A portrait of a young man with long, dark, curly hair, wearing a white ruffled collar and a dark blue coat with a red lining. He is holding a sword. The background is dark.

ABERDEEN'S
JACOBITE TRAIL
AND COLLECTIONS

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The Jacobites and Bonnie Prince Charlie are amongst some of the most romantic figures in Scottish history. They are entirely evocative of a time and a place and help to define a certain sense of 'Scottishness'. This trail leaflet explores a number of different locations and buildings around Aberdeen city centre that have strong Jacobite connections. It also introduces the rich collections held by the City Council and the University of Aberdeen which represent excellent resources for learning more about Aberdeen's Jacobite associations and Jacobitism more widely.

This leaflet was funded by NEMP, the North East Museums Partnership, comprising Aberdeen City Council Museums and Galleries, Aberdeenshire Heritage and University of Aberdeen Historic Collections. NEMP aimed to publicise the rich collections held by various museums in the North East as well as the heritage of the area.

The Jacobites

The word Jacobite comes from Jacobus, the Latin version of the name James and indicates supporters, initially, of King James VII and II (James was VII of Scotland and II of England). James VII and II was deposed at the Glorious Revolution of 1689. His religious position was becoming clearly Roman Catholic at a time when this was illegal. James (a Stuart king) was deposed in favour of his daughter Mary and her husband William of Orange. The new regime under William and Mary was firmly Protestant and a more limited monarchy was created, in contrast to James's absolutist policies.

The Jacobite movement grew up around support for James. Although Jacobitism is associated with Catholicism many Episcopalians were also Jacobites. The 1707 Union of Scotland's and England's Parliaments aggravated the situation and helped to push the Jacobites further away from the legitimate political process. In 1715 the last Stuart monarch, Queen Anne, died without any children. The succession went to the 'next best' claimant, George, Elector of Hanover in Germany, who became George I of Great Britain.



James VII and II from Aberdeen's mercat cross



Queen Anne

The major Jacobite rebellions were played out against George I in 1715, by James Francis Edward Stuart (the Old Pretender son of James VII) and against George II in 1745, by Prince Charles Edward Stuart (James VII's grandson, the Young Pretender, also called Bonnie Prince Charlie).

Aberdeen and the Jacobite Rebellions

Aberdeen had an important role to play in both of the major Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745 and a role in the general struggle of the Jacobites against the government of the day. Loyalties in Aberdeen were divided: from the early 18th century there were some overt signs of anti-Hanoverian feeling but the extent of Jacobite sympathies did not become apparent until the rebellions themselves. During both rebellions a rebel Jacobite Council was elected in Aberdeen. In 1715 the rebel Council tried to help the Jacobite cause as far as possible but the rebellion never really developed any momentum. Neither the Earl of Mar nor the Old Pretender were great military leaders and it has been argued that they squandered this chance. The rebel army lacked any great cohesion and fell apart relatively quickly.

In 1745 Aberdeen was occupied by government troops under Sir John Cope. After they left, taking all of the town's arms and munitions with them, Aberdeen was occupied by rebel forces. Again a rebel Council was elected and they set about raising provisions and uplifting taxes to help the Jacobite cause. It was not until February 1746 that the government forces under the Duke of Cumberland entered Aberdeen and the legitimate order was restored. In contrast to the situation in 1716, troops stayed in Aberdeen for some time after the rebellion had ended. The Tolbooth was crammed full of prisoners and a campaign of taking witness statements was embarked upon by a militia force specially created for the purpose. The failure of the 1745 rebellion at Culloden field, near Inverness, on 16 April 1746, effectively ended all major military attempts to restore the deposed Stuart line, but discontent remained.



William and Mary from a coin of their reign

Front Cover
James Francis Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender, courtesy University of Aberdeen Historic Collections.

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THE TRAIL

1 Mercat Cross

Aberdeen's mercat cross dates from 1686 and was the traditional heart of the burgh. At the cross new monarchs were proclaimed: a locked staircase led from ground level to the top where announcements were made. The symbolism in making the announcement from this spot was important to the Jacobites and on 20 September 1715 the Old Pretender was declared king at the mercat crosses of Aberdeen and Old Aberdeen. Old Aberdeen is to the North, incorporating the cathedral and college, which was a separate town from Aberdeen until 1891.



