

Catalogue of the papers and correspondence of

**KENNETH BAILEY FRS**

(1909 - 1963)

Compiled by Peter Harper and Timothy E. Powell

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#### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### PROVENANCE

The material was received in February 1988 from S V Perry, Emeritus Professor of Biochemistry in the University of Birmingham and close colleague of Kenneth Bailey's for many years until his death in 1963. The arrival of the Bailey papers for cataloguing in the NCUACS's offices at Bath concluded enquiries first initiated by the Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre in Oxford in 1975.

#### OUTLINE OF CAREER OF KENNETH BAILEY

He was born on 18 August 1909 at Alsager's Bank near Stoke-on-Trent. Scholarships took him to the Orme's Boys' School, Newcastle-under-Lyme 1922 and Birmingham University 1928 where he took the course on 'Biochemistry of fermentation' and embarked on research in carbohydrate biochemistry with R H Hopkins. In 1933 his promise as a research worker was recognised by the award of a Beit Scientific Research Fellowship at Imperial College where he began a long association with A C Chibnall and developed research interests in protein biochemistry, the area in which he was to have such outstanding success. It was also at this time that he became acquainted with W T Astbury which led to intermittent scientific collaboration and a lifelong friendship.

In the months before the outbreak of the Second World War Bailey's scientific outlook was broadened by a Rockefeller Travelling Grant to work in Edwin Cohn's laboratory at Harvard. Returning to England in December 1939 he worked for a time on anti-gas research at Porton before joining one of the groups on war projects at the

Low Temperature Research Station, Cambridge. He still managed to find time for his studies in protein and especially muscle biochemistry and these continued apace in the postwar years. His outstanding contributions were recognised in 1948 by his election to a Fellowship at Trinity College and his appointment as an Assistant Director of Research in the University of Cambridge and in 1953 by his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society. Although he received frequent offers of chairs, he preferred to retain his post in Cambridge, spending most of his absences abroad at the Stazione Zoologica, Naples. In 1961 he was appointed University Reader in Biochemistry.

The last seven years of Bailey's life were marred by recurrent illness including a complete breakdown in 1955. In the summer of 1962 during the acute phase of the depressive illness from which he suffered, he was arrested (in the company of a 19-year-old youth) for being in charge of a car while under the influence of drink. With more serious charges of indecent assault in the offing Bailey absconded from bail, taking refuge first at the Stazione Zoologica where his behaviour and state of mind gave great cause for concern, and later at Liège in Belgium. He was persuaded to return to England by S V Perry who broke a journey to Prague to discuss matters with Bailey and the journey back to collect him. Although the outcome of the trial in the magistrates' court was as satisfactory as could possibly be hoped for - Bailey pleaded guilty to the indecency charges and was bound over - his health remained precarious and his future uncertain. He returned to Cambridge in May 1963 for a short visit, but three days after his arrival committed suicide.

Bailey's Times obituarist (S V Perry) summed up his scientific achievement and personal qualities:



Kenneth Bailey was one of the great protein chemists in the classical style, of many attainments, but whose main contributions lay in the muscle field with the discovery of the tropomyosins and in the chemistry of blood coagulation. To those who knew him as a teacher, a colleague or as a friend he was much more - a sensitive person of great humanity, a scientist who had more of the artist in him than most. Many students had good cause to be grateful for his generosity and his efforts on their behalf.

Further details about Bailey's career and research can be found in A C Chibnall's Royal Society memoir (Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society, 10, 1-14) and S V Perry's obituary in Advances in Protein Chemistry, 20, XI - XVIII.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The surviving material presented here as a single chronological sequence is almost exclusively correspondence concerning the last few years of Bailey's life and regrettably does not reflect his scientific achievement. There is personal correspondence 1955 (letters to Bailey only) and scientific correspondence between Bailey and Perry 1960-61. The greater part of the correspondence, however, relates to the difficulties of Bailey's final year, 1962-63, arrangements after his death, appreciations, obituaries and so on. Non-correspondence items include Bailey's memorial address for W T Astbury 1961 and a little undated research material.

#### LOCATION OF OTHER MATERIAL

In 1976 Professor A C Chibnall FRS lent the Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre his file of Kenneth Bailey material and a note of its contents was made with his permission and the file returned for eventual deposit in Cambridge University Library with the rest of his papers. Much of the file concerned the preparation and writing of Chibnall's Royal Society memoir but also contained personal and scientific correspondence with Bailey:

Invitation to write Memoir and material assembled for it: list of publications, Bailey's Royal Society personal record, printed obituaries, memorial service, list of references to Bailey in the Council minutes, Trinity College, Cambridge, note by Bailey 'The Trinity Picture Scheme' 2pp, 1953 (on system of hiring pictures for undergraduate rooms), 2 copies of Bailey's tribute to W T Astbury delivered at memorial service, 5pp, 1961.

Correspondence from colleagues and friends of Bailey, and their recollections of him 1963-64. In chronological order: Alfred Pollard; Roland G Westall; Reginald Hadyn Hopkins (two letters), Professor at Birmingham University with whom Bailey worked in 1931; John T Edsall; Joe Lugg (two letters), collaborator of Bailey 1936; Hans Neurath (two letters); J C Rüegg; Samuel Victor Perry; also comments on Chibnall's draft of Royal Society Memoir by S V Perry, F G Young.

Letters of thanks to Chibnall for Royal Society Memoir, some with further recollections of Bailey, from: S V Perry, F G Young (1964); Alfred Pollard, Karl Schmid, Hans Neurath, Cyril M Kay, John D Ferry (1965); one letter from S V Perry (1967).

