

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS

Report on the papers of

EDMUND JOHN BOWEN FRS

(1898-1980)

chemist

deposited in

the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford

Reproduced for the Contemporary Scientific Archives Centre

(CSAC 81/5/81)

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CONTEMPORARY SCIENTIFIC ARCHIVES CENTRE

under the guidance of the Royal Society's
British National Committee for the History of Science, Medicine and Technology

Catalogue of the papers of
EDMUND JOHN BOWEN, F.R.S.
(1898 - 1980)

Mainly on history of science

Deposited in the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford

Compiled by: Jeannine Alton
Julia Latham-Jackson

1981

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INTRODUCTION

PROVENANCE

The material was received from Mrs. E. Bowen (widow) and Dr. H.J.M. Bowen (son).

DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

Dr. Bowen kept almost no records of his scientific work in the field of photochemistry, though see the reprints in A.17. The surviving documents, other than biographical, relate mainly to his interests in the history of science, and of Oxford University and City.

Section A contains mainly personal material, including an autobiographical account of Bowen's childhood, service in the First World War and subsequent career to 1929 (see A.3); Section B consists of drafts and background material relating to Bowen's keen interest in the history of science, including some interesting reminiscences of Oxford chemistry between the First and Second World Wars.

LOCATION OF FURTHER MATERIAL

A copy of Bowen's history of University College, Oxford (of which he was a Fellow from 1922), is held in the College Library.

SUMMARY OF CAREER

b. 1898	Parish of St. John in Bedwardine, Worcester
Educated	Worcester Royal Grammar School
1915 - 1916	Balliol College, Oxford
1917 - 1919	Lieutenant, No. 13 Siege Battery, R.G.A.
1919 - 1920	Balliol College, Oxford
1921	Lecturer, University College, Oxford
1922 - 1965	Fellow, University College, Oxford
1924	Married Edith Moule
1935	Fellow of the Royal Society
1938 - 1952	Demonstrator in Chemistry, Oxford University
1952 - 1965	Aldrichian Praelector in Chemistry, Oxford University
1963	Davy Medal (Royal Society)
1965	Honorary Fellow, University College, Oxford

Biographical and autobiographical

A.11-A.16 Personal correspondence, 1931-80.

Mainly letters of thanks for hospitality, gifts of specimens, lectures, letters of congratulation, etc. The correspondence is arranged in chronological order and indexed, except in the case of first name or illegible signatures.

A.11 1931, 1936-37

A.12 1942-44, 1946-48

A.13 1952-53, 1956-57, 1959

A.14 1960, 1962-63, 1967, 1969

A.15 1970-72, 1974-75

A.16 1980, n.d.

A.17 Large envelope containing a set (incomplete) of reprints of Bowen's publications in the field of photochemistry, 1921-63.

There is a bibliography of Bowen's publications in A.2.

SECTION B HISTORICAL WRITINGS B.1 - B.29

B.1-B.5 General History of Science

B.1 Ms. draft on the history of atomic and molecular concepts
in chemistry.

12 pp., n.d.

B.2 'Notes on the concepts of the Electron, Atom, Molecule, etc.'

Envelope containing 3 sets of ms. notes, all undated.

B.3 'The Progress of Photochemistry'

Ms. draft, n.d.

B.4 'Notes on early spectroscopy'

4 pp. ms., n.d.

B.5 'The Beginning of the Royal Society', by M. Purver and
E. J. Bowen.

Pamphlet, published by the Clarendon Press, 1960.

Folder also includes photocopy of ms. poem entitled 'Who founded
the R.S.?'

B.6-B.17 History of Science at Oxford University

B.6 'Science and Scientists at Oxford'

Ms. draft, variously paginated, tracing the history of
Oxford science from the thirteenth century.

B.7 Ms. notes and jottings mainly re history of Oxford science.

B.8 'Oxford Physical Science from 1850'

Photocopy of 13 pp. typescript, n.d.

