



# E-NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2023

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## ACTING E-NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S WELCOME Geraint Denison-Kurg



In the spirit of quality over quantity, this month's edition has only two pieces. In addition to a website query we have received, the main body of this edition has been given over to Gareth Brown's detailed piece on the Romilly family. I am sure you will enjoy his detailed and thorough examination of a family, which has been immortalised in so many place names throughout Glamorgan.

It reflects poorly upon my originality and, indeed, intellect, that the weather should form so much of what I have written on this page over the last 22 months; however, as observations upon the weather are rather a national past-time, I shall indulge this unoriginality once again to rejoice at the splendour of the day at the time of writing this, and to express my earnest hope that you have all managed to avail yourself of this little sunshine which has been bestowed upon us, made precious as it is by its rarity.

P.S. Photograph taken at a recent volunteering day for the Friends of Penylan's Gardens in Roath Mill Park. Do let me know if you would like to get involved and spend a couple of cheerful hours in the fresh air improving our local Edwardian parks!

## **DOES ANYONE REMEMBER THE CABIN?**

**Arthur Tatchell**

I am researching my family tree and wonder if any of your members can help. After selling their farm around 1940, (Pentwyn Farm, Michelston-y-Fedw), my grandparents Henry Thomas and Elizabeth Ann (Annie) Pugh moved into 18, Hendy Street in Roath. From an entry in a local paper, I now know that this property was also home to Henry's father, Edward Thomas. The newspaper entry further records other property in the area in their ownership. Henry and Annie Thomas had a number of children, one being Edward H. Thomas (1909-1955). Known as Harry, he used to run a confectioners shop at 105, Albany Road (we believe the property was in the ownership of his father, Henry). We think the shop might have been called "the Cabin".

I was wondering if anyone has any memories, or photos, that would help in my research. If so, please contact me at

[arthur.tatchell@sky.com](mailto:arthur.tatchell@sky.com)



## THE ROMILLY FAMILY and BARRY Gareth Brown



Sir Samuel Romilly public house, Barry

On the walk around Barry we have come across the name Romilly on a number of occasions but I have skirted around mentioning the family in any detail. Those of you who are familiar with Barry will be aware of the Romilly schools, Romilly Road, Romilly Park Road, the Sir Samuel Romilly public house near to the Barry train station in Broad Street etc. Having proceeded to Romilly Park this is the appropriate time to address the questions- Who were the Romilly family? What was the connection of this family to Barry and to Cardiff for that matter? When was the family first associated with Barry and Cardiff? The answer to the last question is the shortest to give. The association with Barry began in 1812 when Sir Samuel Romilly, a prominent politician and lawyer, bought the land comprising the old sub manor of Barry, presumably as an investment. He bought land in the Canton part of the parish of Llandaff in 1818.

The Romilly family developed the land in Barry as farmland and at Porthkerry created parkland and also had a sawmill on the Nant Talwg. It was seventy years or so later that the investment really paid off when their land was used for the railway, the dock development and subsequent housing with the rapid growth of the new town of which they owned the western side.

In Cardiff, fields of the Manors of Llandaff and Cardiff were owned and managed by the Mathew family for almost four hundred years. In 1818, Sir Samuel Romilly bought the land and a few decades later the estate was

offered as a freehold building ground for sale. The two lots offered in Canton were purchased by the Cardiff Freehold Land Society. This group was part of a wider movement across the UK and people who bought a plot of freehold land through the Society and built a house with a minimum value of £150 gained the right to vote. While many societies succeeded in their aim of building houses and achieving voting rights for their owners, few areas remain intact today. Cardiff Council has said that "the legacy of the Cardiff Freehold Society is important for retaining many of the original buildings, their individual character being testimony to this unusual history as well as embodying a fundamental democratic principle". One of the objectives of the Society was to find areas of freehold land from which larger plots might be sold for more substantial houses. These are referred to in archived documents as "country villas for merchants" and good sites for building. The area around Conway Road and Severn Grove were developed in this way. Romilly Crescent is nearby. The method used to sell the plots can still be seen in the character of the area and the variety and style of the area's houses. The council says that "this is in contrast to the more uniform impression presented by the development of adjoining Bute land and is what gives the area its special architectural and historical character." This information is gained from a Wales online article entitled "The fascinating history behind the protected areas of Cardiff you never knew about" by Thomas Deacon - senior reporter in 25/10/2018, updated 26/10/2018.

Now back to Barry and to answer: "who were the Romilly family?"

The Romilly family were of French ancestry and were Protestants in religion. French Protestants gained rights under Henry IV of France by the Edict of Nantes in 1598 and were able to live alongside Catholics in an uneasy peace. However, during Henry's grandson Louis XIV's reign the Protestants were increasingly repressed in an attempt to eliminate Protestantism in France. Their churches were destroyed, schools closed, and they were under [pressure](#) to convert to Catholicism. This all culminated in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Many Protestants fled the country to places such as Geneva, which was the home of Calvinism, that being the dominant form of Protestantism, as well as to Holland and England, with those in the latter becoming known as Huguenots. Many settled in the area surrounding London, including Spitalfields, the City, Clerkenwell, Soho, Greenwich, Marylebone and Wandsworth, with other notable populations in Canterbury, Colchester, Faversham, Norwich and Sudbury. They were often from urban rather than rural France and were involved in finance and in the textile industry as well as other skilled work. About 50,000 are believed to have come to England. They were largely tolerated because they established industries and because of the sympathy towards them in England because of their harsh treatment in France and anti-Catholic attitudes in England at that time. They tended to form friendly societies offering mutual help and attended French language churches. In Spitalfields they were largely involved in the silk weaving industry and occupied large three-storied terraced houses where the upper rooms

were often used for weaving. After the pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe, Jewish people also came to live in the area, which of course was one of the haunts of Jack the Ripper and some of his victims around Christ Church and The Ten Bells public house.

Etienne Romilly, born in Montpellier in 1684, was one of these refugees who came to London for religious freedom rather than live in France. His father was a landowner who remained in the South of France, continued to worship as a Protestant and brought up his children as Protestants. In 1701, Etienne went to Geneva to receive Communion and met Jacques Saurin and they decided to travel to England. Etienne was known as Stephen in England and he settled in Hoxton, London where he established a wax bleaching business. He married Judith de Monsaillier of St Leonard's, Shoreditch, of another émigré Huguenot family, and they had four sons seemingly, although other sources give a differing number of brothers and some sisters, possibly totaling 9 children in all. I shall only give a potted family history of the family members relevant to the story of the Romilly family in Barry. Stephen died in poverty in 1733. The resource "Protestant Exiles from France" below contains some memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly with descriptions of the family members. He says that Stephen's generosity led to expenses which the profits of his business could not support but he was frequently in receipt of remittances from his father. When his father died, and the estate in the South of France was inherited by a distant relative who was a Catholic, the financial support dried up and he became bankrupt. Poverty ensued and his "gentle spirit sank and he died of a broken heart" in 1733 at the age of 49. This source gives fascinating information about the connections of the Romilly family to high echelons of London Society. Of note is that one of Stephen's sisters-in-law, Elizabeth Montsallier, married Samuel Fludyer Snr (1680-1716), a London clothier originally from Frome, Somerset, becoming Lady Fludyer. They had a son, Samuel (1705-1768), who became Sir Samuel Fludyer, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet, and a daughter, Ann, although [findagrave.com](http://findagrave.com) states that Thomas Fludyer was also a son of Elizabeth and Samuel Snr.

