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## BRITISH FAMILY COMPANY DC THOMSON AWARDED

### 9TH LEONARDO DA VINCI PRIZE IN LONDON

Paris, 26 September 2019 – The ninth Leonardo da Vinci Prize has been awarded to Christopher Thomson, the fifth generation of the Thomson family to manage the DC Thomson company, in the presence of a large audience including embassy representatives and university and business school lecturers from around the world. The prize, co-founded by the Henokiens Association <https://www.henokiens.com/> and the Château du Clos Lucé <http://www.vinci-closlucé.com/en>, aims to promote family entrepreneurship as a model for dynamic and sustainable growth in keeping with the values of its founders. Christopher Thomson received the trophy from Lord Wilson of Dinton, former Head of the UK Civil Service, at London's prestigious Two Temple Place venue.

#### A prize-winner recognised for the values embodied by Leonardo da Vinci

Following in the footsteps of past winners from France, Italy, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands and Austria, it is the turn of a UK family company to receive this highly respected prize. Faithful to its traditions and history, the **Thomson family** has passed down its expertise and its values from one generation to the next, just as Leonardo da Vinci transmitted his to his students.

These are **the five core values** recognised in the winner of the prize:

- History and tradition
- Business and family
- Loyalty and commitment
- Memory and transmission
- Innovation and modernity

#### Innovation, modernity and tradition

Faced, as all media companies are, with the digitalisation shift, DC Thomson continues to grow through diversification, acquiring radio, event and publishing businesses. This innovation policy creates both synergies and opportunities to cut costs and access new markets. Throughout its 170 year history, the company has succeeded in upholding its values of integrity and respect by providing dynamic and attractive content, while maintaining its commitment to the community and its employees.

*“Fidelity and commitment, but also innovation and modernity, have all helped to build the reputation of the Thomson family, whose name has become synonymous with a unique brand and a benchmark for superb creativity. This extraordinary company shares with Leonardo da Vinci a talent for passing its values on to future generations, superior expertise and an ability to innovate.”* Willem van Eeghen, Vice-President, The Henokiens Association

## Diversification and acquisitions

DC Thomson is one of the leading media organisations in the UK. In the last decade, the company has evolved into a group of trading businesses, launching and acquiring businesses in sectors complementary to its core media interests. Its primary media business continues to publish newspapers and magazines, while diversifying into new media, radio and events. The wider group includes global genealogy company Findmypast, leading IT and data business services provider Brightsolid, premium gifting business Wild & Wolf, multimedia studio Beano Studios and magazine publishers The Stylist Group and Puzzler Media. The company is an entirely family run business and has been for five generations. It employs over 1,800 people within its seven subsidiaries in 15 different locations across the UK and overseas and generates a turnover of €294 million. DC Thomson is headquartered in Dundee, Scotland, with prestigious London offices in the world-famous Fleet Street.

## 170 years of history

In 1849, the entrepreneur William Thomson II launched a shipping business after buying a 50% share in the sailing ship “Catherine”. The fleet grew to some 25 sailing ships and 19 steamboats. In 1866, he took a financial interest in the Dundee Courier before taking full ownership in 1886 with his son David Couper (DC) Thomson and his brother Frederick, who joined him shortly after. They acquired the Post Sunday Special, the Sunday Post, Kingsway and other regional newspapers. Between 2005 and 2019, major investments were made in Puzzler Media and the acquisition of Britain’s best-selling regional newspapers, the Press & Journal and The Courier. In 2014, the flagship office at 185 Fleet Street underwent a major renovation, 133 years after it was originally purchased. The business continues to grow through investments in the digital economy with in particular the multimedia Beano Studios set up to create and curate mischievous content for kids by building on their much-loved comic brands.

## DC THOMSON facts and figures

**Founded: 1849**

**Founder: William Thomson II**

**Head office: Dundee, Scotland**

**Turnover: €294 in 2018**

**Number of employees: 1,800**

## About the Leonardo da Vinci Prize

Founded in 2011 by the Henokiens Association and the Château du Clos Lucé, [the Leonardo da Vinci Prize](https://www.henokiens.com/content.php?id=3&lg=en) <https://www.henokiens.com/content.php?id=3&lg=en>, now in its ninth year, recognises family businesses that continue to reinvent themselves and pass on their expertise, an “intangible and living heritage” and an essential guarantee of sustainability in keeping with the works and genius of the artist and inventor who gives his name to the prize. By awarding a trophy, the "Leonardo da Vinci Prize", the Henokiens Association and le Château du Clos Lucé intend to honour multigenerational companies that have remained loyal generation after generation to cultural and human values, traditions that are unique to them. The Leonardo da Vinci Trophy designed by Mellerio, a member of the Henokiens Association, is inspired by the aerial screw invented by Leonardo da Vinci. It embodies the values of elevation, advancement and vision that the Leonardo da Vinci Prize was created to recognize, promote and reward.

<http://www.vinci-closluce.com/fr/prix-leonard>

<http://www.henokiens.com/content.php?id=3&lg=en>

**The Henokiens Association** – Founded in France in 1981, the Henokiens Association brings together family businesses around the world that are over 200 years old. Descendants of the business’s founders are owners or majority shareholders of the 49 member companies in nine countries. The Association’s aims are the development through its members of the values they represent and the concept of the family business as an alternative to multinationals. <http://www.henokiens.com>

**Le Château du Clos Lucé** – Located in Amboise, Château du Clos Lucé was the home Leonardo da Vinci came to live in at the invitation of King Francis I of France in 1516. Appointed “Premier Painter and Engineer and Architect of the King”, he worked continuously on multiple projects until he passed away in his room on 2 May 1519. Five hundred years later, Le Clos Lucé uses various highlights to celebrate the life of the man who believed that everything was possible and who constantly brought art and science together. The event programme illustrates the knowledge transmitted by Leonardo da Vinci, inspiring us to collectively transform the challenges of the contemporary world into opportunities. The Saint Bris family, who have owned Le Clos Lucé since 1854, opened the château and the Leonardo da Vinci Park to the public in 1954 to promote the artist’s legacy, memory and work.

<http://www.vinci-closluce.com>

## ***Photos of the event and press kit available on request***

### **Press contacts:**



**Carla van Benschop** – [carla@escalconsulting.com](mailto:carla@escalconsulting.com) - 01 73 01 45 52  
**Karine Berthier** – [karine@escalconsulting.com](mailto:karine@escalconsulting.com) - 01 44 94 95 63 / 06 60 95 70 77