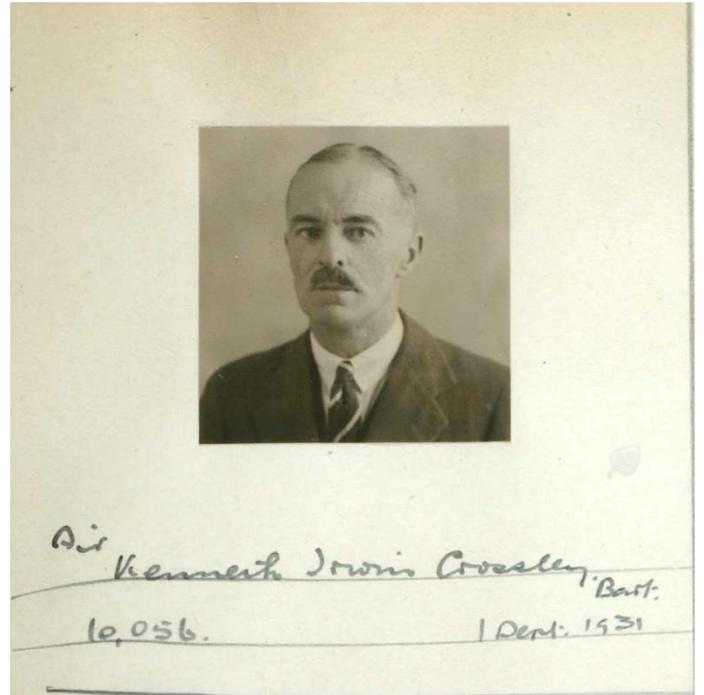


Sir Kenneth Irwin Crossley 1877-1957

Kenneth Crossley is one of Mobberley's more interesting residents. He was born at Dunham Massey in 1877 and moved to Mobberley New Hall (Now Barclay Hall/Sunrise Living) around 1910. He was the son of Sir William John Crossley



Sir William John Crossley, Bart. was born at Dunmurry, near Lisburn, County Antrim, Ireland, on 22nd April 1844, being the second son of the late Major Francis Crossley, formerly in the service of the East India Company.

He received his early education in Ireland, and from there he went to Bonn, in Prussia; at the age of nineteen he entered the Elswick Works of Sir William Armstrong, where he received a four year s' course of training.

In 1867 Francis William Crossley, with help from his uncle, bought the engineering business from John M Dunlop & Co at Great Marlborough Street in Manchester City Centre. The business included the manufacture of pumps, presses and small steam engines. William joined his brother Francis, concentrating on the business side while Frank provided the engineering expertise. The brothers were committed Christians and strictly teetotal, refusing to supply their products to companies such as breweries, whom they did not approve of. They adopted the early Christian symbol of the Coptic Cross as the emblem to use on the road vehicles they later manufactured. The business was carried on for some years, but without much success; indeed, it almost ended disastrously. They also devoted some of their energies to improvements in flax-scutching machinery.

In spite of their temporary failure, however, the brothers stood together, and their determination met with reward, for soon afterwards — in 1876 — the English patent rights of the Otto gas-engine were secured by them. They set themselves to improve upon Dr. Otto's designs, and succeeded in their business



to such an extent that more extensive premises had to be found. Land was acquired in Openshaw, and extensions were made from time to time until, at the present day, the works cover an area of about nine acres.

In 1881 the business was converted into a private company, and at the death of Francis Crossley in 1897, it was formed into a public company. Sir William and his brother devoted much of their leisure and wealth to philanthropic work in Manchester, and for a long period he was chairman of the Manchester Hospital for Consumption. At his own cost he extended the accommodation of the Convalescent Home at Bowdon, in Cheshire, and his interest in the work was further proved by his gift of £70,000 for the erection of the Sanatorium in Delamere Forest for the reception of consumptive patients from Manchester and other Lancashire towns.

In 1901 he was elected is member of the Cheshire County Council, and devoted much useful work to the improvement of technical education under the County Authority. He was one of the promoters of the Manchester Ship Canal, and afterwards became a director of this undertaking.

In 1903 the Corporation of Manchester conferred upon him the freedom of the city; and in 1906 he was elected Member of Parliament for the Altrincham Division of Cheshire. He, however, lost the seat at the election in December 1910. He was a Justice of the Peace for Manchester and Cheshire.

