

Collection: The Fox/Pearce (Darwin) Collection**Names:** Fox, William Darwin, 1805-1880**Online access:**  [Charles Darwin Letters](#)

Description: This collection of approximately 80 items was acquired in 1970 from Captain Christopher Pearce, a descendant of the Fox family. Most of the collection consists of letters but lists of observations and collections, photographs, and magazine and newspaper clippings are also included. The dates range between 1821-1887. (There is one letter dated 1935). There is great variety in the content and many correspondents. The principal correspondents are William Darwin Fox (1805-1880), a minister, and his cousin Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882). Others include the Rev. W.D. Fox, Henry Doubleday, William C. Hewitson and Richard Owen. Many of the letters are detailed accounts of what the various men have and need in their pursuit of “natural history”. Insects, birds and eggs are especially discussed.

Dates: 1821-1887, 1935**Location:** Memorial Room Rare Cabinet 27**Items:** 12 cm of textual records**Inventory:**

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| 1.1 | May 18, 1825 | Dr. Hasper, Leipzig to Dr. Kennedy, Glasgow. Dr. Hasper thanks Dr. Kennedy for the friendship that was shown to him during his short stay in Glasgow and introduces a friend, Dr. Kind, who will also be visiting England and Scotland.
A.L.S., 2p. |
| 1.2 | Mar. 19, 1831 | Spurzheim, Johann Kaspar, 1776-1852, Derby to Dr. Kennedy, Ashby de-la-Zouch. Spurzheim has examined the head of an eagle. He is not able to inspect the head of a woodcock and thus cannot say “how the spot, share inhabitory lies”. (?)
A.L.S., 1p. envelope. |

- 2.1 Dec.17, 1821 Duke of Norfolk, Farnham, to Samuel Fox, Osmaston Hall, Derby. The Duke of Norfolk accepts and thanks Mr. Fox for the honor extended to him, that is, of being President of the Derbyshire ? for the ensuing year - understanding that-his attendance may be dispensed with.
A.L.S., 1p. envelope.
- 2.2 Aug. 12, 1834 Emma Darwin [née Wedgwood], Derby, to Revd. W.D. Fox, Harrowgate. This letter is filled with social pleasantries and chit chat. Many names are mentioned.
A.L.S., 2p. envelope.
- 2.3 Oct. 24, 1835 Samuel Fox, No.11 Melville St., Edinburgh to Rev. William Darwin Fox. Discusses William's acute rheumatism; Fox is disappointed that Dr. Darwin was of little help (though admits that he is clever) and comments on the expense of medical treatment.
A.L.S., 4p.
- 2.4 Dec. 5, 1835 Basil Geo. Woodd, New Bond St., to (W. Darwin) Fox at Ryde, Isle of Wight.
This is a note concerning an overpayment of money.
Shipping wine requested by Fox.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 2.5 Dec. 4, 1855 J. Lichfield to Rev. William Darwin Fox.
Thanks Fox for sending elder plants and would like to revisit Delamere Rectory to see his blue elder.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 2.6 April 24, 1855 Lyon Playfair, Baron, 1818-1898, to Miss Fox.
The writer has to decline any engagements at the present time - he is too busy with the French exhibition.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 2.7 June 7, 1858 N. Cardinal Wiseman, Leydon N.E. (?) to Rev. W. Darwin Fox, Delamere Rectory, Northwich.
Wiseman has just finished a course of Vichy waters for his health and is feeling better; he hopes to completely regain his strength. Newspaper accounts of his illness were exaggerated.
A.L.S., 2p. envelope.

