

## Family and estate papers in Special Collections

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QG HCOL018

### The Wolfson Reading Room

#### Special Collections Centre

The Sir Duncan Rice Library  
University of Aberdeen  
Bedford Road  
Aberdeen  
AB24 3AA

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### Introduction

Many notable families have deposited their papers with the University and as a result it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material relating to the history and culture of the north-east of Scotland.

These archives are fantastically rich for the study of estate management, local and regional politics, law enforcement, art and architecture, foreign trade, military adventure and colonial power.

Some collections are particularly rich for family historians as they contain large series of tenants' records, such as those of Arbuthnott of Arbuthnott and the Earls of Fife (Duff House). The sources include writs, letter books, rentals, tacks, accounts, correspondence (between owner and tenant) and plans.

Some collections are weightier than others with certain types of record but many will include these general types:

- Legal and business documents: comprising the collection of title deeds and other legal papers relating to land ownership, including financial papers.
- Estate papers: comprising those documents relating to the administration of the estates, including accounts, rentals, and estate development.
- Family papers: comprising the records relating more particularly to the history and genealogy of the family, together with personal papers and correspondence.

***Please note that if there is a description of individual papers (for example Gordon of Haddo), this indicates that only part of the collection of family papers are held at Special Collections.***

### Selected list of prominent collections

Arbuthnott of Arbuthnott: 13<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2764).

Burnett of Leys (Crathes Castle papers):  
14<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3361).

Chalmers family, Aberdeen: 1845 – 1966 (MS 2884).

Davidson of Kebbaly, Midmar, Aberdeenshire:  
1711 – 1878 (MS 4018).

Dingwall Fordyce of Brucklay family:  
16<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 999).

Dunecht Estate Office (Viscounts of Cowdray):  
18<sup>th</sup> century to 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3040).

Dalrymple of Tullos, Nigg, Aberdeen:  
1813 – 1937 (MS 3700).

Douglas of Glenbervie and Nicolson of Glenbervie:  
15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3021).

Duff of Braco and Wharton-Duff of Orton:  
17<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century: (MS 2727).

Duff, Earls of Fife (Duff House): 13<sup>th</sup> century –  
20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3175).

Duff of Meldrum: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2778). For more material relating to the Duffs see the main Earls of Fife catalogue, MS 3175, above.

Erskine of Pittodrie: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 18<sup>th</sup> century  
(MS 2524).

Ferguson of Kinmundy: 16<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century  
(MS 3816).

Forbes family, of Newe, Aberdeenshire:  
16<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3402).

Forbes and Hay of Seaton: 18<sup>th</sup> century –  
19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2253 and MS 2414).

Forbes-Leith of Whitehaugh: 17<sup>th</sup> century –  
20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2308).

Fordyce family of Brucklay Castle and Aberdeen:  
1844 – 1865 (MS 3220).

Fraser Family of Culbockie, Ross-shire: papers:  
1601 – 1727 (MS 2022).

Fraser of Castle Fraser and Inverallochy:  
16<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3470).

Frasers of Inverallochy: 16<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century  
(MS 2701).

Fraser of Philorth: 14<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century  
(MS 3004).

Gordon, Dukes of Gordon: 1644 – 1906 (MS 907,  
MS 908 & MS 909). Please note that the main  
family papers are held by the National Archives  
of Scotland.

Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness: 17<sup>th</sup> century –  
20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 1160 and MS 3193).

Gordon family of Craig Castle and Auchindoir,  
Aberdeenshire: 1511 – 1730 (copies) (MS 2499).

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Gordon of Cluny: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3600).

Gordon family, Earls of Aberdeen, relating to Cromar estate, Aberdeenshire: 19<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3198). Please note that the main collection of papers are still held by the family.

Gordon of Haddo papers relating to the construction of Haddo House: 1732 – 1734 (MS 2520).

Gordon of Letterfourie: 1508 – 1819 (MS 3745).

Gordon of Park, Banffshire: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3260).

Gordon of Pitlurg and Straloch (The Straloch papers: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2223).

Gregory family: papers of the Gregory family of Aberdeen, Edinburgh, St Andrews and Oxford: 1582 – 1912 (MS 2206).

Grierson family, Lerwick, Shetland: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3044).

Guthrie family of Gagie: 1628 – 1745 (MS 2857).

Hay family, Erroll Estates papers, estate accounts of Cruden and Slains: 18<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2110).

