

## Chapter 10

The following letter makes clear that Hal had never really wanted to sell Garnstone, but in those days father's word was law and he would have found it very difficult to question Dan's decisions over the estate:

4 Sloane Terrace,  
Sloane Street  
December 2nd 1887.

Dear Mr Gwynne James,

I do not mean to sell if I can help it. I do not see why with care and economy I might not still save the estate. My father in the last four years has paid off so much and we are now clear of all debt, that all saving in future will be clear going and if at any time I changed my mind I do not think I could well get a worse price than people now seem inclined to offer, so I am writing to Walton and Lee to that effect.

It will be well for you to take any steps that are necessary in the way of valuation for the probate. If the keys of the cellar are necessary, Preece will be able to get them. As to that £550, it is a sum that came to my Father from Mrs (Annie) Peploe's will, which had been used for paying annuities, and the sum was used for current expenses instead of being invested for my mother, therefore the sum has now been taken out of the rents in order to be invested with the insurance money for Mrs Peploe's benefit. The balance of the rents has been paid to my account, and I am responsible for making up Mrs Peploe's income to a sum my father considered adequate to her needs. If I could only leave the matter of transportation of the coffin from the Docks to Hereford I should like to come down at once, but I am afraid I cannot.

Believe me, yours truly  
D. Henry T. Peploe

Hal was horrified by the amount the estate agents Walton and Lee were wanting to charge for trying to sell the estate, even though they had not been successful:

Billett, Campbell and Co  
Stockbrokers  
6th January 1888

Dear Mr Gwynne James

This account is monstrous (the account from Walton and Lee, the Estate Agents), they are, I suppose trying it on in order to see how much they can get for they have charged 1% on the valuation of the estate and 3% on both timber and furniture – the commission they were to charge if they succeeded in selling the estate which they have not done. They have also charged £445 for the auction instead of £200 as they wrote. What is to be done I do not know – offer half the amount and eventually give £200, though even that seems outrageous, but what do you propose? Not pay the full amount as claimed I suppose – but as it is it will be difficult enough to find the lesser amount. I enclose the liquidator's answer regarding G.E.A. Company. I have not yet heard from Captain Boycott with regard to the other companies.

Yrs very sincerely  
D. Henry T. Peploe

The other companies Dan had invested money on the advice of Captain Boycott were more or less worthless as this series of letter from Hal to his solicitor Mr James makes clear:

Billet, Campbell and Co  
Stockbrokers  
10.1.1888

Dear Mr Gwynne James

Hawke's Nest (Company) is worth nothing, as even if it were to earn any money the Debenture holders have the first claim

Walmesley le Tavernier and Co £10 shares - £5 paid

The G.E.A. I think I told you was not likely to be worth anything. The Clerk at the office tells me that my father had £1060 in the Kanawha but they are paying nothing yet, though they hope to pay something on the Debentures this next half year, but the shares would have to wait a long time. I suppose there is nothing to stop the proving the will except Walton and Lee's account

Yrs very sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

Billet, Campbell and Co

Stockbrokers

18.1.1888

Dear Mr Gwynne James

Anything that has to do with the Stock Exchange in our business I shall like to attend to myself, for I may as well get the commission as some other broker.

Paraguay Land Warrants of £500 each - £4.10 per £100

Paraguay bonds of £100 – 31 1/2 per bond

Army and Navy £1 - £11 per share.

New York/Boston/Montreal Railway – Goldbonds \$1000

This rail appears to have been merged in the Newburgh Duchesse and Connecticut R.R. but we cannot find what value (if any) the bonds possess. The best way almost would be to send up one of the bonds, so as to see what they are, and we might write to the company and find out. In writing to me here it is better to put Billett and Campbell as of course there are a lot of companies in these buildings and having only just begun here I am not known

Yrs very sincerely

D. Henry.T. Peploe

Billett, Campbell and Co

Stockbrokers

19th Jan. 1888

Dear Mr Gwynne James,

I find it is no use troubling about the New York, Boston and Montreal Bonds as the line that has taken them over hardly earns enough to pay their working expenses so bonds of a line that they have absorbed are not likely to be worth much. I am getting on well, having secured several clients even in this short time.

Yrs v Sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

Billett, Campbell and Co

Stockbrokers

20th. Jan. 1888

Dear Mr Gwynne James,

What I said was that our holding in the company consisted in shares, and that the company was only just paying a small dividend to the debenture holders, but nothing to the share holders. It is a private company and never had a quotation on the Stock Exchange, therefore it is impossible to put a value on . If you had to sell them you would get nothing for them, but yet the Secretary thinks they will turn out well. The name is The Great Kanawha colliery company Limited 1060 shares, and he says they are worth par, but that is to make out the Company is as good as possible. The prices fro Paraguay and Army and Navy 'Cooperative are the official prices. I am trying to get the Iron (the Virginian Iron and Steel Works shares) taken up by some speculator in the City – but do not say anything as I am only throwing a fly and it is not very likely any one will bite.

Yrs v sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

Hal was now living in London and was every bit the man about town wearing his top hat 'at a most rakish angle', according to his grandson. He became engaged to Lady Scudamore-Stanhope, a daughter of the Earl of Chesterfield of Holme Lacy, one of the grandest country houses in Herefordshire, but the relationship appears not to have blossomed for a short time later he became attached to a Miss Sydney Katherine Chapman.



Sydney Katherine Chapman around the date of her marriage to Hal Peploe

The Chapmans were originally a Quaker family from Whitby in Yorkshire who were for many generations successfully involved in business and banking, and they were related to the Barclay and Gurney banking dynasties. Many generations of Chapman daughters had been endowed with handsome dowries resulting in some very well connected marriages to aristocratic families such as the Earls of Galloway, the Phelips of Montacute, the Guests of Wimbourne, and the Molesworth St Aubyns of St Michaels Mount in Cornwall. The future Sydney Peploe would often tell her

granddaughter Jane the terrible story of how one of her St Aubyn cousins had been preparing for a childrens party when her dress caught fire. Her elder sister had rushed to her assistance only to be engulfed in flames also and both of them later died of their burns.

