E M Forster and the Labouchere Family

By Andrew Lumsden

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I’m delighted to be at Charleston for this famous house’s first-ever? “OUTing the Past” Festival and thank Melissa Perkins and the other organisers for inviting me. My theme is the good and the harm that two men of the Labouchere banking family successively did to E M Forster the novelist. Forster first visited here at the age of thirty-nine at the end of the First World War, after his return from Alexandria, where he had been a Red Cross Chief Searcher for missing servicemen. He was four months older than Vanessa Bell, and six years older than Duncan Grant, the two “Bloomsbury Group” artists who opened house here in 1916. Forster came here again in 1927 and for the last time, so far as I can discover, in 1942. The 50th anniversary of his death is being commemorated by LGBT History Month here and abroad.

The good the Laboucheres did to E M Forster was in 1825. It was all about money, and it gave Forster the leisure in early life to write those first and third novels of his that are set in Italy. The harm that was done to him by the Labouchere family was in 1885. It deprived him of the self-confidence to come out, though he lived for ninety-one years. The good was the work of John Peter Labouchere, banker and philanthropist, born in 1799, died in 1863. The harm was the work of John Peter’s son, Henry Labouchere, MP for Northamptonshire and the author in 1885 of the “Labouchere Amendment”. This criminalised male homosexuals entirely, even for the mere intention of touching, and was the worst law of its kind in the European world. It took until 2017 – 2017 – to be rid of it entirely in these islands, though versions of it survive in some thirty former British colonies, members of the post-Imperial Commonwealth of Nations.

1

Let me start with an elderly woman. [**Power Point 1, Dorothy Baring**]. Here she is, bless her: Dorothy Baring, born in 1771. Without her I would have no story. From her flowed the prosperity which gave us by turns the good Mr John Peter Labouchere, banker and philanthropist, and John Peter’s son, who gave us the Labouchere Amendment. Mild she looks, but in retrospect she is a figure in Greek mythology holding good and bad equally in a balance. She was one of eleven children of Harriet Herring of Croydon, heiress, who in 1767 aged seventeen was married to twenty-seven year old Francis Baring, founder in 1762 of the second oldest British merchant bank. I say she “was married” for the sons and daughters of 18th century commodity traders and bankers were as fully expected to marry “in”, taking a partner of benefit to the family, as hereditary monarchs.

Some here today will remember how her husband’s bank, Barings, was to last until 1995, when like a bell tolling thirteen years before the general banking crash of 2008 it went bust, an employee in Singapore losing £827 million in unsupervised trades. [**Power Point 2, Sir Francis Baring**]. Here’s Dorothy’s husband Francis, son of a Bremen wool merchant who emigrated to Devon in England in 1717 and married Elizabeth Vowler, a grocer’s daughter with a fortune of £20,000. I ought to mention that that’s equivalent to £4 million today. The sums possessed by the characters in my little story including those belonging to E M Forster are breath-taking when you convert them into ‘real wages’ modern money via *measurinngworth*, the online guide.

‘Sir’ Francis Baring, then, as Harriet’s husband became - making her ‘Lady Baring - is seen here, painted in 1823 in the style of Sir Thomas Lawrence. He was partially deaf from childhood and after a lifetime of marital shouting at him she seems to have asked the painter to show her husband as he truly was in life, with that cupped hand at the left ear. Sir Francis and Lady Baring’s second, or she may have been their third, child, our Dorothy, the equal mother of good and evil, whom we just saw, benign in a halo of lace, was twenty-five and moving towards spinsterhood when she suddenly chose to marry, or was informed she was to marry, Pierre-César Labouchère, a Dutchman a year younger than herself. [**Power Point 3 Pierre Cesar Labouchere**]. Here’s Pierre-César Labouchère aged twenty, drawn in pastel in 1790 by Johann Hirschmann and pretty as a picture in the pre-French Revolution aristocratic Versailles style, though he wasn’t an aristocrat at all, but a market-trader.

