

Around the Archives

Glamis Castle Archives

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The building of Glamis Castle as we know it today began around 1400 and many additions and alterations have been carried out over the years, particularly during the period of Patrick, 3rd Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, in the late seventeenth century (Plate 1). Its walls have witnessed over 600 years of comings and goings, from illustrious royals, prime ministers, artists and writers, to family, friends, associates, tradesmen, clergy, governesses, servants and tenants. It is therefore not surprising that Glamis Castle has a rich and diverse archive dating back to the twelfth century, documenting the lives of not just the Strathmore family, but also a wide spectrum of society. The records at Glamis consist of several collections, comprising the Survey Lists of the National Register of Archives (Scotland) – NRA(S) 885 and 3526 – referring to both the Strathmores’ Scottish and English estates; Castle Opening (CO) Department records from when the castle first opened to the public in 1950; family correspondence and other records transferred from the Queen Mother’s residence at Clarence House, including some of the 14th Earl’s business papers, *c.*1876–1940 (closed to the public); personal records of the 16th, 17th and 18th Earls (closed for 100 years); the printed music collection of Mary Eleanor Bowes, some of which she inherited from her mother, mainly from the 1760s to 1800; and even early-eighteenth-century male clothing, presumably worn by the Earls of Strathmore, *c.*1710–60.

The archives are currently under-utilised and would benefit from being opened to a wider audience so that more people can share in the rich history and heritage of Glamis. Situated at the top of the tower, involving a 91-step climb with no lift facilities, the archives are not easily accessible to the public and the Archivist is employed on a part-time basis. The documents are stored in two rooms, in approximately 400 standard archive boxes, with over 600 volumes and 400 plans. Researchers can access the archives, but appointments must be made well in advance and a charge is also administered. Unlike public archives, it is a privilege rather than a right for the public to access private family archives and it must be borne in mind that private owners contribute staff, resources, heating and lighting for visitors without the aid of public funding, so a contribution is necessary. Having said that, the policy at Glamis is to be as helpful as possible and to be mindful of financial constraints in the current economic climate; the purpose of charging is therefore to cover staff time and conservation costs and not to make a profit. Enquirers can request the

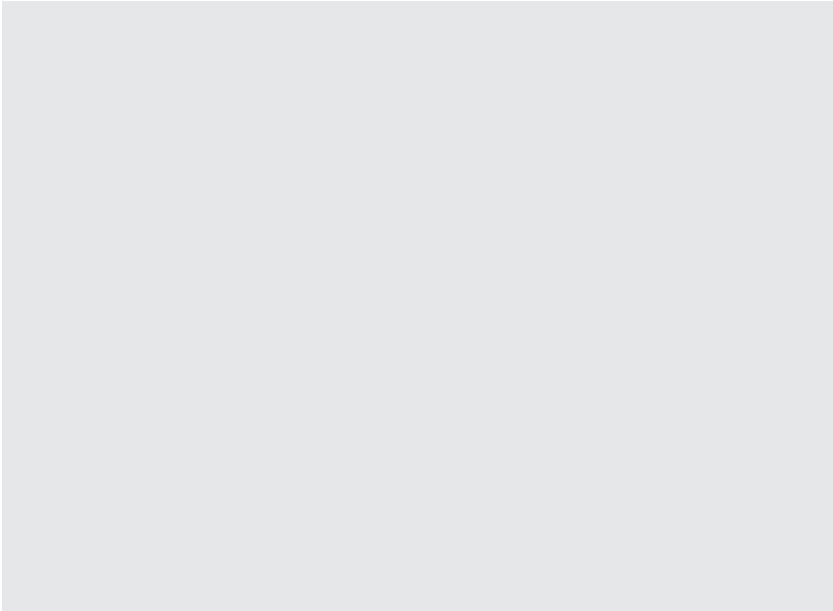


Plate 1 Glamis Castle, P37: proposed alterations to front of Castle, 1763.

Archivist to conduct a brief initial search on their behalf, usually free of charge, and fees are only implemented on any subsequent research requests or visits. It is also possible for researchers to request the temporary removal of certain records from Glamis to the University of Dundee Archives for consultation in the search room there for a maximum of three months, subject to the approval of the Archivist and the condition of the documents. This option is particularly useful for researchers with mobility issues, as the University of Dundee Archives are in the basement of the Tower Building, which has lift facilities. In addition, readers can spend more intensive blocks of time researching their chosen topic. Please note, however, that records can only be produced for consultation subject to their physical condition and any closure requirements.

