University of Sheffield Library. Special Collections and Archives

Ref: MS 296

Title: Madeleine Blaess Documents

Scope: Documents relating to the early life and career of Madeleine Blaess, Lecturer and later Senior Lecturer in the Department of French at the University of Sheffield

Dates: 1845-1989
Level: Fonds
Extent: 8 boxes
Name of creator: Madeleine Blaess

Administrative / biographical history:
The collection consists of diaries, personal papers and memorabilia from Madeleine Blaess’s school career in York, through her university days at Leeds to her academic career in the Department of French at the University of Sheffield. Notably, it also includes a journal written during Madeleine Blaess’s years in Paris during the German Occupation.

Madeleine Blaess (1918-2003) was born in York to French parents on 19th June 1918. She attended The Bar Convent Secondary School, and went to Leeds University to study French in 1936. She graduated with a First Class Honours degree in 1939, and was awarded both the Ruston Scholarship and a University Research Scholarship. In October 1939, Madeleine Blaess enrolled at the University of Paris and at the École des Hautes Études. In January 1940, she (in her own words on the University of Leeds Alumni website) “missed the last boat home”. She remained in Paris until January 1945, obtaining the Licence-ès-Lettres in January 1944. From January to June 1941, she was lectrice in the English department of the University of Paris, and taught English part-time at the McGregor School of Languages on the Boulevard Montmartre. From June 1941 to December 1944, she worked at the Centre de Documentation de la Bibliothèque Nationale. Between February 1945 and June 1948, Madeleine Blaess was a lecturer for the Ministry of Information, carried out research at the Sorbonne and acted as tutor in the British Institute Correspondence Course for the Licence-ès-Lettres. In October 1948, she was appointed lecturer in the Department of French at the University of Sheffield, where she remained until her retirement in 1983, having concentrated her research and teaching on medieval French literature. Madeleine Blaess died in 2003.

Related collections: French Wartime Newspapers
Source: By bequest in July 2003
System of arrangement: Chronological

Subjects: France – History – German occupation, 1940-1945
Names: Blaess, Madeleine M.F.; University of Sheffield – Department of French

Conditions of access: Academic researchers by appointment
Restrictions: None
Copyright: University of Sheffield Library

Finding aids: Listed
Itemised list

296/1 School career, 1932-1936

/1  *Nature Note Book*, marked M. Blaess, Form V. Covers September 1932 to June 1933, and includes diagrams, class notes and some loose pages. Ms., 50 pages, 20 x 16 cm.


296/2  Student career at the University of Leeds, 1936-1939

/1 Letter from Caroline Stanley, former teacher at the Bar Convent, to Madeleine Blaess 3 Jan 1937. Ms., 2 l.

/2 Letter from M. Magdalen, of the Bar Convent, to Mrs. Blaess, Madeleine Blaess’s mother, 7 Mar 1937. Ms., 1 l.

/3 The Tyke, University of Leeds Union Rag Magazine, May 1937. Printed.

/4 University of Leeds, Degree Examinations Pass List, June 1937. Printed.

/5 Letter from M. Constance Caldwell, German lecturer at the University of Leeds, to Madeleine Blaess, advising her on her choice of subjects, 21 Mar 1938. Ms., 1 l.

With envelope


/7-13 Letters to Madeleine Blaess from her mother during Madeleine’s visit to Paris, April-September 1938. In French. Ms. Nos. 7-11 have 2 l. each; 12-13 have 3 l. each.

No. 8 includes a newspaper cutting about the death of the 9th Duke of Devonshire, Chancellor of the University of Leeds. No. 11 includes some pressed flowers.

/14 Invitation and two tickets for the ceremony of naming a new L.N.E.R. locomotive “St. Peter’s School, York, A.D. 627” at York Station on 3rd April 1939. Invitation addressed to ‘The Misses Groves’. Printed and Ms., 3 cards, 1 at 11 x 15.5 cm., 2 at 7.5 x 11 cm.

