

GLAMORGAN RECORD OFFICE/ARCHIFYDY MORGANNWG

Reference code: GB214 DX89

Title: PAPERS OF ROBERT DRANE OF CARDIFF

Date(s) 1894-1914, 1927

Level of description: Fonds (level 2)

Extent: 0.01 cubic metres

Name of creator Joshua John Neale

Biographical history

Robert Drane, the eldest of four children, was born on August 21 1833 in Norfolk. He went as an apprentice chemist to Mr Francis in Woodbridge, Surrey in July 1849 but remained only "4 or 5 weeks", and then to Smith & Sons Chemists, Norwich, in September of that year. He stayed there past the end of his four-year term of apprenticeship. His pharmacy commenced business at 11 Bute Street, Cardiff in 1858 and moved to 16 Queen Street ten years later. The business seems to have been moderately successful, and he was able to employ four assistants to work in his shop, along with a porter, cook, and housemaid. He also had a branch in Penarth in the 1890s, which did not do so well.

Drane was a founding member of Cardiff Naturalists Society in 1867 and was its sometime president. He is credited with discovering the Skomer Vole (a distinct species of Bank Vole, specific to Skomer Island). He often kept voles and fieldmice, and his tame hares had the run of his house above the shop.

Drane was also an honorary curator for the Cardiff Museum and involved in the debate leading to the opening and location of the National Museum of Wales in Cathays Park. He was considered to be an authority on porcelain, especially old Worcester. He systematically amassed a collection of this himself, and was commissioned to purchase samples of Swansea and Nantgarw pottery for the Cardiff Museum. These are now in the National Museum of Wales. His other main collecting interest was antique spoons but he also acquired some glassware, books, and antique oddities, especially those that demonstrated the 'development of religious myths'.

Joshua John Neale was one of Robert Drane's closest friends, a fellow naturalist and student of archaeology. He was appointed a joint executor of Robert Drane's will.

Scope and content

The correspondence between Drane and Joshua John Neale mostly comprises notes on flora and fauna, and his annoyance with the Cardiff Naturalist Society, which he repeatedly describes as "whipping a dead horse". There are also comments on antiques and some verse.

The papers cover Drane's naturalist and antiquarian interests, with a small collection of his poetry. There are also papers regarding the disposal of Drane's collections after his death.

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information

All records offered have been accepted and listed

Conditions governing access

Open Access

Conditions governing reproduction

Normal Glamorgan Record Office conditions apply.

Language/Scripts of material

English; hand-written and typescript.

Physical characteristics and technical requirements

Good/Fair condition

Finding aids

Detailed list available

Related units of description

Photographs of Drane's collection of pottery, porcelain and glassware (DXGC)

Robert Drane: diaries and personal papers (DXIB)

Drane family papers (D147)

Letters from Robert Drane to Mr Solomon Andrews regarding antiques (DAB31/5/56, 58-59, 61)

Prescription books of E.G. Howell and Sons, Chemists, (formerly Robert Drane's) (DXQB)

Cardiff Naturalists Society (DCNS)

'Castell Coch : A gossiping companion to the ruin and it's neighbourhood' by Robert Drane (6/4)

Appendix, written by Robert Drane, on the mannerisms of the artists in 'The Ceramics of Swansea and Nantgarw' by William Turner (B/72)

Date(s) of descriptions

October 2002

DX89/1/1-47	Letters from Robert Drane to Mr Neale (Letters of particular interest are detailed below)	1896-1911
DX89/1/1	Annoyance at the degradation of the English language [1 paper]	Aug 1896
DX89/1/2	Recounting everything that happened to him on his way back from Skomer island to Cardiff [3 papers]	Jun 1898
DX89/1/3,4	Naturalist observations, including Skomer voles [2 papers]	Jun 1898
DX89/1/6	Thanks for the greengages, wishes him luck on his Inaugural address [?for the Naturalist Society] [1 paper]	Sep 1900
DX89/1/7	Regarding absorbing the "P Ents Society" into the Cardiff Naturalist Society, and his views on the members of the latter [1 paper]	Oct 1900
DX89/1/9	Regarding "poor old Storrie(?)" and Drane's decreasing involvement in the Cardiff Naturalist Society [1 paper]	Feb 1901
DX89/1/10	Thanking for the Red Mullet, and what he hopes to see on his forthcoming visit to Scotland [1 paper]	Apr 1901
DX89/1/12	Detailed list of scientific disagreements with Mr Neale's book The Birds Of Ireland [3 papers]	Apr 1902
DX89/1/14	Notes on kestrels and lizards, how he brought four blue tits home from Carlisle to Pontypool by train and what he has been feeding them [2 papers]	Jul 1902
DX89/1/16	Naturalist notes, including verses by "Harker" [1 paper]	Aug 1903
DX89/1/17	Christmas greeting, in verse [1 paper]	Dec 1903
DX89/1/18	Comments on the CNS and quarrels about Skomer voles [1 paper]	July 1904

