



Inventory

Acc.4864

George Mackay Brown

National Library of Scotland
Manuscripts Division
George IV Bridge
Edinburgh
EH1 1EW

Tel: 0131-466 2812
Fax: 0131-466 2811
E-mail: manuscripts@nls.uk

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George Mackay Brown (1921-96), was a novelist, poet and playwright, who was born in Orkney. He was educated at Newbattle Abbey College and the University of Edinburgh, and, apart from his time at these institutions, he rarely left the islands of his birth.

These papers, which date from the period 1960 to 1969, include manuscripts and typescripts of poetry, plays, broadcasts and reviews. Many of the poems (Acc.4864/1-8) were published in the following works:

The Year of the Whale (London: Chatto and Windus, 1965).
Fishermen with Ploughs (London: Hogarth Press, 1971).
Poems New and Selected (London: Hogarth Press, 1971).
Winterfold (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976).

The manuscripts of plays include drafts of *A Spell for Green Corn* (London: Hogarth Press, 1970).

For further literary manuscripts of George Mackay Brown, see Acc.4835.

Bought, 1969.

1-8 **Poetry, 1960-68, n.d.**
9-22 **Plays, 1964-67, n.d.**
23-33 **Essays, broadcasts and reviews, 1963-69, n.d.**

1-8 **Poetry, 1960-68, n.d.**

Manuscripts, typescripts and corrected typescripts of poems, arranged alphabetically by title. The poems are generally entered under the latest, or undeleted, title, and are cross-referenced from rejected or parallel titles when these are markedly different. They are undated, unless otherwise stated.

1. A-F.

‘After the Herring’ (also called ‘The Herring Fishers’ and ‘The Herring Whisky’).
‘Angels and Musicians’, 1962.
‘April Litany’, 1965.
‘The Artist’ (also called ‘Halcro’), 1962.
‘The Axe’: see ‘Sestina: The Women of Egilsay’.

‘A Bairn’s Calendar’: see ‘The Laird’s Dinner’.

'Bairnsong', n.d. (also called 'Bairnsong: Flower and Shell').
 'Bairnsong: the Dove', 1965.
 'A Ballad of Saint Magnus': *see* 'Sestina: The Women of Egilsay'.
 'A Battle in Ulster' (also called 'Three Young Men').
 'Beachcomber', 1965.
 'Benediction: Magnus Lands in Egilsay from the Ship': *see* 'Sestina: The Women of Egilsay'.
 'The Big Wind', 1965 (with 'Fisherman's Bride').
 'Birth' (also called 'The Red Place'), 1965 (with 'Ikey's Enemies').
 'The Birth', a prose poem, 1965.
 'Black Furrow, Grey Furrow', 1962, 1965 (with 'Crofter's Death', 1962 (here called 'Inscription' or 'This is how it will be ...')).
 'The Blacksmith': *see* 'Hill Runes'.
 'The Blind Helsman to Njal': *see* Acc.4864/5.
 'Brough of Birsay', 1965.
 'Building the Ship': *see* Acc.4864/5.
 'Business Man': *see* 'The Four Winds'.
 'Butter', 1965.

'Carnival of Love' (also called 'The Masque of Love', 'The Feast of Love', and 'The Troubles of Love'), (with 'Sheep in Snow' and 'A Love Poem').
 'The Coats': *see* 'Sabbath'.
 'Carol', 1966.
 'A Child's Calendar', 1965.
 'Chorus: April the Sixteenth': *see* 'Sestina: The Women of Egilsay'.
 'Clouds and Swans, Stenness'.
 'The Cod': *see* Acc.4864/5.
 'The Colporteur' (also called 'The Visitor from Edinburgh'), 1965 (with 'The Laird').
 'The Coward'.
 'Crofter', 1965. (*see also* 'How They Brought the Word to Rackwick').
 'Crofter-Fisherman': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
 'Crofter's Death' (also called 'Inscription'), (*see also* 'Black Furrow, Gray Furrow').
 'The Crofter's Seasons', 1965 (also called 'The Crofter').
 'The Crossing' (also called 'The Ferry Poem' and 'The Making of a Poem').
 'Culloden: the Last Battle'.

'The Day of the Dove', 1965.
 'Dead Fires', 1967 (also called 'The Deserted Valley').
 'The Death of Thorkeld': *see* Acc.4864/5.
 'Deor'.
 'The Deserted Valley': *see* 'Dead Fires'.
 'The Desertion of the Women and Seals', 1962.
 'Dounby Show', 1963.

'The Drowned Fisherman': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
'The Drowning Boy' (also called 'The Last Boy'), 1965.

'Elder': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
'The Escape of the Hart': *see* Acc.4864/5.
'Exile', 1965.
'Exiles': *see* Acc.4864/5.
'The Eye of the Cod': *see* 'The Laird's Dinner'.

