



friends newsletter Issue 89 Winter 2022

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

Although the Friends have still been unable to meet, the committee has continued to conduct its business by email and on Zoom – the latter often producing hilarious results with us all shouting at each other to ‘unmute’ or ‘switch your video on’. But despite time delays and crossed emails we managed to sign up three new committee members (see below), persuade our membership secretary to serve another term and appoint a new Honorary

Treasurer to replace Fiona Hamilton who has served more than three years. So, much to our surprise, Duncan and I think we have managed to produce an interesting enough issue that has information about the committee’s deliberations and decisions, an up-to-date Library report and articles for your interest. Sadly, there are no ‘Dates for your Diary’ but the visit to Inveraray Castle Archive is still top of the list when we can safely travel again. Once more,

we are asking the membership to write to us about the newsletter or indeed anything pertaining to the Friends in general. It would be so good to have a Letters to the editor column where we could exchange ideas and offer opinions. Thanks as always to Susan, Siobhan and Julie who are ever ready to supply information and correct copy and of course to Duncan who keeps me under control. We wish you a happy, safe and healthy new year



Courtesy Photographic Unit University of Glasgow

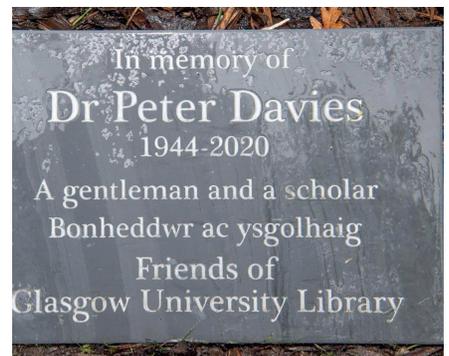
Peter’s tree

By DUNCAN BEATON

In memory of Dr Peter Davies, our good Friend of the Library and of the College, a short ceremony to scatter his ashes took place on Thursday 7th of October. A small group representing FGUL, his university colleagues, and other friends, watched as the ashes were

scattered on the south lawn and Dr Carolyn Kelly, University Chaplain, read the blessing ‘On Passing a Graveyard’ from *Benedictus: A Book of Blessings*, by Irish, poet, philosopher and priest John O’Donohue. The lines “May the wildflowers and grasses/Whisper their wishes into light” stayed fresh in the memory as Ramona Fotiade scattered her packets of seed near the spot.

(Continued on Page 5)



CONVENOR'S MESSAGE

David Baillie

Will I never learn? I concluded my last Newsletter section by observing that 'summer is looking more like what we expect'.

True, but then along comes Omicron and the COVID curse remains with us. (Perhaps you also were surprised at how much of the Greek alphabet you could still recite).

Uniquely, we have managed to have two AGMs in the intervening months. The Committee decided in both cases to provide all the relevant information either electronically or by post and this seemed to work well in terms of response. It can't, of course, replace personal contact, to which we continually aspire. We'll get there.



This would be an appropriate point at which to thank Fiona Hamilton for her five years as assiduous Treasurer. Her stewardship was first class and much appreciated.

We are delighted that Graeme Smith, both a former Convenor and

also a C.A., has agreed to take on this responsibility. We welcome also to the Committee another pair of 'weel-kent' faces in Jean Anderson (another former Convenor) and Iain Wotherspoon (who has been our unofficial photographer on many an occasion).

The Committee will continue to meet by Zoom on a regular basis and move as much forward as it possibly can. I remain grateful to them, the ever-supportive Library staff and our redoubtable Membership Secretary, Freda Tuck.

And let us all fervently trust we have to move no further through the Greek alphabet!

Library Service and Study Spaces

In August 2021, the Scottish Government announced that it would move beyond Level 0. In practical terms, that enabled the Library teams to review the facilities, services and spaces that would be available for the Autumn Semester of AY 2021/22 at the Main Library, Reading Room, site libraries and James McCune Smith Learning Hub. Under previous restrictions, the number of study spaces available on campus had been reduced to comply with physical distancing measures. With these restrictions removed, and following the completion of appropriate risk assessments, staff were able to increase the number of study spaces available to near pre-COVID-19 levels.

