

BIFRONS

A Kentish Mansion

by

L. Laurence Boyle

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* Shelf-mark U213.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Bifrons was a mansion house in Patrixbourne, Kent, which was first built about 1615, reconstructed in 1775 and demolished in 1950. This book recounts the story of Bifrons and the people who lived in it.

CHAPTER TWO

The Bargrave Dynasty

(a) John Bargrave

There is no documentary evidence for the precise date when Bifrons was built but the architectural evidence leads one to conclude that the year was 1615 or possibly 1616. The original house was probably designed by Inigo Jones (1573–1652) in a Palladian style now known in Britain as Jacobean Courtier (or Court) style. Jones learned the principles of this style during an architectural study tour with Thomas Howard, 2nd Earl of Arundel, in the Venice and Vicenza areas of Italy in the period July 1613 to September 1614. He studied the Palladian palaces in Vicenza in September 1613 and August 1614. He was interested in both their structural form and in their building materials. The external architectural details of Bifrons well match those of Houghton Court at Houghton Conquest in Bedfordshire which was built in 1615. Any earlier date for Bifrons would be inconsistent with all known usage of this very characteristic style. No other contemporary architect is known to have been responsible for buildings in this style. Prior to 1615, houses were more or less randomly-developed rather than symmetrical. One clue to the interior construction was provided by Seymour¹ who recorded that it was “built on arches and had a venerable appearance”.

The original owner of Bifrons was John Bargrave. His father, Robert Bargar, was a yeoman farmer and tanner of Bridge who was born about 1540. Robert had married Joannah Gilbert, daughter of John Gilbert of Sandwich, on February 1st, 1568, and so we assume that John, his first son, was born in the early 1570s. John matriculated as a Fellow-Commoner at Clare College, Cambridge, at Easter 1588 and was admitted to the Bar at Lincoln’s Inn on November 7th, 1590. The Admissions Register shows that, on November 30th, John Bargar was granted “special admission” (which meant that he had certain privileges such as exoneration from keeping vacations or serving certain offices); the right of sitting at the Master’s (*i.e.*

Benchers') Commons instead of the usual Fellows' Commons or the right of taking meals without needing to undergo any legal exercises. Life in the City enabled John to meet (and marry in St. Mary Woolchurch Haw on February 13th, 1597^{7/8}) Jane Crowche, the daughter of Giles Crowche, the armigerous haberdasher of Cornhill ward in London.

John's mother died in December 1598 and his father's will was proved in 1600. After his father died any estate would have to be used to provide for the other children, some of whom were of school age. Two well-documented examples are Richard, who was a scholar at The King's School, Canterbury, from 1598 to 1601, and Isaac who was born in 1586 and by 1625 had become Dean of Canterbury Cathedral.

The Bargar family of Robert and Joannah was quite well-connected and financially stable. One connection was probably through John Boys, who married Angela (or Angell), one of John's sisters, on October 4th, 1604, in St. Mary's Church, Patrixbourne. It cannot be inferred from this that Bifrons was standing in 1604 as Bridge church was subsidiary to Patrixbourne church.

The records are silent about how John's own career developed after leaving Lincoln's Inn but he seems to have used his legal training to go into business. He is recorded² as being an esquire of Tilmanstone in April 1607 and his daughter Sarah was baptised in Tilmanstone church that same year. The significance of this location is that he was probably lodging with his sister Angela whose husband was the vicar of Tilmanstone at that time. John must have been sufficiently successful that it was expedient for him to change his name from the rather humble Bargar to the less humble Bargrave in 1609. Bann has speculated extensively about possible motives for the change³ of surname. John was granted arms in September 1611.

On July 20th, 1615, John Bargrave's brother, George, married Dorcas Martin in the London church of St. Gregory (by St. Paul). She was the daughter of Captain John Martin who was a shipowner and one of the pioneer planters in Virginia. John Martin's father was a London goldsmith whom John had sought to deceive when he returned from Virginia with a barrel

of soil claiming it to be gold ore. It may have been this inclination towards deception that influenced John Bargrave to invest in the colonisation of Virginia.

We know from parliamentary documents that John Bargrave owned a pinnace named *Edwin* on May 4th, 1618, and that James Brett of London was its master. The evidence of the persons who travelled from the Port of London to Virginia recorded in the muster taken in the Virginia settlements in January and February 162⁴/₅ reveals that the *Edwin* had arrived from London each year from 1616 to 1619. There may have been other departures. Sir Edwin Sandys is reputed to have noted that Captain Bargrave had sent out various ships so the scale of Bargrave's investment cannot be assessed on the involvement in the *Edwin* alone. At least one other ship, a magazine, was noted. This would be for the commercial operations of carrying goods in both directions while the *Edwin* would have been primarily for passengers.

1619 was also the year when John Bargrave was one of the 11 people granted a patent enabling him to undertake the transport to Virginia of "great multitudes of people and also cattle".

One of John's younger brothers, Thomas, who was the incumbent of the livings of Eythorne and Sevington, was a member of a party of 50 emigrants who arrived in Virginia in 1619. He took up the post of director of the Episcopal church at Henricus (known since 1634 as Henrico) in St. John's, Richmond. He was the successor to the Rev. Alexander Whitaker, the founding rector, who had gained fame as the minister who had baptised Pocahontas and, in 1614, married her to John Rolfe who unfortunately drowned in the James River in 1617. His post was covered by William Wickham until Thomas Bargrave arrived. However, Thomas died in Virginia in 1621 and left his library to the college in Henricus.

In 1622 John Bargrave claimed the distinction of having undertaken to be the first planter of a private colony in Virginia. Circumstantial evidence concerning the location of this colony suggests an earliest possible date of foundation as 1616.

In 1623 John Bargrave, an “esteemed member” of the Virginia Company, became active in suing or entering complaints against a number of officers and fellow members. He wrote five treatises suggesting reforms of the government of Virginia. He changed faction within the Virginia Company several times in pursuit of his own ends. His main complaint was against Sir Thomas Smythe who was Governor of Virginia. He alleged that the government of Virginia was corrupt in that the patent he had for free trade had been overruled and that there was effectively a monopoly in operation which caused him considerable financial losses. Sir Thomas was only interested in the export of tobacco and sassafras from Virginia which meant that John Bargrave’s ships were returning unladen from America. Consequently John had lost tens of thousands of pounds. By 1624 he was defaulting on a debt of £500 to the Virginia Company for which he had given a bond of £800. He was hoping to settle this from the accounts of his estate.

John Bargrave died intestate and was buried on October 24th, 1624, in the south chapel of Patricbourne church. Administration was granted⁴ on February 11th, 162⁴/₅ to his creditor, Bernard Cliffe: his wife, Jane, and son, Robert, renounced any claims.

(b) Captain Robert Bargrave

It is recorded in the Acts of the Privy Council of England for March 31st, 1630, that “this day John Bargrave, being sent for by their Lordships’ warrant, appeared by his servant and was discharged from farther attendance upon his conformitie in finding such Armes as he is charged with, and withall to attend the Lord Chamberlaine, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Kent”.

Exactly what happened to Bifrons after John Bargrave had finished with it is far from clear.

(c) John Bargrave

CHAPTER THREE

The Slingsby Dynasty

(a) The tenancy of Sir Guilford Slingsby

Geoffrey Ridsdill Smith states, without indicating his source, in a section on the period from 1634–1638 that Bifrons was the family home of Sir Arthur Slingsby's father, Sir Guilford Slingsby. A few pages earlier he incorrectly reported that Sir Guilford, who was Comptroller of the Navy, had been lost at sea in 1633 rather than in 1631. We have to conclude that either Sir Guilford's residence at Bifrons was very brief or that John Bargrave himself had vacated the property before he died, possibly on financial grounds, although he still had at least one servant at the time of the Privy Council summons. The most likely explanation is that Sir Guilford, and subsequently his widow, had rented Bifrons from the Bargrave family. This is in accordance with the epitaph in Patrixbourne church which reads:—

Guilford Slingsby was born on October 7th, 1565, the son of Francis Slingsby of Scriven (1522–1600) and his second wife Mary Percy (1532–1598). He matriculated at The Queen's College, Oxford, on March 23rd, 158^{1/2}. He was knighted on July 23rd, 1603. He married Margaret Walters, a daughter of William Walters, one of the aldermen of York, in 1609. On November 24th, 1611, he was appointed Comptroller of the Navy which gave him an annual salary of £50 for life.

Sir Guilford was not reputed for politeness and, indeed, he threatened Sir John Coke, one of the Commissioners of the Royal Navy, that he would not outlive Lady Day 1624 unless he was restored to office by that day. King Charles I reappointed Sir Guilford to the post of Comptroller in February 162⁸/₉. He was entitled to lodgings but the size of his family (8 sons and 4 daughters) and servants presented a problem in finding suitable accommodation. Accordingly he violently ejected John Wells, the storekeeper of the navy, from his lodgings at Chatham. In the light of this the renting of rooms at Bifrons seemed a logical step though there are no details of the agreement with the Bargraves. It seems probable that Bifrons, which was certainly large enough, was capable of accommodating more than one family.

Sir Guilford was lost at sea on April 29th, 1631, and his will was proved on June 16th that same year. There is no evidence to suggest that Bifrons remained occupied by Sir Guilford's widow and their family. On the other hand, there is a letter⁵ from Robert Bargrave at Bifrons to one of his sisters which refers to his son (rather than *one* of his sons) at the time he was still being breast-fed. Given that Robert had married Elizabeth Peyton, sister of Sir Thomas Peyton of Knowlton Court, in Canterbury Cathedral on April 13th, 1635, one can hazard a reasonable guess when this letter might have been written.

Sir Guilford's widow was referred to as "Old Lady Slingsby" by Samuel Pepys in his Diary entry for January 29th, 166⁰/₁.

(b) Sir Arthur Slingsby

One of the younger children, Arthur, provided a further link with Bifrons. He was born about 1623 and in time became a Colonel of Horse. As a Cavalier he felt he would be safer abroad and escaped to France in a shallop. In 1657 he was living in Brussels where he worked as Secretary to the Earl of Bristol on the proposed alliance with Spain. He had a house near the park which he put at the disposal of the King.

Arthur was knighted at Brussels on June 24th, 1657, and created 1st Baronet of Bifrons by letters patent at Bruges on October 19th, 1657.

He retired to Bifrons with his Flemish wife and their family and, according to Hasted, purchased Bifrons from the Bargrave family late in 1661 or early in 1662. Possible evidence for the continuation of the Bargrave ownership until 1661 would be that the sale was arranged by Robert Bargrave's father-in-law, Sir Samuel Peyton of Knowlton Court. Since Robert was a naval captain, the attractions of living at Bifrons were possibly neither desirable nor compelling.

Arthur's wife submitted a petition for the position of Lady of the Privy Chamber which had been promised her at Breda. She argued that she had lost all her fortune in the King's service and had left her country in the confident hope that her husband's faithful service would give him employment⁶. Arthur himself appealed for their son, whose godfather was the King himself, to be made a Page of Honour to the Queen when the next vacancy occurred⁷. The comment has been made that it was the state of want, which seemed to be chronic with most cavaliers, that led Arthur to run lotteries. Unfortunately some of these were regarded as unfair and Arthur was regarded as a "shark".

Arthur became a Freeman of the City of Canterbury by gift on May 13th, 1664, in recognition of his having been instrumental in procuring the assize judges to come to the city.

He died at Bifrons from a sudden fit of vomiting on February 12th, 166⁵/₆, only two days after he had been playing tennis at Whitehall. In accordance with the terms of his will he was buried in the Bifrons chapel of St. Mary's church.

(c) **Sir Charles Slingsby**

Arthur was succeeded by his elder son, Charles, who became the second (and last) baronet of Bifrons. Charles was reported to have been under 21 in 1664 and it would seem that Bifrons was an unnecessary luxury for him. He therefore sold it in 1667 and was reported as living abroad in 1669.

In 1681 he married a Mrs Mary Lee who was a well-known and talented actress playing classical rôles to some acclaim. She had

been variously known for some time up to 1660 as Mrs Mary Aldridge, from 1672 to 1680 as Mary Lee and then as Lady Slingsby in the period 1681–1685. A warrant for her arrest was issued on August 12th, 1682, for delivering a sardonic epilogue criticising the Duke of Monmouth at the Theatre Royal. She died as a widow of St. James's parish and was buried in the old St. Pancras churchyard on March 1st, 169³/₄. The baronetcy had lapsed with Charles's death.

CHAPTER FOUR

Thomas Baker

According to Hasted, Thomas Baker was a London merchant who bought Bifrons in 1677 from Sir Charles Slingsby. Hasted further noted that there was a pedigree of Baker of Patrixbourne, descended originally from Cranbrook, in the Heralds' office. This has since been transcribed by the Harleian Society⁸ and is the pedigree of an Edward Baker of Patrixbourne. The problem with this is that during the Visitation carried out by Sir Edward Bysse, Clarenceux King of Armes, in 1663–1668, an Edward Baker of Patrixbourne — Bifrons was not mentioned — declared a pedigree showing that he was currently on his fifth marriage and with a connection to Cranbrook, which would include Sissinghurst. However, there is no Thomas Baker in the pedigree and hence this particular pedigree does not help to identify the owner of Bifrons in 1677 and, as a good historian, Hasted did not say that it did!

Hasted's clue may not have been far off the mark since Edward Baker had a son, Thomas, by Joyce, his second wife and daughter of John Jowles of Alkham. Edward is thought to have been born about 1593 so that the purchase of Bifrons in 1677 may well have been jointly with his son, Thomas.

However, there was another Thomas Baker who might have been the documented owner of Bifrons though there is no direct evidence for this. This Thomas was the eldest son of Sir Richard Baker (1588–1645), the chronicler, and as such belonged to the Baker family that owned Sissinghurst.

The Bakers of Sissinghurst

Another widely-perpetuated myth is the claimed descent from Sir Richard Baker the Chronicler, who is descended from the Bakers of Sissinghurst, Kent. The more research that comes to light, the less that probability remains that this connection may exist.

Sir Richard Baker was born in 1588 and died on February 18th, 1645. He married Margaret Mainwaring, daughter of Sir George Mainwaring, baronet of Ightfield. Richard agreed to assume certain debts of his wife's father and thus became bankrupt and ended up in

debtor's prison. Richard was knighted for his historical works, and was well-known. His family owned the beautiful Manor of Sissinghurst, Kent. He was the grandson of Sir John Baker, Chancellor of the Exchequer of England, under King Henry the VIII, through King Edward VI and Queen Mary, about 18 years. Margaret Mainwaring's lineage can be traced back to William the Conqueror. For these reasons, I believe, many people with the surname Baker, claimed a relationship that, so far as we can tell, is totally non-existent. Sir Richard Baker the Chronicler had two sons, Thomas and Arthur, and three daughters, Cicely, Anne and Margaret. (source: *Biographia Britannica* by Andrew Kippis, 1800, researched by Edward Sinker.)

When Thomas Baker died Bifrons was sold to William Whotton.

CHAPTER FIVE

William Whotton

Hasted's reference to the purchase of Bifrons by a "William Whotton" is unlikely to refer to William Wotton (13.8.1666–1726^{6/7}), the natural scientist. William had local roots, coming from the Wotton family of St. Alban's Court, Nonington. Having suffered a precocious youth in which he mastered Latin, Greek and Hebrew at the age of six, he was admitted to St. Catherine's Hall, Cambridge, at the age of nine, took his Bachelor of Arts when he was 12½, and became in time a Doctor of Divinity and a Fellow of the Royal Society. According to Nigel Ramsey⁹, there is ample evidence of scholars, such as the philologist William Wotton, using Canterbury Cathedral Library in the late 17th century. Bifrons would therefore have been a convenient residence for such work.

Equally reference to the William Wotton who was the vicar of Cholsey from 1662 does not fit Hasted's description of a London gentleman.

A more likely possibility is the William Wootton who was a warden of the Cordwainers' Company in 1685¹⁰.

Another possibility is the William Wotton (or Wootten) who was born in Kent about 1623 and married Martha Brodnax of Godmersham (born 1611) in Northgate Church in 1655.

CHAPTER SIX

Thomas Adrian

Thomas Adrian was born in Hammersmith in 1647 and married Ann Crisp on November 11th, 1675 in Hammersmith. She was the daughter of Ellis Crisp and his wife, Anna Strode. Ann died on August 16th, 1677, after which Thomas married a Catherine, by whom they had a daughter Judith.

Thomas Adrian owned Hode Farm from about 1680. He was a member of the Grand Jury at Maidstone Assizes on July 19th, 1687, and was Sheriff of Kent for the year 1690¹¹.

On November 28th, 1694, he and Catherine sold Bifrons, Hode Farm and other messuages, lands and appurtenances in Patricxbourne, Bekesbourne, Littlebourne and Bridge to John Taylor of Hackney and John's uncle, Brook Bridges of the Inner Temple, for £7,800¹².

Some time after Thomas Adrian died on April 15th, 1701, Catherine married Francis Wilkinson. She died on **January 21st, 1706**.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Taylor Dynasty

(a) John Taylor

John Taylor was born on December 7th, 1655, the son of Nathaniel Taylor of St. Giles's Parish in Cripplegate ward and his wife, Mary Bridges. Nathaniel was a radical Puritan lawyer who by supporting Oliver Cromwell had been appointed Recorder of Colchester at the time of the Commonwealth. His nomination as one of the Members of Parliament for Bedford in Barebone's parliament of 1653 was accepted by Cromwell. Nathaniel was fanatical. He had 18 children, most of whom were born in Brook House, Holborn. Several died young. Nathaniel died on January 15th, 168^{3/4}.

John's mother, Mary (*~1631), was the daughter of John Bridges of Hackney and Elizabeth Holyoake ~1649 and the sister of Brooke Bridges of Inner Temple and, later, Goodnestone.

On June 14th, 1677, John married Olive Tempest, the daughter of Sir Nicholas Tempest of Stella, Co. Durham, and his wife Margaret Swinburne who was the daughter of the Sheriff of Northumberland. They had 14 children of whom the first three were girls — Mary, Olive and Margaret. Their first son, Brook, was born on August 18th, 1685, when they lived in Edmonton.

John agreed to purchase Bifrons and Hode Farm from Thomas Adrian on September 29th, 1694. Their son, James, died a year later. Finances can't have been too bad as oval bust portraits of John and Olive were painted about 1695 and, although the present whereabouts of these is not public knowledge, they belonged in 1975 to Mr. and Mrs. Brian Trench who were also the owners of a painting in oil on canvas of the Taylor children which John Closterman executed about 1696. This picture was sold in London by Sotheby's under the title "The children of John Taylor of Bifrons" as the work of Johann Baptist Closterman on July 9th, 1980, to the National

Portrait Gallery. They retitled it “The Children of John Taylor of Bifrons Park” and attributed it to Johann (henceforth known by them as John) Closterman, the brother of Johann Baptist Closterman. It featured in an exhibition “John Closterman — master of the English Baroque, 1660–1711” there from July 24th to October 4th, 1981. Douglas Stewart¹³ described it as “arguably the finest English group portrait of its period”. It currently hangs on the left of the fireplace in the saloon of Beningbrough Hall, near York.

