The Friends of Aberdeen University Library

EDITORIAL

We could not achieve our aims to support the University Library without you all and, although many of you are based in Aberdeen and the North East, a substantial number give your support from elsewhere in the UK and some from abroad. Many Friends are never able to come to our meetings but we thank those of you who do and hope that our newsletter helps everyone to keep in touch and aware of what’s happening here.

A warm welcome as ever to new and established Friends and we trust that we will have the pleasure of your company at one of our forthcoming events, together with members of the University of Aberdeen Alumnus Association whose meetings we reciprocate.

Friends’ Membership Cards

Please bring your Membership Card with you when you use the University Library if you have no other Library membership identification. This will also mean quicker access when you come to Friends events.

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

Single copies of the postcards which the Friends funded, depicting some of the Treasures held in Special Libraries and Archives, are available from the CopyShop in Queen Mother Library at 25p each.

FRIENDS’ ACTIVITIES

Dates for your Diary

With the go-ahead now given for the new Library, Chris Banks, who joined as University Librarian last October, will give an illustrated talk to update us on this exciting development for the whole University community and the opportunities the project will bring to the University and to the North East.

Those of you who came to the Friends’ talk earlier in the year and heard Chris speak on her interests as Head of Music Collections at the British Library will this time hear of her plans as Librarian of the University of Aberdeen for our building.

Please note the change of venue to the MacRobert Building as QML Seminar Room is unavailable while the new Library building work is undertaken.

The Friends of Aberdeen University Library
The Ming Encyclopedia – Yongle Dadian

If you peruse the Marischal Museum Lecture programme closely you will see that our Spring meeting, in association with the Aberdeen Chinese Studies Group, will be on an encyclopaedia from the Ming dynasty in China (1368-1644). In Special Collections we have a section of this work, the Yongle Dadian, its importance stemming from its method of compilation.

The Yongle Encyclopaedia, or Yongle Dadian, was commissioned by the Chinese Ming Dynasty Emperor Yongle in 1403.

2000 scholars worked on the project, incorporating 8000 texts from the ancient to almost contemporary times. They cover a vast array of subjects together with descriptions of unusual natural events. Completed in 1408, the work comprised over 11,000 manuscript volumes.

The vastness of the work meant that it could not be block printed and it is thought that only one other manuscript was made. In 1557 a fire burnt down three palaces in the Forbidden City and the Encyclopaedia was narrowly saved by Emperor Jiajing. He then ordered another copy to be transcribed.

The original copy of the work has since disappeared and the second copy was gradually dismembered and lost from the 18th century onwards. The approximately 800 volumes remaining were burnt in a fire or looted or rescued by European and American forces in 1900 during the Boxer Rebellion. Only about 400 volumes remain, in libraries and private collections around the world; the University of Aberdeen has a section of this second copy.
REPORTS ON FRIENDS’ ACTIVITIES

Northness:
Aberdeen’s northern connections
by Neil Curtis, Senior Curator, Marischal Museum

An excellent turnout came to hear Neil give his talk to the Friends at our Autumn / Winter meeting on 15th May, after a speedy AGM ably chaired by Roy Thomson.

Aberdeen has had many and varied connections with the Baltic, Scandinavia, the North Atlantic and Canada, including the Scots Colony in Danzig, the Canadian fur trade and the whaling industry. Neil’s talk explored some of these connections, focusing on objects in the University’s museum collections, together with, as he put it, some of his ‘holiday snaps’.

In his usual relaxed, easy and absorbing style Neil treated us to a veritable feast of images of items the University has acquired from past alumni and their families, collected originally by donation or trade. Those who visited Marischal Museum will be aware what a stunning collection the University has and we were most privileged to be given such a chance to see artefacts in the Museum’s care, some of which are not normally on display.

Throughout his talk Neil showed us intriguing and surprising links - both material and symbolic - between artefacts found in different parts of the Northern climes, from Siberia, through Scandinavia, via Scotland to Northern Canada and the Arctic. Thus for example the famous ‘Amber Room’ in the Catherine Palace at Tsarkeye Selo, near St Petersburg, celebrated the high esteem in which amber has always been held and links in with our own prehistoric amber bead from the Tap o Noth. This was obviously a prized possession and found in the Rhynie area which, from the many archaeological discoveries there, we know was an important area in earlier times.

