

Kings Bromley

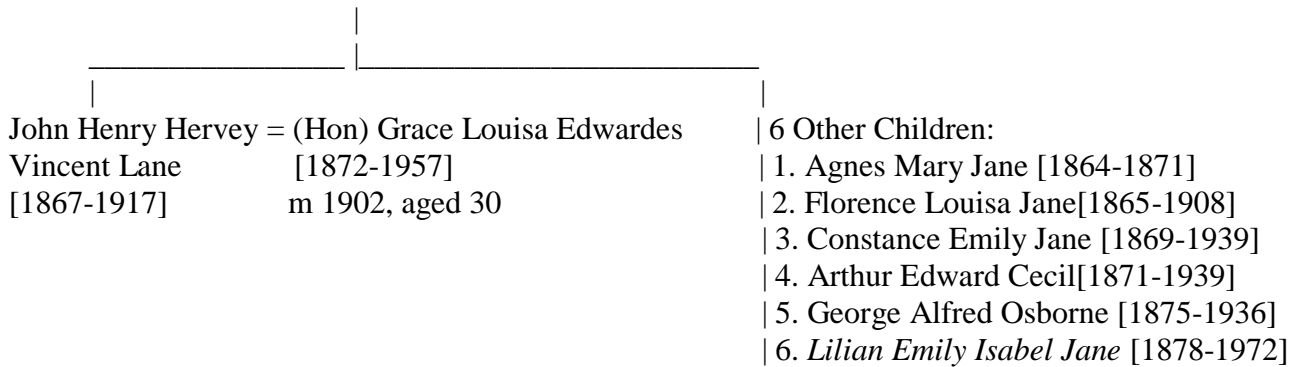
Historians 2014

Dame Lilian Bromley Davenport and Kings Bromley



Lilian Bromley Davenport was the seventh child of John Henry 'Harry' Bagot Lane, Lord of the Manor of Kings Bromley since 1869 and Susan Anne Vincent, heiress of H.W.Vincent from whom she inherited Lily Hill, Bracknell, as well as several other properties. Her parents married in 1864 at which time Harry's father, John Newton Lane, was still alive and living at Kings Bromley. Harry and Susan Anne therefore made their home, for the first part of their marriage, at Lily Hill. It is clear that after John Newton Lane died, Harry spent a lot of money renovating Kings Bromley Hall and the family divided their time between the two residences, spending the winter season at Lily Hill and the summer at Kings Bromley. When Lilian was born her father was 49 and her mother 46, her grandmother, the Hon. Agnes Lane, was 70, and her oldest sister Florence was 13.

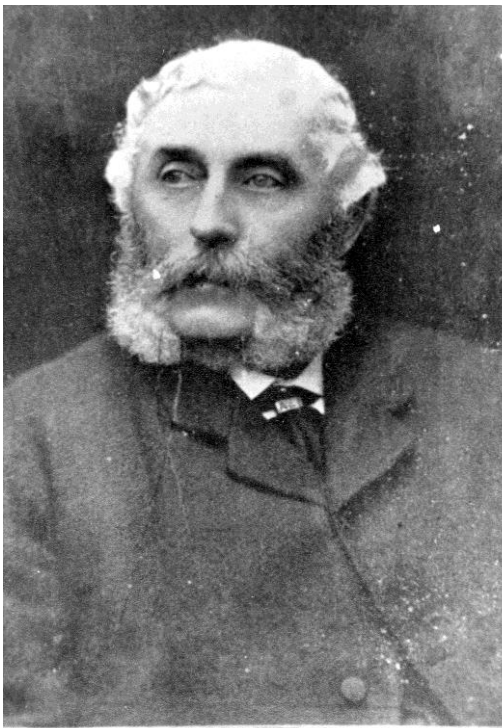
John Henry Bagot Lane = Susan Anne Vincent



