
The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

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**Bulletin of
The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club
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Editorial

Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis. I had always thought that Horace or Cicero was the originator of that phrase but it was a Welshman, John Owen, at about the time of Sir Walter. How true it has been once again. No sooner has the Club got rid of one Hon.Sec. but it is saying farewell to his successor. Sadly Joan Dunnnett felt unable to continue in the post after one year's tenure; we regret her early departure and thank her for her work over the past year. We have been most fortunate in securing as her successor Professor Peter Garside, a member of the Club for many years and the joint editor of *Talking about Scott* which was published in 1994 on the centenary of the Club. No one could be more suitable for the job of secretary and we trust that he will be with us to guide the Club for many years to come.

As it seems that a considerable number of members are not terribly interested in receiving the Bulletin we are reverting to our previous arrangement with the printer and restricting the number of copies printed to the minimum necessary to cover requirements.

While there has been a full year of meetings it is disappointing that the numbers attending have been dropping in recent years. Some years ago the attendance was frequently around 60 whereas now it is only half that number. This cannot be attributed to the quality of the lectures and must presumably be due to the fact that many of our members are elderly and not keen to venture forth at night. We do hope that this year attendances will improve again, as the Events Convenor and, of course, the lecturers, go to a lot of trouble to make the evenings a success. Each meeting held was, however, most interesting, different and enjoyable and the social aspect of the evening much appreciated.

The Hon.Treasurer has in the past year added considerably to the contents of the Club's internet with "The Readings by Sir Walter Scott Fans", and a most welcome contribution from pupils of George Heriot's School. More information on these two items will be found in the Miscellanea section of the Bulletin. We must have one of the most informative Club websites and it is pleasing to find how much it appears to be being consulted. Lee Simpson is to be greatly commended for his imaginative contributions to the Club's lasting memorial.

One further change is now intimated; the writer regrets that *anno domini* necessitates his laying down his pen or whatever one uses these days in editing. It has been a pleasure and an education to have been joint editor for the past few years and I express my best wishes for the future success of the Bulletin. I am glad that it is in a healthy state as I demit office.

Fraser Elgin

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DL

Russell Sanderson is the Chairman of the Abbotsford Trust, whose aims include the preservation and improvement of the building and its contents and the advancement of knowledge about Scott and the history of Abbotsford.



He was born within a mile of Abbotsford and has always lived and worked in the Borders. He has long been involved in Scottish textiles, and is Chairman of the Hawick Cashmere Company.

He was knighted in 1981 and raised to the peerage in 1985. He was Minister of State at the Scottish Office, 1987 to 1990; Chairman of the Clydesdale Bank, 1999 to 2004; and is Ex-Vice Lord Lieutenant of Roxburgh, Ettrick and Lauderdale.

Among various connections with educational institutions, he has been Chairman of the Council of Glenalmond College and of St Mary's School, Melrose, and at one time was on the board of the Scottish College of Textiles. He holds honorary degrees from Napier University and Glasgow University.

He will give the Toast to Sir Walter at our 102nd Annual Dinner on 3rd March 2011.

Sir Walter Scott & Thomas Moore

Kath Hardie, a long-time member of Club and Council, gave the following address in the New Club on Thursday, 11th February 2010. The assembled members were delighted also to be entertained by Music by Ian Scott and Chapter 4.

In his day, Tom Moore was noted as scholar, satirist, journalist, accidental tourist, biographer, singer and author of the Irish Melodies. Although he considered his words as valuable only in relation to the songs, the words themselves do have lasting merit as in the haunting *Oft in the Stilly Night*:

Oft in the stilly night
Ere slumber's chain has bound me
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me
The smiles, the tears of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken,
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone
The cheerful hearts now broken....

The origins of Scott and Moore could hardly be more diverse.

Walter Scott was born in 1771 to a father who was Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh and a mother who was daughter to a Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh University and had, at her command, a vast store of ballads, proverbs and stories. A kinswoman of Mrs Scott's, one Mrs Cockburn, describes a visit to the Scott household, where young Walter, 'the extraordinary genius of a boy', aged six, was reading Falconer's *Shipwreck* to his mother. Published in 1762, it was the modern verse of the day containing lines like.

The ship hangs hovering on the verge of death,
Hell yawns, rocks rise, and breakers roar beneath! -

Thomas Moore was born in 1779 to John Moore, a grocer living above his shop in Aungier Street, at that time a fashionable address in the south side of Dublin. His mother, Anastasia, was determined her only son would make his mark in society. He became a show child and from an early age could be called upon to perform for guests in her salon. Anastasia also arranged lessons in Latin and Greek, French and Italian. At the age of six Thomas was reciting from *Hamlet*, of all things, the prince's soliloquy on his mother's marriage 'O most wicked speed to post/ With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.' He entered Trinity College in 1795 when he was barely sixteen.

Walter Scott, who had enrolled at Edinburgh University when he was barely twelve was, by 1792, a newly qualified advocate. He had also started to explore Scotland, in particular the valleys of Liddesdale to collect ballads. He had

married in 1797, and in 1799, with the influence of Lord Melville and the Duke of Buccleuch, Scott was appointed Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire. This undemanding position left him at liberty to get on with editing his *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. To his great satisfaction, the first two volumes were at last ready for publication and appeared in 1802 and the third in 1803. By 1812, over 10,000 copies were sold.

In Trinity College, Moore had, as fellow students, United Irishmen like Robert Emmet who were involved in the '98 Rising but Moore himself was not soldier material. When he visited his friend, artist Edward Hudson in Kilmainham jail, an image stayed with Moore for ever, of the harp the artist had drawn in charcoal on the wall of the jail. After graduating from Trinity, Moore went to London to read for the Bar, for which he had no real aptitude. However, armed with letters of introduction, he was fortunate to meet some of the leaders in society who stayed friends with him for life, in whose salons his singing was welcomed and who would, more importantly, put their libraries at his disposal. These were people like Lord Moira, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Holland and the wealthy poet-banker Samuel Rogers. With their help, he published his translation from the Greek of the 79 Odes of Anacreon, a poet who lived in the sixth century BC and whose poems on wine, women and song appealed to a generation intoxicated with all things Greek. The poet died in style by choking on a grape-pip.

With the success of Anacreon, Moore was offered the Irish poet-laureateship but his father said he'd be on a ladder with only one rung. Making one of the many misjudged decisions of his life, Moore became Registrar to the Vice-Admiralty Court in Bermuda. The duties were not arduous. If a Navy ship legally captured an enemy ship, the ship was sold off and the Registrar got 2.5% of the prize money. Unfortunately for Moore, no ships were captured so he departed, leaving a deputy behind. He wrote so many Bermuda-inspired poems that he became Bermuda's unofficial poet-laureate. A biographer peevishly comments on the lack of competition for this particular title. A bust of Moore still stands beside the town hall of St George.

Moore next published his *Epistles, Odes and Other Poems* which received such a mauling by Francis Jeffrey of the *Edinburgh Review* that Moore challenged him to a duel. That was stopped by the police and ended up with Moore and Jeffrey becoming great friends. I note that in his life of Jeffrey, Lord Cockburn, well ahead of his time in spin, glosses over the duel as an incident.

Back in circulation in London, Moore was in demand for many balls, including the grand rout given by the Marchioness of Lansdowne, where cross-dressing was popular. For example, the Duke of Hamilton came as a coy young lady, while the Duke of Clarence appeared as an old lady who 'had not yet forgotten the gambols of her youth'.

In October 1806, Moore met the Power Brothers who were greatly inspired by the success of Scotland's Robert Burns in marrying his poems to ancient Scottish airs.

The Powers suggested that Moore did likewise for Irish airs which had been collected by Edward Bunting. When the first of the Irish Melodies appeared in 1808, they were an instant success. They included *Believe Me If All Those Endearing Young Charms*, *The Harp that Once Through Tara's Halls*, *The Meeting of the Waters*. Seven series appeared between then and 1834 - about 110 melodies in all and featured *The Minstrel Boy*, *The Last Rose of Summer* and *Love Thee Dearest*, *Love Thee*.

In Jane Austin's *Emma*, for example, Frank Churchill draws the heroine's attention to 'the new set of Irish airs.' There are 30 references to them in Dickens whom Moore once met, and they're mentioned by James Joyce. Even the leading Irish Archbishop of the day, translated 'The Last Rose of Summer' into Gaelic. Two lines should give you the flavour:

Tá rós déannach an tSamhraidh leis féin ar a gcaobh
Deis a chuallact na sgéimhe beith éagtha air gach taobh

In 1810, Moore met Lord Byron at a dinner given by Samuel Rogers. Byron had read Moore's earlier satires, and was one of his greatest admirers, stating that Moore was 'the Epitome of all that is exquisite'. The men discussed the merits of Walter Scott.

The said Walter Scott had moved to his small country-house at Ashiestiel on the banks of the Tweed where he brought up his four children. In his writing there had been a change of direction - a transition from being the editor of ballads to producing his own poetry. In 1805, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* appeared and was the first poem to become a best-seller in the modern sense of the word. Selling 44,000 copies, it made his reputation. On visiting London, he became a literary lion, was feted everywhere and had a meeting with Princess Caroline. Everybody was quoting

Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
This is my own, my native land

In Walter Scott's next poem *Marmion*, he moved from being a poet of the Borders to becoming a national poet. At the same time he was working on his edition of Dryden's poetry in eighteen volumes, which was published three months after *Marmion* and was more robust in nature than Scott's own work. The scholarship of the work, by the standards of the day, is said to be sound.

However, it was the publication, in 1810, of *The Lady of the Lake*, which marked the height of Scott's popularity as a poet. When it was turned into a melodrama, it played to packed houses in Edinburgh, London and Dublin.

For Moore, at last, the poem he'd been working on for years, *Lalla Rookh*, was published - an Oriental Poem for which he'd received an advance of £3000 from Longmans. Its first edition sold out on the first day and it was translated in seven languages, including Arabic, which caused one wit to remark:

I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung,
(Can it be true, you lucky man?)
By moonlight, in the Persian tongue,
Along the streets of Ispahan

It was staged in venues from London and Dublin to Calcutta and New Orleans and artists including Turner painted scenes from it. Bristol barmaids had it by heart and one European prince slept with it under his pillow. Only one song survives where a trembling nymph sings:

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream
To sit in the roses and hear the bird's song.

At the height of Moore's success, it was announced that his Deputy in Bermuda had absconded leaving Moore responsible for his debts. When the news reached Edinburgh, Jeffrey was one of the first to offer financial help which Moore declined. Instead he left for the Continent where he met up again with his friend Lord Byron whose early fame had changed to such notoriety. In Venice, in 1819, Byron handed Moore the manuscript entitled '*My Life and Adventures*' which was to be published only after his death.

Meantime, having declined the offer of a Poet-Laureateship from the Prince Regent, Scott switched genre. His poetry wasn't as popular as before. Although *Rokeby* had sold reasonably well, Thomas Moore, in one of his satirical squibs, wondered which rich friend's house Scott was going to versify next. With the arrival of Byron's *Childe Harold* on the scene, Scott knew he couldn't compete and he turned to the novel, and in so doing, took thousands of readers with him. In 1814 *Waverley* burst on the literary scene, to be followed in 1815 by *Guy Mannering*. When Thomas Moore was in Paris in 1820 he was depressed that 'the attention of the reading world is absorbed by two writers, Scott and Byron'. In that year Scott met Lord Byron for the first time. The two men formed an instant rapport.

Scott's life was eventful in the 1820s. Abbotsford was being built and the novels continued, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Bride of Lammermoor*. In 1822, he masterminded the visit of George IV to Scotland which was a tremendous success. It did help that the king was sober when he arrived unlike on the visit to Ireland when he arrived at Howth, helplessly drunk. However, the royal visit to Scotland led to a revival in the wearing of the kilt and it fostered the creation of many new kilts. By 1824 Abbotsford was complete.

1825 was a spectacular year for Scott. In January, at the end of the Christmas festivities, a grand ball took place at Abbotsford - unfortunately the very last. That year also marked a visit to Ireland, where his carriage was cheered in the streets of Dublin, and where a theatrical performance was halted with the audience

waving hats and handkerchiefs and calling, 'Sir Walter Scott - welcome to Ireland, Sir Walter'. In Limerick the bells rang out and he was given a grand reception in Cork. His son-in-law Lockhart relates that Scott was as full of glee as a schoolboy.

Meantime, Byron's death in 1824 shocked the literary world - Moore in particular. Moore who was always asking and receiving conflicting advice from his high-born friends, wasn't himself of strong enough character to prevent the *Memoir* he received from his great friend Byron from being burned, as he yielded to the wishes of Byron's former wife and her advisers.

His singing continued to touch people. There is the famous story of his dinner at Lord Bellhaven's where he so affected 'that beautiful person, Lady Fullerton', with his rendering of *Poor Broken Heart* that she left the room, sobbing violently.

He produced a new edition of the *Melodies*, and finished his *Life of Robert Brinsley Sheridan*, a task which Moore was to find daunting, given Sheridan's complicated life, as he said: 'Truth will be deadly, and vague praise will be cowardly - so what am I to do?'

While the content of the book was welcomed, critics damned its purple prose - they counted 2500 similes in the piece. Uncertain of the public's verdict, even though extracts were already being published in the *Edinburgh Advertiser*, Moore was happy to accept an invitation to Scotland from Sir Walter Scott.

On Oct 28, the *Edinburgh Advertiser* announced that Mr Moore, the celebrated poet, was to leave London on Tuesday to visit Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford.

With the *Rokeby* squibs forgotten by both men, Moore's visit to Scott was a complete success. Scott had written: 'There is a manly frankness and good breeding about him which is delightful. Not the least look of a poet or a pedant...Byron had often spoken...of Moore and myself, in the same breath and with the same sort of regard so I was curious to see what could be common betwixt us...Moore a scholar, I none; he a democrat, I an aristocrat. Yet, there is a point of resemblance...We are both good-humoured fellows who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions.' Observing Scott at ease with all classes in society, Moore said his own poetry might have had a more vigorous character if it hadn't been for his own boudoir education. The two men talked about 'poor Byron' noting that he always appeared to have 'a fixed hostility to himself'.

As Moore sang for the Scott's family and their dinner guests he noted that Scott had little ear for music until one of the guests launched into some old Jacobite songs. Moore writes 'Scott's eyes sparkled...we sang in the true orthodox manner, all of us standing around the table with hands crossed & joined, & and chorusing every verse with might and main.'

In Edinburgh, Moore was invited out to Craigcrook by his friend Francis Jeffrey where he was asked to sing his latest song *Ship Ahoy* so often that he remarks that

‘the upland echoes of Craigcrook ought long to have had its burden by heart’.

When Scott’s financial woes came to light, many people were gloating but Moore wrote ‘For poor devils like me...to be pinched for means becomes second nature, but for Scott...to be thus suddenly reduced to working his way is too bad, and I am heartily grieved at it’.

The two men were to meet on two further occasions. In 1826 when Scott was on his way to France and again in 1830, when Scott in very ill-health was in London en route to Italy. While he’d expressly asked for Moore to come and see him, Moore was grieved and shocked to see how little Scott took part in the conversation and describes ‘the utter vacancy of his look’. The great man was coming to the close of his days.

Like Scott, Moore would meet the young Victoria, but unlike Scott, he would duet with the future queen’s mother, singing *Go Where Glory Waits Thee*. Moore’s life of Byron was a triumph. John Lockhart found it quite perfect in every way and his wife Sophia agreed that it was divine - an excellent omen for the female market.

Despite a triumphant tour of Ireland, and an offer to represent his country in Parliament, the end of Moore’s life was a tragic one. Having outlived his three daughters and the two sons in whom he had invested such high hopes, the man whom Shelley had immortalised in *Adonais*:

The sweetest lyrist of her saddest song
And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue

would sit for the last few years of his life an empty shell, protected from the outside world by his faithful wife, Bessie.

So let us celebrate both men towards the end of Moore’s visit to Edinburgh when he accompanied Scott and the Jeffreys on November 12 to the Theatre Royal which was re-opening after its refurbishment. The first interruption was the arrival of the Duchess of St Albans – a formidable figure who had once been a comic actress in a provincial troupe.

Just as the first Act of *The Barber of Seville* ended, a party glided quietly into the box next to the Duchess. The audience first of all recognised Sir Walter and then, his guest. In his diary, Scott wrote ‘the house being a good one, received TM with rapture. I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.’

One unidentified newspaperman described, in more detail, the scene as the Scott party arrived. ‘Eh, yon’s Sir Walter...and wha’s the wee bit bodie wi’ the pawkie een? Wow, but it’s Tam Moore, just – Scott, Scott! Moore, Moore!’ with shouts, cheers, bravos and applause. The orchestra played alternately Scottish and Irish melodies. *The Edinburgh Advertiser* noted that Mr Moore was much affected by the reception. As Moore’s latest biographer, Ronan Keane points out: ‘For audiences

like this, Scott and Moore were more than ambassadors of Scotland and Ireland; they actually were their countries, the living, breathing incarnations of their native lands’.

Nowadays, of course, Thomas Moore’s reputation rests almost completely on a handful of fine lyrical songs of love and constancy, or of nostalgia for a long lost Ireland. The songs of Scott, the master novelist, are, like his verse, a too often forgotten part of his work. Both, as we have seen, were steeped in the folk traditions of their respective countries. Their songs, which have been set by great classical composers and often performed by art singers in concert halls still, in my view at least, sit best within the tradition that created them.

(Kath Hardie gratefully acknowledges the permission from Penguin Books to include in her talk excerpts from Bard of Erin by Ronan Kelly (2008). This excellent biography does justice to the life of the complex and multi-faceted Thomas Moore.)

Annual Dinner, Friday 12th March 2010

The 101st Annual Dinner was held in the New Club, Princes Street, Edinburgh, with some 80 members and guests crammed into the Long Room. Due to the incidence of the Rugby International against England on the following day it was not possible to have the main dining room. This has been resolved for 2011.

The introduction of those at the Top Table by the chairman was followed by this beautifully composed Grace by the Very Rev. Allan Maclean of Dochgarroch:

O Almighty God, tonight we remember Sir Walter Scott, the 'Minstrel of the Borders' and the 'Wizard of the North'.

We give thanks for the pleasure we enjoy from Scott, the person and the author, from the characters he drew and the verse he penned, and from our thoughts of the halcyon age in which he lived.

This year, we remember Scott, the writer of books, and the collector of books and manuscripts, who loved a library so much he made most of his house into one.

We remember him also as a 'Prince of Hosts', who greeted his book club companions as, 'You friends of old books and old wine'.

And finally, we give thanks for Edinburgh, 'a finer scene he ne'er surveyed', recalling all that it meant to Scott, not least in his own words, 'its busy day and social night.'

And for the 'social night', as well as the 'old wine', of this Gathering and Dinner, remembering Scott's own pleasure in conviviality and friendship, we pray that you will bless these gifts to our use as also ourselves in your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

After dinner was partaken The Chairman invited those present to Toast to the Queen. He then called upon the President Dr. Iain G. Brown to propose the Toast to the Memory of Sir Walter Scott. As the Toast involved a special item the President felt it would be appropriate to give it the following title.

**'CONSIGNED WITH INDIFFERENCE TO THE
CHANCE OF AN AUCTION':
THE LIVES AND MEANINGS OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT'S WRITING-CABINET**

It is a formidable task to speak at an occasion that follows a uniquely memorable one. Last year we held our one-hundredth dinner, and our society was honoured by the presence of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal. My predecessor as President was His Grace the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry. In composing his thoughtful and elegant address, Richard Buccleuch had the inestimable

advantage of being able to draw upon a family archive rich in letters of our hero, Sir Walter Scott, written to three successive dukes as the men whom he regarded as his clan chiefs and with whom he had been involved throughout his life as lawyer, landowner, littérateur and borderer. Few Presidents in the Club's history can have had anything like such a resource on which to depend, or by which to be inspired in choosing their words of tribute to the immortal memory of Walter Scott.

Mine is not a distinguished name, nor is my inheritance that of a great territorial proprietor; but I have some slight qualifications for addressing you tonight. Walter Scott has been my companion, so to speak, for many years in my professional life: his hand, heart and mind have been, so it has sometimes seemed, as close to me as my own, as I have bought his letters, papers and literary manuscripts for the nation. The most significant Scott purchase with which I have ever been involved was the repatriation of the great Interleaved Set of the Waverley Novels from the United States. When I wrote the story of the acquisition of the Interleaved Set I had to pay tribute to Mr Robert Maxwell (he was the publisher of my book) for so generously opening his pocket in support of the National Library's cause. I now realise, of course, that he was in fact opening other people's pockets rather than his own, so let us pass over that episode while remaining profoundly grateful to have the emotive literary relic and textual Pandora's Box that is the so-called 'Magnum Opus' safe again in this city.¹ I have felt this closeness, even intimacy, as I have read Scott's letters (frequently, despite long familiarity with the script, with difficulty and doubt as to what that dreadful writing actually says) in order to answer – or try to answer – the innumerable questions of enquirers from across the world. In my Library career I have known and corresponded with all the Scott scholars of modern times and with countless researchers in the general literary and artistic area that we may think of as a cultural realm constituting the Age of Scott. And I have served the cause of Abbotsford in various ways as a member of the Library Project Board which meets at the behest of the Faculty of Advocates.

My personal Scott connection becomes more direct still when I tell you that part of this address I give tonight was actually composed at the writing-cabinet that was first Scott's father's and then Sir Walter's until, at the time of his ruin, he gave it, full of financial papers bearing upon the tangled web of his business affairs, to his faithful solicitor and man of business, John Gibson. It descended through Gibson's family and was latterly exiled in Herefordshire (no unattractive part of the world, admittedly), before being sold about 1980. Then, five years ago, the cabinet was offered for sale again. An object of real emotional power which seemed to me to cry out from the inner fastnesses of its now-empty folio racks and pigeon-holes 'My own right hand shall do it!', it nevertheless attracted astonishingly little interest from all those institutions and bodies corporate which should have acquired it in order to preserve it for the public benefit. It was left for

me to buy, if not exactly for a song, then for much less than it is surely worth, certainly as an evocative historic relic (indeed I would go as far as to assert that this is one of the most resonant of all Scottish literary relics or association items) and perhaps even as an interesting example of practical Georgian office or estate furniture.²

Upon this cabinet, as I say, I have written part of this speech. It is my proposal, therefore, that I devote my address tonight to the vicissitudes of its chequered history. Having done that, I propose to consider the cabinet – in a process which one might term ‘Reading a Relic’ – as metaphor for Scott as writer, Scott as risk-taker, Scott as supremely noble soul in the gravest of adversity, and Scott as the DWEM or ‘dead white European male’ that the lack of interest in the fate of this piece of furniture at auction suggests him to be today, but which we in this Club know is very far from the truth.

