

Some Noteworthy Acquisitions to New College Library in 2025

2025 has been a year of substantial acquisitions activity, as we accessioned into New College's library and archives important collections items broadening and deepening the strengths of our holdings for current and future researchers, as we continue to build our institutional repository of published and unpublished materials.

Augmenting our early printed collections, the library acquired two books, bound in one volume, both written and translated in large part by New College fellow and physician Dr Francis Willis (1664–1702). Like his father Hugh Willis (1625–1689), also a New College fellow, Francis had been educated at Winchester College; he matriculated at New College in 1681 as founder's kin. Francis was born in the Oxfordshire vicarage of St Mary's, Thame, during the incumbency as vicar of his father Hugh, who was also master at Thame School, a school under New College's jurisdiction until the 19th century, and where Francis was educated prior to Winchester. A late 19th-century history of the Thame church notes that Francis was 'an author of considerable distinction and repute, a poet of no mean ability, and a physician of much skill and renown', and indeed both of these are poetry books, *Miscellany Poems and Translations by Oxford Hands* (1685) and *Anacreon Done into English Out of the Original Greek* (1683), printed by Oxford bookseller Anthony Stephens.¹

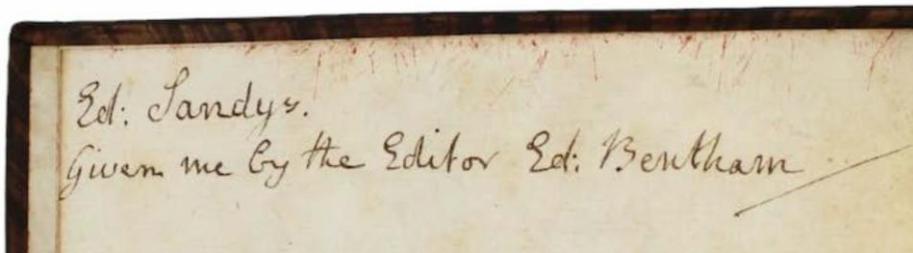
We have also acquired other books dating from the 17th century onwards on account of New College and other notable provenances. Two relate to the landed Sandys family of Ombersley, Worcestershire. The first is a fine copy of *Moral Essays and Discourses* (1690) by Francis Boyle, first viscount Shannon (1623–1699), bearing the signatures in ink of both the Whig chancellor of the exchequer Samuel Sandys, first baron Sandys of Ombersley (1695–1770), and of his father Edwin Sandys (1659–1699), member of parliament for Worcestershire. The text, decrying the dissipation and social licence of the age (the Restoration), is a rare one, and is extant it would seem in no more than half a dozen libraries in the UK. Francis Boyle's wife, Elizabeth, became a mistress of the future Charles II, bearing him one of his many illegitimate children, Charlotte Jemima Henrietta Maria Fitzroy (c. 1650–1684); Francis was duly elevated to a viscountcy when Charles subsequently acceded to the throne. Samuel Sandys, to whom the book once belonged, matriculated at New College in April 1711; the family estates he inherited while still a young boy yielded a sizeable income that would have forbidden under the college statutes his becoming a fellow. He was instead a gentleman commoner at New College, departing in 1715 without taking a degree to undertake that rite of passage for a young man of his social standing, a grand tour of the European continent. Though it would require further research to verify this, an additional ink inscription, 'Mary Devereux's given by my grandmother' on the title page, indicates ownership of this book by conceivably another Sandys family member, Mary Devereux (née Sandys) (1667–1729), Edwin's sister and Samuel's aunt, and the wife of Price Devereux, 9th viscount Hereford (1664–1740).²

The later volume with Sandys provenance is a presentation copy of orations and speeches, from its editor, the Oxford theologian Edward Bentham, to Samuel Sandys's eldest son, Edwin Sandys, second baron Sandys (1726–1797), and bearing Lord Sandys's armorial bookplate. Like his father and grandfather before him, this Edwin was also a member of parliament, and he served for a brief period during 1757 as lord of the admiralty. He had been an avid book collector from an early age, and he matriculated at New College on 21 May 1743, eventually being awarded a doctorate of civil law in 1756. Notably, too, he was elected on 6 March 1769 a trustee of the British Museum, and at the time of his death, a listing records a library of some 1,484 volumes in his

¹ Frederick George Lee, *The History, Description, and Antiquities of the Prebendal Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Thame, in the County and Diocese of Oxford* (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1883), p. 144; Francis Willis et al., *Miscellany Poems and Translations by Oxford Hands* (London: Anthony Stephens, 1685), bound with *Anacreon Done into English Out of the Original Greek* (Oxford: Anthony Stephens, 1683), New College Library, Oxford, BT3.38.17.

² Francis Boyle, *Moral Essays and Discourses, Upon Several Subjects, Chiefly Relating to the Present Times*. By a Person of Honour (London: John Taylor, 1690), New College Library, Oxford, BT3.38.20.

