

BERRY (FAMILY), (Lords Buckland, Camrose and Kemsley,) industrialists and newspaper proprietors. ▾

Name: Berry

Occupation: industrialists and newspaper proprietors

Area of activity: Business and Industry; Printing and Publishing

Author: Mary Auronwy James

All three sons of JOHN MATHIAS BERRY (born 2 May 1847 in Camrose, Pemb.; died 9 January 1917) and his wife Mary Ann (née Rowe, of Pembroke Dock), who moved to Merthyr Tydfil in 1874, were created peers. J. M. Berry worked on the railway and as an accountant before becoming an estate agent and auctioneer in 1894. He was the mayor when King George V visited the town in 1912. The foundation stone of a new Salvation Army Citadel in Merthyr was laid in memory of him in 1936 and he is also commemorated by the J.M. Berry Technical College which was built by his eldest son.

HENRY SEYMOUR BERRY, 1st Baron BUCKLAND (1877 - 1928) industrialist;

their eldest son, born 17 September 1877 in Gwaelod-y-garth, Merthyr Tydfil. In 1892 he was a monitor at Abermorlais Boys' School and passed his examination to become a pupil teacher. Four years later he was a certificated assistant teacher there but left on 1 September 1897 to work with his father. In 1915 he was asked to assist **D. A. Thomas (Lord Rhondda)** manage his estate, with the result that when the latter joined the cabinet in 1916 his numerous industrial companies were entrusted to the care of H. S. Berry. This proved to be a turning point in Berry's life. Within three years he became director of no fewer than 66 companies. These were mostly coalmines and shipping companies, including John Lysaght, Ltd. makers of galvanised sheets, with steelworks, rolling mills and colliery interests, which he had recently acquired in conjunction with his brother William Ewert Berry, **D. R. Llewellyn** and **Viscountess Rhondda (Thomas, Margaret Haig)**. This was the biggest industrial transaction in the history of Wales, involving five million pounds. He was chairman of the company until it became part of Guest, Keen and Nettlefold in 1920, of which he became chairman in 1927. He did much to reorganize GKN and introduced various management committees, but he was not a widely popular man, being resolutely opposed to trade unions, though he did not take part in the public statements of coalowners. His chief contact with the newspaper industry was as director of the *Western Mail* 1920-27. He married, 5 September 1907, Gwladys Mary, eldest daughter of Simon Sandbrook of Merthyr Tydfil and they had five daughters. In 1922 he bought Buckland, Bwlch, Breck. and went there to live, subsequently becoming a J.P. for that county as well as for the borough of Merthyr Tydfil. He was a generous benefactor to his native town, to which he gave public swimming baths, a new wing to the hospital and many smaller gifts to assist underpaid pastors, ex-service men and other poor inhabitants of the borough. In 1926 he and his brothers granted Merthyr hospital £750 per annum for 7 years. He was also a benefactor of Brecon Memorial College, the university college at Cardiff, and the National Museum of Wales to which he was appointed a member of the Court of Governors shortly before his death. In 1923 he was granted the freedom of the borough of Merthyr Tydfil, and was created first Baron Buckland of Bwlch in 1926. He died 23 May 1928 after a fall from a horse.

WILLIAM EWERT BERRY, 1st Viscount CAMROSE (1879 - 1954), newspaper proprietor and editor;

