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J.T.D. Hall

## Hugh MacDiarmid, Author and Publisher



In his volume of autobiography, *Lucky Poet*, Hugh MacDiarmid declared that at an early age he had decided that his life's work would not follow a conventional pattern and would exist outside the scope of ordinary professional activities:

I was very early determined that I would not 'work for money', and that whatever I might have to do to earn my living, I would never devote more of my time and my energies to remunerative work than I did to voluntary and gainless activities, and *actes gratuits*, in Gide's phrase.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising that his chosen field was literature. In the same volume, MacDiarmid claimed that a "literary strain" had been struggling to the fore over several generations on both sides of the family. If his home background was thus conducive to literature, he also found ample encouragement in the resources of the local library in Langholm which were available to him, and which he consumed with an omnivorous appetite.<sup>2</sup> Early writings were occasionally rewarded by prizes in literary competitions, or accorded the ultimate accolade of publication.<sup>3</sup> MacDiarmid's teachers at Broughton School were aware of his great talents, and

the headmaster prophesied great things for the future if it was not spoiled by his own tempestuous nature:

So he told my father—told him of the terrible vein of recklessness in me, and the fact that life was likely to be very hard on one who was so utterly unamenable to discipline of any kind, not in any overt acts of challenge or defiance, but behind his deceptively quiet exterior, inside himself—in the innermost recesses of his nature.<sup>4</sup>

This reckless nature is the key to the early part of MacDiarmid's career as author and publisher, for it produced a never ending stream of writings and fuelled the fighting spirit in the man, whenever setbacks of one sort and another befell him. Hard work and success are counterbalanced by rejection and failure, but are always handled on the poet's own terms.

Little first-hand evidence now remains of MacDiarmid's early work, and information on this depends on surviving correspondence which makes mention of it. One of the earliest letters in the correspondence with MacDiarmid's former teacher at Broughton School, George Ogilvie, dating from October 1911, mentions "piles of stuff in chaos" as well as projected articles and a booklet on theology.<sup>5</sup> This was perhaps later incorporated into MacDiarmid's *Scots Church Essays* which he described in some detail in a letter to Ogilvie written "Somewhere in Macedonia" in August 1916, listing chapters as diverse as "The calibre of modern Scottish priests" and "John Knox and Mrs 'General' Drummond: an imaginary interview."<sup>6</sup> These and other projects, such as one act plays, an autobiographical novel, essays and poems, in fact came to nothing.<sup>7</sup> MacDiarmid had a multitude of disparate ideas swimming round in his imagination and he found great difficulty in marshalling them into some sort of order:

Never a day but what I have said, 'Tomorrow I will write the Fine Thing—then I will write to him again'. But the tomorrow has never come. I have written and written and great are the piles of my MSS—but they have never taken the one shape I keep on hunting for. Someday yet perhaps—!<sup>8</sup>

War service was an added complication which hindered the

smooth progression of MacDiarmid's career as a writer. Yet it was to provide the inspiration for an early collection of poems entitled *A Voice from Macedonia*. This collection, mostly written quickly over a period of just three days, was intended for the Soldier Poets series issued by Erskine MacDonald Ltd.<sup>9</sup> The firm, known as "the unofficial publisher in general to the poets of the British Army" was one of the more enterprising of the younger publishers, and was also responsible for the Little Books of Georgian Verse series featuring writers of the neo-Georgian era. It was perhaps not surprising that MacDiarmid should consider this particular publisher, as Erskine MacDonald had included in his volume *More Songs by the Fighting Men (Soldier Poets Second Series)* (London, 1917) several poems by Roderick Watson Kerr, who had been at Broughton School with MacDiarmid and had succeeded him as editor of *The Broughton Magazine*. MacDiarmid felt that his volume was justified by the lack of work by men from Salonika, the Soldier Poets series being mostly representative of the Western Front. John Buchan read the poems at this time and thought highly of them,<sup>10</sup> but when Erskine MacDonald, having provisionally accepted the volume, then declared that they were unable to publish for some time, MacDiarmid withdrew the manuscript and sought Buchan's assistance.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, he could only promise to help after the war, which meant that the poems would no longer be topical. MacDiarmid may have sent the manuscript to various publishers—he certainly expected that his wife Peggy would have sent it to John Lane<sup>12</sup>—but notwithstanding these efforts, the volume was not published and all that remains of it are a few uncollected poems.<sup>13</sup>

At much the same time MacDiarmid was working on other projects inspired by his experiences abroad during the war. Acquaintance with Leon Pavey, a frequent contributor to *The Guardian* and other journals, led to a collaborative venture entitled *Marseilles, Moods & Memories* in which Pavey had the larger share.<sup>14</sup> A holiday in the Pyrennees in the summer of 1919 was the inspiration of a further collaboration with Pavey entitled *The Road to Spain*, which MacDiarmid described as "partly travel, partly political, partly literary,"<sup>15</sup> and though submitted for publication, this work never appeared.<sup>16</sup> At much the same time he completed *In the Tents of Time*, "a series of post-war essays, psychological in interest and concerned principally with

the reactions to war experience of the imaging and expressing faculties."<sup>17</sup> This included, alongside MacDiarmid's own work, contributions by Joseph Lee, L.A.Pavey and R.W.Kerr, together with an introduction by John Buchan, and although T.N.Foulis seems to have promised to undertake its publication, this, too, came to nothing. Yet another book completed but not published was *The Soviet State*, which gave an account of the political situation in Russia and its historical background, and MacDiarmid hoped that the manuscript had been submitted by his wife Peggy to various publishers—he mentions P.S.King, Headley Brothers or Fifeild—during his absence abroad.<sup>18</sup>

Of MacDiarmid's many early projects, the first to be fulfilled was his anthology of poetry by Scottish writers, *Northern Numbers*, which was published in 1920. With a variety of books either half written or no further advanced than undeveloped ideas, and others completed and following the rounds of publishers, MacDiarmid had finally managed to interest the Edinburgh firm of T.N.Foulis in the idea of a selection of modern Scottish verse by contemporary writers. The nature of the anthology and its purpose were adumbrated in a short Foreword penned by MacDiarmid:

This collection does not pretend to be in any sense an anthology of contemporary Scottish poetry. It merely consists of representative selections (chosen by the contributors themselves) from the—mainly current—work of certain Scottish poets of to-day—and to-morrow!<sup>19</sup>

As most of the contributors were friends and acquaintances, the volume was not a true anthology, more a group publication on the lines of the Georgian Poetry series issued by Harold Monro from his Poetry Bookshop. Like this series, *Northern Numbers* was to be the first volume of several, all with the aim of promoting contemporary Scottish literature.

MacDiarmid freely admitted in a letter to George Ogilvie that the inception of the idea came from his former teacher and present mentor.<sup>20</sup> The two had evidently discussed the project in some detail when MacDiarmid had returned to Scotland from France after the war. Having now interested a publisher in the anthology, MacDiarmid was anxious to assemble all the material for it as quickly as possible in order to maintain momentum.

Hence his urgent appeal to George Ogilvie towards the end of July 1919, asking him to make contact with Roderick Watson Kerr, so that the latter could send in his contributions post haste.<sup>21</sup> MacDiarmid also hoped that Mr Stewart, principal classics teacher at Broughton, would be able to enlist the support of Donald Mackenzie for *Northern Numbers*, and another potential contributor was seen in Edward Albert, a former pupil at Broughton School. At the time of writing this letter, only T.S.Cairncross, R.W.Kerr and Joseph Lee had expressed a definite intention to participate; MacDiarmid was optimistic that Donald Mackenzie, John Ferguson and Edward Albert would be party to the scheme, and had already written to John Buchan and Will Ogilvie about the proposed anthology.