London house alone, further evidence of his intellectual pursuits.³ The volume we have acquired is a composite one, bound probably at the request of its editor, Bentham: it contains his edition of funeral orations in Greek by Thucydides, Plato, and Lysias, followed also by Bentham's Latin edition of speeches by Cicero; both texts are from 1746 and printed in Oxford.⁴



New College Library, Oxford, NB.88.29—with signature and inscription on second front endleaf verso
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What must surely be one of the most significant copies there are of *Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems* (1789), by New College fellow Thomas Russell (1762–1788), has been accessioned into our collections this year. Son of an affluent attorney from Beaminster, Dorsetshire, whose family had long been merchants, Russell was first schooled locally in Bridport before proceeding to Winchester College in 1777 where he shone academically, winning gold medals for Latin verse in 1778 and for Latin essay the year after. He matriculated at New College on 29 December 1780, graduated BA in 1784, and thereafter was ordained in the Church of England. His untimely death on 31 July 1788 cut short what promised to be a splendid literary career—his verse drew the admiration of Coleridge, Charles Lamb, Southey, and Wordsworth. A year after his death, his junior at Winchester and New College, William Howley (1766–1848) (later archbishop of Canterbury), edited the quarto volume of his poetry which appeared ‘by the late Thomas Russell, fellow of New College’, published in Oxford, and dedicated to the Revd Dr Thomas Warton (1722–1800), Winchester’s headmaster in Russell’s day. Russell was celebrated especially for his sonnets, and the third sonnet in the collection is an ode to Oxford. With its references to ‘thy domes with turrets crown’d’, ‘cloysters hoar’, and ‘varying bells, which hourly sound / In pensive chime’, it may well implicitly recall New College. However, the ‘Stanzas Address’d to a young Man who was disgusted with Oxford’ do so explicitly:

Say didst thou never, never haply pass
Where Wykeham rear’d his gorgeous fane on high,
To gaze with rapture on the storied glass,
Whose hues with TITIAN’S or with NATURE’S vie?⁵

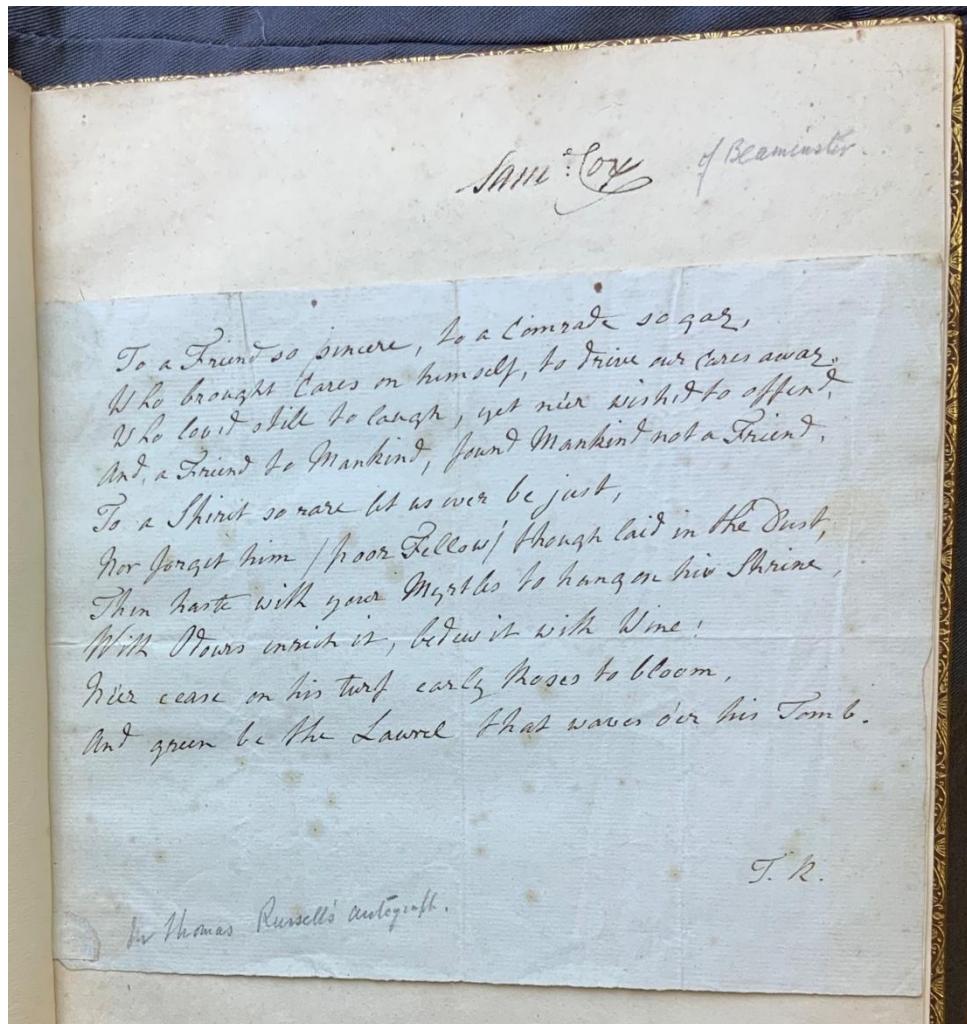
In an attractive 19th-century, gilt-tooled calf panel binding, what distinguishes our copy, in particular, is its tipped-in manuscript verse poem ‘To a Friend so sincere’, signed ‘T. R.’, ostensibly in the hand of the poet. Other loose inserts include a three-page manuscript biography of Thomas Russell ‘written by one of the Banger-Russell family’. The provenance is notable as well. Besides the armorial bookplate of Reginald Baliol Brett, Viscount Esher, and a later one of bookseller and publisher James Stevens Cox with an attached *carte de visite* depicting Thomas Russell’s tomb, the volume also bears the (likely 18th- or 19th-century) ownership inscription of

