



friends newsletter Issue 88 Summer 2021

Note from the Editor: *Priscilla Barlow* psbarlow@sky.com

Preparing this issue has been a bit of a challenge as the Friends cannot yet meet face to face. We have neither visits nor talks to report or dates for your diary to tempt. However we hope to hold your interest.

We celebrate the life of the late Peter Davies and we have been touched by the readiness of friends and colleagues

to send tributes. Due to the number of these we have had to omit certain regular features which are being held over to the next issue. But we are delighted to also include a report on the Friends' funding of the planting of a tree, on campus, in Peter's memory.

We thank the university librarian, Susan Ashworth for her comprehensive

annual report and David Baillie, our convenor, for his. We are, as always, indebted to Siobhan Convery and Julie Gardham whose cooperation has greatly assisted the preparation of this issue. As ever my thanks to Duncan for his unflinching patience and Gerry for his imaginative design. I sign off in the hope that we shall meet again very soon.



In memoriam

After considerable deliberation about an appropriate memorial to the late Peter Davies, the committee unanimously agreed that the planting of a tree on campus would be most fitting. Sincere thanks are due to Siobhan Convery who undertook all research with characteristic thoroughness including consultation with the university arborist (did you know there is one?). On his advice, a yellow-berried rowan was chosen and permission was given to plant it on the grassy slope beside the Reading Room – well within sight of Peter's second home – the Library. A plaque was chosen and the tree was duly planted. It is hope that at a future date a live dedication ceremony can be held for what we now call affectionately "Peter's Tree".

• **Dr Peter Davies – an appreciation p4-5**



An extraordinary year

I'd like to start by paying tribute to the remarkable work of Library staff over the past year who have made exceptional efforts to support University students and staff during the most challenging of periods.

The fast-moving and changing environment produced by the COVID-19 pandemic required an agile and creative response from the Library and our staff rose to the challenge in many ways. During periods of lockdown Library staff ensured that virtual services to the University community were as seamless as possible:

- we supported online learning, teaching and research, sourcing additional electronic content;
- our Reach Out support services have been able to support staff and students online as well as in person;
- our College Librarians, College Library Support Team and Research Information Team have offered teaching and one-to-one sessions online throughout the past year;
- we were able to repurpose laptops from our on campus laptop loan service to lend to students who were struggling without an appropriate device;
- we launched the Glasgow Anywhere website which brings together Library and IT resources in one place to make it easier for staff and students to gain access.

We have also been able to offer access to safe study spaces in the Library, Reading Room and other venues on campus since August 2020. This has been a huge logistical effort, including colleagues from Estates who supported with enhanced cleaning

Glasgow University Library during 2020/21



**Report: SUSAN ASHWORTH,
Executive Director of
Information Services
& University Librarian**

and signage. We have had to respond to fast-changing Scottish Government guidance which meant at one point we had to suspend access to the book stacks and borrowing, and very quickly introduce an Essential Loans fetching service. We have had lovely feedback from students who greatly appreciated the Library remaining open for study and who have described it as a 'lifeline'.

The pandemic has been a catalyst for innovation in terms of academic engagement with the Library's archival and special collections material. Building on existing, successful pre-pandemic partnerships, the Archives and Special Collections (ASC) team, in conjunction with IT and academic colleagues, reviewed and redesigned services in support of collections-based research and teaching. One great example is our Virtual Collections Classroom.

Over summer 2020, a ceiling-mounted visualiser, with recording functionality, was installed in the ASC

Seminar Room to enable teaching to be pre-recorded or delivered live to students. This has had a transformational effect on teaching practice; the ceiling-hung camera provides an over-the-shoulder, vicarious handling experience. The ability to zoom in at high resolution permits detailed examination of materials, as the Tweet pictured above demonstrates.

