

AUSTRALIAN JOINT COPYING PROJECT

PEREGRINE MASSINGBERD

Journal, 1832-33

Reel M719

**Mrs J. Massingberd Campbell
45 Bramham Gardens
London SW5**

**National Library of Australia
State Library of New South Wales**

Filmed: 1968

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Peregrine Langton Massingberd (1780-1856) was the second son of Bennet Langton (c. 1736-1801), a writer, scholar and friend of Samuel Johnson. He grew up at Langton Hall, an Elizabethan house near Spilsby, Lincolnshire. In 1802 he married an heiress, Elizabeth Massingberd, the only child of Henry Massingberd (d. 1784) of Gunby Hall, which was also near Spilsby. In accordance with Henry Massingberd's will, Langton adopted the name of Massingberd.

Massingberd and his wife at first lived at Gunby Hall, which had been built in 1700 by Sir Henry Massingberd. In order to reduce expenses, they moved to Bath in 1807, letting Gunby Hall to George Phillipps. From 1814 onwards they lived for long periods in Europe. Massingberd returned to England in 1827, but Elizabeth refused to leave Paris and they remained separated from then on. In 1829 he moved to Mannheim in Germany. In 1831 he met his eldest son, Algernon Massingberd (1803-1844) and agreed that Algernon should take charge of the Gunby estate, on condition that he should assist his mother, pay off all his father's debts, give him an allowance of £150 a year, and provide a marriage portion for his sister.

In 1831 Massingberd's eldest daughter Mary (d.1851) married William Hastings Neville, the son of General Charles Neville. In the following year they decided to emigrate to Van Diemen's Land, where Neville had hopes of obtaining a military position. They were accompanied by their baby son and also Mary's father and her sister Margaret. They arrived in the colony in December 1832 but, although Massingberd was well-received by leading figures such as Anthony Kemp and John Batman, their stay was a short one. Neville was accused of presenting a forged letter of credit and he and his wife decided to leave the colony immediately. Without financial resources of his own, Massingberd reluctantly accompanied them. They departed in May 1833 and arrived back in England in September.

Following his return to England, Massingberd gave up all claims to the Gunby estate in return for the payment of all his debts. He lived in Guernsey for many years and later in Exeter in Devon. On the death of Algernon in 1844, the ownership of Gunby passed to Peregrine's grandson, known as 'Naughty Algernon', and after his death in 1855 it passed to Peregrine's other son Charles Massingberd. In later years Mary Neville, who was abandoned by her husband, was a close friend of Alfred Tennyson and his sister Mary. There are portraits of Massingberd, Mary Neville and Hastings Neville at Gunby Hall, which is now owned by the National Trust.

Journal of Peregrine Massingberd

Massingberd seems to have begun keeping a journal in 1806. The 1832-33 journal is the last of nine surviving journals. They form part of the extensive Massingberd Family archives which is now held at the Lincolnshire Archives, St Rumbold Street, Lincoln LN2 5AB.

PEREGRINE MASSINGBERD

Reel M719

Journal of Peregrine Massingberd kept on a voyage from London to Hobart, during his stay in Van Diemen's Land, and on his return voyage to England, 18 June 1832 – 22 September 1833. (481pp)

Although the journal starts with the departure from London on the ship *Edward Lombe* (Capt. W. Freeman), Massingberd devoted many pages to the events preceding the voyage. They include the depressed economic conditions resulting in loss of income, his disputes with his son Algernon and Sir Gregory Lewis over the management of the Gunby estates, financial arrangements with his son, his departure from Mannheim and visits to Rotterdam and Paris, where he met his estranged wife Elizabeth, her refusal to consider a reconciliation despite her financial distress, his decision to join his daughter Mary and her husband Hastings Neville on the voyage to Australia, and the inclusion of his younger daughter Margaret in the party. There are also references to his friend Anthony Bacon (1796-1864), who in 1831 submitted a proposal for the establishment of a colony in southern Australia, with Bacon as the governor. Bacon and his wife Lady Charlotte farewelled Massingberd in London, but two months later the Colonial Office rejected Bacon's scheme.

