# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

Kenneth King Munsie Leys (1876–1950) was both in Scotland. He had an older brother, Norman (born 1875), and his mother died about a month after he was born. Leys was educated at the University of Glasgow, and then read History at Merton College Oxford, getting a First in 1903. After a short time working as a Tutor at Isleworth Training College, he returned to Glasgow as a Lecturer, before being elected a History Fellow at University College in December 1908.

Leys did not hold many College offices: he was Junior Dean from 1912–15 and again for a few months in 1920. He was also Dean of the Hall from 1919–20. He was absent on war service from 1915–18. Like many Oxford academics of his time, Leys was intensely self-critical, and published nothing, devoting himself instead to teaching and lecturing. To judge from his lectures and notes below, Leys specialised in British political history and the history of Ireland in the later 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some of the material in **UC:S29/C1** below shows also that he had several friends in Ireland, and took a keen interest in events there during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Apart from his work, Leys was also a keen mountaineer, regularly visiting the Alps and the Lake District.

In 1916 Leys married Margaret Hayes Robinson, History Tutor of Somerville College, and they had a daughter, Mary Wade Leys. Sadly, Margaret Leys was killed in a street accident in 1930. In 1933 Leys then married Agnes Sandys, History Tutor of St. Hilda's College.

Leys was due to retire in March 1940, but owing to the war, his post was extended until the end of Hilary Term 1942. He was elected an Emeritus Fellow on the determination of his Fellowship. In 1940, Leys had taken holy orders, and was offered the College living of Melsonby in 1941, but declined it on the grounds that it would be too demanding for him. On his retirement however, Leys did accept the small living of Isel, near Cockermouth, in Cumberland. He died there in 1950.

These papers were given to the archives in September 1995. They had evidently been collected and preserved by his second wife Agnes. Most of the papers fall into three main groups, as follows:

- (1) Letters written by Leys, which were given to Agnes Leys by his friends in response to a request made by her after her husband's death to send her any letters from Leys which they could find. In particular, there are a great many letters to Sir Maurice Powicke (whom Leys knew as "Freddy"). Conversely, not many letters written to Leys are preserved in the collection.
- (2) Letters of condolence written to Agnes Leys after her husband's death.
- (3) Notes for lectures delivered by Leys.

There are obituaries for Leys in *UCR* 1949/50 pp. 4, 8 and 25, and in *The Times* of 22 June 1950.

Catalogued in October 2021.



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

#### UC:S29/C1 - LETTERS TO KENNETH LEYS

#### UC:S29/C1/1

# **August 1896 & February 1898–March 1899**

22 letters to Leys from his aunt Agatha, some of which are addressed jointly to him and his older brother Norman. These contain news of relatives and family friends, and advice for Leys in his later life.

UC:S29/C1/2 October 1902–October 1905

9 letters to Leys from his aunt Eliza. These contain news of relatives and family friends.

#### UC:S29/C1/3

# September 1903–February 1904

11 Letters to Leys from "Madge". The identity of "Madge" is uncertain, but, to judge from **UC:S29/C1/2** above, she might have been the sister of John Lochhead. She wrote to Leys about his relatives and he knew several of her relatives. Her family used to live at Altafearn, Kames, but they sold up in September 1903.

UC:S29/C1/4 3 Sep 1906

Letter to Leys from K. T. Frost (address, "In the Persian Gulf near Bushire"). Frost describes his adventures in the Middle East. Kingdon Tregosse Frost (1877–1914), who studied Classics at Brasenose, overlapped with Leys at Isleworth Training College in 1904. He became an archaeologist, and in 1905–8 was working for the Ministry of Education in the Middle East. He was killed in the First World War.

UC:S29/C1/5 n.d. (1918?)

Two copies of a typescript article or lecture about whether people in Ireland should support the First World War. The piece is undated, but allusions in it suggest that it dates from 1918. It was almost certainly not written by Leys, but presumably sent to him for interest.

UC:S29/C1/6 n.d. (1918?)

Typescript of a speech or memorandum on the state of Ireland at the end of the First World War. As with **UC:S29/C1/5**, this is almost certainly not by Leys, but sent to him for interest.