In 1886 Leila's niece Georgiana Clive Bayley had married Edward (later General Sir Edward) Chapman, one time Quarter Master General of India. Sir Edward's younger brother, Cecil had married his cousin Adeline Guest, widow of Arthur Guest and sister of Spencer Chapman of 84 Eccleston Square, and it was through them that Hal met and later became engaged to Spencer's eldest daughter Sydney Katherine.



Sydney Chapman's parents Spencer and Elinor

Spencer Chapman (1843-1918) was a younger son of David Barclay Chapman, a banker and financier who left an estate worth £1,015,594 when he died in November 1892. Spencer himself had been a midshipman in the Navy and took part in the storming of the Summer Palace in Peking in 1860 at which time he collected a considerable amount of Imperial booty including beautiful lacquer boxes, china e.t.c., and this was later divided up amongst his children. Sydney Peplow inherited some china and her niece Nancy Kidston came into a very fine statue of a figure holding a Crystal Ball, the size and perfection of which had never before been seen by Christies of London.

Spencer was a tall and stately looking man and had inherited the Saxon colouring of his Chapman forbears - flaxen hair and brown skin. He had wanted to study Chemistry whilst still in the Navy, but his father had disapproved of his son doing this for a career, and so instead he went into Barclay's Bank, the old family firm. After a great deal of persuasion they allowed him the funds he needed to go and study in Germany, and here he met Doctor Rudolf Messel of Darmstadt (1848-1920), a fellow student with no money but plenty of ability. Spencer persuaded him to come to England in 1870, and together they set up a chemical company. (Tony Armstrong-Jones, later Lord Snowdon was his grandson)

The first break came with the development of a product for curing diseased vines which was widely adopted by the grape growing areas of France, and the firms logo thereafter incorporated a vine. Later they were the first people to develop smoke screens during W.W.1. but their main line of business was producing Sulphuric Acid, and Messel was the first with Squire to devise a

successful process for the manufacture of sulphuric anhydride using the catalytic process. My father had heard the process for making the acid was actually stolen from the Germans but in any case they became one of the largest manufacturers of the chemical in the country. During WW2 the company works at Silvertown in the East End of London were badly bombed, and after Spencer's oldest son Fitzroy took over the business there was little expansion as he 'had little head for business'.



Leila Peploe in old age circa 1900

Spencer Chapman's wife was born Elinor Sydney Stewart, the daughter of Admiral Keith Stewart (1814-1879) and this family was descended from an illegitimate branch of the Royal House of Stewart. They had been ennobled as the Earls of Galloway in 1623 - the premier Earldom of Scotland and were related to most of the British Aristocracy. They were said to be 'artistic, musical and slightly odd' with a strongly Celtic look about them - dark hair, blue eyes and pale skin. Further more they were proud to point out their 'Stewart lines' - exaggeratedly long creases which connected the sides of the nose with the corners of the mouth, and this feature they claimed to share with Charles I. Hal's eldest son Dan said he had inherited this feature from his Stewart forebears. A less attractive feature of the Stewarts was the facial hair that the female members of the family tended to get as they grew older. Elinor Sydney's mother, Mary Caroline (1823-1895), was a daughter of Sir Charles Fitzroy, the first Governor of New South Wales. A tragedy had occurred when his wife, Lady Mary Fitzroy, was riding in a carriage to a wedding at Paramatta, a suburb of Sydney, with her A.D.C.. Whilst going down a hill the horses bolted and both Lady Mary

and her A.D.C, were killed in 1847. There is still a memorial to them at the spot in Sydney where the event took place, and a portrait of Sir Charles Fitzroy at Government House shows a very dark and forbidding looking gentleman. He was by reputation a very hard man and hanged people at the drop of a hat, but it is said he had 'a very difficult job looking after the convict community'. His wife Lady Mary was supposed to have been uncommonly pretty.

Mary Caroline, the wife of Admiral Keith Stewart, returned to Sydney to look after her bereaved father, and the journey aboard ship from England took 3 months with all their provisions 'on the hoof' if possible – live chickens e.t.c. She was already pregnant and her first daughter was later born in Government House, Sydney, and named Elinor Sydney in memory of the occasion of her birth. Elinor Sydney's eldest daughter would also be called Sydney – the future Sydney Peploe. On the 3rd July 1850 10000 people gathered at Redfern in Sydney to watch Sydney Chapman's grandmother, The Hon Mrs Mary Stewart turn the sod of the first railway opened in New South Wales, if not Australia, and the spade was manufactured from materials indigenous to Australia.

Sydney Chapman's mother Elinor was a great friend of Princess Mary Adelaide, the slightly impecunious mother of Queen Mary, and every fortnight she had taken her musical daughter Audrey to Buckingham Palace for the Children's Musical Orchestra. Audrey eventually became a very competent amateur cellist and formed her own orchestra of Lady musicians which would play in the poorer parts of London for charity. Frank Bridge started conducting for the orchestra in the mid 1920'ties, and the very young Benjamin Britten made the odd appearance playing the cymbals. Eventually Audrey would lend Benjamin his first grand piano, and she also became very friendly with Madame Suiggia the cellist whose portrait by Augustus John playing her instrument can be seen at The Tate. When Madame Suiggia died she left a Stradivarius cello to Audrey on condition it went to the Royal College of Music after her death, and it is now played by Steven Isserlis.

