



friends newsletter Issue 94 Summer 2024

Note from the Editor: Priscilla Barlow

In this, my final issue as editor of the Friends' Newsletter, I find I have little to add to all I said in the winter issue except to reiterate my thanks for all

the immeasurable support I have enjoyed over 17 years from the committee and of course, Duncan who has ever been the voice of sanity and restraint over my shoulder.

As 'threatened', this is my nostalgia issue. Apart from the usual reports and information, I invite you to join me down my memory lane.

Duncan says his farewells

My route to FGUL membership was not a typical one; with a mechanical engineering background and a passion for Scottish history I had no direct connection with the university. So, aiming to obtain a readers' ticket to the University Library to pursue my passion, I joined the Friends

When one joins any organization with longstanding members, breaking the ice with that tight-knit group wasn't easy, although Margaret Paxton

and Sheila Craik were very friendly.

I was fine with that, accessing the shelves and attending the regular talks suited me fine. It was when Graeme Smith became convenor of the Friends that I was encouraged to join the committee.

The next step was when Priscilla Barlow became editor of the newsletter, she asked me to assist, which I have been delighted to do.

Now retired, my wife and I are

moving from the Renfrewshire village of Houston to my home village of Furnace in Argyll.

Coinciding with this impending move is Priscilla's notice of retirement from the editorship of the newsletter. So, I am handing in notice too, from assisting the editor, the committee, and membership of the Friends. It has all been good, but it's time to move on. Thank you, good luck to the incoming editor, and the Friends

Changing faces at the newsletter



Outgoing Editor Priscilla Barlow



Former Deputy Duncan Beaton



Our new Editor Michael Gallacher

Meet new Editor Michael Gallacher

Graeme Kemp was introduced recently as the new editor. Circumstances have changed. Graeme will shortly be taking up a post at St Andrews and will no longer be available. We wish him every future success.

However, we are delighted to introduce the new editor, Michael Gallacher, who has willingly stepped into the breach. Good luck Michael and thank you.

Michael joined the University Library in November 2023

as an archivist, to develop and manage the University's new Heritage Collections Engagement Service.

This was a homecoming of sorts: he studied history at the University some 20 years ago and the experience of using the Archives & Special Collections during his dissertation research inspired him to pursue a career in the sector.

After undertaking a master's degree in Information Management and

Preservation in 2009, Michael worked at the University of Edinburgh (please don't hold that against him) and then spent 11 years as archivist at Glasgow City Archives in the Mitchell Library.

In his spare time Michael edits the Archives and Records Association's bi-monthly magazine and enjoys football, running and, until the arrival of a daughter in 2020 hampered this, making music with a somewhat limited appeal.

Message from the convenor

I'd like to pay tribute to Priscilla Barlow in my Convenor's report for this newsletter. As Friends know, this will be the final newsletter that Priscilla will edit.

I wanted to extend my heartfelt thanks to Priscilla for her excellent work editing the Friends of Glasgow University

Library newsletter over the years. Her sharp eye and dedication have meant a really top quality edition every time. We truly appreciate her contribution in keeping our community informed and engaged.

- Dr Peter Davies's name was added to the Roll of Benefactors this year in recognition of his gift

to both the Friends of Glasgow University Library and the University, and his name was read out for the first time by the Principal in the Chapel Service which was the first part of the day.

Commemoration Day began with the Service of Thanksgiving in the University Memorial Chapel. The services

acknowledges those who have made significant contributions to the University since its foundation in 1451 to the present day, and gives thanks for these gifts.

The service was attended by the Chancellor, the Principal and other senior officers of the University, along with the Honorary

Graduands and invited guests. FGUL were represented by Professor Gerry Carruthers, Professor Grove, Siobhan Convery and Susan Ashworth.

Following the call to prayer by the university chaplain, the highlight of the service was the reading of the Roll of Benefactors, which dates back to the 17th

century, and the Prayers of Commemoration for the Chancellor, the University, and its community. These were accompanied by choral anthems provided by the Choir. It was wonderful to hear Peter's name being read out.

