

# The Earl of Radnor

11th AUGUST 2008

*Landowning peer who wrote his family's history and cared for a collection of Old Masters*



Longford (above) is said to have been bought on the spot by a forebear of Lord Radnor (right) after he first saw it, with money he had in his saddlebags

THE 8th EARL OF RADNOR, who died on August 11 aged 80, was the owner of Longford Castle in Wiltshire; he preserved and enhanced his inheritance, and was a knowledgeable custodian of an exceptional collection of Old Master paintings.

His family – the Bouvieres – were Huguenots in the Spanish Netherlands who were persecuted by the Catholic Duke of Alva, and in the 16th century Laurens des Bouvierie, a silk merchant, moved to London, settling up in Threadneedle Street.

Laurens founded the family fortune on the profits of trade with the Middle and Far East. His great-grandson, William, became Governor of the Bank of England and was created a baronet in 1714. Family lore has it that his son, Edward, spotted Longford Castle while riding near Salisbury in 1717 and there and then bought it from the Coleraines with the money he had in his saddlebags.

Originally a manor, Longford had been rebuilt in 1591, and was the model for the Castle of Amphicleus in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. It was constructed in triangular Swedish pattern form, with a round tower at each corner.

The Bouvierie family also acquired considerable property around Folkestone, and politically they were liberal and independent, which sometimes earned them a degree of notoriety. The 3rd baronet was created Viscount Folkestone in 1747, and his son, William, who married a Pleydell heiress in 1747 (thus bringing to the family the Coleshill estates in Berkshire), was in turn created 1st Earl of Radnor. He was a particularly judicious buyer of pictures, acquiring

75, and he commissioned Reynolds and Gainsborough to paint portraits of members of his family.

Jacob ("Jake") Pleydell-Bouverie was born on November 10 1927, the elder son of the 7th Earl of Radnor, KG, Lord Warden of the Stannaries from 1933 to 1965, and his wife Helena (née Adeane), whose mother, Madeline Wyndham, was one of the Three Graces in the celebrated Sargent portrait, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

Jake's paternal great-grandmother was Helen Matilda Chaplin, who during the First World War conducted her own all-female orchestra and was said to wear her tiara backwards so that the audience could see it while she was on the rostrum. It was she who first catalogued the impressive art collection at Longford Castle and had it published in two large volumes.

Following an unsuccessful operation on his back when he was young, Jake was obliged to walk with sticks. In later years he was confined to a wheelchair and had a motorised buggy on which he rode about his property, frequently with a delighted grandchild or cousin in tow.

He was educated at Chafyn Grove, Salisbury, and – during the war – at Greenlaw on Long Island. He then went on to Harrow and on to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read Agriculture. Thereafter he ran the diverse family businesses, greatly increasing his inheritance by his diligence and careful stewardship.

He created a farming operation which supplied Salisbury's and other retail outlets and, though based in England, his businesses took him to Canada and Australia. When the

Channel Tunnel was constructed, the family property at Folkestone rose considerably in value.

On the death of his father in 1968 he became an active member of the House of Lords, contributing to debates until he and most other hereditary peers were ejected from the House in 1999. He brought to the chamber a good, practical knowledge of farming, forestry, fish-farming and environmental matters. He championed South America and sea fisheries, and, as chairman of the board of the Dyslexia Institute, spoke on special education – dyslexia having afflicted several members of his family.

Radnor loved Longford Castle and made it a happy home for his family. He was a kind and generous host, witty and well-read, and had an encyclopaedic knowledge and appreciation of his art collection, which included works by Rubens, Van Dyck and Frans Hals, as well as Holbein's portrait of Erasmus. In 2001 he published *A Huguenot Family – des Bouvierie, Bouverie, Pleydell-Bouverie*, which told the story of his family from 1536 to 1889.

In May 1969, the day after he took up residence at Longford, he was at breakfast when the butler announced a broken window pane and the theft of some six paintings. It appeared that this was a commissioned robbery, but the thief, failing to identify the required painting (probably Holbein's *Erasmus*), had grabbed what he could. Along with other works he took a pair of paintings by Frans Hals, *Old Woman* and *Old Man*. A year later, following a tip-off, the pictures were found by a

woman police officer in Bournemouth. In 1972, to settle death duties, Lord Radnor sold Velasquez's *Juan de Pareja* (painted in Rome in 1650) for £2.3 million.

He married first, in 1953 (dissolved 1962), Anne Seth-Smith, with whom he had two sons. He married secondly, in 1963 (dissolved 1985), Margaret Fleming; they had four daughters.

In 1986 he married Mary Jillean (Jill) Gwennell Eddy, and this was a supremely happy union. Jill had been born in Patagonia, to an English father and an Argentine mother, and had originally met Jake when he was working on her father's ranch in Argentina in 1949. At the time his family had discouraged the idea of their marrying, and Jill became the wife of Squadron Leader Anthony Pettit, DSO, DFC and Bar.

When Pettit was killed in an air crash she was left with two small children and was expecting a third. She lived in Peru, but met Radnor again when she was bringing her children to school in England. After their marriage, she played an enthusiastic part in his public life, and supported him in seeing Longford as a welcoming home to a large and extended family. He described her as "a perfect chateleine, wife and companion", and was bereft when she died in 2004.

In recent years, Jake Radnor opened Longford to the public on only one day a year, during which he would absent himself until the visitors had gone.

His elder son, Viscount Folkestone, born in 1955, succeeds to the earldom.



## OBITUARIES

# The Dowager Countess of Radnor

Chatelaine of Longford Castle, Wiltshire, who restored the house and set up a trust for nature conservation

THE DOWAGER COUNTESS OF RADNOR, who has died aged 89, was chatelaine of Longford Castle, in Wiltshire, for 25 years and was active in organisations concerned with issues ranging from bee-keeping and the preservation of the countryside to prison conditions for women.

Isobel Radnor moved to Longford Castle following her marriage to William Pleydell-Bouverie, the 7th Earl of Radnor, in 1943. The Elizabethan structure of the castle, which is set in a large park on the banks of the River Avon near Salisbury, was completed in the last decade of the 16th century by John Thorpe, the architect of Holland House, for Sir Thomas Gorges. Built as a triangle, with round towers at the angles and an interior courtyard, the house provided the inspiration for Sir Philip Sidney's "Castle of Amphialeus" in the *Arcadia*. Having been spared destruction by Cromwell's forces in 1645, it was bought by the Bouveries in 1717.