Above New Aberdeen's mercat cross

In 1745 events at the cross took a more dramatic turn. On 25 September 1745 the rebels intended to make a similar announcement. Under the command of the Laird of Strathbogie the rebels could not find the keys to the cross and so an armed party was sent to Provost Morison's house. The first party failed to find him so a second party was organised with instructions to make it known that unless Morison surrendered himself they would burn down his house. By these means they found the Provost; they marched him at sword point to the Town House and then onto the roof of the cross. A further armed party had by this time rounded up a number of the councillors and two baillies, who were also marched at sword point to the cross. All of the Council officials were forced onto the top of the cross, along with James Petrie, Sheriff Substitute of Aberdeen, who declared the Young Pretender king and toasted his health. Petrie attempted to force Morison to toast Charles as monarch, which Morison refused to do. Petrie then poured wine down Morison's chest in a mock toast.

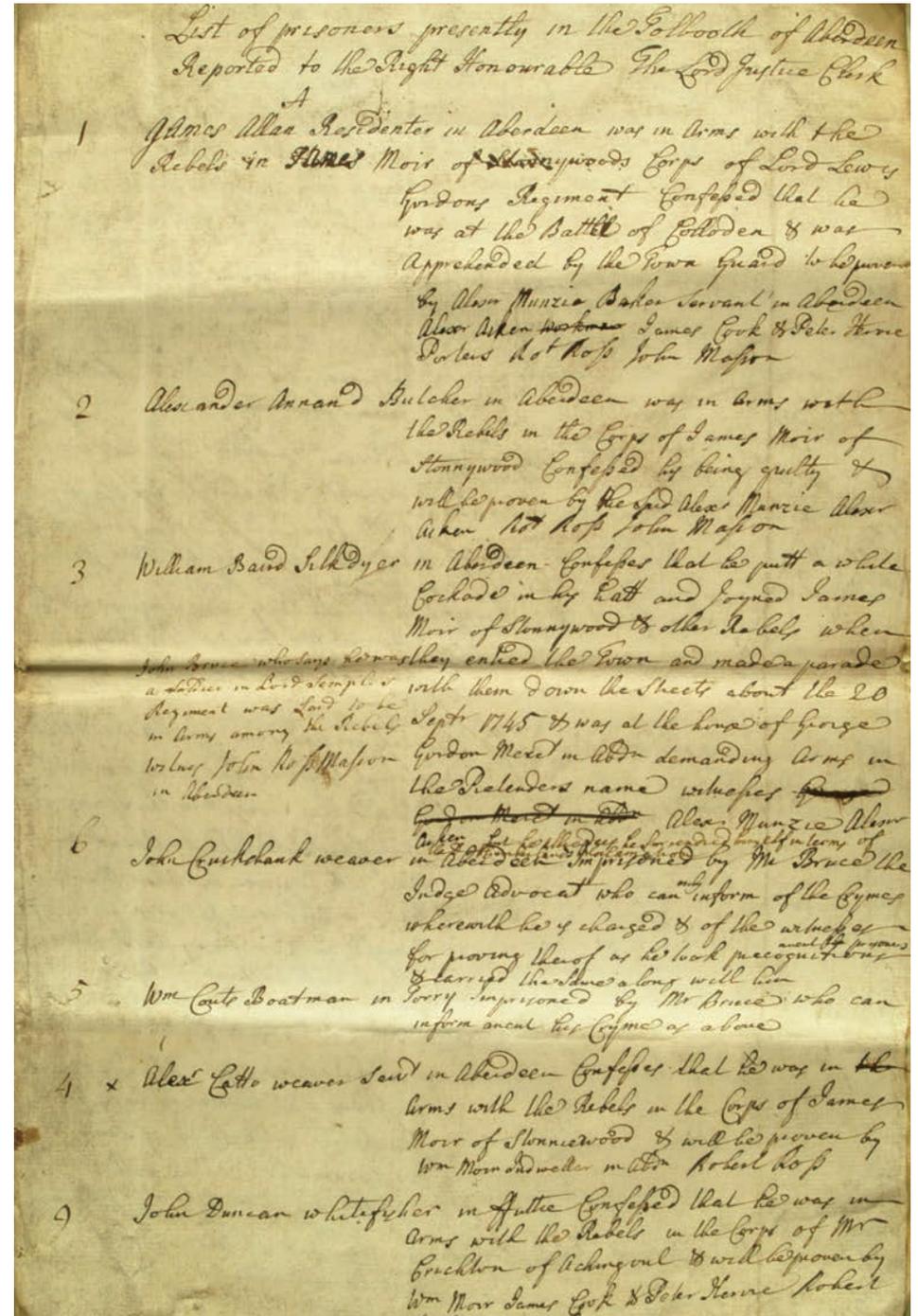
2 Tolbooth

Aberdeen's Tolbooth, properly the Wardhouse Tower of the Tolbooth (Aberdeen's prison) was built between 1616 and 1629 and had a significant role to play in the 1745 rebellion. After the declaration of the Young Pretender as king, the Laird of Strathbogie ordered all of the town's bells to be rung and the doors of the Tolbooth to be opened, freeing all of the prisoners, no doubt earning himself some dubious allies.

After the town was 'liberated' by Cumberland's forces in 1746, it was to the Tolbooth that known and suspected Jacobites were taken prior to trial. On 17 May 1746 William Murdoch, then keeper of the gaol, made a note of the names of the 34 prisoners he had received into custody. Three days later, on 20 May, this number had risen to 46 names, and by 25 July had reached a staggering 96 prisoners 'in the Tolbooth for treasonable practices...'. There followed a campaign of collecting statements of evidence against and confessions from these prisoners.

