



University Archives Annual Report 2025



Introduction

The University Archives preserves the institutional memory of the University of Stirling. We support research and engagement through our archive collections which cover a wide range of subjects including film, literature, politics, sport and health and wellbeing. Located in the University Library, we provide access to our collections in our archive reading room and online through a programme of cataloguing and digitisation.

The University Archives aims to support the five key focus areas of the University's Strategic Plan 2030:



Supporting Research

Our unique collections provide a rich research resource, providing inspiration and subject-matter for dissertations, PhDs and research projects. Classes in our archives reading room provide hands-on experience and practical real-life projects for students across a range of subjects.

Supporting Staff

The University Archives holds the institutional memory of the university. The information we manage is a vital asset for good governance, providing the evidential basis for planning and decision-making, while the history and heritage of the campus is used to promote and celebrate the university's story.

Supporting Students

We provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience working with our collections through our volunteer programme. The skills gained on the programme contribute to enhancing student employability, with many of our volunteers going on to careers in the heritage and information management sectors.

Supporting Engagement

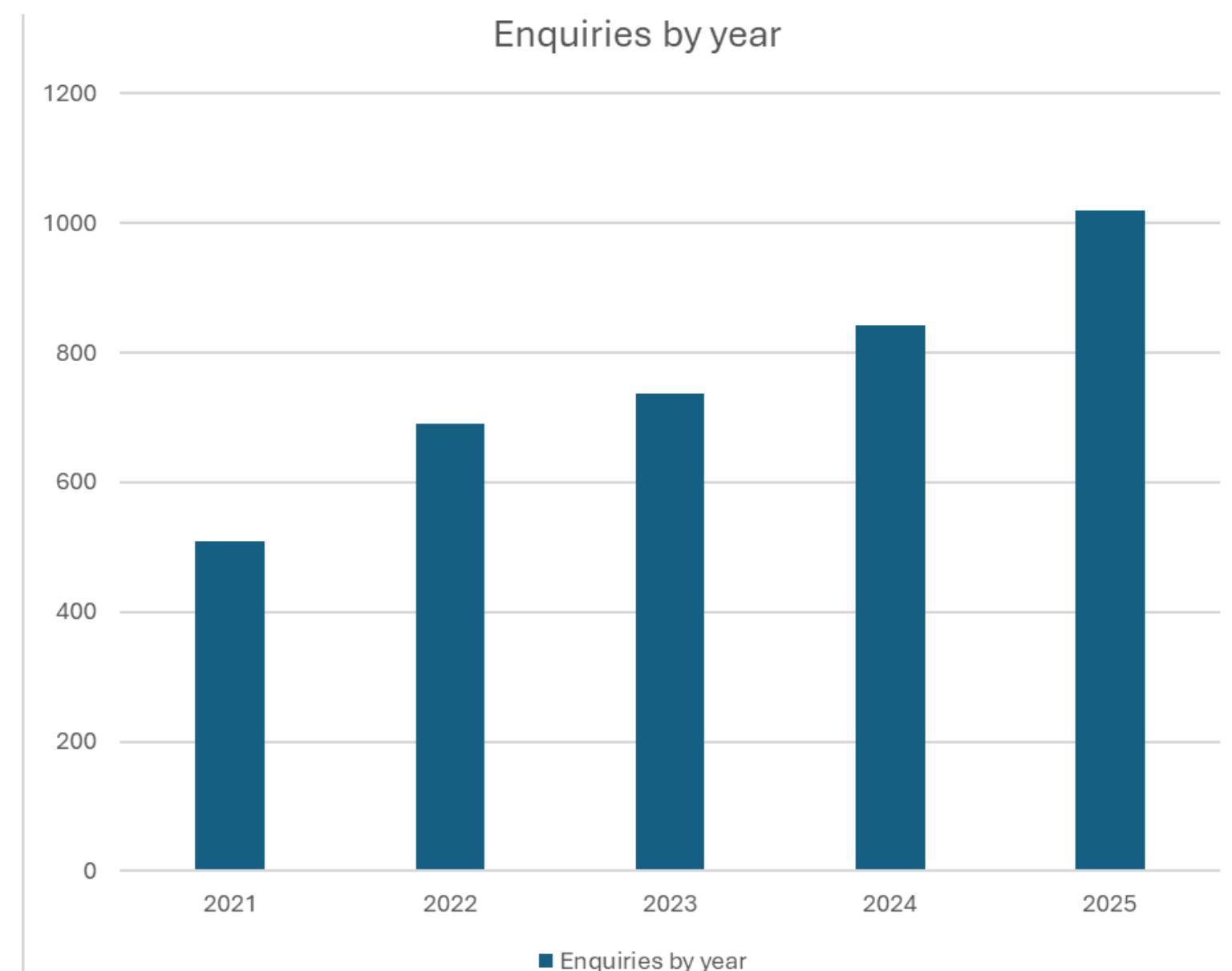
We work with a wide range of cultural and heritage organisations to open up our collections to new audiences and communities. We share the stories held in the archive through exhibitions, talks and tours.

