

Edward Tredcroft – a Sporting Life by Susan C. Djabri

Until now, we have known very little about the life of Edward Tredcroft, the last of the Tredcroft “squires” to live in Horsham. He is kindly remembered for giving part of the Barrackfield, which he owned, to the Horsham Cricket Club, for the ground that they still use today. The fact that he had to sell all his Sussex estates in the 1850s meant that he spent most of his life elsewhere and was far less prominent in Horsham than his predecessors. But now, some hitherto unknown photographs of Edward Tredcroft in a very fine Victorian album have most generously been made available to us, and these reveal him to have been just as much the typical country squire, devoted to hunting, shooting and fishing, as his father and grandfather were known to have been. He was also a keen cricketer who played for the prestigious amateur cricket club known as I Zingari (the gipsies) and other first-class teams, at what we might consider to be professional level. The album includes photographs of him engaged in all these activities and, as no portraits of the earlier members of the Tredcroft family are available to the general public, these photographs are of particular interest. The album also contains the earliest known photographs of Denne House in Horsham. Further research and the recent availability online of newspaper articles, from the British Library archive and elsewhere, have provided much useful material to amplify what the photographs show us. We have thus been able to build up a far more detailed picture of the man and his way of life than could ever have been done before.

The photograph album belonged to a Mrs. Charlotte Ricardo, wife of Albert Ricardo, who was a fellow member of the I Zingari cricket team. Albert was also a steeplechase rider, who won the Cambridgeshire Stakes on a horse called *The Widow* in 1847, and he was a founder member of an amateur dramatic society, “*The Windsor Strollers*”. The Ricardos lived at Ray Mead Cottage in Maidenhead, very near Boulter’s Lock. Their album would appear to have been put together during the year 1861 and contained photographs of their family and friends, their locality, Albert’s fellow-cricketers and places that they had visited. There are several photographs of Edward Tredcroft (“Ned” to his friends) in the album, so he was clearly someone whom they knew well.

It seems likely that Albert Ricardo first became acquainted with Edward Tredcroft when they both played in a cricket match at Denne Park, owned by Edward’s half-brother, Charles Gilbert Eversfield, in 1849. Charles Gilbert had also played cricket before an accident that paralysed him in 1845, and with Edward’s help, continued to host an annual cricket match in which his team played against an I Zingari team at Denne until the early 1850s. The 1849 match at Denne Park was the third time that Albert had played there, and it seems from the photographs of Denne House in the album that he had been

invited to stay there also, on this or a later occasion. The photographs of Denne House in the album show the ivy-covered east side of the original mansion, before its extension and the building of a new wing in the 1880s, and a view of the avenue, showing the wrought-iron gates that used to front the west side of Denne House. This view was clearly taken from an upstairs bedroom window (see figures 1 and 2).

The Tredcroft family

The Tredcrofts had held the estate of the Manor of Hewells, at the very heart of Horsham, with its Manor House in the Causeway, the Manor of Hawkesbourne and land in North Heath, for nearly two centuries. During that time they acted as squires and chief magistrates of Horsham. In 1827, Edward's father, Henry Tredcroft, built a fine new mansion in Jacobean style outside the town in the village of Warnham, for his bride, Mary, the widow of James Eversfield of Denne Park, who had three young children from her first marriage. Here Edward was born in 1828 and grew up as the eldest son and heir to his father's estates, with his younger brother, George Tredcroft, and his older half-brother and sisters, Charles Gilbert, Anna Isabella and Sophia Eversfield. Edward's cousin, Lt. Col. Charles Lennox Tredcroft, described the young Edward in glowing terms in his memoirs; *"he was extremely popular and liked by all his friends. He was very good looking and had a beautiful voice"* (see vignette photo – figure 3). But Col. Tredcroft was less enthusiastic about Edward's upbringing and early life. He said; *"unfortunately he had been a very spoiled boy, given a gun at 12 years old, and a "pink" jacket to follow the hounds, and having afterwards entered a fast Cavalry Regiment he acquired very extravagant habits"*.¹

Edward's father, Henry Tredcroft, died in 1844, when he was only sixteen, and still in the fifth form at Eton. Edward was heir to all the Tredcroft estates, which included property in Shipley and Billingshurst as well as Horsham. Under his father's will, provision was made for an annuity of £100 to be paid to his mother and younger brother, George,² but otherwise the income from the Tredcroft estates all went to Edward, as his half-brother and sisters were already provided for under their father James Eversfield's will.³ (Charles Gilbert was heir to the Eversfield estates in Horsham and Hollington, near Hastings, where the building of the new town of St. Leonard's had greatly increased his rental income). In 1845, Sophia Eversfield married Henry William George Paget, then Earl of Uxbridge and later 3rd Marquis of Anglesey, who was a fellow-member of I Zingari. Edward's mother Mary married again in 1847; her third husband was the Rev. John James Vaughan, the Rector of Gotham, near Nottingham, who was a widower, but very much younger than her. John Vaughan's first wife, Lucy Pigott, was an older sister

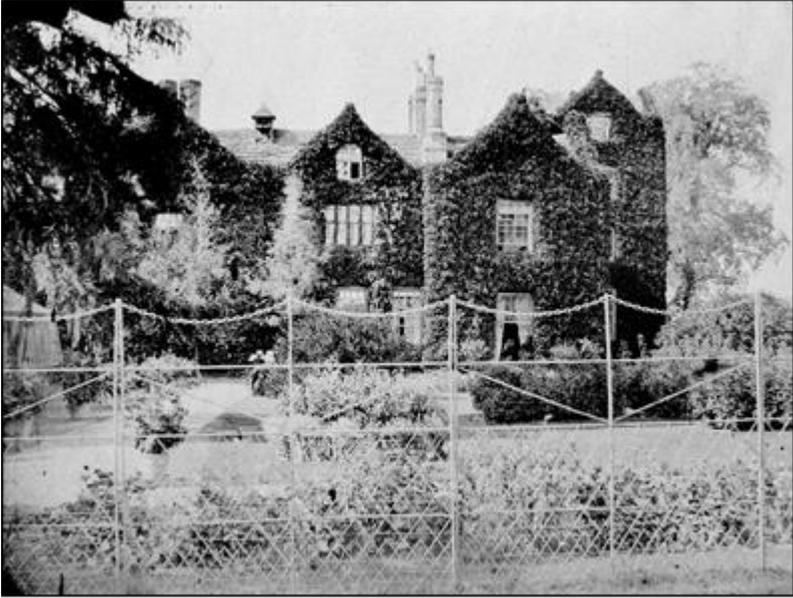


Figure 1 – the east front of Denne House c. 1860 (from the Ricardo album)

