
Papers of Josephine McNeill

P234

Descriptive Catalogue



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CONTEXT

Biographical History

McNEILL, Josephine (1895–1969), diplomat, was born 31 March 1895 in Fermoy, Co. Cork, daughter of James Ahearne, shopkeeper and hotelier, and Ellen Ahearne (née O'Brien). She was educated at Loretto Convent, Fermoy, and UCD (BA, H.Dip.Ed.). With a BA in French and German she began a teaching career, teaching at St Louis' Convent, Kiltimagh, at the Ursuline Convent, Thurles, and at Scoil Íde, the female counterpart of St Enda's, established by her friend Louise Gavan Duffy (qv). A fluent Irish-speaker with an interest in Irish language, music, and literature, she took an active part in the cultural side of the Irish independence movement. She was also a member of Cumann na mBan and in 1921 a member of the executive committee of that organisation. She was engaged to Pierce McCann, who died of influenza in Gloucester jail (March 1919). In 1923 she married James McNeill, Irish high commissioner in London 1923–8. Josephine McNeill took reluctantly to diplomatic life, but it never showed in public. Her charm and intelligence were immediately apparent, and in a period when Joseph Walshe (qv), the secretary of the Department of External Affairs, viewed married diplomats and diplomatic wives with disdain, McNeill was a noted hostess, both in London and later in Dublin, where James McNeill was governor general of the Irish Free State (1928–32). A paragraph in her obituary in the *Irish Times* sought to separate the real McNeill from her official persona. The 'immediate impression she gave was of a very mannered woman of the world'; but this was a mask which 'concealed very considerable shyness as well as a protean nature. This apparently conventional woman, with the air of a hostess in a Pinero play, was an adventurous and romantic spirit. Possibly those who knew her in her Cumann na mBan days got nearer to the real woman than later acquaintances, when she had become an official hostess.' Due to her position as the wife of the governor general, she 'suppressed the rebel and produced the public servant.'

Josephine McNeill greatly resented the manner in which her husband was treated by Fianna Fáil when they suppressed the office of the governor general in 1932; yet, when minister to Switzerland later in her career, she put aside all differences with Éamon de Valera, who was in the country for an eye operation, and went to sit with him during his convalescence.

After James McNeill's death (1938), Josephine McNeill became honorary secretary of the council of the Friends of the National Collections and acted as chairman of the executive committee of the Irish Countrywomen's Association to 1950. She wrote on social, cultural, and economic issues, was a member of the Department of External Affairs advisory committee on cultural relations, and represented Ireland at the general assembly of UNESCO at Paris in 1949.

The foundation of Clann na Poblachta gave McNeill a new lease of life and she embraced working for the party with the enthusiasm of her Cumann na mBan days. In 1950 she was appointed minister to the Netherlands by the party leader, Seán MacBride, minister for external affairs in the inter-party government in 1950. She thus became Ireland's first female diplomat to be appointed in a ministerial capacity to represent the Irish state abroad. However, the career diplomats in the Department of External Affairs looked on this overtly political appointment poorly. McNeill's reports to Dublin from The Hague paid particular attention to the problems of Dutch decolonisation. She was appointed minister to Sweden in 1955 and held a joint appointment to Switzerland and Austria (1956–60), when she retired from public life. She was a collector of porcelains and paintings and an

amateur pianist, and in 1933 published *Finnsgéalta ó India*. Her *Irish Times* obituary considered that ‘there were several Josephines, the rebel who became a servant of her people, the musician, the art lover (she had real taste), the practical enthusiast, the feminist. All held under by a restraint which was misleading, because it suggested too much a concern for social activity.’ Yet it concluded that ‘she did more than any three or four women usually achieve. And yet she left the impression of one whose full potential – perhaps from unconquerable shyness – was never fully realised.’

Josephine McNeill died 19 November 1969 in St Vincent’s Hospital, Dublin, and was buried in Kilbarrack cemetery.

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Archival History

Papers presented by Mr Gerard Hearne in October 2008.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

Scope and Content

Correspondence mainly to Josephine McNeill and generally personal in nature, reflecting her interest in the arts. Correspondents include W. B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Kate O'Brien, Elizabeth Bowen, Mícheál MacLiammóir, Lady Augusta Gregory, Seán O'Casey and William Orpen. Other letters, routine in content, reflect her role as a diplomatic spouse particularly during the period 1928–32 while at the Vice Regal Lodge. There are only scant references to her own diplomatic appointments and the collection contains no official correspondence relating to her diplomatic career.

Certificates awarded to Josephine McNeill, press cuttings and published material including a book of Indian children's stories that she translated into Irish, *Finnsgéalta ó India*, 1932. Transcripts of addresses delivered at functions; a copy of the minutes of a meeting of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations in the Department of External Affairs.

Material relating exclusively to James McNeill, notably a file of correspondence between McNeill and the Press Censor's Office, concerning permission to publish his letter to the Right Honorable Henry Edward Duke, Chief Secretary of Ireland, in which he protests against the trial and imprisonment of his brother, Eoin McNeill in 1916. Also a file of correspondence between McNeill, de Valera and Sir Clive Wigram concerning the crisis that resulted in McNeill's early resignation from the post of Governor-General in 1932.

System of Arrangement

Correspondence has been arranged alphabetically by the surname of the correspondent. Within the papers relating to individual correspondents, correspondence has been placed first, followed by any supplementary material. Photographs are not described separately but are noted within the file description.

Although the vast majority of correspondence is to Josephine McNeill, there is a minority of letters addressed to Josephine and James McNeill jointly, particularly during their tenure at the Vice-Regal Lodge, 1928–32 and referring mainly to diplomatic hospitality. A very small number of letters are addressed solely to James McNeill, but as he and Josephine often shared the same correspondents, they are included under the relevant correspondents' headings.

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CONDITIONS OF ACCESS AND USE

Access

Available by appointment to holders of a UCDA reader's ticket. Produced for consultation in microform.

Language

English and Irish; occasional Dutch, Swedish, French and Latin

Finding Aid

Descriptive catalogue

DESCRIPTION CONTROL**Archivist's Note**

Descriptive catalogue prepared by Lisa Shortall, August 2009. Documents rearranged, repacked, numbered and checked against the draft catalogue by Sarah Helferty, September 2009. Catalogue edited by Seamus Helferty, September–October 2009.

1 CORRESPONDENCE

1.1 Sara Allgood, 1925

P234/1 3 December 1925

2pp

Letter from Sara Allgood

From 56 Courtfield Gardens, London, thanking Josephine McNeill for arranging a reception in her honour. Reports that *Juno and the Paycock* continues to be a great success in London and encloses a current programme of the play running at the Royalty Theatre, London.

Includes a programme for *Juno and the Paycock* by Seán O'Casey produced by J. B. Fagan at the Royalty Theatre, London.

1.2 Osborn Bergin, 1932

P234/2 6 June 1932

1 item

Card from Osborn Bergin

Card containing verse of thanks to Josephine McNeill at the Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin, from Crádh Croidhe Éigeas [Osborn Bergin]:

*Grian na spéire is géarchúis Mhná an Tighe Mhóir
do sgiamhaig sgéal an lae úd – gnáthghníomh dóibh.
A rian araon is pléisiúr árdai gheas meón:
gan ciach gan néal an shaorchlú a ngairdín leo!*

P234/3 11 December 1932

1 item

Card from Osborn Bergin

To Josephine McNeill, Woodley Park, Dundrum, containing a poem he has composed on the resignation of James McNeill as Governor General:

*Prionnsa fé dhaorsmacht nú caomhchara ar iarraidh
iongantaisí saoghail agus claonchleasa siabhra -
a gclú-san i nÉirinn, i gcéin ó Innia Thoir,
nár lugha, a Bhean Shéamuis Mhic Néill, sin id dhiaidh-se.*

1.3 Augustine Birrell, 1925–30

P234/4 6 November 1925

1p

Letter from Augustine Birrell

To Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London SW7, regretfully informing her that he cannot attend her farewell luncheon for Lady Lavery.

P234/5 14 March 1926

2pp

Letter from Augustine Birrell

From 70 Elm Park Road, Chelsea, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London SW7, thanking her for the invitation to the St Patrick's Day festivities at the Irish Legation in London but declining due to ill health.

P234/6 23 January 1930

4pp

Letter from Augustine Birrell

From 70 Elm Park Road, Chelsea, to Josephine MacNeill at the Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin, enclosing a newspaper cutting from *The Sunday Times* featuring an interview with him by 'Whitehall creatures', which he has labelled 'rubbish'. Explains that his comments while having some semblance of truth were taken out of context and he particularly examines the part of the interview, which dealt with the Irish Free State. Concludes by remarking that he feels so cut off from Ireland and Irish friends, that he is afraid that his ten years as Chief Secretary will pass out of his mind.

Includes a newspaper cutting from *The Sunday Times* entitled 'Obiter Dicta at Eighty: Mr Birrell's birthday advice—Don't take world too solemnly'. (19 January 1930)

1.4 Thomas Bodkin, 1949

P234/7 17 November 1949

1p

Letter from Thomas Bodkin

From the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, congratulating Josephine McNeill on her appointment as High Commissioner from Ireland to the Hague. Reveals that Sean MacBride had already canvassed his opinion on the matter and he had been anticipating the official announcement with eagerness.

1.5 Elizabeth Bowen, 1945–53

P234/8 15 July 1945

2pp

Letter from Elizabeth Bowen

From Bowen's Court, Kildorrery, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill at the Loreto Convent, Youghal, County Cork, regretfully informing her that she will not be able to get to Youghal to see her as she has to travel to Dublin. Refers to World War II: 'Yes, these war years are like a long, bad tunnel: one needs all the strength & spirit one has'.

P234/9 30 August 1945

2pp

Letter from Elizabeth Bowen

From Bowen's Court, Kildorrery, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill, The Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin, arranging to meet in the coming months.

P234/10 14 [November] 1945

2pp

Letter from Elizabeth Bowen

From Bowen's Court, Kildorrery, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, inviting her to dinner at The Shelbourne Hotel later in the month.

P234/11 8 June 1953

1p

Letter from Elizabeth Bowen

From Bowen's Court, Kildorrery, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill at the Irish Legation in The Hague, regretting that she cannot meet the Dutch delegates in Dublin as she is 'rooted in Bowen's Court' finishing a book. Remarks that she would love to visit Josephine at the Hague and may be able to visit her when she travels to Germany for the British Foreign Office the following January.

P234/12 27 July 1953

1p

Letter from Elizabeth Bowen

From Bowen's Court, Kildorrery, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill at the Irish Legation in The Hague, expressing her delight at Josephine's impending visit to Bowen's Court - 'Heaps of room for your car and chauffeur'.

1.6 F. O. Bower, 1931

P234/13 26 June 1931

3pp

Letter from F. O. Bower

From The Western Club, Glasgow, to the Secretary to the Governor General, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills via their secretary, for their hospitality during his recent visit.

'Of course, I am aware that through me, as President, they were conferring recognition to the British Association ... but none the less I feel the personal consideration which was shown me by them'.

1.7 John Broderick, 1963

P234/14 cOctober 1963

2pp

Letter from John Broderick

From The Moorings, Athlone, thanking Josephine for writing to him on the subject of the 'Cocteau review' [Cocteau died in October 1963]. States that he enjoyed writing it and was not at all surprised that it

Josephine McNeill Papers

P234/14 appealed to her. He is giving a lecture in UCD later in the month and wonders if she can attend.

P234/15 6 November 1963

1p

Letter from John Broderick

From The Moorings, Athlone, enclosing some unidentified books for Josephine McNeill.

1.8 Stan Bullock, 1925

P234/16 28 March 1925

2pp

Letter from Stan Bullock

From Emo, York Road, Cheam, Surrey, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality during his recent visit.

1.9 Séamus Burke, 1965

P234/17 3 July 1965

1p

Letter from Séamus Burke

From Samarkand, Prior Road, Camberley, Surrey, to Josephine McNeill, 29 Leeson Park Avenue, Dublin, praising her letter concerning W. B Yeats published in *The Irish Times*.

'We have been living here now for quite a time and are a little out of touch with Dublin. Your reference to Dr Hempel recalls old times'.

1.10 Frances Chesterton, 1932

P234/18 29 July 1932

2pp

Letter from Frances [wife of G. K.] Chesterton

From Top Meadow, Beaconfield, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for the hospitality shown to them by the McNeills

P234/18 during their recent stay at the Vice-Regal Lodge.
'My husband speaks with the greatest affection of yours—he admired him so much. I know you will not think me impertinent for saying this'.

1.11 Edward Coyne, 1944

P234/19 1 September 1944

2pp

Letter from Edward Joseph Coyne SJ

From 'a nursing home somewhere in Eire', to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'Very many thanks for your kind letter ... It was—I won't say a pleasure—but at least a most agreeable duty to give Benediction & the few words'.

He is currently recovering from an operation. I abstain from giving a more definite address to relieve you of a formidable decision—"What to do with a J in bed?" I am here practically "incognito" in "terra incognita"-and will be out soon. I'll plead for a good place for you in your Limbo of helpers of good Prots'.

1.12 Earnán de Blaghad, 1933

P234/20 19 February 1933

2pp

Letter from Earnán Óg de Blaghad [young son of Ernest Blythe]

From 6 Temple Villas, Palmerston Road, Dublin, to Seosamhin Bhean MhicNeill, Radharc Na Coille, Dún Droma, praising her recently published children's book [*Finnsgéalta ó India*, 1932].

1.13 Monsignor Pádraig de Brún, 1929-31

P234/21 12 February 1929

2pp

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth, organising a visit to Josephine McNeill at the Vice Regal Lodge the following Saturday.

'Much as I doubt my wisdom, I can't resist. I have always been too ready to follow the beck of the Spéir-bhean. And now my hair is getting steely grey and sparse, and I am about to turn the quarantaine ...'

P234/22 Lá 1e Bhailintín 1930

1p

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth, confirming that he will call at the Vice Regal Lodge at 3 o'clock the following day and will stay until dinner. Refers to her recent essay published in *An Lóchrann* and praises it highly. Complains about the standard of writing in Irish in the rest of the publication. In Irish.

P234/23 8 April 1930

1p

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth, to the Vice Regal Lodge, arranging to meet her the following Wednesday. In Irish.

P234/24 cMay 1930

4pp

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Dún Chuinn, Dingle, County Kerry, to the Vice Regal Lodge, enclosing a sample printed page of his translation of Racine's *Athalie* entitled *Atáile*. In Irish.

P234/25 29 November [1930]

1p

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth, arranging to meet her on 7 December, the last time before the Christmas holidays. In Irish.

P234/26 9 December 1930

1p

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth to the Vice regal Lodge, arranging a suitable date to meet in Dublin. In Irish.

P234/27 12 November 1931

2pp

Letter from Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

From Maynooth to the Vice Regal Lodge, saying that he will have to put an end to meeting her while the court [cases?] are still ongoing. Complains that the bishops' role in this makes him want to throw up and compares the church and the state in Ireland to Siamese twins: '...aon anam amháin eatartha'. In Irish.

P234/28 29 November 1929

7pp

Address by Monsignor Pádraig de Brún

Two drafts of an address in Irish sent by Monsignor Pádraig de Brún, Maynooth, to the Vice Regal Lodge [for use by Josephine McNeill at the opening of a play at An Taidhbhearc, Galway].

P234/29 1931

3pp

Programme for *Atáile*

Program advertising a performance of *Atáile* by Monsignor Pádraig de Brún, a translation of Racine's *Athalie*. The performance will be by university girls from Loreto Hall, St Stephen's Green. A summary of the play is provided in English and a cast list is included.

1.14 Ruth Draper, c1930

P234/30 c1930

1p

Letter from Ruth Draper

Accepting Josephine McNeill's invitation to lunch at the Vice-Regal Lodge the following day.

1.15 Hilton Edwards, 1930

P234/31 21 February 1930

2pp

Letter from Hilton Edwards

From the Dublin Gate Theatre, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for visiting the theatre [for the first night of *Faust*?].

I am really sorry the theatre was so terribly cold. There was an electrical breakdown that was only reported to me after the performance.

And then the interest you took in the production has been a genuine source of encouragement to Micheál MacLiammóir & to me at the very moment when we needed it most. We were bemoaning the dozens of first night accidents & woes at the moment your letter arrived'.

P234/32 February 1930

4pp

Programme for *Faust*

Programme for Goethe's *Faust* directed by Hilton Edwards for the Dublin Gate Theatre.

1.16 Arthur Evans, 1929

P234/33 1 October 1929

4pp

Letter from Dr Arthur Evans

From 86 Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, London, to Josephine McNeill, Palace Hotel, Rome, concerning the 'wonderfully good' results of medical tests recently performed on her husband.

1.17 Robin Flower, 1925, 32

P234/34 26 March 1925

1p

Letter from Robin Flower

From the Department of Manuscripts, British Museum, enclosing one of his books with illustrations and verses by his wife, and looking forward to Josephine McNeill's visit the following week.

