

NATIONAL MUSEUMS **LIVERPOOL**

**MARITIME ARCHIVES & LIBRARY**

**PAPERS OF J. BRUCE ISMAY, WHITE STAR LINE,**  
**DEPOSITED WITH ALDERSON SMITH,**  
**SOLICITORS, LIVERPOOL**

**Ref. Code: DX/504**  
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**Gabrielle Fabri, Assistant Curator**  
**26 April 2004**

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**Introduction**

Joseph Bruce Ismay was born in Crosby, Liverpool on 12 December 1862. He was the eldest son of Thomas Henry Ismay and Margaret Bruce. Thomas Ismay was the senior partner in the firm of Ismay, Imrie & Co., and founder of the White Star Line.

After being educated at Elstree School, Harrow and tutored for a year in France. J. Bruce Ismay was apprenticed to Thomas Ismay's office for four years. After touring the world for a year, J. Bruce Ismay was appointed as the White Star Line agent in New York. Whilst in New York, he married Julia Florence Schieffelin and had two sons and two daughters. In 1891 the family returned to England, and J. Bruce Ismay was made a partner in the firm of Ismay, Imrie & Co. Following the death of Thomas Ismay in 1899, J. Bruce Ismay became head of the business.

In 1901 Ismay was approached from America to form an international conglomerate of shipping companies. After lengthy discussions with John Pierpont Morgan, it was agreed that the White Star Line would form part of the International Mercantile Marine Co. (I.M.M.C.), led by C.A. Griscom of the American Line. In 1904 J. Bruce Ismay succeeded Griscom as president of the I.M.M.C., and held the position until 1913. He was also on the Boards of a number of other companies, including the Asiatic Steam Navigation Co. and the Liverpool, London & Globe Insurance Co.

J. Bruce Ismay died on the 17 October 1937, having survived the maiden voyage of the RMS *Titanic* in 1912.

The collection includes correspondence regarding the speed and arrival of the RMS *Olympic* in New York and the I.M.M.C. The correspondence also includes letters regarding Ismay's directorship and resignation from the I.M.M.C. There are a number of documents within the collection regarding the Ismay family's property in Liverpool and London, the family coat of arms and the Ismay family's donations to the Liverpool Seamen's Pension Fund and the Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund. The collection also includes papers relating to the will of J. Bruce Ismay and the clauses affecting the family.

The collection comprises 9 bundles of items, dated between 1893-1917. The information has been kept in order in their original bundles, but the bundles have been renumbered. It is of interest to those studying the history of the Ismay family, the White Star Line and the I.M.M.C.

Mr. J. Alderson Smith, of Ayrton Alderson Smith, Solicitors, Liverpool, deposited the collection on behalf of the Ismay family's trustees to the Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum, on 14 November 1984. The late Sir Frederick M. Radcliffe, who appears regularly in the correspondence, was principal partner in the depositing firm, under its former title of Ayrton, Radcliffe.

The collection is accessible to any reader within the Maritime Archives & Library Searchroom. Some items are fragile and may not be produced.

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**Contents**

1/1 - 16	Papers relating to J. Bruce Ismay's house "Sandheys", Mossley Hill Road, includes notes on value, rates, expenditure, town planning, rules, etc.	1909 - 1913
2/1 - 17	Copies of correspondence relating to the speed and arrival of the RMS <i>Olympic</i> in New York in connection with the Titanic Enquiry, to show that J.B. Ismay was opposed to fast-running liners.	1911
3/1 - 4	Correspondence regarding the RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	1911 - 1912
4/1 - 2	Correspondence and Newscuttings concerning J. Bruce Ismay and the Earl of Derby, regarding the Liverpool Seamen's Pension Fund, the Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund and the <i>Titanic</i> Relief Fund.	1912
5/1 - 12	Documents relating to the Town Planning Act 1909, and a new Town Planning Scheme.	1912 - 1914
6/1 - 12	Papers regarding the Will of J. Bruce Ismay, including a synopsis of clauses affecting his family. Also includes an account of his investments, income and estate.	1912 - 1917
7/1 - 9	Documents relating to the Ismay family coat of arms.	1913
8/1 - 16	Papers relating to the resignation of J. Bruce Ismay from the Board of the International Mercantile Marine Corporation.	1916
9/1	Book: <i>Thurstaston Notes</i> , by Rackham.	1893