In March 1826 Sir Walter Scott, financially ruined, and in thrall then and for the foreseeable future to his creditors (however liberal and magnanimous they proved to be) was flitting – *anglice* moving house – from Castle Street, Edinburgh. Number 39, together with all its plenishings had been for sale since 14 February. Clearing the clutter of 24 years’ residence, Scott shared his wife’s sense of depression. She especially, as he put in his journal, lamented the prospect of seeing their once-treasured worldly goods ‘consigned with indifference to the chance of an Auction.’³

Were his possessions to be disposed of thus, Scott was adamant that they be sold as *his*. Even as he was unashamed of the ‘productive labour’ and wealth-creating activity that his life as a man of letters constituted, so he displayed no reluctance to make money now, albeit for his Trustees and creditors, by the sale of his goods and gear. To his solicitor, John Gibson, he wrote on 8 March:

‘There is one point on which I beg to speak. I wish it to be advertized as *the furniture in No 39 lately occupied by Sir W. S.* Your delicacy would I know boggle at this but mine does not. My displeasure is that I am not able to pay every one their own, not on the measures necessary to effect payment, & I have some reason to think that if the public are aware it is mine better prices may be given. Some folks are curious to have even trifling articles belonging to those who have, right or wrong, made some noise [in] the world. I heard a fellow passing the house say: “Odd I’ll have one of his chairs if it cost me 20/-.” Others may have a similar whim & if so why should they [the pieces of furniture] go to the brokers to give them the advantage which would be gained by the Creditors’.⁴

We may, perhaps, think of a somewhat similar and deeply affecting passage in the *Journal* where Scott muses that someone might love and care for his beloved dogs because they had been his.⁵

One item of furniture was not, however, sold with the rest. This was the writing-cabinet, which Scott gave to Gibson.⁶ Strictly speaking, it was Gibson’s duty to sell everything for the benefit of the Trust for which he acted. But Gibson accepted this gift from a man whom he admired inordinately. Gibson bought for himself Scott’s dining-table and other pieces. The cabinet had in fact been Scott’s father’s, so one Writer to the Signet now took possession of the former property of another WS. Recording the gift in his journal, Scott noted that the cabinet ‘suits a man of business well’. Always courteous towards Gibson, Scott expressed himself as if it were Gibson who was doing *him* a favour rather than the other way round, remarking in his letter of 8 March that he wished the cabinet were a more worthy offering. A further, short letter of 9 March accompanied the article of furniture when it was delivered either to Gibson’s house at 23 Lynedoch Place or more likely to his office at 10 Charlotte Street. Scott wrote: ‘I send you the cabinet and much gear may it hold. I enclose you the keys. There are in it receipts, regularly bundled up for more than twenty years which may as well be with you in case of reference...’. This second letter⁷ is today set into the cabinet itself. The document had been recorded by Sir Herbert Grierson (as the property of F. Maitland Gibson, of Ealing) and published in Grierson’s edition of Scott’s letters in 1935. At some point in its history, the cabinet was subjected to an operation, evidently designed to reinforce its associations. The inner writing surface of the secretaire front panel was adapted to take a flush-mounted, brass, niello-inlaid plaque, incorporating a glass panel behind which Scott’s brief note of presentation was set. The style of lettering would suggest a date in the 1920s or 1930s, and the operation may indeed have been done about the time of the 1932 commemorations of the centenary of Scott’s death. This plaque is neither a very tastefully-designed nor an elegantly-worded feature; but it now forms part of the archaeology of the cabinet.

The cabinet passed through the family of some of Gibson’s descendants and was, when the National Library of Scotland heard of it for the first and last time, in 1978-79, in Hereford in the possession of his great-granddaughter. Then it had fallen to me, as a young Assistant Keeper, to discover what I could about the circumstances of donation by Scott to Gibson, this as a favour to the then owner. Distant memories of that episode, made vivid by the finding of old correspondence on the matter, some of it even within the drawers of the cabinet itself as it stood in the auction room, started to my mind again in March 2005. It now appears that the cabinet must have been sold very soon after I was approached about its past history. The purchaser (apparently at an auction in the ‘English Midlands’: Herefordshire might just qualify) was the leading Edinburgh antiques dealer Eric Davidson. He subsequently sold it to George Tait, WS, of the Leith legal firm of G. W. Tait & Sons, SSC. Mr Tait placed the cabinet in the reception hall of his Constitution Street office, and there it remained, not at all widely known, until removed to Lyon & Turnbull’s rooms with a view to sale in 2005.

Relatively utilitarian in appearance, but with an almost Japanese purity of line, it is a simple but substantial mahogany George III estate cabinet on a low stand, having double doors opening to reveal an arrangement of 24 pigeon holes round a secretaire compartment concealed behind a fall-front, this central space being fitted with six small drawers and a series of moveable folio racks. It would have served Sir Walter's tidy-minded father well. Since it was the elder Scott's, it must pre-date 1799, the year of his death. However Scott senior had been ill for some time before his death, and he would surely have had no need to buy such an obviously functional piece of 'office' furniture late in life when his legal career was over. Furniture historians place the cabinet in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and though it is impossible to attribute it to a particular maker, it is almost certainly Scottish.⁸ The probability is that the cabinet was acquired by Walter Scott when he and his family moved from the squalor of the College Wynd to the salubriousness of their new-built house at 25 George's Square, about 1774, during the early childhood of his son Walter, who was born in August 1771. New and larger furniture would have been in order as an accompaniment to the increased dignity of the Scott domestic establishment. The grandeur of the cabinet must not be over-stated: it is more workmanlike and practical than stylish and elegant. But it is still, in its way, a fine thing.

Pre-sale publicity in 2005 gave the cabinet not to the elder Walter Scott but to his son, thus leaving out of account some of its early history and depriving the piece of at least a quarter of a century age. 'Scott's *Waverley* work-station goes up for sale', said the *Edinburgh Evening News*, the article also suggesting, imaginatively, that the cabinet had once contained the manuscripts of the novels. The auction house did not dispute this excited and almost certainly erroneous opinion. In the sale catalogue itself no mention was made of the elder Scott's erstwhile ownership. Attempts were made to interest likely corporate buyers in the shape of the Faculty of Advocates, the Society of Writers to HM Signet, and Messrs Murray Beith Murray as occupiers of the Scott house in Castle Street; and the auctioneers must further have hoped that some local or national public institution would bid in the rooms: the University of Edinburgh, perhaps, or the City of Edinburgh Council's Writers' Museum for, after all, the cabinet was being peddled as a literary relic, and Edinburgh had recently been nominated the first UNESCO World City of Literature. The National Museums of Scotland certainly toyed with the suggestion of purchase, but did no more than toy.

There is no evidence that Scott ever had the cabinet at Abbotsford. It is immensely heavy, and clearly it is not the sort of thing that Scott could have lugged about with him. It was always an Edinburgh piece. Prior to Gibson's acquisition of the cabinet its homes had been George Square and then Castle Street, to which Walter Scott, advocate and coming man of letters, moved in 1801. Nevertheless Abbotsford, with its character as a literary shrine, would have been an excellent place for it to find a resting place. But, I for my part, and conscious

of its Edinburgh history, would have chosen to see it in Lady Stair's House, there to keep company with the dining-table from Castle Street, bought by John Gibson and sold subsequently by his descendants to the City. Last summer, however, the cabinet finally saw Scott's Conundrum Castle when it was taken there for the BBC Antiques Roadshow. It was allowed to spend two nights at Abbotsford. The cabinet and its new, and current, owners became temporary television stars just before Christmas.⁹

As Scott's solicitor (which he had become in 1822) John Gibson was a major player on the dramatic stage of Scott's last years.¹⁰ Neither man was to know how each would soon be tested in the great financial crisis that lay ahead. With the crash of 1825 Scott was relieved to place his entire affairs and all his confidence in what Sir Eric Anderson has called 'the polite precise figure' of Gibson, an ideal man for the task, 'prudent, painstaking ... who let nothing pass him by.'¹¹ This was to be Gibson's finest hour as well as Scott's. Gibson it was who advised Scott of two courses open to him: sequestration as a commercial bankrupt, or the establishment of a trust on behalf of his creditors. The latter was the more worthy but more onerous course of action; and this was what Scott consented to do. It meant that a much harder road lay ahead. But it allowed the ruined man to do more for those to whom he owed money; and above all it preserved his honour as a gentleman, and helped to conceal his 'un-gentlemanly' involvement in the 'trade' of printing and publishing. Gibson was appointed the principal trustee, and was joined in the complex and distasteful financial work by men with the singularly inappropriate names of Jollie and Monypenny.

In 1871, at the time of the Scott centenary, and as the last survivor of those most involved in the events of that fateful winter of 1825-26, John Gibson wrote a memoir of his dealings with the great man, to whose memory he remained devoted and whose sense of honour and integrity he revered. Here he rehearsed his role as trustee and agent for Scott.¹² He explained how he had been the first to acknowledge definitively to the creditors Scott's authorship of the *Waverley* novels, a year before Scott's own famous public admission of the fact in 1827. Thereafter, in addition to his technical legal and financial work for the trust, Gibson became something of what might now be called a 'rock' for Scott (as in 'he was my rock', said of Mr Paul Burrell). He was something, too, of a literary agent for Scott as mediator in the fate of Scott's literary property when he successfully sold *Woodstock* and the enormous *Life of Napoleon* to the highest London bidder. ('You have made a glorious sale', wrote Scott to the lawyer, signing himself here and elsewhere 'truly obliged and faithful.'¹³) And, along with the immortal *Journal*, Scott's inanimate confidant, Gibson found himself the recipient of Scott's intimate thoughts on various other literary projects, and on his constant toil for the benefit of the creditors. It was Gibson who put into memorable and elegant form the expression of the trustees' satisfaction, bordering on wondrous disbelief, at Scott's almost superhuman efforts on their behalf.¹⁴ His 1871 memoir provides

a succinct, tactful and charitable (perhaps too tactful and charitable) account of the vast edifice of paper credit, in the bewildering form of accommodation bills and counter-bills, that Scott had constructed, and which had crashed about him and his trade partners.¹⁵

Oddly, in his *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott*, John Gibson never mentions the writing cabinet. Perhaps he was uneasy at having accepted it: after all, he recorded in his pamphlet that his 'painful duty' as trustee had been to see that everything Scott's Edinburgh house contained was transferred to the trust for its benefit, and that all was duly sold. For his part, Scott (homeless, now, in Edinburgh) was able to record of the occasions when he stayed with the Gibsons in Lynedoch Place the strange feelings that the sight of his own old furniture from Castle Street, duly bought by Gibson, gave him. Scott's consolation was that the pieces were 'in kind and friendly hands.'¹⁶ In May 1826 Gibson seems to have believed that Scott, then accommodated in Mrs Brown's sparse lodgings at 4 North St David Street (no: I cannot claim kinship!), was in need of a desk and he, of course, had one by courtesy of his illustrious client; but in fact it was simple bookshelves that Scott then wanted most.¹⁷

That the cabinet set to be sold on 23 March 2005 was not actually Sir Walter's to begin with but his father's allowed those so moved to muse a little on matters of character and fate, time and chance. Was it not from him, *douce* Edinburgh lawyer that he was, that the younger Scott derived some at least of those characteristics which would be his undoing? Scholars, including Thomas Crawford and more recently John Sutherland, have hinted at this: Crawford, for example, saw in the elder Scott, the fount of the future man of letters' devotion to 'money values, worldly ambition and sober calculation', and the source of his 'practicality, his habit... of diligent labour.'¹⁸ If this is correct, and if it is true that in Walter Scott the elder's law office the young Walter was first 'exposed to the bourgeois side of his inheritance' which ultimately caused him to become 'a slave to the business man's neurotic compulsion to work',¹⁹ then the writing-cabinet found in the great Sir Walter Scott a worthy heir, and he in turn passed it on to Gibson, an equally diligent and upright pillar of the Edinburgh legal establishment. The furniture would 'suit a man of business well'. It is probable that the receipts it contained when handed over to Gibson were evidence of Scott's extravagant life: of spending the money he worked so hard to earn, simply that he might then spend it, and so on ... Abbotsford, his 'Dalilah', was, of course, the mistress on whom he lavished most, and who demanded from him ever more sacrifice to literary duty. Perhaps the cabinet also contained documentation bearing upon the speculative and shaky financial dealing which his involvement with Constable and Ballantyne so famously involved. In its way, the unremarkable cabinet offers its own silent commentary on the ruin of its owner, its contents, given under lock and key to the discreet Edinburgh lawyer, being (in the words of Scott's own punning

device stamped upon his book-bindings) *Clausus tutus ero* - 'I shall be safe when locked up'.

It is not known for sure what writing-furniture Scott had at Castle Street.²⁰ Did he therefore at any time, or even occasionally, use the cabinet when engaged in literary composition? We cannot tell. But we can indulge in intriguing speculation. Was it at this cabinet that Lockhart and his friends, peering from the George Street window along the east-facing rear elevation of 39 Castle Street, saw Scott writing that summer night in June 1814? Was it on this secretaire that the 'confounded' but 'unwearied' and ceaselessly-moving hand so famously scribbled and cast the endless sheets of manuscript upon the growing pile that was *Waverley* in the making? It would be pleasant indeed to think so; and it is also possible – just as possible, that is to say, as Lockhart's far-fetched story of the moving hand and its effect upon the *jeunesse dorée* of Edinburgh, so unsettled by the sight of it, is itself in the first place credible. Yes: at this desk *Waverley* and its successors *may* have been written, in part at least, and equally some of the earlier narrative poetry, and subsequently the history, journalism, biography, letters and so much else.

What is more certain is that, in some capacity – as furnishing of study, business-room or library – the cabinet will have witnessed the bleak events and bleaker thoughts of December 1825 and January 1826 when its owner learned that, as he put it in the *Journal*, his extremity had come. Maybe, just *maybe*, the greatest pages of that greatest of personal diaries were written upon it. Certainly these matchless passages were written in Edinburgh rather than at Abbotsford; and keeping company with the writer in his Edinburgh house was this silent, wooden witness to his hour of need. How the mahogany must have groaned as its owner wrote lines of truest pathos but yet greatest nobility. Imagine passages such as these being written on a piece of furniture one comes to own!

'I suppose it will involve my all... Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall makes them higher... how could I tread my hall with such a diminishd crest? How live a poor indebted man where I was once the wealthy – the honourd?... this will be news to wring your heart and many a poor fellow's besides to whom my prosperity was daily bread... For myself the magic wand of the Unknown is shiverd in his grasp... I can no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in my mind, haste to commit them to paper, and count them monthly as the means of planting such groves and purchasing such wastes... What a life mine has been... now taken in my pitch of pride ...because London chuses to be in an uproar and in the tumult of bulls and bears a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushd to the wall...I feel quite composed and determined to labour...I feel neither dishonourd nor broken down by the bad – miserably bad news I received. I have walked

my last on the domains I have planted, sate the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them...There is just another dye to turn up against me in this run of ill luck – i.e. If I should break my magic wand in a fall from this elephant and lose my popularity with my fortune. Then ...I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog or turn devotee and intoxicate the brain another way. In prospect of absolute ruin I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I should like methinks to go abroad

And lay my banes far from the Tweed.

But I find my eyes moistening and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it... adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer... My own right hand shall do it. Else I will be *done* in the slang language and *undone* in common parlance... No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself... I will not put out of the [reach] of my creditors the resources mental and physical which yet remain to me.’²¹

Whether or not all this was written at the cabinet is speculation; but (I have to protest) it is at least informed speculation. May we not so indulge ourselves after a good dinner and among like-minded companions? And we can always return to the world of indisputable fact and truth. At the auction, little interest was shown in Lot 519. Few present saw the latent significance, or appreciated the resonance of something so ‘ordinary’ in itself in a world of unfashionable ‘brown furniture’. Today plain, but solid and worthy Georgian mahogany is less ‘commercial’ than the flashy Second Empire ormolu and gilt-wood so beloved of Russian oligarchs. It is less desired, too, than the Habitat or IKEA that is the preferred choice of the young, aspiring middle-class British family. The cabinet was not exactly a ‘John Lewis List’ item, and not even the Speaker of the House of Commons could legitimately claim it on Parliamentary expenses; and the pampered, feathered flocks of a certain Honourable Member, so prominent in our thoughts last summer, might not readily take to it as a duck-house, despite its many useful pigeon-holes.

Considerations of furniture styles and priorities apart, Scott himself is out of fashion in the popular view, ‘inaccessible’ and wordy. Even the notion of heroism in adversity, personified in Scott’s life between 1825 and 1832, appears itself to be unfashionable, and one confined to history; the very idea of effort seems to have had its day, in an age when one downloads from the internet, ready-made, everything from undergraduate essays to after-dinner speeches – though not, I have to say, this one! Who now wants, in Scott’s phrase, used when writing of the fate of his own goods soon to be disposed of, ‘articles belonging to those who have made some noise in the world’? Few indeed, it appears, in this time of anti-heroics and grudging admiration of, or even sneering at, real distinction and outstanding

worth. Sir Walter Scott, greatest of all Scotsmen, was truly an ‘A- List’ celebrity; and the public now prefers the sordid Big Brother antics of the D-List or below. In him, Britain really had Got Talent: now, we idolize the mediocre, the worthless and the vulgar. Yes: Scott and his old furniture are, in today’s parlance, ‘Oh-My-God, so like, 1832, like’. What, I wondered on the day of the sale, thinking of modern-day comparisons, would the tables from either of the cafés which claim to be the place where J. K. Rowling scribbled the early chapters of the Harry Potter saga have fetched were they to come to auction? Surely they would be sought-after and collectable? In the event, the Scott cabinet was knocked down to me for much less than the price of a single Rowling first edition copy.

So, in our house the cabinet stands; and there we hold it in trust for the nation, until such time as some more suitable public place can (as I sincerely hope) be found for it when I have no further use for it. In the meantime it is mine, and my most personal and emotional material link with Scott. Should ever the University of Edinburgh make amends for its incomprehensible failure to acquire 25 George Square when the house was on the market four years ago, and there establish a Walter Scott Study Centre housing the vast Corson Collection and other materials relating to one of the University’s greatest sons, I would be willing to see the cabinet return to its first home. Even as your President has managed to save this relic for Scotland and for the future, so let us all work to see that its erstwhile owner, Walter Scott, is not consigned to the lumber-room of history as some unfashionable and un-saleable piece of brown furniture – rather like your President, really!

Mr Chairman, Bailie Maclaren, Your Grace, my Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen: I give you the toast of the immortal memory of Sir Walter Scott.



Writing-cabinet formerly belonging to Walter Scott, W.S., and Sir Walter Scott, Bart., of Abbotsford. Now the property of Dr Iain Gordon Brown, Edinburgh.

NOTES

- ¹ Iain Gordon Brown, *Scott's Interleaved Waverley Novels ((The 'Magnum Opus': National Library of Scotland MSS. 23001-41): an Introduction and Commentary (Aberdeen 1987).*
- ² Immediately after my purchase, and in the fresh enthusiasm of the moment, I wrote an account of the episode and the history of the writing-cabinet in an article published as 'Cabinet Reshuffle' in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 8 April 2005, p.15. This was accepted by the journal for an issue largely made up and laid out, so it was cut substantially in the editing.
- ³ *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, edited by W. E. K. Anderson (Oxford 1972), p. 100, entry for 1 March 1826. On the Scotts' move from Castle Street and their mood see pp.90, 107, 112.
- ⁴ *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, edited by H J C Grierson, 12 vols (London 1932-37), IX, p.456 (8 March 1826).
- ⁵ *Journal*, p.39 (18 December 1825).
- ⁶ The gift is recorded by Scott in *Journal*, p.109 (10 March 1826) and is referred to in *Letters*, IX, pp.456 and 463. See also J. G. Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, Edinburgh edition, 10 vols (Edinburgh 1902-3), VIII, p.263 and Edgar Johnson, *Sir Walter Scott. The Great Unknown*, two volumes (London 1970), II, p.977.
- ⁷ *Letters*, IX, p.463.
- ⁸ I am indebted to Dr Sebastian Pryke, Stephen Jackson, Laurance Black and Christopher Payne for discussion of the cabinet.
- ⁹ See the BBC publication *Homes & Antiques*, January 2010, p.125.
- ¹⁰ In his *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh 1871), p.4 Gibson explains how he became associated with Scott. Gibson was always known as 'John Gibson, Junior'. He is thus labelled in the inscription on the brass plaque laid into the cabinet.
- ¹¹ *Journal*, Introduction, pp. xxxiv-xxxv. Scott expresses his satisfaction at having Gibson to act for him in letters to William Laidlaw and his son Walter, *Letters*, IX, pp.378 and 381 (26 January 1826).
- ¹² Gibson, *Reminiscences*, pp.13 ff.
- ¹³ *Letters*, IX, p.508 (14 April 1826).
- ¹⁴ National Library of Scotland, MSS. 112-114, Sederunt Books of the Trustees of James Ballantyne and Company. See also John Gibson's original letters and papers connected with his work for the Trustees in NLS Acc. 11878, some of which are engrossed in Sederunt Book II, MS. 113.
- ¹⁵ W. E. K. Anderson provides an admirable summary of Scott's financial circumstances and of his affairs at the time of the crash, and afterwards, in *Journal*, Introduction, pp.xxiii- xxviii.
- ¹⁶ *Journal*, p.348 (5 September 1827).
- ¹⁷ *Letters*, X, p.31.
- ¹⁸ Thomas Crawford, *Scott* (Edinburgh 1965), p.3. See also John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott* (London 1995).
- ¹⁹ Crawford, *Scott*, p.16.
- ²⁰ When Scott moved from the family home to lodgings in the New Town – removing 'my camp' (as he put it, consumed with the military fervour of his life in the Royal Edinburgh Volunteer Light Dragoons) 'from Georges Square to Georges Street' – prior to his marriage at the end of 1797 he took with him, along with some other 'little moveables', his 'Scritoire': see *Letters*, XII, pp.67-68 (14 November 1797, to Charlotte Carpenter). This writing-desk (about which nothing more is known) may have served him for some time thereafter, indeed into his Castle Street days, where it will have been supplemented, if and when the need arose, by his father's writing-cabinet from George Square.
- ²¹ *Journal*, pp.39-40, 42-43, 65, 68 (18 December 1825, 22 and 24 January 1826).

The Chairman expressed the deep appreciation of the members to the President for his excellent Toast and invited Bailie Marilynne Maclaren to give the reply to the Toast to The City of Edinburgh, which had been proposed by the Chairman.

