**GEORGE ELIOT**

**Guide to records**

**Coventry Archives** is located in the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry, CV1 5QP. Admission to both the Reading Room and Research Room is free. Documents and books can be consulted without charge, but a charge is made for photocopying or the taking of digital images. Visitors are required to make an appointment to view original documents in the Research Room. Material in the Reading Room is available without the need of an appointment.

**Opening hours:** The Coventry Archives Reading and Research Rooms are open, 10.30 am – 3.30pm, Wednesdays – Fridays; the Reading Room is open on alternate Saturdays, 10.30 am – 3.30pm. Please refer to the Herbert website at www.theherbert.org for further details, or telephone on 02476 237583.

**Introduction**

George Eliot, christened Mary Ann Evans, was born in Nuneaton at the Arbury Estate in 1819 before moving to Griff house in 1820. Throughout her adolescent years she was educated at Misses Franklins School on Warwick Row in Coventry. When she reached 21 her brother married, leaving her and her father to move to Foleshill Road in Coventry, where she became acquainted with the Bray and Hennell families. Evans maintained a longstanding relationship with the Hennell and Bray families, sharing correspondences regularly even when she had moved to London. Eliot also participated in the Intellectual circle the Brays had grown at Rosehill, where thinkers of the time such as Herbert Spencer and Robert Owen frequented. It was here that Eliot became influenced by agnostic ideas and translated works by Feuerbach and Strauss. In 1850 she moved to London in hope of becoming a writer and found employment at the Westminster Review, eventually becoming its foremost writer of material. It was here in her later life that Eliot produced the most prominent of her literary works, including *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, the highly acclaimed *Middlemarch*, and the controversial *Daniel Deronda*. Evans died in 1880 and rests at Highgate cemetery in London where figures such as Karl Marx and Herbert Spencer are also buried. She leaves a great legacy behind her, not only producing works of fiction which are held in the highest regard, but also one of being a liberal thinker certainly by her contemporaries’ standards. She maintained a relationship with George Henry Lewes whilst he was still married. She also backed J.S. Mills’ campaigns for greater equality for women and investing in schools for girls, to improve female education.
**GE: George Eliot Collection**

This recently catalogued collection consists of six sub-sections which covers the following areas:

GE/1 George Eliot articles
GE/2 George Eliot letters
GE/3 George Eliot newsletters and news cuttings
GE/4 George Eliot Fellowship pamphlets and ephemera
GE/5 George Eliot sale catalogues
GE/6 George Eliot scrapbooks

**Biographical books**


**George Eliot literary works, poems and essays, first edition**

Adam Bede, 1859, Harper and Brothers, New York, GM 013.E42


Essays by George Eliot from *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review*:
- German Wit: Heirich Heine, 1856
- Women in France: Madame de Sable, 1854
- Contemporary Literature of England: McKay’s ‘Progress of Intellect’ Review, 1851
- Vehse’s ‘Memoirs of the courts of Austria’, 1856, Westminster Review & Foreign Quarterly Review
- London, Hardback, GM013.E42


**Bray family first edition works**


Our duty to Animals, Caroline Bray, 1878, S.W Partridge & Co, Hardback, GM 013.B827


The Philosophy of Necessity: Or, the Law of Consequences; As Applicable to mental, moral and social science: Volume I &II, Charles Bray, 1841, Longmans, Green and Co, London, Hardback, GM013 B827


Hennell family


Tale of the Alps: A Romance [Original Manuscript in the author’s own handwriting and bound by her at the age of fourteen], 1819, Hardback, GM013.H515


A memoir of the Late Charles Christian Hennell [Letter from Caroline Bray inserted], Sara Sophia Hennell, 1899, Hardback, HM920.H515
Political critique


George Eliot and Europe, 1997, Scholar Press, Ashgate, Aldershot, GM940, Reading Room

George Eliot and Italy: Literary, Cultural and Political influences from Dante to Risorgimento, Andrew Johnson, 1998, MacMillan, London GM945 reading room

Gendering Orientalism- Race, femininity and representation, Reina Lewis, 1996, Routledge, London GM704.93

George Eliot and Herbert Spencer- Feminism, evolutionism and the reconstruction of gender, Nancy Paxton, 1991, Princeton University Press, GM 801, Reading Room

George Eliot and the Politics of National Inheritance, 1994, Oxford University Press, G801, Reading Room

The Jewish Odyssey of George Eliot 2009, Encounter Books, Gertrude Himmelfarb, New York, GM296, Reading Room

*Herbert Art Gallery and Museum also hold a considerable number of museum objects related to Mary Ann Evans [George Eliot]. For more details please look at our online catalogue Coventry collections.*