

Edith Evans, 1888-1976

A Preliminary Inventory of her Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Evans, Edith, 1888-1976
Title:	Edith Evans Papers
Dates:	1893-1976 (bulk 1912-1956)
Extent:	21 document boxes, 1 oversize box, 10 bound volumes (11.00 linear feet)
Abstract:	The archives of the English actress Dame Edith Evans include letters from her husband, Guy Booth, and from Margot Asquith, Enid Bagnold, Noel Coward, John Gielgud, Katharine Hepburn, George Moore, Terence Rattigan, George Bernard Shaw, Edith Sitwell, Ellen Terry, Sybil Thorndike, and Thornton Wilder. The balance of the collection contains clippings, programs, autograph drafts of replies and working notes, scrapbooks of press cuttings, and presentation and acting copies of books and filmscripts.
Call Number:	Performing Arts Collection PA-0127
Language:	English
Note:	This brief collection description is a preliminary inventory. The collection is not fully processed or cataloged; no biographical sketch, descriptions of series, or indexes are available in this inventory.
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 1980 (R8980)
Processed by:	Helen Adair, 2001-2002
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Scope and Contents

One of the finest actresses of her time, Edith Evans began her career as a milliner in London before making her first stage appearance as an amateur under William Poel's direction. Subsequently she toured with Ellen Terry as a professional actress. She joined the Old Vic Company for the 1925-26 season where her roles included Portia, Rosalind, Beatrice, and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Outstanding parts in her distinguished stage and film career were in *The Way of the World* (1924), *The Chalk Garden* (1964), and *The Whisperers* (1967); she portrayed her most famous role, Lady Bracknell in Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, on stage in 1939 and on film in 1952. In 1946 she was made D.B.E. Evans gave her last stage performance at the age of 85 in a one-woman show at the Haymarket, "Edith Evans ... and Friends."

The bulk of the Edith Evans Papers consists of correspondence, clippings, scrapbooks, and performance-related materials such as rehearsal copies of playscripts. The papers are arranged in three series: I. Correspondence, 1910-1976 (5.5 boxes), II. Theater Papers, 1899-1976 (15 boxes, 10 bound volumes), and III. Miscellaneous, 1893-1976 (1.5 boxes). Within each series, materials are arranged alphabetically by title or subject, with some materials further sorted chronologically.

The Correspondence series consists of incoming correspondence from Evan's husband, Guy Booth, her parents, and from Margot Asquith, Enid Bagnold, Noel Coward, John Gielgud, Katharine Hepburn, George Moore, Terence Rattigan, George Bernard Shaw, Edith Sitwell, Ellen Terry, Sybil Thorndike, and Thornton Wilder, among others. Also included is an index of correspondents, perhaps compiled by Evans' biographer Bryan Forbes.

The Theater Papers series is divided into four subseries. Subseries A. Performance Texts and Works, 1937-1973, contains marked rehearsal copies, presentation copies, and typescripts for stage and film projects, poems, radio broadcasts, and works by Evans. The Publicity Materials subseries, 1899-1976, consists chiefly of photographs, programs, clippings, and scrapbooks of press cuttings. Nearly all of these materials pertain to performances by Evans. Item-level descriptions of the newspaper and magazine clippings are available in the Theatre Arts card catalog, and separate item-level lists of the newspaper clippings and the assorted poems and play excerpts are also available. Subseries C. Administrative and Financial Records, 1920-1971, includes weekly financial summaries for *The Chalk Garden* and *The Millionairess* as well as contracts and lists of tour dates and production personnel for other productions. The Sponsorship of Others subseries, 1952-1968, contains materials related to Evans' charitable activities, nearly all of which supported theater professionals.

The Miscellaneous Series, 1893-1976, includes papers of the Evans and Booth families, Evans' honorary degrees, and other materials collected by Evans. Although the material in this series is not directly related to Evans' work as an actor, much of it is of a theatrical nature, e.g., theater programs for performances attended by Evans.

Related Material

The Ransom Center also holds Henry Hurford Janes' Collection of Edith Evans.

Separated Material

One film strip was transferred to the Film Collection in 2006.

Series I. Correspondence, 1910-1976

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Chronological files	
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Fry, Christopher	Container 6.1
Gielgud, John	Container 6.2
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Series II. Theater Papers, 1899-1976**Subseries A. Performance Texts and Works, 1937-1973**

