

Acc.13220
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Inventory

Acc.13220

Joyce Placzek, 'Jan Struther'

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Literary and personal papers, 1909-1953, of Joyce Placzek (1901-1953) who wrote using the pseudonym 'Jan Struther'. She is best known for creating 'Mrs Miniver', the character who - particularly as played by Greer Garson in the 1942 Hollywood film - did so much to swing public opinion in the USA towards joining the Allied war effort.

London-born daughter of a Scottish Liberal MP, Joyce Anstruther married into the Maxtone Grahams, a Perthshire landowning family, and led a privileged if occasionally impecunious life, making a fairly regular income from articles and poems published in newspapers and magazines. These are all faithfully preserved in 16 large albums of press cuttings. 'Mrs Miniver' first appeared as a fortnightly character in *The Times*, and the articles were collected and published under the eponymous title in 1939. On the back of the book's American success, Joyce Maxtone Graham travelled to the USA in 1940 to undertake lecture tours promoting British-American relations, but also – secretly - to meet up again with Adolf Placzek, a Viennese refugee with whom she had begun an affair in London before the war. The collection contains hundreds of letters to 'Dolf', whom she married in 1948. In the USA, Jan Struther appeared regularly on radio shows and on the lecture tour circuit. She was a keen supporter of the Democratic Party and the correspondence files hold some letters of Eleanor Roosevelt and Adlai Stevenson. The collection includes several travel journals, and manuscripts and typescripts of many articles, verses, songs and hymns - which she had a gift for writing, despite her own agnosticism. Also significant are the manuscripts of two unfinished works: an autobiography, and 'Cactus and Columbine' which was to have been her book about the USA, where she lived for most of the last 10 years of her life.

The Jan Struther archive was arranged and catalogued by her son, Robert Maxtone Graham, and given to the National Library of Scotland in 2010. It remains in the order in which it was received, other than a slight reshuffle to bring together the notes and manuscript of 'Cactus and Columbine'. The descriptions below are largely as supplied by the donor, which give extremely useful provenance and background information, with some additional detail added by NLS.

The archive, and family knowledge, were the major sources for Ysenda Maxtone Graham's biography of her grandmother, *The Real Mrs Miniver* (London: John Murray, 2001). See Acc.13220/48 for further information on sources for the book.

Presented, 2010.

The collection is arranged as follows:

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| 1-16. | Albums of published articles and verse; with related press cuttings. |
| 17. | Small format notebooks and diaries. |
| 18-19. | Prose. |
| 20-22. | Verses, songs and hymns. |
| 23. | Juvenilia. |
| 24-26. | Plays. |
| 27-29. | Autobiography. |
| 30-35. | Travel writing and journals. |

- 36-38. **Contracts and other work-related papers.**
- 39-41. **Miscellaneous personal papers.**
- 42-47. **Correspondence.**
- 48. **Biographical material.**
- 49. **Catalogue.**

1-16 Albums of published articles and verse; with related press cuttings.

The material was collected and collated by Jan Struther into a series of large albums. A number of these items were later reprinted in her collections of verse and prose, books with the titles *Betsinda Dances*, *Sycamore Square*, *Try Anything Twice*, *The Glass Blower*, and *A Pocketful of Pebbles*.

