W. Graham Robertson Papers: Finding Aid

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Overview of the Collection
Title: W. Graham Robertson Papers
Dates (inclusive): 1875-1948
Collection Number: mssWR 1-707
Creator: Robertson, W. Graham (Walford Graham), 1866-1948.
Extent: 1,606 pieces in 17 boxes and 1 envelope.
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Abstract: This collection consists of correspondence both to and from English painter and writer W. Graham Robertson (1866-1948), including letters from literary and theatrical persons and fan mail regarding his published reminiscences, Time was (1931). There are approximately 800 letters from Robertson to Kerrison Preston and also 15 notebooks and sketchbooks of Robertson's.
Language: English.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item]. W. Graham Robertson Papers, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.
Provenance
Biographical Note
Walford Graham Robertson (1866-1948) was a wealthy English painter, writer, and collector of William Blake watercolors. Robertson was well known in art and theatrical circles of the 1880s and 1890s as a rising artist. A bachelor, he lived with his mother till her death in 1907, and thenceforth as a country gentleman. He developed numerous friendships with actors, artists, and collectors. Among his correspondents were artists such as Burne-Jones and Whistler, playwrights such as Pinero, James Barrie and Terence Rattigan, actors and actresses such as Ellen Terry and Sarah Bernhardt in the old days, the Lunts and Laurence Oliviers later on, and collectors such as Mrs. (White) Emerson of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Although he painted and wrote little after 1914, he maintained extensive correspondence with numerous literary or stage personalities during his long retirement, and many of them made the journey to Sandhills, his Surrey home. As a collector he was best known for the number and quality of his Blake watercolors, many of which he gave to the Tate Gallery on the outbreak of World War II in 1939; the rest were widely dispersed to public and private collections after his death in 1948. He had no relatives or heirs; to his long-time friend and executor, Kerrison Preston, fell the task of distributing his books, pictures and estate among various charitable causes. Among these was set up the William Blake Trust, founded with Graham Robertson money, to publish the now well-known Trianon Press facsimiles of Blake's illuminated books.
Bibliography
Graham Robertson's reminiscences, Time Was 1931 (American title: Life was worth living) describe his many friendships
Scope and Content
The collection consists of correspondence both to and from W. Graham Robertson, including letters from literary and theatrical persons and fan mail regarding his published reminiscences, Time was (1931). There are approximately 800 letters from Robertson to Kerrison Preston and also 15 notebooks and sketchbooks of Robertson's.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Huntington Library's Online Catalog.

Subjects
Robertson, W. Graham (Walford Graham), 1866-1948.
Actors -- Great Britain -- Correspondence.
Art -- Collectors and collecting -- Great Britain -- Correspondence.
Artists -- Great Britain -- Correspondence.
Artists -- United States -- Correspondence.
Authors, English -- 19th century -- Correspondence.
Authors, English -- 20th century -- Correspondence.

Forms/Genres
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 19th century.
Letters (correspondence) -- Great Britain -- 20th century.

