

Issue Number

57

Autumn 2024

Friends of Perth & Kinross Archive



Donald Macdonald Abbott, F.S.A. Scot.,
celebrating his 80th Birthday

© Image courtesy of Jennifer Carlin

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Notes from our Chairman

In August, it was with much sadness that we announced the death of our Honorary President and founder member, Donald Abbott. Donald was an inspiration and a great supporter of the Friends over many years and your committee would like this issue to be a tribute to him. This Newsletter includes three of his articles as well as an obituary written by former Archivist, Steve Connelly. From his wealth of knowledge of the area, he wrote extensively about its heritage and its connections and then shared his images and articles with the Archive, a very few of which have appeared in previous Newsletters. Donald's family tell us that he had a real passion for the Friends of the Archive.

In time, the Archive would like to catalogue this output but now it is not in a position to undertake this task due, since 1st October, to cutbacks in staffing at the A.K. Bell Library and the reduction in opening hours and the number of volunteers. On your behalf, the committee has sent a letter to the Chief Executive of Culture Perth & Kinross outlining the effects on the Friends and volunteers and requesting that the situation be reviewed. This Newsletter also marks the 250th Anniversary of an event in the history and law of Scotland (page 14).

At the AGM in May, Friends discussed the Motion to stop offering on-line talks at the end of the 2023-2024 season and to deliver the 2024-2025 programme as in-person talks only. The Motion was modified to allow the committee time to investigate alternative methods of delivery and alternative platforms. The Options Appraisal on alternative methods of delivery has been completed and two options selected but other issues have come to light. Until these are resolved, the committee regrets it is unable to report back to you by end-2024 but plans to do so at the 2025 AGM. For the time being, the talks are in-person only. However, the Archive has been receiving negative feedback about the new booking system, which is through the Perthshire Box Office; while this is being reviewed, please just turn up.

Since the AGM, the committee has met in-person on three occasions, the joint Event Officers have organised for us an exciting Programme of Talks (page 24), an Historic Map of Perth was launched on 11th May at the A.K. Bell Library (page 19), the Summer Outing was to Innerpefferay Library on 12th June (page 21) and the Friends shared a stand with Perth's Archive, Local & Family History Service on 21st September at a Fair in Dundee (page 20). Finally, I can report that the Rhoda Fothergill 2024 Annual Lecture is to be hosted by Perthshire Society of Natural Science (PSNS) and will be given by Robin Rodger on "David Octavius Hill" on 7th March 2025 (invitations will be sent) and your committee has invited Steve Connelly to become an Honorary President and is delighted that he has accepted.

Prue Dowie

News from the Archive

Since the last Newsletter our joint Archive and Local & Family History Service has been through some changes. Following a challenging budget for Culture Perth and Kinross, a service review was undertaken, which has resulted in a reduction of our staffing levels, including the loss of our Assistant Archivist post. To reflect this, in October our public opening times were reduced to 21.5 hours per week. The new opening hours for both sides of the service are now Tuesday to Thursday 10am-5pm and Saturday 9.30am-1pm.

On a brighter note, it has been a busy year for new archive deposits and we have accessioned a variety of interesting collections. Highlights include three separate collections of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Perth Academy lecture notes which were purchased with generous financial support from the Friends of the Archive, The National Fund for Acquisitions and the Friends of the National Libraries. Very few institutional records survive for the school's early period, so we are always keen to acquire personal records such as this which occasionally come up for sale through antiquarian book dealers.

Working with colleagues from Perth & Kinross Council, we have also taken in historical school records from Abernethy, Dunning, Forgandenny and Dunbarney Primary Schools, which date from the Education Scotland Act of 1872. Following the closure of Kilgraston School in August we also accepted a collection of mainly printed and photographic records, documenting the school's activities from the early 1950s to the present time.

In May, we received a small parcel from America containing letters written between 1937 and 1945 by Helen Mason, a local Perth girl, to her pen friend, Thomas Yeats, an officer in the US Army. Helen describes her life in Perth during the Second World war and its aftermath in wonderful detail, giving a real sense of the hardships of wartime Britain, interspersed with humorous descriptions of her friendship circle and social activities - including the new craze of ice hockey! One of our Archive volunteers has transcribed the letters and will put on a small exhibition of the collection in the Archive display cases on the first floor of A.K. Bell Library in the near future.

In October, the family and estate archive of the Murrays of Dollerie was deposited which covers around seven hundred years of history of this small Strathearn estate, including some significant Jacobite and colonial records. I spent three enjoyable days packing up the archive and am sure it will support a great variety of research interests in the future.

There have also been many smaller deposits covering a variety of topics, including several from local organisations such as Tummelside SWRI, Stanley SWRI, Perth Junior Chamber, Perth Mountaineering Club, The Munro Society and Perth Civic Trust. Each of these deposits contributes to the richness of the Archive and I'm always amazed and delighted there are still so many fascinating new collections waiting to be discovered.

I hope you have a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Ishbel MacKinnon

A TRIBUTE TO DONALD ABBOTT

As Editor of the FPKA Newsletter since 2016, I am going to miss Donald Abbott (and do), as will all the Friends of the Perth & Kinross Archive. Enormously helpful to me both firstly as Editor and then latterly as Chairman, he shared his enthusiasm and remarkable knowledge of the area with unstinting generosity, in the expectation that some of his articles would be suitable for the Newsletter.

Donald shared his writings with anyone that he thought might have a mutual interest in them. He shared his noteworthy collection of communion tokens and old photographs from this area and had fond memories of/a fascination for the Carse of Gowrie, parts of which he got to know when growing up with his family connections there. Much of this material was published in booklets for sale, the proceeds of which were generously donated to the Friends (and can be found by contacting the Archive). The Friends however were not the exclusive recipient of Donald's research and his articles would frequently appear in other publications, such as Dundee *Courier's* Craigie column and/or the Tay Valley Historian.

