

## *Around the Archives*

# University of Strathclyde Archives

## *Anne Cameron and Kirsteen Croll*

The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow recently celebrated its Golden Jubilee. Established by the merger of the Royal College of Science and Technology and the Scottish College of Commerce, the University received its Royal Charter in August 1964. Its ancestry, however, can be traced back almost 200 years earlier, to Anderson's Institution.

An Enlightenment scholar whose many interests ranged from meteorology to ballistics, John Anderson (1726–96) was Professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Glasgow. He advocated the practical application of science and the education and advancement of working men, offering a successful evening class in Experimental Philosophy for the townspeople alongside his regular lectures to the University students. Unfortunately for Anderson, he also spent much of his career embroiled in bitter disputes with his fellow professors over matters of University governance and over their hostility, as he saw it, to new ideas.<sup>1</sup> When he died in January 1796, Anderson consequently willed his estate for the foundation of a new seat of higher education, 'to be Denominated "Anderson's University"'.<sup>2</sup> He conceived this as a 'Seminary ... of Useful Learning',<sup>3</sup> dedicated to 'the Improvement of Science' and governed not by its professors, as at the University of Glasgow, but by 81 lay trustees: an innovation that later became the model for the reform of the Scottish universities.<sup>4</sup>

Anderson's estate did not yield sufficient capital to carry out all of his plans immediately, so the nascent Anderson's Institution, as it was named by his trustees, began modestly in two rented rooms of the Old Grammar School building. The first professor, Dr Thomas Garnett, was appointed to the Chair of Natural Philosophy in September 1796, with others following gradually as resources allowed. On taking possession of new, purpose-built premises in George Street in September 1828, the trustees resolved that the institution should henceforward be known as Anderson's University,

<sup>1</sup> See J. Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy: The University of Strathclyde and its Antecedents 1796–1996* (East Linton, 1996), 11–19.

<sup>2</sup> University of Strathclyde Archives (henceforth USA), OB/1/1/1, Minutes of the Managers and Trustees of Anderson's Institution 1796–99, p. 3, Copy of the Last Will of Professor Anderson, Article Second.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17, Article Seventh.

<sup>4</sup> Butt, *John Anderson's Legacy*, 22.

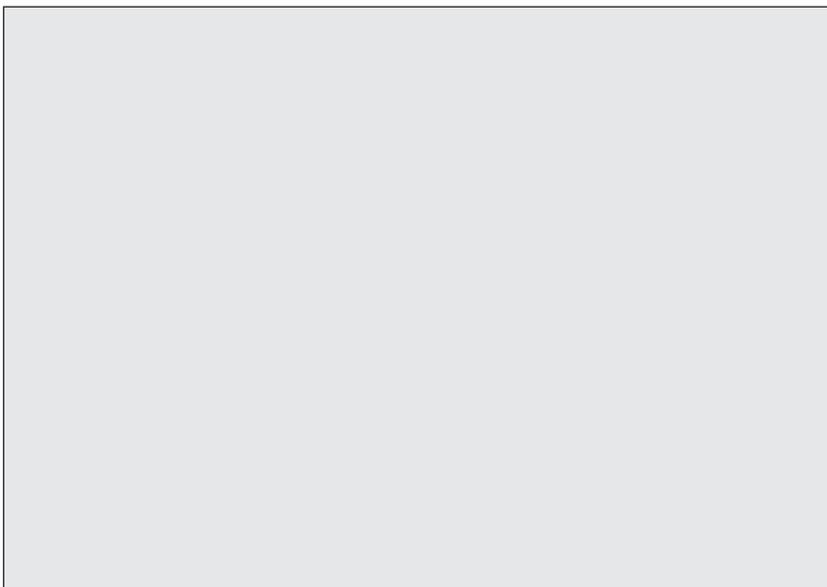


Plate 1 Diagram showing the ancestry of the University of Strathclyde.

as originally stipulated in Anderson's will.<sup>5</sup> Despite lacking the authority to award degrees, the Andersonian, as it was also popularly known, cultivated a reputation for excellence in scientific and technical education, and continued to expand, attracting increasing numbers of students.<sup>6</sup> There followed several changes of name and amalgamations with other educational establishments, as summarised in Plate 1; but the Institution's direct descendent, the University of Strathclyde – which achieved degree-granting powers under the Royal Charter of 1964 – still retains the epithet of 'the place of useful learning'.