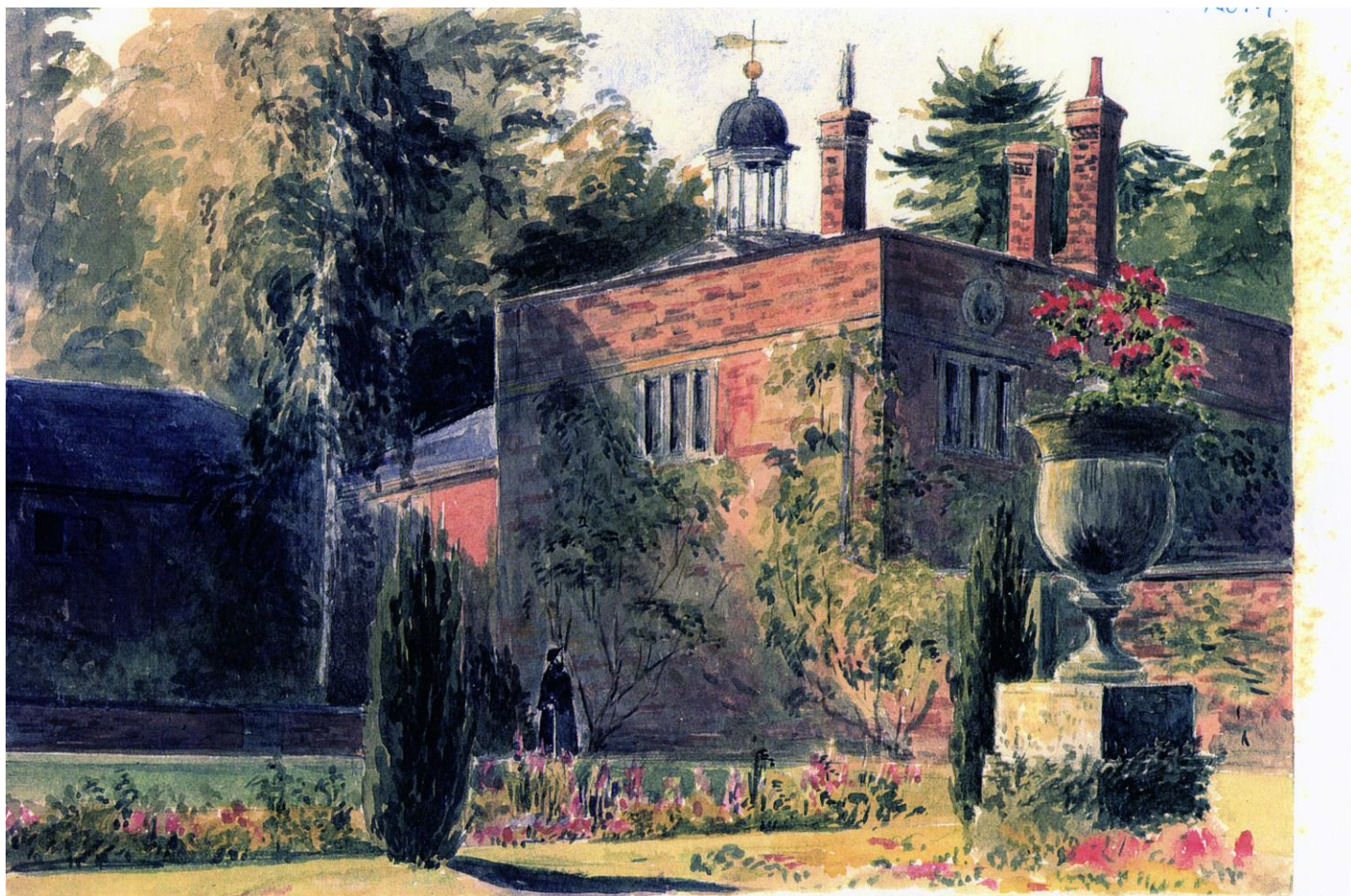
Lilian's older brother JHHV Lane went on to inherit Kings Bromley Hall in 1886 after the death of his father; of her other siblings:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Agnes Mary Jane [1864-1871] | died young |
| 2. Florence Louisa Jane [1865- 1908] | married 1886 Hon. Frederick William Anson |
| 3. John Henry Hervey Vincent [1867-1917] | married 1902 Hon. Grace Louisa Edwardes |
| 4. Constance Emily Jane [1869-1939] | unmarried |
| 5. Arthur Edward Cecil [1871-1939] | married 1922 Beatrice Margaret Davies Perry |
| 6. George Alfred Osborne [1875-1936] | married 1913 Edith Sinclair Hannay |

The following photographs of Lilian's parents would have been taken at about the time of her birth:



Lilian's mother Susan Anne was an artist. The following watercolour, labelled 'Cecil's Room 1878', is a view of the south side of Kings Bromley Manor in high summer, maybe July or August. Lilian was born on the 19th December that year, so Susan Anne would have been about four months pregnant with Lilian when she painted it.

