

## GRENFELL (FAMILY) Swansea industrialists

They originated from St. Just in Cornwall. They were related, through intermarriage with the St. Leger family, to Sir Richard Grenville of the *Revenge* and Richard de Granville, the founder of Neath Abbey. Sir Richard, a direct descendant of Richard de Granville (*Visitations of the County of Cornwall*, ed. J.L. Vivian), married Mary, daughter of Sir John St. Leger. PASCOE GRENFELL (1761 - 1838) married, as his 2nd wife, Georgina St. Leger, daughter of the 1st Viscount Doneraile (of the 2nd creation), in 1798. Charles Kingsley, another relation by marriage, first traced the connection. The family were already prosperous merchants and bankers in the eighteenth century. In 1803 Pascoe Grenfell entered into a contract with Owen Williams to trade in copper and developed a business in London, Liverpool, Swansea and Flintshire. The firm of Pascoe Grenfell and Sons was founded in the 1820s. They owned the Middle and Upper Bank Copper Works in the Lower Swansea Valley and at their height employed 800 men. They ran a line of ships between Swansea and their Flintshire works on the River Dee. The Swansea works were sold to the neighbouring firm of Williams, Foster and Co. in 1892.

### PASCOE ST. LEGER GRENFELL (1798 - 1879), Deputy Lieutenant, J.P.

The eldest son of Pascoe and Georgina. He came to live in Swansea in the 1840s and built Maesteg House at the foot of Kilvey Hill. He married, 1st in 1824, Catherine Ann Du Pre, the eldest daughter of James Du Pre of Wilton Park in Buckinghamshire and the grand-daughter of Josias Du Pre, Governor of Madras, and 2nd in 1847, Penelope Frances Madan, daughter of the Dean of Chichester. He was an active humanitarian who built model (by the standards of the times) houses for his workers, founded All Saints Church, Kilvey, and supervised the school taught by [Richard Gwynne](#) (see [GWYNNE \(family\)](#) above). He was chairman of the Harbour Trust and active in the development of Swansea docks. By his first wife he had four sons and five daughters: Madelina Georgina (1826 - 1903), Pascoe Du Pre (1828 - 1896), St. Leger Murray (1830 - 1860), Arthur Riversdale (1831 - 1895), Gertrude Fanny (1834 - 1880), Elizabeth Mary (1836 - 1894), Francis Wallace (1841 - 1925), Katherine Charlotte (1843 - 1906), Eleanor Catherine (1845 - 1928). MADELINA married Griffith Llewellyn (1802 - 1888) at Baglan Hall in 1850. Llewellyn became rich from coal interests in the Rhondda and Madelina spent large sums on charity. She was responsible for the building of St. Catherine's Church, Baglan, and St. Peter's Church, Pentre, the restoration of St. Mary's Church, Aberafan, and the endowment of the Llewellyn Alms Houses at Neath and of Swansea Eye Hospital. (ELIZABETH) MARY was long remembered in Swansea for her public service. She trained as a nurse, intending to serve in the Franco-Prussian war, but returned to Swansea instead and devotedly nursed the poor. Contemporary newspapers said that 10,000 people spontaneously attended her funeral at Danygraig Cemetery in 1894. She was responsible for the foundation of St. Thomas Church in Swansea East, where a stained glass window is dedicated to her memory.

[Editorial note 2020: When Britain abolished slavery in 1833 Pascoe St. Leger Grenfell applied for compensation for a total of 347 slaves in Jamaica. See '[Legacies of British Slave-ownership](#)'.]

### FRANCIS WALLACE GRENFELL, Field Marshall Lord GRENFELL of Kilvey (1841 - 1925)

It was the 4th son who achieved national fame: P.C., K.C.B. 1886, G.C.M.G. 1892, G.C.B. 1898, LL.D. Edinburgh 1902, LL.D. Cambridge, 1903, and F.S.A. He was born in London 29 April 1841, but spent his childhood at Maesteg House, educated at Milton Abbas School, Dorset, entered 60th Rifles (later the King's Royal Rifle Corps) in 1859 and served in Ireland during the Fenian troubles in the 1860s and subsequently in Malta, Canada and India. He went to South Africa in 1873 as A.D.C. to General Sir Arthur Cunynghame. In 1875 he took part in the expedition which claimed Griqualand West (the site of the Kimberley diamond fields) for Britain and was one of the small party who recovered the body of the Prince Imperial, the only son of Napoleon III, who was killed in a skirmish while serving with the British forces during the Zulu War of 1879. He took part in the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 and in April 1885 succeeded Sir Evelyn Wood as Sirdar (Commander-in-Chief) of the Egyptian army which had to be totally rebuilt after the events of 1882. He fought the Mahdi and his successor, the Khalifa, in several battles. The flag he captured in the battle of Toski in 1889 is in St. Peter's Church, Pentre. It was Grenfell's reconstituted Egyptian army which fought under Kitchener at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898. Grenfell, who had left Egypt for a War Office appointment in 1892, was back in Egypt in 1898 but was careful not to cramp the style of the famous Kitchener, whom he outranked. GRENFELL was a keen amateur archaeologist and initiated important excavations at Aswan. Some of his finds are in Swansea Museum. From Egypt he went to Malta as Governor, 1899-1903, and to Ireland as Commander-in-Chief, 1904-08. There he had to deal with serious rioting in Belfast. He represented the British army at the coronation of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, in 1896 and wrote a book, *Three Weeks in Moscow*, about his experiences. He was raised to the peerage as Baron Grenfell of Kilvey in 1902 and made a Field Marshal in 1908. His later years were devoted to the Royal Horticultural Society, of which he was President, and the Church Lads Brigade. He continued to take an interest in Swansea and became a freeman of the town in 1889. He married 1st in 1887, Evelyn Wood, daughter of General Blucher Wood, who died childless in 1899, and 2nd in 1903, Margaret Majendie, daughter of Lewis Ashunt Majendie, M.P. They had two sons and a daughter. His elder son, Pascoe (1905 - 1976), succeeded to the title on his father's death on 27 January 1925. He was buried at Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, after a large funeral at which the royal family was represented.

The last Grenfell to live at Maesteg House was KATHERINE (KATE), the daughter of St. Leger Murray Grenfell; she ran a school there. The house was demolished soon after World War I to make way for the Grenfell Park housing estate.

Two grandsons of Pascoe St. Leger, the youngest (twin) sons of his eldest son, Pascoe Du Pre, Francis (1880 - 1915), who won the V.C., and Riversdale (1880 - 1914) were killed in France and were the subject of a biography by John Buchan. The famous war-poet, Julian Grenfell (1888 - 1915), the son of Lord Desborough, the Olympic athlete, was a cousin. The twins and other members of the family are commemorated in All Saints Church, Kilvey.

## Author

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