

Family matters

At 8, Queen Street, Edinburgh, on the 22d current, Mrs THOMSON, widow of the late John Thomson, Esq. Professor of the Theory of Music in this University, of a son.

This notice from Edinburgh newspaper *The Caledonian Mercury*, on 25 November 1841, caught my eye while I was researching another possible source for our first-year students to explore.

Newspapers are particularly rich sources for studying the history of musical life in this period, containing information on events, publications, professional musical life and much more: digitalisation makes these sources easily accessible and, of course, easily searchable. Sometimes, however, it is the things that we come across by accident, while looking for something else, that grab our attention.

John Thomson's tenure as the first Professor appointed under the terms of John Reid's bequest was a short one. He had only recently organised the first, highly successful Reid memorial concert when he died in May 1841, possibly without knowing that a child was on the way. Under the circumstances, those left behind may well have read something into the date on which Thomson junior entered the world: 22 November is, of course, St Cecilia's Day.

Our 1841 Calendar

Inspired by one of the students in our 2020-21 cohort, we're building up a calendar of musical and related events in the year 1841. Gradually, this will include links to primary sources where available, and commentaries on these sources and what they tell us.

You can access the Calendar [here](#). We'll continue to edit it as new information becomes available.

1841 General Election

Voting in the 1841 General Election started on 29 June and continued until 22 July. Songs written for the

election campaign feature among the primary sources for this project.

The election would see the Conservatives, led by Robert Peel, take power from the Whigs, led by William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne. This was the last time the Whigs were in government in the UK.

Secondary sources:

Isobel White and Mary Durkin, General Election Dates 1832-2005 – UK Parliament House of Commons Library, Standard Note SN/PC/04512