SACHA: Scottish Association of Country House Archivists

Haven’t heard of us? We’re a fledgling organisation that has been formed to support the work of archivists who are employed in the private collections of estates and country houses throughout Scotland. Working with these collections poses unique challenges, and many of the archivists in this sector are volunteers, who often work alone.

Over the centuries, the family fortunes of many of the country houses of Scotland have fluctuated. As a result, dedicated resources for the archives have often fallen victim to other priorities within the estates. Archivists in these private collections sometimes find themselves working in cold attics during the winter when the house is closed to public visitors, or they may work on a limited-basis for one day per week, or even less frequently.

Budgets for private collections are usually small, and many of the country houses have ‘Friends of’ groups that will donate funds for the most necessary supplies. The lack of modern connectivity in old properties hinders computer-aided work, and collection materials can be scattered across many rooms or buildings around the estate. These combined issues mean that archivists in country houses can feel isolated, or out-of-touch with colleagues in the public sector or larger institutions, and accessibility to the collections is also affected.

In the past, some archivists from Scotland have been members of the UK-wide organisation, Historic Houses Archivists Group (HHAG). Membership to HHAG provides the opportunity for networking in England, and to attend AGM’s at other estates. However, archivists from the country houses in Scotland often find that the time and travel required to attend events south of the border is too prohibitive, and therefore they miss out on these activities.

Although SACHA is an independent group committed to providing local support for Scottish archivists, it is our intention to continue to work closely with the HHAG and to encourage membership in both organisations, where appropriate. SACHA also has connections with the National Register for Archives in Scotland (NRAS) within the National Records of Scotland (NRS). Researchers and enquirers may submit requests to access private collection materials via the NRAS, and surveys from the country house collections may be viewed on the National Records of Scotland website.

SACHA has already begun to host annual Study Days each springtime, first at Hopetoun House and most recently at Bowhill House. The next one will be hosted in March, 2019 by Margaret Fox, the archivist at Traquair House, by kind invitation from Lady Maxwell-Stuart. Members of the SACHA committee have also made visits to the archives of several country houses to exchange ideas and fellowship, including Mount Stuart and Inveraray Castle.

If you would like to find out more information about joining SACHA, volunteering, becoming a guest speaker, or hosting an event, please contact our Secretary, Alison Diamond.

Mindy Lynch, Public Services Officer, Historic Environment Scotland

Cover Image:

Contributors: Peter Burman, Alison Diamond, Josephine Dixon, Margaret Fox, Keren Guthrie, Lynsey Nairn, Crispin Powell, and Ingrid Thomson.

SCA would also like to add our thanks to Dr Alison Rosie, Registrar, National Register of Archives for Scotland, for her assistance in preparing this issue.
There is something very special about Archives that are housed in the place they relate to: for example, the rich Cathedral Archives of Great Britain and the equally rich collections of archives of country houses, especially those houses which have been for centuries the home of an aristocratic land-owning family. Hopetoun House is one such house, being the seat of the Marquess of Linlithgow. The present fourth Marquess now lives in another historic house on the estate, while the heir to the title, the Earl of Hopetoun, lives with his wife and children in what seems always to have been the Family Wing, warmer and more manageable than the rooms of state in the main part of the house.

Hopetoun House is set within an outstanding eighteenth century garden landscape along the south bank of the Firth of Forth. The core of that landscape and the house itself are vested in an educational and conservation charity called the Hopetoun House Preservation Trust. I am a trustee of that charity and our objects are quite clear: to preserve and conserve the historic assets to the best of our ability, and to make the house and its history accessible to visitors, educational groups and researchers.

It has to be admitted that the historic Hopetoun Archive is somewhat the Cinderella of the present circumstances inasmuch as it is vested in a separate charity, with very similar objectives, but has little opportunity to create income streams. We do make a small charge to researchers for access to the Archive but naturally we do not wish to discourage researchers and so the charge is pitched at a modest level. Whatever resources we acquire are ploughed back into the preservation and conservation of the documents. We have one asset however which is beyond price: the presence on site of the Scottish Conservation Studio whose three partners include Helen Creasy, an exceptional figure in the world of paper conservation. We can call on Helen’s services to the tune of fifty hours a year as part of the lease arrangements for the SCS’s use of the former Motor House, superbly converted into conservation studios, including our own Tapestry Conservation Studio.

We firmly believe that the Hopetoun Archive is of local, national and international importance. What makes it so? One factor is that it is the private archive of the Hope family, prominent in Scottish affairs since at least the middle of the seventeenth century, when the estate

Michael Rysbrack’s beautiful drawing realising a design suggested by Robert Adam
began to be formed by the lawyer Sir James Hope of Hopetoun (1614–1661), whose marriage to a Lanarkshire heiress, Anna Fouls, brought the Leadhills Estate into the family, with its rich resources of lead, silver and gold. The papers which relate to the Leadhills Estate form an important component in the holdings of the Archive. The Earldom of Hopetoun dates from the very beginning of the eighteenth century, close to the time of the Union of the Scottish and English Parliaments. My particular favourite of the historical personalities is the fourth Earl (1765–1823), who, as General John Hope (later Sir John), was a distinguished soldier who latterly played a significant part in the Peninsular War in Portugal and Spain. He was much loved and appreciated by his friends and, it seems, by his tenants; the two ‘Hopetoun Columns’, one in Fife and the other in East Lothian, were erected to his memory as testimony to the high regard in which he was held. During his Earldom, which came fairly late in his life, he made a point of creating projects which would provide employment, such as the building of superbly crafted walls of stone along the river Forth and around the estate. He welcomed George IV to Scotland in 1822 and at Hopetoun entertained him to lunch before the King embarked on the sea journey back to London from nearby Port Edgar.