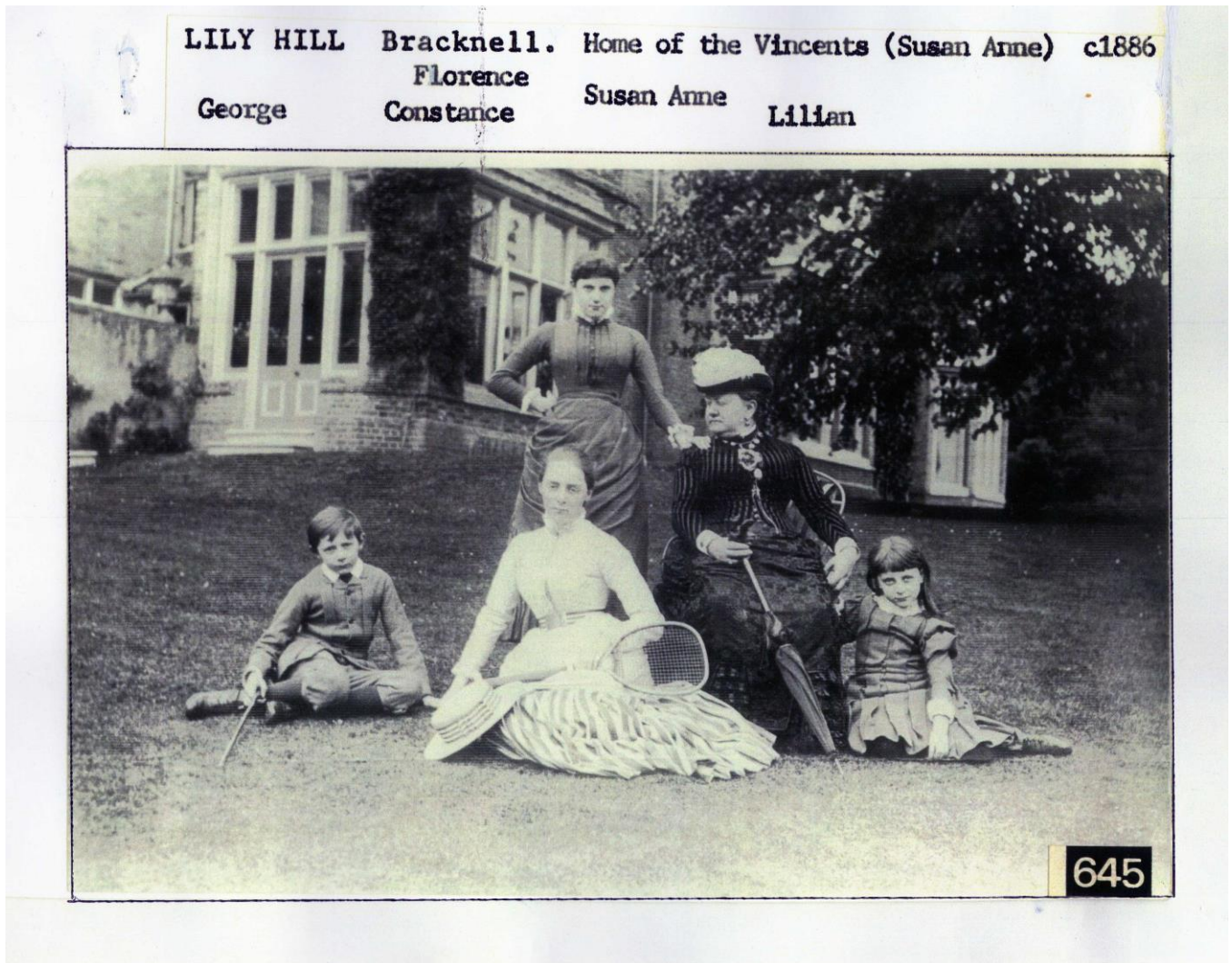


The small figure in black may well be Lilian's grandmother Agnes.

The 1881 census has the family living at Lily Hill. JHHV Lane, 12, was at school at Dover:

| | | | | | Where born |
|--------------------|----------|---------|----|---|----------------------|
| JH Bagot Lane | Head | Married | 52 | Late Col. Coldstream Guards & J.P. for Berks & Staffs | Kings Bromley |
| Susan Anne Lane | Wife | Married | 48 | Wife of Colonel Bagot Lane | London |
| Florence L Lane | Daughter | Single | 15 | | Paris, France |
| Constance E Lane | Daughter | Single | 11 | | Bracknell |
| Arthur E Lane | Son | Single | 9 | | Bracknell |
| George Lane | Son | Single | 5 | | Bracknell |
| Lilian E I Lane | Daughter | Single | 2 | | Bracknell |
| Mary Ann Ward | Servant | Single | 35 | Nurse | Suffolk |
| Charles Phipps | Servant | Single | 49 | Butler | Culham, Oxon |
| Charlotte Neath | Servant | Single | 67 | Housekeeper | Yately, Hants |
| Jane Wright | Servant | Single | 27 | Cook | Daventry, Northants |
| Marie Coudopot | Servant | Single | 24 | Nurse | Pau, France |
| Hannah Wildblood | Servant | Single | 30 | Housemaid | Pontisbury, Salop. |
| Annie Martin | Servant | Single | 19 | Housemaid | Pillow, Glos. |
| Harriet Cooper | Servant | Single | 16 | Scullery Maid | Warfield, Berks |
| Mary Aswell | Servant | Single | 18 | Kitchen Maid | Stafford |
| Eliza Bitschiff | Servant | Single | 26 | Governess Teacher | Thouse?, Switzerland |
| Henry Startin | Servant | Single | 20 | Footman | Dudley, Staffs |
| Thomas Ferneyhaugh | Servant | Married | 29 | Odd Man | Kings Bromley |

The earliest photograph of Lilian was taken at Lily Hill. The date of the photograph is probably more like 1884.



Lily Hill was quite a grand Victorian residence. This lithograph, from the Sneyd collection at Keele, was drawn before it was extended:



This photograph was taken after it was extended (before Lilian's birth):



In 1885 when she was seven her grandmother Agnes died and a year later her father died. He must have been quite a distant figure to her, as he was quite an old father and he seems to have spent a great deal of time not with his family but with male friends at his old regiment and at his London clubs, of which he belonged to four. However, Lilian had a large extended family. While her mother only had one sister, her father had, at this time, 4 brothers: Sidney (married to Lady Downe), Cecil (married to Adela Bertie), Ernald (married to Evelyn Adelaide) and Ronald, together with a sister Edith (married to Lord Northbourne). Lilian appears to have been a favourite with her uncles and aunt, as indeed she would prove to be with virtually everyone who knew her.

Both her grandmother and father were buried at All Saints, Kings Bromley. The stained glass window, shown below, was placed in the north east window of the chancel to commemorate her father. The chancel already had a stained glass window commemorating her grandfather John Newton Lane, a plaque commemorating her great grandfather and great grandmother and the chancel aisle covered the Lane vault. All Saints chancel took on the character of a Lane mausoleum, and it is not surprising that the church had a special emotional charge for Lilian.



The following group photograph, taken on the steps of Kings Bromley Manor, was probably taken on the occasion of her brother JHHV's coming of age, which would put Lilian at 9 years old.



From left to right, uncle Ernald, brother Arthur, mother Susan Anne, brother George, aunt Evelyn, uncle Sidney, brother JHHV, sister Florence, sister Constance, ?, Lilian, uncle Ronald.