- Meanwhile, the Committee continue to work on Reimagining the

Friends, so that we can ensure that our support of the library and its wonderful collections go from strength to strength. More on this as we progress.

- My thanks as ever, to all the committee for their support and hard work.

Professor Ann Gow



Library Annual Report

Some of the highlights for this year include the launch of a new Glasgow Collections portal, enabling searching across the rich resources of Archives & Special Collections and The Hunterian Museum & Art Gallery collections; support for the University's celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Adam Smith; the successful expansion of the Reach Out service into the Adam Smith Business School and PGT Hub.

Collections portal

In May 2023, The Library and The Hunterian reached a pivotal milestone with the launch of the Glasgow Collections portal. This innovative digital platform aims to revolutionise how users interact with the University's extensive, world-class heritage collections, marking a significant step in digital outreach and discoverability.

Together these collections encompass all aspects of human life, from ancient cultures through to 21st century art and archives. These treasures are the resources driving scholarly breakthroughs and enriching academic learning worldwide.

Friends funding for processing

The generous support of the Friends of Glasgow University Library enabled the processing of collections. Excellent progress has been made across the year to appraise, catalogue, and preserve the archive of Scottish Ballet and the personal papers of Johnny Beattie, (Pictured right) one of Scotland's

leading comedians and actors. Beattie's papers highlight the full range of his professional career, from his writing for his own and other's characters, through to his performances on stage and screen.



Adam Smith 300

The Library worked closely with the Adam Smith 300 Project Team to enrich the University's celebrations of this anniversary and to deliver the objectives of a major grant from the Templeton Foundation. The Library's heritage collections relating to Smith were at the centre of the Library's exhibition on his continuing legacy.

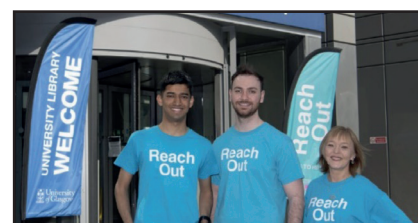
Folio 400

2023 saw nationwide celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the First Folio, the first printed edition of William Shakespeare's collected plays. The Library played a full part, with a series of activities, talks and events celebrating the University's very special, annotated copy of the Folio. A complex 'made up' volume,

this copy is enhanced by annotations made by a reader who had evidently seen Shakespeare's plays being acted contemporaneously. Highlights of the celebration included over 500 visitors having the opportunity to view the Folio in a 'for one-weekend only' exhibition at The Hunterian and the publication of a short film featuring the three Scottish copies of the Folio in collaboration with Mount Stuart and the National Library of Scotland.

Reach Out

Reach Out support services were successfully delivered 8am-8pm in person and digitally 7 days a week in the University Library and James McCune Smith Learning Hub. Extensive planning was undertaken to build and develop a new Reach Out team to work in the brand-new Adam Smith Business School and PGT Hub. This team (pictured below) is delivering building-specific support to ASBS students and staff.



Our sincere thanks to the Friends for all your support for the Library, enabling us to do many fantastic projects and initiatives.

SUSAN ASHWORTH
Executive Director, Information Services & University Librarian

Talk: City Streets, Scottish Islands and Silhouetted Hills: Bet Low, Art and Life

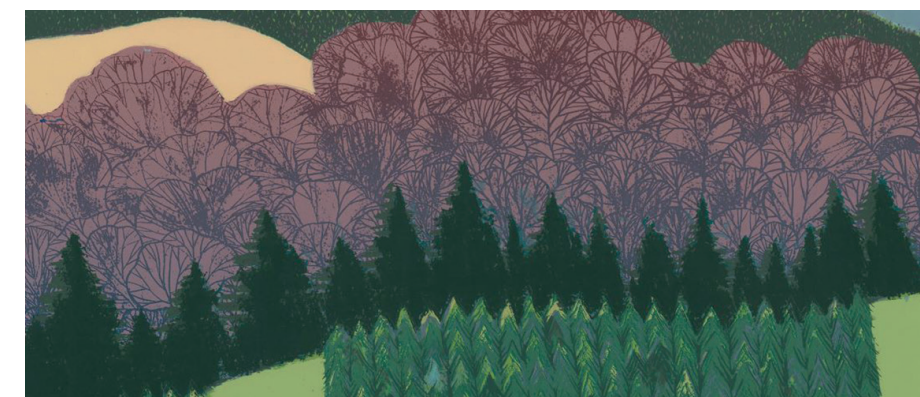
On Thursday 22 February a respectable audience, including a dozen or so members of the public, braved the elements to hear Hildegard Berwick's talk on the artist Bet Low. The talk was introduced by Siobhán Convery. Hildegard Berwick studied History of Fine Art and Psychology at University of Glasgow, as well as attaining a post-graduate diploma in Art Gallery and Museum Studies from the University of Manchester. Her illuminating talk drew on her many years of years of experience in curatorial roles in galleries across Scotland, including Perth Museum and Art Gallery and as Head of Collections at Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute.

