

*University of Aberdeen*

*Special Libraries and Archives*

*Historic Collections*

## *Highland Connection: The Scottish Holdings*



*George Robson, Scenery of the Grampian Mountains, 1814*

### **An Information Document**

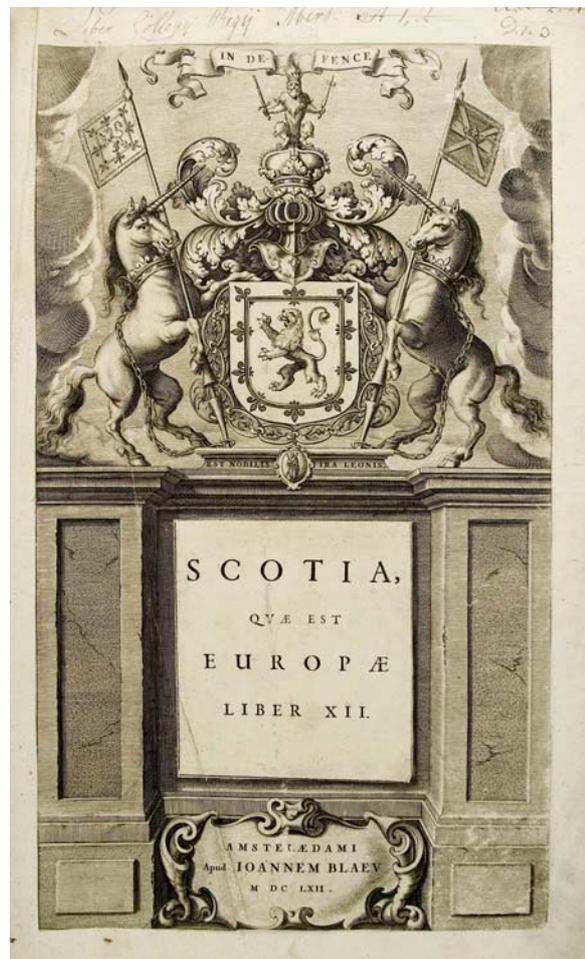
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## Highland Material held in the University of Aberdeen's Historic Collections

The library collections of a university as ancient as Aberdeen inevitably become a microcosm of the known world, a representation of the development of knowledge of the whole world and all that it contains. Ancient universities also accumulate, in the course of the centuries, the essential memorials of the region where they are located: those documents deemed most worthy of preservation for posterity. This is very much the case with Aberdeen, particularly because of the Highland and Jacobite associations of the University Colleges and of Old Aberdeen itself (where several elite Highland families had their winter residences). The Highland collections in the university library are of such depth and quality that it is hard to summarise them briefly.

From the foundation of King's College in the fifteenth century, Aberdeen's students have included Highlanders and those from the Gaelic heartlands of the northwest as well as from formerly Gaelic-speaking areas in the eastern Highlands. When members of the Royal Society of London sought for information about Highland customs and beliefs in the seventeenth century, it was naturally to the Professors of Old Aberdeen that they turned. Among the University's alumni is James Fraser of Wardlaw (1634-1709) one of the very earliest scholars of Highland life, language and history and author of the first (sadly lost) Gaelic Dictionary. Fraser's extensive journals survive in the Historic Collections at Aberdeen, and are at last being transcribed, edited and studied, as part of the current initiatives for the library. Another Aberdeen alumnus, Robert Gordon of Straloch (1580-1661) was the great topographer of Renaissance Scotland, contributing the text, and revising the cartography for the magnificent *Atlas of Scotland* which was published by Bleau at Amsterdam in 1662. Gordon was the first to map some regions of the Highlands, such as Wester Ross, and the fine impression of the Atlas now in Historic Collections at Aberdeen is a worthy memorial of his work. The university holds also Herman Moll's rare *Set of Thirty Six new and Correct Maps of Scotland, with Roads, Divided into Shires* (1725).