P234/35 1 March 1932

2pp

Letter from Robin Flower

From 14 Wellesley Grove, Croydon, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her and her husband for their recent hospitality. 'Here I am back again after a very pleasant journey. I met Stephen Gwynn on the boat and we travelled together to London. My family thought I was looking extraordinarily well, and I explained to them that that was because I had been taking generous draughts of the very best medicines in the world, kindness and hospitality and (however undeserved) praise. You were all so good to me that I shall always remember that week with the greatest pleasure, though I had been looking forward to it with the greatest apprehension. I do hope that I did some good, and, if I did, it is pleasant to think that it is all due to you. I was the mere instrument of your plan'.

1.18 Lucy Franks, 1945

P234/36 26 July 1945

2pp

Letter from Lucy Franks

From Westfield House, Mountrath, County Laois, to Josephine McNeill, 1 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, referring to a summer school, 'the great experiment', held in June at the [Patrician] College, Mountrath that Josephine took part in as a teacher. It was a wonderful success and the students were sad to leave.

1.19 Achille Fould, 1931

P234/37 11 August 1931

4pp

Letter from Achille Fould

From the French Under-Secretary of State for Agriculture, to James McNeill, thanking them for their hospitality during his recent stay in Dublin.

'Please tender my wife's best regards to Her Excellency aux pieds de laquelle je depose mes hommages très respectueux ...'.

P234/38 26 September 1931

2pp

Letter from Achille Fould

From Avenue Henri-Martin, Paris, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for the hospitality shown to him during his recent visit to Dublin. In French.

1.20 George Gavan Duffy, 1949

P234/39 15 April 1949

1p

Letter from George Gavan Duffy

From 81 Bushy Park Road, Terenure, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'Many thanks for your letter, which I shall bear in mind. I fully appreciate the importance of vigilance in this too easy-going land. I shall not be at the next two or three meetings, but hope to return to duty after Whitsuntide'.

1.21 Dino Grandi, 1931

P234/40 7 April 1931

1p

Letter from [Dino Grandi], Italian Foreign Minister

From the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, to James MacNeill, Albergo Palazzo, Rome, inviting him to the Palazzo Venezia.

1.22 Lady Augusta Gregory, 1926-32

P234/41 c1926

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From 29 Sloane Square, London, inviting Josephine McNeill to her house to meet Seán O'Casey.

I told him I would ask you to meet him as I am sure you would like each other! He caused quite a sensation in making his speech of thanks in Irish at the prize giving today'.

P234/42 31 January 1927

4pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From 82 Merrion Square, Dublin, to James McNeill, 15 Regent Street, London SW1, marked 'Private', mainly concerning the controversy surrounding the Hugh Lane bequest of paintings and the proposed

P234/42 building of a municipal gallery to house the paintings in Dublin.
'I haven't been worrying you about the paintings of late, for I have felt that it is on this side our next move must be ... Senator [Samuel Lombard] Brown is very helpful ... and he tells me (but this is private) that they have decided to build. But because of the heavy expense on the rates, they must have a "public enquiry". I didn't like the idea of this but he tells me it will be quite safe and that it is legally necessary'.

P234/43 27 April 1927

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 21 Bothar Ailesbury, Dublin.

'Certainly if you wish it & think I would be of any use I will with pleasure go on your committee [to repatriate the Hugh Lane pictures to Dublin]. I hope the outcome will be successful. Ask Mr McNeill if he doesn't think a film of THE STOLEN PICTURES would be useful to go on tour round the Empire?!

P234/44 28 February 1929

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From the [Standard?] Hotel, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge.

'Very Dear Excellencies – I wish I could adequately thank you both for your hospitality and beautiful kindness during that "wonderful week" ... It has quite brought me back to life and vigour'. Encloses news of her social life in Dublin.

P234/45 4 June 1929

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to the McNeills, Vice Regal Lodge.

'Beloved Excellencies – If I have not written earlier it is not because the memory of your beautiful kindness had slipped from my mind – no – it is very clearly imbedded there - & I have those days of ease and luxury and pleasant talks, and laughter to look back on and have as happy background to the business of the day – . Such business includes a visit from a forestry inspector and a plumber to fix the pump.

P234/46 7 December 1929

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to Josephine McNeill, Vice regal Lodge.

'Very dear Excellencies – Here, a storm blowing from the Atlantic. I let my mind dwell on this beautiful week of kindness received – and pleasant talk in delightful surroundings with you and with your guests. I was especially glad to meet the O'Neill's again, and for the first time the Mulcahys. It is a great charm of Dublin now that every one is doing [?] best for the country, and you – both of you – make the Lodge a centre of life, of living interests'.

P234/47 16 December 1929

4pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to James McNeill, Vice-Regal Lodge, thanking him for his understanding and sympathetic letter. Reminisces about the career of her late husband, Sir William Henry Gregory, and their son Robert Gregory.

'I think all was for the best. He was strongly urged by the Liberals to stand for Parliament in 1880 ... He would certainly, as the Liberals came in have been given office. But all was for the best, for I remember his saying he wd probably have been made Chief Secretary for Ireland. And no one could have made a success of this post at that time – and it would probably have put him in antagonism to the people – and that would have grieved him

P234/48 20 August 1930

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From a nursing home, 5 Upper Mount Street Crescent, Dublin, on Abbey Theatre headed notepaper, to Josephine McNeill, Adare Manor, County Limerick.

'I have been here these 10 days for what Yeats' poem calls 'Another tatter in the mortal dress' (*sic*). And although it was not very serious & I am going home on Friday, my doctor – Slattery – forbids me to come up again next week. Such a disappointment. I was looking forward so much to my visit and especially to that first evening that was to have [been] a comfortable gossip. And I remember Charlotte Shaw writing to me once that G.B.S. was taking a walk with the Sidney Webbs – "having his mind improved" – and I am losing the chance for mine!'

P234/49 22 January 1931

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, thanking Josephine McNeill for 'those beautiful days and those wonderful evenings ... I am sending the play Dr Downey spoke of with such warm approbation at the Liverpool St Patrick's Day dinner 3 years ago - I think you have not seen it'..

P234/50 18 March 1931

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From the Euston Hotel, London, to James McNeill, remarking how well Josephine McNeill looked and spoke at an unidentified event [St Patrick's Day celebration?]. She has at last made the acquaintance of Robin Flower with whom she had been at the British Museum that day.

P234/51 14 July 1931

6pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to James McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking him for the 'nice, kind, appreciative letter you have given me the joy of receiving' in acknowledgement of the 'little book' she had sent him. Reminisces about her limited exposure to books when growing up: 'Perhaps the very scarcity of books made them mean all the more to me'. Also remarks that she has W. B. Yeats, Jack B. Yeats and Mary Cottenham Yeats staying with her at present.

P234/52 26 January [1932]

2pp

Letter from Lady Gregory

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to James McNeill. Due to a 'rheumatic attack' the letter is mainly dictated to W.B. Yeats. Invites the McNeills to Coole Park when she has improved, so that she can show them the woods and the work of the Forestry Department. 'Happily Yeats is absorbed in his work and has written some new verses and the woods always amuse him ...'

1.23 Maud Griffith, 1930

P234/53 21 January 1930

2pp

Letter from Maud [widow of Arthur] Griffith

From 'Somerville', Howth Road, Clontarf, accepting Josephine McNeill's invitation to meet the Papal Nuncio at the Vice-Regal Lodge. 'I would be very happy to meet the Nuncio, for many reasons. He called to say good bye to us on his way to Palestine when a poor friar. We little though then of his coming great honours'.

1.24 Bryan Guinness, 1955

P234/54 28 March 1955

5pp

Letter from Bryan Guinness, Lord Moyne,

From Knockmaroon House, Castleknock, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, congratulating her on her appointment as Minister to Norway and Sweden. Offers an introduction to his old school friend, Peter Scarlett, the British ambassador to Norway and assures Josephine that she will like him and his wife.

'We are just setting off on a cruise with our 4 oldest children to Greece & the islands and then Asia Minor and Constantinople all in a fortnight under the auspices of Messrs Swan's tours. There are 5 lecturers to address us all night (including Sir Maurice Bowra and Mortimer Wheeler) & we rise daily to go ashore at 6 a.m. so I imagine we shall be somewhat exhausted by the end of it all'.

1.25 Denis Gwynn, 1961

P234/55 26 January 1961

2 items

Letter from Professor Denis Gwynn

From 3 Lower Montenotte, Cork, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing 'my pamphlet about Hugh Lane which was planned long before I knew there would [be] celebrations next month'. Also comments on his wife's ill health (1p). Pamphlet entitled *Tribute to Sir Hugh Lane* by Denis Gwynn published by Cork University Press (52pp).

1.26 Stephen Gwynn

P234/56 Not dated

1p

Letter from Stephen Gwynn

From 18 Bower St, London, concerning a painting which he is returning to the McNeills the following day. Advises that it be properly framed.

I am very grateful to you and Mr McNeill for consenting to my importunity. The matter is of so great consequence to this friend of mine that I ventured to ask, as I knew no one else who had an important Paul H.[enry] here & they wanted to see [one] at once. It seems likely to result in his getting the commission and the resulting publicity'.

1.27 Basil H. Liddell Hart, 1947

P234/57 7 October 1947

1p

Letter from Captain Basil H. Liddell Hart

From Tilford House, Tilford, Surrey, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, informing her of his forthcoming visit to Ireland in connection with the history of the Tank Corps he is writing. He hopes to see her again.

P234/58 14 October 1947

1p

Letter from Captain Basil H. Liddell Hart

From The Grand Hotel, Greystones, County Wicklow, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, accepting her invitation to dinner.

1.28 Richard Hayes, 1949

P234/59 31 October 1949

1p

Letter from Richard Hayes

From Woodlands, Rochestown Avenue, Blackrock, County Dublin, enclosing some notes (2pp) on the Irish ancestry of General Charles de Gaulle, his maternal great grandfather being a Dr MacCartan from Rostrevor, County Down.

1.29 Adriaan ('Jany') Roland Holst, 1950-54

P234/60 19 September 1950

3pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. Regretfully declines her request to give a talk on W. B. Yeats: 'The fact is, I'd just simply hate to appear as a public-man'. He will be going to Oxford in October rather than Poland and hopes to see her again in November.

P234/61 15 October 1950

1 item

Postcard from Jany Roland Holst

From Oxford, to Josephine McNeill, chez Madame de Thoisy, Avenue de Labourdonnais, Paris, hoping that she is enjoying her holiday as much as he.

P234/62 6 November 1950

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, regretfully informing her that he cannot meet her the following week due to a previous engagement. Reflects on the differences between Paris and London both of which he has visited recently.

P234/63 11 November 1950

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, arranging to meet her on 22 November. Discusses France and the French.

'How I enjoyed your appreciation of the French for their "earthy naturalness and elegance" and their "curious blend of the folk element and the aristocratic". If they survive as the essential centre of West-European culture (as one sometimes fears they will not) it will in the first place be on that account, which is of the soil more than of the Sorbonne'.

P234/64 1 January 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, explaining that he spends Christmas and New Year alone since his parents died. Thanks Josephine for her warm praise of his poem 'Deirdre'.

'You were right in seeing "Deirdre" as my first *inspiratrice* and when I remember Yeats' inspired line : "Was there a second Troy for her to burn", I always still think of Emain Macha and the Red Branch of Ulster and all the tales that made me catch fire when I was young'.

P234/65 20 February 1951

1p

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. He has caught the 'flu and under his doctor's orders 'may not risk trains, dinner-parties etc'.

P234/66 5 March 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. Refers to a recent illness she has suffered and asks her to take care.

'I have been told that my country's behaviour to yours has been, if not altogether bad, at least open to criticism—may that allow you to put off

P234/66 all Dutch engagements till you feel quite fit again’.

P234/67 9 April 1951

3pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, discussing Samuel Beckett’s latest work [*Molloy*, 1951] and comparing it to works by Kafka.

‘He lacks Kafka’s authentic, genuine quality, the inner inevitableness, the obvious mediumship which convinces one that Kafka—at least before he wrote—had been victim to the obsession. Compared to him, I somehow don’t quite believe Beckett. However he is quite remarkable’

P234/68 13 April 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague

‘Two week-ends ago I had my brother staying with me, and we heard the Mattheus Passion in the beautiful Church at Alkmaar. Very many years ago I heard it at least 4 times in the Amsterdam Concertgebouw and now at Alkmaar, I felt it all coming back to me, almost like a celestial reproach for not having made of myself what might have been made of it—especially at that Aria “Erbarme Dich” which is like eternity made audible’.

He invites her to the opening of Charlie Toorop’s exhibition at the Gemeente Museum at the Hague. The artist’s mother was Irish.

P234/69 10 May 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, making arrangements to meet when a busy schedule allows. Wishes her courage in her ‘difficulties’ and offers his assistance.

P234/70 6 July 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, thanking her for sending him an unspecified book about Maud Gonne [Maud Gonne *A servant of the Queen: her own story* 1950].

‘She has the reckless “allure” that sweeps aside all the more or less amusing misgivings of our modern intellect-et je ne demande pas mieux, je vous assure ... Like yeats I want to believe in a future elite-but isn’t our hope being reduced daily and more and more to the *entweder-oder* of USA or Moscow? I don’t feel like choosing the second...worst’.

P234/71 26 July 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for his tardy response to her invitation, blaming a state of depression for his inability to make decisions.

P234/72 29 September 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, arranging to meet. ‘I feel proud that my country made you look younger and happier, though how it managed to do so I can’t imagine—as it often bores me to extinction, except in my retirement in Bergen’.

P234/73 24 October 1951

5pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, approving of her idea to have poems by Yeats printed on a loose sheet for a reading to a Dutch audience. He encloses a list of suitable titles including, ‘When you are old’, ‘No second Troy’, and ‘The fisherman’. Adds a note to the list: ‘I am not sure about “September 1913” (O’Leary) and “Easter 1916”—they allude to so many things unknown to the audience, don’t you think?’

P234/74 4 November 1951

5pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, discussing the detailed arrangements for their forthcoming joint Yeats' reading, at which she is giving an introductory talk, and he will read some of his own and other translations of Yeats' poems.

P234/75 15 November 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, accepting her invitation to lunch and providing addresses for invitees to their Yeats reading.

P234/76 20 November 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, providing the addresses of people to be invited to their Yeats reading.

'I don't care a hang if 2/3 of the audience won't understand; they'll be mystified and like it the better for that. Let me be an optimist just for once!'

P234/77 22 November 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, with addresses of two further people to be invited to the Yeats reading. Also comments on the timings of the talks, commentaries and readings.

P234/78 26 November 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, recounting the success of their Yeats "performance" the previous evening. Conveys the praise of his fellow poets Bloem, Nyhoff Tergast.

P234/79 27 November 1951

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, discussing a recent paper he has written on W. B. Yeats: 'When I think of myself as I was 40 years ago, reading Yeats, it almost gives me a lump in my old throat to think that his widow will now read how much he always meant to me'.

P234/80 26 December 1951

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, thanking her for the two books she sent him as Christmas presents.

'I have read the first 20 pages of *Teresa [of Avila]* and am very struck by Kate O'Brien's style-it has a very compelling tone. But I shall take Mary Lavan with me to Laren-I know I shall enjoy your favourite story if the sea's murderous innocence resounds in it'.

He encloses two copies of his Yeats paper and asks that one be given to Mrs Yeats' widow, if she cares to have it; his translation into Dutch of Yeats' 'A prayer for my daughter'; and a privately printed copy of a story he wrote about the death of Cúchulainn when he was much younger.

P234/81 12 February 1952

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for not being able to accept her invitation the following Saturday due to business in Amsterdam. Refers to the Ravenna Mosaics and remarks: 'I saw them nearly 30 years ago, at their source, and still feel hypnotised'.

P234/82 6 March 1952

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for not being able to attend her St Patrick's Day celebrations due to prior commitments but assures her 'that at 6 o'clock the barrel-glass of a repentant Dutch poet will be raised in honour of your dear and inspiring country and of its Minister who makes these two qualities so evident'.

P234/83 28 March 1952

5pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. He compares his career as a poet with that of W. B. Yeats. 'His sole aim in life was to write poetry whilst to me poetry (the writing of it) is—or has been—a means to realise myself'.

A group of Roman Catholic students at Utrecht plan to give a performance of Yeats' *The Countess Kathleen* using his own translation published many years previously. Asks Josephine whether she can arrange copyright permission with George Yeats.

P234/84 5 May 1952

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for not writing in weeks due to the effect her last letter had on him.

'...it weighs on me, intensifying as it does, the sad doom of the "might-have-been" that in another manner darkens one since the end of the war'. The performance of Yeats' *The Countess Cathleen* has been cancelled for various reasons.

P234/85 13 August 1952

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, arranging to visit. Refers to his aversion to public speaking: 'I am getting more and more averse to appearing before whatever audience. The fact is that life has changed me into a nebula

P234/85 (a very tiny one) with 1 drop of (frozen) heart-blood inside ... melt it, if you can'.