³ Martin Davis, *Edwin 2nd Baron Sandys 1726–1797* (Ombersley: Ombersley Court, 2018), pp. 19, 21.

⁴ Edward Bentham, *Thoukydidou Platonos kai Lysiou logoi epitaphioi* (Oxon: Ek theatrou en Oxonia, 1746) [transliterated from the Greek], bound with Edward Bentham, *M. T. Ciceronis Sententiae Duae De iis honore augendis, Qui periculum vita adierunt Reipub. causa* (Oxonii, 1746), New College Library, Oxford, NB.88.29.

⁵ *Sonnets and Miscellaneous Poems by the late Thomas Russell, Fellow of New College* (Oxford: D. Prince and J. Cooke, 1789), pp. 3, 48, New College Library, Oxford, NB.162.16.

‘Sam: Cox’ to its front flyleaf. James Stevens Cox’s own Toucan Press published in 1960 Edmund Blunden’s short biography, *A Wessex Worthy: Thomas Russell* (a copy of which we also acquired this year). And the inscription in an early hand may well correspond to a Samuel Cox (1719–1801) of Beaminster, of whose will Thomas Russell’s older brother, John Banger Russell (1760–1827), was appointed joint executor.⁶



New College Library, Oxford, NB.162.16—with tipped-in poem by Thomas Russell

Russell’s near contemporary William Crowe (1745–1829), who was likewise educated at Winchester and New College, and was both poet and Anglican cleric as well, is best remembered for his Dorsetshire poem *Lewesdon Hill*, first published in 1788, the year Russell died. Lewesdon Hill is the highest point in Dorset, and but a three-mile walk from Beaminster. Crowe came from humble origins (his father was a carpenter) and was ultra-Whig in his politics; he matriculated at New College on 17 August 1765, held a fellowship there from 1767 to 1783, and in 1784 was elected public orator in the university. (He too is the subject of a short biography by Edmund Blunden, published by Cox Stevens’s Toucan Press.) The library has acquired an 1804 printing of Crowe’s *Lewesdon Hill*, ‘considerably enlarged: with other poems’, which also has a provenance of note. The copy once belonged to Sir John Taylor Coleridge (1790–1876), nephew of the Romantic poet, and contains a transcription of a poem by Crowe in Sir John’s hand. It was later owned by

⁶ Edmund Blunden, *A Wessex Worthy: Thomas Russell* (Beaminster: Toucan Press of J. Stevens Cox, 1960), New College Library, Oxford, NC/RUS; Will of Samuel Cox of Beaminster, merchant (24 October 1797), Dorset County Museum Collection, Dorset History Centre, D1/9809.

Sir John's grandson, the judge and politician, Bernard John Seymour Coleridge, Baron Coleridge, and bears his pictorial bookplate too.⁷ Other notable 19th-century imprints acquired this year include an 1810 printing of a sermon on Jeremiah 13:23 by the bishop of Norwich, Henry Bathurst (1744–1837) along with an account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Bathurst, one of the 36 children of his father, Benjamin Bathurst, attended Winchester College 1756–61, and then New College, matriculating there as founder's kin on 21 April 1761 and subsequently graduating BCL on 21 October 1768. His son, also Henry Bathurst, graduated in civil law likewise from New College, where he was made a fellow. The Rivington family were the inveterate printers and publishers for the SPCK; this volume is very rare, seemingly extant in only half a dozen UK libraries.⁸

We have usefully augmented our archives this year with a number of photographs. These include colour photographs of various New College sports groups of 2014–17. I was delighted to receive photographs too of our alumnus Alfred Alexander Gordon Clark (1900–1958), better known as novelist 'Cyril Hare', which his daughter Lady Alexandra Wedgwood donated along with related papers, when she visited to see the library's exhibition on her father. She also kindly gave to the library the author's own copy of the first edition of his *When the Wind Blows* (1946), with the armorial and pictorial bookplate of A. A. Gordon Clark, which nicely complements the autograph manuscript copy of this novel we purchased in 2024. An extensive set of photographs dating from 1868–1914 relating to the family of Charles Cripps, first baron Parmoor (1852–1941), we acquired at auction; Cripps was sometime leader of the House of Lords, and was educated as a scholar at both Winchester (1865–71) and New College (1871–5).