'Fallen Thickest, God Wounds', 1962.
'Farm Labourer'.
'The Feast'.
'The Feast of Love': *see* 'Carnival of Love'.
'The Ferry Poem': *see* 'The Crossing'.
'Fiddlers at the Wedding'.
'The Fight with the Dragon' (partly written on a card, n.d., of Kulgin Duval).
'The Finished House', 1963.
'Fisherman's Bride', 1965 (*see also* 'The Big Wind' and 'Islanders').
'The Fisherman's Word', 1965.
'Fishmonger': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
'Five Craggs': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
'The Five Voyages of Arnor'.
'Foldings', 1965.
'The Four Winds' (with 'Myxomatosis' and 'Business Man').
'Fundamentalist'.
'Funeral', 1965.

2. G–O.

'Girl into Woman', 1965.
'A Girl's Song': *see* 'How They Brought the Word to Rackwick'.
'Gloria' (also called 'Lent').
'Gravedigger', 1965 (with 'Ikey!', 'Hunger', and 'Timor Mortis').
'Gudrun': *see* Acc.4864/5.

'The Haddock Fishermen', 1965.
'Halcro': *see* 'The Artist'.
'Hamnavoe: Saturday Night'.
'Harald, the Agnostic Ale-drinking Shepherd, Enemy of the Whisky Ploughmen and Harvesters, Walks over the Sabbath Hill to the Shearing'.
'The Hawk' (*see also* 'The Laird's Falcon').
'Helmsman', 1965.
'The Herring Fishers': *see* 'After the Herring'.
'The Herring Whisky': *see* 'After the Herring'.

‘Hill Runes’ (‘Thirst’, ‘Blacksmith’, ‘Kirkyard’, and ‘Tractor’), 1965.
‘Homage to Heddle’, 1965.
‘The Holy Table’, 1965.
‘Horse’, 1965 (*see also* ‘A Love Letter’).
‘How They Brought the Word to Rackwick’ (with ‘Sampler’, ‘A Girl’s Song’ and ‘Crofter’).
‘Hunger’: *see* ‘Gravedigger’.

‘Ikey!’: *see* ‘Gravedigger’.
‘Ikey and Bella of Midhouse’: *see* ‘Ikey and the Spinster’.
‘Ikey and the Fair Ground People’, 1965.
‘Ikey and the Sheriff’.
‘Ikey and the Spinster’, 1962 (also called ‘Ikey and Bella of Midhouse’).
‘Ikey Crosses the Ward Hill to the Spanish Wreck’.
‘Ikey on Women’: *see* ‘Letter’.
‘Ikey the Tinker’, 1965 (*see also* ‘Sheep in Snow’).
‘Ikey’s Day’, 1965.
‘Ikey’s Enemies’, 1965 (*see also* ‘Birth’).
‘Ikey’s Indictment’: *see* ‘A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child’.
‘The Image in the Hills’.
‘An Image out of Yeats’, 1962.
‘Imposters’ (also called ‘Tinkers’).
‘Inscription’: *see* ‘Crofter’s Death’.
‘Island Kirkyard’.
‘Islanders’, 1965 (with ‘Fisherman’s Bride’ and ‘Peat-cutting’).

‘Jack-in-the-Box’, 1962.
‘A Jar of Salt’, 1965.
‘Jean of the Crowsnest Buys a Dog at the Hamnavoe Market’.
‘Jess of the Shore’, 1965.

‘The Keeper of the Ale House’.
‘Kirkyard’: *see* ‘Hill Runes’ and ‘A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child’.
‘Kyrie’.

‘The Laird’ (*see also* ‘The Colporteur’ and ‘The Taxman’).
‘The Laird’s Dinner’, 1965 (with ‘Our Lady of the Furrows’, ‘Strangers: A Bairn’s Calendar’, and ‘The Eye of the Cod’).
‘The Laird’s Falcon’ (also called ‘The Hawk’).
‘Largs: the Battle by the Ships’, 1963.
‘The Last Boy’: *see* ‘The Drowning Boy’.
‘Last Instructions’, 1962, 1965 (also called ‘Willag’).
‘Lent’: *see* ‘Gloria’.
‘Letter’ (with ‘Ikey on Women’, ‘Seven Women’, and ‘Sheep-Thieves’).

‘A Love Letter’, 1965 (with ‘The Silent Old Ones’, ‘Noon’, and ‘Horse’).
‘A Love Poem’: *see* ‘Carnival of Love’ and ‘Sheep in Snow’.