Berkeley, Reginald. <i>Woman Power</i> . Rehearsal copy, undated	Container 6.10
Davidson, Eric. <i>Max</i> . Rehearsal copy, undated	Container 6.11
Evans, Edith	
<i>Calling South Africa</i> , "The First Night of Macbeth in London." Typescript, 1942	Container 6.12
<i>Home Service</i> , "Calling All Women" and "A Homely Christmas: A Talk by Edith Evans." Typescripts with corrections, 1940	Container 6.13
<i>The Long View</i> , "No. 44 The Responsibility of the Actor." Typescript with corrections, 1954	Container 6.14
<i>Overseas North America Transmission</i> , "Democracy Marches." Typescripts, one with corrections, 1940	Container 6.15
Farjeon, Herbert. <i>Diversion</i> , "Prologue," "The Hop-Picker," and "The Hop-Picker Returns." Typescripts, some with corrections and annotations, circa 1940	Container 7.1
Fleming, Tom. " <i>So That Was Spring . . .</i> ": <i>First Poems in Scots and English</i> . Typescript, undated	Container 7.2
Hodge, Merton. <i>My Life in the Theatre</i> , "No. 2 Edith Evans." Rehearsal copies, 1941	Container 7.3
Lenthall, Ben, after Edith Sitwell. <i>English Eccentrics and Eccentricities</i> , "No. 1 Charles Waterton." Typescript, undated	Container 7.4
Mérimée, Prosper. <i>The Coach</i> . Rehearsal copy, undated	Container 7.5
Murdoch, Helen, and Ethel McCracken. <i>Alan and the King's Daughter</i> . Typescript with annotations, circa 1969	Container 7.6
Nichols, Wallace. <i>Madame Letizia</i> . Typescript, undated	Container 7.7
Rasky, Harold. <i>Upon This Road: The Drama of the Building of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome</i> . Presentation copy, 1969	Container 7.8
Shaw, George Bernard. "He Calls Her Unscrupulous." Typescript with annotations, undated	Container 7.9

Wilder, Thornton. <i>The Merchant of Yonkers</i> . Presentation copy, 1938	Container 7.10
Williamson, Hugh Ross. <i>Queen Elizabeth</i> (author's note). Typescript, 1946	Container 7.11
Unidentified authors	
"Careless Talk." Typescript, undated	Container 7.12
<i>Journey's End in Lovers' Meeting . . . Will Shakespeare</i> . Typescript, undated	Container 8.1
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"Please, Captain Eversleigh." Typescript, undated	Container 8.4
<i>St. John Ervine: A Programme for His 80th Birthday</i> . Typescript, 1963	Container 8.5
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Assorted poems and excerpts from plays. Typescripts, some with annotations, 1937-1964, undated	
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With Gilbert Harding. Typescript with annotations, (1948)	Container 9.2
With Gerry Wilmot. Typescript, undated	Container 9.3
Mayfair (London), advertisement for television program hosted by Richard Dimpleby. Rehearsal copies, 1955	Container 9.4

The Midsummer Banquet, reply to the Lord Mayor's toast. Typescript with corrections, 1970 **Container**
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Shakespeare, radio (?) program. Typescript fragments, 1937 (?) **Container**
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Subseries B. Publicity Materials, 1899-1976

Photographs

Personal photograph, undated **Container** 9.7

Production photographs, with order list, undated **Container** 9.8

Programs, leaflets, fliers, brochures, and souvenir menus

Fully staged productions, A-Z, 1912-19(71), undated **Container** 9.9

Recitals and other dramatic performances, 1932-1973, undated (*oversize materials removed to box 22) **Container**
9.10*

Speeches and nontheatrical appearances, 1952-1968 **Container**
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1899-1907 (with two souvenir programs)	Container bv 8
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<i>Celebrity Bulletin</i> , 1950	Container 20.3

Gordine, Dora, exhibition catalog of works by, 1938 **Container**
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Newspapers in London, list of addresses, undated **Container** 20.5

"This I Believe," guest lists, undated **Container** 20.6

Who's Who in the Theatre, galley proof, undated **Container** 20.7

Subseries C. Administrative and Financial Records, 1920-1971

B.B.C., contracts and entry pass, 1941-1949 **Container** 20.8

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20.9

The Chalk Garden (film), Box Office Blue Ribbon Award, 1964 **Container**
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Daphne Laureola, list of theaters and dates for tour, (1950?) **Container**
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Dear Antoine, list of actors and understudies, (1971) **Container**
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E.N.S.A., lists of payments, 1974-1945 **Container** 20.13

A Garden of Cucumbers, contract, 1966 **Container** 20.14

Journal of expenses, 1965 **Container** 20.15

The Last Days of Dolwyn, list of production personnel, 1948 **Container**
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The Millionairess, weekly financial summaries, 1940 **Container**
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Old Acquaintance, list of theaters and dates for tour, 1942 **Container**
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Screen Actors Guild, membership card and receipt, 1966 **Container**
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Subseries D. Sponsorship of Others, 1952-1968	
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James Bridie Memorial Fund, leaflet, 1952	Container 20.26
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Shakespeare Theatre Trust, certificate, 1968	Container 22
Stewart Headlam Shakespeare Association, executive committee report, prize-winning essay, and fliers, 1955, undated	Container 20.28
Third Foundation for Women in the University of Cambridge, leaflets, 1954	Container 20.29
William Poel Centenary Committee, program and fliers, budgets and accounts, and minutes, 1952	Container 20.30
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Sheet music, 1927-1960	Container 22
Theater programs and fliers, 1951-1973, undated	Container 21.2
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Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, financial statement and annual audits, 1953-1954	Container 21.3
Other organizations, brochures, leaflets, and fliers, undated	Container 21.4