



Leighton Letter No. 9

Newsletter of the Leighton Library¹

April 2024

This Leighton Letter comes at an exciting stage in the Library's story, with the **main phase of the Restoration completed**, cleaning of the interior under way, and the books now arriving back. The cartouche (see photo) is due to be replaced soon. Huge thanks to the Restoration Team for the work itself and for the monthly "Restoration News" for Friends and supporters of the Library! These started in Sept 2022 and the latest one, Apr 2024, is no.18!



A team of 12 volunteers is now cleaning and polishing the shelves, checking each book, passing it to the photographer to take a photo of the cover and front page, and placing it on the shelf. 4,500 books to be in place by early May.

A decision on the opening date is due soon. The first training session for guides is on Friday 19 April, 2 - 4 pm, in Dunblane Cathedral Halls, for those who can be available then. This session will give an opportunity for those who have already been guides to get a refresher of what they need to know, and those new to the role to get that introduction. There will be a chance to meet each other and chat over refreshments. Alternative training is planned for those who cannot be available that day. As we move into full gear, volunteers will be needed for other tasks behind the scenes - see page 2.

In this Leighton Letter:

- The Trustees report on donations received and work starting on the Undercroft
- Hugh Grant writes on Leighton's early life in troubled religious times
- Gordon Willis adds to our knowledge of the first Librarian, John Littlejohn
- Evelyn Roberts writes about Jennifer MacLellan, one of the Library's most devoted volunteers
- Josh Smith reports on the database created by the *Books & Borrowing project*, including detailed records of Leighton borrowers and the books borrowed in the years 1734 to 1822.

Editors Frances and Hugh welcome comments and suggestions for articles. Email us at leightonfriends@gmail.com

News from the Trustees

Donations and Volunteers:

Excluding Gerry Goddard's legacy, the Trust has been successful in attracting £362,000 in donations towards the cost of the building conservation and repair although the harling, lime wash and re-installation of the cartouche have still to be paid for. Currently, this is expected to result in a small deficit. We continue to seek donations to plug this gap and to build the financial resource allowing us to meet our annual running costs and to pay for renewal of the lime wash every five to six years. Visitor donations help but to grow these we must keep our doors open and more volunteers are needed. Please encourage others to join us.

The Undercroft:

In the meantime the Executive has started work on Phase 3, the modernisation of the Undercroft. Sufficient donations have already been received to allow us to employ professional architectural and quantity surveying assistance and when the designs and costings have been reviewed and approved by the Trustees we will let you know our plans.

¹ Leighton Library Trust, Scottish Charity SC003010.

An exciting time to join our friendly team of volunteers!

(Dan Gunn, Volunteer Coordinator)

Are you **“Pious and sober, trusty and of good behaviour”**? If so, you would have met the criteria to look after the Library in 1688. You would have had to keep the books and shelves free from dust, moths and cobwebs and **“suffer no persons to haunt the Library but such as come with a purpose to read.”**

The Library is completely run by volunteers.

- Trustees and Executive group members plan and organise (and much more!)
- Guides welcome visitors from around the world and share the background to Bishop Leighton, the building, the books, and the borrowers.

There are many other roles too:

- Creating newsletters
- Keeping track of Friends of the Leighton Library
- Planning events and special visits
- Developing the Undercroft
- Fund-raising
- Online presence / communications
- Contributing to the new education group
- Maintenance of the building and the books
- Developing the Library as an asset to Dunblane.



At this exciting stage in the Library’s development, it’s a perfect time to join our friendly team of volunteers. There is no formal time commitment – it’s as much or as little as you can manage! If you would like to know more, do get in touch with Volunteer Co-ordinator Dan Gunn. He will be happy to tell you about the different roles and discuss how best to use your talents to help support and promote the Library to a wide audience: <https://www.leightonlibrary.org.uk/profile/dan-gunn>

A Beacon of Moderation: Bishop Leighton in a Tumultuous Age

(by Hugh Grant)

As we look to the re-opening of the Library, it’s good to turn our attention back to Leighton himself, recognised as a force for moderation and toleration in a deeply divided church. With the help of the sources listed at the end of the article, Hugh has been looking at Leighton’s early life and the influences he would have received from different religious perspectives.