We also saw the pairings, an important concept of the time, between land and sea mammals and Neil had images of unicorns and narwhal horns to show us. Aberdeen and the North East were, of course, very heavily involved in the whaling industry and the decorated whalebones which he showed us, with their Inuit carving and scrimshaw depictions, were exquisite.

Lubeck was seen as the centre of the old ‘Baltic Empire’ and there have always been active sailing and trading links, including Aberdeen connections. The Scots colony in Danzig (now Gdansk) nurtured Robert Gordon and we saw silver communion beakers, made there for King’s College Chapel. We also have a portrait of Robert Low, the postmaster in Danzig and a benefactor to Marischal College.

Similarly, John Rae, the most famous Scottish Arctic explorer, has a memorial in St Magnus Cathedral in Orkney. His particular skill was that he learned from the Inuit people - instead of carrying meat there for his food, he hunted when he got there. We have a 1906 tin-opener from the Discovery and, from the HMS Alert, a tea cup and a tin-opener abandoned by an Arctic expedition.

Items large and small, originally from Greenland, have been discovered in the collections of the National Museum of Denmark and some returned to the National Museum of Greenland, part of the present concept of ‘repatriation’ of artefacts. Neil has been closely involved with this for some of our own items, such as the headdress which has been returned to its North American homeland.
Neil noted the current interest in not simply acquiring items from other Northern territories, as was the emphasis in the past, but in the present preoccupation of seeing how other people viewed us. Thus the famous Inuit kayak which arrived on a North East beach c.1720 (previously on permanent display in Marischal Museum) with its Inuit paddler, later buried in Belhelvie churchyard, can be seen as a lone kayaker making his own voyage of discovery or as someone brought back by a whaler as a curiosity.

Those of you within easy reach of Aberdeen had also had the chance to see the display in Marischal Museum during the early Summer which had a similar theme. Material Histories, exploring the links between the North-East of Scotland and the fur trade in Northern Canada, was curated by Alison Brown and Nancy Wachowich of the University’s Anthropology Department. There were strong family links from this part of Scotland with the Hudson’s Bay Company and more donations have come to Marischal as a result of this exhibition. We saw boots whose thread had been made in Europe but sewn into the shoes by the local people. And a sewing kit, such as we were shown, could save your life in the perilous, icy conditions of Canada and the Arctic by repairing a tear in fur clothing.

Neil finished his talk by describing a surreal experience when he visited Nuuk, capital of Greenland, for a repatriation conference. The display of traditional dancing turned out to be a demonstration of what he recognised as an Eightsome Reel, part of Greenland’s heritage as well as ours. We also learnt that the keeper of the Headdress repatriated from Marischal to the Kainai nation / Blood tribe in Canada then ordered a jacket from Scott the Kiltmaker in Aberdeen, which he now wears with the headdress as part of the ceremonial dance. To them it is important to show that the headdress spent seven decades in Aberdeen and Neil was touched to know how well they felt it had been cared for here.

In his Vote of Thanks to Neil at the end Roy Thomson echoed our appreciation for this opportunity to see again some of the riches of the Museum’s collections and be reminded of its enormous range. Remembering a visit by the Friends to the Museum and Conservation Laboratory some years ago Roy expressed the hope that we may have chance to repeat this at some point. The Museum is, of course, out of bounds for an indeterminate period, as is the rest of the Marischal College site, but we know that Neil and his colleagues will ensure that the precious material they have there will be carefully protected while the City Council’s building and refurbishment work continue.

Amongst the audience was the Professor in the new Centre for Scandinavian Studies. Some of you will remember that the University used to have a Department of Scandinavian Studies, closed under government policies of the ‘80s, when our Library collection was transferred to Edinburgh University. Staff in the new Centre are now hoping that some items from Edinburgh’s collection can come to us to help to establish a new post-graduate and research collection here.

For those who were enthused by Neil’s talk but missed the exhibition it’s available to see via Marischal Museum’s website at: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/museum

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**My Lady Nevells Book, by Chris Banks, University Librarian**

On 27th June the Friends were treated to a talk by Chris Banks on My Ladye Nevells Booke, to mark its first showing in Scotland, at Aberdeen Art Gallery from May to August. She gave a fascinating talk to the Friends on this outstanding Elizabethan music manuscript.

