



The Lugards in Abinger

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The Lugard family were Protestants who left Central Europe for Holland, where Paulus Jacobus Luegert is recorded as a "Sadelmaker uyt Bohemen" in 1632. An English Branch became established in the late eighteenth century, when John Lugard is recorded as serving with the 60th Inniskilling Dragoons. He became Adjutant and Secretary of the Royal Military School, Chelsea. His sons both served in India, one as a priest and one as a soldier. General Sir Edward Lugard took part in the Relief of Lucknow in the Indian Mutiny; his portrait is one of those on the Outram Shield displayed in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

The first member of the family to live at Abinger was Flora Shaw. Born in 1852, she determined to make a career as a writer, and supported not only herself but at least two sisters, with elegant economy. Through George Meredith she had an introduction to W. T. Stead, as a woman "with the reasoning capacity of a man", and became a valued member of the outside staff on the Pall Mall Gazette. In May 1890 she submitted to The Times an article on Egyptian Finance, simply signed "F. Shaw". It was printed immediately, and though it was a shock to the proprietor, Mr. Buckle, to discover that his correspondent was a woman, she soon became a regular member of the staff, writing principally on Colonial matters and travelling widely (she covered the Klondyke Gold Rush).

In 1883 she was visiting a friend at Abinger and in the course of a walk came upon two small cottages in the woods on Leith Hill. There lived two widowed sisters-in-law, both Mrs Elms, and they were happy to rent Flora a room as a country retreat. Flora was a vigorous walker, despite early ill-health, and often walked over to Flint Cottage on Box Hill to visit the Merediths. She would write an article for The Times in the waiting room at Charing Cross before catching the train to Gomshall, to walk on, sometimes in the dark, up to Leith Hill. In all her subsequent travels the beloved Abinger woods were the yardstick against which all landscapes were measured. In 1902 Flora Shaw married Sir Frederick Lugard, nephew of Sir Edward, and the two old cottages, now acquired, became one wing of a larger house, Little Parkhurst. Frederick Lugard had begun a military career in India, but in 1887, equipped with his favourite .450 rifle and 50 gold sovereigns won by stalking and shooting a man-eating tiger, he was granted leave on half pay and set off as a deck passenger on a timber ship down the East Coast of Africa. He was engaged first by the African Lakes Company to lead a hazardous but successful expedition against the Arab slave traders in the interior, and in 1889 the British East Africa Company asked him to command an expedition to Uganda to bring order to an area riven by dissension between rival Christian groups, Muslims and pagans. This he did, with a force of 50 Sudanese and Somali soldiers, also mapping hitherto uncharted areas.

At the time of his marriage he was High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria, where he suppressed the slave trade and established peace under British authority. In Nigeria he introduced his system of Indirect Rule, government through

existing native institutions and traditions. From 1907-1912 he was Governor of Hong Kong, at a time of great upheaval in China; here his great achievement was the foundation of the University. He came back from China to govern Nigeria till 1919. In retirement he wrote extensively, setting out his theory of colonial government in "The Dual Mandate", and served for 14 years on the Mandates Commission of the League of Nations. He was raised to the peerage in 1928 and took the title Baron Lugard of Abinger, the last hereditary peer to link his name to the village. He died in 1945, when Little Parkhurst was sold.

In 1924 his brother, Major Edward Lugard, came to Abinger with his wife Nell, building their house, Furzen Wood, in 3 acres at the northern end of Abinger Common village. Edward had first tried farming in Manitoba, gone on to live as a soldier in India, and in 1896, with his wife, son aged two, and a nursemaid called Rose, joined his brother in exploration of the Kalahari Desert in southern Africa. Later he ably seconded his brother's work in Nigeria, and during the First World War he served in Naval Intelligence. He was a notable botanist, collecting plants for Kew in India and Africa, and at Abinger established an important shrub garden. Nell Lugard was a professional artist, specialising in miniatures, whose skills were adapted to botanical illustration for Kew.

Both Edward and Nell were active in Abinger Church life, and Nell did much work for the Common School. Edward represented Abinger North on the Rural District Council from 1925 to 1935, and played a major part in establishing the Leith Hill Preservation Scheme. He was for many years Treasurer of the St James' P.C.C. A meticulous worker, his final years were largely devoted to preparing his brother's archive for transfer to Rhodes House in Oxford.

The two brothers were joined at Abinger by their sisters Agnes Roper and Charlotte Lugard, who lived at Furzen Lodge through the Second World War. Mrs Roper died in 1960 aged 103 and still active.

After Nell Lugard's death in 1939 Edward Lugard joined his brother at Little Parkhurst, and Furzen Wood was occupied by the family of his son Cyril, who had returned from ten years' coffee farming in Kenya to serve again in the Army through the War. Cyril Lugard and his wife Kitty were active members of the Abinger Community, Kitty acting for many years as Secretary of the P.C.C. and as President of the Abinger W.I. She was a great gardener, and had helped her father-in-law in his work on the flora of Mount Elgon in northern Kenya. Cyril Lugard died in 1969, the last male member of the family, and Furzen Wood was sold in 1981, when Kitty died.

The Dutch Lugards continue to flourish.

Chambers Biographical Dictionary has the following entry:

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LUGARD Frederick John Dealtry, Baron Lugard (1858-1945). British soldier and colonial administrator; born in Fort St. George, Madras, to a clerical and missionary family. In 1878 he was commissioned as an army officer, serving in Sudan against Mohammed Ahmed, the Mandi (1885), and in Burma after the fall of King Thibaw (1886), and commanded an expedition against slavers in Nyasaland (1888). His activities in the rough-and-ready Uganda peacekeeping led to its being made a British protectorate in 1894, in which his Rise of our East African Empire (1893) was also influential. Appointed commissioner in the Nigerian hinterland by Joseph Chamberlain (1897), he kept a French challenge at bay and kept the peace. Britain having declared a protectorate over Northern and Southern Nigeria, Lugard was high commissioner for the North (1900-07), and established administrative paternalistic control with minimum force. He was governor of Hong Kong from 1907, helping to establish its University in 1911. He returned to Nigeria as governor of the two protectorates, becoming Governor-General (1914-1919) on their amalgamation. His principle was one of use of existing tribal institutions as infrastructure for British rule. He served on the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations (1922-36), published another influential book in The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa (1922) and was active on a Parliamentary Select Committee on closer union in East Africa (1930-31).

By Sheila Meade (nee Lugard) - Abinger & Coldharbour Parish News, June 2000

See some details of Lugard memorials in St James', Abinger. See also Lord Lugard's Legacy - Hong Kong (page 3)