Pierre-César was French Huguenot by extraction, a Béarnais, a descendant of refugees from Louis XIV’s Catholic tyranny. He was fluent in Dutch, French, and English, but either to amuse others or from a deficiency comparable to Francis Baring’s deafness he spoke each language with the accent of one of the others. Apprenticed to the commodity business at thirteen, he grew up to run the French-trades desk of the commodity-dealing House of Hope in Amsterdam, a creation of the Hopes of Edinburgh and Linlithgow. He won Dorothy Baring’s hand in marriage in 1796 by stating that he was about to be made a partner in Hope’s Bank, and won the partnership at Hope’s by stating that he was about to marry Dorothy Baring. So went Labouchere family legend.

With the marriage alliance to Dorothy at Barings Pierre-César Labouchère, speaking strangely in his three tongues, leapt to a front-line position in European banking. The novelist Napoleon was just marrying the rose-grower Joséphine. The Barings, I regret to say, were large slave-owners in the sugar plantations of the Caribbean and Pierre-César Labouchère’s own speciality at Hope’s, cotton, brought Hope’s Bank profits from unpaid black labour on the slave plantations of the American Deep South. Napoleon fell, and in 1816 Pierre-César Labouchère doubled what was already a large banking and trading fortune by participating in the “Alliance Loan”, the re-floating of ruined France by bankers in Amsterdam and the City of London after the Battle of Waterloo.

Pierre-César Labouchère then retired. We are nearing the impact that Dorothy and Pierre-César Labouchere’s son and grandson on Forster. She and Pierre-César settled it between themselves that they would spend the rest of their lives in Dorothy’s homeland, England, rather than in Pierre-César’s native Holland. He bought a mansion in Hamilton Place, London, near what was then “the Queen’s House’, now Buckingham Palace. They had no daughters that I’ve heard of, but they had two sons: Henry, with whom we won’t have anything to do just here, and John Peter Labouchere, banker and philanthropist, born in England in 1799, died in England in 1863, whom we’ve already met. The man whose goodness will benefit E M Forster. I’m afraid I haven’t yet found anywhere a picture of him.

2

That’s a lot of banking, so before we come to the details of John Peter Labouchere’s goodness to the Thorntons may I draw us momentarily forwards from the 18th century to the near-present day? This is my first visit to Charleston, and yet I seem to have been hearing about the farmhouse all my life. My parents moved from London to Sussex when I was eight and we lived in Arundel. I remember the flattened local Sussex accent of those days. “*Caaartainly*” the school cook at Littlehampton, Mrs Sop, used to say, meaning ‘yes’, where a Londoner would have said in a clipped way ‘*Certainly*’. When E M Forster first came here to Charleston in 1918 the road from Lewes will have been unmetalled, a mere track, and he will have *bounced* in the primitive car or horse and cart that got him here. And I expect locals spoke with the same flattened accent I remember.

Mrs Sop would have called Forster, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell “very “*queer*”. Respectable Sussex women of her day in the 1910s, ’20’s, ’30s, and ’40s didn’t mean anything sexual by the word. ‘*Queer*’ merely meant ‘*different*’. But as we became aware in 1967 with Michael Holroyd’s wonderfully frank biography of Lytton Strachey some denizens of Charleston like Duncan Grant, and some visitors like E M Forster, were “queer” in our modern sense too. Not Vanessa Bell, unless we give her a posthumous doctorate for taking Duncan Grant to her bed just once and creating Angelica Garnett, who died only eight years ago, aged ninety-three. [**Power Point 4, Duncan Grant in 1912**]. Here’s the queer man Duncan Grant, photographed in 1912. He’s on the left, facing Maynard Keynes the economist, when they were in the middle of an affair.

I myself fell in love once with Duncan Grant, if I may say so in all modesty. It was hopeless, for not only was there Keynes, but I hadn’t yet been born. I saw this photo when I was twenty-seven and I don’t *what* it was about it that so tugged at me but I fell in love with the shaggy-haired Grant. Perhaps it was because I’d never yet, at twenty-seven, as yet had a gay lover of my own. And then I nearly met Grant. Simon Watney – some here I’m sure will know of Simon Watney, author in 1990 of *The Art of Duncan Grant* - brought him to a Gay Liberation Front meeting in 1970 or so to see us as we rose in fury seeking to lose our last vestiges of gay shame.