The Chapman's residence at 84 Eccleston Square was an enormous corner house and there was a large billiard's room where Spencer would teach his younger daughter Helene how to play the game from the age of 10. At first she was made to stand on a stool, but she later became very good and was able to beat most men, in fact she was the athlete of the family. She excelled at tennis which she played at Dinard where her parents owned the villa 'Les Figuiers', and also won the West of Scotland Golf Championship.

Adjoining the billiard room was a small room with special locks on the door and a humidifier that Spencer had specially made for his cigars to keep them safe and in perfect condition. The room was lined with cupboards containing drawers of different cigars and it took half an hour every day for Spencer to choose which selection he would require. He had a large book in which he wrote how many cigars and which variety he had taken. There was also a ballroom at one end of which Spencer erected a stage for Audrey's cello recitals, and a glass case which contained the booty looted from the Forbidden Palace at Peking.

Spencer had a succession of motor yachts the largest of which was the Aldebaran which he bought in 1900. It had a tonnage of 186 and measured 154½ feet in length with a 20½ foot beam, but disappeared from the records around 1920 and may therefore have been a casualty of war.

Fitzroy was the tall and good looking only son of Spencer and Elinor, and it is said 'he loved gardening, golf, antiques and good food. He had a very good chef at his villa in the South of France but would get very angry if the food wasn't perfect. He was almost totally deaf having contracted a fever at Eton, and therefore was unable to hear either his wife or children speak, and further more he never learnt to lipread instead relying on little notes. He used to speak very loudly on account of his deafness but enjoyed telling bawdy stories and this created quite a stir in public places such as restaurants, according to his nephew Dan Peploe. In fact deafness was a congenital problem for the Chapmans and Sydney complained to her maid Martha Crowhurst that she missed a great deal of the conversation at meal times. She had a special ear trumpet for special occasions which was trimmed with lace, and in later years her visitors would have to speak into a special box from which a tube protruded which Sydney would hold to her ear.

According to Sydney's grandson the Chapmans were on the whole quieter and more down to earth than the Peploe's, and she herself was the complete opposite from Hal - shy, quiet and as she admitted herself not particularly talented compared to her sisters; 'I was never present when the prizes were given out' she used to say. Her short stubby legs and fingers gave her an un-athletic appearance and when the family went sailing in Spencer's yacht, the young Sydney was

always placed in the 'jolly boat' where she was violently sick. During the early years of her marriage Sydney was terrified of Leila, her formidable mother-in-law, and declined to sit down in her presence. However the two of them shared a love of music and Sydney's favourite composer was Wagner, although she admitted she had absolutely no talent for playing herself.

However she had great reserve of character and would let nothing stop her from discharging her duties towards her friends and neighbours. Her down to earth attitude towards life together with a generous nature made her popular with everyone, not least her staff.

Sydney's Marshall cousins took to calling her Gelly - a polite version of Golly, on account of her very dark and frizzy hair, but they loved her very deeply. Never the less they thought Hal and Sydney a most incongruous couple and couldn't understand why a sophisticated London socialite like him had made such an unworldly and rather plain choice for a wife. It is probable that the Chapman family fortune played an important role as it was at a time when 'one didn't marry for money, but one married where money is', and Hal may have thought a cash injection from his father in law could save the family fortunes.

Hal and Sydney were married on 11th December 1890 and despite their differences the marriage proved to be a reasonably happy one:

Mr H.T.Peploe and Miss Sydney Chapman

On Thursday Afternoon at St Peter's, Eaton Square, with full choral service, the marriage took place of Mr Daniel Henry T.Peploe, J.P., eldest son of the late Major Daniel Peploe Peploe of the 4th Dragoon Guards, D.L.,J.P., and M.P. from 1874 to 1880, of Garnstone Castle, Weobley, Herefordshire, and Miss Sydney Katherine Chapman, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs Spencer Chapman, of 84, Eccleston Square.

The bride was accompanied by her father, Mr Spencer Chapman, who gave her away. She wore a rich dress of white duchesse satin, with full Court train, and ornamented with fichu of embroidered chiffon on bodice along with a neat girdle of orange blooms. She also wore a tastefully arranged chaplet of real orange blooms, surmounted by an exquisite Brussels lace veil, which extended to the hem of the train and was fastened with diamond ornaments.

The six bridesmaids, who were attired in dresses of white crepon with girdles of gold jewelled passementerie, were Miss Helene Chapman and Miss Audrey Chapman (sisters of the bride), Miss Peploe (sister of the bridegroom) Miss Hilda Stewart (Aunt of the bride) and Miss Sybil and Miss Ursula Marshall (cousins of the bride).

The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Hanmer W. Webb Peploe, vicar of St Paul's, Onslow Square, and uncle of the bridegroom.

Mr Fitzgerald Peploe, the bridegroom's brother, acted as best man.

The reception given after the ceremony at 84 Eccleston Square, the town residence of the bride's parents was largely attended, among those present being Jane Duchess of Marlborough, Countess of Chesterfield, Countess of Galloway, Lady and Miss Cotterell, Baroness and Mr Burdett Coutts, Hon, Evelyn and Mrs Stanhope, Sir Hercules and Lady Robinson, Hon Mrs Keith Stewart and Miss Lina Stewart, Admiral Sir Houston and Lady Stewart, Hon. Fitzroy and Mrs Stewart, Viscount Oxenbridge, Lady Metcalfe, Mrs Peploe, Hon. Mrs Haliburton Campbell, Hon Joseph Maxwell Scott, Sir Guy and Lady Campbell, Major General and Mrs E.F.Chapman, Mr Robert Barclay Chapman, Mr Kyrle Chapman, and co.