We also curate the private papers of two notable ‘Consuls of Empire’. The first of these was the seventh Earl (1860–1908) who became the first Marquess, a highly successful Governor of the State of Victoria, and then, when Australia became a Commonwealth in 1900, the first Governor-General of all Australia. His son, the second Marquess (1887–1952), who succeeded in 1908, survived the first World War to become first the highly successful Chair of the India Agriculture Commission and then from 1936–43 the longest-serving Viceroy of India. The papers from these two heads of the family alone are of huge national and international importance.

The second factor is that Hopetoun House is one of the acknowledged masterpieces of Scottish eighteenth century architecture, the work of two successive architects, Sir William Bruce (1699–1702 and 1706–1710) and William Adam (1721–26). William Adam’s eldest son John Adam was involved with the final construction of the two side pavilions with their superb craftsmanship and stone carvings (1750–54). The most famous member of the family, Robert Adam, was also able to provide advice on the fitting out of the Red Drawing Room. We have every kind of document relating to these building enterprises, which also included the Home Farm and other buildings on the estate: contracts, drawings, specifications, receipts and so forth. We have recently realised that the detailed specifications throw a vivid light on the use of traditional building materials and traditional building skills over the past three centuries. Likewise, the garden and the design landscape are well documented.

During my time as a trustee and Archivist we have held major conferences on The State Bed (attended by over a hundred delegates from six countries including the USA) and on the evolution of house and garden landscape (organised jointly with Scotland’s Garden & Landscape Heritage).

As this is the archive of the Hope family we have untold riches in the form of personal papers, including letters from and to members of the family and their allies and friends across the generations since the mid-seventeenth century. There is an important set of inventories. There is a significant holding of Marriage Settlements, invariably a well-documented landmark in the story of land-owning families. When newly Archivist, from April 2012, I began one day to list all the topics which from the catalogue seemed likely to be fruitful topics for research. In the end I gave up as there were simply too many of them. But to take one example, it seems that the funerals of members of the family were arranged by the Estate Office until well into the twentieth century. There are instructions, designs and receipts for every conceivable aspect of funerals which, collectively, would surely form a fascinating survey of social and religious attitudes and customs. The literary and the musical lives of members of the family are likewise reflected in the archives, together with their artistic patronage, their sporting enthusiasms and their zest for travel. One of our most delightful items is a scrapbook of numerous watercolour paintings of a family holiday, Earl, Countess and two children, to Egypt in the 1860s.

Our chief finding aid is the 700-page two-volume green-backed catalogue prepared by the National Register of Archives for Scotland in the 1960s, together with the CD which enables it to be searched by typing in keywords. Quite significant material has been added to the Archive since the late 1960s and so we have supplements. Moreover, the archive continues to grow as we gradually take into the central Hopetoun Archive the historical archives of the Estate Office which were traditionally held separately from the main family and house archive. We estimate that we have lately added around 20 per cent to the total archive by identifying and gradually transferring historical Estate Office archives to the main Archive. Our ability to do this has depended wholly on the enthusiasm and energy of our volunteer team, and especially Richard Gillanders, who came to us as a volunteer soon after retiring as Records Manager of the British Geological Survey. Thanks to his advocacy we have also fallen heir to a considerable quantity of metal shelving which has enabled us to handle and house the Estate Office material. This is an ongoing process. To house this new material, we have been able to expand into the wide second-floor corridor which serves as a lockable annexe to the main Archive rooms.

Two years ago, we invited the Archivists of other Scottish country houses to join us in forming the Scottish Association of Country House Archivists (SACHA), which has greatly increased the contacts and mutually beneficial visits between us. We held the second annual meeting
as well as the founding meeting at Hopetoun. In 2018 we held the annual meeting at Bowhill, Selkirkshire, at the invitation of the Duke of Buccleuch’s Archivist, Crispin Powell, where the principal focus was the preservation, cataloguing and conservation of historic photographs in country house collections. Hopetoun has a very precious collection of historic photographs which are curated by the Archives Team.

Some of our researchers make multiple visits and become friends, whose researches we are very glad to support. Two of our researchers have produced learned papers recently: Charlotte Bassett has followed up her doctoral studies at the University of Edinburgh by publishing in the Journal of the Georgian Group a major article on the evolution of the building of Hopetoun House and the original and changing dispositions and functions of the rooms of the house; and Phillip O’Neill, a distinguished military historian, has offered for publication an article on The Hon. John Hope (later, as mentioned above, the fourth Earl), dealing with his early military career in Ireland. In addition to individual research visits we have also welcomed this year a number of group visits including the Friends of the Perth & Kinross Archives and the NRS Palaeography Course.