The UofG Life App continues to be actively developed by the University and was updated to highlight how busy both the Main Library and the James McCune Smith buildings are using a 'traffic light' system of red, amber and green to reflect study space availability. Digital signage at the turnstiles and on the ground floor of the Library also use this 'traffic light' system. This approach provides guidance on how busy these

Changing Service Delivery Environment. By SUSAN ASHWORTH, Director of Information Services and University Librarian. From report submitted to Library Committee 18 November 2021

spaces are and has enabled us to move away from the more controlled entry and queue management in place during earlier COVID Levels. We were also able to reopen some of our other greatly valued facilities, including our Prayer

and Reflection rooms in the Library and James McCune Smith building, and the Library's Family Study Lounge.

In Archives and Special Collections, the team built on the success of the Virtual Collections Classroom which was developed over the course of last session to offer a full range of in-person, virtual and hybrid teaching sessions with the collections.

Reach Out launched an extended virtual support service in November 2021, and the team are now providing help via UofG Helpdesk 8am –8pm Monday to Friday. The Reach Out team are developing an online chat service to support users wherever they are. The Inter Library Loan (ILL) service is back in place and the team are now fulfilling requests to this service. Further development of our collections has continued throughout this period.

Following consultation within the School of Modern Languages and Cultures, it was agreed that the Language Resource Library, previously based in the Hetherington Building, would be moved to the Level 8 Annexe of the University Library.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

To date there are 120 active members made up of 112 Annual Members, 9 Life Members and 1 Hon Life Member. The Newsletter is distributed to all members by Standard Mail except for 24 who have elected to receive this by email.
Freda Tuck Membership Secretary

BOOK PRIZE DEADLINE

FGUL have again agreed to fund and participate in the David Murray Book Collecting Prize.

Submission deadline is 25 February : proposed shortlisting date is 7 March; shortlisted presentations 21 March possibly via Zoom.

From Mexico to Madrid:

The conservation of University of Glasgow Library MS Hunter 24

Report by
JULIE GARDHAM
University of Glasgow
Archives & Special Collections

The Historia de Tlaxcala is a fascinating 16th century manuscript. It is a narrative history of the state of Tlaxcala in Mexico, accompanied by an illustrated chronicle of 156 drawings. Originally compiled by Diego Muñoz Camargo, the two parts of the manuscript were brought together when the work was presented to King Philip II of Spain as a diplomatic gift in 1584-85. Key to our understanding of the 16th century Spanish conquest of Mexico, the manuscript is of international cultural and historical importance.

The manuscript has been in significant demand for research, teaching and exhibitions for many years, but access has been limited owing to its many conservation issues.

A grant from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust (NMCT)



Keira McKee and John Mumford at work

has enabled us to embark on a conservation project to make the manuscript fully accessible again. The project got underway in September 2021. The NMCT grant provided us with the funds to recruit a six month part-time book conservator, Caroline Sharfenberg, to support the work of the conservation & preservation team in Archives & Special Collections, allowing in-house book conservator Keira McKee the time required for the conservation of the manuscript. Conservation

of the manuscript is now well underway. The project will include paper repairs and will aim to rebind the manuscript while conserving as much of the original sewing structure as possible. The treatment will also enable safe digitisation, and the full investigation and documentation of the manuscript's existing structure and materials.

The manuscript presents some unique conservation challenges, and skills development and training is also a crucial component of

the NMCT project. The grant therefore also funds support from John Mumford, an Independent Book & Paper Conservator, who will act as a mentor and work directly with Keira in our conservation studio in Glasgow. Over two separate weeks, he will provide specialist expertise to support decision-making around treatment options and pass on practical skills in new techniques to Keira.

You can follow the progress of the project via the manuscript's very own twitter account @MsHunter242.

Language Resource Collection's New Home

We are happy to share news that the Language Resource Collection (LRC), previously the Language Resource Library (LRL), has moved from the Hetherington Building to Level 8 Annexe of the Library.

