Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery

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Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery, 1st Earl of Midlothian, KG, KT, PC, FRS, FBA (7 May 1847 – 21 May 1929) was a British Liberal politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from March 1894 to June 1895. Between the death of his father, in 1851, and the death of his grandfather, the 4th Earl of Rosebery, in 1868 he was known by the courtesy title of Lord Dalmeny.

Rosebery first came to national attention in 1879 by sponsoring the successful Midlothian campaign of William Ewart Gladstone. He briefly was in charge of Scottish affairs. His most successful performance in office came as chairman of the London County Council in 1889. He entered the cabinet in 1885 and served twice as foreign minister, paying special attention to French and German affairs. He succeeded Gladstone as prime minister and leader of the Liberal Party in 1894; the Liberals lost the 1895 election. He resigned the party leadership in 1896 and never again held political office.

Rosebery was widely known as a brilliant orator, an outstanding sportsman and marksman, a writer and historian, connoisseur and collector. All of these activities attracted him more than politics, which grew boring and unattractive. Furthermore, he drifted to the right of the Liberal party and became a bitter critic of its policies. Winston Churchill, observing that he never adapted to democratic electoral competition, quipped: "He would not stoop; he did not conquer."

Rosebery was a Liberal Imperialist who favoured strong national defence and imperialism abroad and social reform at home, while being solidly anti-socialist. Historians judge him a failure as foreign minister and as prime minister.

Origins and early life

• Lord Dalmeny was a courtesy title used by the Earl's eldest son and heir apparent, during the Earl's lifetime, and was one of the Earl's lesser Scottish titles.

• His father was

Archibald Primrose, Lord Dalmeny (1809–1851), son and heir apparent to Archibald Primrose, 4th Earl of Rosebery (1783–1868), whom he predeceased.

Archibald Philip Primrose was born on 7 May 1847 in his parents' house in Charles Street, Mayfair, London. His father was

Archibald Primrose, Lord Dalmeny (1809–1851), son and heir apparent to Archibald Primrose, 4th Earl of Rosebery (1783–1868), whom he predeceased. Lord Dalmeny was a courtesy title used by the Earl's eldest son and heir apparent, during the Earl's lifetime, and was one of the Earl's lesser Scottish titles. Lord Dalmeny (died 1851) was MP for Stirling from 1832 to 1847 and served as First Lord of the Admiralty under Lord Melbourne.

Rosebery's mother was Lady (Catherine Lucy) Wilhelmina Stanhope (1819–1901), a historian who later wrote under her second married name "the Duchess of Cleveland", a daughter of Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl Stanhope. Lord Dalmeny died on 23 January 1851, having predeceased his father, when the courtesy title passed to his son, the future Rosebery, as the new heir to the earldom. In 1854 his mother remarried to Lord Harry Vane (later after 1864 known as Harry Powlett, 4th Duke of Cleveland). The relationship between mother and son was very poor. His elder and favourite sister Lady Leconfield was the wife of Henry Wyndham, 2nd Baron Leconfield.

Education and youth

• Remarkably the three Prime Ministers from 1880 to 1902, namely Gladstone, Salisbury and Rosebery, all attended both Eton and Christ Church.

• Rosebery toured the United States in 1873, 1874 and 1876.

Dalmeny attended preparatory schools in Hertfordshire and Brighton and then Eton which he attended between 1860 and 1863; he then went to Brighton College between 1863 and 1865. His remarkable intellect, displayed in debates, attracted the attention of William Johnson Cory. Dalmeny proceeded to Christ Church, Oxford, through the years 1865 until 1869. Remarkably the three Prime Ministers from 1880 to 1902, namely Gladstone, Salisbury and Rosebery, all attended both Eton and Christ Church. Whilst at Christ Church, in 1868 Dalmeny bought a horse named Ladas, although a rule banned undergraduates from owning horses. When he was found out, he was offered a choice: to sell the horse or to give up his studies. He chose the latter, and subsequently was a prominent figure in British horseracing for 40 years.

