

## On the trail of Buchan

Dennis Johnson

**A**N EDINBURGH teacher is to trace and collate the scattered archives of John Buchan, the novelist and first Lord Tweedsmuir, from a small office in the old administrative building of Scotland's National Library.

Eventually Dr Eileen Stewart, who teaches English at George Watson's College, and wrote her PhD thesis on Buchan, plans to edit the first complete, annotated edition of the author's prolific works and letters.

Interest in Buchan, the creator of Richard Hannay, shows no decline almost 50 years after his death while Governor-General of Canada.

His "shockers" remain in print, his stories are dramatised for television and radio, and his views on life and friendship coincide with assessments being made of figures decried since the last war as imperialist.

Dr Stewart says: "There has been a re-evaluation of the so-called imperialists and a recognition that many of the things they were trying to do, though grandiose and paternalistic, were often noble in the most human sense.

"We seem to need some of that kind of altruism now, instead of the ethos of grabbing self-interest. Somehow Buchan's work contains a reassurance that right will eventually prevail."

Other archives exist in Oxford, London Universities and Pretoria, a legacy of his life during the Boer War.

A complete archive is one of the chief aims of the John Buchan Society. Grants and sponsorships will be sought from industry and charities.



Dr Eileen Stewart with Buchan's best-seller outside the National Library of Scotland