In 1906 Crossley Motors was registered as the vehicle manufacturing arm of Crossley Brothers.

In 1909 he received a Baronetcy, in which he is succeeded by the eldest of his three sons—Mr. Kenneth Irwin Crossley.

His death took place after an operation, in Manchester, on 12th October 1911, at the age of sixty-seven.

He became a Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 1875.

He married Mabel Gordon eldest daughter of the late Surgeon Francis Anderson, Inspector general, Hospitals India.

Sir Kenneth Irwin Crossley inherited the baronetcy on the death of his father in 1911. He was appointed a JP in Cheshire and served as High Sherriff 1919. He became Chairman of Crossley Brothers Ltd and Crossley Motors Ltd and also served as a Director of William Deacon's Bank Ltd. In 1901 he married Florence Josephine daughter of Joseph Nash Field, Chicago USA at Dunham Massey. Eton (Biology & Physiology prize 1895). He went to Magdalen College Oxford where he rowed bow in the Magdalen eight and was awarded his BA in 1898. He travelled extensively and made shooting expeditions in Ceylon, India, Nepal and America and later in Canada, British East Africa, Uganda, Upper Nile.

During their stay in Mobberley, Sir Kenneth and Lady Crossley were involved in village life. In a selection of reports in the Knutsford Guardians of 1914 to 1916, Lady Crossley organised a children's concert in aid of war relief and accompanied on piano. Sir Kenneth donated a £10 prize to the newly formed miniature rifle range and was a member of the recruiting committee for the WW1 volunteers. And it was Sir Kenneth who in 1919 mooted the idea the idea of constructing the Victory Hall.

Kenneth and Florence had a son Anthony Crimmelin Crossley born 13th August 1903 and three daughters, Fidelia born in 1905, Ruth in 1909 and Catherine in 1913 after the family had moved to Mobberley Hall. At the 1911 census Kenneth was alone at Mobberley Hall with their seven servants while his wife and children were visiting friends in Falmouth. Florence died in 1954 and Kenneth married Elizabeth Joyce Shenton, daughter of E. Shenton, of Boxmoor, Hertfordshire. Kenneth died in 1957 leaving an estate valued at £111,000. Elizabeth died on 29th July 2005 at the age of 92.



In 1918 Sir Kenneth bought Combermere Abbey near Whitchurch in Shropshire. He took up flying in 1931, buying a De Havilland Gipsy Moth registered G-AAKC (personalised registrations are nothing new!). Four more aircraft followed, the last being a De Havilland Hornet Moth (G-ADKC) which he kept until the War. Sir Kenneth had an airstrip in the field and a shed in which to house his plane. His flying lessons were based at Woodford aerodrome, and he may have used it fly to the factories in Gorton. One of his three daughters, Fidelia, also became a pilot at the same time, and took part in the 1931 King's Cup Air Race. Combermere Abbey is still in the Crossley family.



SOME OF THE COMPETITORS (L. to R.) : Miss Amy Johnson, Miss P. Gower, Miss Spicer, Miss Burr, Miss Slade, Miss Winifred Spence, and Miss Crossley

The old hangar at Combermere



Royal Aeronautical Society

	10056
<u>CROSSLEY, Sir Kenneth Irwin, Bart.</u>	
Combermere Abbey, Whitchurch, Salop	
<i>Born</i>	17th February, 1877 at Dunham Massey, Cheshire
<i>Nationality</i>	British
<i>Rank, Regiment, Profession</i>	Farmer
<i>Certificate taken on</i>	D.H.Moth 85 h.p. Gipsy I
<i>At</i>	Lancashire Aero Club
<i>Date</i>	1st September, 1931.

Anthony Crommelin Crossley (13 August 1903–15 August 1939) was a British a writer, publisher and Conservative politician. He was born on 13 August 1903 and in 1916 enrolled at Eton College, completing his education at Magdalen College, Oxford. His flair for writing both poetry and prose led to his becoming a partner in the publishing house of Christopher's from 1928 to 1935. In 1927 he married Clare Thomson, daughter of Brigadier A F Thomson, and had two daughters and one son. Anthony Crossley died, aged 36, when the aircraft in which was travelling crashed into the sea off the Danish coast on 15 August 1939. He published three books of poetry: *Aucassin and Nicolette and Other Poems*,

Prophets, Gods and Witches and *Tragedy under Lucifer*. His prose works showed his other interests: *The History of Eton College Hunt*, *Chin Wag: The War Records of the Eton Manor Club* and *The Floating Line for Salmon and Sea Trout*.

