Birkbeck’s paintings have been added to the BBC’s digital collection

A collection of 26 oil paintings owned by, or on loan to, Birkbeck, has been published on the BBC’s Your Paintings website as part of an initiative showcasing the UK’s oil paintings.

Chris Terrey, Archivist at Birkbeck, said: “The paintings all add to the narrative of the College’s history, whether by depicting key events or individuals in the development of the College, or through the shared history of the buildings in which we now house our teaching and research. We are very pleased to be able to share them more widely via this important catalogue of publicly owned paintings.”

GEORGE BIRKBECK (1776–1841) by Samuel Lane, c.1830

In 1823, George Birkbeck founded The London Mechanics’ Institute, which later became Birkbeck College, to make education available to working Londoners.

H. GORDON JACKSON, MASTER OF BIRKBECK FROM 1943 TO 1950 by Sam Morse-Brown, 1940s

H. Gordon Jackson carried out fire watch duties from the roof of the College during the Second World War.


During Baroness Blackstone’s decade as Master, the College expanded, with the formation of departments of Law, Management and Business Studies.

DAME HELEN GWYNE–VAUGHAN CBE DSc by Philip Alexius de László, c.1910

Birkbeck’s first female professor, Dame Helen Charlotte Isabella Gwynne-Vaughan CBE DSc, was a prominent botanist and mycologist, as well as serving as Controller of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps in France and Commandant of the Women’s Royal Air Force during the First World War.

For more information about Birkbeck’s paintings, visit: www.bbk.ac.uk/news/birkbeck-paintings

For more information about the BBC’s Your Paintings website, visit: www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings