Finding aid for Letters of British dignitaries and professionals, 1756-1951

Finding aid prepared by Onica Busuioceanu.
Descriptive Summary

Title: Letters of British dignitaries and professionals
Date (inclusive): 1756-1951
Number: 860525C
Creator/Collector: Getty Research Institute. Research Library
Physical Description: 65.0 items
Repository: The Getty Research Institute
Special Collections
1200 Getty Center Drive, Suite 1100
Los Angeles, California, 90049-1688
(310) 440-7390

Abstract: The collection, assembled by the repository, comprises 65 letters from 43 correspondents. The senders are well-known people in England, including physicians, politicians, directors of cultural institutions, and members of the peerage and the clergy. The letters cover a wide variety of subjects, ranging from professional issues and public business to social activities, private relationships, and family concerns.

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Language: Collection material is in English

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Acquisition Information
Received in several acquisitions, 1983-1990.

Processing History
Processed and cataloged by Onica Busuiocanu. The items in this collection were formerly part of the British artists letters collection (accession number 860525). They were separated when that collection was cataloged.

Scope and Content of Collection
The collection comprises 65 letters from 43 correspondents. The letters are dated between 1756 and 1951, with the bulk from the 1820s to the 1880s and the first decade of the 20th century. The senders are well-known people, such as the physician Alison, the chemist Humphry Davy, the pottery and porcelain manufacturer Herbert Minton, and directors of major cultural institutions, such as the British Museum, the London National Gallery, the Royal Society, and the Tate Gallery, as well as politicians and members of the peerage or the clergy. The letters cover a large variety of subjects ranging from professional issues and public business to social activities, private relationships and family concerns.

Among the most relevant are the letters of the physician William Pulteney Alison (3), Thomas Philip De Grey, lord lieutenant of Ireland (2), Dugald Sutherland MacColl, keeper of the Tate Gallery (2), Sir Henry Ellis, Librarian of the British Museum (7), Sir William Henry Gregory, trustee of the National Gallery (4), Sir Samuel Rush Meyrick, antiquarian and collector (1), Herbert Minton, pottery and porcelain manufacturer (1), Sir John Rothenstein, Director of the Tate Gallery (1), Sir Robert Thomas Wilson, son of Benjamin Wilson (3), and a long letter from Lady Jane Davy, socialite, to the poet Robert Pearse Gillies (1). The collection was assembled by the repository.

Arrangement note
Arranged alphabetically in one series.

Subjects - Names
Alison, William Pulteney, 1790-1859
Davy, Humphry, Sir, 1778-1829
Finding aid for Letters of British dignitaries and professionals, 1756-1951 ...
Box 1, Folder 5  Burton, Frederic William, Sir (1816-1900, Director of the London National Gallery) 1879
Scope and Content Note
Explains to an unidentified correspondent that the National Gallery does not purchase drawings - the existing ones are gifts or bequests. He has allowed a large number of students to copy Turner drawings, but he now fears that this "will only multiply forgeries and increase mannerism" (1879 Feb. 16). 4. p. on Athenaeum club letterhead.

Box 1, Folder 6  Crowe, Joseph Archer, Sir (1825-1896, diplomat and journalist) 1888
Scope and Content Note
Informs Mrs. Bronson that he will not be able to enjoy her invitation. He must leave Venice "within the next few hours" because its climate "entirely disagreed" with his boy, who is very sick (1888 Sept. 24). 3.p. on letterhead of Grand Hôtel d'Italie, Venise.

Box 1, Folder 7  Cumin, Pat[rick] (Professor (?), Glasgow) 1784
Scope and Content Note
Writes to James Chalmer, a solicitor in London, that, at his request, he met with Messrs. Trowlis (?) and Tulloch (?), who assured him that their invention was original and "absolutely different from the Logography of Mr. [Henry] Johnson, and did not interfere with his patent" of 1870. Cumin explains the differences, concluding that "no person can justly prevent them from obtaining a Patent" (Glasgow, 1784 Mar. 3). 4 p.

Box 1, Folder 8  Cuming, Patrick (1695-1776, professor, theologian, author) 1756
Scope and Content Note
"The address of the Commission of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," presented to the King by its moderator, Patrick Cuming, professor at the University of Edinburgh. It expresses the "just indignation at the triumphs of our enemies." The people of Scotland declare their confidence, ardent zeal and full loyalty to His Majesty (Edinburgh, 1756 Nov. 18). Newspaper clipping, 1756 Dec. 18.

