10.00pm (Taylor and Medical)

Special Libraries

Monday - Friday 9.30 am - 4.30 pm

The Friends of Aberdeen University Library