During the Second World War, the greater part of Longford Castle was occupied by the Army, as a headquarters for the American General Mark Clark and also for the planning of D-Day, June 6 1944. After the Army left, a fire gutted the Victorian part of the house — but left the Elizabethan portion, and the family's art collection, including works by Holbein, Velasquez, Rubens, Van Dyck and other masters, intact. With the return of peace, the Radnors set about the long task of restoration, and in 1956 opened the house to the public for the first time.

Isobel Radnor saw it as her duty, as chatelaine, to pass the house on to subsequent generations in better shape than she had found it. With great enthusiasm she thus restored the castle gardens, which had been given over to the growing of vegetables during the war, and set about becoming expert on 18th-century furniture. She also became fascinated by embroidery, and in later years undertook the completion of a large embroidered carpet which had been begun by her brother-in-law, Bartie Pleydell-Bouverie.

Following a formal design by J M Pontremoli, the carpet, measuring 18 ft by 14 ft, took Isobel Radnor and her assistants seven years to complete. It was exhibited at the Wilton Carpet Factory in aid of the Salisbury Cathedral Spire Appeal in 1989, and for the next six years was exhibited at Montacute House, on loan to the National Trust.

She was born Anne Isobel Graham Oakley, the daughter of a colonel, on September 6 1908 at Lawrence End, Hertfordshire. She spent much of her childhood with her grandparents in Lanarkshire, on the Clyde, where she developed a love of natural history. Dur-

ing the Second World War she lived in London and, after the death of her first husband, worked at the Ministry of Information. An encounter with an hysterical woman on her way to an Underground shelter proved a more frightening experience than the Blitz, and thereafter she kept to her top-floor flat, sleeping under the table when necessary.

Having married the Earl of Radnor, who already had six children by a previous marriage, Isobel Radnor embraced the responsibilities of her position in Wiltshire with great energy. She was president, vice-president, chairman or patron of numerous local organisations, among them the Salisbury Community Health Council, the Salisbury Nurses League, the Salisbury Museum, the Wiltshire Association of Youth Clubs, the Girl Guides, and the Wiltshire Bee-Keepers Association (she herself kept bees).

With Colonel Charles Floyd, she founded the Wiltshire Trust for Nature Conservation, and in 1962 became its first president (and later its patron). "We thought then, very innocently," she recalled, "that if we could stop egg collecting and the men with butterfly nets, if we could have a few 'preserves' of special species and if we could persuade the Government to ban some of the more deadly pesticides, then all would be well."

They formed a council, published a leaflet, made a film and toured the county. Isobel Radnor herself would travel miles to catch sight of some rare species or migrant bird of which she had heard reports.

She also held a number of positions at a national level. In 1950 she joined the Prisons Voluntary Advisory Nursing Board, where she was instrumental in improving conditions for women prisoners who were pregnant or gave birth in prison. She felt this to be the most valuable contribution she had made in public life. She was for a time vice-president of the Royal College of Nursing, and from 1965 to 1984 she was president of the Health Visitors' Association.

In 1953 she became a member of the Historic Buildings Council, and from 1969 to 1979 sat on the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches.

After Lord Radnor's death in 1968, Isobel Radnor moved out of Longford Castle, but continued to live on the banks of the Avon, her binoculars always to hand to watch the wildlife. During her last summer, she much enjoyed the sight of a Montagu's Harrier nesting near her home.

Lady Radnor's first husband, Dick Sowerby (of Lilley Manor, Hertfordshire), whom she married in 1931, died in 1939. By her marriage to Lord Radnor she had a son.



Longford Castle: spared destruction by Cromwell and bought by the Bouveries Isobel Radnor (below, left) embroidering a carpet to designs by J M Pontremoli



## THE MAKING OF THE MODERN TOWN

### 1. The Estate and the M.P.s

1.

The Earls of Radnor, Lords of the Manor of Folkestone and owners of most of the land to be developed, together with their agents and advisers, collectively the Folkestone Estate, must surely be ranked as the most powerful unofficial influence on the development of the town. The foundations of the Estate dated from before the Norman Conquest. In 1863 its rights on the foreshore and the taking of wrecks were challenged by the Lord Warden, who exercised such rights at Dover and the rest of the Cinque Ports. The matter went to a Committee of the House of Lords. The judgment traced the history of the Manor through the centuries and concluded the Lord Warden's claim to be "a thing of yesterday" compared to the seven centuries such rights had been exercised by the Lord of the Manor. ①

The Estate documents are now in the Kent Archives collection. They form a fascinating, and largely untapped, source for the town's early history. ② There are court rolls, hundreds of leases, the wills of John Herdson and Basil Dixwell, a notebook with observations made by Jacob des Bouverie on his purchase of the Estate in 1697, the family account book, many exchanges with the Corporation regarding Estate rights and duties, down to the railway correspondence of the 1880s about the proposed loop line. There are documents concerning the fee farm of two hens from a tenement by the churchyard of 1391, the 1449 rental of John, Lord de Clyntch, arranged by streets, and the lease of a shop in Le Bochnery, 1559, and another survey of Folkestone by streets with lists of occupiers of 1810. ③ The Estate still holds the originals of the maps of 1698 by Abraham Walter and 1782 by John Powell. ④

The Estate Office did not preserve these documents so carefully out of mere antiquarian interest. In The Folkestone Chronicle, October 22, 1859, appeared the following announcement by Ralph Brockman, deputy Steward, that the Courts Baron were to be held at the "King's Arms":

"All Folkestone freeholders and copy and service holders who owe suit and service to William, Earl of Radnor, lord of several manors of Folkestone, are required to make their personal appearance, to pay up arrears of quit rents, copy rents and reliefs, and to enter their estates with proper descriptions on the Count Rolls." (~~The Folkestone Chronicle, October 22, 1859.~~)



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There were similar courts held at for the outlying manors at the "Maypole", Hawkinge. Such independent registration of tenancies, boundaries and transfers, with the fees thereon, were of obvious importance in any future dispute. <sup>Such as that of 1761 over the Sandgate (see chapter)</sup> The Estate was organised, motivated and held the documentation to pursue a more coherent and long-term policy than ordinary owners who held scattered parcels of land. Hence its importance in the eyes of its ~~xxxx~~ tenants during the railway negotiations. The leases it granted in themselves trace the history of the town's development. Between 1780 and 1800 43 leases are extant, between 1800 and 1829 there are 12. <sup>438</sup> The former period involved the development of the beachy ground at Sandgate. Fabian Clayton Wilson and others were building cottages for their <sup>boatbuilders</sup> ~~mariners~~ and this, together with the establishment of Shorncliffe Camp during the Napoleonic Wars, was the beginning of Sandgate village. Fabian Clayton Wilson built himself a spacious residence and 30 tenements for his men ~~working~~ working in the Sandgate shipyards. The industry thrived and other shipwrights followed. Between <sup>1775</sup> ~~1775~~ and 1787 seven 28-gun frigates, four 16-gun sloops and two fireships were built for the Royal Navy, as well as sturdy privateers. This activity, together with the purchase by the War Department of land for the new military camp at Shorncliffe, was the beginning of the village of Sandgate.

