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.

Please note that Aberdeen city boundaries have changed over time and the parishes of Peterculter, Dyce, Nethills 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 the purposes of this factsheet these parishes will be included here as formerly part of Aberdeenshire.


Archival collections

Family and estate papers
Arbuthnott of Arbuthnott: 13th century – 20th century (MS 2764).

Burnett of Leys (Crathes Castle papers): 14th century – 20th century (MS 3361).

Davidson of Kebbaty, Midmar, Aberdeenshire: 1711 – 1878 (MS 4018).

Dingwall Fordyce of Brucklay: 16th century – 19th century (MS 999).

Dunecht Estate Office (Viscounts of Cowdray): 18th century to 20th century (MS 3040).

Duff of Meldrum: 15th century – 19th century (MS 2778).

Erskine of Pittodrie: 17th century – 18th century (MS 2524).

Ferguson of Kinmundy: 16th century – 20th century (MS 3816).

Forbes of Newe: 16th century – 19th century (MS 3402).

Forbes and Hay of Seaton: 18th century – 19th century (MS 2253 and MS 2414).


Fordyce family of Brucklay Castle: 1844 – 1865 (MS 3220).

Fraser of Castle Fraser and Inverallochy: 16th century – 20th century (MS 3470).

Frasers of Inverallochy: 16th century – 19th century (MS 2701).

Fraser of Philorth: 14th century – 20th century (MS 3004).

Gordon, Dukes of Gordon: 1644 – 1906 (MS 907, MS 908 & MS 909). Please note that the main family papers are held by the National Records of Scotland.

Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness: 17th century – 20th century (MS 1160 and MS 3193).

Gordon family of Craig Castle and Auchindoir, Aberdeenshire: 1511 – 1730 (copies) (MS 2499).


Gordon family, Earls of Aberdeen, relating to Cromer estate, Aberdeenshire: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3198). Please note that the main collection of papers are still held by the family.
Gordon of Haddo papers relating to the construction of Haddo House: 1732 – 1734 (MS 2520).

Gordon of Ptilurg and Straloch (The Straloch papers: 17th century – 20th century (MS 2223).

Hay family, Erroll Estates papers, estate accounts of Cruden and Slains: 18th century (MS 2110).

Innes of Learney papers: c.1750 – 1920 (MS 3667).


Keith of Kintore: 15th century – 20th century (MS 2707, MS 3064 and MS 3538). This also includes some records of Baird of Ury.

Kinharrachie Estate, Ellon: 1603 – 1885 (MS 2621).

King of Tertowie: 16th century – 20th century (MS 2957).

Leith of Glenkindie and Freefield: 17th century – 20th century (MS 2847 and MS 2849).


Leslie of Balquhain: 14th century – 18th century (MS 3043).

Leslie of Warthill: 18th century – 19th century (MS 2580).


Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie: 15th century – 20th century (MS 2740).


Scott family, Achath, near Castle Fraser: papers: 17th century – 20th century (MS 3873).

Seton of Mounie: 16th century – 20th century (MS 2787).

Seaton of Pitmedden: 15th century – 20th century (MS 2463 and MS 3531).

Shand and Mlane of Craigellie: 19th century (MS 2619).

Shand of The Burn, Fettercairn and Straloch: 1816 – 1835 (MS 3652).


Organisations’ papers

Please note that some organisations had a geographical remit of the wider north-east of Scotland (such as the Aberdeen and District Milk Marketing Board, North East of Scotland Music Festival, Spalding Clubs). Please therefore also see the separate factsheet.

Aberdeen Burgh and Shire, poll book: 1696 (MS 568).

Aberdeenshire valuations: 17th century – 20th century (MS 252, MS 507, MS 1037, MS 1038).

Aberdeenshire Volunteer Rifle Corps (part of Castle Fraser papers): 1814-1865 (MS 3470/20).

Aboyne Circulating Library papers: 1839 – 1855 (MS 3495).

Alford poll book: 19th century (MS 3470/21/44).

Alford Mutual Improvement Association Library papers: 1912 – 1929 (MS 3438).

Alford Turnpike Trust papers: 1822 – 1897 (MS 2769/I/104 and MS 2769/II/117).


Ballater Mutual Improvement Association: 1889 – 1927 (MS 2632).

Buchan Coursing Club: 1854 – 1881: (MS3004/351 and MS 3004/V41).

Buchan Medical Society: 1862 - 1935 (MS 1163/2).

Cairngorm Club papers: 1889 – 1990 (MS 3405).

Castle Fraser School records: 1870 – 1888 (MS 3470/18).

Collegiate Church of Turriff: register: 1548-1558: Also includes notes made in the 20th century (MS 2255).


Crichie Barony, court minutes: 1640 - 1644 (MS 3004/V406).


Fraserburgh Heritors minutes: 1837 - 1867 (MS 3004/507).

Fraserburgh Parochial Board: 1862 – 1865 (MS 3004/bundle 277).

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

Garioch and Northern Medical Association: 1854 – 1925 (MS 1163/1).


Kennethmont, Clatt and Leslie Total Abstinence Society: 1878 – 1886 (MS 3630).


New Deer Agricultural Association: 1837 – 1845 (MS 3387).

Old Machar Parochial Association: 1864 – 1868 (MS 1020).

Philorth Barony and Fraserburgh Regality court books: 1633-1720 (MS 3004/V405).


Rathen Heritors (copies): 1832 – 1853 (MS 3004/587).

Roman Catholic Church, Aquhorthies College papers: 1804 – 1817 (MS 2249).

Roman Catholic Church, Glengairn and Braemar: 1703 – 1845 (MS 536, 537, 538, 5918, MS 919 & MS 2005).

Scottish Episcopal Church, Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, including many individual churches: 17th century – 20th century (MS 3320).

St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Fraserburgh, inventory: 1963 (MS 2450).


Business papers
Aberdeenshire Light Railways Company records: 1889 – 1898 (MS 4020).


Culter Mills Paper Co. Ltd: 1865 – 1965 (MS 3076).


William Kennedy, joiner, Kinnernie, daybook: 1831 – 1867 (MS 2266).

Adam Mackie, farmer, merchant and innkeeper, Fyvie: 1818 – 1850 (MS 3347).

Alexander George Reid, Builder and Contractor, Kemnay: 1845 – 1937 (MS 3544).

John Rickart of Auchnacant, merchant (The Rickart manuscript): 1690 – 1724 (MS 2305).


Philorth Steam Cultivation & Traction Co Ltd: 1872 – 1888 (MS 3004/433, MS 3004/V30, MS 3004/V74 & MS 3004/V78).


There is much relevant material across collections of solicitors and surveyors. For example:

Davidson and Garden, advocates, Aberdeen: 15th century – 20th century. This extensive collection contains records of some 200 families, estates, businesses, trusts and other organisations which the firm represented such as Lewis Chalmers of Fraserburgh (MS 2769 and MS 3744).

Ledingham Chalmers, solicitors: 18th century – 20th century. Includes papers from various families and estates such as Burnett of Elrick (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 (papers MS 2626 and maps and plans MS 3860).

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 Aberdeenshire (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. 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 such as publications by the Buchan Field Club and local schools. Also in The Local Collection you will find a number of local newspapers.

**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*.

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)