Early in the afternoon Mr and Mrs D.H.T. Peploe left for a lengthened honeymoon tour abroad. The presents which numbered over 200, included the following:- Princess Mary and Princess Victoria of Teck, three gold Japanese screens, Baroness Burdett Coutts, diamond ornament, Mr Burdett Coutts, orchid in enamel with diamond dewdrop, Mrs Peploe, diamond tiara, comb, and Brussels lace, Mr David Barclay Chapman (grandfather of the bride), silver plate, Countess of Galloway, pearl crescent brooch, Mr and Mrs Hugh Chapman, diamond and sapphire brooch, Admiral Sir Houston and Lady Stewart, turquoise and diamond brooch, the tenants of the Garnstone Estate, silver cup, the inhabitants of Weobley, massive silver bowl, employees of Messrs Chapman and Co, pair of oriental vases, bowl and silver candlesticks and co.

The magnificent bridecake was supplied by Messrs W. and G. Buszard, 197 and 199 Oxford Street, London.

The bridesmaids were each given a diamond and pearl brooch of the Peploe and Webb crests with the weeping eye depicted by a single ruby.

By 1891 Sydney was expecting her first child and she gave birth in the October of that year to a son whom they named Daniel Spencer. That winter Sydney and Hal paid a visit to her first cousins, the Rogers at Stannage Park, Radnorshire and they were said to have been very shocked when Sydney insisted on going skating on the pond whilst still suckling Dan. ‘

Around this time Leila and Winnie moved to Paris and it was here that Winnie began to sing opera on the stage at an advanced amateur level to the strong disapproval of many of her relations - particularly the evangelical Webb-Peploes. It is said she spoke fluent Italian and French and formed many close friendships with artists, writers and musicians from both Florence and Paris. Fitz enrolled at L’Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in 1889 and the family became well assimilated into Parisian cultural life during this fascinating period known as ‘La Belle Epoch’.

On his return to New York he made quite a name for himself as a sculptor specialising in crafting busts in marble and bronze of members of New York society. He was, according to Sydney his sister in law, the most tremendous charmer but with a tendency to ‘drink like a fish’. He looked very like his brother Hal sharing with him the family characteristic of a rather large head only topped with curlier hair. Unfortunately no photographs of him are known to exist but there is a caricature of himself in a letter he wrote to his godson and nephew Daniel Spencer Peploe:

121 Madison Avenue  
New York  
United States of America

10th October 1892

My dearest little godson,

This your first letter is being written by your poor old uncle in a strange land, far away from you all, but he could not forget his little boy’s first birthday. Twelve whole big long months old! You are too young to understand this letter, but mother has promised to keep it for you till you are big enough to read it yourself. We who are living in this big city are very much excited over the celebration of the remembrance of the first man who discovered this far off land four hundred years ago; his name was Christopher Columbus, and the people here are hanging flags out of their windows and the soldiers are marching through the streets and everyone thinks he and she is very happy – with their feet sore and trodden on, and little boys who are naughty and do naughty things like climbing lampposts or barking like dogs behind old ladies to frighten them, are hit by big fat policemen with clubs.

I had to carry a little boy, another of my godsons, but not my nephew, on my shoulders through a large crowd of people so that he should not get hurt – he is only three years older than you and some day I hope you will know each other and be good little boys and not pull cats tails or think it funny to see flies spin on pins like your uncle did when he was small and then his mammy used to take her slipper and hurt poor uncle and he used to look like this, and then his mammy said it hurt her as much as it hurt him, but he did not believe it, nor will you my sonnie when your turn comes. So the only way to avoid the slipper, Spencer my boy, is to be good and not put pins into the butler’s bed, or when the housemaid has gone down into the dark, dark cellar to shut the trap door an sit upon it. Now I cannot write any more but I will send you another letter some other time and when I come back to Old England, I shall expect to find you a big boy and good and loving to your father and mother.

Your loving uncle  
Fitz

In 1894 he made a marble sculpture of Lady Randolph Churchill, the mother of Winston Churchill, and it was considered to be a triumph establishing his reputation in New York:

“His bust of Lady Randolph Churchill is one of the most ornamental adjuncts of the library in her London dwelling.”

'In connection with the forthcoming marriage of Lady Randolph Churchill, it may be mentioned that what is said to be the finest and most artistic bust ever modelled of her ladyship came from the



Daniel Spencer Peploe whilst at Eton

studio of the talented American sculptor, Mr Fitzgerald Peploe. Mr Peploe, who is perhaps better known in Paris than in London, has just finished a striking full length statue of one of Colonel Roosevelt's rough riders, Trooper Tiffany, who was killed in the operations in Cuba in the war of two years ago.'

London Evening News June 27th 1900.

This bust may be the one that can still be seen in Winston Churchill's studio at Chartwell.

In the mean time Hal was finding it difficult to convince Leila of her financial position and it was leading to tensions within the family as this series of letters show:

39 Sloane Gardens  
S.W.

14th June 1892

My dear Mr Gwynne James

I wonder if you write to me my exact position under that deed breaking off the entail for the purpose of raising the mortgage.

My mother is not satisfied with her position from a monetary point of view, and also is not satisfied with the will you drew up for her.

She imagines that the estate is legally hers though not morally so, because in my Father's will REAL as well as PERSONAL property was left her, and also because in her will you put REAL. I am right I suppose in thinking that the estate was resettled on me?

Then she says that the £30,000 Iron debentures are legally hers – is that so? I imagined they were secured for me in consideration for allowing the estate to be mortgaged for the sake of the Iron – if not, they surely should have been – I should be glad if you would give me your reason for not thinking it advisable making my sister residuary legatee. I have to go to Dixon to give an account of the monies in my hands and if my sister is left residuary legatee. I ought to get a release from my Mother that all is in order up to now should I not? If you think I had better see you I would come down if you would kindly wire for this matter must be fixed up for good and all now.

Yours very truly

D.Henry.T.Peploe

39 Sloane Gardens

S.W.

