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Second catalogue of the supplementary papers and  
correspondence of

**Sir Joseph John Thomson FRS**

(1856 - 1940)

by Simon Coleman and Peter Harper

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physicist

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## INTRODUCTION

### PROVENANCE

The papers were received for cataloguing from Mr David Paget Thomson, grandson, in 2002.

### OUTLINE OF THE CAREER OF SIR JOSEPH JOHN THOMSON

For an outline of Thomson's career see NCUACS catalogue NCUACS 91/4/00.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PAPERS

The papers cover the period 1882-1949. They should be consulted in conjunction with those described in NCUACS catalogue 91/4/00.

Section A, Biographical, includes letters from the King George VI's Private Secretary informing Thomson of the King's wish to award him the Order of Merit. There are also press cuttings relating to Thomson and material concerning dinners and functions at Cambridge University.

Section B, Family and personal, chiefly consists of correspondence sent to Thomson's wife, Rose, and to his brother Frederick. The former group of correspondence dates from 1882 to 1949 and comprises letters to Lady Thomson from various members of her family, including her twin sister, Violet, and letters of thanks for hospitality at Trinity College from visiting academics, scientists, politicians and others. The letters to Frederick Thomson are from Lady Thomson and date from 1906 to 1914. There are a few letters, 1903, from Thomson to his wife.

Section C, Correspondence, is presented in two sequences: general correspondence to Thomson dating from 1886 to 1939 and correspondence in French with foreign scientists 1898-1926. The general correspondence is from various scientists, politicians and academics, a large part of it being letters of thanks for hospitality at Trinity College. The correspondence in French, of both Thomson and his wife, is with a number of distinguished scientists, or their spouses, including Marie Curie, A.H. Becquerel and Paul Langevin.

Section D, Non-text material, has one item only: a film of Thomson delivering a lecture in 1934.

There is also an index of correspondents.

Simon Coleman  
Bath, February 2003

## Biographical

SECTION A	BIOGRAPHICAL, A.1-A.5	1904-1942, nd
A.1	Biographical notice.  Offprint of a note in French on Thomson's life and work given by M. Maurice de Broglie at session of the Académie des Sciences, 14 December 1942.	1942
A.2	Receipt of the Order of Merit.  Letters to Thomson from the King's Private Secretary informing him of the King's decision to award him the Order of Merit and re arrangements for the conferment of the award.	1912, March
A.3	Press cuttings.  Most of the articles are about Thomson, or make mention of him. Included are reviews of his book <i>Recollections and Reflections</i> , London 1936.	1930-1937
A.4-A.5	Miscellaneous material.	1904-1937, nd
A.4	Menus from Trinity College functions and material relating to memorial services at Cambridge.	1904-1937
A.5	Miscellaneous papers re events and social functions at Cambridge.	1921, nd



**Family and personal**

<b>SECTION B</b>	<b>FAMILY AND PERSONAL, B.1-B.100</b>	<b>1882-1949, nd</b>
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B.1-B.98     Rose Elizabeth Thomson

B.99, B.100     Frederick Vernon Thomson

<b>B.1-B.98</b>	<b>ROSE ELIZABETH THOMSON</b>	<b>1884-1949, nd</b>
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Correspondence to Lady Thomson. An account book in her hand is included.

B.1             Joseph John Thomson

B.2-B.52     Other family and friends

B.53-B.97     General correspondence

B.98           Account book

<b>B.1</b>	<b>Joseph John Thomson</b>	<b>1903 May-June</b>
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Letters to Lady Thomson from her husband while he was in the USA.

<b>B.2-B.52</b>	<b>Other family and friends</b>	<b>1884-1949, nd</b>
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Correspondence to Lady Thomson arranged chronologically.

B.2             1882-1889.

Included are letters from James Paget to 'Lydia'.

<b>B.3-B.27</b>	<b>Letters from Violet ('Vie') Roy Batty.</b>	<b>1896-1924, nd</b>
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Violet was Lady Thomson's twin sister.

B.3-B.10       1896 April-July.

8 folders.



**Family and personal**

B.11-B.16	1898.  Included at B.16 is a letter from 'Agnes'.  6 folders.
B.17	1903, 1907.
B.18	1908.
B.19	1909.  Included are two photographs inscribed on back in [?Violet's] hand.
B.20	1912, 1914.
B.21	1915.
B.22	1916, 1917.  Included is a letter to Lady Thomson's daughter, Joan.
B.23	1918.
B.24	1919. Included is a letter to Lady Thomson's daughter, Joan.
B.25	1921-1923.

**Family and personal**

B.26	1924.	
B.27	Undated.	
B.28-B.29	Letters of condolence on Violet's death.  2 folders.	1924
B.30	1898.	
B.31-B.33	Letters from C. Maud Gadow.  Maud Gadow was Lady Thomson's sister.  Some letters are addressed to Lady Thomson and her sister Violet ('Vie').	1898-1908
B.31	1898-1899.  Includes a photograph [?of Maud].	
B.32	1908.	
B.33	1912, 1931, 1942.	
B.34	1900, 1905.	
B.35-B.36	Letters from Frederick Thomson.  F.V. Thomson was Lady Thomson's brother-in-law.	1906-1912
B.35	1906-1909.	

