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Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

Guide to the John Bruce Collection

OSB MSS 73



by Diane J. Ducharme

May 2002

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
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CALL NUMBER: OSB MSS 73

CREATOR: Bruce, John, 1802-1869

TITLE: John Bruce collection

DATES: 1835-1845

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 0.4 linear feet (1 box)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: Series I, Letters to John Bruce, consists almost entirely of business and professional letters addressed to him in his roles as Secretary of the Camden Society and editor of many of its early publications. Correspondents include Octavian Blewitt; Sir Robert Harry Inglis; William Jerdan; Macvey Napier; Julia Pardoe; and Thomas Joseph Pettigrew.
Series II, Letters of Caroline Amelia Halsted, contains 35 letters from the popular historian to Bruce on the subjects of her royal biographies; her negotiations with publishers and research libraries; and her thoughts on her position as a woman historian.

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Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Ongoing collection of documents acquired by gift and purchase from various sources. Source information is recorded on the folders. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Conditions Governing Use

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Preferred Citation

John Bruce Collection. James Marshall and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

This finding aid is updated periodically to account for new materials that have been added to the collection. The date of the most recent update is noted on the title page. For information on material that may have been acquired for the collection since the last update, please consult the Public Service Desk.

JOHN BRUCE, 1802-1869

John Bruce was born in London and educated in England and Aberdeen. While he was trained in English law, he did not practice after 1840, and instead pursued his historical and antiquarian interests.

In particular, Bruce devoted much of his energy and attention to the newly important scholarly societies and publication projects of his day. Bruce held two offices in the Society of Antiquaries and wrote many articles for its journal, *Archaeologia*, including his "Inedited Documents Relating to the Condemnation and Imprisonment of Sir Thomas More" (xxvii, 10) and the "Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Paston Letters" (v. xli, 15). For the Parker Society he edited *The Works of Roger Hutchinson* (1842), and was co-editor of *The Correspondence of Matthew Parker* (1853) with T. T. Perowne.

Bruce was a principal founder and officer of the Camden Society, and contributed many of its early publications, including its first, *The Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV...* (1839). For the Society, Bruce edited selections of correspondence and documents relating to Elizabeth I, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leceister, Robert Cecil, Lord Burleigh, James I, and Charles I. In addition, Bruce edited the first publications of *Letters and Papers of the Verney Family...* (1853); the *Liber Famelicus* of Sir James Whitlocke (1858); and the *Journal of a Voyage into the Mediterranean* of Sir Kenelm Digby (1868). Bruce also offered advice and assistance to many historians and biographers of the period, including Caroline Amelia Halsted, the first biographer of Richard III to draw upon unpublished sources such as MS Harleian 433.

The project that occupied the final decades of his scholarly career was the 12 volumes of the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Charles I...* (1858-71). In 1861 he was appointed a Trustee of the Sir John Sloan's Museum. John Bruce died suddenly in London on October 28, 1869, his wife having predeceased him.

Scope and Contents

This finding aid encompasses accessions of single manuscripts and small groups of manuscripts and other papers, by or pertaining to John Bruce, acquired by the library from a variety of sources. Materials incorporated into the collection prior to May 2002 have been organized into two series.

[Series I, Letters to John Bruce](#), has been arranged alphabetically by correspondent and contains business and professional letters addressed to Bruce, frequently in his role as an officer of the Camden Society. Topics include meetings, membership nominations, dues collection, and publication plans of the societies. Many of the letters date from the first years of the Camden Society's existence and offer support for the new venture. Lord Mahon, on the other hand, pointed out that "the Roxburgh, Bannatyne, Abbotsford and other societies already existing seem to be quite adequate to the purpose required," and declined to join the Camden (Box 1, folder 74).

