



Argyll Papers: Collection Level Description

UK Archon

3452

Title

The Argyll Papers (The family and estate archive of the Campbell Family, Dukes of Argyll).

Creator

The Campbell Family, Dukes of Argyll.

Covering dates

13th – 20th centuries.

Extent

Approx 0.3 linear miles

Scope and Content

The contents of the archive are wide and varied, reflecting:

- The historically important role of the Campbell family in Scottish, British and international affairs: From the fourteenth century onwards the Earls and, later, Dukes of Argyll were closely allied to the Scottish crown and parliament, 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 in all of its endeavours, offering potential for many important historical themes and events to be explored.
- The geographical extent of the estate: Until the mid-twentieth century Argyll Estates covered most of Argyllshire, parts of Inverness-shire, Clackmannanshire, Stirling, East Lothian, as well as properties in Edinburgh, London and abroad. Many of their lands were acquired controversially during the west highland clan wars of the 16th and 17th centuries, whilst acting as Crown mediator and overseer for confiscated estates. 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 our landscape history and built heritage. Large areas of the estate lie in some of Scotland's most marginal and fragile island environments (Tiree, Iona, Mull) which endured some of the worst periods of nineteenth 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.

- The chronological depth of the collection: Records in the archive date from the 13th to 21st centuries, forming an unbroken record of nearly eight hundred years of the family's fortunes which closely reflects all of the key events in Scotland's history. This depth of chronology is very rare for a Scottish family archive.

Principal series and items of interest

- A large collection of writs and charters relating mainly to the transfer of land and titles, but also including marriage agreements, commissions and appointments, contracts of friendship, inquests, gifts of ward and non-entries, letters of tutory and more, 13th – 20th centuries. The principal collection of approximately 500 charters is arranged chronologically, 1315-1784, and is summary listed. This is an important collection as it includes many early royal charters which record the progressive expansion of Campbell lands and influence from the 14th to 16th centuries. Many other charters are listed in groups and individually, throughout NRAS 1209, and there is a further substantial collection of, as yet, un-listed and largely unsorted charters.
- Records relating to the Earls and Dukes of Argyll's official roles and responsibilities, 16th – 20th centuries, including three collections of political and personal correspondence from important royal, military and noble figures with whom the Argyll Family were closely associated, 1543-1800 ('Royal Letters' and 'The Argyll Letters' Volumes 1 and 2). These collections also include commissions to the Earls of Argyll, 1460-1646.
- Military papers, 16th – 20th centuries, including militia lists, muster rolls, accounts and correspondence relating to military and political matters, with much on 16th and 17th century west highland unrest and on the Jacobite Rebellions. Also, records relating to the Argyll Militia, Territorial Army and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 19th - 20th centuries, and some papers relating to the First and Second World Wars (also see personal and estate correspondence).
- Personal and business papers of family members, 16th – 20th centuries, including personal correspondence of the Marquess of Argyll and Margaret Douglas, 1660 and 1673, papers of the 8th Duke of Argyll relating to his term as Secretary of State for India, 1860s-70s, and letter books and press cuttings of the Marquis of Lorne (later, 9th Duke) as Governor General of Canada, 1878-1883. A large and interesting collection of family correspondence exists for the 8th Duke and Duchess and their extended family, including the Dukes of Sutherland, Northumberland and the Royal family, along with personal diaries, photograph albums and sketch books. A very complete personal archive for the 10th Duke also exists, comprising extensive correspondence and an unbroken series of detailed personal diaries, 1892-1945. Personal papers also exist for other generations of the family, some of which have been listed.
- Transcripts of The Argyll Papers and related archives, compiled by Sir William Fraser, the 10th Duke and others: approximately 250 volumes and 100 bundles or folders. The most important collection, 'The Argyll Transcripts', contains handwritten copies of many of the earliest records in the archive (24 volumes).

