

VICTORIAN SUFFOLK'S GREAT ECCENTRIC: COLONEL GEORGE TOMLINE 1813–1889¹

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BISHOP'S GRANDSON, MAVERICK politician and landed proprietor of almost limitless wealth, builder of the Felixstowe Railway and pioneer developer of that town and port, the peppery and eccentric Colonel George Tomline was arguably the most colourful character of Victorian Suffolk. No respecter of either persons or institutions, he quarrelled so acrimoniously with the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire, the Marquess of Granby, over the North Lincolnshire militia regiment of which he was honorary colonel, as to require the personal intervention of the Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, for the maintenance of the public service. He challenged the War Office so successfully for a time as to render Landguard Fort virtually untenable for several years, and hounded the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe (though both sat in Parliament for the same party) on the issue of the silver coinage.

His reputation as an arch-litigant was legendary in his lifetime. In November 1858, when Tomline and his immediate neighbour Sir George Broke (afterwards Broke-Middleton) of Broke Hall, Nacton, were embroiled in a protracted boundary dispute, the latter's cousin and junior legal adviser, Horace Broke, a solicitor of Lincoln's Inn and thus fully acquainted with Tomline's awesome reputation in the central courts, sent his client a solemn warning:

From many things that I have seen and heard, I am convinced that he is a dangerous man to quarrel with, and that he has the will and the power to be a very nasty enemy in every sense of the word. He is certainly clever, and has a better knowledge of law than is possessed by nine solicitors out of ten, and therefore will be pretty sure to take care that he is legally right in what he may do, while if fairly riled he would not scruple to be unpleasantly aggressive! For goodness sake therefore do nothing hasty, and recollect that you will always catch more flies (and wasps too!) with treacle than with vinegar... I have a faint suspicion that Tomline would be glad if he put you into a passion, and induced you to do or write something hasty, which would give him a fair ground for breaking off all negotiations, and taking his stand on legal rights only.²

Had Tomline chosen, rather than inherited, the motto accompanying his paternal arms, one is tempted to believe that he might have considered *Nemo me impune lacessit*³ to be singularly appropriate.

With the exception of various accounts of his role in the development of Felixstowe, virtually nothing has been written on his life which has not been based almost exclusively on anecdote and reminiscence. Though his surviving papers have long been on deposit in the Suffolk Record Office in Ipswich – many of them for half a century – only his journal for the Felixstowe years 1876–85 appears to have been extensively used. This omission the present study seeks to redress.

ANTECEDENTS

Though born in Lincolnshire, George Tomline was a member of the old Suffolk gentry family of Pretymans, which had been established in north-central Suffolk from at least the 14th century, tracing its descent from William Pratyman of Bacton, who is mentioned in a charter of 1393 and died before 1413. During the course of the 16th century the Pretymans became substantial landowners in this area of the county, acquiring between 1543 and 1593 the manors of Horringers and Boyes, Old Bacton and Bresworth Hall (all in Bacton), Old Newton, and Cotton Bresworth.⁴ The marriage of George



FIG. 25 – Colonel George Tomline (1813–1889): thought to be his only portrait; some Suffolk historians however have cast doubt on the sitter's identity (*by permission of the Suffolk Record Office*).

Pretyman of Bacton to Jane, daughter and heir of John Pistor, rector of Claydon, in 1711, brought the family further property in Nettlestead, a few miles north-west of Ipswich (Allen 1999, 336–37).

Their son Baron (his forename, not a title) Pretyman, described by William Pretyman the family historian as 'profligate and spendthrift' (W.P., I, f. 124), dissipated the family inheritance. On his death without issue in 1758, the now debt-encumbered and diminished estates (the manor of Cotton Bresworth had to be sold) descended to his first cousin George Pretyman (1722–1810), younger and

only surviving son of Peter Pretyman, a London merchant. George, orphaned at an early age, was set up in business as a draper in Bury St Edmunds, where in due course he became one of the capital burgesses, twice serving as alderman and chief magistrate. On inheriting the family estates he leased them out to tenants, while he himself remained in trade in Bury. It was left to his son, another George Pretyman (1750–1827; afterwards Dr George Pretyman-Tomline), to revive the family fortune (which would descend to his grandson Colonel George Tomline) in the most spectacular way.⁵

George Pretyman the younger was admitted to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge in 1767 at the age of sixteen, and distinguished himself in mathematics, graduating B.A. in 1772, in which year he was Senior Wrangler and Smith's prizeman. He was elected a fellow of Pembroke in the same year, and appointed tutor in 1773. The degrees of M.A. and D.D. (*per Lit. Reg.*) were conferred upon him in 1775 and 1784 respectively (Venn 1953, 190).

When the future Prime Minister, William Pitt the Younger, was sent as an undergraduate to Pembroke Hall in 1773 at the early age of fourteen, Pretyman was appointed his tutor, and an early and lasting close friendship developed between them. When in 1783 his former student became First Lord of the Treasury, Pretyman abandoned his university career and accepted the post of Pitt's private secretary.⁶ At first the position was unofficial. As Pretyman explained in an undated letter to his father, written from Downing Street at the time of his appointment, he was to live with Pitt 'and do him all the service in my power without bearing the name of secretary', since Pitt considered that otherwise it might impede his progress in the Church, where the Prime Minister intended 'to push me to the uttermost'.⁷ It was a decision that Pretyman was never to regret.

Preferment came rapidly. At the first opportunity Pitt secured his mentor's elevation to the Bench of Bishops by nominating him to the see of Lincoln in succession to Thomas Thurlow, translated to Durham in 1787. At the same time he was made Dean of St Paul's, and held both offices in plurality until 1820. Though he ceased to act as Pitt's secretary on becoming bishop, he remained his close friend and confidential adviser until his patron's death in January 1806. Well might the Bishop, in writing to let his wife know of Pitt's death, refer to the passing of 'my great and good friend'.⁸

But despite Pitt's best endeavours, Pretyman was denied the ultimate prize, the see of Canterbury, in succession to Archbishop Moore who died in January 1805. Ignoring his Minister's advice, King George III insisted on appointing his own nominee Charles Manners Sutton, Bishop of Norwich and Dean of Windsor – a snub which almost provoked Pitt's resignation.⁹

When in 1813 the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, offered Pretyman the see of London, he declined the promotion, despite the express wishes of the Prince Regent, ostensibly on the grounds of advanced age (he was nearly sixty-three). In reality, his reasons were largely financial, since acceptance would have meant resigning the lucrative deanery of St Paul's and, moreover, his second son the Revd George Thomas Pretyman was in line for appointment as Chancellor of the diocese of Lincoln, a preferment which would have been placed at risk by his father's translation.¹⁰ But when the see of Winchester – since medieval times the wealthiest in England – was offered to him on the death of Bishop Brownlow North in 1820, his scruples on the grounds of age (he was now in his seventieth year) abruptly left him, and he accepted with alacrity. Indeed, more than two months earlier he had asked Liverpool to recommend his appointment should the expected vacancy occur.¹¹

In 1803, a most spectacular stroke of good fortune transformed the family's finances in a way and to an extent that could never have been foreseen. That year Marmaduke Tomline, a man of considerable wealth and owner of the Riby Grove estate (including the whole parish of Riby) near Grimsby in Lincolnshire, left the Bishop virtually all his property, on condition that he and his heirs adopt the surname Tomline. The two men were unrelated, and little more than casual acquaintances. The Bishop, confessing that 'I never saw Mr Tomline, I think, more than five or six times in my life', commented to his wife on learning of their good fortune: 'I hope that the will is a good one, and that one of later date will not be found.'¹² This bequest would in due course form the main source of Colonel George Tomline's wealth.

From 1803 therefore, in compliance with the terms of the bequest, the Bishop, his wife Elizabeth, and his eldest son and heir William Edward, assumed the name of Tomline; the two younger sons, being unlikely to inherit, retained the family name of Pretymán. The Bishop's correspondence with his wife makes clear that William Edward (father of the subject of this article) was always his parents' favourite, on whom their hopes for the future rested. The accrual of Marmaduke Tomline's wealth encouraged them in the ambition to found a titled, landed political dynasty in William Edward's family. In 1811 they secured his marriage to a Shropshire heiress, Frances Amler of Ford Hall, which brought him substantial estates on the Shropshire and Montgomeryshire border. The house at Riby was enlarged and refurbished to become his country seat and, following an undergraduate career at Cambridge which had been distinguished by a talent for public speaking,¹³ he was encouraged to enter politics. He became M.P. for Christchurch (Hampshire) in 1812 through the influence of his father's friend and loyal follower of Pitt, the statesman George Rose (Thorne 1986, 401).

Elizabeth Tomline had long been exercised, almost to the point of obsession, with the lack of status accorded to bishops' wives in England, considering that they ought to rank with the wives of baronets,¹⁴ and it was chiefly at her instigation, following extensive researches into the family pedigree, that an attempt was made to revive, in the person of the Bishop and for the eventual advancement of William Edward's family, a 17th-century Nova Scotia baronetcy conferred on the Driffild (Gloucestershire) branch of the Pretymán family (afterwards of Loddington in Leicestershire) and extinct or dormant since the death of the last baronet Sir Thomas Pretymán c. 1750. The proofs resulting from the researches conducted and commissioned over many years by Mrs Tomline failed to convince the English College of Arms that the Bishop's right had been conclusively proved. Since, however, the title was a Scottish one conferred before the Union, the Bishop elected to have his claim determined under the simpler and less rigorous process permitted by Scottish law, before a jury in the Haddington Sheriff Court, where on 22 March 1823 he was served as heir male general of Sir Thomas Pretymán, bart, and his right to the style of baronet was upheld by the Lord Lyon King of Arms.¹⁵ On 20 May 1824, just two years before her death, Elizabeth achieved her long-standing ambition of being presented at Court as Lady Tomline, to the fury of the English officers of arms who had threatened her with exclusion.¹⁶ In 1828 George Beltz, Lancaster Herald, denounced the late Bishop's assumption of the baronetcy (Tomline had died the previous year) as 'one, as I conceive, of the most shameless genealogical misdeeds of this age'.¹⁷

With the Bishop's death in 1827 the baronetcy, which would otherwise in due course have descended to Colonel George Tomline, was quietly allowed to lapse once more. William Edward, after seeking counsel's opinion as to whether the College of Arms could be compelled to recognize the Haddington verdict, declined to assume a title which he considered beneath his dignity while his right to it was disputed. He nevertheless drafted a letter to the Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, whom he supported in the House of Commons, requesting the conferment of a baronetcy of new creation, lest his failure to claim the 'family' title appear 'to imply a tacit censure upon my father for having hastily assumed' it.¹⁸ It is not known whether this letter was ever despatched, but if so, it received no favourable response: William Edward always remained plain 'Mr Tomline', and the only other prefix to be accorded to George, his heir, would be that of his honorary militia rank.