Rosebery toured the United States in 1873, 1874 and 1876. He was pressed to marry Marie Fox, the sixteen-year-old adopted daughter of Henry Fox, 4th Baron Holland. She declined him and later married Prince Louis of Liechtenstein.

Succession to earldom

• When his grandfather died in 1868, Dalmeny became 5th Earl of Rosebery.

• However, in 1828, Rosebery's grandfather had been created 1st Baron Rosebery in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, which did entitle Rosebery to sit in the Lords like all peers of the United Kingdom, and barred him from a career in the House of Commons.

When his grandfather died in 1868, Dalmeny became 5th Earl of Rosebery. The earldom did not however entitle Archibald Primrose to sit in the House of Lords, nor disqualify him from sitting in the House of Commons, as the title is part of the old Peerage of Scotland, from which 16 members (representative peers) were elected to sit in the Lords for each session of Parliament. However, in 1828, Rosebery's grandfather had been created 1st Baron Rosebery in the Peerage of the United Kingdom, which did entitle Rosebery to sit in the Lords like all peers of the United Kingdom, and barred him from a career in the House of Commons.[citation needed]

Career

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Early political career

• Rosebery Avenue in Clerkenwell is named after him.

• Rosebery served as Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's brief third ministry in 1886.

• Benjamin Disraeli often met with Rosebery in the 1870s to try to recruit him for his party, but this proved futile.

• Disraeli's major rival, William Ewart Gladstone, also pursued Rosebery, with considerable success.

At Eton, Rosebery notably attacked Charles I of England for his despotism, and went on to praise his Whig forebears – his ancestor, James Stanhope, 1st Earl Stanhope, was a minister to George I of Great Britain. Benjamin Disraeli often met with Rosebery in the 1870s to try to recruit him for his party, but this proved futile. Disraeli's major rival, William Ewart Gladstone, also pursued Rosebery, with considerable success.

As part of the Liberal plan to get Gladstone to be MP for Midlothian, Rosebery sponsored and largely ran the Midlothian Campaign of 1879. He based this on what he had observed in elections in the United States. Gladstone spoke from open-deck trains, and gathered mass support. In 1880, he was duly elected Member for Midlothian and returned to the premiership.

Rosebery served as Foreign Secretary in Gladstone's brief third ministry in 1886. He served as the first chairman of the London County Council, set up by the Conservatives in 1889. Rosebery Avenue in Clerkenwell is named after him.

He served as President of the first day of the 1890 Co-operative Congress.

Rosebery's second period as Foreign Secretary, 1892–1894, predominantly involved quarrels with France over Uganda. To quote his hero Napoleon, Rosebery thought that "the Master of Egypt is the Master of India"; thus he pursued the policy of expansion in Africa.[citation needed]

Rosebery helped Gladstone's Second Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords; nevertheless it was defeated overwhelmingly in the autumn of 1893. The first bill had been defeated in the House of Commons in 1886.

Prime Minister

• Rosebery became a leader of the Liberal Imperialist faction of the Liberal Party and when Gladstone retired, in 1894, Rosebery succeeded him as Prime Minister, much to the disgust of Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the more left-wing Liberals.

• The added pressure weakened Rosebery.

Rosebery became a leader of the Liberal Imperialist faction of the Liberal Party and when Gladstone retired, in 1894, Rosebery succeeded him as Prime Minister, much to the disgust of Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the more left-wing Liberals. Rosebery's selection was largely because Queen Victoria disliked most of the other leading Liberals. Rosebery was in the Lords, but Harcourt controlled the Commons, where he often undercut the prime minister. Rosebery was the only one of the ten Prime Ministers to serve during Queen Victoria's reign who was born after her accession to the throne in 1837.

