



Medical resources in Special Collections

Andrew MacGregor, June 2017

QG HCOL007 [www.abdn.ac.uk/library/documents/guides/qghcol007.pdf]

The Wolfson Reading Room

Special Collections Centre

The Sir Duncan Rice Library
University of Aberdeen
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Website: www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/

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.

In 1497 a royally endowed Chair of Medicine was established at King's College (founded 1495) and in 1506 medicine was recognised as a proper subject of study. The foundation charter of Marischal College, Aberdeen's second college-university (founded 1593), made provision for the teaching of medical subjects within the liberal arts curriculum and a chair was established in 1700.

The history of medicine represents a major strength in Special Collections. The collections cover all disciplines: anatomy, obstetrics and gynaecology, surgery, military medicine, medical training and pharmacology. The archival collections include notes from medical lectures, treatises, prescriptions, herbals, patients' case notes, dispensary records and the records of medical societies and individuals including correspondence, diaries and journals.

This factsheet is to be used in conjunction with the factsheets [QG HCOL032: Scientific resources in Special Collections](#), [QG HCOL039: University student lecture notes in Special Collections](#) and [QG HCOL040: University student resources in Special Collections](#).

Archival collections

University institutional papers

Anatomical and Anthropological Society: 19th century – 20th century ([MSU 1442](#)).

Department of Anatomy: papers: 19th century – 20th century ([MSU 1332](#)).

Department of Pathology papers: 20th century ([MSU 1439](#)).

Department of Surgery: c.1872 - 1964 ([MSU 1095](#)).

Faculty of Medicine minutes: 1860 – 1989 ([MSU 647](#)).

Joint Hospitals Scheme: 1928 – 1939 ([MSU 659](#)).

Medical Committee minutes: 1839 – 1860 ([MARISCHAL/1/3/1](#))

Postgraduate courses in medicine papers: 1927 – 1939 ([MSU 886](#)).

Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health, specifically the Carnegie Dietary Research Survey papers: 1913 – current ([MSU 1451](#)).

Student Health Service papers: 1938 – 1988 ([MSU 1448](#)).

Organisation papers

Aberdeen Blind Asylum papers: 1889 – 1905 ([MS 2769/II/27](#)).

Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children: ledger and minute book: 1877 – 1910 ([MS 2769/II/10](#)).

Aberdeen Medical Club: 1868 - 1875 ([MS 2630](#)).

Aberdeen Royal Infirmary Linen and Comfort Guild: 1931 – 1994 ([MS 3735](#)).

Garioch and Northern Medical Association and Buchan Medical Society, 1854 – 1935 ([MS 1163](#)).

H.M. Antarctic Relief Ship 'Terra Nova': medical accounts, 1903 – 1904 ([MS 2415](#)).

Personal papers

Avicenna: Pars Canonis: 1469 ([MS 259](#)).

Bernardus de Gordonio: Liliun medicinae (The Lily of Medicine', a medical textbook): 1462 ([MS 255](#))

Boerhaave, Hermann, Professor of Medicine and Botany, University of Leiden, lecture notes: 1734 ([MS 2127](#)).

Chalmers, William, surgeon: 'The Silent Grinder' (collection of notes on medicine and surgery): c.1850 ([MS 2839](#)).

Cumming, Ronald, surgeon: papers: 1940 – 1997 ([MS 3810](#)).

Esslemont, Mary, physician: 20th century ([MS 3179](#)).

Forbes, Sir John, knight physician: case-notes and diplomas: 1817 – 1852 ([MS 2908](#) and [MS 3790](#)).

Fraser, Dr Angus, physician and lecturer: medical notes: c.1860 – c.1880 ([MS 657](#)).

Gordon, Gordon, obstetrician, 'The Practice of Physick', vols. 1, 3 and 4: 1788 ([MS 643 - MS 646](#)).

Gordon, Gordon, obstetrician, Treatise on the Epidemic Puerperal Fever of Aberdeen by Alexander Gordon: 1795 ([MS 632](#)).