My Ladye Nevells Booke is one of the most beautifully written music manuscripts to survive from the late 16th century. Chris, previously Head of Music Collections at the British Library, successfully led the fundraising to allow the acquisition of the work. This allowed her to give a unique insight into the significance of this book.

Her talk focused on the six areas which led to the manuscript being accepted in lieu of inheritance tax, together with additional funding from donors.
Although few people had seen the original before it was allocated to the British Library, virtually all of the 42 pieces for keyboard by William Byrd contained in the book were known. It was the binding, dedicatee, copyist, corrections, notations and printing which made the work so important.

The manuscript is preserved in its original ornate binding. Chris explained that this, incredibly elaborate for the period, was carried out by the MacDurnan Gospels Binder/Bateman workshop. John Bateman was the Royal Bookbinder and the tools and blocks used to decorate My Ladye Nevells Booke were also used on a number of works in the British Library’s Royal Music Library collection.

The lavish presentation suggests that the manuscript was created for someone of importance. Elizabeth, Lady Nevell, was the wife of Sir Henry Nevell of Billingbere and subsequently of Sir William Periam. As Lady Periam she was the dedicatee of Morley’s First Booke of Cazonets to Two Voyces published in 1595. However by this time the book had passed from the Nevell family to Elizabeth I, a second royal connection.

The third royal connection can be found in the copyist. The work is signed and dated by John Baldwin of Windsor. Baldwin was a singer at St George’s Chapel, Windsor and records show that he was also paid for copying music. Baldwin was also an admirer of Byrd's work, writing of him:

Whose greate skill and knowledge
Doethe excelle all at this tyme
And farre to strage countries
Abroade his skill dothe shyne

Chris demonstrated how the manuscript captures the development of notation. It looks backward in the use of six staves and forward in the use of bar lines and key signatures. The work also shows how Baldwin’s confidence as a copyist was growing. Here he places flats and sharps above rather than beside the notes to avoid spoiling the patterns they create.

Despite Baldwin’s efforts My Ladye Nevells Booke features a number of corrections in a different hand. Chris explained that no music in Byrd’s hand survives but that comparison with the numbers in documents written by him suggests that the corrections may be by Byrd himself.

Chris concluded her talk with a final royal connection. Byrd, along with Tallis, was granted a patent for printing music by Elizabeth I. This final royal connection included a monopoly on the printing of manuscript ruled papers. This was particularly lucrative as, although music printing dates from 1473, it was uneconomic to produce keyboard music while the type was set by hand, each note and even accidentals being a separate piece of type.

After the talk Friends were able to look through a facsimile of the manuscript presented to Chris by her colleagues at the British Library and explore the history of music publishing over a glass of wine.

There is further information about My Layde Nevells Booke at:
http://www.bl.uk/collections/musicmy_ladye_nevells_booke.html.

Robin Armstrong Viner

Throughout May and June the Art Gallery put on a series of talks and musical events around the exhibition and at the last one in June Richard Turbet, a member of the Library’s Cataloguing Unit in Special Collections gave a fascinating talk on ‘Byrd & My Ladye’. He was followed by a short recital by Dr Roger Williams, Master of Chapel and Ceremonial Music and Organist to the University, on harpsichord, of six pieces from My Ladye Nevells Book.

Aberdeen is not the only venue for events round My Ladye Nevells Book this year. A member of the British Library staff also spoke about the manuscript in the Wren Library of Lincoln Cathedral in September, the talk followed by a harpsichord recital. Byrd was the organist and master of the choristers at Lincoln Cathedral from 1563-72 and is still very much remembered there, with a plaque and an endowed William Byrd Choristership.
Once again the Principal, Professor C Duncan Rice, very kindly extended to us the hospitality of Chanonry Lodge in June for a recruitment evening. The occasion was thus primarily aimed at potential new Friends and number restrictions meant that regrettably only existing Friends bringing a potential new member could be accommodated.

A model of the new Library building was available to see in the Old Town House in Old Aberdeen, immediately before the evening at Chanonry Lodge, when the University Librarian, Chris Banks, was there to explain our plans and answer your questions. A lively and interested group of Friends and their friends came along and after this chance to see exactly what we envisage all shared the Librarian’s own excitement for the future of the Library.

