

Government and political resources in Special Collections

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QG HCOL020

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

The Sir Duncan Rice Library
University of Aberdeen
Bedford Road
Aberdeen
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Introduction

Many individuals and institutions have deposited their papers with the University; as a result it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material not solely relating to the history and culture of the north-east of Scotland but also of national and international importance.

There are personal papers of politicians and diplomats, of organisations such as political parties, and records created by local administrative units (such as Baronies and Regalities, Burgh Councils, Commissioners of Supply, Harbour Commissioners, Heritors, Lieutenancies, Parochial Boards and Turnpike Trusts) covering the historic counties of Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Some key sources include early taxation records (valuation books and poll books).

In addition, many north-east families had links with the colonies, especially North America and the West Indies; thus there are a number of papers related to colonial governance.

Archival collections

Records of local administration

Aberdeen burgh, Propinquity book: testimonials granted by the Baillies of the Burgh and a burgh Charter: 1559 – 1603 (MS 1050).

Aberdeen burgh, Stent Roll: 1748 – 1749 (MS 57).

Aberdeen Burgh and Shire, poll book: 1696 (MS 568).

Aberdeen valuations: 1674-1786 (19th century copies) (MS 2793).

Aberdeen Commissioners of Supply papers: 1587 – 1743 (MS 3175/Z/174/5) and MS 3175/Z/175).

Aberdeen Sheriff Court record extracts: 17th century -18th century (MS 3155).

Aberdeenshire valuations: 17th century – 20th century (MS 252, MS 507, MS 1037, MS 1038).

Alford poll book: 19th century (MS 3470/21/44).

Alford Turnpike Trust papers: 1822 – 1897 (MS 2769/II/104 and MS 2769/II/117).

Alvah Heritors minute book: 1899 – 1921 (MS 3175/V/1014).

Arnage Barony: 1702 – 1748 and Bourtie Barony: 1608-1702, court acts (MS 3346).

Banffshire, various Baronies: Cullen, Fortry, Montbleatton, Kirk of Alvah, and Doune (Macduff): 1775 – 1831 (MS 3175/V/755).

Banffshire Commissioners of Supply, various papers amongst the Earls of Fife papers: 18th century – 19th century (MS 3175).

Countesswells court book: 1620 – 1662 (MS 2308/11).

Crichie Barony, court minutes: 1640-1644 (MS 3004/V406).

Fraserburgh burgh court book: 1820 – 1826 (MS 3004/V88).

Fraserburgh Heritors minutes: 1837 - 1867 (MS 3004/507).

Fraserburgh Parochial Board: 1862 – 1865 (MS 3004/277).

Down (Macduff) Barony court book: 1770 – 1782 (MS 3175/V/754).

Keithhall Heritors minute book: 1873 – 1884 (MS 3064).

Kintore Heritors minute book: 1850 – 1857 (MS 3064).

Morayshire, various Baronies including Innes, Coxtown, Garmouth and Pluscarden: 1776 – 1798 (MS 3174V/1159).

Morayshire Commissioners of Supply, various papers amongst the Earl of Fife papers: 18th century – 19th century (MS 3175).

Philorth Barony and Fraserburgh Regality court books: 1633-1720 (MS 3004/V405).

Philorth Barony court book: 1653 – 1676 (MS 3004/V406).

Philorth Barony and Fraserburgh Regality court book: 1748 – 1765 (MS 3004/V407).

Philorth Barony, Lord Saltoun court book: 1783 – 1826 (MS 3004/V408).

Philorth Barony court book (copy): 1653 – 1676 (MS 2867).

Rathen Heritors (copies): 1832 – 1853 (MS 3004/587).

Whitehaugh lands and barony court book: 1739 – 1745 (MS 2308/8).

Election papers (Barons, Commissioners of Supply and Members of Parliament), part of the Earls of Fife papers: 1548 – 1741 (MS 3175/Z/174).

Personal papers

Arbuthnot, Charles, diplomat and politician: 1767 – 1850 (MS 3029).

Arbuthnot, Charles George James, diplomat and politician: 19th century (MS 3029).

Alava, Miguel Ricardo De, Spanish Soldier and diplomat (part of papers of Charles Arbuthnot, diplomat and politician): 1824 - 1832 (MS 3029).

Bale/Beal, Beale, Robert, administrator, diplomat and Clerk of the English Privy Council: 1550 – 1600 (MS 1009).

Dyer, Dr Michael, lecturer: political studies collection: 1967 – 2000s (MS 3889).

Halkett, G. R., cartoonist: caricatures of Prime Minister Gladstone: 19th century (MS 2176).

Hume, Joseph, surgeon and M.P.: correspondence principally relating to political matters: 1830 – c. 1850 (MS 2135).

