

Media Release

History graduate puts John Buchan's wartime propaganda on show



University of Sunderland [history](#) graduate Emma Small has developed an impressive exhibition that delves into world-famous author John Buchan's propaganda campaign during the First World War.

After securing an internship with the [John Buchan Story Museum](#) in Peebles, Emma spent eight-weeks researching the work of 'The Thirty Nine Steps' author, when he was the Director of Information which involved making effective use of Britain's war-time propaganda campaign.

Emma's work resulted in a centenary exhibition tracing Buchan's progress from 1916 to 1919, and how his position influenced his novel *Mr Standfast*, which was published in 1919.

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Buchan, a historian, journalist, politician, soldier and public servant is one of Scotland's most famous authors, best known for his influential espionage novel, *The Thirty Nine Steps*, which has never been out of print since it was first published in 1915. His *final role as Governor General of Canada, and the popularity of film adaptations of his novels, have also helped to give him an international reputation which continues to this day.*

Emma's Internship was arranged through the University's [Graduate Internships Scheme](#), which is a paid work experience programme offered by employers to students and graduates looking to gain relevant skills and experience in a particular field.

The internship linked in with the University's School of Culture's close collaboration with the John Buchan Society and Museum on a number of projects. These have included the digitisation of the Society's Journal and the redevelopment of the Museum's website.

Dr Peter Worthington, Chair of the John Buchan Story says the exhibition is proving a huge success, adding: "Without Emma's contribution the current exhibition would not have been possible. She worked very thoroughly on researching John Buchan's work in 1918 and the Museum is extremely grateful for the opportunity to engage her as an Intern. The exhibition has just opened but is already attracting considerable interest."

Emma, 22, from Stockton, said: "I thoroughly enjoyed my internship, it was interesting to put the skills I had learned in my degree to the test. Despite most of the information about John Buchan's time as Director of Intelligence being lost due to the nature of his work, we were still able to uncover surprising details about the type of work he undertook.

"I was able to manage my own project and worked closely with the team at the museum and they were supportive throughout the whole project, funding my visit to Peebles and allowing me access to their resources on the

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subject. I feel that I have gained valuable skills that better prepare me for future job opportunities.”

Steve Watts, Head of the School of Culture, and a member of the John Buchan Story Museum’s management committee, said: “When the Museum asked if we could help them research their 1918-2018 centenary exhibition and the important role of John Buchan in the final victory we knew that this was an exciting opportunity to look again at what evidence was still available. Emma’s role in researching John Buchan’s appointment as Director of Information has been greatly valued by the Museum, confirming the many skills and talents that the University’s history graduates possess.”

Nickola Gray, Employment Services Manager, who helped to organise Emma’s Internship, said: “We were delighted to pair Emma up with the John Buchan Story Museum, she has done an impressive job. With each Internship we spend time with the organisation to find out exactly what they need from the project before it starts, so we’re satisfied that we’ve matched them to the right candidate and it works for the organisation.

“Many organisations who engage with the scheme have returned to the University to see what they can do next to develop their own model, how they can continue to work with us and access further student and graduate talent. We’re delighted that this is the third time the team have worked with the John Buchan museum, the first two being undergraduate students placements.”

Emma commented: “I would definitely recommend an Internship to recent graduates. It gives you the opportunity to develop the skills you learned during your degree. In my own experience I was able to work and manage my own project which gave me the confidence I need to develop my career.”

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'The John Buchan Story' Museum explores Buchan's life and legacy, showing the variety and scale of his personal experience and literary output, beyond "The Thirty Nine Steps". It also portrays his family's broader associations with Peebles and illustrates some of their achievements. His parents had grown up in Tweeddale and family holidays were spent with relatives in the area, so Buchan developed a passion for the Borders countryside and its people.

School of Culture

Culture at Sunderland is a large School within the University of Sunderland's Faculty of Education and Society. It is made up of academics in English language and literature, creative writing, modern languages, TESOL, history, and politics.

The team works in a rich and diverse intellectual environment, the manifestations of which a blog has been archiving since June 2012.

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