Supporting Health & Wellbeing

We hold significant collections relating to health and wellbeing including the archives of NHS Forth Valley and Aberlour Children's Charity. The University Archives works with academic colleagues to learn from the stories of the past contained in the archives to make a difference to today's society.

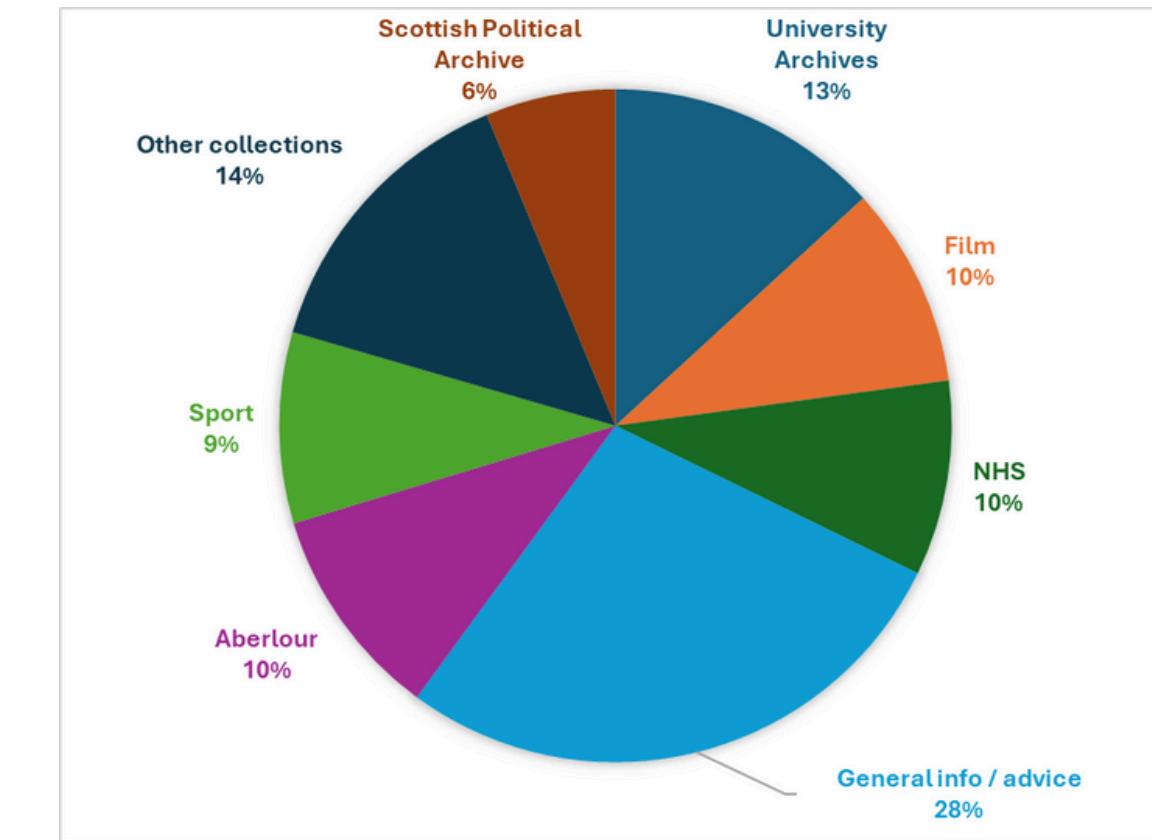
Collections usage

Enquiries received by the University Archives in 2025 increased to over 1,000 for the first time with a marked increase in use of our collections by university staff and students.

