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 numerous and diverse collections of papers created by individuals from all walks of life. The papers often comprise diaries, journals, correspondence, research papers and photographs.

Personal papers (selected)

Anderson, Dr. James, agriculturist and author; see Seton of Mounie papers: 1765 – 1804 (MS 2787 and MS 3523).


Anderson, Peter John, librarian, University of Aberdeen: 19th century – 20th century (MS 545, MS 918, MS 977, MS 978, MS 1097 - 1099, MS 2462, MS 2528, MS 2899, MS 3178, UNIVERSITY 513-514, UNIVERSITY 522, UNIVERSITY 524, UNIVERSITY 525 - 527 and UNIVERSITY 528).

Angus, Marion, poet: 1934 – 1969 (MS 2737).

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

Arbuthnot, Charles George James, General MP (correspondence with family, part of papers of Charles Arbuthnot, diplomat and politician): 1767 - 1850 (MS 3029).

Bain, Alexander, Professor of Logic and Rhetoric: 1895 – 1905 (MS 522, MS 523 and MS 524).

Baird, John Lawrence, 1st Viscount Stonehaven, diplomat and politician (part of the papers of the Earls of Kintore): 1890s – 1915 (MS 3064).


Beattie, James, poet and scholar: 1758 – 1806 (MS 3977, MS 3978, MS 3979, MS 4015, MS 30, MS 555, MS 2065, MS 2901, MS 3294, MS 3486 & MS 3522.

Bell, Reverend Patrick, minister and inventor: 1833 - 1837 (MS 2137).

Bickersteth, Professor G L, Professor of English Literature: 1913 – 1974 (MS 2906).


Bottomley, Gordon, poet: 1896 – 1946 (MS 1102 and MS 2985).

Bruce, Robert, sinologist and diplomat and Bruce, Helen, author: 1930s – 1990s (MS 3836).

Buchan, Peter, ballad-collector: 1811 – 1815 (MS 2303).

Bulloch, John, journalist: 19th century (MS 690, MS 876, MS 930 & MS 931).

Bulloch, John Malcolm, journalist: 1850s – 1900 (MS 553, MS 840, MS 911, MS 967, MS 970, MS 1021, MS 1072, MS 2482, MS 2798, MS 3051, MS 3135, MS 3149, MS 3180, MS 3239, MS 3310 & MS 3331).

Burnett, Dr D., lecturer in particle physics: 1917 – 1987 (MS 3487).

Butchart, Henry Jackson, administrator: 1917 – 1918 (MS 3134).

Byron (later Gordon Byron), John and Catherine, parents of Lord Byron: 1788 (MS 932).

Cairns, David Smith, theologian and Principal of Christ's College, Aberdeen: 1883 – 1946 (MS 3384).
Campbell, George, Principal at Marischal College: theological papers: 18th century (MS 649, MS 650, MS 651, MS 652, MS 653, MS 654 & MS 655).

Cardno, David Hawthorn, whaler: 1866 – 1960s (MS 3090).

Cargill, David, missionary: 1826 – 1881 (MS 3090).

Carmichael, Charles: plans and drawings: late 19th century (MS 3059).

Carnegie, Susan Scott; see Alexander A. Cormack papers: 1765 – 1818 (MS 2937).


Chapman, John Bissett, collector of contemporary literature: 1915 – 1947 (MS 2265).

Clyne, Arthur, architect: papers: 19th century (MS 3898).


Cooper, Dr James, minister and Professor of Church History, Glasgow University: 1867 – 1922 (MS 2283).

Copland, Patrick, Professor of mathematics and natural philosophy: 1770s-1870s (MS 2886, MS 2999 and MS 3376).


Craven, Reverend James Brown, clergyman: 1880 – 1922 (MS 2150, MS 2151, MS 2152, MS 2153, MS 2154, MS 2155, MS 2156).

Cruickshank, Ernest, University of Aberdeen Professor of Physiology: diaries: 1916 – 1919 (MS 4027).

Cumming, Rev John, minister at Crown Court Church, Covent Garden: 19th century (MS 3761).


Daube, David, Roman and Biblical Law scholar: 20th century (MS 3878).

Diack, Francis Carney, Celtic scholar: 20th century (MS 2276, 2636 and MS 2771).

Dixon, Waynman, engineer and amateur archaeologist: Great Pyramid diagrams: 1873 (MS 2031).

Doddridge, Philip, nonconformist minister, teacher and hymn writer: 1739 – 1751 (MS 2334 and MS 2454).

Donald, Reverend Francis Cantlie, minister: c.1905 – c. 1974 (MS 3202).

Duncan, Mrs. Isobel, of Banff (Mrs Master William Duncan): 1878 – 1893 (MS 2526).

Duncan, Rev. James, of Lynturk, ballad-collector: 1796 – 1917 (MS 998).

