

Natural history resources in Special Collections

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QG HCOL026

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

The University Library
University of Aberdeen
Bedford Road
Aberdeen
AB24 3AA

Introduction

Many individuals, families and organisations have deposited their papers with the University and 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 of national and international importance.

Special Collections are rich in holdings relating to fauna and flora and the natural sciences. Notable persons connected with the University are represented, such as Professor William MacGillivray and Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards.

Archive collections

University institutional papers

Department of Natural History: teaching lantern slides: late 19th century to early 20th century (UNIVERSITY 1437).

Department of Zoology, Culterty Field Station: 1949 – 2001 (UNIVERSITY 1454).

Department of Zoology, Culterty Field Station, rook research papers: 1960s – 1980s (UNIVERSITY 1453).

Department of Zoology, Culterty Field Station, shelduck research papers: 1960s – 1980s (UNIVERSITY 1250).

University Natural History Museum: 19th century – 20th century (UNIVERSITY 665 and UNIVERSITY 680).

Also see the papers of Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards and Professor George Mackenzie Dunnet.

Family and estates papers

There are many game books as part of estate collections. Notable items include:

- Game books/register. Straloch House, New Machar and Barra, Bourtie: 1908 – 1916 (MS 3710).
- Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness, estate game books: 1879 – 1937 (MS 1160/14).

Organisations papers

Aberdeen Natural History Association: 1845 – 1851 (MS 544).

Aberdeen and North of Scotland Zoological Society: 1961 – 1978 (MS 2990).

Cairngorm Club papers (specifically lantern slide collection): 1889 – 1990 (MS 3405).

Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen: 1841 – 1982 (MS 2635).

Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Aberdeen Branch, minute book and related papers: 1947 – 1986 (MS 3875).

Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Grampian Branch, North-East Scotland Breeding Bird Atlas 2002 - 2006 papers: 1980s (copies) – 2011 (MS 3835).

Personal papers

Agassiz, Louis, natural historian: letter to Reverend Dr. John Fleming, Aberdeen: October 1840 (MS 2444).

Barnett, Dr. Euphemia, botanist: 1913 – 1969 (MS 2989).

Bouck, Charles Harold, hunting diaries: 1888 – 1952 (MS 3845).

Bourne, Dr William, ornithologist: 1950s – 2000s (MS 3876).

Brooke, G., fishing registers recording salmon catches on the rivers Spey and Dee, Speyside and Aberdeenshire: 1931 – 1959 (MS 3644).

Brunyer, Abel, gardener: 'Hortus regius Blesensis', an alphabetical catalogue drawn up of the plants in Gaston, Duc d'Orleans' Royal garden at Blois: c.1652 (MS 387).

Dunnet, Professor George Mackenzie, Regius Professor of Natural History: 1950 – 1991 (MS 3365 & MS 3541).

Galloway, Alexander and Pirie W.J., notes on the life of George Sim, naturalist: c.1915 – c.1925 (MS 917).

Garden, Elizabeth (Betty), ornithologist: field notebooks: 1953 – 1962 (MS 3916).

Geikie, Sir Archibald, geologist, essay on Hugh Miller: 1895 (MS 2448).

Hamilton, Daisy (Margaret Camilla), Skene House, Dunecht, Aberdeenshire: natural history journals: 1884 – 1918 (MS 3899).

Lauder, Sir Thomas Dick, 'Remarks on the geology of the River Findhorn': 1827 (MS 531).

MacGillivray, William, naturalist and Professor of Natural History: 1811 – 1840 (MS 1032 – MS 1033, MS 2158 and MS 2159).

Paterson, Hilda, of Birkwood, Banchory, genealogist and antiquarian, bird observations notebook: 1906 – 1947 (MS 3132/1).

Ramsay, Lewis, ornithologist: natural history diaries: 1902 – 1909 (MS 3867).

Sim, George, naturalist: notebook on fish and annotated volume of Robert Gray's 'The Birds of the West of Scotland including the outer hebrides': 1870s – 1905 (MS 3795).

Skene, David, physician and scholar, including papers reflecting his interest in botany, natural history, and mineralogy: 1750 – 1780 (MS 37, MS 38, MS 39, MS 40, MS 471 – MS 483, MS 501 and MS 540).

Trail, James William Helenus, Professor of Botany, including material relating to expedition to the Amazon: 1787-1920s (MS 668, MS 851 - MS 853, MS 863 - MS 867 and MS 2988).

Turreff, Francis, minister, botanical and ornithological drawings: 1925 – 1932 (MS 2062 – MS 2064 and MS 2082 - MS 2083).

Walker, Dr David, arctic Flora specimens collected by Dr Walker, ship's surgeon and naturalist on board the yacht Fox: 1857 – 1859 (MSU 1332/9).

Watson, Dr Adam, biologist and ecologist, papers: 1953 – 2011 (MS 3877).

Weatherley, Paul Egerton, Regius Professor of Botany: 1939 – 1981 (MS 3621).

Wolfe-Murray, Lt. Col. David, ornithologist: 1920s (copies) – 1970s (MS 3876).

Wynne-Edwards, Vero Copner, Professor of Natural History, appointment papers: 1945 – 1946 (MS 3796).

Wynne-Edwards, Vero Copner, Professor of Natural History: letters patent conferring title of Regius Professor: 1946 (MS 3465).

Oral history collections

University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University (MS 3620) - of particular interest is the interview conducted with Professor Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards (MS 3620/1/38).

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Wolfson Reading Room, contains relevant printed material such as those published by relevant University Departments and by organisations such as the North Sea Bird Club.

There are numerous other printed collections of, or containing material of, particular relevance, including significant works in the Special Books and Lib R Collections, such as a treasured volume of John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*. Audubon's collaborator was William MacGillivray, later to be Professor of Natural History at Marischal College. Other significant treasures include volumes by the naturalist John Gould, e.g., as *Birds of Australia* and *Birds of Asia*. There are also numerous association and annotated copies of works linked to MacGillivray, Wynne-Edwards and Sim.

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*.

A number of the above papers were highlighted in Beavan, Iain; Davidson, Peter and 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)