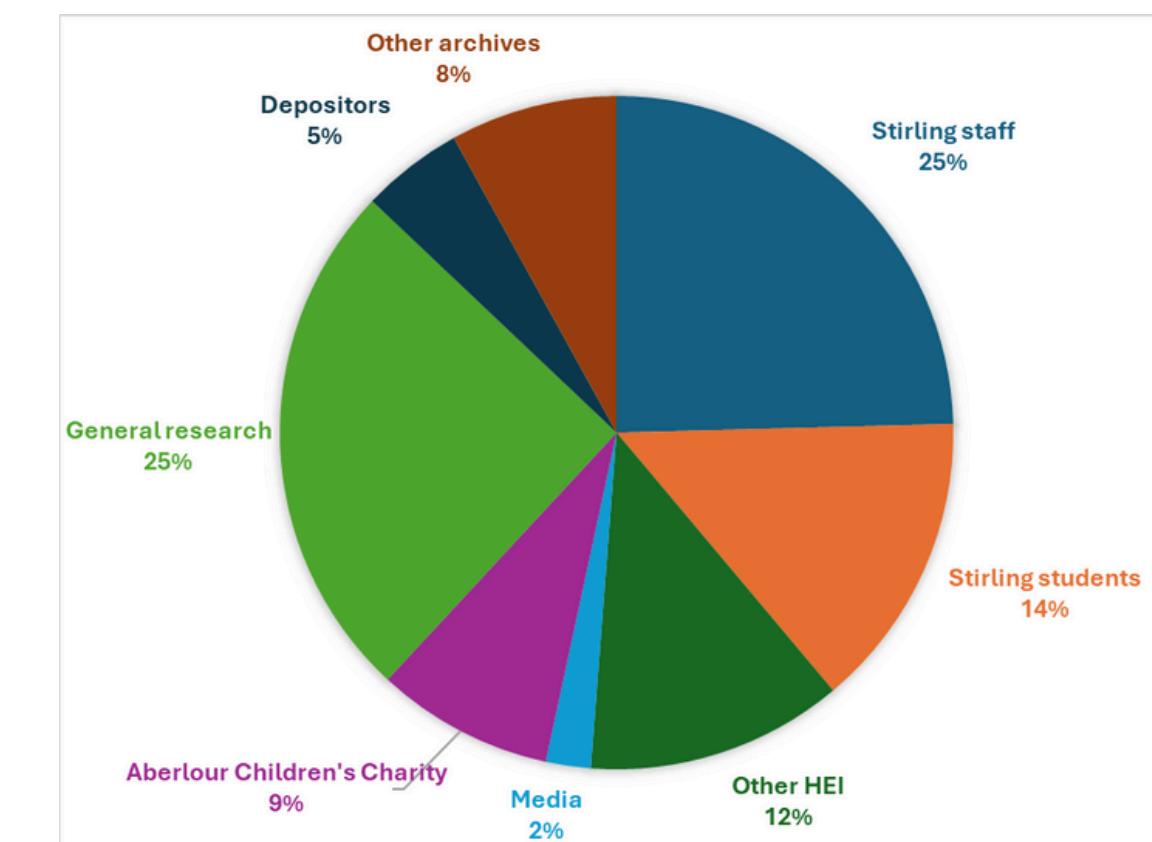


Full details can be found in our University Archives 2025 Statistical Review: <https://stir.ac.uk/aem>

Enquiries by collection:



Enquiries by sender:



Enquiries

The national and international importance of our collections can be seen in the geographical spread of enquiries we received in 2025 from researchers across the world.