Keith-Falconer, Algernon, 9th Earl of Kintore, politician and Governor of South Australia (from 1889 – 1894). Includes an important series of letters relating to his political and court functions as Conservative Chief Whip in the House of Lords and Lord in Waiting in the 1880s. Also notable papers relating to his role as Governor, including some official papers, non-official papers and scrapbooks of life in Australia created by Lady Kintore: 1870s - 1895 (MS 3064).

Baird, John, 1st Viscount Stonehaven, diplomat and politician. Diaries of Baird from 1897 when he was in Sudan, from 1899 in Abyssinia, from 1900 as private secretary to Sir William Garstin, under-secretary for public works in Egypt and from 1902 – 1903 acting agent and consul-general in Abyssinia and political officer with the British East Africa and Abyssinia Frontier Survey. Also war diaries when he served with the intelligence corps in France: 1890s – 1915 (MS 3064).

Burnet, Alexander of Kemnay: Prussian letters to Sir Andrew Mitchell, ambassador (typescript copies): 1764 – 1765 (MS 2339).

Esslemont, Mary, physician. Papers relating to her role in the Liberal Party and membership of political and humanitarian groups: 20th century (MS 3179).

Gordon, Lord Adam, politician and commander of H.M. forces in Scotland: correspondence with Henry Dundas, politician and others: 1783 – 1795 (MS 966).

Leatham, James, author and publisher: 1911 – 1958 (MS 2776).

Mackintosh, Sir James, politician: correspondence and biographical notes: 1819 – 1837 (MS 2164).

Ogilvie Forbes, Sir George, diplomat in Mexico (1927-1930), Vatican (1930-1932), Baghdad (1932-1935), Madrid (1935-1937) and Berlin (1937-1939). Including official correspondence and telegrams: 1920s – 1930s (MS 2740).

Scott, Sir John of Scotstarvet, scholar and statesman: 'The Staggering State of the Scottish Statesman': 1650 – 1670 (MS 120).

Stewart, James, British government officer, Fiji and British Guiana, correspondence to his parents in Aberdeen: 1880 – 1900 (MS 3385).

Thornton-Kemsley, Sir Colin, politician: 1929 – 1964 (MS 2852).

Washington, George, President of the United States of America: letter to Richard Lee regards the writing of a history of the American Revolution: April 1788 (MS 906).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller. Copies of Letters from Robert Wilson to the Marquess of Lansdowne and Lord Lauderdale and other letters: 1821 – 1824 (MS 422). Volume containing transcripts of letters written by Robert Wilson during his time as Private Secretary to Lord Hastings, Governor General of Malta: 1822 – 1826 (MS 423).

Organisation papers

Aberdeen Clarion Club: 1899 – 1909 (MS 2467).

Communist Party, Socialist, and Trades Union literature: 1886-1997 (MS 2664).

Liberal Association, Aberdeen, minutes: 1878 – 1923 (MS 2472 – MS 2473).

Liberal Party, executive committee minutes, circulars, election papers in Aberdeenshire constituencies: 1930s – 1960s (MS 3037).

Local Labour Party branch records 1920s – 1960s (Aberdeen City, Banffshire, Keith) (MS 2663, MS 2891 and MS 2892).

Kincardineshire Unionist Association minute book (copy): 1901 – 1930 (MS 2725).

Newhills Liberal Association minute book: 1878 - 1881 and 1899 – 1900 (MS 4031).

Scottish Universities' Labour Party (Aberdeen branch) minutes: 1938 – 1956 (MS 4029).

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 12th 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 political dimension 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-east of Scotland. Of particular relevance are the manuscript memoirs of King James VII & II from 1633 – 1701 (SCA).

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, contains relevant printed material such as local Parish Board and Council minutes and publications from the Harbour Commissioners, hospital boards, Medical Officers of Health, the Police and school boards. At a national level there are publications such as the Illustrated London News and Punch. There are also examples of literature from various political and campaign groups.

There are also named collections of relevance:

Glucksman Collection of Caricature and Satire

MacBean Jacobite and Stuart Collection

This collection was donated to Aberdeen by the New York businessman William MacBean, and is a resource of international importance. Some 3,500 books and 1,000 pamphlets, as well as numerous contemporary engravings cover many aspects of the histories of the Stuarts and the Jacobite risings. Some are held in no other collection in the UK, and some are unique, with the collection also being added to continually. The Collection also includes later, 19th century, retrospective and romantic depictions of Jacobite history, as well as some two dozen manuscripts. For more information see [here](#).

See also Allardyce, Mabel, *Aberdeen University Library MacBean Collection* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1949).

See also: *Drawn Sword: Engravings and Woodcuts from the MacBean Jacobite and Stuart Collection*.

This is an online resource providing access to c.1,300 loose engravings and woodcuts, including portraits, topographical subjects and historical incidents.

Scottish nationalist pamphlets collection (Lib R 3 (41) Sco).

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*.