Gregory family: David (1661-1708), astronomer; James (1638-75), mathematician; James (1753-1821), professor of medicine; John (1724-73), professor of medicine; William (1803-58), chemist: 1582 – 1912 ([MS 2206](#)).

Hamilton, Dr Gilbert Frewin, Department of Anatomy senior lecturer: papers: 20th century ([MS 3750](#)).

Harvey, Professor Alexander, Professor of Medicine: papers: 19th century ([MS 3067](#)).

Hay, Matthew, Professor of Forensic Medicine: medico-legal papers: 1890 – 1905 ([MS 2853](#)).

Henderson, Walter, surgeon, diary of a whaling voyage from Peterhead to Greenland: 1853 ([MS 2719](#)).

Humphrey, William (Gulielmus Umfra): Philonius, Bartholomaeus Putanensis: texts: 1461 – 1499 ([MS 256](#)).

Johnstone, Alexander, M.D.: microfilm reels of personal papers and notebooks: 1750 – c.1850 ([MS 3527](#)).

Keith, Sir Arthur, knight, anatomist and anthropologist: 1890 – 1933 ([MS 470](#)).

Kosterlitz, Hans, Professor Emeritus and Director of the Unit for Research on Addictive Drugs: papers: 1920s – 1990s ([MS 3682](#)).

Laws, Robert, of Livingstonia, missionary and Amelia Laws, nurse: papers ([MS 3290](#)).

Lockhart, Robert Douglas, Professor of Anatomy: papers: 20th century ([MS 3270](#)).

Low, Alexander, Regius Professor of Anatomy: papers: 1923 – 1956 ([MS 2629](#)).

MacLeod, John James Rickard, physiologist and biochemist: Nobel Prize Diploma: 1923 ([MS 1041](#)).

Mallard, John R., Professor of Medical Physics: publications and associated papers: 1950 – 2007 ([MS 3819](#)).

Ogston, Sir Alexander, surgeon: personal and family papers: 1881 – 1917 ([MS 3760](#) and [MS 3850](#)).

Reid, Robert, Regius Professor of Anatomy: papers: 19th century – 20th century ([MS 3753](#)).

Rorie, David, physician: 'Scottish folk medicine' typescript thesis: 1908 ([MS 2316](#)).

Souter, William Clark (1880 – 1959): ophthalmologist: papers: c.1903 – 1940s ([MS 3755](#)).

Stalker, Alexander Logie, Professor of Pathology papers: 20th century ([MS 3471](#)).

Skene, David, physician and scholar: 1750 – 1780 ([MS 37](#) – [MS 40](#), [MS 472](#) – [MS 483](#), [MS 501](#) and [MS 540](#)).

Troup, Jonathan, physician of Aberdeen, Scotland and Dominica, West Indies: 1788 – 1797 ([MS 2070](#), [MS 2391](#), [MS 2900](#) and [MS 3027](#)).

Wilson, Robert, surgeon and traveller: volume containing accounts of surgical cases treated by

Robert Wilson on voyages with the East India Company: early 19th century ([MS 430](#)).

Medical prescriptions: 15th century ([MS 258](#)).

Medical recipes: mid 15th century ([MS 987](#)).

Medical prescriptions: 15th century ([MS 258](#)).

Medical and scientific texts collection, sixteen volumes including medical case notes: 1600 – 1946 ([MS 2872](#)).

Oral history collections

University of Aberdeen Oral History Archive: comprises nearly 200 interviews with individuals connected with the University ([MS 3620](#)) - of particular interest are the interviews conducted with Sir Dugald Baird ([MS 3620/1/21-22](#)), Professor Hans Kosterlitz ([MS 3620/1/35 & 37](#)) and Professor Robert Douglas Lockhart ([MS 3620/1/18-19](#)).

Other relevant collections

NHS Grampian Archives

The archive dates from the founding of Aberdeen Infirmary in 1739 and contains substantial materials relating to 18th and 19th century hospital provision, notably general and specialist hospitals, cottage hospitals and asylums. These have information not only on the administrative and financial affairs of the hospitals but also on individuals who were patients, staff or managers.

