

300th birthday celebrated in Edinburgh

✘ Books and papers relating to Scotland's most celebrated philosopher, David Hume, go on display today at the National Library of Scotland, 300 years after his birth.

Hume was one of the most prominent figures in the Scottish Enlightenment and one of the first British men of letters to win fame and fortune through his pen, both as an essayist and historian.

Now Scotland's largest library is giving the public a chance to view an original copy of Hume's famous 'A Treatise of Human Nature' (volume 1) which dates back to 1739, and is considered by many scholars to be his most important work.

Dr Iain Gordon Brown, Principal Curator of Manuscripts at the National Library of Scotland, said: "Our display is a great tribute to Hume who is arguably the most important philosopher ever to write in English. Hume's 'A Treatise of Human Nature' is a fascinating insight into 'the science of man' but was not an immediate success in Britain, and inevitably attracted criticism from his contemporaries.

"To illustrate this we have also put on display a letter, written by Hume to Glasgow professor Francis Hutcheson in 1739, in which he responds to such criticism. If you are interested in Hume or want to learn more, come to Edinburgh and see this inspiring collection first-hand."

Hume was an international celebrity who enjoyed a varied career – he was a law student, apprentice merchant, military secretary, diplomat and civil servant. Although popular in literary circles he also attracted controversy due to his perceived atheism.

NLS is a major centre of Hume scholarship, with world-renowned collections of his correspondence, papers and books. Most distinguished of all is the Hume Collection bequeathed to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1838 by the philosopher's nephew, and now on long-term loan to the National Library of Scotland. In the 1750s Hume was Keeper of the Advocates' Library, predecessor of the present National Library of Scotland.

Other highlights in the treasures display include letters between Hume and his contemporaries, including Adam Smith, and minutes of meetings from his time with the Advocates' Library.

The display will be open to the public from today until June 28. For further information log on to [their website](#).