The Lord Provost is sorry not to be here this evening but I am delighted to be able to take up your kind invitation to respond to the Toast to the City this year on his behalf. Many thanks to Prof Purdie for such a wonderful toast. As a City of Edinburgh Council Bailie and Councillor, and as a citizen of Edinburgh, I feel very proud that the City's long and rich literary history was recognised when it became the first UNESCO World City of Literature in 2006. It is important that we take pride in and celebrate our literary history. It is even more important that we encourage a new generation of readers and writers. I believe that literature is a potent vehicle for getting a message across. Recently, in their annual City of Literature reading campaign, the organisation gave away thousands of free 'Carry a Poem' books and poetry pocketcards and organised a month of poetry events

This brought 35 organisations together to run events attended by nearly 2,000 people in 28 days. They also ran the largest ever poetry event in Scotland 'Poets for Haiti' with the Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy and 18 other poets. Over 800 people attended and they raised £12,000 for the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund.

Edinburgh is often presented as an ancient city, rich in culture, architecture and natural beauty, but it is much more than that. Edinburgh's heart and soul is its people, their talents and aspirations. As Convener of Education and Children & Families and a local Councillor, I meet them every day, ordinary people give a lot to this City and I am proud of this City and its people.

As you know, the Writers' Museum forms part of the City of Edinburgh Council's museum service and is dedicated to three of Scotland's greatest writers: Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson. I'm delighted to say that in 2009, the museum welcomed over 53,000 visitors through its doors, a clear indication of the wonderful draw of Edinburgh's literary heritage to visitors both national and international, and of how much our literary heritage is valued.

An additional feature celebrating Edinburgh's literary heritage at the Writers' Museum is Makars' Court, a literary commemoration celebrating the lives and works of Scottish Writers. Each writer, including of course, Scott, Burns and Stevenson, is commemorated by a quotation. The quotations are inscribed in stone and set in the paving leading from both The Mound and the Lawnmarket to the door of the Writers' Museum. The quotation for Sir Walter Scott is taken from his poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805): "This is my own, my native land". I am delighted to report that the sign for Makars' Court, sadly disfigured with graffiti, will be replaced shortly. However, happily, the enamel panel on the north

wall of The Writers' Museum, incorporating bas relief profiles of Scott, Burns and Stevenson remains untouched, possibly due to its position high up the wall, though, given the acrobatic feats of some graffiti artists, I can't guarantee that it will remain so.

The City of Edinburgh continues to support the celebration of Edinburgh's literary heritage in many ways. Another initiative associated with the Writers' Museum is the post of Edinburgh Makar, instituted by the City of Edinburgh in 2002. This civic appointment is selected by representatives of the Scottish Poetry Library, Scottish PEN, The Saltire Society, City of Literature Trust and the City of Edinburgh Council. The current Edinburgh Makar is the internationally renowned poet and author Ron Butlin who acts as the City's literary ambassador at home and abroad assists in the promotion of poetry in partnership with literary organisations.

A new development which I am highly pleased to announce is the forthcoming launch of the City of Edinburgh Museums and Galleries website (date to be confirmed; around March/April). This will give our service an opportunity to showcase our collections, including those of the Writers' Museum and of course Sir Walter Scott. The website is aimed at local and overseas visitors, making them aware of our literary and heritage facilities and the diversity of our collections. Connected to this is a digitisation project, which aims to put photographs and information on our collections onto the City Libraries' 'Capital Collections' website. The Scott collection has been earmarked for inclusion on the site, making it accessible to a wide range of the public, including researchers, schools and Scott enthusiasts.

Yet another exciting new development is the revitalisation of the Museum Room of the Scott Monument. It is hoped the work will be completed in the next three months, ready for the busy part of the tourist season. The revitalised Museum Room will include: upgraded display cabinets with new biographical text about Scott; the installation of a smaller bronze copy of the main statue which is currently in storage; a new biographical display and material relating to the architect George Meikle Kemp; and new visitor sound points on four themes, namely: Scott – Wizard of the north, Scott's poems, influence and characters. Using the carved detail in the room, there will be more historic photographic images of the monument and more information on Scott's books and novels.

Sir Walter Scott, a writer of prodigious output, gained prestige and influence both nationally and internationally and his historical novels were not only an important influence on literature, painting and music in many countries, but changed attitudes towards the past. It is therefore such a great pleasure to celebrate Sir Walter Scott's heritage in the city while also celebrating Edinburgh's great literary heritage.

It has been delightful to be in such good company this evening and I would like to extend a genuine thank you for your kind hospitality.

The Chairman thanked her for her reply and then asked Dr William Zachs to respond to the Toast to The Roxburghe Club, which had been proposed by the Chairman in a most informative and amusing manner.

On behalf of my fellow Roxburghe Club members (and, I might add, with the approbation of our president, Lord Egremont) I would like to thank the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club and its members, Professor David Purdie, the Chairman, in particular, for the entertaining and even instructive toast in honour of our club. I personally would like to say thank-you for the kind invitation to be here this evening. I came to Scotland 27 years ago to study Walter Scott, so this event has special meaning.

Each spring, for nearly 200 years, at the anniversary dinner of the Roxburghe Club, the president makes a toast. It is a rather long toast, and over the years it has gotten longer, for reasons which will soon be evident. It is a toast which ends, for me at least, in poignancy – a poignancy that brings forth a smile and perhaps even a tear, a poignancy which reminds each of the members why we have gathered together. And it is a toast in which, like the toasts heard this evening, Sir Walter himself would have regaled.

Indeed, Sir Walter undoubtedly heard the Roxburghe toast in the year 1828, when he attended his first, and what was, sadly, to be his final Roxburghe Club anniversary dinner. This took place in London at the Freemason's Tavern on 15 May 1828. The Roxburghe Club Minute Book (which I recently consulted in the Society of Antiquaries Library in London) records the attendance of the 'author of Waverley', for Scott was unique in the annals of the Club in that his election was pseudonymous. The Minute Book, for those interested in culinary matters, also notes that turtle was served – an expensive delicacy of the day which seems to have been consumed in excessive quantities at Roxburghe Club dinners. In his Journal Scott recorded the occasion:

[15 May 1828.] Dined at the Roxburgh Club. Lord Spencer presided but had a cold which limited his exertions. Lord Clive, beside whom I sate, was deaf though intelligent and good humoured, the Duke of Devonshire was still deafer. There were many chirruping men who might have talked but went into committee. There was little general conversation.

Scott, it seems, was disappointed with his first Roxburghe Club dinner. A few days before, he had had a rather better time dining slightly more informally with such fellow members and friends as Sir Francis Freeling, Edward Utterson, and

Thomas Frognal Dibdin. Dibdin was the guiding force behind the founding of the Roxburghe Club. He was the librarian of Earl Spencer at Althorp, and the author of many books about books, including the *Bibliographical Tour to the North of England and Scotland*, which I highly recommend if you're interested in the bookish world of Sir Walter Scott's day.

More to Scott's taste than fine food, or 'chirruping' conversation with the hearing impaired, were the Roxburghe Club's books. These were productions typically of a literary or historical nature which are at the heart of the Club's *modus operandi*. For the most part they were printed in small quantities, distributed to members only and difficult to come by otherwise – the early productions in particular. Having been elected in 1823, eleven years after the Club's founding, Scott was desirous to obtain the books previously issued. And there were 37 of these at the time. When an opportunity arose, he paid the stately sum of £130 to his bookseller (Payne) for a set – this in spite of his well known financial difficulties. Bibliomania was an ailment from which Scott, happily, suffered. The library at Abbotsford is evidence, if it were needed, of his condition. Sadly, many of these Roxburghe books do not seem to be at Abbotsford today. A copy of the book Scott *himself* presented to the Roxburghe Club is there, though, oddly, not his copy. (A member's individual copy is designated by the printing in red of his name in the list of current members.) The work Scott presented is the *Proceedings in the court-martial held upon John, Master of Sinclair, Captain-Lieutenant in Preston's Regiment, for the murder of Ensign Schaw of the same regiment, and Captain Schaw of the Royals, 17th October 1708. With correspondence respecting that transaction*. There is also a copy in the National Library of Scotland where you can find one of the very few complete runs of Roxburghe Club books – currently standing at 280 titles.

When Scott was elected in 1823, he wrote [25 Feb. 1823] to Dibdin, on behalf of 'the Author of Waverley' to express his thanks, and told Dibdin:

It will not be uninteresting to you to know that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club: but having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view. – It is to be called the Bannatyne Club from the celebrated antiquary George Bannatyne who compiled by far the greatest manuscript record of old Scottish poetry. Their first meeting is to be held on Thursday when the health of the Roxburghe Club [will be toasted].

Scott, of course, was the first president of the Bannatyne Club and the major figure behind its early printed productions. Not long after its establishment, a west coast counterpart came into being: the Maitland Club of Glasgow. Inspired by these organizations, others of a related kind, though open to a wider membership, emerged over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries: the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society founded in 1890, the first of its kind, and this Club itself founded in 1894 are two local examples. Most have come and gone.

Your Club and the one I have the honour to represent this evening, the Roxburghe, have endured. This is something we can be proud of. In the spirit of intra-clubbability (if that's a word). I would like to conclude my reply to *your* very kind toast by reciting the toast given at the Roxburghe anniversary dinners.

1. To the immortal memory of John Duke of Roxburghe
2. of Christopher Valdafer, Printer of the Decameron
3. of Gutenberg, Furst, and Schoeffer, the inventors of the art of printing
4. of William Caxton, the father of the British Press
5. of Dame Julia Berners and the St. Alban's Press [1496]
6. of Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson, the illustrious successors of Caxton
7. of the Aldine family at Venice
8. of the Giunta family at Florence
9. of Walter Chapman, the earliest Scottish Printer
10. the Society of Bibliophiles at Paris
11. the Prosperity of the Roxburghe Club
12. and the Cause of Bibliomania all over the World.

And if I may add: to the good health and happiness of all of you here this evening. Thank you very much.

The evening was brought to a close with a Vote of Thanks proposed by Alasdair Hutton.

Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 13th May 2010

This year's A.G.M. was held in the Long Room in the New Club at 7pm., chaired by Professor David W. Purdie.

After the chairman had welcomed the approx. 30 members who were present the Hon. Sec. intimated apologies for absence on behalf of: May Baird, Ian Campbell, Hector Chawla, Chay Corsar, Alasdair Hutton, John Milne, Mary Rankin, Astrid Silins and Gordon Wylie.

Adoption of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Club held on 14th May 2009, which had been circulated, was proposed by Dairmid Gunn, seconded by Paul Scott, and agreed unanimously, following the correction of a minor typing error in item 6.

The Chairman reported on activities of the Club during the year. Following the AGM in May, Jacque Wright presented an address on the *Past, Present and Future of Abbotsford*. In June, Ronald Silvester gave a talk titled, *Scott as Poet, Critic and Historian*. The Club held a colloquium at Abbotsford on *Rob Roy*, with Alasdair Hutton and Professor David Hewitt. On the anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's birth on 15th August, the Chairman presented an illustrated biographical talk on Sir Walter, using images from the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) collections, and also the Corson archive. This talk was followed by music by The Sorries. The joint lecture with the University of Edinburgh, held in October in the Advocates Library, was given by Lindsay Levy, titled *Walter Scott: Bibliophile or Bibliomaniac?*. In November, the Club celebrated the completion of the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels (EAWN) by introducing on part of the website recordings by distinguished scholars reading short passages from EAWN. Brian Taylor announced the project on BBC Radio Scotland. Fraser Elgin donated a complete set of the EAWN to the Club for presentation to the New Club. A special reception for Fraser is to be held by the New Club in October. Kath Hardie gave a talk in February about *Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore*, with music by Chapter Four. This year the 101st Annual Dinner was held in the Long Room at the New Club on 12th March. Dr Iain G. Brown, President, proposed the Toast to the *Memory of Sir Walter*. Mr William Zachs replied to the Toast to the Roxburghe Club which had been proposed by the Chairman.

Dr Iain G. Brown thanked the Club for their programme and for the privilege of serving as President this year.

Dairmid Gunn proposed Lord Russell Sanderson, a Borders' man and Chairman of the Abbotsford Trust, as President for 2010/11. The proposal was seconded by the Very Reverend Allan MacLean, and approved by members.

Joan Dunnett submitted her resignation from the position of Honorary Secretary. Appreciation was conveyed to her for her work on behalf of the Club during the past year. Professor Peter Garside, Professor of Bibliographical and Textual Studies at Edinburgh University, was proposed as Honorary Secretary to succeed her and this was agreed to unanimously. Lee Simpson was re-elected Honorary Treasurer and Events' Convener, being proposed by the Very Reverend Allan MacLean and seconded by Paul Scott.

It was intimated that Alex Cameron, Alex Currie, and Joan Dunnett had submitted their resignations from Council. Their services were duly acknowledged. The remaining members were re-elected.

The Honorary Treasurer presented the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2009. Following an annual donation of £250 from John Loska towards costs of the Bulletin, £1600 was raised from other members. The Annual Dinner had run at a loss, due to extra costs and additional guests. Costs of postage were up. This year a copy of the Bulletin was sent to every member as it commemorated the special occasion of the presence of HRH the Princess Royal at the Hundredth Annual Dinner. For future events, to keep tickets at a reasonable price, Council had agreed to limit the supply of wine. There are about 150 life members and approximately 70 members who pay annual subscription. Paul Scott proposed acceptance of the Annual Accounts; seconded by Lady Caplan. The accounts were adopted unanimously.

The Events' Convener outlined the programme of events for the remainder of 2010. As the Annual Dinner this year was cramped, it was suggested for next year that the main dining room should be booked for a Thursday evening. The attendance could then be increased to 110. There had been complaints about the food at this year's Dinner. Representation was made to the New Club, and comments sent to the chef. As a result a small reimbursement had been received. The next event is the Colloquium on the *Lady of the Lake* to be held on 23rd May, with speakers Ali Lumsden and Nicola Watson. Our reserved 30 places on the boat have been taken, but places at the Colloquium itself are still available. At Abbotsford; David Purdie, Alasdair Hutton, Rose McBain, Henry Douglas and Hilary Bell are giving a presentation in aid of funds for the Abbotsford Trust on 27th May. Stuart Kelly is giving a talk on 24th June. There will be an event to commemorate Scott's birthday on 15th August. Allan Massie is giving an address on *Scott and Byron* on 16th September. The Joint Lecture with Edinburgh University on 14th October is being delivered by Claire Lamont. On 4th November Penny Fielding will give a lecture entitled: *To The Lighthouses: Scott and the Stevensons in Orkney and Shetland*.

The next Annual General Meeting will be held in May 2011.

The meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

A Mighty Treasure

On Thursday 14th May, at the conclusion of the AGM, Dr. Paul Barnaby, Project Officer of the Walter Scott Digital Archive at Edinburgh University Library, gave an address to the Club on 'A Mighty Treasure': James C. Corson's Collection of Scottiana.



*James C. Corson
photographed 29 April 1939*

The Corson Collection of Walter Scott materials is the lifework of a remarkable scholar and Scott enthusiast. James Clarkson Corson was born in Edinburgh on 30 June 1905. He was educated at Daniel Stewart's College from 1911 to 1924 before entering Edinburgh University to read history. Having graduated in 1928, Corson stayed on to prepare a Ph.D. on 'The English Revolution and the Doctrines of Resistance and Non-Resistance, 1688-1714' (1934). Before completing his postgraduate work, however, Corson had taken up a post at the University Library. At first he was employed as an Assistant Librarian, but he soon rose to the position of Deputy Librarian in 1939, where he was to remain until his retirement in 1965. Today Corson is best known to Scott scholars for his 1943 publication *A Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott: A Classified and Annotated List of Books and Articles Relating to his Life and Works 1797-1940* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd) and for his *Notes and Index to Sir Herbert Grierson's Edition of the Letters of Sir Walter Scott* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), both of which remain standard reference works in the field. His most durable legacy, however, is one of the most diverse and significant archives of Scott materials. The Corson Collection, almost certainly the world's largest self-standing collection of Scottiana, was sold to Edinburgh University under an agreement in 1978, and was transferred to the University Library in 1989, a year after Corson's death.

Corson himself provided a vivid account of the origins and development of his collection in the catalogue of an exhibition of some of its highlights organized by Edinburgh University Library in 1980. 'Since I was in my teens', he wrote, 'the study of Sir Walter Scott's life and works has been an obsession with me' (p.[i]).¹ Looking back, he identified three milestones. The first was in 1917 when, aged twelve, he was set *The Lady of the Lake* as a textbook in his English class. He declared himself exasperated with the notion that enforced exposure to Scott at school might lead to neglect in later life. In his case, the encounter proved a revelation, inspiring a lifelong love of Scott, and he 'devoured' all the Waverley Novels while still in his teens. The second milestone was his first visit to Abbotsford in 1919. 'Though', Corson wrote, 'I have visited the house hundreds

of times since and stayed there and slept in Scott's bedroom, I have never been able to recapture the thrill of that first visit' (p.ii). The third milestone was the Centenary of Scott's death in 1932 when Corson collected posters, programmes and newspaper reports relating to celebrations held over the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. After he completed his academic studies in 1934, Corson wrote, 'all my spare time has been devoted to the study of my hero'.

Corson kept an accession register of all his Scott-related purchases from the age of twelve onwards, thus leaving a detailed record of how his collection had come together. 'Did this mean', he wrote, 'that I was destined to become a librarian?' (p.ii). Corson recalls that he was constantly faced with two problems as a collector: cash and space. To overcome the former, he had always to buy at the cheapest rate, visiting bookshops regularly, one every day, and the others in rotation, usually every Saturday afternoon. Booksellers' catalogues were 'ransacked daily' (p.iii) and he bought extensively from them whenever the prices suited his pocket. He also attended every auction sale at Dowell's and Lyon and Turnbull's for thirty years and was able to make large purchases at reasonably low prices. The period covered by Corson's search for items was a lucky one, for after the First World War and the slump of 1931 many large libraries from mansion houses came on the market. In addition the collections of major Scott scholars like David Douglas and W. S. Crockett became available after their deaths. It was also, Corson noted, a period when there were far more second-hand bookshops with their 'penny stalls'.

To overcome the problem of lack of space, Corson had, to a certain extent, to be selective. He calculated, for example, that although sets of the Waverley Novels could be acquired very cheaply, they would amount to over a thousand volumes and occupy space which he could not afford. This explains why the collection contains complete sets of only the standard editions, but he tried to have at least one novel from each set to show the type of binding and plan of the edition. Though there are first and other early editions of nearly all Scott's works, they were never given priority and were bought for their textual and not their bibliographical value. Priority was always given to biographical and critical works, and Corson believed that the collection contained practically every work in these classes which the student of Scott was likely to want to consult. The problem of space was partially solved when Corson moved in to the old manse in Lilliesleaf in the heart of the Scott country and used an abandoned chapel to house his collection.

The Corson collection may be divided into five categories: printed books, manuscripts, visual materials (prints, drawings and paintings), realia, and Corson's own papers and working materials

The Collection contains just over 6,800 printed books, making it the largest self-standing collection of Scott-related printed materials in Britain and most

probably the world. Almost half of the printed books are editions of the works of Scott. Although Corson did not prioritize the search for first or early editions of Scott, this section of the collection contains a number of rare or unique items. He owned three copies of Scott's first publication, *The Chase and William and Helen*, a translation of two ballads by the German poet Gottfried August Bürger, which was published by Manners and Miller, in Edinburgh, in 1796. One of these is a presentation copy to the poetess Anna Seward with an inscription in Scott's own hand. Seward, known as the 'Swan of Lichfield', was a warm admirer of Scott's verse and corresponded with him from 1802 till 1808. Her final letter bequeathed to him the task of editing her poems. This Scott dutifully performed and his edition of her works was published in three volumes by John Ballantyne in 1810.

Corson also owned a rare variant of the first edition of Scott's second publication, a translation of Goethe's drama *Goetz von Berlichingen* (originally from the collection of the Rev. W. S. Crockett) published by J. Bell of London in 1799. On the title page, Scott's name is misprinted as 'William Scott', an oversight which gave rise to rumours that Scott had subsequently abandoned his real Christian name for the more poetic 'Walter'.

Corson owned two copies of the first edition of *Waverley* (published by Constable in 1814) the most significant of which is a presentation copy to Scott's friend Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, scholar, song-collector, poet, and amateur artist. Perhaps the most valuable presentation or association copy in the collection, however, is the Duke of Wellington's copy of Scott's 1824 novel *St Ronan's Well* (Constable, 1824). Scott met the Duke on a number of occasions and also corresponded with him, drawing on his reminiscences and observations for his *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* (1827). He told James Ballantyne that he was the one man in whose presence he had ever felt 'awed or abashed'.² For Scott, he was 'a man of genius and talent, not deterred by obstacles, not fettered by prejudices, not immured within the pedantries of his profession but playing the general and the hero.'³

What renders this section of the Corson Collection truly unique, however, is the large number of posthumous popular editions of the Waverley Novels, derived, to greater or lesser degrees, from the 'Magnum Opus' edition published by Cadell between 1829 and 1833. This is not material that academic or research libraries have traditionally collected or retained, or that bibliographers of Scott have systematically documented. Corson, a largely traditional textual scholar with little sympathy for the turn to theory, proved surprisingly prescient as a collector in placing as much emphasis, on the popular reception and diffusion of Scott, and on his impact on material cultural and national identity, as on strictly scholarly response. The Corson Collection permits an overview of Scott the posthumous bestseller and mainstay of the Victorian book market. It includes early US editions and provincial British editions published in centres such as

Liverpool and Halifax after the expiration of the original copyrights. An edition of *The Antiquary* published by Ward, Lock & Co. in 1882 is one of the rare Scott novels to have appeared as a budget yellowback edition, a format usually reserved for works of a sensational nature. The collection also contains editions of the Waverley Novels sold at railway bookshops in the original travelling cases.

The Corson Collection is particularly rich in illustrated editions of the Waverley Novels and provides an invaluable record of the role of Scott and his publishers in creating the blueprint for the copiously illustrated Victorian novel. Equally groundbreaking are illustrated editions of Scott's narrative poems, the earliest of which are John Sharpe's editions of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion* (both 1809), *The Lady of the Lake* (1811), and *Glenfinlas and other Ballads* (1812), for which Richard Westall produced influential engravings. Together with complete copies of each of these works, Corson acquired sets of Westall's illustrations loosely inserted in the cardboard portfolios in which they were originally issued for binding with the poems.

An 1863 edition of the *Lady of the Lake*, published by A. W. Bennett of London, contains some of the earliest photographic illustrations to appear in a British book, including a frontispiece by the pioneering landscape photographer George Washington Wilson and further images by Thomas Ogle. This is one of only six editions of Scott to be illustrated photographically. Corson owned a second, an 1872 edition of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, published by Provost and Co. of London, with photographs by Russell Sedgfield. These illustrate how throughout the nineteenth-century, Scott – a perennially safe commercial prospect – was used to launch innovations in book format and publishing technology.