- 3.1 June 8, 1856 Ch. Darwin, Down to W. Darwin Fox, Old Parsonage, High Harrowgate. He is sorry Fox is unwell; Darwin has been working very hard lately and at the moment is most interested in domestic rabbits and ducks. Because of the doubt about origins, he is more interested in pigeons and ducks than poultry. Sir C. Lyell has urged Darwin to write a Preliminary Essay and he has begun but is full of doubt about the work; asks if he may quote Fox about never having seen or heard of a blueish-grey cat that was not deaf
A.L.S., 2p. envelope.
- 3.2 May 26, 1876 C. Darwin, c/o H. Wedgwood, Hopedene, Dorking to W. Darwin Fox, Woodlands, Hampstead, London N.W.
Darwin shall be here for 42 days in order for him to have a rest. He answers Fox's enquiry about ?, who is very unwell and may never return to Leith Hill. Darwin's son William of Southampton has had an accident but is recovering slowly; he hopes Mrs. Hughes will go on well.
A.L.S., 1p. envelope,
- 3.3 March 29, 1880 Charles Darwin, Down, Beckenham, Kent to Charles W. Fox, Broadlands, Sandown, Isle of Wight.
Fox's father is very ill and Darwin sends his sympathy and recalls how he and the father had been very close at Cambridge and how much he thought of him.
A.L.S., 1p. envelope.
- 3.4 March 10, 1880 Charles Darwin, Abinger Hall, Dorking to Ch. W. Fox, Broadlands, Sandown, Isle of Wight.
He sends his condolences on the death of Charles Fox's father.
A.L.S., 1p. envelope.
- 3.5 Feb. 7, 1867 Charles Darwin, to Rev. W.D. Fox, Delamere Rectory, Northwich, Cheshire
Envelope only.
- 3.6 Feb. 13, 1882 E. Darwin, Down, Beckenham, Kent to Mrs. Hughes. Emma, writing on Charles' behalf as well, thanks Mrs. Hughes for her kindness and sympathy. Death of Erasmus? She wishes to be remembered to Mrs. Fox and her son Charles also.
A.L.S., 2p.

- 3.7 March 2, 1877 Erasmus Darwin, 6 Queen Anne St. to Mrs. Hughes. Darwin is unable to help but has sent his nephew George on the Athenaeum and hopes that he may be of some help. A.L.S., 2p.
- 3.8 Feb. 1, 1935 Hesketh Pearson, London to Rev. Gilbert B. Darwin Fox, Isle of Wight. Answers Darwin's letters regarding his familial background and the history of the Portland vase by Wedgwood. Includes clipped samples of handwriting of R.W. Darwin. A.L.S., 1p. envelope.
- 4.1 n.d. Notes of the Medusa. D., 1p.
- 4.2 August 29, 1827 Notes on Craniology. D., 2p.
- 4.3 Aug. 16, 1830 Nature notes [author unknown] Someone caught some birds while on a walk with Professor Henslowe.
- Aug. 23, 1830 Discusses the Cinerions (?) Falcon and the Hen Harrier (?); also another bird. Gives hints on how to capture wasps, was with Baker (?).
- Aug. 24, 1830 Talking about insects.
- Aug. 25, 1830 The pieman brought samples too.
- June 28, 1831 Observations of caterpillars.
- July 23, 1831 Listing of species.
- July 25, 26, 1831 Listing of species. Found a lizard and visually compared it with a written description by Fleming.
- Aug. 15, 1831 Gathering samples.
- Aug. 16, 1831 Gathering samples and also saw an unfamiliar animal, perhaps a mole.
- Aug. 23, 1831 Recording of sightings.
- Aug. 29, 1831 Sighting as of the 23 April.

- Sept. 12, 1831 Description of insect laying eggs.
13p.
- 4.4 n.d. “A list of summer birds of passage”.
“Pernicious effects of Yew to Cattle”.
D., 2p.
- 4.5 n.d. Anecdotes and jokes.
D., 2p.
- 4.6 n.d. Remedy for blistered feet. Illness called “diable au corps and
inner achism” devil possessed. “Never to shrink while life
retains a spark”. “Narrative of a Pedestrian Journey through
Russia and Siberian Tartary.”
D., 2p.
- 4.7 n.d. Notes on medical treatment.
D., 2p.
- 5.1 July 7 (?), 1832 (?) Epperstone near Nottingham, to Hewitson, (William
Chapman, 1806-1878).
Sharing insects, also a bird's nest and some other
“desiderata”. A listing of what, where found and when.
L., 4p.
- 5.2 Dec. 29, 1833 Henry Doubleday, 1808-1875, to [Rev. Wm. Darwin Fox?].
Sending a description of the eggs along with them.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 5.3 Dec. 19, 1835 Henry Doubleday, Epping? to Rev. Wm. Darwin Fox, York
House, Ryde, Isle of Wight.
Discusses sharing of specimens and Doubleday's observances
of multitudes of birds and their nesting. Other names
involved in similar observations - Temminck, Gould, Jenyns,
J. Marshall?, Wm. Yarrell, J.S. Hay of Stoke. Close
observation to differentiate species. Discusses specimen
gathering and sharing in Natural History.
A.L.S., 3p. envelope.