In 1931 Anthony Crossley was elected one of two Conservative Members of Parliament for the two-seat Oldham borough constituency. At the next election in 1935 he was elected as MP for Stretford in south east Lancashire. He remained MP for the area until his death in 1939.

As of 2013, the title is held by Sir Sloan Nicholas Crossley, 6th Baronet.

1925 Staffordshire Sentinel reports on the Sir Kenneth Crossley Cup (football)

Crossley Motors Cars

The following article was written by someone who found a batch of photographs which turned out to be Crossleys

Crossley Streamline.

I bought these Crossley photographs off the internet two or three years ago. The vendor was selling a large number of motoring photographs, batched up into separate Lots by car registration. Amongst the Lots of Austin and Morris photos were these seven fascinating old photos, unidentified, but clearly all featuring a somewhat time-worn example of Crossley Streamline. Only twenty or so examples are believed to have been built, so I was very pleased to secure this small collection of rare images.

The Streamlines were powered by a rear-mounted six cylinder engine, producing 61bhp according to contemporary paperwork. The example featured in these photographs was registered CLB 844, a London issue confirming that this Streamline was registered late 1935, or early 1936 in the London area.

At first I thought these were probably photographs of a car being subjected to a road test by a motoring journalist. However, given the number of modifications that appear to have taken place, and the presence of various aftermarket badges attached to the Crossley, I suspect that the car was in private ownership. Judging by the condition of it in these photos, I don't think it led a particularly easy life.

Photograph number one shows the Crossley parked on a grass verge, perhaps waiting for the rear-mounted engine to cool down. A substantial adjustable spot lamp, mounted on the passenger side of the scuttle, suggests that perhaps the owner(s) were keen on a spot of night rallying. Note the filthy coachwork.



The second photograph shows the car, still dirty, parked in a suburban setting. The driver's door window has been wound down, and the offside front hubcap has disappeared. The Crossley Streamline was based on the earlier Burney Streamline Car of 1929, an advanced design by Sir Charles Dennistoun Burney. The wind cheating shape of the bodywork was inspired by airship design, notably the R100 airship which was produced by the Airship Guarantee Company in Howden, of which Burney was Managing Director.



Next, a head-on photograph of the same car. An Automobile Association (AA) badge has been fitted to the radiator cap, while an RAC badge can be seen attached to the front bumper. A winged J.C.C. badge is also fitted. The J.C.C. (Junior Car Club) started out in life as The Cyclecar Club, a group that organised many events at, and around, Brooklands. The name was changed to the Junior Car Club in 1919, and initially catered for owners of light cars - i.e. four seat cars weighing less than 15cwt, or two seat cars weighing less than 13cwt. Engines were limited in size to 1500cc (four stroke), or 1100cc (two stroke). Again this is evidence to suggest that the Crossley's owner had an interest in motor sport.



Photograph number four shows a rear 3/4 view of the Crossley, the distinctive streamlined tail on this example incorporating a large number of air vents. Some period photographs of the Streamline show engine covers devoid of any cooling vents, however as cooling was marginal at best, I suspect the later cars (1935 build) came with vents as standard. The car is again shown parked on a grassy verge. It looks like liquid - coolant perhaps - has been escaping from the engine, spraying out from beneath the engine cover and down the rear mudguards.

The nearside running board is in quite a bad way. Also note the fuel filler assembly incorporated within the side of the body. Other cars I've seen photos of have a simple filler cap, this car looks to have had its filler neck extended up the side of the body. Perhaps the owner wasn't keen on bending down when filling up with motor spirit, or else the cap had a tendency to leak during fast cornering. Interestingly, the rear track on the Streamline was 13" narrower than that at the front.



The following photograph shows the Crossley's engine cover in the raised position, perhaps in a bid to help cool the engine down. Note the Crossley badge affixed to the offside rear mudguard.



And the car with the engine cover back in position. Coolant has been leaking down both rear mudguards. I've not seen a Streamline with this type of double rear bumper before either.



The final photograph of this car again shows the car parked in suburbia. What happened to this car? Did it survive the war? Or did its hard life lead it to an early one-way trip to the breaker's yard?



Two examples are known to exist - one car is at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu (reg. BGU 217), while the "Motor" road test car (reg. ANB 487) survives in private hands.

