

On This Day – 20th September 1842

Sir James Dewar born in Kincardine



James Dewar. Photo: public domain.

Anyone who has enjoyed a piping hot cup of tea or bowl of soup while camping in the wilderness has Sir James Dewar to thank – among the various inventions and breakthroughs made by the Kincardine-born scientist was the development of the vacuum flask.

Dewar was born in the Inner Forth village in 1842, in the building which is now the Unicorn Inn, and attended Kincardine Parish School before moving onto the University of Edinburgh. He worked in a variety of fields, and alongside the invention of the double-walled vacuum flask he worked on the invention of cordite, spectroscopy (the study of the interaction between matter and radiation) and studied the liquefaction of gases.

Dewar would go on to be recognised by a number of scientific institutions across the world, including here in Britain, in America (Hodgkins gold medal), France (Lavoisier Medal) and Italy (Matteucci Medal) – becoming the first Briton to be awarded the latter two.

So why not make a cup of coffee, put it in a Thermos, carry it around for 5 hours, then decant it and raise a toast to this important Inner Forth innovator.

More information:

[The science behind the Thermos](#)

[Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)

[James Dewar produces solid air](#)