By early August MacDiarmid was able to report further progress with *Northern Numbers*. All the contributions, with the exception of those of R.W.Kerr, Edward Albert and Donald Mackenzie, had now been received and dispatched to the publisher.<sup>22</sup> In addition, MacDiarmid had arranged to dedicate the volume to Neil Munro and this duly appeared in the volume.<sup>23</sup> According to the colophon, *Northern Numbers* was published in November 1920, but it was not announced in the Books of the Week column of *The Publishers' Circular* until 18 December 1920. John Buchan's poems were tactfully placed at the beginning, and MacDiarmid, with his publisher, no doubt hoped by this pious act of reverence to perpetuate the support he had sought, if not received, from this quarter. Edward Albert's poems probably did not arrive in time, and poems by MacDiarmid's brother made good the deficiency. Others by Violet Jacob and Neil Munro had also been received. The arrangement of the poems within the volume apparently gave offence to Donald Mackenzie, who objected to being relegated to the end. MacDiarmid explained how this came about thus:

As a matter of fact I shirked my duty as editor: I did not arrange the order of contributors: and left it to Foulis.<sup>24</sup>

However, as both Donald Mackenzie and Roderick Watson Kerr delayed in sending MacDiarmid their manuscripts, which arrived only after the rest of the text had been delivered to the publishers, it was not unnatural that their contributions should be placed at the end of the book.

The immediate reaction to *Northern Numbers* was favourable; MacDiarmid received correspondence to that effect on publication, and the anthology was well received by the critics. Flattering extracts from reviews were published at the end of *Northern Numbers*, second series, as further evidence of the value of the first volume. The brief notice taken from the *British Weekly* drew particular attention to the publisher of the volume, T.N.Foulis:

Mr T.N.Foulis, of Edinburgh and London, is a publisher whose books command attention by the mere artistry of their production. He has issued a very happily-named little volume, *Northern Numbers* . . .

This pointed to the weakness of MacDiarmid's choice of publisher in this instance. Foulis undoubtedly did MacDiarmid a service in taking on the anthology, but it was quite out of place on his list. As a publisher Foulis had a distinctly Scottish flavour, with illustrated editions of Dean Ramsay, John Galt, D.M.Moir and Robert Burns, as well as other Scottish titles, such as Charles St.John's *Wild Sports and Natural History of the Highlands* or Archibald B.Scott's *The Pictish Nation, Its People and Its Church*, but the keynote was the quality of the production and the illustrations rather than the text. Moreover, other titles on the list placed emphasis on the artistic side: a series of monographs was devoted to the Arts and Crafts of various civilisations, and the series of booklets, such as *Les Petits Livres d'Or* or the *Friendship Booklets*, though attractively produced, were light weight. *Northern Numbers*, despite its typographic excellence, was ill at ease alongside these titles, and though priced in accordance with the list was nevertheless a relatively expensive volume, given its unfinished appearance with uncut pages and uneven margins. In addition, Foulis was not in the forefront of the publishing world. The firm was well enough established in Edinburgh, but its list was small and had developed little since before the First World War. Foulis made no effort to capture sales in the wider market. No advertisements for books published by the house were placed in *The Publishers' Circular*, one of the leading trade journals of the day, when notices among the spring and autumn trade list announcements, or the pre-Christmas promotion number, could have encouraged more extensive sales.

Foulis was important to MacDiarmid as the first publisher to accept work from the author, at a time when he had already had material rejected by other firms, but the interests of Foulis meant that MacDiarmid and his work would not be so widely noticed.

Already in January 1921 MacDiarmid was actively engaged in preparing for the second volume of *Northern Numbers*, and by the following month the editor had almost fixed his list of contributors. Most of the authors in the first series were to appear again, Neil Munro, T.S.Cairncross and Joseph Lee deciding against further involvement. MacDiarmid's brother was scheduled for inclusion, but it is clear that the poems he submitted did not meet the editor's critical standards and they were finally rejected.<sup>25</sup> MacDiarmid also returned Roderick Watson Kerr's initial offerings via George Ogilvie, as they too were not considered to be up to scratch.<sup>26</sup> By March 1921 MacDiarmid had most of the manuscripts to hand. In another attempt to involve Edward Albert, MacDiarmid wrote to him to ask for material, maintaining in his letter that "whips to the laggards are going out by the same post as this."<sup>27</sup> In an undated letter to George Ogilvie, MacDiarmid announced that the publication of *Northern Numbers* had been postponed until early in the spring because of typographical reasons,<sup>28</sup> but by September 1921 MacDiarmid was busily occupied correcting proofs of the volume.<sup>29</sup> According to the colophon, the book was published in October 1921, but this was clearly not the case. Early in November *Northern Numbers* was still not out, and MacDiarmid had received no explanation from the publisher concerning the delay.<sup>30</sup> The book was finally announced in *The Publishers' Circular* on 24 December 1921, and soon attracted favourable "but of course hopelessly uncritical" reviews.<sup>31</sup> In a letter to Violet Jacob, John Ferguson praised the new volume, claiming that it was a distinct improvement on the first, and went on to say, "I believe it is one of the most important books published in Scotland for many years."<sup>32</sup> It was also favourably noticed in *The Publishers' Circular*.<sup>33</sup> In order to avoid all possible disputes, the contributors were arranged in alphabetical order,<sup>34</sup> and as Edward Albert was again not represented,<sup>35</sup> the poems of John Buchan once more appeared at the beginning of the volume.

Although the first two volumes of *Northern Numbers* had



been successful, they were not as satisfying to MacDiarmid as his next venture, the periodical devoted to the encouragement of contemporary Scottish poetry, *The Scottish Chapbook*. With *Northern Numbers* MacDiarmid had to put commercial considerations before artistic ones, and hoped that the position could be reversed with *The Scottish Chapbook*:

*Northern Numbers* had to sell—a stiff proposition!—so I was to a certain extent out for names and included certain types of verse greatly admired by many people but to which I personally am utterly indifferent.

In the *Chapbook* commercial conditions won't weigh; and I'll be out for genuinely significant and experimental work wherever it is to be found.<sup>36</sup>

This was certainly a project which had been nurtured for some time. In November 1920, with the first *Northern Numbers* shortly to be published, MacDiarmid put a proposal to Foulis concerning a literary periodical:

Foulis has practically agreed to start a monthly (1/-) *Scottish Chapbook* under my editorship—to set a national standard, to sort the grain from the chaff, to discover and encourage new Scottish poets, to move Towards a National Theatre etc. etc.<sup>37</sup>

MacDiarmid's optimism, which convinced him that Foulis would proceed without delay, was obviously without firm foundation. The publisher declined, as the scheme was not commercially viable at that time, and in February 1921 MacDiarmid was formulating new ideas for a periodical miscellany of Scottish verse and prose, entitled *The New Scotsman*, which Blackwell of Oxford had agreed to publish, provided that subscriptions for the first issue would guarantee a sum of between £100 and £150.<sup>38</sup> Despite efforts to raise this sum, it was not found in full and Blackwell would not publish.

Frustrated by the difficulties of having a literary periodical taken on by a publisher, MacDiarmid decided to take the matter into his own hands. In an open letter to *The Glasgow Herald* published on 15 May 1922,<sup>39</sup> MacDiarmid outlined his plans for a "monthly chapbook of current Scottish poetry." Deploring the

lack of a publishing outlet for much good work being produced, the newspapers shunning for obvious reasons innovative or experimental writing of any kind, MacDiarmid proposed to plug the gap with a new monthly, which would bring to the attention of readers work that would not otherwise be seen. MacDiarmid's sole business ambition was that the expenses of production should be covered.<sup>40</sup> To this end he appealed to all readers genuinely interested in the revival of Scottish poetry to place a 10/- subscription for the twelve monthly issues. Provided that there was sufficient interest, publication would commence in August.