On the land below the cliffs, formerly the property of Plain Farm, Cuma House was erected by Captain Gill, R.N. The rent for the land was a peppercorn the first year, £15 p.a. subsequently and the building was to be to the satisfaction of the Earl and his surveyors. (This was the house subsequently used by the sixth Earl.) <sup>439</sup> There is the lease of the Cistern House, to be used as the Guildhall, to the Mayor and Jurats of Folkestone in 1830 for 21 years at £70 p.a., to be paid half yearly, and to include the stable yard, garden and pasture. <sup>440</sup> Two rooms were to be kept for Lord Radnor's steward. There are the leases of Walton Farm to Hunt Jeffrey in 1843, <sup>441</sup> of Terlingham Farm and Broadmead Manor. <sup>442</sup> There are pub leases, 'The Valiant Sailor' with 37 acres in 1861 at £45 p.a., 'The Black Bull' leased to Messrs. Rigden and Elmar in 1858 for £18 p.a. and 'The Ship Inn' in Sandgate to George Ward in 1865 at £50 p.a. The large-scale development of the town from the 1850s involved a flood of ~~xxxx~~ leases of plots of land, generally for 99 years. They included restrictive covenants prohibiting trade signs (in fashionable



areas) or drying washing in the garden. Proposed designs had at first to have the approval of the Estate architect, Sidney Smirke. No freeholds were granted before 1910 and this prohibition was sometimes criticised and contrasted with the more liberal policy adopted by the Duke of Devonshire in relation to Eastbourne. ①

Having surrendered its control over the Stade to the Harbour Company and to its successor, The South Eastern Railway Company, The Estate still kept a firm hold on its other foreshore rights, the rights of wreck and of quarrying building stone. The former may not have yielded much profit as, on all shores, the local inhabitants have always been the first to reap the harvest which the wrath of the sea has given them. In 1859 a Dutch galliot, the "Frederick" went aground off Radnor Cliff with a cargo of coal and the Sandgate villagers laid in a store of cheap firing. ② The "Princess", a west Indian brigantine was wrecked off Sandgate Castle and a crowd scrambled for coconuts and barrels of rum and sugar, while Thomas Baker and George Kennett climbed aboard and were arrested for stealing the Captain's gold watch. ③ Building stone was valuable, but quarrying had to be carried out with caution in case it caused cliff falls. In 1790 Richard Hodgmen had a lease to take stone from Eastwear Bay to Sandgate Castle, the Earl still keeping the copperas stones (used to produce a green dye), thunder stones (fossils), and enough stone to repair the streets and houses in Folkestone. ④ There was an interesting case in 1860 in which the lease of the Stade to the Corporation was cited. The Railway Company was taking Stade rock to build a new north wall and to extend the pier. The local men on the job said they had decided to take the rock and that they had the power to do so. Messrs. Bailey and Norman, the Radnor surveyors, denied such a right. The railway officials in London were more conciliatory and a negotiated settlement was reached. ⑤ Lord Radnor had received £2,296 cash for land used for the line. ⑥ see p. 172. The Estate was indeed well served by its agents, from Dubouche Smith to the cautious and pragmatic Mr. Norman.

Henry Carter

The holders of the Estate are chronicled in the History of the Manor and Lordship of Folkestone, dedicated to Jacob, the second Earl, dated 1800, handsomely bound in white calf lettered in gold, by Edward Hasted.<sup>①</sup> Hasted had exhausted his resources on the compilation of his History of Kent, which contains the two earliest engravings of the ~~xxxx~~ area, the town from the sea and Park Farm. At the end of his life, the Earl, his friend and patron, ~~xxx~~ rescued him from penury by granting him the Mastership of Corsham Hospital in Wiltshire. Hasted ~~describes~~ describes the introduction of the feudal system into England by William the Conqueror. Land was held from the king by the payment of knights' service, and similar payments in kind or in service were exacted from smaller landholders. At the time of Domesday, Folkestone was a thriving settlement with 209 villagers, 83 smallholders, 5 churches and 7 mills.<sup>②</sup> The feudal system went back in fact before the Conquest and the Lordship of the Manor of Folkestone was held by Godwyn, the rebel Earl of Kent. It passed to Odo of Bayeux, William's half-brother, and eventually to William des



The Estate and the M.P.s

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Avranches, who held of John de Fiennes by service of 21 knights for 28 weeks  
in rotation the honour of Folkestone and its manors, Swingfield, Enbrook,  
Casebourne, Cheriton, Evering, Boughton, Lidden, and Ardenne, all within the hundred.  
He was succeeded in 1095 by Nigel de Muneville, who founded a new <sup>benedictine</sup> priory  
to replace the old church and nunnery of St. Eanswythe. He gave the  
monks <sup>h</sup>two manors in Normandy, tithes on all produce, fish, sheaves, calves,  
one third part of the mill, the right to take what the sea cast on their  
land (the rights of wreck) and other extensive privileges. He finished with  
a swingeing curse on those who dared to deprive the religious of any part  
of the grant. These anathemas were not uncommon, adds Hasted, in that age of  
bigotry. There was a weekly market on Wednesdays and a yearly fair on St.  
Eanswythe's day. The property returned by marriage to the d'Avranches who  
held it for six generations till Maud married Hamo de Crevequer. The story  
goes on through the centuries, from Hamo to John de Sandwich, to the Segraves  
who sold to William de Clinton in 1349. Part of the Estate was held in  
separate ownership and the two halves were united by Thomas Cromwell. After  
he was beheaded, the Estate reverted to the Crown and the King gave it  
back to the Clinton family.

When Henry VIII dissolved all the monasteries, Folkestone of course  
had to go with the rest. It was an alien priory, belonging to the Abbey of  
Lolley, and was no great loss. The prior, Thomas Bassett, reported

"Considering the state of our house and the small revenues  
belonging to it and the great and heavy debt which oppresses and  
nearly overwhelms us .... we have consented that this priory shall  
be totally annihilated in spirituals as well as in temporals."