One of our most significant accessions in the period 2019/20 is the University's born-digital records documenting its response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the shift to working and learning from home. Activity in this space has included capturing the University's website, particularly the Glasgow Anywhere portal; social media output, such as #QuaranTeamUofG stories; email communications to staff and students; online events, such as Offer Holders' Day and public engagement programmes; guidance and procedures around the delivery of the exam cycle through Moodle.

We have recently created and appointed to a new Digital Archivist post which will support us in the acquisition and preservation of born-digital materials, a growing area of importance in our archiving work.

Our thanks, as ever, go to the Friends for your support—we have been able to fund a second round of Visiting Research Fellows, funding thirteen Fellowships. We extended the programme to facilitate visits to our collections as travel and guidance permit.

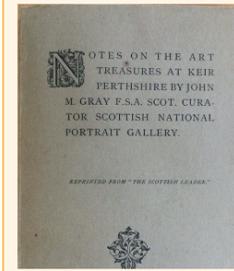
Message from our convenor: David Baillie (davidsbaillie1@btinternet.com)

It seems appropriate to be writing this on 19th July, the ridiculously named 'freedom day' (although slightly less so outside England). There is a quite palpable sense of anxiety among many concerning the immediate future. Obviously the Friends are hardly a major focus of the consequences of COVID since March last year but it remains true it has been difficult to keep major activity going. Much will require to be 'repaired' once we feel able to move away from the limitations of Zoom. To a considerable extent, this will have to

be done in conjunction with the always-supportive Library staff, working at the moment on an uncertain timetable. We will, of course, remain optimistic and committed to the Friends' future. At the very least, you can rest assured that our editorial team will ensure you receive your Newsletters, packed with good things and on time! We would hope to turn this hiatus to good use by reconsidering both the future development and structure of Friends. How, for example, do we (should we?) adapt to an increasingly

digital world. Are programmes of talks still what members want? And so on ... This leads to my relentless, and hitherto fairly unsuccessful, request for new Trustee/Committee members, who have skill sets suitably for exactly such a full-scale review. Accountant? IT guru? Strategic development? Membership development? These and other skills warmly welcomed. Any written thoughts likewise. Summer is currently looking more like what we expect. I trust you benefit from this and above all stay safe.

In memoriam: Helen Cargill Thomson



Lovers of Archives & Special Collections will undoubtedly be familiar with our unrivalled collection of emblem books, originally forming part of the library of Sir William Stirling Maxwell (1818-1878).

As well as being a renowned bibliophile, Stirling Maxwell also collected paintings, engravings, ceramics, and silver – a wonderful collection that was housed at his house at Keir in Perthshire.

We are therefore delighted that FGUL have kindly enabled the purchase of a small but fascinating book that describes all these art treasures, thus helping us more

fully understand Stirling Maxwell's wider collecting interests.

Written by John Gray (1850-1894), the founding curator of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 'Notes on the art treasures at Keir Perthshire' (Edinburgh: 1887) takes the form of a room-by-room tour of Keir; it thus provides a full record of the contents of the collections, and also documents how works were originally hung or otherwise displayed.

Limited to an edition of 100 copies, this rare book has been acquired in memory of Helen Cargill-Thompson.

JULIE GARDHAM

Visiting Research Fellowship

Anke Timmermann

It is wonderful to join the Friends of Glasgow University Library after researching the Library's special collections for the past two decades and benefitting from the Friends' support via a Library Research Fellowship!

I first came to Glasgow for my MPhil in 2002 specifically to work on the Ferguson collection of alchemical manuscripts.

Following a PhD in history of science at Cambridge and during my postdoctoral career – which included a return to Glasgow to work for the Letters of Bess of Hardwick Project – I revisited the illustrated manuscripts whenever an opportunity arose. But it was especially after becoming an antiquarian bookseller that I became fascinated with the history of the Ferguson collection itself. I was able to research John Ferguson's books and manuscripts, the archive of his papers, his remarkable research on the history of chemistry, and the circumstances of how his scientific collections came to form part of



the University's collections with the help of a Glasgow Library Research Fellowship two summers ago. Without the support of the Fellowship it would have been very difficult to justify time away from the antiquarian book business, whereas the award made it possible for me to immerse myself in the Ferguson materials and write an article for The Book Collector, which was published in its Winter 2019 issue.