Stephen Romilly had four sons: Joseph, Stephen, Isaac and Peter (Pierre). Joseph apparently died of grief after his father's death. Stephen Jnr was a partner in business with Sir Samuel Fludyer and Sir Thomas Fludyer (1712-1769), as was the third son, Isaac Romilly (c. 1710- 18/12/1759). Sir Samuel Fludyer was a merchant and banker, an MP and Lord Mayor of London.

Isaac Romilly became a Fellow of the Royal Society in May 1757. He had "an extensive and valuable collection of natural curiosities to the esteem of the learned". He died, aged 49, and was buried in St Bride's, Fleet Street, which has had a long association with journalists and newspapers. Isaac's wife's name was Mary and the couple had five children. Mary died, aged 44, in 1759. Their second daughter was Jane Anne Romilly who died on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1803. She was the mother of Caroline Romilly, of whom there is more later.

The other son of Stephen Romilly was Peter Romilly, who was born about 1711, and died in 1784. He was apprenticed to a jeweler in the City, a Frenchman named Lafosse. Naomi Clifford states that Peter worked as a watchmaker and jeweler to the King based in Broad Street. I presume, perhaps incorrectly, that this was Broad Street in the City of London, but there is or certainly was a Broad Street in Soho, very near Frith Street. This appears to be called Broadwick Street now. This is where the Broad Street pump is situated, made famous by the scientist John Snow, who in the 1854 cholera outbreak in London confirmed that cholera was a waterborne disease not spread in a miasma through the air. Almost 600 people died in the area in August and September 1854. They had drunk water drawn from the pump, not from the Thames, nor had they drunk beer which used a different water source. The pump was just a few yards from a cess-pool or cess-pit. It seems a dirty nappy of a child with cholera was washed in the cesspool and this might have been the cause of this outbreak. There is a pub called the John Snow adjacent to the pump. Lessons were slow to be learned though. In the fourth, and worst, cholera outbreak in London in the nineteenth century, in 1866, there was an outbreak affecting the East End, mainly the St George in the East area. Two of my great great grandfathers died of cholera within about a week in the same street. It is thought that the water supplied by the East London Water Company, as I believe the company was called, was drawn from the River Thames close to where raw sewage was discharged into the River Lea.

But I digress for too long. Back to the Romilly family. In time, Peter became a prosperous jeweler and watchmaker of Frith Street, Soho. There is even a Romilly Street crossing Frith Street, next to Shaftesbury Avenue. He also married a daughter of a refugee, Margaret Gamault or Garnault, in 1744; I have seen both spellings, although Garnault is seen more frequently. Margare's father, Aime, was also a jeweler. After the death in infancy of a number of children, five daughters and a son it seems, he moved from London to the village of Marylebone. Peter and Margaret had a further two sons, Thomas Peter Romilly, born 17<sup>th</sup> June 1753, and Samuel Romilly, born 1<sup>st</sup> March 1757, as well as a daughter Catherine.

Thomas Peter Romilly, Sir Samuel's brother, was born in St Anne's, Soho, Westminster. He married his first cousin, Jane Anne Romilly, the daughter of Isaac on 17<sup>th</sup> September 1780 in St. Mary's church, Marylebone. They had five sons and three daughters, the most relevant to our story being Caroline Jane Romilly. Thomas died on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1828.

Catherine Romilly was born about 1755 and died in 1835. She married Jean (or John) Roget, a pastor from Geneva, who worked in London for a number of years. They had a son, Peter Mark Roget LRCP FRS FRCP FGS FRAS, born 18<sup>th</sup> January 1779 in Soho and died 12/9/1869 on holiday in West Malvern. He was a physician, natural theologian, lexicographer and founding secretary of the Portico Library. He is best known for publishing the Thesaurus of English words and phrases in 1852. He dealt with life's problems, including the death of his



father when he was young, an unsettled homelife when he returned to England from Switzerland, the agonising death of Sir Samuel Romilly, &c., by making lists seeming to make order out of confusion. It sounds as if he could have been on the autistic spectrum to me. After he retired from Medicine he organised the lists of words, synonyms etc. which had helped him in writing articles into Roget's Thesaurus. Further details of his eventful and interesting life, in which he battled with depression, can be found in a short account in Wikipedia and in the Daily Telegraph article by Troy Lennon listed below.



### Sir Samuel Romilly

Left by William Owen

Right Old and New London- a narration of its history, its people and its places  
(London: Cassell, Peter and Galpin). From [naomiclifford.com](http://naomiclifford.com) website

We now come to Samuel Romilly, later Sir Samuel, born 1<sup>st</sup> March 1757 at Frith Street, Soho, who first established the links with Barry. One source gives him the full name of Samuel William Peter. He was brought up in surroundings with strong Huguenot influences although he said his father Peter attached more

importance to charitable behaviour to his fellow men than forms of worship. Nevertheless, Peter made his family attend church regularly, attending morning and evening services and alternating between the parish' Anglican church and the French chapel. Samuel was not particularly enamoured with the French church, merely feeling it was a means of paying homage to his ancestors and rendering the French language familiar to his family. Like other third generation French Protestants, born and bred in England, he was not particularly interested in his origins and the chapels were poorly attended. His was a "large uncouth room" accessed by narrow courts and dirty alleys. The pews were irregularly painted, the plastered walls were dusty and the congregation mainly comprised of some strange looking old women scattered here and there. The clergyman spoke in a monotonous tone of voice and in an unfamiliar language and Samuel was not impressed with religious awe or attracted to the doctrines delivered.

Despite his experiences of religion as a youth he continued to attend the chapel and was enthused when a new minister John or Jean Roget replaced the old man. John Roget was the pastor of two churches in London. There were two Huguenot churches, la Patente and St Lukes, next to each other in Berwick Street, Soho, and they amalgamated. Perhaps this is where John Roget was pastor. Samuel Romilly and Jean Roget became close friends and Roget influenced Samuel's political outlook by introducing him to the works of Rousseau, a fellow Genevan and through contacts to other influential people. Roget married Samuel's sister Catherine. In 1786 Samuel followed his elder brother and father in being elected as a director of the French Protestant Hospital. The third generation of refugees were the last to show any profound awareness of the Huguenot character of their families. In 1787 Protestants in France won toleration and soon after Huguenot descendants were offered special rights, but few returned to France. They had become assimilated and were now British. Indeed, many, including the Romilly family, became part of the "Establishment".

Samuel Romilly was largely self-educated. When he was born, his mother was already a confirmed invalid. She died on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1796. He was therefore brought up by a female relative on his mother's side who taught him to read from the Bible, the Spectator, and an English translation of Telemaque, and by a methodist maidservant, possibly Welsh, who told stories of the supernatural. He read books on martyrology and a copy of the 'Newgate Calendar'. Despite a cheerful household, this gloomy outlook on life returned on occasions throughout his life. When he went to a private school, which was still attended by sons of French refugees because it had once been kept by a French refugee, he only learned writing, arithmetic and French grammar. The schoolmaster exercised unjust brutality, and this surely influenced his later political views on punishment. By a "rule" of his father, French was spoken at home in the family on a Sunday morning, "the only time business allowed him to pass with us". Thus, Samuel and his brother, Thomas Peter, were familiar with

the French language. Samuel learned Latin from a private tutor from the age of sixteen, studied the masterpieces of English literature, and practised verse and prose composition. He also read translations of Greek literature and attended lectures on natural philosophy and attended Royal Academy courses on the fine arts and anatomy. Apparently, he also worked for his father, keeping his accounts in order, and Wikipedia says he served for a time in his father's shop. Therefore, by dint of hard work and application, Samuel had a broad self-education.

