The crowded seventeenth century has seen a major re-evaluation by historians. For long it was seen as the darkness before the dawn of the 'glorious revolution' and then parliamentary union. Its religious history was dominated by the Covenanting 'struggle'. A quite different viewpoint has now emerged, based on two great themes. One is the development of the state formation achieved by James VI before 1603 into the 'imperial experiment' of combining three kingdoms. This experiment was set in motion by James VI in 1603, put under almost intolerable stress by his son and by the civil war which destroyed him, then re-established by the force of Cromwell's arms.

The common interests of Scotland and England in the restoration of Charles II revived the experiment until the Stuart regime collapsed. The apparently parallel revolutions of 1688-9 in fact revealed that Scotland and England had distinctive needs and traditions. The success or even permanence of the regal union seemed no longer a foregone conclusion. Full parliamentary union can be seen as an admission of its failure. Nor did 1707 answer finally the question of the relationship of Scotland to the other British kingdoms.

The second great theme of seventeenth century Scotland, the working out of a church settlement, continued to be intertwined with the first. The tendency of Protestantism to split undermined the idea of a state church and established a pattern of dissent and eventually schism which had political implications all along. The source of much of the tension within the regal union was also religion. Each ruler in turn failed to reconcile the differing views of Protestantism held by majorities and
minorities in Scotland and England. The result was a complex series of changes of direction, especially during the period after Scotland had effectively shaken off royal control in the illusory unity of the National Covenant.

Ultimately it was only the threat by James VII to abandon Protestantism altogether which forced an accommodation between different church organisations north and south of the border. This way of looking at the century on its own terms has also provoked interesting questions in cultural, economic and social history: did Scotland move closer to the other British kingdoms during this period? what were the key areas of 'state formation'? what were the strengths and weaknesses of the Scottish economy before the disruption of the civil wars? why was Scotland so united in defence of the Kirk in 1638 and so divided for so long after that? how different really were highland and lowland society? Why did tension between them increase? why was there such a prolonged Scottish witch hunt? how much agricultural improvement took place before 1690? what were the origins and significance of the intellectual developments in the 1670s and 80s?

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE

James VI hoped that his accession to the throne of England would lead to a 'perfect union' between his kingdoms. It did enable him to continue the process of state formation which he had begun before 1603. James had an effective government in Edinburgh. However by 1625 he had unconsciously begun the disassociation of the King from the true interests of Scotland, both in politics and in religion, allowing room for an alternative leadership of national identity. The absolute monarchy which he created proved hard for his successor to handle.

The sinews of James VI's absentee rule continued to develop throughout his reign as he balanced the reduction of personal contact by a strengthening of institutional links. He controlled all the estates of Parliament as well as the Committee of the Articles which alone could initiate legislation. The most powerful government body throughout the seventeenth century remained the Privy Council, run by a small active group of officials over whose votes James kept a close watch. He used English money for patronage and in return won higher levels of taxation from Scotland.

The stronger royal state challenged attempts at independence by the convention of royal burghs, the Court of Session and the General Assembly of the Kirk. In particular, James confirmed state control of the Kirk through the exile of Andrew Melville and the elevation of bishops at the expense of the General Assembly. The Five Articles of Perth, however, moved royal policy away from the centre ground. James was circumspect about enforcing them. Yet the fact that he had created some opposition among those who usually supported him suggests that, by the end of his reign, he was losing his sure touch in the management of Scotland.

A practical limitation on royal power lay in the localities, where the great noble houses retained their feudal overlordship. Magnates and lairds increasingly acted as the local representatives of royal justice as pressure from the government
encouraged loose feudal ties to be replaced by legal and state ones. James VI increased royal control of the borders with a policy of steady pressure and a ready use of the gallows. Indirect control of the Highlands through Campbells, Gordons and Mackenzies was reinforced by the Statutes of Iona 1609 which several chiefs were forced to sign. They struck a blow against Gaelic society but did not end warfare in the southern Highlands. Colonisation was also used in the western and northern Isles, as in northern Ireland.

