

Denton Welch:

An Inventory of His Papers in the Manuscript Collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center

Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Welch, Denton, 1915-1948
- Title:** Denton Welch Papers
- Dates:** 1770-2002 (bulk 1938-1982)
- Extent:** 10 boxes, 1 galley file (4.2 linear feet)
- Abstract:** The Denton Welch papers document the artist-author's creative life in the last eight years of his life, 1940 to 1948. Included in the papers are manuscripts, correspondence, personal documents, and biographical materials.
- RLIN Record #:** TXRC06-A26
- Language:** English
- Access:** Open for research. This collection was previously accessible through a card catalog, but has been re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.
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Administrative Information

- Acquisition:** Purchase and gift, 1957-2006
- Processed by:** Bob Taylor, 2006
- Repository:** [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)
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Biographical Sketch

Maurice Denton Welch was born to Rosalind and Arthur Joseph Welch in Shanghai on March 29, 1915, the youngest of four sons. The maternal and paternal sides of the family had for a considerable period been successfully involved in commercial ventures in China, and the Welch sons were raised in comfortable circumstances. In 1924 Denton was sent, like his elder brothers, to England for schooling. Following his mother's death in 1927 the bright but eccentric youth struggled with his mother's loss and a feeling of alienation at school, culminating in his running away from Repton School in 1931.

Following a year spent, at his father's suggestion, in Shanghai, Denton Welch returned to England in 1933 and enrolled in the Goldsmith School of Art in London. Two years later injuries received when he was struck by an automobile terminated his scholastic career and led to medical complications to which he eventually succumbed. After his discharge from a nursing home at Broadstairs, Kent in 1936 Denton Welch moved with housekeeper Evelyn Sinclair to rural western Kent, where he lived for the remainder of his life.

In his Kentish retirement Welch continued to paint and draw and had his first exhibition at the Leicester Galleries in 1941. From the first years of World War II Denton Welch also began to pursue, with increasing success, a literary career, initially publishing poems in literary magazines during 1941 and maintaining a journal.

His "Sickert at St. Paul's," an account of Welch's meeting with the artist Walter Sickert (1860-1942) during the early stages of his recuperation at Broadstairs, appeared in the August 1942 issue of *Horizon*, attracting (with Welch's encouragement) the attention of Edith Sitwell. His autobiographical novel *Maiden Voyage* was accepted for publication by George Routledge and Sons, and, with Sitwell's foreword and strong pre-publication review, was sold out before its May 1943 publication.

Welch's arrival as a novelist during 1943 was followed by his introduction to Eric Oliver, who soon became his friend and life partner. As his health deteriorated in the mid-1940s Denton Welch worked as he was able to finish a second novel, *In Youth Is Pleasure* (1945), as well as to continue writing short stories, several of which were collected in *Brave and Cruel and Other Stories* (1949). His last novel, *A Voice through a Cloud*, was unfinished at his death on December 30, 1948, but eventually appeared in print in 1950.

Sources:

De-la-Noy, Michael. *Denton Welch*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Viking, 1984.

Laughlin, Charlotte Gay. "A Catalogue of the Denton Welch Collection at the University of Texas." Ph.D. diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1975.

Welch, Denton. *The Denton Welch Journals*, edited and with an introduction by Jocelyn Brooke. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1952.

Scope and Contents

The Denton Welch papers document the artist-author's creative life in the last eight years of his life, 1940 to 1948. Included in the papers are manuscripts, correspondence, personal documents, and biographical materials. The bulk of these materials were bequeathed to Eric Oliver in Welch's will, and were subsequently added to by other acquisitions from friends and researchers of Denton Welch. The present organization is one created at the Ransom Center and arranges the collection in three series: I. Works, 1940-84, II. Correspondence, 1938-48, and III. Other Papers, 1770-2002. This collection was previously accessible through a card catalog, but has been re-cataloged as part of a retrospective conversion project.

Series I, Works, includes manuscripts for Denton Welch's novels, short stories, and poems written between 1940 and 1948, many being represented by variant drafts. While most of the manuscripts are present as rough handwritten drafts, *Brave and Cruel and Other Stories*, *In Youth Is Pleasure*, and *Maiden Voyage* are also represented by typescripts. The author's title page design for *In Youth Is Pleasure* is present in the series; other sketches found in his notebooks document Denton Welch's graphic designs on his own published works.

An index of works by title, or by first line or phrase for untitled works, is included in this finding aid. Drafts and fragments of the numerous short poems found in multiple locations in the series of notebooks kept by Welch are not included in the index, but may be found using Charlotte Laughlin's "A Catalogue of the Denton Welch Collection." Citations to entries in Laughlin's bibliography are noted parenthetically in the folder list.

