

BG: BILL GRIFFITHS COLLECTION: Key topics finding aid

Alfred, King of England, 849-899 – Griffiths amassed numerous research notes on King Alfred with particular reference to his translations of the Roman philosopher Boethius, whose work Alfred transcribed into Old English. Griffiths took this one step further and created new versions in modern English. The collection includes notes and copies of published material with some items on Alfred and Boethius in [Folders 20/1, 20/2, 20/3, 20/4, 20/5](#) and on the law during Alfred's reign in [Folders 22/1](#) and general notes in [23/3](#).

Amra Imprint – Griffiths's second publishing venture, created in the eighties while Griffiths was based on his barge in Cowley, but later moved to Seaham. The press published pamphlets and booklets of poetry, local history, essays, and artwork by Griffiths and several other writers.

There are several examples of work by Amra Imprint principally in [Boxes 2 to 6](#).

Anglo-Saxons – Folklore

Key Publications – [Folder 2/1](#) Book, *The Land Ceremonies Charm* edited and translated by Bill Griffiths, illustrated by Mary Parry.

Research Notes – [Folder 15/1](#) general notes on folklore and ritual, [Folder 18/4](#) notes on charms, [Folders 25/2-25/4](#) have studies on runes, and some charts made for publication.

Beowulf

Reflecting Griffiths's interest in ancient languages and modern interpretations are several items around the great Anglo Saxon poem *Beowulf*, including translations of the epic poem and research into the figure of Beowulf and his adversary the drax (dragon).

Correspondence – [Folder 7/1](#) contains letters from Mike Weller around his Beowulf cartoon.

Research Notes – [Folders 19/3, 19/4, 22/4, 23/2](#) and [24/1](#).

Key Publications inspired by/translations of - [Folder 1/1](#) Booklet, *Beowulf Anglo Saxon Text with Modern English Parallel*. English text by John Porter.

[Folder 1/3](#) - *Beowulf Anglo Saxon Text with Modern English Parallel, 2nd Impression*. English text by John Porter.

[Folder 4/1](#) - essay *Meet the Dragon: An Introduction to Beowulf's Adversary* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 4/2](#) - Poetry booklet, *Meet the Dragon: An Introduction to Beowulf's adversary* by Bill Griffiths, published by Heart of Albion Press.

[Folder 6/2](#) - Illustrated graphic edition of *Beowulf cartoon* by M J Weller with an introductory poem by Bill Griffiths.

Boethius

Research on the Roman philosopher Boethius and his publications *Consolation of Philosophy* and *Meters of Boethius* for the purpose of translating Old English versions of them into modern English.

Research Notes –miscellaneous notes on the history and the constructions of his texts in [Folders 19/4, 20/1, 20/2, 20/3, 20/4](#) and [20/5](#)

Book design

Construction – Print ready copies of text for printing can be viewed in [Folder 12/1](#). Camera ready images in [Folder 12/4](#).

Visuals used in publications – hand drawn or crafted images used in publications are collected in [Folder 13/2](#) for original artwork, [Folder 13/3](#) for uncoloured images, [13/4](#) for coloured images. [Folders 6/3](#) and [6/4](#) show some elements in the layout and design of *Split Cities*.

Bunting, Basil – (1900-1985) (modernist poet) -

Correspondence – [Folders 15/2](#) and [15/3](#) contain copies of a series of letters between Bunting and the poet Eric Mottram.

Several other folders have lectures and articles written by others on the subject of Bunting.

[Folder 5/1](#) - Journal, Chicago Review Volume 44 Numbers 3 & 4 1998 including an article by Bill Griffiths, 'Basil Bunting and Eric Mottram'

[Folder 15/1](#) - Copy of lecture given by Bill Griffiths at Durham University on the subject of Basil Bunting & Eric Mottram

[Folder 15/3](#) - Essay about Basil Bunting & Eric Mottram by Bill Griffiths

[Folder 9/1](#) - Booklet, *Bewcastle and Other Poems for Basil Bunting* by Colin Simms.

Clark, Robert (Bob) (artist and collaborator) –

Correspondence – [Folder 6/3](#) and [6/4](#) contains some letters and cards sent to Bill Griffiths, with information on the design of the book *Split Cities*.

Key Publications – [Folder 1/4](#) Book, *For Rediffusion* by Bill Griffiths, illustrated by Robert Clark

[Folders 6/3](#) and [6/4](#) contain material by the artist Bob Clark, original watercolours and the artwork for the book *Split Cities*.