As regards Colonel George Tomline's political antecedents, they were pure Tory. His grandfather the Bishop was described by his earliest biographer as 'a supporter of the prerogative and an uncompromising friend to the existing order of things' (Cassan 1827, cited in *D.N.B.*). He was so strongly antipathetic to Catholic emancipation that he was prepared to oppose the measure even if brought in by Pitt, to whom he owed all, and it was he who suggested the wording of Pitt's guarantee to George III never again to raise the question during the King's lifetime (*D.N.B.*).

William Edward Tomline sat in Parliament as M.P. for Christchurch (1812–18), Truro (1818–20 and 1826–29), and Minehead (1830–31). Until 1829 he followed his father's line in consistently voting against any measure of relief for Catholics, and unswervingly supported measures for agricultural

protection.¹⁹ His abstention in the vote on the Penryn Disfranchisement Bill during the 1828 parliamentary session so angered Lord Falmouth, patron of his seat at Truro, that Tomline felt obliged to re-state his Tory credentials in order to clarify their political connexion:

You brought me into Parliament as a sincere Tory, and an opposer both of Parliamentary Reform and the Catholic claims – I am so still – Every year confirms those opinions – I have never swerved from them for a moment, or been lukewarm in supporting them ... but I do well recollect your saying distinctly ... that such being my general principles you wished me to consider myself free and unfettered in Parliament ... I was utterly astounded to find that my not voting on the Penryn Bill excited so much displeasure. I certainly did consider myself at full liberty to exercise my own judgement ... without violating any articles of our treaty ... I also think it possible that by occasionally yielding to popular feeling in particular cases like the present, an additional power may be gained in the means of resisting all general questions of Reform, and I am willing to give the Government, whose sincerity against Reform I cannot doubt, credit for having better means of information than I can possibly have. However I did not, and would not vote with them. On the other hand I am Tory enough to dislike opposing a measure of a Government conducted by the Duke of Wellington, to whom I look as the Head of the Tories ... unless the Duke is supported by the Tories, he must of necessity yield to many measures proposed by persons, whose politics you and I equally dislike, more than he need do if he could depend upon that steady support, which I think all Tories ought, consistently with their own principles, to afford him.²⁰

Tomline's change of heart on the issue of Catholic emancipation the following year was once more for sound Tory reasons: loyalty to Wellington, the 'one man superlatively fit to be at the head of the Government'; and to prevent the return to power of the Whigs, 'by whom the measure of emancipation would be carried probably in a manner less conciliatory to the feelings of every zealous Protestant'.²¹ This further opposition to Falmouth, who regarded the Bill as 'the most insidious, the most unworthy, and the most dangerous piece of political apostasy that ever disgraced a British Administration', cost him his seat.²² He succeeded in being returned to Parliament for Minehead in the 1830 election, but the premature dissolution following the defeat of the first Reform Bill the next year brought his parliamentary career to an end. Such was the political legacy bequeathed to his son George.

EARLY LIFE

George Tomline was born on 6 March 1813 at Riby Grove (Fig. 26), the eldest son and second child of William Edward and his wife Frances. Only three years later, on 30 April 1816, his mother died just days after giving birth to George's youngest brother John, worn out with bearing five (perhaps six) children in barely five years of marriage.²³ Within weeks of his wife's death William Edward had departed to seek consolation on a tour of Europe in the company of his youngest brother Richard Pretyma.²⁴ Though children of their class at this period may not normally have seen much of their parents, and their father was moreover absent in London whenever Parliament was in session, Frances, in an almost continuous state of pregnancy, had spent most of her time at Riby (as her husband's letters attest). Her death, followed so soon afterwards by the departure of their father, cannot but have had a profound effect upon the young children now left in the care of their grandparents at Buckden Palace.²⁵ The very real sense of abandonment that George must have felt may perhaps have been a factor in his decision not to marry, which so much puzzled his friends and acquaintances in later years. Who knows what other effect it may have had on the moulding of his complex personality?

George, joined later by his younger brothers William and John, was educated at Eton under the headmastership of the redoubtable Dr John Keate, a brilliant classical scholar, and a popular and successful teacher despite his reputation as a ferocious flogger (D.N.B.). William Ewart Gladstone was



FIG. 26 – The south front of Riby Grove, Lincolnshire, birthplace of George Tomline, showing (left) the extensions carried out by the Bishop of Lincoln for William Edward Tomline
(by permission of Mrs. M. Bence-Jones and the Suffolk Record Office).

George Tomline's contemporary there, and both would later be described by their political leader, Peel, as 'two of the best younger men of the party' (W.P., I, f. 178). These were stirring times in which to be at school. The 'Captain Swing' agrarian disturbances were at their height, and in November 1830 following revolution in France, George wrote to his father of the wild rumours circulating locally of the burning of Windsor Castle, murder of soldiers and deposition of the King. A letter written at the same time, tongue-in-cheek, for his younger sister Mary's entertainment, demonstrates both the excitement of the times and George's very real sense of humour:

Keate is terribly frightened, he always brings a brace of pistols into school, and carries a watchman's rattle of fourteen Horse Power under his gown. My tutor has advertised for the thickest books, and strongest shoe leather to barricade the windows, if necessary. Twelve waggon loads of birch, warranted to last, came into College this morning; what for? Keate has contracted with Government for all the old armour from the Tower and elsewhere, to be made serviceable at the shortest notice, he has kept Guy of Warwick's for himself, as he resembles him so much both in stature and in spirit.²⁶

The reports of James Chapman, Housemaster to all three Tomline brothers at Eton, to their father, show that George was considered a highly intelligent, academically able, industrious, cheerful and well-mannered student. Though, perhaps from boredom, his attention 'flagged much' during his last year, he pleased his masters during his final examination by being placed 'among the eight best of the whole school'.²⁷

Despite his undoubted ability, he did not follow his grandfather, father and Pretyman uncles to Cambridge, apparently by his father's decision,³⁰ but went instead in April 1831 to spend six months with a private tutor, W.C. Thompson, a specialist in modern languages, at Hartley Wespall (Hampshire), presumably on the recommendation of Keate, who held the rectory there. It is unfortunate that Thompson's letter to William Edward, accepting his son as a student, does not elaborate on 'the views which you entertain for your son's future education'.³¹

Contrary to the accepted and often repeated statement that 'Colonel' Tomline never served in the regular armed forces, on his departure from Hartley Wespall in September 1831 he was in fact commissioned into Colonel Lygon's regiment of the Life Guards, being gazetted cornet on 4 October 1831.³² He seems however not to have seen much active service, being mostly involved with garrison duty at Windsor or stationed at the Horse Guards in London.³³

Despite his army service and junior rank he had time for foreign travel in the late summer of 1832, probably to Germany.³⁴ The following year he was able to spend three months in Holland, Germany and Italy, and in later years he was to visit Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria and Hungary.³⁵ His travel journals reveal him to have been not only an informed connoisseur of art (of which he became an avid collector; see Fig. 27), but also a judicious and unbiased observer of the foreign political scene. He was visiting Hungary in the spring of 1850 during Austria's brutal suppression (with the aid of Russian troops supplied by Tsar Nicholas I) of the national uprising which followed the 1848 revolution. On 9 May Baron Julius von Haynau arrived in Budapest to take command, a man whose brutality in suppressing the revolt against Austrian rule in Italy had already earned him the Europe-wide nickname 'General Hyena', and who on a visit to London later that year would be set upon by a mob of brewer's draymen and narrowly escape with his life. Though liberal



FIG. 27 – George Tomline's picture gallery at Orwell Park, Nacton
(by permission of Mrs M. Bence-Jones and the Suffolk Record Office).

western European sympathies lay overwhelmingly with the Hungarians, their own conduct was far from blameless, and Tomline, present in Pesth on the day of Haynau's arrival, commented: 'Plenty of firing, one horse artillery officer unhorsed ... Everywhere the signs of the bombardment are visible. Altogether I am told that the war cost on both sides nearly 300,000 men. *Great atrocities were committed on both sides but especially on the Hungarian*' (authors' italics).³⁴

There is evidence that Tomline came to regard his years of peacetime soldiering as largely wasted. In an undated letter to his brother William (also a serving army officer), attributable to the mid-1840s, he wrote:

We are both of us, old enough to take a serious view of life ... I for one am thoroughly convinced that the idle, unprofitable mode of life we have both been leading since we left school, adds little either to our character, or our happiness, besides which, my pride revolts at the idea of merely living, 'pages consumed' ... What I regret even more than the years I have thrown away is the habit of exact thinking; I mean the power of attentive and *fructifying* reading as contrasted with the desultory style of dipping even into abstruse works, which every body imbibes who does not read for the purposes of study ... There are two words that can achieve any thing – System and Perseverance – I am so sensible of the folly of my past life that I am resolved to marry (not for beauty or fashion) and work really hard ...³⁵

Surely this was, in part, a heartfelt cry of regret for the university education which his father, for unfathomable reasons, had denied him; though despite the above disclaimer, in later years he was certainly very widely read.³⁶

The letter also makes clear that, despite the possible effect of his mother's early death, he had no objection to the *idea* of marriage. It may well be, however, that other losses contributed to his failure to marry. His name was linked in the gossip columns of the London society press with that of the ill-fated Lady Flora Hastings, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Duchess of Kent, whose shabby treatment at Court during her terminal illness so shamed the young Queen Victoria and her circle. Lady Flora died in 1839, and the death of both Tomline's much-loved sisters in that same year at the tragically early ages of twenty-seven and twenty-four, may have left him subconsciously unwilling to risk the loss of any other woman close to him.³⁷

William Edward Tomline had meanwhile died in 1836, at the early age of forty-nine. He had inherited not only his father's Suffolk and Lincolnshire estates, all unencumbered by mortgages, but virtually the whole of the Bishop's personal fortune of some £150,000 in Government stocks and about £20,000 derived from insurance and other sources.³⁸ William Edward had proved a careful steward of the family fortune, being in a position in 1832 to lend £70,000 to the Marquess of Bath on the security of the Longleat estate.³⁹ By his death the inheritance had been substantially increased, his personal estate being sworn under £400,000. After financial provision had been made for his daughters and younger sons, George as eldest son and heir, at the age of twenty-three came into possession of almost the whole family fortune (including his mother's Shropshire lands), together worth in today's terms many millions.⁴⁰ Despite his youth and inexperience, and the self-confessed idleness of his early adult life, the inheritance would not be frittered away.