As a friend-turned-Friend of Glasgow University Library I look forward to continuing prospecting for gold in its alchemical collections as well as supporting the Library for many years to come.

PROFILE 30



Kirsteen Valenti

Kirsteen joined Team UofG as a Library Assistant in 1994. An experienced Library staff member, Kirsteen prides herself on delivering a professional support service for the university and wider community.

Over the years, Kirsteen first worked in the Maps, Official Publications and Statistics Unit (MOPS) where she discovered her interest in official publications. Kirsteen's role was student facing and she realised quickly that helping our library users find the right information was something she really enjoyed.

Enquiries ranged from geographers preparing for field trips, to medics looking at deprivation data and lawyers researching legislation. This role gave her a great foundation in library work but she was keen to extend her knowledge so then worked in other departments including Serials, Document Delivery and Cataloguing, before returning as supervisor in MOPS. A few years later she became Head of the Unit.

In 2011, she became Manager of the newly formed College Library Support Team (CLST). Her remit now includes UG and PGT library induction and information skills sessions, management of our branch libraries in the School of Chemistry, the Dental School and the School of Veterinary Medicine and MOPS.

Kirsteen's varied role continues to satisfy her curious mind and she is always busy thinking of ways to do new things or make improvements.

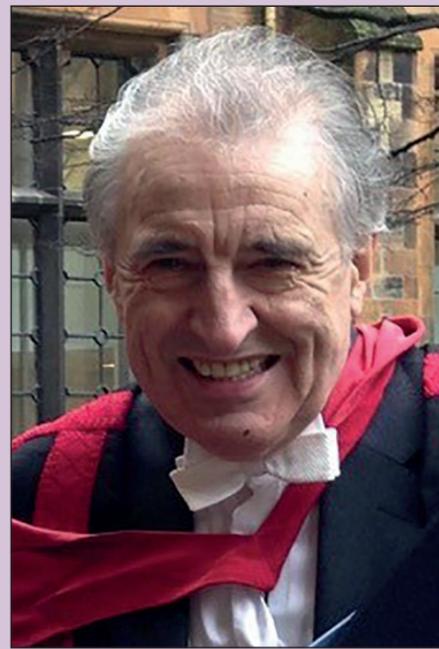
Outwith the Library Kirsteen has a keen interest in coffee with cake, Scottish gin, (in fact, not just Scottish gin) and live music. Her time is mostly spent looking after her teenage daughter, and not forgetting her best buddy Nyla, her young Maine Coon.

Dr Peter Davies: an appreciation

STEPHEN RAWLES (founder member) writes: Peter was an usher at our wedding - it's a measure of his meticulous attention to detail, that it was he who checked up on the correct way to address an Austrian count and countess - the people my wife Alison had au paired for before going to university. Another happy memory is of Peter at a Scotland/Wales match at Murrayfield, singing "Land of my fathers" at the top of his pleasing tenor voice, oblivious to the fact that he was in the middle of hardcore Scottish supporters!

LISE TANNAHILL (former student) writes: I met Peter when he took up the role of second supervisor of my PhD in 2012. He was a kind and thoughtful man who offered invaluable support during my studies and beyond. When I think of Peter, what first comes to mind is his enthusiasm for and openness to expanding his knowledge into new areas: at a conference we attended together in 2017, he gave an excellent conference paper on regionalist comics from 1950s Picardie. Peter's work was unfailingly detailed and extremely rigorous, and I learnt a lot from working with him. Peter was always very generous: I remember him, on several occasions, knocking on my office door to tell me about an opportunity or a useful research article, or to bring me a book from the library book sale that he thought I would like (I always did). Peter was the ideal PhD supervisor and a fine scholar. I will miss him, and Glasgow will be poorer without him.