One topic that did feature largely in Donald's writings was the history of local churches and the heritage that can be found in and around them. So in tribute and acknowledgement of his support, this Autumn's Newsletter contains three more of his articles, two of which concern redundant churches.

Prue Dowie

St Paul's Church, Perth: Communion Token

This former church building has been in the news with proposals for its development. This church was opened in 1807 and was the second oldest Church of Scotland in Perth. The token is for the year in which this church was opened.

The Communion Token is interesting and on its obverse it bears the legend **SAINT PAUL'S PERTH** above and in the exergue below is the date **1807**. The image of the church is in the centre. The reverse bears the inscription, set out in four lines, **This Do in Remembrance of Me.**



St Paul's Church, Perth Communion Token 1807

Image courtesy of Donald Abbott

The Minister of this congregation from 1807 until 1846 was Revd John Findlay. The token is of white metal, oval and measures 22.5mm by 28.5mm; it is in attractive “Extremely Fine” condition with hints of residual lustre.

Between 1755 and 1793, the population of Perth almost doubled to 18,000 and the sole parish church of St John's was consequently overcrowded. An unsuccessful attempt was made to divide the St John's congregation into three but the problem was finally solved by building St Paul's in the Old High Street in 1807. During construction, iron rings were found in the town's lade, which in culverted form still exists beneath St Paul's. Movement of population to the suburbs caused St Paul's to become redundant and so it closed, the last service being conducted in 1986. It is excellent that so long after closure, there seems to be proposals on the horizon to clear up the dereliction there.

Donald M. Abbott, FSA Scot., June 2013

Editor's Note: “Communion Tokens — A Short Appreciation”, booklet written in 2006; the receipts to be divided equally are for Invergowrie Church and for the Friends of Perth & Kinross Council Archive

Kinnaird Church in the Braes of Gowrie (and the 19th Century Alterations)

There is not much recorded about this church in mediaeval times save to say it was a chapel offshoot of the early church at nearby Inchtute, which itself was recorded in the reign of William the Lion (1165-1214). Kinnaird (Kinard) is well recorded as having been granted by the same King (date 1172-1174) to Ralph Ruffus (or Radulphus Ruffus) by Charter, all as set out in the *Regesta Regum Scottorum II, The Acts of William I*, edited by G.W.S. Barrow and W.W. Scott, Edinburgh 1971.

Pitmiddle was excepted from this grant of Kinnaird. It was granted separately to Richard, the King's clerk. The Kinnaird grant was made *in feu and heritage, with sake and soke, toll, team and infangthief, for the service of one knight*.¹ The original document is in the Scottish Record Office GD 48/1.²



The present day Church building of Kinnaird

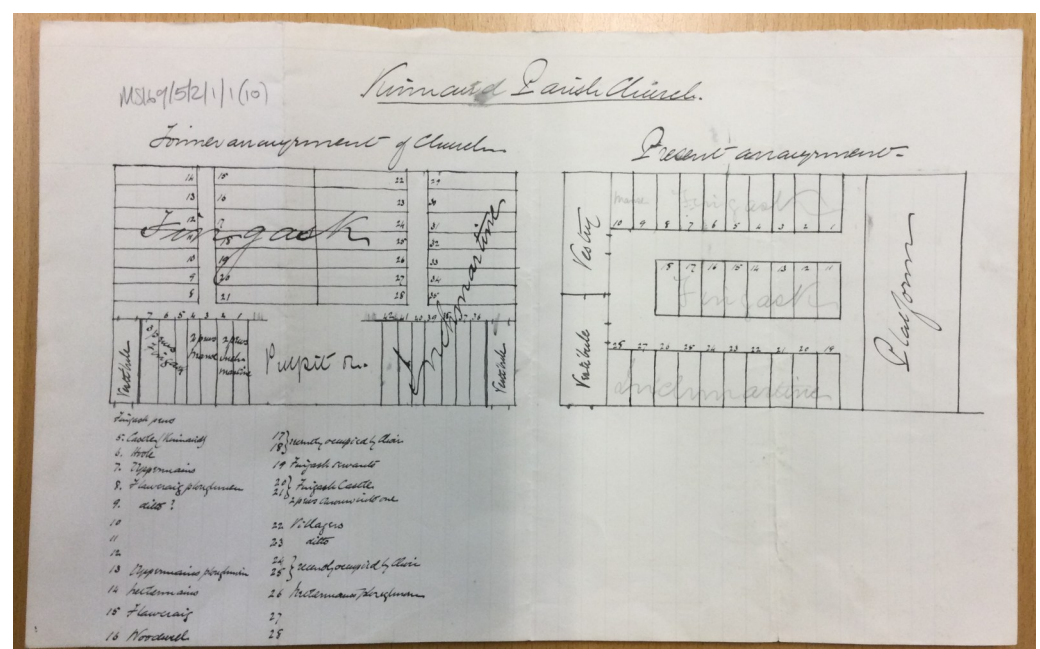
© Image courtesy of owner

Editor's Notes:

1. sake and soke (sac and soc) = right to hold a court of administrative jurisdiction.
toll and team (tol and tem) = right to exact payment on goods and with jurisdiction over legal warranty.
infangthief (infangenthef) = right of lord to apprehend and try someone within his jurisdiction for committing theft.
2. Now in Perth & Kinross Archive MS100/1/1

There is no doubt that Kinnaird is an ancient settlement with what remains of its Norman motte on top of Barton Hill, which was excavated in 1971; the post-holes of a wooden defensive structure were found as well as ancient pottery, p60 “Excavations at Barton Hill Kinnaird”, by M.E.C. Stewart and C. Tabraham, *Scottish Archaeol. forum* No 6, 1974. Strangely perhaps, the locus of this historic motte now has its second modern house built over it, both with Planning Permissions of the then local authority. A good friend and Scottish London-based architect, G. Alan Kinnaird, is an expert on the origins of Kinnaird and could expand upon my observations including telling something of its ditch and likely bailey.