He was given a pension of £10 yearly. Alderman Henry Herdson, a merchant  
and member of the Skinners' Company, purchased the estate from the Clintons.  
<sup>Thomas</sup>  
~~John~~ Herdson. In the days of ~~John~~ Herdson, 1578,

"The ancient park of Folkestone seem to have been disparked  
as to the use of it for deer and the like and to have been used for  
the feeding of oxen and sheep and for the purposes of agriculture."

Basil Dixwell was the nephew and heir of John Herdson and it was a later  
Sir Basil Dixwell who sold the manor and lordship of Folkestone to Jacob  
des Bouverie in 1697.\* Jacob must have known the area, as he represented  
Hythe as one of the Barons of the Cinque Ports from 1695-1700 and was

\* (John Dixwell, Sir Basil's nephew, actually signed Charles II's death  
warrant. He later took refuge in New Haven, Conn. His name was erased  
as far as possible, from family history, and does not appear in Hasted) ①

elected again in 1714. ①

The founder of the Radnor family fortunes was Lawrence des Bouverie, born 1542, of Flanders, who married Barbara den Hove, niece of an opulent silk manufacturer in Frankfurt, and emigrated to Canterbury at the age of 26. His great grandson, William des Bouverie, was created a Baronet in 1714. Jacob, William's brother, was also a silk merchant living in London who was looking out for good investments. As well as Sir Basil Dixwell's estate he bought a house and tenements <sup>in Lythe</sup> from Mr. Gibson. ~~His~~ His notebook describing a trip around his new properties <sup>②</sup> and his letter <sup>③</sup> book from 1717 to 1722 <sup>④</sup> gives a good idea of his holdings and general policy.

As well as farms, his possessions included two tile lodges, a copperas house, (copperas stones were used to produce a green dye), a stone quarry on the shore, the Kings ~~xxx~~ Arms at the Holmestone Distern house and 300 acres of woodland, worth in all £1,204 p.a. He rode round Park Farm, were flowed St. sawsynthe's stream of clear water, Walton farm, the Cherriton and Radnor woods, the Priory Lees and noted the state of repair of each. He saw "My Bayle land" with its battery of eight guns and the remains of the house of the old priory that had been dissolved 2<sup>d</sup> centuries before. The stones would come in useful for building.

Henry Barton was appointed to collect the rents. Jacob was a meticulous, indeed a grasping landlord, intent on the last penny of his rights, particularly if his agent had been dilatory in collecting the rents. He wrote to Margaret Haughton two days before Christmas, 1710, "After heartily condoling with you on the death of your husband, wishing health and ~~xx~~ happiness to yourself and your little one, I think it proper for me to acquaint you that your husband stands my debtor in £200."

It was difficult to send money safely to London and guineas were advised as they attracted less attention than large amounts in small coin. Otherwise bills of exchange were used, a very complicated proceeding and Jacob had to acknowledge receipt and successful encashment of each one. However, rents were sometimes two or three years in arrears. "I am glad you go forthwith after tenant Dixon, he has broken his word with you a hundred times. His farm is undoubtedly a good pennyworth, (this was a favourite expression of Jacob's), and you can't fail of an able tenant for it."



He was particularly jealous of his rights ~~and~~ of wreck and salvage on the shore, making sure that the anchor and cable of the wrecked ship Neptune, cast ashore between the middle new and the Shorne Cliff, fell to his share.<sup>①</sup> This caused a dispute with Mr. Brockman of Hythe and Jacob had recourse to Sir Basil to see if he had any remaining documents to support the Estate's claim. He was also at loggerheads with the Mayor and fishermen of Folkestone after a great storm in 1720. Stones from the Stade had become dislodged and he offered the fishermen a barrel of ale to replace them. They felt their labour was in vain, as the stones needed to be cradled in large timber, otherwise they would only be washed away again. The Mayor said the fishermen continued clamorous. Jacob was furious.

"This expression was not well used towards me. I desire you to acquaint Mr. Mayor that as I am Lord of the Mannor, I esteem it my rights to proceed in the liberties of it as I think well of. I will remove the stone or not and do what I please about the Stade, and if the Fisher Men dont like it, let him and them represent to me by a Petition what they would have done for the advantage of the Town and Corporation, and I shall resolve what may be best to do in it."

Jacob eventually died unmarried and the Estate passed to his nephew, Sir Edward, who also died without issue. Sir Edward's brother Jacob who inherited title and estates was created Viscount Folkestone in 1747 and started the famous Longford picture collection. In 1761 he was succeeded by his son, William, another noted picture collector, who was granted the Earldom in 1765. The family name was now William and Jacob in alternate generations and succession to the title <sup>was</sup> as follows: ②

William, 1st Earl, 1765-1776, married firstly Harriet, daughter of Sir Mark Pleydell, secondly Rebecca Alleyne of Barbados.

of Coleshill, Berks, firstly Anne Duncombe,  
widow of Lord Faversham.

✕ Jacob, 2nd Earl, 1776-1828, married Anne Duncombe, daughter of Lord Faversham.

The family name became Pleydell-Bouverie.

✕ William, 3rd Earl, 1828-1869, married firstly Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton, daughter of the Earl of Lincoln, secondly Judith Anne Mildmay. *2nd Lord. Herbert - King - Aldrich, Goreau*

Jacob, 4th Earl, 1869-1889, married Lady Mary Grimston, daughter of the Earl of Verulam.

William, 5th Earl, 1889-1900, married Helen Chaplin, daughter of the Rev. Henry Chaplin.

Jacob, 6th Earl, <sup>1900-1930</sup> married Julian Balfour.

William, 7th Earl, 1930-1968, married firstly Helena Adeane, secondly Mrs. Anne Sowerby.

Jacob is the 8th and present Earl.

