

Explore

The Museums and Galleries of Eton College

Open Sundays, 2.30 - 5.00pm Free Admission



The Museum
of Eton Life



The Natural
History Museum



The Museum
of Antiquities



The Verey Gallery hosts a programme of changing exhibitions showcasing objects from the Eton College Collections as well as exciting loans from other institutions and galleries.

Free admission. Entrance through the Museum of Eton Life.

Seven Halts on the Somme by **Hughie O'Donoghue, RA** - Millington-Drake Gallery

Victorian Stained Glass by **Thomas Willement** - Austen-Leigh Gallery

Open most Sunday afternoons September – April.

For further information, see www.etoncollege.com/Exhibitions



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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS JOURNAL

Michaelmas 2019

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Three New
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Exploring the
Treasures of
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From the Provost

Another fascinating edition of the Collections Journal starts with two essays celebrating and explaining generous new gifts. First, the Friends of the Collections enabled Eton to purchase an extraordinary set of silver plaques, originally attached to the base of a cup presented by his OE friends to Charles Kean. Kean was the OE son of the famous but rickety actor Edmund Kean. Charles, as Justin Nolan explains in his historical note, was a somewhat more sober figure, in every sense. Less successful as an actor, he was probably far more important in the long term to English theatre as a director and producer of plays. These silver plaques, Shauna Gailey demonstrates, are not only of great Etonian interest for their association with Kean, but are quite spectacular examples of the finest silversmithing of the 19th century. As she says, the representation of the Fourth of June Procession of Boats and fireworks is a tour de force. Next comes David Smith, former curator of the Eton Natural History Museum with an account of the reasoning behind his choice of the portraits of Banks and Darwin for the new stained glass windows he has so generously presented to the museum. Saskia Nesja, our Education Officer, writes about the extremely successful programme she

and the team have crafted on the history of medicine for secondary school pupils. A different kind of outreach and partnership by the Collections is represented by Lucy Cordingley's account of some of our loans to others' exhibitions: Keats's death mask to Winchester; the manuscript of Patrick Shaw-Stewart's poem 'I saw a man this morning' to the British Museum; a beautiful Pompeo Batoni drawing to Turin. The Collections is a regular partner for leading museums both in the UK and worldwide, as it should be. Another generous gift was of a delightful collection of vintage postcards of Eton scenes about which Roddy Fisher writes. Aakash Gupta, the Captain of the School and Secretary of the Savile Society, describes the activities of the society, which thrives, in this the 400th anniversary year of the foundation of the Savilian Professorships. Stephanie Coane describes how the Society has been enjoying some of College Library's fine collection of private press books and Lucy Kelsall describes the talk she gave to them about typesetting. Eleanor Hoare, our archivist, writes of the complex interwoven histories of Latin, French and English as languages of record in the middle ages.

Then there is Andrew Robinson on what is to me by far the most interesting portrait in the Blue Corridor – namely that of Harold Macmillan by Stanley Spencer. I knew Macmillan quite well towards the end of his life, and Spencer captures the subtle, lugubrious, asymmetric face quite brilliantly. All credit to Provost, Claude Elliott, and to Macmillan himself, for commissioning it. The scholarly team from Johns Hopkins University next describe some of the results of their research using the part of the Myers Collection of Egyptian objects, which at present resides there. No review would be complete without an essay by Michael Meredith: this time on a subject of which he is a world master – Casa Guidi and the Browning-related sub-collection he has established there. If you have not been to stay at Casa Guidi – go! Finally, our ever-supportive Friends Committee, to whom Eton's gratitude is profound – give an account of their activities. And two full page descriptions of fine current exhibitions, and a reminder that our museums are open to the public every Sunday, complete a most enjoyable journal!

Lord Waldegrave of North Hill

Forthcoming Events for Friends of the Collections

Thursday 27 February 2020

'Spotlight on Charles Kean'

A talk by Michael Meredith, Librarian Emeritus,
with accompanying display
6:30 – 8:30pm, Tickets £15 per head

Tuesday 23 June 2020

Friends Summer Event (afternoon)

Presentations by curators and afternoon tea
Tickets: Free event but reservations will be required

For more information, please contact friends@etoncollege.org.uk

03

ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
From the Provost

Three New Silver Plaques

04

ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections



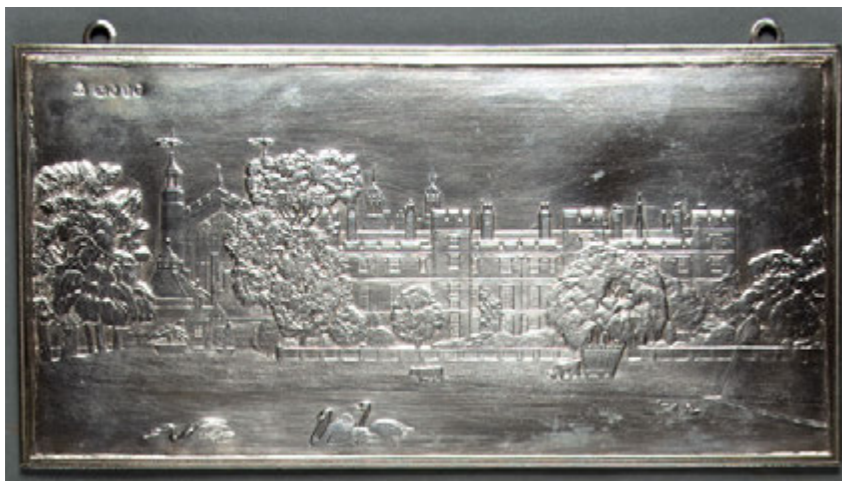
Fourth of June fireworks display with the Procession of Boats in front of Windsor Castle (ECS-S.188:3-2019)

At first glance, these three plaques appear quite unassuming: neither large nor flashy, and depicting familiar scenes of Eton. Why,

therefore, were they recently added— thanks to the generosity of the Friends of the College Collections—to Eton’s

Silver Collection? The reasons for their acquisition are twofold. They have a direct historic connection with the famous Old Etonian actor Charles Kean and are also pieces of the highest artistic merit.

Made in the workshop of one of the great manufacturers of the Victorian era, Hunt and Roskell, silversmiths and jewellers to Queen Victoria, the low-relief casting is of superb technical quality. The maker’s stamp is that of John Samuel Hunt, a partner in the firm. The plaques originally formed three sides of the base to a large and elaborate vase, which itself was part of a sculptural set given to Charles Kean by the Old Etonians at a testimonial dinner on 22 March 1862. The set comprised the vase, two candelabra and two dessert stands with two groups of



Eton College from the River Thames (ECS-S.188:2-2019)

figures, all in oxidised silver, with Charles Kean and his wife, Ellen, represented in many of their famous Shakespearean roles.

Silver manufacturers of the time frequently employed prominent sculptors. The designer of the Kean testimonial set was Henry Hugh Armistead, whose education grounded him in the High Victorian ideals of applying the professional artistic principles of good design directly to manufacturing. His sculpture anticipates the later New Sculpture Movement, which broadly rejected classicism for realism, and this naturalism is very clear in the Eton scenes.

The third plaque, depicting School Yard, shows an interesting elevation of Lupton’s Tower with slightly flattened perspective, with the Founder’s statue deliberately moved to allow a view through the archway. The view of Eton from the river has fine detail of cows and trees, while the Procession of Boats is a tour de force. It depicts, in silver, the fireworks display held on the Fourth of June in front of Windsor Castle. To convey the fleeting, explosive nature of fireworks in low-relief on a solid silver plaque is an extraordinary accomplishment. Armistead must have travelled to Eton to make original drawings, which were then cast in silver by Hunt. The plaques therefore embody the very best of Victorian technical work and artistic design as well as being a product of one of the great manufacturing firms of the era.

Shauna Gailey
Keeper of Silver

Charles Kean

These are not just a set of nicely worked silver plaques – they are an introduction to one of the most interesting Old Etonians of the Victorian period and his extraordinary family. Kean is hardly a household name today, but he had an immense influence on 19th-century theatre and played probably the most significant role in turning it from a raffish and rather disreputable entertainment to the serious art form it is considered today.

Kean’s career was also, perhaps, an act of filial revenge against his father, Edmund Kean – the great actor of the early 19th century. The elder Kean’s life is almost a textbook example of the wild, untrammelled romantic hero: drink-sodden, riddled with venereal disease, lurching from dramatic triumph to personal failure. His career ended in a spectacular court case when he was sued for a ‘criminal conversation’ with the wife of another man.

Amidst all this chaos, Kean had made one good decision when he sent Charles to Eton in 1824. However, with the collapse of his fortunes three years later, he removed him, and when Charles refused to join the East India Company, he cut him off without a penny. So Charles ran away to join the stage. He had no experience, precious little stage presence and not much of a voice. Initially his career was a disaster, but by sheer perseverance and determination, he began to build a reputation. But what marks Charles Kean out and makes him such a significant figure was his impact when he became a manager and director. Put simply, Charles Kean moved acting from bombast and the culture of the dominant lead actor, to something more subtle and sophisticated. Historian M. Glen Wilson, writing in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, summed this up:

‘his later characters were uniquely individualized, complex, and multi-dimensional, researched for realism, and physically detailed. The identity of the actor was submerged, and his performances were subtle and polished, without artifice, staginess, or conventionality.’

Kean researched his plays, he looked for realism, he revolutionised stage layout with bridges, ramps, steps and levels. He explored the possibility of dramatic lighting. His programmes were full of detailed notes and information about the productions. It wasn’t quite modern theatre but provided the crucial pre-conditions for the developments of the early 20th century; Henry Irving and Max Beerbohm Tree both acknowledged their debt to him. With his intensive rehearsal programme and control of every aspect of a production, he paved the way for the development of the modern director.