John became a Freeman of the City of Canterbury by gift in 1696.

More children followed and

In 1704, he purchased Bridge Place from the heirs of Walter Bræms (who had died in 1692) who had become so impoverished by its construction that they had to sell it. Surprisingly John demolished the greater part of his new acquisition leaving just one wing standing which he regarded as sufficient for a gentleman.

According to the Rev. Dr. John Harris¹⁴, there was a motto deriving from verse 1 of chapter 14 of the Book of Proverbs somewhere on the front of Bifrons — no view has ever shown it and accounts are too vague — which read:

DIRUTA ÆDIFICAT UXOR BONA, ÆDIFICATA DIRUIT MALA
 which roughly means “A good wife rebuilds what has been destroyed while a bad wife destroys what has been built”. Being reported in 1719 it cannot refer to the Rev. Edward Taylor and his rich wife, Margaret, who were subsequent owners. However, it has been suggested that it referred to the construction by John Bargrave and his rich wife, Jane Crowche. The difficulty is that it was never clear what Jane Crowche would have been *rebuilding* so perhaps we must tolerate a little poetic licence.

John Harris also reported that there were “some very large and fine hollies and two brick walls covered on each side with striped holly which is planted on one side of the wall and made to bend down over the top and cover the other side to the bottom. The green walks are here also fine and covered with the cleanest turf I ever saw. About 500 yards below the house is a canal at one end of which are two islands and a little house

built, which they call Trout Hall; in it are bathing places, some beds and rooms for company. The rivulet which makes the canal abounds with trout of two sorts, white and speckled, and in it are many loaches, some of which are often found in the trouts' bellies”.

(b) Brook Taylor

Brook was educated at home by the vicar of Folkestone, the Rev. John Sackette, M. A. (Cantab.), who on October 24th, 1702, married (in St. Pancras' church, London, though recorded in *Canterbury Marriage Licences*) Brook's aunt, Margaret Tempest, who was resident in Bifrons at the time. Brook qualified for admission to Cambridge University as a Fellow-Commoner at age 15 but didn't go up until April 3rd, 1701^{2/3}. His tutor at St. John's College was no less than his brother-in-law, John Bowtell, who had married his elder sister, Olive, and who had been the vicar of Patricbourne since February 2nd, 1697^{7/8}, appointed by Brook's eldest sister, Mary. Brook matriculated in 1709 and was awarded the degree of Bachelor of Laws that same year.

On March 20th, 1711^{1/2} he was elected to the Royal Society, the foremost scientific society, of which Sir Isaac Newton was President. Just 28 days later he was appointed to the committee whose remit it was to inspect the letters and papers relating to the dispute between Newton and Leibniz.

In 1714 he became a Doctor of Laws and was admitted to the grade of advocate in the Court of Arches, the ecclesiastical court of appeal of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

On January 14th, 1714^{4/5} he was appointed a Secretary of the Royal Society as he was conversant with nearly all of the discoveries that Sir Isaac Newton had made and was able to elucidate them in the most abstruse ways and also support them. His knowledge of languages enabled him to answer the pressing correspondence of foreign academies, which were engaging in wars of literature with the Royal Society. This contact with foreigners led to invitations which he felt too busy to accept. However, he did give in to a pressing invitation from Pierre Rémond de Montmort, the Abbé Antonio Conti and others to meet them in Paris.

Brook was always a favourite with the ladies and this was explained by his grandson on the basis of family sources as being due to the facts that he was remarkably handsome, that he was most elegant and that he had considerable social talents. He had been associated with Marcilly de Villette and Catherine Barton who was a beautiful and accomplished daughter of Sir Isaac Newton's step-sister.

Brook's mother, Olive, died in April 1716 and Brook returned to Bifrons. The funeral was on the 17th and on the 22nd Brook wrote¹⁵ to Newton asking for leave of absence until the summer recess. This meant that he did not take the minutes of the meetings from April 12th to May 17th which was a little difficult as the other Secretary, Dr. Edmund Halley, was also away.

Pierre Rémond de Montmort was a great admirer of Newton and had sent Brook a hamper of champagne out of which 50 bottles were to be passed on, "either by land carriage or by water" to Newton. The real destination of this wine was in fact Catherine Barton who had lived with Newton for nearly 20 years. She was admired by many of Newton's foreign visitors as well as de Montmort who had to be careful as he was married. Catherine had become available since the death in May 1715 of Charles Montagu, a predecessor of Newton as President of the Royal Society and also sometime Chancellor of the Exchequer, founder of the Bank of England and a great debater. His wife had died in 1698 and his relationship to Catherine Barton was variously described from one of a "secret marriage" or "open concubinage" to a more casual, but close, relationship. Montagu was created Baron Halifax in 1700 and Viscount Sunbury and Earl of Halifax in 1714. She profitted very substantially from his will and, notwithstanding the considerable competition for her at the time, she married in August 1717, at the age of 38, John Conduitt, an economist for whom Newton had secured an appointment at the Mint. They had one child the following year.

Brook returned to London in **February 1717** and the necessary overwork impaired his health. Consequently, he went to Aachen to take the waters on his doctor's orders. He decided he would prefer to study moral as well as natural philosophy

and so, on October 21st, 1718, he wrote from Bifrons to Edmund Halley a letter of resignation from his office of Secretary with effect from the usual date — November 30th — asking that a successor be appointed at the next election. His reason for resignation was stated to be that he would not be spending enough time in London to enable him to discharge his duties. He returned from Aachen early in 1719.

Towards the end of 1720 (Henry) St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, invited him to pass some time at the Chateau de La Source (near Orléans) which he been granted a life-lease of in the right of his second wife, Marie Clara des Champs de Marcilly, who was the widow of the Marquis de Villette. The two men became lifelong friends and in 1721 Brook returned to England.

Brook's scientific productivity had not completely declined once he had given up his Royal Society post but his last paper in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* appeared in May 1721 and his biographer admitted that the lack of any further contributions indicated an "impaired state of mind".

Brook married Elizabeth Bridges of Wallington, near Croydon, in St. Mary Abchurch on July 4th, 1721. She was regarded as being of good family but no fortune and the absence of a dowry caused a complete rift between Brook and his father. This caused considerable unhappiness, especially for the new Mrs. Taylor, but some hope was given when John announced that if they produced a son all would be forgiven. Unfortunately, both she and their child died in childbirth on December 17th, 1722.

John commiserated with Brook, forgave him and almost as quickly his former affectionate regard returned. Brook moved back into Bifrons in the autumn of 1723 and Bolingbroke sent him a letter of congratulation dated December 26th that year. Brook continued at Bifrons in 1724 and 1725: there were musical parties and the attentions of a numerous family welcoming an amiable brother ultimately persuaded him to being effectively retired in the country, domesticated and with fixed habits.

In 1725 Brook met Sabetha Sawbridge, daughter of Jacob and Penelope Sawbridge of Olantigh. He liked her and proposed marriage. The union enjoyed the full approval of his father as a dowry of no less than £4000 was involved. It appeared not to matter that Jacob Sawbridge had been disgraced by expulsion on January 23rd, 1720¹, from the House of Commons, where he had sat as the Member for Cricklade, for his leading part in the scam known as the “South Sea Bubble”. Jacob’s gross assets were assessed at £121,639 in 1721 and much of this remained after punitive levies had been made.

John Taylor died on April 4th, 1729, leaving his estate to Brook for his lifetime after which it should pass to Brook’s son, if he had one; otherwise it should revert to John Taylor’s successors. John had outlived his sons John, Nathaniel, James, Bridges and Upton so that only Herbert and four daughters, Mary, Olive, Margaret and Hannah, remained as potential inheritors. Brook and Sabetha set about acquiring a son and on March 20th, 1729²⁹/₃₀, a daughter, Elizabeth, was born. Most unfortunately, however, Sabetha died in the process and Brook was naturally very upset.

Brook’s condition clearly gave Viscount Bolingbroke, cause for concern. That same month Bolingbroke asked John Brinsden of Durham Yard, a palace in the Strand, to visit Brook at Bifrons, as part of his trip to Calais to fetch the wine he had ordered, to ascertain the state of Brook’s health.

Bolingbroke wrote to Brook from Dawley Farm, Middlesex, on January 3rd, 1730¹ saying that John Brinsden had showed him a letter from someone wishing to be a tenant at Bifrons. This could have been an innocent enquiry or could be interpreted as indicating a bad financial situation: a view which is reinforced by a letter from Brook to his eldest sister, Mary, dated April 24th, 1731, in which he says he had arrived at Dawley where his host, Alexander Pope, the satirical poet and essayist, had enquired once they were alone about the situation of his affairs. Pope insisted on taking him to London to consult his own lawyers to ascertain fully the whole nature of his present circumstances. This language is more indicative of a financial problem than a medical problem.

The last news was final: Brook went into a decline from which he did not recover: he died in Somerset House on November 20th, 1731, and was buried in St. Anne's churchyard, Soho. His extensive personal library was sold to the Holborn bookseller, Fletcher Gyles, who offered them for sale "very cheaply" on February 22nd, 173^{1/2}.

The fate of the orphan Elizabeth Taylor was not too bad. She married William Young on January 29th, 1747. He was the son of a Scottish physician of the same name who emigrated to the West Indies after the 1715 Uprising and married Margaret Nanton of Antigua. He became Lieutenant-Governor of Dominica and in 1769 was created 1st baronet Young of the Delaford estate in Buckinghamshire. They had seven children of whom the eldest son, also named William, (born in 1749) became the Governor of Tobago and died there in 1815. It is this William Young who wrote Brook Taylor's biography in 1791 while crossing the Atlantic and using the few letters left behind by Brook.

(c) The Rev. Herbert Taylor

Bifrons now passed to Brook's eldest surviving brother, Herbert who had been born on May 5th, 1698, and attended The King's School, Canterbury, as a commoner in preparation for his teenage years at Westminster School. Thence he proceeded, as a 16-year-old pensioner, to be admitted to St. John's College, Cambridge, on July 7th, 1714, and matriculated that same year. He took his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1717⁷/₈ and his Master of Arts in 1721. He became a fellow from 1720 to 1727.

His ecclesiastical career began with appointment as an ordinary deacon in the London diocese on December 24th, 1721. He became a priest of the Lincoln diocese on March 10th, 1722²/₃, and was licensed as a curate at St. Margaret's church, Canterbury in 1726. That same year he married Mary Wake, the daughter of Dr. Edward Wake *senior*, the canon of the 6th Prebend of Canterbury Cathedral and nephew of William Wake, the Archbishop. This connection no doubt assisted Herbert's promotion that same year to be rector of St. Alphege and, simultaneously, vicar of St. Mary Northgate parish in Canterbury. On November 7th, 1727, he was appointed to be the Six Preacher in Canterbury Cathedral. He obtained a dispensation to become, in 1728, vicar and, the next year, rector of Hunton along with his other appointments. He was chosen to be the Preacher before the King's School Feast Society for 1729.

Apart from a number of children who died in infancy and did not survive their father, Herbert and Mary had two sons, Herbert and Edward. "Herbert, son of Herbert" (as he was known), was born in 1731 and Edward, known as "Ned", was born in 1734. Both were christened in St. Alphege's church, Canterbury.

Herbert, father of Herbert, had to wait until February 3rd, 1753, to become vicar of Patricbourne as his predecessor, Dr. John Bowtell, occupied the post for nearly 55 years. Herbert had been promised this living in the will of his father, John, who had conferred the right of patronage on his eldest child, Mary, on condition that she would appoint Herbert when the post became vacant.

One of the tasks which Herbert assumed was the cataloguing of the 1078 books and a large quantity of individual sermons and pamphlets which John Bowtell had bequeathed for the use of parishioners. 431 of the books were located in the study over the hall of the vicarage while the rest occupied 13 shelves in another study. The sermons and pamphlets were kept in a chest under lock and key.

According to his will dated May 5th, 1738, **his son, Edward, would inherit Bifrons.**

It was agreed on June 6th, 1761, that the properties of Herbert the father would pass on to Herbert the son on his death. This then facilitated the indentures of lease and release dated June 8th and 9th, 1761, by which the Herbert Taylors raised a sum of £1000 from William Gason using as security the manors of Patrixbourne Cheney and Patrixbourne Merton with their appurtenances, 50 messuages, 1 forge, 2 malhouses, 3 dovehouses, 2 tanyards, 120 gardens, 800 acres of land, 100 acres of meadow, 100 acres of pasture, 100 acres of wood, 10 acres of hop ground and 200 acres of furze and heath, common or pasture.

Lot 231 : COTES, Francis (attrib) (1726-1770, British)

Portrait of Herbert Taylor of Bifrons Oil Painting (19x25in).

[Auktionsverket](#) : Sweden

Auction Date : **1996**

Herbert had given up his post in Canterbury in 1753 and gave up that at Hunton in 1763. He died that same year on September 29th and was buried at Patrixbourne eight days later. The £1000 mortgage had not been repaid.

(d) Herbert, son of Herbert, Taylor

Herbert the son was born **at Bifrons** and christened at St. Alphege's church, Canterbury on April 20th, 1731. He was admitted as a pensioner to St. John's College, Cambridge, on **March 20th, 1748**, and matriculated in 1749.

According to a document of June 16th, 1764, Herbert the son now wished to raise a further £2000 in addition to the £1000 already owed to William Gason. This was to be done

through the good offices of Charles Wake. According to a document dated two days later, John Biggin of Belvedere and George Ward of Wandsworth would lend the £3000 and this would enable William Gason to be paid off. By December 18th, 1766, all interest on the £3000 had been paid off but the principal was still outstanding. James Brockman agreed to lend the money to pay off John Biggin. The solicitor in this transaction was Isaac Bargrave of Lincoln's Inn Fields and Eastry Court, a great-great-greatnephew of the original builder of Bifrons. The tenure of Herbert, son of Herbert, was only just over 4 years as he died, unmarried, on November 19th, 1767.

(e) The Reverend Edward Taylor

On his brother's death, the Reverend Edward Taylor inherited the Bifrons estate and its mortgages.

Ned was born on August 26th, 1734, and had attended school in Ashford — presumably the Ashford Grammar School now known as the Norton Knatchbull School — and was admitted as a 16-year-old pensioner to St. John's College, Cambridge, on June 24th, 1751. He took his B. A. in 1755 and his M. A. in 1758.

His ecclesiastical career began with his ordination as a deacon in the Hereford diocese on February 19th, 1758. He became a priest of the Canterbury diocese on March 11th, 1759, and became vicar of Patricbourne on November 16th, 1763, in succession to his father, the Reverend Herbert Taylor.

He was unmarried on November 19th, 1767, when he took over the responsibilities of Bifrons but soon remedied this by marrying Margaret Payler of Ileden in St. Martin-in-the-Fields church, Westminster, on February 23rd, 1769. The marriage agreement of February 2nd shows that Margaret had a considerable personal fortune — over £8000 — part of which consisted of £3705 of Capital Bank stock. This effectively solved the financial problems of the Bifrons owners for what was to be just one generation. Margaret's brother, Thomas Watkinson Payler, was resident in Patricbourne on January 29th, 1771, when he married, by licence in Patricbourne, Charlotte Hammond, a daughter of William Hammond of St.

Alban's Court, Nonington. When their father, Thomas, died later in 1771 Ileden passed to Thomas Watkinson Payler.

(i) The rebuilding of Bifrons

Now that capital was no longer a problem, Ned financed improvements to Bridge Hill and the bridge over the Nailbourne in Bridge before the General Turnpike Act of 1773. In February, 1775, he decided to demolish Bifrons on the grounds that it was in need of repair and inconvenient¹⁶. This latter description would refer to the sequential arrangement of the rooms which had fallen out of fashion by then and was being replaced in many places by more private, dendritic, arrangements. The new Bifrons was basically built on the foundations of the north, central, part of the old house and the wings were not rebuilt. Seymour recorded¹⁷ in 1776 that Ned had also “planted a fine shrubbery which forms a pleasant shady walk down to the village of Patrixbourn [*sic*]”. With regard to the vicarage, Seymour recorded¹⁸ that Ned, as both patron and incumbent, had made “great additions to the house which is now fit for the accommodation of a genteel family”. It was valued at £5 7s. 4d.

Ned and Margaret now had two houses in which to bring up their family of 5 sons and 3 daughters. Ned wanted his children to have a good education and this was only obtainable at a reasonable price in Europe so he travelled with them in the period from 1779 to 1792. However, Margaret died in Brussels on April 27th, 1780, and her body was brought back to Patrixbourne for burial 12 days later. Margaret was only 36 years old and her eldest child just 10 so some help must have been forthcoming to bring up the eight children. The parish registers give some idea of the extent of Ned's absences as his duties were then assumed by curates J. Kirby, William Howdell, William Lade, Henry Pix Heyman and John Gregory. Help was also forthcoming from ministers including Edward Hasted, son of the eponymous historian, and Philip Brandon.

Given that neither house could be sold, it seemed sensible to rent out Bifrons. Exactly when this started is not clear but 1790 seems to be a possible date. It is also unclear

whether Bifrons remained let when Ned returned to England with his family.

Ned suffered a stroke¹⁹ which left him paralysed and he was advised to take the waters at Bath on the grounds that the hot water would brace up the relaxed nerves. However, he suffered a relapse on the way home about two months later and died at Bifrons on the morning of December 8th, 1798²⁰.

(ii) The tenancy of Sir John Brewer Davis

John Brewer Davis was the only son and heir of the Rev. Dr. John Davis of Smith's Hall, West Farleigh, where he was christened on October 28th, 1732. Dr. Davis was from 1752 rector of Hamsey (near Lewes) and also rector of East Peckham. On May 29th, 1755, he was promoted to be canon of the 10th Prebend of Canterbury Cathedral. Dr. Davis died on February 7th, 1766 and was buried in the nave of the cathedral. John Brewer inherited his father's estate subject to a condition in the will "strictly requiring him to pursue and practice the law or follow some other employment instead of a life of dissipation and idleness". He was created a knight on September 28th, 1778, and was resident in the parish of St. George, Hanover Square, when he married Frances Tattersall, the second daughter of the rector of Streatham, on August 28th, 1784. The ceremony was performed by licence by James Tattersall of Tewkesbury, an elder brother of the bride. In 1789 they were living in Calehill and their only son, Horatio, was baptised at Little Chart on April 18th that year.

We know from a poll book²¹ that Sir John Brewer Davis had his abode in Patribourne in June 1790 even though he was the freeholder of land in Hawkhurst. Further, a directory²² entry indicated that he still occupied Bifrons in 1792. The tenancy is also confirmed in the accounts²³ for 1798 where it is recorded that the rent was £120 *per annum* out of which Edward Taylor had to pay Land Tax of £9. 8s. 0d. The total amount of rent received in 1798 from 50 sources in the Bifrons Estate was £1138. 14s. 0d. out of which £127. 19s. 0d. was to be deducted for Land Tax.