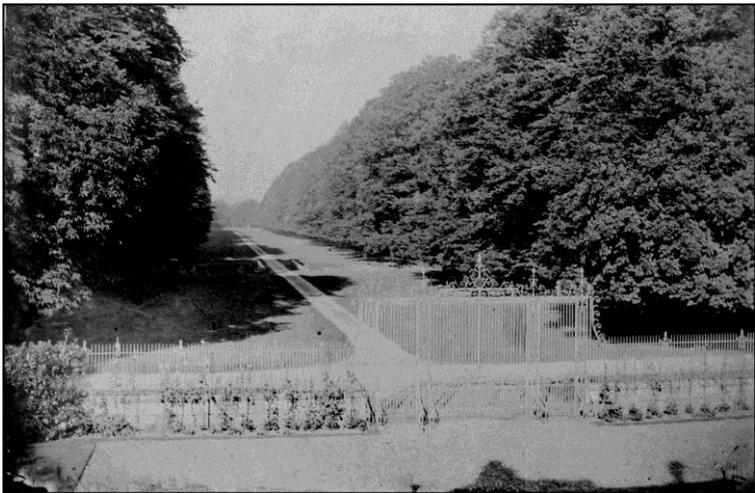


Figure 2 – the avenue at Denne Park taken from an upper window (from the Ricardo album)



Figure 3. Edward Tredcroft – a vignette photograph from the Ricardo album



Figure 4. Henry Padwick (HM 1996.649)

of Isabella Pigott, who married Mary's son, Charles Gilbert Eversfield, in 1848.

While waiting to inherit his estates at the age of 21, Edward Tredcroft did indeed serve in a very smart cavalry regiment, the 4th Light Dragoons, where the temptations to live rather extravagantly would probably have been almost irresistible. Edward joined the regiment as a Cornet, and purchased a Lieutenancy in December 1848.⁴ However, only a few months later, in April 1849, he sold out of the army, shortly before his 21st birthday, when he would have obtained full control of his property.⁵ It is perhaps interesting to speculate what might have happened had he remained with his regiment. The 4th Light Dragoons took a prominent part in the disastrous Charge of the Light Brigade under Lord Cardigan, of the 11th Hussars, at the battle of Balaclava in 1855, during the Crimean War. They were one of the three units that suffered the heaviest casualties. Had Edward remained in the 4th Light Dragoons, he might well have been one of the officers killed on that day.

Henry Padwick “the Spider”

An appreciation of Edward Tredcroft in *“Baily’s Magazine of Sports and Pastimes”*, Vol. 49, published after his death in 1888, throws a little more light on this early period of his life, with a somewhat cryptic comment; *“unfortunately he was one of Mr. P-----’s flies, and lost a lot of money on the Turf when a young man”*. There can be absolutely no doubt that *“Mr. P-----”* here refers to Henry Padwick, the Horsham lawyer, political agent, money lender and racehorse owner, who later became notorious for ruining young men who had become indebted to him. If Edward had lost a lot of money at the races, it would have been very easy for him to borrow more from Henry Padwick, with whom he must have been well acquainted. Padwick became involved with horse-racing in the 1850s, by which time he had his own racing stables at Findon and a close connection with the bookmaker, Henry Hill. His most famous horse, Virago, won ten races in 1854 – Henry Padwick collected £9,750 in prize money and netted some £80,000 in bets. Padwick was nicknamed *“the Spider”* at the time when he was involved with the scratching of the Marquis of Hasting’s horse, The Earl, from the 1868 Derby, and his victims were known as *“flies”* from then on. But it was only in 1886, with the publication of the trainer William Day’s *Reminiscences of the Turf*, that many of Henry Padwick’s more dubious practices were revealed, including the fact that he charged interest of between 50 and 500 per cent on money that he lent in the way of business. Day’s revelations led to other articles on Henry Padwick in the British and foreign press. Henry Padwick’s relationship with one of his victims, John Baynton Starkey, of Spye Park in Wiltshire, was

vividly described in another article and shows how easily a young man like Edward Tredcroft could be drawn in to Padwick's "web".⁶

"Soon afterwards he (Starkey) made the acquaintance of the noted Mr. Henry Padwick who was at that time residing in Hill Street, Berkeley Square. Mr. Padwick, racehorse owner and money-lender, lived in the most luxurious style; he was the most delightful of hosts, his table was laden with every delicacy and the choicest wines. It was open house for the jeunesse dorée; to them he was most lavish, and though when the card-playing came on after dinner the guests usually found that they paid rather dearly for their feed, the play being heavy, everybody was delighted with his reception; and then if a young fellow fell into any difficulty, who was so ready to help him out of it with a good cheque as Mr. Henry Padwick? The obliged party only had to sign his name across a bit of paper and there was the money squeezed into his hand with such a charming air of frankness that a man felt quite delighted at having to borrow it". The credulous Baynton Starkey allowed Henry Padwick to get control of the whole of his Spye Park estate over a period of years, believing that it would be safe in his hands. But Padwick sold the house at Spye Park to Major J.W.G. Spicer in 1855, and the rest of the estate in 1864; he was estimated to have made a clear profit of £275,000 out of these transactions.⁷ (See figure 4).

Edward and Theodosia

For Edward Tredcroft, the consequences of his indebtedness to Henry Padwick were not immediately apparent. On 11 July 1850, Edward married Theodosia Bligh, a first cousin of the Eversfields, whose strong Christian faith had helped the paralysed Charles Gilbert to overcome his depression and undergo a religious conversion that inspired him for the rest of his life.⁸ Theodosia was seven years older than Edward, and part of his close family circle – she had herself been born at her mother's old home of Denne Park in 1821 and christened in St. Mary's Church in Horsham. Her father, Edward Bligh, who was a grandson of the Earl of Darnley, had estates at Brittas in Ireland. The *London Standard* of 13 July 1850 described the wedding in some detail under the heading "*Marriage in High Life*". The ceremony took place at St. Peter's Church, Eaton Square, and was conducted by Edward's stepfather, the Rev. J.J. Vaughan. "*The fair bride, who was elegantly attired in a rich bridal dress, was attended to the altar by her cousins, the Ladies Bligh, Misses Tighe and Miss De Bathe*". The "*sumptuous*" wedding breakfast took place at the Bligh's London home and was attended by some 60 "*personages of distinction*", including the Marquis of Douro and the Marquis of Bath, and members of the Paget and Ricardo families. The honeymoon took place at Cobham Park, the Earl of Darnley's seat in Kent.