The failure of Charles I to maintain the regal union was starkly revealed within thirteen years of his accession. The National Covenant of 1638 can be seen as the fulcrum of the political history of the next half-century. It was a manifesto of the alternative leadership of Scotland's political and religious communities. It operated on different levels, activating disparate groups in different ways to create an illusion of a united national revolution. The consensus on which the Covenant was launched fractured soon after. It was replaced with confrontation in various degrees of violence as Scotland became entangled in the first British civil war.

Charles I attempted to alter the terms on which the regal union operated to suit his own ends: the aggrandisement of the crown, the challenging of noble power and the establishment of the influence and wealth of an Episcopalian Church. In pursuing this vision of unity between his kingdoms, he alienated the political classes in Scotland and made them fear relegation to provincial status. Above all he created widespread insecurity among nobility and ministers. The Act of Revocation of 1625 alienated the nobility by giving political power to bishops and by higher taxes.

The majority of the Kirk disliked Charles' use of the English Prayer Book on his visit in 1633, the new code of canons of 1636 and the new liturgy in 1637. The Covenant won widespread support in 1638 by delineating the structure of discontent in Scotland. There was an orchestrated riot at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh on 23 July 1637 at the first use of the new prayer book. It was a continuation of opposition to Charles' political and ecclesiastical policies and to the arbitrary style of their imposition. The loss of power felt by nobles and clergy who were not listened to by Charles in London deepened to frustration. All constitutional means of communication appeared to be blocked.

Charles' intransigence led a representative organisation, later called the 'Tables', covering the nobility, clergy, burgh and shire commissioners, to set themselves up as a virtual rival administration. The National Covenant was written in February 1638. It had radical echoes as a nationalist statement against the provincialisation of Scotland within Charles' 'Great Britain'. Yet it was a conservative document. It argued that ecclesiastical innovations tended to subvert 'our liberties, laws and estates'. The Covenant was the work of a legal, clerical and landowning alliance, foreshadowing their continuing dominance of Scottish society.

The history of the Covenant and the wars which followed can only be understood in the wider imperial context of Charles' rule of all three of his kingdoms. While intending to reintegrate Scotland, he made a series of concessions. Leaders of the Covenanters arranged for the Covenant to be signed across Scotland. Meanwhile, at
the Glasgow General Assembly of 1638 they were already developing their arguments further, particularly against the bishops.

The major themes of conflict between the kingdoms had emerged by the end of the Bishops’ Wars in 1640. While a united Scotland had won a relatively bloodless victory over royal authority, Charles' actions were also being determined by his conflict with the English Parliament. Scotland's radical covenanting leadership were determined to impose Presbyterianism on England. There was also tension between those who thought their aims had been achieved and those who wanted more - constitutional change, alliance with the English Parliament, and an attack on the monarchy. In any event, the British dimension reasserted itself when the English civil war broke out in 1642 and the radical covenanting leadership agreed the Solemn League and Covenant with the English Parliament. However the war of the three kingdoms spread across Scotland. The royalist military rising led by Montrose and Alasdair Macdonald or MacColla, was not defeated until September 1645.

The conflict in Scotland led to reaction and extremism. In 1646 Charles' defeat sharply reduced Scottish influence in England. Scots nobles won Parliamentary support for the Engagement with him in December 1647. This marked the breach between the aristocracy and the radicals. The counter-revolution failed when the aristocratic army was defeated by Cromwell at Preston in 1648. This left a political vacuum in Scotland into which the radical clerical party could move. It was the start of a period of extreme theocracy in Scotland, defined by the 'Act of Classes'. On the execution of his father, the regime arranged an alliance - on humiliating terms - with Charles II. Cromwell had then to defeat his former ally at the battles of Dunbar and Worcester and by the end of 1651 Scotland and England had been declared to be one commonwealth.

Scotland under Cromwell was, from 1651 to 1660, a conquered country, united on English terms, represented in an English parliament on a restricted franchise, run by an English dominated commission underpinned by a military occupation and paid for by heavy taxation. But the occupation itself was not oppressive. Justice worked with a good deal of efficiency, speed and impartiality. The power of ministers was curbed, although religious divisions in the country between moderate pro-royalist 'resolutioners' and radical 'remonstrants' or 'protestors' hardened for the first time into genuine schism.