The relocation of the collection followed a review of space within the School of Modern Languages and Cultures (SMLC), and a subsequent consultation which was shared with all students and staff attached to the SMLC. The collection moved in September and has created additional space within the Hetherington



Report by
KIRSTEEN VALENTI,
Manager,
College Library
Support Team

Building, where options for its future use are being explored. The LRC focuses on languages taught by the SMLC and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Along with academic study, many of the textbooks and multimedia guides are targeted at those wishing to improve their language skills. Having this collection in the Library presents a fantastic opportunity for a wider audience to make use of these resources as well as improved access at evenings and weekends for regular users. The collection

includes a number of films and documentaries in DVD format, so we have created a DVD viewing room on Level 8 (Rm 820). Although it is worth noting that many of these titles are increasingly available via subscription streaming services such as the Box of Broadcasts and Kanopy. As well as the transfer of the collection, the Language Resource Librarian has also joined us. Working as part of the College Library Support Team, she will provide support for the LRC and will also contribute to wider areas of activity.

PROFILE 31



Leo Konstantelos

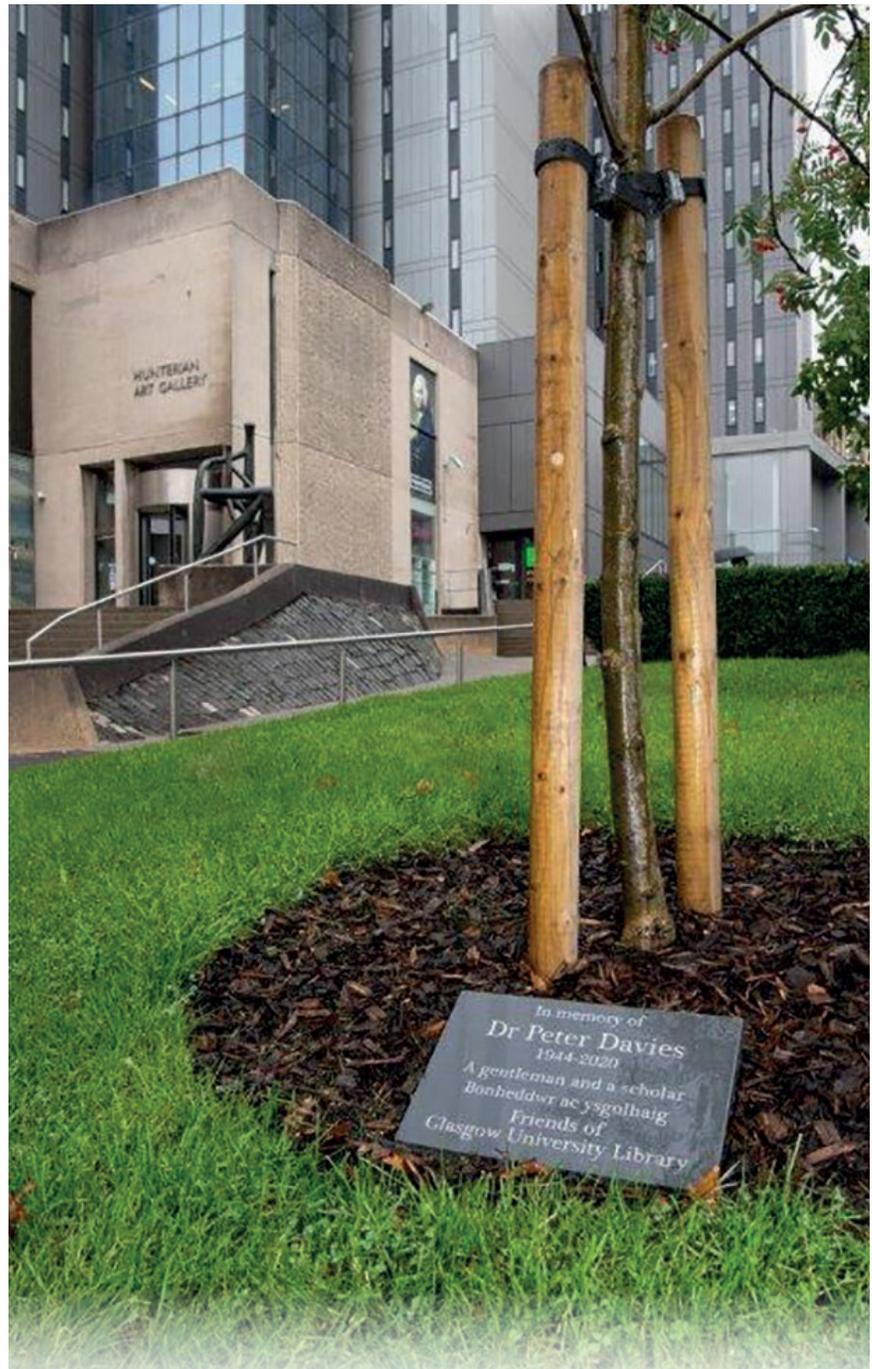
Leo was born and raised in the seaside suburbs of Athens, Greece. Brought up in a family of artists and engineers who admired cultural history, he became fascinated by technology, art and culture from a very young age.