Box 1, Folder 9  Davy, Humphrey, Sir (1778-1829, chemist) 18--
Scope and Content Note
Writes to Thomas Lawrence that "the Royal Society can not move in the award of the Kings medals till they are stamped by your genius. The 16 of Nov. is the day for the decision." He is going on a trip with Lady Davy, and will be back at the beginning of November (Oct. 4). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 10  Davy, Jane, Lady (1780-1855, socialite) 1814
Scope and Content Note
Writes to the poet Robert Pearse Gillies about his ailments and excessive sensitivity, "which is the foundation of all genius." She elaborates about melancholy, suggesting psychological, moral and physical ways to treat it. Confesses her "tender affection for a noble and adorable being," that she has "no reason to think it returned" (Pensance, 1814 July 30). 4 p.

Box 1, Folder 11  De Grey, Thomas Philip, Earl (1781-1859, Lord lieutenant of Ireland) 1842
Scope and Content Note
Writes to Martin [Shee] that Miss Kennedy wants to send a high relief in marble to the Royal Academy exhibition. It represents Donnybrook Fair, a national subject. He asks him to "say a word to the R.A. who manages the sculpture department" (Dublin Castle, 1842 May 28). 4 p.
Writes to the Earl of Mornington that he wants to make a collection of portraits of all the previous Lords lieutenants of Ireland since the Union, asking for his help to obtain duplicates or copies from their families. He would like to have the collection complete by next summer, when Her Majesty "should think fit to come over here" (Dublin, 1842 Oct. 28). 2 p.
Box 1, Folder 12  
**Delamere, Hugh Cholmondeley, Lord (1811-1887, M.P.) 1865, 1869**

**Scope and Content Note**
Writes to the cabinetmaker Sopwith that his sketch is exactly what he wanted, and asks him to make the monocleid as soon and as “nicely” as he can (1865 Jan. 3). 1 p.

Tells Sopwith that he wants the monocleid at the beginning of February, when he hopes to be established in London. Gives him the address where to send it ([1865] Jan. 9). 3 p. on emblazoned paper.

The Lord has moved to his new house, the monocleid has arrived and it is “in all respects as good as possible” ([1865] Feb. 20). 1 p.

Writes to an unidentified person that he will inform him about the Birches Hall exhibition as soon as he can (1869 Dec. 23). 1 p.

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Box 1, Folder 13  
**Devonshire, Victor Christian William Cavendish, Duke of (1868-1938, civil servant) 1901**

**Scope and Content Note**
Writes to Sir Richard Wilson(?) that he agrees with the Finance Committee's recommendation of a grant to Sir Herbert Jekyll, regarding some expenses presumably incurred during the preparations for the British Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition of 1900 (1901 Mar. 26). 3 p.

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Box 1, Folder 14  
**Ellis, Henry, Sir (1777-1869, Principal librarian of the British Museum) 1825-1862**

**Scope and Content Note**
Sends to Wedlake Brayley, at the Russell Institution, a printed thank you letter for his gift of a manuscript to the British Museum (1825 Nov. 16). 1 p.

Thanks Joshua Watson for sending "an introduction for young Robinson ... one of the most estimable young men" (1833 Aug. 7). 2 p.


Sends to Mr. Dynham his compliments along with the card for the reading room (1851 Feb. 28). 1 p.

Informs an unidentified donor that his letter and the book have arrived, but his wishes differ so entirely from the ordinary practice, that he has to wait till the Trustee's meeting and their decision (1851 June 7). 2 p.

Writes to Edward Magrath that he found among the papers he took from the Athenaeum a "proposal for educational suffrage," which he thinks he must have taken away by mistake and wants to return it (1854 July 26). 2 p.

Sends to Rev. William Brodie condolences on the death of his father, who has also been one of his oldest friends (1862 Oct. 24). 3 p.
**Box 1, Folder 15**  
*Flower, Edgar (d. 1903, chairman of Shakespeare Birthplace Trustees) 1877, 1901-1902*

**Scope and Content Note**

Writes to J. C. Parkinson, who will not come for the festivity on the 23rd, that they hope to have "an interesting gallery … and many eminent men of stage and letters." Parkinson may come later to visit "on the occasion of laying the foundation stone" (1877 Apr. 7). 4 p.

Answers to Frank Richards' desire to have his "grand picture of Hamlet placed in the Gallery of the Shakespeare Memorial." The trustees may choose to receive it on loan or as a gift. Subscriptions are also possible, and the Memorial Association would bear the expense of its transportation to Stratford (1901 June 1). 3 p.

Informs Richards that the governors of the Shakespeare Memorial will accept the painting of Hamlet if it is presented to the Memorial of Stratford-on- Avon. As he is going to London, he will see Richards at his convenience, which "may save trouble in correspondence" (1901 May 13). 3 p.