At first glance, little has changed since the times of Jane Anderson, who was Glamis Castle Archivist from 1990 to 2010, and Joan Auld, University of Dundee Archivist, who administered the Glamis Archives prior to 1990. The shelving and furniture is the same and the rhythmical, soothing tick of the clock at the top of the tower is a constant companion to the Archivist, particularly during the cold winter months when the castle is empty of visitors. Yet, small advances have been made. A review of the storage environment at Glamis Castle was carried out by the Archivist in 2010, which resulted in the purchase of two new desiccant dehumidifiers the following year, allowing a stable environment (relative humidity of *c.*50 per cent) to be maintained.

The archive database project, set up in the late 1990s in conjunction with the University of Dundee, continues slowly but surely, with around two to three boxes listed to item level and indexed per year. The purpose of the project is to provide more detail and to expand upon the NRA(S) Survey lists which, although immensely useful, do not necessarily pick up enough relevant information for intrepid researchers. Each individual item is listed with information such as date; description of the contents of the document, including relevant names, occupations, addresses, goods or subjects involved; condition of the document; and additional noteworthy points, such as whether it is in Latin, has a seal attached, is a copy or linked to another document, and so on.

The aim is to record the salient points of a description, but to avoid being verbose. The description should enable the reader to pick up relevant documents, which may not apparently be obvious in the NRA(S) Survey lists. The main beneficiaries of the database project are family historians, but it is also invaluable to other researchers as it gives sufficient information to pick up specific themes and subjects, from salmon fishing to education, politics, disbursements to the poor, the purchase of clothing and goods, the transfer of property, and so on. The project is very much a work in progress and the standard of descriptions varies, as several volunteers have contributed over the years, with a range of palaeographical abilities and archive skills.

Locating relevant documents is not always easy and with the digital era developing apace, readers are becoming more demanding, with higher expectations. In April 2017, a new full-time Social Media and Marketing Co-ordinator post was created at Glamis and the Archivist's hours were also increased. In 2017, the first dedicated archive section was set up on the Glamis Castle website to promote awareness of the archives and their potential usage, with information on the archives and the records, access conditions, genealogy FAQs and a timeline.¹ Images from the archives are regularly used on social media: Glamis Castle has a 'Flashback Fridays' post on Facebook and Instagram, which highlights the versatility of the archives. Glamis Castle Archives also participated in a Twitter exchange on 16 November 2017 with Dundee University Archives and Perth and Kinross Council Archives, in which each archive promoted their collections to mark 'Explore Your Archives Week'. This increased profile on the Internet has led to a rise in enquiries, particularly from television companies. Documents and images from the archives, including the unpalatable seventeenth-century recipe for worm broth, appeared in two episodes of the second series of *Royal Recipes* on BBC1, while further archives relating to HM The Queen as a child at Glamis were filmed for the BBC1 *Countryfile* series on 'Queen and Country'.

As well as dealing with a range of enquiries from television companies, academic researchers, school pupils and a variety of family, local, house and art historians, the Archivist is heavily involved in planning exhibitions for the

¹ <https://www.glamis-castle.co.uk/the-castle/archives/>

castle. For example, a range of Glamis archive material, including letters from HM The Queen to her grandmother, was displayed at the ‘Coronation Robes’ exhibition in 2017, which celebrated the 80th anniversary of the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Queen Consort, in 1937.

The potential relocation of the archive collections to an existing building or to a purpose-built archive on-site is currently being considered. While the archive records have survived well in their present environment, restricted accessibility is a concern. However, the issues of preservation, security and accessibility need to be carefully balanced if planning any future move. Glamis Castle Archives is of national as well as local significance, and increased accessibility would allow the archives to be used not just by individual researchers, but also by the community, schools and further education groups. It is in the public interest to develop the archive in such a way as to ensure its preservation, to raise awareness of its rich diversity and to enable more people to access it. More accessible buildings would allow the public to view and engage with a variety of original records from correspondence to accounts, game books, diaries, writs and other legal documents, photographs, maps, posters, estate rentals, seventeenth-century recipe books, musical scores and even early-eighteenth-century clothing. As the records relate to all sections of society, it would be fitting if they could be accessed by a correspondingly wide range of users. Ultimately, however, it must be remembered that the Glamis Castle Archives are privately owned records, so public access is at the discretion of the owner.