DX89/1/19	Annoyance with the CNS, naturalist notes [2 papers]	Oct 1904
DX89/1/20	Invective against the museum curator [1 paper]	Nov 1904
DX89/1/22	Christmas greeting, in verse [1 paper]	Dec 1904
DX89/1/24	Comments regarding books by Mr [?]S E Williams and Mr E Harting [1 paper]	Jul 1905
DX89/1/26	Poems on the South Wales Art Society's Annual Exhibition and on illustrations of Roosevelt and the Kaiser in the New York Journal [1 paper]	Sep 1905
DX89/1/34	Verse regarding a turtle from the Nile which Drane sent to Professor Parker, with the latter's reply, also in verse [1 paper]	Feb 1908
DX89/1/36	Letter, in verse, apologising for giving Neale a book he had not meant to, and enclosing the one he had intended [1 paper]	Apr 1908
DX89/1/37	Regarding the geologists trip to Skomer and worries about the condition of his mind [1 paper]	May 1908
DX89/1/38	Regarding birds and the Skomer Vole [1 paper]	Oct 1908
DX89/1/41,42	Musings on ill-health, old age and death [2 papers]	Jun 1909
DX89/1/43	Complaints about the misuse of titles and knighthoods [1 paper]	Jun 1909
DX89/1/44	Gratitude for his holiday in Bournemouth and comments on "two penny druggists" [1 paper]	Mar 1910
DX89/1/46	Regarding the bust of Drane by Merrifield [1 paper]	Jul 1911
DX89/1/47	Verse regarding the capture of a bird and miscellaneous notes [2 papers]	nd

Death of Robert Drane

- | | | |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| DX89/2 | Copy will of Robert Drane
[1 file; typescript] | Jul 1914 |
| DX89/3 | List of books and other items taken by William Drane,
following the death of his brother, Robert Drane
[2 files; typescript] | c1914 |
| DX89/4 | Priced sale catalogue of a selected portion of Robert Drane's
library (copy belonging to Joshua John Neale)
[1 booklet; printed] | 1916 |
| DX89/5 | Newspaper article concerning Robert Drane's life
[2 newscuttings] | Feb 1927 |

Lectures delivered by Robert Drane

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| DX89/6/1 | Eating and Drinking in Times Past
[1 booklet; printed] | 1901 |
| DX89/6/2 | Irish Biological Futilities
[1 file] | 1903 |
| DX89/6/3 | 'A Series of Antique Drinking Vessels', Cardiff Naturalists'
Society Conversazione
[1 booklet; printed] | Nov 1905 |

Poetry by Robert Drane

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| DX89/7/1 | 'Bunkum and Co's Marvellous Meteoric Medicines' by
Robert Drane
[1 paper; printed] | Feb 1902 |
| DX89/7/2 | 'Bunkum & Co's Latest', signed by R Drane, Honorary
Secretary
[1 paper; printed] | Apr 1902 |
| DX89/7/3 | 'The Twopenny Druggist at C' by R D[rane]
[1 booklet; printed] | 1907 |

Photographs

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| DX89/8 | Photograph of Robert Drane and Joshua John Neale
[1 photograph; mounted] | 1913 |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|

DX89/9/1-24 Photographic negatives of Robert Drane's collection of pottery, porcelain and glassware, displayed in Robert Drane's home, Queen Street, Cardiff taken by F E Loveridge [24 glassplates] 1914

Prints made from DX89 are available for consultation as DXGC/66/1-24

Miscellaneous

DX89/10 Notice of meeting of the Fortnightly Club [1 paper] Jan 1894