The publication of this letter, and the support given to it the following day in the leader of *The Glasgow Herald* produced an encouraging response and subscriptions were placed.<sup>41</sup> However MacDiarmid was acutely aware of the problems he faced as an editor:

Running any periodical devoted to pure art these days even in England is lean and difficult work: and in Scotland the difficulties are greater.<sup>42</sup>

He appealed to friends such as George Ogilvie to spread the word and drum up support.<sup>43</sup> He also put together a circular which he sent to people whom he considered likely to subscribe to the *Chapbook*, exhorting them as follows:

My associates and I believe that such a periodical is a prerequisite of the potential Scottish literary revival which present commercial conditions are inhibiting.<sup>44</sup>

By the middle of June, MacDiarmid was able to ask George Ogilvie to send him a list of subscribers, as the minimum number had now been reached and final arrangements needed to be made in order to achieve the launch in August.<sup>45</sup>

The first issue of *The Scottish Chapbook. A Monthly Magazine of Scottish Arts and Letters* duly appeared in August 1922, and the periodical apparently had a measure of success, as MacDiarmid claimed that all copies were sold out and that he had been unable to fulfil all orders.<sup>46</sup> It was published from MacDiarmid's home in Montrose at 16 Links Avenue, being printed locally by James Foreman at the "Review" Press in Montrose where MacDiarmid was employed. The annual

subscription was increased on publication to 15/-, single copies being available at 1/6, although original subscribers at the lower price were not charged extra.

The first issue set out the broad aims of the monthly, emphasising the need to "encourage and publish the work of contemporary Scottish poets and dramatists, whether in English, Gaelic, or Braid Scots" and the need for a proper critical evaluation of the work of contemporary Scottish writers. Despite any initial success, the *Chapbook* was slow to establish itself. In the third issue for October 1922, an editorial notice entitled Finding Our Feet appealed to every subscriber to find one more in order to secure the future well-being of the project:

We have subscribers in Hong-Kong and Bechuanaland, Stornoway and Newton-Stewart, Toronto and Sydney; but there must be still a few in between these places capable of being interested—if we could only get into touch with them!<sup>47</sup>

The magazine picked up; and MacDiarmid confidently placed an advertisement in the issue for June 1923 inviting readers to renew their subscriptions for the following year.

MacDiarmid had not been altogether happy with the format of the *Chapbook*,<sup>48</sup> but could do little to change it. Instead he chose to end the first year of publication with a flourish, by altering the colour of the wrapper from dull red to pale green, and replaced the lion rampant and its motto "Not Traditions—Precedents" with a stylish drawing by Pittendrigh Macgillivray which symbolised the Scottish muse, placed together with title lettering by the young Edinburgh sculptress Miss Campbell Muirhead.<sup>49</sup> Pittendrigh Macgillivray offered much advice to MacDiarmid at this time, and MacDiarmid was extremely grateful for suggestions, which, in his opinion, did so much to improve the *Chapbook*:

I like the Chapbook immensely in its new form, and wish I had had the boon of your help and benefit of your experience a year ago.<sup>50</sup>

One can now only guess at the difficulties experienced by MacDiarmid as an editor. In a letter to Helen Cruickshank, for

example,<sup>51</sup> he apologises for the fact that the November issue of the *Chapbook* had not arrived, and explains that her poem "Beechleaves" had been set up in type but in the end could not be fitted in. Apart from editorial problems, there were business problems too. MacDiarmid strongly suspected that the booksellers Menzies were partly responsible for low sales, for it was apparent that the *Chapbook* was said to be out of print even though Menzies returned several copies to him each month.<sup>52</sup> By the autumn of 1923 MacDiarmid's difficulties became more acute. The September issue was amalgamated with that for October, and was not published until November.<sup>53</sup> The next issue also covered two months, November and December, and in spite of the assurance that regular monthly publication would resume in January 1924, this proved to be the end of *The Scottish Chapbook*.

Short-lived though *The Scottish Chapbook* was, it was vitally important as an outlet for the writings of C.M.Grieve and Hugh MacDiarmid. Apart from propaganda for the cause of the Scottish literary renaissance, in the form of editorials or accounts of contemporary writers, much of what was contributed to the *Chapbook* by MacDiarmid represented work which had not otherwise found a publisher. The first two issues, for example, contained the text of "Nisbet, An Interlude in Post War Glasgow," probably one of the one-act plays that MacDiarmid reported to Ogilvie he was writing in 1917 and 1918,<sup>54</sup> especially as he was so deeply moved by Nisbet's death in the First World War and wanted to write a poem in his memory.<sup>55</sup> In October 1920, MacDiarmid wrote to George Ogilvie, describing a sonnet sequence he was planning, which was to comprise fifty poems in four sequences of twelve, with a dedicatory and valedictory poem.<sup>56</sup> This sequence was entitled *Sonnets From the Highland Hills*,<sup>57</sup> and MacDiarmid had high hopes that it would be published by Blackwell in Oxford. Six poems from the sequence were published in *The Scottish Chapbook*, number 5 for December 1922, five others having been inserted in *Northern Numbers*, second series. Extracts from another, more extensive sonnet sequence are also published in *The Scottish Chapbook*. Five "continental" sonnets from a sequence of one hundred formed part of the *Chapbook* for November 1922, and a further, small selection was inserted in the issue for March 1923. MacDiarmid described the nature of these poems in the following

terms:

All of them are obscure in at least one, and generally in more than one, respect. They deal with foreign subjects—Russian, French, Italian, Spanish, Bulgarian—for the most part: and are largely unintelligible to those who are not thoroughly familiar with the modern literatures of these countries. They are highly allusive—but I am supplying notes which will be interesting in themselves and thoroughly illuminating.<sup>58</sup>

In view of their nature, it is perhaps not surprising that only three of the poems were later collected by MacDiarmid.

At this stage in his career MacDiarmid had enjoyed the opportunity of discussing his creative writing in depth with George Ogilvie, and so it is not surprising that he determined to dedicate a poem to his mentor:

I have always meant to dedicate to you something really good if—and as soon as—I could. This is not it. I have put your name about it and am sending it to you simply because you are the subject of it and were in my mind to the exclusion of all else when I wrote it.<sup>59</sup>

The poem in question, "A Moment in Eternity," was favourably received by Ogilvie,<sup>60</sup> and was given a prominent position in the first issue of *The Scottish Chapbook* of August 1922.<sup>61</sup>

These poems apart, *The Scottish Chapbook* was used by MacDiarmid as a vehicle for his experiments in Braid Scots which he published under his recently adopted pseudonym. Extracts from "A Kist O'Whistles" were published from November 1922, and these and other Scots poems form much of the content of MacDiarmid's first two Scots collections, *Sangschaw* (1925) and *Penny Wheep* (1926). *The Scottish Chapbook* also illustrates MacDiarmid's activities as a publisher with growing ambitions. It was in March 1923 that an advertisement for the Hon.R.Erskine of Marr's Gaelic one-act play entitled *Fo Chromadh an Taighe* first appeared. This was to be produced in broadsheet form, with an imaginative frontispiece by Stewart Carmichael. The ordinary edition was priced at one shilling, while a special edition on hand-made paper and limited

to 50 copies was available at five shillings. Advertisements in successive issues maintained interest in the project, until the September-October 1923 number, when the advertisement for the play stated that copies were available either from booksellers or direct from C.M.Grieve. The number also included an extract from one of Erskine of Marr's plays and Stewart Carmichael's frontispiece was later reproduced in *The Scottish Nation* of 4 December 1923. MacDiarmid clearly intended to issue a series of such publications, and a broadsheet play by George Reston Malloch entitled *The House of the Queen* was announced as being published by The Scottish Poetry Bookshop in *The Scottish Nation* of 25 December 1923.<sup>62</sup> At the same time as MacDiarmid announced Erskine of Marr's play, he began to advertise a new venture entitled *The New Makars*:

It is intended, if sufficient support is forthcoming, to publish under the above title a series of selections, in broadsheet form of the work of new poets of unquestionable merit in the Scottish Vernacular. These editions will be strictly limited, and will consist entirely of work not otherwise accessible in collected form.<sup>63</sup>

Not surprisingly, the first volume of the series was to be devoted to the best poems of Hugh MacDiarmid. Although the final number of *The Scottish Chapbook* referred to this series as being on the point of publication, it does not seem to have been realised.