Later some of the guests braved the somewhat chilly elements to wander round the Chanonry Lodge garden – and impressive vegetable ‘patch’ - lovely flowers, shrubs and trees. How we all wished for an afternoon borrowing the University gardeners! Other Friends stayed indoors, where we all later gathered to hear Roy Thomson, our Chairman, explain and expand on the value and work of the Friends organisation. The Principal echoed this, with a request from both of them for support for the new Library.

We also took this chance to have on display for Friends to see two of the items for which we gave funding to Special Libraries for their purchase: Sir Philip Sidney’s The Counte of Pembrokes Arcadia (1613) and Jean-Jacques Boissard’s De divinatione (1615), together with a selection of the black and white prints from the 1690s from the MacBean Stuart and Jacobite Collection which are undergoing conservation locally for their preservation, thanks to a financial donation from the Friends.

A most enjoyable evening was had by all and our membership roll will be increased as a result. Our thanks are extended to the Principal, yet again, for hosting the evening in his University residence.

PS – As we know that some Friends would have liked to come in their own right, we very much hope that at any future Reception we shall be able to extend the invitation to you all, as a thank you for your support over so many years.

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**Thanks to you …**

**17th century music CD  £2,000**

Friends may remember that last year we gave a donation to Professor Peter Davidson which enabled the Music Department to produce a CD of music from ‘Georgian Aberdeen’. This was warmly and appreciatively received wherever copies were distributed – including those available for the Friends. It also, as expected, made a most useful gift (which in itself emphasises the riches of the University collections) in the course of the campaign for the new Library.

(If you would still like a free copy please contact: Miss Sheona Farquhar, Membership Secretary, s.c.farquhar@abdn.ac.uk or telephone her on 01224 273773.)

The Department approached us for help in producing a further CD of 17th century music, including unpublished and unperformed French madrigals and keyboard music, together with material from the rare songbooks published in Aberdeen in the later 17th century.

The CD will again be played by the University Musicians under the direction of Dr Roger Williams. The costs envisaged were higher than with the previous CD, because more resources will be used and much more preparatory work done to make performing versions from manuscript.
Perhaps the most important single item of 17th century music in the University Library is the First book of Madrigals of Arcadelt, published at Venice in 1561. This is a substantial collection in itself and is rendered yet more interesting by having on its endpapers full pieces of manuscript music, both vocal and keyboard. The vocal items are two early 17th century madrigals in praise of the city of Nîmes, apparently a product of the minority protestant culture of the Mediterranean; the name of the composer would appear to be de Flores. The keyboard music also looked to be of real interest and appeared at a preliminary survey to be late 17th century French.

This is an item of real interest and both the printed and manuscript music seems worthy of performance. Obviously there would be a considerable amount of cachet and interest for a first recording of completely unknown music of such quality and antiquity.

The Library also holds other relatively-rare 17th century printed music: a published book of Madrigals by Michael East, Madrigals of 3, 4 and 5 parts (London 1604); settings of Buchanan’s Latin paraphrases on the psalms (MN.11.256) and a London publication of the 1580s, William Hunnis, Seven Sobs of a Sorrowful Soul for Sin which might well yield more material for the CD.

We have also music by the Aberdeen professional composer of the 17th century, Andrew Melville (whose commonplace book survives as AUL MS 28, itself containing an unperformed setting of the Nunc Dimitis. There is also music by him in the collection of the airs of 17th century Scotland, sophisticated composed music in many cases printed by Alexander Forbes. This Songs and Fancies is an attractive collection. Only the Cantus part was published, but there are modern editions of some of the material in performable form, much of it is little known. Amongst the supplements to the 2nd edition is a very curious festival piece for three voices, The Plough Sang, a plough-blessing a good deal more sophisticated and complex than it appears at first sight. Amongst the songs in Songs and Fancies Professor Davidson has also identified a hitherto-unrecognised poem by the 17th century Scottish hero, the Marquis of Montrose.