UC:S29/C1/7 2 October 1918

Typewritten letter, unsigned (1 page), to Leys from Gilbert Murray (address, Board of Education). Murray discusses the problems about introducing conscription.

UC:S29/C1/8 13 July 1920 and n.d.

Two letters to Leys from "Æ", the pen name of the Irish writer George William Russell (1867–1935), address 84 Merrion Square. They discuss mutual friends, politics and co-operative ventures. Æ, like Leys, was friendly with Horace Plunkett.



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

UC:S29/C1/9 15 Oct 1920

Typed copy of letter to Leys from an unnamed correspondent (address, 105 Mount Street, London, W.1). The writer is delivering some speeches, and wants to visit Leys to talk to him beforehand, and asks Leys to give him some help with the historical background.

#### UC:S29/C1/10

#### 8 December 1920 & 22 March 1921

Two letters to Kenneth Leys from Horace Plunkett (matr. 1873; respectively addressed, The Plunket House, 84 Merrion Square, Dublin, and on boat S. S. Ballie). Leys evidently was involved in Plunkett's charitable work, and the letters discuss this.

UC:S29/C1/11 27 April 1938

Letter addressed from The Plunkett House, 84 Merrion Square, Dublin to an unnamed addressee to Leys. After jokingly abusing Leys for not sending them any letters, the writer reports on the current state of Plunkett House, and how much it has changed.

UC:S29/C1/12 26 April 1941

Letter (2 sheets) to Leys from T. E. Carron (address, Courar [?] View, Pennington, near Ulverton). Carron discusses R. C. Collingwood's new book (perhaps *An Essay on Metaphysics*, published in 1940), and some of Walter Scott's novels.

# UC:S29/C2 - LETTERS WRITTEN BY KENNETH LEYS TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY, COLLECTED AFTER HIS DEATH

As stated in the introduction, after her husband's death Agnes Leys asked several of his friends to send her such letters from Leys as they had, and this is the result. Leys was neither thorough nor consistent in dating his letters; not infrequently his correspondence (most notably Maurice Powicke) added dates of their own to them.

UC:S29/C2/1 1902–1912

57 letters from Leys to Sir Maurice Powicke. Frederick Maurice Powicke (1879–1963), who in later years tended to use his second name, came to know Leys when they were undergraduates together at Oxford (Powicke was at Balliol). From 1905–6 he was Assistant Lecturer at the University of Liverpool, and then Assistant Lecturer at Manchester in 1906–8. In 1908 he was appointed a Prize Fellow at Merton College. In 1909–19 he was Professor of Modern History at Queen's University, Belfast, in 1919–28 Professor of Medieval History at Manchester, and finally in 1928–47 Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. His wife Susan was the sister of A. D. ("Sandie") Lindsay (matr. Univ. 1898; later Master of Balliol 1924–49), both of whom are mentioned regularly in the letters.

The letters to Powicke form the largest collection of letters from Leys to one correspondent, and reflect the closeness of their friendship in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Leys usually addresses Powicke as "Freddy" or "Dear Boy". Subjects discussed in their letters include regular expressions of



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

friendship, historical subjects, academic activities such as giving lectures, Leys's comments on some of Powicke's publications and theology. The letters also discuss both men's career prospects (which in Leys's case are mostly concerned with his unhappiness as a lecturer at Glasgow, and his attempts to find a post at Oxford). They show that, before Leys was elected at University College, he had applied unsuccessfully for a Fellowship at Lincoln College. They also show that, as he was applying to University College, he was offered a post at St. Andrews, but vastly preferred the former. In large part, he has little to say about University College, apart from general comments on the abilities of his pupils (no. 50), and a letter of 1910 with barbed comments about A. S. L. Farquharson (no. 54). Most of the letters bear at least approximate dates added by Powicke, and some of them are annotated by Powicke to explain allusions.

UC:S29/C2/2 September–October 1906

Typed transcripts, annotated by Agnes Leys (and perhaps prepared by her) of extracts from two letters from Leys to F. M. Powicke. The originals are nos. 22 and 25 in **UC:S29/C2/1** above.