Grant was eighty-five. [**Power Point 5 GLF meeting in 1970**]. Here’s one of the rare photos of a Gay Liberation Front mid-meeting fifty years ago. No i-phones or social media then. Grant isn’t in it, I’m afraid, but if you can make out any faces at all I’m there in the middle, seated aged twenty-nine, wearing a moustache heaven knows why, and with my two trousered knees up. It’s the 50th Anniversary of the London Gay Liberation Front visited by Duncan Grant this very year. Watch out for the celebration at the Bishopsgate Institute in London on 10-11 October, and if you can come to the events, wear gold for our Golden Anniversary.

3

[**Power Point 6 Forster by Carrington**] Here is E M Forster painted by Carrington in about 1924, hunched up in his jacket like a tortoise. I don’t know if you managed to see Matthew Lopez’ play *The Inheritance* which was on at the Young Vic in 2018. It’s about the Aids crisis, but references Forster’s novel *Howards End*. A character speaks disparagingly of Forster. So, in 1974, did London Gay Liberation Front. Our Counter-Psychiatry Group’s pamphlet *With Downcast Gays*, which sold around the world (you can find it online), denounced him as a traitor because, though given ninety-one years to do it,and queer as a coot throughout, dying in 1970 in the arms of his lover, a policeman, he never came out.

We reasoned that he didn’t use his great fame to aid the less well-advantaged, in what we were at last beginning to think of as our community. If Gide could do it in France and James Baldwin in the USA why not he in cruel England? Since then we’ve learned that in 1964 he quietly financed several months work by the Homosexual Law Reform Society, set up in 1958 to end criminalisation of gay men. The information appeared in 1992 in *Quest for Justice* by Antony Grey, for a while the leading gay male activist in the world. Grey wrote: “When I met [Forster] in 1964 he questioned me minutely about my work. I remember vividly the sweetness of his smile. He was at least eighty-five. My answers apparently satisfied him, for he got up and walked slowly over to his desk, saying ‘I would like to give you something. Luckily I have just had some royalties from America.’ His cheque was for quite a few thousand pounds.” “I am the only bugger among us who has any money” he used to say.

This afternoon we can be more focused on *why* E M Forster couldn’t bring himself to come out, though he knew he should, rather than on the temporary loss to our cause because he wouldn’t. Within the forty-five year old face in the painting of him by Carrington in 1924 is distress. He was no longer, in the middle of his life, able to create full-length fiction. A Dickens who, at twenty-nine in 1841, found himself unable to write *Bleak House*, *David Copperfield*, or *Great Expectations*. He’d produced five published novels between 1905 and 1924. It was an age which agreed that the novel is a great art-form and he was competing with the best.

His five have delighted five generations of people of every sexuality and faith, or lack of faith, and after his death in 1970 a successful sixth was published, *Maurice*. But in 1924, he dried, he died, like an actor in mid-performance. After that it was to be mere radio broadcasts and essays and criticism and amiable short stories, gentle nudges in constant favour of civilisation, but nothing to satisfy an artist who would have hoped to go on and on until death writing profound accounts of his epoch as Austen and Dickens did.

4

The key to the damage is the novel he never published, the 6th he wrote, which he prepared in 1913-1914 just before the First World War, but which stayed in his desk, tinkered with, as he completed his 5th novel, the famous *A Passage to India*, finally published in 1924 and later filmed by David Lean. *Maurice* he couldn’t bring himself to publish. It’s about two young gay men who live happily ever after. Forster started it the year after the death in Florence of the Labouchere family member who harmed him: Henry Labouchere, son of John Peter Labouchere, banker and philanthropist, grandson of Dorothy Herring and Dutch-born Pierre-César Labouchère of the ill-spoken tongues.

E M Forster was sixteen years, four months and twenty-four days old and living in Weybridge, Surrey, twenty five miles from Newgate Prison, when on 25 May 1895 Oscar Wilde went down for two years under the terms of the Labouchere Amendment of 1885. Wilde died young from the consequences. And Forster was seventy-three years, two months and thirty days old and living 165 miles off when on 31 March 1952 Alan Turing the British war hero was sentenced to prison under the terms of the Labouchere Amendment of 1885, accepting chemical castration as an alternative to prison and dying young of the consequences.

