

Resources relating to Aberdeen City in Special Collections

September 2021

QG HCOL043

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

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

Introduction

Many individuals, families, organisations and businesses 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.

Please note that the city boundaries have changed over time: the parishes of Peterculter, Dyce, Newhills and the Bridge of Don area of Old Machar parish were incorporated into the City of Aberdeen District in 1974 and thence into Aberdeen City in 1996. For papers relating to these specific areas see the factsheet relating to Aberdeenshire.

Archival collections

University institutional papers

The University's own records are diverse, ranging from the original senatus books to charters, dispositions, writs, and other legal documents relating to the regulation of the colleges, their teaching, and in support of their considerable landholdings. There are letters, licences and agreements between the two colleges of King's (in Old Aberdeen) and Marischal (in the city of Aberdeen) and between them and the Town, Parliament, and even Crown; the colleges had a powerful political dimension and they operated on a local, national and international level. More comprehensively, from the 18th century onwards we have student registers, bursary and trust papers, inventories and catalogues, records regarding building repairs and papers concerning rectorial elections and staff appointments (MARISCHAL).

As well as papers of the University and its predecessor bodies, there are also records from the 'Aberdeen Colleges of Education', Christ's College, Aberdeen, North of Scotland College of Agriculture and the Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health.

The University's collection of plans relating to Marischal College and the University of Aberdeen is a rich resource detailing the history of the University's buildings. This extensive collection dates from the 1850s through to the mid 1960s; unfortunately many of the items are not dated: 1850s – 1960s (UNIVERSITY 1494).

Collection of prints, drawings, photographs and plans of buildings at Marischal College: 19th century – 20th century (MS 2920).

Family and estate papers

Skene of Rubislaw: 19th century (MS 2720).

Organisations' papers

Aberdeen Association of Civil Engineers: 1900 – 1966 (MS 3278).

Aberdeen Blind Asylum: 1889 – 1905 (MS 2769/II/27).

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 and District Milk Marketing Board: 1932 – 1992 (MS 3636).

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

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

'Aberdeen Colleges of Education': 1874 – 2001 (UNIVERSITY 1421).

'Aberdeen Colleges of Education' Practising/Demonstration School, Aberdeen: 1888 – 1970 (UNIVERSITY 1421/3).