However, this paper is intended to concentrate on the alterations in the later 19th century to the lovely present day church building at Kinnaird, which dates from around 1810. To find out something of these alterations, an examination was made some time ago of the Threipland papers at the Perth & Kinross (Council) Archive, based at the A.K. Bell Library in Perth. These alterations were partly instigated by the then Minister at Kinnaird, Revd James Rose Macpherson, M.A., B.D. They highlight the somewhat heated debate between the Minister and the Heritors regarding who will pay for the works. There is a fine sketch plan of Kinnaird Church internally and prior to the 1894 alterations, together with suggested allocations of seating by the incumbent Minister.



The Threipland Papers

MS169/5/2/1/1(9) (10)

Images courtesy of

Perth & Kinross Archive

MS169/5/2/1/1(9)

Kinnaird House

Inchmurrin

25th February 1894.

Gentlemen

Fingask.

I am obliged by your letter of yesterday enclosing cheque in payment of £10 pence for which I send receipt.

I now send you a somewhat rough drawing of the former & the present arrangement of the pews in the Church, on which I have marked, as far as I can, the particular allocation of the Fingask pews. Various changes, I understand, took place in the course of years as to ~~the~~ the special designation

to Fingask, -

- 2 to Fingask Castle (1 for servants)
- 2 to Uppermain (1 for playground)
- 2 to Lowermain ditto
- 2 to Hawaig ditto
- 1 to Roddell
- 1 to Koolen
- 1 to Franklyden, (with Roddell playground)
- 1 to Nestans
- 3 to Village
- 1 to Kinnaird Castle, & Smiddy.

And I might suggest further pews no. 9 & 10 to be

1-8, 11-18 Fingask.

19-25 Inchmurrin.

of farms, &c., and as some of the pews were never occupied & some were given off to the choir several years ago, I cannot speak with complete accuracy.

According to the present arrangement of the 28 pews, I would naturally be set apart for the Manse, & the proportion would then be 16 for Fingask, and 10 for Inchmurrin.

My only suggestion is that the two pews near the door from the Vestry into the Church should be set apart for the Manse, on the ground of the convenience.

Seats for the elders & the choir are provided for the choir on the platform.

In reference to your note received some time ago as to the state of the Reading Room, may I mention that nothing seems to have been done yet to put it in repair.

Yours faithfully
J. R. Macpherson.

James Macpherson, Esq., Logan W.D.

P.S. It may be of some service to you if, merely by way of suggestion, I note what seems to be the simplest designation of the 16 pews that would belong

The papers at the Archive include:

1. The Minute of an adjourned meeting of 6th May 1892 of the Heritors of Kinnaird regarding the raising of £70 from the congregation for adjustments to the church and manse.
2. The copy of a letter from Mr John Panton, Blairgowrie, regarding invitations to tender and a letter from him dated 21st September 1892 to Revd J.R. Macpherson, stating that the increased costs were attributable to the alterations ordered by the Minister.
3. The letter dated 6th September 1892 from Revd J.R. Macpherson, written from Bay House, Carnoustie, (where presumably he was on holiday) to Chas B. Logan W.S. expressing surprise at the costs and re-iterating his understanding that the Heritors are bound to meet the costs, subject to a contribution from parochial sources and very much holding this to be his legal position.
4. There is a detailed report dated 23rd April 1893 from Robert Grant, Civil Engineer on the church and manse of Kinnaird.
5. The Minute of Meeting of the Presbytery of Dundee held at the manse of Kinnaird on 26th April 1893, when having considered reports by Mr Grant and the Revd Macpherson, it was agreed to proceed with the remedial works.
6. Letter of 4th May 1893 from the Minister to Mackenzie, Innes and Logan W.S. suggesting a clear division of responsibilities between the church and the Heritors. *Mr Macpherson mentions that it will have to be decided whether or not his six bairns will have to move during the manse alterations as all (six) bedrooms were in use on a daily basis, excluding one small bedroom.*
7. Letters of 4th and 13th May 1893 from Revd Mr Burr of Lundie and Foulis (Clerk to the Presbytery of Dundee) to Messrs Mackenzie, Innes & Logan, W.S., setting out the Presbytery's position on the installation of a bathroom (in the manse) and its views on the fencing of the glebe and stating further that given the non-specification of the works to the church proposed by the Revd J.R. Macpherson, all of this should be remitted to a Committee to obtain a distinct agreement between the Heritors and the Minister.

The Church alterations caused a lot of seeming *argy-bargy* then and was likely a main topic of conversation at that time in this very pretty village, with its antecedents from King William I. It is amazing just what can be found of local interest in our local archives which can add to the research of genealogists. The Perth & Kinross Archive, at the A.K. Bell Library, Perth, The City of Dundee Archives, entered from 2 Shore Terrace, Dundee and the Angus Council Archives at Restenneth, near Forfar* are thus commended to readers. It is usually advisable to give advance notice by 'phone when one intends to call at these busy places.

Any reader wishing to follow-up the above writings, might well find more in the records of The Presbytery of Dundee; preliminary enquiries can be made at the City of Dundee Archives.

Donald M. Abbott, F.S.A. Scot.

Notes

- a) The Church at Kinnaird is conjoined with those at Inchtute, Abernyte, and Longforgan all within the Presbytery of Dundee. Invergowrie Parish Church is also in the eastern part of the Carse of Gowrie and all churchyards are, however, under the local authority jurisdiction of Perth & Kinross Council.
- b) Revd James Rose Macpherson had ministered at Kinnaird from 1879 but significantly moved to Dingwall in 1899, not too long after the above-mentioned seeming contretemps.
- c) The manse at Kinnaird, like Kilspindie, is a private home today and is huge when compared with the size of its church building.
- d) The burial place of the Threiplands of Fingask, that prominent family of Jacobite supporters, is located at the entrance to this church.
- e) Radulphus Ruffus is said to have been the progenitor of the Kinnaird family, later barons of Rossie Priory.
- f) The witnesses to the Charter of 1172-1174 signed at Perth, were Mathe(w), Bishop of Aberdeen; Andrew, Bishop of Caithness; Walter de Bidun, Chancellor; Earl Duncan, Justicar; Walter de Berkelai, Chamberlain; Philip de Colville; Thomas de Muschamp; Henry son of Jordan and Richard Mallvun.

