

Byron at Bromley House

Curating the Byron200 Exhibition

The opportunity to explore the collections relating to George Gordon Byron - better known as Lord Byron - at Bromley House Library has been a privilege. As with many of our special collections, we hold rare and wonderful items relating to the poet - some of which are entirely unique.

Many of the items included in the exhibition came from the James Ward collection. A former member, librarian and bibliophile, James Ward took an academic interest in Lord Byron. Many of the works he donated are either collected letters or scrapbooks; here you will find, for example, *Lord Byron's Lameness* (1915) - some of the first correspondence to ever discuss the nature of Byron's infamous "club foot".

This flipbook contains images of the the Byron200 exhibition, alongside the written interpretation placed throughout the library in which I attempted to connect Byron's life and works to our wider collections. It also contains the work of Elin Haworth, a Cultural Services Placement Student who not only digitised a number of the works on display so they could reach a wider audience, but also used her considerable creative writing talents to respond to our collection. I hope you enjoy it.



Heather Green
Library Services Supervisor

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Byron at Bromley House

Curating the Byron200 Exhibition

The best place in the library, for me, is one of the least conspicuous. Walk up the spiral stairs and along the gallery, and you will come across the George Green room! Named after the library member who was a prestigious physicist (rather than the UoN science library), this room has given me many quiet placement shifts that I would love to replicate in my study sessions.

In this room, I helped digitise many of the most precious books in the library's Lord Byron collection, such as a suspected first edition of his *Hours of Idleness*, in order to make them more accessible for people unable to visit the library in real life. Most of the collection is able to be looked at by members on request, which is a real highlight of the library's services in my opinion as an English student.

Elin Haworth, Cultural Services Placement from
University of Nottingham



Byron at Bromley House

An Ode to Bromley House by Elin Haworth

Oh Bromley House! Oh Bromley House!
Refuge of Knowledge! leaves new and old!
Of Nottingham's people, the city's spouse,
Whose Angel Row door holds hidden gold.

In its rooms, two vast centuries of books!
Collated curios, precious past's tomes
Aside young trees' pages, for all to look,
All ripe for the borrow, for some to roam.

Yet rooms are also home to members all,
With each one taking seats in cozied chairs;
Books borrow'd, tea brew'd in sweet enthrall
Of this place perfum'd with such a peaceful air.

Thy dark room, hiding plenty pictures past,
In attic high and lofty, out of sight;
Snapdragon blue, sun bright on subjects cast,
While Barber's portraits captur'd its fair light.

And outside all is the city's tranquil haven!
Sanctuary shade, beneath trees of London Plane;
Many who seek beauty find it saved,
'Midst the em'rald grass and blossoms same.

And thy resplendent beauty will persist,
Continue, sagely, as the years do come;
Shap'd as though inspir'd by God's great fist,
The loaded shelves of transcendental sum.



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Byron at Bromley House



*"There is my only want a library... and then
I could amuse myself, even if alone..."*

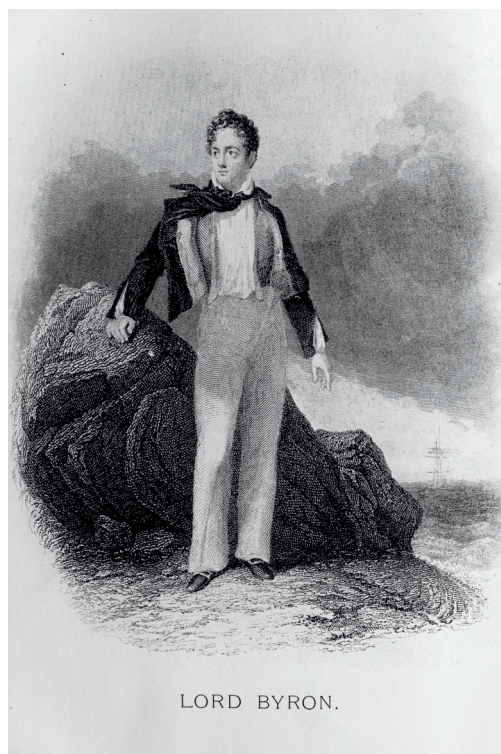
Lord Byron, 1815, in a letter to Lady Melbourne

Byron 200 marks the bicentenary of Lord Byron's death, commemorated by events celebrating his life and works.

Bromley House is showcasing our own unique collection relating to the infamous Romantic poet. An exhibition of our special collections is displayed in the Neville Hoskins Reading Room, but you will find interpretation relating to Lord Byron across the library.

Byron at Bromley House

Main Library



*"There is my only want a library... and then I could
amuse myself, even if alone..."*

Lord Byron, 1815, in a letter to Lady Melbourne

Byron wrote to his aunt of his desire for a library during a stay at Hainaby hall. Byron and his new wife, Annabella Milbanke, were staying in the hall following their wedding day; a stay which Byron referred to as a "treacle moon". The marriage lasted only a year; although the couple did have one daughter - Ada Lovelace, a mathematician often referred to as the "world's first computer programmer".

The Main Library at Bromley House contains part of our contemporary fiction collection alongside special collection cases.



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Lord Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron200 display in Neville Hoskin's Reading Room. From Left to Right:

Astarte : a fragment of truth concerning George Gordon Byron, Sixth Lord Byron
(1921) Ralph and Mary Caroline Milbanke

*The correspondence of Lady Lovelace and others relative to the Lady Byron
portrait* (1899-1916) compiled by James Ward