Taken altogether, the CD will be an important contribution to scholarship, making very rare music, unperformed for three hundred years, available for the first time. It would give pleasure to the Friends and to the wider community of University alumni and well-wishers and, again, it would act as an ambassador for the riches of our collections and as a pleasant reminder of the length and sophistication of the musical traditions of Aberdeen. In addition to being able to use the CD for such promotional purposes for the University, it is envisaged that it will be on sale, as with the earlier CD, and, as before, that the Friends would again receive a copy free.

Our contribution was to be used for transcriptions, editions, performance and recording and the production of CDs.

Professor Patrick Copland:
Family Letters, 1790-1837
£1,275 + VAT

By courtesy of Patrick A Copland, descendant of Professor Copland, from a painting in his possession by John Moir in 1817

Professor Patrick Copland (1748 -1822) was one of the leading scientific figures in late 18th and early 19th century Aberdeen and is a natural philosopher of national repute, whose association with Marischal College spanned 60 years. His correspondence sheds light on his domestic and private business life, an aspect little covered in our collection previously.

Copland was both Professor of Mathematics and of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College from 1775 until his death in 1822. He did much to popularise scientific subjects and contributed greatly to the modernisation of the science syllabus in Marischal College. He is particularly noted for introducing demonstration apparatus in the teaching of natural philosophy.
The letters are to, from and between the family and friends of Patrick Copland; including his wife Elizabeth, three sons Alexander, John and Charles, daughter Mary and other related family and friends, including Alexander Gordon, fourth Duke of Gordon.

They provide insights into the life of a privileged, educated family in early 19th century Aberdeen and contain many references to the work of Copland as he developed his teaching methods and apparatus. The correspondence with the Duke of Gordon highlights the real friendship between the two men and how Copland enjoyed the patronage that came from this shared interest in science.

Special Libraries & Archives already hold papers relating to Patrick Copland and the University Museum collections also have many of his demonstration apparatus.

Anyone interested in learning more about Copland and his extraordinary career can see the ‘Collection Highlight’ by Siobhan Convery on the Department website:
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Collection_highlight_autumn07.shtml:

The cost of purchasing these letters was shared with the Alumni Association and the Department.

Andrew MacGregor
Deputy Archivist
Library and Historic Collections

 Contributions also came from the National Acquisitions Fund (Edinburgh): £1,450 and the Friends of National Libraries: £1,500

Funding from the Friends has helped with this purchase of a copy of the fine 17th century catalogue of the museum assembled at the Collegio Romano by the polymath Athanasius Kircher, with text by Giorgio de Sepibus. The finely-illustrated work is in good condition and complete with all of its engravings, including the folding plates, except that illustrating the Pamphilian obelisk, which is often missing. There is no copy of this book in Scotland outside Edinburgh.

There were particular reasons for us wanting to purchase the work, all of which arise from the antiquity of our library collections (which include other significant early museum books) and the way in which they have been inextricably related, for well over two hundred years, to a growing museum collection. We believe the collection which began in the library of King’s College, Aberdeen in the mid-18th century to constitute the oldest surviving Museum in Scotland. It is also, therefore, amongst the oldest surviving University museums in the English-speaking world.

The manuscript collections for the history of Old Aberdeen which accrued through the 18th century around the collectanea of Thomas Orem, describe and illustrate the museum collections in King’s College Library – ‘several missals, ancient and foreign arms, and sundry natural curiosities.’ There is also a record as early as 1751 of the donation of ethnographic items by Patrick Wilson, Esq. Display cases were constructed in 1771, and, in the following decade, a formal museum grew

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under the guidance of Professor William Ogilvy, with natural history specimens, shells and minerals.

By the end of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, the \textit{Statistical Account} reported museums at both of the Colleges which now make up the modern University of Aberdeen: at King’s the natural history museum had been joined by ‘a collection, under the name of a Museum of Antiquities, containing Greek and Roman coins, casts in sulphur from ancient gems, and some of the more valuable books of engravings, relative to this subject.’ Many of the volumes from this ‘paper museum’, including the engraved publication of another great Roman Museum, the Pio-Clementino, can be identified in our Library collections to this day.