The rare Glamis copy of the Aberdeen Breviary, a product of Scotland’s first printing press, established by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar in 1507, was sold to the National Library of Scotland in September 2014. This national treasure will now be housed in the NLS’s secure fireproof and temperature- and humidity-controlled safe.

The records in Glamis Castle Archives hold many secrets and are crying out for exploration. The following examples have been randomly selected to illustrate the potential of the archive, but there is sure to be something of interest for everyone, whatever their background or interests.

Among the personal papers of the successive earls of Strathmore and Kinghorne is the original manuscript of the Book of Record – a detailed journal or diary written by Patrick, the 3rd Earl, between 1684 and 1689, consisting of 129 pages. He started writing this journal in his early 40s, and daily entries are interspersed with recollections from his past, covering the story of his own youth and personal life, and his business affairs, until six years before his death. Many of the entries are written by Patrick’s servant, Thomas Crombie, but Patrick also writes some of the entries himself. He tends to digress, but it is precisely this trait that adds to the richness and honesty of his account.

Patrick’s father, John, the 2nd Earl of Kinghorne, died when Patrick was just four years of age. He inherited an enormous debt of £400,000, Scots (*c.* £40,000 sterling) from his father, which would equate to around £4 million today. This was exacerbated five years later, when Patrick was just nine years

old, by the fact that Oliver Cromwell placed a large garrison of English soldiers in Glamis Castle and imposed an annual tax of £1,000 upon the estate. Patrick refers to Cromwell in his diary: 'It was my misfortune being a child at that time not to be in that capacity to act against him [Cromwell] which had I been a man, I would have done to my utmost hazard.'²

The diary reveals that Patrick saw it as his duty to improve the fortunes of his family, and remarkably he managed to achieve this through a combination of the sale of some peripheral lands, strict economy and great business acumen. He also comes across as a family man who loved and respected his wife, Helen Middleton, and their five 'good and virtuous' children: three sons and two daughters.³

Patrick is refreshingly blunt and honest when it comes to his opinions. He describes Francis Erskine, a servant of his at one point, as 'an infamous rogue' who he was obliged to 'put in prison merely to let it be known through the country that he was no longer my servant'.⁴ Francis Erskine had brazenly followed the Earl around for twelve months after he was discharged, pretending he was still employed by him in order to fraudulently procure lodgings and goods.

Patrick's business skills allowed him to make substantial additions to his remaining estates and he spent large sums on improvements at Glamis Castle and Castle Lyon (now Huntly Castle). Indeed, the 3rd Earl's assiduous care during his custodianship of Glamis Castle enabled it not only to survive, but also to thrive, and his legacy lives on today. The Book of Record provides a unique insight into Patrick's life and the impressive painting by the famous Dutch artist, Jacob de Wet, of Patrick surrounded by his sons, proudly pointing to Glamis Castle in the background, hangs in the Drawing Room at Glamis Castle (Plate 2).

Glamis is probably best known for its association with Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*, written for King James VI and I after his accession to the throne of England, when he brought Scottish courtiers and Scottish customs to the English court. In 1603 Patrick, 9th Lord Glamis, accompanied the King to England and three years later the King elevated him to the Earl of Kinghorne. It is possible that Shakespeare heard stories of Glamis at court which he used as a fit setting for the grim tragedy of *Macbeth*. Although there is no record of him visiting Glamis, he did visit Scotland, so it is possible that he may have passed by Glamis during his travels north to Aberdeen. Alternatively, the story of *Macbeth* being Thane of Glamis could have been adopted by Shakespeare from the history of Hector Boece, the translation of which by Bellenden was the popular and acknowledged history of Scotland in the time of Shakespeare. The

² Glamis Castle Archives (hereafter GCA), vol. 272, Patrick, 3rd Earl's Book of Record, 1684-1689, 47.