With envelope addressed to Miss Madeleine Blaess


/16 Corrected typescript, possibly of Madeleine Blaess’s undergraduate dissertation. In French. Includes:
‘Introduction’ [second copy], Ts., 29 l.
‘Chapitre II: Hostilité du Clergé’, Ts. and Ms., 11 l.
‘Chap IV: Le Clergé après 1919’, Ts. & Ms., 7 l.
‘Bergson’, Ts, 3 l.
‘La pensée politique de M, Bergson’, Ts., 2 l.
‘Conclusion’, Ts., 1 l. [2 copies]
Instructions on producing undergraduate dissertations in French from the University of Leeds. In English Ts., 3 l.


/18 Letter from Joan E. Groves to Madeleine Blaess 5 Jun 1939. Ms., 1 l.

/19 Receipt from the University of Leeds for £3 admitting Miss M.M.F. Blaess to the B.A. Hons. French Examination held in June 1939. Printed.

/20 University of Leeds, Congregation of the University for the Conferment of Degrees, Monday 3rd July 1939. Includes ‘Madeleine Marie Félicie Blaess’ under ‘Degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours (B.A.), French: First Class’ on page 5. Printed.

/21 Letter from Frances Catchside to Madeleine Blaess, congratulating her on her graduation 10 Jul 1939. Ms., 1 l.

/22 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Ivor Arnold, Professor of French at the University of Leeds, recommending her for a French Bourse to carry out advanced research in France, 29 Jun 1939. Ms., 1 l.

/23 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Dr. Charles E. Gough, Professor of German Language and Literature at the University of Leeds, certifying that she passed examinations in German in her first and second years, 29 Jun 1939. Ms., 1 l.

/24 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Walter Moule, Clerk to the Senate of the University of Leeds, informing her that she had been awarded a Rutson Scholarship of £50 for the session 1939-40, 1 Jul 1939. Ts., 1 l.

With envelope

/25 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from B. Mouat Jones, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds, informing her that she was ineligible for a French Bourse because of her ‘foreign nationality’, 7 Jul 1939. Ts., 1 l.

With newspaper cutting concerning awards of scholarships by York Education Committee

/26 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Walter Moule, Clerk to the Senate of the University of Leeds, informing her that she had been awarded a scholarship of a further £25 for the session 1939-40, 11 Oct 1939. Ts., 1 l.

With cheque stub

/27 Letter to Madeleine Blaess from George H. Gray, Secretary for Education, City of York, requesting information in relation to her application for a grant for research work in Paris, 7 Jul 1939. Ts., 1 l.
Receipt for letter to George H. Gray, as above, 11 Jul 1939. Printed and typescript, 1 card. 8.5 x 11.5 cm.

Letter to Madeleine Blaess from George H. Gray, as above, informing her that she had been awarded a grant of £25 and a loan of £25, 6 Oct 1939. Ts., 1 l.  

*With cheque stub*

Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Ivor Arnold, Professor of French at the University of Leeds, advising her on material for her research, 2 Aug [1939]. Ms., 1 l.

Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Ivor Arnold, as above, advising her on applying for funds for her stay in France, [September? 1939]. Ms., 1 l.

Letter to Madeleine Blaess from Ivor Arnold, as above, advising her on whether or not to go to France. [25 Sep 1939]. Ms., 1 l.  

*With envelope*

296/3 Paris, 1939-1945

/1-40 Letters from Madeleine Blaess to her parents during the first part of Madeleine’s stay in Paris, Oct 1939-Jun 1940. In French. Ms. No. 1 is postcard, 8.5 x 13.5 cm; Nos. 2, 3, 5, 19, 20, 27, 29 have 1 l. each; no. 14 has 3 l.; the remainder have 2 l. each.

/41 Letter from Madeleine Blaess to ‘Auntie Margaret’, from Paris, 10 Jan 1940. Ms., 1 l.

/42 Journal of Madeleine Blaess, written in Paris in the form of letters to her parents, from October 1940 to September 1944. In French. Ms., 105 pages., 22.5 x 17 cm.

Includes pressed leaf

/43-50 Letters to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from the War Organisation of the British Red Cross and Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Foreign Relations Department, giving details of the “Red Cross Postal Message Scheme” and providing information on the wellbeing of Madeleine Blaess, Jun 1940-Jul 1941. Ts, 1 L. each. No. 47 is receipt for 6s. for the cost of a cable, dated 31 Jan 1941.