It seems Samuel had no intention of working in his father's business long-term and a job was probably anticipated working for Sir Samuel Fludyer and his brother Sir Thomas Fludyer. After all his uncles, Stephen and Isaac were in their business, and Sir Samuel Fludyer was Samuel Romilly's godfather, and first cousin once removed. As we have seen Samuel's father Peter was a first cousin with Sir Samuel Fludyer as their mothers, Judith and Elizabeth de Montsaillier, were sisters. However, Sir Samuel and Sir Thomas Fludyer died when Samuel Romilly was just into his second decade of life, so a different path was followed by Samuel.

After his intense self-education, Samuel determined to become a lawyer and with the help of a £2000 legacy left to him by a family connection in the French emigre population, he secured a place and was articled to William Michael Lally, a chancery solicitor. Lally worked in the Six Clerks office of the Court of Chancery. After five years, Samuel was offered the chance of purchasing his post there, but he declined. He had determined to become a barrister, so on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1778 he entered Gray's Inn and was a pupil of Jeffries Spranger. During these five years he was a regular attender of debates in the House of Commons. He was called to the Bar on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1783 and went on the Midland circuit and Warwick assizes to gain a wider professional experience, but he was mostly engaged in chancery practice. While at Grays Inn in June 1780, he did sentry duty at the Holborn Gate during the Gordon Riots and fell ill "with excitement and exposure". He learned Italian during his convalescence and studied the works of Machiavelli and Beccaria who had an interest in criminology and punishments for crime.

The term Chancery Law was a mystery to me, and it is difficult to define it apparently. These days it generally involves disputes over property in its broadest sense. including litigation over wills and the administration of estates, real property disputes, banking and financial services law, insolvencies, fraud and asset tracing &c., according to James Fennemore at lawble.co.uk. I am just a little wiser after reading this. Samuel's practice grew, slowly at first when he was a diffident young man without the ability to exploit his keen intellect and his attractive personal appearance, then rapidly when he became more confident and experienced. By 1791, he had gained an excellent reputation in the legal world and received fees of £2,000. One source said this increased eight-fold over the next two decades. His legal trajectory slowed rather due to political influences later in his career. In 1800, he was made a King's Council

and, in 1805, Bishop Barrington appointed him Chancellor of the County Palatine of Durham. The lawyers amongst you will know what this means, exactly.

I am not going to list cases in his legal career in any detail, but in 1797, at Warwick, he successfully defended John Binns, a delegate of the London Corresponding Society, against a charge of seditious words. In 1793, he defended a Birmingham bookseller who had sold Tom Paine's works, despite Romilly thinking that Paine was lacking in arguments. These cases give a sense of Samuel's radical political views and his sympathy to the common man seeking political representation. The London Corresponding Society was an organisation established in 1792 to campaign for voting rights and to link with other reforming groups in Britain etc. The society passed resolutions, printed them on handbills, and then distributed them amongst the public. Resolutions included a statement attacking government foreign policy. A petition was started and by May 1793, six thousand members of the public signed saying that they supported the resolutions of the London Corresponding Society. Romilly did free work for the society as in the Binns case. The Seditious Meetings Act made the organisation of parliamentary reform gatherings extremely difficult, and in 1794 the Government got a Corresponding Societies Act through Parliament which made it illegal for the London Corresponding Society to meet and the society folded. This was just one example of the repression of the general population by the entrenched establishment and a taste of what was to come in Samuel Romilly's political career.

Romilly was very self-aware, and acutely mindful of the difficulty acting as a lawyer in cases where he had to act against his inner thoughts, beliefs and morals. In his memoirs he comments "I am soon to embark on a career which.... will give me partial and selfish interests incompatible with the good of others and which will...compel me to hear the profession of dishonourable sentiments without opposing them and to be a near spectator of selfish and degrading conduct, without discovering any detestation of it." When he entered the political world, he argued that his large income enabled him to obtain political independence.

We have already seen that Samuel Romilly was introduced to the views of Jean-Jaques Rousseau, the Genevan philosopher, writer and composer, at an early age by Pastor Jean Roget. Rousseau's political philosophy influenced the Age of Enlightenment in Europe, aspects of the French Revolution and modern political, economic and educational thoughts. Samuel's political orientation was strengthened by the personalities he met during a number of tours and visits he made to France and Switzerland.

His first continental tour was during the legal vacation of 1781, when he brought his 2-year-old nephew, Peter Mark Roget, to Geneva to reunite with his parents, Jean and Catherine Roget who had left him in the care of his grandparents. Pastor Roget had moved back to Geneva from the pollution of London for



health reasons soon after Peter was born. Jean had chest symptoms and died of tuberculosis in 1783, although a daughter Ann Susanne Louise 'Annette' was born to him and Catherine (Kitty) in Lausanne in the intervening period. Jean died soon after and Catherine returned to her family in England. Samuel Romilly remained a father figure to Peter until his death.

While in Geneva, Samuel met Pierre Etienne Louis Dumont (1759- 1829), a Swiss legal scholar, a liberal or democratic politician, and clergyman, and they became lifelong friends. Etienne, or Stephen Dumont as he became known, moved to London in 1785 and became a member of Lord Shelburne's, later the 1st marquess of Lansdowne's household when educating his sons. He became acquainted with Fox, Sheridan, and Lord Holland, in addition to resuming his friendship with Romilly. In 1788, Dumont and Romilly visited Paris and met with Mirabeau almost daily. Like Rousseau, Mirabeau had a colourful back story, but he and Dumont of diametrically opposed habits and character hit it off. Dumont in personality and temperament was more similar to Romilly. When Dumont returned to London, he met Jeremy Bentham and started to translate his writings into French and also to alter and edit them so they made more sense to the reading public. Dumont revisited Paris in 1789 to obtain from Necker the restoration of Genevan liberty. He met most of the leading men in the Constituent Assembly and was a spectator and even indirectly a participator of the French Revolution. He renewed his friendship with Mirabeau, who had been elected as a deputy in the Assembly representing Aix La Chapelle at the Estates-General. Mirabeau also was writing a journal, the *Courier de Provence*, and Dumont helped him by supplying reports and articles and writing speeches for Mirabeau to deliver in the Assembly. Honore-Gabriel Riqueti, comte de Mirabeau (1749-1791), was an orator and one of the most prominent figures in the National Assembly and a potential leader in the early phases of the French Revolution, but he was a moderate and favoured constitutional monarchy. He was an admirer of the British political system and lived in London for a while before moving back to France in time for the revolution.

Again, I am sorry for this further digression, but it shows the circle in which Samuel Romilly was moving. On this his first continental tour, Romilly also stayed with David Chauvert, one of a progressive group of local politicians in Geneva. He also met the like-minded Etienne Claviere, Jacques-Antoine Douveray and Etienne Reybaz. In Paris he became friends with Marguerite Madeleine Delessert (1767-1839), who later became Madame Gautier when she married Jean-Antoine Gautier (1756-1800), a Genevan banker who had moved to Paris. Rousseau was a family friend of the Delesserts. Romilly also stayed at the Delessert's home in Passy, which I presume is the town in France near to Geneva. He also met Diderot and d'Alembert in Paris.