The wedding seems to have been celebrated in Horsham by a servant's ball given by Edward Tredcroft at the Manor House in the Causeway (South Street) during the following Christmas season. There was a short account in the *Sussex Advertiser* on 7 January 1851. "*On Wednesday last E. Tredcroft Esq. gave his servants a treat with a Ball, at the old mansion in South Street occupied by his father, N. Tredcroft Esq.*"⁹ *The party consisted of tradesmen, servants and others of the neighbourhood, numbering about 150. The rooms were nicely dressed with evergreens, and bounteously supplied with everything required for the occasion. Some portion of the company amused themselves with cards, and others brought their vocal powers into play, whilst the more juvenile guests figured in the ballroom. The founder of the feast led off the first dance and continued to share the amusements of the party throughout the night in a most convivial and familiar manner. About midnight the principal part of the company assembled in the ballroom, when the health of Mr. and Mrs. Tredcroft was drunk with the greatest enthusiasm; after which, dancing was resumed, and now and then a song or duet, until daylight began to peep in about the company, when they separated for their respective homes".* (One wonders, though, whether some of the tradesman and "others of the neighbourhood" were really all that pleased at having been invited to a "servants" ball!)

Although Edward now owned Warnham Court and the Manor House in Horsham, he and Theodosia appeared in the 1851 census as tenants of Springfield Park (former home of the Blunt family), which they appear to have been sharing with Edward's half-sister Anna Isabella and her husband Charles Goodwin Bethune – both Edward and Charles were described as "*head of household*". The most probable explanations of this rather odd arrangement were either that the Tredcroft properties had been leased out, while Edward was serving in the 4th Light Dragoons, and the tenancies had not yet expired, or that substantial repairs and renovations were being made to Warnham Court and the Manor House, which made it more convenient for Edward and Theodosia to live elsewhere until they had been completed. But by June 1851, they appear to have settled at the Manor House in Horsham, since their first child, Theodosia Isabella, was born there on 26 June. Edward and Theodosia had three children in all, a son, Henry Edward, born at the Manor House on 19 March 1853 and another daughter, Sophia Mary, born there in November 1854, who died of bronchitis a few months later in July 1855.¹⁰

The usual cricket match between a Denne Park team and I Zingari in June 1851 seems to have been less successful than usual and was indeed the last one to be played there. Edward Tredcroft on this occasion played for I Zingari, and Henry Padwick jr. was the local organiser of the Denne Park team, which contained several first-class players from the Sussex county side. But there was

criticism that the match was not played out fully, and it was said that “*the spectators were not very numerous, neither were there many expected*” despite the fact that “*luncheon was provided on the ground each day by Mr. Naldrett of the King’s Head Hotel*”. During the final day, Theodosia Tredcroft, shortly to give birth to her first child, was lucky to escape serious injury when driving down Pict’s Hill to the town, when her horse started kicking, and she and her groom were thrown from their chaise and severely bruised.¹¹ On 25 August 1851, Edward hosted a one-day cricket match at Warnham Court between the Gentlemen of Sussex and the Gentlemen of Surrey. This was followed by other matches on the same ground by various teams.

Edward’s cricketing career and financial crisis

By then, Edward Tredcroft was playing for first-class teams like Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), Sussex and the Gentlemen of England as well as I Zingari, which contained many first-class players. He was described as “*one of the lions of the I Zingari*” in an article about a match played in Perth in 1852, in which, unfortunately, he did not perform as well as expected and was out for a duck in the second innings.¹² During the next three years, Edward reached the height of his cricketing career, playing a total of 14 first-class and other matches in 1851, 19 matches in 1852 and 25 matches in 1853, throughout the cricket season. At this point, however, his financial troubles came to a head, and brought about a dramatic change in his circumstances. The crisis was graphically described by his cousin, Lt. Col. Tredcroft, in his memoirs; “*Owing to never looking after his affairs, the inevitable crash came at last, when one day the well known Mr. Padwick, the money lender, said to him “Well, now Sir, you and I must change places”. On my cousin asking him “Why?” he said “because I have signed cheques to the value of your estates”, upon which my cousin put on his hat and walked out of the house without employing any Solicitor to investigate his affairs. Thus the Warnham and Horsham and Billingshurst properties passed into other hands, and the Tredcroft family, after possessing land for centuries in the County of Sussex, have now not an acre belonging to them in the County*”¹³.

In fact, there is evidence that it was not nearly as simple as that – but Col. Tredcroft obviously could not resist telling the story in rather vivid and melodramatic terms! Edward sold his estates over a period of two years, and he seems to have spent most of 1854 trying to cope with the consequences of his youthful extravagance. His cricketing career came to an almost complete halt during 1854; he only played in two matches and put all his property in Warnham on the market.¹⁴ With the sale of Warnham Court to Sir John Pelly in 1855, and of all his other Sussex estates in 1856,¹⁵ Edward was able to settle his debts to the moneylender Henry Padwick (who acquired the Manor House

in Horsham and other Tredcroft estates) and provide himself with some income for the future – he was described as a “*fundholder*” in the 1861 census.

Edward then swiftly returned to much the same style of life as that he had previously enjoyed – he played 17 cricket matches in 1855, and 20 in 1856, one of which perhaps marked a high point in his cricketing career. An article in *The Era* on 8 June 1856 was devoted to a splendid match between I Zingari and the Household Brigade, which was attended by Prince Albert, the Prince of Prussia (later to marry Princess Victoria), the Regent of Baden, and their suite, and many leading members of the English nobility, including the Duke of Wellington and the Marquis of Anglesey. “*The Gipsies (I Zingari) ..ran up an excellent score of 136, mainly gathered from the excellent display of batting afforded by Lord Strathmore, Lord Stamford and Warrington, Hon. Chandos Leigh and Mr. Tredcroft....The Gipsies resuming their position at the wickets ..some of the finest play was then exhibited that we have ever witnessed at this celebrated cricketing resort. Lord Strathmore drove and cut his balls from the bat in all directions over the ground, and .. a splendid registry of 83 was attained, amidst the cheers of the aristocratical assemblage. Mr. Drake also batted finely, and contributed 35, while 27 was allotted as the share of Mr. Tredcroft...When the game was called, 204 runs had been made by the Zingari. On the conclusion of the match the Royal party left the ground, after having expressed their gratification at the skilful play which they had witnessed*”.