So the gift of the vase adorned by these plaques tells us that his fellow Old Etonians acknowledged and celebrated his cultural impact. Given his relationship with his father, I suspect that Charles Kean saw Eton as the place that ‘made’ him and gave him aspirations and a network of friends that sustained him through his life. I like to think that he would have been delighted that we remember him today and that ‘his’ silver has found its way into our collection.

Justin Nolan
Deputy Head (Co-Curricular)

Spotlight on Charles Kean

The Friends of the Collections will be taking a closer look at the life and theatrical times of Charles Kean on the evening of Thursday, 27 February (invitation to follow). Michael Meredith, Librarian Emeritus, will give a talk on this fascinating figure of the Victorian stage. The event will also feature a display of related objects from the College Collections, including the new silver plaques.

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections

New Stained Glass Windows for the Natural History Museum

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections

I have donated four windows to the Eton College Natural History Museum (NHM), of which I was curator for 11 years (1994-2004). The newest of these, which depict Joseph Banks and Charles Darwin, have now joined the two butterfly windows installed in 2017 and the earlier memorial window. All four of the 21st-century windows were designed and made by Nani Croze of Kitengela, Nairobi, Kenya.

In determining the subjects for the windows, I decided that pride of place had to go to Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820), surely the greatest Etonian not to have merited a bust in Upper School. Banks, a scientist of originality and immense foresight, acquired his life-long enthusiasm for botany while at school (1756-60). I also chose Charles Darwin (1809-82), because of his unique contribution to Natural History, Biology, Geology and Anthropology. Remarkably, 117 years after his death, Darwin's Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection has survived essentially intact to be refined and enriched by recent advances in molecular genetics and epigenetics.

Joseph Banks came to Eton in 1756 aged 13. He never liked the Eton curriculum as it comprised little but Latin and Greek. In 1757 Banks was smitten by a copy of *Gerarde's Herball* acquired from his mother, and his growing obsession for plants was shared by a small group of boys – whom we now know as the 'Eton botanists'.

At Christ Church, Oxford, Banks hired a private tutor in botany and, following an expedition to Newfoundland, Banks was elected Fellow of the Royal Society at the tender age of 23. He secured a place on HM Barque *Endeavour*, commanded by



The lower window shows Banks in middle-age in his regalia as President of the Royal Society.

Captain James Cook, and invested £10,000 (£1.7 million in today's money) in staff and equipment. The main objective of the expedition was to observe the transit of Venus. However, more importantly, the epic voyage (1768-71) expanded our known world to include the Antarctic Ocean, Australasia and their hitherto unknown biota. Banks arrived home with many thousand plants new to science.

In 1778 he was elected President of the Royal Society, a post he held (controversially) for 41 years, as the effective Minister for Science. His voluminous correspondence



The upper window shows Charles Darwin in later life.

includes almost every illustrious name in contemporary science. As the Eton NHM was not founded until 1875, Banks's direct connection with it is slender but the museum holds a type specimen collected in China and sent to Banks via the amateur algologist Dawson Turner (1775-1858)¹⁻².

Although as far as we know Charles Darwin (1809-82) never visited Eton, he had several important connections with its alumni. The first of these was John Lubbock (1834-1913, Eton 1845-49). In 1842 the Darwins moved to the village of Downe in Kent, and became close neighbours of the Lubbocks. Darwin persuaded John's father to give his eight-year-old son a microscope and thereafter the two spent many happy hours together studying 'animalcules' in pond water and the soil; this nurtured a passion for natural history that remained with John for life. In 1860, a year after publication of *On the*

Origin of Species, Darwin wrote to him: 'I settled some time ago that I should think more of [Thomas Henry] Huxley's and your opinion, from the course of your studies and the clearness of your mind, than that of any other man in England'.

At Cambridge Darwin's mentor introduced him to Leonard Jenyns (1800-93, Eton 1813-18) – and the three of them enjoyed botanising and 'beetling' together. It is little known that when Captain Robert FitzRoy sought advice on the choice of a naturalist to accompany him on the voyage of HMS *Beagle*, Henslow's first pick was his future brother-in-law Jenyns. Jenyns refused as he'd recently been ordained and acquired a parish but proposed that his replacement should be Darwin – and the rest is history. On his return from the *Beagle* voyage (1831-36), he had a huge quantity of preserved material, which included a collection of small birds from the Galapagos Islands. The birds were given, via the Zoological Society of London, to John Gould FRS, the famous English ornithologist – who lived in Eton. After several meetings with Gould, Darwin's thoughts clarified and are expressed in Chapter 12 of *Origin*. Gould's great-great-granddaughter averred that he traded blown eggs and stuffed birds to Eton boys. He probably also sold birds to Jenyns and the Lower Master, Dr George Thackeray (1777-1850, KS 1789-96). It is certain that Gould used some specimens from the Thackeray collection as models for his two magnificent tomes, *The Birds of Great Britain*³.

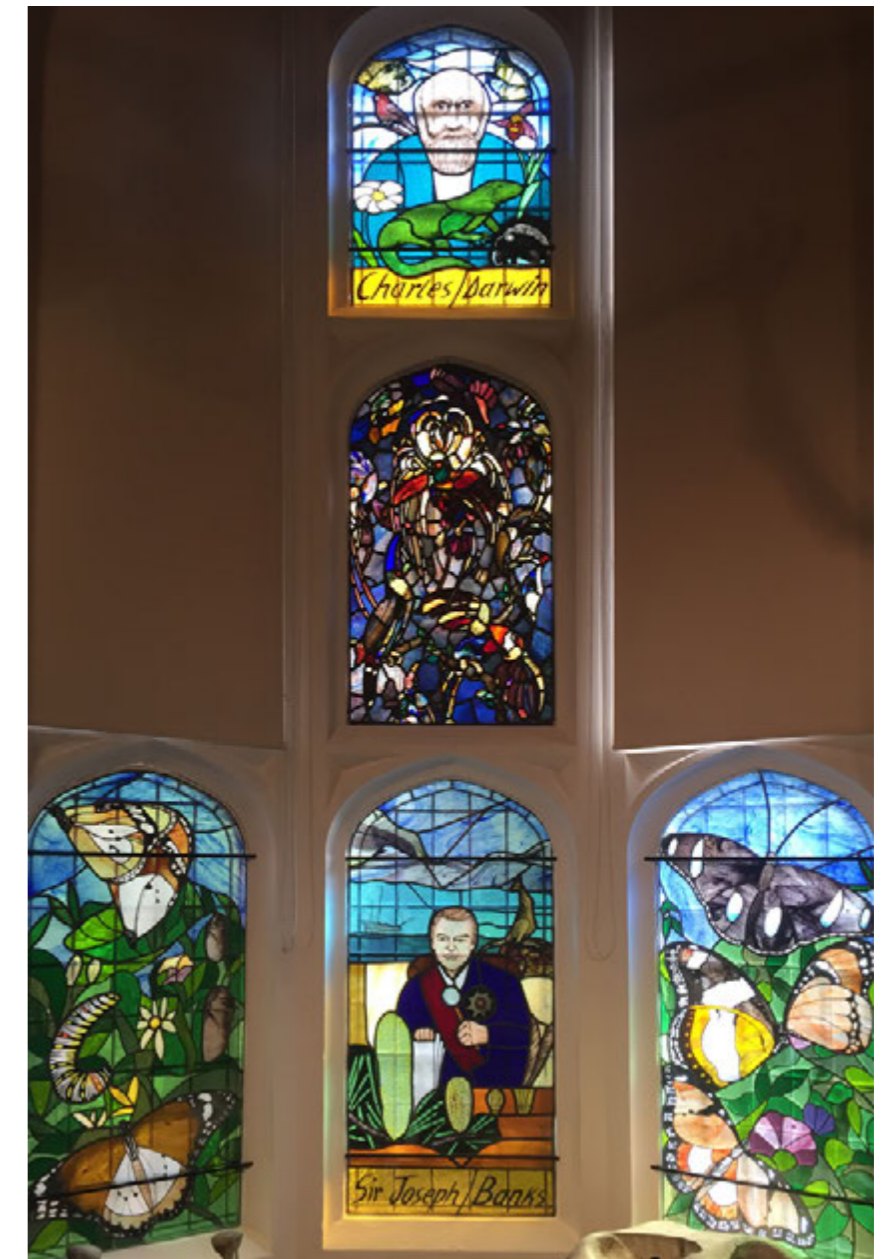
Darwin's final connection with Eton is via his champion Thomas Henry Huxley, who was nominated by the Royal Society as its Fellow of Eton in 1879. Huxley and Lubbock were life-long friends, and both belonged to the X-Club (a dining club comprising FRSs who shared a missionary zeal for Darwinism). Furthermore, as a Public Schools Commissioner from 1861-64, Lubbock had criticised the dead weight of classics throughout the public schools. It is possible that Lubbock's and Huxley's shared belief in the importance of science

education persuaded the Royal Society to recommend Huxley for the Eton fellowship, which he took up two years after Dr Philip Herbert Carpenter FRS (1852-91) had been appointed to teach biology and geology, and become the first ever qualified scientist to be an assistant master at Eton.

David A. S. Smith
Curator, Natural History Museum,
1994-2004

References

1. Brodie J, Fussey G.D., Wilbraham J. & Guiry M.D. (2015). 'From Sir Joseph Banks to the world's seaweed colloid industry: the discovery of original material and typification of the marine red alga *Gloiopeltis tenax*'. *Journal of Applied Phycology* 27: 1535-1540.
2. Fussey, G. 'New Type Specimen'. *ECCJ*, Spring 2015, 17.
3. Lambourne, Maureen. In litt. to DASS, 1996.