Editor's Notes:

The Church of Scotland closed Kinnaird Church in 2020; it has since been sold.

* The Angus Archives is to be removed to Arbroath.

The Pitrodie Dinner, 1870

This excerpt from *The Peoples' Journal* is of some interest. Much indignation was expressed by a large section of the rate-payers at the excessive amount that was charged by the Police Commissioners for their Dinner on the occasion of their making the annual inspection of the quarry at Pitrodie. The following was furnished to the *Journal* as a correct copy of the accounts paid for the dinner, exclusive of carriages; only seven Commissioners going to inspect the Quarry.

Refreshments to Committee	£1. 7s. 4d
37 Dinners at 5s	£9. 5s
1 Dozen Champagne	£4.16s
1 Dozen Claret	£2. 8s
1 Dozen Sherry	£2. 8s
2 Gallons Whisky	£1.16s
Half Dozen Port	£1. 6s
Half Dozen Brandy	£1.16s
4 Dozen Pints Bass	12s
6 Dozen Lemonade and Soda	18s
1 Box Cigars	18s
Crockery, Glass and Breakage	£2.10s
Total	£30. os. 4d

Obviously junkets took place then as now, but given that thirty-seven Dinners were paid for and even allowing for say 3 or 4 officials, there must have been a fair number of guests as the newspaper reports only seven Commissioners attending. It must have been a convivial day in the Braes of the Carse paid for by the ratepayers of Dundee.

This is abstracted from "Pitroddie Perspectives" 2003, by Donald M. Abbott, Invergowrie and the excerpt can be read also at 307(12) in the Lamb Collection Local History Department, Central Library, Dundee. Donald's 3rd grandfather, Donald McDonald was the manager of Pitrod(d)ie quarry for the Dundee Police Commissioners.

Donald Abbott

OBITUARY

Donald M Abbott, F.S.A. Scot.

11th October 1938—21st August 2024



Donald Abbott, F.S.A. Scot. at the old church at Rait

© Image courtesy of Alison Abbott, Meikle

Recollections by the former Archivist, Perth & Kinross Council

I first met Donald shortly after he retired as Chief Executive of North-East Fife District Council in 1996. He took early retirement when local government reorganisation saw the abolition of his authority. Donald had a long history of public service at Dundee Corporation and the East of Scotland Water Board before his move to Fife. In his retirement he was able to engage in his passion for local history research and that is when he started to use the relatively new A.K. Bell Library. His main interest was the Carse of Gowrie, Rait and Pitroddie in particular, where he had spent many happy days with his grandparents.

Around about the millennium the archive staff started to think about forming a Friends' organisation and Donald seemed the ideal person to help set it up. He agreed to act as chairman of a steering committee and along with my then assistant, Alan Bell, he set about putting the necessary structures in place. I remember going with him to Newton Castle in Blairgowrie where we were able to persuade Sir William MacPherson to be one of our Honorary Presidents, the other being the serving Perth & Kinross Provost.

Once the Friends of Perth & Kinross Council Archive was formally constituted, Donald was prevailed upon to be its first chair, continuing in this position for several years and giving the organisation a firm foundation. He also very generously allowed the Friends' funds to be the beneficiaries of the several books he produced about Pitroddie, Rait and Invergowrie. It was the latter place where he and Jean had brought up their three children and remained the family home. He was very proud of his children and doted on his five grand-daughters. In later years he served as an elder in his local Church of Scotland.

After standing down as chair of the Friends, he was made an Honorary President in recognition of his significant contribution. He kept in touch over the years, regularly bringing biscuits and chocolates for the Archive staff at Christmas and always spoke very highly of the friendliness of the team.

He and Jean went on many adventurous trips around the world, visiting old friends and making new ones. His mobility deteriorated with his health in recent years, but he kept his mind active and continued to provide articles to the Tay Valley Family History Society and was a regular contributor to the Craigie Column in *The Courier* (sometimes appearing as 'an Invergowrie reader'). His current successor in the chair, Prue Dowie, edited *The Curiosities of the Carse* which Donald generously produced for the Friends in 2018*.

I know from his e-mails since my retirement that he looked back with great fondness to the time spent on the steering committee and the great help he received from its members and the various office-bearers during his time as the Friends' chair. Donald deserves a lot of the credit for putting in place the foundations of a strong organisation, one that has been of great benefit to Perth & Kinross Archive and which is still going strong as it approaches its 25th anniversary.

Steve Connelly

Editor's Note*: A copy of the booklet, *The Curiosities of the Carse*, is available in PDF format on request from the Friends' Membership Secretary (tel: 01738 477022 ; E-mail: FriendsPKA@culturepk.org.uk)

Two Perthshire Slavery Cases

This year is the 250th anniversary of a significant event in the history and law of Scotland. On 20th May 1774 John Swinton, Sheriff Depute of Perthshire, declared in the action of Knight v Wedderburn 'that the state of slavery is not recognised by the laws of this Kingdom and is inconsistent with the principles thereof and found that the regulations in Jamaica concerning slaves do not extend to this Kingdom and repelled [Wedderburn's] claim to perpetual service'. Wedderburn immediately appealed the decision to the Court of Session but on 15th January 1778 the appeal was rejected.

