

CULTURE COURSE

Esperanto in Scotland

Clubs, congresses, postcards and poets: what Esperanto meant in the towns of Scotland, with every claim checked against its sources.

8 Chapters | Philip Osztromok | Generated with Claude

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Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 1 · Why Scotland? Scope & Sources

The story of Esperanto is usually told from Białystok and Warsaw, through world congresses and great names. This course asks a smaller question with a local answer: what did the language mean in the towns of Scotland? It looks at clubs in Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh, at classes, congresses and postcards, and at the people who learned a language that was less than twenty years old.

What Kind of History Is This?

A local history

It follows clubs, classes and meetings in particular towns, not the language as a whole. Most of what survives was written by the people who took part.

A history from paper

Letters, postcards, newspaper reports and club records are the main evidence. A postcard is a small thing, but a collection of them shows who wrote to whom, and how friendships crossed borders.

A history of ordinary people

The people in these chapters are ministers, teachers, journalists, chemists, clerks and students, not rulers. Their motives, and the doubts about them, are part of the story.

Why a small history matters

Esperanto was always meant to be a language of ordinary people, so its history is partly a collection of local histories. Studying one country shows what the movement looked like from inside: who joined, what they hoped for, what they did together and what they left behind.

Words You Will Meet

Word	Meaning
Esperanto club	A local society that met to learn the language, practise it and organise events. Clubs were the basic unit of the movement in Scotland.
Scottish Esperanto Federation	The body that linked the Scottish clubs. It was founded in 1910 (Chapter 4 looks at the date).
Scottish congress	A yearly gathering of Scottish Esperantists, held in a different town each time (Chapter 4).
Universal Congress	The annual world congress of Esperanto speakers. In Esperanto it is the *Universala Kongreso*, often shortened to UK, which here does not mean the United Kingdom.
Correspondent	A person who wrote to speakers in other countries in Esperanto, often on picture postcards (Chapter 5).
The Beveridge Collection	The John Beveridge Collection at the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums: the letters, postcards and papers of a Dundee minister and his family, the main source for the first chapters.

For the wider history of the language and its founder, see *The Story of Esperanto*. For the sounds and rules of the language itself, see *Esperanto Grammar 1*, Chapter 1.

Why Did People in Scotland Learn It?

The motives that scholars have found in the surviving material include the following. Each one is a reason people gave or can be shown to have had; the course does not claim that any one of them was typical.

- **It was presented as open to everyone.** Learning books described Esperanto as a language for anyone, including manual workers, and as a way to correspond with people of any nationality.
- **It promised practical benefits.** No interpreter at an international meeting, pen friends, exchanges of magazines.
- **It suited people already in other causes.** Temperance, women's rights, reform and Christian organisations all produced Esperantists.
- **It gave a social life.** Clubs offered friendship, music and tea-and-talk evenings, rather like chess or book clubs.
- **It offered travel.** Congresses abroad let members use the language fully.

Where the Evidence Comes From

- **The John Beveridge Collection.** Letters, postcards, club papers and manuscripts held at the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums (shelfmarks begin *Ms36242*, *Ms36244* and so on). It is the core of the story for the years 1906–1913.
- **Scottish newspapers.** Reports in the *Dundee Advertiser*, *Dundee Courier* and *Evening Telegraph*. Informative, but often written to praise or promote.
- **Esperanto periodicals.** Among them *The British Esperantist*, *La Revuo* and *Germana Esperanto-Gazeto*.
- **Learning manuals.** Textbooks of the period, which show how the language was sold to learners.
- **A recent study.** *Postcards, Translators and Esperanto Pioneers* (Guilherme Fians, Bernhard Struck and Claire Taylor, University of London Press, 2025), which draws on the Beveridge Collection and is free to read online.
- **Later sources.** The Esperanto Association of Britain's history of its own congresses, and the books and papers of the poet William Auld, whose collection of nearly 5,000 books is in the National Library of Scotland (Chapter 7).

What We Do Not Know

A careful history says where its evidence runs out. For this subject, these are the main gaps:

- **The evidence centres on one family.** The best-documented story is that of the Beveridges in Dundee, so it can look as though Scotland *was* the Beveridges.
- **The surviving material is mostly from 1906 to 1913 and from Dundee.** Other places and later decades are thinner.
- **Numbers come from club reports and the press.** A report of a "flourishing" club or a large membership may be incomplete or promotional.
- **Some links are uncertain.** The authors of the 2025 study say it is unclear whether some people met, and whether several proposed clubs were actually founded.

Six Claims to Test

These are things people say, or might say, about Esperanto in Scotland. The course returns to each. Do not accept or reject them yet; note the question a careful reader asks.

Common claim	The question a careful reader asks
Esperanto never mattered in Scotland.	How many clubs and members are recorded, and who recorded them? (Chapters 2, 4, 8)
It was a hobby of a few eccentrics.	Who joined, and what did they do with it? (Chapters 2 and 3)
It was a men's movement.	What roles do women hold in the records? (Chapter 6)
It died out after the First World War.	What happened to the clubs and the Federation afterwards? (Chapters 4 and 7)
Nothing survives to study.	What does survive, and where is it kept? (Chapters 1 and 5)
The Scottish story is just the British story.	What was distinctively Scottish, and what was shared with the rest of Britain? (Chapters 4 and 7)

Map of the Course

Part	Chapters	Theme
Beginnings	2, 3	The first clubs; the Beveridge family and Dundee
Organisation	4	Congresses and the Scottish Esperanto Federation
Connections	5, 6	Postcards and pen friends; women in Scottish Esperanto
Afterwards	7, 8	The Scottish poets and the twentieth century; today

A short reading in Esperanto

Each chapter ends with a few sentences in Esperanto, written for this course, as practice from *Esperanto Reading 1*. Try this one without the list first. *Esperanto venis al Skotlando komence de la dudeka jarcento. En 1903 oni fondis klubojn en Glasgovo kaj en Edinburgo. En 1906 oni fondis klubon en Dundee, kaj poste aliaj kluboj aperis en Perth, Arbroath, Montrose kaj aliaj urboj.* The words to know are *jarcento* (century), *fondi* (to found) and *aperi* (to appear). The meaning: Esperanto came to Scotland at the start of the twentieth century. In 1903 clubs were founded in Glasgow and Edinburgh. In 1906 a club was founded in Dundee, and later other clubs appeared in Perth, Arbroath, Montrose and other towns.

