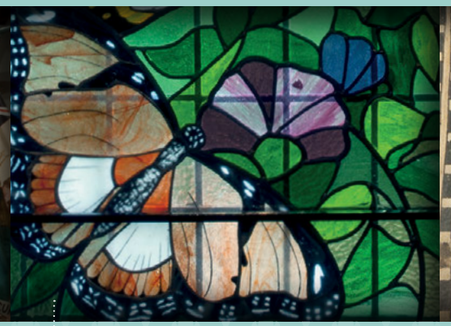
Explore

The Three Museums of Eton College



The Museum of Eton Life

The Natural History Museum

The Museum of Antiquities

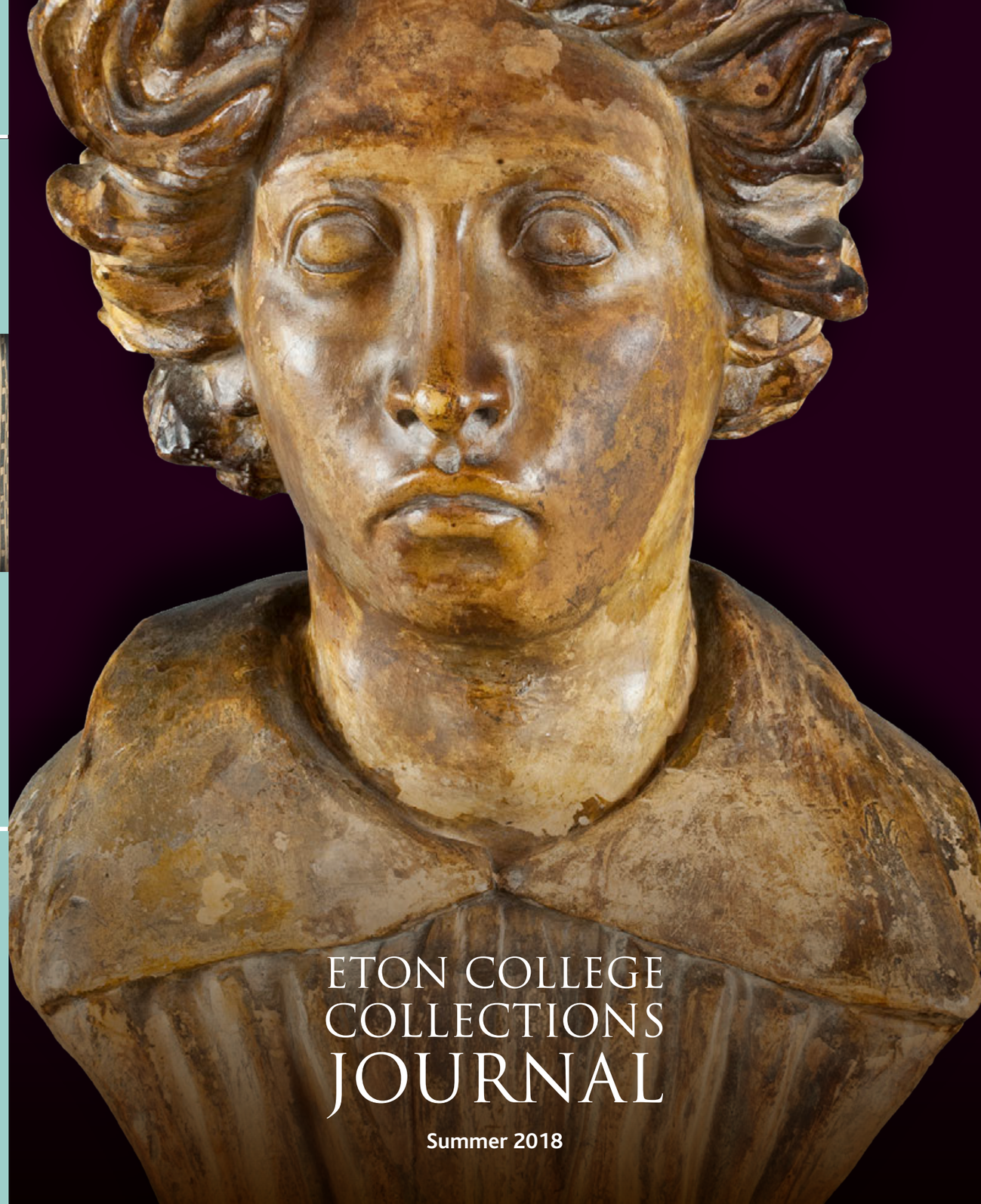
Open Sundays, 2.30 - 5.00pm
Free Admission

Eton College Collections
Eton College, Windsor, SL4 6DW

Telephone: 01753 370590
collections@etoncollege.org.uk

Website: www.etoncollege.com/CollegeCollections
Blog: www.etoncollegecollections.wordpress.com
Twitter: @EtonCollections

Registered charity number 1139086



ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS JOURNAL

Summer 2018

Contents

03 From the Provost

Around the Collections

04 Plenty to Shout About: The Collections on social media
06 Medals and Misdemeanours
08 The Two Shelleys
09 *Etoniana* and *The Chronicle* online
10 Behind the Scenes: Caring for artefacts in the Museum of Antiquities
12 Passport to an Exhibition

Features

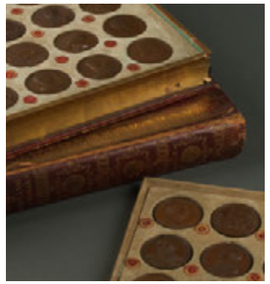
14 An Emperor's Gift to Eton: Poetry and Power
17 John Piper's Altar Frontal
18 The New Silver Commissions
20 Talking Through Trees
22 Eric Arthur Blair: Thinking for Himself

Eton College Collections Remember

24 The Newall Collection of Eggs

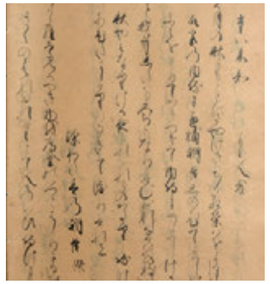
Friends of the College Collections

26 Friends Review



06
Medals and Misdemeanours

08
The Two Shelleys



14
An Emperor's Gift to Eton

Cover Image: Cast of Marianne Hunt's bust of Percy Bysshe Shelley

From the Provost

Once again, the team has produced a fascinating Journal, which displays both the breadth of our holdings, and the success with which they are being used to educate, inform and entertain. Two of the major themes at Eton this year are represented. First, the Collections are playing a central part in the inevitably sombre remembrance of the centenary of the Armistice on 11 November. Second, this summer marks the hundred and first anniversary of the arrival in College of Eric Blair, George Orwell, whose bust by Martin Jennings was unveiled on the 3rd of May by Orwell's son Richard at the end of a day of discussion and speeches at Eton held in conjunction with the Orwell Foundation. Georgina Robinson writes about what the archive will be able to display on the day – not all that much, since apart from a vigorous contribution to the activities of College Wall, Orwell admits himself to having done not much academic work at Eton, though he did enjoy himself.

The Journal also demonstrates the team's mastery of modern media in terms of showing what we have and making it accessible. OEs and others can now enjoy as much as I do browsing old Chronicles online; and the Collections deploy no less than six Twitter accounts: Lucy Gwynn demonstrates on page 4 the good use that can be made of them. Philippa Martin writes of the extraordinary and mostly disastrous life of James Mudie, of whose 'National Series of Medals' we have a fine set. She also brings back into focus the last – but not the least – of Eton's commissions to John Piper, namely that of the fine altar frontal illustrated on page 17, while Shauna Gailey writes about the creation of our magnificent new silver commissions for the Chapel, worthy objects to accompany Piper's work in glass and cloth.

As always, there is a fascinating essay by our doyen, Michael Meredith: this time on the connection between our bust of Shelley by Marianne Hunt, which Michael shows to have been given to Robert Browning and long owned by the Browning family, before being generously bought and given to Eton in 1939 by OE Marshall Field III. The first and essential duty of the owner of any collection is to care for it properly: Rebecca Tessier and Aimee Sims remind us of the hard and painstaking work this involves, giving examples from the Museum of Antiquities. I have written before about Stephie's Coane's excellent Tower Exhibition, 'Voyages: a Journey in Books'. On page 12 she writes about the principles which led her to curate it in such an original way. Roddy Fisher and George Fussey collaborate to tell us about the scientifically very significant Newall Collection of eggs, and how such a collection today is used in the cause of conservation.

But I am particularly pleased to see two excellent scholarly contributions, one from a current Etonian, Chris Thorn KS, and one from a recent Etonian, Ed Picton-Turbervill. Chris demonstrates the importance of our collection of Japanese Waka poetry, given to us in the 1920s by then Crown Prince Hirohito. He explains that we own a spectacular treasure, which has perhaps not until now been fully appreciated. Ed meanwhile, inspired by Michael Meredith's having introduced him to our holdings of private press books when he was a boy here, describes his own very fine venture, the production of the beautiful book Talking Through Trees. No better proof of the success of the Collections in fulfilling their mission could be found than in the way they have helped to inspire Chris and Ed, and many, many more. Once again, on behalf of the Provost and Fellows, I thank Rachel Bond and her team for all their work.