P234/86 5 September 1952

3pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing a copy of *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (Oxford University Press 1940) . Apologises to Josephine for his last visit to her: 'I somehow feel that at my last visit to you I have again been rather a failure—but then you rather stressed the fact when I had to take leave which made me feel very "gauche" and awkward'.

P234/87 29 December 1952

0

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, thanking her for the Christmas gift of two books, Lady Gregory's *Journals* and Roger Chauviré's *History of Ireland*, 'Cauviré's preface is extremely moving and very sad-but I hope you do not quite agree with the sadness. For in thinking of Ireland he deplores the loss of a way of life which after all is vanishing everywhere, but-as I think-survives in Ireland (if perhaps with little hope) more than anywhere else. It is this loss of dignity all over the world that most of all depresses the heart of poetry, but has not the Irish people the talent to be dignified in rags—to be a singing tramp on the world's edge'.
Apologises for not writing in a while and asks to meet her on his next visit to the Hague.

P234/88 10 March 1953

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for not writing sooner and attributing the delay to the death of his friend Nyhoff and of his sister-in-law. He regrets that he cannot attend the St Patrick's Day celebrations at the Irish legation in the Hague. His newly widowed brother and he will be travelling to Ireland shortly for a driving holiday.

P234/89 18 April 1953

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, confirming arrangements for their next meeting.

P234/90 27 April 1953

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, enclosing six of his poems that he has translated into English:

'It was hard (though rather thrilling) labour as I wanted to keep to the form (stanza rhymes etc) of the Dutch text'.

Includes six signed typescript poems by A. Roland Holst:

- 'The Betrayal' (1916)
- 'Helen of Troy (a fragment)' (1918)
- 'Day of Reckoning' (1922)
- 'The Child beyond Death' (1923)
- 'The Intervention' (1924)
- 'Once and Now' (1938)

P234/91 7 October 1953

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, referring to a bust by [Corinne Franzén-Heslenfeld] that he is sitting for. He finished his translation of Yeats' *The Old Age of Queen Maeve* while he was in hospital for a fortnight.

P234/92 28 December 1953

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, apologising for not thanking her for her Christmas gift of a Kate O'Brien book and blaming it on his 'customary December collapse'.

P234/93 12 February 1954

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, urging her to write her memoirs.

'You have the gift of writing "with your voice" (if you know what I mean) and, besides that, you have a background of great value against which you can stage your figures lighted by admiration or malice'.

P234/94 23 February 1954

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague.

'Many thanks for the final instalments of the Kavanagh [libel] case. Serve him right! For obviously it was only cash he was after. However, I should like to read some of his poems, especially "The Great Hunger". Have you got it?-and is it really a masterpiece?'
He may be travelling to Ireland with his brother in June.

P234/95 8 October 1954

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, thanking her for sending a copy of 'Dónal Óg', 'a wonderful and haunting poem'.

P234/96 12 November 1954

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, regretfully informing her that he cannot attend her dinner-party at the Hague.

'I fear I am getting more and more *sauvage* and I don't want to delay the process ... Moreover I can't bear the thought of getting into someone else's dinner jacket ...'

P234/97 2 December 1954

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing a booklet about Ireland which has just appeared but which he wrote forty years previously. Refers to his dislike of the Christmas season. 'I feel I am already getting infected by the depressing paralysis the last month of the year always inflicts on me... I just simply can not bear December!'

P234/98 28 January 1955

2pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, hoping that she recovers from her recent illness.

P234/99 20 December 1955

4pp

Letter from Jany Roland Holst

From Bergen, The Netherlands, to Josephine McNeill.

'Your dear letter delights me, and the more so as I think it proves that on the whole you are getting on good terms with Sweden and its beautiful, if somewhat mechanical, Swedes. Still, from what I have been told, I am not surprised that you find Norway nearer to your Irish heart-the Norwegians too, I daresay.'

P234/100 1950-51

c60pp

Yeats Afternoon at the Hague

Papers relating to the Yeats Afternoon organised by Josephine McNeill and A. Roland Holst, held at the Hague. Contains notes, drafts, transcripts and copies of addresses or lectures, as well as letters and supplemental published material.

Includes:

- Draft (19pp) and final copy (9pp) of the introductory address given by Josephine McNeill at the Yeats Afternoon.
- Postcard from A. Roland Holst, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing a copy of part of a poem (1p) by Oliver St John Gogarty entitled 'Elegy on the Archpoet William Butler Yeats Lately Dead' (23 April 1950).

- P234/100**
- Typewritten copy of A. Roland Holst's Dutch translation of Yeats' 'Sailing to Byzantium' [*Zee-kiezen naar Byzantium*] (2pp).
 - Handwritten translation by A. Roland Holst of Yeats' 'A Prayer for my Daughter' [*Een Bede E Voor Myn Dochter*] (5pp).
 - Typewritten address by A. Roland Holst on the life and works of W. B. Yeats and commentary on his Dutch translations of Yeats' work (6pp).
 - Digest of press reports from Dutch newspapers of the Yeats Afternoon together with a cutting from *Haagsche Courant* (2pp).

P234/101 1951

8pp

Yeats Afternoon at the Hague

Pamphlet produced to accompany the poetry reading by A. Roland Holst and Josephine McNeill organised in celebration of the work of W. B. Yeats. Poems include 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree'; 'Coole Park and Ballylee, 1931'; 'When you are old'; 'No Second Troy'; 'A Prayer for my Daughter'; 'Sailing to Byzantium'; and 'Red Hanrahan's song about Ireland'.

1.30 Evie Hone, 1945

P234/102 5 November 1945

3pp

Letter from Evie Hone

From the Dower House, Marlay, Rathfarnham, Dublin, thanking Josephine McNeill for praising her recent exhibition. Confirms that the picture of Youghal, which Josephine greatly admired, had not been sold and offers to sell it to her at a much reduced price. She is 'beginning work on the next Tullamore window tomorrow'.

1.31 J. Joly, 1932

P234/103 4 June 1932

1p

Letter from Professor J. Joly

From the Iveagh Geological Laboratory, Trinity College Dublin, thanking Josephine McNeill for the photograph she sent him, taken during his recent visit to the Vice Regal Lodge.

1.32 Lady Hazel Lavery, 1928–34

P234/104 1 July 1928

6pp

Letter from Lady Hazel Lavery

From Polesden Lacey, Dorking, where the Laverys are on holiday, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, accepting 'that charming invitation to the entire Lavery clan ... It is lovely here. John has brought down his painting box and the party although exalted in rank is full of amateur artists including Winston and Princess Patricia—the latter is really wonderfully good and paints quite up to professional standard. It would be great fun if I were not unhappily forced into being [a] model and sit (*sic*) pensively under a tree in a muslin frock to enable the artists to put a spot of colour in their landscapes ... '.

P234/105 3 February 1929

6pp

Letter from Lady Hazel Lavery

From Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo, where the Laverys are on holiday, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge.

'John is painting the "Salle Privée" at the Casino. Such a beautiful picture like the House of Lords and Commons. He does that sort of thing so well. Meanwhile I am revelling in the housekeeping and a hot bathroom—too delicious, and lots of people I know here now so while he paints, I play ... one meets very queer people in this Riviera hotch potch of society out on the fringe but money is an essential so one gets ones dinner where one can and no questions asked'.

P234/106 c1930

9pp

Letter from Lady Hazel Lavery

From 5 Cromwell Place, London, thanking Josephine and James McNeill for their recent hospitality

'This is the very most difficult "bread and butter" letter I have ever had to write because the jam on the bread was so delicious and so thickly spread'.

She apologises for sounding overly critical during their discussions on Irish political matters.

'I had intended to discuss with you and James certain aspects of the feeling on this side of the Channel (*sic*) and hear your opinion of what had best be done (if anything can be done) to dispel the very serious misunderstandings between the English and the Free State. Both sides, curiously enough, feel aggrieved and believe the other

P234/106 antagonistic'.
A postscript contains a short note from her husband John commenting on Hazel's political remarks in the preceding letter: 'I think it rather cool and a bit gratuitous on her part to offer advice to experts like yourselves but she means well and is a champion behind your back'.

P234/107 c1934

2pp

Letter from Lady Hazel Lavery

From 20 Clifton Terrace, Brighton, where she is convalescing, having been confined to bed for the previous six months. Includes a pen and ink self-portrait of a gaunt and extremely thin woman with long hair: 'Below is my portrait at present. A cross between something horrid just fallen out of [the] nest or the result of a love affair between Lady Oxford and Ghandi. Add to this beautiful vision long lank locks as I have had no hairdressing in six months save the determined "pig tails" of the nurses. Would you like to show this as a "warning" in your beauty parlours?'

P234/108 c1930

1 item

Envelope from the Kildare Street Club.

Recto has handwritten name 'Lady Lavery' and verso has a pencil drawing of a ballerina.

1.33 Sir John Lavery, 1924

P234/109 17 December 1924

3pp

Letter from Sir John Lavery,

From 5 Cromwell Place, London, to Josephine McNeill in response to a suggestion by her for an exhibition of Irish artists in London.

'Having seen the rooms of the Free State Offices in York House I feel that the conditions under which the work of Irish artists might be placed before a London public are excellent and particularly appropriate.

There are in Ireland today artists of the first rank such as Keating, Lamb, Tuohy, Leech, Yeats, Whelan, Paul Henry, Purser and others whose work is little known outside their country and which would be a revelation to people here who believe Irish culture to be a thing of

P234/109 the past and that contemporary art is confined to that of the “Gunman” and his followers’.
He encloses a short memorandum entitled ‘Proposed Conditions for Exhibitions’.

1.34 Lady Leonie Leslie, 1931

P234/110 20 January 1931

4pp

Letter from Lady Leonie Leslie,

From Glaslough, County Monaghan, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality.

‘We left the Lodge bathed in sunshine this morning-had a good run & were here in time for luncheon-and now we will “talk over” our visit and live through it again’.

1.35 Sir Shane Leslie, 1932-48

P234/111 23 June 1932

1p

Letter from Shane Leslie

From Lough Fea, Carrickmacross, County Monaghan, informing Josephine McNeill that he will be arriving in Dublin the next day [to attend the Eucharistic Congress] and will be ‘bringing a top hat as well as the kilt so that I can dress in the garb of Piccadilly or of the Gael according as etiquette demands’.

P234/112 29 June 1932

2pp

Letter from Shane Leslie

From Glaslough, County Monaghan, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality during the Eucharistic Congress, ‘... at this of all times in Irish History when it was most wonderful to be in the Irish Capital. I am struggling (as I am sure Mr Chesterton is) to record some impressions on paper but it is all as difficult to commentate as a rich and rare dream in the far past. Only with years will one be able to arrange one’s thoughts and memories’

P234/113 14 December 1947

2pp

Letter from Shane Leslie

From 36 South Lodge, St John's Wood, London.

'I must send you my Xmas card, a snapshot of me collecting folk and fairy lore in the Monaghan backwoods. There are so few of the old people left who live still in two worlds. I hope you are going to have a nicer Xmas than is foretold for this distressful country. I do not think Ireland was ever short of potatoes since the Famine as England is today. The London food is so bad one needs coffee or alcohol to take away the taste. But in the country people are living happily enough by living on their farms and selling to the Black Market. ...

The Gate Players are in London showing very well. What has befallen the Abbey that the audience rise up in protest from their stalls. I must send them a play to rejuvenate them. I was investigating Lord Leitrim's murder-1878-historically but dreamed it all as a play. I woke up and one Act was all ready in my mind. So I completed it.

I gather you expect elections in the New Year as I have received telegrams that I have been nominated Labour candidate for Monaghan. But I must wriggle out without hurting any feelings. It is really a tremendous compliment. Marjorie says she will divorce me if I win! I regard it as a triumph for the old aristocracy. It sounds very Irish'.

P234/114 December 1947

1 item

Christmas card from Shane Leslie

Features a black and white photograph of Leslie wearing a kilt and speaking to an elderly man from County Monaghan. Photograph is captioned: 'Finding the Fairy Man'. Also features a poem of four quatrains entitled 'The Fairy Man' by Shane Leslie.

P234/115 6 January 1948

6pp

Letter from Shane Leslie

From Barton House, Worth, Kent, to Josephine McNeill, 1 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, principally on the subject of the forthcoming general election.

'I understand your wishing to give your vote to Seán MacBride. The burning flame of "Young Ireland" reflickers in every generation. I felt it from Pearce (*sic*) and Douglas Hyde and John MacNeill. I suppose Dev has had "Young Ireland" behind him for twenty years until it has grown old and crusty and even less idealistic ...

Her husband, James McNeill, was 'abominably treated by the Fianna

P234/115 Fáil crew' when he was Governor General of Éire and she must be 'secretly waiting to see the wheel turn full circle'. He has 'sidestepped' the nomination by Labour to run for a seat in the Dáil. Comments in particular on the Anglo-Irish food treaty that he campaigned for through the *Daily Telegraph* and remarks that Seán Lemass 'played up splendidly'. Also discusses MacBride's afforestation policy which is a cause dear to his heart, and informs her of his involvement with the 'Men of the Trees' organisation, which he hopes to bring to Dublin for their summer school. His slogan from now on will be 'UP THE TREES!'

P234/116 17 May 1948

2pp

Letter from Shane Leslie

From Barton House, Worth, Kent, on 'Men of the Trees' headed notepaper, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, regretfully informing her that he will not be able to attend the exhibition of religious art by the sculptor Clare [Consuelo Sheridan]. He is working on the programme for the Tree Conference to be held in Trinity College Dublin later in the summer and hopes that the English and Irish Foresters 'will meet and raise a national interest in planting trees'.

1.36 Moya Llewelyn Davies, 1933

P234/117 13 September 1933

4pp

Letter from Moya [Llewelyn Davies]

From Furry Park, Raheny, to Josephine McNeill. She is due to meet Frank Pakenham.

'I will only see him socially however. I did a complete dissertation on the Treaty for him, and have nothing to add to it, and he can take it or leave it. Besides, as a plain Irishwoman, how can I compete with these American ladies, one from Chicago [Hazel Lavery] claiming to have made the Treaty, the other from Boston [Molly Childers] who can claim to have made the Civil War. It is for us Irishwomen to stand down and I have refused to allow Frank to include my name with these other two, or to mention it at all. I have heard of this claim of Lady Lavery's before and of her supplying the material for a novel in which she appears as the heroine of the liberation of Ireland with Mick as the hero ... I have been excited about the United Ireland Party and, though I have a lot of congenial literary work on hand, thought I must offer to help. And my bank book showing a small balance for a change, I was going to write a cheque for a subscription. But, my dear, what did W.B. Yeats tell me but that he had been talking to "a Minister of the late Government" who told him I had encouraged the

- P234/117** Army Mutiny. (I was in London when it occurred and the first I heard of it was the report given in the *Sunday Times*). I was so disgusted that I am going to spend my five pounds on a new hat ...'
Also refers to a visit she had from W. B. Yeats.
'But that he carried away any impression of any one of us, either separately or en masse, I cannot believe. We were merely the necessary audience. His egoism is superb; and his entrance, his performance and his exit were magnificent. I thoroughly appreciated them. The words of the monologue were not so good'.

1.37 Sir Edwin Lutyens, 1929

- P234/118** 26 June 1929

1p

Letter from Sir Edwin L. Lutyens

From 17 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, accepting her invitation to stay and suggesting a date in August when he will be visiting Lord Revelstoke at Lambay..

- P234/119** 23 July 1929

1p

Letter from Sir Edwin L. Lutyens

From 17 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, London, confirming the dates of his proposed visit to the Vice-Regal Lodge the following month.

- P234/120** 9 August 1929

10pp

Drawings by Sir Edwin Lutyens

Nine pencil sketches by Sir Edwin Lutyens mostly on light-hearted equine themes such as dressage but including elephants. Note by Josephine McNeill, 'Drawn by Sir Edwin Lutyens at the Dublin Horse Show Friday 9th Aug. 1929 when he was our guest at the Vice-Regal Lodge. Other guests Lady Lavery & Alice, Mrs Phillimore, ...'.

1.38 Count John McCormack, 1932

P234/121 1 July 1932

2pp

Letter from Count John McCormack

From Moore Abbey, Monasterevan, County Kildare, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality during the Eucharistic Congress.

P234/122 4 July 1932

2pp

Letter from Count John McCormack

From Moore Abbey, Monasterevan, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for sending him a book entitled *Traditional Irish Airs*. Asks her opinion on his claim that although Ireland has the greatest wealth of folk music in the world, it is the 'most poorly stricken in composers'.

1.39 Lily McCormack, 1932

P234/123 29 June 1932

2pp

Letter from Lily McCormack

From Moore Abbey, Monasterevan, County Kildare, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for receiving them during the Eucharistic Congress. Remarks how nice it was to see them again at the horse races and wonders whether they will be at Leopardstown the next day as their own horse, 'Smart Aleck' may win.

