National Records of Scotland

Scottish Handwriting.com

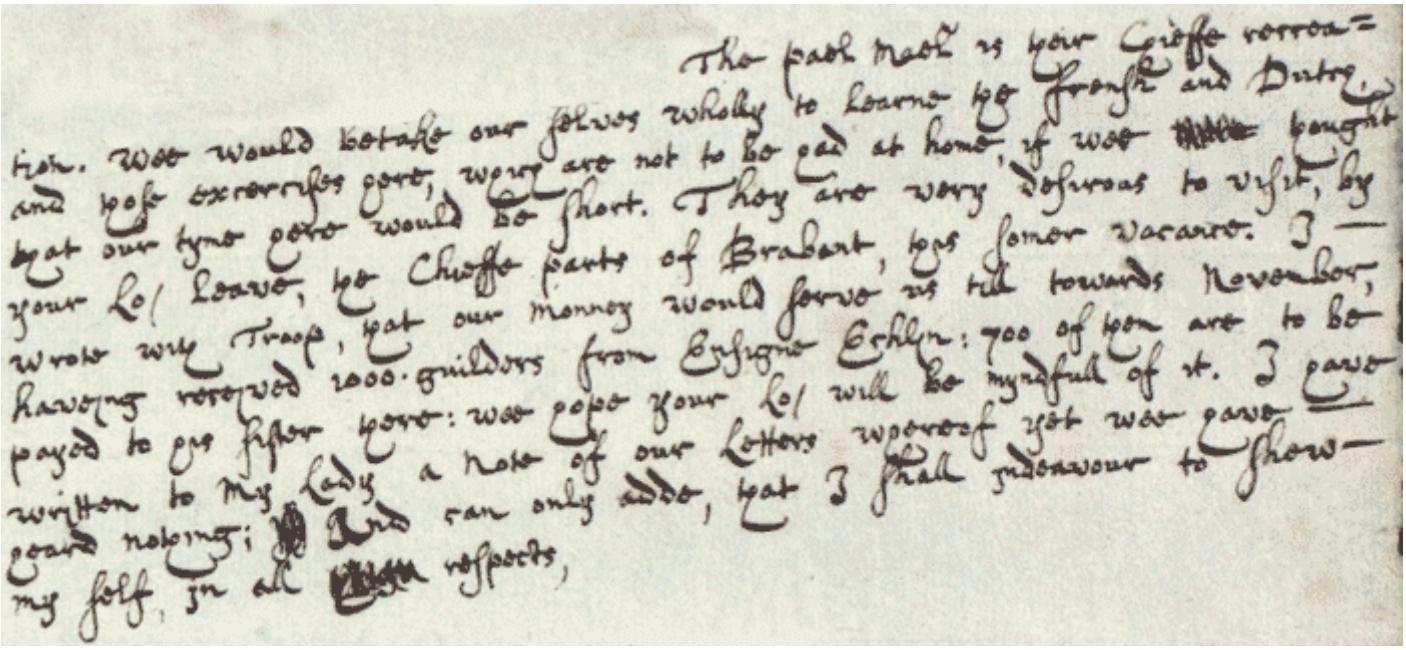
Weekly Poser 400 – Letter by Michael Young to the Earl and Countess of Lothian, 1652

Our 400th poser concerns links between Scotland and the Netherlands. It is the second of two posers taken from a letter written in 1652 (National Records of Scotland, Lothian muniments, GD40/2/3/14).

The letter is from Michael Young to the Earl and Countess of Lothian, reporting on progress of a continental tour he undertook with Lord Kerr and Sir William Kerr, the sons of the Earl and Countess, between 1651 and 1657. At this point Michael Young and the Kerrs were studying languages and taking other classes at the University of Leiden.

In the 17th century Scotland's business and cultural links with the Netherlands were very strong and many Scots travelled to the Netherlands to study at university or to get a business education. Scottish handwriting and the Scots language were strongly influenced by the Netherlands at this time.

The handwriting in the extract is the typical 17th century mixture of hands: secretary hand: secretary hand, italic and cursive. If you are unfamiliar with this, a good place to start is our Dunlop letters tutorial (http://www.scottishhandwriting.com/dunlop.asp), which features letters sent home from the Netherlands to Scotland.



This week's questions: what was the young men's favourite recreation and where did they want to spend their vacation?

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Answer: Their favourite recreation was the Pell Mell (*pael mael is their Chieffe recreation*) and they wanted to spend their vacation in Brabant (*They are very desirous to visit, by you Lo[rdships] leave, the Chieffe parts of Brabart, this somer vacance*).

Transcription:

The pael mael is their Chieffe recrea-
tion. Wee would betake our selves wholly to Learne the frensh and Dutch
and those excercises here, which are not to be had at home, if wee thought
that our tyme here would be short. They are very desirous to visit, by
your Lo[rdship's] Leave, the Chieffe parts of Brabart, this somer vacance. I
wrote with Troop, that our monney would serve us till towards November,
havejng recejved 1000 guilders from Ensigne Echljn: 700 of them are to be
payed to his sister there: wee hope your Lo[rdship] will be myndfull of it. I have
wrjtten to my Lady a note of our Letters whereof yet wee have
heard nothing; And can only adde, that I shall jndeavour to shew
my self, jn all respects,

This week's poser was contributed by 'Fodiator', a researcher from Fife.

If you would like to contribute palaeography posers to the website contact us (onlineresources@nas.gov.uk).