June 16th. 1892

My dear Mr Gwynne James,

Thank you for your letter of explanation. I was perfectly certain in my own mind as to the state of the case, but for me to convince my Mother on legal points was hopeless. I had quite forgotten about the £3750 but as every thing is to be put on a strictly legal footing I shall certainly put in my claim to that as well – for now that the old informal un-business like way of carrying on the affair is broken up – it is better to have it all defined. I have money of my Mother's in my hands in this way – The Life Policy was £12,966 – the £12000 on mortgage leaving the balance of £966 which by successful investment I have turned into £1027. Then there were two sums of £1279 and £1194 realised from the Paraguay and General Expenditure Assurance Company respectively; which sums I have been using in my Stock Exchange from Billett and Campbell, and the interest on these sums, and the interest on the other securities of Mrs Peploe I have appropriated to my use, allowing her £1600 which is far in excess of any income which could have accrued to her, if she had invested the said sums and just drawn the interest. I should like now almost to hand everything over to her – settle what the furniture china e.t.c in and about Garnstone is worth, secure the reversion of that to me on my Mother's death, by allowing her interest on the sum during her life time and charging my estate with that sum for the benefit of my brother and sister after her death or some such arrangement.

It would have been so much pleasanter if she had left matters as they were – for as she had left me the furniture in her will – as you remember, I had left certain incomes to my brother and sister – what amount of rents would have been due to my Mother. I see Haywood paid in £1287 on Nov 26th. – evidently the balance of rents due in October. There is also due £472 for wine sold against which there must be put £1193 I paid you a cheque for May 30th in order to liquidate Messrs Walton and Lee's account in addition to the money you had in hand – There is also the Probate duty which I paid. The worst of having opened up the question of what is legally due to my Mother now raises these questions which I thought were done with – If I had only anticipated this I would have kept the whole account separate from my private account – In one way I am glad it had been opened for after this there can be no question of what is legally my Mother's.

Yrs very sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

39 Sloane Gardens

S.W.

June 28th. 1892

My dear Mr Gwynne James

Mr Dixon wants proof of the Iron Debentures and the Furniture at Garnstone being mine – would you kindly supply him with what is necessary to satisfy his mind as soon as possible as I am to see him on Friday and my Mother leaves town on Saturday and wants the matter settled as soon as possible

Yrs sincerely

D.Henry.T. Peploe

Garnstone

July 1st.

My dear Mr Gwynne James

I called at your office this morning, for it struck me I might as well take over the box of deeds to Garnstone myself, but found you were not at home. I have been thinking over the question of the furniture, and I come to the conclusion my Mother must see that inventory. She has every right to indicate what things are hers in the house and there is no other way – so I shall be glad if you will send me the inventory to 39 Sloane Gardens. I do not suppose she will for a moment wish to leave away any such articles as were put in in the way of furniture by my Father, but any how I wish her to have every opportunity of pointing out what she really has power over.

Yrs sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

(It is a shame that this inventory appears to have been lost as the 1845 one is so lacking in detail)

39 Sloane Gardens

S.W.

October 26th, 1892.

Dear Mr Gwynne James,

I had an interview with Mr Dixon yesterday, and he proposes drawing up a small deed reciting what my Mother succeeds to – she is handing over to me all the furniture that was my Father's accepting the £3000 I have in my hands (proceeds of sale of Paraguay e.t.c.) as representing all the moneys that were hers under the will. I should release my Father personally from any liability as to silver sold and as to the £3750 – the remainder of the mortgage money for which I had the 400 Iron shares – now worthless. In fact it does nothing but leave us exactly where we are, but it will clear my Mother's mind, and make it impossible hereafter for my brother or sister to raise a single question for the few odds and ends my Mother wishes to reserve will all be scheduled. The allowance I now make is to be continued and paid quarterly, so I hope things will be on a pleasanter footing. If you approve of the plan will you kindly write to Dixon that you have heard from me, and he will send you a draft of the proposed deed for your perusal and approbation.

Yrs sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

39 Sloane Gardens

S.W.

February 11th. 1893

Dear Mr Gwynne James

I enclose Mr Smith's letter, which reads as if he were willing to pay the 1 month at the rate of £500 a year, but I am not sure it is quite fair to charge him for the shooting Rent – the birds at that time I fancy would want feeding in the Pheasantry – by the bye though he could not shoot (game) he could perfectly well shoot and trap rabbits during that month – I almost think I should put the month in at the full rate i.e. £41.10 – and see what he says. I think Dixon is a fool – he raises these most unnecessary objections one would almost think it was a hostile arrangement. I have not the slightest idea of selling the estate, and the whole matter is only for my Mother's life, for at her death, no doubt my brother would want his share out – I do not want to retransfer the mortgage to the Insurance Company for I should then have to invest the £12000 in surest funds and get only

3% if that, and so loose £120 a year, for I should not be able to dock my Mother's allowance by that amount – I wrote and told her the fuss Dixon was making.

Yrs sincerely  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

39 Sloane Gardens  
S.W.  
March 10th. 1893

Dear Mr Gwynne James

I see no harm in my brother's allowance being in my Mother's hands - as a matter of fact I should place £100 to his credit quarterly and £300 to hers as at present.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

24 Sloane Gardens  
S.W.  
Dec 12th 1894

Dear Mr Gwynne James

My mother is anxious to settle her property on my brother and sister during her life time, in order to escape paying death duties.

Her property consists of

£12000 mortgage on Garnstone

£4000 i.e. 800 £5 shares Bodega

£324 A1 Debentures Kington and Eardisley shares.

17 shares Hereford Club.

£2300 cash in hand of Messrs Billett and Campbell

400 Shares Green Park Chambers in my name.

1 share Army and Navy.