Coal miners -- England, North East – Language

Bill Griffiths was a vocal supporter of miners and attended benefits and published work for their charities.

Publications - [Folder 2/2](#) Long pamphlet titled *Coal* by Bill Griffiths with a single poem inside.

[Folder 4/3](#) Folded paper booklet, *The Kids That Carried the Satchel; A Tale of Derring Do and Dark Pit-Craft*.

[Folder 5/2](#) - Booklet, *The Coal World: Murton Tales Re-worked as Dialect Verse*.

Cobbing, Bob (1920-2002) (sound and visual poet, member of Koncrete Canticle, founding publisher of Writers Forum) –

Correspondence – [Folder 7/4](#) contains letters and ephemera written to Bill Griffiths.

Key Publications – [Folder 7/4](#) Publication, *Cobbing Kith & Kin No. 1*, about the history of Cobbings in England. Booklet, *On Word Part One* poetry anthology edited by Bob Cobbing & Lawrence Upton
Single examples of Cobbing's writing in [Folder 1/1](#), [5/1](#), [5/3](#) and [6/1](#).

Death of - [Folder 8/4](#) has obituaries on Cobbing and poems published on his death. Letters concerning his death appear in [Folders 5/2](#), [7/2](#) and [9/5](#).

Dream of the rood

Research notes on the 8th century Old English dream poem can be found in [Folder 22/3](#) and [Folder 11/6](#) has some manuscript versions of Bill Griffith's translation of the poem.

Durham (history) – see Local History

England, North East -- Songs and music

Key publication - [Folders 3/2](#) - *Alexander Barrass: The Pitman's Social Neet* edited by Bill Griffiths.

English essays -- 20th century

Griffiths utilised the essay writing tradition as a way of publicising his campaigns and causes as well as publishing academic compositions.

Key Publications [Folder 3/1](#) - *'the battle of Maldon': a response to Donald Scragg* from Bill Griffiths. This is an essay published by Griffiths as a riposte to a critical review earlier in his career.

[Folder 3/2](#) - Comb bound essay, *HMP Revising Prison: an essay by Bill Griffiths and In Praise of Church Street (Seaham)* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 3/3](#) - Published essay, *In Rebuttal of The Guardian, on Solitary Confinement* by Bill Griffiths, Amra Imprint and *Some Notes on The Metropolitan Police*, London with some footnotes on Magistrates Courts by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/2](#) - Comb bound essay *The Denes of the Bishopric: An Essay on the Coastal Zone of County Durham* by Bill Griffiths and Trevor Charlton.

Drafts - Some drafts of essays are contained in [Folder 22/2](#) and [22/3](#).

English language -- Dialects – England

Bill Griffiths's interest in language was re-awakened by his move to Seaham and contact with the North East dialect. His studies in the language also generated verse and prose as well as dictionaries and word-lists.

Correspondence on - [Folder 8/3](#) has correspondence with Steve Cox on the subject of dialect and [Folder 9/1](#) includes correspondence with Colin Simms on dialect.

[Folder 9/4](#) has some letters on Griffiths's time at the Centre for Northern Studies where he studied dialect.

Publications –

[Folders 3/2](#) - Publication, *Alexander Barrass: The Pitman's Social Neet* edited by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 3/3](#) – Comb bound booklet, *Durham & Around: a dialect reader* edited by Bill Griffiths. Booklet, *Skemmies an' Stanes: two poems in dialect* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 4/1](#) - Publication, Edward Chicken's *The Collier's Wedding A Poem*, *Durham & Around: Dialect Word Lists* edited by Bill Griffiths, second revised edition of *A List of Slang Terms for Morden, Surrey* compiled by D.R McIntosh; revised by Paul Campbell; with notes by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/1](#) - Book, *North East Dialect Survey and Word List* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/2](#) - Booklet, *The Coal World: Murton Tales Re-worked as Dialect Verse*, Book, *North East Dialect: The Texts* selected, edited and introduced by Bill Griffiths.

Selected publications on dialect in [Folder 5/4](#), [Folder 6/1](#) and [Folder 6/2](#).

English language--Old English, ca. 450-1100.