Series II, Correspondence, embraces the letters sent and received by Denton Welch in the last eight years of his life. A significant amount of correspondence from Welch to his friends Noël Adeney, Maurice Cranston, Eric Oliver, and Helen Roeder finds place in the series, along with correspondence to Welch from, among others, Julian Goodman, Thomas Hennell, Henry Moore, Edward Sackville-West, and Edith Sitwell.

Series III, Other Papers, comprises two subseries, the first of which is correspondence received by Eric Oliver after Welch's death. Correspondents include David Archer, Jocelyn Brooke, Cyril and Barbara Connolly, Richard Newton, Harold Nicholson, and Vita Sackville-West. The final subseries includes Hector Bolitho's notes on Denton Welch, along with some correspondence to Bolitho from Eric Oliver. Also present in the subseries are photographs and personal documents of Welch.

Related Material

Additional material relating to Welch is located in the Ransom Center Vertical File Collection. Other holdings at the Center with materials relating to Denton Welch include Maurice Cranston, Robert Rubens, and Edith Sitwell.

Separated Material

Denton Welch's paintings, drawings, and sketchbooks are held by the Ransom Center's Art Collection and are described in a separate finding aid.

Five books related to Welch and acquired by the Center from the estate of Gordon Hooper are held in the Ransom Center Library and are listed in the University of Texas [Library Catalog](#).

Index Terms

People

- Archer, David.
- Asquith, Margot, 1864-1945.
- Bagnall, Stephen.
- Berners, Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson, Baron, 1883-1950.
- Bolitho, Hector, 1897-1974.
- Brooke, Jocelyn.
- Colefax, Sibyl, 1874-1950.
- Connolly, Barbara.
- Connolly, Cyril, 1903-1974.
- Cranston, Maurice William, 1920- .
- De-la-Noy, Michael, 1934- .
- Goodman, Julian.
- Hennell, Thomas, 1903-1945.
- Moore, Henry, 1898-1986.
- Newton, Richard.
- Nicolson, Harold George, Sir, 1886-1968.
- Oliver, Eric.
- Sackville-West, Edward, Hon., 1901-1965.

Welch, Denton, 1915-1948

Sackville-West, V. (Victoria), 1892-1962.

Sitwell, Edith, Dame, 1887-1964.

Sitwell, Osbert, 1892-1969.

Walbrand-Evans, May.

Subjects

Authors, English--20th century--Biography.

Artists--England--Biography.

Document Types

Christmas cards.

Drawings.

Journals.

Legal documents.

Negatives.

Photographs.

Postcards.

Series I. Works, 1940-84

Untitled works

Poems, untitled **Box.Folder 1.1**

Novel fragment (8 chapters in 2 notebooks) (D45) **Box.Folder 1.2**

Prose fragments **Box.Folder 1.3**

Three short story fragments (D76) **Box.Folder 1.4**

A-B **Box.Folder 1.5**

"At Sea"; Discoveries (D20a, D20b) **Box.Folder 1.6**

"The Barn" (D21) [* removed to Galley Files] **Box.Folder ***

"Brave and Cruel"

Five notebooks (D22a, D22b) **Box.Folder 1.7**

Carbon typescript (D22c) **Box.Folder 1.8**

C **Box.Folder 1.9**

D **Box.Folder 1.10**

Denton Welch material from Hamish Hamilton, 1982 **Box.Folder 2.1**

E **Box.Folder 2.2**

F **Box.Folder 2.3**

"The Fire in the Wood"

Working title Pine Wood

Two notebooks (D32a) **Box.Folder 2.4**

Two notebooks and a fragment (D32b, D32c, D32d) **Box.Folder 2.5**

Final title; three notebooks (D32e) **Box.Folder 2.6**

G **Box.Folder 2.7**

H-L **Box.Folder 2.8**

Welch, Denton, 1915-1948

I Left My Grandfather's House (D38) **Box.Folder 2.9**

In Youth Is Pleasure

Five notebooks (D39c) **Box.Folder 3.1**

Typescript (D39d); title page design (D39e) **Box.Folder 3.2**

Journals

1-4, 1942/43 (D1-4) **Box.Folder 3.6**

5-7, 1943/44 (D5-7) **Box.Folder 3.7**

8-13, 1944/46 (D8-13) **Box.Folder 3.8**

14-19, 1946/48 (D14-19) **Box.Folder 4.1**

The Journals of Denton Welch

Passages deleted from the 1952 edition (typescript photocopy) (G12509) **Box.Folder 10.1**

Copy of 1984 edition (edited by Michael De-la- Noy) with annotations and interleaved material (G12509) **Box.Folder 10.2**