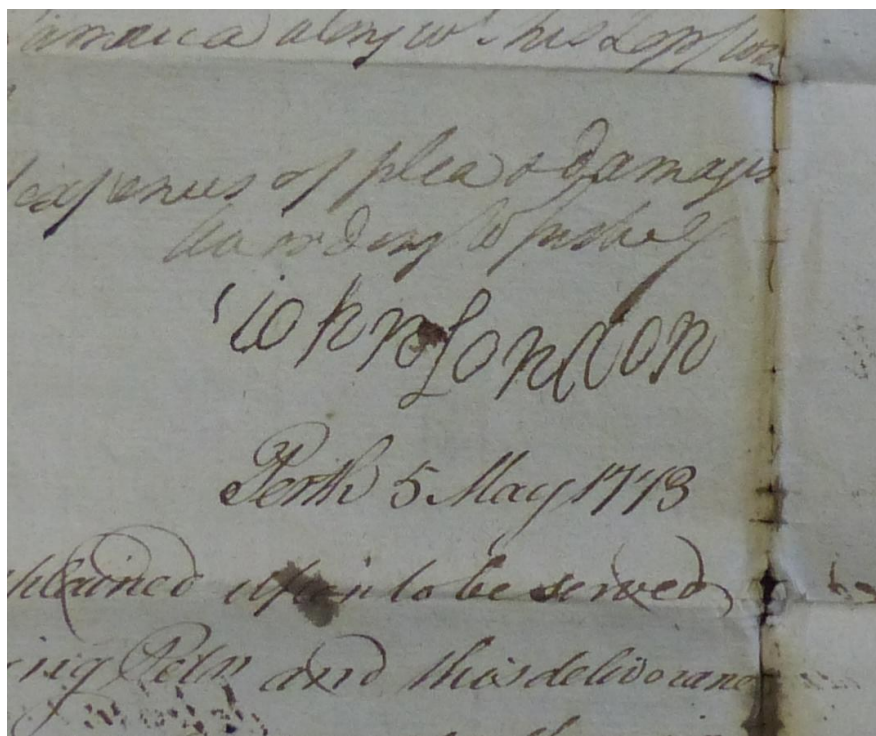
Although the Sheriff Court records are held in the National Records of Scotland, the Register of Decrees of Perth Sheriff Court between 1757 and 1830 (SC49/4/) do not survive. The Diet Books and Minute Books of Decrees for Perth Sheriff Court for the period are extant and simply list by date the court processes and decrees respectively (SC49/1/64 and SC49/5/12).

The original papers for Knight v Wedderburn are held in the Extracted Processes (SC49/6/134) and were copied for the appeal to the Court of Session (CS235/11/2/2) and are available online along with the further presentations to the Court of Session in the Virtual Volumes of Scotland's People (https://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/virtual-volumes/volume-images/volume_data-CS235-11-2-2). This case will not be dealt with in this article as it has been described elsewhere (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/learning/slavery/slavery-freedom-or-perpetual-servitude-the-joseph-knight-case>) but it will be discussed in the next Newsletter.

Wedderburn, in his appeal to the Court of Session, mentioned that Joseph Knight had been emboldened to seek his freedom after learning from 'a Scots news paper he found [that Swinton] had discharged a servant formerly a slave from all service or dutie to his master'.

This is a reference to the case of London v Oliphant, where on 1st October 1773, Swinton declared 'that the state of slavery is not recognised by the law of this Kingdom and is inconsistent with the principles thereof, finds that the regulations in Jamaica concerning slaves do not extend to this Kingdom and therefore repels [Oliphant's] plea that the pursuer [London] is a slave', almost the same wording as he later used in the Knight v Wedderburn case.

This case has been almost completely overlooked. It was noted by Jan Merchant, Assistant Archivist of Perth and Kinross Council Archive, and Jackie Hay, an Archive volunteer and member of the Friends of the Archive, when they organised a display in 2007 marking the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade (Newsletters 22 and 23). The case had been recorded in a notebook of Robert Scott Fittis, a local historian in Perth in the 19th century, whose papers are held in Perth and Kinross Archive and in the Local and Family History Collection of the A.K. Bell Library. The original papers for London v Oliphant are held in the Perthshire Sheriff Court, Preservation Processes in the National Records of Scotland (SC49/7/46) and include his Petition to the Sheriff Court with his signature on it and his baptism certificate.

A photograph of a handwritten document, likely a petition, with cursive script. The text is written on aged, slightly stained paper. The signature 'John London' is prominent in the center. Above it, there is a line that appears to say 'James Oliphant'. Below the signature, the date 'Perth 5 May 1773' is written. At the bottom, there is a line that says 'John London' again, followed by 'Perth 5 May 1773' and 'John London'.

John London's signature on his Petition to the Sheriff of Perthshire

(National Records of Scotland, SC49/7/46)

Image courtesy of David Perry

Almost the only information about John London is contained in the court papers. However, there is an additional newspaper reference to him. On 6th January 1773 a notice of a fugitive slave appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury*, concerning 'John London alias Quashy, a Black Slave, and servant to the Right Hon. Lord Oliphant' who had run away from Pitheavlis.

He was described as 'about 37 years of age, marked with the smallpox, and about five foot six or seven inches high' and he was wearing 'a coat of a whitish colour, faced up with red cloth, and white flat mettles (sic) buttons, a red vest, and either red plush or white cloth breeches', presumably a livery suit for a domestic servant. A reward was offered for anyone returning him to his master. This incident is mentioned in the court papers, where Oliphant paid 20 shillings to his captor. (Although throughout the court papers, Oliphant is referred to as Lord Oliphant, he was not entitled to use that title, but was instead John Oliphant of Bachilton; *Scots Peerage*, vol 6, p562).

