Inventory

Acc.13860

Michael Roberts
Correspondence, personal and literary papers, published articles and reviews, and photographs, 1891-2015, of William Edward Roberts (1902-1948), known as Michael Roberts, poet, critic, teacher and mountaineer.

From Bournemouth School he went to King's College, London, where he read chemistry (BSc, 1922). He then read mathematics at Trinity College, Cambridge (BA, 1925), where he took the name Michael through admiration for the Russian savant Mikhail Lomonosov.

From 1925 to 1941, Roberts was a schoolmaster; until 1931 and again from 1934 at the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne; from 1931-1934 at the Mercers' School, London; and in summer 1934 at the King's School, Chester. From September 1941 to March 1945 he worked for the European Service of the BBC. He then became principal of the College of St Mark and St John, Chelsea, and Anglican teacher-training college. He died of monocytic leukaemia in December 1948.

In 1935 he married Janet Adam Smith (1905-1999).


For further papers of Michael Roberts, see Acc.13145.

This material was presented in 2017.

The papers are divided into the following sections:

1 Correspondence
2-13 Personal papers
14-49 Literary papers
50-54 Published articles/reviews
55-58 Mountaineering papers
1  CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence of Michael Roberts, David Robertson, H. Tyndale and Helen Sutherland, 1941-1948. (11 items)

See also Literary Papers for additional correspondence accompanying poetry.

2-13  PERSONAL PAPERS

2-4  School and University Certificates, 1916-1925

2  Bournemouth Secondary School Junior and Senior Certificates awarded to William E Roberts [aged 14-16], December 1916, December 1917 and December 1918. [3 items]

3  Officers Training Corps Certificates “A” and “B” awarded by the War Office to William Edward Roberts, 1 May and 21 July 1922. [2 items]

4  University of London and University of Cambridge awards in Science and the Arts to William E Roberts, 1920-1925. [4 items]

5  School and college magazines, 1918-1933

5  15 items, including:
   - The Cambridge Magazine, vol. 7, No.19, 16 February 1918 [fragile] and vol. 7, No.21, 2 March 1918
   - The Trinity Magazine - March 1923, March 1924, June 1924, December 1924 and June 1925
   - The Cambridge Mercury, No. 15, 1st November 1924 and No. 16, 1st December 1924
   - Notebook on The Hypocrites Club, formed at Trinity College Cambridge, 1924
   - Trinity College Concert programmes, 1924 and 1925
   - Mercers’ School Magazine, vol. 31, No. 3, September 1932 (mountaineering entry, pgs. 121-125)
   - Mercers’ School List of Camps, Summer 1933
Amateur dramatics, with photographs, 1926-1930

Programmes for five plays put on by ‘The Castrian Play’, produced by Michael Roberts:
- ‘The Man with the Dumb Wife’, Christmas 1926, with four mounted b/w photographs of the cast in action [in separate sleeves]
- ‘The Old Wives’ Tale’, New Year 1928
- ‘The Man in the Bowler Hat’, February 1929
- ‘The Honourable Historie of frier Bacon and frier Bongay’, Christmas 1929
- ‘The Knight of the Burning Pestle’, November 1930, with three mounted b/w photographs of the cast in action [in separate sleeves].

Programmes for plays put on by ‘The Valley Players’, in which Michael Roberts was a member of the cast:
- ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’, December 1926
- ‘Amyntas’, December 1927
- ‘Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary’, October 1928
- Four short pieces including ‘Scenes from Hamlet’, December 1928
- ‘Half-an-Hour’ and ‘The Dumb Man of Manchester’, December 1929
- ‘Mrs Moonlight’, December 1930
- Unidentified mounted b/w photo of young male cast in action [in separate sleeve].

The Royal Grammar School, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1930-1980


Newspaper cuttings on the end of the evacuation of pupils from the Royal Grammar School, Newcastle, to Penrith for the duration of the war, July 1944.
Michael Roberts’ address book, c.1930s-1940s.

The College of St Mark and St John, Chelsea, 1945-1948

Correspondence about the career of Michael Roberts as Principal of the College of St Mark and St John, Chelsea, 1945 until his death in 1948. With published information on the history of the College, details of the Memorial Service in his honour, January 1949, and a draft article on his career, written by T W Eason.

Obituaries, memorials, newspapers cuttings and articles on the life and works of Michael Roberts, 1948-2015

Including:
• ‘Impressions of Michael Roberts at Bonneval, 1948’ - an account of a climbing expedition in the Alps written by C E Fitchett, a colleague at the College of St Mark and St John, Chelsea
• Memorial Address by Lesley S Hunter, Bishop of Sheffield, January 1949
• Elegy on the Death of Michael Roberts by George Barber, and other tributes to him published in The Marjon, 1949

Photographs and negatives, c.1900s-1951

Box 13a Black/white photographs, c. 1900s–1946, including:
• Michael Roberts as a child, with family and friends, as a young man, a teacher, in the military, and in amateur theatricals
• on holiday and mountaineering, including trips to St. Adrien, Dipton, Stratford, Jura, Provence, Cumberland, Mont Blanc, New Forest, Tignes and Val d’Isere.

