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## Biology Curators Group Newsletter

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Title: Perth Museum - Its History and Collections: A Brief Sketch

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Source: Taylor, M. A. (1978). Perth Museum - Its History and Collections: A Brief Sketch. *Biology Curators Group Newsletter*, Vol 2 No 1, 20 - 24.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/1658>

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## PERTH MUSEUM - ITS HISTORY AND COLLECTIONS: A BRIEF SKETCH

The area of Perth and Kinross District which Perth Museum and Art Gallery serves consists of some 2,000 square miles of largely non-industrial land containing a variety of highland/lowland environments, including within its boundaries many nature reserves, (both national and local), in addition to SSSIs. Its flora and fauna are exceptionally rich and varied and have been the subject of constant research since the earliest days of natural history in Britain.

The present extensive biological and geological collections in the Department can be largely attributed to the collecting zeal of the members of two societies: the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth (L and A Soc.) and the Perthshire Society of Natural Science (PSNS). Though the former society (now defunct) collected a great deal of important material which now forms the nucleus of the ethnography and archive collections, the bulk of the biological specimens were collected by members of the PSNS.

The following is an attempt to outline briefly the history of these societies and the subsequent history of Perth Museum and Art Gallery. It must be stressed that these notes are the result of preliminary research only and that hopefully more detailed accounts will appear at some future date.

### History

The Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth first met in 1784 and almost at once collections of all types began to accumulate. Prior to 1813 the Society's collections were kept in a 'closet' adjoining Perth Public Library and then in an apartment in that building. In 1822 it was proposed that following a public subscription a 'monument' to Thomas Hay Marshall, Esq. of Glenalmond be erected to contain halls for the Public Library and the L and A Soc. This building, opened in 1824 forms part of the present museum and is amongst the oldest surviving museum structures in Britain. The L and A Society's minute book contains records of some interesting, if vague, donations including "a very singular animal resembling the dragons of fabulous history", "an enormous centipede" and "a very elegant grasshopper".

The L and A Soc. continued to meet through the last century until eclipsed by the PSNS formed in 1867 and still thriving. The PSNS aimed right from the start to establish a natural history museum in Perth and some discussion took place with the L and A Soc. with a view to establishing a joint museum. The latter society, however, undoubtedly regarded the newer society with suspicion, there was acrimonious sniping between them in the press at this time and all plans for a joint museum came to nothing.

Following the death of the PSNS President Sir Thomas Moncrieffe in 1879 subscriptions were solicited and a purpose built museum was opened in Tay Street, Perth, in 1881. Under the able guidance of members of the PSNS, in particular Dr. Francis Buchanan White, the museum flourished and in 1895 Sir William Flower opened an extension. The Tay Street Museum was transferred to Local Authority ownership in 1902 and in 1914 the L & A Soc. Museum was taken over and such of the natural history material which was in good condition transferred to Tay Street.

In 1935 a bequest by Robert Brough (d. 1926) resulted in a new museum building with three art galleries, two natural history galleries, an ethnography gallery, two lecture theatres and large stores built adjacent to the Marshall Monument. All the collections (and displays!) were transferred to this building. All the major biological collection pre-dates this move and subsequently little attention was given to this aspect of the museum.

### Staffing

Curators	Col. H. M. Drummond Hay (Honorary)	1884-95
	Alex M. Rodger	1895-1914
	Henry Coates (Honorary)	1914-18
	John Ritchie	1918-40
	J. Wood	1940-51
	W. Davidson	1951-75
	J. Blair	1975-

The Curator was latterly aided by various assistants. In 1977 taking advantage of the Job Creation Programme one assistant was employed to carry out basic sorting and cataloguing of the natural history collections. This year the post of Keeper of Natural Sciences was added to the establishment and a S. T. E. P. Scheme initiated during the course of which four graduates will continue the cataloguing and storage programme and develop a schools service.

### Collections

The following list of collections must be regarded as a very superficial account resulting from work recently carried out. However it is sincerely hoped that even such a basic account will promote interest in the collection and stimulate further enquiries.