Several correspondents address Bruce's personal scholarly pursuits. Letters by John Hymers and Cornelius Nickerson discuss the editing of Roger Hutchinson's works. The letters of Macvey Napier reveal his editorial policy for historical articles in the *Edinburgh Review* and explain his lack of interest in a Bruce submission: "nor have I ever heard of Sarah Martin, either by herself, or in connection with 'prison discipline.'...Look about you for an article *similar* to the last." Julia Pardoe's letters thank Bruce for his encouragement and request further advice. A. F. Holt of Eton College explains his failure to locate a volume in the college library: "the catalogue...is imperfect as it is, and the present position of the books does not, in any degree, correspond with it."

Finally, other letters offer more general insights into mid-nineteenth century scholarship. Letters from the widow and son of James Bird, including two to the popular royal biographer Agnes Strickland, concern the relief provided by the Literary Fund Society and George Bird's hope for Strickland's assistance in continuing to edit "Pawsey's Ladies' Pocket Book." The Rev. Robert Dixon's letters detail his attempts to rebuild the only college (and the only library) on the Isle of Man. Robert Eden, John Mee Mathews, and J. A. Cramer discuss their own research projects.

[Series II, Letters of Caroline Amelia Halsted](#), contains chronologically arranged letters to Bruce, primarily on the writing of her *Richard III as Duke of Gloucester and King of England* (1844). Halsted requests extracts from the then-unpublished Croyland Chronicles; discusses her use of manuscript sources and society publications; sends Bruce completed chapters for "the pruning knife;" and asks advice on the selection of frontispieces, negotiating with her publisher, Longmans, and the appropriate use of gift copies.

Halsted's letters also reveal her strong sense of her position as a woman historian. As early as December 8, 1842, she expressed misgivings about writing "a book that...is *almost* too strong for a woman's pen." In a letter of February 28, 1844, she states: "I sometimes think I have too many notes--and too much Appendix--and yet I thought I ought to give my authorities, considering the suspicious way in which a *woman's* opinion wd. be viewed, unless well backed, on a subject so *important*." Halsted also reminds Bruce that research for an essay on "'the progress of opinions' concerning Richard... could *not* be accomplished, except at the British Museum."

Her later letters contain requests for copies of reviews, comments on sales of *Richard III*, and discussions of her search for a new subject. While Halsted accepted Bruce's discouragement about Alfred the Great, and considered writing a biography of a woman, she rejected the idea that she should write fiction. "I have no imagination for fairy tales and I am too matter of fact for *novels*--but I love historical research; heart and soul goes to work on it." (Box 1, folder 81)

The Halsted letters also contain news of her travels and her home life, as well as repeated inquiries about the health of Mrs. Bruce and plans for visits to London.

Collection Contents

Series I: Letters to John Bruce, 1835-1845

0.30' (0.75 box)

Series I, *Letters to John Bruce*, is alphabetically arranged by name of correspondent.

	ADAMSON, JOHN	
b. 1, f. 1	ALS to JB; Newcastle upon Tyne	1845
	ALLNATT, R. H.	
b. 1, f. 2	3 ALS to JB and ALS to "My dear Richards" Concerning literary matters and the Society of Antiquaries	1840-41
	BARNWELL, CHARLES FREDERICK	
b. 1, f. 3	ALS to "Sir Henry;" British Museum Proposing Rev. William Staunton for membership in the Camden Society.	1840 Jan 21
	BENNETT, J. W.	
b. 1, f. 4	3 ALS to JB; 3 Rosomon's Buildings, Islington	1841-42
	BERGNE, JOHN BRODRIBB	
b. 1, f. 5	3 ALS to JB Concerning the Society of Antiquaries and the <i>Numismatic Chronicle</i> .	1842-45
	BIRCH, CHARLES	
b. 1, f. 6	2 ALS to JB Concerning the Camden Society; thanks for books. With: ALS to "My dear Knighte," n.d.	n.d.
	BIRD, EMMA (MRS. JAMES BIRD)	
b. 1, f. 7	ALS to JB Thanking him for his assistance in the Literary Fund Society grant	1839 Jun 16
b. 1, f. 8	ALS to Agnes Strickland Thanking her for her assistance in the Literary Fund Society grant; describing needs of herself and her children	1839 Jun 2
	BIRD, GEORGE	
b. 1, f. 9	ALS to Agnes Strickland Assuming editorship of "Pawsey's Ladies' Pocket Book;" news of his mother and siblings	1839 May 12
	BIRKBECK, THOMAS	
b. 1, f. 10	ALS to JB Concerning his subscription	n.d.