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/1/1 - 16  (formerly bundle 21)	<b><u>PAPERS RELATING TO J. BRUCE ISMAY'S HOUSE, "SANDHEYS", MOSSLEY HILL ROAD, INCLUDING NOTES ON VALUE, RATES, EXPENDITURE, TOWN PLANNING, RULES, ETC.</u></b>	<b><u>1909 - 1913</u></b>
1	Documents, re the undeveloped land duty on "Sandheys".	c.1909
2	Letters, payment dockets, re the rates on "Sandheys".	May 1909 - Apr 1910
3	Documents describing the available accommodation at "Sandheys", including a copy of the rules and orders, 1910, for Town Planning. Documents, re Ismay's notice of objection to the valuation. List to the West Derby Union.	1909 - Aug 1910
4	Documents, re the assessment of Property Tax.	1910
5	Documents and newspaper clipping, re the assessment of rates at "Sandheys".	1910
6	Documents, re the duties on land values and capital expenditure at "Sandheys".	Aug 1910
7	Letters to Mr. Radcliffe, re the land valuation of "Sandheys".	Oct 1910
8	Unofficial form for duties on land values for "Sandheys", and provisional land valuation form.	29 Oct 1910
9	Letter, re Mr. Radcliffe acknowledging receipt of a letter; receipt from Philip, Son & Nephew Ltd., for mercantile stationery.	23 Nov 1910
10	Dockets for duties on land values for the years 1910, 1911, 1912 and 1913.	1910 - 1913
11	Letter to Mr. J.B. Ismay, re the provisional valuation, and letter of acceptance.	12 Dec 1912
12	Number of documents, including copies of letters, re the payment of undeveloped land duty.	1910 - 1913
13	Notice of Appeal to Referee on provisional valuation, and notes.	12 Feb 1913
14	Note from J.B. Ismay on undeveloped land duty.	7 May 1913

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15	Notice of assessment and notice to pay duties on land values.	2 Dec 1913
16	Envelopes, re the letters in rest of the bundle.	n.d.

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/2/1 - 17  (formerly bundle 19)	<b><u>COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE SPEED AND ARRIVAL OF RMS <i>OLYMPIC</i> IN NEW YORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE <i>TITANIC</i> ENQUIRY, TO SHOW THAT J.B. ISMAY WAS OPPOSED TO FAST-RUNNING LINERS</u></b>	<b><u>1911</u></b>
1	Correspondence from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J. Bruce Ismay, re the arrival of RMS <i>Olympic</i> in New York on Tuesdays.	7 Jul 1911
2	Correspondence from J. Bruce Ismay to P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, re the arrival of RMS <i>Olympic</i> in New York on Tuesdays.	17 Jul 1911
3	Correspondence from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J. Bruce Ismay, re the arrival of RMS <i>Olympic</i> in New York.	19 Jul 1911
4	Correspondence from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J. Bruce Ismay, re satisfactory reports from the passengers and Tuesday docking.	20 Jul 1911
5	Correspondence from J. Bruce Ismay to P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, re recommendations for docking on a Tuesday at New York.	27 Jul 1911
6	Correspondence from J. Bruce Ismay to P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, re his continuation in writing regarding the docking of RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	31 Jul 1911
7	Correspondence from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J. Bruce Ismay, re RMS <i>Olympic</i> 's arrival in New York and J. Bruce Ismay's discussions with Lord Pirrie.	4 Aug 1911
8	Chart illustrating the short track undergone by RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	7 Aug 1911
9	Extract of a letter from Ismay, Imrie & Co. to White Star Line's Steamship Department, New York, re the speed on the short track of RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	11 Aug 1911
10	Correspondence from Ismay, Imrie & Co. to Captain E.J. Smith, RMS <i>Olympic</i> , New York, re instructions to go on full speed when on short track.	11 Aug 1911