Besides original works by Scott, Corson collected musical and theatrical adaptations, derivations, and pastiches. Scott's immense influence on 19th-century music can scarcely be overestimated. His lyrics were set by Beethoven and Schubert. He inspired over ninety operas – more than any writer except Shakespeare – including masterpieces by Donizetti, Bellini, Rossini, and Bizet. Corson collected librettos of the best-known operas, but also less celebrated musical works such as the *Abbotsford Polka* by J. G. Jones and the *Bonnie Dundee Quadrille* by Charles d'Albert.⁴ The collection includes some of the very earliest musical adaptations from Scott, including John Clarke Whitfield's 1808 setting of 'The Song of Fitz Eustace' from *Marmion*. Whitfield requested the exclusive right to set Scott's songs to music. Scott would not accede to this but gave Whitfield advance copies so that his settings would be ready by the time the poems were published.

Where Scott's impact on the world of music is widely recognized, he is perhaps less often regarded as a staple of the nineteenth-century theatrical repertoire. Some theatrical adaptations, notably Daniel Terry's *Guy Mannering, or, The*

Gypsy's Prophecy (1816) and Isaac Pocock's *Rob Roy Macgregor, or, Auld Lang Syne!* (1818), were among the most frequently performed dramas of the nineteenth century. Together with many editions of Scott plays, Corson owned a toy theatre set designed for home performances of Scott-based dramas, and many playbills for productions of Scott's works or for dramatized episodes from Scott's life.

Scott was also a popular choice for the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century phenomenon of the Kinderspiel, in which episodes from Scott's works were adapted for child actors. The Corson Collection includes illustrated librettos for Kinderspiel versions of *Rob Roy*, *The Lady of the Lake*, and *The Lord of the Isles*, with words and music by John C. Grieve (all published by Ernest Köhler in the 1890s). The apotheosis of the Kinderspiel is perhaps represented by the child's pageant which marked the Centenary of Scott's death in Edinburgh in 1932 and for which each of the city's schools contributed a scene from Scott's life or works.⁵ Scott's works, his poems in particular, also inspired numerous pastiches and parodies. Corson owned such works as *The Lay of the Scottish Fiddle* (1813),⁶ a parody of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* by James Kirke Paulding, *Jokeby* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1813), a skit on *Rokeby* by John Roby, and *The Ass on Parnassus* (1811),⁷ 'a prophetic tale; written in imitation of *The Lady of the Lake* by 'Jeremiah Quiz'.

Corson, as we have seen, regarded the biographical and critical works as the centrepiece of his collection. It was his intention, sadly unrealizable, that they should form the reference library of a Walter Scott study centre which he wished to see housed in Scott's childhood home at 25 George Square. This section contains over 1200 works dating from the publication of *Waverley* to the 1980s. The earliest items include attempts to unmask the mysterious 'Author of *Waverley*', including John Leycester Adolphus's *Letters to Richard Heber, Esq.* (London: Rodwell and Martin, 1821) which pointed the finger at Scott and won his admiration for the ingenuity of its arguments.⁸ Scott's confession of his authorship in 1827 did little to stem a flood of publications arguing that hidden hands lay behind at least part of his production. As late as 1856 the Irish historian William John Fitzpatrick was arguing that the earlier 'Scottish novels' were largely the work of Walter's brother Thomas and sister-in-law Elizabeth McCulloch Scott.⁹ Equally prominent among the early publications are works presenting the historical episodes or real-life models behind Scott's imaginings or disputing his interpretations of history. Thus *Old Mortality* prompts the publication of histories of the Battles of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge, and its companion piece, the *Black Dwarf* a life of the hermit David Ritchie, Scott's supposed model.¹⁰ *The Heart of Midlothian* leads to publications on the Porteous Riots and *Kenilworth* to historical works on the mysterious death of Amy Robsart at Cumnor Palace and on the pageant held in Queen Elizabeth's honour at Kenilworth Castle.¹¹

A similar impulse ultimately gave rise to works providing an historical guide to the *Waverley* Novels as a whole. The earliest is Richard Warner's *Illustrations, Historical, Biographical and Miscellaneous of the Novels of the Author of Waverley* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Browne, 1823), but similarly conceived and titled works were published throughout the nineteenth century. Addressing much the same market are handbooks to the *Waverley* Novels, such as May Rogers's *Waverley Dictionary* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1879) and M. F. A. Husband's *Dictionary of the Characters in the Waverley Novels* (London: Routledge, 1910), providing handy plot summaries, and alphabetical guides to Scott's characters. Towards the turn of the twentieth century, the emphasis shifts from the historical to the geographical background, as works such as George G. Napier's *The Homes and Haunts of Sir Walter Scott* (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1897) and W. S. Crockett's *Footsteps of Scott* (Edinburgh: T. N. Foulis, 1908) cater to a growing rail-driven mass tourist market.

The critical and biographical section of the Corson Collection contains all the major English-language monographs, together with studies in French, German, Italian, Danish, Swedish, and Finnish. Amongst the most valuable of the strictly biographical works is the first edition of Hogg's *Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott*, published by Harper & Brothers in New York, 1834 after negotiations for publication in Britain broke down. Corson also owned the first British edition pirated from the New York edition and published as *The Domestic Manners and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott* by John Reid of Glasgow. There is also less conventional biographical and scholarly material, such as works on Scott's dogs and studies of his career as a Sheriff.¹²

Corson also collected biographical material on people connected with Scott – either personally, or as models for his fiction – and literary work by Scott's friends and peers. This includes an item from Scott's own library with his own signature on the title page: the *Miscellaneous Works* (London: J. Murray, 1791) of Andrew MacDonald, a talented but tragically short-lived poet and dramatist who boarded at Glasgow University with Scott's friend Will Erskine. Scott was in the habit of disposing of duplicate or earlier editions if he acquired later ones, which is how this volume came onto the market. He probably disposed of this copy when he acquired the 1820 reprint now in the Abbotsford Library collection. The Corson Collection contains one further item from Scott's own library, his copy of George Colman's 1778 edition of *The Dramatick Works of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London: T. Evans) The first volume bears an MS note from John Ballantyne stating that Scott had exchanged it with him for a copy of the new edition of Beaumont and Fletcher issued by Ballantyne in 1812. Unusually for Scott, these volumes include marginal notes in his handwriting.

The Corson Collection contains only a small number of Scott manuscripts, as Corson's budget rarely permitted him to buy or bid for such items. The most

extensive manuscript is the text of one of Scott's two *Religious Discourses by a Layman* of 1828. Corson also owned a two-page manuscript from chapter 88 of Scott's mammoth *Life of Napoleon*. There are twenty-six letters from Scott to correspondents such as James Hogg, Allan Cunningham, and John Leycester Adolphus, and including a letter to a distant relative, Mrs Bell, announcing the death of Scott's brother Thomas. There are also letters to Scott from Francis Jeffery, Thomas Moore, and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. Perhaps Corson's most valuable manuscript holdings, however, are a small leather pocket book with jottings from the dying Scott's tour of Italy in 1831-32 and a map of the Abbotsford estate drawn up by John Morrison in 1819-20, with the names of fields and plantations added in Scott's own hand.

Corson also assembled ca.500 letters and other manuscripts by relatives, associates, and contemporaries of Scott and by Scott scholars, even if the contents were not directly Scott-related. Scott's family is represented by correspondence from his father and son Walter and from his son-in-law and biographer J. G. Lockhart. There are letters by writers such as Byron, Hogg, Joanna Baillie, Charles Maturin, Jane and Anna Maria Porter, Samuel Rogers, the Rev. Sydney Smith, and John Wilson, as well as by later figures such as Henry James and John Buchan. Perhaps the most valuable of these is the original of Byron's letter to the editor of *Galignani's Messenger* denying authorship of Polidori's *The Vampyre* (27 April 1819). There are letters from the publishers William Blackwood, Robert Cadell, and John Murray, from artists with Scott associations such as Sir William Allan, Sir David Wilkie, John Watson Gordon, and John Millais, and from scholars and scientists such as Sir David Brewster and Sir John Bowring. Corson also collected correspondence from Scott's neighbours Sir Thomas Ogilvie and John Pringle of Clifton and Haining, from literary patrons such as the Duke of Abercorn, and from many legal colleagues of Scott, particularly in his capacity as Sheriff-Deputy of Selkirkshire. There are letters from Scott scholars and collectors like W. S. Crockett, G. G. Napier, and Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, and a good deal of correspondence relating to Sir Herbert Grierson's edition of Scott's letters.

Proportionally the largest section of the Corson Collection is that devoted to artworks and illustrative material. These include twenty-five oil paintings by artists such as David Roberts, Robert Scott Lauder, and Sir William Allan, pencil drawings of buildings featured in the Waverley Novels by Scott's friend James Skene of Rubislaw, and sepia drawings by David Octavius Hill from which engravings were made for the 'Magnum Opus' edition of the Waverley Novels and for *The Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott* published by Robert Cadell in 1834-36. The original drawings had remained in the possession of the Cadell family and twenty-six of these were purchased by Corson in 1939.

The bulk of the illustrative material, however, is to be found in a collection of ca.10,000 engravings, etchings, lithographs, photographs, and postcards. Many of

the engravings were commissioned for Scott-related publications but also issued separately. They include scenes from the poems and novels, pictures of people and places connected with Scott, however tenuously, and a large number of engraved portraits of Scott. Corson avidly collected postcards from Scott tourist sites throughout Scotland and commissioned or took many photographs and slides. In particular, the collection includes many views of Abbotsford, both exterior and interior, ranging from some of the earliest engravings of Scott's 'plaything in stone' to Corson's own photographs of repairs to the roof of the West Tower in 1958. Corson was honorary librarian of Abbotsford from 1953 until his death. Living only ten miles from Abbotsford, Corson spent weekends there during his working life, and considerably more time during his retirement. He completed a painstaking 600-page unpublished history of Abbotsford, tracing the origins of each item of furnishing or ornamentation on a room-by-room basis. Many of the images which he made or collected were intended to illustrate this work. The collection also includes handmade nails from the roof of Abbotsford, a sample of stone taken from the Kaeside quarry which provided Scott's building materials, and a sheet from Scott's bed.

This brings us to perhaps the most astonishing section of the Corson Collection, that devoted to Scott realia or memorabilia. Together with the inevitable tea-towels and shortbread tins, these include an extraordinary selection of tourist merchandise in brass, including a miniature bed-warmer with an Abbotsford motif, door-knockers in the shape of Scott's head, and a thermometer in the shape of Edinburgh's Scott Monument. Porcelain items include salt-and-pepper pots portraying the Scott Monument in Selkirk, cufflinks portraying Scott and Abbotsford, and miniature models of Scott's writing chair and dog Maida. The realia also includes a full set of plastic knights brought out to publicize the 1952 MGM film of *Ivanhoe*, featuring Elizabeth Taylor as Rebecca and Joan Fontaine as Rowena.

Corson appears to have left no record of his motives in collecting Scott memorabilia and other items such as postcards and guidebooks aimed at the tourist market. Was it an extreme manifestation of what he cheerfully called his 'obsession' or a far-sighted appreciation of the possible interest of such items to future social historians? Whatever the case, he has left a treasure trove for scholars and researchers interested in material culture and the fraught relationship between tourism and Scottish national identity.

The remainder of the Corson Collection consists of Corson's own manuscripts and working papers. These include manuscripts, proofs and preparatory materials for his major published works. Besides the 1943 *Bibliography of Scott* and the *Notes and Index* to Grierson's Scott Letters, Corson published articles on *The Border Antiquities* (1956, 1960) and on American books and chapbooks in the Abbotsford collection (1962 and 1963), all in the new journal of Scottish

bibliographical studies *The Bibliothek*.¹³ In 1955 Corson delivered the Walter Scott Lectures at Edinburgh University, on the state of 'Scott Studies', published as two articles in the *University of Edinburgh Journal*, vol. 18 (1955-57). He edited William Gell's *Reminiscences of Sir Walter Scott's Residence in Italy, 1832* for Thomas Nelson in 1957. In the 1960s he prepared the section on Scott in the Revised *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* (1966), an entry on Scott for *Collier's Encyclopedia*, and introductions to the Everyman's Library editions of *Waverley*, *Woodstock*, and *The Fortunes of Nigel* (all 1969). Corson's papers also include additional matter collected with a view to publishing revised and expanded editions of his scholarly works. Thus the collection includes not only transcripts or photostats of the many critical articles surveyed in Corson's 1943 bibliography of Scott, but additional critical materials, often copied out in full by hand, that Corson continued to assemble up to his death. Likewise, together with transcripts or photocopies of the letters included in the Grierson edition of Scott correspondence, Corson maintained an index of letters excluded by or unknown to Grierson, and, wherever possible, recorded the text. There is evidence in his correspondence that Corson intended to publish these as a supplement to Grierson. Although his own project remained unrealized, this material has proved an invaluable resource for the Millgate Union Catalogue of Scott Correspondence, the project, hosted by the National Library of Scotland, to record all of Scott's known correspondence.

The Corson Collection also includes manuscripts of unpublished works. Sadly, Corson's critical energies in the late 1950s and 1960s were largely devoted to two projects which did not achieve fruition. In 1956, Lord Normand invited Corson to act as Series Editor for a critical edition of the *Waverley Novels* to be published by Thomas Nelson. Corson completed and submitted a critical edition of *Waverley* itself in 1961, by which point he had nearly completed work on an edition of *Guy Mannering*, and had prepared notes on all the other novels. The takeover of Thomas Nelson by Thomson International Ltd in 1962, led, however, to a disagreement between Corson and the new literary editor on the format of the edition, and Corson resigned his editorship in 1966. Steps to find a new publisher at least for his edition of *Waverley* appear to have come to nothing, but Corson maintained until his death that he was continuing work on his own definitive edition of the *Waverley Novels*. A second major aborted project was a volume on Scott for Routledge and Kegan Paul's 'Critical Heritage' series. When Corson submitted his manuscript in 1968, he was told that he had concentrated too exclusively on the reception of Scott by his contemporaries, rather than on the subsequent critical tradition, and was asked to revise his text accordingly. Corson, always impatient of perceived editorial interference, withdrew his manuscript.

There are also papers relating to a number of unfinished projects, for which no publisher appears to have been sought. The project that came nearest to completion, and which Corson gave most serious thought to publishing, is

unquestionably the history of Abbotsford, which, according to his correspondence, Corson worked on continuously from 1952 to 1987. Also over thirty years in preparation was a guide to portraits of Scott, listing all derivatives and reproductions. Corson's project was largely pre-empted by Francis Russell's *Portraits of Sir Walter Scott: a Study of Romantic Portraiture* (1987), but the surviving manuscript shows that Corson recorded a number of engravings missed by the otherwise authoritative Russell. Other projects for which manuscripts and preparatory materials survive include a bibliography of illustrations to Scott's works, an anthology of Scott's critical writings, an anthology of poems about Scott, and a guidebook to the Scott Country. It is unclear from Corson's correspondence, what steps, if any, he took to find a publisher for these works. Following his experiences with Thomas Nelson and Routledge and Kegan Paul in the 1960s, Corson resolved to have nothing further to do with the world of academic publishing. Only with great difficulty did Sir Eric Anderson, Corson's closest scholarly contact and subsequently his literary executor, coax him into preparing and publishing the *Notes and Index* to the Grierson Letters.

Together with Corson's literary papers, the Corson Collection includes some twenty-five boxes of correspondence with Scott scholars and students from all over the world, reflecting Corson's global reputation as an authority on all aspects of Scott's life and works. Scholars with whom Corson corresponded at length include J. H. Alexander, James Anderson, Arthur Melville Clark, Thomas Crawford, W. S. Crockett, Douglas S. Mack, Donald Sultana, and Clive Wainwright. The collection also includes three boxes of correspondence pertaining initially to Corson's work as honorary librarian of Abbotsford but extending eventually to handling all manner of Scott- and Abbotsford-related enquiries on behalf of the Maxwell-Scott sisters. These ranged from scholarly requests to access items at Abbotsford through innumerable claims of kinship with Scott to an enquiry from a Sicilian bank manager asking how much Corson would charge to write his daughter's doctoral thesis for her.

Unquestionably, however, the most significant item amongst Corson's own manuscript and working papers is what he termed his 'Scott Dictionary': over 200,000 alphabetically arranged cards, housed in thirty-two shoeboxes, containing notes on every aspect of Scott's life and works. Corson himself described it as 'a vast amount of information for any research worker' and increasingly came to see it as his major scholarly legacy.

After Corson's death in 1988, his widow, Ada Corson née Cartwright, generously bequeathed a sizeable estate to the University to maintain and develop the collection. As well as adding to the collection of manuscripts and printed books, the University has employed part of this fund to develop a website to publicize the collection and to exhibit some of its visual highlights. The Walter Scott Digital Archive (<http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk>) was initially designed primarily to



The duel between Marmion and Ralph de Winton, engraved by Francis Engleheart after Richard Westall (1809) [By permission of Edinburgh University Library]

exhibitions, arts festival programmes, and websites. Requests have ranged from finding suitable images for Edinburgh's successful bid to become UNESCO City of Literature to decking out an *Ivanhoe*-themed room on a cruise liner.

It is also, however, the stated aim of the Walter Scott Digital Archive to 'become the main source of information on the life and work of Sir Walter Scott on the web'. It presently contains pages on all of Scott's major works, giving bibliographical information on first editions, a brief history of their composition, a synopsis, and details of reception by public and critics. The Biography section of the site deals with every aspect of Scott's career and contains pages on family, business, and literary connections. These are copiously illustrated with images from the Corson Collection. The Recent Publications page gives information on all Scott-related monographs published since the year 2000, including new editions of Scott's works, critical material, and translations. It has recently been expanded to include an analytical bibliography of over 300 Scott-related articles published since the year 2000, modelled on Corson's own biography of Scott and

highlight the e-Learning potential of the visual material and realia, both for traditional literary and art-historical studies and for newer fields of study like book history, material culture, and tourism. The centrepiece of the site is an Image Database, designed using Luna Imaging's Insight™ software which enables lecturers and students to view and work dynamically with high-resolution images from the collection accompanied by detailed metadata. Interest in the database, however, has extended far beyond the university's teaching community. Images from the database have been requested to illustrate books and journals, both academic and general, and for use by TV programmes, newspapers,

the sequels compiled by the late Jill Rubenstein.¹⁴ A Forthcoming Events page aims to list forthcoming conferences and lectures of interest to Scott scholars. We also felt that a web-portal for Scott should keep track of Scott e-texts (including individual poems) and we currently list over 300 Scott texts freely available online. Likewise, we provide links to over 200 Scott-related websites and pages. Currently in development are pages devoted to portraits of Scott, Scott's correspondents, and Scott's illustrators, each of which draws on Corson's own unpublished research.

The Walter Scott Digital Archive has unquestionably done much to heighten awareness of the Corson Collection and to alert scholars to its research potential. It has increasingly led to collaborative projects in the fields of web publishing and online bibliography. It has generated a large number of enquiries on all aspects of Scott's life and works from both the scholarly community and the general public. Above all, however, the Digital Archive has aimed to foster appreciation of the legacy of an extraordinary scholar, to provide a worthy monument to his memory, and to contribute to an international revival of interest in the writer to whom he dedicated his life.

¹ Page references are to James C. Corson, 'Foreword' to *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Some Unique or Unusual Items from the Corson Sir Walter Scott Collection Held in 27/29 George Square* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Library, 1980), pp.[i]-vii.

² Quoted by J. G. Lockhart in *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 7 vols (Edinburgh: Cadell, 1837-38), III (1837), 375.

³ Letter to J. B. S. Morritt, 26 April, 1811, in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H. J. C. Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37), II (1932), 479-82 (p.480).

⁴ Published by Joseph Williams and Chappell and Co. respectively, these works have no year of publication but clearly date from the late 1840s or 1850s.

⁵ See *Sir Walter Scott Centenary: Souvenir Programme of Pageant* (Edinburgh: Printed by McLagan & Cumming, 1932).

⁶ Paulding's poem, a satirical response to the British attack on the American town of Havre de Grace in 1813, was first published in that year by Inskip and Bradford of New York. Corson owned the first UK edition (London: James Cawthorn, 1814).

⁷ First published by J. M. Richardson, London, 1811; Corson owned the first US edition (Philadelphia: Matthew Carey, 1815).

⁸ See letter to Richard Heber, February-March 1822, in *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, VII (1934), 85-86 (p.86).

⁹ In his *Who Wrote the Waverley Novels?: Being an Investigation into Certain Mysterious Circumstances Attending their Production, and an Inquiry into the Literary Aid Which Sir Walter Scott May Have Received from Other Persons* (London: Effingham Wilson).

¹⁰ See William Aiton, *A History of the Rencounter at Drumclog, and Battle at Bothwell Bridge, in the Month of June, 1679: With an Account of What Is Correct, and What Is Fictitious in the 'Tales Of My Landlord', Respecting These Engagements; And Reflections On Political Subjects* (Hamilton: Printed by W. D. Borthwick and Co., 1821), Thomas Brownlee, *Narrative of the*

Battles Of Drumclog and Bothwell Bridge: The Former Fought on the 1st, and the Latter on the 22nd of June, 1679 between the King's Troops and the Covenanters (Glasgow: Printed by Andrew Young, 1822), and William Chambers, *The Life and Anecdotes of the Black Dwarf or David Ritchie, Commonly Called 'Bowed Davie' of Manor, Peebleshire, the Celebrated Original of the Character of Elshender, in 'The Tales of my Landlord'* (Edinburgh: W. Chambers, 1820).

¹¹ See *Criminal Trials, Illustrative of the Tale Entitled 'The Heart Of Mid-Lothian': Published from the Original Record: With a Prefatory Notice, Including Some Particulars of the Life of Captain John Porteous* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1818), Robert Laneham, *Laneham's Letter Describing the Magnificent Pageants Presented before Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth Castle in 1575; Repeatedly Referred to in the Romance of 'Kenilworth'* (London: J. H. Burn, 1821), and Hugh Usher Tighe, *An Historical Account of Cummer: With Some Particulars of the Traditions Respecting the Death of the Countess of Leicester; Also an Extract from Ashmole's 'Antiquities of Berkshire', Relative to that Transaction and Illustrative of the Romance Of 'Kenilworth'* (Oxford: Munday and Slatter, 1821).

¹² See Elsie Prentys Thornton-Cook's *Sir Walter's Dogs* (Edinburgh: Grant & Murray, [1931]) and John Chisholm, *Sir Walter Scott as a Judge: His Decisions in the Sheriff Court of Selkirk* (Edinburgh: W. Green, 1918).

¹³ See *The Bibliothek*, 1.1 (1956), 23-26, 3.1 (1960), 15-23, 3.6 (1962), 202-18, and 4.2 (1963), 44-65.

¹⁴ *Sir Walter Scott: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G. K. Hall, [1978]) and *Sir Walter Scott: An Annotated Bibliography of Scholarship and Criticism, 1975-1990* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, [1994]).

