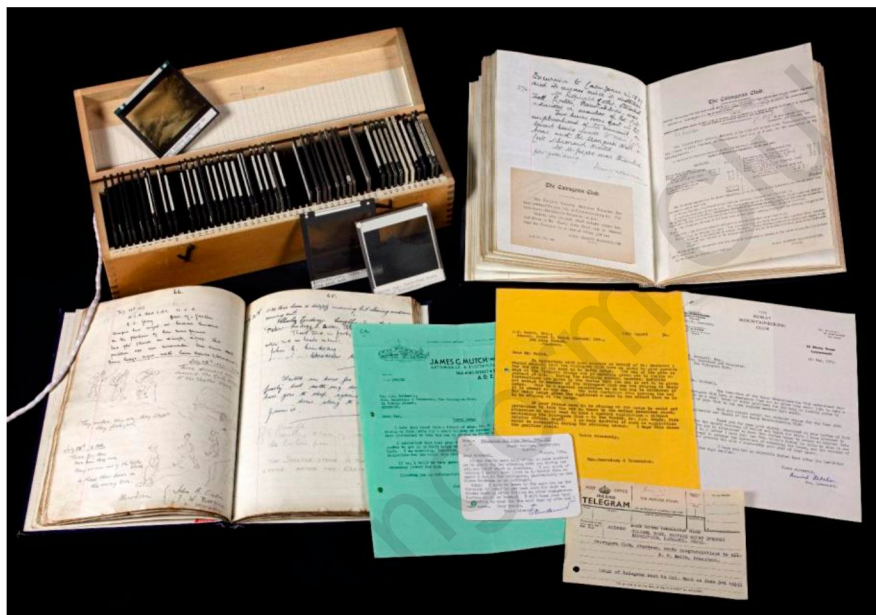


CAIRNGORM CLUB ARCHIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

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Photograph showing a selection of material from the Cairngorm Club collection of papers.

The University's historic collections of archives and books, dating from antiquity to the present day, include approximately 5,000 archive collections and over 230,000 rare printed books. The archives include fine medieval and early modern manuscripts and outstanding 17th – 19th century holdings relating to science, medicine, and Scottish Enlightenment philosophy. There are also thousands of collections including the papers of families, estates, churches, organisations and businesses as well as the academic, antiquarian and literary papers of individuals. Housed in climatically controlled stores in the Special Collections Centre, in the Sir Duncan Rice Library, the collections cover all aspects of the history and culture of the University, the City of Aberdeen, the region and their connections with the wider world. The collections are continually growing and are freely accessible to all.

The Cairngorm Club papers (MS 3405) were deposited by the Club in 1993 at the same time as the Club's library. Dating from 1889, two years after the formation of the club in 1887, the collection provides a comprehensive record of the administration of the Club and its activities throughout its history. The collection has been fully catalogued and arranged into five sections: minutes of meetings, correspondence, visitor books, photographs and deposited collections.

A companion collection is the Club library which contains publications on all aspects of mountaineering with a focus on Scotland and includes important 19th century topographical books as well as a number of late Victorian and Edwardian mountaineering texts. The library contains over 1,000 volumes and over 40 periodical runs and both the library and archive collection is still added to by purchases made by, and gifts made to, the Club.

MINUTES

The first minute book in the collection (MS 3405/1/1) covers the period 1889 to 1918 and includes mostly hand-written minutes of committee meetings, listing members present and activities undertaken by the Club. Included are printed leaflets providing details of excursions and events, postcards inviting members on excursions and printed agendas for meetings (which include financial accounts). The whereabouts of the first volume of minutes, as well as the first constitution drawn up by the original founders, remains unknown.

The names of the six founding members of the Club: William Anderson, Alexander Copland, William A. Hawes, Robert Lippe, Alexander I. McConnochie and Charles C. McDonald are recorded in the printed list of members for 1889 enclosed at the beginning of the volume. This is followed by a printed notice to members dated February 10, 1890 announcing the date of the first annual meeting of the club on the February 19, 1890 at the Palace Hotel and is signed by the Secretary, Alexander Inkson McConnochie. The notice also refers to the first official excursion which took place on the July 9, 1889 to Cairngorm and Ben Macdhui with the next excursion to Lochnagar in the September of that year. This became the initial pattern as outings were held three times a year during the Spring, Summer and Autumn holiday-weekends. The first handwritten minutes appear for the meeting of April 16, 1901 and are signed by William Porter, President from

1899-1900. Last year we received minutes for more recent meetings of the Club covering the period from 1970 to 2014.

CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence files (MS 3405/2) cover a very short time-period in the history of the Club and date from 1948-1959. During this period Eddie Bothwell was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer and many of the letters are addressed from his office at 34 Bridge Street, the unofficial headquarters of the Club. The letters refer to all aspects of Club administration including issues concerning the management and booking of lodges, membership payments and the running costs of the Club, as well as correspondence with publishers regarding Club publications and thank-you letters for events and talks. Although many of the letters are of a routine nature, they give a valuable insight into some of the issues faced by the Club at this time, such as the running of Derry Lodge.