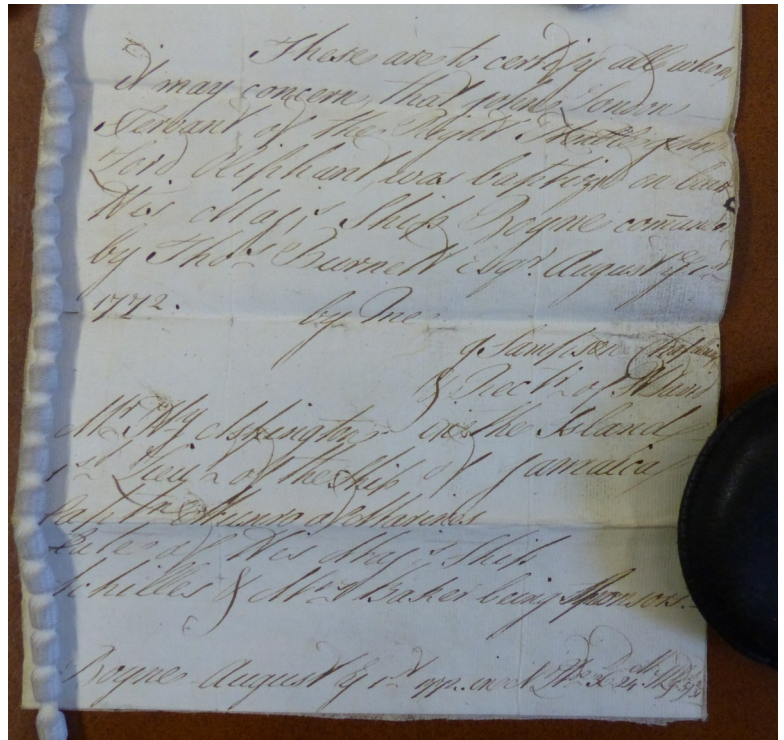
John London was born a slave on an estate in Jamaica, half of which belonged to Oliphant's wife, the other half to her sister, whose share Oliphant bought out. The sisters' mother had a right to a third of the produce of the estate as a dower from her first husband, after whose death she had married Oliphant's uncle, David Oliphant of Bachilton, who had previously claimed the title of Lord Oliphant.

On his uncle's death, Oliphant's brother Dr David Oliphant became their uncle's residuary legatee and Oliphant sold the estate and its slaves to him, reserving some slaves, including John London, to himself. Before returning to Britain, Oliphant made out a paper, the intent of which was disputed between Oliphant and London, the latter claiming it granted him his freedom as he had put his mark on it and that it was registered in Jamaica, the former denying both points, claiming it had been his intention to grant his servant freedom if Oliphant thought he deserved it, but that his conduct since arriving in Britain had not merited it.

London also claimed that Oliphant had agreed to pay him £12 a year as his wage when he returned to Britain, again denied by Oliphant. On the voyage from Jamaica on board HMS Boyne, John was baptised on 1st August 1772 by the ship's chaplain with the First Lieutenant of the ship, the Captain of Marines and Mrs Baker, a passenger being sponsors.

John London's Certificate of Baptism
(National Records of Scotland, SC49/7/46)

Image courtesy of David Perry



On arrival in Scotland at his residence at Pitheavlis Castle, Oliphant in his dissatisfaction with him maltreated him and refused to pay him. This caused the slave to run away to Edinburgh and, after being brought back, to petition the Sheriff of Perth on 3rd April 1773 for his freedom and back wages.

It is worth noting that while he said he had 'exhibited his mark' on the paper in Jamaica, he signed the petition. Although the sheriff ordered Oliphant to be served with the petition and to provide answers, no action was taken while London hoped to reach a settlement out of court with Oliphant. But the latter proving obdurate, the petition was finally served on 10th September. Oliphant's answers were made on 20th September, in which he quoted from the laws of Jamaica. On 22nd September, Swinton ordered Oliphant 'to make oath whether or not he had has or has fraudulently put away any Act Deed or Writing by which the pursuer [London] was intitled to be liberated from Slavery and any Testimonial or other Evidence of the Pursuer's Baptism'.

Oliphant's oath was taken on 27th September, when he produced the certificate of baptism but acknowledged that he had destroyed the paper, which had never been registered in Jamaica, freeing the slave because of his misconduct. On 1st October Swinton delivered his judgement adding that London had proved his wages and maltreatment. Oliphant petitioned the sheriff on 14th October to reconsider his decision but on 20th May 1774, the same day as his judgement in Joseph Knight's case, Swinton confirmed his earlier judgement in the case. Although Oliphant took out a bill of advocation to the Court of Session on 24th June 1774, no other proceedings are known.

Swinton's two judgements were much more decisive than Lord Mansfield's in the Somerset Case in 1772. Mansfield, aware of the political importance of a decision on slavery, deliberately took a very narrow and technical view of the case concerning a writ of habeas corpus, involving the capture and intended removal of a runaway slave by his owner to Jamaica to be sold as a plantation worker, and avoided any decision on the legality of slavery, a point made out by Oliphant in his Petition on 14th October 1773.

Habeas corpus applied to people but slaves were regarded as chattels. Mansfield ruled that Somerset must be freed. The court held that 'a master could not seize a slave in England and detain him preparatory to sending him out of the realm to be sold'. It also ruled that habeas corpus was a constitutional right available to slaves to forestall such seizure, deportation and sale, because they were not chattels, or mere property; they were servants and thus persons invested with certain (but limited) constitutional protections (<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenwood/history-stories-kenwood/somerset-case/>).

Although Mansfield had delivered no decision on slavery, his judgement was regarded as ending slavery in England.

David Perry

AN HISTORICAL MAP OF PERTH

Given its rich history, it is not surprising that Perth was selected to be the first* city in Scotland to participate fully in the pan-European Historic Towns Atlas (HTA) Project, which promotes the creation of historical maps and atlases of cities throughout Europe. The Perthshire Society of Natural Science (PSNS) entered into a partnership agreement with the Oxford-based charity Historic Towns Trust (HTT) to produce an historical map of the Fair City. The map, launched on Saturday 11th May 2024 at the AK Bell Library, is selling well.