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

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- Aberdeen Sheriff Court record extracts: 17th century -18th century (MS 3155).
- Aberdeen Clarion Club: 1899 – 1909 (MS 2467).
- Aberdeen Clerical Association: 1858 – 1907 (MS 3337/16).
- Aberdeen Ecclesiological Society: 1894 – 1902 (MS 2452).
- Aberdeen Fish Curers and Merchants Association: 1888 – 1947 (MS 3054).
- Aberdeen Fish Salesmen's Association: 1896 – 2003 (MS 3874).
- Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children: ledger and minute book: 1877 – 1910 (MS 2769/II/10).
- Aberdeen Institution for the Deaf and Dumb: 1840 – 1918 (MS 3428).
- Aberdeen Literary Debating Society: 1836 – 1837 (MS 518).
- Aberdeen Lyceum Club: 1831 – 1833 (MS 546 & MS 1085).
- Aberdeen Medical Club: 1868 – 1875 (MS 2630).
- Aberdeen Natural History Association: 1845 – 1851 (MS 544).
- Aberdeen Philosophical Society: 1758 – 1773 (MS 145, MS 539 and MS 3107). See also papers of Ledingham Chalmers, solicitors, below.
- Aberdeen Philosophical Society: 1840 – 1939 (MS 597).
- Aberdeen Preachers' Society papers: 1832 – 1834 (MS 1078).
- Aberdeen Royal Horticultural Society: 1841 – 1982 (MS 2635).
- Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Linen and Comfort Guild: 1931 – 1994 (MS 3735).
- Aberdeen Saturday Whist Club: 1894 – 1912 (MS 2056).
- Aberdeen Shipmasters' Society: 1590 – 1965 (MS 2940 & MS 3070).
- Aberdeen Social Chess Club: 1859 – 1863 (MS 1085).
- Aberdeen Society of Probationers: 1834 – 1838 (MS 541).
- Aberdeen Stock Exchange: 1845 – 1952 (MS 2756).
- Aberdeen Trawlers records: 1891 – 1913 (MS 2791).
- Aberdeen Union Perseverance Society: 1818 – 1852 (MS 543).
- Aberdeen University Club, London papers: 1888 – 1984 (MS 3209).
- Dr John Anderson Trust papers: 1740 – 1882 (MS 3460).
- Bethany House: volume containing notes on services and the management of the house: mid 19th century (MS 2801).
- Bishop Dunbar Hospital Trust papers: 1373 – 20th century (MS 3861).
- Bon Accord Society in Aberdeen: 1778 – 1810 (MS 48).
- County Club of Aberdeen: 1718 – 1873 (MS 2188).
- Free East Church School, St Andrew Street, Aberdeen, log book, 1863-1874 (MS 3812).
- Friends of Aberdeen University Library: 1957 – current (UNIVERSITY 1037).
- Gordon's Mill Farming Club, Aberdeen: 1758 – 1764 (MS 49).
- Grammar School, Old Aberdeen: Register of pupils, 1870-1885 (MS 648).
- Historical Association, Aberdeen Branch: 1927 – 1994 (MS 3572).
- Liberal Association, Aberdeen: 1878 – 1923 (MS 2472 – MS 2473).
- Local Labour Party branch records 1947 - 1959 (Aberdeen City) (MS 2663).
- Mitchell's Hospital Trust, Old Aberdeen: 1920s (MS 3108).
- North Eastern Scotland Local Tribunal for conscientious objectors: 1939 - 1946 (MS 2108).
- North East of Scotland Music Festival: 1909 – 1913 (MS 3237).
- Our Club, Aberdeen: 1825 – 1841 (MS 596).
- Royal Horticultural Society of Aberdeen: 1841 – 1982 (MS 2635).
- Scottish Co-operative Women's Guild, Greyfriars Branch, Aberdeen: 1922 – 1944 (MS 3325).
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Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, including many individual churches: 17th century – 20th century (MS 3320). The records of St Andrew's Cathedral Aberdeen have been catalogued separately: c. 1700 - 1989 (MS 3499).

Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Aberdeen Branch: 1947 – 2011 (MS 3835) and (MS 3875).

Shuttle Lane Mission, Aberdeen records: 1897 – 1949 (MS 3242 and MS 3701).

St Clement's Church, Aberdeen: register of baptisms: 1837 – 1885 (MS 1015).

Trinity Congregational Church, Aberdeen: 1793-19th century (MS 2769/I/45).

Trinity Chapel of Ease, Aberdeen records: 1793 – 1843 (MS 2769/I/11 and MS 2769/II/115).

Dr Tulloch's Academy, Aberdeen: 1843 - 1873 (MS 561).

United Presbyterian Church, Aberdeen: seat rent book: 1844 – 1864 (MS 3773).

W. G. Walker's Academy, Aberdeen: 1873 - 1886 (MS 562).

Well Services Contractors Association minutes: 2002 – 2008 (MS 3851).

William Harvey Trust papers: 1834 – 1923 (MS 3039).

Dr Robert Wilson's Trust papers: 1796 – 1986 (MS 3390).

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

Business papers

Aberdeen Harbour Board photographic collection: 1880s - 1930s (MS 3595).

Aberdeen Journals Ltd.: 1876 – 1978 (MS 2770).

Aberdeen Steam Navigation Co.: 1835 – 1925 (MS 2479).

Aberdeen Stock Exchange: 1845 – 1952. Includes member company records such as articles of association and annual reports. Those included are: Scottish Steam Herring Fishing Co. and Tivoli (Aberdeen) Ltd. (MS 2756).

Aberdeen Trawlowners and Traders Engineering Company Ltd.: 1900 – 1971 (MS 3248).

Aberdeen Trust Ltd. (formerly North of Scotland Canadian Mortgage Co. Ltd.): 1875 – 1984 (MS 3211).

Aberdeen University Press: 1869 – 1996 (MS 3233).

Adam, Cochran and Company, advocates, Aberdeen: papers. This collection contains records from families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented: including James Strachan, bookseller: 1630 – 1919 (MS 3066).

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC): Aberdeen programme material: 1982 – 1999 (MS 3628).

Barry, Henry and Cook Ltd., engineers: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3348 and MS 3268).