The following article asserts that the Crossleys were the inspiration for Arthur Ransome's 'Swallows and Amazons'

[Beckfoot Found? - The Crossley Girls by Iain Hobbs](#)

Studying the map

If you follow the hints laid out by Ransome in *Swallows and Amazons* and *Swallowdale*, and study a map of Windermere, you arrive at a place on the North-West shore that matches the description of Beckfoot in all except the layout of the house. The geography of the area is detailed later in *The Picts and Martyrs*.

In SA, the people who live in the house are called Blackett and they own a houseboat. They also have a boathouse just to the left of the main house as you look at it from the lake. On the river, just to the east of the house, in the mouth of a beck, they have a ¹motor launch. (In SA the two boathouses are combined, but AR establishes them as separate ones by the time SD is written.) In real life, from 1911 to 1935, Pull Wood House was owned by Sir Kenneth Irwin Crossley. He did not live there, but used it as a summer residence for himself and his family.

Also, from 1922 to 1928, Sir Kenneth ²owned the houseboat *Esperance* upon which AR based the one used by Captain Flint. The houseboat in the book had an upper railed decking on the cabin roof and steps from the for'ard deck to reach it. The photograph in Roger Wardale's book taken by the Scott family of *Esperance* shows this very decking. The picture has to be examined in magnification to see it, but it is there. There is also a good photograph of *Esperance* taken by AR in the Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library. The similarity is unmistakable to the WH illustration 'The Houseboat is frozen in'.

Their actual ownership of ³Pull Wood House (later to become a boarding school and renamed Huyton Hill), is supported by information from the present and previous owners, details of which are now in the TARS archive. The existence of a motor launch was confirmed by the staff of Huyton Hill. They pointed out the location of a former 'Steamer House' on the shore of the Pull Beck, exactly where AR illustrates it in SD. This remained up to the Second World War when it was demolished to make space for a bungalow called 'The Noggins' and Nissen hut.

The house and grounds can be seen from Waterhead Pier at Ambleside. It is directly across the lake. Just by the landing stage is the Waterhead Hotel. This was a favourite place to dine of Arthur Ransome and he would have been very familiar with the view. Until a few years ago, when trees grew at the edge of the lake, it was even possible to see the lawn from the steamer pier.

The staff of Huyton Hill confirmed that the grounds of the house contained a pigeon loft and also stables. The stables were on the far side of the grounds and were linked to the house by an electric bell to summon the Groom or Chauffeur.

The surrounding geography of Beckfoot/Pull Wood House/Huyton Hill is given in surprising and accurate detail within the pages of PM. You can follow the route taken by the Amazons from the back gate of Beckfoot over to the Dogs Home. The Beckfoot back gate is the exact location of the rear entrance to Huyton Hill.

North of the grounds of Huyton Hill is the valley of the Pull Beck, a large former stream valley populated by reeds and sheep. The map shows the remains of a long lake (now a swamp) and the meanders of a large stream, highlighted by reed beds on the bends. This area is known as Pull Beck Swamp and the Beck is the Pull Beck. Most of the time there is hardly a foot of water in the lake and the beck is un-navigable.

In times of heavy flood, just as happened in August 2005, the lake returns to its former glory, and AR's Octopus Lagoon lives again. The lake has the same relationship to Huyton Hill as Octopus Lagoon has to Beckfoot; in fact they are identical even to the shape of the lake and that of the estate layout. The drawing in PM of Nancy clearing the weeds to make a birth for Scarab were based on this lake and surrounding area. The picture of the D's looking down on the Beckfoot lawn from 'The Lookout Post' shows the Steamer House in the distance exactly where the real one was.

The time when SD was being written is practically the same period as when Pull Wood House was being sold to the building firm of Pattinsons. AR has the builders in at Beckfoot redecorating. Something similar would have been happening at Pull Wood House.

Pamela and Ruth

Sir Kenneth's two daughters were born in 1913 and 1909. The younger sister, Pamela Catherine Field Crossley, was born on 30th December, 1913 at the Crossleys' new family seat of Combermere Abbey. The elder sister by three years was Ruth Irwin Crossley. She was born on 17th September, 1909.

Remember how Peggy Blakett introduces her sister at the parley in SA?

"Her real name isn't Nancy... her name is Ruth."

Each summer Sir Kenneth brought his two daughters from Altrincham to Pull Wood House so that they could use his sailing dinghy during the school holidays. At the same time their father could check up on the state of the house.