The 1600s in Britain was a period of intense religious turmoil. The Reformation in the 1500s had fractured the Church of England from Catholicism, but further schisms emerged between Anglicans and Puritans / Presbyterians.

The Puritans were English Protestants who maintained that the Church of England had not been fully reformed, still retained Catholic practices, and should become more Protestant. In Scotland the Presbyterians were opposed to the use of the Anglican Prayer Book and church rule by Bishops rather than by elders.

Early Years and University (1611-1631)

Born in London in 1611, Robert spent his early years with his family. His father, Alexander Leighton, was Scottish but ended up living in London, after studying at St Andrews University and Leyden University in Holland, where he graduated in 1618 as a Doctor of Medicine. Although his father was a Catholic, Alexander became a Presbyterian and a strong opponent of Catholicism.

From 1627 to 1631, Robert studied in Edinburgh University, graduating as MA. It was at this time that his father published a pamphlet, *Zion's plea against Prelacy: An Appeal to Parliament*, an attack on bishops and on Charles I's Catholic Queen. Found guilty of sedition, he was sentenced to mutilation and imprisoned indefinitely, finally being freed by Parliament in 1640.

Robert studied in both Scotland and England, receiving influences from both Presbyterian and Anglican traditions, which would have given him an understanding of the theological differences dividing the two factions.

Leighton's years on the continent (1631-41)

Leighton was exposed to similar divisions in France, which was also grappling with religious tensions. The Huguenots, a Protestant minority, faced persecution from the Catholic majority. Not much is known about his travels on the continent but we know that for some of the time he resided in the city of Douay, a centre of Catholic learning, and would have been aware of these conflicts first-hand.

Furthermore, France had been embroiled in intense political turmoil in the late 1500s. Knowledge of the Wars of Religion (1562-1598) would have been a stark reminder of the devastation religious conflict could unleash.

Newbattle Church, 1641-1653

Returning to Britain in 1641, Leighton became minister of Newbattle church (Presbyterian) near Edinburgh. He soon found himself amidst the English Civil War (1642-1651), a conflict heavily influenced by religious differences, leading ultimately to the execution of Charles I in 1649 and rule by Cromwell as Lord Protector. Leighton rejected the rigidity of both Puritans and Anglicans. He believed in the importance of personal piety and a focus on inner faith rather than outward rituals. His writings, particularly "Sermons" and "An Explanation of the Creed," illustrate his emphasis on a personal relationship with God.

Edinburgh University, 1653-1661

In 1653 Leighton became Principal and Professor of Divinity at Edinburgh University. He was appointed at the insistence of Cromwell whom he had met to negotiate the release of Scottish prisoners after Battle of Worcester (1651), when Cromwell's army defeated a Scottish force led by Charles II in the final action of the English Civil War. Leighton's time at Edinburgh appears to have given him an opportunity for contemplation, with thoughtful interpretation of the Bible, the Creed, and the Christian life, with some notable publications emerging.

Bishop and Archbishop (1661 – 1674) and Retirement (1674 – 1684)

We'll take up the details of the story from here in a later edition, covering the period when Leighton:

- was consecrated Bishop of Dunblane in the (now Episcopalian) Church of Scotland, following the Restoration of Charles II (1661-1671)
- reluctantly accepted elevation to Archbishop of Glasgow (1671-1674)
- retired in 1674 to Broadhurst Manor, Horsted Keynes, in Sussex, home of his half-sister Sapphira Lightmaker, the widow of a successful London brewer.
- died in the Bell Inn, London, in 1684.