The University Archives was formally established in 1977, and has been part of a combined Department of Archives and Special Collections within the University Library since 2009. Its core holdings are the official records of Strathclyde and its predecessors from 1796 to the present, beginning with the first minute book of Anderson's Institution. This contains a full copy of John

<sup>5</sup> USA, OB/1/1/3, Minutes of the Managers and Trustees of Anderson's Institution and Anderson's University 1811–30, pp. 295–6.

<sup>6</sup> In 1913, the successor body to Anderson's University, the Royal Technical College of Glasgow, entered into a scheme of affiliation with the University of Glasgow whereby students of engineering and the applied sciences could take all or some of their classes at the College and graduate with a degree from Glasgow. The scheme was dissolved when the University of Strathclyde obtained the power to grant its own degrees under the Royal Charter.

Anderson's will, effectively the blueprint for his Institution. One of the most striking, and most progressive articles in the will reflects Anderson's conviction that scientific instruction should be open to women as well as men. He specified that a class should be offered,

at least once every year, to be called 'The Ladies Course of Physical Lectures', in which no mathematical reasoning shall be used; and ... the Audience shall consist of both Ladies and Gentlemen ... The intention of this Course of Lectures is, that the Ladies in Glasgow, may have an opportunity for a small sum, and in the early part of life, of being at several of these courses of Lectures, by which their Education for domestic affairs will not be interrupted, no pedantic [*sic*] language will be acquired, as is often the case in a more advanced age, And such a Stock of General Knowledge will be laid in, as will make them the most accomplished Ladies in Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Though women were generally denied access to higher education and could not graduate with a degree from any British university at this time, private courses of lectures for female students had been offered at certain Scottish universities before 1796. In the 1770s, for example, vocational classes for midwives were held by Professor Thomas Hamilton of the University of Glasgow.<sup>8</sup> However, these classes were delivered quite separately from the lectures offered to male medical students on the same subject. Anderson, by contrast, was advocating a mixed class, in which ladies and gentlemen would receive instruction together. To minimise any prospect of impropriety, he stipulated

that no men may be admitted who are disorderly, talkative, ill bred, or intoxicated; and no women that are giddy, or incorrect in their manners. If they do not like these conditions, they need not apply for Tickets [...].<sup>9</sup>

Anderson's vision was soon realised, for Thomas Garnett, the first professor appointed to Anderson's Institution, shared the founder's determination to forge educational opportunities for women. He accordingly offered two classes to which both sexes might be admitted: a course in Natural and Experimental Philosophy, corresponding exactly to the instructions in the will; and a 'popular' Chemistry class. The minute book reveals that by April 1797, 972 students – around half of them female – had attended Garnett's classes. This, Garnett declared, represented 'an era in the annals of female education which posterity may contemplate with peculiar pleasure'.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> USA, OB/1/1/1, pp. 22–3, Copy of the Last Will of Professor Anderson, Article Ninth, Second Rule.

<sup>8</sup> A. M. Cameron, 'From Ritual to Regulation? The Development of Midwifery in Glasgow and the West of Scotland, c.1740–1840' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2004), 131–2.

<sup>9</sup> USA, OB/1/1/1, p. 24, Copy of the Last Will of Professor Anderson, Article Ninth, Fourth Rule.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116, Meeting of the Managers of Anderson's Institution, 28 April 1797.

