

The George Don [Sr.] Collection at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Reference Number GB 235 GDS

Title: George Don [Sr.] Collection

Dates of Creation: 1799-1917

Name of Creator: Isaac Bayley Balfour (1853-1922) [collection consists of original documents from George Don, published articles about him, testimonies from people that knew him, and letters about him, but all of it seems to have been brought together by Balfour]

Administrative / Biographical History:

George Don (1764-1814)

Thought to have been born at Ireland Farm in the parish of Menmuir, Forfarshire around October 1764, George Don was a man of many talents, but it was botany he excelled in. At eight or nine years of age Don's family moved to Forfar, his father working as a shoemaker in the town. Don was presumably educated at the local parish school, and on leaving was sent to Dunblane to learn the trade of watch and clock making, but throughout this time, Don was happier collecting plants, forming his own collection of dried and pressed plants (or herbarium) and classifying them using his own system.

Watchmaking, and his father's occupation of shoe making clearly did not interest Don, as by the age of 15 he was sent to Dupplin Castle in Perthshire, the seat of the Earl of Kinnoull to work in the Gardens. It was here he made his first botanic discovery which was named after him – a moss, *Gymnostonium Doniana*. He also began making regular plant hunting trips to the Highlands, exploring and increasing his knowledge of the Scottish flora. He also met a young woman, Caroline Stewart whilst on a botanical ramble from Dupplin – she was later to become his wife.

In 1780 or 1781, Don moved south to England, moving from place to place for around eight years including London, Oxford and Bristol, working as a short-term gardener before moving back to Scotland and Glasgow to resume his trade as a watchmaker, although still spending his spare time botanising.

By 1797 Don had married Caroline and had obtained a plot of land in Forfar known as Dove or Doo Hillock. He built a house here and began his botanic garden which soon earned a reputation for its remarkable range, number and rarity of hardy plants.

In 1802, the position of Principal Gardener or Superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh became vacant and George Don was recommended for the post despite having no formal qualifications or scientific training; proof of how highly regarded his practical experience and botanic garden at Doo Hillock was. Don was reluctant to leave Forfar, and the poor pay at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh was hardly an incentive but he was finally persuaded to go and took up his new duties in Edinburgh at the

end of 1802, leaving his beloved Doo Hillock in the capable hands of his father, Alexander.

Whilst in Edinburgh, Don spent a lot of time botanising with Dr. Patrick Neill, discovering many new species of wild flowers and cryptogams (lichens, mosses and fungi). He became an Associate of the Linnaean Society and attended medical classes at the University, which, although he never qualified as a doctor, he did use on his return to Forfar. He also began to publish (thanks to Patrick Neill who was a publisher) producing the first edition of *Herbarium Britannicum*. He also contributed to some other works, including his 'Account of the Native Plants in the County of Forfar' in the Revd. James Headrick's 1813 'Agricultural Survey of the County of Angus'.

In 1806 Don left the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh to return to Doo Hillock, possibly because of a difficult relationship with Regius Keeper Daniel Rutherford (Neill believed Don far exceeded Rutherford as a botanist – Rutherford was principally a chemist) but probably more likely because he missed the freedom to botanise around 'Angus-shire' as he called it, in particular his favourite location for plant collecting, Glen Clova, pioneering the exploration of this area.

Unfortunately, Don concentrated so much on the exploration of the local hills and glens that he began to ignore the commercial side of his botanic garden – the nursery and market garden. George and Caroline had a large family, 15 children but only six still surviving by 1814, and with little or no income coming in, by 1813 they were dependent on neighbours for subsistence rations. Don still carried on with his excursions coming back from one of them, in the autumn of 1813, with a severe cold. Necessity meant he had to carry on working and the cold worsened. Eventually he was bedridden with a suppurating throat, and after six weeks of agony he died on the 14th January 1814 at Doo Hillock at the age of 49.

Don left his family destitute and dependant on friends and Don's fellow botanists for charity. There were six children, the eldest, a girl, dying shortly after Don. The two eldest sons, George Don [Jr.] (1798-1856) and David Don (1799-1841) had both begun botanical careers by the time of their father's death and both eventually did very well, George [Jr.] becoming foreman of the Chelsea Physic Garden and collecting plants for the Horticultural Society of London in Brazil, the West Indies, Sao Tome and Sierra Leone. David became the Linnaean Society's Librarian and Professor of Botany at King's College. Both published works as well. The three younger boys including Patrick Neill Don (1806-1876) and James Edward Smith Don (1807-1861) also had careers in horticulture in England.

The striking contrast between the wealth of knowledge accumulated by Don and the poverty he was living in at the time of his death is notable. He was buried in an unmarked grave in Forfar's Old Parish church. By the late 1800's there were calls for more recognition of Don's achievements which gathered pace at the start of the 20th century and lead to a marble obelisk being erected over his grave and unveiled by George Claridge Druce in 1910. This collection appears to have been collected and brought together by Isaac

Bayley Balfour, Regius Keeper of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh between 1888 and 1922 at the same time as this movement.

