

Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor,
2nd Duke of Westminster (1879–1953),
known as ‘Bend’Or’: A Reappraisal.

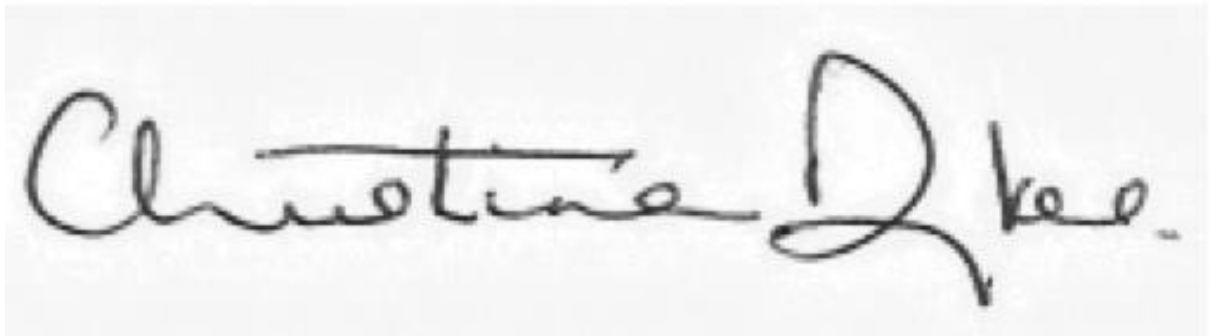
Christina Dykes

February 2021

Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that my thesis entitled “Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor, 2nd Duke of Westminster (1879–1953), known as ‘Bend’Or’: A Reappraisal” is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except that which is declared in the acknowledgements and specified in the text, and is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted or am concurrently submitting for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Buckingham or any other university or similar institution except as declared in the acknowledgements and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted or is concurrently submitted for any such degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Buckingham or any other university or similar institution except that which is declared in the acknowledgements and specified in the text.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "Christina Dyke".

Date: 10 February 2021

Abstract

The 2nd Duke of Westminster, Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor (known as 'Bend'Or'), is usually seen as a super-rich landowner and spoilt playboy. This was the view of contemporaries, and previous biographers have reinforced it. Economic historians have analyzed the Grosvenor Estate, but this thesis is not concerned with the creation, husbandry or growth of the Grosvenor millions. The primary aim of this thesis is to reassess Bend'Or's reputation. It traces the life of a duke faced with the changing circumstances of the aristocracy in the early twentieth century.

Access to the Grosvenor family archives has been fundamental to the task of re-evaluating the career of the 2nd Duke. By generous permission of the late Duke and the present Duke, I was granted approval to read private family papers. Various historians have visited the Grosvenor archive to research specific topics, but none has been given the breadth of access needed to write a sourced and researched biography on Bend'Or.

The archive has yielded rich findings, especially on Bend'Or's early life. Bend'Or's childhood was outwardly idyllic, but my research shows that his family circumstances were not auspicious. His father died when Bend'Or was an infant. The correspondence between his mother Sibell and her second husband, George Wyndham MP, reveals that the 1st Duke gave consent for their marriage only on condition that Wyndham agreed to relinquish all authority over the young Bend'Or. Bend'Or was left exposed to an overprotective mother and the limited vision of the 1st Duke. Their folly contributed to Bend'Or's inadequate education, causing him to suffer for most of his adult life from a chronic lack of confidence and self-belief. It rendered him unable to navigate successfully the web of obligations and duties that his social station demanded.

Nevertheless Wyndham emerges as a major influence on Bend'Or. It was Wyndham who stepped in to rescue Bend'Or when he failed to qualify for university or the army. Wyndham encouraged Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for Southern Africa, to take the young Bend'Or to Cape Town as his aide-de-camp. Bend'Or's letters, stored in the Grosvenor archive, offer significant insights into the attitudes held in Government House as the Second Boer War approached. They

reveal Milner's responsibility for precipitating a war for which the British were neither ready nor equipped to fight.

After the war, Bend'Or bought an estate on ex-Boer territory. The enterprise began well but its success was overtaken by politics. Material in The National Archives has been found which shows that Winston Churchill, then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, misjudged the strength of surviving Boer sentiment in southern Africa when framing policies for a post-war constitutional settlement. The Boers were successful in the election of 1907 and came to dominate the future of the new South Africa.

Material from the archive of Wyndham's biographer, John Biggs-Davison MP, including a hitherto closed file opened for the author, reveals the extent to which Wyndham leaned to the politics of the Conservative right. Wyndham's influence on Bend'Or meant that Bend'Or was associated with diehard politics. It was not until Bend'Or came under the influence of a stronger character, Winston Churchill, that he abandoned Wyndham's style of politics.

Churchill and Bend'Or's friendship stemmed from the Boer War but it was strengthened during the First World War. In spite of the mayhem, the war represented a contented period for Bend'Or. The thesis shows the extent to which Bend'Or and Churchill collaborated at the beginning of the war. Bend'Or used the opportunities afforded by his social position and wealth to progress the future of armoured cars and the tank. Archival documents reveal the depth, and success, of Bend'Or's involvement in the development of warfare weaponry; a topic which remained an abiding interest for him up to the Second World War.

In the 1920s and 1930s Bend'Or largely based himself abroad, for which he was widely criticized. My research suggests that the reason he abandoned London Society was because he had been ostracized by the King from Court. In 1920 Bend'Or resigned as Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire. The apparent reason for Bend'Or's resignation was his recent divorce from his first wife. My research in the Royal Archives reveals that the real reason was George V's insistence on pre-war standards and behaviours being maintained amongst his courtiers, especially from a duke such as Westminster, whose family was close to the throne. Exclusion from

Court was a public humiliation from which Bend'Or found it hard to recover, and it left him rudderless as a duke.

If Bend'Or found himself at odds with the King, he was also uncomfortable in the emancipated post-1918 society. Once hailed a war hero, Bend'Or became ten years later the butt of societal re-evaluation. His difficulties were compounded by his third marriage, to a woman twenty-three years younger than him. The marriage broke down largely because of generational differences. The Duchess's subsequent memoir did much to destroy Bend'Or's reputation.

It is well known that before the Second World War Bend'Or was an appeaser. What has not been explained in previous biographies is why. Although Bend'Or may have had opinions which would be unacceptable today, I argue that his Nazi sympathies have been exaggerated by his critics. The thesis concludes that his attitudes were culturally ignorant rather than politically menacing.

Bend'Or's friendship with Neville Chamberlain has never been acknowledged by historians. Chamberlain's letters to his sisters, in the Cadbury Research Library, Birmingham, confirm that each August during 1937–1939 Neville Chamberlain holidayed with Bend'Or in Scotland. It was personal loyalty to Neville Chamberlain that made Bend'Or support Chamberlain's politics. In 1940, once it became apparent that appeasement would not restrain Hitler, Bend'Or returned to Churchill's fold.

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for graciously granting me permission to read papers in the Royal Archives relating to the 2nd Duke's resignation as Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire in 1920.

This thesis would not have been possible without access to material in the Grosvenor Archive, private family papers in particular. My deep gratitude and profound thanks are extended to His Grace the 7th Duke of Westminster, to his late father the 6th Duke, and to the Trustees of the Grosvenor Estate for giving their consent. Jeremy Newsom, then ex-Executive Trustee, and Jane Sandars, Family Office Communications Director, gave me early encouragement and I am indebted to them for their trust. I also owe Louise Benson, the Grosvenor Archivist, my wholehearted thanks for her forbearance over the years, during which she has had to put up with my requests and questions.

Many others have supported and encouraged me along my way. The 13th Earl of Scarbrough and the Countess not only allowed me to read papers from their private archive but invited me to stay at Sandbeck Park in addition. Maybe they will never know the thrill of reopening letters that have not been read since being seen by the original recipient. I thank them.

I am indebted to Mr and Mrs Francis Dinely, who entrusted me with the letters of the Rt Hon. George Wyndham MP. Lady Mark FitzAlan Howard kindly allowed me to question her about her stepmother, Lady (Loelia) Lindsay. Maldwin Drummond confirmed the story told to him by his father Cyril, Bend'Or's cousin and friend. Also, Charles Sebag Montefiore showed me the unpublished notes of Sir Philip Magnus on George Curzon which helped in my considerations of Sibell Grosvenor. I am extremely grateful to them all.

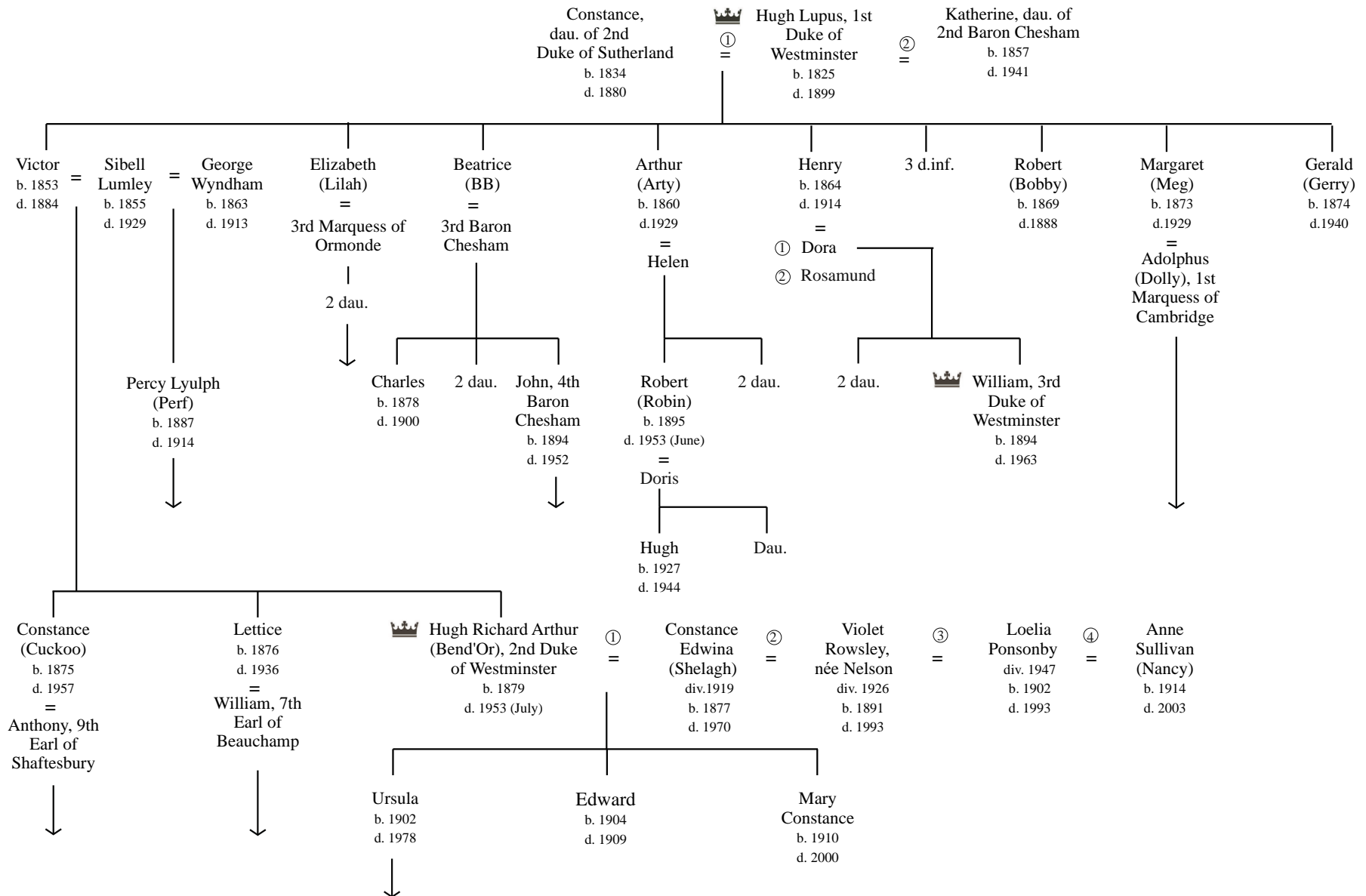
Many others have also gone out of their way to ease my path. The Earl of Shaftesbury gave his permission for me to be shown letters from the Shaftesbury archive and his archivist, Richard Samways, enabled me to do so painlessly. I thank the archivists

of the Bodleian Library, the Churchill Centre Cambridge, Eton College Library (Eleanor Hoare), Nuffield College Library Oxford, the Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham (especially for the speedy replies to my enquiries), the Westminster City Archives, the Parliamentary Archives in the House of Lords; Julie Crocker at the Royal Archives for being there to help; and Lucy Edyvean for her skill and endless patience. Lastly but not least, the team at the Chester Records Office who hosted my many visits.

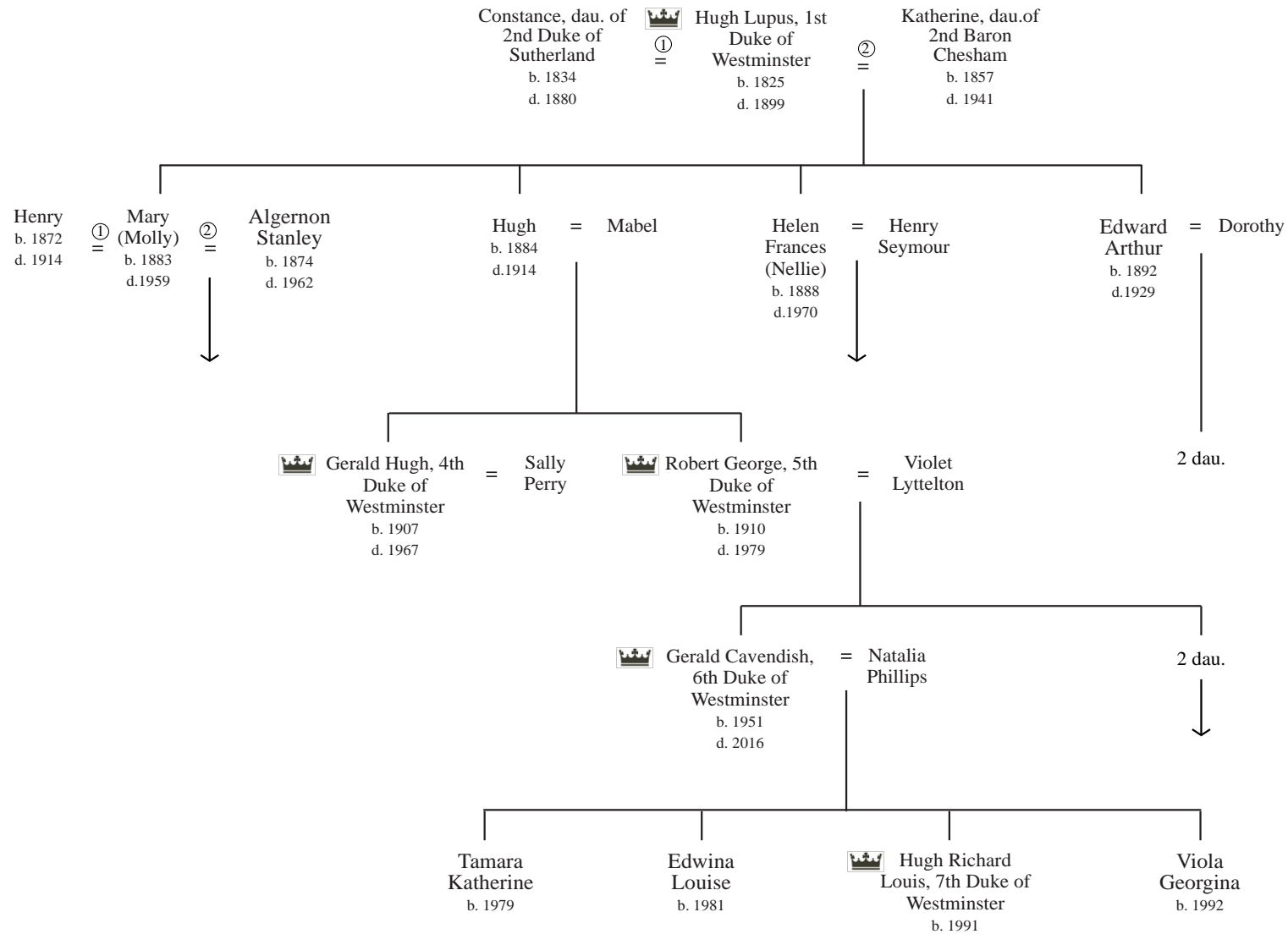
Finally, I owe a huge debt to Professor Jane Ridley, who has been my tutor for more years than she would care to remember. Without her guidance and encouragement I would never have attempted this thesis. Without her support I certainly would never have finished it. *Gratis tibi ago.*

Family Trees

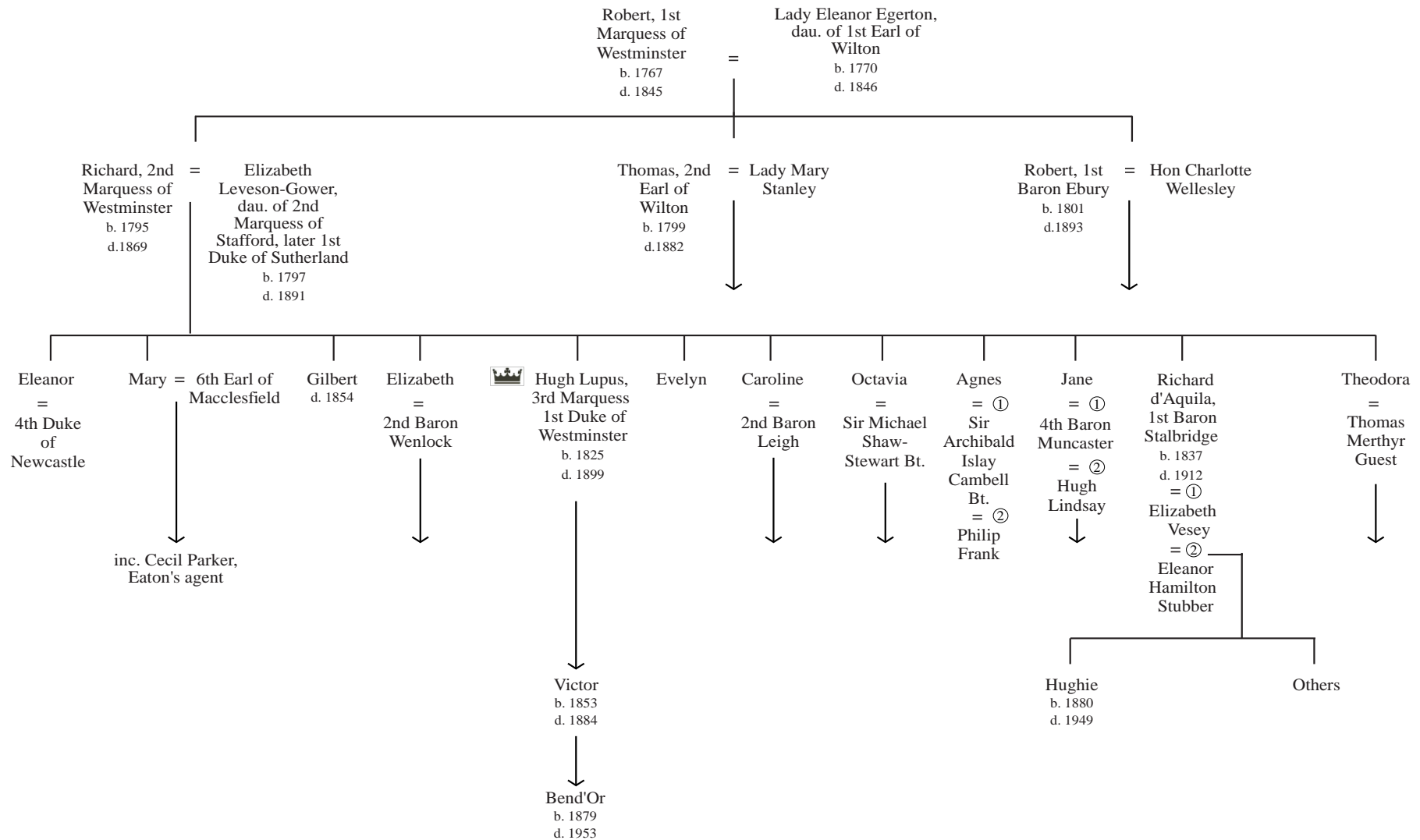
1st Duke's First Marriage - Simplified



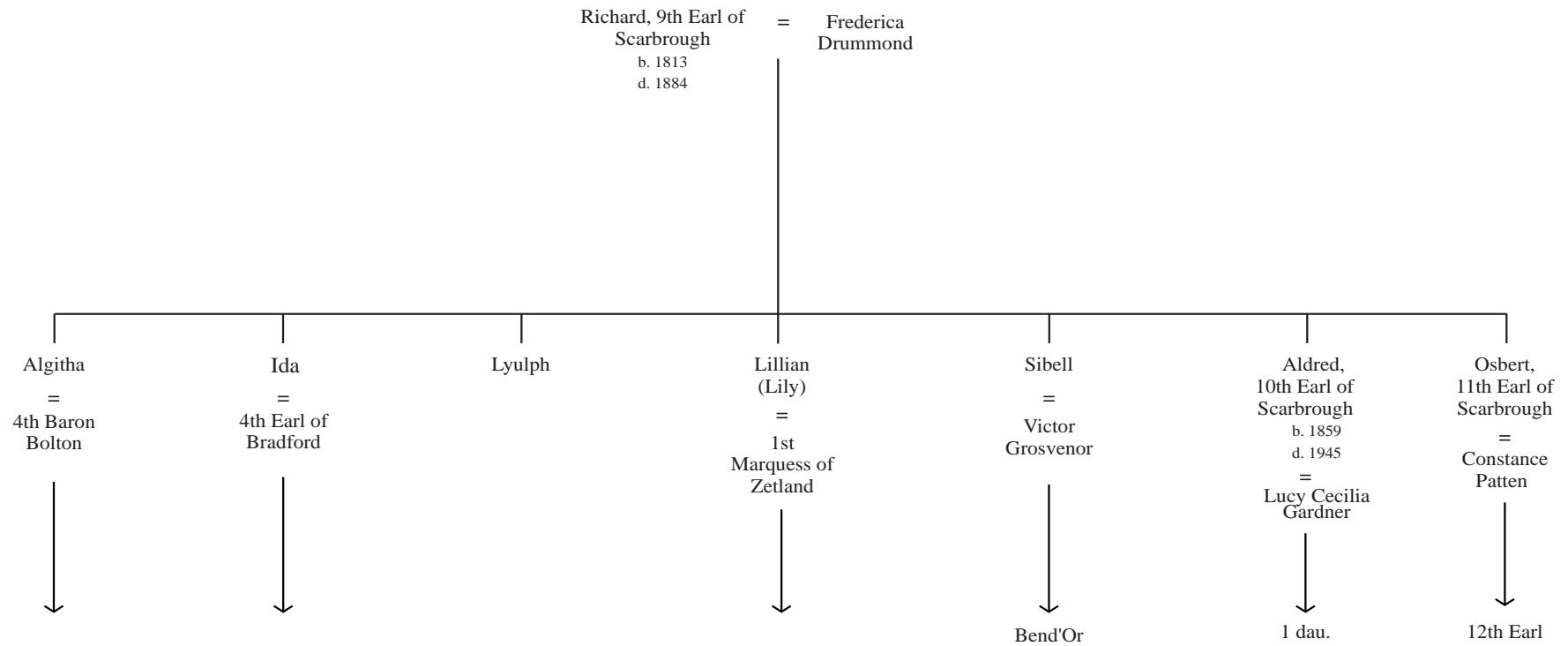
1st Duke's Second Marriage - Simplified



Grosvenor Descent - Simplified



Lumley Family Tree - Simplified



Introduction

The 2nd Duke of Westminster is known not for being a great man but for being a rich duke. He is also a man who received a mixed reputation both from contemporaries and subsequent authors. It is the portrayal of Bend'Or the playboy that people have come to believe. Like a cud that has been over-chewed, diverse writers' unflattering remarks on Bend'Or have become a mush of speculation and exaggeration. The principal ambition of this thesis is to take a fresh look at the man and to put him in a historical context of which he is both a product and an example.

The many unattractive things said about Bend'Or have obscured a life that has proved to be full of interest. He lived for seventy-four years from 1879 to 1953. It was one of the more transformative periods in British history, encompassing the reigns of six monarchs, two world wars, the loss of the Empire, the arrival of the motor-car and aircraft, of radiation and penicillin, of democracy, public opinion and an irreverent universal media. It was when everything, from the aristocracy to food menus, was challenged and changed.

In general historians have accepted the view that the aristocracy collectively lost power and influence in the same epoch.¹ Leaving Winston Churchill (and royalty) to one side, the reduced interest in the inherited nobility has resulted in fewer

¹ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982); F.M.L. Thompson, 'Presidential Address: English Landed Society in the Twentieth Century IV. Prestige without Power?' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1993), 1–22 (5), <www.jstor.org/stable/3679134> [accessed 2 July 2020]; F.M.L. Thompson, 'Life and Death: How Successful Nineteenth-Century Businessmen Disposed of Their Fortunes', *The Economic History Review*, 43 (February 1990), 40–61; W.D. Rubinstein, 'Wealth, Elites and the Class Structure of Modern Britain', *Past & Present*, 76 (August 1977), 99–126, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/650411>> [accessed 29 August 2020]; W.D. Rubinstein, 'New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth-Century Britain', *Past & Present*, 92 (August 1981), 125–47, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/650752>> [accessed 29 July 2019]; William D. Rubenstein [*sic*], 'The Evolution of the British Aristocracy in the Twentieth Century: Peerage Creations and the "Establishment"', in *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours*, ed. by Didier Lancien and Monique de Saint-Martin (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de Sciences de l'Homme, 2007), pp. 245–57, <<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://books.openedition.org/editionsmsmh/9986?lang=en&prev=search&pto=aue>>; Francis M.L. Thompson, 'English Landed Society in the Twentieth Century', in *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours*, ed. by Didier Lancien and Monique de Saint-Martin (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de Sciences de l'Homme, 2007), pp. 11–27, <<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://books.openedition.org/editionsmsmh/9986?lang=en&prev=search&pto=aue>>; W.D. Rubinstein, 'Cutting up Rich: A Reply to F.M.L. Thompson', *The Economic History Review*, 45 (May 1992), 350–361, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2597627>> [accessed 17 September 2020].

monographs on those individuals.² Bend'Or was a senior aristocrat and a major landowner whose life provides a caveat to the accepted trend. During his tenure as duke he oversaw a transformation of the Grosvenor Estate from what was in essence an urban, family-owned property portfolio into the modern conglomerate that it is today. In spite of this and Bend'Or's participation in some of the great events of the first half of the twentieth century, he has not merited an entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. This thesis aims to provide a better understanding of Bend'Or's historical contribution as well as of Bend'Or the man.

An additional reason for an academic thesis on the Duke is to produce a document which adds to our knowledge of history and which subsequent historians may use with confidence. Three biographies have been written on Bend'Or: Michael Harrison's *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (published in 1966),³ Leslie Field's *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (published in 1983)⁴ and George Ridley's *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (published in 1985).⁵

Not one of these authors was primarily a historian. Michael Harrison (this was his pen name: he was Maurice Desmond Rohan) was a general writer whose repertoire includes detective novels, travel commentaries and books on food and philately. His book *Lord of London* contains inaccuracies, few footnotes and a very short bibliography of secondary sources. His habit of calling people by nicknames and his reliance on unsupported tittle-tattle suggests the book is a pastiche. His main source was gossip, of which some was supplied by Bend'Or's first wife, Shelagh (unacknowledged in his book). Where sources can be verified they are useful, especially his use of eyewitnesses. The book is incomplete, with a heavy emphasis on Bend'Or's early life and little on his mature years.

² Notable examples are Andrew Roberts, *Victorian Titian* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999); Simon Kerry, *Lansdowne; The Last Great Whig* (London: Unicorn, 2017); R.J.Q. Adams, *Balfour: The Last Grandee* (London: John Murray, 2007); Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London: Penguin, 2005); Neil C. Fleming, *The Marquess of Londonderry: Aristocracy, Power and Politics in Britain and Ireland* (New York: Tauris, 2005).

³ Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966).

⁴ Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983).

⁵ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985).

Leslie Field's book is that of a fashion journalist who declared, in the book's foreword, Bend'Or to be 'my fantasy Prince Charming [...]. I first suggested writing this book because I was a little "in love" with him, and now, even knowing all there is to know, that has not changed'.⁶ Of the biographies, hers is the most complete, but she provides no references although there is an extensive bibliography. Field relied on her journalistic instinct for what would sell: her answer being glamour, fashion and society. Wars receive less attention than the softer subjects such as Bend'Or's affair with Coco Chanel, which is given one mention by Harrison and none by Ridley.

With an aim to correct what she saw as a distorted portrayal of her husband, Anne (Nancy), Duchess of Westminster, Bend'Or's fourth wife and widow, commissioned George Ridley to write a further book. In the foreword Nancy wrote, 'I know of no person better qualified than George Ridley to write an accurate and comprehensive book on the life of my husband'.⁷ Ridley worked for the Grosvenor Estate all his life, ending up as Chief Agent. He called his book a 'memoir'. Although he had access to the Grosvenor archive, he made sparing use of it and gave no references when he did. The importance of his account is that, of all the biographers, only Ridley knew Bend'Or personally. But, typical of the circumstances in which the book was commissioned, Ridley aimed to present Bend'Or in a favourable light. Difficult issues, such as appeasement or Bend'Or's love interests, are simply brushed over.

The biographer is fortunate in Bend'Or as a subject. His prominent position in Society as a duke and his large personality have ensured that there are plenty of extant opinions on him from his peers and societal commentators, as well as in contemporary newspapers, journals and memoirs.

Comments on Bend'Or cover a spectrum from Bend'Or the golden boy to Bend'Or the terrible. At the beginning of the Second Boer War (1899) Lady Edward Cecil met him in Cape Town. He was twenty years old and she found him:

a fortunate youth [...]. Handsome, intelligent, with one of the most delicious characters I have ever known in anyone, with great charm — a good

⁶ Field, *The Golden Duke*, p. 2.

⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, Foreword.

sportsman — a good companion. I don't think I ever knew a boy who was better fitted out for life's journey.⁸

W.S. Blunt, diarist and adventurer, described Bend'Or in 1912 when he was thirty-three years old as 'a kindly, good-humoured fellow, like a great Newfoundland puppy, much given to riotous amusements and sports'.⁹ According to Bend'Or's cousin the 5th Duke of Sutherland, who holidayed with him and his wife Shelagh before the First World War, "Ben d'Or" [*sic*] I regarded as one of the most attractive personalities of the Edwardian era [...] [he was] a most charming person'.¹⁰

George Cornwallis-West, the brother of Bend'Or's first wife Shelagh, whom Bend'Or divorced in 1919, belongs to Bend'Or's detractors. Bend'Or had attempted to save George from financial ruin but, inevitably, George, who was reckless with money, ended up selling his memoirs. George relays a story, apparently told to him by a gamekeeper, that Bend'Or enjoyed standing behind the best shots in England to laugh when they missed a bird. Bend'Or 'flogs' a river for salmon in the time that he, George, caught 'two salmon and killed two stags'. Bend'Or fussed about losing a salmon; he had the pool dredged to reveal the salmon had been foul-hooked.¹¹ The implication is clear: George was suggesting that Bend'Or might have been a duke but he was not an English Gentleman. It was a singular opinion considering Bend'Or was a noted fisherman and shot.

As Bend'Or aged, comments about him were less generous. Duff Cooper, eleven years Bend'Or's junior, was neither intellectually nor politically a friend. By September 1939, the month of the incident described below, these two irascible men could argue on appeasement, anti-Semitism and Prime Minister Neville

⁸ Hugh Cecil and Mirabel Cecil, *Imperial Marriage: An Edwardian War and Peace* (Stroud: Sutton, 2005), p. 128.

⁹ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888–1914*, 2 vols (London: Martin Secker, 1920), II: 1900–1914, p. 397.

¹⁰ The Duke of Sutherland, *Looking Back: The Autobiography*, with a Foreword by Viscount Kilmuir, G.C.V.O. (London: Odhams Press, 1957), p. 164.

¹¹ George Cornwallis-West, *Edwardian Hey-Days: A Little about a Lot of Things* (London: Putnam, 1930), pp. 196–97, 220–21.

Chamberlain's defence priorities.¹² In his memoirs *Old Men Forget* Duff described a clash with a 'rich friend' on appeasement and the fate of Jews.¹³ His wife Diana revealed the man to be Bend'Or and referred to him as anti-Semitic.¹⁴ Duff published his memoirs in 1953, Diana published hers in 1959, so both appeared once the full horror of Nazi atrocities had shocked the world. Coming at the time they did, the anti-Semitic allegation was potent. Before the Second World War there was a greater degree of verbal anti-Semitism in society than is acceptable today. Bend'Or did hold anti-Semitic views, possibly above the then societal norm, but the issue is whether he was proactively anti-Semitic. The evidence, examined in Chapter 10, suggests that he was not.

Chips Channon, politician and diarist, did not know Bend'Or as a young man. Chips was eighteen years the younger and only came to Britain in 1920. Nevertheless Chips has provided the famous epitaph on Bend'Or. He wrote on Bend'Or's death:

magnificent, courteous, a mixture of Henry VIII and Lorenzo Il Magnifico, he lived for pleasure — and women — for 74 years. His wealth was incalculable; his charm overwhelming; he was restless, spoilt, irritable and rather splendid in a very English way. He was fair, handsome, lavish; yet his life was an empty failure; he did few kindnesses, leaves no monument.¹⁵

There is much that Henry VIII and Bend'Or had in common. Both succeeded to their inherited responsibilities when young (Henry aged seventeen, Bend'Or twenty); both were brought up in maternal-dominated households; physically they were big men with red hair; both self-indulged; they enjoyed manly sport; the quest for an heir dominated a large part of their life; they were courageous and risk-takers; and both had a low boredom threshold. There the comparison ends. Henry

¹² For Duff's pre-war politics, see John Charmley, *Duff Cooper: An Authorized Biography* (London: Papermac, 1986). Charmley describes Duff as 'quick-tempered' (p. 2), giving 'outbursts [of temper]' (p. 89), 'bellicose' (p. 141) and of having 'veiners' (p. 239).

¹³ Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget: The Autobiography* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), pp. 258–59.

¹⁴ Lady Diana Cooper, *The Light of Common Day* (London: Vintage, 2018), p. 246.

¹⁵ Henry Channon: '*Chips*': *The Diaries of Sir Henry Channon*, ed. with an Introduction by Robert Rhodes James, 2nd edn (London: Phoenix, 1999), p. 477.

left his kingdom weaker than when he had succeeded; Bend'Or left his estates stronger and more prosperous than when he had inherited, and he was a well-regarded seigneur of his estates. Even Bend'Or's third wife Loelia, who was his main critic, admitted that he was an 'enlightened landlord' and that 'he was very popular in London, where he was well-known as a benign landlord'.¹⁶

Loelia, née Ponsonby, had by far the greatest influence on, or was the destroyer of, Bend'Or's reputation. She published *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia Duchess of Westminster with a Foreword by Noël Coward* in 1961, eight years after Bend'Or's death. A less well-known *Cocktails & Laughter: The Albums of Loelia Lindsay* followed in 1983.¹⁷ Loelia was twenty-eight, twenty-three years younger than Bend'Or, when they married in 1930. The marriage lasted five years although they did not divorce until 1947. *Grace and Favour* is typical of a work by a divorced wife who wished to present her story for public reckoning, and for profit.¹⁸

Loelia's Bend'Or is 'a restless play-boy' and a 'formidable and capricious autocrat, a Tsar, a Sultan, a Jove hurling thunderbolts'.¹⁹ More specifically she accuses him of being 'easily bored' and 'extremely spoilt', and says he was 'utterly ruthless', anti-Semitic and underwent 'unexpected and violent tornadoes' — a 'sort of mental St Vitus dance' — and 'over-powering jealousy'.²⁰ To do her justice, Loelia alleviates her criticism by crediting Bend'Or's 'colossal generosity' and steadfastness.²¹ But it is her flamboyant language concerning Bend'Or's faults that is remembered.

¹⁶ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), pp. 183, 192.

¹⁷ *Cocktails & Laughter: The Albums of Loelia Lindsay (Loelia, Duchess of Westminster)*, ed. by Hugo Vickers (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983).

¹⁸ Other examples are: Consuelo Vanderbilt Balsan, *The Glitter and the Gold* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2012); Vittoria Colonna, Duchess of Sermoneta, *Things Past*, with a Foreword by Robert Hitchens (London: Hutchinson, 1929); *Daisy Princess of Pless by Herself*, ed. with an Introduction by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1928); *From My Private Diary by Daisy Princess of Pless*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1931).

¹⁹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 181.

²⁰ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 165, 177, 183, 186, 187, 189, 194.

²¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 182, 234.

Although there is some doubt on the question, Bend'Or has been accused of being homophobic because of his hostility to his sexually ambiguous brother-in-law, the 7th Earl of Beauchamp. It would explain Noël Coward's harsh foreword to Loelia's *Grace and Favour*. Coward wrote just four years after the publication of the Wolfenden Report and he was an important contributor to the emergence of modern sexual attitudes. Coward draws a parallel between Cinderella, being Loelia, and her Prince Charming, Bend'Or. He wonders whether such a Prince Charming had been 'schizophrenic' or, 'as the American psychiatrists would say, "insecure in every area"'. His Cinderella was 'well disposed, inherently submissive and willing, perhaps even eager, to allow herself to be bullied and dominated' while her Prince Charming, Bend'Or, was a 'man of notorious personal charm [...] who also was well known [...] as expert at the chase and other manly sports and who, had he lived in an earlier age, would undoubtedly have glittered with rhinestones from head to foot'.²²

Duff and Diana Cooper, Chips Channon, Noël Coward and Loelia were friends who identified with the generation that produced the Bright Young People. They were popular in the unrestrained and less inhibited metropolitan society from which Bend'Or felt alienated. Their influence as opinion-formers was immense.

There were others who provided a more nuanced opinion. Anita Leslie, whose father was a close friend of Bend'Or, whom she knew from childhood, comments:

Bend'Or showed himself good-natured and petulant by turn. I liked him, but he obviously did not know where to turn next for diversion. He needed to work in some leper colony to get his priorities right, and discover himself. As it is he fretted amidst toadies.²³

Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, believed that Bend'Or was a 'man more sinned against than sinning'. Chamberlain said of him that he was:

extraordinarily hospitable, generous and kind hearted [...] to have withstood all that [immense wealth and a dukedom] [...] poor Westminster would have

²² Noël Coward, Foreword, in Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 11–13.

²³ Anita Leslie, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread* (London: Hutchinson, 2007), p. 133.

had to be a hero & he is not that: only a good fellow without any great strength of character.²⁴

Jock Colville, best known for having worked as a Private Secretary to three Prime Ministers, including Bend'Or's lifetime friend Winston Churchill, agreed: 'In Edward VII's reign nobody with a disposition much less saintly than St Francis of Assisi could have been Duke of Westminster and remained unspoilt. Bend'Or had no inclination to saintly austerity: he denied himself nothing'.²⁵ Colville completes his remarks on Bend'Or with the observation: 'Self-centred he might be, but he combined charm of manner with a capacity of friendship and he had both a good brain and personal courage.'²⁶

The biographer must ask: how did Bend'Or come to earn such a varied reputation? Can it be accounted for by a temperament change in a man bruised by life's disappointments and frustrations? Or did Bend'Or's reputation suffer from generational differences? Perhaps Bend'Or fell foul of changes in fashionable public opinion on sexuality and attitudes in the 1960s? They are all valid questions in Bend'Or's case which contain some truth.

Popular writers have been quick to seize upon Bend'Or's black legend. In particular there is a myriad of writers who offer opinions on the Beauchamp affair.

Bend'Or's fall-out with the 7th Earl Beauchamp, a gregarious, popular and bisexual man who married Bend'Or's sister Lettice in 1902, hardly caused a ripple of gossip at the time beyond the closed world of high Society. But in the hands of subsequent writers, the story attracted great interest. It began with Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, said to be based on the Lygon family. First published in 1945, it contained all the ingredients to attract popular curiosity, including as it does aristocratic degeneration, sexual promiscuity and family tragedy.

²⁴ University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers (CRL, NC) 18/1/1017, Neville Chamberlain to his sister Ida Chamberlain, 22 August 1937.

²⁵ John Colville, *The Churchillians* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), p. 11.

²⁶ Colville, *The Churchillians*, p. 11.

Jane Mulvagh and Paula Byrne are authors who wrote about Evelyn Waugh's relationships with the Lygons, so inevitably they covered the Beauchamp affair.²⁷ Mulvagh refers to Field and Channon in her 'Notes' but her main informant was Beauchamp's daughter Sibell. Sibell's history suggests that she was traumatized by her father's fate. She made an unfortunate marriage to Michael Rowley, who turned out to be already married. Rowley was the stepson of Bend'Or by virtue of being the son of Violet, Bend'Or's second duchess, from her first marriage to George Rowley. Violet and Bend'Or divorced acrimoniously in 1926 when Michael was nine years old. In spite of Sibell's connections, Mulvagh fails to test Sibell's account by calling on other primary sources, nor does she examine Sibell's motivation.

Paula Byrne portrays Bend'Or as 'an ardent right-winger [...] [who had] a habit of seducing under aged girls'. No source is given for this 'habit' which, apparently, cost him '£20,000 in "hush money"'.²⁸ This accusation is not referenced. Leslie Field is mentioned in Byrne's bibliography, although Field does not accuse Bend'Or of paedophilia.

Michael Bloch is best known for his work on the Duke and Duchess of Windsor but he is also the author of *Closet Queens*, a book about homosexual or bisexual politicians. Bloch repeats the allegation that 'his [Bend'Or's] weakness was for girls rather than boys'. Bloch refers to the common accusation that Bend'Or wrote to his brother-in-law as 'Dear Bugger-in-law'. No source has ever been provided or found for this remark.²⁹ Both Mulvagh and Byrne are mentioned in Bloch's notes.

An array of other writers have damaged Bend'Or's reputation further. Robert Lacey includes the Grosvenors in the six families he studied for his book *Aristocracy*.³⁰ Lacey's Bend'Or is a Flash Gordon who is grudge-bearing, spoilt and frightening. His descriptions of Bend'Or were based on Channon's and Loelia's accounts. Lacey acknowledges that during the First World War Bend'Or was

²⁷ Jane Mulvagh, *Madresfield – The Real Brideshead: One House, One Family, One Thousand Years* (London: Doubleday, 2008). David Cannadine wrote the Foreword to the book.

²⁸ Paula Byrne, *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead* (London: Harper Press, 2009), pp. 134–35.

²⁹ Michael Bloch, *Closet Queens: Some 20th Century British Politicians* (London: Abacus, 2015), p. 55.

³⁰ Robert Lacey, *Aristocrats* (London: Hutchinson & BBC, 1983), pp. 136, 236.

‘dashing’, but to write that Bend’Or went to the Western Front in 1914 ‘accompanied by his own private army’ exaggerates the truth.³¹ Lacey claims his main source was George Ridley but he acknowledges ‘other off-the-record sources, for help in shedding light on the less creditable side of the character of the 2nd Duke of Westminster’.³²

Mary Lovell devotes space in her book, *The Riviera*, to the rumour that Coco Chanel spent a year ‘involved with both’ Bend’Or and Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VIII).³³ In *Churchills* she opines that Bend’Or was malicious. She describes Bend’Or as, ‘A right-wing Tory, he hoped to bring the Liberal party into disrepute by “outing” his bisexual brother-in-law’.³⁴

Brian Masters, whose main thesis in *The Dukes* (2001) is that family traits are preserved over the centuries, relies on Anita Leslie and Loelia for information on Bend’Or. Masters’ Bend’Or is a selfish womanizer. He concludes that ‘the picture of Bend’Or’s private character, as portrayed by his third wife, is not particularly endearing, but it rings true, as it accords with what little information we have as to the character of his ancestors’.³⁵

Andrew Rose, author, depicts Bend’Or with ‘bizarre habits’, who was ‘a supremely arrogant man’. He ‘regarded wives [...] mistresses and sundry squeezes with equal contempt, treating them as little more than objects strewn across the path of life’. According to Rose, Bend’Or had a ‘malign influence’ on the Prince of Wales which is shown ‘in the younger man’s increasingly crude, sometimes abusive treatment of discarded favourites’.³⁶ No evidence is offered for these alarming statements.

³¹ Lacey, *Aristocrats*, p. 150.

³² Lacey, *Aristocrats*, p. 237.

³³ Mary S Lovell, *The Riviera Set, 1920–1960: The Golden Years of Glamour and Excess* (London: Little, Brown, 2016), p. 84.

³⁴ Mary S. Lovell, *The Churchills* (London: Abacus, 2011), p. 274.

³⁵ Brian Masters, *The Dukes: The Origins, Ennoblement and History of Twenty-Six Families* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 318.

³⁶ Andrew Rose, *The Prince, the Princess and the Perfect Murder* (London: Coronet, 2013), pp. 30–31, 171.

Scholarly writers have succumbed to Chinese whispering. Professor Sir David Cannadine's opinion of Bend'Or sharpens as his books multiply. In *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774–1967* (published 1980) there is little reflection on Bend'Or's nature except for the recognition of Bend'Or's 'mentality' as one belonging to the *ancien régime*.³⁷

In *Aspects of Aristocracy* (published in 1994) Cannadine describes Bend'Or as a 'flawed and fallen grandee' and says that after his first marriage 'three more marriages brought Bend'Or neither happiness nor repose'.³⁸ This is simply wrong: by all accounts, in his fourth marriage, to Nancy, Bend'Or was happy and contented. Cannadine also writes, 'he [Bend'Or] hated democracy, disliked Jews, voted against the Parliament Bill in 1910, and favoured a negotiated peace with Hitler'. Borrowing Chips Channon's 'damning epitaph', Cannadine concludes, "his life was an empty failure".³⁹ As well as Chips, Cannadine lists Michael Harrison as a source.

In *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (first published in 1990) Loelia is included as a source. Cannadine's comparison between the first Duke and the second is made to illustrate his theme of the waning character of the old aristocracy. To make the comparison work, Cannadine maximizes the 1st Duke's virtues while minimizing Bend'Or's successes. He declares:

the contrasted lives of the first and second Dukes of Westminster vividly illustrates this shift from responsibility to indulgence, stability to restlessness, leisure to pleasure [...] [the 1st Duke] was high-minded, morally upright, religious, abstemious [...] he believed in the sanctity and significance of home life. He was a good and conscientious landlord. He was renowned for his charitable endeavours and his generous philanthropy

³⁷ David Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774–1967* (Leicester University Press, 1980), p. 424.

³⁸ David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 141–42.

³⁹ David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, p. 142.

[...]. How very different was the life and attitude of Bend'Or [...] his life was an empty failure; he did few kindnesses, leaves no monument.⁴⁰

Professor J.M. Lee also suggested a difference in aristocratic styles between Bend'Or and his predecessors. He observed, 'The age of the motor-car and the private yacht, the week-end in Paris and the polo season at Monte Carlo, did not breed the solid worth which the great political patrons of the previous generation had expected'.⁴¹ Lee is correct in his broad social commentary but his remarks on Bend'Or could have been adjusted by admitting to Bend'Or's dedication to the charitable giving and attention to his estates which showed that Bend'Or adhered to the traditional values of his landowning forebears.

Cannadine's comparison between the dukes finds echoes in other works. F.H.W. Sheppard, the Editor of the *Survey of London*, wrote in a chapter relating to the Grosvenor Mayfair estate, 'In their general mode of living there could hardly be a greater contrast between the peripatetic second Duke and his staid Victorian predecessor: and since [the second Duke's] death he has in general attracted a bad press'.⁴² His sources, apart from Cannadine, were Chips Cannon and Loelia.

In Professor Crosby's recent monograph on Lloyd George, Bend'Or is shown to be an 'aloof and irresponsible aristocrat [...] who enjoyed "colossal riches", had the reputation of a self-indulgent and irritable skinflint'. Whatever else Bend'Or was he was not a miser. He spent extravagantly and he was equally extravagantly generous. Crosby cites Cannadine's *Decline and Fall* 'for thumbnail sketches on Westminster'.⁴³

Professor Tinniswood's Bend'Or has few saving graces (being a serious sportsman was one). For his book *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars*, Tinniswood relied on Loelia's memoirs. Tinniswood's Bend'Or 'ditched his wives when they began to bore him, [...] didn't give a damn

⁴⁰ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 386–87.

⁴¹ J.M. Lee, *Social Leaders and Public Persons: A Study of County Government in Cheshire since 1888* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 42.

⁴² *Survey of London: Volume 39, The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part 1 (General History)*, ed. by F.H.W. Sheppard (London County Council, London, 1977), Chapter IV, pp. 67–82: digitized by double rekeying (/about#technical), <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>> [accessed 19 May 2019].

⁴³ Travis L. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014), p. 411.

for public opinion, [...] flaunted his wealth and his mistresses in the casinos of Monte Carlo'.⁴⁴ Pamela Horn in *Country House Society: The Private Lives of England's Upper Class after the First World War* criticized Bend'Or for being rich and for investing abroad 'despite his ownership of valuable real estate in London' (emphasis added).⁴⁵ Amongst others, Leslie Field and Loelia were her sources.

Some of the Grosvenor family's papers were at one time kept in the Westminster City Archives, London. Today papers relating to the family are kept at Eaton Hall in Cheshire under the supervision of a full-time archivist, although some papers pertaining to the London Grosvenor Estate can still be found in the Westminster City Archives. Specific academics used family material, in the main, before the papers were moved to Cheshire. Nancy Ellenberger and Max Egremont read the correspondence between Bend'Or's mother, Sibell Countess Grosvenor, and her second husband, George Wyndham MP. Ellenberger made use of it for her seminal paper 'Constructing George Wyndham',⁴⁶ Egremont used the archive for his work on the cousins George Wyndham and Wilfrid Blunt.⁴⁷ Gervas Huxley was given access to papers for his book on the 1st Duke.⁴⁸ Philip Magnus was shown the correspondence between Sibell and George Curzon, as was David Gilmour for his biography on Curzon.⁴⁹ Thomas Pakenham saw papers relevant to his work on the Boer War.⁵⁰ Justine Picardie was supported for her work on Coco Chanel.⁵¹ John

⁴⁴ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016), p. 68.

⁴⁵ Pamela Horn, *Country House Society: The Private Lives of England's Upper Class after the First World War* (Stroud: Amberley, 2015), p. 82.

⁴⁶ Nancy W. Ellenberger, 'Constructing George Wyndham: Narratives of Aristocratic Masculinity in Fin-de-Siècle England', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (4) (Oct. 2000), 487–519.

⁴⁷ Max Egremont, *The Cousins: The Friendship, Opinions and Activities of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and George Wyndham* (London: Collins, 1977).

⁴⁸ Gervas Huxley, *Victorian Duke: The Life of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor First Duke of Westminster* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁴⁹ David Gilmour, *Curzon* (London: John Murray, 1994).

⁵⁰ Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2004).

⁵¹ Justine Picardie, *Coco Chanel: The Legend and the Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2010).

Glanfield read papers relating to Bend'Or's work on tanks.⁵² Michael Hazleton-Swales studied many documents relating to the Grosvenors' nineteenth-century London estate, to be housed at Eaton.⁵³

Each of these historians had a specific theme other than a biographical study on Bend'Or. The author's unprecedented access to the Eaton archive was fundamental, and imperative, to the re-examination of Bend'Or's life.

Previously, apart from these historians, academics and authors wanting to research Bend'Or's character for themselves have had to rely on Loelia's memoirs or on the earlier misleading biographies. The availability of the Grosvenor archive has enabled this thesis to be grounded in rigorous historical research.

The study of family papers has also allowed new insights into Bend'Or's life to be established that have been substantiated by material in other archives. The late Professor Lord Blake wrote of the importance of a biographer examining the childhood experience of his/her subject.⁵⁴ In the case of Bend'Or it is crucial for understanding his future career. The Earl of Scarborough, a descendant of Bend'Or's mother Sibell, generously gave the author access to his private archive. In Chapter 1, letters between Sibell and her mother, the Countess of Scarborough, and between the Countess and the Duchess of Westminster, confirm the severity of Victor's, Bend'Or's father's, ill-health and the shadow it cast on his widow which fuelled her tendency to be a needy and an overprotective mother.

One of the casualties of Sibell's anxiety was Bend'Or's education, which is the subject of Chapter 2. The extensive correspondence between Sibell and her second husband suggests that Sibell considered education to be an unnecessary optional extra. Her view was not challenged. When Sibell decided to marry George Wyndham, the 1st Duke, not wanting to lose his authority over his heir, obtained an agreement from George that Bend'Or would remain under the Duke's influence. Until George

⁵² John Glanfield, *The Devil's Chariots: The Birth & Secret Battles of the First Tanks* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001).

⁵³ M.J. Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats: The Grosvenors and the Development of Belgravia and Pimlico in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1981). pp. 148–50,

⁵⁴ Robert Blake, 'The Art of Biography', in *The Troubled Face of Biography*, ed. by Eric Homberger and John Charmley (London: MacMillan Press, 1988), p. 82.

had to step in to rescue Bend'Or's faltering career, the effect of the agreement was that early paternalistic authority over Bend'Or was diffused and weakened.

After the doting feminine domain of his home, the harshness of a male boarding school was a shock to Bend'Or. In spite of this, his letters home from his preparatory school suggest that he may not have been as unreasonably unhappy as previously supposed. At Eton, papers in the college archive, studied in relation to Bend'Or for the first time, imply that a combination of Bend'Or's mother's indulgence and Bend'Or's recurring illnesses (which shored up the former) resulted in an inadequate education that had a profound effect on the rest of Bend'Or's life. It was the basis of his chronic lack of confidence and self-belief, from which he did not recover until his later years. It rendered him unable to navigate successfully the web of obligations and duties that his social station demanded.

Bend'Or's belief in the British Empire, fostered by George Wyndham and developed by Lord Milner, was genuine and heartfelt. In 1920 a *Country Life* article described Bend'Or as 'actively a citizen of the Empire'. The author, H. Avray Tipping, continued that Bend'Or owned land in southern Africa, Rhodesia and East Africa and he was 'keenly alive to their development as immense sources of food and raw material for the Empire'. Tipping concluded:

He [Bend'Or] comes of an ancient stock and ancient traditions but he is one of a group of dukes who are by no means ready to live in the past, but are keen to face and to solve the problems of today.⁵⁵

Bend'Or invested time and resources to support Milner's and Wyndham's vision of a united British Empire of which British South Africa was to be the keystone. The Grosvenor archive contains good material on Bend'Or's South African estate, which hitherto has not been fully explored. Additional material came from Lord Milner's archive stored in the Bodleian Libraries, Oxford. Bend'Or bought an estate in South Africa in 1902 not as a commercial activity but as a demonstration of support for Lord Milner's Imperialistic vision. It was a project for which Bend'Or worked hard to make a success. However, although as a community and estate it

⁵⁵ H. Avray Tipping, 'Eaton Hall, Cheshire. A Seat of the Duke of Westminster', *Country Life*, 29 March 1920, pp. 724–31 (731).

outlived Bend'Or, it did not fulfil its original intent. It was one of Bend'Or's severe disappointments.

Politics ended Bend'Or's South African aspirations. When the radical Liberal Government came into office in 1906 Winston Churchill, Bend'Or's lifelong friend, became Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and as such the chief architect of the Liberal Government's policies for southern Africa. A letter in the Churchill archive and policy papers in The National Archives, written by Churchill, suggest that Bend'Or and Churchill worked together to secure a future for recently established British settlers in ex-Boer colonies. Their ambitions ended in disappointment in 1907 when Afrikaans administrations were elected in these territories.

There is much else in Bend'Or's history that is revealed for the first time. Chapter 4 delves into the vexed decade of Edwardian politics. Not having the political confidence to plough his own furrow Bend'Or relied on his stepfather George Wyndham to be his political mentor. The papers of Bonar Law, Lord Beaverbrook, Willoughby de Broke and Sir John Biggs-Davison, a biographer of George Wyndham, have been consulted. The latter yielded the biggest reward. File BD/1/70, opened for the first time at the request of the author, and examined for Chapter 4, suggests that Wyndham played a greater role in Conservative right-wing politics between 1911 and his death in 1913 than has been appreciated. Wyndham relied on Bend'Or's support and resources to further his ambitions. After Wyndham's unexpected death, and out of loyalty to his stepfather, Bend'Or continued to identify with diehard Conservatism. It was an identification he accepted but which did not sit easily with him. With the exception of Bend'Or's belief in tariff reform and his cultural prejudices, abetted by Wyndham, Bend'Or's habits as a landlord and his interests in technological progress and innovation suggest he could have been more at home as a Whig Unionist, like his grandfather the 1st Duke, and Winston Churchill.⁵⁶

In Chapter 5 documents from the Churchill and Grosvenor archives are used to show how Churchill and Bend'Or collaborated during the early phase of the First World War to push forward their ideas, to the exasperation of Kitchener, on mechanical warfare. Additional papers prove that Bend'Or purposefully used his

⁵⁶ John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1993), pp. 39–40.

social standing and influence to get armoured cars onto Flanders battlefields in 1915. His role, which he assumed for the second time for the development of the tank, was one of champion and influencer.

Illness brought Bend'Or's military career to a close, to his frustration, in 1917. Before then he had won himself fame for his heroic feats in North Africa. However, his interest in mechanical warfare never diminished. Up to the beginning of the Second World War he continued to be instrumental in developing the tank, an untold part of his history. It is a history that should be considered along with Bend'Or's views on appeasement.

Chapter 5 also contains details of Bend'Or's trip to Spain in the spring of 1918. Foreign Office papers in The National Archives, discovered for this thesis, explain this unlikely trip. His mission has little historical importance but, if the German Spring Offensive of 1918 had been successful, Bend'Or's work in Spain might have been critical. The fact that it counted for little was another frustration for him.

The thematic Chapters 6 to 9 provide the context of Bend'Or's life in terms of the social milieu in which he lived. Chapter 6 on Manliness investigates the meaning of manhood at the beginning of the twentieth century. Bend'Or displayed a particular manifestation of robust manliness, one that Professor Jeremy Black refers to as 'imperial masculinity'.⁵⁷ It was a heroic conception suffused with chivalric and Victorian ideals of resolve, dedication and self-sacrifice. It was not a form of masculinity that made relationships with women easy, which is the subject of Chapter 6. Particular attention has been given to understanding early twentieth-century marriages and divorce proceedings. Bend'Or's adherence to the time-honoured gentlemanly code that led him to accept the whole blame for a failing marriage despite the faults of his wife contributed to his unfavourable reputation.⁵⁸

Crucial to understanding why his relationships with his first three wives went awry was Bend'Or's need for a son. Bend'Or had had a son who died in 1909. It was a death that haunted him. During 1916 to 1917 Bend'Or had suffered from an

⁵⁷ Jeremy Black, *Britain 1851–2010: A Nation Transformed* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2010), p. 119.

⁵⁸ Gail L. Savage, 'Divorce and the Law in England and France Prior to the First World War', *Journal of Social History*, 21 (Spring 1988), 299–513, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3787596?seq=1>> [accessed 6 October 2018].

extended unnamed illness. What the fever was is unclear, but after it he never fathered another child, in spite of three further marriages to women of child-bearing age. Before the illness he had sired three children by his first wife and possibly at least one illegitimate child. The Grosvenors had not failed to produce a male heir since the death of Sir Thomas Grosvenor in 1733. Bend'Or's loss of fertility was his most bitter disappointment.

Chapter 8 is concerned with what it was to be a duke. By gracious permission of Her Majesty the Queen, documents have been accessed from the Royal Archives. In 1920 Bend'Or resigned from being Lord-Lieutenant of the County of Cheshire. Hitherto it has been accepted that this was because of Bend'Or's first divorce. Chapter 8 demonstrates there was more at play: the King had a greater purpose, beyond Bend'Or's personal circumstances. Bend'Or was deeply hurt by his rejection from the royal Court. It is crucial to understanding why he abandoned London Society and the expected lifestyle of a duke.

Chapter 9 considers the question of wealth and its changing value in the twentieth century. Bend'Or was born rich, and he died richer. Traditionally this would have been regarded as a suitable achievement for a senior aristocrat, but in the twentieth century attitudes changed. The reasons are multifarious, involving the aristocracy's loss of power and influence; social disillusionment and upheaval after the First World War; the rise of public consciousness; wider enfranchisement; increases in taxes; and the growth of political agitation. An additional phenomenon emphasized in Chapter 9 was that a new generation of often politically critical journalists were able to take advantage of popular journalism to voice the changing values of post-1918 society.

His love for the Empire, and salmon fishing, explains why Bend'Or came to be associated with Neville Chamberlain in the crucial years leading up to the Second World War. Chapter 10 reveals that Chamberlain enjoyed three successive fishing holidays at Bend'Or's Scottish lodge during 1937 to 1939. Over drinks and fishing prattle Chamberlain shared with his host the worthiness of appeasement. Chamberlain's fishing trips are a new revelation and it accounts for the lengths that Bend'Or went to in 1938–1939 to support Chamberlain. It also explains the nature of Bend'Or's appeasement — once war was the only viable option, Bend'Or fully supported the war effort.

This thesis offers a sub-theme: that of Bend'Or's friendship with Winston Churchill. Churchill was connected to Bend'Or through family (Bend'Or's brother-in-law, George Cornwallis-West, married Churchill's mother in 1900) and in attitude. They both unconventional mind-sets, were Imperialists, enjoyed manly sports, had an alike sense of humour and enjoyed the company of close-knit friends rather than a crowd of many.⁵⁹ Churchill realized Bend'Or needed to escape his gilded cage, while Bend'Or was able to pay for Churchill's expensive and luxurious tastes. Like most friendships, it ebbed and flowed. In the 1930s it ebbed; during the earlier decades of the twentieth century it flowed; but their friendship was sustained until Bend'Or's death and it played an important part in Bend'Or's life.

In spite of the generosity of the late Duke and present Duke in allowing me to view family papers, there are three limitations on this thesis.

There is little material written in Bend'Or's hand once he became an adult. From his schooling onwards he kept no diary and few of his letters are available. Most of what are accessible were written to his mother till her death in 1929. Ridley wrote, 'Bend'Or was never a good correspondent'.⁶⁰ The author Seton Gordon maintained: 'The Duke hated writing letters and used the medium of telegrams to communicate with friends. He also disliked having his photograph taken, so few are in existence'.⁶¹ It is an indication of the sort of man Bend'Or was — which was someone who scorned publicity, who was notoriously shy, who sought privacy and did not give voice to personal examination. It is not surprising. Bend'Or was a Victorian, brought up in the closeted world of the nineteenth century when personal trials were endured but not voiced.

There is no catalogue available on the Grosvenor archive. Although some 16,000 individual sheets of material were photographed and studied, this work is handicapped by 'known unknowns' where there were no known papers, and from

⁵⁹ For the last point, see Charmley, *Churchill*, p. 221.

⁶⁰ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 126.

⁶¹ Raymond Eagle, Seton Gordon: *The Life and Times of a Highland Gentleman* (Moffat: Lochar, 1991), p. 231.

‘unknown unknowns’.⁶² Areas that remain unsubstantiated are Bend’Or’s attitude to Irish Home Rule preceding the First World War; the extent of his appeasement activities before the Second World War; and a mysterious, but doubted, trip to Spain in 1940 to which Ridley refers.⁶³ These remain a challenge for another study but it is hoped that this work provides the foundation.

The very large matter of the management of the Grosvenor Estate during Bend’Or’s lifetime deserves to be the subject of an independent thesis, possibly written by an economic historian. The formation and expansion of the London estate up to the death of the 1st Duke was subjected to a thorough examination in Michael Hazleton-Swales’ dissertation. Hazleton-Swales admitted, ‘virtually no consideration has been given to politics or personal biographical details (where they exist)’.⁶⁴ His main interest was to examine ‘the extent of their [the Grosvenors’] wealth, the nature of the land which provided the major part of it, and the manner in which this land was controlled’.⁶⁵ This thesis attempts the opposite: its main consideration is to write a biographical study of the 2nd Duke. Estate management is considered only to the extent that it reveals aspects of Bend’Or’s character and ambitions.

There are two incidents in the 2nd Duke’s life which have over the years attracted much interest: his disputes with his brother-in-law, the 7th Earl Beauchamp, and with Detmar Blow, who became the 2nd Duke’s chief agent and private secretary. There are no papers in the archive on either of these issues, so no primary research could be undertaken. Both incidences are referred to in context.

The Grosvenors’ claim to be descended from the Norman Hugh Lupus, the 1st Earl of Chester, is a Victorian myth.⁶⁶ The family’s earliest historical presence is Robert

⁶² Donald Rumsfeld, *The Unknown*, February 2002, taken from the official transcript on the Defence Department’s website, <<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2003/04/the-poetry-of-donald-rumsfeld.html>> [accessed 5 August 2019].

⁶³ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 145.

⁶⁴ Hazleton-Swales, ‘Urban Aristocrats’, p. 422.

⁶⁵ Hazleton-Swales, ‘Urban Aristocrats’, pp. 421–22.

⁶⁶ W.H.B. Bird, ‘The Grosvenor Myth’, *The Ancestor*, 1 (1902), pp. 166–88.

de Grosvenor of Budworth, Cheshire in the 1170s. The national event for which the Grosvenors were first noted was the contest with the Scrope family on the right to bear the arms *Azure, a bend or*, which both families claimed. Richard II confirmed the Scropes as the winners in 1390.

By the fifteenth century the Grosvenors could be counted amongst the gentry class, whose ambitions were determined by their place in county society.⁶⁷ Their rise to national prominence was assisted by advantageous marriages. The manor of Eaton, with the accompanying rights and title of Grand Sergeant of the River Dee, came through the marriage of Joan, heiress of John Eaton, to Ralph Grosvenor (d. 1471). In the sixteenth century Thomas Leigh left the manor of Belgravia in Cheshire to the Grosvenors through his wife, Mary Grosvenor.⁶⁸

Sir Richard Grosvenor was the first of the family to be educated outside of Cheshire. He attended Oxford University, became a Member of Parliament and a baronet in 1617. Sir Thomas Grosvenor (1655–1700), the third baronet, married in 1677 Mary Davies, the heiress to the manor of Ebury, which brought a large area of west London to the family. The importance of their London estate rose once fashionable society migrated west to the area of Mayfair and Belgravia in the wake of George III's purchase of Buckingham House in 1767. The Grosvenors benefitted too from title inflation that characterized the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁶⁹ The seventh baronet, Richard, was given a viscountcy and earldom in 1784. The 2nd Earl became Marquess of Westminster in 1831. His grandson Hugh Lupus, the 3rd Marquess, became a duke in 1874. He was the grandfather of Hugh Richard Arthur, 2nd Duke of Westminster.

Valuable marriages also supported the Grosvenors' rise to the higher rungs of the aristocracy. Through his marriage to Eleanor Egerton, heiress of the Earl of Wilton, the 2nd Earl succeeded to land in Hampshire and Egerton. Both the 2nd Marquis and the 1st Duke married Leveson-Gowers. The 2nd Marquess's wife, Elizabeth, was the younger daughter of the 2nd Marquess of Stafford, soon to be elevated to

⁶⁷ Christina Dykes, 'Cheshire's County Community 1450–1500' (unpublished master's thesis, University of St Andrew's, 1977).

⁶⁸ Diana Newton and Jonathan Lumby, *The Grosvenors of Eaton: The Dukes of Westminster and Their Forebears* (Chester: Jennet, 2002), p. 3.

⁶⁹ Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy*, pp. 29–32.

1st Duke of Sutherland, while the 1st Duke's first wife was Constantine, daughter of the 2nd Duke of Sutherland. The Sutherlands were regarded as one of the richest families in Britain, having benefitted from coal and vast rural acreages in Scotland and England. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Grosvenors themselves were candidates for that accolade. Once the original Mayfair leases fell in, they benefitted from the considerable fines levied and richer lease renewals.⁷⁰

It is hard to empathize with the life of the very rich. According to Coco Chanel, Bend'Or's lover for at least eight years, people who have a 'very famous name, and are immensely rich' are hunted. They 'stop being a man and become a hare, a fox', she said.⁷¹ Bend'Or's history suggests that being very rich was not necessarily all positive. Wealth made him vulnerable. Consequently he trusted few, and those he did trust he became overly reliant upon.

There is something of a Gossian tension in Bend'Or's life. In *Father and Son*, the young Edward Gosse struggles between his individual needs and the expectations of his father.⁷² In an age which believed in Thomas Carlyle's dictum that leaders were born, not made, Bend'Or's challenge was how to accommodate society's expectation of ducal behaviour with his own uniqueness. Bend'Or, unlike Gosse, did not have the confidence or articulacy to marry his aspirations with his public persona. But like the young Gosse, Bend'Or struggled between the demands of others and the 'self'.

This thesis reveals a man straddled between two eras: the one in which he was nurtured and the other, less reverential age in which he later found himself. In the final phase of his life, when maturity raised his self-assurance, and supported by his fourth wife, he was able, to find an accommodation with his responsibilities.

⁷⁰ Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', p. 428.

⁷¹ Paul Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, trans. by Euan Cameron (London: Pushkin, 2010), p. 163.

⁷² Edmund Gosse, *Father and Son*, ed. with Introduction by Michael Newton (Oxford University Press, 2009).

A note on the name: There are two ways of spelling the 2nd Duke's familiar name, Bend'Or. Many people spell it without the apostrophe as 'Bendor', but others, including Bend'Or himself and his mother, apostrophized it as 'Bend'Or'. I believe this is the correct form and I have used it unless the alternative was used in a quotation.

Chapter 1. The Family Nest

The influence of childhood on subsequent behaviour is a contested area. Social scientists, neuroscientists and psychologists dispute the impact and importance of various factors, but few doubt that during childhood a predisposition to certain values and codes of behaviour is inculcated. Although early years encompass an individual's first experiences, biographies written over thirty years ago treated childhood as a passing phase to the more important stuff of adulthood. In the case of the 2nd Duke of Westminster, the key to his character is to understand that, although his childhood was charmed, it did not prepare him for the responsibilities he was to inherit. There were three shadows over his otherwise idyllic boyhood: a dead father, an overprotective mother and a self-absorbed grandfather (the 1st Duke). It was left to his stepfather, Sibell's second husband George Wyndham, to rescue the prospective duke, but that was not until Bend'Or was approaching manhood.

The Grosvenor archive is rich in material on the 2nd Duke's childhood, particularly in the correspondence of his mother Sibell, née Lumley, with her second husband, George Wyndham, whom she married in 1886, two years after the death of Victor, Earl Grosvenor, her first husband. She was an enthusiastic letter-writer, often writing two or three letters a day to George during his frequent absences. Their vivid correspondence reveals much about their individuality as well as their joint lives. Her letters could be long and chaotic, with little attention, if any, to structure or lucidity. George's letters were initially more disciplined. When he was younger, he strove to be romantic but towards the end of his life his letters could be angry and explosive. It was a correspondence that was maintained from their courtship in 1885 to George's death in 1913.

The other main source on the future duke's childhood are the Kleeblatt diaries: named after the German for 'clover leaf' — the three leaves representing Sibell's three children. Begun in 1885 on the initiative of Fraudy, their German-speaking Swiss governess, the diaries span nine years, and several volumes, to 1894, the year of Fraudy's departure. Primarily they were written so that Sibell would know what her children were doing in her absence, but they were also intended to be instruments for educational and moral improvement. 'It will help us to be good',

wrote the eldest child on the first page, ‘as we shall have to write down everything good or naughty.’¹ Gervas Huxley, the biographer of the 1st Duke, described it as ‘a perfect piece of childish Victorian, with pious sentiments and good resolutions that dot its pages’.² Nevertheless the diaries offer insights into the daily rhythm of the children’s lives, as well as more extraordinary occurrences that disturbed their nursery routine. The girls took it in turns to contribute daily entries, with the very occasional entry by the future duke.

George Ridley’s assertion that the 2nd Duke had a happy childhood, which had ‘nothing of the stiffness often associated with Victorian families’, is largely true.³ He grew up in the lush Cheshire countryside, surrounded by a doting mother, two adoring sisters, and a loving extended family who were rich. He had ponies, dogs, and an indulgent household to support him. He was born in 1879, when the British Empire was unsurpassed, technological progress was beginning to improve living standards, and the aristocracy of which he was a part enjoyed largely unquestioned superiority and authority.

It would be superficial to leave it there. Beneath the surface there were cracks caused by the ill health and untimely death of the 2nd Duke’s father, Victor.

Victor, the 1st Duke’s eldest son, an epileptic who suffered ‘*grand mal*’ seizures, died when his only son, the future 2nd Duke, was only five years old. By the 1870s scientific research was beginning to replace superstition and most educated people no longer thought of epilepsy as demonic. Nonetheless popular opinion feared that sufferers of epilepsy might be contagious, intellectually feeble, or violent. From early 1873 doctors were beginning to experiment with crude forms of electrical applications, and drugs became increasingly available.⁴

¹ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), Adds 378/1, Kleeblatt Diary, July 1885, p. 1.