Immediately after being called to the Bar in 1783, Samuel Romilly embarked on his second continental tour. He was accompanied in France by John Baynes, who was a Yorkshire man and lawyer who graduated from Trinity



College, Cambridge as a BA in 1777 and took his MA in 1780. He entered Gray's Inn in 1778 or 1779, when he was also elected as a fellow of Trinity. He practised as a special pleader, was a Whig in politics, and joined the Constitutional Society of London and supported the nomination of William Wilberforce for Yorkshire at the 1784 general election. He was thus a near contemporary and kindred spirit of Romilly. They met Benjamin Franklin at Passy through an introduction by John Jebb, Baynes' tutor at Trinity and the Abbe Raynal in Lausanne.

In 1782 the failed Geneva Revolution had occurred. The franchise of that city state was limited to 1,500 upper-middle-class burghers, mainly merchants. The 5,000 or so lower middle class "natives" male Genevans born to longstanding Genevan families and living in the city were denied the vote and could not serve in office. They were craftsmen, principally watchmakers. Similarly, the same exclusions applied to "habitants", a larger population whose roots were in the canton but not the city or whose families had immigrated to Geneva. An armed uprising in 1781 achieved the grant of voting rights to 100 natives and 20 habitants but the legislative body the Genevan Small Council stalled the process for a year then blocked this token offer of enfranchisement. Within hours of this vote the revolutionists occupied the city hall and held the no voters, the *Négatifs*, hostage and convinced the Representatives of the General Council to support them. Romilly's acquaintances. Etienne Claviere and Jacques-Antoine Duroveray, were prominent in setting up a *commission de sûreté* but the burghers called in professional troops from the Kingdom of France, the city state of Bern and the Kingdom of Sardinia, and the city was returned to the wealthy burghers. The revolution's prominent supporters were banished, but 500 or so left the city going to Neuchâtel at first till expelled. Some went to Waterford in Ireland but many then went to Paris. Some including Dumont and d'Ivernois were part of the group of the Genevan Revolution's leaders exiled in London in 1784. In his memoirs Samuel Romilly says that Francois d'Ivernois introduced him to Mirabeau in London in 1784 and the two met daily for a long while and Romilly translated Mirabeau's pamphlet on the American order of the Cincinnati, also known as the Society of the Cincinnati, which was founded in 1783 to preserve the ideals and fellowship of the Revolutionary War officers who fought for American independence. It was criticised by some for appearing to support a return to a hereditary nobility in the developing republic. As previously stated, Romilly visited Paris and Versailles in 1788 with Dumont and in 1789. He also revisited in 1802 and 1815.

By this time Samuel Romilly had long been a member of the so-called Bowood circle, a group of like-minded radical thinkers who were well connected and comfortably well off. Bowood House was the home of William Petty, better known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Shelburne, who was created the Marquess of Lansdowne in 1784 (*Editor's note: while much of Bowood house was demolished due to its unmanageable size, a salvaged portico found its way to Roath Court, where it still stands to this day at the entrance*). He came from a family with Irish antecedents and his family controlled the two parliamentary

seats of their pocket borough of Calne in Wiltshire. He was the Prime Minister in 1782-83. Romilly was invited to Bowood House around 1784-85. The Marquess had learned about Samuel Romilly from Mirabeau and had read Romilly's pamphlet entitled 'A fragment on the Constitutional Power and Duty of Juries upon Trials for Libel'. It was much admired by Lansdowne and Bentham. It was in reference to the case of the Dean of St Asaph. It was published anonymously by the Society for Constitutional Information. As we have learned, Dumont was part of the household at Bowood. Jeremy Bentham was a prominent member of this circle, an acquaintance of Romilly who became a friend as did Benjamin Vaughan. Romilly was thus becoming well-known in political circles.

In 1786, Romilly also wrote anonymously "Observations on a late Publication (by Martin Madan) entitled "Thoughts on Executive Justice"". Romilly was against the harsh punishments advocated by Maddan, including Capital Punishment for quite minor crimes. This later was known as the Bloody Code, a series of laws in England, Wales and Ireland in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 220 crimes were punishable by death, compared to only 50 in 1689.

In 1788, Romilly supplied Mirabeau with subject matter for his 'Lettre d'un Voyageur Anglois sur la Maison de Force de Bicetre'. This was suppressed by the police. He also wrote a precis on the procedures of the House of Commons when the Estates-General assembled in France, which Mirabeau translated and published as 'Reglemens observes dans la Chambre des Communes pour débattre les matières et pour voter. It was ignored by the deputies. Nevertheless, Romilly was an enthusiastic supporter of the radical party and the French Revolution, which he observed with Dumont at Versailles and Paris in the vacations of 1788 and 1789. He wrote a pamphlet entitled "Thoughts on the probable influence of the French Revolution on Great Britain" on his return and encouraged his friend James Scarlett, later Lord Arbinger, to complete a translation of letters of Dumont describing the events of 1789. He added letters of his own from a very republican viewpoint criticising English political, legal and social institutions. He did leave France with less optimism about the politics of the revolution, however, and as the excesses of the revolution unfolded his enthusiasm for it diminished. The September massacres and the violence and political repression involved appalled Romilly. He also criticized the regime's atheism. Despite his indoctrination in Anglicanism and French Calvinism, as we have seen Romilly was not enthused by organised religion. Nevertheless, he felt that French anti-clericalism was unreasonable and likely to presage further persecution. By the end of 1793, he felt that French revolutionary politics amounted to barbarism. Perhaps the influence of Bentham and Scarlett had also moderated his views. He wrote to Madame Gautier the following year that public events had changed his views on the revolution. He also admitted that the French Revolution produced "among the higher orders...a horror of every kind of innovation". This was also the opinion he had in his political career, when his attempts at penal reform were thwarted by strong opposition.

As we have seen Romilly was well known in Whig and in radical circles, but he resisted attempts to enter the political field until 1806. In 1792, Lansdowne offered him a seat in Parliament for his pocket borough of Calne. Romilly turned this down, feeling that their relationship would suffer if his political opinions differed from his patron's. Romilly was determined to be independent. In 1805 Romilly, again turned down the offer of a seat in Parliament, this time by the Prince Regent, pleading again a desire for independence. Privately, he was appalled at the thought of being in the pay of such a person, describing himself as "averse to being brought into Parliament by any man but by the Prince almost above all others".

After William Pitt the Younger died in January 1806, Romilly was invited by Fox to join his Government and was sworn in as Solicitor General in the administration of "All the Talents" on 12 February 1806 and knighted. He was almost universally admired in this role, being regarded as at the head of his profession and unable to be improved upon. He had to be a member of the House of Commons and so became the MP for Queenborough on 24<sup>th</sup> March. He was placed on the committee for the impeachment of Lord Melville and powerfully summed up the evidence in the trial in Westminster Hall in May. It seems Pitt appointed Melville to the post of First Lord of the Admiralty in 1804 but in 1802, the Commissioners of Naval Inquiry commenced inquiries into the misappropriation of public funds while Henry Dundas, as Melville was previously known, was treasurer of the Navy. He was forced to resign in April 1805. One source suggested Romilly was involved in this inquiry but it is unclear if he was. He certainly was in the legal team conducting the impeachment proceedings in 1806. He also examined witnesses before the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the conduct of the Princess of Wales. He was again returned as MP for Queenborough on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1806, but the Government went out of office on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1807. Nevertheless, he had managed a significant amendment to the law of bankruptcy in 1806 and, in 1807, he succeeded in making the freehold property of traders' assets for the payment of simple contract debts. He failed to make the freehold estates of non-traders liable in the same way.