References:

Desmond, Ray, 1994, "Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturists...", Taylor and Francis and Natural History Museum, London.
Luscombe, Edward, 2007, "George Don, the Forfar Botanist, "Man of Genius"", Pinkfoot Press, Brechin.

Archivist's Note: The Collection comprises one of Isaac Bayley Balfour's scrapbooks in which he collects together copies of information relating to George Don and correspondence relating to this search. The rest of the collection consists of loose correspondence and papers seemingly associated with the scrapbook, presumably being sent to or copied by Balfour as part of his investigation, but not filed within it, presumably due to their size or bulk.

In arranging this collection, the scrapbook was kept and numbered separately. The rest of the collection had already been divided into folders, possibly by material type, possibly by originator of the material, but because the rationale for the division is not now known, an attempt was made to split the material by originator/provenance, so some material has been kept together because it was in the same folder, but because much of the material comprises transcriptions of articles / newspaper cuttings / original material ordered by Isaac Bayley Balfour, much of the provenance has now been lost. Now some of the items are in folders because they were generated or relate to one of Balfour's Don correspondents; the rest have been divided by material type.

The Listings

In brief:

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| GDS/1 | Balfour's George Don scrapbook |
| GDS/2 | Patrick Neill's copy of George Don's "A Catalogue of a few of the Rarest and Latest Introduced Plants, cultivated for sale at Don's Botanic Garden and Nursery, Forfar", 1813. |
| GDS/3 | Transcription of George Don's Day Book (1811-1815), including copy of page from the Day Book held at the University of Dundee Archives |
| GDS/4 | I. Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – items relating to Mr John Knox, inc. two versions of his George Don Memoir and his obituary. |
| GDS/5 | I. Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – items relating to Jane Taylor Ewen of Mill Bank, Forfar. Including postcards and photographs showing views of Forfar. |
| GDS/6 | I. Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection– Geo. Don's correspondence |
| GDS/7 | I. Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – Various papers / articles / letters relating to George Don and his family collated by Isaac Bayley Balfour. |
| GDS/8 | Correspondence / article / notes relating to G. Claridge Druce's Memoir to George Don. |
| GDS/9 | Two Photographs of the Don Memorial in Forfar. |
| GDS/10 | Photographs taken of Don's entry in Young and Lowson's ' <i>Portrait Gallery of Forfar Notables</i> ', 1893 – photographs date to 1960s to 1980s? |

In detail:

GDS/1

Scrapbook

I.B. Balfour's George Don Scrapbook

Includes correspondence, newspaper articles, etc. relating to the life and work of George Don, listed roughly as follows:

- Letter from Ellis and Blyth W.S. to J. Hutton Balfour requesting Neill's papers, 25.08.1879. Note from Balfour stating they'd been returned.
- Copy letters to and from Alexander Lowson, Forfar, and J. Young, J.E. Harting and B. Daydon Jackson of the Linnaean Society about obtaining copies of George Don's Linnaean Soc. letters, May-June 1892.
- Copy reference from Scots Magazine, 1809, p725 referring to Neill's good opinion of Don
- 4 copy letters from Patrick Neill to Robert Brown (Brown Corresp. NMH) and James Edward Smith regarding the death of George Don and the plans for his eldest sons George [Jr.] and David Don. 1814-1816
- Copy letter from George A. Don to Alexander Lowson regarding the poem by James Ross in the Forfar Review, 01.05.1891 with copy of poem.
- Original advertisement flyer for Don's Herbarium Britannicum, c.1804
- Copy of "George Don, The Forfar Botanist" from Dundee, Perth, Forfar and Fife People's Journal, 23.05.1863.
- "A Famous Botanist"; newspaper article on George Don [and also Charles Lyall] ; The Forfar Herald and Kirriemuir Advertiser, 08.05.1914
- Address on the Unveiling of the Monument to George Don at Forfar, September 8, 1910 by G. Claridge Druce, 1910 – Isaac Bayley Balfour's copy.
- I.B. Balfour's invitation to the unveiling of the Don Monument, 08.09.1910, from John Knox, Forfar
- Transcript of Charles Alston's gravestone, Canongate Churchyard.
- Commendation of V.III of the Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh's Don article by the Forfar Dispatch, 02.03.1905.
- "Some noteworthy local botanists: 1 George Don" in the Stirling Journal and Advertiser, 21.02.1908.
- "A Forfar Genius, George Don the Botanist, Strange Life Story, His Appearance and Eccentric Habits" in the Evening Telegraph, 25.06.1902.
- 3 letters to the Dundee Advertiser, one from Alex. P. Stevenson relating to Dr Jamieson and George Don
- "Another Forfar Botanist: James Donald" by 'Erica' c.1905, refers to George Don and Alex. P. Stevenson. ['Erica' is the pen-name of Jane Taylor Ewen]