B.9 'Chemistry at Oxford'

27 pp. typescript, with some ms. corrections, 1969.

A few loose papers were found tucked inside the front cover of
the typescript and these have been removed to a separate folder
for safe keeping (see B.10 below).

Historical writings

- B.10 Miscellaneous papers originally kept with B.9. They include:
- 1 p. ms. notes by Bowen.
 - Summaries of careers of 2 Oxford scientists.
 - Brief correspondence, 1934.
 - Copy of agreement with D. Van Nostrand Company Limited, 8 February 1967, for publication of a book by Bowen entitled 'Luminescence in Chemistry'.
 - Photocopies of pages 46, 48, 50, 52 of the ms. draft of B.9
- B.11 'The Alembic Club. The First Fifty Years'
- Spiral-bound ms. incorporating photocopies of some original documents relating to the Oxford University Alembic Club, n.d.
- B.12 Ms. notes, drafts and printed matter re the Alembic Club assembled by Bowen. Includes a note of material relating to the Alembic Club held by the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford.
- B.13 'Oxford University Chemical Club'
- 7 pp. ms., n.d.
 - A photocopy of a humorous dinner menu of the club is also included in the folder.
- B.14 'The Balliol-Trinity Laboratories, Oxford 1853-1940', by E.J. Bowen.
- Offprint from Notes and Records of the Royal Society, 25, 2, 1970.
- B.15 Letters of thanks from colleagues on receipt of copies of B.14. Some of these contain interesting reminiscences of the Laboratories. The correspondence is arranged in alphabetical order and indexed.
- B.16 Duplicated typescript draft of B.14, 17 October 1969.
- Folder also includes 1 p. ms. notes and a photograph.
- B.17 Duplicated typescript draft with ms. annotations re Oxford science in the seventeenth century. The typescript is paginated from 17 to 25.

Historical writings

- B.18-B.28 Biographical Writings
 Mainly of Oxford scientists.
- B.18 'Robert Boyle, 1627-1691'
 21 pp. ms. draft, n.d.
- B.19 'Dalziel Llewellyn Hammick, 1887-1966'
 Offprint from Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society, 13, 1967.
- Folder also includes typescript and printed obituary notices of Hammick and letters from friends and colleagues, some containing additional comments and reminiscences.
- B.20 'Sir Harold Hartley'
 Ms. draft and proof of obituary by Bowen.
- Folder also includes copies of printed obituaries by others.
- B.21 'Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, 1897-1967'
 Typescript draft and offprint of obituary by E. J. Bowen published in Chemistry in Britain, 3, 12, 1967.
- Additional printed matter re Hinshelwood is also included in the folder.
- B.22 Letters from colleagues commenting on Bowen's obituary of Hinshelwood.
- B.23 'Dr. Bertram Lambert'
 2 ms. drafts of obituary for publication in the Proceedings of the Chemical Society, 1963.
- Folder also includes invitation to write the obituary and correspondence with colleagues from whom Bowen sought information or advice.
- B.24 'Dr. Peter Pringsheim'
 Offprint of obituary published in Nature, 205, March 1965.

Historical writings

- B.25 Dr. A.S. Russell
Ms. drafts for obituary of Russell.
Some printed matter is also included in the folder.
- B.26 Sir Harold Thompson
4 pp. typescript biography of Thompson by Bowen.
Some printed matter is also included in the folder.
- B.27 'The Right Reverend John Wilkins, F.R.S. (1614-1672)', by
E. J. Bowen and Sir Harold Hartley.
Offprint from Notes and Records of the Royal Society,
15, 1960.
- B.28 L.A. Woodward
Typescript draft and offprint of Preface to a Festschrift
presented to Woodward on his retirement.
Folder includes invitation to Bowen to write the Preface and
misc. background material.
- B.29 Miscellaneous
'Park Town, Oxford'
Photocopy of 7 pp. ms. account of the history of Park
Town, March 1976.

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