POLITICS, CHURCH RATES AND THE COINAGE

Tomline's decision to enter Parliament, as we have seen, may have been partly motivated by a sense of self-disgust at what he regarded as a wasted youth. Given the political legacy of his grandfather and father, it was perhaps inevitable that he should first have sought election as a Conservative, and this cast of mind can only have been reinforced by the political and agrarian violence he had witnessed at an impressionable age while at Eton. In 1840 one of the sitting Conservative members for Sudbury in Suffolk, Sir John Walsh, applied for the Chiltern Hundreds in order to stand for another and perhaps

less expensive constituency, thus causing a by-election. The borough was notoriously corrupt, 'where tradesmen were accustomed to place a notification in their windows, an hour before the poll closed, in the significant terms, "Not voted yet"...'.⁴¹ Tomline, aged twenty-seven, was selected as candidate, doubtless on the grounds of his recently inherited great wealth; his long purse ensured that he was returned unopposed, without being called upon even to make a speech (obit.).

But within months Parliament was dissolved. Benjamin Disraeli, the future Prime Minister, having broken with his former constituency of Maidstone, was in need of a seat for the 1841 general election, and was found what was hoped would be a safe haven in Shrewsbury by his old Shropshire friend and supporter Lord Forester. But to dispel the odium of carpet-bagging a Conservative fellow-candidate was needed with connexions in the county. Tomline, now in possession of his mother's estate at Ford, filled the bill and was recruited, probably by Forester and the Earl of Powis. He seems to have considered withdrawal at a late stage to contest a county seat in Lincolnshire, still at this time his main territorial base, so that Disraeli, hearing reports of his possible defection at the Carlton Club, felt obliged to write urgently on 31 May, pointing out to him that such a course would render his own presence in the new Parliament 'very doubtful'. In the event Tomline honoured his pledge to Disraeli and both were elected, with Tomline topping the poll.⁴²

In Shropshire the 1841 election resulted in a Conservative landslide with the return of twelve members, known locally as the 'Twelve Apostles'. However, the disastrous national schism in the party brought about by Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws was reflected in the county. Tomline and two other 'Apostles', the Hon. R.H. Clive and Beriah Botfield, voted with their leader Peel, while T.C. Whitmore, who avoided a vote, was nevertheless classed with the others as 'the Four Traitors' by local protectionists (V.C.H. *Shropshire*, III, 314). Tomline, having alienated the Shrewsbury Conservatives, stood as a Liberal-Conservative in 1847, but lost his seat and did not return to Parliament for five years.

He never returned to his Conservative allegiance, but like his contemporary Gladstone, who had also supported Peel, became a Liberal, though always maintaining his independence of party discipline. In 1852 he carried off a substantial coup in re-taking the Shrewsbury seat as a Liberal, and held it until 1868, representing the town in all for twenty-two years. During the middle years of the century, however, Tomline gradually built up an independent interest in Grimsby, near his seat at Riby, in opposition to the landed influence of the Earls of Yarborough and the Heneage family. No single interest could hope to control the town's electors, for corruption was extensive, and the fishermen in particular were considered 'very independent' and generally to 'vote with a popular man or one likely to serve their own personal interests, rather than from any strong political feeling' (Olney 1973, 15). While Tomline again put himself forward for election at Shrewsbury in 1868, it is clear that he was only keeping his options open while trying to secure the seat at Grimsby. For months before, he had been representing himself in the Lincolnshire press as a champion of the farmers and a strong advocate of chambers of commerce and county financial boards (Olney 1973, 166-67). He withdrew from the contest at Shrewsbury almost at the last moment (according to his obituarist because, he said, 'it was getting so plaguy expensive'), and succeeded in carrying the day at Grimsby. Since he took the seat from the previous member, also a Liberal, the result presumably turned on purely local and personal grounds.

Tomline represented Grimsby until the 1874 general election, when he transferred his attentions to the county seat of East Suffolk, where by now he had purchased extensive property (see below) and was immersed in plans for the development of Felixstowe. Though he spent freely, the Conservatives swept the board in East Anglia, and in East Suffolk he came a poor third in the poll behind both his Tory rivals Lord Rendlesham and Viscount Mahon (obit.). He would never sit in Parliament again.

In 1880 he unsuccessfully contested the borough of Harwich in the Liberal interest, at least partly out of personal antipathy towards the Conservative candidate Sir Henry Tyler, a director of the Great Eastern Railway Company which was threatening his development of Felixstowe by its own expansion of Parkeston on the Stour. Defeated by fifty-eight votes Tomline, having been advised that the contest had been subject to much bribery and treating, lodged a petition against the result, which was eventually dismissed, with costs awarded against the petitioner.⁴³

Tomline stood as a parliamentary candidate one final time, in the 1881 by-election in the North Lincolnshire constituency caused by the death of the sitting member. The constituency Liberal Association saw an opportunity to appease the moderate 'agricultural' Liberals who had declined to rally to the party's support at the previous general election, and invited Tomline to stand. He was once more unsuccessful, the Conservative, James Lowther, defeating him by 471 votes. A party activist, analysing the result in a report to Tomline's agent, ascribed his defeat to the belief of the owners and occupiers of land in Lowther's promises of 'protection'; that the Conservatives would be more likely than the Liberals to obtain relief for them in the present agricultural depression. Most of Tomline's supporters were tradesmen, small freeholders and small farmers, many of them dissenters, while against him were ranged the largest landowners and farmers, the clergy, and those under their influence (Olney 1973, 191–94). If the historian of the Pretymans family is to be believed, Tomline's fury at this defeat caused him to shut up Riby Grove and never return; he is said to have further shown his disgust by cutting down the avenues of ash bordering the roads on the Riby estate (W.P., I, f. 178).

The extent of Tomline's commitment to politics is not easy to determine. He was described in print during his lifetime as one to whom public affairs were 'an amusement and nothing more', one of the superlatively rich whose mind was too good to let him be satisfied with 'the small pastimes which are to be purchased for money'; who became 'a gentleman amateur' in politics and followed 'no man's lead', so that even the House of Commons was unable to say whether he was a Liberal or a Tory (Gowing 1875, 103–04, 108).

It is almost certainly untrue that he regarded politics merely as amusement. His expressed regret at his 'idle' youth and desire for hard work have already been discussed. In a Shrewsbury election address in 1847 he pledged, if re-elected,

to assist to the best of my power the efforts which are being made to add to the prosperity and morality of the lower classes, convinced, as I am, that in every man whom we can redeem from misery and vice, we shall gain a supporter of all we hold most dear in Church and State.⁴⁴

While obviously this statement was intended for public consumption and electoral advantage, he told his brother William privately, in the letter quoted at some length above (p. 86):

I was very much struck with the death bed words of poor Edward Drummond (the man who was shot by MacNaghten)⁴⁵ who said, and they were the last words that he uttered, that he died happy, for he had always studied to do to everyone as much good as his limited means would enable him to do. He was himself, for a gentleman, almost a pauper, and supposed to be a gay, frivolous, thoughtless man about town.⁴⁶

Tomline's means were very far from 'limited' and, as we shall see, he would employ much of his great wealth in providing work for a considerable number of people in Suffolk. It therefore seems very probable that he had every intention of making a valuable contribution in Parliament.

However, he was always his own man, and would certainly never have consented to be mere 'lobby fodder'; Gowing's assertion that he followed 'no man's lead' thus has some validity. True, he turned his back on his father's strongly-held protectionist opinions in order to support his leader Peel over the repeal of the Corn Laws, a course which led him into the political wilderness for five years. As a Liberal M.P. he was at home among the party grandees – present, for instance, in November 1866 at a house party at Raby Castle, seat of the Liberal Duke of Cleveland, where he had a long conversation on the state of politics with the Earl of Kimberley (Hawkins and Powell 1997, 194–95). Yet at his selection interview as Liberal candidate for North Lincolnshire in 1881, pressed as to whether he would give Gladstone his 'thorough, consistent and hearty support', he replied merely that he would 'support his policy, with the insertion of the word independent' (Olney 1973, 193). Could

he have brought himself to accept party discipline he could well have risen high in Government, for, as Gowing wrote (1875, 109), 'in spite of crotchet and eccentricity, he has better natural abilities than many a successful or popular statesman'. It was not to be.

Two political issues which we know particularly concerned him – church rates and the silver coinage – illustrate the extent to which Tomline was prepared to antagonise both neighbours and parliamentary colleagues, and (particularly over the coinage) the lengths to which he was willing to pursue a quarrel. Early in the 19th century dissenters, especially in towns, began to refuse to pay the rates levied for the repair of the fabric of parish churches, which they did not attend. The legal position was unsatisfactory in that, while payment could be enforced at law if the rate was levied by the churchwardens and a vestry meeting, only ecclesiastical sanctions were available if the meeting refused to approve a rate. Interdict or excommunication were hardly appropriate or effective instruments in a modern age, and in any case would have punished churchmen, not dissenters. Various Whig attempts to abolish the rates were blocked by the ecclesiastical Establishment, and the matter remained a source of local disputes and bitterness until Gladstone succeeded in abolishing the compulsory rate in 1868 (Woodward 1962, 511).