At Marischal College, from the 1780s, Professor Patrick Copeland had been gathering scientific and astronomical equipment. Here there is a close link with the machines and apparatus illustrated in the \textit{Musaeum celeberrimum}, as a good proportion of Copeland’s material survives in the Aberdeen collections today. At Marischal also there was ‘a considerable number and variety of natural and artificial curiosities.’ Among other articles, are ‘an Egyptian mummy; a beautiful antique statue of Esculapius; the staff of office belonging to the Earls Marischal of Scotland and a set of casts of ancient gems selected from Tassie’s vast collection.’ This was supplemented by fine engraved museum books, most notably Regenfuss’s volume of the shells in the Royal Collection of Denmark, which is still in our Library.

A final strand in Kircher’s volume which relates closely to our collections is its emphasis on Egyptian artefacts in Rome, especially obelisks. We hold James Playfair’s designs for the remarkable neo-classical Cairness House, built for kinsmen of Lord Byron. This house has a central room in the Egyptian taste, designed long before Denon’s publication of the antiquities of Egypt, which most likely draws its decorative ‘hieroglyphics’ from Kircher.

The use which the University of Aberdeen can potentially make of this book would go far beyond its great utility for the research of our specialist scholars of the history of museums and of the baroque arts and sciences. A \textit{wunderkammer} exhibition and related educational events are already planned for the near future, including the reconstruction of the university’s early collections displayed as an early-modern museum. We are also planning widespread educational activities focused on a modern version of a ‘Hainhofer’ museum cabinet. In all of these contexts, the volume of the \textit{Musaeum Celeberrimum} and reproductions of its engravings, would be exhibited and shared with the wider community.

Kircher’s book is one which will greatly enrich our Library and the museum collections which have been associated with it for over two centuries.

\textbf{Dr Iain Beavan}
\textit{Keeper of Rare Books}

\textbf{Thank you – Mike and Caroline Craig}

This issue of the Friends’ \textit{News} marks the end of an era. For the last 20 years and more the design work in translating my text copy to the finished newsletter which comes to you has been in the capable and very professional hands of the Library’s Reprographic Unit.

This Unit is headed by Mike Craig, who took responsibility for the design work in the early years, but since then the creative spark behind it all has been Caroline Craig. Both are now leaving the Library / University.

These 20 years have seen the change from basic Mac desktop publishing for the text, to a PC and Pagemaker software. Graphics and photographs gradually appeared, colour was introduced – now on every page – and the look of the newsletter has therefore improved dramatically over the decades.

Throughout the preparation of text for each issue Mike and Caroline have shown an enduring patience with my late items, requests for changes and timetable deadlines. They have always been most helpful and prepared to put themselves out to ensure a smooth production schedule. Many thanks indeed to them both, for advice and input at every stage. It has been a pleasure to work with them and I shall miss their ideas, dedication and professionalism. We give them our very best wishes for the future.

What will we do without them?!

Mike has been with the University Library for 41 years and many of you will be aware how much hard work he has put into expanding the old ‘Photographic Unit’ and in particular his enormous enthusiasm and vision in developing and publicising the George Washington Wilson Collection of Victorian plate glass negatives, the collection now accessible digitally. Friends have a 10\% discount on GWW items from Queen Mother Library CopyShop. Caroline has been with us for 29 years and her artistic work is available in the very attractive range of prints, cards and postcards using photographic images of Old Aberdeen and around, also available from the CopyShop.

\textbf{Christine Miller}
Congratulations …

And Congratulations also to **Tom Hall**, erstwhile Deputy and then Acting Librarian here (1976-88).

Those of you who were Friends in 2000 may remember that we reported then that Tom had received the prestigious George Waterston Memorial Award from the National Trust, presented annually to someone who has worked voluntarily and with distinction for the Trust for a number of years.

Tom received the award for his longstanding work on the centuries old family libraries at the Trust’s properties at Drum Castle and Haddo House.

In conjunction with the exhibition to celebrate 500 years of the printed word in Scotland, at the Trust’s headquarters in Edinburgh, Tom was one of the experts in printing, books and libraries hosting a series of lectures during the exhibition.

He gave a talk there in October entitled, *Revealing hidden treasure: the work of a volunteer librarian*.

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**Marischal Museum Lectures – change of venue**

Enclosed with this issue of *News* you should find the brochure for the current session of Marischal Museum Lectures.

Please note that with the start of the City Council’s preparations to move into Marischal College as its new corporate headquarters, Marischal is no longer available.