The interest from the above is roughly £800 a year. I have been allowing my Mother £1200 per annum and my brother £400 per annum.

It is now wished to transfer to F.C.Peploe what my mother had intended to leave him. The difficulty is that that sum would produce an income in excess of what he now receives, and I understand that the persons making over the property must do so absolutely and must in no way receive any income there from – consequently if the whole amount was transferred to him his income would be increased and Mrs Peploe's decreased. I find the income produced from the stocks and shares are as follows –

Bodega	£280
Kington and Eardisley	£12.19.3
Hereford Club	£2.10
4% on £2300	£92
Green Park	-
1 A and N	£?
	<hr/>
	£387.2

Now 4% on the £2000 mortgage would bring the above sum to over £400. I should be glad to have your opinion on this subject and on the best way of dealing with this £12000 mortgage, of which £200 is to go to F.C.Peploe and £10000 to my sister, also on the best manner of securing the £10000 in trust for my sister to receive the income during her life, and so that in the event of her marrying the capital could be secured to her children. The above I think embraces all the difficulties I say in the proposed arrangement.

Yrs sincerely  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

24 Sloane Gardens  
S.W.  
May 9th 1895.

Dear Mr Gwynne James,

My mother has decided to hand over all the securities and interest in the £12000 mortgage to my brother and sister. The former to take all the stock shares and £2000 mortgage, the latter £10000 mortgage to be placed in the hands of trustees, so that in the event of her marrying the capital should be secured against her or her husband having any power over it. She to take a life interest, and he after her death to take a life interest capital to the children if any – failing issue, he to have a life interest, till he marries again, at his death or marriage the capital to revert to her brothers. My mother therefore depends entirely on the £800 a year which I now allow her over and above the income brought in by the interest of shares and mortgage. The deed of arrangement to be endorsed to the effect, that it now is nugatory as all the moneys therein contained have been settled. I shall thus be freed from all responsibility under my Father's Will. My mother will therefore have no property to dispose of at her death except some furniture and small articles of personal ornament. There is one point I have forgotten – what has been done with the shares my Father held in Kanawha? Dixon thought they had been made over to me – in consideration of the money which my Father applied to his own use out of the sum raised on the estate – they should be transferred to me, I think.

Yrs sincerely

D.Henry.T.Peploe

P.S. Mrs Peploe has given Dixon instructions to carry out the above transfer of her property and I have assented.

In 1896 Fitz came back to England and sculpted a bust of his mother. Leila was by now considerably past her prime but it was a good likeness and the composition of her cloak was interestingly conceived. The bust descended to Winnie but was sold after the death of her husband in 1949 by Dan Peploe. At some point it was bought by Billy Butlin (the originator of Butlins Holiday Camps) to decorate the pond at his house in Jersey, but his widow sold it at Christies in 2003, and I recognised Leila from a picture in the Antiques Trade Gazette. Christies informed me the bust was unnamed but when I looked at the back it was clearly signed Fitzgerald Peploe 1896 and I was able to buy it back.

At the same time he created a large sculpture for Spencer Chapman entitled 'The Goddess of Golf' and this was erected in the garden of the Chapman villa at Dinard.

The following year Fitz became engaged as reported in The Auburn Bulletin of January 11th 1897:

'The engagement has just been announced of Miss Anna Elizabeth Duryea, elder daughter of Gen. and Mrs Hiram Duryea, of New York, and Mr Fitzgerald Peploe, second son of the late Major D. Peploe-Peploe of the Fourth Royal Infantry of England. Mr. Peploe is well known in New York Society having been there for some years. He is a sculptor of considerable merit, and when he is not in Paris or Rome has a studio there. He is a member of the Racquet club.

Mr Peploe is well known to society people in Auburn. He was a guest of Willard E. Case for some days a short time ago and a sheet and pillow-case party was given by Mr and Mrs Case in Mr Peploe's honour. Mr Peploe is the purchaser of Ward's point on Owasco Lake and is to erect a summer residence there in the new future.

The New York Press wrote three days later:

'The engagement of Fitzgerald Peploe, son of Major Peploe of England and Miss Anne Elizabeth Duryea, which has recently been announced, is pleasantly received. Mr Peploe, who is a sculptor of good ability, is well known in New York and Newport. He spent nearly two years in this city and two summers at Newport, and has formed a large acquaintance. He came to America some years ago and went out West on a ranch. In consequence of an accident he was obliged to leave the ranching business and spent many weeks in a hospital in a Western city. During his illness he conceived the idea of becoming a sculptor, and on his recovery went to Italy, where he went

through an arduous course of study. Returning to America, he established a studio in New York, and has produced several important works. He is a handsome man, more than six feet tall, and has a fine physique. Miss Duryea is an heiress, and sister of the Mr Duryea who is soon to marry Miss Nina Smith, daughter of Franklin Waldo Smith of Boston.'

Fitz purchased 3/4 of an acre of land on the shore of Owasco Lake in Scipio from his friend Willard E Case for \$1500 at this time and he erected a summer house which he called Garnstone, and this house still exists in an altered condition but now called Garnston. Sadly his engagement to Annie was called off a year or so later due to her contracting typhoid and she died in 1899:

'Miss Annie Duryea, elder daughter of General Hiram Duryea, and who was at Narragansett Pier (Newport) at the same time as Mrs Freeman, died on Thursday after a long illness from typhoid.



Bronze bust of Judge Truax - considered to be one of Fitz's best works

Her death has caused great sorrow in many households, for she was an unusually attractive girl, and only twenty six. Miss Duryea was at one time engaged to Mr Fitzgerald Peplow. Her brother married Miss Nina Smith, sister of Mr George Stuart Smith.'