Tomline, unsuccessfully contesting Shrewsbury as a 'Liberal Conservative' in 1847, had claimed 'by hereditary motives, as well as by conviction', an attachment to the Protestant Establishment and 'a fixed determination to resist every attempt which may be made, whether boldly or insidiously, to weaken its security, and to lose no opportunity which may present itself, to promote its interest and add to its prosperity'.⁴⁷ His grandfather the Bishop would doubtless have applauded.

But by 1858, from his seat on the Liberal benches in the Commons, he viewed things differently. The fabric of Nacton church, the parish church serving both Tomline's Suffolk seat of Orwell Park and Sir George Broke's at Broke Hall (and of which Tomline and Broke were both churchwardens), was in urgent need of repair. The nave roof in particular was in such a state of decay that 'nothing but its entire reframing' would prevent its spreading 'to such an extent as to seriously endanger the lives of the congregation'.⁴⁸

At first Tomline, absent in London for the Parliamentary session, was content to leave the levying of the necessary rate to his fellow-warden;⁴⁹ but the Nacton church restoration unfortunately coincided with a further attempt in Parliament to abolish church rates, and when it became apparent that the new roof would cost £160, necessitating a rate of 2s. 6d. in the pound, he affected to be appalled. Launching a virulent attack on the competence and integrity of R.M. Phipson, the architect, he told Broke that he had given orders for his own assessment not to be paid, or at least not 'more than I paid last year as Church Rate', and that he would 'most undoubtedly contest in every shape, and, if necessary, in every court', the 2s. 6d. rate. Pointing out, correctly (his sound knowledge of the law was noted above), that churchwardens had no power to levy a contested rate, he asserted his intention to do what he conceived to be his duty 'as a large ratepayer to protect those that are poorer'. Since he believed (erroneously) that church rates would probably be abolished during the current parliamentary session, he was 'the more reluctant to take advantage of their last year to levy a higher rate than was ever before known in the parish'.⁵⁰

Tomline's opposition was intemperate. On learning from the Duke of Somerset that the bishops would overturn the abolition Bill in the Upper House, his statement to Broke that 'the next step will be to bring in a Bill to turn the Bishops out of the House of Lords, and you and I will live to see it carried with acclamation'⁵¹ was hopelessly unrealistic, as history continues to prove.

Meanwhile in Nacton, at a vestry meeting (in Tomline's continued absence) on 3 July 1858, Broke's proposal for a 2s. 6d. rate was defeated on a show of hands. Broke requisitioned a poll, which resulted in the rate being carried. But in October, when Broke (a naval officer) was overseas on active service, Tomline returned to Nacton to attend a further meeting which, under his influence, voted unanimously to quash the earlier proceedings and to approve a rate not exceeding 3d. in the pound for the repair of the church. The end result was that the work had to be financed by voluntary subscription within the parish.⁵²

In the late 1860s Tomline became concerned that a general shortage of small-denomination silver coin in circulation was causing great inconvenience in the country, particularly to employers in paying their workforce. Traditionally such shortages had been answered by the issue of private trade tokens, but the modernisation of the Royal Mint with Boulton's machinery, together with an adverse effect on trade caused by a glut of copper tokens, had resulted in the suppression of all tokens by Act of Parliament in 1817 (Whiting 1971, 28–31).

Quite reasonably, and correctly, Tomline first raised the matter in the House of Commons, with a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (and titular Master of the Mint), Robert Lowe (afterwards Viscount Sherbrooke). The peppery colonel and his opponent were well-matched. Lowe was one who 'in force of sarcasm ... excelled all his contemporaries at St Stephen's ... and never shrank from expressing the scorn which he felt' (*D.N.B.*); the constitutionalist Walter Bagehot summed him up as 'a great man, but ... also a great irritant'.⁵³ His characteristically brusque reply to Tomline, to the effect that there were already far too many shillings in circulation and that, if possible, several millions of them should be withdrawn, was greeted with laughter (obit.).

This ill-considered put-down infuriated Tomline, who never forgave ridicule. Having failed to carry the point in Parliament, he resorted to other means, attempting to resurrect a 17th-century statute (18 Car. II, cap. 2) which had provided that anyone bringing bullion to the Master of the Mint was entitled to have it coined free of charge. He now, in June 1870, sent consignments of gold and silver bullion to the Mint for coining, to be met, not surprisingly, with a flat refusal.⁵⁴

At this time Tomline, already involved in his great project for the development of Felixstowe, was employing a large labour force on land reclamation at Walton. Though always rightly credited with using his vast wealth to create employment, in this instance he ruthlessly used his workers as pawns in furtherance of his battle of wills with Lowe. On the pretext that he had no silver coin to pay them, he suspended all work at Walton, blaming the Chancellor. Doubtless at his instigation, 196 workmen petitioned Lowe on 21 November 1870, pleading that his inaction had forced them into idleness and pauperism. Frequently-recurring surnames among the signatories show that whole families had been thrown out of work.⁵⁵

Lowe's reply to the petitioners, on 24 November, took the form of an open letter in the press, which read, in the words of his biographer, 'like a page out a "First Spelling Book"' (Martin 1893, 374), pointing out that as Master of the Mint he had no obligation to buy silver unless needed at the time for coining. It was his analogy of the pig which enraged Tomline, a further employment of ridicule which may well have goaded him into pursuing the issue to greater extremes:

If a man has a pig to sell and takes it to a town where there are several butchers, the first butcher may, perhaps, not want to buy a pig. But the man does not take his pig home again and say that the butcher has prevented him from selling his pig. He goes to the other butchers until he finds one that wants a pig, and sells the pig to him. I am very sorry that Mr Tomline has ceased to give you employment, but as he could easily, if he chose, obtain 2,000 shillings in exchange for his silver, and, indeed, in many other ways, you must not think that my refusal to buy his silver has anything to do with your distress. I do not claim for the Queen, in this case, any right except that which is possessed by you and me and Mr Tomline and all Her Majesty's subjects, the right to refuse to buy the things we do not want.⁵⁶

Tomline, ever legalistic, took issue with the Chancellor's use of the verb 'to buy', which he dismissed as a fallacy, on the grounds that the Mint was not being asked to *buy*, but to *coin* bullion. The Mint, he wrote, was not a shop, but 'a manufacturing monopoly where alone coin can be obtained'. He himself had bought the silver with a banknote, and 'you could not purchase it of me except by giving me a similar banknote which I do not want or gold and silver coin which you have not got'.⁵⁷

The Chancellor's publication of the petition and its rejoinder resulted in a spate of letters in support of Tomline's stand, furnishing plentiful anecdotal evidence that there was indeed a shortage of silver coin which was a very real inconvenience. Tomline forwarded to Gladstone, the Prime Minister, and to George Goschen, President of the Poor Law Board, copies of a letter from the

secretary of the Temperance Hall in his Grimsby constituency, complaining that a shortage of silver at the Grimsby fishermen's landing pontoons meant that they often had to be paid in gold 'three or four together, and to divide the gold among them they are driven to the public house for change'. Charles Tennant, the Glamorgan landowner and industrialist, similarly wrote of great inconvenience in paying his Neath estate and industrial workers, while another correspondent complained especially of the difficulty in paying the tolls levied at the London bridges.⁵⁸

Meanwhile, the passage of the 1870 Coinage Act had restored the right to free coinage of gold (though not of silver) by private citizens. Tomline increased the pressure on the Chancellor by sending further consignments of gold and silver bullion to the Mint in January 1871. His gold was duly coined into sovereigns the following month, but the silver was again rejected.⁵⁹

For Tomline this proved the last straw, and he resolved upon an act of self-indulgence possible only to one of his almost limitless means. Though the legal opinions he sought from counsel were distinctly cautious,⁶⁰ he brought a lawsuit against the Chancellor in the Queen's Bench for inducing C.W. Fremantle, the Mint's Deputy Master, 'maliciously, and intending to injure Mr Tomline', to refuse to coin his original consignments of gold and silver bullion (i.e., those submitted before the 1870 Act). The case was heard on 28 April 1871, when the Solicitor-General (for Lowe) admitted Tomline's right in respect of gold but argued successfully that an Act of 1816 (56 Geo. III, cap. 68), not fully repealed in 1870, had removed the public's right to coinage of its silver bullion, unless solicited by the government by royal proclamation. On the silver question judgement was given for the Chancellor (*I.J.*, 2 May 1871, p.3).

Even now, Tomline did not yield gracefully; indeed he did not yield at all. Defeated in the Commons and the courts, he founded a short-lived London newspaper, *The Future*, the better to pursue his vendetta. It is typical of the man that the one reference to it in the family archive arose from yet another lawsuit: Tomline dismissed his manager, Arthur Mainwaring, for inattention to business and financial irregularities, and was sued by him for breach of contract.⁶¹ *The Future*, which operated from premises at No. 50 Strand, ran for only thirty-four issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays from 11 July to 3 November 1871, describing itself as 'a national advertiser for free distribution', but actually priced at ½d. During its short life twenty-three letters from Tomline to the editor were published in twenty-two issues, condemning the Mint's current practice as a closed shop. In the final issue the editor (Tomline himself?) makes explicit that the 'primary object for which his journal was started was to bring before the public the question of our currency system, and to show that for many years the people of this country have been deprived of a privilege which dates back to a very early period of our history'.⁶²

Tomline's investment in the 'Logotype' process for improvements to typesetting by casting groups of letters or whole words in one piece has long been known. The patents of the inventor, Bartholomew Beniowski, were acquired in 1868 by John Greene, former M.P. for Kilkenny, and a type-casting foundry established in London, at 9 Woodstock Street. The patents and business were mortgaged to Tomline, who installed his own manager, but not surprisingly the venture proved unprofitable, since the process was more expensive than normal typesetting. Again unsurprisingly, the enterprise ended in litigation (for once, resolved by compromise) when Greene sued Tomline for allowing the patents to lapse.⁶³ In an attempt to recoup his investment Tomline would ultimately display the Logotype process at the Philadelphia International Exhibition of 1876.⁶⁴ What is important to note for present purposes is a passing reference in his journal in 1881, that he had ordered the removal from his stables of the cases containing the type, 'to show to capitalists'; the patent had been revived, and 'I may get my money back which I advanced in aid of the silver question, the whole of the Press being in the hand of the Jews, and I wanted to cheapen printing'.⁶⁵ In other words, the investment in Logotypes was directly linked to the founding of *The Future*, and both were intended as weapons in his vendetta against the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