³ *Ibid.*, 114.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

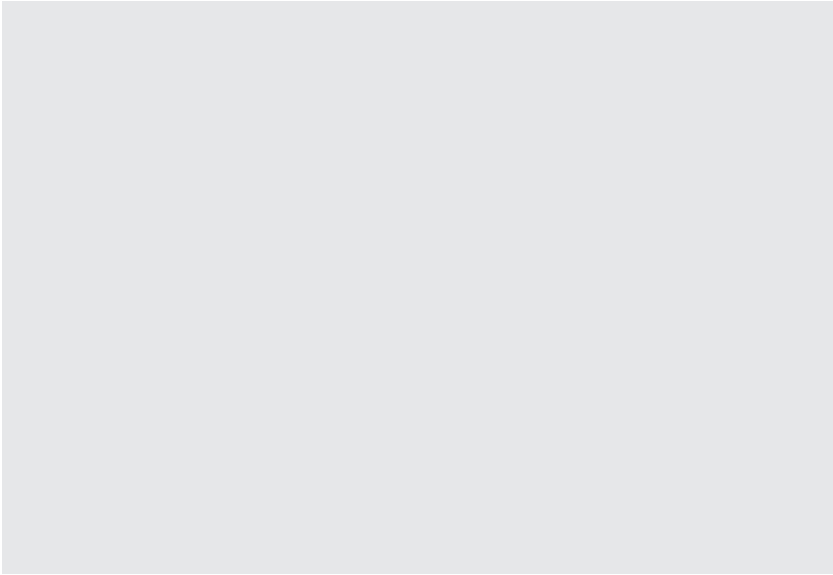


Plate 2 Jacob de Wet's painting of Patrick, 3rd Earl, and his sons.

slaying of King Duncan by Macbeth in fact took place at Elgin, not Glamis, but nevertheless the Macbeth tradition at Glamis lives on. An innovative Macbeth Sculpture Trail has been installed at the Pinetum in the grounds of Glamis Castle, featuring seven wooden sculptures by Neith Art & Sculpture, fashioned out of oak, Douglas fir and noble fir procured from the estate.

The colourful game books from 1878 onwards are rich sources which include unexpected discoveries. They were primarily kept as estate records, recording the numbers and variety of game shot on the Glamis estate, but uniquely they also contain historical depictions (e.g. Plate 3), as well as intricate wildlife illustrations (e.g. Plate 4), photographs of family, friends and employees, and newspaper cuttings. Before the First World War, shooting parties at Glamis were lavish affairs. Game hunted on the estate would have included grouse, partridges, pheasants, woodcock, snipe, wild fowl, wood pigeon, hares, rabbits and deer. A surviving menu book for 1866 shows that meat was a key part of the diet of both the Strathmore family and their servants, and it shows what the family ate 'upstairs' and the servants ate 'downstairs'. Game, such as leverets (young hares), fried, roasted or curried rabbit, venison, and 'hashed hare' frequently appeared on the menu. The servants ate well, but their choice was generally limited to one course – for example, roast mutton or Irish stew – in comparison to the three courses offered to the family. Occasionally the servants would get dessert such as fruit tarts, which may have been leftovers or a way to use up surplus fruit.

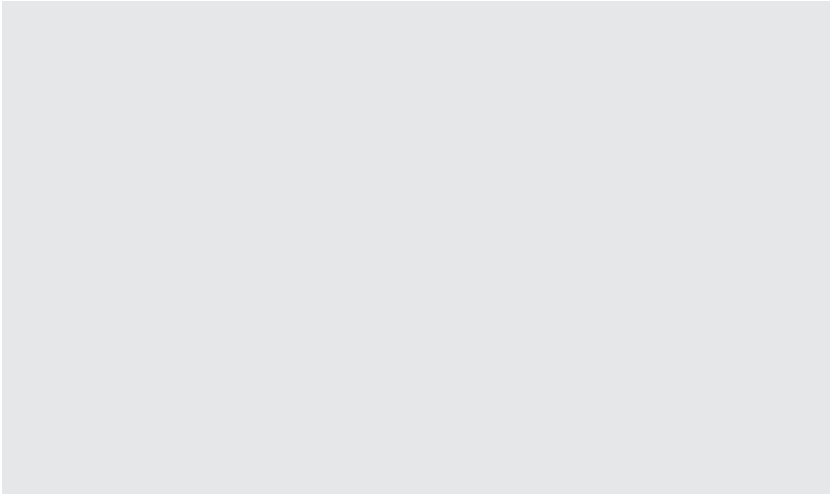


Plate 3 Jeanie Lindsay's artistic depiction of Macbeth, 1888, from GCA, vol. 194, Game Book, 1888–1900.