Soon after this Fitz understandably became disillusioned with life in New York and the art world in particular, and he was never really to repeat his earlier successes. He travelled to the Klondike where the famous Gold Rush was taking place in the hope of making his fortune, but like the majority of the 100000 people who went with him he failed to strike it rich. From the Chicago Daily Tribune of Jan 25th 1898:

'Fitzgerald Peploe the well-known society man and sculptor is going to the Klondike. Mr. Peploe confesses that he is tired of making money slowly. Art, he says, is not doing for him as he has done by art. Mr Peploe has had many prominent and handsome women among his sitters. His bust of Lady Randolph Churchill is one of the most ornamental adjuncts of the library in her London dwelling. Mr. Peploe was very successful in the bust he made of Mrs Kingdon. mother of Mrs George Gould which is very much prized by the family. Among other titled Individuals who have sat for Mr. Peploe is the Earl of Chesterfield. One of his recently-finished busts is that of Mrs Willard Case of Auburn.'

In 1897 Hal and Sydney moved into Seale Lodge, a large rendered mid Victorian house with tall chimney near Farnham in Surrey that could before its demolition be seen from the main Hogs Back Road. They by now had two further boys - Keith b.1893 and Gerald Sydney b. 1894 but the latter was unfortunately partially paralysed by polio whilst still an infant and as a result had trouble with his spine. He spent most of his time on a couch until his early death in 1904 aged 9.

Two years later Hal finally gave up his struggle to save the Garnstone estate and put it on the market with Messrs Millar and Co of London. He was by this time working in his father in law's chemical business and there may have been pressure from Spencer Chapman to put money into expanding the Company. The Chapman's had not traditionally been interested in acquiring landed estates and those involved with agriculture continued to struggle to make money until the out break of the First World War eighteen years later. Hal wrote to his solicitor Mr Gwynne James in Hereford to tell him about the offer of £123500 which was actually less than his father had been offered back in the 1880'ties:

Yacht Gudrun  
Loch Inver  
July 28th 1899.

Dear Mr Gwynne James

I have received an offer for Garnstone Estate – House and Timber for £123500 furniture e.t.c. at a valuation from Sir Joseph Verdin which I have accepted. Messrs Millar and Co, 14 Grafton Street, Bond Street who have effected the sale will get a preliminary agreement signed and a deposit, and will apply to you for completion. Sir Joseph wants possession on Feb 2nd 1900 as a convenient date for taking over the estate, as regards shooting and rents. I have written to Messrs Haywood by this post – notice must be given at once to Mr Smith and if possible arrangements made with him regarding giving up possession by the date named. My address for a week at least will be Yacht Gudrun, Badachro, Gairloch, N.B.

Yours very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

Yacht Gudrun  
Loch Inver  
August 4th 1899

Dear Mr Gwynne James

I knew you would be one of those who would really be sorry at the sale of Garnstone – But ever since the complete failure of the Iron business I knew I should never be able to live there again, and I must say I got frightened – for one year I only got £3,300 including £500 from Mr Smith out of which I had to pay £1800 for mortgage. Fortunately the Prince of Wales was still alive or else there would have been £800 for my mother. Also if Mr Smith were to give up I should have to find a good sum to redecorate the house which has not been touched for 20 years. If everything is in order will you give notice to the Insurance Company that is if Sir Joseph Verdin can have possession on Feb 2nd.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

p.s. I have been away from Gairloch for 2 days but shall return there shortly.



Hal's aunt Ella Hutchinson nee Webb in old age at Cheltenham circa 1900

The Cottage.  
Ayot St Lawrence  
Welwyn  
30th August 1899

My dear Mr Gwynne James

I am sorry to hear you think there will be many solicitors charges to pay – you of course know, but it seems hard that simply handing over money to the Economic and receiving back the mortgage deed, and equally so with Dixon, should be expensive. As to solicitors for my sister – I do not see how I can prevent that. As it happens it is very awkward that both her trustees are in America – my brother's address is Tuneau, Box 392, Alaska Via Canada. If you will kindly tell me exactly what acting for four trustees to the Marriage Settlement means, I would lay it before Mr Chapman – but you know the trouble that often arises between relations – and though I am quite on the very best terms imaginable with my Father in law, and perhaps also on that very account, I am extremely loath to raise the slightest question unless the money saved were considerable. I might in the meantime mention the matter to Mr Cecil Chapman who is one of the trustees, a barrister just made Police Magistrate and ask him whether he sees any objection. By the bye there is the fire

Insurance – did you not negotiate that for my Father – notice should be give to them. I am here for a fortnight longer I fancy.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

Seale Lodge  
Farnham  
Surrey  
September 14th 1899

Dear Mr Gwynne James,  
In answer to your letter-

As to furniture – Sir Joseph is to have the option of purchasing the furniture at a valuation but I quite agree with you that he should not be able to pick and choose. I should suggest that all the ordinary furniture i.e. bedroom furniture, sofas, chairs, tables e.t.c. downstairs should be valued together, and that he should take as a whole or not as he chose. Ornamental furniture, books, china (?) should be a separate matter.

As to date. I cannot give him absolute possession on February 2nd. Mr Smith has legal possession till March but will clear out as soon as he can – then comes the inventory – then valuation of Furniture. Sir Joseph must be satisfied with moral possession – Mr Smith will give every facility for taking measurements and getting out plans for his alterations which I gather is what he wants. I go to Titley Court, Titley R.S.O. tomorrow till September 22nd and could no doubt come and see you.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

Titley Court  
Titley R.S.O.  
Herefordshire  
Sunday September 17th 1899

My dear Mr Gwynne James

I am sorry you have written that all the furniture must be taken to - for that was not what I intended – unless by that they only understand all the ordinary furniture – for there is a good deal of china, clocks, pictures e.t.c. which I would only part with if I got a very good price. I had intended having a valuation of all the ordinary furniture made, at that price Sir Joseph Verdin should have the option of purchasing it – then as to the rest, I was going to get an idea of the value and if it really was worth a good deal of money I should put a price on it and say at such a price take it or leave it, but would not agree to sell it at valuation. Now I shall have to say I intend taking it all away and then come to him and say “however if you are willing to pay so much you may keep it” – not that it will make much difference in the end, I daresay, but I consider my original plan much clearer and simpler.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

Seale Lodge,  
Farnham,  
Surrey  
Dec 10th 1899.