Asks Richards to choose the day and time when he could meet him (London, 1901 May 16). 1 p.

Informs Richards that "a little water color of you would be of great interest." They will also be pleased to have the "Hamlet" at Stratford for as long as it is convenient to him (1902 Mar. 12). 2 p.

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**Box 1, Folder 16**  
*Forbes-Robertson, Johnston, Sir (1853-1937, actor and artist) 1872*

**Scope and Content Note**

Thanks Miss Kortright for speaking of him to S.C. Hall so nicely. He would be "delighted to work under him." Informs her that Brown's large picture representing "Chaucer reading his poetry to Edouard III" is now in the artist's house, and he would gladly take her friend to see it (1872 Sept. 14). 2 p. on letterhead of *Art pictorial and industrial review* [where his father was the editor].

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**Box 1, Folder 17**  
*Gilmour, Robert Gordon, 1st Baronet (1857-1939) 1913*

**Scope and Content Note**

Thanks an unidentified person for the letter and the sketch of Craigmillar castle (Liberton, Midlothian, 1913 Oct. 23). 2 p.

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**Box 1, Folder 18**  
*Gregory, William Henry, Sir (1817-1829, MP, trustee of the National Gallery) 1866, 1879, 1888, undated*

**Scope and Content Note**

Asks an unidentified person to forward his mother's letter to Mr. Priestly (?) (1866 Aug. 5). 1 p.

 Writes to Sir Frederic W. Burton, Director of the National Gallery, a letter packed with information. He thinks that Burton has no more reason to come to Paris since the Duc d'Aumale has purchased Frédéric Reiset's pictures "en bloc." He will return to London by Venice, to see Layard before he departs, then will be ready to do his duty at the board of trustees. Morris Moore is in Paris, "still raging against the Nat. Gal., telling the world that our Pisani Paul Veronese is but a notorious copy." Burton should see an "early Florentine Annunciation of considerable size," that looks like Gentile Fabriano. He warns him that "a law is to be introduced imposing a duty of 25% on objects of art leaving Italy," so it would be advisable "to secure without loss of time the pictures you deem worthy of the Gallery" (Hôtel de Rome, [Paris 1879], Apr. 13). 3 p.

Returns to Mr. Story his two volumes of poetry, whose "introduction is admirable and the description of Italian scenery quite beautiful." He adds short comments on his favorite poems (1888, Feb. 1). 3 p.

Informs Parkinson, his "traveling Pal," that he has quoted in his intended speech "at considerable length" from his book (n.d.). 2 p. on paper with blind stamp of the House of Commons.
Box 1, Folder 19  Hancock, John (1808-1890, taxidermist) 1851
Scope and Content Note
Reports to unidentified person on the interior work still being done in the section of the building where Hancock’s taxidermic specimens will soon be exhibited on “tables covered with crimson cloth.” The undated letter is presumably related to the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, which included important works of British taxidermists. (Walton on Thames, [1851, Apr.]). 4 p.

Box 1, Folder 20  Holland, Henry Richard Vassall, Baron (1773-1840?) undated
Scope and Content Note
Thanks the President and the Council of the Royal Academy for their “flattering invitation,” which he “gratefully accepts.” He asks the President’s “obliging permission to send his rolling chair as he did last year” (undated). 1 p.

Box 1, Folder 21  Holmes, Charles John (1868-1936, painter, art historian, Director of the National Gallery) 1918
Scope and Content Note
Informs [Edward Marsh] about a private viewing of the new pictures at the Gallery (1918. Dec. 2(?)), 1 p. on National Gallery letterhead

Box 1, Folder 22  Kinloch, John, G. (scholar of Meigle sculptured stones) 1881
Scope and Content Note
Informs Mr. Leng that making "fresh drawings" of the Meigle sculptured stones would be most costly, while they have all been engraved in previous works, like John Stuart’s Sculptured stones of Scotland, Chalmers book, and the Pennants Tour. He gives detailed bibliographic information for all the items Leng may want, and also sends him two drawings. Hopefully this unique collection of Pictish stones will be placed in the building donated by Sir George, which cost him some 6000 Lire, and thus it will be conserved and accessible to the public. An article written by Mr. Leng would do "a lot of good" (Meigle House, 1881 Feb. 1). 7 p.