The republican regime may well have been largely accepted by 1659, but there was little objection to the restoration of Charles II the following year. Though the English occupation was resented, petitions for economic union accompanied General Monck on his march south to restore Charles II. The Restoration period has been misinterpreted in three ways at least in the past. It has been seen as a period of reaction, of reversal to pre-war social and political life, which it could never be. Indeed many of the aristocratic and anti-clerical elements of the Covenanting movement attained fulfilment in the reign of Charles II. It has been seen as a heroic period in Covenanting mythology.

The nature of the conflict between government and resistance over Church policy was constantly changing, but the groups who took resistance to extremes became
increasingly isolated geographically and socially and had little part in the eventual victory of Presbyterianism in 1689. Lastly, it has been seen as a period of limited achievement politically or intellectually whereas in fact there was real progress as well as continuity in both areas. Like all historical regimes which are deposed by revolution, the Restoration must be considered for itself, with only one eye on the events of 1689.

The Restoration period has also been seen as a period of limited achievement politically or intellectually, whereas in fact there was real progress as well as continuity in both areas. Like all historical regimes which are deposed by revolution, the Restoration must be considered for itself, with only one eye on the events of 1689. In his permanent absence Charles II's government delivered control of Scotland, primarily through the Privy Council. It was more aristocratic than his father's and gained a reputation for greed, corruption and legal irregularities. Both political and ecclesiastical opposition now appealed to 'fundamental laws and liberties'. However, the creation of a Stuart Court in Edinburgh under Charles' brother James after 1679 changed the political terms of reference and induced an outbreak of loyalty among politicians.

On James' accession in 1685 it appeared to contemporaries that the regal union had addressed its central problem: the insecurity created by the lack of attention paid to Scotland by absentee rulers. It was the last great irony of the Stuarts' long rule that this success was the basis of the policy which finally destroyed it. A presbyterian settlement, as suggested in the Engagement, seemed likely in Scotland. However in 1662 a new Episcopalian system was set up, though the structure of synods and presbyteries was retained. The resolutioner minister James Sharp became Archbishop of St. Andrews. The new church resembled in many ways that of the first seventy years after the Reformation. Yet the genuine schism which had resulted from the civil war period persisted throughout the Restoration.

Conventicles or illegal church services were held, often outside, by ministers who still adhered to the Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant. A quarter of all ministers were deprived for failure to agree to the settlement. These ministers were most common in south-west Scotland, as were conventicles. Conventicles showed two new and radical features: the absence of leadership by landowners and a direct challenge, by implication, to the authority of the crown. The response of the government veered between conciliation, which allowed conventicles to take on the form of an alternative Church and repression, which provoked armed rebellion in 1666 and 1679. By the 1680s only a small band, the 'Cameronians', remained in arms. Stuart absolutism had never seemed stronger in Scotland than at the accession of James VII. Yet within three years its weakness had been exposed.

The revolution of 1688-9 was imported from England but James also allowed particular problems peculiar to Scotland to emerge. His offers of toleration had the double effect of confusing his Episcopalian supporters and allowing an alternative Presbyterian Church to come into being. Yet the government remained in control of the country until the news of James' flight from London. There was then a popular uprising in Edinburgh and a covenanting revolution in the south-west. At this the loyalty of the aristocratic politicians who had benefited from thirty years of restored
Stuart rule dissolved. The settlement of 1689 consisted of the Claim of Right and the Articles of Grievances. It contained much that was distinctively Scottish. Both politics and religion retained a tension with England that highlighted the difficulties regal union had created.

In politics there was a relatively free and outspoken Parliament. In religion, the restoration of a full presbyterian system was initiated with the expulsion of what was eventually to be half the ministers in the Kirk. Almost immediately new themes emerged in the regal union. One was Jacobitism. Southern Highland clans fought at Killiecrankie for Viscount Dundee's rebellion. Their special relationship with the Stuarts was a result of Campbell adherence to Covenanting opposition. Another was William's new anti-French foreign policy. This took little account of Scottish interests, a perspective which was to dominate the next eighteen years of Scottish history. This proved that, despite the changes of the 1689 revolution, tension within the British imperial experiment remained.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

About 30% of Scots lived in the Highlands, 30% in the south-east Lowlands and 20% each in the north-east and the west and south-west Lowlands. It was not clear whether the population of Scotland was rising or falling. A high celibacy rate and age of marriage restrained it. The 1640s saw the most serious mortality crisis, with the last outbreaks of plague killing a fifth of the people in Edinburgh and other towns, and the civil war leading to death and deportation. Emigration for military service, especially in Scandinavia during the Thirty Years War, accounted for tens of thousands of Scottish men before 1650 and numbers settled in Poland and in Ulster. A more even mixture of men and women emigrated subsequently, mainly to England, Ireland and the New World.

