

Thomas Chatterton Manuscript Project (TCMP)

William Barrett's Correspondence.

Letter (No. 3) William Barrett to George Symes Catcott.

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Contains: a description of Spring; Barrett's poor health; seeing the doctor; staying with his son in Wraxall.

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Verso of the Letter - forms an envelope when folded :

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Panel 1 : William Barrett's Letter to George Symes Catcott 1788 - letter No.3

Dear George; No 3

Willing to prepare for close Attention I shall
soon be oblig. to pay to & pass when once set in motion,
I have taken this excursion to my Son; - which has
done my health great service; - & clear'd off & his on
this Hill at this beautiful season has been of infinite
advantage to me. - Jam. Formosissimus. Annus, Venerav.
The Country smiles around me; - & low fields richly dy'd
& hedges buds budding, & Trees blossoming, & Violets smelling
& Birds singing - the cocks crowing, the Geese cackling
& Turkeys gobbling, the Hens clucking, & chickens peeping
all these salute my ears hourly or feast mine eyes here.
all Nature looks gay, & every thing conspires to
gladden the Heart & raise & Imagination, that even I
with a Genius blunted by age & clouded by disease
am almost inspir'd with poetic fire to describe the
usual felicity here to be enjoy'd by a mind rightly
dispos'd in a Body free from pain. - But I must
descend from these towering thoughts & confine them
to the strict path of History without deviating into
& Wilds of parnassus. - I shall for that purpose
return & ensuing week & call upon you, hoping to
hear such an account, as may set me to work
immediately to work; which I shall pursue with
unremitting diligence till it is completed & published.
If you see Dr. Smole, who understood by you, intended
me & favour of a visit at Wrasel, you will let him
know I shall be at home & end of next week. Make my
compliments also to all enquiring friends. I should return
this week but find I clear Air of this Hill so reviving &
of such advantage to my health, that it induces me
to stay another week; especially as I shall not be able
for some time to visit here again. My Son & Daughter
desire their service to you; & I shall always consider
myself as much indebted to you for your assiduity in
my affairs, & am, Dr. Sir, Yr. oblig. friend & Servr.
Higham 9 April 1788 - Wm. Barrett

Panel 2 : Transcript

(QE!): This is my transcript of William Barrett's Letter No. 3 to George Catcott -it's the best I can do. If you can do better, specifically with the Latin used in the letter, then please let me know and I will update the transcript.

"Dear George,

Willing to prepare for ye close attention I shall soon be oblig'd to pay to ye press when once set in motion **[talking about the publication of his History of Bristol, 1789]**.

I have taken this excursion to my sons;- which has done my health great service;- ye clearness of the air on this hill at this beautiful season has been of infinite advantage to me. -

I am [there follows a latin phrase, which may indicate that his illness was a nervous fever?].

The Country smiles around me,- and corn fields richly dyghte & hedgerows budding, ye trees blossoming, and violets smelling and Birds singing;- the cocks crowing, the Geese cackling, and Turkeys gobbling, the Hens clucking, & chickens pipping - all these salute my ears hourly or feast mine eyes here - all nature looks gay, & every thing conspires to gladden the Heart & raise the imagination, that even I with a Genius blunted by age [he was only 55 years of age] & clouded by disease am almost inspir'd with poetic fire to describe the rural felicity here to be enjoy'd by a mind rightly dispos'd in a Body free from pain. -

But I must descend from these towering thoughts and confine them to the strict path of History without deviating into ye Wilds of parnassus.- I shall for that purpose return ye ensuing week & call upon you, hoping to hear such an account, as may set me & M. P [my pen?] immediately to work; which I shall pursue with unremitting diligence till it is completed & publish'd.

If you see Dr Small, who I understood by you, intended me ye favour of a visit at Wraxal, you will let him know I shall be at home the end of next week & make my compliments also to all enquiring friends. I should return this week but find the clear air of this Hill so reviving & of such advantage to my health, that it induces me to stay another week; especially as I shall not be able for some time to visit here again. My sons [word is unclear] desire their service to you; and I shall always consider myself as much indebted to you for your assiduity in my affairs,

I am, Dr Sir your Obligated friend and Servant

Wm. Barrett.

Higham April 1788"

(QE!): William Barrett died 13th October 1789 at the age of 56

You might care to read about William in: [The Dictionary of National Biography](#).

Panel 3 :

A single leaf with the address on the back and Barrett's letter on the front.

It was folded and sealed with red wax and posted to George Catcott at Temple Backs, Bristol.

George has annotated around the address: *Number 3 April 9th 1788, Description of Spring.*

The later annotation, on a blank part of the leaf, is by Richard Smith, Catcott's nephew, gifting the letter to Mr Lunell; the annotation is shown in the next panel.



Panel 4 : The envelope address in close-up

Num^r 3 April 9th 1788
W. G. Catcott
Description of Spring
Temple Backs
Bristol

Panel 5 : Richard Smith's annotation, gifting the letter to Mr Lunell

My dear Sir - Upon looking over some
old bundles of papers belonging to my late Uncle
George - I find this Autograph of the Bristol
Historian - Barrett. - If you have not a
letter of his perhaps you may like to
put it amongst your records - if you think
it worth your acceptance I shall be glad -
remaining very truly yr

W. Lunnell
Brunswick Square

Rich and South Street
28 April 1821.

Recd 2 April 1821
Wm G. Catcott
Description of Spring
Temple Backs
Bristol

Panel 6 : Transcript of Smith's Annotation above.

My Dear sir,

Upon looking over some old bundles of papers belonging to my late uncle George, I find this autograph of the Bristol Historian, Barrett. If you have not a letter of his perhaps you may like to put it amongst your records. If you think it worth your acceptance I shall be glad.

remaining very truly yours, Richard Smith Surgeon 28 April 1821

Mr Lunell, Brunswick Square

QE! Who is Mr Lunell?: Possibly Peter William Lunell, merchant, or George Lunell, ship owner. George Lunell was part owner, inter alia, of *City of Waterford*, built Bristol 1829, although I note that a George Lunell died in 1815 and left his shares to his son William, but it might not be this George Lunell - further research required by anyone interested enough to take it forward.

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