

Labour history resources in Special Collections

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QG HCOL022

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre
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Introduction

Special Collections hold a wealth of material relevant to the study of labour history. Manuscripts and printed material survive to chart the lives of working people via friendly societies, trade unions and the political parties that sought to represent them.

Trades councils and numerous local trade union branches have deposited their papers with the University; as a result, it has acquired an unrivalled collection of material. The University holds more than 30 collections of local trades union branches relating to the region's traditional industries (including fishing, textiles, printing, granite-cutting, construction, engineering and boat building) and a range of service and public sector industries are represented dating from the mid-19th century to the present day. Most recent additions are papers relating to unionisation in the oil and gas industry. Allied collections include the records of Aberdeen Trades Council and local Labour Party branches.

Organisations

Aberdeen and Northern Friendly Society: 1855 – 1973 (MS 3182).

Banchory Farmer Friendly Society: 1776 – 1866 (MS 3244/7).

Bon Accord Society in Aberdeen: 1778 – 1810 (MS 48).

Free Master Gardeners of Fintray: 1818 – 1842 (MS 1024).

Gardener Fraternity of Old Aberdeen: 1821 – 1864 (MS 41).

Union of Women Workers: 1900 – 1926 (MS 2769/II/126).

Woodside Oldgroves Farmers Friendly Society: 1792 – 1832 (MS 2769/II/123).

Trades councils

Aberdeen Trades Union Council: 1876 – current (MS 2270).

Trade unions

Aberdeen Association of University Teachers: 1921 – 2002 (MS 3738).

Amalgamated Engineering Union (Aberdeen Branches): 1832 – 1962 (MS 2640, MS 2667).

Amalgamated Society of Painters and Decorators: 1891 – 1962 (MS 2657).

Amalgamated Society of Woodcutting Machinists: 1893 – 1960 (MS 2641).

Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers: 1868 – 1961 (MS 2652, MS 2653, MS 2668, MS 2674, MS 2679).

Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers including Aberdeen Operative Masons' and Stonecutters' Society, Granite Cutters' Union, United Operative Masons: 1892 - 1948 (MS 2655).

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, Keith Branch: 1918 – 1968 (MS 2676).

Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, British Rail Kittybrewster and Ferryhill Local Departmental Committees: 1961 – 1992 (MS 3557).

Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union: 1943 – 1962 (MS 2658).

National Association of Theatrical and Kiné Employees: 1938 – 1960 (MS 2642).

National League of the Blind: 1923 – 1966 (MS 2675).

National Union of Dock Labourers: 1912 – 1927 (MS 2879).

National Union of Dyers, Bleachers and Textile Workers: 1939 – 1965 (MS 2643).

National Union of Public Employees: 1949 – 1959 (MS 2673).

National Union of Seamen: 1926 – 1959 (MS 2644).

National Union of Sheet Metal Workers and Braziers: 1912 – 1967 (MS 2645).

National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers: 1898 – 1952 (MS 2656).

National Union of Vehicle Builders: 1891 – 1966 (MS 2672).

Offshore Industry Liaison Committee collected material: 1989 – 2012 (MS 3852).

Plumbing Trades' Union: 1866 – 1958 (MS 2646).

Printing and Media Unions papers: 1926 – 2006 (MS 3779).

Scottish Commercial Motormen's Union: 1922 – 1964 (MS 2660).

Scottish National Operative Plasterer's Federal Union: 1887 – 1965 (MS 2647).

Scottish Schoolmasters' Association and related organisations: 1935 – 1965 (MS 2700).

Scottish Typographical Society: 1853 – 1958 (MS 2471, MS 2648).

Scottish Union of Bakers and Confectioners: 1922 – 1954 (MS 2659).

Ship Constructors' and Shipwrights' Association: 1916 – 1965 (MS 2670).

Society of Graphical and Allied Trades: 1924 – 1949 (MS 2649, MS 2650).

Society of Lithographic Artists: 1945 – 1964 (MS 2678).

Steamfishing Vessels' Enginemen's and Firemen's Union: 1899 – 1957 (MS 2880).

Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers: 1900 – 1949 (MS 2662).

Union of Post Office Workers: 1894 – 1941 (MS 2661).

United Operative Cabinet and Chairmakers; Association of Scotland: 1897 – 1929 (MS 2654).

United Patternmakers' Association: 1889 – 1952 (MS 2651, MS 2681).

United Society of Boilermakers, Ship-Builders and Structural Workers: 1936 – 1958 (MS 2669).

Other relevant collections

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

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

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via our Reading Room, also contains relevant printed material including literature from campaign groups and political organisations.

There are numerous other printed collections that contain material of particular relevance, including publications by 19th century working men's associations (both established for political and social purposes).

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 also 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*.

W. Diack, *History of the Trades Council and the Trade Union Movement in Aberdeen*, (Aberdeen 1939)

K. D. Buckley, *Trade Unionism in Aberdeen 1878 – 1900* (Edinburgh 1955)