Correspondence on – [Folder 9/2](#) discusses Old English in a letter to Clive Fencott,

Publications - [19/1/1](#) Booklet, *A User-Friendly Dictionary of Old English* compiled by Bill Griffiths,

Research – Notes on structure, syntax, vocabulary in [Folder 19/1, 19/2, 19/4, 20/1](#) and [20/3](#)

English literature--Old English, ca. 450-1100

Key Publications – [Folder 2/1](#) Booklet, *Guthlac B: A Translation* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 2/2](#) Small bound copy of *The Phoenix* with red cover, this is an old English poem translated by Bill Griffiths

[Folder 5/2](#) - Booklet of *St Cuthbert: Aelfric's Life of the saint in Old English* with Modern English Parallel prepared by Bill Griffiths

[Folder 6/1](#) *Battle of Maldon* from a Victorian version published by Frederick William Lois Butterfield. This edition has a modern version and a transcription of the text by Bill Griffiths.

Research – Notes on Old English literature in [Folder 20/1, 20/2, 20/4, 20/5, 21/4, 21/5](#)

English poetry -- 20th century

Examples of published and unpublished concrete, visual, experimental poetry as well dialect verse in [Boxes 1 to 9](#), usually by the poet Bill Griffiths. Also by Jeremy Adler, Bob Cobbing, Clive Fencott, Tom Leonard, Barry MacSweeney, John Muckle, Tom Pickard, John Seed, Colin Simms, Iain Sinclair and Mike Weller, to a significant extent. With Geraldine Monk, Adrian Clarke, Harry Gilonis, Jeff Nuttall, Steve Cox, Tom Raworth, to a lesser extent. Many of the poets concerned were involved in the British Poetry Revival in the 60's and 70's.

Exeter book

Griffiths published several translated sections of *The Exeter Book*, an Old English anthology of verse.

Key Publications

[Folder 2/1](#) -Booklet *Guthlac B: A Translation* by Bill Griffiths of the Old English Poem on the death of Saint Guthlac translated by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 2/2](#) – *The Phoenix*, trans. by Bill Griffiths.

Research Notes [Folders 22/3](#) and [23/5](#), contain research on the anthology.

Fencott, Clive (sound poet and academic)

Key Publications – [Folder 1/3](#) -Pamphlet with plastic binding and Perspex cover, *Three* by Jeremy Adler, P.C Fencott and Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 1/4](#) -*The Spiral Door Stop* by P.C Fencott,

[Folder 2/3/](#) -Booklet, *The Dinosaur Park* by Clive Fencott and Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 3/1](#) - Poetry pamphlet *Variations on the Life of Cuthbert* by Clive Fencott and Bill Griffiths.

[Box 9/2](#) is a key folder and contains several examples of Fencott's work and some collages.

Ghost stories, English -- History and criticism

Correspondence about - [Folder 8/3](#) Letter from Steve Cox with feedback on Griffith's Ghost play.

[Folder 9/1](#) Postcard from Tom Pickard to Bill 28th Jan 2001, he praises Bill's "ghost book".

Key Publications – [Folder 1/1](#) A4 booklet, *Mr James Ghost Stories* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 4/3](#) -Author's second proofing copy of *Fallacies & Ghost Tales of Seaville* by Bill Griffiths, October 1996.

[Folder 4/3](#) - *The Experiment A New Year's Eve Ghost Story* by Montague Rhodes (M.R) James revived for reading, author's proofing copy of *Phantom Tales of Seaville – Three*.

[Folder 5/2](#) -Book, *Ghost Tales, Folk Tales & Tales of Seaville* collected, arranged and realised by Bill Griffiths.

[Box 26/3](#) researches into Griffith's ghost play, and includes notes on ghost stories.

Law – England – History

Correspondence – [Folder 25/4](#) Letter from Tony Bush to Bill Griffiths, September 1994 on publication of a book about Anglo-Saxon law.

Research – [Folder 19/3](#) and [Folder 22/3](#) – Studies in the law from the Roman period to Anglo-Saxon.

Local and regional action

Griffiths was involved in several local campaigns to improve the community of Seaham, Durham.

Correspondence on – [Folder 18/2](#) includes letter campaigns Bill Griffiths wrote from 1995 -1997 to preserve the local coastline and [Folder 18/3](#) has similar material from 1995-2002 the product of activism against council building plans.

Publications - [Folder 3/3](#) Report, *The Coast of Durham* compiled by Bill Griffiths, *A Century of Self Service? Aspects of Local Government in the North East*, with special reference to Seaham a study by Bill Griffiths.

Local History

Griffiths was a passionate local historian, researching particularly the geology, history and geography of Seaham and Durham.

