

ISADG Collection level description

Reference Code:	IE NLI GO MS 1000
Title:	Letters of Thomas Ulick Sadleir
Date of Creation:	1893-1958
Held at:	Genealogical Office, National Library of Ireland
Extent:	2 Archival Boxes
Name of Creator:	Sadleir, Thomas Ulick, (1882-1957),
Level of Description:	Collection – level (Fonds)
Language of Material:	eng

Biographical History

Thomas Ulick Sadleir was born in 1882 at the Curragh Camp, Co Kildare, where his father, Rev Franc Sadleir, was stationed as chaplain to the British Army. He attended Dover College Junior School as a day-boy from 1892-96, afterwards attending Rosall near Fleetwood in Lancashire. He then attended Trinity College Dublin, graduating with a BA and BL in 1904 and was called to the Irish bar in 1906. He worked as a barrister on the Leinster circuit for the next ten years. His work with the Office of the Ulster King of Arms at Dublin Castle commenced in an informal way whilst he was still a student in the early part of the century, and by 1913 he was working there on a daily basis. In 1915 he was appointed registrar of the Order of St. Patrick at the Office of Arms, becoming Deputy Ulster in 1921 after the tragic death of the then deputy George Burtchaell. Wilkinson as Ulster King of Arms 1908-1940 was absent from the office for much of this period, travelling the world with the famous dolls house he created, which meant that certainly from 1921 on, Sadleir ran the Office of the Ulster King of Arms in Dublin Castle on a day to day basis. Dublin Castle was the home of British Administration in Ireland until 1922 and the Office of Arms was the only Office to remain under British control until 1943. From 1940 (after the death of Wilkinson) to 1943 (when the office came under Irish control) Sadleir continued his work in the office, despite an uncertain future and resigned his position in 1943 although he had been offered a role in the office when it transferred to Irish control. Sadleir continued to work on arrears at the office at the time of the transfer, and later on secured a post in the library at Kings Inns, where he worked until his death in 1957.

Archival History

Material was deposited at the Office of the Chief Herald, National Library of Ireland, in 2001 by Randal Sadleir, son of Thomas Ulick Sadleir, and further material was deposited at a later date.

Scope and Content

The vast majority of this collection is in letter format and is either written to Thomas Sadleir, or written by him. For the period 1921-1924 there is a block of material written by Sadleir to his superior Nevile Wilkinson in his capacity as Deputy Ulster covering the period marked by the war of independence and civil war. Another substantial block of material covers Sadleir's correspondence with many from members of the Ascendancy classes with whom he was on personal terms. These letters are of a more personal nature but also refer to heraldry and genealogy. Special reference has been made to the correspondence from Lord and Lady Mayo, due to the more substantial amount of material that has survived. There are also letters from Wilkinson to Sadleir on his various travels around the world with Titania's Palace (1925-1940), and more office-related material referring to Northern Ireland addressed to Wilkinson c.1923. Other office material which has survived includes material relating to staff matters (1929-1931) in the Office of Arms and a small amount of material relating to the Knights of St. Patrick (2 items). Also included are letters addressed to Arthur Vicars (1893-1904) a former Ulster King of Arms who had encouraged Sadleir with work experience in the Office whilst a student from c.1902. Post 1943 letters tend to relate mainly to research matters. Also part of this collection contains letters written to Sadleir by John Betjeman (poet) who was a good friend of T.U. Sadleir, and contact with Trinity College Dublin in relation to various matters (4 items).

Non letter type material includes items such as school reports, copies of invitations received, research, references, and material relating to membership of various organisations such as his election to the council of the Royal Irish Academy 1925-1926

A file of newspaper clippings mainly relating to the 1943 changeover of the office from British Administration to the Irish Government is also retained.

System of Arrangement

The collection is arranged as follows; The collection is divided between letter and non letter material 1000/1 and 1000/2 respectively. However the vast majority of the collection is letter material. Within the letter series of the collection there are further sub series relating to Sadleir's time as Deputy Ulster, his more personal correspondence with members of the ascendancy when Deputy Ulster and his time post 1943, namely 1000/1/1, 1000/1/2 and 1000/1/3. Each of these sub series is further sub divided to reflect the various different individuals who were in correspondence. The series 1000/2 is very small in quantity and contains 1000/2/1 items such as school reports and references with 1000/2/2 being a file of newspaper clippings.