With thanks to Gordon Willis for helpful notes on Leighton's biography. Gordon notes that Robert and his nephew Edward became close friends and together planned how to set up the Leighton Library in Dunblane. Thanks also to Bill Inglis for his excellent article on Leighton's life which can be found on the Library website: [Robert Leighton by Bill Inglis](#). And finally to acknowledge the use of material from the *Dummies Guide to Scottish History* and *Wikipedia*, and help from *Google Gemini*.

The Later Career of John Littlejohn

(by Gordon Willis)

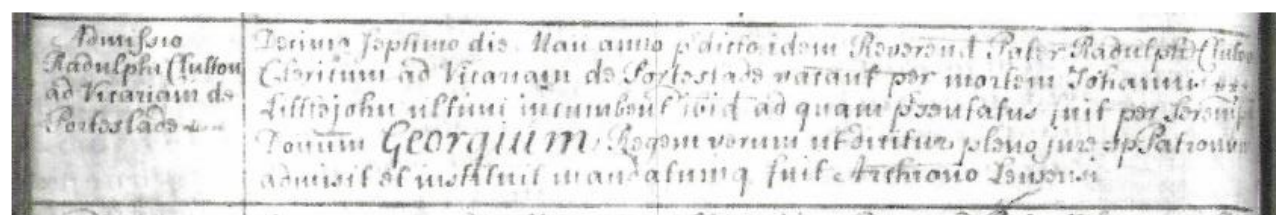
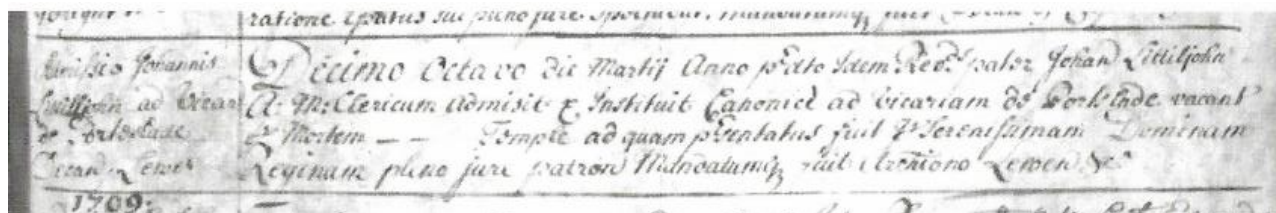
In Leighton Letter 7, Gordon wrote about the first Leighton librarian John Littlejohn, who disappeared from the scene after less than a year, his tenure cut short by the revolution of 1688 which led to Protestant King William of Orange replacing Catholic James II and VII. Never one to give up the search, Gordon has now established with better than 90% certainty that Littlejohn eventually achieved a career in the Church of England, within 25 miles of Leighton's retirement home in Sussex.

In an earlier Newsletter I recounted the mystery of the first Leighton librarian, John Littlejohn, MA (Edinburgh 1684), who after a very short tenure disappeared from the Scottish scene. However, further research has revealed that, probably with help from his Leightonian friends, he was eventually able to fulfil his clerical ambitions, though not in Scotland. In 1705, John Littlejohn, MA (Edinburgh), was ordained as a clergyman in the Church of England by the Bishop of London. Since only one John Littlejohn in the history of the university to 1858 is recorded as gaining an MA, this looks like our man. The alumni register for some years (though not 1684) notes the subsequent careers of graduates, several of whom also became clergymen in England.

The gap of some 15 years between his departure from the library post around 1689 and his ordination suggests that Littlejohn's path was not easy. Armed with his MA, certificates of completion of four years' postgraduate study at St Andrews, and glowing references from Bishop Douglas and Dr Fall, former Principal of Glasgow University, he might have hoped for swifter progress. There may well be documents as yet undiscovered that will explain the apparent delay.