"The Judas Tree," handwritten manuscript (D65.1); typescript **Box.Folder 3.3**

"Leaves from a Young Person's Notebook" (D40a, D40b, D40c) **Box.Folder 3.4**

"A Lunch Appointment" (D41) **Box.Folder 3.5**

M **Box.Folder 4.2**

Maiden Voyage

Handwritten manuscript (D42a) **Box.Folder 4.3-4**

Typescript (D42b) **Box.Folder 4.5**

N-P **Box.Folder 5.1**

Poetry manuscripts

Undated

Typescript inscribed "Bell Farms, Hadlow" **Box.Folder 5.2**

[Poems A] (D73) and [Poems B, Aug. 1944]

Box.Folder 5.3

Dated

1940, 1942, 1943 (D59, D62, D63); for 1941 (D60), see Fear, folder 2.3

**Box.Folder
5.4**

1944, 1945/47, 1947 (D64, D68, D69)

Box.Folder 5.5

Q-T

Box.Folder 5.6

"The Trout Stream," handwritten manuscript and carbon typescript (D46a, D46b)

**Box.Folder
5.7**

U-Z

Box.Folder 6.1

A Voice through a Cloud

Fragment and first handwritten draft (D47a, D47b)

Box.Folder 6.2

Author's handwritten "fair copy" (D47c)

Notebooks I-IV

Box.Folder 6.3

Notebooks V-XI

Box.Folder 6.4

Notebooks XII-XV

Box.Folder 6.5

Series II. Correspondence, 1938-48

Subseries A: Outgoing, 1938-48

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Originals	Box.Folder 7.2
Photocopies	Box.Folder 7.3
Oliver, Eric	
Originals, 1943-47, undated	Box.Folder 7.4
Transcriptions, 1943-47, undated	Box.Folder 7.5
Oliver, Eric (and others), 1943-45 (transcriptions) (G12509)	Box.Folder 10.4
Oliver, Marcus, 1938-48 (transcriptions) (G12509)	Box.Folder 10.5
Roeder, Helen	
Originals, 1942-47 (G12166)	Box.Folder 7.6
Transcriptions, 1942-43, undated	Box.Folder 7.7
Transcriptions, 1942-47, undated (G12509)	Box.Folder 10.6
Swanwick, Betty, 1943-45 (transcriptions) (G12509)	Box.Folder 10.7

Subseries B: Incoming, 1941-48

Unidentified; A-E	Box.Folder 7.8
F-P	Box.Folder 8.1
R-Z	Box.Folder 8.2
Sitwell, Edith, Dame, 1942-46	Box.Folder 8.3

Series III. Other Papers, 1770-2002

Subseries A. Eric Oliver Incoming Correspondence, 1948-76

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Brooke, Jocelyn	
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1952 (July)-1963	Box.Folder 9.1
Newton, Richard, 1971-76	Box.Folder 9.2

Subseries B. Miscellaneous, 1770-2002

Bolitho, Hector, notes on Denton Welch and correspondence from Eric Oliver, 1945-66	Box.Folder 9.3
Streeten, Francis: correspondence to Benjamin Whitrow, 1976 (photocopies and transcriptions) (G12509)	Box.Folder 9.4
Walbrand-Evans, May: correspondence to Marcus Oliver, 1940-41 (originals and transcriptions) (G12509)	Box.Folder 9.5
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Personal documents, 1942-52	Box.Folder 9.6
Photographs, 1934-81 (G12509)	Box.Folder 9.7
Photocopies, printouts, clippings and related, 1770-2002 (G12509)	Box.Folder 9.8
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- **Asquith, Margot, 1864-1945**--7.8
- **Bagnall, Stephen**--7.8, 8.4
- **Berners, Gerald Hugh Tyrwhitt-Wilson, Baron, 1883-1950**--7.8
- Blanch, Lesley (*Vogue*)--7.8
- **Bolitho, Hector, 1898-1974**--7.8, 8.4, 9.3
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- **Brooke, Jocelyn**--8.6, 9.1
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- **Connolly, Barbara**--8.4
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- **Cranston, Maurice William, 1920-** (Germany Emergency Committee)-- 7.8, 9.2
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Welch, Denton, 1915-1948