Check the details

Dates and numbers are easily repeated wrongly, and sources do not always agree. This course takes its facts from published work and the surviving documents, marks each doubtful point, and gives no claim about Scotland that its sources do not support.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Pick two claims from the "Six Claims to Test" table and say what evidence you would look for and where you would find it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Explain why a history of Esperanto in Scotland that relies mainly on the Beveridge Collection might give a misleading picture, and what you would do about it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Choose three kinds of source from the chapter and, for each, say who made it, why, and how far it can be trusted for a history of Esperanto in Scotland.

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **The question:** what did Esperanto mean in the towns of Scotland?
- **Main source:** the John Beveridge Collection (University of St Andrews), the 2025 study of it, Scottish newspapers and Esperanto periodicals
- **Main gaps:** the evidence centres on one family, mostly 1906–1913 and Dundee; numbers may be promotional

- **Method:** describe the story, check the figures, mark the doubts, test the claims
- **Related courses:** *The Story of Esperanto*, *Esperanto Grammar 1*, *Esperanto Reading 1*

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 2 follows the first clubs: Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1903, Dundee in 1906, and the towns that followed.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 2 · The First Clubs (1900s)

A language needs people who meet. In Scotland the meeting place was the club: a few people in a room above a shop or in a hotel, with a textbook, a teacher if they were lucky, and a pot of tea. This chapter follows the first clubs from 1903 to about 1910, and asks who joined and what they did.

> **The idea in a box**
>
> Esperanto spread in Scotland from town to town through clubs. A club began when someone gave a class or called a meeting, and it survived if it found a president, a meeting place and enough members. Several early attempts failed before later ones took root.

1903: Glasgow and Edinburgh

The earliest Scottish clubs belong to the big cities. Glasgow and Edinburgh both had Esperanto clubs dating to 1903, the same year the London club was formed. A 2003 announcement from the Esperanto Association of Britain spoke of the "double centenary" of the two societies, which fits the date.

The figures that survive are about interest rather than certainty. The recent study of Scottish Esperanto reports that Edinburgh had about 320 members around 1908, and that lectures in Glasgow drew up to 200 people. These numbers come from reports of the time, so treat them as indications of enthusiasm and not as exact counts.

Dundee, 1906

Dundee is the best-documented case. A first attempt to start a club in 1902 failed. The club that lasted was founded in October 1906 at a meeting in Lamb's Hotel, a temperance hotel. It was presided over by Janette King (1862–1947), a local journalist, who became the first president.

Detail	What the sources report
Founding meeting	October 1906, Lamb's Hotel, Dundee
First president	Janette King, journalist; she moved to Newcastle the following year
After her	Alexander Pride led the club; John Beveridge became president in 1908
Weekly meetings	Began the following Wednesday at the Cercle Français in central Dundee
Size	"Still small in point of numbers" in 1908 (*The British Esperantist*); about 100 members by around 1910
Social events	Between about 20 and 50 people, according to the *Dundee Courier*

The activities were mostly sociable: teas, songs, recitations, lectures, informal chats, picnics and excursions. Two of John Beveridge's daughters, Lois and Heather, took part (Chapter 3).

The Towns Around

Town	What is reported
Perth	A club formed around 1908. Lois Beveridge travelled from Dundee to teach weekly evening classes. A photograph of about that date shows 28 adults and one child.
Aberdeen	Sources differ (see below). A later visit from John Bredall led to a club with evening classes of about fifty learners; Constance Ogston taught and organised outings, and Annie L. Burgess was secretary and treasurer.
Montrose	A club existed; J. D. Simpson, a founding member, later became president of the Federation.
Arbroath	A club formed in line with the aims of the Federation.
St Andrews, Kilmarnock, Linlithgow	Named as places where clubs took root, with few details surviving.
Cowdenbeath, Burntisland	Mentioned as villages where Esperanto attracted interest.

Where the sources disagree

The Esperanto Association of Britain's history says, citing *The British Esperantist* for January 1905, that an Aberdeen society was founded in October 1904. The 2025 study describes an early Aberdeen attempt around 1904 as having failed, with a lasting club following a later visit. The two accounts may describe different groups, or one may be incomplete. This course does not choose between them.

Who Joined, and Why?

Teachers and ministers

John Beveridge was a Presbyterian minister; Lois Beveridge and Constance Ogston taught classes. People used to explaining things often became the club's teachers.

Journalists

Janette King's profession helped: newspapers reported the club's meetings, which brought in new members, though it also means the reports are friendly to the cause.

People looking for company

Teas, songs and outings made a club a social evening. For many members the friendships were as important as the grammar.

A temperance hotel

Lamb's Hotel was a temperance hotel, where no alcohol was served. That fits the point from Chapter 1: some Esperantists came from reform and temperance circles, and the meeting place suited them. One hotel is not proof of a pattern, so do not read more into it than that.

A Short Reading in Esperanto

Read first, then check the list.

En oktobro 1906 oni fondis klubon en Dundee. La unua prezidanto estis ĵurnalistino, Janette King. La membroj lernis, kantis kaj trinkis teon kune. Post kelkaj jaroj la klubo havis proksimume cent membrojn.

ĵurnalistino (female journalist) · *prezidanto* (president) · *kanti* (to sing) · *trinki* (to drink) · *kune* (together) · *proksimume* (approximately).

The meaning: In October 1906 a club was founded in Dundee. The first president was a journalist, Janette King. The members learned, sang and drank tea together. After a few years the club had about a hundred members.