Once ordained, he spent the years from 1709 until his death in 1722 as Vicar of Portslade, near Brighton. Remarkably, he had therefore made almost the same journey as Robert Leighton, for Portslade is just 25 miles from Horsted Keynes where Leighton retired, to live at the home of his widowed half-sister Saphira Lightmaker and son Edward. Both were in the Diocese of Chichester. Littlejohn also seems to have supplied the nearby curacy of Newtimber, where Edward Lightmaker's niece Elizabeth Osborne lived with her husband, who was the lord of the manor. The Osbornes were close to Edward, to the extent that he appointed them overseers of the charity school he founded by his will, and he also asked Elizabeth to have some of Leighton's manuscripts transcribed and sent to Dr Fall with a view to publication. Though Littlejohn's appointments were both formally within the gift of the Crown, it seems very likely that he obtained them with the backing of the Lightmaker connection. If so, he owed much to his brief spell at the Leighton Library.

The illustrations show the entries in the Episcopal Records of the Diocese of Chichester, relating respectively to John Littlejohn's appointment as Vicar of Portslade, and to his replacement following his death. (West Sussex Record Office, ref MF 423. I am grateful to WSRO for permission to reproduce these documents, and to Jenny Bettger of WSRO for assistance with research.)



Lady Jennifer MacLellan (Jul 1930 – Oct 2023)

(by Evelyn Roberts)

We were sad to hear the news that former guide and Leighton Library supporter Jennifer MacLellan died in October, aged 93. When Evelyn became Honorary Custodian of the Library, she got to know Jennifer well. She tells us about Jennifer's long interest and involvement in the Library.

I first encountered Jennifer over 20 years ago when I took on the Honorary Custodianship of the Leighton Library. As a recent arrival in Dunblane it seemed appropriate to introduce myself to the Guides by telephone in the first instance. The Guides proved most welcoming, and when I reached Jennifer on the list she was very friendly and positive and thus began a lasting, close friendship.

Her involvement and commitment to the Library went back many years. In her service as a Guide, in bringing on new Guides and support both financial and practical, she was stalwart. She lit up the Library with her greetings to the visitors and her genuine friendliness and interest in people. It was this which allowed her to connect as easily with international visitors as with those who admitted that, although they had lived for 30 years in Dunblane, this was their first visit to the Leighton.

After a move to Edinburgh when I handed over the Custodianship to Dr Graeme Young, I found myself back in Perthshire and it was Jennifer who persuaded me to return as a Guide. We served together on many sessions until in her late eighties she felt that the stairs and the standing had become too much for her.

Some years ago, June Payne, another guide, visited Bishop Leighton's grave by the Church in Horsted Keynes in East Sussex, where his life is celebrated with an annual service. She discovered in what high regard he is still held there. Jennifer was inspired by their example and encouraged a visit by members of the Church to Dunblane Cathedral for a concert of 17th century music and celebration of Leighton's work, arranged as a fund raiser for the Library. Jennifer hosted a lunch for them at Churches' House. She was also instrumental in setting up the Friends of the Leighton Library and rounded up many Stirlingshire friends to enrol. Latterly, it was at her suggestion that this newsletter was christened The Leighton Letter.

She was a strong supporter of the Parish Church of Buchlyvie, in Stirlingshire, where she had lived for many years. Former minister Scott Brown came back to conduct her memorial service on 27th October. Jennifer was married first to Roderick Maclellan, of the Glasgow engineering firm of bridge builders, who died in his early fifties, and later to a distant cousin, Sir Robin MacLellan of the Scottish Tourist Board and British Airports Authority, who also predeceased her. Her father, Lieutenant Colonel Stanley Casson, was a Fellow of New College, Oxford, a Greek specialist, author and poet. He was serving in the Intelligence Corps in 1944 when he was killed in an aircraft crash.

Jennifer always showed great compassion and gave generously of her time and resources to charitable causes. She sat on the Board of Crossroads, and was much involved with the Blind, Strathcarron Hospice, and others. She was a keen hands-on gardener who loved to conduct visitors on tours of her beautiful garden at Buchlyvie. She loved to fly and was delighted to be taken for a trip in our little Piper aircraft over the Forth Bridges although she had already crossed the Atlantic on Concorde.

