

**U DX325 Letters from Francis F. Johnson (Architect) 1982-1993
to Neil R. Hynd (Regional Director for Historic Scotland)**

Biographical Background:

Francis Frederick Johnson was born 18 April 1911 to James Frederick B. Johnson (1880-1938) and Ethel daughter of Francis S. Smith. His father's family were well established corn merchants, whilst his mother's father had been a senior traveller for the Hull paint manufacturers Blundell Spence & Co. His parents married in Bridlington in 1909 but Ethel tragically died just a few days after Francis was born.

His father had lived in Wellington Road, Bridlington, but upon his marriage he moved to 6 (now 8) Swanland Avenue, Bridlington, and it was there that Francis was born. Ten months after his birth Francis' father remarried Mabel, a daughter of John Easton, and had five children by her. In 1914 his father had 'Kernside', 154 Cardigan Road, built and the family lived there for a few months before WWI. During WWI the family lived at Harrogate and then Sharrow Lane in Sheffield. On moving back to Bridlington at the end of the war Francis' father purchased Medina House, Quay Road, where the family remained for ten years. In 1929, with some persuasion from Francis, his father purchased 'The Toff', 43 High Street.

Francis began his schooling at a small private day school in Bridlington before being sent as a full boarder to Marton Hall Preparatory School for two years. He fell ill whilst attending this school and was removed to Bridlington Grammar where he spent the remainder of his school years. In 1927 he started attending the School of Architecture at Leeds, then part of the College of Art. Whilst studying for his exams in 1929 Francis took lodgings in Leeds where he shared a room in a YMCA hostel in Clarendon Road known as Woodsley House. In 1926 and 1929 he undertook visits to France with acquaintances from Bridlington Grammar school. He won two Royal Society of Art prizes for design in 1930 and 1931. In 1931 he received a travelling scholarship from Leeds School of Architecture which allowed him to undertake a tour of the continent. During these visits, Francis developed his architectural interests and skills. He kept detailed illustrated journals documenting the places he visited and the buildings he saw. In 1932 he finished at Leeds and he returned to Bridlington.

After a few months of unemployment, his father's friend Colonel C. Donald Allderidge gave Francis employment in his own practice of Allderidge & Clark, Architects, Hull. During the first eighteen months he travelled from Bridlington to Hull every day and proved himself to be very competent. He was made a partner in 1934 and put in charge of an office above a shop in Manor Street, Bridlington. In 1937 he moved to lodgings at 26 Market Place and, following the break-up of the partnership of Allderidge & Clarke, established his own practice. He retained his Manor Street office in Bridlington and continued to build a name for himself. A legacy from his aunt Lucy Smith had enabled Francis to purchase Craven house, 16 High Street, Bridlington, in 1935. In 1938 he and his partner Edward Ingram moved into Craven House. He spent the late 1930s and early 1940s restoring the property to its original Georgian character.

After the destruction of the Manor Street office during an air raid in August 1940 Craven House also became Francis' office. Over the next few years Francis continued to build his practice and it soon became impractical to maintain his office and home in one building.

In November 1952 Francis and Edward moved from Craven House to former village school Leys House at Sewerby. Francis had purchased the house in 1951 when it needed much restoration which he carried out. They remained at Leys House for fifteen years.

However, as Sewerby became a tourist destination, Francis desired a more secluded residence and so purchased Reighton Hall near Filey in July 1966. He had the place restored and in November 1966 both he and Edward moved in. They were to remain at Reighton Hall for the rest of their lives, along with Edward's sister Dorothy (d.1988).

Francis was prominent in the realm of civic life in Bridlington. He was a staunch Tory throughout his life and became involved in politics through his campaigning to preserve the character of Bridlington's 'Old Town'. He served as an independent town councillor for fourteen years (1936-1950). He was elected one of the Lords Feoffees of the Manor of Bridlington for life in 1940 and served as Chief Lord on five occasions. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1952 and served in this capacity for twenty nine years until 1981, after which he remained on the supplementary list.