Opposite

List of prisoners in the Tolbooth in 1746, following defeat at the Battle of Culloden, courtesy of Aberdeen City Archives



10 April 1746 In presence of the Governours
 Compared William Murray Merchant in Aberdeen
 who was called by the Governours upon account that
 he had been some time out of Town and being
 Examined Declared that he went out of this Town
 the fifteenth day of March last to Kincaurie to
 to order the forage due out of that Estate to the Army
 and being there Advised by his Wife that there was
 little Business in Town and that he might take the
 Opportunity of visiting his friends in the Countrey
 Upon which He went to the house of David Simpson
 in Achlousen (who is Married to his wifes Sister) and
 Stayed there till Saturday last that he came back
 to Kincaurie Six Miles from this Town where he
 Stayed till Yesterday that he came in to this Town
 and was willing to Make Oath that During all this
 time he has had no Correspondence with any of the
 Rebels
 James Morrison Junr
 Alexander Robertson
 Wm Murray

The Governours Appoint the said William Murray
 to find bail to appear before the Magistrate & Governours
 of this Town at all times when called for under the
 penalty of one hundred pound Sterling money
 James Morrison Junr
 Alexander Robertson



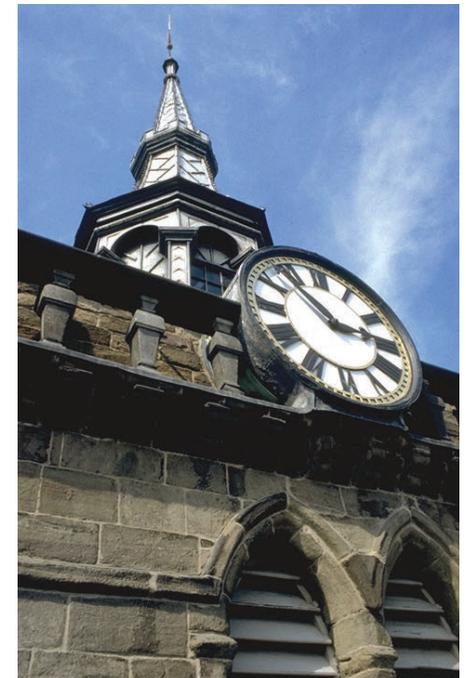
Opposite
 Confession of Will
 Murray held in the
 Tolbooth after the Battle
 of Culloden, courtesy of
 Aberdeen City Archives

Left
 Interactive model of
 Jacobite prisoners in The
 Tolbooth Museum

Below
 Aberdeen's Tolbooth

What is striking about the lists of prisoners is the social class involved. The majority were craftsmen or servants, few if any being professionals or merchants. Thus William Murdo, shoemaker in Aberdeen, James Thom, servant, George Wallace, George Wales and John Main, white fishers in Fittie were all imprisoned. Although an Episcopalian preacher, William Strachan, and one advocate, Thomas Mosman, were questioned they do not appear as prisoners in the Tolbooth.