The Labouchere Amendment encouraged police forces up and down the country to pursue gay men, hauling thousands before the courts before we could finally be rid of all of it in 2017 and even the police could come out as gay. In 2017 Peter Tatchell listed for the BBC just how awful the police persecution continued to be for two further decades after it was supposed to have abated in the 1960s. During the 20th century the resulting magistrates and Crown Court hearings were all reported in local newspapers when they had circulations unprecedented ever before or since.

I don’t know for a fact that Forster was made aware of the death of Henry Labouchere MP on 15 January 1912 at the Villa Cristina, Florence, but I surmise he soon learned of it. There were obituary notices in *The Times* and in the American press. Not long after, E M Forster began his vision of how homosexual might pull through and be happy, his *Maurice*…

He lived under that regime incited by Henry Labouchere in 1885 from his teens until he was eighty-eight, when Parliament began to reconsider. He dared not publish that sixth novel *Maurice*, though Christopher Isherwood kept gently encouraging him to. He knew that because he was then so famous and regarded as a popular institution of England, and yet had written of two gay men living happily ever after no matter what society or Parliament could throw at them, that there would be inquisitive publicity about his own personal life wherever in the English-speaking world his novel was reviewed.

“What the public really loathes in homosexuality”, he said, “is not the thing itself, but having to think about it.” And so, with his failure to publish *Maurice*, he ceased to be a novelist.

5

But let’s now go back to his good fortune at the hands of a great-aunt, and to how we owe two of Forster’s most dearly-loved early novels, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room With a View*, in part to a kind member of the Labouchere family, John Peter Labouchere, banker and philanthropist, younger son of Pierre-César Labouchère the Dutchman and himself, later on. the father of Henry Labouchere, author of the Labouchere Amendment. Here goes. The plots of the two early novels are driven by Forster’s experiences of Tuscany when in his twenties. [**Power Point 7, Pensione Simi**]. Here for instance is the *Pensione Simi* of Florence, which became the ‘*Pensione Bertolini*’ of *A Room With a View*. In 1901 Forster, aged twenty-one, lodged at the ‘*Simi*’ with his forty-four year-old widowed mother Lily. The constipated emotions of British sightseers compared to Italians in the streets stayed in his head and so, as a metaphor, did the English people’s polite disputes about who should have a room with a view, and who should not.

It’s scarcely possible that Forster could have made the expensive journey to Tuscany with his mother in 1901, given that there were then porters and guides and bellhops to tip and great heaps of necessary changes of clothes to be carted everywhere and train and steam tickets to be bought and carriage-drivers to be paid, had he been without inherited money and obliged to work six days a week in a government office as a clerk with few holidays. In 1887, when he was eight, Forster inherited nearly a million pounds in today’s money from a great-aunt. In the actual 1887 money the sum was £8,000. It was held in trust for him while he grew up, and in those days his trustees, and subsequently he himself, could expect about 5% on his money. That’s £400 a year, or in modern purchasing power about £44,000 a year.

A hell of a gift from a great-aunt! [**Power Point 8 Great-aunt Thornton**]. Here she is, Marianne Thornton, drawn by George Richmond in the summer of 1873 when she was seventy-six. She didn’t marry. Had she done so when marriage was for heterosexuals only, and before the Married Women’s Property Act of 1882 allowed married women to manage some of their own money, her capital would have gone to her husband for his lifetime and then to her children if she had any. No £8,000, in all human likelihood, for great-nephew E.M. Forster in 1887.

Or Marianne *might*, like “Gentleman Jack” Anne Lister, who was six years older than herself, have gone striding about the landscape seeking a woman to be all-in-all to her and left her money to *her.* But Marianne Thornton. She took neither man nor woman and became one of those, like Jane Austen, who weighed things up as they were in early 19th century Britain and preferred the life of a spinster, ignoring the mean comments of those days on women with such (quotes) ‘unfulfilled’ lives. Marianne’s fortune, from which she was to leave the £8,000 to E M Forster in 1887, derived from her great-grandfather born in 1680 or so who had made a fortune in the Russian and Baltic trade out of Hull in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

6

In December 1825 a banking crisis not so dissimilar to ours of 2008 swept the trading and banking operations of the City of London. Over the course of three terrifying weeks the Thornton family sped like many other owners of British country and town banks and their depositors from generations of luxury towards the cliff-top of bankruptcy. The seniors of the Thornton family, twenty-eight year old Marianne behind the scenes and her three years younger brother, twenty-five year old Henry Sykes Thornton, up front running the bank, struggled to find rescuers for rthe bank and to keep the crisis from younger members of the family. On Sunday 1 January 1826, as they went to church and John Sykes Thornton vanished into meetings within the City of London, it looked to Marianne and Henry as if they wouldn’t be able to open the doors of the Thornton bank at its regular hour of 8 am on Monday morning. Or indeed ever again.