/51 Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s parents from Yolande Blot (Madeleine’s cousin) in France, asking whether or not Madeleine had returned to England and telling of her own evacuation to Brittany with the Ministère de l’Information, 15 Jun 1940. In French. Ms., 4 l.

With envelope, showing that it was opened en route, and marked as received on 13 Aug 1940

/52-56 Letters to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from Dorothy Clarke, an Australian friend of Madeleine’s, who left Paris in June 1940, telling of Madeleine’s plans to return to England and giving news from other friends in Paris, Jul 1940-Jun 1941. In French. Ms. Nos. 52 and 53 have 3 l. each; no. 54-56 have 2 l each.

/57 Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s father from Ivor Arnold, Professor of French at the University of Leeds, asking for news of Madeleine, 11 Jun 1940. Ms., 1 l.

/58-62 Letters to Madeleine Blaess’s parents from Jean Inebnit, Professor at the University of Leeds, asking for and giving news of Madeleine, Oct 1940-Aug 1942. In French. Ms., 1 l. each.


/64 Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s father from the BBC Publications Relations Division, in response to an enquiry about tracing Madeleine in France, 1 Jul 1940. In French. Ts., 1 l.
Letters to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from E.P. Bingham whose sister had also remained in Paris, Jul and Sep 1940. Ms., 1 l. each.

Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from Mother Aquinas, St. Mary’s Convent, Egton Bridge, 21 Sep 1940. Ms., 1 l.

With envelope

Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from Mother de Sales, the Bar Convent, York, 22 Sep 1940. Ms., 1 l.

Letter to Madeleine Blaess’s mother from Sister M. Michael, St. Mary’s Convent, York, 22 Sep 1940. Ms., 1 l.


Notebook containing transcript by Madeleine Blaess of part of *Pwyll Pendeuc Dyuwt*. Ms., 53 pages, 21.5 x 16.5 cm.

Notebook containing transcript by Madeleine Blaess of part of *Manawydan uab Lyr, Math uab Mathonwy* and *Breuddwyd Maxen*. Ms., 117 pages, 22 x 17 cm.

Notebook containing research notes by Madeleine Blaess on *Buile Suibne*, edited by James G. O’Keeffe. Ms., 35 pages, 22 x 16.5 cm.

Notebook containing research notes by Madeleine Blaess on Celtic archaeology, dated Lentier 1943-1944. Ms., 8 pages, 21.5 x 16.5 cm.

Notebooks and loose pages containing transcript and research notes by Madeleine Blaess on *Lestoire de Merlin*, edited by H. Oskar Sommer. Ms. and Ts., 549 pages, 27 x 21cm., 25.5 x 20 cm., 32.5 x 20 cm., 20 x 16 cm., 22 x 18 cm.
Academic career at the University of Sheffield, 1948-1983

Teaching:


2. University of Sheffield Department of French Class Lists, 1980-81, as at 8/10/80. Ts and Ms., 10 pages, 29.5 x 21 cm.

3. University of Sheffield Department of French Choice of Special Topics, 1981 (4 copies). Ts., 1 page, 29.5 x 21 cm.

4. University of Sheffield Department of French Special Topics in Part I: 1981-82, Second Year. Ts. and Ms., 1 page, 25.5 x 20 cm.

5. List of student names [Year 1, 1980/81]. Ms., 1 l.


7. Letter from T.A. Thomas, Director of Finance, University of Sheffield, to all members of academic and related staff concerning the University’s financial situation 14 Aug 1981. Ts., 1 l.

8. Programme and photograph from production of *le Mariage de Figaro* by Beaumarchais by the Sheffield University Cercle Francais, March 1982

Research:


2. Second copy

3. Third copy

4. Fourth copy

5. Fifth copy


7. Research notes by Madeleine Blaess. Ms., 29 pages, 28 x 22 cm.

Research notes by Madeleine Blaess on *Gauvain*. Ts., 1 page, 27 x 21 cm.

*Calendrier d’Arthur*. Ts., 1 page, 33 x 20 cm.

*Date d’un épisode de la Vulgate du Merlin*. Ts., 1 page, 33 x 20 cm.