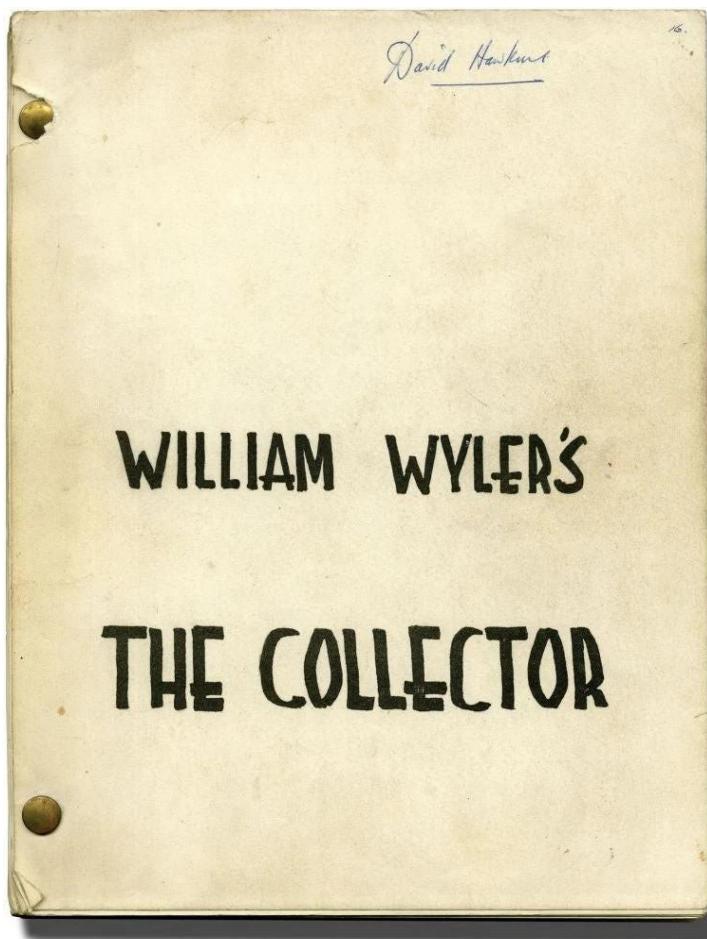
New College Archives, Oxford, NCA JCR/R/Cripps/1/121—boys grouped at Winchester College hall steps

⁷ William Crowe, *Levesdon Hill considerably enlarged: With other Poems*, 3rd ed. (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies; and J. Cooke, Oxford, 1804), New College Library, Oxford, NB.88.33.

⁸ Henry Bathurst, *A Sermon Preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, London: On Thursday, June 7, 1810. Being the Time Of the Yearly Meeting of the Children Educated in the Charity-Schools, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster . . . To which is annexed, An Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* (London: Rivington, 1810), New College Library, Oxford, NB.88.30.

A testimonial of 1907 written by warden William Spooner on college headed notepaper proved another welcome acquisition, relating as it does to our alumnus Ernest Victor Culme-Seymour (1887–1949), whose photograph album we had previously acquired in 2023.⁹ But what are probably the three standout archives accessions this year are documents of very different types. In October, I purchased at auction a parchment Winchester College long roll, dated 4 September 1733, bearing the engraved 'Manners Makyth Man' coat of arms of both Winchester and New College. Listing members of both colleges, as well as those elected to the colleges for the new academic year, it has now become the earliest such long roll of that series we hold in our archives. Earlier in the year, we accessioned a manuscript draft (dating from 1932–67) of the fictional account of life on the Thames sailing barges just before the Second World War, later published as *The Singing Swan* (1968), by prolific author and politician A. P. Herbert (1890–1971), along with the naval journal (1909–11) of one of his younger brothers, Sidney Jasper Herbert, who was killed at sea during a Second World War battle. Both were kindly donated by Herbert's granddaughter,

renowned photographer Sandra Lousada (b. 1938). Sir Alan Patrick Herbert excelled at both Winchester and New College, where he read jurisprudence, and enjoyed a glittering literary and political career, and a lifelong love of the River Thames. And, notably in the year that saw the deaths of Hollywood actors Samantha Eggar (1939–2025) and Terence Stamp (1938–2025), we also acquired from the US the typescript copy of the original screenplay of the 1965 film in which they both starred, *The Collector*, which is based on the 1963 debut novel of the same name by our alumnus John Fowles (1926–2005). The legendary William Wyler directed the film, which was nominated for three Oscars and secured Best Actor and Best Actress wins for Stamp and Eggar at the Cannes Film Festival. The typescript is the revised final draft, with annotations throughout by the film's editor David Hawkins.¹⁰



New College Archives, Oxford, NCA PA/FOW/3

⁹ The college sports photographs are assigned to multiple call marks within New College Archives, Oxford; the photos and papers relating to Gordon Clark are held at New College Archives, Oxford, NCA JCR/R/Gordon Clark; Cyril Hare, *When the Wind Blows* (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), New College Library, Oxford, NC/HAR; see Christopher Skelton-Foord, '[A Newly Acquired Literary Manuscript, MS 381: The Autograph Copy of Cyril Hare's *When the Wind Blows* \(1949\)](#)', *New College Notes* 21 (2024) no. 9; Cripps family photographs, NCA JCR/R/Cripps; testimonial (24 December 1907) by W. A. Spooner for E. V. Culme Seymour, NCA PA/SPO/3/2xix.