I would like to pay tribute to the support we receive from the National Register of Archives for Scotland and especially to Dr Alison Rosie and Linda Ramsay. I would like to say also how much inspiration we have had from Josephine Dixon, now of NRAS, who, following a period as Voluntary Archivist in 2011, produced a report with recommendations. We have made much progress on following up her recommendations but of course not all. One project which has been dear to me but progresses slowly is the possibility of moving into re-purposed accommodation in the Home Farm, in a fine eighteenth Century building which is thought to have been the original abattoir. Being at present on the second floor, up many stairs, is not ideal for an Archive which seeks to serve the actual or potential research community interested in exploring the rich veins of information which are contained within the Archive. There is also an inherent risk in being high up in a historic building open to the public.

More archival research would also enable us gradually to increase our knowledge and evaluation of the cultural significance of the house and its treasures, the landscape and the estate.

A house without an Archive must seem like a human being with very little of a memory. We are privileged to look after the Archive of a house and family which is capable of furnishing one of the richest memories in Scotland, with untold insights into past events and personalities and how they still impact on the present. Gradually to improve the ways in which we look after it and gradually to improve and enhance its accessibility to local, national and international researchers and interpreters of the past must remain our chief objectives.

Dr Peter Burman MBE FSA, Honorary Archivist to the Hopetoun Trust Papers at Hopetoun House
I ought to live at Scotch Corner, a noisy location but handy for the Duke’s three houses in which there are archives to care for. North is Bowhill, west is the drive over the Pennines to Drumlanrig and due south, eventually you come to his English seat, Boughton in Northamptonshire. Being an Englishman I am actually based there, in a suite of offices created by the Duke in 2017. My job, in all directions, is to make the archive accessible, by appointment, and to create a catalogue which brings it all together, at least on paper.

There has never been a catalogue, nor indeed an archivist, for the whole of the Duke’s heritage. The archive, like the houses, is tripartite, reflected in the surname Montagu Douglas Scott – no hyphens. It comprises the English archives of the Montagus of Boughton, the Dukes of Montagu, those of the Douglas family of Drumlanrig, the Dukes of Queensberry, and of the principal paternal line, the Scotts of Buccleuch, one unfortunate Duke of Monmouth and 9 Dukes of Buccleuch. There has been one Duchess in her own right. The present Duke, Duke Richard, is passionate about the rich collection and magnificent estates he has inherited and keen that all should inspire and be studied. My appointment, the new archive offices at Boughton and the newly opened offices at Bowhill are demonstrations of this.

The archive in the houses luckily isn’t as enormous as it might seem, substantial portions of it are cared for by public institutions, in Scotland at the NRS, with their handy online catalogue and their support, which with that of the NRAS, is invaluable. In England there is a large deposit in the Northamptonshire Record Office, where I had the benefit of working for 22 years, so irreplaceable ‘Montagu experience’. An archive split into so many locations does have its disadvantages, especially if one considers farther flung allied records in Barrow and Beaulieu; my catalogue will encompass all but it does cut down on my physical presence being necessary. I’m glad I don’t often have to drive into Hampshire.

I spend roughly one week in a month working in Scotland, shared between Bowhill and Drumlanrig; probably not enough and it is important to balance access by appointment with all the necessary background tasks such as cataloguing and conservation work. I write this from Drumlanrig where I have three visitors and one ‘background day’ over four days. The visitors are a fair representation: an Oxbridge archivist on an ‘exchange’ visit, an ongoing PhD researcher into the architectural history of the Castle and a new visitor, an academic from Glasgow University who will be studying the archives in conjunction with objects in the Castle. This last day is especially representative, the archive often ties in with the wider collection, or the landscape, and it is perhaps the greatest pleasure and value of an archive in a country house. Next week at Bowhill, visits from a genealogist with a family sampler and a Durham University post-doctoral student on Scottish conservatism get added to the mix. I will also travel to Dalkeith to talk with the newly appointed country park project manager and meet the Bowhill factor to discuss GDPR. The new archive storage at Bowhill is reserved for the papers of the 20th century Dukes so more sorting needs to be done here to make the space presentable. SACHA members attending the workshop in March got to inspect these new premises. We also have a new collections management system called MuseumPlus to develop, which will ally the objects to archives. Nineteenth century accounts for miniatures purchased from the London dealers Colnaghi, located on my last trip, are being added to the database.

‘Spare days’ and time around the visits and email enquiries will be built around my current cataloguing ‘hot spots’. At Drumlanrig these are the accounts and vouchers of the 1st Duke of Queensberry. Here I am adding item by item detail to the basic description given in the NRAS survey. Quite an exciting but a slightly worrying set of records containing figures for rebuilding the Castle under the clerk of the works William Lukup in the 1680s. The Duke is supposed to have been so horrified by the vast expense that he sealed the accounts up and cursed anyone who got sight of them. Perhaps it’s tempting fate but I found them the last time I was here, eye watering amounts indeed but aside from a traffic jam at Scotch Corner, nothing untoward has occurred.