Today the Tolbooth is Aberdeen's Museum of Civic History. One of the cells, now known as the Jacobite cell, explores this part of its history. An interactive model of Willie Baird, a real prisoner from 1746, sits next to his Jacobite compatriots James Innes and Alexander Annand and tells visitors his sorry tale, whilst the prisoners await trial and sentencing.



3 Town House

Today's impressive neo-Gothic Town House dates from the 1870s and incorporates elements of the previous Town House and Tolbooth, within which many of the great dramas and decisions of the rebellions were played out. In 1715 the rebel Council under Provost Bannerman advanced the cause of the rebels as far as was possible. The town's Lochaber axes were sent to the rebels, as was the printing press with its type, whilst the town's ministers were ordered to pray for the Old Pretender. A tax of £200 10s 9d was imposed on the town, with a further 'loan' ordered of £2000.

In 1746, when the rebel Council in favour of the Young Pretender was forced out of office, a new Council was elected. In the Town House the new Council deleted from the Burgesses' Book the names of all Burgesses created by the rebel Council, whilst all the acts of the rebel Council were formally rescinded. From here the new Council took considerable pains to collect supplies of straw, oats, hay, beef, bear and bread from Aberdeen and its hinterland to aid the government army. In fact between February and 1 April the collecting of these provisions generated a shocking 115 papers. These papers are held in Aberdeen City Archives. A collection known as Parcel L contains a fascinating wealth of information: papers generated by the rebel Council sit alongside the lists of Jacobite prisoners and witness statements collected against them.



New Town House in mid 20th century

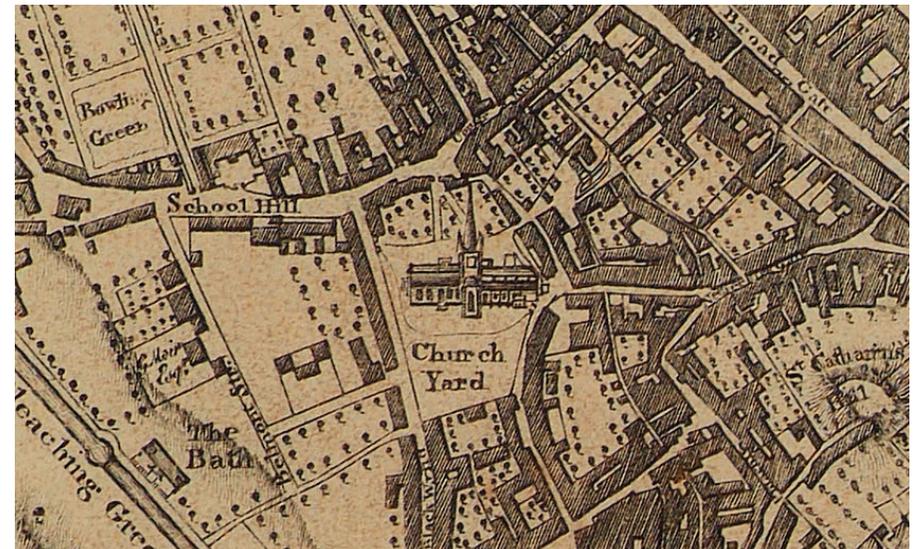
4 Kirk of St Nicholas

In 1715, the day after the Old Pretender was declared king at the mercat cross, elections were held for a new Council. Those loyal to the Hanoverians absented themselves whilst the Jacobite councillors met in the East Kirk of St Nicholas in order to elect a rebel Council: they elected Patrick Bannerman as Provost and John Leslie, John Burnett, William Simpson and John Fyfe as baillies. Writing his memoirs later, the brother of the Earl Marischal declared that this was done in order to shake off the 'double yolk, and [to] free themselves from slavery and usurpation by the restoration of king James 3rd...'. It has been reported that during the 1745 rebellion Cumberland's troops stabled their horses in the West Kirk of St Nicholas, which at that time was derelict. Both the West and East Kirks used by the Jacobites have since been replaced, the West Kirk in 1755 and the East in 1837-8.