- Genealogies of all branches of the Campbell Family, mainly compiled by the 10th Duke and Herbert Campbell, 19th – 20th centuries, but including some earlier records.
- Extensive estate archives for Inveraray; Rosneath; Kintyre; Campbell; Tiree; Mull, Iona and Morvern; Lismore and Scammadale Estates, 16th – 20th centuries. These include accounts, rentals, tacks, correspondence and other papers relating to the administration of the estates, including rural industries (kelp, salt, wool, lint, coal, quarries, woods) and infrastructure. They also include name lists, such as the Argyll Estate Census of 1779 (recording the names and ages of every person living on the Argyll Estate) and smaller scale census for Tiree (1776), and Campbeltown and Kintyre (1792). A large collection of estate maps, plans and written surveys also forms part of the estate archive and is described more fully below under ‘Maps and Plans.’
- Amongst the personal, family and estate papers described above are surveys and accounts for buildings of national importance, with which the family was associated, 17th – 19th centuries, including:
 - Argyll’s Lodging and Gardens, Stirling: titles, correspondence, surveys and accounts, 17th – 18th c, including detailed accounts for carpentry work, wright work, slaters work and a bill for painting the ‘wholl lairge high deining room’ (NRAS 1209 Bundles 1051, 1189, 1856, 3206).
 - Argyll’s Lodging, Holyrood House: copy royal warrant, granting John, Duke of Argyll, lodgings in the Abbey formerly possessed by John, Duke of Atholl, 1705 and vouchers for household expenses, 1776-1796 (NRAS 1209 Bundles 111 and 683).
 - General Register House, Edinburgh: vouchers for work done by tradesmen at Register House, Edinburgh, under the supervision of Robert Reid, Architect (NRAS 1209 Bundles 3194-3197, amongst the executry papers of Lord Frederick Campbell, Registrar).
 - Castle Campbell, Dollar Glen: survey describing its state of dereliction after military occupation and estimates for repair, 18th century.

Maps and Plans

- Architectural plans and specifications relating to family homes, estate buildings and county towns, including:
 - Inveraray Castle and policies: original plans and elevations by Roger Morris, John Adam, and Robert Mylne, 1746-1789, including Roger Morris’ book of ‘Letters and Instructions for building Inverara Castle, 1744-47’. Also, plans of alterations made by Anthony Salvin and Ian Lindsay following extensive fires in 1877 and 1975; plans and correspondence relating to the policies by William Nesfield, 19th century (incorporating 17th century formal avenues and plantations); plans of estate buildings and follies within the policies, by various architects, 18th – 19th centuries.
 - Rosneath Castle: large volume containing over 100 annotated plans and specifications by Joseph Bonomi and correspondence with the 5th and 6th Dukes of Argyll, 1802-1806.
 - The Royal Burgh of Inveraray, 18th – 20th centuries: drafts for the town layout (Inveraray was one of Scotland’s first planned towns, built under instruction of Archibald, 3rd Duke of Argyll in 1751), plans and elevations of the principal public and residential buildings by Roger Morris, John Adam and Robert Mylne.

- Campbeltown and Oban, 1740s-1900s: detailed street plans, house plans and written surveys containing detailed descriptions of properties, building styles and their occupiers.
- Estate plans and surveys, relating mainly to estates in Argyllshire, 17th - 20th centuries, including:
 - William Douglas' map of Iona, 1769. This is the earliest detailed map of the island and is accompanied by a written survey. Many other records relate to the island's history, including correspondence describing the 8th Duke's efforts to manage the landscape and antiquities, his appointment of Sir Robert Rowand Anderson to repair the abbey in 1874 and his decision to gift the ownership of the abbey buildings to the Church of Scotland in 1899.
 - George Langland's Survey of Kintyre, 1770-77. This is one of the most important landscape surveys ever undertaken by a single surveyor and patron, containing detailed descriptions of 204 Kintyre farms, with recommendations for their modernisation and improvement. The process of improvement was embraced over a period of thirty years and is recorded in a very large collection of estate records recording the amalgamation and abandonment of marginal settlements, the division of shared tenancy farms into modern farming units, and the introduction of new families, technologies and industries into the peninsula, which by the middle of the nineteenth century had become the industrial and agricultural heartland of the Argyllshire.
 - James Turnbull's Survey of Tiree, 1768/9. A large, gloriously illustrated and highly coloured map depicting the Tiree landscape before the modern crofting landscape was created in the nineteenth century. It shows densely packed clusters of large farming townships separated by rigs of infield and outfield cultivation, common grazing, 'old danish forts' and other antiquities. It is accompanied by a detailed 111 page written survey describing each township in detail, with minutely recorded observations on farming practices, fishing and the way of life of the island's inhabitants. There are many other eighteenth and nineteenth century surveys for the island, which appears to be particularly well documented owing to its geographical location and circumstances of its acquisition.
 - Twentieth century maps of Auchindrain and Auchnagoul townships, near Inveraray, demonstrating the rare survival of traditional shared farm tenancies long after the practice had died out elsewhere. These maps and supporting estate records could enable further research to be undertaken on the history and cultural significance of these its history than has been possible to date, and most importantly, help us understand its significance in the wider landscape.