1.40 Edith McEllis, 1932

P234/124 12 October 1932

4pp

Letter from Edith McEllis

From Wrea Head, Scalby, Scarborough, to James McNeill, thanking him for his hospitality during her recent visit to the Vice-Regal Lodge. 'I can now add your Governor-Generalship to my memories of the Lodge under Lord Fitzalan and Mr Healy. I suppose I am right in feeling it is a chapter in Irish history which is closing rather than a personal quarrel as our newspapers make out. Mr de Valera said two sentences to me about it. "I think the Governor Generalship is unnecessary and I do not think my people desire it". I thought it wiser to make no comment.

1.41 Micheál MacLiammóir, 1929-55

P234/125 17 September 1929

2pp

Letter from Micheál MacLiammóir

From 4 Harcourt Terrace, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for the present of sherry she sent to him for his birthday. Mostly in Irish.

P234/126 17 January 1930

1p

Letter from Micheál MacLiammóir

From Dublin Gate Theatre Studio, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for her kind comments on the play he performed in the Mansion House. Expresses his hope that she and her husband will attend the Gate Theatre once it re-opens. In Irish.

P234/127 [January] 1930

1p

Letter from Micheál MacLiammóir

From the Gate Theatre, inviting Josephine and James McNeill, to the opening night of his play, an adaptation of Goethe's *Faust*. In Irish.

P234/128 [February] 1930

1p

Letter from Mícheál MacLiammóir

From the Gate Theatre, informing Josephine McNeill that the opening night of *Faust* has been put back to 17 February and hopes that the McNeills can still attend. In Irish.

P234/129 Not dated

1p

Letter from Mícheál MacLiammóir

From the Gate Theatre, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, apologising for not being able to meet her that day due to various time constraints. Jokes that he all he wants is death but that he has been told it's not that much easier than life. In Irish.

P234/130 11 March 1955

2pp

Letter from Mícheál MacLiammóir

From Hotel des Pays Bas, Amsterdam, to Josephine McNeill. Irish legation, The Hague, thanking her for her hospitality at the Hague. Remarks that he enjoys Amsterdam and that seeing children sliding on the ice with the sun shining down upon them reminds him of a scene from one of Brueghel's paintings. In Irish.

1.42 Charles McNeill, 1929

P234/131 15 October 1929

2pp

Letter from Charles McNeill

From Oxenford Hall, Oxford, to Josephine McNeill, Hotel Palace, Rome, but re-directed to the Mayfair Hotel, London. Mentions places of interest in Rome, mainly St Isidore's. Also refers to his research.

'I am still plodding on through the Bodleian MSS, the end of which, like the circle bounding earth and skies, allures from far and, as I follow, flies'.

1.43 Sir John Loader Maffey, 1948

P234/132 17 October 1948

2pp

Letter from Sir John Loader Maffey

From the United Kingdom Representative to Éire, 50 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, praising her contributions to proceedings the previous evening.

'I fancy that Mr Derrig [Minister for Education] sat down fully satisfied with having put his ministerial pronouncement over. You started the process of disillusionment. I agreed with no sentiment of yours more wholeheartedly than your declaration that it would be better to bring Women into the business. Women suffer most not only from social evils, but also from the main tragedies of our civilisation. I regard them as the world's chief hope of better & brighter days. So put your foot-both feet-on to the accelerator.'

1.44 Bishop Daniel Mageean, 1932

P234/133 22 July 1932

1p

Letter from Daniel Mageean, Bishop of Down and Connor

From Trench House, Belfast, to James McNeill, in relation to the St Malachy's College Scholarship fund for prospective students from the Glens of Antrim, to which McNeill had donated £400.

1.45 Constantia Maxwell, 1942

P234/134 20 August 1942

2pp

Letter from Constantia Maxwell

From the Grand Hotel, Malahide, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Loreto Convent, Youghal, praising her for her recent speech which was reported in the Irish newspapers. Wishes that she too was at the Loreto Convent as she is not enjoying her annual holiday in Malahide. Complains that the hotel is crowded with people, she has been ill and the weather has been awful. She encloses 'a short notice of E's [Elizabeth Bowen] book which will appear in the next *Dublin Magazine*'.

P234/135 1942

6pp

Review by Constantia Maxwell

Handwritten draft of a review by Constantia Maxwell for *Dublin Magazine* of Elizabeth Bowen *Bowen's Court* (Longmans, 1942). Note in margin reads: 'Josephine. P. Tear this up. CM'.

1.46 Lady Ottoline Morrell, 1934

P23/136 6 March 1934

4pp

Letter from Lady Ottoline Morrell

From 10 Gower Street, London, to Josephine McNeill, Woodley Park, Dundrum, in which she recommends various cold creams, skin tonics and face masks based on old family recipes and specialist formulations.

1.47 Nigel Newton, 1933

P234/137 3 July 1933

2pp

Letter from Nigel Newton

From 3 Upper Fitzwilliam Street, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Woodley, Dundrum, thanking her for being so helpful and for viewing his work with her friends.

'I am glad you have the still life ... it is certainly the best I had to show'.

1.48 Henry W. Nevinson, 1925

P234/138 8 December 1925

1 item

Postcard from Henry W. Nevinson

From Hampstead, London, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London, thanking her for the invitation. 'At the moment I happen to be in a dying condition but I hope that will make no difference to my coming on the 17th'.

1.49 Kate O'Brien, 1945–48

P234/139 10 August 1945

4pp

Letter from Kate O'Brien

From Clifden House, Corofin, County Clare, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, but redirected to c/o Very Rev Canon O'Brien, Dungarvan, County Waterford, referring to the surrender of Japan and the end of the war. Thanks Josephine McNeill for her kindness and hospitality when she was recently in Dublin. Describes her recent attempts to write near Lake Inchiquin in her 'beloved West Clare', which were hampered by a severe tooth infection.

P234/140 18 November 1945

3pp

Letter from Kate O'Brien

From 15 Farm Street, Berkeley Square, London, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'The lovely violets are dead and Dublin is a smoky, lovely mist-a surprisingly attractive trail across my memory. ... Return to London has been even more hectic than farewell to Dublin-and I am now plunged in affairs-i.e business with publishers and agents, search for a flat, search for my own decision about what to do next The usual recurrent whirligig'.

P234/141 20 September 1948

2pp

Letter from Kate O'Brien

From Silverton Hotel, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin. Hopes that Josephine McNeill is recovering well from her recent illness.

'I have been far in the west all these months, seeing almost no one and hearing no news. It was odd suddenly then to encounter all together again so many acquaintances, at the poet's funeral [the reburial of W B Yeats at Drumcliffe, County Sligo]. That was a beautiful and entertaining jaunt'.

1.50 Seán O'Casey, 1926-60

P234/142 3 August 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From c/o Mrs Spanner, 2 Trafalgar Square, Chelsea, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, accepting her invitation to dinner and thanking her for her comments on his new play *The Plough and the Stars*. Informs her Kathleen O'Regan will play the part of Nora Clitheroe on a particular Wednesday night.

P234/143 10 August 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, c/o Mrs Eoin MacNeill, South Hill Avenue, Booterstown, Dublin.

'Very glad to get your kind and critical letter. You are probably right about the character of "Nora Clitheroe" but sssh, don't let on to anyone for God's sake! ... I am quietly settling down here in a little, simple, austere flat, just dotted with a suggestion of comfort, hoping to enjoy the association of old comrades like Shakespeare, Balsac, France, Nietzsche (*sic*), Goya, Giorgione, & a few new friends like A John, Epstein & possibly yourself.'

P234/144 19 September 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, informing her that Miss [Kathleen] O'Regan is back [acting in the play, *The Plough and the Stars*] and promises to arrange seats for the McNeills.

'I have settled down here in Clareville St, & am awaiting men to put in book-shelves for me, when I shall be enabled to evolve order out of chassis'.

P234/145 cSeptember 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, remarking how pleasant it was to realise that she also appreciates the artists, Augustus John and Jacob Epstein. Asks her to tea and to see 'the tiny shelter that shades me from the sweat and toil of London'.

P234/146 20 September 1926

3pp

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, generally concerning modern art. Bemoans the cult of the celebrity artist such as Augustus John and Jacob Epstein whose work is overlooked but whose company is feted by high society. Also takes issue with Josephine McNeill's quest to have the Hugh Lane paintings permanently housed in Dublin: '...I honestly care little whether the spinning coin falls head for England or harp for Ireland. The people don't, won't, can't bother about them—oh, no, now; not the ignorant people, not the poor alone; the educated well-fed classes trooping through Trinity or National University corridors to hear loud lecturing, red-necked, blue-robed, black-robed sons of Clann Socrates, think more of the lines and lines, and rows and rows of photographs on the walls of the Engineering College, or of the green and gold prints of Ireland's Easter Week Resurrection than they do of the Lane Pictures. And the People—why they don't care a damn even for the Book of Kells'.

P234/147 24 September 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, inviting Josephine and James McNeill to afternoon tea with himself and Lady Ebba Low [formerly Ebba Byström] who had translated George Bernard Shaw's plays into Swedish and was now 'putting a Norseman's helm' on O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock*.

P234/148 12 October 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, inviting her to tea again, claiming that 'one meets so many stupid persons, that it is a joy to talk to a woman like you'.

P234/149 19 October 1926

1p

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From 32 Clareville Street, Gloucester Road, Kensington, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, Kensington, declining an invitation to attend a reception in honour of W.T. Cosgrave.

'Time and circumstance, God or the Devil have nurtured in my nature an indifference to the formal & ceremonial notions of humanity that seem to make life as stately still as a Royal Academy picture'.

P234/150 6 March 1960

2pp

Letter from Sean O'Casey

From Flat 3, 40 Trumlands Road, St Marychurch, Torquay, Devon, to Josephine McNeill, Irish legation, 9 Dufourstrasse, Berne, Switzerland, reminiscing on an evening spent with her, James McNeill and Robert Lynd.

'I remember the long vigil I had in your London home, when you had gone & I listened for hours and hours to Robert Lynd and your husband discussing affairs of state in Ireland and the world, unaware of what would happen in a few years to come; both of them oblivious to the great potential in power growing steadily but harshly within the Soviet Union. Poor men, poor men, thinking they had all the monopoly on spiritual & worldly wisdom'.

In answer to her question about *The Silver Tassie*, he confirms that it was performed in Berlin and Vienna some years previously in a translation by Dr Elizabeth Freundlich. States that it caused 'rows & near riots' and that he was accused of writing it to boost the Communist Peace Movement.

'I also was one of the first 12 writers (apostles?) who signed a letter denouncing atom bomb & calling for peace-so you see I was a black-listed boy. Am still'.

1.51 Richard Caulfield Orpen, 1931–32

P234/151 14 May 1931

1p

Letter from Richard Caulfield Orpen

From 13 South Frederick St, Dublin, to James McNeill, thanking him for presiding at a meeting of the Institute [R.I.A.I.].

P234/152 11 March 1932

1p

Letter from Richard Caulfield Orpen

From 13 South Frederick Street, Dublin, thanking James McNeill for taking time in connection with Sean O'Sullivan's desire to make a drawing of Ruth Draper.

1.52 William Orpen, 1925–29

P234/153 5 November 1925

1p

Letter from William Orpen

From Hotel Majestic, Paris, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London, declining an invitation to a reception involving Hazel Lavery. 'Anyway, between ourselves, perhaps it is as well I cannot attend. It's a sad story, but I fear me Hazel (sic) loves me no more. Sometime ago she wrote me regarding the distress in the West of Ireland, it was an urgent call for help for HER people. And I'm afraid I did not take it rightly, but replied that I wished that all Foreigners (even those from Cincenatee) would leave my poor country alone, now that it was trying to stand on its own feet, and doing it remarkably well. But that I did wish that she would look around and see the poverty and distress all about her home in South Kensington, and try to do something for her neighbours.'

P234/154 c1927

1p

Letter from William Orpen

From 8 South Bolton Gardens, London, to Josephine McNeill, 4

P234/154 Courtfield Road, London. Addresses Josephine as 'Most beautiful of High Commissioneresses' and apologises for not being in the studio as he has been ill. Signs as 'Ikkle Orps'.

P234/155 c1927

1p

Letter from William Orpen

From 8 South Bolton Gardens, London, informing Josephine McNeill that he is leaving for France and will not be able 'to "gorge" at the Carlton' as previously planned.

P234/156 29 July 1929

1p

Letter from William Orpen

From 8 South Bolton Gardens, London, to Josephine McNeill.

'Will you please give my best regards to His Excellency and would you also add, that I have got a new idea, not at all a joke, about Hazel Lavery's head on the Irish notes, regarding the colour of the hair, should not it change as she changes her own.

From the best information I have received, last month it was deep brown, now it is a violent scarlet, next month is going to be a most beautiful pea-green.

But please Your Excellency as I regard this as of vital importance to the Irish Free State, I pray that you and His Excellency, will have my idea forwarded through the proper channels so that the heads of Your Government responsible for these Notes, who as I trust will follow out Hazel's hair whims, and so date the history of the Free State perfectly, according to the colour of her beautiful tresses'.

P234/157 1 August 1929

1p

Letter from William Orpen

From [London], to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin, regretfully informing her that he will not be able to attend the luncheon to which she had invited him.

1.53 Pádraig Ó Siocfhradha [An Seabhac], 1931

P234/158 22 October 1931

3pp

Letter from An Seabhac (Pádraig Ó Siocfhradha),

From 119 Bothar Morehampton, Domhnach Broc, Baile Átha Cliath, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing a copy of a letter (1p) that he has sent to Pádraig de Brún, Lord Ashbourne, and Pádraig Ó Duinnín, in which he proposes to initiate a series of Irish language lectures concerned with Irish literature, history, drama, and music and ask whether he can put Josephine McNeill's name forward as a guest lecturer. The personal letter provides more details of the scheme.

P234/159 28 October 1931

4pp

Letter from An Seabhac (Pádraig Ó Siocfhradha),

From 119 Bothar Morehampton, Domhnach Broc, Baile Átha Cliath, to Josephine McNeill, Arus an tSeanascail, Páirc an Fhionnuisce, informing her of progress on the foundation of the Irish language lecture series. Discusses the working committee he has formed to organise the series and comments on the meetings and decisions that have already taken place.

1.54 Dónal O'Sullivan, 1949

P234/160 22 April 1949

2pp

Letter from Dónal O'Sullivan

From Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, discussing the difficulty of getting his biography of Turlough Carolan published (*Carolan: The Life, Times And Music Of An Irish Harper*, 1958). Also refers to potential difficulties in publishing *Songs for the Irish*. 'It's not much fun producing books which everybody praises but nobody publishes! I dimly suspect that some of our people are looking to the political or nationalistic angle: a form of propaganda which doesn't interest scholars'.

P234/161 26 April 1949

1p

Letter from Dónal O'Sullivan

From Cairn Hill, Foxrock, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, thanking her for her letter regarding the publication difficulties he is facing with both his books on Irish traditional music. Referring specifically to his biography of Turlough Carolan, he agrees that the Government cannot be responsible, solely, for any one book, but that a grant of some amount would help to get it published.

1.55 Christine Pakenham, Lady Longford, 1931

P234/162 21 January [1931]

4pp

Letter from Christine Pakenham

From Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for the hospitality shown to them during their recent stay at the Vice-Regal Lodge.

'We went away early on Monday & dropped from the highest pitch of luxury to complete rusticity. But the Westmeath Hunt behaved very well & the worst damage was one broken table'.

P234/163 2 September [1931]

3pp

Letter from Christine Pakenham

From Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard, County Westmeath, thanking Josephine McNeill for hosting a 'beautiful weekend party' at the Vice Regal Lodge.

1.56 Frank Pakenham, Lord Longford, 1967

P234/164 5 June 1967

2pp

Letter from Frank Pakenham, Lord Longford

From the Leader of the House of Lords, to Josephine McNeill, regretting that they have not met in some time and hoping that they may the next time she is in London.

1.57 C. F. Palmstierna, 1956

P234/165 10 April 1956

1p

Letter from C. F. Palmstierna

From the private secretary to the King of Sweden, Royal Palace, Stockholm, to Josephine McNeill, Legation of Ireland, Stockholm, thanking her for presenting the King with an issue of the *Irish Bulletin* containing an account of Irish associations with St Gall.

1.58 Baron Erik Palmstierna, 1925

P234/166 5 May 1925

2pp

Letter from Baron Palmstierna, Swedish Minister in London

From the Swedish Legation, 27 Portland Place, London, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London, thanking her for sending *The Irish Statesman*. Provides her with three unidentified verses translated into Swedish.

P234/167 1925

6pp

Offprint from *Ord och Bild*

Presented to Josephine McNeill with Baron Palmstierna's compliments. Contains articles in Swedish by Palmstierna on Irish writers such as W. B. Yeats, George Russell, J. M. Synge, and Patrick Colum. Also includes translations by Palmstierna of poetry by James Stephens, Patrick Colum and Dora Sigerson. Published in Stockholm.