² Gervas Huxley, *Victorian Duke: The life of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor First Duke of Westminster* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 126.

³ George Ridley, *Bend’Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 21.

⁴ ‘Introduction: History and Stigma of Epilepsy’, *Epilepsy*, 44 (Suppl. 6) 12–14, 2003, onlinelibrary.wiley.com, <<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/ert/2014/582039>> [accessed 18 August 2016].

Material shown to the author in the Scarbroughs' private archive shows that Victor's parents, who were created Duke and Duchess of Westminster in 1874, may not have been fully frank with the parents of Victor's bride on the nature of Victor's condition when they arranged for Sibell Lumley to marry him. Possibly they did not understand it.

Sibell was the fifth daughter of Richard and Frederica Scarbrough, the Earl and Countess of Scarbrough. For the Scarbroughs it was a good match. Victor was the eldest son and the Grosvenors were now a ducal family. The couple married on 3 November 1874. The Duke, on the day of the wedding, wrote to the Countess, 'I do hope you will not feel low and sad — certainly you must have felt deeply and I am sure we did also to circumstances of his health making us feel the solemnity of it all.'⁵

A couple of days after the marriage, Victor had two fits in one day, in Sibell's presence. It must have been an appalling shock for the nineteen-year-old bride. She wrote to her mother, marking her letter 'Private', and pleaded for secrecy: 'he had a baddish faint but is better now, do not say a word about it in yr letter, as he does not know I've told you [...] except for this we have been happy'.⁶ In a further letter, written the next day, she wrote:

He is quite well again — that same day he had one more faint, suddenly at dinner: it is horrid to see, but he does not suffer, I have heard from Dr Rad [Dr Radcliffe] & he hopes it may be the last. Yr Sibell Don't speak about it please except to Pa.⁷

The incident set off a flurry of letters between the newlyweds' mothers, and a visit to the honeymooners from the Duchess of Westminster, after which she wrote to Sibell's mother. In her anxiety Constance Westminster slipped into using

⁵ S. Yorkshire, Sandbeck Archive (SA), 1st Duke to Frederica Lumley, 5 November 1874.

⁶ SA, Sibell Grosvenor to Frederica Lumley, 5 November 1874.

⁷ SA, Sibell Grosvenor to Frederica Lumley, 7 November 1874.

Victor's former name of Belgrave (Viscount Belgrave), rather than his newly upgraded title of (Earl) Grosvenor.⁸ She reassured the Countess:

Between these horrid things Bel is so well that I know from experience one does get very secure & I do think it will not be too great a cloud for her [Sibell's] happiness [...]. I suppose one ought to have been more prepared after all he had gone through. [...] I am going to make Dr R talk to her privately; two is not really worse than one: but this has only happened when in Ceylon before.⁹

The Duchess strove to soothe the Countess:

dearest Freddie tho' he is big & has not seen as much of smart manners as yr other sons in law I am sure you cannot have a dearer whose loving heart, not only for his Darling, but as regards you all, or anyone belonging to Sibell.¹⁰

While epilepsy of the *grand mal* variety damages the brain in the long term, it is important to realize that Victor was not an imbecile. He had been schooled at Eton, held a commission in the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry, and had served as a magistrate in Cheshire.¹¹ His letters to Sibell are intelligently written, if inclined to schoolboy humour.

In a further letter the Duchess stressed the need to keep Victor's condition a secret. The reference to G [Grosvenor] is to the Duke, who had eight sisters, all of whom had married into other aristocratic families. She wrote:

He [Victor] is apt in many ways not to be careful enough — such as eating fast, too much smoking; and certainly never fears riding on Engines! [...] but then he is so soon perfectly well again. [...] I am all for not letting this get about too much: I have not any of my [illegible] (except my dear Ronald [brother] who was in & out of here & saw through me) as I think these things get so much exaggerated: I shan't let any of G's sisters know. My

⁸ Hugh Grosvenor received his dukedom on 1 February 1874 in Gladstone's Resignation Honours list.

⁹ SA, Constance Westminster to Frederica Lumley, 7 November 1874.

¹⁰ SA, Constance Westminster to Frederica Lumley, 5 November 1874.

¹¹ 'Death of Earl Grosvenor', *The Times*, 23 January 1884, p. 12.

girls know, as they have always been accustomed to be ready to bear well anything that might happen before them & they might be of use to Sibell (but how I pray each one may be the last).¹²

After another attack the Duchess told Sibell's mother that her daughter was a godsend to help her 'good boy':

I do feel for her so much but I also feel convinced that she is sent to be a blessing to that good boy of mine 'her mission' as Dr Rad: says — but all the same, it makes my heart bleed for her [...] I do hope it did her no harm? — tell me.¹³

By the next August Victor's mother was telling the Countess, 'I don't think Beggy [is] looking quite his best & he is apt to be too lazy about eno' exercise unless urged.'¹⁴ 'Beggy', short for Belgrave, was Victor's pet name.

Victor's letters contain several references to his medication. In 1877 he wrote to his wife, 'I have seen Clayton who will alter & give me some other physics'.¹⁵ The next year he sees Clayton again, who 'is going to change the physics'.¹⁶ In 1881 he wrote, 'Clayton says that I am very well & has given me a lot of pills'.¹⁷ Clayton was Oscar Clayton, physician to the Prince of Wales, who was perhaps better known for being an obliging society doctor than for his medical knowledge.¹⁸ In the early days of medical science, medicines could have a worse effect than the underlying condition. Potassium bromide was commonly used in the hope of controlling seizures. If used for a long time, it can give rise to horrible side-effects associated with 'bromism', which is characterized by lethargy, headaches, delirium and erratic behaviour.

¹² SA, Constance Westminster to Frederica Lumley, n.d.

¹³ SA, Constance Westminster to Frederica Lumley, n.d., December 1874.

¹⁴ SA, Constance Westminster to Frederica Lumley, n.d., August 1875.

¹⁵ GA, WP 1/1, Victor to Sibell, 30 January 1877.

¹⁶ GA, WP 1/1, Victor to Sibell, 5 February 1878.

¹⁷ GA, WP 1/1, Victor to Sibell, 1881.

¹⁸ Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2012), pp. 146–48.

These symptoms feature frequently in Victor's letters. Just after Victor and Sibell's marriage, Constance wrote to Frederica:

[Dr Rad] is most anxious about he not being over late in the morning & about this I want dear little Sibell to do all she can for it is such a bad habit, besides Dr Rad views of its unhealthiness.¹⁹

In August 1875 Victor himself tells Sibell, 'you will be surprised to hear that I was down at breakfast at 9.30 this morning so I hope you are satisfied'.²⁰ He suffered from neuralgia constantly. From Scotland he complained of headaches.²¹ The next year, 1876, from Newmarket he tells Sibell, 'I have been bad with neuralgia but tonight it is better'.²²

As a wedding present the 1st Duke had given to Victor and Sibell Saughton Grange (sometimes referred to as Saughton Towers), a historic house originally bought by the 1st Duke's father which was situated near to Eaton Hall. Built in red sandstone, the Grange, as the name suggested, was originally a gatehouse to a twelfth-century monastic building. It was renovated and extended to make it into a suitable home, but the fifteenth-century central block, with its pronounced arched doorway, a narrow crenellated tower and mullioned oriel windows, remained. It appealed to Sibell's 'absorbing interest in the medieval past'.²³ It was here that the 2nd Duke was born.

Beggy and Sibell had two daughters: Constance (known as Cuckoo or Cussie), born in 1875, and Lettice (known as Lettie), born in 1876. Victor needed an heir to ensure that the newly established ducal line would be continued. It was especially important as it was highly likely that Victor would never be a duke himself.

Victor was twenty-six when his son was born on 19 March 1879, the third child. The baby was christened a month later on 20 April in Eccleston Parish Church.²⁴

¹⁹ SA, Constance Westminster to the Countess of Scarbrough, 15 November 1874.

²⁰ GA, WP 1/1/1, Victor to Sibell, 8 August 1875.

²¹ GA, WP 1/1/1, Victor to Sibell, 15 September 1875.

²² GA, WP 1/1/1, Victor to Sibell, 24 October 1876.

²³ SA, newspaper cutting, 1914.

²⁴ Parish records, Eccleston Parish Church, Cheshire.

Writing from Government House, Ottawa, some months later, his father wrote of the baby, Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor, the future 2nd Duke of Westminster, ‘Your mother tells me that the baby’s hair is red but she does not think it will stay as his eyelashes are dark’.²⁵ The reddish hair stayed, as did his family nickname, Bend’Or. Bend’Or told a Cheshire squire that the name came about because his hair matched the light-chestnut forelock and tail of his grandfather’s 1880 Derby winner Bend’Or.²⁶ The horse was named to commemorate the family’s ancient coat of arms, *Azure, a bend or*, their use of which had been the centre of a heraldic dispute with the Scropes in 1399. The Grosvenors lost, and adopted the three wheatsheaves. No doubt the 1st Duke, in choosing the name for the horse, was deliberately conjuring up, in the fashion of the day, the family’s ancient lineage. The baby’s nickname ‘Bend’Or’ became his familiar name, although his intimates called him Benny.

Victor was showing signs of dissipation. Horse-racing and betting had caused him to build up considerable debts, much to the 1st Duke’s disapproval.²⁷ Soon after Bend’Or’s birth, Victor was sent on an extensive tour of Canada and the United States, accompanied by a doctor. From Ottawa in 1880 Victor wrote: ‘Dear little Wife, you see you have borne my absences very well, but I know that it has been for the best’.²⁸ The trip did not help either his medical condition or his gambling habit. By 1881 the 1st Duke wrote to Sibell:

I am willing to pay the debts — so that you may have that off yr mind and purse! It is satisfactory so far that they do not amount, as they might have done, to a great deal now! I am afraid I will have to pay £14,000 for Baker

²⁵ GA, WP 1/1/1, Victor to Sibell, Thursday, 14 January 1880.

²⁶ Gordon Fergusson, *The Green Collars: The Tarporley Hunt Club and Cheshire Hunting History, incorporating Hunting Songs by R.E. Egerton Warburton (Eleventh Edition)* (London: Quiller, 1993), p. 57.

²⁷ M.J. Hazleton-Swales, ‘Urban Aristocrats: The Grosvenors and the Development of Belgravia and Pimlico in the Nineteenth Century’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1981), p. 165, <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.493822>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

²⁸ GA, WP 1/1/1, Victor to Sibell, 7 January 1880.

wh[ich] is very annoying — this would have gone a long way in Farm buildings and cottages.²⁹

Sending Victor on long trips abroad was a reasonable way of coping with his circumstances. Victorian upper-class men could spend much time away from their families, pursuing activities favoured by their class such as game-shooting, yachting, stalking, horse-racing and travelling. His father the 1st Duke spent time abroad, particularly in India and Ceylon, before he inherited the dukedom. And by keeping Victor away, the Grosvenors hoped to keep the twin secrets of his embarrassing health condition and financial irresponsibility. It did not work. Victor continued to indulge in the turf, and a yacht was added.³⁰

Victor's deterioration gathered pace. Gervas Huxley noted that Victor's grandmother, the Dowager Marchioness of Westminster (Elizabeth, née Leveson-Gower, 1777–1891), had confided to her diary that she found Victor in November 1880 as 'a sad spectacle and quite altered from when I saw him eleven years ago — enormous, untidy and with a disagreeable underbred expression'.³¹ News of Victor's illness could no longer be contained. Very soon the Queen was told. Huxley records that Victoria wrote to the Duke in June 1881:

Much and truly grieved is the Queen at the terribly distressing account which the Duke gives of poor Grosvenor [...] he is her godson and she held him at his christening and she knew him as a pretty little boy whom his dear mother doted on. But the account the Duke gives of poor Grosvenor is truly deplorable and she feels greatly for him and for poor Grosvenor's sweet young wife.³²

²⁹ 1st Duke to Sibell, 11 December 1891, quoted in Hazelton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', p. 166.

³⁰ Hazelton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', p. 165.

³¹ Huxley, *Victorian Duke*, p. 121.

³² Huxley, *Victorian Duke*, p. 121.

On 17 July 1881 the Queen recorded in her diary, ‘after luncheon saw Mr Gladstone [...] he spoke [...] about his [1st Duke’s] eldest son, who was in such a bad state of health’.³³

It is not clear whether Victor lived with Sibell and the children in his dying years. The 1881 census shows Sibell residing in Parkstone, Dorset.³⁴ It may have been a holiday. In 1883 Victor was sent to Cuba. Bend’Or told Loelia, his third wife, that his only recollection of his father was when his father smacked him; Loelia referred to it as a ‘colossal spanking’.³⁵ It is more probable than not, considering his condition, that the children and Victor were kept apart as much as possible.

However, Victor was at Saughton Grange when he died on 22 January 1884. His death certificate records the cause of death as ‘bronchiole pneumonia 5 days certified by Dr Dobie MD Edin. MBBS Eng., Chester’. He was thirty-one years old. The Rev. Sparling told the parishioners of the Grosvenors’ parish church in Eccleston:

From early boyhood the deceased was never out of the doctor’s hands. And their most skilled efforts and advice could not avert the growth of a constitutional affliction which had so enervating an influence over him, and which gradually deprived him of that force and vigour of mind and body with which the healthy man is blessed [...]. It prevented him as he grew older from taking any very active part in public duties, to which he was naturally called by his birth and position, and [was] the cause of that lethargy which oppressed him as severely.³⁶

The Times’ obituary noted that Victor had taken ‘no active part in politics’ and that he ‘spent his life of a country gentleman at his Cheshire residency’, adding:

³³ Queen Victoria’s Journal Online, 17 July 1881, <<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/home.do>> [accessed 15 August 2016].

³⁴ 1881 Census, <<http://search.ancestry.co.uk>> [accessed 13 August 2016].

³⁵ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 176.

³⁶ *Cheshire Observer*, 2 February 1884, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 2 August 2016].

he had a slight connection with [horse] racing [...]. Lord Grosvenor was passionately fond of mechanical engineering, and was frequently to be found in the railway workshops at Crewe station, and oftener still driving the 'wild Irishman' between London and Holyhead.³⁷

After Victor's death his best racehorse, Reprieve, and his yacht were sold. The 1st Duke once again met Victor's debts.³⁸

Deborah Cohen, in *Family Secrets*, suggests that there was some openness about what the Victorians regarded as mental feebleness. She writes, 'Victorians of the middle and upper classes discussed learning difficulties more openly than their parents and grandchildren, who proved willing to conceal the mentally handicapped altogether'.³⁹ This may account for the Rev. Sparling's surprising candour in his sermon at Victor's funeral. The 1st Duke and his wife had not been so candid and they had striven to hide Victor's affliction. As it was unknown whether epilepsy could be inherited, it was a constant worry that Victor's condition could contaminate the newly created ducal bloodline and appear in other aristocratic families connected to the Grosvenors by marriage. Moreover Victor's spendthrift habits must have been a matter of deep concern to the 1st Duke, who had learnt parsimonious ways from his own father. The family's fortune had nearly been lost by the extravagance of the 1st Earl, the 1st Duke's grandfather; the fear was that Victor could have been a 'throwback'.

It was a forlorn hope that Victor's circumstances would remain hidden. On 29 January 1884, a few days after Victor's death, the author Henry James wrote in his notebook that a Mrs Tennant had told him a story involving a Lady G with whom Lord Stafford was in love.⁴⁰ The story became the basis for James's short story *The*

³⁷ *The Times*, 23 January 1884.

³⁸ Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', p. 166, quoting a letter from the Duke's private secretary to Sibell, 4 April 1884.

³⁹ Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Viking, 2013), p. 110.

⁴⁰ Henry James, Notebook, 29 January 1884, <<http://www.henryjames.org.uk/pathod/home.htm>> [accessed 25 August 2016].

Path of Duty, in which the object of the protagonist's heart was a widow who had been married to a Lord Vandeleur, 'a feeble type [...] who had every pretension of his order and none of its amiability'.⁴¹

The fear of Victor's illness cast a shadow over Bend'Or and his mother for many years. Bend'Or's multiple childhood ailments increased Sibell's anxiety. When he cut a finger badly, Sibell explained to George, 'I found him [Bend'Or] nearly fainting & ghastly white on the stairs & feeling very sick [...] it made me feel rather upset & I have been sitting over the fire with chattering teeth & aching bones.'⁴² In January 1891 she wrote from Cheshire to George, with whom Bend'Or was staying in Ireland. A nurse had made Sibell anxious by saying 'that Benny asked her once or twice about his heart, told her that when he ran he had such pain there, & palpitations she thinks he has a weak heart'. She instructed George:

I tell you, so that you may not encourage him to run or take violent exercise as he is too ready to do so [...]. I suppose you could not, without making a fuss & worrying him, find an excuse to let one of the Dublin doctors see him [...] the thought of Bend'Or not being sound.⁴³

The next day she wrote:

Sweet if you can arrange about Dr sounding Benny, you will, only without making a fuss [...] looking back I remember Mr Cotterill saying much the same thing to me I did not quite understand he said I ought to be careful not to let him overplay at cricket or run.⁴⁴

The doctor reported that Bend'Or's heart 'is quite normal and quite strong'.⁴⁵

The 'thought of Bend'Or not being sound' haunted Sibell. Her anxiety about his health was a constant and proved to be a detrimental feature of his childhood and adolescence.

⁴¹ Henry James, *The Path of Duty*, 1885, The Project Gutenberg eBook, <<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/21772/21772-h/21772-h.htm>> [accessed 28 November 2020].

⁴² GA, WP 2/1/6, Sibell to George Wyndham, 1889; no other date shown.

⁴³ GA, WP 2/1/10, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 11 January 1891.

⁴⁴ GA, WP 2/1/10, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 12 January 1891.

⁴⁵ GA, WP 1/2/7, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 January 1892.

Sibell's marriage to Bend'Or's father must have been traumatic. Some years later she showed how deeply she had been affected by it. Writing to George Wyndham in November 1886 she confessed:

I wanted to say to you never tell even Minnie, what I told you about poor Beggy last night & don't be sad over it because I have nearly forgotten it, only last night it suddenly came back vividly that I could not help telling you, & I thought I would explain why sometimes the thought of marrying again made me sad instead of happy.⁴⁶

Whilst at Eton, in trouble with the school authorities for missing 'absence' [roll-call], and for asking another boy to answer for him, Bend'Or was whipped by the headmaster not merely for the crime but because Bend'Or had lied; a punishment his house master noted 'he took manfully'.⁴⁷ Bend'Or wrote to his mother, 'Darling [*sic*], I don't want to and I don't mean to grow into a man like [name heavily obliterated in another coloured ink] please don't think I will & feel sure I won't'.⁴⁸ Months later, when accused of cribbing, he wrote to Sibell: 'your letter made me cry. I want you to be happier & forget the past & pray that I may never lie again in the future'.⁴⁹

Sibell was only twenty-nine when Victor died. Her portraits show her to have had dark round eyes, a pert nose and white fragile-looking skin. She exudes femininity. She had been brought up in an age when women, no matter of their inner feelings, were expected to display what E.F. Benson described as an outward 'bland blindness' to events around them. It was a code of behaviour that dictated 'that

⁴⁶ GA, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 17 November 1886. It is not clear who Minnie was: it is possible she was Dora Mina Kittina Eskine-Wemyss, who married Henry Grosvenor (third son of the 1st Duke) in 1887. The context suggests Minnie was close to the Grosvenor family.

⁴⁷ Windsor, Berkshire, Eton College Archive (EA), Eton College Library, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Summer 1894.

⁴⁸ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 June 1894.

⁴⁹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 8 November 1894.

when the two sexes met together for social enjoyment they should preserve a certain outward form of dignity and politeness'.⁵⁰

The 1st Duke referred to her as looking 'aerial'.⁵¹ Lady Paget (writer, diarist and friend of Queen Victoria) noted in her diary, 'the faint odour of sanctity which always hovers about Sibell and her surroundings [...] she glided about the house and garden, the conservatory and chapel, clad in soft liberty stuffs, her white, gentle face framed in a long veil of black gauze'.⁵² Her elusiveness, regarded as an asset in the mid-nineteenth century, was attractive to men. According to her brother, Osric Lumley, when she was Victor's widow there were some eighty men in love with her at one time.⁵³ However, Sibell's otherworldliness did not fool everyone. George's father, Percy Wyndham, perceptively told George, 'very delightfully unselfish people like S.S. [Sweet Sibell] often caused sorrow without meaning it being so sensitive & trying to please everyone'.⁵⁴

Sibell did not have the originality to rise above contemporary conventions. She was content to live the life expected of her status. She was typical of Benson's idea of a great lady, which he describes as:

she had no push because there was nowhere to push to, for as regards position she was there already by birth or marriage or both, and the craving that everyone should know how much she was there, could not exist in her, for nobody could doubt it [...] she was not concerned with making a position for herself by enticing notable folk to her house, for the position was hers already, and she did her social duty by it.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ E.F. Benson, *As We Were: A Victorian Peep Show* (London: Cornwall Press, 1934), p. 75.

⁵¹ SA, Duke of Westminster to Frederica Lumley, 5 November 1874.

⁵² Quoted in Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983], p. 43.

⁵³ Max Egremont, *The Cousins* (London: Collins, 1877), p. 80, footnote 5.

⁵⁴ GA, WP 1/2/1, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 24 November 1886.

⁵⁵ Benson, *As We Were*, pp. 148–49.

Writers have tended to include her with George Wyndham as a member of The Souls. It was an association through her husband rather than through Sibell's capabilities. Although she told George, to please him, she had read Swinburne, Plutarch and de Ronsard, she was not a candidate for the self-conscious, closely-knit group of quick-witted friends that formed The Souls, of which George was a central member. She was no match for Margot Asquith, Mary Elcho or Violet, Duchess of Rutland, nor did she try to compete. She made little impression on Society beyond that given to her by her position, and she did not care. She resisted going to London as much as she could, which was a habit that came to exasperate her second husband.⁵⁶ Ultimately she was a woman happy to wrap her identity around her children, home and flowers.

The children's diaries and Sibell's letters bear witness to Sibell's intimacy with her children — and particularly with Bend'Or, whom she treated as a confidant despite the fact he was a child. During their troublesome courtship Sibell told George that once she was in bed:

[I] told it all to Bend'Or as I had no one else & I thought [...] if it all was changed in the morning I should like someone to know that I was happy and grateful & then I told him I was afraid of being happy, because then something sad happens & he scolded me and told me to go to sleep & not think of such things.⁵⁷

Bend'Or was only six (maybe seven) years old. It was not uncommon that she shared her bed with Bend'Or, or one of her daughters, when she needed comfort, both before her marriage and after. In August 1887 she wrote to George, now her husband, whom the children called Brautigam (German for 'bridegroom' or 'betrothed'):

I woke at 3.30 this morning to think of mine. Bend'Or on your pillow awoke too & asked if you were in Ireland yet. After that fell asleep for an hour & dreamt horrible dream [...] and dreamt it all once more & had no darling husband to lay head on & be comforted did feel sad. Little boy woke up then

⁵⁶ GA, WP 1/2/15, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 October 1900.

⁵⁷ GA, WP 2/1/1, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, n.d.

cuddled me and talked of Brautigam & was such a darling & now all day he has been with me & will not leave me for a minute as he thinks he must take care of me for you.⁵⁸

Unlike many of her contemporaries, Sibell was particularly attentive if her children were ill, which was frequent. In November 1886, when all three had whooping cough, she took her turn to nurse them. She told George:

Have come to sit with my sweetest, as he [Bend'Or] is the worst tonight & his cough so hard but it does not wake him, Oh George I do love him but I cannot tell you what it is, it is love mixed with fear, when one loves anything so much that is one's very own, one dreads to lose it, & when he is alone with me & pours out all his little angel thoughts & love for me I feel he is almost too precious & too near heaven he is not like a child to me, because I tell him nearly all my thoughts & nobody knows what he is to me.⁵⁹

Sibell's neediness threatened the boundary that should exist in a healthy relationship between an adult and child, where the adult takes the responsibility for the child, not the other way round. Where there is a muddle in roles, or they are ill-defined, parental authority is risked.

Sibell was a deeply religious woman and the children were brought up accordingly. Her religion was more than the perfunctory obligation typical of the mid-nineteenth century; her faith was her mainstay. Her prayers at her 'ruby shrine' set up in her bedroom were a constant reference in her letters; in 1888 she had a chapel built in the garden of Saughton in which morning prayers were said daily; and religion saturated the manner in which she reared her children. Church was attended twice on Sunday — the local church in the morning, at which flowers were laid on Victor's grave, and the chapel in Eaton in the afternoon.

When gossip reached her that George had no faith, there was a crisis in the engagement. After he reassured her, she wrote:

⁵⁸ GA, WP 2/1/3, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 22 August 1887.

⁵⁹ GA, WP 2/1/2, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 26 November 1886.

I can never forget the despair of these days [...] it is the only objection that could have prevailed for religion or what ever name you would like to call that instinct which [...] has never failed me through all my life & is so part of my being that to feel you had no share in it & no feeling or hope in it made me more miserable than I have ever felt & I could not have gone to the Chapel & heard you make the vows & be blessed together knowing that it had not meaning to you.⁶⁰

Her high sense of duty would become a strain on her marriage to George Wyndham. In a moment of self-analysis she wrote to George, 'It is difficult for me — all my life I have been taught to submit my own will to that of others & I always feel more right doing that than pleasing myself'.⁶¹ Duty and submission to the family were considered desirable womanly attributes, but George was soon to discover that the first call on her duty was not to him as her husband but to Bend'Or.

During an unhappy first marriage and widowhood, Sibell had become increasingly dependent on her father-in-law.

The 1st Duke was generous to his charities but he was less generous in spirit to his immediate family. As befitting his position as head of the family, he was a typical patriarch. All matters concerning authority, discipline and moral welfare were deferred to him. He saw himself not only as the titular head but also as the active pater of his extended family. He was responsible for their welfare and for their moral conduct. Reflective of his attitude, he liked to be addressed as 'Daddy' not just by his children but by wider family, including his grandchildren.

The 1st Duke was at ease with young children, with his daughters and Sibell, possibly because they did not challenge him, but intolerant of his three surviving adult sons from his first marriage, Arthur, Henry and Gerald. They were not given the expected responsibilities within the family estate or encouraged to leave

⁶⁰ GA, WP 2/1/3, Letter from Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 30 January 1887.

⁶¹ GA, WP 2/1/1, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, November 1886.

Cheshire to establish themselves elsewhere. The 1st Duke's biographer, Gervas Huxley, concluded:

His sons, as they grew to manhood, were a disappointment to him. He found them weak in character and lacking in industry and enterprise. [...] In consequence it was the stern and reserved side of their father's character which the sons saw most, and their affection for him was strongly tinged with respectful awe.⁶²

Little is known about the Duke's surviving sons. Both Arthur and Henry went to Oxford and both fought in the 2nd Boer War. Arthur became a Lieutenant Colonel in the Cheshire Volunteers and its honorary Colonel, and a Justice of the Peace; Arthur was an ardent big-game hunter.⁶³ He was also keen on foxhunting. He lived till 1929. His record implies a sound man, which suggests the 1st Duke's attitude to his son was a product of the Duke's mind.

The 1st Duke's first wife, Constance, died in 1880. With three children still not out of the schoolroom, he remarried quickly. His second wife, Katherine Caroline (1857–1941), whom he married in 1882, was the sister of his son-in-law, Charles, 3rd Baron Chesham. Katie was only twenty-four years old, thirty-two years younger than the Duke, and younger than Sibell by two years. A new nursery appeared at Eaton of Mary (born 1883), known as Molly, and Hugh (born 1884), known as Hughie. Helen (born 1888) and Edward (1892) were to follow. In the Kleeblatt diaries the two newest children were referred to as the 'babies'. The three youngest surviving children from the Duke's first marriage, Bobby (who died in 1888), Margaret, known as Meg (who later married Queen Mary's brother), and Gerald, known as Gerry, remained a feature of Eaton life.

The 1st Duke had great affection for Victor's children and indulged in a domesticity that John Tosh recognised as characteristic of the mid-century.⁶⁴ Holidays, outings, homes, broughams and ponies were shared between the two nurseries and there was a constant to-ing and fro-ing between Eaton Hall and

⁶² Huxley, *Victorian Duke*, pp. 104–05.

⁶³ Fergusson, *The Green Collars*, pp. 159–60.

⁶⁴ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale, 1999), pp. 53–79.

Saughton. The Kleeblatt diaries show the extent of Daddy's involvement with the young children of his extended family. Lettice noted in October 1886, 'In the afternoon Cuckoo and I went for a ride with Daddy, Meg and Bobby came too, we went all over the place [...] it was the first time that I had ridden with daddy [*sic*] on my new pony'. The next day Cuckoo noted, 'I had a great treat Daddy said he would take me with Meg out cubbing with him [...] the babies came in their [possibly 'carriage' — illegible]'.⁶⁵ On 12 August 1891 Daddy and his wife Katie took Meg, Gerry, Molly, Hugh, Nelly, Cuckoo, Bend'Or and Lettice for a picnic at Beeston Castle. 'It was great fun', said Lettice.⁶⁶

As he grew older the 1st Duke liked to take Bend'Or out and about with him. In 1896, when Bend'Or was seventeen, Sibell told George: 'Daddy and [Bend'Or] drive to Tarporley together on Wednesday: to dine there — Daddy's Jubilee — wont it be delightful those two going together'.⁶⁷

Bend'Or wrote familiarly to his grandfather at important junctures of his life and was happy to ask him for financial help when he ran into debt at Eton.⁶⁸ More importantly, both grandfather and grandson spent time in each other's company, particularly at Lochmore on the Reay Forest estate in Sutherland.⁶⁹ During August and September they would enjoy fishing, shooting and stalking. The 1st Duke had bought Lochmore in 1866 and set about acquiring the nearby lodges of Kylestrome and Gobernuisgach to house his large family. Bend'Or's first visit that we know of was in 1893 when Bend'Or was fourteen years old and at Eton, so was considered to be of the age that it was appropriate for him to be in the company of men. He told his mother, 'I got a stag the other day. Arty [his uncle Arthur] got an 18.8 stag, he is very big'.⁷⁰ Bend'Or's next letter told Sibell he had caught '3 trout'.⁷¹ He went to

⁶⁵ GA, Adds 378/2, 8 and 9, Kleeblatt Diary, October 1886.

⁶⁶ GA, Adds 378/4, Kleeblatt Diary, 14 August 1891.

⁶⁷ GA, WP 2/1/17, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 30 October 1896.

⁶⁸ GA, WP 2/1/18, Sibell Countess Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 15 February 1897.

⁶⁹ Huxley, *Victorian Duke*, p. 74.

⁷⁰ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, August 1893.

⁷¹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 August 1893.

Scotland again in 1894.⁷² A pencil-written letter by Bend'Or from Kylestrome told Sibell, 'I had such fun yesterday I went out stalking with Daddy [the 1st Duke] we got a big stag of 18.8 the 2nd biggest killed this season'.⁷³ Love of field sports and of Scotland were the 1st Duke's lasting gift to his grandson.

Although the 1st Duke was fond of Sibell, she found that, when she wanted to remarry, 'Daddy' withheld his permission. Her choice was George Wyndham, son of Percy and Madeline Wyndham, who were based in Wiltshire. The Duke was disturbed. George was not seen as a suitable match. He was younger than Sibell and, although his family had aristocratic antecedence, he was not wealthy. Worst was the rumour of George's gambling which had reached the Duke.⁷⁴ By all accounts this was more a case of a young man's recreation rather than a serious problem, but it was reminiscent of Victor.

The 1st Duke might also have been concerned about the speed of the courtship. Sibell had fallen romantically in love with George's debonair looks, of which she was proud and which she took to reflect his passionate personality. Finally, as the 1st Duke might have suspected, letters to Sibell in the Grosvenor archive confirm that she was being actively encouraged by George's family to marry George.⁷⁵

These were trivialities compared to the 1st Duke's fundamental concern, which was that a remarried Sibell would take Bend'Or away from Cheshire and Bend'Or would have a stepfather under whose family authority Bend'Or would fall.

The Duke would not let his heir escape his control. After Victor's death, in anticipation of this situation, the Duke had extracted a promise from the young widow that she would not marry again without his permission. He now refused to give it. Sibell's sister Lily, writing to their mother in 1886, confirmed 'that there are difficulties in the way with Bend'Or'.⁷⁶ Once the Duke's position had been made

⁷² GA, WP 1/111, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1894.

⁷³ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁷⁴ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), I, p. 83.

⁷⁵ GA, WP 2/1/1, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 29 September 1886, in which she complains that 'I wish we could have been as we were for another 6 months before M [George's mother] spoke to you'.

⁷⁶ SA, Lily Zetland to Frederica Lumley, 8 November 1886.

clear, Sibell told George, 'I fancy there wd be the same difficulties whoever I wished to marry, chiefly on acct. of poor little Bend'Or.'⁷⁷ A month later she wrote, '[the Duke] wants me to be happy [...] but at the same time he says he must think of what is best for Bend'Or on who so much depends in after life'.⁷⁸

Sibell was unable to stand up to the Duke. It was left to others to intercede for the couple, George's mother in particular. In the end the Duke relented. George could marry Sibell, but he set conditions. Sibell would continue to be called Countess Grosvenor, Sibell and her children would continue to live at Saughton and George had to promise that he would refer to the Duke on all matters concerning Bend'Or. George made his promise to Sibell, 'I will lay down my life for you, for your children that are dear to me, that I will slave for their interests, that I will love yr life, that I will study D's [Daddy's] wishes in all'.⁷⁹ The 1st Duke effectively disenfranchised George's position as head of his own married home: the Grosvenor interest had to come first.

The marriage took place in February 1887 and George moved into his wife's former home, Saughton Grange. Bend'Or was eight, just sixteen years younger than George.

George's arrival came as a breath of fresh air to a family stupefied by mourning. The Kleeblatt diaries tell of George's early efforts to familiarize himself with Bend'Or and his sisters through play and gifts.⁸⁰ But he kept his word to the Duke. With no responsibilities in Cheshire, George gave his attention to politics and the pursuit of literature in London.

While the 1st Duke was alive, anything affecting Bend'Or was referred to the Duke.⁸¹ In 1887 Sibell wrote to George to pass on: 'Daddy very anxious we should not press Benny to ride but to wait until he asks'.⁸² When Bend'Or was found to

⁷⁷ GA, WP 2/1/2, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 13 October 1886.

⁷⁸ SA, Lily Zetland to Frederica Lumley, 8 November 1886; GA, WP 2/1/2, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 10 November 1886.

⁷⁹ GA, WP 1/2/1, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 4 December 1886.

⁸⁰ GA, Adds 378/2, 7 January 1887.

⁸¹ GA, WP 2/1/3, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 23 October 1887.

⁸² GA, WP 2/1/4, Sibell to George Wyndham, 18 October 1887.

have escaped from Eton without permission, Bend'Or had to write to his grandfather to apologize. His letter is suitably contrite. It concludes, 'God grant that I may grow up half as noble, honourable & unselfish as you and then I should be quite happy'. Bend'Or decorated the letter with a drawing of a shield with a *bend or*.⁸³ The Duke acknowledged Bend'Or's letter in a note to Sibell, 'This is a nice letter & I believe from what I hear he is very unhappy with the affair'.⁸⁴

The lack of authority within his own marital home was a trial for George, especially as Sibell exerted little discipline over her children. On more than one occasion George would complain about the 'racket' in the house which prevented him from working.⁸⁵ Fraudy, the governess, too found it hard to exert discipline. 'We are not doing very many lessons now I am afraid as we have so many disturbances', wrote Lettice in June 1888.⁸⁶ Bend'Or and George would develop a close relationship, particularly once the 1st Duke died in 1899. This happened just three months before Bend'Or reached twenty-one, then the age of maturity. But in Bend'Or's early years he experienced a stepfather who had none of the expected masculine authority in the household. It had left Bend'Or vulnerable to an unrestrained, suffocating maternal love and to the control of the 1st Duke, who was well-intentioned towards his heir but failed to exert the foresight that Bend'Or's career would need.

The lack of paternalistic influence became apparent in Bend'Or's education, the subject of the next chapter. The Duke, born in 1825, had been educated in the 1840s, when what mattered was not scholarly attainment but position in society's hierarchy. It was different in the last decade of the nineteenth century, when Bend'Or was at school. Competition from an ambitious middle class meant educational success was needed to secure entry to what had been hitherto the preserve of upper classes.

In 1937, Neville Chamberlain described Bend'Or to his sister. He wrote:

⁸³ GA, WP 3/3, Bend'Or to 1st Duke, 1 July 1894.

⁸⁴ GA, WP 3/3, Note from 1st Duke, n.d.

⁸⁵ GA, WP 1/2/15, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 October 1900.

⁸⁶ GA, Adds 378/3, Friday, 25 May 1888.

I look on him [Bend'Or] as a man more sinned against than sinning, who in happier circumstances might have made a great success of his life but has been most unfortunate in an unwise grandfather, a dissipated father who died prematurely, several unhappy marriages [...] and finally in being born to immense wealth and a dukedom.⁸⁷

The 1st Duke is not generally described as unwise. More often he is seen as the model Victorian duke. But his failure to encourage his heir to prepare for the responsibilities he would inherit was 'unwise'.

⁸⁷ University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers (CRL, NC) 18/1/1017, Neville Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 22 August 1937.

Chapter 2. Preparing for Dukedom

The rationale for sending young boys to boarding school, a custom of Bend'Or's stratum of society, was to remove them from female-run households to toughen them for the responsibilities that they would hold as adults. By all accounts, nineteenth-century boarding schools were nasty institutions, where sentiment was left at the door and endurance was the best most boys could achieve. Bend'Or's schooling suggests a variation of this theme. It is not disputed that the schools themselves were grim establishments, but Bend'Or's schooling was typical and not as harsh as has been supposed.¹ Bend'Or was far from being an outstanding pupil, but frequent illness and his mother's overprotectiveness hindered his educational progress and gave Bend'Or an excuse to be indolent. His lackadaisical approach to learning and to scholarly pursuits put him at a disadvantage which he felt for the rest of his life.

For this period in Bend'Or's life the sources are good. In addition to Sibell's letters to George Wyndham (her second husband) and the Kleeblatt diaries (Bend'Or and his siblings' childhood memoirs) Sibell kept the letters Bend'Or sent home both from his preparatory school, where he started in 1890, and from Eton. In addition Bend'Or's house master at Eton, the Rev. S.A. Donaldson, a conscientious man, was one of the few Eton house masters to record his confidential observations on students in his House.²

The traditional education for a male member of the upper class at the end of the nineteenth century followed a set pattern. Nursery years were spent with a governess. At usually between seven and ten years of age, boys headed for preparatory school, where they were equipped to move on to a public school. There their characters were developed, mainly through participation in team games, for the leadership roles they would be expected later to play in the service of country and Empire. The

¹ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 22.

² Windsor, Berkshire, Eton College Archive (EA), Dr S.A. Donaldson's House Book, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1.

stress was laid on duty, service to others, and personal responsibility.³ Suitable roles for upper-class boys, aside from being a landowner, were the armed forces, the Church, public services, law, the diplomatic corps, particularly the colonial service, or as a legislator in Parliament. For the latter a degree from Oxford or Cambridge would complete their schooling. A grounding in Classics was seen as ideal for equipping an aspiring politician in the art of rhetoric and plenty of quotes and stories from the ancients to colour their speeches. History was another useful subject.

The Kleeblatt diaries provide sufficient detail to support the conclusion that Bend'Or's childhood was standard for his gender and social circumstances. In his early years Bend'Or inhabited the feminine terrain of the nursery and schoolroom. Both his mother and Fraudy, who combined the roles of nanny, companion to Sibell, and the family's governess, read to him; although most of the books had Christian themes, such as *The History of the Church* and the *Christian Year Book*, the diaries also mention Thomas Carlyle's *Heroes*, Longfellow's poetry and *King Solomon's Mines*.⁴ John Tosh recognized the latter examples 'counterposed the stifling conventions of home with heroism and adventure away'.⁵

Although the children wrote fondly of Fraudy in their letters, she nursed stern Protestant values of obligation and duty, which dominated her tuition. One of Bend'Or's few entries in the Kleeblatt diaries was on 1 June 1887 when, aged eight, he wrote:

Fraudy says it will be a good thing if I write down every day how I behave. If I do anything wrong, I shall be obliged to write it, and of course feel very much ashamed of myself. Fraudy says I can be a very good boy and do my

³ Anthony Seldon and David Walsh, *Public Schools and the Great War* (London: Pen & Sword Military, 2013), p. 3.

⁴ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), Adds 378/2, 30 December 1886 and 25 December 1887.

⁵ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale, 1999), p. 179.

lessons [*sic*⁶] well if I like, but I am often careless and babyish I must try to be a big boy.⁷

Later in the year Bend'Or added, 'I have been very rude today, so I have had to put it down in my diary. I had to stand in the corner for half an hour and I am very sorry.'⁸

The diaries show that there was the usual boys' exceptionalism. For toys Bend'Or, but not his sisters, was given soldiers by his mother and stepfather, which he enjoyed.⁹ From the age of eight divisions between genders became marked. Tellingly, Constance and Lettice had swimming lessons at the local swimming baths but Bend'Or did not join them, for, as Cuckoo wrote, 'he is too big'.¹⁰ Moreover, in a nod to the high position he would inherit, he was taken by his mother to commemorations: an example being in 1888 Sibell sent 'little' Bend'Or, aged nine, to open a bazaar; and in March 1889 Sibell took Bend'Or, without his sisters, to Chester town hall for a reception to mark the enthronement of a new Bishop of Chester.¹¹ Bend'Or was introduced to sport. His sisters stayed indoors, or went to chapel, while Bend'Or shot rabbits with the keeper, learnt tennis with his tutor, or ran after the hounds.¹²

When Bend'Or was nine, comparatively late as it was more usual for boys to leave the schoolroom at the age of seven, he was entrusted to male tutors to prepare him for the next stage of his education. It was the first sign that his education was not being taken seriously by his mother. The Kleeblatt diaries show that Bend'Or's

⁶ Throughout the thesis, the author follows the original spelling and punctuation in correspondence. To avoid unnecessary repetition, [*sic*] will be used sparingly and only for clarification.

⁷ GA, Adds 378/2, 1 June 1887.

⁸ GA, Adds 378/2, 2 October, 1887.

⁹ GA, Adds 378/2, March 1886; GA, Adds 378/3, 19 March 1888.

¹⁰ GA, Adds 378/2, 20 June 1887; GA, Adds 378/3, 20 October 1888.

¹¹ GA, WP 2/1/3, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, October 1888; GA, Adds 378/3, 5 March 1889.

¹² GA, Adds 378/3, 9 May 1889 and 22 May 1889.

education had not made progress under Fraudy's regime. 'Bend'Or will have to have a tutor to get him on with his Latin and other lessons', wrote Cuckoo.¹³

With the prospect of preparatory school looming, a number of clerical tutors arrived. Canon Morris, from Chester Cathedral, was the first to be pressed into service. He was followed by Mr Harvey, who left to be ordained, and was replaced in January 1889 by Mr Cary, another trainee cleric, who seemed to have lacked lustre. The problem was compounded by an overprotective Fraudy. In May 1889 Sibell was seriously ill and confined in London with Cuckoo and Perfoo.¹⁴ George visited Bend'Or and Lettice at Saughton. He reported:

I talked about school to Mr Cary. [...] I think he is doing his very best with Benny [...]. He told me (only this is for careful use) that he thought it a pity for Benny to drive too often to see old ladies with Fraudy as he is trying hard to make him more self-reliant & hardy.¹⁵

Sibell instructed George to speak to Mr Cary: 'tell him it is always for him to do as he likes about Bend'Or in those ways [arranging outings], & I told Fraudy this must be'.¹⁶

In 1890 Bend'Or aged eleven was sent to St David's preparatory school in Reigate. He should have gone earlier, when he was ten, but as Sibell told George:

had a letter from Mr Churchill [headmaster] wh. was very pleasant surprise saying unless I wrote to the contrary he would not take Bend'Or until May instead of Jan: will be so much happier letting him begin school in the summer, instead of winter. If only Mr Cary can stay till then.¹⁷

Holding Bend'Or back at the beginning of the term became a habit. Sibell had the attitude that education was an inconvenience rather than an investment. Some years later, when Sibell began to repeat this pattern with Perfoo, George intervened.

¹³ GA, Adds 378/3, 31 March 1888.

¹⁴ 'Perfoo' was the nickname for Bend'Or's half-brother Percy Lyulph Wyndham, Sibell and George Wyndham's only son.

¹⁵ GA, WP 1/2/4, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 23 May 1889.

¹⁶ GA, WP 2/1/6, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 24 May 1889.

¹⁷ GA, WP 2/1/2, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 1 July 1887.

He told Sibell: 'I think it much more important that he should always go back on the right day. Otherwise he loses ground & cannot recover it'.¹⁸ The fact that he did not intervene to rescue Bend'Or from his mother's idiosyncrasy is testimony to the weakness of George's position over Sibell's children, particularly Bend'Or. George is reputed to have said, 'I would never have dreamed of reproofing my stepson'; the fact is that he was not able to because of the agreement he had made with the 1st Duke when he married Sibell.¹⁹

The education at St David's was sturdy. According to Lord Birkenhead, biographer of Lord Halifax (then called Wood) who was a contemporary of Bend'Or's at St David's, the school had a sinister reputation and a headmaster who was keen on 'flogging'.²⁰ There is little hard evidence to support that verdict although Bend'Or did refer to the headmaster in a letter, to his mother, as a 'humbug as Cuckoo kows don't tell him though'. Further in the same letter Bend'Or wrote: 'Mr Churchill is not so nice as you think when you have turned your back, how ever Cuckoo will tell you and Lettice what I have told them'.²¹ His next letter home starts with, 'I am quite happy now'.²²

St David's was an unremarkable example of its type and a 'feeder' for Eton. It was a school for some sixty boys ruled over by the Rev. Churchill and a male staff of seven. Bend'Or joined the third form, where he was the eldest, which included his cousin Hugh (the son of the 1st Duke's brother, Lord Stalbridge), who was a year younger.

¹⁸ GA, WP 1/2/13, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 24 March 1898.

¹⁹ The quote appears first in Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), p. 33. For details of George's agreement with the Duke, see Chapter 1 'The Family Nest', p. 20.

²⁰ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 22. The name Wood does not appear on the 1890 School List, GA PP19/725, nor is the school mentioned by Andrew Roberts in *The Holy Fox: The Life of Lord Halifax* (London: Apollo, 2016).

²¹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 February 1891.

²² GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 4 February 1891.

His early letters home oscillated between homesickness and acceptance of his situation. Predictably he found ‘everything is done so uncomfortably’.²³ What is surprising is the degree of involvement Sibell and his sisters had with the school. The Kleeblatt diaries show that Sibell visited Bend’Or in June 1890; Cuckoo and Lettice visited him on 25 June and found ‘darling Belgrave looking very well & happy & playing cricket’. Fraudy, Holly (the children’s nurse) and Cuckoo went again on 5 July. During the Spring Term Lettice visited on 21 February 1891, Cuckoo on 28 February, Lettice again on 7 March, and Sibell on 18 March. He was home by 3 April.²⁴

At this stage there is little sign that Bend’Or was aware of his destiny. At the age of seven he queries his name, the title Belgrave. Sibell told George, ‘Bräutigam [the children’s nickname for George] must think of me tonight because he will be sleeping in me, Belgrave Square. I never know why I was called after so many places’.²⁵ His letters home from preparatory school were sometimes decorated with heraldic shields; more often the drawings were of horses. When a stranger wrote to him at school asking for money, Bend’Or is puzzled. He wrote to Sibell:

I got yesterday such a funny letter from a man of whom I have never heard of before. He wrote and asked me for some money for a freehold land. I have lost the letter [...] could I have a football.²⁶

If anything, effort was made to prevent Bend’Or being treated differently on account of his social position. When Sibell requested Bend’Or should be given an extra holiday to go to a wedding, the headmaster, the Rev. Churchill, wrote, ‘I have before refused to let others go away for the wedding of friends also Bend’Or being — Bend’Or — makes it impossible for me to break the rule’.²⁷

²³ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 February 1891.

²⁴ GA, Adds 378/4.

²⁵ GA, WP 2/1/1, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 21 March 1886. George was staying at 44 Belgrave Square, the home of his parents.

²⁶ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, possibly 21 September 1890.

²⁷ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 6 December, n.y.

There is no record that Bend'Or achieved any success at St David's at sport or in the classroom. On the contrary, there were indications that Bend'Or was slow to mature academically and in self-discipline. His late start had put him at a disadvantage from which he had not recovered. In an undated letter from St David's Bend'Or assured Sibell, 'I do try my best in work but I find it rather hard'.²⁸ Sibell was concerned that he would not move up a form. Bend'Or wrote, 'Mother sweet I am so unhappy about one thing that is I am very bad in arithmetic.' But he thinks he will 'get on alright with Latin and French'.²⁹ In May 1891 he assured Sibell that he was 'trying to work hard'.³⁰ In his fourth term, he asked if he could give up music.³¹

The Rev. Churchill wrote to Sibell in December 1891:

he is very well and growing big and strong and does not suffer from lack of character. The servants often call him Master Belgrave — which is delightful! He is working hard but you know that he is far from clever, yet we shall manage Eton.³²

As Eton approached, Churchill increased the pressure, which was predictably met by Bend'Or's increasing dislike for headmaster and school. In January 1892 Bend'Or wrote to his mother to share his 'little sorrows'. He felt downhearted; the other boys 'all seem to be so full of fun I try to be but I cant I always feel miserable'.³³ A reason for one of his 'sorrows' soon became apparent. The next month he wrote to his mother asking her not 'to put such nice words in telegrams such as "sweet" Mr Churchill teases me so much about it and makes me feel uncomfortable [...]. Mr Turtle always reads the telegrams.'³⁴

²⁸ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d; possibly 1890.

²⁹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 4 February 1891.

³⁰ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 3 May 1891.

³¹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 26 April 1891.

³² GA, WP 1/11/5, Rev. Churchill to Sibell Grosvenor, 6 December 1891.

³³ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, marked 31 January 1892.

³⁴ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 21 February 1892.

Bend'Or began at Eton in September 1892. A rash of public schools opened in the nineteenth century to provide for the expanding professional classes, but the oldest public schools — Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse and Rugby — remained the grandest.³⁵ Most of them were modelled on the reforming principles of Thomas Arnold, the former headmaster of Rugby, who had absorbed many of the theories of muscular Christianity.³⁶ The system Arnold advocated included a stress on godliness, Christian obligation and intellectual development — which came third. His curriculum included community life, a prefect system to keep order, and lessons on the traditional subjects, which were dominated by Latin, and Greek for the brightest.

Eton was benefitting from the appointment of the benign Dr Warre in 1884, who rescued it from the somewhat lax rule of Dr Hornby. Warre excelled in administrative improvements. School discipline and functioning were enhanced, record-keeping was introduced and punctuality checked, a new sports-field acquired, and additional classrooms planned. He also expanded the choice of available subjects, but the heavy emphasis on Classics, still required for entry to Oxford or Cambridge, continued. A School of Mechanics was built in 1879 and a workshop established seven years later although, according to a historian of the school, 'neither of these institutions fulfilled the hopes of those who founded them'.³⁷ German as a substitute for Greek was also introduced, aimed at the boys destined for a military life.³⁸ In the year before Bend'Or entered, there were a thousand pupils at Eton.³⁹ In spite of Warre's reforms, Eton was in a period when it was described as a 'confidently philistine academy'.⁴⁰

³⁵ Seldon and Walsh, *Public Schools*, p. 10.

³⁶ The importance of Muscular Christianity will be explored more fully in Chapter 6 on Manliness.

³⁷ Sir H.C. Maxwell Lyte, *A History of Eton College (1440–1910)* (London: Macmillan, 1911), p. 542.

³⁸ Tim Card, *Eton Renewed: A History from 1860 to the Present D* (London: John Murray, 1994), pp. 83–101.

³⁹ <<https://www.etoncollege.com/briefhistory.aspx?nid=734b5fab-5590-4102-b1af-1eb09e3beb65>> [accessed 15 August 2019].

⁴⁰ Hugh Cecil and Mirabel Cecil, *Clever Hearts: A Biography of Desmond & Molly MacCarthy – A Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1990), p. 27.

As a keen sportsman, Warre was enthusiastic about the advantages of competitive sport. By Bend'Or's time, excellence at sport had been established as an essential part of a young gentleman's repertoire. Soccer was introduced in the 1890s as well as fives, rackets and athletics, but Eton's own field game, cricket and rowing remained the prestigious sports.

In later life Bend'Or would excel at field sports, but at school he was not a success at sport. This put him at a disadvantage at Eton. Duff Cooper (who went to Eton in 1902) recalled: 'A boy who has no aptitude for the recognised games nor much interest in them can never become a big figure in the school'.⁴¹ He showed some aptitude for rowing and represented his House in 1894 in the Junior Four team for which, Ridley claims, he was awarded his House colours.⁴² His main sporting enthusiasm was reserved for football, which by then was being played at Eton under official Football Association rules.⁴³ Nevertheless it lacked social cachet and was generally not recognized as a game suitable for gentlemen.

Bend'Or was pleased to be at Eton. When he arrived, Gerry, his uncle (the 1st Duke's fifth surviving son by his first wife), was still there and his cousin Hugh Stalbridge joined at the same time as Bend'Or. He enjoyed the freedom that Eton offered a young man. In December 1982 he wrote to Sibell:

I have been having great fun, the Sunday before last, I went over to tea & spend the afternoon with the Cholmondelies & Ducky Ellis & Gerry & Coventry it was great fun. They are sisters of Lord Cholmondeley. And the Saturday before last I went with Lady Antrim, Dunluce, and the daughter of Sir H Ponsonby & we went over the stage for the opera & went behind the scenes. And yesterday I went over to Hilda, alias Lady Southampton for lunch, and I am going ratting there next Thursday. We went tea with Will Cavendish in the guard room at Windsor Castle.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget: The Autobiography* (London: Rupert-Hart Davies, 1953), p. 19.

⁴² EA, House Annals, Captain of House Book, G.W. Williams, 1894; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 24.

⁴³ Lyte, *History of Eton College*, p. 562.

⁴⁴ GA, WP 2/1/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 December 1892.

Not surprisingly, at the end of Bend'Or's first term his house master, Dr Donaldson, wrote to Sibell: 'Belgrave has been very happy here [...]. I have found him a most pleasant member of House & pupil room. [...] I am glad to be able to give him an excellent character.' The rest of his letter was more concerning. It continued that Bend'Or 'was not overground with his books he is especially weak in mathematics'. He explained,

He has of course lost a great deal this half by 'staying out' so much: & for quite a long while was excused early schools: I hope very much that it won't be necessary to keep him out so often next half, as he has not time to lose.

The problem was that Bend'Or 'seems rather subject to colds & to find it difficult to pick up again when once a chill has taken hold of him'. He recommended 'a little arithmetic two or three times a week for an hour or so with the village schoolmaster'.⁴⁵ In his private House Book Donaldson recorded: 'good lad, ingenuous, frank, straight: like him much. Slow wth wk & [?] — do some in holidays.'⁴⁶ Bend'Or was losing ground he could ill afford. Donaldson was hoping that Bend'Or could be pushed a little harder.

But the pattern of illness continued. Bend'Or was ill again in February 1893 with bronchitis and 'congestion of the lungs'.⁴⁷ He was, his house master noted, 'away nearly all half [term] ill'.⁴⁸ There was talk of sending Bend'Or abroad, with Sibell's brother Aldred, but this did not happen. Back at school for the Summer term in 1893 he fell ill with scarlet fever, which also afflicted his house master. He returned to Saughton, and a tutor (not named) was hired.

Nearly ten months later, in February 1894 Donaldson wrote to Sibell asking what prospect there was of Bend'Or returning for the Summer term of 1894, adding, 'I am quite prepared to hear that he can't come back yet, if at all'.⁴⁹ Bend'Or returned and moved with the rest of the House into a new building,

⁴⁵ GA, WP 1/11/1, Donaldson to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 December 1892.

⁴⁶ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Michaelmas 1892.

⁴⁷ GA, Adds 378/5, Lettice, 13 February 1893.

⁴⁸ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Easter, 1893.

⁴⁹ GA, WP 1/11/1, Rev. Donaldson to Sibell Grosvenor, 17 February 1894.

although he did not move up a division (form).⁵⁰ In January 1895 he had a cough; by the beginning of March it was still troubling him, so poultices were applied to his back. In March he wrote to Sibell:

the doctor wont let me into school yet as the crackle in my lung is still there I don't know what to do about these beastly trials [exams]. I am allowed to go out in the sun till about 3 o clock.⁵¹

In October 1895 he was once again ill. He wrote, 'I saw the doctor this morning who said that the same old place in the base of the left lung has shown up again [...] he says that I will have to take care about it.'⁵² He wrote plaintively to Sibell, describing the fog that rolled off the Thames and engulfed the town, 'I wish this place would suit me. I love the life and the football above all'.⁵³

On at least one occasion his old nurse was sent to Eton to nurse him.

Dear old Holly is here and looking after me but as I am much better she had not had much to do. The Dame [House matron] did not quite like Holly coming. [...] It makes Holly rather uncomfortable as she thinks she is in her way.⁵⁴

Later he told his mother, 'Some silly person told the tutor that I was unwell & that I had my old nurse down so he thought I must have been very ill & he was rather figety about it'.⁵⁵ He was becoming aware that he was being mollycoddled by his mother, but it was something of which he began to take advantage. During his critical last year, 1896/1897, he was once again ill with influenza. He wrote to Sibell:

⁵⁰ EA, School Clerk Register, 1878–1907, Lord Belgrave, CSH/SC/1/1. At this time each house master leased his house from the school and acted as an independent operator responsible for all the financial arrangements for his house. When a house master retired, another house master could move his students into the building of the retired master. In 1894 Mr Everard left and Rev. Donaldson moved into the vacated house, which he found more spacious.

⁵¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 March 1895.

⁵² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 October 1895.

⁵³ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁵⁴ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁵⁵ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

Here is a little plan. I should come up to Saighton on Friday, and stay till Monday, as you see if I were to stay on here I would not be allowed to go into school till Monday, & so would be doing nothing till then [...] I am alright now if a little weak.⁵⁶

On his arrival even Sibell had to recognize that he was not ill. She told George, ‘Bend’Or has arrived looking all right, only a little remaining of cold — feels I could leave him [to join George in London]’.⁵⁷

There were signs that Bend’Or was trying to throw off his mother’s overprotective attitude. From Eton he wrote, ‘I got rather cold [snowballing]. I think my old lung is all right. [...] Please don’t come for a concert.’⁵⁸

Bend’Or’s growing assertiveness is detected in his letters to his mother, especially on the subject of money, where his letters became noticeably more instructive. Sibell was anxious about money. She was not extravagant and it is evident from her letters that she had a careful attitude to her finances. Her experience with Bend’Or’s father, who was a considerable spendthrift, had made her wary and she kept Bend’Or on a tight rein. It was Dr Donaldson who signalled that it was time for Bend’Or to be given an allowance.⁵⁹ Sibell continued to be dilatory, and Bend’Or had to ask her, ‘have you settled anything about my allowance? [...] Hughie [his cousin] has started one’.⁶⁰ In a subsequent letter he pointed out that ‘Hughie had [£]40 which is not enough, sixty is about the right sum’. He added, ‘please don’t put off sending to the last moment but let me know soon.’ He was clearly anxious about the subject, as the demand is repeated in the same letter: ‘Do you think you could send allowance [...]. I better have it paid

⁵⁶ GA, WP 2/1/17, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 25 February 1897.

⁵⁷ GA, WP 2/1/18, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 26 February 1897.

⁵⁸ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁵⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 28 January 1895.

⁶⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 5 May 1895.

quarterly, there is a very good bank here'.⁶¹ A bill that he had run up in Stores 'before I got my allowance' was also sent home.⁶²

Whatever the allowance was, it was not enough. In February 1897 he turned to his grandfather, the 1st Duke. He owed £48 [nearly £6,300 in 2019 values].⁶³ Sibell was shaken. She complained to George, 'I went to Eaton & Daddy told me that Bend'Or had written to him to pay his debts, wh: was a fresh shock to me especially as I had asked B the other day if he was doing well with money'. She acknowledged it was not a great sum that he owed, 'but it is in the way of carelessness'.⁶⁴ In April 1897 Bend'Or asked Sibell for a further £3 as he was 'rather hard up'.⁶⁵

Sibell continued to worry about his finances. Bend'Or was overspending but, in the scheme of things, the sums were trivial. Bend'Or thought so. He wrote to Sibell in the flamboyant style of the time, 'Darling is not to worry about money [...] I can easily pay off my Eton bills — so don't mind about them'.⁶⁶ And in May 1898 he wrote: 'Darling about the bills darling, I really can manage them alright. [...] Now darling do be happier about me & not so troubled, I don't feel a "sweep" but I know I ought to —'.⁶⁷

Academically Bend'Or was not doing well. On a conservative estimate, by the end of 1895 Bend'Or had missed, through illness, half of his time at Eton. He was neither clever nor industrious enough to make up the time lost. In the summer of 1894 Donaldson privately noted: '[Bend'Or] fd hopelessly in Trls [Trials] as was expected. Very dilatory & weak. But of course away nearly a year'.⁶⁸ The next term,

⁶¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 May 1895.

⁶² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1895; no other date shown.

⁶³ Bank of England Inflation Calculator <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 13 December 2020].

⁶⁴ GA, WP 2/1/18, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 15 February 1897.

⁶⁵ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, April 1897.

⁶⁶ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 8 November 1897.

⁶⁷ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 12 May 1898.

⁶⁸ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Summer 1894.

Donaldson noted: 'v.bad rpt. from ACGH. And indeed can scarcely be sd. to have done well, thou he has really wked hard for Trls. But he had a weak chrcter I fear: hope for best'.⁶⁹ At the beginning of 1895 Donaldson noted Bend'Or had 'absence thro illness'. Bend'Or had succumbed to the 'flu in the House.⁷⁰

In the next term, things were worse. Donaldson, by all accounts a kindly man who would finish his career as Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, seems to have been apprehensive about Bend'Or. His private notes show signs of exasperation. He wrote: 'disastrous failure in Trls: not done best: needs grit; far too easy going. Don't like his friends afraid there is something in bkground, Hope for best'.⁷¹ Donaldson must have felt that Bend'Or was not making friends with the right class. It was an early sign of a significant characteristic of Bend'Or's that he would make friends with people according to their character, not their social position.

Bend'Or failed his exams again in the Michaelmas term. Donaldson noted an 'element of anxiety' which was followed by 'Qs abt leaving at Easter'.⁷² George Cornwallis-West, who left Eton in the year Bend'Or entered, explained the situation: 'a boy could learn just as much as or as little as he chose. Provided he scraped through "Trials" and got his remove, nothing was said. If, however, he repeatedly failed to do this he was superannuated'.⁷³ By Easter 1896 Donaldson jotted in his private notebook: 'fld again Trls but HM allows him to return as has lost much by ill health & absence but will hv to leave if fls agn July'.⁷⁴ Bend'Or was spared probably because of his social position as much as his illnesses. Sibell wrote to George, 'Donaldson writes [Bend'Or] has really worked much harder this term, for that I am thankful — the headmaster gives him one more chance, if that

⁶⁹ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Michaelmas 1894.

⁷⁰ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Easter 1895.

⁷¹ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Election 1895.

⁷² EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Michaelmas 1895.

⁷³ George Cornwallis-West, *Edwardian Hey-Days: A Little about a Lot of Things* (London: Putnam, 1930), p. 26.

⁷⁴ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Easter 1896.

fails he must leave end of summer half'.⁷⁵ The 1st Duke was also concerned. George told Sibell, 'Had a pleasant journey with "Daddy"; talked about Benny and [took] the occasion to throw in a word for the Army'.⁷⁶

There are two letters from Bend'Or urging Sibell to let him take Modern Languages; he explained that he could:

do German for Greek this half as it is much more useful for me, as I do not take much interest in Greek, as there is not much object in it, but I should work up German much hard as there is a great deal of use in that especially if I go on some staff.⁷⁷

The idea of a career in the army was an option he was obviously thinking about. Yet he did not give up Greek, probably to keep open the unrealistic option of university.

Bend'Or was not applying himself to his lessons even when he was well. The few Eton reports that have survived say as much. Generally the masters found him to be pleasant, cheerful and well-mannered but noted Bend'Or's frequent absences and that his work was suffering. His reports are littered with descriptors such as 'inattentive', 'unpunctual' and 'talkative' in lessons. He was particularly bad at Mathematics and was described by the relevant beak as 'slow and backward'; the latter word was also used by the Classics master.⁷⁸ A redeeming feature was that he was described as 'good' at French.⁷⁹ Donaldson observed that Bend'Or was 'good in House but so unbusiness like; never a book'.⁸⁰ Today he might have been considered a candidate for Attention Deficit Disorder. Such an assessment would explain his restlessness, which remained throughout his life and was often commented upon by contemporaries.

⁷⁵ GA, WP 2/1/17, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 2 April 1896.

⁷⁶ GA, WP 1/2/11, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 April 1896.

⁷⁷ GA, 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 September 1896; also GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁷⁸ GA, PP19/175, Mathematic and Classics report for Michaelmas Half, 1892.

⁷⁹ GA, PP 19/175, French report for Michaelmas Half, n.d.

⁸⁰ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Election 1896.

Bend'Or failed only Mathematics in the summer exams of 1896. Donaldson noted Bend'Or had been given coaching by Mr Hargreaves and that he 'had worked really well the last 6 weeks'.⁸¹ He was allowed to stay, which satisfied the 1st Duke, much to Sibell's relief.⁸²

He left Eton in the summer of 1897 with little to show for his education and his only accomplishment having been 'captain of the lower boy' (he probably meant Lower School).⁸³ It was a conclusion to a school career that was not unusual. Only those with an academic disposition could override a system that was designed to produce stoic characters. In C.F.G. Masterman's opinion, writing in 1909, 'Public schools [...] profess to teach "character" rather than to stimulate intelligence'.⁸⁴ It is a fitting summing-up of Bend'Or's experience at Eton.

Donaldson's final private note on Bend'Or reads: 'is to try to matric at Trin. Cambs in Oct. & sincerely trust the experiment of sending him there will succeed: a weak lad with a gt knack of getting into scrapes but has much improved in last year'.⁸⁵ Why Cambridge was considered for Bend'Or is a mystery. The 1st Duke and two of his sons, Arthur and Henry, had gone to Oxford; but as it was Bend'Or failed to get into Trinity College, Cambridge. It was unexpected given that a family's station counted for more than academic prowess. The Grosvenors were now regarded as very rich — if not the richest in the country.⁸⁶ Not surprisingly, the news came as a great shock to Sibell, who wrote to George:

Cambridge failed & we are spending a melancholy even. The tel: came half an hour after I got here. [...] Bend'Or is bitterly disappointed & he feels very flat. [...] Can he have another try? He thinks he can, if so, he ought to

⁸¹ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Election 1896.

⁸² GA, WP 2/1/17, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 22 April 1896.

⁸³ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 October 1894.

⁸⁴ C.F.G. Masterman, M.P., *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. 63.

⁸⁵ EA, SCH/HOUS/SAD/1, Election 1897.

⁸⁶ EA, SCH/SC/1/1, School Clerk Register, 1878–1907.

begin again at once — for he is drifting into the thought of Trinity Hall but that is not the same thing — and if has another chance for Trinity ought he not to try? If nothing can be settled for the moment shall I ask Clifford to let him go with him to Italy middle of the month? I don't know what is the best & I am very distressed but is no use to give way to sad feeling & thoughts but must set to work to see what is the best thing left to do, for he is only 18, & there must be some way out of it & we must invent work of some sort. If you can think of something good, will you suggest it to Daddy? If he joins the Yeomanry as he wants to has he not got months training to do wh: might be done now as soon as he returns from Germany? Or wd there be a chance: if he went back to [illegible] at once of his passing into Trin: & doing his little [...]. I am so very sorry about it & disappointed.⁸⁷

Once Bend'Or left school, he reacted more strongly against his mother's overprotectiveness and the fear of being thought of as 'delicate'. He began to live the life associated with his privileged social position. At a fashionable crammer in Woodstock in Oxfordshire, to which he was sent in the hope that he would pass the army entrance exams, instead of buckling down to his studies he preferred to play polo and ride with the drag hounds or at point-to-points. His behaviour was not out of the ordinary. Physical activities were seen as character-building and it was typical of the heroic concept of manliness that bodily prowess was rated above intellectual pursuits.⁸⁸ It was also typical of someone who did not have to worry about his future.

There was an added problem: that Bend'Or was being diverted from his work by his infatuation with Constance (Shelagh) Cornwallis-West.

Shelagh Cornwallis-West was the younger daughter of Colonel and Mrs Cornwallis-West, who had an impoverished estate in North Wales, within a day's carriage ride from Eaton. Bend'Or and Shelagh had been childhood sweethearts. Writing from St David's to his mother, Bend'Or told her that Shelagh had written to

⁸⁷ GA, WP 2/1/19, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 1 October 1897.

⁸⁸ Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 232–33.

him, and he asked her, ‘did not you send her the letter that I sent to you to send to her?’ The postscript issued the demand, ‘send the letter to Shelagh that I am sending you as I dont know the address.’⁸⁹ He was eleven. Shelagh also features in Bend’Or’s scrap album. Her picture is pasted between an image of Emma Hamilton and horses ridden by Roddy Owen, who rode the winning horse in the Grand National in 1892.⁹⁰

The Cornwallis-West family did all they could to encourage the relationship, to the consternation of Sibell Grosvenor, who thought Shelagh was not a suitable consort for Bend’Or.⁹¹ In October 1897 Bend’Or escaped the crammer and went to stay with Shelagh and her sister Daisy, Princess of Pless, at Fürstenstein in Schlesien. Shelagh was twenty-two, an age when Society dictated a girl should be married. Daisy wrote honestly, ‘I helped them as much as ever I could’, adding:

When he [Bend’Or] was eighteen he came to stay with us and they wanted to be engaged. He was not allowed to as my father and Benny’s grandfather thought they were too young and for two years he was sent abroad to learn French.⁹²

Subsequent to the trip, in December 1897 Bend’Or told his mother that he and Shelagh had agreed on an unofficial engagement. Bend’Or was quite unrepentant. He thought that no harm had been done by his trip to Fürstenstein or by reaching his agreement with Shelagh. She was such ‘a dear’ and he was sure Sibell would like her. He requested her not to tell ‘Daddy’ but added, ‘do as you think best, as it wont alter my ideas will it.’ He ended his letter to her, ‘please dont be down hearted by about this. I do assure you it is alright & I know you believe me’.⁹³ Sibell was unable to stand up to Bend’Or, and he knew it. He was beginning to exhibit a wilfulness, based on being overindulged, which would blind him to the advice of others. It would be a constant feature of his character until age mellowed him.

⁸⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, November 1890.

⁹⁰ GA, PP19/727, Bend’Or’s Scrap Album.

⁹¹ The implications of Bend’Or’s romance with Shelagh are discussed more fully in Chapter 7 ‘Women’.

⁹² *Daisy Princess of Pless by Herself*, ed. with an Introduction by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1928), p. 75.

⁹³ GA, WP 1/11/1, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 12 December 1897.

In the early summer of 1898 Bend'Or took another unauthorised leave from the crammer in Woodstock to see Shelagh. It alarmed the authorities as exams were approaching, and Sibell, who had not been told. Bend'Or wrote to explain:

Now darling dont be so upset about it all [...] it might have been something much worse that I had done — you have no idea what it means to me not seeing Shelagh at all, & what all the world can give one, as you say, has very little to do with it when she is concerned, darling you must make a little allowance for that [...]. Now darling perhaps I ought not to have written all this but one must stand up for oneself somehow.⁹⁴

He reassured her that he would pass his exams, writing to her: 'work goes on well & I shall manage it alright in June somehow, I hope'.⁹⁵

Sibell shared her fears with her husband: 'Only [my] heart is so worried about B & sick at how the W [Cornwallis-West] family pursue him after all our nice letters to them on the subject, that week's anxiety has worn me out.'⁹⁶ Sibell penned another note to George:

I feel bitterly disappointed in Mai [Patsy Cornwallis-West, Shelagh's mother] who had such an opportunity of helping both to what may be their ultimate happiness & for pleasing Daddy meanwhile & backing up B's work so she has brought sorrow to so many by her utter foolishness. I suppose it is only what one must expect.⁹⁷

In June Bend'Or failed his exams and therefore to qualify for the army.

He was sent swiftly to France, Azay le Rideau in Normandy, arriving there by 5 July 1898, ostensibly to learn French but more in the hope that he would be removed from the Cornwallis's influence. He lived in an establishment that took in wealthy paying guests of all ages and sexes, run by Count de Mauncey. Daisy claims that Bend'Or was to spend two years in France, but this is doubtful:

⁹⁴ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.; marked in pencil 'early 1898?'.

⁹⁵ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 12 May 1898.

⁹⁶ GA, WP2/1/21, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 7 May 1898.

⁹⁷ GA, WP 2/1/20, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 11 May 1898.