Dunnet, Professor George Mackenzie, Regius Professor of Natural History: 1950s – 1980s (MS 3365 and MS 3541).

Eeles, Francis Carolus, ecclesiologist: 20th century (MS 2143, MS 2241, MS 2348, MS 2351, MS 2379 and MS 2507).

Esslemont, Mary, physician: 20th century (MS 3179).

Ferguson, Alexander Stewart, Professor of Logic: 1944 – 1958 (MS 2622).

Forbes, Sir George Ogilvie, diplomat: 1927 – 1939 (MS 2740).

Forbes, Sir John, knight, physician: 1817 – 1852 (MS 2908 and MS 3790).


Forbes-Clarke, John, of Tillypronie, Tarland: 1897 – 1900 (MS 3142).

Fraser, Olive, poet: 1920s – 1970s (MS 3336).

Fraser, Rev. James, of Phopachy, clergyman: 1661 - 1670 (MS 630 and MS 2538).

Fraser, James, book dealer and librarian: 1656 – 1712 (MS 3952).

Fraser, John, Celtic scholar: 20th century (MS 2760 and MS 2771).

Fraser, William, numismatist: 1771 – 1786 (MS 124 and MS 126 – MS 127).

Fullarton, John, divine: 1682 – 1755 (MS 2267).


Gill, Sir David, astronomer: 1891 (MS 2574).

Godsman, James, local historian: 1815 – 1961 (MS 2804).
Gordon, Alexander, obstetrician: 1780s – 1795 (MS 632 and MS 643, MS 645, MS 646).

Gordon, Robert, of Straloch, geographer and scholar, and his family: 1585 – 1665 (MS 632 and MS 643, MS 645, MS 646).

Graham, Cuthbert, journalist: 20th century (MS 632).

Grant, James, Senior Sergeant Major, Bengal Sappers and Miners: 1877 – 1883 (MS 3272).

Gray, Frances, chemist: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3302).


Gregory family: David (1661 – 1708), astronomer; James (1638 – 1675), mathematician; James (1753 – 1821), professor of medicine; John (1724 – 1789), professor of medicine; William (1803 – 1838), chemist: 1582 – 1912 (MS 2206).

Greig, Gavin, ballad-collector: 1876 – 1917 (MS 701 – MS 790, MS 3088, MS 3173).

Grierson, Sir Herbert, literary scholar: c.1900 – 1972 (MS 2206).

Hamilton, Robert, Professor of Mathematics, Marischal College: 1766 – 1829 (MS 36, MS 451 – MS 464, MS 4004 & MS 4012).

Hay, Major Malcolm Vivian, of Seaton, historian: 1907 – 1962 (MS 2193, MS 2272, MS 2788).


Hay, Matthew, Professor of Forensic Medicine: 1890 – 1905 (MS 2853).

Hardy, Thomas, author: (MS 593, MS 617 and MS 2445).

Henderson, John Alexander, antiquary: early 20th century (MS 2034, MS 2035, MS 2036, MS 2037, MS 2038, MS 2039, MS 2040, MS 2041, MS 2261 and 2262).

Hendrick, James, Professor of Agriculture: 1902 – 1908 (MS 3603).

Jack, Adolphus, Professor of English: 20th century (MS 2208).


Johnstone, James Fowler Kellas, biliophile: 1906 – 1924 (MS 1087, MS 1088, MS 1089, MS 1090, MS 1091, MS 1092, MS 1093, MS 1094 & MS 1095).

Jones, Professor R. V., Professor of Natural Philosophy: 1980s (MS 3827).


Keith, Dr Alexander, writer: (MS 2148 and MS 3017).

Keith, Sir Arthur, knight, anatomist and anthropologist: 1890 – 1933 (MS 470).

Keith, George Skene, minister and writer: 1817 – 1822 (MS 3629).

Kelly, William, architect and antiquarian, 1805 – 1944 (MS 2380 and MS 3859).


Kilgour, Alexander, physician: 1817 – 1826 (MS 3307).

Knight, Margaret, psychologist and humanist: 20th century (MS 3133).

Knight, William, Professor of Natural Philosophy: 1837 – 1842 (MARISCHAL/8/1/1, MARISCHAL/9/1/4 and MS 2020).

Kosterlitz, Hans, Professor Emeritus and Director of the Unit for Research on Addictive Drugs: 1920s – 1990s (MS 3682).

Laird, Professor John, philosopher: 1924 – 1946 (MS 2298).


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


Livingstone, John, divine: 1666 (MS 671).

Lockhart, Robert Douglas, Professor of Anatomy: 20th century (MS 3270).

Logan, James, artist and antiquarian: drawings of St. Machar’s Cathedral: early 19th century (MS 2928 and MS 3598).

Low, Alexander, Regius Professor of Anatomy: 1923 – 1956 (MS 2629).