In addition to governing body and committee minutes, the official records of the University of Strathclyde and its antecedents include registers of students, financial ledgers, prospectuses, building plans, photographs, and the papers and memorabilia of distinguished alumni and staff. This material offers a unique insight into the development of education, science and society in Scotland. Of particular historical importance are the personal papers of two former students: James ‘Paraffin’ Young (1811–83), father of the Scottish oil industry, and John Logie Baird (1888–1946), pioneer of television.

James Young began his working life as an apprentice joiner, but, aspiring to study chemistry, he enrolled at the age of nineteen for Professor Thomas Graham’s evening classes at Anderson’s University. Young made such a favourable impression upon the professor that, despite his relatively humble origins, he was rapidly appointed as Graham’s laboratory assistant, where his talent in conducting chemical experiments shone out. After leaving the University in 1837, Young went on to develop and patent various processes in distillation, the manufacture of ammonia and salts of ammonia, the preparation of materials for dyeing and printing, the production of stannate, stannate of soda and stannate of potash, the treatment of mineral waters and bituminous mineral substances, the manufacture of gas, and the preservation of vegetable and animal matters. Young’s most significant achievement was the successful distillation of cannel coal (shale rock) at a low temperature to produce liquids including naphtha, lubricating oil, and, in 1847, ‘paraffine oil’, which was suitable for use as a lamp oil and for which Young obtained a patent three years later. He subsequently entered into partnership with Edward Binney and Edward Meldrum to manufacture oils from cannel coal at Bathgate in West Lothian. The Bathgate works were completed in 1851, and the paraffin fuel and solid paraffin thus produced were sold from 1856. These were the first genuinely commercial oil-works in the world, with Young’s pioneering activities precipitating the rise of the international shale oil industry.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout his life, Young maintained his early links with Anderson’s University, becoming a generous benefactor to his Alma Mater and his old colleagues and friends. The latter included another notable alumnus: the explorer and missionary, Dr David Livingstone, to whom Young was particularly close. He used the proceeds of his business ventures to finance Livingstone’s expeditions to Africa, on one occasion expending the sum of £6,000 on a Clyde-built steamship, the *Lady Nyassa*.<sup>12</sup> Young served as President of the University from 1868 to 1877, endowed a professorial Chair in 1869 (the Young Chair of Technical Chemistry, the first of its kind in the world), and gifted the University his personal library of books and manuscripts on alchemy and early science, which date from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries and

<sup>11</sup> For further details of Young’s career and achievements, see M. Leitch, *Paraffin Young and Friends: A Biography of James Young, 1811–1883, the World’s First Professional Oilman* (Ratho, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–6.

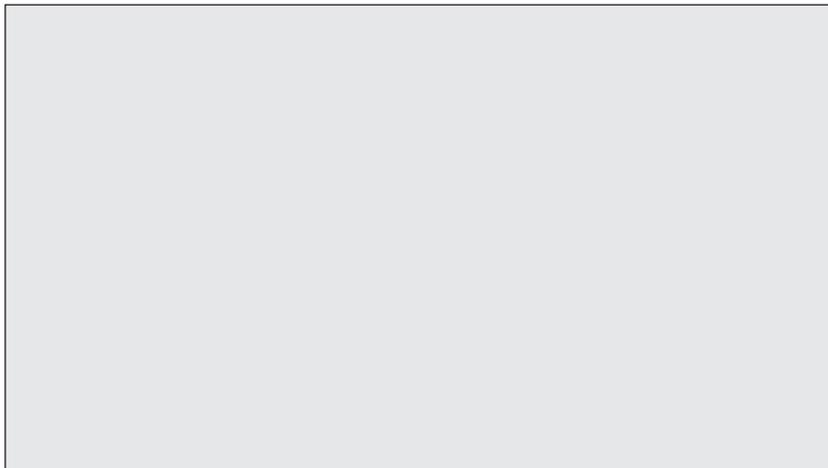


Plate 2 Technical drawing of a Spring Motor Phonograph by John Logie Baird, 1 March 1906 (University of Strathclyde Archives, OM/11/10/3).

