

PHILIPPS, WOGAN, 2nd Baron Milford (1902-1993), politician and artist

Name: Wogan Philipps
Date of birth: 1902
Date of death: 1993
Spouse: Tamara Rust (née Kravets)
Spouse: Cristina Philipps (née Casati Stampa di Soncino)
Spouse: Rosamond Nina Runciman (née Lehmann)
Child: Sarah Philipps
Child: Hugo John Laurence Philipps
Parent: Ethel Georgina Philipps (née Speke)
Parent: Laurence Richard Philipps
Gender: Male
Occupation: politician and artist
Area of activity: Art and Architecture; Politics, Government and Political Movements
Author: David Lewis Jones

Born at Manor House, High Street, Brentwood, Essex, on 25 February 1902, the eldest child of **Laurence Richard Philipps** (1874-1962) and Ethel Georgina Speke (1879-1971). **Laurence Philipps** was a man of considerable wealth, with interests in shipping and insurance; he was granted a baronetcy in 1919 and made a baron in 1939, with the title of **Baron Milford, of Llanstephan in the County of Radnor**. A member of the Philipps family from Pembrokeshire, he took the title Milford from his ancestor, **Richard Philipps** of Picton Castle, who was created **Baron Milford** in the Irish peerage. Two of **Laurence Philipps**'s brothers also became peers: **John Wynford Philipps, 1st Viscount St. Davids** (1860-1938) and **Owen Cosby Philipps, Baron Kyslant** (1863-1937). A third brother, **Major-General Sir Ivor Philipps** (1861-1940), was a soldier, politician and businessman. On his mother's side of the family, Wogan Philipps was the great nephew of Hanning Speke, the African explorer.

Wogan Philipps was brought up in a wealthy family whose time was spent between their various houses: Llanstephan House, Llyswen, Radnorshire; a house near Berkeley Square in London; another house near Newmarket racecourse; an estate for shooting and fishing in Sutherland, Scotland; and a villa in the south of France. He was educated at Eton and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he read history for two years until his father decided that this was an unprofitable use of time. Sent to work with the Forestry Commission in India, Philipps was struck down with a severe attack of malaria. Brought home, he was placed to work in his father's insurance company, although he had little liking for office work. Forced by his father to break an unsuitable engagement, Philipps was sent on a sporting holiday to South America. On his return in 1925, he refused to return to the insurance business and his father sent him to learn the shipping business at the Newcastle firm of Walter Runciman, a family friend, whose son, Leslie, was a close friend to Wogan Philipps. Leslie Runciman had recently married Rosamond Lehmann but their relationship was already strained. Rosamond Runciman and Philipps became lovers and the relationship continued when he returned to London on the completion of his time at Newcastle. Eventually, Leslie Runciman divorced his wife and she married Wogan Philipps at a registry office on 21 November 1928.

Rosamond Philipps is better known as Rosamond Lehmann, the novelist, and she published her first novel to great acclaim shortly before her second marriage. Philipps's great ambition was to be an artist and **Sir Laurence** agreed in 1929 that he would subsidise his son for two years while he sought to establish himself as an artist.

In the same year, on 25 August, the young couple had a son, Hugo John Laurence, and they settled at Ipsden, in Oxfordshire, which brought them into the society of Lytton Strachey and the Bloomsbury circle. A violent altercation arose between Philipps and his father in 1931 when **Sir Laurence**'s patience ran out and he made a surprise visit to his son's studio. Taking great exception to the depiction of a nude woman, **Sir Laurence** wrote a furious letter to his son and received an equally angry letter in return. **Sir Laurence** stopped his son's allowance and Philipps resigned his directorship of the shipping company. Throughout his life, he nursed his ambition to be a successful artist but the critical response to a number of exhibitions of his work was lukewarm.

For the next few years, Philipps travelled a great deal: he toured Wales with **Augustus John** and visited Normandy, the Adriatic, Greece and Spain. Like many of his young fashionable friends, Philipps had worked to break the General Strike of 1926 but he was persuaded by London dockworkers that their cause was just. Throughout the early 1930s, his politics became more radical and he was strong in his support of the Republican cause when the Spanish Civil War began in 1936. He volunteered to assist Spanish Medical Aid and drove a lorry of supplies to Barcelona in February 1937. In the company of Stephen Spender, he went to Valencia, where he provided medical assistance during the Battle of Jarama. Later, he was attached as an ambulance driver to the Franco-Belge International Battalion; he was wounded on 7 May and returned home. Philipps provided more valuable assistance to the Republican government in Spain when he agreed to assist British ships in running the blockade of the Spanish ports. After the defeat of the Republicans in March 1939, Phillipps used his knowledge of shipping to charter the *SS Sinaia*, which took almost 2000 refugees to Mexico.