Box 1, Folder 23  Lennard, George Barrett(?) (1796-1870, descendent of Sir Thomas Barrett Lennard, 1st baronet of Belhus) 1853
Scope and Content Note
G. B. Lennard writes to the landscape painter Henry Lewes asking for information about the time and circumstances in which he had painted their residence in Belhus, Essex. He has lately found out about that excellent work, and wondered why it has not come into the possession of Sir Thomas Lennard, "the possessor of the place," and why the family had no knowledge about this "very fine work of art" (Liverpool, 1853 Oct. 24). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 24  Lindsay, Coutts, Sir (1824-1913, amateur artist, owner of the Grosvenor Gallery London) undated
Scope and Content Note
Invites Mr. and Mrs. Guilter to visit the Grosvenor Gallery that afternoon. The Prince and Princess of Wales intend to come at 3 p.m. (undated). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 25  Long, Charles, Baron Farnborough (1761-1838, politician, fellow of Royal Society, trustee of the British Museum, the National Gallery, etc.) 1828
Scope and Content Note
Writes to [Martin Archer See] that he will be back on time to insert any "respectable artists" in his list of candidates in "the Book," as required in order to be eligible. He adds that the Exhibition of Sir Thomas Lawrence "succeeds as I hoped and fully expected" (Whitehall Garden, [1828] May 29). 3 p. Watermark: J. Whatman Turkey Mill 1828.
Box 1, Folder 26  MacColl, Dugald Sutherland (1859-1948, artist, critic, keeper of the Tate Gallery) 1906
Scope and Content Note
Thanks Cockerell for the "expression of good will." His wife hopes they will rent a house at the Criquebeouf for the summer. Asks his friend the date of the [Lawrence] Hodson sale, and whether Frank Potter is among the pictures, which could be interesting for the [Tate] Gallery (1906, June 18). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 27  Mackintosh, James, Sir (1765-1832, politician, law professor, author) 1816
Scope and Content Note
Sends Abderman Atkins the letter of recommendation for his former groom/ coachman he had asked for (Weedon Lodge, 1816 Jan. 10). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 28  Meyrick, Samuel Rush, Sir (1783-1848, antiquarian, collector, author) 1822
Scope and Content Note
Thanks the solicitor William Edwards in Derby for the drawing of a coffer with military subject, asking him to send sketches of any old furniture. He has acquired a carved frame from the period of Charles. He is trying to acquire an old castle in Pembrokeshire and make it his summer residence with the help of the architect Blore, but there are many delays (1822 Sept. 21). 3 p.

Box 1, Folder 29  Minton, Herbert (1793-1858, pottery & porcelain manufacturer) undated
Scope and Content Note
Writes to a friend that he has received a notice from the Society of the Art Union about a meeting in which "the introduction of iron and terra cotta articles, copies of those in the British Museum, will be proposed." Asks the friend to accompany him at the museum to discuss the subject. Minton hopes to be accompanied by a lady friend, whom he will introduce as "the intended Mrs. H.M." (Stoke-on-Trent, undated). 4 p.

Box 1, Folder 30  Norfolk, Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of (1847-1917) 1891
Scope and Content Note
Thanks Mr. Powell for the interesting notes on glass and his letter. The Duke expects him to come to the Arundel castle, where he has a room. He wants to dedicate the South chapel to his wife, and indicates several female names from her family, presumably for new stained glass in the chapel (1891 May 23). 4 p.

Box 1, Folder 31  Poole, Reginald Stuart (1832-1895, archaeologist, numismatist, keeper of coins and medals in the British Museum) 1850
Scope and Content Note
Sends a lady the interpretation of the inscriptions on the seal she had sent him (1850 Nov. 2). 2 p.

Box 1, Folder 32  Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll (1848-1939, artist) undated
Scope and Content Note
Asks Mr. Bell to inform Professor Heinrich Angeli that his portrait of the Duke of Argyll was rejected by the Royal Academy. She has written to Sir Coutts Lindsay, asking him "to try and get it into the Grosvenor Gallery" (undated). 3 p.