A lively question and answer session followed, with audience members sharing their experiences of Bet's work and memories of the woman herself. The talk was accompanied by a display of material from Archives & Special Collections,

MICHAEL GALLAGHER

Abstract

This talk covered the very eventful 50+ years of Bet's career, from her time commuting from Gourrock to Glasgow School of Art by steam train and leaving Jordanhill teacher training college in 1946 to follow a path, not as a teacher, but as a full-time artist. An extensive archive



Detail from Bet Low's Lennox Woods

of Bet's papers is held by Glasgow University's Special Collections which informed much of Hildegard's talk. Hildegard's talk was also peppered with quotes from Bet herself, taken from articles Bet had written and other papers. Bet's early career, working for Glasgow Unity Theatre, was sparked off by a chance meeting with a friend that she had not seen for some time, a young, aspiring comedian, Stanley Baxter. Her drawings and linocut prints of the east end of Glasgow and its inhabitants, dating to the late 1940s and 1950s, form important social records. Her subject matter at this time was similar to Joan Eardley, who had been three years above Bet at Art School. Bet was involved with several initiatives to bring the art of young, ambitious artists to the attention of the public.

This included membership of the Clyde Group and co-organising probably the first open air painting exhibition in Glasgow hung on the

railings of the Botanic Gardens. By the end of the 1950's, Bet's style was changing, taking inspiration now from water, riverbeds and dense woodland, to create abstract compositions. In 1963, Bet co-founded the New Charing Cross Gallery in Sauchiehall Street to show the work of artists who were at the start of their careers, as well as two important exhibitions of well-established artists who had recently died, J D Fergusson and Joan Eardley.

Bet's style would alter again from 1967, when she began to stay in Orkney where she had a cottage. The clear, bright light of the far north, including the west coast islands of Colonsay and Eigg, also attracted her interest. These landscapes are pared down to the minimum and often record the view in the fading evening light. Bet received the honorary title of Doctor of Letters from Glasgow University in 1999 to acknowledge her contribution to artistic life in Glasgow

Down my Memory Lane

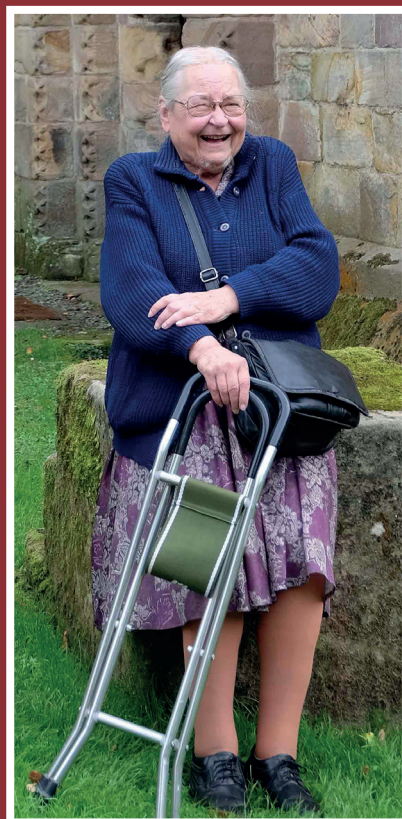
In this my final issue as editor, I am indulging myself by revisiting items from past newsletters. I note how the newsletter has provided a record of how we, as a society have fulfilled our obligations according to our constitution, in particular "all matters bibliographical."

