

NEW DEPOSITS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

By Amy Devenney

Last year the University Archives were lucky enough to accept three prominent collections into their care: The John Henry Whitley Collection; The British Music Collection; and the Open College Network Archive.

The John Henry Whitley Collection is a family archive which was begun by his wife, Margherita Virginia Whitley, to record her husband's high-profile political career. After becoming the liberal MP for Halifax in 1900, JH Whitley was asked by the Prime Minister, in 1916, to set up a committee which would investigate the country's appalling industrial relations and recommend new approaches. The outcome was the 'Whitley Councils', which were joint councils of employers and employees where views from both sides could be aired. He then became the speaker of the House of Commons in 1921 and oversaw the House during a time of great upheaval, as changes were being made to the government and during the General Strike of 1926 when he famously said, 'even if the electricity was cut off he would ensure that debates continued by candlelight'. By his retirement from Speaker in 1928, he had won recognition from many and was offered a peerage, which he turned down.

On MV Whitley's death in 1925, the archive passed first to their eldest son Percival Nathan Whitley and then to their younger son Oliver John Whitley. Under the custody of OJ Whitley, the collection developed as he began to organise and label the loose material it contained, and to supplement the archive with additional material and explanatory notes. With his death in 2005 his son, John Paton Whitley, took over and continued to add explanatory notes as he organised the material for deposit.

The Collection arrived 14th October 2011. It contains a variety of material including books, journals, newspaper articles and letters pertaining to the career of JH Whitley, both his political and subsequent career. Items of particular significance are: a letter from the Prime Minister in 1907; a

Huddersfield Local History Society Journal

handwritten letter for George V; as well as the Speaker's House Visitors' Book, which contains the signatures of prominent people, such as Mussolini, Mahatma Gandhi and members of the Rockefeller family.

The University was chosen as the place for deposit due to its excellent Archive and Special Collection resources and its position as the local University to Halifax. The family also hope, that by depositing this excellent resource, they are providing the opportunity for scholars and students to research into the life of a prominent Yorkshire man, who was a key figure in early-twentieth century politics.

The second collection to arrive was the British Music Collection (BMC), formerly housed and preserved by Sound and Music in London. This Collection is made up of twentieth and twenty-first century scores and recordings, and the administrative records of the former British Music Information Centre (BMIC). In November 2011, the collection was moved from London to a specially designed unit in the University of Huddersfield's Music Library, to be jointly managed by the Music Librarian and the Archivist.

The Collection, containing over thirty thousand scores and many other items, has been inaccessible and in storage for the past two years. It is a remarkable resource for anyone interested in the musical heritage of this country or for those seeking to find a new repertoire. Recordings of British contemporary composers can be found alongside the scores. It also contains both published and unpublished works, including many pieces that are out of print or hard to obtain. High-profile composers, such as Britten, Tippett, Birtwistle, Maxwell Davies, Cardew, Harvey, Weir, MacMillan, Turnage and Adès, are featured alongside currently emerging or less well-known composers whose work deserves rediscovery. Although the majority of the collection relates to post-1960 work, it does include some material from as early as 1900.

When the material arrived, two hundred and fifty crates and two hundred boxes, only a basic contents list existed. Therefore the first job after unpacking the large volume of material was to group the material into

Huddersfield Local History Society Journal

intellectual groups, gain some knowledge of the contents and then sort the contents physically into an order, which would allow us and users to use the collection. While our first priority is to organise and catalogue the collection, and to enable online access to the catalogue via our website and online portals, the University in co-operation with Sound and Music hope, in the long term, to develop the collection further by, continuing to acquire new material and to successfully digitise the material. Although there is still a lot of work to do on the collection, the purpose-built reading room was opened to the public in January 2012 and we have already received a number of enquiries and visitors.

The Open College Network Archive was the third collection acquired by the University in December 2011. The collection shows the development of the accreditation-based Open College Networks for adult learning, which were founded in Manchester in 1982. The aims of the Networks were to allow adults without qualifications to further their learning and to study for accreditation, which would allow them access to Higher Education. From 1985 onwards, Local Authorities, Adult and Community Education providers and Further Education Colleges enthusiastically took up this idea, with Access Centres being developed throughout the country. The Collection was deposited by David Browning, the first Director of the Greater Manchester Open College Network. It includes correspondence, publications and documents such as Governmental papers, which deal with the incorporation of Further Education Colleges in 1992. This archive will be of great interest to anybody researching the history of education or the education of adults. It also complements some of the other collections we hold, such as the archive of the Huddersfield Female Educational Institute and the Huddersfield Mechanic's Institute, both of which also deal with the promotion of education.

Biography

Amy Devenney has an MA in Medieval History and has worked at the University of Huddersfield Library since 2008 where she has spent time in both the Archive and Acquisitions teams. She is currently planning to undertake research for her PhD on *Miracles & Medicine in the Norman Kingdom of Sicily*.