With envelope addressed to Miss Madeleine Blaess


With envelope addressed to R.M. Wilson, M.A.

Research notes by Madeleine Blaess. Ms. And Ts., 24 pages. 26 x 20.5 cm.


Offprint of Epilogue, *A Note on the Continuity of Ritual Form in European Drama* from *Christian rite and Christian drama in the Middle Ages* by O.B. Hardison (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965). Printed, 4 pages, 20 x 13.5 cm.

Offprint of *Le Théatre Breton: mystères anciens et essais récents* by Raymond Lebègue. Printed, 19 pages, 30 x 21 cm.

Letter from Hedley Sharples, Division of Education, University of Sheffield, to Madeleine Blaess concerning trip to Syria 16 Sep 1974 (also has some research notes on the reverse). Ts., 1 l.

Card from J. Ribard, Faculté des Lettres, Université de Picardie to Madeleine Blaess 10 Sep 1978. Ms., 1 l.
/3/24 Letter from Rupert Pickens, Department of French Language and Literature, University of Kentucky to Madeleine Blaess 26 Feb 1980. Ms., 1 l. 

With envelope


/3/27 Note from Professor Brian Woledge, Department of French, University College London to Madeleine Blaess, 5 Aug 1983. Ms., 1 l.

/3/28 Menu from the “Banquet offert par l’Universite de Poitiers” to the Congres de la Societe Rencesvals, Poitiers, 21-25 Jul 1959. With signatures on reverse. Printed and Ms.

/3/29 List of Participants at the Thirteenth International Arthurian Congress, Glasgow, 11-19 August 1981. Ts. and Ms., 3 l.

/3/30 Newspaper cutting from Paris-Normandie 9 Sep 1981 concerning the Fourth International Colloquium “Epopee animale, fable et fabliau” held at Evreux. Printed, 1 l.

/3/31 Note from University of Sheffield Finance Department concerning expenses for a conference in Bangor, [n.d.]. Ts., 1 l.

/3/32-45 Invoices and receipts for the purchase of books, from Boydell and Brewer, E.J. Brill, Centre de Documentation Universitaire, Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, Grant and Cutler, dating from 1965-1983

/3/46 Newscutting from the Yorkshire Post 19 May 1966 of a review by Professor H.W. Lawton, Emeritus Professor of French at the University of Sheffield, of Currents of thought in French literature: essays in memory of G.T. Clapton, edited by J.C. Ireson

/3/47 Newscutting from the Yorkshire Evening Press (York) 11 Jul 1970 of an article on the lives of medieval priests at Lowthorpe in East Yorkshire

/3/48 Newscutting from The Times 3 May 1977 concerning an exhibition of statuary from Notre Dame

/3/49 Newscutting from The Times 12 May 1983 – the obituary of Professor C.E. Pickford

/3/50 Anglo-Norman Text Society List of Members, May 1979

/4 Retirement:
/4/1 Letter from John Padley, Registrar and Secretary of the University of Sheffield to Madeleine Blaess, concerning her retirement 22 Oct 1982. Ts., 1 l.

/4/2 Letter from Professor F.W. Pierce, House Secretary, Senior Common Room Club, University of Sheffield to Madeleine Blaess, concerning a retirement dinner 10 May 1983. Ts., 1l

With envelope

/4/3 Letter from John Padley, Registrar and Secretary of the University of Sheffield to Madeleine Blaess concerning her retirement 28 Jun 1983. Ts., 1 l.

/4/4 Madeleine Blaess’s membership certificate for the Universities Superannuation Scheme, dated 1st Dec 1980

/4/5 Explanatory booklet for the Universities Superannuation Scheme, dated April 1983
296/6 **Personal life, 1960-1989**


/9-17 Letters from friends/family, some dated between 1951 and 1977, others undated

/18-23 Christmas, New Year and Easter cards

/24-26 Birthday and Saint’s Day cards to Madeleine from her mother

/27-31 Invitations to weddings, 1958-1970

/32 First Communion card, including menu, for Marie-France Blot, 31 May 1959

/33 Bill for flowers (in French). Ms., 1 l.

/34 Estate agent details of the house in Fulwood, Sheffield, purchased by Madeleine Blaess. Ts., 1 l.