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

The Eton Collections will be hosting three events as part of the Windsor Festival and Windsor Fringe this autumn.

23 September:
History Trail around Eton's war memorials and the Verey Gallery exhibition In Memoriam: Great War remembrance at Eton

26 September:
Seven Halts on the Somme: a talk by the artist Hughie O'Donoghue on his seven paintings and a view of the works in the Millington-Drake Gallery

27 September:
Eton's watercolour collection: a talk by Philippa Martin (Keeper of Fine & Decorative Art)

WINDSOR FESTIVAL
Patron: HRH The Earl of Wessex KG, GCVC
WINDSOR FRINGE

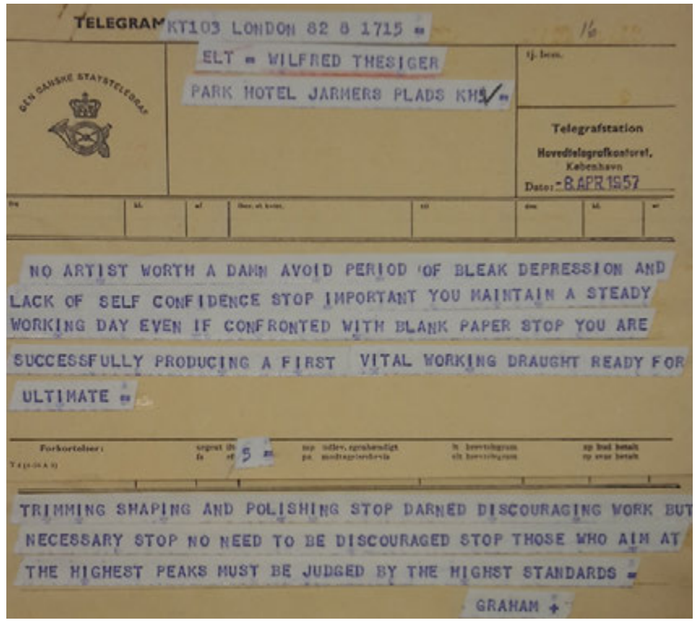
More details will be available on the Festival website (www.windsorfestival.com) and Fringe website (www.windsorfringe.co.uk) soon.

Plenty to Shout About: The Collections on social media

What do a pair of Ancient Egyptian granite feet, Keats' death mask, and a telegram to the OE explorer Wilfred Thesiger have in common? They are all objects from the Collections that have recently made their way into the wider world through the wonders of social media. In the last couple of years, the Collections' use of online methods of communication has become a rewarding way to spread the word about our holdings and activities.

Social media – websites and other online applications that allow users to share material and engage in social networking – are increasingly used by cultural institutions to reach a wider online audience. Collections as varied as the Bodleian Library, the National Trust and the London Natural History Museum's Dino Lab have accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to tell the world about their work. At Eton, George Fussey has been the trailblazer, creating social media accounts for Eton's Natural History Museum. The team woke up to the usefulness of online communication for providing access to the collections, particularly during 2016, when an enthusiastic team of tech-savvy conservators arrived and the three Eton museums opened to the public every Sunday afternoon. Our online presence began to grow.

One of the most successful initiatives has been the Collections blog, which works like an online magazine. We take turns publishing short posts on a variety of objects. The blog has had 1412 visitors since it was launched in January last year. It is pleasingly popular with the school, and posts are often rewarded with feedback from the boys. An especially well-received


TELEGRAM KT103 LONDON 82 8 1715 =

ELT = WILFRED THESIGER

PARK HOTEL JARMERS PLADS KHS =

Telegrafstation
Hovedtelegrafkontoret,
København
Date: - 8 APR 1957

NO ARTIST WORTH A DAMN AVOID PERIOD OF BLEAK DEPRESSION AND LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE STOP IMPORTANT YOU MAINTAIN A STEADY WORKING DAY EVEN IF CONFRONTED WITH BLANK PAPER STOP YOU ARE SUCCESSFULLY PRODUCING A FIRST VITAL WORKING DRAUGHT READY FOR ULTIMATE =

TRIMMING SHAPING AND POLISHING STOP DARNED DISCOURAGING WORK BUT NECESSARY STOP NO NEED TO BE DISCOURAGED STOP THOSE WHO AIM AT THE HIGHEST PEAKS MUST BE JUDGED BY THE HIGHST STANDARDS =

GRAHAM +

Telegram to Wilfred Thesiger subject of a Collections blog post

post was written by Ceri Brough, College Library's Project Archivist, in May last year. It focussed on a rousing telegram sent to Wilfred Thesiger by his agent when he was in despair over the redrafting of his first book. Timed to be published at the height of Eton's revision season, it was appreciated by not a few boys and their masters. The most popular post thus far had almost no words at all, being a 'Christmas cracker' gallery of seasonal objects from stained glass to Victorian skating scenes. As ever, George has been ahead of the game with his blog at http://etonnhm.com/museum-blog/ which forms a calendar of natural history notes from around Eton.

The collections now rejoices in six accounts on Twitter – the Collections, College Library, the Natural History Museum, the museums now open on Sundays, the conservation team and the Friends have their own accounts. Twitter, for those of you who have not yet braved it, allows us to share messages of up to 280 characters, sometimes with photographs or even films. Twitter thrives on 'hashtags' which bring together common themes – for us, these might be #WorldBookDay2018, #Halloween, #NobelPrize or, for the bibliophile, #WoodcutWednesday. These hashtags make our tweets more visible to other users who are interested in the Nobel Prize or woodcuts. In December, we took part in #Museum30, in which hundreds of British museums tweeted a picture every day on a different theme, such as insects or patterns.

We use Facebook and TripAdvisor as an online face for all three museums. TripAdvisor is a website listing and publicising hotels, restaurants, and places of interest that can also be reviewed by members of the public. It is invaluable coverage for the museums, since they feature in Google searches and in TripAdvisor lists such as 'top ten things to do in Eton'. They can also provide useful feedback and encourage other visitors: at present, the Museum of Eton Life has a star rating of 4.5 out of five, as does the Natural History Museum, whilst the Museum of Antiquities has five stars! Both our TripAdvisor and Facebook pages give details of access so that visitors can easily find out when they can visit. Facebook, another social networking site, allows us to publicise events and to provide a forum for people to post feedback on their experiences of the museums. Both the conservation team and the Eton Museums account use Twitter and Facebook in tandem, duplicating the material they post on both sites to reach two online audiences efficiently.

Taking advantage of social media has meant that we not only get to tell the world about our objects, but can hear back from the world too. A tweeted picture of early editions of Virgil out for a Latin div in the library provoked some Old Etonians to exclaim how lucky the current boys are; our TripAdvisor reviews are full of compliments; the blog elicits responses from Masters and support staff at Eton. It's not just good for our egos, it reminds us that the things we look after every day are extraordinary and can excite and entice people. It draws them in to visit in person. And, of course, it's fun!

Lucy Gwynn,
Deputy Director of Collections

The Collections on Twitter

@EtonCollections
@EtonCollMuseums
@Eton_NHM
@Eton Conservator
@EtonCollFriends
@EtonCollLibrary

On Facebook

@EtonCollegeMuseums
@EtonConservator

Blogs

https://etoncollegecollections.wordpress.com
https://etonnhm.com/museum-blog

A tweet by College Library showing a display of material on Keats, Shelley and Shakespeare

Medals and Misdemeanours

Two identical sets of commemorative medals in the Fine & Decorative Art Collection represent one outstanding achievement in a life marred by failure.

Born in 1779, James Mudie of Forfarshire, Scotland, served in the Royal Navy during the French Revolutionary Wars. Beginning his career at Portsmouth, he then served at Îles Saint-Marcouf, a group of islands off the coast of Normandy, on HMS *Leda* and HMS *Inflexible*. However, when evidence came to light that Mudie and his mistress, a widow named Mrs Scargill, were defrauding the service, he was dismissed in 1810 while still only at the rank of lieutenant. It was this sudden termination of his naval career which caused Mudie to launch a remarkable business venture, to mint a series of commemorative medals.

Mudie was inspired by the examples struck by the Paris Medal Mint to celebrate Napoleon's triumphs and intended his series to commemorate the victories of British fleets and armies during the Napoleonic Wars. Hopeful of government support, he referred to the set as his 'National Series of Medals'. At his own expense, he employed the leading medallists of Britain and France, including Thomas Webb (1755–1831), William Wyon (1795–1851), Jean Jacques Barre (1793–1855) and Alexis-Joseph Depaulis (1792–1867). The medals themselves were struck by Edward Thomason (c.1769–1849), a Birmingham-based manufacturer of buttons, tokens and coins. Almost all of Mudie's medals have a portrait head of Wellington or one of his generals on one side and an allegorical figure, typically representing a battle or event of the wars, on the other. Mudie issued the first of what would be 40 medals in 1816. It featured the head of his majesty George III, with figures representing Religion, Faith and Fortitude on the reverse. Later subjects represented were the landing of the British army in Portugal, the capture of Paris and

The series of medals housed in their leather-bound presentation box

The front and reverse of a model showing Napoleon's portrait and a representation of his captivity on the island of St Helena

the imprisonment of Napoleon on the island of St Helena. Although the medals could be bought individually, a presentation box in the form of a leather-bound book was available to purchasers of the entire series. The last medal was struck in 1819 and bore the portrait of Admiral Lord Exmouth on one side and a representation of the bombardment of Algiers (1816) on the other.