In between these dates we have a record of Jane Austen passing by in a carriage *en route* from Rowling to Nackington

in September 1796. She wrote in a letter²⁴ to her sister and confidante, Cassandra, “We went by Bifrons & I contemplated with a melancholy pleasure the abode of him on whom I once fondly doated [*sic*]”. Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, 1st Baron Brabourne, who published this letter in 1884, freely admitted that he did not know to whom his great-aunt Jane referred. The statement in a modern picture-book that she was thinking of Captain Edward Taylor presupposes that Jane did not know that he had not been in residence for some years. If one rules the servants out, and members of Sir John Brewer Davis’s family seem unlikely, one must use the letter²⁵ dated December 18th, 1798, in which Jane reports to Cassandra that she hopes and imagines “that Edward Taylor is to inherit all Sir Edward Dering’s fortune as well as his own father’s”. It is difficult to see why the fortune of Sir Edward Dering, who died on the same day as Ned Taylor, might pass to Captain Edward Taylor.

(f) Captain Edward Taylor

(i) Captain Edward Taylor’s early life

Edward Taylor was born on June 24th, 1774, and christened in Patixbourne on July 28th. He was educated in Karlsruhe from 1783 to 1788. Unlike his younger brothers Herbert, Brook and William, Edward Taylor did not have a career arranged for him through the Foreign Office connections. He went up to Merton College, Oxford, where he matriculated on May 15th, 1793.

On April 20th, 1795, he was commissioned as one of the three captains in His Majesty’s Regiment of New Romney (also known as the Duke of York’s Own) Fencible Dragoons which meant that, although a regular soldier, he would only fight at home and then only in times of hostilities.

When his father died in December, 1798, 24-year-old Edward succeeded to the headship of the family and Bifrons. One of his earliest tasks was to appoint a new vicar to succeed his father and on May 8th, 1799, the Rev. William Toke was installed. William’s eldest brother, John, was the vicar of Bekesbourne at the time. Their father, John Toke, had been

Sheriff of Kent in 1770. William didn't stay long, however, and Edward then appointed his cousin, William Payler, who was installed on April 28th, 1800.

It would appear that Edward's financial state was not too healthy and one traditional solution was to find a rich and suitable woman to marry. In November, 1800, Jane Austen expressed²⁶ the hope "that it is true that Edward Taylor is to marry his cousin Charlotte. Those beautiful dark eyes will then adorn another generation at least in all their purity". The cousin was Charlotte Clare Payler who was just a few months older than Edward and living nearby in Ileden with her widowed father, who was also Edward's maternal grandfather.

(ii) The marriage agreement with Louisa Beckingham

However, Edward didn't have to look too far. Louisa Beckingham, the daughter of John Charles Beckingham, the rector of Upper Hardres and owner of Bourne Place, married Edward in Bishopsbourne church on September 6th, 1802. The financial settlement between Edward and Louisa was formalised by indentures of lease and release respectively dated 30th and 31st August 1802. It provided some short-term relief for Edward and some longer-term headaches. The dowry was to amount to £5000 of which £4000 was to be used to pay off a debt to John Dilnot and £1000 was for Edward's own use. Further, in the event that Louisa would outlive Edward, she was to have the choice to make Bridge Place her residence for an annual rent of £50 and would also get an annual pension of £400.

The £1000 was insufficient to enable Edward to pay off his other debts which at the time of his marriage were £2000 to his brother, Brook (1777–1846); £800 to his brother, Bridges (1777–1814); £500 to Eleanor Thompson (*née* Marsh), the widow of John Thompson living in Bridge; and a further £500.

By May 1st, 1804, it had become apparent that Edward's brother-in-law, Edward Wilbraham-Bootle, and Daniel Mesman had been unable to raise the sums of £5000 and £2000 which were needed to pay off Edward's debts. The situation was alleviated by Edward's cousin, Thomas

Watkinson Payler, who agreed to provide a mortgage of £4000 secured on some of Edward's property.

(iii) Captain Edward Taylor's political life

In May 1807 Edward Taylor contested the General Election and won one of the two Canterbury seats. On June 2nd that same year he was made a Freeman of Canterbury by gift of the city*.

On 30th October, 1809, Edward owed Margaret Taylor £2000, his brothers Brook and Bridges £800 each, John Dilnot £500 and £500 to each of two widows living in Bridge, Elizabeth Nash and Eleanor Thompson. Edward consolidated his debts by borrowing £5000 from Edward Wilbraham-Bootle and Daniel Mesman. These credit-worthy gentlemen had raised the sum by a loan from William Baldock of Canterbury, James Foord of White Hill, Ospringe, and Deane John Parker of Holy Cross parish, Canterbury.

Time had taken its toll before the next transaction. William Baldock had died on December 21st, 1812.

Edward Taylor's behaviour in the 1818 General Election was rather remarkable.

On June 26th, 1829, Sir James Gore Ouseley agreed to lend Edward and Herbert Edward Taylor £24,546 and a bond for twice this amount as the sum to be paid in case of default was signed.

* The five ways of becoming a freeman were by patrimony, by apprenticeship, by marriage to the daughter of a freeman, by redemption and by gift of the city. Edward Taylor was clearly obtaining his freedom the best way!

CHAPTER EIGHT

Captain Taylor's Tenants

(a) General Oliver Nicolls

(b) Abraham Parry Cumberbatch

The dating of the departure of the Taylor family from Bifrons and their renting it out depends on the evidence of the records of St. Mary's church. The Taylors buried an infant daughter, Charlotte Margaret, in the churchyard on July 16th, 1819. Abraham and Caroline Cumberbatch baptised their daughter, Emma, there on January 30th, 1820. This suggests that the Cumberbatch tenancy commenced at Michaelmas 1819.

Abraham Parry Cumberbatch was baptised in St. Peter, Barbados, on November 29th, 1784, and like his father and paternal grandfather, owned several plantations in Barbados. He had previously been married to Charlotte Jones who had died in Hastings in January 1818. He married Caroline Chaloner of Guisborough on April 19th, 1819, and so the move to Bifrons had some of the character of a fresh start. The Cumberbatch family included the three children of his first marriage, Abraham Carlton, Eliza and Benjamin William Robert. Unfortunately Benjamin died at Bifrons on May 7th, 1820. Following the birth of Emma, Abraham and Caroline had three more children. The first of these, Robert William, was baptised in Tunbridge Wells in February, 1822, and hence we may deduce the latest quarter day for the end of the Cumberbatch tenancy as probably some time in 1821. If the house remained unlet for a period the Cumberbatch tenancy could have ended as early as Midsummer 1820.

It is difficult to guess why the Cumberbatches should have wished to rent Bifrons. His roots were at Bristol where his father and paternal grandfather were both buried in the cathedral itself. Much of his work involved the triangular journeys between Bristol, Africa and Barbados and the number of slaves he had working on his plantations is recorded as late as 1830. On leaving Bifrons the Cumberbatches seemed to have chosen Tunbridge Wells for their residence, although their

last child, Robert William, was born in Queen's House, Lyndhurst, in 1827. Abraham Parry died in Tunbridge Wells on October 10th, 1840, aged nearly 56.

Of the children, Abraham Carlton became Consul-General at Istanbul (then known as Constantinople) and was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath. He died on October 24th, 1875, at Bingham House, Richmond. According to his will he had a settled estate in Barbados.

(c) The Second Marquis of Ely

John Loftus was born on February 15th, 1770, and was a Member of Parliament for Co. Wexford from 1801 until the death of his father on March 22nd, 1806, when he became the 2nd Marquess of Ely in the Peerage of Ireland. On May 22nd, 1810, he married Anna Maria Dashwood, daughter of Henry Watkin Dashwood, 3rd Baronet of Kirtlington Park, Oxfordshire. She had been Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte from December 12th, 1805, until the day before her marriage. Their first child, Charlotte Elizabeth, was born in Co. Fermanagh on April 22nd, 1811. Their first son, Henry Robert, was born on March 15th, 1813, but died exactly a month later. Their heir, John Henry, Viscount Loftus, was born in Hill Street, near Berkeley Square, on January 19th, 1814.

The date on which the Marquess and Marchioness of Ely began to rent Bifrons from the Taylors is not totally clear. The first Loftus to be baptised in Patricbourne was Henry Yorke Astley on April 12th, 1822, followed by Caroline Louisa on April 19th, 1824, and Elizabeth Caroline Augusta on July 30th, 1826. By Midsummer Day, 1827, the Ely family had moved on and shortly after the death of King George IV, Anna Maria took up a post of Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Adelaide on July 23rd, 1830.

In 1824, John was appointed *Custos rotularum* for Co. Wexford.

John died on September 26th, 1845 at Ely Lodge in Co. Fermanagh. Anna Maria died at Hampton Court Palace on September 6th, 1857.

Charlotte Elizabeth married William Tatton Egerton, the Member of Parliament for Lympington, on December 18th, 1830. He

was created 1st Baron Egerton of Tatton in 1859 and became Lord Lieutenant of Cheshire in 1868.

John Henry went into politics, contesting Gloucester in 1841 and becoming Member of Parliament for Woodstock from May 1st to September 26th, 1845, when he succeeded his father as Marquess of Ely.

(d) Lady Noel Byron and the Trevanions

The latest date for the end of the Ely tenancy is Midsummer Day, 1827, as *The Times* was able to report on July 13th that year that Lady Byron had taken Bifrons for a residence.

Annabella, Lady Noel Byron, did not like Bifrons and never overcame this distaste²⁷ in the four years she rented it. It was effectively a base from which she could set off on trips and leave her chattels in comparative safety. For most of the period of the tenancy, Annabella was abroad. We know that she travelled with her friend, Louise Chaloner, her daughter, Ada, and her daughter's governess.

Annabella lent Bifrons to her sister-in-law's daughter, Georgiana "Georgey" Augusta Trevanion (*née* Leigh), and her husband, Henry, as they were desperately poor at the time. Henry was the second son of Byron's cousin, John Purnell Trevanion Bettesworth Trevanion of Caerhays Castle, Cornwall, and his first wife, Charlotte Hosier. The Trevanions had **three** children during the period of the Byron tenancy of Bifrons. Bethia Rosa was born in 1826, Agnes Charlotte Sophia Ada in **1828** and Ada Bettesworth was baptised in Patribourne on June 8th, 1828. However, they were to be joined by Georgey's 15-year old half-sister, (Elizabeth) Medora Leigh (known earlier as "Do" and later as "Elizabeth" or "Libby") who was also a half-sister of Ada Byron. Libby became pregnant by Henry, reputedly with her sister's collusion.

The neighbours reported the affair to the rural dean, the Rev. William Eden, who duly consulted George, 7th Lord Byron, and his wife, Mary, and reported the matter to Lady Noel Byron. As a consequence Annabella provided enough financial assistance for the Trevanions to emigrate to Calais where a baby boy was born in February 1830. Annabella

returned to Britain with the Trevanions in May, 1830, leaving the baby in the care of a doctor but it died of convulsions when a few months old. Bifrons had by then been sold by auction and was awaiting completion so they went to stay with Libby's mother, Augusta Leigh (a half-sister of the poet Byron), in her apartments in St. James's Palace. Augusta had not seen Libby for more than a year and was unaware of recent events in her daughter's life. Indeed she did not find out until 1831 due to the lack of communication in the family. Henry and Libby had another child, Marie Violette, in Morlaix in 1834 but their relationship had broken down by then.

CHAPTER NINE

The Conynghams in Residence 1830–1882

(a) The First Marquess Conyngham

The sale by auction of the Bifrons Estate for the then phenomenal sum of £95,600 may well have fuelled speculation that it had been bought by King George IV, if Greenwood's account²⁸ of 1838 is to be understood. With the exception of the *Kentish Chronicle*²⁹, the local newspapers at the time seemed unaware that the Conynghams would be moving from Windsor to Bifrons. The death of King George IV coincided very well with the completion of the deeds of sale and in principle the Conynghams could have moved straight in. The following account³⁰ of the Conynghams' departure from Windsor on Saturday, June 26th, 1830, is sufficiently amusing to merit transcription:

“The Marchioness Conyngham, with the ladies of her family, were very busy packing up during the whole of Saturday morning and her ladyship, with a carriage full of ladies, set out from Windsor with four horses at a quarter past 12 on Saturday and drove with haste to Mr. Denison's (her brother's) house near Dorking where she arrived before dinner. The people about the castle understood that her Ladyship intended to go to Paris. The Marquess of Conyngham remained behind at the Palace, the corridor of which, near the late King's suite of apartments, he paced like a man lost in abstraction; and it was not till one o'clock he was reminded that he had important duties to perform in London with the new court and Parliament. He then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, ordered a chaise and four and came to town with all speed, arriving at Westminster at 20 minutes before 4 o'clock, just in time to enable the Speaker to take the Chair in the House of Commons, after being sworn in the long gallery”.

On acquiring Bifrons, the Conynghams appointed the architect Thomas Frederick Hunt to design various extensions. Hunt had been since 1813 Labourer in Trust at St. James's Palace and was promoted in 1829 to be Clerk of the Works at Kensington Palace. He was well thought of in Court circles as well as at the Office of Works. He did, however, live beyond his means and was constantly harassed by bailiffs because he

was always in debt. We can date the time of these extensions quite accurately because they would hardly have been commissioned before completion of the sale in June 1830 and could not have been done after Hunt died, at the age of 40, on January 4th, 1831. Hunt had published *Half-a-dozen Hints on Picturesque Domestic Architecture in a series of designs for Gate Lodges, Gamekeepers' Cottages and other rural residences* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green and Longman; 1825, 2nd ed. 1826, 3rd ed. (with additions) 1833, reprinted 1841). His designs were aimed at persons of middle *wealth* — the dynamic concept of *income* did not come into consideration — and were based on the more picturesque domestic buildings of times typically those of Henry VIII. The use of barge boards, exposed timber and corbels, porches and decorative chimneys were all characteristic of these and examples may be seen in the remaining peripheral buildings at Bifrons such as Bifrons Cottage, Lion Cottage, Lower Lodge and Upper Lodge.

Brian Montague Thomas discussed the possibility that Hunt might have designed the extensions between 1815 and 1824 but noted that Ireland³¹ had made no mention of any such extensions in 1829. Given the known financial state of Edward Taylor and his need to maintain Bourne Park, he would surely have been precluded from making any significant expenditure on extensions at Bifrons. Furthermore, it had been reported in the local newspapers^{32,33} that, in the short period since the Conynghams purchased Bifrons, “large sums have been expended in beautifying the mansion, which has given employment to upwards of 50 persons”.

A further enhancement of Bifrons was occasioned by the auction at East Cliff House, Ramsgate, of the 635 dozen bottles of fine wine which its wealthy occupant, Sir William Curtis, had failed to consume before his death. Curtis is renowned as the illiterate Lord Mayor of London of 1795 who proposed a toast to “The Three R’s — Reading, ’Riting and ’Rithmetic”. The Bifrons accounts³⁴ show that the cost of the Marquess’s purchase of 362 bottles for £82. 18s. 11½d was debited from the estate account rather than the Marquess’s personal drawings.

The accounts³⁵ for Michaelmas 1830 give a realistic impression of the tradesmen's bills one had to face at the time:—

Beazeley	dyer	£18. 13s. 11d.
Sharp	upholsterer	£13. 11s. 10d.
Keeler	glass men (discounted)	£7. 5s. 6d.
Kingsford's	coal merchants	£19. 19s. 0d.
Fisher	tinman	£ 2. 1s. 3d.
Wright	wine merchant	£1. 10s. 0d.
Martin	collar maker	11s. 11d.
Quested	coal baskets	8s. 0d.
Cook	chimney sweep	18s. 0d.
	sundry small bills per abstract	
	2 visits to Bifrons and gift to servants	£ 6. 19s. 6¾d.
Beioley	linen drapes for toilets	7s. 0½d.
G. Denne	ton hay for horses	£ 4. 0s. 0d.
B. Helps	for 12 pheasants and expenses to and from London	£13. 19s. 6d.
T. Collard	for keeper's suit of clothes	£ 6. 10s. 0d.
Wm. Vickers	22 weeks wages as keeper and carpenter	£23. 1s. 0d.
F. Colegate	tenants' dinner	£9. 4s. 0d.
	sundry cottagers' usual presents on prompt payment of their rents subject to your Lordship's pleasure (½ year)	£ 1. 13s. 9d.
	stamps for receipts	£ 1. 5s. 0d.
	stamps for postage	£ 1. 0s. 0d.
	extras	5s. 0d.
	2 journies [<i>sic</i>] to Isle of Thanet on your Lordship's account, <i>viz.</i> Minster tenants and East Cliff wine sale: hire horses <i>etc.</i>	£2. 2s. 0d.
	2 days attending Mr. Wright in survey of Sir Henry Oxenden's Hearne [<i>sic</i>] Estate	£2. 2s. 0d.

	by order	
	horse and gig	
[R.]	Agency – $\frac{3}{4}$ year from Lady	£75. 0s. 0d.
	Day to 31 December	
	extra labourers for river course	£9. 15s. 11d.
	timber felling and fences	

Richard Pilcher was appointed Steward of Bifrons³⁶ which entailed keeping the books and receiving, depositing and disbursing monies as well as the administration of the house and estates.

Henry died on December 28th, 1832, at his London residence and was buried in a vault in the chancel of Patricbourne church on January 4th. The Kentish Gazette reported that he “was distinguished for his unostentatious demeanour and great urbanity of manners, united to a cheerful temper and an unparalleled evenness of mind, which had gained for him the affections of all who had the pleasure of his society and those employed under him”.

(b) The Dowager Marchioness Conyngham

Following the death of the 1st Marquess, Bifrons essentially became the home of the Dowager Marchioness since her eldest surviving son, Francis Nathaniel, the 2nd Marquess, was fully occupied in the Royal Household. The two daughters had both married, the elder in 1826 and the younger, Maria, just six days before her father’s death. This left just the youngest son, Albert Denison Conyngham, as the remaining unmarried child who might use Bifrons as a base when not in London.

Lord Albert was born at 8, Stanhope Street, Piccadilly, on October 21st, 1805, and was educated at Eton from 1820. On September 21st of that year his name, with the rank of cornet, was placed on the half-pay list of the disbanded 22nd regiment of dragoons. On July 24th, 1823, he joined the Horse Guards but retired after 12 months. In May 1824 he entered the Diplomatic Service and was appointed *Attaché* at Berlin where he improved his knowledge of the German language. In May, 1825, he transferred to Vienna where he was similarly *Attaché*.