are today maintained as a discrete Special Collection. Young's family donated his personal papers in 1959. This rich and fascinating collection comprises Young's diaries, which refer to his friendship with Livingstone, as well as his business correspondence, patents and legal papers, financial papers, and technical and scientific notes.<sup>13</sup>

John Logie Baird achieved worldwide recognition when he gave the first demonstration of television to the Royal Society in London on 26 January 1926. Two decades earlier, he had acquired his core technical skills as a student of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College (renamed in 1912 as the Royal Technical College). Baird attended the College from 1906 to 1914, qualifying for a Diploma in Electrical Engineering in the latter year. Under the pen name of H2O, he was also a regular contributor of features and short stories to the *Royal Technical College Magazine*, holding the office of Evening Sub-Editor during session 1913–14.<sup>14</sup> As well as Baird's student forays into fiction, the Archives holds his College certificates of merit, lecture and laboratory notebooks for classes in Electrical Engineering, Mechanics, Practical Chemistry and Experimental Physics, and five technical drawings submitted as part of his coursework.<sup>15</sup> One of these, a drawing of a Spring Motor Phonograph, is reproduced in Plate 2.<sup>16</sup> Baird's drawings are meticulously executed and

<sup>13</sup> USA, T-YOU, James 'Paraffin' Young papers.

<sup>14</sup> USA, OM/11/14/4, Letter from Alexander Rhind, Editor of the *Royal Technical College Magazine*, to John Logie Baird, 12 October 1913.

<sup>15</sup> USA, OM/11, John Logie Baird papers.

<sup>16</sup> USA, OM/11/10/3, Drawing of a Spring Motor Phonograph, 1 March 1906.

hand-coloured, and his notebooks neatly and painstakingly kept; yet he attained only second-class, rather than first-class certificates of merit for each of the various subjects studied towards his Diploma. In view of his obvious intelligence and capabilities, this may seem surprising. However, the *College Calendar* indicates that first-class certificates were only awarded to students who achieved a final mark of over 80 per cent in any class.<sup>17</sup> Any mark within the range of 60–80 per cent qualified for a second-class certificate. Interestingly, a score of 70 per cent or above would be deemed of first-class standard in most higher education institutions today.

A substantial proportion of the institutional records relate to Jordanhill College of Education, which merged with Strathclyde in 1993 and was at that time the largest teacher training college in the UK. The official records of Jordanhill and its predecessors, the Glasgow Church of Scotland Training College (CSTC), the Glasgow Free Church Training College (FCTC), the Glasgow Normal Seminary and the Glasgow Infant School, date back to 1828, and are a treasure trove of information on the development of teacher training in Scotland. The student registers for each institution – particularly those of the CSTC and FCTC, which generally include details of each candidate’s ‘Destination’ (their first teaching post after qualifying) as well as an assessment of their teaching potential – are also an invaluable resource for family historians. Again, however, the most fascinating and evocative records are often the personal memorabilia of staff and former students, with the papers of Bill Ireland being a notable example.<sup>18</sup>