The reception of Mudie's medals in the press was positive and he was commended for his brave attempt to reignite British medal making, which had suffered a 'faint existence' since the reign of Charles II. But despite public voices of support and high profile subscribers, including the Queen and several members of the nobility, the venture failed to attract the subscribers needed to make it a financial success. In fact, it was noted that very few of the individuals depicted on the medals had themselves subscribed. Having spent some £10,000 to complete the series, Mudie was left bankrupt. He suffered further public humiliation as his belongings were advertised for sale; among them a collection of sculpted busts, including that of Napoleon by the great Italian sculptor Antonio Canova. Mudie successfully sought an injunction against Thomason to prevent use of the dies (the inverse versions of the images) to produce medals without his agreement. Then, in 1822, he emigrated to New South Wales with his family, receiving financial support from the Colonial Office and from Scottish Tory MP Charles Forbes (1774–1849). He was given a land grant of some 2,150 acres on the Hunter River, which he later added to and named the Castle Forbes estate after his patron. Here, with help from fellow Scottish settler John Lanarch (1805–1869), who became overseer of the estate, and with the assistance of several convicts assigned to him, Mudie became a successful producer of wool, meat and wheat. In about 1830 he was appointed a Justice of the Peace, serving on the bench at Maitland. However, he inspired fear and anger among convicts for his harsh treatment of those working on his estate and his propensity towards floggings for minor offences. In 1833, six of the convicts working at Castle Forbes mutinied, robbing Mudie's stores before escaping. The mutineers were later arrested, tried and found guilty. Five were condemned to be executed, while one was sent to Norfolk Island. Despite this outcome, an investigation was launched into the charges of degrading treatment towards convicts aimed at Mudie and Larnach during the trial. Although the resulting report exonerated both men, they were angered by its criticism of their behaviour. Their response was published as a pamphlet, *Vindication of James Mudie and John Larnach, from Certain Reflections* ... (published in 1834), which they sent to the Colonial Office and circulated in Britain and Australia. One British reviewer concluded: 'the tone of bitter personality in which this work is written compels us to regard its statements with caution', and the result was to further reduce support for Mudie and Larnach. With his reputation in Australia ruined, Mudie sold Castle Forbes and eventually returned to Britain. He died in Tottenham, in 1852.

Today, sets of Mudie's medals can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. In a life of shortcomings, they stand as his one irrefutable achievement.

Philippa Martin
Keeper of Fine & Decorative Art

The Two Shelleys

Cast of Marianne Hunt's bust of Percy Bysshe Shelley

One of the treasures of College Library is a plaster cast of Marianne Hunt's bust of Eton's most famous poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley. Given to Eton by the rich Chicago publishing tycoon Marshall Field III in 1939, it came with a glittering provenance. We were told that it was given by Thomas Carlyle to Robert Browning, had been sold at Sotheby's in 1913 to Wilfred Meynell, and later bought by Field, who had himself been educated at Eton. Urged by another OE friend Shane Leslie, Field had then presented it to his alma mater.

The bust itself is remarkable. Originally sculpted in clay by the wife of Shelley's close friend Leigh Hunt, a few years after the poet's death, the bust was intended for Shelley's grave in Rome until it was rejected by his family on the grounds it wasn't true to life. Their particular objection was the weak receding chin, which contemporary portraits of Shelley do their best to hide. In fact, as many of his friends acknowledged, Marianne Hunt's bust was only too true: it is today probably the best portrait of this unusual-looking man. Shelley's delicate features, particularly his nose and mouth, as well as his tousled hair, are beautifully modelled.

Last October we were surprised to receive a communication from the New York Public Library telling us that they possessed another cast of Marianne Hunt's Shelley bust, which had belonged to the Pre-Raphaelite painter William Bell Scott. This one bore an ink inscription on its base which indicated that it had been given to Thomas Carlyle by Leigh Hunt, presumably in the 1830s, and that Carlyle had given it to Scott on 12 April 1876. It was clearly unlikely that Carlyle had owned two busts of Shelley, particularly as he disliked his poetry, nicknaming him 'Shrieky'. So what is the true provenance of the College Library cast?

The earliest reference to the young Robert Browning and the bust is his recollection in a letter of 1878: 'I remember seeing it in the clay, just executed, at Leigh Hunt's house, on the only occasion of my going there. Mr Carlyle, John Forster, and a few others were present. L. H. protested that the likeness was so extraordinary that the very shadow on the wall had startled him as if his friend had actually passed by in the flesh again. He justified each detail - the clustered hair, narrow forehead, and diminutive chin …' This early display of the bust took place at 4, Cheyne Row, where Hunt then lived, and was likely to have been in 1836 when Browning, only 24, was still a fervent admirer of Shelley whom he had referred to as 'sun-treader' in his poem *Pauline*.

The Leigh Hunts had a few plaster casts made of the bust and gave them to friends and to admirers. They certainly gave one to Browning and presumably another to Carlyle who had been present with Browning at the original view. Browning took his back to his parents' Camberwell home, where his close friend Alfred Domett saw it: 'I remember his enthusiastic exclamation one day at his house, "Ah, *that was* a Poet!" as we passed on the stairs a bust of Shelley executed and given to him by Mrs Leigh Hunt. The greatly receding chin and defiant mouth of this bust were very striking.' This must have been before 1842, because in that year Domett emigrated to New Zealand.

Three years later Browning met Elizabeth Barrett; they married in September 1846 and left for Italy. The bust presumably remained with his parents, now living in New Cross, London, as there is no reference to it having been at Casa Guidi in Florence, where Robert and Elizabeth spent their married life. There is a reason for this. By now Browning had lost much of his early enthusiasm for Shelley on moral grounds. He had learned of Shelley's appalling treatment of his first wife Harriet, which had led to her suicide. 'I don't much care to record what he said, whether right or wrong; ' wrote a friend at the time, 'only he seemed to have adopted the opinion with regret.'

Browning's father moved to Paris in 1852, and almost certainly took the bust with him, as it is only after his death in 1866, that it resurfaces in Robert Browning's house in London. He briefly lent it to the painter Henry Wallis in 1871 and it is last recorded in Browning's final home at De Vere Gardens in 1888 on a window ledge on the staircase.

The Eton Shelley bust, therefore, has nothing whatever to do with Thomas Carlyle. It was in Browning's possession or that of his family for over 50 years and was the direct gift of the sculptor and her husband.

Michael Meredith
Curator, Modern Collections

Etoniana and *The Chronicle* online

The College Archives is delighted to announce that issues of the *Eton College Chronicle* from 1863 to 2000 and the complete run of the Etoniana magazine have been digitised and are now available to view online at http://archives.etoncollege.com.

The Eton College Chronicle first appeared on 14 May 1863. According to the editors, unlike previous periodicals, it was to 'be entirely composed of facts, not fiction.' Their readers, they thought, would be the whole school, Old Etonians at university, and to 'Parents of Eton Boys our Paper will prove an especial boon, as it embraces the whole School, and will in a great measure supply the place of letters, which often, from press of circumstances and time, Boys omit to write.' As a record of events in the school, sports matches, society meetings, concerts and plays, election of school officers, as well as the comings and goings of staff and boys, the *Chronicle* is unparalleled, and it remains one of the main boy-produced magazines.

In March 1904, a new Eton publication was founded. Called *Etoniana*, its purpose was to 'provide a medium for Etonians and others for discussing all matters relating to the history and traditions of Eton'. The editors searched collections across the country for these snippets, and many are not recorded anywhere else. Running until the 1970s, it contained nearly 800 articles on aspects of Eton's past and the people connected with the school, covering subjects as varied as biographies of past masters, changes and alterations to the fabric of the school, changes to the curriculum and routine, fees charged at different times and most importantly the letters sent home by boys detailing their daily activities. It gives a first-hand account of what it was like to be a boy here and is therefore of enormous value to anyone interested in the history of this great school.

We are very grateful to the generous donors who have enabled these collections to be made more publicly available.

Eleanor Hoare
College Archivist

Behind the Scenes: Caring for artefacts in the Museum of Antiquities

Items before conservation

After conservation

The Museum of Antiquities has had an energetic life, moving from location to location and travelling for exhibition and loan. In 2015 the new Jafar Gallery was built as a dedicated exhibition space to display and house this collection. Since this relocation, however, a proportion of the collection has remained in temporary storage. Housed in cardboard boxes across the school site, these are short-term measures as we work towards having the entire collection together under one roof. Since 2017 the Collections team has been working on rehousing this collection in the Museum of Antiquities in order to care it through suitable housing and condition surveys, and to improve access to this incredible resource through location records and accessible storage.