The 1891 (April) census shows the family living at Lily Hill:

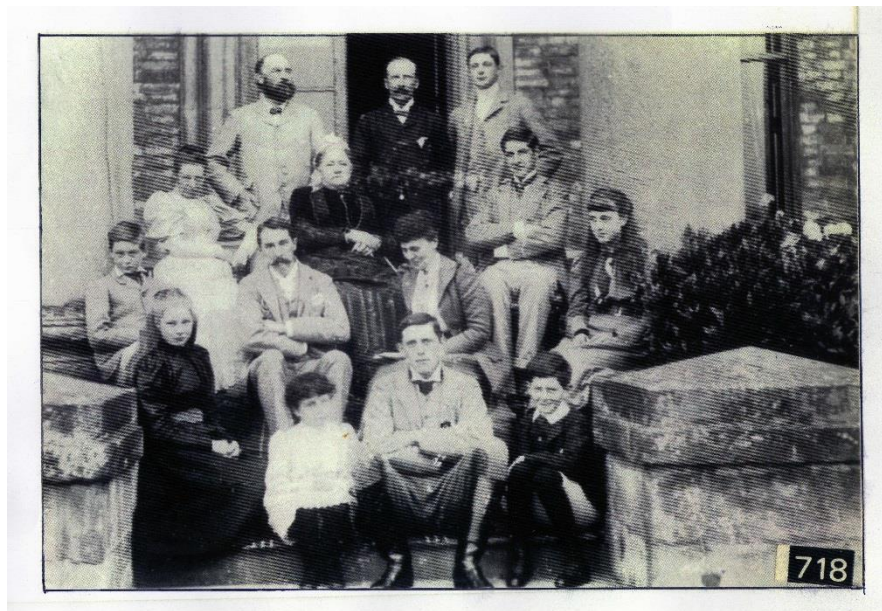
| | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|----|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Susan Anne Lane | Head | 58 | Widow living on own means | London |
| JHHV | Son | 23 | Single S. Staffs Militia | London |
| George Alfred | Son | 15 | Single | Bracknell |
| Constance E J | Daughter | 21 | Single | Bracknell |
| Lilian E I | Daughter | 12 | Single | Bracknell |
| Ellen Hurst | Servant | 48 | Single Governess | Strasburg, Alsace |
| Charles Phipps | Servant,M | 51 | Single Butler | Culham, Oxon. |
| J Sanders | Servant,M | 23 | Single Footman | Kings Bromley |
| J Mosley | Servant,M | 18 | Single Odd Man? | Derbys |
| Elizabeth Newlands | Servant | 36 | Single Cook | Haddington, Scotland |
| Ellen Marks | Servant | 51 | Single Lady's maid | Cirencester, Glos |
| Mary Ward | Servant | 36 | Single Nurse | Grandsburgh?, Suffolk |
| Lizzie Adams | Servant | 23 | Single Lady's maid | Stantonbury, Bucks |
| Harriet Morris | Servant | 27 | Single Housemaid | Branston, Staffs |
| Alice Woolley | Servant | 22 | Single Housemaid | Kings Bromley |
| Eliza Mervis | Servant | 28 | Single Kitchen maid | Branstone, Suffolk |
| Kathleen Dobson | Servant | 21 | Single Scullery maid | Burton-on-Trent |
| John Herring | Stables | 45 | Married Coachman | ?, Essex |
| George Coker | Stables | 27 | Married Groom | Bromley, Kent |

Lilian's oldest sister Florence Louisa Lane, 26, had married, in 1886, the Hon. Frederick William Anson, fourth son of Thomas George, Earl of Lichfield. There is no census record for her in 1891, so they were probably abroad. Lilian's brother, Arthur Edward Cecil Lane, 19, is recorded as living as a boarder student with the Reverend Henry B Hodgson at The Vicarage, Thornbury, Glos., with another three students.

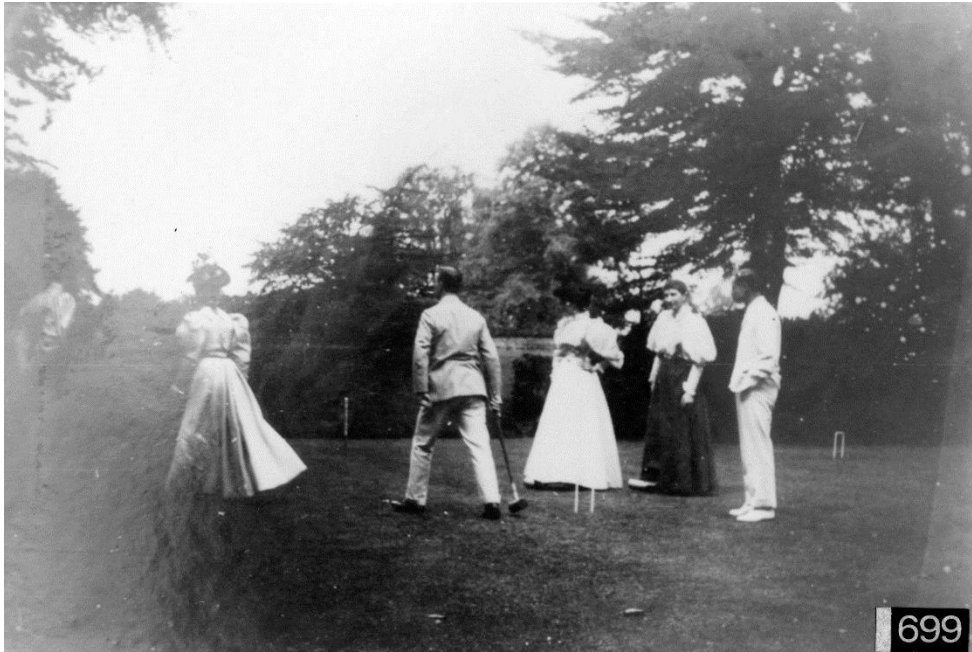


This photograph taken in 1891, the same year as the census, shows a family group on the steps of Kings Bromley Hall. From left to right, Evelyn (Mrs. Ernald Lane), Geoffrey (Evelyn's son), Susan Anne Lane, Lilian, Florence Anson, Frederick Anson.

