

478. H.C. Beeching, *Liber Amicorum*

England 19th/20th c.
1889-1939

A friendship book compiled by Henry Charles Beeching (1859-1919, Dean of Norwich & author, matriculated Balliol 1878) chiefly between 1889 and 1899 and largely consisting of entries by his Oxford contemporaries from his time at Balliol and the circle he had built up as vicar at Yattendon, Berkshire, but with two dating to 1939 (presumably in remembrance). The entries are chiefly in verse, often original and some possibly unpublished, although there is some musical notation as well. Those contributors positively identified include: Robert Bridges (1844-1930, poet, Beeching's wife's uncle); Lucius Smith (1860-1934, inaugural Bishop of Knaresborough, Balliol 1879); John William MacKail (1859-1945, classical scholar, educationalist, poet, co-author of *Love's Looking Glass* 1891 with Beeching and Bowyer Nichols, Balliol 1878); Harry Ellis Wooldridge (1845-1917, musician & artist); John Bowyer Buchanan Nichols ('Bowyer Nichols', 1859-1939, poet, Balliol 1879); Andrew Cecil Bradley (1851-1936, literary scholar, Beeching's tutor, Balliol 1869); Annie Matheson (1858-1924, poet & biographer of Florence Nightingale); William Smith Rockstro (1823-1895, musician & composer, who taught Mrs Beeching); Herbert Henley Henson (1863-1947, Bishop of Durham); Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938, writer & publisher); and Denis MacKail (1892-1971, author, son of John William, Balliol 1910).

Physical Description

Paper. Fol. i, 62, i leaves (unfoliated) + 3 loose inserts. Fol. 4 cut to stub with insert tipped onto it. Page size: 190 x 124 mm. Text area: variable.

Binding: Contemporary stiff vellum over pasteboard. Decoration to boards: gold-tooled border (single-fillet). Spine bears looping gilt ornament and fillets. All edges red. Marbled endpapers. 197 x 134 mm.

Contents

1. Fols. 1r-61v: Beeching, Henry Charles, *Liber amicorum* chiefly consisting of verse. English with one passage in Hebrew lettering. Several 19th c./20th c. hands in black ink, some calligraphic. Written in single columns with varying number of lines to a page. Some musical notation. Contents as follows:

- i. Fols 1-2: blank except for inscriptions (see Provenance)
- ii. Fol. 3r: Section of the *Nun's Priest's Tale* by Geoffrey Chaucer, "But what that God forewote most nedes be, ... I wol not han to don of swiche matere". In calligraphic hand with initial in red. Fol. 3v blank.
- iii. Fol. 4r: Insert tipped onto stub bearing verse "Spring goeth all in white ..." signed "R.B. [i.e. Robert Bridges] '89." Calligraphic hand, of which the bookseller's description states "Possibly in the hand of Monica Bridges [nee Waterhouse, 1863-1949, pianist, composer, wife of Robert]." Fols 4v-5r blank.