Key publications - [Folder 2/4](#) -*A Seaham Reader 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6*. Medieval, Seaham Hall, The Harbour, The Mines, Yearly Bonds - pamphlet series about the history and geography of the area edited by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 3/2](#) - *Seaham: a provisional bibliography* compiled by Bill Griffiths, published essay, *In Praise of Church Street (Seaham)* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 3/3](#) - Published essay, *The Mythology of Seaham: A Review of Tom McNee's Local History Publications* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/1](#) - Booklet *Seaham's Fishing Fleet*. A history/ social memoir about the fishing fleet.

[Folder 5/2](#) - Booklet *Readings in Seaham History, Part One*, edited by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/3](#) - Booklet, *Old Seaham in Anglo Saxon and Medieval Times*, published by The Story of Seaham. Pamphlet, *Smuggling In Seaham* compiled by Bill Griffiths.

MacSweeney, Barry (1948-2000) - (journalist and poet)

[Folder 7/5](#) contains miscellaneous material on MacSweeney.

Publications - [Folder 7/5](#) - Booklet of poetry, *Hellhound Memos* by Barry MacSweeney.

[7/5/4](#) Poetry booklet, *Six Poets: Views & Interviews* (The Gig Documents Series, #2) November, 2001. It contains an interview with Barry MacSweeney by Eric Mottram.

Death of - [Folders 9/4](#) and [9/5](#) contains some letters on the death of Barry MacSweeney and a benefit performance in his honour.

Mottram, Eric - (poet and critic)

Correspondence – [Folder 15/2](#) has copies of some correspondence by Mottram in relation to his position as editor of the Poetry Society journal as well as letter to Mottram from Basil Bunting on the same subject.

Key Publications –

[Folder 2/1](#) - Pamphlet *Variations* by Various Artists including Bill Griffiths and Eric Mottram.

[Folder 2/2](#) - Book, *The New British Poetry 1968-88* edited by Gillian Allnutt, Fred D'Aguiar, Ken Edwards and

[Folder 3/3](#) - Pamphlet *Motley for Mottram a tribute to Eric Mottram* with several contributors including Bill Griffiths. Eric Mottram.

[Folder 4/2](#) - Booklet, *Design Origins Mask Book Two Poems 1993-4* by Eric Mottram.

Mottram, Eric – Archive – [Folder 15/1](#) and [15/2](#). These folders contain information related to Bill Griffiths's appointment and work as archivist of the Eric Mottram Archive at Kings College London.

Muckle, John – (writer)

Publications – [Folder 2/2](#) - Poetry booklet *Bikers* by Bill Griffiths and John Muckle, larger copy of the poetry booklet *Bikers* by Bill Griffiths and John Muckle.

[Folder 2/4](#) Booklet, *Bazzin*, by Bill Griffiths, Claire Cohen, John Muckle and Billy Mills.

North East – Dictionaries

Key publications - [Folder 5/1](#) - Book, *North East Dialect Survey and Word List* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/4](#) - Book, *North East Dialect: Survey and Word-List, Second Edition Revised, Updated* by Bill Griffiths. Book, *North East Dialect: The Texts*, researched, edited & introduced by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 6/2](#) - Book, *A Dictionary of North East Dialect* by Bill Griffiths.

Pirate Press

Bill Griffiths's first press, based in London and publishing in the seventies and early eighties. It produced mainly handmade pamphlets and booklets of poetry, essays and chapbooks by Griffiths and other poets and writers.

Examples of publications are chiefly contained in [Boxes 1](#) and [Box 2 Folder 1 & 2](#).

Prisons--Great Britain.

Bill Griffiths wrote to many imprisoned men over his lifetime and became involved in campaigning for their release and improving conditions in prisons.

Appeals process - [Folders 10/2, 10/3](#) and [11/1](#)– have correspondence on the appeal for the prisoner Ray Gilbert 1999-2004. Folder [16/1](#) and [16/2](#) contains the letters Griffiths received while campaigning for better conditions in prisons 1993-1996 which include an appeal to the European Parliament.

Correspondence with prisoners

[Folder 16/4](#) has miscellaneous letters related to prisoners.

-**Brickland, Phil** – [Folder 10/1](#) contains hand crafted cards sent by the prisoner Phil Brickland to Bill Griffiths.