Although Massingberd did not write daily entries, his journal is extremely detailed and the account of the voyage to Van Diemen's Land takes up over 100 pages. He refers to living conditions on the ship, fellow cabin passengers, fears of the spread of cholera, threats of a mutiny by members of the crew, the sighting of ships and the coast of Madeira, his impressions of Porto Praya in the Cape Verde Islands, church services, his relations with the captain, conversations with the surgeon and with other passengers, the sighting of dolphins, flying fish and albatrosses, the monotony of the voyage, crossing the Line festivities (25 Aug. 1832), shortages of provisions, the arrival at Cape Town (9 Oct. 1832), his impressions of the town, a trip to Haut Bay and Weinberg, the museum and public library, South African fauna, charges made against the captain, storms and high seas in the Indian Ocean, damage caused by a wild sea and the distress of his daughter Mary and her baby son, the characters and behaviour of cabin and steerage passengers, the sighting of Van Diemen's Land, views from the Derwent River, and the arrival at Hobart (9 Dec. 1832). Scattered among the entries are long passages about his relations with Hastings Neville, including verbatim records of arguments.

The second part of the journal (pp 132-270) begins with Massingberd's impressions of Hobart and records his difficult relations with Hastings Neville and his concerns about Mary's unhappiness, his journey into the interior unaccompanied by his family, his visits to the farms of Anthony Kemp and John Batman near Ben Lomond, encounters with Aborigines, their mimicry of John Glover ascending and descending Ben Lomond, Massingberd's meeting with Glover and inspection of his paintings, Glover's account of his one meeting with Sir Joshua Reynolds, meetings with the Gray Family of Campbelltown and with the surveyor George Frankland, Massingberd's annoyance at reports of Neville's purchase of a property near Hobart, Neville's negotiations with Henry Jellicoe, accusations that Neville had presented a forged bill for £6000, Massingberd's visit to the township of Brighton and dealings with Frederick Roper, a convict church service, his opposition to the decision of Neville

to return to England, the climate, the beauty of the countryside and fertility of the soil. The stay in Van Diemen's Land ends with another crisis: the report that a marine from HMS *Imogene*, Charles Desborough, was courting Margaret Massingberd (aged 15), her confirmation of their engagement, the arrest of Desborough, Massingberd's conversations with Governor Arthur and John Pedder, the chief justice, his meeting with Desborough at Mulgrave Battery and the eventual surrender of Margaret's letters by Desborough.

The third part (pp 270-466) begins with the departure of the Massingberds and Nevilles from Hobart on the *Duckenfield* (Capt. A. Riddell) (25 May 1833). Although it is a long section, there are relatively few passages dealing with the actual voyage, which was quite uneventful. There are references to conversations with the captain, games of bridge and chess, books, Massingberd's reading of the diary of Samuel Pepys, the weather, storms, sightings of birds, porpoises, Cape pigeons and fishes, mountainous seas near Cape Horn, fellow-passengers, the sighting of the Azores, and the final arrival at Margate (22 Sept. 1833). In general, in writing the later entries in the journal, Massingberd was preoccupied with the events that had taken place in Van Diemen's Land, his relations with his daughters and Hastings Neville, the villainous character of Neville, the nature of Mary's marriage, Margaret's decision to return to her mother in France, and Massingberd's fears about his future life and the likely reaction of friends to his sudden return to England. There is one passage on the growth of Van Diemen's Land, its economy, the landscape and towns, birds and animals, trees and climate (pp 325-42). There are also occasional recollections of his earlier life and religious reflections.

Although the journal essentially ends in September 1833, there are a few later entries, extending to 24 May 1839, in which Massingberd refers to a meeting with his son Algernon in Guernsey, the agreement about the ownership of Gunby and the settlement of debts, and the consolations of religion. It is followed by an appendix (pp 473-75) written many years later, in March 1854, in which Massingberd touches on his life in Guernsey and Exeter, travels in Europe, the deaths of Elizabeth Massingberd, three of their children and also Hastings Neville, and his relations with his grandchildren. At the end of the volume are plans of the *Duckenfield* and *Edward Lombe*, sketches of the *Duckenfield* and a cabin, and a summary index of the first part of the journal.