Stained-glass windows in situ.

07

ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections

The Wonders Within Us

'We carry within us the wonders we seek without us', Thomas Browne, physician (1605-82)

One of the most striking aspects of the recent temporary exhibition at Eton, *Death and the Doctor: Dying, Burying and the Afterlife in the Seventeenth Century*, was its exploration of the use of the dead body in the rapidly developing science of anatomy in that period. This provided the inspiration to develop Eton College Collections' new offer for visiting school groups on the history of medicine, an option in at least three different GCSE History exam syllabi. Entitled 'The Wonders Within Us', it follows three themes through medical history: surgery and anatomy, public health (specifically vaccination) and medicine.

Resourcing such a lesson from the Eton Collections turned out to be a case of looking at the College Library and Archives' extensive collections. The rare books library holds contemporary or near-contemporary copies of many works by major figures in medical history, including Vesalius, Galen and Thomas Sydenham. There are even letters from Louis Pasteur in College Library (ECL MS 670), asking about the English reaction to vaccination and totting up the ever-increasing number of rabies cases with which he was dealing. The archives hold items such as a boy's letters describing the march of cholera up the Thames towards Windsor and Eton in 1832 and the reaction of the local community (ED 363).

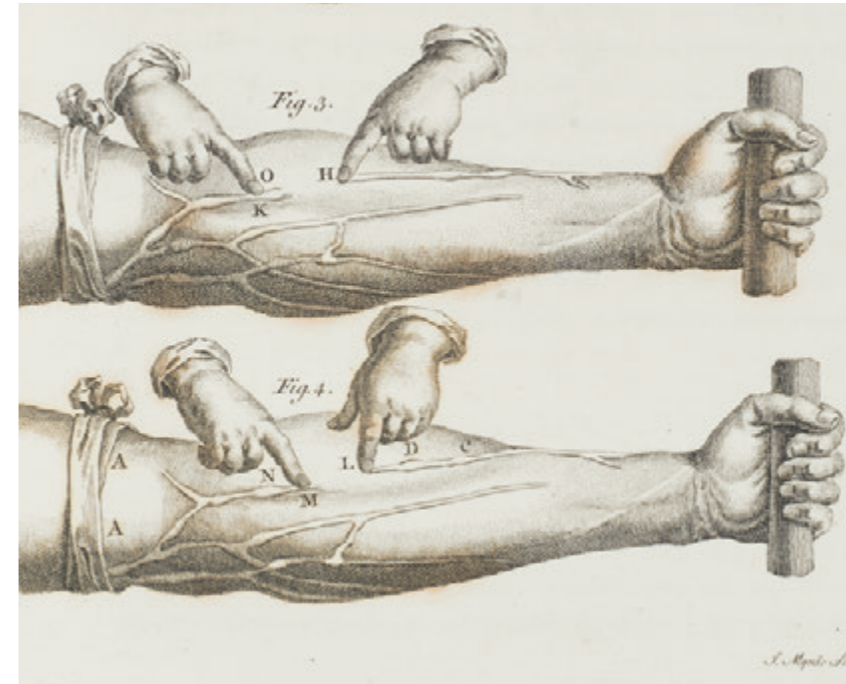
The session itself is document based, allowing the students to investigate actual sources, supplemented by digital images of pages from the more delicate items. Guided by targeted questions, students will read

sections of books and documents, with topics ranging from medieval descriptions of plants and their medical uses to early modern surgical instruments to epidemics of the 19th century, and they will be asked to analyse the content and evaluate the

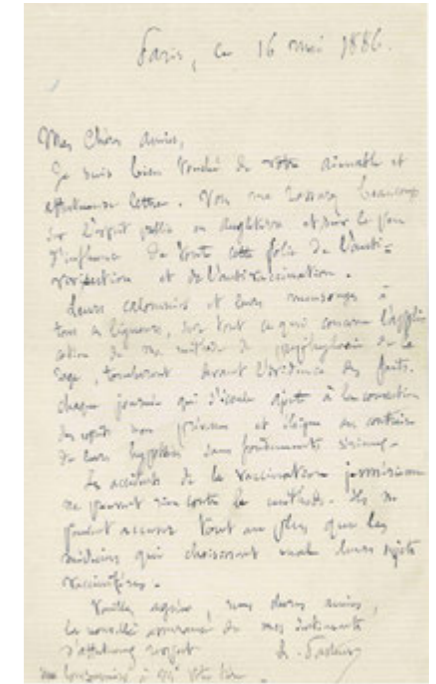
significance of the primary sources. They will also compare developing approaches to vaccination and surgery and will be given the opportunity to discuss how medical understanding has changed over time.



Anatomical illustration from Andreas Vesalius's treatise *De humani corporis fabrica* (Basel, 1555)



Demonstration of the venous valves from William Harvey's study of the circulation of the blood in his *Opera omnia* (London, 1766)



Louis Pasteur, autograph letter, 16 May 1886. (ECL MS 670 L.607)

'The Wonders Within Us' was trailed in May 2019, during one of the Collections' professional development events for local secondary school teachers, with a free talk by Gareth Williams MD ScD FRCP FRCPE, Emeritus Professor of Medicine at the University of Bristol. Dr Williams spoke on 'Edward Jenner: the man who changed the world'; a fascinating talk that looked not only at Jenner's breakthrough smallpox vaccination, but also at what inspired him. The teachers viewed the documents that will be used in the education session, and visited the *Death and the Doctor* exhibition. It was a wonderful evening with an audience who really appreciated seeing at first hand the sources they had studied and taught for years. We look forward to welcoming them back, along with other local teachers, to engage in the new session with their students in the coming months.

Saskia Nesja
Education Officer



Dr Williams delivering his talk in the Museum of Eton Life

Eton's Collections On Tour

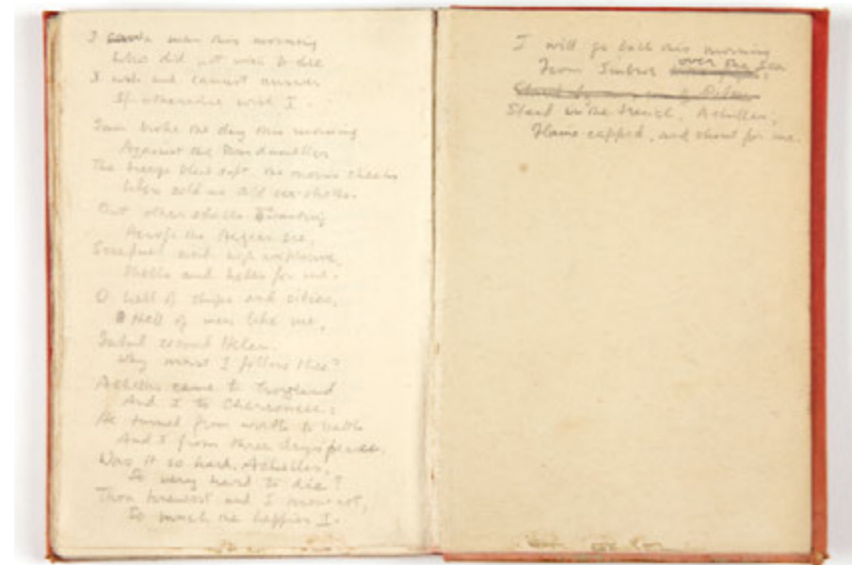
As part of my role as Exhibitions & Access Coordinator, I act as registrar for external loans. This encompasses liaising with the organisation requesting the loan and the keeper of the relevant collection at Eton. The process always includes conversations regarding display, conservation, security, temperature control, humidity levels, couriers, art handlers and insurance. I have been working on three loans of Collections objects to exhibitions elsewhere in the UK and abroad, and I am keen to share the details in case you would like to see them in Winchester, London or Turin over the next few months.

**The Path to Autumn:
Keats and Winchester**
Winchester College Treasury
10 September – 20 December 2019

This exhibition celebrates John Keats's (1795-1821) poem 'To Autumn' inspired by the two months he spent in Winchester



Plaster cast of Keats's death mask, early 20th century



Patrick Shaw-Stewart, autograph manuscript of 'I saw a man this morning' (ECL Icc5.2.33)

between August and October 1819. Contemporary depictions of Winchester will be shown alongside works of 18th-century Romantic poets including Edward Young (1683-1765) and William Collins (1721-59), both educated at Winchester College. Their poems emphasise individual experience, emotion and the close observation of nature, characteristics which made them very appealing to later writers, including Keats.

Eton Collections object on loan:
Plaster cast of Keats's death mask, early 20th century

'To Autumn' was among the last poems that Keats wrote before his death from tuberculosis in Rome in February 1821. A mould was made from his face after his death, which along with the earliest casts is now lost. Eton's cast was one of a small

number of copies made in the early 20th century. Keats's work in 1819 was marked by a premonition of his death; he had become convinced the previous year that he only had a thousand days left to live.

**The BP Exhibition
Troy: Myth and Reality**
British Museum
21 November 2019 – 8 March 2020

Troy: Myth and Reality seeks to reveal the lasting legacies of stories from the Trojan War, which have been reinterpreted and retold from ancient times right up to the present day. The exhibition features nearly 300 objects, including a large number of original finds made by Heinrich Schliemann in Turkey in the 1870s. These revealed for the first time that Troy could have been a real – rather than legendary – place.