DR GEOFFREY ROGER (University of London) writes: The day after having had my first conversation with Peter Davies, a full list of recommended reading on various historical questions we'd casually discussed landed in my mailbox, kindly compiled and sent by him. A few years and many more bibliographies later, as Peter's supervisee, I gratefully wrote in the acknowledgement section of my thesis that he had 'offered me more support than a PhD candidate can ever hope for'. Later on I heard similar stories from each and



By **PRISCILLA BARLOW**

Peter was a Senior Lecturer and subsequently an Honorary research fellow in the School of Modern Languages and Cultures in the University of Glasgow. He was a founder member of the Friends in 1976 and was a committee member from 2007 until his death in 2020.

I first met Peter when I joined the Friends committee. Over the years as I got to know him, I was always impressed by his scholarly approach to everything he tackled. I particularly grew to appreciate his wit. Collaborating with him on editing work was so instructive and also fun. A man of immense charm and a wonderful presence at our social events. I shall miss the cheery *bons mots* in his emails.

Peter's commitment to the Friends of the Library was total and as Honorary Secretary his invaluable work in maintaining links with the campus is likely to be irreplaceable. His 'thank you' speeches to speakers at our talks were legendary; renowned for their evident knowledge of everyone's subject: indeed mini-lectures in themselves.

There surely can be no introduction more fitting to this appreciation than the description of Peter by himself which he wrote for the *Profiles* column in the Friends' newsletter.

We thank those friends and colleagues who have so generously shared their memories of this memorable scholar and gentleman.

every acquaintance of his that I've stumbled upon, and it has become clear there is a whole army of us feeling endlessly thankful to Peter for his dedication & kindness, and now endlessly sad for losing him. I hope Peter didn't leave this world feeling sorry he never received as much as he gave!

Hwyl fawr fy mrawd, gorffwys mewn hedd ♥

Goodbye my brother rest in peace

GRAEME SMITH (former convenor): I only knew Peter in the last 12 years or so through the Friends of Glasgow University Library and soon enjoyed his linguistic thoughts and experiences in academia sans frontières. I was delighted when he accepted my invitation to become the society's secretary when I became its chairman. We worked together well and shared views upon all aspects of life and community. He was generous to the Friends, and of course in establishing his Peter V Davies Fellowship for the University. As you will recall, among many things over the decades he had at Glasgow he enthusiastically brought to our attention the Comic Book Exhibition and publication a few years back, which the society was pleased to support, and was a pivotal academic in leading

the editing of The University of Glasgow Library - Friendly Shelves. Just this year he kindly edited the texts of my latest book Glasgow's Blythswood which will be published in mid-2021. The Acknowledgement page has already been drafted, now of course the word 'late' is added, the words remain in happy remembrance.

PROFESSOR LAURENCE GROVE writes: Peter took up post in Glasgow in 1973 following studies in Leicester. He is known for his work on medieval linguistics and in particular on Occitan, of which he was a fluent speaker, although he also branched out to the language and culture of Québec, and, more recently, bandes dessinées. In 2016 he edited Friendly Shelves, the definitive, highly readable, account of the history and collections of Glasgow University Library, one of Europe's greatest: <https://www.glasgowwestend.co.uk/the-university-of-glasgow-friendly-shelves/> Above all Peter will be remembered for his tireless dedication to students at all levels. I recently had the honour of co-supervising two PhD theses with him (Kenan Koçak and Lise Tannahill) and in both cases the whole team was indebted to Peter's eagle eye for detail, his



innovation in finding new sources, and general approachability.

He gave generously to student scholarships at the University of Glasgow. Peter was a much-valued supporter of the Stirling Maxwell Centre, both in seminars and at dinner, where conversation went from troubadour poetry to Scottish independence, and, of course, rugby. Graeme Smith summed Peter up as 'a French linguist, native of Wales, and adopted Glaswegian. Glasgow's gain'. Peter passed away surrounded by books.