The first task has been to bring the collections in temporary storage together in the Jafar Gallery. Organised by object and material type, each item is then carefully checked and rehoused in conservation-grade materials. Its object number and location are recorded in the Collections catalogue, so that we have a full picture of the collections and are able to access them directly and with minimal object movement. The need for accessibility has informed the approach to storage. Items are housed in the gallery, cushioned in conservation tissue within trays with clear lids so that objects can be easily seen, without excess handling which can cause damage. The clear lids also open up the stored collections for teaching, maximising the visibility of objects not on display. Each tray is clearly labelled, so when looking for an object you can easily locate it. The remainder of the collection is similarly packed with tissue into boxes in storage cupboards, labelled and locations recorded.

Conservation process

In conjunction with the rehousing project, the conservation team has taken the opportunity to perform a condition audit of the Antiquities. Each object is examined by a conservator and its overall condition, material stability and need for interventive treatment are rated. This system allows us to easily assess which objects need interventive conservation treatment most urgently and also allows us to monitor an object's deterioration over time.

After having audited half of the Antiquities collection, we can report that there are no objects in need of interventive treatment and due to the rehousing process, we can be confident that they will sustain extremely minimal deterioration in the coming years.

Rebecca Tessier,
Collections Cataloguer
and Museum Officer

Aimee Sims,
Conservation Steward

Last year we started using an application run on iPads that allows digital records to be created in situ, as well as embedding annotated photographs and attaching external digital documents. This means that we can survey objects faster and upload the information directly onto our catalogue, making the current condition information of the object accessible to all Collections staff.

Since 2016 over 5000 objects have been surveyed across the Silver, Antiquities, Museum of Eton Life and Fine Art collections. We hope to have these collections completely surveyed by 2019 and to have made a start on the Natural History collection. The Library, Archives and Photography collections pose a larger challenge as they are each made up of over 100,000 individual objects, making it almost impossible to survey each object in a reasonable time frame. We are currently surveying newly catalogued items in each collection and as we rehouse specific items we are surveying them at the same time.

This is a mammoth project, which will provide an in-depth understanding of the condition of the collections and will inform where financial and time resources need to be focused. Importantly it will also help us project what resources we will need for the future. It used to be thought that conservation should be focused on interventive object treatments that were time consuming and costly. However, as the field has developed it has been shown that improvements in environmental management, storage, and handling minimise the need for costly treatment, and lead to the better preservation of collections.

Passport to an Exhibition

College Library's latest exhibition in the Tower Gallery opened on 23 November, just in time for St Andrew's Day. 'Voyages: a journey in books' brings together a wide range of books about travels both historical and literary, alongside other evidence of what is now the nearly universal experience of travelling, borrowed from Eton's three museums. We have all been touched by travel, whether as travellers ourselves or through the experience of our families or other people we encounter in our lives, and this exhibition seeks to explore the way travel in all its varieties has marked the world we live in.

As lead curator, I was inspired by previous College Library exhibitions such as 'Let there be light: the King James Bible' (2011) and 'A gesture of friendship: the music manuscripts of Malcolm Arnold' (2017) to push the boundaries of what we had done before. Another inspiration was the British Museum's 2008 exhibition 'Hadrian: empire and conflict', which strikingly placed the section on the Pantheon in the Round Reading Room, which has often been compared to it. I wanted to use the library's Tower Gallery, with its wooden-framed cases designed by Alec Cobbe and the dark wooden beams above, to evoke the wooden world of sailing ships, employing a graphic designer who transformed the room into a sea of blue, thanks to the visually striking wraparound graphic panels, complemented by a soundtrack of ocean waves and seagulls. Along with the objects themselves, the impromptu loan of a well-travelled suitcase by the Provost and the creation of a signpost by Eton's Buildings department continued to develop the theme, and there are of course postcards on offer as well!

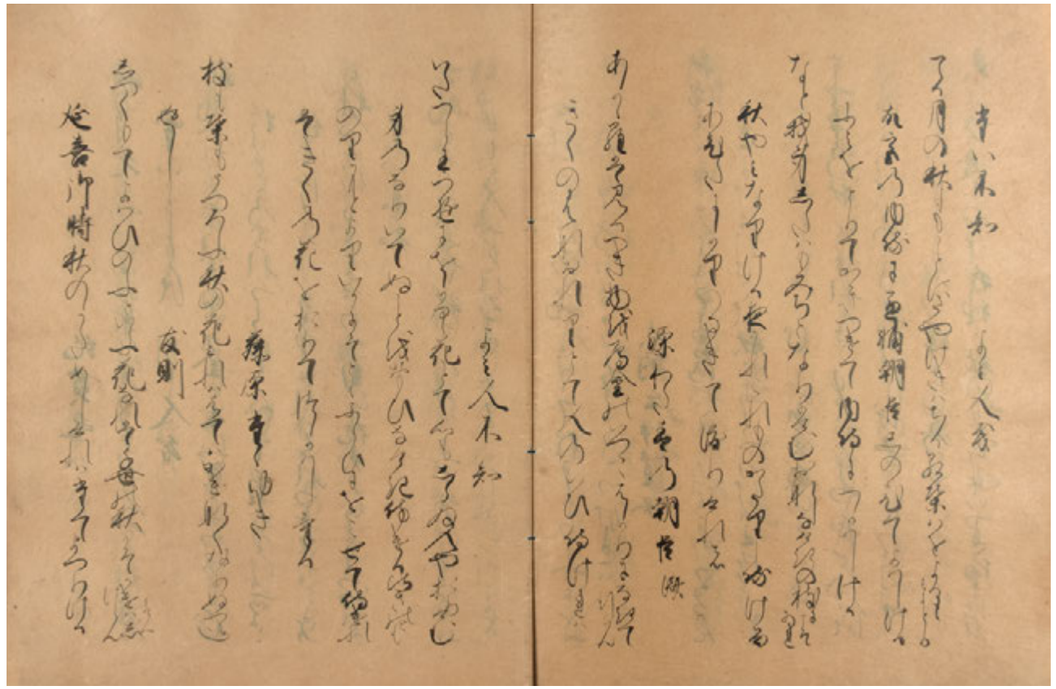
It has also been one of the most ambitious exhibitions held in the gallery, building on our growing experience within the College Collections to put together a project team who worked collaboratively from the start on the various elements of the exhibition, from selection and design ideas to interpretation and installation.

Passport of Richard Durnford, February 1834-January 1835, with visa and permit stamps for cities he passed through on his grand tour to Italy and Austria.

The 'bread and butter' of an Eton exhibition is the tutorial programme, and so 'Voyages' has also been deliberately planned to be as accessible as possible to tutors and boys from F to B block, whatever their academic and other interests. The four sections of the exhibition (Odyssey, Explorations, Ways of travelling, Imagined travels) can be explored independently of each other, and we've put together a tutor's guide to suggest possible 'trails' through the exhibition, picking up on themes, reflections and echoes around the room. A key decision was to remove the explanatory captions from the cases, to encourage direct contact with the objects before turning to the printed guides to discover more. The exhibition is being well used by tutor groups and we also hope to bring in local primary schools.

Stephie Coane, Deputy Curator of Modern Collections, College Library

An Emperor's Gift to Eton: Poetry and Power



Japanese Waka in handwritten script

On 27 May 1921, Crown Prince Hirohito of Japan visited Eton as part of his European tour. After being greeted by a 'Banzai!' from the assembled boys, he was shown around the school, including College Library. The librarian at the time 'lamented that Eton possessed no Japanese books', a gap which Hirohito promised to remedy. Four years later, a small and rather plain lacquer wood box arrived in School Office.

The box contained handwritten workbooks in a script illegible to our current Japanese teachers. This script turns out to be a form of Japanese poetry known as waka, and this collection was identified as a copy of the *Nijuuichidaishuu*, or the 21 Great Collections, an imperial waka anthology; arguably the most important anthology of Japanese poetry. This royal gift is one of the greatest ever given to Eton, and it remains on display in College Library to this day. So why did Hirohito give Eton a poetry collection, and why this particular collection?

To answer these questions, we need to understand the 1,150-year history of waka. Waka, literally means 'Japanese poem' and is a much older ancestor of the better known Haiku. Waka first appeared in the *Kojiki*, an 8th -century AD chronicle containing myths about Japan's creation and the gods. Initially, waka was unpopular, as Chinese influence still dominated court life in the Nara and early Heian periods. The first major 'Japanese' poetry anthology, the *Manyoshu*, was compiled in 759. Although the *Manyoshu* still shows Chinese influence, the majority of the poems are waka and display Shinto virtues such as virility and respect for tradition.

As the Heian court began to cut ties with China, a domestic court culture developed. Poetry played a new and prominent role as the primary form of self-expression: this was 'Japan-ification'. In Murasaki Shikibu's *The Tale of Genji* (early 11th century), waka was used to convey romance and as an art form to match the subtlety of court intrigue. Waka was often recited in conversation in aristocratic circles, and the memorisation of many waka and actual poetic skill were key to obtaining prestige in the court. During the reign of the Emperor Uda, waka team competitions known as Uta-ai were instigated. Waka became more formal and a central part of imperial court ceremonies.