When the newspaper ceased publication Tomline seems finally to have admitted defeat. The anecdotal evidence of his correspondents, most of them strangers to him, strongly suggests that there was indeed a shortage of silver coin which was inconvenient to the country, so that Lowe's refusal to admit the existence of the problem was merely wrong-headed. Both men were acerbic, and a classic

clash of personalities may have been at least partly responsible for Lowe's rejection of the question without proper consideration. After much unpleasantness and expense the Government tacitly conceded the point, for over the next six consecutive years the total silver coin in circulation was allowed to rise annually from an estimated £14.195 million in 1870 to an estimated £17.418 million in 1876 (Capie and Webber 1983, 30). However, Tomline's widening of this original issue into a campaign to force the Mint to coin privately-held silver bullion at will – in effect to re-monetise silver and establish bi-metallism – was doomed to failure. His attempt to revive an archaic law, his court action against a Government minister for whose party he himself sat at Westminster, and his founding of a newspaper purely as an instrument of vendetta, exhibited a degree of pig-headedness which almost beggars belief. The contemporary judgement that it was an instance of the 'chequered and somewhat distorted character of his mind' and that 'he takes up with a big crotchet and finds no end of profound reasons for standing by it' (Gowing 1875, 106) is mild. Much may have been an over-reaction to the Chancellor's initial ridicule, but Tomline's conduct speaks volumes on his unfitness for ministerial office despite his undoubted intellectual gifts.

THE COLONEL AND THE LORD LIEUTENANT

Much less well-known than his highly public duel with Robert Lowe, Tomline's quarrel with Charles, Marquess of Granby, heir to the Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire and Conservative M.P. for North Leicestershire,⁶⁶ over the administration of the Lincolnshire militia, is once more revealing both of his fiery temperament and of his scant regard for established authority. William Edward Tomline had held militia rank in Lincolnshire, being commissioned first-major (1809) and lieutenant-colonel (1814) of the Lindsey Regiment, and colonel of the Royal North Lincolnshire Regiment in 1831.⁶⁷ His son George maintained the family connexion, accepting the lieutenant-colonelcy of the North Lincolnshire Regiment a week after his father's death and succeeding to the colonelcy in 1851 on the death of Lord Alford.⁶⁸

George Tomline was also selected as High Sheriff of Lincolnshire the following year, again following family precedent; his father had held the office in 1824 (L. and I. IX, 82). In view of his militia duties he regarded the shrievalty as burdensome, and applied unsuccessfully to the Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord President of the Council, to be excused from office.⁶⁹ Certainly the duties of the shrievalty obliged him to abandon the victory celebrations on his re-election as M.P. for Shrewsbury in July 1852, in order to receive the Assize judges at Lincoln.⁷⁰ He was thus unsympathetic, to say the least, when importuned by the Lord Lieutenant three months later on the subject of the recruitment of militia volunteers, reminding him tartly that 'I am High Sheriff, and not your Deputy Lieutenant'.⁷¹ This riposte boded ill for future relations between the two men.

Ill-feeling boiled over the following year, over unspecified administrative delays affecting the performance of the North Lincolnshire Regiment. Tomline blamed the Lord Lieutenant, whom he attacked in a blistering letter to the county's Clerk of Lieutenancy on 16 May, questioning Granby's fitness for office:⁷²

... Now that Lord Granby, if he thinks at all, cannot but know that he has been obliged to do everything I proposed, though so late as to be useless, I hope matters will proceed more smoothly. The post of Ld. Lieutenant is no longer ornamental, it is one of great responsibility and should command in the holder of it, the same qualities of energy and ability which are expected in the holders of important situations in every other rank of life.

Tomline's temper was not improved on receiving, the following day, a telegram from the mayor of Lincoln. Through some administrative oversight two hundred militiamen had arrived in Lincoln, not having received notice that their muster had been postponed, and unprovided with food or shelter. The mayor, fearing disturbances in the city, urgently requested the regimental colonel to authorise a

representative to take charge in his name. This incident may have been partly responsible for his second letter to the Clerk of Lieutenancy on 21 May, in which he repeated 'every syllable I have written or said to the Lord Lieutenant himself', and added that 'it was my intention to cast blame upon his Lordship's procrastination, that I might as far as I could, repudiate responsibility for delay which I had no power to prevent'.

Meanwhile Granby, understandably incensed at the manner of Tomline's attack, blamed him for the chaos of 17 May and involved the Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, to whom he wrote demanding the militia colonel's resignation. Palmerston, faced with a situation manifestly 'injurious to the good of Her Majesty's Service', attempted the difficult task of pouring oil on troubled waters while at the same time bringing the two infuriated men to heel. Diplomatically he informed Tomline that, after investigation, no blame attached either to him or Granby regarding their respective complaints, but at the same time invited him, in terms which virtually demanded compliance, to withdraw his charges against the Lord Lieutenant, which were 'made by you under a misconception of the matters to which they relate'. The Home Secretary trusted that

you will participate in the desire by which the Lord Lieutenant has assured me that he is animated, that when these differences are settled by the Secretary of State, as I hope by this letter they will be, in a manner fitting for both parties, there may be between the Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire and the Colonel of the North Lincoln Regiment that cordial and friendly co-operation, which is so essential for the interests of the Queen's service.

Tomline at once came fully into line, withdrawing his charges unreservedly and giving the required assurances of future good conduct.

For Granby, Palmerston attempted first to sugar the pill with an assurance that he did not consider a mere colonel of militia competent to pass judgement on the official conduct of a Lord Lieutenant, this being the prerogative of the Home Secretary. Injecting a note of steel, however, he expressed the 'confident hope' (demand) that 'nothing of the same kind will again occur to require the interposition of Her Majesty's Secretary of State'. It was a masterly banging of heads.

Granby duly withdrew his request for the Colonel's resignation, 'in deference ... to your Lordship's wishes'. But, as stiff-necked as Tomline at his worst, on the grounds that the Colonel's unconditional withdrawal had failed to include any expression of regret (the Home Secretary had not asked it of him), he insisted to Palmerston that 'in order to prevent any future misunderstandings ... any future communications between Col. Tomline and myself regarding the service of the Regiment pass through the Clerk of Lieutenancy or the Adjutant of the Regiment'. Tomline (and Palmerston) had met his match.

As with the war over the silver coinage, this was a clash between two stiff-necked personalities. In this instance the initial fault undoubtedly lay with Tomline. To attack the Lord Lieutenant by means of a letter directed to his subordinate was a wholly disgraceful lapse; and whatever the causes of the unspecified delays, a more temperate approach could surely have led to a resolution of the difficulties by constructive discussion between the two principals. That he was perhaps still smarting from the unwelcome imposition of the shrievalty and spoiling for a fight may partially explain, but in no way excuses his conduct. Cooler heads are required for the public service. In the end, however, Granby, when every allowance is made for his very real grounds for affront, out-did him in sheer pig-headedness.

ORWELL PARK, FELIXSTOWE AND THE WAR OFFICE

To students of Suffolk's history, Colonel George Tomline is best remembered for the building of the Felixstowe Railway and the early phases of the development of its port. Yet he need not have turned his interest to Suffolk at all. The Pretymann family had not resided on the ancestral Bacton estate since the 18th century, and since 1803 its territorial base had been at Riby in Lincolnshire. When William Edward Tomline had considered investing part of his great inheritance in land purchase he had not looked to Suffolk, but to Westmorland, Northamptonshire, Yorkshire and Wales. He was sufficiently interested in the 13,000-acre Johnes family estate of Hafod, in the remote Ystwyth valley in Cardiganshire (the house, library and gardens considered one of the wonders of Wales, and in 1830 for sale at £100,000), to copy into his diary the particulars supplied him by the estate agent.⁷³ Though in the event he purchased no estate before his premature death in 1836, it is interesting, if fruitless, to wonder what development George Tomline might have undertaken in rural west Wales, had much of his inheritance already been invested in property there.

The reason for Tomline's return to his Suffolk roots is unknown. It may simply have been that, with the early deaths of both his sisters in 1839, his childhood home at Riby came to hold too many unhappy memories. Even so, he had first, in 1845, investigated the possibilities of the Londesborough estate in Yorkshire's East Riding, being put off perhaps by the need to build a new house, since the old mansion there had been levelled.⁷⁴ However, in 1847 he agreed to purchase the 3,608-acre Orwell Park estate in Nacton, Suffolk, the former seat of Admiral Vernon, from Sir Robert Harland (2nd baronet), whose wife Arethusa was the last of the Vernons. The purchase was completed on 27 January 1848, for £102,500,⁷⁵ and Tomline set about an extensive enlargement of both mansion and estate (Figs. 28 and 29).

Eight years later he acquired the Kesgrave Hall estate from the devisees of the late Frances Ann Shawe, and in 1868 purchased from the Duke of Hamilton and Brandon the 6,000-acre Walton estate including the manor of Walton with Trimley, four other manors, virtually the whole parish of Walton, and much of Felixstowe. Between 1848 and 1885 he extended and consolidated his holdings in the area with almost annual purchases, becoming by his death the second largest landowner in Suffolk, with a total estate of almost 20,000 acres.⁷⁶

It was perhaps inevitable, certainly typical, that Tomline would quarrel with his new neighbours. His ill-tempered opposition to his immediate neighbour Sir George Broke's proposals for the restoration of Nacton church has been discussed above. His simultaneous boundary dispute with Broke, referred to at the beginning of this article, was to drag on for four years. Originating in a minor disagreement over the siting of the gate piers for the new entrance to Broke Hall, it was widened to include the diversion of the footpath to Levington church, Tomline at one point issuing threats of legal action against the parish vestries of Nacton and Levington, and in April 1861 threatening to cut off the water supply to Broke Hall by digging up the pipes running through Orwell Park land from Broke's hydraulic ram. He was to consider this latter course again in 1874, ostensibly as a sanction against possibly undesirable tenants at Broke Hall (Sir George, now Broke-Middleton, having inherited Shrubland Park in Barham and moved away), but, apparently, partly in revenge for Broke's opposition to the proposed route of the Felixstowe Railway through his estate.⁷⁷ Tomline was very conscious of the power conferred by control of the supply of water; it was a weapon he would use with devastating effect at Landguard Fort.