Bon-Accord Distillery Co Ltd, whisky distillers: 1880 – 1884 (MS 2769/II/62).

George Bruce and Co., seed-merchants, Aberdeen: c. 1870 – c. 1973 (MS 2816).

H. & J. Bryce, plumbers and brassfounders: papers: 1903 – 1959 (MS 2936).

Robertson Burnet, draper, Aberdeen: 1752 – 1762 (MS 3068).

City of Aberdeen Land Association Ltd.: 1874 – 1875 (MS 2626).

Robert Clark, painter and decorator: 1868 – 1912 (MS 2378).

Robert Dawson, accountant: legal papers and correspondence: 1866 – 1921 (MS 3515).

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).

James Fenton, printer: c.1830 – 1877 (MS 3393).

George Jamieson & Son Ltd., builders and timber merchants: 1913 – 1919 (MS 2769/II/73).

George Washington Wilson and Co.: 1850 – 1905 (MS 3792).

Grampian Regional Transport Ltd. (formerly Grampian Regional Transport, Aberdeen Corporation Tramways/Transport and Aberdeen District Tramways Company): c.1872 – 1993 (MS 3508).

Gray, Watt & Company, ropemakers: 1813 – 1819 (MS 1045).

Knox and Machray's Royal Mail Coach Office: 1831 – 1837 (MS 2639).

Robert Lawson & Sons (Dyce) Ltd., bacon curers, Parkhill Farm, Dyce: 1955 – 1957 (MS 3732).

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).

Thomas Mercer, merchant, Aberdeen: copy letterbook and ledger: 1718 – 1745 (MS 2947).

Thomas Milne, nurseryman, Aberdeen, ledger: 1839 – 1863 (MS 3395).

P & O Scottish Ferries Ltd incorporating predecessor businesses: 1810 – 2002 (MS 3697).

Scotland the What?, comedy show papers: 1969 – current (MS 3437).

D. Wyllie & Son, publishers and booksellers, Aberdeen: 1848 – 1938 (MS 3205).

Personal papers

For papers relating to individuals from Aberdeen see the separate factsheet.

Some collections are particularly useful for local history research:

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

Simpson, William Douglas, historian and archaeologist, papers including collection of archaeological, monumental and architectural plans, 19th century – 20th century (MS 2729, MS 2818 and MS 3759).

Other relevant collections

Scottish Catholic Archives, Historic Archives

The Historic Archives of the Scottish Catholic Archives predominantly relate 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 survival 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 (SCA).

NHS Grampian Archives

The archive dates from the founding of Aberdeen Infirmary in 1739 and contains substantial material

relating to hospital provision, notably general and specialist hospitals, cottage hospitals and asylums across Aberdeen City (GRHB).

Medico-Chirurgical Society

The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society was founded in 1789 in response to the perceived lack of medical teaching offered by both King's and Marischal Colleges. Its members contributed to the development of medical teaching and practice in Aberdeen and beyond in profound ways. For more information see the website but please note that although the catalogue is available via the University, the papers are held by the Medico-Chirurgical Society (AMCS)

Printed collections

The Local Collection of printed material geographically speaking covers the north-east corner of Scotland and is available to consult on open-access in our Reading Room. It contains local area histories, plans and maps and reports of local institutions. Also in the Local Collection you will find a number of local newspapers. Many of these can only be consulted in the Reading Room on microfilm.

Access

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search our online catalogues to identify individual items.

Further reading

For further reading please see the studies of a number of our manuscripts, printed books and collections in the journals *Aberdeen University Library Bulletin*, *Aberdeen University Review* and *Northern Scotland*.

Anderson P. J. (ed.). *Studies in the History and Development of the University* (Aberdeen University Press, 1906). This contains the most detailed bibliography relating to the Universities.

Johnstone, James. *A concise bibliography of the history, topography and institutions of the shires of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine* (Aberdeen, 1914).

Johnstone, James and Robertson, Alexander. *Bibliographia Aberdonensis: being an account of books relating to or printed in the shires of Aberdeen, Banff, Kincardine or written by natives or residents or by officers, graduates or alumni of the Universities of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen, 1929).

Robertson, Alexander. *Handlist of bibliography of the shires of Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine* (Aberdeen, 1893).

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).