Alternate Authors
Preston, Kerrison, correspondent.
Agate, James, 1877-1947.
Ainley, Henry, 1879-1945.
Allingham, William, 1824-1889.
Allingham, Helen Paterson, 1848-1926.
Angeli, Helen Rossetti.
Bancroft, Marie, 1839-1921.
Bancroft, Squire, 1841-1926.
Bate, H. N. (Herbert Newell), 1871-1941.
Bastien-Lepage, Jules, 1848-1884.
Bax, Clifford, 1886-1962.
Beerbohm, Max, Sir, 1872-1956.
Bernhardt, Sarah, 1844-1923.
Blackmore, R. D. (Richard Doddridge), 1825-1900.
Blackwood, Algernon, 1869-1951.
Bottomley, Gordon, 1874-1948.
Brabourne, Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, Baron, 1829-1893.
Bridie, James, 1888-1951.
Buffalo Bill, 1846-1917.
Burne-Jones, Edward Coley, 1833-1898.
Campbell, Patrick, Mrs., 1865-1940.
Craig, Edith, 1869-1947.
Crane, Walter, 1845-1915.
Delafeld, E. M., 1890-1943.
Dent, Alan.
Dickens, Charles, 1837-1896.
Egerton, Alix, Lady.
Farren, Nellie, 1848-1904.
Forbes-Robertson, Johnston, Sir, 1853-1937.
Fuller, Loie, 1862-1928.
German, Edward, 1862-1936.
Gibbs, Philip, 1877-1962.
Gilbert, W. S. (William Schwenck), 1836-1911.
Gorell, Ronald Gorell Barnes, Baron, 1884-1963.
Granville-Barker, Harley, 1877-1946.
Grossmith, Weedon, 1852-1919.
Helleu, Paul, 1859-1927.
Hichens, Robert, 1864-1950.
Hunt, Violet, 1862-1942.
Irving, Henry, Sir, 1838-1905.
James, Henry, 1843-1916.
Keynes, Geoffrey, 1887-1982.
Leblanc, Georgette, 1869-1941.
Lowndes, Marie Belloc, 1868-1947.
MacCarthy, Desmond, 1877-1952.
Mackail, Denis, 1892-1971.
Mc Kinnel, Norman, 1870-1932.
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 1862-1949.
Melville, Arthur, 1855-1904.
Menpes, Mortimer, 1855-1938.
Meynell, Alice, 1847-1922.
Montesquiou-Fézensac, Robert, comte de, 1855-1921.
Moore, Albert Joseph, 1841-1893.
Moore, Jane Burden.
Morris, May, 1862-1938.
Moses, Montrose Jonas, 1878-1934.
Newton, A. Edward (Alfred Edward), 1864-1940.
Neilson, Julia, 1868-
Norton, Frederic, 1869-1946.
Olivier, Laurence, 1907-1989.
Owen, Will, 1869-1957.
Partridge, Bernard, 1861-1945.
Pater, Walter, 1839-1894.
Pearson, Hesketh, 1887-1964.
Phelps, William Lyon, 1865-1943.
Pinero, Arthur Wing, 1855-1934.
Playfair, Nigel, 1874-1934.
Poynter, Edward John, 1836-1919.
Rattigan, Terence.
Redgrave, Michael.
Riley, Athelstan, 1858-1945.
Sandys, Frederick, 1829-1904.
Sargent, John Singer, 1856-1925.
Sargent, Emily, 1857-.
Seyler, Athene.
Sherard, Robert Harborough, 1861-1943.
Shipman, Louis Evan, 1869-1933.
Spielmann, M. H. (Marion Harry), 1858-1948.
Sutro, Alfred, 1863-1933.
Taylor, Una.
Terriss, William, -1897.
Terry, Ellen, Dame, 1847-1928.
Terry, Fred, 1863-1933.
Terry, Kate, 1844-1924.
Todd, Ruthven, 1914-1978.
Trench, Herbert, 1865-1923.
Tree, Herbert Beerbohm, Sir, 1852-1917.
Von Arnim, Elizabeth, 1866-1941.
Walbrook, H. M. (Henry Mackinnon), 1865-1941.
Watts-Dunton, Theodore, 1832-1914.
Whistler, James McNeill, 1834-1903.
White, Maude Valérie, 1855-1937.
Wilde, Oscar, 1854-1900.
Williamson, George Charles, 1858-1942.
Woolcott, Alexander, 1887-1943.
Yeats, W. B. (William Butler), 1865-1939.
Box 1

Notebooks and sketchbooks (WR 1-6)

WR 1 Robertson, W. Graham. Notebook and sketchbook. [Approximately 1900]
WR 2 Robertson, W. Graham. Sketchbooks 1-3. [Approximately 1900]
WR 3 Robertson, W. Graham. Notebook I including dramatization of Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring* for stage. [Approximately 1900]
WR 4 Robertson, W. Graham. Notebook II including Guildford Pageant, etc. [Approximately 1900]
WR 5 Robertson, W. Graham. Notebook III including reminiscences for *Time Was*. [Approximately 1900]
WR 6 Robertson, W. Graham. Notebook IV. [Approximately 1900]

Notes on Ellen Terry, etc. in an old notebook of Greek translations.

Box 2

Lists of paintings; Lady Alix Egerton: Poems; Sutro play (WR 7-11)

List of Robertson's work as an artist [3 volumes]. 1889-1904, 1904-1915, 1915-1938
Lady Alix Egerton: poems 1906-1930
Alfred Sutro: 2 plays.

Box 3

Addenda I (WR 684-688)

Note

Consists of bundle of 5 oversize folders.

