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WALTHAM FOREST ARCHIVES

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W 96 ROE

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Papers of George Edward Roebuck F.L.A. (1877-1953) Librarian and Antiquary.

Donated by : Mr. I. Wilson

Date of donation : 7 April 1986.

George Edward Johnson Roebuck was born at Cheltenham and entered the service of Middlesborough Public Libraries in 1890. He became Senior Assistant Librarian at Shoreditch in 1896 and helped to prepare the new Central Library at Pitfield Street. He also played a leading part in founding the Library Assistants Association. He took up post at St. George-in-the-East, Stepney in 1898, establishing the first public lending library for the blind in the East End. He held a seat on the Council of the Library Association for many years.

He was appointed Walthamstow Librarian in 1907 in succession to George W. Atkinson, sent to prison for embezzlement. Roebuck saw the new Carnegie Central Library in the High Street built by 1909, and instituted a series of popular lectures there. He supervised the compilation of the town's impressive Roll of Honour of men on active service during the First World War. He was also prominent in the successful efforts of 1919 to remove the rate-limitation for libraries.

In 1914, Roebuck promoted the establishment of the Walthamstow Antiquarian Society (for records see W 28), and served as the Society's honorary secretary until his retirement as Librarian in 1946. He was therefore at the forefront of efforts to establish the Museum of Local Antiquities, opened at Vestry House in 1929. He wrote several books on local history, including THE STORY OF WALTHAMSTOW, published by the Borough Corporation in 1952, and with G.F. Bosworth, organised the Walthamstow Pageant of 1930.

Roebuck was also a prominent Freemason and issued two books under the pseudonym "Essex Master".

For a detailed account see "George Edward Roebuck, A Critical Study of His Life and Work". C.A.E. Bostle thesis for Fellowship of the Library Association, 1975.

W 96 ROE

Papers of George Edward Roebuck (contd)1. Library work

(See also Walthamstow Public Library Reports 1907 - 1938, Catalogue of Books. 1933, and Walthamstow Library Review 1908-09 under (W 54).

1/1 Testimonial from Walthamstow Corporation 29 November 1946  
(1 paper)

2. Genealogical research

2/1 Letters to G. E. Roebuck from R. A. Colbeck 1912 & n. d.  
at Torquay, Laura Bennett at Hammersmith and  
Lillian G. Colesworth at Greys Green. nr. Henley  
on Thames and Great Smith Street, concerning  
his research into the history of the Roebuck family.  
(4 papers)

2/2 Report of C. A. Bernau, F.S.G. at 1 July 1912  
17 Billiter Square Buildings, London,  
genealogist, concerning calendar references  
to Roebucks in Perogative Court of Canterbury  
Wills 1701-1800.  
(1 paper)

2/3 Report of George Sherwood F.S.G. at 227 Strand, 11 March 1913  
London, re: deed of 1759 referring to  
Benjamin Roebuck, gent. concerning Sheffield, Yorks.  
(1 paper)

2/4 Handbill for The Kirkburton Parish Registers  
from 1514 to 1711 Mrs Collins, (late of Kirkburton  
Vicarage, Huddersfield) ed., listing families  
mentioned including 'Robucke'  
annotated information can be given to 1794.  
(1 paper, printed)

2/5 Newspaper cuttings re: George Roebuck of  
Stocksbridge and grave of Dr. John Roebuck,  
Scientist (1718-1794) in Carriden Churchyard  
nr. Bo'ness.  
(3 papers, printed)

2/6 Envelope entitled 'Roebuckiana'  
(1 envelope)

3. Masonic papers

3/1 Manuscript : "Some Reflections on the  
R.(oyal) A.(rch) Ceremonial" n. d. [c.1933]  
endorsed on Walthamstow Antiquarian Society  
printed circulars.  
(60 papers)

Papers of George Edward Roebuck (contd)

3. Masonic papers cont'd.
- 3/2 Certificate issued by Freemasons Hospital and Nursing Home qualifying Bro. G. E. Roebuck of Chingford Lodge as a Vice-Patron. n.d. [c. 1930]  
(1 paper, printed form)
- 3/3 Review of The Teachings of Freemasonry by "Essex Master" (G. E. Roebuck) extracted from Transactions of Essex Masters Lodge. 1928 - 1929
- 3/4 Colchester Castle. : a paper by W. Bro. Philip G. Laver extracted from Transactions of Essex Masters Lodge. 1929 - 1930  
(2 papers, printed)
- 3/5 Transactions of Essex Masters Lodge including "Some Reflections on the Early Days of Speculative Masonry" by W. Bro. George Edward Roebuck, P. P. G. D. (Essex), P. M. 2859. annotated. 1932 - 1933  
(1 booklet, printed)
- 3/6 List of members extracted from Transactions of Essex Masters Lodge, including name of George Edward Roebuck, joined 1930. n.d. [1930 - 1931]  
(1 paper, printed)
- 3/7 Notice and agenda for meeting of Cranbrook Lodge at Loughton, Essex, including lecture by W. Bro. George Roebuck P. P. G. D. "Freemasonry; what it is and what it implies", lists of officers and members. 29 April 1937  
(1 paper, printed)
- 3/8 Menu card and toast list for installation meeting of W. Bro. Roy Rates, Master, Librarian Lodge at The Library Association, Chaucer House, Malet Place, London with list of officers 1952-53, endorsed signatures of members. 15 November 1952  
(1 paper, printed)
- 3/9 Letter from Roy D. Rates, Hon. Secretary, Librarianship Masonic Circle to Mrs Roebuck at The Avenue, Highams Park, sending her the best wishes of the Lodge. 13 December 1954  
(1 paper, typescript)
- 3/10 Report on lecture entitled "Masonic Research - Its Possibilities and Dangers", by W. Bro. G. E. Roebuck (P. M., P. P. G. D., Essex) n.d.  
(4 papers, printed)