	[BLACK, WILLIAM?]	
b. 1, f. 11	ALS to JB; 16 Clements' Inn	1837 May 1
	BLEWITT, OCTAVIAN, 1810-1884	
b. 1, f. 12	17 ALS to JB Concerning business of the Camden Society and the Parker Society	1840-44
	BOSWORTH, JOSEPH, 1789-1876	
b. 1, f. 13	ALS to JB; Carrington near Nottingham Concerning the Camden Society	1841 Aug 31
	BRÖMET, WILLIAM	
b. 1, f. 14	3 ALS to JB Concerning his membership in the Shakespeare Society; history of the wainscoting in Eton College Chapel	1841-42, n.d.
	BRUCE, C. D.	
b. 1, f. 15	3 ALS to JB Concerning copies of the Domesday Book, including that belonging to "my uncle Lord Elgin"	1835 Jun-Jul
	BRYAN, G., REV.	
b. 1, f. 16	2 ALS to JB Concerning his research in the Wyatt Papers and the Camden Society	1840, 1845
	[CANDLER, JOSIAH?]	
b. 1, f. 17	ALS to JB; Patent Office	1837 Feb
	CARLISLE, NICHOLAS, 1771-1847	
b. 1, f. 18	ALS to JB; Somerset Place With 3 printed forms completed by Carlisle, probably notifications of meetings of the Society of Antiquaries sent to JB, 1836-39	1843 Jul 17
	CARTHEW, GEORGE ALFRED, 1807-1882	
b. 1, f. 19	3 ALS to JB Concerning the Camden Society	1839, n.d.
	CASSAN, STEPHEN HYDE, 1789-1841	
b. 1, f. 20	ALS to JB Soliciting a subscription	n.d.
	CHRISTMAS, HENRY, 1811-1868	
b. 1, f. 21	ALS to JB; Sion College	1842 Mar 11
	COCHRANE, JOHN GEORGE, 1781-1852	

COCHRANE, JOHN GEORGE, 1781-1852 (continued)

b. 1, f. 22 5 ALS to JB; London Library 1843 Feb-Nov
 Concerning research and Sir Harry Verney

COURTENAY, THOMAS PEREGRINE, 1782-1841

b. 1, f. 23 AL (in the third person) to JB 1840 Mar 9

COXE, H. O. (HENRY OCTAVIUS), 1811-1881

b. 1, f. 24 ALS to JB 1841 Nov 22
 Sending information on Roger of Wendover (not present)

CRAMER, J. A. (JOHN ANTHONY), 1793-1848

b. 1, f. 25 2 ALS to JB; Oxford n.d.
 Concerning his progress on *The Second Book of Nicander Nucius*

DAVIES, THOMAS STEPHENS, 1795-1851

b. 1, f. 26 ALS to JB; Woolwich 1839 Aug 28

DE GREY, THOMAS PHILIP DE GREY, EARL, 1781-1859

b. 1, f. 27 AL (in the third person) to JB; Newby Hall [1839?] Aug 21
 Concerning Camden Society

DEVON, FREDERICK

b. 1, f. 28 ALS to JB n.d.
 Complaining of a reviewer

DIXON, ROBERT, REV.

b. 1, f. 29 4 ALS to JB; The College, Isle of Man 1844-45
 Concerning his efforts to rebuild King William's College after the fire of
 January, 1844

[DURHAM, SAMUEL ASTLEY, D. 1858?]