Chibnall's personal and scientific correspondence with Bailey, 1932-62. In chronological order:  
References for Bailey for Commonwealth Scholarship 1934;  
Bailey's letters to Chibnall 1934 (2), 1935, 1936 (6 letters from Harvard Medical School describing research), 1944;  
Bailey's report on his 'Researches carried out during the tenure of an ICI Fellowship 1945-47';

Letter from Astbury and reference from Chibnall for  
Royal Society Research Fellowship 1947;  
Correspondence of Chibnall with Vice Chancellor, Leeds  
University (Sir Charles Morris) re Bailey as candidate  
for Chair of Leather Industries 1949;  
Bailey's letter to Chibnall re his decision to decline  
Chair of Biochemistry at Sheffield University 1954;  
Bailey's letters to Chibnall on his work at Naples  
1955, 1959;  
Letter to Bailey from N F Astbury with reminiscences  
of his brother W T A 1961;  
Letter from Bailey to Chibnall 1962.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are very grateful to Professor Perry for making the  
material available, for advice and encouragement, and for reading  
the draft.

P Harper  
T E Powell  
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1 Personal correspondence, 1955.

5 letters all addressed to 'my dear Ken' and signed 'Desmond', and dated 'Tuesday before Easter', 26 April, 13 May, 21 June and 5 November.

Letters of 26 April, 13 May and 21 June refer to plans for Desmond to join Bailey in Naples during the summer.

2 Scientific correspondence, 1960.

S V Perry's carbons of his letters to Bailey dated 15 January, 2 February, 9 February, 11 May and 20 September and Bailey's undated longhand reply to Perry's 20 September letter.

Correspondence relates to amino acid analyses of meromyosin preparations which Bailey arranged to have carried out in Cambridge for Perry, arrangements for Perry's lecture on protein biosynthesis to the Graduate Science Club in Cambridge and tropomyosin section of Annual Reviews [of Biochemistry] chapter which Perry was preparing.

3 Scientific correspondence, 1961.

Bailey's longhand letters of 26 January, 16 June, 23 June and 28 June and the carbons of Perry's letters of 2 February, 17 June and 27 July.

Correspondence relates to muscle protein research, especially myosin sub-fragments, lectures, visits, thesis examining, with some personal news. Bailey's letter of 16 June refers to his giving the address at W T Astbury's memorial service.

4 'Tribute to W T Astbury, ScD., FRS., given by Kenneth Bailey at the Memorial Service, held in Emmanuel Church, June 15, 1961', 5pp typescript.

5 Scientific correspondence, 1962.

1 letter only, 24 May, re Royal Society nomination.



- 6 - 12 Correspondence during the last year of Bailey's life, 1962-63, concerning his mental and legal problems, professional prospects etc., and the efforts made by his friends towards rehabilitation. Principal correspondents are Professors S V Perry, F G Young, R R Porter, A Neuberger and Jean Hanson, Dr Andrew Packard, Dorothy Needham, J R G Bradfield (Trinity College), M G M Pryor (Trinity College), Lord Adrian, Bailey's father and sister and legal advisers.
- 6 1962 July. Includes letter from F G Young to S V Perry with the news that 'today's [25 July] "Daily Herald" had spilled the whole beans - more or less' and copies of Young's letters of the same date to Bailey and Bailey's father assuring them of the willingness of his many friends to help in these difficult circumstances and the importance of a speedy return to England to get the whole matter settled.
- 7 1962 August (1). Includes letter from A Packard at the Stazione Zoologica Naples to S V Perry, 9 August and copy letter from A Neuberger to A Packard, 16 August re Bailey's mental state, and future courses of action.
- 8 1962 August (2). Includes correspondence between Perry and Young, and Young and Packard about Bailey's mental state, the legal situation in England, future courses of action; also letter from Bailey to Perry, 24 August, in which he indicates his intention to move to Belgium to work with Gabriel Hamoir. Packard's letter of 30 August to Young gives news of Bailey's departure for Belgium.
- 9 1962 September. Principally Perry's correspondence with Young and Bailey re Bailey's return to England (successfully accomplished) with Perry.
- 10 1962 October. Principally Perry's correspondence with Young and Trinity College Cambridge re court proceedings, prospects of rehabilitation. Includes photocopy of report of court proceedings in the Times under heading 'Lecturer bound over'.

- 11 1962 November, December. Continuing correspondence between Perry and Young and Perry and Trinity; also letter from Jean Hanson offering help, and letter from Bailey's sister.
- 12 1963 January - May. Correspondence between Bailey and Perry including arrangements for Bailey to visit Cambridge on 19 May (one letter from Young to Bailey).
- It was on this visit to Cambridge that Bailey committed suicide, 22 May.
- 13 - 15 Correspondence and papers re funeral, memorial service, obituaries etc., 1963-65.
- 13 1963 May. Includes letter from J R G Bradfield, Trinity College, to Perry with news of Bailey's last few days in Cambridge and photocopy of Times obituary written by Perry.
- 14 1963 June-August, October. Includes order of service for Trinity College memorial service (held 19 June), correspondence between Perry and C E Dalglish re International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry's Commission on Proteins, of which Bailey was President and correspondence between Perry and J T Edsall, editor of Advances in Protein Chemistry re obituary which Perry agreed to write for Advances. Edsall's letter of 10 July expresses his own great admiration for Bailey and encloses a letter of appreciation from Cyril Kay.
- 15 1964-65. Includes correspondence re Perry's obituary for Advances in Protein Chemistry, typescript drafts and published version.

- 16 - 18      Miscellaneous items
- 16            Press-cuttings covering principal steps in Bailey's career.  
              Probably used by Perry for writing obituary.
- 17            List of Bailey's publications, 1946-61.
- 18            'Interaction of actin, myosin and ATP'.    6pp typescript.  
              Unidentified ms notes.

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