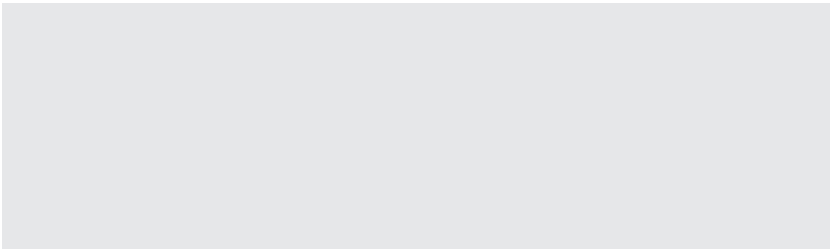


Plate 4 Extract, 1891, from GCA, vol. 194, Game Book, 1888–1900.

The surname 'Bowes' arrived at Glamis in the eighteenth century. Mary Eleanor Bowes (Plate 5) was the daughter and sole heir of the prominent County Durham coal magnate, George Bowes, MP, who was a direct descendant of Sir Robert Bowes, Queen Elizabeth I's Ambassador to Scotland from 1577 to 1583. Mary Eleanor married John, 9th Earl, in 1767, and a stipulation of her marriage contract, laid down by her father before his death in 1760, was that any future husbands should take the name of Bowes. The 9th Earl reluctantly relinquished his illustrious 'Lyon' surname, but although the marriage resulted in five children, it was not a happy one and it ended with the Earl's death in 1776.

As a wealthy heiress, Mary Eleanor soon became the focus of fortune-hunters, the most persistent and devious of which was to become her second

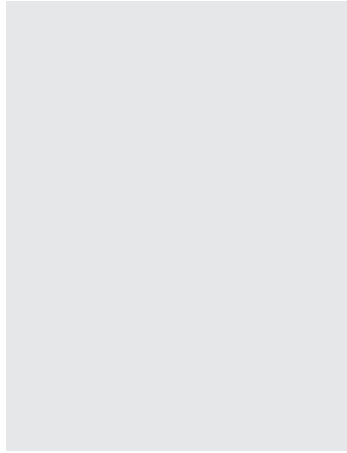


Plate 5 Framed miniature of an eighteenth-century engraving of Mary Eleanor Bowes, Countess of Strathmore.

husband, Andrew Robinson Stoney (Bowes), who duped her into marriage following a fake duel in 1777. Her extensive education, which was unusual for women at that period, did not protect her fortune, which became the property of her husband following their marriage, as was the custom of the times. A ruthless psychopath, his name survives today in the saying ‘stoney broke’, as he squandered much of Mary Eleanor’s fortune. After being subjected to years of virtual imprisonment and domestic violence, Mary Eleanor managed to escape from her husband and was eventually granted a divorce in 1786, after an arduous court case in the ecclesiastical courts. She became the first divorced woman in England to have her properties restored to her following a landmark Chancery decision. Her son from her first marriage, John, 10th Earl of Strathmore, took the name of Bowes, but following his death the name gradually evolved into Lyon Bowes and then Bowes Lyon. The castle archives include correspondence and legal documents referring to Mary Eleanor’s life and her subsequent divorce, but the most revealing of all is a volume of narrative, written in her own words, recalling the harrowing events of her second marriage, which makes for uncomfortable reading and is one of the earliest personal accounts of domestic abuse:

Mr. Bowes drove me into a corner of the room, and beat me about the head and face with his clenched fist, the strength of which I had so often experienced. My arms he bruised with some kind of stick – that happened to be at hand, and told me, ‘he would learn me to be beaten without crying out’.⁵

⁵ GCA, vol. 332, Lady Strathmore’s Narrative, 1795, 117.

