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COLETTE'S TRETHOWAN CUP

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On 31 January 1918, Constance Malleson told Russell that she had bought him this unique Wedgwood cup and saucer, now on permanent display outside the reading room of the Russell Archives. As “the only one of its kind in the whole world”, she considered it “eminently suited” to her lover. She thought it had been designed by Harry Trethowan, a Cornish artist, designer and porcelain expert who was manager of the Pottery and Glass Department at Heal’s for more than 30 years. Colette’s annotation to her letter indicates that she had made the purchase at this leading London retailer. Russell had only limited opportunity to enjoy his gift before his incarceration in Brixton Prison early in May. But on 15 February Colette reported that she had drunk tea from the “Trethowen [*sic*] cup” after waking alone in the “Studio”, the ground-floor bolt-hole they were renting in London W1.