Rosebery's government was largely unsuccessful, as in the Armenian crisis of 1895–96. He spoke out for a strongly pro-Armenian and anti-Turkish policy. Gladstone, a prime minister in retirement, called on Britain to intervene alone. The added pressure weakened Rosebery.

His designs in foreign policy, such as expansion of the fleet, were defeated by disagreements within the Liberal Party. He angered all the European powers.

The Unionist-dominated House of Lords stopped the whole of the Liberals' domestic legislation. The strongest figure in the cabinet was Rosebery's rival, Harcourt.[citation needed] He and his son Lewis were perennial critics of Rosebery's policies. There were two future prime ministers in the Cabinet, Home Secretary H. H. Asquith, and Secretary of State for War Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Rosebery rapidly lost interest in running the government. In the last year of his premiership, he was increasingly haggard: he suffered insomnia due to the continual dissension in his Cabinet.[citation needed]

On 21 June 1895, the government lost a vote in committee on army supply by just seven votes. While this might have been treated merely as a vote of no confidence in Secretary for War Campbell-Bannerman, Rosebery chose to treat it as a vote of censure on his government. On 22 June, he and his ministers tendered their resignations to the Queen, who invited the Unionist leader, Lord Salisbury, to form a government. The following month, the Unionists won a crushing victory in the 1895 general election, and held power for ten years (1895–1905) under Salisbury and Arthur Balfour. Rosebery remained the Liberal leader for another year, then permanently retired from politics.

Lord Rosebery's government, March 1894 – June 1895

• Lord Herschell – Lord Chancellor

• Lord Spencer – First Lord of the Admiralty

• Lord Tweedmouth – Lord Privy Seal

• Lord Rosebery – First Lord of the Treasury, Lord President of the Council, and Leader of the House of Lords

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Lord Herschell – Lord Chancellor

Lord Tweedmouth – Lord Privy Seal

H. H. Asquith – Secretary of State for the Home Department

Lord Kimberley – Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Lord Ripon – Secretary of State for the Colonies

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman – Secretary of State for War

Sir Henry Hartley Fowler – Secretary of State for India

Sir William Harcourt – Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons

Lord Spencer – First Lord of the Admiralty

Anthony John Mundella – President of the Board of Trade

Arnold Morley – Postmaster-General

George John Shaw-Lefevre – President of the Local Government Board

James Bryce – Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

John Morley – Chief Secretary for Ireland

Sir George Otto Trevelyan – Secretary for Scotland

Sir Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland – Vice-President of the Council

Changes

• Lord Tweedmouth succeeds Bryce at the Duchy of Lancaster, remaining also Lord Privy Seal.

May 1894: James Bryce succeeds A. J. Mundella at the Board of Trade. Lord Tweedmouth succeeds Bryce at the Duchy of Lancaster, remaining also Lord Privy Seal.[citation needed]

Rosebery caricatured by Spy for Vanity Fair, 1901

Later life

Liberal Imperialists

• Rosebery’s acolytes, including H H Asquith and Edward Grey, regularly implored him to return as party leader and even Campbell-Bannerman said he would serve under Rosebery, if he accepted fundamental Liberal party doctrine.

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Rosebery resigned as leader of the Liberal Party on 6 October 1896, to be succeeded by Harcourt and gradually moved further and further from the mainstream of the party. With the Liberals in opposition divided over the Boer War which started in 1899, Rosebery, although officially politically inactive, emerged as the head of the “Liberal Imperialists” faction of the party, opposed to Irish Home rule. He supported the war, and brought along many nonconformists likewise. However the war was opposed by a younger faction of Liberals, including David Lloyd George and the party leader Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Rosebery’s acolytes, including H H Asquith and Edward Grey, regularly implored him to return as party leader and even Campbell-Bannerman said he would serve under Rosebery, if he accepted fundamental Liberal party doctrine. In a much trailed speech to the Chesterfield Liberal Association in December 1901, Rosebery was widely expected to announce his return but instead delivered what Harcourt's son and private secretary Loulou described as, “an insult to the whole past of the Liberal party,” by telling the party to, “clean its slate.” In 1902 Rosebery was installed as president of the newly formed “Liberal League” which superseded the Liberal Imperialist League and counted amongst its vice presidents Asquith and Grey.