On the change of Government in 1807 he made an important speech on the constitutional question within it. He was returned as MP for Horsham in the General Election of 12 May 1807 but unseated on petition on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1808. He then very undemocratically, for a Radical, bought the representation of Wareham, Dorset for £3,000 and was returned on the 20<sup>th</sup> April. He justified this rotten practice of buying a seat in a "rotten borough" as the best means of securing his own independence, the same reason he had used when refusing offers of a seat in the Commons in the past. Those of you who studied History for O-Level GCE in the 1960s and early 1970s will be familiar with the term 'rotten borough', used to describe the practice of a town or village or even a hamlet, often tiny in size particularly in comparison to the new industrial towns, being able by ancient Royal Charters to return two members Parliament. They were often in the pocket of the local landowner or Lord as villagers would not dare to vote against him in the election by a public show

of hands. It was only in 1832, many years after Romilly's death that rotten boroughs were finally done away with by the Great Reform Act. Romilly was defeated at Bristol in October 1812 and returned on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1812 for Arundel, the borough of the Duke of Norfolk. He was returned for Westminster on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1818.

Samuel Romilly was very interested in penal reform, or the amendment of the criminal law, having been influenced by Rousseau and Beccaria as a young man and by Bentham later on. He realised the strength of opposition he was likely to face and did not attempt a comprehensive scheme, instead attacking things in a piecemeal fashion and going into great detail. The results of his attempts were disappointing in comparison to the amount of work he put in. The "Establishment" was still in fear of the revolutionary fervour which had gripped France in the recent past. It resisted attempts for electoral reform, including the ruthless putting down of the protest in the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester in 1819, the year after Romilly's death, as described to us last year by Jeff Childs. In tandem with this the common people were to be kept in their place by a severe and harsh penal code in which minor crimes were punished by death or transportation in order to dissuade people from stepping out of line. Romilly admitted in his Memoirs that the events of the French Revolution had a detrimental effect on his attempts at moderating the criminal law. If he did manage to get a Bill through the Commons, time and again the House of Lords would defeat it.

Romilly did have some successes. In 1808, he managed to repeal the Elizabethan statute that made it a capital offence to steal from the person. Successful prosecutions of pickpockets rose after this, since the Court was relieved of the expectation of condemning a guilty person to death. The Bloody Code of justice was often counterproductive because criminals were frequently not found guilty due to this reluctance to impose the death sentence. He failed to carry a similar reform regarding shoplifting, stealing in dwelling houses and in navigable rivers. In 1811, he substituted transportation in place of the death penalty for stealing from bleaching grounds. In March 1812, he had repealed another Elizabethan statute in which a seaman or mariner would be committing a capital offence for begging without a pass from his commanding officer or a magistrate. In 1813, he failed to pass a law abolishing "corruption of blood" for all crimes. Corruption of blood meant an heir to a person found guilty of a crime could not inherit the property/estate of the criminal, who likely would have been executed nor could the heir hold public office. However, in 1814, the Corruption of Blood Act introduced by Sir Samuel Romilly became law and corruption of blood was abolished for all crimes except treason and murder. He also succeeded in abolishing hanging, drawing and quartering that year. Although Romilly's successes in legal reform were modest, he was a man ahead of his time and many of the measures he tried to get through Parliament did so in later years. He had no success in advocating prison reform, being thwarted in Parliament in 1811.

Another great passion of Romilly was seeking the abolition of the slave trade, which he vocally expressed in Parliament, calling it robbery, rapine and murder. He met the Abbe Raynal in Lausanne in 1783 as we have seen and read his *Histoire des deux Indes* which describes the trade between Europe and the rest of the world. Apparently, it is full of contradictions with contributions from various people. It was regarded as anti-colonial at the time its third edition was published and showed sympathy to the slaves involved and predicted uprisings by the enslaved, although saying the economic success of Europe depended on slavery. Romilly was one of the group of Parliamentarians supporting William Wilberforce's abolition campaign. Romilly paid tribute to Wilberforce during the parliamentary debate on the Slave Trade Bill, saying that his leadership had "preserved so many millions of his fellow creatures" As he concluded his remarks, other Members of Parliament gave him a standing ovation, a very rare occurrence in the House of Commons. Wilberforce was sitting with his head in his hands, tears streaming down his face.

He voted against the Corn Bill in 1815, deprecated the resumption of hostilities against Napoleon, and, in 1816, censured as a breach of faith against the French people the part taken by the British Government in the restoration of Louis XVIII. In 1817, he was prominent in the opposition to governing by the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act and the suppression of public meetings. In 1818, he opposed the ministerial Bill of Indemnity and the renewal of the Alien Act. He also favoured the emancipation of Catholics. It was anticipated that he would be elevated to the Lords as the Lord Speaker when the Whigs returned to power and a large range of reforms would come to fruition; these did not occur.

Romilly was a stately, tall and graceful figure with a melodious voice, features of classical regularity, chaste diction and cogent logic. He was often an eloquent speechmaker in Parliament, not averse to using sarcasm when needed. He was more interested in forensically examining the causes of problems rather than their manifestations or results. It has been said that his approach was more suited to the courtroom than the rumbustious hurly burly of the House of Commons. Charles Williams-Wynn, the longstanding MP for Montgomeryshire from the well-established Welsh gentry family, who had himself first entered Parliament in 1797 as an MP for the infamous rotten borough of Old Sarum, saw Romilly's background in equity law and discrete bills as inadequate. John William Ward in 1813 found his approach too philosophical.

Romilly was a down to earth, compassionate man who believed in tolerance, liberty and fairness. He tried to be pure in soul and thought and eschewed creature comforts and affectations. He was a principled man, but his intensity of conviction and his melancholic nature could make him lose long-held friendships due to political antagonism. His principles were austere, almost puritanical, and in general society he could appear cold and reserved; however, with close friends, he could show sympathy and converse spiritedly.



He was a hard worker, rising early and going to bed late. He read widely and was able to retain the important aspects of the subjects quickly and with tenacity. Going on long walks was his favourite relaxation. He spent leisure time in a cottage at the Vale of Health, Hampstead, in mid-life and at his villa, Tanhurst, in Leith Hill, Surrey, later in life, where his old friend Scarlett was a neighbour.

What, then, of his family life? Romilly did not marry until 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1798, when he was not quite 41. His wife was Anne Garbett, eldest daughter of Francis Garbett of Knill Court, Herefordshire. She was born on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1774 making her just 23, near 18 years Romilly's junior. They met through Shelburne (marquess of Lansdowne) as Francis Garbett was Shelburne's secretary. They announced their engagement after a courtship of only 10 days. They were married at St Michael and All Angels, Knill, which is just up against the Herefordshire-Radnorshire border between Presteigne and Kington. Romilly appeared to have been devoted to Anne. They had six sons and a daughter.