1. Summer 1914 to June 1928.
Printed articles and verse: about 160 items published in such periodicals as the *Westminster Gazette*, *Penny Magazine*, *Lady's Pictorial*, *Graphic*, *Evening Standard*, *Youth*, *Tatler*, *Bystander*, *Eve*, *Daily News*, *Punch*, *Sunday Times*, *Times Educational Supplement*, *GK's Weekly*, *Daily Express*, *Spectator*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Observer*, as well as some provincial and Commonwealth newspapers.
2. November 1928 to May 1932.
Mainly from the same periodicals as above, plus *Country Life*, *Sketch* and others; several *Punch* verses illustrated by Ernest Shepard.
3. May 1932 to December 1934.
Mainly from *Punch*, some with Shepard illustrations; also *Weekly Scotsman*, *Nursing Mirror*, *Madras Mail*, *Calcutta Statesman*, *Listener*, *Everyman*, *Sporting and Dramatic News*, *Manchester Guardian*. Inside the front cover, Robert Maxtone Graham has inserted Jan Struther's introduction to Stevenson's *Kidnapped* (Scholar's Library, 1933). Inside the back cover: 'BBC News Bulletin', broadcast in humorous verse by Jan Struther and others on 23 December 1933 (typescript).
4. February 1935 to October 1936.
Broadly similar in origins to albums 1 to 3. Further periodicals include *London Mercury*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *Sunday Referee*, *Harper's Bazaar* (USA), *Fortnightly Review*, *Fiction Parade*. The most amusing of the *Punch* verses is a series based on Heinrich Hoffman and republished in 1936 in a slim volume called *The Modern Struwwelpeter*, illustrated in colour by Ernest Shepard. The naughty characters were based on Jan Struther's three children and eight nephews.
5. October 1936 to Dec 1938
Broadly similar in origin but including *Toronto Star*, *Night and Day* and advertising jingles for Capstan cigarettes. Jan Struther's first Mrs Miniver column was published anonymously on the Court Page of *The Times*, 6 October 1937. This album contains the fortnightly Miniver articles up to the end of 1938, with related letters; also many of Jan Struther's light

leading articles in *The Times*, all anonymous. Also inserted in this album is 'When Grandmama was Small', translated by Jan Struther from Swedish.

6. December 1938 to June 1940.
Includes the rest of the Mrs Miniver articles, and more of Jan Struther's *Times* leaders. Further sources include *New Verse*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Magazine Digest*, *The Queen's Book of the Red Cross*, *Magazine of the English Association*.
7. Printed articles and verse, published after June 1940, many undated.
On arrival in the USA, Jan Struther seems to have discontinued her habit of pasting her works chronologically into an album. This loose file is now arranged alphabetically by title.
154 ff.
8. Hymns and songs, 1931, etc.
Includes the twelve hymns written by Jan Struther for the new edition of *Songs of Praise*, 1931, of which the best-known are 'Lord of all Hopefulness' and 'When a Knight Won His Spurs'.
9. Press cuttings, etc, 1931 to 1939.
About 200 notices and articles. Mainly short and favourable reviews of published works, but with a few longer articles on Jan Struther and her Chelsea house. Some fan letters are inserted, including one from Lord Beaverbrook.
10. Press cuttings, etc, October 1939 to July 1940.
Some 100 further notices and articles, continuing the series of reviews of Mrs Miniver and other works by Jan Struther, up to the time when she and her two younger children left England to spend the rest of the duration of the war in the USA.
11. Press cuttings, etc, August 1940 to June 1942.
Many hundreds of articles mostly printed in the USA about *Mrs Miniver*, chosen as the Book of the Month. This period includes the release of the Mrs Miniver film, which became a huge Hollywood success. (Jan Struther did not write the film script; she had sold the film rights to MGM who adopted her characters and re-wrote the story as a war propaganda film.)
12. Press cuttings, etc, a few of 1941 but mostly April 1942 to November 1943. This overlaps the dates of Volume 11, for the following reason.
When Jan Struther sailed to the USA in June 1940, she did not cancel her subscription to her London press cutting agencies, who continued throughout the war to clip articles about her. These accumulated in London, at first looked after by her husband Tony, and, when he left for military service in North Africa (where he was taken prisoner) by his secretary, Mrs Shattock. Hundreds were found loose in a paper bag, and more had been glued inexpertly into a bulging scrap book. Now

transferred to an album of their own. It contains some illustrated articles of family interest.

13. Press cuttings, etc, covering the month of July 1942.
This was the time of the greatest public interest – what would nowadays be called media frenzy – arising from the Mrs Miniver film. Hence the 200 or more cuttings from this month alone.
14. Press cuttings, August to December 1942.
Contains some interesting articles about the Maxtone Graham family, as well as more about the success of *Mrs Miniver* as book and film.
15. Press cuttings, etc, 1943 and 1944.
More about the Mrs Miniver film, the seven Oscars that it won, Jan Struther's lectures and broadcasts, especially the radio quiz, 'Information, Please'.
16. Press cuttings, etc, 1945-2010.
There is an unexplained gap in the collection, from 1955 until 1972. The file includes some internet print-outs of websites that have to do with Jan Struther, her life and works.
133 ff.