Access

The collection is now catalogued and will be available for consultation by XXXX

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To be discussed with donor

Further information

Findings Aids

A finding aid to this collection can be found in the manuscript reading room of the National Library of Ireland, GO MS 1000.

Publication Note

The following books have used material from the collection

Hood, Susan *Royal Roots, Republican Inheritance, the Survival of the Office of Arms* (Dublin, 2002)

Sandleir, Randal *Tanzania. Journey to Republic* (London, 1999)

Memoir, Susan Hood??

The following books provide further information on the Office of Arms and its work

Grenham, John *The Genealogical Office and its records* (Dublin, 1998)

Galloway, Peter *The most illustrious order: the order of St. Patrick and its knights* (London, 1999)

Access Points

Subject:

GO MS 1000 Thomas Ulick Sadleir

1000/1 Letters

1000/1/1 As Deputy Ulster

1000/1/1/1 Deputy Ulster to Ulster (Wilkinson)

Letters mostly written by Thomas Sadleir, (as registrar of the Office of the Ulster King of Arms, and Deputy Ulster) to Nevile Wilkinson, Ulster King of Arms (1908-1940) concerning office business. Includes letter received from 'Rialtas Sealadach na hEireann' stating that the use of envelopes headed O.H.M.S. (On His Majesty's Service) should be discontinued, 21 March 1922; letter dated 10 April 1922 concerning a visit from an official of the Public Record Office, who 'took stock of our documents' and a further letter 20 April stating 'I do not think anything will be done for some time with regard to our records being transferred, the Record Office being in the hands of 'irregulars'.' Letters mostly refer to the financial affairs of the office, heraldic matters, and the state of health of either correspondent at a given time. Sadleir also refers to 'Belfast refugees (1 May 1922). Includes letter from Burgoyne (Deputy Cork Herald) to Wilkinson. Letter of 25 June 1922 states 'a battle is raging here since 3 am, the din being too awful. It is said that the Four Courts are being attacked'.

Letter of 30 June 1922 to Lady Beatrix (wife of Sir Nevile Wilkinson) where Sadleir describes the effect of the fighting around Dublin Castle and Dame Street, and his journey to the train station at Westland Row as there were no trams running. On 27 July he speaks of private matters to Wilkinson, his engagement to Miss Kenny who is 'dangerously ill' and Major Burgoyne's future marriage to 'an R.C. widow'. Also discusses heraldic matters 'would you kindly let me know how the enclosed badge should be blazoned?' 4 Aug 1922. He again discusses private matters in October stating that his house at Celbridge was raided by 'eleven 'irregulars', who got in through a window at 1 in the morning' and how he got rid of 'an 'armed and drunken man who called himself a 'free stater' at his house in Dublin. In the same letter he discussed work matters, namely the rush of work since the end of the postal strike. Sadleir later in October, discusses his difficulty in getting to work from Celbridge due to a strike in Kingsbridge and how '13 miles is a long way to cycle daily'. He describes the killing of a local butcher and the raiding of the local telephone exchange.

Also includes letter from Ministry of Home Affairs in Northern Ireland to Wilkinson complimenting the design of the cap badge for the RUC, and letter from Hugh Kennedy, Law Officer of the Irish Provisional Government concerning the Irish Flag and the position of the Office in the 'constitution of departments' (Nov 1922). In February of 1923, his wife Norma writes to Sir Nevile of her husband's illness, and how she called to the office in the castle to bring down his letters to Celbridge so that he can deal with them, when he is better. Two weeks later Sadleir himself writes from home stating that due to the 'accumulation of work' and the need to pay clerical staff out of his salary he feels he can't go on without an increase in salary.

Various staff and financial matters are discussed over the next few months, and Wilkinson also receives a letter from a Robert Johnson, the Royal Mint in London (April 1923) concerning a Great Seal, and comments on the 'crest' for the city of Dublin. A letter from Sadleir to Wilkinson on 27 April 1923, tells him that he will find Dublin much changed and that he may be 'held up and searched on entering the castle'. Matters discussed include the Great Seal of the Free State, and the 'commandeering' of office accommodation by the Board of Works at the castle (Aug 1923)