Edward continued to play cricket well into the 1860s, and even later on an occasional basis. Lt. Col. Tredcroft said that he was the wicket-keeper for the I Zingari team, but the article in *Baily's Magazine* commented a little more fully on his prowess; “*As a cricketer he was a hard hitter and fast underarm bowler, varied with lobs, and very active in the field. He was best known in the cricket field about the same time as the Duke of Beaufort (then Marquis of Worcester), Lord Fitzhardinge, and the present Sir Frederick Bathurst, and in 1852 played in the Gentlemen of Sussex, and was a very regular attendant at Lord's*”. One of the photographs in the Ricardo album shows Edward at Lords with Frederick Bathurst and others, most probably on 9 June 1859, when I Zingari were again playing a team from the Household Brigade (see figure 5). There was also a photograph of the I Zingari team at Badminton, the Duke of Beaufort's seat, in 1860, in which Edward Tredcroft may be seen third from the right in the back row (see figure 6). A local newspaper (the *Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser*) gave a brief account of this visit to Badminton on 18 August 1860, but a much fuller article, accompanied by the scores and other details, had already appeared in the *London Standard* on 13 August. Both of these articles are worth quoting, as they give a very good impression of the many pleasures of aristocratic country-house cricket at this period, as enjoyed by its participants.

“CRICKET AT BADMINTON.- The celebrated cricket club, “I Zingari”, composed of the best gentlemen cricketers in England, paid a visit to Badminton last week, this being their third annual visit. They first contended with a selected eleven, by Mr. Trinder, of the Cirencester Cricket Club, and on Thursday and Friday against a similar number, selected by Col. Nigel Kingscote. Not only the gentlemen of I Zingari, but the gentlemen who contended with them, were entertained by the Duke with the princely hospitality for which his Grace is so justly celebrated. All the arrangements made for the reception of the guests were most perfect, both in the house and on the cricket ground (beautifully situated in front of the mansion, where luncheon was provided for all visitors). The first match was won easily by the I Zingari, in 1 innings and 18 runs to spare. The second was lost by them. On Saturday the party broke up, full of gratitude to the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort for their kindness and hospitality” (*Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser*, 18 August 1860)

“VISIT OF I ZINGARI TO BADMINTON...This, the third visit of the I Zingari to the princely seat of the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort, was, notwithstanding the ill-nature of the elements, a week of unalloyed pleasure to that wandering tribe...The pleasure of the trip was much enhanced by a ramble through the stables and kennels...Every alternate evening the cricketers had an opportunity of seeing the hounds taking their training gallop.. Cricket (v. Cirencester) commenced on the 6th August, at three o'clock, and the rain, which commenced at five minutes past that hour, continued till evening, when the damp but undamped I Zingari retired. The following morning found them ready at the wickets, and ere evening fell, their endeavours were crowned with success...A more interesting match than this one (v. Colonel Kingscote's Eleven), which was played on Thursday and Friday, has never been witnessed. The various good cricket acts during the play are too numerous to enumerate, but we cannot omit a tribute of praise to Mr. Gillett's very fine first innings of 60; his second promised to be equally fine, but a brilliant 'smack' was as brilliantly caught at point by Mr. Tredcroft, a delectable, nay, an ambrosial moment to his side”. (*London Standard*, 13 August 1860).

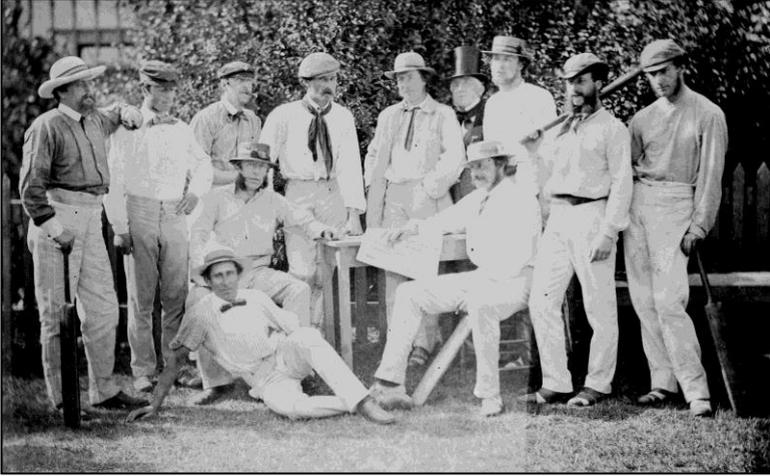


Figure 5 “I Zingari Lords 1859” with Edward Tredcroft first left (from the Ricardo album)



Figure 6. “I Zingari Badminton 1860” with Edward Tredcroft third right (from the Ricardo album)



Figure 7. “Candover Park – Edward Tredcroft Esq” decorated with two crossed horse-whips and a fox’s head, from the Ricardo album.



Figure 8. “G. Tredcroft, (the Earl of) Uxbridge, C. Pigott and E. Tredcroft” from the Ricardo album.

Master of the Hampshire Hounds

When the cricket season was over, Edward found several other sports and pastimes to occupy him during the winter months. In the autumn of 1856, having sold all his Sussex estates, Edward moved to Alresford in Hampshire, at the heart of good hunting country, and became the Master of the Hampshire Hunt (generally known as the H.H.). In the 1861 census, he was found living at Candover House in Brown Candover, a village near Alresford, with a staff of seven servants. (His wife and children were not there, but were perhaps away visiting their relations in Ireland, as they have not been found elsewhere in the English census for that year). Edward was a well-regarded Master of Hounds, and this was celebrated in the Ricardo photograph album, which contained two pictures of Candover House, said to be the home of “Edward Tredcroft Esq.”, appropriately decorated with a pair of crossed hunting whips and a fox’s head. There was also a photograph of Edward with the Earl of Uxbridge, his brother George and Charles Stainsby Pigott, all in hunting kit, probably taken at Candover House (see figures 7 and 8).