b. 1, f. 30 ALS to JB; 29 Prebend St., Camden Town 1843 Mar 10

DYCE, WILLIAM, 1806-1864

b. 1, f. 31 ALS to JB; School of Design, Somerset House 1841 Mar 25

EDEN, ROBERT, 1803-1898

b. 1, f. 32 4 ALS to JB 1841-42, n.d.
 Concerning his progress on *Examinations and Writings of John Philpot* for
 the Parker Society

EDWARDS, EDWARD, 1812-1886

b. 1, f. 33 2 ALS to JB 1840 May, Nov
 Concerning Camden Society

FARR, EDWARD

HOLT, A. F. (continued)

b. 1, f. 44	ALS to JB; Eton College Concerning his failure to locate a requested book	1841 Sep 24
HUSSEY, RICHARD CHARLES		
b. 1, f. 45	ALS to W. J. Thomas; "at Mrs. Suthe1rland's, Merrow, Guildford" Concerning Camden Society dues	1841 Mar 5
HYMERS, JOHN, 1803-1887		
b. 1, f. 46	2 ALS to JB Concerning the Parker Society's interest in publishing the works of Roger Hutchinson	1841 Jun, Sep
INGLIS, ROBERT HARRY, SIR, 1786-1855		
b. 1, f. 47	4 ALS and 2 engraved invitations, signed, to JB Concerning Camden Society matters	1838-41, n.d.
JENNER, CHARLES H.		
b. 1, f. 48	ALS to JB; 1 Chesterfield St. Concerning Sir Herbert Jenner's information on John Hayward	1840 Jan 27
JENNER, HERBERT, SIR		
b. 1, f. 49	ALS to JB; Chesterfield St. Concerning John Hayward	1840 Jan 16
JERDAN, WILLIAM, 1782-1869		
b. 1, f. 50	3 ALS to JB and circular letter, signed Circular letter solicits support for a plan to encourage "the Authors of England"	1839, n.d.
JERMYN, JAMES, D. 1852		
b. 1, f. 51	2 ALS to JB; Reydon Concerning Camden Society business	n.d.
KING, THOMAS WILLIAM, 1801-1872		
b. 1, f. 52	ALS to JB; College of Arms Concerning ceremonial for the coronation of Henry VII. Signed, "Thos. Wm. King, Rouge Dragon"	1842 Sep 21
KÖNIG, CHARLES DIETRICH EBERHARD, 1774-1851		
b. 1, f. 53	2 ALS to JB; British Museum Concerning Camden Society dues	1840 Jan, Feb
LANDON, WHITTINGTON HENRY, 1804-1883		
b. 1, f. 54	ALS to JB; 4 Lincoln's Inn Fields Informing him of his election to the Literary Fund Society Committee	n.d.

LECHMERE, CHARLES		
b. 1, f. 55	AL (in the third person) to JB; State Paper Office Enclosing copies (not present)	n.y. Jul 4
LICHFIELD, S.		
b. 1, f. 56	ALS to H. Merivale Proposing William Whateley for the Camden Society	1839 May 4
LISTER, T. H. (THOMAS HENRY), 1800-1842		
b. 1, f. 57	ALS to JB; Kenthouse, Knightsbridge	1843 Apr 29
LODGE, JOHN		
b. 1, f. 58	3 ALS to JB; Magdalene College, Cambridge Concerning the loan of manuscripts from Peterhouse	1838-39
MANSEL, JAMES T.		
b. 1, f. 59	ALS to JB Declining to join the Society	1841 Jan 3
MARKLAND, J. H. (JAMES HEYWOOD), 1788-1864		
b. 1, f. 60	2 ALS to JB Camden Society business	1842, 1844
[MATHEW, JOHN MEE]		
b. 1, f. 61	ALS to JB enclosing ALS with notes to the Camden Society Board; Temple Contains notes on Harl. MS 2307 and proposals for an edition	1842 Jul 28
MERIVALE, JOHN HERMAN, 1779-1844		
b. 1, f. 62	ALS to JB; Court of Bankruptcy, Basinghall St. Will meet his "co-auditors" tomorrow	1839 Apr 26
NAPIER, MACVEY, 1776-1847		
b. 1, f. 63	6 ALS to JB; Edinburgh Concerning <i>The Edinburgh Review</i>	1839-44?, n.d.
NICHOLSON, CORNELIUS, 1804-1889		
b. 1, f. 64	2 ALS to JB; Caesar Head, Kendal Concerning provincialisms in the language of Roger Hutchinson	1842 Dec
NICHOLSON, W.		
b. 1, f. 65	ALS to W. M. Thomas	1842
OUSELEY, GORE, SIR, 1770-1844		