Eton Collections objects on loan:
Ronald Knox, *Patrick Shaw-Stewart*,
London: William Collins Sons, 1920;

A E Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*,
London: Grant Richards, 1912

Within the context of this exhibition, these books show how the characters Achilles and Hector have been used by artists and writers to reflect on questions about the nature of heroism and the cost of war. Although Patrick Shaw-Stewart's poem 'I saw a man this morning' is widely known, it was only discovered after his death on the Western Front, jotted in his copy of *A Shropshire Lad*, which he kept in his pocket. The British Museum's Project Curator Vicky Donnellan comments, 'We are very pleased to be able to include the autograph manuscript of 'I saw a man this morning' as a telling example of the way poets of the First World War, fighting in some cases very close to the legendary battlefield, looked back to the heroes of the Trojan War'.

**Rome, Turin, Paris 1680-1750.
Antique and Modern**
Reggia di Venaria, Turin
13 March – 14 June 2020

The exhibition will focus on a direct comparison between two centres of culture, Rome and Paris between 1680 and 1750, and illustrate how artists grappled with opposing external pressures to be both antique and modern whilst tackling themes of history, memory, sensitivity to nature and invention. Items on loan from a wide range of Italian, European and North American museums will allow visitors to admire the quality and variety of figurative art from the period.

Eton Collections object on loan:
Pompeo Batoni, (1708-1797)
Cupid and Psyche c. 1730
red pencil on paper

This drawing belongs to the Topham Collection at Eton College, a group of

over 2,200 drawings and watercolours commissioned and amassed by Richard Topham (1671-1730) to document antique works of art in Rome, Florence and Venice. The drawing depicts a classical sculpture of Cupid and Psyche; Psyche is shown with a drape round her waist, embracing nude Cupid who turns away from her. Cupid holds her mouth away from her with his right hand and grasps her hair at the back with his left. On the back of this drawing, the words 'in Casa

del Conte Fedi' indicate the original location of the sculpture – a neoclassical palace on Via Sora, Rome, now a block of apartments. This drawing will be exhibited alongside works by painters of contemporary Rome: Sableyras and Panini, and their Parisian counterparts: Watteau, Boucher and Chardin.

Lucy Cordingley
Exhibitions & Access Coordinator



Pompeo Batoni (1708-97), Cupid and Psyche c. 1730 red pencil on paper (ECL Bn.3.21)

A Collection of Vintage Eton Postcards

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections



Magnified detail of a photographic postcard (PA-M.2_61-2018)



A magnified detail of a printed postcard (PA-M.2_13-2018)

The Photographic Archive has recently received a very generous donation of a collection of about 600 vintage post cards of local interest from Vivian Bairstow, the Chairman of the Eton College Old Choristers Association and a member of the Friends. Almost 100 are of Eton College and about half of the rest are of Windsor, including the river.

It is appropriate for this collection to come into the Photographic Archive, as many of the cards are indeed photographs, enlarged individually by the maker onto photographic paper that was pre-printed on the reverse with space for the address, correspondence and stamp. This would have been a slow business and there was a general tendency for vintage postcards to be printed on a printing press rather than to be actual photographs. There are also

paintings, many quite simple, though often very charming and attractive, and perhaps painted specifically to be reproduced on postcards.

One can tell the difference between real and printed photographs by examining a card under magnification. The dotted appearance of an image from a press is clearly different from the photograph with its continuous gradations of tone, although these are often rather blurred.

My first concern for the postcards was to house them properly in transparent, archival enclosures. Then it was a matter of recording the postcards digitally, with the front and rear being kept together. I photographed the front of each postcard at very high resolution against a piece of black card and then immediately (so

I didn't lose the link) turned the card over and photographed the rear. The two digital images were then pasted together in Photoshop to provide the final record of both sides of each card. This is a fairly slow business and I have a good many cards still to go, and I also have to record information about each card, so that they can be viewed in the Collections catalogue (<http://collections.etoncollege.com>).

Once digitisation and data recording are complete it will be possible to study the collection and perhaps for future researchers to gather historical information from it. Research interests might include changes in buildings, traffic, trees and so on over time, which would actually best be done with photographic cards rather than the painted ones, where artistic licence can come into play.

It is reckoned that the Golden Age of postcards was about 1898 to 1919. Before 1906 the backs were undivided, which made for addresses that were hard to read; from 1907 the back usually featured a clear dividing line, and there was some description written along the top and often the maker's name as well.

The production of postcards was not regulated in the way that postage stamps have been, and so it is often very difficult for collectors to discover an accurate date. Fewer than half of our cards were ever sent through the post; these include a written greeting of some sort as well as a dated GPO stamp, which at least gives a clear date, although no doubt some cards sat on shelves for some time before being bought and posted.

The greetings are interesting and often make clear that early postcards were a rapid means of communication, with comments such as 'Looking forward to seeing you tomorrow.' A notable feature of the Eton College cards is that none of them seem to have been sent by Eton College folk, neither boys nor staff.

Roddy Fisher
Keeper, Photographic Archive



Front and reverse of one postcard digitised together (PA-M.2_13-2018)



Four postcards in their protective enclosure (PA-M.2_61-64-2018)

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Around the Collections

Meetings with Remarkable Books

Many Eton boys only venture through College Library's discreet door in the Cloisters a few times during their days in a tailcoat. For those who are keen to spend a great deal more time in this wonderful place, there is the Savile Society, a gathering of boys and beaks meeting several times a term to learn more about rare books and collecting.

The society was founded in 1967 as an informal Book Collectors' Club by the young master Michael Meredith. Meetings were held in his study, where early distinguished speakers included the writer-aesthete Harold Acton and the noted book collector John Sparrow, Warden of All Souls' College, Oxford. When Mr Meredith became College Librarian in 1995, the club moved with him to College Library, by which time its scope had extended to the collecting of photographs and three-dimensional objects. After some periods of inactivity, it was reborn in 2011 as the Savile Society, renamed after Eton's great 17th-century provost, Sir Henry Savile.



who has gone on to collect and deal in Russian books and ephemera; and Ed Picton-Turbervill (MJP '11), author of the amazingly inventive *Talking Through Trees* recently published by the Old Stile Press, to which he was introduced via the Savile Society. All three of these Old Etonian bibliophiles have given fascinating talks to the society over the past several years.

Over my four years in the society, I have gained two great things: exposure to incredible rare books and manuscripts, and opportunities to talk to and learn from highly respected figures in the book world. The first has been achieved mainly through the intimate and informal meetings with external speakers or members of the library team illustrating an aspect of College Library's collections. The group's small size allows members to handle and explore the books, which is an integral part of the experience. Highlights have included an evening with some of the librarians' favourite 'quirky' books in the library, and a hands-on session with a portable printing press.

revolutionibus orbium that had probably belonged to him.

This enthusiasm for libraries and book collecting makes Savile an ideal namesake for the society. Membership currently numbers around ten boys. There has always been a focus on encouraging members to develop their own collections: past members of earlier incarnations of the society include Anthony Davis (JA '73), who began his collection of fine bindings as part of the club; Tobie Mathew (PRT '99),

Savile, a classical scholar and one of the translators of the King James Bible, had been responsible for more than tripling the holdings of the library of Merton College, Oxford, where he was Warden, and he played a crucial role in the establishment of the Bodleian Library. At Eton, Savile introduced the idea of deliberately creating an institutional library rather than passively waiting for donations. During his time as provost, more than 1,000 volumes were added to College Library, including, for example, a first edition of Copernicus' *De*

We also regularly escape the Eton bubble to go on trips, such as an expedition to the Antiquarian Book Association and Provincial Booksellers Association book fairs in London in 2017, or a visit to the historic premises of Byron's publisher, John Murray, earlier this year.

Each society member is also encouraged to develop their own personal interest in the book world, ranging from medieval manuscripts to contemporary books. My interest was immediately captured by



Opening page of the Doves Press Bible, 1903

private press books for their unique beauty and intimate feel. Through the society I was able to meet Frances and Nicolas McDowall, the founders of the Old Stile Press, a wonderfully traditional and artistic private press still in operation, and Sophie Schneideman, a bookseller specialising in this area. I have also had the opportunity to get close to some fantastic private press books, such as the Doves Press Bible or the Old Stile edition of *The Seafarer*, bound in fragrant Cedar of Lebanon wood; this has helped me greatly in developing my passion.

Eton is the perfect place for a boy interested in collecting books, offering arguably the best school library in the world as well as enthusiastic and willing staff. The Savile Society allows those who are especially interested to connect with seminal works of literature to meet with other boys and experienced collectors, and access knowledge that will help them start their own collecting journey. Though its name has varied over the years, it has always been a club made up of enthusiastic and inquisitive boys to explore one of the greatest resources any school can possess – a world-class library.

Aakash Gupta (KS)
Savile Society Secretary

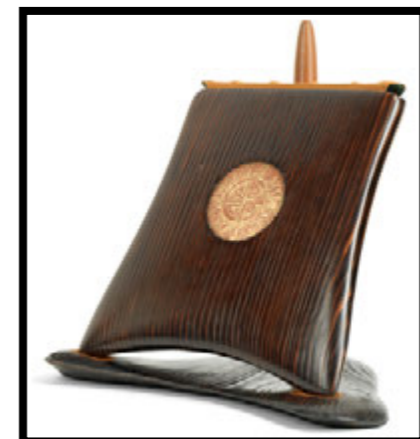
'The Book Beautiful'

An offshoot of the Arts and Crafts movement, the private press movement had its heyday between the 1880s and 1940s. Influenced by medieval manuscripts and early printing, it sought to revive traditional skills and workmanship as an alternative to cheap mass production.

College Library holds an impressive collection of private press books, including all the major printers of the first two generations of the movement, and we continue to buy new books from contemporary practitioners. One of my first acquisitions for the Modern Collection was the Old Stile Press edition of the Anglo-

Saxon poem *The Seafarer*, which made its first outing at a Savile Society meeting. The aesthetic, visual and tactile appeal of these books—fine papers and types, crisp presswork, and beautiful bindings—also make them a particularly accessible way for boys to learn about the materials and techniques used in the hand-press period of printing (c.1454-c.1830) as represented by the more historic holdings of College Library, which may at first seem more daunting.