*The Scottish Chapbook* was important to MacDiarmid as the first literary production that he was responsible for as publisher as well as editor, and as such it is a touchstone to his ambitions as a writer. No doubt inspired in some measure by Harold Monro and his Poetry Bookshop in London that had publicised the Georgian school of poets and issued *The Chapbook* for modern writing, MacDiarmid's ideas for other, sometimes more ephemeral, publications are reminiscent of series in the Poetry Bookshop list. Indeed the final advertisement for *The New Makars*, as well as that for *The House of the Queen*, urges readers to order copies from the Scottish Poetry Bookshop located at 16 Links Avenue, Montrose. The intention to produce bibliographical rarities was also part of the whole *Chapbook* enterprise.<sup>64</sup> That *The Scottish Chapbook* did not succeed

commercially is due largely to the fact that MacDiarmid was attempting to do too much at the same time, with other, major publishing projects running concurrently, all competing for the few, so-called leisure hours at his disposition outside his working day as a journalist with *The Montrose Review*:

My ventures were all (in a material sense) unsuccessful as you know—that is to say, they did not pay their way; I never expected them or wanted them to do more. But they were all insufficiently financed. I was not out to make money—but I lost money. They have, however, done their work to some extent. Of that I am assured. My main regret was that running them singlehanded in my scanty spare time and as economically as possible I was unable to develop as I should have liked to do—as the interests of the movement I was trying to create demanded—the various acquaintances that came my way as a result of them. It was physically and financially impossible for me to reply to half the letters I received. My only excuse was my entire disinterestedness—I sacrificed all I possibly could to keep them going. I even sacrificed my own career—staying so long down here on a little local paper, simply because it gave me more leisure for my efforts on behalf of Scottish nationalism and letters . . .<sup>65</sup>

It is evidence of MacDiarmid's dynamic energy that during the life of *The Scottish Chapbook*, alongside other writing he edited the third volume of *Northern Numbers*, launched a political weekly, *The Scottish Nation* and published his prose work interspersed with poetry, *Annals of the Five Senses*.

At much the same time as MacDiarmid was organising the launch of *The Scottish Chapbook*, he was busily making arrangements for the third volume of *Northern Numbers*. MacDiarmid hoped to have the volume out by the end of October or early November 1922, but his publisher, T.N.Foulis, ran into business difficulties and this placed a question mark over the whole enterprise.<sup>66</sup> MacDiarmid was determined that *Northern Numbers* should continue, asserting that if Foulis could not undertake the volume he would either find another publisher or publish it himself. Although MacDiarmid claimed that his selection for the volume had been made at this time, as he felt

unable to offer any space to William Soutar, this was subsequently changed, as three poems of Soutar were eventually included.<sup>67</sup> By September 1922 it was clear that Foulis could not be involved, as an advertisement was placed in the second issue of *The Scottish Chapbook*, explaining that the editor had decided to undertake the publication himself and appealed for subscribers to "assist the venture by booking copies at their earliest convenience." A more prominent and urgent appeal was placed in the October issue, suggesting that the volume would be available in time for Christmas, a hope also expressed in a letter to Helen Cruickshank written in early December when the book was being printed off locally at the "Review" Press, Montrose.<sup>68</sup> So *Northern Numbers*, in a paperback edition limited to 400 copies, was announced in *The Scottish Chapbook* for December. The London based *Publishers' Circular* did not refer to *Northern Numbers* until early February 1923, when it was described as a publication of January 1923. All three volumes of *Northern Numbers* were later sold as a set for 10/-, and the first two were also made available in a cheaper, paperback edition.

While *Northern Numbers* and *The Scottish Chapbook* were published by MacDiarmid in furtherance of the new movement in Scottish literature, the appearance of *Annals of the Five Senses* in 1923 marked a departure, in that it represented the author as publisher bringing out his own work. *Annals of the Five Senses* was written during MacDiarmid's period of war service with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Salonika.<sup>69</sup> The work was originally entitled *Cerebral and Other Studies*<sup>70</sup> and towards the end of 1920 was in the hands of a publisher, presumably Foulis.<sup>71</sup> By September 1921 MacDiarmid was able to send George Ogilvie a set of proofs, confidently reporting that the book would soon be out.<sup>72</sup> MacDiarmid was anxious that the book should be a success so that he could get similar work published,<sup>73</sup> otherwise this side of his creative work would be stifled:

I have a feeling that if it doesn't go sufficiently well I shall be bound over to keep the peace and compelled to do so—gagged and bound.—I have no wish to let the Cursed Commercial System turn me into 'some mute inglorious Milton'.<sup>74</sup>

In early November MacDiarmid was concerned that neither



*Northern Numbers* nor *Annals of the Five Senses* were out,<sup>75</sup> despite the latter's having been announced in *The Publishers' Circular* for November 1921. Subsequently MacDiarmid learned that the publication had been postponed indefinitely,<sup>76</sup> because of the business difficulties which beset the firm of T.N.Foulis. A further promise of publication in the spring of 1922 came to nothing,<sup>77</sup> and delay was succeeded by further delay.<sup>78</sup> Despite yet another hitch in January 1923, MacDiarmid was then able to force a solution:

Either the people who have it in type just now must print it and let me publish it within the next week or two—or have it set up here de novo and publish it. My lawyers have the matter well in hand now. But it has been a ghastly business.<sup>79</sup>

MacDiarmid did indeed take over the edition from Foulis, and the volume, unlike the third *Northern Numbers* which was produced locally in Montrose, was printed to the same high standard as the first two in the series by The Edinburgh Press of Young Street in Edinburgh. Published in April 1923, *Annals of the Five Senses* was a failure commercially, and immediate sales were insufficient to recover MacDiarmid's expenses in having the sheets bound.<sup>80</sup>

While the inability of T.N.Foulis to undertake *Northern Numbers* and *Annals of the Five Senses* forced MacDiarmid to become a book publisher, he was motivated quite differently with *The Scottish Nation*. This weekly journal rivalled *The Scottish Chapbook* in ambition and excelled it in the complexity of the business arrangements required to manage it. MacDiarmid had made plans to launch a paper originally entitled *The New Scotsman* already in November 1920,<sup>81</sup> but although he hoped it would be "a very big thing" it had to be abandoned on grounds of cost.<sup>82</sup> *The New Scotsman* was announced publicly in *The Scottish Chapbook* for November 1922: the weekly, intended to give Scotland its version of *The New Statesman* or *Nation and Athenaeum*, was to be devoted to "Labour Politics, Scottish Nationalism, and Scottish Arts and Letters." A similar announcement appeared in the December issue of *Scottish Home Rule*, the monthly journal of the Scottish Home Rule Association.

Final arrangements for establishing the new weekly were

made in the early part of 1923. Writing to George Ogilvie on 15 January 1923, MacDiarmid was optimistic that the weekly would come out in early March, as a result of "pulling all sorts of Labour Party, Scottish Home Rule Assoctn, Scots National League, etc., strings."<sup>83</sup> According to an advertisement in the February *Scottish Chapbook*, planning for the weekly was well advanced. In letters to R.E.Muirhead in the same month, MacDiarmid outlined his plans in some detail.<sup>84</sup> The paper was to be predominantly a literary and artistic review, "but, also, an attempt to fuse all sorts of Scottish interests into a keener nationalism; and, in particular, designed to foster the demand for Scottish Home Rule."<sup>85</sup> The prospectus for *The Scottish Nation* also emphasised the growth of the Scottish Home Rule movement and the need for a weekly journal to support its aims adequately.

The title originally envisaged, *The New Scotsman*, was dropped because of copyright difficulties and so *The Scottish Nation* came into being. MacDiarmid planned a 24 page weekly, three columns to a page, illustrated by Scottish artists, and well printed on good quality paper. The cost of printing *The Scottish Nation* on these lines was costed at £100 per week for 25,000 copies, and MacDiarmid confidently expected sales of 10,000 at 3d per copy—"and judging by the experience of similar periodicals elsewhere we shall be very ill-supported if we cannot secure more than that."<sup>86</sup> MacDiarmid was equally optimistic over the revenues he could expect from advertising. Nevertheless, he hoped that R.E.Muirhead would become involved in the project financially, and that, encouraged by the Executive, branches of the Scottish Home Rule Association would take a number of copies of *The Scottish Nation* on a weekly basis in exchange for the publication in it of branch reports.