- 5.4 Mar. 16, 1835 Henry Doubleday, Epping to Rev. W.D. Fox, Osmaston . Fox has written asking Doubleday's assistance in Ornithology and/or Entomology. During last six or seven years Doubleday has assembled quite a collection of British Birds. Fox is welcome to any duplicates. Doubleday's similarly interested friends, Hewitson, Salmon, Gould, Wm. Yarrell. Doubleday includes a listing of his specimens. A.L.S., 3p. envelope.
- 5.5 Sept. 18, 1835 W.C. Hewitson, Oatlands, to Rev. Fox. General discussion of Hewitson's poor health and his acquisition of 100 new butterflies for his collection. A.L.S., 2p.
- 5.6 Jan. 29, 1835 William C. Hewitson, Newcastle to Rev. W.D. Fox, Osmaston Hall, Derby. Fox had previously written asking for Hewitson to identify some bird's eggs. Hewitson is also sending some specimens along to Fox and his wife. A.L.S., 3p. envelope.
- 5.7 June 21, 1834 William C. Hewitson, Newcastle to Rev. W. Darwin Fox, Hamphall Stubbs, Yorks. Hewitson had tried to call upon Fox, who was not home, and had thereby seen large numbers of birds. Hewitson cannot remember what specimens he promised to send to Fox. He hopes that he can visit Norway, around Trondheim, next spring. Tells Fox what he has been finding for his collection. Hewitson has spent very little time lately on his insect observation and collection. He is a member of a newly formed Field Naturalist Club. A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 5.8 July 10, 1832 William C. Hewitson to Rev. W.D. Fox, Epperstone, Nottingham. Hewitson is sorry that the package of specimens which he had sent to Rev. Fox did not arrive safely. He discusses his eggs and thoughts on types of birds. Discusses various places and their type of bird and insect populations. A.L.S., 4p. envelope

- 5.9 Mar. 31, 1832 Willaim C. Hewitson, Newcastle to Rev. W.D. Fox, Epperstone, Nottingham [c/o Strutt] . Hewitson apologizes for not sending Fox samples, especially in view of Fox's generosity in this regard. He promises to send something soon.
A.L.S., 2p. envelope
- 5.10 Dec. 27, 1830 William C. Hewitson, 32 Collingwood St., [Newcastle?] to William D. Fox, Osmaston near Derby. Hewitson is having a book published, it has been delayed and hopefully will be available March 1. One must be very strict in believing identifications of birds.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 5.11 Jan. 5, 1832 William C. Hewitson, Newcastle on Tyne to Rev. W.D. Fox, Osmaston Hall near Derby. Friendship, “a sort of Freemasonry” among naturalists. Hewitson greatly enjoys his work. Lengthy discussion of his desiderata and comments on a variety of birds, eggs and insects. Also discusses procedure for exchanging boxes of specimens.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 5.12 n.d. William C. Hewitson
Discusses sharing of boxes and letters and the preparations of the specimens for the book. The author is most grateful for the kindness which his correspondents have shown. Discusses insects, eggs, and birds. The comment is made that “where species resemble each other so closely positive evidence must only be at all relied on”.
A.L.S., 7p.
- 5.13 April 5, 1835 William Hewitson, Newcastle to Rev. W. D. Fox, Osmaston Hall, Derby. Hewitson is writing for some bits of information that he needs to finish another section of his book and ready it for printing. Discusses some of his problems with the production. Hewitson is considering accepting the position of secretary to the Royal Institution in Manchester. Ends with a bit of political discussion.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope

- 5.14 June 7, 1836 William C. Hewitson, Bristol to Rev. W.D. Fox, Wood's Esq., Hampstead.
There seems to have been a long silence between these two. Hewitson discusses the numbers of his book which he is working on. Other men are involved in the identification of birds, etc. and they sometimes disagree with these collector's opinions. Hewitson has the job with the Royal Institution but he is disappointed with it and hopes to leave.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 5.15a List of eggs. H. Doubleday 3/15/35
D., 4p.
- 5.15b Rev. W.D. Fox
List of eggs for Doubleday;
List: "I want which he has".
D., 4p.
- 5.15c W.C. Hewitson(?) to W.D. Fox(?)
List of insects sent.
List of eggs sent and returned.
D., 2p.
- 5.15d List of eggs sent and list promised.
D., 1p.
- 5.15e Observations of various birds.
D., 4p.
- 6.1 n.d. Godfrey Howitt to Rev. W.D. Fox.
Howitt apologizes for not being at home when Fox called.
Thanks Fox for the specimens.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 6.2 July 9, 1840 W. Hoy, Stoke, (Nayland?), to Wm. D. Fox.
More sharing of specimens, with a list of eggs
A.L.S., 2p.
- 6.3 July 26, 1840 W. Hoy, Stoke, (Nayland?) to Wm. Darwin Fox (?)
Short note on receipt of letter. [Second page has been used to list eggs by someone else (?) Fox]
A.L.S., 2p.