Bend'Or's letters show that by the summer of 1898 he was already anticipating going to South Africa to join the staff of Sir Alfred Milner.⁹⁸ In October he was expressing delight at the idea of going there.⁹⁹ But he was meant to stay in France longer than he did. Something went wrong.

Bend'Or's letters home imply that he was initially happy. He told his mother, 'De Mauncey is a capital sort & is the only person who has really ever understood me at all & we get on well'.¹⁰⁰ But in a further letter, written days later, he wanted his mother to come and visit him; he suggested it 'was only because your son at times was a bit worried about something'.¹⁰¹ In October he left suddenly with the two other English students. He scribbled a line to George: 'I have had this interview with de Mauncey, with the result that of all that we suspected him of is true, he has [ow]ned up it is so [page torn] consequence of this, three of us have left at once'. The reason Bend'Or gave George Wyndham was fear that a scandal might reflect badly on George's career. He asked George for advice and to speak to 'Dads'.¹⁰²

De Mauncey was homosexual, which was illegal. In an earlier letter to George, quoted by Ridley, Bend'Or had written: 'By personal observation I have had a suspicion of it for a month or two back'.¹⁰³ It was only when he became sure that Bend'Or acted. Daisy of Pless recalled that the 'Castle of Azay le Rideau which was one taken by a dreadful Count de — who kept a *pension* for boys [...] the *pension* did not prosper and the venture ended in a horrible scandal'.¹⁰⁴ The 1st Duke was informed. He wrote to George: 'this is bad, bad. Could you come over here soon after 10am'.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁸ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to the 1st Duke, July 1898; WP 1/11/1, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 October 1898.

⁹⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 October 1895.

¹⁰⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 15 August 1898.

¹⁰¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 22 August 1898.

¹⁰² GA, WP 2/6, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 17 October 1898.

¹⁰³ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁴ *From My Private Diary by Daisy Princess of Pless*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1931), pp. 142–43.

¹⁰⁵ GA, WP 3/3, 1st Duke to George Wyndham, October 1898.

There is an impression that the family had snatched at the idea of sending Bend'Or to France in an attempt to keep him away from Shelagh Cornwallis-West. Before he succeeded his father, the 1st Duke had travelled widely, had been to Oxford and had been a Member of Parliament. No firm plan had been prepared for Bend'Or's years after school, as Sibell's letter subsequent to Bend'Or's failure to get into Cambridge makes clear. In 1898, with an unsuitable engagement threatening, there was no time to prepare one.

The 1st Duke was not taking the interest in his heir that he should have done. He had insisted on retaining his authority over Bend'Or but he did not match this with an appropriate interest in Bend'Or's development. The trouble was that the Duke was ailing and he was unused to sharing family responsibilities with anyone. In February 1898 he fell seriously ill.¹⁰⁶

Although the Duke lived for another two years, it was George who started to take charge of Bend'Or. This was an important moment for George and Bend'Or's relationship. The previous year had not been an impressive one for Bend'Or. He had failed most of his exams at Eton, had been rejected by Cambridge, and had failed the qualifying exams for the regular army. His credibility looked fragile. Marriage might have appeared to Bend'Or a positive alternative but he was still not of age. George stepped forward to arrange Bend'Or's immediate future.

Bend'Or's continuing relationship with Shelagh proved that France had not been far enough away to stop him seeing her. George arranged for Bend'Or to join the Yeomanry, and then to assist Sir Alfred Milner in South Africa as one of his aides-de-camp. By joining the Yeomanry Bend'Or could qualify for the army 'by the back door'. As required, Bend'Or was sent to train with The King's Royal Hussars at their barracks in Somerset for a month. The commanding officer, Capt. Hodgson, was not impressed. It was a moment when traditional aristocratic assumption met modern accomplishment — represented by Capt. Hodgson. Bend'Or had had little experience of the military, not having joined the corps at Eton. In Hodgson's opinion, unfortunately noted on the official Certificate for Proficiency on 10 December, 'having had absolutely no previous instruction, it has been impossible for him [Bend'Or] to attain sufficient proficiency in the time to command a

¹⁰⁶ GA, WP 2/1/20, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 22 February 1898.

squadron but he has acquired a very good knowledge of the subjects mentioned in the regulations'.¹⁰⁷

The Cheshire Yeomanry, of which the 1st Duke was the Hon. Commanding Officer, and Bend'Or's uncle, Arthur, the Commanding Officer, was approached. The necessary certificate was produced and Bend'Or gained his commission into the Yeomanry. Bend'Or's official war record shows the date that he was appointed to the Cheshire (Earl of Chester's Own) Yeomanry as 14 November 1898.¹⁰⁸ Hodgson's earlier certificate with its qualifying remarks does not appear on the official record.

Bend'Or, and Shelagh, went hunting in Ireland with the Roscommon Stag Hounds before he left for South Africa at the end of January.¹⁰⁹ By now rumours of their relationship were gaining ground. In May 1899 the regional newspapers reported that an announcement had been placed in *The Times* to state that a previous announcement that 'Viscount Belgrave is engaged to Miss Cornwallis-West' was unfounded.¹¹⁰

Bend'Or's chequered career had not inspired the 1st Duke's confidence. The Duke wrote a letter to Sir Alfred which showed he had no illusions about Bend'Or's ability at that point in time. The Duke thanked Milner 'for his great kindness in allowing Belgrave to accompany him to the Cape as ADC'. The letter, written by a secretary's hand, continues:

This will he [the 1st Duke] hopes and believes be of the greatest use to the boy, and under the Colonel H Williams' auspices he has a splendid chance for stiffening his character which is that which he most requires and learning

¹⁰⁷ GA, WP 1/11/2, Army Form E 580, 10 December 1898.

¹⁰⁸ London, The National Archives (TNA), WO374/73266, Army Record of Major (Hon. Col.) Hugh R.A., Duke of Westminster.

¹⁰⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 January 1899.

¹¹⁰ *Cheshire Observer*, 27 May 1899, p. 5, <<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 2 August 2016].

habits of business & methods wh: are now much wanting in him. He is otherwise a very amiable boy.¹¹¹

The Duke summed up Bend'Or's predicament accurately. Although his mother devoted herself to him, her needy behaviour as a widow blurred the roles of adult and child. In addition her anxiety about his health cast him as a sickly child, warranted or not. Later in adolescence, a period when a maturing adult can investigate his or her individuality, Bend'Or's personal prospects were impaired by those of his inheritance, and he was well aware of it. Writing from South Africa during the 2nd Boer War to his grandfather, who had forbidden him to join a fighting force, he complained:

It is all very well people saying to me that it isn't worth going up when someday you will have such a responsible position to fill — this strikes me as a very poor idea & not worth bothering about — [...] I see it is the bottom of the whole business [...] [I] feel thoroughly ashamed.¹¹²

The Duke never saw Bend'Or's letter as he died unexpectedly while staying with Cuckoo, on 22 December 1899. Unusually, the 1st Duke was cremated, as he had wished, on 24 December and his ashes were buried on 28 December in the graveyard of Eccleston's parish church. There had been no time to warn Bend'Or. Sir Alfred had to give the news to him. According to Lady Edward Cecil, who was in the Cape, 'Bend'Or only heard on 27th — five days late — [...]. Poor boy, he is very unhappy about [...] the bewilderment of such a tremendous load put upon him while he is still a baby — he is not yet of age'.¹¹³ Bend'Or returned home to deal with estate business before he returned to South Africa to join Lord Roberts, who had recently been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the British force in southern Africa, as an ADC. He was supported by George and Sibell in what was probably a practical decision. On 19 March 1900 Bend'Or came of age as he turned twenty-one years old. He was not only a duke but he was free to do as he pleased.

¹¹¹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS, Milner dept. 207, fol. 187.

¹¹² GA, WP 3/3, draft letter from Bend'Or to his grandfather, December 1899.

¹¹³ Hugh Cecil and Mirabel Cecil, *Imperial Marriage: An Edwardian War and Peace* (Sutton: Stroud, 2005), p. 128.

A photograph taken of him in field uniform shortly after he had become a duke shows him to be a good-looking young man. He was tall, slender and broad-shouldered. He had a debonair look and, by all accounts, he was well-mannered. He was accomplished in all the attributes expected of a young man at the time: he rode well, played polo, and he was more than proficient at shooting and fishing. But he was also impetuous, lacking in discipline and unfocused.

Chapter 3. For Love of Empire¹

Bend'Or was typical of his time in his love for the Empire and belief in Britain's mission to enlighten the world; in other words, late nineteenth-century Imperialism.² These political beliefs lasted through his life from the Boer War to appeasement. He accepted them from his stepfather, George Wyndham, who was fundamental in forming Bend'Or's political opinions. Attitudes which George planted in Bend'Or's mind were strengthened while Bend'Or worked with Sir Alfred Milner in the Cape Colony. After the Boer War, Bend'Or sought to put his beliefs into practice. It was an experiment on which he embarked with enthusiasm but resulted, for him, in disappointment. Thereafter Bend'Or's concept of Imperialism was limited to tariff reform.

George Wyndham immersed himself in southern African affairs to the extent that he was known in Parliament as 'the member for South Africa'.³ Determined to see the countries for himself, he set out in September 1896 to explore British settlements in southern Africa and Rhodesia — previously British South Africa territories. From the Bulawayo Club he wrote enthusiastically about the country, exhibiting typical idealism:

It is amusing to see the young Englishmen playing at building an Empire. This is going to be a long, a very long game. We may not live to see it won. But that it will be won, that in 30 years there will be thousands of happy English families living here in wealth, I do not doubt for one moment. With luck we may win in 5 or 10 years.⁴

¹ This chapter concerns South Africa. The country was not officially recognized as South Africa until the Union of 1910. However, contemporaries often referred to the British colonies there as 'South Africa', and indeed some official titles contained the nomenclature 'South Africa' before 1910. Those official terms have been kept even if they refer to South Africa before 1910.

² The author is aware that there is a considerable debate on the meaning and values implicated in the term 'Imperialism'. The debate ranges from an acceptance of its historical meaning to claims that it implies white supremacy and selectivity of memory. In this thesis the term is taken to mean what it did to Bend'Or, i.e. its nineteenth-century/early twentieth-century meaning.

³ Max Egremont, *The Cousins: The friendship, Opinions and Activities of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and George Wyndham* (London: Collins, 1977), p. 189.

⁴ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), WP 1/2/11, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 8 October 1896.

George became Under-Secretary of State at the War Office in Salisbury's third government. His superior, Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State, was in the House of Lords, making Wyndham the Ministry's spokesman in the Commons. It was a formative time for George's political thinking. From the War Office he worked with two ardent Imperialists: Joseph Chamberlain, who had recently crossed the floor from the Liberal benches to join Salisbury's government as Unionist Secretary of State for the Colonies; and Lord Selborne, the Prime Minister's son-in-law.

George arrived at the War Office in 1898 just as another war with the Boer republics in southern Africa loomed. Relations between the Calvinist Boers in the Transvaal (since 1856 also called the South African Republic) and Orange Free State (OFS), and the British colonies in the Cape and Natal, were simmering.

The discovery of diamonds and gold in the Transvaal's Witwatersrand ('the Rand') transformed the Boers' backward, rural-based economy into a rapidly developing industrial one which encouraged the Transvaal's nationalistic ambitions. They were further stimulated by the re-election of the energetic Kruger as President, the defeat of the botched Jameson Raid, and the Kaiser's support for the Raid.⁵

Migrants flooded into the Transvaal in search of gold and fortunes. The Uitlanders, the term used for white non-Afrikaans settlers, three-quarters of whom were British, were treated by the Boers with suspicion and intolerance. This was partially because they threatened to outnumber the Boer population and, contrary to the terms of the Convention of London (1884) to which Kruger had agreed, the Uitlanders were disproportionately taxed while being deprived of political rights.⁶

For the Imperialists, like George Wyndham, a weakened British presence in southern Africa threatened the Empire's cohesion. Sentiment played a part too. Britain's defeat in the First Boer War rankled with public opinion. The Battle of Majuba (1881) in particular was imprinted on British consciousness as a national humiliation.

⁵ *The Milner Papers: South Africa 1897–1899*, 2 vols, ed. by Cecil Headlam (London: Cassell, 1931), I, p. 29.

⁶ Bill Nasson, *The Boer War: The Struggle for South Africa* (Stroud: Spellmount, 2011), p. 46.

Sir Alfred Milner, who was appointed Governor General of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa in 1897, summed up the view: ‘S.A. is just now the weakest link in the Imperial chain, and I am conscious of the tremendous responsibility which rests upon the man who is called to try and preserve it from snapping.’⁷

Milner, a Balliol man and product of the teaching of Dr Benjamin Jowett and the Imperialist George Robert Parkin, believed in the influence of British culture and institutions as civilizing agents for colonized countries. He also believed in the strength of an interdependent Empire. Milner regarded it as ‘a group of States, all independent in their own local concerns, but all united for the defence of their own common interests on the development of a common civilisation’.⁸

After a year in the Cape, at the end of 1898 Milner returned to England, supposedly for a holiday but in reality on a self-appointed undertaking to warn his political masters, and friends, of the threat from the Boers. Having not been persuaded of war when he first arrived in southern Africa, Milner had reached the point of realizing war with the Boers was inevitable. If it accomplished anything, the Jameson Raid had shown that amateur efforts by capitalist colonists would not achieve the desired effect, which was for Milner the subjugation of the Boer republics, and an enlarged British colony. At this point Milner met the young Lord Belgrave, Bend’Or.

As noted in Chapter 2, Bend’Or’s immediate future was of concern. He had fallen in love with Constance (Shelagh) Cornwallis-West, the daughter of a neighbouring family. The ambitious Cornwallis-West family were making sure that what might have been an episode of young love was kept alive — to which Bend’Or was enthusiastically responding. Lady Edward Cecil, who was based in the Cape while her husband attended to military duties, met Bend’Or for the first time in Cape Town. She commented to her sister, ‘He [Bend’Or] is truly born with

⁷ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 42, Milner to Sir George Parkin, 28 April 1897.

⁸ Milner’s farewell speech at Pretoria, quoted in J.R.M. Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882–1940* (London: MacMillan, 1960), p. 15.

a gold spoon in his mouth and no drawbacks as I can see — though I think he may be going to make a foolish marriage — that was why he was sent here.’⁹

George and Sibell conspired to have Bend’Or removed as far from the Cornwallis-West family as they could. By introducing Bend’Or to Milner, George achieved a triple advantage. The inexperienced and impressionable Bend’Or would go to southern Africa to be exposed to the influence and discipline of Milner; George was able to strengthen an alliance between himself and one of the greatest exponents of New Imperialism; and Bend’Or, with his impending fortune, would be steeped in the Imperialists’ dream of a strengthened Empire.

Bend’Or met Sir Alfred in December 1898. Sibell wrote to George before Bend’Or’s interview:

Will be thinking of the great interview tomorrow if had opportunity might send me telegram to say satisfactory & that Ben & Sir A.M. have settled it all. Shall be think [*sic*] of D.K [Darling Knight or Dear/Dearest Knight]’s plan really starting with all haste.¹⁰

Bend’Or was not the obvious choice for the intellectual Milner, who since his friendship with Arnold Toynbee at Oxford had shared Toynbee’s keen sense of social responsibility. But that is beside the point. Bend’Or by all accounts was a well-mannered and charming young man and well-suited to act as a genial social secretary, a crucial task of an aide-de-camp (ADC). When George Curzon was looking for an ADC to accompany him to India, he described the role:

What one wants is a boy who knows society, who is a sportsman and who is unselfish and will work when he is asked. He should be a smart sort of fellow — an idler is no good.¹¹

It also suited Milner, who was a prudent political operator, to have by his side the stepson of a rising Minister in the Imperial Government. By accepting Bend’Or

⁹ Hugh Cecil and Mirabel Cecil, *Imperial Marriage: An Edwardian War and Peace* (Stroud: Sutton, 2005), p. 128.

¹⁰ GA, WP 2/1/20, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 16 December 1898.

¹¹ GA, WP 1/286/1, George Curzon to George Wyndham, 16 November 1899. Curzon had already suggested to Sibell that he would be happy to take Bend’Or with him to India: GA, WP 1/286/1, George Curzon to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 August 1898.

onto his staff, Milner was ensuring that his viewpoint would go straight to George Wyndham in the War Office and on to the drawing rooms of the Souls, a group that included Arthur Balfour, Margot Asquith, George Curzon and St John Broderick. In addition Bend'Or, who was the heir to the 1st Duke of Westminster, had the potential for immense social influence in the not-so-distant future. It was something Milner fully understood. Earlier, in 1886, when Milner was working for George Goschen, then Unionist Chancellor of the Exchequer, he reported: “We have no bait when we want to angle for big fish.” [...] Where are the Dukes with the long purses?¹²

Bend'Or left for southern Africa in January 1899 on the Union Steamship Company's *RMS Briton* with Milner. Soon after arrival Bend'Or wrote to thank George for arranging his position: 'This is a really interesting country & I am awfully thankful to you for having got me here'.¹³ He assured his mother that 'Sir Alfred is charming & we are all like a family'.¹⁴

Bend'Or wrote to Sibell boasting about his duties: 'One does get to know a great deal of what is going on in the country, as in copying despatches & de-coding telegrams & cyphers which is quite exciting.'¹⁵ He added, 'of course as the staff is small here one gets a lot of information'.¹⁶

In addition, dinners, garden parties and celebrations for occasions such as the Queen's birthday, and meeting and greeting guests, had to be arranged. Bend'Or, a capable horseman, was soon riding out with Milner, buying polo ponies, establishing a team and a stud, riding in point-to-points, and hunting. He was, at this time, outward-going, fun and popular. He had a flirtation with Miss Butler, the daughter of the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in the Cape, about which he

¹² J. Lee Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot: A Life of Alfred, Viscount Milner of St James's and Cape Town, 1854–1925* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), p. 53, quoting Milner to Goschen, 25 April 1886.

¹³ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 2 April 1899.

¹⁴ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 March 1899.

¹⁵ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 March 1899.

¹⁶ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 March 1899.

wrote home, 'I have quite fallen in love with Miss Butler', adding, 'I have written to tell Shelagh!!'¹⁷ Milner wrote to his confidante Mrs Montefiore:

Our "home circle" goes on smoothly, I am glad to say. Belgrave [then Bend'Or's title] is one of the most amiable boys I ever knew and gets on thoroughly well with everyone — both inside and outside. He won the steeplechase at our gymkhana race on Easter Monday, much to his and everyone's delight.¹⁸

Bend'Or's main contribution seems to have been to jolly along an otherwise rather dour Government House. Lady Edward told her sister: 'I don't think I ever knew a boy who was better fitted out for life's journey. I love him dearly as I think everyone must'.¹⁹ And he amused Milner with his keen horsemanship, his dances and his ability to charm the endless stream of wives and onlookers that had descended on Cape Town. In August Bend'Or told his mother:

I gave rather a successful dinner party the other night [which included the MP for Islington and his family] [...]. After dinner I got the band to play and we rolled the carpet up and put the furniture outside the window and danced.

The night before there was a hunt ball which 'was capital fun'. In the same letter he mentions 'the other day' he had met Mr Rhodes for the first time. Rhodes had lost his hat and came into Bend'Or's office to find it. Maybe at times the 'fun' threatened to go too far. He planned to attend a fancy-dress party dressed as Kruger 'but this plan was unfortunately at once frustrated'.²⁰ For Bend'Or, it was all such a lark.

During his time in Africa Bend'Or wrote home frequently. The letters were mostly sent to his mother but some were addressed to George and the 1st Duke (others were sent to Shelagh but these are not in the Grosvenor archive). Bend'Or's

¹⁷ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 26 April 1899.

¹⁸ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 336, Milner to Mrs Montefiore, 9 April 1899.

¹⁹ Cecil and Cecil, *Imperial Marriage*, p. 128.

²⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 August 1899.

remarks were observations rather than thoughtful deliberations. Most of his letters to his mother are concerned with horses and gossip, but even to her his language and style showed he had adopted an unreservedly hard line against the Boers.

In the lead-up to open warfare in the autumn of 1899, Bend'Or's opinions reflected the attitudes around him in the Cape, albeit his language is coloured by youthful exaggeration. What is missing is any thoughtful insight on Milner's strategy. Bend'Or's letters shine little light on the question of the Uitlanders. He mentions in passing: '*the long wished for* petition has arrived and goes off to England today' [my emphasis].²¹ It is an important omission. The petition, addressed to the Queen, had been organized through British agents. It sought the Queen's protection and the franchise for the Uitlanders. Most scholars think Milner used the Uitlanders' situation to ensnare Kruger.²² If the Uitlanders had the vote, the Boers could be outvoted in a country they regarded as their homeland; by not giving the Uitlanders the vote, Kruger would be seen as repressive, unconstitutional and, worse, as insulting Great Britain. Bend'Or's silence on the issue implies that Bend'Or had no grasp of the higher politics at play.

He was the only ADC to travel with Milner to the Bloemfontein conference in May 1899. This was surely a tactical move by Milner, who knew he could rely on Bend'Or's letters to George Wyndham to give a favourable view of Milner's performance.

Milner has been criticized for his actions at the Bloemfontein conference.²³ Chamberlain, whose concerns were the state of British and European relations, and that British public opinion was not ready for another war, sent instructions urging

²¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 April 1899.

²² Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A Modern History*, 5th edn (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 221.

²³ Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2004), p. xvi; Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa*, p. 222.

Milner to remain impassive and not to inflame the situation.²⁴ Milner did not receive them in time.²⁵

Bend'Or's letters reflect Government House's lack of enthusiasm when the proposed conference was suggested by London. In May Bend'Or wrote:

I wont write much more about it but personally & *in fact all here thinks* that nothing much will come of it, Kruger won't give in much & we certainly won't at all, so it will be pretty well as it was before, except that this I suppose will be the last time we shall put up with any more vague promises on his part [my emphasis].²⁶

Bend'Or's reports on Bloemfontein reveal that Milner was uncompromising. Bend'Or had a prime position sitting 'almost' opposite 'a green' bespectacled Kruger. He reported:

it is most exciting, this is the second day & I think Paul is getting pretty well tread [...]. Kruger is just about to make a long harangue on franchise [...]. Kruger grunting away now, he is wriggling & trying his best to keep from facing the music [...]. Really exciting this afternoon Kruger thumping the table and H.E. laughing at him, he is delighted.²⁷

The next day, Milner continued to pressurize Kruger. Bend'Or, who shows himself to be deeply impressed by Milner, related:

Kruger wept this morning! He is the slyest of the sly full of resource, but I think he has met his match in the H.E. who treats him very firmly & isent in the slightest bluffed! In fact Kruger is climbing down the ladder rung by rung very slowly. I don't know when we shall be leaving this place — we

²⁴ Andrew Porter, *The Origins of the South African War: Joseph Chamberlain and the Diplomacy of Imperialism* (Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 217; Simon Kerry, *Lansdowne: The Last Great Whig* (London: Unicorn, 2017), p. 125. Lansdowne too thought public opinion was not yet ready to support another war.

²⁵ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 424, Milner to Chamberlain, 16 June 1899.

²⁶ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 25 May 1899.

²⁷ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 June 1899: quoted in Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, pp. 136–37.

are very hard working & have already had to refuse two days buck shooting of the best.²⁸

The conference broke down in spite of Kruger's making some concessions on the Uitlanders' rights. Milner had pushed too hard.

Bend'Or's letters show that Government House in Cape Town was frustrated by the Imperial Government's reluctance to commit itself to sending troops.

As early as March 1899 Bend'Or wrote to his mother, 'tell him [George W] I hope he is sending an army against Kruger by now'.²⁹ In April he stated: 'I myself think the Boers ought to be squashed at once as they will take too long to die out'.³⁰ It is a flamboyant remark serving to remind us of Bend'Or's youth and enthusiasm.

In May, in advance of the Bloemfontein conference Bend'Or instructed his mother, 'Tell George the only thing for the Transvaal is 2 regts: of cavalry, 6 batteries artillery and squash they would go.'³¹

In June Bend'Or continued to argue for force. The Cape's Dutch/Boer community were showing signs that they were agitating in favour of their compatriots in the Transvaal, adding to Government House's sense of urgency.³² Bend'Or reported:

everything is going on well here I think, & the only thing is for you in England to be firm & squash the old man [Kruger] outright, it is indeed the only thing to be done & am nearly sure it will done.³³

He was more forthcoming in July, writing, 'Things are buzzing along now better than a week or so back, & I think we shall get *what we all pray for here namely war*' [my emphasis].³⁴

²⁸ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 June 1899.

²⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 22 March 1899.

³⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 April 1899.

³¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 17 May 1899.

³² Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, pp. 425–26, Milner to Chamberlain, 14 June 1899.

³³ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 June 1899.

³⁴ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 5 July 1899.

He was impatient. In August Bend'Or told Sibell, 'Work is indeed becoming quite a nuisance & there is as much as we can get through [...] owing to paid clerks not being allowed to do the confidential part we the 2 ADCs have to do it'.³⁵

In September he was writing, 'we are indeed wishing we were shot of the whole thing & that the Govt: would not Hanky-Panky about so much which in deed it does, & this delay strengthens the S.A.R. cause more than you think'.³⁶ He was aware that it took six weeks for reinforcements to be sent from Britain. He wrote:

For George! I suppose we are a little bit impatient out here but supposing the W.O. were allowed to loose off 30,000 men they would take a tremendous time, well so it appears.³⁷

To George he wrote, 'all the Boers want is a good smack in the 1st round & they wont trouble you any more, but you must put troops in the country after that'.³⁸ To his mother on the same day he wrote, 'Tell George we have only got to kill 200 Boers in the 1st round & the others will go quietly.'³⁹

Bend'Or had great praise for Chamberlain but not for the War Office. In London the War Office was being criticized for its inertia. Milner, who was in close contact with his fellow alumnus and Imperialist Selborne in the Colonial Office, had heard interdepartmental sniping. Bend'Or absorbed the gossip. He told his mother, 'It appears the only thing that is really behind is the W.O. anyway that is the opinion of everyone out here'.⁴⁰

After months of delay, in September the War Office in London did begin to strengthen forces in southern Africa, but Chamberlain, attracted by concessions offered by Smuts on Kruger's behalf, urged Milner to make another effort to reach

³⁵ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 9 August 1899.

³⁶ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 27 July 1899.

³⁷ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 30 August 1899.

³⁸ GA, WP 2/6, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 6 September 1899.

³⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 6 September 1899.

⁴⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 27 September 1899.

agreement.⁴¹ Bend'Or's letters show Milner did not welcome the idea. Bend'Or wrote to his mother:

I hope by next mail the Boers will have begun hostilities but there is not much chance of that. They seem to think that representatives will be sent down from the S.A.R. to a conference here in Cape Town — but it all looks bad as if they [the Boers] are going to get off altogether. You may be quite sure that they will find some excuse out of any promises that they may make now & in consequence cause a much more expensive and difficult war 2 to 3 years hence. Nothing will do them the slightest good except fighting it out — it is a waste of time giving reasons for this statement as everyone can see that this has been their game up to now i.e. of promising and not keeping the promises made & just to keep floating out of harm's way. They know perfectly well that the Imp: Govt: does not want to fight, I wish it would show more determination [...]. They will now without a doubt give into proposals set forth by the Imp: Govt: to avert war but the result will be 2 or 3 years hence the same fuss will begin over again.⁴²

Bend'Or's letters show the uneasy relationship Milner had with General Sir William Butler, the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa. Butler, who considered himself to be an old African hand, clashed with Milner's aggressive approach to the Boers. Milner referred to Butler in a letter to Mr Rendel, an Oxford friend, as 'a violent Krugerite'.⁴³ Milner's letters to Selborne and Chamberlain pressed for troops, urgently from June 1899 onwards, which Butler opposed. Bend'Or alerted George Wyndham to the difficulties. Bend'Or's letter to George was written a week after Butler had sent his telegram to the War Office challenging Milner's request for military reinforcements.⁴⁴ Bend'Or told George:

Just a line unofficially etc. etc. to you about one little matter out here or rather an important matter. It is very hard on the H.C. [High Commissioner]

⁴¹ Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa*, p. 222.

⁴² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 September 1899.

⁴³ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 473, Milner to Mr Rendel, 21 July 1899.

⁴⁴ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 509.

that the G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] should almost, I may say refuse to help him or back him up in any way or work conjointly with him at all. But of course you will hear about all this officially. Of course one does not like writing this, as he is a very nice man socially [...]. I know that you must really all be backing up H.C.'s proposals & wont let it slide this time.⁴⁵

Lord Edward Cecil also found Butler to be pro-Kruger 'and a recalcitrant general'.⁴⁶ In June Milner wrote to Chamberlain to say, 'I ought to have here a G.O.C. who is a support not a weakness to me'.⁴⁷

Opposing reports from the Cape might have contributed to the War Office's reluctance to commit itself to strengthening the Cape's defences. It might have contributed to Chamberlain's decision to issue an ultimatum demanding full political rights for the Uitlanders. The Boers issued their own ultimatum, demanding the British withdraw their troops from the Transvaal border. They gave forty-eight hours' warning. On 11 October the Boers declared war, and a war plan that Smuts had been working on for months was swiftly put into action.⁴⁸

Maybe the strongest indication that elements in Government House had underestimated the strength of the Boers is that, once war started, the Boers' military ability came as a surprise. Bend'Or opined, 'the Boers appear to be fighting with great determination & pluck, more than we thought'.⁴⁹ In the same letter he confessed, 'People aren't very excited here, but we are awfully relieved that it has come to war'.⁵⁰ It is the first admission of uncertainty and contrasts with the letter he had written five days earlier when he had added, 'After all this is over come out & see H.E.'s triumphant entry into Johannesburg seats have already been sold — it will be a wonderful sight'.⁵¹

⁴⁵ GA, WP 2/6, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 28 June 1899.

⁴⁶ Cecil and Cecil, *Imperial Marriage*, p. 111.

⁴⁷ Headlam, *The Milner Papers*, I, p. 509, Milner to Chamberlain, 24 June 1899.

⁴⁸ Nasson, *The Boer War*, pp. 69–75.

⁴⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 November 1899.

⁵⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 November 1899.

⁵¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 26 October 1899.

Once the war started, it was apparent that the British believed that they would be fighting a traditional Western colonial war involving infantry squares and cavalry charges. In this respect victory at Omdurman had a higher claim on British collective memory than defeat at Majuba Hill. In fact the Second Boer War proved to be more akin to a guerrilla war: a war of rapid movement, lightning attacks and ambushes.

The British lack of realism as to the type of war they would be fighting is illustrated by the attitude taken to horses. During the Second Boer War British military horses were found to be unsuited to the difficult climate and terrain of Africa. Bend'Or, who knew about horse welfare, had warned George. He told his mother in July:

impress on George that in case operations should be necessary in the Transvaal during the month of December then that is the time up there when the horses are carried off in 1000s by the horse sickness, this would be serious as regards transport.⁵²

To George he had written earlier:

through several chats I have had with both subalterns of my own age and colonials, it appears that the transport system out here is very poor and insufficient. This experiment of S American horses in this country seems a farce entirely. I cannot quote the exact percentage of these Horses (S American) which get this bone disease (ostiaprosis? [*sic*]) none of these horses can go out of a wall and are totally unsuited to the climate. Now Free State horses are the ones.⁵³

It was a warning that went unheeded.

Historians' views on the cause of the Second Boer War vary in detail but most agree that Milner was chiefly responsible for it happening when it did.⁵⁴ Professor Newbury

⁵² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Countess Grosvenor, 7 July 1899.

⁵³ GA, WP 2/6, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 19 April 1899.

⁵⁴ Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. xvi; Porter, *The Origins of the South African War*, p. 263; Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa*, pp. 220–21; Colin Newbury, 'Milner, Alfred, Viscount Milner', *ODNB*,

argues that Milner had not understood the situation from a military perspective. Bend'Or's letters show that Milner had been pressing hard for troops, to which the Imperial Government was not responding.⁵⁵ Military planning was not Milner's principal task, but Milner would have been cognisant of intelligence reports regarding the Boers' military preparation. He knew the Boers were buying German and French guns, although he may have underestimated their effectiveness.⁵⁶ Whether the lack of military readiness was Milner's fault or not, Newbury's charge stands: Milner was overconfident given the state of British defences.

The other charge against Milner is that, in his attempt to make the Boers appear the aggressor, he had forced the pace to war before the Imperial Government was ready.

Bend'Or's letters reveal Government House's determination to crush the Boers. They suggest that Milner had concluded that war was the only means by which the British could win the race for domination over the Boers. British supremacy was essential if the 'weakest link' in the imperial chain was to be strengthened. Milner's behaviour at Bloemfontein, his urgent request for troops and his reluctance to go the extra mile to maintain peace in September 1899 lend credibility to the argument that Milner hurried the inevitability of war regardless of Britain's military strength.

Bend'Or's correspondence demonstrates Bend'Or relied heavily on those around him for his views, with the exception of horses, a subject on which he was confident. Not all of his views would have come from Milner but, given Milner's ability to dominate those around him and to inspire loyalty and affection, it is fair to say Milner would have had a great influence on Bend'Or's young mind.⁵⁷ Milner's concept of the importance of the Empire, and the need to encourage British

September 2004, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/35037>>; Nasson, *The Boer War*, p. 62.

⁵⁵ Colin Newbury, 'Milner, Alfred, Viscount Milner', *ODNB*, October 2008, <<https://www.oxforddnb-com.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35037?rskey=H2EBcl&result=2>> [accessed May 2017].

⁵⁶ Jeremy Black, *Britain 1851–2010: A Nation Transformed* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2010), p. 132.

⁵⁷ Butler refers to Milner as a 'natural and inspiring leader', Butler, *Lord Lothian*, p. 36.

immigrants to settle in the newly acquired colonies, would influence Bend'Or's politics when he returned to London and took up his position in the House of Lords.

Once the war started, Bend'Or wanted to go 'up country' and fight. The 1st Duke resisted, not wanting to risk his heir to warfare. He died in late December 1899 and Bend'Or, now a Duke, could become an extra aide-de-camp to Field Marshal Lord Roberts, who had recently been appointed Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa, replacing the unsuccessful General Sir Redvers Buller.⁵⁸ Roberts arrive in Johannesburg in January 1900; Bend'Or, who had to return to Britain to deal with estate business, arrived soon afterwards and joined Roberts on the latter's march to Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and then Pretoria. Vivid letters were sent home with long descriptions and maps of the battles he joined: Poplar Grove, Driefontein, Paardekral (or Paaredekop), Zand River and Bergendal. Bend'Or described incidences such as during the battle at Driefontein when:

the Boers held up their arms, also the inevitable white flag, promptly putting in three vollies into our men as they advanced, killing twenty-three men and two officers [...]. Lord Roberts witnessed this himself and wired to our Government accordingly.⁵⁹

He wished British troops could 'shoot straighter' but added that it 'doesn't matter much as you seldom see a Boer to shoot at'.⁶⁰ When the son of the Bishop of Chester was killed, he wrote wistfully, 'Am feeling very much for the Bishop but I don't think one ought to grudge anyone a death like that'. He admitted, 'one has lost a lot of pals hasn't one'.⁶¹ He described how he rode out from Bloemfontein with the Duke of Marlborough, an assistant military secretary to Roberts, to join a skirmish. Marlborough 'had not yet seen a fight, and in consequence was very keen'. Bend'Or 'got in two shots at a bunch of Boers, I did not Brown them, but picked my man each time with a carbine which I borrowed'. It was, he declared,

⁵⁸ For the death of the 1st Duke, see Chapter 2 'Preparing for Dukedom', p. 45.

⁵⁹ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or transcript, Bloemfontein, 14 March 1900.

⁶⁰ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 3 January 2000 [*sic*].

⁶¹ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 April 1900.

‘one of the best days of my life’. He was ‘contented now I have seen as much of a fight as anyone & had a lots of squeaks’.⁶² He could call himself a man.

Bend’Or was having a good war. He liked his new ‘Chief’, using adjectives such as ‘wonderful’, ‘admirable’ and ‘splendid’ to describe him.⁶³ He grew a beard (red) as his chin was too sore from sunburn to shave.⁶⁴ He contracted enteric fever but not badly.⁶⁵ Life was ‘ripping’ on the veld.⁶⁶ In April 1900 George Wyndham was able to tell his brother, a soldier who had been stranded in Ladysmith, ‘We have great accounts of Benny, who is very popular but shoves himself too much into the firing line when carrying messages, as at Driefontein.’⁶⁷ Bend’Or dismissed this rumour in a letter to Sibell:

In your last letter it appears that some of those lazy good for nothings who at present infest Cape Town in everyone’s way have been telling nonsense about rashness of my part. I should pay no attention about it or give it a moment thought, as it is an absurd assertion & unworthy of them.⁶⁸

It was the first indication of Bend’Or’s courage, or foolhardiness. He was promoted to Lieutenant in April 1900.⁶⁹ Later in July George told Sibell, ‘Arthur Stanley has just been singing Benny’s praises to me. The most popular man up there: no nonsense about him and so on in real ringing terms. They single him out for praise & affection.’⁷⁰

⁶² GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or transcript, Bloemfontein, 22 April 1900.

⁶³ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or account, 13 March 1900.

⁶⁴ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 March 1900.

⁶⁵ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 April 1900.

⁶⁶ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 4 May 1900.

⁶⁷ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), I, p. 397, George Wyndham to Guy Wyndham, 20 April 1900.

⁶⁸ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 7 June 1900.

⁶⁹ London, The National Archives (TNA), WO374/73266, Officers’ Service Records, Major (Hon. Col.) Hugh R.A., Duke of Westminster.

⁷⁰ GA, WP 1/2/15, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 11 July 1900.

In May Bend'Or noted, 'The hospitals here are in a bad state filled with enteric'. He was afraid there would not be much more fighting, which would mean 'one not being able to kill and really terrorize more Boers'.⁷¹ By July 1900 he mentioned being 'stuck up in a train the other day when carrying despatches down to Cape Town'.⁷² This was the incident at Roodeval Station that Winston Churchill described in *My Early Life*:

I was breakfasting with Westminster who was travelling on some commission for Lord Roberts, when suddenly the train stopped with a jerk. We got out on to the line, and at the same moment there arrived almost at our feet a shell from a small Boer gun. It burst with a startling bang.⁷³

The train reversed back to Roodeval Station, where Boers surrounded it. The despatches had to get through, so Bend'Or, as he told his mother, 'managed to ride through in time' to deliver the despatches. Bend'Or's account is more prosaic than the fuller account given by Churchill in his autobiography *My Early Life*. It symbolizes the difference between the attention-seeking Churchill and self-effacing Bend'Or. Bend'Or concludes, 'have now been shot at enough'.⁷⁴ Later he complained, 'one feels one is never going to have peace again'.⁷⁵

Bend'Or was with Roberts for the last set battle of the war — Bergendal in August 1900. Unlike his other accounts, his report on Bergendal is less sensational and excited. He found it 'a rather hot engagement where we slaughtered a good many Burgers'.⁷⁶ His letter describing the battle is short and the account is interspersed with gossip. Bend'Or was showing signs of being complacent, battle-weary, or bored.

Earlier in the year, from Pretoria, his thoughts had turned to home, possibly a sign that, like Roberts, he believed that the war would soon be over; or, more likely,

⁷¹ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 21 May 1900.

⁷² GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 11 July 1900.

⁷³ Winston S. Churchill, *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* (London: Odhams, 1947), p. 348.

⁷⁴ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 11 July 1900.

⁷⁵ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 24 July 1900.

⁷⁶ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 28 August 1900.

he was thinking about his new life as a duke. He thought he would live in the ‘wing of Eaton’, take up the Yeomanry seriously and ‘maybe politics’, although that would have ‘to wait a bit’.⁷⁷ In August 1900, under the influence of Roberts, he transferred to the Royal Horse Guards to become a regular.⁷⁸ In September 1900 he heard he had been gazetted ‘a month ago’.⁷⁹ He told his mother, ‘the Chief is awfully anxious for us all to do a bit of soldiering however short a time it may be, & I also want it as it will be most useful for Yeomanry work afterwards’.⁸⁰

Bend’Or returned home, unexpectedly, on the steamship *S.S. Norman*, in October 1900, although Roberts returned in November. George was surprised, telling Sibell, ‘I am puzzled by Benny’s return but delighted at the prospect of getting [him] safe home’. In his diary Lord Balcarres, private secretary to Lord Roberts, had mentioned in June that ‘the Duke of Westminster has been sent to the base by Lord Roberts for disobedience’.⁸¹ But that incident was at least two months before Bend’Or’s departure. It is more probable that an affair he was having with an officer’s wife, which will be discussed in Chapter 7, accounted for his unplanned leaving.⁸²

Bend’Or’s relations with Lord Roberts continued to be good. In January 1901 Bend’Or was in bed, with jaundice, probably war-related, and claiming, ‘I may be laid up some time’. He was unable to accept Lord Roberts’s request to join him in the celebratory procession.⁸³

Bend’Or had acquitted himself well in the war. He was awarded the Queen’s Medal with five bars and was mentioned in Lord Roberts’s despatches for performing

⁷⁷ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 7 June 1900.

⁷⁸ TNA, WO 374/73266, Officers’ Service Records, Major (Hon. Col.) Hugh R.A., Duke of Westminster.

⁷⁹ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 September 1900.

⁸⁰ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 10 August 1900.

⁸¹ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), p. 426, quoting from the diary of June 1900.

⁸² GA, WP 1/2/14, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 October 1900. The reason for his sudden return is explained in Chapter 7, ‘Heirs and Her Graces’.

⁸³ GA, WP 1/11/13, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 January 1901.

‘his duties loyally and well’.⁸⁴ He was also awarded a cigar which had been donated by Mr W.H. Knowles to the ‘Officer who hoists the Union Jack at Pretoria’.⁸⁵

The Boer War, for all its tribulations, represented a period in Bend’Or’s life when he had been happy. He had enjoyed the army for male companionship, adventures and, importantly, rapidly changing scenarios. Southern Africa was a place where he was able to be himself and free from flattening expectations of his inheritance.

Bend’Or came home with his head full of Milner’s ideas on Empire. Both the 1st Duke and George Wyndham had taken an interest in southern Africa’s affairs — an important consideration for Bend’Or, who was keen to follow his grandfather’s example and heavily influenced by his stepfather. The 1st Duke had been Chairman of the South Africa Association (SAA), which was established to propagate the ‘political, commercial and other questions which affect the various peoples and communities in South Africa’.⁸⁶ According to its circular published by *The Times*, the object of the Association was: ‘To uphold British supremacy and to promote the interests of British subjects in South Africa, with full recognition of colonial self-government’. Joseph Chamberlain made use of it to campaign to win the support of public opinion for his southern African policy. The circular declared that ‘whilst incidentally giving its support to the policy set forth in Mr Chamberlain’s despatches and speeches, its main work will be educational work throughout the country’.⁸⁷ George Wyndham was an active participant.⁸⁸

George and Milner envisaged British territories in southern Africa as places where English-speaking families would settle and form colonies as part of, and for, the welfare of the British Empire. If the first task was to rescue the country from the

⁸⁴ Lord Roberts’ Recommendations, 2 April 1902, <<https://www.angloboerwar.com/component/content/article?id=1843:mentions-in-despatches-army>> [accessed 20 August 2019].

⁸⁵ GA, PP19/250, Note written by W.K. Knowles.

⁸⁶ ‘The South Africa Association’, *The Times*, 1 May 1896, p. 10.

⁸⁷ ‘The South Africa Association’, *The Times*, 1 May 1896, p. 10; Porter, *Origins of the South African War*, pp. 242–44.

⁸⁸ ‘The South Africa Association’, *The Times*, 17 May 1898, p. 11.

Boers, the second was to ensure enough British settled to outnumber and dominate them. This is the task that Milner turned to after the war and it was an aim which Bend'Or supported.

Bend'Or's involvement in southern Africa was genuine and he worked hard at it. In 1903 he became Chairman of the (now named) Imperial South Africa Association (ISAA). Under his chairmanship the Association, in conjunction with the Colonial Office, supported Milner's Land Settlement Scheme in the now British colonies of the Transvaal and the Orange River. A special Committee of the ISAA was formed, on which Bend'Or sat, to negotiate with the Colony Office and the Lieutenant General of the Orange River Colony (ORC).⁸⁹ Its remit was to settle British communities of farmers selected by county organizations. Each settlement would be called after its county.⁹⁰ In January 1904, in ISAA's office at 66 Victoria Street, interviews were held for 'intending settlers who desire to take advantage of the facilities offered by the Government of the Orange River Colony for acquiring land'.⁹¹ At the Annual General Meeting in the same year Bend'Or asserted that the object of the Association was to establish in the new colonies agricultural settlements of 'British race and British sentiments'.⁹²

Bend'Or led by example. He was one of three, but by far the largest, British landowners who responded to Milner's call to encourage 'a great influx' of British settlers to help rebuild the war-torn country by providing the 'superior skilled work, trades, professions and agriculture'.⁹³ The other two were Lord Lovat and Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, the South African-born mining financier and soon-to-be author.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ 'Agricultural Settlements in South Africa', *The Times*, 12 October 1903, p. 13.

⁹⁰ 'Agricultural Settlements in South Africa', *The Times*, 12 October 1903, p. 13.

⁹¹ 'Land Settlements in South Africa', *The Times*, 6 January 1904, p. 7.

⁹² 'The Imperial South Africa Association', *The Times*, 11 June 1904, p. 14.

⁹³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS, Milner, dept. 1, fol. 698, letter from Milner to Walton, 8 April 1903.

⁹⁴ Saul Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism, The Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of "South Africanism" 1902–10', *History Workshop Journal*, 43 (1) (Spring, 1997), 53–85 (73), <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4289491>> [accessed 30 August 2017]; Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa*, p. 238; Kenneth Ingham, 'Review of The Boer War by Thomas Pakenham', *African Affairs*, 79 (316) (1980), 427–29, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/722051>> [accessed 10 August 2019]. FitzPatrick was author of *Jock of the Bushveld*. As partner of the mining house Eckstein and Co., he was instrumental in sustaining the Uitlanders' agitation and to keep mining millionaires alongside Milner.

In 1902/03 Bend'Or bought 30,000 acres of land near Bloemfontein, in the ORC, and asked Herbert Baker, who had recently designed the parliament buildings in Pretoria, to build sixteen farms with all roads and services.⁹⁵ Following the protocol laid down it was called the Westminster Estate and the individual farms, which were allocated 300 acres each, were given Cheshire names such as Saughton, Grosvenor and Halkyn, while other farms were named after Bend'Or's family: Lumley after his mother, Wyndham after George, and Shaftesbury and Beauchamp after his brothers-in-law. Bend'Or peopled the farms with men and their families from his own estates. One was Price, whose father was a gardener at Eaton and his uncle a keeper. He was born in Eccleston, Cheshire.⁹⁶

This was not an inherited estate, so Bend'Or was free to administer it independently of the Grosvenor Estate and its Trustees. It was important for him, and he kept the running of the estate firmly under his control. His enthusiasm is shown in a letter to his mother:

Had a very good account from my agent in SA regarding my property there, it is a tremendous interest to me, and when it is a little more settled and has got a house or two in it we must all go out for a bit.⁹⁷

The poet and diarist Wilfrid Blunt also noted Bend'Or's delight. He recalled Bend'Or enthused that 'he had taken six thoroughbred stallions there from the Eaton Stud'.⁹⁸

Bend'Or installed Colonel Byron as the first agent, who was followed some time before 1914 by Winchester (known as Sainty) St George Clowes, who had been a comrade of Bend'Or's in the Boer War. Sainty remained the Chief Agent until 1938. Bend'Or regarded and treated him as a friend. He reported to Bend'Or directly, and only for convenience did he go through the London estate office.

⁹⁵ George Ridley, *Bend'Or, Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 71; Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events 1888–1914*, 2 vols (London: Martin Secker), II: 1900–1914, p. 105. Blunt cites 60,000 acres close to the Basuto frontier.

⁹⁶ GA, Adds 2047/2, St Clowes to Mr Borrer, 27 December 1932.

⁹⁷ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 30 August 1903.

⁹⁸ Blunt, *My Diaries*, II, p. 105.

From the start Bend'Or was clear about his intention: this was not a commercial enterprise but a patriotic one. In a letter from Bend'Or's private secretary, Colonel Lloyd, to Mr Hatfield, the family's solicitor, the object of the enterprise was spelt out:

it should be explained [...] that this scheme is purely philanthropic or more correctly patriotic; there is no idea of making money [...]. The scheme was not devised nor is it marked with a view to pecuniary profit but with a view to encourage Englishmen to settle on the land.⁹⁹

In 1930 Sainty asserted the same principle during a conference with Mr Raymond Needham KC. The meeting's minutes claimed:

Capt Clowes explained fully [...] and made it clear that when the Duke in about 1902, purchased the land [...] he did it in support of Lord Milner's Land Settlement at the close of the South African war. The Duke had not idea of making a profit.¹⁰⁰

In 1938 when the South African taxation authorities were investigating the Westminster Estate, the estate's solicitor confirmed that 'the Westminster Estate has never been run for a profit, and consequently has never paid Union Income Tax'.¹⁰¹

Bend'Or adopted a scheme based on mutual co-operation between landowner and tenant. He gave each settler a £100 'present' on taking a farm. The tenants were given generous terms. No rent was charged in the first year. Thereafter the rent on the land was on a sliding scale so that by the fifth year it comprised four-tenths of 'the total production derived by him [the tenant] from any manner whatsoever from the said Farm'. After that the rent was 'one-half of the total production' with allowances given for living expenses and subsistence for the tenant's stock and horses. Bend'Or, as the landowner, would supply trees wherever he thought fit, which the tenants had to tend. Bend'Or would also be responsible for water supply and conservation, roads, bridges, watercourses and boundary fences. Hunting of

⁹⁹ GA, Adds 2045/46, Colonel Lloyd to Mr Hatfield, 1 November 1904.

¹⁰⁰ GA, 2047/2, Notes on Conference with Mr Raymond Needham KC, 17 January 1930.

¹⁰¹ GA, Adds 2045/46, South African Accountants Smetham & Son to Grosvenor Estate Office, London, 2 June 1938.

game was reserved for the landowner. A tenant could live in his farmhouse free of rent provided the farm was returned in good order to the landowner.¹⁰²

The venture started as planned. No money was spared. By November 1904 eleven farms had been built and occupied. A further five were being built. Herbert Baker designed them all in stone with long overhanging red-slatted roofs. A school would come and a golf course.¹⁰³ A dam had been completed at a cost of £10,000 and Bend'Or had three steam-diggers sent out at a cost of £4,000 each.¹⁰⁴

Milner was supportive. He wrote that Herbert Baker, encouraged by Cecil Rhodes, wanted to start furniture-making on the Westminster Estate. Milner commended the plan:

In my opinion there is nothing which would more assist Land Settlement than the introduction of rural industries [...]. The taste for really good furniture in the old Dutch style [...] there can be no doubt whatever that it is a real good commercial business and will support a large number of people.

Milner's ambitions were larger. He told Bend'Or:

We have now got between 500 and 600 people (British men) on the land [...]. I hope to see an equal number placed on the land within the next twelve months. This is something, but in order to make the movement a real big thing, which would materially affect the character of the population in the country and its political future, it is necessary that private enterprise should back up the Government undertaking. So far yours is the only assistance we have had from private sources. Of course there are not many men in the position to take up a thing of this kind; but there are some. I wish you could inspire a few to follow your example. If the thing once caught on there is no reason why we should not, in the course of ten years, have between 5,000 and 10,000 British settlers of the land in the new colonies

¹⁰² GA, Adds 2045/2046, the Lease.

¹⁰³ GA, Adds 2045/2, letter from Mr Bovill to George St Clowes, 2 September 1930.

¹⁰⁴ GA, Adds 2045/6, Colonel Lloyd to Mr Hatfield, 1 November 1904.

and that would settle the political question, the towns and industrial [illegible] are British.¹⁰⁵

George Wyndham was delighted by Bend'Or's progress. By 1911 Bend'Or had invested in another property in Africa, the Nanga Estates in Rhodesia, which experimented in cotton. It was a success, producing tons of top raw cotton.¹⁰⁶ George wrote to Sibell: 'I was delighted to hear such good news of dear Benny, & South Africa & his cotton growing & shall enjoy talking it over with him & renewing my love for South Africa.'¹⁰⁷

A few days later George told his mother that:

[Benny and he] had a great talk over S Africa politics and his 2nd property there on which he is growing wonderful crops of cotton. This venture is exactly the kind of thing which rich people ought to do and all the cotton magnates are agog with interest.¹⁰⁸

The Times was equally impressed. It commented, 'If the possibilities suggested by the success of the Duke's experiments are realized, they should be of great importance to the Lancashire cotton industry'.¹⁰⁹

It was a hard life for the settlers on the African Westminster Estate. Much of the countryside's infrastructure had been destroyed by the British policy of 'clearing the country' in its determination to defeat the Boers' guerrilla tactics. Leo Amery, then a reporter for *The Times* in southern Africa, observed, 'except for a few dams and occasional fences which had escaped destruction the whole apparatus of rural civilization had practically been wiped out'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS, Milner, dept. 181, fols 393–94, Milner to Bend'Or, 24 January 1904.

¹⁰⁶ 'Cotton Growing in Rhodesia', *The Times*, 26 January 1911, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷ GA, WP 1/2/24, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 17 January 1911.

¹⁰⁸ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, p. 683, George Wyndham to his mother, 23 January 1911.

¹⁰⁹ 'Cotton Growing in Rhodesia', *The Times*, 26 January 1911, p. 6.

¹¹⁰ L.S. Amery, *My Political Life: England before the Storm 1896–1914*, 3 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1953), I, p. 171.

Reconstruction was hampered by a drought which lasted for five years between 1903 and 1908.¹¹¹ In 1905 Bend'Or, writing from the Westminster Estate, noted that the weather was 'glorious' but he was 'rather longing for rain'.¹¹² The drought was matched by a financial depression. Francis Grenfell, who was stationed in the south of Africa, compared it unfavourably to India: 'You cannot realise the terrible expenses incurred here for merely living. We spend four times what we spent in India, and get no return whatever'.¹¹³

In 1905 Bend'Or addressed the tenants. The effects of the drought were biting, and his tenants were anxious. Bend'Or assured them that he was not seeking any short-term return but was 'fully content to wait some time for financial results'. Because there had been difficulties in establishing the farms, he instructed that 'rents should be part of the gross profits instead of gross production', thereby allowing for machinery and other outlays to 'be deducted before the proceeds of the crop are divided between us'. He emphasized:

I realise how indispensable your whole-hearted assistance will be in bringing about the success we all hope to attain. For this reason I have all along desired that the business relations between us should be those of partners rather than landlord and tenant.

He concluded, with perhaps a hint of the memory of his old Swiss-German governess, 'To help those who help themselves will always be an important part of my policy'.¹¹⁴

Bend'Or visited the Westminster Estate every autumn up till 1908, sometimes with Duchess Shelagh. Such trips were an excuse for big-game hunting, then popular for the animal trophies it yielded. In 1906 Bend'Or wrote from Barotseland, 'We have shot so far about 84 head of big game — we could have shot more, but

¹¹¹ Davenport and Saunders, *South Africa*, p. 238.

¹¹² GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 October 1905.

¹¹³ John Buchan, *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell: A Memoir*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Nelson, 1920), p. 98.

¹¹⁴ GA, Adds 2045/2046, Bend'Or's address to settlers, 1905.

we only want specimens for each of us — and we have got good ones'.¹¹⁵ In 1908 from Bulawayo he revealed, 'It is delightful getting to such an English place no Dutch and full of the spirit of Rhodes — I wish he was with us still'.¹¹⁶ It was an admission of the difficulties the British faced.

Hardship and drought were not the only issues that Bend'Or's settlement had to face. Ultimately it was politics that destroyed Bend'Or's hopes for a British South Africa.

The Liberals came into government in 1905 with a political agenda for southern Africa that sought to combine Britain's imperial responsibility with greater self-government for the colonies.¹¹⁷ Their approach clashed with George Wyndham's and Lord Milner's, and by extension Bend'Or's, idealism, which required Britain to rule the Boer-populated colonies until such time as the British settlers would dominate.

Southern African affairs received an unusual prominence in the British 1906 General Election campaign. The Liberal Party used Milner's encouragement of the employment of Chinese indentured labourers in the goldmines as a means of embarrassing Unionists' imperialism and its celebrated champion Milner. The Liberals claimed that indentured labourers were kept in slavery, a claim which became more potent once it emerged that Milner had authorized the flogging of miscreant labourers. The British public, already appalled by the news of concentration camps established by the British, was shocked. The campaign was effective but it gave the new Liberal Government two pressing political problems once in office: firstly to make good its promise to remove Chinese labourers; and secondly to settle constitutions for the recently annexed Boer territories.

The man who took responsibility under Campbell-Bannerman for policy on the Transvaal and ORC was Winston Churchill. He was Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies but his position was enhanced because the Secretary of State, Lord Elgin, was a member of the House of Lords, making Churchill the chief spokesman

¹¹⁵ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 September 1906. Barotseland is now in Zambia.

¹¹⁶ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 September 1908.

¹¹⁷ Dubow, 'Colonial Nationalism', p. 58.

for the Ministry in the Commons; and because the energetic Churchill made himself the Ministry's workhorse.

Churchill had a lot to balance in his new position. He was still a relatively recent addition to the Liberal ranks, having crossed the floor from the Conservatives in 1904. With his aristocrat antecedents he was viewed suspiciously by the Liberals' more radical elements. He needed to prove his worth to that party;¹¹⁸ and he needed to make good the Liberals' recent electioneering promises. With an ideology that emphasized freedom, the Liberals sought to go further than the promise in the Treaty of Vereeniging 1902 of eventual self-government for the ex-Boer colonies, or the Unionists' promise of representative government. By privilege of letter patent, as Lord Willoughby de Broke noted, thereby avoiding the House of Lords, where support for Imperialism was stronger, the Liberal Government granted responsible government to the Transvaal and ORC in February 1906.¹¹⁹

For Bend'Or the Liberal Government's approach posed a possible conflict. As we have seen, as President of the ISAA he was deeply committed to the previous Unionist Government's Land Settlement Scheme. It was on this subject that Bend'Or gave his maiden speech, in the House of Lords in March 1906.¹²⁰ Bend'Or's reasons for his intervention were his Imperialist conviction and his knowledge of agriculture in that country, which he believed had a 'bright future'. The speech was reasoned and practical, dwelling on the importance of irrigation, railways, and the need for continuing support from the Colonial Office. He claimed he had settled 'over twenty families', taken from his British estates. He concluded that 'there are many loyal Englishmen in South Africa who are ready to carry out the wishes of the mother country as long as those wishes are adequate to keep her first in the field of colonizing nations'.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1993), pp. 38–39.

¹¹⁹ Richard Greville Verney, Lord Willoughby de Broke, *The Passing Years* (London: Constable, 1924), p. 245.

¹²⁰ House of Lords, Hansard, 27 March 1906, vol. 154, cc 1019–36, <<http://www.hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed November 2017].

¹²¹ House of Lords, Hansard, 27 March 1906, vol. 154, cc 1019–36, <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed November 2017].

He urged that the British who had been encouraged to settle in the ex-Boer colonies ‘should not be deserted and left to the tender mercies of a Boer Government’.¹²² The speech was efficient but lacked emotion — it was probably written by another. The debate did little to change the Government’s mind; in reality the debate’s chief purpose was to give Milner an opportunity to answer his critics.

Churchill and Bend’Or had remained friends since their travails in the Boer War — a friendship that had been strengthened when Bend’Or’s brother-in-law George Cornwallis-West married Churchill’s mother, Jennie. Jennie’s extravagance and George’s business misadventures threatened the couple’s financial stability. Bend’Or felt an obligation to help Churchill because it involved his wife’s family and because Bend’Or knew that the impecunious Churchill could not support George, whereas Bend’Or could.

In August 1906, from Bulawayo, Bend’Or promised Winston funds to rescue George.¹²³ It was October before Churchill was able to settle matters. When he did, he wrote to Bend’Or to confirm the arrangements, concluding his letter: ‘I hope you are enjoying yourself in S.A. & and that your Land Settlement Schemes are prospering finely’.¹²⁴ It was during this time that Churchill was constructing his political ideas for the settlement of the Transvaal and ORC.

Churchill calculated that by being generous on a constitutional settlement he would achieve two political wins. He could present the new Liberal Government as progressive in its Imperial ambitions while ensuring the problem of Chinese indentured labourers, of which there were some 50,000 living mainly in the Transvaal, became an issue for the new colonial governments to resolve.¹²⁵

¹²² House of Lords, Hansard, 27 March 1906, vol. 154, cc 1019–36, <<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com>> [accessed November 2017].

¹²³ Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill* (1874–1914), 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1966–67), II: *Young Statesman, 1901–1914* (1967), pp. 198–99.

¹²⁴ Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill*, II, p. 200.

¹²⁵ Roy Jenkins, *Churchill* (London: MacMillan, 2001), pp. 114–15.

Churchill crafted long papers for the Cabinet Committee appointed to oversee policies for southern Africa.¹²⁶ They reveal Churchill's awareness of the fate of British settlers who had been lured to Africa by the promise of land. He knew in addition that abandoning the settlers would have a detrimental effect on British public opinion and upset Bend'Or, who was in effect financing Churchill's mother.¹²⁷ Churchill wrote in November 1908:

Six or seven hundred [British] settlers have been planted in each of the colonies [...]. A hostile regime [could] very easily sweep away like mushrooms before the scythe, the whole of these settlers planted at so much expense and trouble.¹²⁸

A letter from Bend'Or to Churchill suggests that at this stage Churchill was seeking the help of the ISAA. The letter implies that the ISAA could provide funds to support British settlers. By sidestepping the use of Imperial funds the arrangement had the advantage of avoiding claims of British partisanship, which would have provoked the Boers. Bend'Or wrote that he and 'my friends' were prepared:

to find the £50,000 if the Col: Office will now send a formal letter to Col: Owen Thomas saying that the grant will be given provided the amount is immediately for the coming or the alternative saying, that provided so much money is now subscribed we (the Col: Office) can give you the grant [...] we are only waiting to know the exact sum the Govt: require [...] we cannot ask them to keep the money indefinitely [...] Lord Cobham has written Lord Elgin on the matter.¹²⁹

In 1906 Churchill believed that the forthcoming elections in the Transvaal would return a British majority of possibly nine, certainly five, and that the pro-British Sir

¹²⁶ TNA, CO/879/93.

¹²⁷ TNA, CO/879/93/12, memorandum on Land Settlement by Winston Churchill, 7 November 1906; Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill*, II, p. 154.

¹²⁸ TNA, CO/879/93/12, memorandum on Land Settlement by Winston Churchill, 7 November 1906.

¹²⁹ Cambridge, Churchill Archive, Churchill College (CA, CHAR), 10/21, Bend'Or to Churchill, 25 January 1907.

Richard Solomon would be Prime Minister. What is more, Churchill thought, as he told the King, the possibility of a Boer majority “‘is outside the bounds of possibility’”.¹³⁰ Churchill’s confidence explains why Bend’Or and the ISAA were prepared to support him.

Afrikaans parties won the elections on 7 February 1907 in the Transvaal with a majority of five. Randolph Churchill wrote, ‘The results astonished Churchill’.¹³¹ The election result dramatically altered the prospects of the British settlers.

No doubt Churchill was at his most unctuous towards Bend’Or, whose support he might yet need to sort out his mother and stepfather’s finances. Bend’Or must have accepted Churchill’s position, even though it was Churchill’s miscalculation that brought to an end George Wyndham, Milner and Bend’Or’s hopes for a British South Africa.¹³² They remained friends.

Dominion status and the Union of South Africa into one unitary state followed in 1910. The Union rendered the ISAA redundant. In June 1910 Bend’Or held its last dinner, which Milner and George attended. Bend’Or had been an assiduous Chairman — but it had been in vain.

Bend’Or’s annual visits to southern Africa ceased after 1910. Ridley claims that Bend’Or never visited a tropical climate again after his illness during the First World War.¹³³ It is unlikely that health concerns alone would have stopped Bend’Or from doing what he wanted to do. This was a man who excelled in notoriously dangerous sports of polo, hunting and power-boat racing, and continued to pursue them in spite of recurrent injuries.

The fact was that Bend’Or’s heart had gone out of his southern African project now that the political motive of establishing a British South Africa had faded.

The African Westminster Estate struggled on. After the Great War farming was blighted by workforce issues, a long-running agricultural depression, an

¹³⁰ Churchill, *Winston S Churchill*, II, p. 160; Butler, *Lord Lothian*, p. 21. Churchill was not alone in thinking that the elections would produce a pro-British government. Kerr (later Lord Lothian) in southern Africa also thought that the promise of responsible government would provide ‘a British majority’ in the elections.

¹³¹ Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill*, II, p. 192.

¹³² Thompson, *Forgotten Patriot*, p. 236.

¹³³ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 72.

unfavourable currency exchange rate, and another drought that Sainty described as ‘the worst drought ever remembered’.¹³⁴

Bend’Or continued to be generous to his tenants. Pensions were paid; those who fell into debt had rents reduced; those who for health reasons could not farm were paid off; and when famine threatened, seven tenants were absolved of half a year’s rent.¹³⁵

Fresh settlers came from Bend’Or’s Scottish estate. Murdock McDougall wrote to Colonel Hunter, Bend’Or’s Scottish manager, with their news. Murdock had failed to find a job ‘as there are thousands in this country unemployed, all work about here is done by natives’. He asked if he could be given some land to farm ‘on a business basis’. He added that James McDougall ‘has been very ill since he came here’ but ‘is now working with an open wound in the rectum and very bad heart trouble’. But Murdock was confident that ‘there is no doubt His Grace having sent us out here has saved James’ life so far’, even though ‘food and clothes costs treble what they do in England’. He asked Hunter to ‘thank His Grace for all he has done for us since our trouble began’. He ended on a wistful note: ‘I hope the fishing will be good this year. I often wish I had one day ghillying with his Grace on the Rockpool’.¹³⁶

Murdock got his land. Hunter told Sainty:

Benny quite realises you advised against it with full knowledge of his prospects out there — but his prospects here [Scotland] are as bad and the climate worse [...] and they were at the end of their tether when Benny sent them out [...] I suppose just possible the younger children will make good

¹³⁴ GA, Adds 2047/4, St Clowes to Mr Borrer, 6 February 1933. One of the original settlers, Price was given a pension of £120; GA, Adds 2047/2, St Clowes to Mr Borrer, 27 December 1932. Pensions were also given to Miss Matthey the schoolmistress and Murdock McDougall; GA, Adds 2017/4, Note headed ‘Re The Westminster Estate. South Africa, 28 February 1933’. When Mr Bovill, who lived at Ormonde Farm, fell into arrears on his rent for a second time, Bend’Or wrote off £50 of his overdue rent and reduced his ongoing rent by £50; GA, Adds 2047/2, St Clowes to Mr Bovill, 1 April 1931. Mr Milford received six months’ payment when his health broke and he had to leave the farm; GA, Adds 2047/4, Mrs Milford to St Clowes, 5 December 1833.

¹³⁵ GA, Adds 2047/4, St Clowes to Mr Borrer, 22 February 1933.

¹³⁶ GA, Adds 2047/2, Murdock McDougall to Colonel Hunter, 8 May 1928.

out there — So that's that — Benny considered it all and read the letters most carefully.¹³⁷

James died in November 1931. Bend'Or paid for his funeral.

Bend'Or's interest in the Empire continued but his trust in politics was damaged by the turbulent Edwardian period. In the 1930s Lord Beaverbrook and Winston Churchill attempted to bring Bend'Or back to Imperial causes. Neither was successful.

Bend'Or's entrenched belief in the strength of the Empire and his distrust of politicians made him vulnerable to radical-right influences in the 1930s. In 1932 Neville Chamberlain introduced a general tariff of 10 per cent on all imports except foodstuffs or those from the Empire. By moving the Conservative Party towards imperial preference he had achieved what George Wyndham had passionately wanted. It was the hope of preserving the Empire that attracted Bend'Or to Chamberlain and appeasement. How his relationship with Chamberlain played out will be discussed in Chapter 10.

¹³⁷ GA, Adds 2047/2, Hunter to St Clowes, 10 June 1928.

Chapter 4. Political Trauma

Politics came to Bend'Or as a ducal duty. He was not a politician by choice. He had no need of it for reasons of status, he had little interest and he was unprepared. Nor did he have the competencies to be politically capable; he was hampered by an untrained mind and, crucially, a lack of confidence, which made him vulnerable to the influence of others. The man who wielded the greatest leverage on Bend'Or's early political experience was his stepfather George Wyndham. George's politics became Bend'Or's; in return, Bend'Or encouraged George by providing him with the means to pursue his ambitions. Consequently a necessary theme of this chapter is George's political career, focusing in particular on the period from 1910 to George's unexpected death in 1913. It was a time when political parties of all colours struggled for definition. In the bitter intra-party bickering within the Conservatives and Unionists, George emerged as one of the key figures on the political right. This was the legacy he left Bend'Or, who did not question it until the beginning of the Second World War.

Even by contemporary standards Bend'Or's grooming for the role that his rank demanded was poor. His mother's dilatory approach to schooling and his own disinclination resulted in an unsatisfactory education. Surprisingly for a man of his rank, Cambridge refused him and so he missed out on the chance of higher learning, the challenge of lecture halls and debating chambers, and the society of robust thinkers.¹ His deficiency meant Bend'Or felt ill-prepared in new situations and suffered from a chronic lack of confidence accordingly. One of Coco Chanel's biographers quotes Chanel, with whom Bend'Or had an eight-year affair, as saying, 'Sometimes the Duke drank, and he told Coco he hadn't had the education of a duke'.² He shared a poor education with Winston Churchill but, whereas Churchill determinedly self-tutored, Bend'Or did not. Moreover Bend'Or succeeded his grandfather's dukedom while still underage, thereby missing the experience of a pocket seat in the House of Commons, the usual political training ground for sons of hereditary peers. Lastly, he had no dynastic political inheritance for inspiration

¹ See Chapter 2 'Preparing for Dukedom', pp. 38–39.

² Claude Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Collins, 1973), p. 45.

such as enjoyed by the Cavendishes or the Cecils. In fact, it was the opposite. M.J. Hazleton-Swales, who wrote a PhD thesis on the Grosvenors' London estate in the nineteenth century, noted, 'The first Earl [Grosvenor] seems to have established a tradition of political quietism which was predominant throughout the Grosvenors' history'.³ He concluded:

from the early fifteenth century onwards, the Grosvenors played what can only be described as a comparatively insignificant part in national events. There were no family members who, at various important moments in English history, emerged to distinguish themselves in leadership in some key field, be it political or military, and so far no historian has seen fit to ascribe to them responsibility for any memorable act which had ramifications on a national scale. Indeed, as Charles Gatty has suggested, the Grosvenors were illustrious in neither 'council, court or camp'.⁴

Bend'Or's grandfather, the 1st Duke, did have a minor political career, but his was typical of the mid-nineteenth century, when politics were less partisan and more likely to be steered by personal motives. His biographer Gervas Huxley concluded the Duke felt 'free to disregard any opinions except those stemming from his own strong convictions however unpopular they might be in political, social, or Court circles'.⁵ Professor Ellenberger describes his politics as 'determinedly independent'.⁶

The 1st Duke was initially elected to the Commons as a Liberal member for Chester, one of the family's pocket seats. He gained notoriety as an Adullamite when he opposed Earl Russell's Franchise Bill in 1866. Once in the Lords, he

³ M.J. Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats: The Grosvenors and the Development of Belgravia and Pimlico in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1981), pp. 75, 148–50, <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.493822>>. Charles Gatty was an antiquary and author who wrote the first biography of George Wyndham. He was a friend of both George and Bend'Or's mother Sibell.

⁴ Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', p. 416.

⁵ Gervas Huxley, *Victorian Duke: The Life of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor First Duke of Westminster* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 108.

⁶ Nancy W. Ellenberger, *Balfour's World: Aristocracy and Political Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), p. 176, quoting Pam Morris, *Imagining Inclusive Society in 19th-Century Novels: The Code of Sincerity in the Public Sphere* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

concentrated on social issues that affected his tenants. He promoted the Metropolitan Commons Bill 1877 to guarantee managed open spaces for public enjoyment in London; he supported the opening of London's national museums and galleries on Sundays (in spite of his own religiosity); and in July 1899, in his last political undertaking, he introduced the Seats for Shop Assistants Bill.

He supported Gladstone against Disraeli's handling of the Eastern Question in 1875–1878, but not over Home Rule for Ireland. With his brother Lord Richard Grosvenor, the 1st Duke joined Harrington's Liberal Unionists in 1886. He and Gladstone were reconciled sufficiently to act in unison to condemn Turkey's treatment of the Armenians in the mid-1890s.

The 1st Duke's career was not useful as a political model for Bend'Or, who would have to contend with a transformation in politics from individual agendas to institutionalized party politics.