A short account of Edward’s Mastership can be found in Aesop’s “*Sporting Reminiscences of Hampshire*”¹⁶ and this was largely repeated in the “*Baily’s Magazine*” article mentioned above, with some additional comments on the horses that he owned at this time;

*“During his mastership of the H.H., Mr. Tredcroft lived at the Swan at Alresford, where his private stud stood, and such a lot of horses as he had there have not often been seen in Hampshire, as he was a heavy man, and spared no expense in mounting himself or his men, the Masons, we believe, for the most part supplying the horses.”*¹⁷ *One of his best was the dark chestnut Freemason, who ran second in a hurdle race on Abbotstone Down, and won the Hunt Club Stakes on Soberton Down, ridden by Mr. Hunt at the Hambleton meeting, but was a sad rascal as regards temper. He also had Greyling at Alresford, who had run forward – third, if memory does not deceive us – in the Liverpool. During his mastership his brother-in-law, the late Marquis of Anglesey, then Lord Uxbridge, rented The Grange*¹⁸ *and hunted a good deal in Hants. Mr. Tredcroft, from his genial manner, was most popular with all classes, especially the farmers, and was entertained at a dinner at Alton, on April 27th, 1857, which was attended by many members of the H.H. Hunt and by several officers from Aldershot. He gave up the hounds, and was succeeded by Mr. Deacon, in 1862”*. It appears that Edward was on quite good terms with Henry Padwick at this time, at least as regards his horses. An article in *The New Sporting Magazine* of July 1858 said that Padwick had bought the horse called *Grayling*, for 280 guineas, for Edward Tredcroft of the H.H., “*who is said, by the bye, to have more than 70 couples of hounds in his kennel*”.

Thus it appears that, in regard to his horses and hounds, Edward was still inclined to spend very freely, and it was noted that “*in quality and number of hounds and horses, the establishment of the present Master of the Hunt has never been exceeded*”.¹⁹ But all too soon it became clear that he was not able to sustain the level of expenditure required to maintain such a large stable and kennel, in his reduced circumstances. In a very detailed account in a supplement to the *Hampshire Advertiser* of 25 February 1860 of another dinner given in his honour at the Swan Inn, Alresford, in February, 1860, Edward himself revealed that he was finding it difficult to meet the cost, and was already dependent upon his friends for financial help. In a full report of the speech that he gave in reply to the toast in his honour, we have a rare opportunity to hear the voice of Edward himself, and note his absolute dedication to the sport of the hunting field. (This article is worth quoting at some length, in order to capture the atmosphere of the occasion).

“On Thursday evening, a complimentary dinner was given to Edward Tredcroft Esq., Master of the H.H. Hounds. The banquet took place at the Swan Hotel, Alresford; and the repast placed upon the tables by Mr. Rolls, the proprietor.. was of a first-class character in regard both to the viands and the wine.. The walls were completely covered with devices in evergreens interspersed with foxes’ heads, brushes, sporting pictures etc. Behind the noble Chairman’s seat were Prince of Wales’ feathers, above the initials of the H.H., among garlands of evergreens. One of the side walls exhibited the initials “E.T.” in large Roman characters, beneath them were three foxes’ brushes; and above two hunting horns, the one in gold, the other silver. These decorations , together with the scarlet coats interspersed among the sombre black, gave the room a very interesting appearance. At 6 o’clock the chair was taken by the Rt. Hon. Lord Ashburton; the noble lord had on his right the guest of the evening, Mr. Tredcroft, who was attired in hunting costume...there were altogether between 60 and 70 gentlemen assembled to do honour to the worthy master”. After toasts had been drunk to the Queen, the Royal Family and the Army and Navy “the noble President observed, the next toast was the toast of the evening. They had come from all corners of the county to this festive board.. and he believed it was not only in their name but in the name of many of those who were kept away by accident – illness and other circumstances – who were anxious to give this public recognition of their obligations to Mr. Tredcroft (Cheers)...They thanked Mr. Tredcroft for his courtesy; they thanked him for the management, the way in which he had conducted the chase. They felt reason to expect that the old glory of the Hampshire Hunt may be renewed....In all their names ..he expressed these their feelings to Mr. Tredcroft and he called upon them by the loudness of their cheers to respond to this toast and confirm all that he had said.

The noble lord proposed "*the health of Mr. Tredcroft, the Master of the Hampshire Hunt*". (The toast was received with loud and reiterated applause).

Mr. Tredcroft was received with renewed plaudits on rising to respond. He begged to express to Lord Ashburton and the gentlemen present his most grateful thanks – to the noble lord for the proposal of his health, and to his friends for the flattering manner in which it had been accepted by them. It was an old saying that "*the more you look at it, the less you like it*", as regards a fence; and he assured them that this was the most difficult fence he had ever looked at (laughter). The way in which he had been received by the gentlemen of the H.H. compensated him for any expense he might incur in hunting the country; and he had the happiness to announce that, by the aid of several kind friends here tonight, he was enabled to be their master for another year (loud cheers). As long as he was Master, nothing in the shape of expense or trouble should be spared to ensure good hunting sport. It was the real thing he desired; he asked them for time and for room; and if they would have the patience to follow him out in that, he would guarantee the rest. They had an unprecedentedly bad season as regards scent this winter; but in high Leicestershire, the cream of the hunting countries, it had been equally as bad; and if they failed in Leicestershire, they might naturally be expected to fail in Hampshire also (Hear). It was a difficult thing to properly carry out sport; fields were large, fences were small; the fields would press a deal too much upon the hounds and the men hunting them, and people might think him harsh in speaking to them in decisive terms (no, no); but if anyone thought so, let him put it down to the cause of sporting, and of sport alone. While he was their Master he should endeavour to do his best, and would always speak sharply to the man who over-rode his hounds (cheers). He thanked them all for the reception of the toast of his health. May they meet for many, many days, and after many good runs through the country, assemble again at this festive board (loud cheers).....Mr. Tredcroft obliged the company with his favourite song "*The Good Old Country Squire*"... Mr. Bulpett introduced the toast of "*Lady Ashburton and the Ladies*" received with much enthusiasm. Lord Ashburton in reply said, Lady Ashburton would be happy to see his friends within her house as, like other women, she liked the red coats (laughter). The noble President vacated the chair, and left the room amid the acclamations of the assembly. Mr. Tredcroft assumed the presidency, and a number of complimentary toasts were honoured before the company separated. Mr. Smith of London was engaged for the occasion, and his vocalisation afforded much gratification. Many songs were also sung by the gentlemen around the table. The pleasures of the evening did not terminate until a late hour".

