

## The Waterhouse collection

**Reference:** MSS 386, 508 & 2787

**Title:** The Waterhouse collection

**Dates of creation:** 1825-1934

**Extent:** 2 boxes, 1 folder and 8 books

### Administrative/Biographical History

Mary Bevan (1805-1880) married Alfred Waterhouse (1798-1873) in 1829 in Liverpool. Both came from long established Quaker families and remained lifelong members of the Society of Friends. Their children - Alfred (1830-1905), Ellen, later Crewdson (1832-1876), Maria (1834-1905), Katherine, later Redmayne (1836-1889), Theodore (1838-1891), William (1839-1869) and Edwin (1841-1917) - were all born at Aigburgh, Liverpool. Of the family Mary remained the most committed to the orthodox Quakerism in which she had been brought up and was recognised as a minister of the Society of Friends in 1842. Her husband had some disagreements with Friends and her five youngest children were baptised members of the Church of England in 1864.

Alfred Waterhouse senior retired from business in 1847 and took a house for the family in Reigate. In April 1849 they removed permanently from Liverpool to Redland Hall, a house near Bristol, and thence in April 1850 to Sneyd Hall in the same area where they remained for five years. In August 1855 the family left Bristol and moved first to Dover and then to Regents Park in London so that the boys could attend University College School and university. Finally in December 1858 Mary and Alfred Waterhouse moved to Reading where Alfred had purchased part of the Whiteknights estate. A new house called Whiteknights was built for them which they moved into in November 1859 and remained in for the rest of their lives.

Alfred Waterhouse the younger (1830-1905) was a noted architect. He studied architecture in Manchester, France and Italy and began his own practice in Manchester in 1853. Among the buildings for which he was responsible were Owens College, Manchester, Manchester Town Hall, the

Natural History Museum, various offices of the Prudential Assurance Company, including the head office in Holborn, University College Hospital and extensions or renovations to Balliol & other Oxford colleges. In 1860 he married Elizabeth Hodgkin (1834-1918), whose father John was a family friend and whose brother Thomas (1831-1913), the banker and historian, had been Alfred's companion on a sketching tour of the continent. Elizabeth Waterhouse published several books including *The Island of Anarchy*, *A Book of Simple Prayers*, and *A Little Book of Life and Death*. Alfred designed several houses on the Whiteknights estate and lived in one of them, Foxhill, with his family from 1868 until the late 1870s when they moved to another larger house of Alfred's design, The Court, Yattendon. Alfred's son Paul, also a distinguished architect, lived there until his death in 1924 when it was sold and later demolished.

### **Scope and content**

The collection consists of manuscripts and books written by or related to the Waterhouse family. MS 508 is a collection of manuscript exercise books written as a journal, mainly of her spiritual life, by Mary Bevan Waterhouse (1805-1880) from 1825 to 1880 and bound into 4 volumes at a later date. Entries for 1828 to 1830 are missing and there is only one entry in both 1838 and 1839. The volumes include a newspaper account of Mary Waterhouse's funeral and 38 loose sheets of memoranda written by Mary of her spoken ministry in Quaker meetings for worship from 1840 to 1842 with a covering note written by her in 1878. MS 386 is a letter from Elizabeth Waterhouse to Madeleine. MS 2787 is a collection of family letters, mainly to Thomas Hodgkin (1831-1913), from his sisters Elizabeth (Bessie) Waterhouse and Mariabella Fry, his brother-in-law Alfred Waterhouse and his nephew Paul Waterhouse. There are also 2 letters from Alfred and from Elizabeth Waterhouse to Thomas's wife Lucy Hodgkin. 8 books related to Quakerism or to the Waterhouse family, including a memoir of Theodore Waterhouse, mainly belonging to Thomas Hodgkin or his daughter Lucy Violet Hodgkin, are kept with the collection.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Mary Waterhouse's journals given by Mrs Michael Waterhouse, 1968. Other material given by Robin Hodgkin 1986

### **Access Conditions**

Open to all researchers. No reader's ticket is required but an appointment is necessary. Check the [archives access page](#) for contact details and opening hours.

## **Further Information**

### **Finding Aids**

MS 2787 listed to item level; books from the Waterhouse Collection may be found on Unicorn.

Contact [specialcollections@rdg.ac.uk](mailto:specialcollections@rdg.ac.uk) for more information about this collection.