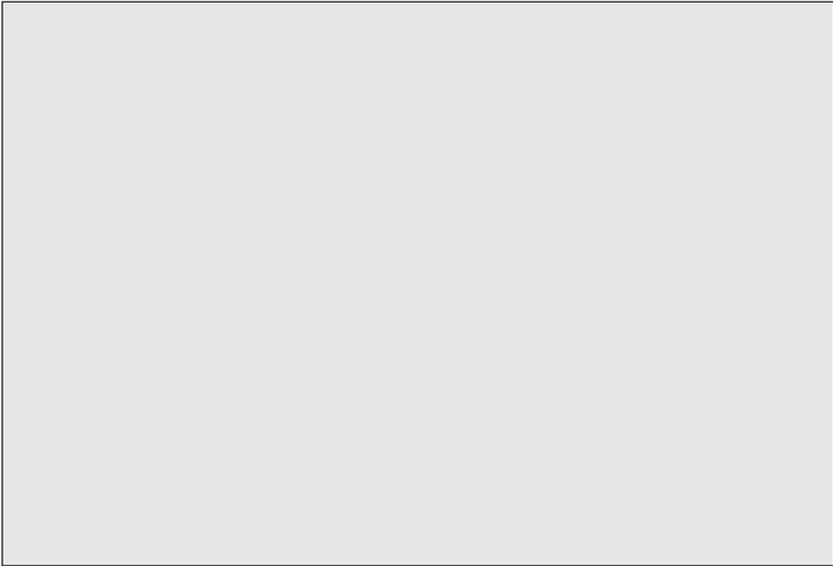
William J. Ireland (1924–2002) studied at the Scottish School of Physical Education (SSPE) from 1942 to 1945. Established at Jordanhill College in 1931, the SSPE was then the only training centre for male teachers of physical education in Scotland, resulting in fierce competition for places.<sup>19</sup> Those who passed through its doors consequently enjoyed a reputation for excellence, and Ireland was no exception. A hard-working student, he took copious notes of the lessons in anatomy, hygiene, theory of physical education, history of physical education, and theory of games. These are carefully copied out in ink and illustrated with hand-drawn diagrams and stick figures, demonstrating the fastidiousness and self-discipline that would define Ireland’s subsequent career as a teacher of Scottish country dance for the London Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and at the Royal Ballet Junior School, Richmond Park.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> USA, OE/10/1/27, *The Royal Technical College, Glasgow: Calendar for the One Hundred and Eighteenth Session, 1913–1914* (Glasgow, 1913), 146.

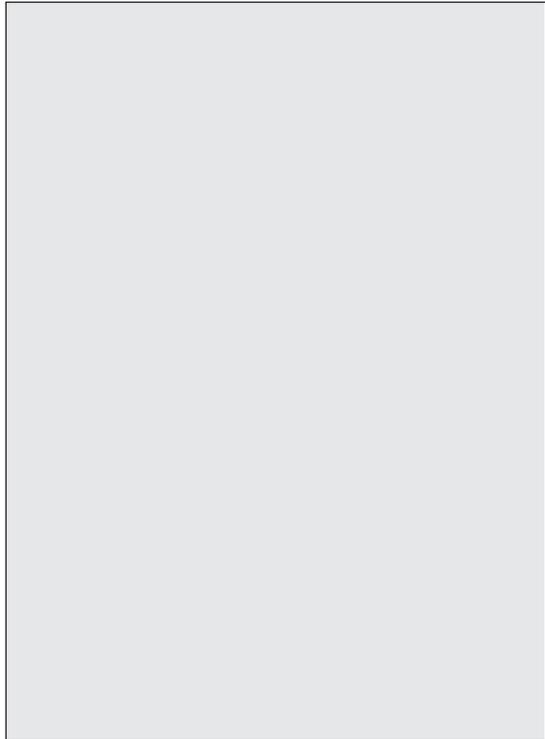
<sup>18</sup> USA, JCE/22/5/2, William J. Ireland papers.

<sup>19</sup> See R. B. Small, ‘The Scottish School of Physical Education’, in (ed.) M. M. Harrison and W. B. Marker, *Teaching the Teachers: The History of Jordanhill College of Education 1828–1993* (Edinburgh, 1996), 146–57.

<sup>20</sup> R. Ferguson, ‘Bill Ireland: Obituary’, *The Reel: Magazine of the London Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society*, 243 (February–May, 2003), 4–6.



Plates 3 and 4  
Bill Ireland and friends  
at play on the Jordanhill  
College campus, 1944  
(University of Strathclyde  
Archives, JCE/22/5/2).



