

SAMUEL JAMES WARING, 1st Baron Waring (1860-1940)

Samuel James Waring came to Sidcup in 1898 when he leased Foots Cray Place with shooting rights, a country estate to entertain friends and business associates. He was a pioneer in furnishing and decoration and had moved his family business, Waring & Co, to London in 1893. In 1903 the company merged with Gillows which was a well established furniture maker and became Waring & Gillows.

Samuel Waring was born into a prosperous middle class family in Liverpool in 1860. He had inherited Warings of Liverpool from his Belfast born father who was a cabinet maker. An enthusiast of Decorative art he evolved a style of classicism with English practicality and used his influence to promote a new English Renaissance.

During WW1 many of his factories were turned over for war production making ammunition chests for the Navy, wings and propellers for the De Havilland aircraft; he also equipped and funded a hospital. In 1919 he was given a baronetcy and later became 1st Baron Waring.



Whilst living at Foots Cray Place Lord Waring, together with his wife Eleanor, became very involved with the local community. He encouraged many scouting activities in the grounds of his home and in 1918 he was made Kent County Commissioner. Rallies were held including troops from other countries and the chief scout Lord Baden Powell visited on several occasions.

Samuel Waring attended the local church of All Saints and in 1901 donated a spire to the church to celebrate the coronation of Edward VIII. He later made a gift of part of his birch wood to the people of Sidcup and this is now known as Waring Park. He landscaped his grounds by employing a fellow Lancastrian Thomas Mawson, some of which survives especially the iconic avenue of trees.

Lord Waring travelled extensively and sometimes leased his home. In the summer of 1931 the house was leased to an Indian Prince attending a conference on the future of India. Local legend has it that Mahatma Gandhi stayed at Foots Cray Place for several weeks.

In 1938 Lord Waring left Foot Cray Place and the house was sold to Kent County Council. He died in London in 1940 aged 79.