

U DX133

Papers of Peter Sheldon

1959-1977

Historical Background:

Frank Raymond Leavis (F.R. Leavis) was born on 14 July 1895 and went on to become an influential literary critic, mainly teaching at Downing College Cambridge and later at the University of York.

On the outbreak of the First World War Leavis joined the Friends' Ambulance Unit (FAU), working just behind the Western Front. When conscription was introduced in 1916, members of the FAU were automatically considered conscientious objectors and, therefore, not forced to sign up. The war had a deep impact on Leavis and he was slow to recover, he later referred to this time as 'the great hiatus'. He had previously won a scholarship to Emmanuel College, Cambridge and began a degree in History in 1919, only to change to English in his second year. Leavis graduated with a first class degree, however, he was not offered a research fellowship and so instead began a PhD. He was later appointed a probationary lecturer at Cambridge in 1927.

In 1929, Leavis married Queenie Roth, one of his students. It was a productive partnership, which reached its height in 1932 when Leavis published *New Bearings in English Poetry*, Queenie published *Fiction and the Reading Public* and the quarterly periodical *Scrutiny* was first produced. Leavis was also appointed director of studies in English at Downing College the same year and it was where he would stay for the next thirty years.

Scrutiny was a critical quarterly that Leavis edited until 1953, using it as a vehicle for the new Cambridge criticism. It provided a forum for identifying important contemporary work as well as reviewing the traditional canon. This was followed by several other books and publications in the ensuing years.

Leavis left Downing in 1964 and took visiting professorships at the Universities of Bristol, Wales and York. He died in 1978, aged 82.

Sir Basil Blackwell was born on 29 May 1889, the son of Benjamin Blackwell, founder of Blackwell's bookshop. Blackwell's went on to become a family publishing and bookshop empire, which has now been incorporated as the publishing arm of Wiley-Blackwell. He was knighted in 1956, the only bookseller to be knighted. He died on 9 April 1984.

Custodial history:

Donated by Peter Sheldon, Brynmor Jones Library, University of Hull, 15 December 1977 [DX133/1] and 9 August 1982 [DX133/2-4]

Description:

This small collection includes a letter of summons to serve on a coroner's jury as well as several letters asking permission to copy particular books and articles, including *Scrutiny*, Vol.6 Parts I and IV, by F.R. Leavis.

Extent: 8 items

Related material:

Letter from F.R. Leavis to W.S. Vines [U DX41/1/3]

Other repositories:

Dr Frank Raymond Leavis, Cambridge University King's College Archive [ref. NGA/4/23]

Access conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

U DX133/1	Summons to serve on a coroner's jury This was one of the last summons to be issued for such jury duties 1 item	7 Dec 1977
U DX133/2	Letters relating to permission to copy <i>Scrutiny</i> Contains three letters including Peter Sheldon's initial letter to Deighton, Bell & Co Ltd, requesting permission to copy <i>Scrutiny</i> , Vol. 6 Parts I and IV, as well as Deighton, Bell & Co Ltd.'s reply and a further letter from the copyright holder, F.R. Leavis 3 items	4 Oct- 4 Nov 1959
U DX133/3	Letter from Peter Sheldon to Basil Blackwell Asking permission to copy Chapter 2 of 'An Estimate of William Wordsworth by his Contemporaries' by Elsie Smith (1932). Includes Blackwell's reply. 2 items	25-28 Jan 1960
U DX133/4	Letter from Peter Sheldon to Leonard Woolf Asking permission to copy 'The Structure of Wuthering Heights' by C.P.S. Includes Woolf's reply. 2 items	27 Jan- 1 Feb 1961