See also 5/4 re: investiture to London Grand Chapter.

4. Poetry

Note : Some of these poems are signed by Roebuck under the pen names 'Peter Montrose' or 'Peter', and 'J.D. Templeton', others are initialled 'GER'

4/1 Typescript : 'Random Thoughts of Idle Hours' a book of poems including :

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 'To B.H.' 'Beauty' (2 poems) |                     |
| 'A wet Holiday in Scotland'  | 'Our plans'         |
| 'Armistice Day'              | 'Life's Eastertide' |
| 'Taken for granted'          | 'A reflection'      |
| 'Old Vestry House'           | 'Recollections'     |
| 'The loss of a loved one'    | 'Crianlarich'       |
| 'Fireglow'                   | 'Maconachie'        |
| 'Evening'                    | 'Winter'            |
| 'Sheep in the shade'         | 'Bethlehem'         |
| 'Values'                     | 'Enfin'             |
| 'Time's Thermometer'         | 'Fairie'            |
| 'In Somerset'                |                     |

(1 booklet)

4/2 Typescript and manuscript poems :

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| 'Old Vestry House'                       | 29 August 1933 |
| [Enfin]                                  | 1 January 1935 |
| 'Trees' annotated 'just a fancy of mine' | n.d.           |
| 'A Thought'                              | n.d.           |
| 'The Answer'                             | n.d.           |
| 'Enigma'                                 | n.d.           |
| 'Copied'                                 | n.d.           |
| 'Passing Pleasures'                      | n.d.           |
| 'When is one old ?'                      | n.d.           |
| 'Lasting Memories'                       | n.d.           |
| 'The Old Actor'                          | n.d.           |

(11 papers)

4/3 Poem : 'A Thought at the end of a Year' 1933  
written in ornamental script with pictorial borders.

(1 card)

4/4 Untitled manuscript poems n.d. [c.1930s]  
(8 papers)

4/5 Manuscript poems :  
'On an early bird from Arran' November 1936  
(2 drafts)  
'This Day of Birth' 28 February 1940  
'Eros Returns' July 1974  
(3 papers)

Papers of George Edward Roebuck (contd)4/ Poetry contd.

4/6 Printed poems, some with Christmas greetings endorsed :

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| 'Everlasting'           | 1934 |
| 'Snowdrops'             | 1939 |
| 'Fire Glow'             | n.d. |
| 'True Friendship'       | n.d. |
| 'Reflections'           | n.d. |
| 'Trees'                 | n.d. |
| 'Hornbeams in the Snow' | n.d. |
| 'Evening'               | n.d. |
| 'Reverie'               | n.d. |

*(9 papers, printed)*5. Personal papers and correspondence

5/1 Cutting from The Kilmarnock Standard 22 September 1945  
announcing marriage at Kilmarnock of  
G.E. Roebuck, Librarian of Walthamstow to  
Nan, youngest daughter of Robert Wilson decd.  
and Mrs Wilson of Scott Road, Kilmarnock on  
15th September 1945.

*(1 paper, printed)*

5/2 Pastoral letter of Church of Scotland, 22 September 1945  
King Street, Kilmarnock, with marriage of  
G.E.J. Roebuck of 94 The Avenue, Highams Park,  
London E.4. to Annie Caldwell Wilson of  
1 Scott Road, Kilmarnock and disjunction of  
Mrs Roebuck of 1 Scott Road (on 4 October)  
both marked.

*(1 paper, printed)*

5/3 Fragment of letter by G.E. Roebuck in the form n.d. [c.1940-45]  
of a sermon on rebuilding the Social Wellbeing  
of Britain after the War through the work of  
the Church.

*(1 file)*

5/4 Fragment of letter by "Peter" [G.E. Roebuck] n.d. [c.1940-45]  
to Nan Wilson on the significance for him of  
being invested as a member of the London Grand  
Chapter of Freemasons.

*(1 paper)*