1.59 Lawrence Parsons, 6th Earl of Rosse, 1969

P234/168 28 January 1969

2pp

Letter from Lawrence Michael Harvey Parsons, 6th Earl of Rosse

From Birr Castle, Offaly, to Josephine McNeill, 29 Leeson Park Avenue, Dublin 6, concerning her decision to resign from the Council of the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland due to increasing difficulty in attending meetings. Expresses gratitude for her support and work for the society throughout its existence and proposes to nominate her as a Vice-President.

1.60 Lucy Phillimore, 1929-32

P234/169 11 August 1929

1p

Letter from Lucy Phillimore

From Kilmacurragh, Kilbride, County Wicklow, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality during her recent visit and apologising if she said anything 'stupid' regarding the English-Irish controversy.

'I think I understand better the difficulties than I appeared to. That ass at Trinity ought to be suppressed but it isn't easy to do. I don't mention names but naturally I don't mean the Provost'.

P234/170 11 August 1930

1p

Letter from Lucy Phillimore

From Kilmacurragh, Kilbride, Wicklow, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for hosting a very successful Horse Show party.

'I hope you too are coming to the A.E. show when the date is settled? We ought all to gather to give him affection'.

P234/171 22 June 1932

4pp

Letter from Lucy Phillimore

From Kilmacurragh, Kilbride, Wicklow, to James McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, concerning the 'vulgar situation' created by de Valera.

'It is really hard that you and Josephine should have been shut out from the Reception to the Legate. [The official government reception for the Legate in Dublin Castle]. After all de Valera acknowledged your position as legal when he took office and this is an incredible insult both to you and to all the English in Ireland'.

Encloses a newspaper cutting describing the garden party hosted by the archbishop and bishops of Ireland at Blackrock College, Dublin in honour of Cardinal Lauri, the Papal Legate. Contains a photograph of James McNeill.

'On the platform with the Legate were 10 cardinals and bishops from every corner of the earth. The only laymen I could see were the Governor-General Mr James McNeill, with his gracious and handsome wife, and Mr G.K. Chesterton'.

1.61 Archbishop Pietro Pisani, 1929

P234/172 23 June 1929

1p

Letter from Archbishop P. Pisani

From the archbishop in Dublin, to the McNeills, Vice Regal Lodge, accepting their invitation to lunch. Note added on envelope at a later date reads 'Arch. Pisani Bearer of Pope's message to Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland on occasion of centenary of Catholic Emancipation June 1929'.

1.62 Sir Horace Plunkett, 1925-32

P234/173 14 December 1925

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George's Hill, Weybridge, to James McNeill, High Commissioner in London, referring to the settlement of the boundary question.

'It was worth suffering a good deal for such a magnificent—and magnanimous-reconciliation. I find nothing in Irish history to compare with this achievement. If something like it had happened while I was active in Ireland, I could have accomplished much in which I failed. This is not egotism, but only an illustration of the way

P234/173 many an Irish worker must be feeling’.

P234/174 23 March 1926

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, to James McNeill, High Commissioner in London, referring to problems in the agricultural sector in Ireland.

‘I get sad letters from the remoter districts of Ireland, complaining of the decline of everything that makes for prosperity. There is only one way out and up—Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living on the farmlands of our country. It will come but it will have to be expedited’.

P234/175 4 November 1926

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, to Josephine McNeill, thanking her for organising a recent party and praising her on her organisational skills and ‘another triumph of hospitality’.

‘Of course I know the work entailed in doing these things in a way which makes them look so easy; but you have your reward, You have helped your husband in his difficult task, and have materially aided those who want to forget the things we must forget if we want to do our little bits in rebuilding the fortunes of the country we love’.

P234/176 13 November 1926

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George’s Hill, Weybridge, to James McNeill, High Commissioner in London, discussing invitations to Sir John Keane’s address on Ireland and the Empire to be held at the Institute of International Affairs. Hopes that if they both attend, ‘we might have a chance of doing a little good in a quiet way’.

P234/177 2 July 1927

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George's Hill, Weybridge, to Josephine McNeill, thanking her for hosting a party at which she managed 'to combine people so recently uncombinable'. Referring to the recent solar eclipse he comments: 'The eclipse still exhibits totality and temperature is arctic'.

P234/178 [c1929]

2pp

Copy typescript letter from James McNeill

From McNeill, in London to receive medical treatment, to Sir Horace Plunkett, agreeing with his policy and principles concerning self-help. 'I was one of those who held in India that, while more education was needed, we could not wait for this defect to be remedied. But I think it also needful to regard governmental guidance and control as transitory and to work steadily towards a movement and not an official organisation'.

P234/179 23 June 1930

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, Weybridge, Surrey, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for inviting him to stay during the Dublin Horse Show.

P234/180 9 August 1930

2pp

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George's Hill, Weybridge, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for her recent hospitality during the Horse Show. Praises James McNeill's 'mastery of his duties' as Governor-General and hopes that he has another five year term 'to work out the scheme to which he has set his hand'.

P234/181 14 January 1932

1p

Letter from Sir Horace Plunkett

From The Crest House, St George's Hill, Weybridge, to Josephine McNeill. He has been very ill with gallbladder trouble and will write as soon as he is able.

1.63 Sara Purser, 1928-40

P234/182 c1928

2pp

Letter from Sara Purser

From Northway Hotel, Euston Square, London, to Josephine McNeill inviting her to the theatre with herself and Jack B Yeats.

P234/183 25 December 1928

1 item

Christmas card from Sara Purser

From Mespil House, Dublin, commenting on the card printed by the Cuala Press and containing a verse by Monk Gibbon.

'This is how I like to imagine you both having a romantic holiday & getting strong & gay'.

Also refers to the Charlemont House Scheme for the new Municipal Gallery in Dublin.

P234/184 8 May 1931

2pp

Letter from Sarah Purser

From Mespil House, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vive Regal Lodge, apologising for not being able to meet up recently but inviting her to lunch the following week to make up for it.

P234/185 11 February 1940

2pp

Letter from Sara Purser

From Mespil House, to Josephine McNeill, Lansdowne House, Lansdowne Road, Dublin, asking for forgiveness for the 'rude and hurting things' that she has done 'thoughtlessly and certainly without meaning them really'. Envelope contains note written by Josephine McNeill: 'From Sara Purser—the valiant, the bold. She had been rude as she often was & after a time, I struck and stayed away'.

1.64 Dorothy 'Dolly' Robinson, 1944–57

P234/186 9 October 1944

2pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, apologising for not being able to attend one of her parties due to the likely behaviour of her husband, Lennox.

'...to dress and get there alone and then to be in a sweat as to L's condition, makes my knees give way. Maybe he'll be lovely and sober and charming, but before me he has successfully spoilt every party for me in years & I have no heart for watching his antics. Only in his own house is he reasonably behaved'.

P234/187 30 July 1948

1p

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

[From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin], to Josephine McNeill, The Grammar School, Drogheda, informing her that Norris Davidson's brother, John, arrived back from Cyprus suffering from TB and subsequently died.

P234/188 18 April 1949

2pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 17 Cheyne Gardens, Chelsea, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, promising to post the Beethoven volumes at once.

P234/189 14 November 1949

3pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, congratulating her on her posting to Holland.

'... not only will you represent Ireland, but also the female sex, in a light which will possibly get the world out of its narrow-minded male outlook & lead to more knowledgeable relationships.'

P234/190 22 January 1950

4pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, commenting at length on the death of her former teacher, the artist James Sleator.

P234/191 20 May 1950

8pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, in which she discusses financial problems facing herself and Lennox, and other more general news.

'Our Dundrum house is completely off the mat. Tho' Lennox won his case, it was a hopeless proposition. Michael Scott said it would cost £800 to make it seaworthy quite apart from any decorating at all & it had grave drawbacks, one of which would have been an infuriated landlord-but it cost L. £85 in lawyers!'

P234/192 29 July 1951

4pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

On headed notepaper of the Irish Exhibition of Living Art, of which she is Secretary, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, mainly concerning the fire in the Abbey Theatre.

'While I was standing viewing the wreck the day after, I heard dear Masie Craigsie's (*sic*) voice behind me raised in protest about some item she had lost. On seeing me her voice dropped to a suitable mourning note, & when she released me from an overpowering embrace, she flung wide her arms exclaiming "Dolly darling my whole

P234/192 life lies there in ruins” much to the amusement of a crowd of Dublin gutties who were hanging over a broken doorway looking in. It occurred to me that had May only arrived in time her tears would have quenched the fire as quick as anything’.

P234/193 18 June 1952

6pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, with general news of the social scene in Dublin.

‘However I feel much happier & more settled in myself now that I have given up “Hope”. Poring through a volume of George Watts works (& were they works!) I definitely decided to give up “Hope”. So now I no longer dress in sea-sickley green. I have taken to walking about, instead of sitting forever, uncomfortably & very insecurely perched on top of a sickly sea-green world with a handkerchief, dipped in vinegar, tied around my eyes. Honestly I was getting cramped. So I’ve given up “Hope”.

I trust you will not be disappointed in the 3 shabby volumes that are coming your way. No matter what shortcomings my mother had, the very best of her was in her music, an ungrudging passion. These much thumbed volumes smell of nothing but devotion. She was never a Bach fan, far too mathematical, she said-she couldn’t stand the repetition. Many years ago I chose her parents-St Sebastian & George Sand. She never could quite see this. She was romantical (as they say in Dublin) to the end of her life & how she would have loved to run off with Chopin. She had no use for women in theory.’

Described a garden party at Áras an Uachtárain.

P234/194 8 February 1953

6pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, referring to the ‘terrible disaster’ of the Dutch floods.

‘Denis Gwynn is now interested in the oil sketch I have of Edward Dowden by J.B. Yeats. Cork has no portrait of Dowden & no picture by J.B.Y. So I hope to sell it to them-they have some sort of trust like the Haverty.’

She describes a visit by Lennox to Paris at the invitation of the Catholic Stage Guild to present a statuette to Gordon Craig.

P234/195 22 April 1954

6pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, Co Cork (*sic*), to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, Berne, Switzerland, referring at length to Lennox's illness. He is in hospital in Cork, having taken seriously ill when staying with friends near Castletownbere.

P234/196 22 August 1954

4pp; 1 photograph

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, enclosing a black and white photograph of a portrait of her mother [Hester Travers Smith, née Dowden] painted by John Butler Yeats. The painting has now been sent away to be cleaned. Due to a number of reasons, including the suicide of a neighbouring tenant and the illness suffered by her husband, Lennox, which has rendered him incapable of speech, she feels it is time for her to move out of her current home.

The painting is of a young girl seated with her hands clasped. Caption on verso: 'Canvas 25 x 30. Painted 1882-1883 by John Butler Yeats. Portrait of Hester Dowden aged 14, daughter of Edward Dowden'.

P234/197 20 July 1957

4pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, Berne, Switzerland, updating her on the state of Lennox's health. He suffered a heart attack followed by a slight stroke but has recovered wonderfully. Discusses plans to move to a house as Lennox is unable to use the stairs to the flat at Longford Terrace.

'One of the Tostal shows I went to was the three short films made by John Ford here last year. Honestly Jo, I never got more hot & bothered. They are shocking. Thoroughly BAD. They got dreadful reviews in the English press.

I feel quite weak from responsibilities. I have almost an invalid husband-who will not stay quiet-a move ahead of me & no money. Actually people are doing things for L. re money. I went out & asked. He never got over the *Irish Press* cutting him off last year from an income because he went to China'.

P234/198 1 August 1957

2pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, , to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, Berne, Switzerland, thanking her for the cheque she has sent to help the Robinsons move to a more suitable house. Refers to Pádraic Colum's recent book [*The Flying Swans*] 'Next comes a novel of 538 pages by Padraic Colum, just out. Well it isn't only just out, but it is just fifty years out of date. An endless nostalgic whimsy. I had thought that America had given up these vast novels-beginning with a little boy & going through each phase of his interesting life. Needless to say this is set in a bog, with masses of Celtic twilight'.

P234/199 c1957

2pp

Letter from Dorothy Robinson

[From the Vatican?], referring to Josephine McNeill's visit to Drogheda.

'It strikes me that while I maybe taking the veil in the Vatican (purely because I do, do, as the Romans do, do) you maybe-maybe being receipted into the Protestant Salvation Army Church by St Patrick and his Cathedral'.

P234/200 Not dated

1 item

Drawing of the Robinsons' house, Dalkey, County Dublin

Card featuring a printed illustration of Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey, County Dublin. Drawn and handcoloured by Dolly Robinson. Caption on recto: 'Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey'. Caption on verso: 'With love & all good wishes from Dolly. In another hand: 'The Robinsons' house at Dalkey by Mrs Lennox Robinson'.

1.65 Lennox Robinson, 1929–56

P234/201 10 August 1929

3pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, praising a recent party hosted by the McNeills, which he had attended with Miss Ninette de Valois. Also discusses their forthcoming attendance at a performance of *The Whiteheaded Boy* and an unnamed Yeats' ballet at the Abbey, and enquires how many seats he should keep for their party.

'The Yeats' ballet won't come on until after 10 p.m. Lots of time if you are here at 10. The programme is fifteen or twenty minutes ballet at the beginning of the evening, then the old "Whiteheaded Boy" then the Yeats' ballet. I am dining with the Yeats that night and we won't come until about 10 as he will be merry about his play and couldn't sit through two hours before it ...' Handwritten.

P234/202 19 August 1929

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, referring to her 'acute criticism' of the W. B. Yeats' play [*Fighting the Waves*]. Admits that he had shown her letter to Yeats who agreed with her on some points.

'I do regret not hearing the lovely lyrics but Mr yeats prefers they should not be heard; they are a little secret of his own, he says, and they have nothing whatever to do with the play'. Typewritten.

P234/203 25 September 1929

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, inviting the McNeills to the opening of his new play.

'It is an odd kind of play but I can lay my hand on my heart and declare that it contains nothing subversive to faith or morals so you will run no risk of implicating yourselves in an impropriety'. Handwritten.

P234/204 4 December 1929

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, apologising for describing Myles Dillon to her as a Republican when in fact he is a member of 'the ould Irish Party' who 'apparently are much more fiercely anti-F.S. than the Republicans'. Refers to his forthcoming school show at the Abbey School of Ballet. Typewritten

P234/205 5 August 1930

4pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

On board R.M.S. *Acquitania*, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, introducing his friends, the Dudley Digges, with whom he will cross to Dublin after docking in Southampton and spending a night in London. Digges, although Irish, is one of the most distinguished 'American' actors. Asks whether she 'would show them some little courtesy while they are in Dublin'. Handwritten.

P234/206 25 August 1930

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, inviting the McNeills to see Dudley Digges's performance in Yeats's *The Hour Glass*. Thanks them for inviting Digges to the Vice Regal Lodge.

'He was entirely overcome by you at the Lodge that night, talked to me for two days of your charm and lovely manners. Of course I agreed'. Handwritten.

P234/207 [December 1930]

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey, to Josephine McNeill, sending a copy of his latest play. Suggests a performance of Yeats's *The Hawk's Well* to be staged in the drawing-room of the Vice-Regal Lodge as 'an after dinner entertainment'. Mentions Ninette de Valois watching rehearsals of it in the Abbey Theatre and Yeats remarking 'I wrote it for a drawing room. It should be done in the Vice-Regal Lodge but I suppose they wouldn't'. Typewritten.

P234/208 18 January 1931

1 item

Invitation to *The Hawk's Well* at the Vice Regal Lodge

Invitation from the Governor General and Mrs McNeill, to an 'At Home' event at the Vice Regal Lodge featuring a performance of W. B. Yeats' *The Hawk's Well* by the Abbey School of Ballet.

P234/209 12 December 1938

1p

Repatriation of the remains of James McNeill

Statement by Lennox Robinson describing the arrival of the remains of James McNeill by ship in Dún Laoghaire harbour, following his death in London on 12 December 1938: including an appreciation of McNeill.

'For we had loved him so much. Loved him for his unfailing courtesy; his charm of manner; his gentle strength; his humour – no one delighted more to hear a good story or to tell one; his fearlessness in our troubled times; his immense courage during his last illness. All these things we thought of standing in the gloom'. Typewritten.

P234/210 26 December [1938]

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Sorrento Cottage, Dalkey, to Josephine Mc Neill, enclosing the appreciation he had written of James.

'It's very inadequate, just an attempt to say what we felt that horrid evening-an attempt to tell you how I felt towards James'. Handwritten.

P234/211 [February 1939]

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, transcribing in full a letter from Dermot O'Brien at the Eden Hotel, Cap D'Ail, on 31 January 1939 concerning Yeats's funeral in Roquebrune, France, at which O'Brien was present.

'We buried W. B. yesterday in the little cemetery on the highest point of Roquebrune that dominates Cap Martin and Monaco. A beautiful spot where he had expressed the wish to be buried if not taken back to Sligo ...