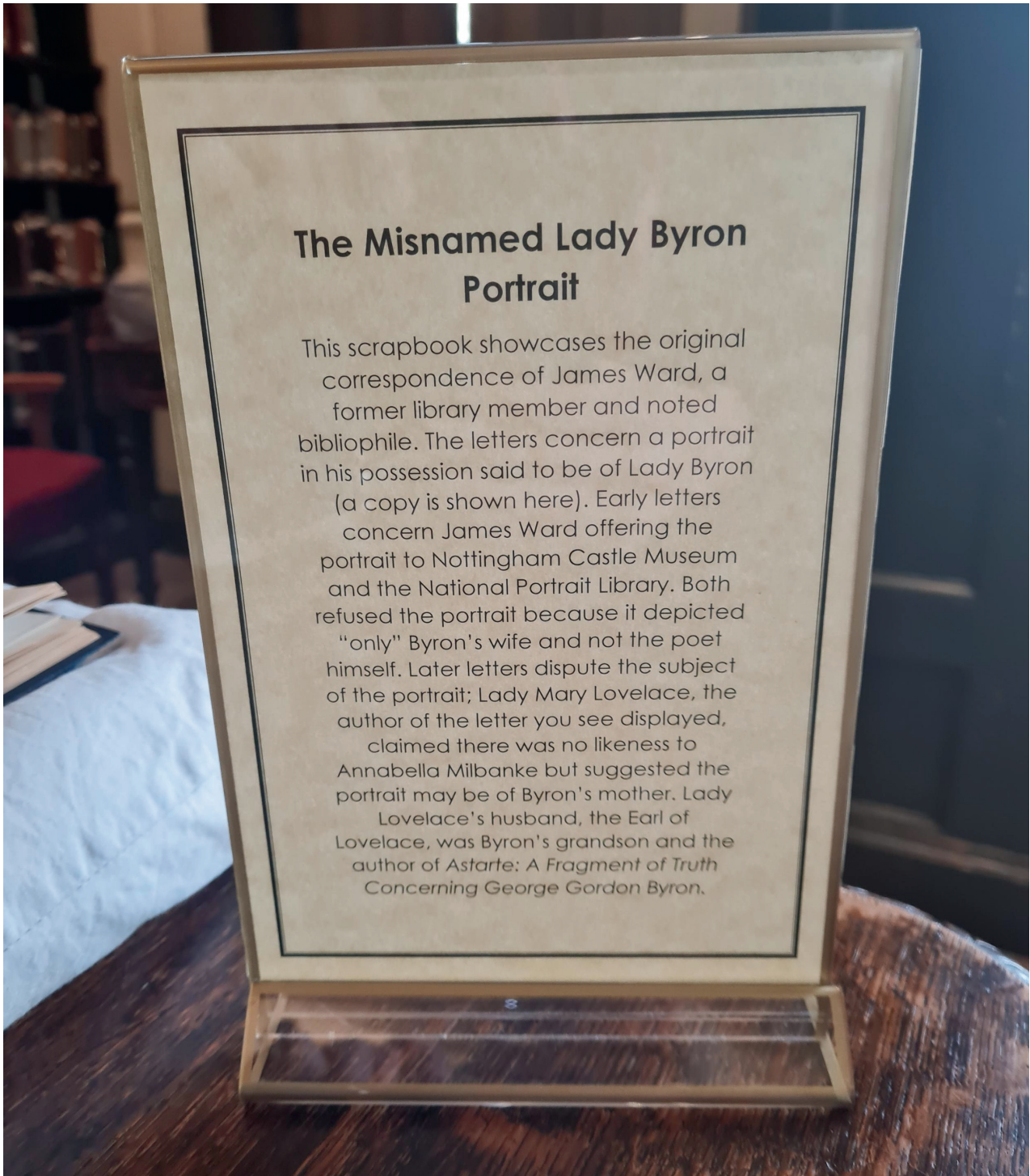


Behind: Portrait of poet Lord Byron and
copy of discussed Lady Byron portrait

Byron
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Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections

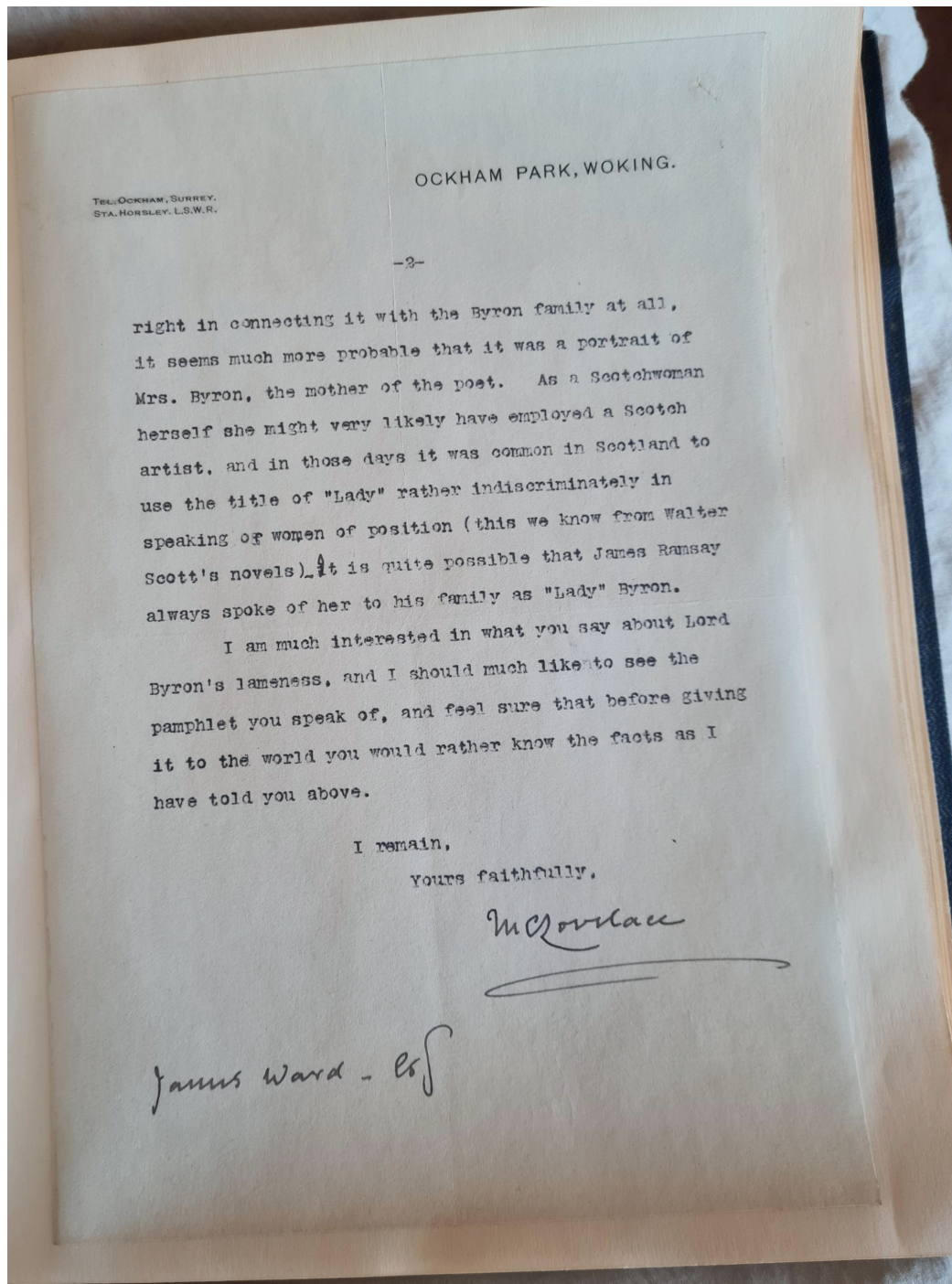


The Misnamed Lady Byron Portrait

This scrapbook showcases the original correspondence of James Ward, a former library member and noted bibliophile. The letters concern a portrait in his possession said to be of Lady Byron (a copy is shown here). Early letters concern James Ward offering the portrait to Nottingham Castle Museum and the National Portrait Library. Both refused the portrait because it depicted "only" Byron's wife and not the poet himself. Later letters dispute the subject of the portrait; Lady Mary Lovelace, the author of the letter you see displayed, claimed there was no likeness to Annabella Milbanke but suggested the portrait may be of Byron's mother. Lady Lovelace's husband, the Earl of Lovelace, was Byron's grandson and the author of *Astarte: A Fragment of Truth Concerning George Gordon Byron*.

Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Displayed letter from *The correspondence of Lady Lovelace and others relative to the Lady Byron portrait (1899-1916)*

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Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron200 display in Neville Hoskin's Reading Room. From Left to Right:

Manuscript Notes on Medical Subjects (1777) J .H. Pigot

Lord Byron's Lameness: the correspondence of James Ward and George G. Napier (1915) James Ward

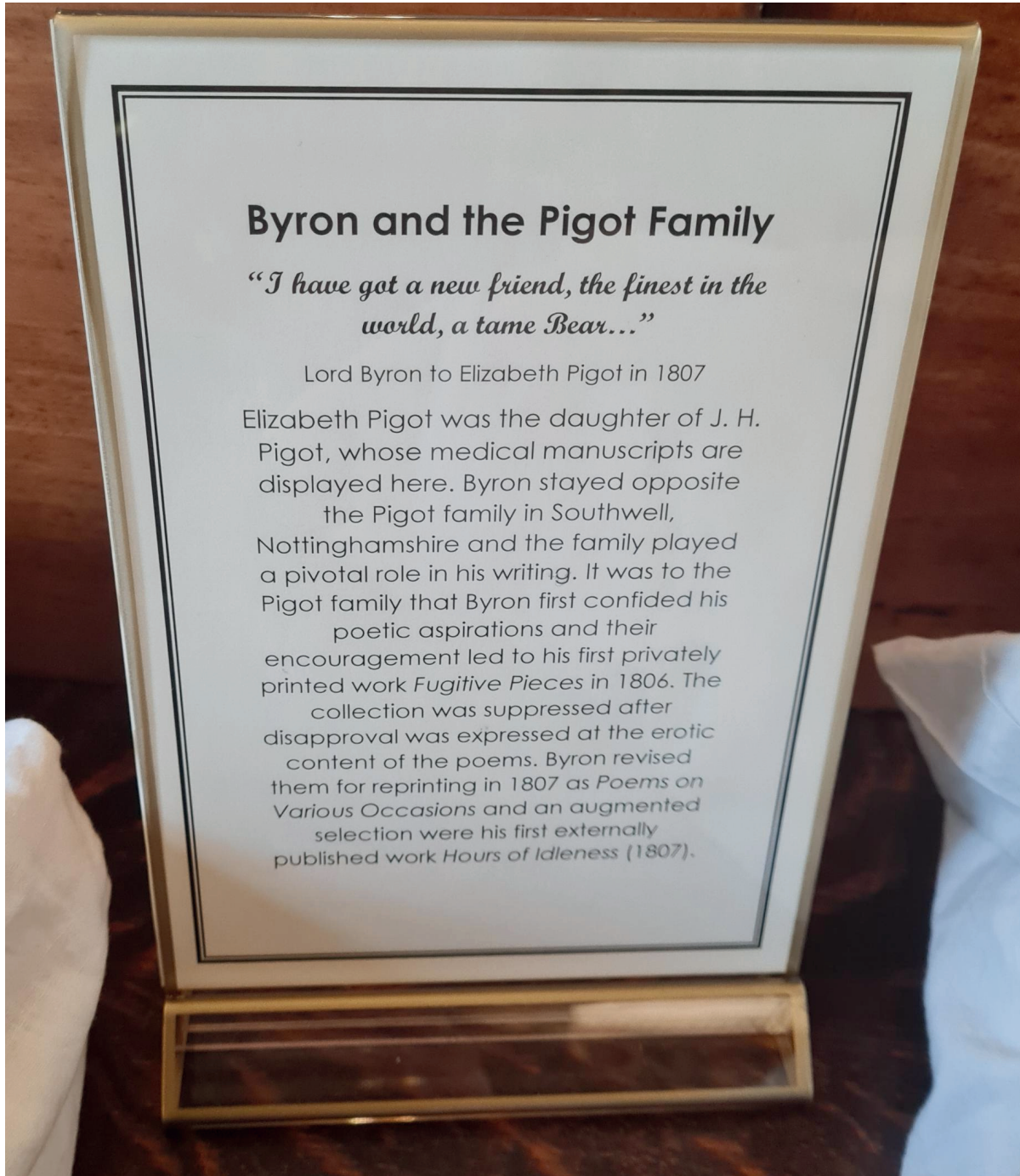
*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers:
A Satire (date unknown) An original
transcription by Miss Renny & Mrs Neale*



Byron
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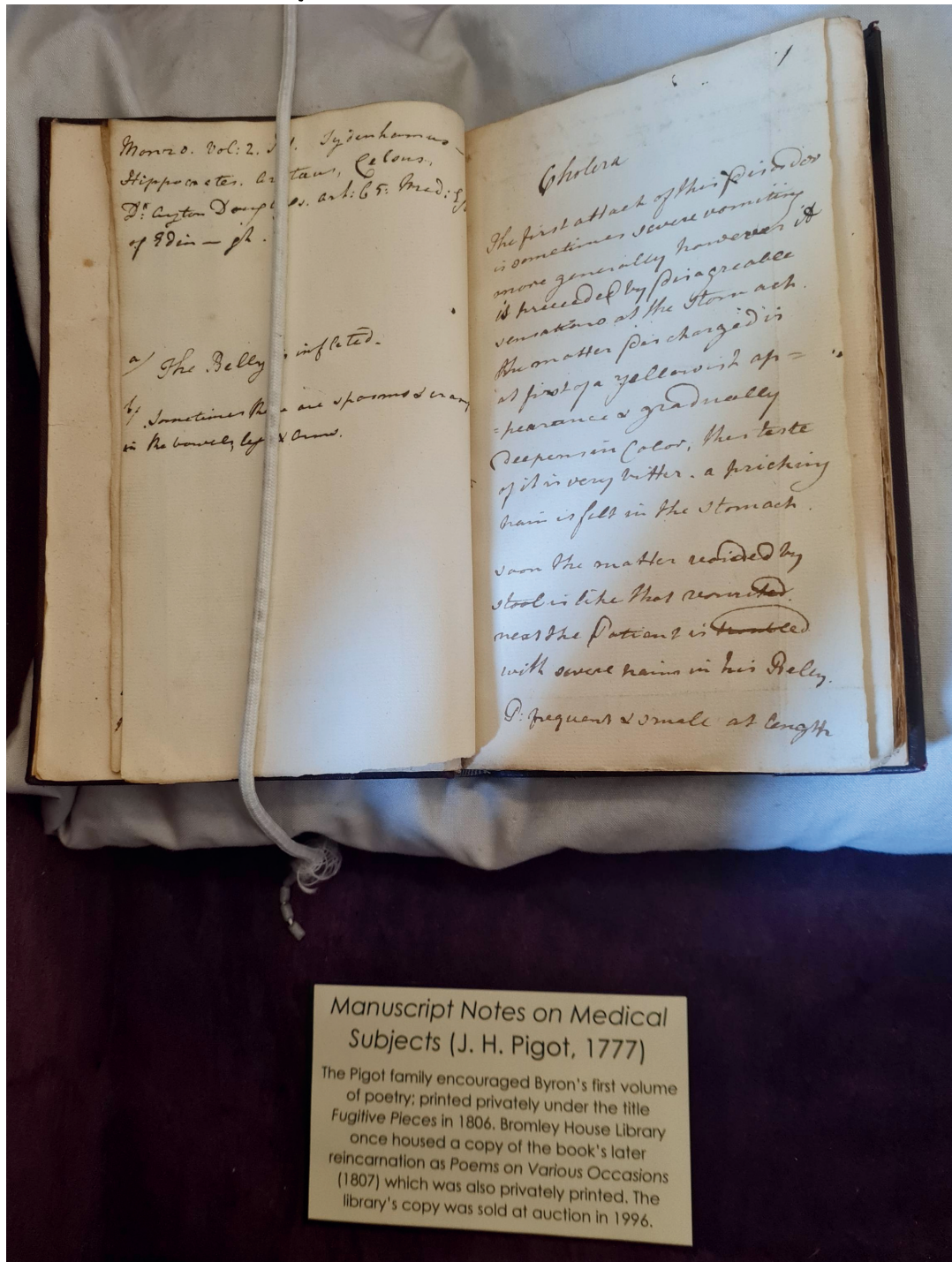
Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