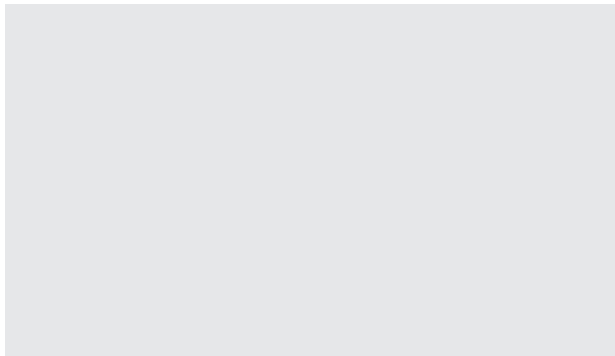


Plate 6 The 13th Earl with his five eldest sons, *c.*1864 (right to left): Claude, Francis, Ernest, Herbert and Patrick. Glamis Castle Archives, PH24/2.

One of the most rewarding roles of the Archivist can be assisting with enquiries, particularly when they are of a personal and serendipitous nature. A descendant of Ernest Bowes Lyon, who tragically died at the age of 33 in 1891 following a fall from a horse in Serbia, contacted Glamis regarding her ancestor, Hubert, who was Ernest's son. At the age of two Hubert survived the wreck of the SS *Sidon* in 1885 off Spain, along with his devoted nursemaid, Annie Jackson, but sadly his baby sister Susan and her nursemaid died. Subsequently, Annie Jackson's great-granddaughter visited Glamis and recalled the family tradition that Annie Jackson had in fact saved Hubert's life by tearing strips off her nightgown, tying her and Hubert together and to the mast, from where the captain eventually led them to safety the next day. A letter written by Annie in December 1885 survives in the archives, in which she reveals that her foot is recovering following her ordeal, and her attachment to 'dear little Master Hubert' is clear.⁶ The 13th Earl mentions Ernest and Hubert in his diaries and several photographs of Ernest survive in the archives, which illustrates how an archive can so often flesh out the bones of family history (Plate 6). Annie's great-granddaughter kindly donated documents and photographs to Glamis in July 2018 and her remarkable story will be featured in a 'Women of Glamis' exhibition in 2019.

One of the most notable records in the archives is the Visitors' Book, dated 1905–53. This covers the use of Glamis Castle as a convalescent hospital for soldiers during the First World War, as well as numerous royal visits, including those of King George V and Queen Mary, Princess Mary, Prince Edward and, of course, Albert and Elizabeth, the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, Queen Consort) and their daughters, Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret. HM Queen Elizabeth II's signature

⁶ GCA, box 215, bundle 7, Letter from Annie Jackson to Mr. Beal, 3 December 1885.

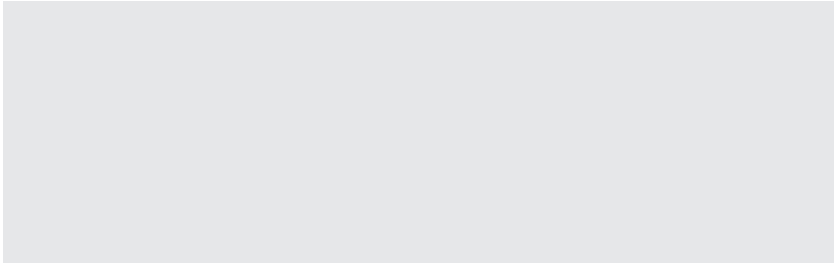


Plate 7 Signatures of the Duke and Duchess of York and their daughters, 'Lilibet' (later HM The Queen) and Margaret, 1931, Visitors' Book, vol. 271.

gradually evolves from 'Lilibet', aged five at her grandparents' Golden Wedding in 1931, to 'Elizabeth R.' in the year of her coronation in 1953 (Plate 7). This volume includes a cross section of society from royalty to commoners, which aptly reflects the diverse contents of the archives.

Glamis Castle Archives continues to grow, and accessions from 2010 onwards include further transfers from the Strathmore Estates Office, the Castle, the Castle Office and The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle, as well as individual donations. The custodianship of such a significant archive collection is a privilege, but also a great responsibility. The Archivist's job is to lovingly care for these records and to ensure that they are conserved and passed on to future generations. In the current climate of 'fake news' and Internet inaccuracies, the preservation of archives is an even greater priority. Glamis Castle Archives contains a cache of gems and its diverse contents provide huge potential to researchers; it is a prime example of how versatile private archives can be.