Stephanie Coane
Curator of Modern Collections,
College Library



The Old Stile Press edition of *The Seafarer* (1982) image credits: Bonhams and Old Stile Press

Practical Printing

Earlier this year I was delighted to speak to the Savile Society about the practical aspects of letterpress printing and binding books by hand. Although these traditional methods of book production were largely superseded by industrial mechanisation in the 19th century, they are still used today in contemporary private press work. However, the craft is also kept alive by an enthusiastic community of amateur printers. I first learned to typeset as a trainee at the Bodleian Library, and have been fascinated ever since by printing and bookbinding. The hands-on, physical nature of these processes is part of their appeal; I also find that working with these traditional crafts informs my work as a rare books cataloguer.

For the Savile Society meeting I was able to bring in my Adana 8x5 printing press, which is compact enough to be portable. Adana machines have been manufactured since the 1920s, catering for the hobby printer, and have seen a revival of interest in recent years alongside the rise of digital technologies. I also brought along a selection of type, prints, linocut blocks and artists' books. The session involved a discussion of these and a demonstration of the press, following which society members set a short text and printed their own postcards by hand.

Lucy Kelsall
Project Cataloguer
January-July 2019



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21 November 2019 – 19 April 2020
Tower Gallery, Eton College

This new temporary exhibition highlights 32 objects from the internationally renowned collection of antiquities at Eton College. Arranged into four themes, Gods, Plants, Humans and Animals, *Ancient Beings* explores the contemporary context and iconography of a variety of artefacts and offers a wealth of insight into ancient Egyptian culture. From a small amethyst scarab ring to a blue faience lotus chalice, an inscribed papyrus and a striking wooden figure of Mesehti, the exhibition brings together a variety of materials and techniques that span over 3,000 years of ancient Egyptian culture.

Our understanding of these objects has been enhanced by collaboration with the Barber Institute of Arts, University of Birmingham, and the Archaeological Museum at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA, where, until recently, these items were on long-term loan from Eton.

Tower Gallery, 21 November 2019 – 19 April 2020, by appointment
To book a visit, contact us at collections@etoncollege.org.uk or 01753 370590

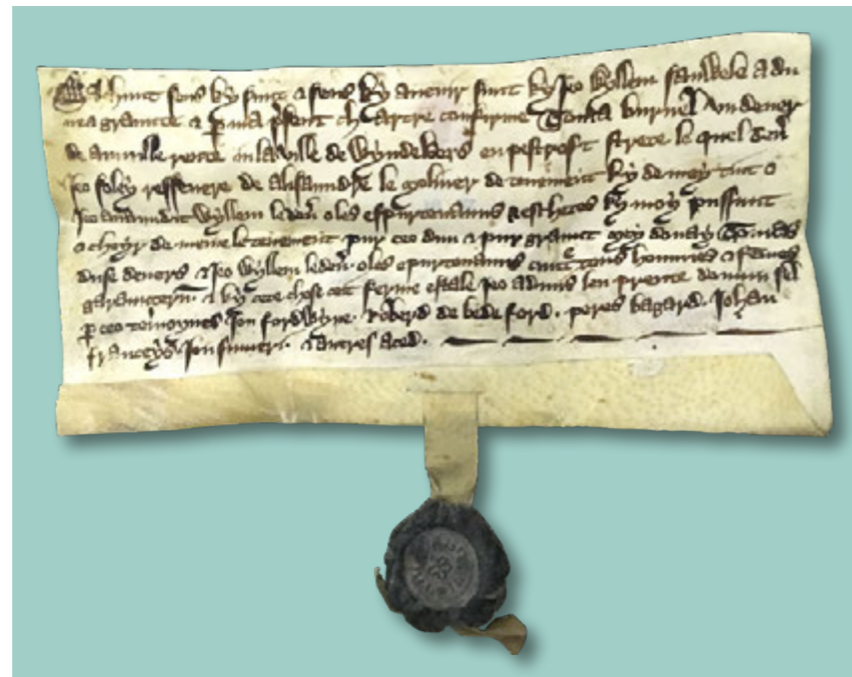


Languages of Record

During the 12th century, England began to see the emergence of government from the core of the Royal Household. The Crown retained power, but the Royal Household was responsible for its administration. This led to a system of permanent officials acting on behalf of the Crown. The king no longer dealt with the details, only the policy. This delegation of business required keeping records of the decisions made on his behalf by officials. Then, in 1275, the first Statute of Westminster was passed setting the definition of time immemorial, a time extending beyond the reach of memory or record. The date of legal memory was set at 6 July 1189, the date of King Richard I's accession. Courts would now require written evidence; oral testimony was no longer sufficient. Together, these developments would lead to an exponential increase in the number of documents being produced.

But in what language should these records be kept? Medieval Britain was a multi-cultural, multi-lingual place, with English, Welsh, Cornish, Scots, Norse, Latin, Anglo-Norman and other languages in use. It has been traditionally stated that after the Conquest, Anglo-Norman French was the language of the management, Latin the language of the scholars and English the spoken language of the people. From surviving records, it can be seen that actually all three languages were in common use, with writers often using more than one language in the same document. By focussing on one area, the law, we can trace some of this complicated history.

The early legal system in England used all three languages. Trials were held orally in



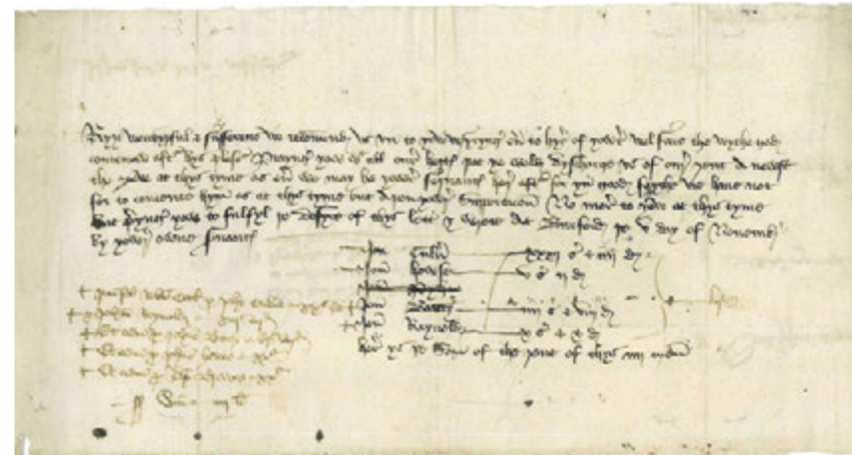
Grant by William Sanwele to Thomas Burel of rent from a tenement in Peascod Street, Windsor, 1272-1307. Written in French. (ECR 11/81)

French, with lesser discussions between judge, witnesses and lawyers in English. The formal record of the court was then written in Latin. In 1362, the Statute of Pleading was passed which declared English to be the official spoken language of the courts and Parliament, requiring all government and legal affairs to be conducted in English. However, the records were still to be kept in Latin, a language with fixed grammar and spelling, easy to abbreviate and therefore quicker to write without mistake.

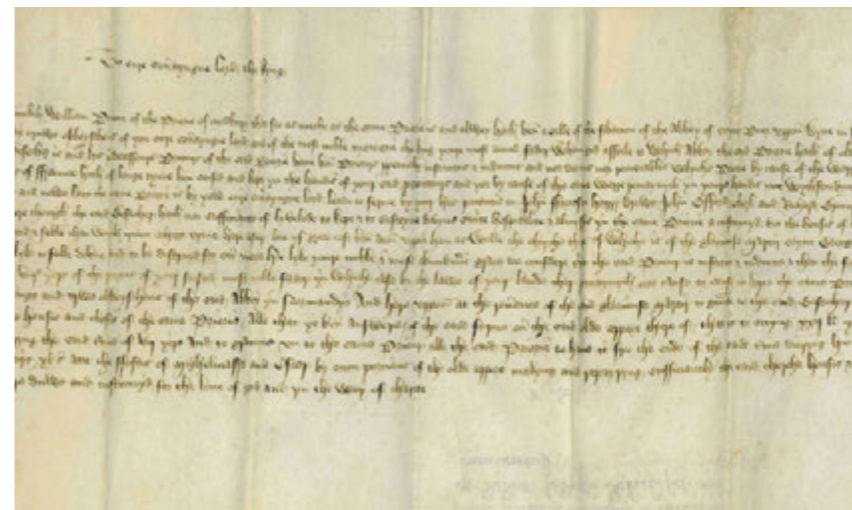
Despite this, French continued to be used by many in the legal profession; indeed many legal terms still used today derive from the French, including attorney, jury, bailiff, mortgage, plaintiff and defendant, as well as more obvious ones such as *force majeure*.

In 1650, the Rump Parliament passed *An Act for turning the Books of the Law, and all Proces and Proceedings in Courts of Justice, into English*. According to this Act, all records from the courts and government were to be 'in the English Tongue onely, and not in Latine or French, or any other Language then English'. However, it would not be until 1731, with the Act of Parliament *Use of English Language in the Law Courts made Obligatory*, 4 George II c.26, that English truly became the language used to record all official information from the law courts of England.