MacDiarmid needed to complete the financial arrangements required in early April 1923 in order for the proposed launch of the periodical to take place the following month. His urgent appeal to Muirhead at the end of March<sup>87</sup> for a decision regarding Muirhead's own involvement, was turned down, however. Sceptical about the financial predictions, Muirhead was even more sceptical about the ability of the editor to manage a weekly newspaper when engaged in so many other projects, and suggested that *The Scottish Nation* should be issued as a monthly in the beginning, reducing to weekly frequency only when it had proved itself.<sup>88</sup> Though disappointed that Muirhead did not

support the venture financially, MacDiarmid was undeterred and pressed ahead with his plans to issue *The Scottish Nation* from 8 May, although he made it quite clear that he hoped for a considerable degree of support from the Scottish Home Rule Association.<sup>89</sup> The size of *The Scottish Nation* was reduced to 16 pages for technical reasons<sup>90</sup> and because of this limitation some of the features and articles announced in the dummy that had been circulated had to be held over to later issues.<sup>91</sup>

Despite encouraging advance orders, *The Scottish Nation* was not an unqualified success. In some ways the paper failed to find the stance sought for it by its editor, and MacDiarmid considered that some of the articles he had included, which were sympathetic to Scottish National politics and the labour movement, might have been offensive to certain readers and advertisers.<sup>92</sup> Indeed he predicted an uphill struggle ahead in order to secure an adequate circulation to support the paper properly:

The "Nation" seems to be going alright so far but will take all the pushing it can get to acquire a circulation which will make it financially stable.<sup>93</sup>

The burden of "pushing" *The Scottish Nation* forward obviously fell on MacDiarmid's shoulders. Added to this were the technical difficulties experienced as a result of having the paper printed in Montrose, again by James Foreman at the "Review" Press.<sup>94</sup> The paper was remodelled from 3 July 1923 with the intention of its becoming a predominantly literary paper.<sup>95</sup> MacDiarmid was already experiencing financial difficulties with the paper, having found the need to raise £150 to keep it afloat over the summer,<sup>96</sup> and it was clear that it could only succeed with a larger circulation. The future of *The Scottish Nation* was complicated further by MacDiarmid's many commitments at the time, and frequently he reminded his correspondents of the workload required of him as spare time editor:

No one is more keenly conscious than I am of the imperfections of the paper—I know a score of ways in which it could be strengthened and improved. That is only a question of time and money. In the meantime, it has to be remembered that I am doing the whole of the work

connected with it—collection of materials, reading of proofs, conducting of correspondence, dispatch of papers, book-keeping, etc.—in my spare time: as well as a great deal of the actual writing.<sup>97</sup>

At one stage, in September 1923, it seemed to MacDiarmid as though the paper would have to close prematurely. Accordingly a note was published in the issue for 11 September, appealing for readers to subscribe and to ensure that the paper was displayed prominently in newsagents and libraries.<sup>98</sup> Also at this time MacDiarmid decided to write and publish articles on Pittendrigh Macgillivray's work as poet and artist himself rather than commission them from others and risk not being able to publish the articles at all.<sup>99</sup> Further financial difficulties again threatened the newspaper, and MacDiarmid sought assistance from R.E.Muirhead and his friends, including Sir Daniel Stevenson, a former Lord Provost of Glasgow.<sup>100</sup> Muirhead's gloomy prognostications for *The Scottish Nation* had proved all too accurate: the financial basis of the paper was unsound, with too low a circulation and insufficient advertising revenue, so that losses of £9 per week were being incurred.<sup>101</sup> *The Scottish Nation* also had to contend with the hostility of the wholesale booksellers Menzies, whom MacDiarmid suspected of not displaying properly the advertising material for the paper.<sup>102</sup> Though influential people such as John Buchan, Erskine of Marr and Pittendrigh Macgillivray were still keen to see *The Scottish Nation* continue, funds to support it were not raised in time, and so in late November or early December 1923 a decision was taken to cease publication.<sup>103</sup>

Fund-raising activities, however, continued unabated and in January 1924 MacDiarmid was in a position to meet the conditions laid down by potential backers such as Sir Daniel Stevenson, even if it was too late to save *The Scottish Nation*.<sup>104</sup> With his previous editorial traumas behind him, caused by the demise of *The Scottish Nation* and *The Scottish Chapbook* concurrently, MacDiarmid was more willing to listen to advice from others, and accepted the view that *The Scottish Nation* should reappear as an 80 page monthly costing 1/-. Furthermore the financial prospects seemed healthier, and with important names lined up for the early issues, MacDiarmid was again full of confidence:

From a literary point of view this magazine will take a much higher level—or rather a more uniformly high level—than did the weekly: and will have a much broader scope. I have been enheartened by the number of letters I have received deploring the stoppage of the weekly: and expressing hopes that it will be resumed. I am going to make exhaustive efforts to secure a solid list of subscribers for the first year of the monthly, and have various plans to that end well advanced. I shall spare no effort to make it a magazine worthy of Scotland in every respect.<sup>105</sup>

By March 1924 MacDiarmid had decided to issue the monthly under the new title of *The Northern Review*, for at this time he wrote to Roderick Watson Kerr to enquire if the Porpoise Press, of which Kerr was a founder member, could act as publisher for the magazine which was being printed in Edinburgh by the Darien Press. MacDiarmid had arranged for Messrs Wells Gardner, Darton & Co. Ltd. to act as publisher in London, and he hoped that the Porpoise Press would be able to do the same in Scotland.<sup>106</sup> Given previous rivalry, if not hostility, between MacDiarmid and Kerr, it is perhaps not surprising that this business arrangement failed to prosper, and so in April 1924 MacDiarmid was to write to R.E.Muirhead, asking him to place an advertisement in *Scottish Home Rule* for *The Northern Review*, "The magazine for the thinking Scot," available "from all the leading booksellers and newsagents, or direct from *The Northern Review*, c/o The Darien Press, Bristo Place, Edinburgh."<sup>107</sup>

The first issue of *The Northern Review* appeared in May 1924, priced at one shilling. MacDiarmid's editorial bemoaned the fact that good literary periodicals were not able to survive for long—"The more mediocre the greater the longevity!"—and that there was nothing to rival in quality the best continental journals. MacDiarmid set out to define the role of *The Northern Review* in the following terms:

In any case, *The Northern Review* will be resolutely tendencious in character, and will represent a more determined effort than has hitherto been made to rescue Scottish arts and letters from the slough of Kailyairdism.<sup>108</sup>

Nevertheless, MacDiarmid was anxious that the journal should not commit itself to any social or political creed, nor should it be wholly Scottish, but rather international in scope.

*The Northern Review* got off to a good start with a varied selection of articles and poems bearing a distinct Scottish flavour, despite MacDiarmid's opening Causerie. If the choice of Wells Gardner, Darton & Co. as London publisher now seems surprising, given their interest in juvenile literature and works on philosophy and religion, the ties with London at least ensured better advertising revenue, with notices from some of the major London houses, such as T.Fisher Unwin, J.M.Dent, George Routledge/Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and T.Werner Laurie. Unfortunately the momentum was not maintained. The second issue was delayed, perhaps as a result of switching the production of the journal from the Darien Press in Edinburgh to Billing and Sons Ltd. of Guildford and Esher, and it combined in one those for both June and July. A renewed request for subscriptions to be placed can now be interpreted all too easily as a sign of uncertainty over the magazine's future, and the editorial in what was to be the final issue, September 1924, gives ample evidence of MacDiarmid's weariness as an editor, worn down by an accumulation of problems. The circumstances in which *The Northern Review* ceased publication are not now known. For a time MacDiarmid nurtured the hope of resuming publication,<sup>109</sup> then he considered a new quarterly magazine which would combine the respective talents of William McCance, Edwin Muir, Denis Saurat, F.G.Scott, F.V.Branford, C.M.Grieve and Hugh MacDiarmid in order to further the aims of the Scottish literary renaissance. MacDiarmid put the proposal to Messrs Blackwood in August 1925:

What I would venture to suggest to you is that you might consider the publication of a small quarterly devoted to Scottish letters, Art & Music, entitled *Scots Art* and comparable in size to, say, *The Scots Magazine*, but admitting only work of first-class creative value calculated to give international consequence to contemporary Scottish culture.<sup>110</sup>

Messrs Blackwood did not consider the project to be commercially viable, and the venture proceeded no further. In

fact MacDiarmid was becoming more involved in his book publications at the time, and with a series of articles devoted to Scottish subjects being published in the *Scottish Educational Journal* from June 1925, the majority of which were to be incorporated in *Contemporary Scottish Studies* (1926), MacDiarmid was less free to explore the possibilities open to him as an editor and publisher of periodical publications.

