

Balfour archive bought by National Records of Scotland

Thousands of items from the family archive of former British Prime Minister Arthur Balfour (1848-1930) have been bought by National Records of Scotland (NRS), on behalf of the nation.

Balfour was Prime Minister from 1902 to 1905. As Foreign Secretary, he was one of the principal British delegates at the Versailles peace conference in 1919, which negotiated the peace treaty following the First World War. He is renowned as the author of the 1917 Balfour Declaration conferring British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

The Balfour family was very well-connected in scientific, artistic and political circles. Several family members were closely involved with the women's suffrage movement, perhaps most notably Lady Frances Balfour (1858-1931), sister-in-law of the 1st and 2nd Earls of Balfour.

Dr Alan Borthwick, Head of Private Records for National Records of Scotland, said: "This collection offers a remarkable insight into life in a family whose influence stretched around the world; revealing them at home, at work and at play. We are pleased to have secured this collection, which includes items from 1577 to 1956, for the nation."

Culture Minister Neil Gray said: "This purchase safeguards a remarkable collection which offers insights into the life of

an influential Scottish family over a huge period of history.

“The public ownership of the Balfour archive not only ensures that it is preserved whole and in Scotland forever, but that the public and researchers have the opportunity to see and study it.

“I look forward to finding out more about the highlights in this collection once National Records of Scotland have carried out further detailed research on its content.”

Michael Brander and Lord Balfour, speaking on behalf of the family, said: “Our forebear, Arthur James Balfour, was at the centre of many pivotal events over his remarkable life and the dilemmas he faced, including Irish home rule, free trade and unwarranted aggression in Europe, still resonate today. We are delighted that his papers have found a permanent home at the National Records of Scotland for future scholarship.”



The Balfour Family

do not offer ourselves to her.
Anyhow I agree with all you
say about not concentrating
our minds ~~of~~ too much upon
"Armageddon N^o. 2". What is
wanted is a better atmosphere,
and that I believe is slowly
coming.

Yours very sincerely.

Winston S. C.

Churchill's letter to Balfour

Oct 29 - 1922 cont'd.

Lloyd George was also full of his reception in Edinburgh. They had got out of the train at the Haymarket and motored in an open hued motor to the East end of Musselburgh, where they got into Arthur's motor, & so here. There were crowds in the street the whole way, cheering & enthusiastic in spite of bitter cold weather & showers of rain & sleet. I was interested to see how much Lloyd George dwelt upon these crowds, & also the crowd outside the Hall & at the Station at Glasgow. He clearly thought them of great importance as showing which way the wind blew, - of much greater importance than I should have ever thought they were. All agreed that from what they had heard, ~~the~~ Bonar Law's meeting at Glasgow was very flat. They fully realized that any big rig could fill St Andrew's Hall: therefore the full meeting did not impress them, whereas Lloyd George at Ayr looked upon crowds in the street as of much greater significance. Sir R. Horne made a prophecy of how many Conservatives would get in at the election - ~~the~~ ^{counting} both sections. He said 310. Mr Davis said 375. They said that B. Law was like a tried out man, & there was much amusement over his saying in his speech



Photograph of AJ Balfour and David Lloyd George