In February, 1828, he became Secretary of the Legation at Florence and from January 1829 until June 1831 was Secretary at Berlin. There he was reported by *The Times* on January 11th, 1830, to have engaged in a duel. He took on the French *Chargé d’Affaires*, Baron Mortier, for making some general remarks about the British which Albert thought should be resisted. The weapons were broadswords of which Albert had no experience: being wounded in the hand in the first onset the seconds moved in and stopped the affair, congratulating Albert on his honourable conduct.

King George IV created him Knight Commander of the Order of the Guelphs in 1829 and he was also named a Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

On July 6th, 1833, Albert married Henrietta Maria, the fourth daughter of Cecil Weld, 1st Baron Forester, at St. George’s Church, Hanover Square. Their first child, Henry, was born on June 19th, 1834.

Following his military and diplomatic experience he sought a career in the Houses of Parliament, following in the footsteps of his uncle, William Joseph Denison, who had sat as the Whig Member for Camelford from 1796 to 1802, for Kingston-upon-Hull from 1806 to 1807, for Surrey from 1818 to 1832 and then for West Surrey from 1832 until his death in 1849.

Preparation for the parliamentary election held on the 8th and 9th of January, 1835, began some six months earlier. Despite the Reform Act of 1832, the lucrative practice of bribery persisted in Canterbury elections. The voter would be nominated a “colourman” and given a ticket which was exchangeable after the election for a reward on the basis of 5s. per day. The number of days varied but typically the reward would be 10s. or £1. No work was required for the payment although the more ardent supporters would protect the colours. Between the voter and the party leaders were agents who often profitted very handsomely: it was not uncommon for £20 or £30 to be paid for the sale of a dozen votes. The agents further charged for the “sale” of votes without the knowledge of the relevant voters themselves who saw nothing of the reward paid to the agent for them.

On this occasion^{Error: Reference source not found}, 320 colourmen were paid £1 each for the four days — 1 day for the nomination, 2 for the voting and 1 for the declaration. The agent was a Mr. Birch at whose house the colourmen were paid by Richard Pilcher. The total election expenses for Lord Albert Conyngham alone came to £1400 18s. 9d. of which a direct subsidy of £1000 was paid by his uncle as a transfer from his own bank in two tranches of £500 on the 7th and 12th of January.

In 1835, Lord Albert published a translation* of the three volumes of Carl Spindler's historical novel *Der Bastard: eine deutsche Sittengeschichte aus den Zeitalter Kaiser Rudolph des Zweiten*.

He was granted the Freedom of the City of Canterbury in 1835.

As well as the large portrait of George IV by Sir Thomas Lawrence which the Marchioness gave pride of place in Bifrons, there is evidence of a significant collection of works of art. She was able to lend Titian's "Jacob and Leah" and Rubens' portrait of himself with his wife and family to an exhibition in Canterbury museum³⁷ while Lord Albert lent portraits by Tintoretto and Zuccherò's "Head of Mary, Queen of Scots".

The second Marquess separated from his wife in 1841 and divorce proceedings were being considered in 1843. There is no record of any reconciliation and, indeed, it was reported³⁸ that he lived apart from his wife for most of their married life. They were, however, buried next to each other in Patixbourne.

(i) The sale of Bourne Park

It was an aspect of the Dowager Marchioness's character that the idea of having freeholders near Bifrons was undesirable and that any property which became available should be bought. Consequently when Bourne Park came up for sale in 1844 every effort had to be made to purchase it since

* Carl Spindler, "The Natural Son: a German tale descriptive of the age of the Emperor Rudolph II" translated by Lord A. Conyngham, 3 volumes (London: J. Mitchell, 1835).

it was contiguous with the Bifrons estate. The vendors were the executors of the recently-deceased widow, Mrs. Louisa Beckingham, who had actually resided at 18, Marine Crescent, Dover and rented out her mansion. As Mrs. Beckingham was the mother-in-law of the Edward Taylor from whom the Conynghams had bought Bifrons, the Dowager Marchioness thought she should have first refusal. But the executors were rather more shrewd than expected given that there was clear competition from a Matthew John Bell who had been renting *Oswalds* in nearby Bishopsbourne since 1841 as a temporary measure until he could find something more suitable. The sale was to be effected by the private tender of sealed bids and subject to the condition that the highest bid should be accepted. Matthew Bell's offer turned out to be £150 higher than that of the Dowager Marchioness³⁹.

(ii) The restoration of St. Mary's church

The Marchioness funded the installation of the organ⁴⁰ in 1847 and the restoration of the chancel early in 1849*. She had also given six more pieces of **Flemish** painted glass for the small, un moulded, Norman windows in the north and south walls. The architect was Hezekiah Marshall of Canterbury who was also responsible for the designs of the synagogue (now King's School Recital Room) and the workhouse (now known as Nunnery Fields Hospital). His work in Patricbourne was well spoken⁴¹ of by Sir Gilbert Scott eight years later when he came to restore the whole building.

(iii) Lady Jane Conyngham's wedding

The social highlight of Patricbourne in 1849 must have been the wedding of Lady Jane Conyngham to Francis George Spencer, 2nd Baron Churchill of Whichwood, on May 19th. Jane was recorded as residing in Bifrons at the time of the marriage which was permitted by licence rather than by the reading of banns. The newspapers of the time failed to point out that he was over twice her age! Born at Blenheim on October 6th,

* The assumption here is that the restoration was completed after the marriage held on November 4th, 1848, and before that of Lady Jane.

1802, and educated at Harrow, he went up to Christ Church, Oxford, on April 10th, 1821. He was employed as an *Attaché* at Vienna from 1823 to 1828 where he would have known Jane's uncle, Albert, who was three years younger than him. In 1828 he transferred to a similar position in Lisbon. He succeeded to the barony when his father died in 1845.

The splendid occasion was recorded in the local newspaper⁴² where it was reported that the marriage had taken place "in the presence of a select circle of relatives and friends of both parties and a large congregation of neighbours, together with upwards of 100 schoolchildren, arranged under a tastefully-formed laurel bower, interspersed with all kinds of flowers which extended from the entrance of the churchyard to the porch. After a most impressive service the children sang an appropriate hymn, composed for the occasion, which had a very pleasing effect".

The official guest list can be deduced from the newspaper report with a bit of detective work and tolerance for journalistic euphemisms such as "The Rev. A. Steward" who was perhaps a useful clerical version of "Mr. A. N. Other". The guests then appear to have been the Dowager Marchioness Conyngham (*bride's grandmother*), the Ladies Elizabeth and Cecilia Conyngham (*bride's sisters*), Lady Louisa Spencer (*a sister of the groom*), the Misses Fitzroy, Miss Elizabeth Somerville (*cousin*), Miss Augusta Conyngham (*a sister of the bride*), Lord Mountcharles (*her brother, George Henry*), Mrs Stevenson (*vicar's wife, Margaret St. Leger née Kippen*), Miss Stevenson (*vicar's daughter*), Miss Kippen (*vicar's sister-in-law*), Miss Wildman, Lady Maria Tollemache (*née Anna Maria Jane Seymour, daughter of the 11th Duke of Somerset*), her daughters Emma Maria and Matilda Jane (*both aged about 9–10 years*), the Dean of Canterbury (*William Rowe Lyall, a successful seeker of patronage and equally successful in the art of nepotism*), Matthew and Fanny Bell (*owner-occupiers of Bourne Park*), Lady Louisa Spencer (*a sister of the groom*), Major Spencer (*probably The Hon. Sir Augustus Almeric Spencer, a brother of the groom*), Commander Spencer (*probably The Hon. John Welbore Spencer, another brother of the groom*), Rev. Charles Oxenden (*Rector of Barham, Vicar of*

Eastwell and sometime Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral), Miss Montessori and Miss Charlotte Georgiana Oxenden (25-year old daughter of Charles Oxenden).

After leaving Bifrons, Jane set up a new life as Lady Churchill. She took employment as Lady of the Bedchamber in 1854 and was still so employed when she died at Osborne on Christmas Day, 1900. The shock of her sudden death is said to have accelerated that of Queen Victoria herself just four weeks later. On December 30th, the Wesleyan minister of Witney officiated at Jane's burial service in Holy Trinity church, Finstock, Oxfordshire, in conformity with the Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880.

Jane had one child, Victor Albert Francis Charles, who was born on October 23rd, 1864. Queen Victoria was his godmother. He served as Page of Honour from 1876 to 1881 and became a lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards, retiring as a subaltern in 1889. He then joined the Royal Household as a Lord-in-Waiting. Lady Jane's husband died in 1886 and sometime after this Sir Horace Rumbold recorded that "with many other attractions and accomplishments Lady Churchill is a perfect horsewoman and she was truly *bonne à voir* in those days on her favourite chestnut hack".

(iii) The restoration of St. Mary's Church

The chancel of St. Mary's church was completely restored under the direction of George Gilbert Scott in 1857. His firm was responsible for such "restorations" (in Gothic revival style) of some 500 churches and 39 cathedrals: previous projects had included the Martyrs' Memorial (1841), St. John's College chapel and Exeter College chapel in Oxford. Subsequent successes included the Albert Memorial (1862–3), St. Pancras Station (1865) and the Home and Colonial Office (1858 on). His firm was the largest architectural firm of the period so it is difficult to attribute any particular restoration to him personally. He was knighted in 1872 and when he died in 1878 he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

(iv) Death of the Dowager Marchioness

The end of a great era was signalled by the death of the Dowager Marchioness Conyngham at the age of 91 on October 11th, 1861. Her will made interesting reading: she gave her son Albert any picture in her home at Bifrons or Hamilton Place.

To Lady Albert Denison, his wife, she gave any pictures of Lord Albert in either house. [It is to be noted that since Albert was by this time very rich he was deemed not to need any other legacies].

[Silver] plates and plated articles, linen, china, furniture, the remaining pictures, statues, books and prints in both houses were bequeathed to Francis Nathaniel, her eldest surviving son, the 2nd Marquess Conyngham. Her diamonds were bequeathed to him for his life and, after his death, to Lord Mountcharles (*i.e.* George Henry, the eldest son of the 2nd Marquess and successor to the marquessate) for his life and after his death to whoever is Marquess Conyngham. One must assume that some of these diamonds had been acquired from King George IV.

She was empowered by the will of her late brother, William Joseph Denison, dated August 3rd, 1848, to dispose of £30,000 to her granddaughters. Accordingly she left £6000 to Augusta Elizabeth Denison to be paid on the day she married or reached 21, whichever be the sooner. She further left £4000 to executors as trustees to invest and pay to Augusta Elizabeth at the same time.

She left her sister, the Rt. Hon. Lady Anna Maria Wenlock, an annuity of £500 for her life to be paid quarterly. [She had in fact died on August 20th, 1850.] She left her son-in-law, the Rt. Hon. Sir William Meredyth Somerville*, the sum of £2000. The family solicitor, John Benbow, was left £500 and her steward, Robert Pilcher, £100. Each of her male servants who had lived with her for three years prior to her death received £50 while the female equivalents got £25. £100

* He had married her sister Maria who died on December 3rd, 1843 and in 1860 had remarried Maria Georgiana Elizabeth Jones. In civil life he was the Member of Parliament for Drogheda from 1837 to 1852 and for Canterbury from 1854 to 1865. He held office as Under-Secretary for the Home Department from 1846 to 1847 and as Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1847 to 1852. He was created Baron Athlumney in the Peerage of Ireland in 1863 and Baron Meredyth in the Peerage of the United Kingdom in 1866. He died in Dover on December 7th, 1873.

was left to the parish of Patricbourne for distribution to the poor of the parish of Patricbourne and Bridge by the vicar, the Rev. John Stevenson. £100 was to be distributed to the poor of Templecrone, Co. Donegal, by the minister of that parish, Frederick Corfield. The rest was to go to her son, the 2nd Marquess, and she appointed him and Sir William Meredyth Somerville as executors. Under a codicil, she withdrew the money awarded to Augusta as she had plenty and bequeathed £24,000 to the four daughters of the Marquess.

(i) The building works of 1862-1863

The death of the Dowager Marchioness provided a suitable break in the occupation of the house to modernise it and remedy the defects which had accrued with age. Accordingly, four contracts were drawn up:-

1. The original contract for alterations to the mansion and the stables dated May 21st, 1862, costing £5268.0s.0d.
2. An extra contract for alterations to the sole of the stables dated August 18th, 1862, costing £602.13s.3d.
3. A contract for repairs to the ground floor and part of one floor dated September 4th, 1862, costing £308.0s.0d plus £43. 0s. 0d. for paving of the conservatory.
4. A contract dated December 10th, 1862. An account of the same date indicates the following expenditure:-

Vestibule to the entrance hall	£38. 6s. 4d.
21 pairs of sashes to one part	£36. 16s. 5d.
8 pairs of sashes to the ground floor	£21. 0s. 0d.
3 pairs of sashes to the dining room	£8. 0s. 0d.
Enclosing walls	£200. 0s. 0d.
4 mahogany water closets exclusive of fixing	£17. 0s. 0d.
Kitchen table	£4. 15s. 0d.
Dresser	£9. 0s. 0d.
	£334. 17s. 9d.

A measured account dated October 6th, 1863, showed that the following improvements had been effected:-

Extra girder timbers in the roof; alterations to the skylights; a chimney shaft in the roof; a doorway to the Ladies' maids'

room in the attic; a cistern on the attic floor; fittings in the housemaids' closet and a cupboard in the roof; grounds to the attic doors; a new floor to the sitting room on the ground floor; matchboarding in the servants' hall; windows in the spare bedroom in the basement; paving in the conservatory.

(c) The 2nd Marquess Conyngham

When Francis Nathaniel Conyngham was born on June 11th, 1797, he could not have been expected to become the second Marquess Conyngham — a title to which he only succeeded after the death of his elder brother, Henry Joseph, on December 26th, 1824. By then he had joined the 2nd Life Guards in September 1820 and, no doubt through the earnest endeavours of his mother had been appointed that same year as First Groom of the King's Bedchamber and Gentleman and Master of the Robes. As a peer he had been appointed Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1823 and then became Member of Parliament for County Donegal in 1825. He became one of the Lords of the Treasury in 1826 and succeeded to the Marquessate on the death of his father on December 28th, 1832. He had already become a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Guelphic Order and in 1833 was accorded the Blue Ribbon of the Order of St. Patrick. From July to December, 1834, and again for a few months in 1835 he served as Postmaster-General. That year he was appointed Lord Chamberlain of the Royal Household and was sworn in as a member of the Privy Council.

Death of William IV

For relaxation he was a keen yachtsman and became Commodore of the Irish Yachting Club and Vice-Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron.

The *Kentish Gazette*⁴³ related details of social life at Bifrons in late October 1874 as follows:-

“The Earl and Countess of Mountcharles have been entertaining company during the past week at Bifrons, near Canterbury; the house party including Viscount Neville, Viscount Grimston, Captain and Mrs Streatfield, Mr and Mrs Sands, *etc.* The gentlemen have had excellent sport at pheasant shooting. The Earl and Countess entertained a numerous company at dinner who afterwards attended

the Hunt Ball at Waldershare being given by the Earl and Countess of Guilford to inaugurate the hunting season. The Earl of Mountcharles, according to his ancient custom, since his residence in Kent, has supplied the Kent and Canterbury Hospital, also the Cottage Hospital at Ashford, with an abundance of game, the result of his Lordship and friends' sport".

Jane, 2nd Marchioness Conyngham, died at her residence at 14, Marine Parade, Folkestone, on January 28th, 1876⁴⁴ after being seriously indisposed for a few days⁴⁵. She died surrounded by her son, Lord George Mountcharles, her daughters, Lady Jane Churchill, Lady Frances "Fanny" Lambart, Lady Elizabeth Bryan and Lady Cecilia Brinckman together with sons-in-law Captain Theodore Brinckman and Gustavus Lambart. Her remains were removed by road to Patribourne rectory and at 2 p.m. the following Wednesday, February 2nd, a funeral procession preceded by the Rev. Francis Thomas Vine and the Rev. R. Cantley accompanied the nest of coffins to the church for the funeral service. The outer coffin was covered with crimson velvet and ornamented with gilt mountains. The mourners were the Earl of Mountcharles, the Duke of Richard and Gordon, Earl Sydney (*brother-in-law*), Lord Henry Gordon Lennox (*nephew*), Lord George Gordon Lennox (*nephew*), Lord Charles Bingham (*husband of niece*), Admiral Lord Clarence Paget (*brother*), Lieutenant-General Lord George Paget (*brother*), Viscount Hinchinbrook (*nephew*), Lord Templemore (*nephew*), the Hon. Frederick Cadogan (*brother-in-law*), the Hon. Francis George Crofton (*nephew*), Captain Brinckman, Mr. Francis Lambart, General Hankey, Mr. G. Wilkes, M.D., and the principal domestic servants. Her estranged husband, Francis, was unable to attend due to a rather severe attack of gout⁴⁶ and her youngest son, Francis, was travelling in Egypt at the time. Consequently the chief mourner was her eldest son, George. After the coffin was lowered into the family vault a number of beautiful wreaths and immortelles composed of fresh flowers sent by her daughters and friends were placed on the lid.

In less than six months, her husband, the 2nd Marquess Conyngham, died at his London residence, 5 Hamilton Place, Piccadilly, on July 17th, 1876, following a lithotomy operation

four days earlier. Messrs. Gregory & Co. of 212–214, Regent Street, spent four days from August 1st to the 4th making a detailed inventory of the furniture, pictures, livestock and outdoor effects at Bifrons. They estimated the value to be £4080 10s. and duly charged a fee of £62 10s. and expenses for travelling by railway and cab' of £2 15s. The will, dated October 18th, 1874, with a codicil thereto dated April 1876, was proved on **September** 25th, 1876, by the executors, the Rt. Hon. Charles John Colville, 10th Baron Colville of Culross and Chamberlain to Queen Alexandra, and John Henry Benbow, the solicitor, with the personal estate being sworn to be under £500,000.

His will specified that £100,000 was to be raised for the purchase of any property in Kent from his real estate in England and Wales and was to form part of his residuary personal estate. After this he specified that all his real estate and also that in Ireland was to devolve to the use of his son, George Henry, for life, with remainder to Henry Francis Conyngham, the son of George Henry, 3rd Marquis Conyngham. The fate of his leasehold property was settled similarly. He left £10,000 to his son, Francis Nathaniel, and to each of his four daughters, £5000 in trust for each of his two grandsons, Theodore Francis Brinckman and Victor Albert Francis Charles Spencer and £2000 to each of the seven children of his daughter Lady Frances Caroline Maria Lambart. Each of his executors received £500 as a mark of his esteem and the vicar of Patixbourne, the Rev. Dr. John Stevenson, got £250. Legacies were also left to the servants according to the length of their service. His eldest son received the furniture, pictures, plate and household effects together with a pecuniary legacy of £20,000. His trustees were directed to keep up the payment of certain voluntary allowances made by him and the residue of his property was to be divided equally between his younger son and his four daughters,

(d) George Henry, 3rd Marquess Conyngham

When George Henry succeeded to the Marquessate at the age of 51 in July 1876, he had already retired from his military career and since 1872 had been equerry to Queen Victoria. He was therefore logically based in London most of the time.