She played the role of matriarch with her accustomed address and commitment and leaves a son and daughter, five grandchildren and four great grandchildren, the latest of whom attended her memorial service at six weeks old.

All who came in contact with Jennifer were in awe of her energy and accomplishment. A truly remarkable woman who will be greatly missed by so many people who crossed paths with her.



Jennifer on her 90th birthday

Books and Borrowing Project: Database now available

(by Josh Smith)

As reported in previous editions of the *Leighton Letter*, this project examined the register of Leighton Library borrowers in the years 1780 to 1840. As the project nears its end, it has launched the immense database it has created, freely accessible to all. It includes a digitised record of Leighton Library borrowers and the books they borrowed over those years.

Last month, the *Books and Borrowing* project reached an important milestone with the ‘soft launch’ of the project’s database and data. For the last three years, researchers based at the universities of Stirling and Glasgow have been transcribing and digitising borrowing records from eighteen historic libraries across Scotland for the period 1750 to 1830, including the Leighton Library. The aim of the project was to uncover and reinterpret the history of reading in Scotland, to test established narratives about important books and authors and to reveal what people really borrowed in eighteenth and early nineteenth century Scotland. The project includes data from a range of institutions, including the university libraries of Edinburgh, St Andrews and Glasgow, subscription libraries in Orkney, Selkirk, Westerkirk and Wigtown, a commercial circulating library in Edinburgh, a private library in Aberdeenshire, the Hunterian Museum Library in Glasgow and the libraries of the Faculty of Advocates and the Royal High School of Edinburgh.

The screenshot shows the Leighton Library database interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'INTRODUCTION', 'REGISTERS (5)', 'BOOKS (809)', 'BORROWERS (306)', and 'FACTS & FIGURES'. Below this, the page is titled 'LEDGER 1, PAGE 244'. A navigation bar includes 'Previous', 'List of pages', 'Jump to page: 244', and 'Next'. There are also options for 'TEXT VIEW', 'IMAGE VIEW', and 'IMAGE & TEXT VIEW'. A tip indicates 'This view works best on a large screen' with a 'Download full image' link. The main content area is split into two columns. The left column shows a scan of a handwritten ledger page with entries such as '1812 Rev. Mr Gilfillan -', 'Feb 25 Leighton's Select Sermons - Returned', 'Mar 26 Horrocks sermons Vol. 1', 'June 18 Dr. Douglas's Controversies - Ret.', '25 1/2 Part on the Ecclesiastical System - Ret.', '28 Dr. Leighton's 1720 Sermons - Ret.', 'Sept 28 Taylor's Select Sermons - one Ret.', '1803 Mar 25 The History of the University of Edinburgh - one Ret.', 'Mar 25 Mackintosh's Letters - one Ret.', 'Dr. Douglas's Controversies - one Ret.', 'May 16 South's Sermons - Vol. 1 - Ret.', 'Aug 18 Owen's fourth Volume - Ret.', 'Sept 6 Gooden's Disquisitions - one Ret.', '1814 Nov 24 Bacon's Sermons - one Ret.', 'Jan 26 South's Sermons - Vol. 1 - Ret.', and '1815'. The right column shows a detailed record for 'Leighton's Select Sermons' (Record ID 293161), borrowed on 1812/3/26 (Thursday). It lists the borrower as Reverend Mr Michael Gilfillan, with details on his gender, address, and occupation. It also provides information on the book holding, including the author Robert Leighton, the genre 'Sermons', and the title 'Sermons preached by Dr. Robert Leighton, Published, at the desire of his friends, after his death, from his papers written with his own hand.' The record includes publication details like language, place, year, and format, as well as the volume borrowed.

1: Screen grab from the database, showing, left, an image of the ledger page, and, right, the transcription of the borrowing records.

