

# Frederick Soddy Awards

Royal  
Geographical  
Society

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Advancing geography  
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## ● About Frederick Soddy



Frederick Soddy, born in 1877, was one of the earlier atomic scientists. He went to Oxford rather than Cambridge in 1896 to read chemistry, and established a reputation for excellence at an early age. Before the First World War he was concerned with the potential effects of the release of atomic energy, working with Ernest Rutherford at McGill in 1901. They published 8 papers setting out the “Disintegration Theory of Atomic Transmutation,” for which Rutherford received the Nobel Prize.

At Glasgow (1904 to 1914) he studied the displacements in the periodic table through radioactive changes leading to his theory of chemically identical elements with different atomic weights, which he called isotopes. This work earned him the Nobel Prize in 1921.

He became greatly perplexed by the paradox of atomic chemistry and physics that could either bring massive destruction or huge wealth. In 1919 he was appointed to the Dr Lee’s Chair of Chemistry at Oxford where later he also became interested in politics and currency reform.

The late Lord Dainton of Hallam Moors, himself a former Dr Lee’s Professor of Chemistry, writing the foreword to Dr Linda Merricks’ *The World Made New*, explained that when, in his youth, he arrived at Oxford, his utter respect for Soddy’s work and Soddy as a man were wholly reinforced when attending Soddy’s lectures.

Frederick Soddy was actively involved in the Le Play Society which was founded on the ideas of the pioneering French sociologist le Play. Shortly before his death in 1956, feeling that the Society was in decline, Professor Soddy instructed Peter Bunker, a young solicitor, to establish the Frederick Soddy Trust by his will, giving grants to groups studying the whole life of a community. Peter Bunker became an eminent Brighton solicitor and chaired and developed the Trust for many years.

For further details about Professor Frederick Soddy, see *The World Made New: Frederick Soddy, Science, Politics, and Environment* by Dr Linda Merricks. OUP 1996 ISBN 0 19 855934 8. See also <http://nobelprize.org?chemistry?laureates?1921?soddy-bio.html> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Soddy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Soddy)

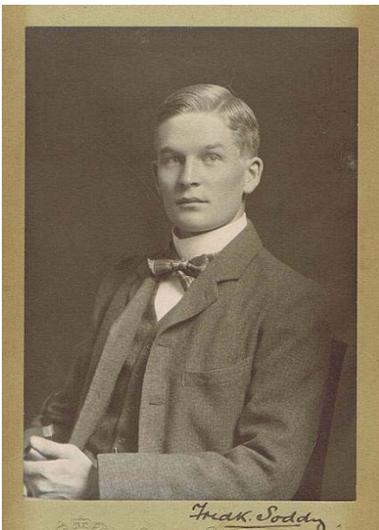
Text and images and compiled by David Hall OBE, Chair of the Frederick Soddy Trust, 1992-2015.