¹⁰ Winchester College long roll 1733, New College Archives, Oxford, NCA 15060; A. P. Herbert, *The Singing Swan* I (1932–67), and Sidney J. Herbert, *Journal and Note Book for the Use of Junior Officers* (1909–11), NCA PA/HER/5/5H, and NCA PA/21/14; William Wyler's *The Collector* screenplay (1964), NCA JCR/R/Fowles/3.



New College Library, Oxford, BT3.38.19—binding (above), front doublure and endpaper (below)

Numerous purchases of significant 20th-century imprints relating to college have enriched our collections. We have further developed our holdings of art and antiquities collector and poet, Edward Perry Warren (1860–1928), our alumnus, with a very beautiful *art nouveau* fine binding of his poetry collection *The Wild Rose* (1909). Its custom-made binding features, aptly, red roses: the light-brown crushed morocco over boards bears a gold-tooled panel design of gilt leaves, vines, and red and orange flowers, with a *pointillé*, rolled-gilt border. Equally beautiful inside, unusual handmade, floral gilt-stamped paper doublures, with delicate corner fleurons and facing endpapers—at both the front and the back of the book—are completed with gilded text block

edges and an olive-green satin page marker. Unsigned, the binding is a work of considerable skill. We displayed it in college for the first time at the library's *Art of the Book* exhibition in June. Another book by an American author who studied in Oxford, and a rare find for our collections, was a first edition copy of *The Eighth Sin* by Christopher Morley (1890–1957). This collection of poetry by Morley, who is better known as a novelist, was his first book to appear, in 1912. It was published in Oxford under the famous Blackwell's imprint while Morley was studying modern history on a Rhodes scholarship at New College. Ours is an author's presentation copy inscribed in 1928 to lawyer and bibliophile Maxwell Steinhardt (1889–1977).¹¹

Copies of *The Child's ABC of the War* (1914) appear to be equally rare. An illustrated, rhyming alphabet book, it explains to children the First World War, as things stood in the year of its outbreak. Adding greatly to its appeal are its illustrations by artist Stanley Kennedy North (1887–1942), who was (in fact) a conscientious objector. It has a two-fold connection to New College. The founder of the British Drama League, Geoffrey Arundel Whitworth (1883–1951) wrote it, as its dedication makes clear, with his son Robin Aymer Whitworth (1911–1996) in mind, who was then just three years old: 'Little Robin, safe at home / And not quite four years old, / What's the War to you / But a funny tale that's told / And pictures to be looked at / And words to be explained'. Robin would go on to become a radio and television producer, and also a conscientious objector, serving with the Friends' Ambulance Unit in Britain, Belgium, Germany, and Austria, 1941–6; and both father and son were educated at New College. Also published in 1914, and by Blackwell's of Oxford, is *Oxford Poetry 1914*. It includes verse by New College alumnus Sherard Vines (1890–1974)—so named because his father held the Sherardian chair of botany at Oxford—and Vines is also its co-editor. We have acquired a copy of that book, along with *Whips & Scorpions* (1932), another verse collection Vines edited.¹² Political scientist Sir Ernest Barker (1874–1960) was also a wartime writer, penning for *The Times*, while he was a fellow in modern history at New College, some pieces which made their way into his *Mothers & Sons in War Time*, published in several editions; we have acquired this year 1915 and 1917 printings of the book. Barker dedicated the book 'To the memory of the members of New College who have fallen in the War'. The title essay 'Mothers and Sons' commemorates New College scholar Alec Rowan Herron (1893–1915), while 'Life and Death' memorialises New College fellows Geoffrey Watkins Smith (1882–1916) and Leslie Whitaker Hunter (1886–1916), all of whom were killed in action. And it is Barker's son Nicolas Barker (b. 1932), publisher, librarian, scholar—and honorary fellow of New College—who donated most generously indeed a spectacular 15th-century, illuminated Florentine manuscript to New College Library in January of this year.¹³