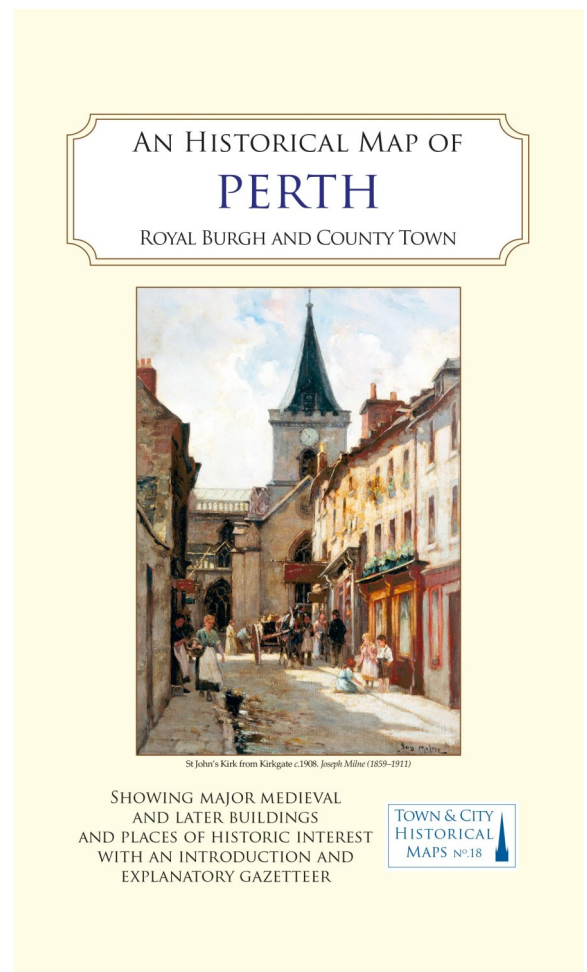
*Perth is the first town in Scotland to have produced a map in the present revised format, which allows for the later publication of an accompanying atlas. (Glasgow appeared in HTT's first, multi-city, atlas in 1969.)

An Historical Map of

PERTH

Painting by Joseph Milne

© Image courtesy of Perth Art Gallery
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The HTT is tasked by the International Commission for the History of Towns with carrying forward the HTA Project in Great Britain, while the Royal Irish Academy does similar work in both parts of Ireland. HTT staff have now expressed their wish for the production of an historical atlas of Perth. Some members of the Perth map production team are already planning work on this and anyone interested in participating is invited to contact David Perry or myself (care of: friendsPKA@culturepk.org.uk).

Margaret Borland-Stroyan

Local Family and History Fair, Dundee, 21st September 2024



Perth & Kinross Stand
Archive, Local & Family History and
Friends of the Archive

Image courtesy of Local and Family History

The Friends of Dundee City Archive held a Local Family and History Fair in the St Andrew's and Glasite Halls, Dundee on Saturday 21st September 2024 and invited 20 other local & family history and archive societies and associations to join them on that day. The Glasite Hall was used for displays and two talks were given: "What's in a Name: A Street History of Broughty Ferry and Monifieth"; and "The Wellgate Project: creative collaborations inspired by family histories".

Twelve participated, they were: Dundee City Archives and Friends of Dundee City Archives; University of Dundee Archives; Abertay Historical Society; Tay Valley Family History Society; Dundee Local History Forum; Western Front Association Tayside; Dundee Museum of Transport; Perth & Kinross Archive, Local & Family History and Friends of Perth & Kinross Archive (FPKA); Angus Archives; Fife Archives; Fife Family History Group; and Lifelong Learning Dundee.

Perth & Kinross was represented by Craig Statham (Archive, Local & Family History) and the FPKA Chairman. The event was well attended (43), the FPKA membership leaflets and free booklets were popular and four FPKA books were sold.