It seems though, that however enthusiastic his supporters, Edward was not able to continue as Master for more than another two years. It is clear that financial circumstances forced his resignation in 1862, since it was immediately followed by the sale of his entire stud of sixteen horses at Tattersalls. A notice appeared in *The Morning Post* on 11 June 1862, the day before the sale, which stated that the sale was “*in consequence of his giving up the H.H. country*”. The horses were named as *Freemason, Mackerel, Norfolk, Grayling, Charlie, Yellow Jack, Magnolia, Master of Arts, Major, Monkey, Margaret, Maid of All Work, Magic, Brown Mare, Martha* and an unnamed “*powerful cob*”. One of his cricketering and hunting friends, Sir Edward Chandos Leigh, said that *Freemason*, whom he had enjoyed riding before Edward Tredcroft bought him, was regarded by Edward as his best horse.²⁰ This double blow, the loss of the Mastership and the sale of his beloved horses, was probably even more painful to Edward than the loss of his estates in Sussex, as it must have left a huge gap in his life.

Other activities

Edward had appeared as a steward at the Grand National Hunt steeplechase at Market Harborough, on 4 April 1861, and this was perhaps a function that he may have continued to fulfil, even though he could no longer afford to keep a stable.²¹ Shooting was another sport that Edward had long practised when visiting friends on their country estates, and he was said by Lt. Col. Tredcroft to be a fine shot. A report of a shooting party in Cheshire in December 1855 listed him amongst the guests;²² “*The Earl and Countess of Stamford have been entertaining a large party of friends for several days at his lordship’s seat, Dunham Massey, Cheshire, during which time his lordship had a shooting party. On the 4th inst. the Earl of Stamford, Earl Strathmore, Sir G. Wombwell. A Walsh Esq., H.C. Taylor Esq. E. Tredcroft Esq. and Captain St. George Caulfield killed 140 pheasants, 14 partridges, 80 hares, 416 rabbits, 4 woodcocks, 3 wild ducks, and 7 various wild fowl*”. The party continued for another three days and killed a total of 1845 head of game in all. Sir George Wombwell appeared in a photograph of a shooting party in the Ricardo album, which may have been hosted by Edward Tredcroft himself, as it is on the same page as the Candover House photographs (see figure 9). Another photograph in the album showed Edward with fellow cricketer Edward Tyrwhitt Drake, holding a gun (see figure 10). Drake is known to have shared Edward’s interest in country sports as well as cricket. As Rector of Amersham, he became known as a somewhat eccentric “*sporting parson*”, famous in the hunting field and a habitué of the racecourse throughout his life.²³

But while Edward was still a country squire at heart, he also maintained a presence in London society. During the time that he was living in Hampshire,

Edward was a member of the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, founded in 1735, which met every Saturday night at the Lyceum from November to June. The members of the Sublime Society ate grilled beef steaks with onions and baked potatoes, on hot pewter plates, followed by toasted cheese, and entertained each other with songs and stories. Members were required to wear the Society's uniform – a blue coat and buff waistcoat with brass buttons, which bore a gridiron motif and the words "*Beef and Liberty*". Edward's talent for singing was well suited to the Society, as the *Baily's* article reveals; "*He was also a member of the old Beefsteaks at the Lyceum, .. whose chief beverage was porter and port wine, a very convivial society, but not a club. He could tell a good story, and sing a good song in a rich tenor voice, and was not only a good all-round sportsman but, in a congenial set, capital company*". Edward became a member on 21 November 1855, but the Society declined in the 1860s, and he was not listed among the final 18 members when it closed down in 1867.²⁴

Other members of the Sublime Society at the time that he joined it were two of his fellow-members of the I Zingari cricket team; the Earl of Strathmore and the Hon. Frederick Ponsonby, who was one of the founders of I Zingari and the "*Old Stagers*" amateur dramatic society, to which Edward also belonged. Edward had the stage name of "Podger" but does not seem to have been one of the players in the productions put on by the *Old Stagers* at Canterbury during cricket week, as no record has yet been found of any part that he played.²⁵ But he is known to have taken part in a charity concert in 1878 at Ruddington (near his mother's home at Gotham), where it was reported that "*Mr. Tredcroft sang a charming ballad "In the Gloaming" with much expression and feeling*".²⁶ In 1871, he was proposed for election as a member of the Society of Arts.²⁷

Another photograph in the Ricardo album shows Edward Tredcroft holding a fishing rod, with Thomas Coke, 2nd Earl of Leicester, who was offering him a fishing fly from a book on his knee (see figure 11). They probably met first when Edward played in several cricket matches at the Earl's seat, Holkham Hall in Norfolk, between 1848 and 1851. The Earl and Edward were also fellow-members of the I Zingari team that played at Lords in June 1856. The two men would appear to have become very good friends, as Edward Tredcroft was one of the house guests in most distinguished company, when the Earl entertained the Prince and Princess of Wales at Holkham Hall, with great splendour, in 1865. "*Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales left Sandringham, and travelled by the new line of railway, the West Norfolk Junction — over which they were the first passengers — to pay a visit to the Earl of Leicester at Holkham..... The guests at the Hall consisted of the following : Major G. H. Grey and the Countess of Morton (in attendance on the Prince and Princess of Wales), the Marquis of Bowmont, the Duke and Duchess of Roxburghe, Earl and Countess Spencer, the Countess of Dunmore*

and Lady Almorant, the Earl of Dunmore,²⁸ Viscount and Viscountess Powerscourt, Lord and Lady Suffield, Viscount Hamilton, M.P., Hon. T. De Grey, M.P., ... Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, Captain Stephenson, Mr. J. Powell (and) Mr. Edward Tredcroft".²⁹ An article in *The Glasgow Herald* on 9 January 1865 was devoted to this visit, during which the party went out shooting and "*met with extraordinary sport, having killed nearly 2000 head of game*". It was concluded with a grand ball in the Egyptian Hall at Holkham - "*The scene was really a most brilliant one. Their Royal Highnesses won all hearts with their easy affability*".