Crispin Powell, Archivist to the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensberry KT

Portrait of the first Duke of Buccleuch by an ‘unknown’ artist called James Carrudus or Carruthers. Crispin Powell has been unable to find out anything about this artist, or where this painting is now. If you have any information please contact him.
This is one of the drawings where the contract was drafted to grant the title of Duke of Rothesay to Mr. James Smith of the said book relate signed by his grandson John James Smith at 125 the twentieth day of March and thirty youth at Aberdeen in presence of Robert Crawford of Crawfordmore written and signed by William Albert Wilson at 125.
The Bute Archive

The Bute Archive at is housed at Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute, the ancestral home of the Marquesses of Bute. Mount Stuart House itself is under the Mount Stuart Trust, a charitable trust, and is open to the public; all of the collections within the house, including the archive, are privately owned. One of the main aspirations of the Trust is education and we work with local schools, artists and researchers to help share this fantastic resource where we can.

Dating from 1158 to present day, the archive largely consists of family and estate correspondence. Collections include papers of the Loudoun and Hastings families; the latter includes correspondence of Francis Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings (1724-1826) and Governor General of India (1813-1823); John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute (1713-1792) who became the first Scots Prime Minister during the reign of King George III as well as co-founder of Kew Gardens with George’s mother Augusta; John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute (1793-1848) who built the Bute Docks in Cardiff turning the area from a village into the City that it known today; John Patrick Crichton-Stuart, 3rd Marquess of Bute (1847-1900) who built the present Victorian Gothic Mount Stuart following the 1877 fire which devastated the original Georgian property commissioned in 1716 by John Stewart, 2nd Earl of Bute (d.1723) and John Crichton-Stuart, 4th Marquess of Bute (1881-1947) a keen collector of Scottish silver, Irish glass, Welsh porcelain, sporting pictures and archive material relating to the Bute family and to Scotland.

Another significant collection is that of the Jacobites. Collected by the third and fourth marquesses, this collection dates from 1673-1820. Among the collection there are quarto albums containing numerous mounted manuscripts and engraving relating to the Royal House of Stuart and the various Jacobite enterprises; manuscripts and documents which relate to the Rising of 1715 and bound manuscripts by John Murray of Broughton, former secretary to Charles Edward Stuart, describing his recollections of the Jacobite Rising of 1745 and its aftermath.

The family also acquired land and properties through marriage; John Stuart, 1st Marquess of Bute married first, Charlotte Jane Windsor (1746-1800), heiress to Welsh Estates and secondly, after Charlotte’s early death, Frances Coutts (d.1832) daughter of the well-known London banker and founder of Coutts & Co, Thomas Coutts (1735-1822). John and Charlotte’s eldest son, also John, Lord Mountstuart (1767-1794), married Penelope

Colour plates drawn by Johann Sebastian Muller for 3rd Earl of Bute.
Crichton (1772-1797) and it was through this marriage that lands in Ayrshire were acquired which included the Palladian Dumfries House. Commissioned in 1754 and designed by John and Robert Adam for William Dalrymple, 5th Earl of Dumfries (1699-1768), original plans and elevations of the house are also held in the Bute archive. It is very much a living archive being added to by the Bute Estate as well as the family.

Mount Stuart was offered up on the outbreak of the Great War by the 4th Marquess and Marchioness of Bute. Firstly, to the Scottish Branch of the British Red Cross who considered at the time that they had enough accommodation and secondly to the Admiralty who accepted. After temporary use as a military hospital from 9th October 1914, the first batch of naval sick and wounded were received on 9th January 1915 and this marks the opening of Mount Stuart as a Royal Naval Hospital. Augusta, 4th Marchioness of Bute did her training and became Matron of the hospital which earned her a DBE for her efforts. It was a fully functioning hospital with an X-Ray Room and Operating Theatre. There were 2120 patients admitted to the hospital; of those, one officer and twelve men died; the hospital closed in January 1919.

The archive has never been fully accessible to researchers; to date approximately 45% of the archive has been catalogued and therefore, it can be seen as one of the most important untapped resources of privately held material in the UK with local national and international connections. The National Register of Archives Scotland (NRA(S)), began a survey of the Bute papers in 1971. Known as survey 0631 it covers approximately 25% of the overall archive collection and it is currently the only publicly available listing of these papers.

Access to the Bute archive is by prior appointment only and we are currently working on a plan to have the remainder of the archive catalogued to allow better access for all. As Mount Stuart is an historic building the search room is within the collections department offices and the reason why visitors to the archive need to be booked in advance. We are; however, very fortunate to have physical access for all visitors as there is an historic lift to assist those who have difficulty with stairs.

Key items in the Bute Archive & Special Collections

- Earliest known hand-drawn map of Singapore (c.1819) and papers relating to the American War of Independence are held within the Hastings Papers.
- Eyewitness Account of the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots – acquired by the 4th Marquess of Bute in 1930.
- Shakespeare’s First Folio – belonged to the Bute collection for over 150 years and was re-bound by the 4th Marquess in 1930.
- Botanical tables of the 3rd Earl of Bute including individual colour plates drawn by Johann Sebastian Muller also known as John Miller.