It was this fascination that led him to complete a BSc in Business Management for tourism and cultural resources, followed by a MSc in Information Technology at the University of Glasgow. His doctoral thesis on documentation and preservation of digital art through digital libraries epitomised Leo's research interests, and set the foundations for an exciting and varied career.

He has conducted research and led initiatives in major EU-funded projects on digital curation and preservation; and has worked with institutions nationally and internationally to promote long-term preservation of born-digital cultural heritage. He was the inaugural Data Curator and later Manager of Digital Scholarship at the University of Melbourne, where he introduced several innovations in acquiring, processing and managing digital records for the long-term. Leo returned from Australia in 2016, and worked as a Lecturer in Information Studies at the University of Glasgow until 2021.

In his new role as Digital Archivist in Archives & Special Collections, he is responsible for establishing a digital curation and preservation platform for digital archival records; and contributing to initiatives and actions relating to the creation, management and dissemination of digital collections.

Leo has lived in Glasgow for 16 years, and is proud to call Scotland his adoptive home. He loves reading high fantasy novels, crafting leather accessories, baking extravagant cakes and can never say no to a good video game!



Dr Peter Davies

(Continued from front)

We then made our way through the quads to Peter's Tree, near to the Library, where colleagues and friends were welcome to say a few words of remembrance. The tree, sorbus aucuparia, a native mountain ash or rowan, was covered in ripe red berries, ready to sustain the thrushes in winter.

Rowan trees can grow in the most unlikely of places, on the barren hills or the depths of a native forest. The ancient Celts believed the veil between the after world and the mortal world was thinnest on mountain summits, this gave the rowan a special spiritual significance in Celtic Mythology. It symbolises the fragility of life, motherhood,

birth, blood, protection, and survival. In Peter's native Welsh the tree has two names, cerddinen and crafal, sometimes translated as "The Lamenting Fruit". This is derived from a Welsh Christian tradition that Christ's Cross was carved from the wood of the rowan, and the subsequent association of the tree's red fruit with the blood of Christ.

Even in modern times rowan trees are revered in Celtic countries, and there is a lot of superstition surrounding them. In Scotland they were often planted at the front door or gate of a cottage, to ward off witches and prevent evil from entering. So Peter's Tree is well placed, near the door of the Library.

Newes from Scotland

For ten years Book of the Month ran as a virtual exhibition on the Archives & Special Collections website. As the name suggests, each month a different book or manuscript from the Library would be highlighted to showcase the immense wealth and variety of our extensive Special Collections.

Although this feature was discontinued in 2009 Book of the Month archive can be viewed online at - <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/archivespecialcollections/digitisedcollections/bookofthemontharchive/>

However, we thought it would be interesting over the next issues to highlight items from this collection. Selecting randomly our first choice is *Newes from Scotland*.