The third Earl succeeded to the title at the age of 49 and lived till he was three weeks short of 90. He was educated in France where he was introduced to Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. He was in the Commons for 27 years and, <sup>as an Earl,</sup> on succeeding to the title, became that rare bird, a Liberal peer, supporting the abolition of the slave trade, Catholic Emancipation, and the 1832 Reform Bill.<sup>①</sup> His lifetime saw the coming of the railway and, under his guidance, the Estate adopted an expansionist and forward-looking policy which should be also financially remunerative. At no time had Folkestone been considered ~~xxxx~~ other than an investment property. It lacked the dignity and consequence of a resident Lord of the Manor. The family seat was at Longford Castle, Wiltshire, which had been purchased from Lord Coleranke in 1717. The Earl was not seen often in the town,



though he held various honorary offices, being patron of the Working Men's Educational Union, the Dispensary and the Harveian Literary Institute. He ~~was~~ also always <sup>gave</sup> good for a generous subscription, such as the £70 given annually to the Dispensary in the 1860s. Land could ~~also~~ be granted for good causes, religious, ~~or~~ educational or recreational. He presented the ground for the Sandgate National Schools, he built Christ Church and endowed it with £30 p.a. His son built Holy Trinity and both churches were regarded as refuges for those of an Evangelical persuasion from the High Church practices at St. Eanswythes. The Leas was kept in good order as a promenade and completely returned in 1866<sup>③</sup>, shrubs and trees were planted along the Lower Sandgate Road which had been made up in 1828 as "The Earl's New Road." Later the Estate gave ground for the Marine Gardens, Radnor Park and the ~~new~~ Leas Shelter. The Earl was the largest shareholder in the Waterworks Company and represented its interests in Parliament. In his later years he was known as "The Old Earl"<sup>④</sup> and Lord Folkestone transacted Estate business on his behalf.

His grandson's wife, Helen, remembered him ~~as a kindly~~ in her memoirs, From a Great-Grandmother's Armchair, <sup>⑤</sup> as a kindly old gentleman, delighted with her first baby, Jacob, the new Radnor heir. She did not get on so well with her <sup>immediate</sup> ~~in-laws~~. Lady Radnor, wife of the <sup>fourth</sup> ~~third~~ Earl, who had borne 15 children in 18 years, had made up her mind to disapprove of her eldest son's wife, who was neither rich nor titled, and made her feel extremely uncomfortable on her visits to Longford. The young Folkestones lived at the other family home, Coleshill, under considerable restrictions, unable to invite their uncle and aunt to the house, as Lord Radnor had quarrelled with them both. In 1877 their adored daughter died of typhoid fever and was buried at Coleshill. The Radnors took such offence <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~ Nellie was not in the family vault at Britford that they forbade her parents to use Coleshill any more. Helen Radnor's unfavourable impression is reinforced by the facts of a case heard by the Salisbury magistrates, while Lord Radnor was Chairman of the Bench, which was widely reported both in the national dailies and at Folkestone. <sup>⑥</sup>

Three children had stolen greens from a field for sale at Salisbury. The ~~Chairman~~ addressed the ringleader sentencing him to 20/- plus costs or a month in prison,

"If you are caught at this sort of thing again, you will go to gaol, and perhaps get a flogging into the bargain."

George Stay was eight years old. The Daily Telegraph remarked that ~~the~~ the appointment of stipendiaries would do away with such maladministration of justice.

If the fourth Earl was not perhaps the man to be widely loved by his tenants, visiting Folkestone rarely and staying in hotels, family public relations were excellent, thanks ~~for~~<sup>to</sup> Lord and Lady Folkestone. Lady Folkestone was a talented musician and singer who could have turned professional, had she been born into a different class. She appeared many times at charity concerts and sang duets with Tosti. Lord Folkestone learnt to play the cello and joined in with the family. She organised concerts for the poor with the People's Entertainment Society and sang for the Primrose League at the Albert Hall and Covent Garden. There was a memorable concert at St. James', Piccadilly, when she persuaded all the leading musicians and conductors of the day to play in the Toy Symphony. She also organised the "Ladies' String Band" with sell-out performances, 82 instrumentalists and 120 in the chorus, all ladies of good family of course. She sang for the Queen and was a great friend of the Princess of Wales who asked her to be a Lady-in-Waiting, but she had to refuse for health reasons.

Folkestone was not forgotten. She gave a London concert in aid of St. Andrew's Convalescent Home and the whole family performed at a free entertainment for fishermen at the Congregational Schools. She sang often and brought the String Band to the Exhibition Building, notorious for its cold draughts. On these visits, the Folkestones stayed either at the Westcliff or the Lees Hotels, or at 39 Augusta Gardens. After his accession to the title in 1889, the new Earl decided to build himself a home in Folkestone, thus satisfying a persistent desire on the part of the inhabitants for the Lord of the Manor to have a marine residence and attract good society around him. The Manor House, still standing on the Lees, was built ~~on the site of the old Manor House~~ by Dawieal Baker; George Gordon, son of the Dean of Salisbury was the architect. It was not long in Radnor occupation, as their son found it too small for his family of 10 children and used Cliff House, Radnor Cliff. "F" and Helen were constantly in Folkestone in the nineties, and their daughter was much in demand for amateur theatricals. Radnor influence at this period was strong in local politics by way of the Primrose League and they attended many Town Hall meetings. (S)

The year 1900 was a sad time for the family. Jacob joined the army during the Boer War and was sent to South Africa. He became very ill with enteric fever at Bloemfontein and his wife, Julian, and Uncle Bert, Canon Bouverie, went out to nurse him. His father's death in June was due partly to anxiety over his son's health. The fifth Earl had been popular in the town. He attended meetings himself instead of sending a subscription. His father had been a rich man, leaving £288,548 and landed B.6.



property of 20,000 acres in Wiltshire and Berkshire and 3,003 acres in Kent. <sup>①</sup> However much of this ~~went~~ <sup>was</sup> in legacies to the rest of the family and the Folkestone property had to be mortgaged. <sup>②</sup> William ~~he~~ felt the need to be a prudent landlord and to ask a proper price for building ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup>, though he was faced with a considerable demand that the Estate should be responsible for providing cheap working class housing as well as expensive mansions. Land was set aside for allotments and Radnor Park, laid out <sup>by</sup> the Borough Surveyor, presented to the public. At the opening of the Leas Shelter, ~~which had been built~~ <sup>which had been built</sup> by the Estate but transferred to the Corporation at a percentage of the cost, the Earl remarked that he read newspaper comments and had no desire to be a grasping landlord. <sup>③</sup>

His son now drew the ties uniting Estate and town even closer. A Radical, Cllr. Payer of the East Ward, had suggested him as Mayor and he accepted the office in 1901. <sup>④</sup> He insisted on being addressed as "Mr. Mayor" in his official capacity and gained a favourable verdict from the local Press:

"He has sacrificed leisure and many personal enjoyments, he has done much to raise the tone of municipal government and ~~to~~ make a seat on the Town Council an object worthy the ambition of cultured and leisured citizens. Trained in the Imperial Parliament, he has been a firm but courteous advocate of order and has insisted firmly upon Council rules in their deliberations." (F.H., Oct 1902).