The MacBean Stuart and Jacobite Collection is a resource of international importance for the study of Highland history and culture, the finest collection of its kind outside the British Library, containing numerous items held in no other collection in the UK. Some 3,500 books and 1,000 pamphlets, as well as numerous engravings, cover many aspects of the histories of the Stuart royal family and the Jacobite Risings which attempted to restore them to the throne. From the year 1688 the three kingdoms of Scotland, Ireland and England had, in effect, two monarchs, two courts, two aristocracies, twin and conflicting demands on the loyalty of the citizen. The MacBean collection documents the pamphlet wars of these years.



Title Page of the Scottish volume from the *Great Atlas* published by Bleau in Amsterdam.

The conflict, which began with the 1688 flight of the Catholic James II and his replacement by the Protestants William and Mary, continued unabated in a series of risings and suppressions, until the decisive defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden at the end of the rising of 1745. The collection has

several accounts of Culloden and its aftermath, including *A Particular Account of the Battle of Culloden* (London, 1746). For the Jacobite heartlands in northern and western Scotland, particularly the territories of Aberdeenshire and Moray, Culloden ended a way of life based on



Memorial Cairn, Culloden Moor, Invernesshire; 9.3 x 12.6 cms.  
Anon. Photograph, early twentieth century, MacBean Collection, Historic Collections, Aberdeen.

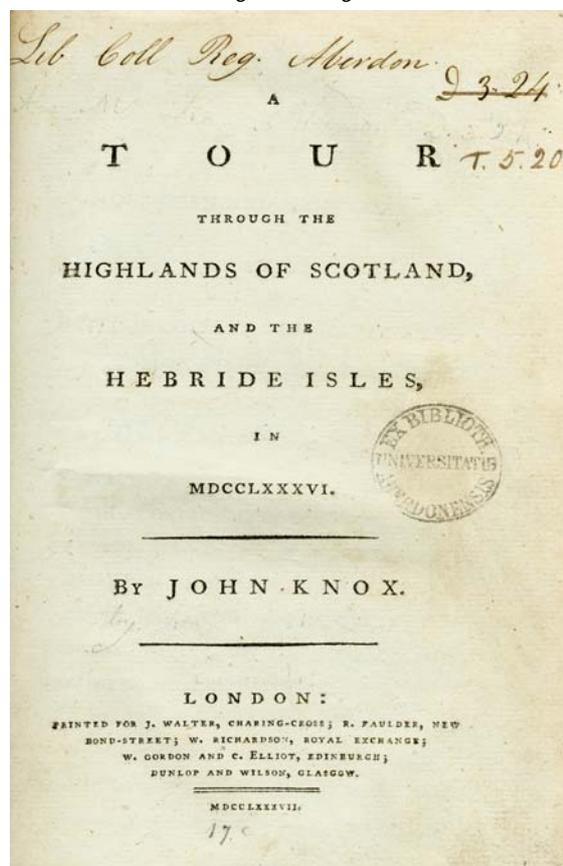
traditional loyalties and customs and brought in (often forcibly) modernisations of husbandry and society. Among the treasures of the Collection, donated to Aberdeen by New York businessman William M. MacBean (1852-1924), is John Finlayson's *General Map of Great Britain; wherein are delineated the military operations in that island during the years 1745 and 1746*. The engraved text on this map is left incomplete, with Charles Edward described as 'Pr', allowing of the reading 'Prince' or 'Pretender', who

*Arriving too late, through the darkness of the night and badness of the way, was obliged to return; and while great part of his army were dispersed in quest of provisions, and others sunk down to rest, through the fatigue of the double march, the Duke came upon them and forced the battle of Culloden. After a short cannonading, the Pr ordered the Highlanders that were present to attack, which they did on the right with great intrepidity and notwithstanding the dreadful fire they sustained, they broke through the first line of their enemies, but were repulsed by the second.*

A discrete part of the Collection contains over 1,300 loose prints, many contemporary and rare, printed on the Continent as well as in Britain. These can be viewed and searched online at [www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic). In particular, the MacBean collection is rich in pamphlets,

broadsides, maps, engravings and a miscellaneous and international assembly of prints including contemporary engravings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and also nineteenth century romantic and retrospective depictions of Jacobite history.