Marital troubles

It is significant that Edward was at Holkham alone, and not with his wife, whom one would have expected to accompany him on such an occasion. It would seem that they were no longer happy together – Edward's love of sport probably did not accord well with Theodosia's religious enthusiasm, and his frequent absences in pursuit of his sporting interests may well have made her feel neglected. Maybe she was also deeply affected by the loss of her third child in 1855, in the midst of Edward's financial crisis. But it was not until the 1881 census that we have definite proof that Edward and Theodosia were living apart, with each named as "*head of household*" at different addresses. Edward was living at 3 Morpeth Terrace, just off Knightsbridge, with three servants, while Theodosia was living in a terraced house at 25 Alexander Street, near Paddington, in a rather less select part of town. Their son Henry, who was married by now, was there also, with a visitor, Berthe de Henest, along with three servants.

It was only with the passing of the Married Women's' Property Act in 1870 that Theodosia would have had a right to own property or keep any income that she had from work or investments. Before that, most money or property owned by a woman was made over to her husband, or could be seized by his creditors. But after the Act was passed, it became possible for unhappily married women, with some resources of their own, to live away from their husbands, and Theodosia seems to have taken full advantage of this new freedom. At what point the marriage failed is not entirely clear; as was mentioned earlier, Edward's wife and children were not with him at Candover House in the 1861 census, but there may be another explanation for that. The couple may not have openly lived apart until after 1870, by which time their children would have been more or less grown up. There is no evidence that Edward and Theodosia's separation was followed by divorce, which still bore a severe social stigma. Edward was invited to a garden party at Marlborough House, given by the Prince and Princess of Wales, on 14 July 1881, and an evening party there on 22 July, from which, if divorced, he might well have been excluded.³⁰ At the time of her death on 23 March 1898, Theodosia still bore the name of Tredcroft and was described as a "*widow*".³¹



Figure 9. “Capt. Wombwell, Hon. F. Curzon, Capt. Peyton, Lord Andover, Sir George Wombwell” from the Ricardo album



Figure 10. “Tredcroft and Drake” from the Ricardo album



Figure 11 “Ned Tredcroft and (the Earl of) Leicester” from the Ricardo album

It seems very clear that Edward Tredcroft, that keen sportsman and jovial companion, was far more at home in the company of other men than that of his wife and family. This is nowhere more clearly shown than in a well-known painting by Henry O'Neil which shows 43 members of the Garrick Club and John, the Club servant, in the billiard room at the Garrick in 1869 (see figure 12). The Garrick Club was one of the more lively London clubs patronised by many literary, theatrical and artistic figures, though in 1865 it had been criticised for becoming rather philistine in tone. Edward's place in the painting was mentioned in the *Baily's Magazine* article quoted previously; it said of Edward that "*he was a member of the Garrick, and there is an excellent likeness of him in a picture painted by O'Neill, in which he is represented leaning over the billiard table, in the act of making a stroke*". However, although most accounts of this painting claim that it was Edward Tredcroft striking the ball, the photographs of Edward Tredcroft in the Ricardo album now make it clear that he was in fact the man standing on the left and leaning on the table, with a cue in his hand, behind Sir Charles Taylor who was sitting in the foreground (see figure 12).³²

The prominent position given to Edward Tredcroft in this painting perhaps shows the significant part that the Garrick Club may have played in his later life, when he appears to have been known chiefly as a Club member. Sir Henry Irving, the actor, in a letter written in 1890 to the Lord Chancellor, Viscount Finlay, mentioned a portrait of Napoleon by Thomas Phillips which had belonged to the Duke of Richmond's family, who had given it to "*Tredcroft, late member of the Garrick*".³³ When Edward died on 8 April 1888, aged 60, from bronchitis, he was living at 9 Sussex Mansions, Maiden Lane – a mansion flat very near to the Club at 15 Garrick Street, in Covent Garden. With his estates lost, his sporting career over and his marriage failed, the companionship that he could find at the Garrick Club was probably very important to him.

There are some indications that Edward's last years were not happy ones, and that he felt regret that he had not achieved more during his life. He must have been well aware that many of his former sporting companions had also had distinguished careers in various other fields. Albert Ricardo pursued a successful career in the financial world, and Edward Chandos Leigh was a distinguished barrister and judge. But Edward Tredcroft appears to have had no other profession, other than a brief period in the army, and led a life almost entirely devoted to sporting activities. Surprisingly, on his death certificate, Edward Tredcroft was described as a Major in the 4th Light Dragoons, yet there is no evidence that he had rejoined his regiment and been promoted after he had sold his Lieutenancy in 1849³⁴ – his will named him as "*Edward Tredcroft Esquire*". It seems very probable that this was a false claim made to impress others and boost his self-esteem. The *Baily's Magazine* article also referred to

him as “*Edward Tredcroft of Warnham Court*” even though he had sold Warnham Court some 33 years previously – possibly another indication of an empty claim to a past glory. Perhaps even more ominous was the fact that Edward seems to have become embroiled in a Chancery case against Henry Padwick in 1884.³⁵ There is clear evidence that at the end of his life Edward’s financial resources were very limited – his personal estate only amounted to £538.13s.7d when his will was proved on 18 August 1888 by his sole executor, his half-sister Sophia, now the Dowager Marchioness of Anglesey. His estranged wife was not mentioned in the account of the probate of his will, but in fact she outlived him and left more than he did. Her will was proved on 17 May 1898 by her son, Henry Edward Tredcroft, and her effects were declared as £684.10s.³⁶

Edward Tredcroft was brought back to Horsham to be laid to rest with honour and recognition of his former status, in Denne Road cemetery. He was buried beside his half-brother, Charles Gilbert Eversfield of Denne Park, who had died two years earlier in 1886, in a part of the cemetery that contained a vault for members of the Eversfield and Bethune families. A report of his funeral in the *Surrey Mirror and General County Advertiser* on 21 April 1888 listed the “*small band of relatives and personal friends*” who were present on this occasion – Edward’s son Henry (who had trained as a mining engineer), his brother George, his cousin Lt. Col. Charles Lennox Tredcroft, his nephews Edward, Henry and Herbert Bethune, his son-in-law Dennis Lambert Higgins and his friends Major Brownrigg, Major Jones, Mr. Heath, Mr. Powell, Mr. Walters and Mr. Martineau. Ladies did not generally attend funerals at this period, but Lady Anglesey sent a wreath. Edward’s grave, like that of Charles Gilbert, is now overgrown and neglected, a sad memorial to a man who, in many ways, remained throughout his life the spoiled and extravagant boy who was perhaps given too much, too soon, and never quite grew up (figure 13).