When and how did the 21 Great Collections come into being? The first of these, the *Kokin Wakashu*, was published in 905 by the Emperor Daigo, son of Emperor Uda. From then on, the emperors took an even more prominent role in the development of waka. Daigo's son, the Emperor Murakami, established the Waka Office, which collected waka verses. Around 1100, the Emperor Horikawa changed the make-up of the Imperial Collections. Previously, they had been compilations of already-written waka, but Horikawa ordered his court to write and submit original verses. Poetry therefore began to play an even greater court role. But why was the imperial family so obsessed with waka poetry?

While Japan was technically an absolute monarchy, from the beginning of the Heian Period the emperor, politics and the civil service were dominated by the Fujiwara family. Rather than directly supplanting the imperial dynasty, the Fujiwaras exerted control over the emperors in two ways. Firstly, they instituted a policy of intermarriage with the imperial family. Secondly, they encouraged emperors to abdicate early to spend their days either in monasteries or focused on arts. As a result, during the Heian Period the emperor mainly played a ceremonial role, part of which was the development of waka within the court.

The Heian period came to an end in 1185 following the Genpei War between two families that had supplanted the Fujiwara and attempted to exert their own control over the emperor. The victorious Minamoto set up a new feudal system of government based in the town of Kamakura and received the title of 'shogun', becoming the de facto rulers. However, the tradition of Imperial Collections and of waka continued, albeit in a different manner.

One of the most significant of the 21 Great Collections, the *Shin Kokin Wakashu*, the eighth anthology, was presented in 1205. Its poems were chosen not just on quality but on how well they connected to each other; the anthology is one which contains a great variety of interconnected poems from different ages and literary styles. Despite the shift in power, 13 other anthologies followed in the Kamakura and subsequent Muromachi periods. What also makes this compilation interesting is that although the emperor played a significant role, many of the poems were written and selected by the Fujiwaras.

While they had lost their role as de facto rulers and had split into factions, many of the branches of the Fujiwara remained within the court, with two main branches prominent. The first was the Rokujo, known for its literary conservatism and scholarly work. The other, although slightly more junior, counted amongst its members the famous poet Fujiwara no Teika, who was appointed compiler of the Ninth Collection.

For these comparatively weak families, and for many like them, the only hope of attaining prestige and power was through poetry, by courting the favour of either the emperor or the Shogunate, with the ultimate honour of being granted the privilege of compiling an Imperial Anthology which would make up one of the 21 Great Collections. The politicking over poetry was significant enough that Teika was at one point banished from the Imperial Court.

In 1333, the Emperor Go-Daigo attempted to wrest back power from the shoguns.

Laquer wood box housing the 21 Great Collections

Visit of His Imperial Highness, Prince Hirohito, the Crown Prince of Japan to Eton, 27 May 1921

However, the shogun clan responded by setting up Go-Daigo's cousin as a rival emperor in the new 'Northern Court'. The issue for the Northern Court and its Shogunate backers was that the Southern Court possessed the Imperial Sacred Regalia, and thus was considered more legitimate. As a result, the Northern Court tried to legitimise itself through various means, one of which was waka.

Who compiled more of the 21 Great Collections was now extremely significant. The Northern Court/Shogunate ordered a branch of the Fujiwara family to compile four new anthologies, the last of which was completed in 1439. The Southern Court compiled its own anthology, though this does not feature in the 21 Collections.

Because of its superior production of anthologies, the Northern Court was regarded as more poetically significant. Furthermore, the backing of the Shogun and the fact that the Northern branch eventually became the main imperial family meant that the 21 Collections did not become 22. The fact that both sides considered poetry to be critical for imperial legitimacy is a testament to the importance of waka in Japanese politics.

So why did the compilation of imperial anthologies stop in 1439? The answer again lies in politics. In 1467, a dispute over the succession of the Shogunate broke out. The result was the ten-year-long war, which led to the beginning of the Warring States Period. Much of Kyoto, previously the centre of the Imperial Court and therefore waka, was destroyed. Furthermore, new forms of poetry, such as haiku, began to gain prominence. It seemed that waka might soon die out.

However, the opposite happened. In the Edo Period (1603-1868), an informal tradition of waka reading in January which had been started by the Emperor Kameyama in 1267 became an important New Year's Day celebration known as the Utakai Hajime, which is now broadcast on TV. Today this is the main way the Imperial Family still plays a role in waka and helps to keep it alive.

Also, waka is taught in schools in a rather innovative way, in a card game called Uta-garuta, which are 100 poems, each on a playing card, taken from the 21 Great Collections. The teacher starts to read the poem-card and the students have to find the 'grabbing card', which has only the last two lines of the poem, until all the cards are collected. In order to do well, students have to memorise all 100 poems-and be good at 'grabbing'. There are national Uta-garuta competitions; today, waka in Japan is alive and well.

So, the nexus between waka, Japanese politics and the Imperial Family shows clearly why Hirohito chose to give the 21 Great Collections to Eton: a 'royal' school with substantial literary and artistic collections. Waka is an art form that has not only been central to court life but has been used to shape the course of Japanese history. The 21 Collections in College Library is undoubtedly one of Eton's greatest treasures. It was also the greatest gift an Emperor could give: it is a symbol of his power and history.

Chris Thorn, KS

John Piper's Altar Frontal

John Piper's altar frontal

The altar frontal in use in College Chapel is of beige silk, hand painted with a simple design of purple foliage and red berries. From above, light filters through the much admired series of eight stained glass windows to either side, which were designed by artist and designer John Piper (1903–1992), executed by stained glass artist Patrick Reyntiens (b. 1925) and installed between 1959 and 1963. However, the story of the altar frontal, also by Piper, has been largely forgotten.

Almost 20 years after the installation of Piper's windows, the then Conduct, the Reverend James Bentley, wrote to urge the artist to consider creating one further design for Eton's College Chapel. An anonymous donor had offered £1,000 towards a new altar frontal to cover the austere portable altar and, although it seemed a modest amount to offer such an esteemed artist, Bentley believed Piper's involvement would 'complete' the scheme and did not want to look elsewhere. He wrote to Piper at his home, Fawley Bottom Farmhouse, near Henley, on 25 November 1980:

I know that money – even £1,000 – goes a very little way these days. But I wonder whether there is anything you yourself could do for that figure. Eton College Chapel is one of the great buildings in the country, and your work has immensely enhanced it. I do not wish to install in the Chapel anything less good than what we already possess.

The following week Piper telephoned the Conduct to accept the commission. This time he would both design and execute the work. Another former Conduct, Canon Keith Wilkinson, was working as an assistant master and chaplain at Eton when Piper arrived to begin painting the frontal on site in the chapel. On the first day, Piper brought purple paint and created a freehand foliage design along the lower half of an expanse of plain beige silk. Wilkinson reports that Piper told him this design was intended to relate to Burne-Jones's tapestry, seen beyond the altar, and his foliage clearly echoes the twisting green leaves of the flowers along the tapestry's lower edge. As Piper completed this work, Wilkinson thought he was looking at the finished design, but the artist returned the next day carrying a pot of red paint and added deep red berries between the twisting branches of foliage. These berries visually connected the design with the red carpet on which the altar then stood, further demonstrating the artist's consideration of the site as a whole. As with his stained glass, Piper aspired to bring coherence to the interior of College Chapel, respecting the contributions of generations of artists and architects whose work is represented there together.

Philippa Martin
Keeper of Fine & Decorative Art

The New Silver Commissions

Chasing the lilies on the chalice

Chalice and paten

Adding objects to a collection by commission is a sensitive issue and a number of hurdles must be scrambled over for success to be guaranteed. Initially a project needs an enthusiastic body of people willing to support the concept. Then money has to be found. The maker must be commissioned and the design of the objects considered and agreed, and after that, inevitably more money needs to be raised. So it was with great pride and many thanks to everyone involved that on Sunday 4 February, Eton's new silver commission reached fruition. The pair of silver candlesticks, made by Rod Kelly, and the chalice and paten, made by Miriam Hanid, were dedicated by the Rt Revd & Rt Hon. Lord Chartres, formerly Bishop of London, at the service of Candlemas in College Chapel.

The process of commissioning the altar set began three years ago with two ideas. Firstly, to return the candlesticks currently in use on the main altar in College Chapel back to the Memorial Chapel, as their original purpose was as memorials to Etonians lost in the First World War. Secondly, to add to the silver collection in the spirit with which it had accrued; to acquire beautiful objects for practical purpose that will be used on the altar of Eton College Chapel.

Eton has therefore been very lucky to acquire pieces by two distinguished contemporary designers. Rod Kelly is one of England's leading silversmiths with major works in Goldsmiths' Hall, 10 Downing Street, the V&A and various livery companies to name just a few. He is known for low relief chasing, often accented with gold leaf. The strong, angular design of his candlesticks allows them to stand out against the eclectic background of varied objects that decorate the east end of the chapel. The cores are of English walnut against which the bright silver of the candleholders, knops and bases stand out in striking contrast. Kelly has chased designs into the silver inspired by the surroundings of College Chapel. Miriam Hanid is at the beginning of her career and pieces by her are held in Goldsmiths' Hall, the National Museum of Wales and a number of prestigious private collections. She specialises in flat chasing, often highlighted with engraving. For the chalice and paten, Hanid has taken as her inspiration the lily from Eton's arms. The lily leaves and stem of the plant have been wrapped tightly around the cup from the base to the bowl where the petals of the flower are finally allowed to spiral outwards. From Eton's earliest communion cup, which dates to the Elizabethan period, through to Hanid's elegant 'lily' chalice, each piece of altar plate is part of a living tradition of objects that reflect the changing liturgy of the Church of England. In the spirit of this respect for the past, we hope that this new commission will remain in use in College Chapel for generations to come.