Sources and doubts

Facts here come from the 2025 study *Postcards, Translators and Esperanto Pioneers* (its chapter on learning the language and founding local clubs) and the Esperanto Association of Britain's history. Membership numbers come from clubs and newspapers. Whether every club in the Federation's plans was founded is, in the study's words, less certain than for Aberdeen and Arbroath.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

List the Scottish clubs named in the chapter in the order they are reported (with dates where given), and mark which dates come with a stated doubt.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Why might a newspaper's claim that a club is "flourishing" be an unreliable measure of its size? Name two other pieces of evidence that would help.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write three sentences in Esperanto about a club you might found, using the vocabulary of the reading (for example *fondi*, *klubo*, *kune*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **1903:** Glasgow and Edinburgh clubs (Edinburgh about 320 members around 1908)
- **1906:** Dundee club, Lamb's Hotel; Janette King first president; Beveridge president in 1908
- **Around 1908:** Perth club, with Lois Beveridge teaching
- **Also:** Aberdeen (sources differ), Montrose, Arbroath, St Andrews, Kilmarnock, Linlithgow
- **Caution:** numbers come from clubs and the press

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 3 turns to the Beveridge family of Dundee: John Beveridge, his daughters and their work.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 3 · The Beveridge Family and Dundee

If one family stands for Esperanto in Scotland, it is the Beveridges of Dundee. A minister, a chemist and a teacher learned the language together, helped to found clubs, wrote to people abroad, and left a large archive to a university. This chapter introduces them, and then asks the question Chapter 1 promised: how far can one family speak for a country?

> **The idea in a box**
>
> We know a great deal about Esperanto in Dundee because the Beveridges kept their papers and gave them away. Their story is real and well documented, but it is the story of one household, so it should be used as an example and not as a portrait of the whole of Scotland.

John Beveridge (1857–1943)

John Beveridge was born in Ayr in 1857 and lived most of his life in Dundee. He was a Presbyterian minister. According to the University of St Andrews' own guide to his papers, he served in several parishes (Stow, Wolverhampton, Dundee, Fossoway and Gartmore) before retiring from the regular ministry in 1926. The recent study describes him as coming from an ordinary, middle-class family, an avid reader, a beekeeper and a keen follower of world affairs.

Interest	What the sources say
Norway	He was fascinated by its language, customs and history, and visited it several times. The 2025 study says he used Esperanto contacts to improve his Norwegian.
Beekeeping	One of his three main collecting interests, with Norway and Esperanto.
Esperanto	Learned it around 1906 (the study says "around"). Founding member of the Dundee club, its president in 1908, and first president of the Scottish Esperanto Federation in 1910.
Writing and preaching	He wrote magazine articles in Esperanto on Christianity and gave sermons.

Heather and Lois

Heather Beveridge (1886–1940)

A chemist with a degree from St Andrews. She published scholarly articles in Esperanto, including a 1908 article on a chemical compound, and translated articles from chemistry journals.

Lois Beveridge (1889–1946)

A teacher. She gained an advanced proficiency diploma in 1908, taught evening classes (including in Perth, Chapter 2), and travelled to congresses abroad. Chapter 6 returns to her.

The rest of the family

John's wife was born in Australia, and there were four Scottish-born children. Only some of the children appear in the Esperanto record.

Both daughters learned the language with their father and helped found the Federation. They are not footnotes to him: Chapter 6 shows Lois holding an office of her own.

The Bible Translation

The best-known part of John Beveridge's Esperanto work is connected with the Esperanto Bible. Zamenhof himself translated the Old Testament from Hebrew. A British committee prepared a New Testament from the Greek, and the New Testament was published in 1912. Beveridge was part of the work; the St Andrews guide says his role is documented in letters to the other translators and to Zamenhof.

What is not clear

Sources do not agree on the details. The 2025 study says he was part of the team but does not give the committee's structure, his exact role or the dates. A general reference article on Bible translations into Esperanto lists the committee as J. C. Rust, "B. J. Beveridge" and C. G. Wilkinson, with the New Testament completed in 1910 and published in 1912, but the initials differ from John's and the entry does not explain them. This course says only

that John Beveridge took part and does not describe his part in more detail than the sources allow.

The only direct contact with Zamenhof that the study reports is a postcard in Esperanto that Zamenhof sent him in 1910. Beveridge also travelled to the 1912 Universal Congress in Kraków.

The Collection

Shortly before he died in 1943, Beveridge gave his library and papers to the University of St Andrews. The library guide describes more than 1,700 books, almost all on his three interests, and a body of papers that includes about 392 letters (1884–1940), manuscript translations, articles, scrapbooks, photographs and lectures. The Esperanto material is only part of it.

What it lets us do	What it does not
Follow one family's friendships, travels and writing over time	Tell us how typical they were
See how postcards and letters were used (Chapter 5)	Show the people who wrote to the Beveridges but kept no papers
Check newspaper reports against private letters	Replace evidence from other towns

Using an example fairly

An archive created by one family describes that family's choices: what they kept, what they gave and what they threw away. When a statement such as "Esperantists in Scotland did X" rests only on the Beveridge papers, the honest wording is "the Beveridges did X, and we do not know how many others did."

A Short Reading in Esperanto

John Beveridge estis pastro en Dundee. Li ŝatis Norvegion, abelojn kaj Esperanton. Li lernis la lingvon kun siaj filinoj Heather kaj Lois.

pastro (minister, pastor) · *ŝati* (to like) · *abelo* (bee) · *filino* (daughter) · *lingvo* (language).

The meaning: John Beveridge was a minister in Dundee. He liked Norway, bees and Esperanto. He learned the language with his daughters Heather and Lois. Notice *siaj*: it refers back to the subject, *li* (he), so the daughters are his own.

