

= Peter Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood =

Sir Peter Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood , 1st Baronet , (9 May 1801 ? 12 April 1866) was an English landowner , developer and Member of Parliament , who founded the town of Fleetwood , in Lancashire , England . Born Peter Hesketh , he changed his name by Royal assent to Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood , incorporating the name of his ancestors , and was later created Baronet Fleetwood . Predeceased by an older brother , he inherited estates in west Lancashire in 1824 . Inspired by the transport developments of the early 19th century , he decided to bring the railway to the Lancashire coast and develop a holiday resort and port . He hired architect Decimus Burton to design his new town , which he named Fleetwood ; construction began in 1836 . Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood was instrumental in the formation of the Preston and Wyre Railway Company and with his financial support , a railway line was built between Preston and Fleetwood which opened in 1840 .

Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood married twice and had several children , most of whom died in infancy . His new town flourished , but the expense of building it left him close to bankruptcy and forced him to sell most of his estates including Rossall Hall , which had been his family home . He left Lancashire and died in London , succeeded by his son Louis .

= = Early life and family = =

Peter Hesketh was born in 1801 at Wennington Hall , in Wennington , near Lancaster , the second son of Robert and Maria (née Rawlinson) Hesketh . He had an older brother , Edward , a younger brother , Charles , and a younger sister , Anna . He was descended (through his paternal grandmother) from the Fleetwood family who had owned the large Rossall estate in West Lancashire for over 200 years . Robert inherited the estate in 1819 on the death of his elder brother , Bold , and the family relocated to the manor house , Rossall Hall , on the Fylde coast . On Robert 's death in 1824 , the estate passed to Peter , his elder brother Edward having predeceased him in 1820 . By that time the family 's land extended from Heysham in the north , to North Meols , near Southport , in the south , and encompassed most of the Fylde .

Hesketh was educated , along with his younger brother Charles , at Trinity College , Oxford . Although Charles was a studious young man , who planned to enter the church on graduation , Peter had an active social life in both Oxford and London . He holidayed in southern resorts including St Leonards @-@ on @-@ Sea , a new development in Sussex , where he admired the work of architect James Burton . He became close friends with Burton 's son Decimus , who was also an architect . The two men were involved in the formation of London 's Athenaeum Club and Burton designed the club 's building in Pall Mall . Hesketh received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1823 and his Master of Arts degree in 1826 . That same year , he married Eliza Debonnaire Metcalfe , the daughter of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe , 2nd Baronet , commonly known by her middle name . Debonnaire 's father gave the couple a house in Dover , but they also spent time at the Rossall estate . The couple were very close to Charles and his new wife Anna , and their sister Anna , and her husband Thomas Knowlys . Charles was ordained in 1828 and as patron of St Chad 's Church in Poulton @-@ le @-@ Fylde , Peter presented his brother with that curacy .

Hesketh enjoyed looking after the Rossall estate (which had no steward or agent) , but struggled to keep on top of finances ; he was an indulgent landlord . He became an enthusiastic member of the Lancashire Agricultural Society and was concerned about the fate of local farm workers who were losing their jobs because of increased mechanisation . Hesketh was gradually becoming more interested in the lives and conditions of the working classes .

The Heskeths ' first child , Anna Maria (known as Maria to distinguish her from three close relatives named Anna) , was born in 1827 . Three more children ? named Metcalfe Bold , Debonnaire and Frances ? all died in infancy . In 1831 Hesketh changed his name by royal licence to Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood , incorporating the better @-@ known family name of his ancestors into his own . Debonnaire contracted tuberculosis and died in early 1833 . Shortly before Debonnaire 's death Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood contracted scarlet fever . This was followed by erysipelas , a bacterial

infection so severe that it necessitated the removal of one of his eyes . At the end of the year , the Rossall estate was severely flooded and suffered damage costing about £ 3 @, @ 000 to repair . Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood subsequently spent very little time at Rossall .

In 1837 in Belgium , Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood married Virginie Marie Garcia , the daughter of a Spanish nobleman . Maria , his daughter with Debonnaire , contracted tuberculosis and died in 1838 at Regent 's Park , aged 11 . She was interred in a glass coffin in the family vault at St Chad 's , Poulton . Around the same time as Maria 's death , Virginie gave birth to a son , Peter Louis . In 1841 , on the death of his aunt , Anna Maria Hesketh , Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood succeeded to Tulketh Hall in Preston .

