

Footnotes

News from The Library of Innerpeffray

June 2025



The Library of Innerpeffray

A Scottish Charity SC013843

Opening Lines

Welcome to our latest update from Scotland's first free, public lending library. I'm delighted to bring you an exciting and varied programme of events for the rest of the year including a preview of our Festival, new exclusive items in the Library shop and stories from the collection.

We had a lovely sunny Spring, and we have been enjoying the peaceful surroundings of Innerpeffray—hopefully the Summer has more days to be spent outside. Our heritage trail path has been resurfaced, with thanks to John and Stuart from Thompson Landscapes for doing all the hard work, and to Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust for arranging it.

I'm also pleased to announce a new event for the summer, which we hope will be a regular date on the calendar: a Summer Fayre. On Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd August, from 10am—4pm the Schoolroom will play host to carefully curated artists and crafters alongside our own exclusive shop, a second-hand book stall and the Friends will be running a teddy-bear tombola! All this plus refreshments. Entry is free, and the Library will be open for visits as usual: we hope you can join us.

Best wishes

Lara

Midsummer Madness, Magic and Mayhem!

A Midsummer Night's Dream from Three Inch Fools

A few tickets still left for the 10th anniversary tour of the irrepressible Three Inch Fools. Their Shakespearean troupe, touring the bard's most iconic comedy, is coming to Innerpeffray on Thursday 10th July. Come join us deep in the forest for midsummer madness, magic and mayhem.

Call us or [book online](#).



Did Mary, Queen of Scots visit Innerpeffray?

The latest Innerpeffray blog is now available, looking at an intriguing possibility that Mary Queen of Scots may have visited Innerpeffray at a particularly key time within her turbulent reign. One reference states she stayed the night at Innerpeffray Castle on the 2nd June 1565, with James Drummond of Innerpeffray her host. Other references show a different itinerary, though the same date for a visit still occurs, however it was known that the '*royal clerks were not always immaculate in their dates*'. One reference suggests it was to Innerpeffray Abbey. Should it have stated Castle rather than Abbey, or was it a reference to Innerpeffray Chapel or Inchaffray Abbey?



A portrait of Mary in John Leslie's *De Gestis Scotorum*, 1579

27 May 1565 Stirling Castle to Perth. 28th to Stirling. There 30 May-1 June. 2nd to Innerpeffray Castle (*Ibid.*).
3 June 1565 Innerpeffray Castle to Perth. There to 9th (*Ibid.*).
10-16 June 1565 Perth (*Ibid.*).



Henry, Lord Darnley

Artist Unknown, Title: Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, 1545 - 1567. Consort of Mary, Queen of Scots, Date: About 1564, 'National Galleries of Scotland' <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/2256>

The visit to Innerpeffray falls between meeting Lord Darnley in February 1565 and then marrying him in July 1565. He was a Catholic and was descended from both James II of Scotland and Henry VII of England.

When Mary met him for the first time she thought him '*the lustiest and best proportioned lang (tall) man she had seen*'. Mary subsequently married him at Holyrood and proclaimed him King of Scots without the consent of Parliament.

As a result of opposition to the marriage, Mary travelled across Perthshire numerous times between February and July 1565 to gather support. It was quite likely Darnley was with Mary on these journeys, with the intriguing possibility that he was with her at Innerpeffray, meeting Lord Drummond and key members of his family and clan on the 2nd June to confirm their continued backing. If she had visited, then it would be highly likely she, Darnley and her retinue would have passed the site of the future Innerpeffray Library, up the Roman cutting below the Library and maybe even entered the chapel.

DG

Read more at: <https://innerpeffraylibrary.co.uk/did-mary-queen-of-scots-visit-innerpeffray/>



Mary shown with a young James VI and his tutor George Buchanan with the caption 'Instability'

Arsenic and Old Books?

Book Covers in Emerald Green

The Library took part recently in a pilot project run by a team at the University of St Andrews who are developing a simple testing process to help libraries identify toxic elements in book covers from the 19th century, specifically, Emerald Green or copper acetoarsenite. Their work has found that bookbindings containing Emerald Green have a distinctive pattern in the visible part of the spectrum that is distinguishable from other green pigments.

Innerpeffray has approximately 900 books from the 19th century but this colourant was used most commonly between 1830 – 1860, reducing the potential field to just over 200. During the visit the team tested 32 books with three variations of spectroscopy and flagged eight out of these for further testing. Three books were found to be consistent with Emerald Green: that's just 0.3% of the relevant part of the Innerpeffray collection.

The books containing arsenic in the covers have been placed in protective wrappers and now have warnings about how to handle them. You'd have to lick a lot of books to cause any serious effects, however, small amounts can still make you ill, so good practice means we should take sensible precautions: the books are now in Melinex (an archival acid free polyester film) envelopes and we will now handle these books with nitrile gloves and wash hands afterwards.

Other pigments used in this period may include other toxic metals such as chromium and lead, giving bright yellow, orange and red covers as well as other shades of green, but these metals do not transfer in the same way that arsenic does, and therefore do not require the same precautionary handling.

The Library would like to thank Pilar Gil, Erica Kotze, Morgan and Eddie for bringing the project to Innerpeffray.

The three books identified are top to bottom:

Catechism, 1703 – this rare pamphlet is bound in a 19th century cover.