Sources and doubts

The biography and family come from the 2025 study (its chapter on John Beveridge) and the University of St Andrews' guide to his papers. The details of the Bible committee come from a general reference article and are marked above as unclear. Dates for Lois and Heather come from the study's earlier chapters.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Make a timeline of John Beveridge's Esperanto life from 1906 to 1912 using only dates the chapter gives, and mark any date described as approximate.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Rewrite the sentence "Scottish Esperantists wrote to people all over the world" so that it is true to a Beveridge-based source, and say what further evidence would let you keep the original.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write two sentences in Esperanto about someone you know, saying what they like and who they learned something with (use *ŝati* and *kun*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **John Beveridge:** 1857–1943, minister, beekeeper, Norway enthusiast; Dundee club president 1908, Federation president 1910
- **Heather:** 1886–1940, chemist, wrote scholarly articles in Esperanto
- **Lois:** 1889–1946, teacher, advanced diploma 1908
- **Zamenhof:** a postcard to John in 1910; John at the 1912 Kraków congress
- **Collection:** given to St Andrews in 1943; large, but one family's

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 4 looks at congresses and the Scottish Esperanto Federation.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 4 · Congresses and the Federation

Clubs in separate towns became a movement when they met. This chapter follows the yearly Scottish congresses, the Federation that linked the clubs from 1910, and the larger event that brought the world to Edinburgh in 1926.

> **The idea in a box**
>
> A club serves a town; a congress and a federation serve a country. Between 1906 and 1911 the Scottish clubs took turns hosting a yearly gathering, and in 1910 they formed a Federation with elected officers and four districts. Some details, such as the planned 1915 Universal Congress, are told differently by different sources.

The Scottish Congresses, 1906–1911

Year	Place
1906	Stirling
1907	Linlithgow
1908	Edinburgh
1909	Perth
1910	Glasgow
1911	Dundee (June)

The pattern is clear: a different town each year, organised by a local club. Two of the first three were in small towns, not in the big cities where the oldest clubs were, which suggests that interest was spreading beyond Glasgow and Edinburgh. The first took place in the same year the Dundee club was founded (Chapter 2).

Congresses were social as well as practical. For the Dundee gathering of 1911, Mary Jane Hare wrote a comedy, *The Foreign Correspondent*, which shows that entertainment in Esperanto was part of the programme (Chapter 6).

The Scottish Esperanto Federation

Founded

1910, in Glasgow, according to the 2025 study. John Beveridge was the first president. Other accounts put the founding in 1909–10; this course uses 1910 and notes the doubt.

Structure

Four districts (north, central, west and east), each with its own secretary. J. D. Simpson of Montrose became president in 1911.

Size

By 1911 the Federation reported 15 affiliated clubs and 531 members. These are the Federation's own figures.

The Federation set itself the aim of founding new clubs. Its list of target places included Aberdeen, Inverness, Crieff, Cupar, Angus, Forfar, Arbroath and Oban. Its steering committee sometimes met in villages without a club, hoping to encourage one. The study says new clubs did form in Aberdeen and Arbroath, but it is "less certain" for the others on the list.

The Federation had women officers too: in 1913 Lois Beveridge was one of four vice-presidents, and the only woman among them (Chapter 6).

The 1915 congress

The 2025 study reports that the Federation's work was linked to Scotland's hopes of hosting a Universal Congress in Edinburgh in 1915, which did not take place because of the First World War. A general list of the world congresses shows Paris 1914 as cancelled and a congress held in San Francisco in 1915, without mentioning Edinburgh. These accounts do not obviously conflict (a bid could be dropped or moved), but the sources I could read do not explain what happened, so this course cannot say.

1926: The World in Edinburgh

The 18th Universal Congress of Esperanto was held in Edinburgh from 31 July to 7 August 1926, the one time the full world congress met in Scotland in the period this course covers. A Bahá'í report written at the time puts attendance at about a thousand delegates from thirty-nine countries, while the Wikipedia list gives 960. During the congress, the complete Esperanto Bible

was presented at a service in St Giles' Cathedral on Sunday 1 August. The same report describes Scottish Esperantists meeting arrivals at stations and docks with green flags, free tram travel, Esperanto menus in restaurants and a civic welcome with Highland music and dancing.

Claim	Status
Edinburgh hosted the 18th Universal Congress, 31 July–7 August 1926	Agreed by the sources read
Attendance about 1,000 (report) or 960 (list)	Different figures, similar size
The Esperanto Bible was presented at St Giles'	One report; details of who translated and funded it vary by source
Scottish hosts welcomed visitors in Esperanto	From one contemporary account, which is friendly to the cause

Careful with the Bible

The Bahá'í report calls the Bible a Scottish achievement and says two Scottish women paid for it. A reference article on the translation names a London committee, which worked from 1919 to 1926 and was funded by two sisters. The sources disagree on those details, so the safe statement is that the Bible was ready in time to be presented at the Edinburgh congress. The role of John Beveridge in the final edition is not established here (Chapter 3).

A Short Reading in Esperanto

Ĉiujare la skotaj Esperantistoj kunvenis en alia urbo. En 1910 ili fondis la Skotan Esperanto-Federacion. Post unu jaro ĝi havis dek kvin klubojn kaj 531 membrojn.

ĉiujare (every year) · *kunveni* (to meet, assemble) · *alia* (other, different) · *federacio* (federation) · *post* (after).

The meaning: Every year the Scottish Esperantists met in a different town. In 1910 they founded the Scottish Esperanto Federation. After a year it had fifteen clubs and 531 members.

