

Resources relating to Asia in Special Collections

September 2021

QG HCOL051

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.

A significant number of alumni have been explorers, missionaries, migrants, traders or officers of state. Many of them have left manuscripts and material objects reflecting travel and adventure. This is in addition to much rich topographical printed material accumulated over many centuries.

Archival collections

University institutional papers

The Heritage of China and the West, An International Conference, University of Aberdeen proceedings: 1997 (MS 3622).

Family and estate papers

Fraser, Major-General Alexander Mackenzie, commanding officer of the 78th Highlanders Regiment, India: 1796 - 1800 (MS 3470/6).

Fraser, Colonel Charles Mackenzie of Castle Fraser, India: 1792-1871 (MS 3470/8).

[Gordon, Lieutenant R], diary while serving with the British Expeditionary Force to China: 1841 – 1843 (MS 3004/V410).

Leith-Ross family of Arnage, Aberdeenshire, relating to military service of Major W. Leith-Ross in India: 1920s – 1930s (MS 3346). (Sections 15 – 17).

Leslie of Warthill, letters to family members in Canton, China: 19th century (MS 2580).

Ogilvie-Forbes, various family members in India, including merchants William Forbes and Theodore Forbes, and in military service, including Captain

William Ogilvie and Dr Frederick Forbes: 19th century (MS 2740).

Ogilvie-Forbes of Boyndlie, Sir George Ogilvie-Forbes, diplomat in Baghdad. Including official correspondence and telegrams: 1932-1935 (MS 2740).

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

Yule, Sir Henry, geographer, India: late 19th century (MS 1162/1/3 and MS 2860).

Yule, Robert, soldier, 9th Lancers, India: 1850s (MS 1162/1).

Organisation papers

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

Revenue Party Survey of India, Gorakhpur District Survey: 1885 (MS 1118).

Business papers

Bennachie Coffee Estate, South India: 1882 - 1886 (MS 2769/II/87).

Kayan Coconut Company, Malay States, and related papers: c. 1700 – 1900 (MS 2769/II/131).

Rajawella Estate and Raja Coffee Company, Ceylon: c.1890s (MS 2911).

S. S. Woodford, England to China, log book: 1791 – 1792 (MS 2769/II/122).

Aberdeen connections in Ceylon papers (coffee and tea estates): 20th century (MS 3813).

Personal papers

Anderson, Sir John, colonial administrator, Ceylon: 1900 – 1914 (MS 2965).

Booker, Patrick Kilgour, civil servant, relating to Arabia and Aden: c.1950 – 1970 (MS 3520).

Bosch, Baron Firmin van den, Procurator General: relating to Palestine and Syria: 1928 – 1934 (MS 2272).

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

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

Carnegie, Thomas and George, sons of Susan Scott Carnegie, philanthropist, papers relating to military service in India: 1799 – 1801 and 1801 – 1807 (MS 2937/1 and MS 2937/2).

Chalmers, Alexander, chief engineer in the Royal Navy, including China and India: 1843 - 1868 (MS 2884/1/2).

Chalmers, John, Lieutenant, Bengal Native Infantry and Assistant Commissioner for the Punjab: 1852 - 1862 (MS 2884/1/5).

Chalmers, Samuel, H.E.I.C. Artillery and telegrapher, India: 1849 - 1858 (MS 2884/1/3).

Chalmers, William, assistant military surgeon, including India: 1853 - 1862 (MS 2884/1/4).

Corbet, James, sketch of the opium trade in India: 1857 (MS 647).

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

Fraser, Edward, of Gortuleg, Officer in the East India Company's Madras European Regiment, diary: 1802 – 1807 (MS 3864).

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

Johnston, Ian, plantation worker, papers relating to Bengal: 1933 – 1951 (MS 2812).

Kintore, Lady Hilda Keith Falconer, journals of various trips around the world including Japan: 1890s (MS 3064).

Moir, William, notes on 19th century Ceylon; compiled 20th century (MS 2736).