Little is known about Lilian's teenage years. It is clear from the censuses that the family had a governess and that her brothers were sent away for schooling, her brother JHHV went to Eton. From the following two photographs it is clear that the Lanes did have an active social life. Probably Lilian would have been a frequent visitor at the grand houses of her family - Baldersby Park, Yorkshire (uncle Sidney), Betteshanger Hall, Kent (aunt Edith), Whiston Hall, Shropshire (uncle Cecil), Leigh Rectory (uncle Ernald) along with their London houses in Kensington and Grosvenor Square. This is a house party at Kings Bromley c. 1895, Lilian on the right:



This photograph shows a group of guests playing croquet at Kings Bromley in the mid 1890's, Lilian is second from the right:



In June 1896 Lilian was presented to the Queen:



In 1899, when Lilian was 20, her mother, Susan Anne, died. She was 66 and was buried alongside her husband at Kings Bromley.

In the 1901 census her brother JHHV Lane (34) was a visitor at Broad Oak, Farnham, Guildford, Surrey as the guest of a Robert M Howard - he would marry Grace Louisa Edwardes, daughter of the 4th Baron Kensington, in 1902 and sell Lily Hill; her sister Florence was recorded as living at Cell Barnes, St. Peters, St. Albans, Herts. with her husband Frederick William Anson; her sister Constance (31) was living as a boarder at the Rectory, Barton Beacons, Northamptonshire and described as 'feeble minded'; her brother Arthur (29) was recorded as a boarder at Belle Vue house, Lympne, St. Stephens, Kent living as a timber merchant and employer; her brother George (26) had joined the Coldstream Guards, as a career, in 1897, and was a Lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards. Lilian herself (23) was visiting, or living with, her aunt Edith James, Lady Northbourne at 47, Courtfield Gardens, Kensington. She was to marry Walter Bromley Davenport in 1902.

UTTOXETER ADVERTISER & ASHBOURN TIMES

16 April 1902

Marriage of Mr. W. Bromley Davenport and Miss Lane

At St Peter's Church, Eton Square, London on Thursday afternoon the marriage took place of Mr. Walter Bromley Davenport second son of the late Col. W. Bromley Davenport, MP of Baggington, Warwickshire and Wootton, Staffordshire and Miss Lillian Lane, youngest daughter of the late Col. J. H. B. Lane, Coldstream Guards, of Kings Bromley Manor, Staffordshire and Lily Hill, Bracknell, Hertfordshire. The ceremony was conducted by the Venerable Archdeacon Lane of Stoke on Trent uncle of the bride and the Bishop of Lichfield was present during the service and pronounced the benediction Mr. J. Henry Lane, brother of the bride gave her away and the bridegroom was attended as best man, by his brother Mr. W. Bromley Davenport MP from Macclesfield Division, Cheshire. There were six bridesmaids and Masters Arthur and Frederick Hanson twin nephews of the bride acted as pages. Miss Lane was attired in a wedding gown of crepe de chine, trimmed with orange blossoms and old Brussels lace and full court train of transparent net. Her only ornament was a massive diamond brooch, the gift of the bridegroom. The reception was held at 81 Eton Square by Lady Northfold, aunt of the bride and was very largely attended and early in the afternoon Mr & Mrs W. Bromley Davenport left for Cape Sol Cheshire the seat of Mr William Bromley Davenport MP, where they will spend the honeymoon. The presents over 400 were handsome and costly.

This piece contains several errors, the aunt of the bride was Lady Northbourne, not Northfield and the happy couple would have left for Capesthorpe, not Cape Sol. When they married, Walter Bromley Davenport was 39 whereas Lilian was 23, an age discrepancy extremely common in her family, and he came from an old landed Cheshire family. Walter's father William Bromley Davenport owned Capesthorpe, Cheshire and had four sons, the first Sir William Bromley Davenport (1862-1949) and the second Walter, born 1863. Walter's older brother William, who had inherited in 1884 pursued an army career and was unmarried in 1902 at the age of 40 when Lilian married Walter, and in fact never did marry. If Lilian were to have a son he would inherit Capesthorpe. A son, Walter Henry was duly born in 1903, followed by another Arthur in 1904, a third, Edward, in 1909 and a fourth, John, in 1920. Walter died in 1942, so when William died in 1949, Lilian's son Walter, now Lieut. Col Sir Walter Henry Bromley Davenport inherited Capesthorpe. Throughout her life Lilian lived at 'The Kennels' Capesthorpe, which, far from being a dog house is a grand house, now the residence of the Bromley Davenport owners of Capesthorpe who, since 1955, have opened the Hall to the public:



She did however continue to visit Kings Bromley which she considered to be her second home:



In the 1911 census Lilian, 33, was visiting, or living with, her unmarried brother-in-law, William Bromley Davenport, at 6 St. Auben's Gardens, Hove with her mother-in-law and three children Walter Henry, Arthur Richard and Edward - the first two recorded as having been born at Capesthorne and the last at Torquay. Her uncle Ernald had now become Dean of Rochester, her eldest brother JHHV was living in Kings Bromley with his wife Grace and their 5 children Jane(8), Grace(7), Thomas(6), Withy(4) and Richard(2). Her brother Arthur was living in Canada and her brother George was abroad in the army. Her sister Florence had died in 1908. Her sister Constance(41) was living in a kind of sheltered accommodation "Fotheringay", De La Mare Parade, Bexhill on Sea. She is described as a visitor. Also at this address are a 'companion', Sarah Ralph, a housekeeper, his wife, a male nurse, a male attendant, a retired Colonel and his wife and three domestic servants.

In the First World War her brothers Arthur and George both served in France which meant that they were unable to attend the funeral of their brother JHHV Lane who died in 1917 of complications following influenza at the age of 49. Lilian attended the funeral held at Kings Bromley with Walter. She was friendly with the vicar, the Rev. Chilwell, and had contributed £7 to his pet scheme, the building of the Dean Lane Institute, now known as the Village Hall. She also attended the dedication service for the war memorial in 1922, along with her uncle Ronald, now Major General Sir Ronald Bertram Lane. It is significant that the widowed Grace Lane with her seven children did not attend; they left Kings Bromley in December 1921. Following the death of JHHV Lane, Grace had become increasingly unpopular in the village, there had been a long running dispute with the Rev. Chilwell over his use of the chancel and Grace had even accused him of lying over a dispute with her agent Mr. Bennett. Lilian did her best to smooth over relations as can be seen in this letter that she wrote to Mrs. Chilwell after the war memorial dedication service:

The Kennels
Capesthorne
Chelford
Cheshire

Dear Mrs Chilwell,

April 25th 1922

I feel that I must write one line of sincere thanks to you and Mr. Chilwell for all the kindness and hospitality you showed me on Saturday. The memory of the unveiling of our village memorial is one that I shall always remember; your arrangements were excellent & the service so simple & full of feeling and the memorial itself is quite the best that I have seen and the position perfect. It was most kind of you to meet me at the station & to take me away in the evening.

I cannot tell you how deeply we all feel the state of things at home; the dear old place shut up and deserted and all the unpleasantness which we so much regret. You must make allowances for a woman who has had so much sorrow & worry to try her nerves and temper - indeed I know you have done & have shown great patience over many things. I am devoted to her and know what splendid qualities she has, but she has not the training to teach her that times are changed since the days when my dear grandmother ruled like a little Queen at Kings Bromley and expected everyone to bow to her will in all things. My sister-in-law has really never realized how much ways and manners have changed & cannot understand why things don't move exactly on the same lines as they did sixty years ago. But whether we approve or not - we must move with the times.

I hope you will see Jane whilst she is in the village - I was very sorry not to see her when I was there. Mrs Bedford is so nice & will be a very good influence; I am sure she is by nature a peace maker.

With kindest regards to you both and repeated thanks for your hospitality.

I remain, Yours v. sincerely, Lilian Bromley Davenport

The war memorial dedication service, Lilian is one of the ladies wearing hats:



In 1989/90 Kings Bromley Historians taped conversations with a number of old villagers who remembered Lilian:

Ern Rock 6/12/79 "They insisted on having the curfew rung after the war when she was still alive ? she came to see me because I lived by the church and I rung it for some years and she told me the pay was a bottle of wine for the season and though it wasn't so much about the wine I'd willingly drink it, you know she was very good, she always sent me this bottle of wine."

Gladys and Millie Osborne. Probably 6/12/79: "She was a great favourite. She was a favourite with the right? people too I think. Sometimes she would, at the end of the day bring, not a tie, but the things they used to wear with a pin in (*a cravat*). She was quite a girl I think because they would live there as children at the manor and it would have been her mother that painted those pictures."

Bill Fox. 6/2/81 "Colonel George, he was one of the executors, you see, and Mrs. Bromley Davenport and on occasions, especially when they were breaking up the estate, they used to have to come down here on business."

Fred Johnson. 14/10/1982. (Talking about JHHV's funeral) "One thing I remember, because I had to go with them with the coffin was seeing Mr. Lane and he was half shaved and had a bunch of snowdrops in his hand, and they had the wagon with the heavy horses to bring his coffin down to the church and strange to say I had the fortune to go and see Mrs. Bromley Davenport's funeral and she was taken to church in the same way with the horses and dray."

Ern Rock, Gladys and Millie Osborne and Fred Johnson clearly were very fond of Lilian. Kings Bromley Historian, Ivy Butcher, whose father was a groom at the Manor, also says he spoke of her with affection. In 1928 the estate was put up for sale and no buyer was found and so it was demolished. Lilian's brother George and husband Walter had been named as executors in JHHV's will, and it seems to have been left to them, with Lilian's help, to arrange the sale of the estate. This was clearly a task that she did not relish. While it was going on, in 1929, she was invited to a garden fete at Kings Bromley held in aid of the new church organ fund (she had already given generously to the new church roof fund in 1927) where a painting donated by the Queen was being raffled. This was reported in the local newspaper:

...the inhabitants of Kings Bromley and their friends had the pleasure of seeing with them once again one who holds a very special place on their affection - Mrs. Bromley Davenport.

