



Letters from Jack Butler Yeats and Mary Cottenham Yeats to Roberts
Richmond Figgis and Philippa Figgis (1936-1951).

National Gallery of Ireland: Yeats Archive

IE/NGI/Y32

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1. Identity statement area

Reference Code: IE/NGI/Y32

Title: Letters from Jack Butler Yeats and Mary Cottenham Yeats to Roberts Richmond Figgis and Philippa Figgis (1936-1951).

Dates of Creation: 1936-1951.

Level of Description: Fonds.

Extent and Medium: 1 folder, paper textual documents.

2. Context area

Name of creators: Roberts Richmond Figgis, 1900-1984; Philippa Maria Figgis, 1909-1988; Jack Butler Yeats, 1871-1957; Mary Cottenham Yeats, 1867-1947.

Biographical/Administrative history

Roberts Richmond Figgis (1900-1984) was born in Dublin to Henry Wingfield Figgis, a corn merchant, and Lucy Jane Gage Allen Figgis, formerly of county Wexford. In 1911 the family, including sister Lydia Anna Figgis, were living at 9 Temple road, Rathgar, Dublin. Roberts Richmond Figgis was for many years a well known figure in musical and artistic circles in Dublin. He was educated at Ley's school in Cambridge where he studied under Doctor Mann, organist and choir master of King's College. Figgis attended Trinity College Dublin and was a school master for a time. Later he worked with Hodges Figgis and company, booksellers and publishers. Through his friendship with Sarah Purser Figgis became a member of the Friends of the National Collections and served as Honorary Secretary for many years. He was one of the founders of the Living Art Exhibition in the early 1940s. He collected paintings, including works by Jack Butler Yeats, and lent to the Yeats/Nicholson exhibition in London in 1942. Figgis organised a major exhibition of modern continental art in Dublin in 1944 and was secretary of the 1945 National Loan Exhibition of Yeats's work held in Dublin. He was also a long standing member of the industries and arts committee of the Royal Dublin Society. In 1976 the director of the National Gallery of Ireland, James White, made a presentation to Robert Richmond Figgis and his wife on the occasion of their leaving Ireland. Both Roberts Richmond Figgis and his wife Philippa are buried at the Grove cemetery, Greystones, county Wicklow.

Archival history:

From Roberts Richmond Figgis to NGI and transferred from the Director's office to the Yeats Archive in 2000.

Immediate source of acquisition

Donated to NGI by Roberts Richmond Figgis, [c.1970].

3. Content and structure area

Scope and content:

Includes 17 letters from Jack Butler Yeats and his wife Mary Cottenham Yeats to Robert Richmond Figgis and his wife Philippa between 1936 and 1951. Twelve letters from Jack Butler Yeats to Roberts Richmond Figgis (1936-1951) relate to arrangements for Figgis to view/acquire paintings, including *Streedagh strand*, by Jack Butler Yeats, either privately or for the Friends of the National Collections; to the National Loan Exhibition; to the Society of Scottish artist's, 52nd exhibition, Edinburgh; and the acquisition by the Friends of the National Collections of paintings of Lily Yeats and Elizabeth Corbet Yeats by John Butler Yeats. Five letters from Mary Cottenham Yeats to Philippa Figgis largely relate to gifts sent by Philippa and to arrangements for the Yeatses to visit.

Appraisal, destruction, and scheduling information

All records have been retained.

Accruals

None expected.

System of arrangement:

Arranged in two chronological series for ease of access and use.

4. Conditions of access and use

Conditions governing access

Access by appointment and in accordance with NGI Library and Archive access policy.

Conditions governing reproduction

Material may only be reproduced, in accordance with NGI Library and Archives policy, with permission of the archivist, and in accordance with relevant copyright legislation.

Language/scripts of material

English

Physical characteristics and technical requirements

Paper textual documents- no special requirements.

Finding aids

Y32 descriptive list.

5. Allied materials area

Allied material area:

Other sub-fonds within the IE/NGI/YI fonds and other collections within the Yeats archive. Related collections are held at Trinity College Dublin, National Library of Ireland and various repositories internationally.

6. Description control area

Archivists Note:

This catalogue was compiled by Dorothy Redmond, June 2011, updated May 2013.

Conventions:

ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description. 2nd edition. Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 2000.

1. Letters from Jack Butler Yeats to Roberts Richmond Figgis.

Series

10 February 1936-24 April 1951

9 files & 3 items

Twelve letters from Jack Butler Yeats to Roberts Richmond Figgis relating to arrangements for Figgis to view/acquire paintings, including *Streedagh strand*, by Jack Butler Yeats either privately or for the Friends of the National Collections; to the National Loan Exhibition; to the Society of Scottish artist's, 52nd exhibition, Edinburgh; and the acquisition by the Friends of the National Collections of paintings of Lily Yeats and Elizabeth Corbet Yeats by John Butler Yeats.

