
L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner and Tom Turner
1934-1958
(bulk dates 1938-1947)

Abstract: The L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner and Tom Turner contain 41 letters written by British author L. A. G. (Leonard Alfred George) Strong (1896-1959) to his friend, bibliophile Tom Turner (1870-1949), as well as 150 autograph letters addressed to Mary Turner (born circa 1924), Tom Turner's daughter. The letters to Mary Turner document an affair she seems to have had with Strong.
Descriptive Summary

Identification: MSS 659
Title: L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner and Tom Turner
Inclusive Dates: 1934-1958
Bulk Dates: 1938-1947
Extent: .6 linear feet (2 boxes)
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Citation: MSS 659, L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner and Tom Turner, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware.

Shelving Summary: Boxes 1-2: Shelved in SPEC MSS manuscript boxes

Location: Special Collections, University of Delaware Library Newark, Delaware
19717-5267 Phone: 302-831-2229 Fax: 302-831-6003 URL:
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/


Processing: Processed and encoded by Elyse Brown, November 2012.

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Biographical Notes

L. A. G. (Leonard Alfred George) Strong


Strong was born March 8, 1896, in Plymouth, England. His mother was Irish and his father half-Irish; strong ties to his Irish heritage greatly informed Strong's writings and travels. He was also elected to the Irish Academy of Letters.

Strong attended Brighton College and Wadham College of Oxford. During his time at Wadham, he began teaching at the Summer Fields preparatory school in North Oxford, where he developed a solid professional reputation and worked frequently over the next ten years. During this time, in 1926, he married Dorthea Sylvia Brinton. From 1938-1958, Strong served as the director of Methuen and Company Publishers.

In 1929, Strong published his first novel, *Dewer Rides* as well as his short story collection, *The English Captain and Other Stories*. Both of these works were very successful, prompting his decision to become a full-time writer. His mysteries proved to be very popular, especially *All Fall Down* (1944). He also wrote literary criticism and works about several authors, such as James Joyce and W. B. Yeats, with whom he corresponded regularly.

Strong's work was popular in his time, although its critical reception was often mixed. In addition to his election to the Irish Academy of Letters, he was a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and recipient of the James Tait Black Prize in 1946.

Strong died August 17, 1958, from thrombosis following a minor operation.

Tom Turner and Mary Turner

Tom Turner (1870-1949) was a British post office official and an ardent bibliophile. Mary Turner (born circa 1924) was Tom Turner's daughter. Tom Turner was named "Tom" rather than "Thomas" because his mother, against the advice of the parson, felt that he should be christened the name he would inevitably be called. Turner began working at the Bradford Post office at age 16 and remained there for 44 years, retiring in 1930 from his post as assistant superintendent. In 1942, assisted by L. A. G. Strong's letter of recommendation, Mary Turner began classes in English literature at Oxford. In 1948, she was married to Herbert Ochs.

Tom Turner loved to collect books (although he did not like to be called a "collector") and amassed a library of thousands of volumes. Unlike many bibliophiles, he enjoyed sharing his books, lending and giving away as many as he kept for himself. He also loved to share with others the knowledge he had gained from his extensive reading, and he loved to talk about books. He befriended and regularly corresponded with several authors, notably L. A. G. Strong, whose *The Sacred River: An Approach to James Joyce* was dedicated to Turner. His library, containing over 8,000 volumes, was purchased by the University of Illinois in 1952.
Sources:


Biographical material derived from the collection.
Scope and Content Note

The L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner and Tom Turner contains 41 letters written by British author L. A. G. (Leonard Alfred George) Strong (1896-1959) to his friend, bibliophile Tom Turner (1870-1949), as well as 150 autograph letters addressed to Mary Turner (born circa 1924), Tom Turner's daughter. The letters to Mary Turner document an affair she seems to have had with Strong.

This collection is arranged in two series: Series I. Letters to Tom Turner; and Series II. Letters to Mary Turner. In both series, all correspondence present is incoming to Tom Turner or to Mary Turner.

