On Monday 12th of September, 2011, an iconic new building for Aberdeen opened its doors to the public for the first time.

Chris Banks, University Librarian and Director of Library, Special Collections and Museums said:

“Our new library has created a stunning environment which accommodates new styles of learning, enables research and collaborations, and allows us to engage with all of our communities through exhibitions, public events, seminars, school groups, professional visits and much more. I am enormously proud of all those colleagues across the whole University who have worked tirelessly to bring the project to fruition.”

With special thanks to the University of Aberdeen Communications Team for articles.

EVENTS
At a Glance
(see inside for details)

✦ ‘Rebels with a Cause: the Jacobites and the Global Imagination’ Exhibition
   24th November-17 March

✦ ‘Tour of the new University Library for Friends’
   17 January 2012 at 7pm

See page 9 for a look inside the new building, or come and visit!
We are delighted to announce that the new Special Collections Centre on the lower ground floor of the University Library opened its doors for the first time on 5th December, offering unprecedented access to the University's internationally significant rare books, manuscripts, archives and photographs.

The future of Library, Special Collections and Museums is set to be an exciting one. Details of our forthcoming programme of exhibitions and events are available in this News, and we hope this will encourage a real sense of engagement with the life of the University of Aberdeen and its connected communities.

Housed in environmentally-controlled facilities, the collections comprise over 200,000 rare printed books – including more than 4,000 16th century items – as well as 4,000 important archive collections, with material dating as far back as the 3rd century BC. The collections cover all aspects of the history and culture of the University, the City of Aberdeen, the region and the relationship they enjoy with the wider world, and are available to be consulted in the Wolfson Reading Room on the lower ground floor.

The Wolfson Reading Room has 36 reader spaces, a large map and print consultation table, a dedicated room for microfilm reader-printers, as well as a listening room for accessing the department’s oral history and audio collections. Local history, bibliographic and print history texts are also available to browse in the Reading Room alongside many historic periodicals.

The Centre also has a Seminar Room and Learning Room which provide visitors of all ages with dedicated spaces to learn more about the collections through seminars, workshops and educational activities. The adjacent Glucksman Conservation Centre will be operational in early 2012 and a newly-appointed team of professional conservators will carry out vital preservation and conservation work on our most fragile items, enabling wider access to the collections.

The staff of Special Collections would like to thank all our readers for their patience and understanding while we have been carrying out the collections move, and look forward to welcoming you to the new facilities.

Siobhán Convery, Head of Special Collections
s.convery@abdn.ac.uk

You can find further details at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/
November saw the opening of the Gallery, the curious cube located on the ground floor adjacent to the café. The impressive space represents an important public venue for visitors to the University Library to engage with the collections and be inspired. The space within the Gallery has been designed to be dynamic and accessible, offering opportunities to present enlightening and inspiring exhibitions that make connections to our collections. The exhibitions are being designed to have a broad appeal and to be of interest to a wide public audience.

*Rebels with a Cause: The Jacobites and the Global Imagination* marks the inaugural exhibition at the Gallery. The exhibition displays treasures from the University's rare book, archive and museum collections to explore and challenge traditional assumptions about the Jacobites. It highlights the worldwide dimension to the Jacobite story, revealing the lives and travels of the historical characters whose ideologies have played a distinctive role in forming part of Scotland's contemporary cultural identity. The exhibition aims to look at an enduring subject from a new perspective and to appeal to a wide range of visitors; from those well-read on the Jacobites, to others for whom the Jacobites remain an evocative mystery.

The Exhibition Programme will host an exciting series of exhibitions, each of which will be accompanied by regular, accessible and engaging events which are open to all, including special performances, illustrated talks and accompanied tours.

Scott Byrne, Exhibitions and Public Programming Officer with Special Collections, welcomes your thoughts and queries about any aspect of current or future programming and may be contacted at s.byrne@abdn.ac.uk

Scott Byrne, Exhibition and Programming Officer  
s.byrne@abdn.ac.uk  
Special Collections Centre Events  
sec.events@abdn.ac.uk

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**REBELS WITH A CAUSE**  
**EVENTS PROGRAMME**

**Saturday 10th December 2011, 2 – 2.45pm**
The Sobieski-Stuart Marriage & the Jacobite World  
Professor Robert I. Frost, British Academy/Wolfson Foundation Research Chair, Department of History, University of Aberdeen