1905 onwards

• Rosebery's positions made it impossible to join the Liberal government that returned to power in 1905.

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• The last years of his political life saw Rosebery become a purely negative critic of the Liberal governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith.

Rosebery's positions made it impossible to join the Liberal government that returned to power in 1905. Rosebery turned to writing, including biographies of Lord Chatham, Pitt the Younger, Napoleon, and Lord Randolph Churchill. Another one of his passionate interests was the collecting of rare books.

The last years of his political life saw Rosebery become a purely negative critic of the Liberal governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith. His crusade "for freedom as against bureaucracy, for freedom as against democratic tyranny, for freedom as against class legislation, and ... for freedom as against Socialism" was a lonely one, conducted from the crossbenches in the Lords. He joined the die-hard unionist peers in attacking Lloyd George's redistributive People's Budget in 1909 but stopped short of voting against the measure for fear of bringing retribution upon the Lords. The crisis provoked by the Lords' rejection of the budget encouraged him to reintroduce his resolutions for Lords reform, but they were lost with the dissolution of parliament in December 1910.

After assaulting the "ill-judged, revolutionary and partisan" terms of the 1911 Parliament Bill, which proposed to curb the Lords' veto, he voted with the government in what proved to be his last appearance in the House of Lords. This was effectively the end of his public life, though he made several public appearances to support the war effort after 1914 and sponsored a "bantam battalion" in 1915. Though Lloyd George offered him "a high post not involving departmental labour" to augment his 1916 coalition, Rosebery declined to serve.

Death and burial

• The last year of the war was clouded by two personal tragedies: his son Neil's death in Palestine in November 1917 and Rosebery's own stroke a few days before the armistice.

• Rosebery died at The Durdans, Epsom, Surrey, on 21 May 1929, to the accompaniment, as he had requested, of a gramophone recording of the Eton Boating Song.

The last year of the war was clouded by two personal tragedies: his son Neil's death in Palestine in November 1917 and Rosebery's own stroke a few days before the armistice. He regained his mental powers, but his movement, hearing, and sight remained impaired for the rest of his life. His sister Constance described his last years as a "life of weariness, of total inactivity, and at the last of almost blindness". John Buchan remembered him in his last month of life, "crushed by bodily weakness" and "sunk in sad and silent meditations".

Rosebery died at The Durdans, Epsom, Surrey, on 21 May 1929, to the accompaniment, as he had requested, of a gramophone recording of the Eton Boating Song. Survived by three of his four children, he was buried in the small church at Dalmeny. By the time of his death, he was the last Victorian-era British Prime Minister alive.

His estate was probated at £1,500,122 3s. 6d.; (equivalent to £89,573,000 in 2018) and he was thus the richest prime minister ever, followed by Salisbury, then by Palmerston.[citation needed]

Marriage

• It was also speculated that Rosebery was homosexual or bisexual.

• Queensberry believed, as he put it in a letter, that "Snob Queers like Rosebery" had corrupted his sons, and he held Rosebery indirectly responsible for Drumlanrig's death.

• It was speculated at the time, and indeed evidence suggests, that Drumlanrig may have had a romantic or sexual relationship with Rosebery.

On 20 March 1878 in the Board of Guardians in Mount Street, London, at the age of 31 Rosebery married the 27-year-old Hannah de Rothschild (1851–1890), only child and sole heiress of the Jewish banker Mayer Amschel de Rothschild, and the wealthiest British heiress of her day. Her father had died four years previously in 1874, and bequeathed to her the bulk of his estate. Later on the same day the marriage was blessed in a Christian ceremony in Christ Church, Down Street, Piccadilly.