17. Small format notebooks and diaries (boxed together)

- 17.1. 'History of my Children'.
- 17.2. 'The Book of Joyce. Dances, Dinners, Boys, Girls, etc,', 1918–1920. See *The Real Mrs Miniver*, page 31.
- 17.3. Travel diary, Scotland, 1921.
- 17.4. Travel diary, Egypt, 1922.
- 17.5. Engagement diary, 1927 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham and Jan Strutheret Rance tipped in).
- 17.6. Engagement diary, 1928 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham and Jan Strutheret Rance tipped in).
- 17.7. Travel diary, Balkans, 1929. Volume 1.
- 17.8. Travel diary, Balkans, 1929. Volume 2.
- 17.9. Travel diary, France. 1936.
- 17.10. Engagement diary, 1939 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.11. Notes on arrival in USA. 1940.

- 17.12. Engagement diary, 1940 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.13. Engagement diary, 1941 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.14. Engagement diary, 1942 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.15. Engagement diary, 1943 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.16. Engagement diary, 1944 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.17. Engagement diary, 1945 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.18. Engagement diary, 1947 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.19. Engagement diary, 1948 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.20. Engagement diary, 1949 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.21. Engagement diary, 1951 (with explanatory notes by Robert Maxtone Graham tipped in).
- 17.22. Engagement diary, 1952.
- 17.23. Engagement diary, 1953.
- 17.24. United Kingdom passports, 1936, 1946, 1948; United Kingdom driving licence, 1945-1953; 'Protection for your home', wartime advertising literature for Jay's Furnishing Stores, London.
- 17.25. Notes on graphology. Undated.
- 17.26. 'Plots'. Notebook recording ideas for stories, articles, rhymes, etc. Undated, but a loose sheet near the end is dated 1928.
- 17.27. Botanical notes, 1948-1949.

18-19. Prose

In alphabetical order of title or subject. Most are undated and many are unpublished. Titles preceded by a question mark are possible titles attributed by Robert Maxtone Graham.

18. Aftbears (f.1)
?Mr Ajemian, ?1948 (possibly a chapter for 'Cactus and Columbine') (f.33)
All round the world (f.49)
Amberley episode, 1945 (f.52), with copy of related letter of Robert Maxtone Graham, 1991.
Anderson and apple sauce (f.62)
[Miscellaneous notes and a press cutting] (f.66)
Luggage (f.72)
The art of giving (f.76)
Aunts (f.87)
Bad housekeeping: a brief guide to the oldest profession in the world (f.89)
Badminton speech (f.98)
?Mr Balmer (chapter IV) (f.104)
?Katherine Bartlett (f.112)
Below-stairs (f.118)
Bucks County (f.128)
Candlesticks (f.132)
?Celebrities (f.135)
Central Park (f.139)
Cherry stones (f.149)
For children only (f.155)
Compliments with a sting (f.158)
?Cornelia (f.162)
The court ball (f.164)
Crossword (f.169)
The curious phenomenon of the militarist's sister (f.175)
Way they talk in Devonshire (f.182)
Drama in everyday life (f.184)
Dreams, 1938 (f.188)
Early morning tea (f.195)
The editor regrets ... (f.200)
?Ellen (f.211)
A fake hand (f.224)
?Flying (f.227)
For services to trade (f.230)
Four travellers (237)
?On the fringe (f.245)
The goose girl (f.254)
Graphology (f.257)
Hallowe'en (f.260)
?Hitch-hiking (f.263)
?Holiday / The seven sins of the road (f.277)

?Holidays (f.283)
An ideal home (f.286)
?Island (f.296)
306 ff.