**Saturday 21st January, 2 - 2.45pm**
Curator’s Talk  
Neil Curtis, Head of Museums, University of Aberdeen

**Thursday 2nd February, 6 - 6.45pm**
Scotland, the Highlands and Tartan  
Dr. John Morrison, Senior Lecturer, History of Art, University of Aberdeen

**Jacobite Family Fun Days** - Join us for crafts and storytelling events for the whole family on  
**Saturday 11 Feb 2012**: 10am – 12pm & 2pm – 4pm  
**Sunday 12 Feb 2012**: 2pm – 4pm  
**Monday 13 Feb 2012**: 10am – 12pm & 2pm – 4pm  
**Saturday 10 March**: 10am – 12pm & 2pm – 4pm  
**Sunday 11 March**: 2pm – 4pm  

See page 5 for further events
‘Elements’ is the latest eclectic exhibition at King’s Museum - our newest (and bijou-est!) display space at the centre of King’s campus. ‘Elements’ displays a remarkable selection of items from the university’s many museum collections, highlighting some of the ways people have explained, explored and exploited the properties of the earth’s components.

The displays represent a microcosm of our collections. Starting with the Aristotelian idea of Air, Fire, Water and Earth, a series of oil paintings annotated with poetry quotes illustrate something of the artistic expression of these four elements, with the addition of ‘aether’ – the mysterious material that medieval scholars believed made up the universe beyond the known world - represented by one of the very ethereal-looking stained glass panels from the old Marischal College Library, called Divine Spirit Over Nebulous State.

Metallic artefacts, both precious and practical, are on display too, and show how societies have been shaped by the weaponry and wealth that metals have influenced: tiny Zapotec masks made from gold from the days of Mexican conquest; a solid silver arrow; a raw nugget of platinum; iron spurs detailed with Bolivian silver; a prehistoric copper axe from around 1500 BC, a steel sword from a 19th century member the Gordon Highlands regiment, and more.

There’s also a selection of more recent chemical developments, with a fascinating focus on some of the more obscure (but no less interesting) elements of the Periodic Table. There are Neon (and Xenon, and Krypton) lights, a disconcerting First World War gas mask, as well as a modern mobile phone containing Tantalum – the rare and lesser known metal required in a host of modern appliances such as DVD players and computers, which is mined mainly in the Democratic Republic of Congo where conflicts relating to this invaluable resource have raged in recent years.

For a little culture in your lunch hour this place is perfect: no chance of museum fatigue here! Personally - much as I love to ramble for hours along the labyrinthine corridors of major museum sites - there inevitably comes a point when sore feet and saturated brain make it too much to take in. The bright side of a bite-sized space such as King’s Museum is that visitors can really absorb all the carefully considered details, and appreciate the thoughtful care with which the exhibitions are collated and curated (without rushing to get on to the next mile of display cases).

The King’s museum is an amuse-bouche for the mind. I always leave with my intellectual appetite whetted.

By Georgia Brooker, Communications Co-ordinator for Library Special Collections and Museums.
‘LIGHT IN THE DARK’: A winter workshop

Winter in Aberdeen, and the damp, dark nights are drawing in - it can be a depressing season when you’re this far north. As an antidote to those long-night blues, King’s Museum is hosting a special festive event to lighten your heart and banish the gloom.

*Light in the Dark* draws on the large number of beautiful lamps in the University Collections, focusing on lamps, candles and lanterns of the many religious festivals and celebrations which take place in winter. Visitors can examine examples of these up close, learn about the importance and significance of light in religion, and create their own paper lantern to take home.

The event will run over two days in early December. The first session, on **Thursday 8th December from 2pm to 4pm**, is for **adults only** (students and staff most welcome).

The second session takes place on **Saturday 10th December from 12pm to 2pm**, and is open for **all ages**.

**Booking is essential.** To book your place(s), please contact King’s Museum by calling (01224) 274330 or email kingsmuseum@abdn.ac.uk.