P234/211 On Saturday George rang me up to say he had died and would I arrange for clergyman, etc. After dinner we motored over, picking up the padre on the way, George took me into his room where he lay looking indescribably noble and beautiful and as if he had fallen asleep with some happy thought that left the suspicion of a smile on his lips. I had never realised what a beautiful head he had when his features were at rest'.

P234/212 21 December 1945

4pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From an unidentified hotel in London, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, describing conditions and morale in the city in the aftermath of World War II.

'The first and lasting impression of London is diet, diet, diet. Much. Much worse than 3 years ago and no one seems to want to start cleaning up. If it was Dublin, they'd say "How like the Irish". I find it hard to say "How like the English". Even the public clocks seem all stopped and their faces unpolished-The few people I have met all say the same thing. "Everyone has lost heart, it was better this time last year when the V2s were coming over, that excited, frightened, stimulated-not now". I suppose it's the reaction after those years of tension. Of course some blame the Labour Govt.-but they haven't had much time._They say the food is worse yet I see lots in the shops but perhaps the menus are of a sameness. I have fed very well on my own in small restaurants or in this lousy hotel and don't know what they grumble about-and grumble is the word. There isn't a spark of that cheery English spirit that one used to see (and perhaps sometimes be irritated by)' ...

I shall have to work over the week-end and till Stephens's Day and have managed to borrow a typewriter. The only "artistic" thing I have done is the Picasso-Matisse exhibition. I don't even bother to dislike the Picasso-I don't think they are worth a 2nd thought-I loved the Matisse-Fortunately I went on Wed before all the press made the attacks on Picasso front-page news-Yesterday I believe you couldn't get near them with the throng'. Handwritten

P234/213 23 January 1946

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, inviting her to tea at his house. 'I can promise you tea, a home-made cake from County Cork, honey made by Cork bees, and butter from Mallow. It seems to me it might be nice to listen to Mozart thus'. Handwritten

P234/214 9 November 1946

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Drama Department, University of North Carolina, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, describing the work of the department, particularly their productions of Carolina Folk-Plays. Describes Paul Green's play *The Lost Colony*, which is performed outdoors annually in an historical context. Suggests a similar venture should be attempted in Ireland.

'Think of Kincora on the banks of the Shannon at Killaloe, or the Walls of Derry in Derry city, of Saint Brigid in Kildare, etc. etc. etc. In the summer we could make pilgrimages (in motor cars) for week-ends to these places; the plays would have to be written very well, fine music and fine singing-everything done awfully well'. Typewritten.

P234/215 22 November 1946

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From North Carolina], to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, with general news.

'This is only a bit of a note because I wrote you 2 days ago and yours came this morning-I was so glad you reproached me for not writing for I was able to shout across the Atlantic, I did, I have'.

P234/216 9 January 1947

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Lower Montenotte, Cork, describing his enforced stopover in Nova Scotia *en route* to Ireland, and informing her of his proposed return to the US in September.

'There is nothing in the offing; it's high time you came home. For God's sake don't fall under the spell of Cork. Thank God, I broke away from it forty years ago'. Handwritten.

P234/217 24 [January] 1947

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, inviting her to stay with himself and his wife, Dolly,

P234/217

at a hotel in Killaloe for a week in April.

'There is a lovely Norman Prot cathedral, a dreadful Cat church with a Harry Clarke, the Shannon, lovely mountainy walks, a comfortable hotel excellent cooking-I am writing this so far ahead because I am afraid of you being fixed up with Countrywomen or the sort'. Typewritten.

P234/218 18 July 1947

4pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From Monkstown], to Josephine McNeill, 4 Lower Montenotte, Cork

'Thank you for your card-the result being that I won't go to the Bodkin "do"-I really hate those things, and anyway Tommy is so conceited he won't know if I'm there or not-but I do want to prod him about the Lane Pics-oh, he and Dev were going to bring them back under their arms, Thursday of next week ... I meant to send you the beginning of my *Guide to Dublin* but it's not quite tidied up and I want Dolly to smell it first. I'm really getting frightened by U.S.A looming so near and it's not the sort of book to be finished away from facts and places. What an old ass Sean T. made of himself! The Invisible Mender would never have made such an awful gaffe ...'. Handwritten

P234/219 26 November 1947

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the U.S., but in an envelope posted in Dún Laoghaire, probably forwarded by Dolly Robinson, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, reminiscing on Irish winters and how he misses being in Dublin.

'I'm so glad you've been having all that fun in Dublin, life here seems very dull in comparison but of course I'm just as glad not to be there for the Abbey row. I haven't been asked about it but when I have to speak about the theatre in Michigan (*sic*) University I shall glory in it, make it the text of my sermon. What other country would riot over a bad performance of a play etc. etc. The thing has got a lot of publicity over here so they will know what I am talking about ... So glad you like champagne; I love it and not too dry. I used to say I had a chorus-girl's tastes; white fox furs (don't really like 'em) sweet champagne and Tchaikovsky's music ... There should be, of course, a Minister of Fine Arts-the old Sinn Fein had it-perhaps Sean O'Bride (*sic*) will. I am almost certain I'd vote for his party if I were there in January. Have you the guts to impersonate me at the polling-booth?' Typewritten.

P234/220 [December 1947]

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Bowling Green State University, Ohio, to Josephine McNeill, describing his work at the University and complaining of not having enough work to do.

'I am escaping to Cleveland for a night or two at Thanksgiving-that's just before the end of the month, there's a good repertory theatre there and a picture gallery. There's a stunning one at Toledo only 22 miles away, I have been there once but must go again and again. A lovely building, wonderful stuff, nothing very much Italianate but fine 18th cent. English-Gainsboroughs and such like, a few grand Spanish-a superb Zuberan (*sic*), an El Greco, etc. etc. I think a brace of millionaires are the nucleus of it'. Typewritten.

P234/221 6 January 1948

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Bowling Green State University, Ohio, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, encouraging her to continue writing her book [on Lady Wilde].

'... don't, please, get discouraged about your book, creative work waxes and wanes like the moon and one night you will go to bed and say "what the hell; why do I write a book, aren't there enough books in the world?" and in the morning you'll realise that the world is waiting for your book. So please cheer up and go on. I don't think there can be enough books about our Irish heritage, your book will be part of the "canon" as W.B.Y. would say about some dull book of young Gwynns, not thinking the book very good ...'.

Also mentions the visit of Sara (Sally) Allgood for his 'very trifling play'. Describes her as 'very quiet and very difficult'. Typewritten with a handwritten postscript.

P234/222 30 January 1948

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Bowling Green State University, Ohio, to Josephine McNeill.

'I feel rather mad at not being in Monkstown amid all the rumble-jabble of elections and wondering where I shall cast my vote. For Sean, I bet, but will his party not just put in the Devs for another five years? I do think that would be deplorable but then wouldn't the others be as bad?' Typewritten.

P234/223 4 February 1948

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Hotel Avery, Boston, Mass, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'I should be reading about an old girl called Lady Gregory in the Library this morning but am putting her off till after lunch ... I must go out and see Mrs Jack Gardner's place-Lady G. gave her first lecture there in 1911-I was there and how she disliked me!' Handwritten.

P234/224 2 September 1948

7pp

Short story by Lennox Robinson

Typewritten short story entitled 'Luggage', with a dedication handwritten by the author 'For Jo MacNeill-just to amuse her in her convalescence. Finished today Sept. 2 1948. Lennox'.

P234/225 16 June 1949

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, c/o Miss Clare Sheridan, The Spanish Arch, Galway.

He reviews his personal political views, having supported Arthur Griffith and Sinn Féin, but joined the Redmond Volunteers in 1914 when war broke out, a result of his Anglo-Irish background.

'Now, after forty years, we are a Republic and I am full of hope. And my hope lies in the Young Farmers organisations and in your Irishwomen than in anything else'. Typewritten.

P234/226 Christmas-tide [1949]

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, enclosing a Christmas gift of scent and a copy of the poem he wrote about her at the Horse Show.

'Dolly and I will miss you terribly. Would you have time to read a Couperous novel before you go? ... He is one of the few Dutch writers of importance and it would be nice if you could let the Hollanders know you are acquainted with his work. The scene is your Hague, upper-class family and very much, I imagine the sort of people you

P234/226 will be apt to meet ...'.
The poem, 'Josephine at the Horse Show', is thirty six lines long.
'Try my perfumes, try my perfumes,
Flap, flap, flap.

P234/227 31 January 1950

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill following her arrival in Holland as Ireland's Minister at the Hague.

'It must be like going to the life after death for it must be so bewildering. But I know you'll be able to deal with heaven, and if so, why not with Holland?'

Discusses the death of artist, James Sleator at some length.

'I learn from Deena that the family had this heart and that James knew about it. It comes like a pistol shot-and did come thus. He could have led an invalid's life, lying down, doing little or nothing, he preferred to take his chance, live to the hilt of his collar, drink his whiskeys, smoke his cigarettes-and how rihjt he was. He had awfully overworked Christmas-time over the exhibitions to the U.S.A. when Sean MacBride was sending all the wrong pictures, he went to bed for a week, got up and worked too much again ... I have to go tomorrow to see the Orpen-Lady Gregory portrait he left. Orpen and Lady G. didn't get on well and the sittings were not concluded, yet Blather Burke says it's a good painting and that the Abbey should buy it'.
Typewritten.

P234/228 24 March 1950

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, discussing tentative plans to holiday in Kinsale.

'Keating has been made P.R.H.A. and now the next art question is who is to [be] Director of Nat. Gall. I am pulling all the strings I can for Tom McGreevy, I can't think of anyone better for the job but you never know, some civil servant who has a reproduction of the Mona Lisa on his walls and therefore knows all about pictures may be jobbed in'.

P234/229 2 July 1950

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, reporting on his holiday to Kinsale with the Freddie Ryans.

'You will have seen the Cultural Committee (*sic*) have been getting into hot water over the Venice Exhibition, 12 pictures by Nano Reid, 12 by Norah McGuinness and no one else represented. I do think it's a bit steep on the other artists ... isn't it grand about Tamsie? [McGreevy's appointment as Director of the National Gallery]. I think it will make all the difference in him, I have met him twice since and he seemed all sweetness and light, he'll lose that sense of injury, lose his little jealousies'. Typewritten.

P234/230 12 January 1951

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, [Irish Legation, The Hague], discussing theatre news and providing updates on various Dublin acquaintances.

'The last six weeks have been rather grim, old Elizabeth Young broke her hip very badly, was in Vincents for weeks, Terence de Vere White has been a trump, collected money for her and I think she is now home. MacNie broke her leg, has gone quite mental and I hope has been certified, old Hackett went on fire-at least her flat did. "The Lady's (?) Not For Burning". ... I though 1950 was grim but really 1951 seems to start grimmer. ...Perhahs we are going to have a new theatre in Dublin, apart from Les Boys' new theatre'. Typewritten.

P234/231 26 July 1951

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, commenting on the rebuilding of the Abbey, that 'the thing shouldn't be solely left to Government'. Typewritten.

P234/232 9 December 1951

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, with mainly personal news.

'Of all people, Jack Leslie rang me up yesterday and I lunched with him at the Kildare St Club today; he had two boy friends with him, both names at once forgotten by me, one looked like an Indian (never spoke), the other a young Englishman. Jack was very charming and couldn't have been nicer in every way, he is going back to Glaslough tomorrow evening and then for the winter to Tunis. Shane has been a year in America lecturing about Trees, Manure, and Mrs Fitzherbert, as Jackie says "I hope he doesn't put in the wrong slide and say 'That is Mrs Fitzherbert', and it's a bit of dung". Dublin bristles with pictures: I saw two shows yesterday-Patrick Hennessy's and Cecil Saltkeld's. I think Hennessy is static, I mean he doesn't change or improve=though, goodness knows, he is good enough as he is'. Typewritten.

P234/233 9 June 1952

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

On the West Pier, Dún Laoghaire, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. He has sent her, via Iveagh House, the volumes of Beethoven and Bach, left to her by his mother-in-law, Hester Travers Smith, famed medium and 'automatist'.

'She wanted to be a professional pianist-she was one of Fanny Davis best pupils- but love stepped in and she married Dick Smith and they soon found out it was a mistake ... In the last few months I have discovered Stephan Zweig-why did I not know of him before? I've read his Mary of Scots, his Marie Antoinette, his auto-his life, his Balzac, and now his Erasmus, and his Martin Luther to follow. Even in 1932 he had Erasmus's dream of a federation of Europe-then Hitler broke and after terrible hardship Zweig and his wife committed suicide in Brazil'. Handwritten.

P234/234 12 January 1952

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, mainly discussing theatre matters.

'I see Constantia Maxwell now and again in the Arts Club and she always asks have I heard from you. I think the Club has made up its mind firmly about us two. I have lent her your last letter-no, the one before the last-about your Yeats thing but have asked her to give it me

P234/234 back ... Now I have to edit eight full-length Irish plays for the Oxford University Press and write 3,000 words of a preface. Will I ever be quit of this B_ _ _ _ _ Irish theatre? I feel like some old woman mumbling over her beads'. Typewritten.

P234/235 11 April 1952

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague. mainly discussing the drama festival at Scariff where he was a judge.

'Tomorrow I go to Limerick to do the same sort of thing. It's rather a wearing job but very interesting ... Yesterday afternoon I had a lovely drive to Enniskerry with Pauline Morgan and a Jesuit from Scotland who has been doing a retreat at University Church. She has taken the house the Joe Hones used to have and is altering it greatly'. Typewritten.

P234/236 18 February 1953

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin], to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, referring to the Dutch floods: 'Seriously, I was distressed and gathered a suitcase of old clothes (older than the ones I am wearing) and hauled them down to the Red Cross in Westland Row – including my tails (which might do for a waiter in Holland) and as I haven't been asked to that sort of party for more than two years I think I can do without them'. Typewritten.

P234/237 20 May 1953

1p

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, referring to the P. E. N. Conference in Dublin.

'I'll look after your Dutch butties-I expect they all speaak (*sic*)English. I'm not a P.E.N. creature but I look forward to meeting again Compton Makenzie and that most dear Yankee Marc Connolly the Green Pastures man. ... Did you read your Arts Club annual report? That mysterious five hundred stolen from the bar'.

P234/238 12 August 1953

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, with news of Dublin and mutual acquaintances. Refers to the Dublin Horse Show, a lunch with American screen-writer, Anita Loos, and the success of Thomas McGreevey at the National Gallery.

'This is the TWELTH and I am going up the mountains with lord Moyne etc. shooting grouse and we shall eat them in Jammets in the evening (sez you). ... I was meeting Anita Loos yesterday for lunch, a tiny little thing and very pleasant, I said I suppose you made millions out of those Gentlemen who Prefer Blondes (*sic*) and she said "Yes but I lost all in the Wall Street crash". She is now, I think, doing scripts in Hollywood. ... I hear Tamsie is doing splendidly at the Gallery and likes the job. Living Art opens on Wed. I've already had two minor rows with Norah McG., she takes everything so damn seriously, won't understand the leg-pull. I am rather surrounded by Yanks, only one of them studying Yeats but it will be a rest in a week when they have all flown back to the States'. Typewritten.

P234/239 2 July 1954

3pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown], to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, forwarding a letter he has received from [Norris Davidson], from Stockholm, but on a cruise and due to dock at Amsterdam.

'If you are still having relations with Her Excellency at the Hague will you tell her I will be on board this corvette when she reaches Amsterdam next week'.

Robinson annotates the letter, 'I enclose in a hurry. If it reaches you before the Irish fleet arrives do try and contact nice Norris'. Typewritten.

P234/240 3 August 1954

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From Waterfall, Bantry, County Cork, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague.

'... Norris Davidson of the Eire Naval Reserve you had them to a grand concert at the Hague amongst other things. Unfortunately I haven't had a talk with him since he came back though I had him to lunch at the Arts Club to help me entertain 3 U.S. naval cadets-one a

P234/240 son of a friend of mine in Ohio. Such dumb three young men, I never met. Norah MacG., Dolly, Norris and I coped and dug and dug again, shot our nets and caught no draught of fishes ... I am writing this from the Bridge Adams near Castletownberehaven ... He was Stratford Shakespeare Theatre for about 16 years-directing-she has money and they built a lovely small house here a couple of years ago and have settled in ...'
Envelope annotated. 'Thinking of the friends I am staying with [I] have coined the phrase *nouveau Irish*'. Handwritten.

P234/241 15 October [1954?]

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown, County Dublin, to Josephine McNeill.

'Two nights later George Yeats threw a dinner for the three of us at Jammets-sort of combined birthdays-and very pleasant, too. Tomorrow we are having Harriet Cohen, Arnold Bax, the Larchets, Arthur Duff, the Berminhams (*sic*) (they live a few doors away) and she is [a] brilliant professional pianist, we only give them a little drink here and bring them across to the Salthill for dinner. ... Financially things have been too grim for words but I think they are going to look up. I am trying to sell my great Keating and I think that Dwyer of Cork may buy it-if he does, wolves will be turned from the door. This Sunday afternoon is so beautiful, no wind and a sun, you and I and Charles should be walking down the West Pier and coming back to Dolly's lovely supper, and then we'd have lots and lots of piano and I'd push you on to the second-last bus'. Typewritten.