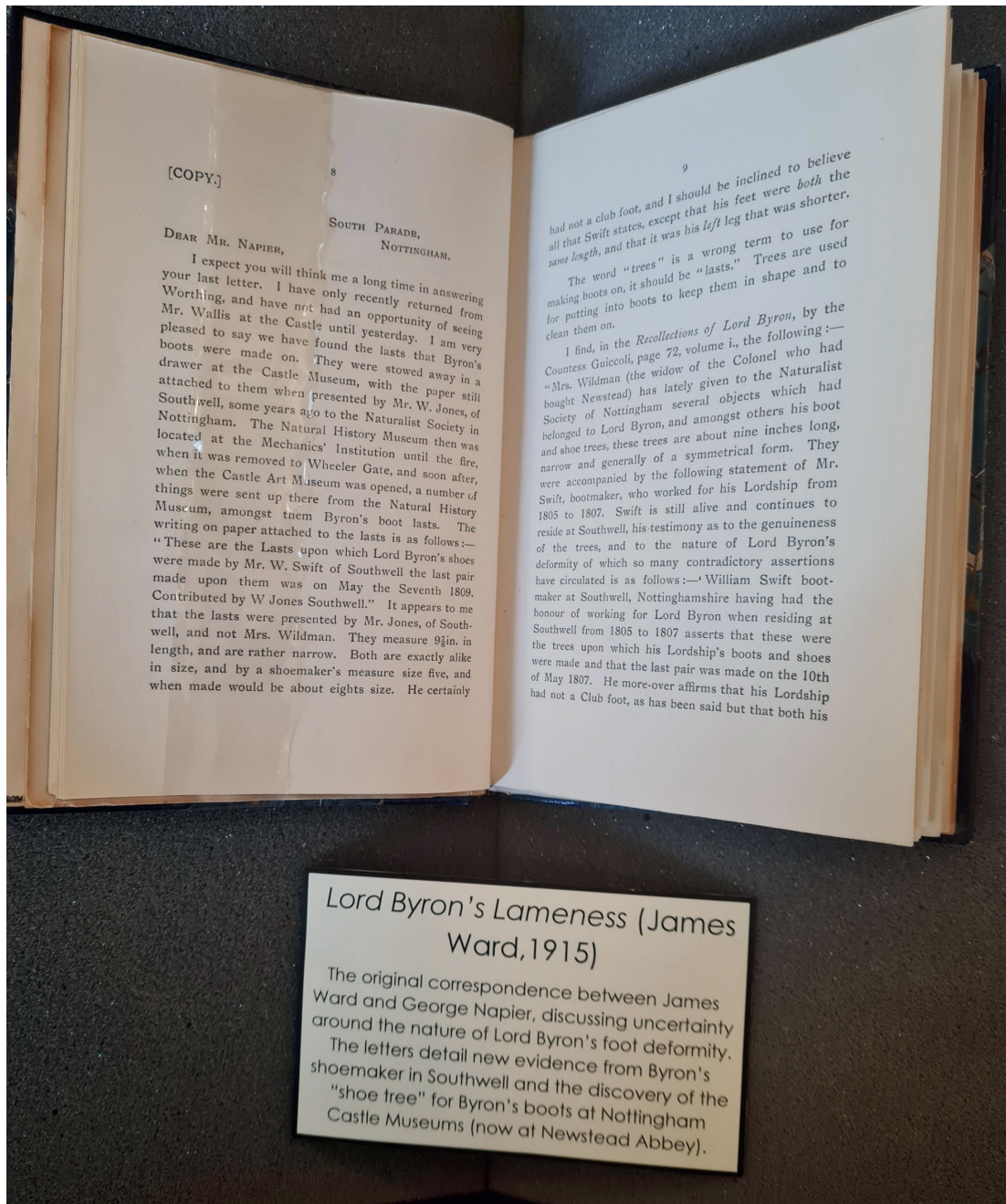
Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



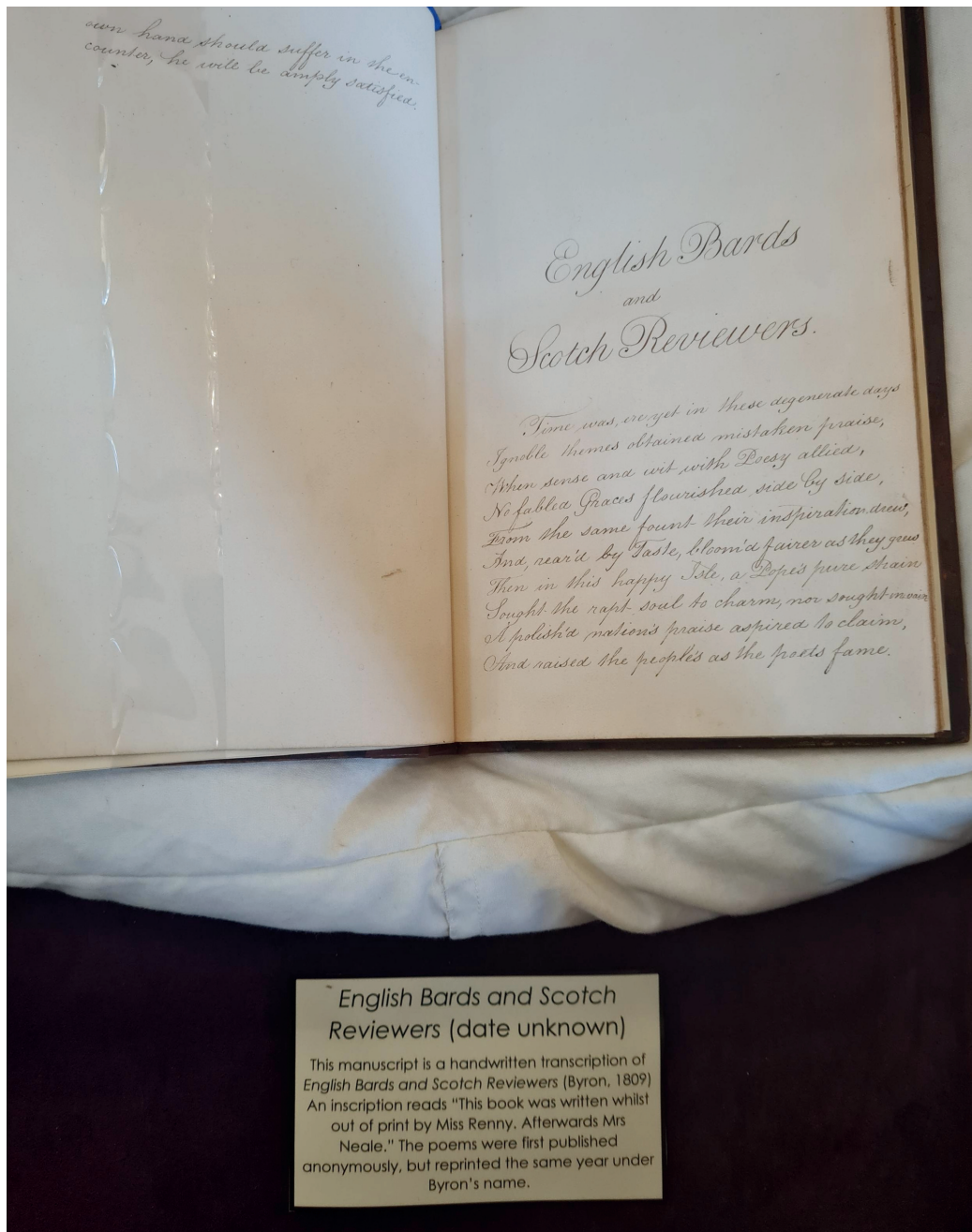
Displayed Lord Byron's Lameness: the correspondence of James Ward and George G. Napier (1915) James Ward