It is not difficult to see why Bend'Or admired George Wyndham. Wyndham was good-looking, sartorial, a good horseman, politically well-connected, particularly to the bright and exclusive 'Souls', and his arrival into the Grosvenor family brought relief from the severity of mourning Bend'Or's father. But by the time Bend'Or took up politics Wyndham's political judgement was faltering. George began his political career as Private Secretary or, as Professor Ellenberger describes it, 'research assistant' to Arthur Balfour when Balfour was Chief Secretary for Ireland.⁷ He was elected MP for Dover and was Salisbury's appointee for Under-Secretary of State for the War Office under Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State, in 1898. At the time he was seen as one of the most promising of Conservative MPs and was bracketed with Austen Chamberlain as a, if not the, rising star.⁸

In 1900 George was moved to be Chief Secretary of Ireland. Ireland delivered the high point of George's political reputation and his downfall. His Land Purchase Irish Act 1903 held out the promise of settling the vexed Irish land question,

⁷ Ellenberger, *Balfour's World*, p. 171.

⁸ R.J.Q. Adams, *Balfour: The Last Grandee* (London: John Murray, 2007), p. 198.

although inevitably the Act alarmed both the great landowners and the Unionists.⁹ Alarm gave way to criticism when he appointed Sir Anthony MacDonnell as Permanent Under-Secretary. MacDonnell was Roman Catholic and a self-confessed sympathizer for greater Irish independence. Austen Chamberlain confided in his diary that MacDonnell was the stronger character of the two and that it was MacDonnell who set the pace at the Irish Office.¹⁰

Criticism turned to outrage in 1905 when Lord Dunraven published proposals, drawn up with the help of Sir Anthony, for greater Irish devolution. George claimed ignorance of Dunraven's activities, in *The Times*. There is doubt about George's sincerity. A letter from Sibell to George indicates that George *was* aware of MacDonnell's dealings. Lord Dunraven was staying with Sibell in September 1904, when she wrote, 'Lord Dunraven very cheerful over his conspiracy and your letter'.¹¹ In addition a letter from MacDonnell outlining his activities was later found in one of Wyndham's books.¹²

George had politically overreached himself.¹³ The proposals caused predicted fury amongst Unionists at a time when the Party's popularity was declining. The Unionists had been in power since 1896. Joseph Chamberlain's proposals for tariff reform in 1903 had sharpened divisions between Unionists and Conservatives, which the Prime Minister Arthur Balfour failed to stifle. It created an opportunity for the revived Liberal Party, which they took. Balfour could ill afford a row over Ireland.

⁹ Adams, *Balfour*, pp. 198–99.

¹⁰ Sir Charles Petrie, Bt., *The Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Sir Austen Chamberlain, K.G., P.C., M.P.*, 2 vols (London: Cassell, 1939/40), I, p. 158.

¹¹ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), WP 2/1/29, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 28 September 1904.

¹² Max Egremont, *The Cousins: The Friendship, Opinion and Activities of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt and George Wyndham* (London: Collins, 1977), p. 255.

¹³ Nancy W. Ellenberger, 'Constructing George Wyndham: Narratives of Aristocratic Masculinity in Fin-de-Siècle England', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (4) (Oct. 2000), 487–519 (509).

Previously unknown letters, written to George by his sister Lady Elcho (Mary), Balfour's confidante, confirm George emotionally broke down.¹⁴ On 4 March, Mary wrote to George, advising that Balfour hoped to retain him as Chief Secretary for Ireland but such an action 'may bring the Government to an end in 2 weeks' and 'it would be remembered against you'.¹⁵ The next day she wrote, 'I'm inclined to think yr power of usefulness in Ireland may be over — for the moment.' She wrote in the evening of 5 March: 'heaven pray, that you do not think I ever thought you wanted pressing' before begging him to see a Dr Keithley: 'he is a most acute psychologist as well as a very clever doctor'.¹⁶

It is hard to tell whether Mary was acting in George's or Balfour's interest.¹⁷ George spoke of his own health being a concern. In a draft handwritten letter to Balfour, subsequent to his resignation, Wyndham wrote, 'I have ups and downs of health but the downs are still bad ones'.¹⁸ The suggestion is that he was a depressive, a condition made worst by alcohol abuse. Balfour could not or would not save him. George resigned.

For a time George remained loyal to Balfour, a loyalty that stopped him from backing Joseph Chamberlain when Chamberlain sought his support. George maintained to his wife, Sibell, that Chamberlain's views were 'mischievous'.¹⁹ Wyndham's difference with Chamberlain harked back to Chamberlain's earlier career as a Liberal MP. He felt that the revenue Chamberlain aimed to raise through tariff reform would 'be lavished on socialistic adventures'.²⁰ George had a different

¹⁴ Wiltshire, Dineley Collection. Mrs Dineley's grandparents owned Clouds, Wyndham's last home. The letters were found in the loft. The cache includes some fifty uncatalogued letters.

¹⁵ Dineley Collection, Lady Elcho to George Wyndham, 4 March 1905.

¹⁶ Dineley Collection, Lady Elcho to George Wyndham, 4/5 March 1905.

¹⁷ It could be argued that Mary was encouraging George to resign to help Balfour; an alternative suggestion is that Mary was seeking to protect an excitable George. See *The Letters of Arthur Balfour & Lady Elcho 1885–1917*, ed. by Jane Ridley and Clayre Percy (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), pp. 218–20.

¹⁸ Dineley Collection, George Wyndham to Arthur Balfour, 9 March 1905.

¹⁹ GA, WP 1/2/19, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 22 November 1905.

²⁰ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), II, pp. 517–19.

view on the primary purpose of tariff reform. He supported imperial preference as a means of strengthening the Empire. According to Professor A.S. Thompson, there was a racial element to George's thinking. He wanted a united Empire in which the white Anglo-Saxon was dominant.²¹

George would come to be convinced of the usefulness of tariff reform's revenue-raising potential but, by the time he did, his opportunity had passed.

By 1906 George was increasingly erratic, but it was a discontent that was shown chiefly in private. In spite of his outward loyalty to Balfour's successor, Bonar Law, George felt both politicians were betraying the country. He increasingly associated with Hilaire Belloc and G.K. Chesterton, and their ideas of distributism. The distributist state looked back to a medieval utopia when 'Europe was a Christian unity, a society of peasant proprietors' who were self-contained and interdependent and small-scale land ownership was advocated over large.²² It was a theory that blended with George's romanticism. He formed a vision of an ideal England, where there were no 'American duchesses', 'cosmopolitan press', 'usurious landlords' or international financiers whom he increasingly associated with Jews. He mostly kept his discontent private. His letters to Sibell are often excitable, immoderate and pessimistic, while his letters to others were more measured. Wilfrid Blunt, George's cousin, noted that in private George used the language of extremism.²³

Unable to find his place within mainstream Conservatism, he became more radical and inflexible, which accentuated his exclusion. Julian Amery (son of the tariff reformer Leo Amery), told George's biographer, John Biggs-Davison:

Your Sir Galahad drank too much, married a woman years older than himself, broke down in his only real crisis of his career, and withheld his

²¹ A.S. Thompson, 'Tariff Reform: An Imperial Strategy, 1903–1913', *The Historical Journal*, 40 (4) (1997), 1033–54 (1038), <<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0018246X97007565>>.

²² Alan Sykes, 'The Radical Right and the Crisis of Conservatism before the First World War', *The Historical Journal*, 26 (3) (September 1983), 73–78.

²³ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries, Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888–1914*, 2 vols (London: Martin Secker, 1920), II: 1900–1914, p. 132.

support from tariff reform when it might have made a difference. There is a flaw in the metal somewhere'.²⁴

This is the man Bend'Or unwaveringly supported and to whom he looked for political instruction.

Bend'Or's letters from South Africa showed no interest in the context of the Boer War, the politics within the Cape, or questions on the future of southern Africa after the war. It is an indication of his lack of political awareness or interest. In 1903 he turned down the Prime Minister Arthur Balfour's invitation to move the Loyal Address in the House of Lords. It would have been a good opportunity to have made a mark on the House after Bend'Or's recent elevation. He explained why to his mother:

You will never make me believe that you would be proud of your son stuffed in a tight uniform repeating a few words parrot like that he has been told to say, on the contrary if I had a boy — I should be proud to see him get through on his legs & say what he thought without the pompous flourish & the ordinary routine of moving the address. Mind you I am in a position of knowing that in politics one is not wanted personally but it is one's influence & money that is most needed, so before I hurriedly decide I am going to look round.²⁵

It was a perceptive and realistic comment about his future in politics. It suggests Bend'Or was aware that his position would lend 'influence and money' which others would be willing to exploit. Secondly, he shows that he would not be constrained by protocol: he was determined to be his own man.

In spite of his reservation about Balfour's invitation, Bend'Or was in the most conformist period of his life. He attended the Court and held grand balls at

²⁴ London, Parliamentary Archives (PA), John Biggs-Davison Papers, B/1/70, Julian Amery to John Biggs-Davison, 20 June 1951.

²⁵ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 24 January 1903.

Grosvenor House.²⁶ He fathered a son, and his wife, Shelagh Cornwallis-West, was acknowledged to be a grand hostess and beauty; and he was accepting about the role he was expected to play in politics.

A review of those voting in House of Lords' divisions during 1909 shows the extent that dukes participated in politics. The 9th Duke of Marlborough had been Paymaster General between 1899 and 1902 and Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies between 1903 and 1905 in Conservative governments. He was a Privy Councillor. The 15th Duke of Norfolk was three times Chairman of the Conservative Central Council of the National Union. He was made Paymaster General in 1895 and a Privy Councillor too. The 7th Duke of Northumberland had been Treasurer of the Household, Chair of the Conservative National Union and a President of its Party Conference. He became a Knight of the Garter and a Privy Councillor. The 9th Duke of Devonshire, as Lord Edward Cavendish, had followed his family's political tradition by being a Liberal Unionist Member of Parliament, and he was Financial Secretary to the Treasury between 1903 and 1905. He was a Privy Councillor. The 6th Duke of Portland had been Master of the Horse twice between 1886 and 1903, and a Privy Councillor by 1886. The Dukes of Rutland (8th), Wellington (4th), Argyll (9th), Richmond (7th), Gordon (2nd), Abercorn (2nd, also a Privy Councillor), and occasionally Sutherland (4th Duke, who had been an MP before his father's death) were all active in the Lords. Sutherland would be a Minister in time. The 15th Duke of Somerset was President of the Navy League as well as participating in the House of Lords, and the Duke of Bedford was making a name for himself as a critic of Haldane's army reforms in the Lords. The future 6th Duke of Montrose, then known as James Graham, had been an Assistant Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and stood, unsuccessfully, in two general elections and one by-election between 1906 and 1910.

It was natural and predictable that at first Bend'Or would follow in the Grosvenor/Leveson-Gower tradition by entering the Lords as a Liberal Unionist. He became the President of Chester Liberal Unionist Association.²⁷

²⁶ Court Circular, *The Times*, 28 February 1908, p. 13; 'Ball at Grosvenor House', *The Times*, 23 June 1908, p. 13; 'King and Queen at Grosvenor House', *The Times*, 18 July 1908, p. 13.

²⁷ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 71.

Matters changed when a radical Liberal government came into office in 1906. Ridley stated, ‘under pressure from the radical policies of Lloyd George he [Bend’Or] had begun to side with the Conservative opposition’.²⁸ This is partly true. In the 1906 election the Conservative Unionists failed to win a single seat in the twelve constituencies in Cheshire. Chester, which was Conservative-held from 1910 to 1967, fell to the Liberals in 1906. Bend’Or had no enthusiasm for a revived Liberal Party which was elected on a radical social agenda. The early passing of the Land Tenure Bill 1906 was a warning of what was to come.²⁹

An additional reason for Bend’Or leaving his Whig/Liberal allegiance was the treatment that his ex-chief, Lord Milner, received at the hand of the new Liberal Government. Loyalty was a mark of Bend’Or’s character and he had become fond of Milner during the eighteen months he had spent in South Africa. On his return, Bend’Or followed his grandfather and George Wyndham by becoming President of the Imperial South Africa Association in 1903. It was during a debate on the Liberal’s Government censorship of Lord Milner in 1906 that Bend’Or made his maiden, and only, speech in the House of Lords.³⁰

George Wyndham claimed responsibility for bringing Bend’Or to the Conservative Party. George wrote to his father in 1907 that ‘by special request, here in Cheshire and, today, I got Bend’Or to accept the office of President’.³¹ By 1911 Bend’Or sat on the Conservatives’ National Union Central Council representing Cheshire.³² In 1903 Bend’Or had joined the inaugural executive committee of the

²⁸ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 71.

²⁹ According to an article in the *Spectator*, the Bill proposed to offer tenants compensation for, firstly, damage to their crops by game that was not their responsibility and, secondly, any increase in the agricultural value of their holding at the end of the tenancy. The *Spectator* Archive, pp. 1–2, <<http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/17th-march-1906/1/in-the-house-of-commons-on-friday-week-the-second>> [accessed 19 February 2020].

³⁰ House of Lords, Hansard, 27 March 1906, vol. 154, cc 1019–36, <<http://www.hansard.millbanksystems.com>>. See Chapter 3 ‘For Love of Empire’, pp. 73–74.

³¹ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, p. 570. The appointment was announced in *The Times* on 8 April 1907.

³² Gregory D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 11.

Tariff Reform League.³³ George was the President of the Lancashire, Cheshire and N.W. Counties Division of the League.

In three political areas, Conservative politics, tariff reform and southern Africa, Bend'Or followed George's lead. It suited them both. Bend'Or needed George to steer him through political difficulties and George needed Bend'Or to give him resources and emotional support.

The need for money to pay for their manifesto pledges on social reform, and for more battleships that the public demanded, implied that in 1909 the Liberal Government needed a deep-reaching Budget. Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer, did not disappoint. His proposals contained a number of tax increases and new levies. It was the so-called 'land taxes', in addition to the introduction of supertax, which panicked landowners. These included proposed taxes on: the unearned increment of land either sold or inherited; a capital tax to be collected on undeveloped land and minerals; and a reversion duty on benefits enjoyed by a lessor at the end of a lease.³⁴ To implement these land taxes there would have to be a national land valuation. Provision for it was 'tacked' onto the Budget proposals although it was not strictly a fiscal measure. The Government anticipated opposition in the House of Lords, where landowners dominated. Andrew Adonis calculated that 471 of the 591 peers on the roll in 1911 were listed in Bateman's *Great Landowners* as owners of 2,000 acres or more.³⁵ The agricultural sector was already under stress. A continuing agricultural depression reduced rents; taxes, especially the introduction of death duties and charges from newly established local authorities, had increased; and imports from overseas markets knocked prices. The 3rd Lord Montagu of Beaulieu wrote: 'In an article written in 1907 my father demonstrated that in the previous forty-seven years the rent on his then thousand acre estate at Beaulieu had halved, while the burden of rates and taxes had

³³ Phillips, *The Diehards*, p. 121.

³⁴ Adams, *Balfour*, p. 239.

³⁵ Andrew Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work: The Peerage and the Political System in Britain 1884–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 146.

doubled'.³⁶ In the days when land ownership could still be equated with prestige and influence, Violet Bonham Carter summed up the Lords' attitude when she wrote: 'It was not only the purse but the power of the landlord which was at stake.'³⁷

The 'tacking' of a controversial measure onto a finance bill gave the Lords a pretext to reject Lloyd George's Budget. The Lords made use of the device of 'referendal', which is the right to amend or reject measures that the Lords believed lacked popular mandate. It gave peers a reasoned position to reject in its entirety the Budget on behalf of the electorate.³⁸

The Government for its part made no secret that the land taxes were designed to fall on urban land, where population growth had inflated values. The Earl Beauchamp, the newly appointed Lord President of the Council in Henry Asquith's Liberal government, and Bend'Or's brother-in-law, explained to the Lords:

This taxation of land values is not a taxation of agriculture land values [...] it is the taxation of urban land values [...]. This wealth which was hardly known forty or fifty years ago had grown [...] almost beyond the dream of avarice.³⁹

The wealthiest urban landowner was the Duke of Westminster, Bend'Or.

The alarm amongst landowners was reflected in a spontaneous reaction by some aristocrats, who spoke out against the Budget's proposals. Writing in 1910 from Harvard University, the historian Edward Porritt considered 'earls and dukes' who took up campaigning against the Budget were the first to introduce a class element. Porritt also suggests that the peers' opposition threatened to reverse centuries of constitutional reform.⁴⁰ He cites the Earls of Derby and Beaufort, the Marquis of

³⁶ Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, *More Equal than Others: The Changing Fortunes of the British and European Aristocracies* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), p. 169.

³⁷ Violet Bonham Carter, *Winston Churchill As I Knew Him* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965), p. 177.

³⁸ Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work*, p. 113.

³⁹ House of Lords, Hansard, 22 November 1909, col. 907.

⁴⁰ Edward Porritt, 'The Struggle over the Lloyd-George Budget', *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 24 (Feb. 1910), 243–78 (252–53).

Londonderry and the Dukes of Portland, Marlborough, Rutland, Bedford, Buccleuch and Somerset as the most vocal of the peers. Bend'Or was not included.

The Duke of Portland, who owned 183,199 acres and an income of £108,000, which included a good portion of London, was judged as one of the wealthiest landowners. He threatened his tenants with possible reduction in wages and/or employment. The Duke of Buccleuch, who was thought to be the second-wealthiest landowner in the country (after Bend'Or) with 460,108 acres and an income of £232,000, declined to send a subscription to his local football club owing 'to the large prospective increases in taxation caused by the present Budget'.⁴¹ The Duke of Rutland, with an acreage of 70,137 and an income of £97,000, was reported as saying the Budget was the work of Socialists.⁴² The Duke of Somerset, a relatively poor duke, told his Wiltshire estate workers that he would have to review his outgoings as a result of the Budget.⁴³

Professor Crosby includes Bend'Or in a list of protesting dukes. Crosby reasons, 'the second Duke of Westminster would likely have been the type of aloof and irresponsible aristocrat that Lloyd George had in mind'.⁴⁴ That Lloyd George targeted rich landowners is not in dispute. What is, is that Bend'Or should be accused of being an irresponsible aristocrat, which at this stage in Bend'Or life was far from the truth.

What is true is that the Grosvenor Estate had drawn attention to itself and, by doing so, may have played unwittingly into Lloyd George's hands. In December 1908 the Eaton Estate had announced that payment of its ex-gratia pensions would be stopped. Its statement encouraged pensioners over the age of seventy, who were eligible for the Government's new state scheme, to apply as 'His Grace's pensions'

⁴¹ Porritt, 'The Struggle over the Lloyd-George Budget', 255.

⁴² W.D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain since the Industrial Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1981), pp. 194–95; David Cannadine, 'The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire, c.1880–c.1926', *Agricultural History Review*, XXVI (1978), 92–93; David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), pp. 710–11. Rubinstein's and Cannadine's figures are based on John Bateman's *Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, which was first published in 1883; Travis L. Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George: A Statesman in Conflict* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), p. 93, citing *The Times*, 5 August 1909, 25 August 1909 and 3 September 1909.

⁴³ Porritt, 'The Struggle over the Lloyd-George Budget', 255–56.

⁴⁴ Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George*, p. 411, note 42.

would be stopped from the end of the year.⁴⁵ Administrative efficiency might well have been the motive. But the announcement suggested that the Estate would shirk its responsibility to its employees. That was probably not the intention. In 1935 the Estate was still paying pensions to its employees, as the book lodged in the City of Westminster's Archives verifies.⁴⁶ Moreover it was proved in *The Inland Revenue Commissioners v. the Duke of Westminster*, which concluded in 1935 (after an appeal which the Estate won) that pensions had been paid, in George Ridley's words, for 'hundreds of years'.⁴⁷ Nonetheless the Estate's announcement played to Lloyd George's case against the selfishness of dukes.

The Budget did not cause undue concern within the Grosvenor Estate office. There is no mention of the Budget proposals in that year's book of 'The Duke of Westminster: Notes and His Grace's Instructions' (His Grace's Instructions), suggesting the Budget's measures were seen in perspective.⁴⁸ An urban estate at the beginning of the twentieth century was under constant bombardment of demands from local authorities and amenities companies, such as railway and electrical corporations, for land and concessions. The threat from the Government of proposed land taxes would have been another issue the chief agent would have had to sort, once the land valuation, on which the new taxes were to be based, had been concluded. In the event the survey was never completed, so the land taxes suggested in 1909 were not introduced.

In any case, it is unlikely that Bend'Or would have spoken out. He was a shy man who hated public exposure and, as Churchill confirmed, he was 'not good at explaining things or making speeches'.⁴⁹ Additionally, Bend'Or was unsure about the ramifications of the Budget. Sibell reported to George:

⁴⁵ 'Old Age Pension Claimants', *Evesham and West Midlands Observer*, 26 December 1908, p. 2, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 20 February 2020].

⁴⁶ London, City of Westminster Archives, Grosvenor Papers, 1934/216, Particulars of Deed of Covenants in Favour of Certain Employees, 1930–1938.

⁴⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 200.

⁴⁸ GA, Adds 679/3, His Grace's Instructions, 1909–1911.

⁴⁹ Winston Churchill, 'Fearless, Gay and Delightful', *The Times*, 22 July 1953, p. 8.

He [Bend'Or] is rather puzzled as to something you said about the budget not understanding quite your view — but when you see him it wd help him to make it clear what you think. I did not know either except that you hope someday for a tariff reform to put things right again or better.⁵⁰

In the summer of 1909, as political debate on the Budget heated up, Lloyd George went on the offensive. He stepped up his rhetoric, using colloquial and inflammatory language 'to ginger up' the faithful and to generate support.⁵¹ His speeches were amusing and picturesque; and he picked on dukes in particular. Lloyd George argued that dukes were men 'who grudge out of their riches a fair contribution towards the less fortunate of their fellow-countrymen they are very shabby rich men'.⁵² Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's secretary and mistress, admits, 'L.G. ran true to form and derived great satisfaction from focusing his attacks upon the dukes, so it happened, were amongst the largest landowners and provided, so he thought, the most flagrant cases. They were, in fact, fair game.'⁵³ He had three dukes in his sights; Bend'Or was one of them.

In the Limehouse speech, to illustrate his proposed reversion tax, Lloyd George referred to Mr Gorringe, a tenant of the Grosvenors' London estate. Lloyd George might have thought he was on popular ground.

A dispute between John Lewis and his ground landlord, the Howard de Walden Estate, over properties near Cavendish Square had been running for years. The case was bitter. In 1903 John Lewis had been sent to Brixton Prison for contempt of court. The essence of the dispute was the nature of the leasehold system, which John Lewis considered represented an unfair balance of power between the landlord and tenant.⁵⁴ *The Times* obliquely supported John Lewis in an editorial on the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill. The opinion piece referred to the unpopularity of

⁵⁰ GA, WP 2/1/39, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 14 July (possibly) 1909.

⁵¹ Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George*, p. 96.

⁵² Limehouse speech, 30 July 1909, <<https://liberalhistory.org.uk/history/lloyd-george-on-the-peoples-budget>> [accessed 22 September 2019].

⁵³ Frances Lloyd George, *The Years That Are Past* (London: Hutchinson, 1967), 2nd impression, p. 61.

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Tweedale, 'Lewis, John', *ODNB*, January 2011, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/49323>>.

the English leasehold system, which required a tenant at the end of the tenure to repurchase the lease at the then current market price.⁵⁵ The Lewis–de Walden dispute was settled amicably in 1912 after twenty-three years.

If Lloyd George thought he had found a similar case with Mr Gorringe, he was mistaken. The larger question of whether the English leasehold system was appropriate was not an issue between Mr Gorringe and the Grosvenor Estate. Various Estate books show that Mr Gorringe and the Grosvenor Estate had a business relationship that stretched back into the nineteenth century. In 1901 Mr Gorringe, ‘draper’, sought permission to ‘purchase the shops in his occupation as leaseholder in the Buckingham Palace Road, and the premises at the rear [two shops]’. The Board approved and Bend’Or gave his consent.⁵⁶ However, the complete transaction may not have gone through. Another entry in 1903 suggests that Mr Gorringe was still a leaseholder in Buckingham Palace Road.⁵⁷ In 1904 he began rebuilding his properties there, which were completed by 1909. The Duke’s permission was sought to release the charge of £50,000, extracted in case the building work was not completed to the satisfaction of the Estate Surveyor. Bend’Or approved the return of the entire sum.⁵⁸ It was all normal business practice of the time.

Lloyd George’s interpretation was that landowners, in this case the Duke of Westminster, were charging tenants excessively. He claimed that when the lease on Gorringe’s properties came up for renewal, ‘he [Gorringe] went to the Duke of Westminster’, who increased the rent so that ‘the few hundreds a year pay for ground rent shall in the future be £4,000 a year’. The Chancellor added that Mr Gorringe had ‘to pay a fine — a fine, mind you! of £50,000’ and ‘to build up huge premises at enormous expense, according to plans approved by the Duke of Westminster’.⁵⁹ Whether it was a fine (a legal term of art) or the charge referred to

⁵⁵ Editorial, *The Times*, 24 March 1906, p. 11.

⁵⁶ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace’s Instructions, 1900–1904, 10 December 1910, p. 23.

⁵⁷ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace’s Instructions, 1900–1904, 8 October 1903, p. 107.

⁵⁸ GA, Adds 679/3, His Grace’s Instructions, 1909–1911, 2 January 1909, p. 4.

⁵⁹ Limehouse speech, 30 July 1909, <<https://liberalhistory.org.uk/history/lloyd-george-on-the-peoples-budget>> [accessed 22 September 2019].

above does not matter; Lloyd George knew his audience would have understood ‘a fine’ only in its criminal justice sense. He concluded:

all I can say to this — if it is confiscation and robbery for us to say to that duke, being in need of money for public purpose, we will take 10 per cent of all you have got, for that purpose what would you call his taking nine-tenth from Mr Gorringer?⁶⁰

The speech caused a sensation. The Duke of Westminster had been held up for public scorn and on a false premise. *The Times*’ Leader, headlined as ‘Mr Lloyd-George’s Inaccuracies’, highlighted that Lloyd George lacked moderation in his speech. The Leader criticized him for ‘tendering directly to foster that very class antagonism which we condemn Mr Lloyd-George for provoking’. Lloyd George’s argument was methodically unpicked and found wanting.⁶¹

The same edition carried a letter from Bend’Or. The language is stilted. Bend’Or claimed that people had been urging him to take legal action against the Chancellor, but he argued:

Whilst I should be disposed in other circumstances to attach importance to every utterance coming from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the traditions of that great office have become so far submerged under the personal idiosyncrasies of the present occupant that a person attacked from that quarter should find all that is necessary in the way of defence in the fairness and sense of decency still inherent in the community.⁶²

Lloyd George responded the next day. He had to admit that he was aware that ‘the prospectus issued by “Frederick Gorringer (Limited) in July 1903” contains the words “the premises now in occupation of the vendor will be leased at a rental of

⁶⁰ Limehouse speech, 30 July 1909, <<https://liberalhistory.org.uk/history/lloyd-george-on-the-peoples-budget>> [accessed 22 September 2019].

⁶¹ ‘Mr. Lloyd-George’s Inaccuracies’, *The Times*, 5 August 1909, p. 7. In all *The Times*’ references Lloyd-George’s name is hyphenated although he did not use a hyphen until 1944.

⁶² ‘Mr. Lloyd-George’s Speech at Limehouse’, *The Times*, 5 August 1909, p. 8.

£4,000 per annum (being £335 per annum more than the rent now paid by the business)”.⁶³

The King, Edward VII, was not amused by Lloyd George’s politicking. In the first week in August the King attended Cowes regatta, where he played host to the Tsar and Tsarina of Russia. Edward took the opportunity to tell the Prime Minister that Lloyd George had used language ““which the King thinks was calculated to set class against class and to inflame the passions of the working and lower orders against people who happened to be owners of property””.⁶⁴ The King was not alone in his opinion. Violet Bonham Carter commented, ‘he [Lloyd George] poured a devastating fire of wit, invective, eloquence and ridicule upon the great landowners of the Peerage, and in particular upon the Dukes, whom he arraigned as enemies of the people’.⁶⁵

As a show of support Bend’Or was invited to dinner on *HMY Victoria and Albert*.⁶⁶ The King also went to stay at Eaton in December 1909.⁶⁷ It was left to Sir Edward Grey to put the record straight by explaining that the Gorringer transaction was ‘an ordinary business transaction’. He continued:

‘if the Duke of Westminster had said “I am not going to have it because it is unearned increment,” Mr. Gorringer would have taken it, or somebody else would have taken it but the unearned increment in this case was a real and substantial thing, undeniable and, therefore, a very proper subject of taxation by the State.’⁶⁸

Lloyd George still argued for the new tax but Bend’Or and the Grosvenor Estate had been exonerated.

⁶³ ‘Mr. Lloyd-George’s Speech at Limehouse’, *The Times*, 6 August 1909, p. 10.

⁶⁴ Edward VII to Lloyd George, quoted in John Grigg, *Lloyd George: The People’s Champion 1902–1911* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1978), p. 211.

⁶⁵ Bonham Carter, *Winston Churchill*, p. 181.

⁶⁶ Court Circular, *The Times*, 5 August 1909, p. 9. *The Times* noted Bend’Or was unable to attend.

⁶⁷ Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2012), p. 444.

⁶⁸ ‘Sir Edward Grey at Leeds’, *The Times*, 11 August 1909, p. 8.

Professor Crosby in citing the case opines that Bend'Or was 'an example of how landlords took advantage of others'.⁶⁹ His accusation shows he has fallen for Lloyd George's fallacy. To win popular approval for a distributive Budget, Lloyd George had triangulated by sowing the suspicion that landowners, like the Duke of Westminster, were abusing the system. Bend'Or might not have warranted the accusation, but it was effective. The accusation stuck and the 'spirit of Limehouse' suffused the election campaign of 1910.⁷⁰

On 30 November 1909 the House of Lords fulfilled their threat and vetoed the Budget, the first time the House had moved against a finance bill for over 250 years. The Government sought an election to seek a popular mandate. It won but with a reduced majority. In April 1910 the 1909 Budget passed into law.

The result of the election forced the Liberals, who had failed to gain a clear majority, into an agreement with the Irish Parliamentary Party. Home Rule was back on the Parliamentary agenda. It was bound to provoke another contest with the Lords. To avoid it, Asquith's government was intent on curbing the Lords' power.

Bend'Or was in a completely different mood in 1911 when the Liberals' proposals for reform of the House of Lords was debated. He was in his second year of three *anni horribili*. Late in 1908 he developed what George Wyndham called a 'tropical fever, caused by a separate and known microbe with some horrible name'.⁷¹ Edward, Bend'Or's son, died in February 1909. In June 1910 Shelagh gave birth to a girl, not a boy which Bend'Or had fervently wanted. In July Bend'Or had a serious accident in his hydroplane in which he was thrown out and taken from the water unconscious.⁷² In November the sale of the Halkyn Estate, the Grosvenors' estate in Wales, was announced. It was a controversial decision in North Wales and Cheshire.⁷³

⁶⁹ Crosby, *The Unknown Lloyd George*, p. 93.

⁷⁰ John Buchan, *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell: A Memoir*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Nelson, 1920), p.155.

⁷¹ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, p. 626.

⁷² 'Duke of Westminster's Accident', *The Times*, 12 July 1910, p. 15; *London Daily News*, 'Duke of Westminster's Narrow Escape', 11 July 1910, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 1 March 2019].

⁷³ 'Sale of Halkyn Estate', *The Times*, 12 November 1910, p. 10.

In 1911 Bend'Or continued to be a concern to George. In February Bend'Or resigned from being Master of the Cheshire Hunt.⁷⁴ In June the King and Queen attended a ball at Grosvenor House: Bend'Or was noted by his absence.⁷⁵ Later in the month Bend'Or had another accident while playing polo, causing bulletins on his health to be printed in *The Times* over four days.⁷⁶ In July George wrote to Sibell: 'I got an invitation from Alice Stuart Wortley to dine & meet Paderewski but I refused by telegram in case Benny wd like me to cheer him up'.⁷⁷

Time was not being kind to George either. Balfour had not provided him with a meaningful position in the Unionist Party and his mental fragility was exacerbated by frenetic work, alcohol and disappointment as his career faltered.⁷⁸ As his isolation from the Conservative and Unionist leadership widened, George became more entrenched in the politics of the right. In 1909 George wrote to Sibell, 'I dined with Benny at Grosvenor House & got him & Shrewsbury on to vote for Lord Roberts [...]. This is a big fight for national salvation'.⁷⁹ The vote was for the National Service (Training and Home Defence) Bill, introduced by Earl Roberts and designed to institute compulsory national service.⁸⁰ Strong defences became a core component of those who were to be known as 'diehards'. Bend'Or made a rare speech, in Chester, in support of Lord Roberts' campaign for national service. According to Sibell, 'he [Bend'Or] had a tremendous reception'.⁸¹

⁷⁴ 'Hunting', *The Times*, 1 February 1911, p. 22.

⁷⁵ *Speaking for Themselves: The Personal Letters of Winston and Clementine Churchill*, ed. by Mary Soames (London: Black Swan, 1999), p. 49.

⁷⁶ Court Circular, *The Times*, 13 June 1911, p. 13; 14 June, 1911, p. 13; 15 June 1911, p.11; 17 June 1911, p. 13.

⁷⁷ GA, WP1/2/23, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 15 June 1911.

⁷⁸ *The Crawford Papers: The Journals of David Lindsay twenty-seventh Earl of Crawford and tenth Earl of Balcarres 1871–1940*, ed. by John Vincent (Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 329.

⁷⁹ GA, WP 1/2/22, letter from George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 July 1909.

⁸⁰ House of Lords, Hansard, 13 July 1909, <<https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1909/jul/13/national-service-training-and-home>> [accessed 3 September 2019].

⁸¹ GA, WP 2/1/44, Sibell to George Wyndham, 28 April 1913.

In the same year Bend'Or wrote a heartfelt letter to George. The circumstance is not clear but the letter shows the deep attachment that Bend'Or had for Wyndham. It was a month after Bend'Or's son had died, he wrote:

My dear George

You know how I feel for you, over this shadow that has now crossed your path.

If in any way I can do half of what you did for me in my trouble, I shall feel that I have done something.

Yours Bend'Or⁸²

The feeling of mutual support was shared. George wrote to Sibell in May 1911, 'I felt lonely so I called at Grosvenor House & find that Benny was lonely too so we dined together & were very happy.'⁸³

Asquith's Parliament Bill, otherwise known as the Veto Bill, which was designed to curtail the Lords' ability to reject Bills passed by the Commons, angered the Opposition, especially as it was widely regarded as a harbinger of a Home Rule Bill.⁸⁴ Reaction on the Tory benches was the strongest. Those who resisted constitutional change comprised a group that was known as 'diehards' or 'whole hoggers'. George as his political vision narrowed was a natural diehard.

In July George learnt that the new King, George V, had agreed to create enough peers to ensure the Parliament Bill passed the Lords. Faced with a constitutional crisis, the Unionists' leadership refrained from opposing the Bill, which George regarded as a sell-out. According to Blunt, George organised a 'conspirators' meeting with Bend'Or and F.E. Smith at 44 Belgrave Square. Blunt thought they were 'all three much excited' and commented further:

⁸² GA, WP 2/6, Bend'Or to George Wyndham, 18 March 1909.

⁸³ GA, WP 1/2/24, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 22 May 1911.

⁸⁴ J.R.M. Butler, *Lord Lothian (Philip Kerr) 1882–1940* (London: MacMillan, 1960), p. 42.

for some time past, George has been organizing a revolt against Lansdowne and Arthur Balfour's management of the Tory Party in the matter known as the Veto Bill [...]. Hugh Cecil and F.E. Smith are the leaders of the revolt with George. Bendor has turned Grosvenor House into an office, where they hold their meetings.⁸⁵

Earlier that day invitations were sent out from Grosvenor House in the names of Wyndham, Austen Chamberlain and F.E. Smith for a gala dinner on 26 July to honour the octogenarian Lord Halsbury, thrice former Lord Chancellor, who had been designated the diehards' leader.⁸⁶ It became a diehard rally. Lord Milner, who had been 'reluctantly dragged back [...] into politics', wrote that its purpose was 'to stiffen the back of the House of Lords'.⁸⁷ The *Times* reported five dukes attended the dinner: Bedford, Marlborough, Northumberland, Somerset and Bend'Or.⁸⁸

Papers in the Willoughby de Broke archive show how the diehards operated. Politically active peers were individually lobbied by a diehard agitator, who was also given a list of less active peers to rally. A resolution was drawn up for new recruits to sign, which stated that the House of Lords was 'essential to the cause of free government'.⁸⁹ The results of the canvass were fed back to Willoughby de Broke.

Each diehard was responsible for bringing their recruits to the House of Lords to vote against the Government. Bend'Or rallied some peers, probably to swell George's list. Sibell from Cheshire told George, 'Bend'Or has flown past — he gets to London between 5 & 6 I think & I hope with three peers'. A further note added, 'I hope Bend'Or is arriving at the House with his little cohort of Peers'.⁹⁰ The

⁸⁵ Blunt, *My Diaries*, II, p. 371.

⁸⁶ Richard Greville Verney, Lord Willoughby de Broke, *The Passing Years* (London: Constable, 1924), p. 283; PA, Willoughby de Broke Papers, WB/2/52, WB/2/54, WB/2/56, WB/2/65; PA, WB/2/58. A copy of the invitation is reproduced in Charles Petrie, *Life and Letters*, I, p. 279; Egremont, *The Cousins*, p. 277. Egremont includes Curzon's name as a host; but Blunt's diary entry for 25 July is explicit that Curzon was not counted at this stage as a diehard: Blunt, *My Diaries*, II, p. 372.

⁸⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS, Milner, dept. 82, Diary for 1911, 1 August.

⁸⁸ 'The Dinner to Lord Halsbury', *The Times*, 27 July 1911, p. 6.

⁸⁹ PA, Papers of Willoughby de Broke, WB/2/5, Resolution.

⁹⁰ GA, WP 2/1/41, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, August 1911 (no day given).

suggestion is that Bend'Or by shepherding some peers to London gives an impression that they were indeed backwoodsmen.⁹¹

Bend'Or did not seek prominence in the diehard movement. He lent Grosvenor House and supported George, but otherwise he did not engage. It suggests that Bend'Or's motive was primarily to support George. It was characteristic of his political behaviour, then and later, to follow rather than lead.

The diehard effort was to no avail. On 10 August the Lords passed the Parliament Bill. Willoughby de Broke listed seven dukes who voted against the Bill: Bedford, Leeds, Marlborough, Newcastle, Northumberland, Somerset and Westminster. Two, Abercorn and Sutherland, who were predicted to vote with the diehards, are marked 'RO' [ran out] in de Broke's hand.⁹² Bend'Or stayed in London to vote even though he missed a day of a visit to Eaton by the Spanish monarchs.⁹³ Bend'Or had dinner with George, Milner and Carson on the night of the defeat. George wrote later the same evening to Sibell telling her that Milner and Carson can 'see that Benny has done a great deal for truth and Right'. The letter disintegrated into a rage. He told her:

Of course we can never meet George Curzon or St John Broderick again nor can we ever consent to act with Lansdowne or Balfour if they summon Curzon to their counsels [*sic*] [...] I will never act with George Curzon, I will never bend the knee to the Harmsworth Press I will never meet Curzon at a council convened by Balfour [...] now we are 'finished' with the cosmopolitan press — and the American duchesses & the Saturday to Monday at Taplow [...]. For it is now a civil war. And when some sincere men are shot — & they will be — at barricades their blood will be on the heads of Bishops.

⁹¹ Phillips, *The Diehards*, p. 6.

⁹² PA, WB/2/119.

⁹³ 'Festivities at Eaton', *Liverpool Echo*, 11 August 1911, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000648/19110811/061/0007>> [accessed 30 January 2020].

After that I will get Milner & Benny to form the nucleus of a new Party of clean men.⁹⁴

The threat of a new party was hyperbole. Once the tariff reform supporter Bonar Law became Leader of the Unionist Party (in November 1911), George was noticeably solicitous to him.⁹⁵ Even after Law had to limit his support for tariff reform in January 1913, George made it clear to Amery that, while they must continue to campaign for full tariff reform, they should not ‘embarrass the Unionist Party and its Leader. My word wd be “Conversion not Coalition”’.⁹⁶

Alan Sykes credits Willoughby de Broke with a leading role in the emergence of the radical right in the Unionist Party.⁹⁷ A closed file in the Biggs-Davison papers, opened for this thesis, suggests that between 1911 and 1913 it was George Wyndham who was the more proactive malcontent.⁹⁸ Instead of creating a new party, George spent the summer of 1911 scheming and laying the foundation for what became the Halsbury Club (named after Lord Halsbury) with the intention of creating ‘the revival of a constructive Conservative policy’ by encouraging diehard politics within the Unionist Party.⁹⁹ At the end of August George dined with Milner, who recorded: ‘we had an endless tête-à-tête about matters political’.¹⁰⁰ An upshot was that Milner visited Eaton. George recorded: ‘I have a telegram from Benny making Ld Milner welcome at Eaton & a letter from Milner proposing Monday 18th’.¹⁰¹ Leo Amery accompanied Milner and, according to Amery, they discussed

⁹⁴ GA, WP 1/2/24, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 10 August 1911.

⁹⁵ PA, Bonar Law papers, BL/27/1/3, George Wyndham to Bonar Law MP, 1 August 1912. George told Bonar Law ‘to “pass the word” to the Central Office & the Whips room that you approve of what I am trying to do’.

⁹⁶ PA, John Biggs-Davison papers, BD 1/70, George Wyndham to L.S. Amery, 4 January 1913.

⁹⁷ Sykes, ‘The Radical Right’, 661–76.

⁹⁸ PA, BD/1/70.

⁹⁹ John Biggs-Davison, *George Wyndham: A Study in Toryism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Bodleian, MS, Milner dept. 82, Milner’s diary, 30 August 1911.

¹⁰¹ GA, WP 1/2/24, George Wyndham to Sibell Countess Grosvenor, 3 September 1911.

‘Imperial Unity, Defence and Social Welfare, with Tariff reform as the essential economic instrument’.¹⁰²

There is an important qualification in Milner’s diary: Bend’Or was not party to the discussion. Milner noted: ‘Bend’Or’s motor met us at Chester & we went straight to Eaton Park. No-one there but Bend’Or, Shrewsbury [Bend’Or’s brother-in-law] & Wyndham. Dined alone with Wyndham & Amery — the others went to the Yeomanry mess — & talked politics hard till midnight’.¹⁰³ Bend’Or’s absence confirms his role as a George supporter rather than an independent activist.

George named the key players in the Halsbury Club as Lord Halsbury and Lords Selborne, Milner, Willoughby de Broke, and Robert and Hugh Cecil.¹⁰⁴ Carson was another, but no mention is made of Austen Chamberlain.¹⁰⁵ Their first meeting was on 6 November. Balfour resigned the next day. According to Lord Crawford, then the Unionist Chief Whip, the emergence of an organized traditionalist grouping forced Balfour’s resignation, especially as it was formed ‘by his nearest relatives and oldest friends’.¹⁰⁶ It might have precipitated the timing of the announcement, but Professor Adams has convincingly argued that Balfour had made up his mind to resign earlier in the autumn.¹⁰⁷

Although the Halsbury Club had wide ambitions, the urgent political topics were the constitutional settlement of Ireland, the suffragettes and tariff reform. Home Rule for Ireland was critical between 1911 and 1914. Bend’Or’s attitude to Irish politics is not known. At this time Bend’Or had no land in Ireland. No papers have been seen on Bend’Or’s involvement with the Irish issue — indeed, it is not known if there are any. George was consorting with loyalists like Carson, but Wilfrid Blunt noted in 1905 that George ‘certainly became converted to views not very

¹⁰² L.S. Amery, *My Political Life: England before the Storm 1896–1914*, 3 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1953), I, pp. 395–96.

¹⁰³ Bodleian, MS, Milner, dept. 82, diary entry, 18 September 1911.

¹⁰⁴ GA, WP 1/2/24, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 October 1911.

¹⁰⁵ Adams, *Balfour*, p. 257, note includes Chamberlain.

¹⁰⁶ Vincent, *The Crawford Papers*, p. 229.

¹⁰⁷ Adams, *Balfour*, p. 257.

distinguishable from Home Rule'.¹⁰⁸ George had had his fingers badly burnt over Ireland and his attention was on tariff reform. As argued in this chapter, Bend'Or would have followed George's political lead. Whether Bend'Or gave any money to the Ulster Protestants at George's or Milner's bidding, either directly or through an intermediary such as Bonar Law, is an unanswered question.¹⁰⁹ Bend'Or could have done, as it was his habit to back causes supported by his mentors, with money rather than personal involvement; but this is speculation. Bonar Law's appointment as Leader of the Conservative Unionist Party revived internal disagreements over tariff reform. Chamberlain's view that tariffs could be a means of raising revenue for social reform without resorting to higher taxation gained traction after Lloyd George's 1909 Budget.¹¹⁰ For Conservatives, George Wyndham amongst them, tariff reform was primarily a means of strengthening the Empire. For them, tariff reform implemented through imperial preference would encourage a common market within the Empire based on preferential tariffs.¹¹¹ The divisions were by no means contained or clear.¹¹² And there was a growing difference between the Party leadership and its grassroots which fuelled the Tariff Reform League (TRL) and the rival Free Food League.¹¹³

Divisions in views focused on food taxes. Improved refrigeration and faster ships meant Britain was importing 70 per cent of its wheat supply and a sizeable percentage of other foods.¹¹⁴ The 'imperial faction' wanted full food tariffs even if it

¹⁰⁸ Blunt, *My Diaries*, II, 28 February 1905, p. 120.

¹⁰⁹ Iain McLean, 'The 1909 Budget and the Destruction of the Unwritten Constitution', 3 November 2009, p. 2, <<http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/the-1909-budget-and-the-destruction-of-the-unwritten-constitution>> [accessed 20 February 2020]. McLean makes the point that Unionist gun-running 'may have been financed by the Leader of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition', i.e. Bonar Law; p. 3: George Wyndham was keen to support the tariff reformer Law, begging the question could George have persuaded Bend'Or to give money to curry favour with Bonar Law? Or did George's Home Rule instincts stay his hand? It is a question that further research should answer.

¹¹⁰ Adams, *Balfour*, p. 242.

¹¹¹ Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 1033–54.

¹¹² Sykes, 'The Radical Right', 661–76 (664).

¹¹³ Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 039.

¹¹⁴ E.H.H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism: The Politics, Economics and Ideology of the Conservative Party 1880–1914* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 208.

meant a duty on imported wheat; while those concerned with the adverse effect of food taxes on public opinion sought a mixture of compromises.¹¹⁵ The issue of possible food taxes had been seized upon by the Liberal Party, who dubbed the proposed tariff increases as a ‘stomach-tax’, ‘bread tax’ and ‘food tax’. It had proved to be an effective campaigning message in the 1906 election, to the Conservatives’ cost.

The signs that Law was moving to acceptance of tariff reform with food taxes did not go down well with the rank and file of the Party, whose job it would have been to sell the policy on doorsteps. To counter adverse publicity on tariff reform, Amery was put in charge of an information campaign on the rationale for ‘food taxes’. His first attempt had limited success.¹¹⁶

In 1912 George and Amery had set up the Chamberlain Birthday Fund, with Bend’Or as its President, to raise money to support the work of the Tariff Reform League.¹¹⁷ But more had to be done. George and Amery therefore settled on establishing the Imperial Fund. Amery later confessed, ‘I forget whether the original idea was Wyndham’s or mine’.¹¹⁸ Ostensibly its function was to provide resources to support another campaign on the benefits of tariff reform, especially in parts of the country that ‘T.R. & I.Pref has not been suffic explained’.¹¹⁹ But as George also made clear to Amery, the Imperial Fund’s real function was to stiffen the Unionist policy to ensure imperial preference ‘be kept in the forefront of the T.R. prog’.¹²⁰ Later Amery confirmed these intentions to John Biggs-Davison:

¹¹⁵ Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism*, p. 325; Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work*, p. 150.

¹¹⁶ Thompson, ‘Tariff Reform’, 1048–49.

¹¹⁷ Thompson, ‘Tariff Reform’, 1048–49.

¹¹⁸ PA, BD/1/70, Amery to John Biggs-Davison, 1950.

¹¹⁹ PA, BD/1/70, Wyndham’s memorandum, n.d.

¹²⁰ PA, BD/1/70, Wyndham’s memorandum.

The object of this was both to enable the Tariff Reform League to carry on and also to make sure that it continued to advocate the whole policy of Imperial Preference and not relapse into pure insular protectionism.¹²¹

The Imperial Fund was a decisive move by the imperialist faction to capture the argument within the Party. The support of the TRL, which had branches and recruits throughout the country, was important. George Wyndham told Bonar Law: ‘I have seen Austen [Chamberlain] who will also write to Goulding [Francis Goulding, Chairman of the TRL] who welcomes a new recruiting sergeant. I cannot say how encouraging it is to get such quick support for an idea’.¹²²

George counted on the support of his stepson. Bend’Or became President of the Fund. A bank account was established, at Lloyds Bank, St James’s Street under the names of the Duke of Westminster, George Wyndham and L.S. Amery. From this account money could be transferred to the Tariff Reform League.¹²³ Sir Francis Trippel was appointed as ‘Organiser’.

Having Bend’Or as the President of the Fund was considered an advantage. He conveyed social prestige and had the necessary resources to stand as guarantor of the Fund’s viability. According to Sibell, Bend’Or was enthusiastic about the project. She told George, ‘I see himself [Bend’Or] is very keen about it & interested in Fr: Trip & the wonderful jump with wh: you have started off as against the Diehards last year: He hears — private that is K is interested & hoping all good may come of it!’¹²⁴ The reference to K cannot be clarified—considering the family’s Court connections, the King is a possibility.

A few days later George Wyndham replied: ‘Trippel tells me he is going to Eaton to see Benny. It is a real joy to me that Benny is “going in” for this campaign & I shall revel in having him to go “tiger-hunting” with.’¹²⁵

¹²¹ PA, BD/1/70, Amery to Biggs-Davison, 1950. In BD1/70 there are some documents that L.S. Amery must have given to John Biggs-Davison.

¹²² PA, BL 26/4/28, George Wyndham to Bonar Law, 20 November 1912.

¹²³ PA, BD/1/70, Wyndham’s memorandum, n.d.

¹²⁴ GA, WP 2/1/43, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 8 August 1912.

¹²⁵ GA, WP 1/2/25, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 August 1912.

Bend'Or did try, in his fashion, to give George and the Fund the necessary support. An article appeared in Bend'Or's name. From the tone of the quotes used by Gregory D. Phillips, the article was probably written by George. The article ended with a rallying cry, 'We must either unify the Empire or allow it to disintegrate'.¹²⁶ An Imperial Fund Founders' dinner was held in July at Grosvenor House. George wrote to Bonar Law:

I wonder if you would dine with Westminster tomorrow Tuesday or look in — if you are engaged — for a moment to give us your blessing. I did not like to suggest this until I felt that something substantial had been done. So far I have got over £15,000 of which £5,000 from Bedford is contingent on our raising £50,000. I feel fairly confident of doing so by November.

In addition to Bend'Or and George, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Leconfield, Leo Amery, three members of Parliament and three industrialists were listed to attend.¹²⁷

The dinner raised £21,000.¹²⁸ It was not as much as was wanted but times were inauspicious. As well as trouble in Ireland there were the activities of the suffragettes, workers' unrest and German aggrandizement which occupied minds. Bend'Or supported another fundraising effort. George wrote to Bonar Law:

I dined with Westminster tonight & he is ready to throw himself into this fight. He proposes to give a dinner at Grosvenor house to 100 or 150 — if I can get them [...] but he hopes you can come to the dinner & asks me to ascertain that day would be convenient [...]. I confidently guarantee a banquet that will settle the whole business.¹²⁹

Sir Francis Trippel kept Bonar Law informed of its progress. In October he noted that 'several leading Canadians are coming over to attend the banquet'. He also told Law that 'the Duke has broken his collar bone and is laid up in France where he is

¹²⁶ Phillips, *The Diehards*, pp. 107–08.

¹²⁷ PA, BL 26/5/46, George Wyndham to Bonar Law, 29 July 1912.

¹²⁸ Frans Coetzee, *For Party or Country: Nationalism and the Dilemmas of Popular Conservatism in Edwardian England* (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 146.

¹²⁹ PA, BL 27/1/3, letter from George Wyndham to Bonar Law, 1 August 1912.

playing polo'.¹³⁰ The 'banquet' attracted 200 people and £60,000 was raised, 'far more than anyone expected', according to the Treasurer, Amery.¹³¹

The Imperial Fund, with Bend'Or still President, launched a national appeal at the beginning of 1913. The appeal hoped to raise £100,000 to fund a 'great work of popular education' on tariff reform and imperial preference.¹³² A letter to editors, signed by Bend'Or as the Duke of Westminster, appeared in local newspapers. The following is taken from the *Manchester Courier & Lancashire General*. The letter opens with a challenge: 'Everyone who believes in the Empire is bound to help forward the cause of economic federation'. Donations were to be sent to the 'Organiser, Grosvenor House', and those sending £1,000 or more would become 'Founder Members'.¹³³

Bend'Or pointed out that the aims of the Imperial Fund were non-partisan and that the Fund was not committed to any single or exclusive policy of imperial development. Imperial preference, Bend'Or wrote, 'is only a means to an end, namely, the consolidation of the States of the Empire into a great organic union. All the large political federations of the world have been based upon a common fiscal and economic policy'.¹³⁴

The richest duke in the country riding at the head of a great cause might have appealed to George's romantic vision, but public opinion saw only a rich and privileged man advocating a rise in food prices. It implies a lack of political, and cultural, realism by tariff reformer idealists.

Later in the month tension within the Unionist Party was febrile. When Law threatened to resign, a pledge of loyalty, known as the January Memorial, was organized amongst Unionist parliamentarians. In January 1913 Trippel wrote to Law on Bend'Or's behalf to assure him that the Duke, who was in the South of

¹³⁰ PA, BL 27/3/15, Trippel to Bonar Law, 7 October 1912.

¹³¹ Amery, *My Political Life*, I, p. 413.

¹³² Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 1049.

¹³³ 'Imperial Preference', *Manchester Courier & Lancashire General*, 1 January 1913, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 20 February 1920].

¹³⁴ Letters to the Editor, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 January 1913, p. 4, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 25 October 2019].

France, 'would loyally support you whatever your answer may be regarding the Memorial presented to you today'.¹³⁵ This is surprising. A month before, George had written a private letter to Bonar Law in which he stated categorically that if preference on wheat fell off the agenda, then:

In that case I should be obliged to continue my advocacy of Imperial preference, with the wheat preference but I should do so with scrupulous care not to embarrass your leadership or embitter relations between sections of the Unionist Party.¹³⁶

It is probable that the letter reflected Trippel's ambitions and had not been referred to Bend'Or in France.¹³⁷ It was an example of Bend'Or's inclinations to be too trusting of those acting in his name and to be inattentive to the point of carelessness. It was a mistake he would make again.

Trippel also told Law that an appeal by Bend'Or for the Imperial Fund and imperial preference would appear in the next day's edition of *The Outlook* and 'a copy of that journal is being sent to every Unionist member of both houses of Parliament'.¹³⁸

Bend'Or's activities prompted a response from Joseph Chamberlain, dated 21 February 1913, which was released to the newspapers. He wrote:

My dear Westminster,

I am very glad to see that you are still active in pressing the new project which you have forward for raising a Fund to carry on the Imperial Reform campaign [...]. I do not hesitate to say that its success will largely depend on

¹³⁵ PA, BL 28/2/49, Francis Trippel to Bonar Law, 10 January 1913.

¹³⁶ PA, BL 28/1/104, George Wyndham to Bonar Law, 30 December 1912.

¹³⁷ PA, BL 27/3/13, Trippel to Bonar Law, 7 October 1912. Trippel told Law he had asked Amery to 'embody my views and suggestions in a letter to you'.

¹³⁸ PA, BL 28/2/49, Francis Trippel to Bonar Law, 10 January 1913.

you and on those who have contributed to give to its due prominence [...].

We ought however not to allow what has been so begun to rest here.¹³⁹

Three months later Wyndham was dead. He was in France, preparing to join Bend'Or, from where he wrote to Sibell about the joys of a restaurant, noting 'No Jew was there.'¹⁴⁰ Bend'Or mourned George as a father. Writing from Mimizan two months after George's death, he told his mother:

It [Mimizam] is looking too lovely. & all my roses and other flowers have done well & smell divine. Swam about the river all this aft: then a long ride through the Forest — my heart went out with sorrow to think that someone who would have loved it had never seen it on this earth [...]. I feel it more & more everyday, [...] — your son.¹⁴¹

In August 1914, distressed by the chaos at the beginning of the First World War, Bend'Or wrote to his mother from Flanders: 'We have as usual made some awful mistakes and are now rectifying them, but they have cost many lives [...]. I wish we had a great brain here. Would to God dear George were here.'¹⁴²

With George's death the Imperial Fund lost momentum and faltered and the TRL leadership succumbed to the negative views of its members on the prospects of food taxes.¹⁴³ Bonar Law's compromise of announcing that food duties would not be introduced until after a second election took the urgency out of further campaigning. The epicentre of politics moved on to Ireland, women's rights and the Great War.

With no George, Bend'Or showed no further interest in politics until the 1930s. He had taken up politics because he felt it was his duty to his station and to his stepfather. He had little personal inclination for it, or interest.

¹³⁹ 'The Imperial Fund', *Whitstable Times and Herne Bay Herald*, 1 March 1913, p. 3, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000338/19130301/061/0003>> [accessed 25 October 2019].

¹⁴⁰ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, pp. 748–50.

¹⁴¹ GA, WP 1/11/4, letter from Bend'Or to Sibell, 2 August 1913.

¹⁴² GA, WP 1/11/4, letter from Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 August 1914; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 77.

¹⁴³ Thompson, 'Tariff Reform', 153.

George left Bend'Or a difficult legacy, and one that did Bend'Or no favours. George had sidetracked Bend'Or from the influences and restraining effect of mainstream or moderate conservatism during a period when political style and content were becoming increasingly defined and party-driven. George Wyndham's zeal linked Bend'Or to a more extreme definition of Conservatism, that of reaffirming landed interests, imperial co-operation and national defence. They were issues that drew Bend'Or to the more radical politics of the 1930s. Through his allegiance to right-wing Conservatism his contemporaries saw him as reactionary and an unreconstructed diehard. It was an identity that tends to eclipse other aspects of his character. Bend'Or could also be innovative and forward-looking, as his interest in technological advances demonstrates, but in politics he had been schooled as a diehard and he remained one for the foreseeable future.

From Bend'Or's perspective his experience of active politics had been troublesome. The desertion by the Government of the British settlements in South Africa had ruined his imperialistic dreams, he had been publicly mocked in 1909, and he witnessed political assault on Lord Milner and, more seriously, on George Wyndham. After 1911 Bend'Or never attended Parliament again.

Chapter 5. Chums at War

Bend'Or's war record in North Africa is celebrated.¹ Less is known of his work on armaments, and nothing on his extraordinary trip to Spain in the spring of 1918. Material from The National Archives, the National Army Museum and the Grosvenor and Churchill archives, much of it hitherto unused, confirms Bend'Or had a crucial role in introducing armoured cars to the British army and in the early stages of the tank's development. During the Great War he also consolidated his friendship with Winston Churchill. Their common interest was excitement and adventure. To this end Churchill provided Bend'Or with opportunity while in return Bend'Or provided material wealth and personal support to sustain Churchill's ambitions.

The Great War came at a crucial time for Bend'Or. He was thirty-five years old and disillusioned by the aristocratic life he had led until 1914. The period of 1909–1913 had been unsettling. It was marked by the deaths of his only son and his stepfather, a troublesome political experience and a separation from his wife. Bend'Or was spending most of his time in France, where he indulged in boar-hunting, polo and yachting.

He was at Mimizan, his French retreat, when the Germans invaded Belgium.² With an impetuosity which was a mark of his character he went straight to Arras with an idea of joining the French army.³ From there he wrote to his mother: 'Just heard from the General here that England has definitely declared war on Germany — this being the case I should have to get back if not too late — the French are very confident almost too much I think'.⁴

¹ Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), pp. 170–82; Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), pp. 136–41; George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), pp. 87–108; S.C. Rolls, *Steel Chariots in the Desert: The First World War Experience of a Rolls Royce Armoured Car Driver with the Duke of Westminster in Libya and in Arabia with T.E. Lawrence* (London: Jonathan Capel, 1937; repr. www.Leonaur.com, 2005), pp. 13–53.

² Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 August 1914.

³ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 76.

⁴ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 5 August 1914.

On 15 August *The Times* reported that Bend'Or was at the Admiralty 'to say good-bye to his cousin [*sic*], Winston Churchill', the First Sea Lord.⁵ This is interesting: the opening stage of a war is a frantic time, so the fact that Churchill prioritized seeing Bend'Or shows that Churchill regarded their meeting as important.

On the same day of Bend'Or's visit, according to Churchill writing in *Great Contemporaries*, General Sir John French, Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, met Churchill too. Churchill wrote, 'And ten days later [from 5 August], [...] he [French] came solemn, radiant, and with glistening eye to take leave of me before embarking upon the swift vessel which waited at Dover'.⁶

Churchill knew that being the voice of the navy would leave him isolated from the main military command, especially as his relationship with the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener, was fractious. On the other hand, Churchill had a good friendship with Sir John.⁷ It is probable that Churchill asked French to take Bend'Or, whom French knew from the Boer War, onto his staff. The arrangement meant that Churchill and French were complicit in guaranteeing a confidential way to communicate with each other. It ensured that Churchill could exert his influence on the war's progress, to the exasperation of many.⁸

The Boer War had convinced Churchill that subsequent warfare would be machine-driven and mobile. He was, as Andrew Roberts states, always interested in the next generation of weaponry.⁹ Perceptively Churchill had told the Royal United Services Institute in 1901, 'You do not want to teach your infantry to ride but to teach your cavalry to shoot [...] and let us abandon once and for all our servile imitation of European methods [...] and develop our unique and peculiar resources.'¹⁰ At the Admiralty Churchill set about reshaping his resources. He established the

⁵ *The Times*, 15 August 1915.

⁶ Winston S. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (London: Reprint Society, 1941), p. 70.

⁷ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, pp. 65–77.

⁸ John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1993), pp. 100, 111.

⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), p. 173.

¹⁰ Winston L. Spencer Churchill Esq., M.P. (Late Lieutenant 4th Hussars), 'Some Impressions of the War in South Africa', *Royal United Services Institute Journal*, 45:281 (1901): 835–48, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03071840109423722>>.

Royal Navy Air Service (RNAS) in July 1914, delegated it to Murray Sueter and instructed that Sueter report directly to him.¹¹ The Royal Navy Division was created in August, making a land force within the navy;¹² and the Royal Navy Armoured Car Division followed in September.

According to Ridley, Bend'Or had also foreseen the importance of speed in war.¹³ With a lateral-thinking ability, for which he has been insufficiently credited, Bend'Or had a lifetime interest in weaponry innovation. Just as engines had fascinated his father, technology interested Bend'Or for its potential to create possibilities.

Bend'Or rejoined the Cheshire Yeomanry in 1914.¹⁴ His official military record shows that he was 'seconded for service with the French army'.¹⁵ He joined Sir John's staff and was assigned as a liaison officer between the French and the British armies, a suitable appointment for someone who was fluent in French.

Having taken his leave of Churchill, Bend'Or returned to Arras, from where he wrote to his mother:

have been here 2 days & got up long before the Headquarters staff [...]. I think the only other English was Col. Fowler here [...] Sir John French I expect gets here today. I left them at Amiens and came straight here.¹⁶

Bend'Or left for war with his cars and his chauffeur, George Powell. Powell was not a luxury (as some writers have supposed) but a necessity as the army had few car mechanics. A bit later Bend'Or described his role to his mother. From an undisclosed address he reported:

¹¹ London, The National Archives (TNA), MUN 5/210/1940/3, Churchill's first draft for the Royal Commission on Inventions, para. 6, n.d.

¹² Charmley, *Churchill*, p. 103.

¹³ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 81.

¹⁴ Lt-Col Sir Richard Verdin, *Cheshire (Earl of Chester's) Yeomanry 1898–1967: The last British regiment to fight on horses* (Birkenhead: Willmer, 1971), pp. 37, 44. Note: Verdin insists that Bend'Or was 'on the strength' of the Cheshire Yeomanry for the whole war and wore the Yeomanry badge throughout his time in uniform. However, he concedes that Bend'Or was detached from that regiment to the Motor Section of the Machine Gun Corps in September 1915. The official records show that Bend'Or left the army in November 1914 to join the RNAS, then part of the navy.

¹⁵ TNA, WO 374/73266, War Record of Major (Temp.) Hugh R.A. Westminster, Duke of.

¹⁶ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 August 1914.

heavy firing in the N. today — it [the war] has begun in earnest — all very secret so keep anything I say to yourself first for safety [...]. Hugh Dawnay and I work together & link up with different armies from headquarters. We also do a lot of reconnoitring & pick up positions etc.¹⁷

He was worried about the war's lack of progress. On 19 August he wrote to his mother, 'we have as usual made some awful mistakes [we] are now rectifying them but they have cost many lives and many miles of marching'. He continued that too much 'secrecy is playing the mischief'. His life had been risked when he had been ordered to go to a town not knowing it was surrounded by Germans. He felt 'this is carrying things too far'.¹⁸ He was involved in heavy fighting.

The opening phase of the First World War on the Western Front saw opposing armies aiming to outmanoeuvre each other in an attempt to attack, or defend, northern France. The emphasis was on mobility. The British Expeditionary Force was initially successful in resisting German encirclement of Paris, thereby saving the collapse of France, but by the end of August 1914 the Germans had driven the British back, leaving Belgium exposed. It was a situation which Churchill had anticipated, and he bent his energy to protecting Antwerp. He poured the Admiralty's resources into that mission, amongst which, with Kitchener's agreement, was an RNAS squadron of aeroplanes under the command of Commander Charles Samson. From Ostend Samson's task was to support the defence of Antwerp and to establish pioneering attacks on Zeppelin bases in Germany. Accompanying the planes were the RNAS cars, which had been gathered from Churchill's personal contacts. It included cars from Charles Rolls' Volunteer Corps, which consisted of twenty-five members including Bend'Or. Bend'Or's cars were not involved, probably because he needed them himself.¹⁹ The unarmoured cars were being used to ferry pilots to planes, for patrolling the airfields, and for reconnaissance. With a shortage of planes, Sampson looked to use the cars as an offensive weapon.

¹⁷ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 24 August 1914. Hugh Dawnay was serving as General Staff Officer 2nd Grade. He was killed on 6 November 1914. The mention of Dawnay confirms that Bend'Or was acting on French's staff.

¹⁸ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 August 1914.

¹⁹ *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car: Its Substance and its Place in History*, ed. by Eliot Levin (Northamptonshire: The Rolls-Royce Enthusiasts' Club, 2016), p. 59.

Witnessing how the Belgians used their armoured cars, Charles Samson and his brother Felix, with what one writer describes as ‘the British penchant for improvisation at its best’, strengthened their own cars with materials they had at hand, and armed them with navy guns.²⁰

On 18 September Bend’Or met Churchill in Calais, from where they drove to British Headquarters at La Fère-en-Tardenois to rendezvous with Sir John French.²¹ On 20 September Churchill visited Dunkirk, the depot of his RNAS squadron.²² Churchill went to France a week later, on another of his frequent ‘jaunts’ that irritated Kitchener and others.²³ Bend’Or was with him. ‘Sorry to have had such a hurried farewell’, he wrote to his mother, ‘Winston and I are just going to embark on a destroyer, he come with me to see French — this private, yr son’.²⁴ Churchill confirmed the visit, and Bend’Or’s involvement, to Kitchener: ‘I can now get away for 24 hours and Westminster is returning in his car this morning. There wd I am sure be advantage in my having a talk with French’.²⁵ Ridley claims that the purpose of this trip was to convince the military ‘that the war could only be won by a rapid development and deployment of armoured vehicles’.²⁶ Ridley’s claim is premature; the protection of Antwerp was a more pressing concern as the Germans attacked the city three days later. The city fell on 10 October. Bend’Or was there with Lieutenant General Sir Henry Rawlinson, another friend from the Boer War, who had taken command of the IV Corps on 4 October.²⁷ Bend’Or wrote home, ‘I

²⁰ David Fletcher, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car* (Oxford: Osprey, 2012), p. 6.

²¹ The Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill C.H., *The World Crisis 1911–1914*, 2 vols (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1923), I, p. 280.

²² Brian Lavery, *Churchill Warrior: How a Military Life Guided Winston’s Finest Hours* (Oxford: Casemate, 2017), p. 167.

²³ Charmley, *Churchill*, pp. 111, 126.

²⁴ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 26 September 1914.

²⁵ *The Churchill Documents, Companion*, ed. by Martin Gilbert, 9 vols (London: Heinemann, 1972–2014), III: *Early Years in Politics 1901–1907*, part 1 (1972), pp. 140–41.

²⁶ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 83.

²⁷ Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London: Abacus, 2004), p. 392. Rawlinson was a Staff Officer to General Lord Roberts at the same time as Bend’Or.

am with Sir H Rawley [Rawlinson] [...] I hope we can do something to save Antwerp or anyhow to revenge it. You won't get much news from me for some time.'²⁸

Ridley's claim holds some truth. During their numerous meetings Churchill and Bend'Or witnessed the effectiveness of Belgian armoured cars, which convinced them that the provision of rapid fire from moving protected bases would be critical to winning the war. Armoured cars had been developed before 1914 by the Austrians, French, Germans, Italians and Belgians, but there was nothing of the equivalent in Britain.²⁹ *The Times* on 11 November 1914 carried a description from a captured German officer of the guerrilla tactics used by Belgian cars against the invading Germans:

The Belgians have understood thoroughly how to use [cavalrymen and cyclists...] supported by quick firing guns and machine guns on armoured cars. These motorcars operated with great skill on side roads, and after a few rounds would get away uninjured. While we bring down large number of riders and cyclists, it is absolutely impossible to get at the armoured motor cars [...].³⁰

Churchill told Sueter to develop equivalent cars.³¹ He later noted:

almost immediately after the German inroad into Belgium, I received accounts of the remarkable work done by a Belgian motor-car, hastily equipped with armour and a machine gun, in shooting down and driving back the numerous Uhlans with which the enemy were seeking to overrun the country.³²

²⁸ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 9 October 1914.

²⁹ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, pp. 47–49.

³⁰ London, The National Army Museum Archive (NAM), London, 8109–204; 'Through German Eyes', *The Times*, 11 November 1914.

³¹ TNA, MUN 5/210/1940/3, W.S. Churchill's first draft for the Royal Commission on Inventions, para. 8, n.d.

³² Churchill, *World in Crisis*, I, p. 318. Originally an Uhlan was a type of Polish/Eastern European light cavalryman. The German army had several Uhlan regiments in the First World War but the term could be used generically for a German soldier who was mobile, either with or without a horse.

The official historian of the Cheshire Yeomanry, Lt-Col Verdin, opined that Bend'Or formed the idea of armoured cars from armoured coaches used during the Boer War to protect troops carrying trains across the Karroo.³³ There might be some truth in it: Bend'Or was not academically gifted but he was observant.

In November 1914 Sir John French sent Bend'Or with Charles and Felix Samson to London to see Churchill.³⁴ In the same month Bend'Or left the army and joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve as a Lieutenant Commander, serving with the Royal Navy Air Service.³⁵

It was not a conventional move for a duke, who would have typically joined a traditional Guards regiment, as Bend'Or had done in the Boer War. His move was testimony to his commitment to the armoured car project, his disregard for convention and his growing confidence to follow his own path.

Undoubtedly his transfer was a boon to the development of armoured cars. Bend'Or brought with him his extraordinary wealth, passion, social influence and, most importantly, cars. The number of cars he surrendered at this stage is not certain but it was probably six.³⁶ Until January 1915 Bend'Or was based at the RNAS Armoured Car Division recruitment depot at Wormwood Scrubs in London.³⁷ His immediate task was to form, man and equip a squadron of armoured cars capable of fighting in France.³⁸ It was suggested at the time that it cost Bend'Or 'something like £20,000'.³⁹ Running expenses and the men's pay were met by the Admiralty.

³³ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, p. 560.

³⁴ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, p. 101.

³⁵ TNA, WO 374/73266, War Record of Major (Hon. Col.) Hugh R.A. Duke of Westminster.

³⁶ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, pp. 211–36.

³⁷ Wormwood Scrubs is usually given as the place of the depot. In fact the depot was based there for only a month before it was moved to Clement-Talbot Motor Works, North Kensington; but the usual reference is to Wormwood Scrubs.

³⁸ A squadron should have consisted of three sections of four cars and some heavy lorries to carry spare parts, supplies and ammunition, but not all squadrons were complete.

³⁹ GA, PP 19/284, unnamed newspaper report (possibly *Daily Telegraph*), 27 March 1915.

By now it was clear that the Samson brothers' initial design was insufficient, so Bend'Or spent time with Rolls-Royce engineers at their Crewe workshop in Cheshire, bringing his experience of conditions in Flanders to use in developing his Rolls-Royces into better-prepared armoured cars.⁴⁰ The cars were ready by December and he tested them against the Cheshire Yeomanry. Verdin commented, 'Thus it was that the Yeomanry & the Armoured Cars opposed each other just south of Beeches on the 1st day of 1915.'⁴¹

He was not the only one with responsibility for a squadron — Oliver Locker-Lampson raised No. 15 Squadron of armoured cars and Josiah Wedgwood MP No. 3 Squadron.⁴² Bend'Or's squadron was No. 2. The linkage between these men was friendship with Churchill.

The Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener, viewed the development of armoured cars with suspicion; he suspected the RNAS of being Churchill's excuse to meddle with military plans. Kitchener had grounds for his complaint. In August Churchill had refused Kitchener four Lewis guns. Churchill wrote, 'We cannot spare those 4 Lewis guns. They belong to us & are needed for the Naval Air Service'.⁴³ Between August 1914 and the year's end Churchill, as was his habit, had fired off endless notes to Lord Kitchener covering topics as diverse as Turkey and Persia, boys' camps, the possibility of invasion, Kitchener's relationship with the Prime Minister, and army strategy.⁴⁴ There was a particularly tetchy correspondence over their individual relations with Sir John French, with Kitchener complaining Churchill's relationship with French 'is rapidly rendering my position and

⁴⁰ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, p. 106.

⁴¹ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, p. 49. Beeches refers to a Cheshire location.

⁴² Fletcher, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, pp. 14–15.

⁴³ TNA, PRO 30/57/72/WQ/5, Churchill to Kitchener, 26 August 1914.

⁴⁴ TNA, PRO 30/57/72, various letters and notes.

responsibility as Secretary of State impossible'.⁴⁵ Churchill was later to confess that during 1915 'I had been very intimate with French all through the year'.⁴⁶

At the end of 1914 Kitchener was seeking to clarify command structures and regulations at the Front and to introduce much-needed process, which would have had the added advantage of reducing Churchill's interference. Kitchener was particularly vexed about what he referred to as irregular formations. He was suspicious that the armoured car squadrons were 'only a means to enable certain officers, and gentlemen without military experience and training, to get to the front and take part in the war'. He insisted:

I think it is even more important [...] that they should form part of the Army [...]. I tell you that the morale of the Army in the field is affected by these irregular Naval additions and therefore its fighting power impaired.⁴⁷

Martin Gilbert suggests that amongst those Kitchener described as 'certain officers and gentlemen without military experience' were the Duke of Westminster, Baron de Forest and the Hon. Eustace Twistleton-Wykeham-Fiennes.⁴⁸ It is not clear why Gilbert picked on these men, apart from the fact they were considered odd friends of Churchill's. Bend'Or and Fiennes had respectable army records and Bend'Or had been slightly wounded in action before Christmas 1914.⁴⁹ De Forest had enlisted in the Prince of Wales' Militia, which he served for six years.⁵⁰ Nor is it fair for John Glanfield to include Bend'Or in his verdict that the RNAS 'offered a

⁴⁵ TNA, PRO 30/57/72/WQ/32, Kitchener to Churchill, draft, n.d.; see also TNA, PRO 30/57/72/WQ/30, Churchill to Lord Kitchener, 18 December 1914; TNA, PRO 30/57/72/WQ/32, Churchill to Kitchener, 19 December 1914.

⁴⁶ Churchill, *Great Contemporaries*, p. 75.

⁴⁷ Gilbert, *Churchill Documents, Companion*, III, part 1, p. 331.

⁴⁸ Gilbert, *Churchill Documents, Companion*, III, part 1, p. 331.

⁴⁹ GA, PP 19/284, *Sunday Herald*, 27 March 1915.

⁵⁰ Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill (1874–1914)*, 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1966–67), II: *Young Statesman, 1901–1914* (1967), pp. 156–57.

short cut into the war for young men fearful that it would all be over by Christmas'.⁵¹ Bend'Or's commitment to the armoured car was deep and proved to be lifelong.

Kitchener and Churchill's squabbles intensified during the formation of plans for the Gallipoli campaign.⁵² Meanwhile Bend'Or took advantage of his social position to forward his ambition for his squadron of armoured cars. Without Churchill's knowledge, so Churchill claimed (see below), Bend'Or went to France to press the case in person for armoured cars. He is reported as making several trips to France whereby 'working hard [he] enlisted interests and brought over many an official to see "the goods"'. Eventually there was a big surprise when it was known he had permission to take the squadron to the fighting line'.⁵³ Bend'Or's squadron of twenty-four cars was the first to cross to France. Typical of the culture at the time, Bend'Or named each car after his hunting dogs, all beginning with B: 'Bear', 'Blaze', 'Bloodhound', 'Bouncer', 'Brave', 'Bulldog', 'Busy' and 'Buzzard'.⁵⁴

Bend'Or's contact was Sir Douglas Haig, whom he would have known from the Boer War and, probably, from polo, of which both were enthusiasts. A somewhat 'tongue-in-cheek' letter from Churchill to Kitchener dated 24 March 1915 explains:

For several months, indeed since the earliest days of the war, I have kept a squadron of armoured cars at Dunkirk in connection with the naval aeroplanes there [...]. About three weeks ago [...] I [...] relieved the armoured car squadron by Westminster's squadron from home. I had no intention that they should go into your domain at all until they were officially applied for by the War Office. But Westminster has a great many friends high up in the Army, and it appears that when the Neuve Chapelle fighting was about to begin, they were requested to come and take part in it by one of the divisional commanders, with the sanction of Sir Douglas Haig: and on successive days were sharply engaged [...]. When I went to see French the other day, I found Westminster had been invited by Douglas

⁵¹ John Glanfield, *The Devil's Chariots: The Birth & Secret Battles of the First Tanks* (Stroud: Sutton, 2001), p. 39.

⁵² Charmley, *Churchill*, pp. 116–21.

⁵³ GA, PP 19/284, *Sunday Herald*, 27 March 1915.

⁵⁴ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, pp. 106, 237.

Haig with the approval of G.H.Q., to attach himself to the Army, and as I felt that, after our conversation on the subject you would regard this as irregular, I gave directions for his immediate return to Dunkirk with his squadron [...]. I write you this to show you how careful I have been to avoid doing anything you might not like [...]. I hope, however, that you will now consider whether you cannot allow this squadron to join the Army. I know that Sir Douglas Haig would be glad to have it with his corps and if they are found to be useful the value of these cars can be tested.⁵⁵

Haig's readiness to embrace new technology supports Gary Sheffield's opinion that 'Haig's reputation as a technophobe with little appreciation of anything that didn't eat hay rests heavily on post-1918 criticism by his enemies, which some historians have unwisely followed.'⁵⁶ It was Kitchener who was sceptical, maybe in part because he did not want to perpetuate Churchill's excuse for continual interference.

Bend'Or and his squadron were in Flanders for the battle of Neuve Chapelle (10–12 March 1915). From October 1914 the area had become part of the front line and, for the next four years, the scene of battles of attrition. The British objective was to capture the Aubers Ridge, and from there Lille, a key strategic and major industrial town. The conditions were difficult as the water-table was only two feet below the surface.⁵⁷

From France Bend'Or kept Churchill briefed. After sharing a joke at the expense of the army, 'now [...] all at peace with the sister & junior service', he confirmed the difficulty he had had with British military authorities while the French equivalents were more receptive:

now all this fuss & bother that we had to contend with is over things run smoothly, but I don't mind telling you I had the devil of a time getting under weigh — but I enjoyed it all [...]. Poincaré had a look at some of my cars

⁵⁵ TNA, PRO 30/57/72/51A–51B, Kitchener's papers, Churchill to Kitchener, 24 March 1915.

⁵⁶ Gary Sheffield, *Douglas Haig: From the Somme to Victory*, rev. edn (London: Aurum Press, 2016), p. 380.

⁵⁷ Geoff Bridger, *The Battle of Neuve Chapelle: French Flanders* (Barnsley: Leo Cooper, 2000), pp. 16–21.

the other day & wrote & said that they reflected great credit on the army — or words to that effect.

Bend'Or wanted larger guns, explaining to Churchill:

I now have the whole of my 12 3pds cars out at the front [...] I find that the Germans are strengthening these [their] ports [...] and we now want a 6pds: firing Lyddite, if you have any of these guns to spare we could fix up the mountings & armour out here.⁵⁸

He finished by sending 'many messages to the D.A.D. [Sueter] & thanks for all the help he had given us in these [illegible] times. Put in a word to him about the 6pds: just send some over & we will get them going'.⁵⁹

Bend'Or was experimenting with his cars and sending reports to Clement-Talbot Motor Works at Wormwood Scrubs to benefit new designs of armoured cars which would be safer for the men in the field.⁶⁰ The first official design was unpopular with operators as it offered no protection from waist upwards for the gun-handler positioned on the armoured turret.⁶¹

A later message from Bend'Or told Churchill, 'our cars not in action as yet & beyond one or 2 of them getting shelled nothing doing'.⁶² A newspaper cutting recounts that Bend'Or's armoured cars' performance at La Bassée had benefitted from German shells being rotten, otherwise the Germans would have 'made scrap of them'.⁶³

The situation changed radically during the second battle of Ypres, April–May 1915. Bend'Or had been promoted from Temporary Lieutenant Commander to Temporary Commander.⁶⁴ John Buchan (later Lord Tweedsmuir), then a war

⁵⁸ Cambridge, Churchill Archive (CA, CHAR) 13/51/21-22 Bend'Or to Churchill, 18 April 1915.

⁵⁹ CA, CHAR 13/51/21–22, Bend'Or to Winston Churchill, 18 April 1915.

⁶⁰ Levin, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, p. 106; Fletcher, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, p. 12.

⁶¹ Fletcher, *The Rolls-Royce Armoured Car*, p. 5.

⁶² CA, CHAR 13/51/105–7, Bend'Or to Winston Churchill, 29 April 1915.

⁶³ GA, WP, PP 19/284, unnamed newspaper report, 27 March 1915.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 17 April 1915.

correspondent for the *The Times*, recorded that on the morning of 13 May British troops endured a savage bombardment from German artillery which broke the right of the British line. He described ‘the excellent work’ done by the Duke of Westminster’s armoured cars. ‘That charge of the dismounted cavalry was one of the great episodes of the whole battle’, he concluded.⁶⁵ Another reporter, Mr Perceval, wrote:

to their [soldiers’] help there suddenly emerged two or three of the naval armoured cars [...] these steel-clad tortoises made their way at once to the spot where they were most needed [...] and there they halted and poured in perpetual and devastating fire from their machine guns upon the enemy’s position [...] the moral support afforded by them was admitted by everyone [...] the cars were able to illustrate in the happiest way the peculiar use to which these may be used on special occasions.⁶⁶

Bend’Or lost one of his best officers and friend, the tennis champion Anthony Wilding, who had played tennis at Eaton’s charity tournament in 1914.⁶⁷ He was killed while sheltering in a dugout. Bend’Or wrote to his mother, ‘you might drop a line to Mrs. Wilding [...] I have got all his things & am arranging them [...] I am afraid the Germans are not great gentlemen in the way they are conducting the war’.⁶⁸

Reporting after the first phase of the battle, Major Fetherington Hall noted on behalf of General Briggs:

In continuation of my report of the part taken in the action of May 12–14 by C section, No 2 Squadron Armoured cars, the G.O.C. 3rd Cavalry Division desires me to add in the course of the personal conversations with officers of the days holding trenches N. of the main Verloren Hock road and in prolongation of our left, those officers stated that the coolness and daring with which the armoured motors were handled was magnificent; they were

⁶⁵ GA, WP, PP 19/284, newspaper cutting, *The Times*, 17 July 1915.

⁶⁶ GA, WP, PP 19/284, newspaper cutting, 17 July 1915.

⁶⁷ GA, Adds 2047/1, Colonel Lloyd to St Clowes, 19 April 1914.

⁶⁸ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 15 May 1915; Mary S. Lovell, *The Riviera Set 1920–1960: The Golden Years of Glamour and Excess* (London: Little, Brown, 2016), pp. 59–60.

under very severe shrapnel and shell fire the whole time they were in action, but manoeuvred up and down the road each time the enemy had got their range and did not retire until their mission had been accomplished.⁶⁹

In addition, Major General Cavanagh, Commander of the 2nd Cavalry Division, wrote:

The section of armoured cars with maxims guns that has been attached to this Division has rendered excellent service during the late operations near Ypres [...]. The retention of the armoured cars with this Division is, in my opinion, very desirable.⁷⁰

Undoubtedly armoured cars would have been introduced to the British army in time. But Bend'Or deserves great recognition for accelerating their arrival. It had taken determination and intelligent use of his social advantages to encourage a better design of armoured cars and to create the opportunity for their adoption. In addition he had been part, at some physical risk, of the cars' successful usage at La Bassée and Ypres.

Just when the military began to recognize the advantage of armoured cars, circumstances did not. The halting of the German advance at the Battle of Marne and the inability of either side to outflank the other also halted the movement of armies. The war entered a period of attrition and trenches multiplied. Moreover the Flanders' mud was not compatible with heavy cars. In September, the armoured car section of the RNAS was put under military command. In all seventy-two Rolls Royces, 20 Armoured Seabrooks and 24 Lanchester were presented to the War Office from the RNAS.⁷¹ Bend'Or accordingly left the navy, and on 26 September 1915 joined the Motor Machine Gun Corps as a temporary Major.⁷² In October 1915 it became the Machine Gun Corps (Motor). He spent the next few months preparing to take his armour-plated Rolls-Royces and three armoured-car batteries to North Africa.

⁶⁹ NAM, 8109-20-6, Major Fetherington Hall, extract of report, May 1915.

⁷⁰ NAM, 8109-20-6, Major General C.M. Cavanagh's memo, 27 May 1915.

⁷¹ GA, PP/19/284, Note headed 'Armoured Cars'.

⁷² TNA, AIR/76/540.

Although the story of Bend'Or's exploits in North Africa are well-recorded, their historical context and significance are missing. These are the themes of this section.

Bend'Or and his squadron were sent to Egypt to support General Sir John Maxwell, the General Officer Commander, British Troops. Maxwell's task was to secure Egypt and the Suez Canal for the Allies. After Britain had declared war on the Ottoman Empire in November 1914, Egypt became a British protectorate with a pro-British Sultan, Hussein Kamil. Maxwell knew that the Turks had the Suez Canal in their sights and that Egypt was critical to British interests. He was aware that the Gallipoli campaign's failure had made Britain look weak in the Middle East. Moreover his British troops had been depleted to strengthen the Gallipoli campaign, leaving him with a badly equipped Indian force, many of whom were Muslims. The fear of a Muslim uprising was real, so the last thing Maxwell needed was a Senussi insurrection on Egypt's western border, not least because the Senussi were Muslim.⁷³

In January 1916 Bend'Or and his men arrived in Egypt. In February Bend'Or wrote to Sibell, 'We are by the sea right out in the desert [...]. Cars are going well & get over the country splendidly'.⁷⁴ Bend'Or and his men were to join the fight against the Senussi, who had become allies of, and were equipped by, the Ottomans. The Senussi were growing in strength along the North African coast and had captured Sollum from an Anglo-Egyptian force.⁷⁵ Under General Lukin, Bend'Or and his cars were sent to flush out Senussi strongholds. Bend'Or mounted a notable car 'charge' against a surprised enemy at Agagia on 26 February. He wrote home: 'with hard work we got there all right — very satisfactory. [...] Fired over 3,000 rounds from the maxim in my car'.⁷⁶

⁷³ Robert L. Tignor, 'Maintaining the Empire: General Sir John Maxwell and Egypt during World War 1', *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, LIII, No. 2 (Winter 1992): 173–99 (192), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26410058>> [accessed 22 February 2020].

⁷⁴ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 February 1916.

⁷⁵ Tignor, 'Maintaining the Empire': 192.

⁷⁶ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 February 1916. Ridley reproduces the same letter but with the word 'very' added in front of 'hard work'. It is not there in the MS.

General Sir John Maxwell wrote to Bend'Or to congratulate him 'on the action of his cars. I hear they were excellently well handled and of great assistance'.⁷⁷

Major General Peyton, Commander of the Western Frontier Force in Egypt, congratulated him in what Bend'Or described as 'a charming letter'. Bend'Or wrote, 'I hope now we may go back to France'.⁷⁸

It was not to be. His next letter covered the capture of Sollum on 14 March 1916. While Lukin continued along the coast, Bend'Or was ordered to take his cars up to the high Halfaya Pass, a feat which his cars achieved against the odds. By doing so he secured protection for Lukin's main force and gave the British the advantage of height to bear down on Sollum. Seeing their disadvantage, the Senussi abandoned Sollum. Bend'Or and his cars pursued and caught up with them at Bir Asisa Wells.⁷⁹ There was little resistance and Bend'Or's unit captured Turkish officers, Senussi men and considerable arms (see Plate 24).

The response from British military command was fulsome. Peyton put in his report: 'I think this performance of the armoured cars must be unique and deserves some prominence'.⁸⁰ General Sir John Maxwell awarded Bend'Or the Distinguished Service Order.⁸¹ The Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies and Egyptian Squadron, Vice-Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss, wrote a personal letter to congratulate him on 'the splendid bit of work you and your cars did at Sollum'.⁸²

With only nine cars and thirty-six men, Bend'Or told his mother, he 'captured 3 cannons & 9 maxims, killed fifty of the enemy, including 4 Turkish officers, 26 prisoners, fifty camels, 12 horses, 10 mules, 250,000 rounds ammunition & lots of booty. This took an hour'. He added a *nota bene*, 'none of this success due to me

⁷⁷ GA, PP 19/284, General Maxwell to Bend'Or, 29 February 1916.

⁷⁸ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 29 February 1916.

⁷⁹ GA, PP 19/284, handwritten report, dated 19 March 1916. There is no signature on the document, but the authorship suggests Brigadier General Lukin.

⁸⁰ GA, PP 19/284, General Peyton to General [Maxwell], dated 16 March 1916, Cairo.

⁸¹ GA, PP 19/284, General Maxwell to the Secretary of State for War, 31 March 1916. The DSO was awarded for Bend'Or's action at Sollum, *not* for the rescue of the *Tara* prisoners, as mentioned in Bend'Or's entry in *The Complete Peerage*, XII, part 2 (1959), ed. by G.H. White. p. 542.

⁸² GA, PP 19/284, Vice-Admiral to Bend'Or, 22 March 1916.

but to my officers & men, was in the centre car of the charge which went full speed glorious feeling'.⁸³ Modesty was one of Bend'Or's good features.

The relief of the military chiefs in the Middle East and in Whitehall was palpable. A statement was issued from the War Office which spoke in 'glowing terms' of 'a very skilful little campaign'. The statement pointed out that:

in three weeks General Peyton's force has captured the hostile commander and killed or captured quite 50 per cent of the Turkish subordinate commanders, has driven the scattered remnants of his force beyond the Egyptian border and has taken all his artillery and machine-guns.⁸⁴

The day after Sollum, Bend'Or told his mother: 'am off on my last expedition [...] tomorrow [...] I hope to bring off a big thing'.⁸⁵ Among the Senussi prisoners a note was found from a British prisoner who had been taken from *HMS Tara* after it had been sunk by German fire off the Tripoli coast in November 1915. *Tara* was formerly the Dublin and Holyhead ferry *Hibernia* and she was still crewed by men from North Wales, local home territory for Bend'Or. Nearly a hundred of these sailors had been captured. The prisoners were passed from the Germans to the Turks, and on to the Senussi, who had kept them for months in harsh desert conditions. Bend'Or volunteered to rescue them. Peyton agreed. After a drive across the desert — Bend'Or estimated 240 miles — the prisoners were discovered at El Hakim (Bir el Hakim Abbayar) and ninety-one starving British sailors were rescued.⁸⁶

Bend'Or's achievement had been central to Peyton's campaign. He had not only defeated the Senussi but by doing so he had re-established, to doubting Middle-Eastern opinion, belief in Britain's strength. Brigadier General Lukin claimed, in an account of the 'little campaign on the N.W. frontier', that 'thanks to Westminster &

⁸³ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 March 1916.

⁸⁴ 'Dash into the Desert', *The Sunday Times*, 19 March 1916, p. 9.

⁸⁵ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 March 1916.

⁸⁶ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 27 March 1916.

his armoured cars we believe the Senussi power to be quite broken in in that part'.⁸⁷ Peyton recommended Bend'Or for a Victoria Cross for the prisoners' rescue, which was endorsed by General Sir John Maxwell.⁸⁸ Maxwell also told Kitchener, 'I venture to suggest that these actions [of the armoured cars] constituted a record in the History of War'.⁸⁹ Vice-Admiral Wemyss wrote an official letter of congratulations to Bend'Or to express the 'gratitude felt by myself and the Fleet under my command'.⁹⁰

Peyton was greatly distressed when the request for a Victoria Cross was refused. Peyton wrote to Bend'Or three times on the subject. He explained:

All [the army boards] were agreed that in ordinary times there would have been no doubt that you would have got it but that the large number of gallant acts in France that had to go unrewarded militated against favourable consideration elsewhere.⁹¹

In a further letter Peyton wrote, 'The King said the standard set in France was so high that it made it difficult'.⁹² Finally Peyton reported that it was 'K' (Kitchener) who was the block. 'Besides what can they do [...] if K is satisfied with giving you a DSO'.⁹³ The Sultan of Egypt, Hussein Kamil, awarded Bend'Or the Order of Muhammed Ali, the Egyptian order of chivalry founded in 1915.

Churchill suggested that Bend'Or was denied a VC because he was a duke, but the official explanation is more plausible. Though it is fair to say that the frailty of the British situation in Egypt was not fully appreciated by a Western military command obsessed with their own theatre of war.

⁸⁷ GA, PP 19/284, handwritten report, dated 19 March 1916. There is no signature on the document, but the authorship suggests Brigadier General Lukin.

⁸⁸ GA, PP 19/284, Peyton to General Sir John Maxwell, 18 March 1916, Sollum; General Maxwell to the Secretary of State for War, 31 March 1916.

⁸⁹ GA, PP 19/284, General Maxwell to the Secretary of State for War, 31 March 1916.

⁹⁰ GA, PP 19/284 Vice-Admiral Rosslyn Wemyss 21 March 1916.

⁹¹ GA, PP 12/284, General Peyton to Bend'Or, 9 April 1916.

⁹² GA, PP 12/284, General Peyton to Bend'Or, 1 May 1916.

⁹³ GA, PP 12/284, General Peyton to Bend'Or, 2 May 1916.

Bend'Or remained in North Africa, where he and his cars patrolled the desert and protected British positions. In June he succumbed again to a fever; he had already had an attack in February. What type of fever is not known, but this time he was severely ill.⁹⁴ He was taken from Matruh, where he had noted 'nothing but swarms of flies & that always means down I go', to Alexandria, and then, by August 1916, to France.⁹⁵ *The Times* reported that he was 'lying seriously ill in Paris, suffering from fever and congestion of the lungs'.⁹⁶ In August Bend'Or wrote to his mother from the British hospital, 'I am a great deal better. But my great disappointment was to get knocked over by another fever when recovering from the original'.⁹⁷ Later in the same month *The Times* stated that he was progressing well.⁹⁸ In November *The Times* claimed he was still confined to bed.⁹⁹ He took time recuperating. He failed the Army's Medical Board in February 1917.

Bend'Or's exploits in Libya had proved the usefulness of armoured cars for covering large distances in harsh conditions. By so doing he paved the way for further usage of the cars in Palestine. If Bend'Or had not been ill he might have gone with Sam Rolls and other members of his brigade to Palestine, where Rolls ended up driving for Lawrence of Arabia.¹⁰⁰ His illness denied him the opportunity. It was a savage blow to his ambitions, to be forced to return to England.

Bend'Or's involvement with armoured cars led him to be associated with the development of the tank. When at Wormwood Scrubs Bend'Or was surrounded by inventive men who shared his enthusiasm for mechanical warfare — men such as Murray Sueter, Thomas Hetherington and Albert Stern, who had been brought into

⁹⁴ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 105.

⁹⁵ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 1 July 1916.

⁹⁶ *The Times*, 17 August 1916.

⁹⁷ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d.

⁹⁸ *The Times*, 21 August 1916.

⁹⁹ *The Times*, 10 November 1916.

¹⁰⁰ Rolls, *Steel Chariots in the Desert*, pp. 126–37.

the RNAS by Bend'Or himself at the end of 1914.¹⁰¹ Stern had been at Eton and in the same year as Bend'Or.¹⁰² When it became apparent that armoured cars were unable to traverse trenches, Sueter and his team began the quest for an armoured machine that could.

The evolution of the tank is a study of its own. There are several claimants to be the originator but Churchill is correct in saying, 'there never was a moment when it was possible to say that a tank had been "invented"'.¹⁰³ But there were significant moments and one of those, according to Churchill, was a dinner on 17 February 1915 which Bend'Or gave for Churchill.¹⁰⁴ It was a tactical move. Bend'Or wanted to expose Churchill directly to the creative ideas being fermented at the Scrubs. It was at this dinner that Churchill met Hetherington.

Churchill was aware of experiments involving a prototype tank which were being sponsored by Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the War Council. Hetherington put to Churchill the concept of a heavily armed 'land ship' that could navigate broken terrain. It excited Churchill's interest, especially if the adoption of Hetherington's idea gave advantage to the Admiralty over the War Office. The dinner was the spur for Churchill to establish The Landship Committee to develop Hetherington's model.

In May 1915, after the Gallipoli campaign, Churchill left the Admiralty. With no effective Ministerial lead, the development of the tank suffered. From the Ministry of Munitions Lloyd George rescued the project, and when Churchill succeeded Lloyd George in July 1917 the project once again came under Churchill's control.

¹⁰¹ Glanfield, *The Devil's Chariots*, p. 268. No source is given, although there is an impressive bibliography, including papers from the Grosvenor and Stern archives.

¹⁰² Windsor, Berkshire, Eton College Archive, SCH/SC/1/1, School Clerk Register, 1878–1902.

¹⁰³ TNA, MUN 5/210/1940/31, Churchill's draft submission to the Royal Commission on Inventions, n.d.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, MUN 5/210/1940/31, Churchill's draft submission to the Royal Commission on Inventions, n.d.; Bovington, The Tank Museum Archive (TM), E2006/1094, Report of Interview between Colonel T.G. Hetherington and Mr G.I.H. Lloyd, 7 December 1918. Arnold Sueter's accounts do not refer to the dinner; TM, E2006/2175, Stern to the Prime Minister 28 August 1917 and TM, E2006/2175, Stern's report 27 August 1917: but, as John Glanfield points out, Sueter had not come up with a design that pleased Churchill and Sueter was excluded from the dinner; Glanfield, *The Devil's Chariots*, p. 65.

Bend'Or was either in Africa, or ill, during the tank project's early stages. In April 1917 he told his sister he was still undergoing medical treatment of 'leg pulling & electricity' but he had 'had an interesting day or two with the Tanks last week at various places'.¹⁰⁵ He passed his Medical Board in July, with Category A, the highest designation of fitness, allowing general service on the home front or abroad.¹⁰⁶

Once fit, Bend'Or's ambition focused on the tank project. In July 1917 he wrote from K Battalion, Bovington Camp, Wareham, which had become the Armour Centre for the Machine Gun Corps' Heavy Branch, the antecedent of the Tank Corps. His letter reveals little: he was 'busy all day and thinks shall get the hang of things pretty quickly'.¹⁰⁷ In the Grosvenor archive there is a typed note marked 1914/15 (incorrectly: there is a reference in the note to the Whippet tank, the prototype of which was not produced until 1917), claimed to be from Bend'Or. It was possibly addressed to Churchill. The note suggests that in 1917 Bend'Or was looking for a command:

about 20 August to Lincoln for the purpose of studying on the spot the construction and putting together of the tanks. [...]

The reason I would like to know if there is any chance of a command for me in the lighter tanks is that I can lay my hands on Officers that I know would be invaluable for the type of work required. I would like an order from you or who ever is the necessary authority to proceed on a [*tear in page ...*] know what chances there is of getting a show with the Whippet class [...] I shall have done a month here if I could go say about 20th August. Have got the hang of things here but [*end of page ...*].¹⁰⁸

The command was not realized. Another opening arose.

¹⁰⁵ Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, Shaftesbury Archive, NE/W/9/12, Bend'Or to Countess Shaftesbury, April 1917.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, WO 374/73266, The Duke of Westminster's Service Record.

¹⁰⁷ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, July 1917.

¹⁰⁸ GA, PP/19/284, extract from a Field Message Book, c. 1914/15.

Once at the Ministry of Munitions, as he had done at the Admiralty in 1911, Churchill set about reorganizing his Ministry's management structure to maximize his own authority. It gave him plenty of opportunity to introduce those he wanted and to concentrate resources on instruments of mechanical warfare, which he regarded as critical to the outcome of the war.

The tank project had reached a vital juncture by the summer of 1917. Tanks were used for the first time at Flers-Courcelette, part of the battlefield in the Somme offensive. Military historians debate the effectiveness of its debut, with the general agreement that tanks had failed to achieve their potential while their appearance at the battle had given away their novelty factor. Nevertheless Douglas Haig, since late 1915 the Commander-in-Chief, saw their potential. He noted in his diary: 'certainly the Tank has done marvels and have enabled our attack to progress at a surprisingly fast pace'.¹⁰⁹ He ordered a thousand more tanks to be built, and, although the Army Council subsequently cancelled the order, Churchill had it reinstated.¹¹⁰ It was critical that these tanks should be more useful than their predecessors.

On 30 October Bend'Or and Churchill lunched with General Henry Wilson, who was shortly to go to Paris as Chief of the Imperial General Staff and British military representative on the Supreme War Council.¹¹¹ In October 1917 the war was at a low point. Lloyd George, the new Prime Minister, had little confidence in the military command of Haig and in Robertson, then Chief of the General Staff. Lloyd George made Wilson his personal military adviser and invited him to brief the Cabinet over the heads of Haig and Robertson.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Douglas Haig, *War Diaries and Letters 1914–1918*, ed. by Gary Sheffield and John Bourne (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), p. 230.

¹¹⁰ TNA, MUN/5/210/1940/3, Sir Albert Stern, 'Revelations of the Secret History of their [tanks] construction: Extracts from the note-book of a Pioneer', *Strand Magazine*, September 1919, pp. 223–32.

¹¹¹ Martin Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill (1914–1965)*, 6 vols (London: Heinemann, 1968–88), IV: *World in Torment, 1917–1922* (1975), pp. 60–61.

¹¹² Keith Jeffrey, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 201.

Wilson's paper suggested an alternative approach to the 'fruitless slogging-match strategy which Haig appeared to have adopted'.¹¹³ Crucially, Wilson recommended 'substantial increases in guns, the machine guns, planes, and tanks, as well as improvements in defences and rail transportation'.¹¹⁴

The changes were in the air when the lunch party on 30 October took place. Gilbert claims Churchill was encouraged by Wilson to produce a paper to be submitted to the War Cabinet. Churchill's paper commended the use of the tank "not only as a substitute for bombardment", but also as "an indispensable adjunct to infantry".¹¹⁵

The timing of the lunch suggests that Wilson was seeking Churchill's support for his reforms, and to establish whether Churchill could produce enough tanks to satisfy Wilson's plan. Whether Churchill had already decided that he needed his own man in the Ministry of Munitions to report on tank production progress or whether the lunch meeting suggested it is a moot point. Soon after it, Churchill made Bend'Or Assistant to the Controller of the Mechanical Warfare Department within the Ministry of Munitions.

The Controller of the Mechanical Warfare Department was Vice-Admiral A.G.H. Moore.¹¹⁶ Violet Bonham Carter notes that Moore was 'often' amongst Churchill's parties on the Admiralty's yacht, the *Enchantress*.¹¹⁷ He is also noted for knowing nothing about tanks.

It was a convenient arrangement for both Churchill and Bend'Or. The latter was at a loose end and, as has been seen, was casting round for a job to do with tanks. For Churchill's part, he liked to keep close to his side trusted and loyal friends who could be relied on to bring him information and impartial opinion. Bend'Or was independent of Churchill for both ambition and fortune, making him one of a few who could speak his mind to Churchill. Churchill appreciated Bend'Or's candour.

¹¹³ Jeffrey, *Wilson*, p. 205.

¹¹⁴ Jeffrey, *Wilson*, p. 214.

¹¹⁵ Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, IV, p. 61.

¹¹⁶ *The Times*, 28 November 1917.

¹¹⁷ Violet Bonham Carter, *Winston Churchill As I Knew Him* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode and Collins, 1965), p. 261.

He noted in his adjunct to Bend'Or's obituary: '[Bend'Or] thought deeply on many subjects, and had unusual qualities of wisdom and judgement. I always valued his opinions'.¹¹⁸ And in fairness, by this stage Bend'Or knew a great deal about tanks and was committed to them.

Bend'Or applied himself to furthering the army's capabilities of armoured vehicles. His scheme was to create an Armoured Car battalion within the Tank Corps. A memo in the Grosvenor archive details that the new battalion would be 'based partly on Locker-Lampson Armoured Car Unit, partly on Tank battalion Establishment'. Each section was to be self-supporting.¹¹⁹ A heavily annotated note in Bend'Or's hand shows him working through the proposals. In August 1918 he set about pushing his idea to the army establishment in the only way he knew — lobbying generals directly. A letter from Bend'Or addressed to 'My dear General' in Bend'Or's handwriting began: 'I understand that Winston Churchill has forwarded you a rough scheme of mine with regard to the possible utilisation of the old armoured car personnel at the present moment'. The General, who is not named, was asked to lunch at Bourdon House, Bend'Or's London home.¹²⁰

Personal lobbying might have worked in the disorganisation of 1914/15 but by 1918 the army had developed into a more efficient fighting machine. In any case by August 1918 it was too late for Bend'Or's ideas.

Meanwhile Bend'Or was kept busy being Churchill's travelling companion. Martin Gilbert calculated Churchill went to France five times between July 1917 and March 1918. On at least two occasions he took Bend'Or with him. Bend'Or's presence ensured that Churchill could travel and entertain in style; the latter an important consideration when dealing with the French.

During his visit in mid-March Churchill, with Bend'Or, decided to pay a visit to General Henry Tudor, who commanded the Ninth (Scottish) Division, to which Churchill had been attached in 1915. Churchill had known Tudor since they had

¹¹⁸ *The Times*, 22 July 1953.

¹¹⁹ GA, PP/19/285, Note of the Armoured Car Battalion Tank Corps, 15 April 1918. Oliver Locker-Lampson had been responsible for assembling and commanding No. 15 Squadron of armoured cars in the RNAS. In 1916 three squadrons under Locker-Lampson, known as the Armoured Car Expeditionary Force, were sent to Russia.

¹²⁰ GA, PP/19/285, Bend'Or to General, 13 August 1918.

been subalterns in India.¹²¹ With the connivance of Tudor, Churchill and Bend'Or stayed at the divisional headquarters in Nurlu.

On 18 March the German Spring Offensive began and Churchill and Bend'Or were caught in near fighting. Churchill was enthralled, but it was a reckless and dangerous place for a British Cabinet Minister to be. The advancing Germans did overrun Nurlu, so the danger was real and apparent. It took Bend'Or to persuade Churchill to leave.¹²² At the end of March, Leo Amery lunched with Bend'Or and Churchill in Paris. Churchill was proposing another trip to the Front and Amery noted Bend'Or said, "[Churchill] couldn't realise that he wasn't popular on these occasions, just because people received him politely."¹²³

Nurlu was clearly a moment of great excitement for Churchill. Twenty-four years later, in March 1942, reminiscences of that moment prompted Churchill to telegraph Bend'Or: 'hope you remember our awakening twenty-four years ago. All good wishes Winston'.¹²⁴ The German attack had started at 4.30am.¹²⁵ Bend'Or replied straight away: 'Indeed I do remember this date 24 years ago. Thank you so much for having wired me greatly appreciated your thoughts in these busy and somewhat anxious times'.¹²⁶ The two chums had been shot at during the Boer War in a train ambush. In 1918 they saw action again. It sealed their friendship.

The German offensive continued and Lloyd George wanted Churchill to make sure that French resolve did not weaken. Another trip was arranged to France. Bend'Or went with Churchill and, as Ridley comments, 'there had been a whole series of meetings where Allied strategy was agreed, at all of which Bend'Or seems to have been present. It is possible, since his French was better than Winston's'.¹²⁷ It

¹²¹ Winston S. Churchill, *The World in Crisis*, 2 vols (London: Odhams, 1939), II, p. 1279.

¹²² Jenkins, *Churchill*, p. 327; Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, IV, pp. 76–79.

¹²³ Gilbert, *Churchill Documents, Companion*, IV: *Minister of the Crown 1907–1911* part 1 (1977), p. 292.

¹²⁴ CA, CHAR 2/447/58, Churchill to Bend'Or, 21 March 1942.

¹²⁵ Churchill, *The World in Crisis*, II, p. 1280.

¹²⁶ CA, CHAR 2/447/61.

¹²⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 107.

is another of Ridley's exaggerations. Bend'Or did speak French better than Churchill, but Churchill makes no reference to Bend'Or concerning his trip with Georges Clemenceau to inspect the front line, either in his letter to his wife or in his account written afterwards.¹²⁸ Moreover Clemenceau, who was Churchill's chief interlocutor, spoke fluent English.¹²⁹

The part that Bend'Or played during the week of 28 March–2 April cannot be established. There are only two impartial references: Amery's account of the lunch on Sunday 31 March and the second on Tuesday 2 April when Churchill and Bend'Or met the returning Lloyd George and General Wilson at Boulogne to complete the journey together.¹³⁰ Churchill enjoyed travelling in Bend'Or's Rolls-Royce, but the fact that Bend'Or accompanied Churchill at this serious time indicates the depth of companionship between the two. And it gave Bend'Or privileged knowledge of the war's last stages. This would be important when he went to Spain in April 1918.

Ridley suggests that Churchill sent Bend'Or to Spain to 'pave the way for bringing Spain into the war'.¹³¹ He overstates Churchill's influence. A file in The National Archives discovered by the author suggests that the initiative for Bend'Or's visit came from the Ministry of Information and the intention was that Bend'Or would undertake propaganda work.¹³²

¹²⁸ Mary Soames, *Speaking for Themselves: The Personal Letters of Winston and Clementine Churchill* (London: Black Swan, 1999), p. 206; Churchill, *The World in Crisis*, II, p. 1335.

¹²⁹ Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, IV, p. 92.

¹³⁰ Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, IV, p. 103.

¹³¹ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 108.

¹³² TNA, FO 395/197.

The Ministry of Information was reshaped from three separate units within Whitehall in early 1918.¹³³ Lloyd George appointed Lord Beaverbrook as its first Minister.¹³⁴

It was an appointment designed to modernize what had been hitherto an academic approach to propaganda, to counter the more effective German propaganda in neutral countries and to keep Beaverbrook onside.¹³⁵ In Beaverbrook's view propaganda was "the popular arm of diplomacy", so it was inevitable that he would clash with the Foreign Office, which maintained its traditional lofty approach to its responsibility. Squabbling over who should receive intelligence reports soon started.¹³⁶

It was against this background of interdepartmental rivalry that in March 1918 Beaverbrook wrote to Churchill to ask:

I want to send the Duke of Westminster to Spain on propaganda work. Will you be able to lend him to us for, say a couple of months provisionally; the time to be extended if we think a longer visit would be useful? I presume that all that is required is that he should be seconded to the Ministry of Information.¹³⁷

Edward Marsh, Churchill's Private Secretary, replied, 'Winston asked me to tell you that he gladly consents to lend Westminster to you for the visit to Spain'.¹³⁸

How this came about is not clear. A.J.P. Taylor suggests that Beaverbrook and Churchill were forced together in the face of Whitehall hostility to their innovative ways.¹³⁹ More likely it was convenience. Bend'Or's credentials for arms-length

¹³³ Charles Williams, *Max Beaverbrook: Not Quite a Gentleman* (London: Biteback, 2019), pp. 210–11.

¹³⁴ Max Aitken was created 1st Baron Beaverbrook in January 1917.

¹³⁵ M.L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War 1914–18* (London: MacMillan, 1982), pp. 4–12.

¹³⁶ A.J.P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), pp. 145–46.

¹³⁷ London, Parliamentary Archives (PA), Beaverbrook papers, BBK/E/3/17, Beaverbrook to Churchill, 5 March 1918.

¹³⁸ PA, Beaverbrook papers, BBK/E/3/37, Marsh to Beaverbrook, 18 March 1918.

¹³⁹ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 148.

propaganda work in Spain were solid. Ridley claims: 'Bend'Or was closer to [King] Alfonso than any other Englishman as he had entertained him at Eaton more than once for polo and shooting'.¹⁴⁰ Moreover Bend'Or had the status and connections to be admitted to Spain's highest aristocratic circles, which was important in a country where the aristocracy still had an active public role. As for Churchill, he saw an opportunity to contact his erstwhile friend King Alfonso XIII of Spain that he could not resist.

The personal interests of Churchill and Beaverbrook aside, Spain featured on the Prime Minister's agenda. According to Charles Petrie, Lloyd George had the ambition of wooing Spain to the Allies' cause. Foreign Office papers in The National Archives show that the idea of exchanging Gibraltar for Ceuta was under serious consideration, but whether this had been relayed to Madrid is questionable.¹⁴¹ Sir Arthur Hardinge, the British Ambassador in Madrid, advocated a gentle approach; but in London there was a growing appetite for a more aggressive and concerted one.¹⁴²

John Buchan, Director of the Ministry of Information, explained the nature of Bend'Or's mission to Stephen Gaselee, appointed as the liaison officer between the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Information:¹⁴³

It is most important that we should not make the Duke of Westminster's visit to Spain in any way official. He ought to go out as an officer, more or less an invalid, in search of rest and change [...]. The unofficial nature of his visit might be mentioned in a letter of introduction to the Ambassador, which might be sent off as soon as it is ready.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 108.

¹⁴¹ TNA, FO 371/3037, F 246161, Report on the Question of Exchanging Gibraltar for Ceuta, 31 December 1917; Sir Charles Petrie, *King Alfonso XIII and His Age* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1963), p. 132. Ceuta was a Spanish holding in North Africa.

¹⁴² CA, CHAR 27/55/12, dispatch from Sir A. Hardinge, dated 27 July 1918.

¹⁴³ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Stephen Gaselee to Sir Arthur Hardinge, dated 26 March 1918.

¹⁴⁴ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, John Buchan to Stephen Gaselee, n.d.

The cover of convalescence made sense according to Bend'Or's immediate history. Stephen Gaselee wrote to Hardinge accordingly. He reassured Hardinge that the Duke's role would be to mix in 'in court and army circles to good effect'.¹⁴⁵

Although Bend'Or's trip was classified as unofficial, the Ministry of Information went to considerable trouble to equip him. Buchan provided an initial £200; and the British Ambassador in Madrid was instructed 'to honour any further demands up to £300 making £500 in all'.¹⁴⁶ Buchan also instructed that an English-speaking secretary should be provided for Bend'Or's use.¹⁴⁷ The British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Bertie, was directed to provide the necessary passport to allow Bend'Or to travel to the French-Spanish border.¹⁴⁸ Bend'Or was to buy a car 'because the authorities thought it more prudent for him to travel by that method', and petrol would be provided.¹⁴⁹ The inference is that the trip was to be an extended one, not just a quick meet-and-greet.

Bend'Or left for Spain in April accompanied by his private secretary, Detmar Blow. He also carried a letter from Churchill, designed to be shown to King Alfonso:

My dear Benny

I am delighted you are going to Spain & it will be very kind of you to give my best respects & very sincere good wishes to the King [...]. I have watched all through the war with its ups and downs & perils to everyone the admirable skills & prudence with which he has steered the ship. We have I think understood in England the difficulties of the Spanish position [...]. I hope you will tell the King that I am absolutely confident of the final result. I do not think there will be any compromise [...]. Everything shows that the

¹⁴⁵ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Stephen Gaselee to Sir Arthur Hardinge, dated 26 March 1918.

¹⁴⁶ PA, Beaverbrook Papers, BBK/E/3/17, Buchan to Thomas, 27 March 1918, and W. Gale Thomas to Needham, 15 May 1919; PA, Beaverbrook Papers, BBK/E/3/17, Gale Thomas, 28 March 1918.

¹⁴⁷ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Colonel Buchan to Mr Tombs, dated 27 March 1918.

¹⁴⁸ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Stephen Gaselee, Foreign Office, to Lord Bertie, 12 April 1918.

¹⁴⁹ PA, Beaverbrook Papers, BBK/E/3/17, Blow to Mr Needham, 22 July 1919; TNA, FO 395/197, Bend'Or to Hambro, 2 August 1918.

English-speaking world is settling down to war [...]. In the end we shall beat the heart of Prussian militarism.

It is such a good thing my dear Benny that you should be in Spain I only wish I cld accompany you; for it wd indeed be a pleasure to me to meet once again a Prince who had guided & preserved through so many dangers for the accomplishment of the highest form of service in the world.¹⁵⁰

By conveying Churchill's letter, Bend'Or showed that he was still under Churchill's influence; but it was a mistake by Bend'Or as it confused the purpose of his mission, and mischievous of Churchill.

Bend'Or was held up in Burgos with a fever but was in Madrid by May.¹⁵¹ He delivered the letter in person and reported back to Churchill that Alfonso would be glad to see him 'if you could spare even one day to visit Spain when he [Alfonso] goes to the country in a few weeks' time'.¹⁵² By offering a visit from a British Minister, Bend'Or overstepped his brief. On the same day that Bend'Or wrote to Churchill, Hardinge wrote in strenuous terms to the Foreign Office:

I have told him [Duke of Westminster] that W.C.'s visit would in my opinion be undesirable even if he could find time for it. His coming to Spain, in his position, would be deemed a grave political step of His Majesty's Government, would be misinterpreted by Germans and might be constructed by Spaniards as a bid for active Spanish assistance in the War.¹⁵³

Hardinge had been in Madrid since 1913, where he found a troubled country split by geography, class, religious attitude and courtly allegiances. With such frail internal instability, the King had no alternative but to support the neutrality that the Spanish governments, of various colours, had maintained since 1914.¹⁵⁴ This

¹⁵⁰ CA, CHAR 2/103/13; Gilbert, *Churchill Documents, Companion*, IV, part 1, pp. 303–34; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 108.

¹⁵¹ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, telegram from Hardinge, 5 May 1918.

¹⁵² CA, CHAR 2/103/29, Bend'Or to Churchill, 7 June 1918.

¹⁵³ CA, CHAR 2/103/28, Hardinge to Arthur Balfour, 7 June 1918; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 109.

¹⁵⁴ Carolyn S. Lowry, 'At What Cost? Spanish Neutrality in the First World War' (master's thesis, University of South Florida, 2009), p. 61, <<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/2072>> [accessed June 2018].

delicate state of Spanish politics needed handling with kid gloves. Hardinge, and the Foreign Office, feared that the Ministry of Information's initiative, or at least Churchill's intervention, would drive a horse and carriage through their own carefully crafted plans to woo Spanish politicians.¹⁵⁵

Churchill's involvement, via Bend'Or, was awkward. His direct appeal to the Crown suggests that Churchill had underestimated the sensitivity of Alfonso's position. It was out of place and also ineffective as Alfonso was not as malleable as Churchill had supposed.

Bend'Or still had his commission from the Ministry of Information to fulfil, and it became more ambitious. In May, within the Ministry of Information, Eric Hambro sent Sir Roderick Jones a submission on propaganda work in Spain. One of Hambro's aims was 'commercial propaganda', which he defined as 'the deliberate development of an industrial, commercial and economic community of interests between the two countries'. For this he suggested the establishment of a British Bureau of Information.¹⁵⁶ He argued that 'the best form of propaganda for Gt. Britain is to show her desire to develop Spanish industries'. Such a strategy, he claimed, would play into 'high policy' in that it could convince Spain to break away from Germany, and especially if Spain understood that she was not expected to be 'a combatant ally, but only to provide supplies etc. for the Allies'. In addition, Hambro feared that Spain would be 'squeezed out of her foothold in Morocco by a victorious France', and Britain would not be able to resist France if Spain had 'done nothing for the Allies during the war'.¹⁵⁷

Under Hambro's proposals someone had to be found to run the British Bureau of Information. Bend'Or was given the task. From Spain he recommended Mr Villiers,

¹⁵⁵ TNA, FCO 371/3375, report by Charles V. Sale, 14 May 1918, explains the Foreign Office's proposal.

¹⁵⁶ Ursula Buchan, *A Life of John Buchan: Beyond the Thirty-Nine Steps* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), p. 196 shows that a successful Bureau of Information has already been successfully established in New York.

¹⁵⁷ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, C. Eric Hambro to Sir Roderick Jones, 6 May 1918.

who was the British Consul in Malaga.¹⁵⁸ In July Beaverbrook, at Hambro's instigation, wrote to Villiers to welcome him to the Ministry of Information.¹⁵⁹ This prompted a Whitehall row over which department had responsibility over Mr Villiers. Lord Robert Cecil, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, who regarded the Ministry of Information as an impertinent adolescent, initially would not release Villiers, but eventually the Foreign Office agreed that the Department of Overseas Trade could manage him.¹⁶⁰ Villiers was then told he had to return to England to be formally approved, which provoked Beaverbrook.¹⁶¹ Hambro overcame Beaverbrook's resistance, but he confessed to Percy Loraine in the Foreign Office that 'if I had known of the difficulties ahead, I never would have embarked on the undertaking'. Hambro concluded:

things seem to be moving in Spain, and with an extra little pressure, I should not be surprised to see the Spanish Government break with the Germans, at any rate, break so far as diplomatic relations are concerned. The offensive in the West is the best kind of propaganda that we can have.¹⁶²

In Spain Bend'Or was unaware of the wrangling in Whitehall. His telegrams to Hambro urged speed. He wanted an impressive title for Villiers to provide a good cover.¹⁶³ Bend'Or had also seen an opportunity for British-Spanish cooperation in the coalmines owned by the Wagner group. He set about arranging a mining expert to be sent to Spain, telegraphing Beaverbrook directly, possibly a sign of his frustration that negotiations were moving slowly.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁸ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Stephen Gaselee to Sir Eyre Crowe, 25 April 1918.

¹⁵⁹ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Hambro to Beaverbrook's private secretary, 17 July 1918; Beaverbrook to Villiers, 19 July 1918.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Balfour to the Ministry of Information, 10 July 1918; TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Eric Hambro to Sir Percy Loraine, 12 August 1918.

¹⁶¹ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, C. Eric Hambro to Sir Percy Loraine, 12 August 1918.

¹⁶² TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, C. Eric Hambro to Sir Percy Loraine, 12 August 1918.

¹⁶³ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Bend'Or to Hambro, 7 August 1918.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, telegram from Bend'Or to Beaverbrook, 22 August 1918.

Bend'Or was upbeat. He wrote to his mother from Spain: 'My work here is nearly finished & I feel content about it — the last fortnight has brought about things one can't write but you will understand'.¹⁶⁵ But progress was painfully slow. In September 1918 Bend'Or told Edward Marsh, who wrote to ask if Churchill could borrow one of Bend'Or's Rolls-Royces, that he had to return to Spain.¹⁶⁶

The mining operation was stuck on the question of working capital. The figure of fifty million pesetas was mentioned.¹⁶⁷ Bend'Or telegraphed Beaverbrook to tell him: 'engineering expert's reports being so good consider it a great mistake involving far-reaching consequences both as regard propaganda and business to allow this fine venture to fall through'.¹⁶⁸ The file on this matter closes with a plea from Villiers to Beaverbrook to intervene personally 'in order that a reassuring cable can be sent to the Duke of Westminster informing him that the money can be guaranteed'.¹⁶⁹ Two days after receiving this note Beaverbrook resigned. The war was nearly over. As far as Bend'Or's efforts in Spain were concerned, it was over.

A few years later Bend'Or dined in Paris with Arthur Balfour, who had been the Foreign Secretary in 1918. Bend'Or told his mother:

Mons Lotti took a lot of trouble with the dinner which we didn't regard very much as we were so busy talking & it was most interesting about Spain when I was out there & the inside history reveals that one was not so impotent & useless as one thought.¹⁷⁰

Balfour was being kind. With hindsight it is easy to see that Bend'Or's activities in Spain were doomed. Spain was a sideshow to the main action on the Western

¹⁶⁵ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 August 1918.

¹⁶⁶ Gilbert, *Churchill Documents, Companion*, IV, part 1, p. 397.

¹⁶⁷ It is difficult to calculate the value of 50m pesetas. A crude valuation using the websites <<https://www.measuringworth.com>>, <<https://www.oanda.com>> and <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> suggests £1.9m in 1918 values, but this is only a rough estimation.

¹⁶⁸ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, 14 October 1918.

¹⁶⁹ TNA, FO 395/197, F55474, Bend'Or to Beaverbrook, 22 August 1918.

¹⁷⁰ GA, WP 1/11/5, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, n.d., possibly 1920.

Front. True, Bend'Or had muddled his mission by allowing Churchill to interfere, but otherwise he had satisfied the brief given to him by Hambro: he had found a man to establish a Bureau, and he had set about encouraging a British-Spanish venture. What Bend'Or had not appreciated was the institutional resistance within Whitehall to the Ministry of Information. It meant that prompt, effective action was impossible. Moreover, Bend'Or had failed to realise the financial difficulties the Government was in as the war ended. Fifty million pesetas might have been found if Spain's role was fundamental to the war's outcome, but it wasn't. Bend'Or's weakness was that he was naïve.



Plate 1.

The 1st Duke of Westminster, Bend'Or's grandfather. Seen as the archetype of a Victorian duke, he failed to understand how the world was changing.



Plate 2.

The 1st Duchess of Westminster, Bend'Or's grandmother, who bequeathed him an inclination to plumpness.

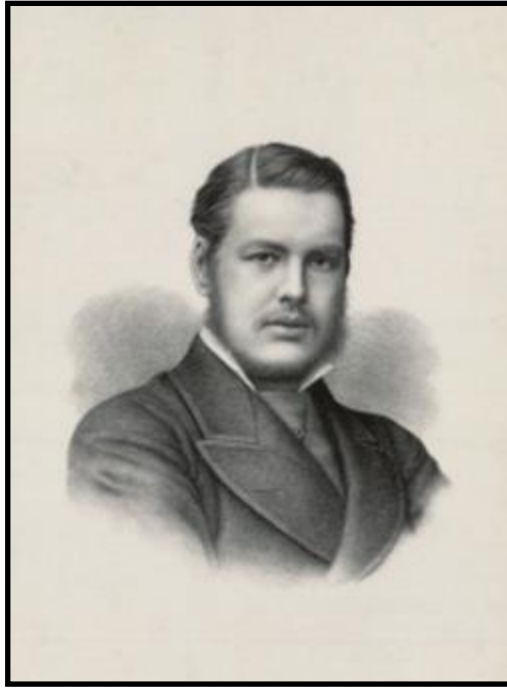


Plate 3.

Victor, Earl Grosvenor, Bend'Or's father. Endowed with social advantage and wealth, he was denied the one thing that mattered: good health.



Plate 4.

Sibell, Countess Grosvenor. The daughter of the 9th Earl of Scarbrough, and Bend'Or's mother. Religious, romantic, and a doting mother.



Plate 5.

The Rt Hon. George Wyndham MP, Sibell's second husband. Sarah Bernhardt thought he was the handsomest man she had ever seen. Source: Max Egremont, *The Cousins* (London: Collins, 1977), p. 194.



Plate 6.

Eaton Hall. Large and draughty, it was built to be a show house. The family lived in the wing on the right.



Plate 7.

Saighton Grange, where Bend'Or spent his childhood. A restored monastic gatehouse, it fuelled his mother's yearnings for a chivalric age.



Plate 8.

St David's Preparatory School, Reigate. Very different from the cosy world of Saighton Grange.



Plate 9.

Bend'Or and his mother. He must have been about eleven when these photographs were taken; possibly just before he went to St David's School.



Plate 10.

The young Bend'Or's scrapbook. Horses and Shelagh Cornwallis-West were early loves – along with Emma Hamilton.



Plate 11.

Bend'Or in khaki field uniform in 1900.



Plate 12.

A race meeting in Cape Town in the summer of 1899.



Plate 13.

The Main House of the Westminster Estate, South Africa. Herbert Baker was the architect.



Plate 14.

The stables on the Westminster Estate, also designed by Herbert Baker and built in 1904.



Plate 15.

Constance (Shelagh) Cornwallis-West, Bend'Or's first wife. The couple separated in 1913 and divorced in 1919.



Plate 16.

Bend'Or's and Shelagh's eldest children, Ursula and Edward, in sunny times.



Plate 17.

Miniature of Bend'Or in parade dress painted just after the Boer War.



Plate 18.

Ogden Cigarette card of Bend'Or. Famous faces appeared on them to introduce glamour and third-party endorsement. This picture dates from before 1914.



Plate 19.

The grave of Bend'Or's and Shelagh's only son, Edward, Earl Grosvenor, who died in 1909 aged five. His death may have been preventable. Bend'Or never forgave himself or Shelagh. The grave was designed by Detmar Blow and Emile Madeleine was the sculptor.



Plate 20.

Such posters were effective in getting Free Traders' message across that tariff reform could introduce higher food prices. Hunger was a constant and immediate concern for the poor, and for the growing public consciousness of other classes.



Plate 21.

A postcard showing the outbuildings of Mimizan in the Landes. Built for hunting, it was remote and one of Bend'Or's favourite places.



Plate 22.

A proud specimen of one of the earlier models of armoured car, showing the revolving turret.



Plate 23.

A picture from Bend'Or's own collection, taken in the Western Desert in 1917. Possibly it is one of Bend'Or's own cars but by this time he had returned to Europe ill.

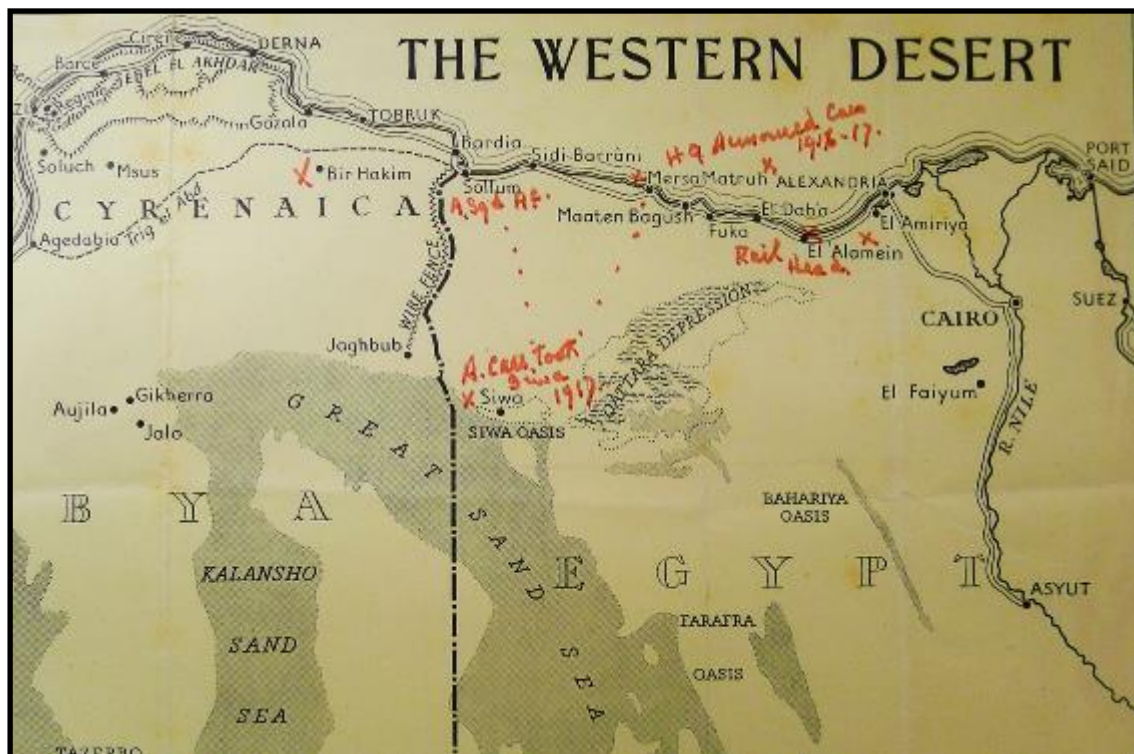


Plate 24.

Taken from Bend'Or's own collection. Note the distance between Sollum and Bir Hakim, where Bend'Or found the Tara prisoners.



Plate 25.

Bend'Or's second wife, Violet Mary Geraldine Rowley, née Nelson, pictured with her son Michael from her first marriage.



Plate 26.

A relaxed Bend'Or in a brown tweed suit. His tweed jackets impressed and inspired Coco Chanel.



Plate 27.

Coco Chanel, Bend'Or's lover for about eight years. Determined and independent, she was a good, if unlikely, match for Bend'Or.



Plate 28.

Bend'Or with Loelia Mary, daughter of Fritz Ponsonby, later 1st Lord Sysonby. Loelia was Bend'Or's third Duchess.



Plate 29.

Loelia with the dachshunds. Bend'Or liked to use the dogs to hunt rabbits. They went everywhere with him.



Plate 30.

Anne Winifred Sullivan, known as Nancy. Bend'Or's fourth and last Duchess.



Plate 31.

Lochmore in Sutherland, in the north of Scotland. Another of Bend'Or's favourite places, he died here in July 1953.



Plate 32.

Bend'Or and Neville Chamberlain inspecting the day's catch at Lochmore one August. Whether the picture was taken in 1937, 1938 or 1939 is not known.



Plate 33.

The Memorial to the 1st Duke at Eccleston, with Bend'Or behind. They were men of their times: the 1st Duke in Victorian courtly splendour, the 2nd the military man.



Plate 34.

Bend'Or as he wished to be seen: a determined, resolute soldier.
Modelled by Gilbert Ledward.

Chapter 6. Manliness

Holders of great titles or positions have two personas: their own individual personality and the personification of their position. It is the difference between public façade and private domain. The two are not necessarily compatible but they are interrelated and each depends on the other. To split Bend'Or the duke from Bend'Or the man may give an imperfect analysis; but in areas of soldiering, sport, companionship and sexuality, choices can be made revealing personal attitudes. Bend'Or the duke will be discussed in Chapter 8, whilst this chapter concentrates on Bend'Or the man. It will take up Professor Ellenberger's challenge of looking at Bend'Or through the prism of 'gender, class and cultural messages'.¹

There have been many studies on the topic of manliness, but exactly what constituted aristocratic manliness at the turn of the twentieth century is a question that has not been fully addressed. Martin Francis warns that more research should be undertaken on 'the creative tension between aristocratic and bourgeois varieties of masculinity, especially since the twentieth century saw the nation "of the gentleman" enlarged to embrace a much broader social cross-section of the male population'.² In another respect, recent historians have highlighted the domestic role of women, which in turn is focusing interest on men's role in the home. John Tosh argues that displays of manliness in mid-nineteenth-century family life can be traced to expressions of fatherhood where the aristocracy, on the whole, held the advantage of greater wealth and opportunity.³ Such advantages give the aristocracy an ability to defy simple group analysis. Ellenberger has investigated the question of aristocratic manliness by scrutinizing the life of George Wyndham, Bend'Or's stepfather. She explores 'what it meant to be a man, an aristocrat, and a public figure at a particularly interesting moment in the evolution of class and gender definitions in modern Britain'. Ultimately, George 'failed to escape the anxieties

¹ Nancy Ellenberger, 'Constructing George Wyndham: Narratives of Aristocratic Masculinity in Fin-de-Siècle England', *Journal of British Studies*, 39 (Oct. 2000), 487–551 (517).

² Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal*, 45 (Sept. 2002), 637–52 (649).

³ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven: Yale, 1999), p. 82.

about male self-presentation and performance that marked the great societal shifts of the late nineteenth century'.⁴ The question of interest is: could Bend'Or adapt?

Men who lose their father at an early age can be at a disadvantage in learning the qualities associated with masculinity. Bend'Or was fortunate that he matured in a close family group where there were male relatives to compensate for his dead father. The 1st Duke and George Wyndham, who was nearly fifty years the duke's junior, displayed different manifestations of manliness. The 1st Duke was a domestic patriarch, while George exhibited a more chauvinistic masculinity. However, both men ascribed to difference between the sexes based on chivalric ideals. Bend'Or's schooling was another significant influence.

Chapter 1 showed that the 1st Duke lived in an era when patriarchy dominated. The thin and asthmatic 1st Duke was never a candidate for the heroic. He participated in the Yeomanry but did not join the regular army. Like the Prince Consort, the 1st Duke's leadership style focused on familial and social concerns. His attitude is epitomized in his wish to be called 'Daddy' by his extended family, which included his daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

The 1st Duke's outward display of masculinity embraced the horse. Horse-racing and breeding had long been regarded as virtuous aristocratic activities. The Duke was widely admired for his interest in the turf. He restored the stud at Eaton to its former glory and succeeded in rearing three Derby winners: Bend'or, Ormonde and Flying Fox. Ormonde and Flying Fox became Triple Crown winners.⁵

He was a natural rider who enjoyed being in the saddle and he played a full part in the activities of the local Cheshire Hunt. In Chapter 1, it was noted that Bend'Or had learnt proficiency in the field sports of shooting, fishing and hunting from his grandfather. These sports were not exclusively aristocratic but were regarded as the necessary accomplishments of the wider concept of gentlemanly behaviour, and Bend'Or was brought up to participate fully in them. He proved himself to be as talented at them as his grandfather had been.

⁴ Ellenberger, 'Constructing George Wyndham', 517.

⁵ Horses that won the 2,000 Guineas stake, the Derby and the St Leger were said to have won the Triple Crown.

George Wyndham became Bend'Or's stepfather when Bend'Or was six years old and George was twenty-four. George's agreement with the 1st Duke, by which George was subordinate to the Duke's authority over Sibell's children, meant George did not have the expected masculine authority in his wife's Cheshire home, where he was obliged to live.⁶ When George had his own son, Percy (known as Perf) he showed himself to be a doting father. George was highly sentimental, an attitude apparent in his syrupy poem 'Heart's Delight', which he wrote in celebration of his son.⁷ In other ways George's behaviour was typical of 'the flight from domesticity' that Tosh associated with late nineteenth and early twentieth-century men.⁸

It was because George had established himself outside of a domestic environment that he was able to help Bend'Or escape the shadow of an anxious mother. G.K. Chesterton, who knew George well, said of him: 'because he happened to be a handsome man, it was always insinuated that he was merely a ladies' man. In most essential ways it was curiously untrue. Wyndham was very definitely what is called a man's man'.⁹

In his liking for homosocial activities George encouraged a robust version of manliness in Bend'Or. George had been a professional soldier in the Coldstream Guards and, according to Mackail and Wyndham, participated in 'several hot engagements' in the 1885 Egyptian campaign.¹⁰ On leaving the army he continued to be an enthusiastic member of the Yeomanry. According to his letters to Sibell he went to its annual camp, if not every year, then most. At times Bend'Or accompanied him, to their joint delight. George sought the company of men in other ways too. The world of politics offered an exclusive male sanctum, especially in the

⁶ See Chapter 1 'The Family Nest', p. 20.

⁷ Charles T. Gatty, *George Wyndham: Recognita* (London: John Murray, 1917), pp. 20–21.

⁸ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p. 184.

⁹ G.K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), p. 265.

¹⁰ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), I, p. 30.

Houses of Parliament and in the many male dining clubs that were typical of Edwardian times. He was also a notable participant of the Crabbet Club.¹¹

In his treatment of women George was more of a man of the *fin de siècle* than the 1st Duke. Whereas the 1st Duke's piety and chivalric self-restraint kept him faithful to his wives, it was not long before George found the pious Sibell boring.¹² He indulged in extramarital affairs, of which the longest and most settled was with Gay Plymouth.¹³ It was a typical Edwardian arrangement whereby the affair was an open secret amongst the couple's social peers, although all concerned maintained an external front of marital respectability.

Ellenberger suggests that such an understanding had 'long been associated with aristocracy'.¹⁴ There is evidence to suggest that adultery in marriage was not considered a matter for a marital breakdown.¹⁵ The correspondence between George and Sibell indicates that Sibell was aware of his mistress and that she maintained a cordial relationship with Gay. For George's part, while he showed frustration with Sibell in his letters, he never deserted her. George and Sibell maintained throughout their marriage a frequent and often affectionate correspondence in which they would characterize themselves as Tristan and Isolde. In spite of his infidelity George remained Sibell's 'parfait Knight'.

In Chapter 2 it was shown that Bend'Or's schooling was typical of the period. By the time he entered Eton in 1892, masculinity, under the influence of muscular Christianity, had acquired a new manifestation. The rise of competitive sports, the need for competent and resilient men to sustain the Empire, and nascent feminism

¹¹ The Crabbet Club was named after the estate of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, who established a male-only society for his friends to meet, dine, recite poetry and rival each other in sport — sometimes, famously, naked.

¹² *The Letters of Arthur Balfour & Lady Elcho 1885–1917*, ed. by Jane Ridley and Clayre Percy (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), p. 93.

¹³ Alberta Victoria Sarah Caroline Paget (Gay) Plymouth was known as Lady Windsor until 1905, when her husband succeeded to the Earldom of Plymouth.

¹⁴ Ellenberger, 'Constructing George Wyndham', 500.

¹⁵ Roderick Philips, 'Review: The Road to Divorce: England, 1530–1987 by Lawrence Stone', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 3 (July 1992), 143–45 (145), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3704377>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

all encouraged a more forthright version of what it was to be a man. Professor Jeremy Black sums it up as ‘imperial masculinity’ which he sees as combining ‘Anglo-Saxon authority, superiority and martial prowess, with Protestant religious zeal and moral righteousness’.¹⁶

In addition, the stress that muscular Christianity placed on honour and guardianship was echoed by Romantics and Evangelicals, who extended manhood to include the protection of the home from immorality and material harm.¹⁷ Hence the patriarch male took on the mantle of stern masculinity that brimmed with vigour, virility and physical excellence.

Bend’Or would have found the prevailing culture at Eton stressed tough physicality over intellectual endeavour. It suited Bend’Or’s mentality but educationally it put him at a disadvantage. Moreover the emphasis on toughness and emotional suppression tended to stifle feelings. John Tosh concluded that men who endured such schooling repressed ‘feminine’ traits, maintained stiff-upper-lip reserve, and shunned emotional intimacy with the opposite sex, although they ‘were conforming to the gender prescription of middle-class society’.¹⁸ Girouard sums up the man who emerged from Victorian public schools as:

The kind of hero [...] was a bearded and whiskered giant standing six foot two in socks, a superb sportsman, a fearless rider, ready to give a thrashing (in fair fight, with his fists) to any contemptible sneak he found maltreating an animal or a child.¹⁹

It was natural that Bend’Or, who had been imbued with this robust sense of manhood, should want to fight in the Second Boer War. He planned to leave his position as ADC to Lord Milner to join General (John) French, then a Lieutenant General in command of the cavalry, as a galloper on his divisional staff. It was a good post. French was one of the few early Boer War commanders who had a

¹⁶ Jeremy Black, *Britain 1851–2010: A Nation Transformed* (London: Constable & Robinson, 2010), p. 119.

¹⁷ Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p. 85.

¹⁸ Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p. 185.

¹⁹ Mark Girouard, *The Victorian Country House: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (New Haven: Yale University, 1979), p. 15.

respectable record. As Bend'Or was still underage he needed the consent of his mother, who agreed, and the 1st Duke, who did not. A frustrated and angry Bend'Or wrote to his grandfather. The final manuscript has not survived but two drafts remain.²⁰ The 1st Duke probably never saw the eventual letter as he died before it would have arrived.

In his drafts Bend'Or complained that he was being treated similarly to the Queen's grandson, Christian Victor. According to Bend'Or the authorities strove 'to keep him [Christian Victor] out of harm's way'. Bend'Or protested:

To have to refuse to make a post like this is nothing short of a disgrace — it is a false position to be in, and the mere idea of a Grosvenor not being allowed to do ups [*sic*] — what is the use of wearing a sword, it surely isn't only meant for an ornament like a footman.²¹

Some vital words were different in the other draft:

I [...] feel thoroughly ashamed that a Grosvenor should not have been sent up [...]. If it is true what I think namely that care had been taken to keep me out of harm's way, and that rank and position have had something to do with that all I can say is I am sorry for it.²²

The drafts reveal that Bend'Or saw himself foremost as a Grosvenor knight, not as a domestic landowner with responsibilities, and that he had absorbed the prevailing strong manifestation of being a man.

With his emphasis on heroics, Bend'Or was typical of the young men who marched to war in 1914. They expected war to be glorious, short and conducted according to the chivalric rubrics of gallantry, respect and courtesy. Bend'Or's language reflected these sentiments. He wrote to his sister with the news of their half-brother's death:

²⁰ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 27 December 1899. Bend'Or asked Sibell to retrieve the letter before his grandfather could see it. He must have had second thoughts about the indignation expressed in it.

²¹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or's draft to the 1st Duke, 12 December 1899.

²² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or's draft to the 1st Duke, n.d.

