



**A** The National Archives

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**FROM THE VICTORIANS WITH LOVE -  
THEIR TANGLED LOVE LIVES REVEALED IN LETTERS**

As Valentine's Day approaches, a timely browse through correspondence held at Glamorgan Archives reveals how the course of true love ran far from smoothly for our Victorian ancestors.

Highlighted as part of the [Archive Awareness Campaign](#), letters written up to 200 years ago chronicle tales of passionate affairs and unrequited love in nineteenth century Britain.

The *Edmondson Collection* in particular contains a rich collection of letters which shed light on courtship and romance in Victorian high society. An account written in 1886, describes how the elderly Lord Dormar, who became Mrs Edmondson's fourth husband, proposed to his intended. He '*was so old and stiff*', apparently, that after he had fallen on his knees to propose, Mrs Edmondson was '*obliged to ring for the footman to help him up*'.

Other letters illustrate the kind of obstacles that could thwart Victorian romance.

**Heather Mountjoy, Archivist** explains: "Two letters amongst the *Edmondson Collection* give an insight into the tangled love life of Thomas Deere Salmon, a friend of Miss Charlotte Edmondson of Cowbridge. In letters sent in 1865, Thomas announces his engagement to a Miss Adelaide Gorton. Unfortunately for Thomas, in his next letter he gives Charlotte the news that the engagement is off, citing '*money matters*' as the reason. Adelaide could have also been persuaded to break off the engagement by the offer of a new horse and piano from her father if she didn't marry Thomas."

As well as several other enthralling love letters, there are a number of hand-made cards in the collection. Some are decorated with lace and cherubs. Others are beautifully illustrated with declarations of love such as “My heart is yours forever”. There are also several love tokens and gifts.

**Cardiff Council’s Executive Member for Sport, Culture and Leisure, Cllr Nigel Howells**, comments:

**“The cards and letters shed light into love in the Victorian age and show how our ancestors had the same troubles as us when it comes to finding romance. Glamorgan Archives is a treasure trove of items that are a great resource for people who are researching their family trees.”**

**Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign Officer** says:

**“As well as telling charming Valentine's Day stories, the letters and cards prove that the complexities of love haven’t changed much across the centuries. In the past, just as today, love hasn’t always run smoothly. The records illustrate the wealth of material about family history stored at the Archive – a great resource which is available to everyone. Archives across the UK are opening their doors to the public so that people can search for fascinating materials such as this”.**

**– Ends –**

## **Notes to Editors**

One of the many heartbreaking letters sent by Mr Salmon translates:

*My Dear friend Charlotte*

*I am really very sorry not to have written to you before, & I beg your pardon for it as I wished to do so & meant to do so long ago, but (don't laugh at me) I've written to nobody. There are piles of letters unanswered. But thanks for your last which I have not deserved, more thanks to you for writing it. There is no secrecy or difficulty about the matter. I am engaged to be married to Miss Adelaide Gorton the only daughter of the Revd. Mr Gorton, Rector of Badingham, Suffolk. She is of course much younger than I, but it is not an affair of yesterday, in fact it has been going on for a long time between us, but some time ago my father made some indiscreet remarks about it in London society just as if we were engaged when we were not, & therefore in justice to the lady I was obliged to contradict the whole thing, & keep it dark till I really was engaged. She is an only daughter & has nursed her father for years through an amount of agony and suffering that are quite horrible to witness, & of course it is a great trial to part with such a daughter. He offered her a new piano & a new horse the other day if she would stop! Well, the time of our marriage is not fixed; when it is, I will of course let you know. Her*

*father's complaint is Tic Douloureux, the worst case I have heard of, & his state may delay our marriage, in fact all is uncertain at present. I have had a most delightful autumn at their beautiful place in Suffolk. Now I am back in London. Black Monday has come, & I am getting up a speech for the court tomorrow, as dismal as a hung dog. Therefore you will I trust, mercifully excuse this exceedingly sprightly letter, & all my other negligencies & stupidities & set them all down to the account of "that blind rascally boy Dan Cupid." But nevertheless I hope you will believe that I am always your sincere friend Thos. Deere Salmon*

- See link attached link <http://cardiff.images.newsflashconnect.co.uk/pickuppictures.tlx?pickupid> for photographs of the Victorian Valentine cards and letters between Thomas Deere Salmon and Charlotte Edmondson held at the Glamorgan Archives, full transcripts of Thomas Deere Salmon letters are available on request.
- The Glamorgan Archive opened its new home in Leckwith in 2010. A staggering 45,000 volumes, 60,000 plans and hundreds of items were moved to the new building.
- Glamorgan Archives provides archive services to Cardiff Council, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan CBCs see [www.glamro.gov.uk](http://www.glamro.gov.uk) for further details.
- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the Archives & Records Association (ARA) ([www.archives.org.uk](http://www.archives.org.uk)) and funded by The National Archives ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council ([www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk)).
- Archive Awareness Campaign [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com) is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.