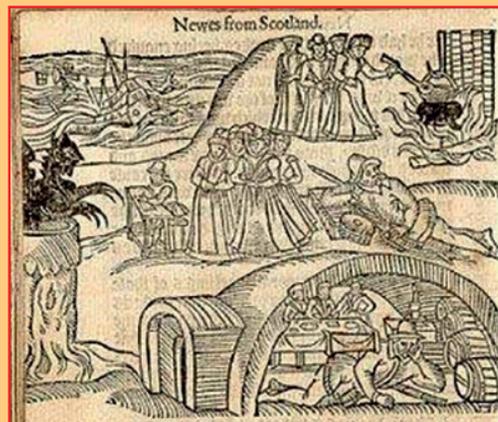
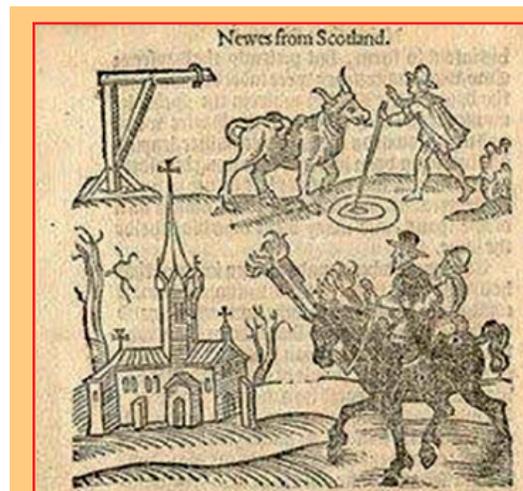
The extracts here are based on an article for Archives and Special Collections (ASC) written by Niki Russell (2000) and reproduced with permission from ASC. Our thanks to Julie Gardham.

Newes from Scotland is the earliest tract on Scottish witchcraft. It claims to give a true account of a famous trial of alleged witches in North Berwick which had far reaching effects due to the fact that King James VI himself played a prominent part in it, giving credence to the existence of witchcraft and setting the standard for later trials.

Our copy is from the library of John Ferguson (1837-1916), a bibliographer and Regius Professor of Chemistry at Glasgow University.

This tale of supposed witchcraft began with the arrest of a maidservant named Geillis Duncan who was suspected by her employer, David Smeaton of Tranent. Geillis Duncan was tortured with the pilliwinks on her fingers and by binding or winching her head with a cord or roape. She did not confess until her torturers declared they had found her "devil's mark". Once Geillis was committed to prison it did not take her long to accuse others of witchcraft. These people were Agnes Sampson, Agnes Tompson, Doctor Fian, alias John Cunningham, Barbara Napier and Effie MacCalyan, to name but a few. In all around 70 people were implicated in this case.

Agnes Sampson was arrested and



**A true Discourse,
Of the apprehension of sundrie Witches lately taken
in Scotland: whereof some are executed,
and some are yet imprisoned.
With a particular recitall of their examinations, taken
in the presence of the Kings Maiestie.**

Newes from Scotland.
Declaring the damnable life of Doctor Fian a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in January last. 1591.
Which Doctor was register to the devil, that sundrie times preached at North Baricke Kirke, to a number of notorious Witches.
With the true examinations of the said Doctor and witches, as they vntered them in the presence of the Scottish King.
Discouering how they pretended to bewitch and drowne his Maiestie in the sea, coming from Denmark, with such other wonderful matters as the like hath not bin heard at anie time.
Published according to the Scottish copie.

TO THE READER.
THE MANIFOLD vntruths which are spread abroad, concerning the detestable actions & apprehension of those witches whereof this historie following truly inuiceth, hath caused me to publish the same in print, and the rather for that sundry written coppies are lately dispersed thereof, containing that the said Witches were first discovered by means of a poore Pedler, traueiling to the towne of Trenten, and that by a wonderful manner hee was in a moment conuayed at midnight from Scotland to Burdeaux in France (being places of no small distance) into a Merchantes seltter there, and after, being sent from Burdeaux into Scotland by certain Scottish merchants to the Kings Maiestie, that hee discovered those Witches, and was the cause of their apprehension: with a number of matters miraculous and incredible: all which in truth are most false. Neuertheless to satisfie a number of honest mindes, who are desirous to be informed of the veritie and truth of their confessions, which for certaintie is more strange then the common report runneth, and yet with more truth, I haue undertaken to publish this short Treatise, which declareth the true discourse of all that happened, and aswell what was pretended by those wicked and detestable.