Our Perf has gone in a merciful and gallant manner at the head of his men [...]. He went in good company with several of his friends in a way most befitting to him — with a heap of Germans slain around him.²³

Perf's death was that of a hero — performing his duty as he died. It was the same when Perf's first cousin, Hugo (Ego) Charteris, was killed in 1916. His mother Mary, George's eldest sister, mourned him as 'the noblest, the most chivalrous the very best the very essence of the highest generosity, the true Heart'.²⁴

It was a shock when Bend'Or found that the Germans were behaving 'like savages' and they were not 'great gentlemen in the way they are conducting the war'.²⁵ He told his mother, 'if I find Hans Pless [his sister-in-law's husband] I shall cut his throat and this shows one's indignation at their conduct towards our wounded'.²⁶ The mention of German atrocities anticipated the Bryce Report (The Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages) by nine months and is added evidence to the recently established fact of German brutality in the early phase of the war.²⁷

In France Bend'Or showed himself to be a fearless soldier who had little regard for his own safety. In 1916 he took his squadron of armoured cars to Egypt to join British forces in their campaign against the Senussi, an Islamic nomad tribe that supported the Turks.²⁸ His adventures in North Africa caught the attention of the press. Of the action at Sollum in March 1916, where Bend'Or's unit of armoured cars captured Turkish officers, Senussi men and considerable arms, *Reuters*' report commented:

²³ Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, Shaftesbury Archive, NE/W/5/10, Bend'Or to Constance Shaftesbury, 15 September 1914.

²⁴ Ridley and Percy, *The Letters of Arthur Balfour*, p. 339.

²⁵ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 August 1914; GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 13 May 1915.

²⁶ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 August 1914.

²⁷ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 53–56; George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War*, 2nd edn (London: Palgrave, 2015), p. 122.

²⁸ See Chapter 5 'Chums at War', pp. 125–29.

Of the gallant fellows who manned them [armoured cars] it is impossible to speak too highly, and Major Duke of Westminster's name will be by now on everyone's lips for the intrepid manner he pushed the pursuit home and committed his command to the final attack.²⁹

The War Office issued an official statement of appreciation, praising in 'glowing terms' the armoured car action at Sollum which 'under the Duke of Westminster was a very dashing affair'.³⁰ When Bend'Or rescued the prisoners of *HMS Tara* there was more enthusiasm in the press. Just at a time when the British army in France was bogged down in unrelenting, cheerless fighting, Bend'Or was saluted as the national hero. He was the image of British pluck that the public wanted to hear. The *Cheshire Observer* trilled:

No county ever had a finer example of patriotism set for it than the lead that the Duke has given to Cheshire. He was early in the field of War, is a generous subscriber to all manner of funds, and has spared every man possible in his service for the Army. Nothing has been too much for the Duke to do in order to help to win the war and Britain is delighted to proclaim him a hero.³¹

According to the *Sketch*'s 'eye-witness', Bend'Or's rescue mission was 'most dramatic, and such as one only reads about in books'.³² The *People* wrote the story under the heading 'The Motor Race for Life; Thrilling Details of the Rescue'.³³ Newspapers covered the exploit over several months. Clementine Churchill writing to Winston commented: 'My darling, I was quite excited to read of Bend'Or's dashing exploits — I suppose he will get the DSO or be made an Arch-Duke. All

²⁹ GA, PP 19/284, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 April 1916.

³⁰ 'Dash into the Desert', *The Sunday Times*, 19 March 1916, p. 9.

³¹ GA, *Cheshire Observer*, 1 April 1916, pp. 19–284.

³² 'His Grace of the Armoured Cars', *The Sketch*, 19 April 1916, p. 8, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 4 December 2019].

³³ 'The Motor Race for Life', *The People*, 23 April 1916, p. 11, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 4 December 2019].

his many friends are thrilled.’³⁴ Churchill wrote in his tribute to Bend’Or after the latter’s death: ‘His most gleaming personal exploit was to lead the armoured regiment he had formed in a daring and far-flung excursion against the Senussi.’³⁵

There is no doubt that Bend’Or’s action was risky; he had volunteered for an uncertain, and possibly dangerous, mission. Driving cars across an uncharted desert was courageous when the endurance of the cars in difficult conditions over long distances had not been proved; the positions of the enemy were unknown; the Senussi were known to be well-armed and had the capabilities of ambush tactics; and all in great heat with little water (it was too heavy to carry in quantity).

In managing to rescue vulnerable men from certain death, against the odds, Bend’Or had displayed a form of manhood which society admired and demanded from society’s leaders. In the obituary Sacheverell Sitwell wrote of Bend’Or, ‘He [Bend’Or] had that instinct that always led him to do what was chivalrous and daring.’³⁶

If manliness in the army was admired for certain behaviours, so it was in sport. Professor George Mosse explains: ‘Willpower was usually equated with courage, knowing how to face danger and pain. Steeling the body through sport was universally advocated as one of the best ways to accomplish this end.’³⁷

Two developments combined to emphasize the importance of sport. Firstly, disquiet focused on the future security of the Empire, particularly on the state of the armed forces and the physical fitness of men needed to be soldiers. Fitness achieved through sport became not just a matter of personal choice but a national objective.

Secondly, when Germany and the United States emerged as keen sporting rivals to Britain in yachting and athletics, sporting accomplishment became a matter of

³⁴ Cambridge, Churchill Archive, CA, CHAR 1/118A/106, Clementine to Winston Churchill, 21 March 1916.

³⁵ ‘Fearless, Gay, and Delightful’, *The Times*, 22 July 1953.

³⁶ George Ridley, *Bend’Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 195, quoting from Sitwell’s obituary of Bend’Or in *The Sunday Times*.

³⁷ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 100.

national pride. Dr Loweson argues: ‘sport and its assumptions emerged as a battlefield for questions of national identity, patriotic superiority and arguments over a perceived racial and spiritual decline which fuelled the preparations for war’.³⁸

Sport became an opportunity for men — and it was primarily a masculine business — to demonstrate their physicality and ruthlessness. To provide exclusive environments for upper- and middle-class sporting enthusiasts to perfect and show off their prowess, sporting clubs and societies were formed by the hundreds across the country. The emphasis was on individual courage and mastery of body and mind. Professor Mike Huggins sums up the model action man as one who ‘showed courage in adversity, in facing and overcoming challenges’.³⁹ Tosh adds that the ‘craze’ for sport encouraged ‘the character-building qualities of courage, self-control, stoical endurance, and the subordination of the ego to the team’.⁴⁰

The aristocracy and upper classes, traditionally the stock for the officer class, were quick to associate their own sports with national need. The contemporary magazine *Polo Monthly* explained:

Without doubt, one of the best assets to the British Army is the genuine love of field sports which is firmly implanted in the breast of every English man. Sport teaches observation, patience in adversity, and doggedness which leads to victory, in a way that no form of regulation drill can accomplish. It also makes good comrades. Men who have hunted, shot, fished, sailed together will fight well side by side and accomplish things highly trained machines are incapable of.⁴¹

Sport was of profound importance to Bend’Or. He differed from his aristocratic forebears in that he sought to be a participant, not merely a patron. He liked fast and

³⁸ John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1970–1914* (Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 261.

³⁹ Mike Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London: Hambledon, 2004), p. 168.

⁴⁰ Tosh, *A Man’s Place*, p. 189.

⁴¹ *Polo Monthly*, Sept 1914–Feb 1915, p. 5, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1914-Sep-1915-Feb.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019].

furious sports. It was an outlet for his inculcated militarism which encompassed male companionship, competition and adventure.

At first Bend'Or's choice of sports revolved around the horse. Mastery of horse-riding was an accomplishment expected of someone of his station. Riding started young as its proficiency was necessary for entry to the army, particularly the cavalry, and an essential requirement for the gentlemen's sports of hunting and polo.

From South Africa Bend'Or's letters to his mother are full of his involvement in hunting, steeplechases and polo. He sent her a newspaper clipping in April 1899 which commended his efforts as a jockey,⁴² and later in the year a picture of himself on Cornstalk, having won the Hunts Cup.⁴³ He won a race in May 1899, and told his mother, 'It was a very popular win as it is only the 2nd winner Government House has ever had. His Excellency [Sir Arthur Milner] was delighted.'⁴⁴

Once back in England, Bend'Or had a racecourse built at Eaton so he could practise racing. He rode in the Tarporley point-to-point in 1901.⁴⁵ His biographers Harrison and Field claim that he rode in the 1903 Grand National, a not-unknown aim for ambitious amateur riders, especially cavalry men. His 'pal' Francis Grenfell shared the same desire. But Bend'Or did not ride in the National; his horse Drumree was ridden by J. Phillips but it had a 'fit of the staggers' and was destroyed.⁴⁶ Bend'Or did win the Welter Race at the Waverton Point to Point in 1911 but was thrown in the Open Race.⁴⁷

⁴² GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 April 1899.

⁴³ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 18 October 1899.

⁴⁴ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 3/4 May 1899.

⁴⁵ Gordon Fergusson, *The Green Collars: The Tarporley Hunt Club and Cheshire Hunting History, incorporating Hunting Songs by R.E. Egerton Warburton (Eleventh Edition)* (London: Quiller, 1993), p. 95.

⁴⁶ 'Today's Sporting', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 27 March 1903, p. 6, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 20 February 2020]; *From My Private Diary by Daisy Princess of Pless*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1931), p. 91.

⁴⁷ 'Sporting', *The Times*, 6 April 1911, p. 15.

Bend'Or's aptitude for horsemanship and his personal enthusiasm came together in hunting. Foxhunting was a key activity in rural Cheshire. Cheshire's county structure was rapidly changing in the nineteenth century. Although suburbia grew in the north and west, and around the industrial and railway towns, in the rustic areas of the south-east and south-west there remained a cohesive gentry class who supported a strong foxhunting tradition.

A quarrel between the two Cheshire hunts, the North and the South, drew in the Marquis of Cholmondeley. The row risked the viability of hunting in the county, especially when Cholmondeley threatened to ban hunting on his land. Bend'Or, having initially refused, was invited in 1907 to be the Master of one united Cheshire Hunt and, to the community's relief, he accepted.⁴⁸

By taking the position, Bend'Or followed in his family tradition and conveyed a patrician blessing on a depressed sport. Hunts were already experiencing rising costs, the growth of barbed-wire usage and the increased practice of reserving areas for shooting driven pheasants.⁴⁹ *The Times* marked Bend'Or's appointment as a Master: 'The acceptance of the office by such an influential landowner and sportsman [...] is certainly regarded as a guarantee of the continued furtherance of the best interests in the sport'.⁵⁰ Bend'Or had the prestige and social influence to ensure good hunting land was available and to encourage farmers to maintain traditional hedging, and he had the means to pay for any damage caused by hunting on the smallholders' land. He was noted for his generosity in this respect.⁵¹

Bend'Or brought his own spirited approach to the sport. Occasionally he was known to hunt six days a week.⁵² He kept two packs of hounds, sometimes using three horses in one day. There was a stable for sixty horses (including polo ponies) with thirty men to service them. An additional two men looked after the stallions. Then there were the stud groom, a foreman, the terrier man and two further men for

⁴⁸ *The Times*, 23 February 1907.

⁴⁹ Jane Ridley, *Fox Hunting* (London: Collins, 1990), p. 137.

⁵⁰ *The Times*, 23 February 1907.

⁵¹ *British Hunts and Huntsmen in Four Volumes* (London: London Biographical Press, 1910), pp. 111, 372.

⁵² Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, p. 653.

odd jobs. At the kennels there were the huntsman, two kennelmen, the huntsman's second horseman and three whippers-in.⁵³ Bend'Or shared his enthusiasm with his stepfather and stepbrother. George Wyndham wrote: 'Today I had two hunts of 1 hour and 1½ hours with Bend'Or and Perf. I loved it. I sweated through everything and forgot Tariff Reform.'⁵⁴ To his father George wrote, 'Bend'Or [...] [is] going well and giving complete satisfaction to an exacting Field'.⁵⁵

The Times was less warm when in 1911 Bend'Or resigned the Mastership, sold a pack and took thirty couples of hounds, with his huntsman Joseph Wright, and his hunters to hunt boar from Mimizan in the Landes department of France. The paper reported the news within a longer article setting out the difficulties facing the English hunting scene. The message was: Bend'Or's decision was regarded as a national disappointment.⁵⁶

Boredom probably accounted for Bend'Or's decision. Hunting was changing. It was increasingly popular amongst the suburban nouveaux riches and those who sought social respectability rather than a hard hunt. Professor Jane Ridley explains, 'Cheshire squires, many of whose families had been there since 1066, disliked rubbing boots with rich merchants, Jews and radicals'.⁵⁷

Boar-hunting was more dangerous and faster than the comparatively tamer foxhunting. Churchill described the excitement of a 'pig hunt' to the Duke of Windsor:

It is pretty good sport and I like it because although there is a great deal of rough and tricky riding through woodland and up and down hill, there are no fences to jump. This I fear you would regard as a disadvantage.⁵⁸

⁵³ Tape recording of Gordon Fergusson interviewing Joseph Wright, huntsman to the 2nd Duke of Westminster. Private property of William Fergusson Esq.

⁵⁴ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, 13 December 1909, p. 644.

⁵⁵ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, 16 February 1910, p. 653.

⁵⁶ Ridley, *Fox Hunting*, p. 138; *The Times*, 11 (or 24) March 1911.

⁵⁷ Ridley, *Fox Hunting*, p. 67.

⁵⁸ Windsor, The Royal Archives, RA/EDW/PRIV/MAIN/A/3090, Winston Churchill to the Duke of Windsor, 16 December 1936; *The Churchill Documents, Companion*, ed. by Martin Gilbert, 9 vols (London: Heinemann, 1972–2014), XIII: *The Coming of War 1936–1939*, part 3 (1982), pp. 493–94.

It was also much more exclusive as only the most competent horseman, or horsewoman, could manage the more challenging ride, and only wealthy people could fund the highly trained horses and pack of hounds that the sport demanded.

Bend'Or had been an enthusiast of polo from leaving school. Whilst at the army crammer in 1898 he tried to start a polo team.⁵⁹ Initially disappointed by the standard of the game in the Cape Colony, he aimed to form a team there too, buying ponies to do so.⁶⁰ Back in England, he organized and captained his own Eaton polo team and had a polo pitch built at Eaton. By 1904 he had inaugurated a polo week. It was held in August and became a prominent tournament in polo's calendar. In 1905 Bend'Or's tournament attracted eleven teams and ninety-two ponies.⁶¹ Rivy Grenfell recalled Eaton Hall as 'the most enormous place I was ever in, but dreadfully ugly, just like the Natural History Museum with two wings added'.⁶² The best players came to stay along with large house parties. There was Rivy and his brother, Cecil, and Charles Darley Miller, the founder of the Roehampton Club and international polo player. Bend'Or's own playing ability earned him a handicap of seven, making him one of the country's leading players.⁶³

In 1910 Bend'Or rented a house in Roehampton to be near to its polo field and based himself there after he separated from his first wife. In 1909 he played in Ireland, for the Irish Open Polo Cup.⁶⁴ He played for England against Ireland in 1912 and 1913.⁶⁵ He played regularly in France, and in Egypt in 1913.

⁵⁹ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 5 May 1898.

⁶⁰ GA, WP 1/11/2, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 2 April 1899.

⁶¹ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, 18 August 1905, pp. 511–12.

⁶² John Buchan, *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell: A Memoir*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Nelson, 1920), p. 75.

⁶³ *Polo Monthly*, September 1912–February 1913, pp. 417–31, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1912-Sep-1913-Feb.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019]. There were 1,474 players rated — of which only 76 had a rating of 7 or more, that is 5%.

⁶⁴ 'The Irish Open Polo Cup', *The Times*, 27 August 1909.

⁶⁵ *Polo Monthly*, March 1912–August 1912, p. 348, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1912-Mar-1912-Aug.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019]; *Polo Monthly*, September 1912–

More munificently, in 1911 he agreed to supply the ponies and sponsor a British team to challenge America's Polo Association for the International Polo Cup. *Polo Monthly* reported, 'all lovers of the game will learn with satisfaction of the Duke's sporting action'.⁶⁶ The magazine added:

had it not been for this offer from the Duke, the Hurlingham committee would have been obliged to appeal to the public for a further sum, amounting from £500–£10,000, in order to carry out another attempt to win back the America cup. To judge by the rather lukewarm support which was accorded to the first appeal for funds, it is rather doubtful whether a second request for a large sum of money would have met with much success. In these circumstances the Duke of Westminster's action is peculiarly timely and doubly timely.⁶⁷

The challenge was deferred to allow the team, and ponies, more practice at Eaton. The competition was eventually held in May 1913, in America, without Bend'Or's being present, with a win for the home team.⁶⁸

Like his father, who was fascinated with trains, Bend'Or showed great interest in new inventions for speed. Such men were said to have 'speed fever' and Bend'Or was regarded as 'being in the first flight of these enthusiasts'.⁶⁹ He had a garage full of Rolls-Royces and a Mercedes which, judging by the many speeding fines he collected, he drove hard.⁷⁰ Rivy Grenfell, a man noted for his courage in the First

February 1913, p. 29, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1912-Sep-1913-Feb.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019].

⁶⁶ *Polo Monthly*, March 1911–August 1911, p. 421, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1911-Mar-1911-Aug.pdf>> [accessed 24 January 2020].

⁶⁷ *Polo Monthly*, March 1911–August 1911, p. 438, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1911-Mar-1911-Aug.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019].

⁶⁸ *Polo Monthly*, March 1912–August 1912, p. 169, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1912-Mar-1912-Aug.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019]; *Polo Monthly*, March 1913–August 1913, p. 278, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1913-Mar-1913-Aug.pdf>> [accessed 8 December 2019].

⁶⁹ 'Our Portrait Study', *Yachting World*, vol. IX, July 1910.

⁷⁰ A few examples will suffice. 'The Duke of Westminster Fined', *The Eastern Evening News*, 19 August 1908, p. 3; *The Western Gazette*, 26 April 1907, p.10; 'The Duke of Westminster Fined',

World War, recorded journeying to a meet with Bend'Or in 1906: 'Yesterday Bend'Or and I [...] with Bend'Or driving, went in a new car he had just bought of 100 horse-power that could go ninety miles an hour. It certainly frightened the life out of me.'⁷¹ Charles Rolls, the son of the 1st Baron of Llangattock, had been a friend and, when he was killed in a flying accident in 1910 at the age of thirty-two, Bend'Or's message to his mother showed that Rolls and Bend'Or shared an insight on the future importance of air flight:

I am distressed by Charles Rolls' death. He was the most careful person about taking precautions when flying. But it was evidently meant that he would sacrifice himself for something that we little dream may be a big thing some day.⁷²

Bend'Or was a member of the Royal Yacht Squadron, though not as a competitive yachtsman or dinghy sailor; motor-launches were his style.⁷³ In 1909 he succeeded the Duke of Sutherland to become Commodore of the Sussex Motor Yacht Club (SMYC), of which he had been a founder member in 1907.⁷⁴ The SMYC was not short of grandees. In addition to the Duke of Sutherland, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu was Vice Commodore and Lionel de Rothschild was the Honorary Treasurer.⁷⁵ Bend'Or owned three powerboats, including *Wolseley-Siddeley I* in which he competed in the 1908 Olympics. *The Times* called her 'the fastest vessel of her length afloat so far as men know' and that on her 'the hopes of this country rest so far as the principal international event of the year is concerned'.⁷⁶

Bolton Evening News, 17 June 1908, p. 3, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 1 March 2019]; *The Globe*, 18 May 1910, p. 10, reported that the court noted he had two previous convictions before giving him a third.

⁷¹ John Buchan, *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell*, p. 81.

⁷² GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 12 July 1910.

⁷³ The yachts Bend'Or owned are better described as 'motor yachts'.

⁷⁴ 'A Club House on the High Seas', *The Sketch*, 23 May 1906, p. 11, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 5 December 2019].

⁷⁵ 'Motor Yacht Club', *Manchester and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 1 March 1907, p. 2, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 5 December 2019].

⁷⁶ 'Motor Yacht Club', *The Times*, 13 July 1908, p. 17.

Bend'Or steered her himself. The race was not a success. The boat ran aground, so Bend'Or lost to the only other competing nation, France. But the result was not in contention; taking part and representing the country was what counted. In the same craft he competed for the Prix de Monte Carlo in Monaco.

In Bend'Or's next vessel, *Wolseley-Siddeley II*, renamed *Ursula* after his daughter, he again raced in Monaco, in both 1909 and 1910, beating the French in 1909 (which must have been satisfying) and in both years taking the first prize and breaking the then speed record. In 1910 he reached 38 knots, which according to *Yachting World* was 'a remarkable record', and won for Great Britain the Coupe des Nations.⁷⁷ The magazine wondered if 'there is any finality to the race for speed'. The aristocracy's display of conspicuous consumption was still being admired and envied.⁷⁸ Noting that 'boats like *Ursula* are not built and run for nothing', *Yachting World* concluded: 'Every credit is due to the owner [Bend'Or] for putting below the White Ensign a really worthy national representative to win and hold the most coveted speed prize of Europe.'⁷⁹

The quest for speed led him to build *Brunhilde*, a hydroplane, to represent Great Britain against an American challenge. On the trial run, with Bend'Or at the wheel, he turned the vessel too quickly and it capsized. According to a statement by Bend'Or's secretary Colonel Lloyd, Bend'Or, weighed down by clothing, sank and had to be rescued unconscious from the water and given artificial respiration.⁸⁰ The *London Daily News* reported: 'The Duke of Westminster had a thrilling experience this afternoon.'⁸¹ It is another example of Bend'Or's heroic courage — or reckless risk-taking.

His mother was not amused. On hearing the news, she wrote to her husband, George Wyndham:

⁷⁷ 'Marine Motoring', *The Times*, 11 February 1911, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ 'Our Portrait Study', *Yachting World*, vol. IX, July 1910.

⁸⁰ 'Accident to the Duke of Westminster', *The Times*, 11 July 1910, p. 15.

⁸¹ 'The Duke of Westminster's Narrow Escape', *London Daily News*, 11 July 1910, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 5 December 2019].

after glancing at the *Daily Mail* — wh is the only news I have had of the boat accident [...] Ursula [Bend'Or's daughter] and I have hugged each other and thanked God. Again a lovely day — try and see Bend'Or and tell me if he is alright — and will leave the boat safe at the bottom of the seas.⁸²

Even in Edwardian Britain, polo and powerboat racing were elitist sports necessitating costly equipment, whether horse or vessel. Bend'Or's choice of games was too novel to be traditionally associated with the aristocracy. Nevertheless his habit of funding teams and supporting clubs was in the same tradition as that of his ancestors. His involvement echoed that of his contemporaries, such as Lord Lonsdale's support of boxing, or the Marquis of Ormonde's (the husband of Bend'Or's aunt, Elizabeth, known as Lilah) and the Duke of Leeds' patronage of yachting.

A good account of his sporting approach was given in the *Graphic* newspaper:

Hunting and polo are his favourite pursuits. Shooting he is fond of, and especially deer-stalking. Motoring claims him as an enthusiast; and the Turf includes him among its best supporters. But the energetic 'Bend'Or' would rather play in the Champion cup at Hurlingham or hold a good pace throughout a quick forty minutes with his hounds, than see the best day's racing that Ascot could show. So thorough a Nimrod is obviously in the right place in the Mastership of the historic Cheshire Hunt.⁸³

What the *Graphic* called 'his keenness unbounded' brought 'Nimrod' his toll of injuries. Bend'Or fractured his right collarbone while hunting in 1903; in 1904 he had a heavy fall, again whilst hunting, incurring heavy bruising on his shoulder; he probably had concussion in 1908 after being thrown from his horse; in 1910 he tore muscles in his back while playing polo; in 1911 he had an accident when playing polo and broke his right collarbone; in 1912 he broke his collarbone again playing polo.⁸⁴

⁸² GA, WP 2/1/41, Sibell to George Wyndham, 11 July 1910.

⁸³ 'The Duke of Westminster M.F.H.', *The Graphic*, 23 January 1909, p. 14.

⁸⁴ *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligence*, 11 December 1903; *Aberdeen Press & Journal*, 4 November 1904; *Globe*, 25 January 1908; *The Times*, 13 June 1911; GA, WP 2/1/38, Sibell

It is a record that suggests safety was of secondary importance to Bend'Or's enthusiasm. Nonetheless his sporting record was renowned for its manliness, for setting an example to others and for upholding national honour. These sentiments accorded well with the patriotic zeal of the day and with the concept of manhood, which demanded an individual's sweat and toil. In the opinion of the Rear Commodore of the Sussex Motor Yacht Club, as quoted in the *Brighton Gazette*, Bend'Or 'was one of the greatest noblemen in the land [...], [who] stood absolutely at the head of sport (applause). He was the greatest man in that line of sport in that or any other country'.⁸⁵ In *Polo Monthly* Lieutenant Colonel H.A. Tomkinson, a player in the British polo team that succeeded in winning polo's America's Cup in 1914, is reported saying, 'No-one has done more for English polo than His Grace the Duke of Westminster who himself is a clever, dashing player.'⁸⁶

Another indication of the sort of man Bend'Or was is reflected in the company he chose to keep. Friendship mattered to Bend'Or. Coco Chanel, with whom Bend'Or had a long affair, described how Bend'Or had a small band of 'regular' friends, those whom he thought were 'real people'.⁸⁷ Loelia, Bend'Or's third wife, also claimed that 'he only liked what he called real people'.⁸⁸ Hugo Vickers suggests the definition meant 'obscure people'.⁸⁹ More probably the term 'real people' related to George Wyndham's expression: 'functional and non-functional' individuals. Charles Gatty, George's first biographer, author, antiquary and friend of George's, explained the meaning:

Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 18 May 1909; London, Parliamentary Archives, BL /27/3/15, Trippel to Bonar Law, 7 October 1912.

⁸⁵ 'The Duke of Westminster', *Brighton Gazette*, 24 April 1909, p. 5, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 5 December 2019].

⁸⁶ *Polo Monthly*, October 1919–March 1920, p. 412, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1919-Oct-1920-Mar.pdf>> [accessed 5 December 2019].

⁸⁷ Claude Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, trans. by Barbara Bray (London: Collins, 1973), p. 40.

⁸⁸ *Cocktails & Laughter: The Albums of Loelia Lindsay (Loelia, Duchess of Westminster)*, ed. by Hugo Vickers (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983), p. 185.

⁸⁹ Vickers, ed., *Cocktails & Laughter*, p. 14.

A functional person may be gipsies, or they may be gentlemen; they may be absorbed in politics, or prize-fighting; they may succeed, or they may fail; they may be wrong, or they may keep right, but they live out every moment of their lives [...] pretending nothing, imitating nobody, but just being themselves.⁹⁰

Bend'Or had no regard for rank; he valued genuineness. Seton Gordon, the naturalist, who knew him well, and who gave the address at Bend'Or's funeral, described Bend'Or as 'most at home with simple folk'. He emphasized Bend'Or's strong sense of humour and that he was happiest when surrounded by the men of his Scottish estates.⁹¹ Moreover Bend'Or's 'pathological' dislike of London Society is well recorded by Loelia.⁹² In this attitude Bend'Or embodied the Grosvenors' ancient motto *Virtus non stemma* — virtue not lineage.

Both Chanel and Loelia describe Bend'Or's awkwardness with people on first meeting. Chanel tells how 'Westminster hates meeting people, and he avoids first encounters'.⁹³ Loelia stated he 'likes escaping from the crowd'.⁹⁴ Seton Gordon described him thus: 'Bend'Or was a shy man, but once one had become his friend he was loyal, constant and great hearted, admiring and enjoying in his friends' independence of thought and independence of spirits.'⁹⁵ To Chanel, Bend'Or's great wealth brought him 'parasites'.⁹⁶ He avoided London clubs, the haunt of his contemporaries. Loelia observed: 'The reason he gave for never going to Clubs was that if he did enter one he was immediately surrounded by borrowers'.⁹⁷

⁹⁰ Gatty, *George Wyndham: Recognita*, p. 119.

⁹¹ Norman Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk: Fifty years a gamekeeper for the Dukes of Westminster* (Cambridge: White Lion Books, 2001), p. 121.

⁹² Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 196.

⁹³ Paul Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, trans. by Euan Cameron (London: Pushkin, 2010), p. 159.

⁹⁴ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 221.

⁹⁵ Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk*, p. 121.

⁹⁶ Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, p. 167.

⁹⁷ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 183.

Bend'Or was associated with only two clubs. The Other Club, established by Churchill and F.E. Smith in 1911, was one. Smith, a Conservative, and Churchill, then a Liberal, created a dining club where friends could meet irrespective of political allegiance to debate and socialize. Membership, chosen by Churchill and Smith, was limited to fifty and to those who were the 'most interesting people in public life'.⁹⁸ Bend'Or must have been an early member because by 1926 he is listed as a past member.⁹⁹ His membership possibly proved incompatible with his dislike of establishment figures, and his intellectual lack of confidence.

The only other club he was known to associate with was the Jockey Club. Like Churchill and Smith's club, the Jockey Club had the advantage of exclusivity and limited members.

There is a tendency for writers to project their own status aspirations when forwarding suggestions of Bend'Or's friends. Chanel told Morand that Bend'Or's friends were Winston Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Lonsdale. There is no doubt that Churchill was one of Bend'Or's closest 'pals' but there is no evidence that the Duke of Marlborough was anything more than an associate based on their shared troubles with Churchill's mother's and Bend'Or's brother-in-law's precarious financial position.

Up to 1929 Lonsdale stayed frequently at Eaton for racing meetings. Bend'Or and Lonsdale shared similarities, not least in being wealthy, titled landowners with a keen interest in sport. No doubt Bend'Or enjoyed Lonsdale's laddish humour and irreverence. But there were crucial differences. Bend'Or was never as financially reckless as Lonsdale. Lonsdale's willingness to challenge convention and set a course of his own matched Bend'Or's similar inclination, but Bend'Or was a determinedly private man who shied away from publicity and never sought a public profile.

Loelia mentions Joseph Laycock and Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny as particular chums of Bend'Or's. De Crespigny features in the Eaton Hall Visitor Book. Bend'Or was a closer companion of Claude's son, Champion. Champion

⁹⁸ John Campbell, *F.E. Smith: First Earl of Birkenhead* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1983), p. 268.

⁹⁹ Ephesian (C.E. Bechhofer Roberts), *Lord Birkenhead: Being an Account of the Life of F.E. Smith, First Earl of Birkenhead* (London: Mills & Boon, 1926), p. 175.

won a DSO in the Boer War and was an ardent polo player. He committed suicide in 1910. Bend'Or's continuing association with Claude was more likely a shared sympathy for the loss of a son.

Loelia, who wrote her memoirs after a short and difficult marriage which ended in divorce, speaks of 'hangers on' that surrounded Bend'Or. She wrote: 'all the classic types were represented, the advisers, the intriguers, the jesters, the toadies and the parasites. They stuck like limpets'.¹⁰⁰ Anita Leslie also records Bend'Or's 'toadies'.¹⁰¹ It is difficult to know to whom they were referring. Bend'Or preferred to employ people he trusted in an effort to keep sycophants at bay. Basil Kerr was the agent for the Cheshire estates; George St Clowes was the agent for Bend'Or's South African estate; Charles Hunter oversaw Bend'Or's French and Scottish estates; and Detmar Blow became the estate surveyor and Bend'Or's private secretary. These men should be seen as Bend'Or's aides-de-camp. He gave them great authority and his complete trust. There was none of the usual staff–employer divide. In return he expected their total loyalty and service.

All four men had known Bend'Or for many years before taking up their positions. Kerr, St Clowes and Hunter were soldiers and sporting men. Kerr joined Bend'Or's armoured car squadron, he won a DSC in November 1915, and was discharged as a Major.¹⁰² He captained the Argentine polo team. Bend'Or may have met St Clowes during the Boer War; he served in the First World War and retired as a Captain.¹⁰³ Clowes joined Bend'Or's powerboat team in the 1908 Olympics.¹⁰⁴ He stayed at Eaton between 1903 and 1936 at least twenty times, often in large house parties.¹⁰⁵ Colonel Charles Hunter was Bend'Or's military adviser and intimately involved

¹⁰⁰ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 185.

¹⁰¹ Anita Leslie, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread* (London: Hutchinson, 2007), p. 133.

¹⁰² TNA, WO 339/82133, Major Basil Kerr, Army Corps; TNA, ADM 273/5/132, Royal Naval Air Service Index; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 152.

¹⁰³ TNA, WO 372/4/173648, Medal Card of Clowes, Winchester St George.

¹⁰⁴ 'Great Britain Motorboating at the 1908 London Summer Games', <www.sports-reference.com>. The 1908 Olympic feature is now closed.

¹⁰⁵ GA, EV1669, Eaton Hall Visitor Book.

with Bend'Or's armaments projects. Hunter was an expert fisherman and hunted boar with Bend'Or in France. He, too, regularly joined Bend'Or's house parties.¹⁰⁶

Detmar Blow's background was the arts, an area that held little appeal for Bend'Or but meant a great deal to George Wyndham. Blow was an architect and a significant adherent of the Arts and Crafts Movement. He worked with George's parents and George himself at Clouds, which George renovated in 1911. Blow worked with the Grosvenor Estate from 1908, when he was involved in Bend'Or's redesign of Eaton Hall's gardens.¹⁰⁷ He also designed Mimizan, Bend'Or's French retreat. In the 1920s Blow gradually took over the role of Edmund Wimperis, the Estate's surveyor, eventually replacing him. He became Bend'Or's executive secretary in 1928.¹⁰⁸

Blow left Bend'Or's employment in 1933 in circumstances that remain contentious. Loelia reports that there was a 'dramatic scene when he [Bend'Or] discovered that one of the most trusted of all his assistants had been cheating him'. Loelia had a 'deep distrust' of Blow; nonetheless, she 'partly' attributed fault to Bend'Or for being inattentive and careless in leaving estate business to others.¹⁰⁹ According to Ridley, Bend'Or himself accepted that he had given Blow too much leeway.¹¹⁰

Blow's departure was the exception, not the rule. Kerr, St Clowes and Hunter served Bend'Or for years and well.

The Grenfell twins, Francis and Rivy, were typical of the type of man Bend'Or liked to have as a friend. They were both carefree and brave, and highly ranked polo

¹⁰⁶ University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers (CRL, NC), 18/1/1015, letter Neville Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 8 August 1937; CRL NC 18/1/1112, letter Neville Chamberlain to Hilda Chamberlain, 13 August 1939.

¹⁰⁷ Oliver Bradbury, 'A debacle between the architect Detmar Blow and "Bend'Or", 2nd Duke of Westminster, revisited', *The British Art Journal*, 8 (Summer 2007), 34–38 (34–35), <<http://jstor.org>> [accessed 25 May 2015].

¹⁰⁸ *Survey of London: Volume 39, The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair, Part 1 (General History)*, ed. by F.H.W. Sheppard (London County Council, London, 1977), Chapter IV, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

¹⁰⁹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 183–84.

¹¹⁰ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 170.

players.¹¹¹ On 19 August 1914, within weeks of the outbreak of the First World War, Bend'Or rescued the wounded Francis in his car from a battlefield in Northern France. Bend'Or explained to his mother, '[I] motored him into a town (in our possession) so that he might escape being made a prisoner — he has been recommended for the V.C. [Victoria Cross] for saving some guns — he ought to get it'.¹¹² Francis did but he was killed in May 1915. He left a note in his Will saying of his relationship with Bend'Or, 'no man ever had a better friend'.¹¹³ Rivy was killed on 14 September 1914.

Winston Churchill and Joe Laycock were two of Bend'Or's closest and longest friends. Churchill was something of a buccaneer who sought out participation in the Cuban War of Independence, in India, with Kitchener in the Sudan, and in the Second Boer War, where Bend'Or and he met. Churchill was best man at Bend'Or's third wedding. They shared a joint passion for shooting stag and boar, and Churchill was a frequent guest on Bend'Or's yachts and to his Scottish lodges. That they had both lost a child created a deeper bond.

Bend'Or also met Brigadier General Sir Joseph Laycock during the Boer War. In October 1900 from Cape Town, Bend'Or wrote to his mother that Laycock was 'one of the best and quite bravest man that has been out here'.¹¹⁴ Laycock was awarded the Distinguished Service Order in 1901. He was best man at Bend'Or's first wedding.¹¹⁵ He raced with Bend'Or in the 1908 Olympic powerboat racing.¹¹⁶ He joined Bend'Or's No. 2 Squadron, Armoured Cars in Egypt, and was with

¹¹¹ *Polo Monthly*, September 1912–February 1913, pp. 430–, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1912-Sep-1913-Feb.pdf>>; *Polo Monthly*, September 1914–February 1915, p. 26, <<http://hpa-polo.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/polo-monthly/1914-Sep-1915-Feb.pdf>> [accessed 28 January 2020].

¹¹² GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 19 August [added in pencil; may not be correct] 1914.

¹¹³ Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, 6 vols (London: Heinemann, 1966–88), III: *The Challenge of War, 1914–1916*, part 2, note p. 1293.

¹¹⁴ GA, 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 3 October 1900.

¹¹⁵ 'A Grand Wedding', *The Penny Illustrated Paper*, 23 February 1901, p. 12, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

¹¹⁶ 'Great Britain Motorboating at the 1908 London Summer Games', <www.sports-reference.com>. The 1908 Olympic feature is now closed.

Bend'Or for the rescue of the *Tara* prisoners. In 1918 Laycock was a commander of a brigade of the Royal Artillery and was one of the few Territorial officers to be appointed KCMG in 1919 for services in the field. Loelia picked out Sir Joseph Laycock as 'a true friend and good influence' and claimed he had a 'twinkling sense of humour'.¹¹⁷

Bravery and humour drew F.A. Lindemann (later Viscount Cherwell) to Bend'Or, but tennis was the first draw. Lindemann was an international competition player who had won tournaments in Germany and had been champion of Sweden.¹¹⁸

Professor Andrew Roberts asserts that Lindemann met Churchill at Eaton 'when they were partnered at a charity tennis tournament'.¹¹⁹ This is not correct. In August 1921 Clementine was staying at Eaton for the tennis, without Winston.¹²⁰ Returning from that tournament, Lindemann told his father, 'I refused an invitation [...] of the Duke of Westminster to Scotland to meet Winston Churchill [...]. The Duke was very keen on my meeting Churchill and arranged a special dinner in town last night for the purpose.' The meeting was only 'quite' interesting as Lindemann found Churchill 'rather distraught'.¹²¹ Four days later Churchill's daughter Marigold died.

Lindemann specialized in thermodynamics and electrochemistry and had worked under Einstein in Germany before he settled in England and became involved with aeroplane manufacture. While at the Royal Aircraft factory at Farnborough he learnt to fly, and when only just qualified exhibited extraordinary bravery by testing, in person, the handling of an aeroplane in a spin.

Lindemann and Bend'Or also shared similar humour. In Lindemann's letter to Bend'Or, thanking Bend'Or for lending him a book by the entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre, Lindemann with care (the draft with alterations survives) wrote:

¹¹⁷ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 185–86.

¹¹⁸ The Earl of Birkenhead, *The Prof in Two Worlds: The Official Life of Professor F.A. Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell* (London: Collins, 1961), p. 48.

¹¹⁹ Andrew Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), p. 286.

¹²⁰ GA, EV1669.

¹²¹ Nuffield College Oxford, Cherwell Papers (NC, Ch.P), A93/F8, F.A. Lindemann to his father, dated 19 August 1921.

I had no idea that green grass hopper had such a Sien [*sic*] Fein propensity to assassination or the cabbage caterpillar such an almost Semitic voracity, or the pine martin processing the blind follow my leader attitude commonly believed to be confined to members who hoped to see their names in the birthday honours list. Many insects of course seem really to have solved the problem of determination of sex: let us hope, when we solve it, that we shall not revert entirely to the communistic form of government.¹²²

Humour and courage also recommended Sir John (Shane) Leslie, 3rd Baronet, to Bend'Or. Shane was a frequent guest for racing. He designed a coloured spoof of a heraldic shield for Bend'Or, which is glued into the Eaton Hall Visitor Book.¹²³ Ridley quotes Shane as saying, 'Staying at Blenheim was not unlike living in a mausoleum. Bend'Or's parties for the Grand National and Chester Cup were very different.'¹²⁴

Clever, slightly eccentric, he had, according to his entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'a fine conversational power and wit'. He was interested in reforestation, on which he campaigned.¹²⁵ After the Second World War Bend'Or was responsible for afforestation and agricultural schemes, to the benefit of the North-West Highlands in particular, by encouraging employment and industry.¹²⁶

Isaac Bell (Ikey) played an important part in Bend'Or's life by introducing him to Nancy Sullivan, who became Bend'Or's fourth wife, and to an estate in Ireland, Fortwilliam, in County Waterford.¹²⁷ Bell, born in America to an American father but Irish mother, was a noted, and by all accounts fearless, field sportsman, especially at hunting. The *Western Times* (and other newspapers) carried a story of Bell: he had 'plunged' his horse into a swollen river, and he and the horse had to be

¹²² NC, Ch.P K308/1, letter from Lindemann to Bend'Or, 5 September 1921.

¹²³ GA, EV1669.

¹²⁴ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 74.

¹²⁵ Anita Leslie, revised by Clare L. Taylor, 'Leslie, Sir John Randolph [Shane], third baronet', *ODNB*, 23 September 2004, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/31354>>.

¹²⁶ Raymond Eagle, *Seton Gordon: The Life and Times of a Highland Gentleman* (Moffat: Lochar, 1991), p. 247.

¹²⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 158.

rescued separately.¹²⁸ Bell was Master of three hunts, a famous breeder of hounds and an author.

People change during their lifetime as they mature, but dominant characteristics remain stable. For Bend'Or these were courage, courtesy, curiosity and humour, and he was attracted to people of a similar profile. They were strong, determined and courageous. They were prepared to stand up for what they believed or enjoyed. Like Bend'Or they were, in short, 'blokes'.

Bend'Or showed no inclination to be 'gay'. On the contrary, his strong attraction to women encouraged him to be wholly heterosexual. Ridley claims that the realization that Count de Mauncey, the principal of the establishment Bend'Or had been sent to in France, was gay left Bend'Or 'with an abiding dislike of homosexuals'.¹²⁹ This is unlikely. Bend'Or had been at Eton, where a homoerotic atmosphere would have been prevalent, as it was in other public schools. One Eton housemaster's wife explained homosexuality to her daughters in 1893 as, 'It's the traditional, ancient aristocratic vice of Eton'.¹³⁰

Moreover a letter from Bend'Or to George revealed that Bend'Or had his suspicions about de Mauncey for over a month. Far from flouncing out in horror, Bend'Or had waited until 'there is no more doubt whatever especially as he had such old busters as Ward Cook whom you probably know, staying here' before Bend'Or left the academy, and then it was because he feared a scandal might harm George's political career rather than his own circumstances which made him leave.¹³¹ It suggests that Bend'Or was level-headed in his attitude to homosexuality.

Much has been made of Bend'Or's supposed stance on sexual ambivalence in the matter involving his brother-in-law, 7th Earl Beauchamp, who was bisexual.

¹²⁸ *Western Times*, 6 March 1913, p.3, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 26 February 2020].

¹²⁹ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 28.

¹³⁰ Hugh Cecil and Mirabel Cecil, *Clever Hearts: A Biography of Desmond and Molly MacCarthy – a Biography* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1990), p. 19.

¹³¹ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 28.

There are no papers in the Grosvenor archive, or in Madresfield's, relating to the affair.¹³² The stories are therefore vulnerable to subjective opinions.¹³³

Bend'Or's elder sister Lettice married Beauchamp in 1902 and had seven children. Amongst an array of public and state positions, Beauchamp was a Liberal MP who served in Asquith's cabinet and became a Privy Councillor; he was a prominent courtier who had carried the Sword of State at George V's coronation and became a Knight of the Garter; he was Lord-Lieutenant of Gloucestershire from 1911 to 1931 and Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports from 1913 to 1932.¹³⁴ He was urbane, articulate, confident and likeable.

From the late 1920s Beauchamp's flaunting of his outré behaviour was attracting gossip.¹³⁵ In June 1931, encouraged by a delegation of Privy Councillors, Beauchamp moved to live abroad. He died in 1937 in New York. Lettice died in 1936.

The saga attracted no comment in contemporary newspapers. One reason was the Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act 1926, which prevented salacious details of a marriage breakdown from being aired. Nonetheless Beauchamp's behaviour when he was Governor General of New South Wales had attracted

¹³² Sara Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage: 7th Earl & Countess of Beauchamp' (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Buckingham, 2019), pp. 1–226 (17).

¹³³ Michael Bloch, *Closet Queens: Some 20th Century British Politicians* (London: Abacus, 2015), pp. 54–61; Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), pp. 243–49; Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), pp. 218–20; Ridley, *Bend'Or*, pp. 172–73. Bloch's description of the tale is written using particularly prejudicial words. In Harrison's account, Bend'Or becomes a Chief Justice who could decide what 'sentence' should be meted out to Beauchamp. Field agrees with Harrison that Bend'Or orchestrated a vendetta against Beauchamp. Ridley's personal prejudice and loyalty to Bend'Or makes his rendering incomplete. Later on, Paula Byrne, in *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead* (London: HarperPress, 2009), pp. 136–51, makes an attempt to balance. She includes some letters written by Lady Beauchamp to her children but she still finds Bend'Or the villain of the piece. Jane Mulvagh, *Madresfield – The Real Brideshead: One House, One Family, One Thousand Years* (London: Doubleday, 2008) and a more recently published book by Peter Raina, *The Seventh Earl Beauchamp* (Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2016) are referenced in Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage'. No source has yet been found to the claim that Bend'Or wrote to Beauchamp, 'Dear Bugger-in-law'.

¹³⁴ Richard Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp (1872–1938)', *ODNB*, 23 September 2004, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/34643>>.

¹³⁵ Mulvagh, *Madresfield*, p. 288.

attention in the more open Australian press, and there was contemporaneous gossip amongst members of the British establishment.¹³⁶

Within these broad facts there lay a family drama. What the Grosvenor documents show, particularly the Kleeblatt diaries (Bend'Or's and his sisters' childhood diaries), is that Bend'Or and Lettice were close and that Lettice had been a feisty child who later became religious and dutiful like her mother. A close bond grew between Sibell and Lettice; from Sibell's letters it is apparent that she spent a great deal of her time at Madresfield.

Lettice has been described as witless and innocently unaware of her situation.¹³⁷ But this is contradicted by Jane Mulvagh and Paula Byrne.¹³⁸ Byrne reproduces a letter that Lettice wrote to her children, beginning: 'for many years, I had strongly suspected that (with Daddy) all was not as it should be — and that one side of his life and desires went contrary to everything that is right, normal and natural'.¹³⁹

In February 1929 Sibell had died. From the same time Lettice stopped appearing in public with Beauchamp.¹⁴⁰ Her mother's death possibly removed Lettice's fear of embarrassing her deeply religious and aged mother. It also meant Saughton Grange, Lettice and Bend'Or's childhood home, was vacated. Lettice could live there sheltered by her brother; a not insignificant consideration for a woman contemplating leaving a marital home.

Whether Bend'Or removed his sister from her family or she asked to return to Cheshire is not known. Protecting her youngest son, then aged twelve, whom she took with her to live in Cheshire, from the contagion of homosexuality may have been a consideration: it was then a common fallacy that being gay was 'infectious'.¹⁴¹

¹³⁶ Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp', *ODNB*, <<https://www-oxforddnb-com.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-34643?rskey=obGCIO&result=2>> [accessed 3 October 2020].

¹³⁷ Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp', *ODNB*.

¹³⁸ Mulvagh, *Madresfield*, p. 288; Byrne, *Mad World*, pp. 140–41.

¹³⁹ Byrne, *Mad World*, p. 148. NB: no date given.

¹⁴⁰ Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage', p. 129.

¹⁴¹ Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage', p. 130, quoting Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Living with Shame from the Victorians to the Present Day* (London: Viking, 2013), pp. 158–59.

Beauchamp and Bend'Or were not close brothers-in-law. They were opposites in many ways. Bend'Or did not care for politics or the Court, which were Beauchamp's main preoccupation.¹⁴² Bend'Or was robust, obvious, conservative in manner and politics and tense with people; Beauchamp was quick-minded, original, popular, and liberal in temperament and politics. They tolerated each other at first for the sake of appearances. Thereafter their relationship probably faltered as their differences became apparent. Beauchamp was a 'radical', free trader and successful Liberal Minister, while Bend'Or was a Conservative diehard whose support for imperial preference was lifelong but who failed to develop a significant political presence. The brothers-in-law held opposing attitudes to war. Bend'Or went on active service in Flanders and Libya; Beauchamp was a pacifist, did not endure active service and supported Lansdowne's peace letter in 1917.¹⁴³

Most authors claim that Bend'Or had a vendetta against Beauchamp arising from jealousy.¹⁴⁴ It is true that Beauchamp had three living sons and that having no son to succeed him remained painful for Bend'Or. But at that time there were enough living male Grosvenors to ensure the continuation of the title and estates. What would have rankled more was hypocrisy. Beauchamp continued to be a courtier while indulging in conduct likely to bring the Court into disrepute; and seemingly a blind eye was being turned. In the next chapter it will be shown that Bend'Or was deeply grieved that the King had made him resign from being a Lord-Lieutenant after his first divorce. It must have been particularly vexing for Bend'Or that Beauchamp remained a Lord-Lieutenant, and Knight of the Garter, while his behaviour was more scandalous than being a divorcee.

At the centre of the scandal was Bend'Or's sister. As the family's head Bend'Or had the responsibility to defend the family's honour. It was a contemporary value that bound him to be his sister's protector. Moreover Bend'Or's instinct would have been to settle the issue quickly to limit publicity and family exposure to further

¹⁴² Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 196.

¹⁴³ Mulvagh, *Madresfield*, p. 234; Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage', p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp', *ODNB*. Harrison claims that Bend'Or acted out of 'his deep sense of family', not malice. Field believes that Bend'Or was driven by revenge and prejudice. The prompt was an article in *The Church Papers* that was unflattering to Bend'Or, the authorship of which Bend'Or traced back to Beauchamp.¹⁴⁴ Ridley wrote that Bend'Or acted in order to save Lettice and her family from what would have been disastrous circumstances.

gossip. Sibell was settled at Saighton, where she drew up divorce papers. These were not lodged, but were probably designed to put pressure on Beauchamp to resolve the situation, which depended on his absenting himself from England.

There was also nothing new in voluntary exile. Homosexuality was illegal. If the matter had been brought to a court of justice, the guilty person would be imprisoned. Exile, either voluntary or suggested, was the traditional option for men who feared public humiliation or disgrace.¹⁴⁵

Whether Bend'Or brought Beauchamp's peccadillos to the notice of George V or whether the King had motives of his own to seal Beauchamp's fate is not known.¹⁴⁶ A letter written to *The Times* in 2005 by the author Robin Rhoderick-Jones claims that two of George V's sons, Prince Henry and in particular Prince George, who was courting Mary Lygon, were associated with Madresfield.¹⁴⁷ The King's attitude that his Court and those connected with it should set an example of moral probity to other classes would have been severely at odds with a scandal emanating from Madresfield that may have included his sons.¹⁴⁸ Beauchamp's behaviour was an Achilles heel in the King's campaign for moral rectitude.

It is possible that Bend'Or's father-in-law brokered a solution. Bend'Or had married Loelia Ponsonby in 1931. She was the daughter of Henry Ponsonby, 1st Baron Sysonby, the King's Treasurer. Bend'Or's ostracism from the Court affected Loelia's enjoyment of Court life, which had been central to the life of her family. Ponsonby too would have wanted that situation to be resolved.

The use of private detectives was common practice in family disputes to establish whether adultery, or any other sort of misdemeanour, had taken place. Bend'Or's wealth meant that he was able to employ the best detectives, which was

¹⁴⁵ In 1889 Lord Arthur Somerset had to leave the country after the Cleveland Street scandal. His brother Lord Henry Somerset also went into exile, having been accused of homosexuality by his wife. Oscar Wilde was urged to leave the country while he could. He didn't and was imprisoned.

¹⁴⁶ Davenport-Hines, 'Lygon, William, seventh Earl Beauchamp', *ODNB*; Byrne, *Mad World*, p. 140; Bloch, *Closet Queens*, p. 56. Bloch insists that Bend'Or was the instigator.

¹⁴⁷ Robin Rhoderick-Jones, 'Lives Remembered', *The Times*, 29 November 2005, p. 58. N.B. Rhoderick-Jones's source is not made clear.

¹⁴⁸ The King's attitude is examined in greater depth in Chapter 8 'What it was to be a Duke'.

useful for both monarch and duke. If enough evidence were gathered, then it would be possible to persuade Beauchamp to leave the country quickly and quietly.

If that was the plan, it worked. In June 1931, the same month and year that Beauchamp left Britain, Bend'Or sat next to the King at a Jockey Club dinner held in Buckingham Palace.¹⁴⁹ It was an indication of royal favour.

The crisis precipitated a split in the Lygon family. Even so, it was a story that attracted little attention until Evelyn Waugh published *Brideshead Revisited* in 1945, and more so when the book was serialized for television in the 1970s. By then attitudes to homosexuality had changed: Beauchamp became the tormented and Bend'Or the tormentor. Only then did the affair become 'a public scandal rather than a private family tragedy'.¹⁵⁰

In his life choices, those that Bend'Or was free to make outside of his inherited responsibilities, he shows himself to be typical of the type of manhood that was a product and an expression of the era in which his character was largely formed. It was a period when masculinity was associated with leadership and dominance, which in turn were associated with spurious chivalric ideals. As the twentieth century progressed, that version of masculinity was challenged by the growing capabilities of women, an enlarged franchise and a greater stress on egalitarianism. Some men could adapt; Bend'Or was not one of them. In his rigid adherence to a robust manliness he became increasingly out of step with the social, political and cultural milieus of the mid-twentieth century. It was unfortunate. This lack of adaptability contributed to his unsympathetic reputation.

¹⁴⁹ Information supplied by Professor Ridley.

¹⁵⁰ Paulley, 'A Queer Marriage', p. 181.

Chapter 7. Heirs and Her Graces

Despite recent books which focus on individual marriages, it is not an easily accessible subject for historians.¹ Dr Gail Savage warns: ‘The pervasiveness and idiosyncrasy of marital unhappiness represents a home truth more easily grappled with by the novelist than the historian.’² For Bend’Or the question of marriage, or more precisely the need to secure the Grosvenor inheritance by procuring a son, was of fundamental importance. Bend’Or did eventually, on his fourth marriage, find marital happiness but he did not leave a living son to be his heir. The inclusion of a chapter on Bend’Or’s marriages, and affairs, is justified because of the effect the issues had on his life and reputation. If the birth of a son is an aspiration for most men, it was a requirement for those with hereditary titles and/or estates. Not producing a son to ensure the family succession was seen as a failure on the part of the titleholder. A contemporary of Bend’Or’s, Anita Leslie, commented, ‘Bend’Or’s name was seldom mentioned without the accompanying sigh: “But he had no son.” One might have thought that the only function of an English duke was to beget yet another duke.’³

Robert Lacey offers an explanation why an heir is of such importance:

The true aristocrat [...] is he who inherits and who passes on. His most cherished values lie in the past which has bestowed so many privileges upon him, and his ultimate priorities are concerned with the future to which he must pass on at least as much as he has inherited. He is one link in a chain of generations, and his weight is assessed in the scales of aristocracy by how strong a link he proves.⁴

¹ For example, Nigel Nicolson, *Portrait of a Marriage* (New York: Atheneum, 1973); Thomas and Jane Carlyle, *Portrait of a Marriage* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2002); Phyllis Rose, *Private Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (New York: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1984).

² Gail L. Savage, ‘Divorce and the Law in England and France Prior to the First World War’, *Journal of Social History*, 21 (Spring 1988), 499–513.

³ Anita Leslie, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread* (London: Hutchinson, 2007), p. 132.

⁴ Robert Lacey, *Aristocrats* (London: Hutchinson & BBC, 1983), pp. 21–22.

The historian Jonathan Petropoulos agrees. He suggests families with the responsibility of an inheritance share ‘certain traits’ amongst which he lists ‘an awareness of ancestry and a loyalty to family’.⁵

Bend’Or had no trouble in attracting women. He was tall (six foot two) with a dignified bearing, he had fine hair tinged with red, pale-blue eyes in a well-set face, and a manly figure.⁶ John (Jock) Colville, who as Assistant Private Secretary to Winston Churchill knew Bend’Or, credits him ‘with a personality to which men and women seldom failed to succumb’.⁷ Loelia, his third duchess, described him as ‘having a splendid appearance, a quick and lively brain and a warm heart’. She noted: ‘he was naturally good at games and at outdoor sports, fearless, generous and loyal. Above all he had that dangerous quality of charm’.⁸ He also had the allure of extreme wealth and a senior aristocratic title.

Having spent his infancy in a female-dominated household of his mother and two sisters, Bend’Or liked women’s company. The last chapter argued that he was a typical example of the early twentieth century’s robust masculinity.⁹ It included a chauvinistic attitude to domesticity and an ability to compartmentalize marriage from affairs.

It is equally true Bend’Or would ignore social convention when it suited him. He chose all his wives according to his own wishes and not according to those who were regarded as suitable to marry a duke. His first wife was his longstanding girlfriend, Constance (Shelagh) Cornwallis-West.

In Chapter 2 it was noted that Bend’Or had known Shelagh from childhood and that the Cornwallis-West family had encouraged the couple’s courtship, while

⁵ Jonathan Petropoulos, *Royals and the Reich: The Princes von Hessen in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 5–6.

⁶ George Ridley, *Bend’Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 66.

⁷ John Colville, *The Churchillians* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), p. 11.

⁸ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 182.

⁹ See Chapter 6 ‘Manliness’.

Bend'Or's mother was hoping that his enthusiasm for Shelagh would fade. Anita Leslie suggests that the Cornwallis-Wests succeeded in driving Bend'Or into marriage.¹⁰ She is half right: undoubtedly the socially ambitious Mrs Cornwallis-West, who had prompted her eldest daughter Daisy to marry the future Hans Heinrich XV von Hochberg of Pless, wanted an equally good match for her second daughter.

Bend'Or's mother had done all she could to delay a wedding. In the end, Bend'Or, having reached the age of majority, rushed into marriage because, as research for this thesis has established, a scandal threatened from an affair he had had with a married woman.

Liaisons with women outside marriage were tolerated in Edwardian upper-class society as long as an affair did not interfere with duty or create a scandal. Cheating on a fellow officer, during a war, fell into both categories. The affair was not reported in British newspapers but it was in America.

The *San Francisco Call* was one American newspaper that covered the affair in detail. That paper had it that the lady in question was Mary Louise Atherton, wife of Major T.J. Atherton, who had accompanied her husband to South Africa during the Second Boer War. The paper claimed Bend'Or met her in 1899 during the Modder River campaign. The report asserted that Atherton had fended off calls to drop the case, which included an offer of £40,000 from the Grosvenor lawyers and a plea from Edward VII. The affair may have been the reason Bend'Or had to leave South Africa so precipitately.

In October 1900, Bend'Or returned to England, it seems accompanied by Mrs Atherton. The newspaper article suggested that a writ was served on Bend'Or on the day of his marriage.¹¹ The divorce papers of Atherton v. Atherton were eventually lodged in Lancaster in 1904.¹²

A distressed Sibell appealed to her husband, George Wyndham. George, who had recently been appointed Chief Secretary to Ireland, felt that as Bend'Or was of

¹⁰ Anita Leslie, *Edwardians in Love* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), pp. 222–23.

¹¹ 'Westminster Figures in Divorce Scandal', *The San Francisco Call*, 87 (84) (February 1901), California Digital Newspaper Collection, <<https://cdnc.ucr.edu/cgi-bin/cdnc?a=d&d=SFC19010222.2.15>> [accessed 7 September 2018].

¹² London, The National Archives (TNA), PL 31/29/3, Atherton v. Atherton.

age he could only 'advocate', which is what he did when Bend'Or precipitously announced his intention to marry Shelagh.

An added complication was that the King was not pleased by either the scandal or that the hastily arranged marriage would be held in the Court's mourning period for Queen Victoria.¹³ In their rush to choose St Valentine's Day for the wedding, Shelagh and Bend'Or had disregarded Court etiquette.

George wrote to Sibell in an attempt to calm the situation down:

My view was that Benny had better (a) stave off the lady by saying that, in view of the paragraph in the American paper, everything shld done to abate a scandal. (b) enter into no engagement as (i) this wd irritate the lady and (ii) interfere in his soldiering. I thought that he agreed with my advice. But he engaged himself. I was surprised but made the best of it.

With a view to not goading the lady to extreme action, and soldiering, I advocated no marriage till Easter or Whitsuntide. But I heard the marriage was fixed for Feb 14th. Again I felt that my advice and plan being rejected the only thing was to make the best of the plan which Benny preferred [...].

Being engaged and having announced the date of the marriage, he will only create more disturbance by a further change. He owes it to his word to marry now that he is engaged and to her [Shelagh's] feelings not to postpone the date.

George recognized that Bend'Or's engagement to Shelagh had irritated Mrs Atherton:

As the lady, naturally is annoyed, I don't think that any of us ought to speak harshly of her. I have little doubt but that she is moving heaven and earth to stop the marriage. But many women wd do so under like circumstances. I would disregard her letter. It is very probable that her husband has not got the letters. If he has it is almost certain that she gave them to him.

¹³ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), WP/1/2/16 George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 18 March 1901.

[...] He must now, I think go through with it [the marriage]. Then I do hold that he ought to soldier a bit at home until the war is over.¹⁴

A letter Bend'Or wrote to his mother four days after his wedding suggests that something had been amiss in the run-up to the wedding day. Bend'Or wrote, 'feels has been rather a hasty son with Ma on occasions but knows will understand that son has had rather a trying unsettled sort of time'.¹⁵

The engagement troubled Bend'Or's friend, Winston Churchill. Churchill wrote to his mother, Jennie:

I see the Wests have netted the unfortunate Bendor — though he is to have a year's respite. I prophesy that it will not come off. He does not love her really or he could not have done what he did and he will find someone he does love before time is called.¹⁶

There was no respite. Bend'Or married Shelagh in February 1901 in St Paul's Knightsbridge. The church 'was filled to over flowing', two bishops presided, the church was 'tastefully decorated, tall palms and a profusion of graceful arums being arranged', the bride was adorned with 'orange blossom and diamonds' and, as the King was in mourning, the guests were headed by the Duke and Duchess of Teck, Bend'Or's aunt.¹⁷ According to the *Penny Illustrated* there was an army of 'wedding guests' from high society and 'over six hundred' wedding presents headed by individual gifts from the King and Queen to bride and groom.¹⁸ The couple moved into Eaton Hall.

Apart from each other, Bend'Or and Shelagh's marriage pleased the bride's family only. The Cornwallis-Wests had a small but unprofitable estate based on Ruthin Castle in North Wales, a Strawberry Hill Gothic mansion on the Hampshire

¹⁴ GA, WP 1/2/16, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 9 February 1901.

¹⁵ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 20 February 1901.

¹⁶ Cambridge, Churchill Archive (CA, CHAR) 28/26/80–82, W.S. Churchill to Jennie Churchill, 1 January 1901.

¹⁷ 'Marriage of the Duke of Westminster', *The Times*, Court Circular, 18 February 1901, p. 6.

¹⁸ 'A Grand Wedding', *The Penny Illustrated*, 23 February 1901, p. 12, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

coast, and aristocratic forebears. Shelagh's father, Popsey, was affable but financially hopeless and in Edwardian society he was rated as relatively poor.¹⁹ The colour, but no money, came from the women. Shelagh's grandmother was Lady Olivia FitzPatrick, the daughter of Thomas Taylor, 2nd Marquess of Headfort, who had been Lord Chamberlain to Queen Victoria.²⁰ Olivia's daughter, Mary Adelaide, known as 'Patsy', was Shelagh's mother. She inherited Olivia's gaiety and an Irish vivacious spirit. Suspected to have been a mistress of Edward, when Prince of Wales, Patsy was one of the first 'professional beauties'.²¹

In both resources and social standing Shelagh was a poor match. Bend'Or's choice was a show against convention. According to Gregory Philips, 'To marry for money was accepted as proper: indeed many believed that the owner of an encumbered estate would be derelict in his duty to his family and tenants if he failed to do so.'²² Bend'Or no doubt comforted himself that he had no need to marry for money, but there was a question of social status. Bend'Or was only the second Duke of Westminster. A marriage into a more ancient family would have cemented his stock amongst the *ancien régime*.

George's letter confirms that Bend'Or had been impetuous and reckless in allowing himself to be dictated to by circumstances, especially if Churchill were right in his assumption that Bend'Or was not truly in love with Shelagh.

Even before Bend'Or and Shelagh were married, Popsey had sought from his future son-in-law a guarantee of £2,500 to secure a loan from the Wiltshire and Dorset bank.²³ Shelagh's brother, George Cornwallis-West, was worse. A spendthrift

¹⁹ On her father's side the Cornwallis history had been three generations of family feuds, court cases, extravagant spending and consequently a decreasing landholding. Source: Barry Jolly, 'Money, Politics and Family: The Life of Frederick Richard West MP of Ruthin Castle and Arnewood House, Hordle', *Milford-on-Sea Historical Record Society*, 4 (2016), 3–24.

²⁰ Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2012), p. 167. Olivia was reputedly banned from the Court for flirting with Prince Albert, unsuccessfully.

²¹ Ridley, *Bertie*, p. 167. Patsy's flirtation with the Prince was probably more successful than her mother's with Prince Albert. 'Professional beauties' was a term to describe Society ladies who sold printed portraits of themselves in large numbers to the general public. Daisy wrote that a photograph of Patsy wearing ermine on an artificial rock in an artificial snowstorm 'sold by the million'.

²² Gregory D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 37.

²³ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 66.

and a bad businessman, George had married in July 1900 Lady Randolph (Jennie) Churchill, Winston's mother, whose extravagance was famed. Bend'Or and Churchill had to rescue the couple from ever-threatening financial embarrassment on several occasions. A note in 'The Duke of Westminster: Notes and His Grace's Instructions' estate book (His Grace's Instructions) for the year 1903 showed that George obtained a loan from the British Empire Insurance Co. with the assistance of Bend'Or, the Duke of Marlborough and Sir Ernest Cassell. In return George pledged his guarantors a covering charge against 'his estates'.²⁴

By 1906 Bend'Or was not 'on terms' with George. Nevertheless Bend'Or offered Churchill £3,000 towards another of George's losses,

to be used on condition that George should not know of this transaction till I choose, if ever, to let him know. I think it very hard that you and Jack should bear the brunt, when it should have come from me, as the brother-in-law.²⁵

Churchill carried out the commission and replied, 'let me say in conclusion that it gave me a vy warm feeling of pleasure to read your generous letter, and I think it vy kind of you to express so much sympathy with my mother'.²⁶ The author Tim Coates quotes another letter, from George, dated 19 February 1907, thanking Winston for a further cheque from Bend'Or, but no reference is given.²⁷

In spite of the circumstances, Bend'Or's marriage to Shelagh started well. Shelagh, who was Bend'Or's elder by three years, was a capable and spirited woman. Tall, poised and elegant, she was a skilful horsewoman and an enthusiastic yachtsman. Her sister, Daisy of Pless, described Shelagh as 'an excellent organizer' and 'business woman'. It made her an intelligent hostess and chatelaine of the Grosvenors' mansions, a competence that was highly rated in Edwardian society. Daisy also called her 'strong willed' with a 'generous share of Irish-Welsh

²⁴ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace's Instructions, 1900–1904, p. 103.

²⁵ Randolph S. Churchill, *Winston S. Churchill* (1874–1914), 2 vols (London: Heinemann, 1966–67), II: *Young Statesman, 1901–1914* (1967), pp. 198–99.

²⁶ Churchill, *Young Statesman*, pp. 199–200.

²⁷ Tim Coates, *Patsy: The Story of Mary Cornwallis-West* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 38.

temperament and [...] we are both I should say mettlesome and difficult to handle'.²⁸ Edward VII, whom the sisters were allowed to gently tease, harboured a paternal fondness for both.

A daughter, Ursula, was born in 1902 and two years later a son, Edward. His christening was in the Chapel Royal, London. The King stood as chief sponsor and 'made the response on behalf of the child', who was named, 'by special permission', Edward George Hugh.²⁹ The other godparents were Katharine, Dowager Duchess of Westminster, and George Wyndham. It was in all senses a majestic affair.

The early years of Bend'Or and Shelagh's married life can only be described as hedonistic. Bend'Or left the army in August 1901. To his mother he expressed some reluctance:

The King has approved of my sending in my papers which I have done. I am sorry in many ways [...] the summer I had at Windsor I shall always look back to as it has made a lot of good pals for me.³⁰

The young ducal couple participated fully in London Society, attending Court and holding balls at Grosvenor House and Eaton, which were accompanied by large house parties. They hunted in Cheshire and for a time in Leicestershire.³¹ In addition Bend'Or was constantly absent from Eaton, playing polo at home and abroad, visiting his estates in southern Africa, or enjoying field sports in Scotland. Shelagh's sailing, which included racing in the 1908 Olympics and constant travelling, kept her away from Cheshire as well. Wilfrid Blunt noted in 1908 that the couple were leading hectic lives. He commented: 'The life of both of them is a

²⁸ *Daisy Princess of Pless by Herself*, ed. with an Introduction by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1928), p. 32.

²⁹ 'The King as Sponsor', *The Sportsman*, Tuesday 13 December 1904, p. 2, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

³⁰ GA, WP 1/11/3, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 31 August 1901.

³¹ Gordon Fergusson, *The Green Collars: The Tarporley Hunt Club and Cheshire Hunting History, incorporating Hunting Songs by R.E. Egerton Warburton (Eleventh Edition)* (London: Quiller, 1993), p. 281.

perpetual gallop. This sort of society cannot last, it will end in Bedlam.’³² It was a perceptive comment.

A factor in their marriage breakdown was the affair that Shelagh probably had with the Duke of Alba. He was an accomplished rival for Shelagh’s favours. The 17th Duke of Alba and 10th Duke of Berwick was a descendant of James II, the last Stuart King of England and Wales. A year older than Bend’Or, Alba would have been at Eton with him. But Alba had taken his education more seriously. He went to university in Spain, where he gained a degree in law. He had Spanish good looks, he was well-versed in the arts, a motor enthusiast and a keen polo-player, which won him a silver medal at the 1908 Olympics. In short, he was ‘an aristocrat to his finger-tips’.³³ In addition he was a diplomat, businessman, a great landowner and rich.

Leslie Field, one of Bend’Or’s biographers, suggests that Shelagh’s affair with the Duke ‘lasted for some years’.³⁴ The hunting chronicler Gordon Fergusson, who tended to reflect county gossip, wrote that the ‘elegant and dashing Jimmy Alba [...] was hardly ever absent from the Eaton Polo Weeks, but in the course of time paid rather too much attention to his hostess, Shelagh, for Benny’s liking’.³⁵ Alba’s name featured four times in the Eaton Hall Visitor Book between 1907 and 1911, including when King Edward stayed in December 1909.³⁶ There is no mention of Alba in 1910 when the King and Queen of Spain visited for Bend’Or’s polo week, but he was at Eaton in August 1911 for another visit by the Spanish monarch.³⁷ In addition, in April 1908 Shelagh and her sister Daisy, without Bend’Or, were in Spain and stayed with Alba at the Palacio de Liria in Madrid.³⁸ In June 1908 Alba and Shelagh were sailing together at Cowes; in August 1909 they had another

³² Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries: Being a Personal Narrative of Events, 1888-1914*, 2 vols (London: Martin Secker, 1920), II: 1900–1914, p. 219.

³³ Charles Petrie, *King Alfonso XIV and His Age* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1963), p. 70.

³⁴ Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 111. Typically Field does not offer her source.

³⁵ Fergusson, *The Green Collars*, p. 284.

³⁶ GA, EV1669, Eaton Hall Visitor Book.

³⁷ GA, EV1669, Eaton Hall Visitor Book.

³⁸ *Daisy Princess of Pless by Herself*, pp. 152–54.

sailing holiday at Cowes and they spent Christmas together at Daisy's castle in Fürstenstein, all unaccompanied by Bend'Or.³⁹ Over Easter in 1911 the Grenfell twins found Shelagh, accompanied by Lady Helen Grosvenor, staying with Alba in Madrid.⁴⁰ In 1912 Shelagh, Daisy and Alba sailed to Holland on Shelagh's yacht; and in February 1914 they holidayed with Daisy near Cannes.⁴¹ Bend'Or was not included, but by this stage Bend'Or and Shelagh had separated in 1910.

Bend'Or, like many of his peers, had mistresses. It was not necessarily regarded as marriage-breaking. The attitude lingered that a husband's adultery was natural and should be tolerated, whilst that of a wife could not.⁴² There are rumours that Bend'Or had an affair with Pamela Lytton, née Chichele-Plowden, who had been the object of Winston Churchill's affections before he met Clementine.⁴³ She also featured in the Eaton Hall Visitor Book: her name is recorded three times between 1905 and 1907, including twice in 1906, and spasmodically thereafter.⁴⁴

The Daily Telegraph's obituary of Bend'Or's fourth wife, Nancy, suggests that Bend'Or had fathered an illegitimate son. According to the *Telegraph* this unnamed boy was killed in 1942 during the battle of El Alamein.⁴⁵ Pamela Lytton lost two sons during the Second World War. Her youngest, Alexander Bulwer-Lytton, born in 1910, died at El Alamein. More revealingly, 'His Grace's Instructions' show that Bend'Or paid a pension to Lady Lytton, giving credibility to the rumour. The book shows that 'for December 1931 increased by deed of covenant Lady Lytton's quarterly payments from £1,500 a year to £3,000 a year for a period of seven years'.⁴⁶

³⁹ *From My Private Diary by Daisy Princess of Pless*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by Major Desmond Chapman-Huston (London: John Murray, 1931), pp. 232, 249, 255.