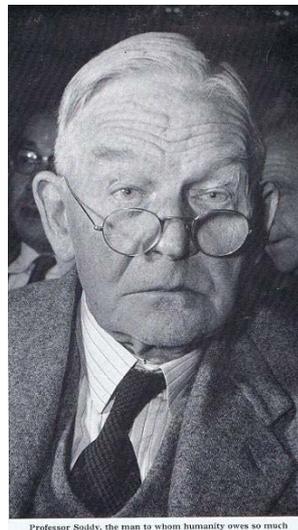
Soddy as a very young man 1897/98



Photograph of Soddy previously held by the Frederick Soddy Trust



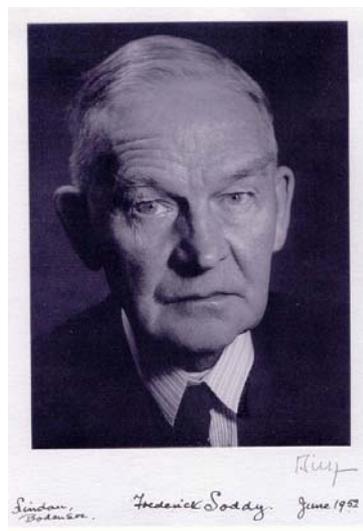
Soddy probably in about 1900 to 1903



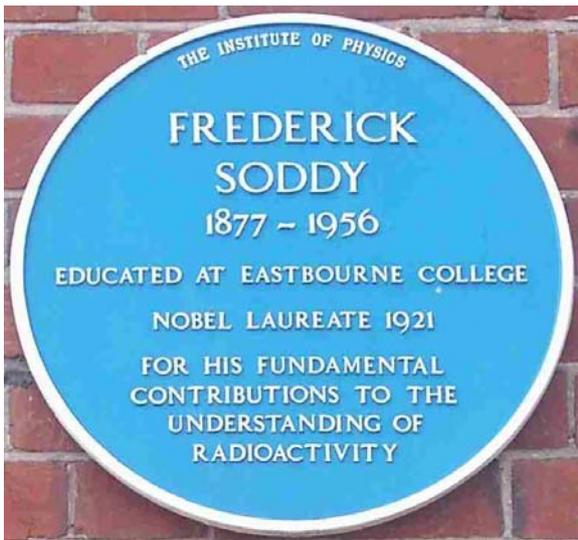
Soddy near the end of his life.



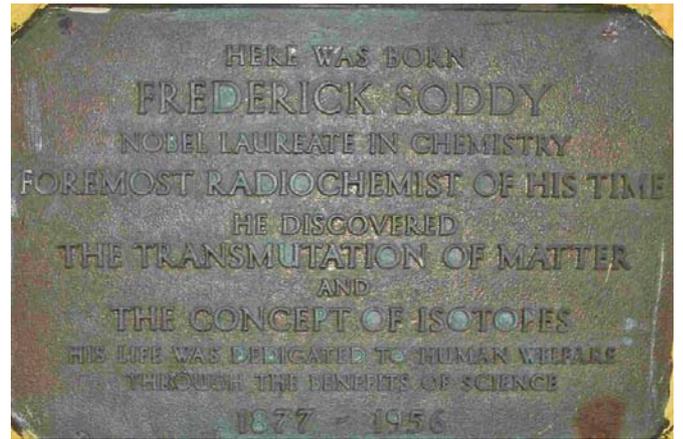
Soddy in Aberdeen in 1915



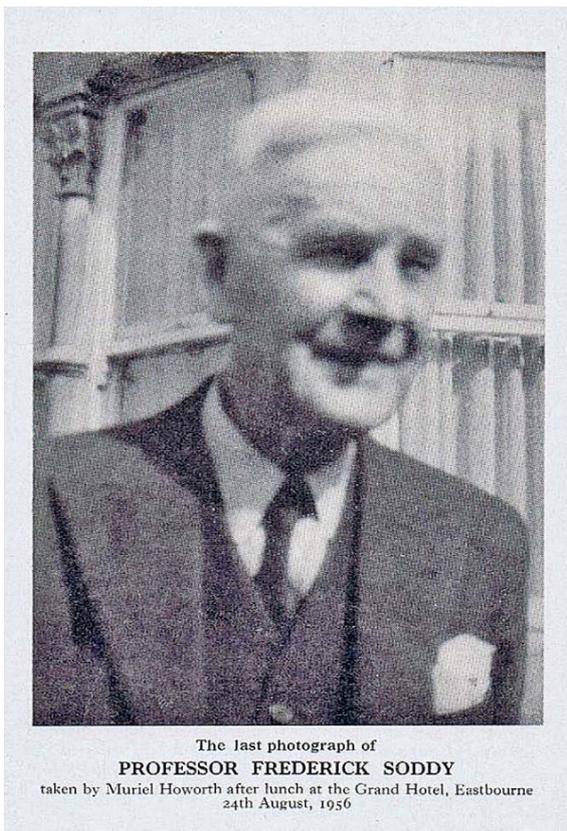
Photograph of Soddy held by the Royal Society.



A commemorative plaque at Eastbourne College



A plaque from Frederick Soddy's birthplace in Eastbourne



The last photograph of Professor Frederick Soddy. Taken by Muriel Howorth after lunch at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne on 24 August 1956.



Lindau, 1952. Graf Lennart Bernadotte, Frederick Soddy, Artturi Ilmari Virtanen, Georg von Hevesy & Otto Hahn.