Lady Anne Romilly  
historical portraits image library by John Hoppner RA



Knill Court where Lady Romilly / Anne Garbett lived  
before marriage  
lastheritage.org.uk



St Michael's and All Angels, Knill, Herefordshire  
where Sir Samuel and Lady Anne Romilly  
were married and buried.

Lady Anne apparently was a capable sketcher. On a visit to Ford Abbey, with her husband, in September 1817, she made two sketches of the building. Jeremy Bentham, Romilly 's old friend was renting the property at the time, which was then in Devonshire, but now in Dorset. An engraving was later made of one of the sketches. Sadly, one year and a month after the visit Anne was dead. She had been suffering a long and painful illness and the family had travelled with her to the Isle of Wight in the hope of improving her health. They stayed at East Cowes Castle, as a guest of John Nash, the architect. He designed the site which was built between 1798 and 1800 and it was his home until his death in 1835. No expense was spared in the building. Nash's body was interred in the grounds. East Cowes Castle was demolished in 1963 after it was neglected and allowed to deteriorate after it was badly treated during the Second World War, when requisitioned by the War Office. It was here that Anne died on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1818, aged 43, after 20 years of marriage.



Lady Anne Romilly  
by Sir Thomas Lawrence



East Cowes Castle, Isle of Wight, where Lady Romilly died

A few days before Anne died, Sir Samuel put his affairs in order and made arrangements for his children, the youngest being only eight. He must have realised that he would not cope with life without his beloved wife. On the day after Anne died, Romilly and his family set off for his London home in Russell Square. His companions on the journey were alarmed by his state of mind. Stephen Dumont later said that he was continually wringing his hands and complaining of heat in his head. When they reached Russell Square, the family were reluctant to let him out of their sights. His nephew Dr Roget insisted on sleeping on a couch in his bedroom and called in Drs Marcet and Babington to see him. His uncle was "uttering expressions in a strain of great perturbation".

On the Monday morning 2 November 1818 Sir Samuel's daughter, Sophia, aged 18, brought tea up to him in his bedroom and Roget slipped out downstairs to the drawing room. Romilly asked Sophia to fetch the doctor back up and in

those few seconds when he was alone, he slit his throat with a razor. Thomas Bowen, the footman, heard a commotion upstairs and saw Romilly ushering Roget out of the door. Bowen and Roget forced the door open and saw Romilly bleeding profusely, leaning over a basin with blood everywhere. He had severed his larynx and could not speak. He could only make signs and indicated he wanted a pen and paper. Perhaps it was then that his last words were written: My dear, I wish..... presumably for his late wife. He was laid on the floor and John Knox, a surgeon, was sent for, He started to suture the wound but it was pointless, so he stopped. Dumont arrived to find Bowen in tears and Roget in despair.



Sir Samuel Romilly's home in Russell Square,  
where he died  
londonmembers.com



Memorial plaque outside Romilly's  
chambers at Gray's Inn  
openplaques.com cc: Nick Harrison on Flickr

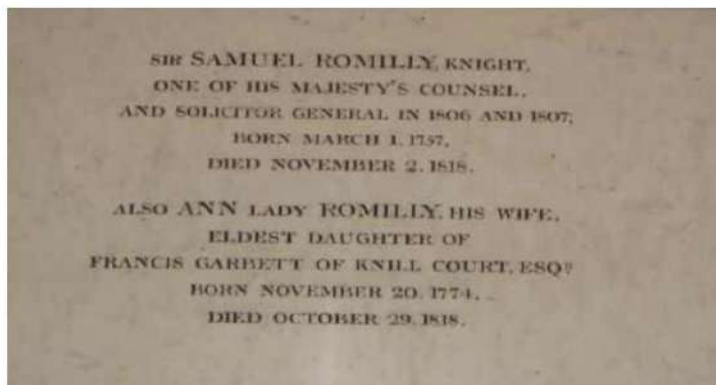
Within 4 days the children had lost both parents. Romilly's state of mind was so badly affected it would seem that he lost his sense of compassion for his own children, albeit that he had put his affairs in order, presumably contemplating suicide when it would seem that his state of mind was stable. Yet Frederick was only 8 and Sophia, who was 18, must have felt guilty for being duped into leaving her father alone for those few seconds. Rather a callous way for a compassionate man to treat his children, perhaps? Let us excuse him by saying that the balance of his mind was disturbed. Romilly was buried on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1818 at the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, Knill with his wife.

His death was greatly lamented by his friends and political allies. He was 61. What might he have achieved if he had lived longer? Surely, he would have been better known and remembered for further reforming measures that he would have guided through Parliament? Could he have achieved the highest state of office?





Memorial plaque to Sir Samuel  
on the outside of his house  
©jessop77 on Upst, from naamicifford.com



Memorial plaque to the couple  
inside the church at Knill  
findagrave.com

He is the sort of person I admire. Admittedly, he did not have to drag himself out of poverty, but he was largely self-educated and achieved all he did by his strong work ethic. He became highly regarded in his profession and a shining light in radical politics and the Whig party. Perhaps it was easier in those days to be a reforming politician despite the resistance of the entrenched Establishment because there was so much that needed reform compared to today?? He was an expert in his field and, by this author's estimation, an honourable man, in contrast to the many career politicians of current days. It is remarkable that he was associated with Barry, but that invites the question: what did he actually do for Barry? The answer is, really, nothing. That was left for his children and then their descendants at the time Barry as a coal port was being developed.

Who were these children then, and what was their involvement in the town which forms the basis of this series? You may be relieved to hear that I am not going into any great detail here. I have not had the time or the inclination to seek out books in libraries or search online or in shops to buy them. All that I have found out is derived from online searches, and compared to Sir Samuel Romilly himself, there is, perhaps surprisingly, little to find.

The first child of Samuel and Anne was William. All that I can find out about him was that he was born in London in 1798 or 1799 and died in Geneva on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1855. I have found no record of a marriage. He is mentioned on tithe apportionments in Porthkerry in August 1838 for the Porthkerry estate and woodland along with two of his brothers, while his brothers Charles, Edward and Frederick are named as the landowners and tenants in common. The occupiers were Edward Romilly, Thomas Evans and others for the estate and Charles, Edward and Frederick for the woodland. He is also a landowner on tithe apportionments along with his brothers in a large number of plots in Gladestry, Radnorshire in June 1839, Barry, Penmark and Old Radnor in 1839 and 1840 and so on. On the [artprice.com](http://artprice.com) site, a William Romilly is named as an

artist born in 1799 who died in 1855 with a photo of a painting of his sold at public auction. For the eldest son, his achievements seem rather underwhelming compared to his brothers.



John, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Romilly

The second son John, 1<sup>st</sup> baron Romilly (January 1802 to 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1874) is the most well-known of the children. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge and called to the bar at Gray's Inn in 1827. He became the MP for Bridport in 1832 to 1835 and again from 1846 to 1847. In 1847, he became the MP for Devonport. He became a Queen's Counsel in 1843. He was appointed Solicitor General in 1848 in Lord John Russell's administration and knighted and then became Attorney- General in 1850. In 1851 he was appointed Master of the Rolls, the last to sit in Parliament. He was defeated at Devonport in the General Election of 1852. He was known as Lord John Romilly between 1848 and 1866. He was created Baron Romilly of Barry in 1866 and retired as Master of the

Rolls in 1873. He was instrumental in removing restrictions in access to public records and state papers which had long frustrated research. He died at Russell Square, London aged 72. He married Caroline Charlotte Otter daughter of the Right Reverend William Otter and Nancy Sadleir Bruere on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 1833 at St Mark, Kensington and they had eight children, four sons and four daughters. It appears that he did not spend much time in Barry, but as we saw earlier on our journey he owned the Lodge on what became St Nicholas Road and spent time there in the summer holidays. He would seem to have had a smoother journey up the legal and political tree than his father, no doubt built upon the efforts of Samuel.