Sources and doubts

The congress list, Federation structure and figures come from the 2025 study's chapter on clubs. The 1926 details come from a Bahá'í report of the time and the Wikipedia list of world congresses. Unclear: the exact founding date of the Federation, what became of the 1915 bid, and who exactly translated and paid for the 1926 Bible.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

From the congress table, say which of the six host towns had a club before 1906 according to Chapter 2, and what that suggests about why congresses moved around.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

The Federation reported 531 members and 15 clubs in 1911. Give two reasons these figures should be treated with caution and one way to test them.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write two Esperanto sentences saying that a group of people meet every year in a different town (use *ĉiujare*, *kunveni* and *alia*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Scottish congresses:** Stirling 1906, Linlithgow 1907, Edinburgh 1908, Perth 1909, Glasgow 1910, Dundee 1911
- **Federation:** 1910 (Glasgow), Beveridge first president, Simpson president 1911, four districts, 15 clubs and 531 members in 1911

- **1915:** a planned Edinburgh congress, cancelled; the sources do not explain how this fits with the list of world congresses
- **1926:** 18th Universal Congress in Edinburgh, 31 July–7 August; Esperanto Bible presented at St Giles'

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 5 turns to postcards and pen friends: how friendships were made across borders.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 5 · Postcards and Pen Friends

The first thing many learners did with Esperanto was write to someone. A picture postcard cost little, travelled far and fitted a few lines of a language both people were still learning. This chapter follows how a Dundee minister found correspondents in Bulgaria, Finland and elsewhere, and what a few surviving cards reveal.

The idea in a box

Esperanto gave ordinary people in small places a way to make friends abroad without being fluent in each other's languages. The postcards in the Beveridge Collection show the friendships, interests and hopes of their writers, but they come from one man's mailbox, and the replies he sent are mostly lost.

A Postcard from Harmanli

The recent study opens with a card sent on 26 June 1908 from Harmanli, in Bulgaria, to John Beveridge in Dundee. The front shows a photograph of the town with a group of about twenty townspeople on a bridge. The sender, Fina Nedenka Kirilova, wrote a short note in Esperanto thanking him for stamps he had sent to her brother, St. Kirilov.

The language

The note was in Esperanto, with some errors and traces of Cyrillic habits, which suggests the writer was still learning. French was still the usual international language of the post at the time.

The exchange

Stamps were a common gift. The postcard thanks Beveridge for them and so shows a friendship built on a shared hobby as much as on the language.

The place

In 1907 the Harmanli group had thirteen members, eleven men and two women. A

small-town group, not a capital city, is typical of the places in this archive.

How Correspondents Were Found

Method	How it worked
Yearbooks (*Jarlibro*)	Printed lists of Esperantists by town. Beveridge owned the 1907 and 1910 editions.
Zamenhof's directory of learners	An address list kept between 1889 and 1908; the study says it began from coupons in the first textbook.
Magazine notices	Readers advertised their interest in *The British Esperantist* and in Russian-language Esperanto journals such as *Ruslanda Esperantisto*.
Introductions from pen friends	A Finnish correspondent, Hugo Salokannel, gave Beveridge three further Finnish addresses.

In 1904 a list of Bulgarian Esperantists named 114 places, 61 of them with only one or two speakers. Plovdiv had 51 members and Silistra 88. A yearbook was therefore a map of small groups scattered across a country, which is what made postcards possible between such small places.

What They Wrote About

- **Stamps and photographs.** People sent portraits, outfits and views of their towns.
- **Buildings.** Cards showed local landmarks, such as Dundee's Wishart Arch and an avenue in Göteborg.
- **Religion and translation.** Beveridge's Esperanto version of the Sermon on the Mount, *Prediko sur la Monto*, was among the subjects.
- **Poetry and periodicals.** A translated poem in *Finna Esperantisto* is one example.
- **Causes.** Hugo Salokannel wrote about pacifism and vegetarianism. The study describes him as a Finnish station officer from Kymi.

Esperantists often called one another *samideano*, "fellow thinker", a word that shows how the language was a shared outlook as well as a means of communication.

How Big Was It?

Figure	Meaning
Over 50	Postcards that Beveridge received between 1908 and 1910, in the collection
At least 3	Mails from Salokannel in 1908–1910; the total is unclear
About 1 billion	Postcards dispatched in Britain in 1906, which sets the Esperanto cards in the larger postcard craze

What the archive cannot tell us

Beveridge's replies are mostly unknown, so we see only one side of each friendship. Some correspondents are elusive: Stoičo Kirilov is described as hard to trace, and his sister is not listed in the local club. The yearbooks did not record every learner. The people in the group photographs are unidentified. The study frames many of its readings with "may", "likely" or "perhaps", and this chapter keeps to that level of caution.

Why the postcard mattered

A postcard is public: anyone handling it could read it. That made it a good vehicle for short, friendly messages in a language that many postal workers could not read, and a poor one for secrets. It also meant that sending a message in Esperanto could itself be a statement, a way of saying "I am one of you".

A Short Reading in Esperanto

En 1908 oni sendis poŝtkarton de Harmanli en Bulgario al John Beveridge en Dundee. La sendinto skribis en Esperanto kaj dankis pro poŝtmarkoj. Sur la karto estis foto de la urbeto.

poŝtkarto (postcard) · *sendi* (to send) · *sendinto* (sender) · *danki* (to thank) · *pro* (for, because of) · *poŝtmarko* (stamp) · *urbeto* (small town).

The meaning: In 1908 a postcard was sent from Harmanli in Bulgaria to John Beveridge in Dundee. The sender wrote in Esperanto and thanked him for stamps. On the card was a photo of the little town.

Sources and doubts

The details of the Harmanli card, the correspondents and the figures come from Chapter 1 of the 2025 study, *Postcards, Translators and Esperanto Pioneers*. The study says its archive is uneven. Postcards from Scotland to other countries are not covered here, because the collection holds what Beveridge received.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Choose one of the four ways of finding correspondents and explain what its limits are as a source for counting Esperantists.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

A historian says "Scottish Esperantists had friendships across Europe." Using this chapter, list two things the postcards support and two things they cannot show.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write a postcard of three sentences in Esperanto from a town you know, thanking someone for a gift (use *danki*, *pro* and *foto*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Harmanli card:** 26 June 1908, Bulgaria to Dundee; thanks for stamps

- **Finding correspondents:** yearbooks, Zamenhof's directory, magazine notices, introductions
- **Topics:** stamps, photographs, buildings, religion, poetry, pacifism, vegetarianism
- **Collection:** over 50 postcards received 1908–1910; replies mostly lost
- **Word:** *samideano*, fellow thinker

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 6 asks what women did in Scottish Esperanto: as teachers, authors, officers and speakers.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 6 · Women in Scottish Esperanto

The claim "it was a men's movement" is one of the six in Chapter 1. The evidence says otherwise: women taught the classes, wrote the plays and the dictionary, sat on the committees and filled the steamers to the congresses. This chapter sets out what the surviving records show, and what they leave out.