the second son, born 23 June 1879. When he was 14 years old he commenced five years' apprenticeship as a journalist on *The Merthyr Tydfil Times* and other south Wales newspapers before going to London to work as a reporter. He was unemployed for three months and never forgot this chastening experience when dealing with his staff in later years. In 1901, with a loan of £100 from his elder brother, he started an entirely new periodical, *Advertising World*. He then asked his younger brother, JAMES GOMER BERRY, to come to assist him with the second issue, thus starting a partnership which lasted over 35 years. Four years later the periodical was sold to enable them to set up a small publishing company, Ewart, Seymour and Co., Ltd.; they also acquired their first newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, which was losing money at the time. W.E. Berry was its editor-in-chief, 1915-36. In 1924, with Sir E.M. (later Lord) Iliffe they founded Allied Newspapers. The next big purchase was the Amalgamated Press in 1926, which included a large number of non-political periodicals, a book section, two printing works and the Imperial Paper Mills. The following year they bought Edward Lloyd, Ltd., one of the largest paper mills in the world, and also their first 'heavy' London daily newspaper, *Daily Telegraph*, with W.E. Berry becoming editor-in-chief. They now controlled 25 newspapers, and about 70 periodicals. Competition was fierce in the 1930 s but instead of trying to attract readers with gifts, as other newspapers did, they decided to change the format of the *Daily Telegraph*, to maintain the quality of their news coverage, and to halve the price from 2d. to a penny; the circulation doubled immediately to 200,000 and grew to well over a million copies by 1949. In 1937 the three partners decided to go their separate ways, the *Daily Telegraph*, *Financial Times* and the Amalgamated Press being taken by Lord Camrose. He was a distinguished-looking person, accessible, good-tempered and a gifted speaker. He maintained contact with his home town and in conjunction with his brothers rescued some local coal mines from closure, to their own loss. In 1936 he and his younger brother, then Lord KEMSLEY, presented a new clock tower to Merthyr parish church. He was director of several companies in south Wales and became a governor of Christ College, Brecon in 1929. He was the author of *London newspapers: their owners and controllers* (1939) and *British newspapers and their controllers* (1947). In 1905 he married Mary Agnes, elder daughter of Thomas Corns, and they had four daughters, and four sons who also became directors of parts of the family business. In 1921 he was created baronet, first Baron Camrose of Long Cross, Virginia Water in 1929 and elevated first Viscount Camrose of Hackwood Park, Basingstoke in 1941. He died 15 June 1954 in Southampton; a tablet has been placed in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral in memory of him.

JAMES GOMER BERRY, 1st Viscount KEMSLEY (1883 - 1968), newspaper proprietor;

the youngest son, born 7 May 1883. He was educated at Abermorlais school and was one of the first pupils to enter Merthyr Tydfil county intermediate grammar school. At his brother William's request he went to London when he was 18 years old to assist with *Advertising World* and his career for the next 36 years was closely connected with that of his brother, he too becoming director and chairman of many companies. When they divided the business, Lord Kemsley became chairman of Allied Newspapers, (renamed Kemsley Newspapers in 1943). The group owned 26 papers, the holding being maintained at much the same size over 22 years, making him the largest newspaper owner in the United Kingdom. From the start Lord Kemsley concentrated his energies on the *Sunday Times*, and once he was in sole command he became editor-in-chief and the circulation trebled. In 1947-49 he gave robust evidence before the royal commission on the press. He started the Kemsley editorial plan to train journalists and wrote the introduction to *The Kemsley manual of journalism* (1947). In 1959 he sold all his holdings in Kemsley Newspapers to Roy Thomson and went to live in Monte Carlo. As already mentioned, he too maintained connection with his native town. He succeeded his eldest brother as president of Merthyr General Hospital 1928-49, and received the freedom of Merthyr Tydfil in 1955; he was president of the Football Association of Wales 1946-60, and of the university college at Cardiff 1945-50. Among the many honours he received were hon. LL.D. degrees from the Universities of Wales and Manchester. He married (1), 4 July 1907, Mary Lilian (died 1 February 1928) daughter of Horace George Holmes, Brondesbury Park, London, by whom he had six sons and a daughter. He married (2), 20 April 1931, Edith, formerly wife of C.W. Dresselhuys. He was created Baronet in 1928, a week before his first wife died, first Baron Kemsley of Farnham Royal in 1936, first Viscount Kemsley of Dropmore in 1945, and G.B.E. in 1959. He died in Monte Carlo, 6 February 1968.

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Published date: 2001

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James, M. A., (2001). BERRY (FAMILY), (Lords Buckland, Camrose and Kemsley,) industrialists and newspaper proprietors.. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 10 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s2-BERR-BUC-1847>

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