‘Magnus Poems’: *see* ‘Sestina: The Women of Egilsay’.
‘The Making of a Poem’: *see* ‘The Crossing’.
‘Martyrdom’ (also called ‘Rose of Martyrdom’).
‘The Masque of Kings’: *see* Acc.4864/7.
‘The Masque of Love’: *see* ‘Carnival of Love’.
‘The Mermaid and James of Bigging’, 1962.
‘Myxomatosis’: *see* ‘The Four Winds’.

‘The Naked Dancer’.
‘The Net’: *see* Acc.4864/5.
‘The New Boat’, 1962 (*see also* ‘Sea Runes’ and ‘Sheep in Snow’).
‘A New House’.
‘The New Skipper’: *see* Acc.4864/5.
‘New Year’, 1964 (also called ‘Old Stories’).
‘The Night of the Fishermen’s Funeral’, 1965 (also called ‘A Smashed Boat’).
‘Noon’: *see* ‘A Love Letter’.

‘The Old Man’, 1965.
‘Old Stories’: *see* ‘New Year’.
‘Orkney: the Winter Islands. A Television Poem’, 1966 (*see also* Acc.4864/26).
‘Orkney Crofter’, 1967.
‘Our Lady of the Furrows’: *see* ‘The Laird’s Dinner’.
‘Our Lady of the Waves’.

3. P-S.

‘Peat Cutting’, 1965 (*see also* ‘Islanders’).
‘Pilgrims’, 1965 (with ‘A Smashed Boat’).
‘Ploughmen and Whales’, 1965 (*see also* ‘A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child’).
‘The Poet’.
‘A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child’, 1965 (with ‘Ikey’s Indictment’, ‘The Ploughman and Whales’, ‘The Scarecrow’s Year’, ‘Kirkyard’, and ‘Tractor’, 1965).
‘The Press Gang’, 1965.
‘The Priest’, 1965.

‘Quand Vous Serez Bien Vieille, Au Soir, A La Chandelle’.

‘The Red Place’: *see* ‘Birth’.
‘A Reel of Seven Fishermen’.
‘Reel: The Egilsay Fiddler’: *see* ‘Sestina: The Women of Egilsay’.
‘Roads’, 1965.

'Rosary'.
 'Rose of Martyrdom': *see* 'Martyrdom'.
 'Runes From a Holy Island'.
 'Runes From an Island of Horses'.

'Sabbath', 1966 (also called 'The Coats').
 'Sackcloth'.
 'The Sailor, the Old Woman, and the Girl', 1960, 1962.
 'Saint Magnus'.
 'Saint Magnus in Birsay', 1963.
 'Sampler', 1965 (*see also* 'How They Brought the Word to Rackwick').
 'Saul's Song'.
 'The Scarecrow in the Schoolmaster's Oats', 1965.
 'The Scarecrow's Year': *see* 'A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child'.
 'Sea Orpheus'.
 'Sea Runes', 1965 ('Five Craggs', 'Elder', 'Crofter-Fisherman', 'Village Shop Keeper', 'The Drowned Fisherman', 'New Boat', and 'Fishmonger').
 'Sermon: the Priest in the Kirk of Egilsay on the Day After the Martyrdom when the Body of the Saint Lies Before the Altar'.
 'Sestina: The Women of Egilsay', (with 'The Axe', 'Benediction: Magnus Lands in Egilsay from the Ship', 'Reel: The Egilsay Fiddler', 'Chorus: April the Sixteenth', and 'A Ballad of Saint Magnus').
 'The Settling of Rackwick'.
 'Seven Women': *see* 'Letter'.
 'Sheep in Snow' (with 'Ikey the Tinker', 'Sunk Sailing Boat', 'Carnival', 'A Love Poem', 'Wedding', and 'The New Boat'), (*see also* 'Carnival of Love' and 'The Whaler Home').
 'Sheep-Thieves': *see* 'Letter'.
 'Shore Chapel'.
 'The Shroud'.
 'The Silent Old Ones': *see* 'A Love Letter'.
 'The Silent Ones', 1965.
 'Skeleton', 1965.
 'A Smashed Boat': *see* 'The Night of the Fishermen's Funeral' and 'Pilgrims'.
 'Snow: from a Hospital Bed'.
 'Song: the Four Winds'.
 'Song: the Widow of Quoys'.
 'Song for a Dry Time, 1963'.
 'Spinster'.
 'Spring'.
 'Stations of the Cross for a Chapel in the Fields'.
 'The Statue in the Hills'.
 'Strangers': *see* 'The Laird's Dinner'.
 'The Stone Cutter'.
 'Sunk Sailing Boat' (*see also* 'Sheep in Snow' and 'The Whaler Home').

'The Supper of Grace'.
'Sylvia Wishart'.