- 6.4 Sept. 6, 1838 J. Howard Galton? to Revd. Wm. Darwin Fox, Delamere Rectory, Chester.
The author of the letter discusses his breeding of dogs.
A.L.S., 3p. envelope
- 6.5 April 26, 18?? Denmark Rd., Camberwell, Surrey to Rev. Wm. D. Fox?
Instructions on how to catch vipers and extract their oil.
A.L.S., 4p.
- 6.6 Feb. 10, 1834 John D. Salmon, Thetford, Norfolk to William Darwin Fox, Osmaston Hall, near Derby.
Sharing of specimens to add to each other's collections.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 6.7 March 13, 1835 John D. Salmon, Thetford to W.D. Fox, Esquire, Osmaston Hall, near Derby.
Various men involved in nomenclature and identification and the interest of the Magazine of Natural History in this information. The author is sorry he was not able to accompany Hewitson to Norway.
A.L.S., 3p. envelope
- 6.8 July 13, 1835 John D. Salmon, Thetford to the Revd. W.D. Fox, Capel Carig, Bangor, North Wales.
More sharing and discussion of collections Hewitson and W. Hoy mentioned. The author still retains the egg collection of the Norfolk and Norwich Museum and he hopes to add a few items.
A.L.S., 4p. envelope
- 6.9 n.d. W.H. (Probably W. Hoy).
"Skins in fine preservation and some birds".
D.
- 7.1 March 24, 18?? R^d. Owen to ?
The need to be well-documented. Recommends reading "Steenstrup on Alternate Generation".
A.L.S., 4p.
- 7.2 Nov. 18, 1845 R^d. Owen to ?
Helpful criticisms of book being published, the "Prospectus".
A.L.S., 2p.
- 7.3 Sept. 9, 1861 Richard Owen, Manchester, to Mr. Price.
Owen is leaving Manchester; the situation has not been good.
A.L.S., 1p.

- 7.4 June 26, 1880 Richard Owen to C.W. Fox?
Owen will be seeing someone shortly and sends this note to thank the receiver's father for kindness in remembering his work.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 7.5 June 6, 1884 Richard Owen to an unknown woman.
Information regarding appointment in the British Museum, in response to her enquiry.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 8.1 May 2, 1872 A. Sedgwick, Trinity College, Cambridge.
He will be able to meet a commitment for the 22nd at two o'clock. The fine weather has improved his health.
A.L.S., 1p.
- 8.2 March ?, 1848 Edward Forbes, 6 Gray's Court, Ch. N. Woodd, Esq.
Setting up of dinner date.
A.L.S., 1p.
- 8.3 June 6, 1868 Jno. O. Westwood, Walton Manor
Change of appointment time.
A.L.S., 1p.
- 8.4 "Notes of a Mesmeric Performance"
entry dated Thursday, March 14, 1872.
D., 2p.
- 8.5 Dec. 29, 1835 Dawson Turner, Yarmouth, to Elizabeth.
Note of what is being sent.
A.L.S., 1p.
- 8.6 May 21, 1861 Charles. Babbage to Mrs. Frances J. Hughes, 4 Kensington Park Gardens.
Babbage tries to clear up confusion regarding the "Diff Engine", a computing machine.
A.L.S., 2p.
- 8.7 Nov. 28, 1834 Duke of Devonshire, London.
Accepts position as Patron of the Society for the Encouragement of Horticultural Pursuits and offers the services of his gardener.
A.L.S., 1p.