THE QUEENS GIFT

The most important event of the day was the draw for the Queen's gift, which was made by Mrs. Bromley Davenport during the evening.

Major Thompson, in calling on Mrs. Bromley Davenport to make the draw, said he was sure they would all wish him in the first place to express their very deep sense of gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen for her gracious gift. (Applause). In spite of the never ending calls made on Her Majesty and the Royal Family generally, she was always ready to help...

The call was responded to with enthusiasm and Major Thompson, continuing, referred to the very deep pleasure they all had in having Mrs. Bromley Davenport with them....Mrs. Bromley Davenport, who spoke with deep sincerity and feeling and was very warmly received, said they all knew what it meant to her to come back to Kings Bromley. She hardly dared speak to them of her feelings about the corpse of her old home that lay close to them. There was no feeling like the feeling of home, and although the things material that one loved and treasured and valued so much had gone, there still lived that which was of far more worth, and that was the living friendship of old friends. That was the only thing worth having for itself, the real Divine in our nature.

"Have you ever seen those baskets of pigeons that they send on the railway to be loosed at certain stations?", she continued. "I have watched them often. You see the birds fly up and circle round and round, and then they dart off in a straight line for home. I know where I should dart for; it would be Kings Bromley every time."... she thanked God for the roses of her memories of Kings Bromley.

The day was brought to a close by an incident as happy as all those which helped to make it memorable. A leg of mutton, given by Mrs. M.W. Winterton, was drawn for, Mr. Coleman this time making the draw, and to the enormous delight of everyone present the winner proved to be - Mrs. Bromley Davenport!



Bouquet presented by Winnie Rock. From left to right, Mrs. Bedford, Lady Muriel Worthington, Rev. E.W Bridgewood, The Mayoress of Lichfield (Mrs. J. Key), Mrs Bromley Davenport. Kings Bromley Historian Ivy Butcher can be seen just behind the Mayoress standing next to Mavis Crockett's mother.

Lilian's sister, Constance, described in the 1901 census as 'feeble minded' was, in 1911, living at 'Fotheringay', De-la Warr Parade, Bexhill-on-Sea. One of Lilian's letters to Mrs. Chillwell, dated 1922, comes from 'Lily Hill, Cantalupe Road, Bexhill -on-Sea, shown here with a green arrow. De la Warr Parade is the next street to the south:



It is clear that either Lilian had taken a house near to her sister's sheltered accommodation, or had chosen that accommodation to be near where she already had a house. It is quite touching that she should name her (for her) little house 'Lily Hill' after one of her childhood homes.

For many years Lilian kept 'Silver Thatch' in Manor Road, considering it as 'her own bit of Bromley':



It was through this connection that Kings Bromley Historians got in touch with Lilian's nieces in 1979/80. Her brother George died in 1936, aged 61, and was buried at All Saints, Kings Bromley:



In 1937 all six bells in All Saints tower were recast for the coronation. Bell 5, the second largest, is inscribed "Lilian Bromley Davenport. Recast 1937"



Her brother Arthur died in 1939 at the age of 68 in Canada. In the same year her sister Constance died at the age of 70, and was buried in All Saints. Her stone was erected by Lilian, the last survivor of the seven siblings.



Lilian soon suffered more losses, her husband Walter died in 1942 at the age of seventy nine. This is the only photograph that we have of him:



Then, in 1944, her youngest son, John died in WW2.

Bromley Davenport, John



Cemetery: Leopoldsburg War Cemetery

Country: Belgium

Area: Leopoldsburg Limburg

Rank: Captain

Official Number: 92107

Unit: 5th Bn. Cheshire Regiment attd. 1st Bn. Manchester Regiment.

Force: Army

Nationality: British

Details:

2nd November 1944. Age 24. Son of Walter Arthur Bromley Davenport and of Lilian Emily Isabel Jane Bromley Davenport of Capesthorne Cheshire. III. E. 8.

In 1949 Sir William Bromley Davenport, Walter's older brother and the owner of Capesthorpe, died at the age of 87. He had had an army career and died unmarried. Capesthorpe was therefore inherited by Lilian's son Lieut. Col Sir Walter Henry Bromley Davenport, MP for Knutsford. He would have known all his life that he would inherit.

On June 10th 1954 Lilian was named in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. She became Dame Commander of the British Empire for her political and public service. She had been a County Councillor for years, Vice Chairman of the Council, Chairman of the Education Committee, a Governor of Macclesfield High School and the Kings School, Chairman of the County Nursing Association, a J.P. for the County and a Women's Institute President. In the Church she was a churchwarden and PCC member. She never lost the 'common touch' or her interest in her Kings Bromley roots. In 1961 she wrote two letters to Edie Fox, who, as Edie Hall, had been the cook at Kings Bromley Manor, and who lived in Manor Road:

The Kennels
Capesthorpe
Macclesfield
Cheshire

7th September 1961

Dear Mrs. Fox,

I am much distressed to hear from Miss Hitchenor that your husband was knocked down by a car and had to be taken to hospital. Indeed one never feels safe on the roads in these days, and I do hope that he is now recovering from his injuries. But it is a big shock to be knocked down...

I think I remember your house - a long white house near the smithy. But I thought Edie Hall and her husband there. Where are they living now?

I believe your son is Captain of the bellringers? I am so glad that the dear old bells are being rung, and it gave me much pleasure when they rang the bells for me when I came to open the garden fete in the summer at the vicarage...