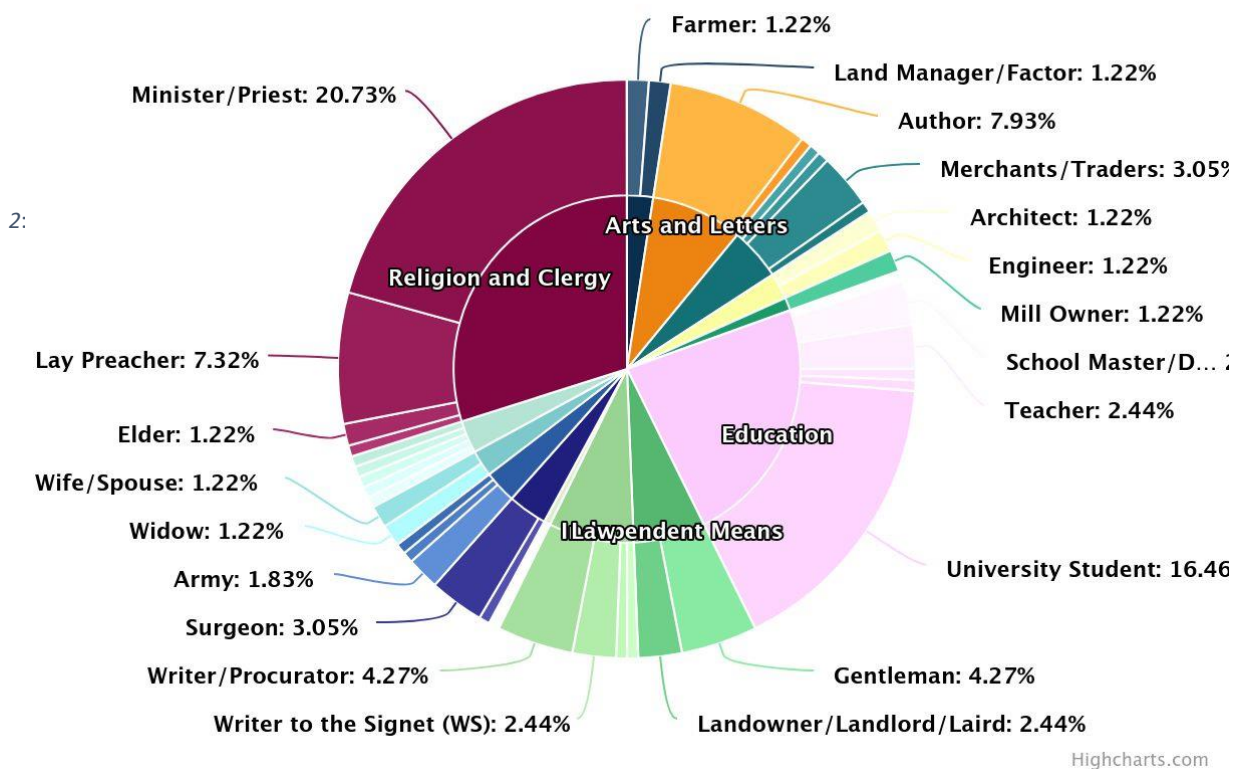
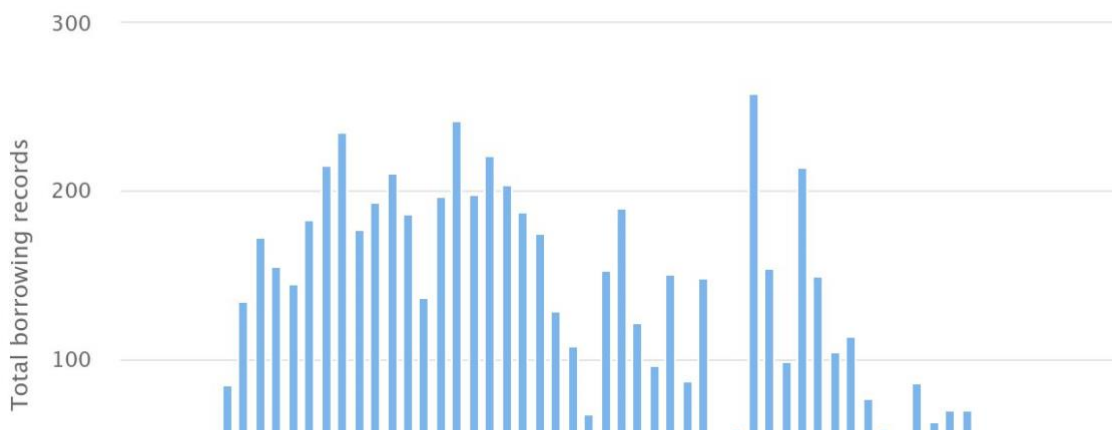
The project has digitised all of the Leighton Library’s surviving borrowing records between 1780 and 1840, as well as the library’s first minute book, which spans the years 1734 to 1822. The database is free to use and accessible from the project’s homepage <https://borrowing.stir.ac.uk/>