*The Northern Review* marks a watershed in MacDiarmid's publishing career in the 1920s, bringing to a close, for the time being, his activities as editor of anthologies and periodicals devoted to the diffusion of the movement towards a Scottish literary renaissance. After this date MacDiarmid, who had already used this pseudonym for contributions to periodicals, was to embark on his career, with this name, as author of books of poetry, beginning with *Sangschaw* in 1925. Not that his Braid Scots poems as published in this volume were unknown to his readers. The author acknowledged his debt to the editors of *The Glasgow Herald*, *The Northern Review*, *The Scottish Nation* and *The Scottish Chapbook* for permission to reprint some of the poems in his book. This rather misleading statement conceals the fact that most of the poems had been published already, although not as part of a collection in his name.<sup>111</sup> MacDiarmid had also endeavoured to have these poems published as a volume. It is clear from the surviving archives of Grant Richards that already in 1924 an approach was made by Hugh MacDiarmid to have a volume of Scottish poems entitled *Penny Wheep* published. The manuscript was submitted in February but was eventually turned down at the end of June on the grounds that a large proportion of the work would be unintelligible to the general English public.<sup>112</sup> It seems more than likely that MacDiarmid submitted his manuscript to other publishers unsuccessfully before he turned to Messrs Blackwood of Edinburgh in April 1925.<sup>113</sup>

MacDiarmid first wrote to Blackwood on 16 April 1925, enclosing a cutting from *The Glasgow Herald* of a critical article devoted to his Scots poems by Alexander McGill. This was in fact a review of the series "Penny Wheep" which had been published in successive numbers of *The Scottish Chapbook*. Given the increasing critical interest in his work, MacDiarmid (who corresponded with the firm under his pseudonym) considered that a small volume of these poems would be a successful venture:

There is obviously a demand for a volume and I have reason to believe that it would sell well and score a succes-d'estim [sic].<sup>114</sup>

Though unwilling to finance the volume himself, he felt that he would be able to supply 200 possible subscribers, and was confident that he could persuade Professor H.J.C.Grierson to write a short prefatory note to commend it to readers. MacDiarmid submitted a copy of *Penny Wheep* for consideration on 20 April 1925, it was costed out on 27 April and the following day Blackwood wrote offering to undertake the publication of the volume.<sup>115</sup> Blackwood offered to pay a royalty of 10% on the first 750 copies sold, 15% on the next 750 copies and 20% on all sales beyond 1500. As was not uncommon at the time, Blackwood also placed an option on MacDiarmid's next two volumes, and in the event of either the first or the second work selling more than 3000 copies, the rate of royalty on the first, second or third would be 20% from the beginning.

Not surprisingly MacDiarmid accepted Blackwood's terms for publication with alacrity.<sup>116</sup> Following advice received from friends, MacDiarmid decided to alter the title of the collection to *Sangschaw*, and so MacDiarmid's first published collection of Scots verse came into being. At the same time MacDiarmid wrote to Professor Grierson, asking him the favour of writing a short introduction to the volume to give it "as good a send off as possible,"<sup>117</sup> and in a later letter he is even more explicit:

I feel sure that what you say in the preface—the mere fact that you evince an active interest in what is being attempted—will have far-reaching consequences, and that although you may not be specially interested in this particular question, to have you introduce my poems will give them the exact 'cachet' I (perhaps presumptuously) covet for them.<sup>118</sup>

Grierson in fact did not write the preface to *Sangschaw*, and already on 1 June MacDiarmid wrote to Blackwood enclosing John Buchan's preface with a set of corrected proofs of the book which had been set up in type very quickly in the second week of May.<sup>119</sup> At the same time he forwarded the text of an



additional poem, "Moonlight among the pines," now required because of an alteration made, at Grierson's suggestion, to the poem preceding it, "I heard Christ sing." Second proofs were returned by MacDiarmid on 17 June 1925<sup>120</sup> and early in August sample cases were sent to MacDiarmid, it being left to him to select the colour of his choice.<sup>121</sup> Later the same month, MacDiarmid finalized arrangements for review copies and presentation copies, including one to his friend C.M.Grieve.<sup>122</sup>

*Sangschaw* was scheduled for publication on 9 September 1925. Although part of Blackwood's Autumn list for 1925, the firm only gave the collection modest coverage in national trade journals. *Sangschaw* figured quite prominently in Blackwood's announcement of autumn books in *The Publishers' Circular* of 8 August 1925, but was not mentioned in either the Autumn Books number or the Christmas books number.<sup>123</sup> The volume did not make a very strong impression immediately. MacDiarmid admitted that reviews were very mixed, but with some that were favourable and encouraging.<sup>124</sup> This was perhaps not surprising, given MacDiarmid's own critical opinion of his work:

Of course *Sangschaw* is like the curate's egg. There's about a third of it below par, which I'm sorry I included.<sup>125</sup>

Sales, too, were not exceptional, with 402 copies disposed of from warehouse stocks up to 31 December 1925, but falling off dramatically thereafter.<sup>126</sup> Messrs Blackwood were perhaps staid in the approach to MacDiarmid's work, poetry not being the chief interest of the house. George Ogilvie's sentiments, praising the firm for taking MacDiarmid on, would probably have been echoed by others, had they been more public:

May I take this opportunity of paying my 'respects' to you for publishing Grieve's poetry? These volumes cannot have been a "business proposition", but it moves and stirs one to know that there is a house which knows great poetry when it sees it and is willing to lose for its sake. Yours is an honourable record & your adoption of Grieve is in your own fine tradition.<sup>127</sup>

Given the initial encouragement by Blackwood, MacDiarmid bombarded the firm with new proposals, but as many were

turned down as were accepted.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless to Blackwood must go the credit for being the first commercial publishing house to accept work written under the name Hugh MacDiarmid and thereby giving a necessary wider dimension to MacDiarmid's career as an author.

Between the publication of *Northern Numbers* in 1920 and *Sangschaw* in 1925, MacDiarmid worked on several projects which were not published. In 1920 MacDiarmid moved to Kildermorie, Ross and Cromarty, where he was appointed to teach the daughters of the deer stalkers on the Dyson Perrins estate, and there he drafted out a book entitled *Oddman Out: Notes from a Highland Pantry*.<sup>129</sup> At much the same time MacDiarmid arranged with Gollancz to write a book on "The future of Scotland" for the new World of Today series of Oxford University Press, a subject he finally developed in *Albyn* published by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. in 1927.<sup>130</sup> MacDiarmid wrote numerous short stories, without attempting to get them published,<sup>131</sup> and also drafted a substantial section of a novel.<sup>132</sup> From 1920 he was involved in a volume of essays devoted to contemporary Scottish writers for Leonard Parsons' "Contemporary" Series,<sup>133</sup> but this had a somewhat chequered career and was not published in book form until 1926. In addition MacDiarmid gave much attention to poetry, and particularly in his correspondence with George Ogilvie, he discussed all manner of projects, ranging from an individual poem such as one entitled "Water of Life,"<sup>134</sup> his poems on Scottish subjects,<sup>135</sup> a sequence of poems on Edinburgh provisionally entitled *Sic Itur ad Astra*,<sup>136</sup> to his book of sonnets on foreign subjects, some of which he published in *The Scottish Chapbook* as Continental Sonnets.<sup>137</sup> Two further collections of verse belong to this period: *The Following Day and Other Poems*, which was submitted to John Lane in 1921 but not accepted for publication,<sup>138</sup> and *Shapes and Shadows*, a collection of songs and little lyrics unsuccessfully submitted to Andrew Melrose.<sup>139</sup>