UC:S29/C2/3 1901–1934 & 1951

Envelope addressed to Agnes Leys on which she has written "Lenwood Letters". This encloses seven letters from Leys to Frank Lenwood and his wife Gertrude, which have been sent to Agnes Levs by Gertrude Lenwood. Some dates have been added, presumably by the Lenwoods. Frank Lenwood (1874-1934) was educated at Corpus Christi and Mansfield College, and became a missionary travelling in Australia and Polynesia; some of his papers are preserved at the School of African and Oriental Studies in London. The letters, some of which are annotated (by Lenwood?) to explain certain allusions, discuss religion and mutual friends, and the earliest ones include reflections on undergraduate life. Letter 5, from 1910, includes Leys's (unimpressed) reflections on academic life at University College, as well as gossip about his friend Robert Kenneth Evans (matr. Merton 1903), nicknamed "Jevons", Robert Parsons (F. 1907-11), and Sir Maurice Powick, with praise for William Temple, future Archbishop of Canterbury. The last letter is one of consolation to Gertrude Lenwood on her husband's death. [9 items1

UC:S29/C2/4 1903 & 1942

Typed transcripts of, three letters from Leys to Jack Lochhead (with the originals of the two letters from 1903). The 1903 letters respectively discuss theology, and a vivid dream which Leys had of Lochhead, and in the 1942 letter Leys talks about his retirement from University College, and his plans for the future.

UC:S29/C2/5 1906–1912 & 1950

Envelope addressed to Agnes Leys on which she has written "T. E. Harvey & K's letters to him". It contains a letter from Thomas Edmund Harvey (1875–1955) to Agnes Leys enclosing eight letters written to him by Leys, mainly



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

between 1906 and 1912. Harvey was a social reformer and later MP; he was Warden of Toynbee Hall during the time that most of these letters were written.

Many of the letters merely thank Harvey for the gift of various books written by him, but some correspondence of 1912 centres on the efforts of Leys's brother Norman to support some members of the native population in British East Africa, and the trouble into which this is getting him. In one letter, Leys encloses a letter from his brother. [9 items]

UC:S29/C2/6 1931–1952

Envelope addressed to Agnes Leys on which she has written "Re. Ken". It contains a letter to Mrs. Leys from Edward Casson enclosing three letters to him from Leys dated 1931, 1938 and 1948. These mainly discuss the books of his poems which Casson regularly sent Leys.

UC:S29/C2/7 1937–1951

Envelope addressed to Agnes Leys, which includes 21 letters (some of them only fragmentary) from Leys to George Eugene Fasnacht (matr. 1919), and two letters to Leys from Fasnacht. Fasnacht (1897–1956) read History at University College, being taught by Leys, and went on to lecture in History at Sheffield and Leicester. He then returned to Oxford, becoming from 1937 a lecturer in History at University College. He was also attached to Nuffield College. His main area of interest was the work of Lord Acton, which culminated in his book *Acton's Political Philosophy: an Analysis* (London, 1952).

The letters discuss Fasnacht's return to Oxford, and Leys's advice on his career, and his frequent efforts to help him find work (which included persuading Sir William Beveridge (F. 1937–45) to write testimonials for him), and the prospect of work for Fasnacht at University College after the resignation of David Lindsay Keir as a Fellow in 1939. The later letters discuss Fasnacht's book on Acton, which Leys evidently read in draft. Most of the letters have been dated, if only approximately, by Fasnacht. The envelope also includes another print of the photograph of Leys at UC:S29/P1/5 below. [25 items]

UC:S29/C2/8 1948–1949

Bundle of 13 letters from Leys to John Wild (F. 1933–45; M. 1945–51), one of which includes a postscript from Agnes Leys. Subjects include theology, reflections on College life, advice for how to encourage undergraduates to engage in public work, contributions to the College's Memorial Fund, plans for the unveiling of the Second World War Memorial and who might dedicate it, plans to move the Shelley Memorial to the Master's Garden, and memories of Robert Parsons (F. 1907–11) and Eric Hamilton (matr. 1909). [13 items]

# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

#### UC:S29/C3 - LETTERS WRITTEN TO AGNES LEYS AFTER HER HUSBAND'S DEATH

UC:S29/C3/1 June–August 1950

Envelope addressed to Agnes Leys, and inscribed by her "Answered about K." This contains a collection of letters addressed to Agnes Leys on the death of her husband. Correspondents include former relatives, friends, former pupils and colleagues (including members of St. Hilda's College), and parishioners from Isel, as well as Fred Bickerton (Head Porter 1918–50), David Cox (F. 1939–80), David Lindsay Keir (F. 1921–39), Susan Powick (wife of Maurice), G. H. Stevenson (F. 1906–49), R. H. Tawney, J. M. Thompson (History Fellow of Magdalen College), and John Wild (M. 1945–51).

UC:S29/C3/2 June–December 1950

Envelope addressed to Kenneth Leys, and inscribed by Agnes Leys "About K". This contains more letters written to Agnes Leys on the death of her husband, as well as a memoir of Leys written by Agnes Leys herself. Correspondents include former relatives, friends, former pupils and colleagues, and parishioners from Isel, as well as Jean Maud (wife of John Maud).

UC:S29/C3/3 June–August 1950

Bundle of letters of condolence written to Agnes Leys after Leys's death, written by friends and relatives.

UC:S29/C3/4 20 July & 19 August 1950

Two letters to Agnes Leys from C. J. A. Fyfe (address on the first, Calder Cottage, Menlove Avenue, Liverpool). Fyfe was a relative of Leys, and writes to send his sympathies on Leys's death, and to remember their early years together.

UC:S29/C3/5 9 August & 23 November 1951

Two letters to Agnes Leys from Charles Overy (address, The Vicarage, North Hibley, Dunsley, Glos.). Overy is trying to find memorabilia and photographs of Leys from among his papers.

#### UC:S29/MS1 - NOTES FOR LECTURES GIVEN BY LEYS

Leys's practice in writing up his lecture notes seems to have been to start off with a basis text, which he then amended and added to more or less every time that he gave them again, so that almost all of these lecture series are a mixture of old and new versions.

UC:S29/MS1/1 1929–41

Envelope inscribed "P. Reform Lectures 1760–1800", containing Leys's lecture notes on Parliamentary Reform. The earliest lectures in this group were delivered in 1929, with revisions and additions up to 1941.



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

UC:S29/MS1/2 1929–39

Envelope inscribed "Lect on Introduct to Party H. T. 1939", which in fact contains notes for several lectures given between 1929 and 1939 on the subject of political parties in Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

UC:S29/MS1/3 1933-40

Folder of papers inscribed on the outside "Worcester Paper on Polit. Parties 1815–48". Most of the papers are Leys's lecture notes on British political parties from 1815–48, which were first delivered in 1933, and then revised to 1939, but there is also the text of a separate lecture on this subject delivered in 1940 to the Historical Association at Worcester.

UC:S29/MS1/4 1935

Envelope inscribed "Irish Lect Anglo-Irish Relations post 1800", containing detailed notes, some of them dated to 1935, for a lecture about this subject. Leys seems to have delivered it more than once, as it has been extensively annotated.

UC:S29/MS1/5 1935-42

Envelope inscribed "Lect. Ireland 1760–1800", containing Leys's lectures on this subject, which were delivered between 1935 and 1942, and probably earlier.

UC:S29/MS1/6 1936–41

Envelope inscribed "Party Reform Lecture 1800–32", containing notes for lectures given on this subject between 1936 and 1941.

UC:S29/MS1/7 1936–41

Envelope containing lecture notes by Leys on British Parliamentary Reform, 1832–67. The notes show that they were regularly reused and revised at least between 1936 and 1941.

UC:S29/MS1/8

Notes made by Leys of an address on political theory given at Otterburn to some History students from Kong's College Newcastle, having a weekend away.

UC:S29/MS1/9

Notes made by Leys for a lecture on political theory given to the Historical Association at Worcester.