/36 Programme for Junior Prize-giving at Rotherham High School for Girls, at which Madeleine Blaess was formerly a Governor, 16 Feb 1967. Ts., 1 l.

/37 Notes on changes in Paris. Ms., 2 l.

/38 Newspaper cutting of the wedding of Theresa McCarthy and Patrick Danaher, from the Sheffield Star newspaper, 20 Aug 1974

/39 Newspaper cutting of the summer fair at Myers Grove School, Sheffield, showing Caroline Whittaker (aged 8) and Gini and Heather Crompton, from the Sheffield Morning Telegraph 18 Jul 1977

/40 Newspaper cutting from the Yorkshire Evening Press (York) of the shop of Mr. William Ellis, Acomb, York

/41 Newspaper cutting concerning Fern Gauna, annotated by Madeleine Blaess “Max?” referring to her colleague, Dr. Max Gauna, of the Department of French, University of Sheffield

/42 Newspaper cutting from the Yorkshire Evening Press (York) of the opening of the new church of St. Aidan’s, Ridgeway, Acomb, York

/43 Newspaper cutting from the Daily Mail, 14 Sep 1959, of the fall in the water level of the Ladybower Reservoir

/44 Notes on rationing in the Second World War, probably used for talks given by Madeleine Blaess. Printed and Ms.
Memorabilia

/1 Colour plate no. 2144 from Petit Courrier des Dames 30 Nov 1845, illustrating Modes de Paris – Boulevard des Italiens 1.


/3 The Yorkshire Post 28 Feb 1922: Princess Mary Wedding Souvenir (Wedding of Princess Mary to Viscount Lascelles). Printed

/4 L'Illustration July 1931: L'Exposition Coloniale – album hors série. Printed

/5 L'Illustration no. 4616, 22 Aug 1931. Includes 20 pages on l'Exposition Coloniale. Printed

/6 L'Illustration no. 4917, 29 May 1937: Exposition 1937. Printed

/7 Colour picture illustrating La Glorieuse Carrière du Général Leclerc from 1902 to 1946. Printed

/8-112 Souvenir booklets from France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain and Wales. Printed

/113-146 Illustrated cards

/147-154 Religious memorabilia

/155 First day cover, York 1900th Anniversary Celebrations, 5 Jun 1971, addressed to Mrs. M.E. Robson

/156 Booklet from the Cérémonie à la mémoire du Général Karol Świerczewski, Paris, 28 Apr 1947

/157 Postcard from the Royal Station Hotel, York

/158-159 2 French menus dated 28 Jan 1913

/160 Booklet for Divine Service and Michaelmas Court at the Company of Merchant Adventurers of the City of York, 4 Oct 1963
Material from Charles and Gabrielle Blaess, Madeleine Blaess’s parents

/1 First Communion dinner card, Charles Blaess, 21 Apr 1901

/2-3 2 Valentine cards for Charles Blaess, one dated 1915, probably drawn by Gabrielle

/4 Postcard to Charles Blaess from Gabrielle, 2 Nov 1916

/5-6 2 copies of Christmas card (with envelope) from Monsieur et Madame Blaess, with symbol of “Les Français de Grande-Bretagne”

/7 Notebook with name and address of Charles Blaess on front, containing menus and recipes. Ms.

/8 Notebook with name of Charles Blaess on front, containing notes on wartime gas protection and decontamination. Ms.
Notebook dated 1942-1943 containing lecture notes on fever and infectious diseases. The name of the student and of the hospital (believed to be Hayley Green Hospital, Halesowen) have been crossed out. Includes magazine article by Richard Gordon, *Menace of Typhoid Mary*. Ms. and printed.
Addenda

/1 Newspaper section, Yorkshire Gazette, 24 Nov 1944. Includes article entitled ‘A Yorkshire Woman’s Notebook’, concerning Madeleine Blaess’s time in Paris. (At the time of writing, Madeleine Blaess had not yet returned home). Printed. 2 l. (and a copy on archival paper).


/3 Illustrated booklet entitled ‘Les F.F.I. vers l’Armée Nouvelle, publ. 15 Mar 1945. 46 p.'