- 8.8 May 2, 1845 C. Wheatstone, 20 Conduit Street, to Mrs. Davenport.
Declines an invitation; he is off to Paris.
A.L.S., 1p.
- 8.9 3 scraps, names of people mentioned.
- 9.1 July 14, 1880 Carl Haag, Ida Villa, Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, to Charles
W. Fox, Esquire, Members Mansions, Victoria Street.
Thanks Fox for the oriental prayer rug.
A.L.S., 2p. envelope
- 9.2 Miscellaneous notes on various subjects, author unknown.
10 sheets.
- 9.3 July 22, 1871 Caricatures on Darwin from "Fun".
D., 2p.
- 9.4 Nov. 16, 1872 Caricatures of Darwin from "Fun".
D.
- 9.5 Photograph of Darwin.
- 9.6 Photograph of Darwin by Barraud.
- 9.7 Photograph of Darwin by Elliott and Fry.
- 9.8 Photograph of unidentified man.
- 9.9 April 19, 1880 G. Batten, 7 Above Bar, Southampton, to C.W. Fox, Esq.
Receipt of payment for clothing.
Also newspaper cutting – "boa constrictor".
A.L.S., 2p.
- 10.1 July 6, 1858 C. Darwin, Down, to Wm. Darwin Fox.
Thanks Fox for his second letter; there has been some illness
in the house but the crisis is over and he hopes no one else
will become ill. They are to go to Elizabeth Wedgwood's and
then to the sea but does not know just where because the
house they take must be very near the sea for Etty's sake.
A.L.S., 1p.

- 10.2 Feb. 14, 1878 Charles Darwin, Down, Beckenham, Kent, to Rev. W. Darwin Fox, Broadlands, Sandown, Isle of Wight. He recalls their long friendship and is sorry to hear of Fox's daughter's illness; he is anxious about his son-in-law, Litchfield, who is not well. George is in Algiers? Frank and he are working on physiological aspects of plants. A.L.S., 2p. envelope
- 10.3 July 10, 1878 Charles Darwin, Down, Beckenham, to Revd. W. Darwin Fox, Sandown, Isle of Wight. He is very sorry for the loss which Mr. & Mrs. Fox have suffered and which he saw yesterday in the Times and hopes she did not suffer too much. A.L.S., 1p. envelope
- 10.4 August 28 Charles Darwin?, 36 Great Marlborough Street, London, to Wm. Darwin Fox. The proof sheets are coming in and so he will be busy; he will then go down to Shrewsbury which he is very much looking forward to for he loves wooded country in England during the autumn. After that he will come back to Marlborough Street and begin pure Natural History; his time will all be taken up with supervising the illustration of *Zoology of Beagle's Voyage* for which the Government has given him some money. L., 1p. incomplete
- 10.5 Feb. 7, 1837 E. Bickersteth, Walton Rectory, Herts, to Rev. Prebendary Townsend, Vicarage, North Allerton. Concern over the salvation of the multitude from the evil days at hand. Discussion of publishing a religious book. Townsend is about to write a preface to Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. A.L.S., 4p.
- 10.6 July 17, 1867 Benjamin Disraeli, Downing Street, to Basil T. Woodd, Eq., M.P., Conyngham Hall, Knaresborough. The meeting of Parliament will be considering business of the highest importance and Disraeli earnestly requests the presence of Woodd at that time. A.L.S., 1p. envelope

- 10.7 1853 The Phrenological and Mesmeric Chart, J.S. Butterworth, Hulme, Manchester.
Lecturer on Mesmerism and Teacher of Practical Phrenology. Attached analysis of character of Fanny Fox dated June (?), 1856. (?Phrenological examination) A. D., 7p.
- 10.8 Sketch.
W.D. Fox drawn by Ellen S. Fox.
- 10.9 Various Photograph - Revd. W. Darwin Fox.
"Delemare" Rectory, Cheshire.
1862, aged 57.
Also 2 envelopes and illustration of Darwin arms.
- 10.10 Photograph - probably of W.D. Fox.
- 10.11 March 22, 1871 Cartoon of Charles Darwin from "The Hornet".
D., 1p.
- 10.12 Sept. 16, 1878 Llewelyn Powell and David Thomas Powell, Cedar Lawn, Hampstead Heath, to Alex Pearce, Broadlands, Sandlands, Isle of Wight.
The mother of the two boys has sent Alex (the uncle) a clock and now the boys want to send him a bronze for the top of it. They wish their Uncle much love on his wedding.
A.L.S., 2p. envelope
- 10.13 Nov.19, 1887 Newspaper cutting from the Times on "The Life of Darwin" taken from "Life and Letters of Charles Darwin, with an Autobiographical Chapter", by his son, Francis Darwin, F.R.S.
Three Vols. London, Murray, 1887.
D., 5p.