4. T-W.

'The Taxman' (also called 'The Laird').
'Tenohl'.
'Thirst' (*see also* 'Hill Runes').
'The Three Kings', 1966, with an illustrated printed version.
'Three Love Poems in April'.
'The Three Saints - for Beth Bowden', 1962-3.
'This is how it will be...': *see* 'Black Furrow, Grey Furrow'.
'Three Young Men': *see* 'A Battle in Ulster'.
'Timor Mortis': *see* 'Gravedigger'.
'Tinkers' (*see also* 'Imposters').
'Tractor': *see* 'Hill Runes' and 'A Prayer to Our Lady for a New Child'.
'Transfiguration'.
'The Troubles of Love': *see* 'Carnival of Love'.
'The Twelve Piers of Hamnavoc', 1960.
'The Two Elders', 1962.

'The Unborn and the Dead', 1965.
'Unlucky Boat'.
'Unpopular Fisherman'.

'The Viking's Testament'.
'Village Shop Keeper': *see* 'Sea Runes'.
'Visitor From Edinburgh': *see* 'The Colporteur'.

'The Waves of Eynhallow'.
'Weather Bestiary'.
'Wedding', 1965 (*see also* 'Sheep in Snow').
'The Whaler Home' (with 'Sunk Sailing Boat' and 'Sheep in Snow').
'Whales': *see* Acc.4864/5.
'The Wheel of Fire'.
'Willag': *see* 'Last Instructions'.
'Witch'.
'The White Ship', 1965.
'A Winter Night's Fishing', 1965.
'Windfall', 1965.

5. Poems, 1963, n.d., mainly from 'Dragon and Dove'.
This sequence forms part of *Fishermen with Ploughs*. Other poems from this volume may be found in the alphabetical sequence, Acc.4864/1-4 above.

 'Building the Ship'.
 'The Death of Thorkeld'.
 'The Blind Helsman to Njal'.
 'The New Skipper'.
 'Exiles'.
 'The Escape of the Hart'.
 'The Blind Helsman to Njal: The Holy Trees'.
 'Gudrun'.
 'The Cod'.
 'The Net'.
 'Whales'.
6. Fragments of poems, and rejected or untitled poems, including a manuscript list of poems, 1963.
7. Manuscripts, 1961-5, n.d., for 'The Masque of Kings', a poem sequence.
8. 'The Sight and Sound of Orkney', an annotated cutting from *The Scotsman* (10 February 1968) featuring poems by George Mackay Brown.
- 9-22. Plays, 1964-67, n.d.**
9. Two manuscripts, 1964, of 'Our Lady of the Fishing Boats', a nativity play.
- 10-20. *A Spell for Green Corn*, 1966-7, n.d.
This play was first broadcast by the BBC in 1967.
 10. Manuscript, n.d., of 'Miracle'.
 11. Manuscript, n.d., of 'Witch and Poet'.
 12. Manuscript, n.d., of 'Witch and Poet'.
 13. Manuscript drafts, n.d., for 'Witch and Poet'.
 14. Manuscript, n.d., of 'The Tinker Road'.
 15. Manuscript, n.d., of 'Resurrection'.
 16. Manuscript, n.d., of 'Some seventeenth century records from the island of Hellya, Orkney, concerning a witch trial', with a letter, 1966, of Stewart Conn.
 17. Corrected typescript, with additional manuscript pages, [1966].
 18. Manuscript, 1967, of 'Suggestions for linking verse'.
 19. Draft of letter, 1967, to Stewart Conn.
 20. BBC radio script, 1967.

21. Manuscript, ? 1967, of 'The Watcher', 'a Tolstoy adaptation in three scenes'.
22. Manuscript, n.d, of Scene Three of an unidentified play, set in 'The Hall in Sandwick, Orkney'.
- 23-31. Essays, broadcasts and reviews, 1963-70, n.d.**
23. Manuscript, 1963, of 'The Living Poet', a broadcast for BBC Radio 3.
24. Manuscript, 1965, of 'Writing in Orkney', with a letter, 1966, of George Bruce.
25. Radio script, [1966], of 'Writing in Orkney'.
26. Two draft television scripts, 1966, n.d., of 'Orkney: the Winter Islands. A Television Poem.', with a letter, 1965, of Finlay J. Macdonald. For the manuscript of this poem, see Acc.4864/2 above.
27. Radio script, n.d., of 'Red Christmas', with a letter, 1966, of Mary Wilkinson.
28. Manuscript notes for a review, c. 1966, of Peter H. Butter, *Edwin Muir. Man and Poet* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966).
29. Manuscript, 1967, of 'Why Live in Orkney?', a talk for the BBC.
30. Manuscript, c. 1969, of 'The Broken Heraldry'.
This essay was published in Karl Miller (editor), *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* (London: Faber, 1970).
31. Radio script, n.d., of 'Poetry Now', featuring poems of George Mackay Brown and Stewart Conn.