19. ?Letter to post (f.1)
Librarians (talk) (f.6)
Marriage and freedom (f.20)
?Married couples (f.22)
Meredith (f.24)
Untitled fragment (f.49)
Ideas for Mrs Miniver, c.1939 (f.50)
Mountains and molehills (f.58)
?Nicola (f.63)
On not going to parties (f.74)
Nothing's really hard work ... (f.81)
?Old Man Rouch (f.85)
Op (f.105)
?The perfect cottage, 1929 (f.107)
Perfect meeting (f.111)
Opportunity (f.116)
Philosophy (f.119)
The poet and the sage (f.121)
Poets (f.129)
Notes on propaganda (f.135)
Proverbs (f.144)
?Mrs Purvis (f.147)
Queer (f.151)
Rapunzo (f.157)
?Roberta (f.160)
A rover ticket (f.167)
Schools (f.181)
The secret drawer (f.205)
Singing in Snake Hollow (f.208)
So I went a little farther ... (f.226)
Something useful (f.236)
Sometime, never (f.240)
Starling Magna (f.245)
Start talking (radio script), 1952 (f.254)
A stone's throw (f.263)
?Suicide storm (f.269)
?Sympathy (f.280)
Things (f.283)
A third-party risk (f.294)
Town v. Country (f.300)
Winding and unwinding (f.304)
The wit (f.308)
311 ff.

20-22. Verses, songs and hymns

About 350 items in alphabetical order by title, many unpublished, circa 1920-1951: consisting of fair copies, drafts and notes, with some music.

20. A-G.
Filed in are: the 2001 internet edition of 'Betsinda Dances' (ff.58-81); correspondence (2004-2005) and musical setting by R A Stewart for 'Cat' (ff.119-141); the 2001 internet edition of 'The Glass-blower' (ff.250-269). 307 ff.
21. H-P.
Filed in are the 2001 internet editions of 'Hymns by Jan Struther' (ff.39-48); 'The Modern Struwwelpeter' (ff.173-188); Poems from *A Pocketful of Pebbles* (ff.298-326). 353 ff.
22. R-Z.
Filed in are copies of letters, 1984, of Jamie Maxtone Graham relating to a breach of copyright claim against Celestial Seasonings for unauthorised use of 'The Reason' (ff.2-9); internet edition of 'Sycamore Square and other verses' (ff.109-132) 262 ff.

23. Juvenilia

- 23 Juvenilia.
Typescript copies of stories, with some verses, written from the age of five onwards, c.1914-1920; with some adult contributions to the Scratch Society of London, 1928 to 1933. 130 ff.

24-26. Plays

24. Manuscripts and typescripts of plays, circa 1920s and 1930s.
As far as is known, the only one to be performed by the family was 'St George and the [Loch Ness] Monster', acted at 16 Wellington Square, Chelsea, in 1934. In this file is a sheet giving the comments of spectators of that performance. Robert Maxtone Graham, aged 3, was cast as St George's page, but refused to speak his one line, 'Here is your sword'.
25. 'The City'. Manuscript and typescript. Undated, not published or performed.
26. 'Hell's Kitchen'. Manuscript and typescript. Undated, not published or performed.

27-29. Autobiography

- 27-28. Notes for an autobiography up to the age of 20. Manuscript and typescript, in two files.
27. Mainly manuscript, some typescript notes.
28. Mainly typescript, including 'fair copy' of some of the notes in Acc.13220/27.
29. 'The Gentle Gale'.
Manuscript and typescript of unfinished autobiography (up to age 20 but never got beyond seven), with a typed document by Jan Struther's son Jamie Maxtone Graham describing her start in writing the manuscript in 1948 near Kelso, Roxburghshire.
366 ff.

30-35. Travel writing and journals

30. European travel journals.
Mostly manuscript with some typescript. Includes: journey to Majorca and Barcelona, 1933; shooting house-parties in Lincolnshire, 1934; journey to Spain, 1934; notes about Rye, Sussex, 1938.
289 ff.
31. USA travel journals.
Manuscript and typescript, 1940. Unfinished and unpublished.
281 ff.
32. Notes on US cities and states visited on lecture tours, 1940-1943.
Manuscript in small loose-leaf ring binder with alphabetical thumb index, alphabetically arranged.
426 ff.
- 33-35. 'Cactus and Columbine', an unfinished and unpublished book about the USA.
33. Manuscript notes and drafts, in original binder.
34. Typescript notes and drafts, in original binder.
35. Typescript (incomplete?) of 'Cactus and Columbine', alternative title 'Project 1953'.
Mostly typescript but with some manuscript pages and some photocopies of later date.
426 ff.