On July 11th, 1902, he was presented with a silver cradle bearing the Radnor arms and the Mayoral seal, a traditional gift to a Mayor to whom a baby was born during this year of office. It was a boy, Bartholemew. Ironically, only a few months later there was considerable public controversy when ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> Gordon Hotels, the owners of the Metropole, erected ~~barriers~~ <sup>barriers</sup> either side of the hotel barring access to the part of the road facing the Leas. The Estate retaliated by putting up a large fence in front of the hotel itself. The matter went to law and the case <sup>⑤</sup> was found in favour of Lord Radnor. Both fence and barriers were removed.

#### Contemporary views on the Radnor Estate were mixed:

An Act for the support and preservation of the lower part of the town and the parish church, 1760.

"We are sensible of your Lordship's favour in contributing so largely to the expenses of preparing and passing the said Act. It will be our study to put the same into execution for the power thereby intended in such manner as we hope will merit your Lordship's esteem and favour." (The Corporation, Rev. Dr. William Langhorne, the minister and all the principal inhabitants of the town.) <sup>⑥</sup>

"His (Lord Radnor's) interest in the town of Folkestone except what comes into his purse is exceedingly small and would doubtless require a candle and lantern to find it." (A liberal, protesting against Lord Radnor's refusal to allow Sandgate to be supplied with Hythe gas, F.C., July 10, 1858).

"Before 25 years ago, his Lordship's name was not mentioned with the respect it is now. It was not his fault, but that of his advisers and now a better feeling prevails." (The Mayor, speaking at the Tradesmen's Dinner, R.O., Feb. 22, 1868.)

"The Earl relies solely on the agent's report and accounts. He really ought to have a marine residence here and could understand the needs of the area better." (F.O., October 21, 1871.)

"His strict rules (with regard to the size of houses and the preservation of the Lower Road) may seem harsh at present, but posterity will appreciate their value. That firmness will insist that this magnificent inheritance is worthy of ~~at~~ its situation and its frame." (F.O., January 2, 1886.)

"Every bit of local enterprise and activity has to pay tribute to the Lord of Longford Castle and it is principally due to this fact that Folkestone is kept from her proper position as the leading summer health resort of the South Coast" (Cllr. Jones, a Radical, F.O., March 15, 1895).

"Everyone knows that to get popularity in certain quarters, the thing is to 'have a go' at the Earl. We like to know that his sympathies have not been alienated in spite of all the attacks made in recent years." (Editorial, F.O., May 4, 1895.)

Did the Estate benefit the town? In the nineteenth century the answer must be in the affirmative, though the Folkestone it promoted is now an ~~anachronism~~ anachronism. The aristocratic mansions are divided into flats and bedsitters, the tall ceilings making them difficult to heat. The great sweep of ~~the~~ the Leas is comparatively deserted. Holiday patterns have changed and the wealthy go farther afield. It may be felt that, had there been more co-operation between the Estate and the Council since World War II the town would not now be in a state of decline. ~~As a result~~  
~~was produced in 19~~

The Earl is seldom seen now in person and the Leasehold Reform Act has meant the break-up of large estates. It still owns part of the town centre and exercises a watching brief over new developments, the Sports Centre, and the Warren and <sup>now</sup> the Channel Tunnel. ①

Compared to the local presence of the Estate and its agents, the members of Parliament were remote figures whose activities seemed to affect the town little. But Parliamentary representation in the nineteenth century must be seen against the background of the gradual extension of the franchise, the introduction of secret ballots and the prohibition of bribery. Interest in politics was growing by the last quarter of the century, expectations of M.P.s duties were higher and there was a greater polarisation of opinion between Conservatives and Radicals. Until 1895 Folkestone was nominally Liberal, as perhaps befitted a town with strong trading and mercantile interests. While agricultural constituencies



mostly returned members linked to landed interests, Folkestone and Hythe were fortunate in having as members four men of wealth and initiative, with experience of a wider world than county society.

The Reform Bill of 1832 caused a few broken windows on the Bayle, the sort of incident that occurred nation-wide. After the Bill, Folkestone was joined to Hythe, which returned one member instead of two. In 1834 the register of voters was as follows: ①

Freemen		£10 qualification
Borough of Hythe	21	133
Liberty of Folkestone	4	147
West Hythe	2	4
Folkestone	1	28
Cheriton	2	67
Saltwood	5	21
Newington	0	26
Other parishes within 7 miles of Hythe		
Guildhall	8	Total 469

By the end of the century the numbers qualified to vote had risen almost tenfold to over 4,000. Stewart Marjoribanks was the ~~first~~ member from 1832 to 1837. He was a Whig and shipowner, living at Cuma House, who presented a picture of Charles James Fox to Hythe Town Hall. ②  
~~He was a Whig and shipowner, living at Cuma House, who presented a picture of Charles James Fox to Hythe Town Hall.~~  
 He accepted the Chiltern Hundreds in 1837 and was succeeded by Viscount Selbourn who held the seat until 1841 when Stewart Marjoribanks returned. In 1847 Edward Drake Brocknan succeeded in gaining the seat against the opposition of Baron Mayer de Rothschild, a fellow Liberal. He was the son of James Drake Brocknan of Beachborough and was a barrister and Recorder of Hythe. The election was fought out with great bitterness and, never, according to local tradition, had the right of a vote in Hythe been so valuable. In 1857 he retired because of indisposition and Sir John Ramsden, a Yorkshireman, was elected in his place. Sir John was opposed by ~~Baron Mayer de Rothschild~~ Colonel (later General) Hankey, a local figure of some note, especially in Sandgate. He returned to his native Yorkshire in 1859 and this time Baron Mayer de Rothschild was returned unopposed, four rival candidates having withdrawn, and kept the seat till shortly before his death in 1874.

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minutes  
re  
portion.

This now meant a return to the Rothschild connection begun in the days of the Napoleonic Wars. Mayer Amschel Rothschild was a coin dealer in Frankfurt who expanded into international finance. (A) He had five sons, one of them Nathan Mayer who handled the export of gold to the Continent via the port of Folkestone. Nathan's eldest son, Lionel, also raised large sums for the Government to compensate the expropriated slave owners, to relieve the Irish famine, for the Crimean War and the Suez Canal purchase. He also wanted to become an M.P., an ambition hitherto impossible for Jews who had to take an oath "on the true faith of a Christian". For eleven years he persevered; ten times a bill was introduced to revise the oath and ten times the Lords threw it out. (B) At last in 1858 he was successful and the way was open for his brother Mayer to take his seat peacefully at Folkestone. Had ~~he~~ <sup>Baron Mayer</sup> won on his first attempt in 1847, he would have faced the same struggle as ~~his~~ his brother.