⁴⁰ John Buchan, *Francis and Riversdale Grenfell: A Memoir*, 2nd edn (London: Thomas Nelson, 1920), p. 163.

⁴¹ Chapman-Huston, ed., *From My Private Diary*, p. 274.

⁴² Roderick Phillips, 'Review: The Road to Divorce: England, 1530–1987 by Lawrence Stone', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 3 (1) (1992), 143–45, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3704377>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

⁴³ Justine Picardie, *Coco Chanel: The Legend and the Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 159.

⁴⁴ GA, EV1669, Eaton Hall Visitor Book.

⁴⁵ Obituary of Anne, Duchess of Westminster, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 2003.

⁴⁶ GA, Adds 679/11, His Grace's Instructions, 1931–32, December 1931.

There were other mistresses. Churchill noted in 1911 that Bend'Or did not attend a ball at Grosvenor House. Churchill told his wife:

I am just off [...] to Gala: and then to Grosvenor House. They say Bend'Or will not be there to entertain the King and Queen. He has gone off without leaving an address to see a friend whom we all know by sight! This is thought to be cool even for a duke.

Mary Soames notes that the mistress was Gertie Millar.⁴⁷ Cynthia Asquith also noted that Bend'Or was the lover of Gertie Millar, renowned for being one of the Gaiety Girls. Cynthia noted in 1918, '[she] left him because she discovered he was keeping Pavlova, when she had believed herself to be the "only woman"'.⁴⁸

George Wyndham noted that neither parent was attentive to their children, Ursula and Edward. Although at the start of the twentieth century it was typical upper-class behaviour, it shocked the more paternally minded George.⁴⁹ He made the following observation to his sister Pamela:

Well! Ursula and the Baby boy [Edward] have been staying here, while Shelagh was at Monte Carlo. And there has been such a debauch between Sibell, as a grandmother, and those 2, as 'beats Banagher'.⁵⁰ They begin at 7.30. When I get down to Breakfast, before hunting, all the dining-room chairs are arranged as a train along one wall [...]. The Burglar alarm-bell is vigorously used to announce the departure of that train. Between whiles, Sibell and Ursula, on the floor are making a sand-garden in a tea-tray [...] I love it. These 2 children are starved of nonsense and hugging. Here they get both. Ursula flings her arms round me and says 'What a Duck you are!'

⁴⁷ *Speaking for Themselves: The Personal Letters of Winston and Clementine Churchill*, ed. by Mary Soames (London: Black Swan, 1999), p. 49.

⁴⁸ *Lady Cynthia Asquith's Diaries 1915–8*, ed. by L.P. Hartley (London: Hutchinson, 1968), p. 414.

⁴⁹ Martin Pugh, *We Danced All Night: A Social History of Britain between the Wars* (London, Vintage, 2009), p. 194.

⁵⁰ 'Banagher' refers to the Welsh town of Bangor-on-Dee, which hosts an annual point-to-point.

What can one do? But it makes me sad to think of the need which leads to such excesses over a man in a hurry to eat before hunting.⁵¹

John Tosh warns that ‘the role of father was highly variable and certainly not to be contained within any stereotype image of the “Victorian father”’.⁵² The intimacy between child and father is impossible to fully measure, but the suggestion made by George is that Bend’Or, and Shelagh, were not only distant parents geographically but emotionally as well.

The circumstance of Edward’s death suggests the same. In February 1909 Edward, aged five, fell ill. Sibell rushed to be with him but she told George that Shelagh ‘was miles away in Scotland at Kylestorm or anywhere [...] the last account was that he [Edward] was very low and very ill’.⁵³ Appendicitis was diagnosed, Sir Alfred Fripp was summoned and an operation performed but Edward died of peritonitis three days later.⁵⁴ According to family lore, Bend’Or had been dismissive of the child’s complaints of stomach pains. When the pain became acute, Bend’Or insisted on a London doctor, delaying the operation. He never forgave himself or Shelagh, whom he accused, according to the same gossip, of being an inattentive mother for not being there.⁵⁵ If Shelagh had been in Scotland with Alba, it explains the bitterness, but of this we do not know. George Ridley skirts over the delay, stating the boy was not operated on immediately ‘for whatever reason’.⁵⁶ Bend’Or’s third wife, Loelia, noted his son’s death was ‘the great grief of Benny’s life’.⁵⁷

Bend’Or needed another son, which Shelagh would have to bear. An affair with Alba added obvious difficulties. She did become pregnant again but the child, born

⁵¹ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), II, p. 598.

⁵² John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, Yale, 1999), p. 79.

⁵³ GA, WP 2/1/46, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, n.d.

⁵⁴ ‘Death of Lord Grosvenor’, *Lichfield Mercury*, Friday, 19 February 1909, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁵⁵ Told to the author by a distant family member.

⁵⁶ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 68.

⁵⁷ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 178.

in June 1910, was a girl. According to Harrison, who had Shelagh as his tale-bearer, Bend'Or did not visit the baby, Mary, for a month.⁵⁸ Mary might not have been a boy but she did grow up to be like Bend'Or in looks, interests and manner.

What can be verified is that Bend'Or and Shelagh lived apart from 1910. They officially separated in 1913 but it was not until after the war that the separation became divorce. In the separation deed Bend'Or guaranteed to pay Shelagh's parents a pension, but Shelagh was ostracized from Grosvenor House and Eaton Hall.⁵⁹

There is plenty of evidence that there was considerable tension between the couple over the children. In 1913 there was an extended row over where the children should live. Shelagh and her family wanted the children to stay with Sibell, who was living at Clouds in Wiltshire. Sibell, fearing the Cornwallis-West sisters were conspiring against Bend'Or, thought it may have been a 'ruse' but was prepared to agree 'as it is in their [?] legal hands'.⁶⁰ Bend'Or initially agreed but changed his mind, and insisted the children went to Eaton.

By April Sibell feared, as she told Bend'Or, the Cornwallis-West family 'all these last days [...] had been trying to get control of children — and trying to see and arrange gov: for them [...] so your telegram was right'.⁶¹ Later Sibell wrote to George Wyndham, 'Little Ursula and baby are ducky'; she then slipped into French, which she used for confidential messages: 'But also greatly sad and the same threatens domestic peace [but] all is quiet and gentle'.⁶² By May 1913 Sibell hoped

⁵⁸ Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), p. 141.

⁵⁹ Harrison, *Lord of London*, pp. 148–52. Harrison reproduces legal letters from Mr Hatfield, probably taken from the papers of Boodle Hatfield. Personal family letters relating to the Grosvenors have subsequently been removed from Westminster City Archives to Cheshire.

⁶⁰ GA, WP 2/1/44, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 19 March 1913.

⁶¹ GA, WP 2/1/44, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 12 April 1913.

⁶² GA, WP 2/1/44, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 28 April 1913: the French being 'mais aussi une grande tristesse et en même terrifes la paix des domestiques [mais] sont tous si calunes [*sic*] et gentils'.

that matters were being resolved ‘for what we hope’.⁶³ In February 1914 Bend’Or wrote to his mother, ‘I feel happy the children being under your wing and relieved’.⁶⁴

Another major quarrel flared up in May 1914. Bend’Or’s secretary Colonel Lloyd wrote to Winchester St Clowes, agent of Bend’Or’s African estates: ‘there is another fierce fight raging over Ursula. B. has refused to send her back on account of the disgraceful treatment she received and intends to fight the question in court’.⁶⁵

The couple spent the war apart. In spite of their quarrelling, Bend’Or appears to have harboured residual fondness for Shelagh. Shelagh, like so many ladies of her station, ran a hospital in France, which Bend’Or supported by contributing £500.⁶⁶ She was awarded a CBE in 1917.⁶⁷ During the war he wrote several letters to his mother encouraging Sibell to keep in touch with her. He wrote, ‘I want you to write a little line to the Duchess at “Savoy Hotel”, Vallomtroma [*sic*] Italy. I happen to know she is rather unhappy now’.⁶⁸ A month later: ‘Royal Hotel, via Reggio, Italy is the little Duchess’ address if you feel like writing her a line’.⁶⁹ From North Africa after his *Tara* exploit he asked his mother: ‘Will you write to little Duchess and explain have had a big success — she will understand and explain it was in Italian territory as I fought this action [the *Tara* prisoners’ rescue] 30 miles in Tripoli’.⁷⁰ In 1915 he told his mother, ‘I have told Hatchard to get a good copyist of whom I know — to do a copy of Gen. [illegible] for Shelagh’.⁷¹

There was a change in Bend’Or’s attitude to Shelagh after the Great War. In 1919 he decided on divorce, telling his sister: ‘You know proceedings would never

⁶³ GA, WP 2/1/44, Sibell Grosvenor to George Wyndham, 13 May 1913.

⁶⁴ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 3 February 1914.

⁶⁵ GA, Adds 2047/1, Colonel Lloyd to Capt. Clowes, 1 May 1914.

⁶⁶ Harrison, *Lord of London*, p. 188.

⁶⁷ *The Times*, 8 June 1917.

⁶⁸ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 14 August 1914.

⁶⁹ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 26 September 1914.

⁷⁰ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 16 March 1916.

⁷¹ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend’Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 5 October 1915.

have been begun had not Ursula been more than safeguarded in every respect'.⁷²

The younger daughter, Mary, according to Bend'Or was also upset. Bend'Or wrote to his mother from his yacht *Belem*, 'Mary showed disinclination to go back to Shelagh so I kept her on here'.⁷³

Whether Bend'Or delayed pressing for divorce before the war when he first separated from Shelagh is an unanswered question. Divorce proceedings during the Edwardian period were expensive and attracted great publicity. A Royal Commission on divorce reform was established in 1909. Although the Commission suggested that newspaper reporting on divorce cases should be curtailed, its findings had not been translated into law by 1919.⁷⁴

The challenge was in obtaining a divorce. There were two interrelating factors which governed divorce proceedings prior to the change in law in 1923.

The first was procedural. In English law only a husband could claim adultery as grounds for divorce. Wives had to prove, in addition to adultery, a further marital offence of cruelty, incest, bigamy or desertion to be granted a divorce. The easiest of these to prove was desertion. The law also required the plaintiff to be the 'completely innocent party'. Mutual consent was not recognized and collusion was prohibited.⁷⁵

The second factor was cultural. In the late nineteenth century a fusion of Arthurian legend with medieval concepts of courtly love had created an unwritten gentleman's code of conduct which insisted that a lady's honour should be publicly protected. To contest a wife's petition risked labelling a gentleman a 'blackguard' or a 'cad' and threatening the success of the petition because the plaintiff had to be the 'completely innocent party'. For these reasons it tended to be the wife, with her husband's compliance, who petitioned against her spouse. It was a *quid pro quo*: a woman was expected to turn a blind eye to her husband's peccadillos, and in

⁷² Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, Shaftesbury Archive, NE/W/9/14, Bend'Or to Constance Shaftesbury, 1 January 1919.

⁷³ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, dated 26 September 1919.

⁷⁴ Gail Savage, 'Erotic Stories and Public Decency: Newspaper Reporting of Divorce Proceedings in England', *The Historical Journal*, 41 (1998), 511–28 (517–18) <<http://www.jstor.org/2640116>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

⁷⁵ Savage, 'Divorce and the Law', 506.

exchange the unspoken rule within the gentleman's code of conduct was that her reputation would be preserved.

There are marked similarities in the divorces of George and Jennie Cornwallis-West in 1913, the Westminsters' in 1919 and the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough's in 1920. In these cases the wives presented themselves as the wronged party. All three petitioned for the restoration of 'conjugal rights'. They claimed desertion when the husbands did not comply. The three husbands went through the motions of apparent adultery and the two dukes used the same counsel, Mr Bayford K.C. Jennie and the duchesses used Charles Russell and Co.

Bend'Or and Shelagh's divorce was widely reported in national and regional newspapers. *The Times* devoted three columns to it on 18 June 1919 in which no intimate detail was spared. Bend'Or, whom Ridley describes as 'an essentially shy man', would have been profoundly discomfited by the public exposure of private details.⁷⁶

Bend'Or wasted no time in getting remarried. His choice of second bride was again surprising for a man of his station. He married Violet Mary Geraldine Rowley, née Nelson, on 26 November 1920, eleven days after she obtained her decree absolute from Richard Rowley.⁷⁷ Bend'Or refers to Violet in a letter from Spain, so their affair must have started before May 1918.⁷⁸ The surprise wedding shocked Sibell. Bend'Or wrote to her from Mimizan: 'Of course we would have told you all about it before, but circumstances were against us, and that I will explain to you when we meet [...] it is a blessing to feel settled down'.⁷⁹ Impetuosity is suggested again. No announcement was made in *The Times*' Court Circular, and other newspaper reports

⁷⁶ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 76.

⁷⁷ 'The Duke and Duchess of Westminster', *Cheltenham Chronicle*, 27 November 1920, p. 7, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁷⁸ See Chapter 5 'Chums at War', pp. 136–43.

⁷⁹ GA, WP 1/11/4, Bend'Or to Sibell Grosvenor, 30 November 1920.

expressed astonishment that the engagement and wedding were announced on the same day.⁸⁰

Violet's father, Sir William, was Chairman of Liverpool-based Nelson Line Ltd. The Nelsons had been butchers before starting to ship refrigerated meat between Argentina and Liverpool. Sir William sold his companies in 1913. The Nelsons were regarded as parvenus, they were Catholic, and Violet was divorced. However, social snobbery was not one of Bend'Or's faults; as far as he was concerned, what mattered was that he thought himself in love and that Violet had a son, Michael, by her first marriage: she was fertile.

Violet, according to *The Times*, was 'one of the country's leading horsewomen' who 'judged hunters at Olympia'. The paper added she was 'combative', perhaps as a result of not having been brought up in the stifling traditions of Edwardian high society. Bend'Or found her refreshing and challenging,⁸¹ and she won the approval of Winston and Clemmie Churchill. After the death of their daughter Marigold, Clementine kept to the holiday plans she had already made with Violet and stayed with Bend'Or and Violet for two weeks in Scotland.⁸² The next year Winston stayed with them again on Bend'Or's yacht, the *Flying Cloud*. He reported to his wife, 'Benny very charming and Violet too'.⁸³

Too soon it was a different story. In February 1924 Churchill reported, 'People are very cool about Benny and sorry for [Violet] in a detached way.'⁸⁴ In the spring of 1924 private squabbles gave way to a public one. Violet was to host an Italian ball at Grosvenor House to which the King and Queen of Italy were asked. The *Daily Mail* reported that Bend'Or withdrew his consent for use of the house without stating

⁸⁰ 'The Duke of Westminster', *The Globe*, Weds, 26 November 1920, p. 1, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁸¹ Obituary of Hon. Mrs Violet Cripps, *The Times*, 12 November 1912.

⁸² CA, CHAR 1/139/65-66, Clementine Churchill to Winston Churchill, 9 August 1921; CA, CHAR 1/139/67-69; Soames, ed., *Speaking for Themselves*, pp. 240-41.

⁸³ Soames, ed., *Speaking for Themselves*, p. 272.

⁸⁴ Soames, ed., *Speaking for Themselves*, p. 276.

a reason.⁸⁵ In the *Daily Express* Violet claimed that she had not been consulted.⁸⁶ It was a public embarrassment for Violet.

The divorce was ugly. The Matrimonial Causes Act 1923 had created a more equal footing for men and women in divorce. The ‘absence of collusion’ clause remained, but for a woman her husband’s adultery could now be accepted as a *prima facie* case for divorce. It meant the former ritualized proceedings were discarded in favour of hearings which were intrusive. The Act had not restricted newspaper coverage as the 1909 Commission had recommended. It was not until the Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act 1926 that reporting of divorce cases was restricted.

Initially Violet applied to the courts for an injunction to restrain Bend’Or from ejecting her from Bourdon House, their London base.⁸⁷ Bend’Or contested the petition on the grounds that ‘negotiations for the settlement of their difference were proceeding between their respective solicitors’. The motion was dismissed, although Violet’s maid was allowed to remain at Bourdon House.⁸⁸

Violet then petitioned for divorce. In the divorce papers Violet claimed Bend’Or’s behaviour had been drunken, unreasonable and violent.⁸⁹

There are sufficient references to Bend’Or’s temper, and rumours of his abusive behaviour, to support a conclusion that he had bursts of explosive anger.⁹⁰ Loelia, his third wife, complained that she found it difficult to live with a man ‘who could be perfectly delightful one moment and rage like a madman the next’.⁹¹ What is

⁸⁵ London, Westminster City Archives (WCA), 1049/8/455, *Daily Mail*, 14 May 1924.

⁸⁶ WCA, 1049/8/455, *Daily Express*, 15 May 1924.

⁸⁷ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 131.

⁸⁸ ‘Duke of Westminster’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 August 1924, p. 9, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁸⁹ TNA, J77/2100/5757. In her petition Violet claimed that Bend’Or locked her in the drawing room with Cyril Augustus Drummond on 20 December 1924, telling Drummond ‘Take her, she likes fucking’. This story was confirmed in conversation between the author and Drummond’s son, Maldwin Drummond, before the latter’s death.

⁹⁰ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 182. Hugo Vickers, who collaborated with Loelia on her book *Cocktails & Laughter*, confirmed to the author that Loelia had told him of the physical violence she experienced at Bend’Or’s hand, 24 February 2020.

⁹¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 205.

noticeable is that Bend'Or's anger tended to be the most extreme when he felt he had been deceived, whether true or not. Bend'Or was a man who gave his trust reluctantly and, once he had, he expected reciprocation. If he felt betrayed, his temper could be furious, as for differing reasons his first three wives experienced. He might have been mildly phobic, fearing that people only liked him because of his money. But his outbursts should be seen in parallel with the fact that he was capable of trusting people and he enjoyed long friendship with a range of individuals.

Violet's petition claimed that Bend'Or committed 'assumed' adultery on several occasions and that Bend'Or had told her about 'his love affairs with numerous women and said that he had children by them'.⁹² Bend'Or denied cruelty and all other of Violet's claims except his adultery with Mrs Crosby, a *demi-mondaine*.⁹³ Violet was granted a decree nisi on 17 June 1925 and a final decree on 18 January 1926. She married Frederick Cripps, later the 3rd Baron Parmoor, and brother of Sir Stafford Cripps, in October 1927. They had a son in 1929, after which they divorced.

Violet's petition is of interest for another reason. She stated that she suffered a miscarriage in November 1923. If this was true, it was the only pregnancy associated with Bend'Or after 1917. It was probable that he had been rendered infertile by an illness he experienced during the war — though it is doubtful that he accepted, or understood it, at this stage.⁹⁴

It is clear from Violet's petition that Bend'Or had a number of affairs during their brief marriage. One name that does not appear in Violet's petition is that of Mrs Roys, even though Bend'Or's affair with Mrs Roys apparently began when Violet and Bend'Or had been married for less than three months.

The author has discovered that the divorce papers of Mr and Mrs Samuel Roys cite Bend'Or as a co-respondent. The papers are meagre, containing only Mr Roys's petition and his 'additional information'. Mr Roys's petition claims that Bend'Or committed adultery with Mrs Roys in Paris and London on given dates between January and May 1921. The date of 24 February is singled out as an occasion 'when

⁹² TNA, J77/2100/5757.

⁹³ *The Times*, 18 June 1925, p. 5.

⁹⁴ His illness is covered in Chapters 4 'Political Trauma' and 5 'Chums at War'.

adultery took place in the motor car' between Cannes and Monte Carlo.⁹⁵ Mr Roys claimed custody of the couple's three children and 'damages from the said Duke of £50,000'.⁹⁶ According to the papers' jacket, the divorce was 'dismissed' in December 1921.⁹⁷

Mr Roys had changed his name from Moses in August 1917. The couple had married in St John's Wood Synagogue — they were Jewish — and divorced in 1922. Mrs Olga Roys petitioned on cruelty, neglect and adultery. According to newspaper reports, Mr Roys was 'intemperate'. Olga was awarded a decree nisi with costs and secured the custody of their children.⁹⁸

With no court hearing concerning Mr Roys's petition, it is impossible to establish whether this was an attempt to gain money by extortion or whether the allegations were true. The claim would have collapsed if there had been insufficient evidence. Alternatively, if the allegations were true, the Grosvenor lawyers might have settled out of court to deflect bad publicity. It should be noted that there was no reference to Bend'Or in newspaper reports when the Roys's divorce was heard in 1922.

The fact that Bend'Or might have had an affair with a Jewish woman would suggest that the anti-Semitism with which he was later associated was not deep-seated. However, if there had been no affair and the petitioner was attempting to extort money, it may have encouraged Bend'Or's latent anti-Semitism.

The names that are given in Violet's divorce petition for Bend'Or's 'assumed' adultery were Gabrielle Chanel, Sylvia Lady Poulett, Elaine Coggeshill and two prostitutes. Sylvia Poulett was the widow of the 7th Earl Poulett and a leading 'Gaiety Girl'; Mrs Coggeshill was an aspiring actress who graduated from RADA

⁹⁵ TNA, J77/1804/6253, divorce papers of Roys.

⁹⁶ TNA, J77/1804/6253, divorce papers of Roys.

⁹⁷ TNA, J77/1804/6253, divorce papers of Roys.

⁹⁸ 'A Jewish Divorce', *Westminster Gazette*, 11 May 1922, p. 11; "'Other Woman" and a Wife', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 May 1922, p. 2, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 24 March 2020].

in 1925. They both entered counter-petitions denying adultery.⁹⁹ There was no counter-petition from Gabrielle Chanel.

Coco Chanel is a fashion legend. And that legend was carefully crafted. Biographers, and there are many, have struggled to capture her essence as she was notorious for make-believe, reinvention and mystery about her personal life, resulting in inconsistencies.

Her biographers agree that her affair with Bend'Or lasted eight years, maybe ten.¹⁰⁰ Bend'Or met Coco Chanel at Christmas in 1923 but an affair did not start till spring 1924.¹⁰¹ The relationship was secure enough for Coco to appear with Bend'Or unchaperoned in press photographs attending the Grand National in April 1924, two months before Violet filed her petition.¹⁰² A married duke, not yet divorced, appearing with his mistress in public was a direct challenge to those who believed, which included King George V, that aristocrats should present a public display of moral rectitude.¹⁰³

Winston Churchill also noted the couple's frankness. He told his wife, 'Coco is here in place of Violet'.¹⁰⁴ Mistresses were tolerated if they were discreet. A mistress acting as the lady of the house might not have scandalized society by the 1920s but it certainly would have raised an eyebrow. It was a sign of Bend'Or's growing willingness to distance himself from the conventions upon which much of his social position depended. There was no question of a pre-war disguise of the

⁹⁹ RADA website, <<https://www.rada.ac.uk/profiles/elaine-coggeshall>> [accessed 14 November 2018].

¹⁰⁰ Claude Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, trans by Barbara Bray (London: Collins, 1973); Axel Madsen, *Coco Chanel: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009); Lisa Chaney, *Chanel: An Intimate Life* (London: Penguin, 2012); Picardie, *Coco Chanel*; Hal Vaughan, *Sleeping with the Enemy: Coco Chanel's Secret War* (New York: Vintage, 2012); Edmonde Charles-Roux, *Chanel: Her Life, Her World - and the Woman Behind the Legend She Herself Created*, trans. by Nancy Amphoux (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976).

¹⁰¹ Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, p. 40.

¹⁰² Vaughan, *Sleeping with the Enemy*, p. 47.

¹⁰³ See Chapter 8 'What it was to be a Duke', pp. 214–22.

¹⁰⁴ Soames, ed., *Speaking for Themselves*, p. 312.

truth. Ridley confirms that Bend'Or 'found compromise difficult [...]. Dishonesty in private and hypocrisy in public relations were alike anathema to him'.¹⁰⁵

If Chanel did not say, 'there have been several Duchesses of Westminster but only one Coco Chanel', she ought to have done. Inventive, accomplished, ambitious and ruthless, she was also skilled at fishing, one of Bend'Or's sports. She was an entrepreneur whose driving force was success. In 1924 she had not reached the pinnacle of her fame, but she was on her way to being one of Paris's greatest couturiers. It was achieved through hard work, albeit with the help of several well-connected lovers on the way.

In each other Bend'Or and Chanel found something exciting and new. Chanel's friends belonged to Paris's bohemian elite, who favoured creativity over origins of birth and looked to the future rather than the past. For Bend'Or this was the novelty of Chanel: she and her friends represented none of the shallowness that he associated with London Society and, being a woman liberated by work, she was free of the social conventions that Bend'Or loathed. He could be himself with her. In return, Bend'Or offered Chanel access to the highest social circles, which was good for her business, and a luxurious lifestyle; he also introduced her to Scottish tweed, a material she made her own.¹⁰⁶

Chanel provides a warm portrayal of Bend'Or in his late forties. His physical presence was of a 'corpulent chap, heavy, robust' but that under his 'clumsy exterior' he was 'elegance' itself. This is not a sartorial definition but refers to elegance in manner. He 'belongs to a generation of well-brought-up men', and for 'the richest man in England, perhaps in the world', he was 'simplicity made man' who liked scruffy shoes and his well-worn jacket. She recalled a time when they raided a greenhouse at Eaton and guzzled the strawberries. The next day the gardener, fearing the strawberries had been stolen, locked the greenhouse. She commented: 'The gardener had spent his life at Eaton Hall and it had never occurred to him that his master might, even playfully, eat strawberries straight from the bed.' It had not occurred to Bend'Or either that raiding his own greenhouse was allowed. But 'in spite of the greenhouses Westminster only liked natural flowers [...]. What

¹⁰⁵ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁶ Paul Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, trans. by Euan Cameron (London: Pushkin, 2010), p. 47.

gave him greatest pleasure was to bring me the first snowdrop, picked from the lawn, in a box.’¹⁰⁷ Loelia wrote similarly:

Bend’Or would often bring me touching little bunches of primroses or bluebells or cowslips that he had come across out walking. There was a side of him that appreciated simplicity and I am sure that he was happier in the bleak little bedroom with an iron bedstead and linoleum on the floor, at one of his fishing lodges, than he was in his grand bedroom at Eaton.¹⁰⁸

Both the context and the haste of Bend’Or’s third marriage suggest that the couple married for the wrong reasons. Evidence from His Grace’s Instructions suggests that Bend’Or, freed from Violet, was under some pressure to settle the inheritance of the estate. Although it was necessary business, it was an unpleasant reminder that he had no son. In November 1927 the Chief Agent advised that the Grosvenor properties faced the prospect of double death duties if Bend’Or should die before his uncle (the 1st Duke’s second son, Lord Arthur), who was Bend’Or’s heir presumptive. Mr Borrer instructed, ‘I venture to remind your Grace that it is competent for you if you think well so to dispose of the Settled Estates by your will as to effect such a saving of duties should the contingency under consideration occur.’¹⁰⁹ A reminder followed a few weeks later. Mr Borrer urged, ‘I therefore formally refer to it again, as it appears to be a matter of considerable importance and to avoid the possibility that it might be lost sight of.’¹¹⁰ The matter was settled at the time — it would be altered in his final Will. Bend’Or’s first cousin, Captain Robert Grosvenor, the son of Lord Arthur, became Bend’Or’s heir presumptive, while Lord Arthur was compensated by an annuity of £50,000 a year. It was a timely move: Lord Arthur died two years later.

¹⁰⁷ Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, pp. 158–61.

¹⁰⁸ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 187.

¹⁰⁹ GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace’s Instructions, 1926–1928, 8 November 1927, pp. 349–50.

¹¹⁰ GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace’s Instructions, 1926–1928, 29 November 1927, p. 361.

Loelia suggested that Bend'Or did not know his cousin.¹¹¹ There is no evidence of Robert being inducted as the heir. Instead Bend'Or decided to marry again in the hope of achieving his own male son.

The pressure of securing the succession came at a difficult time for Bend'Or. He was emotionally unsettled in 1929. Edmonde Charles-Roux, Chanel's biographer, supports the opinion that if Chanel had become pregnant they would have married.¹¹² But Chanel was forty-one when she first met Bend'Or, an age which would have reduced the possibility of a child. Although they were friends until his death, his relationship with Chanel was waning.

In 1929 Lord Arthur died and, crucially, so did Bend'Or's mother. Sibell had been a devoted if an uncritical mother, and Bend'Or had a strong relationship with her. Moreover, it was a politically unsettling year. The Conservatives lost the general election in May 1929, allowing Ramsay MacDonald from the Labour Party to take office for the second time, but on this occasion with the majority of the popular vote. The Wall Street crash in October heralded a period of economic instability that affected the world's economy and would ultimately lead to a sterling crisis in 1931. His Grace's Instructions books were making reference to impending socialism.¹¹³ A new bride would have been a fillip after a difficult year and offered hope for the ducal succession, the security of the family estates and the Grosvenor name.

His choice was Loelia Ponsonby. Born in February 1902, Loelia, who was twenty-eight years old when she married, was the daughter of Sir Frederick (Fritz) Ponsonby, later Lord Sysonby, and his wife Victoria Lily (Ria), née Kennard. Fritz was the son of Henry Ponsonby, Queen Victoria's proficient private secretary. Fritz had a notable career as a courtier, rising to be the Keeper of the Privy Purse (from 1914) and Lieutenant Governor of Windsor Castle (1928–1935). Loelia's childhood was therefore privileged in terms of access to the highest ranks of society, but Fritz was a salaried official, not independently wealthy, and the extravagant lifestyle expected of courtiers was a strain on his limited means. To supplement their income Loelia's mother wrote cookery books, and Loelia had to

¹¹¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 178.

¹¹² Charles-Roux, *Chanel*, pp. 255–58.

¹¹³ GA, Adds 679/11, His Grace's Instructions, 1929–30, Estate Planning, 4 December 1929.

make her own clothes. Bend'Or might have been divorced, twice, but the prospect of marrying a fabulously wealthy duke was considered a social coup. Loelia would be rich and 'off the shelf'.

The courtship was rapid. Bend'Or wooed her assiduously, by sending her 'exotic' flowers daily, and by hiding jewels for her to find amongst her belongings.¹¹⁴ Later she reflected on the speed of her engagement and marriage. In April 1930 she faced her first 'monstrous' house party at Eaton as Duchess, just four months after she had first heard of Eaton.¹¹⁵

Consideration of the couple's compatibility did not arise. If it had, then the couple would have discovered they had little in common. Loelia, having been brought up in London, was unfamiliar with rural life, and outdoor sports of any form were not to her liking. She 'adored going shopping', embroidery and sophisticated company, which were features that held no appeal for Bend'Or.¹¹⁶ Moreover the age gap of twenty-three years made a critical difference in the couple's individual attitudes and experiences.

Loelia was twelve when the Great War began. Her adolescence was spent in the more liberated post-war society than that of the pre-war period. Patrick Balfour, 3rd Baron Kinross, the social commentator, explained:

In so far as the 'twenties can be defined they were a period of change: from quails in aspic to eggs and bacon, from champagne to lager, from coal fires to electricity, from mansions to mansion flats, and from balls to cocktail parties [...] the Speed King supplanted the Guards officer as the beau ideal of modern woman and modern woman herself grew each day slimmer and slimmer — and slimmer.¹¹⁷

In social and cultural terms the 1920s witnessed younger people turning away from the stifling conventions of Edwardian England to develop fresh ways of

¹¹⁴ *Cocktails & Laughter: The Albums of Loelia Lindsay (Loelia, Duchess of Westminster)*, ed. by Hugo Vickers (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1983), p. 11.

¹¹⁵ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 205.

¹¹⁶ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 236.

¹¹⁷ Patrick Balfour, *Society Racket: A Critical Survey of Modern Social Life* (London: John Long, 1933), p. 60.

expressing themselves. Cecil Beaton, the fashion connoisseur, referring in particular to the ‘bright young people’, observed: ‘Raucous, irritating, and offensive as these young people were, they were undoubtedly the spearhead of those who broke convention.’¹¹⁸

In addition to these difficulties there was Chanel. Loelia hints that Bend’Or married Loelia with Chanel’s connivance.¹¹⁹ According to Loelia, Bend’Or was staying with Chanel when he wrote to Loelia, ‘And that was how we became engaged’.¹²⁰ Bend’Or and Loelia married in February 1930 with Winston Churchill as the best man. Two days later, according to Chanel, Bend’Or visited her in Paris, leaving Loelia behind in the hotel with her embroidery.¹²¹

It seems likely that Bend’Or’s expectation was that he and Loelia would have a son. Early in 1930 arrangements were made to provide an inheritance for the children of the marriage. There was a new Will which, according to Mr Borrer, dealt ‘with the situation if you have a son’.¹²²

After nearly two years of marriage to Loelia, Bend’Or began to face the fact that he would not father another child. In November 1931 His Grace’s Instructions for 1931–32 show a renewed interest was being taken in the safe continuation of the Grosvenor Estate in the event of his death. Bend’Or was also fussing about his daughters’ inheritance.¹²³ That led to the Grosvenor Estate Act 1933, which enabled Bend’Or to use trust money to make better provision for ‘various members of the family’ which included Ursula and Mary.¹²⁴

The reason for his possible infertility may rest with the illnesses he endured in 1917. Malaria does not cause infertility. Considering the length of his illness and its

¹¹⁸ Cecil Beaton, *The Glass of Fashion* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954), p. 153.

¹¹⁹ Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, p. 50.

¹²⁰ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 155.

¹²¹ Baillé, *Chanel Solitaire*, pp. 50–51.

¹²² GA, Adds 679/11, His Grace’s Instructions, 1929–30, February 1930.

¹²³ GA, Adds 679/13, His Grace’s Instructions, 1931–32, p. 212; Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 179.

¹²⁴ Ridley, *Bend’Or*, p. 179; ‘Grosvenor Estate Bill’, *The Times*, 29 June 1933, p. 9. The Act received Royal Assent on 28 July 1933.

initial severity, it is possible that he had had either brucellosis or typhoid, which were rife in Egypt. Both can cause infertility as well as recurring fevers. He could have contracted syphilis, although more likely gonorrhoea, which if left untreated can cause infertility in men.

Loelia was honest enough to see that circumstances did not favour their marriage. She blamed Bend'Or's violent rages, which she believed were inspired by his 'ferocious jealousy'. She complained that he hardly let her out of his sight.¹²⁵ One telling story she relays suggests that Bend'Or still resented Shelagh's affair with Alba, which had contributed to his first divorce. Loelia wrote:

Once [...] [on] a long continental train journey, he threw my book out of the window leaving me with nothing to read for the rest of the day, because his eye had lit on the word "adultery". To a trained psychologist he probably would have been a perfectly clear case-book type. To me he was a complete enigma.¹²⁶

Loelia's memories make explicit that the marriage was not a success. The couple's differences soon became apparent. The age gap presented problems with mixing their friends, especially those of Loelia's friends who represented the more abrasive attitude of the post-war generation.¹²⁷ Loelia hated sailing, which was an essential part of Bend'Or's nomadic lifestyle; and that nomadic life denied her the role of chatelaine, which should have been naturally hers. The lack of children also denied her the mothering role and made the couple more dependent on each other. Both Chanel and Loelia agreed that Bend'Or was easily bored and restless.¹²⁸ Loelia wrote, 'how pathetically he longed to be amused and how boredom was the curse of his

¹²⁵ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 232.

¹²⁶ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 188.

¹²⁷ *The Letters of Nancy Mitford*, ed. by Charlotte Mosley (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1993), p. 25. Nancy describes a quarrel between James Lees-Milne and her father over the Germans and who was responsible for the worse atrocities. Lees-Milne claimed it was the Australians. Lord Redesdale ordered him out of the house.

¹²⁸ Norman Mursell: *Come Dawn, Come Dusk: Fifty years a gamekeeper for the Dukes of Westminster* (Cambridge: White Lion, 1996; repr. 2001), p. 13.

existence'.¹²⁹ Loelia's stepdaughter remembers that Loelia told her that they barely spent three weeks in the same place in the course of the marriage.¹³⁰ His criticism of her parents and the world of the Court, which was vital to her parents, was an additional grief.¹³¹

They separated in 1935 but did not divorce for twelve years. When Bend'Or was seriously ill in 1940, Loelia visited him. Loelia, as well as drawing fearful descriptions of Bend'Or's rages, paid handsome tribute to his 'usual colossal generosity' and that he had 'settled a munificent income on me'.¹³² She maintained even after they had divorced that there remained a 'deep mutual affection and respect' for each other.¹³³

She married again in 1969 to Sir Martin Lindsay Bt, who had been a Conservative Member of Parliament. She died in 1993.

Bend'Or was still married to Loelia, albeit separated, when he met Anne Winifred Sullivan, known as Nancy. Loelia was granted a decree nisi on account of Bend'Or's adultery, with Nancy being named a co-respondent. The divorce was settled in January 1947 and Nancy and Bend'Or married on 7 February 1947; she was thirty-two and he was sixty-eight years old, a thirty-six-year gap. Both Ursula and Mary were older than Nancy — Ursula by twelve years.

Nancy's father was Major General Edward Sullivan, who lived in Glanmire, County Cork. Ridley made a point of saying that Nancy was independently wealthy, thereby emphasizing that Bend'Or's other wives were not.¹³⁴ Nancy's mother was Winifred Burns, a Canadian, whose father Adam Burns had been a successful

¹²⁹ Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, p. 190.

¹³⁰ Private interview with Lady FitzAlan Howard, daughter of Loelia's second husband.

¹³¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 233.

¹³² Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 234.

¹³³ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 234.

¹³⁴ Violet's family were Catholic and, although Sir William was moderately rich, according to his obituary in *The Times* he had three sons as well as five daughters (Sir William Nelson, Obituary, *The Times*, 8 July 1922, p. 14). His view on his daughter's three divorces is not known. Having divorced Bend'Or, Violet ran a hairdressing business.

banker. In the Second World War Nancy was in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY), acting as a driver.

Nancy had been brought up with horses and fishable rivers. She was a capable, no-nonsense countrywoman. Unlike her predecessors, she was not embedded in London Society, nor was she attracted by it. She is quoted as saying:

I think he [Bend'Or] actually loathed all that grand-scale entertaining, but if you had Grosvenor House, the grandest house in London, it was expected of you. His other wives loved all that. But thank God, I missed all that. I never could have married him then — or if I had, it wouldn't have worked out.¹³⁵

Nancy was astute enough to achieve a deeper partnership because she did not challenge his authority; instead she channelled it to enable him to find fulfilment. Sensible and reassuring, she provided Bend'Or with the security he had craved but had not been able previously to voice or find.

Nancy and Bend'Or had interests in common. Her knowledge of field sports, and horse-racing in particular, coincided with and revived Bend'Or's earlier interest. Bend'Or in his senior years was less enthusiastic for constant travel than he had been. Nancy explained: 'After the hassle of war, he didn't want to travel non-stop from yacht to house to yacht.'¹³⁶

They were married for just six years. Nancy outlived him by fifty years. She never remarried but she established herself as a 'woman of the turf'. She is best known as the owner of the racehorse Arkle, named after a mountain on one of the Grosvenor estates in Scotland.

Throughout most of his life, Bend'Or was in a relationship with a woman. He had known Shelagh from childhood. He was still married to Shelagh when he started his affair with Violet. His affair with Coco began before he had divorced Violet; he was still emotionally dependent on Coco when he married Loelia. Although they had been apart for some years, he was still officially married to Loelia when he courted Nancy.

¹³⁵ Obituary of Anne, Duchess of Westminster, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 2003.

¹³⁶ Obituary of Anne, Duchess of Westminster, *Daily Telegraph*, 4 September 2003.

Nancy had an advantage over her predecessors, apart from being rich: by the time Bend'Or married her, he had come to terms with the probability that he would not father another child. Undoubtedly the quest for a male heir blighted his relationships with his first three wives. Nonetheless Bend'Or must take his share of the responsibility. He showed at times an unwillingness to modulate his own behaviour or, until his last marriage, to accept the self-discipline required in marriage. He was inclined to circumvent, or ignore, rules which he regarded as inconvenient.

His failure to build sustaining relationships with his wives was due to his tendency to treat them as supplementary to his life. Most of his early behaviours reveal an egocentric or self-centred disposition. It is an outcome typical of someone who lacked firm boundaries in childhood and who then had been indulged by others throughout his life.

Loelia tells of a revealing incident. The unwritten gentleman's code of behaviour, which in the 1930s assiduously governed blood sports, dictated that there should be no killing on Sundays. Salmon fishing, shooting and hunting were all six-days-a-week activities, and never on the Sabbath. Loelia wrote:

and of course that [Sunday] was the day that inevitably produced the best fishing weather. Once it was so perfect that it was more than Benny could bear and I saw him take his smallest salmon rod to pieces, hide it under his coat like a guilty schoolboy, and walk nonchalantly down to a hidden pool where he spent the afternoon [...] but his wicked deed was not crowned with success.¹³⁷

For a time Bend'Or found happiness with Chanel, and all reports suggest that in his fourth marriage he achieved contentment. Chanel and Nancy stand out as similar in that both had the character to match his, and, more importantly, an outside interest to sustain them: Chanel with her couturier business and Nancy with her horses. Churchill recognized the importance of this. He wrote to Clementine from Scotland when he was staying at Rosehall with Coco and Bend'Or:

¹³⁷ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 212.

Bennie vy well and I think extremely happy to be mated with an equal — her ability balancing his power.¹³⁸

In spite of the difficult relationships he had with three wives, they were given generous divorce settlements. Loelia wrote: ‘I never for one moment forget that all the comforts I enjoy I owe to one person, Benny, who gave me so much and to whom alas! I brought too little’.¹³⁹

The greatest service he did for the women in his life was that he never wrote publicly about either his marriages or his mistresses — or, in Shelagh’s case, her affair. To have done so would have betrayed the chivalric values on which he had been brought up.

¹³⁸ Soames, *Speaking for Themselves*, p. 312.

¹³⁹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 237.

Chapter 8. What it was to be a Duke

For most of his life Bend'Or sought to reconcile his conventional upbringing and inherited responsibilities with his desire to be recognized for his own individuality rather than for his social station. It did not help that he succeeded a grandfather who had been revered in his time as a model duke. Moreover he inherited his title when the aristocracy was enduring a period of considerable change. The nineteenth century saw the House of Commons grow in confidence and maturity as democratic ideas replaced land as the basis of authority and notions of meritocracy replaced hereditary distinction. This chapter explores what it meant to be a duke at the dawning of the twentieth century. It reveals a dispute between King and Duke which had a profound impact on Bend'Or's subsequent behaviour.

The terms 'aristocrat' and 'peer' are often used randomly. Not all aristocrats are peers, defined as being eligible to sit in the House of Lords; and there is no specific economic identity for aristocrats, who in terms of wealth overlapped with the landed gentry and the plutocracy.¹ Professor Sir David Cannadine offers the definition, 'their [aristocrats'] lives were lived in a certain way, and in accordance with certain attitudes, which also served to mark them off from the rest of the population'.² Professor George L. Mosse provides a similar definition: 'aristocratic honour was linked to the power of blood, it was attached to noble lineage and descent'.³ In other words, by ancestry, habit and values, there is a distinct concept of aristocratic behaviour.

According to Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, aristocratic dignity stemmed from what he described as 'sacral royalty', which had its origins in ancient concepts of hereditary priestliness.⁴ That being what it may, as time evolved that rationale

¹ Andrew Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work: The Peerage and the Political System in Britain 1884–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 5; David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Penguin, 2005), pp. 8–13.

² Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 13.

³ George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 18.

⁴ Sir Iain Moncreiffe of that Ilk, Bart, Foreword, in Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, *More Equal than Others: The Changing Fortunes of the British and European Aristocracies* (London: Michael Joseph, 1970), pp. 13–16.

became opaque and noble dignity became more readily associated with material wealth and the ability to maintain a station above the ordinary. In 1886 Lord Salisbury, who had no alternative means of income but land, on being offered a dukedom by the Queen, declined saying, ‘His fortune would not be equal to such a dignity’.⁵ According to Lord Lansdowne’s latest biographer, Lansdowne used the same reason to refuse a dukedom which Queen Victoria wanted him to have but the Prime Minister, Gladstone, did not.⁶

A dukedom is the most senior rank in the aristocratic hierarchy, but there is no legal definition.⁷ Most of a duke’s privileges are arcane. Dukes are allowed, for example, eight strawberry leaves on their coronets, while lower nobles have fewer; in form of address, dukes alone are referred to as ‘Duke’ or ‘your Grace’ rather than ‘Lord’; and the monarch officially addresses a duke as ‘right trusty and entirely beloved cousin’. What might today be regarded as trivia was a serious matter of decorum for Victorian and Edwardian hostesses, who were bound to respect rank in their entertainment etiquette. Plainly speaking, rank rendered social influence. The American writer Mark Twain explained it in his essay ‘Does the Race of Man Love a Lord?’ He wrote, ‘There is something pathetic, and funny and pretty, about this human race’s fondness for contact with power and distinction, and for the reflected glory it gets out of it.’⁸

The British essayist and constitutionalist Walter Bagehot, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, regarded monarch and aristocracy as bound together by ‘nobility’, which Bagehot defined as a state created by men who abided by a code of honour. Nobility won the Crown and the aristocracy the respect of the common man. Unfortunately for Bagehot both the common man, and the aristocracy, showed an

⁵ Roy Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 543, quoting *Letters of Queen Victoria*, 3rd Series, I, p. 34.

⁶ Simon Kerry, *Lansdowne: The Last Great Whig* (London: Unicorn, 2017), p. 97.

⁷ William D. Rubenstein [*sic*], ‘The Evolution of the British Aristocracy in the Twentieth Century: Peerage Creations and the “Establishment”’, in *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours*, ed. by Didier Lancien and Monique de Saint-Martin (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de Sciences de l’Homme, 2007), pp. 245–57 (para. 5). The right to be tried for a crime by fellow peers was abolished in 1948.

⁸ Mark Twain, ‘Does the Race of Man Love a Lord?’ <<http://www.online-literature.com/twain/3263>> [accessed 11 June 2019].

avid reverence for Mammon, so the role that Bagehot believed the aristocracy should have, which was to ‘prevent the rule of wealth — the religion of gold’, was short-lived.⁹

Anthony Trollope suggests that ducal dignity conveyed a moral responsibility superior to any legal duty. Many see parallels between his invented Duke of Omnium and the 1st Duke of Westminster, who was created a duke in the period Trollope wrote the Palliser novels.¹⁰ In *The Duke's Children*, Omnium wrestles with modernism encroaching on traditional aristocratic standards. He asks his son, Lord Silverbridge:

Does the law require patriotism, philanthropy, self-abnegation, public service, purity of purpose, devotion to the needs of others who have been placed in the world below you? Between you and me there should be no mention of law as the guide to conduct. Speak to me of honour, of duty, and of nobility.’¹¹ [He challenged:] ‘And was it not his [Omnium’s] duty to fortify and maintain that higher, smaller, more precious pinnacle of rank on which Fortune had placed him and his children?’¹²

If the principal duty of the aristocracy was to enhance the monarch’s dignity, which was achieved through what Bagehot terms ‘theatrical exhibition in their state’, then this was achieved by participation in royal pageantry, service to the Crown and attendance at royal Courts.¹³ Having witnessed the public’s reaction to Queen Victoria’s years of seclusion, Edward VII, and then George V, were alert to the need of upholding royal authority by ceremonial display. It gave the aristocracy, and the Royal Household, a new lease of life as they became integral to the making and sustaining of royal ritual.

The Grosvenor family was well-entrenched in royal circles. Bend’Or’s grandfather, Hugh Lupus, the 1st Duke, and his great-grandfather, the 2nd Marquess

⁹ Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 73–74.

¹⁰ *The Prime Minister* was published in 1876 and *The Duke's Children* in 1879.

¹¹ Anthony Trollope, *The Duke's Children* (Oxford World’s Classics, 2011), pp. 388–89.

¹² Trollope, *The Duke's Children*, p. 393.

¹³ Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, p. 76.

of Westminster, regularly attended Queen Victoria's Courts. The 2nd Marquess was Lord Steward of the Household between 1850 and 1852 (in Lord John Russell's Whig government). He was granted the Garter in 1857. The 1st Duke's brother, Lord Richard Grosvenor, was Vice-Chamberlain of the Household, and the Duke was Master of the Horse in 1880 (under Gladstone's Liberal government) and in 1887 a personal aide-de-camp to the Queen (during Lord Salisbury's second government). In this capacity he rode beside the royal carriage during the Queen's Golden Jubilee celebrations, watched by his grandchildren, including Bend'Or.¹⁴ Their diary noted:

Daddy [the 1st Duke's family sobriquet] and the other gentlemen the head of whom was the Duke of Cambridge, formed a line outside the Palace ready to follow up close beside the Queen's carriage. Dear Daddy looked so nice, he rode a grey horse of Compton's called Crusader.¹⁵

Although the ducal recommendation had come from the Prime Minister, Gladstone, Hugh Lupus's elevation to a dukedom was eased by the close friendship that the Duke's mother-in-law, Harriet Duchess of Sutherland, enjoyed with Queen Victoria. Harriet was the Queen's Mistress of the Robes four times and her daughter, Constance, the 1st Duke's first wife, became a royal favourite in her own right.

Nevertheless, in 1894, the Queen recorded in her diary her 'great astonishment' when Margaret (known as Meg), the Duke and Constance's third daughter, married Prince Adolphus (Dolly) of Teck.¹⁶ Meg brought £75,000 to the marriage, which may have compensated for the fact that Meg was neither royal nor German.¹⁷

Meg, Bend'Or's aunt, was only six years older than Bend'Or and, according to Bend'Or and his sisters' diaries, had featured largely in their childhood. Dolly succeeded his father as Duke of Teck in 1900. The Duke of Teck was the second

¹⁴ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), Adds 3/78/2, Kleeblatt Diaries, 21 June 1887.

¹⁵ GA, Adds 3/78/2, Kleeblatt Diaries, 21 June 1887.

¹⁶ Queen Victoria's Journal, 31 July 1894, <<http://www.queenvictoriasjournals.org/home.do>> [accessed 28 July 2016].

¹⁷ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8.

son of the Duke of Württemberg by a morganatic marriage to a Hungarian countess. In consequence the Tecks' status was reduced; but the family prestige was restored when Dolly's father married Queen Victoria's cousin, Mary Adelaide, and vastly so when their daughter May (Mary) married Queen Victoria's grandson, George of York. Meg became sister-in-law to Queen Mary and an intimate of the Royal Family. Dolly stayed at Eaton in 1907 for field sports and in 1908, accompanied by Meg for Chester races; he stayed for polo in August 1913 and Chester races again in 1914. Meg stayed alone in November 1915, and with her children in March 1916.¹⁸ In 1917, at the height of the war, George V renounced the German titles of his wife's family and created for them British ones. Dolly became the 1st Marquess of Cambridge.

Meg was not the only royal insider in the family. Bend'Or's uncle by marriage, the 3rd Baron Chesham, was the last Master of the Buckhounds (then a position in the Royal Household), and Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales. Chesham died from a hunting accident in 1907. Both Bend'Or's brothers-in-law, the 9th Earl of Shaftesbury and the 7th Earl of Beauchamp, had Court positions. Shaftesbury was Chamberlain to the Princess of Wales between 1901 and 1910, Lord Chamberlain of Queen Mary's Household between 1910 and 1922, and Lord Steward of the Queen's Household between 1922 and 1936. As we have seen, Beauchamp held a range of honorific positions, including Lord Steward of the Household, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and a Knight of the Garter in 1914, and both brothers-in-law were Lord-Lieutenants of their counties. Shaftesbury's wife, Constance (Cuckoo), Bend'Or's eldest sister, continued the tradition set by her grandmother and great-grandmother of serving in a Queen's Household. Cuckoo was a Lady of the Bedchamber, and then an Extra Lady, to both Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary, serving the latter until Mary's death in 1953. If dedication to royal service was part of an aristocrat's purpose, Bend'Or's credentials could not be faulted.

Bend'Or began his ducal career hoping to fashion himself on his grandfather. George Ridley noted that Bend'Or was satisfied that 'Hugh was a model duke, and

¹⁸ GA, EV1/669, Eaton Hall Visitor Book.

a model man, and that his own ambition must be to emulate him'.¹⁹ In an attempt to follow his grandfather, Bend'Or actively attended royal Courts. In 1907 the King appointed him Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire, the King's personal representative in Cheshire, and made him a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Victorian Order.²⁰

Royal visits, a vivid sign of royal favour, were made to Bend'Or and his first wife Shelagh, to the delight of the people of Cheshire, who bathed in the associated glory. Bend'Or and Shelagh stayed at Sandringham for the King's birthday in 1907; Edward VII made two visits to Eaton; the Prince and Princess of Wales made one; the King of Spain stayed three times. On one of Alfonso's visits a crowd of 600 turned up for a meet on Eaton Hall's lawn.²¹ The King attended a service in Chester Cathedral on the Sunday morning, travelling with Bend'Or in an open carriage with an escort of mounted police. The King received 'a rousing reception from the large concourse of people who had assembled'.²² The flamboyancy would have satisfied the citizens' vision of ducal splendour — and confirmed Bend'Or as a fully established duke.

A courtly career was beckoning, except Edward VII harboured doubts about Bend'Or's commitment to his obligations. It was typical of the King's feeling of paternalism to be solicitous towards a fatherless young duke, whom Edward sought to mentor. In March 1901 George told Sibell that the King was asking about Bend'Or's stalled army career:

I never fuss as you know but Shelagh & Benny are, quite unconsciously making mistakes [...] I wd not have written this except that there is more. The King has just ordered me to say to Benny that he ought to go back to

¹⁹ George Ridley, *Bend'or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 17.

²⁰ *The Complete Peerage*, ed. by G.H. White, XII, Part 2 (1959), p. 540.

²¹ 'The King of Spain', *Dublin Daily Express*, 30 November 1907, p. 4, <britishnewspaperarchives.com> [accessed 13 March 2019]; Gordon Fergusson, *The Green Collars: The Tarporley Hunt Club and Cheshire Hunting History, incorporating Hunting Songs by R.E. Egerton Warburton (Eleventh Edition)* (London: Quiller, 1993), p. 283.

²² 'The King of Spain at Chester', *Irish Times*, Monday, 2 December 1907, p. 7, <britishnewspaperarchives.com> [accessed 13 March 2019].

duty. Well, sweet, you know that they are both too young to have learnt that all must give way to Kings and duties.²³

George V was as fastidious as his father; more so when it came to moral conduct. In the years immediately after the 1914 war, the flamboyant attitude many adopted to decorum, form and fashion epitomized by the craze for cocktails and jazz, the growing independence of women and journalists, and the soaring divorce rate amongst the upper class, rattled the King. George, mindful of the fate of his Russian and German cousins, believed that those around him should set a high standard of propriety in both public duty and private life in order to sustain a moral leadership over ordinary people, especially in times of economic constraint. Headlines such as the one in *The Times* which declared ‘Petition by Four Peeresses’ confirmed to George that the aristocracy was not acting with the modesty he expected and demanded.²⁴

The Archbishop of Canterbury, preaching at a special service in Westminster Abbey following George V’s death, suggested that the King’s strength was that he was ‘simple, sincere, frank, a lover of home and of healthy sport, loyal to his friends, keeping a high standard of personal life and public duty, steadfast in service and mindful of God’.²⁵ Separation from a spouse could be tolerated if discretion was maintained, but divorce could not, especially if the proceedings had been displayed in newspapers. In George’s view, bad behaviour damaged the dignity of the Court, and the Crown.

Knowing George V’s strong opinions on the permanence of marriage, when Bend’Or and Shelagh separated, Meg Cambridge had interceded with the King on Bend’Or’s behalf. Bend’Or wrote to the King assuring him that ‘I would never have resorted to the extreme measure of separating from my wife, had I not more than ample justification for doing so’.²⁶ George drafted a reply in his own hand:

²³ GA, WP/1/2/16, George Wyndham to Sibell Countess Grosvenor, 18 March 1901.

²⁴ ‘The Divorce Court’, *The Times*, 16 June 1919, p. 9.

²⁵ ‘Tributes From Every Pulpit,’ *The Times*, 27 January 1936, p. 11.

²⁶ Windsor, The Royal Archives (RA), PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/1, 21 March 1913.

I do implore you to remember your great position; not only that of your family but as my representative in the County of Cheshire & that in these days the example from those like yourself may do infinite good or harm in the country.²⁷

It was confirmation of the high standards George would insist on and a warning of the hard line he would adopt in 1919.

After the war, journalists reported Bend'Or and Shelagh's divorce in detail. These were the days before newspaper reports on divorce proceedings were curtailed. Bend'Or wrote to apprise Lord Stamfordham, the King's Private Secretary, of the situation. It was a prudent letter:

Now the newspapers have published the fact that the divorce suit, brought by the Duchess against me, is imminent, I am writing to ask you whether His Majesty under these circumstances would wish me to place my resignation of Lord Lieutenant of the County of Cheshire in his hands.²⁸

It was an honourable gesture. Stamfordham thanked Bend'Or for his offer of resignation, which 'His Majesty appreciates', but referred Bend'Or to the Prime Minister because 'the question of a Lord-Lieutenant must be made to the Sovereign by the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, for it is on the recommendation of the latter that all appointments to that office are made'.²⁹ Stamfordham's letter, written the same day to the Prime Minister's office, had a different tone. It was more decisive. Lloyd George was told, 'The King thinks [...] in the circumstances it will be expedient if his representative in the County of Cheshire were to resign.'³⁰

Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, who was heavily involved in peace negotiations at Versailles, was not overly concerned with points of etiquette, nor, given his own domestic circumstances, in a rush to become involved. He advised Bend'Or that his resignation from the Lord-Lieutenancy would not be needed as the

²⁷ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/2, March 1913.

²⁸ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/3, Bend'Or to Stamfordham, 16 June 1919.

²⁹ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/4, Stamfordham to Bend'Or, 18 June 1919.

³⁰ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/5, Stamfordham to Ernest Evans, 18 June 1919.

rumpus would ‘all blow over’.³¹ Stamfordham waited five months to be told this news, and heard it eventually from Lord Edmund Talbot, the Chief Whip.

Stamfordham was amazed: ‘The second paragraph of your letter of yesterday really takes my breath away, but what is of still greater importance, it annoys the King.’ He pointed out that as a divorced man Bend’Or, especially as he was presented as the guilty party, could not attend Court and represent the county of Cheshire.³²

Talbot found himself in an uncomfortable position between the King and his Prime Minister. He was also a close friend of Bend’Or’s parents, Sibell and George Wyndham, and had known Bend’Or from childhood. He was also aware that the full circumstances of Bend’Or’s divorce included Shelagh’s adultery with the Duke of Alba.³³

In ignorance of the King’s attitude, Bend’Or had been comforted by the Prime Minister and believed his resignation would not be necessary. The manner in which he wrote to Winston Churchill suggests that Bend’Or considered the choice of resignation was still his to make:

My dear Winston

I think that enclosed clearly indicates that it would be as well for me to resign the Ld Lship of Cheshire. I have held it a long time now, & it may be a good thing to let someone else have a turn at it.

I hate worrying you with this but sometime ago you told me to let you know if anything cropped up about it.

I am more than ready to go. Could you return the enclosed as soon as possible.³⁴

³¹ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/9, Stamfordham to Talbot, 28 November 1919. The fact that Lloyd George did tell Bend’Or he had no need to resign is confirmed in Stamfordham’s letter to Talbot, RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/13, and Stamfordham to the King, 8 January 1920.

³² RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/9, Stamfordham to Talbot, 28 November 1919.

³³ See Chapter 7 ‘Heirs and Her Graces’, pp. 185–86.

³⁴ Cambridge, Churchill Archive, CA, CHAR 2/106/118, Bend’Or to Winston Churchill, 14 November 1919.

What the ‘enclosed’ was has not come to light. Bend’Or may still have been in ignorance of the King’s attitude, but gossip was rife. Stamfordham told Talbot in January 1920, ‘there is a great effort being made to save the Duke from having to resign the Lrd. Ltncy. of Cheshire’.³⁵

Two days after writing to Talbot, Stamfordham prepared a submission for the King. It is a detailed and objective document reflecting the difficulty that was caused by the differing approach between the Prime Minister and King.

Stamfordham reported on a meeting between Talbot and Detmar Blow, Bend’Or’s private secretary. Blow had argued that the Duke was popular in Cheshire and the people there ‘sympathised with him in his domestic troubles and would regret his removal from the L. Lancy’, and that the Duke was “‘turning a new leaf” [and] is taking life much more seriously, is attending to his affairs, regulating his finances, interested even in his ecclesiastical patronage which is considerable and generally seems to shape towards realizing & fulfilling his great responsibilities’. What Stamfordham then reported was insightful. He wrote:

What Mr. Blow earnestly represents is that while the Duke is in this improved state of mind, it would be disastrous were he now to be told to resign the L. Lancy. as he might despair and in desperation throw all present good resolutions & efforts to the wind.³⁶

Stamfordham had consulted with the Lord Chamberlain of the Household (William Mansfield, 1st Viscount Standhurst). Stamfordham asked whether the Duke could be received at Court or as a divorced man would he be ‘entirely’ debarred.³⁷ Standhurst returned that the rule was ‘no man or woman who has been divorced —that is —the guilty party should be allowed to come to Court’.³⁸

Stamfordham now suggested that the King might allow Bend’Or ‘to remain on as Lord Lieut: but uphold your ruling & exclude him from Court’. It would, he argued, ‘be a gracious charitable mercifol act and might have good results’. His

³⁵ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/11, Stamfordham to Talbot, 6 January 1920.

³⁶ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/13, Stamfordham to the King, 8 January 1920.

³⁷ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/10, Stamfordham to Talbot, 5 January 1920.

³⁸ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/12, Standhurst to Stamfordham, 7 January 1920.

last argument was that in comparison to Lord Kenyon, 4th Baron (Lord-Lieutenant of Denbighshire), who had ‘behaved really atrociously [...] the general opinion was that there was not much to choose between his [the Duke’s] conduct and that of the Duchess and that he [the Duke] might have brought a cross action for divorce against her’. Stamfordham apologized ‘for this very long memorandum but possibly the importance of the matter justifies it’.³⁹

The King was vexed with the Prime Minister, whom he felt had ‘let me down badly’. But Court protocol could not be compromised. If the Lord-Lieutenant could not come to Court, then he could not be Lord-Lieutenant: ‘if I agree to Cheshire how can he meet me at dinner in some onelse’s [*sic*] house when I won’t receive him in my own’, he argued.⁴⁰

The matter dragged on more months. Churchill wrote in support of his friend, but it was too late — the King had given ‘his last word’.⁴¹ The King’s attitude was adamant: there would be no more royal visits to Eaton, not even from Meg. Bend’Or was ostracized from the Court.

Talbot must have explained the situation to Bend’Or in the spring of 1920. Bend’Or was offended, as Talbot revealed in a further letter he wrote to Stamfordham in June. Bend’Or was ‘fretting’, Talbot wrote. Blow had told Talbot that the matter was ‘so exercising W’s mind that he [Blow] promised him [Bend’Or] he would come & see me’. Bend’Or wanted to know where he now stood with the King.⁴² The King’s decision had been noted by Stamfordham and it was clear: George would receive Bend’Or ‘as a friend — but he cannot come to Court’.⁴³

Bend’Or resigned as Lord-Lieutenant in 1920, as he said he would, but he felt that he had been treated badly. That the matter piqued Bend’Or is not surprising. He had offered his resignation to the King believing it to be the correct form; he had been told by the Prime Minister, who the King advised had the lead in matters

³⁹ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/13, Stamfordham to the King, 8 January 1920.

⁴⁰ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/14, the King to Stamfordham, 8 January 1920.

⁴¹ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/18, Churchill to Stamfordham, 27 February 1920; RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/16, Stamfordham to Talbot, 15 March 1920.

⁴² RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/20, Talbot to Stamfordham, 4 June 1920.

⁴³ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/20, Stamfordham’s note to Talbot, 6 June 1920.

concerning Lord-Lieutenants, that he had no need to resign; he had done the decent thing in allowing his wife to divorce him to protect her honour; he had been left in limbo for months; and then he had been singled out by the King for humiliating treatment. He hurt and went on hurting.

The King had held fast on a point of etiquette. He was determined to abide by the rules and, the more people tried to dissuade him, the more he dug in.⁴⁴

There were other Lord-Lieutenants whose behaviour was questionable who continued in office. Although neither was divorced, which was for the King the critical criterion, the 3rd Earl of Durham, Lord-Lieutenant of Durham, allegedly had a child out of wedlock, and the extravagances and mistresses of Hugh Lowther (5th Earl of Lonsdale, Lord-Lieutenant of Cumberland) hardly made him a figure of probity. Then there was Lord Kenyon, whose behaviour was vexing Stamfordham: Kenyon's divorce was listed in the law court in 1919, although the matter was 'amicably settled'.⁴⁵ Kenyon remained Lord-Lieutenant until his death in 1927. Possibly particularly grievous to Bend'Or was that his brother-in-law, William 7th Earl of Beauchamp, continued to be Lord-Lieutenant in Gloucestershire in spite of the mounting evidence that he was actively engaging in homosexual practices — which were illegal. Eleven of the then capable contemporary dukes were Lord-Lieutenants in 1919. Bend'Or was the only Lord-Lieutenant who had to resign. This was not only a personal rebuke but it was also an injury to his dignity as a duke and in circumstances Bend'Or had reason to think were hypocritical.

The unfairness needled Bend'Or. In 1927 he had Blow write to 1st Viscount FitzAlan of Derwent, as Talbot had become, about the Duke of Marlborough, who had divorced his first wife in 1921. Blow's letter was to the point:

Bend'Or wishes me to write [...] and ask you if you could kindly write to explain to him, that which is always puzzling him: why the Duke of Marlborough is allowed to remain the Lord Lieutenant of his county, while

⁴⁴ Gale Savage, 'Erotic Stories and Public Decency: Newspaper Reporting of Divorce Proceedings in England', *The Historical Journal*, 41 (June 1998), pp. 511–28 (519–20), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2640116>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

⁴⁵ 'The Divorce Court', *The Times*, 16 June 1919, p. 9; RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/13, Stamfordham to the King, 8 January 1920.

Bend'Or was forced to retire for Cheshire; and why he should be received at Court and Bend'Or unable to go there?⁴⁶

FitzAlan's initial reply was weak. He claimed he had received no instruction to take action on the Marlborough matter 'as I did in Bend'Or's case'.⁴⁷ He wrote again three days later, having taken counsel from Stamfordham, to clarify the position.⁴⁸ He argued the Garter ceremony was not a Court function and therefore Marlborough 'could not be deprived of his right to attend [it]'. He reminded Bend'Or that it was the Prime Minister who decided on the Lord-Lieutenancy, a point which must have jarred because Bend'Or by this stage would have known that it was the King who had overruled the Prime Minister. FitzAlan concluded:

I should like to remind you, as I think I intimated to Bend'Or at the time, that the King, while deeply deploring the circumstances, recognised and appreciated the upright and gentlemanly way in which Bend'Or took initiative himself in offering to resign.⁴⁹

In an internal memorandum Stamfordham admitted Marlborough had behaved badly in 'studiously' refusing to resign, and that Lord Birkenhead and Churchill had supported him. Finally Stamfordham complained about Lloyd George's 'determined inaction': having agreed to ask for Marlborough's resignation, 'nothing was done'.⁵⁰ In effect Marlborough, and the politicians, had called the King's bluff. Bend'Or had been a pawn in a contest between the King and modernity. The King might have used his discretion, as Stamfordham suggested. But the King was too rule-bound and concerned about lapses in the upper class's behaviour to alter his view.

The King's concern eventually led to the Judicial Proceedings (Regulation of Reports) Act 1926, which restricted newspaper reporting of divorce cases 'in order to preserve the public decorum crucial for the maintenance of hierarchies of class,

⁴⁶ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/23, Blow to FitzAlan, 3 November 1927.

⁴⁷ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/24, FitzAlan to Blow, 5 November 1927.

⁴⁸ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/24, FitzAlan to Stamfordham, 8 November 1927.

⁴⁹ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/26, FitzAlan to Blow, 8 November 1927.

⁵⁰ RA/PS/PSO/GV/C/D/1491/28, Stamfordham, n.d., November 1927.

gender, and age'.⁵¹ Maybe the King thought that, if he reduced a duke, Society's behaviour would change. If he did, he was wrong. The forces of change were too multifarious and too strong for such a gesture.

Bend'Or's removal from the King's orbit meant the chief requirement of a duke, as defined by Bagehot to add to royal theatre, was denied him. It left him rudderless. The 5th Duke of Sutherland, writing some years later, explained the point:

Nowadays, except in a few cases, dukes have rather disappeared from the political scene — taxation and large houses have crippled them — although the Dukes of Norfolk, Buccleuch, Hamilton and Beaufort still, through their responsibilities and connexions [*sic*] with Royalty, keep up a semblance of their old power.⁵²

The Dukes of Norfolk held a hereditary position as Earl Marshal. The 10th Duke of Beaufort was Master of the Horse for forty-two years, starting in 1936; the 14th Duke of Hamilton became Lord Steward of the Household and he was also the hereditary Keeper of the Palace of Holyroodhouse. The 5th Duke of Sutherland became Lord Steward of the Household, to be succeeded by the 8th Duke of Buccleuch, who in turn was followed by the Duke of Hamilton. Sutherland carried the Orb at the coronation of King George VI, while the Duke of Somerset carried the Sceptre with the Cross. To the list may be added the 8th Duke of Atholl, who was Lord Chamberlain during 1920–1921.

Bend'Or felt humiliated; a humiliation that he would have felt all the more because of his family's tradition of serving at Court. He was a man who tended to see life in black and white. Nuance and refinement of argument evaded him. He felt rejected and bruised by what he considered to be hypocrisy. According to his third wife, he came to regret making his initial offer to resign.⁵³ He responded as

⁵¹ Gail Savage, 'Erotic Stories and Public Decency: Newspaper Reporting of Divorce Proceedings in England', *The Historical Journal*, 41 (1998), 511–28 (519–20), <<http://www.jstor.org/2640116>> [accessed 19 March 2020].

⁵² The Duke of Sutherland, *Looking Back: The Autobiography*, with a Foreword by Viscount Kilmuir, G.C.V.O. (London: Odhams, 1957), p. 45.

⁵³ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster*, with a Foreword by Noël Coward (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), 157.

Stamfordham had feared: he developed a grudge that lingered. He never deserted his responsibility to the Grosvenor estates but he declined to be involved with the House of Lords or London Society and set about living his life of travel unencumbered by ducal obligation.

Bend'Or's dissatisfaction affected his conduct towards his third wife, Loelia. He initially refused to have her presented at Court and took no part in the procedure when his half-aunt, Lady Stanley, insisted. He also objected when Loelia felt it was 'our duty to play some part in the County, and occasionally to accept public engagements'. According to Loelia he 'poured cold water over my feeble attempts calling it "playing the Lady Bountiful"'.⁵⁴

To his credit, Bend'Or never revealed the King's part in the circumstances in which he had lost the Lord-Lieutenancy, even though the matter of his resignation turned out to be a life-changing issue.

By the 1920s Bend'Or had neither a political career nor a position at the royal Court; and he had come to despise London Society. There was no reason to live in London. This had consequences for the future of Grosvenor House.

The house had come to symbolize the Grosvenors' growing wealth and prestige. Dating from the eighteenth century, during the nineteenth century Grosvenor House was added to and embellished by the 2nd Marquess and then the 1st Duke, until it became one of the great aristocratic houses designed 'to express [the family's] own importance'.⁵⁵

The house presented an imposing classical exterior and an equally imposing heavy classical interior which acted as a backdrop to exhibit pictures and trappings of the Grosvenors' wealth. To this end it was designed to have a public function. Incorporated within its architecture were features to encourage public usage: there was a stage set up in the Rubens room to be used for charity concerts and meetings, and a special corridor had been made on the north side to act as a public entrance.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 192, 196.

⁵⁵ Christopher Simon Sykes, *Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses* (New York: Viking, 1986), p. 251.

⁵⁶ Sykes, *Private Palaces*, p. 282.

It was an amenity that was popular. There are numerous examples in the newspapers of bazaars, charity concerts and meetings for good causes held in it, especially in the years leading up to the 1914 war.

Once it became known that Bend'Or would not live in it again, the Duke of Sutherland expressed an interest in renting it in 1919, but in the end it was let to the recently widowed Lady Michelham.⁵⁷ When this arrangement came to an end, Lord Leverhulme took the lease with the aim of creating a national art gallery.⁵⁸ A year later in 1925 his death heralded the end for Grosvenor House. A speculator bought the lease, and had it knocked down in October 1927 to make way for flats. As the development took form, Sir Edwin Lutyens was employed alongside Detmar Blow to protect the Estate's interest, which still owned the freehold. Professor Ridley believes Blow was behind Lutyens' appointment, but it is equally possible that it was Reginald McKenna, the Grosvenor Trustee, who was both patron and friend of Lutyens.⁵⁹

By contrast, in 1926 Bend'Or bought Rosehall Lodge in Scotland. It was unpretentious and, similar to Bend'Or's other favourite homes, Mimizan in France and Lochmore in Scotland, it was remote. Such retreats were a projection of his own character. He liked the wilderness and inaccessibility better than the show houses he inherited in Eaton Hall and Grosvenor House.