The early years of MacDiarmid's career as author and publisher are exceptionally rich in activity. As a writer MacDiarmid was bursting with ideas, which spilled out of his imagination in all directions, at times more controlled than at others. Yet his writing was surprisingly little affected by the business side of literature. His experiences with publishers were not always happy, with work often rejected and projects

jeopardised by unsound business practices. Even his own experiences as a publisher served the writer in him no better. Sadly lacking in business acumen, his schemes all too quickly came crashing down again. Only the creative urge within and the strength this gave him carried him forward from one business failure to the next. The emergence of Blackwood as a publisher interested in his work was a stabilising factor, and this important, respectable, and above all Scottish publishing house proffered a breathing space which allowed his work to develop without the pressure of financial worries. MacDiarmid was all too conscious of the various ups and downs and "startling discontinuities" of his career, and the need to adapt himself to new situations, a pattern he considered he had been born to, given the unsettled life of his Border ancestors.<sup>140</sup> But MacDiarmid was intensely proud of what life had offered him and felt that the richness of experience he had enjoyed was beyond comparison. For all its vicissitudes, he would have changed nothing.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Lucky Poet: A Self-Study in Literature and Political Ideas. Being the Autobiography of Hugh MacDiarmid* (Christopher Murray Grieve) (London, 1943), p.40.

<sup>2</sup>See *Lucky Poet*, pp.8-13.

<sup>3</sup>See *Lucky Poet*, p.230. An early publication dating from 1908 is referred to by Ruth McQuillan, "The complete MacDiarmid," *Studies in Scottish Literature*, 18 (1983), 177-209 (p.181). Cuttings of other early publications in prose and verse dating from 1911-12 survive in the papers of A.G.Grieve, Edinburgh University Library (hereafter EUL) MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>4</sup>*Lucky Poet*, p.227.

<sup>5</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 24 October 1911, published in *The*

*Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*, edited with an introduction by Alan Bold (London, 1984), p.6. This edition is subsequently referred to as *Letters*.

<sup>6</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 20 August 1916, *Letters*, pp.8-9.

<sup>7</sup>See letters to George Ogilvie, 4 December 1917, 13 February 1918, 27 December 1918, 23 March 1919, 12 June 1919, 7 August 1919, *Letters*, pp.18-22, 29-34, 35-6, 38; letter to Helen Murray, 30 January 1918, EUL MS Gen.2001\*/57-60.

<sup>8</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 2 September 1916, *Letters*, p.16.

<sup>9</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 28 April 1918, *Letters*, p.24.

<sup>10</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 24 November 1918, *Letters*, p.28.

<sup>11</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 27 December 1918, *Letters*, p.31. Buchan was a reader for Nelson at this time, and there is ample evidence in the Blackwood Papers deposited in the National Library of Scotland (hereafter NLS) of his encouragement of writers on active service.

<sup>12</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 23 March 1919, *Letters*, p.33.

<sup>13</sup>See Ruth McQuillan, "The complete MacDiarmid," p.189. A further poem entitled "A Salonikan storm song," dated 1 September 1916, survives, along with other largely unpublished manuscripts, in the A.G.Grieve papers, EUL MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>14</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 23 March 1919, *Letters*, p.32.

<sup>15</sup>Letter to A.G.Grieve, 29 October [1920], EUL MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>16</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.44. For poems belonging to this work, see Ruth McQuillan, "The complete MacDiarmid," p.189.

<sup>17</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.44.

<sup>18</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 23 March 1919, *Letters*, pp.32-3.

- <sup>19</sup>*Northern Numbers*, p.9.
- <sup>20</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 26 December 1920, *Letters*, p.51.
- <sup>21</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 23 July 1919, *Letters*, p.37.
- <sup>22</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 7 August 1919, *Letters*, p.38.
- <sup>23</sup>*Ibid.* See also letter to George Ogilvie, 10 August 1919, *Letters*, p.39.
- <sup>24</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 25 March [1921], *Letters*, p.57.
- <sup>25</sup>See letters to A.G.Grieve, 1 February and 5 February 1921, asking for contributions, and two undated letters from the same period, criticising work submitted, EUL MS Gen. 2236.
- <sup>26</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 22 February 1921, *Letters*, p.56.
- <sup>27</sup>Letter to Edward Albert, 31 March 1921, NLS MS 9146(2), fols.229-30.
- <sup>28</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, nd, NLS MS Acc.4540, fols.95-6.
- <sup>29</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 8 September 1921, *Letters*, p.59.
- <sup>30</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 9 November 1921, *Letters*, p.65.
- <sup>31</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 29 December 1921, *Letters*, p.69.
- <sup>32</sup>Letter to Violet Jacob, 16 December 1921, NLS MS Acc.6686.
- <sup>33</sup>Vol.116 (January-June 1922), p.52, 245.
- <sup>34</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 25 March [1921], *Letters*, p.57.
- <sup>35</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 8 September 1921, *Letters*, p.59.
- <sup>36</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 17 May 1922, *Letters*, p.108.

<sup>37</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.45.

<sup>38</sup>Letter to A.G.Grieve, 5 February 1921, EUL MS Gen. 2236. The Blackwell archives for the period have not survived.

<sup>39</sup>*Letters*, pp.756-7.

<sup>40</sup>See also the letter to George Ogilvie, 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.76

<sup>41</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 17 May 1922, *Letters*, p.107; letter to Neil Gunn, 14 June 1922, *Letters*, p.195.

<sup>42</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 17 May 1922, *Letters*, p.107.

<sup>43</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 22 May 1922, *Letters*, pp.75-6.

<sup>44</sup>NLS MS 8506, fol.91.

<sup>45</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 16 June 1922, NLS MS Acc.4540, fol.126.

<sup>46</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 20 September 1922, *Letters*, p.77. Notices published in later issues advertising back numbers of *The Scottish Chapbook* exclude the first from those available. See No.7, February 1923.

<sup>47</sup>*The Scottish Chapbook*, Vol.1, no.3 (October 1922), p.iii.

<sup>48</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 10 October 1922, *Letters*, p.78.

<sup>49</sup>Some readers, including Pittendrigh Macgillivray, had apparently objected to the presence of the lion on the cover of the *Chapbook*. See letter to P.Macgillivray, 17 July 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, no.28.

<sup>50</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 28 July 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, no.28.

<sup>51</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 6 December 1922, EUL MS

Gen.886, fol.3.

<sup>52</sup>Letter to Mairi Campbell Ireland, 5 June 1923, NLS MS 19328.

<sup>53</sup>Letter to Neil Gunn, 1 November 1923, *Letters*, p.197.

<sup>54</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, 4 December 1917, 13 February 1918, *Letters*, p.19, 20.

<sup>55</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 20 August 1916, *Letters*, p.10.

<sup>56</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 24 October 1920, *Letters*, p.40.

<sup>57</sup>Letter to A.G.Grieve, 29 October [1920], EUL MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>58</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 19 March 1922, *Letters*, p.71.

<sup>59</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 8 February 1921, *Letters*, p.54.

<sup>60</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 22 February 1921, *Letters*, pp. 55-6.

<sup>61</sup>The poem was later incorporated into *Annals of the Five Senses* (Montrose, 1923) and *To Circumjack Cencrastus* (Edinburgh, 1930), in the latter case without the dedication.

<sup>62</sup>p.12.

<sup>63</sup>*The Scottish Chapbook*, Vol.2, no.2 (September-October 1923), p.ii.

<sup>64</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.76:  
The arrangements I am making ensure that immediate bibliographical value will attend the first year's issues anyhow. But I am not to disclose these details—subscribers will find that, apart from literary value, they have made a good investment.