117 items

Aug 1921; Dec 1921; Mar 1922-Feb 1924

1000/1/1/2 Ulster to Deputy Ulster

Wilkinson later writes from various locations of his travels with Titania's Palace, on matters relating to heraldry, office business, his health. Of his tour of America in 1927 he states that 'Lady Beatrix and I are quite worn out' 30 Jan 1927, and of a member of staff leaving the office he states 'I'm sorry to hear Miss Johnson is about to leave, but I didn't think so attractive a person would long remain single' 30 Jan 1927. He writes from San Francisco about Titania's Palace 'Visitors average nearly a thousand a day' and how he dined with Helen Wills a tennis champion. He writes from Buenos Aires in 1931, describing his proposed travels across the Andes to Chile, and how the railway ascends to 12,000 feet. Of Santiago he writes how it is more beautifully situated than Buenos Aires, but there is 'very poor architecture' and the streets are 'dreadfully noisy'. In November 1932 he writes 'I see a Mr Buckley has been chosen [for] Governor General...He lives near you I fancy, perhaps supplies your groceries'.

16 items

Feb 1925-Feb 1940

1000/1/1/3 College of Arms

Letters mainly concern Sadleir's proposed appointment to the College of Arms in London, and difficulties with same. Butler, Windsor Herald, College of Arms, London, states 12 April 1943 'I think there will be little doubt that the proposed genealogical bureau will peter out and that the work will gradually drift here, that is to you.' Anthony Wagner, College of Arms, London states Aug 1943 'I am sorry to see that they propose to go on issuing patents from Dublin'. Later letters concern outstanding Office of the Ulster King of Arms heraldic matters. Wollaston states in 1946 that 'the right of MacLysaght to issue patents was difficult, but it was deemed more difficult to dispute legally'.

20 items

Dec 1909; June 1916:Oct 1930;Feb 1941-Jan 1951

1000/1/1/4 Staff

Letters relating to staff matters at the Office of Arms

7 items

Oct 1929-Aug 1931

1000/1/1/5 Knights of St. Patrick

Material relating to Knights of St.Patrick

2 items

May 1932;1942

1000/1/1/6 Northern Ireland

Letters referring to matters of protocol and Northern Ireland to Nevile Wilkinson

from the Home Office, Whitehall, London and Commander Oscar Henderson,
Governor's Office, Belfast.

4 items

Jan 1924-Oct 1924

1000/1/1/7

Vicars

Letters addressed to Arthur Vicars (Ulster King of Arms 1893-1908) from Lord Drogheda, Duke of Leinster and Lord Walter Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald berates Vicars for his failure to issue a notice for a Naas meeting of the Kildare Archaeological Society 'you are hopeless...if your heart is not in the duties of our Hon. Secretary I wish to goodness you would resign the post'.

7 items

May 1893-July 1904

1000/1/2

Correspondence with others

Letters from Mahaffey (Provost of Trinity College Dublin), Lord Belmore, Lord and Lady Leconfield, Archbishop of Dublin, Lord Walter Fitzgerald, Lord Londonderry, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Iveagh, Marquess Headfort, Lord Inchiquin, Lord Antrim, H. Montgomery Hyde, Earl of Mayo

1000/1/2/1

Mayo

Letters from Earl of Mayo, (Sir Dermot Robert Wyndham Bourke) and Lady Mayo to Sadleir. Letters refer to personal family information, but also to the Kildare Archaeological Society, various antiquarian matters, and news referring to big houses in the area. Geraldine Mayo requests Sadleir's help in relation to the case of 'Misses O'Dell' who sold their Guinness shares to a 'friend' as Guinness was about to break. Lady Mayo thinks that the ladies are starving, and asks Sadleir to take a Waterford glass bowl that they possess and sell it as they are proud. In July 1919, Lady Mayo writes from London how she hears bad accounts of 'employers locking out their labourers in Kildare'. In 1921 they request the pleasure of the company of Sadleir at their home in Palmerstown, Straffan, but they state that their motor is off duty 'by order of the IRA' and how on the previous Saturday, 125 men and horses 'billeted themselves in the farm' and '11 men established themselves in the house' with the conclusion that 'it is a nuisance from every point of view'. Letters are also written concerning the death of Sadleir's mother and his engagement to Ms. Norma Kenny. In July 1922 (after the bombing of the Four Courts and Civil war) Geraldine Mayo writes 'I feel so worried at hearing nothing from Palmerstown. I trust it is not in ashes.' She also writes of architectural matters, about how Sir [L]edwine before leaving Ballyfa[ir] at the Curragh - has taken out the Mahogany doors and the beautiful chimney pieces and had put in common things in their place. She also mentions the destruction of Woodstook [Co. Galway] and 'what ruffians there are in the world'. She later May 5 (year not given) refers to Weavers Hall, Dublin and how the owner Mrs Swan may have to strip it. 'She has been offered £500 or £800 for the lead statue of George II'. On New Years Eve 1930 Geraldine Mayo writes that electric light is being put in at Palmerstown. In later years after the death of her husband she discusses bookplates with Sadleir.