Lady of the Lake Colloquium: The Trossachs 23rd May 2010

It is pleasant to report another successful Colloquium held by the Club, celebrating the Bicentenary of The Lady of the Lake, Scott's most successful narrative poem, which first made its appearance in Edinburgh on 8th May 1810, followed by publication in London on 16th May. Just two-hundred-years-and-a-week later, on Sunday 23rd May 2010, a party of some thirty of us, having shown great resilience in the face of traffic chaos caused by the Edinburgh Marathon, journeyed by coach to the Harbour Café, overlooking Loch Vennachar in the Trossachs, where participants heard a scintillating account of the poem's significance from our two speakers, Drs Alison Lumsden and Nicola Watson, under the chairmanship of Professor David W. Purdie. After lunch the party headed for a boat trip on the steamer SS Sir Walter Scott along Loch Katrine from which, as newly informed latter-day literary tourists, they observed a number of key locations in the poem.

David Purdie's Introduction:

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the Trossachs and to this colloquium in which the Club celebrates the bicentenary of the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*. My warm thanks on behalf of us all, go to Lee Simpson, Peter Garside, to our speakers and all whose hard work made today possible.

Scott began work on his third great poem in August 1809 while on holiday with his wife Charlotte and his elder daughter Sophia, here by Loch Katrine. With this new poem, Scott wished to depend less on local colour and spectacular action as in *Marmion* and to attain a greater depth of characterization. Superficiality of character had been one of the shafts levelled at *Marmion* by Francis Jeffrey in the *Edinburgh Review* and he seems to have accepted that the criticism was well founded – despite the great public success of the work. Progress on the new poem was slowed by illness among his three younger children. Only when they were well again was he able to complete the poem, which was published in May 1810 by John Ballantyne and printed by his brother James.

The Lady of the Lake marked the pinnacle of Scott's popularity as a poet, selling 25,000 copies in eight months. It exceeded all records for the sale of poetry in the UK and Scott's fame spread far abroad across Europe and the US. Thereafter there was a decline through *The Lord of the Isles* and *The Field of Waterloo*, the latter being raked by (it is thought) Lord Byron, in the notorious quatrain;

*On Waterloo's ensanguined plain,
Full many a gallant man was slain.
But none, by sabre or by shot,
Fell half so flat – as Walter Scott. ...*

But with *The Lady*, the critics reflected the public response. In the *Edinburgh Review*, Jeffrey felt it to be a vast improvement on its predecessors: the story was ‘constructed with infinitely more skill and address’ and there was ‘a larger variety of characters, more artfully and judiciously contrasted’. The travelling public flocked to Loch Katrine, and an hotel went up smartly at Callander to receive the stream of coaches and their occupants. These were the literary tourists who inaugurated a new form of sightseeing in Scotland – one which we are continuing today with our post-lunch sail on the Loch, aboard the *SS Sir Walter Scott*.

Alison Lumsden is a graduate of the Universities of Aberdeen (MA, Hons.) and of Edinburgh (Ph.D). She worked for Aberdeen University as an Arts and Humanities Research Council Fellow for the Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels, before taking up her appointment as Lecturer. She is now a General Editor of the Edinburgh Edition and co-director of the University of Aberdeen’s Walter Scott Research Centre. Her main research interests are: Walter Scott, nineteenth-century Scottish fiction, Scottish women’s writing and textual editing. She is also editor or co-editor of Scott’s *The Pirate* (2001), *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* (2004) *Peeveril of the Peak* (2007), and *Reliquiae Trotcosiensis* (2004) – or ‘the Gabions of the Late Jonathan Oldbuck Esq. of Monkbarne’ which she co-edited with my friend Dr Gerard Carruthers, presently co-editing *The Burns Encyclopaedia* with myself. Her new book *Walter Scott and the Limits of Language* will be published by Edinburgh University Press in the autumn.

Our second speaker, Dr Nicola Watson, holds an Oxford doctorate (in fiction of the romantic period) and left Oxford having won a Fellowship to Harvard University. She spent twelve years in the States, before returning to teach again at Oxford, and then joining the Open University. Her publications to date have ranged over eighteenth-century, Romantic, and nineteenth-century literature and culture, with special interests in Sir Walter Scott, historical fiction, literary afterlives, and women’s writing. Her first book, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel 1790-1825* (OUP, 1994) dealt with fiction of the romantic period, including that of Scott; she edited Sir Walter Scott’s *The Antiquary* for Oxford World’s Classics ten years ago; more recently, she authored *The Literary Tourist: Readers and Places in Romantic and Victorian Britain* (2006), in which Scott, and *The Lady of the Lake*, play a central role. Her current book project is entitled *Transatlantic Pilgrims* and deals with the 19th century construction of an Anglophone literary map spanning the Atlantic.

Alison Lumsden’s text:

In *Highland Adventures* James Hogg comments ‘Whoever goes to survey the Trossacks, let him have the 11th, 12th, and 13th divisions of the first canto of the *Lady of the Lake* in his heart; a little Highland whisky in his head; and then he

shall see the most wonderful scene that nature ever produced’.ⁱ In his own inimitable way Hogg identifies the impact that *The Lady of the Lake* was to have on all its readers and the effect that it had in bringing visitors to Loch Katrine. It is, indeed, for these reasons that we are here today, celebrating the bicentenary of the publication of the poem. Nicola Watson will speak with far more authority than me on the impact the poem was to have in bringing tourists to the region, so the question I would like to address is this: what is valuable about *The Lady of the Lake* beyond its impact on tourism? Why indeed, should we still be reading it in 2010?

This is of course a question we could address in relation to Scott’s poetry more generally, and as the Walter Scott Research Centre at the University of Aberdeen embarks on a scholarly edition of Scott’s poems it is one I have had to answer several times in the last few weeks. Here are a few of the answers that might be given. First of all we do well to remember that Scott’s place as the greatest novelist of his age developed from his origins as its greatest poet and his fiction can only be fully understood in the light of his poetry. Recent work by critics such as Peter Garside has demonstrated that Scott’s poems were not written before his fiction but were, indeed, contemporary with it – *Waverley*, for example, was being written around the same time as *Marmion*.ⁱⁱ Not surprisingly, then, poetry and poems often share similar themes: how to negotiate the relationship between past and present, for example, and what the role of the writer is in articulating this. These themes are, of course, still relevant and resonant for today. Other features that we now identify very firmly with the fiction (and indeed recognise as surprisingly contemporary in nature) such as Scott’s use of framed narratives are also first rehearsed in the poems; *The Lay* and *Marmion* offer the best examples.

Of wider literary relevance is the fact that Scott’s poetry played a key role in the formulation of what we now call British Romanticism. A lack of critical attention to the poems in recent years has obscured Scott’s involvement and has all but written him out of the Romantic canon but by encouraging a wider readership for the poetry it is hoped that his place as one of the foremost Romantic poets again becomes visible. And of course, as their impact on tourism implies, Scott’s poems have helped shape our understanding of what it means to be Scottish. In some ways, however, these reasons are all historical; they may be reasons *why* Scott was important rather than *why* he still is. Yet, I’d suggest, Scott’s poems are in fact also more immediately relevant, dealing with issues that still concern us as readers, and we can consider this by revisiting *The Lady of the Lake* here today in the area where it was set.

In many ways *The Lady of the Lake* is the hardest of Scott’s poems to revisit with fresh eyes precisely because of its tremendous impact on the Highlands and the many works of art it has generated. Somewhere along the way the poem has

been lost beneath its legacy. For many critics (if not readers) the poem is viewed, consequently, not as one that can contribute to our modern understanding of ourselves, but rather as one that has fixed Scottish identity so that it is frozen in the past, providing a version of Scottishness that is both outmoded and outdated. Susan Oliver, for example, argues that Scott's 'ballads and poetry of Scotland's borders and other margins' (and by this she means the Highlands of *The Lady of the Lake*) 'consistently bear out a position that relegates the Celtic fringe to history at the same time that he immortalizes it in romance'.ⁱⁱⁱ This view, that Scott creates an appealing Romantic view of the Highlands that nevertheless consigns them to the past, has been repeated time and time again.

However, a closer examination of the poem rather than just the set pieces and images that are so easily extracted from it serves to demonstrate that, as in many of his narrative poems, Scott offers a far more complex engagement with the Highlands and the mirror of romance through which they are presented than this might imply, and in doing so, offers a more problematic, and perhaps more relevant version of Scotland. Moreover, rather than simply offering a static and redundant version of the Highlands, Scott considers the far more difficult and more modern question of how and why such realities are shaped and both the appeal and limitations of them. This aspect of the poem – one that is aware of the 'artificial' nature of the version of Scotland it is creating – is, in fact, one picked up by Hogg himself when he complains that the poem contains 'no one fact'.^{iv} He goes on to describe an encounter with 'an old crusty Highlander' who states that 'Mr Scott had put all the people mad by printing a *lying poem* about a man that never existed – "What the d___ was to be seen about the Trossachs more than in an hundred other places?", the Highlander continues, "A few rocks and bushes, nothing else".^v In his own voice Hogg comments that if you don't go to the Trossachs armed with the prescribed copy of the poem and glass of whisky you 'may as well stay at home; [you] will see little that will either astonish or delight' you.^{vi} In essence Hogg is, then, drawing attention to the overtly constructed nature of the Highlands in the poem – it is a lying poem as he says – suggesting that there is nothing *intrinsically* Romantic about the Trossachs. We only see it as such once the poem has taught us to read them in that way.

What Hogg does not comment upon, however, is that the poem *itself* draws attention to this fact, and in doing so, offers a discussion of the ways in which all realities exist within discourse, and the problems that may be inherent in this. What Hogg seems to see as a flaw in the poem may in fact be part of its thematic effect. This is evident if we turn to the poem itself. Nowhere is the Romantic version of the Highlands more fully in view than in the famous opening of the poem when James arrives in the Highlands, follows the stag, and is eventually led to Ellen. Here is a section from canto 1, stanza 2, the description of the stag:

As Chief, who hears his warder call,
"To arms! the foemen storm the wall,"
The antler'd monarch of the waste
Sprung from his heathery couch in haste.
But, ere his fleet career he took,
The dew-drops from his flanks he shook;
Like crested leader proud and high,
Toss'd his beam'd frontlet to the sky;
A moment gazed adown the dale,
A moment snuff'd the tainted gale,
A moment listen'd to the cry,
That thicken'd as the chase drew nigh;
Then, as the headmost foes appear'd,
With one brave bound the copse he clear'd,
And, stretching forward free and far,
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.^{vii}

It isn't hard to see why such scenes as these have been so readily extracted from the poem and depicted in art. But these depictions cannot convey the fact that in the poem *itself* Scott complicates this Romantic image by putting several pairs of eyes between the reader and the Highlands he here presents. We should recall, after all, that the whole poem is ostensibly the product of a minstrel who has been woken from slumber to offer 'Some feeble echoing of [his] earlier lay' (Canto 1). This is a reminder to us, then, that in spite of appearances this may not be romance proper, but a feeble imitation of it which we would do well to be cautious of. Moreover, the Romantic vision of the Highlands with which the poem opens is not one necessarily endorsed by the poet, but one, crucially, seen via James's eyes; in the lines that precede this stanza we are reminded that the 'clanging hoof and horn' of the hunter is at hand (1.1) and ultimately it is James who pictures the Highlands in overtly Romantic terms, seeing them as 'So wondrous wild, the whole might seem / The scenery of a fairy dream' (1.12). What becomes apparent then, is that reality is not necessarily fixed or static, but is imaginatively constructed.

Moreover, as if to remind us of this, there are other incidents in the poem where individuals seem to create their realities through their own perceptions of events. Brian, of course, offers an excellent example of this. Told strange tales of his birth, we are told, Brian has eventually come to believe in them: 'Whole nights he spent by moonlight pale, / To wood and stream his hap to wail, / Till, frantic, he as truth received, / What of his birth the crowd believed, / And sought, in mist and meteor fire, / To meet and know his Phantom Sire!' (3.6). Similarly, held captive on his death bed, Roderick Dhu invites his minstrel to recreate for him through verse the battle which he has witnessed at Loch Achray, so that in his imagination he might burst through his prison walls: "I'll listen, till my fancy hears / The clang of

swords, the crash of spears! / These grates, these walls, shall vanish then, / For the fair field of fighting men, / And my free spirit burst away, / As if it soar'd from battle-fray.'" (6.14) All in all these incidents in the poem serve to remind us of what seems a surprisingly modern concern; that reality is not essential but constructed by those who view it (or indeed recite it), often for their own political ends. As Hogg's comments imply, the poem suggests that the Romantic Highlands are not necessarily out there – a fixed reality – but, rather, are shaped by shifting perceptions of them.

This idea is particularly interesting in relation to *The Lady of the Lake* because Scott employs James's Romantic version of the Highlands to explore another surprisingly modern theme in the poem, the limits and responsibilities of power. This is evident if we consider that *The Lady of the Lake* offers a far more direct engagement with history than any of Scott's earlier poems and there is a sense in which it offers his first real exploration of the historical process that was to become so much a feature of his later fiction; while the love relationship between Ellen and Malcolm Graham is of course a significant part of the poem the impediments to their marriage lie in a 'national' narrative that evokes the relationship of the Douglas family with the crown and the relationship of the Highlands to the rest of Scotland. As Roderick Dhu recognises James's real purpose in visiting the region is his desire to pacify the Highlands, incorporate them into his modern version of Scotland and to erode the markers of difference (a Highland clan culture) which the poem itself seemingly inscribes.

As James's encounter with Roderick Dhu demonstrates, however, his view of the Highlands as Romantic – epitomised by his eagerness to return to the region just to see Ellen – marks a dangerous failure to properly understand Highland culture and the nature of it which is in danger of costing him his life, and is certainly a threat to the stability of his kingdom. It is interesting to note, therefore, that at the moment when James recognises Roderick Dhu for who he is, and realises, moreover, that he is accompanied by five hundred clansmen, his dream of the Highlands almost immediately becomes a nightmare: 'Fitz-James look'd round – yet scarce believed / The witness that his sight received; / Such apparition well might seem / Delusion of a dreadful dream.' (5.11). James's refusal to see the Highlands for all that they are and to view them *only* in Romantic terms, this implies, is potentially itself a dangerous delusion, suggesting a far more complex view of Scottish identity at work here than a purely Romantic reading of the poem might imply, and moreover, reminding us that any failure to recognize the disparate and diverse nature of a kingdom (and to figure its peripheries in the contained terms that James employs) may be a threat to power.

Indeed the threat James's blindness poses to his authority becomes even more apparent when he returns to Stirling, for here the problems of his failure to truly understand his country become overt. The pageant which greets him there, like

his view of the Highlands, is itself presented as a sham consisting of 'chiefs, who, hostage for their clan', 'deem'd themselves a shameful part / Of pageant, which they cursed in heart' (5.21). Again, then, all is not as it seems and the success of Douglas in the tournament that takes place at Stirling and the response of the crowd to it equally calls into question the king's real power and the loyalty of the people to him. The rift which James has made between himself and Douglas, and which, in his poem, Scott has mapped onto a rift between James and the Highlands, seems, then, to have caused a serious division in James's kingdom, and one which questions both the limits of his power, and the contract between himself and his people (thus foreshadowing a question which Scott was to revisit time and time again in his fiction – at what point can the people legitimately rebel against an unfit sovereign).

These tensions, however, seem to be resolved at the close of the poem, leading many critics to recognize in it a forerunner of those narratives of reconciliation which they see as a feature of his fiction. Douglas is of course pardoned and Ellen permitted to marry Malcolm Graham, apparently bringing the poem to a harmonious close. But having been warned that things are not always as they seem, we should perhaps be wary of entirely trusting the peaceful version of Scotland offered here. As 'Snowdon's Knight' miraculously becomes 'Scotland's King' we should note that for Ellen this transformation is framed in precisely the same romance terms that mirror the descriptions of the scenery at the opening of the poem as a kind of fairy land, thus suggesting that this apparent act of power and reconciliation may be as much of a delusion as James's construction of the Highlands as a land of romance. This passage is worth quoting at some length:

Within 'twas brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright;
It glow'd on Ellen's dazzled sight,
As when the setting sun has given,
Ten thousand hues to summer even,
And from their tissue, fancy frames
Aerial knights and fairy dames.
Still by Fitz-James her footing staid;
A few faint steps she forward made,
Then slow her drooping head she raised,
And fearful round the presence gazed;
For him she sought, who own'd this state,
The dreaded prince whose will was fate!-
She gazed on many a princely port,
Might well have ruled a royal court;
On many a splendid garb she gazed,-
Then turn'd bewilder'd and amazed,

For all stood bare; and, in the room,
Fitz-James alone wore cap and plume.
To him each lady's look was lent;
On him each courtier's eye was bent;
Midst furs and silks and jewels sheen,
He stood, in simple Lincoln green,
The centre of the glittering ring,-
And Snowdown's knight is Scotland's King! (6.26)

In his review of Duncan Forbes's *Culloden Papers* Scott warns that if the Highlands are cleared by brutal economic policies they will become what he calls 'the fairy ground for romance and poetry'.^{viii} This seems to offer a criticism of the version of the region he offers in *The Lady of the Lake*, but, in fact, it is perhaps a criticism not of his *own* position, but of the version of the Highlands which James has mistakenly created. At the very moment when Scott was constructing a Romantic version of the Highlands then, he was then reminding his readers that such a depiction is not essential or real, but something of a delusion, offering both a surprisingly modern account of how we construct our own realities, and a far more complicated response to the question of Scottish identity than the legacy of this great poem might imply. It is therefore highly fitting that we should be celebrating *The Lady of the Lake* two hundred years after its publication since the poem is one that remains relevant for a modern readership. I would therefore like to thank the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club for the opportunity to revisit it here in the landscape where it was originally conceived.

Nicola Watson's text:

It is a great pleasure not just to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the publication of Scott's most successful poem, but to re-enact – in such good company – the tourist experience of the lake sought out by thousands of admirers of *The Lady of the Lake* from 1810 onwards. In taking a boat on Loch Katrine with the poem in hand we will be following in the wake of many of the famous: Scott himself, of course, his friends Maria Edgeworth and Lady Frances Shelley, Elizabeth Grant, William Charles Macready, Victoria and Albert, Theodore Fontane, and Jules Verne amongst many others. My subject is the history of tourism to Loch Katrine, both before and after the publication of *The Lady of the Lake*; the sorts of pleasures, mostly the pleasures of romance, that these tourists were seeking; and what it was about the poem itself and the way it was disseminated that made embarking on the SS *Walter Scott* into a favoured excursion.

Loch Katrine as we experience it today is very much the product of Scott-inspired tourism; even some of the place-names on the Ordnance Survey map (Loch Katrine, Ben A'an, Ellen's Isle, and the Silver Strand) derive from Scott's poem.

Since the 1780s, the lake had been known to the local gentry as a beauty spot, and since the 1790s it had been written about as such, by James Robertson in his *Statistical Account of Scotland* (1794), and in a series of travel-accounts and even guidebooks by the anonymous authors of *The Traveller's Guide: or, a Topographical Description of Scotland...* (1798), Sarah Murray (1799), the author of *A Sketch of the Most remarkable Scenery, near Callender of Monteath* (1800) (often identified as Margaret Oswald), Alexander Campbell (1802), and Patrick Graham, in *A Sketch Descriptive of the Picturesque Scenery on the Southern Confines of Perthshire* (1806). In these writings the defile of the Trossachs was often described in terms of the sublime; the loch itself was often sold to would-be visitors as especially picturesque because it combined stations from which picturesque views could be taken, and mixed the sublime (the mountains) with the beautiful (the unusually deep lake). The authors of these accounts thought in terms of framing the lake as a repertoire of foregrounds, glimpses, prospects, side-wings, side-screens, in short, as something to be sketched. In particular, taking a boat trip on the lake allowed modern connoisseurs of this new aesthetic to admire the way that the many little islands shifted and changed as you rowed past them, forming different pictures. Loch Katrine itself began to be changed in response to this new aesthetic. The route into Loch Katrine was already organised for picturesque enthusiasts by 1799. A road had been blasted through the boulders obstructing access; and little wicker picnic shelters had been installed to protect tourists from the rain. This sense of the spot as picturesque is what brought William and Dorothy Wordsworth walking down the side of the loch in the summer of 1803, and what brought Scott in 1809.

The poem Scott began writing while still in the locality produced a tourist boom and decisively shifted the aesthetic and sensibility of tourist practice in the area. Comments at the time suggest that the publication of *The Lady of the Lake* vastly increased the traffic of tourists coming in by carriage, mostly from Callender. In 1806, Graham estimated 6 or 7 carriages a day in high season between May and November (Graham, 28); by 1810 Spence's *Sketches of the Present manners, Customs, and Scenery of Scotland* (1811) guessed that the number was more like 500 (I, 200). By 1811, on the evidence of the fifth edition of *A Sketch of the Most remarkable Scenery, near Callender of Monteath*, more tourist provision was in place: the wicker huts had been supplemented by a new hotel at Callender, a new inn at Lochearnhead, and an official guide (James Stuart) who would row you out on the lake in his boat. Indeed, the place itself was slowly being altered to 'match' the poem. Not long after publication you could land on Ellen's Isle where you would find a bower made to look like Ellen's bower (burned down in 1837). By the 1840s James Stuart's cottage had turned first into a 'public', then into an inn, and was finally rebuilt as the Trossachs hotel, complete with turrets (inspired by Abbotsford) by 1855. By 1858 there was a railway to Callender, and you could hire a carriage through to the Trossachs, but it was also possible to take daytrips out from Edinburgh and Glasgow by chara-banc. By 1843, a small steamer called *The*

Gypsy was launched on the loch (before then there had been *The Water Witch* rowed by about six men). 1846 saw the launch of *Rob Roy*; *Rob Roy II* was launched in 1855; and the *SS Sir Walter Scott* itself was launched on 31 Oct 1899.

The tourists who filled these trains and steamers were inspired with a sense that they should use the poem as the best and only guidebook. Travellers' accounts suggest that they had it by heart and recited it at fellow tourists. If memory failed, they could pick up a copy from piles thoughtfully provided by the hotel, purchase a guidebook with the famous descriptions extracted from Canto 1, or buy a map with the locations marked on it. A set of tourist rituals and practices developed: tourists went to see Ellen's Isle, to hunt for the Goblin's Cave, to muse at the spot where the 'gallant grey' died; they took twigs from the tree at the landing-place on Ellen's Isle and picked up white quartz pebbles from the silver strand. Tourists would seek out the best views, and sketch, or later in the century, photograph, or buy postcards and send them back home to certify that you'd been there. Other pleasures included the aural: travellers' accounts and guidebooks make it clear that it was common to hear tourists trying to activate the echoes in the defile and on the lake by whistling or blowing horns, in emulation of Fitz-James, the king incognito as a huntsman, who stumbles into this secret place.

