

## **The Hopetoun Archive at Hopetoun House – the story so far**

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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. In order to achieve those objectives we have a modest endowment, but we also need income streams: our Events department is highly successful in organising and running events which give the house a high profile and also bring in sufficient funds to carry out regular maintenance and more ambitious repairs when needed. Being a charity, we also have access to certain public or semi-public funds.

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 began to be formed by the lawyer Sir James Hope of Hopetoun (1614–1661), whose marriage to a Lanarkshire heiress, Anna Foulis, 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 which has for long had a strong presence in Edinburgh. 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.

PETER BURMAN, 26 August 2018



Figure 1 Peter Burman learning some basic conservation skills during a one-day seminar for the Archives Team given by Helen Creasy of Scottish Conservation Studio



Figure 2 Ian Riches, Archivist to National Trust for Scotland and one of our advisers, giving advice to us in the early days of re-configuring the Hopetoun Archives



Figure 3 Helen Creasy tackles the problem of bundles stuck together through damp penetration in former store

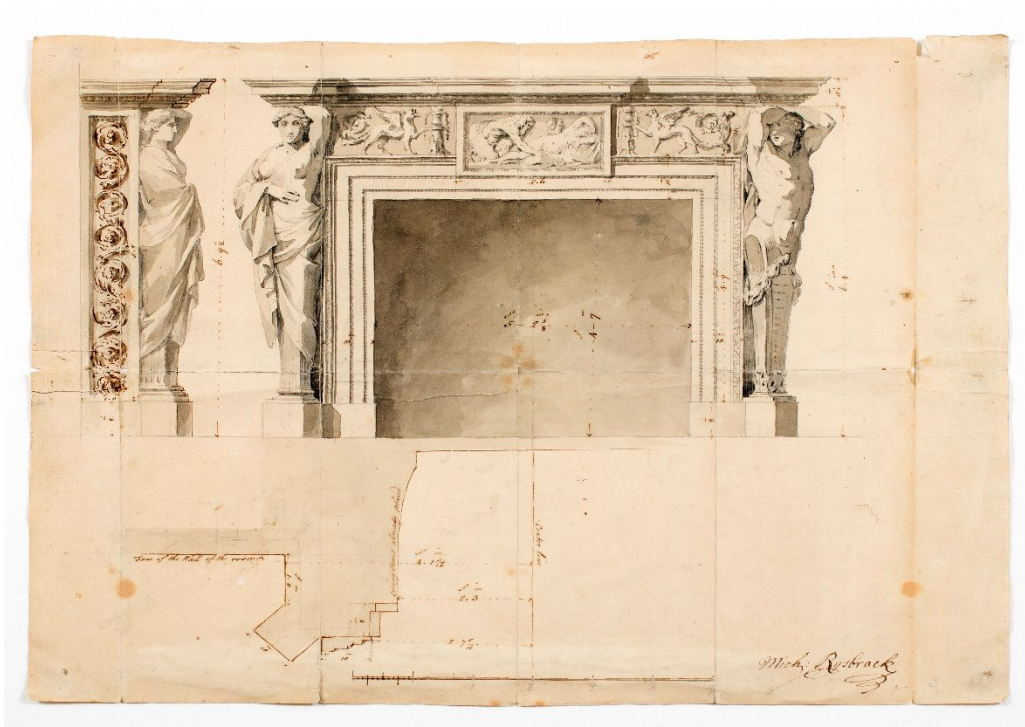


Figure 4 Michael Rysbrack's beautiful drawing realising a design suggested by Robert Adam