



## 2008 Newsletter

September 2007

In 2008, it will be 500 years since the first book was printed in Scotland. The project to celebrate this anniversary is promoted by the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Printing Archival Trust and the Scottish Print Employers' Federation and endorsed by the Scottish Government. A range of local events and initiatives across Scotland throughout the year is planned. The aim of the celebration is to allow the public to see everything from the first printed Chepman and Myllar book to a modern day printing press. The project is supported by other organisations, including local museums and libraries throughout Scotland, the National Museums of Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland, the National Archives of Scotland and several universities. A full list can be found on the website.

The first printed book with a definite publication date in Scotland was John Lydgate's poem, 'The Complaint of the Black Knight', printed on 4 April on a printing press in Edinburgh's Cowgate by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar. The only known copy is held in the National Library of Scotland and will form the centrepiece of a major exhibition at the National Library in the summer of 2008. The 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first dated item printed in Scotland, 4 April, will be marked by a dinner in the splendid surroundings of the Playfair Library of the University of Edinburgh, as well as by a media event at the National Library of Scotland earlier in the day. A multi-volume 'History of the book in Scotland', is to be published by Edinburgh University Press,

while a history of the Scottish Print Employers' Federation is also in progress.

According to Brian Hillyard, Rare Books Collections Manager at NLS: '500 years of printing is a very significant occasion for the nation to celebrate, and we hope that a great many people will take part, whether by arranging or helping with an event or exhibition or by simply attending.' Patrick Mark, Chairman of the Scottish Print Archival Trust, said: 'We want to motivate and encourage people around the country to recognise the opportunity that this anniversary represents and think about how they might mark it.'

Suggestions include:

- 'Printing trails' in major printing centres
- Commemorative plaques relating to the printing trade
- Educational activities and resources
- Open days by Scottish printing companies
- Printing workshops
- Conferences and lectures
- Commemorative books and specialist articles

### **Appointment of Programme Manager**

As the planning of events to mark the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first dated book to be printed in Scotland approaches, a Programme Manager has now been appointed to co-ordinate the activities and publicity for events to mark 2008.

Helen Williams is based at the offices of the Scottish Print Employers' Federation. If you have any news or suggestions relating to the celebration of Scotland's print culture over the past 500 years, please contact her: details are given below.

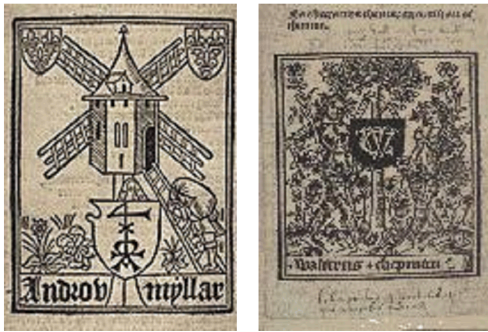
A brochure listing events and activities taking place throughout Scotland to mark the anniversary is to be produced. News of events and links to other websites can be found on the project website, and there will be further issues of this newsletter.

[www.500yearsofprinting.org](http://www.500yearsofprinting.org)

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## The first licence for printing in Scotland



On 15 September 1507 King James IV of Scotland issued the first licence for printing in Scotland. It was granted to Walter Chepman, an Edinburgh merchant, and his business partner, a bookseller named Androw Myllar. The original royal licence is to be put on show on Friday 14 September 2007 at The National Archives of Scotland: the document is in the Register of the Privy Seal, part of Scotland's national records.

The book for which the licence was granted was the more serious 'Aberdeen Breviary', the service book containing Scottish practices and lives of local saints, ('effter our awin scottis use, and with legendis of Scottis sanctis', in the words of the licence). It is called after its compiler, William Elphinstone, Bishop of Aberdeen (1431-1514).

Other works are known collectively as the 'Chepman & Myllar Prints' originally produced, as far as can be told, as separate items and are all small enough to be held in the hand. Chepman and Myllar also printed at least one book in folio format, i.e. Blind Harry's *Wallace* [1508?], which only survives in fragments. The shortest of the books, Dunbar's poem on the arrival of Lord Bernard Stewart in Scotland, is only eight pages long, while the longest, *Golagros and Gawane*, comprises 48 pages. The booklets contain works by two of Scotland's most important medieval poets, Robert Henryson and William Dunbar, although Henryson is not identified as an author.

[www.nls.uk/firstscottishbooks/index.html](http://www.nls.uk/firstscottishbooks/index.html)

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## Bible publishing exhibition at Napier

As part of the celebrations of the first five hundred years of the printed word in Scotland, there is to be an exhibition celebrating the significant role that the Bible played in the development of the Scottish printing and publishing industries in the library at Napier University's Merchiston Campus. *Bound for glory: 500 years of the Bible as book in society*, covers the relationship between the changing material form of the Bible as book and its differing functions over time.

The market for printed books for the century after Gutenberg's Bible c. 1455 was limited by the number of literate readers, the interests of those readers, chiefly religion, law and medicine, and the disposable income possessed by individuals and institutions such as churches. However, the production of religious works, including missals, breviaries and Bibles, would have been the main employment of the early printers.

The exhibition does not offer or reflect any particular view of the Bible other than as a book, and tells the historical narrative of the Bible as book in Scotland through the range of exhibits drawn from the wider Edward Clark Collection of rare books held at Napier University. Other events associated with the exhibition are a programme of educational activities related to the 5-14 curriculum, and a series of 8 lectures, which will be collected and published by the St Andrews' Press.

The exhibition will run from 14 October 2007 to 14 December 2007.

**2008 – 500 years of printing in Scotland**

[www.500yearsofprinting.org](http://www.500yearsofprinting.org)



Scottish Print



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