In January 1878 Rosebery had told a friend that he found Hannah "very simple, very unspoilt, very clever, very warm-hearted and very shy ... I never knew such a beautiful character." Both Queen Victoria's son the Prince of Wales and her cousin, the army commander George, Duke of Cambridge attended the ceremony. Hannah's death in 1890 from typhoid, compounded by Bright's disease, left him distraught.

Following his wife's death it was speculated that Rosebery intended to marry the widowed Princess Helena, Duchess of Albany, widow of Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, 4th son of Queen Victoria.

It was also speculated that Rosebery was homosexual or bisexual. Like Oscar Wilde, he was hounded by John Douglas, 9th Marquess of Queensberry, for his association with Francis Douglas, Viscount Drumlanrig, one of Queensberry's sons – who was his private secretary.

On 18 October 1894, sixteen months after his ennoblement, Drumlanrig died from injuries received during a shooting party. The inquest returned a verdict of "accidental death", but his death was rumoured potentially to be suicide or murder. It was speculated at the time, and indeed evidence suggests, that Drumlanrig may have had a romantic or sexual relationship with Rosebery. The suggestion was that Queensberry had threatened to expose the Prime Minister if his government did not vigorously prosecute Wilde for Wilde's relationship with Drumlanrig's younger brother, Lord Alfred Douglas. Queensberry believed, as he put it in a letter, that "Snob Queers like Rosebery" had corrupted his sons, and he held Rosebery indirectly responsible for Drumlanrig's death.

Progeny

• Albert Edward Harry Meyer Archibald Primrose, 6th Earl of Rosebery known as Harry (8 January 1882 – 30 May 1974) he married Lady Dorothy Grosvenor (granddaughter of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor, 1st Duke of Westminster through his third son Lord Henry Grosvenor) on 15 April 1909 and was divorced from her in 1919.

By his wife Hannah de Rothschild, Rosebery had two sons and two daughters, with whom, according to Margot Asquith, he loved to play:

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Neil James Archibald Primrose (14 December 1882 – 18 November 1917) he married Lady Victoria Stanley (daughter Edward Stanley, 17th Earl of Derby) on 7 April 1915. They had one daughter: Ruth Wood, Countess of Halifax.

Lady Sybil Primrose (1879–25 February 1955) she married General Sir Charles Grant on 28 March 1903. They had one son.

Lady Margaret "Peggy" , Etrenne Hannah Primrose (1881–13 March 1967) she married Robert Crewe-Milnes, 1st Marquess of Crewe on 20 April 1899. They had two children.

Sporting interests

Horse racing

• Rosebery won several of the five English Classic Races.

• Rosebery built another stable and stud near Mentmore Towers at Crafton, Buckinghamshire, called Crafton Stud.

• His most famous horses were Ladas who won the 1894 Derby, Sir Visto who did it again in 1895 (Rosebery was Prime Minister on both occasions), and Cicero in 1905.

As a result of his marriage to Hannah de Rothschild, Rosebery acquired the Mentmore Towers estate and Mentmore stud near Leighton Buzzard which had been built by Mayer Amschel de Rothschild. Rosebery built another stable and stud near Mentmore Towers at Crafton, Buckinghamshire, called Crafton Stud.

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Football

• In 1882 he donated a trophy, the Rosebery Charity Cup, to be competed for by clubs under the jurisdiction of the East of Scotland Football Association.

• This occurred 9 times during Rosebery's lifetime, most notably for the 1900 British Home Championship match against England, which the Scots won 4–1.

Rosebery became the first president of the London Scottish Rugby Football Club in 1878, also developed a keen interest in association football and was an early patron of the sport in Scotland. In 1882 he donated a trophy, the Rosebery Charity Cup, to be competed for by clubs under the jurisdiction of the East of Scotland Football Association. The competition lasted over 60 years and raised thousands of pounds for charities in the Edinburgh area.