c. 22 items

Nov 1916-Jan 1939

1000/1/2/2

Others

Letters contain some personal references but also relate to matters of heraldry, genealogy and research. Arthur Moore writes from the front in 1916, 'we have been having a quiet time of it during the past 10 days or so although the Huns are only 100 yards away on our bit of front'. Harry Eve writes in 1918 concerning the collection of materials for a history of his late son's regiment, and requests Sadleir's assistance stating that Sir Robert Baden Powell had forwarded him a letter of Sadleir's. Lord and Lady Leconfield write concerning books and the Archbishop of Dublin writes looking for a book that will give the pedigree of the Fitzmaurices of Duagh, Co. Kerry. Walter Fitzgerald writes from Kilkea Castle, commiserating with Sadleir on the 'likely abolition of Ulster's Office (1922) and how the death of his nephew [Maurice 6th Duke of Leinster] creates a family crisis as 'his successor is an out and out blackguard'. Lord Londonderry writes concerning arms and bookplates. In 1928 he writes that he wants to trace Walter, first earl of Ulster, and how 'it is no real importance as I am only using it in rather a foolish fairy tale for my children'. Headfort [Geoffrey Thomas, 4th Marquess] writes in 1936 thanking Sadleir for the coat of arms. A number of letters exist from H. Montgomery Hyde (author, politician and lawyer), who writes (1933-1934) that Lady Londonderry would very much like to give the teapot to Lord Londonderry for his birthday 'if you are willing to let it go. Of course she says she is very hard up at present, but if you could give her an idea of what you would be prepared to take I am sure she would be reasonable'.

Also includes some undated letters.

c. 69 items

1903-[1936]

1000/1/2/4

Betjeman

Letters from John Betjeman, some as United Kingdom representative to Eire, to Sadleir, thanking him for material he has sent. Betjeman informs Sadleir that he has put in word in for the continuation of the Office, by word of mouth only Aug 1941. In 1946 he writes that he is trying to make a living by writing.

3 items

1941;1946

1000/1/2/5

Trinity

Letters from the Vice Chancellor and Provost of Trinity College Dublin concerning Sadleir's prospects and publications

4 items

1929;1936;1944

1000/1/3

Letters written to Sadleir

1000/1/3/1

Includes letters from the United Kingdom representative to Eire and the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, concerning the Order of St. Patrick; letters relating to attempts to secure employment/projects, financial/pension matters; letter from 10 Downing Street awarding him a civil list pension; letters from the Home

Office concerning possible appointment to the College of Heralds in London; letter from PRONI after the death of Sadleir concerning his collection of papers and books
c. 21 items 1928-1948;1958

1000/1/3/2

Letters are less personal and refer mainly to research matters. Includes a letter from Desmond Guinness writing from Carton, Maynooth, soon after Sadleir's death concerning an article he (Sadleir) had written and also a letter from Sister Bertrand in 1949 discussing research matters and recent publications

c. 24 items 1943-1958

1000/2 Non Letter material

1000/2/1

File contains school reports for the years 1896, 1898 (age 13.5) insurance details, letter in relation to pension received by Sadleir, invitations to meetings, a letter from a young Tom to [Harold] (his brother), a letter from Franc Sadleir to his mother 1853. Also contains manuscript items, and research items. Letter from Tom to his wife Norma who is on the Riveria for health reasons

Various invitations, pieces of research

References for Sadleir from Dudley Westropp, former Keeper of National Museum, and from R.I. Best, President of R.I.A..

Election of Sadleir as Vice President of Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 1942, and election to The Council of RIA 1925-26

Copy of letter from Sadleir offering himself as candidate as Ulster King of Arms on death of Wilkinson.

(no. of items in total to be supplied)

1000/2/2 File of Newspaper Clippings

Clippings mainly relating to the Office of the Ulster King of Arms, particularly c. 1943 and the transfer of the Office to the Irish Government items

