

## ***The Margaret Kennedy Collection***

**Margaret Kennedy** (1896-1967) read History at Somerville from 1915-9. She was extremely well known in the twenties and thirties for her novels, the most famous of which is her second, *The Constant Nymph* (1924). This book brought her instant recognition, and was reprinted in several editions in Britain and America.

Adapted for the stage by Kennedy in collaboration with Basil Dean, it was successfully produced in London and New York, with Noel Coward and later John Gielgud playing the part of Lewis Dodd; four film versions also appeared.

In all, she wrote fifteen novels and three plays over a period of more than forty years. *Troy Chimneys* (1952) won the coveted James Tait Black Memorial Prize, whilst *The Feast* (1950) and *Lucy Carmichael* (1951) were selected as Literary Guild and Book Society choices. She also published some non-fiction work including a consideration of the medium of film in *The Mechanised Muse* (1942).

Her books were remarkable for being both tremendously popular and well regarded by literary society, as witnessed by some of the letters in the collection from fellow authors, including Thomas Hardy (via his wife), Dodie Smith, C S Lewis, AE Housman and many others.

The papers of Margaret Kennedy were gifted to the college by her family in 2012 with additional papers deposited in 2017. With their support, they have been fully catalogued and now form an important archive of her work as a highly influential writer, and her life as a wife and mother during the darkest years of the twentieth century.

A more detailed catalogue is available on request; please email [archives@some.ox.ac.uk](mailto:archives@some.ox.ac.uk) if you would like to see it.

### **Box number:**

- 1      Personal Papers & Photographs.  
*Including certificates, family histories, notebooks, scrapbooks, obituaries of MK & letters of condolence, and photographs (see also Scans 2\Margaret Kennedy Portraits).*
- 2      Letters to MK from various VIPs.
- 3      Juvenilia.  
*Including notebooks, exercise books and typescripts.*

4. Journals.  
*Including 'Journal to Lin' 1937-9 and the American Journal, 1947.*
5. Professional Correspondence.  
*Concerning talks, literary topics, plays, the Society of Authors, to newspapers, and with some examples of fan mail.*
6. Articles and Talks.
7. Typescripts I.  
*Mostly short stories.*
8. Typescripts II  
*Including the plays How Happy With Either and Deep River.*
9. Reviews 1926-33.
10. Reviews 1933-66.
11. American Reviews 1925-64.
12. Julian Street Papers 1939-47.  
*Correspondence with an American gentleman of letters and epicure, who became a close family friend.*
13. Letters from MK to her husband David Davies (DD), 1925-31.
14. MK-DD, 1939-July 1940.
15. MK-DD, Aug – Dec 1940.
16. MK-DD, 1941.
17. MK-DD, 1942-57.
18. DD-MK, 1925-39.
19. DD-MK, Jan-July 1940.
20. DD-MK, Aug-Dec 1940.
21. DD-MK, 1941.
22. DD-MK, 1942.
23. DD-MK, 1943.

24. DD-MK, 1944-5.
25. DD-MK, 1947-57, plus fragments.

**Margaret Kennedy Add. Mss.**

- 27 Postcard albums c.1950-1956
- 28 Juvenilia, notebooks and diaries, letters, 1912-1953  
Including *Little Lord Fauntleroy* and *The Voyage of the Maeldune*
- 29 Miscellaneous papers, including letters from Oxford, family correspondence, c. 1914-1990s
- 30 Material for biography of MK by Sarah Frankland
- 31 Papers relating to biography by Sarah Frankland including correspondence, obituaries, poetry, 1917-1989
- 32 Editions of MK's books
- 33-34 Contracts, 1925-1995
- 35-37 Albums – photographs and ephemera, 1896-1950