All the Rothschilds were very rich and Mayer was no exception. When his only child, Hannah, married Lord Rosebery, a future Prime Minister, after her father's death, she was described as the richest heiress in England and the possessor of a fortune of seven million pounds. Mayer engaged Joseph Paxton, the architect of the Crystal Palace, to build Mentmore Towers on his 700 acre estate in the Vale of Aylesbury. It ~~was~~ is a vast and impressive "Jacobethan" pile. He filled it with one of the most outstanding and varied collections of art treasures in private hands in Europe; quantities of French furniture, Marie Antoinette's milking pails, Gobelin tapestries, crystal, silver, enamels, pictures by Rubens, Boucher, Van Loo and Moroni. (C) The washing facilities for guests were Louis XV commodes, fitted with basins and taps. These were cheaper than Maple's. The sale of the treasures and the house by the Rosebery family in 1977 excited much interest. (D) A bust of the Baron was standing forlornly on a pile of horsehair mattresses in the stables. Lot 2461 in the sale, subsequently withdrawn, was "luggers awaiting the departure of the Steamer from Folkestone Harbours" by John James Wilson, a Folkestone artist, presented to the Baron by his grateful constituents in 1873. It was hung at his residence, 107 Piccadilly, and the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were invited to lunch to admire it. (E)

No one could expect that such a man, described as "the hungriest, merriest, ridingst baron in England" would be at the beck and call of his electors. ~~Baron~~ In 1868 he voted in nine divisions out of 168 and apologised that the pressure of duties kept him away from his constituency. (F) He was known as a moderate Liberal and supporter of Gladstone, approving of education for the working classes and the extension of the franchise. He was generous to local charities, subscribing £50 for the poor at Christmas, (2/- per head as



one recipient ungratefully calculated),<sup>①</sup> and giving a clock to the new Town Hall. At the 1865 election he was returned unopposed, though there was a complaint that he had not been seen in the town for six years. After that, he made a point of turning up for the Mayor's dinner. In the 1868 election he had two rivals, Captain Merryweather, a fellow Liberal, who subsequently retired, and Albert Nugent, Conservative, a simple honest soul who did his best and promised to be more attentive to the wishes of the electors. The Baron was called "an absent member of the House and a silent and neglectful one out of it", who had refused to intervene when Captain Boxer was oppressing the fishermen by refusing to let them enter the harbour till their fish was stale.<sup>②</sup> The only recorded anti-Semitic remark came from Thomas Denne, "Why do you vote for a Jew and an unbeliever against a Protestant and a Christian?" Election fever lasted for weeks and there were noisy scenes at the Town Hall and the Artillery Rooms in Sandgate. However, the Baron's return was a foregone conclusion, the results being Nugent 521, ~~xxxx~~ Rothschild 1,268. Election expenses were £2,130 for the Baron and £1,284 for Albert Nugent. Fighting an election did not come cheaply. However he exerted his influence in circles where it mattered and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ promoted Folkestone's commanding position in the bullion export trade. He was also remembered with affection by those interested in ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ racing. "Follow the Baron" they advised. He had a magnificent stable and in 1871 his mare Hannah won the Thousand Guineas, the Oaks and the St. Leger and Favonius won the Derby. The parish church bells rang in rejoicing.<sup>③</sup> ~~Sc~~

He was succeeded in 1874 by ~~xxx~~ Edward Watkin who held the seat until 1894. Watkin was an obvious choice for the town as he influenced its fortunes already to such an extent already as chairman of the South Eastern Railway Company. It was also convenient for him to find a secure seat. In 1857 he had been returned for Great Yarmouth but was unseated on a petition. He was M.P. for Stockport 1864-8 and then unsuccessful in Cheshire and Exeter. Unlike the Baron he was indefatigable in the performance of his duties, always ready to attend meetings of civic functions and presented the prizes at the Science and Art classes sixteen times.<sup>④</sup> Nominally a Liberal, he appealed to members of both parties, occupying a middle of the road position. He sometimes voted with the Tories, taking the patriotic side in the Zulu and Afghan wars and was given a baronetcy in 1880<sup>⑤</sup> by Disraeli's government. His lukewarmness over the favourite Liberal cause of Church disestablishment earned him the scorn of the Nonconformist ministers, Rev. Sampson and Rev. Foster Jeffery, both the backbone of the extreme Radicals. He also did not support school boards. In his first election he was opposed only by the resurgent Capt. Montague Merryweather, a good-looking and gentlemanly man, as the Folkestone Chronicle commented, his only fault being a deficiency of brains. "Although the Captain did not have a chance, the Watkin party set about their task as

though they were fighting a tough contest. Volunteers were sent out, back streets and alleys canvassed while the candidate was busy shaking hands and generally making himself known. The figures were: Watking 1,347, Merryweather 300. His standing with the electorate increased in 1878 with his activities ~~in connection with~~ over the new harbour at Boulogne when he went with a fellow director to see M. Gambetta. The discussions lasted till cockcrow and he was supposed to have returned with the new Boulogne Harbour Bill in his briefcase. He equally earned some unpopularity with the Railway Company's tactics over the Sandgate branch line. At the 1880 election he was returned unopposed, Folkestone being only one of about a dozen boroughs to experience an uncontested election.

Opposition was not dead, however, and as the middle ground was already occupied, this tended to extremism. In 1881 a new party appeared, its mouthpiece "The Folkestone Advanced Liberal Association", organised by the Rev. Sampson. Premises were found, radical literature together with tea and coffee distributed and regular meetings held. One was addressed by Thomas Pilcher, an organiser of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, which had organised strikes in Kent and Sussex. There were demands for manhood suffrage, the abolition of the House of Lords and Church disestablishment. Any mention of Sir Edward was greeted with hostile laughter. A radical candidate, Mr. Morton, stood against him in the 1885 election, advocating free education, the abolition of grants to Royalty and leasehold enfranchisement. But Sir Edward was again triumphant with a majority of 1,450.