Y32/1/1 10 February 1936
1 item, 1p

Letter from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis.
Yeats invites Figgis to come and see some new paintings 'before they go away'.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.1

Y32/1/2 17 May 1941
File, 2 items, 2pp

Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Carrowgary, Beltra, county Sligo. Yeats conveys his delight that Figgis, who is on holidays in Sligo, will buy his painting *Streedagh Strand*.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.2

Y32/1/3 27 May 1941
1 item, 1p

Letter from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis.
Regarding arrangements for Figgis to call on Yeats to see the painting [*Streedagh strand*] 'which is ... to have such a good home'.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.3

Y32/1/4

5 November 1941
File, 2 items, 2pp

Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin

Yeats is 'very glad' *Streedagh Strand* is being lent to the National Gallery London exhibition organised by Kenneth Clarke as 'it will be a great help to my reputation'.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.6

Y32/1/5

24 May 1945
File, 2 items, 3pp

Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin

Yeats sends Roberts Richmond. Figgis information about *Old Friends* which Miss Kathleen O'Brennan is lending [to the National Loan Exhibition.]

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.9

Y32/1/6

26 September 1945
File, 2 items, 3pp

Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin

Yeats is 'delighted' that the [National Loan] exhibition has a surplus which will be used to buy a picture of his for the National Gallery of Ireland. He has only one painting at £200: *Number One Ferry Dinner Hour*. Yeats invites Figgis to one of his 'Thursdays' [at homes] or to call at a quieter time 'to look especially at pictures.'

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.11

- Y32/1/7** 9 January 1946
File, 2 items, 3pp
- Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin
Yeats thanks Figgis for the safe return of his photography [of his paintings].
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.12
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- Y32/1/8** 11 October 1946
File, 2 items, 3pp
- Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin
Yeats sends Figgis details of the Edinburgh exhibition and relates the information he has received from doctor Elder Dickson who undertakes to help Figgis with finding hotel accommodation if he visits the exhibition and gives dates of a reception and lecture. 'Dr Dickson writes that my work looks splendid, apart from this judgement, he seems a kind and pleasant man.'
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.13
-
- Y32/1/9** 12 May 1947
File, 2 items, 3pp
- Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis and Philippa Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin
A letter of thanks for condolences on the death of Mary Cottenham Yeats.
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.14
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- Y32/1/10** 26 March 1948
File, 2 items, 3pp
- Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county

Dublin

Yeats apologises for not having replied to Figgis' letter and states that he is looking forward to meeting professor Henn.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.15

Y32/1/11

28 May 1949

File, 2 items, 2 pp

Letter with envelope from Jack Butler Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Roberts Richmond Figgis, Farm Lodge, Ballybrack, county Dublin.

Letter concerning [Victor Waddington's] uncertainties regarding labels on the back of a painting of one of Jack Butler Yeats' sisters by John Butler Yeats which is to be given to the Friends of the National Collections. Yeats asks Figgis to send him a copy of the wording on the labels on that painting 'and the other two' [paintings] in order that he can make any necessary alterations.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.16

Y32/1/12

24 April 1951

1 item. 1p

Letter from Jack Butler Yeats, Portobello House, Portobello Bridge, Dublin to Roberts Richmond. Figgis

Yeats thanks Figgis for asking him to illustrate Donal O'Sullivan's *Irish Folk Music and Song* but regrets that he is 'not able to illustrate anything any more'. Also relates that he is recovering well from a pulled muscle.

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.17

2. Letters from Mary Cottenham Yeats to Philippa Figgis.

Series

7 July 1941-16 June 1945

5 items

Mary Cottenham Yeats writes to thank Philippa Figgis for gifts received and to accept invitations to visit.

- Y32/2/1** 7 July 1941
1 item, 1p
- Letter from Mary Cottenham Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Philippa Figgis.
Mary Cottenham Yeats accepts an invitation to supper and expresses thanks for flowers received.
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.4
- Y32/2/2** 3 October 1941
1 item, 1p
- Letter from Mary Cottenham Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Philippa Figgis.
Mary Cottenham Yeats thanks Philippa Figgis for flowers and cabbage. Relates that she and Jack Butler Yeats are just back from a holiday in Waterford.
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.5
- Y32/2/3** 15 April 1942
1 item, 1p
- Letter from Mary Cottenham Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Philippa Figgis.
Mary Cottenham Yeats thanks Philippa Figgis for flowers received.
- Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.7
- Y32/2/4** 3 April 1945
1 item, 1p
- Letter from Mary Cottenham Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Philippa Figgis.
Mary Cottenham Yeats accepts an invitation to visit on 7 April.
- Associated code: : Y Mus Y28-2.8

Y32/2/5

16 June 1945

1 item, 1p

Letter from Mary Cottenham Yeats, 18 Fitzwilliam square, Dublin to Philippa Figgis.

Mary Cottenham Yeats thanks Roberts Richmond. Figgis and Philippa Figgis for decorations [at the National Loan Exhibition.] 'They were so restful and dignified and a wonderful foil for the pictures.'

Associated code: Y Mus Y28-2.10