Now that the project has reached its endpoint, it’s possible to provide some idea of the scope of the data that has been digitised. The database comprises almost 145,000 borrowing records from over

27,000 borrowed books across 21 genres. Spanning the years 1732 to 1840, it includes data on over 12,500 authors and over 11,000 borrowers.

The borrowing records of the Leighton Library form an important element of the database, enabling us to see when and how the Library was used by borrowers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Leighton's data reveals that 6,737 borrowings of 809 books were made between the years 1780 and 1840. These books were written by 565 authors and borrowed by 306 different

Borrowings per year



3: Borrower occupations at the Leighton Library.

individuals. 245 (80%) of these borrowers were male, while 61 (20%) were female. In comparison to the other libraries in the database, this is quite a large proportion of female library members, although the vast majority of borrowing records (95%) were still made by men.

According to the data, an average of 22 borrowings were made per borrower and each book holding was borrowed an average of 8 times. The busiest year for the library was 1818, when 258 borrowings were made. The Leighton's most prolific borrower was the Rev. Robert Stirling (1765-1817), the minister of Dunblane between 1795 and 1817, who made 408 borrowings between 1791 and 1811.

Following close behind in second place was the Rev. Michael Gilfillan (1747-1816), the minister of Dunblane's Secession church between 1768 and 1816, who made 373 borrowings between 1780 and 1815. The library's most popularly borrowed book was *The Statistical Account of Scotland* (1791-99), or the *Old Statistical Account*, which was borrowed 194 times between 1791 and 1830.

Please do give the website a visit and the database a search. Users can view an image of the original ledger page alongside a diplomatic transcription of every borrowing record. In the case of the Leighton Library, each borrowing record includes a link to the Library's modern catalogue, where the book still survives in the collection, enabling future researchers to be able to track down the physical text that was actually borrowed. The website also includes a Facts and Figures page for each library which provides top ten lists for the most popular books, authors, genres, and the most prolific borrowers, as well as visualisations of borrower occupations and borrowings by book genre.

An *On This Day* widget allows users to see which books were borrowed from any of the project's libraries on any given day. For the tech savvy amongst you, all the project's data can be freely downloaded to enable anyone to construct their own searches and visualisations. We do hope you all enjoy using and searching the database. Any errors or glitches should be reported to the project's principal investigator, Professor Katie Halsey at katherine.halsey@stir.ac.uk We hope the database becomes a resource used by researchers, guides, and friends of the Leighton Library to learn and discover more about the Library's long and active history.

And finally...

Do keep an eye on the Leighton website <https://www.leightonlibrary.org.uk> where you can find excellent photos, videos, latest news, and links to press articles. You can also read about the history of Robert Leighton, the Library, and the books. All previous editions of the Leighton Letter are there, with articles on Leighton, the books and the bindings, the early librarians, past volunteers, and other subjects. All 18 Restoration Newsletters are there.

Friends of the Leighton Library: If you know of someone interested in signing up as a Friend, an application form can be obtained by emailing leightonfriends@gmail.com



From the April 2024 Restoration Newsletter