Box 13b Photographs, c.1931- c.1948
• black/white photographs on holiday and mountaineering in the New Forest, Aiguille Percée, Pourri, Val d'Isere and Tignes, 1933-1938
• black/white photographs with family, 1943
• small brown photograph album of b/w pictures of mountaineering /walking trips in Val d’Isere and Bonnerat, c.1947-1948
• colour photograph of portrait of Michael Roberts, c.1940s
• Correspondence from photography firms about photographs of the late Michael Roberts, 1949. (4 items)
• A4 envelope of negatives, some dated from 1931-1932.

14-49  LITERARY PAPERS

14-15 Poetry, 1934 -1948

14  Papers, including:
• Correspondence of Michael Roberts to Janet Adam Smith, enclosing a selection of his poems, 1934-1935
• Collection of poems, put together by Michael Roberts, following their previous publication in various magazines, including The Adelphi, The Listener, and The Spectator, 1936
• A set of proofs of Orion Marches, with other draft poems, c. 1939.

15  Papers, including:
• Draft compilation of Michael Robert's poems, in four parts, with introduction by Janet Roberts, c.1948:
  o Early Poems
  o Poems, 1935
  o Orion Marches
  o Last Poems
• Fragments of poems by Michael Roberts and others, October-December 1948
• Notes for poems and essays, including Jura, with various quotations from other writers, undated.

16-23 Novels and prose, c. 1938-1951

16  The Estate of Man

16  Notes for The Estate of Man with press cuttings on various topics used as research material, 1938-1951.
17-19  *Trelawnie*

17  Draft typescript of *Trelawnie*, Chapters 1-28, undated.


19  Typescript and notes on the writing of *Trelawnie*, undated.

20  *Black Magic*


21  *Recovery of the West*

21  Notes and drafts for various chapters for *Recovery of the West* [published 1941].

22-23  Untitled novel – draft chapters

22  Chapters 1-7, undated.

   (3 copies – 2 annotated drafts and one completed typescript)

II,  *The Birth of Henry-Joe*, pgs.1-14
    (3 copies – 2 annotated drafts and one completed typescript)

      (2 copies – annotated draft and completed typescript)

IV,  *Untitled*, pgs.25-34
    (2 copies – annotated draft and completed typescript)

V,  *The Music of the Spheres*, pgs.35-53
    (2 copies – annotated draft and completed typescript)

VI,  *Untitled*, pgs.54-64
    (2 copies – annotated draft and completed typescript)
VII, *The Madraporarian Skeleton*, pgs.65-81
(2 copies – annotated draft and completed typescript).

23 Chapters 8–15, 21 & 24, undated.

VIII, *Easter, 1921*, pgs.82-89
(3 copies – 2 annotated drafts and one completed typescript)

IX, *The Natterjack Business*, pgs.90-97
(3 copies – 2 annotated drafts and one completed typescript)

X, *The Cuddling Curate*, pgs.98-104
(3 copies – 2 annotated drafts and one completed typescript)

XI, *Bertorelli’s*, pgs.1-9
(3 copies – completed typescripts)

XII, *The Earthly Paradise*, pgs.1-6
(1 typescript copy)

XIII, *The Commercial Traveller’s Story*
(4 copies – 3 typescript versions and one draft)

XIV, *Conspiracy*, pgs.1-7
(3 copies – completed typescript)

XV, *Scene in Museum*, pgs.1-14
(1 draft)

XXI, *Meditation and Melodrama*, pgs.1-7
(1 typescript draft)

XXIV, *Ashes and Divine Sparks*, pgs.1-11
(1 typescript).

24 Drafts of various works, undated

24 Complete and incomplete works, several starting with quotations from other writers, undated:

• II, *To Oxford, with sundry irrelevant quotations*
‘The pen is mightier than the thought’
(1 incomplete typescript, undated)

- **III, Of Folly and of Bridges**
  ‘And malt does more than Milton can
  To justify God’s ways to man
  A E Housman
  (1 completed typescript, undated)

- **Woods and Waysides**: an account of the wanderings of Michael Roberts from the unpublished works of ‘Hoppy’
  (1 completed typescript, undated)

- **The Antiquary**
  *More strange than true: I never may believe
  These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.*
  Shakespeare
  (1 completed typescript, undated)

- **The Extravagancy**
  With a lengthy quotation from L. A. G. Strong, starting:
  ‘This is the wisdom of the road: to love
  All you can find to love, and love it wholly.
  (1 completed typescript, undated)

- **Juicy Gubbins: his tale**
  With a quotation from an Old Hampshire Rhyme, starting:
  ‘Oft in the vorrest wild
  I’ve sat un’though un’smiled
  (various drafts and typescript versions, undated)

- bundles of miscellaneous incomplete draft typescripts, undated.

**25-27 Notes of Michael Roberts, 1929-1947**

25 Press cuttings, reviews and notes, including notes on *Prolegomena to Any Future Whatnot* and *The Function of the Intellectual*, 1929-1933.