P234/242 25 August 1955

2pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From St Michael's Hospital, Dún Laoghaire], to Josephine McNeill, Ambassador to Sweden, c/o Iveagh House, Dublin,.

' ... I have gone into retreat with the nuns to have a toe removed, a great bore and an expense ...'

He discusses recent books by Peadar O'Donnell, Benedict Kiely and Elizabeth Bowen ,and particularly the banning of the Kiely book; and excursions to the west and north of Ireland.

'I made Lorna Reynolds's acquaintance at Kate O'Brien's and when Kate was passing through Dublin *en route* to London, Lorna threw a small and very nice party. I like Lorna very much'. Handwritten.

P234/243 4 September 1955

6pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown], to Josephine McNeill, Irish Ambassadress (*sic*), Stockholm, Sweden.

'You have said everything I feel about the Bowen book. A chapter-No. 5-was printed in *Irish Writing* before the book was published and I kept the number and sometimes read it aloud *pour rire* and my listeners could hardly believe that I wasn't making it up. And to think of those lovely earlier things like *The Last September* ...

Describes at length the circumstances behind his speaking at a gathering of textile manufacturers north of Dundalk, at which most of the letter is written.

'Dolly and the dog Charles are week-ending with Norah McGuinness who has bought a little mountaineer cottage somewhere near Bray out of the £500 Evie Hone left her.' Handwritten.

P234/244 9, 22 February 1956

3pp

Letter from Lennox Robinson

[From 20 Longford Terrace, Monkstown and later from Norris Davidson's house in Donard, County Wicklow], to Josephine McNeill, Irish Ambassadress (*sic*), Stockholm, Sweden.

'Donagh MacDonagh and I are going on steadily on with the *Oxford Book of Irish Verse*. The enemies we shall have made by the time it is published! There's quite a flotilla of young writers-interesting-but will they be interesting fifteen years hence because the book will be the standard one for the next 20 years? Oh dear! And the amount of minor verse I have read-even the great ones' minor verse. There is some delicious minor Tommy Moore for instance.

At last I have seen *Godot*. Everything seemed to stop me from going, I was interested, very interested ... Truly it is a little Emperor's New Clothes to me and so say many people but others find it the new gospel-gospel of despair'. Handwritten.

1.66 George Russell [AE], 1929

P234/245 25 March 1929

1p

Letter from George Russell (AE),

From *The Irish Statesman*, thanking Josephine McNeill for her interesting letter about salesmanship and selling techniques and promising to write a piece for *The Irish Statesman* on the matter.

'I have noticed this absence of salesmanship and it is engaging the attention of a friend of mine a Mr Orpen who believes if we studied the techniques of selling we could find good markets in the U.S.A. for our art industries, woollens etc'.

1.67 James Henry Scullion, 1930

P234/246 1 December 1930

1p

Letter from James Henry Scullin, Prime Minister of Australia

To the Governor General, acknowledging the McNeill's hospitality and kindness during a recent visit to Ireland.

1.68 Sultan Mahommed Shah, Aga Khan III, 1930

P234/247 13 March 1930

4pp

Letter from Sultan Mahommed Shah, Aga Khan III

From the Villa Jane-Andrée, Le Cap d'Antibes, Antibes, France, to James McNeill, Governor-General, Vice Regal Lodge, Dublin, concerning Anglo-Indian relations and the power struggle within India.

'In many ways an Irishman from the Free State is qualified to judge Indian matters better than people from most European countries, though, of course, there is no similarity between our immense Continent with its three hundred million people and your country, except that religious zeal renders national unity more difficult than in other countries.

In Ireland the main political problem was to free her from British dominion which had lasted for several centuries. In India the problem with Britain is only secondary and a minor one, the main question being the internal divisions of which the Hindu-Moslem is the biggest and the most important but of which there are a great many others,

P234/247 each of which in difficulty can be compared to the problems of pre-War Austria. In the whole world no country has been so full of divisions and contradictions except Czarist Russia.

1.69 Charlotte F. Shaw, 1925-46

P234/248 1 May 1925

2pp

Letter from Charlotte F. Shaw

From 10 Adelphi Terrace, London, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London, concerning Josephine's proposed membership of the Albermarle. Reassures her that there is no prejudice against Irish members of the Club.

P234/249 6 November 1926

1 item

Postcard from Charlotte F. Shaw

From Ayot St Lawrence, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, to Josephine McNeill, 4 Courtfield Road, London, thanking her for her letter and congratulating her on arranging a recent unspecified meeting which she assures her was a great success.

P234/250 27 December 1931

1 item

Postcard from Charlotte F. Shaw

On board the Royal Mail Motorship 'Carnarvon Castle' en route to South Africa, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, sending the McNeills every possible good wish for 1932.

P234/251 11 October 1946

1p

Letter from [D. A. Boyd], National City Bank Limited, Dublin

Concerning the Charlotte F. Shaw Trust. They are in talks with the solicitors for the Trust as to how soon they can put the Trust into operation, and will write to her when they have definite news.

P234/252 29 October 1946

1p

Letter from [D. A. Boyd], National City Bank Limited, Dublin

Concerning C. F. Shaw, deceased. Thanks Mrs Mc Neill for her letter and informs her she will not have to make another application when the unspecified scheme goes into operation.

1.70 George Bernard Shaw, 1928-50

P234/253 27 July 1928

1p

Letter from George Bernard Shaw

From Hotel Beau Site, Cap d'Antibes, Alpes-Maritimes, France, to Josephine McNeill concerning the award of gold medals to Irish writers at Aonach Tailteann.

'Those Tailteann innocents do not know their job yet. Awards of gold medals are not made to people who have arrived safely at the top, but to aspirants who are still climbing. If this were not so the medals would go every year (or four years) to the patriarchs, and would be quite useless for the purpose they are intended to serve.

To avoid this the patriarchs are placed on a list of honour as *hors concours* and are thus made ineligible for the medals. The medal can then be given to (say) O'Casey for *the Plough and the Stars* without raising any question of its being better or worse than St Joan'.

P234/254 26 April 1944

1p

Postcard from George Bernard Shaw

From Ayot St Lawrence, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, to Josephine McNeill, 6 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, expressing his surprise that she has not yet remarried.

'What are our countrymen thinking of? If I were not so horribly old (88) and still regard myself as Charlotte's property, I should put in a claim myself'.

When I last saw Fitzwilliam Square every window in it was broken. No doubt it has now recovered its old distinction. I and my people lived at number one Hatch Street close by'.

P234/255 25 April 1946

1 item

Postcard from George Bernard Shaw

From Ayot St Lawrence, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, concerning the estate left by his wife, Charlotte, following her death in 1943.

'Charlotte's property is in the air at present. She left it subject to my life interest. I have released and renounced this life interest so that the bequest to Ireland may operate at once. But the legal process is not yet finished; and until it is, nobody but the lawyers can touch the money.

In any case I shall have no control over it. The executor is the National Bank of Ireland; and to it you must apply, making the best case you can for the I.C.A. (Irish Countrywomen's Association) as a cultural organisation. As a political or social one it has no claim. It must teach music or manners or fine art in some form.

I have given my own Irish property to the town of Carlow. To do it I had to have an enabling Act passed by the Dail. I am now penniless as far as Ireland is concerned'.

P234/256 13 August 1950

1p

Postcard from George Bernard Shaw

From Ayot Saint Lawrence, Welwyn, Hertfordshire, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, congratulating her on her new posting to Sweden and Norway.

'No need for any Catholic to rope me in. As a Red Communist I am a World Communist, like Saint Peter.

On the Woman Question I preach the Coupled Vote making the political unit not a man OR a woman, but a Man AND a Woman. This is necessary because women will not vote for women and therefore count for next to nothing in Parliament'.

1.71 Clare Consuelo Frewen Sheridan, 1947-55

P234/257 10 November 1947

2pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'I haven't seen Fr Paddy yet-I'm working so hard on stone and get so tired, I'm fit for nothing when I knock off but I will try and see him. I'll also write to the Oswald Birleys who are rich, and she adores Shamus

P234/257 Stephens – How one would love to help.
I did enjoy my few days in Dublin. How hospitable you all are. I was much touched by the kindness of everyone-I look forward to the Spring & to my exhibition. Until then-I am really unknown over here. "By their works shall ye judge them" '.

P234/258 29 April 1948

2pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, describing the difficulties and cost of moving her belongings to Galway.

'Sometimes I wish I were in a less windy wild spot, & that I could have a sheltered garden somewhere-But now I'm settled I must stick it until such time as I have not the strength to hold a mallet - & then I'll sell all I have & go to Italy to die in the sun!'

P234/259 3 May 1948

1p

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, discussing arrangements for her forthcoming exhibition in Dublin.

P234/260 cMay 1948

1p

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill.

'Would you have a hospitable fireside on Monday next 15th by the side of which I could huddle on my way to London?'

P234/261 8 May 1948

3pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin referring to an invitation card she has received from Áras an Uachtaráin which she has had to have translated. Asks Josephine McNeill's opinion on whether she should attend the party

P234/261 or not.
I don't know them & never met them & wonder why they've asked me.
... If you say "come" & that there's a bed & a friend to accompany me
(the friend not necessarily in the bed), I'll come'.

P234/262 18 November 1948

2pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, informing her that she will be visiting Dublin shortly to have some small works plaster moulded, and would like to stay at the Club.

I've forgotten the name of the good unfriendly secretary, perhaps you could approach her for me!

P234/263 28 December 1948

3pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From 32a Queen's Grove, London, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, informing her of her new arrival date in Dublin and arranging to attend Mass and have lunch together.

P234/264 20 March 1949

2pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From M'Cid Oasis de Biskra, Algeria, North Africa, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, recounting her current visit to her former home in Algeria which she is preparing to sell. She praises her Arab servant who has faithfully looked after all her possessions for the past 12 years; contemplates the difficulty of selling the house, but remarks that she has had one offer from a French woman in Algiers who would pay for the house in diamonds. Her 27 year old niece, recently widowed with two small children, is currently staying at her home at the Spanish Arch, Galway.

P234/265 1 August 1949

4pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From Blair Drummond, Stirling, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

'You will probably not be surprised to hear that in the end, I ran away from the Spanish gate house!! The Miss Fudge you witnessed stayed three weeks-I stuck it out *tant bien que mal* ... I've made up my mind to try & arrange to live in Italy: Ireland being now a foreign country it has no advantages. For instance I've had a hellish time trying to get 3 small plaster casts through the customs in London for metal casting-& envisage the same hell on the irish side when they are returned to me in aluminium. So it is clear one can't live in Ireland and do business in England & there's no money to be earned in Ireland so by astute reasoning I tell myself that if I am to live in a foreign country with all the botherations that go with it, why Ireland? Why not Italy?'

P234/266 14 November 1949

4pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From the Spanish Arch, Galway, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin.

I've just read the announcement in the *Daily Tel*. My dear I am delighted and filled with admiration. It used to be a dream of my jeunesse (before I discovered I was a sculptor) to be a female Ambassador! ... If (as I plan some time) I go to stay at Rotterdam with the Brit. Consul Darrell Wilson whose Belgian wife is a great friend of mine may I come on and stay with you at the Hague? ... Every time the Sheridan caravan starts trekking I declare it is the last time-but now I'm growing old & must settle finally somewhere. It must be in the sun & it must have a garden ... Here I am working so hard and earning nothing. If it is my fate to earn nothing, I'd rather do it in the sun than in the rain.'

P234/267 3 May 1955

2pp

Letter from Clare Sheridan

From Biskra, Algeria, North Africa, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, Stockholm, congratulating her on her appointment as Minister to Norway and Sweden.

I've by this post written to King Gustav of Sweden who is a very dear friend of mine, dating back to my girlhood days, when Princess Margaret of Connaught became his wife. ... I carve while I am here, & do good work. Lovely marbels are available & wood. But this year as

P234/267 perhaps you have read in the papers there is trouble & very near to us. So reminiscent of Ireland in the old days’.

1.72 Osbert Sitwell, 1931

P234/268 25 May 1931

2pp

Letter from Osbert Sitwell

From Castle of Montegufoni, Montagnana, Val di Pesa, Florence, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, regretfully declining her invitation to stay, due to family commitments.

‘The weather here has been odious, and to add horror to discomfort, there was an earthquake last night at about eleven. The whole of the old house rocked for several seconds and doors slammed and china rattled in the most alarming way’.

P234/269 23 June 1931

2pp

Letter from Osbert Sitwell

From 2 Carlyle Square, Chelsea, London, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality during a recent visit.

1.73 Wickham Steed, 1925

P234/270 25 January 1925

1p

Letter from Wickham Steed

From Lansdowne House, Holland Park, London, accepting Josephine McNeill’s invitation to lunch at the Carlton the following Wednesday to meet the Boundary Commissioner [Eoin MacNeill?].

1.74 Alice Stopford Green, 1925–28

P234/271 24 March 1925

1p

Letter from Alice Stopford Green

From 90 St Stephen's Green, Dublin, to James McNeill, mainly concerning her nephew Robert Stopford, whom McNeill has invited to an official dinner. Also expresses hope that he has read her history [*The History of the Irish State to 1014*].

'One of its main uses will be to make the common and uneducated people understand the extraordinary quality of your brother's work'.

P234/272 31 January 1926

2pp

Letter from Alice Stopford Green

From 90 St Stephen's Green, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, recommending a Miss Taaffe as a dependable employee for the McNeills in London.

P234/273 16 September 1926

2pp

Letter from Alice Stopford Green

From 90 St Stephen's Green, Dublin, to James McNeill, High Commissioner at London, mainly concerning the Director of the National Library, Dr Richard Irvine Best, 'a man so gifted and trained, that anyone who goes to him will get information which will be worthy of Ireland and of the utmost use to any collector of books ... What has happened the great news you told us regarding the Lane pictures? Has it leaked out?'

P234/274 21 February 1928

2pp

Letter from Alice Stopford Green

From 90 St Stephen's Green Dublin, to James McNeill, congratulating him on his appointment as Governor-General.

'It is you who bring hope & confidence to us all. And by what toilsome ways you have won that power! May you long know of all our trust and admiration and sympathy'.

1.75 Marie-Anne Tellegen, 1953–54

P234/275 3 March 1954

1 item

Drawing of Marie Anne Tellegen

Black and white photograph of a pencil drawing of Marie Anne Tellegen by [Bruyn?] in 1950. A dedication reads: '*Marie Anne. De tout ce je vois que faut-il que je pense? 3 March 1954*'.

© A. Frequin, Den Haag.

P234/276 28 March 1953

11pp

Text of a lecture by Marie Anne Tellegen

Published text of a lecture given by Marie Anne Tellegen at the University of Amsterdam.

1.76 Judy van Wijnbergen, 1967

P234/277 17 November 1967

3 items

Notes from Judy van Wijnbergen

Two notes from the widow of Baron Sweder van Wijnbergen, to Josephine McNeill, 29 Leeson Park Avenue, Dublin, concerning the danger to the church in Holland.

'Bishops much too weak-accept all & are very modernistic themselves. Even dear Mgr. Zwarlkreis shows no energy in Orthodox reaction against the storm of demonic aggression against faith'.

Memoriam card issued on the death of Dr Sweder Ferdinandus Antonius Canisius Maria Baron van Wijnbergen (1897–1967)

1.77 Lubbers Westphalen, 1931

P234/278 15 August 1931

1p

Letter from Lubbers Westphalen

From Berlin, to James McNeill, thanking the McNeills for their hospitality at the Vice-Regal Lodge [during the Dublin Horse Show].

P234/278 Note on verso states that the author was previously Master of Horse to Kaiser Wilhelm.

1.78 Lord Wigram, 1936

P234/279 January 1936

3pp

Death of King George V

Copy letter from James McNeill, Woodley Park, Dundrum, County Dublin, to Lord Wigram, Private Secretary to King George V, on the occasion of the King's death, conveying his sympathies; and telegram in response from Queen Mary, Buckingham Palace.

'I have hesitated about intruding on the Queen's grief, but I thought that as I had the great honour of being King George's representative and the further great honour of experiencing Her Majesty's gracious personal kindness, I ought to offer my respectful and heartfelt sympathy to the Queen in her irreparable loss'.

1.79 George Yeats, 1937-51

P234/280 22 November 1937

2pp

Letter from George Yeats

From Riversdale, Willbrook, Rathfarnham, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Woodley Park, Dundrum, County Dublin.

'You delightfully said in a letter that we might make our visits to you once every 2 or 3 weeks. Now I take advantage of that to ask you if you know-and like-quite a different thing! Any of the Germans. WB is most passionately interested in the Nazi schemes & is trying to meet anyone who can tell him what they are really doing'.

