

## **P399 The Christian Couper Caithness Midwives Collection**

### **RECORDS' IDENTITY STATEMENT**

Reference number:	GB1741/P399
Alternative reference number:	-
Title:	The Christian Couper Caithness Midwives Collection
Dates of creation:	1786-2025
Level of description:	Fonds
Extent:	1786-2025
Format:	Paper

### **RECORDS' CONTEXT**

Name of creators:	Christian Couper, Anne Fraser, Hetty Munro, Michael and Gill Couper
Administrative history:	<p>Christian Couper (or Cowper) was born Christian Campbell and was baptised at Clyth on 11 May 1765. Christian married Robert Couper, a shoemaker from Thurso, in 1783. The initial entries from her midwifery memorandum book for 1786 detail babies born in Edinburgh, suggesting she was taught midwifery there.</p> <p>Christian's memorandum book records that she assisted at the birth of 3,948 babies across Caithness, serving both the very rich and the very poor throughout the county. Christian also had eleven children of her own: Donald (b.1784), Helen (b.1787), Isabel (b.1788), Hannah (b.1789), Donald (b.1792), Alexander (b.1794), Robert (b.1796), Catherine (b.1798), Christian (b.1800), Christian (b.1802), Elizabeth (b.1804).</p> <p>Christian died on 29 Apr 1843 in Thurso. Her obituary in the John O'Groat Journal reads 'Died – At Thurso, on the 30<sup>th</sup> ult. Mrs Couper, midwife, aged 79. Mrs C. had exercised her vocation for more than half-a-century; and her list of children amounts to about 4000, and a mother never died in her hands. Her services to the poor were always given cheerfully</p>

and gratuitously, although patronised by all the gentry in the county. Her death leaves a blank in the obstetrick profession that will not easily be filled up. The deceased was sister to the late Chief Justice of Canada, Sir W. Campbell’.

Custodial history:

The original copy of Christian Couper’s (Cowper’s) Midwife Memorandum Book is held by the National Records of Scotland (previously the General Register Office for Scotland) in Edinburgh.

## **RECORDS’ CONTENT**

Description:

Christian Couper’s Midwife Memorandum Book and transcriptions; Research by C. Anne Fraser, Highland Archive Service Family Historian; Various articles and research about historic Caithness midwives.

Appraisal:

-

Accruals:

None expected

## **RECORDS’ CONDITION OF ACCESS AND USE**

Access:

Open

Closed until:

-

Access conditions:

Available within the archive searchroom

Copying:

Copying permitted within standard Copyright Act parameters

Finding aids:

Available within the archive searchroom and [online](#)

## **ALLIED MATERIALS**

Related material:

-

Publication:

-

Notes:

-

Date of catalogue:

Jun 2025

Ref.	Description	Dates
<b>P399</b>	<b>The Christian Couper Caithness Midwives Collection</b>	<b>1786-2025</b>
<b>P399/1</b>	<b>Christian Couper's (Cowper's) Midwife Memorandum Book</b>	<b>1786-1843, 2008</b>
P399/1/1	Hard-bound facsimile copy of original midwife memorandum book recording details of infants delivered by Christian Couper (Cowper) (1 volume) [original held at the National Records of Scotland]	1786-1843
P399/1/2	Typed transcription of Christian Couper's (Cowper's) Midwife Memorandum Book, arranged alphabetically by surname. The volume begins with a set of explanatory notes and ends with the article 'The Respected Mrs Couper, Midwife' by Michael and Gill Couper, which first appeared in Caithness Family History Society Journal No.29, pp. 15-18, Sep 2008 (1 volume)	1786-1843, 2008
<b>P399/2</b>	<b>Research by C. Anne Fraser, Highland Archive Service Family Historian</b>	<b>2025</b>
P399/2/1	Caithness Midwives Database. Printed database showing names of over 100 women who were identified as midwives within the 1841-1901 censuses. Includes details of name, where living, parish, birthplace and date, head of household, spouse, children and occupation (1 item)	2025
P399/2/2	Family Tree for Christian Couper, née Campbell (b.1765, Clyth), midwife (1 item)	2025
P399/2/3	Family Tree for Isabella Dunnet (b.1794, Canisbay), midwife (1 item)	2025
P399/2/4	Family Tree for Ann Campbell (b.1803, Thurso), midwife (1 item)	2025
P399/2/5	Family Trees for Christina Stewart (b. c.1806, Thurso), midwife (1 item)	2025
P399/2/6	Family History for the Campbell family of Ausdale and Houstry (family of Christian Couper née Campbell, midwife) compiled by C. Anne Fraser from original, online and surrogate sources (1 file)	2025
<b>P339/3</b>	<b>Various</b>	<b>n.d.</b>
P399/3/1	Transcription of a short article, 'Christian Couper' by Hetty Munro (1 item)	n.d.

P399/3/2	Photocopied photograph and transcribed obituary for Georgina Jack (née Mackenzie/Blackstock), midwife born 17 Aug 1869 Cogle, Watten, died Wick 1950 (1 item)	n.d.
----------	---	------