Francis was a member of various local societies in Bridlington, including the Literary and Philosophical Society, the Madrigal Society and the Augustinian Society. It was through attendance at meetings of the latter society in December 1936 that Francis met his life-long partner Edward Ingram, a teacher in Bridlington who was originally from Hull and who had studied at the University College of Hull in its early years. From the late 1930s both Francis and Edward (aka Jim and Ted) became very much involved in campaigns to protect Bridlington's 'Old Town'. Through this work Francis came to the notice of Rupert Alec-Smith, founder of the Georgian Society for East Yorkshire. He was invited to become part of the Georgian Society and this started a life-long association with both Alec-Smith and the Georgian Society.

Through connections formed as a result of his professional and civic life he was invited to be a member of the York Civic Trust and served in various positions on its Board of Trustees. He was admitted a member of the York Merchant Adventurers Company in 1961 and the Merchant Taylors Company in 1970. A friendship with Dean of York Eric Milner-White led to his appointment as consultant architect to the York Diocese, his membership of the York Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (1956-1983), and his appointment to the Central Council for the Care of Churches (1964-1972).

Because of his occupation, Francis spent WWII as a draughtsman. In May 1940 he took a civilian post as a draughtsman with the Royal Engineers in South Wales based mostly at Pen-clawdd on the Gower Peninsula. He was only in post for a few months before returning to Bridlington after being dismissed. He resumed his council business and became chairman of the Bridlington Air Raid Precaution Committee. He became a member of the Home Guard in 1942 and was responsible for scheduling iron gates and railings to be requisitioned for the war effort. He was finally called up in June 1943 and was sent to Fulwood Barracks, Preston, before being sent to Aldershot. He was then sent to Orkney in March 1944 as Lance Corporal Johnson, and after four months was moved to Titchfield, Hampshire. Here he was attached to the Lands Branch of the War Department and was charged with assessing compensation for damage done to War Office property.

He was released in June 1946 and resumed his practice in the hard financial times of the late 1940s. Off the back of his War Office work, he was asked to compile the first Ministry of Local Government lists of buildings of special architectural or historical interest for Beverley and Hull. He completed the Beverley lists August 1946-January 1947, and the Hull lists were finished by July 1947.

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Throughout his life, Francis' work won him various accolades and awards including one presented by the Civic Trust and Goldsmiths' Company for the long gallery restoration at Burton Agnes Hall during European Architectural Heritage Year 1972. It also led to him receiving a number of honours. These honours included being made a Fellow of the Society of Antiquities (1955), the receipt of an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Hull (1983) and being awarded the CBE (1991).

In 2001 Francis Johnson was the subject of a major exhibition at the RIBA and a substantial architectural biography entitled "Francis Johnson Architect: A Classical Statement" by John Martin Robinson and David Neave. He died in hospital at Leeds on the 29 September 1995. Highly respected in his field, he was renowned for his traditional and classical work. Many of his clients had become life-long friends because of his genuine nature and respected advice. His packed funeral was held at Bridlington's Priory Church on 5 October 1995 and he was then buried in Reighton Churchyard. Edward survived him by two years but died in a nursing home on 19 December 1997. They have a joint gravestone which simply reads 'Francis Frederick Johnson Architect' and below 'Mallard Edward Ingram Historian'.

Neil Hynd was a regional director for Historic Scotland.

Custodial history:

Donated to Hull University Archives by Neil Hynd in Aug 2001

Description:

Bundle of letters of general correspondence between friends architect Francis Frederick Johnson and Historic Scotland Regional Director Neil Hynd. The content of these letters are on the whole personal and generally about family and work. There is also correspondence between Neil Hynd and James Macdonald-Buchanan organising a visit to Strathconon House by the Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS).

Extent: 16 items

Related material:

Francis Johnson, Architects [U DFJ]

Francis Johnson, Architects related material [U DFJR]

Access conditions:

