

**CATALOGUE OF  
THE IVOR GURNEY ARCHIVE**

Gloucestershire Archives, Gloucester

D10500/1/C/1/7

**ORIGINAL WORKS:  
CORRESPONDENCE 1912-22:  
Letters to Sydney Shimmin**

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**National Manuscripts Conservation Trust**

Subseries Gloucestershire Archives  
**Letters from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin**

D10500/1/C/1/7

**[1915-1918]**

Description: Letters to Sydney Shimmin: a friend from the Royal College of Music who went on to be Music Master of Cheltenham Ladies College.

15 letters Notes: A letter from Gurney to Shimmin of c.January 1917 is published in Collected Letters which does not appear in the archive, noted by Thornton as having been 'transcribed from a very faint xerox copy supplied by Robin Haines; present whereabouts of original unknown'. (CL146).

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/1

(76.3) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [September 1915]

Description: Gurney expresses his sympathy at Shimmin being ill and talks of music making at the Royal College of Music and in the army band, of which he is now a member. He writes of music and books, describing Wordsworth's 'Prelude' as 'Bach-like in places'.

4pp. Notes: Manuscript; ink. A red pencil annotation at the head of the letter gives a date of 'Winter 1915'. CL47.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/2

(76.2) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [November 1915]

Description: Shimmin is again unwell. Gurney writes of how distant College life seems now and of the decision to go to war. He has attended a debate on the subject of ghosts, at which he was elected onto the debating committee, and writes of Mozart and how he is tiring of band practice.

4pp. Notes: Manuscript; ink. CL58.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/3

(76.5) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin December 17 1915

Description: A letter largely concerned with books.

3pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; ink. The envelope is postmarked Chelmsford, 17 December 1915, the date of which has also been annotated in pencil at the head of the letter. An ink annotation in an unknown hand at the head of the letter notes some of the contents: 'The going to Wycombe / The Stevenson walk'. CL63.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/4

(76.10) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [July 1916]

Description: Gurney begins by apologising for not having let Shimmin know he had been sent into action, which he thought he had, and describes some of his first impressions and the other soldiers he has met. He reports that the 'women' [Society of Women Musicians] are to do his Five Elizabethan Songs.

3pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked 31 July 1917, which date is annotated in pencil at the head of the letter, along with censor and field post office attributes from the envelope. CL105.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/5

(76.1) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [July 1916]

Description: Gurney writes of army life and the Germans, of some of his friends back home, and a little of music, writing that he has 'learnt more about music in the last 1 1/2 years than the previous four' and of Howells's Piano Quartet.

4pp. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. A brief note at the end of the letter, in ink in unknown hand, reads 'Songs / Miss Scott'. CL110.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/6

(76.6) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin February 3 1917

Description: Gurney thanks Shimmin for the chocolate and reports being back with the battalion. He asks what music Shimmin might have been playing recently and recollects life in England before the war.

2pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked variously 3 February and 6 February 1917. The envelope was originally sent to Marion Scott, in whose hand (ink) the address has been amended to Shimmin's address in Margate, and reiterated on the verso. The head of the letter has been annotated in pencil with the date of the postmark. CL154.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/7

(76.7) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin April 24 1917

Description: Gurney asks what Shimmin is up to and writes of his hope for an end to 'the whole business'. He reports having visited the local cathedral.

2pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked 24 and 26 April and is again addressed to Scott who has altered the address in pencil for forwarding to Shimmin at Herne Bay, Kent, reiterated on verso. The date of the postmark has been annotated at the head of the letter. CL193.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/8

(76.8) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin April 30 1917

Description: Shimmin is ill again. Gurney reports his having been wounded and recalls Framilode.

2pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked variously 30 April and 2 May 1917, the first of which dates has been annotated in pencil at head of letter. It is addressed to Scott for forwarding and the forwarding address completed in ink by her. A pencil annotation on the verso gives Gurney's army number (by Scott? or otherwise unknown hand). CL196.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/9

(76.15) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [May 29 1917]

Description: Shimmin has been operated upon. Gurney tells Shimmin he likes his 'tune', writes of Howells and a 'lovely village' he is in with little to do and little to read. He gives a short melody in D major, 12/8.

2pp. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. A pencil annotation at the head of the letter suggests a date of 1917. Thornton dates to late May 1917 in CL. CL208.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/10

(76.12) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin July 20 1917

Description: Gurney hopes Shimmin is recovering, tells of his transfer to the Machine Gun Corps, that his book has been accepted for publication [Severn & Somme], and that he is reading 'Quentin Durward' [Walter Scott].

2pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked variously 20, 23 and 24 July 1917. It was originally addressed c/o Shimmin's sister (presumably), readdressed in ink to Herne Bay, Kent, who forwarded the letter tc/o Mrs Taylor. The verso of the envelope has various attempts at the correct spelling of Battalion and two different versions of a capital 'A' sampled in the writing of 'Arthur', in an unknown hand. A note by kelsey Thornton accompanies the letter, regarding the matching up of letters and envelopes within this section of the collection. CL223.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/11

(76.11) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [July 31 1917]

Description: Shimmin is on the mend. Gurney writes of Howells, the possible end of the war, his forthcoming book, and of the reinstigation of the Queen's Hall Proms.

2pp. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The head of the letter is annotated with postmark and other details from an envelope which probably belongs with the following letter. CL227.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/12

(76.13; 76.11 env.) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin August 14 1917

Description: A short letter expressing sympathy following what appears to be the suicide of Shimmin's sister.

1p. +env. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. The envelope is postmarked 14 August 1917. CL234.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/13

(76.4) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [November 1917]

Description: Gurney regrets that it wasn't possible to see Shimmin whilst on leave briefly, tells that he probably won't be invited again to stay at the Scotts', writes of various friends, and reports that he has '6 blooming songs to write out': a rewrite of In Flanders and By a Bierside, and new settings of The Folly of Being Comforted, Wenlock Edge, Even Such is Time, and 'a 'Song' of my own' [Severn Meadows].

2pp. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. CL283.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/14

(76.9) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin [April 1918]

Description: A letter giving reports on Royal College business, Howells, Benjamin, Margaret Hunt ('in a very bad state'), and his own situation. He writes of those currently serving in the trenches, and enquires after Shimmin's wellbeing. Gurney makes brief reference to his experiences in France, recalling going up the 'magnificent' river Seine 'in September'.

2pp. Notes: Manuscript; pencil. CL325. Addressed from Barton Street, Gloucester.

Item D10500/1/C/1/7/15

(76.14) Letter from Gurney to Sydney Shimmin November 30 1918

Description: Gurney expresses relief at the end of the war and looks forward to Christmas and to his return to the Royal College and spending time once more with Shimmin. He reports the writing of a violin sonata ('almost finished'), a few songs, a string quartet ('on the stocks') and tells of the forthcoming publication of his second volume of poetry, 'probably to be entitled War's Embers'.

2pp. +env. Notes: Manuscript; ink. CL364. Includes a short melody line, as yet unidentified.