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- The moon was arched like a finger nail . . . --4.2 (D143a [photocopy]); 5.2 (D143b)
- The moonlight wood--2.7 (D144a; with Girl's poem); 4.2 (D144c-d); 5.6 (D144b; with The ship)
- My cats and evolution--4.2 (D145a-b); 5.2 (D145c)
- My house--4.2 (D146a-b); 5.2 (D146c)
- Narcissus Bay--5.1 (D44, D67.1)
- Near the Ebenezer Chapel--5.1 (D147a-i); 7.2 (D147j; with correspondence to M. Cranston)
- The needled worm--5.1 (D148a); 5.2 (D148b)
- A new moon--5.1 (D149a-b); 5.2 (D149c)
- Night in war-time--5.1 (D150a-b); 5.2 (D150c)
- Night poem--5.1 (D151a); 5.2 (D151b)
- Nightscape--5.1 (D152a-b,d); 5.2 (D152c)
- O see them walking in the angry rain . . . --6.1 (D153; with manuscript for Weather, D200f)
- The old boy's celebration day--2.1
- Once I thought . . . --5.5 (D154; with N. Adeney note, B79)
- Once or twice--5.1 (D155a,c-d)
- One day--5.2 (D156)
- One day all choking garments . . . --1.1 (D123a.2, D157)
- One evening, in the flat fields by the river . . . --1.4 (D76.2)
- One Sunday, everyone out, Mother kept jewel case . . . --1.3 (D54)
- Panacea--5.1 (D158a); 5.2 (D158b)
- Parliament Square--5.1 (D159a-c); 5.2 (D159d)
- A party--5.1 (D70.2, D71)
- Philanthropist--5.1 (D160a); 5.2 (D160b)
- A picture in the snow--5.1 (D70.1)
- A poem for 3 o'clock in the afternoon--5.1 (D164a); 5.2 (D164b)
- A poem for bathing--5.2 (D162c)

- A poem for the future--5.1 (D163a-b); 5.2 (D163c)
- Prayer--5.1 (D166a); 5.2 (D166b)
- Protection at night--5.1 (D167a-b,d-e); 5.2 (D167f)
- Public house--5.1 (D168a); 5.2 (D168b)
- Question and answer--5.2 (D169c); 5.6 (D169a-b)
- The railway bridge--5.6 (D170b-d,e, and one not in Laughlin?)
- Remainder-- 5.2 (D171b); 5.6 (D171a)
- A rhyme--5.6 (D161a-b)
- Robert at last jerked open the door . . . --1.2 (D45)
- Robert was having a very late breakfast in the sun . . . --1.3 (D56)
- Roger lay on the cliff--2.8 (D75.8)
- Rural raid--5.2 (D172d); 5.6 (D172a-c)
- "Scepticemia"-- 5.2 (D173b); 5.6 (D173a)
- Shark's teeth--5.2 (D174)
- She had pale gold hair done in a plait . . . --1.3 (D57)
- The ship--5.2 (D175g); 5.6 (D175a-b,d-f); 6.1 (D175c; with Unteroffizier B. Adelwart)
- The sickness--5.6 (D176b-d)
- The skeleton child--5.6 (D177a-c)
- So much escapes the heart's . . . --1.1 (D178)
- So shall this song in after years . . . --1.1 (D179b); 5.2 (D179a)
- Soldier clinging to that woman . . . --7.8 (D180; on letter from Maurice Cranston, B3)
- Some laurels--5.2 (D181c); 5.6 (D181a-b)
- Something that stings in every man's face once . . . --5.5 (D182; with note from unidentified correspondent, B63)
- Song--5.2 (D183b); 5.6 (D183a)
- Spit on your heart . . . --1.1 (D184)
- Stiff thoughts--5.6 (D185a-c)
- Stop heart--5.2 (D186c); 5.6 (D186a-b)
- Stranger--5.6 (D187)
- A stranger in the train--5.6 (D188a-d)
- Sun--5.2 (D189b)
- Take the [proud?] mornings . . . --1.1 (D190)
- Theory and practice--5.2 (D192b); 5.6 (D192a)
- This day is old . . . --1.1 (D193)
- To God--5.2 (D194b); 5.6 (D194a)
- A tombstone--5.2 (D195c); 5.6 (D195a-b)
- Touchett's party--1.5, 2.1 (D39a.1)
- The trout stream--5.7 (D46a-b)
- Two cats--5.2 (D196)
- Understanding and fighting--6.1 (D197)
- Unteroffizier B. Adelwart--5.2 (D198c); 6.1 (D198a-b)
- Velvet--1.10 (D26b.2; with Discoveries); 2.1
- The venom bee--5.2 (D199b); 6.1 (D199a)
- *A Voice through a Cloud*--6.2-5 (D47a-c)
- The war breaks out--2.1
- Weather--6.1 (D200a-g)
- Weekend--2.1, 2.8 (D75.9)
- Well plaything ball . . . --8.1 (D201; with George Routledge and Sons letter, B3)
- When darkness comes . . . --5.2 (D202b)
- When darkness comes--6.1 (D202a)
- When I ran out of the headmaster's front door . . . --1.4 (D76.1)

- When I was thirteen--6.1 (D48)
- Where I wander . . . --6.1 (D203a-b)
- Where nothing sleeps--5.2 (D204c); 6.1 (D204a-b)
- The whirling of engines . . . --1.1 (D205)
- Will it twine at last--5.2 (D206c); 6.1 (D206a-b)
- You never would have guessed--5.2 (D207b); 6.1 (D207a)
- The youth rang the bell of the house . . . --2.4 (D32a.2)