

**Reference code:** GB165-0329

**Title:** Ian Skeet Collection

**Name of creator:** Skeet, Ian (b.1928)

**Dates of creation of material:** 1951-1996

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 5 boxes

**Biographical history:** Skeet, Ian, b 10 November 1928. In 1953 Skeet joined Royal Dutch Shell, and in 1954 went to the Middle East Centre of Arabic Studies (MECAS), in Shemlan, Beirut, to learn Arabic. In 1958 he was posted to Qatar as General Manager of Shell SouthEast Arabia (later Markets Middle East). He was responsible for Shell sales in the Gulf including Oman, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In 1966 he was posted to Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), as Management Liaison Representative. Skeet remained in Oman until 1968 living in the Old French Consulate and travelling widely in the Interior of Oman, and the coast. From 1973-1985 he retained a responsibility for Shell relations in the Middle East in general, retiring to live in Winchester in 1985. Since retiring he has worked as a consultant on the politics of oil in the Middle East. Skeet has published a number of works including: *Muscat and Oman: the End of an Era* (1974), republished in 1985 as *Oman Before 1970: the End of and Era* (1985); *OPEC: 25 Years of Prices and Politics* (1988); ed. Paul Frankel, *Common Carrier of Common Sense* a selection of his writings 1946 – 1988 (1989); *Oman: Politics and Development* (1992).

**Scope and content:** The main scope of the papers are research materials for two books about Oman, written by Skeet: *Muscat and Oman: the End of an Era* Faber and Faber, London 1974; and *Oman: Politics and Development* Macmillan, 1992. Other materials relate to Skeet's interest in other Middle Eastern countries, and there are a few personal documents. Broad subjects covered by the papers are: The Sultanate and life in Oman before 1970, and the development of the country under the new Sultan Qaboos from 1970. A large number of the materials focus on the development of law and the economy in Oman from 1970.

**System of arrangement:** The papers are divided into five main sections: correspondence; research papers for *Muscat and Oman: the End of an Era* (1974); research papers for *Oman: Politics and Development* (1992); materials relating to other Middle Eastern

Countries; and personal papers. The bulk of the materials are research papers; these are arranged according to the subjects addressed by the two books. The correspondence is arranged chronologically, and the materials relating to other countries are arranged by country. The personal papers section is very small and is arranged chronologically. The original order of files is retained where possible, and new files have been created by the archivist where necessary.

**Access conditions:** Open

**Language of material:** English, some Arabic.

**Conditions governing reproduction:** Copies of the PDO papers may be supplied for private research and study, but not for publication. Copies of the other papers will be supplied at the discretion of the Archivist. The Archivist will assist where possible with identification of copyright owners, however, users should understand that they are ultimately responsible for ensuring copyright.

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Received as a gift from Ian Skeet c1995

**Related Units of Description:**

**In MEC Archive**

For further information about PDO and the development of the oil industry in Oman please see the Paxton Collection GB165-0331 and the Peyton Collection GB165-0330

**Finding aids:** In Guide; Handlist

**Archivist's note:** Fonds, series and file level description created by C. Hughes 31 Jul 2000. Fonds level description revised by D. Usher 18 Dec 2008.

## SERIES AND FILE LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE IAN SKEET COLLECTION

### CORRESPONDENCE

#### Box 1

- 1/1 *Correspondence*: Relating to Skeet's second book, *Oman: Politics and Development* (1992). Between Skeet and various friends and colleagues and concerns mainly their opinions on the draft chapters, which have been annotated. Other correspondence related to research for the book, and opinions on his first book, *Muscat and Oman: the End of an Era* (1974). The file is arranged chronologically.  
26 Mar 1972 – 8 Dec 1990
- 9 items

### RESEARCH PAPERS FOR *MUSCAT AND OMAN: THE END OF AN ERA* (1974)

- 1/2 *Foreign Policy*: Treaties between Oman and other countries. Particularly of interest are the notes about the Written Engagement from the Imam of Muscat 1798, and Treaty of Sib. The file also contains information about relations of Oman with HMG and with the United Nations.  
20 Dec 1951 – 17 Nov 1967 and n.d.
- 7 items
- 1/3 *Miscellaneous*: The papers cover: The Al bu Said Dynasty; Omani tribes; Omani economy; Official Precedence; history of the SAF; and a speech by Sultan Said bin Taimur about the history and financial position of the Sultanate in the past and future after the export of oil. The provenance of the papers is mainly unknown, however the majority of them are official information documents, and were probably issued by PDO to its employees for information about the local area. Some of the papers are in Arabic with no English translation.  
c. 1952 – 20 Aug 1968 and n.d.
- 20 items
- 1/4 *Printed Materials*: Booklets about the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman giving a brief history of the country and information about its geography, terrain, and culture.  
1962 – c. 1965
- 2 items
- 1/5 *Photographs*: Print of Muttrah with Muscat in the distance, used in *Oman: the End of an Era* (1974) p48. Also a print of Muscat and a print of an oil rig in the desert. The pictures were taken by Skeet on behalf of PDO. Stored separately.  
c.1966
- 3 items