Lynsey Nairn, Archivist, Mount Stuart
Glamis Castle has witnessed over six hundred years of comings and goings, from illustrious royals, prime ministers, artists, writers, family, friends, associates, tradesmen, clergy, governesses, servants and tenants. It is therefore not surprising that Glamis Castle has a rich and diverse archive dating back to the 12th century, documenting the lives of not just the Strathmore family, but also a wide spectrum of society.

Situated at the top of the tower, the archives are not easily accessible to the public and the Archivist is employed on a part-time basis. The documents are stored in two rooms, in approximately 400 standard archive boxes, with over 600 volumes and 400 plans. Researchers can access the archives at Glamis, but appointments must be made well in advance and a charge is also administered. It is also possible for researchers to request the temporary removal of certain records from Glamis to the University of Dundee Archives for consultation in the search room there for a maximum of three months, subject to the approval of the Archivist and the condition of the documents. The University of Dundee Archives are in the basement of the Tower Building, which has lift facilities, and readers can spend more intensive blocks of time researching their chosen topic. Remote researchers can request that the archivist undertakes research on their behalf; an initial search of around 15-20 minutes is made free of charge and charges are only implemented on subsequent research requests. Further information on the archives, including Genealogy FAQs, can be accessed on the Glamis Castle web site.

The records in Glamis Castle Archives hold many secrets and are crying out for exploration, with potential for everyone, whatever their background or interests. Among the personal papers of the successive Earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne is the original manuscript of the Book of Record – a detailed journal or diary written by Patrick, the 3rd Earl between 1684 and 1689, consist-
ning of 129 pages. Daily entries are interspersed with recollections from his past, covering the story of his own youth and his personal life and business affairs until six years before his death. His tendency to digress adds to the richness of his account and he is refreshingly blunt and honest in his opinions on people, including Oliver Cromwell, his family and wayward servants.

Glamis is probably best known for its association with Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, written for King James VI and I after his accession to the throne of England. In 1603 Patrick, 9th Lord Glamis accompanied the King to the English court and three years later the King elevated him to the Earl of Kinghorne. It is possible that Shakespeare heard stories of Glamis at court which he used as a fitting setting for the grim tragedy of Macbeth. Although there is no record of him visiting Glamis, he did visit Scotland, so it is possible that he may have passed by Glamis during his travels north to Aberdeen. Alternatively, the story of Macbeth being Thane of Glamis could have been adopted by Shakespeare from the history of Hector Boece, the translation of which by Bellenden was the popular and acknowledged history of Scotland in the time of Shakespeare. Whatever the case, the slaying of King Duncan by Macbeth in fact took place at Elgin, not Glamis, nevertheless the Macbeth tradition at Glamis lives on. An innovative Macbeth Sculpture Trail has been installed at the Pinetum in the grounds of Glamis Castle, featuring seven wooden sculptures by Neith Art & Sculpture, fashioned out of wood procured from the estate: Oak, Douglas Fir and Noble Fir.

The colourful Game Books from 1878 onwards are rich sources which include unexpected surprises. They were primarily kept to record the numbers and variety of game shot on the Glamis estate, but uniquely they also contain historical depictions, as well as intricate wildlife illustrations, photographs of family, friends and employees, and newspaper cuttings. Game hunted on the estate would have included grouse, partridges, pheasants, woodcock, snipe, wild fowl, wood pigeon, hares, rabbits and deer. A surviving menu book for 1866 shows that meat was a key part of the diet of both the Strathmore family and their servants and it shows what the family ate ‘upstairs’ and the servants ate ‘downstairs’. The servants ate hearty stews, although they were generally limited to one main course, in comparison to the greater choice offered to the family.

One of the most notable records in the archives is the Visitors’ Book, dated 1905-1953, which spans the use of Glamis Castle as a convalescent hospital for soldiers during WW1, as well as numerous royal visits, including King George V and Queen Mary, and of course Albert and Elizabeth, the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Queen Consort) and their daughters, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. HM Queen Elizabeth’s signature gradually evolves from ‘Lilibet’, aged 5 at her grandparents’ Golden Wedding in 1931, to ‘Elizabeth R.’ in the year of her Coronation in 1953. This volume includes a cross-section of society, which aptly reflects the diverse contents of the archives.

Ingrid Thomson, Archivist, Glamis Castle

Images: Previous page: Gamekeepers at Glamis, c.1920s (Glamis Castle Archives PH 14/39); above: Vol. 271, Visitors’ Book, 1905-1953, with an early signature of HM Queen Elizabeth, Lilibet, alongside her parents’, the then Duke and Duchess of York.
For over 70 years the National Register of Archives for Scotland (NRAS) has been supporting owners of private archives across Scotland. We are available to offer support and impartial advice to owners and provide a vital link between owners and researchers seeking access. As a result, we help to ensure the continuing survival of these rich and important collections, key for encouraging research and ensuring that Scotland’s history continues to be told.

Formed in 1946 to compile a record of collections of private papers in Scotland, the NRAS appealed to owners to submit information about their archives. The response was very positive and the following year NRAS staff embarked on visits to owners’ homes where papers were examined in situ and surveys produced.