Engagement

The University Archives undertakes a variety of outreach and engagement activities throughout the year, introducing archive collections to new audiences, strengthening ties with existing users and encouraging new and creative ways of using our collections. Highlights in 2025 included:

Events:

- Stirling County Rugby Club Archive SCRUM
- Stirling Doors Open Day
- Archives x Zines workshop, Denny High School
- International Sports Events Symposium
- Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group summer conference
- Student Union Academic Fayre

Talks:

- Dunblane Local History Society
- Archive Film Roundtable, Creative Stirling
- Boxing History, Spiers Centre, Alloa
- Collections At Risk, Sporting Heritage
- International Council on Archives, Section on University and Research Institution Archives
- FAH Learning and Teaching conference
- Setting up for Success: University Staff Induction

Walking Tours:

- Business Librarian's Association
- Stirling Doors Open Day
- Nagasaki National Peace Memorial Hall
- Scottish Government/Consular Corps in Scotland



Spotlight on: Culture Night at Stirling Castle

The Culture Night at Stirling Castle was an opportunity for the local community to engage with live demonstrations, taster sessions, and hands-on experiences led by Stirling's top creative organisations.

Our stall showcased our long-standing William Simpsons Asylum Archive volunteer project, encouraging members of the public to try some basic conservation of archival documents for themselves, to give them a taste of the work we do and the opportunities available to our volunteers.

Spotlight on: Golden Years 70s Reunion

In August, the Alumni Office organised the Golden Years 70s reunion weekend, welcoming back over 100 alumni who were celebrating 50 years since graduating or enrolling at the University. The University Archives supported the reunion by providing a talk on the history of the University and hosting an open archives event, showcasing material from the 1970s and accepting donations of memorabilia into the University Archive.



“A lot of work had gone into getting the information out that we were most likely to be interested in. The talk on the Uni’s early years was excellent too”

Event attendee

“My late wife would have been thrilled to know that she is now in the archives along side me”

Event attendee and archive donor

“The archives were brilliant and the archivist was really knowledgeable and approachable. Seeing all the materials brought back lots of memories!”

Event attendee



Spotlight on: John Maclean: All That Life Can Give Us

In collaboration with the University's Creative Histories Research Group, Archives and Special Collections hosted a talk and poetry reading by award-winning author and poet Henry Bell. Bell gave a talk on his historical work relating to Scottish socialist and educator, John Maclean, before reading from his edited anthology of poetry commemorating the centenary of Maclean's death.

Attendees had the opportunity to browse the Nan Milton Archive, a collection on Maclean amassed by his daughter and first major biographer, and hear original new work by Henry Bell.

Exhibitions

Strivelin, Striveling, Strivelyn, Strewelin, Sterling, Sruighlea, Stirling: 900 Years of the Burgh of Stirling

Our annual Culture on Campus exhibition drew together material representing the city, its past and its stories from Archives and Special Collections, the Art Collection and the MacRobert Arts Centre to join in with the Stirling-wide celebrations celebrating the Burgh's 900th anniversary.

The exhibition was held in the MacRobert Arthouse 27th January-18th May and inspired local journalists to use one of our Special Collections tourist guides from 1919 to rediscover Stirling: <https://stir.ac.uk/aeg>.

Aberlour: Then and Now

The University Archives worked with Aberlour Children's Charity to create an archive exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the organisation. Transferred to the University Archives in 2021, the Aberlour Archive continues to be used by the charity to engage with the community of care-experienced people it has supported over the years.

Featuring original material from the archive, the exhibition was launched at the Speyside Visitor Centre in Aberlour village before visiting the University Library in the summer.