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DX/504/2/1 - 17  (formerly bundle 19)	<b><u>COPIES OF CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO THE SPEED AND ARRIVAL OF RMS <i>OLYMPIC</i> IN NEW YORK IN CONNECTION WITH THE <i>TITANIC</i> ENQUIRY, TO SHOW THAT J.B. ISMAY WAS OPPOSED TO FAST-RUNNING LINERS (cont)</u></b>	<b><u>1911</u></b>
11	Extract of a letter from Mr. Toppin to J. Bruce Ismay, re the decision to allow RMS <i>Olympic</i> to come out on full speed when on short track.	18 Aug 1911
12	Extract from a letter to J. Bruce Ismay, re RMS <i>Olympic</i> not docking on Tuesday.	19 Aug 1911
13	Extract of a letter from J. Bruce Ismay to Mr. Toppin, re the withdrawal of all restrictions on RMS <i>Olympic's</i> speed.	4 Sept 1911
14	Extract of a letter from J. Bruce Ismay to P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, re the position from New York of RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	5 Sept 1911
15	Extract of a letter from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J. Bruce Ismay, re the docking of RMS <i>Olympic</i> and the satisfaction of her passengers.	7 Sept 1911
16	Extract of a letter from J. Bruce Ismay to P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, re cabin passengers.	26 Sept 1911
17	Envelope addressed to J.M. Radcliff. [with stamps and postmark]	n.d.

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/3/1 - 4  (formerly bundle 12)	<b><u>CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING THE RMS <i>OLYMPIC</i></u></b>	<b><u>1911 - 1912</u></b>
1	Correspondence and report from J. Bell, Chief Engineer, RMS <i>Olympic</i> , on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York.	24 June 1911
2	Correspondence from F.M. Blake, Superintendent Engineer, White Star Line, Southampton Docks to Ismay, Imrie & Co., re a voyage report from J. Bell, Chief Engineer, onboard the RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	6 Jul 1911
3	Correspondence from Harland & Wolff Ltd., Belfast to Ismay, Imrie & Co., re a voyage report from J. Bell, Chief Engineer, onboard RMS <i>Olympic</i> .	18 Aug 1911
4	Notes, re coal situation affecting the speeds of RMS <i>Olympic</i> and RMS <i>Titanic</i> .	28 Mar 1912

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/4/1 - 2  (formerly bundle 8)	<b><u>CORRESPONDENCE AND NEWSCUTTINGS CONCERNING J. BRUCE ISMAY AND THE EARLY OF DERBY, REGARDING THE LIVERPOOL SEAMEN'S PENSION FUND, THE MERCANTILE MARINE (WIDOWS) FUND AND THE TITANIC RELIEF FUND</u></b>	<b><u>1912</u></b>
1/1 - 11	<u>Correspondence</u>	<u>1912</u>
1	Draft correspondence from J. Bruce Ismay to the Earl of Derby, Lord Mayor of Liverpool, re proposal to supplement The Liverpool Seamen's Pension Fund with a fund to provide pensions for widows following the <i>Titanic</i> disaster. Includes a handwritten memorandum.	11 May 1912
2	Correspondence from the Earl of Derby, Lord Mayor of Liverpool to F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe, re luncheon appointment to discuss 'amount' with J. Bruce Ismay.	13 May 1912
3	Telegram from the Earl of Derby, Lord Mayor of Liverpool to J. Bruce Ismay, asking permission to publish his letter in the <i>Courier</i> , and reply from J. Bruce Ismay giving his permission.	14 May 1912
4	Correspondence from J.F. Hutchinson, Private Secretary to J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe, enclosing a copy of J.B. Ismay's letter to the Earl of Derby, Lord Mayor of Liverpool, re the widows fund as given to the press.	14 May 1912
5	Correspondence from Mr. Grylls, Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund to F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe, re questions of fund eligibility raised by the Charities Sub-Committee of the Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund.	n.d., c.1912
6	Correspondence from F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, re fund eligibility questions raised by the Charities Sub-Committee of the Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund.	7 Nov 1912
7	Correspondence from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe, re answers to fund eligibility questions raised by the Charities Sub-Committee of the Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund.	7 Nov 1912