Early focus was on records of landed estates and these first surveys give an intriguing insight into how and where the papers were kept. Collections were surveyed as found. One collection listed in 1954 is described as being housed in various rooms throughout the house and packaged into containers including a hide trunk, wooden chest, tin deed box and hair trunks.

Whilst some country house collections surveyed have subsequently been deposited at national and local archives, a substantial and significant number remain with the owners in their own homes. This arrangement brings many benefits – the unique perspective of an owner whose family papers have remained in his or her hands for generations for example, as well as significant challenges – how to balance the needs of caring for an archive with the competing demands of the time and resources involved in maintaining a large stately home. The NRAS is sensitive to these issues and aims to offer helpful and practical advice. Given the many other responsibilities faced by these owners, the NRAS is tremendously grateful for the generosity of owners in giving access to their papers to researchers, often without a charge.

From the outset, the NRAS’s remit was not only to record the papers held by these private owners, but to offer advice on all aspects of collections management, including storage, preservation, cataloguing, and dealing with requests for access from researchers. Researchers were quick to benefit from these newly accessible papers, with requests for access facilitated by NRAS staff who liaised with owners on their behalf, a function which remains central to the services offered by the NRAS today.

Given our long standing involvement with Scottish country house archives, the NRAS is delighted to be involved with SACHA. The meetings are a great opportunity to meet owners and their representatives from archives across Scotland and to share ideas and support. The sessions to date have focused on pertinent themes of relevance to attendees and have also given the hosts the chance to showcase their archives to an enthusiastic audience.

Over the years the number of surveys has grown and expanded beyond estate papers to include records of a huge range of individuals, families, organisations and businesses. In the 1960s the NRAS began numbering its surveys and the Register as we know it was launched. The surveys have been continually updated both through visits from NRAS staff and welcome updates and additions received from owners, their staff or volunteers. This helps to ensure that our large number of surveys remain a useful and relevant resource for researchers and owners alike. The NRAS website now hosts many of these surveys online, maximising access for a wider audience. Despite these changes and improvements over the last 70 years, our aim has remained constant – to compile a record of private collections across Scotland, to encourage their care, and to make information about them available to researchers and others. In recent years the NRAS has also assisted the HMRC Heritage Division with advice on designated collections (i.e. those receiving tax benefits on historically important buildings and their collections).

The NRAS is a small team of three archivists but our reach is large and we provide a valuable service to owners and researchers of Scottish archives. The Register means that we now have a good idea of what privately held records exist across Scotland. What was previously hard to reach has been made readily accessible by the efforts of the NRAS. It is a privilege to be trusted to give advice on these important and diverse private collections and to play a key role in ensuring their survival and continued use.

Josephine Dixon, Assistant Registrar,
National Register of Archives for Scotland
I know it is not always helpful to label things but I’ve always thought of Traquair’s archives as ‘Scottish history in miniature’. The collection is not large compared with those in vast stately homes but, tucked away on the top floor of the house in the room slept in by the resident Catholic chaplain in past centuries, it certainly contains a microcosm of Scotland’s past. Well, almost…

Focussing on the 19th century for a moment, you won’t find evidence of illustrious careers in national (or even, local) politics, the law, the armed forces, the British Empire or the Kirk. By this time, it was evident that the Stuarts of Traquair had suffered for their loyalty to ‘lost causes’, namely the Roman Catholic religion and the Stuart monarchy. As Peter Maxwell Stuart, the 20th laird of Traquair, put it, the family had taken the wrong side in religion and politics.

But it was not always so. The archives preserved at Traquair bear testimony to successive generations of the family’s prominence in national affairs, and this is where their richness as a source for key aspects of Scottish history lies. John Stuart, 4th laird, was knighted by Mary Queen of Scots in 1565, appointed Captain of her Bodyguard, and played a prominent role in her life before her imprisonment in Loch Leven Castle. Three documents naming Sir John Stewart/Stuart and signed by Mary and Lord Darnley are treasured items in Traquair’s muniment room. (Copies are on display in the Museum Room).

The archive is a wonderful resource for the turbulent decades of the mid-17th century as John Stuart, 7th laird, was in effect Charles I’s right hand man in Scotland. Granted an earldom during the king’s coronation visit to Scotland in 1633, he served as Lord High Treasurer of Scotland, and was also tasked with introducing the Anglican Book of Common Prayer into St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh in 1637. Earning the reputation of a ‘trimmer’ in his efforts to please both the king and his fractious Scottish subjects, the earl was impeached by the Scottish Parliament in 1641 but soon re-emerged as a Royalist. Captured at the Battle of Preston in 1648, he was imprisoned in Warwick Castle until 1652. We have over forty letters from the king to the earl, many of them holograph, with copies of the earl’s replies, charting their strained relationship. There are many other letters to the earl from Scotland’s main players in both politics and religion and other documents which serve to illustrate the complicated situation.