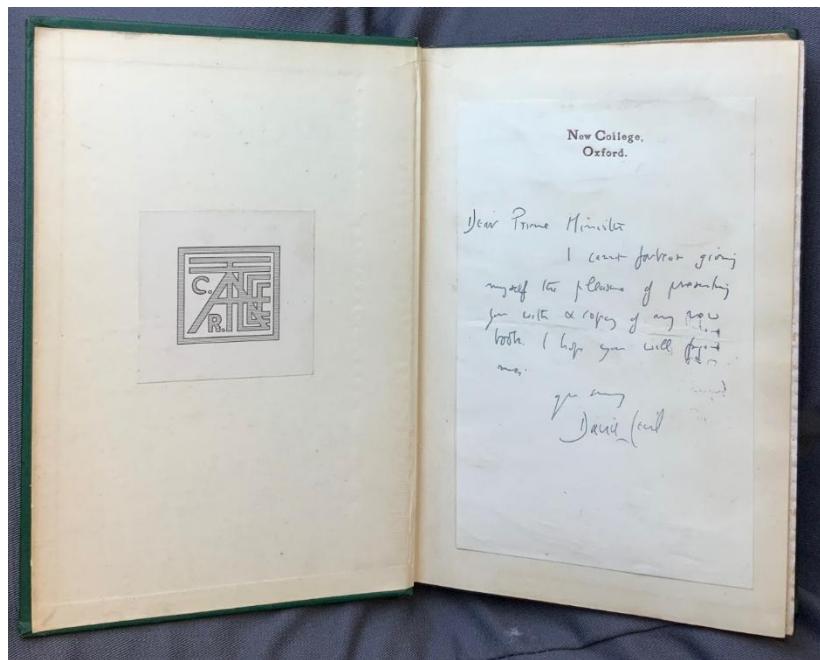
Inscriptions with New College associations enhance three books we acquired, published in the 1920s. *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge* (1922) is a 10th-century Arabic text translated by New College fellow D. S. Margoliouth (1858–1940) and published by the Royal Asiatic Society, of which Margoliouth would later become president. Our newly acquired copy is one Margoliouth presented in January 1923 to Henry Ludwig Henderson (1880–1963), when Henderson was dean of New College, bearing a dedicatory inscription 'With the translator's compliments'. *Rosemary I* acquired at auction, a 1924 collection of poetry and prose pieces edited by F. de Burgh and Walter Stoneman, published by the Not Forgotten Association to fundraise for First World War veterans. Our copy is signed by eight of the contributing authors, headed by New College alumnus, later

¹¹ Arthur Lyon Raile [i.e. Edward Perry Warren], *The Wild Rose: A Volume of Poems* (London: David Nutt, 1909), New College Library, Oxford, BT3.38.19; C. D. Morley, *The Eighth Sin* (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1912), NC/MOR.

¹² Geoffrey Whitworth and Stanley North, *The Child's ABC of the War* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1914), 'Dedication' on title-page verso, New College Library, Oxford, NC/WHI; Geoffrey Douglas Howard Cole and Sherard Vines (eds.), *Oxford Poetry 1914* (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1914), and Sherard Vines (ed.), *Whips & Scorpions: Specimens of Modern Satiric Verse 1914–1931* (London: Wishart, 1932), NC/VIN.

¹³ Ernest Barker, *Mothers & Sons in War Time and Other Pieces* (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1915), *Mothers and Sons in War Time and Other Pieces*, new and enlarged edition (London: Arthur L. Humphreys, 1917), both held at New College Library, Oxford, NC/BAR; see Christopher Skelton-Foord, '[The Restitution of St Jerome: New College Library's MS 384](#)', *New College Notes* 23 (2025) no. 4.

honorary fellow of college as well as a Nobel literature laureate, John Galsworthy (1867–1933). And the copy we have purchased of a literary work, *Nuces Relictae* (1926), by New College classicist and British colonial administrator Sir Dougal Orme Malcolm (1877–1955), bears the author's 1928 presentation inscription to diplomat and scholar Sir Rennell Rodd (1858–1941), later first baron Rennell.¹⁴ 1940s imprints we acquired this year include two of particular note. The copy of Jean Cocteau's *La difficulté d'être* (1947) we have bought is inscribed by the author to our alumnus Duff Cooper (1890–1954), later first viscount Norwich, when Cooper was the British ambassador to France: 'Mon très cher ambassadeur, permettez moi de vous envoyer mon livre avec bien de l'amitié Jean x', Cocteau has written. And we have also acquired a special copy of *Two Quiet Lives* (1948), a study of letter writer Dorothy Osborne and poet Thomas Gray, by New College fellow and later the university's Goldsmiths' professor of English Literature, Lord David Cecil (1902–1986). Ours belonged to prime minister Clement Attlee, bearing his bookplate, and with a presentation letter to him from the author handwritten on New College notepaper.¹⁵ More recent publications with New College associations include, from a set of six Anvil Press Poetry booklets published in 1968 in a limited, numbered edition signed by the poets, the booklet *Juggernaut* by New College poet Gavin Bantock (b. 1939). The copy acquired of *Primitive Song* (1962), a study of music and song in primitive societies by New College alumnus Sir Maurice Bowra (1898–1971), is inscribed by its author to George 'Dadie' Rylands, the theatre director and King's College, Cambridge don; and our printed copy of what was the memorial address for Bowra, delivered by New College tutor Sir Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997), formerly belonged to the Jesuit Oxford poet and scholar Peter Levi.¹⁶



New College Library, Oxford, NC/CEC, pastedown and flyleaf—Clement Attlee bookplate and presentation letter

¹⁴ al-Muḥassīn ibn 'Alī al-Tanūkhī, *The Table-Talk of a Mesopotamian Judge*, trans. D. S. Margoliouth (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1922), New College Library, Oxford, NC/MAR, recto of front endleaf; *Rosemary*, collected & compiled by F. de Burgh & Walter Stoneman (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1924), RS5427, recto of front endleaf; Dougal Malcolm, *Nuces Relictae* (London: Philip Allan, 1926), NC/MAL, front flyleaf.