I hope to demonstrate our contents over the years have striven to provide reports on our activities, in our annual messages from our convenors, treasurers and senior library staff; we have recorded prizes awarded, fellowships granted and donations and bequests received; we have introduced you to many library and Friends stalwarts in our "profiles" series; we have kept you up to date with major projects the Friends have funded.

We have endeavoured to broaden our horizons by running various series: introducing you to unknown or unfamiliar libraries in our "Did you know about?"; "The Book of the Month"; "Honorary Research Fellows researching in the library". Events and talks have offered well illustrated reports. On occasion we have invited contributions on many subjects, sadly including tributes on the deaths of people so significant in the life of the society. We hope to have informed and entertained. Here are some significant memories and some of my favourites....

PRISCILLA BARLOW

Among my favourite illustrations



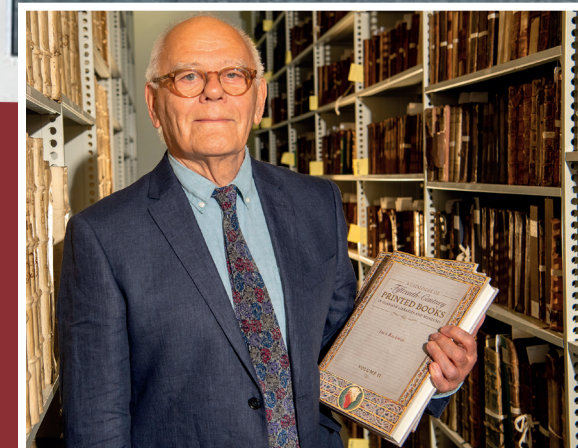
LEFT: Winter 2021: Helen Cargill Thomson *Because it embodies the larger-than-life personality of our former convenor the late Helen*



Winter 2019: The murals on the library stairs *Because they are fun*



Summer Outing



LEFT: Winter 2023: Jack Baldwin receives the Breslauer Prize for the Incunabula Project *Because it records Jack's tremendous achievement which the Friends proudly funded*

ABOVE: Summer 2010: The summer outing to Dundee University Conservation Department. *Because of its nostalgia content*

Winter 2007: report on annual the sale of our Christmas cards and Dr Helen Cargill Thomson, our then convenor, was our first Profile.

Winter 2009: we reported on the appointment of Smith & Williamson Investment Management to take discretionary control of FGUL investment profile

Winter 2010: David Weston, Keeper Special Collections

This year sees the 10th anniversary of the "Book of the Month" feature on the Special Collections website...

Summer 2010: David Weston gave first intimation of the Glasgow Incunabula Project:

...We have invited Jack {Baldwin} to return to the Library as an honorary researcher in incunabula to work closely with my colleague – Julie Gardham

Summer 2013: Editor's Note – *Welcome*

to our new look! With 8 pages, your newsletter now encompasses more news and information from the Library...We are also delighted that we can now print, in full colour ... Stoddart Templeton Archive and items form the Textile Restoration Centre...

Winter 2014: Helen Durndell (Head Librarian)

The success of the Glasgow Incunabula Projiet is reliant on the ongoing commitment and skill of Jack Baldwin... His painstaking approach, in depth knowledge and incredible eye for detail...is real scholarship at work

Summer 2016 included a 4 page photographic supplement of the redevelopments in the Library

Summer 2017: Report on the visit to the Leighton Library and the Cathedral at Dunblane

Winter 2017: Our current designer, Gerry Cassidy, first takes up the reins

My favourite from the *Did you know about* series is from Summer 2018 issue

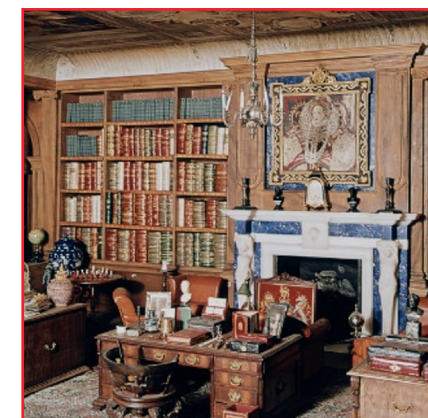
Miniature Books

The generally accepted definition of a miniature book is one of whose height and width do not exceed three inches (75cms.)