Travellers in the Highlands after Culloden are richly represented in the Aberdeen collections, including Samuel Johnson's famous *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, 1775 (in the course of which journey he visited the library at Aberdeen and appreciated its Hebrew and humanist manuscripts). The 1787 *Tour through the Highlands of Scotland*



Title page of John Knox's *Tour through the Highlands of Scotland* published in 1787

by John Knox contains much on the economic well being (and economic distress) of the post-Jacobite Highlands, but also contains an unexpected and informed dissertation on Highland history as well as appreciative descriptions of Scenery.

*It is scarcely possible to do justice to the grandeur of this road. A ridge of mountains, rises from the edge of the lake to a great height, and is covered with woods from the water to the very summit.*

This appreciation is the forerunner to a more general passion for the mountains and landscapes of the British Isles, which found expression in the lavish books of coloured engravings which appeared in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Aberdeen possesses one of the finest of these, George Robson's *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains*, a set of hand-coloured plates which first appeared in 1814. The later nineteenth century, schooled in appreciation of Scottish landscape and culture by the poems and novels of Sir Walter Scott, exploited the developing medium of lithography for the depiction of Scottish scenery. Aberdeen holds three volumes of Michel Bouquet's *Rambles in the Highlands of Scotland*, printed in Paris, and masterpieces of the lithographer's art, as well as a curiosity, the Highland tour of the exiled French King (or Pretender) Henri V, complete with a frontispiece of the juvenile monarch in full Highland regalia.



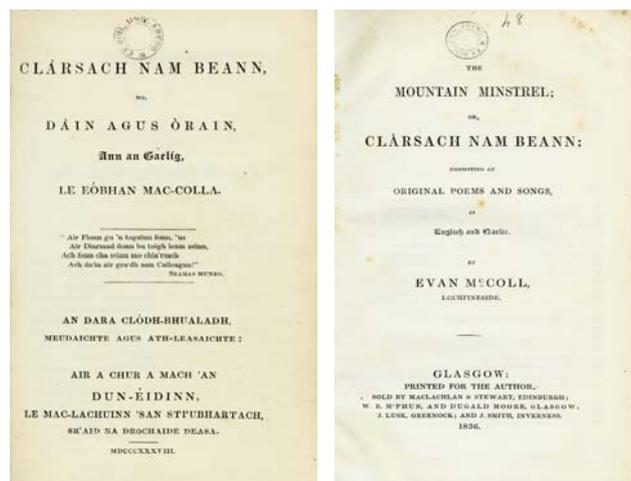
*Tarbet House*, from *A Collection of Entirely Original Strathspey Reels by Ladies resident in a remote part of the Highlands of Scotland* Nathaniel Gow, 1801

The J. Murdoch Henderson collection of Scottish Music contains many of the compositions of the Perthshire family of traditional musicians, the Gows, and also many great rarities of Highland music, such as the *Collection of Entirely Original Strathspeys and Reels by Ladies resident in a remote part of the Highlands of Scotland* published by Nathaniel Gow in 1801. Another rare volume is Gow's *Collection of Entirely Original Strathspeys, Reels, Marches etc...taken from a Remote Part of the highlands of Scotland* (1796). The Henderson collection also contains many of the compositions of the Perthshire composer Robert Mackintosh (1745-1807) and culminates in rich holdings of the great Highland composer of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries J. Scott Skinner (1843-1927).

The Brown-Lindsay collection reflects 300 years of the dissenting religious traditions in Scotland, in its inclusion of many sermons preached to, or under the auspices of, the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Knowledge in the Highlands and

Islands, which also serves as an index of education and religious belief in the highland regions. The economic prosperity and distress of the region are documented in many works in the collections, such as Knox's *Observations on the Northern Fisheries* (1786) or William Marshall's *Description of the Agriculture of the Central highlands of Scotland* (1794).