Relations with his family had not improved. Despite the birth of a daughter, Sarah Jane ('Sally') on 14 January 1934, Philipps and his wife had been on distant terms for some years. Rosamond Lehmann had a passionate affair with **Goronwy Rees** and was then involved with the poet, Cecil Day-Lewis. At the end of 1943, Phillipps divorced his wife and married, soon afterwards, Cristina, the former wife of the Earl of Huntingdon, daughter of the Marchese di Roma and his eccentric wife Luisa, and who was a Communist and former treasurer of Spanish Medical Aid. Infuriated that his son had joined the Communist Party and that he was both divorced and re-married, **Sir Laurence**, now **Lord Milford**, cancelled his son's allowance, for the last time and announced that he was to be disinherited.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Philipps's health prevented him from joining the armed forces; he was turned down by the Home Guard but for reasons of politics rather than health. He joined the Merchant Navy Reserve but did not serve. Wogan and Cristina Philipps turned to farming and acquired Butler's Farm, Colebourne, Cheltenham. He became the editor of the Communist Party's *Country Standard* and one of the party's agricultural experts. For a brief period, Phillipps was the only non-Tory member of Cirencester Rural District Council until the other members campaigned against his re-election. He worked with the Gloucestershire branch of the National Union of Farmworkers and he contested, as a Communist candidate, the Cirencester and Tewkesbury constituency in 1950 but received only 473 votes.

After Cristina Philipps died in 1953, he married, in the following year, Tamara Rust, the widow of William Rust, editor of *The Daily Worker*. His father died on 7 December 1962; in his will, he specified that if any beneficiary were a communist or a fellow-traveller, that person would forfeit any interest in the estate. Wogan Philipps became the 2nd Lord Milford but his son, Hugo, would receive the Llanstephan estate after the death of his grandmother. Communist Party sources claim that the party's leader, Harry Pollitt, persuaded the new Lord Milford to take his seat in the House of Lords. He made his maiden speech on 5 July 1963, during the second reading debate on the Peerage Bill, and argued for the complete abolition of the House of Lords. The next speaker conventionally congratulates the maiden speaker; Lord Attlee, the former Prime Minister, did so gracefully and remarked that the voice of the Communist Party could only be heard in the House of Lords, which was, he added, one of the advantages of the hereditary system. For the next twenty years, he contributed to debates on disarmament and international affairs. When he retired from farming in 1984, he moved to Hampstead, which enabled him to attend the House of Lords more easily. Lord Milford claimed that he was ostracised in the House but this was merely his humour, he was on affable terms with his fellow-Members.

Lord Milford was a tall, handsome man with perfect manners, who inspired much affection among his friends and acquaintances; he was not known as a clever man. He died on 30 November 1993 at Flat 2, 8 Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, and left an estate of £162,149. His widow arranged a memorial exhibition of his paintings. His son, Hugo Charles Laurence Philipps (27 August 1929 - 4 December 1999) became the 3rd Lord Milford. His daughter, Sally contracted polio and died young on 21 June 1957 while visiting Bali in Indonesia; her husband, the poet P. J. Kavanagh, wrote *A Perfect Stranger* (1966) in her memory.

Author

David Lewis Jones

Sources

Who was who? 1991-95

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

The Guardian, 3 December 1993

The Independent, 3 December 1993

The Times, 1 March, 5 July 1963, 2 December 1993

Wogan Phillips, *Communist Biographies Compendium*, accessed 5 February 2008

Selina Hastings, *Rosamond Lehmann* (2002)

Wogan Philipps, 'An ambulance man in Spain', *New Writing* new series 1 (Autumn 1938), 28-33

personal knowledge

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Q335851](#)

Additional Links

Wikidata: [_2nd_Baron_Milford](#)

Published date: 2009-03-26

Article Copyright: <http://rightsstatements.org/page/InC/1.0/>

PDF Print Cite

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is provided by The National Library of Wales and the University of Wales Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. It is free to use and does not receive grant support. A donation would help us maintain and improve the site so that we can continue to acknowledge Welsh men and women who have made notable contributions to life in Wales and beyond.

Find out more on our [sponsorship page](#).



APA Citation



Jones, D. L., (2009). PHILIPPS, WOGAN, 2nd Baron Milford (1902-1993), politician and artist. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 13 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s6-PHIL-WOG-1902>

Copy to Clipboard

Privacy & Cookies
Copyright
The Project
Help
Contact

LGC
NLW

LLYFRGEL
THE NATION



Nodiwr gan
Llywodraeth Cymru
Sponsored by
Welsh Government