The lecture notes are complemented by 96 delightful black and white snapshots of Ireland and his classmates, mostly taken on the Jordanhill campus. These images capture the spontaneity, liveliness and camaraderie for which students of the SSPE were renowned: the devil-may-care antics of this particular cohort exaggerated, perhaps, by the uncertainties surrounding life during World War II. Plate 3, which could well be a result of some kind of dare, features Ireland (third from the right) and five others standing in the campus grounds in the snow, wearing nothing but shorts and a smile. Similarly, Plate 4, taken in June 1944, shows Ireland (right) and two friends striking a pose worthy of a top music hall variety act.

In addition to the institutional records of Strathclyde and its antecedents, the Archives holds a broad range of collections acquired by gift or deposit to support the University's teaching and research interests in town planning, investigative journalism, environmental health, industrial history and other fields. The largest and most internationally significant of these deposited collections is the papers of Sir Patrick Geddes (1854–1932), eminent biologist, sociologist, educationist and town planner.<sup>21</sup> Born in Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Geddes began his professional life as a biologist in London and France. In the late 1880s, he returned to Scotland and participated in the regeneration of Edinburgh's Old Town, principally through the Ramsay Garden complex, consisting of private housing, a student hall of residence and artists' studios; and via a regional-sociological laboratory known as the Outlook Tower. His impressive and varied subsequent career included appointments as Professor of Botany at University College, Dundee and Professor of Sociology and Civics at the University of Bombay, where he was much involved in town planning. He also co-founded the Sociological Society in London in 1903, and established the Scots College in Montpellier, France, as an International University to propagate his ideas.

A true polymath, Geddes believed in the interrelationships between all branches of knowledge, and espoused the mottoes of *vivendo discimus* (by living we learn) and *creando pensamus* (by creating we think).<sup>22</sup> His papers were donated in 1955 by his son, Arthur, and the Trustees of the Outlook Tower. Since then, the Geddes collection has been consulted more frequently than any other single collection in the Archives, and by researchers from all over the world. It comprises around 45 linear metres of manuscripts, typescripts, pamphlets and books on town planning, economics, sociology, history, art, religion and philosophy, education, geography, astronomy, meteorology and hygrometry, biology and botany. There are also over 4,000 outsize maps, plans, photographs, prints and drawings. As well as Geddes' own writings, correspondence and diagrams, such as his famous 'thinking machines', this wonderfully rich collection contains plans and drawings executed for Geddes

<sup>21</sup> USA, T-GED, Patrick Geddes papers.

<sup>22</sup> P. Boardman, *The Worlds of Patrick Geddes: Biologist, Town Planner, Re-educator, Peace-warrior* (London, 1978), 360.

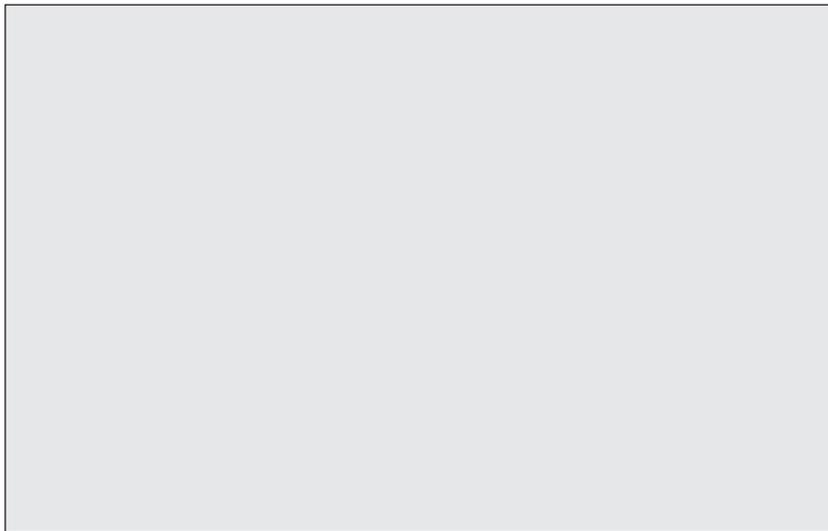


Plate 5 Elevation drawing and plan for a war memorial in a public place by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, c.1915–18 (University of Strathclyde Archives, T-GED/22/1/1413/2).