The Highland connections of Aberdeen University and its long tradition of teaching Gaelic language and culture have ensured that the University Library contains rich material on Highland literature and culture, with a particularly detailed holding in many European languages on Ossian and the Ossianic controversy as to the authenticity of the material published in James Macpherson's *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1760) which led even Napoleon to commission paintings of Ossian receiving his marshals into a Celtic Olympus. This long Highland tradition at Aberdeen has also resulted in the University's holding complete runs of the *Transactions* of the Gaelic Society of Inverness from its foundation in the 1871 and the accumulation of many rare editions of poets and historians of the Highlands, originally published in small editions by subscription or for their author, such as Evan McColl's bilingual *The Mountain Minstrel/Clarsach nan Beinn*.



Title pages of Evan McColl, *The Mountain Minstrel/Clarsach nan Beinn*, 1836 and 1839

For the later nineteenth century the collection broadens, with ample documentation of the penetration of the railways into the Highlands and the consequent development of something like

popular tourism, fostered by the guides published by the Caledonian Highland railway companies. A part of this opening-up of the Highlands was the development of mountain climbing as a sport and



*Capercaillie, colour plate from John Guille Millais Game Birds and Shooting Sketches, 1892*

the foundation of the climbing society, the Cairngorm Club, whose library, collection of journals and archives are held by Aberdeen historic collections. The Highlands also became a focus for the study of natural history in the nineteenth century, led by a number of Aberdeen professors. These studies have left a magnificent holding of works, including beautifully illustrated bird books and the papers of William MacGillivray (1796-1852), Audubon's collaborator for the celebrated *Birds of America*, whose Scottish field notes and journals are in the University collections.

The photographic collections of the University include the 40,000 glass-plate negatives of the Aberdeen firm of George Washington Wilson and Co., dating from the second half of the nineteenth century. With 480 views of Argyllshire, 860 of Invernesshire and no fewer than 2120 of Perthshire, the collection offers a matchless view of the nineteenth-century Highland landscape. The whole collection can be viewed and searched at [www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic).

All the works so far mentioned have been catalogued, studied and explored, but it should be remembered that the University manuscript and archive collections contain a wealth of material

relating to the Highlands of Scotland which is still awaiting study and edition. These include a long sequence of letters on the state of the Highlands covering the greater part of the eighteenth century from the year of Culloden into the nineteenth century (MS 954); there are the papers of the Highland Society of Scotland from 1786 to 1814 in MS 960; there is Edward Ross' collection of bagpipe music dating from the 1820s to the 1870s; John Anderson's early-nineteenth century unpublished *History of the Highland Clans* (MS 551) and the papers of the Gaelic Scholar and librarian of King's College, Ewan MacLachlan (1775-1822) in MS 499. This can only be an indication of the manuscript holdings spanning over half a millennium of collecting at the University, with its long and diverse connections with the Highlands and with Gaelic Scotland. It is certain that there are many Highland discoveries yet to be made in the historic collections of the University of Aberdeen.



*Putting the Stone from Michel Bouquet, An artist's Ramble in the North of Scotland, 1849.*

# Appendix: The Scottish Highlands

Although there is no collection of printed books in Historic Collections that is entirely devoted to the Scottish Highlands, very many contain material that contributes substantially to our knowledge and understanding of aspects of that region.

## The printed collections

### (a) Books, prints and pamphlets

The MacBean Collection, with over 3,500 books and 1,000 pamphlets, plus numerous sermons, official reports and satirical verse, is one of the largest Jacobite collections in the country and provides invaluable insights into later seventeenth- and eighteenth-century society in general and in particular the various Jacobite risings. Every aspect of the Jacobite movement is represented both in favour and against. The Collection contains many contemporary accounts including proclamations by the principle protagonists as well as writings of respective supporters and other observers.

Typical of the many works expressing the Hanoverian viewpoint (and successful military campaign) is the *Compliment to the Duke of Cumberland* (1746) which contains the poem, 'Sweet William'. It is a work that stands in marked contrast to the Jacobite poem, printed in 1745, *To His Royal Highness, Charles, Prince of Wales* in which the Young Pretender is described as 'best of princes, best of patriots'.