The idea in a box

Women are well represented in the records of Scottish Esperanto, but the records still mark them as exceptions: "Miss" and "Fräulein" were written beside their names, and only one woman held a federation vice-presidency. The recent study argues that Esperanto offered an unusually open space for mixed company. It also stresses that little is known about many of the women involved.

Lois Beveridge (1889–1946)

Dresden, 1908

Aged 18 (or 19; the study gives both) she travelled from Dundee to the Universal Congress in Dresden, which drew about 1,500 Esperantists. The study says she would have met young speakers from other countries, but it names no one.

The diploma

In 1908 she earned the advanced proficiency diploma (*Atesto pri Kapableco*), which made her a certified teacher and an examiner for British Esperanto Association diplomas.

Teaching and office

She ran classes and a Friday-evening circle at her father's church and later at Harris Academy. Perth's club honoured her in December 1912, and in 1913 she was one of four vice-presidents of the Scottish

Esperanto Federation, the only woman among them.

Other Women, Other Roles

Woman	What the records show
Heather Beveridge (1886–1940)	Entered University College Dundee at 16 and took a chemistry degree. She became a Carnegie Research Scholar and later worked at the University of Edinburgh. In 1908 she published "Hidro de para-toluidino" in the journal *Internacia Scienca Revuo*. The *Dundee Courier* reported her hope that scholars everywhere would read it.
Mary Jane Hare	A Dundee resident who wrote a three-act comedy, *The Foreign Correspondent*, staged at the Scottish Congress in Dundee in 1911.
Jane Baird	First author, with William Harvey and John Mabon Warden, of the *Edinburgh Esperanto Pocket Dictionary*, first published in 1915 and reissued often until 1939. She also appears in a photograph of Scots travelling to the 1912 Kraków congress.
Constance Ogston, Annie L. Burgess	Teacher and secretary-treasurer of the Aberdeen club (Chapter 2).
Janette King (1862–1947)	Journalist and first president of the Dundee club (Chapter 2).

Numbers

- **Edinburgh, 1911.** Six members were chosen as delegate councillors to the British Esperanto Association, and four were women: Isabella Mears, Annie Robb, A. B. Mackenzie and I. E. McIntosh.
- **Antwerp, 1911.** The study counts 65 women among the Scottish travellers to the Universal Congress, who left from Leith on a steamer. Of those whose jobs were listed, 22 of 65 women (33 per cent) were in professional work, against 21 of 41 men (51 per cent). The women's occupations included eight teachers, five stenographers, three accountants, three nurses, a typist, a cashier and a journalist.

These lists show women in the working world of the time: teaching, office work and nursing, and a few higher posts. Esperanto did not remove the pattern of which jobs were open to them. It did give them a place to meet others, speak in public and travel.

How Women Were Described

Reports of the time marked women with titles. "Miss" and "Fräulein" appear beside names in congress lists, and one 1908 report remarked on "proud young British women". Dundee was sometimes called a "women's town" because of its female industrial workforce, though the study does not claim that this explains the women's role in Esperanto.

> **A voice from outside Scotland**
>
> Marie Hankel, an Esperantist from outside Scotland, won first prize at the first poetry competition held at a Universal Congress (Barcelona, 1909) and in 1911 founded the Esperantist Literary Association in Antwerp. The study quotes her saying in Washington in 1910 that universities may be closed to women, but books are open. She is not Scottish, but she shows what the wider movement said to the women in it.

"Languages of Egalitarianism"

The study argues that Esperanto offered women an unusually egalitarian space at a time when many were shut out of office, votes and some schools. It points out that other international women's organisations of the time could be closed to middle-class women, while Esperanto groups mixed men and women of different ages and classes. The argument is a hopeful one, and the study is cautious: it uses "may have" and "perhaps", and says that little is known about many of the women involved.

> **Care with the numbers**
>
> Lois Beveridge's age at Dresden is given as 18 in one place and 19 in another (her 1911 census age was 22). The study gives other congress figures, such as the share of women among registered speakers in 1910, which I could not tie to a specific congress, so this chapter leaves them out. The occupation counts for Antwerp cover only those Scots whose jobs were listed.

A Short Reading in Esperanto

Lois Beveridge estis instruistino. En 1908 ŝi veturis sen siaj gepatroj al la Universala Kongreso en Dresdeno. En 1913 ŝi iĝis vicprezidanto de la Skota Esperanto-Federacio.

instruistino (female teacher) · *veturi* (to travel) · *gepatroj* (parents) · *iĝi* (to become) · *vicprezidanto* (vice-president).

The meaning: Lois Beveridge was a teacher. In 1908 she travelled without her parents to the Universal Congress in Dresden. In 1913 she became a vice-president of the Scottish Esperanto Federation. Notice *siaj*: it refers back to the subject *ŝi* (she), so the parents are her own.

Sources and doubts

The facts here come from Chapter 3 of *Postcards, Translators and Esperanto Pioneers* (2025) as retrieved for this course. Little is known about many of the women, and their evidence is often a name in a list.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Using the chapter, answer "Esperanto in Scotland was a men's movement" with three facts, and add one limit on what those facts prove.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

The study says 33% of the women at Antwerp with listed jobs were professionals against 51% of the men. What would you need to know before using these figures to say something about equality in Esperanto?