The third son, Edward, was born in London on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1804 and died presumably at Porthkerry, certainly in the registration district of Cardiff on 12<sup>th</sup> October 1870 and was buried at Porthkerry on 18<sup>th</sup> October. He lived at Porthkerry House near St Curig's Church. He was educated at King Edward VI School, Bury St Edmunds, and entered Christ's College Cambridge in 1833, moving to Trinity College in 1826, graduating LL.B in 1828. He was an amateur cricketer, playing for the Cambridge University Cricket Club, and the MCC of which he was a member. He made 9 appearances it seems in first class matches, including one for the Gentlemen in 1827. He amassed the total of 124 runs in 17 innings with a highest score of 40 and the less than impressive average of 8.26. He did not bowl in these matches.

He was a Whig and was elected as one of the two MPs for Ludlow in 1832 but was defeated in 1835. He was also a Cambridge Apostle, a rather exclusive



and secretive discussion group of undergraduates and graduates. He was a member of the Board of Audit from 1837 to 1866 being chairman from 1855 to 1865. Edward seems to have been the family member most involved with the development of parkland at Porthkerry and was High Sheriff of Glamorgan in 1869; he was thus one of 'the great and good' of the county. He married Sophia Marcet on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1830. They had no children. She was the daughter of Alexander John Gaspard Marcet, a physician and chemist born in 1770 in Geneva, who settled in London and died in 1823. Sophia died on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1877, aged 67, in St George Hanover Square, London, and was buried in the parish of Porthkerry on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1877. It is possible that the wonderful name Gaspard becoming a Romilly family name started with the association with Sophia's father. There is a Gaspard Place off the Parade in Barry.

Henry Romilly was the fourth son, born on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1804, and who died on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1884 in Kington, Herefordshire, where the Romilly family were landowners. He was a merchant in Liverpool, and on the 1841 census was listed as the Hon. Henry Romilly, a 26-year-old commission merchant lodging in 1, Huskisson Street, Liverpool. He was the author of 'Public Responsibility and Vote by ballot'. He married Rosa Gardiner Morris on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1850 in Holywell, Flintshire. She was the daughter of James Pemberton Morris. She died on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1892.

Charles Romilly, the fifth son was born in London in 1808. He died in Westminster on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1887. He was Clerk to the Crown in Chancery, and married Lady Georgiana Russell, daughter of John Russell, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford and Lady Georgiana Gordon on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1842. They had six sons. He played cricket for the MCC. He played 13 matches and 23 innings scoring 121 runs with a highest score of 37 and an average of 5.76. He did not bowl.

He was 43 and living at 29, Wilton Crescent in the parish of St Georges, Hanover Square, in 1851, although it is nearer Belgrave Square Garden and Hyde Park Corner. His occupation on the census return appears to be barrister. His wife and 5 children were with him and a whole host of servants. He was at the same address in 1881, a widower and his occupation was described as civil service, retired. In the household were three sons with occupations of being a barrister, a sugar planter in Australia and a merchant and one daughter in law born in Gothenburg, Sweden and again many servants.

Frederick, the 6<sup>th</sup> son, was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1810 and died 6<sup>th</sup> April 1887 in the parish of St Georges, Hanover Square. His abode as on the burial record was Eccleston Square which is between Victoria and Pimlico. He was buried in Barry in St Nicholas churchyard by the Rector Edmund E. Allen. We saw the grave of Frederick and Elizabeth, his wife, on our walk. It is surmounted by the restored Celtic preaching cross. Elizabeth died in January 1892. Her abode and place of burial were the same as her husband's and she was buried by E. E. Allen and another with a French sounding name. As we learned on the walk, Frederick had Barry House in Barry opposite the Lodge on St Nicholas Road. It would

seem that Frederick had an affinity for Barry. Frederick is only present in the 1851 census at 15, Eaton Square, St Georges Hanover Square, aged 41, a landed proprietor born in Bloomsbury. His wife was E. A. J. Romilly, Elizabeth Amelia Jane, the daughter of Gilbert Elliot-Murray-Kynynmound, 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Minto. They married in 1848. They had a son Samuel Henry, aged 1 in the 1851 census (1849-1940,) and a daughter Elizabeth Mary, 18 in 1871, who died in 1950. The 1871 census at the same address also shows a 15-year-old son, Hugh, who became an administrator, author and explorer and died in 1892, and I have read in [familypedia.fandom.com](http://familypedia.fandom.com) that there were other children: Frederick William (1854-1935) and Gertrude Emily (1858-1952).

Frederick snr was a Lieutenant-Colonel, but I have been unable to find any more details about his Army career. He was a Whig politician and one of two MPs for Canterbury from 1850 to 1852. He was a member (1864-1887) and from 1873 to 1887 deputy chairman of the board of customs. He also, was a cricketer and played for the MCC. He played one first class match for the MCC v Cambridge University getting off the mark in both innings to amass a total score of 2.

Sophia, Sir Samuel and Lady Anne's only daughter, was born about 1800 and married the Rt Hon. Thomas Francis Kennedy, twelve years her senior, MP for Ayr Burghs, and grandson of John Adam in 1820. They had one son, Francis Thomas Romilly Kennedy. In 1851, they were living at 25, Lowndes Square in the parish of Chelsea according to the census. It was near Sloane Street but very close to Hyde Park and Thomas was a landed proprietor and privy councillor. In 1861, they were at 2, John Street, St Georges, Hanover Square. Francis, age 18, and born in Dublin, was a scholar at Cambridge. I traced them to Dalquhanan Castle in Ayrshire in 1871, where Thomas was described as a landowner and Privy Councillor, 82, and Sophia, 70, his wife. With them were Francis, 28, a Magistrate Lieutenant of Ayrshire, born in Ireland, his wife Eliza, 28, born in England, and their two daughters, Eliza, 1, and Sophia, 0, both born in Edinburgh. There were also fourteen servants. Sophia died in 1879.

Many of the descendants of Sir Samuel Romilly's children became prominent in the legal profession, or in Army, or other prestigious fields. They were often of the nobility or married into aristocratic families. I shall only detail those with relevance to Barry here.