P234/281 4 February 1939

1p

Letter from George Yeats

From Riversdale, Willbrook, Rathfarnham, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Woodley Park, Dundrum, County Dublin, referring to the death of her husband.

'Yes, his letter to you was the last he ever wrote. We had only heard the news of your loss a few days before. The last two months have been very strange; he foresaw his death and yet did not I think really

P234/281 believe it was to come so soon’.

P234/282 4 February 1939

1p

Letter from George Yeats

Typewritten copy by Josephine McNeill of George Yeats’ letter to her confirming that the letter she had received from W. B. Yeats was the last he wrote before his death.

P234/283 10 November 1951

2pp

Letter from George Yeats

From 46 Palmerstown Road, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Irish Legation, The Hague, concerning the forthcoming celebration of W. B. Yeats’s poetry organised by Josephine McNeill and A. Roland Holst, and referring to the reinterment of W. B. Yeats remains in County Sligo in 1948.

“WBY arrived in Sligo on September 17, 1948. [The Corvette docked in Galway on Monday Sept. 16 but those details are non-essential]. I hope some one will eventually write a description of the journey from Galway to Sligo which should be recorded. Perhaps some child who was among the many children on the way will do it better than any one who knew WBY. I hoped Tom MCGreevy might write it, but I doubt if he will.

That it was Sean MacBride who arranged for the Corvette, that the Corvette was the “Macha”, all seemed so perfect. However all that is my own feeling & irrelevant to your theme’.

1.80 W. B. Yeats, 1930–39

P234/284 27 December 1930

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From 42 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, accepting her invitation to him and his wife to visit

‘Forgive my delay but the house has been in a turmoil with Xmas. It seemed out of the spirit of the time to sit down with envelope & paper—so many long streamers of a different kind of paper & of many colours littered everywhere by my children & their friends. The wreckage has just been cleared away and sobriety returns’.

P234/285 31 August 1931

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From Coole Park, Gort, County Galway, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking her for sending him some photographs.

'I have given Lady Gregory hers and she bids me thank you. I am delighted with myself as Gullivar – are there two 'I's – I look so [hurt?] and condescending'.

P234/286 27 April 1932

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From 42 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, regretfully declining an invitation. He is expected at Coole Park and does not want to disappoint Lady Gregory.

P234/287 6 June 1932

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From 42 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, to James McNeill, Governor-General, referring to Lady Gregory's death which has affected him deeply.

'I have indeed lost my conscience and my strength. She was indomitable to the end, forgetting no duty or habitual occupation unto the day she died. ... The great house, so full of tradition, has died also, the heirlooms & pictures are being moved to a house in Kildare'.

P234/288 Not dated

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From Orchard Hotel, Portman Street, Marble Arch, London, accepting Josephine McNeill's invitation to lunch 'with great pleasure'.

P234/289 24 January 1939

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

From the Hotel Idéal-Séjour, Cap-Martin, France, to Josephine McNeill, reputedly the last letter he wrote before his death.

'I was distressed to hear a few days ago of your husband's death. I get no Irish newspapers. What can I say except that he was a wise and charming man who did his country considerable service and that I mourn the loss of a friend'.

P234/290 1939

1p

Letter from W.B. Yeats

Typewritten copy [by Josephine McNeill] of Yeats's letter to her of 24 January 1939 with the heading 'Copy of letter from W. B. Yeats written four days before his death and very probably his last letter'.

P234/291 c1908

1 item

Portrait of W.B. Yeats

Lithographic reproduction by Emery Walker of a painting of a young W. B. Yeats by the British artist, Charles Shannon.

P234/292 18 January 1931

2 items

'At Home' cards

'At Home' cards autographed by W. B. Yeats, for a programme of entertainment at the Vice Regal Lodge, to include performances by the Abbey Theatre School of Ballet; a group of songs performed by Joseph O'Neill; a production of *The Hawk's Well* by W. B. Yeats; and a performance of Chopin's *Les Sylphides*.

P234/293 8 December 1932

4pp

Printed copy of *Leda and the Swan* by W. B. Yeats

Sent to Josephine McNeill by Oliver St John Gogarty. Message reads:

P234/293 'To Mrs McNeill. With regards from Oliver StJ. Gogarty. 8 XII 1932'.

P234/294 13 June 1935

16pp

William Butler Yeats Aetat. 70

Offprint from *The Irish Times* of a feature of this title. Contains articles on the life and works of W. B. Yeats by various writers and journalists. Autographed by Jack B. Yeats on the front cover.

P234/295 January 1952

1 item

Greetings card

Card featuring an illustration inspired by lines from 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' and 'When you are old' by W. B. Yeats. Handwritten message from an unknown sender reads 'In remembrance of the Yeats celebration [at The Hague]and with best wishes for 1952'.

1.81 Other and unidentified correspondents, 1925-31

P234/296 13 October 1928

3pp

Letter from Government House, Hillsborough, Northern Ireland

Letter from Mary [?], Government House, Hillsborough, Northern Ireland, thanking the McNeills for providing them with a chauffeur to take them to their train from Portumna.

'We had a most comfortable journey and very much enjoyed the opportunity of going to Portumna by one route and returning by another'.

P234/297 5 May 1929

4pp

Letter from the Mother Superior, Presentation Convent, Youghal

To Josephine McNeill, thanking her for visiting the convent that day. In Irish.

P234/298 6 January 1930

2pp

Letter from P. [Hogan?]

From 13 Anglesea Road, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge.

'I was unable to get up to the Lodge on Monday. I am getting married tomorrow. I hope to see you when I get back in about three weeks'.

P234/299 28 November 1930

3pp

Letter from [A.L.?]

From Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, mainly concerning [Aldous Huxley].

'Also when you say that sex for the first time in England has become an intellectual craze. I think the whole of your letter is amazingly to the point and I must agree with you against my own self. I had not seen him fumbling in the dark the way you did, but I feel certain now that you are right'.

P234/300 4 February 1931

2pp

Letter from [A.L.?]

From Dublin, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, principally concerning Aldous Huxley. In French.

'Mais il est evident qu'il cherche au contraire à aguicher le gros public'.

P234/301 8 June 1931

2pp

Letter from Richard, Archbishop of Liverpool

From 1 Spanish Place, Manchester Square, to Josephine McNeill, Vice Regal Lodge, thanking the McNeills for hospitality shown to him during his recent visit to the Vice-Regal Lodge.

P234/302 7 October 1931

3pp

Typescript unsigned letter from the Estate Office, Kendall's Estate, Herts.

On Kendall's Estate headed paper but from the Carlton Hotel, London, referring to the forthcoming general election in Great Britain and the state of the country economically and politically. Comments particularly on the campaign by Ramsay MacDonald for re-election.

'It really is a fight between classes ... or rather between property and poverty. With a few rich on the side of poverty. I'm blessed if I know what is going to happen. The intellectuals Keynes, Laski etc. are working for Labour. I have been told 4 times that Bernard Shaw has senile decay because he praises Russia. I am lunching with him on Sat. and can judge. It doesn't sound likely. The waiters here are Socialist. The lift men Tory. The unemployed came round the other day and asked for food and a "carriage attendant" got a black eye'.

P234/303 23 December 1931

1p

Letter from the Master of the Household

From Sandringham, Norfolk, to the Secretary of the Governor General's Household, conveying to the Governor General His Majesty's best thanks for the woodcock pie.

P234/304 Not dated

2pp; 6 photographs

Letter from Victor, a nephew of Josephine McNeill

From Marycourt, Englefield Green, Surrey, to Josephine McNeill, Vice regal Lodge, with personal news and enclosing photographs taken at the Vice-Regal Lodge

Six black and white photographs taken on the steps and grounds of the Vice-Regal Lodge, Phoenix Park, Dublin, showing James and Josephine McNeill and unidentified guests.

P234/305 7 July 1942

1p

Letter from the Irish Red Cross Society

Letter from Hilda Nic [?], Honorary Secretary, Gifts Sale Committee of the Irish Red Cross Society, to Josephine McNeill, 3 Fitzwilliam Square, Dublin, informing her that her book *Hugh Lane and his*

P234/305 *Pictures* was sold at the Red Cross auction and then re-sold privately, with funds from both transactions going to the Irish Red Cross.

2 OTHER MATERIAL

2.1 Certificates, 1920–60

P234/306 29 July 1920

1 item

Certificate of Registration

Certificate issued by the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland certifying that Josephine Ahern was admitted to the register of intermediate school teachers in Ireland.

P234/307 May 1960

1 item

Cumann Hibernia honorary membership certificate

Certificate issued by Cumann Hibernia, accepting Josephine McNeill as an honorary member of the Fribourg [Switzerland] branch of the Society. Signed by Breandán MacMathúna, president and Nodlaig Ó Dubhshláine, secretary.

2.2 Published material, 1931–50

P234/308 c1931–50

12 items

Press cuttings

Press cuttings of reports and photographs featuring Josephine McNeill at various stages in her public life. Main articles concern her appointment as Ireland's first woman ambassador on taking up office at The Hague in November 1949.

P234/309 December 1932

63pp

***Finnsgéalta ó India* by Josephine McNeill**

Containing her published translations of Indian folktales. Dedication on title page reads: 'Do Shéamus le grádh ó n-a Aintín Seosaimhín bean Mhic Néill. Mí Nodlag 1932'.

2.3 Addresses/speeches, 1929-64

P234/310 17 March [1920s/30s]

2pp

Addresses to meetings of NUI graduate

Two addresses delivered by Josephine McNeill to graduates of the National University of Ireland at two St Patrick's Day celebrations: introducing Augustine Birrell, former Chief Secretary for Ireland to propose the toast of Ireland; and responding to a vote of thanks proposed by Dr E.J. Coyne.

P234/311 1964

15pp

Address to women graduates

Transcript text of an address delivered by Josephine McNeill to members of the Irish Federation, members of Dublin Women Graduate's Association and members of the Dublin Branch of the NUI. Discusses the forthcoming marriage of Princess Irene of the Netherlands and Prince Charles-Hugo Bourbon-Parme which caused a constitutional crisis in the Netherlands.

2.4 Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations, 1949

P234/312 27 January 1949

2pp

Minutes of the first meeting of the Cultural Relations Committee

Minutes of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee on Cultural Relations at the Department of External Affairs. Josephine McNeill listed as present.

3 JAMES MCNEILL

3.1 Political Interests, 1917-21

P234/313 7-24 April 1917

8pp

Trial and imprisonment of Eoin MacNeill

Correspondence from the Press Censor's Office, 85 Grafton Street Dublin, refusing James McNeill permission to publish his letter to the Right Honorable Henry Edward Duke, Chief Secretary for Ireland.

Includes a copy of the letter sent by James McNeill to Duke, on the subject of the imprisonment of his brother John [Eoin] McNeill. Contains excerpts from the charge sheet outlining the offences allegedly committed by John McNeill. Also contains a lengthy argument by James McNeill on the illegality of his brother's trial and imprisonment. Asks Duke to retract his statement recently made in the House of Commons in which he stated that John McNeill was one of the body who published the proclamation and that he took part in the armed rebellion. James McNeill claims that none of the charges brought against his brother actually related to participation in the rebellion, rather to activities and events undertaken in the period before the rebellion.

P234/314 post 1919

3pp

State Bank of Ireland

Memorandum entitled 'Proposal for a State Bank of Ireland', outlining regulations for the constitution of a State Bank of Ireland, constituted from the National Land Bank founded in 1919.

P234/315 1921

23pp

***The Case for the Treaty* by Alfred O'Rahilly.**

James McNeill's copy of the pamphlet.

3.2 Governor-General of the Irish Free State, 1928–32

P234/316 5 March 1928

1p

Petition to house the Blessed Sacrament at the Vice Regal Lodge

Petition made on behalf of James McNeill that the privilege of a private oratory be granted to him at the Vice Regal Lodge, following his nomination to the post of Governor General of the Irish Free State. The permission to house the Blessed Sacrament at the Lodge is granted by Pope Pius XI on 5 March 1928 for the duration of McNeill's term of office. The permission is signed by Cardinal M[ichele] Lega, Prefect of the Congregation of the Discipline of the Sacraments. In Latin.

P234/317 20 April 1928

1 item

Hand-coloured ceremonial certificate

awarded to James McNeill by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, on the occasion of his appointment as Governor-General of the Irish Free State.

P234/318 1932

22pp

Correspondence between the Governor General and the Executive Council

File containing correspondence concerning the diplomatic incident by which James McNeill felt the role of the Governor-General was slighted by the Irish government, particularly by Ministers Seán T. O'Kelly and Frank Aiken.

Includes:

- Copy letter from McNeill to Éamon de Valera, President of the Executive Council of the Irish Free State, drawing his attention to a statement in *The Irish Press* where it was reported that on the arrival of McNeill to a reception hosted by the Minister of the French Republic, Ministers Sean T. O'Kelly and Frank Aiken walked out apparently as a form of protest at his presence. Claims that as *The Irish Press* is under the control of de Valera, that it must be 'a considered policy that the Governor General should be treated with deliberate discourtesy' by members of the Executive Council and the newspaper he controls (26 April 1932).

P234/318

- Letter from Éamon de Valera, Department of the President, to James McNeill, denying that there is a considered policy that the Governor General should be treated with deliberate discourtesy by members of the Executive Council or by *The Irish Press*. States that the Governor-General should communicate public social engagements to the Executive Council so that similar incidents do not occur (30 April 1932). Copy provided with the original letter marked 'Personal. Not to be published'.
- Copy letter from McNeill to de Valera, demanding an apology from de Valera and Ministers O'Kelly and Aiken, 'not merely on my personal or official account, but with regard to the honour and self-respect of Irish public life' (2 May 1932).
- Letter from de Valera to McNeill reiterating his view that the whole affair was 'unfortunate and regrettable and one that should not have been permitted to occur. Further than this I am unable to go' (7 May 1932).
- Copy letter from McNeill to de Valera, concerning the arrangements for the Eucharistic Congress. Refers to de Valera's message conveyed by Joseph Walshe, Secretary, Department of External Affairs, that it would cause the Government great embarrassment if McNeill as Governor-General invited a number of distinguished European Catholics to stay with him at the Vice Regal Lodge.
- 'I feel that the embarrassment, if it should arise, would not be sufficient to justify me in failing to make the contribution to the Congress which I had already arranged' (24 May 1932).
- Copy of a letter from Sir Clive Wigram, personal secretary to King George V, Buckingham Palace, to James McNeill, thanking him for keeping him updated on events at the Eucharistic Congress. Refers to diplomatic protocols which had to be observed during the visit by the Cardinal Legate to the Vice-Regal Lodge and states that McNeill 'did everything possible to maintain the dignity of the Governor General in exceptionally difficult circumstances'. Reassures him that the letter will not be circulated to Downing Street (5 July 1932).
- Copy letter from James McNeill, to de Valera, outlining the deteriorating relationship between the Governor-General and the Government since the protest staged by Ministers O'Kelly and Aiken at the French Legation the previous April. Refers to the exclusion by de Valera of the presence of the Governor-General at a civic reception for the Cardinal Legate during the Eucharistic Congress.

'I never sought any public office. I am willing to return to private life when my acceptance of public duty is displeasing to a majority either of the Dáil or of the people. But I do not think I am a suitable target for ill-conditioned bad manners. I know that you have a majority in the Dáil. I know that you can have me removed'. Adds that he intends to publish the correspondence unless he receives an apology for discourtesy shown towards his office (7 July 1932).
- Copy of a letter from de Valera to McNeill, expressing his surprise that McNeill wishes to publish correspondence which he would consider to be confidential State documents. Formally requests McNeill to refrain from publishing the letters in question (8 July 1932).

- P234/318**
- Copy letter from McNeill to de Valera, objecting to ‘unjustifiable and offensive’ acts by de Valera and the Executive Council. Reiterates his position that he will publish the correspondence in defiance of de Valera’s previous order (9 July 1932).
 - Copy letter from McNeill to Sir Clive Wigram, private secretary to King George V, enclosing recent copy correspondence between McNeill and de Valera, and explaining the course of action he has taken. ‘I feel sure that anything but a direct challenge would encourage those who regarded any Governor General as objectionable and would discourage all those who accepted the Governor General as the King’s representative. My resignation might save me trouble but would not, I deferentially submit, be the more honourable way to serve the King’ (9 July 1932).

P234/319 11 July 1932

1p

Letter from John S Steele

From the London correspondent of the *Chicago Tribune*, to James McNeill, commending him on the publication of correspondence between the Governor General and the President of the Executive Council in the English newspapers. ‘It is about time the proletarian mentality was dealt with by someone’.

P234/320 28 [December] 1932

1p

Letter from William T. Cosgrave

From Leinster House, to James McNeill on the eve of his departure from the Governor-Generalship of Ireland. Thanks him, ‘on behalf of my colleagues in the late administration as well as myself’, for the service both he and Josephine have rendered since taking up office in 1928.

P234/321 1929–32

39 items

Press cuttings

Press cuttings relating to James McNeill’s tenure as Governor-General, concentrating mainly on his resignation from office in 1932.