Prue Dowie

Friends' Outing to Innerpeffray, 12th June 2024



Group Photograph, Innerpeffray

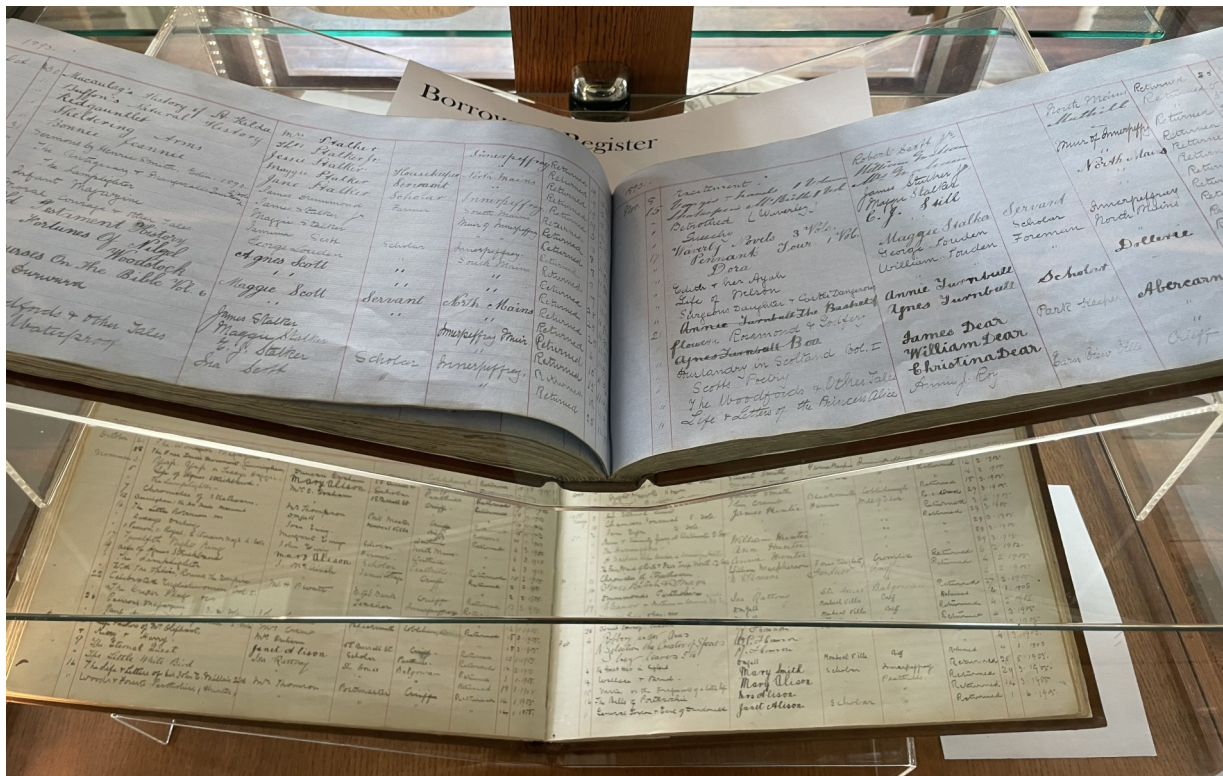
Image courtesy of Dr Anna Cunningham

Ten Friends enjoyed the 2024 Summer Outing to Innerpeffray Library near Crieff, the oldest free public lending library in Scotland, where we were warmly welcomed by Lara Haggerty, the current Library Manager and Keeper of Books, who encouraged us to browse through the volumes when we went upstairs to the main light and airy book room.

The Library was commissioned in 1680 by David Drummond, 3rd Lord Madertie, when he also founded a school at the same time, for the benefit of the community “... in time coming” and left 5,000 Scottish merks for their continuing upkeep. After his death the Innerpeffray Mortification was set up to carry this on and it still continues today as a charitable trust. The school building was so dilapidated by the mid-19th century that a new one was built, remaining in use until 1946, whilst the Library lent out books until 1968.

Robert Hay Drummond, Archbishop of York, inherited Innerpeffray Estate and he not only erected the current Library building in 1762 but increased the original collection of around 400 books to some 1500 volumes, covering a vast number of topics from deeply academic to leisure ones.

In 2013, an American bibliophile, Mrs Janet St Germain, gifted her “Scottish Collection” of rare books and documents which included first editions by writers such as John Knox, Robert Burns, David Hume and Samuel Johnson. Currently the Library houses some 5,000 books. “Travelling Tales” was the 2024 specialist exhibition featuring intriguing books, reports and early souvenirs from both travellers from and visitors to Scotland across several centuries.



The Borrowers' Register

Image courtesy of Dr Anna Cunningham

We also viewed the unique, handwritten volumes of the continuous Borrowers' Register, which date from 1747 to 1968 and record the names of all the local people who came to choose books and took them home to read. Another highlight was the earliest printed book, or incunabulum, the 1476 edition of the works of the philosopher and theologian, John Duns Scotus. There are later, handwritten additions in the margins, some with a tiny pointing finger, or manicule, drawing attention to the contents - whether agreeing or not with the printed version is open to speculation.

Across the graveyard sits St Mary's Chapel, which was built around 1508 on the ruins of the original chapel. Its post-Reformation survival is believed to be, to it being regarded as a Drummond family mausoleum rather than a place of worship. Indications of its Catholic past survive through fragments of the painted ceiling and consecration crosses in the plasterwork, the altar table at the east end and a holy water stoup beside the south entrance.

A later addition to the chapel interior is the magnificent 1707 Faichney Monument, carved by the stonemason, John Faichney, commemorating himself, his wife and their ten children. The monument used to be outside in the graveyard but was moved inside the chapel for preservation.

The Faichney Monument

Image courtesy of Pat Kerr



Some of the Friends also followed the waymarked Heritage Walk through the grounds and along by the River Earn with views of the route of a well-preserved Roman road and the peaceful countryside. To conclude our visit, we gathered in the former schoolroom to enjoy a chat and welcome refreshments provided by Lara, before setting off for home with thoughts that many more visits could be necessary to appreciate the full width and diversity of Innerpeffray Library's unique collection.

Pat Kerr

Summer Outing 2025?

Suggestions for a venue for the Friends' Summer Outing for 2025 are welcome and should be sent either to the Friends' e-mail: FriendsPKA@culturepk.org.uk or verbally to any member of the committee.

Friends' Talks 2024-2025 Session

Talks are held on the third Thursday of the month and will be entirely delivered in-person in the Soutar Theatre and Sandeman Room at the AK Bell Library, Perth (Rhoda Fothergill Annual Lecture excepted)

Please note the varied times. Evening talks are at 6.30pm.

All are welcome to attend the talks, which are free to members (non-members £5.00)

Pre-booking is essential, please contact: 01738 477022 / friendsPKA@culturepk.org.uk

Date	Time	Talks
2024		
Thursday 19 th September	6.30 pm	Dr David Robertson The Story of Perthshire Postcards
Thursday 17 th October	2 pm	Alan Jacques How Henry Dundas became Baron Dunira
Thursday 21 st November	2 pm	John Borland Pictish and Medieval Sculpture in Highland Perthshire
2025		
Thursday 20 th February	2 pm	Christopher Dingwall Marl Mania—Strathmore's Forgotten Industry
Friday 7 th March	7.30 pm	Robin Rodger David Octavius Hill, a pioneer of photography (The Rhoda Fothergill Annual Lecture)
Thursday 20 th March	2 pm	Ronnie Black John Dewar's Perthshire (from the Dewar Manuscripts' Project)
Thursday 17 th April	6.30 pm	Dr Roger Collins The Battle of Sheriffmuir
Thursday 15 th May	6 pm 6.30 pm	AGM Mike Taylor Bristling with Guns

Friends of Perth & Kinross Archive

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Honorary Presidents: The Provost, Steve Connelly

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