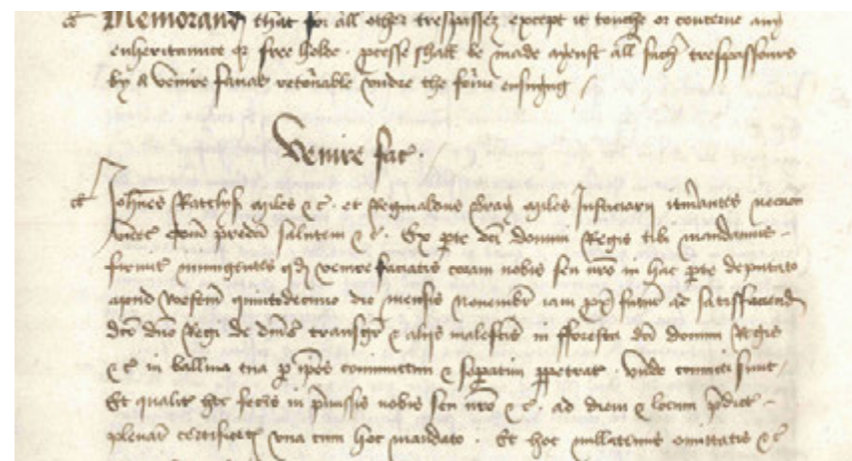
The story is different for other types of records. Records of Chancery, the King's secretariat, show the growing use of written English beginning under Henry V but



Letter from several of those building the college to the Clerk of the King's Works asking to be released from paying rent, 5 November 1455. Written in English. (COLL BA 55)



Petition to the King by the Prior of Modbury, requesting money for the repair of the church and priory, 1438. Written in English, but note on the outside concerning the contents written in French. (ECR 1/137)



Forest Courts Precedent Book, this section recording the process for summoning jurors, 15th century. The official wording for the writs to be used is written in Latin, the description of what to do in English. (ECR 60/6/4/1)

standardised during the reign of Henry VI. Property records such as title deeds can be found in English from the time of the Black Death and are almost exclusively in English from the 1550s, but it is very rare to find English in manorial records, such as rentals and accounts, before this period, with Latin being the chosen language of record.

This mix of language is reflected in the archives of Eton College. The earliest title deed in French is 13th century, and the last dates from 1427. The earliest deed we have in English is from 1480, but the vast majority are in Latin until the late 16th century. Exceptions are the final concords, which remain in Latin until the 18th century.

Personal letters in English begin to appear in the early 15th century, with examples including a petition to the King dated 1438 (ECR 1/137), and a letter from the Provost to the Prior of Modbury, dated 1453 (ECR 1/317).

Several documents in the archives show the switch of language. An agreement between Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and Provost William Waynflete, dating from 1443 has the majority (the indenture) in English but a subsection (the schedule) in Latin (ECR 39/16); the Forest Courts Precedents book, compiled in the 15th century, begins in Latin but continues in English (ECR 60/6/4/1); and a court roll for East Wretham, Norfolk, is written in Latin during the time of Charles I, but in English during the Commonwealth (ECR 63/82).

A student of the medieval period therefore needs to expect to encounter records in all three languages, depending on their area of research. Archivists who look after these items and provide access them also need to be able to read and understand the variety of languages of record.

Eleanor Hoare
College Archivist

The Prime Minister and Stanley Spencer

The Blue Corridor in Eton contains a wonderful cavalcade of Eton's great and good: Founder Kings, Prelate Provosts and the like; but throughout there are also images of those who have featured in national life, from Dr Arne to the Duke of Wellington. There's even a little space left for future luminaries. Quite rightly, one image there is that of the Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (KS 1912).

Indeed 'Supermac' is quite extensively represented in Eton's art collection; there is a bust of him by Angela Connor in College Library – which he liked – and a portrait in oils by Sir James Gunn in College Hall – in which he somewhat fancifully wears the robes of Chancellor of the University of Oxford, whilst Lupton's Tower peeps through a curtain behind him. But in the Blue Corridor there is an intimate sketch, simply of the head and shoulders, and it is rather surprising to see who is the artist: Stanley Spencer. Surprising perhaps since though Spencer is regarded as one of the greatest of British 20th century artists, he is best known either for large scale, slightly primitive works like *The Resurrection, Cookham* or indeed his set of WW1 memorial murals at Burghclere. He did produce several sublime self-portraits, but was also the subject of an attempted prosecution for offending public decency brought by Sir Alfred Munnings, given some of his more unsparing works. There were several more conventional 'head and shoulder sketch' artists, so the story of how Spencer came to provide Eton's picture is an interesting one.

In late 1958 the provost, Sir Claude Elliot, sought to commission a Macmillan sketch. Various artists' names were discussed,

including Andrew Freeth ARA. Freeth had certainly painted numerous studies of politicians, including several of his friend Enoch Powell, whom Simon Heffer slightly un-nervingly describes as Freeth's 'Muse.' He offered to do the work for 100 guineas, but the fellows on reflection turned him down. Spencer seems to have come into the running since when they actually wrote to the Prime Minister *he* replied to suggest it. This was quite bold; earlier that year Spencer had provided an altarpiece for Aldenham School, commissioned by the Brewers Company – he clothed the carpenters nailing Christ to the Cross in Brewers' Caps and wrote to *The Times* to say that the governors of that school were 'still nailing Him there'. Happily the Eton fellows don't seem to have been put off, even if it's a little striking that they wrote to Spencer to ask for a selection of photos of his recent work.

Initially it seems Spencer refused the work, but an intermediary, Sir Jack Martineau, O.S. (TFC '23), played a part in smoothing the path. The Martineau family had befriended Spencer, who called on them for 'nursery tea' and had re-enacted with them his recent knighting (by the Queen Mother) with the aid of a poker in place of the sword. Things did not proceed apace, however. Prime ministers are busy people, and in January 1959 Macmillan went off to Moscow to meet Khrushchev, sporting his famous white hat. Furthermore, Spencer had become seriously unwell and had a major cancer operation just before Christmas. He recuperated in the Canadian hospital set up by the Astors at Cliveden, and on his discharge returned to his family home 'Fernlea' at Cookham, provided for him by Lord Astor and Martineau. Once

recovered he wrote in the spring to say cheerily that he was doing 'masses of work' but was ready to do the picture. The provost must have been pleased to hear this, since he replied to ask if Spencer might like to draw Sir Anthony Eden into the bargain. The sitting was arranged for 21 June 1959. Spencer travelled to Birch Grove, the prime minister's house in Sussex, to do it. Macmillan clearly enjoyed the experience, since he wrote in his diary 'All morning, and most of the afternoon, taken up by the drawing, which is of a very delicate, almost miniature technique. Spencer is a good artist, and a most amusing, attractive personality – reminding me, with his little gnome-like figure, and rather fanciful talk, of James Stephens.' Sadly, we don't know what Spencer thought of the experience, but Macmillan's is a very interesting face, and a changed one. According to Colin Matthew's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Macmillan was held to have looked 'rather like a Bolshevik commissar' in earlier life, but in later years 'the round spectacles went, the teeth were capped, the Brigade or OE tie appeared and the appearance was firmly set as "gent".'

It is rather striking to read that day's entry in Macmillan's diary (Bodleian Library MS Macmillan dep.d.), to find he spent the afternoon in contact with the foreign secretary over relations with the new European Economic Community, and later on with the American ambassador since Eisenhower was taking umbrage at Macmillan's propensity for personal contact with Khrushchev. But he *did* find time to read *Tristram Shandy* for half an hour before bed.

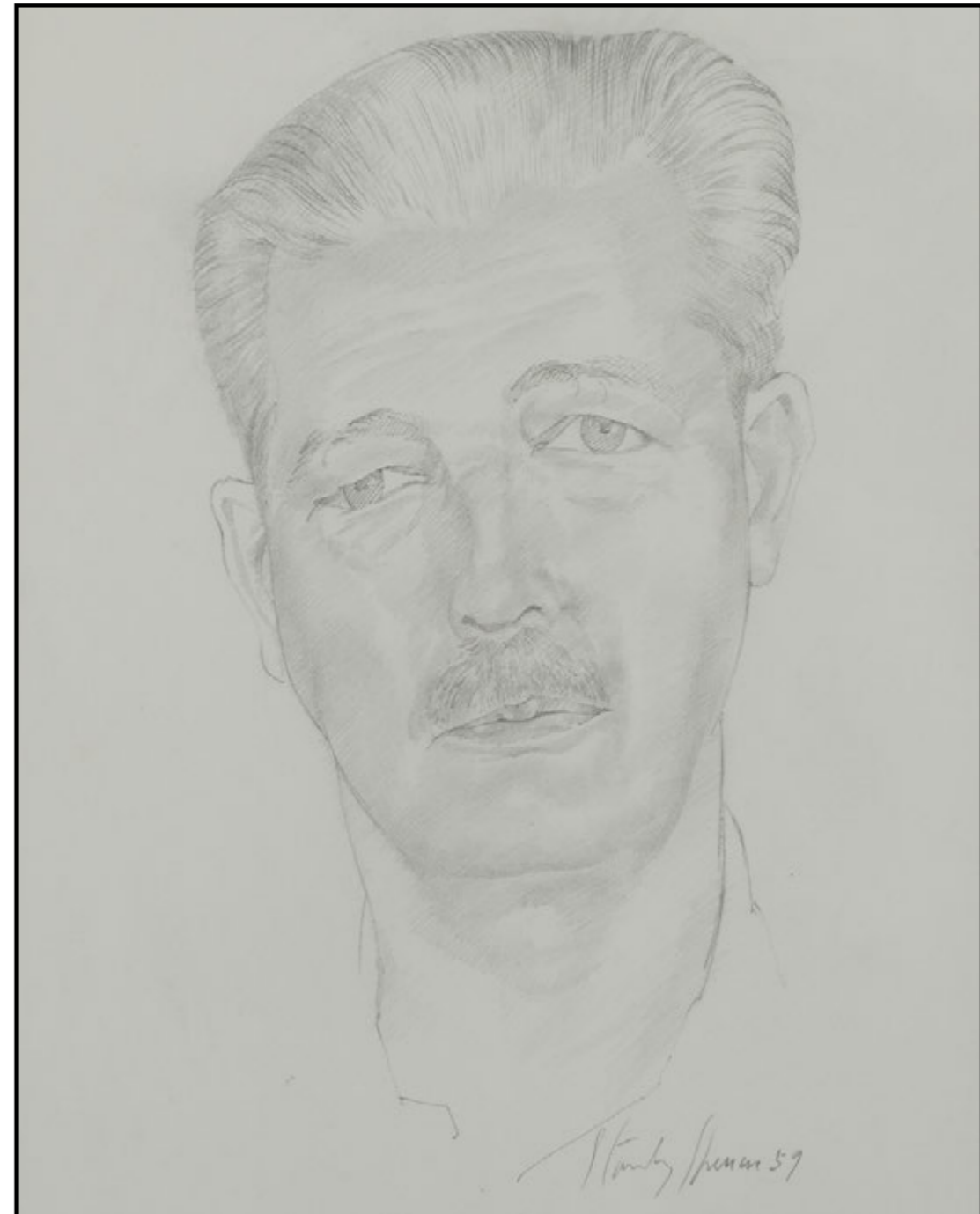
The provost and fellows certainly liked what they got – Elliott wrote to the artist 'it is