Instead of “Austerity”, the punishment imposed upon every British institution in 2010 rather than upon private wealth after the banking crash of 2008, the idea in 1825 was that if money suddenly wasn’t to be found it was the bankers and their depositors and they alone who should pay the price. A very rare exception was made on Sunday 1 January 1826 for Henry Sykes Thornton, because he was young and people liked him. It was as simple as that: his older competitors liked him. Friends and strangers who merely approved of what they heard and didn’t otherwise know him from Adam stepped forward on Sunday 1 January 1826 to save his bank. Among those friends, a regular at the same church the Thorntons attended, the Rev. Venn’s Evangelical Christian one called Holy Trinity, on Clapham Common, was twenty-five year-old John Peter Labouchere, son of Dorothy Baring and Pierre-César Labouchère.

John Peter put in such a personal power of promissory notes - or merely shook hands on a promise (“my word is my bond” – and called in such a quantity of promises of money from his mother Dorothy Baring’s relatives the Barings, or got such backing from his Dutch dad, that by Tuesday his name was up on the new bank Williams, Deacon, & *Labouchere* into which the rescued Thornton assets were transferred. This story of the three-week run on the City and country banks in 1825 and the survival of Thornton’s is so dramatic, and the characters are so interesting, that I’d love to tell it all to you, but I’ve no time and you’d have no patience. It would make a blisteringly good docudrama.

7

Among the figures in the real-life 1825 drama was forty-eight year old Nathan Mayer Rothschild of Frankfurt am Main and St Swithin’s Lane, EC4, the “Jew King of the City of London” as Forster’s great-aunt Marianne called him in language then thought reasonable among members of the Church of England. Here he is, Nathan Mayer Rothschild. [**Power Point 9, Nathan Mayer Rothschild**]. Rothschild sent round to Henry Thornton’s offices a wheelbarrow-full – perhaps not literally a wheelbarrow: bags-full, then – of thousands of tiny gold sovereigns, so that in a London bereft of coins, which people were suddenly hoarding, Thornton’s could pay across the counter depositors who were determined to have precious metal, not bank-notes.

May I show you the self-portrait of the man who painted Nathan Mayer Rothschild? [**Power Point 10, Moritz Oppenheim**]. Here he is, Moritz Daniel Oppenheim, age sixteen, long before he created the Rothschild canvas. As you see, either straight boys in 1816 were very unworried about being seen with a hand on the hip, or - despite the Venus implying straight preferences - he was promoting his charms in his teens in the hope of commissions from the vast numbers of early 19th century gay art-collectors.

I find he’s described as “the first Jewish painter of the modern era.” He refused to convert to the Christian faith despite all the career advantages such conversion offered in the Europe of his day. A hero, then, to any sensible person. Perhaps he was proud not only of being Jewish, but of being - as we say - gay.

8

If Henry Sykes Thornton had lost the family bank on the second day of January 1826 his elder sister’s own money wouldn’t have been lost. We know that from E M Forster himself, who wrote about it. The inheritances of the Thornton women were secured away from the trading house. So *in theory* Marianne Thornton could have bobbed away unharmed from the national banking crisis of 1825 and the £8,000 of her money that eventually went to E M Forster in 1887 would have gone to him regardless. But – but. Who can doubt that Forster’s great-aunt would have poured out her money to help her “little brother”, as he had been for her in their childish days, to maintain as much as possible of the family way of life?

