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Preface to SSL 48.2

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PREFACE TO *SSL* 48:2

While *Studies in Scottish Literature* aims to include articles on a full range of literary periods, the balance can be hard to keep within any individual issue or even volume. Special topic issues make such balance even more difficult. This issue, though delayed through no fault of the contributors, redresses any imbalance in recent issues between earlier and later Scottish writing by opening with two sections focused on Scottish literature before 1707, while also including articles, notes and reviews on writing from later centuries.

The *SSL* symposium, guest-edited by Tricia McElroy and David Parkinson, presents four papers from the International Conference on Medieval Scottish Literature and Language, held at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. The Alabama conference, the sixteenth in a triennial series, was only the second to be held in North America since the conference met at South Carolina in 1990. Though all involved are well-established in the field, two contributors are publishing in *SSL* for the first time, and two and one of the guest editors were at the South Carolina conference and published in the proceedings.¹

The issue also features another important pre-1707 contribution, Jamie Reid Baxter's article on the Franco-Scottish calligrapher and poet Esther Inglis (c.1570-1624), accompanied by an edition of her *Octonaries upon the Vanitie and Inconstancie of the World*, based on a manuscript in the Folger Library, co-edited with Georgianna Ziegler. Dr. Reid-Baxter has also provided appendices about the prefatory materials in other manuscripts of the *Octonaries* and about the identity of one of those who wrote prefatory tributes to Inglis. Both contributors are engaged in other scholarly projects leading up to the quatercentenary of Inglis's death next year.

¹ G. Ross Roy, ed., Patrick Scott, guest co-ed., Lucie C. Roy, assoc. ed., *The Language and Literature of Early Scotland* [*Studies in Scottish Literature*, 26] (Columbia, SC: *Studies in Scottish Literature*; Tempe, Mesa, AZ: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1991).

The articles that follow include essays, notes and reviews on a mid- 18th century Scottish rhetorician (Robert Watson), a late 18th-century poet (three notes on Burns manuscripts, from the Roy Collection, from Florida State University, and from a Victorian facsimile of a lost manuscript letter), an early 19th century poet and novelist (Walter Scott), an early 20th century writer (R.B. Cunningham Graham), a 20th century cultural movement (the first of a two-part series on Scottish PEN), and two late 20th/early 21st century Scottish poets (Kenneth White and Liz Lochhead).

* * *

Studies in Scottish Literature has recently lost two valued friends. Our 18th century colleague, Donald Seibert (1940-2023), a navy veteran and Virginia PhD who taught at South Carolina from 1972-2002, was a David Hume scholar; in the past ten years, his early essay on Hume's last words, in *SSL* 19 (1984), predating both his book *The Moral Animus of David Hume* (1990) and his widely-reviewed later study *Mortality's Muse: the Fine Art of Dying* (2013), has been downloaded over 3,500 times. At the time of his death, he was working on a review essay for *SSL* on Hume's literary essays.

Like many Scots-Americans, Frank R. Shaw (1938-2023), of Atlanta, a Furman University graduate and trustee who had made his career in long-term health care, discovered Burns and Scottish literature through an interest in his family heritage from Jura. He became a notable collector of Burns (and other Scottish authors), a good friend to Ross Roy and Patrick Scott, a gifted speaker for Burns dinners and conferences, and through his online series *Robert Burns Lives!* a pioneer in using the web to bridge the gap between humanities academics and a wider audience. A member of the Atlanta Burns Club, and a past president of the St Andrews Society of Atlanta, he and his wife Susan have been generous hosts to many visiting Scottish scholars, and generous donors to many Scottish causes, including the Centre for Robert Burns Studies at Glasgow, the Roy Collection at the University of South Carolina, and *Studies in Scottish Literature*.

Originally launched in 2002 as a column in a genealogical newspaper, *The Family Tree*, and soon finding its online home on Alasdair McIntyre's website *Electric Scotland*, Frank Shaw's *Robert Burns Lives!* ran for over fifteen years and well over 250 episodes.² Its ethos initially came from Frank's blog-like accounts of places he and Susan visited and books he was

² For a history of *Robert Burns Lives!*, see Alasdair McIntyre, in *RBL*, no. 200 (2014), prefaced by Frank Shaw's own account; for a list of topics and contributors see: <https://electricScotland.com/familytree/frank/burns.htm>; for Mr. Shaw's other series, 'A Highlander and his Books' (48 reviews), and 'Chats with Authors' (34 interviews), see: <https://electricScotland.com/familytree/frank/index.htm>.

reading, and from the generous introductions he wrote for almost every episode. He soon recruited other Burnsians, notably Thomas Keith (no. 3) and Ross Roy (nos 6, 7, and 13). He was an active and persuasive editor, and his friendly enthusiasm drew contributions from a host of well-known Burns scholars, younger researchers, and unexpected names (Eddie Reader, no. 37; Alex Salmond, no. 40). As with most such sites, some episodes were ephemeral, but a good number are of lasting value. *Robert Burns Lives!* has played an outsized role in showing the value of ‘outreach’ as a two-way process, introducing Burns scholars and their work to a broad public, but also encouraging scholars to humanize their writing and see their research as others might see it.³ Frank’s own last contribution was in October 2020 (no. 268), a brief memoir of visiting Ellisland with his grandchildren.

* * *

We had hoped that this delayed issue could share plans for the future development of the journal. These are now well advanced, though not ready for formal announcement. Meantime, submissions or queries about submissions should be sent to both editors, and all correspondence should be cc’d to both editors. The next general issue, *SSL* 49.1, is now full, and the two issues after that (Fall 2023, Spring 2024) are both on special topics, making *SSL* 50.2 and *SSL* 51.1 the next issues open to consider other regular contributions. *SSL* traditionally publishes research-based articles and shorter notes or documentary items on all periods of Scottish literature, and on comparative or interdisciplinary topics where a significant focus is on Scottish literature. Shorter articles are usually easier to schedule than longer ones. For contact information, preferred length, and other guidelines, see links from the journal’s home page.⁴

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³ For tributes to the impact of *Robert Burns Lives!*, see Patrick Scott, Bill Dawson, Mike Duguid, and Gerard Carruthers, in *RBL*, no. 250 (2017)..

⁴ See “Aims and Scope”: <https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/aimsandscope.html>; and “Rights,” etc. : https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/ssl/rights_permissions.html.