“I hope you will excuse my interference...”: Surveillance and control in the Stirling District Asylum Archive

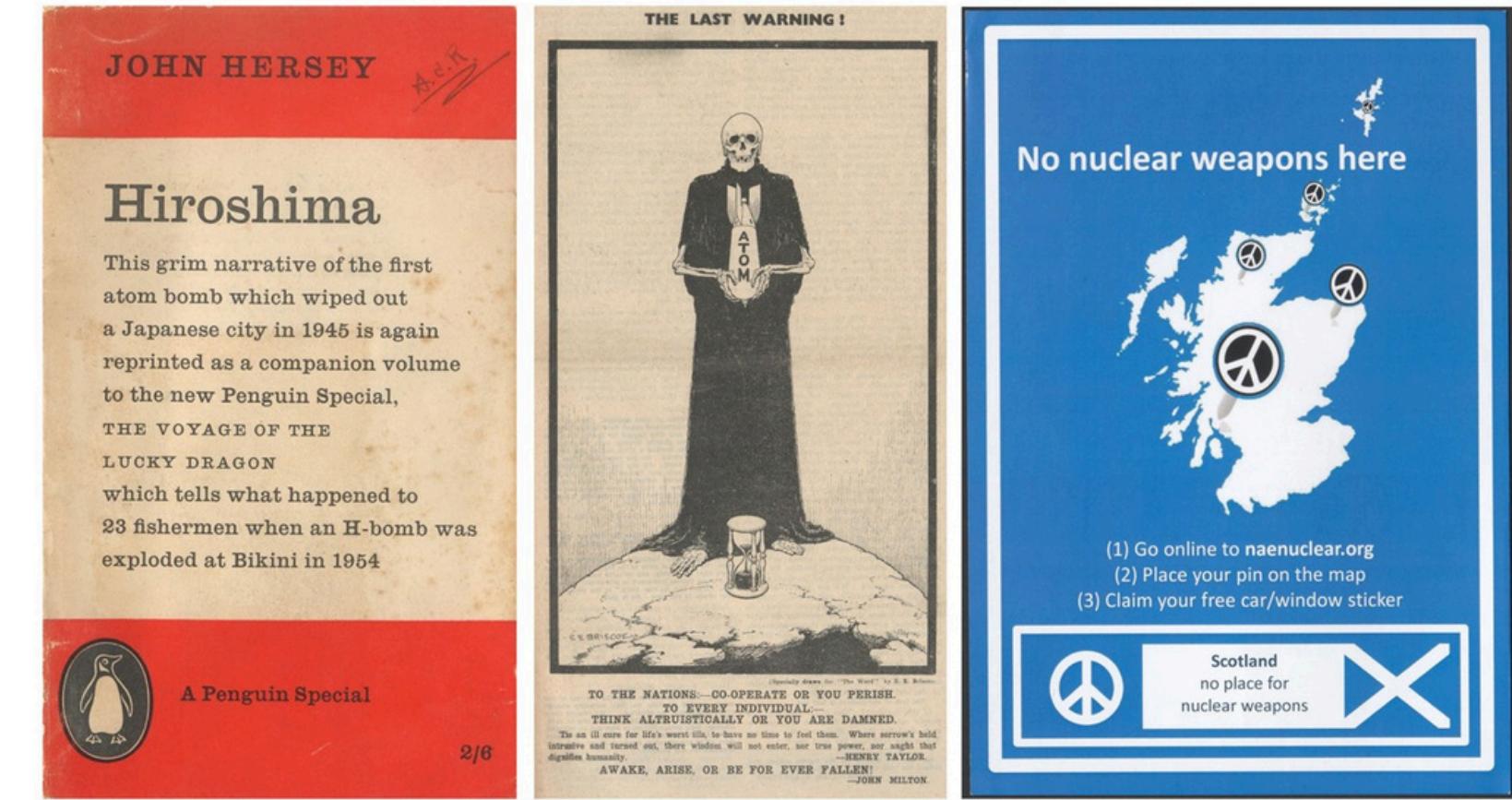
In February, the University Library hosted the Winston Smith Library of Victory and Truth, a touring artwork created by Hans K Clausen which features 1,984 copies of George Orwell's novel 1984. As part of a series of events supporting this exhibition the University Archives produced a display centred around methods of surveillance and control in the Stirling District Asylum Archive, the most well-used collection in our NHS Forth Valley Archive.

The Winston Smith Library of Victory and Truth was brought to the University by the Art Collection and the Centre for Research into Information, Surveillance and Privacy.