¹⁵ Jean Cocteau, *La difficulté d'être* (Paris: Paul Morihien, 1947), New College Library, Oxford, NC/COO, half title page; David Cecil, *Two Quiet Lives: Dorothy Osborne, Thomas Gray* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1948), NC/CEC, front pastedown and flyleaf.

¹⁶ Gavin Bantock, *Juggernaut* (Norwood: Anvil Press Poetry, 1968), New College Library, Oxford, NC/BAN; C. M. Bowra, *Primitive Song* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), NC/BOW, flyleaf; Isaiah Berlin, *Sir Maurice Bowra 1898–1971* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), NC/BOW.

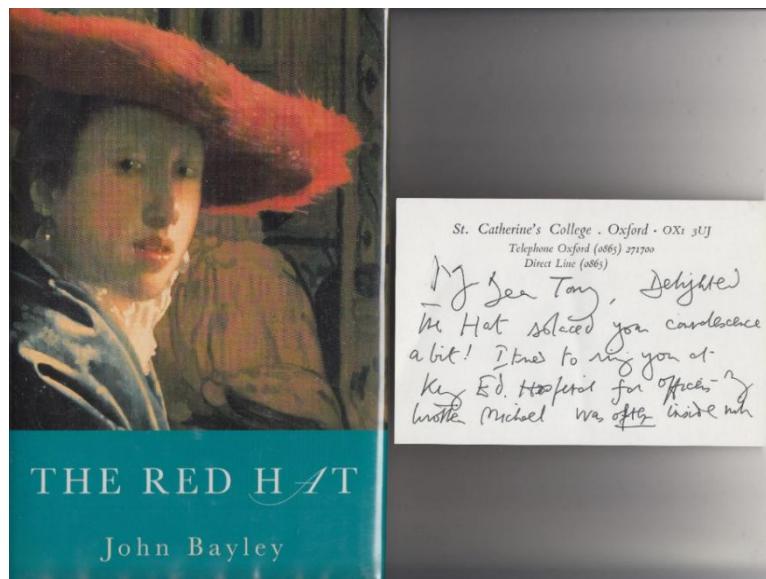
It has been rewarding once again this year to develop our holdings of novels and other prose fiction works by New College authors. Protestant clergyman and moralist James Ridley (1736–1765) modelled his *The Tales of the Genii* on the *Arabian Nights*, and the tales proved popular with both adult and child readers during the 18th and early 19th centuries, after first appearing in two-volume format in 1764. Following a Winchester College education and the briefest of periods at University College, Oxford, Ridley graduated from New College in 1760, where he held a fellowship 1755 to 1762, later working as a chaplain in the East India Company. These (pastiche) Oriental tales purport to be translations from the Persian by a Sir Charles Morell; the 1820 edition of them acquired is notable for its eight hand-coloured plates in its two duodecimo volumes, which are in decorative gold-tooled calf bindings. *An Ishmaelite Indeed* (1893) was co-written by Amelia Sophia Coates Young (1844–1931), under her pseudonym Pamela Sneyd, and our splendidly named alumnus Britiffe Constable Skottowe (1857–1925). He is almost entirely forgotten as a writer today, and first edition copies of this two-decker Victorian novel, about a disreputable American adventuress novelist, are now rare and hard to come by, so we were fortunate to find a copy for sale.¹⁷

Complementing our strong archival holdings of A. P. Herbert, Andrew John Greenwood Banks (*b.* 1941) donated to the library his excellent set of books by Herbert formerly belonging to Herbert's friend and political ally William Mabane (1895–1969), first baron Mabane, who collaborated with Herbert in his opposition to the Entertainments Duty, and with most of the books containing inscriptions by the author. Other 1950s and '60s novels we have acquired, also in their original dustjackets, are by our PPE alumnus Alan Hackney (1924–2009). Both novelist and screenwriter, he is best known for his comic novels *Private's Progress* (1954) and *Private Life* (1958)—featuring Oxford-educated hero, Stanley Windrush—and especially the books' film versions *Private's Progress* (1956) and *I'm All Right Jack* (1959), the latter establishing the film career of Peter Sellers, winning him the Best British Actor BAFTA.¹⁸ The library has also acquired notable copies of 1990s novels by our alumni: an author-signed copy of *Special Relations* (1994) by journalist and novelist Tim Sebastian (*b.* 1952); *The Red Hat* (1997) with a notecard (referring to his novel) written to New College philosophy fellow, Anthony Meredith Quinton, Baron Quinton (1925–2010), by the novel's author, English graduate and fellow, John Bayley (1925–2015), plus a publisher's proof review copy of the American edition of the novel (1998); and author-signed UK and US copies of *The Drowning People* (1999), the bestselling debut novel by Richard Mason (*b.* 1978), published while he was still an English Literature undergraduate in Oxford. *Remainder* (2005), another remarkable debut novel by another English Literature alumnus, Tom McCarthy (*b.* 1969), we purchased in its scarce, first edition (printed from a small publishing house in Paris), also bearing the author's inscription on its title page; we also bought author-signed copies of his experimental conceptual piece *Navigation Was Always a Difficult Art: General Secretary's Report to the International Necronautical Society* (2002) and of his novel *C* (2010), shortlisted for the Booker Prize.¹⁹