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Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Displayed *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (date unknown) An original transcription in the hand of Miss Renny afterwards Mrs Neale



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Byron at Bromley House

Neville Hoskins Reading Room



*"Behold! in various throngs the scribbling crew,
For notice eager, pass in long review"*

Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers is a scathing satire of the literary circle at the time of Byron's writing. The poem was penned as a reaction to a critical review of *Hours of Idleness*, Byron's first published collection. In his journal in 1813, Byron records that after reading the criticism in *The Edinburgh Review* he "dined and drank three bottles of Claret... was not easy until I had vented my wrath and my rhyme". Thomas Moore, whose biographies of Byron are displayed here, was originally attacked within the poem. The pair later became friends; a connection often attributed to Byron's acceptance in the London literary scene of the day.



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Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron200 display in Neville Hoskin's Reading Room. From Left to Right:

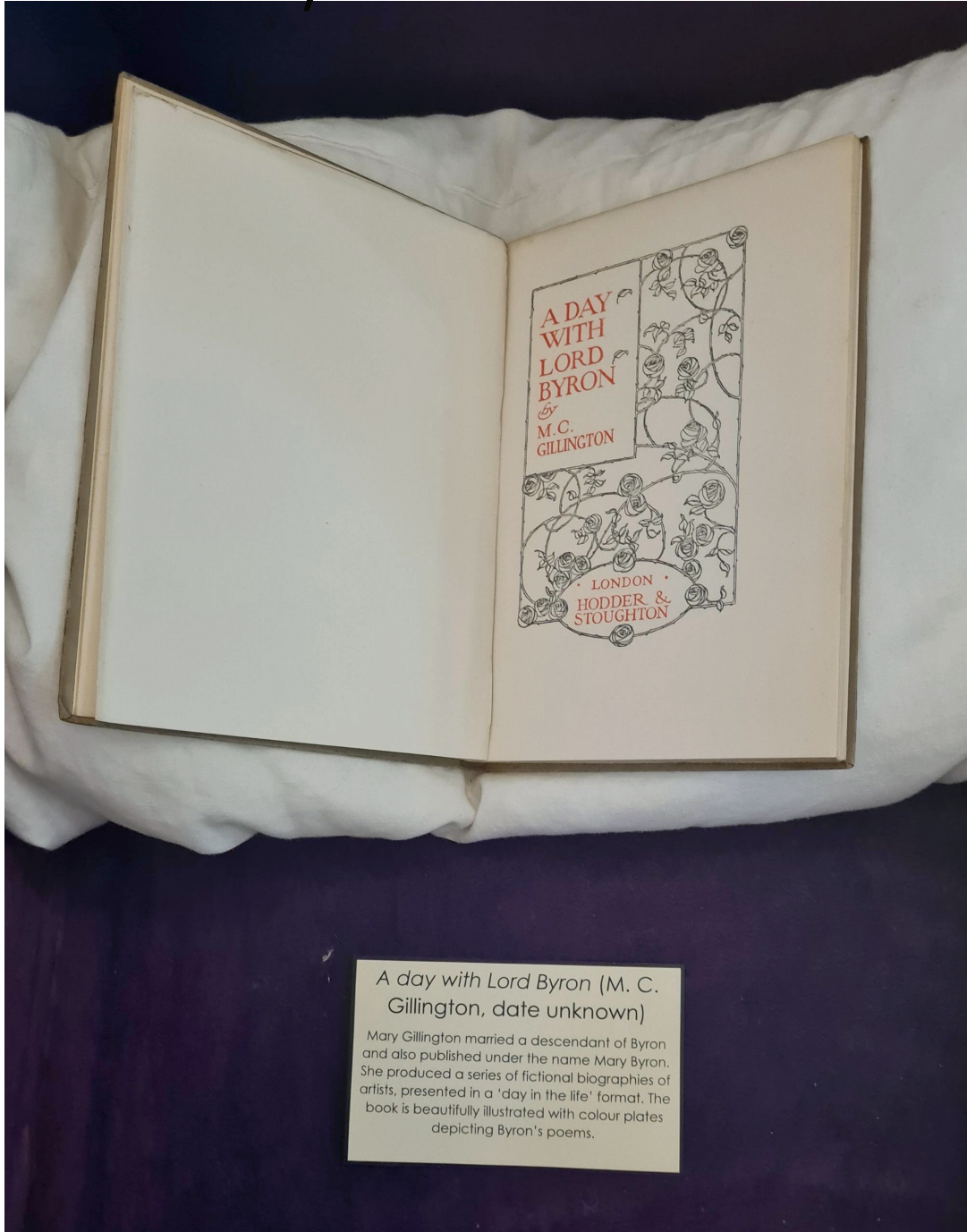
A day with Lord Byron (date unknown) M. C. Gillington