(With many thanks to Myrna Goldware for all her help in finding material on the internet, and to Frances Crowe for providing information from birth and death certificates and other documents on the Tredcroft family).



Figure 12 – painting of the Billiard Room at the Garrick Club showing Edward Tredcroft standing on the left behind the table (© Collection of Garrick Club)

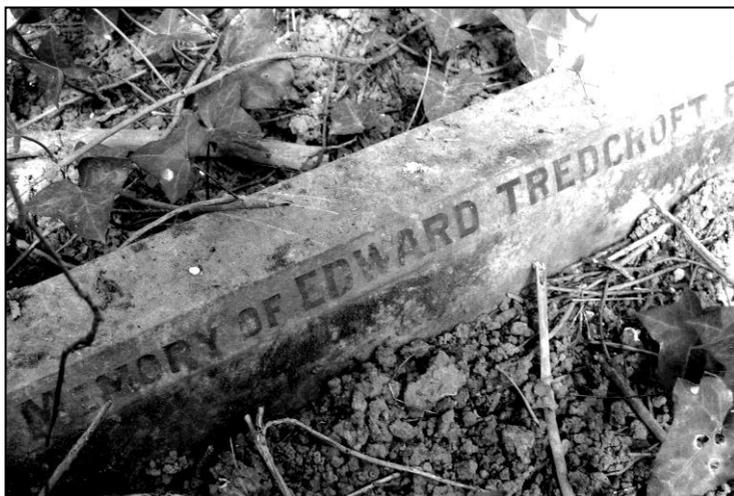


Figure 13 – Edward Tredcroft's grave in Denne Road cemetery – no. L 362.

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- ¹ Lt. Col. Charles Lennox Tredcroft, *Recollections of 70 Years, and Memoirs of my Family*, privately published in 1904.
- ² West Sussex Record Office SAS-MD/497 and 498, release in respect of a Trust Estate and assignment of reversion.
- ³ HM MSS Cat. No. 2346.
- ⁴ *The London Gazette*, War Office, 8 December 1848.
- ⁵ *The London Gazette*, War Office, 20 April 1849.
- ⁶ “*Baynton Starkey*” from the *Licensed Victuallers’ Gazette*, published in the *Otago Witness*, 6 Pipir 1889, page 25 (from *New Zealand Papers Past*).
- ⁷ William Day’s *Reminiscences of the Turf; with anecdotes and recollections of its principal celebrities during the present reign* (1886), p. 45.
- ⁸ See “*The Eversfields of Denne House*” part 2, by Susan C. Djabri, in *Horsham Heritage*, Issue No. 18, Autumn 2009.
- ⁹ Nathaniel Tredcroft was actually Edward’s grandfather, not his father, and he had died in 1825.
- ¹⁰ Details of birth and death certificates supplied by Frances Crowe
- ¹¹ *Sussex Advertiser, Surrey Gazette etc.*, 3 June 1851.
- ¹² *Fife Herald and Kinross, Strathearn and Clackmannan Advertiser*, 23 September 1852 – article entitled “*Grand Cricket Match at Perth*”.
- ¹³ Lt. Col. Charles Lennox Tredcroft, *Recollections of 70 Years, and Memoirs of my Family*, privately published in 1904, p.
- ¹⁴ Horsham Museum Sales Particulars 96, 21 June 1854 (asterisk means map is included) Warnham Court (252a.3r.24p.)*, Dork’s Farm including Great Dork’s House (40a.3r.31p.)* cottage in Friday Street (2r.31p)*, Little Mays als Benland Farm (40a.3r.39p.)*, Thatcher’s als Gearing’s Farm (70a.1r.17p.)*
- ¹⁵ Horsham Museum Sales Particulars 384, 13 February 1856, 12 lots, including the “mansion house” and the Manor of Hewells, Hawkesbourne; North Heath, Old Park and Whitesbridge farms in Horsham; the Town Mill and the Barrack Fields in Horsham; and Bentons Farm in Shipley.
- ¹⁶ Available online as an e-book
- ¹⁷ The Masons were well known horse breeders and trainers.
- ¹⁸ The Grange is near Brown Candover.
- ¹⁹ Article on the Hampshire Hunt dinner in the *Reading Mercury*, 20 February 1858.
- ²⁰ “*Bar, Bat and Bit; Recollections and Experiences*” by Sir Edward Chandos Leigh, John Murray, London, 1913.
- ²¹ *Northampton Mercury*, 30 March 1861.
- ²² *London Standard*, 21 December 1855.
- ²³ From an obituary of the Rev. E. T. Drake, *Manawatu Times*, 22 August 1904.
- ²⁴ Walter Arnold, *Life and Death of the Sublime Society of Steaks*, London, 1871 (now available as an e-book online).
- ²⁵ “*The Old Stagers*” by W. Yardley, from *Amateur Clubs and Actors*, edited by W.G. Elliott, Edward Arnold, 1898.
- ²⁶ *Nottinghamshire Guardian*, 24 May 1878.
- ²⁷ *Journal of the Society of Arts*, Vol. 19, p. 149

²⁸ The Earl of Dunmore was a fellow-cricketer who played for I Zingari and whose picture can be found in the Ricardo album

²⁹ See *The Journal of the Household Brigade* for 1866, p. 62.

³⁰ *The Morning Post*, 16 and 23 July 1881.

³¹ *The Morning Post*, 26 March 1898.

³² See catalogue number G0793 in the collections of the Garrick Club online, which lists all the members shown in the painting and the date of when they became members – Edward became a member in 1849.

³³ See <http://www.henryirving.co.uk/correspondence.php>

³⁴ Details of death certificate supplied by Frances Crowe.

³⁵ *London Standard*, 8 April and 5 July 1884, in the Law Notices; *Tredcroft v Padwick*, in the High Court of Justice, Chancery Division

³⁶ National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966.