I hope your husband is recovering, please give him my sympathy and my best wishes, believe me,

Yours very sincerely

Lilian Bromley Davenport

Edie Hall clearly then replied and told Lilian that Edie Hall and Mrs. W. Fox were the same person. Lilian replied:

The Kennels
Capesthorpe
Macclesfield
Cheshire

12th December 1961

My dear Edie,

How pleased I was to hear from you this morning and to know that you are the Edie Hall who I remember so well, looking after our dear old friend Miss Bessie Farmer, the friend of my youth and all my life. I remember you threaded a lot of needles for her, and did what she wanted in so many ways. And I believe she never would allow you to alter the clock for Summer time? Is not that the case? In her day she was a wonderful laundress and you were a very good cook....

I often think of the lovely days at the dear old Manor where we were all so happy and jolly.

And it gives me much pleasure to think that your eldest son, Jim, is Captain of the bell ringers. That lovely peal of bells which my Father & Uncles, and my brother Arthur used to ring with such pleasure and skill. It gave me much pleasure to hear them when I came to Kings Bromley this Summer.

I hope you are keeping well? But I know you must be anxious about your husband, as it is rather a long business. Here is a present of £2 and please spend some of it on your husband from me as a Christmas present. I think Harry Fox was keeper to dear Mrs. Lane? Your father in law...

Your very sincere old friend
Lilian Bromley Davenport

Lilian Bromley Davenport died in 1972. The Macclesfield Express, on 11th May, had a full page devoted to her funeral:

Bishop's tribute at funeral of 'Cheshire's grand old lady'

All who had the privilege of knowing Dame Lilian Bromley Davenport, DBE, must have been saddened last week by the news of her death, at home at The Kennels, Capesthorpe, at the age of 93.

Such was Dame Lilian's personality, that she was held in genuine esteem and affection by all who met her and in the seventy years she had been associated with the district - since she first came to Capesthorpe as the young bride of the late Mr. Walter Arthur Bromley Davenport, she endeared herself to countless friends throughout the County

SPEECH DAYS

Macclesfield people will perhaps remember her best for her 'visitations' at local speech days. Always wearing a huge corsage of flowers, she would often begin by telling the boys and girls that she was just an old woman and she knew they didn't want to listen to her, but she was there and they were jolly well going to have to put up with her. Then she would go on to talk with such delightful humour and wisdom that they not only listened but listened eagerly.

Nowhere was Dame Lilian better loved, however, than by the people of her own district, Siddington. In 1962 they showed their gratitude when they arranged a special Jubilee Celebration to mark her 60 years among them. She had been a friend and adviser and symbol to the people of the village, writing them letters of comfort when they were sorrowing, sending them flowers and fruit when they were ill and money in times of need. It was their turn to say thank you.

One of her greatest joys was to stroll leisurely through the delightful gardens of her home which she took such pride in showing off to visitors.

POLITICS

To many Dame Lilian's death must seem like the passing of an era. She was a true-blue Tory of the old school and a great champion of her country and the old Empire. She would chide her opponents, but never entered into personalities and that was why she had so many friends in all political parties. She had a great affection for Macclesfield and its people and they for her...

Despite the great part she played in public affairs, Dame Lilian would have the first to condemn today's "Women's Liberationists". She was a great believer in the traditional family life.

FAMILY LIFE

When she was interviewed by a Macclesfield Express reporter on the occasion of her 90th birthday, she had this to say: "I don't believe in women getting in such a stew about getting power into their hands. They have already got it. Women, by wanting to occupy men's positions, are losing the power that they had, because they have always had a great deal of power at home, even if they didn't talk about it. Nothing can ever make up for the fireside."

FUNERAL SERVICE

The funeral of Cheshire's grand old lady ... was an understandably private affair... The Church choir, the Bishop of Chester, the Archdeacon of Macclesfield, The Vicar of Siddington and the Rev. William-Jones, Vicar of Kings Bromley, Staffordshire processed before the simple bier which was followed by members of Dame Lilian's family.

Local residents filled the small Siddington church for the short private service which started with William Blake's hymn to England's green and pleasant land, "Jerusalem"...

GREAT LADY

The Bishop of Chester paid tribute to Dame Lilian. He said, "If there is one phrase which rises more quickly to the mind when one thinks of Dame Lilian, it must be that she was a great lady and indeed, in all that she did, she gave herself so fully that she did nothing by half measures and to everything that she put her hand, she laid upon it the imprint of her personality."

Stating that she was great in what she gave to others the Bishop said: "She was great in the service which she undertook in the church, and in the state and the responsibilities which she accepted and carried out so readily. So was she great in her sense of justice, of dedication and of reverence for the things which rightly call forth reverence from them.

"She was also great for her sense of humour and fun. She was great for her dislike of hypocrisy, with one searching word breaking the bubble of self-importance..."

The regard in which Dame Lilian was held was shown by the magnificent array of floral tributes which were spread around the church both from the people of the neighbouring country districts and those holding offices in all walks of life.

The Bishop of Chester in front of the coffin borne on a farm cart bedecked with flowers and drawn by a towering shire horse indicative of the life and countryside of which Dame Lilian was a part::



One of Dame Lilian's favourite photographs was the one below which was taken by Macclesfield photographer Henry Redfern on the occasion of her 90th birthday:



This document was written by Allan Howard for the Kings Bromley Historians. It has been composed out of photographs and images from a Powerpoint presentation given by him at a Historians meeting held on 31st Jan. 2014.