While it is thought that these little books were mostly creations of the 19th and 20th centuries, the first printed miniature book on record is an 'Officium Beatae Virginis Maria' printed in 1475.

These books are most commonly to be found in specific collections within a large library. Not infrequently they are held by private collectors.

Perhaps one of the most famous and indeed delightful collection of



miniature books is contained in the miniature library of Queen Mary's Dolls' House (pictured above) in Windsor Castle.

The house itself was created as a 1:12 scale miniature royal palace or town house as a gift from the nation to Queen Mary.

It was designed by Sir Edward

Lutyens. The tiny leather-bound volumes were contributed by 170 contemporary authors of their own titles.

Notable collections are to be found in The Bodleian Library, several American university libraries and in private collections. The National Library of Scotland actively collects miniature books with a Scottish connection.

An edition of Old King Cole is the smallest book in the collection (1mm X 1mm) published in Paisley 1985.

Also included are books published by David Bryce & Sons in Glasgow around the turn of the 19th century. The NLS is particularly proud of a miniature New Testament published 1895.

DOWN MY MEMORY LANE (CONTINUED): MY FAVOURITE 'FEATURE' ARTICLES

■ *Because it is interesting and moving:*

Winter 22 : Peter's tree

By Duncan Beaton

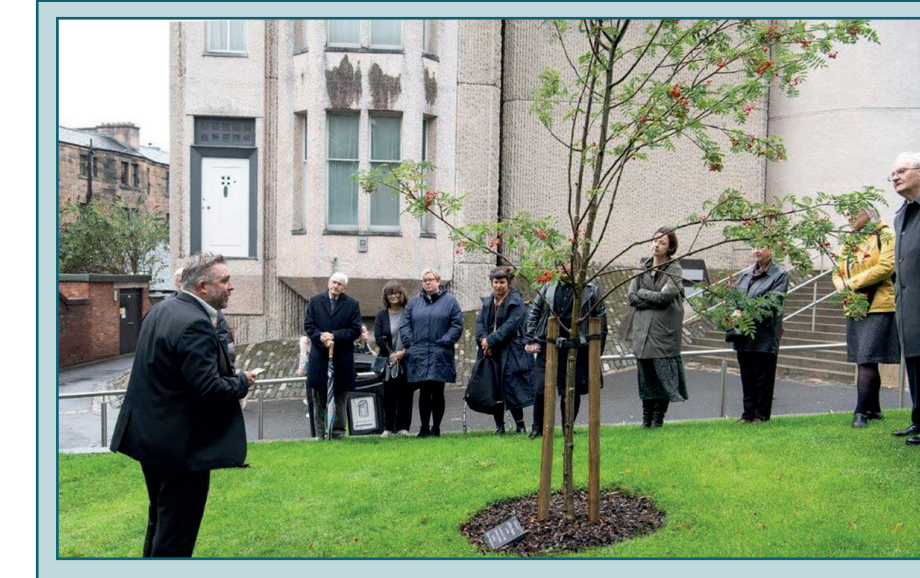
In memory of Dr Peter Davies, our good Friend of the Library and of the College, a short ceremony to scatter his ashes took place on Thursday 7th of October. A small group representing FGUL, his university colleagues, and other friends, watched as the ashes were scattered on the south lawn and Dr Carolyn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

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 crafol, 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.

■ *Because it is such a fine piece of writing*

Summer 2012 : Executing Edwin Morgan

Marshall Walker. Professor Emeritus, University of Waikato, New Zealand

Prof. Walker taught in the University of Glasgow's English Department till 1983.