When his eldest son, Henry Francis, Earl of Mountcharles, celebrated his coming-of-age in October 1878, the Marquess was unable to attend due to his continuing indisposition⁴⁷ and the festivities were largely held in several locations in Bridge. Those involved included about 40 workmen who were engaged in extensive alterations and improvements to the mansion. There were changes in London too that year: the family house at 5, Hamilton Place, was sold to Leopold de Rothschild, banker to the Prince of Wales, who remodelled it and had an Italianate front with Doric columns and Corinthian pillars constructed from Portland stone. It commanded extensive views of Hyde Park and Park Lane. Slane castle then became the principal residence of the Conynghams.

Like his father, George Henry was figured in *Vanity Fair*. A cartoon appeared with the epithet "Mount" on January 1st, 1881, as he had been so known for so many years.

His eldest daughter, Blanche, never married in spite of being regularly cited as attending appropriate functions. His second daughter, Constance Augusta, married Richard Combe in St. Mary's Church, Patricbourne, on October 20th, 1881⁴⁸. This was another splendid occasion for the village with the service celebrated by the Bishop of Dover with the assistance of the vicar, Francis Vine, as private chaplain to the Marquess. The bridesmaids were the bride's four sisters (Blanche, Jane Seymour, Maud and Florence) and her cousin, Gertrude Paget, together with the bridegroom's sister Ada. The best man was Lord William Nevill and the bride was given away by her father, the Marquess. Queen Victoria sent the bride an Indian shawl.

George Henry died at 5.30 p.m. on June 2nd, 1882, in his residence at 36 Belgrave Square. He left instructions⁴⁹ that the funeral should be of the plainest description. Hat-bands, scarves, feathers and crape were to be dispensed with and the

ceremony was to be conducted without ostentation. Nonetheless the funeral was a magnificent occasion for the village in which the church was filled with distinguished mourners. The *Kentish Gazette*⁵⁰ reported that the simplicity and absence of ostentation did not in any way detract from the impressive and affecting character of the ceremony. The body had arrived at Canterbury East station where it was transferred to a hearse. The cortège arrived at noon and the body was met at the gate of the churchyard by Francis Vine (*vicar*), John Henry Hughes Hallett (*chaplain of the East Kent Yeomanry and rector of Westbere*), Henry John Wardell (*vicar of Bekesbourne*) and the Rev. F. N. Ripley (*curate of Bridge and Patribourne*). The coffin was carried by 8 estate workmen.

The Marquess was buried in the family vault in the chancel of St. Mary's church in a nest of three coffins — two wooden and one leaden. The outer coffin had a massive cross carved in plain oak on the lid. The eight solid brass handles had a coronet above each. On the pediment of the cross was a plate bearing the inscription "The Most Honourable George Henry Marquess Conyngham; born February 14th, 1825; died June 2nd, 1882". Above the inscription was the coat-of-arms of the Conyngham family. The pall-bearers were the 3rd Marquis of Ormonde (*3rd cousin*), the Hon. Victor Churchill (*nephew*), Sir Theodore Brinckman (*brother-in-law*) and Mr. Gustavus William Lambart (*brother-in-law*). Mr. Bradbury Tassell played the organ.

Wreaths had derived from the following sources:- The Queen, Princess Beatrice (*the Queen's youngest daughter*), Sir Moses Montefiore, the Marchioness of Headfort, Lady Ventry and the crew of the yacht *Minerva*. More wreaths were deposited in the vault where there were already the coffins of Henry, 1st Marquess Conyngham, (†1832) and his wife Elizabeth (†1861), Francis Nathaniel, 2nd Marquess Conyngham, (†1876) and his wife Jane (†1876).

The mourners included the Dowager Marchioness, the succeeding Marquess (*elder son, Henry Francis*) and Lady Mountcharles (*daughter-in-law, Frances Elizabeth Sarah Blakeney née Eveleigh de Moleyns*), Lord Charles Conyngham (*younger son*), Lady Blanche Conyngham (*eldest child*), Lady

Jane Seymour Conyngham (*third daughter*), Lady Elizabeth Maud Conyngham (*fourth daughter*), Lady Florence Conyngham (*fifth daughter*), Lady Jane Churchill (*eldest sister*), Lady Fanny Lambart (*second sister*), Mr. Harry Combe (*eldest sister's father-in-law*), Mr. Richard and Lady Constance Combe (*eldest sister and her husband*), the 4th Duke of Leinster (*brother of the second husband of an aunt*), the Marquis of Ormonde (*3rd cousin*), Sir Theodore Brinckman (*brother-in-law*), the Hon. Victor Churchill (*nephew*), Lord Londesborough (*1st cousin*), the 8th Earl of Harrington (*eldest son of a first cousin of the widow*), Col. the Hon. Henry Byng (*representing the Queen*), Lord de Ros (*on behalf of the Royal Family*), Lord Alfred Paget (*mother's half-brother*), Lord Ventry (*heir's father-in-law*), Lieut.-Col. William H. D. FitzGerald, Mr. Cecil Paget (*first cousin*), Major-General Hankey, Mr. F. Sanders, Mr. Saville, Col. Robert Peter Laurie (*recently** *M.P. for Canterbury*), Admiral Sir Reginald John Macdonald of Clanranald, Mr. Charles Stewart Hardy (*of Chilham Castle; racehorse owner*), Colonel Billington, Captain Thomas Lambert

* There was at this time no Member of Parliament for Canterbury since the local result of the general election of April 1st, 1880, had been declared void on the grounds of bribery by agents and the extensive prevalence of corrupt practices. Colonel Laurie was first elected in a by-election for one seat on May 8th, 1879, by 1159 to 1103 — a considerably smaller majority than the 572 votes which separated the Conservative and Liberal candidates in the general election of February 5th, 1874. His running mate, Alfred Erskine Gathorne-Hardy, had been unopposed in the by-election of March 2nd, 1878. Accordingly Colonel Laurie, a Justice of the Peace and member of the Stock Exchange, employed George Hall, a rat-catcher, to bribe persons who would be unlikely to be amenable to direct approaches from more traditional Conservative canvassers. Hall kept an excellent account of his expenditure for which he was duly reimbursed. The result was that Gathorne-Hardy got 1467 votes, Laurie 1425, the Liberal candidate 1294 and the independent candidate (who was in fact the Conservative whose resignation caused the 1878 by-election) 1215 votes. Canterbury remained without an M.P. until the 1885 general election when its representation was reduced to one member.

(*prominent Conservative and town councillor*), Captain Douglas, Mr. H. R. Peckham, Mr. William Henry Saltwell (*the family solicitor*), Mr. Robert Smith (*the land agent of the Bifrons and Minster estates and steward*), Mr. Osborne (*the agent of the Irish estates*) and others.

Captain and Adjutant Mervyn Chaloner Stephen Tynte and Captain Edward Frewen of the Royal East Kent Yeomanry attended in uniform and a number of members of the D troop (of which the late Marquess was formerly Captain) were present. Canterbury, Ashford, Bridge and Wingham fire brigades were also represented. Nearly all the tenants on the Bifrons estate and the officers of the late Marquess's yacht *Minerva* were present.

The Inland Revenue Legacy Receipts under the Legacy Duty Act provide an insight for us into his domestic establishment, which we must presume were those based at Bifrons. The executors were the Most Honorable James Edward William Theobald Butler, 3rd Marquis of Ormonde, and the solicitor, William Henry Saltwell of Lincoln's Inn. The legacies for the domestic servants and the £200 for the benefit of the poor of the parish of Patricbourne entrusted to the vicar, Francis Vine, were subject to 10% duty as they were for "strangers in blood". More substantial legacies were paid to Lieutenant-Colonel William H. D. Fitzgerald (£500), William Henry Saltwell, the solicitor, (£500), Robert Hippisley Cox, his resident medical attendant, (£200), Edgcombe Venning F.S.E.C.S., his friend and medical attendant, (£200) and The Marquis of Ormonde (£500). This last bequest was only subject to 6% duty as the Marquis was a descendant of a brother of the grandfather of the deceased.*

The funeral sermon on Sunday, June 11th, referred to the open vault with some sense of awe. It was mentioned that a few months before his death he was promoted to Lieutenant-

* The 3rd Marquess Conyngham's maternal grandfather was Henry William Paget, 2nd Earl of Uxbridge and 1st Marquis of Anglesey. One of his younger brothers was General the Hon. Edward Paget, whose eldest daughter, Frances Jane, married John Butler, the 2nd Marquis of Ormonde.

General in the army and he had said that he would have so much more to give away as he regarded his professional income as his own earnings which he could give away to charity. He had served as one of Her Majesty's equerries.

His widow sought permission shortly afterwards to have the body transferred to a new plot to be provided by the Conynghams on the western side of the churchyard, north of the tree-lined path. This formed the nucleus of the group of graves which form a major feature in the churchyard today.

The family vault was covered over in 1885 when the Commissary General granted permission⁵¹ for the level of the chancel to be raised. This task was accompanied by the removal of the reredos to the west end, the lowering of the children's seats, the placing of additional stalls in the chancel and the moving of the pulpit as far south as possible to open up the chancel arch.

CHAPTER TEN

Estate administration after 1882

After the death of the 3rd Marquess in June, 1882, the administration of Bifrons and the Bifrons Estate became essentially separated from the lives of the various tenants who were found to occupy Bifrons itself. This chapter will be concerned with the Conynghams and the various trustees appointed to manage the estate while the tenants themselves will be discussed in the next chapter.

(a) The 4th Marquess Conyngham (1882–1897)

Henry Francis, the 4th Marquess, was educated at Eton.

He entered the Scots Guards on January 1st, 1879 and served for some time in the 1st Battalion. When he retired in 1881, he was appointed to a Lieutenancy in the Duke of Connaught's Own East Kent Yeomanry.

We have an assessment of the revenue of the family estates in 1883. These were:-

9737 acres in Kent	producing £17,431 <i>per annum</i> .
122300 acres in Co. Donegal	producing £15,166 <i>per annum</i> .
27613 acres in Co. Clare	producing £10,808 <i>per annum</i> .
7060 acres in Co. Meath	producing £6,670 <i>per annum</i> .

In total 166,718 acres produced £50,076 *per annum*. The importance of the Bifrons and Minster estates as the highest revenue earners can thus be seen, even though Slane Castle in Co. Meath remained the principal residence of the Marquess. In the list of the 28 noblemen who owned more than 100,000 acres of land in the United Kingdom in 1883, the Marquess Conyngham ranked 12th in terms of acreage and 23rd or 24th in terms of yearly value.

Henry Francis married Frances Elizabeth Sarah Blakeney Eveleigh de Moleyns, the eldest daughter of Dayrolles Blakeney Eveleigh de Moleyns, 4th Baron Ventry, on March 21st, 1882, less than three months before succeeding his father. The wedding was held at All Saints' Church, Ennismore

Gardens. His bride was resident at her mother's ancestral home, Niddrie House, Edinburgh, at the time. Their first son, Victor George Henry Francis, was born on January 30th, 1883, in Charles Street (off Berkeley Square) and baptised in Patricxbourne on March 17th that same year. Queen Victoria was a sponsor by proxy at the baptism.

They also had five daughters as well as another son, Frederick. When his wife, Frances, was seven months pregnant with their last child, Barbara Helen, a scandal arose.

Henry Francis Conyngham was well known in Paris and London society where he was a clubman and something of a judge of pictures and sculptures. He was reputed to be a student of the art of war although his military experience was rather limited. He had the honorary title of Vice-Admiral of the Coast of the Province of Ulster.

The 4th Marquess died in Slane Castle after a short but serious illness at the early age of 39 on August 28th, 1897, leaving seven young children. He had undergone surgery at the hands of Mr. Sims Manley of 12 Hertford Street, Mayfair, five or six weeks previously and had gone to Slane to recuperate. He was buried in the Church of Ireland (Anglican) cemetery at Slane on September 1st. In contrast to the luxurious ceremony afforded to his father, his funeral, in the hands of Alfred G. Walter of 49 Denzille Street, Dublin, only cost £24 12s.

Henry's executors were originally to have been his uncle, Sir Theodore Henry Brinckman, and his second cousin, Henry Charles Denison, but these were changed by a codicil of **July 10th, 1893**, to his uncle, Sir Alexander Fuller-Acland-Hood, 1st Baron St. Audries, and his brother-in-law, Bertram "Bertie" Frankland Astley.

An epitome of his original will, dated April 30th, 1884, indicated the presence of carriages, carriage horses and carriage harness at his mansion house at Bifrons as well as 1000 ounces of silver plate suitable for ordinary use. There were other household items, books and manuscripts "whether at Bifrons or elsewhere" to be considered unless they had already been given to the Marchioness who was to receive £2,000 *per annum*.

His last will, dated July 10th, 1893, and amended by a codicil dated June 9th, 1897, was proved⁵² on December 18th, 1897, and showed a personal estate worth £57,709 gross and £19,755 net. He left his wife £2000, the wines and consumable stores, carriages and horses and 1000 ounces of silver plate. The remainder of his gold and silver plate and articles of vertu were left to his eldest or only son and in default thereof to the person who would be entitled under a deed of settlement dated January 1st, 1879, to the rents and profits of the Minster and other estates. His diamonds and other jewels were to devolve as heirlooms and follow the like trusts. After bequeathing £200 to each of his executors, the residue of his real and personal estate was left to all of his children except his eldest son. However, had he no child to inherit the residue, his wife would inherit it absolutely.

(b) The Trustees of the 5th Marquess (1897–1904)

As the eldest child of the 4th Marquess, Victor George Henry Francis succeeded to the Marquessate. Since he was only 14 years of age, the estates were entrusted to the husband of his great aunt Augusta, Sir Theodore Henry Brinckman of 34, Grosvenor Street, London, who was the Member of Parliament for Canterbury from 1868 to 1874, together with the family solicitor, William Henry Saltwell of Messrs. Saltwell & Co.

(c) The 5th Marquess Conyngham (1904–1918)

The term of office of the trustees expired on January 30th, 1904, when the 5th Marquess reached the age of 21. Until the First World War he would spend most of the year at Slane Castle and there is no evidence that he ever lived at Bifrons. He was extremely popular in social and sporting circles, particularly in Co. Meath. He was much devoted to otter hunting and in 1907 established a private pack of otter hunters. He hunted other animals including foxes and was a regular follower of the Meath Hounds. He held nominations for the Irish Cup and the Tipperary Cup. He had some good greyhounds in his kennels. Overall he was a true, generous and unassuming gentleman and sportsman.

Victor became a well-known figure in Paris and London society, both as a clubman and as a judge of pictures and sculptures. He was also known as a student of the art of war although his first-hand knowledge had not exceeded that of a second lieutenant in the Rifle Brigade in the Second Boer War followed by two months guarding Boer prisoners-of-war on St. Helena. This service entitled him to the award of a Queen's South Africa Medal. He was appointed to the honorary position of Vice-Admiral of the Coast of the Province of Ulster.

In preparation for the Great War he started on August 15th, 1914, as a probationary 2nd lieutenant in the 7th (South Irish Horse) Battalion of the Royal Irish Regiment. He was a member of the Cavalry Reserve Unit of the Special Reserve of Officers. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant on October 20th, 1915.

When His Serene Highness Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a grandson of Queen Victoria, gave up his German title to become the Marquess of Carisbrooke on November 7th, 1917, he also gave up his post of *aide-de-camp* to Lieutenant-General the Hon. Sir John Grenfell “Conky” Maxwell, General Officer, Commander-in-Chief, Northern Command. Carisbrooke was succeeded, albeit on a temporary basis, by Victor who was a 3rd cousin of his predecessor’s recently-acquired wife, Lady Irene Frances Adza Denison. Maxwell was involved in the training of recruits at York. This relatively safe job afforded no protection, however, from the influenza pandemic: Victor died at Sir John Maxwell’s residence in Dringthorpe, York, on the morning⁵³ of November 9th, 1918, from the pneumonia which had developed as a consequence of the influenza.

(d) The Problem of the Succession

Since Victor had never married, the marquessate would pass on his death to his younger brother, Frederick William Burton Conyngham, known as “Freddy”. However, this did not guarantee that the management of the estate would go the same way. The involvement of Victor in the Great War and the

happy-go-lucky behaviour of Freddy made some action on the part of the family all the more urgent.

Freddy had married an Australian girl, Bessie Alice Tobin, known as "Betty", at St. George's, Hanover Square, on November 28th, 1914, and it very rapidly appeared that she wanted to secure herself an independent income from the family estates. She had, after all, done the rounds: she had been presented by her mother at the King and Queen's Court at Buckingham Palace on May 25th, 1911. She had even been engaged for six months to a Mr. B. H. Nicolson yet announced in *The Times* on September 19th, 1914, just 10 weeks before the marriage to Freddy, that their marriage would not take place.

Freddy was assessed on December 16th that same year as having a total annual income of £11,000 consisting of £5,000 charged on the Conyngham estates and £6,000 charged on the Ventry estates. He was advised to settle this upon himself for life and afterwards it should be settled on Betty for life and the capital on any children. On December 29th, Betty was reported to be receiving £400 *per annum*. The bombshell arrived on January 13th, 1915, when Betty's solicitors suggested that the £5,000 should be paid directly to her and that it was as much in Freddy's interests as hers. Four days later, details of Freddy's interests in property were handed over to Betty's solicitors and six days after that Betty's solicitors were asked to provide a draft settlement. On February 11th, Freddy's solicitors received such a draft in which it was proposed that Betty should have a first life interest in Freddy's property. A fortnight later Freddy was given an epitome of the proposed settlement and told that it needed considerable modification.

On March 31st, Freddy learned that Betty's solicitors were pressing for the return of the draft and Freddy reported two days later that he was unable to proceed. Ten days later he decided to settle £100 *per annum* on her for life at once and make a proper settlement at the end of the war. Meanwhile, Victor was preparing his will which he signed on April 11th. According to this a trust would be established to manage the estates, to raise money to pay off the mortgages and to pay certain annuities. The Irish estates would be settled for life on Freddy with remainder to any issue of Freddy in tail male with

remainder for life to John Francis Ainsworth, his eldest nephew, with remainder to Ainsworth's issue in tail male and with final remainder to his "own right heirs". Freddy duly signed the memorandum and returned it on May 17th. This was not enough for Betty's solicitors, however, so they wrote on June 3rd urging completion of the settlement.

Freddy then made the big mistakes that caused him to be disinherited. He agreed on June 14th to give her the £5,000 *per annum* and a share of the £6,000 and would try to ensure a life interest in the properties. Three days later her solicitors returned the draft so that the covenant guaranteeing £100 *per annum* could be inserted. On June 21st, Freddy wrote to her solicitors to say that she was to get the £5,000 *per annum* plus one sixth of the £6,000 plus £100 a year for life whether or not she re-married and that this clause could go into the settlement at once.⁵⁴

As a consequence of this, Victor changed his will. According to a codicil dated November 18th, 1916, Victor revoked all the benefits given to his brother under the will substituting them by an annuity.