Undeterred by the turmoil of the mid-17th century, the Stuart family of Traquair remained steadfast in its support of the Stuart monarchy, with the 4th Earl serving periods of imprisonment as a Jacobite in Edinburgh Castle in 1692 and 1708; and the 5th Earl in the Tower of London from 1746 to 1748. This period in the family’s history has left us with two of Traquair’s most iconic documents – the “Inventory of Popish Trinkets” forcibly removed from the house in December 1688 by a Presbyterian mob shortly after the arrival of William of Orange in the Glorious Revolution, “all which were solemnly burnt at the cross of Peebles”, and a Jacobite letter in code from the ’45 testifying to the 6th Earl’s (somewhat ambiguous) role in that rising. Alas, there is no document written or signed by Bonnie Prince Charlie.

I should also mention that Traquair is proud of its 18th century connection with American Independence through the marriage of the eldest daughter of the 6th Earl, Lady Christina, to Cyrus Griffin, a Virginian, who became one of the founding fathers.

So – how do we exploit all of Traquair’s archival treasures?

In addition to displays of original documents on particular themes in the Museum Room and High Gallery, we now have three permanent exhibitions on display panels which are put up in the High Gallery and change from year to year. One gives an overview of the family from 1700 to 1800 while the other two were initially prepared to mark notable anniversaries – Traquair and the Jacobites (2015: 300th anniversary of the 1715 Rising) and Mary Queen of Scots (2016: 450th anniversary of her visit to Traquair in 1566).

We now have two books based largely on our archives, with the family telling their stories in their own words – A Family Life Revealed: the Stuarts at Traquair, 1491 – 1875 (2012) and “All for our Rightful King” – Traquair’s Jacobite Story, 1688 – 1842 (2017).

Our latest archival venture, an annual Living History weekend, is now in its second year. Throughout the house there are short dramatic scenarios, scripted largely from the archives, involving one or more actors in period costume, bringing the past to life. In addition to the visits of Mary Queen of Scots and Bonnie Prince Charlie there are episodes of a more domestic nature. With so many vibrant stories still tucked away in the archives, we are hoping to develop this initiative in the future.

Finally, what about access? We always have a steady trickle of people interested in viewing the archives, family historians (inevitably!) and academics. We sometimes need to call on the NRAS to arrange temporary deposits of documents to be made available to them in the Historical Search-room of the NRS. This is a service for which we are most grateful.

Margaret Fox, Archivist, Traquair

Background image: Traquair’s famous Jacobite coded letter from the ’45 Rising
The Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle
Inveraray sometimes feels a long way from civilisation: there’s no train - thanks to the 7th, 8th and 9th dukes of Argyll who resisted all efforts to build a branch line from Dalmally (‘Inveraray is resorted to chiefly on account of its beauty – which would not be improved by a Railway passing up Glenaray’), wrote Lord Lorne, later the 8th Duke of Argyll, in 1847, ‘[It] would be a most serious damnification’), and nowadays the steamers all dock at Greenock. When Colin, 2nd Lord Campbell, moved the seat of the Clan Campbell from Lochawe to Inveraray in the mid-19th century, however, it was the improved network of communications at Inveraray which was the deciding factor.

The Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle are the family and estate archive of the Campbell family, dukes of Argyll. The papers provide a virtually unbroken record of nearly eight hundred years of the family’s fortunes which closely reflect key events in Scotland’s history. They reflect the historically important role of the Campbell family in Scottish, British and international affairs from the fourteenth century onwards, with the earls and, later, dukes of Argyll closely allied to the Scottish crown and parliament, and acquiring a host of official roles and responsibilities which were sustained and expanded after Union. Extensive personal papers, correspondence and accounts document the activities of the extended family, offering potential for many important historical themes and events to be explored.

The estate itself was (and still is) extensive: until the mid-twentieth century, it covered most of Argyllshire, as well as parts of Inverness-shire, Clackmannanshire, Stirling and East Lothian, with properties in Edinburgh, London and abroad. In the 18th and 19th centuries, successive Dukes invested heavily in agricultural, industrial and urban development and the records of these endeavours provide an unparalleled insight into landscape history and the built environment. Large areas of the estate also lie in some of Scotland’s most marginal and fragile island environments (Tiree, Iona, Mull) which endured some of the worst periods of 19th century Highland famine, emigration and land agitation. The history of all of these places and events, and of the people within them, is documented in detail in the archive.

Alongside the official records, there are also numerous stories: of mermaids, sea monsters, pirates and, naturally, midges – ‘the torment of flies and insects was something awful’ wrote Lord Archibald Campbell in 1864. There are also 7 volumes of one of the earliest oral history projects, The Dewar Manuscripts, a collection of Gaelic historical and folk tales, as told at the fireside in the late 19th century.

The Argyll Papers were always kept in Inveraray Castle, except during the 17th century conflicts, when the Atholl Chronicles relates ‘the privat conveyance of the peapers belonging to the Late Earle of Argyll’ by Robert Campbell in Uig from Inveraray to Holy Loch. The documents were then hidden in what is still known as the ‘Paper Cave’ on the shores of Loch Eck. Eight barrels of ‘wholle papers and evidents’ were later found in ‘a mean tenant’s house’ and taken to Edinburgh by a Glasgow carrier for storage in the Exchequer House. They eventually brought back to Inveraray where, despite two fires in the Castle, the majority have survived relatively unscathed.