<sup>65</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 10 February 1925,

*Letters*, p.313.

<sup>66</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 17 May 1922, *Letters*, p.107; letter to George Ogilvie, 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.75.

<sup>67</sup>Letters to William Soutar, 8 June 1922, 6 December 1922, *Letters*, pp.137-9.

<sup>68</sup>Letter to Helen Cruickshank, 6 December 1922, EUL MS Gen.886, fol.3.

<sup>69</sup>Letter to J.K. Annand, 6 January 1970, *Letters*, p.368. See also J.K. Annand, "Hugh MacDiarmid: some notes on the poet's early career," *Akros*, Vol.5, no.14 (April 1970), 20-3 (p.22).

<sup>70</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, 27 December 1918, 23 March 1919, *Letters*, p.30,33.

<sup>71</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.43.

<sup>72</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 8 September 1921, *Letters*, p.59.

<sup>73</sup>MacDiarmid mentioned another prose work, entitled *Triangular*, devoted to futurism, in a letter to George Ogilvie, 23 March 1919, *Letters*, p.33.

<sup>74</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 26 September 1921, *Letters*, p.61.

<sup>75</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 9 November 1921, *Letters*, p.65.

<sup>76</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 25 [November] 1921, *Letters*, p.68.

<sup>77</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 29 December 1921, *Letters*, p.69.

<sup>78</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, 19 March and 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.72, 75.

<sup>79</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 15 January 1923, *Letters*, p.80

<sup>80</sup>Letter to William Soutar, 7 August [1923], *Letters*, p.140;



letter to Neil Gunn, 1 November 1923, *Letters*, p.197. The book is advertised for sale in the April 1923 issue of *The Scottish Chapbook*.

<sup>81</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.45.

<sup>82</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 26 January 1921, *Letters*, p.54; letter to A.G.Grieve, 5 February 1921, EUL MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>83</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 15 January 1923, *Letters*, pp.79-80.

<sup>84</sup>Letters to R.E.Muirhead, 2 February 1923, *Letters*, pp.275-6; 24 February 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols 5-8.

<sup>85</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 2 February 1923, *Letters*, p.276.

<sup>86</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 24 February 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fol.6.

<sup>87</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 29 March 1923, *Letters*, pp.276-7.

<sup>88</sup>Letter of R.E.Muirhead to C.M.Grieve, 4 April 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols 16-19.

<sup>89</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 26 April 1923, *Letters*, p.278.

<sup>90</sup>*ibid*.

<sup>91</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 3 May 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fol.24.

<sup>92</sup>Letters to R.E.Muirhead, 4 July 1923, 1 November 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols.27-9, 35-8.

<sup>93</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 23 May 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, No.28. See also letter of 28 May 1923.

<sup>94</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 25 May 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, No.28:

" . . . the resources of local printers are lamentably limited and

we are still producing the 'Scottish Nation' under severe technical handicaps."

<sup>95</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 28 June 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, No.28. See also *The Scottish Nation*, no.9 (3 July 1923), p.15.

<sup>96</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 4 July 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols.27-9.

<sup>97</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 25 October 1923, *Letters*, p.280. See also letter to W.Soutar, 7 August [1923], *Letters*, p.140; letter to N.Gunn, 26 July 1923, *Letters*, p.196; and letter to P.Macgillivray, 15 October 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, No.28.

<sup>98</sup>*The Scottish Nation*, no.19 (11 September 1923), p.12.

<sup>99</sup>Letter to Pittendrigh Macgillivray, 15 October 1923, NLS MS Dep.349, No.28.

<sup>100</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 25 October 1923, *Letters*, pp. 280-1.

<sup>101</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 1 November 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols 35-8.

<sup>102</sup>Undated letter to R.E.Muirhead, EUL MS Gen.888, fol.55; letter to N.Gunn, 1 November 1923, *Letters*, p.197.

<sup>103</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 27 November 1923, EUL MS Gen.888, fols.41-3.

<sup>104</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 14 January 1924, *Letters*, pp. 281-2.

<sup>105</sup>*Ibid.* p.282. See also letter to N.Gunn, 6 February 1924, *Letters*, p.198.

<sup>106</sup>Letter to R.W.Kerr, 28 March 1924, NLS MS Acc.5756.

<sup>107</sup>Letter to R.E.Muirhead, 26 April 1924, *Letters*, p.283.

MacDiarmid had written in rather guarded terms about the Porpoise Press in a letter to George Ogilvie, 15 January 1923, *Letters*, p.79.

<sup>108</sup>*The Northern Review*, Vol.1, no.1 (May 1924), p.1.

<sup>109</sup>Letter to Neil Gunn, 5 January [1925], *Letters*, p.199.

<sup>110</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 14 August 1925, *Letters*, p.339.

<sup>111</sup>*Sangschaw*, p.vii. See also letter to H.J.C.Grierson, 30 April 1925, *Letters*, pp.306-8, in which MacDiarmid claims that most of the poems have not been published before.

<sup>112</sup>Letterbook, Vol.34 (1923-24), p.790, 840; Vol.35 (1924-25), p.351. See *Index to the Archives of Grant Richards, 1897-1948*, compiled by Alison Ingram (Cambridge, 1981).

<sup>113</sup>In this period MacDiarmid claimed to be working on his Braid Scots poems which were thought of highly by his friends. See letter to George Ogilvie, [February 1925], *Letters*, pp.82-3.

<sup>114</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 16 April 1925, *Letters*, p.336.

<sup>115</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 29 April 1925; Estimate No.180, 27 April 1925; letter to Hugh MacDiarmid, 28 April 1925, NLS MS Dep.309, Box 19.

<sup>116</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 30 April 1925, *Letters*, p.337.

<sup>117</sup>Letter to H.J.C.Grierson, 30 April 1925, *Letters*, p.308.

<sup>118</sup>Letter to H.J.C.Grierson, 12 May 1925, *Letters*, p.310.

<sup>119</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 1 June 1925, *Letters*, p.337.

<sup>120</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 17 June 1925,

NLS Dep.309, Box 19.

<sup>121</sup>Letter to Hugh MacDiarmid, 6 August 1925, NLS MS Dep.309, Box 19.

<sup>122</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 20 August 1925, *Letters*, p.342.

<sup>123</sup>Respectively 3 October and 14 November 1925.

<sup>124</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, [November 1925], 9 December 1925, *Letters*, pp.85-6, 87-8; letter to Neil Gunn, 14 October 1925, *Letters*, p.201.

<sup>125</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, [November 1925], *Letters*, p.87.

<sup>126</sup>Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons Stockbook, 1923-34, NLS MS Dep.309, No.47.

<sup>127</sup>Letter to Messrs Wm.Blackwood & Sons, 14 December 1930, NLS MS Dep.309, Box 19.

<sup>128</sup>For an account of MacDiarmid's relationship with the firm, see Ruth McQuillan, "The complete MacDiarmid," pp.186-8, 190-6.

<sup>129</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 13 November 1920, *Letters*, p.44. See also J.K. Annand, "Hugh MacDiarmid: some notes on the poet's early career," p.23.

<sup>130</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 19 December 1920, NLS MS Acc.4540, fols.83-4. There is no trace of this commission in the Oxford University Press archives.

<sup>131</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, [1921], *Letters*, p.58.

<sup>132</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.75.

<sup>133</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, 13 November and 19 December 1920, *Letters*, p.44 and NLS MS Acc.4540, fols.83-4.

<sup>134</sup>Letters to George Ogilvie, 29 December 1921, 5 April and 22 May 1922, *Letters*, p.70, 74, 75.

<sup>135</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 26 January 1921, *Letters*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>136</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 29 December 1921, *Letters*, p.70.

<sup>137</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 19 March 1922, *Letters*, pp.71-2.

<sup>138</sup>Letter to A.G.Grieve, 5 February 1921, EUL MS Gen. 2236.

<sup>139</sup>Letter to George Ogilvie, 8 September 1921, *Letters*, p.59.

<sup>140</sup>*Lucky Poet*, p.240.