an admirable study and its humanity of approach makes it all the more impressive as well as attractive'. But despite the mention of an Eden commission for Spencer, sadly there was not to be a pair. Spencer's operation proved inconclusive and his condition worsened. He did paint his last self-portrait

in July of 1959, which is said to have 'a fierce, almost defiant truthfulness' about it, but he died later in the year. There is a portrait study of Eden in the Blue Corridor, but it is by Cecil Beaton, and that's quite another story. There is also in the College Collections a sketch of Eden by Freeth, though it is not

on display. If ever you see it, you'd see all the more reason to praise Harold Macmillan's perspicacity that for his own picture Spencer 'might do it well'.

Andrew Robinson
History Department



Spencer, Stanley, 1891 - 1959
Rt. Hon. Harold Macmillan (1959)
(FDA-D.20-2010)

New Discoveries on Ancient Objects

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Features



Figure 1: ECM 169. Description: Stone cippus. Culture/Date: Egyptian, 664-30 BCE. Era: Late Period to the Ptolemaic Period. Measurements: 8.1cm (W) x 10.9cm (H) x 2.7cm (thickness).

One of the most rewarding aspects of having daily access to a museum collection of ancient art, particularly the objects on loan from the spectacular Myers Collection at Eton College, is the opportunity to revisit what is known about these objects, and perhaps to make new discoveries. Given The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum's pedagogical mission, we were able to do so along with 15 undergraduate and graduate students in a recent course called 'Egyptian Funerary Arts in the Archaeological Museum'. The class investigated the production and functions of funerary objects for Egyptian elite tombs across the long time span of ancient Egyptian civilisation.

Students worked with specific objects from the Eton collection, deepening their textual knowledge of both culture and technology by carrying out analyses on materials, pigments, construction methods, and erosion and degradation effects. In

this way, students and faculty engaged in learning new aspects of these ancient objects together; we were never sure what we would find, and our joint work raised even more questions and expanded our appreciation for the extraordinary skill of the ancient craftspeople who made these objects. The research from this course will soon find its way to the museum's website, (<http://archaeologicalmuseum.jhu.edu/the-collection/>) where it will join other studies of the Eton College material. This information, along with catalogue records for a larger number Eton objects, will soon be publicly accessible and searchable through ArtStor, (<https://library.artstor.org/>) an open-access digital platform for museum collections worldwide. Below are a few highlights of the research conducted in the latter half of last year.

Dating to between 664-30 BCE, a small stone *cippus* or stela imbued with protective and healing powers is carved in bas relief with a figure of the god Horus as a young boy, and his mother, the powerful goddess Isis (Figure 1). Horus is shown subduing dangerous animals—a lion,

two snakes, a scorpion and an oryx. One of the questions this object immediately raised was the nature of the stone from which it was carved, as it was not a type found in Egyptian quarries. It bears a close resemblance to green dolomitic marble, thought to have been sourced in the Levant. The use of an imported stone for a protective object attests to ancient Egyptians' love of unusual materials as well as the extensive trade networks in Ptolemaic times that made such exchanges possible. Today the stone is a light green-grey color with prominent veining, and its eroded surfaces gleam with quartz inclusions, suggesting that the stone had perhaps been worn away over time as liquids were poured over it in ritual use. The stela is also carved with texts on three surfaces. Given the condition of the stone, these hieroglyphs were difficult to read, but with a technique called reflectance transformation imaging (RTI), they became legible once again (see Figure 2). The main inscription was found to be a shortened form of a well-known set of spells associated with Isis, who warded off scorpion bites and other dangers that threatened children and mothers inside

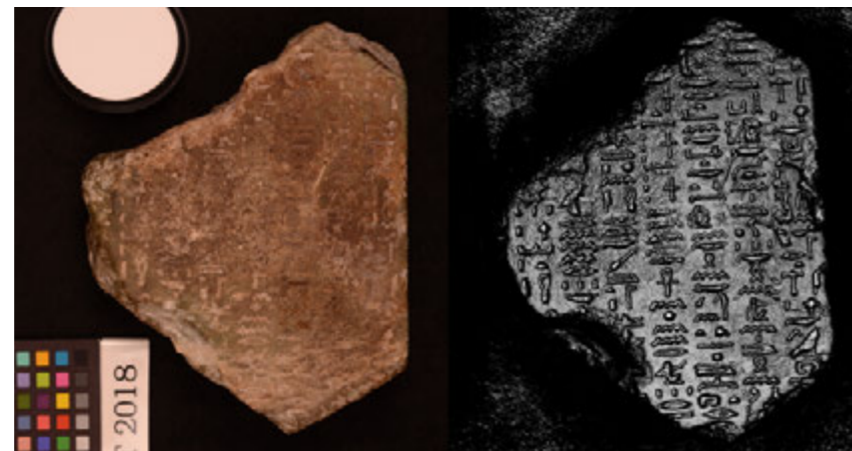


Figure 2: View of the back of ECM 169 in normal light (left) and as a screen capture from a reflectance transformation imaging dataset (right).



Figure 3: Two views of ECM 1722. Description: Faience jar. Culture/Date: Egyptian, 15th century BCE. Era: New Kingdom, 18th Dynasty, Reign of Hatshepsut or Thutmose III. Measurements: 7.7cm (W) x 10.2cm (H) x 1.1cm (thickness).



Figure 4: ECM 1874. Description: Flint knife covered in three pieces of gold-alloy foil. Culture/Date: Egyptian, ca. 3200-3000 BCE. Era: Naqada III. Measurements: 24cm (L) x 5.9cm (W) x 1.3cm (thickness).

houses. In fact, our text is very similar, but shorter, than the famous Ptolemaic Metternich Stela in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

A footed faience jar dated to the 18th Dynasty raises questions about how ancient Egyptian artisans may have learned their craft (Figure 3). Typically, small jars of this shape held scented oils or ointments, and frequently they had simple flat, round lids secured with string and mud. The contents of such vessels may have been for cosmetic use, but the same materials were used in funerary and temple rituals. The exterior of the cup is painted in a manganese-based black colorant with three columns of diamonds. While one of these columns is precisely painted (see left image in Figure 3), the other two are rather irregular—sloppy even—by contrast. And some of the horizontal banding, typically so steady on these vessels, is uncharacteristically wobbly. The firing of the vessel is also uneven,

with one side overheated such that the glazed surface is bubbled (see right image in Figure 3). Does this cup give us insight into a master craftsman demonstrating the ideal decoration and then passing it to an apprentice to copy and fire in a kiln, with decidedly mixed results? Despite these flaws, the cup was included in someone's funerary goods, perhaps giving us insight into how the ancient Egyptians may have judged value or quality differently from our own expectations.

Certainly one of the most spectacular objects in the Eton Collection is a flint knife covered in gold-alloy foil and dated to between 3200 and 3000 BCE (Figure 4). This type of knife was common in Predynastic and Early Dynastic graves and may have been used for a range of activities from combat to animal slaughter. An example covered in gold foil surely identifies this piece with a high status setting. There is little evidence of use, and it may have been produced and deposited

in an elite grave. RTI provided detailed insight into the astonishing expertise of the individual who crafted the faceted, polished object that fits so comfortably into a human hand (Figure 4). While there are numerous examples of such finely flaked flint knives, it was the unusual use of a metal foil (0.1mm in thickness) that was the focus of our investigation. X-ray fluorescence analysis shows that this metal appears to be electrum, an alloy of gold and silver native to Egypt and in keeping with the time-period to which the knife is dated. The folding and crimping of the three pieces of foil to cover the knife is a technique seen in other metal foil objects from this time period, and x-rays confirm that the metal shows striations and variations in density associated with hand-working. While investigations continue, our research thus far suggests that this metal foil is not inconsistent with other examples that date to this early time period and the fine craftsmanship suggests the elite nature of its original use.

One of the challenges of working with archaeological objects is the recognition that some of the information we would like to know about their production, use, and eventual burial may never be known to us. However, as we have studied and taught with the Eton collection, we have had the opportunity to learn from these ancient remnants in unexpected and exciting ways. The thrill of research is in rediscovering details that have previously escaped our notice, and in working closely with our students to ask new questions of the ancient Egyptians.

