

## **Robert Jocelyn, 1st Viscount Jocelyn (1688 – 1756)**

### *The Story of the First Viscount*

*This article is an addendum to my series of 'follow-ups' to my earlier article of November 2018 entitled 'Hyde Hall/Great Hyde Hall'. In these I have been writing about the residents of Hyde Hall, especially the Jocelyn family, and feel obliged to therefore write this article on the 1st Viscount, even though he was neither the owner nor a resident of Hyde Hall. Indeed, even though I feel positive that he would have visited his close relatives who lived there, I can find no evidence that he actually did so. He is, however, buried at Great St. Mary's church in Sawbridgeworth, and that is reason enough for this article.*

*Note. I have used the modern spelling of the Jocelyn surname throughout this particular article as it is the most common form in later records. However, it should be noted that other spellings such as 'Josselyn' are still present in some documents.*



*Robert Jocelyn, 1st Viscount Jocelyn*

Robert Jocelyn was born late in the year of 1688 and was baptised on 7 January 1689 at Great Waltham in Essex. He was the first known son of Thomas Jocelyn and his wife Anne (née Bray). (Anne Bray was the daughter of Thomas Bray of Westminster). Robert was, therefore, the paternal grandson of Sir Robert, 1st Baronet of Hyde Hall, who was one of the subjects of an earlier article of mine.

When still a young man, Robert studied law at the office of an attorney named Charles Salkeld in Brooke Street in Holborn, London. It was here that he became acquainted with Philip Yorke, 1st Earl of Hardwick. Philip Yorke was very well connected and was earmarked for great things, having received the patronage of the Lord Chancellor, and with Philip's friendship and patronage, the career of Robert Jocelyn also progressed apace.

In 1709 Robert became a student at Gray's Inn and he was called to the Irish Bar in January 1719. This, and Robert's subsequent Irish connections appear to have been at the instigation of, and with the support of, his friend Philip Yorke, and were to prove fruitful.

As was common in those days, Robert entered politics to further his career. From 1725 until 1727 he was the MP for Granard, County Longford, and from 1727 until 1739 he was the MP for Newtownards, County Down, both seats being in the Irish House of Commons. Further legal/political advancement was to follow, and on 4 May 1727 Robert became the Solicitor-General for Ireland and on 22 October 1730 he became the Attorney-General for Ireland. On 7 September 1739, at the specific request of his friend Philip Yorke, who had by now become Lord Chancellor of England, Robert was appointed Lord Chancellor of Ireland and the Speaker of the Irish House of Lords.

On 29 November 1743 Robert was created Baron Newport, and on 6 December 1755 he was created a Viscount. Both these awards being in the peerage of Ireland. In the last 20 or so years of his life, Robert preferred to reside in Ireland. He loved the countryside there and his favourite pastime was simply a recreational walk. In September 1756, he returned to England as his health had declined and he wished to recover. Sadly, this did not happen, and on 3 December 1756 Robert died in London aged 68. He was buried at Great St. Mary's church in Sawbridgeworth.

Robert married twice in his life. In 1720 he married Charlotte Anderson of Worcester. This was reportedly a happy marriage, Robert calling her 'The best of wives' (sic). They had one child, a son, also named Robert, who was born in 1731, and who was to later become the 2nd Viscount and the 1st Earl of Roden.



*Church of St. Peter in Dublin in the 19th century*

Sadly, Charlotte died on 23 February 1747. However, on 16 November 1754 at the church of St. Peter in Dublin, Robert married a second time to Frances Claxton (who was the widow of Richard Parsons, 1st Earl of Rosse). This marriage was, however, very short; Robert died in 1756, but Frances survived as his widow until her death on 25 May 1772.

Following his death, Robert's son (the 2nd Viscount) had a bust made by the famous sculptor John Bacon RA of his father and presented this to Great St. Mary's church, Sawbridgeworth, where it is still to be seen above the pulpit.



*Bust of Robert Jocelyn in Great St. Mary's church*

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December 2018.