Access will be granted to any accredited reader

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| U DX325/1 | Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd
References to the following: Postponing a meeting in York to attend the funeral of Lady Grimston at Sneaton; promise to meet at York next time Hynd is in the area; flying to Leningrad on 11 Mar 1982 for the first time and that his great grandfather lived there for several years.
1 item | 26 Feb 1982 |
| U DX325/2 | Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd
References to the following: Having been on one holiday this year, that the holiday was to Rouen and Paris with Edward, that it was the first time Edward had been abroad in his life; Edward suffering illness and requiring an operation and recuperation in Belvedere Nursing Home at Scarborough; Completion of works at Fairfax House, York; Articles written and planned by John Cornforth; John Martin Robinson's book on the 'Latest Country Houses'; 'inheriting' a c.1825 circular dining table; His quiet friend Leonard Stead; lecture given at the V&A on 'F.H.' [Fairfax House?].
1 item | 2 Dec 1984 |
| U DX325/3 | Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd
References to the following: Roger Goldthorpe having surgery and having worked for Johnson for 24 years; York Civic Trust meeting with Duchess of Kent; upcoming new-build house at the Muir of Ord; not having visited Edinburgh this year; congratulates Hynd on his award; lecture given by Johnson on plastering where the two became friends; opinions on current architectural styles and theory; publicity received as a result of articles by John Cornforth and a chapter by John Martin Robinson on Johnson's work; inheriting a c.1825 circular dining table once used by Queen Victoria; work projects undertaken this year.
1 item | 24 Dec 1984 |
| U DX325/4 | Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd
References to the following: Building of Chatelherault; various mentions of Strathconon House in the Muir of Ord; visit to France with Edward; card games; gardening; neighbours at Reighton. Includes two photographs of exterior of Strathconon House in the Muir of Ord.
1 item | 7 Nov 1986 |

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U DX325/5	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Civil service and beauracacy; an article by John Cornforth; Chatelherault. 1 item	26 Mar 1985
U DX325/6	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Illness; concern for Hynd and his family; weather; Chatelherault and work by Dick Reid there and for the British Embassy; work at Nostell Priory for Lord and Lady St Oswald; being Chief Lord of the Manor of Bridlington for the fourth time; Fairfax House. 1 item	20 Mar 1985
U DX325/7	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Lunch at York with Hynd; Temple Newsham; visit to Wellingborough. 1 item	11 Jan 1985
U DX325/8	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Seeking advice re Strathconon House finish; problem with lumbago. 1 item	21 Feb 1985
U DX325/9	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Visit to see Hynd and his wife Sarah; Visit to Chatelherault with Neil; interest in William Adams' work; visit to the National Gallery to see Clifford; forthcoming visit to Berlin and fascination with Frederick the Great. 1 item	22 Sep 1987
U DX325/10	Letter from Edward Ingram to Neil Hynd References to the following: Visit of Ingram and Francis Johnson to see Hynd and his wife Sarah; Visit to Chatelherault by Ingram, Johnson and Hynd. 1 item	23 Sep 1987
U DX325/11	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Illness of Edward and his sister's death; health problems suffered by Johnson including a hip replacement and heart attack; possible work by Hynd at Mavisbank; new parson [at Reighton] named Greg Kerr formerly at Musselburgh; second surgery for Roger Goldthorpe; visit to Dun House with Malcolm McKie and comments on William Adams' work there. 1 item	14 Aug 1990

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U DX325/12	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Possible RIAS visit to see Strathconon House in the Muir of Ord; visit of Hynd and his wife Sarah to see Johnson and Edward Ingram at Reighton. Includes letters between Hynd and A.J. Macdonald Buchanan of Strathconon House, and a letter from Hynd to RIAS re RIAS visit to Strathconon House. 1 item (6 pieces)	21 Aug 1990- 15 May 1991
U DX325/13	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Weekend spent by Johnson and Edward Ingram outside Wakefield; the House of Gray near Dundee and possibility that the architect was Alexander McGill; Lord Lichfield. 1 item	1 Oct 1990
U DX325/14	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Strathconon House; night spent in York to attend dinner at Fairfax House; lecture comparing William Adam and Smith of Warwick; membership of York Diocesan Advisory Committee alongside George Pall; Edward's birthday and attendance at a lecture on the Russian section of the Tran-Siberian railway. 1 item	16 Jan 1991
U DX325/15	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Talk with slides given by Hynd and attended by Johnson and Edward Ingram; the work of Timothy Clifford; work by Malcolm Liddle in the walled garden at Reighton Hall. 1 item	4 Apr 1992
U DX325/16	Letter from Francis Johnson to Neil Hynd References to the following: Visit by Hynd to see Johnson and Edward Ingram; reading 'the Allan Ramsay book'; commissioning of a portrait of Johnson by John Langton; congratulations on Hynd's new job. 1 item	10 Jan 1993