- “George Don and his Forfar Botanic Garden” by Alex. P. Stevenson in the Dundee Advertiser, 25.04.1905.
- “More about George Don’s Botanic Garden at Forfar” including letter from Town Clerk Mr MacHardy and likely sent in by Alex. P. Stevenson, in the Forfar Review and Strathmore Advertiser, 03.03.1905.
- “George Don the Forfarshire Botanist” in the Scotsman, 12.04.1905.
- 2 letters from G. Claridge Druce [to I.B. Balfour?] regarding the Don fund and corrected proofs, presumably on his paper on Don, published in the Notes of the RBGE, 1905
- letter from British Museum (Natural History) regarding Prestons at RBGE.
- Letter from Isaac Bayley Balfour to G. Claridge Druce regarding donating to Don fund, 11.12.1902
- Letter from Patrick Neill Fraser to I. Bayley Balfour regarding looking for Neill’s papers, 05.06.1902
- Copy letter from I Bayley Balfour to P. Neill Fraser, the original of which enclosed proof that the Neill papers had passed from J. Hutton Balfour’s hands back to the Neill family. 30.05.1902 (referring to letter at start of this volume)
- Letter from Claridge Druce requesting contributions to Don fund[?] 10.12.1902
- Letter from Bayley of MacRitchie, Bayley and Henderson W.S. regarding Neill’s papers – he thinks they may have been destroyed by the successors to Ellis and Blyth W.S. 27.02.1903
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson, Dundee to Isaac Bayley Balfour offering to send him information / newspaper articles about George Don. Talks also of John Hope, his garden and lecture notes. 10.05.1903. [these articles may well be the ones pasted in this scrapbook]
- Copy letter from Isaac Bayley Balfour to Patrick Neill Fraser asking if Neill’s papers had ever been found. 30.05.1903.
- Copy letter from Isaac Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson thanking him for papers, and discussing Knox’s Memoir of Don, and Patrick Neill and John Hope stating that he was to have two sets of Hope lectures transcribed so he could compare them. He states he now has the lecture papers of all the Regius Keepers from the Prestons to the present day which he hopes to publish. 28.05.1903.
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to G. Claridge Druce commenting on his paper – includes some of Balfour’s views of Don. 28/05/1903.
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour discussing how Druce should have credited John Knox more for he practically lifted it verbatim for his memoir of Don; Patrick Neill’s complaints about the railway company disturbing his garden in a letter to Gardiner; Don, Neill and *Primula scotica* from Orkney; the sending of his Hope lecture notes and Duncan’s oratory on

Hope to Balfour and other references to Scottish botany. 17.05.1903.

- Letter from Patrick Neill Fraser to I. Bayley Balfour saying that he still hasn't found the Neill papers and that there is now little chance of their ever turning up. Suggests that Joseph D. Hooker may know something as he stayed with Neill whilst contesting the Chair of Botany at Edinburgh University with John Hutton Balfour in 1845. 01.06.1903
- Letter from Claridge Druce to Bayley Balfour about revised version of Don memorial. June 1903
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour about Gardiner's list of mosses, his garden in Dundee and James Donald; offering Balfour his Hope lecture notes, communication with John Knox regarding Don's birth; Glen Tilt; letters from Don to Winch and J.E. Smith, and confusion over portrait of Don; Stevenson reckons it is actually a portrait of his son, David Don. 14.06.1903 [document in N.L.S. Forfar Noteworthy? States that portrait is actually of Don's son George?]
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding completing journal runs and correspondence with Joseph D. Hooker. 11.10.1903
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding J.E. Smith letters and referring to a note by Gardiner stating Don had a habit of exterminating plants. 17.06.1903
- Memorandum referring to editing of Druce's paper on George Don. 17.06.1903
- Letter from B. Daydon Jackson, Linnaean Society, regarding correspondence of James Edward Smith and list of plants sent by Don to Smith. 18.06.1903
- Letter from G. Claridge Druce to I. Bayley Balfour regarding £100 being collected for the Don Memorial. 17.10.1903.
- Letter from Druce to Bayley Balfour requesting proofs of his paper as he is travelling to the East in the early spring. December 1903.
- Two memos from A. P. Stevenson regarding returning journals to RBGE. 19 and 27.10.1903 and return correspondence from Henry Hastings regarding journal runs. 23.10.1903
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson – reply to Stevenson's letter of the 10th May 1903 listed above. Refers to George Don, Gardiner and John Hope lecture notes. 12.05.1903.
- Letter from James MacDonald, Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, regarding an award of a Piece of Plate worth 15 guineas awarded to George Don whilst he was still at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on 10th January 1806 for an Essay on our Native Plants and Grasses. 25.11.190[3?]
- Letter from Druce to Bayley Balfour regarding Don manuscript. 08.02.1904

- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson asking him to comment on Druce's manuscript on Don, with some comments about Don's life. 27.02.1904
- Letter from Druce to Bayley Balfour regarding letter about Don and correspondence in the Linnaean Society and also discusses plans to publish work on Dillenius and his herbarium at Oxford. 15.02.1904
- Letter from Druce to Bayley Balfour regarding Don memorial – appendix to his manuscript. 28.02.1904
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs and Don's birth. 01.03.1904
- Postcard from John Knox, Forfar to Claridge Druce, and forwarded to Bayley Balfour, answering in the negative any queries about Don's dates, March 1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Druce's proofs, Don's births and discrepancies in Neill's account of Mackay and Knox's account of Don. 04.03.1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to G. Claridge Druce regarding inconsistencies of dates in his manuscript on Don. 05.03.1904 accompanied by an extract of Patrick Neill's life of John Mackay published in the Scots Magazine in February 1804.
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Druce's proofs and discussing problems with Don's early dates. 10.03.1904
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs. 08.03.1904.
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs including detailed notes and a Don chronology. 20.03.1904
- Copy of the above letter.
- Postcard from Stevenson to Balfour regarding the letter of the 20th March 1904. 21.03.1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Stevenson's letter of the 20th March, Druce's proofs and Don's dates. 26.03/1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Druce's proofs, 12.04.1904
- Letter from Claridge Druce to Bayley Balfour regarding Don's early dates. Apr(?) 1904. Piece cut out of letter – predates letter being taped into scrapbook. Letter now loose.
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to G. Claridge Druce regarding proofs. 12.04.1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Don's Day Book and Neill's statement that Don left Edinburgh because of poor pay. 17.04.1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Patrick Blair and a physick garden at Dundee. 18.04.1904

- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs, Don's early dates and J. Hutton Balfour's excursion to the Sands of Barry. 18.04.1904.
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Don's Day Book, Don leaving the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, Don's early dates, Dr. Blair, His physic garden at Dundee and the dissection of the elephant which died between Dundee and Carnoustie. 24.04.1904
- Letter from John Knox, Forfar to Bayley Balfour regarding sending Don's Day Book, evidently the last in use at Forfar and Don's memorial, temporarily on hold due to complications over its site. 26.04.1904
- Copy letter from Bayley Balfour to John Knox regarding Don's Day Book and date of starting at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. 26.04.1904
- Copy letter from Bayley Balfour to John Knox regarding Don's Day Book, Mr. Hopkirk of Dalbeath and the Glasgow Botanic Garden, and the little amount Don was earning from his garden. 30.04.1904
- Copy letter from Bayley Balfour to John Knox regarding Don's Day Book and its return [no mention of having it copied], Druce's memoir which has now been published alongside Balfour's notes in the Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and some discussion of George Don. 24.02.1905
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding article on Don in the People's Journal, Druce's proofs, Don's Day Book (1811-1815), early impressions of it, Don's fascicule [Herbarium Britannicum?], Dr. Blair and the Dundee physic garden, Blair's reference to William Arthur and the Jacobite uprising of 1815, sending Druce's proofs to press, Stevenson's testimonials. 01.05.1904
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Dr. Blair, Dundee, William Arthur and the Jacobite rising; the date of Don renting Dove Hillock. 15.05.1904 along with copy letter from A. MacHardy, Town Clerk of Forfar outlining the Title papers for Dove Hillock, 05.05.1904.
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding, Dr. Blair, his physic garden at Dundee, the missing elephant, Don's renting of Dove Hillock, Stevenson's testimonials and him not getting an appointment. C.13.05.1904
- Three pages of botanical poetry, some making reference to Don from Jane Taylor Ewen, Mill-Bank, Forfar. March-June 1904.
- Letter from Isaac Bayley Balfour to F.O. Bower regarding Dr Brown, lecturer in Botany at Glasgow University in 1782 – was Don his assistant? 23.10.1904
- Copy letter from Druce to Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs and Don's dates. March 1904 in reply to IBB's letter of 05.03.1904

- Letter from B. Daydon Jackson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding collating copy letters against their originals [?]. 03.10.1904
- Letter from B. Daydon Jackson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding the collated letters of George Don – sending transcribed copies back but some words from the originals are still illegible. Jackson offers his own opinions of Don from the letters. 15.11.1904
- Two letters from James Coutts and F.O. Bower of Glasgow University in reply to Balfour's letter of 23.10.1904. No mention of lecturer in Botany at Glasgow university for 1780-1790 and no mention of George Don, though he may have been employed in some capacity on an unofficial basis. 31.10.1904 and 03.11.1904
- Letter from B. Daydon Jackson to I. Bayley Balfour granting him permission to print the letters from Neill, Don and Mackay in the correspondence of Winch and Smith from the Linnaean Society, also encloses transcripts of Don's letters. 04.11.1904
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding the Don Memoirs, the sending of an extract from a French book containing the impression made upon a gentleman by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in 1826; and outlining references made to George Don, his essays and experiments in the Farmer's Journal; and Patrick Blair and the Jacobite uprising of 1715. 20.11.1904
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's proofs. 27.11.1904
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding her memories of Don's house and garden, and her appeal for reminiscences of Don from Forfar locals. She sends a pinch of century old rose leaves in a penny jar, liking to think they were sent by Don but she has no proof. They were given to her grandmother by a gardener. No date.
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding a few reminiscences and connections, but no memories / stories of Don from the Forfar poorhouse inhabitants. 01.03.1905.
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding more reminiscences of Don's garden, and sending some old photos of Forfar. Mentions the late provost Peter Reid gathering information on Don, he was 11 when Don died. 27/02/1905
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding the publication of the Don memoir, and Blair and his Physic Garden. 12.02.1905.
- Letter from John Knox, Forfar to I. Bayley Balfour regarding the Published Don memoir and acknowledging return of Don's Day Book. 27.02.1905
- "Bitter-Sweet", excerpt from The Scotsman about remnants from Don's garden by Jane Taylor Ewen. 06.02.1905
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Jane Taylor Ewen requesting copies of photographs and enclosing copy of Don memoir. 24.02.1905.