The construction of the Felixstowe Railway and Dock is the one aspect of Tomline's career which has been adequately dealt with in print.⁷⁸ Though he eschewed conventional charity and habitually burned begging letters unread, he confided to his brother (above, p. 88) his belief in the merit of doing to all as much good as his means allowed. To his end, as he told a friend, he would employ as many people as possible in every way he could discover; and 'the time I used to spend in thinking how I could directly help the poor devils who confided their woes to me, I now devote to scheming new openings for setting people to work, and so indirectly helping many more' (obit.).

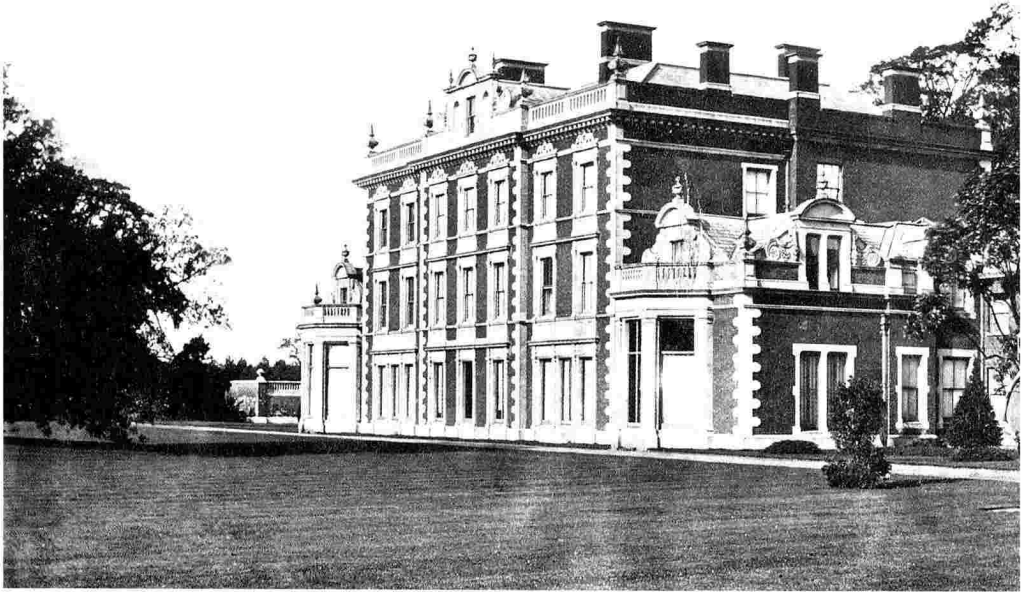


FIG. 28 – Orwell Park as purchased by George Tomline in 1848
(by permission of Mrs M. Bence-Jones and the Suffolk Record Office).



FIG. 29 – Orwell Park as enlarged by George Tomline
(by permission of Mrs M. Bence-Jones and the Suffolk Record Office).

This philosophy underlay his plan to develop at the south end of Felixstowe, on land he had himself acquired, a new trading port and holiday resort. Existing communications were primitive, and Tomline first planned a standard-gauge tramway from Ipswich railway station along the north bank of the Orwell. But though the route was surveyed, the work begun, and much money spent, the scheme foundered in 1873. Tomline's co-promoter, John Weston of London, proved a man of straw, and the project ended, as with so many other of Tomline's activities, in a welter of litigation. Tomline sued Weston in Chancery; both men were together sued in the Queen's Bench by Weston's solicitors; while Tomline was sued by the contractors, Hassell and Gambier of Fishbourne, Sussex, for wrongful dismissal, and by the trustees of the now bankrupt Alfred Maberly, the engineer who had drawn up the plans.⁷⁹

In 1874 Tomline proposed a railway link to Felixstowe from a junction with the East Suffolk line at Westerfield. His Bill was however rejected in the House of Lords, chiefly through the opposition of his Nacton neighbour Sir George Broke-Middleton, on the grounds that the projected route would cut the line of flight of ducks to his decoy (thus prompting Tomline to consider, in retaliation, cutting the water supply to Broke Hall). Following a rapid survey of an alternative route the application was renewed later the same year, and the Felixstowe Railway and Pier Company was incorporated by Act of Parliament on 19 July 1875. Tomline was naturally elected chairman. He had meanwhile anticipated the passage of the Act by commencing work, on his own property, on the section of the line over Landguard Common, entirely at his own expense and risk.⁸⁰ The line, built by Lucas Brothers of Lowestoft and Lambeth, was opened on 1 May 1877. In the early years it operated independently, but proved insufficiently profitable, so that in 1879 the Company was obliged to enter an agreement with the Great Eastern to work the line.⁸¹

Meanwhile Tomline, through his Company, had embarked upon a further development project, the construction of a dock at Felixstowe, authorised by Act of Parliament in 1876. Early plans proved abortive, and it was not until 1881 that work began in earnest under the supervision of Robert Pearson Brereton as engineer. Though the contractors, Samuel Lock and Company, went bankrupt, the dock was eventually opened to shipping in 1886.

In the following year the Felixstowe Company was forced to sell 'Colonel Tomline's Railway' to the Great Eastern, which had since the outset done all within its power to starve it of revenue, regarding the Felixstowe enterprise as unwanted competition for its own development of Harwich and Parkeston. The price was £164,000, of which the major part was paid in G.E.R. shares. Tomline and his Company were also coerced into an undertaking not to promote or support the projected Felixstowe, Ipswich, Cambridge and Midlands Railway in Parliament, or any other scheme antagonistic to Great Eastern interests.⁸² Tomline must have found it a bitter pill to swallow.

He had originally hoped that a rail link through Westerfield to the industrial Midlands would transform Felixstowe into a major port. But, largely through the Great Eastern's hostility, the line was never built; nor did the expected trade with Germany and the rest of northern Europe materialise. His more expansionist ambitions were thus not realised during his lifetime. Nevertheless the town grew quickly as a holiday resort during his last years. He unquestionably succeeded in his first and paramount aim of providing the maximum possible employment, and by his vision and pioneering spirit, no less than his practical philanthropy, almost single-handedly laid the foundations of Felixstowe's future prosperity.

Tomline's 1868 purchase of the manor of Walton with Trimley, with its extensive foreshore and common rights in Felixstowe and up the Orwell estuary, involved him in an almost interminable succession of disputes with the War Office over Landguard Fort, which was held by the Crown on long-term lease from previous lords of the manor. Doubtless the military authorities were irked by Tomline's levy on building materials brought across his foreshore for the extension of the fort, so much so that after various increases in the rate charged they suspended the works (Thompson 1946, 26). Even so, it is indisputable that they treated him high-handedly and with scant regard for law.

Among their acts of trespass detailed by Tomline in a published exchange of correspondence with

the newly-appointed Secretary of State for War, Gathorne Gathorne-Hardy (afterwards 1st Earl of Cranbrook) in November 1874 were the illegal fencing off of some of his property; the erection (without permission) of rifle butts on his land, involving the removal of sandhills; the construction of an unauthorised shingle barrier on his foreshore; and inordinate delays in the arbitration process over compensation for the offences. Following complaints from the tenants of his marshes of an unusual shortage of water, Tomline's on-the-spot investigation revealed that, again without permission, the engineers at Landguard Fort, to augment their own inadequate supply, had sunk a well on his property. A protest to the War Office solicitor produced no redress, and further inspection of the site showed that a pipe had been laid across his fields, diverting a spring which fed the marshes into the illicit well-head and depriving his tenants of water. Tomline now took matters into his own hands and immediately severed both the pipe from the spring and that (on government land) connecting the well to the fort.⁸³

Tomline was much criticised at the time for resorting to direct action (Leslie 1898, 83–87), but the formal legal opinion submitted by his counsel, F. Meadows White, clearly shows that he had little hope of redress in law. Though the various trespasses had been committed by Crown servants, a petition of right would not lie against the Crown in a civil action, nor would it be practicable to sue the individuals directly responsible, since 'the acts of the subordinates would be shielded by the same indemnity ... as the acts of the Crown itself'. White concluded:

Col. Tomline must, I fear, for all practical purposes be left to enforce his rights by cutting off the connections which have been made with the pipes and springs upon his land. With regard to past losses he must lay his grievance before the [War] Department, and if he should meet with no redress, must try what his influence in Parliament will do.⁸⁴

The War Office countered with a lawsuit against Tomline in Chancery. But while his action in cutting the pipe on government property was adjudged unlawful, the ruling regarding the pipe from the diverted spring went in his favour, so that, deprived of its illicit supply, the fort was left cripplingly short of water. In 1875 the War Office, to prevent future disputes over manorial rights, took steps under the Defence Act for the compulsory purchase of the foreshore and common land in the vicinity of the fort. The arbitration hearing took place in Ipswich in January 1876 (*I.J.*, 8 Jan.), when the jury assessed the value of the 200 acres involved at a mere £11,039 rather than the £40,000 proposed by Tomline's valuer. On appeal, the final purchase price was set at £15,000, and it was generally felt that Tomline had been shabbily treated (*obit.*). The conveyance to the War Office was signed on 7 September 1876.⁸⁵