Shauna Gailey
Keeper of Silver

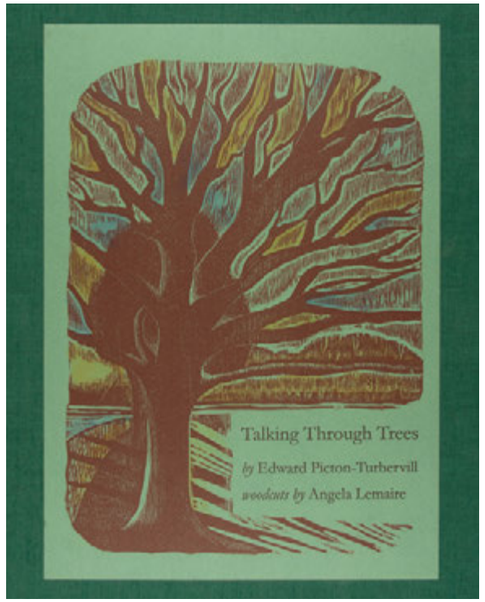
Kelly scoring the silver with a sharpened cutter. The silver can then be folded along the score to produce the right profile

Chased central knop of candlestick

Model for the altar candlesticks with four half-round silver tubes as part of the construction of the knop

Talking Through Trees

My interest in the Old Stile Press began when as a boy at Eton, I encountered in College Library an exhibition on modern private printing presses. Of all the magnificent books on display, I was most taken by an edition of Wordsworth's *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*, in which clouds of dark blue ink blot the banks of the River Wye on thick white paper. Michael Meredith, the Curator of Modern Collections, took the book out of the cabinet for me, and I was captivated; I spent a blissful summer going often to the library, guided through the great British private presses by Michael. Later that term came the golden opportunity to travel to the Olympia Book Fair with a group of Etonian bibliophiles. There I met Frances McDowall, who runs the press with her husband Nicolas.



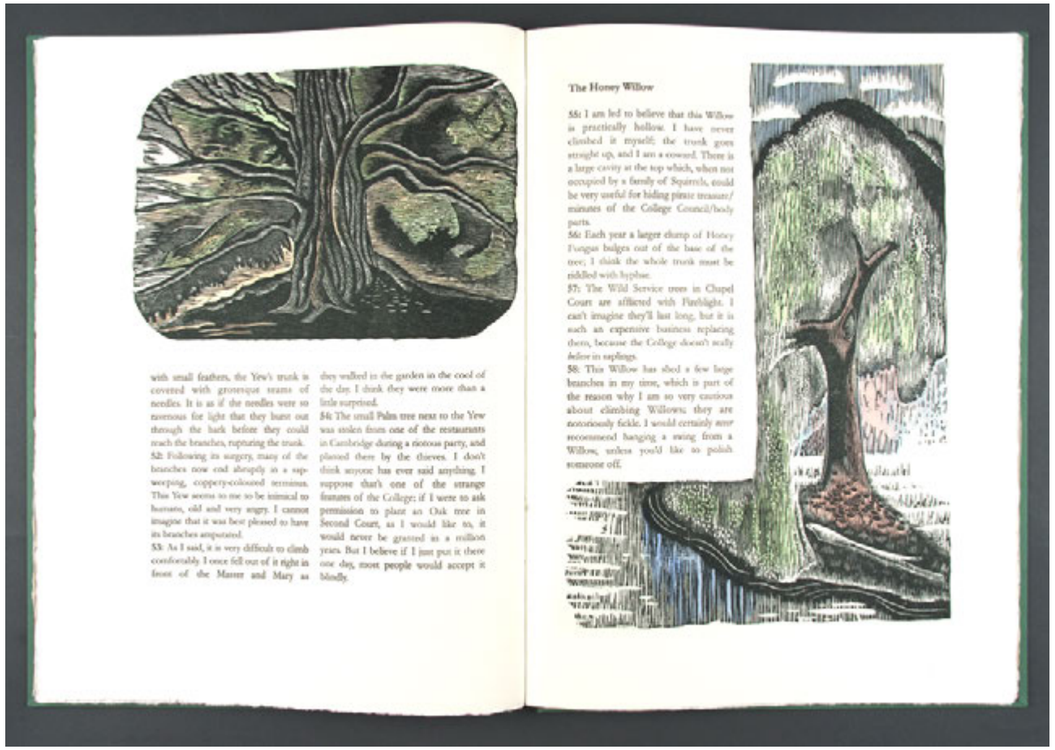
Slipcase cover of the special edition

I spent that afternoon cross-legged on the floor, examining every single book that Frances had brought with her to the fair, and thus began our friendship. I started to buy books from the press, and each new purchase was an opportunity to visit the McDowalls at their magical, sprawling house in the Wye Valley, where I would spend hours delving through their collection of artwork and private press books. Nicolas and I began a fairly regular correspondence, and I gradually built up a small collection of their work.

Years later, as my undergraduate days at St John's College, Cambridge were drawing to a close, I started to think about ways that I might leave some mark of my time at the college. Carving your name on a wall is now out of the question, and I eventually settled on the idea of writing a small history of the college gardens, and leaving a copy in the crown of my favourite tree. I did all my research, and when I finally felt ready to write the book, what emerged was not the dry and dusty tome that I had planned, but something entirely different. I knew that Nicolas would enjoy it, and sent it to him. There followed a few days of wrangling by email, and soon afterwards we had a plan to produce a book together. I could scarcely believe my luck.

The only thing that remained was to find an artist to produce the woodcuts. The usual *modus operandi* of the press is to select an artist and a text, and then to design the book together with that artist, who goes off to produce the illustrations. The last living author with whom the press had worked was Ted Hughes, and Nicolas joked to me that he finds it easier when the author is dead, for reasons that became clearer to me as I began editing the text! By far my favourite of all the artists that Nicolas has worked with is Angela Lemaire, and I owned three of her books already. We decided to approach her first of all, and she agreed almost immediately.

There followed a few months of editing, as I edited the book with advice from Nicolas and Angela, puffing out corners, being a bit braver with syntax here and there, and rebalancing sentences. The Old Stile books are all about the dialogue between text and images, and knowing that Angela was going to be the illustrator, I was able to shape the text, the better to suit her visual style. I wrote the last paragraph (number 220) whilst staying with the McDowalls in December, and discovered the title at the same time – I felt that the text was finished, and handed the book over. Angela lives in the Scottish borders, and was not able to travel down to Cambridge, so we settled on the idea that I would send her photographs of the trees with an audio description, and it was from this that the title sprang; the voice message I left for her began 'I'm just going to talk through the trees one by one'. I particularly like the fact that some of the woodcuts originated in particular photographs – my friend Rob and I took them on a beautiful day in late autumn, and the lawn was covered with long thin shadows, which have made their way into Angela's work.



Nearly six months later, Angela sent us a mock-up of the book, with the woodcuts that she had produced glued into Nicolas's pasted-up version. They were more brilliant than I could have hoped for, and it felt like something altogether stranger (perhaps the landscapes of the Scottish borders) was intruding on the neat lawns of Cambridge. What Angela had picked up from the text was my effort to make the familiar seem strange and wonderful, to re-enchant a garden which I knew so well. Thus, just as the text uses the mundane as a springboard into the metaphysical, so Angela's woodcuts were grounded in the real images of the Backs, and preserved enough of them to be recognisable, but were altogether more wonderful.

Then followed a long period of biting my tongue, waiting for Nicolas to finish the gargantuan task of printing 7200 sheets by hand. I dared not ask how the work was proceeding, but as the months shifted slowly by, I often imagined Nicolas in front of his printing press. Finally, the sheets were produced, and of the 150 books we printed, 10 'special editions' were sent up to Angela, so that she could colour the black and white sheets with delicate watercolours. By this stage, it had been so long since I had first mentioned it that most of my friends and family had decided that the book was entirely a figment of my imagination. It was thus a tremendous relief, as well as one of the most joyful moments of my life, when I held my own Old Stile Press book in my hands.

There are copies of the special edition in the libraries at St John's and at Eton College, and it gives me enormous pleasure to think that a copy of my book sits in those two establishments, which mean so much to me. Without that small copy of *Lines Composed above Tintern Abbey*, and without the support and encouragement of Michael Meredith and Rachel Bond in College Library, none of this would have been possible.

Ed Picton-Turbervill
(MJP '11)

Eric Arthur Blair: Thinking for Himself

Eric Arthur Blair, the only son of Richard Walmsley Blair and Ida Mabel Blair, was elected to be a King's Scholar in May 1916. This, however, did not guarantee him a place and it would be a year before Blair finally started at Eton in the Summer Half of 1917.