by other people. Among the most interesting of these is a set of three elevation drawings and plans for a memorial fountain in a public place, a war memorial in a public place (shown in Plate 5), and street lamp standards, created by Geddes' friend, the famous Glasgow architect and artist, Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868–1928).<sup>23</sup> Rendered in watercolour, ink and pencil on paper, the designs are signed by Mackintosh and, though undated, appear to have been produced some time between 1915 and 1918. Geddes, who strove to introduce the latest modern conveniences to cities, supported by the highest standards of architecture and urban design, had probably commissioned these drawings as a project or demonstration work connected with his town planning surveys in India.<sup>24</sup>

Several collections have also been gifted to the Archives in recognition of honours bestowed by the University of Strathclyde. Two of the most recent, and most popular, acquisitions fall into this category, the first of them relating to Verity Lambert, OBE (1935–2007).<sup>25</sup> Lambert holds the distinction of being the first female television producer employed by the BBC, and is perhaps best

<sup>23</sup> USA, T-GED/22/1/1413.

<sup>24</sup> See V. M. Welter, 'Arcades for Lucknow: Patrick Geddes, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the Reconstruction of the City', *Architectural History*, 42 (1999), 316–32.

<sup>25</sup> USA, T-LAM, Verity Lambert papers.

remembered as the original producer of the iconic science-fiction series, *Doctor Who* (1963). She went on to be the creative force behind numerous British television dramas, including *Budgie*, *Rumpole of the Bailey*, *The Naked Civil Servant*, *Minder* and *Jonathan Creek*, as well as films such as *Clockwise* and *A Cry in the Dark*. Lambert garnered a host of domestic and international awards during her career, but was particularly proud of the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws conferred upon her by the University of Strathclyde in April 1988. She consequently arranged that her personal memorabilia should be gifted to the University after her death. The collection consists predominantly of artefacts, among them Lambert's OBE medal, awarded in 2002 for services to film and television production; photographs taken on various production sets, including *Doctor Who*, and her personalised producer's chair. However, the undoubted highlights are her two British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards, received in 1969 (Best Television Drama Series for *Somerset Maugham's Short Stories*) and 2002 (the Alan Clarke Award for Outstanding Creative Contribution to Television). The British equivalents of the Oscars, these distinctive, mask-shaped statuettes not only enchant visitors to the Archives, but also represent a significant coup for the University. BAFTA awards usually remain the property of the Academy while in the care of the recipient or his or her descendents; however, special permission was granted in 2008 for Verity Lambert's awards to be gifted to Strathclyde as an integral part of her personal archive.

The second such acquisition is the papers of George Wyllie, MBE (1921–2012).<sup>26</sup> Wyllie is regarded as one of Scotland's greatest and best-loved contemporary artists. Born in Glasgow, he started out as a sailor and subsequently became a customs officer before changing career completely to forge an international reputation as an artist, sculptor and writer. Having no formal art school training, he was unsure whether his creations could accurately be called 'sculpture', so he instead described them as 'Scul?ture', using a question mark in place of the letter 'p'. Wyllie deliberately incorporated a question mark motif into many of his works, as he believed that art should always be interrogated. His creative output includes such ambitious and attention-grabbing projects as the Straw Locomotive, a full-scale locomotive model made of straw formed around a wire structure (Plate 6). During Glasgow's 1987 Mayfest festival, the model was suspended from the River Clyde's Finnieston Crane, which, in the city's engineering heyday, had loaded real locomotives onto ships bound for the far corners of the world. The Straw Locomotive was later ceremoniously set on fire, the charred remains revealing a large question mark.