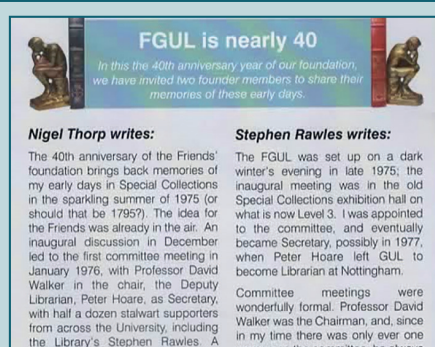
'I'd like you to be my literary executor', he said over a coffee in the College Club. 'But I'm going to New Zealand next year', I said, 'I'll be too far away', and this was already mid-1980. 'That doesn't matter', he said, compounding the honour, 'I'd like you to do it anyway'.

It had to be yes. I was a declared fan and had worked joyously with him in the interview originally published in *Akros 11: 32*, reprinted in *Hamish Whyte's indispensable Nothing Not Giving Messages* (1990). Finding that a working relationship in the Department of English had evolved into friendship and become the privilege of a lifetime with happy hours spent in the book-lined eyrie of his flat overlooking Great Western Road with a window ledge for a seagull, and a balcony for jumping into the sun or taking off for the

moons of Jupiter or up the road to Loch Ness to hear the monster singing. Eventually, in 1992, he'd take off for my new home in New Zealand where I introduced him to a packed hall at Wellington's International Arts Festival and he read his poems in Hamilton on receipt of an honorary doctorate from the University of Waikato. Not long after the millennium I seduced the University's Department of Theatre Studies into staging A.D., his trilogy of plays on the life of Jesus. 'The First Men on Mercury' and 'Little Blue Blue' were already campus hits.

I loved the tang of sulphur in him as self-styled Demon, rattling the bars of convention and complacency. I loved his hyenas, centaurs, astronauts, Mercurians and Glaswegians, his Cinquevalli and city-boy Cyrano. I loved his energy, his delight in risk, the devilish optimism of his indefatigable curiosity, his peerless, nonconformist contemporaneity. I loved his internationalism and the radio-active dust of Scottishness that lies on the pulse and spring of his lines. The poet should be himself a true poem? This one was. I loved the work and the poem that was the man. Didn't everyone? Of course it had to be yes.

As literary executor, seeking to be of service, I undertook the job of doing what I could to bring work and man together for future biographers in a time-line of his life. So we settled



LEFT: Friends and members were invited to say a few words of remembrance at Peter's Tree, close to the library. ABOVE: How we marked four decades of the Friends in our newsletter.

into a rhythm of regular meetings when I would ask questions and he would ransack memory and consult diaries, allowing ourselves a single malt only when digging was over for the day. When I left for New Zealand there was still much to discover, so whenever I returned to Scotland for research, or passed through en route for somewhere else, I stopped in Glasgow and we got back to work. Birth in Hyndland on 27 April 1920, then Pollokshields, Rutherglen, Glasgow High School, pacifism, Royal Army Medical Corps, Palestine, Glasgow University for History, Political Economy, French, English and Russian, Professor of English, innumerable readings at schools, coming out as gay when he was 70. Always writing towards Buckingham Palace for an OBE and laureateship first of Glasgow, then of Scotland. He was our first First Poet and the time-line was there for James McGonigal who begins his masterly *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (2010) with the perfect summing-up: 'Edwin Morgan is Scotland's best loved poet since Robert Burns'.

■ *Because it reminds of our beginnings*

Summer 2014: FGUL is nearly 40

Nigel Thorpe and Stephen Rawles
In this the 40th anniversary year of our foundation, we have invited two founder members to share their memories of these early days.

NIGEL THORP writes: The 40th anniversary of the founding of the Friends brings back memories of my early days in Special Collections in the sparkling summer of 1975 (or should that be 1795?). The idea for the Friends was already in the air, and an inaugural discussion in December led to the first committee meeting in January 1976, with Professor David Walker in the chair and the Deputy Librarian, Peter Hoare, as Secretary, together with half a dozen stalwart supporters from across the University, including the Library's Stephen Rawles. A general programme of events was planned to take place on a termly basis, and the initial subscription was set at an inviting £2! Word soon got about, including coverage in the *Glasgow Herald*. Within a few months there were over 200 members, providing funds of over £700. This allowed the purchase the following year of Elizabeth Diggles's *Journal of a Tour from London to the Highlands of Scotland, 19 April-7 August 1788* (MS Gen 738), which was for sale by a dealer in Los Angeles for \$250. There were also numbers of early donations, including a collection of Gaelic songs, presented by Seumas MacNeill, facsimiles of works printed by William Caxton for the Caxton Quincentenary, presented by Mrs Jessie Duncan of Aberdeen, and a three-volume set of 'The Laws of the United States of America,' from the 1790s, donated by a Glasgow solicitor, Harry Flowers. Stephen Rawles took over as Secretary in 1978, and my turn came in 1981, lasting until 1990.