WR 684 Robertson, W. Graham. Tan sketchbook I (including Sarah Bernhardt as Cleopatra, signed and dated June 20, 1892). 1892
WR 685 Robertson, W. Graham. Tan sketchbook II (including Ellen Terry as Faire Rosamund). [Approximately 1892?]
WR 688 Articles about Robertson in *The Magazine of Art, Cassell's Magazine*, and *The Studio* [3 periodicals]. 1899-1908
Collection Contents

Box 4

**Correspondence: Achnides, Th. - Bernhardt, Sarah**

Correspondents include:
- Achnides, Thomas
- Achurch, Janet
- Agate, James Evershed
- Ainley, Henry
- Allen, Beatrice Ellen
- Allingham, William
- Allingham, Helen (Paterson)
- Angeli, Helen (Rossetti)
- Armstrong, Thomas
- Armstrong, William
- Arnim, Elizabeth
- Ashwell, Lena
- Atkins, Bertha
- Bagger, Esther Dean
- Balfour, Lady Mary Edith
- Bancroft, Marie Effie (Wilton), Lady
- Bancroft, Sir Squire
- Baring, Hon. Laurice
- Barrie, Sir James Matthew
- Bate, Rev. Herbert
- Bastien-Lepage, Jules
- Bax, Clifford
- Beerbohm, Sir Max
- Bellerby, Rev. Alfred
- Bernhardt, Sarah

Box 5

**Correspondence: Blackmore, Richard Doddridge - Cole, Milton**

Correspondents include:
- Blackmore, Richard Doddridge
- Blackwood, Algernon
- Blunt, Arthur
- Bourchier, Arthur
- Bourchier, Violet (Vanbrugh)
- Bridie, James, pseud, see Mavor Osborne Henry
- Bottomley, Gordon
- Burne-Jones, Sir Edward Coley
- Campbell, Mrs. Patrick
- Coates, Austin
- Cody, William Frederick
- Cole, Milton
Box 6

**Correspondence: Colefax, Sibyl - Ellis, C. F. Corbould**

Correspondents include:

- Colefax, Sibyl
- Coward, Sir Noel Pierce
- Craig, Edith
- Craig, Edward Gordon
- Crane, Walter
- Davies, Hubert Henry
- Davis, Fay
- De La Pasture, Edmée Elizabeth Monica
- Dent, Alan
- Dickens, Charles, Jr.
- Drew, John
- Drinkwater, John
- Du Maurier, Sir Gerald
- Egerton, Lady Alix
- Ellis, C. F. Corbould

Box 7

**Correspondence: Evans, J. Roland - Hutchinson, Ursula C.**

Correspondents include:

- Evans, J. Roland
- Farren, Nellie
- Forbes-Robertson, Ian
- Forbes-Robertson, Sir Johnston
- Fuller, Loie
- German, Sir Edward
- Gibbs, Sir Philip Hamilton
- Gielgud, Sir John
- Gilbert, Sir William Schwenck
- Gorell, Ronald Gorell Barnes, 3rd baron
- Granville-Barker, Harley Granville
- Granville-Barker, Lillah (McCarthy)
- Grey, Sylvia
- Grossmith, Weedon
- Halsey, Jean M.
- Hamilton, Hamish
- Hamilton, Jean (Forbes-Robertson)
- Helleu, Paul C. F.
- Hichens, Robert Smythe
- Holland, Henry Thurstan, 1st viscount Knutsford
- Holland, Lionel Raleigh
- Hunt, Violet
- Hutchinson, Ursula C.
Box 8

**Correspondence: Huxley, Harry - Lunt, Lynn (Fontanne) (through 1940?)**

Correspondents include:

- Huxley, Harry
- Irving, Sir Henry
- Isaacs, Rufus Daniel, 1st marquess of Reading
- James, Henry
- Jeffreys, Ellis
- Jekyll, Lady Agnes
- Kendall, Dame Margaret
- Kerr, Frederick
- Keynes, Sir Geoffrey Langdon
- Knatchbull-Hugesson, Edward Hugessson, 1st Baron Brabourne
- Lavery, Sir John
- Letts, Winifred M.
- Lewis, Kate (Terry)
- Lowndes, Marie Adelaide (Belloc)
- Lunt, Alfred
- Lunt, Lynne (Fontanne)