Within Scotland, society was equally mobile. People moved to towns to escape poverty, to obtain jobs - especially after plague outbreaks - or for education. Edinburgh apprentices, for instance, came from all over Scotland. The proportion of Scots living in towns doubled in the seventeenth century as it had in the previous. Local migration in rural areas was also considerable, especially among the poorer cottars and among women. In the Highlands population movement was greater than the clan system might suggest. Coal, salt and lead exports increased in the early seventeenth century, as did imports of timber, iron, flax and hemp. Many of Scotland's existing trading patterns - with the Netherlands, France and the Baltic - persisted well into the seventeenth century. Changes slowly emerged. Ulster settlements increased trade with Ireland.

In the last quarter of the century, England became the major trading partner for Scotland. The Union of the Crowns and the pacification of the borders allowed this, though the English resisted the idea of free trade. Economic development faced a lack of capital and expertise. Textile production in the Lothians, lead, gold and silver mining in Clydesdale and iron smelting in the western Highlands were all enterprises of modest success. Sir George Bruce's integrated coal mines and salt pans at Culross was an exceptionally successful venture. Fishing was also of economic
significance, especially around the Firths of Forth and Clyde, and the Isles of Orkney and Shetland.

One small group of Edinburgh merchants did use sophisticated methods such as joint-stock companies abroad. Sir William Dick was the greatest of these ‘merchant princes’, whose capital underwrote salt pans, grain trade and the liming of farmland. They diversified into ship-owning, industry, grain futures, money lending and urban and rural property speculation. Government economic legislation on the other hand generally lacked direction. Neither the attempts by Sir William Alexander to set up a colony in Nova Scotia nor most of the 24 monopolies granted between 1587 and 1642 proved successful. The Covenanting wars from 1638-52 caused economic disaster, compounded by plague in the 1640s. The English occupation at least brought stability but in 1658 Cromwell described Scotland as ‘a very ruined nation’.

After the Restoration, recovery was slow, hampered by the Dutch wars and the English Navigation Acts, but in the 1670s British neutrality reversed the situation and trade increased again. The domestic market was so small that any economic recovery had to be led by linen, coal and cattle exports. Salt and wool exports were less impressive but domestic markets were expanding. Pre-war business practices were revived and joined by new developments. Landowners were more economically active, building harbours and industrial works. Another pointer to the future was the growth of Glasgow, which began trading with the West Indies in the 1650s. In 1668, 107 merchants formed a company to trade with America, a contravention of the English Navigation Acts which was overlooked.

Positive efforts to encourage economic development and to promote colonies, such as North Carolina, were more successful than earlier in the century. Agricultural change also began much earlier than used to be thought, albeit still in a varied and localised manner. In the early part of the century liming began in the Lothians, allowing outfields to be upgraded to infield quality. Greater changes followed the end of the disruptions of the mid century, when war, debt and taxation had forced many smaller landowners out. Food supply improved and more grain was exported, though low prices prevented the accumulation of capital for investing in improvements.

Demand from England led sheep and cattle farming to become more specialised and intensive in the eastern borders and Galloway respectively. Longer tenancies were spreading and they could include specific advice on agricultural good practice. In return, increasing yields meant that rents began to be paid in cash not kind, for instance to the Clerks of Penicuik as early as 1646. Acts of Parliament after 1661 promoted enclosures and consolidation of holdings. These were increasingly accompanied by extensive tree planting, selective breeding and new rotations.