Blair is considerably better known by his adopted pen name, George Orwell, which inevitably became synonymous with the success of his political satire, while his birth name was left to his childhood and his deathbed. To this effect, the Eton College Archive will always know him as Eric Arthur Blair and with this year marking the 101st year since he started at Eton, we are taking a closer look into his time in College as recorded in the College Archives.

What impact did Eric Arthur Blair have on the archive? The answer, alas, is very little. It would seem he performed academically well, but by no means excelled in the way one would expect of a man so frequently praised for his intellect.

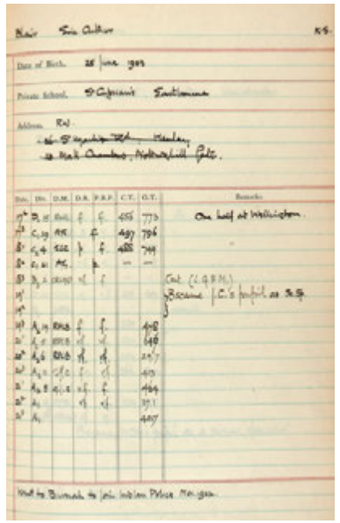
In some respects, Blair took an active part in school life. He often competed in the wall game in his last year, including playing for College on St Andrew's Day 1921 (College Archives reference: SCH HOUS 03 COLL 03 10). He seems to have shown dedication to the sport and is in and out of the wall game records. It is perhaps surprising that this is where we find most mentions of Blair.

A rare surviving example of his academic achievement is the mark book of his often dissatisfied tutor A.S.F. Gow, who supervised his studies and taught classics at Eton from 1914 to 1925 (College Library, MS 733). Gow has later been accused of failing to recognise Blair's talents and dissuading him from applying to university, preferring more reliably academic boys to the unpredictable intellect and eccentricities of Blair. Orwell himself later admitted to having never done any avoidable work, which may have contributed to Gow's prejudice against his intellectual ability. But the marks given to Blair in this book show good progress in what would have been an intellectually demanding environment - an environment to which Orwell later attributed his ability to think for himself.

Perhaps not uncharacteristically Blair appears in the College Debating book (SCH HOUS 03 COLL 02 27), however, none of Blair's contributions were deemed worthy of record in subsequent debates. He was elected to the debating society in 1921 – shortly before he left–perhaps because he had only just achieved seniority, or perhaps because he was not the immediate choice to elect in the first place.

Blair's popularity at school has often been questioned, and there are personal accounts of him having been bullied for reasons such as the relative poverty of his family. His 'obituary', written in the College Annals when a Scholar leaves College, consists of a single line stating the years he attended and that he was a member of College Wall and the College Debating Society (SCH HOUS 03 COLL 01 02). When compared with the vast paragraphs written for Blair's contemporary Cyril Connolly, later a literary critic and writer, it seems remarkably poignant.

However the tables do turn. In the *Chronicle*, following Blair's rendition of the introduction to the *Suicide Club* by Robert



A.S.F. Gow's mark book for Blair covering his term in Winchester, brief tuition by J. Christie and leaving to join the Indian Imperial Police in 1921.

Louis Stevenson in speeches, the reporter remarked that the 'even and unmoved coolness with which Blair let the story make its own effect was certainly very successful.' Years later, Orwell's own works would be the praised material of such Eton speeches, to such an extent that it was deemed he was being used too often. Meanwhile, Connolly, interviewed for the Chronicle in 1970, dismissed the question 'You were at school with George Orwell, weren't you?' stating he preferred the question the other way around, but alas that never happened.

Orwell complimented the institutions and the people in his childhood sparingly in his later life. In an article written for the *Observer* in 1948 Orwell gave Eton brief praise, stating that its 'tolerant and civilised atmosphere gives each boy a fair chance of developing his own individuality'.

In his interview for the Chronicle, Connolly also recalled some unpleasant bullying in College, stating that 'perhaps the intellect thrives under a certain amount of persecution'. Blair was apparently on the receiving end of this. Gordon Bowker's 2003 biography of George Orwell relates an episode in Blair's first year at Eton, when he sought revenge against a threatening older boy, Philip Yorke. Blair and his friend Steven Runciman, later a distinguished historian, constructed a crude wax model of their persecutor and tore off one of the legs. Shortly afterwards Yorke broke his leg playing football. Runciman recalled that this spooked the young boys and gained them a reputation for being odd. Tragically, a few months later Yorke died of leukaemia and the boys found themselves further ostracised and perplexed by guilt.

Contemporaries and personal recollections thereafter generally deemed Blair to have been solitary. It is hard to see from archival material whether this was in fact the case: they record an active boy much involved with the events and life at Eton. Photographs of him dancing at 'Athens', a section of the Thames, paint a very happy picture. One hundred and one years later, it is certain that Orwell has made an impression on Eton and he will be celebrated as one of Eton's most remarkable OEs.

Georgina Robinson,
Archives Assistant

Blair (far right) pictured dancing at Athens, a section of the Thames, in 1919. Image supplied courtesy of the Orwell Archive, UCL Library Services Special Collections

Eric Arthur Blair in 1921, aged 18

On 3 May, 2018, Eric Blair's adopted son, Richard Blair, unveiled a bust of Orwell to stand in the foyer of School Library. The school is celebrating the arrival of the bust with an Orwell 101 season of events.

ORWELL 101

A display of original George Orwell material from the College Collections will be in College Library between 3 May, 2018 and 2 November, 2018.

Open for viewing by appointment, please contact collections@etoncollege.org.uk or telephone 01753 370590.

The Newall Collection of Eggs

William Newall's elder son Leslie entered Eton in Michaelmas 1905 and joined H.F.W. Tatham's House. The House was taken over by A.E. Conybeare in Michaelmas 1909, coinciding with Leslie's younger brother Nigel joining it. At that time, the family lived at Redheath, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire, now the home of York House Prep School. The only House Group containing both the brothers and annotated with names that survives in the Photographic Archive was taken in Summer 1910. Leslie, sitting on the left of the second row with B Block, is perhaps looking a little jaded and ready to leave school, and Nigel in the top row on the right is wearing a bum-freezer, the short jacket that boys wore until they reached the height of four foot 11 inches, before donning tail coats.

Leslie left Eton at the end of the Summer Half of 1910; Nigel remained until 1914 but sadly both brothers were killed in action on the Western Front, Leslie as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion London Regiment (Royal Fusiliers) in 1915, and Nigel as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Battalion Welsh Guards in 1917. Leslie is buried in Rue-David Cemetery in Fleurbaix but Nigel has no known grave, though his name appears on the Tyne Cot Memorial. Like so many Etonians, their sacrifice was commemorated in books of remembrance and in the war memorial in the colonnade. But their unique memorial is the stunning egg collection given to the college by their father in their memory. Such collections were very popular, and collectors developed elaborate trading networks to allow them to acquire exotic rarities at a price from dealers. The Newall Collection contains eggs from a range of collectors, some very well known for their exploits. William, a member of the London Stock Exchange, was no stranger to trading!

AEC House Group, 1910

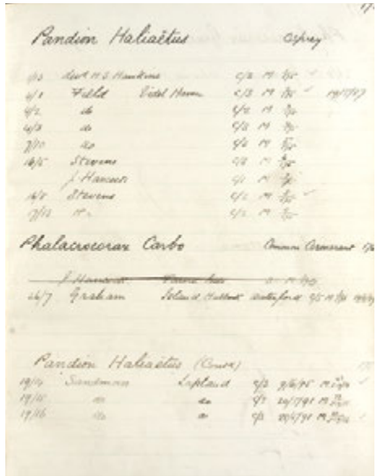
Newall (H.F.W.T. & A.E.C., H.F.W.T. & F.R.G.D.)	LESLIE. Eld. son of W. N. of Redheath, Croxley Green, Herts; 1905[3]–1910[3]; Merton Coll. Oxf.; B.A.; served as 2nd Lieut. 1st T.F. Bn. London Regt. in France in the War 1914–15; unm.; killed in action at Fleurbaix Sept 2, 1915.

School Register entry for Leslie Newall

Newall (A.E.C., J.H.M.H. & G.W.L.)	NIGEL. Son of W. N. of Redheath, Croxley Green, Herts; 1909[3]–1914[3]; served as Pte. H.A.C., aft. Lieut. Welsh Gds. in France in the War 1914–17; killed in action at Houthulst Forest Oct. 12, 1917.

School Register entry for Nigel Newall

Eggs from the Newell Collection



Pages from the original Newell Collection catalogue

High prices from collectors undoubtedly led to the collection of eggs of endangered bird species. Legislation, namely the Protection of Birds Act 1954 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, has made it illegal to collect wild birds' eggs. In the UK, it is only legal to possess a wild bird's egg if it was taken before 1954, or with a permit for scientific research; selling wild birds' eggs, regardless of their age, is illegal.