Innes of Cowie: 16<sup>th</sup> century - 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2970).

Innes of Learney papers: c.1750 – 1920 (MS 3667).

Innes and Walker of Craignetherty: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2531).

Irvine of Drum: 18<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3263). Please note that the main collection of papers are still held by the family.

Johnston family of Caskieben, Hilton and Portlethen, Aberdeenshire: 1709 – 1920s (MS 3338).

Keith family of Ravelston papers: 1550 – 1832 (MS 2233).

Keith of Kintore: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2707, MS 3064 and MS 3538). This also includes some records of Baird of Ury.

Kinharrachie Estate, Ellon, Aberdeenshire records: 1603 – 1885 (MS 2621).

King of Tertowie: 16<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2957).

Leith of Glenkindie and Freefield: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2847 and MS 2849)

Leith-Ross of Arnage: 14<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3346).

Leslie of Balquhain: 14<sup>th</sup> century – 18<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3043).

Leslie of Warhill: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2580).

Lumsden of Cushnie: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2500).

Moir family of Peterhead: 1688 – 1857 (MS 2909).

Murray, Dukes of Atholl: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2607).

Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2740).

Robertson Nicoll, Sir William, and his family, Old Manse, Lumsden: 19<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3518).

Ross of Balnagowan, Ross-shire: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3300).

Russell of Aden: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3634).

Seton of Mounie: 16<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2787).

Seaton of Pitmedden: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2463 and MS 3531).

Scott family, Achath, near Castle Fraser: papers: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3873).

Shand and Milne of Craigellie, Aberdeenshire: 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2619).

Shand of The Burn, Fettercairn and Straloch: 1816 – 1835 (MS 3652).

Skene of Rubislaw: 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2720).

Taylor of Rothiemay: 19<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 3356).

Turner of Kinharrachie, Ellon: 17<sup>th</sup> century – 19<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2621).

Yule family and Napier of Magdala papers: 1838 – 1890 (MS 1162).

## **Other relevant collections**

### **Scottish Catholic Archives**

There are numerous sources within the records of the Scottish Catholic Church. This extensive collection relates to the Catholic Church from the 12<sup>th</sup> century prior to the restoration of the Scottish Catholic Hierarchy in 1878. The collection contains material of regional, national and international significance and provides evidence of the survival of Catholicism both in Scotland and abroad through the archives of its missions, seminaries and colleges. There are also extensive collections relating to prominent Catholic families, many in the north of Scotland (SCA).

### **Other collections**

There is much relevant material across the collections of antiquarians, solicitors and surveyors.

For example:

Adam, Cochran and Company, advocates, Aberdeen: papers. This collection contains records from families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented: 1630 – 1919 (MS 3066).

Davidson and Garden, advocates, Aberdeen: 15<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century. This extensive collection contains records of some 200 families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented (MS 2769 and MS 3744).

Ledingham Chalmers, solicitors: 18<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century. Includes papers from various families and estates such as Burnett of Elrick and

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Davidson/Douglas of Inchmarlo (MS 3257, MS 3277, MS 3394, MS 3662, MS 3665 and MS 3713).

Records of F. A. MacDonald and Partners, engineers and surveyors, Aberdeen (incorporating Walker & Duncan, Aberdeen): 18<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century. This extensive collection contains records created by the firm in the course of their duties as estate factors and land surveyors (MS 2626).

Simpson, William Douglas, historian and archaeologist, papers including collection of archaeological, monumental and architectural plans, 19<sup>th</sup> century – 20<sup>th</sup> century (MS 2729, MS 2818 and MS 3759).

Miscellaneous documents, mainly letters, relating to county families and other persons in Aberdeenshire: 1772 – 1930 (MS 2332).

### **Printed collections**

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, contains material about families, estates and the relevant geographical areas.

Please note that many of the families who have deposited their papers have also deposited their libraries, for example the Duff of Meldrum and Ogilvie-Forbes families.

### **Access**

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items:

### **Further reading**

For further reading please see the studies of a number of manuscripts, printed books and collections in the journals *Aberdeen University Library Bulletin*, *Aberdeen University Review* and *Northern Scotland*.

A number of the above papers were highlighted in: Beavan, Iain; Davidson, Peter; Stevenson, Jane. *Library and archive collections of the University of Aberdeen: an introduction and description*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press with the University of Aberdeen, 2011).

*Burke's genealogical and heraldic history of the peerage, baronetage & knightage* (London, Burke's, various editions).