

# THE EARL & COUNTESS OF IVEAGH

Iain Wakeford 2018



**O**n the 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1966, Gwendolen Guinness, Countess of Iveagh, died at the age of 84. Just under nineteen months later, her husband, Rupert Guinness, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Iveagh also died aged 93, (on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1967). The couple had married in 1903 and as a wedding present were apparently given what became the Pyrford Court Estate by Gwendolen's father, the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Onslow. The land had previously been part of the Onslow Estate offered for sale at auction in 1902, but it was withdrawn from the sale so

The Guinness family built Pyrford Court soon after they were married in 1903

that the Guinness' could build their new home there - designed by the architect Clyde Young.

Rupert Guinness, the eldest son of Edward Guinness (the brewer), was a businessman, politician and philanthropist - interested in science and agriculture.

In 1910 whilst on a visit to Canada he realised that many emigrants to the country had little or no experience of Canadian farming methods or tools, so he decided to set up the Emigration Training School on part of his estate at Woking Park Farm.

According to George Martelli in his book, *The Elveden Enterprise* (Faber & Faber, 1952), 'The scheme got going very quickly and from the first was an outstanding success. Most of the trainees came from the public schools and universities and the vacancies were always filled. The roomy farmhouses were soon found inadequate to accommodate them and a special hostel was built. The minimum length of the course (for which students paid 25s a week) was six weeks, and its object was to familiarize them with conditions as nearly as possible the same as those they would find on a farm in Canada. Thus the working day began at 5am and ended at 6pm, with tea at 6.15pm and lights out by 9pm. This regime had the

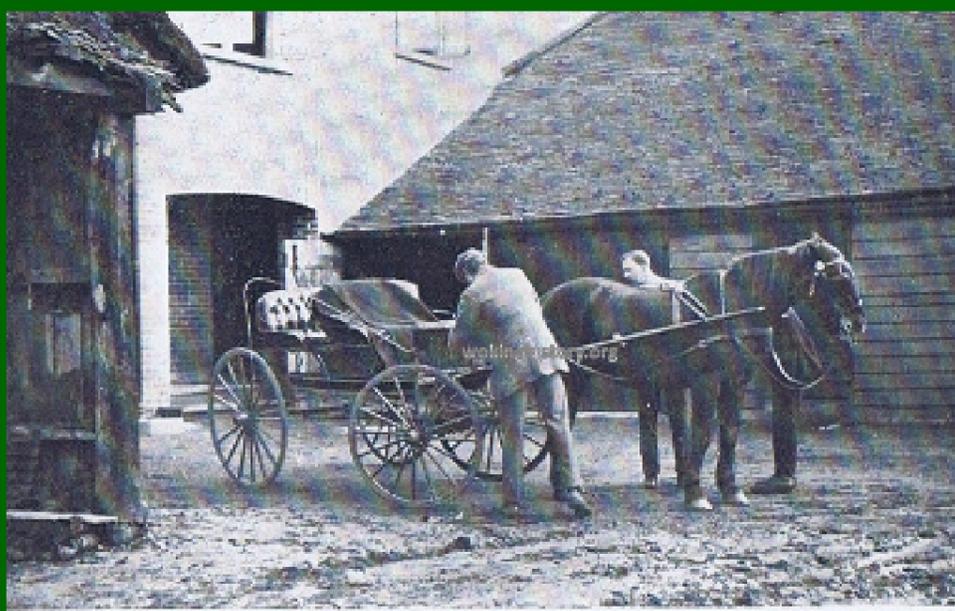
Woking Park Farm was the centre of their training centre, where prospective Canadian farmers could learn how to use the correct tools and grow native crops.

## VIEWS OF THE HON. RUPERT GUINNESS' EMIGRATION TRAINING FARM

MILES, 11-70, WARDOUR ST., W.



WOKING PARK FARM,  
WOKING, SURREY.



HITCHING UP CANADIAN BUGGY.



DISC DRILL.

advantage of discouraging anybody from going through with the course who was not prepared to work as hard as he would be expected to do in Canada. All the implements were of Canadian design, even down to the buggy used for errands and the harness for its horse; a special milkshed was built on the Canadian model and the students were taught to do all the things from chopping wood to ploughing a straight furrow, that they would be required to do on their arrival in the Dominion. There was even an orchard planted with Canadian fruit trees.'

There was also a school for young women emigrating to Canada to marry. 'Lady Gwendolen took the scheme under her own charge, as announced it in a letter to the Daily Mail on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1914. A Canadian lady was engaged to give instruction in domestic and allied work, including poultry keeping and butter making, using such equipment as would usually be found on a Canadian farm'.

Rupert Guinness was also interested in medical research and whilst studying at Cambridge in 1900 he persuaded his father to endow the Lister Institute with a gift of £250,000. Two decades later, as a result of a meeting at the

House of Commons called by Arthur Balfour (brother of Gerald, who lived at Fishers Hill, Hook Heath), a committee was formed to further the work being done at St Mary's Hospital in London, with Guinness becoming the chairman of the Inoculation Department Committee in 1921 (and later endowing the hospital with the gift of a ward). He was also the chairman of the Wright-Fleming Institute of Microbiology (to which he presented £40,000 in 1929 for new laboratories) and was said to be a life-long friend of Alexander Fleming. Indeed it is claimed that it was Fleming who suggested to Lord Iveagh that he should set up a pollenarium in order to study the effects of hay fever and possible cures. This he did on his land off Carters Lane in Old Woking in 1936, the unit being managed by Dorothy Noon who with her brother Leonard had started collecting pollen for clinical research as early as 1907. They developed a means of planting and picking the grass heads, drying, extracting and standardising the extracts.

The facilities here were extended in 1955 'to allow research with new types of pollen', with the work continuing to produce pollen for therapeutic and prophylactic vaccines until it closed in 1971.

Rupert Guinness was also a pioneer of tuberculin tested cows and the production of 'clean milk'. In 1920 he set up the Tuberculin

Tested Milk Producers Association, being its chairman until 1949 when his nephew, Lord Onslow, took over. 'The Super Milk from the Guinness dairy was sold in bottles at a shilling a quart, instead of eight pence, but was still popular locally as the milk was obviously better for you. Besides, who could resist having a bottle of Guinness delivered to your door each day (even if it was the 'white' rather than the 'black' stuff)!

In Old Woking and Pyrford many people remember having a bottle of Guinness delivered to their door every day.



A Pollenarium was set up beside Carters Lane in Old Woking where pollen was extracted from grasses for hay fever vaccines.