The sailing dinghy was kept in the boathouse to the left of the main house, as seen from the lake. The sides of the boathouse were decorated to match the decoration of the main house. It was built on the far left side of the house alongside the wooded boundary. The entrance is at the back in full view of the house as per PM. The front of the Boathouse used to be decorated with large Skull and Crossbones.

Evgenia Ransome's suggested that the Skull and Crossbones was put up by the Huyton Hill School pupils.

However, the son of the Huyton Hill Headmaster, a former pupil, disputes this and claims it was already there. George Pattinson also denies any involvement. With those two owners excluded, that only leaves the Crossley girls. There is no record of where or when the girls were educated although it is thought that they attended boarding school.

Ruth and Catherine are reported to have sunk their father's Houseboat, much to his annoyance. (Captain Flint

wasn't very pleased when the Amazons exploded a firework on the roof of the houseboat.) The location of the sinking is in dispute. According to one source, the houseboat was moored next to Silverholme and the girls were using it as a floating tent. According to another source, the houseboat was moored fairly close to the house. The next time the houseboat would be sunk was by the Sea Scouts when the Scott family owned it. If the official ownership dates are correct then the Crossleys still owned the houseboat when SA was written.

AR has the Great Aunt making the Amazons practice the piano. One of the Crossleys' pastimes was to give musical recitals. They continued this practice when in residence at Pull Wood House, installing an organ for this purpose. Ruth and Catherine both fell in love with RAF Pilots at the start of WW2 and both married. However, both husbands were later killed in action. The girls remarried and Ruth emigrated to North West Ireland and then to South Africa. Catherine moved to London where she remained until her death. By a twist of fate, while in South Africa, Ruth gave birth to a son and named him TIMOTHY (echoes of Pigeon Post!).

Captain Flint and Sir Kenneth

AR based the appearance of Captain Flint on himself. The character background of Captain Flint, however, is Sir Kenneth Irwin Crossley. Sir Kenneth in his spare time was a big game hunter and travelled the world on hunting expeditions. He listed the places he had been in his entry in Burke's peerage. He competed in the University boat races when at Magdalen College Oxford, where he rowed as bow and may have won silver cups from university rowing competitions. He was an author of a book of poetry entitled *Mere Verses*.

Captain Flint flies "The White Elephant" flag on the houseboat. A pun on the expense of purchasing it? In the books Captain Flint explored the world and brought back souvenirs from his travels. In PD it is suggested that he is a big game hunter; he even has firearms. He writes about his travels, but the money earned is just a bonus. He kept his souvenirs in the study at Beckfoot and in the cabin of the houseboat. In PM it is mentioned that he has silver cups from rowing competitions. The one book written by Captain Flint and mentioned by name is *Mixed Moss*.

As well as Pull Wood House, the Crossleys had a well appointed town house in Altrincham, Manchester. Their doctor was a cousin of AR upon whom AR would often visit. However, according to the visitors book there is no record of AR coming up to his cousin and meeting with the Crossleys.

Sir Kenneth and his father, Sir William, were partners in two companies, Crossley Motors, a car manufacturing company and Crossley Brothers an engineering Company. Sir William had provided one of the cars for his wife to use as he left her to look after the estate. She would drive around to see the estate employees. Was this the original *Rattletrap*?

Sir Kenneth sold his late father's Pull Wood House and grounds to local builder, and steam boat collector, George Pattinson.

The final chapter

George Pattinson in turn sold the house and rented a large section of the grounds to Huyton Hill School which on the outbreak of WW II was being evacuated from Liverpool because of the bombing. The house was renamed Huyton Hill. The school would later purchase the land that they were renting and the Pattinsons would manage the estate for them.

George Pattinson wanted to start up a museum to display his collection of steamboats. The original location for the museum was going to be on the shore of Huyton Hill House but he was persuaded to relocate it close to Bowness on Windermere as it would be easier to get visitors there. The Windermere Steamboat Museum is still there.

In the 1960's the BBC filmed *Swallows and Amazons* in the real locations mentioned in the book and Huyton Hill was used as Beckfoot. AR objected and tried to get the filming stopped. The reason he gave was on the grounds that the actors were wearing lifejackets (a Health and Safety condition) and the children in his book did not.

The late Brigit and Taqui Altounyan were questioned over whether they had ever met the real The Crossley Girls or had been to Huyton Hill. The answer from both was "No."