-**Gilbert, Ray** – [Folders 10/2](#) and [10/3](#) contains letters written from Bill Griffiths to Ray Gilbert while in prison during 1999-2004. [Folders 10/4](#) and [10/5](#) have some of the correspondence from Ray Gilbert from 1999-2004. [Folder 11/1](#) has background material on his case. [Folder 17/2](#) has further correspondence to Griffiths 1996-1998, [Folder 17/3](#) letters 1998-2000.

-**McIntosh, Delvin** – [Folder 10/1](#) contains letter to and from Bill Griffiths 1992-1993 from his friend the prisoner Delvin McIntosh. It also has a copy of a journal written by McIntosh in prison.

Ephemera – [Folders 16/3](#) contains booklets and information provided by the prison service for visitors and inmates.

Publications inspired by

[Folder 1/1](#) - Pamphlet, essay no.one. It consists of ten short statements/questions about imprisonment with a paper cover. Pamphlet *War w. Windsor* by Bill Griffiths Visual Texts Sean O’Huigin.

[Folder 3/2](#) - Booklet, *Seventy-six Day Wannu, Mississippi and Highpoint Journal from the work of D.R MacIntosh & Bill Griffiths*. A prison diary by Devlin MacIntosh interspersed with letters, HMP *Revising Prison: an essay* by Bill Griffiths. Edition of *Star Fish Jail* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 17/1](#) – Essay, *Revising Prisons: an essay* by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 5/1](#) - *Durham (Poems of a Visit) (Poems of a Visit to Durham Prison)* by Bill Griffiths.

Research notes – [Folder 10/1](#) contains notes on the publication *Star Fish Jail*. [15/1](#) and [15/3](#) have research notes on prisons in other cultures. [Folder 16/4, 17/1](#) and [17/3](#) has research and newspaper clippings on prisons.

Runes

Research notes – [Folder 15/4, 25/1, 25/2](#) and [25/4](#) contains research into runes in ancient/medieval cultures.

Publications – drafts - [Folder 25/1](#) - Typed draft of *The Rune Poem* by Bill Griffiths and draft of an essay ‘The Non-Secret Rune?’ by Bill Griffiths, about Old English Runes.

Seaham – See local history.

Sinclair, Iain - (writer, poet and journalist)

Correspondence – [Folder 9/3](#) contains cards, postcards and several letters addresses to Bill Griffiths around the subject of anthologies and an event at the Barbican.

Publications - [Folder 9/3](#) - Pamphlet of verse, *Jack Elam’s Other Eye* by Iain Sinclair.

Soccer – Poetry

Publications – [Folder 5/4](#) - Book, *Football Haiku* a book of poems devised by Alec Finlay.

Research notes – [Folder 17/4](#) – Newspaper cuttings, football programme and other material related to league football.

Small presses--England--History--20th century

ALP (Association of Little Presses) – Box 7 Folder 3 has catalogues containing lists of small press publishers and their works, with some articles on the history and some publications.

Publications - There are numerous examples of small press editions in [Boxes 1](#) to [Box 9](#) (up to [Folder 3](#)). [Boxes 1-6](#) (up to [Folder 3](#)) are usually produced and published by Bill Griffiths under Pirate Press and Amra Imprint, with some examples of other small publishers such as Anglo-Saxon Books, Writers Forum, Runetree, Talus Editions, Tern Press, Visual Associations and Woodcraft Books. [Boxes 6](#) (from [Folder 4](#)) to [Box 9](#) (up to [Folder 3](#)) contain works by other writers/artists who have collaborated with Bill Griffiths, been published by him or have given him work, and are usually published by small presses.

M. J. Weller, (Michael John) – (artist, illustrator and writer)

Correspondence – [Folder 7/1](#) - Letters from the graphic artist and illustrator Mike Weller to Bill Griffiths on the subject of their collaborations.

Publications – [Folder 5/2](#) - Booklet, *The Coal World: Murton Tales Re-worked as Dialect Verse*, original text by Frank Platts, versification by Bill Griffiths, visual work by Mike Weller.

[Folder 6/2](#) - Illustrated graphic edition of *Beowulf* cartoon by M J Weller with an introductory poem by Bill Griffiths.

[Folder 7/1](#) - Graphic novel on paper, *Hemptee Promitch and Atterdake Ryst* by MJ Weller, graphic novel on paper, *The boys are back in town* by M J Weller, Booklets, *M* and *N*, an artist's book, by M J Weller, pamphlet, *Beowulf: An Old Old Story Book Four: The coming of Beowulf*.