The Entail Act of 1685, intended to confirm the stability and social significance of property, made it impossible to raise long-term loans against an estate’s value. These developments, though patchy, set the example for the following century. The structure of rural society was as yet little affected by improvements in agriculture. Though the number of nobles had increased under James VI, the total number of landowners began to fall after 1660. Movement between lairds and merchants, lawyers and officers increased during the century. Landowners still treated their
tenants paternally, which might help when the slim margins of agricultural success proved inadequate.

In other cases, enterprising tenants did well and even lent landowners money. Generally, the services a tenant owed were commuted to money rent more slowly than the produce. Farms were worked by cottars, who might also be smallholders or craftsmen themselves, and who worked as farm servants when young and unmarried. Full time craftsmen included millers, smiths, tailors, weavers and wrights, as well as workers in rural industries such as coal or salt. An Act of 1606, intended to prevent poaching of labour, set the seal on the bondage of colliers and salt workers, but their status was not so distinctive as was once thought.

Extreme poverty and vagrancy by the dislocated created a widespread problem. Some was temporary, some permanent. Kirk session records suggest that blindness, infirmity and illness were common features, though able-bodied beggars, and even gangs of armed vagrants, caused frequent alarm. Women were commoner among the resident parish poor, as casual labour and lower life expectancy may have kept men off the poor list. Urban growth steadily overtook the old distinctions between royal burghs, whose privileges were confirmed in 1633, and baronial burghs, who gained rights to overseas trade in 1672.

The year 1639 was a peak of urban prosperity before plague and war. Aberdeen was sacked in 1644, Dundee in 1651. Disruption of trade, forced loans, high taxation and quartering caused further problems, though war affected some burghs more than others. After 1660 smaller satellite towns like Hamilton or Dalkeith, or trading centres such as Culross, Linlithgow and Selkirk did well from renewed economic growth. As well as new baronial burghs, 150 other centres were granted the right to hold markets or fairs, many on the edge of the Highlands like Crieff, the great new cattle tryst.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the period is that some 40% of the population in the area round the Forth lived in or near towns, making this one of the most urbanised parts of Europe. Seventeenth-century towns were still not heavily built up; they contained smallholdings and orchards and the burgh roods and burgh muir lay nearby. Suburbs such as Nungate in Haddington were also expanding. However a speciality of many Scottish burghs was the tenement, which reached its greatest height in the peculiar topography of Edinburgh. Many of Edinburgh's original stone houses were rebuilt in the early seventeenth century, for instance Gladstone's Land. By the 1680s more open designs like Mylne's Court began to emerge. The new charter of 1688 permitted the building of bridges and new streets, though the realisation of a 'new town' had to wait until the next century.

The expansion of the capital in the seventeenth century was achieved by winning control over its suburbs, most significantly the Canongate in 1636 but also Potterrow, Inverleith and Leith itself. Socially, burghs were still dominated by merchant oligarchies through merchant guilds and the burgh councils. Professional groups - especially lawyers but also doctors, university teachers, schoolmasters and clergy - were increasing their influence. Highly skilled craftsmen, such as goldsmiths, barbers and tailors, also held high status whereas baxter, fleshers and weavers did not,
though they all had their own guilds. With increasing wealth the service industries such as stablers and apothecaries became more numerous and successful.

The majority of town dwellers who were not 'free' made livings enough to keep them above poverty, through activities such as brewing, shopkeeping and petty trading, as well as labouring. For those who failed, guild charity was available, not always just to members, and the Kirk sessions dealt with others, though Edinburgh alone had an organised poor rate.

Seventeenth century Scotland has been portrayed as a violent yet repressed society, neither of which is really true. Lowland society was becoming more peaceable, with courts recording fewer cases of violence by the end of the century. The justice system seemed complex but its different parts co-operated well. Much justice was devolved to the localities, which maintained the influence of landowners and local knowledge. Regalities could try cases of robbery, rape, murder and arson; the jurisdiction of baronies varied. Burgh courts had a similar status. Sheriffs were used to notify the circuit courts of local crimes of significance, many of which were moral, such as religious dissent.