The reasons that *The Lady of the Lake* had this effect are rather miscellaneous. At its simplest, Britain was at war, and modern-minded travellers looking to indulge themselves in the pleasures of scenery were confined to its bounds. Celebrated for its descriptions of landscape, the poem equally exploited the fashion for historical anecdote in its extensive notes; both suggest affinities with the emergent genre of the guidebook. It tapped into a growing appetite for visiting beautiful places with literary associations which had originally developed around Rousseau's evocations of the landscapes and villages around Lake Geneva. Most importantly, though, the poem invents a new way of consuming scenery through animating scenery with a romance of the past. It provided models both for the tourist's adventure (in Fitz-James' journey into the landscape) and for the ideal holiday escape (in the incognito Douglas household romantically living rough in exile). The extent of this can be measured through the many tourist accounts throughout the century of enhancing the landscape with figures ambiguously remembered or imagined from the poem.

The importance of *The Lady of the Lake* to the Victorian idea of Scott can be measured in part by the size and importance of the statue of Ellen Douglas on the Scott monument in Edinburgh. It is on the lowest tier, large, and one of the earlier statues, installed in 1870. The craze lasted a long time; in 1907 the Caledonian Railway was still publishing a little brochure for a tour boasting that it was 'the only route by which Tourists may follow the course of the chase as described in Scott's *Lady of the Lake*'. The decay of tourism specifically associated with the

poem is hard to date but can perhaps be related to the history of *The Lady of the Lake* as rendered for the consumption of children in extracts, retellings, abridgements, school textbooks, and school plays. These start to appear in the late 1880s, spurred on by the passing of the Education Act, and are still being produced throughout the nineteen-twenties. One 1927 school-textbook (*Scott's Narrative Poetry, Being Abridgements of The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion and The Lady of the Lake*) supplemented its extracts from the poem with pages of possible assignments, including this one: 'Write a letter as from a hotel in the Trossachs, sketching the kind of country round you. Draw a map in illustration, and say how the place has changed since the days of Roderick Dhu' (252). The end of Scott's deep imbrication in national and anglophone culture, however, is hinted at in the valedictory and defiant remarks of the textbook's editor, A. J. J. Ratcliffe. 'It is alleged that Scott is unpopular with young people,' he concedes, but this made it all the more necessary and desirable for an imaginative and competent teacher to make sure that Scott was read (253). Here it is possible to pinpoint the very moment that the promised indulgences of holiday romance are fatally overtaken by educational conscientiousness. Ratcliffe's Junior and Middle School pupils may well have been the first to refuse to pursue Scott tourism beyond slogging through that particular holiday task. But, boarding the *SS Sir Walter Scott* in company with the Edinburgh Scott Club, I at any rate felt it was an expedition that had altogether more of the flavour of holiday romance than holiday task, and thank the president and committee for their kind invitation.

ⁱ James Hogg, 'Highland Adventures' in *Winter Evening Tales*, edited by Ian Duncan. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 204), pp.107 - 118 (p.111).

ⁱⁱ See Peter Garside 'Essay on the Text' in *Waverley*, edited by P. D. Garside, Edinburgh Edition of the Waverley Novels 1 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p.367.

ⁱⁱⁱ Susan Oliver, *Scott, Byron and the Poetics of Cultural Encounter* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.5.

^{iv} James Hogg, 'Highland Adventures', p.108.

^v James Hogg, 'Highland Adventures', p.109.

^{vi} James Hogg, 'Highland Adventures', p.111.

^{vii} Walter Scott, *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) in *Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (Edinburgh and London: Robert Cadell, 1833 - 34), vol. 8, Canto 1.2. All further references will be given in brackets after quotation.

^{viii} Walter Scott, 'On Culloden Papers: Comprising an extensive and interesting Correspondence from the Year 1625 to 1748' reprinted, in *The Miscellaneous Works of Sir Walter Scott*, 28 vols (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834 - 36), 20.1 - 93, p.93.

Bricks without straw?

Club member, John M. Milne, tries to unravel a tangled web that Scott wove.

As any Scott scholar knows, the only occasion on which he reviewed his novels (as opposed to remarking on them in the *Magnum* notes, or in the “Introductory Epistle” to *The Fortunes of Nigel*), was in the anonymous, fifty-page, review he published in the *Quarterly Review* for “January” 1817. (It must have appeared some weeks after the end of January.) The review was mainly about the first series of *Tales of my Landlord* (incorporating the *Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*) and carries that title. The range was actually wider, covering the first three Waverley novels as well. This makes it a key document in Scott studies.

As scholars also already know, there is a problem about the authorship. Scott persistently claimed in his correspondence with John Murray, publisher of the *Quarterly Review*, and co-publisher with Blackwood of the *Tales*, that he shared the work with his friend William Erskine. It is quite a vexed question as to how much, if at all, Erskine was really involved. Scott himself informed Murray, on 28th January 1817, that he was supplying the “straw” out of which Erskine would make the “bricks”. (Scott did not admit to Murray that he was the author of the *Tales*, but Murray was in no doubt.) On 9th February Scott wrote again to reassure an anxious Murray about the progress of what he dubbed the “Killiecrankie article.” It was stated to be “in great forwardness and when I have done with it Erskine has promised to revise it and make such additions & corrections as may be necessary.” (The quotations from Scott correspondence given here can be most accessibly found in H.J.C.Grierson’s Centenary edition, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, volume four, 1815-17, Constable 1933.)

Now that the John Murray Archive is conveniently housed in the National Library of Scotland, it becomes practicable to probe a little deeper into the mystery of whether Erskine was really involved in the end-product. Direct testimony is lacking. Neither the JMA, nor the comprehensive Millgate Union Catalogue, yields any letter to or from Erskine, on the part of Scott or Murray, as to Erskine’s contribution. We do, however, have the manuscript from which the printed review was derived: MS 42540. It is in the form of a slim volume of 65 pages. Scrutinising the handwriting, it is plain that the substance is entirely in Scott’s hand, with insertions of documentary material, mainly from covenanting sources, transcribed by an amanuensis. It seemed worthwhile to place this alongside the printed article, which runs from p430 to p480 in the *Quarterly Review*.

What follows might be a discovery, although a frustrating one, if it is. Until two-thirds of the way through (p.464 of the printed article and f48 of the MS) there

is very substantial consistency. Then significant variations occur. The MS, from ff48-59, contains a very lengthy insert, by the amanuensis, giving an account, by Mr Blackadder, a Presbyterian divine, of the Battle of Bothwell Bridge. This should have come in at p.464, but is entirely omitted. Instead the article continues with its *précis* of the plot of *Old Mortality*, rapidly compressing the events in the closing chapters into the top half of p.466. Then the article becomes considerably more interesting, with remarks about the value of “Historical Romances” and a close analysis of the validity of Scott’s treatment of his central characters and themes in *Old Mortality*, clearly responding to the strictures of the Rev. Dr Thomas McCrie. The nub of McCrie’s case was that Scott had shown a lack of sympathy with the embattled and persecuted covenanters. The article mounts a sturdy defence until p.480, where it ends with the oft-quoted anecdote of Claverhouse and the “webster”. The MS, however, behaves very differently. It gives a more detailed account of the closing scenes, on ff62-64, and then, at the foot of f64/top of f65, it **ends**, with a single, rather dismissive sentence: “Thus ends a story neither very natural in itself nor very interesting and which has yet been found capable of deeply interesting the public mind.” This sentence is omitted from the article, which instead runs on for 14 more pages, entirely absent from the MS. So the question arises: what has become of the manuscript from which this part of the article was printed? Where is the straw which formed the *Quarterly*’s closing bricks? Until, if ever, it comes to light, we are restricted to making some conjectures from the available evidence.

It seems probable that the decision to drop the lengthy extract from Mr Blackadder’s battle narrative was taken because Scott was now in a position to mount a solid refutation of Dr McCrie’s critique. It was Scott, not Erskine, who possessed the necessary command of the sources. A revealing parallel comes to light on the final page of the *Quarterly* article, where just before the closing paragraph, the review makes the point that the militant covenanters of the late seventeenth century are long gone. But if there remain some unforgiving sectaries who take offence at the novel, “we are afraid they will receive their answer in the tone of the revellers to Malvolio, who, it will be remembered, was something a kind of Puritan: ‘Dost thou think that because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? Aye, by Saint Anne, and ginger will be hot in the mouth too.’” On 31st January 1817 Scott had written to Lady Louisa Stuart giving precisely the same quotation. Yet, leading into it, he says of Dr McCrie’s attack, “I have not read it, and certainly never shall.” Clearly he recanted, and rapidly.

So is there any place where another hand can be traced? Just possibly it comes very soon after the point at which the manuscript and the printed review begin to diverge. On p468 there is an enthusiastic encomium of the author, rather out of keeping with the mixed assessment with which the review had opened.

The volume which this author has studied is the great book of Nature. He has gone abroad into the world in quest of what the world will certainly and abundantly supply, but what a man of great discrimination alone will find, and a man of the very highest genius will alone depict after he has discovered it. The characters of Shakespeare are not more exclusively human, not more perfectly men and women as they live and move, than those of this mysterious author.

Scott's reverence for Shakespeare was profound. He might play fun and games with his anonymous identity, but would he have written this about himself? If Erskine really did contribute to the review, this passage could be attributed to him, but hard evidence of any other input has yet to be found. The more likely explanation, in the current state of the evidence, is that the encomium was inserted in house, by Murray or by William Gifford, the *Quarterly's* editor. Its conjunction of Scott with Shakespeare went beyond where Scott himself might have gone, but who are we to disagree?

Presidential Perspectives

Scott as seen by Past Presidents of The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

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INTRODUCTION

The list of past presidents of The Club published in The Bulletin is an epitome of the great and good of the last century. It seemed to me that it might be of interest to members of the Club to revisit what some of this great company had said of Sir Walter; I chose six men of whom I know something and who, I was sure, would repay our attention. They are: Sir Herbert Grierson, Hesketh Pearson, C S Lewis, Sir Hugh Walpole, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and John Buchan.

The six had much in common. They were roughly of the same generation, born in the latter part of the 19th century and flourishing in the earlier part of the 20th century. Four of them served in the First World War, a fifth lost a son in the aftermath of that terrible conflict. Three were distinguished scholars; three were successful writers.

They may also be loosely characterised as being traditionalists, both as critics and as popular writers. Their approach to literature was humane and perceptive, aesthetic rather than doctrinal. As the century wore on, their approach, alas, came to be regarded as outdated, becoming increasingly cerebral and dogmatic; the emphasis was on what came to be called the theory of literature, rather than the art of literature. But, our six have this in common: they remain wonderfully accessible to the common reader.

Presidential addresses are, of course, occasions for celebration rather than rigorous criticism and so, where possible, I have drawn on the views of these writers expressed in other contexts.

1 Sir HERBERT GRIERSON (1866-1960)

Of all the scholars who have served as Presidents of the Club, Sir Herbert Grierson (1927) was probably the most eminent. The son of an impoverished Shetland laird, Grierson was educated at Aberdeen and Oxford Universities. He progressed to the Chairs of English, first at Aberdeen and then at Edinburgh, where he succeeded George Saintsbury.

A brilliant lecturer and a man of vast erudition, he made two lasting contributions to English studies: his definitive edition of John Donne's poetry (1912) and his editorship of Scott's letters, issued in twelve volumes between 1932 and 1937, a superb and indispensable contribution to our knowledge of Scott.

Grierson's Address to the Club is entitled "*Scott and Carlyle*"; and the latter's well-known essay on Scott is Grierson's point of departure.

He calls Carlyle a 'high-minded plebeian' and says 'it was almost impossible for Carlyle to write of Scott with fairness', because of his humble beginnings and his struggles to achieve fame as a writer. However, he denies that Carlyle was envious of Scott, although it is difficult to agree with this. Certainly Carlyle, whose reaction to Scott, it must be said, was very confused, misunderstood Scott in a fundamental way, writing "His life was worldly...there is nothing spiritual in him". In this connection, Grierson himself makes a good point when he comments "the tormented man [i.e. Carlyle] is critical of the happy man... and if ever there was a happy man...it was Scott."

Grierson considers Carlyle's comparison of Scott with Shakespeare. Carlyle had written: "We might say...that your Shakespeare fashions his characters from the heart outwards; your Scott fashions them from the skin inwards". This suggests a total failure of understanding as Grierson points out, saying correctly: "Scott's method of drawing his characters and Shakespeare's are the same."

A moment's reflection will confirm the justice of his comment. Consider, for example, Falstaff and Malvolio; then consider Edie Ochiltree and Andrew Fairservice. These characters owe their brilliant realism to two basic factors: dialogue and action. This is how Shakespeare creates his characters; and this is how Scott creates them. Carlyle's distinction is meaningless and misleading.

Grierson makes short shrift of the complaint that Scott was 'merely' an entertainer. On this topic he says:

"Scott's domain is comedy in a large sense of the word. Tragedy, says Professor Saintsbury, was certainly not Scott's forte to the same extent as were comedy and history...'I write for general amusement', says Scott in the introduction to *The Fortunes of Nigel*, which is Carlyle's charge. But one must not always take Scott's confessions at their face value. He belittled his own work as much as Wordsworth was disposed to exalt his. He hated to make parade of his deeper feelings, or to pose as teacher or author. He accepted, like Shakespeare, the role of entertainer of the public...But he had a deeper motive than to amuse and make money: his own delight in his work, the thought of which was never absent from his mind; and he knew that "amusement" is an inadequate word to describe the satisfaction we derive from a great work of art, be it drama or poem or novel or piece of music..."

Grierson responds with enthusiasm to Scott's prose at its best:

"...what flow and movement his style gathers in great scenes, and what an evocative power ...One would think that Scott had been in the streets of Edinburgh, on the night of the Porteous Riots."

He sums up thus:

"Scott's work holds the past before our imagination, and appeals quite as much as Carlyle's to [Scotland's] soul, for the soul of man has more needs than are to be satisfied by Puritanism. Chivalry, generosity, loyalty, honour, a sense of the beauty of nature, and the beauty of human nature in every class, a deep regard for right, a sober fear of God – all these things one may learn who reads Sir Walter, and all of them Scotland needs if she is to advance into the future without a moral disaster."

Turning from Grierson's Address to the Club to his other writings on Scott, I would draw attention to his excellent *Introduction* to his edition of the Letters. This is remarkable for its balanced judgement of Scott. He writes:

"I have concealed nothing that has come into my hands concerning Scott's financial dealings. Nor is it any part of my plan to exculpate Scott at the expense of Constable or of the Ballantynes, though they certainly made their contribution to that disaster. The impression made on my mind by these letters is not that of a gambler fevered with a thirst for gold, but of one to whom came, as in a dream, fairy-gold, wealth which enabled him to gratify his manifold desires and charities, but which, as is the way with such gifts, disappeared as suddenly as it came. If he had been intent on money for its own sake, he could easily have made more and kept it longer. In all Scott did there was the same blend of practical and imaginative interest."

And how just is this comment:

"...Scott's was not capricious kindness like that of Byron, but steady and consistent kindness arising from an unflinching recognition of the rights or even the claims of others. I know no man of letters of the first rank to whom the word "dutiful" can be applied so justly as to Scott. It is an old-fashioned word, not much in favour to-day when the first of virtues is self-assertion; when *sacro egoism* is the great proof of character and genius. But Scott seemed able to combine it with a steady expansion of his own powers and tastes."

Referring to Scott's editions of Dryden and Swift, Grierson makes a welcome comment:

"That he was a scientific editor I will not aver – and it seems to be the fate of Dryden's plays to incite the wrath of every editor against his predecessor – but he had the gift of making even notes interesting.

Nor is very much gained by saying that Scott sacrificed perfection in his art to love of money – or it is equally true of Shakespeare. One is only substituting censure for an effort to understand."

But perhaps Grierson's most perceptive comments concern Scott's character, which is often misunderstood, writing:

"Scott had no more illusions about the worth of life than Carlyle. Underneath his worldly and stoical temper lay an acute sensibility with which he had done battle from his youth. His sentiment – his romantic and passionate love of his country, of Scotland and Britain, and of the social order that was disappearing – astonished those who occasionally got glimpses of their depth and intensity...."

And he has an eloquent passage on Scott's achievement:

"Scott's achievement was not to transport you back into a strange past, making you share the feelings of men whose moral and spiritual life was remote from ours. It was rather the opposite, to dispel that feeling of strangeness and make you realise that the past was once a present and felt much as life does to us to-day. His closest affinity is not with modern mediaevalists, but with his great predecessors, Smollett and Fielding; yes, and with Defoe, and that great, realistic, humorous handling of romance, the immortal forerunner of all modern fiction, *Don Quixote*. He brought the past out of the shadowy and strange lights in which we see it into the clear light of the present."

In 1938 Grierson published *Sir Walter Scott, Bart. A new life, supplementary to, and corrective of, Lockhart's Biography*.

Commenting on this, in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Professor Hewitt describes it as 'the first and still the most important deconstruction of the fictional interpretation of Scott offered by Lockhart'. This dismissal of Lockhart's *Life* as fiction cannot be allowed to pass without comment: the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography article on Lockhart redresses the balance:

"Though modern criticism has pointed out inaccuracies in Lockhart's details and considered his portrait of Scott idealized it is clear none the less that he attempted to present the near heroic regard in which Scott was held in his time. As Maria Edgeworth wrote to Lockhart in 1838:

'We thought it impossible any publication could raise Sir Walter Scott's talents or character in public opinion or in our private opinion more especially. And yet you certainly have done it without one word of puff or exaggeration or even full-faced eulogy.'"

Grierson's biography is a work of meticulous detail, and certainly performs a useful function as being 'corrective' of Lockhart. However, the carefully assembled minutiae of Scott's relationships with his various publishers and the Ballantynes makes hard reading. As a biographer seeking to present a complete picture of Scott's life, Grierson lacks something of the instinctive empathy with his subject which we find in Buchan..

Nonetheless, the Epilogue does justice to Scott the writer and the man. His pages on what he calls Scott's 'charisma' are excellent:

"There was in Scott's mind a dualism which he made no attempt to bridge, of which he was not himself fully conscious. In the novels it shows itself in the contradiction between his romantic sympathies and his sober judgement.

And referring to Scott and the common man, a theme he had referred to in his address, he writes:

"Though a Tory Scott did wish to do good to the poor. Nor was he the only person who was moved by the same sympathy yet did not feel sure that the good of the poor was to be advanced by the doctrine of laissez faire. He saw the source of the evils that were coming, and he indicated some of the means which might be used to alleviate the lot of the victims. To Scott as to Carlyle the main source of the evil was not the divorce of any tie between the employer and the labourer but the cash-nexus...It is just such a settlement which Scott describes in *Chronicles of the Canongate*." "This is now quite changed. The manufacturers are transferr'd to great towns where a man may assemble 500 workmen one week and dismiss the next, without having any further connection with them than to receive a week's work for a week's wage, nor any further solicitude about their future fate than if they were so many shuttles."

What a refreshing view this is of Scott and how misleading are those critics who dismiss him as an old-fashioned Tory with a snobbish adulation of the aristocracy. This in itself makes Grierson a valuable guide to our understanding of Sir Walter.

2 HESKETH PEARSON (1887-1960)

There could hardly be a greater contrast in character and career than that between Grierson, the quintessential scholar, and Hesketh Pearson, President in 1959, an extrovert actor and director turned popular biographer. After some unsettled early years, with a variety of employments, he went onto the stage, without any formal training, in 1911, and acted with some of the famous knights of the West End stage, such as Beerbohm Tree, George Alexander and Harley Granville-Barker. He served with distinction in the First World War, being seriously wounded and winning an M.C. He gave up acting in 1931 and became a highly successful popular biographer in the '30s and '40s, with subjects such as Shaw, Shakespeare, Conan Doyle, Disraeli and, in 1954, Scott.

His book on Scott is highly readable, but stronger on the man than on the writer. His criticism of the novels is uneven, and while his comments on *Pevekil* and *St Ronan's Well* are excellent, his dismissal of the early chapters of *Waverley* and of *The Bride of Lammermoor* seem to me to be mistaken.

Where he excels is in his portrait of Scott the man. He draws attention to the nature of Scott's Toryism, which has an uncanny relevance to our present political situation:

"He was not in any real sense a party man, realising at an early date that 'the principles of statesmen are regulated by their advance to or retreat from power'; but being a traditionist he was a Tory in sympathy, and being a man of common sense he disbelieved in the panaceas of the so-called progressive party... he noticed that 'those who are apt to be peculiarly and clamorously loud in the assertion of supposed public rights, do not always feel quite so acutely at the infringement of those which subsist in society between man and man.' He thought that 'the art of making people happy is to leave them much to their own guidance', and in this respect also the Tories were better than the Whigs."

He also tackles the vexed question of Scott's alleged snobbery, on which he writes perceptively:

"The chivalric dreams of his youth, nourished by the stories of the Border barons which he had heard in his childhood, stayed with him to the end, and resulted in the exceptional deference he paid to rank. His attitude to the aristocracy of the age was roughly the same as the modern attitude to the bureaucracy. In his day the ruling class existed more or less by descent, whereas now it is largely recruited by ascent; and the main difference between the two viewpoints is that he had a romantic respect for tradition while the modern world has a realistic respect for tyranny. There was nothing in him of the snob; that is, one who apes gentility and pretends to a nodding acquaintance with half the peerage. He paid far more respect to a poor Scottish chieftain than to a modern English lord. He loved, not the title, but its historic associations. He was proud of his family, and thought nothing of his fame as a writer compared with his place as the cadet of Harden and clansman of Buccleuch."

He also draws attention to Scott's extraordinary prescience with regard to Anglo-American relations:

"The Americans are so like the British, the British [so like] the Americans, that they have not much patience with each other for not being in all respects the same with each other... It is probable, I should hope, that both nations having so close points of resemblance in general matters may derive benefit from calmly collating their points of difference, and perhaps they may both derive advantage from such an amicable discussion... I see dissensions between us and the Americans as threatening infinite disadvantage to both nations and offering no adequate advantage to either."

In Pearson's Address to the Club, the emphasis is even more concentrated on Scott the man. Referring to the Journal, he writes:

"That work made me want to tackle his biography. It is to my mind the greatest diary ever written, if only because he was the greatest man who ever kept a diary, and his noble character shines from every page of it. Later I read the twelve volumes of his letters, and perceived that apart from his genius and his chivalrous nature he was the sanest and wisest of counsellors, superior in that respect to Dr Johnson, because more tolerant, more sympathetic and less egotistical. Indeed I delayed writing about him simply on account of his virtues."