Box 9

**Correspondence: Lunt, Lynn (Fontanne) (1943-1948) - Melville, Arthur (through 1899)**

Correspondents include:

- Lunt, Lynne (Fontanne)
- MacCarthy, Sir Desmond
- Mackail, Denis George
- McKinnel, Norman
- Maeterlinck, Georgette
- Maeterlinck, Maurice
- Martin, Sir Alec
- Matthay, Jessie
- Mavor, Osborne Henry
- Melville, Arthur

Box 10

**Correspondence: Melville, Arthur (1900-1904) - Montesquiou Fezensac, Comte Robert de (through 1886 September 21)**

Correspondents include:

- Melville, Arthur
- Menpes, Mortimer
- Meynell, Alice Christina (Thompson)
- Milton, Ernest
- Milton, Naomi (Royde-Smith)
- Millward, Jessie
- Montesquiou Fezensac, Comte Robert de
Box 11  
**Correspondence: Montesquiou Fezensac, Comte Robert de (1886 September 29-1891) - Playfair, Sir Nigel**

Correspondents include:
- Montesquiou Fezensac, Comte Robert de
- Moore, Albert Joseph
- Morris, Jane (Burden)
- Morris, May
- Moses, Montrose Jonas
- Murray, A. Hallam
- Nasmyth, James
- Newton, Alfred Edward
- Neilson-Terry, Julia
- Norton, George Frederic
- Norton, Emily
- Olivier, Sir Laurence
- Olivier, Vivian (Leigh), Lady
- Owen, Will
- Palmer, Lady Margaret
- Parker, Eric
- Partridge, Sir Bernard
- Pater, Walter Horatio
- Pearson, Hesketh
- Phelps, William Lyon
- Pinero, Sir Arthur Wing
- Playfair, Sir Nigel

Box 12  
**Correspondence: Pleydell-Bouverie, Douglas - Sargent, Emily**

Correspondents include:
- Pleydell-Bouverie, Douglas
- Pleydell-Bouverie, Dorothy
- Pollock, Sir Adrian
- Poynter, Sir Edward John
- Poynter, Sir Hugh
- Preston, Ivor Kerrison
- Pryde, James
- Rattigan, Terence
- Redgrave, Sir Michael
- Rehan, Ada
- Riley, Athelstan
- Robertson, Marion
- Robson, Hon. Harold
- Robson, Iris
- Rothenstein, Sir William
- Rothenstein, Sir John Kewstub Maurice
- Row, Arthur William
- Russell, Archibald George Blomefield
- Russell, Annette (Beauchamp) Countess Russell
- Sandys, Frederick
Collection Contents

Box 13  

**Correspondence: Sargent, John Singer - Terry, Ellen (through 1899)**

Correspondents include:
- Sargent, John Singer
- Sargent, Emily
- Saur, Emil
- Seyler, Athene
- Shannon, James Jebusa
- Sherard, Robert Harborough
- Sherwood, Robert Emmet
- Shipman, Louis Evan
- Simon, Ruth
- Snowden, James K.
- Spielmann, Marion Harry
- Stahl, Rose
- Sutro, Alfred
- Symons, Arthur
- Taylor, Una
- Terriss, William
- Terry, Edward

Box 14  

**Correspondence: Terry, Ellen (1900-1917 May 31)**

Box 15  

**Correspondence: Terry, Ellen (1917 May-?) - Yeats, William Butler**

Correspondents include:
- Terry, Dame Ellen
- Terry, Fred
- Thompson, Dorothy
- Todd, Ruthven
- Trench, Herbert
- Tree, Sir Herbert Beerbohm
- Tree, Viola
- Tweed, John
- Walbrook, Henry Mackinnon
- Watts-Dunton, Walter Theodore
- Watts-Dunton, Clara Jane (Reich)
- Whistler, James Abbot McNeill
- White, Maude Valerie
- Wilde, Oscar
- Williamson, George Charles
- Woolcott, Alexander
- Yeats, William Butler

Box 16  

**Addenda I and II (correspondence and three photographs) (WR 689-706)**

Box 17  

**Robertson, W. Graham. Letters to Kerrison Preston (WR 707)**

Approximately 840 letters, mostly published in *Letters from Graham Robertson*. 

W. Graham Robertson Papers: mssWR 1-707  
Finding Aid