

Nicholson, William

Newark-on-Trent 1872 – 1949 Blewbury, Berkshire

Portrait of the bookseller Gustave David, sitting on a crate outside his stall in the Market Place, Cambridge, while a gowned student and another figure browse through the books on trestle tables behind, with a bicycle propped in the left foreground

[London] 1926

COLOUR LITHOGRAPH, image 320 × 465 mm, sheet 440 × 570 mm, printed in black and blue, on smooth wove paper, signed and dated in the image (left) 1926 Nicholson; signed in brown ink on the recto Nicholson and No.25 and Limited to 100 copies.

Several soft folds along right side of the sheet, apparently caused by former rolling. Light-stained, soiling (mostly confined to margins).

Mounted, framed and glazed (James Bourlet & Sons Ltd.).

REFERENCE Colin Campbell, *William Nicholson: the Graphic Work* (London 1992), pp.139–140 (reproduced fig. 138) and p.227 no. 187

A PORTRAIT of the Cambridge bookseller Gustave David (1860–1936), seated on his stall near Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge. The print depends from a graphite drawing (221 × 165 mm) recently acquired by the Fitzwilliam Museum;¹ it is 'one of Nicholson's infrequent essays in lithography'.

Gustave David had a recognizable influence in the intellectual life of the University and a legendary role in developing the libraries of several generations of Cambridge bibliophiles, among them E.P. Goldschmidt, Stephen Gaselee, Maynard and Geoffrey Keynes,² and

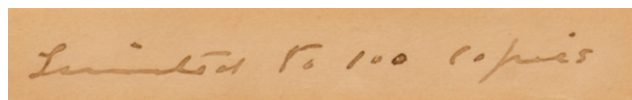
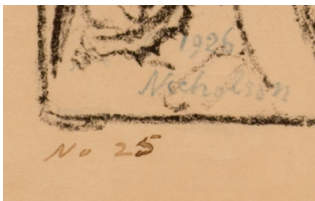
¹ Fitzwilliam Museum, Department of Paintings, Drawings and Prints, PD 267-1985 (obtained from Robin Garton, Cambridge; gift of The Friends of the Fitzwilliam Museum, 1985); see Collections Explorer (record [12176](#)).

² Graham Chainey, *A Literary history of Cambridge* (Cambridge 1985), p.234; David Scrase and Peter Croft, *Maynard Keynes: collector of pictures, books and manuscripts* (Cambridge 1983), p.67; cf.



Lithograph by William Nicholson (sheet dimensions sheet 440 × 570 mm), signed on the stone and in brown ink by Nicholson. No. 25 of 100 copies printed

Details



Raymond Lister.³ Toward the end of David's career, the University offered him in recognition of the 'conspicuous services he has rendered the cause of Humane Letters'⁴ either an honorary MA or a luncheon in the Hall of Trinity College; he chose the latter. It seems that Nicholson's print was issued then, as a keepsake.⁵ After his death, a handful of affectionate tributes were collected in a volume published at the University Press and sold for the benefit of his widow. A detail from Nicholson's portrait was reproduced as the frontispiece to that volume.⁶

Our impression is titled in brown ink 'Mr. David', 'No. 25', and 'Limited to 100 copies'.⁷ An impression *hors série* signed on the recto 'Nicholson' and 'No.', in *blue* ink (not brown, as here), is in the British Museum.⁸ An impression additionally titled like ours in brown ink 'Mr. David' and 'No. 24', was sold by Christie's in 2009,⁹ another impression titled in brown ink 'Mr. David', 'No. 13', and 'Limited to 100 copies' was sold by Christie's in 2013.¹⁰

David McKitterick, 'The Young Geoffrey Keynes' in *The Book Collector* 36 (1987), pp.491–517, maintaining (p.512) that Geoffrey Keynes in fact acquired few books on David's stall, and was critical of David's judgment of condition. See also A.N.L. Munby, 'Book-Collecting in the 1930s' in *The Times Literary Supplement*, issue 3714, 11 May 1973, p.536, who recollected David as 'something of a tyrant', who 'awarded his books rather than sold them – and awarded them in the most arbitrary and unpredictable way'.

³ Raymond Lister, *With my own wings: the memoirs of Raymond Lister* (Cambridge 1994), p.67.

⁴ Roy Harley Lewis, *Antiquarian books: an insider's account* (Newton Abbot 1978), pp.30–33, p.50 (detail from the print reproduced).

⁵ Campbell, *op. cit.*, p.139.

⁶ *David of Cambridge. Some appreciations* (Cambridge 1937), p.[5]: 'The publishers thank Sir William Nicholson for allowing them to reproduce part of his drawing of David at his stall'. The memoirs are by T.R. Glover ('Mr. Gustave David – The Bookstall in the Cambridge Market', reprinted from *The Times*, issue 47539, 23 November 1936, p.17), Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (from *The Cambridge Review*, 27 November 1936), W.H.D. Rouse (from *The Cam*, January 1937), H.F. Stewart ('David of Cambridge', from *The Spectator*, issue 5657, 27 November 1936, pp.938–939), and S.C. Roberts, together with some anonymous verses, 'The Song of David' (reprinted apparently from *The Cambridge Review*, circa 1923; cf. *The Times Literary Supplement*, issue 1831, 6 March 1937, p.172, with reproduction of the detail from Nicholson's print). 'The price is 6d., and any profits are to go to David's widow' (*The London Mercury* 35, 1937, p.628).

⁷ Cf. Campbell, *op. cit.*, p.227: 'The size of the edition has not been established'.

⁸ British Museum, Department of Prints & Drawings, [1939.0817.2](https://www.britishmuseum.org/pressroom/press-releases/1939-08-17-2).

⁹ Christie's, London (King Street), 'Old Master, Modern & Contemporary Prints', 17 September 2009, lot 83. The impression was mistakenly described as 'an early working proof... reworked in places in blue crayon by the artist' (price realised £3,250 inclusive).

¹⁰ Christie's, London (South Kensington), 'Prints and Multiples', 10 April 2013, lot 12 (price realised £2,375 inclusive).

