

Joe Orton's Defaced Books at the Islington Museum

Martin Paul Eve

University of Sussex

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I took a detour today, en route to visiting the [Freud museum](#) to the [Islington Museum](#), in order to see the [collection of library books defaced by playwright Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell](#).

The collection was not disappointing! Among my favourites were "The Collected Plays of Emlyn Williams" amended to contain such fictitious content as "Fucked by Monty" and "Knickers Must Fall" as well as containing the typewriter upon which "What the Butler Saw" was produced and some of Orton's handwritten notes, on loan from the Leicester collection.

For those unaware, Orton had a brief, but promising career, penning a short number of sophisticated farces before being bludgeoned to death by his lover, Halliwell, in their Islington flat in 1967. The pair took offence, in happier days, at the poor taste in books available at the local library and so embarked upon a campaign of defacement for which they were rewarded with a harsh six months in prison and a hefty fine.

References

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Freud Museum London - The Home of Sigmund Freud, Freud Museum London
<<http://www.freud.org.uk>>