

# Footnotes

News from The Library of Innerpeffray

Winter 2023



The Library of Innerpeffray

## Opening Lines

We've had a busy autumn with our *Festival of Reading* and *Doors Open Days* bringing over 250 people to the Library over the two weekends. **Wild Words** was the theme of the Innerpeffray Festival of Reading this year and a huge thank you to the authors who spoke and audience who came to hear them. Read a review of the event on page 2 in an extract from the blog by Isla Macfarlane, PhD candidate.



You will see this copy of Footnotes is larger than usual—we are extending the newsletter to bring you more features and articles about the Library and its collections, we hope you enjoy it!

**As I write we are just about close the Library's doors for the winter, but we will** be very busy over the next four months. As well as housekeeping to care for the collection such as dusting the books, we will be launching the new catalogue, training new volunteers and recruiting for new governors. There are also several events coming up: shopping at the Festive Fayre, a make a Christmas Wreath workshop, the return of Nunkie Theatre with *Gravest Fears* and of course, the Friends present Carols from Innerpeffray in December.

In the new year we look forward to putting together a new exhibition for the 2024 season and a new programme of talks, concerts, performances and workshops.

Lara Haggerty, Keeper of Books

*The Library of* **Innerpeffray** 

# Wild Words and Spooky Happenstance—A Festival Diary

## WILD WORDS!

A Festival of Reading

at the Library of Innerpeffray, by Crieff



From Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2023, Innerpeffray Library hosted its third annual **Festival of Reading**, celebrating the theme of **Wild Words**. Authors, poets, storytellers, musicians, artists, and readers met in and around the historic location of Scotland's first free, public lending library.

On Thursday evening, the Festival of Reading kicked off with a new production by the **Crieff Drama Group**, featuring traditional Scots and Gaelic songs performed by Innerpeffray's very own Library Assistant Naomi Harvey. Hosted by Strathearn Arts in Crieff, **Heroic Strife Famed Afar** treated the audience to a new perspective on the 1745 Jacobite Uprising, the Battle of Culloden, and its aftermath. The performance included dramatic reading of archival material put together by the late Tony Murray of Dollerie House in a collection of his ancestor's letters entitled, 'A Young Man's Path to Culloden'. The show was entertaining and illuminating, and Naomi's singing was beautiful.

On Friday afternoon, library volunteer and expert craftsperson Gillean Ford hosted **The Art of the Book: Printing from Nature**, a hands-on workshop inspired by the natural world and the area surrounding Innerpeffray. Participants made beautiful prints using all sorts of local flora, including seed heads, leaves, firs, and moss.

A Festival of Reading favourite, Perthshire poet Jim C. Mackintosh hosted a sold-out spectacular on Friday evening. Joined by violinist Karys Watt, guitarist Dave Macfarlane, poet Julie McNeill and legendary writer and storyteller Dolina MacLennan, the library rang with music and laughter throughout the night. An absolute highlight was the unexpected audience participation, which had various sections of the audience loudly impersonating lambs and calves separated from their families – all in the name of attracting the attention of an invading mythical beast set on destroying the Scots Pines of Perthshire. Say it with me now: it had the head of a **woman**, the body of a **whale**, and the wings of an **eagle**!

Jim also treated audience members to a special gift: a handwritten piece of his poetry, with everyone getting a unique extract (some previously unpublished!). In addition to leaving the night with unforgettable stories and wild words, we also took home love, peace and poetry.

Over the weekend, Innerpeffray was visited by four acclaimed writers based in Scotland. Picture book author and illustrator **Natalie Russell** led a group of children in an arts and crafts workshop inspired by **Hamish the Highland Cow**, and journalist, author and poet **Merryn Glover** told us what Scotland means to her and discussed her latest book, **The Hidden Fires: A Cairngorms Journey with Nan Shepherd**. **Keith Broomfield** presented some amazing photos of the wildlife and locations that have inspired him to write books including **A Scottish Wildlife Odyssey**. **Fiona Valpy** took us on a journey throughout the inspired settings of her bestselling works of fiction, including her upcoming novel **The Sky Beneath Us** – the title of which was revealed as an Innerpeffray exclusive!

On Sunday afternoon, the 2023 Festival of Reading came to a close with **Pop-up Poetry by the River**, hosted by local poet Jennie Turnbull in Innerpeffray's stone storytelling circle. Listeners and readers came together in this very special location to hear poems on the theme of **Wild Words**. Thank you to Lesley Buchan Donald, Alastair Donald, Tom Langlands, Ian Ledward and Karen Macfarlane for reading their poems – it is a brave thing to stand up and read your own writing to a group of strangers and we really appreciate the poets sharing their words with us.