- Letter from G. Claridge Druce to I. Bayley Balfour acknowledging receipt of Don Memoir. 09.02.1905
- Letter from B. Daydon Jackson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding proofs of Don memoir and Jackson's glossary. 11.02.1905.
- Letter from John Knox to I. Bayley Balfour regarding having in his possession about 100 specimens of heaths collected by George Don arriving in the same parcel as his fascicule and herbarium in the early 1880's. They are, with a few exceptions, fixed to the blank leaves of one of his fascicules. Also expresses doubts as to Don's birth date, and to the supposition that he was apprenticed as a watch maker. Apparently it was his brother who was the watch maker. 11.03.1905.
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding cost of photographs [minimal] and referring to John Knox. 12.03.1905
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to John Knox regarding concerns about Don's early life and his son, George Don [Jr.]'s recollections. 13.03.1905
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to John Knox thanking him for sending the heaths but stating that they are of no real value. 24.03.1905
- Letter from John Knox to I. Bayley Balfour regarding sending the Heaths and his search for an earlier garden of Don's at Forfar (prior to Dove Hillock). 14.03.1905
- Postcard from Jane Taylor Ewen to Isaac Bayley Balfour acknowledging receipt of second part of Don memoir and saying she has found no further information. 24.03.1905.
- Letter from R. Brown, governor of the Forfar poorhouse to Jane Taylor Ewen saying that none of the old resident's had heard of George Don. 02.03.1905
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour acknowledging receipt of second part of Don memoir, and discussing Patrick Neill. 26.03.1905
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour with further reminiscences of Don's garden including hand drawn map. 27.03.1905. [pages of letter missing?]
- Postcard from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Don article in The Scotsman – was it written by Stevenson? [no] She refers to a former Forfar Field Club member now on the staff at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, J.W. Esplin – he has passed his examinations in Botany. Mr Esplin is trying to find the address of a Ladies Gardening College in Edinburgh for a friend of Jane's to get a prospectus. 14.4.1905.
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour thanking him for the address of the Ladies Gardening College. They sent a prospectus. Talks of her cousin's desire to attend College as she is involved in a scheme near Blairgowrie to employ women from the City to pick raspberries at her allotment [see brochure in loose papers filed at GDS/5], also refers to cartoon of John Knox knocking at the door of Reid Park with the Don Monument on his

- shoulder entitled "A Modern Pilgrim's Progress", from the Evening Telegraph. 26.04.1905
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour referring to article on George Don in The Scotsman previously referred to by Jane Taylor Ewen – criticises it. Discusses his research on Blair and Gardiner. 16.04.1905
 - Letter [or part of letter?] from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour about poem written by her divinity student cousin [Willie Taylor] called "Immortality" [Ode to some century old rose leaves] which JTE had to copy out as she could not get a copy. [it is on the brochure for the Blairgowrie Raspberry picking scheme – see loose papers in folder GDS/5] Originally published in "St Andrew", a parish church magazine. No date.
 - Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour sending sprig of Bitter-sweet from Doo Hillock. 06.09.1905
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour discussing Blair and his involvement in the Jacobite uprising of 1715, and offering to send some Pickering's Diamond Classics to Balfour's son. 08.10.1905
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Blair, Charles Preston, Charles Alston, and his article on Patrick Blair. 21.04.1907.
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding visit to Edinburgh. 21.07.1907
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding the 'other Dr Blair' and refers to an image of Blair's stuffed elephant. 22.12.1907
 - Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding sending a set of Forfar views (presumably those in folder GDS/5) and John Knox showing her some of Don's and Drummond's [?] dried specimens. 04.07.1908
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding a visit to Edinburgh and R.B.G.E. 09.04.1909
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to the Council, University College, Dundee applying for post of Librarian to the College. 05.07.1909
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Patrick Blair's copy of Ray's Synopsis, and asking Balfour for a reference for his application to the Librarian's post at the University College, Dundee. 17.06.1909
 - Letter from James Britten, Natural History Museum, to I. Bayley Balfour thanking him for the information and for settling a date and referring to sending Balfour slips relating to Scots folks for a potential new edition [of his biographical dictionary?] 31.07.1909
 - Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alexander P. Stevenson providing a reference / testimonial for the University College Librarian post. 19.06.1909
 - Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour discussing not getting the University College Librarian's post, Blair and a

visit to Edinburgh. 18.07.1909 along with a newspaper cutting announcing James A.S. Barrett as the new University College Librarian.

- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour discussing visit to Edinburgh. 21.07.1910
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alexander P. Stevenson sympathising over the Librarian post at University College, Dundee. 27.07.1909
- Letter from John Knox to I. Bayley Balfour thanking him for attending the unveiling of the George Don monument and sending him a photograph of it. 26.09.1910
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to John Knox thanking him for the photograph. 27.09.1910
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding visit to Edinburgh. 23.07.1911
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Edinburgh visit / invitation to lunch. 24.07.1911
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour sending walnuts grown at Bedgebury Park, Kent, "where Don's son used to be". Also mentions Alan Reid publishing a note in the 'Forfar Herald' about the relics of George Don's plants; and James Esplin, now at Aberdour. 09.12.1911
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding missing seeing Balfour at a Dundee Meeting [British Association]; Stevenson's Handbook about Gardiner and Blair; an enquiry about 'Potato' Paterson and business being bad [Stevenson owned a book binding business]. 16.09.1912
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding not getting the Handbook on Gardiner and Blair and Druce's entry on Don in it and 'Potato' Paterson. 17.09.1912
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding Druce's entry on Don in the British Association Handbook claiming Don was abused in Edinburgh and referring to John Hutton Balfour; using Stevenson's sketch of Gardiner in a future copy of the Transactions of the Botanical Society of Edinburgh; and "insurance business" affecting the economy in such a way that Balfour is struggling to publish his full history of the Garden. 22.04.1913
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Jane Taylor Ewen thanking her for picture postcard of the Don ceremony and Andrew Peffers attending botany classes at Edinburgh. 03.06.1913
- Letter from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour regarding sending the picture postcard of the unveiling of the Don monument and Andrew Peffers, son of a town councillor attending Botany classes at Edinburgh University. 28.05.1913
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson regarding donation of "Scandinavian Flora" and Gardiner proofs. 31.07.1913

- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding Scandinavian Flora and Gardiner proofs for the Botanical Society. 17.07.1913
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding his brother being ill and the business getting backlogged, criticizing the religious emphasis of Hutton Balfour's sketch of Dr. Coldstream, Hutton Balfour's entry in "The Biograph and Review" [Biographical Review?]; his Gardiner proofs, asking Balfour to speak at the opening meeting of the Dundee Naturalists Society; and asking for information about the Canadian "Jack-pine". Undated [August 1913?]
- Letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson turning down invitation to speak at the meeting of the Dundee Naturalists Society as he will be in Russia and France – he is travelling with his daughter and her husband on their way to China. He refers to Hutton Balfour's entry in the "Biograph" – "full of facts and useful for a detailed story". 14.08.1913.
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding visit to Edinburgh with Professor Steggall. 18.05.1914
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson apologising for missing him and Professor Steggall. Balfour has been in London, involved with the establishment of Wisley Gardens as a "real place of scientific research". Balfour regrets being away from the Garden when "things are very beautiful and when so many come to see the Garden, and I miss therefore the opportunity of that delightful stimulating contact with keen minds which is so stimulating". 21.05.1914
- Letter from Alex. P. Stevenson to I. Bayley Balfour regarding visit to Edinburgh, reading the life of Dr James Hamilton of Regent Square, London, references to W.J. and J.D. Hooker – paragraph from Hamilton's diary refers to meeting Mr Don in the Linnaean Society's Library in 1838 and being told that George Don [Sr.]'s papers had been given to a Mr D. in Edinburgh – Stevenson asks Balfour if he knows who that is; death of John Knox – queries what has happened to his papers. 26.07.1914.
- Postcard from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour sending an article in her local paper (Forfarshire Herald) about George Don (centenary of his death) and noting an entry in the Forfar Episcopal Church Register of the baptism of a son to William Don, watchmaker, named Alexander on December 8th 1790 – George Don's brother who was also a watchmaker in Forfar. 08.05.1914
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Jane Taylor Ewen praising the article on Lyall in the Forfarshire Herald she has sent but criticizing the article on Don. 08.05.1914
- Letter from R. Hingiton Fox intimating that something has been returned. 01.09.1917
- Postcard from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour letting him know of Alexander P. Stevenson's death and sending the notice

in the newspaper. 12.11.1917. The cutting from the Dundee Courier, 12.11.1917 has also been pasted in.

- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Jane Taylor Ewen thanking her for letting him know of Alex. P. Stevenson's death. 14.11.1917
- Copy letter from I. Bayley Balfour to Alex. P. Stevenson sending him two books to inspect and referring to their meeting the day before. 30.07.1914
- Two undated letters from Jane Taylor Ewen to I. Bayley Balfour, one possibly a continuation of another letter refers to attending a botany class given by Mr Knox; her notes on nightshade and bitter sweet in the Scotsman; showing A.P. Stevenson round Forfar, and wondering if a decision has been made about the Don monument [letter must be 1910 or earlier]; the other (Tuesday) refers to a note from John B. Low of Edinburgh saying her clock must have been made by George Don's brother William and provides a list of names and dates of George Don's brother and sisters which includes his parents. She has gathered some more reminiscences of old Forfar, and will try the governor of the poorhouse to see if anyone there has tales of Don. [relates to letter from R. Brown, 02.03.1905, and herself, 01.03.1905 filed earlier in book?]

GDS/2 Patrick Neill's copy of George Don's "A Catalogue of a few of the Rarest and Latest Introduced Plants, cultivated for sale at Don's Botanic Garden and Nursery, Forfar", 1813. Front cover slightly annotated by Neill.

Catalogue includes greenhouse plants, shrubs and herbaceous plants, is 17 pages long and contains the following quote from Don at the end: "this catalogue contains but a small proportion of my Herbaceous Collection; which is equaled by few in Britain, and surpassed by none perhaps but the Cambridge one. I have also upwards of three hundred species of Grasses."

GDS/3 Transcription of George Don's Day Book (1811-1815), including copy of page from the Day Book held at the University of Dundee Archives.

This copy was made in 1904 by Isaac Bayley Balfour from the original book then in possession of Mr. John Knox, schoolmaster, Forfar.

Also includes photocopy of two pages from the Day Book, annotated by John Knox in 1912, which were found stuck into David Robert Robertson's Botanical Common Place Book in the University of Dundee Archives – p.93 of the Day Book's transcription, and referred to as MS/102/3/5 but may be more likely to be MS/103/3/3?

The current location/fate of the original Day Book is unknown.

- GDS/4 Isaac Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – items relating to Mr John Knox, including two versions of his George Don Memoir and his obituary.
- GDS/4/1 Two transcribed versions of “The Life and Labours of a Scottish Naturalist; George Don of Forfar” by John Knox as described below.
- GDS/4/1/1 Version of “The Life and Labours of a Scottish Naturalist; George Don of Forfar” by John Knox communicated to the Perthshire Society of Natural Science, 06.01.1881 and printed in the Scottish Naturalist, April and July [1881?]
- GDS/4/1/2 Version of “The Life and Labours of a Scottish Naturalist; George Don of Forfar” by John Knox revised and shortened for publication in the Forfar Herald.
- GDS/4/2 John Knox's obituary from the Forfar Herald, 10.07.1914.
- GDS/5 Isaac Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – items relating to Jane Taylor Ewen of Mill Bank, Forfar.
- Folder of postcards and photographs, many annotated by Ewen, from and of Forfar at the turn of the 20th century, presumably all sent by Jane Taylor Ewen, Mill Bank, Forfar to Isaac Bayley Balfour in addition to those stored in Bayley Balfour's George Don scrapbook, GDS/1.
- Includes: 9 postcards
- 8 photographs of Forfar including one taken at the **unveiling of the Don memorial** in Forfar churchyard, 08/09/1910 – shows Claridge Druce holding his address and John Knox.
- 1 pamphlet – “Sixteen Views of Forfar”
- 1 pamphlet – “A Month in the Country for Working Girls” about a raspberry picking scheme for city girls to work on a Blairgowrie raspberry farm – Jane Taylor Ewen's cousin is involved; she owns the farm – see Balfour's Don scrapbook, GDS/1. On reverse of pamphlet is poem written by Willie Taylor, Ewen's cousin, called ‘Immortality’ (An Ode to Century old rose leaves) – rose leaves thought to have been given to Taylor Ewen's grandmother by George Don. JTE had to copy out as she could not get a copy. Originally published in “St Andrew”, a parish church magazine. No date. [c.1905]
- Plus – 2 photographs of Brechin – not J.T. Ewen's handwriting on reverse, and postcard to I. Bayley Balfour from Eug. [Eugenius] Warming, Denmark, 21.12.1905 – unrelated to above but found in same folder so kept together.