He goes on to say that such was his admiration for his subject that he was in danger of turning his biography into hagiography. Accordingly he considered whether Scott could be accused of anything shameful in his life. He could only produce two examples: his treatment of his cowardly brother Daniel; and his rift with Lord Holland, who had accused Scott of jobbery with regard to his brother Tom. He makes a telling remark on one aspect of Scott's character which is indeed puzzling:

"In going through his letters and Journal I was struck again and again by his extraordinary intelligence and common sense in the ordinary affairs of life, though he didn't exercise his shrewdness where his own affairs were concerned."

He goes on to note Scott's simplicity and courtesy, particularly towards troublesome visitors to Abbotsford. He comments on what he calls Scott's 'vice of modesty':

"It is a curious thing to say of a man, but if Scott had a vice at all it was the vice of modesty. Not, you will agree, a very widespread complaint among men of letters, most of whom suffer from an overweening sense of their own importance and a colossally high opinion of their own works."

David Cecil once commented that it is always wise to listen to what an author says of his own work. This is not always good advice with Scott, who regularly denigrated his work – and himself.

Pearson draws attention to the extraordinary facility with which Scott wrote, defends him against the charge of toadying to George IV, and notes his contempt for literary critics:

"Nothing is more valueless than the opinion of literary people of London coteries, although it is unnecessary to tell them so."

He concludes his talk:

"We at any rate will do honour to one whose greatness as an artist was matched by his benevolence and fortitude as a man."

3 C S LEWIS (1898-1963)

Like Pearson, C S Lewis, President in 1962, was primarily attracted to Scott the man, particularly Scott the man as revealed in the Journal. Lewis was the son of an Ulster solicitor. He fought in the trenches in the First World War, was wounded and invalided out of the Army. After the war, he went up to Oxford where he had a brilliant career. In 1925, he was appointed Fellow and Tutor of Magdalen. From 1954 to 1963 he was Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Cambridge, although he continued to maintain close links with Oxford.

His bluff exterior and convivial manner concealed a deeply sensitive and emotional man. At Oxford he was part of a circle of literary dons, the Inklings, which included J R R Tolkien. A good lecturer, he lacked the charisma of the elegant David Cecil or of the somewhat histrionic H V D Dyson, another member of the Inklings.

A formidable scholar, his most substantial academic work was his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, a book to be consulted rather than read. He became more widely known to the general public, particularly in America for his evangelical writings such as *The Screwtape Letters* and the very popular children's books, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

His biographer says of him:

"He lived more in the world of literature and the imagination than in the technological age; for diversion he preferred to read Kipling and Rider Haggard, rather than modern poets or novelists."

Lewis had a no-nonsense approach to literature and a donnish sense of humour. His lines on the opening simile in T S Elliot's *Prufrock* are worth quoting:

"For twenty years I've stared my level best
To see if evening – any evening – would suggest
A patient etherized upon a table;
In vain, I simply wasn't able."

In his Address to the Club, he tackles one of the common charges laid against Scott that as a novelist he was an escapist.

"The absence of the blue devils from his work, its freedom from all petulance, morbidity or shrillness, will not now be regarded as wholly a virtue."

He mentions Jonathan Oldbuck, Edie Ochiltree and Baillie Nichol Jarvie as examples of Scott's wonderful 'sense of life'.

Lewis also disposes of another objection to Scott as a novelist:

"It is generally demanded that a novel should be 'a comment on life'.... I do not think Scott supposed it to be anything of the sort"

He makes a comment which admirably sums up what we find in Scott:

"He was not (save very incidentally) saying something about the world but making an objet d'art of a particular kind. If you like you may, no doubt, say that he was an entertainer; if you must, I suppose no one can prevent your saying 'a mere entertainer'. That is, his work belongs with the *Decameron*, *The Canterbury Tales*, the *Furioso* (one of his own great favourites), *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Pickwick Papers*, and *The Moonstone*; not with *The Divine Comedy*, *War and Peace* or *The Ring*."

And dealing with Scott's alleged lack of 'seriousness' and his writing for money, he says trenchantly:

"Here we come to an irreducible opposition between Scott's outlook and that of our more influential modern men of letters. These would blame him for disobeying his artistic conscience; Scott would have said he was obeying his conscience. He knew only one kind of conscience. It told him that a man must pay his debts if he possibly could. The idea that some supposed obligation to write good novels could override this plain, universal demand of honesty, would have seemed to him the most pitiful subterfuge of vanity and idleness, and a prime specimen of that 'literary sensibility' or 'affected singularity' which he most heartily despised."

He goes on to say:

"...some art, flows best from men who treat their work as a kind of play. I at any rate cannot conceive how the exuberance, the elbow-room, the heart-easing quality of Dickens, or Chaucer, or Cervantes, could co-exist with that self-probing literary conscience we find in Pater or Henry James. Lockhart speaks somewhere of Scott 'enjoying rather than exerting his genius'. We may be coming to a period when there will be no room for authors who do that. If so, I admit there may be gains; I am sure there will be losses."

However, like Buchan, who disliked – and misunderstood – what he called Scott's 'polite English', Lewis criticises Scott's prose style and gives two examples from the Journal. He speaks of early 19th-century English being 'bloated'; I wonder what he thought of Gibbon and Dr Johnson in the 18th.

Scott should be defended on this subject. Let me give an example of Scott's descriptive prose. This is from *The Abbot*, paradoxically not one of Scott's best novels, but one that contains some of his best writing:

"It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the Lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of

flag-stone presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck, or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the Lady in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened. The sounds which she heard reminded her of former days...."

I find this both evocative and effective in setting the scene. It conjures up a sense of rural tranquillity which recalls the landscapes of Claude Lorrain; and Claude's paintings, like Scott's prose, were to be condemned (by Ruskin) as artificial and lacking in invention. We must ignore the carpers and continue to enjoy excellence wherever we find it, irrespective of passing fashions.

Lewis continues by noting Scott's historical insight – following G M Trevelyan – and his sense of balance and proportion. Towards the end of his Address, he sums up:

"...the novels embody those immensely valuable qualities of mind which I have claimed for the Gurnal. They may lack many virtues which no age is in more desperate need than our own. They have their own essential rectitude. They slur some things; they exaggerate nothing. Minor frailties are never worked up into enormous sins, nor petty distresses into factitious tragedies. Everything is in proportion. Consider what either Dickens on the one hand, or George Moore on the other, would have made of Effie Deans. Then turn back to Scott and breathe the air of sense."

I must, however, confess that this Address has left me with some reservations. I have the impression that Lewis was really more interested in Scott's character as revealed in the Journal than in the novels. He mentions several of the great novels only in passing, and we hear nothing of Scott's poetry, let alone his other writings. Lewis does a good job but leaves one wondering whether his heart was really in what he was saying.

Lewis's collected lectures were published with the title *They Asked for a Paper* which suggests a 'de haut en bas' attitude. Well, he was asked and the paper was given. It is of course workmanlike. But compared with Buchan, Lewis is rather detached; we miss that vital empathy which lights up Buchan's work.

4 SIR HUGH WALPOLE (1884-1941)

Like Lewis, Sir Hugh Walpole, President in 1932, enjoyed great success as a best-selling author. The son of a clergyman who became Bishop of Edinburgh, he was born in New Zealand but educated in England, completing his education at Cambridge. Abandoning any idea of entering the church, after a short period as a schoolmaster, he turned to writing, forming friendships with Arnold Bennett, Henry James and Joseph Conrad.

During the First World War, he served in the Russian Red Cross and was awarded the Russian Georgian Cross for bravery. For a short time he worked with John Buchan at the Department of Information.

After the war, he became a prolific best-selling novelist, his most popular books being the historical tales set in the 18th-century Cumberland, beginning with *Rogue Herries* in 1930. He also travelled extensively as a lecturer in America, where he was immensely popular. He was knighted in 1937.

One of his biographers comments on Walpole's erratic personality; clearly he was a difficult and complex man, thin-skinned and quick to take offence. (He was greatly hurt by an attack made on him by Somerset Maugham in *Cakes and Ale*.) He built up a considerable collection of art and books. His great generosity to less fortunate writers than himself recalls Scott, as does his phenomenal capacity for work.

In what was a brief Address to the Club, he reflected on Scott's fall from fashion, observing:

"Let us admit at once that the past ten years have not been favourable in atmosphere for the true point of appreciation of him. In Literature, since the war, everybody has swung to the left. We have been cynical, realistic, obscene, and above all have paid earnest attention to the manner of the new book rather than its matter. Especially in the region of the Novel we have wanted things to be new, and not only new but terse, epigrammatic, and coloured with a nice unromantic pessimism."

He went on to praise Scott's 'inimitable creation of human beings' and celebrated his legacy as a great Scotsman:

"And there is the second ground, that he was poet of a great country. I do not mean poet in a technical sense, although, I fancy, it will yet be found that *The Minstrel* and *The Lord of the Isles* do very grandly a thing that no one quite did before him, and that most certainly no one has done since. I mean that the whole of Scotland is in his work, that his genius in the use of dialect alone would place him on a pinnacle, and without ostentation or sentimentality or any cheap appeal he made a poem of the country that he loved in terms of immortality."

He concluded on an optimistic note:

“It is then an especially happy moment for this Centenary. Scott may be seen again with fresh eyes, judged for the first time for many a year in a new critical atmosphere, and win, possibly to their own astonishment, a new world of eager admirers.”

In the year of his presidency, Walpole published a substantial anthology of Scott, *The Waverley Pageant*, arranged so as to demonstrate Scott’s extraordinary skills as a storyteller. The Introduction to this is more wide-ranging than the Address.

Walpole strikes a balance between what he calls the sentimentality of Scott’s extreme adulators and the cynicism of his detractors:

“But whatever colour past friends may have put upon him, our own age – suspicious of any surrender to the emotions – is likely to correct, is indeed already correcting. Walter Scott himself, I fancy, would value the cynicism more than the sentiment. He was always one who enjoyed the affection of his fellowmen, but shrank instantly from any effusion. At the same time he would expect fair play although most surely he would bear no grudge against his detractors. He was accustomed to smile at a great deal that to-day men think of importance, he valued much that to-day men think of as obsolete, but, were he translated into our time, he would, I am certain, very quickly shoulder our modern problems with a practical common-sense that would astonish some of our modern critics, and he would write a page or two about our late lamentable Great War that would far exceed in brilliance and vigour anything that has yet been written about it.

In truth he was and is a man not belonging only to his own time and his wisdom would not be defeated by our troubles if he encountered them any more than his courage was defeated by his own.”

This is a penetrating comment; and echoes what Hesketh Pearson noted when speaking of Scott’s prescience in connection with Anglo-American relations. Indeed we could apply to Scott what Ben Jonson said of his friend Shakespeare, the truly Great Unknown of English literature:

“[He] was not of an age, but for all time.”

Dealing with Scott’s detractors, he summarises his defence of Scott with these excellent sentences:

“But we may make at once this statement confidently about Sir Walter: that, when everything has been dug up, when he has been charged with loving a Lord, with cheating at business, with despising his wife, with a Toryism that was puerile, with a love of old armour and a bad taste in bric-a-brac, with an inability to write English prose, with historical inaccuracy, with novels that are fit only for children

and pages more boring than Rasselas – at the end of it all he rises serenely, apart and beyond, a great gentleman, a creative genius, a friend of anyone and everyone who seeks his company, a great man in every true sense of greatness.”

And speaking of the novels, among which he rates *Redgauntlet* very highly, Walpole says they display a genius that is essentially Scottish: “They are Scottish with the strength, roughness, gaiety, exuberance of his own nature”. He contrasts Scott’s spontaneous originality with what he calls “the conscious artistry” of his Romantic contemporaries.

However, like Buchan and Lewis, he comments on Scott’s “long, clumsy sentences”, citing in particular *The Legend of Montrose*. Of course there are ‘longueurs’ in his novels, but I suspect that complaints about Scott’s prose style come down to a matter of taste. I can only say that I find the passage I quoted from *The Abbot* evocative, while others find it ‘bloated’, to use Lewis’s word.

As in his Address, Walpole ends his Introduction to *The Waverley Pageant* with reflection on Scott’s fall in reputation, and he makes an excellent generalisation:

“The business then of the novelist seems to me precisely what it was a hundred years ago: its freshness is preserved because every novelist of any personality soaks his work through and through with that personality. If that personality is second-rate the work is second-rate and readers with second-rate tastes will enjoy it. No harm is done.”

5 SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH (1863-1944)

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, universally known as ‘Q’, was President in 1926. This passionate Cornishman had a remarkable career. Educated at Oxford, he had made his start in literature as a journalist and prolific writer of novels, some of which, like *The Astonishing History of Troy Town*, *Dead Man’s Rock* and *Hetty Wesley*, have endured the test of time.

The turning point in his career came in 1912 when, at the age of 49, he was the surprising and, as it turned out, brilliant choice for the newly established King Edward VII Chair of English Literature at Cambridge. He became a charismatic lecturer and was instrumental in the foundation of the independent Faculty of English at Cambridge. He did valuable work as an editor and as an anthologist, the *Oxford Book of English Verse* still holding its place despite subsequent revisions by other hands.

In his beloved Cornwall, he was largely responsible for the introduction to the county of the grammar school system from which another remarkable Cornishman would benefit, his protégé, A L Rowse.

His attitude to literature was summed up in what he said in one of his lectures: “Literature is not a mere science, to be studied; but an art, to be practised.”

His approach to literature was humane and perceptive, and his lectures still delight in such collections as *The Art of Reading*, *The Art of Writing*, and, perhaps best of all, *Shakespeare's Workmanship*. Thus he represents a tradition which, alas, is now held in low esteem, if not contempt, in current critical thinking. The entry in the ODNB, commenting on Q's traditional values, remarks:

"These traits, and an inability to treat adequately the darker human emotions, have dated Q's serious works for a world grown cynical, and less secure in its verities"

No wonder then, that, in his Address to the Club, Q showed such empathy with Sir Walter who may be said to suffer from the same prejudice and the same critical distaste. Q contrasts the little we know of Shakespeare the man with the vast amount we know about Scott. He says :

"But we see this man, alike in his poems and novels and in his own life so amply recorded, as almost the sincerest figure of a great Scots gentleman – 'the Shirra' – *totus teres*: [wholly rounded,] a figure so vivid, so sincere and simple, that only certain great simple characters in fiction – Don Quixote, My Uncle Toby, The Vicar of Wakefield, Mr Pickwick – occupy in our affection a place comparable with this actual man, who rode Ettrick and survives to us, himself as romantic as any of the characters he created."

He refers to what is to him – and to me – the conundrum of Scott's neglect in his own country, contrasted with the adulation of Burns, a sensitive subject this side of the Border! Q says:

"Many years ago I found myself in very hot water through asking innocently in a weekly paper why Scotsmen spent such a disproportionate amount of enthusiasm on Burns as compared with Scott. I shall not revive that controversy tonight, for fear of physical violence, save to say that had I the honour to be one of Scott's countrymen I would beat the racial tom tom in his honour above all other men of your jealous race."

This alludes to an article, reprinted in *Adventures in Criticism*, which asks the question: "Why Burns? Why not Sir Walter?" It seems to me that Q raised a very interesting question. It is as though the natural literary idol of England had been the iconoclastic and heretical Marlowe, rather than the deeply conservative and politically conformist Shakespeare.

Perhaps the answer to Q is that Burns' fame in his own country has to do less with literary values than, quite simply, his demotic appeal: he connects with the psyche of the people of Scotland, with what Q referred to as 'rant' and 'blatant but militant self-esteem', although he does justice to Burns' exquisite lyrics.

However this may be, returning to the Address, Q contrasted what he called Scott's "Old Romance" with the "New Realism" of such European writers as

Flaubert, Maupassant and Turgenev. In contrast to Flaubert's search for 'le mot juste', for example, he celebrates Scott's "boisterous animal spirits" and his "Homeric vigour", such a powerful characteristic of Marmion. Towards the end of his Address, he writes thus memorably of Scott:

"Here was a man, intensely and actively conservative; a hater of the French Revolution and all it meant: a close clannish Scot, moreover – to whom his family ties and Tweed were Jordan and meant more than any Abana or Pharpar, rivers of Damascus. And yet from the circle of his writing-lamp radiated a something that made all European literature different. Even as, from a little monastery in Jarrow, Bede's candle cast its beam across fen marsh and channel fog to the Continent and Charlemagne's court, so the Waverley novels reached our dear enemy France and (more than ever Byron did, the more admired) rekindled romance over Europe."

6 JOHN BUCHAN (1875-1940)

I began with a Shetlander; now I come towards the end of this little review of the 'Past Presidents', with another great Scot, and a Borderer to boot, John Buchan later Lord Tweedsmuir, President in 1923. One is tempted to say that Buchan was by upbringing, by temperament and achievement uniquely qualified for the role. No-one has described Buchan's similarities to Scott better than Buchan's biographer, Janet Adam Smith. She wrote:

"Likenesses abound. Both were children of the Borders, with a sheep farming grandfather, brought up to hear ballads and range the hills. Both were trained in the law, whose 'complexity and exactness formed a valuable corrective to a riotous imagination;' had a prodigious memory, a tireless industry, great power of concentration, and wrote with happiness and ease. Both were fortunate young men, in marriage and income and reputation. Both had an appetite for hard exercise, and both for years endured regular bouts of bodily pain... Each had an 'inner world of dream and memory,' though Buchan perhaps took warning from Scott not to let that world invade the world of facts. Each had an 'old-fashioned reverence' for women... Each had a vast acquaintance, but a small inner circle of friends; found it easy to get on well with political opponents; was good at helping lame dogs and, when it came to ministers of religion, detested unction and 'those who are at ease in Zion.' And each had the same feeling for the past of Scotland."

A striking characteristic of Buchan's character, as of Scott's, was the combination of the romantic and the realist. He was a son of the manse, his father being a minister of the Free Church. But the father was the more liberal of his parents, the mother being of a somewhat austere temperament. The influence of his parents

was thus reminiscent of that exercised on Scott by his parents, although with Scott it was the Calvinist Writer to the Signet who was the more rigid, and the mother the gentler influence. H C G Matthew, writing in the *ODNB*, described Buchan's parental heritage very well:

"...there developed in Buchan a very sharp awareness both of the need to be respectable [his mother's influence] and of the sense that it is eccentrics [who] get things done [his father's influence]."

Buchan would have been a man after Scott's own heart. In a brilliant career, from Glasgow and Oxford Universities to the Governor-Generalship of Canada, he combined an extraordinarily active public life with a prolific output of books, and a keen pursuit of outdoor sports. He was a colonial servant in South Africa, an intelligence officer and propagandist in the First World War. He was a barrister, a publisher (at Nelson's) and MP for the Scottish Universities. His writing encompassed journalism, editing, military history, biography and fiction.

His substantial experience of writing short stories, historical novels and spy thrillers (his 'shockers' as he called them) made him a perceptive critic of Scott the novelist. And, as with Scott, Buchan's reputation has sadly declined owing to a shift in public taste. Buchan's imperialism, which should not be taken at face value, in stories like *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, became no less unpopular than Scott's deep traditional values.

Buchan's views on Scott are to be found in the paper read to The Club in 1923; a similar though more detailed paper read to the English Association in the same year; and in his *Sir Walter Scott*, published on the anniversary of Scott's death in 1932.

In the first of these, Buchan begins by referring, in what now seems rather optimistic, to Scott's universality:

"The world forgets him and returns to him; we quarry in his work as in Shakespeare and find new treasures; that rich and spontaneous genius of his endures through all the vagaries of literary taste because he possesses what Emerson has called the 'stellar and indiminishable something' which is greatness."

He compares Scott with Dr Johnson, saying "they are personalities as real to us as our contemporaries". And then he goes on to define Scott's unique quality:

"Here we have a man of soaring imagination, whose feet are solidly planted on the earth, an adventurer and a dreamer who never forgets the standards of ordinary humanity, a great romantic who is also a great realist. I propose to speak to you...of Sir Walter's 'common sense'."

Buchan sees Scott's refusal to declare himself a bankrupt in 1826 as an example of his sense of reality:

"He could not see that rules of morality which held in the case of the soldier, the merchant and the country labourer, should be slackened for the artist... He ranked himself with the plain man, and because he ranked himself with him he understood him."

Buchan then goes on to deal with aspects of Scott's novels. He identifies their chief characteristic as the counterpoint of the extraordinary with the mundane, both with regard to action and character. Commenting, for example, on what he calls Scott's 'dull heroes and heroines', he says:

"They form a solid background, a kind of Greek chorus, repeating all the accepted platitudes, and keeping the drama, which might otherwise become fantastic, within reach of our prosaic life."

As in Shakespeare, drama is contrasted with normality, the exceptional with the ordinary. Perhaps Buchan's most telling example is from the closing chapter of *Redgauntlet*:

"It ends as all great drama must end – in an anticlimax, which is more moving than any climax, when a stranger – a Hanoverian and a Campbell – speaks over the dead Jacobitism a noble and chivalrous farewell – the epitaph of common sense."

Buchan also pays tribute to Scott's understanding of the common man and makes a telling comment on what stands as one of the great paradoxes of Scott's writing:

"No professed prophet of democracy ever did so much for the plain man as this Tory Border laird."

Buchan concludes with a striking tribute to the Journal:

"Had Sir Walter Scott never written a line beyond the Journal, some of us would still revere him as one of the rare possessors of that tenderness which keeps watch over man's mortality and neither quails nor complains, and speaks to the generations a language as universal as the gospel of St John."

Buchan, however, is not wholly uncritical. In his address to The Club and in other places, he criticises Scott's use of what he calls 'polite English':

"I am not prepared to defend always [his characters'] polite English... He [Scott] speaks of 'the superb monarch of the feathered tribes' when he means an eagle; he allows Helen MacGregor in *Rob Roy* and Norma in *The Pirate* to talk like governesses from Miss Pinkerton's Academy...."

These strictures are misplaced.

The passage about the eagle, for example, comes from Chapter XVI of *Waverley*, where Scott is describing the journey of Edward Waverley with his Highland guide, Evan Dhu:

“He fired his piece accordingly, but missed the superb monarch of the feathered tribes, who, without noticing the attempt to annoy him, continued his majestic flight to the southward. A thousand birds of prey, hawks, kites, carrion-crows, and ravens, disturbed from the lodgings which they had just taken up for the evening, rose at the report of the gun, and mingled their hoarse and discordant notes with the echoes which replied to it, and with the roar of the mountain cataracts. Evan, a little disconcerted at having missed his mark, when he meant to have displayed peculiar dexterity, covered his confusion by whistling part of a pibroch as he reloaded his piece, and proceeded in silence up the pass.”

This is surely Scott’s dry sense of humour, reflecting Waverley’s somewhat sceptical view of his companion; it is delicious irony.

And with regard to the further comment on Helen MacGregor and Norma, we might recall, for example, the dialogue in *Pride & Prejudice* between the odious Mr Collins and Elizabeth Bennett. This may sound equally formal to modern ears. Perhaps Jane Austen had also attended Miss Pinkerton’s Academy...