= = Politics = =

Hesketh was appointed High Sheriff of Lancashire in 1830 . In 1831 he was invited to stand as a Tory Party candidate for the constituency of Preston . He had similar views to Tory statesman Robert Peel and readily agreed to stand . Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood opposed monopolies , slavery and capital punishment and was in favour of reforming the Corn Laws . At the 1832 general election , he was elected ? along with his friend , Henry Stanley ? Member of Parliament for Preston , in the first parliament following the Reform Act . He made his maiden speech to parliament in 1834 .

Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837 , and in June the following year Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood was knighted in the Coronation honours list and created Baronet Fleetwood . He remained MP for Preston until the 1847 general election , although towards the end of his parliamentary career he was recorded as a Liberal MP . In 1840 he translated Victor Hugo 's pamphlet , The Last Day of a Condemned Man , with a foreword entitled " Observations on capital punishment " that made clear Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood 's abolitionist stance on the issue .

= = Development of Fleetwood = =

As a student holidaying in coastal towns , Hesketh had become aware of the lack of resorts in Lancashire . He was concerned that the working classes of Lancashire could not afford to travel south for their holidays as wealthy people like him could . The number of railways in Great Britain steadily increased in the first half of the 19th century , and Hesketh was impressed by the arrival in 1828 of the steam locomotive in Lancashire . As High Sheriff of Lancashire , he attended the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway on 15 December 1830 . The event filled him with great excitement at the idea of bringing the railway to the coast and enabling Lancashire mill workers to take day @-@ trips to the seaside .

As he discussed the idea with his brother Charles , Hesketh soon realised that day @-@ trippers would need certain facilities that were not yet available , and decided that a new town would need to be built . He initially planned to site his town and railway terminus near the village of Thornton , but it was not close enough to the coast for his liking . He eventually decided on Rossall Point , a small peninsula north of Rossall Hall , at the mouth of the River Wyre , which was then an uninhabited rabbit warren . Although bleak and waterlogged , the area had views of Morecambe Bay and the Lake District .

Hesketh was influenced in the early planning stages by his friends , including mill owners Samuel Fielden and Benjamin Whitworth . They pointed out that mill workers would not wish to make day trips to the seaside all year round , and wondered how the people of the new town would be occupied during the winter months . They encouraged Hesketh to build a new port ; because charges at Liverpool were on the rise , and there were no reasonable alternatives for Manchester mill owners , both Whitworth and Fielden agreed that they would make good use of a port on the Fylde coast . Hesketh soon found that he was not the only one thinking of extending the railway , or of building a new port . He had competition from the residents of Lytham , a village about 13 miles (21 km) south of Rossall , at the mouth of the River Ribble . They were already planning the formation of the Preston Port Company ; Hesketh acted quickly and applied to the official railway committee to have a port built on the River Wyre . The committee agreed to hear all applications .

Charles met Frederick Kemp , a land agent newly arrived in Poulton from his native Essex , and introduced him to his brother , who was on the lookout for a steward or agent . Kemp , well dressed and charming , made a good impression on Hesketh , who employed him immediately . At the meeting of the railway committee Hesketh put forward a persuasive argument . Despite opposition from the Lytham contingent the committee decided that Rossall Point was the best place for the railway terminus to be built , and the Railway and Port Company was formed . In the early 19th century it was thought that steam locomotives would be unable to negotiate hilly terrain , and that Lake District hills like Shap Fell would prevent the railway from reaching Scotland . The Fylde terminus would have even more importance than Hesketh had hoped , providing a sea link for passengers from London to travel on to Scotland . Initially Hesketh had considered naming his new town New Liverpool or Wyreton , but after changing his name to Hesketh Fleetwood in 1831 he decided to call it Fleetwood . With a new career in parliament to prepare for , he readily handed over financial management of the project to his manager , Frederick Kemp .