The Conservatives were also wooing the working man with the foundation of the Conservative Working Men's Association in 1883. Lord Radnor was chairman and remarked that, in his youth, he was called a radical and had been in jeopardy of being injured or even killed for his beliefs - by whom, he did not make clear. But the great success story of the 1880s in politics was the formation of the Primrose League in memory of Disraeli. This was patriotic and universal in its appeal, aiming to defend the Monarchy, the Empire and the Church. A habitation, or branch, was started in Folkestone in 1886 at a crowded meeting <sup>in</sup> at the Town Hall. Lady Folkestone sang "Auld Lang Syne" and 700 members, knights, dames and associates were recruited, which total rose later to over a thousand. The sharp divisions of politics were starting to be felt. £30 worth of damage was done to the Town Hall in March, 1889, at a meeting summoned to discuss Irish Home Rule, always a contentious subject. There was an inebriated old lady waving her shawl and cries of "Chuck him out" and "He's a Dover rough" were heard.



in the twentieth century. During World War I he served in the army and became Haig's secretary, smoothing the path of that irascible man. After the war he was Lloyd Georg's Parliamentary Private Secretary. The Prime Minister found the facilities and ~~lux~~ hospitality of Port Lympne useful for semi-political gatherings, such as that attended by the French President, M. Millerand, who came to discuss the reparations question. Sir Philip entertained a wide spectrum of guests from Charlie Chaplin to the Duke of Windsor, his sister, or cousin, Hannah Gubbay, acting as hostess. Like his father, he did not play much part in the family firm but was very keen <sup>on</sup> flying, ~~becoming~~ becoming Under Secretary to Sir Samuel Hoare, the Air Minister. He died in 1938, aged 50. Folkestone had cause to remember his generosity - he opened and maintained for 15 years a free dental clinic and built a model working class housing estate of 16 cottages and 8 flats.

and also at a Women's Suffrage meeting.  
 Rev. Russell Wakefield spoke on this occasion. The Church of England clergymen were almost overwhelmingly Tory, the Dissenters Liberal and in favour of Church disendowment. Rev. Russell Wakefield was an exception; educated in Germany <sup>eventually to become Bishop of Birmingham</sup> and Vicar of Sandgate, his Liberal sympathies were strong enough to disconcert his ~~fellows in the same way~~ brother clerics. He was also a close friend of Sir Edward, who was godfather to his son, and officiated at Sir Edward's second marriage to Mrs. Blanche Ingram, widow of the founder of the Illustrated London News. This marriage was the subject of unkind rumours that Sir Edward was marrying her for her money, which he was at pains to deny.

"From Snowden's breezy summit to Dover's chally strand  
 He carries us the slowest of any in the land.  
 He bores the Channel Tunnel, he builds the Watkin Tower,  
 But neither helps his income like Mrs. Ingram's dower.  
 He'd blacken Kent with coal pits and cave St. John's Wood in  
 But these are merely trifles in his career of sin,  
 For he doth run the Underground in whose mephitic air,  
 The gasping, choking Londoner doth think of him - and swear." ○

In 1887 Sir Edward paid yet one more visit to North America; he was one of the great advocates of a railway line across the Continent. The following year he went to India, planning a railway through to Burma. On his return he was given a dinner at the Winter Garden in the Royal Pavilion, an event said to be the largest gathering ever held in Folkestone. Here he was described as a captain of industry and brilliant manager on whose thousands of working men depended for their jobs, but one often made the subject of bitter attacks. ○ At the Science and Art prizegiving in 1889 he told the students of plans to erect the "Watkin Tower", modelled on the Eiffel Tower, 1,200 ft. high of octagonal shape to be built at Wembley. ○ In 1892 there was another election and Sir Edward, with united Conservative support, was again returned unanimously. He opened the ~~new~~ Marine Gardens and everyone was agog to see the new Lady Watkin. In his election speech at the Town Hall he promised an extension to the harbour and mentioned that he had done his best to have Folkestone made a torpedo station, but competition from Dover was too strong. ○ By 1894 his health was declining and he gave notice of his resignation from Parliament.

After an ~~uninterrupted~~ period of peace, politics were once more to be thrown into a ~~paralytic~~ state of turmoil. On the extreme Radical side, there was Cllr. Johnes and the Municipal Reform League, demanding the public ownership of gas, electricity, railways and water, together with all landed property. ○ The Primrose League was still strong with regular meetings and Radnor support, attacked for its "inflated income, derived from farm labourers and servant girls, its fanciful and childish parchments, bogus Brummagem badges and enamels." ○ The Conservative and Liberal candidates had now finished with their truce and fielded separately



candidates. Sir James Bevan Edwardes for the Conservatives was a former military man whose longwinded speeches were guaranteed to empty any hall; His Liberal opponent, Sir Israel Hart, should have appealed strong to Folkestonians. He had lived in Tontine Street till the age of 29, moving then to Leicester, where he had opened a successful clothing factory and was three times Lord Mayor. He spoke to an audience of working men, advocating Home Rule, an eight day and Home Rule for workers.<sup>①</sup> It was a fierce battle and the result, Edwardes 2,189, Hart, 1,776, surprised many. However there were national factors at work; while the recent massacre of the Christians in Armenia had helped Gladstone, the Liberal espousal of a temperance bill was not popular in a town owing its prosperity to the holiday trade.

Sir Bevan Edwardes resigned for health reasons in 1899 and was succeeded ~~not~~ as Conservative candidate by Sir Edward Sassoon, head of another famous Jewish family. But ~~xxx~~ while the Rothschilds had been a banking family of German origin, the Sassoons were merchants and manufacturers who came originally from Baghdad and settled finally in Bombay.<sup>②</sup> Here they gained great wealth, though not on the Rothschild scale. Abdullah (later Albert) Sassoon, ~~himself~~ the first Baronet, brought his cotton spinning machinery to England and set up in business. His heir was Edward, born in Bombay, who married Aline Rothschild, daughter of Baron Gustave of Paris. Aline was a "boul" member of an exclusive and intellectual society coterie. The couple had many houses, Trent Park in Hertfordshire, in Park Lane, Bombay, Poona and Paris. They wished also to have a residence in the constituency and bought Shorncliffe Lodge on the hills above Sandgate from the Countess of Chester.

Although Sir Edward was head of the house of David Sassoon and Co., he was more interested in politics. In Folkestone he became the first President of the Chamber of Commerce, President of the Victoria Hospital and spoke at the Cheriton Oddfellows dinner. On a national scale he was interested in wireless telegraphy, and, as Chairman of the Commons Committee he tried to bring down the cost of cables messages and introduced an unsuccessful bill to make telegraphy compulsory on passenger ships. He also took up the cause of English fishermen and French poaching in English waters. Sir Philip, his only son, became M.P. for Folkestone and Hythe on his father's death in 1912, the youngest member at Westminster. He was a millionaire at 23, one of the most eligible young men in London but never married.<sup>③</sup> He was an aesthete and a dandy, disliked and admired in society in about equal quantities for his ostentatious display of wealth, and best known in Kent for building Port Lympne, one of the few great country houses of