Fragments of poetry, most undated, but some dated from pre-1932, 1932, 1942 and 1947, with notes and typescript copies of other poets work, including:
- *The Long Road* by John Gray
- *Villanelle* by W Empson
- *Hidden Ice* by Louis MacNiece
- *The Mediterranean* by Allen Tate.

28-31 Michael Roberts’ notes on Literature, 1930s

28 Notebook on *Poetry, 1579-1637*. 
29 Notebook on *Jacobean and Caroline Prose*.
30 Notebook on the works of *Thomas Nashe*.
31 Blank notebook entitled, ‘NEC’, containing loose notes on poets, including Shelley and Coleridge.

32-47 Notebooks of Michael Roberts, 1933-1939

32 Notebook, undated.
39 Notebook, ‘The King’s School, Chester’, titled *Themes A*, undated.
40 Notebook, ‘R Waugh, 4 Ridley Place, Newcastle’, April 1937.

41 Notebook, ‘R Waugh, 4 Ridley Place, Newcastle’, May 1938.

42 Notebook, ‘R Waugh, 4 Ridley Place, Newcastle’, titled France, undated.

43 Notebook, headed English Political Thought, 27 February 1934.


45 Notebook, headed ‘Michael Roberts, 23 Fitzroy Square’, undated.


48- 49 Miscellaneous notes and press cuttings, 1922-1960

48 Notes and press cuttings, 1928-1930’s, including:
  • Notebook A - notes on ‘Exhortation to FR Lewis’ and ‘Letter to a Headmaster’, undated
  • Notebook B - notes on ‘A Knack to Know a Knave’ DHL, undated
  • Notebook D - notes and thoughts, some on ‘Ecstasy’ and ‘The Schoolmaster’, 1928 - c.1932?
  • Notes on science, c. 1930s.

49 Miscellaneous notes, drafts, autobiographical fragments and memorabilia, 1922-1960, including:
  • a typescript copy of essay/article The West Country, undated
  • song sheets, with music and lyrics in French, undated
  • a French programme for Galerie Carmine and Prix de la Piste a l’Ecran, 1938
  • an English programme for The Player’s Theatre, Piccadilly, 1942.


50 - 54 PUBLISHED ARTICLES/REVIEWS

Folders containing copies of literary magazines, edited by Michael Roberts, with copies of his articles and reviews on books, poetry and essays, 1930-1948.


52 Articles and reviews by Michael Roberts for various publications, 1931-1948

- *Saturday Review*, 1931
- *Time and Tide*, 1931, 1932, 1939-1940
- *Twentieth Century*, 1932, 1933
- *The New English Weekly*, 1932 & 1939
- *Times Literary Supplement*, 1933-1936
- *The Philosopher*, 1934
- *The New Statesman*, 1935
- *Life and Letters*, 1935
- Press cuttings on *Dr Robert Hooke’s Diary*, 1935
- *Purpose*, 1936
- *Annals of Science Review*, 1936
- *Threes*, 1936-1937
- *Now and Then*, 1937
- *Night and Day*, 1937
- *The Yorkshire Post*, 1937
- *The Student Movement*, 1938
- *Southern Review*, 1938
- *Theology*, 1939, 1940
- *Times Educational Supplement*, 1940
- *The Guardian*, 1940
- *Horizon*, 1941
- *Cambridge Review*, 1941
- *Britain Today*, 1941-1947
- *Kingdom Come*, 1943
- *Tribune*, 1945
- *The New English Review*, 1945
- Review of *The Pendulum of Politics* by Aubrey Jones, 1946
Michael Roberts’ contributions to published books, 1933-1940

- Introduction to *Reading the Spirit* by Richard Eberhart, OUP, 1937
- Short commentary in *The World and Ourselves, Part Four: The Answers* by Laura Riding, 1938

Copies of unpublished reviews by Michael Roberts, undated

- *The Theory of Knowledge and Existence* by W T Stace for OUP
- *Second Impressions* by T Earle Welby for ‘The Conservative Critic’
- *Science and Wisdom* by Jacques Maritain, translated by Bernard Wall
- *Shakespeare’s Last Plays* by E M W Tillyard for ‘The London Mercury’.

55 - 58 MOUNTAINEERING PAPERS

55 - 56 Mountaineering trips, 1930-1948

55 Notebook for the *Alpine Camp*, 1935, with maps.

56 Details of Michael Roberts' mountaineering trips, including:

- Miscellaneous hotel receipts and expenses for trips, 1930-1947
- List of Michael Roberts’ climbs for *The Alpine Club*, 1932-1948
- Michael Roberts membership card for the *Club Alpin Francais*, 1948
- A b/w photograph of shepherds and flock of sheep
- Notes of items needed for a climbing trip, undated.
Mountains and mountaineering, 1891-1949

57

Articles, poems and reviews on mountains and mountaineering by Michael Roberts, including:

- ‘Ski-ing: a Novice in the Savoie’ for the publication ‘Overseas’, in draft, 1933
- The Poetry and Humour of Mountaineering, for The Alpine Club, 1939

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Notes, articles and press cuttings on mountains and mountaineering, in English and in French, including references to the Alps, Jura and St Tropez, 1891-1948.