Box 1, Folder 33  Ripon, George Frederick Samuel Robinson, Marques of (1827-1909, statesman, art patron) 1873
Scope and Content Note
Answers Miss Louise Rayner's letter that he shall be very pleased if his official engagements will allow him to visit Mr. Graves Gallery in Pall Mall, and see "the water colour drawing of St. George's chapel Windsor (1873 May 21). 2 p., on paper with embossed seal of Privy Council Office.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 34</th>
<th>Rothenstein, John, Sir (1901-1992, art historian, Director of Tate Gallery) 1951</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Thanks Mr. George for sending him &quot;the Gwen John recollections, which will be invaluable.&quot; He will treat his letter as &quot;an official application to reproduce the Self portrait&quot; (Paris, 1951 Jan. 21). 2 p. on letterhead of Hotel Ritz.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 35</th>
<th>Scarlett, James, Baron Abinger (1769-1844, MP, politician) 1836</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Declines an invitation because he has promised to dine at the Attorney General's place (1836 Apr. 14). 1 p. in French.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 36</th>
<th>Scott, D.? 1798</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Answers the letters of a friend. &quot;The subjects of Buonaparte ... Egypt, etc., was looked into about two months ago and investigated most deeply in every point of view, and I don't think there was a single suggestion in your letters which were not then suggested at Wimbledon&quot; (1798 Aug. 9). 2 p.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 37</th>
<th>Seymour, H. Francis (1812-1884, 5th Marques of Hertford) 1852</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Informs Hogarth that he has decided to have the portrait of his father, Sir George Seymour, engraved in steel, in 100 copies, all expenses covered, as stated in his proposal. He asks him to &quot;procure subscriptions both at Halifax and in the West Indies,&quot; since his father is now Commander in Chief of North American Station&quot; (Holly Grove, Windsor, 1852 Jan. 18). 2 p.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 38</th>
<th>Shelley, Florence Percy, Sir (1819-1889) 1867</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Offers the editor of the Examiner a lithograph made after the portrait of his father, Percy Bysshe Shelley [who wrote articles for that journal], painted by Amelia Curran in Rome in 1819. He adds that &quot;it is the only authentic portrait in existence (Boscombe, Ringwood, Hants, 1867, Apr. 8). 1 p.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 39</th>
<th>Stanley, Dorothy, Lady (1855-1926, painter, wife of explorer H.M. Stanley) 1829</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Informs Lady [Elizabeth] Eastlake that she is too busy to make another drawing for Children's Holiday Fund. Her husband, H. M. Stanley, expects to stand for Parliament as a Liberal Unionist candidate, and she will be out of London &quot;electioneering&quot; with him (1829 June 7). 4 p. Blind stamp with escutcheon and address: 2 Richmond Terrace Whitehall, S. W.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Box 1, Folder 40</th>
<th>Story-Maskelyne, Anthony (1861-1938, exchequer and heraldry specialist) 1900</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Returns to Mrs. Simeon the sketch of a quarterly shield which he explains in heraldic terms, and identifies it as belonging to Leonard Childers and his wife Sarah Anne, Daughter of Sir Charles Kent (Chelsea Gardens, 1900 Mar. 23). 4 p.</td>
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<th>Box 1, Folder 41</th>
<th>Story-Maskelyne, Nevil (1823-1911, Keeper of minerals, British Museum) 1870</th>
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<td>Scope and Content Note</td>
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<td>Asks an unidentified person for a &quot;good specimen of the Clifton Celestine form&quot; (British Museum, 1870 Jan 28). 1 p.</td>
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Box 1, Folder 42  

**Wilson, Robert Thomas, Sir (1777-1849, general, statesman and author) 1825-1826**

**Scope and Content Note**

Sends to unidentified correspondent the promised "documentary extracts" about his father, the painter and etcher Benjamin Wilson. He intends to correct the "inaccuracies" found in a recent publication of Mr. Hattin(?) undated with faded pencil inscription on first page:

Received 24 Sept. 1825. 6 p.

Informs a correspondent that he has no objection to anything he wants to publish "to correct Mr. Hattin's(?) inaccuracies" using the information in his previous letter. He will soon go to Newcastle [upon Tyne], and will pay him a visit to see Hattin's statement (1825 Oct. 7). 3 p.

An unrelated envelope postmarked 1826 is pasted on the blank page.

Sends to J.H. Gilchrist at Newcastle upon Tyne "some extracts to answer the points" regarding his father, the Royal Society, [Benjamin] Franklin and others, stating that he holds "in utter contempt all misrepresentations or calumnies." He leaves to the recipient's judgment the way he will use the extracts, which will be sent in a copy, because of his "very illegible handwriting." After date and signature, Wilson filled the 4th page with information about his father's "two celebrated caricatures, which include "The Repeal [or The funeral of Miss Ame-Stamp, 1766], "with 4000 copies sold in one day" (1826 Feb. 13). 4 p. The envelope above corresponds to this letter.

Box 1, Folder 43  

**Woodward, Bernard Bolingbroke (1816-1869, Keeper of prints and drawings, Windsor Castle) 1826**

**Scope and Content Note**

Wrote to Mr. Fairholl that he may need an antiquarian draughtsman for the inquiries being made at Windsor Park, and wants to know if "it would be the kind of thing" for him (1826 Apr. 23). 1 p.