MARGARET PAXTON (former committee member) writes: Peter was a true gentleman, mannerly, helpful, reliable, and humble although of lofty academic intellect. He will be terribly missed. His death in November 2020 was a shock. Any tribute to Peter would be in the superlative. As committee member of FGUL he was most meticulous in carrying through what was required of him but he went the extra mile too by turning up at venues where Friends sold their fund raising cards to lay

PROFILES

6. Peter Davies

A founder member of the Friends and committee member since 2007, Peter is a former Senior Lecturer in French and nowadays an active Honorary Research Fellow attached to the University's School of Modern Languages and Cultures. His interest in French dialectology and medieval literature is partly explained by his background as the son of linguists in diglossic post-war South Wales as well as by inspirational education at Penarth Grammar School and the University of Leicester. His own involvement in wide-ranging teaching and supervising research in French language and culture at Glasgow has

inevitably developed his natural eclecticism, leading him from troubadour poetry and the music manuscripts of Guillaume de Machaut to transatlantic French, the use of contemporary back slang in French cinema and participation in Occitan summer schools in southern France. Alongside rugby and cricket, for this former dabbler in paint and serigraphy fine art remains another abiding passion, whether in order to identify the local style of medieval miniaturists or relate medieval iconographic and literary evidence, or simply for the aesthetic appreciation of artwork from Giotto to



Hockney. Peter is currently involved in the updating of FGUL publicity as part of the ongoing membership drive.

How Peter described himself in this self-penned profile from an earlier issue of our Newsletter

out tables and set the cards out on display, and be supportive till packing up time which was all an enormous boost to me especially in some awful weather. Peter was such a human being of whom we would truthfully say 'he made a difference'.

PROFESSOR GRAEME SMALL (Durham University, formerly University of Glasgow) writes: As an historian who studies medieval French sources, I often had the pleasure of speaking to Peter, and I always came away from our conversations with some benefit, great or small. With his deep and wide knowledge and his infectious enthusiasm, Peter reminded me very strongly of some of the great scholars of medieval French who taught me at Edinburgh, and about whom Peter, when we met in Glasgow, always managed to be very polite. His encouragement of a collaborative project we worked on together was invaluable to me and the rest of the team. The project concerns the sole surviving manuscript of the scurrilous collection of Burgundian tales based loosely on the Decameron, entitled the Cent Nouvelles nouvelles. Hunter bought the manuscript and left it to Glasgow University, where it has been the subject of several

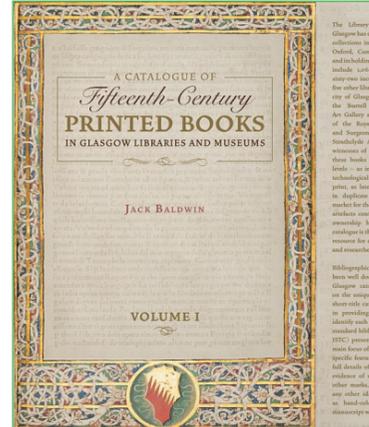
postgraduate theses (one of which, by Geoffrey Roger, was supervised by Peter). The project is coming to fruition now, and an important part of it will be a meticulous study of the language of the manuscript by Peter. Equally important in the project, however, was how generously Peter gave of his time, his sage advice and his sang froid throughout. At one particularly difficult time, when everything seemed to conspire against us, Peter came up with a phrase which has stuck in my mind ever since: 'Just remember what the Marines always say: "Whatever happens, keep moving"'. I have never found the source of the quote, and the mischievous glance and smile that accompanied it may suggest Peter had made it up on the spot to get us back on track, but it certainly did the trick. Peter Davies lives on in his publications and the fond memories he inspires in his students, friends and colleagues.

