

## **ELITE VISITORS to Birchington in the early 1900s**

**Viscount Molesworth** (George Bagot Molesworth) from Walters Hall lived here at 'Rose Bank', next to 'Fernleigh'

**Lord Forrester** also later lived at 'Rose Bank'.

**Lord Decies** 4<sup>th</sup> Baron, William Marcus de la Poer Horsley Beresford J.P. D.L., bought 'Haun & Thor' from the estate of the late Major William Morrison Bell in 1900. He stayed here with his wife for several months each year until 1905 and during that time he had a beautiful cattery built for his wife's valuable collection of cats (like silver grey Persians). He then began work to turn the property into a luxury hotel, later named The Beresford Hotel.

**Mrs Susan Gray** lived in Birchington Hall after her husband had died there a few years previously. (The writer of the 'Elites' article said that Mrs Gray's family background was a 'mystery'. In fact her husband had made his money in the City and his family came from London.) A member of the family contacted me from Australia when he was trying to put his family tree together. He had found that one member had been buried 'in London' – did I know where in that great city that might be? Fortunately the answer is painted on one of the windows that was dedicated to his memory!

**Rev. Charles Ellicott, Bishop of Gloucester** – came here for holidays for a number of years and then bought 'Tresco' in Spencer Road and lived there in his retirement with his wife and a daughter. Both the ladies lived on after he died in 1905 and were all buried in our churchyard. Charles Ellicott was born at Whitewell near Stamford on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1819.

**William Broadley** lived at St Nicholas. He was born at Saltwood Castle and took up farming. He became a member of the Union Board at Minster Workhouse, and also of the boards of the Margate Hospital and the Burial Committee. The road Broadley Avenue was named after him.

**Robert Grant J.P.** lived at 'Fernleigh' (later to become part of Queen Bertha's School in 1929). Besides being a J.P. he was also an Alderman of the Borough of Margate. In 1909 he donated the fountain in the square to the village in memory of his late wife.

**Sir John Soundy** was born in 1851 at Bourne End, Bucks. He was the younger son of Joshua Soundy. He became a successful draper and was later made a Magistrate for Berkshire and Windsor. Mayor of Windsor in

1898 and was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1899. He retired in 1907 and visited / stayed in Birchington. He was married twice, first to Mary Rhys James of Cardigan in 1901 and second to Bernadine, daughter of Monsieur Jean Cox of Pirenge of Belgium in 1911.

**Sir Thomas Vezey Strong** is listed in Kelly's in Birchington in 1913. Sir Thomas was born in 1857 and died in 1920. He was Lord Mayor of London 1910 to 1911. He was a teetotaler all his life and strongly supported the movement. He held many honours and from 1899 until his death in 1920 he was Chairman of the Royal Temperance Hospital in London. In 1925 a new Nurses' Home was added to the hospital and was named after him as a memorial to his years of dedicated service to the movement.

**Mr Henry Osborne O'Hagan** was a very successful businessman who came to Birchington in the late 1800s and bought Rossetti Bungalow from the banker and brewer, Mr A. B. Cobb. Mr Cobb had bought it from the original owner and architect of the property, John Seddon, who also designed and oversaw the building of all the Tower Bungalows in Spenser Road. Mr O'Hagan filled the bungalow with many treasures he had bought on his travels in the Mediterranean, as he sailed his large yacht round those waters each summer. After his death in about 1932, his daughter, Miss A. Greenwood O'Hagan, continued to live there and take care of his finds, until her death in about 1952.