OUSELEY, GORE, SIR, 1770-1844 (continued)

b. 1, f. 66	ALS to JB; 41 Upper Brook Street Camden Society dues	1840 Apr 25
PARDOE, MISS (JULIA), 1806-1862		
b. 1, f. 67	3 ALS to JB Concerning literary matters and messages from her father. Signed, "J.S.H. Pardoe."	n.d.
PARSONS, DANIEL		
b. 1, f. 68	ALS to JB; 7 Richmond Hill, Bath Declining to join the Camden Society	1840 Apr 13
PENROSE, THOMAS		
b. 1, f. 69	ALS to [John Bruce]; W-- Vicarage Resigning from the Society	n.d.
PETTIGREW, THOMAS JOSEPH, 1791-1865		
b. 1, f. 70	6 ALS to John Bruce; Savile Row Society of Antiquaries business and social engagements	1840-42, n.d.
PIDGEON, HENRY CLARK, 1807-1880		
b. 1, f. 71	ALS to John Bruce Concerning his work on Roman and Anglo-Saxon costume. With sketches in pencil on tracing paper of two figures in Roman dress	n.d.
ROBY, JOHN, 1793-1850		
b. 1, f. 72	ALS and AL (in the third person) to John Bruce; Rochdale Concerning Camden Society	1839, 1840
ROSSER, W. H. (WILLIAM HENRY)		
b. 1, f. 73	ALS to JB; 7 Warwick Court, Grays Inn Invitation to a performance of a Christmas masque written for the Society of Noviomagus	1839 Dec 19
STANHOPE, PHILIP HENRY STANHOPE, EARL, 1805-1875		
b. 1, f. 74	ALS to Lord Henniker; Walmer Declining to join the Camden Society. Signed, "Mahon." Followed by ALS from Jonathan Gooding to Lord Henniker, 1838 Dec 7, regretting Mahon's refusal but reporting that the "Society goes on well."	1838 Nov 21
UNIDENTIFIED		
b. 1, f. 75	ALS to JB; London	1845 Feb 8
UNIDENTIFIED		
b. 1, f. 76	ALS to JB	n.d.

Series II: Letters from Caroline Amelia Halsted, 1841-1845*0.20' (0.25 box)*Series II, *Letters from Caroline Amelia Halsted*, is chronologically arranged.

b. 1, f. 77	6 ALS to JB	1841-42
b. 1, f. 78	7 ALS to JB	1843 Aug-Dec
b. 1, f. 79	7 ALS to JB	1844 Jan-Apr
b. 1, f. 80	7 ALS to JB	1844 May-Dec
b. 1, f. 81	8 ALS to JB	1845 Jan-Oct

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Learned institutions and societies -- Great Britain
Learning and scholarship -- Great Britain
Scholars -- Great Britain
Women authors
Women biographers
Women historians -- Great Britain

Geographic Names

Great Britain -- Intellectual life -- 19th century

Occupations

Authors

Names

Blewitt, Octavian, 1810-1884
Bruce, John, 1802-1869
Halsted, Caroline A. (Caroline Amelia), 1803 or 1804-1848
Inglis, Robert Harry, Sir, 1786-1855
Jerdan, William, 1782-1869
Napier, Macvey, 1776-1847
Pardoe, Julia, 1804?-1862
Pettigrew, Thomas Joseph, 1791-1865

Corporate Bodies

Camden Society (Great Britain)
Society of Antiquaries of London