Hours of Idleness (1807) Lord Byron

A Byron Forgery (date unknown) James Ward

Byron at Bromley House

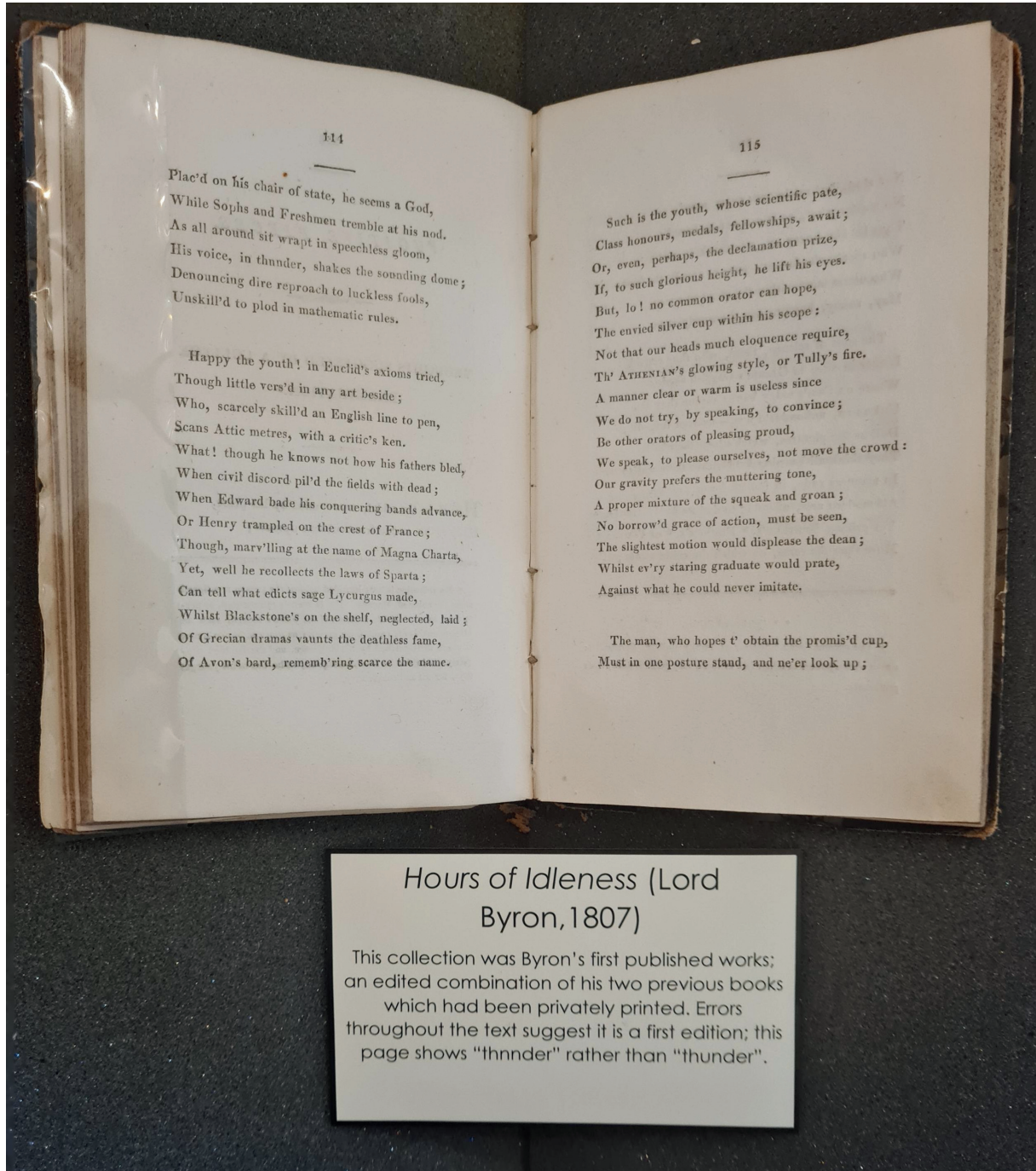
The Special Collections



Displayed *A day with Lord Byron* (date unknown) M. C. Gillington

Byron at Bromley House

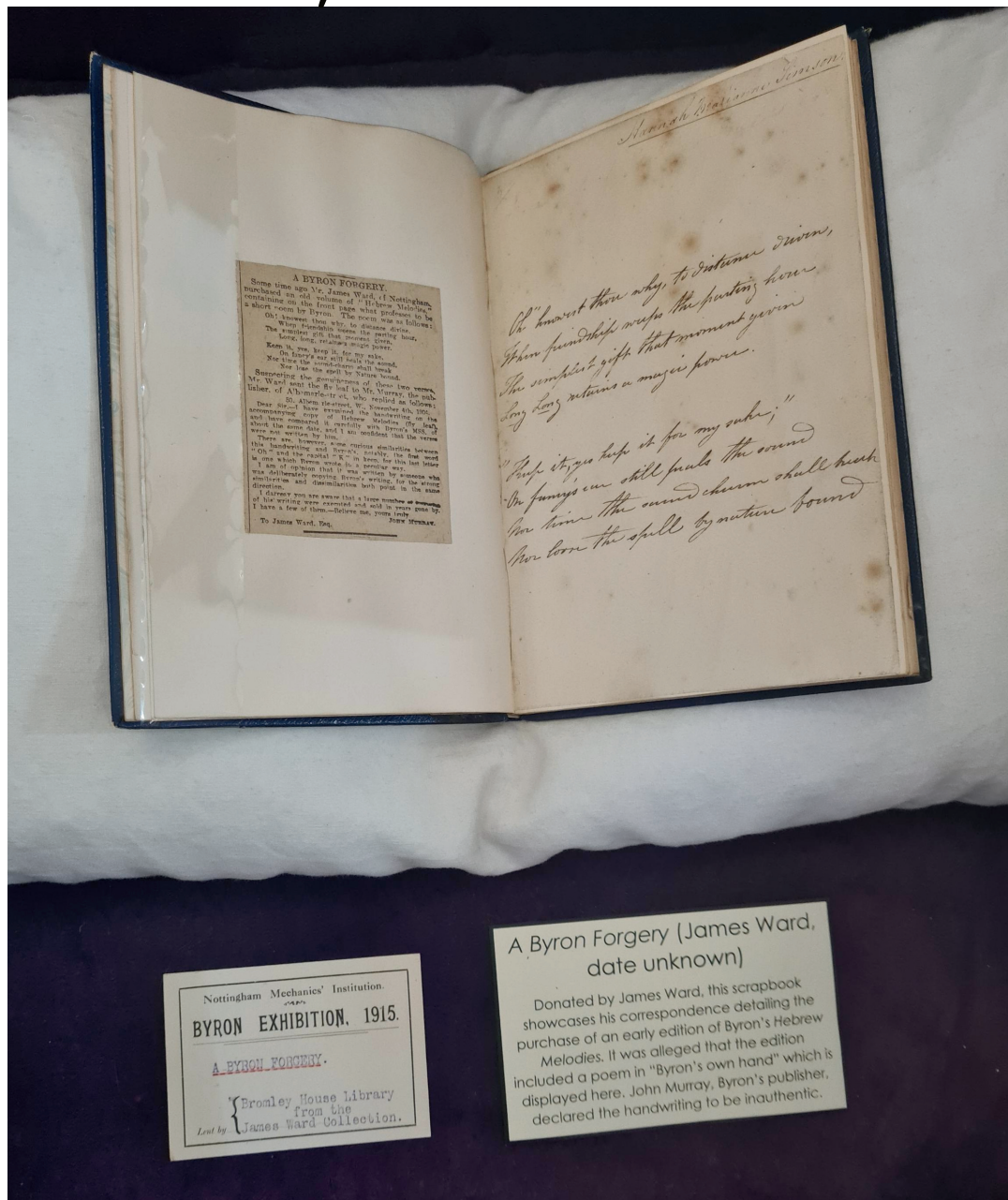
The Special Collections



Displayed *Hours of Idleness* (1807) Lord Byron

Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Displayed A *Byron Forgery* (date unknown) James Ward.
Exhibition card for the 1915 Nottingham Mechanics Institution
Byron Exhibition. A *Byron Forgery* was lent for display at the
exhibition.

Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron200 display in Neville Hoskin's Reading Room. From Left to Right:

Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron (1825) George Clinton

The Home and Grave of Byron: A Souvenir of Newstead Abbey (1874) Richard Allen



Knitted Lord Byron and Boatswain.
Courtesy of Bromley House Knitters.

Byron
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Byron at Bromley House

The Special Collections



Byron200 display in Neville Hoskin's Reading Room. From Left to Right:

The works of Lord Byron : with his letters and journals. And his life / by Thomas Moore, Esq. In seventeen volumes (1832-1833)

Lord Byron and Thomas Moore

A modern Don Juan : Cantos for these times by Divers Hands
(2014)

Andy Croft and Nigel Thompson (ed.)

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Byron at Bromley House

Neville Hoskins Reading Room



"Southey should have been a parish-clerk, and Wordsworth a man-midwife - both in darkness. I doubt if either of them ever got drunk, and I am of the old creed of Homer the wine-bibber"

Lord Byron, 1814, in a letter to James Hogg

Byron was infamously disparaging of many of the Romantic poets of his era; in a letter, he once referred to Wordsworth as "Turdsworth". His hurt at the critical response to *Hours of Idleness* may well have been responsible for his vitriol towards his some of his poetic contemporaries.