Spotlight on REMEMBERED: in the Archive

To complement the Nagasaki Peace Foundation's powerful exhibition on the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which visited the University from 6th October – 14th November the University Archives created an archival reflection on the key themes of the exhibition which was displayed in the University Library. Featuring newspaper reports, political debate, and personal and artistic responses from across our archives and special collections the exhibition presents contemporary reactions to these events and the subsequent emergence of anti-nuclear peace movements around the world.

During the exhibition's run, we partnered with our Culture on Campus colleagues in the MacRobert Arts Centre to screen a double bill of Lindsay Anderson's *March to Aldermaston* and Norman McLaren's Oscar-winning *Neighbours* on Monday 3rd November which related to the archive material on show from the Anderson and McLaren Archives.



“Working on the exhibition was an incredible experience because I was able to utilise my passions for historical research and archiving to search for materials that perfectly fit the theme. Collaborating with Karl and Rosie on the layout of the materials and exhibition space taught me valuable lessons about curation which I hope to use in a future career in archives and collections.”

Mike Vandergoot

Learning and Teaching

In 2025 increased support provided by University Archives staff for teaching in Arts & Humanities resulted in wider interest in material across our collections for both in-class hands-on sessions and coursework and dissertations from both staff and students.

HISU9X5 - Dissertation Preparation (short dissertation)

Students visit the archive reading room to browse our collections, learn more about conducting their own archival research and discuss their own research topics.

POLU9SP - Politics and Policymaking in Scotland

Class on political campaigning using the Scottish Political Archive's 2014 Independence Referendum Archive as a case study.

HISU9O4 - Oral History: theory and practise

Class on the ethics and archiving of oral history interviews.

MMAPP16 - Digital Media Management

Students are introduced to the issues and challenges of making archival content available through digitisation.

HISU9X6 - Dissertation Preparation (long dissertation)

Students visit the archive reading room to browse our collections, learn more about conducting their own archival research and discuss their own research topics.

ARTU9EC - Pen, Print and Press: Documenting the 18th Century

Palaeography class using a wide range of archival materials to allow the students to practise their transcription skills.

RJOUU9SP - Sport Feature and Production

Students use material from our sporting heritage collections for content and inspiration for course work.

HISU9X4 - Back to the Future: putting history and heritage to work

Guest slot delving into a career in archives, how the students can work towards working in the archives sector and how their studies will help them.



‘We can tell [the students] all we like about primary sources, but there is nothing to beat holding the originals in their hands!’

Professor Emma Macleod,
Head of the Division of
History, Heritage and Politics

External classes

Graeme High School, Falkirk - class visit

Highers Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies students came to study the Stirling District Asylum Archive, using the records to chart the progress of specific patients and reflect on their treatment.

'The History of the Asylum' - Strathclyde University

Students from the Strathclyde module 'The History of the Asylum' came to use the Stirling District Asylum Archive as a case study for records left behind by historic asylums.

"The experience was invaluable for pupils... this [class] gave them the chance to connect and empathise with people from our local community and explore the development of psychiatry and mental health care."

Victoria Murray, Teacher at Graeme High School



Spotlight on: Collaborative MRes in Historical Research

For the academic year 2025-2026, Archives and Special Collections are co-supervising an MRes in Historical Research with the Division of History, Heritage and Politics on the receptions of Scottish educator and socialist John Maclean as seen through the lens of the archive of his first major biographer, his daughter, Nan Milton. Milton's research papers relating to her writings on Maclean are held here at the University alongside a broader collection – the Tait & Watson Archive – of left-wing political pamphlets, newspapers and organisational minutes which contextualise the period of politics in which Maclean was active.

The student, James, volunteered with us during the final year of his undergraduate degree and is keen to undertake his archives qualification once he has completed his MRes, so in addition to using the Nan Milton Archive as the basis of his dissertation, James will also be undertaking the following graded modules with us in Archives and Special Collections:

ARTP001 Training for Masters in the Arts and Humanities 1 Employability Skills

- Basic conservation; learning basic skills for cleaning and preserving archival documents

Employability Skills

- Digitisation; selection of material for digitisation and training on our ScanStudio equipment

ARTP001 Training for Masters in the Arts and Humanities 2

- Cataloguing; Engaging with archival theory and methodologies, James will work on a project to catalogue the Nan Milton Archive to international standards. This catalogue will be made available online and will be the main finding aid for the archive.