- iv. Fols 5v-6r: Musical notation signed “Lucius Smith, September 1889”, with a later pencil note “See Masque of Balliol, p. 21. [The satirical *Masque of Balliol* was initially suppressed but printed in 1939 as part of *Balliol Rhymes*]” Fol. 6v blank.
- v. Fol. 7r: Verse: “Winter is over when the woods were wet ...” signed with monograph of J.M.W. [i.e. John William MacKail] and dated June 1889. Unpublished? Fol. 7v blank.
- vi. Fol. 8r: Musical notation with caption “Winter’s Tale, Act 4. Sc. 3” signed H.E.W. with later pencil note “Wooldridge” [i.e. Harry Ellis Wooldridge]. Fol. 8v blank.
- vii. Fol. 9r: Passage from Thomas Carlyle’s *Past and Present*: “My brother the brave man has to give ... in a certain sense, got all for it.” Signed at end “R.S. June 1890.” Notes supplied by Helen Fanning (Beeching’s daughter, see loose insert ii) suggest either Robert Somervell (History Master and Bursar at Harrow School) or William Reginald Steggall (1867-1938, organist at Lincoln’s Inn, where Beeching was preacher). Fol. 9v blank.
- viii. Fol. 10r: Verse: “The lowering sooty London sky ...” signed B.N. [i.e. John Bowyer Buchanan Nichols] and dated November 1890. Published in *Love’s Looking Glass* under the title *Pastel*. Fol. 10v blank.
- ix. Fol. 11r: Verse: “Were I but fat, I should not freeze ...” signed A.C.B., with later pencil note “Andrew Cecil Bradley”, and dated Jan. 91. Unpublished? Fol. 11v blank.
- x. Fol. 12r: Verse entitled: “Hey Robin, jolly Robin” signed H.C.B [i.e. Henry Charles Beeching], and dated 27. Jan. ‘91. Published in *Love’s Looking Glass* under the title *The Robin in January*. Fol. 12v blank.
- xi. Fol. 13r: Verse entitled: “To a snowdrop” signed A.M, with later pencil note “? Annie Matheson”, and dated Feb. 12. ‘91. Publication untraced. Fol. 13v blank.
- xii. Fol. 14r: Verse entitled: “Villars sur Ollons”. In calligraphic hand, signed E.W. [unidentified], and dated 1891. Fol. 14v blank.
- xiii. Fol. 15r: Musical notation for hymn “O Paradise! O Paradise! Who doth not crave for rest” signed W.S.R.. [identified from Helen Fanning’s notes, loose insert ii, as William Smith Rockstro] and dated 1891. Fol. 15v blank.
- xiv. Fol. 16r: Verse in Hebrew characters with Latin title: “Davidis canticum.” Signed “P.A.B.” [unidentified] and dated 1891. Fol. 16v blank.
- xv. Fol. 17r: Verse entitled: “Roses” signed H.H.H. [i.e. Herbert Henley Henson], and dated May 1893. Unpublished? Fol. 17v blank.
- xvi. Fol. 18r: “Will: Shakespeare Sonnet CVI” and “King John II; 437 ff”, transcriptions signed “H.L.W.” [unidentified], and dated at head of page October 1895. Fol. 18v blank.
- xvii. Fol. 19r: Verse entitled: “Aristocracy” signed E.V.L. [i.e. Edward Verrall Lucas], and dated June 30. 1899. Unpublished? Fol. 19v blank.
- xviii. Fol. 20r: Verse: “The far off Church bells strike the limpid air ...” signed W.J[?].F. [Listed as “?” by Helen Fanning, but with a later amendment to her notes in pencil “Wyman Finch? (son-in-law of Bishop Glyn)”, see loose insert ii], and dated “neath the Walnut Tree June XI.” Fol. 20v blank.
- xix. Fol. 21r: Verse: “I cannot add a poet’s words...” signed Denis MacKail and dated Feb 1939. Unpublished? Fol. 21v blank.

- xx. Fol. 22r: Verse paraphrase entitled: “A May morning long ago in England” signed with monogram “W.M.” [identified by Helen Fanning as either William Morris (unsure which person of this name is referred to) or Wilfred Marsden, Keeper of Printed Books in the British Museum and a pupil of Beeching’s at Yattendon, see loose insert ii] and dated “Mch 1939”. With note at end: “From the Parliment [sic] of the Three Ages (14th century)” together with “A specimen of the metre.” The original poem is anonymous.
- xxi. Fols 22v-62v blank.

Loose inserts

- i. Inside front cover: printed booksellers description entitled ‘This nest of singing birds’ prepared by Blackwells Rare Books Department in 2018, and on which much of this description is based.
- ii. Inside front cover: a set of notes in thick black ink attempting to identify some of the contributors throughout the text, with later annotations in pencil and red ink, one of these reading “From Helen Fanning H.C.B.’s daughter. Aug. 70.”
- iii. After fol. 4: Photographic portrait of Robert Bridges, identified as such in pencil on verso.

Provenance

1. On fol. 1r, inscription in pencil reading: “C[harles A.?] Frankenburg. Left to me by Auntie B[ev?] July 1955 (Mrs G.T. Denis de Vitre H.C. Beeching’s sister).”
2. Purchased by Balliol College Library from Blackwells Rare Books Department in April 2018.