

for laying the railways throughout the whole of the British Empire, and became unfathomably rich. But wealth was not enough for Muriel, she wanted to have the title of a countess. Therefore Muriel married Gilbert Sackville, Eighth Earl De La Warr (pronounced Delaware) in 1891. Gilbert belonged to the oldest of English upper-class families. However, his family's fortunes had dwindled and he needed money. Muriel had plenty of it.

One could suppose that everyone was happy. But Gilbert went on to blow his luck by having a fling with an actress in his hometown Bexhill-on-Sea and eventually went to live with the actress a couple of houses down the street from his wife. The marriage ended in 1902 and Muriel went on to be a suffragette, as did her eldest daughter Idina. Idina, however, became famous as a “bolter,” someone who lives a very promiscuous life. She married five times and was the scandal of the English peerage. The biography *The Bolter* (2008) recounts her very naughty adventures. The book was written by Frances Osborne, Idina's great-granddaughter.



*Idina Sackville*

Within the Theosophical Society, Muriel's network and financial backing, as well as others, was important. She was introduced to the Society by Lady Emily Lutyens, the wife of the famous architect Edward Lutyens — a man of common background but artistically gifted, who worked his way up through (intimate) contacts with women — and the daughter of a Viceroy of India, Robert Bulwer-Lytton. The Lutyens family was directly related to former Prime Minister Arthur Balfour (1902-1905). Balfour's brother, Eustace, was an