

WONDRAUSCH COLLECTION OF MATERIAL RELATING TO DOROTHY HARTLEY

D DX1941

Hartley, Dorothy Rosaman (1893–1985), historian, was born on 4 October 1893 at the grammar school, Skipton, Yorkshire, the youngest of the three children of the Revd Edward Tomson Hartley (1849–1923) and his wife, Amy Lucy Eddy (1853–1932). The Revd Hartley was headmaster of the grammar school; his wife came from Froncysylltau, near Llangollen in north Wales, where the family owned quarries and property. Dorothy was educated at a convent in Skipton until 1904, when her father retired through failing sight and became rector of a country parish at Rempstone, Nottinghamshire. She then went to Loughborough high school and afterwards to Nottingham Art School. Her education was interrupted by the First World War, when she worked in a munitions factory, but in 1919 she entered the Regent Street Polytechnic in London where she was a prize pupil; she returned to Nottingham Art School as a teacher in 1920–22 and subsequently taught in London.

During this period Dorothy Hartley began writing. Batsford published her six-volume *Life and Work of the Peoples of England*, written with M. M. V. Elliot, between 1925 and 1931, and in 1930 Knopf published the *Old Book*, a medieval compilation. She had a restless curiosity, and in her 1931 book, *Medieval Costume and Life*, not only recreated the clothes of peasants depicted in old manuscripts, but used pictures of herself wearing them. She temporarily abandoned English rural life in 1931 to travel by car from Cairo to the Congo, and the photographs which she took on her journey were exhibited at the Imperial Institute.

Between 1932 and 1936 Dorothy Hartley toured the British Isles by bicycle and car, with pen, pencil, and camera, writing weekly articles for the *Daily Sketch* on country people and their trades. Her articles covered such themes as horse-ploughing, bread making, and clog making. They used the calendar months as their basis, and were strongly influenced by the sixteenth-century agricultural writer and poet Thomas Tusser. Dorothy Hartley was a keen photographer, developing and printing her own photographs. The material gleaned on these travels went into her many other books and articles, which eventually covered many aspects and periods of English rural life. Medieval culture always held a particular fascination for her and she toured Ireland in the footsteps of the twelfth-century prelate Gerald of Wales. This led to her book *An Irish Holiday* (1938).

In 1933 Dorothy Hartley made her home in a cottage at Froncysylltau and this estate remained her base thereafter. Yet, despite her long residence in Wales, and apart from one book on her Irish journey, she dealt only with English life. During the Second World War she contributed to the publications of the United Nations and began work on the book for which she is probably best known, *Food in England* (1954), a treasury of information on the gathering, storing, and cooking of food from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries. The clarity and detail of text and her charming illustrations made it accessible to a wide public.

In the post-war years she also taught at University College and Goldsmiths' College in London, performed on television with Philip Harben, and advised on the BBC *Archers* programmes. In

between these professional activities she juggled with the maintenance of her house in Froncysylltau and its six cottages which were occupied by a constant stream of tenants and visitors. In 1964 she published a major book, *Water in England*. This remarkable work is full of valuable information on all manner of related phenomena such as holy springs, well digging, leather jugs, spa hotels, and suchlike.

Dorothy Hartley never married; living alone and in a remote place and coming from a generation more accustomed to communicate by the pen than by telephone, letters became her principal form of contact with the wider world. Much of her thought and writing was engaged with the minute details of the relationship between an object and its function — the scythe to the height of wheat cut, the exact width of a linen sheet to the dimensions of the linen press. Part of the great strength of her major books lay not only in her own very exact, decorative yet diagrammatic explanatory drawings, but in the ways these were allied to her text. Her own collections of documents and illustrations of early agricultural life led ultimately to a monumental photographic bequest to the Reading Museum of English Rural Life, reflecting the pleasure that she had from her correspondence with the keeper and her visits to the centre, from its pre-war conception to her death. Dorothy Hartley died from cancer at Fron House, Froncysylltau, on 22 October 1985.

During her lifetime Dorothy Hartley acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the life, work, and food of people living in England since medieval times. She proceeded to document this field through her writings, drawings, and photographs. In a number of books, which have become minor classics, Hartley produced some of the most absorbing and readable accounts of the history and folklore of country life and food ever published. Arguably her best work, and the one for which she will be remembered, is *Food in England*. This book has continued to be republished, and is as full of magic and potions as any medieval herbal.

Mary Wondrausch, 'Hartley, Dorothy Rosaman (1893–1985)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50449>, accessed 17 June 2011]

Mary Wondrausch is a potter, with an interest in Dorothy Hartley.