The Collection also contains many accounts of the battles fought over the Jacobite cause, and has several accounts of Culloden and its aftermath, published at the time, as with *A Particular Account of the Battle of Culloden* (London, 1746).

A discrete part of the MacBean Collection is given over to approx. 1,300 loose prints and engravings, many contemporary, and rare, printed not only in Britain, but also emanating from France or the Netherlands, which depict many of the individuals, incidents and topography surrounding the Jacobite cause.

These can be viewed and searched as part of our Online Collections via <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diss/historic>.

The Brown-Lindsay Collection encompasses 300 years of the history of the dissenting Presbyterian Churches (particularly in Scotland) but also includes unusual rarities reflecting wider religious issues. It contains many sermons preached to, or under the aegis of the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands, and accounts as to the state of religious belief and commitment at the time. In this respect, Alexander Stewart's *Account of a Late Revival of Religion in Part of the Highlands of Scotland* (1800) stands as a good example.

The core of the J. Murdoch Henderson Collection is printed music. Famous Scottish composers feature strongly as with Nathaniel Gow (1763-1831), son of Neil Gow (1727-1807), Robert Mackintosh (1745-1807), and not forgetting the Strathspey King J. Scott Skinner (1843-1927). J. M. Henderson himself was an authority on Scottish fiddle music and wrote *Flowers of Scottish Melody: A First Companion to the Scottish Violinist and Pianist* (Glasgow: Bayley & Ferguson, 1935).

Significant titles within this Collection include Nathaniel Gow's *Collection of Entirely Original Strathspeys, Reels, Marches...etc...[taken from] a Remote Part of the Highlands of Scotland* (1796).

The Gregory Collection (essentially once the working library of a family of academic mathematicians and medical teachers) is, as might be expected, heavily scientific, yet contains a few surprises, including the *Historical Memoirs of Rob Roy and Clan Macgregor* (1819).

The Victorian era heralded the new sport of climbing, and 1887 saw the foundation of the Cairngorm Club. Publications on all aspects of the new popular sport were soon rolling off the press and consequently the Club has amassed volumes of books as well as periodical runs. Since 1993 the Cairngorm Club Library has been housed in Historic Collections. In addition to the Library, the archives of the Cairngorm Club were also deposited at the same time. As would be expected, the Collection concentrates – but not exclusively - on all aspects of mountaineering with special relevance to Scotland. The Club's Library contains many books on the topography of Scotland and its highland regions; and also contains a number of important early books, including copies of George Robson's *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains* (1814) and Samuel Johnson's famous *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland* (1775).

The coming of the railways improved access to the highlands, for goods, passengers and tourists alike. Ranking as one of the major railway collections in Britain, the O'Dell Railway Collection includes all aspects of transport with an emphasis on the North of Scotland, particularly the history of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company (1854-1922). However, it also contains many modern economic accounts of the penetration of the railways into the Highlands of Scotland in the nineteenth century, and, additionally contains early twentieth-century guide books issued for tourists by the Caledonian Highland Railway Companies.

Notwithstanding the resources discussed above, the greatest number of titles related to the Highlands of Scotland are to be found in Historic Collections' large, chronologically arranged (by date of publication), collections, which accommodate many books on Ossian (and the Ossianic controversy), including early editions of the poetry in modern European languages. James Macpherson, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry Collected in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1760) and *Poesie di Ossian figlio di Fingal antico poeta celtico* (Padova, 1763) are important early examples.

These chronological collections also contain much on the economic well-being (and, sometimes, distress) of the Highlands, as with John Knox's *Observations on the Northern Fisheries...with a Discourse on the Expediency of Establishing Fishing Stations or Small Towns in the Highlands of Scotland* (1786), or William Marshall's *Description of the Agriculture of the Central Highlands of Scotland* (1794).