The High Court of Justiciary was reorganised in 1672 to sit in Edinburgh and go on circuit. It was subject to the Privy Council and enabled the government to monitor political offences. The role of secular courts was reinforced by church courts. Kirk sessions and presbyteries were a powerful instrument of social control. After 1620, by which time they were effectively universal in the lowlands, their power was more vigorously exercised against such crimes as Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, swearing, slander, fornication and adultery. Fines and public humiliation were widely used; Presbyteries could also excommunicate the guilty.

The definition of crime was often confused with that of sin; adultery and blasphemy had become criminalised at the Reformation. Both state and church were more intrusive than ever before. Nowhere was this more so than the case of witchcraft.

The Scottish witch crazes of the seventeenth century had some distinctive features. James VI introduced from Denmark the continental notion of the Demonic Pact, by which a person gives up their soul, renounces their baptism and receives the devil's mark. Thus being a witch rather than executing black magic was the sought for crime and white magic could not exist as a benign activity, as it continued to do in England. So the use of torture could lead to accusations or confessions which did not require the proof of any activity.

Most victims of witchcraft were wives or widows of small tenants or sub-tenants, perhaps aggressive or lacking deference, in some cases genuinely deluded. Reputation was next to confession as evidence for a conviction for witchcraft, which shows how closely-knit social bonds were. Interestingly, the earthly advantages described in Scottish cases were much plainer than those on the continent: eating, drinking, dancing and the revealing promise that the devil's servant 'should never want'.
The witch hunt was sporadic and random rather than continuous or general. After the
great witch hunts of 1590-91 and 1597, there was a pause until further outbreaks in
1628-30, coinciding with a European craze. In 1649, a year of exceptional stress, 250
commissions were issued for East Lothian alone. The Protectorate repressed witch
hunting and the consequent backlog may have led to the last great outbreak of 1660-
61, when over 600 cases were tried, half of which led to executions, by burning,
strangling or hanging. Escape, acquittal - possibly as a result of counter-accusations
of slander - suicide or banishment accounted for the other half. Cases were usually
brought first to the Kirk-Session but local courts had to seek a commission from the
Privy Council.

From around 1670, apart from localised occurrences in East Lothian (again) in 1678-
9 and in Paisley in 1697, a more sceptical judiciary and Council helped the craze to
die down by rejecting torture and encouraging acquittal.

Differences between highland and lowland society are now seen as a matter of
emphasis and chronology rather than fundamental organisation. Highland society in
the seventeenth century kept many features which had died out in the lowlands, such
as blood-feud and bonds of manrent. However the linguistic border between English
and Gaelic stabilised and this deepened cultural and social differences and
prejudices.

The development of clans was seen by lowlanders as a cause of violence when it
was largely a response to it, though specific violence was still more often associated
with the breakdown of clanship. There was, however, a steady change in social
relations in the Highlands after the Statutes of Iona in 1609. Feudal rights became
attached to individuals rather than to clans; kinship structures based on control of
areas of land, competitive feasting, gift-giving and hereditary service were slowly
crumbling. But the basic structure of food and service rents remained, maintaining
the chief's household and his control over a unit of fighting men. This structure led to
subdivision of land as population grew. It also encouraged the expansion of outfields,
use of seaweed, sand, turf and peat as fertilisers and even hand cultivation of infield,
and the spread of the potato. The highland economy and social structure were not all
that different from those of the lowlands but they were slower to change.

In the seventeenth century the Campbell empire pressurised the clans of the south-
west - Kintyre in 1607, Islay in 1614, Ardnamurchan in 1625. The Argyll switch from
royal to presbyterian loyalty led to two executions but paved the way for Campbell
power after the Whig revolution of 1689. This made their rival clans - Stewarts,
Macdonalds and Macleans - first royalist, under Montrose and MacColla, and later
Jacobite. Montrose's victory at Tippermuir in 1645 was the first pitched battle
between highlanders and lowlanders for 200 years and the start of a century of
conflict.

The later seventeenth century saw more lawlessness in the form of raids and
protection rackets aimed at the expanding cattle trade. The reputation of some
Macdonalds and Macgregors was applied indiscriminately to all highlanders and
confirmed an apparent but mistaken contrast with an increasingly peaceful lowland
society.
CULTURAL CHANGE

Evidence from Kirk-Session records suggests that folk culture remained vigorous in seventeenth century Scotland in the form of dancing and drinking at 'penny weddings', seasonal and saint's days celebrations. Sports included football and animal baiting and, for the better off, archery, fencing, golf and hunting. Less well documented are the informal recreations such as fireside socialising, but the song culture which began to appear in print in the eighteenth century was a rich oral tradition. Women played a central role in this, as they did as healers and midwives despite the start of the professionalisation of medicine.