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write two sentences in Esperanto about a woman teacher who went to a congress in another country (use *instruistino*, *veturi* and *kongreso*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Lois Beveridge:** Dresden 1908, advanced diploma 1908, vice-president of the Federation 1913 (only woman)
- **Heather Beveridge:** chemist, Esperanto article 1908
- **Mary Jane Hare:** comedy for the 1911 Dundee congress
- **Jane Baird:** first author of the *Edinburgh Esperanto Pocket Dictionary* (1915)
- **Antwerp 1911:** 65 Scottish women travelled; 4 of 6 Edinburgh delegate councillors were women

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 7 moves to the twentieth century: William Auld and the Scottish poets.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 7 · The Scottish Poets and the Twentieth Century

The first six chapters are set before the First World War, the years the surviving papers cover best. This chapter jumps to the middle of the century, where Scottish Esperanto produced its most famous names: four writers who published together in 1951, and one of them, William Auld, who was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

The idea in a box

After the Beveridge years, the best-documented Scottish story is a literary one. A group later called the Scottish School made Scotland a name in original Esperanto poetry. The sources used for this course say much less about ordinary clubs between the wars and after, so this chapter marks that gap and does not fill it with guesses.

The Scottish School

In 1951 an anthology called *Kvaropo* ("a foursome") brought together four writers: William Auld, John Dinwoodie, John Francis and Reto Rossetti. Biographies of Auld describe the book as the start of what is called the Scottish School. Auld is the best known of the four.

Point	What the sources say
The four	Auld, Dinwoodie, Francis, Rossetti
The book	*Kvaropo*, 1951 in one biography. Wikipedia dates Auld's collection *Spiro de l' pasio*, published in it, to 1952, so the exact year is uncertain.
The publisher	The biography connects the book with the beginning of the house Stafeto, founded by Juan Régulo Pérez in La Laguna (Canary Islands).
The name	"Scottish School" is a label used by commentators, so it is not a formal society.

What I could not confirm

The sources I could read name the four writers but say little about Dinwoodie, Francis and Rossetti, or about how far each lived or wrote in Scotland. Do not assume all four were

born in Scotland. The title "Scottish School" is also a later label, so treat it as a convenient name and not as proof of a joint programme.

William Auld (1924–2006)

Life

Born in Erith, England, on 6 November 1924; educated at Allan Glen's School in Glasgow; served in the Royal Air Force as a Spitfire pilot; studied English literature at Glasgow University and trained as a teacher. From 1960 he taught at a secondary school in Alloa and stayed there for the rest of his life. He died in Dollar on 11 September 2006 and is buried there.

Esperanto

A biography says he learned the language in 1937. He edited *Esperanto en Skotlando* from 1949 to 1955 and the Universal Esperanto Association's magazine *Esperanto* from 1955 to 1958. He was vice-president of the Association (1977–1980), president of the Esperanto Academy (1979–1983) and president of the Esperanto PEN Centre (1999–2005).

Work

His long poem *La infana raso* ("The Infant Race", 1956) is considered his masterpiece. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1999, 2004 and 2006, the first nominations for work in Esperanto.

The Journal and the Collection

Esperanto en Skotlando was a modest periodical that served as a forum for young writers while Auld edited it in 1949–1955. One source gives its start as 1947, so sources disagree on when it began; the safest statement is that Auld edited it in 1949–1955.

In 2001 Auld gave about 5,000 books on Esperanto to the National Library of Scotland. This is where a student who wants to read the poems in print can start, and it is a reminder that the library now keeps the printed record of the language in Scotland, as the Beveridge papers do at St Andrews.

What Else Is Known?

Period	What is established here
1912–1914	The Beveridge papers and the Federation's activity (Chapters 3 and 4)
1914–1918	The First World War ends the planned congress; the sources do not describe the Scottish clubs in detail
1926	The Universal Congress meets in Edinburgh (Chapter 4)
1930s–1940s	The study notes that Esperanto speakers were persecuted in the Second World War in various countries; the sources I read do not give a Scottish picture
1949–1956	Auld edits *Esperanto en Skotlando*; *Kvaropo* appears; *La infana raso* is published
2001	Auld's book donation to the National Library of Scotland

Testing the claim "it died out after the war"

The table shows continuous activity in print from 1949 to 1956 and beyond, but it does not show club numbers, so it cannot answer the claim by itself. The honest conclusion is that literary Esperanto in Scotland flourished in the 1950s, while the fate of the clubs needs further sources.

A Short Reading in Esperanto

William Auld naskiĝis en 1924 kaj kreskis en Glasgovo. Li instruis en Alloa kaj verkis poemojn en Esperanto. En 2001 li donis proksimume kvin mil librojn al la Nacia Biblioteko de Skotlando.

naskiĝi (to be born) · *kreski* (to grow) · *verki* (to write, compose) · *poemo* (poem) · *doni* (to give) · *biblioteko* (library).

The meaning: William Auld was born in 1924 and grew up in Glasgow. He taught in Alloa and wrote poems in Esperanto. In 2001 he gave about five thousand books to the National Library of Scotland.

Sources and doubts

The life of Auld comes from Wikipedia and a biography on a literary gallery site. The Scottish School and *Kvaropo* come from that biography. Dates for the anthology differ between sources (1951, 1952). Information on clubs after 1926 is thin in the sources I used.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

List three facts about William Auld that the chapter gives with exact dates, and one fact where sources disagree.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

"The Scottish School was a movement with a shared programme." Explain why the chapter does not accept that, and what you would need to read to test it.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write two sentences in Esperanto about a writer you admire, saying where they grew up and that they wrote poems (use *kreski* and *verki*).

→ Solution

Quick Reference

- **Scottish School:** Auld, Dinwoodie, Francis, Rossetti; *Kvaropo* (1951 or 1952)
- **William Auld:** 1924–2006; taught in Alloa from 1960; *La infana raso* (1956); Nobel nominations 1999, 2004, 2006
- **Journal:** *Esperanto en Skotlando*, edited by Auld 1949–1955

- **Collection:** about 5,000 books given to the National Library of Scotland in 2001
- **Gap:** clubs between the wars and after

Coming next

Esperanto in Scotland, Chapter 8 is the last: Esperanto in Scotland today, the six claims tested, and a list of what is left to find out. Course Complete.