Below A survey of Aberdeen by John Home in 1769 showing St Nicholas Kirk

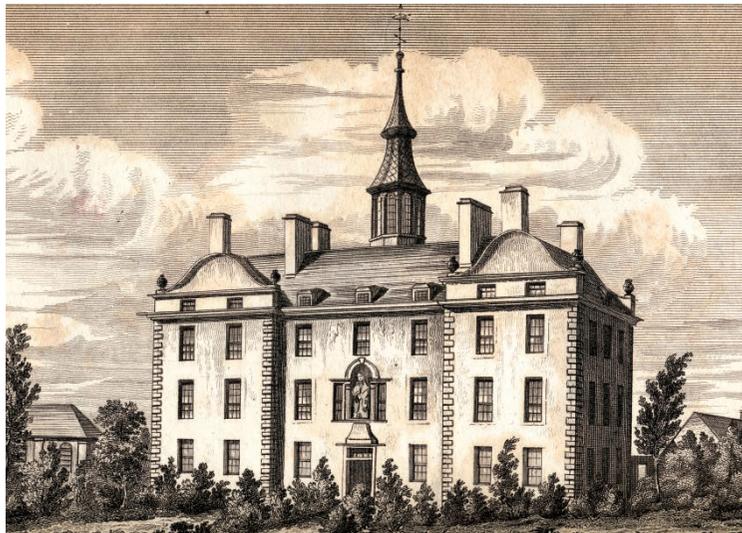
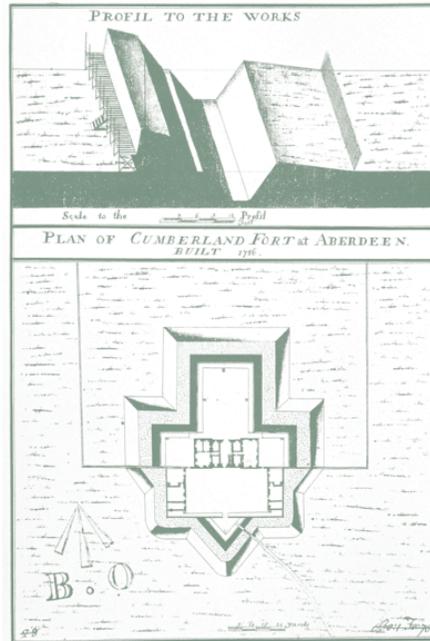
St Nicholas Kirk



5 Robert Gordon's College

In early 1746 when Cumberland arrived in Aberdeen with 5 regiments of Dragoons and 16 of Foot some of his troops were quartered at what was then the newly-built Robert Gordon's Hospital. The troops made a number of necessary alterations to the buildings. The windows were bricked up whilst a defensive ditch was dug around the building.

During groundwork to create an extension to the library at Robert Gordon's College in 2000, archaeologists from Aberdeen City Council Archaeological Unit uncovered a portion of ditch, which they were able to excavate prior to the digging of foundation trenches for the new building. Finds dated the ditch to the 18th century and suggest it was part of the works executed by Cumberland's troops. Amongst the finds were fragments of bowls and stems of clay pipes and fragments of beer bottles, evidence of some of the refreshments enjoyed by Cumberland's troops before they marched off to Culloden. In 1747 a debate emerged as to reparations being paid to the Hospital for damage done by Cumberland's troops. The College treasurer petitioned the Council, who in turn petitioned the King for recompense. Something of a compromise was eventually reached when goods (including timber) left by Cumberland's troops in Gordon's were rouped off to the highest bidder.



Above
Plan of Robert Gordon's Hospital when it was occupied by the Duke of Cumberland's troops

Left
Robert Gordon's Hospital in the 18th century



Marischal College as it would have appeared at the time of the 1745 rebellion, from University of Aberdeen Historic Collections

6 Marischal College

During the 1715 rebellion a number of teachers at both Marischal and King's Colleges were Jacobites. The Old Pretender landed at Peterhead on 22 December 1715 and travelled to Fetteresso, near Stonehaven, where a number of teachers had come to greet him. Later, on 3 March 1746, the Duke of Cumberland held a ball at Marischal College, to which all the great and the good in Aberdeen were invited. Whilst this was a social affair there was also, no doubt, a political motivation behind it: Cumberland and his officers would have noted carefully who attended and who did not, and how those who did attend behaved themselves.