36-38. Contracts and other work-related papers

36. Publishing contracts, UK and USA, 1937-1995.
505 ff.
37. Lecture tour contracts, USA, 1940-48, with some manuscript notes concerning people encountered on the tours.
283 ff.
38. Broadcasting and *The Times*.
Contents include:
Documents relating to Jan Struther's broadcasts in the UK and USA, including her poetry-reading audition with the BBC, 1933; 'Information, Please'; BBC contracts and papers; CBS scripts; 'Forsythe Saga'; 'Invitation to Learning'.
Letters to and from editorial staff of *The Times*, mainly concerning the Mrs Miniver articles, 1936 to 1939.
'The Miniver Times', Robert Maxtone Graham's Christmas Book for the family, 1989.
203 ff.

39-41. Miscellaneous personal papers

39. Formal and legal documents, 1909-1953.
Contents include Jan Struther's birth and death certificates, papers relating to her divorce, her will, US alien registration papers, University of Pennsylvania honorary degree.
138 ff.
40. Papers relating to the Anstruther family.
Contents include papers and letters concerning Jan Struther's elder brother Douglas; her father, Harry (MP for St Andrews); her mother, Hon Dame Eva Anstruther, born Hanbury-Tracy; the bankruptcy of her grandfather, 4th Lord Sudely; and earlier Tracy ancestry.
244 ff.
41. Jan Struther's two marriages.
Contents include papers relating to:
Anthony (Tony) James Oliphant Maxtone Graham, laird of Cultoquhey, Crieff, Perthshire, her first husband (divorced), and father of her three children.
Adolf (Dolf) Kurt Placzek of Vienna, latterly of New York, her second husband, who survived her.
The British War Relief Society. It was through Jan Struther's charitable work with this society in 1939 that she first met Dolf, a Jewish refugee whom she later married.
Various charitable works including food parcels for Britain, 1947.
189 ff.

42-47. Correspondence

42. Jan Struther's letters to her children, Jamie, Jan Strutheret (who became Mrs Patrick Rance) and Robert, c. 1943 to 1953. Mostly typescript, some manuscript. The first letter to Robert was written from The White House, Washington, where Jan Struther was staying as a guest of the Roosevelts.
160 ff.

43-45. Letters to Dolf Placzek.

43. 1939 to 1942 (the early letters are in German).
206 ff.

44. 1943 to 1944.
246 ff.

45. 1945 to 1951.
439 ff.

46. General correspondence, arranged alphabetically by surname. Mainly c.1939-1953, but including a few probably earlier letters, and some correspondence c.1989-1990, with Janet Rance concerning her biographical research into Jan Struther. Includes many letters of condolence to Dolf Placzek after Jan Struther's death in 1953.
244 ff.

47. Ambassadorial and presidential correspondence, 1939-1952. Includes letters of and to Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the USA, Eleanor Roosevelt and Governor Adlai Stevenson.
99 ff.

48. Biographical material

Containing:

Biographical notes about Jan Struther by her daughter Jan Strutheret Rance, 1989, intended as guidance for an eventual biographer, and used by Ysenda Maxtone Graham in writing *The Real Mrs Miniver*, 2001.

Diaries of Anne Meriel Talbot, of Tite Street, Chelsea, born 1899, died unmarried 1979. Extracts from the 51 diaries kept by Anne mainly in the 1920s and 1930s. Photocopies, and some typed copies, of the several hundred pages which contain remarks or information about the Maxtone Graham family. This was an important source for *The Real Mrs Miniver*. The MS originals were lent to Robert Maxtone Graham by Anne's nephew, Henry Villiers, who has consented to the inclusion of these copies in the Jan Struther archive.
263 ff.

49. Catalogue.

Copy of original catalogue as supplied by Robert Maxtone Graham; his Index to *The Real Mrs Miniver*; Bibliography.