Meanwhile, Freddy and Betty lived in Paris and other places until 1917 by which time Freddy was serving as a second lieutenant in the 3rd battalion of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. In January, 1918, he left Betty and never lived with her again. He went to Scotland and refused to see her despite her letters and telegrams. In March (or December depending on which report in *The Times* is correct), 1918, he wrote that it was impossible to live with her again and that he was now living with someone else. The attraction in Scotland was presumably Lady Hume-Campbell, who was born Emily Jane Ram, daughter of the Reverend Prebendary Robert Digby Ram, of Marchmont House, Berwickshire, since her husband, Sir John Home-Purves-Hume-Campbell, 8th Baronet of Purves Hall, Berwick, obtained a divorce at the Court of Session in Edinburgh in November 1919 on the grounds of her adultery with Freddy.

(e) The Trustees of the Will of the 5th Marquess

The death of the 5th Marquess was bad news indeed for the Bifrons estate. The management passed to trustees representing his six-year-old nephew, John Francis Ainsworth, until either he became of age or Freddy produced an heir to the Marquessate which did in fact happen on March 13th, 1924. Worse still was the fact that a condition of one of the mortgages on Bifrons was that it had to be repaid within six months of Victor's death. In fact an extension was negotiated but at the price of an increase in the interest rate from 5½% to 6½%.

Victor's will was proved in May, 1919, by his mother and Herbert Blunt and it transpired that the estate was worth £251,472, the net personalty being only £82,441.⁵⁵ The list of heirlooms which were to devolve as family property proved to be quite interesting. It included three steel keys of Windsor Park in a case; gold coral bells combined with a whistle given by King George IV to the Earl of Mount Charles; a small amethyst seal with gilt mounting given by Queen Victoria to the Earl of Mount Charles when he was her equerry; two ivory passes to the Horse Guards and the Park Gates; an oblong silver-gilt snuff-box given by Prince Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, to Captain Henry Conyngham in 1762; a round silver-gilt box surmounted by a crest presented with the freedom of Drogheda to the first Earl Conyngham; a round chased-edged engine-turned gold box presented by King George IV to the Earl of Mount Charles in 1821; a chased gold diamond-mounted tinder box with "N" and crown in diamonds given by Emperor Napoléon III to the Earl of Mount Charles on the occasion of his visit to London.

All of the real estate in England and Ireland and the residue of the personal property was to be settled on the first and other sons of his brother Freddy. If Freddy had no sons then the inheritance would pass to his nephew John Francis Ainsworth. Freddy contested the true construction of the will and codicil but to no effect: so long as he had no son, his nephew was entitled to any surplus rents and profits of the estate.⁵⁶ His appeal was dismissed.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, Betty's plea for a divorce *a mensa et thoro* from Freddy on the grounds of misconduct was heard in a Dublin court and was granted unopposed⁵⁸ whilst indicating that

there was no charge of cruelty or terrorism. The divorce in England was a matter for the House of Lords where her Bill received a second reading. It transpired that Freddy's infidelity was testified by the manager of the Gresham Hotel, Dublin, who reported that Freddy stayed at his hotel with a lady who was not Betty on both January 6th and 25th, 1916.⁵⁹ This was before Victor's will was changed by codicil.

The financial situation prompted the sale of some of the Bifrons estate and Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley were instructed to sell some outlying farms (covering about 2600 acres).⁶⁰ There were to be 67 lots in the auction at the Fountain Hotel, Canterbury, on May 26th, 1921.⁶¹ The main attractions were stated to be the good hops and corn, the sheep and cattle that can be raised there, the sporting and the woods and, in parts, the fruit-growing capabilities. However, the rights to extract minerals below 400 feet were reserved by the vendors. In the event the option to buy their properties was exercised in the case of over a score of the 68 lots. £29900 was raised for 1200 acres: this included £7000 for Gore Street Farm, Sarre.⁶²

Following the death of Mr. Blunt, Walter Robinson Elgar, Senior Partner of George Webb & Co., Land Agents, Surveyors & Auctioneers, of 43 Park Road, Sittingbourne, was appointed to manage the estates. This seemed to be a good choice as Walter had been born in Wingham, had been a boy in Lower Farm, Nackington, and lived in Bobbing Place, a property similar to Bifrons. Furthermore he had represented Milton Regis on Kent County Council since 1917 and had been an alderman since 1923. The annual salary of £350 afforded a considerable saving on Mr. Blunt's terminal salary of £600 *per annum* plus £30 car allowance plus journeys and expenses of approximately £42 *per annum*.

The disposal of some capital assets to raise some liquidity continued. The Abbey House, together with The Abbey Green and the pond at Minster-in-Thanel were sold on September 2nd, 1929. Shepherd's Close Farm was sold in 1931 followed by Mill Cottage and the adjoining meadow in Bridge on November 18th, 1932. About 25 acres of arable land fronting Tothill Road, Minster, were sold on March 27th, 1933.

The seriousness of the financial situation and the possible consequences of the delayed payment of estate duties caused the Trustees to split the auditing work so that Saltwell's would only deal with the accounts of the Irish estates while Sir John James "Jamie" Withers would deal with those of the Kent estates. This was an excellent choice — Withers had an unparalleled reputation in dealing with the problems of upper-class families and was the senior partner of one of the biggest legal firms, *viz.* Withers & Co. of Howard House, 4, Arundel Street, London W.C.2. Their first audit covered the accounts for July 1st, 1929 to December 31st, 1932. These accounts appear to have been submitted relatively late as Walter Elgar's replies to the auditor's queries were dated April 16th, 1935.

The dowager Marchioness was relieved of her duties as a trustee on September 6th, 1937, when the Hon. George Evan Michael Baillie of Ashford Hall, Bakewell, and Francis Hugh, 2nd Baronet Brooke of Summerton, Dublin, resident at Ballyfad, Coolgreany, Co. Wexford, were appointed to accompany John Gretton who continued as a trustee. Evan Baillie was the elder son of Colonel James Evan Bruce Baillie of Dochfour House, Invernessshire, and Nellie Lisa Bass, Baroness (*suo jure*) Burton. The connection with John Gretton was through the brewing firm Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton (1888–1961). Captain Sir Hugh Brooke was joint master of the Kildare Hounds and had served in the South Irish Horse in World War I with Victor the 5th Marquess. There was also a connection with the Conynghams through the Brinckman family whose residence, Nairnside House, was also in the Inverness area.

The dowager Marchioness died on July 8th, 1939, and Brigadier Evan Baillie, who was on active service, died aged 46 in an Edinburgh nursing home on June 6th, 1941, two days after an operation to repair a peptic ulcer.

There was a further change of ownership on May 31st, 1943, when the number of trustees was increased by inclusion of John Frederic Gretton (son of the existing trustee, John Gretton) and George Grenville Fortescue of Boconnoc House, Lostwithiel. George was the son-in-law of Florence Frankland-

Russell-Astley who was born Florence Conyngham in Bridge Place in 1886. She was an aunt of Freddy the 6th Marquess.

Walter Elgar had died in November 1939 and given that there no longer appeared to be any compelling reason to continue to employ his firm as agent, the contract was transferred in February 1945 to Alfred Savill & Sons of 51A Lincoln's Inn Fields. The partner responsible was Douglas E. White.

(g) The 7th Marquess Conyngham

On his 21st birthday on March 13th, 1945, Frederick William Henry Francis Conyngham, Earl of Mountcharles, eldest son of Freddy the 6th Marquess, became tenant for life of the Bifrons Estate. Accordingly a vesting deed was prepared by the trustees and the property was conveyed to him on May 7th, 1945.

The process of selling off various parts of the Bifrons estate began with the sale of Ileden Farm, together with the house and grounds, to Marion Maude, Viscountess Hawarden, on May 7th, 1947. John Gretton died on June 2nd at the age of 79 and was not replaced as a trustee. His son, John Frederic, succeeded him as 2nd Baron Gretton.

"The Field"* was sold on July 4th followed on the 24th by Sondes House, Patrixbourne. The sale of tenanted cottages in Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne began with the completion on July 25th, 1949, of the sale of some properties in The Street to Wilfrid Rutley Mowll, senior partner of the firm of solicitors Mowll & Mowll of 68, Castle Street, Canterbury for £5500. Edwin Wilfred Gardener, senior partner of the firm of estate agents E. L. Gardener of 9, Palace Street, Canterbury, bought 19 cottages for £2100 less an abatement of £15 on December 18th, 1950. Exceptionally, the Estate Bailiff, Charlie Apps, managed to purchase his cottage (Tudor Cottage, a part of what is now called The Old Court House) together with the walled garden for £100 that same month. The cost per cottage may seem low but so were the fixed rents which varied from 4s. 0d. to 11s. 9d. per week. Further the village did not benefit from

* "The Field", now renamed "Field House", is a large house in Station Road, Bridge.

mains sewerage until 1973 so the numerous outhouses were used for more than just storage.

Bridge Place was sold in 1954.⁶³

On February 15th, 1949, buildings and land at Bifrons known as “Bifrons Gardens” were leased to Major Charles Lancelot W. Kaye who developed the nurseries. He won a prize at the Royal Chelsea Show that year and by July was advertising bride’s bouquets and claimed that wreath-making was a speciality. Visitors were always welcome and the nurseries were open on Sundays.⁶⁴ A party of 25 members of Canterbury Gardeners’ Society visited the nurseries on July 9th and were entertained to tea by Major and Mrs. Kaye.⁶⁵

The estate responded to the Silver Jubilee appeal of the National Playing Fields Association, transmitted by Bridge–Blean Rural District Council through Bekesbourne Parish Council, by agreeing on July 21st, 1949, to make permanent the arrangement with Kent County Council whereby the estate land used by Bekesbourne and Patrixbourne as playing fields.

Bifrons was sold for demolition in July, 1950, for a four-figure sum* and the demolition materials were advertised locally soon thereafter.

Sir Hugh Brooke died on November 4th, 1954.

The Bifrons Estate continues as an economic entity. A contract was signed on June 18th, 1976, to transfer the whole estate with the exception of Goss Hall and Sheriff’s Court Farm (which have since been sold) to Cantley Limited of St. Peter Port. The Land Agent is Mr. Charles W. Gooch of the Sevenoaks branch of Savills.

(h) The future

Bifrons Park was declared a Conservation Area on January 30th, 1995, and was measured as 123.90 hectares (= 306.16 acres). This was in quick succession to the declaration of the Patrixbourne Conservation Area of 15.31 hectares (= 37.83 acres) which was declared on November 8th, 1994.

* Doug White recorded the sum in his notebook as £*pkyy* but did not record the key to his code! It is probable that $p=2$, $k=5$ and $y=0$.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Conynghams' Tenants

(a) Edward Wienholt

Edward Wienholt was born in Laugharne, Carmarthenshire, on March 28th, 1833, to John Birkett Wienholt and his second wife, Sarah (*née* Hill).

The first European to arrive in the Darling Downs region of what was to become South-East Queensland was Henry Dennis who set up Jondaryan Station in 1842.

Edward Wienholt was the Representative for Western Downs in the Queensland Parliament from September 14th, 1870 to November 4th, 1873 when the constituency was split up: he continued as the Representative for Darling Downs until February 1st, 1875.

A Weinholt family arrived at Fremantle, Australia, in the ship *Assam* in March 1877. The family consisted of a husband and wife with an infant and two servants and another Mr. Weinholt.

It is known that an E. Weinholt was a main shareholder in the Central Queensland Meat Exporting Company and a "wealthy Victorian pastoralist".

Edward married Ellen Williams, daughter of another Queensland grazier.

It was recorded in the census on the night of April 5th, 1891, that Bifrons was occupied by an Ellen Wienholt, wife, (age 34, living on her own means, born in Melbourne) with her children Muriel Wendelina (age 15, born in Llanwern, Monmouthshire), Arnold (age 13; scholar; born in Goomburra, Queensland), Brenda and Mary Magdalena. (both born in Goomburra) and sons Edward Arthur (age 7, born in Goomburra) and William Humphrey Meyrick (age 5, born in Kingstone, Herefordshire). Also present were a cousin, John M. O. Bode, (born in Newcastle, New South Wales, age 21 and occupied as a student of theology); a governess, Elizabeth Schipploch, (born in Pomerania and aged 30) and a professor of

music, Carl Deichmann, (who was born in Hannover 63 years previously and was a visitor).

On October 23rd, 1893, Edward Wienholt left Queensland⁶⁶ by the mail train to join the French mail steamer *Le Polynésien* at Sydney *en route* for England to rejoin his family. *Le Polynésien* was a twin-funnelled steamer, 152 metres long and displacing 10,300 tons. It was capable of 17.5 knots and could take 172 passengers in first-class, 71 in second class, 109 in third class and 234 *rationnaires*.

When Edward Arthur Wienholt went up to Eton⁶⁷ in September 1896, the family were living at Wellisford Manor (near Langford Budville) in Somerset. Wellisford had the same advantage as other homes such as Rocklands at Goodrich, near Ross-on-Wye, in being situated on a hill above the river (Tone) below.

An Arnold Wienholt was a member of the Fourth Queensland Contingent (the Queensland Imperial Bushmen) who left for the Boer War on May 18th, 1900, was promoted to Sergeant on June 1st and returned on August 5th, 1901.

An Arnold Wienholt (1877–1940) was an extraordinary adventurer about whom a book was written in 1987.

A Lieutenant Frederick Edward Wienholt of D squadron, Central District, 7th Battalion, Australian Commonwealth Horse (Queensland) is recorded as having departed Australia on May 19th, 1902 and returned on August 2nd the same year as a member of the Tenth Queensland Contingent.

(b) John Miller

John Alexander Miller was born on September 27th, 1867, as the son of William Miller, a merchant of Leith, who became the Liberal Member of Parliament for Leith Burghs and later for Berwickshire. His mother, Mary Anne *née* Farley Leith, was the daughter of John Farley Leith, Q.C., M.P., (1808–1887), 1st baronet Miller of Manderston, Berwickshire. It is said that Gladstone created the baronetcy in 1874 in recognition of this marriage.

John was the younger brother of James Percy Miller who became the second baronet in 1887 and, as owner of Manderston House, Berwickshire, was responsible for the opulent rebuilding of that house in 1903–1905.

On September 19th, 1889, John married Toronto-born Inez Mary Mitchell-Innes, the 22-year-old eldest daughter of Captain William Mitchell-Innes (1841–1879) of the 13th Hussars and his wife Agnes *née* Hulbert. The marriage took place according to the rites of the Scottish Episcopalian Church at Ayton Castle, Berwickshire, where the bride was residing. In 1890 they were living in Barney Hill, Dunbar. At the time of signing the tenancy agreement for Bifrons they were living at Littlegreen, near Petersfield. This agreement was for three years commencing on June 20th, 1892, and involved a rent of £850 per year payable in advance on the 20th of June and December in equal half-yearly payments. After one year, the tenant could give three months notice of quitting. The tenant was restricted “to use the mansion house and premises for private residence only and not to permit any sale or public meeting to be held thereon”. The inventory specified the mansion house, dairy, laundry and cottage, stables, coach-houses, offices, garden, gardeners’ houses, hothouses, greenhouses and pleasure grounds, one entrance lodge (No. 23 on the plan), keepers’ houses and dog kennels making 20 acres in all. Also included were “all household goods, furniture, glasses, books and other articles and effects now being in and about the same mansion house, offices, gardens and other places”.

The sporting rights included the exclusive right, liberty and privilege of hunting, shooting and coursing over and upon part of the Bifrons estate which was then 3900 acres in all.

Both John and his elder brother, James, were interested in racehorses. John's first venture as an owner was to build in 1892 a model training-establishment at Steep Lane, Findon, Sussex, known as the Nepcote Lodge stables. His racing colours were olive green with white-hooped sleeves and quartered caps. He engaged the local artist and fellow Scotsman, Edwin Douglas (1848–1914), to paint his horses. He is known to have accommodated horses belonging to the Prince of Wales at his racing yard stables. His success on the turf was in much part due to engaging William J. Halsey as trainer and jockey. He did not, however, race on the same scale or with such success as his brother who had at some time won most of the classic races including the Derby in both 1890 and 1903. Nevertheless, he had a useful horse called "Bridge" who won a number of races over a long period.

His solicitor was Mr. Hugh Murray, Writer to the Signet, of 48, Castle Street, Edinburgh. The lease renewing the tenancy of Bifrons dated 2nd February 1897 contains some interesting amendments. This was with Henry Francis, 4th Marquess Conyngham, and was to expire on June 20th, 1901. Its provisions indicate that there was a Still Room containing one locked cupboard and a Lumber Room. The lease stipulated that no sale, bazaar or public meeting was to be held on the premises and, further, that the gamekeepers together with the Head and other gardeners were to be retained as well as the wild fowl on the lake. The lessor allowed the lessee the use of a mule for pumping purposes and the lessee could keep the fruit grown in the orchards. However, no grazing rights were included.

The annual rent of £850 was specified as consisting of £600 for the mansion plus £250 for the household goods, furniture, glasses, books and other articles.

John sold the Nepcote Lodge Stables "at the turn of the century" to Eliza Charlotte Thirlwell for £5000 and high-grade training continued there. John moved on to the Michelgrove Stables nearby which were larger and occupying land formerly owned by Sir

John Shelley, 9th baronet of Michelgrove. Although it has been alleged that Sir John was related to the poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, the reality was actually quite different — they were 10th cousins, once removed!

1901 was a memorable year for John Miller: his wife divorced him on February 1st; he left Bifrons* and that summer he married Mrs Ada Mary Walker, the only child of Francis Henry Paget of Birstall Hall, Leicestershire, widow of both Thomas Gerald Walker and a Godfrey Seymour W. Webster.

When his brother died on January 22nd, 1906, John became the 3rd baronet Miller of Manderston. While his sister-in-law continued living at Manderston, John took over his brother's racing colours as second colours to his own as they were associated with notable success. He divorced his second wife in December 1906 as a result of her living at a hotel in Hampton Court for over six weeks with Maximilian John de Bathe who had occasionally stayed with the Millers. In 1907 he married Eveline Frances Cookson, the eldest daughter of John Blencowe Cookson, C.B., of Meldon Park, Morpeth.

As he had no children by any of his three marriages, the baronetcy became extinct on February 16th, 1918, when John himself died at his home — Alexander House, Newmarket. In spite of his love of racing he had not been seen on a racecourse in his last few years which made his appearance at the Newmarket Fifth Extra Meeting, looking obviously ill, all the more remarkable. He was buried in Newmarket cemetery following a service at which the Turf was represented by Richard Marsh, the King's trainer.