Placements and Internships



ARTU9W4 – Putting Arts & Humanities To Work, Mithra de Kleijn

Tullibody Heritage Centre Archive

ARTU9W4 – Putting Arts & Humanities To Work, Kennidi-Lee Geoghegan

Scottish Castles Association Archive

ARTU9W4 – Putting Arts & Humanities To Work, Aurora MacDonald

Stephen Maxwell Collection, Scottish Political Archive

ARTU9W4 – Putting Arts & Humanities To Work, Violet Cooke

Stirling University Retired Staff Association Oral History
Archive, University Archive

MSc Heritage Placement, Yiyi Yang

Scottish Castles Association Archive

MSc Heritage Placement, Alicia Napolitano

Stirling Popular Music Archive

Scottish Graduate School for Arts and Humanities, Levi Tippett

Bill McLaren Archive

Volunteering



Archives and Special Collections runs a popular volunteering programme in three blocks throughout the year, one during the Autumn semester, one during the Spring semester, and one during the summer break. In the Autumn and Spring blocks, we prioritise Stirling students for in person volunteering but we accept in person volunteers from the wider community during our summer block.

The volunteers carry out a variety of tasks such as cataloguing, conservation, digitisation, boxlisting and sorting initial deposits, summarising oral histories and exhibition research and design.

In 2025, we hosted **27 student volunteers** and **7 external volunteers**, who contributed a total of **631 hours** of their time to help us with projects.

In addition, we hosted **13 remote volunteers** who undertake online cataloguing projects.

“Volunteering in the University Archives gave me valuable experience which has allowed me to be accepted onto my first choice of Master's programme. I learned a lot and really enjoyed myself - everyone was so friendly! I would highly recommend it!”

Heather Gemmill
Volunteer 2024-2025



Volunteering with impact: The Edinburgh Film Guild Photographic Archive

This year saw the completion of a major volunteer project to organise and list the photographic archive of the Edinburgh Film Guild. Established in 1929 the Guild is one of the oldest film societies in the world. In 2023 the Guild's photographic archive was transferred to the University Archives following the sudden closure of the Filmhouse Cinema in Edinburgh, where the archive was housed. The University Archives worked with the National Library of Scotland (supported by a grant from the UK National Archives Records at Risk fund) to ensure that the cinematic heritage stored in the building was rescued and preserved.

An important addition to our holdings relating to Scottish film heritage, the photographic archive provides a comprehensive visual record of almost a century of films screened by the Guild. A team of archive volunteers have now documented the main alphabetical series of film stills listing a remarkable 39,000 photographs covering over 5,000 films. From a collection facing an uncertain future, the Guild's photographic archive has become a major new research resource, with access made possible by the efforts of our archive volunteers.





Collections Development

The University Archives continued our core tasks of preserving, cataloguing and making accessible our holdings throughout the year with new online resources widening access to our collections.

Your Scottish Archives

Our online catalogues were added to the new portal for Scottish archives launched by the Scottish Council for Archives in June, widening access to information on our collections: <https://yourscottisharchives.com/>

Aberlour 150

The University Archives contributed to the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Aberlour Children's Charity by adding over 300 digitised copies of the Aberlour Orphanage magazine to our online catalogue in September: https://collections.stir.ac.uk/collections/getrecord/GB559_ACCT_7_1

Scottish Castles Association Archive website

A new website providing access to the digitised holding of the Scottish Castles Association Archive: <https://collections.stir.ac.uk/scottish-castles-association-archive/>



Collections Development

Our holdings continued to grow in 2025 with major new deposits of material to the following collections:

NHS Forth Valley Archive

A significant deposit of over 100 volumes is being added to this archive's most used material, the Stirling District Asylum Archive, opening up links with the Stirling Board of Control and providing our first ever staff records for the institution. We have created a volunteer project for students to learn basic conservation skills and help us to make this material accessible.