However, despite the former Chancellor Lowe's experience at Tomline's hands, the War Office clearly underestimated their man's determination to defend his rights. Despite the acquisition of common and foreshore, the springs which were so desperately needed to augment the water supply of Landguard Fort still lay on Tomline's land. The department's difficulties were gleefully chronicled in his journal. An attempt was made to sink a new and deeper well for the fort, but in July 1878 Tomline noted that Sir Joseph Bazalgette, the engineer to the Metropolitan Board of Works, had failed to obtain water at the Crossness pumping station after boring 1,060 feet through the same chalk formation that underlay Landguard. In April 1880 he received word that 'the War Office have given up their well ... and are making a large tank to catch the rain-water', and commented: 'I knew that it must come to this, and all their vindictive and spiteful proceedings against me have ended in making their Fort practically useless'. In the summer of 1881 Major Rice, of the garrison, to whom Tomline had allowed spring water from his Manor Hotel for personal use, confessed to him that the water in the tanks was exhausted. Further attempts to deepen their well were thwarted by Tomline. He sunk a deeper well of his own as near as possible to his boundary, and by means of a steam pump kept working day and night, successfully kept theirs dry, congratulating himself on having destroyed the water supply to the fort.⁸⁶

Meanwhile he harrassed the opposition on a second front. Having succeeded in enforcing the

closure of the rifle butts on his land on the grounds of danger to the public, he then, between 1882 and 1885, made it practically impossible for troops stationed at the fort to conduct rifle practice on the common by having his employees parade on Felixstowe beach, in the firing line, each time the red flag was run up.⁸⁷ By the summer of 1885 he believed he had won, confiding to his journal:

I think that the War Office have, at last, given way about rifle practice on Landguard Common. The Bedfordshire Volunteers were ordered to go there this summer. The officers took rooms at the Pier Hotel, when suddenly it was discovered that there was no water, and the Battalion was moved to Harwich. An Act of Parliament has been got to enable the authorities to move off from sea and land trespassers who interfere with rifle or artillery practice – but the want of water has made this secret scheme useless as regards Landguard.⁸⁸

For all his astuteness, however, this time he had misread the situation, and the government once more cut the knot by means of compulsory purchase (W.P., I, f. 180r).

While in retrospect the escalation of these petty disputes appears ridiculous, it was only when goaded by War Office procrastination in the matter of compensation and deprived of redress at law by Crown immunity in civil actions that Tomline took direct action. Though in no sense could he be described as ‘the little man’, it is difficult not to applaud his solitary stand against a monolithic, arrogant and unresponsive bureaucracy.

ENVOI

On 21 December 1888 George Tomline suffered a stroke. Though he made a partial recovery, a relapse the following summer deprived him of speech and he died at his London home, No. 1 Carlton House Terrace, on 25 August 1889. At his express wish, following a funeral service at St Martin in the Fields he was cremated at Woking, only the ninety-third cremation to take place in the country and the first of an East Anglian resident. His ashes were interred within the communion rails of Riby church where his mother and sisters were also buried, and where there is a window to his memory (obit., W.P., I, f. 180r). The short-lived Tomline dynasty for which the Bishop of Winchester and his wife had cherished such high ambitions was at an end. All George Tomline’s siblings had predeceased him and his brother William, the only one to marry, had left no issue. The whole estate was willed to a cousin, Captain Ernest George Pretymann, grandson of the Bishop’s second son George Thomas and a future Lord of the Admiralty.

Victorian Suffolk’s great eccentric was the most enigmatic of men. His contemporaries were at a loss to understand his failure to marry, if only to provide a direct heir to his great wealth. His driving, quarrelsome propensity for litigation they likewise found unfathomable, nor could they explain his apparent lack of interest in furthering his public career in Parliament by the pursuit of government office. His *East Anglian Daily Times* obituarist regarded him as an anachronism, ‘an ancient Viking ... living in the nineteenth century when he ought to have lived in the ninth’, a fighting man who ‘smelt the battle from afar, and dearly loved a legal duel’. With some truth the same writer attributed this pugnacity to a simple dislike of being taken in: ‘he stuck to his pound of flesh, for he did not like those who were dealing with him for the same material to best him.’ But what made him so? A friend of long standing contributing an appreciation to that same obituary wrote, somewhat floridly:

There was to the sympathetic observer of Colonel Tomline an ever present deadening *cui bono* at work doing its devilish best to counteract the noblest efforts of an almost God-like intellect. In that majestic leonine countenance, so sad in repose, was plainly written the abstract of some story of an early and abiding sorrow, the details of which were probably known to few, if any, among his latter day associates. One felt in his presence instinctively that a strong nature had at some far-off period received a shock from which neither great wealth nor rude health ... had enabled it to wholly recover.

While one would not for a moment assert that this appraisal is the key to the full understanding of Tomline's complex personality, it surely contains at least an element of truth. We have noted earlier the death of his mother when he was a child of three, followed by his father's precipitate departure abroad. We have noted, too, the tragic events of 1839: the deaths in rapid succession of his two sisters and the woman he might have married. These events may well account for his decision not to marry.

We may consider, too, the early death of his father William Edward in 1836, when George was aged only twenty-three. He thus inherited his colossal wealth at an age which might well have tempted the unscrupulous to try to take advantage of his youth and inexperience to relieve him of some of it by dubious means. In the absence of documentary evidence from these early years this can never now be known, but it seems possible, perhaps even likely, that Tomline, in safeguarding his inheritance from predators, learnt early to trust no man, to avoid being taken in, and to detest being bested in a fight. This last lesson may go some way towards explaining his protracted battles with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the War Office, and his pursuit of these and other campaigns to lengths to which other men, even given his means, would not have been prepared to go.

As regards his political career, these youthful responsibilities perhaps contributed to that striking independence of character and unwillingness to compromise which rendered him unsuitable for the high office for which his unquestioned intellectual gifts had once seemed, in the eyes of Sir Robert Peel and others, to mark him out. Tomline always remained his own man: not for him the horse-trading and backstairs deals which have always been, regrettably, such an essential element of party politics.

Tomline was not a man to bare his soul, and in any case little of his personal correspondence and few of his diaries have survived. The above is offered merely as hypothesis, in an attempt, albeit necessarily partial, to understand, at a distance of more than a century from his death, something of what drove him.

Despite his crusty public persona he did not lack for friends. Both contributors to his obituary wrote with affection of the very different character presented to those who knew him personally. To them he revealed that sense of fun and humour already apparent in his schoolboy letters home from Eton. To them he was kind-hearted, generous and 'the most urbane and delightful of hosts', while 'as a visitor he was usually the most easily entertained man in a house'.

His worst fault was said to be 'a certain stiff-necked arbitrariness which, from the wealth and prominence of the man, was always blazed forth to neighbours far and near, and for which no toning down or explanation was ever given' (obit.). Yet for all his dislike of conventional charity and disinclination to assist individual supplicants – his 'chilling want of sympathy' and 'intense disgust of anything savouring of imposition' as his obituarist expressed it – in terms of practical philanthropy he made a great and lasting contribution to the material well-being of the people of south-east Suffolk, in providing employment, directly and indirectly, on a monumental scale. It was with truth that his obituarist wrote of him: 'Rub out of the history of Ipswich, Felixstowe, and the neighbourhood, all that Colonel Tomline has done the last twenty years, and the record would be left much poorer.'

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NOTES

- 1 This paper originated in discoveries made while cataloguing the Pretymán-Tomline family archive (HA 119) in the Ipswich Branch of the Suffolk Record Office (S.R.O.I.) in the mid-1990s. The catalogue as yet exists only as a MS draft, not available for public inspection. The documents have been cited in this article by their new (permanent) reference numbers, but because it has so far not been possible to re-number and re-pack them to correspond to the catalogue, the author has placed in the Record Office searchroom a list of cross-references to the old (temporary, working) numbers by which alone the documents can at present be produced.
- 2 9 Nov. 1858: De Saumarez papers, S.R.O.I., HA 93/8/54.
- 3 'No-one provokes me with impunity'; pre-empted by The Most Ancient Order of the Thistle.
- 4 See vol. 1 of the four volume MS family history and compilation of genealogical material by William Pretymán (1849–1920), former political resident in North Borneo and a great-grandson of Dr John Pretymán (1752–1817), Archdeacon and Precentor of Lincoln: HA 119/4/18/2/1–4, hereafter cited as 'W.P.'; and Allen 1995. On the acquisition of the manors, see Copinger 1905–11, iii, 222, 229 and 247, and vi, 213; and purchase deeds HA 119/2/2/1/1/1/1 (Old Newton) and Ha 119/2/2/1/1/2/1 (Bacton).
- 5 On the descent of the Pretymán family and estates in the 18th century, see the pedigree in Muskett 1908, 307.
- 6 Relinquishment of his Cambridge fellowship also freed him to marry, on 3 Sept. 1784, Elizabeth, daughter and co-heir of Thomas Maltby of Germains (Bucks.): Muskett 1908, 307.
- 7 HA 119/4/3/2.
- 8 23 Jan. 1806: HA 119/4/5/1/1/7.
- 9 Draft letters, Pitt to the King, with the King's reply: HA 119/4/4/1/5.
- 10 Correspondence between Liverpool and the Bishop, 30 Jul.–3 Aug. 1813: HA 119/4/4/1/9–13; letter from the Bishop's wife to Revd John Pretymán, mounted in W.P., i, facing f. 151.
- 11 Letters from Liverpool to the Bishop, 1 Apr. and 14 Jul. 1820: HA 119/4/4/1/16.
- 12 Letter dated 6.30 a.m., 23 Jun. 1803: HA 119/4/5/1/1/11; Tomline's will, proved 10 Sept. 1803, is HA 119/4/4/7/1.
- 13 Letters of congratulation, Sept. 1806–Jan. 1807, on his winning the Hooper Oration Prize for declamations spoken in Trinity College Chapel, and on his oration on William Pitt: HA 119/4/7/1/3.
- 14 See, for example, her notes in HA 119/4/5/3/11.
- 15 Baronetcy claim papers, HA 119/4/6/1–8; W.P., i, ff. 247–65.
- 16 Press-cuttings in HA 119/4/6/8/2; W.P., i, ff. 259, 176.
- 17 In a letter thanking the Revd Stephen Hyde Cassan for a copy of his *Lives of the Bishops of Winchester*, 17 Jan. 1828, HA 119/4/6/6/8.
- 18 Case for counsel's opinion, n.d. [1827], HA 119/4/6/4/9; W.P., i, f. 262; draft letter, 2 Feb. 1828, HA 119/4/7/2/3.
- 19 For details, see Thorne 1986, 401, and History of Parliament Trust, London, unpublished article on W.E. Tomline for the 1820–32 section. I am grateful to the History of Parliament Trust for allowing me to see this article in draft.
- 20 Copy, Tomline to Falmouth, 27 Mar. 1828: HA 119/4/7/2/4; quoted in highly abridged form in the unpublished article cited in note 19.
- 21 Undated copy [Feb. 1829], Tomline to Falmouth: HA 119/4/7/2/4.
- 22 Falmouth to Tomline, 13 Feb. 1829: HA 119/4/7/2/4.
- 23 Married 18 Apr. 1811; Frances born 1812, George 1813, William 1814, Mary 1815, John Apr. 1816 (Muskett 1908, 308). An undated letter from William Edward to his wife, postmarked 31 May 1815, expressing his confidence that her strength of mind 'would enable you to bear this misfortune with ... fortitude' and pointing out that 'we are so eminently blessed in the health of our other dear children', even though 'I know in *degre* a Mother must feel more than a Father can', strongly suggests either the death of another child in very early infancy (Mary was also born that year), a still birth (possibly Mary's twin?), or at least a miscarriage: HA 119/4/8/1/3.
- 24 Letters from William Edward and Richard to their parents, May 1816: HA 119/4/4/11/6/1.
- 25 Letter from William Edward to his cousin John Pretymán, 21 May 1816, in W.P., i, f. 175v.
- 26 Letter to his father, postmarked 22 Nov.: HA 119/4/7/7/7/1; to his sister, postmarked 21 Nov.: HA 119/4/12/1.
- 27 Letters, 1828–31: HA 119/4/7/6/2.
- 28 George wrote to his father on 15 Jan. 1832 that his commanding officer 'seems not to like my coming into the regiment so early; he has asked me repeatedly what were your objections to the universities ...': HA 119/4/7/7/7/1.
- 29 2 Mar. 1831: HA 119/4/7/6/2.
- 30 Letter dated 15 Oct.: HA 119/4/7/7/7/1.
- 31 Letters to his father; *ibid*.
- 32 Letter to his father, 15 Aug.: HA 119/4/7/7/7/1.
- 33 Travel journals: HA 119/4/9/8/1–3.
- 34 Travel journal: HA 119/4/9/8/3. On Haynau, see Marek 1975, 71.
- 35 HA 119/4/10/4. The letter can be dated after the death (on 20 Jan. 1843) of Edward Drummond, which it refers to further on: see note 45.
- 36 See his obituary in *E.A.D.T.*, 26 Aug. 1889.
- 37 *Ibid.*; Longford 1964, 95–124; Muskett 1908, 307.
- 38 Letter from William Edward to his cousin John Pretymán, 24 Nov. 1827, in W.P., i, f. 176; probate copy of the Bishop's P.C. will, proved the same date: HA 119/4/7/5/1.