Fungi	653 specimens	Charles McIntosh (1839-1922)
		J. Menzies (1864-1945)
	7 folios	M. G. Cooke 1875
	(exsiccati)	F. B. White (1842-94)
Lichens	406 specimens	J. G. Baker
		I. Carroll
		W. Galp
		E. M. Holmes
		C. McIntosh
Algae (mainly seaweeds)		S. W. Brown

Algae (mainly seaweeds)  
(585 slides  
diatoms)

Mosses  
Flowering plants

H. M. Drummond-Hay (1814-96)  
E. W. Dallas

R. H. Meldrum (1858-1933)  
There are four main herbaria:

1. The Prof. J. H. Balfour collection (8500 sheets) originally donated to the L and A Soc. in 1879 via a Dr. McIntosh. This is a fairly general collection containing both Scottish and Foreign specimens.
2. The ex-PSNS herbarium (20,000 + sheets). This is almost entirely a Perthshire collection containing a large amount of material gathered by F. B. White for the "Flora of Perthshire" and his "Revision of the British Willows". Also contains material from Wm. Barclay (Rosa sp.) E. S. Marshall (Juncus sp.) A. Sturrock (water plants) and many others.
3. Col. H. M. Drummond-Hay 13 boxes mainly British
4. A. W. Brown A small collection mainly Perthshire. There are also several small collections including an interesting pocket book containing specimens collected by Dr. MacLaren, Assistant Surgeon on board H. M. S. Hecla during Capt. Parry's Second Arctic voyage 1821-3.

Insects

A very large collection with most orders represented.  
The largest collections are:

Hemiptera

6,900 specimens F. B. White - containing material from Alfred Russell Wallace. A further 3,000 non types and 124 types were transferred to the BM (NH) in 1954.

Lepidoptera

48 drawers	F. B. White
16 drawers	Anderson
56 drawers	S. T. Ellisson
24 drawers	Sir T. Moncrieffe

	Coleoptera	38 drawers	F. B. White
Mollusca	20,000 + specimens. A catalogue was published in 1925 by Henry Coates. The collection includes material collected by Loftus St. George Byrne, A. Coates, J. Coates, Rev. Chalmers, H.M.S. Challenger, Rev. R. N. Dixon, Dundee (University College), J. G. Gordon, W. Gyngell, C. Masterson, Miss Mackinlay, Dr. W. C. MacIntosh, W. M. Macandrew, R. H. Moses, W. Mudge, Dr. J. Ogilvie, Mrs. Paull, Mrs. Paterson, C. P. Richards, Dr. D. Robertson, T. Reid, Mrs. Roberts, Rev. F. Smith, L. Soderstrom, Viscountess Strathallan, F. B. White		
Fish	Casts and Skins by P. D. Malloch		
Birds	(Mounted) 1,181 specimens including donations by H. M. Drummond-Hay, W. S. Home-Drummond, J. G. Millais, Sir D. N. Reid, P. D. Malloch		
	skins	1,366 specimens	J. G. Millais (Britain)
		600 specimens	L. Soderstrom (Equador)
		100 specimens	William Fowler (Paraguay)
		43 specimens	Sir D. N. Reid (Britain)
	eggs	Cabinets from C. S. Ferrand, H. R. Jackson, A. M. Crabbie, Sir D. N. Reid, PSNS	
Osteological material	Mainly carnivores especially pinnipeds.		
Game Trophies	J. S. Meikle		

This year the entire storage area has been re-floored and new storage units installed for the osteological, mounted bird, molluscan and geological collections. Certain areas are now well documented and indexed (using IRGMA), in particular the bird, osteological, lichen and spirit collections. White's Hemiptera collection has also been sorted and possible type specimens identified.

All the collections will shortly be satisfactorily housed and indexed.

Selected references

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Michael A. Taylor  
Keeper of Natural Sciences

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PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY  
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

THE PAST

The Natural History Museum was founded in 1841 when William MacGillivray took up the post of Professor of Natural History at Marischal College. The museum was fortunate to have had such an eminent curator in its infancy (MacGillivray is the author of "The History of British Birds"), for he brought to the post a formidable reputation and considerable experience, which he had acquired as conservator of the Museum of the Edinburgh College of Surgeons.

MacGillivray and his successors, like Prof. J. W. H. Trail and Prof. J. A. Thomson, through their own collecting efforts helped to build up the museum's collections. As it was a teaching museum the collections were not restricted to any particular taxonomic group or geographical area.

THE PRESENT

Museum Policy

Since 1971, when the Zoology Department and its museum moved from