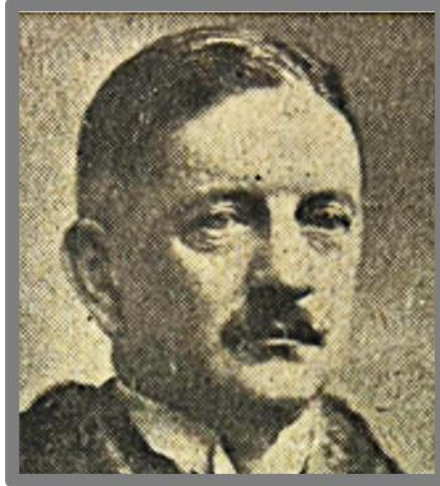


Charles Dynely Twopeny (1868–1923)

Mayor of Hythe (1919–1921)



Early Life and Family Background

Charles Dynely Twopeny was born in 1868 at Thurnham, Kent, into a long-established county family whose seat for generations had been at Woodstock near Sittingbourne, an estate the Twopenys had held since the eighteenth century. His father, the Reverend Edward Twopeny (1828–1872), was Rector of Little Casterton. Owing to ill health, the family spent periods abroad in warmer climates, and Charles's early childhood was unsettled. In 1872, his father died in Cannes, France, leaving Charles only four years old.

He was thereafter raised under the close care of his mother, Caroline Elizabeth Parkin (1835–1919), daughter of the Reverend Charles Parkin, Vicar of Lenham. She remained a constant presence in his life well into adulthood. In 1887, she remarried Captain John Henry Baldwin (1840–1908), a retired officer of the Bengal Staff Corps. Baldwin's professional military background strongly influenced Charles's outlook, reinforcing his interest in soldiering, discipline, and public duty.

The Eton Years and Global Experience

Charles was educated at Eton College, where the values of service and leadership were deeply instilled.

Following his education, Twopeny developed both a military career and a taste for travel and adventure. He joined the Buffs Militia at Canterbury and travelled repeatedly to India, where he became an accomplished marksman and big-game hunter. These years gave him what contemporaries described as a "thorough knowledge of the East," an unusual distinction among country gentlemen of Kent.

Army Career

Charles Twopeny's military service spanned several important phases of British Army history.

In February 1888, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 3rd and 4th Battalions of The Buffs (East Kent Regiment), his county regiment, as recorded in *The London Gazette*.

During the Boer War (1899–1902), he served as a Captain in the 2nd Battalion of The Buffs, seeing active service in South Africa. His campaign experience included the Relief of Kimberley and the Battle of Paardeberg, placing him among those Kent officers engaged in some of the most notable actions of the war.

By the outbreak of the First World War, he was beyond the age for front-line duty, but his leadership was again called upon. In 1914, alongside the Mayor of Hythe, Councillor W. H. Cobay, he helped form the Hythe Company of the Volunteer Training Corps (VTC). As Commander and later Major and Commandant, he was responsible for organising local men for home defence, including protection of the Royal Military Canal and the Hythe coastline against possible invasion. He also served as an emergency special constable and as the military representative on the local Tribunal. In 1917, he additionally served as Temporary Captain and Assistant Adjutant in the 1st Battalion, Kent Volunteer Regiment.

Life in Hythe

Around 1899–1902, Twopeny moved to Hythe with his mother, settling at Tynwald, which remained his home for the rest of his life. For many years, he lived quietly and avoided the public eye, known as a reserved and private gentleman. During this period, he also disposed of the family's Woodstock estate near Sittingbourne.



Mayor of Hythe (1919–1921)

His visible wartime leadership brought him naturally into civic life. Having been co-opted onto the Hythe Town Council in 1914, he was persuaded in 1919 to accept the Mayoralty following Councillor Cobay's retirement. He served three consecutive terms until 1921, guiding Hythe through the difficult transition from wartime conditions back to civilian life.

Twopeny was widely regarded as an "ideal Mayor," quiet in manner but deeply committed to the prosperity of the town and the traditions of the Cinque Ports. He worked to unite the community and helped revive civic and social life, including the restoration of events such as the Hythe Venetian Fete.

His most lasting civic achievement was overseeing the erection of the Hythe War Memorial in the Grove. He took a personal interest in every stage of the project, travelling repeatedly to London to consult with the sculptor Gilbert Bayes. The memorial was unveiled on 16 July 1921.



Marriage

Only days after the unveiling of the memorial, on 20 July 1921, the long-time bachelor mayor travelled to London for a quiet ceremony at St James's Church, Piccadilly. There, at noon, he married Miss Gertrude Isabel Faux, eldest daughter of Mr. Henry Faux. The Rector officiated, Mr. A. W. Monro, C.B., served as best man, and the couple honeymooned at Windermere in the Lake District.

Final Illness and Death

The heavy sense of responsibility he carried during his mayoralty led to serious physical and mental strain. He retired from office in 1921, though he remained an active councillor. On the Monday before Christmas, he attended a Council meeting in apparent good health, then left Hythe for the holidays.

While away, he suffered a nervous breakdown and was admitted to a nursing home in Bath. Though recovery was hoped for, pneumonia developed, and he died at 5 p.m. on 6 January 1923, aged 55.

Funeral and Legacy

His body was returned to Hythe for a funeral that served as a significant local occasion. The ceremony reflected his dual identity as a soldier and a statesman, featuring a sombre procession of muffled drums and civic robes. It was attended by members of the Town Council, local dignitaries, and military representatives from The Buffs and the Volunteer Training Corps (VTC).

He was laid to rest in Saltwood Churchyard alongside his mother and stepfather, marking the end of the Kentish line of the Twopeny family. He is remembered as a man of deep commitment who successfully guided Hythe through the challenging transition from war to peace.



The Guardian of His Memory

His widow, Gertrude Isabel Twopeny, remained in their home on Hillside Street for another thirty years. Until she died in 1954, she acted as the quiet guardian of the "Twopeny Portfolio"—the collection of paintings and memories of the man who had dedicated his final years to the town of Hythe.