**Family and personal**

B.36	1910, 1912.	
B.37	1908.	
B.38-B.41	Letters from James Batty.  J.H. Batty was Lady Thomson's brother-in-law. He married her twin sister Violet in 1902.	1908-1942, nd
B.38-B.39	1908, 1924-1926.  2 folders.	
B.40	1927-1930.	
B.41	1935, 1942, nd.	
B.42-B.44	1909-1921.  Included at B.44 is a letter to Thomson from Henry L. Paget, Bishop of Chester.  3 folders.	
B.45-B.48	1922-1935.  4 folders.	
B.49-B.52	1936-1949, nd.  Included at B.50 are letters of condolence on the death of Lady Thomson's daughter-in-law, Kathleen.	
B.53-B.97	<b>General correspondence</b>  Chiefly letters of thanks for hospitality provided at Trinity College. The correspondents include scientists, academics, public figures and a few members of Lady	<b>1891-1949, nd</b>



**Family and personal**

Thomson's family.

B.53-B.56

1891-1923.

Included are letters by Louis de Broglie (B.53), Ernest Rutherford (B.53), A.E. Housman (B.54) and C.G. Barkla (B.55).

4 folders.

B.57-B.61

1924-1926.

Included are letters by F.A. Lindemann (B.58), A.J. Balfour (B.58, B.59), A.E. Housman (B.58, B.59), 4th Baron Rayleigh (B.58, B.61) and Stanley Baldwin (B.59).

5 folders.

B.62-B.65

1927-1929.

Included is a letter by Louis de Broglie (B.63).

4 folders.

B.66-B.73

1930-1932.

Included are letters from Stanley Baldwin (B.67), 4th Baron Rayleigh (B.67), Max Planck (B.67, B.70), Sir J.H. Jeans (B.71), Sir W.H. Bragg (B.73), A.E. Housman (B.73) and A.O. Rankine (B.73).

8 folders.

B.74-B.81

1933-1934.

Included are letters from Sir B.H. Liddell Hart (B.74), A.E. Housman (B.76, B.81), Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (B.77), 3rd Earl of Leicester (B.81) and Ernest de Selincourt (B.81).

8 folders.

**Family and personal**

B.82-B.88	1935-1936.  Included are letters from Walter de la Mare (B.82) and A.E. Housman (B.86).  7 folders.	
B.89-B.93	1937-1939.  Included are letters from Arthur Quiller-Couch (B.90), and General (later Field Marshall) A.P. Wavell (B.93).  5 folders.	
B.94-B.97	1940-1942, 1949, nd.  Included are letters from Sir W.L. and Lady Bragg (B.96). Included also at B.95 is a 4pp draft, in Lady Thomson's hand, of a speech on the history of Trinity College.  4 folders.	
B.98	<b>Pocket account book</b>  In Lady Thomson's hand.	<b>1891-1902</b>
B.99-B100	<b>FREDERICK VERNON THOMSON</b>  Frederick Thomson was J.J. Thomson's younger brother.  Letters to Frederick from Lady Thomson.	<b>1906-1914, nd</b>
B.99	1906-1908.	
B.100	1913, 1914, nd.	

**Correspondence**

<b>SECTION C</b>	<b>CORRESPONDENCE, C.1-C.22</b>	<b>1886-1930, nd</b>
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C.1-C.17 General correspondence

C.18-C.22 Letters from foreign scientists

<b>C.1-C.17</b>	<b>General correspondence</b>	<b>1886-1930, nd.</b>
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Letters to Sir Joseph Thomson from various individuals, including friends, fellow scientists, academics, public figures and, occasionally family members. Many are letters of thanks for hospitality provided at Trinity College; some concern Trinity College business and matters connected with the scientific community. A few related papers are included.

<b>C.1</b>	<b>1886-1910.</b>
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Included are letters from 3rd Baron Rayleigh, J.H. Poynting, Baron Kelvin of Largs, Sir Archibald Geikie and Sir William Crookes; and a manuscript poem entitled 'Sir Joseph Thomson and the Ions', dedicated to Thomson and signed 'H.D.E. [M.R.I.]'.

<b>C2-C.6</b>	<b>1913-1920.</b>
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Included are letters from Sir Arthur Schuster (C.2-C.4), Sir J.G. Frazer (C.3, C.5), Walter Leaf (C.5), Sir F.W. Dyson (C.6) and A. Bonar Law (C.6).

5 folders.

<b>C.7-C.12</b>	<b>1921-1929.</b>
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Included are letters from R.B. Haldane (C.7, C.10), Sir T.E. Thorpe (C.7), A.J. Balfour (C.8, C.10), Stanley Baldwin (C.8), Sir Henry Newbolt (C.8) and S.A. Arrhenius (C.9).

6 folders.



### Correspondence

C.13-C.16                      1930-1939.

Included are letters from Stanley Baldwin (C.13, C.16), Sir Richard Threlfall (C.13), Sir B.H. Liddell-Hart (C.14), Neville Chamberlain (C.14), Sir Anthony Eden (C.16) and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (C.16).

4 folders.

C.17                              Nd.

Included is a letter from Sir Arthur Schuster.

C.18-C.22                      **Letters from foreign scientists**

**1898-1914,  
1926**

Written to Thomson or Lady Thomson.

Included are letters from spouses, or other family members, of some of the scientists. The correspondents include Henriette Perrin (C.18, C.19), Marie Curie (C.21), Paul Langevin (C.21, C.22). There are a few copies of replies by Thomson and Lady Thomson.

The letters are in French and were found together.

5 folders.

**Non-textual material**

<b>SECTION D</b>	<b>NON-TEXTUAL MATERIAL, D.1</b>	<b>1934</b>
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D.1	Short film of Thomson delivering a lecture, 18 October 1934.	1934
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Thomson's lecture was on electrical and engineering developments and how they can be used for social ends. Duration is about 5 minutes.

Gaumont British Industrial Film.

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