There are also records of members of the general public who contributed to local hospitals in the time before the National Health Service by means of annual subscriptions, donations or legacies. As some of the capital of the larger hospitals was tied up in land, estate papers are also to be found among some hospital records. In addition there are records from three local poorhouses which in 1948 became hospitals under the newly-formed NHS.

Material from the 20th century includes the minutes of the local National Insurance Committees and the records of the various NHS administrative bodies, and its constituent Boards of Management, local Executive Councils and, from 1974, Grampian Health Board. Also contained in the archives are records of various local authority health departments which, prior to 1974, had responsibility for a range of healthcare services including prevention of epidemics, mother and child welfare, and school medical services.

www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/nhs-grampian-archives/

Medico-Chirurgical Society

The Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society was founded in 1789 in response to the lack of medical teaching offered by both King's and Marischal Colleges. Its members, including such figures as Sir Alexander Ogston, Professor Matthew Hay, Sir Ashley Mackintosh and Sir James McGrigor, 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.

www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/projects/aberdeen-medico-chirurgical/

Printed collections

The Local Collection, accessible via the Reading Room, contains relevant printed material including University Calendars, Medical Class Albums and the Post-Graduate Medical Bulletin. There are also publications by the local Medical Officers of Health, Medical Inspectors of Schools, District Nursing Association and local hospitals.

Medicine features strongly in the printed collections. Early benefactors to the libraries of the two colleges include Duncan Liddell, Professor at Helmstadt (first of mathematics then of medicine) and Alexander Reid, medical practitioner in London. From 1710 to 1836 under the Copyright Act, King's College had the right, disputed by Marischal, to claim a copy of every book registered at Stationers' Hall. This contributed significantly to the breadth of the early holdings, not least in popular holdings.

Further notable deposits in the 18th century include those by John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute and Sir William Fordyce and in the 19th century the collections were strengthened by Sir John Forbes MD, of London and Dr Alexander Henderson of Caskieben.

There are also named collections of relevance:

- **FL (Fixed Location) Collection**
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/15/
- **Gregory Collection**
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/16/
- **Henderson Collection**
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/17/
- **Phillips Library of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Collection**
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collections/cld/32/
- **Theses Collection**
(Please search the library catalogue to identify individual items)
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/search-catalogues/

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/

Please note that some records contain personal information and may be closed for 75 years (for adults) and 100 years (for children aged 16 and under) due to the Data Protection Act (1998).

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*.

General Medical Council, *The Medical Register* (various editions since 1859).

'The Medical Collections: The Leaves of Life', (University of Aberdeen Development Trust, undated).

Lawrence, D., *The Gregory family: a biographical and bibliographical study to which is annexed a bibliography of the scientific and medical books in the Gregory Library, Aberdeen University Library*. (3v. PhD thesis, Aberdeen University, 1971).

Pennington, Carolyn, *The modernisation of medical teaching at Aberdeen in the 19th century*. (Quincentennial studies in the history of the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, 1994).

Stephenson, W., *Four centuries of medicine in Aberdeen*, (Studies in the history and development of the University of Aberdeen, edited by P. J. Anderson. Aberdeen, 1906, pp.303-318).

Wightman, W. P. D., *Science and the Renaissance Vol.1 An introduction to the study of the emergence of the sciences in the 16th century* (Edinburgh, 1962).

Wightman, W. P. D., *Science and the Renaissance Vol.2 An annotated bibliography of the 16th century books relating to science in the Library of the University of Aberdeen* (Edinburgh, 1962).

Links

- National Register of Archives
<http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
- Wellcome project websites
www.abdn.ac.uk/historic/wellcome_detail.shtml
- Collection Highlight - Bringing up Baby
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/special/collection-highlights/bringing-up-baby/
- Connecting Collections
<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections/connecting-collections-427.php>
- Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society
www.med-chi.co.uk/
- Rowett Institute of Nutrition and Health
www.abdn.ac.uk/rowett/
- University Medical Library
www.abdn.ac.uk/library/about/med/
- University Museums medical collections
www.abdn.ac.uk/museums/collections/medical.php