The Friends were then well established, giving support to subject areas across the Library, as well as specific interests such as the historic dictionary collection, the Alexander Stone Lecture in Bibliophily, and modern limited editions such as Kenneth White's 'Methodos,' a sequence of 5 original haiku, in French and English, with 5 original silkscreens by Bracaval (No. 30 of 60 numbered copies).

The GUL Staff Bulletin was indulgent enough to include pieces on some of

the discoveries and acquisitions of the time.

STEPHEN RAWLES writes: The FGUL was set up on a dark winter's evening in late 1975; the inaugural meeting was in the old Special Collections exhibition hall on what is now Level 3 I was appointed to the committee, and eventually became Secretary, possibly in 1977, when Peter Hoare left GUL to become Librarian at Nottingham.

Committee meetings were wonderfully formal. Professor David Walker was the Chairman, and, since in my time there was only ever one woman on the committee, he always began: 'Good afternoon, madam and gentlemen'. I cannot now credit the length of time we spent discussing and, at long last, commissioning FGUL bookplates (with a very nice woodcut of the periwinkle, the flower of friendship). Or haversing about buying a facsimile of an 18th century garden encyclopaedia.

I cannot actually remember much about the public meetings of the Friends, although this is a matter of record in the minutes. I do remember dealing with the Newsletter, which was a typed on stencils by the then plentiful and accommodating typists in the Library general office. The distinguished Greenock printer Tom Rae printed a special number which included Dr Robert Hutcheson's memories of the old library in the Gilbert Scott building. There was a machine in the General Council Office which would print addresses on to envelopes. It was deemed revolutionary, in that it meant that we didn't have to write or type addresses when despatching the Newsletter.

I suppose I was frustrated by how little we got done in the early days. But the Friends are now on a much firmer financial footing, especially after a number of significant bequests, and, I would contend, in a better position to widen their ways of support: one idea might be FGUL Fellowships to support scholars working in the Library. (Now implemented!)



Date for your diary

Unfortunately the date for our AGM has not yet been fixed. Members will be notified of this and of any talks, outings or events by email or by post .

A few facts about the library's holdings

Including branch libraries, the Library now holds approximately 2.5 million books and journals, along with access to 1.6 million e-books and over 50,000 e-journals.

Readers can access 1000 UK and Irish titles including: The Telegraph, Guardian, Independent, Observer & Times and well as hundreds of regional titles. Over 1200 International titles including: Le Monde, New York Times, Washington Post, Die Welt, Der Spiegel, La Stampa, El Pais & Le Figaro.

Pdf versions of past newsletters from 2016- 2023 can be downloaded.

FRIENDS OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
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Glasgow G12 8QE

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friends@lib.gla.ac.uk
(This email address may be used to contact the membership secretary and committee members.)

WEBSITE:
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Meet our committee



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Honorary President



Helen Durndell
Honorary Vice President



Ann Gow
Convenor



Aileen Dickinson
Treasurer



Susan Ashworth
Exec Director
Information Services
University Librarian



Siobhan Convery
Asst Dir Collections
Ex Officio



Priscilla Barlow
Newsletter Editor



Duncan Beaton
Editorial Assistant



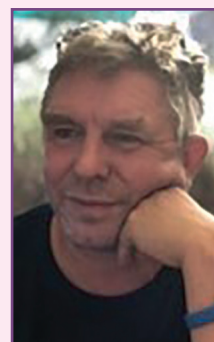
Iain Wotherspoon



John Warren



Dr David Fergus



Professor Lawrence Grove



Professor Gerard Carruthers