Marischal College in early 20th century

7 Provost Skene's House

On 25 February 1746, only two days after the rebels had left Aberdeen, the royal army entered Aberdeen. Two days later Cumberland himself had entered the burgh. He was met at Schoolhill by the magistrates and councillors loyal to the government, who then took him to his lodgings at Skene's House. What is now known as Provost Skene's House is a rare architectural survival in Aberdeen dating, in part, from the mid 16th century. By turns it has been a high quality residence, a slum lodging and now a museum. For many years the House was known as 'Cumberland's' or 'Butcher Cumberland's Lodging'. Today a portrait of Cumberland hangs on the north staircase of the house above a set of 18th century muskets, as a reminder of this important visitor.



The Duke of Cumberland, courtesy of National Portrait Gallery of Scotland



Provost Skene's House

THE COLLECTIONS

Aberdeen City Council

Money and Medals of the Jacobite Period

Aberdeen City Council's numismatic collection contains more than 100 coins of the first two Hanoverian kings of Great Britain, George I and George II. These coins would have been in general circulation throughout the country at the time of the Jacobite rebellions. Denominations range from the splendid gold guinea to the humble farthing and among the George II examples are several which bear the dates 1745 and 1746.

Representing the exiled Stuart dynasty are two propaganda medals of the Old Pretender which bear on their reverses the Latin word *Reddite* meaning 'restore (my kingdom to me)' and also a Scottish silver guinea coin struck in the 19th century from dies prepared in 1716. Perhaps most interesting of all are three small 'touchpieces' issued by the Old Pretender, here known as 'James VIII' and his two sons who are styled 'Charles III' and 'Henry IX'. It was believed that the glandular disease scrofula could be cured if the sufferer carried a coin or medal which had been touched by a person of royal blood. These unusual silver pieces were specially struck for use in the 'touching' ceremony.

Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums Collections contain a flintlock pistol said to have been used at Culloden. The Collections also contain a number of items related directly to Bonnie Prince Charlie. These include a piece of red tartan said to be from his waistcoat and a piece of the mast of the ship, *Culloden*, upon which Charles made his escape from the Highlands following defeat in 1746.

For further information please contact Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums at aagminfo@aberdeencity.gov.uk or 01224 523700.



Touchpiece used by the Young Pretender

University of Aberdeen

In 1919, William MacBean, who was born in Nairn and built his career as a businessman in New York, donated his outstanding collection of printed Stuart and Jacobite material to Aberdeen University. Consisting of over 4,500 books and pamphlets, 1,600 prints and 100 broadsheets, - much of the material is contemporary with the period - the collection covers every aspect of the uprisings, from the broader aspects of British political history, to military events, intrigue and propaganda. Overall, the Collection is regarded as the most comprehensive resource on the Jacobite era outside the British Library, and contains accounts, including proclamations, by the principal protagonists, as well as the writings and poetry of respective supporters and more neutral observers. As texts they vary from closely reasoned and careful argumentation to the factious and downright scurrilous. The prints themselves include portraits, depictions of historical incidents and geographical and topographical subjects.



Important Jacobite themes are also found amongst the 4,000 archive collections held by the University. The baneful effects of the 1715 Jacobite rising, and the removal of many teaching staff, because of their support for James VII's son, can be seen in the records of both King's and Marischal College. And among the family papers held by the University are the letters of Alexander Forbes, Lord Pitsligo (1678-1762) political theorist and Jacobite army officer in both uprisings.

The University's museum collections also include a variety of material dating from the 18th century, including some items closely associated with the Jacobite sympathies of the colleges. For example, both King's College and Marischal College commissioned a series of paintings of monarchs to display their loyalty to the Stuart and then Hanoverian monarchs, while in the years after 1745, King's College employed the Jacobite artist Cosmo Alexander to restore paintings in the collection. There are also many other relevant items which have joined the university's museum collections since their establishment in the later 18th century. These include coins, medals, weapons and jewellery.

For further information please contact the University of Aberdeen's Historic Collections at speclib@abdn.ac.uk 01224 272598.

Above
Commemorative medal of the Battle of Culloden, from University of Aberdeen Historic Collections

Right
Dispatch box of Field Marshal Keith, from University of Aberdeen Historic Collections





Aberdeen's Jacobite Trail and Collections is one of a series of themed trails being developed around the City.

Further details about these trails can be found at: www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/trails and at www.aagm.co.uk

For further information contact

03000 200 293
info@aagm.co.uk
www.aagm.co.uk

Aberdeen Information Centre
01224 269180

www.visitscotland.com/destinations-maps/aberdeen-city-shire

For public transport information contact Travel Line
www.travelinescotland.com

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