

*Keats, Leigh Hunt
and Shelley*

Manuscripts from the Additional, Ashley, Egerton and Zweig collections
at the British Library



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“An invaluable collection of important archival material, much of which is now reproduced and easily accessible for the first time”

Greg Kucich
Department of English, University of Notre Dame

Who can deny the excitement of reading an original manuscript letter by Keats? He packed a great deal into his twenty-six years and his letters shimmer with accounts of his latest reading, his walks, and observations on nature and on his friends. Seeing them in facsimile, juxtaposed with poems he has just written, brings us closer to the poet than any printed version can.

The British Library has a rich cache of these letters (to his brother Tom, sister Fanny, and to Leigh Hunt and Benjamin Haydon), together with a wide range of autograph literary manuscripts including *Ailsa Rock*; *the Eve of St Mark*; *Galloway Song*; *Hyperion*; *I stood tiptoe upon a little hill*; *Ode on the Mermaid Tavern*; *the Pot of Basil* and *St Agnes Eve*.

There is also much valuable material by others on Keats including:

- 13 letters from Byron to his publisher, John Murray, containing his views on Keats' poetry, as well as accounts of the reception of *Don Juan*.
- Letters from Joseph Severn describing his relationship with Keats and Shelley, life in Rome, painting and Romanticism.
- Letters and poetry by Fanny Brawne, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne, Christina Rossetti, Oscar Wilde, Robert



Leigh Hunt

Browning, Thomas Hardy and others indicating their admiration for Keats and his writing.



John Keats

The manuscript material relating to Shelley is equally strong. First there are an important array of autograph literary manuscripts such as *'Brothers, between you and me'*; *The Daemon of the World*; *The Devil went out a-walking*; *Laon and Cynthia*; *'Maiden, quench the glare of sorrow'* a sonnet on Byron and his annotated copy of *Seneca*. Then there are letters and contextual materials including:

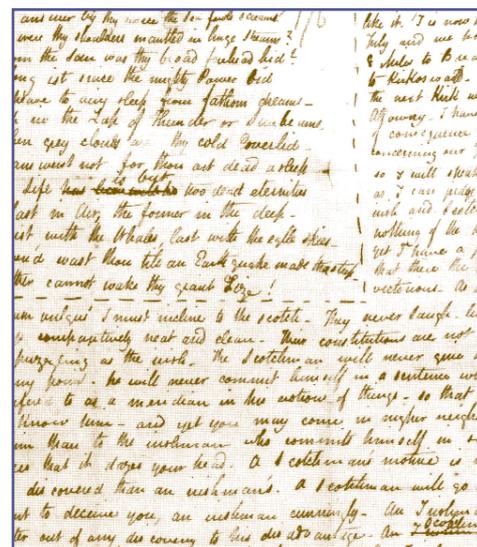
- The unpublished manuscript *Life of ... Shelley* by Thomas Jefferson Hogg.
- Correspondence between Shelley and Elizabeth Hitchener concerning his first marriage, his time in York and Keswick, and a tour of Ireland.
- Papers of Jane Williams (Shelley's 'Miranda').
- Five diaries of 'Claire' Clairmont, 1814-1826, covering the period of Shelley's elopement with Mary Godwin.
- The journal of John and Maria Gisborne, 1820, and the pocket-book of Zambelli, both with notes on Italy, Switzerland, Keats, Shelley, Byron and

Leigh Hunt.

- Accounts of the death of Shelley by Edward Trelawney and Capt. Roberts.

Additional collections of material relating to Leigh Hunt, William Hone and Thomas Hill provide further evidence of literary life in this period. There are hundreds of letters including exchanges with Byron, Shelley, Charles Lamb, William Howitt, Thomas Moore, Dickens, Thackeray, Macaulay, Brougham, J S Mill, the Carlyles, the Brownings, W H Ainsworth, Tennyson and others. There are also two volumes of poems, two plays and key poems such as *The Story of Rimini* by Leigh Hunt.

This collection brings together 141 manuscripts from the British Library (including 83 from the Ashley collection, which has only recently been catalogued) describing the life and work of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Shelley and others during the radical and revolutionary turmoil of the period from 1780 to 1848.



Letter from Keats to his brother Tom

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