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1/1 - 11	<u>Correspondence</u> (cont)	<u>1912</u>
8	Correspondence from J.F. Hutchinson, Private Secretary to J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe, re J. Bruce Ismay's proposal of a fund.	11 Nov 1912
9	Correspondence from F.M. Radcliffe, Solicitor, Ayrton, Radcliffe to Mr. Grylls, Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund, re J. Bruce Ismay's response to his questions concerning the fund.	12 Nov 1912
10	Printed sheet explaining the foundation of the Liverpool Seamen's Pension Fund and the Margaret Ismay Widows Fund.	n.d., c.1912
11	Envelope addressed to J. Bruce Ismay Esq., Mercantile Marine (Widows) Fund.	n.d., c.1912
2/1 - 6	<u>Newscuttings</u>	<u>1912</u>
1	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , re 'Titanic Funds - Lord Derby's Important Suggestion'.	26 Apr 1912
2	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , re 'Titanic Funds'.	29 Apr 1912
3	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Daily Post</i> , re 'Titanic Funds and their Disposal'.	29 Apr 1912
4	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , re 'The Administration of The Funds - Mansion House Conference'.	3 May 1912
5	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , re 'Trade Council's Protest - Alleged "Juggling" of Liverpool Titanic Relief Funds'.	9 May 1912
6	Newscutting from the <i>Liverpool Courier</i> , re 'Relief Funds Administration Unworthy Labour Criticism'.	10 May 1912

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/5/1 - 12  (formerly bundle 18)	<b><u>DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE TOWN PLANNING ACT 1909, AND A NEW TOWN PLANNING SCHEME</u></b>	<b><u>1912 - 1914</u></b>
1	Letter from Boulton, Son & Maples, Estate Agents to J. Bruce Ismay, re the Town Planning Act.	23 Jul 1912
2	Letter from Boulton, Son & Maples, Estate Agents to Mr. John Wylie, White Star Line.	23 Jul 1912
3	Annotated letter from G.L. Hitchin of Boulton, Son & Maples to J. Bruce Ismay.	20 June 1912
4	Letter from J. Wylie to J. Bruce Ismay, re the Town Planning Scheme.	24 June 1912
5	Handwritten letter, re the planning scheme.	n.d.
6	Letter from B. Maples to J. Bruce Ismay, re a meeting concerning the Town Planning Act.	23 Jul 1912
7	Copy of a letter to Boulton, Son & Maples, acknowledging receipt of correspondence.	25 Jul 1912
8	Letter from B. Maples to Ayrton, Radcliffe & Wright, re a letter to J. Bruce Ismay.	23 Oct 1913
9	Formal notice of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909	22 Oct 1913
10	Map and formal notice of the Liverpool City Council's Town Planning Scheme for the Mossley Hill area.	22 Oct 1913
11	Documents from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, re the sale of "Sandheys".	14 Jan 1914
12	Plan of the layout of "Sandheys", Mossley Hill.	n.d.

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/6/1 - 12  (formerly bundle 25)	<b><u>PAPERS REGARDING THE WILL OF J. BRUCE ISMAY, INCLUDING A SYNOPSIS OF CLAUSES AFFECTING HIS FAMILY. ALSO INCLUDES AN ACCOUNT OF HIS INVESTMENTS, INCOME AND ESTATE</u></b>	<b><u>1912 - 1917</u></b>
1	Extracts from the will of Mr. J. Bruce Ismay from Ayrton & Radcliffe, Liverpool.	n.d.
2	Copy of extracts from the will of Mr. J. Bruce Ismay from Ayrton & Radcliffe, Liverpool.	n.d.
3	Synopsis of those clauses in the Will (25 July 1912) of Mr. J. Bruce Ismay affecting his children from Ayrton & Radcliffe, Liverpool.	25 Jul 1912
4	Letter from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, re will.	6 Nov 1912
5	Letter of receipt from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe.	15 Apr 1913
6	Correspondence from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, re tax.	3 Feb 1914
7	Documents, re the mortgage on 49-55 Victoria Street, Westminster, contains details of tenants.	Mar 1915
8	Estimates of the financial affairs of J. Bruce Ismay.	Jan 1916
9	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, concerning his will.	4 Feb 1916
10	Letters from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, concerning the terms of his will.	20-21 Jul 1917
11	Private notes by J. Bruce Ismay, concerning finances and his will.	n.d.
12	Notes on J. Bruce Ismay's income, estate and money left to his children; includes statement of capital to be disposed of by his will.	n.d.

