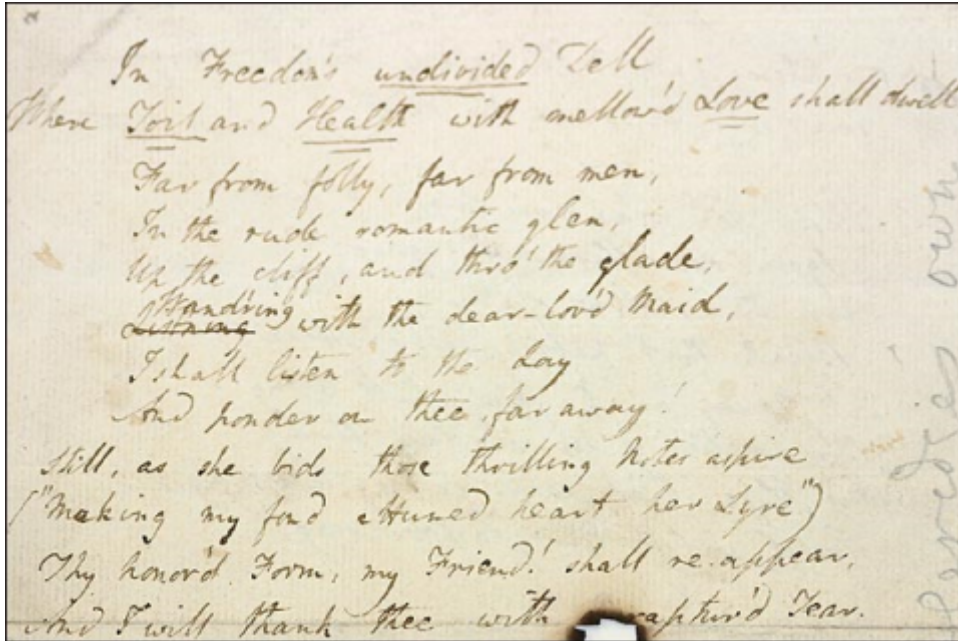


Coleridge archive saved

21 August 2006

The archive of the extended family of one of the greatest English Romantic poets, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, dating from the mid 18th to the early 20th centuries has been acquired by the British Library.

Image



Poem written by Coleridge in his own hand in 1794 to Rev WJ Hort

Formerly preserved in family ownership at The Chanter's House, Ottery St Mary, Devon, it has now been purchased for the nation with the aid of generous grants from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Pilgrim Trust, the Friends of the National Libraries, the Friends of the British Library, the Lynn Foundation, the Gamlen Charitable Trust and the Denton Wilde Sapte Charitable Trust.

Highlights include an unknown autograph verse manuscript of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, significant copies of his verse, and numerous descriptions and reminiscences of the poet in the copious correspondence and diaries of other family members. The letters, journals and court-room notes of the poet's nephew, Sir John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876), barrister and judge (and for a brief period editor of the Quarterly Review) record his long legal career and the innumerable cases he (and after him his son and grandson) tried at all levels of society. The correspondence of a great number of eminent Victorians who were friends of the Coleridges, including Matthew Arnold, W. E. Gladstone, Cardinal Manning,

Cardinal Newman, John Keble, William Butterfield and A. W. Pugin are also contained within the collection.

The archive contains a wealth of further unpublished information about Coleridge himself, the environment in which he grew up, Wordsworth and the Lakes circle, his children, and his whole extended, close-knit and distinguished family. The family produced three successive generations of judges (including John Duke, 1st Baron Coleridge, Lord Chief Justice of England) and the correspondence, diaries and professional records form a substantial part of the archive.

Frances Harris, Head of Modern Historical Manuscripts said; "It is an exceptionally rich source for the whole cultural, political, legal, religious life of 19th century England. The archive is very extensive and entirely uncatalogued. Our priority during the first year will be to arrange and catalogue the papers in order to make them fully accessible for research as soon as possible."

Acknowledging the significance of this grant, Stephen Johnson, Head of the NHMF, said: "This archive is important to the national heritage as it sets out Coleridge's life in context and documents in detail the relationship the family had with England's leading figures. We're delighted this National Heritage Memorial Fund grant will ensure that it's kept in one of the world's greatest research libraries for future generations to study and enjoy."

Notes to editors

The British Library is the national Library of the United Kingdom. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection.

Further information

Catriona Finlayson, British Library Press Officer:
Phone: 020 7412 7115 Email: catriona.finlayson@bl.uk.

Alison Scott or Dervish Mertcan, NHMF Press Officers,
Phone: 020 7591 6032 / 6102 Mobile: 07973 613 820