When John, 1<sup>st</sup> baron Romilly, died, his eldest son, William, became 2<sup>nd</sup> baron Romilly in 1874. William was born 12<sup>th</sup> April 1835 and died 23<sup>rd</sup>



2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Romilly

May 1891. He appears to have been in the vicarage at Effingham with his father in the 1841 census and there as a 15-year-old nephew in 1851. His first marriage was to Emily Idonea Sophia Le Marchant, daughter of General Sir John Gaspard Le Marchant, a highly decorated Army officer and a Governor of various overseas territories, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1865 at Holy Trinity, St Marylebone, London. There is that name Gaspard again! Emily died on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1866, aged just 23, in the district of Kensington but had a son, John Gaspard le Marchant Romilly, who was born on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1866. William married a second time to Helen Jemima Denison (1845-1889) on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1872 at St George Hanover Square. They were living in Ovington Gardens, just off the Brompton Road, in 1881. He died nearby on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1891 at 38, Egerton Gardens, in the Knightsbridge/ Brompton area, of smoke inhalation along with two servants as a result of a fire in his residence. As we have noted William, 2<sup>nd</sup> baron Romilly of Barry, would have been living when no 1 dock in Barry was opened. He would appear to have been a barrister.



Violet Grey-Egerton

John Gaspard le Marchant Romilly (1<sup>st</sup> March 1866 – 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1905) became the 3<sup>rd</sup> baron Romilly on the death of his father in 1891. He was 25. Possibly he was a boarder at Eton College, aged 15 in 1882. He was the Baron Romilly when no 2 dock was opened. He married Violet Edith Grey-Egerton (1<sup>st</sup> March 1870 – 1<sup>st</sup> March 1906), born in Nantwich, daughter of Sir Philip le Belward Grey-Egerton, 11<sup>th</sup> baronet of the ancient Cheshire family of Oulton Park and Hon. Henrietta Elizabeth Sophia Denison, the daughter of 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Londesborough on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1897. Polite society was outraged when Violet married John, according to the tale I heard on the Valeways walk of the Romilly Estate 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022. She had been engaged to a Romilly (presumably John) for four years but called it off. She then was

engaged to a man with a splendidly posh name but alas he was not moneyed like her so that ended. She then was due to marry a member of the Cunard family but did not turn up at the church and instead married John Gaspard le Marchant Romilly possibly on the same day?! From pictures I have seen she was a quite beautiful woman, as befits her romantic history.

John was only 39 when he died at 77, Harley Street, in 1905. Violet died in the following year. They had a son William Gaspard Guy Romilly, born in 1899. John was a Lieutenant in the King's Royal Rifles from 1886 to 1888, then a Captain in the Coldstream Guards in 1898, and, in 1900, he was made Captain of the Reserve of officers of the Coldstream Guards and served in the Second Boer

War before being made a Major of the Reserve of Officers. I have read on one site that he lived in Barry, but I have seen no evidence of this elsewhere or on census records. The only Romilly family members I have found in census returns in Glamorgan were Edward and his wife Sophia, and his brother, Henry, at Porthkerry, in 1841.

Egerton Grey country hotel (pictured below right) was a four-star AA listed hotel near Porthkerry Park. It was originally built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was the rectory for the Rector of Porthkerry with Barry for some time. It opened as a luxury hotel in 1988 and I had some excellent dinners there. Sadly, it closed in 2010. Did the Romilly family own the building, later known as Egerton Grey, when the rectory moved there instead of the house next to the church? Where did Edward Romilly live? In the old rectory or the new one or a different building altogether? Where and what was Porthkerry House? For these questions I need to find answers. The name Egerton Grey must come from the association with Violet Grey Egerton. Does Egerton Street in Canton, Cardiff have the same derivation? It is certainly near Romilly Road and Place.



Arms of the 4<sup>th</sup> Baron

William Gaspard Guy Romilly became the 4<sup>th</sup> baron Romilly in 1905 on his father's death. William was only six, being born on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1899. He was nearly seven when his mother died. He died on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 1983. He was educated at Ludgrove School and was in the First World War as a teenager in 1918, becoming a Lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards from 1919 to 1923. During the Second World War he became a Major in the Reserve of Officers. His Army

career echoed that of his father. He married the Hon. Diana Joan Sackville-West (1906-1975), the only daughter of Charles Sackville-West, 4<sup>th</sup> baron Sackville and Maude Cecilia Bell, the eldest daughter of Capt. Matthew John Bell of Bourne Park. They divorced in 1944 and she became the third wife of Lt-Col. Sir Douglas Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bart. in January 1951. William married Dora Sybil Morris, a daughter of Reginald Morris, on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1944. She died on 24<sup>th</sup> April 1960. His third marriage was on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1966 to Marion Elizabeth Jessie Cecil,



née Clover, a daughter of Charles M. Clover of Pilgrims Way, Blewbury, presumably near Didcot. She was the former wife of Geoffrey Adams and Capt. Lionel Cecil.

As the Right Honourable The Lord Romilly, he was a Member of the House of Lords, Lord Temporal from 4<sup>th</sup> August 1920 until 29<sup>th</sup> June 1983. He was a Conservative.

Despite three marriages, Lord Romilly remained childless and upon his death in 1983, the barony became extinct. After his death, Lady Romilly married for the fourth time, becoming the second wife of Col. Edward John Sutton Ward in 1986.

Samuel Henry Romilly was the first son of Sir Samuel's youngest son Frederick. He was born 4<sup>th</sup> September 1849 in St George Hanover Square parish and died 14<sup>th</sup> March 1940 in Kington, Herefordshire. He was a barrister and married Arabella Charlotte Carnegie (1850-1907) on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1878 in St George Hanover Square. As we have previously noted he laid the foundation stone for All Saints Church in Barry on the outside of the porch on Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1907. He was a patron of the living. He was presented with a mallet inlaid with gold from the architect and a silver trowel from the builder to mark the occasion. He had 2 sons and three daughters. His eldest son, Colonel Bertram Henry Samuel Romilly (1878-1940) had a distinguished army career and was married to Nellie Hozier, a sister of Clementine, wife of Winston Churchill.

One of his sons was Esmond Marcus David Romilly (10<sup>th</sup> June 1918 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 1941), the socialist, anti-fascist and journalist who eloped as a teenager with his distant cousin Jessica Mitford, the communist one of the Mitford sisters and whom he later married in Bayonne 18<sup>th</sup> May 1937. He was a schoolboy rebel and communist supporter, fought with the international brigades in the Spanish Civil War and published an account of his experiences; he also served as the inspiration for the fictional Christian Talbot in Jessica's sister Nancy's celebrated novel, *The Pursuit of Love*. He moderated his political views to those of democratic socialism. He and his wife relocated to America in 1939, and he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force on the outbreak of the Second World War, and was training to be a pilot, but was discharged on medical grounds. He enlisted again, retrained to be an observer and was posted back to England and attached to no. 58 Squadron RAF as a navigator, with the rank of pilot officer. He died when his plane failed to return from a bombing raid over Hamburg on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1941 and was lost over the North Sea.

As can be seen from this small sample of the descendants of Sir Samuel Romilly, the family certainly made its mark on British society. Its beginning in Britain began with Etienne seeking refuge from religious persecution in France. Two generations later Samuel established the family in the upper echelons of the

establishment which had been so obstructive to his aims of reform, particularly in the field of punishments for crime. His sons and daughter certainly had a comfortable living in the wealthy suburbs of London, with land in Herefordshire, Mid Wales, Barry, Cardiff, and no doubt elsewhere due to the riches with which Samuel's hard-work and self-education had been rewarded. Many of their offspring were ennobled and married into and became part of the aristocracy. This had all occurred because of Sir Samuel's efforts. He could have achieved more if he had lived longer, of that I have no doubt. But what greater accolade can a man have than to have a pub named after him? The Sir Samuel Romilly, in Barry, where the name Romilly is deep rooted in the very fabric of the town.

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