By **Soraya Kasim**, Curatorial Assistant (Community Engagement), University Museums

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**MUSEUM EVENING LECTURE PROGRAMME**

**Tuesday 10th January 2012**
Irish Iron Age Bog Bodies
Eamonn P. Kelly, National Museum of Ireland
Free - King's Society of Antiquaries of Scotland lecture

**Tuesday 17th January 2012**
Poetic Performances: wax cylinder recordings of indigenous Siberian storytellers from 1901
Dr Alex King, University of Aberdeen
Free - King's Society of Antiquaries of Scotland lecture

**Tuesday 24th January 2012**
Intangible Cultural Heritage in Scotland: preservation, exploitation and development
Alistair McCleery, Edinburgh Napier University
£3 - MacRobert Elphinstone Institute lecture

**Tuesday 31st January 2012**
Exhibiting Scottish Identity: the 1911 Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry
Neil Curtis, University of Aberdeen
Free - King’s Society of Antiquaries of Scotland lecture

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**REBELS WITH A CAUSE EVENTS PROGRAMME**

Continued from page 3

**Thursday 16 February, 6 - 6.45pm**
Imagined Architectures: Jacobite and Hanoverian
Professor Peter Davidson, Chair in Renaissance Studies, University of Aberdeen

**Thursday 1st March, 6 - 6.45pm**
Unfriendly Friends and Friendly Foes: negotiating Jacobitism in the Waverly Novels
Dr. Alison Lumsden, Senior Lecturer, School of Language and Literature

**Thursday 8th March, 6 - 6.45pm**
Fighting for Forgiveness: Former Jacobites and the Global British Empire
Dr Andrew MacKillop, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy

‘Rebels’ events are located in the Special Collections Centre, Lower Ground Floor, University Library. Events are free of charge, though registration is advised

For more information or to reserve a place, contact Special Collections Centre Events at scc.events@abdn.ac.uk

Details of these and further events are at www.abdn.ac.uk/library/news-events/events/
JUDGING A BOOK BY ITS COVER

What can bindings tell us about books ... ?

The answer is that bindings can tell far more than most of us had ever realised!

On 26th May 2011 Jane Pirie of Special Collections and Archives gave a fascinating talk beautifully illustrated by projecting very high quality photographs taken by her colleague Kim Downie (Digitisation Officer for Special Collections). A substantial number of members attended. All thoroughly enjoyed the talk and the exhibits of the books in question taken from the University’s collections. While Jane claimed not to be an expert the audience speculated how greater knowledge and enthusiasm could possibly be demonstrated by someone she would regard as an expert.

We were taken through the earliest bindings which were all to the individual requirements of the owners – illustrated by three copies of the same 1604 medical text in very different qualities of binding. The least impressive one had been used by students! Individual binders and patrons can often be identified by features of the binding of such early works. The mysteries of the various types of sewing were illustrated with examples from incunabula from 1499 and later types. We refer to the boards of a book without always realising that in origin they were normally wooden boards, oak in England, pine in Scotland and Scandinavia. Pasteboard originated in the Middle East when scrap (and expensive) paper was recycled by being pasted together in boards. Although some limp vellum was used as bindings without internal boards, mostly boards would be covered by leather of one sort or another. A tutorial followed on identification of the types, ranging from sheep through calf to the finest goatskin used for “Morocco” leather and even to how pigskin shows groups of three hair marks under magnification. Parchment, paper and even textile bindings were also illustrated.

Decorative endpapers can sometimes reveal ancient fragments or be highly decorative William Morris designs. We have all heard of, but rarely seen, fore edge painting, but the variety of gilding, painting, marbled sprinkling and even gaufruring impressed patterns on edges was excellently illustrated. We had examples of metal clasps and corners, including one of Bishop Elphinstone’s books, of gold tooling and blind tooling of an extraordinarily high standard. The blind tooling on a 1559 volume from the Duncan Liddell library is particularly remarkable in addition to being the earliest example of such work from Aberdeen. Continued on page 7
A selection of stunning images from our Special Collections are now available from The Print Shop on the ground floor of the University Library.

At present there are over 70 images from our rare books to choose from, varying from a black and white etching of St. Machar’s Cathedral, paintings of Japanese life, to exquisitely coloured drawings of American, Asian and Australian birds. These can be viewed on a rolling slideshow in The Print Shop which runs while the library building is open.

Copies will be printed to order and can be collected from The Print Shop or posted to our customers. All images will be printed to a high quality using photo glossy or matte paper.

Costs and sizes available are:

- A4 £9.99
- A3 £12.99

The Print Shop is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. and orders can be requested by calling 01224 272578 during these hours, or emailing printshop@abdn.ac.uk at any time.
A £250,000 project to ‘unlock’ the secrets of some of Scotland’s greatest museum treasures has gone ‘live’. Over two years nine Scottish universities, led by the University of Aberdeen, have collaborated on the Revealing the Hidden Collections project to digitally catalogue more than 1.8 million objects in some of the nation’s most important collections. For the first time these can now be searched through a dedicated website (http://www.umissearch.org.uk/) and through internet search engines.