Newes from Scotland.
he might the better trie and finde out the truth of the same, did with the helpe of others, torment her with the torture of the pilliwinks, upon her fingers, which is a grieuous torture, and binding of winching her head with a cord or roape, which is a most cruell torment also, yet would he not confesse a iur thing, whereupon they suspecting that she had bene marked by the deuill (as commonly too they are) made diligent search about her, and found the eniuis mark to be in her fore eare, of fore part of her tyzate: which being found, they concluded that all her doings was done by the wicked alluements and intiments of the deuill, and that she did them by totterent.

Book of the Month

eventually confessed under torture to being a witch and implicating all the others. James Fian, the schoolmaster at Salt pans, was also questioned and would not confess until he had been dreadfully tortured. He then told a farcical tale regarding a love spell he tried on a local gentlewoman that had taken his fancy.

James VI obviously believed in the existence of witchcraft and took a personal interest in the story that these "witches" had conspired to kill him by magic but even he found the stories exaggerated as is shown when "his Maiestie saide they were all extreame lyars". He later changed his mind when Agnes Sampson took him aside and apparently told him the exact words of his conversation with his new wife on their wedding night. This was seen

by the King as irrefutable proof that witchcraft had been performed against him.

Poor Doctor Fian was put to more torture but would confess nothing more even though his legs were totally crushed in the "bootes". The King and his Council then decided that he was to be made an example of "to remayne a terrour to all others heereafter, that shall attempt to deale in the lyke wicked and ungodlye actions, as witchcraft, sorcery, conjuration and such lyke". Dr. Fian was burned at Castle Hill in Edinburgh in late January, 1591. It is not recorded what happened to all the accused persons but certainly Agnes Sampson and others were condemned and burnt as witches. At the time *Newes From Scotland* was published they were still languishing in prison.

Visiting Research Fellowships

The Friends are once again funding visiting Research Fellowships. In total 12 have been awarded: four by the Library, five by the William Lind Foundation and three by the Friends who are supporting each scholar with the sum of £2000. The awards were made in 2020 but because of the pandemic research projects are deferred.



Fiona Milne



Peader Ó Muircheartaigh



Sebastian Verweij

The Fellowships are competitive peer-assessed awards. They are designed to provide financial support towards the costs of travel and accommodation to enable researchers to work on the unique collections held in the University Library.

The successful recipients should spend between two and four weeks over the course of a year working with the collections in Glasgow. We are pleased to introduce you to the 2020 recipients

FIONA MILNE

Fiona completed an AHRC-funded PhD at the University of York in 2019, where she is now a tutor in the Department of English and Related Literature.

Her research was on the prosecutions of radical writers in the Romantic period, with a particular focus on character, self-defence, and the relationship between literary and legal history. She previously held a visiting fellowship at the Huntington Library in California.

During this University of Glasgow Library visiting research fellowship, Fiona will be investigating the David Murray collection as part of a new project on antiquarian collecting practices of the late nineteenth century.

PEADAR Ó MUIRCHARTAIGH

Dr Peadar Ó Muircheartaigh is Lecturer in Celtic Studies at the Department of Welsh and Celtic Studies, Aberystwyth University

in Wales. He was educated at NUI Galway, the University of Notre Dame and the University of Edinburgh where he completed his PhD.

His research interests include the literature and culture of eighteenth-century Gaelic Scotland and Ireland. He will be examining the works of the Reverend James McLagan (1728–1805) who is one of the most important figures of the eighteenth-century Gaelic-speaking world.

His various activities as folklore collector, lexicographer, editor, poet, and commentator on the Ossianic Controversy are best evidenced by his collection of 1,600 manuscript pages now preserved in Glasgow University Library. Besides this, his most significant collection of papers, smaller collections associated with him are to be found in Dundee City Archive and Perth Museum.