Macartney, William MacLeod, Church of Scotland Minister: 1936 – 1999 (MS 3757).

MacDonald, George, author: 1852 – 1924 (MS 1031, MS 2165, MS 2166, MS 2167, MS 2231, MS 2254, MS 2291, MS 2716, MS 2717 & MS 2718).

MacGillivray, William, naturalist: 1811 – 1840 (MS 1032 – MS 1033, MS 2158 and MS 2159).
MacGillivray, James Pittendrigh, sculptor: 1889 - 1937 (MS 2751, MS 2958, MS 3095 & MS 3259).

McHardy, Rev. Professor W.D., Hebrew scholar: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3139 & MS 3638).


Mackie, Adam, farmer, merchant and innkeeper: 1800 – 1828 (MS 3347).

Maclachlan, Ewan, gaelic poet and scholar: c.1809 - c.1841 (MS 499, MS 2145 & MS 3274).

MacLaurin, Colin, Professor of mathematics at Marischal College: 1720 – 1743 (MS 34, MS 206 – MS 209).

MacGill-Eain, Somhairle (’Sorley MacLean’), poet: 20th century (MS 2864).

MacNaughton, William Alexander, physician and historian: 16th century – 20th century (MS 3139 & MS 3638).

McHardy, Rev. Professor W.D., Hebrew scholar: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3139 & MS 3638).

MacLaurin, Colin, Professor of mathematics at Marischal College: 1720 – 1743 (MS 34, MS 206 – MS 209).

Macleod, John James Rickard, physiologist and biochemist: Nobel Prize Diploma: 1923 (MS 1041).

MacPherson, Dr Hugh, Professor of Greek Literature and sub-principal: 1838 (MS 3350).


Maxwell, James Clerk, Professor of Natural Philosophy at Marischal College, correspondence: 1856 - 1872 (MS 980 and MS 3838).

Melvin, James, classical scholar: 1831 - 1851 (MS 2324 and MS 2803).

Minto, William, Professor of Logic and English: 1871 – 1892 (MS 2613).

Moir family: Andrew of Cultercullen and Oldmill Rev. Andrew of Towie, Rev. George of Peterhead, Patrick, Dr. James and John: 1688 - 1857 (MS 2909).

Moir, James, industrial chemist: 1900 – 1920s (MS 3129).

Munro, Alexander, historian: 15th century - 19th century (MS 2480, 2481, MS 2483 and MS 2831).

Murray, Charles, poet: 1920s – 1940s (MS 3788).


Napier, Robert Cornelis, first Baron Napier of Magdala and army officer: 19th century (MS 1162/2 and MS 1162/3).

Nicoll, Sir William Robertson and his family, Old Manse, Lumsden: 1822 – 1996 (MS 2588 and MS 3518).

O’Dell, Professor Andrew Charles, Professor of Geography: 1930 – 1970 (MS 2882).


Paton, James, meteorologist: 1920s – 1970s (MS 3188).

Patterson, Hilda M., genealogist and antiquarian: 20th century (MS 3132).

Penny, Captain William, ship master: 1842 – 1854 (MS 2295).

Ree, Reverend Stephen, Church of Scotland minister, antiquarian and genealogist: late 19th century - early 20th century (MS 801, MS 802, MS 803 - MS 821 & MS 822 - MS 837).

Reid, Eric James, composer and teacher: 1950s - 1960s (MS 3104).

Reid, Robert, Regius Professor of Anatomy: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3753).

Reid, Thomas, philosopher: 18th century (MS 2131, MS 2739, MS 2744, MS 2814 and MS 3061). Many papers have been digitised and are available online: www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Thomas_Reid/index.shtml

Rettie, Robert, inventor: 1840s – 1860s (MS 2381).

Rickart, John, Merchant: 1693 – 1724 (MS 2305).


Robertson, Edith Anne Stewart, poetess and author and Robertson, James Alexander, Professor of Biblical Criticism and author: 1908 – 1970 (MS 3406).

Robinson, Roger, author: research papers on James Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic, Marischal College: 1990s – 2000s (MS 4023).

Ross, Dr Thomas, architect, architectural historian and author: c.1890 – 1921 (MS 2820, MS 2910 & MS 3169).

Row, Rev. John, scholar and divine: 17th century (MS 158, MS 2333 and MS 2623).

Scotland, James, Principal of Aberdeen College of Education (copies): 1980s (MS 3834).