The scientific value of the Newall Collection, containing 1466 eggs has recently been much enhanced by the rediscovery of the hand-written catalogue which documents when and where the eggs were collected, and lists the many collectors responsible. Most of the eggs were collected in the last quarter of the 19th century, but it seems that the earliest eggs were gathered by William Newall himself around his birthplace (Ferndene) in Gateshead. The eggs come from all around the northern hemisphere with eggs from Alaska to Archangel down to the Bahamas, Astrakhan, Texas and Southern Spain. Other far-flung locations like Lapland, Spitzbergen, Saint Kilda and Japan also feature. Southern hemisphere locations are rare, but there are eggs from Ascension Island and New Zealand.

Data-rich historical collections such as this are especially important to scientists as a source of information on the lives and past distributions of bird populations. Oologists use these collections to study phenology, the timing of the seasonal laying of eggs in relation to climate change and other factors. Collections can also allow us to ascertain whether a species' range has changed by examining where the nests were found. The handwritten notes that accompany the catalogue entries can make interesting reading. For example, William Newall records the finding of six broken Great Tit eggs broken by letters dropped into a 'constantly used letterbox'.

Egg collectors were fascinated by the variety of sizes, shapes and patterns seen in eggs. Sometimes this leads to so-called collector bias, the tendency to collect interesting and even eccentric variations at the expense of more typical eggs. Guillemot eggs in particular were noted for their variability, and it is said that variations in pattern and colouring allow adults to recognise their own eggs within a dense colony of sea birds. The Eton Natural History Museum has a collection of over 90 such eggs to make precisely this point.

A prime example of egg collections being used in research was a study by British scientist Derek Ratcliffe on the dramatic fall in Peregrine Falcon populations after the Second World War. By examining Peregrine eggs in collections, he showed that the pesticide DDT (Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) had caused the eggs to become thinner, making them more likely to break under the weight of their incubating parents. This discovery subsequently helped lead to the banning of DDT.

The hope is that further research, in collaboration with oologists from the Bird Group based at the Natural History Museum at Tring, will develop our understanding of this collection and provide a fitting memorial to the two brothers Newall.

Roddy Fisher,
Keeper, Photographic Archive

George Fussey,
Curator, Natural History Museum

Friends Review

In March we bade farewell to Charlotte Villiers, the Collections Exhibition & Outreach Coordinator. She has taken on a new and exciting role at Leighton House Museum in London and we wish her every success. She had been at the heart of the Friends and will of course be greatly missed.

For the past decade Charlotte ably and enthusiastically undertook the administration of the Friends, and she served as editor of this journal, which she launched. Charlotte has also specialised in Outreach – a term that was not in my vocabulary till she joined the Collections staff. Goodness knows how many pupils from local schools have been introduced to Eton and the Collections thanks to her. I have read just a few of the letters of appreciation from Head Teachers and there is no doubt that this lady has done wonders for Eton's standing for miles around.

Charlotte is not, however, entirely lost to us! She will remain a Friend (and, I'm sure, a great friend too). Furthermore, we already have a first-class new Friends Administrator in place. Caroline Bradshaw has taken on her new role with calm efficiency and delightful good humour. She has been in touch with many Friends already and can be reached at friends@etoncollege.org.uk.

On 27 February Charlotte Villiers and Dr Stephie Coane hosted a most interesting event for Friends entitled "Voyages and Explorations". Despite snow and ice, many intrepid members came to see the exhibitions in the Tower and Verey galleries. By way of an introduction, Charlotte and Stephie staged a delightful discussion about each exhibition which explained the rationale behind their selection of exhibits.

Our Summer Event will be held on 26 June 2018. The theme will be silver and other treasures in College Chapel. Though no charge is made for this event we do ask Friends to tell us if they wish to attend so that proper arrangements can be made.

We will be tightening security ahead of future events and will issue name badges to all members on arrival. To avoid delay please make sure that Caroline has the full names of everyone in your party.

Ian Cadell
President, Friends of the Eton College Collections

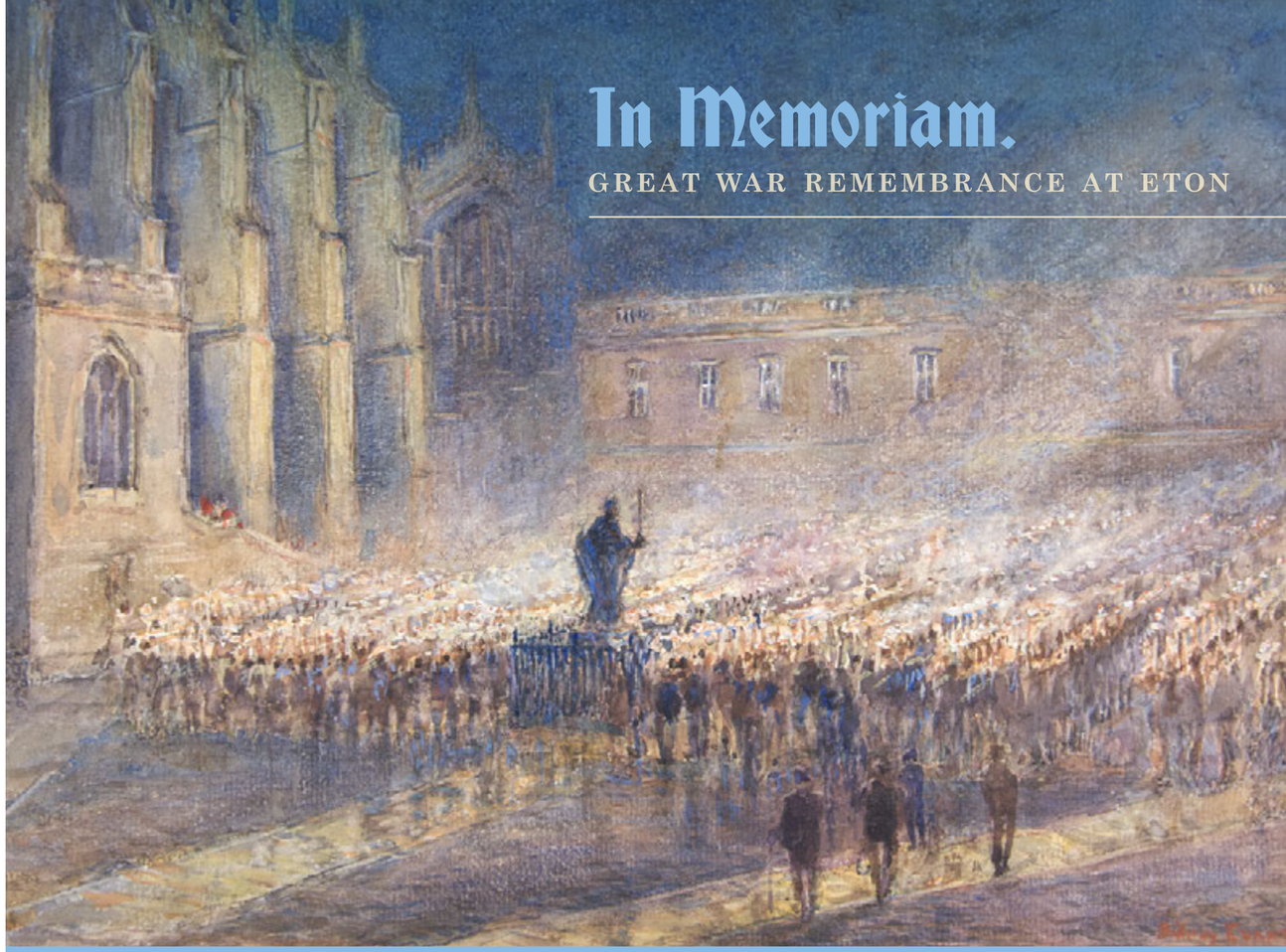
Forthcoming Friends Events

Tuesday 26 June, 2-5pm
Friends Summer Open Afternoon
Focusing on treasures of College Chapel
Including afternoon tea
Free of charge to Friends

Wednesday 3 October, 6-8pm
In Memoriam: Great War remembrance at Eton
A talk and special view of the exhibtion
£15 per ticket

RSVP for all Friends events to **friends@etoncollege.org.uk** or **07761 621118**
Please make cheques payable to Eton College

etoncollege.com/Friends_ofthe_Collections
friends@etoncollege.org.uk



In Memoriam.

GREAT WAR REMEMBRANCE AT ETON

Early in the course of the First World War, Eton—like institutions, towns and villages, governments and families across the country and the globe—began to ask how to commemorate the fallen and the conflict most appropriately. The memorials established in response are so numerous, varied and distributed as to permeate the fabric of the college.

In the centenary of the final year of the war, this exhibition brings together records and objects of remembrance from the college's museums, archives and libraries, as well as from its chapels, boarding houses and school buildings to offer an exploration of one community's memorialisation of the war: collective and individual, visible and unbuilt, educational and aesthetic.

Among the memorials on display will be the manuscript 'Libro d'oro' recording the service of Etonians; one of four tapestries woven at Merton Abbey depicting the legend of St George; a copy of the Kelmscott Chaucer; an exquisite tray by the 18th-century silversmith Paul de Lamerie; a cabinet of natural history specimens; plans for proposed monuments; and inscribed copies of first editions from the Macnaghten memorial library.

Verey Gallery, 16 June-12 November 2018, by appointment
To book a visit, contact us at collections@etoncollege.org.uk or 01753 370 590