



Inventory

Acc.11182

HM Sole & Only Master Printers (Scotland): the Bible Board

National Library of Scotland
Manuscripts Division
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1EW
Tel: 0131-466 2812
Fax: 0131-466 2811
E-mail: manuscripts@nls.uk

© Trustees of the National Library of Scotland

Minute books, registers, letter-books and other papers of the Board, 1839-1981.

In the early 19th century there was much public complaint about the cost and quality of Bibles produced on both sides of the Border where the respective King's printers enjoyed monopoly rights to the printing of acts of Parliament, proclamations, the Authorised Version of the Bible, the metrical psalms, catechism, etc (in England the universities of Oxford and Cambridge also had the Bible printing privilege). When the existing Scottish patent expired in 1839, new letters patent were issued to a body known as the Bible Board consisting of the Lord Advocate, Solicitor-General, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and nominated members, to hold collectively the office of HM Sole and Master Printers but, instead of printing themselves, to licence the printing of Bibles and other specified works by Scottish publishers. In 1890 the licensing powers of the Board were confined to the Bible, New Testament and Book of Psalms. Crown copyright applies only to the Authorised Version and not to the numerous alternative translations that are now available. All business relating to licences is normally transacted by the Clerks to the Board, and depositors, on their behalf, of the records listed below, Messrs Bell and Scott, WS, Edinburgh (formerly Bell & Scott, Bruce & Kerr, WS).

The collection has been arranged as detailed below:

- 1-5 MINUTE-BOOKS
- 6-12 RECORD BOOKS
- 13-14 LICENCE REGISTERS
- 15-23 SECRETARIES' CORRESPONDENCE
- 24-27 PAPERS
- 28-34 PARLIAMENTARY & OTHER PRINTED PAPERS
- 36-38 FORMAL DOCUMENTS
- 39-41 BIBLES

Minutes of the Board

1. Minute book, 1838-1865.
2. Minute book, 1865-1959.

Minutes of the Standing Committee of the Board

3. Minute book, 1842-62.
4. Minute book, 1862-86.

5. Minute book, 1886-1915.

Record Books

- 6-12. A series of volumes containing a record of judgements by standing committees of the Board on editions under licence submitted to them for approval and examined by their appointed reader. The later volumes contain detailed corrections noted by the reader.

6. 1842-8.
7. 1854-64.
8. 1869-73.
9. 1873-8.
10. 1887-96.
11. 1922-38.
12. *post* 1938.

Licence Registers

13. 1859-1896 (nos.1073-2387).
14. 1896-1946 (nos.2388-2645).

Secretaries' Letter-Books & Correspondence

15. Letter-book, 1839-67.
16. Letter-book, 1934-46.
- 17-22. A series of correspondence files, 1952-68, relating to licences and other business concerning the Board kept by its Secretary, W Mark Kerr WS, of Bell & Scott, Bruce & Kerr, WS.
 17. 1952-4.
 18. 1954-6.
 19. 1956-8.
 20. 1958-60.
 21. 1961-4.
 22. 1964-8.
 23. Miscellaneous correspondence and associated papers, 1903-75, of the Secretaries to the Board.

Papers

24. Board papers manuscript and printed, 1839-1911.
- (i) 'Instructions for Her Majesty's Sole and Only Master Printers in Scotland', printed paper, 1839.
 - (ii) 'Additional Instructions' [etc], printed paper, 28 Dec 1839.
 - (iii) 'Additional Instructions', 17 Jan 1845.
 - (iv) Another copy of (iii).
 - (v) Bible Board (Scotland): House of Commons Command Paper, 22 July 1859, printing copies of Royal Warrant, instructions, reports and trade lists.
 - (vi) Report of the Secretary as to questions affecting the present efficiency of the Board's action, 5 Feb 1868.
 - (vii)-(viii) Memorial of the Board for opinion of Crown Counsel: scroll and fair copies, 1869.
 - (ix) Royal commission to the Revd Cornelius Griffen to be a member of the Board.
 - (x) Copies of correspondence between Mr Charles Henderson, Agent to the Board, and the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer relating to the former's emoluments, Dec 1881.
 - (xi) Letter of appointment to James Bruce to be Interim Law Agent & Clerk to the Board, 24 Oct 1885.
 - (xii) Report [printed] of a Scottish Office Departmental Committee into the duties and constitution of the Bible Board, 20 Feb 1889.
 - (xiii) Instruction under Sign Manual to the Board, 29 Nov 1890.
 - (xiv) Copy, report of James Bruce WS, Secretary to the Board, to Lord Pentland, Secretary for Scotland [corrected typescript], 1911.
25. Draft and typescript copies of minutes of the Board, many signed by the members present, 1932-57.
26. Copy of text of Royal Warrant (1839) papers relating to Board procedure and copies of licences, 1963-81; other copies of material in this file have been returned to the depositor.
27. Business accounts, HM Sole & Only Master Printers to Messrs Bruce & Kerr WS, 1957-63.

Parliamentary & Other Printed Papers

- 28-35. A series mostly of printed parliamentary papers, 1832-80, forming part of the archive and all relating to the work of the Board.

28. *Report from the Select Committee on King's Printers' Patents with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, Lond, 1832.
29. *Report from the Select Committee on the King's Printers' Patent (Scotland) with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, Lond, 1837.
- 30-31. Bible Board (Scotland): *Report unto the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty*, Edin, March 1848 (2 copies).
32. *Report from the Select Committee on the Queen's Printers' Patent together with the Proceedings of the Committee and Minutes of Evidence*, Lond., 1859.
33. *Report from the Select Committee on the Queen's Printers' Patent* [etc], Lond, 1860.
34. *Report of the Commissioners ... to Inquire into Certain Civil Departments in Scotland, with Evidence and other Papers* [etc], Edin, 1870.
35. *Additional reasons of Dissent from the Judgement in Professor Smith's Case by Sir Henry Moncrieff*, [Edin] 1880. Rev Sir Henry Moncrieff was a member of the Board.

Formal Documents

36. Commission under the Great Seal in Scotland (attached) in favour of Andrew Rutherford [Lord Advocate] to act as HM Sole and Only Master Printer in Scotland; dated Edinburgh, 17 July 1839.
- 37-38. Two other examples of the Great Seal (Victoria); detached, in cases.

Bibles

- 39-41. Three editions of the Bible (AV); two of them bear the Scottish licence.
 39. *The Holy Bible*, Scottish Bible Society, Edinburgh; licence dated 22 July 1950.
 40. *The New Testament*, Collins, Glasgow; licence dated 3 March 1952.
 41. *New Testament and Psalms*, World Publishing Company, Cleveland [Ohio] and New York; with colour plates; no date of publication.