Scott, Robert Eden, Professor of moral philosophy, King’s College: 18th century-19th century (MS 3107).
Scott, Sir Walter, lawyer and author: 1831 (MS 2455).
Shelley Percy Bysshe, author, 'The Magnetic Lady to her Patient': 1822 (MS 937).
Shire, Helena Mennie, literary scholar: 1832 – 1990s (MS 3407).
Shirras, George Findlay, economist: 1906 – 1955 (MS 2795, MS 2876 and MS 3789).
Simpson, Henry Fife Morland, antiquarian and Rector of Aberdeen Grammar School: 1870 – 1917 (MS 877, MS 2234, MS 2252, MS 2325 & MS 2449).
Simpson, William Douglas, historian and archaeologist: 19th century – 20th century (MS 2229, MS 2230, MS 2285, MS 2498, MS 2729, MS 2818, MS 2968, MS 3042 & MS 3442, MS 3759).
Skene, David, physician and scholar: 1750 – 1780 (MS 37, MS 38, MS 39, MS 40, MS 471 – MS 483, MS 501 and MS 540).
Skene of Rubislaw, James, artist and antiquarian: 1800 – 1830 (MS 2720).
Smith, Alexander, squarewright: 1727 – 1766 (MS 3831/1).
Smith, William Robertson, Professor of Oriental Languages and Old Testament Exegesis, Free Church College, Aberdeen: 1866 – 1894 (MS 3674).
Smith, William, architect: 1843 (MS 926).
Souter, William Clark, ophthalmologist: c.1903 – 1940s (MS 2415, MS 3755) See on-line photographs of Souter's Antarctic Trip: www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/Antarctic_Index.shtml
Stalker, Alexander Logie, Professor of Pathology: 20th century (MS 3471).
Stewart, Captain James, antiquarian: 1890 – 1902 (MS 680 – MS 685).
Stewart, James, British government officer, Fiji and British Guiana: 1880 – 1900 (MS 3385).
Stuart, John, Professor of Greek, Marischal College; (see papers of Keith, Dr. Alexander): 1559 – 1890s (MS 3017). 
Swan, Annie Shepherd, novelist: 1894 – 1946 (MS 3517).
Taylor, Rachel Annand, author and journalist: 1899 – 1908 (MS 2742).
Terry, Charles Sanford, historian: 19th century – 20th century (MS 550, MS 618 - MS 627, MS 698 - MS 699, MS 891, MS 1043, MS 2637, MS 3145 & MS 3165).
Thom, William, poet and weaver: 1841 – 1963 (MS 2304, MS 2497 and MS 3089).
Thomson, Alexander, of Banchory, writer: 19th century (MS 2809, MS 2829 and MS 3244).
Tomlinson, George, 1st Bishop of Gibraltar: 19th century (MS 3470/16).
Toulmin, David, author: c.1925 – 1970s (MS 2823; MS 2830; MS 2980; MS 3048; MS 3065; MS 3114 & MS 3569).
Trail, James William Helenus, Professor of Botany: 1787-1920s (MS 668, MS 851 - MS 868, MS 871 and MS 2988).
Troup, Jonathan, physician of Aberdeen, Scotland and Dominica, West Indies: 1788 – 1797 (MS 2070, MS 2391, MS 2900 and MS 3027).
Walker, William, writer and ballad-collector, papers relating to ballads and folk songs: 19th century – 20th century (MS 2212, MS 2306, MS 2733, MS 2774, MS 3396 and MS 3643).
Watt, James Cromar, artist: c.1880 (MS 2052 – MS 2054).
Webster, John, lord provost, Aberdeen: 1851 – 1878 (MS 881 – MS 890).
Wilkinson, Thomas, Quaker philanthropist and writer: transcripts of journals: 1785 - 1807 (copied in 1937) (MS 2394 – MS 2396).
Wilson, Charles Thomas Rees, physicist: c.1890 – 1959 (MS 3525).
Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller: 19th century – 20th century (MS 413 – MS 443 and MS 3849).
Wyllie, James McLeod, classical scholar and lexicographer: 20th century (MS 2293 and MS 3126).
Yule, Sir Henry, geographer: late 19th century (MS 1162/1/3 and MS 2860).
Yule, Robert, soldier: 1850s (MS 1162/1).
Zulueta, Sir Francis de, legal historian: 20th century (MS 2785).

**Oral history collections**

University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive: comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University (MS 3620).

'Lives in the Oil Industry' Oral History Archive & associated records was a major collection of sound recordings which was completed between 2001 and 2006 and includes interviews with nearly 200 people, totalling nearly 800 hours of recordings (MS 3769).

**Other relevant collections**

Adam, Cochran and Company, advocates, Aberdeen. 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: 14th century – 20th 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: 18th century – 20th century. This collection contains records from families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented: such as Rubislaw Granite Company Ltd. (MS 3257, MS 3277, MS 3394, MS 3662, MS 3665 and MS 3713).

F. A. MacDonald and Partners, engineers and surveyors, Aberdeen (incorporating Walker & Duncan, Aberdeen): 18th century – 20th century. Includes papers from various businesses such as relating to Rubislaw Quarry (papers MS 2626 and maps and plans MS 3860).

**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; 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).