The 2023 Festival of Reading was filled with serendipity – a reminder of what a special place the Library of Innerpeffray is. Our poetry circle was almost put off by a lightning storm but instead, the first drops of rain fell just as we said our goodbyes; the threat of thunder in the air gave an appropriate atmosphere to the proceedings. On Saturday, we heard the story of how Gillean Ford picked up a novel by chance one day in the Innerpeffray second-hand book stall and decided to get in touch with the author to share how much she loved it – leading to Fiona Valpy coming to talk at the Festival.

Also during the week, two separate groups visited the library looking for names in our archive of historical visitors' books. We were able to successfully find their own signatures or those of their families and Innerpeffray played host to an unexpected reunion between old neighbours who had not seen each other for twenty years. You would be surprised by how often this kind of spooky happenstance occurs in the library! As Governor Steph Haxton reminded us on Friday evening, Innerpeffray is a place where words matter and magic is created. To all who read, sang, made art, and came along to listen and enjoy, thank you for being a part of the 2023 Festival of Reading.

## Innerpeffray Gifts

Available at our Festive Fayre and from the website shop we are delighted to have a selection of new, unique items in our gift shop. The perfect gift for a booklover, purchases also support the Library.



500 piece Jigsaw featuring photograph of the Reading Room £20

**Organic cotton Pencil Case** with reproduction of the Hedgehog woodcut from Topsell's Four Footed Beasts (1607) £8

**Our new organic cotton canvas bag** is printed with the title page from **The Gardner's Kalendar** (1683) £12

Bone china mugs with 18th century quotes on tea—**'Happiest of Herbs'** from a poem by **Al-lan Ramsay** or **'Pernicious to Health'** from the **Essay on Tea** £12 or two for £20

## Supporting the Library - a great gift

### Patrons Package

£120

Do you know someone who would like to be the beating heart of the Library?

A Patrons package supports the Library for a year, includes free entry to the Library, and special Patrons event tickets.

You can buy a Patrons package that can be personalised, and contains: a certificate, card, guidebook and entry ticket for 2024.

## Befriend our Books

£25—£100

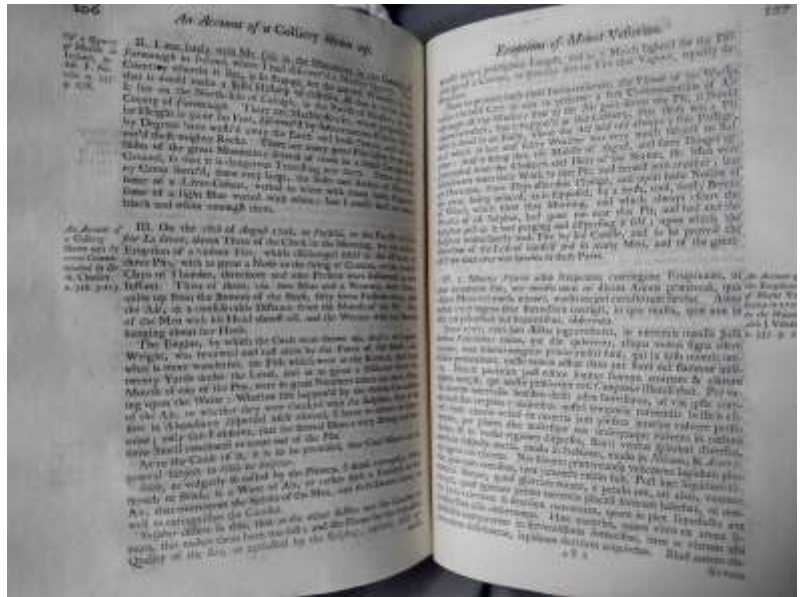
The Library's Befriend our Books scheme enables you to make a direct donation to help care for the books at Innerpeffray. Some needs are more noticeable like book repairs and others are invisible like temperature and humidity control. Your donation helps keep the books in the Library available to everyone, now and for the future, continuing the amazing story of the Library for generations to come.

A choice of design of certificate is available and a range of prices from £25 to £100. Packs contain a greeting card for your own message.