Scottish universities hold a high proportion of Scotland’s nationally important collections – more than 1.8 million items, holding 32% of the country’s materials on the history of science, 31% of the nation’s coins and medals, 24% of its fine art, 20% of natural science collections and 18% of its world culture collections. Collections in four universities, including the entire holdings of the Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow, have recently been recognised as nationally important.

However, it has been difficult for people to discover what was in these collections. Each institution holds its own unique databases, many of which were not online, and not everything had been catalogued. This project has created descriptions of all the Accredited museum collections in Scotland’s universities. These records, alongside all existing electronic records relating to individual items, mean that many thousands of new records are now available through a single online search.

Users will find over 2000 records that categorise groups of objects by a common theme, such as subject, geographical association, donor, or object type. There are also over 170,000 individual object entries providing information such as physical descriptions and provenance, while 1000 images are being made available for selected objects.

A partnership with the Collections Trust, an independent UK-based organisation working with museums, libraries, galleries and archives worldwide to improve the management of their Collections, also allows project data to be searched through their online service the Culture Grid, via Google and through Europeana, a Europe-wide cultural database supported by the European Commission.

Neil Curtis, Head of Museums at the University of Aberdeen and project manager said:

“The collections are of exceptional importance to the nation but before the project less than eight per cent of collections could be viewed on the web.... The internet is now an important research tool, for school children, academics and those with an interest in a particular subject but they had few ways of discovering what we hold, or viewing it...This has been a remarkably successful project that has shown both the riches of the museum collections in Scotland’s universities and the benefit of university museum staff working closely together to provide access to as wide a public as possible. It is particularly gratifying to see Aberdeen’s collections displayed alongside those of other universities, enabling people to discover material that is spread among a number of institutions. For example, there are works by the painter SJ Peploe in Stirling, Dundee, St Andrews, Glasgow and Edinburgh as well as Aberdeen, while there are Ancient Egyptian mummies in both Glasgow and Aberdeen.”

Revealing the Hidden Collections is a partnership between the University of Aberdeen, University of Dundee, University of Edinburgh, Glasgow School of Art, University of Glasgow, Heriot-Watt University, Robert Gordon University, University of St Andrews and the University of Stirling and was funded by a £240,000 SPIRIT grant from the Scottish Funding Council.

All collections are now searchable through the UMIS search portal at http://www.umissearch.org.uk/.

By Joanne Milne, Communications Officer for Arts, Social Sciences and Culture
**INSIDE THE LIBRARY...**

**To visit us**
The library welcomes visitors. The Hardback Café on the ground floor is open to all. To visit the other floors simply bring photographic proof of identity, and also your Friends Membership card if you wish to borrow.

**Borrowing books**

*Life Members* are entitled to free borrowing membership of the Library.

*Annual Members* receive a discounted rate: Aberdeen Graduates £30.00 returnable deposit plus £15.00 annual subscription

*Other Friends of the Library* £30.00 returnable deposit plus £25.00 annual subscription
BRIEF NOTES ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF FAUL AS IT ENTERS ITS 50TH YEAR

Graham Hunter, Chairman of FAUL, is currently researching the history of the Friends using our Special Collections and archive resources.

Dr W.D. Simpson: founder of the Friends

The organisation known as The Friends of Aberdeen University Library (FAUL) came into existence on 6 October 1962. It was the brainchild of Dr Douglas Simpson. W. Douglas Simpson C.B.E., M.A., D. Litt., L.L.D., F.S.A., F.S.A. Scot., was the Librarian of the University of Aberdeen from 1926 until 1966. An excellent tribute to him can be found in Vol. XL1 (1965-66) of Aberdeen University Review at page 269 and long before that, he inspired a cartoon on page 103 of the December 2, 1927 edition of Alma Mater. (see opposite page)

During his hugely successful time as Librarian, the libraries of the University expanded enormously. The staff increased from 6 to 63; the annual expenditure on books from £2,463 to £62,423; the books borrowed from 15,000 to 76,000 and the reading places from 144 to 1,580.

The Formation of FAUL

Dr Simpson’s first attempt to form FAUL was made in 1957. It did not prove immediately successful. On 25 October 1957 he wrote to a former colleague saying that he hoped that FAUL would be launched ‘on the occasion of the opening of the new extension at King’s College Library early in the next session.’ These new extensions were formally opened on 7 March 1958 and included ‘the new Senatus Academicus room (now the old Senate Room) which forms part of the wing that has been built linking up the east end of the old Library building (now the Conference Centre) with the Elphinstone Hall.’