VISITOR BOOKS

The visitor books (MS 3405/3) for the Shelter Stone (1924-1963, 2015-2019), Derry Lodge (1952-1967) and Thistle Cottage (1907-1939) contain the musings, ramblings, jokes, poetry, anecdotes, drawings and notes of thanks of weary climbers, grateful for the comforts afforded them in these lodgings and are an interesting source in themselves to see who visited the mountains and when. There are three volumes covering the period 1907-1939 for Thistle Cottage at Inverey, an important rest-stop to countless hillwalkers owned by Maggie Gruer (1862-1939). An entry by an Alex. Skene in March 1911 in the Thistle Cottage visitor book (MS 3405/3/2/1) is just one of many references to her hospitality: *“Miss Gruer’s three chief points: wholesome food, clean bed, and small charge. What more would you expect?”* Many visitors simply recorded their presence at the Cottage, such as Sir Herbert John Clifford Grierson on the September 26, 1909, while others recorded poems extolling the virtues of the cottage or included sketches such as the one below:



Climbers from Dundee School of Art, April 2, 1929 (MS 3405/3/2/1)

PHOTOGRAPHS

Some of the most interesting material in the collection is contained in the series of around 280 glass lantern slides, the majority dating from 1889-1930 (MS 3405/4). These wonderful photographs, many of which remain yet unidentified, include beautiful photographs of the mountains and the surrounding area with some capturing members of the Club during their climbs on the mountains. These early photographs are notable for the differences in protective clothing and footwear before the development of modern-day equipment and waterproof material designed for climbing in sometimes very inhospitable conditions!



Lochnagar. "In the Black Spout", 26th March 1910. L-R: A.I. McConnachie; J. Dixon; W.M. McPherson. (MS 3405/4/1/1/2)

A photograph album (MS 3405/4/2) presented to the club in 1976 by Jack Lamb, the vast majority dating from the late 19th to the early 20th century, contains some beautiful images of the mountains, notably Ben Nevis. The prints, which have typed or pencil annotations, also include images from James A. Parker's visit to the Innsbruck area of Austria in 1910 and include an additional print from 1925 showing the unveiling of the Ben Macdhui Indicator.



Ben Macdhui Indicator Unveiling (alternative view, from lantern slide collection), August 1925 (MS 3405/4/1/5/57)

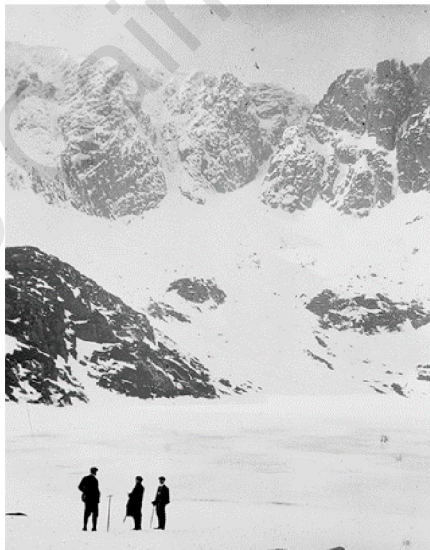
DEPOSITED COLLECTIONS

The final section (MS 3405/5) contains personal papers deposited with the Cairngorm Club. These include the papers of former President Hugh Welsh including his personal diaries of three visits to the Shelter Stone in 1904, 1905 and 1906 (extracts in this Journal) and a collection of newspaper cuttings relating to Maggie Gruer and Thistle Cottage collected from various North-East and Scottish publications. The second collection relates to teacher John Fleming (1912-1948) and is a record of a walking holiday in the Cairngorms in July 1941 including around 50 lantern slides, a photograph album and his own notes of the holiday (see *The Cairngorm Club Journal, Vol 22, 2018. No. 112*).

ACCESSING THE COLLECTION

The collection, which is available to consult in the Wolfson Reading Room in the Special Collections Centre at the University of Aberdeen, offers an important insight into the activities of the club and demonstrates most of all the love of climbing and the outdoors by its members and the duty of care and respect felt towards the majestic Cairngorms.

A further selection of photographs is presented below:



Lochnagar: Loch and Black Spout, March 26, 1910. L-R: A.I. McConnochie; W.M. McPherson; J. Dixon. (MS 3405/4/1/1/15)



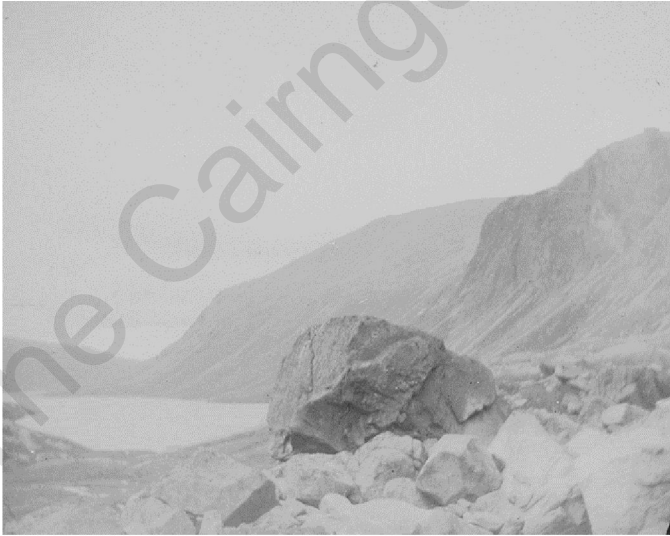
Ballater: Skiing. On hills at Braickley looking down on Ballater, March 14, 1909 (MS 3405/4/1/5/18)



Skiing: Butchart on top of Mount Keen, March 15, 1909 (MS 3405/4/1/5/19)



Skiing: Mount Keen. Glen Tanar Hills looking across to Mount Keen in distance, March 15, 1909 (MS 3405/4/1/5/55)



Loch Avon: The Shelter Stone, July 1924 (MS 3405/4/1/5/62)



Skiing: Approaching Loch Avon, March 15, 1908 (MS 3405/4/1/5/65)



Lower end of Loch Avon and Cairngorm, July 7, 1906 (MS 3405/4/1/6/55)



Ben Macdhui and Glen Luibeg, July 5, 1908 (MS 3405/4/1/6/75)