Sanchita Balachandran,
Associate Director and Conservator,
The Johns Hopkins
Archaeological Museum

Betsy Bryan, Director,
The Johns Hopkins
Archaeological Museum

Alexander Badawy,
Chair of Egyptian Art and Archaeology

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Features

Exploring the Treasures of Casa Guidi

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Features



Henry Pickersgill (1782-1875)
Edward Moulton-Barrett of Wimpole Street
oil on canvas, detail

Casa Guidi, opposite the Pitti Palace in Florence, is the College Collections' furthest outpost. For 13 years, between 1848 and 1861, it was the home of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Today Casa Guidi is owned by Eton College and beautifully maintained by the Landmark Trust, as part of their collection of distinguished buildings rescued from dereliction. Eton uses it for study weeks in the school holidays, when small groups of boys enjoy courses in history, art, literature, science, classical education, cooking, or practise their drawing skills en plein air. At Casa Guidi they are surrounded by pictures and artefacts, many of which belong to Eton, and which certainly deserve a close look.

When Landmark and Eton had the task of restoring the apartment in 1993, our aim was to recreate four of the rooms much as they would have looked when the Brownings lived there. The original furniture had long disappeared, but the 19th-century frescoed walls and painted ceilings had been magnificently restored

by the Browning Institute of New York, and the original early marble fireplaces and wooden doors remained intact. The shell of the building, therefore, was exactly as the Brownings had known it; it was our task to make it habitable again.

The drawing room was the most important, as it was here that Elizabeth had written all her poetry, here the Brownings had entertained their English and American friends such as Frederic Leighton and Nathaniel Hawthorne, and here both poets had discussed Risorgimento politics with some of the leaders of that movement. Fortunately, Robert Browning had had a picture painted of the room as it was when he left in 1861, so using that, and descriptions of the original furnishing from the Brownings' letters, we had much to help us.

The Landmark interior designers bought 19th-century furniture resembling that used by the Brownings, keeping to the original colour scheme of the drawing room. Chairs



William Wetmore Story (1819-95)
Mrs David Ogilvy c. 1864
bust

and sofas had to be functional as well as attractive, suitable for Landmark's paying guests and Eton students to use. Just as the carpets, curtains, furniture and light fittings were being chosen, we had a stroke of luck. The original baroque mirror that Robert Browning had bought and placed over the drawing room fireplace, came on the market. Eton purchased it, and it became the focal point of the room, as it had been a century earlier.

Eton had other contributions to make to the success of the drawing room. We acquired the original plaster busts of Robert and Elizabeth, made by their American friend William Wetmore Story to stand on top of one of the bookcases. Robert's bust, with a winged quill-pen on the base, had been modelled in Rome and brought back to Casa Guidi in 1861; Elizabeth's, created a year later, was posthumous and was intended to complement her husband's. An inlaid table and ornate desk, which had once been in Robert's London and Venice homes, were presented to the college and completed the furnishing of the drawing room, which today retains much of its original charm.

The dining room had to be approached differently, as in the 19th century its walls had been covered in tapestries, which now hang forlornly in a Florida museum. Instead of these, two very large oil paintings by William Artaud of Elizabeth and six of her nine siblings as children, a gift of the present Barrett family, were hung facing each other across the room. Elizabeth, the eldest and aged about ten, is shown carrying a scroll on which she has been writing a poem. The dining room also has a large display case in which items from the Barrett-Browning collections in College Library can

be shown. First editions of all of the books written by Robert and Elizabeth at Casa Guidi, photographs, autograph letters and personal memorabilia take their turn to be exhibited. Regular public access (the rooms are open three afternoons a week) requires security measures: valuable artefacts have to be made safe or alarmed. But, for the benefit of our visitors, when Casa Guidi is open to the public we sometimes place facsimiles of letters or manuscripts on the tables. These are sufficiently realistic to be mistaken for the originals, sometimes with amusing results. One visiting professor became apoplectic when he believed we were mistreating Elizabeth's precious letters.

The Brownings' bedroom has been restored according to descriptions from their correspondence, but two original artefacts remain from their time. The wood-burning stove still stands where it did, though no longer in use, and on the wall at the foot of the bed hangs a portrait of Elizabeth's father, Edward Moulton-Barrett, by Henry William Pickersgill. Although Mr Barrett disowned his daughter after her secret marriage, she was still very fond of him and persuaded her sister Arabella to send this oil painting to Italy from their London family home in Wimpole Street. Thirty years ago the picture was given to Eton by a descendant, another Edward Moulton-



George Mignaty, Salon at Casa Guidi (1861), oil on canvas



F. Magonio, Salon at Casa Guidi (c. 1995), photograph



William Artaud (1763-1823)
The Barrett children: Elizabeth aged 12, her
eldest brother Edward ('Bro') and sister
Henrietta c. 1818
oil on canvas

Barrett, and we were able to return it to its original place in the master bedroom.

An even more important artefact from Wimpole Street came into our possession more recently: the sofa or day bed on which the invalid Elizabeth reclined, from where she received Robert Browning on his first and subsequent visits. Although the sofa had never left England, we decided that the best place to exhibit it in public would be at Casa Guidi in Robert's study. There, under the beautifully painted ceiling, showing the goddess Diana in her glory, it takes its place beside other mementos of the Brownings, including a cast of their clasped hands by Harriet Hosmer, and an elegant bust of Elizabeth's friend Eliza Ogilvy, who lived upstairs with her husband and little boy, and was herself a minor poet.

The opportunity to spend time in such beautiful and historic surroundings is offered today by the Landmark Trust. Friends of the Collections would be most welcome to arrange a visit for themselves. There is no better way of exploring and enjoying Florence, in my opinion, than by staying in the well-furnished rooms in Casa Guidi.

Michael Meredith
Librarian Emeritus

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ETON COLLEGE COLLECTIONS
Features

Friends Review



In June, 55 Friends were privileged to be given a tour of Lambeth Palace, complete with the most important collection of religious books outside the Vatican. The Librarian and Archivist, Giles Mandelbrote, introduced us to a brief history of the Lambeth Palace Library and its collections before we were split into groups to visit the palace buildings, chapel, library and conservation studio. Those of us on the palace tour were struck by the distinctly purposeful feeling to all of the rooms and buildings—from chapel to entertaining rooms to crypt—reflecting what an important role this place has always played in religious and political matters. On the library tour, Friends were lucky enough to view some of the great highlights of the collections, from sumptuously illuminated medieval manuscripts to W.E. Gladstone's diaries (some from his time at Eton). The privilege of learning more of the fascinating history of both palace and library was underscored by passing as we

were leaving, in the late evening light, a fig tree planted in 1556 by the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury.

A similar number of Friends congregated in Election Hall last month for an expert introduction by Dr Lucy Gwynn, Deputy Director of Collections, to one of the finest prose writers of the 17th century, Sir Thomas Browne. A number of attendees found themselves inspired to begin reading some Browne themselves after hearing this engaging account of his distinctive style, careful observations, philosophical method and tolerance of differing points of view—not to mention his enthusiastic coining of now-familiar words and his partiality to the quincunx. Following the lecture, the Friends were invited to explore further aspects of Browne and his times in the Tower Gallery exhibition, *Death and the Doctor: Dying, Burying and the Afterlife in the Seventeenth Century*, and we also viewed a special display in College Library of related rare books. We look forward to similarly stimulating gatherings in the new year, including a summer open event and a closer look at the story behind the Victorian silver plaques recently acquired for the Silver Collection with the support of the Friends (please see Future Events on p. 3).

The Friends have been involved in securing several other items for the College Collections in recent months. We contributed funds to the purchase of a portrait of Edward Coleridge (1800-1833; Lower Master and Fellow of Eton) by George Richmond, which was featured in the recent *New Portraits* exhibition in the Verey Gallery, and also assisted with the acquisition of two small oil paintings of Eton College by Arthur Paine Garratt (1873-1955). Just a few weeks ago, the Friends were able to help the Eton Natural History

Museum add to its collections a copy of an 18th-century verse satire by the Scottish journalist James Perry, which depicts Sir Joseph Banks OE (1743-1820) searching for the Mimosa, an exotic plant. This volume will feature in a special exhibition in the Tower Gallery next year.

Other ways of supporting the Collections, through volunteering opportunities, will be arising in the coming months. If you may be interested in getting involved in this way, please email collections@etoncollege.org.uk for further information. Finally, we are sorry to report the departure of Caroline Bradshaw, who has been the excellent administrator of the Friends for the past two years. She has been a much valued member of the team and we wish her well in her future endeavours. Please continue to direct enquiries to friends@etoncollege.org.uk.

Friends Committee



George Richmond (1809–1896)
Edward Coleridge (1800–1883),
Lower Master and Fellow c.1844
pencil, watercolour and bodycolour
(FDA-D.1604-2019)

The Eton Choirbook

An exhibition celebrating Eton MS 178 and its inscription on the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register in 2018.

The Verey Gallery – Eton College

17 OCTOBER 2019 – 8 MARCH 2020

Curated by Professor Magnus Williamson (University of Newcastle) and Dr Lucy Gwynn with Rachel Bond

The Eton Choirbook is a treasure-store of music and a beautiful instrument of worship, created between 1500 and 1504 for use at Eton College Chapel. Through its survival, this manuscript gives us access to a musical tradition and form of worship that was disrupted and almost obliterated by the Reformation.

This, the first exhibition to focus on the Choirbook, examines its material and historical context. It also explores the development of Renaissance sacred music in this country as traced through the Choirbook's pages and other rare examples of music from this period, never before seen alongside the 'queen of Tudor Manuscripts'.

Open every Sunday 2.30pm-5.00pm. Also open by appointment, Monday-Friday 10am-4pm.

Please contact collections@etoncollege.org.uk or visit etoncollege.com/Exhibitions for more details.