See also:

Archives:

The Dorothy Hart Collection, Ref: DHART

Letters from Dorothy Rosaman Hartley, 1928-1930, ref: JL 8/19

Chatto & Windus letters file 1926-31: Ha, 1926-1931, Ref: CW 35/2 [Please note permission is required to consult CW material]

Museum object:

Painting by Dorothy Hartley of an illustration in Bedford's book of *The Hours*, 1950, Ref: 54/419

Library:

Food in England, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--7060-HAR
The countryman's England, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--9210-HAR
Water in England, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--6060-HAR
Made in England, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--5630-HAR
The shepherd's dogs : their training for mustering and trial work, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--4576-HAR
Irish holiday, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--9330-HAR
The countryman's England, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--9210-HAR
Thomas Tusser, 1557 floruit : his good points of husbandry / collated and edited by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY RES--3513-TUS

Mediaeval costume and life : a review of their social aspects arranged under various classes and workers with instructions for making numerous types of dress, by Dorothy Hartley, MERL LIBRARY--7230-HAR

Contents

D DX1941 A Dorothy Hartley Material
D DX1941 B Mary Wondrausch Research Material

D DX1941 A

Dorothy Hartley Material

D DX1941 A/1 Letters to Fred Littman from Dorothy Hartley 1930s-1985

Includes some replies, and a summary of the contents of the letters by Mary Wondrausch

The letters have been given numbers by Mary Wondrausch, who has attempted to date the letters (6 folders)

D DX1941 A/2 Letters to Fred Littman from Dorothy Hartley 1930s-1985

includes some letters from other people and organisations, some photographs and press cuttings (8 folders)

D DX1941 A/3 Letters to Tails [Marjorie Anton] from Dorothy Hartley 1953-1974

includes some replies, and a summary of the contents of the letters by Mary Wondrausch (2 folders)

D DX1941 A/4	Notebooks belonging to Dorothy Hartley Two books relate to books Hartley read at the British Library (5 docs)	Undated [1930s-1985]
D DX1941 A/5	British Library reader request slips of items ordered by Dorothy Hartley Includes name of author, title of book, and date of publication (3 folders)	Undated [1930s-1985]
D DX1941 A/6	Articles by Dorothy Hartley Includes British Museum application for photography, press cuttings and correspondence (1 folder)	Undated [1930s-1985]
D DX1941 B	Mary Wondrausch Research Material	
D DX1941 B/1	Folder of official documents relating to Dorothy Hartley Includes birth certificate, will, grant of probate and letter relating to probate (1 folder)	1985-1995
D DX1941 B/2	Folders of biographical material and articles on Dorothy Hartley by Mary Wondrausch Includes Dorothy Hartley - A Prelude, by Mary Wondrausch, Dorothy Hartley - A Brief Study of Her Achievements, by Mary Wondrausch, a bibliography of Hartley's publications and lecture notes with photographs (3 folders)	1990s
D DX1941 B/3	Folder of correspondence relating to Mary Wondrausch's research relating to a biography of Dorothy Hartley Arranged alphabetically (3 folders)	1990s
D DX1941 B/4	Folder of handwritten notes relating to an interview with Bernard Andrews by Mary Wondrausch (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]

D DX1941 B/5	Folder relating to an interview with Betty Littman by Mary Wondraush Includes cassette tape, partial transcription, notes by Mary Wondrausch, article and original drawing by Dorothy Hartley (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/6	Folder relating to research into Dorothy Hartley material at the Museum of English Rural Life by Mary Wondraush Includes notes by Mary Wondrausch, photocopies of photographs and copies of correspondence between Dorothy Hartley and the Keeper of the Museum, Andrew Jewell (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/7	Folder of articles by Dorothy Hartley, and notes by Mary Wondraush (2 folders)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/8	Family trees of Dorothy Hartley's family Hand drawn, 2 versions (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/9	Folder relating to Dorothy Hartley's books Includes bibliography of her work, and photocopies of book covers (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/10	Folder relating to Jill Caseley Includes photographs, press cuttings, copies of greetings cards by Dorothy Hartley, notes by Mary Wondrausch and copy of letter from Dorothy Hartley to Jill Caseley (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/11	Folder relating to Irish Holiday Includes notes on Giraldus Cambrensis, press cuttings and extract from the book (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/12	Folder of Photographs, and Articles by and about Dorothy Hartley (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]

D DX1941 B/13	Folder of Photographs of Dorothy Hartley Includes a collage by Mary Wondrausch and copy of an article (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/14	Folder of copies from Food In England by Dorothy Hartley Includes a bibliography of Dorothy Hartley's books (1 folder)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/15	Miscellaneous folders of research by Mary Wondrausch Includes photocopies of letters from Dorothy Hartley to Fred Littman, copies of letters praising Dorothy Hartley's work, letters from Dorothy Hartley's niece, and Gordon Sheratt, article by Mary Wondrausch on the Rebecca Riots, notes by Mary Wondrausch and correspondence (4 folders)	Undated [1990s]
D DX1941 B/16	Llangollen - Official Guide (1 doc)	1993