**RESEARCH PAPERS FOR OMAN: *POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT* (1992)**

Box 2

- 2/1 *Sultan Qaboos*: The coming to power of Sultan Qaboos and the early days of his rule, including a biography of Qaboos.  
24 Jun 1970 – c. early 1980  
4 items
- 2/2 *Economy and Finance*: Perspectives on Human investment exports and regeneration; the State's General Budget 1990 – 1993; sustainable growth and economic diversification in Oman; newspaper cuttings and copies of newspaper cuttings about finance in Oman sent to Skeet by his friends and colleagues.  
c. 1989 – 9 Dec 1994  
10 items
- 2/3 *Oil*: A notable item in the file is the PDO publication written by Skeet in his capacity of Management Liaison Representative, to mark to commencement of regular commercial crude oil exports from Oman in 1967. The booklet provides essential information about oil in Oman, and the part played by PDO in making it into a commercial asset for the country. The file also contains articles, and extracts from articles collected by Skeet about oil in Oman, and there is some incomplete information about the oil companies in Oman.  
1 Aug 1967 – 23 Aug 1968 and n.d.  
6 items
- 2/4 *Education and Health*: Mainly regarding the Sultan Qaboos University, which was opened in 1986. One of the items contains correspondence between Skeet and the building design consultant who was in charge of the project, granting Skeet permission to use photographs of the university for his second book, *Oman: Politics and Development* (1992). The file also contains a booklet about the Royal Hospital in Oman.  
Nov 1986 – 20 Mar 1991 and n.d.  
5 items
- 2/5 *Affairs of State (Participation)*: List of Government members from the Personal Representative of Sultan Qaboos to officials with Under-Secretary rank. The file also contains telexes of news bulletins from the Oman News Agency, about the Majlis al Shura the consultative assembly for Oman created in November 1990.  
11 Oct 1989 – 1 Jan 1992  
2 items

Box 3

- 3/1 *Practice of Law in Oman*: Printed Law books issued by Oman Chamber of Commerce, and articles about Omani Law focusing particularly on the introduction of Commercial Law in Oman.  
1973 – 1992  
10 items

- 3/2 *Decrees*: Given to Skeet by PDO in 1990. Correspondence from PDO, a list of Omani legislation, copies of the Royal Decrees, and Skeet's hand written notes.  
17 Jul 1972 – 12 Nov 1991  
41 items
- 3/3 *Environment and Heritage*: Mainly forewords to *Scientific Results* journal articles by Sultan Qaboos. The forewords give the Sultan's views about what needs to be done in Oman with regard to the national preservation of environment and heritage. The file also contains articles about conservation in Oman, focusing particularly on the Arabian White Oryx, an endangered species of desert antelope.  
1975 – 14 Feb 1990  
9 items

Box 4

- 4/1 *Development plans*: Booklets produced by the Sultanate of Oman Development Council (later the Ministry of Development) describing the five-year development plans for Oman 1976 – 1980, 1991 – 1995, and 1996 - 2000. The file also contains a note issued by the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman about a conference in Muscat to discuss the fifth-five year development plan of 1996.  
1976 – 1996  
5 items
- 4/2 *Foreign Affairs*: Articles about foreign policy perspectives in Oman, focusing on Oman's relationship with Iran in the light of the Gulf conflict, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Oman and Azerbaijan in 1992. The file also contains a research leaflet and requests for documents from the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in connection with Skeet's interest in American Foreign Policy.  
1988 – Jan 14 1992  
3 items
- 4/3 *Miscellaneous*: Research materials covering minorities in Oman, the Al bu Said Dynasty, local Walis (rulers), a map of Khasab, Oman, the Jebel Akhdar Campaign, and security in Oman. Most of the documents were probably issued by PDO to its employees for information about the local area. The file also contains a hand written bibliography of books for Skeet's research. Of particular interest is the first page of the bibliography, the reverse of which is a proposal for Skeet's book *Oman: Politics and Development*. The statement includes a list of published works of Skeet.  
16 Jun 1975 – c. 1995  
8 items
- 4/4 *Newspaper Cuttings*: From: Le Monde; The Washington Post; The New York Times; The Christian Science Monitor; and Minneapolis Star and Tribune. The

main subjects covered are: the deposition of Sultan Said bin Taimur by his son Qaboos in 1970, and its results and ramifications for Oman; a series of articles in The Washington Post about the new generation of 'Arab Money Men', and new found economic growth in Oman; and US interest in Oman.  
26 May 1971 - 20 May 1985 and n.d.

18 items

## **MATERIALS RELATING TO OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES**

### Box 5

5/1 *Egypt*: Extracts from Arabic Press Digest, newspaper cuttings from Egyptian newspapers in Arabic and English, and a small number of printed booklets published in Egypt. The file also contains an Agreement between the UK and Egypt in 1959 regarding financial and commercial relations and British property in Egypt. The materials were collected by Skeet during the time he spent in Cairo during the 1956 crisis.  
1954 – September 10 1956 and n.d.

4 items, 1 bundle

5/2 *Sudan*: A small amount of materials collected by Skeet through his interest in the Sudan, and visits there. The material covers the Government elections of 1953, and a list of graves in the Sukain cemetery.  
c. 1939 – 1953

2 items

5/3 *Other Middle Eastern Countries*: Exchange of notes between the United Kingdom and Kuwait in 1961, a booklet about the future in Arabia, and US literature about the evangelisation of Muslims.  
Oct 1961- 1967

3 items

## **PERSONAL PAPERS**

5/4 *Private Life*: Skeet's private life in connection with Oman. The file includes: ground and first floor plans of Beit Fransa, the old French Consul where Skeet and his family lived in Oman; an invitation and programme to a concert given by the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra, with Thalia Myers playing the piano; and a programme for the 20<sup>th</sup> National Day Military Parade in Oman.  
28 Feb 1990

4 items