

## **Purchase of the Siegfried Sassoon Archive**

This remarkable collection of notebooks, journals, poems in draft and fair copy, diaries, correspondence, manuscripts and photographs spans Siegfried Sassoon's (1886–1967) entire military and literary careers. Sassoon is remembered chiefly for being a prominent member of the group of World War I soldier poets who first brought the true horror of war into the public consciousness. A particularly emotive part of this archive are his war diaries, which still bear traces of mud from the trenches and record battles fought, touching details of jokes shared and friends mourned. The archive also contains an autograph draft of *A Soldier's Declaration*, Sassoon's eloquent and impassioned public plea for an end to the senseless slaughter of his comrades in arms. The archive was in the possession of the poet's son until his death in 2006, and was considered the most important collection of any major WWI poet's papers still in private hands. It was offered for sale to Cambridge University, where Sassoon had been an undergraduate and which already held a significant collection of Sassoon's papers. Cambridge University Library launched a successful fundraising campaign to which many funders and individuals contributed. The most significant contribution was from NHMF, in recognition of the outstanding importance of the archive and the need to preserve it for the nation. The archive also serves as a fitting memorial to those who have given their lives for the UK

Image



Siegfried Sassoon

Nation/region

East of England

Grant awarded

£550,142

Award date

24/09/2009

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## **National Heritage Memorial Fund awards £550,000 to help save Siegfried Sassoon's archive**

The grant will help acquire this important collection of Sassoon's private diaries and pocket notebooks compiled while serving on the Western Front. The collection also includes an autograph manuscript of the seminal *A Soldier's Declaration* - the statement Sassoon wrote detailing his refusal to return to duty after being wounded. It caused a storm in Britain during 1917 when it was read out in Parliament as Sassoon claimed that the war was being prolonged by those wh