

# Bringing the Page to Life

## Introduction

*“The Water of Leith is a most serviceable drudge, and is by no means spared”*



**U**ntil the mid-twentieth century the Water of Leith was an important industrial centre for Edinburgh, particularly in papermaking. At the height of industrial production there were 76 mills at work along this 24 mile stretch of river; many of these were papermills. Between Balerno and Colinton each village had its own papermill: Balerno was home to John Galloway and Company Ltd, which specialised in producing imitation art papers; in Currie, Henry Bruce and Sons mill produced featherweight laid and wove book paper; in Juniper Green, the Woodhall Paper Company produced board for the whisky industry, among others; and in Colinton Andrew Scott and Co manufactured wrappings.



The Water of Leith mills were largely family-owned concerns. Many of them had been producing paper for centuries and had played an important role in the development of the Scottish papermaking industry. The Water of Leith was the site of the first papermill



in Scotland when Dalry Mill began production in 1590. The Water of Leith mills produced a wide range of paper and board that included Imitation Art, Featherweight Laid and Wove Book Paper, Deckle Edged Antique, Chart and Map Papers, Writing and Ledger Papers, Machine Coated Papers and boards such as White and Tinted Pulp.

This exhibition charts the history of this important industry. It focuses on the impact of the mills on the communities along the Water of Leith, work roles within the mills, production activities, technological innovations and the demise of the industry. It is undertaken by [SAPPHIRE](#) (Scottish Archive of Print and Publishing History Records). [SAPPHIRE](#) is a collaborative project between Napier University and Queen Margaret University College. This initiative aims to record the social economic and cultural history of the Scottish printing and publishing industry in the twentieth century by documenting aspects of the working lives of people who have been employed in it and have witnessed the changes that have taken place within it.



SAPPHIRE