She described in a confidential letter to a woman friend at the height of the crisis how her brother’s Henry Sykes Thornton’s face was “…white and bloodless with the anxiety and exertion he had gone through, but so quiet and composed, I could scarcely believe it when he told me [he] they must be declared Bankrupts on Monday morning.” He carefully repaid a small £3 debt to Marianne and to “the old Nurse” of the family the day before the anticipated catastrophe, saying he might not have as much as that by Monday. No £8,000 for E M Forster in 1887 had Henry Sykes Thornton’s bank not been saved in 1826 by among others John Peter Labouchere, for Marianne’s income and perhaps capital would have been sharply reduced during the intervening sixty-one years. Instead, a probable life of secretarial drudgery without Tuscany.

E M Forster never forgot that he owed his youthful independence to his great-aunt and in 1956, aged seventy-seven, he published a thank-you biography of her. [**Power Point 11, Forster on M Thornton**]. Here’s the dust-jacket, with that portrait of her that we saw before. And here’s her brother Henry Sykes Thornton, whom Nathan Mayer Rothschild and the Bank of England and a former partner of Barings Bank and John Peter Labouchere representing, it seems, a consortium, helped save. Note in the chalk sketch Henry Sykes Thornton’s huge nose. [**Power Point 12, Marianne’s brother Henry**].

9

I must leave you with a sketch of Surrey as it once was, famous for its crystal-bright air. I live in Clapham myself now amid diesel fumes. Asparagus grew on Battersea Rise. Lavender on Lavender Hill. Crocuses in Crocus Valley, now Croydon. Market-gardens mainly founded by immigrant French Huguenots, colleagues in religion of the Laboucheres, then stretched for ten miles along the South Bank of the Thames. Pure-air Surrey fed coal-smoke-dark north Bank London, both the wealthy and the poor. Riding through on a horse in 1823 the social reformer William Cobbett said it was all a paradise. Bankers working within the coal-smoke of the City parked their families there, in Croydon and Clapham.

In November 1826, nearly a year after the great crisis of their financial lives was over, unmarried twenty-six year old Henry Sykes Thornton, great-uncle of E M Forster, and unmarried twenty-nine year old Marianne Thornton, his sister, great-aunt of E M Forster, held a dinner party for twenty-five people at their home, twenty-four bedroom Battersea Rise House on the slopes west of Clapham Common. Henry Sykes Thornton was in the middle of a two year sort-out of the consequences of closing his grandfather’s bank and opening a new one without others losing by it. She was a human rights activist, as we would put it today. A spinster by her own choice with the murmured censure that entailed, and a ‘bluestocking’, another intended rebuke signifying a woman who didn’t disguise that she had opinions of her own on matters supposed in public to be reserved to men.

She never married, as we know. He didn’t marry until he was thirty-three. Their mother and father had both died in 1815 when they were teenagers, so when giving a dinner in 1826 they were a youthful bachelor sibling pair at the head of seven even younger brothers and sisters. One of the younger sisters, Emily, would eventually marry and have a daughter who in turn married and had E M Forster for a son. Twenty-four sitting down to dinner at the Thornton’s wasn’t unusual. Among the guests at 4pm that late afternoon in November 1826 was a ‘Mr Labouchere’. E M Forster says so in his 1956 biography of Marianne Thornton, citing her family papers. He says nothing further of this ‘Mr Labouchere’, neither providing his Christian names, nor citing his occupation, nor saying what he looked like.

The latter omission is particularly unfortunate, for this ‘Mr Labouchere’ was surely twenty-seven year old, as yet unmarried, John Peter Labouchere, partner in the new Thornton’s bank and as yet I have found no likeness at all of him to offer you.

10

Except among the youngest children present conversation at the November 1826 Battersea Rise dinner - whenever it departed from jokes and family matters and the family bank - will have been about abolition of British slave-ownership. Starting with a Quaker protest to Parliament in 1783 about both slave-trading and slave-ownership by British and Irish nationals, and widening through other white Christian belief systems to a section of the Church of England in 1787, the campaign to end British approval of the trade in kidnapped black people from west Africa to the Americas was won in Parliament in 1807. But as of dinner-time at Battersea Rise House in November 1826 abolition of British and Irish slave-ownership hadn’t yet been accomplished. Marianne, Henry Sykes Thornton, John Peter Labouchere, were all involved in the campaign. Marianne’s grandfather, John Thornton, was a principal financial supporter of Rev. John Newton, the former slave-trader who in 1772 wrote the words of *Amazing Grace*.

