

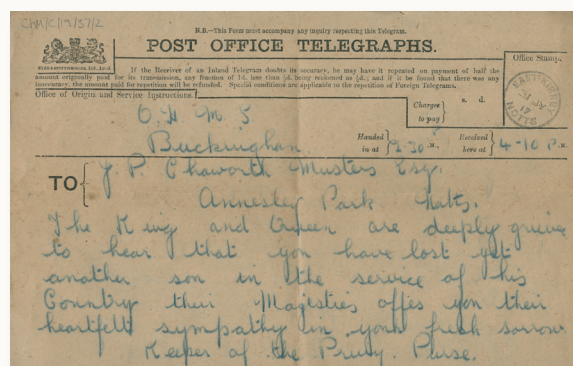


Living Letters

Correspondence then and now

In sickness and in death

Letters provide important information about health and well-being, both of their authors and of those to whom their author was connected, personally or professionally. They also reveal information about the potential remedies tried out by individuals in their search for health.



Remedies include the fashionable water treatments advertised in 1885 on the elaborate, headed stationery of the Granville Hotel, Ramsgate, Kent, a spa hotel with over 25 different types of baths, including Turkish baths. In 1915 the Granville was requisitioned by the government to meet a very different medical need. It became the Granville Canadian Special Hospital and treated soldiers suffering from shell shock and other injuries. The Granville relocated in 1915-16 to Buxton, Derbyshire, where it was housed in another former spa hotel – now the site of Buxton Museum.

The search for health is not always successful. Letters convey news of the death of a family member, a friend, or an associate and are vehicles for sending condolences. In 1917 a Post Office telegram sent the King and Queen's 'heartfelt sympathy' to the Nottinghamshire landowner John

Patricius Chaworth-Musters and his wife on the death in action of their son Philip. They record the obsequies offered to the dead, with Mary Howitt describing Lord Byron's funeral procession to his final resting place at Hucknall. They provide important evidence too of the legalities and the changing customs of death: discussing Wills and executors, and itemising the special clothes ordered for periods of mourning. Letters themselves are also incorporated into the rituals of grieving and remembrance, as a carefully labelled bundle relating to the death in 1854 of 'Poor Fanny' (Frances Buchanan) reveals.

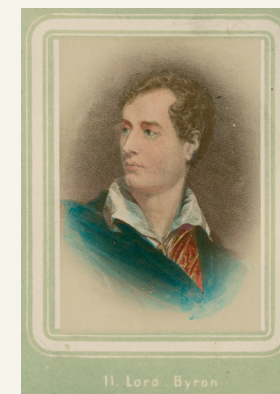


↑ Notepaper from The Granville Hotel, Ramsgate, 1887. Newcastle Collection, Ne C 14233

← Bundle of condolence letters sent to Margaret Mellish on the death of her sister-in-law Frances Buchanan, 1854. Mellish Collection, Me C 4/5/1

↑ Telegram from the Private Secretary, Buckingham Palace, to Mr J.P. Chaworth-Musters, Annesley Park, Nottinghamshire, 31 July 1917. Chaworth-Musters Collection, ChM/C/19/37/2

↑ Letter from Mary Howitt, Nottingham, to her sister Anna Harrison, describing Lord Byron's funeral at Hucknall Torkard, 18 July 1824. Howitt Collection, Ht/1/1/18



Printed portrait of Lord Byron (1788-1824) after a portrait by Thomas Phillips, 1813. Manuscript Collections, MS 258/4