Murray, Lieutenant W., correspondence relating to 2nd Battalion of 25th Regiment, Native Infantry, India: 1810 – 1813 (MS 2769/II/68).

Ogston, Walter Henry and Josephine Elizabeth Ogston (née Carter), papers relating to life in India: 1908 – c.1944 (MS 3850/4/7/5).

Panton family, papers relating to India: 1831 – 1840 (MS 2769 I/80).

Ross, Robert, sergeant, 1st Company Artillery Invalids, journal including military service in East Indies and India: 1800 – 1840 (MS 2858).

Stewart, Captain James, antiquarian, research on oriental names and places: 1890 – 1902 (MS 680 – 685).

Troup, James, Consul-General at Yokohama: Tripitaka: 1903 – 1919 (MS 3172).

Westmacott, G. E.: notes on the history of Assam, India: 1834 (MS 2217).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller, diaries. 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: 19th century (MS 416, MS 417, MS 418, MS 419, MS 434 and MS 3849).

Wilson, Robert, physician and traveller, accounts of surgical cases treated by Wilson on voyages with the East India Company: early 19th century (MS 430). Also, treatise entitled 'On the Preservation of Health on board the Honourable East India Company Ships': early 19th century (MS 431).

Wimberley, (nee Irvine), Mary, diary (extracts) kept in India and England: 1825-1838 and edited in 1969 (MS 2724).

Unidentified traveller, Turkey (possibly the Dutch parson at Smyrna), travel journal including accounts of voyages and details of people. The work is translated from Dutch: 1773 (MS 125).

Manuscript plan entitled, 'Plan of a Tour through Burdwan and part of the adjacent Provinces in the Kingdom of Bengal' by George Morison: 1762 (MS 2353).

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 Helen Bruce, author (MS 3620/1/153).

Oriental manuscripts

Kammavaca (The Upasampada Kammavaca): 19th century (MS 1000).

Marvels of Creatures and Strange Things Existing 'The Wonders of Creation', Persian ms.: undated (MS 183).

Watercolour pen and ink sketches of Japanese flowers, 'Well-known flowers, a careful selection': c. 1875 (MS 2004).

Persian manuscripts: (MS 167, MS 179 and MS 182 and MS 841 – 842).

Various oriental manuscripts, see MS 1105 – MS 1156: including:

Manuscripts collected by Sir James Russell Brazier, Consular service of the Chinese government: (MS 1139 - MS 1154):

Fascicle from the Yongle dadian (or Yung Lo Tien, or Great Encyclopaedia of Yung Lo): 1562 – 1567 (MS 1143).

Watercolour views of Kyoto by Kunii Ōbun: 1865 (MS 1111).

Other relevant collections

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. Of particular relevance here are the papers of Sir James McGrigor who served during the Peninsular War and in India and Egypt, and was a pioneer of field hospitals and ambulances (AMCS/4/1).

For more information see the website; please note that although the catalogue is available via the University, the papers are held by the Medico-Chirurgical Society.

Printed collections

An exceptional collection of printed atlases, topographical material and travellers' accounts demonstrate how the perception of these regions developed from the Renaissance period to the 20th century.

The printed collections include some of the most important atlases ever produced from the 16th and 17th centuries as well as early printed volumes in which maps and plans were inserted to inform or to embellish. Special Collections holds around 600 printed maps, atlases and plans. These encompass topographical maps, city and town plans and nautical maps and cover a chronological range from the 15th century to the present day and are representative of the printed cartographic history of Europe and Scotland.

The earliest printed atlas is a 1482 reworking of Ptolemy's *Cosmographia* by Nicholas Germanus and there are several further 16th century examples of maps in the Ptolemaic tradition. Works by some of the most significant map-makers such as Blaeu, Mercator, Ortelius, and Hondius are also held.

The printed collections contain many printed memoirs written by University alumni who travelled and worked as part of the army and civil service and as doctors, ministers, surveyors or explorers.

There are also named collections of relevance:

London Missionary Society Lending Library,
Edinburgh

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 also 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*.

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).