

Travel diaries and journals in Special Collections

September 2021

QG HCOL036

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

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

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 travel diaries and journals created by individuals from all walks of life whose personal accounts were created while tourists, explorers, soldiers, missionaries, doctors or archaeologists. The papers often also comprise visual sketches and drawings, collected objects and photographs.

The journals are also of different types, some written immediately, others fair copies made soon after from hastily written notes. Others are more complex and were often composed long after the actual events.

Diaries and travel journals

Bell, Reverend Patrick, minister and inventor, diaries of Canada: 1833 – 1837 (MS 2137).

Calder, Sir William Moir, archaeologist, classical scholar, American Society for Archaeological Research in Asia Minor: 1901 – 1959 (MS 3286).

Cardno, David Hawthorn, whaler: journals of whaling and sealing voyages around the arctic: 1866 – 1960s (MS 3090).

Cargill, Rev. David, missionary on his second journey to Tonga (copy): 1842 - 1843 (1920 copy) (MS 911).

Carson, William, author, journal and photographs of a Tour Through the Hebrides and the Western Western Isles: 1897 (MS 897 – MS 898).

Clark, Peter Moir, student, diary of trip to Shetland: 1868 (MS 2251).

Duncan, Isabel, wife of William Duncan, master of the barque, Scotia, of Banff: travel diaries and letters, Caribbean, Americas, South Africa, Mauritius and Ceylon: 1878 – 1893 (MS 2526).

Esslemont, Mary, physician, world tours: 1927 – 1977 (MS 3179/4).

Ferguson, William, businessman: Journal of my work in America, Spring 1857' (MS 3816/6/3/8).

Forbes, Richard Walter, Rovenden, Kent, France: 1815 (MS 2219).

Fraser, Rev. James, of Phopachy. 'Triennial Travels through Scotland, England and the Continent': 1657 – 1660, written 1670 (MS 2538).

Glennie, John and Margaret, journals of trips around Scotland: 1825 – 1835 (MS 981).

Henderson, Walker, ship's-surgeon, diary of a whaling voyage from Peterhead to Greenland, transcript: 1853 (MS 2719). Kerr, George, diary of whaling expedition off Greenland: 1791 (MS 2238).

Kintore, Lady Hilda Keith Falconer, journals of various trips around the world: 1889 - 1914 (MS 3064).

Lauder, Sir John, of Fountainhall, advocate, 19th century transcript of a journal (from 1665 – 1666) of his travels in France. Lauder, Sir John, France, transcript: 19th century transcript (MS 798).

Leslie, John, Ship's Husband, Aberdeen: memoirs: 19th century (MS 3884).

MacKay, Dr Mona Elspeth, school teacher and novelist, diaries of trips to Europe (MS 3797/1).

Mitchell, Rev. William, clergyman: diary created during a trip to London on behalf of a commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland: 1717 (MS 146).

Thomson, Alexander, of Banchory, antiquarian: 11 travel journals of Britain and Europe: 1818 – 1863 (MS 3244/1).

Tomlinson, George, 1st Bishop of Gibraltar, notes and journals of research trips to Egypt: 19th century (MS 3470/16).

Trail, Professor James William Helenus, Amazon expedition: 1873 – 1875 (MS 851 - MS 853 and MS 2988/1).

Troup, Dr Jonathan, physician, *Journal of Dominica, West Indies: 1788 - 1790* (MS 2070).

Wilkinson, Thomas, Quaker minister, journals through London and the Highlands, transcripts copied in 1937: 1785 – 1807 (MS 2394 – MS 2396).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller. In 1816 Wilson embarked on a grand tour of Europe and in 1820 he pushed eastwards through Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and India. In 1825, he travelled through Africa, Greece and Asia Minor and from 1830 until his death in 1871 he continued to travel for pleasure visiting Norway, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Russia, Estonia, Finland and Germany: 19th century – 20th century (MS 413 –MS 443 and MS 3849).

Wimberley, Mary (née Irvine), diary (extracts) kept in India and England, transcript edited in 1969: 1825 – 1879 (MS 2724).

Unidentified traveller, Turkey (possibly the Dutch parson at Smyrna): 1773 (MS 125).

Unidentified French traveller through Scotland: 1786 – 1788 (MS 2464).

Unidentified traveller, Scotland: 1806 (MS 1023).

Unidentified surgeon, diary of a whaling voyage from Aberdeen to the David Straits: 1831 (MS 673).

Unidentified traveller, journal entitled 'Reminiscences of a ramble on the Continent' (France) by an unknown author: 1857 (MS 2170).

Unidentified traveller, journal from Aberdeen around Europe: 1871 (MS 3785).

Unidentified traveller from Aberdeen, notes on the first part of a journey to Sydney, New South Wales: 1889 (MS 3645).

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, contains relevant printed material, specifically journals which have been published.

There are also named collections of relevance:

Henderson Collection

Lib R Collection (specifically relating to 19th century travel and topography)

London Missionary Society Lending Library, Edinburgh

Robert Wilson Collection

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).