It would be another seven years from the dinner at Battersea Rise in November 1826 before, in 1826, ownership of slaves within most of the British Empire would be outlawed by Parliament, and eight years before the abolition law started to come into effect (1834), and twelve years before it became fully operational in 1838, officially ending white British and Irish investment in enslaved African west coast black people. The ‘Clapham Sect’, revolving around Rev. Venn’s church on Clapham Common and the Thorntons’ home nearby on Battersea Rise, and including kind young John Peter Labouchere from the early 1820s, sided throughout with the campaign for the abolition of slavery. Thousands of other devout white Christians, on both sides of the Atlantic, claimed Old Testament authority for continuing the practice.

Rev. Venn’s church and the Thornton’s home formed the principal inner friendship base for William Wilberforce, the white MP for Hull who in 1787 was persuaded to take on the leadership within Parliament of the black, and now white-as-well, anti-slavery campaign beyond Parliament. Wilberforce loved the Thornton family. They were cousins of his. He knew them from when he was nine years old and living nearby in Wimbledon with one of them, Hannah Thornton. He lived at Battersea Rise House for years, the guest of his cousin Henry Thornton, who in time would be the father of Marianne Thornton and Henry Sykes Thornton. They were ‘chums’, short for ‘chamber-fellows’, and they called the house their ‘Chummery’. The house was demolished when the Thorntons moved out in 1909.

E M Forster mentions ‘Mr Labouchere’ three times in his biography of Marianne Thornton.

11

Finally for this afternoon, here are three pictures of the Labouchere family member who did E M Forster harm: Henry Labouchere of the “Labouchere Amendment”, Henry Labouchere the eldest son of John Peter Labouchere - whose kindliness, I haven’t yet mentioned, extended to helping found the Great Ormond St Hospital for Sick Children in 1852 alongside Charles Dickens and pouring his own money into it. In his old age Henry Labouchere woulkd held an annual Christmas party for children in memory of his father’s initiative.

[**Power Point 13, Caricature of H Labouchere**]. Here’s Henry Labouchere MP aged forty-two in a friendly caricature by the Neapolitan refugee artist Carlo Pellegrini. This was drawn for an 1874 issue of *Vanity Fair* magazine in a “Men of the Day” series they were then running. See the cigarette: Henry Labouchere of the Amendment was a chain-smoker. The artist conveys that Labouchere was short. He seems to have been about 5ft 1in in an age when men in white Europe tended to be about 5ft 4ins. This shows him when he was a theatre-owner – the Queen’s in Long Acre - and a journalist and was drawn eleven years before his “Labouchere Amendment”. Pellegrini was gay, as we would term it, and didn’t trouble to hide it. Yet when Pellegrini arrived broke and a refugee in England in 1864 Henry Labouchere with his journalistic and Parliamentary connections helped Pellegrini find work with the London periodicals. He helped a *homosexual* four years before the term was invented? *Go figure*, as the Americans say!

[**Power Point 14, Another Caricature of H Labouchere**]. And here’s Henry Labouchere eighteen years later in 1892. He’s now a Liberal MP of long standing while continuing to be a journalist and no-one believes his protestations about not wanting to be a Cabinet Member. *Punch* magazine shows him in rags looking wistfully at sweet things in a pastry-shop window.

[**Power Point 15, Photo of H Labouchere**]. And here’s a photo of Henry Labouchere taken in about 1895, the year his Amendment sent Oscar Wilde to jail and E M Forster was sixteen.

Thank you for listening!

[Battersea Rise House was demolished by Wandsworth Council in [1907 says London.remembers, not before 1909 it seems from Peter Thorold, *The Rich*,

[ I’ve yet to stress that Mariann was a campaigner for abolition and **I think** for women’s vote ].

The new bank, Williams, Deacon & Labouchere, was up and running.

’ll leave you not in Sussex, where we really are, but in Surrey as it once was, a landscape now wholly lost but where Forster’s mother’s family once owned 24-bedroom Battersea Rise House just on the side of Clapham Common. They *did* all like to live together and have multitudes of friends to dine, including ‘Mr Labouchere’, the John Peter one, banker and philanthropist, and even had friends to live with them, as William Wilberforce the Parliamentary anti-slavery campaigner did for many years..