My dear Mr Gwynne James

I am not sure whether my brother is not going to give me trouble. He has written in a very foolish strain to my Mother about my selling Garnstone. He has not sent the Power back nor has he answered my Telegram sent last Friday. If he really means to try and thwart me by not signing the Power what steps can I take? for Barclays will not give up the deeds without his signature, very wisely saying “Your brother may wish to make himself nasty over the sale”. Mr Smith has kindly

agreed to vacate Garnstone about January 19th and to take the inventory before he leaves so that I can really get to work immediately after that date.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

Seale Lodge,  
Farnham  
Surrey  
January 15th 1900

My dear Mr Gwynne James

It is now getting time to do something with Sir Joseph Verdin about the furniture. Mrs Smith unfortunately is now ill with Influenza and fears she will not be able to leave till the end of the month. Messrs Millar wrote me on the subject and I proposed Sir Joseph should agree to take all the ordinary furniture such as Bedroom Furniture and chairs, tables, carpets, e.t.c. downstairs at a valuation; the ornamental furniture, Books, pictures, china e.t.c. to remain to be a matter of arrangements for if he did not want any of the china e.t.c. that I could always sell in London – Messrs Millar answered me as follows (enclosed) – I cannot say I see any objection to my plan – they seem to have missed the point. Sir Joseph is not to pick and choose – he is to take all the ordinary furniture. I shall be glad to have your opinion.

Yrs very truly  
D.Henry.T.Peploe

In the end Hal appears to have removed all the best furniture and china from Garnstone for sale at Christies, Manson and Woods at there King Street salesrooms in London on May 10th 1900. Most of this had been collected by Samuel and Kitty Peploe soon after Garnstone had been rebuilt in 1805 and included amongst other objects:

- an old Sevres dessert service painted with sprays of flowers in colours - 265 guineas
- a Crown Derby dinner service decorated with flowers in colours and gold - 35 guineas
- an old Worcester service richly painted with exotic birds, butterflies and co - 220 guineas
- part of a (Chinese?) Lowestoft service, decorated with birds flowers and rocks with a coat of arms on the border, consisting of octagonal bowl and cover, octagonal dishes, plates and mugs e.t.c.
- a Louis XV writing table of dark wood on curved legs and ormolu mounts 5 ft wide and with leathered covered top (from the Garnstone Library) - 290 guineas
- a Louis XV cartonniere of Kingwood with tiers open shelves below, and a clock by Palanson of Paris above, in the Chinese taste with ormolu mounts - 700 guineas
- a Louis XVI upright parqueterie secretaire with a fall front and ormolu mounts -
- Large Parqueterie cabinet of Louis XV design composed of a centre cabinet with two wings and surmounted by giallo marble slabs - 195 guineas

It is probable that many of the more valuable paintings were also sold separately at this time including the George Romney of Mrs Anne Peploe Birch, and it appears that once Hal had decided to sell Garnstone he completely washed his hands of it keeping very little of the contents. When the Verdin family took over they were astounded to discover large quantities of silver and other objects tucked away in various closets that they had no idea they had agreed to purchase. All the Hamlet Winstanley portraits of Bishop Peploe and his family were left and when Murray Webb-Peploe visited Garnstone in the 1920'ties with his uncle Frank they were amused as an ageing Sir Joseph Verdin pointed the pictures out at lunch remarking in a broad Cheshire accent 'them's my ancestors!'

Poor Hal had tried so valiantly to save Garnstone and if only he had waited a little longer perhaps it would still be in the family to this day. It was a wretched time to sell an estate and Hal's son Dan became very bitter over it as he grew older and understood what had been lost, in fact his

relationship with his parents was never harmonious as a result, especially as so much of the money raised would later be lost during the great crash of the 1930'ties.

Hanmer Webb Peploe was very upset over the sale and wrote that 'to his grief and pain that the Garnstone Castle Estate was sold to Sir Joseph Verdin by his nephew' and said 'he hoped had had not failed in his duty or erred in his part, as he wished to do what was right, but he was a younger son and had nothing of it'. There was very little contact between the Webb Peploes and Hal's family after this time and in any case they disapproved of their wayward cousins, Winnie performing Opera on the stage and Fitz , the dissipated sculptor in New York.

To make matters worse an argument broke out between Hal and his mother over who owned what contents at Garnstone and the two had to communicate through their respective solicitors for a while. Leila throughout her life was impossible when it came to sorting out family heirlooms.

In the spring of 1899 Spencer Chapman formed a new company from two older businesses and it was called Spencer Chapman and Messel L.T.D. It was not floated on the Stock Exchange but rather shares were offered exclusively to members of the Chapman family and Hal, who was to invest heavily from the proceeds of the sale of Garnstone, was made a Director.

For the next twenty or so years he would travel two or three days a week up to London but he later advised his grandson not to go into business as 'there was nothing ever to do'. It was said he 'never really understood the 'ins and outs of the business' and was only really happy when looking at the horses in the company stables at Silvertown in the east end of London.

As 1899 passed into 1900 a different century dawned heralding in a new era for the Peploe family - no longer could we claim to be part of the old Landed Gentry or even to retain any connections with Herefordshire, a county with which we had been so closely linked for over 150 years.



Hal Peploe circa 1910