Our own poetry collection is housed within this room; including many of the Romantic poets whom Byron belittled .



Byron
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Byron at Bromley House

Neville Hoskins Reading Room



*"And you, ye crags, upon whose extreme edge/ I stand,
and on the torrent's brink beneath/ Behold the tall pines
dwindled as to shrubs"*

Lord Byron, *Manfred*, 1817

The books housed on these shelves contains our works relating to travel. Byron travelled extensively and was known to remark on his dislike of living in his birth country; writing in a letter in 1809 that "in sober sadness, anything is better than England." After the breakdown of his marriage in 1816, escaping both rumours of his conduct and his financial creditors, Byron left England for the last time. His subsequent travels to the Alps inspired the setting for his supernatural drama *Manfred*; the mountainous landscape of the Higher Alps is depicted throughout the poem. *Manfred* follows a hero troubled by an unnamed guilt who calls upon spirits in order to help him forget. As well as the setting having been inspired by his travels, the drama may well have been inspired by Byron's own guilt after the failure of his marriage. An 1832 copy of *Manfred* is on display here.



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Byron at Bromley House

The Standfast Room



"As soon as these beratings find their way in words & vent in newspapers... you may repel them"

John Murray in a letter to Byron, 1819

Byron's publisher, John Murray, wrote to the poet after the publication of *Don Juan* in 1819, warning him of forthcoming disapproval in reviews and press. The poem was indeed lauded as immoral, and Byron's eponymous *Don Juan* became a byword for a seducer and womaniser due to his escapades; as seen in the second canto of the poem:

"A lad of sixteen causing a divorce/ Puzzled his tutors very much, of course"

As with many more contemporary celebrities, Byron's relationship to the press was frequently turbulent; both in the reviews of his literary work and the rumours about his personal life, which in part prompted the poet to leave England for good. In 1818 he wrote that "the rumours of which I was the Subject - if *they were true* I was unfit for England, if *false* England is unfit for me."



The Standfast Room holds our current newspapers.

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Byron at Bromley House

Coffee Room



"I wish to God I had not dined now! - It kills me with heaviness, stupor, and horrible dreams; - and yet it was but a pint of Bucella and fish."*

Lord Byron, 1813, from his journal

Byron makes frequent references to his dietary requirements and desire to lose weight, both within his journal and in letters to friends and acquaintances. In 1811 he wrote to his mother to inform her that he was adhering to "an entire vegetable diet" and was referred to as one of the first celebrity diet icons by the BBC in 2012.

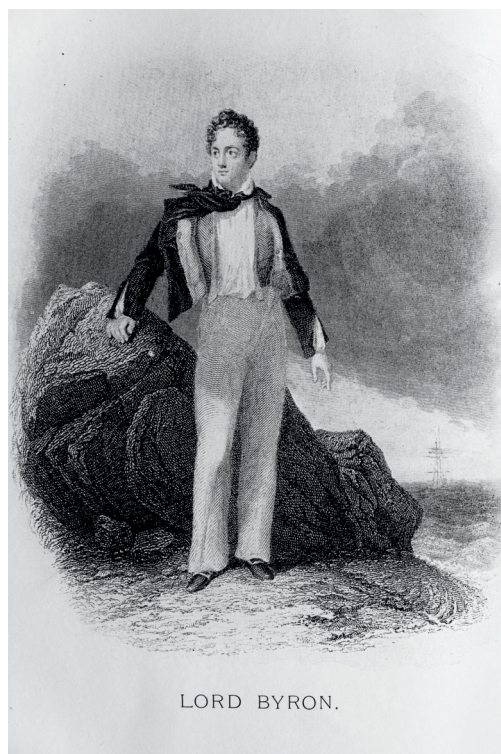
*Bucella - a Portuguese white wine



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Byron at Bromley House

The Gallery



*"The simple WORDSWORTH, framer of a lay
As soft as evening in his favourite May"*

Lord Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 1809

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers clearly suggests there was little love lost between Byron and his contemporary Romantic poet, William Wordsworth. Byron wrote to Thomas Moore in 1818 complaining of Wordsworth's "skimble-skamble about being the head of his profession" and he infamously referred to the author as "Tursdworth".

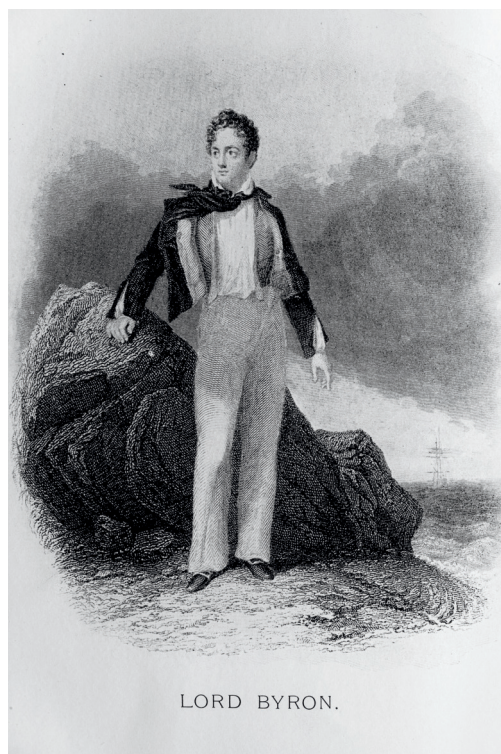
The Gallery collection houses both our pre-1970's fiction and a selection of our miscellanies. The collection includes 1876 editions of *The Prose of Wordsworth*.



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Byron at Bromley House

The Gallery



*"For what is left the poet here?
For Greeks a blush—for Greece a tear."*

Lord Byron, *Isles of Greece*, 1821

Byron believed passionately in the cause for the independence of Greece from Turkish rule.

In 1823 he travelled to Greece as a representative for the London Greek Committee, an organisation formed in support of Greek independence. Byron both funded and directed an army of soldiers, an artillery brigade and numerous military volunteers in the defence of Missolonghi, Western Greece. Byron faced obstacles both from the soldiers demanding additional pay and from the disunity between Greek leaders; writing in a letter in 1824 that he hoped to "concert if possible a plan of Union between Eastern and Western Greece".

Byron died in Greece at the age of 36 later in 1824, never returning to England.

Collection items relating to the Greece War of Independence can be found on the Gallery.

Byron at Bromley House

George Green Room



*"NEWSTEAD! fast falling, once-resplendent
dome!
Religion's shrine! repentant HENRY'S pride!"*

Lord Byron, *Elegy on Newstead Abbey*, 1807

The George Green room contains the work of Dorothy Whipple, another prominent Nottinghamshire author. Her works have been republished by Persephone books after going out of print when their popularity waned. Perhaps her most famous work *The Priory* (1939) was inspired by a stay at Newstead Abbey, Byron's ancestral home. Like Byron's elegy, Whipple reflects on Newstead's origins as a priory; stating that the house had "narrowed from a great purpose to a little one".