RONALD SINGLETON (former committee member) writes: I remember walking homewards along Great Western Road with Peter one late autumn evening after a meeting of the Friends. He explained that he couldn't help with some little project of ours because he was helping to organise

a conference that was to be held the following year. We parted at Kirklee Road and as I walked on I imagined Peter's life, seeing him crouched, round-shouldered, in a little attic room pondering by candle-light the spelling of a word in medieval French in two late nineteenth century books published in Germany... And over my soupe en boite du jour I myself pondered what little I knew of Peter. Ever courteous, unassuming and sensible, like many academics who have retired he continued to teach a small number of senior students engaged in research. He was after all one of a small band of experts in his field. In more ways than one he was one loner in a hundred. He is missed today by many in quiet studies like his own.

PROFESSOR ALISON RAWLES (former colleague and friend) writes: When I think of Peter, it's his infectious laugh that I think of first. I knew him best in the 70s when we were both newcomers to Glasgow, and I remember one particular day when a group of us went to the cinema together to see, believe it or not, a double bill of James Bond films. Peter laughed his way uproariously through, enlivening the occasion for us and, I'm sure, others in the cinema.

Book launch by Zoom



Report by Jean Gilmour Anderson

On the 23rd June the Library held a very successful online book launch for *A Catalogue of Fifteenth-Century Printed Books in Glasgow Libraries and Museums*, by Jack Baldwin.

The event was introduced by Martina McChrystal, Director of the Library. Martina welcomed the audience and expressed GUL's thanks to the Friends for the financial support that had made the incunabula project possible. The Zoom host was Sam Gilchrist, Senior Library Assistant in Archives & Special Collections.

Several members of GUL staff and two visiting scholars spoke about their favourite books and showed us pages with many interesting images.

Julie Gardham, Senior Librarian, chose



the Regiomontanus Calendar of 1482 with detailed woodcuts, some of which are 3D pull outs. Bob Maclean, Assistant Librarian chose Hortus Sanitatis, a treatise on plants and animals. Jack Baldwin's choice was Bessarion, on 'nature and art', printed before 1496. Professor Laurence (Billy) Grove spoke

about the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, published in 1499 and said to be "the most beautiful book of the Venetian Renaissance". It tells the story of a quest for lost love and asserts that all human things are but a dream. It is illustrated with delightful woodcut images (our favourite is a naked swan rider). Billy gave a most moving tribute to our late FGUL colleague Dr Peter Davies and spoke of how important Peter's contribution had been to GUL and to the Friends through many years.

We also heard interesting talks from visiting speakers: Dr Falk Eisermann, from the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin and Professor Cristina Dondi from the University of Oxford. To see some of the GUL holdings visit: <https://universityofglasgowlibrary.wordpress.com/tag/incunabula/>

Welcome old friends



We are delighted to report the return to the committee of two of our most loyal Friends: Graeme Smith - formerly our convenor - to be confirmed at next AGM and David Fergus- who co-edited the newsletter several years ago and has already been confirmed as a Trustee.

LIBRARY INFORMATION

Our Virtual Reading Room appointments are one-hour video calls allowing you to consult ASC (Archives and Special Collections) items.

University of Glasgow students and staff can book through the Appointments Booking System.

Appointment bookings can be made no later than 5 days before the start time of the slot, to allow us time to prepare. We are unable to offer same-day appointments.

Requests from users outside the University of Glasgow with pressing research needs will be considered (email library-asc@glasgow.ac.uk).

Level 12: Appointments are available on Thursdays and Fridays for consultations of our collections held on Level 12 of the University Library (Rare Books & Manuscripts, and

Scottish Theatre Archive).

Thurso St: Appointments are available on Mondays for consultations of our collections held at 13 Thurso St (University Archive, Scottish Business Archive).

Please specify the items you would like to consult, up to a maximum of three items per appointment. We will e-mail you to confirm your booking.

At the appointment start time we will email you a Zoom meeting link. (If you would prefer to use MS Teams for the call, please let us know when making your booking.)