Scottish Political Archive

The SPA inspires regular deposits of ephemeral material and this year is no different. Additionally, we have taken in a major collection of the personal papers of Hamish MacQueen, branch President of the Maryhill and Springburn SNP and key figure in the party's independence movement.

Sporting Heritage Collections

Our Sporting Heritage collections widened their scope and coverage to include new collections relating to athletics, paraspot and sports broadcasting.

Collections in focus: University of Stirling Covid-19 Pandemic Archive and Pandemic Oral History Project

The University of Stirling Pandemic Oral History Project (POH) is a collaborative project between the University Archives, the Division of History, Heritage and Politics and the Art Collection. The project interviews staff and students about their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly their experiences studying and working at the University. Full details on the project can be found on our collections page: <https://stir.ac.uk/3cx>.

This project sits within the university's Covid-19 Pandemic Archive which gathered diaries, images, videos and ephemera from 2020-2022.

In 2025, we were delighted to have these collections be involved in the following:

- An international screening of the POH project film at the Memory Studies Association Annual Conference, Prague
- Winning a Highly Commended Award from the Janette Harley Prize, administered by the British Records Association for the POH project film and article
- The Covid-19 Pandemic Archive was used as a case study in The UK National Archives' guidance on Rapid Response Collecting (<https://stir.ac.uk/aed>)
- The Covid-19 Pandemic Archive was included in the UK Government's official response to the UK Commission on Covid Commemorating report. The University of Stirling's collections were the only Scottish Heritage collections listed (<https://stir.ac.uk/aee>)
- The POH project team gave a talk as part of the British Library's Oral History Festival - 'Filming Oral Histories of Trauma and Conflict: Three Case Studies'



Collections in focus: Sporting Heritage

The University Archives works to preserve and promote Scotland's sporting heritage through the development and care of our sporting collections and the provision of advice and support to sporting clubs and organisations across the country. At the core of our sporting heritage collections sits the Commonwealth Games Scotland Archive which preserves a detailed record of almost a century of international sporting competition. Our sporting collections have grown to cover a range of sports including athletics, boxing, swimming and paraspot with the personal memorabilia of athletes and administrators providing new perspectives on wider sporting events.



“Thank you for sharing the [catalogue] - that’s absolutely amazing. I wish Derek was here to see his legacy and achievements preserved in this way. He was so humble and downplayed all he achieved.”

Lynn Williams

(on the cataloguing of her husband Derek's paraspot memorabilia)

Collection page: <https://libguides.stir.ac.uk/archives/DWilliams>



ScanStudio

Our ScanStudio provides a suite of equipment which allows us to digitise material across a range of conditions and formats, opening up digital access to our archive collections. Made possible through a major funding award from the UKRI in 2021 the ScanStudio also allows us to support the wider heritage sector in the digitisation of collections. Working with external partners provides support for our Digitisation Assistant posts, creating early career opportunities for recent graduates, and practical experience for students through placements and funded internships.

In 2025 we worked with the following organisations and groups on digitisation projects to preserve and make accessible a range of heritage collections:

- The Bill McLaren Foundation (rugby heritage)
- The Camanachd Association (shinty heritage)
- Tullibody Heritage Centre (local history)
- The Scottish Castles Association (built heritage)
- The Angels Share (business history)
- Shuttleston Harriers Athletics Club (club history)

Sector Support

University Archives staff contribute to the improvement and development of the wider archive sector through sharing their knowledge, experience and expertise across a range of external committees, organisations and working groups.

The University Archives is currently represented on the following:

The National Library of Scotland Foundation
AHRC Peer Review College
Scottish Universities Special Collections and Archives Group
UK Health Archives and Records Group
Scotland and Medicine Partnership
Archives and Records Journal Editorial Team
Scottish Council on Archives Historical Care Records
Working Group





Staff

Karl Magee - University Archivist

Rosie Al-Mulla Taylor - Archivist

Dr Joel Casey - Digitisation Assistant

Dr Hanneke Booij - Digitisation
Assistant (to 20th June 2025)

A full statistical breakdown of our activities in 2025
can be found in the University Archives 2025
Statistical Review <https://stir.ac.uk/aem>
Images all ASC or University of Stirling owned.