Sub-collections

- Family and estate archives and personal papers of families associated through marriage:
 - Callander of Ardkinglas and Craigforth, 17th – 19th centuries (69 bundles, NRAS1209 Bundles 1813-35, 1872-1919);
 - Campbell of Southall, 18th - 19th centuries (7 boxes and 5 volumes, currently being catalogued);
 - Campbell of Craignish, 17th – 19th centuries (3 boxes, un-catalogued);
 - Campbell of Barbreck, 18th – 19th centuries (1 box,, un-catalogued);
 - Campbell of Glendaruel, 18th – 19th centuries (2 boxes).
- Records of the Synod of Argyll, 17th - 19th centuries (NRAS 1209 Bundles 535-609 and 1751-1761) (84 bundles). For much of this period the Synod of Argyll covered most of the west highlands and islands of Scotland, from the Western Isles and Skye in the North, to Arran in the South; the collection covers this whole area. It contains many references to the building and maintenance of churches, manses and schools, to ministers and schoolmasters, the recruitment of Gaelic speaking ministers, and to Catholic and pagan religion. It also includes many individual items of interest including the oldest known collection of Scottish Gaelic proverbs dating from c1700 (NRAS 1209 Bundle 545).
- The Dewar Manuscripts, an important collection of Gaelic folklore comprising traditional tales, historical stories, poems and songs, and genealogies, collected by John Dewar for the 8th Duke of Argyll, 1862-72 (7 volumes). A little-known near-contemporary English translation by Hector MacLean, 1879-81 is also held in the archive (6 volumes) and four volumes of Lord Archibald Campbell's folklore collection, 'Celtic Waifs and Strays.' Correspondence relating to all of these collections is preserved amongst the family correspondence and personal papers.

Cataloguing history

The archive was surveyed by the National Register of Archives of Scotland in the 1960s (NRAS 6) and again in the 1980s (NRAS 1209), and these survey lists are currently used to access the archive. NRAS 1209 partly replaces NRAS 6, but not entirely: researchers must, therefore, consult both surveys in order to obtain a full overview of the content of the archive.

A maps and plans list was compiled by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) in 1986. This replaces NRAS 6 pages 159-164 and 276-291. Other parts of NRAS 6 were also re-surveyed during the 1980s and 90s, but the extent of this work was not fully documented.

A comprehensive stock-check and condition survey of the archive was undertaken, June 2012 – December 2013. This has enabled the extent of the re-listing between NRAS 6 and NRAS 1209 to be identified and sections of the two survey lists mapped to each other, where relevant – further information is given in Introductory Notes to the archive, which are designed to help researchers navigate these and other issues, pending further cataloguing.

Some records were not accounted for during the stock-checking process and these are marked as 'missing' on the survey lists. It is anticipated that most will become available in the future, as further

work is undertaken on the archive, therefore, researchers should ask for an update on the status of any affected items which relate to their research.

In addition to the survey lists described above, the following interim lists also exist:

- Index of Sealed Argyll Charters, 1315-1708
- Rolled Plans Survey
- Plan Volumes Survey

Condition

Some records are fragile or dirty and a small number are affected by mould. All affected items are clearly marked on the survey lists and will not be available for consultation where this is likely to cause further damage. Argyll Estates may use discretion in granting access to some of these bundles, but most will not be available until their condition is stabilised and improved.

Publication

The archive was surveyed by Sir William Fraser for the Historical Manuscripts Commission in the 1870s and his reports provide a very useful overview of the historical context of the archive and the earliest records within it:

- Historical Manuscripts Commission 4th Report (1874), pages 470-492
- Historical Manuscripts Commission 6th Report (1876), pages 606-634

The archive was heavily used by Ian G. Lindsay and Mary Cosh to inform their history of *Inveraray and the Dukes of Argyll* (Edinburgh University Press, 1973). This publication remains the standard work on the history of the Dukes of Argyll and the development of the new castle and town of Inveraray, covering the period from 1746 until the mid-twentieth century. It is well-referenced, both with regard to the Argyll Papers and other related archives.

A small number of records from the archive have been published:

- *Inhabitants of the Argyll Estate in 1779*, edited by Eric Cregeen, Scottish Record Society, Old Series, 91 (1963)
- *List of Inhabitants on the Duke of Argyll's Property in Kintyre in 1792*, edited by A.I.B. Stewart, Scottish Record Society, New Series (1991)
- *Argyll Estate Instructions: Mull, Morvern, Tiree. 1771-1805*, edited by Eric R. Cregeen, Scottish History Society, Fourth Series (Edinburgh, 1964)
- *Kintyre Instructions: The 5th Duke of Argyll's Instructions to His Kintyre Chamberlain, 1785-1805*, edited by Eric Cregeen and Angus Martin (The Grimsay Press, 2011)