Wyllie staged his first solo exhibition at the University of Strathclyde's Collins Gallery in 1976, and fourteen years later, the University awarded him the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters. In recognition of this long-standing association, he and his family donated his personal papers to Strathclyde

<sup>26</sup> USA, T-WYL, George Wyllie papers.

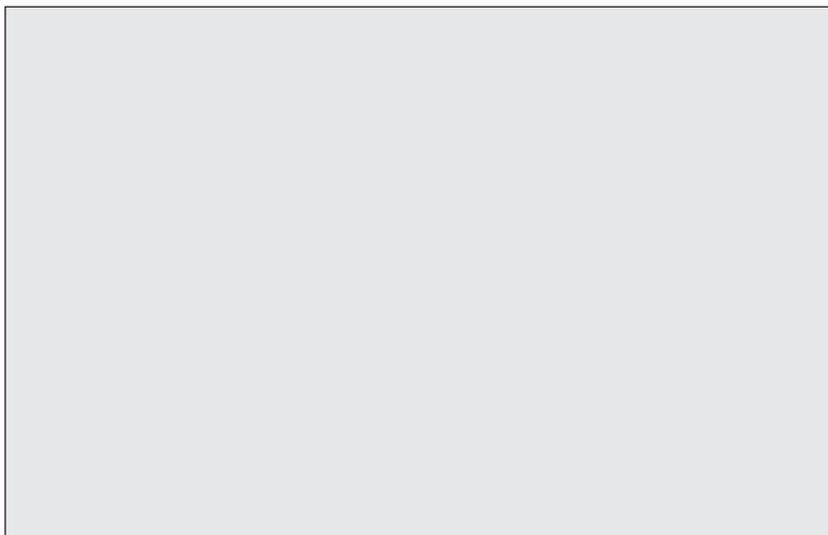


Plate 6 George Wyllie sitting on top of his Straw Locomotive, 1987 (University of Strathclyde Archives, T-WYL/5/19).

between 2006 and 2009. The collection, which is currently being catalogued, is a comprehensive record of Wyllie's vast body of work, comprising slides and photographs, sketches, notebooks, exhibition posters, lectures, writings, press cuttings and scrapbooks, as well as an engine plate from the Straw Locomotive. These not only document his finished art projects and exhibitions, but also the sources of inspiration behind them and the long months of work involved in their creation, often in his own workshop and garden at his house in Gourrock. A number of items from the collection were recently displayed at the Collins Gallery in 'George Wyllie: A Life Less Ordinary', a retrospective forming part of a series of events to mark Wyllie's ninetieth birthday, and the Gallery's final exhibition before its closure in April 2012.

This brief overview of the University of Strathclyde Archives has endeavoured to illustrate the variety, depth and significance of its holdings by focusing on some selected examples. The records, and particularly the personal papers collections, are an outstanding resource for all kinds of historical research, though it is impossible to do full justice to them in the space available. Further details of the records mentioned above, as well as all the official institutional records and many of the deposited collections are available on the Archives' online catalogue (<http://strathclyde.ica-atom.org/>). The Special Collections books, including those bequeathed by James 'Paraffin' Young, appear in the main University Library catalogue (<http://www.strath.ac.uk/library/>). To celebrate 50 years since the granting of Strathclyde's Royal Charter, the Archives also created a blog. Each week throughout 2014, an

image was posted of a 'star' item from the collections, taking the reader on a journey through the history of the University from its origins up to the present day. All 50 completed posts remain available to view at <http://stratharchives.tumblr.com/>.

The Department of Archives and Special Collections is open from 9.00 am to 4.50 pm, Monday to Friday, excluding local and public holidays. Visitors are welcome, but it is advisable to contact us in advance so that material can be looked out from store and a place reserved in the reading room.

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