- 39 Correspondence *re* loan negotiations, Feb.–Apr. 1832: HA 119/4/7/4/8.
- 40 Probate copy of William Edward's P.C.C. will, 15 Jul. 1836: HA 119/4/9/6/1.
- 41 Tomline's obituary, 28 Aug. 1889, in *Salopian Shreds and Patches*, ix, 121.
- 42 *V.C.H. Shropshire*, III, 326–27; Disraeli to Tomline, 31 May 1841, HA 119/4/9/1/1; Edwards 1859, 36–37.
- 43 Obit.; Tomline's journal, 17 and 22 Apr., 5 and 27 May 1880, 18 Mar. 1881: S.R.O.I., HB 31: 4171, pp. 29–36, 61.
- 44 31 May 1847: S.A., 665/4/701.
- 45 Edward Drummond, civil servant; successively private secretary to the Earl of Ripon, Canning, Wellington and Sir Robert Peel; shot, in mistake for Peel, by Daniel MacNaghten, 20 Jan. 1843. MacNaghten was acquitted on the ground of insanity.
- 46 HA 119/4/10/4.
- 47 Election address, 16 Jul. 1847: S.A., 665/4/700.
- 48 Architect's report to Broke, 29 Mar. 1858: S.R.O.I., HA 93/6/8/28.
- 49 Tomline to Broke, 18 Mar. 1858: S.R.O.I., HA 93/6/8/42.
- 50 Tomline to Broke, 15 Apr. 1858: S.R.O.I., HA 93/6/8/43.
- 51 Tomline to Broke, 21 Jun. 1858: S.R.O.I., HA 93/6/8/49.
- 52 Nacton vestry minutes: S.R.O.I., FC 41/A2/1; preamble to subscription list, 21 Feb. 1859: FC 41/E2/1.
- 53 Writing in the *Economist*, 16 Apr. 1873, quoted in Winter 1976, 298.
- 54 Draft, Tomline to Lowe, 10 Jan. 1871: HA 119/4/9/1/6.
- 55 Petition printed in Martin 1893, 373–74; copy (with signatures or marks) among Tomline's papers: HA 119/4/9/1/6.
- 56 Printed in Martin 1893, 374–75; copy in the form of a cutting from the *Paisley and Renfrewshire Standard*, Dec. 1870, in HA 119/4/9/1/6.
- 57 Draft, Tomline to Lowe, 23 Jan. 1871, in HA 119/4/9/1/6.
- 58 Tomline to Gladstone and Goschen, 26 Dec. 1870; Tennant to Tomline, 1 Jan. 1871 (incorrectly dated 1870); George S. Stone, Tadcaster; to Tomline, 13 Dec. 1870: all in *ibid.*
- 59 C.W. Fremantle, Deputy Master of the Mint, to Tomline, 13 and 19 Jan. and 3 Feb. 1871, in *ibid.*
- 60 HA 119/4/9/5/4.
- 61 Case papers, Jun. 1872: HA 119/4/9/5/5.
- 62 Ms Elisabeth Novitski, British Newspaper Library, Colindale, pers. comm., Oct. 2003.
- 63 *O.E.D.* cites the *Printing Times*, 15 Feb. 1880: 'The use of logotypes does rather enhance than lower the cost of printing'. See patents, deeds and legal papers: HA 119/4/9/3/1/1–6.
- 64 Letter from the Secretary of the British Section, 4 Dec. 1876: HA 119/4/9/3/1/5.
- 65 Journal, 21 Jul. 1881: S.R.O.I., HB 31: 4171, p. 70.
- 66 The marquise was a courtesy title enjoyed during the lifetime of his father the 6th Duke, whom he succeeded in 1857.
- 67 Thorne 1986, 401; letter of congratulation from his son George, 22 Sept. 1831: HA 119/4/7/7/7/1.
- 68 Lord Brownlow, Windsor Castle, to Tomline, 4 Jun. 1836: HA 119/4/9/2/1; Richard Cust (for Brownlow) to Tomline, 4 Mar. 1851: HA 119/4/9/2/2.
- 69 Lansdowne to Tomline, 6 Feb. 1852: HA 119/4/9/2/3.
- 70 Election address, 7 Jul.: S.A., 665/4/903.
- 71 Copy, Tomline to Granby, 19 Oct. 1852: HA 119/4/9/2/4.
- 72 The following account and quotations are taken from original and copy correspondence between Lord Palmerston, Tomline and Granby, 14 May–27 Jun. 1853: HA 119/4/9/2/5.
- 73 Correspondence with particulars of estates, Sept, 1829–Jun. 1832: HA 119/4/7/4/5; diary, 9 Sept. 1830: HA 119/4/7/9/5. On Hafod, see Robinson and Williams 1992, 58–59.
- 74 Valuation, sale particulars, plans and correspondence, May–Jun. 1845: HA 119/4/9/4/1.
- 75 Purchase agreement, 17 Mar. 1847: HA 119/2/2/3/1/14; purchase deeds, 1847–48: HA 119/2/2/3/1/15; Blatchly 1992, vii and xiv.
- 76 His purchases may be traced through the chronological arrangement of deeds in the family archive: HA 119/2/2/3/1–33. For Kesgrave Hall, see HA 119/2/2/3/9; for Walton see HA 119/2/2/3/22/6.
- 77 De Saumarez papers, S.R.O.I., HA 93/8/53–110; Nacton vestry minute book, 26 Apr. 1861: FC 41/A2/1; draft, Tomline to his solicitors, 1874: HA 119/4/9/4/2.
- 78 See Quayle and Bradbury 1978, and Malster 1986, 1992 and 2003.
- 79 Case papers: HA 119/4/9/5/8; HA 119/4/9/5/11; HA 119/4/9/5/17; and HA 119/3/2/9/9.
- 80 This section was formally conveyed by Tomline to the Company in 1875: see draft conveyance, HA 119/3/2/9/3.
- 81 15 Sept. 1879: HA 119/3/2/9/8.
- 82 Agreements, 17 Nov. 1886: HA 119/3/2/9/12/1–2.
- 83 Correspondence with Gathorne-Hardy, Nov. 1874, case for counsel's opinion, and Tomline's affidavit, 23 Feb. 1875: all in HA 119/4/9/5/10.
- 84 Counsel's opinion, 22 Mar. 1875, *ibid.*
- 85 Journal: HB 31: 4171, p. 10.
- 86 10 Jul. 1878, 19 Apr. 1880, 25 Jul. 1881, 24 Jul. 1884, *ibid.*, pp. 10, 30, 71, 160–61.
- 87 *ibid.*, pp. 96, 97, 102, 105, 106, 136–38, 144, 159, 160, 174.
- 88 21 Aug. 1885: *ibid.*, p. 174.

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Abbreviations

<i>D.N.B.</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography.</i>
<i>E.A.D.T.</i>	<i>East Anglian Daily Times.</i>
<i>I.J.</i>	<i>Ipswich Journal.</i>
L. and I. IX.	Lists and Indexes, IX. <i>Lists of sheriffs for England and Wales from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1831.</i> (Kraus reprint, 1963). New York.
Obit.	Obituary of Tomline, <i>E.A.D.T.</i> , 26 Aug. 1889.
<i>O.E.D.</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary.</i>
S.A.	Shropshire Archives, Shrewsbury.
S.R.O.I.	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch.
W.P.	Ms family history and genealogical material compiled by William Pretyman: 4 vols, HA 119/4/18/2/1–4 in S.R.O.I.