* It appears from a schedule of rents received by the Bifrons Estate that a John Miller continued to rent a property in the village for £6.10s. per year — the same rent as the vicar was paying for the vicarage — but it is not clear which property this was or whether it was the same John Miller.

(c) Frank Penn

The Penn family lived in a large corner house on the south side of Blackheath Road with a garden alongside the present Lewisham Road back to Cold Bath Lane (now known as John Penn Street). Five other properties separated them from their factory to the west which only had a frontage onto Cold Bath Lane. The firm had been started in 1799 by John Penn, a Bristolian millwright, whose aim was to produce agricultural machinery. It became famous for the marine engines produced from 1825 and also for the marine boilers produced at Palmer's Payne Wharf, Deptford. When John Penn died in 1843 his son, who was also named John, took over. By 1857 the factory had become world-famous and underwent major expansion in the 1860s. In 1868 they built the first-ever wind-tunnel for the Aeronautical Society which was then based in Blackheath.

John Penn had three sons: William (born 29.8.1849), Frank (born 7.3.1851) and Alfred (born 6.1.1855). All three played cricket for Kent. Their sister, Isabella, married Frederick Stokes who was the eldest of another set of three brothers who all played in the Kent XI.

Frank Penn was most appreciated in cricketing circles for his first-class batsmanship. He began to play for Kent on May 31st, 1875, at Catford Bridge and made his début at Lord's in 1876 where he scored 44 and 35 runs for the M.C.C. in a match against Yorkshire. His ability was so recognised that he was picked to play for the Gentlemen in their matches against the Players that year both at The Oval and at Lord's. His best year playing for Kent was 1877 when he scored 857 runs in 24 innings (three times not out). The highest of his many big scores for Kent was the 160 scored in a match against Surrey at Maidstone on July 29th, 1878. That winter he went to Australia as a member of Lord Harris's team.

It was also his privilege to play cricket for England in the Test Match against Australia at The Oval on 6th–8th September, 1880. Penn got 23 runs in the first innings and 27 runs not out in the second. It was his final hit which gave England victory by 5 wickets. The team included the legendary W. G. Grace, who got 152 runs in the first innings and 9 runs not out in the second. Also playing for England were E. M.

Grace and G. F. Grace making this the first instance of three brothers playing in the same Test. This match was regarded as the first Test played in England — others had been held abroad.

1881 proved to be a very significant year in Frank Penn's life. The good news was that he married Grace Ellen Sewell, a 20-year-old daughter of a wine merchant. The bad news was that he developed a heart condition which precluded him from running and so his cricketing career was suddenly ended. In his 61 matches played for Kent from 1875 to 1881 he scored 2906 runs (which included six centuries) and took 8 wickets. His batting average was 29.35 and his bowling average 38.87.

Although living in Bickley in 1881, Frank and Grace moved to Frostenden, Suffolk, at some stage. Their son, Frank, was born on August 18th, 1884, in Ousden, Suffolk. Grace died in Suffolk early in 1901, aged only 40. This sad event probably motivated Frank to move and the break-up of John Miller's marriage provided the opportunity of renting Bifrons which had the attraction of proximity to the St. Lawrence Cricket Ground. He did return to Frostenden in September 1902, however, to marry Ethel Hickling, the 29-year-old daughter of Edmund C. Hickling, the rector of All Saints', the local church.

Frank served as President of the Kent County Cricket Club for the year 1905.

(d) Bob Marsham

Robert Henry Bullock Marsham was born in Merton College, Oxford, on September 3rd, 1833. His father, Robert Bullock-Marsham, had been Warden of the college since 1826 and had married his mother, Janet (known as "Jessie"), in 1828. She was the daughter of Major-General David Dewar of Gilston House, Fife, and the widow of Sir John Carmichael-Anstruther, 5th Baronet Carmichael-Anstruther, the Member of Parliament for Anstruther Easter Burghs. Bob was their second son. He had private tuition at home and, naturally enough, received his university education at Merton College where he gained his B.A. in 1855 and M.A. in 1858. Like his father he followed the legal profession to become a magistrate; he won a studentship to the

Inner Temple when aged only 24 and was called to the Bar in 1860.

These early days were interspersed with a certain amount of cricket. He played for Oxford University in 1856; Cambridge beat his side by 3 wickets and he never played in the Oxford XI again. He was chosen to play for the Gentlemen against the Players at Lord's in July 1859: the Players won by 169 runs. The next week, however, at Lord's his bowling led the Middlesex Cricket Club to victory by 119 runs against the Surrey Cricket Club even though Middlesex were the weaker team.

He was chosen again to play for the Gentlemen against the Players at Lord's in July 1860 but the Players won by an innings and 181 runs. The next month he played for England against the XVI of Kent at Canterbury: Kent won by an innings and 48 runs.

In 1862 he played for the Gentlemen under 30 against the Players under 30 and got his best score, 24 runs, when he opened the Gentlemen's first innings with E. M. Grace.

He made numerous runs for *I Zingari* and played in the double-tie match against Cranbury Park in 1864.

Professionally he joined the South-Eastern Circuit and from 1868 was Recorder of Maidstone. He was distinguished by his acute powers of discernment and sound, unemotional, judgment. The jury did not regard him as sentimental nor did witnesses regard him as humorous. The secret of his success was his plain, straightforward, manner. He married Laura Field, sister of first-class cricketer George Hanbury Field and daughter of George Field of Ashurst Park, near Tunbridge Wells, in 1871.

He moved from Kent in 1879 on appointment as a Metropolitan Police Magistrate, at first working in the Greenwich and Woolwich courts. On November 13th, 1887, he had the job of riding on horseback round Trafalgar Square at the head of a detachment of the Life Guards, complete with glittering cuirasses and helmets, ready to read the Riot Act to the mob participating in what came to be known as the "Bloody Sunday" riot. In 1897 he transferred to Westminster and finally in 1899 to Bow Street where he rose to be the second most

senior magistrate. He earned a reputation for leniency, hoping that kindly words of warning might have greater effects than heavy sentences. He was also inflexible with eminent Counsel who wished him to move their cases up the order paper for the day: all set plans for hearing cases were adhered to, independently of the relative gravities of the cases.

As presiding magistrate at Bow Street on August 29th, 1910, he had the high-profile job of remanding that notorious American dentist, "Dr." Hawley Harvey Crippen, and his shorthand-typist, Ethel Clara Le Neve, into custody at Brixton and Holloway prisons, respectively, to await trial for the murder of the second Mrs. Crippen.

Mr. Marsham continued to sit at Bow Street until March 28th, 1913, after which he suffered an attack of bronchitis which led to his death at Bifrons on April 5th. Two important cases which he had been adjudicating had to be formally adjourned.

His body was transported to Canterbury East station and thence to Victoria by train accompanied by his sons Charles and Robert four days later for the funeral service at St. Mary's, Bryanston Square, that same day. He was interred in the private cemetery at Kensal Green which is, coincidentally, also the final resting place of previous Bifrons resident, Annabella Milbanke, Lady Byron.

(e) Frank Penn's second tenancy

After Bob Marsham's death, Frank Penn decided he would like to return to Bifrons. He was at this time living at Hardres Court, Upper Hardres, where he had been since its owner, George Marshall, J.P. moved to Juniper Rough in 1909 or 1910. Accordingly a lease was signed on May 12th, 1913, which could be terminated by the tenant at the end of the fifth or seventh years of the term if notice is duly given. However, work had to be done on the drains and other sanitary installations to the satisfaction of the London Sanitary Protection Society. Subject to this proviso and possession being given by June 24th, 1913, his first payment would not be due under the terms of the new lease until December 25th, 1913, and would be delayed if the sanitary works were completed late.

Penn also concluded an agreement with the Conyngham Estate for the provision of an electricity supply.

Penn died at Bifrons on December 26th, 1916, and was survived by his wife, Ethel, his son, Frank, and three daughters. At 1.15 p.m. on December 30th, his fumed-oak coffin was taken from the mansion on a wheeled bier through the private grounds and the iron gate in the churchyard, to the church for the funeral. The Rev. Hubert Knight conducted the service and was assisted by some members of the Canterbury Cathedral Choir including Mr. W. T. Harvey, the assistant organist at the cathedral. There were many floral tributes and wreaths including one from the Kent County Cricket Club. The grave was lined with flowers by the Head Gardener of Bifrons.

(f) Major Frank Penn

The tenancy was taken over by his son, Frank, who I shall refer to as Major Frank Penn in recognition of the grade he attained in the 2nd Life Guards and to distinguish him from his father. He had played first-class cricket for Kent in three matches in 1904 and 1905, this latter year being that in which his father was President. He played for the Household Brigade against the Royal Artillery in 1906 and scored innings of 101 and 123 not out.

When the renewal with effect from June 1918 of the tenancy agreement of Bifrons came up for discussion in March 1918, Major Frank Penn was uncertain about whether he wanted a long lease and settled for a lease of one year commencing June 24th, 1918. The rent was just £200 for the mansion and grounds and £350 for the shooting rights and use of the household goods. The tenancy agreement differed from earlier ones in that provision had to be made for wartime disruption of the normal life of Bifrons. Thus the agreement about the game started "... exclusive right, subject to the provisions of the Good Game Acts 1880 and 1906) of hunting, shooting, fishing and coursing over and upon that part of the Bifrons Estate in the said County of Kent and containing 3791 acres 1 rood 5 perches or thereabouts which is specified or referred to in the schedule hereto". However, it continued: "At his own expense to keep and feed in a proper and customary

manner, so far as the present or any future restrictions imposed by the Food Controller or other official will permit, all game in and upon the said lands mentioned, or referred to, in the said schedule hereto and to preserve the same from being killed or destroyed by unauthorised persons or by vermin and at the expiration of the said term to leave the same premises stocked with game as near as may be equal to the existing stock (but in any case there shall be not less than 50 hen pheasants left in the pens) and to keep indemnified the landlord from all claims and demands of or by the landlords, tenants or any of them or any other person for or in respect of any loss or damage occasioned or arising from the keeping or preserving of game in accordance with the provisions of Section 10 of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1908 and especially shall the tenant keep down the stock of rabbits so as to prevent them, as far as possible, from becoming injurious at any time to the woods and underwood of the landlord or the crops of his tenants”.

One must assume that Major Frank Penn left at or before the end of this tenancy as Messrs Osborn and Mercer of 28b, Albemarle Street, advertised Bifrons to be let, furnished, for a “term of years” on April 22nd, 1919.⁶⁸ The first-class sporting over 4000 acres was highlighted and it was claimed that the 600 acres of covert included provided the finest partridge driving in Kent. The residence was said to stand in a park of 200 acres, have 30 bed and dressing rooms and to have electric light and modern conveniences. Nevertheless the house remained unoccupied until new tenants arrived the following April.

(g) Colonel the Hon. Milo Talbot and Mrs. Talbot

The Honorable Milo George Talbot was born at Malahide Castle on September 14th, 1854 as the third son of James Talbot, 4th Baron Talbot de Malahide, and his wife, Maria Margareta (*née* Murray). The 4th Baron was Lord-in-waiting to Queen Victoria from 1863 to 1866. Milo was educated at Wellington College and subsequently had a very distinguished career with the Royal Engineers. He played cricket for them from 1873 to 1890 and was a very fine batsman and a good bowler in the early years of his service. His best season was probably that of 1874 when he had a batting average of 25.3 and took 77 wickets for an average of 11.4 runs each. In a remarkable match against *I Zingari* in 1876 he attained his record score of 172 runs: with the aid of his team-mate Scott 300 runs were scored before the first wicket fell.

From 1877–1878 he served in the Jowaki Afridi expedition to India for which he was awarded a medal with clasp; **he entered the Royal Engineers in 1878 and** during the Second Afghan War of 1879–1880 he was mentioned in despatches and was awarded a medal with four clasps and a bronze decoration. In 1881, he was a member of the Mahsud Waziri Expedition. His oldest brother, Richard (“Dick”) Wogan Talbot, became the 5th Baron in 1883. From 1897–1899 he was Deputy-Assistant-Adjutant-General at the headquarters of the Nile Expedition and was rewarded with a British medal and an Egyptian medal with three clasps. He became Director of the Sudan Surveys in 1900.

He retired in 1905, deciding not to seek re-employment so that he could pursue his interests in the National Service League which had grown as an aftermath of the Boer War. Its secretary was George Shee who had written a small book on the subject. Field-Marshal Sir Frederick (“Bobs”) Sleigh Roberts, 1st Earl Roberts of Kandahar, Waterford and Pretoria was prevailed upon to introduce in 1911 a bill in the House of Lords providing for Compulsory Military Training but it was unsuccessful. The movement grew with Milo’s help as a result of his lecture tours.

In 1909 he was awarded the Patron’s Medal of the Royal Geographical Society “for the large amount of excellent

survey work done by him on the Afghan frontier and in the Sudan”,

In 1911 he married Eva Joicey, the younger daughter of Colonel John Joicey of Newton Hall, Northumberland, who had been the Member of Parliament for Durham County North, a Deputy Lieutenant for the county and a Justice of the Peace and had died in 1881. Their eldest son, Milo John Reginald, was born in 1912.

In July 1914, the Talbots moved to Hartham Park, Corsham, Wiltshire, which they rented from John Poynder Dickson-Poynder, 1st Baron Islington, who at that time was Chairman of the Royal Commission on Public Services in India. They agreed to lease Bifrons for two years from April 1st 1920 for £1000 per year payable by instalments on April 1st and October 1st. By April 21st they could announce that they had arrived.⁶⁹ On 30th December 1921, they signed* the lease to rent Bifrons mansion for a further seven years with the possibility of leaving after 3 or 5 years. The details of the lease are quite revealing: the properties leased were the “mansion house, dairy, laundry, cottage, stables, coach-houses, offices, gardens, gardener’s house, hot-houses, greenhouses, pleasure grounds and one of the cottages numbered 23 on the plan [*i.e.* Upper Lodge] at present occupied by the gardener containing in the whole 20 acres or thereabouts”. In the Smoking Room there were two small bookcases and four cupboards which contained uniforms. Other occupied cupboards included one in the Library and one under the Billiard Room stairs. A whole room over the Stables remained similarly occupied. The lessees were required to contribute 15s. per week to employ one Head Gardener and three under-gardeners.

One might imagine that one factor influencing Colonel Talbot to rent Bifrons was its proximity to the St. Lawrence Ground in Canterbury. He had, after all, played in a first-class cricket match on July 19th and 20th, 1875. As a member of the home team in the *Gentlemen of the South v. Players of the North* match at Prince’s cricket ground, Quailfield, London, he scored a total of 1 run in two innings and actually caught two

* The witness to Col. Talbot’s signature was David Robertson, Butler of Bifrons.

Players out. Most memorable for him must have been playing in the same team as the legendary W. G. Grace.

At meetings of the Trustees on June 26th and 27th, 1927, attended by the Dowager Marchioness and Mr. Saltwell, it was reported that Mr. Elgar had endeavoured to arrange for Col. Talbot to continue his lease and at the meeting on July 18th, 1928, it was reported that Mr. Elgar had written to say that the Talbots were indeed desirous of renewing their lease.

The lease was duly renewed* on January 9th, 1929, for a further seven years from April 1st, 1929, at the same rent and with the possibility of termination by the lessee after three or five years. However, it was noted that there were now cracks in the walls and floors which had given trouble. J. Elvy & Co. were brought in to repair the coping and the walls of the front wing and to coat these with Szerelmey liquid — an early form of damp-proofing treatment — for £31 10s. while “general interior and other repairs” in the same half-year cost a further £88 16s. 11d.

Colonel Talbot died at Bifrons on September 3rd, 1931, and his remains were removed to Malahide for the funeral.

By May 4th, 1934, Mrs Talbot and her daughter Rose evidently felt they had had enough of mourning and so it was announced in the “Court Circular” column of *The Times* that they had arrived at 24, Cadogan Place, from Bifrons. This removal was not, however, permanent as from April 25th, 1935, the public were admitted to the gardens at Bifrons on certain Thursdays on payment of a shilling in aid of the Queen’s Institute of District Nursing.

Details of Mrs. Talbot’s domestic establishment were recorded in an interview in October 1988 between Tim Allen of the Canterbury Archæological Trust and Miss Joan Carpenter of The Green, Patrixbourne. Joan had started work in 1937 at the age of 14 as a scullerymaid and continued there until 1940. She related that there were ten indoor servants (the butler, the footman, the hallboy, the housekeeper, two parlourmaids, the cook, two kitchenmaids and the lady’s maid) and eleven

* Colonel Talbot’s signature was witnessed by his elder brother, Reginald (Gilbert Murray) Talbot, a barrister-at-law of 32, St. George’s Road, London.

outdoor servants (six gardeners, the groom, a stable boy, the chauffeur and two laundrymaids). The indoor staff lived and worked in the semi-basement and access to the bedrooms in the attic was gained by the back stairs. The kitchen was connected by a stair directly to a servery for the dining room. The function of each of the rooms in the semi-basement was also recorded in this interview. There was an outside larder for storing game, fish and Welsh mutton; an inner larder, a kitchen-staff room, the scullery, the kitchen, the linen room, the butler's pantry, the brushing room for polishing boots and shoes, the footman and hallboy's bedroom, the housekeeper and cook's room, the housemaid's sitting room, the servants' hall, a toilet, a water-tank room containing a large tank for softening water, a boiler room which had two other rooms associated with it and a store room.

Mrs Talbot relinquished the lease of Bifrons with effect from Lady Day, 1939, and moved to Froyle Place*, near Alton. The agent advertised⁷⁰ for a new tenant as follows:- "An imposing mansion in the Regency style: finely situated in its own park with entrance lodge and gardeners' cottages, and containing 5 reception rooms, billiard room, 12 principal bed and dressing rooms, 3 bath rooms, nursery suite, 6 servants' offices: the gardens and grounds are tastefully laid out and inexpensive in upkeep, and there is ample stabling and garage space; electricity from private plant; main water; vacant from Ladyday next: shooting over about 1,000 ACRES can be arranged". It is not clear whether anybody took up this offer but there was no further advertisement.

(h) The War Department

Like many large houses in the area, Bifrons was requisitioned for housing troops some time shortly after the outbreak of World War II on September 1st, 1939. The 64th (7th London) Field Regiment Royal Artillery (Territorial Army) recruited men in Fulham, Golder's Green, Putney, Shepherd's Bush and Paddington and billeted them in Bifrons and Mystole House, Chartham, and possibly other such houses until the middle of

* Now Gasston House of the Lord Mayor Treloar (hospital) School.

1940. V. C. Fairfield reported⁷¹ that the atmosphere was effectively like an off-beat, low-class, boarding-school with the battery numbering some two hundred and fifty men billeted in the bedrooms and stables. It is possible that to accommodate so many soldiers some were outhoused in Sondes House and Wanstall's. A lodge (presumably Lower Lodge) was used as an unfurnished sanatorium and first-aid post. There was no heating and the floors were bare apart from straw palliasses which were provided for sleeping.

