Lewis Carroll
Charles Lutwidge Dodgson
better known by the pen-name
Lewis Carroll,
English author, mathematician, logician, Anglican deacon and photographer
Rugby School, 1859 (image courtesy of the school)
Tom Quadrangle, Christ Church College, Oxford. It is dominated by Tom Tower, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. In the centre of the quad, there is an ornamental pond with a statue of Mercury (right). In the past, it was traditional for "hearties" (sporty students) to throw "aesthetes" (more artistic students) into this pond. Whether or not Dodgson was subjected to this now forbidden practice is not known, but as an “aesthete” he probably would have been.
The young adult Charles Dodgson is described as being “about six feet tall, slender and considered handsome, with curling brown hair and blue or grey eyes.” While he suffered from an embarrassing stutter it didn’t render him socially inept. He could sing tolerably well and was not afraid to do so before an audience, was a clever mimic and especially skilled at storytelling and charades.
Carroll with Louisa MacDonald, wife of the writer of fairy stories George MacDonald and four of the MacDonald children
In 1858 a new Dean, Henry Liddell, arrived at Christ Church, bringing with him his young family, all of whom would figure largely in Dodgson's life and, over the following years, greatly influence his writing career.
The Liddell sisters: photograph by Lewis Carroll.  
(National Portrait Gallery)
It was commonly believed that Alice Liddell inspired the children's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, although Lewis Carroll himself vehemently denied it, saying that the literary Alice was a composite of a number of children he had known.
The famous Victorian artist and Punch cartoonist, Sir John Tenniel, is remembered today as the illustrator of Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) and Through the Looking-Glass (1871). The books have been illustrated countless times but for many people the original drawings by Tenniel have never been surpassed. His images epitomise the characters in the books. Tenniel successfully captured the author’s intended vision. Let’s have a look at a few of the illustrations..
“Drink Me”
Sir John Tenniel’s illustration for the first chapter of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*
The Mad Hatter’s Tea Party
Tweedledum and Tweedledee
Agreed to have a battle;
For Tweedledum said Tweedledee
Had spoiled his nice new rattle.
Just then flew down a monstrous crow,
As black as a tar-barrel;
Which frightened both the heroes so,
They quite forgot their quarrel.[}
The time has come," the
Walrus said,
"To talk of many things:
Of shoes--and ships--and
sealing-wax--
Of cabbages--and kings--
And why the sea is boiling hot--
And whether pigs have wings."

"But wait a bit," the Oysters cried,
"Before we have our chat;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat!"
"No hurry!" said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.
The Cheshire Cat

Alice first encounters the Cheshire Cat at the Duchess's house in her kitchen, and then later outside on the branches of a tree, where it appears and disappears at will, engaging Alice in amusing but sometimes vexing conversation. At one point, the cat disappears gradually until nothing is left but its grin, prompting Alice to remark that she has often seen a cat without a grin but never a grin without a cat.
“Off with her head!”

The White Rabbit – he’s always late!
The Hunting of the Snark (An Agony in 8 Fits) is a nonsense poem written by Lewis Carroll in 1874. It describes "with infinite humour the impossible voyage of an improbable crew to find an inconceivable creature".
Dodgson found photography to be a useful entrée into higher social circles and photographed notable sitters. Above is his photograph of the family of the artist Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Rossetti is at the left of the picture.
On his father’s death Dodgson had purchased “The Chestnuts” in Guildford. (picture above left.) It remained the family home for the rest of his life, although he never lived in it, choosing instead to remain in his rooms in Tom’s Quad. However, it was at “The Chestnuts”, now his sister’s house, that he died on 14th January 1898 of pneumonia following influenza. He was 2 weeks away from his 66th birthday.
When Carroll’s papers were examined after his death, controversy erupted. At least four complete volumes and around seven pages of text were found to be missing from his thirteen diaries. This paper (seen opposite,) known as the "cut pages in diary document", was compiled by various members of Carroll's family after his death. Part of it may have been written at the time the pages were destroyed, though this is unclear. The document offers a brief summary of two diary pages that are now missing, including the one for 27 June 1863.
"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
   Long time the manxome foe he sought --So
rested he by the Tumtum tree,
   And stood awhile in thought.

One, two! One, two! And through and through
   The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
   He went galumphing back.
The End