Series I. primarily contains letters from Strong to his friend Tom Turner. Most of the letters were written between 1934 and 1940, with one final letter from December 1949, possibly received not long before Turner's death. The letters document Strong and Turner's developing friendship, travels and works-in-progress (particularly Strong's), plans for extended visits, their families' health, and their occasional interactions with other authors. Many letters thank Turner for sending books to Strong. Also included is a photograph of Strong dated May 2, 1937, as well as letters to Tom Turner from other correspondents.

Series II. contains approximately 150 letters and several telegrams sent from L. A. G. Strong to Tom Turner's daughter, Mary Turner (born circa 1924). Most of the letters are dated 1938-1947, and over the course of the decade their relationship developed into an affair, which flourished between 1942 and 1946 and seemed to end relatively amicably when Mary Turner became seriously involved with and eventually engaged to a man named "Herbert" in 1946-1947. Also included in this series are letters to Mary Turner from others.

The letters were written in England during World War II and provide evidence of this era via patriotic postmarks and Strong's references to air raids.
Selected Search Terms

**Personal Names**


Turner, Mary, b. 1924--Correspondence.

Turner, Tom, b. 1870--Correspondence.

**Topical Terms**

Authors, English--20th century--Correspondence.

**Form/Genre Terms**

Envelopes.

Letters (correspondence)

Photographs.

Telegrams.

**Occupation**

Authors.

Collectors.

**Personal Contributors**

Turner, Mary, b. 1924, correspondent.

Turner, Tom, b. 1870, correspondent.
Arrangement

I. L. A. G. Strong letters to Tom Turner
II. L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner
Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I. L. A. G. Strong letters to Tom Turner, 1934-1949

Series I. primarily contains letters from Strong to his friend Tom Turner. Most of the letters were written between 1934 and 1940, with one final letter from December 1949, possibly received not long before Turner's death. The letters document Strong and Turner's developing friendship, travels and works-in-progress (particularly Strong's), plans for extended visits, their families' health, and their occasional interactions with other authors. Many letters thank Turner for sending books to Strong. Also included is a photograph of Strong dated May 2, 1937, as well as letters to Tom Turner from other correspondents.

Photograph of Strong, 1937 May 2 [Box 1 F1]

Photograph of L. A. G. Strong dated "May 2 1937," framed in a souvenir photograph holder celebrating the coronation of King George VI.

1934 [Box 1 F2]

1935 [Box 1 F3]

1936 [Box 1 F4]

1937 [Box 1 F5]

1938 [Box 1 F6]

1939 [Box 1 F7]

1940 March 10 [Box 1 F8]

1949 December 9 [Box 1 F9]

Letters to Tom Turner from others, 1921-1945 [Box 1 F10]

A postcard from "W.G." (1921 Jul 6); a handwritten letter containing a poem from "I.A.M." (1944 Dec 27); and a typed and signed letter from "Gerard Hopkins" (1945 Dec 20).

Series II. L. A. G. Strong letters to Mary Turner, 1938-1958

Series II. contains approximately 150 letters and several telegrams sent from L. A. G. Strong to Tom Turner's daughter, Mary Turner (born circa 1924). Most of the letters are dated 1938–1947, and over the course of the decade their relationship developed into an affair, which flourished between 1942 and 1946 and seemed to end relatively amicably when Mary Turner became seriously involved with and eventually engaged to a man named "Herbert" in 1946-1947. Also included in this series are letters to Mary Turner from others. The letters were written in England during World War II and provide evidence of this era via patriotic postmarks and Strong's references to air raids.
1938 [Box 1 F11]

1939 [Box 1 F12]

1940 [Box 1 F13]

1941 [Box 2 F14]

1942 [Box 2 F15]

1943 [Box 2 F16]

1944 [Box 2 F17]

1945 [Box 2 F18]

1946 [Box 2 F19]

1947 [Box 2 F20]

1958 and undated, 1958 March 9 and undated [Box 2 F21]

Letters to Mary Turner from others, 1942, 1947, undated [Box 2 F22]

Included is an unidentified letter signed "Bustlebottoms"; a 1947 letter from Strong's wife, Sylvia, congratulating Mary on her engagement; and unsigned drawings.