Forget Me Not, Frederic Shoberl, 1831

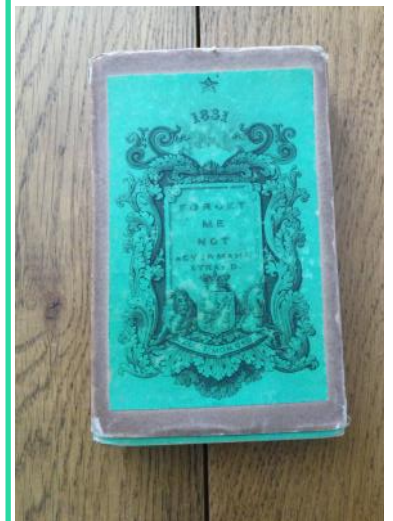
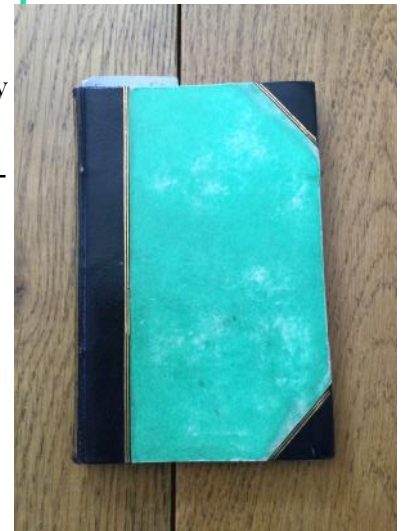
Lives of the Successors of Mahomet, Washington Irving, 1850

You can read more in the following articles:

BBC News feature [If books could kill: The poison legacy lurking in libraries - BBC News](#)

University of Delaware Poison Book Project <https://sites.udel.edu/poisonbookproject/>

<https://www.antiquesandthearts.com/qa-melissa-tedone/>



What's New at Innerpeffray

Two major exhibitions are to feature Innerpeffray in 2025:

Macbeth: an Exhibition is at Perth Museum from now until 31st August, exploring the world of the real king and Shakespeare's play. We were delighted to lend six of the books in our collection to the Museum, including Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of Scotland, England and Ireland* (1577), Reginald Scot's *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (1665) and *The Workes of King James VI & I*, (1616).

<https://perthmuseum.co.uk/inside-the-museum/macbeth/>

Dear Library is The National Library of Scotland's centenary celebration of libraries. Innerpeffray was delighted to be asked to be a part of this showcase that champions the value of reading and libraries to people's lives. Now open at George IV Bridge in Edinburgh, the exhibition is free to visit.

<https://www.nls.uk/whats-on/dear-library/>

New in the Shop

We've now a lovely new selection of postcards featuring the serene Innerpeffray landscape and beautiful images from Familiar Garden



Flowers (1877). And the Four-footed Beasts have found their way onto mugs! Look out for them at Fayre or online shop.

Browse Our Books

[The Innerpeffray Catalogue is online now.](#)

Huge thanks to the team who helped with getting the catalogue online, especially Stephen Rawles, Lewis at Soutron and Adrianne Polcyn.

If you missed the launch you can watch our launch video on the website. Our thanks go to author Sir Alexander McCall Smith and Bodley's Librarian Richard Ovenden for their messages of support.

Good Again?

A Cycling Tour with Sarah Small and her Viola de Gamba

We were delighted to host this intimate concert at the end of June featuring a range of music from composers of the 21st to 16th century.

Sarah Small arrived on her bicycle to share her music and commitment to sustainable travel and rural music performances.

The White Rose of Gask

We were delighted to have the Friends bring Freeland Barbour and Gerda Stevenson (pictured below with Joan Taylor, Convenor of the Friends) who performed songs and poems of Carolina Lady Nairne in the Chapel at the start of June.



What's On at Innerpeffray

Thurs 10th July, 7pm	The Three Inch Fools present A Midsummer Night's Dream. They're back again! In their 10th anniversary year, the Fools present an outdoor performance of an audience favourite in the grounds of the Library. Tickets available here .
Fri 1st & Sat 2nd August 10am – 4pm each day	Summer Fayre at Innerpeffray. Come along and browse in our Summer Fayre in the Schoolroom! Unique gifts from the Library, local artists and crafts, a wide selection of second-hand books, a Teddy Bear Tombola and refreshments. Free entry.
Innerpeffray Festival of Reading Fri 5th—Sun 7th Sept Various times Tickets available soon!	Write Away: unleash your creativity in a Poetry Workshop with Jennie Turnbull (adults session/children's session) Things Found in Books: A musical evening with Yvonne Lyon and Boo Herwerdine Woven in stems of Ink, a talk with author Lucy MacRae Columba's Bones: Writing the story of a Viking in Iona with David Greig Introduction to making Books: Bookbinding Workshop with Marion Archibald
Wed 8th October 7pm	Friends of Innerpeffray Library present: The Ted Powell Memorial Lecture with speaker Hon. Lord Duthie
Fri 7th & Sat 8th November 10am—4pm	Festive Fayre: join us for a great wee Fayre featuring local artists and craftspeople, Innerpeffray exclusive gifts and books to sort all your gifts for the Festive Season.
Wed 19th November	Nunkie Theatre: Not Truly Dead Ghost stories by M R James, Performed by R M Lloyd Parry <i>"His eyes were deep-sunk. And over them, from the brows to the cheek-bone, hung cobwebs. Thick, grey cobwebs..."</i> Three tales of the restless dead, by the master of the English ghost story.
November, Date to be confirmed	Wreath making Workshop with Gwyneth Hardy
Sat 6th December at 3pm Sun 7th December at 3pm	Carols at Innerpeffray