The parochial survey of the entirety of Scotland which was published in the 1790s as the multi-volume *Statistical Account of Scotland*, followed a decade or so later by the Scottish county agricultural surveys (produced under the direction of the Board of agriculture) are also present in Historic Collections.

In addition to the many volumes on the history, politics, economic (e.g. emigration), educational and religious state of the Highlands (there are numbers of publications produced by or for the Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands), these chronological collections contain much on the topography of, and travel within, the region: as with John Knox's *Tour through the Highlands of Scotland* (1787), Michel Bouquet's early nineteenth-century *Tourists' Ramble in the Highlands* and George Anderson's *Guide to the Highlands and Islands of Scotland* (1834).

The collections can also foster and support a number of differing scientific approaches to the Highlands of Scotland. From the 1770s, they can supply texts on the flora and fauna of Scotland; and, from the mid-1840s, texts on the geology of the country, as with the (then) standard work produced by one of Marischal College's professors, James Nicol, with his *Guide to the Geology of Scotland* (1844).

The published *Transactions* of the Gaelic Society of Inverness (1871- ) and the *Proceedings* of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland ought not be overlooked.

## **(b) Maps and plans**

Aberdeen University holds over 80 maps, dating before the mid-nineteenth century, that relate to Scotland and its regions.

Some (mostly from the nineteenth century) provide information for visitors and tourists, some are coastal charts for commercial shipping, whilst others delineate the advance of the railways. Most are topographical.

Outstanding amongst the (relevant) maps held by the University are Blaeu's *Scotia, quae est Europae liber XII; Hibernia, quae est Europae liber XIII* (1662), Herman Moll's *Set of of Thirty Six new and Correct Maps of Scotland, with Roads, Divided into its Shires* (1725) and John Finlayson's *General map of Great Britain; wherein are delineated the military operations in that island during the years 1745 and 1746, and even the secret routs of the Pr after the Battle of Culloden until his escape to France (1750?)* [The printed text is left intentionally incomplete to allow 'Pr' to be read as 'Prince' or 'Pretender', depending on the constitutional/ political sympathies of the user of the map.]

## **The photographic collections**

Aberdeen University's largest, and most widely acclaimed photographic collection is that of the 40,000 glass-plate negatives of the Aberdeen firm of George Washington Wilson & Co., which were taken during the second half of the nineteenth century. With over 480 views of Argyllshire, 860 of Inverness-shire and no fewer than 2120 of Perthshire, the Collection offers an unparalleled view of the nineteenth-century Scottish landscape.

These images can be viewed (and the Collection searched) via Historic Collection's website, under 'online collections'.

## **The manuscript and archive collections**

Numerous manuscript collections contain material relating to the Highlands of Scotland. These include:

- MS 954: Collection of letters on the state of the Highlands, 1745-1813.
- MS 960: Papers of the Highland Society of Scotland, 1786-1814.
- MS 1023: An (anonymous) account of a tour of the Highlands, 1806.
- MS 2428: Edward Ross's MS collection of Scots bagpipe music, c.1820-1877.
- MS 3470: Papers of the Fraser family of castle Fraser and Inverallochy. (Jacobite connections).
- MS 3600: Cluny Castle papers. (The owners of Cluny Castle also owned properties in the Highlands).
- MS 551: John Anderson's MS 'History of the Highland clans', 1835.
- MS 1162: Papers of the Yule family, Tarradale House, Ross-shire, 1838-1890.
- MS 2015: Papers regarding the administration Inverness-shire and the Western Isles, 1817.
- MS 3203: Papers of the Sinclair Wemyss family of Southdun, Caithness (which married into an Inverness-shire family).
- MS 499: Papers of Ewan McLachlan, 1775-1822, Gaelic scholar and Librarian of King's college, Aberdeen 1800-1818.

This list of MS material by no means exhausts the potential for study and understanding of the Highlands: the University also holds the papers of, and zoological specimens collected by William Macgillivray, one of Scotland's outstanding naturalists and ornithologists, who grew up on Harris, but was educated in Aberdeen and became Professor of Civil and Natural History in Marischal College, 1841-1852.