At Bifrons, a bugler blew reveille every morning while the Union Jack was raised. Breakfast, which was eaten in the cold semi-darkness, usually consisted of eggs. The yolks had what appeared to be a kind of plastic skin on them which was almost unbreakable. By the time the food, which was prepared in large vats by a large and grimy cook, was distributed it was almost cold due to the lack of heat in the dining area. All meals were of poor standard and there was no noticeable improvement during the stay.

During the daytime aspects of artillery warfare were practised either as part of the battery (with or without the signallers) or more frequently as a group of specialists. When the weather was good, taking the instruments to an attractive bit of the countryside within walking distance doing some survey, map-reading or a command-post exercise was a most enjoyable way of spending a morning or afternoon session.

Parades finished at 4.30 p.m. after which soldiers were free until the lights were put out for the night. Saturday evenings were spent in a pub in Bridge or occasionally in Canterbury. Spare time was spent playing chess or card games. Entertainment was sometimes provided by groups of visiting artistes or by sing-songs.

Night-training included going out in vehicles in the cold, snow-covered, countryside for two or three hours as if advancing or retreating. The route was pre-selected and very difficult to follow because of the lack of signposts and the difficulty of reading a map with a hand-torch. A mug of hot tea or cocoa and a snack were provided on return.

The winter of 1939/40 was both very long and very cold. There was a heavy fall of snow which remained for several weeks.

The compensation rent paid by the War Department in 1940 was £275 *per annum*. After the Royal Artillery left, it was used as a transit camp for soldiers and displaced persons from continental Europe and was allowed to fall into a bad state of repair. The wooden panelling was used for firewood. Rubble found beneath the floor during the archaeological investigation in 1988–1989 included some NAAFI* cups dated 1942 and 1943.

Derequisitioning, a task assigned to the Ministry of Works, began in 1946 with Sondes House on February 1st, Wanstall's on March 8th and Bifrons on June 24th.

(i) The Ministry of Works

The Ministry of Works may well have chosen to rent Bifrons immediately on derequisition as there is a record of Bifrons being let to them exactly a year later at a rent of £400 *per annum*. The Register of Electors as at June 30th, 1948, which was published on October 15th that year, records a Ronald Payne and a Joan A. Whittaker as residing in Bifrons. Given the state of the mansion, these people may well have been resident in a caretaking or housekeeping capacity.

* NAAFI was a well-known abbreviation for the Navy, Army and Air Force Institute.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Bifrons Chattels

(a) The heirlooms

The recorded chattels of Bifrons essentially date back to the Conyngham period. Jewellery and silver plate feature strongly.

According to the Will of the dowager Marchioness of Conyngham, she gave her son Albert (Lord Londesborough) any picture in her houses at Bifrons or Hamilton Place and to his wife any picture of Lord Albert in either house. [Silver] plates and plated articles, linen, china, furniture, the remaining pictures, statues, books and prints in both houses were to go to her son, Francis Nathaniel, the current Marquess. The diamonds were to go to him for his life and after his death to his son Lord Mountcharles for his life and after his death to whomsoever is Marquess Conyngham.

Much of the Bifrons silver was sold off after the death of Jane, widow of the 3rd Marquess Conyngham, by Christie's, Mann & Woods in their salerooms at 8, King Street, St. James' Square, on May 4th, 1908, and the three following days. Since Jane was wealthy in her own right by inheritance from the Harrington family, there is no reason to suppose that much of the silver being sold had been amassed by the Conynghams prior to their purchasing Bifrons. However, Lot 57 — a James I rosewater ewer and dish (90 ounces silver) — attracted a telling comment from the auctioneer: "A very similar dish is at Windsor Castle". It is more than probable that both dishes were together at Windsor Castle only 80 years before.

(b) The pictures

In the twentieth century the policy of selectively disposing of chattels to provide an income was continued. King George IV had instructed the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), to paint two of the Conyngham daughters, Elizabeth (Henrietta) (who was born on February

16th, 1799 and on March 20th, 1826, became wife of the 10th Marquess of Aboyne; she died on August 24th, 1839) and (Harriet) Maria (who was born in Ireland on July 2nd, 1810, married Sir William Meredyth Somerville, 5th Baronet in the Peerage of Ireland, on December 22nd, 1832, and died on December 3rd, 1843). These oil paintings had been valued by Messrs. Morant & Co, of 91, New Bond Street in August 1910 at £6000 each and had been insured for that amount with the Law Fire Insurance Society by a policy dated November 15th, 1910, in the name of the Marquess. The buyer was Joseph Duveen (1869–1939), an English art dealer who specialised in buying from English aristocrats* and selling to Americans. He wished to buy these portraits for £20,000 each and had put down a deposit of £200. With the exception of Lady Blanche the aunts of the Marquess, who were residuary legatees under the will of the dowager Marchioness, were now all married but the settlements executed on their respective marriages did not affect their shares of the residuary estate. To effect the sale, a handwritten bill was proposed to Parliament by the Marquess Conyngham.

The pictures were displayed in the Special Loan Exhibition of Old Masters of the British School which was held at the galleries of the Duveen brothers in 720 Fifth Avenue, New York, in January 1914.

* His usefulness was duly appreciated in 1933 when he was created 1st Baron Duveen of Millbank.

Appendix 1

The Conynghams before 1830

The history of the Conyngham family has been traced back to an 11th century family in Ayrshire and published by Playfair⁷². For the purposes of understanding the 19th century position of the family in Ireland and Kent it will be sufficient to regard the “Big Bang” in Conyngham genealogy as commencing with Alexander Conyngham of Scotland who married Marian Murray, daughter of John Murray of Broughton, and produced 27 children of whom just 4 sons and 5 daughters survived infancy. They moved to Ireland and he became, in 1611, the first Protestant Minister of Inver and Killymard in Co. Donegal. In 1630 he became Dean of Raphoe and settled at Mountcharles on the coast of Co. Donegal where he leased an estate from John Murray, 1st Earl of Annandale.*

Alexander died on September 3rd, 1660: his two most distinguished children were Katherine, who married Bishop John Leslie, and his eldest son, Albert, who married Margaret Leslie, daughter of the Rt. Rev. Henry Leslie, Bishop of Meath. Albert fought as a captain in Lord Mountjoy’s Regiment of Foot for King William III in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 and in December of that same year was appointed by letters patent Lieutenant-General for Ordnance in Ireland. He was duly rewarded with Slane Castle and its estate which had been forfeited by Lord Slane after the 1641 rebellion. He was present at the Siege of Limerick in 1691. When he was killed by rapparees near Colooney in Co. Sligo, his only surviving son was Henry who followed a similar military career.

However, Henry also became a politician, being M.P. for Killybegs in 1692 and for Donegal in 1695 and 1703. On December 9th, 1696, he married Mary Petty, the widow of Charles Petty, Baron Shelburne, and daughter of Sir John

* The documents relating to the leasehold interests of the Conynghams in the Murray of Broughton estates in Donegal are in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast. (Reference: D/2860).

Williams of Carmarthenshire, the 2nd baronet of Minster Court, Thanet. In this way, the Minster estate came into the possession of the Conyngham family. In 1699 he leased the 14 ballyboes* of Church of Ireland land in the parish of Killybegs from the Bishop of Raphoe. On January 1st, 1704, he was appointed Major-General. He was sent to Portugal and, in the War of The Spanish Succession, he was Governor of Lérida (now known by the Catalan equivalent, Lleida) fighting for the King of Spain. In a battle on January 26th, 170⁵/₆ against a relatively large number of Frenchmen a few miles across the Aragonese border at San Esteban de Litera he suffered a severe abdominal wound. He was taken back to Balagués in Catalonia where he died ten days later. His body was buried in the town walls.

Henry and Mary had had three sons and three daughters: the elder son, William, died in 1738 by which time the younger son, Henry, who was born in 1705, was in his second year as Member of Parliament, a post which he retained until 1753. This Henry was created 1st Viscount Conyngham on July 20th, 1756, and 1st Baron and 1st Earl Conyngham in 1781. In December 1744, he had married Ellen Merrett, the daughter and heir of Sir Solomon Merrett, a merchant of Hart Street in St. Olave's parish and his wife, Rebecca Savage. However, they had no children and so, when Henry died in 1781, the Minster estate passed to the inheritors of his sibling, Mary, who had died on March 20th, 1743. Her widower, the Rt. Hon. Francis Burton of Buncraggy, Co. Clare, inherited the Conyngham estate but with the usual proviso that he change his name to Conyngham which he did by Royal Licence on May 3rd, 1781, just one month after his brother-in-law, Henry, had been buried in Slane church. Francis and Mary Burton had four children: the eldest son, Francis Pierpoint Burton, acquired not only the surname Conyngham in 1781 but also became the 2nd Baron Conyngham. He had married on March 19th, 1750, Elizabeth Clements, the daughter of the Rt. Hon. Nathaniel Clements, who was responsible for building Beau Park in Co. Meath, and his wife Hannah Gore who was the daughter of the

* A ballyboe of land is an area of land containing 120 acres of *usable* land. It may be divided into 3 sessiagh or 4 carrows.

Dean of Co. Down and the sister of the 1st Earl of Leitrim. When the 2nd Baron died at Hot Wells, Bristol, on May 22nd, 1787, their eldest son, Henry, who had been born the elder of twin sons, in London on December 26th, 1766, became the 3rd Baron and it is in the last two years of this Conyngham's life that the family's connection with Bifrons begins.

However, the story gets more interesting before we reach Bifrons.

The Sumner affair

Charles Richard Sumner was an aspiring cleric when he met Henry Joseph Conyngham, Earl of Mountcharles, at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was four years older and in the position of offering tutoring. In the summer of 1814, he took Henry and his younger brother, Francis Nathaniel, on a trip through Flanders and the Rhine valley to Geneva where they unexpectedly met his old friend from Eton days, John Taylor Coleridge, nephew of the poet and philosopher Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who introduced them to Professor Jean-Pierre Maunoir, the distinguished ophthalmic surgeon, in Geneva who had an English wife. Interest developed in their eldest daughter, Jennie Fanny Barnabine Maunoir, to the extent that to prevent Henry from proposing marriage to her, Sumner himself got engaged to her in January 1815 and married her a year later. The Conyngham parents were so immensely grateful for this that they remained firm friends of Sumner and resolved to advance his career. After the Regent became King George IV in 1820, the Conynghams introduced Sumner to the King at Brighton where he dined and talked to George IV for three hours. Sumner's handsome presence, dignified manner and tact created a very favourable impression.

Lady Conyngham's influence over George IV was, to say the least, exceptional. Charles Greville⁷³, Clerk of the Council to both George IV and William IV, recorded on May 2nd, 1821 that when the Canonry of Windsor became vacant, Lady Conyngham had asked the King to give it to Mr. Sumner, a curate who had never even held a living. The King agreed and Mr. Sumner kissed his hands at The Royal Pavilion, Brighton. A letter was sent to Lord Liverpool, the Prime

Minister, informing him of this but it crossed with a letter from Lord Liverpool to the King in which the customary list of suitable persons was provided. Liverpool was simply furious: he took his carriage to Brighton immediately and threatened to resign if Sumner were appointed and if he could not retain the distribution of this patronage. The outcome was that Sumner's candidacy was withdrawn and Dr. James Stanier Clarke*, who could be tolerated, but not approved of, by Lord Liverpool, got the canonry instead. The twist was that Sumner could now give up the curacy of Highclere which he had held since September 1816 because he would be taking on all of the appointments which Clarke had previously held. These included the posts of historiographer to the Crown, chaplain to the household at Carlton House and Librarian to the King. In addition he was appointed private chaplain at Windsor on a salary of £300 per annum and given use of a capital house opposite the park gate.

The Duke of Wellington wrote to Lord Liverpool on October 26th, 1821, confiding to him that since the King had not forgiven him for his opposition to Mr. Sumner he had objected to the accession of George Canning to the government thereafter in retaliation and that although all of the Prime Minister's colleagues supported Lord Liverpool over this matter, they would all suffer with him.

Charles Sumner was with the Earl of Mountcharles when he died in Nice on December 27th, 1824, at the age of 29. He became Bishop of Winchester in 1827 at the age of 37 and only fell from grace with King George IV when he supported the Roman Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829.†

* Clarke was already well known to the King as he had been used as a go-between to get Jane Austen to dedicate *Emma* to The Prince Regent even though she loathed him. However, Clarke then tried to get her to write a novel about a clergyman of his own type: she resisted with consummate wit and diplomacy.

† Henry Reeve, Registrar of the Privy Council, as editor of Greville's posthumously-published memoirs added that although Sumner's early advancement may have been questionable, his performance as Bishop of Winchester was excellent.

Perquisites

Greville went on to recount how Lady Conyngham and all the members of her family were supplied at their house in Marlborough Row, Brighton, with horses and carriages from the King's stables.

Henry Conyngham was appointed Lord Steward of the Royal Household with effect from December 11th, 1821, a post which he held until July 15th, 1830, when he was succeeded by Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville, 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. He, but not the Marchioness, was present at the death of King George IV in Windsor Castle on June 26th, 1830. The king's last words were "This is death".

Appendix 2

Lord Albert Conyngham

Lord Albert Conyngham was the third and youngest son of the 1st Marquess and Elizabeth Denison. He was born at 8, Stanhope Street, Piccadilly, on October 21st, 1805, and was educated at Eton from 1820. On September 21st of that year his name, with the rank of cornet, was placed on the half-pay list of the disbanded 22nd regiment of dragoons. On July 24th, 1823, he joined the Horse Guards but retired after 12 months. In May 1824 he entered the Diplomatic Service and was appointed Attaché at Berlin where he improved his knowledge of the German language. In May, 1825, he transferred to Vienna where he was similarly Attaché. In February, 1828, he became Secretary of the Legation at Florence and from January, 1829, until June 1831, was Secretary at Berlin.

King George IV created him Knight Commander of the Order of the Guelphs in 1829 and he was also named a Deputy-Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

In 1856 he was forced by ill-health to remain in his villa at Cannes and in the winter of 1859 he went to St. Leonards-on-Sea. He then removed to his London residence, 8 Carlton House Terrace — now part of the premises occupied by the Royal Society — where he died on January 15th, 1860. He was buried in the family vault at Grimston nine days later.

Appendix 3

The 2nd Marquess's Yachts

One of the favourite hobbies of the 2nd Marquess was yachting. He was an ordinary member of the Kingstown* Boat Club and offered to use his influence with Queen Victoria to get the privileges of a Royal Yacht Club conferred. By May 1845 both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had agreed and in 1846 the Marquess became the first Commodore of the Royal Kingstown Yacht Club. He flew the club's burgee on his 186-ton schooner *The Flower of Yarrow*. In 1847, the club was renamed as the Royal St. George Yacht Club though the reason for including St. George in the name is unclear. In 1850, he launched the 218-ton schooner (built by Joseph White in East Cowes) *Constance* which secured him a permanent place in the history of yachting. He resigned as Commodore in 1863 due to ill-health and took up the less arduous position of Vice-Commodore from 1865 until his death a few days before the club's 1876 regatta.

* Kingstown, Co. Dublin, is now known as Dún Laoghaire.

Appendix 4

The Estate employees

The estate employees can be regarded as those who worked in the mansion or those who worked outside. There are effectively no details of the establishment before the Conynghams bought the estate in 1830. R. Pilcher was Steward, and eventually Land Agent, and charged £75 for the agency work in the $\frac{3}{4}$ year from Lady Day to December 31st, 1830.⁷⁴ Mrs Huckstep was paid £5 4s. 0d. for being in charge of Bifrons for 26 weeks.⁷⁵ Further details of the domestic establishment only become available with the publication of the 1841 census records. Naturally this only included as such those people who resided in the mansion rather than in the neighbourhood.

In 1882, the domestic establishment benefited considerably from the will of the 3rd Marquess.⁷⁶ This will provided each domestic servant who had been in his service for two years or more with two years' wages! However, since all of the servants were "strangers in blood", 10% duty had to be paid. The beneficiaries and the gross sums received were:- Mary Ann Lynagh (£24), Margaret ("Maggie") Leonard (£28), Mary Ratcliffe (£36), Eliza List (£40), Caroline Elizabeth Long (£60), Fanny Gill (£100), William Henry Archer (£80), William Littlewood (£120), James Hosacks (£160), Martha Logan (£34), Caroline White (£44), Elizabeth Mary Critoph (£46), Edith Charlotte Moffrey (£50) and Anne Payne (£120). It is not clear whether any of these people were based in London rather than Bifrons.

At the time of the 1891 census, the servants in residence were the butler, John Bayley, the housekeeper, Elizabeth McCraig and the Head Bursar, Mary A. Lodge, all aged 36; the Lady's Maid, Lucy Derry, aged 35; three housemaids, Fanny Smith (aged 31), Annie M. Luet (aged 22) and Edith F. Eldridge (aged 15); the kitchenmaid, Ellen Heath (aged 22); the dairymaid, Susanna Lynces (aged 40); the tutor in French, Mlle. Rosa Cuendet of Switzerland (aged 21); the

footman, Edward G. Gard (aged 19), the hallboy, Frederick J. Webb (aged 16) and the scullerymaid, Esther Barnet (aged 18).

Tragedy struck the Bifrons and Minster Estates when Mr. Blunt caught a chill as a result of a walk in Whitehill Wood⁷⁷ on 18th March, 1927. He died of septic pneumonia five days later at his home, "The Old Parsonage", Ospringe, and the funeral service was concelebrated in Patricxbourne Church on the 27th by the resident vicar, the Rev. Hubert Knight, and Mr. Blunt's local vicar, the Rev. Charles F. Hodges⁷⁸. In the eulogy, it was pointed out what a much-loved and kindly Englishman he was. Amongst the large congregation were his sister, Miss Blunt, his brother, Colonel Blunt, his nephew Colonel Sheepshank and Miss Sheepshank, his wife's sister, Mrs Mary Fair, with Colonel James George Fair, Mrs Kenrick, Mrs Jupp, Mr. Blencowe, the Talbots and Major and Mrs. Gordon Home. The Bifrons Head Gardener, Albert Kett, who was also a churchwarden, had lined the grave with ivy. Mr. Blunt was buried just in front of the Conyngham graves in the churchyard and a fine, horizontal, granite prism serves as a gravestone.*

In 1909⁷⁹, David H. Fairweather was head gardener and John Poland was head gamekeeper.

Charles Edward Apps was born in Patricxbourne in 1900 and from 1920 to 1921 worked for the Conyngham Settled Estates as Assistant Woodman. From 1928 to 1934 he was employed as Estate Tractor Driver and from 1945 to 1953 at least he was the local Estate Bailiff. He rented Tudor Cottage, now part of "The Court House", for a penny a week.

* His second wife, Alice Ruth, died on September 4th, 1948, and is buried with him.

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