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/7/1 - 9  (formerly bundle 17)	<b><u>DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE ISMAY FAMILY COAT OF ARMS</u></b>	<b><u>1913</u></b>
1	Letter from Hurst & Brackett Ltd., London to J. Bruce Ismay's brother, re subscribers to "Armorial Families".	29 Sept 1913
2	Annotated letter from A.C. Fox-Davies, London to J. Bruce Ismay's brother, re "Armorial Families".	29 Sept 1913
3	Specimen coloured plate from "Armorial Families".	1913
4	Publication: <i>Armorial Families: A Directory of Gentlemen of Coat-Armour</i> , 7 <sup>th</sup> Edition, compiled and edited by Arthur Charles Fox-Davies.	c.1913
5	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, concerning the publication of the family Coat of Arms.	13 Oct 1913
6	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to T. Powell, re the Ismay Coat of Arms in the East Window of Liverpool Cathedral.	20 Oct 1913
7	Proof of Ismay Coat of Arms, from the <i>Armorial Families</i> , annotated.	1913
8	Letter from J. Powell at Whitefriar's Glassworks, Tudor Street, London, E.C. to F.M. Radcliffe.	21 Oct 1913
9	Memorandum from J. Powell to F.M. Radcliffe, re the return of a drawing of the Ismay Coat of Arms.	22 Oct 1913

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/8/1 - 16  (formerly bundle 7)	<b><u>PAPERS RELATING TO THE RESIGNATION OF J. BRUCE ISMAY FROM THE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MERCANTILE MARINE CORPORATION</u></b>	<b><u>1916</u></b>
1	Letter from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine, in New York to J. Bruce Ismay, concerning the Oceanic Company directorship; annotated with a pencil reply by J. Bruce Ismay.	26 May 1916
2	Letter from H.A. Sanderson to J. Bruce Ismay, concerning the International Mercantile Marine Company; also has handwritten note from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe.	7 June 1916
3	Copy of cablegram from P.A.S. Franklin, vice-president of the International Mercantile Marine to J.B. Ismay, re stockholders agreement.	7 June 1916
4	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay.	8 June 1916
5	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, concerning the resignation from the International Mercantile Marine Corporation.	9 June 1916
6	Copy of a cablegram from P.A.S. Franklin to J. Bruce Ismay.	21 June 1916
7	Newscutting from <i>The Times</i> concerning the reorganisation plan of the International Mercantile Marine Company.	21 June 1916
8	Letter from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe, re the International Mercantile Marine Company.	21 June 1916
9	Telegraph from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, re Ismay's resignation.	22 June 1916
10	Copy of a telegram (original at 8/9) from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay, re Ismay's resignation.	22 June 1916
11	Letter from J. Bruce Ismay to F.M. Radcliffe concerning Ismay's resignation; includes draft of the resignation letter.	22 June 1916
12	Letter from F.M. Radcliffe to J. Bruce Ismay concerning his resignation.	23 June 1916

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DX/504/8/1 - 16  (formerly bundle 7)	<b><u>PAPERS RELATING TO THE RESIGNATION OF J. BRUCE ISMAY FROM THE BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL MERCANTILE MARINE CORPORATION (cont)</u></b>	<b><u>1916</u></b>
13	Letter of resignation from J. Bruce Ismay to E.C. Grenfell, London, Chairman of the British Committee of International Mercantile Marine Company.	24 June 1916
14	Letter of acknowledgement confirming receipt of J. Bruce Ismay's letter of resignation.	27 June 1916
15	Letter from H.A. Sanderson to J. Bruce Ismay acknowledging Ismay's resignation.	28 June 1916
16	Envelope [stamped and postmarked] addressed to Ayrton & Radcliffe, 10 Dale Street, Liverpool. Hand-written annotation re J. Bruce Ismay and the International Mercantile Marine Company.	29 June 1916

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Ref. Code.	Description	Date(s)
DX/504/9/1  (formerly bundle 28)	<b><u>BOOK: THURSTASTON NOTES, BY RACKHAM</u></b>	<b><u>1893</u></b>
1	Book: <i>Thurstaston Notes</i> , by Rackham; a few notes on the Church and Rectory of Thurstaston. [typed and bound]	1893