# Blasts from the Past

Innerpeffray may have been conceived as a lending library all those centuries ago by David Drummond, third Lord Madertie, but this purpose has expanded over the intervening years to the wonderful resource we have today. One of the more recent uses is as a reference library, and it is thanks to this that this blog-post was conceived. As well as my role as a volunteer guide at the Library, I am a Process Safety Engineer and part of this job entails raising awareness of previous industrial incidents to identify where things went wrong and how we in the industry can reduce the likelihood of similar events happening in the future. Typically, these hark back to events from, at most, thirty or forty years ago – easily within living memory. For a change, however, I decided to use the Library to see if there were records of industrial accidents going back not just decades, but centuries. My search was successful...



The first incident I came across was an account of a colliery explosion by Dr. Arthur Charlett, who was the Master of University College, Oxford, from 1692 to 1722. This was included within the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society, the oldest science journal in the world. The account describes an incident at Fatfield Colliery, which is situated just to the south of Newcastle on the River Wear. On 18<sup>th</sup> August 1708, at around 3am, there was, to quote Dr. Charlett, “The sudden Eruption of a violent Fire”. As you can see from the text, he goes into great and vivid detail of the impact of the colliery explosion and the extents of the blast damage. He goes on to describe some of the different dangerous gases that might be encountered whilst mining – the “Stith” and the “Sulphur” – and the effects of each. For modern day readers, the “stith” is an asphyxiant and would most likely consist of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide and the “Sulphur” refers to methane with some residual sulphur components to give the smell. Given the explosion, it is more likely that the build-up in this case was the “Sulphur” – if you think of damage caused by gas explosions in people’s homes today, it is easy to understand the deadly impact of a build-up of methane.

What was particularly fascinating for me from a professional viewpoint is that he does not just describe the event and the background, but goes on to actually theorise the sequence of events that led to the issue. The second page of the account describes the workings of the mine. The production of “Stith” and “Sulphur” are pretty much unavoidable when mining, certainly in 1708, and, as such, methods have to be found to keep the concentration of these gases at acceptable levels. Today, mines use complicated ventilation systems with fans to ensure that they keep levels down, but in 1708, they were solely reliant on good natural airflow – “a free Communication of Air”, as Dr. Charlett put it. Where this was hard to achieve, by some combination of the mine’s layout and the still atmospheric conditions, workers were removed from the danger zone; a decision that I as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Process Safety Engineer very much applaud! Whilst the danger zone was unmanned, however, the noxious and explosive gases were still very much being released. As such, when the wind picked up again, the flammable “Sulphur” was then pushed through the mine until it reached the candle of an Overman and this provided sufficient energy to ignite the flammable cloud, which, through the confinement of the mine’s tunnels, then exploded.

It would be lovely to say that the 69 people who lost their lives that August morning were the last to suffer from a colliery explosion of this kind. Sadly, there were a further three explosions at the same colliery in the next 120 years. Few, if any, changes were made on the back of this incident – the workforce being considered very much expendable and the hazards an unavoidable part of the very profitable mining industry. It took over 100 years for improvements to be made to lighting in mines, with various safety lamps being developed after the Felling Colliery disaster in 1812, the most notable being that of Sir Humphrey Davy. (Davy Lamp pictured right, public domain.)



To read more about my discoveries, including a notable Italian case and a connection to Benjamin Franklin, you can visit the Innerpeffray blog. <https://innerpeffraylibrary.co.uk/blasts-from-the-past/>

# What's On - Autumn Events Programme 2023



Fri 10th and Sat 11th November 10am - 4pm each day

**Innerpeffray Festive Fayre** A festive array of unique gifts, local crafts, food and special books on sale in the Schoolroom. Plentiful parking, toilets, free entry!

Friday 17th November at 2.30pm

## **Make A Christmas Woodland Wreath**

Join Gwyneth Hardy for a fun afternoon making your own beautiful Christmas wreath (or two). All materials and refreshments provided. Tickets £30. See the website for more details.

Tuesday 21st November at 7pm

## **Gravest Fears from Nunkie Theatre**

Nunkie Theatre returns for macabre storytelling for the dark winter nights. Warning: contains moments of pleasing terror, Suitable for ages 13 years +  
In the schoolroom Tickets £15

Sat 2nd December at 3pm

## **Carols from Innerpeffray: In the Library**

Join us for a special gathering in the cosy warmth of the library; readings and songs to mark the festive season. Tickets £10 Limited numbers available, please book early.

Sun 3rd December 3pm

## **Carols from Innerpeffray in the Chapel**

The traditional start to all things festive. Wrap up warm for a special collection of readings and songs in the Chapel. Tickets £10

Tickets and more details for all events available on the website. Book online at <https://innerpeffray-library.arttickets.org.uk/> or call 01764 652819 for more information or to reserve tickets.