McLagan's role in the preservation and propagation of Gaelic literature has received much attention of late. One aspect of McLagan's activity which has been overshadowed by his work as a collector of Gaelic literature, however, is his own travel writing in English, especially his account of a Hebridean tour undertaken in 1774.

McLagan's account of the Gaelic-speaking west coast of mainland Scotland, and the Hebrides punctuates the better-known accounts of Pennant and Johnson, chronologically speaking, offering a perceptive account and informed corrective to Dr Johnson's treatment

of the Highlands, the Hebrides and Gaelic-language culture more generally. Ireland and the Isle of Man.

SEBASTIAAN VERWEIJ

Sebastian Verweij is Senior Lecturer in Late Medieval and Early Modern Literature at the University of Bristol, where he also convenes the Early Modern Studies research cluster. His research interests are in late-medieval and early modern literature, particularly poetry, and what today is called 'the history of the book', which in more old-fashioned terms would be called 'bibliography'.

His first book, *The Literary Culture of Early Modern Scotland: Manuscript Production and Transmission, 1560-1625* won the Saltire Society's 'Scottish Research Book of the Year 2016' award. He is at present also co-authoring the Textual Companion volume to the Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne.

His research project will focus on some seventeenth-century commonplace books in the collection at Glasgow University Library: for example, a diary and business ledger also containing notes of book lending possibly by John Gilmour, a huge and calligraphically accomplished commonplace book associated with John Robertson, c. 1636-1642, and a commonplace book from c. 1695-1730.

To read more details about fellows' research projects see <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/library/researchfellows/>



Getting the newsletter to you

Memories of the 'stuffing sessions' Priscilla Barlow

You might be reading this online having chosen to receive the e-version of the newsletter. So, no real mystery there if you are au fait with up-to-date technology. We must thank Robert Brown for preparation of this version.

However, we thought it might be interesting for those who still prefer something in the hand, to explore the processing of getting the newsletter into your letter box. Many years before the pandemic when Freda Tuck had stewardship of all matters pertaining to the membership, the committee used to hold what we called 'stuffing sessions'. A room in the Library with a large table was reserved. Freda produced meticulously prepared labels and any inserts that the convenor or indeed anyone who wished to convey information to the members e.g. reminders of annual membership fees, advance notice of an important event or even membership cards with our

timetable of talks. At the appointed time volunteers from the committee, would arrive. The convenor was a stalwart, as were the late Peter Davies and Helen Cargill Thomson. I invariably joined in.

Awaiting us, delivered as if by magic, was a large library trolley containing, boxed up, 500 copies of the newsletter. In those days the printer delivered directly to the library.

There were also 500 A4 buff envelopes. Although the membership was never 500, we undertook to make the newsletter available around the campus.

Freda took charge giving each of us a task; some to stick on labels, some to sort bundles into categories – so many to heads of schools, a number to be distributed round the library, the principal and the vice chancellor, envelopes addressed to members abroad. Then we started stuffing. When the task was completed, the filled envelopes were piled back on to the trolley. In those days the Library undertook to frank and mail the newsletters. It was all done in a spirit of cooperation.

The main memory of this biannual

exercise was that it was fun. A delightful social occasion with coffee and biscuits – thoughtfully supplied - and a wonderful chance to bond.

These days are gone. For a few years when succeeding membership secretaries took over, a post graduate student was given the task of stuffing the envelopes by herself and the social occasion vanished. When the pandemic struck, the Library could no longer undertake distribution in any form, so Freda, having returned to office, prepared labels as before.

The copies were delivered to me and having purchased the requisite number of envelopes and stamps, I set to stuffing all by myself. Year one was a lengthy process but by year two the committee had agreed to cut the number printed to 150. A goodly number of Friends chose to receive the e-version and it was no longer possible to deliver multiple copies to multiple locations. The task was lighter. All I had to do then was wait in the post office queue and voila the newsletters were winging their way to you...



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.

FRIENDS OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

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

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