It was also noted that ‘under the Elphinstone Hall a book stack has been formed, with Compactus bookshelves which open and close, very much on the principle of a concertina. This is a Swiss invention and it is the first time it has been used in a British library.’

Dr Simpson returned to the fray in 1961, and this time his efforts met with success. Approval was given by both the Court and the Senate. The original objective was ‘to encourage gifts and bequests of prints and books as well as of money and to provide from its annual subscriptions a source of revenue from which the library acquire rare or valuable books such as it might not be able to purchase from its present resources.’ The only comment which Court made about the draft constitution was to suggest that the words ‘Society of…’ be not used as part of the title as the words ‘Society of Friends…’ were associated with another body!

FAUL came into existence at a joint meeting of the Library Committee and the Steering Committee on 6 October 1962. An Executive Committee of the Friends was elected and in addition, there was an Honorary President and not less than twenty-four Vice-Presidents. It is interesting to note that of the sole nominee for President and 24 nominees for Vice-President there was one Duke, three Earls, four Lords, three Knights, only one Lady (Lady Taylor), one Lord Provost, four Professors, three Doctors, two Majors and only three entitled to the humble appellation of ‘My Dear Sir’.

We know this from the hand-written notes, carefully prepared by Douglas Simpson along with his letters of invitation of 20 September 1962. The note gave his secretary all the names, addresses and appellations of the various nominees. Indeed in the case of one of the humble ‘My Dear Sirs’ – Peter Scott – it could be argued that the appellation should have been ‘My Dear Lord Rector’ for that was the post held by him in September 1962.
With a little help from our Friends

The Friends have continued to carry out their original objectives. Over the years they have made, or assisted with, 143 purchases for the Library at a total cost of £118,000. Their generosity has culminated in their gifts in 2010 of (a) £200,000 towards the building costs of the New Library and (b) £62,813 towards the new Outreach and Learning programme.

The Outreach and Learning gift was made in memory of the late Roy H. Thomson who was Chairman of the Friends from 1987 until 2009. The gift towards the building costs is to be commemorated by the naming of a room in the new Special Collections area as ‘The Friends’ Room’ with an appropriate plaque on its wall. The gift towards the new Outreach and Learning programme is to be commemorated on the Lower Ground Floor in the University Library.
Friends of Aberdeen University Library

Executive Committee

President
Mr Jack Webster

Chairman
Mr Graham Hunter

Honorary Treasurer
Vacancy

Honorary Secretary
and Membership Secretary
Miss Sheona C. Farquhar

Members
Mr Phil Astley
Mrs Chris Banks
(University Librarian & Director of Library, Special Collections & Museums)
Miss Georgia Brooker
(Editor of Friends’ News)
Dr Hazel Hutchison
Professor Michael C. Meston
Miss Christine A. Miller
Professor Derek Ogston
Miss Eilidh M. Scobbie

Friends are warmly invited to our Winter meeting

A Tour of the University Library
(including The Friends’ Room in the Special Collections Centre)
on Tuesday 17th January at 7.00pm
Refreshments will be served
RSVP to Sheona Farquhar - contact details below

Honorary Treasurer Robin Armstrong-Viner, Committee members Professor Chris Gane and Helen F. Stevenson have left the university. We thank them for their support and wish them all the best for the future.

Sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Opening Hours*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University Library</td>
<td>Monday - Friday: 8am-10pm (closed at 8 pm on Fridays) Saturday: 9am-10pm Sunday: 11am-10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical &amp; Taylor Libraries</td>
<td>Monday - Saturday: 9am - 10pm (closed at 8 pm on Fridays) Sunday: 1pm - 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reid Library, Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health</td>
<td>Monday - Friday: 9am - 5:30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Collections Centre Reading Room</td>
<td>Monday - Friday: 9am - 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gallery (University Library)</td>
<td>Monday - Thursday: 10am – 7pm Friday - Saturday: 10.am – 5pm Sunday: 12noon – 4pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Museum</td>
<td>Monday - Friday: 10am -4pm Open until 7pm on Tuesdays Saturday: 11am - 4pm</td>
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To contact us call Honorary Secretary, Sheona Farquhar on 01224 273773, or email s.c.farquhar@abdn.ac.uk

The Friends of Aberdeen University Library