UC:S29/MS1/10 1946

Notes made by Leys for an address on the relations of youth in the church given at Lyzzick at a Deanery meeting.

# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

#### UC:S29/MS2 - HISTORY NOTES COMPILED BY LEYS

UC:S29/MS2/1 n.d. (1920s?)

Notebook inscribed on the cover "Ireland - 18<sup>th</sup> Cy". This contains notes by Leys on the history of Ireland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They appear to have been compiled by him for his own use, rather than as notes for lectures.

UC:S29/MS2/2 n.d. (1925?)

Notebook titled "Ireland 1795—", which appear to follow on from **UC:S29/MS2/1** above. The notes are undated, but enclosed among then a Bodleian book reservation slip dated to 1925.

UC:S29/MS2/3 n.d.

Envelope inscribed "Ireland 1800–50 Notes on Land &c", containing Leys's private notes on this subject.

UC:S29/MS2/4 c. 1925

Envelope inscribed "Notes on Party +c 1790–1850", containing general notes on this subject. They are undated, but folded in with them is part of a copy of the *Times Literary Supplement*, dated 11 June 1925.

UC:S29/MS2/5 c. 1926

Envelope inscribed "Reform 1760–1801", containing Leys's private notes on this subject. The notes are undated, but they include a Bodleian book reservation slip dated to 1926.

UC:S29/MS2/6 n.d.

Bundle of notes made by Leys on the political history of the USA.

UC:S29/MS2/7

Bundle of notes made by Leys on Parliamentary Reform from the 1830s to the 1880s. They appear to be more notes for Leys's use than notes for lectures.

UC:S29/MS2/8 n.d. (1920s?)

Notebook containing notes made by Leys for his own use on early 18<sup>th</sup> century English history, with loose papers on later 18<sup>th</sup> century English politics. The notes are undated, but inside the book is an envelope postmarked 1924.

UC:S29/MS2/9 n.d.

Envelope inscribed "Notes on Party Reform Post 1832", containing undated private notes by Leys on this subject.

UC:S29/MS2/10 1938

Envelope inscribed "Party Some Notes 1660–1760 1760–1792 and 1792–1860 prob. used along with lect. in H.T. 1939", containing notes by Leys on this subject, some of which are dated to 1938.



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

#### UC:S29/MS3 - PAPERS AND MEMORANDA ON LEYS'S FAMILY

UC:S29/MS3/1 18 June 1829

Letter to Mary King (address, White Vale, Glasgow) from her sister Johanna King, in which Johanna King reports on her visits to some friends.

UC:S29/MS3/2 1882

A manuscript account of Leys's mother Mary (1839–76) written by his father. On the cover is a note by Leys explaining that he found it after his father's death in November 1909.

UC:S29/MS3/3 n.d. (c. 1950?)

Note on members of the Munsie family. This shows that Mary King in **UC:S29/MS3/1** above married William Munsie in 1832. One of their daughters, Mary, was Kenneth Leys's mother. This was probably written for Agnes Leys by a Leys relative after her husband's death.

#### UC:S29/MS4 - MEMOIRS OF LEYS

UC:S29/MS4/1 n.d. (after 1950)

MS memoir of Leys's early life by an unknown writer. This writer was someone who first knew Leys when they were students together at Glasgow in 1897.

#### UC:S29/L1 - LEGAL AND FINANCIAL PAPERS CONCERNING LEYS'S FAMILY

UC:S29/L1/1 13 Aug 1874

Copy of the marriage certificate of Leys's parents, John Kirkwood Leys and Mary King Munsie.

UC:S29/L1/2 18 January 1887

Letter to Rev. P. Leys (address, 50 Kelvingrove Street, Glasgow) from an Edinburgh solicitor. Peter Leys was the grandfather of Kenneth Leys, and the letter appears to relate to information relating to the appointment of new trustees for an unspecified trust (presumably a family one).

UC:S29/L1/3 14 January 1930

Envelope addressed to Leys and inscribed by him "Copy of M's Will", containing a copy of the will of Leys's first wife Margaret.