Esperanto in Scotland

Course 1 · Chapter 8 · Esperanto in Scotland Today

The last chapter does three jobs. It says what the sources I could read show about Esperanto in Scotland now, which is less than for 1906. It tests the six claims from Chapter 1 against everything since. And it lists what is left to find out.

The idea in a box

The evidence is strong for the early years and for the literary 1950s, and thin for ordinary clubs after 1913 and for the present. A careful conclusion keeps those gaps in view: it does not say that nothing survives, and it does not say that Scottish Esperanto is thriving.

What Can Be Said About Now?

I searched for current information and found less than I hoped. This is what I found, and nothing more.

Item	What the sources show
Glasgow Esperanto Society	Appears in the Esperanto Association of Britain's event listings through the 2010s, with talks and social meetings; the latest listing I found is from 2017. I could not confirm whether it meets in the same form now.
Edinburgh, 2012	A search summary reports that about 90 speakers came to Edinburgh for a joint British and Scottish congress, with courses and conversation circles. I did not read the original page.
Youth activity	A Wikipedia article says the British Esperanto youth association (JEB) was restarted in Glasgow in 2003.
Learning online	The Esperanto Association of Britain's home page (a post dated 7 September 2026) advertises 12-week online courses run by the London Esperanto Club on Zoom, details at kursaro.net. It lists no Scottish groups or events.
The printed record	Auld's books are in the National Library of Scotland (2001); the Beveridge papers are at the University of St Andrews.

Check before you rely on this

I could not confirm any current Scottish club, meeting or course. If you want to join one, check the Glasgow Esperanto Society's own website, the Esperanto Association of Britain's current pages, and the online courses above, instead of trusting a list in a course written from search results.

The Six Claims, Tested

Claim from Chapter 1	Verdict from the evidence
Esperanto never mattered in Scotland.	**Not supported.** Clubs in many towns by about 1910, a Federation reporting 15 clubs and 531 members in 1911 (its own figures), and the Universal Congress in Edinburgh in 1926. The numbers may be promotional, so "mattered a great deal" is not proved either.
It was a hobby of a few eccentrics.	**Not supported by what survives.** Members included ministers, teachers, journalists, a chemist, stenographers and nurses. Clubs offered teas, songs and classes, which looks more like a social society than an eccentric fringe.
It was a men's movement.	**Not supported.** Women taught, wrote, translated and held offices, though they were marked with "Miss" and one woman was the only vice-president (Chapter 6).
It died out after the First World War.	**Unresolved.** The 1926 congress and the Auld period show it continued, but the sources read do not describe the clubs between the wars or after. A gap in the sources is not the same as a decline.
Nothing survives to study.	**Not supported.** Letters, postcards, newspapers, a periodical, books and two major collections survive, though unevenly and centred on one family.
The Scottish story is just the British story.	**Partly.** Scottish clubs joined the British Esperanto Association and read *The British Esperantist*, but they also built their own Federation, congresses and later literary circle. This course cannot measure the proportion.

What Is Left to Find Out

- How many clubs and members there really were, and where (membership lists, not reports).

- What happened to the clubs and the Federation after 1913, between the wars, and during and after the Second World War.
- The women who appear only as a name in a list (Chapter 6), and the people who wrote to the Beveridges and kept no papers.
- Dinwoodie, Francis and Rossetti, and what the Scottish School meant to them (Chapter 7).
- What happened to the planned Edinburgh congress of 1915 (Chapter 4).
- Who exactly translated and paid for the 1926 Bible (Chapter 4).
- The state of Scottish Esperanto now.

Further Reading

- *Postcards, Translators and Esperanto Pioneers*, Guilherme Fians, Bernhard Struck and Claire Taylor (University of London Press, 2025), free to read online.
- The John Beveridge Collection at the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums, and the library's guide to the papers.
- The Esperanto Association of Britain's history pages and its listings of groups and events.
- William Auld's *La infana raso* and the collection of his books at the National Library of Scotland.
- Within this site: *The Story of Esperanto*, *Esperanto Grammar 1* and *Esperanto Reading 1*.

A Short Reading in Esperanto

Hodiaŭ oni povas lerni Esperanton ankaŭ interrete. La historio de la lingvo en Skotlando komenciĝis per malgrandaj kluboj kaj amikaj poŝtkartoj.

hodiaŭ (today) · *povi* (to be able) · *interrete* (online) · *historio* (history) · *komenciĝi* (to begin) · *amika* (friendly).

The meaning: Today one can learn Esperanto online too. The history of the language in Scotland began with small clubs and friendly postcards.

Exercises

EXERCISE 1

Choose the claim from the table that you find hardest to settle, and say what single new source would help most.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 2

Write a 100-word summary of Esperanto in Scotland that makes no claim the sources in this course do not support.

→ Solution

EXERCISE 3

Write three sentences in Esperanto about how you would like to learn or use Esperanto next (use *hodiaŭ*, *interrete* or *povi*).

→ Solution

Course Recap

- **1 Why Scotland?** The question, the sources, the gaps.
- **2 The First Clubs:** Glasgow and Edinburgh 1903, Dundee 1906, the towns.
- **3 The Beveridges:** John, Heather and Lois, and their collection.
- **4 Congresses and the Federation:** 1906–1911, the Federation of 1910, Edinburgh 1926.
- **5 Postcards and Pen Friends:** Bulgaria, Finland and the yearbooks.
- **6 Women:** teachers, authors, officers, travellers.
- **7 The Scottish School:** Auld and *Kvaropo*; the later gap.
- **8 Today:** six claims tested; what remains unknown.

Course Complete

You have finished **Esperanto in Scotland**. The habit worth keeping is the one this course practised: say what the evidence shows, say where it stops, and mark the difference. Continue with *The Story of Esperanto* for the wider history, or with *Esperanto Reading 1* to read more of the language itself.