After Debonnaire 's death in 1833 , Hesketh Fleetwood immersed himself in his development plans . Southport , a town he owned much of , was becoming a popular sea bathing resort , and Hesketh Fleetwood organised the construction of a promenade . He was becoming concerned over delays on the part of the Railway and Port Company and decided to get on with building Fleetwood . He hired his old friend Decimus Burton , who had become a successful architect , and together they discussed what buildings would be required . Hesketh Fleetwood wanted a church , docks , housing , a gas office , a school and a hotel . Burton agreed that a hotel would be important for passengers to spend the night before travelling on to Scotland . Because those passengers would be arriving from Euston railway station in London , Hesketh Fleetwood decided to call the hotel the North Euston Hotel . Burton 's plans were ready by 1835 .

In 1835 , still frustrated by the lack of activity on the part of the Railway and Port Company , Hesketh Fleetwood organised the formation of the Preston and Wyre Railway Company to raise the funds required to bring the railway to Fleetwood . The estimated cost was £ 122 ,000 . The company obtained Royal assent to start construction , with an underwritten guarantee from Hesketh Fleetwood . The following year Hesketh Fleetwood and Burton oversaw the marking out of Fleetwood 's first street , and the first railway lines were laid .

By 1838 it had become clear that construction costs for the town were spiralling out of control . To make matters worse , the railway 's engineer informed Hesketh Fleetwood that the cost of the railway was expected to exceed £ 300 ,000 . The company had also sold far fewer shares than had been hoped . Frederick Kemp was collecting rents and rates from tenants , and Hesketh Fleetwood repeatedly asked him for money to pay some of the mounting bills . Kemp , a more forceful character than his employer , kept claiming that there was no money . Hesketh Fleetwood turned to his brother Charles and asked him to get £ 4 ,000 out of Kemp . Charles was more assertive , but Kemp said that the money had been spent on workers ' wages and produced yet more invoices that needed to be paid . During Hesketh Fleetwood 's many absences from the Fylde , Kemp managed to involve himself in a number of enterprises in the town , to his own financial advantage . The railway was taking longer than expected and , with mounting debts , Hesketh Fleetwood grew increasingly depressed and began to withdraw from society .

Construction of the railway was finally completed in 1840 , and in July the Preston and Wyre Railway opened . The following year St Peter 's Church was finished , and Hesketh Fleetwood appointed as vicar the Rev. St. Vincent Beechey of Hilgay in Norfolk . Also in 1841 , the North Euston was the fourth hotel to open in the town . Steamer services opened to the Isle of Man , Whitehaven , Ardrossan and Belfast . Fleetwood initially flourished , but Hesketh Fleetwood had run out of money and was compelled to take out mortgages . He lost the £ 75 ,000 he had invested in the Preston and Wyre Railway Company owing to a lack of accounts . Kemp claimed that Hesketh Fleetwood owed him money , but Kemp refused to explain his book keeping . In the face of enormous debts Hesketh Fleetwood sold his estates at Blackpool , Southport , Meols Hall , and Tulketh Hall . Charles bought the Churchtown estate , where he and his wife had been living , from his brother . In 1844 Hesketh Fleetwood auctioned off his personal possessions from Rossall Hall and left Lancashire . The Rev. St. Vincent Beechey had set up the

Northern Church of England School for boys . Close to bankruptcy , Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood leased the buildings at Rossall Hall to the school for six years , with the option to buy it after nine for £ 7 @,@ 000 . Thereafter , the school was called Rossall School .

Fleetwood continued to grow without its principal investor , albeit slowly . As a port , it soon faced competition from Lytham and Preston . In 1847 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert travelled through Fleetwood on their way to London from Scotland , but that year saw the decline of the town 's importance on the route to Scotland . More powerful locomotives were now able to travel over hilly terrain , and the railway was extended over Shap Fell all the way to Scotland ; Fleetwood was no longer needed as a sea link .

= = Later life and death = =

Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood moved to London with Virginie and their son Louis . He rarely visited Lancashire again , and in 1847 he retired from politics . The family spent some time living in Virginie 's home country , Spain . In 1861 Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood expressed an intention to return to politics , but was prevented from doing so by his failing health . He died at his home in Piccadilly , London on 12 April 1866 , following a lengthy illness . He is buried at Kensal Green Cemetery . His son Rev. Peter Louis Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood (1838 ? 1880) succeeded to the baronetcy , which became extinct on his death . What was left of Hesketh @-@ Fleetwood 's land in Lancashire was bought by the Fleetwood Estate Company in 1875 .