The departure of the Court in 1603 blurred the distinction between popular and polite culture. Yet the culture of the printed word increasingly supplemented the oral tradition. There was a popular press, which met the demands of mass culture in the form of religious works, school books and vernacular texts. By the middle of the century Calvin's catechism and psalm books were being supplemented with cheap or children's editions of the Bible.

From the 1680s, John Bunyon's 'Pilgrim's Progress' and 'Grace Abounding' proved immensely popular. This culture depended on the spread of literacy, though Scottish literacy levels are now regarded as uneven and broadly similar to those of England; the Highlands remained largely illiterate.

Signatures to the Covenant in 1638 confirm that women and the poor did not have any more access to literacy than their equivalents in other European countries and suggest that craftsmen had slightly higher levels of literacy than farmers, with servants and labourers lower. Literacy levels began to rise by the end of the century with landed and professional men almost totally literate.

The demands of legal procedures may have been a strong incentive to literacy. There were probably 700 schools unevenly spread across the 1,000 parishes before the 1696 education act, which introduced an element of compulsion. There is no evidence that the Scottish education system was more effective than that in England, being subject to the same pressures on children to work and on parents to pay. Schools were paid for partly by landowners and partly by fees. Where there was a demand this resulted in unofficial 'adventure' schools which taught specific skills. Burgh schools taught a wider curriculum, as did the charitable foundations of Heriot in Edinburgh and Hutcheson in Glasgow. All schools were carefully watched by a Kirk whose educational aims included ideological conformity. A virtual national curriculum existed as Parliament standardised the grammar texts.

Universities retained their function as seminaries for the training of the clergy. They were the subject of interference rather than reform and development before 1700. The number of students increased but new subjects and teaching methods remained patchy before the late seventeenth century. The idea of open access to poor gifted students remained as yet a myth. The most obvious expressions of a distinctive, self-
confident Scottish culture was architecture. Tower houses were reconstructed with Renaissance trimmings, as at Crichton and Fyvie, or built with a new elegance, as at Craigievar or Drum. Nobles also built town houses like the Argyll Lodging in Stirling or Acheson House in Canongate, which moulded French, Italian and Dutch influences into a domestic style.

By the Restoration period, purely residential country houses were being built, such as Caroline Park and Kinross House. Plantations and gardens were appearing round them; John Reid's 'The Scots Gardener' appeared in 1683. Other forms of cultural recreation included drama and music; the first book of secular music was printed in Scotland in 1662. The theme of national identity runs through much of the secular written culture of the early seventeenth century. The collection of historical manuscripts, writing of epic verse and family histories, and the cults of honour and heraldry all derived from this search for identity and contributed to the nobles' influence on the Covenant. These themes were revived in the 1670s and 1680s at a period of aristocratic recovery, but now the professions, especially lawyers, took the lead in cultural development.

The 'advancement of learning' in Scotland moved forward through professional institutions such as the Royal College of Physicians and the library of the Faculty of Advocates. It thrived from contact and comparison with England. The leading 'virtuoso' doctor was Sir Robert Sibbald, whose long geographical and antiquarian investigations and writings began with 'Scotia Illustrata' in 1684. The outstanding member of a largely royalist intelligentsia was Sir George Mackenzie, author of fiction, politics, philosophy and memoirs as well as 'Institutions of the Laws of Scotland' in 1684, written three years after Viscount Stair's great legal and philosophical work of the same title. The intellectual circle patronised by James Duke of York from 1679-88 stands between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Its members sought continuity with the Jacobean past but the institutions it created were to be, along with the universities, the agencies of Scottish intellectual achievement in the following century.

Hugh Ouston July 1999

NOTES

This is Chapter 3 of 5. Including the Overview, this set comprises 6 PDFs. The others are:

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1 1450-1540
2 1540-1603
4 1689-1760
5 1760-1840