Byron at Bromley House

Ellen Harrington Room



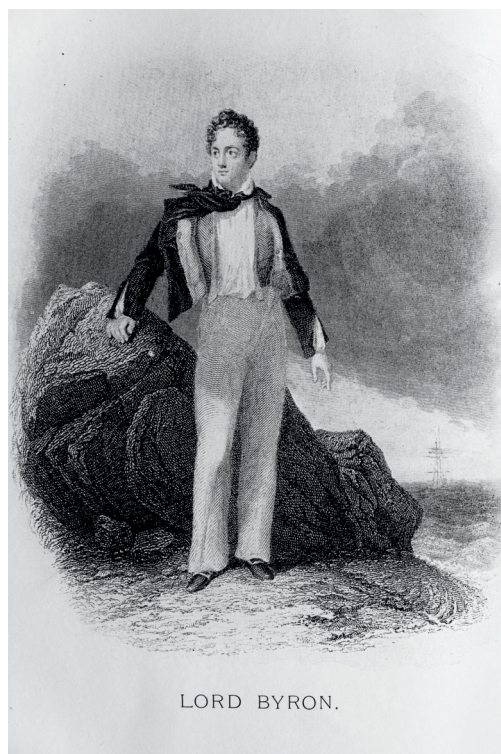
"I have now been married a year on the second of this month - heigh-ho!"

Lord Byron, 1816, in a letter to Thomas Moore

The Ellen Harrington room houses a number of different collections, including part of our extensive range of biographies. This collection includes several biographies concerning the women in Byron's life; including Annabella Milbanke, also known as Lady Byron, who married the poet in 1815. Her own reminiscences, published after her death, began the infamous rumours of Byron's alleged incestuous relationship with Augusta Leigh, his half-sister. We also hold biographies of Lady Caroline Lamb, whose affair with Byron caused highly publicised scandal, and of both Byron's mother and his daughter.

Byron at Bromley House

Thoroton Room



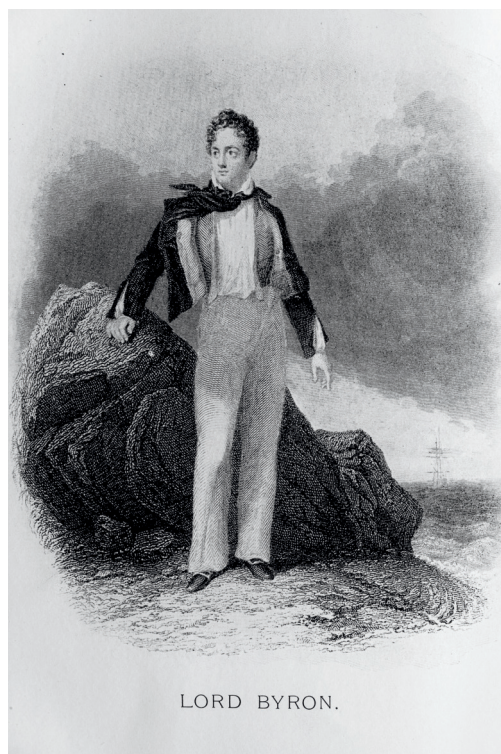
*"Through thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds
whistle; Thine the hall of my fathers, art gone to decay"*

Lord Byron, *On Leaving Newstead*, 1807

The Thoroton Room contains our local history collection, including several works relating to Byron's ancestral home in Nottinghamshire: Newstead Abbey. Although financial difficulties meant Byron's tenancy at Newstead was short-lived (he lived within the Abbey between 1808 and 1814) his legacy remains a key part of Newstead's heritage. Despite spending much of his time away from Newstead, the house and parkland inspired several of his poems. The monument to his beloved dog Boatswain remains in the grounds, upon which is carved Byron's *Epitaph to a Dog* (1808).

Byron at Bromley House

Edith Ransom Room



"I now come to a subject of your enquiry which you must have perceived I have always hitherto avoided - an awful one 'Religion'"

Lord Byron, 1813, in a letter to Annabella Milbanke

Byron was brought up by a Calvinist nurse in Scotland. His own religious beliefs appear to have been mixed throughout his short life. In a letter to Thomas Moore in 1804, the poet declared "Religion... I have no such opinions as to the characters in that drama..." Byron reflected with interest on the varied religious practices he encountered throughout his travels, which perhaps contributed to the irresolution of his own beliefs.

Our own theology collection can be found within this room.

Byron at Bromley House

Children's Library



*"Boatswain a Dog
who was born in Newfoundland May 1803
and died at Newstead November 18th 1808"*

Lord Byron, *Epitaph to a Dog*, 1808

Byron was a famous poet who lived near Nottingham over 200 years ago. He loved animals; especially dogs and horses. He even had a pet bear! But his favourite pet was a dog called Boatswain, pronounced "Botsun". When Boatswain died, Byron wrote a long poem about him.

Could you write a poem about your favourite pet?

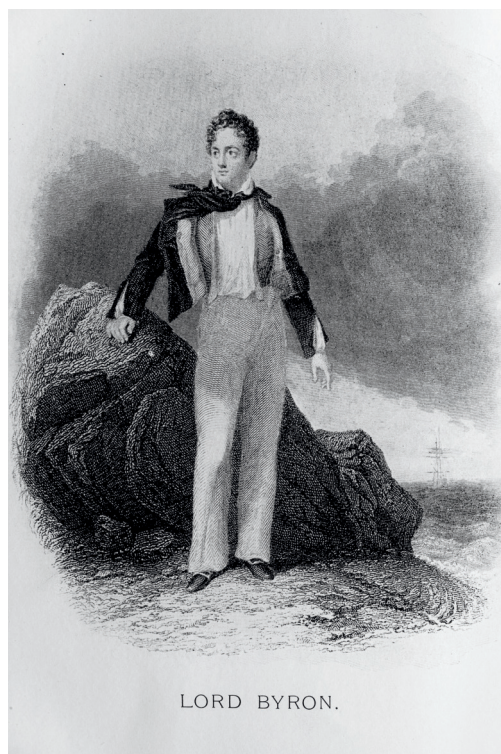


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Image credit: Nottingham City Museums

Byron at Bromley House

The Dark Room



"There is a picture of me in oil to be sent down to Newstead soon. I wish the Miss Parkyns's had something better to do than carry my miniature to Nottingham to copy..."

Lord Byron, 1809, in a letter to his mother

The Dark Room is the site of the first professional photographer's studio in the Midlands and is home to our art and photography collection. Byron's death in 1824 predated the first permanent photography, but had he lived beyond the age of 36 the demand for his photograph can be easily imagined. The many portraits of Byron are explored in Geoffrey Bond's *Dangerous to Show*, displayed here.

Byron at Bromley House

Digitising the Collection

We were incredibly lucky to welcome Elin Haworth from University of Nottingham as our Cultural Services Placement student for part of the Byron200 project. Not only did Elin undertake research and produce some fantastic writing for us, she also began the task of digitising our collections relating to Lord Byron. This will be an ongoing and lengthy project; for now, we can offer four of the items displayed at the exhibition as digitised copies. These will now be accessible to a far wider audience.

The four items included are:

English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (date unknown)
transcribed by Miss Renny afterwards Mrs Neale

Manuscript Notes on Medical Subjects (1977) by J. H. Pigot

Lord Byron's Lameness (1915) *The Correspondence of James Ward and George G Napier* (1915) by James Ward and George Napier

Hours of Idleness (1807) Lord Byron

You can find these here:

https://archive.org/details/@bromley_house_library