Instead the lectures are being held in:

**MacRobert Building - 581, King Street**  
**Centre for Professional Development Suite on the Ground Floor**

Those of you who have been in Aberdeen any length of time will be more familiar with this as the ‘School of Education’ or, before that, the School / College of Agriculture building.

Parking is available on the site.

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Anyone who’s been in the North East for any length of time at all will know that Steve Robertson is one third of the comedy trio, Scotland the What?, honoured by having the Freedom of the City of Aberdeen bestowed on them in His Majesty’s Theatre earlier this year. The three, including also Buff Hardie and George Donald, met as students at Aberdeen University and made their debut in 1969 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, with their final performance at His Majesty’s in 1995. They were awarded honorary degrees from their alma mater in 1994 and were all made MBEs in 1995.

On the student scene Steve Robertson was an active member of the student body, appearing in the Student Show for five years and elected President of the Union Management Committee in 1956/57. He also represented Aberdeen University at squash.

What many of you may not know is that Steve is also a Life Member of the Friends of the Library – but declined the Principal’s invitation at the Chanonry Lodge Reception to perform a sketch for us on that occasion.

And, keeping it all in the Friends’ family, our congratulations should also go to **Graham Hunter**, our Honorary Treasurer, whom the new Rector chose as his Rector’s Assessor.

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to the University’s new Rector, **Stephen Robertson**, MBE

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And, keeping it all in the Friends’ family, our congratulations should also go to **Graham Hunter**, our Honorary Treasurer, whom the new Rector chose as his Rector’s Assessor.
Earlier in the Summer the University’s Elphinstone Institute celebrated the publication of the first new edition of Charles Murray’s collected poems since 1979.

Murray, the North East’s best-known and probably best-loved poet, was born in Alford in 1864 and died in Banchory in 1941. At one time he was the most popular poet in the country and was a key figure in the development of Scots poetry. His verse drew heavily on his native Donside Doric and enthusiasm for it spread across Scotland and to Lowland Scots in England and the Colonies.

He first had his poems published in 1893. The new edition, edited by Dr Colin Milton, previously of the University’s English Department and now the Institute’s Honorary Associate Director, reprints the Scots poems from Murray’s first ‘suppressed’ volume, A Handful of Heather, not included in any later collection.

The Elphinstone Institute’s evening included a programme of recitations and traditional music on the whistle and fiddle.

If only Aberdeen could emulate Oxford!

Julian Blackwell, President of Blackwell’s Bookshops, which has branches in Aberdeen, of course, has donated £5m towards the redevelopment of the New Bodleian Library in Oxford city centre.

This is the largest single cash donation ever made to a university library in the UK and launches the fundraising campaign for the redevelopment of the new library at Oxford University into a major research and culture centre.

It all sounds a little like Aberdeen’s hopes …
The Friends Executive Committee
– Hello and Goodbye

It is with much regret that we have accepted Professor Bill Nicolaisen’s resignation from the Committee on health grounds.

Bill has been a stalwart Member for many years and contributed greatly to our meetings with his sound thinking and experience, together with his goodwill towards the Library and the academic literary environment.

We shall miss his perceptive comments and humour and trust that we shall still continue to see him at Friends events. Thank you, Bill.

But young blood has joined us in the person of Robin Armstrong Viner, who joined the Library and Historic Collections staff as Cataloguing Manager earlier in the year, after 8 years with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors in London.

Robin brings enthusiasm and a new perspective to the Committee and you’ll see that we have already set him to work – he volunteered to report on Chris Banks’ talk to the Friends on My Ladye Nevells Booke. In addition to this he has taken on the post of Honorary Secretary, leaving Christine Miller to revert to her position as Editor of the Friends’ News.

Welcome, Robin.

Friends of Aberdeen University Library

Executive Committee
President
Mr Jack Webster

Chair
Mr Roy H Thomson

Honorary Treasurer
Mr Graham Hunter

Honorary Secretary
Robin Armstrong Viner

Honorary Membership Secretary
Miss Sheona C Farquhar

Editor of News
Christine Miller

Members
Mrs Chris Banks
University Librarian
Professor Chris Gane
Vice-Principal
(Library and Information Services)
Professor Michael C Meston
Professor Bill Nicolaisen
Professor Derek Ogston
Miss Eilidh M Scobbie
Mrs Helen F Stevenson

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 Web site

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