But these are minor cavils which fade into obscurity when we read Buchan’s biography of Scott. He says of himself:

“This is a book I was bound one day or other to write, for I have had the fortune to be born and bred under the shadow of that great tradition.”

This sets the tone for what is one of the finest books written about Scott: in his empathy with his subject, he stands with Lockhart. It is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand Scott the man and Scott the writer. It is a book in which every page contains some valuable insight into Scott’s work and character.

Janet Adam Smith has admirably described Buchan’s literary criticism:

“Buchan’s criticism of the novels has a simple virtue which today we may too easily take for granted. He discusses the book on the table before him – its structure, its tone, its characters, its language – and does not use it as an occasion for fine writing of his own. His close study produces some sharp observations.”

His approach has the freshness of a perceptive and independent mind. He sees, for example, that the early chapters of *Waverley*, conventionally dismissed by Hesketh Pearson, for example, as irrelevant, are in fact preparing the ground for Waverley’s subsequent behaviour. (Incidentally, the autobiographical basis of these chapters is perhaps more revealing of Scott’s character than the Autobiography.) He makes some memorable remarks. Of Edie Ochiltree, for example, he says he is ‘the most Shakespearian character outside Shakespeare’. He draws attention to Lockhart’s rather superior dislike of the Ballantynes – a fact

to bear in mind when reading his account of Scott’s financial collapse. He is frank about Scott’s uncharacteristically unkind treatment of Constable. And he makes a shrewd comment about Scott’s Napoleon: “the pedants of history looked askance at the romancer who had raided their preserves”.

He has unfashionable praise for Scott the poet, particularly for the lyrics scattered throughout his narrative poems and the novels: the coronach in *The Lady of the Lake*, Lucy Ashton’s song in *The Bride of Lammermuir* and, of course, Proud Maisie in *The Heart of Midlothian*. On these lyrics, Buchan comments:

“They are Scott’s final credentials as a great poet for they have the ‘desiderium’ of great poetry... They are Scott’s way of linking the prosaic event with things that never were on sea or land, the ultimate matter of poetry.”

S A Gillon, in his article on Buchan in the *ODNB*, refers to ‘the almost inspired criticism of his Sir Walter Scott’. This is well said.

Inspired, indeed. There is a sentence in this book that remains in the mind long after one has read it:

“This Border laird, so happy in his worldly avocations that some would discard him as superficial, stands at the end securely among the prophets, for he gathers all things, however, lowly and crooked and broken, with the love of God.”

Miscellanea

Scott's Birthday

On the anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's birth on 15th August 2010, in the rooms of the Book Society, High Street, Edinburgh, the Chairman presented an illustrated biographical talk on Sir Walter, using images from the Royal Commission of Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) collections, and also the Corson archive. This talk was followed by music by The Sorries.

Scott-Land – The Author who Invented a Nation.

Stuart Kelly, Literary Editor of Scotland on Sunday, launched his book on Scott at a Club event in the New Club on June 24th 2010. The book is now available from Polygon.

Joint-Lecture with Edinburgh University English Department

On October 8th in the Advocates' Library Lindsay Levy gave an address on *Walter Scott – bibliophile or bibliomaniac?*

Our Website – www.eswsc.com

"The Readings by Walter Scott fans" project was initiated in December 2009 and has been a huge success. The most viewed page is *Chronicles of the Canongate* read by Caroline McCracken-Flesher – it has had 257 visitors. The readings by Fraser Elgin and Sir Eric Anderson have each attracted over 150 visitors. Lady Antonia Fraser is our most viewed President with nearly 500 visitors, the Duke of Buccleuch being in second place with 146.

Several pupils from George Heriot's School did recordings in March 2010 and this has given Lee Simpson the idea to run a Reading Competition for 2011.

The website itself has attracted 5,500 visitors in the last year. 45% of visitors actually looked around the site – spending an average of 4 min. looking at 5 pages each; 30% of visitors made repeat visits. The most viewed pages are the *Listen, About* and *Events* pages which have all had over 600 visitors. The most searched-for webpage on our site is that about Ian Grimble which has a specially written biography by John More.

The Edinburgh Edition

The final volume has come off the press and an epic task of scholarship finally completed after 25 years. The Editor-in-Chief, Profesor David Hewitt, and his cohort of assistants, are to be heartily congratulated. Many thousands of errors have been corrected, many of them obscure. The recently-retired hon.sec., Fraser Elgin, has kindly donated, through the Club, to the New Club, a complete set of the novels. The New Club is commemorating the gift with a small dinner party to David and Fraser.

Cockburns of Leith

The firm was founded in 1796 in good time for Sir Walter to acquire some 350 dozen bottles of wine and 36 dozen bottles of spirits. It was always appreciated that Sir Walter did a lot of entertaining! Sadly, due to competition from the supermarkets, the firm has had to go into administration.

Abbotsford

The Trustees of the Abbotsford Trust have unveiled some details regarding a new visitor centre to be built beside the House and also intimated that work will shortly begin on restoration of Sir Walter's home. The new building will house a shop, cafe

and reception area. This has been made possible with the grants of £4.85 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund, £2.45 million from the Scottish Government and £1.5 million from Scottish Borders Council. It is expected to take about three years to complete. The Abbotsford Trust is seeking to establish a £3 million endowment to cover future upkeep of the house and grounds.

Friend of Abbotsford

In return for an annual subscription you can help to save Abbotsford by becoming a Friend of Abbotsford. For this you will receive a membership card, free entry during the open season, 10% discount in the shop, invitation to a special information day each year and an annual newsletter. Individual membership is £25 and Joint £40. Application should be made to Abbotsford (Friends of Abbotsford), Melrose TD6 9BQ

Novel Award

The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch have most generously funded a Walter Scott Prize, in the sum of £25,000. This will be open to all historical novelists living in the UK. The first winner of the award was recently declared as Hilary Mantel with *Wolf Hall*.

The Lady of the Lake

The Association for Scottish Literary Studies held a Conference in the Trossachs on June 5th-6th 2010, entitled *Scott, the Trossachs and the Tourists*; this was in part a celebration of the bi-centenary of the publication of the *Lady of the Lake*. The Club, of course, as reported elsewhere, held its own celebration on Loch Katrine.

Ashiestiel House

Sir Walter rented the residential estate of Ashiestiel, situated near Clovenfords, for about 8 years just prior to acquiring Abbotsford in 1812. It was here that *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *The Lady of the Lake* and *Marmion* were written. The house was put up for sale recently at a price of more than £1.75 million.

Ave Atque Vale

A warm welcome is extended to the following who have joined the Club since the publication of the last Bulletin:

Dr. Paul Barnaby, Edinburgh
Alan Dewar, Edinburgh*
Alan Grant, Edinburgh
Marilyn Jeffcoat, Edinburgh
* *Life member*

Mr & Mrs Eric Milligan, Edinburgh
Dr. Peter J Murray, Aberdeen
Daphne O'Kane, Belfast
Cuillin Scott, Edinburgh
Dr. Elizabeth Stockdale, Banchory

It is with great regret that we record the deaths of the following members:

Margaret Carnie, Edinburgh
Bill Christie, Edinburgh
Tom Fleming, Edinburgh
Walter Scott, Lauder

The following members have intimated their resignation from the Club:

Ian M. Fraser
Helen Redmond-Cooper

The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2009

GENERAL FUND (SC037636)	2009	2008
Bank and Cash in hand	£	£
Opening Balance	1,296	503
Surplus/ Deficit for year	815	989
		1,492
Treasury Stock Sold		3,500
		4,992
Treasury Stock Bought		3,696
Closing Balance	2,111	1,296
Investments		
£ 1,500 5% Treas 2014	1,506	1,506
£ 3,500 5 1/2% Treas 2008/12	-	-
£ 3,500 5% Treas 2012	3,696	3,696
	5,202	5,202
Reserves		
General Funds	7,313	6,498
Assets		
PA System (at Purchase Cost)	1,255	941
Wine Clips	51	51
Lectern	239	
Hard Drive for Club Data	80	80
Merchandise (at Purchase Cost)	521	631
	2,146	1,703

Notes: We have been very fortunate to have had a lot of donations this year. Without them we would have run a considerable loss. The 100th Dinner incurred a lot of extra expense - but it was worth every penny. We are grateful to members for the donation towards saving the bulletin it can now continue for 2 more years.

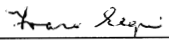
ESSAY FUND (SC005823)	2009	2008
Bank and Cash in hand	£	£
Opening Balance	711	542
Surplus for year	149	365
	860	907
Treasury Stock Sold £ 3,500 5 1/2% Treas 2008/12		3,500
		4,407
Treasury Stock Bought £ 3,500 5% Treas 2012		3,696
Closing Balance	860	711
Investments		
£ 1,500 5% Treas 2014	1,506	1,506
£ 3,500 5% Treas 2012	3,696	3,696
	5,202	5,202
Reserves		
Prize Funds	6,063	5,914

Essay Fund Notes: There was no Essay Prize this year. The payment of £100 is for last years winner.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf.

 Date 8th May 2010
Lee A. Simpson, Hon. Treasurer

Based on the information supplied to me I approve these accounts

 Date 8 May 2010
Fraser Elgin CA

The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2009

	2009		2008	
	General (SC037636)	Essay (SC005823)	General* (SC037636)	Essay (SC005823)
	£	£	£	£
Receipts				
Subscriptions:	2,059		1,380	
Donations	687		164	
Grant, HBoS	1,000		1,000	
Annual Dinner	4,869		2,316	
Other Functions	1,400		1,493	
Bank Interest	5	1	12	3
Interest on Government Stock	250	250	270	362
Bulletin	1,977		559	
Merchandise Sold	155		43	
	<u>12,402</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>7,237</u>	<u>365</u>
Payments				
Postage, Tel., Stationery, Sundries	1,095		601	
Annual Dinner	6,334		2,964	
Other Functions	2,278		1,643	
Honoraria	300		300	
Website	164		160	
Merchandise Bought	149		45	
Bulletin	679		515	
Miscellaneous	35	2	20	
Prize	-	100	-	
New Assets	553		-	
	<u>11,587</u>	<u>102</u>	<u>6,248</u>	
Surplus for year	<u>815</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>989</u>	<u>365</u>
Purchase of Investment				
£3,500 5% Treasury Stock 2012			<u>3,696</u>	<u>3,696</u>
Sale of Investment				
£3,500 5.5% Treasury Stock 2008/12			3,500	3,500

List of Past Presidents

- 1894 Charles A. Cooper, LL.D.
 1885 The Hon. Lord Ardwall
 1896 Emeritus Professor Masson, LL.D.
 1897 The Hon. Lord Stormonth Darling, LL.D.
 1898 Sir George Douglas, Bt.
 1899 The Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bt., LL.D.
 1900 The Right Hon. Viscount Findlay, G.C.M.C., LL.D.
 1901 The Right Hon. The Earl of Aberdeen, G.C.M.C., LL.D.
 1902 Sir Henry Craik, K.C.B., LL.D., M.P.
 1903 The Right Hon. Augustine Birrell, K.C., LL.D., M.P.
 1904 The Right Hon. Viscount Haldane, K.C., LL.D., M.P.
 1905 The Right Hon. The Earl of Lytton
 1906 Sir Ludovic J. Grant, Bt., B.A., LL.D.
 1907 The Right Hon. George Wyndham, LL.D., M.P.
 1908 Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Bt., LL.D.
 1909 Sir Gilbert J. Parker, LL.D.
 1910 Sir Donald MacAlister, K.C.B., LL.D.
 1911 The Hon. Lord Guthrie, LL.D.
 1912 The Most Rev. and Right Hon. Cosmo Gordon Lang, D.D., LL.D.,
 D.litt. The Archbishop of York (later Canterbury)
 1913 The Right Hon. Sir John Simon, K.C., M.P.
 1914–19 The Right Hon. Viscount Bryce, O.M.
 1920 The Right Hon. Lord Latymer (Resigned)
 The Right Hon. Lord Glenconner
 1921 The Right Hon. Robert Munro, K.C., M.P. (Lord Alness)
 The Very Rev. W. P. Paterson, D.D., LL.D. delivered the address
 1922 The Right Rev. Herbert Hensley Henson, D.D.s, LL.D., Lord Bishop
 of Durham
 1923 Colonel John Buchan, LL.D. (Lord Tweedsmuir)
 1924 The Right Hon. The Earl of Birkenhead, P.C., D.L., D.C.L., LL.D.
 1925 The Hon. Lord Sands, LL.D.
 1926 Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, M.A., d.Litt., F.R.S.L.
 1927 Professor H. J. C. Grierson, M.A., LL.D.
 1928 Professor George Gordon, President of Magdalen
 1929 The Right Hon. Stanley Baldwin, P.C., M.P., D.C.L., LL.D.
 (Earl Baldwin of Bewdley)
 1930 The Very Rev. Sir George Adam Smith, D.D., LL.D., D.Litt, F.B.A.
 1931 Professor W. MacNeile Dixon, LL.D., D.Litt.
 1932 Hugh Walpole, C.B.E.
 1933 The Most Hon. The Marquess of Linlithgow, K.T, G.C.I.E., O.B.E.
 The Hon. Lord St. Vigeans presided and delivered the address

- 1934 The Hon. Lord St. Vigeans presided
 The Most Hon. The Marquess of Linlithgow, K.T, G.C.I.E., O.B.E.
 delivered the address
 1935 The Right Hon. Lord Macmillan, P.C., K.C., LL.D.
 1936 Sir Robert S. Rait, C.B.E., M.A., LL.D. (resigned)
 James Curle, LL.D., W.S.
 1937 Professor George Trevelyan, O.M., C.B.E., F.B.A., D.C.L., LL.D.
 1938 Major General John Hay Beith, C.B.E., M.C.
 1939 The Right Hon. Lord Ponsonby
 1947 Dr. O. H. Mavor ('James Bridie')
 1948 Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Wavell of Cyrenaica and
 Winchester, P.C., G.C.B., C.M.B., M.C.
 1949 The Right Rev. Maurice H. Harland, D.d., Lord Bishop of Lincoln
 (later Lord Bishop of Durham)
 1950 The Right Hon. Walter E. Elliot, P.C., C.H., M.C., M.P.
 1951 Professor Sir Alexander Gray, C.B.E., LL.D.
 1952 Eric Linklater, M.a., LL.D.
 1953 Principal John Traill Christie, M.A., F.R.S.A.
 1954 The Right Hon. Lady Tweedsmuir, M.P.
 1955 Professor C. S. Lewis, F.B.A.
 1956 The Right Hon. Viscount Kilmuir, G.C.V.O., D.C.L., LL.D.
 1957 The Right Rev. Monseignor Ronald Knox, D.litt. (resigned)
 Arthur Melville Clark, M.A., D.Phil., D.litt.
 1958 The Right Hon. R. A. Butler, C.h., M.P.
 1959 Hesketh Pearson
 1960 The Most Rev. and Right Hon. Arthur Michael Ramsay, D.D.
 Lord Bishop of York (later Canterbury)
 1961 The Right Hon. Lord Birkett of Ulverston
 The Right Hon. Lord Clyde, The Lord Justice General, presided
 and delivered the address
 1962 Baroness Elliot of Harwood, D.B.E., LL.D.
 1963 Malcolm Muggeridge
 1964 Professor David Daiches, MA, D.Phil., D.litt., FR.S.E.
 1965 The Right Hon. Lord Cameron, K.T, D.S.C., FR.S.E.
 1966 The Right Hon. Sir Alec Douglas-Home, D.T, LL.D., D.C.L., M.P.
 1967 The Right Hon. Lord Polwarth, T.D., LL.D, C.A.
 1968 Ludovic Kennedy (now Sir Ludovic)
 1969 The Hon. Lord Kilbrandon, LL.D.
 1970 Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper (later Lord Dacre)
 1971 Robert Speaight, C.B.E., M.A., F.R.S.L.
 1972 The Right Hon. Earl of Longford, K.G., P.C.
 1973 The Right Hon. Harold Macmillan, P.C., D.C.L., LL.D, F.R.S.
 (later Lord Stockton)
 1974 The Right Hon. Lord Tweedsmuir, C.B.E., C.D., LL.D

1975	Allan Frazer, W.S.
1976	Ian Grimble, B.A., Ph.D., FR.Hist.Soc.
1977	The Right Hon. Lord Scarman, O.B.E., LL.D.
1978	Magnus Magnusson, D.Univ.
1979	Lord Ballantrae, K.T. Professor David Daiches presided and delivered the address
1980	W. E. K. Anderson, M.A., D.Litt., FR.S.E.
1981	Professor R. J. Adam, M.A., FR.Hist.Soc.
1982	Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, K.T. (9th Duke)
1983	Lady Antonia Fraser
1984	The Right Hon. Lord Grimond
1985	The Right Hon. Lord Swann
1986	Dr. T. L. Johnston, M.A., Ph.D., D.L., FR.S.A., C.B.I.M.
1987–88	Dr. David Hewitt, M.A., Ph.D. (now Professor)
1989	Allan Massie, B.A., FR.S.L.
1990	Professor Edwin Morgan, O.B.E., M.A., D.Litt.
1991	Mrs. Dorothy Dunnett, O.B.E. (later Lady)
1992	The Right Hon. Malcolm Rifkind, P.C., Q.C., M.P.
1993	The Right Hon. Lord Mackay of Clashfern
1994	Dr. Archie Turnbull, M.A., D.Litt., FR.S.E.
1995	Paul H. Scott, C.M.G., M.A., M.Litt.
1996	Professor Neil MacCormick
1997	Mrs. Patricia Maxwell-Scott, O.B.E.
1998	Sir John Thomson
1999	Tom Fleming, C.V.O., O.B.E.
2000	Fraser Elgin, C.A.
2001	The Right Hon. Sir David Edward, KCMG QC LLD DUniv Drhc FRSE
2002	Professor Jane Millgate
2003	Dame Jean Maxwell-Scott, DCVO (Professor Ian Campbell presided and delivered the address)
2004	Tam Dalyell, M.P.
2005	James Robertson
2006	Professor Ian Campbell, M.A., Ph.D.
2007	A. N. Wilson
2008	Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, KBE (10th Duke)
2009	Dr Iain Gordon Brown, FRSE, FSA
2010	The Right Hon. Lord Sanderson of Bowden, DL

Constitution & Rules of

The Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club

- NAME.** The name of the Club shall be "THE EDINBURGH SIR WALTER SCOTT CLUB"
 - OBJECT.** The object of the Club is to advance the education of the public concerning the life and works of Sir Walter Scott to such extent and by such methods as shall be determined to be appropriate from time to time by the Council of the Club.
 - MEMBERSHIP.** Membership shall be open to any individual or organisation. Council shall have the right for sufficient reason to terminate the membership of any individual or organisation, but the individual or organisation shall have the right to be heard by Council before a final decision is made.
 - HONORARY MEMBERSHIP.** Honorary members, who shall not be liable to pay any subscription, but be entitled to all the privileges of membership, may be elected by the Council of the Club; after his/her term in office the President shall automatically become an Honorary Member.
 - COUNCIL.** A President and up to fifteen members, in addition to the *ex-officio* members under-mentioned, shall be appointed annually at the Annual General Meeting to carry on the general business of the Club, including arrangements for the Annual General Meeting, Five members of Council shall form a quorum. Council may appoint sub-committees of its members for conducting such work as may be deemed advisable. Council shall have power to co-opt.
 - OFFICIALS.** A Chairman, an Honorary Secretary and an Honorary Treasurer shall be appointed annually by the Council; they shall be *ex-officio* members of the Council and all Committees. The Chairman shall hold office for a term of three years; he/she shall be eligible for re-election but shall not hold office for more than two consecutive terms.
 - GENERAL MEETINGS.** An Annual General Meeting of the Club shall be held in every year. At least fourteen days' notice shall be given to members of the date and time of the Annual General Meeting and of any other General Meeting summoned by Council. At every General Meeting every member of the Club shall be entitled to be present and to have one vote on each question raised.
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8. **SUBSCRIPTIONS.** Subscriptions shall be as follows:

Annual Membership	£ 15
Joint Annual Membership	£ 18
Life Membership	£120
Joint Life Membership	£150
Corporate Membership	£400

Subscriptions shall be payable on admission, and the annual subscription thereafter by 30th June in each year. Council shall have the power to remove from membership any member whose subscription shall fall two years in arrears.

9. **ACCOUNTS.** The financial year of the Club shall end on December 31st. The Honorary Treasurer shall keep such proper records of account as shall enable him to present at every Annual General Meeting of the Club an accurate Report and Statement of the Finances of the Club; the Statement of Finances shall have been confirmed by a member of the Club appointed by Council.

10. **PROPERTY.** Property of the Club, of whatever kind, may be applied only for purposes of a charitable nature. It may be distributed only as specified in Rule 12 infra or in similar circumstances.

11. **ALTERATION OF RULES.** All or any of the foregoing Rules may be altered, and any new Rules may be added, at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting, by a majority of members present. Any motion for alteration or addition to the Rules of the Club shall be given notice of to the Honorary Secretary at least one month before the date of the meeting, accompanied by the names of the proposer and seconder. Such motions shall be included in the notice calling the meeting.

12. **DISSOLUTION.** Should Council by a two-thirds majority decide at any time that it is necessary or desirable to dissolve the Club, it shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club, for which not less than fourteen days' notice be given, stating the terms of the proposal. If such a decision shall be carried by a majority comprising two-thirds or more of members present and voting, the Council shall have power to dissolve the Club and to dispose of any assets held by or on behalf of the Club and remaining after satisfaction of any proper liabilities, to such other charitable organisation or organisations with objects similar to that of the Club, as Council shall determine.

Application for Membership

Complete the form below or join online by visiting www.walterscottclub.org.uk

To the Hon. Treasurer:

Mr. Lee Simpson
9 Burnbank Grove
Straiton
Loanhead EH20 9NX
Tel: (0131) 448 1976
e-mail: lee@walterscottclub.org.uk

I wish to join the Edinburgh Sir Walter Scott Club.

Please send me a Standing Order form:
or

I have pleasure in enclosing herewith remittance for £..... in payment as follows:

- Annual Membership £ 15.00
- Joint Husband and Wife £ 18.00
- Life Membership £120.00
- Joint Life Membership £150.00
- Corporate Membership £400.00

Tick as appropriate

Name

Address

..... Post Code

Email Tel No.....

I understand that this information will be held on the club computer and will not be passed on to any other organisation.

Signature Date

John Loska, to whom the editors are indebted for initiating the donations which saved the Bulletin from extinction, is the proprietor of:

Colin Page Antiquarian Books (ABA)
36 Duke Street
BRIGHTON
East Sussex BN1 1AG
Tel. (01273) 32 59 54

The Editors are most happy to recommend his firm to members seeking advice on books of all kinds.