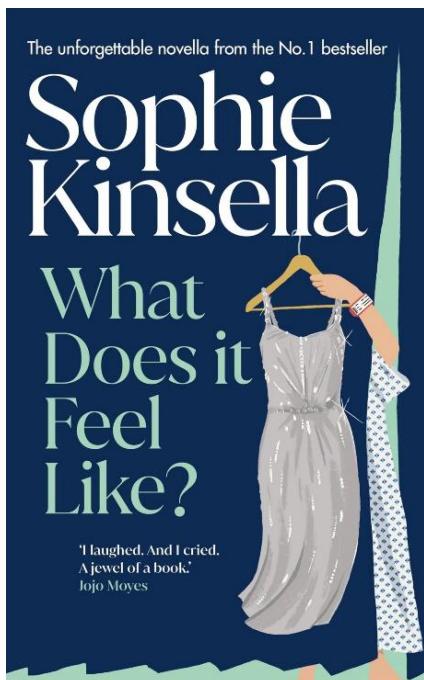
¹⁷ Sir Charles Morell [i.e. James Ridley], *The Tales of the Genii*, 2 vols. (London: Booker; Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy; Rodwell & Martin; and G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1820), New College Library, Oxford, NB.88.31–2; Pamela Sneyd [i.e. Amelia Sophia Coates Young] and Britiffe Skottowe, *An Ishmaelite Indeed*, 2 vols. (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1893), NC/SKO.

¹⁸ The books formerly belonging to William Mabane include A. P. Herbert's *The Ayes Have It: The Story of the Marriage Bill* (London: Methuen, 1937), NC/HER, inscribed 'To "Bill" Mabane With many thanks for his tutelage and encouragement from Alan Herbert', *Topsy Turvy* (London: Ernest Benn, 1947), NC/HER/, inscribed 'To Bill and Stella With love from Alan Herbert. Sept. 24 1947', and *No Fine on Fun: The Comical History of the Entertainments Duty* (London: Methuen, 1957), NC/HER, inscribed 'To Bill Mabane, Guide, Philosopher, Friend, Ally, With salutations from Alan Herbert. March 14 1957'; copies of Alan Hackney novels acquired include *Private's Progress, a novel* (London: Gollancz, 1954), *Private Life* (London: Gollancz, 1958), and *I'm All Right Jack* (London: Gollancz, 1972), at NC/HAC.

¹⁹ Tim Sebastian, *Special Relations* (London: Orion, 1994), New College Library, Oxford, NC/SEB; John Bayley, *The Red Hat* (London: Duckworth, 1997) and *The Red Hat* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), both at NC/BAY; Richard Mason, *The Drowning People* (London: Michael Joseph, 1999) and *The Drowning People* (New York: Warner Books, 1999), both at NC/MAS; Tom McCarthy, *Remainder* (Paris: Metronome Press, 2005), *Navigation Was Always a Difficult Art:*



New College Library, Oxford, NC/BAY—with a card from John Bayley to Baron Quinton of Holywell



New College Library, Oxford, NC/KIN

Our alumna Madeleine Wickham (née Townley) (1969–2025), best known by her penname Sophie Kinsella and for her *Shopaholic* fiction series, enjoyed major international success as a bestselling novelist of romantic comedies and ‘chic lits’. Over 50 million copies of her books had been sold by the time she died, sadly at the age of just 55, on 10 December 2025. This year we acquired author-signed copies of her two most recently published: her novel *The Burnout* (2023) and the novella *What Does It Feel Like?* (2024), the latter drawing upon her own experience of living with brain cancer, and one of the *New York Times*’s 100 Notable Books of 2024.

And the Pulitzer prizewinning fiction writer Geraldine Brooks (b. 1955), who spent Michaelmas term 2024 as a research associate at New College, donated a copy of her *Memorial Days* (2025) in April, ‘with gratitude for your hospitality and help during my term as a visiting researcher’. The book is a memoir detailing how she grieved for her husband of 35 years, the Pulitzer prizewinning journalist Tony Horwitz who died suddenly and unexpectedly. Geraldine Brooks was awarded the 2025 Library of Congress prize for American fiction on 6 September of this year.²⁰

Christopher Skelton-Foord
Librarian
New College, Oxford

General Secretary's Report to the International Necronautical Society on the Interviews, Discussions, Screenings and Performances Conducted at the Office of Anti-Matter, Austrian Cultural Forum, 21 March–4 April 2001 (London: Vargas Organisation, 2002), and *C* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2010), all at NC/McC.

²⁰ Sophie Kinsella, *The Burnout* (London: Bantam, 2023) and *What Does It Feel Like?* (London: Bantam, 2024), New College Library, Oxford, NC/KIN; Geraldine Brooks, *Memorial Days* (London: Abacus Books, 2025), NC/BRO, with a handwritten letter (9 April 2025) to the librarian from Clare Smith, publisher at Little, Brown.