UC:S29/L1/4 9 & 17 May 1930

Envelope addressed to Leys with "Faculty for Holywell Churchyard" inscribed on it. It contains a faculty granting Leys the exclusive right of burial in the grave of his first wife Margaret for himself and their daughter Mary.



# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

UC:S29/L1/5 July-August 1931

Envelope addressed to Leys and inscribed by him "Nicol - Jul 1931 showing my part of M's Estate & abt further investments." This relates to a trust created for Mary Leys, Leys's daughter by his first marriage.

UC:S29/L1/6 1936–43

Bundle of correspondence about Leys's creation of a trust for his daughter Mary.

**UC:S29/L1/7–10** are documents relating to the finances of Leys's uncle Robert George Munsie and Robert's sister Ann Munsie. Robert drew up a trust disposition and settlement in 1917, with codicils from 1925 and 1926, and Anne drew up a similar document in 1933. These both made bequests to Leys.

UC:S29/L1/7 1941–1943

Envelope inscribed, probably by Leys, "At A's affairs", containing correspondence about the above two trusts, as well as copies of the trust dispositions.

UC:S29/L1/8 May–June 1943

Envelope inscribed by Leys "Aunt A's Affairs", containing two letters on the subject.

UC:S29/L1/9 June 1943 & Jan 1946

Two loose letters about Anne Munsie's estate.

UC:S29/L1/10 October–December 1944

Envelope inscribed by Leys "Aunt A's Estate Lawyers' Letters", containing two letters which suggest some difficulties in settling Leys's aunt's estate.

UC:S29/L1/11 September 1951

Envelope containing letters to Agnes Leys from a firm of Glasgow solicitors, partly about the settling of Leys's estate, and the trust for his daughter, and partly supplying details about Leys's early life.

#### UC:S29/L2 - PAPERS ON OTHER TRUSTS ADMINISTERED BY LEYS

UC:S29/L2/1 12 Jan 1931

Envelope addressed to Leys with "Mrs. Toynbee" inscribed on it, containing the will and codicil of Charlotte Maria Toynbee (dated 23 February 1927 and 15 March 1929 respectively), instructions from Toynbee for her executors, and an accompanying letter from the solicitors. Leys was appointed one of her executors and trustees. Toynbee was the wife of Arnold Toynbee (1852–83), and in her widowhood became the honorary house treasurer of Lady Margaret Hall.

# UC:S29 PAPERS OF KENNETH KING MUNSIE LEYS (FELLOW 1908–42)

UC:S29/L2/2 5 August 1936

Envelope addressed to Leys inscribed "Letter August 1936, from Milne Moser etc". This contains accounts for the estate of Thomas Watters, for whom Leys was acting as an executor.

#### UC:S29/P1 - PHOTOGRAPHS OF LEYS

**UC:S29/P1/1–6** were all found in a package addressed to Mrs. Leys, sent from Navana Vandyk Ltd., a photographer based in New Bond Street. They appear to be copies of older photographs made by this firm for Agnes Leys after her husband's death.

UC:S29/P1/1-2 n.d. (c. 1914–18?)

Two prints of a photograph of Leys seated wearing military uniform. This image was presumably taken during the First World War.

Size (including mount): 205 by 255 mm.

Copyright: Navana Vandyk.

UC:S29/P1/3-4 n.d. (1910s?)

Two prints of a photograph of Leys standing in a garden. The photograph is undated, but Leys's appearance suggests a time in the 1910s.

Size (including mount): 255 by 205 mm.

Copyright: Navana Vandyk.

UC:S29/P1/5 n.d. (1940s?)

Photograph of Leys standing holding a cup of tea. The photograph is undated, but Leys's appearance suggests that it was taken towards the end of his life, in the 1940s.

Size (including mount): 255 by 205 mm.

Copyright: Navana Vandyk.

UC:S29/P1/6 n.d. (1940s?)

Photograph of Leys taken indoors. The photograph is undated, but Leys's appearance suggests that it was taken towards the end of his life, in the 1940s.

Size (including mount): 235 by 170 mm.

Copyright: Navana Vandyk.