During the session we will endeavour to answer any basic questions about the items you are consulting, but we are unable to undertake detailed research on your behalf.

DID YOU KNOW ABOUT... CHAINED LIBRARIES?



Hereford Cathedral Library

In the Middle Ages books were scarce and precious, each book being copied by hand which required hours of skilled labour. The advent of the printing press made them relatively cheap and more accessible.

The late Middle Ages saw the creation of publicly accessible libraries. The books were chained to allow the public to read while protecting the valuable collections from possible theft.

The chains were fitted to the corner or cover of the books via ringlets, and were long enough to allow the books to be taken from their shelves and read, but not removed.

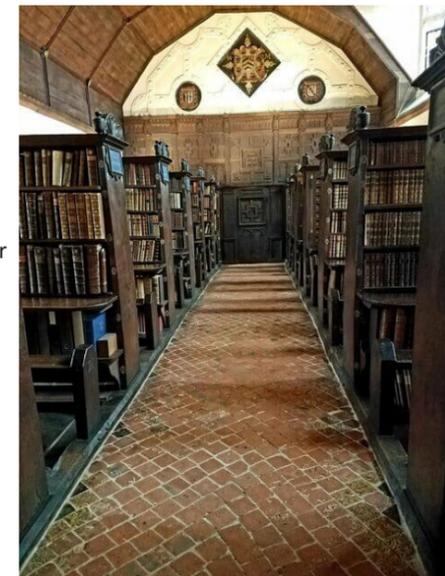
Only the librarian could remove the books from the chain using a key. The books were typically shelved with their foreedges facing the reader, rather than their spines which allowed allow books to be lifted down and opened without needing to be turned around, thus avoiding tangling the chain. Today there are only five extant chained libraries: Hereford Cathedral Library; Francis Trigge Chained Library, Grantham; Merton College Upper Library, Oxford; Wells Cathedral, Somerset; Wimbourne Minster, Dorset.



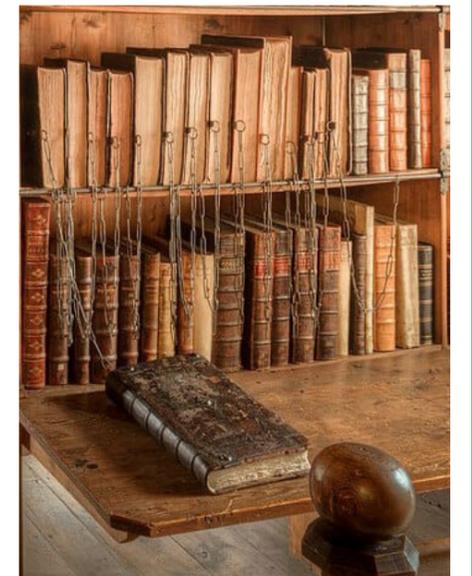
Francis Trigge Chained Library, Grantham



Wimbourne Minster, Dorset



Merton College Upper Library, Oxford



Wells Cathedral, Somerset



No dates for your diary

The Friends Committee regrets that at time of going to print they are unable to confirm any future talks, outings etc. However, there is an attractive list in planning stages. High on this list is the visit to Inveraray Castle and archive which had to be cancelled last May. When the situation is clearer we hope to have information for you which will be communicated by email or letter. However if there still cannot be a live AGM it is hoped to be able to set up one on Zoom.

FRIENDS OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

c/o University of Glasgow
Library, Hillhead Street,
Glasgow G12 8QE

EMAIL:
friends@lib.gla.ac.uk

WEBSITE:
www.gla.ac.uk/fgul
(The website is currently under redevelopment but may be used to contact committee members.)

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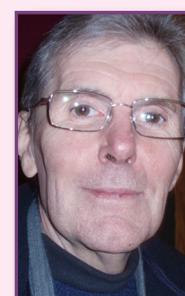
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