- GDS/6 Isaac Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – George Don's correspondence.
3 folders containing original or transcribed correspondence from George Don.
- GDS/6/1 original letter from George Don, RBG Edinburgh to James Brodie of Brodie M.P. (1744-1824), with a transcription annotated by Isaac Bayley Balfour, 22.02.1805
- GDS/6/2 10 letters transcribed and typed onto 27 pages of letters from George Don to Nathaniel J. Winch, copied by the Linnaean Society of London by B. Daydon Jackson [see correspondence in the Don scrapbook, GDS/1] 1802-1812, some reproduced in Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, v.iii, pt xiv, February 1905. There are some annotations / corrections by Isaac Bayley Balfour.
- GDS/6/3 typed transcription of letter from George Don to James Sowerby, 22.05.1799 regarding sending plants to be drawn. Original letter in the British Museum – now Natural History Museum. Letter reproduced in Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, v.iii pt xiv, February 1905
- GDS/7 Isaac Bayley Balfour's George Don Collection – Various papers / articles / letters relating to George Don and his family collated by Isaac Bayley Balfour.
Material is mostly typed transcriptions and may have been jumbled so it is listed and numbered in the order it was found in. [much of this may be papers obtained by / from Alexander P. Stevenson of Dundee.]
- GDS/7/1 Typed transcription of Farmer's Magazine v.15 (1814) No.57 p.131 – George Don's obituary.
- GDS/7/2 Typed transcription – end of a letter? Information about a George Don – most likely to be referring to Patrick Neill Don and his son George Don – letter from A. Anderson, Bedgebury Park, 26.11.1910
- GDS/7/3 typed transcription – letter from George A. Don, Bedgebury, Kent, to Mr. Lawson, Forfar, author of Portrait Gallery of Forfar Notables, offering information on his grandfather, 11.02.1892
- GDS/7/4 Typed transcription – letter from B. Daydon Jackson to W.A. Lawson, Forfar about temporary loss of George Don's letters, 14.05.1892
- GDS/7/5 Typed transcription – 2 pages from Patrick Neill to Conductor of the Farmer's Magazine with account of George Don and a request for help for his family left impoverished after his death, 20.05.1814
- GDS/7/6 Typed transcription – 3 pages – Notes for a sketch of the Botanists George [Jr.] and David Don of the Dove Hillock, Forfar, includes an extract of David Don's birth in the Forfar Parish register, author – Alex. P. Stevenson, Dundee
- GDS/7/7 Typed transcription – Notice of George Don from William Gardiner's Flora of Forfarshire, 1848 – taken from the introduction

- GDS/7/8 Typed transcription – Notice of George Don's life by Patrick Neill contributed to the Botanical Society of Edinburgh, 15.05.1851 and published in the North British Agriculturist and Henfrey's Botanical Gazette, 1851
- GDS/7/9 Typed transcription – letter from David Booth to Sir James Edward Smith, London requesting assistance for Don's family – from Smith correspondence, Linnaean Society, 24.01.1814
- GDS/7/10 Typed transcription – list of dates and achievements of George Don from Britten and Boulger's Biographical Index of British and Irish Botanists, p.56
- GDS/7/11 Typed transcript – Don's entry in A Biographical Index of British and Irish Botanists, pp.50-51
- GDS/7/12 Handwritten note by Isaac Bayley Balfour indicating result of a search through the matriculation registers at Edinburgh University – George Don found in Index of Matriculated Students, 1804 – 'Chem', but not in any Matriculation Albums for 1802-1805
- GDS/7/13 Handwritten transcription of Don's entry in Farmer's Magazine v.15 (1814) No.57 p.131 by Alex. P. Stevenson
- GDS/7/14 Map of Forfar traced on poor quality tracing paper from John Wood's map of 1822 showing sites pertinent to George Don – map in poor condition.
- GDS/7/15/1-9 Bundle of 9 copy letters, transcribed by hand onto 28 pages, from Patrick Neill to James Edward Smith, 1804-1816. Original source unknown. In separate folder to rest of GDS/7
- GDS/8 Correspondence / article / notes relating to G. Claridge Druce's Memoir to George Don
- GDS/8/1-2 Two photocopied letters between Claridge Druce and Bayley Balfour regarding Druce's account of Don and the suggestion that it be published in the Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. February-March 1903. Originals are filed in the Isaac Bayley Balfour correspondence.
- GDS/8/3 Photocopied letter from Bayley Balfour to Claridge Druce accepting his manuscript for publication in the Notes of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. 10/03/1903
- GDS/8/4 Manuscript and typed copy of letter from Patrick Neill to Sir James Edward Smith, 05/11/1804 (same as letter filed at GDS/7/15)
- GDS/8/5 Notice and Review of publication of Claridge Druce's "Life and Work of George Don" in the Notes from the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh reprinted from the Journal of Botany, February 1906.
- GDS/9/1-2 Two Photographs of the Don Memorial in Forfar – dates unknown, may post date Isaac Bayley Balfour.
- GDS/10 Photographs of George Don's entry in '*Portrait Gallery of Forfar Notables, from drawings by John Young*'. Letterpress by Alexander Lowson, 1893. pp.39-52, 178-9 and Young's portrait of George Don

[Jnr] – 17 photographs in total. Date of photography unknown – 1960s-1980s?, perhaps earlier?; photographer unknown. Photographs were found amongst the Don reprint collection, January 2014.

N.B. The RBGE Library 'Obituary' Collection also contains newspaper articles outlining Don's biographical details (Gardener's Chronicle, The Scotsman, Forfar Herald and Kirriemuir Herald)

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