Following the death of the 12th Duke in 2001 and under the conditional exemption obligations entered into by the 13th Duke of Argyll under Section 30 and 31 of the Inheritance Tax Act 1984, the decision was made to bring the archive together in one place where it could be stored appropriately and made available to researchers. Estate buildings have been converted and fitted out to provide two store rooms, an office and a reading room, and an archivist employed to catalogue and make the collection available to researchers.

The Argyll Papers are open to the public (by appointment) and there is a steady growth in the number of visitors finding their way to Inveraray to consult them: academic researchers, genealogists and many of the wider Clan Campbell diaspora. Local and distance volunteers support the work of the archive by cataloguing and transcribing documents, and the recently established Friends of the Argyll Papers supports the archive financially. The HLF funded ‘Written in the Landscape’ project is enabling the Papers to be catalogued and promoted to communities around Argyll.

Those who make the (sometimes long and tedious) journey over the Rest and Be Thankful are (and will be) received warmly, by archivist, volunteers and midges.

Alison Diamond, Archivist, Inveraray Castle

Images: Above left: Inveraray Castle by Nick McCann; Below left: Detail from a letter by Lord Archibald Campbell, 13 August 1864, reporting the midge problem. Courtesy Argyll Estates
On the main route north from Edinburgh to Inverness, Blair Castle seems like a fairy tale white Castle guarding the gateway to the Highlands. The Castle has many layers, but all is not as it seems at first sight. The towers and turrets are Victorian, not mediaeval, the interiors are closer to a classical eighteenth-century mansion and its grounds are not a highland wilderness but a carefully designed landscape. The key to understanding Blair and its surrounding landscape lie in its Archives, carefully collected and preserved by generations of the Atholl family.

The Castle and Estate Archive is based in the Clock Tower. Following a fire in 2011 the new tower was designed, by architect Jamie Troughton, to fit the needs of a fully functioning archive. The Archive has two environmentally controlled stores and a dedicated research room lined with larch. Jamie Troughton once described the archives as the ‘heart of the Castle’, demonstrating its importance to both the Castle and the family.

The main role of the Castle Archivist is to manage the Castle and Estate records and oversee conservation and restoration work, as well as keep a detailed log of where every item in the castle is displayed or stored. Additionally, this year a major exhibition was curated focusing on Queen Victoria and her visits to the Castle. One of the exciting finds in the archive for the exhibition was a letter to Duchess Anne containing a lock of the late Prince Albert’s hair with a note from Queen Victoria, pictured below, saying ‘the precious Hair of my beloved & adored Husband Dec : 14 1861 for the dear Duch of Atholl’.

Blair Castle and its family history is inextricably linked to the Jacobite rebellions, which occurred between 1688 and 1746. The Atholl family was split, father and sons supporting different sides of the political divide. Father opposed son and brother fought brother, resulting in the oldest brother, William, a Jacobite sympathiser, being disinherited, the title passing to his younger brother, James. The third brother, Lord George Murray, was a respected military commander and Jacobite. However, he had serious disagreements with Charles Edward Stuart throughout the Jacobite’s troublesome progression South into England. The tensions culminated in him resigning as
commander and choosing to fight alongside his men. Lord George returned to Blair Castle, with the retreating Jacobite army. On arriving at the Castle in March 1746 he found it occupied by a Royalist garrison. He promptly laid siege to the Castle, the last siege held on British soil, which lasted until 2 April 1746 when he was forced to withdraw and head to Culloden. The Castle Archive holds a large number of letters and documents written at the time by the family, which discuss how the rebellion was affecting the country and the family. Below is a ticket that was used for access to private Jacobite meetings; note the hand written names of fallen Jacobite’s and the depiction of the white cockade, the emblem of the Jacobite cause.

One of the most distinctive elements of the Castle’s history relates to its private army - the Atholl Highlanders. It dates back to 1844 when Queen Victoria visited the Castle and was so impressed with her bodyguard of Atholl men, that she presented them with colours and the right to bear arms. To become an Atholl Highlander one has to receive a personal invitation from the Duke and usually they are men who live and work on the estate, within the local community or have family connections. The Atholl Highlander record book is a valuable resource which is kept in the Archive. It lists all the men in the Duke’s private army and gives their height, a personal detail not easily available elsewhere. It also lists the reason for leaving; it was not all unusual for being dismissed for being drunk or ‘undrillable’. The Atholl Highlanders went into abeyance during the two world wars but the 10th Duke of Atholl reinstated the regiment in 1966. The regiment now stands at 102 soldiers who parade every May at the Castle.

Although the Archive is private, it receives a significant number of academic and a very large number of genealogical enquiries. Family history enquiries can be especially rewarding when an individual is identified. In addition to tenant names, most commonly men, were truculent individuals there may even be letters demanding repairs, rent reduction or details of quarrels with neighbours. If the ancestor was a house servant, the wages book may contain a signature. These can be especially emotional as the visitor realises they are holding the very book their ancestor, maybe over 200 years before, also touched.

Being a Castle Archivist is not without its challenges. Researchers expect online catalogues and immediate access to documents, not always possible when you are a ‘one man band’.

Keren Guthrie, Archivist, Blair Castle