Introduction

Many individuals have deposited their papers with the University and 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 of national and international importance.

Transport is one of the stated strengths of Special Collections, mainly due to the material bequeathed by Andrew O’Dell (1909-66), the University’s first Professor of Geography. The O’Dell collection ranks as one of the major railway collections in Britain but also includes material covering all aspects of transport history.

Other collections include those relating to coaches, trams and buses (such as Grampian Transport) as well as shipping transport.

Please note that this factsheet should be consulted in conjunction with the factsheet QG HCOL016: Business records in Special Collections.

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, also contains relevant printed material such as publications of the Great North of Scotland Railway Association.

Preeminently, the O’Dell collection ranks as one of the major railway collections in Britain, but also includes all aspects of transport. The collection consists of over 10,000 volumes from the 1830s to present and is still accruing. The collection is particularly relevant to railway transport in the north-east of Scotland, with an emphasis on the history of the Great North of Scotland Railway Company (GNSR) and the London & North Eastern Railway (LNER).

The collection is composed of a wide range of ephemera, maps/plans, timetables, plans, and guide books for the many railway companies that operated in Scotland and in England and Wales (as well as in Europe and world-wide). There are also small sequences of works on inland waterways, sea transport, road and aviation. Some of the highlights include: an unbroken run of Bradshaw’s Railway Manual (1858-1923), a full run of the Railway Magazine from 1897 onwards, plans and maps of Scottish railway routes which date from the 1850s to the 1900s and 128 scrapbook volumes compiled by Professor O’Dell which contain much material of local interest.

There is in addition some manuscript material for the GNSR and LNER:

**GNSR**
- Register of guards and brakesmen: 1853 - 1949
- Goods Dpt. Register of staff: 1920 -1923
- Passenger Dpt. Register of staff off duty: 1897 – 1926
- Passenger Dpt. Register of changes in working staff: 1865 – 1884
- Pay-bills (salaries): 1899 – 1925 (incomplete)

**LNER**
- Traffic Dpt. Register of changes in the working staff: 1924 - 1937
- Register of staff changes: 1938 – 1944
- Traffic Dpt. staff book: 1938
- Salaried staff date of birth book: 1882 – 1943
- Advances of salaries granted to managing, clerical and supervisory staff: 1925
- Pay bills (salaries): 1923 - 1929
- Salaries paid: 1934 - 1935
- Wage payments (carbon copies): 1927 – 1931

For more information see:
[www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/31/](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/31/)
Archival collections

Family and estate papers
Amongst the family and estate collections there are papers relating to the development of railways, especially those relevant to the Great North of Scotland Railway Company:

- Burnett of Leys (Crathes Castle papers), specifically the development of railways: 19th century (MS 3361).
- Duff, Earls of Fife (Duff House), specifically the development of railways: 19th century (MS 3175).
- Forbes and Hay of Seaton, specifically Aberdeen Railway Company papers: 19th century (MS 2253 and MS 2414).
- Fordyce family of Brucklay Castle and Aberdeen, specifically the development of railways: 1844 – 1865 (MS 3220).

- Fraser of Philorth estate papers for example contain letters of subscription to the Fraserburgh Railway Company, legal papers concerning a process against the Great North of Scotland Railway Co. Ltd., legal documents relating to the Buchan and Formartine Railway Co. and correspondence about a proposed Rosehearty-Fraserburgh railway in the early 20th century (MS 3004).

- Gordons of Buthlaw and Cairness, specifically the development of railways: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3193).
- Gordon of Cluny, specifically the development of railways: 19th century – 20th century (MS 3600).
- Leith-Ross of Arnage, specifically the development of railways: 19th century (MS 3346).

Organisation papers
- Amalgamated Engineering Union (Aberdeen Branches): 1832 – 1962 (MS 2640, MS 2667).
- National Union of Seamen: 1926 – 1959 (MS 2644).
- Scottish Commercial Motormen’s Union: 1922 – 1964 (MS 2660).
- Steamfishing Vessels, Engineers’ and Firemen’s Union: 1906 – 1957 (MS 2680 and MS 2880).

Business papers
- Aberdeen Harbour Board photographic collection: 1880s - 1930s (MS 3595).
- Invergarry and Fort Augustus Railway, and the Inverness and Lochend Light Railway papers: 1897 – 1899 (MS 3238).
- Great North of Scotland Railway Company (see O’Dell collection below which contains some manuscript material).
- P&O Scottish Ferries Ltd. records: 1910 – 2002 (MS 3697).

Personal Papers
- Alexander, Sam, industrial trainer, photographs of helicopters serving oil and gas industry: 1979 – 1981 (MS 3811).
- Graham, George, engineer: Caledonian Railway research: 1888 (MS 2125).
- O’Dell, Andrew, papers, some relating to transport research: 1930 – 1970 (MS 2882).
- O’Dell, Andrew, notebooks of railway newspaper cuttings and land surveyors’ calculations: mid-20th century (MS 3094).

For main papers relating to Andrew O’Dell see Printed Collections section above.
Access

Materials are available upon request for consultation in the Reading Room. Please search online catalogues to identify individual items. www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/search-catalogues/

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).

Links

National Register of Archives http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
Great North of Scotland Railway Association (See here for a guide on locating staff records) www.gnsra.org.uk/
Collection Highlight www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collection-highlights/happy-holidays/