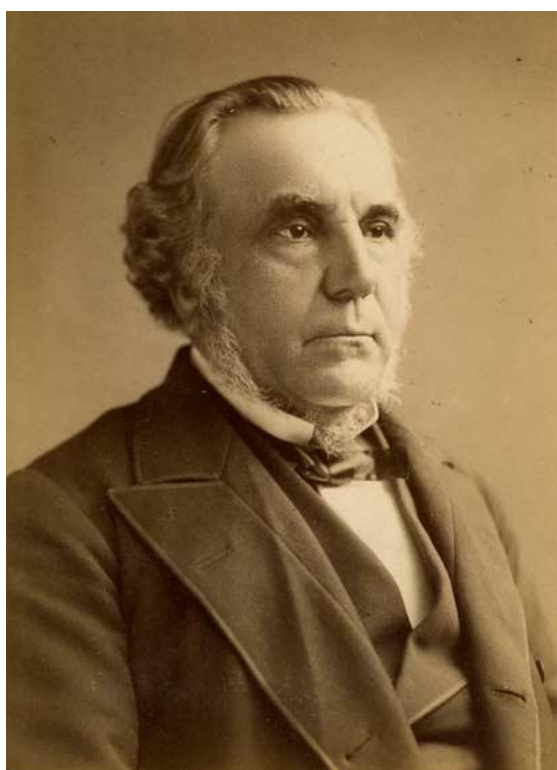


Sir John Pender (1816-1896)

John Pender began his working life in the textile industry in Scotland where he was born in 1816. He moved to Manchester and became a successful and affluent merchant in what was at that time, the world capital for cotton goods.

His success in this field made Pender realise the potential benefits of improved communications with the US as most of his business dealings were with that country. He invested money in the Atlantic Telegraph Company to back its attempt to lay a telegraph cable on the ocean bed between America and England.



Despite the failure of several undertakings, Pender persevered and sunk a vast amount of money into new ventures eventually setting up his own company with a colleague in order to do so. He was convinced that the link between the two nations was the way forward. A cable was finally laid and in July 1866, Queen Victoria and President Andrew Johnson spoke for the first time across 1660 nautical miles. Over the next 15 years, 30,000 miles of cable were laid by Pender's companies and by the 1880s, Australia, South Africa, China and South America were linked to Britain.

He was knighted in 1888 and Sir John Pender is now known chiefly for his remarkable achievements in the field of telecommunications. He was living at Foots Cray Place, where he had taken out a lease, when he died in 1896 at the age of 79.

He is buried at All Saints in Foots Cray with members of his family. An account of him recalled a man of *'inexhaustible tenacity and courage.... in the face of recurring adversity.... typical of the finest British instincts'*.