

UC:MA38 Papers of James Griffith (Master 1808-21)

James Griffith matriculated at Corpus Christi College in 1777, and was elected a Fellow of University College in 1782. He was elected Master in 1808. Perhaps the most notable event in his Mastership was the sending down of Percy Bysshe Shelley for his refusing to admit the authorship of his *The Necessity of Atheism*.

Griffith took an unusual interest in art: he had the front of the south side of the Main Quad rebuilt to his own designs, and specialised in poker work (the art of drawing pictures on wood with hot metal). Two examples of his work, portraits of Henry IV, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, still exist in the College. Some affectionate reminiscences of Griffith and the College are to be found in the memoirs of his wife's niece, Elizabeth Grant (*Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, ed. A. Tod [Edinburgh 1992]). See also Robin Darwall-Smith, *A History of University College, Oxford* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 336-42.

Very few personal papers of Griffith have so far been found in the archives, although two of his designs for College buildings do survive.

Catalogued in January 1998.

UC:MA38/F1 - GUARANTEE FROM GRIFFITH AS BURSAR

UC:MA38/F1/1

23 Mar 1799

Copy (n.d.) of Bond

Parties:

1. a) James Griffith of University College, Oxford, M.A.
b) William Fletcher.
c) John Parsons, both Mercers of the City of Oxford.
2. The Master and Fellows of University College.

Comments: 1a has just been appointed Bursar of the College, and 1 are bound to 2 to guarantee that at the end of his term he will give the College a full account of all receipts, and hand all moneys over to 2.

UC:MA38/F2 - BILL FOR GRIFFITH'S BURIAL

UC:MA38/F2/1

May 1823

Masons' bill for the Executors of J. Griffith (decd.) for expenses over burying him in the College chapel.