Rosebery also became Honorary President of the national Scottish Football Association, with the representative Scotland national team and Honorary President of Heart of Midlothian FC. The national team occasionally forsook their traditional dark blue shirts for his traditional racing colours of primrose and pink. This occurred 9 times during Rosebery's lifetime, most notably for the 1900 British Home Championship match against England, which the Scots won 4–1. These colours were used for the away kit of the Scotland national team in 2014 and were Heart of Midlothian's away colours for season 2016/17.

Literary interests

• Rosebery unveiled the statue of Robert Burns in Dumfries on 6 April 1882.

He was a keen collector of fine books and amassed an excellent library. It was sold on 29 October 2009 at Sothebys, New Bond Street. Rosebery unveiled the statue of Robert Burns in Dumfries on 6 April 1882.

Landholdings

• As Earl of Rosebery, he was laird of:

• Rosebery was the owner of twelve houses.

Rosebery was the owner of twelve houses. By marriage, he acquired:

Mentmore Towers in Buckinghamshire, a huge neo-Renaissance stately home, sold in the 1970s

Number 40, Piccadilly, in London.

With his fortune, he bought:

a shooting lodge at Carrington in Midlothian

a Georgian villa at Postwick in Norfolk

In 1897, he bought Villa Delahente in Posillipo, overlooking the Bay of Naples, currently an official residence of the President of the Italian Republic, still known as Villa Rosebery

38 Berkeley Square, London

The Durdans, Epsom, where he died in 1929.

As Earl of Rosebery, he was laird of:

Dalmeny House on the banks of the Firth of Forth (pictured)

Barnbougle Castle in the grounds of Dalmeny Estate, used by Rosebery (an insomniac) for privacy.

He rented:

a home in Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh, during World War I

Lansdowne House, in London, from the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Place-name tributes

• The former township of Rosebery in South Australia (now part of Collinswood) was named for him, as was modern-day Rosebery Lane in Collinswood.

• Rosebery House, Epsom College, in Epsom, is named after him.

• In October 1895, Lord Rosebery opened the new Liberal Club on Westborough, in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, only months after being Prime Minister.

The Oatlands area in the South Side of Glasgow was laid out in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, contemporary with Rosebery's most prominent period. Several of the street names have an association with him or areas around his estate to the northwest of Edinburgh: Rosebery Street, Dalmeny Street, Queensferry Street, Granton Street and Cramond Street.

In London, Rosebery avenue passing through Clerkenwell was named after him, in recognition of his service as the London County Council's first chairman.

Rosebery, New South Wales, a suburb of Sydney, is named after him. A major street, Dalmeny Avenue, runs through the area. Rosebery, Tasmania is also named after him, via the name of a mining company. Dalmeny, New South Wales, a suburb on the New South Wales South Coast, is named after him. Roseberry Avenue in the suburb of South Perth, Western Australia, is also named after him. The former township of Rosebery in South Australia (now part of Collinswood) was named for him, as was modern-day Rosebery Lane in Collinswood.

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In October 1895, Lord Rosebery opened the new Liberal Club on Westborough, in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, only months after being Prime Minister. The building now houses a Wetherspoons, which is named in his honour.

Ancestry

• Rosebery in the north west of Victoria, some 15 kms south of Hopetoun is also named after him

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See also

• In his fraudulent memoirs, Sir Edmund Backhouse, 2nd Baronet claimed to be Rosebery's lover.

Lady Stair's House

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External links

• Hansard 1803–2005: contributions in Parliament by the Earl of Rosebery

• Works by Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks)

• "Archival material relating to Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery".

• "Rosebery, Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of" .

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More about The Earl of Roseberry on the Downing street website.

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Works by Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks)

Portraits of Archibald Philip Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery at the National Portrait Gallery, London

Newspaper clippings about Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery in the 20th Century Press Archives of the German National Library of Economics (ZBW)