Bend'Or's withdrawal from London Society and the Court might have made him an ally of George V's eldest son, Edward, Prince of Wales. The author has seen no original papers that can shed any light on their relationship, so there is little that can be added to the known facts except by way of observation.

Edward and Wallis did holiday on one of the 'Westminster' yachts in 1935, but Bend'Or was not listed by Wallis as being in their party.⁶⁰ Whilst Edward called the

⁵⁷ London, Westminster City Archives (WCA), 1049/8/444, Duke of Sutherland's office, 28 April 1919; WCA/1049/8/450, Memorandum of Terms 1919.

⁵⁸ GA, Adds 679/7, His Grace's Instructions, 1923–1925, 4 July 1924.

⁵⁹ *Edwin Lutyens: His Life, His Wife, His Work*, ed. by Jane Ridley (London: Pimlico, 2003), p. 350.

⁶⁰ *Wallis and Edward Letters 1931–1937: The Intimate Correspondence of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor*, ed. by Michael Bloch (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), p. 135.

Duke 'Bend'Or', tellingly in her letters to her Aunt Bessy the Duchess constantly refers to Bend'Or as 'the Duke of Westminster' or 'Westminster', and not by the more intimate 'Bend'Or' or 'Benny'.⁶¹

Bend'Or's friendship with Churchill provided a tangible link between him and Prince Edward. It was Churchill who wrote to the ex-King in December 1936, offering Bend'Or's chateau in Normandy, saying, 'Bendor would be delighted if you cared to use Saint Saens'.⁶² In the event Windsor did not take up the offered hospitality.⁶³ It was also Churchill, via Samuel Hoare, then British Ambassador in Madrid, who offered Saughton Grange as a place of refuge to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in June 1940, but again the offer was not taken up.⁶⁴

Joseph Wright, Bend'Or's huntsman, mentions that Prince Edward 'often' stayed at St Saens in Normandy for the hunting, but that does not mean Bend'Or was necessarily there.⁶⁵ Indeed there is no mention of Bend'Or in *A King's Story*, Edward's autobiography. Both may have disliked formalities and etiquette, but Edward liked golf, smart clothes and Americans, especially American women. Bend'Or was physically large and more masculine than the 'little man' and preferred blood sports, shabby tweed jackets and robust male company. Chanel said of him, 'Westminster [...] never has anything new: I was obliged to go and buy him some shoes, and he's been wearing the same jackets for twenty-five years'.⁶⁶

Edward abdicated his crown and abandoned his birthright; Bend'Or might have had his ducal aspirations denied but he never forsook his responsibilities as landowner to his tenants, or to his family.

There were three obligations complementing the dignity of a high-ranking noble: to the monarch, to the body politic, and to their estates, including the localities. On

⁶¹ Bloch, ed., *Wallis and Edward Letters*, pp. 133, 135, 262, 264, 268, 277.

⁶² RA/EDW/PRIV/MAIN/A/3089, Churchill to the Duke of Windsor, 16 December 1936.

⁶³ Bloch, ed., *Wallis and Edward Letters*, p. 277.

⁶⁴ Philip Ziegler, *King Edward VIII: The Official Biography* (London: Collins, 1990), p. 422; Michael Bloch, *The Duke of Windsor's War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), p. 81.

⁶⁵ Joseph Wright, 'Some Hunting Days: With the Duke's Hounds in France', in Gordon Fergusson, *The Green Collars*, pp. 368–73.

⁶⁶ Paul Morand, *The Allure of Chanel*, trans. by Euan Cameron (London: Pushkin, 2010), p. 160.

the basis of their landholdings, traditionally nobles could dominate the local county community.⁶⁷ In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the twin forces of depreciation of land values and growing local democracy combined to end that certainty.

However, the option of retreating to Cheshire to become an active county grandee was still open, in theory, to Bend'Or as a great landowner. The question of whether it was a realistic option is worthy of examination.

Cheshire underwent a rapidly changing character in the late nineteenth century. There were areas in the south-west and in the centre of Cheshire which were rural and where foxhunting was still pursued vigorously. But as transport became easier and office jobs more available, middle-class migrants from Liverpool and Manchester settled on the Wirral and in the northern reaches of the county around Knutsford, Altrincham and Wilmslow. By the end of the nineteenth century swathes of these areas had been overtaken by suburbia and peopled by those whose allegiance was not necessarily to the county but to the city of their workplace.⁶⁸

Municipal boroughs, where the need for public services was great, were established in Birkenhead, Chester, Congleton, Macclesfield, Stalybridge and Stockport by 1888. Each of them had the privilege of its own Commission of the Peace, with the accompanying ability to appoint, instead of the Lord-Lieutenant, their own justices of the peace. Dukinfield (near Ashford-under-Lyne in the north-east) became a borough in 1891 but it did not have privileges over magistrates.⁶⁹ Therefore even when the 1st Duke was alive there were considerable areas of the county where his influence was diluted.

The 1888 Local Government Act introduced the principle of elections to county councils, which were given the same powers as urban boroughs. Both Professor Sir David Cannadine and Cheshire historian J.K. Lee are at pains to point out that the Act was conservative in nature, especially as it allowed the concept of *ex officio* to live on in the office of aldermen. Aldermen were to be elected by the newly formed

⁶⁷ Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work*, p. 186.

⁶⁸ J.M. Lee, *Social Leaders and Public Persons: A Study of County Government in Cheshire since 1888* (Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 40.

⁶⁹ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 48.

council, and many of the new councils were happy to select previous magistrates and to include the Lord-Lieutenant in their choice. By so doing it provided an opportunity for many landowners to perpetuate their influence within local government.⁷⁰ In this way the majority of county councils began with a sizeable complement of aristocratic and gentry members.⁷¹ The 7th Duke of Northumberland and the 11th Duke of Bedford are examples who continued to serve on the newly formed county councils.⁷²

Lee points out that the continuation of aristocratic authority was the longest ‘where there had been a minimum of social and industrial change’.⁷³ Cheshire was not one of them. The 1st Duke was elected an alderman in 1889, but no doubt this reflected his personal standing in the county and the aspiration of the new council to bathe in his reflected glory.⁷⁴ In the main the landowning families did not contest the elections of the first Cheshire county council in ‘any force’. Lee concludes:

The first county council election [in Cheshire] therefore confirmed the supremacy of the great merchants and industrialists in county administration, and introduced for the first time a group of farmers, tradesmen, and small entrepreneurs to work alongside them.⁷⁵

Lee’s table of chairmen and vice-chairmen of Cheshire’s County Council up to 1935 shows the occupations of the first three chairmen were a merchant from Liverpool, a 1st Baronet landowner from Chelford, and a doctor and surgeon from Crewe. The vice-chairmen were a landowner from Tarporley (later an MP), a Manchester cotton merchant, and the head of an engineering company based in

⁷⁰ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 161.

⁷¹ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 224.

⁷² Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 162; Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 225.

⁷³ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 225.

⁷⁴ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 55.

⁷⁵ Lee, *Social Leaders*, pp. 56–59.

Hyde.⁷⁶ The list is confirmation of the changed social and economic character of the county and its lack of homogeneity.

The Grosvenors' influence remained the strongest where they held land. John Bateman noted the 1st Duke owned 15,138 acres in Cheshire in 1881 as well as 3,621 acres in Flint, 744 acres in Denbigh and 246 acres in Buckingham.⁷⁷ Even so, the Duke's acreage did not help the political career of the 1st Duke's third son, Lord Henry Grosvenor.

In 1887 the death of Liberal Unionist Member of Parliament Robert Verdin caused a by-election in Northwich, a town which is near to but not on the Grosvenor estate. Lord Henry stood as a Liberal Unionist candidate against John Brunner, a self-made chemical industrialist. Brunner standing for the Liberal Party won by 1,129 votes and he continued to hold the seat until 1918.⁷⁸ Lord Henry's experience was not unique. The future 6th Duke of Montrose was defeated in Stirlingshire in the 1906 election by a Liberal, James Mackenzie Smeaton, the son of a headmaster; and in 1918 Lord Edward Cavendish, son of the Duke of Devonshire, came fourth in the North East Derbyshire 1918 election, losing to the Liberals, Labour and an Independent Unionist candidate. In 1922 he lost again to the Liberals when he stood as the Unionist candidate in Derbyshire West. He eventually succeeded in winning the seat in 1923 by 453 votes.

These were verdicts of an electorate swelled by migration and by the provisions of the Third Reform Act. Cannadine suggests that in Cheshire the electorate was increased from 20,800 to 100,000 by the inclusion of rural labourers alone.⁷⁹

If Bend'Or had been a keen politician he might have been able to preserve his family's influence in local politics for longer. To do so he would have had to be committed and vigorous. The larger electorate called for wider and more intense campaigning. Furthermore the rate with which responsibility for traffic regulations,

⁷⁶ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 179.

⁷⁷ John Bateman, *Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Harrison, 1883), p. 472.

⁷⁸ Lee, *Social Leaders*, p. 37.

⁷⁹ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 141.

welfare and environmental reform were delegated by Parliament to county councils called for men of professional backgrounds with proven administrative ability.

There were plenty amongst the new men who had settled in suburban Cheshire who were happy to accept public service in exchange for an increase in their status.

Bend'Or was not inclined to put himself out. In local government he would have found similar problems to those he was experiencing as a major urban landowner. Local politics would not have played to his strengths and would have bored him. The signs were there: he had already resigned as Master of the Hunt in 1907, and his attendance with the Yeomanry was not impressive.

The Lord-Lieutenant was automatically President of his county's Artillery Volunteer Force. Bend'Or's family had a long association with the Cheshire Yeomanry, as the Volunteers became in 1908. His father Victor had served with the Volunteers as a sub-lieutenant between 1874 and 1882; his stepfather George Wyndham transferred from the Coldstream to the Volunteers in 1888; and his uncle Lord Arthur Grosvenor commanded the 'B' Eaton squadron from 1905–1910 and became its honorary Lieutenant Colonel in 1916.⁸⁰

During the Boer War Bend'Or was gazetted to the Cheshire Yeomanry, but under the influence of Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, he joined the Royal Horse Guards. In 1901 Bend'Or left the Guards and rejoined the Volunteers as a Captain, becoming a Major in 1906.⁸¹ The Yeomanry's historian Richard Verdin commented, 'The Duke appears to have acted as O.C. "B" Squadron [...]. Captain Radcliffe was to prove very useful in deputizing for the Duke during his not infrequent absences'.⁸²

In 1910 Verdin notes that during a training day:

The Duke arrived at 11am accompanied by the Earl of Shrewsbury [...].

Apparently the Duke was as bored with the idea of squadron drill as in all probability the men were themselves [...] he suggested instead a scout exercise which today reads like a game of mounted 'Hide and Seek' [...]

⁸⁰ Obituary of Lord Arthur Grosvenor, *The Times*, 30 April 1929, p. 21.

⁸¹ London, The National Archives, WO/374/73266, Officers' Service Record of Major (Hon. Col.) Hugh R.A. Duke of Westminster.

⁸² Lt-Col Sir Richard Verdin, *The Cheshire (Earl of Chester's) Yeomanry 1898–1967: The last British regiment to fight on horses* (Birkenhead: Willmer, 1971), p. 23.

whatever the merits of the exercise may have been from a military point of view, it was certainly a novel way for the Duke to entertain his house-party.⁸³

Bend'Or's instruction was a novel, if unorthodox, way of drilling his squadron and entertaining his house party; but Verdin disapproved.

In 1911 Verdin notes, 'Unfortunately neither the advent of his step-father as Colonel nor the proximity of his own home prevented the Duke from attending the Polo Tournament [...] and Captain Barbour acted as Squadron Leader in his absence'.⁸⁴ In 1913 when George Wyndham died, Verdin contributed: 'doubts appear to have arisen as to how active the Duke would be in carrying out his duties'. Verdin does concede Bend'Or was 'immensely popular in the Regiment'.⁸⁵

In his nomadic years of the 1920s and 1930s Bend'Or had little personal involvement with the Volunteers. When Bend'Or resigned as Honorary Colonel of the Regiment in 1951, Verdin wrote:

Whereas the former duke remained actively interested right up to the time of his death, the 2nd Duke saw little of his Regiment from the time he left it in 1914. It is true that the Yeomanry camped at Eaton three times between the wars and dances were given for the officers on two occasions but the Duke was by no means certain to be present himself [...] all this might have been forgiven if he had visited Whitewell to see the Yeomanry before it went abroad in 1939. The request was made but it was too much trouble and he did not come. The regiment [...] was not sorry when his resignation came in 1951.⁸⁶

In 1939 Bend'Or was concerned with a project which he believed could have brought the declared war to an end. He prioritized that possibility, especially as it was more exciting.⁸⁷

⁸³ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, pp. 30–31.

⁸⁴ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, p. 29.

⁸⁵ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, p. 37.

⁸⁶ Verdin, *Cheshire Yeomanry*, p. 470.

⁸⁷ See Chapter 10 'A Crooked Path', p. 291.

Verdin's opinion of Bend'Or focused on two of Bend'Or's cardinal faults: his restlessness and lack of self-discipline.⁸⁸ He enjoyed war but found playing soldiers boring. As far as local government and drilling were concerned, Bend'Or fell into that category of aristocrats cited by Cannadine as 'not prepared to do the real work'.⁸⁹

It was a different matter in respect of his own estates. He never abandoned his interest in them. In Cheshire he might have lost the Lord-Lieutenancy but he was still a Grosvenor and it was an identity that Bend'Or wholly accepted and with which he associated. Talking about the Grosvenor inheritance on *Desert Island Discs*, the 6th Duke is attributed as saying: 'I never think of giving it up. I can't sell it. It doesn't belong to me.' He continued: 'It belongs to my family, it's part of my heritage'.⁹⁰ We can surmise that Bend'Or felt similarly.

Grandeest held a special position in their neighbourhood. A combination of veneration of status, love of grandeur, and historical pride (values that are hard for us to fathom today) meant that a deeply entrenched landowning family was regarded with a reverence otherwise accorded only to a sovereign.

The Grosvenors have a close relationship with Chester. Grosvenors had been mayors, Members of Parliament and landowners in Chester since the fifteenth century. Eaton Hall itself is situated just three and a half miles from the city's walls. This close proximity strengthened the bonds, as did the family's custom, throughout the centuries, of celebrating main events in Chester, not in London. Typically, Bend'Or's homecoming from the Boer War was a major occasion, even though, as George told Sibell:

I stupidly left at 35 [Park Lane] a wire for you from dear Benny which I opened. It ran, characteristically, — "please no khaki fuss at Chester. Quite quiet, Ben." That means that he does not want a reception at Chester on his return.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 186. Loelia calls his restlessness 'St Vitus's dance'.

⁸⁹ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 165.

⁹⁰ *Desert Island Discs*, 2 July 1985, <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0093pds>>.

⁹¹ GA, WP 1/2/15, George Wyndham to Sibell Grosvenor, 18 October 1900.

The khaki might have been dropped but the inevitable reception was not, and it became a celebration which was combined with Bend'Or's coming of age as well as his recent elevation to the dukedom.

The language used by the local newspapers reflected the emotion of the day. Chester celebrated on 9 November 1900 when 'gratifying evidence of the cordial, nay affectionate relationship that existed for generations between the House of Grosvenor and the citizens of Chester was abundantly furnished'.⁹² When Bend'Or went to Flint to receive the congratulations from the town, his tenants and the farmers were 'only too glad of an opportunity of showing through the successor to the title and estates, their unfeigned respect for the illustrious family'. At Halkyn the tenantry 'were anxious to show that they are not a whit behind their Cheshire brethren in loyalty to their young landlord'.⁹³

The loyalty of the tenants on the Halkyn Castle estate in North Wales was crushed nine years later when Bend'Or sold the estate. The decision had little to do with the 1909 Budget which has been suggested.⁹⁴ It was noted in Chapter 4 that the Grosvenors' Chief Agent was not unduly perturbed by the Budget's threat of land taxes. Even though there was a temporary depression of rents in London around 1909, the Grosvenor wealth was supported by enough revenue from a rapidly expanding London housing market to pay for the Budget's tax increases and to bridge a recession.

The most likely explanations are that the Estate needed to release capital to pay off the generous family portions the 1st Duke had bequeathed; Bend'Or wanted funds to invest in his African projects, which the Estate's Trustees could not provide under the rules of the family settlement; and that the lingering agricultural depression was causing difficulties in North Wales, where sheep and high farming predominated.⁹⁵

⁹² 'Chester's Home Coming', *Cheshire Observer*, 10 November 1900, p. 6, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁹³ 'House of Grosvenor' *Cheshire Observer*, 24 November 1900, p. 6, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 27 February 2020].

⁹⁴ Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), p. 157; Leslie Field, *Bend'Or: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 116.

⁹⁵ Gregory D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 30–32; P.J. Perry, 'Where was the "Great Agricultural Depression"? A Geography of Agricultural Bankruptcy in Late Victorian England and

John Beckett and Michael Turner show that several large landowners were in the habit of selling 'outlying land' before the Great War to rationalize estates and to free up money for financial investment, often abroad.⁹⁶ It was a combination of circumstances which sealed the fate of the Halkyn estate.

Bend'Or gave his tenants first option to buy their holdings. In this he followed the trend.⁹⁷ He was also showing consideration to his tenants and being faithful to George Wyndham's vision of supporting yeoman farmers. Towards the end of his life Wyndham wrote to Hilaire Belloc: 'At any rate the big landlords are not the usurious landlords. Mind you, I am not, therefore, in favour of big landlords. I want many small land-owners.'⁹⁸

Faced with responsibility for their financial future, the tenant farmers of the Halkyn estate had no wish to become independent and appealed to Bend'Or to change his mind. In their petition they acknowledged his offer that each tenant had the option of buying their holding, but they:

cannot refrain from saying that we have not desire to take advantage of it, and we would infinitely prefer to remain your tenants [...]. The Westminster estate has always had the reputation of generous treatment of tenantry in regard to rental and agreement of tenure.⁹⁹

The appeal was in vain. The estate was sold over a number of years and the greater portion was sold privately to the tenants.¹⁰⁰

It was the same when in 1919 Bend'Or sold the western portion of the Eaton Hall estate. On this occasion the sale was necessary to pay off long-term mortgages on

Wales', *The Agricultural History Review*, 20 (1) (1972), 30–45, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40273755>> [accessed 22 April 2018].

⁹⁶ John Beckett and Michael Turner, 'End of the Old Order? F.M.L. Thompson, the Land Question, and the burden of ownership in England, c.1880–c.1925', *The Agricultural History Review*, 55 (2) (2007), 269–288, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40276168>> [accessed 22 April 2018].

⁹⁷ Phillips, *The Diehards*, pp. 47–48; Beckett and Turner, *End of the Old Order*, p. 279.

⁹⁸ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), II, p. 661.

⁹⁹ 'The Duke of Westminster's Halkyn', *The Times*, 24 January 1911, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ 'Properties on the Market', *The Times*, 20 June 1912, p. 20.

the London properties, for restoration after bomb damage and estate improvements and to compensate for a shortfall in rental income as a result of the First World War.

Special arrangements were made to encourage the Cheshire tenants to buy their properties. Bend'Or assured them that the estate would not be sold as a whole and that his Trustees would assist in the provision of mortgages for tenants as long as 'each tenant purchase for his own occupation'.¹⁰¹

As indicated by the Halkyn tenants, the Grosvenors were regarded as good landowners who cared for their tenants. Bend'Or provided all the largesse that was expected of a landowner and aristocrat, such as annual balls, Christmas treats for schoolchildren as well as tenants, pensions for those who served the Estate or family well, house improvements and the building of schools and village halls. In 1935 a small item in *The Times* confirmed that 'the Duke of Westminster is to follow his usual custom of sending the children of his tenants on his estates to a Christmas pantomime'.¹⁰² In 1940 it was noted that 'following his usual custom, the Duke of Westminster sent presents for the children attending school Christmas parties on the estate'. The report went on: 'the Duke is also giving a week's rent to each weekly tenant on his Chester estates'.¹⁰³ In 1930 when he married his third wife, Bend'Or instructed that all his tenants should have a week's free rent and all the arrears were forgiven.¹⁰⁴ In one year (date not given) it was noted that Bend'Or distributed a 'large quantity of coal' to about 600 Chester families.¹⁰⁵ In 1921 he gave £500 to the Mayor of Chester's unemployment fund, 'which was a great help in relieving local distress'.¹⁰⁶ In 1901 he sent firewood and 700 rabbits, and had a

¹⁰¹ 'Eaton Hall Estate', *The Times*, 15 December 1917, p. 2; Gregory D. Phillips, *The Diehards: Aristocratic Society and Politics in Edwardian England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 48.

¹⁰² 'Duke of Westminster's Treat for Children', *The Times*, 18 December 1935, p. 15.

¹⁰³ 'Duke's Gifts to Children', *Chester Chronicle*, 21 December 1940, p. 10.

¹⁰⁴ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 168.

¹⁰⁵ 'The Duke of Westminster Dies', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ 'The Duke of Westminster Dies', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

soup kitchen set up, in Rhes-y-cae to help the striking miners on the Halkyn Mountain lead mines.¹⁰⁷

The local newspapers are full of reports of the donations Bend'Or gave to local good causes, especially the Chester Infirmary. Bend'Or maintained his grandfather's custom of opening the gardens of Eaton Hall to visitors for six months of the year. When Eaton Hall had been built, the 1st Duke professed that the purpose of building such a large house was for it to be a 'show house' of which Cestrians should be proud. In other words, he believed it was part of his ducal munificence to the neighbourhood. The *Cheshire Observer* commented:

Many of their [Cestrians'] American cousins who visited the ancient city of Chester came also to inspect Eaton Hall and the gardens and grounds, and he [1st Duke] was desirous that they should be able to show them a house worthy of a member of the English aristocracy. This was partly his excuse for building so large and costly a place.¹⁰⁸

The entrance fee, a shilling per person, was donated to the Chester Infirmary and other charities. By 1916 the gardens had been opened for twenty years, raising £16,000.¹⁰⁹ In 1904 Bend'Or gave a special donation to the Infirmary for the reduction 'of the institution's debt'.¹¹⁰ Donations to the cathedral were another recurring theme.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s Bend'Or maintained Eaton Hall fully staffed and operating. Eaton Hall was built to entertain. It could sleep a maximum of sixty visitors, according to Bend'Or's third Duchess, Loelia.¹¹¹ In 1906 it took a staff of more than sixty to run the house and its gardens.¹¹² This was large but not

¹⁰⁷ Cris Ebb, 'Lead Mining at Halkyn Mountain', 15, <https://www.academia.edu/12840573/Lead_Mining_at_Halkyn_Mountain> [accessed 22 April 2019].

¹⁰⁸ *Cheshire Observer*, 29 August 1874, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 14 April 2019].

¹⁰⁹ 'News in Brief', *The Times*, 31 May 1916, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ 'Chester Infirmary', *Cheshire Observer*, 30 January 1904, p. 6, <<https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>> [accessed 14 April 2019].

¹¹¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 201.

¹¹² Ridley, *Bend'or Duke of Westminster*, p. 64.

extraordinary. John, Duke of Bedford reckoned it took between fifty and sixty to run Woburn in the same era.¹¹³ Mary Lovell suggests that Blenheim had ‘never fewer than forty indoor servants, probably the same number employed in the gardens, and another dozen in the stables’.¹¹⁴

On the 1st Duke’s death Bend’Or adopted Eaton Hall as his home and set about shaping its amenities to suit his needs. If the 1st Duke was determined that Eaton would reflect the latest aesthetic taste of the day, Bend’Or’s improvements were more prosaic. Under him Eaton had to offer facilities that would entertain him and his guests. George Wyndham observed:

The whole place [Eaton Hall] has been turned into a glorified embodiment of a boy’s holidays. In the Park, just to the left front of the great iron gates and Watts’ statue, he has constructed a steeple-chase course with a mile and a half of high tarred rails round it [...]. The stables are crammed with hunters, chase-horses, polo ponies Basutos, carriage horses, American Trotter and two motor cars.¹¹⁵

Wyndham suggested that ‘there is nothing “slang” or “fast” or “raffish”’. Bend’Or had also ‘laid out a very good Dutch garden, gets up early, takes an interest in the trees and has collected more four-footed companions about him than any of our contemporaries with the exception of Klama King of Palapye’.¹¹⁶ Bend’Or had a particular fondness for dachshunds, of which he kept a ‘small pack’ that he liked to use for hunting rabbits.¹¹⁷

If in Cheshire Bend’Or, as a landowner, was principally concerned with the welfare of his estates and of the people of Chester, his attitude was the same in London. In 1906 he had established two labour relief depots, one in Westminster, the other in

¹¹³ John, Duke of Bedford, *A Silver-plated Spoon* (London: Reprint Society, 1959), p. 17.

¹¹⁴ Mary S. Lovell, *The Churchills* (London: Abacus, 2011), p. 346. No source is given.

¹¹⁵ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, pp. 440–41.

¹¹⁶ Mackail and Wyndham, *Life and Letters*, II, p. 441.

¹¹⁷ Norman Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk: Fifty years a gamekeeper for the Dukes of Westminster* (Cambridge: White Lion, 2001), p. 117.

Poplar, to provide work and payment to unemployed working-class men. He contributed £5,000 to the Church Army to run these and other depots. He allowed at a peppercorn rent various houses on his London estate to be let to charities — Toc H and the National Playing Field Association amongst them, while the Rhodes Trust was offered a house in Davies Street ‘at something less than the commercial value’.¹¹⁸

On a larger scale, in 1924 he and the Trustees leased a plot of land for 99 years at a nominal rent of £1 a year to Westminster City Council for the purpose of building houses for the working class. In the 1921 Census it was found that 11,000 families were living in cramped and inadequate housing, and families sharing one room were commonplace. The high cost of land had hindered the provision of what is now called affordable housing. Recognizing the dearth of accommodation for families with children, Bend’Or expressly instructed on the new site that preference should be given to such families. This undertaking was singled out for praise by the then Labour (and radical) Minister of Health Mr Wheatley, who commended the ‘generosity of the Duke and he [Wheatley] would like to commend his example to the great landlords of the country’.¹¹⁹

A more ambitious project was embarked on less than a decade later. In 1928 many already deteriorated houses on the Grosvenor Millbank estate were flooded by the Thames, causing damage and loss of life.¹²⁰ The Grosvenor Trustees arranged an agreement with Westminster City Council whereby Bend’Or would lease to the council five and a half acres (reckoned to be worth at the time £200,000) on a 999-year lease for a shilling a year for the building of 600 tenement flats. In reality it was a gift. In addition Bend’Or provided £113,650 towards the cost of the building and contributed to the refashioning of the nearby streets. When two of the six chequerboard blocks were completed, Princess Mary, Countess of Harewood, presided over the opening ceremony. During one official speech hope was expressed that there would be accommodation to house ‘the Whitehall charwomen, who generally speaking live a long way from the Government Offices’.

¹¹⁸ ‘New Westminster Dwellings’, *The Times*, 20 May 1924, p. 11; ‘The Duke of Westminster Dies’, *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10; GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace’s Instructions, 1900–1904.

¹¹⁹ ‘The Duke of Westminster Dies’, *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

¹²⁰ ‘City of Westminster’s Improvements’, *The Times*, 11 January 1929, p. 9.

Bend'Or was not there to hear this sentiment or the celebration of his generosity. Crowds and acclaim were of no interest to him. Typically, he sent a representative, Detmar Blow, who had been co-architect with Edwin Lutyens.¹²¹

Loelia Westminster, who did not pull her punches, acknowledged in her memoirs Bend'Or's 'colossal' generosity which was directed to those he considered worthy of it 'in a tactful, self-effacing way'.¹²² She also noted that 'as a landlord he was very enlightened and [...] he was interested in schemes for housing the poor and he was most insistent that working-class rents should be kept as low as possible'.¹²³ According to Douglas Sutherland,

the Westminsters [...] led the way in remitting London rentals on their properties during the war years [1939–1945] [...] and they also cut back on rentals for their agricultural properties during the depression of the 1930s, devoting part of their urban income to make this possible.¹²⁴

In Westminster City Archives there are two booklets which detail Bend'Or's charitable subscriptions. One is dated 1937 and it itemizes over 305 organizations. The other is not dated and lists 307. They show that there were larger donations such as £200 for St George's Hospital in London. But most are modest — for example, the £2.2.00 for the Wirral Footpath preservation.¹²⁵

This is the point. Based on the information available, Bend'Or's charitable giving tended to be small, unobtrusive and undemonstrative, and much of it prioritized people and projects on his estates. It was typical behaviour of an old-fashioned landowner who from *noblesse oblige* would direct largesse to those for whom he felt responsible.

In Cheshire Bend'Or remained well-liked in spite of his frequent absences. Even in his wandering years of the 1920s he would be at Eaton Hall for fixed times. These were centred on the Grand National in March, Chester Races in May, a week

¹²¹ 'Grosvenor Housing Scheme', *The Times*, 10 July 1930, p. 11.

¹²² Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 182.

¹²³ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 183.

¹²⁴ Douglas Sutherland, *The Landowners*, rev. edn (London: Muller, 1988), p. 58.

¹²⁵ WCA, 1934/217 and 1934/206.

of sport (polo or tennis) in August and shooting parties in November, December and January.¹²⁶ Then the Hall would be filled with guests and the staff would be fully occupied.

And when death came, Bend'Or was in the graveyard of St Mary's in Eccleston beside his ancestors and amongst the people of Cheshire, who maintained a home base for him throughout his life.

¹²⁶ Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk*, p. 110.

Chapter 9. All that Glitters is Not Gold¹

In 1959 Evelyn Waugh wrote in the preface to the second edition of *Brideshead Revisited*: ‘It was impossible to have foreseen, in the spring of 1944, the present cult of the English country house [...] the English aristocracy has maintained its identity to a degree that then seemed impossible’.² Scholarship may vary in nuance, but the accepted wisdom is that in the mid-twentieth century the relationship between the old aristocracy, landownership and status was breaking down.³ It was not until the 1960s that the nobility found a new role as guardians of national heritage. It was after Bend’Or’s death. He lived through the confusing, transformative interwar years, when societal norms were pulled in opposing directions by contradictory conservative and progressive forces. It resulted in a re-evaluation of what it meant

¹ This chapter tackles wealth. It is difficult to judge the relative value of wealth from one century to another. Economic historian Sir Roderick Floud warns that the formula used to assess purchasing power, known as the ‘weight’, is too variable to be meaningful. He cautions: ‘There is no right or wrong indicator of relative values. Some comparators give more believable answers than others’. Roderick Floud, ‘Pricing the Past’, *History Today*, 69 (3) (March 2019), 40–45. In this study the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, based on the Consumer Price Index, is used throughout simply for illustrative purposes, <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 2 April 2020].

² Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1978), p. 10.

³ The following were used in preparing this section. David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982); David Cannadine, *Aspects of Aristocracy: Grandeur and Decline in Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); F.M.L. Thompson, Presidential Address: ‘English Landed Society in the Twentieth Century IV. Prestige without Power?’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 3 (1993), 1–22 (5), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3679134>> [accessed 2 July 2020]; F.M.L. Thompson, ‘Life After Death: How Successful Nineteenth-Century Businessmen Disposed of Their Fortunes’, *The Economic History Review*, 43 (February 1990), 40–61, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2596512?seq=1>> [accessed 14 November 2020]; W.D. Rubinstein, ‘Wealth, Elites and the Class Structure of Modern Britain’, *Past & Present*, 76 (August 1977), 99–126, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/650411>> [accessed 29 August 2020]; W.D. Rubinstein, ‘New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, *Past & Present*, 92 (August 1981), 125–47, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/650752>> [accessed 29 July 2019]; William D. Rubenstein [sic], ‘The Evolution of the British Aristocracy in the Twentieth Century: Peerage Creations and the “Establishment”’ in *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours*, ed. by Didier Lancien and Monique de Saint-Martin (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de Sciences de l’Homme, 2007), pp. 245–57, <<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://books.openedition.org/editionsmsmh/9986?lang=en&prev=search&pto=aue>> [accessed 7 October 2020]; Francis M.L. Thompson, ‘English Landed Society in the Twentieth Century’, in *Anciennes et nouvelles aristocraties de 1880 à nos jours*, ed. by Didier Lancien and Monique de Saint-Martin (Paris: Éditions de la Maison de Sciences de l’Homme, 2007), pp. 11–27, <<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://books.openedition.org/editionsmsmh/9986?lang=en&prev=search&pto=aue>> [accessed 7 October 2020]; W.D. Rubinstein, ‘Cutting up Rich: A Reply to F.M.L. Thompson’, *The Economic History Review*, 45 (2) (May 1992), 350–61, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2597627>> [accessed 17 September 2020].

to be rich — a change which a buoyant journalism encouraged both wittingly and unwittingly. It meant little certainty for Bend'Or, who was best known for his wealth. He became the target of those who advocated change as well as those who regretted the passing of a more elegant world. This chapter examines the extent of Bend'Or's wealth and how popular opinion ultimately changed its appreciation of it.

It is impossible to fathom, within the present state of knowledge of the Grosvenors' family finances, and those of other comparative families, how rich the Grosvenors were. Some idea can be gleaned from the notes prepared for the Duke in the series of red Moroccan leather books, inscribed in gold 'The Duke of Westminster: Notes and His Grace's Instructions' (referred to as 'His Grace's Instructions'). These are an invaluable resource for the researcher. Details of the estate business were noted by an agent for Bend'Or's attention; in the margin Bend'Or wrote his comments. There is a book for every year of Bend'Or's ducal life. Volumes up to 1935 have been accessed for this thesis. Another source is the archive of Boodle Hatfield, the Grosvenor Estate's solicitors, which is lodged in the Westminster City Archives.

In February 1900 details of the 1st Duke's Will were printed in *The Times*. It stated that he left a personalty of £594,229 1s.⁴ The bulk of his wealth lay in estates in London, North Wales and Cheshire, which were in trust for his grandson and so were not a feature of the Duke's Will. For comparison, *The Times*' report included the personal estate of the 6th Duke of Northumberland (died January 1899) valued at £50,950 and that of the 8th Duke of Beaufort (died April 1899) at £8,687.⁵

The Times' report quoted the 1st Duke as always insisting that his income had been 'greatly exaggerated'. The newspaper surmised that he had 'at his own disposition not much more than about £1,200,000'.⁶ Cannadine and Rubinstein suggest that the 1st Duke's gross income was about £290,000 in 1880.⁷

⁴ From 1898 to 1926, 'personalty' referred to unsettled property. W.D. Rubinstein, 'British Millionaires, 1809–1949', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historic Research*, XLVII (1974), 206–23.

⁵ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8.

⁶ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8.

⁷ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8; David Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 710–11, based on the work of W.D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property: The Very Wealthy in Britain since the Industrial Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1981), pp. 194–95; David Cannadine, 'The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire, c.1880–c.1926',

There is no accurate figure for the total value of the Grosvenor estates. *The Times*' report suggested that it was in the region of £14,000,000 (equivalent to £1.7 billion in 2019 prices).⁸ In 1927 the Grosvenor Estate office estimated the value of the London estate at £10,000,000 upwards, 'but nearer £20,000,000'.⁹ In 1928 Belgrave Square was valued at £12,750,000.¹⁰ In 1930 the Grosvenor office made a 'back-of-the-envelope' calculation of Bend'Or's wealth by adding together the Estate's gross annual rents (£588,722) and the income from investments (£94,000) and then multiplying the sum by 5 per cent (representing the average return): it came to £13,654,440.¹¹

These figures above are not strictly comparable. In London there were sales of land, of which the largest was Millbank in 1929. However, the bulk of Mayfair, Belgravia and Pimlico remained largely intact until Pimlico was sold in 1953. It was in Cheshire and, in particular, the North Wales estate that bore the brunt of land disposals.

Bend'Or's great-great-grandfather, the 1st Marquess, established a pattern for the family's succession planning.¹² When he died in 1845 the estates went to his son, the 2nd Marquess, in trust. The 1st Marquess granted a generous annuity to his wife and made provision for his younger sons (£89,000 to Lord Robert and £10,000 to Thomas, Earl of Wilton) by way of portions. Arrangements were made for the 2nd Marquess (Bend'Or's great-grandfather) to raise further portions for the 1st

Agricultural History Review, xxvi (1978), 92–93; John Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, 4th edn, rev. (London: Harrison, 1883).

⁸ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8; W.D. Rubinstein, *Men of Property*, p. 44; the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 11 January 2021].

⁹ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), Adds 679/9, His Grace's Instructions, 1926–27, Part 2, November 1927, pp. 349–50.

¹⁰ GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace's Instructions, 1927–28, Part 2, 7 December 1928.

¹¹ London, Westminster City Archives (WCA), 1049/8/694, Boodle Hatfield Papers, memo dated 31 January 1930.

¹² M.J. Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats: The Grosvenors and the Development of Belgravia and Pimlico in the Nineteenth Century' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 1981), pp. 148–50, <<https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.493822>> [accessed 19 March 2019], p. 122. Hazleton-Swales had the opportunity of studying some of the family's papers before they were returned from Westminster City Archives to the family's archive at Eaton.

Marquess's other children and grandchildren. In addition the 1st Marquess left £8,500 in further annuities.

Similar arrangements were made for the 2nd Marquess's thirteen children. His eldest (Hugh Lupus) and youngest sons (Richard de Aquila Grosvenor) and his brother Lord Ebury (and Lady Ebury) benefitted from charges made against the Cheshire, Welsh and London estates. Further provision was made for the 2nd Marquess's surviving daughters and other sons by way of more charges. M.J. Hazleton-Swales pointed out in his study on the Grosvenors' London estate that portions were favoured over annuities. For as long as the portions remained unpaid, interest had to be paid out of income at the manageable 5 per cent. It took about thirty years to settle them all.¹³

Resettling a trust was a customary procedure to protect estates from the idiosyncrasies of the family's head, and, because 'trusts do not die', to benefit from more lenient tax treatment.¹⁴ The 1st Duke (and 3rd Marquess), by virtue of a family settlement created in 1874, left his estates in London, Cheshire and Wales to his son Victor (who died in 1884, leaving Bend'Or as sole heir), with a Board of Trustees. On 13 February 1901, on the eve of his first marriage, Bend'Or disentailed in order to create, three days later, a new settlement to accommodate his marriage and his grandfather's bequests.¹⁵

The Resettlement of 1901 provided Bend'Or, his wife and any children of the marriage an income, subject to the family's charges. The document lays out the 'portions', up to £50,000 each, charged against the London estate, that were bequeathed to various Grosvenors by the 1st Duke. The list is extensive. It covered:

1. Lord Arthur Grosvenor, Bend'Or's uncle, with remainder to his children and their male descendants;
2. The other surviving male children of the 1st Duke (four), with remainder to their children and their male heirs;

¹³ M.J. Hazleton-Swales, 'Urban Aristocrats', pp. 148–51.

¹⁴ Rubenstien [*sic*], 'Evolution of the British Aristocracy', pp. 245–57 (para. 3), <<https://translate.google.com/translate?hl=en&sl=fr&u=https://books.openedition.org/editionsmslh/9986?lang=en&prev=search&pto=aue>> [accessed 7 October 2020].

¹⁵ WCA, 1049/2/146, Resettlement of Family Estates by the Most Noble H.R.A. Duke of Westminster, 15 February 1901.

3. Richard de Aquila, 1st Baron Stalbridge, the 1st Duke's only surviving brother, and his sons (three) and remainder to their male heirs;
4. Bend'Or's sisters (two) and remainder to male heirs;
5. The daughters of the 1st Duke (four) and remainder to male heirs;
6. The daughters of 1st Baron Stalbridge (three) and their male heirs.

The named portions, or parts, were charged against various properties on the estates, and each portion had its own trustees. Portions were limited to four per family, i.e. £50,000 x four = £200,000. The settlement made Bend'Or a tenant of the estates for his lifetime, and after his death his eldest legitimate son would be heir. If Bend'Or had no son, the Resettlement document gave him an overriding power of appointment on the disposal of the landed estate. These arrangements were changed by the Grosvenor Act 1933.

The Trust laid various restrictions on Bend'Or. For example, his ability to charge the Estate with an annuity was limited to £6,000 apiece, and the Trustees were responsible for capital improvements only, not Bend'Or's personal expenses. Capital payments were restricted to projects within the British Isles. If Bend'Or wanted to make a gift of land or property, he had to buy it from the Trustees, who could refuse to sell. Bend'Or was able to 'charge' the Settled Estate a yearly rent of £10,000 for fifty years.¹⁶

The pattern of family settlements establishes that the Grosvenor fortune was a family concern. Bend'Or might have been head of the family but he was encumbered by the extensive obligations owed to family members.

Even the tightest of arrangements could be undermined if the family's head had that intent. Many aristocrats who inherited large estates were able to ruin them within a generation or two. The 10th Duke of Manchester (and his two predecessors), the 7th Duke of Leinster and the 10th and 11th Dukes of Leeds, and recently the 7th Marquess of Bristol, are twentieth-century examples.¹⁷ Bend'Or might have spent extravagantly but he never squandered his inheritance, in spite of

¹⁶ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, pp. 83–84; GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace's Instructions, 29 July 1927, Part 2, pp. 303–05.

¹⁷ Marcus Scriven, *Splendour & Squalor: The Disgrace and Disintegration of Three Aristocratic Dynasties* (London: Atlantic, 2009). Scriven traces the fate of the three families of Manchester, Leinster and Bristol.

having no son, which shows that he was in full accord with his primary obligation as the beneficiary of an inherited estate, which is to pass it on to a successor. In placing long-term family concerns above his own short-term inclinations, Bend'Or's attitude to family and money was one of a traditional aristocrat.

A well-oiled professional operation had developed to service the extensive arrangements made for the family and to run the estates, particularly the London estate, which, being urban, demanded intensive and constant close work.

The Boodle Hatfield firm of solicitors has a long association with the Grosvenors, dating from 1836 when the firm, then called Boodle, moved to London from Chester.¹⁸ In 1898 Edward Hatfield joined Boodle, which became Boodle, Hatfield & Co. in 1900. Their involvement continued with Mr Arthur Borrer, who was the last agent from Boodle Hatfield. In 1947 George Ridley, Bend'Or's biographer, became a Trustee of the Estate, and Chief Agent as well as Executor of Bend'Or's Will.

The agents were assisted by an estate surveyor — a list which included the architects Thomas Cundy senior and Thomas Cundy junior. Eustace Balfour, brother of Arthur the Prime Minister, was the surveyor when Bend'Or inherited the Estate. Eustace was nephew by marriage to the 1st Duke, who appointed him in 1890. He remained in post until 1910. A considerable modernization programme of the housing stock took place in the late nineteenth century as older houses needed to be replaced. F.H.W. Sheppard in *Survey of London* charts how the number of private residents increased, at the cost of small commercial outlets, so increasing the numbers of wealthy occupants in Mayfair and Belgravia.¹⁹

By contrast, the first decade of the twentieth century was not a productive period in the Estate's history. Balfour was past his best (he died of alcoholism in 1911), the

¹⁸ History of Boodle Hatfield, <<https://www.boodlehatfield.com/the-firm/our-history>> [accessed 19 January 2020].

¹⁹ F.H.W. Sheppard, ed., 'The Social Character of the Estate: The Last Hundred Years', *Survey of London, Volume 39, The Grosvenor Estate in Mayfair*, Part 1 (London, 1977), pp. 98–102, British History Online, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp98-102>> [accessed 29 September 2020].

Estate was encumbered with large estate duties and, as we have now established, substantial family charges, which combined to reduce funds for reconstruction.²⁰

In 1910 the architect Edward Wimperis became the estate surveyor. Wimperis proved to be innovative and insightful but he lost out to Detmar Blow, also an architect, whose career with Bend'Or began when he designed a formal garden at Eaton.²¹ Blow made himself indispensable to the frequently absent Duke.²² Wimperis left when Blow became Bend'Or's executive private secretary in 1928, and Mr Borrer's role was reduced to that of the family's solicitor. Sheppard, not a Bend'Or fan, summed it up: 'Blow was left in a position comparable with that trusted minister in the court of an autocratic pleasure-loving monarch [...] Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII has, indeed, been suggested.'²³

Blow was not as omnipotent as Sheppard suggests. While Bend'Or was absent in body, and at times in mind, Blow had great influence. But Blow was subject to the Trustees — as was Bend'Or. According to George Ridley, Bend'Or told him that when he had put his estate into trust in 1901 he had not appreciated that there would be an 'iron curtain' between him and the Trustees.²⁴ This was probably truer after 1921 than before. The initial Trustees were the Earl of Shaftesbury and Colonel Lloyd, Bend'Or's brother-in-law and the late Duke's private secretary respectively. It was a relaxed arrangement compared to that put in place after their retirement. In 1921 the Rt Hon. Reginald McKenna and Sir Vincent Wilberforce Baddeley KCB were appointed as replacements.²⁵

McKenna was Chairman of the Midland Bank, but neither of his biographers, Martin Farr and Stephen McKenna, nor the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

²⁰ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

²¹ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

²² See Chapter 6 'Manliness', p. 167.

²³ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

²⁴ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), p. 174.

²⁵ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1920, 30 March 1921, p. 102.

(*ODNB*), mention the Grosvenor appointment — perhaps because it was considered a private matter.²⁶ McKenna could never have been Bend'Or's stooge. McKenna was a Liberal who had had a commendable political career which included the posts of First Secretary to the Treasury (1905–1907), Home Secretary (1911–1915) and Chancellor of the Exchequer (1915–1916). He retained an independent mind in politics and followed Asquith rather than Lloyd George. He was particularly at odds with Winston Churchill, Bend'Or's great friend.²⁷

McKenna was renowned as a leading financier, meticulous, academic and forthright, although according to the *ODNB* 'he mellowed considerably after leaving politics'.²⁸ It is doubtful that Bend'Or would have had the same easy relationship with him as he had enjoyed with his previous Trustees. But McKenna's appointment, which Bend'Or would have approved, marked a step-change in attitude in the Estate's ambition as a family concern to one more akin to a large corporation.

The Estate's financial structure was simple. Under the terms of the 1901 Resettlement, land sales were regarded as capital. When a new lease was granted, a proportion of the rent was paid into Bend'Or's personal account and subject to income tax for which he was responsible; the remainder went to the Trustees' Account and treated as capital for tax purposes. With these funds the Trustees were able to pay off mortgages, the cost of estate improvements and other liabilities typical of running a large urban estate.

There was also an Improvement Account into which went dilapidation money paid by tenants at the end of their lease. The Trustees could invest any money left

²⁶ Martin Farr, *Reginald McKenna: Financier among Statesman, 1863–1916* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Stephen McKenna, *Reginald McKenna 1863–1943: A Memoir* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948); D.M. Cregier, 'McKenna, Reginald', *ODNB*, revised 2011, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/34744>>.

²⁷ John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1993), pp. 72–74, 77–79, 85, 91, 93, 127.

²⁸ Cregier, 'McKenna, Reginald', <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/34744>>.

over from meeting the Estate's obligations, the income from which was paid into Bend'Or's private account.²⁹

The number of family portions on the Grosvenor estates placed a burden not only on the availability of funds needed for housing improvements but on Bend'Or's income. Interest on mortgages and family charges was paid from Bend'Or's private account. If the portions and mortgages could be discharged, then the pressure on Bend'Or's income would be reduced.³⁰ Up to the end of the Great War and beyond, Mr Hatfield's objective, and that of his successor Arthur Borrer, was to settle the accumulated charges and portions while maintaining Bend'Or's income and ensuring the future prosperity of the Settled Estate.

There are two schedules attached to the 1901 Resettlement. One gives details of the rent from unencumbered lands, that is, land that was *not* tied in portions.³¹ The other lists the charges and encumbrances on the estates. In 1901 it showed mortgages and portions on the London properties as worth £1,104,000 with a further £205,000 charged against the Cheshire estates.³²

Charges valued at about £1.3 million were not unreasonable in relation to the overall value of the estates, which *The Times* reckoned to be £14,000,000 in 1899 (although that may be an overestimation), especially as interest rates were low.³³ It was debt that was incurred for definite purposes and, as Hazleton-Swales put it, it was 'an intelligent optimization of existing credit facilities rather than the effects of decadent squandering'.³⁴

In the changed economic circumstances of the Edwardian period it was less advisable to carry debt. Prices were rising, yet incomes hardly rose and the average

²⁹ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, 16 March 1921, pp. 94–96.

³⁰ David Cannadine, 'Aristocratic Indebtedness in the Nineteenth Century.: The Case Re-opened', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 30 (4) (1977), 624–50.

³¹ WCA, 1049/2/146, Resettlement, Second Schedule. Money converted using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator, 23 April 2019.

³² WCA, 1049/2/146, Resettlement. The First Schedule.

³³ 'The Duke of Westminster's Will', *The Times*, 17 February 1900, p. 8.

³⁴ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 169.

rate of return on capital was low.³⁵ Rents, on the whole, were static but there was a fall in housing values.³⁶

General trends should be applied to the Grosvenor situation with caution. Mr Hatfield advised Bend'Or:

past experience leads to the conclusion that in dealing with a large estate like the Grosvenor Estate comprising as it does all classes of residential, professional, commercial and manufacturing districts no hard and fast rules applicable to the whole can be carried out with advantage.³⁷

In 1909 Mr Hatfield acknowledged that there was 'a depression in the housing market' and records suggest the Estate's finances were strained.³⁸ Ridley suggests that property values dropped by 50 per cent between 1900 and 1909.³⁹ Apart from the national economic situation, family charges still had to be paid, as did death duties on the 1st Duke's estate. Sheppard puts them at £600,000 — of which 90 per cent arose from the London properties.⁴⁰ It took time to settle them and, while it did, interest had to be paid.⁴¹ In 1905 Mr Hatfield advised Bend'Or that there were insufficient funds in the Improvements Account.⁴² Earlier he had advised that it was better to pay a higher interest rate than pay off the £100,000 mortgage which Lord Guildford had taken on the Estate in 1871. Hatfield explained, 'it is desirable to defer payment if possible until all the Estate's duties are satisfied'.⁴³

³⁵ E.H. Phelps Brown and Bernard Weber, 'Accumulation, Productivity and Distribution in the British Economy, 1870–1938', *The Economic Journal*, 63 (250) (June 1953), 263–88 (269–71), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2227124>> [accessed 16 April 2020].

³⁶ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

³⁷ GA, Adds 679/2, His Grace's Instructions, 1905–8, 17 March 1905.

³⁸ GA, Adds 679/3, His Grace's Instructions, 1909–11, May 1909.

³⁹ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 169.

⁴⁰ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>. Ridley also cites £600,000 in Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 169.

⁴¹ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace's Instructions, 1900–4, 19 October 1904.

⁴² GA, Adds 679/2, His Grace's Instructions, 3 June 1905.

⁴³ GA, Adds 679/2, His Grace's Instructions, 1905–8, 25 March 1905.

To meet the situation, His Grace's Instructions books show that in the period up to 1914 a number of land sales were made in London and in North Wales. It was probably the first time that land had to be sold to meet external pressures.⁴⁴ In the Boodle Hatfield papers there is a list of these sales between 1900 and 1922 in London. These were of piecemeal plots; those to local authorities were probably the result of compulsory orders. For example, Vincent Street was sold for a roadway to be built.

In 1902 the Estate sold the freehold in Victoria Street to Watney, Combe, Reid & Co. breweries.⁴⁵ It raised £91,000. A further brewery was sold in October of the same year on the Millbank estate. His Grace's Instructions read: 'The instalment of Estate Duty which has fallen due has been paid — another £300,000 still has to be found, and if a sale is required for the purpose, a portion of the Millbank Estate appears to be suitable.'⁴⁶ In 1902 Bend'Or's sister, the Countess of Shaftesbury, asked for payment of £17,000 'in further reduction of the money due to her for the heirlooms, pictures etc.'. The Estate sold a corner of land between Buckingham Palace Road and Eccleston Street for £18,000 to pay her.⁴⁷ Other land might have been sold for similar reasons. The largest disposal made pre-1914 was that of the Halkyn Castle estate in North Wales, which was sold between 1910 and 1913.⁴⁸

The Great War made matters worse. Some rents fell into arrears and the housing improvement programme stalled; a strike in the building trade exacerbated the situation. After the War, building costs rose and the Estate had to make rent concessions.⁴⁹ The biggest headache was the combination of taxation and inflation. Taxation reached unprecedented levels. Income tax was raised from 6 per cent in

⁴⁴ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

⁴⁵ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace's Instructions, 8 February 1902.

⁴⁶ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace's Instructions, 1900–1904, 9 October 1902.

⁴⁷ GA, Adds 679/1, His Grace's Instructions, 1900–1904, 20 December 1902.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 8, 'What it was to be a Duke', pp. 231–32.

⁴⁹ Brown and Weber, 'The British Economy, 1870–1938', 271–72; GA, Adds 679/5, His Grace's Instructions, 1915–1918, 25 February 1916.

1914 to 30 per cent in 1918.⁵⁰ When supertax was introduced, it was payable on incomes in excess of £5,000; in 1914 this was lowered to £3,000.⁵¹ The period 1917 to 1919 was the worst for rapid inflation: it rose by 70 per cent.⁵² Income was reduced and its value was eroded.

In 1917 the western part of the Eaton Hall estate was sold. The sale was slow. According to His Grace's Instructions for 1919–1922, there was an auction on 29 January 1919 which disposed of most of the lots. Fifty of the fifty-three in the initial lot were sold to individuals with recognizable Cheshire surnames; the majority were tenants who had worked together to secure their farms. The sale eventually realized £289,205. A further £12,455 was raised before the sales were completed in 1921.⁵³

It was in this period that Grosvenor House was put on the market. During the War the Government had leased it for the Section of Food Economy, part of the Ministry of Food. The Government paid rent, repairs, rates and taxes, which amounted to £4,637. In addition, the Estate saved on the costs which would have been incurred if the Duke had lived there.⁵⁴ This arrangement came to an end in 1919. It was re-rented, then sold in 1924. In 1925 the house was demolished and, in a joint venture between the Estate and a building company, a hotel and mansion flats were built on the site. The freehold was sold in 1934. The selling of Grosvenor House will be discussed in the second half of this chapter.

These measures relieved the pressure on the Estate's finances. In 1920 His Grace's Instructions specified that charges of £934,200 had been repaid, leaving £404,794.17.3 of charges and portions still to pay. There were two mortgages outstanding: the Alliance mortgage, which charged interest at 3¼ per cent on £100,000, and another, also for £100,000, payable at 4½ per cent.⁵⁵ By 1925 His

⁵⁰ 'Taxation during the First World War', UK Parliament, <<https://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/taxation/overview/firstworldwar>> [accessed 29 June 2020].

⁵¹ A.B. Atkinson, 'Top Incomes in the UK over the 20th Century', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 2 (2005), 325–43 (335), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3559965>> [accessed 3 January 2019].

⁵² Figure based on information from the Bank of England Inflation Calculator.

⁵³ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, pp. 8–9, 17–19, 37–38, 55, 72, 86.

⁵⁴ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, 30 May 1920.

⁵⁵ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, 16 March 1921, pp. 94–96.

Grace's Instructions claimed: 'All the capital charges affecting Your Grace's Settled Estate in favour of various members of the Grosvenor family have been paid off.'⁵⁶ The Alliance mortgage remained.

Although in most of the country rents remained static, the situation in London was different. In the 1920s and 1930s the value of rents was maintained but demand went up. Mr Borrer reported to Bend'Or:

There are some 4,800 buildings on the London estate [...] and are today [22 Nov 1924] only 32 buildings (representing rather more than half of 1 per cent of the total number) which are unoccupied. Quite a perceptible revival in the demand for larger houses had taken place since the election and several have been let.⁵⁷

The Estate was also benefitting from fashion, which put a premium on Mayfair flats. Viola Tree, the daughter of Herbert Beerhohm Tree, who is described as an 'haute' Bohemian, explained in her *Weekly Despatch* column that the reason for the popularity of flats was economy in space, 'responsibilities, worries, and possessions'.⁵⁸

Bend'Or's income is complicated to estimate. He received the majority of it from the London estate in rents but he had, through the Trustees, invested income in addition. He still owned 300 acres in Cheshire, and the lead mine in North Wales. By 1901 the mine was past its peak production, although lead ore was mined there until the 1930s.⁵⁹ He also owned several thousand acres in North Scotland and yachts which could be, and were, let out.

The Boodle Hatfield papers and His Grace's Instructions offer some insight into Bend'Or's income.

⁵⁶ GA, Adds 679/7, His Grace's Instructions, 20 August 1925, p. 203.

⁵⁷ GA, Adds 679/7, His Grace's Instructions, 1923–1925, note dated 22 November 1924, p. 109. It is uncertain whether he was referring to the general election held in December 1923 or the one held on 4 November 1924.

⁵⁸ WCA, 1049/8/455, 'Viola Tree', *Weekly Dispatch*, 29 January (n.d.), badly torn; Virginia Nicholson, *Among the Bohemians: Experiments in Living 1900–1939* (New York: William Morrow, 2002), p. 311.

⁵⁹ Cris Ebb, 'Lead Mining at Halkyn Mountain', <https://www.academia.edu/12840573/Lead_Mining_at_Halkyn_Mountain> [accessed 27 April 2019].

Gross annual rents, London estates	Income £	Conversion to 2019 values using the Bank of England Inflation Calculator ⁶⁰
1916	249,917.14.8	21,909,527
1919	214,000.0.0	11,325,407
1920	251,490.8.7	11,325,407
1927	487,000 (approx.)	30,824,331
1929	553,964.0.0	35,523,053
1930 (estimated)	588,722.0.0	38,770,576

Sources: GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, pp. 142–43; GA, Adds 679/8, His Grace's Instructions, 1926–1928, Part 1, pp. 242–43; WCA, 1049/8/694, memo dated 31 January 1930.

Professor A.B. Atkinson has suggested that in general the income of the richest men in the country followed a pattern of overall decline in share of wealth before 'some' recovery in the 1920s. Atkinson marks out that rents tended to 'remain unchanged in money terms'.⁶¹ The table above shows that at first Bend'Or's income followed Atkinson's proposition. In 1916 the London estates yielded £249,917.14.8.⁶² His income dropped in the War to £214,000 as taxation and inflation levels bit.⁶³ By 1920 it bounced back as returns on capital investment revived, the housing market recouped and, importantly for the Grosvenor estates, 'rental income remained unchanged in money terms'.⁶⁴ He had the benefit of a further £4,247.18.9 from the gross interest on money deposited in the Trustees' Account for the year 1919.⁶⁵

Atkinson reckons that the income of the wealthiest declined rapidly between the years 1929–1932. In contrast, Bend'Or's income went on rising, as did his expenditure. The next window on Bend'Or's income comes in a memo, 'Statement

⁶⁰ <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 2 April 2020]. Figures have been rounded, so they do not represent an exact equivalent.

⁶¹ Atkinson, 'Top Incomes in the UK', 335–36, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3559965>>.

⁶² WCA, 1049/8/694, memo dated 31 January 1930.

⁶³ GA, Adds 679/6, His Grace's Instructions, 1919–1922, pp. 142–43.

⁶⁴ Atkinson, 'Top Incomes in the UK', 336, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3559965>>.

⁶⁵ WCA, 1049/8/694, memo dated 31 January 1930.

of Receipt and Payments’, drawn up in 1928, when the sale of a large section of Belgravia was under contemplation. His income is shown as £550,163.19.11 (nearly £35 million at 2019), but his outgoings were recorded as £590,573 (£37 million).⁶⁶ Of the latter, the yachts constituted a substantial expense of £67,500. Supertax cost Bend’Or £147,256 in spite of the efforts to reduce it through tax planning. The old Alliance mortgage cost £36,105 and bank charges and interest on overdrafts are listed as £12,794. The paper concluded, ‘the excess of expenditure over receipts for the year 1928 (equivalent to the increase in the overdraft on the 2 accounts from 1st January to 31st December 1928) was £40,442.13.5’.⁶⁷ A separate document in His Grace’s Instructions suggests that in November 1928 the overdraft on Bend’Or’s two accounts, his Private and Home, was standing at £236,050.17.6.⁶⁸

On a similar document drawn up in 1930 a handwritten note, petulant in tone, suggests tension within the Estate office. It comes after Mr Borrer’s role had been reduced to legal work only, while Blow ran the Estate. It reads:

These typed figures were handed to CM-C by Mr Blow, the former having gone up to see exactly what it was that was required — the memo requiring possible formation of a Company to acquire a portion of the London Estate is the result of the interview [between] DJB [Blow] and A.C.H.B. [Mr Borrer] no reference what ever being made to any such figures as these shown hereon.⁶⁹

The implication is clear: the author (the initials are illegible) did not think the Estate was being run competently.

The 1930 document suggests that the gross annual rents on Lady Day 1929 were £553,964. There was an annual increase at Michaelmas 1929 worth an additional £19,000 and another due on Lady Day 1930 valued at another £15,758, bringing the estimated income from annual rents to £588,722. A further £94,000 was to come

⁶⁶ <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 12 January 2021].

⁶⁷ WCA, 1049/8/694, Statement of Receipts & Payments, 1928.

⁶⁸ GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace’s Instructions, p. 595.

⁶⁹ WCA, 1049/8/694, memo dated 31 January 1930.

from investments, so making a total gross income of £682,722 (nearly £45 million at 2019 values).⁷⁰

F.H.W. Sheppard thought Bend'Or 'was not so assiduous in the management of his estate as his grandfather'. Sheppard further commented, 'he did [...] make statements of broad intent time to time, as he did [...], for instance, in 1907, when he [...] expressed a wish for the erection of small houses on his estate'. He noted that Bend'Or was more concerned with social issues than historical sentiment, although several houses of note were saved from destruction, and that Bend'Or was consulted on all matters to do with the estate.⁷¹

The author's reading of His Grace's Instructions up to 1935 concurs with Sheppard's opinion. Loelia claims that Bend'Or did not bother about mundane details of estate management.⁷² This was truer of the larger scheme, and during the period Blow was in charge, than smaller issues, especially when they affected people. In 1906 the Trustees wanted to issue defaultment procedures against a Mrs Hunt. Bend'Or refused his permission, asking instead if the lady 'is a widow, is poor, any children'. Bend'Or's instruction was, 'Find out more'.⁷³ He gave specific instructions to the Westminster City Council that the housing development for which he had given land was for housing families with children, family housing then being in short supply.⁷⁴ He refused to give permission to thin trees in the lower garden of Grosvenor Gardens.⁷⁵ When Bend'Or was consulted about an offer of a house to Mr W.H.C. Rollo, the advice was clear: 'No. Duke does not want him on

⁷⁰ WCA, 1049/8/694, memo dated 31 January 1930.

⁷¹ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

⁷² Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 183.

⁷³ GA, Adds 679/ 2, His Grace's Instructions, 24 January 1906.

⁷⁴ See Chapter 8, 'What it was to be a Duke', p. 236.

⁷⁵ GA, Adds 679/2, His Grace's Instructions, 24 January 1906.

the estate'.⁷⁶ A resident in Upper Grosvenor Street complained about street noise, especially from German bands, and wanted a plaque positioned to forbid them. Bend'Or's reply was: 'I have no objections to German bands being excluded; but I like barrel organs! W'.⁷⁷

What is also true is that in the early years Bend'Or's instructions were frequently in his own hand. As the 1920s progressed estate matters became more complicated and impersonal. Bend'Or by this stage was largely absent abroad and there was a growing tendency for his instructions to be relayed by Mr Borrer, but later, and in particular, by Detmar Blow. Such notes as 'shown to the Duke' in Blow's hand became common.

Bend'Or had a rich imagination when it came to spending. Expenses included trinkets for wives and mistresses (which Coco Chanel and Loelia acknowledged were generous), polo ponies and hunters, and yachts. After the Great War Bend'Or revived his interest in horse-racing. All this had to be paid for out of his income.

Some expenses could have been avoided. Installing electricity into Eaton House between 1925 and 1926 cost £259,815.8.0. It was regarded as a capital improvement and therefore was paid by the Trustees. However, they refused to pay an additional £600 for delays caused by Bend'Or's visits during the installation.⁷⁸

In October 1919 his colt, Swynburn, won the Alington Plate at Newmarket, which was marked as the revival of Bend'Or's 'active interest in racing affairs' and hailed as a source of great satisfaction to those concerned with the sport.⁷⁹

Even compared to horse-racing, keeping yachts was expensive. *Belem*, an ex-merchant-ship conversion, was bought in 1919 and sold in 1926. *Flying Cloud*, a four-masted schooner with auxiliary twin screws, succeeded her. At 1,178.74 tons she was one of the world's largest privately owned yachts. Her accommodation consisted of a dining saloon, drawing saloon, lounge, two owner's suites each of

⁷⁶ GA, Adds 679/7, His Grace's Instructions, 1923–1925, 21 March 1925.

⁷⁷ GA, Adds 679/2, His Grace's Instructions, 14 March 1906.

⁷⁸ GA, Adds 679/8, His Grace's Instructions, 1926–8, Part 1, p. 50.

⁷⁹ 'Second October meeting', *Polo Monthly*, November 1919, p. 131.

sitting room, bedroom and bathroom, one other suite, five staterooms with communicating bathrooms, one other bedroom and one other bathroom, maid's and valet's cabins and separate quarters for twenty-four permanent crew.⁸⁰ Bend'Or had her fitted out with Queen Anne furniture and silk curtains.⁸¹ *Flying Cloud* was mainly used for cruising. For rapid travel Bend'Or purchased the *Cutty Sark*, in 1926. She was a decommissioned destroyer which Bend'Or used, under the command of a retired Royal Navy officer, for travelling between his various houses.⁸² In 1926 *Flying Cloud* and *Cutty Sark*, following various refittings, cost £164,194.4.2, more than a quarter of Bend'Or's notional income of £487,000. Mr Borrer wrote a terse little comment:

It is submitted that your present income is more than sufficient to meet ordinary expenses and that the substantial increase of income which may reasonably be expected from the South Street and Hereford Gardens sites and the renewals of other leases should be earmarked to pay off the balance of the costs of the ships.⁸³

In 1928 the running costs of the two yachts dropped to £67,514, and chartered income on *Flying Cloud* reduced it by a further £12,587. But an entry under 'Other Yachts' added £38,883.15.6.⁸⁴

Then there were Bend'Or's houses, which had to be maintained and staffed. At least four houses were maintained at any one time: Eaton Hall (with its hothouses, gardens and large staff), Bourdon House in London, Lochmore in Scotland and Mimizan in France. In addition, in 1920 Bend'Or bought the Reay estate in Sutherland from his cousin the Duke of Sutherland, which had been rented since the time of the 1st Duke. It consisted of 100,000 acres of forest, moor and the salmon river, the Laxford, and it offered two further shooting lodges, Stack Lodge and

⁸⁰ Advertisement, C.W. Kellock Ltd, *The Times*, 19 March 1937, p. 20.

⁸¹ Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, pp. 160–61.

⁸² Leslie Field, *Bend'Or: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 189.

⁸³ GA, Adds 679/8, His Grace's Instructions, pp. 242–43.

⁸⁴ WCA, 1049/8/694, Statement of Receipts and Payments, 1928.

Kystrome. In 1926 he bought Rosehall Lodge in Sutherland. It is a place particularly associated with Coco Chanel, who decorated it with hand-blocked French wallpaper, and the first bidet known in Scotland.⁸⁵ At the same time he was still supporting his African estates, which had to be paid for out of his own pocket as the Settlement prohibited expenditure overseas.

In June 1924 it was noted that Bend'Or's Private Account was overdrawn to the tune of £99,095.14.2. Trustees found sufficient funds to pay off his debt but there was an outstanding supertax bill of £82,146.16.0, for which the Trustees were not responsible. Nor could they help with Bend'Or's personal spending. Mr Borrer estimated he was spending about £10,000 (£61,256.99 in 2019) a month and forecast that the new debt level, which would take account of the remaining family charges, would be £118,000.0.0. Mr Borrer added, 'It is hoped to provide for this deficiency by the sale of some of your Grace's effects.'⁸⁶

More interested in innovation and gadgetry, Bend'Or was weak in artistic appreciation. It was an aspect of his character that did not accord with the popular perception of how an aristocrat should behave.

In 1921 Bend'Or sold the paintings *The Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough and *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* by Joshua Reynolds. As we have seen, Grosvenor House was let. Buyers were sought for the Westminster tiara and for the Argot diamonds (in the end neither were sold). An ingenious plan that centred on the 'heirlooms' came into play whereby the Trustees bought them from Bend'Or and, when it suited him, he would sell them back to the Trustees.

In the 1930s the London housing market was showing reassuring signs of improvement, encouraged by a reinvigorated building programme. Flats were constructed, mews converted into 'bijou' housing and the Estate embarked on handling its own housing projects as opposed to letting them to building speculators.⁸⁷ Whether this was due to Blow or the work of a rejuvenated Trust Board under McKenna cannot be ascertained without more research.

⁸⁵ Justine Picardie, *Coco Chanel: The Legend and the Life* (London: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 166.

⁸⁶ GA, Adds 679/7, His Grace's Instructions, 21 June 1924, pp. 74–77.

⁸⁷ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 67–82, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp67-82>>.

The above analysis shows that the Trustees and Boodle Hatfield in effect ran Bend'Or's British estates, with Bend'Or in a position of influential overseer. A later Executive Trustee of the Grosvenor Estate explained: 'The 7th Duke of Westminster inherits the title. His voice will be important [...] but ultimate control of the assets runs wider than him — to the trustees'.⁸⁸ It was the same for Bend'Or.

It was not a position he relished. On 1 January 1919 Bend'Or wrote to his eldest sister, the Countess of Shaftesbury. His frustration was apparent. He told his sister:

My life is quite impossible to live as it is at present — I am handicapped in every way — now that the war is over I have most of the life left me to carry on abroad — I have S.A., Rhodesia and East Africa properties [...] — my work is out there, and I want to be free to carry it on — other things in England will go on automatically or be stopped by taxation. However no more can be done over here except leave things in good order — for whoever follows me.⁸⁹

In the event Bend'Or did not go to Africa but to Mimizan in France, where he based himself for much of the 1920s. It was in revolt against all that he hated about his life.

His new lifestyle earned him the label of playboy. He had all the accoutrements associated with the description. He was titled, rich, dignified, was classified as a womanizer, lived abroad, gambled in Monte Carlo and had the necessary trappings such as houses, yachts, fast cars and a fashionable French mistress. It was not everyone's idea as to how a duke should live.

Attitudes towards the rich and aristocracy were changing fast. At the beginning of the nineteenth century power had resided with the rich, which, because capital was largely measured in land values, equated to landownership. By the time Bend'Or was born the correlation between status and landownership was breaking down.

⁸⁸ 'Jeremy Newsum reflects on his time as Executive Trustee of the Grosvenor Estate', 27 March 2017, <<https://grosvenor.com/news-and-insight/all-articles/jeremy-newsum-reflects-on-his-time-as-executive-tr>> [accessed 18 September 2020].

⁸⁹ Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, Shaftesbury Archive, letter from Bend'Or to the Countess of Shaftesbury, 1 January 1919.

Men, newly rich from the industrial revolution and London's unrivalled position as the financial capital of the world, sought ways to improve their status by imitating, to a greater or lesser degree, the privileges and lifestyle of the *ancien régime*.⁹⁰

F.M.L. Thompson describes the breakdown of landed authority as a diminishing of two variables: power and prestige. He defined power as control and authority over 'armies, taxes, and laws and influence over votes, policies, legislation, opinion, beliefs and manners'.⁹¹ This is not open to challenge. The landowning classes lost their grip on the army when commissions could no longer be bought, and the high casualty rate of officers in the First World War meant that by 1917/1918 two-thirds of officers were appointed from the ranks.⁹² A succession of Reform Acts and introduction of the secret ballot in 1872 removed by the end of the nineteenth century many of the more exploitative electoral malpractices. A new type of Member of Parliament and alderman emerged as the product and the symbol of a widened suffrage. Such reforms, accompanied by a succession of Education Acts, made politics accessible to more people. The Parliament Act 1911 confirmed the supremacy of the House of Commons over the House of Lords; and what was, in effect, the buying of peerages, of which Lloyd George has been held up as the worst but was by no means the only exponent, embodied the ability of money to gain social standing. In 1914 the magazine *Candid Quarterly Review of Public Affairs* listed the going rates for a knighthood (£1,250–£4,000), for a baronetcy (£6,000–£25,000) and for a peerage (£40,000–£50,000).⁹³ The purchase of noble status was the logical conclusion to granting peerages on account of wealth, which had been

⁹⁰ Mark Rothery, 'The Wealth of the English Landed Gentry, 1870–1935, *The Agricultural History Review*, 55 (2007), 251–68, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40276167>> [accessed 2 July 2020]; in W.D. Rubinstein, 'New Men of Wealth', pp. 99–126, Rubinstein argues that the number of newly wealthy men who purchased land on a large scale was few; J. Mordaunt Crook, *The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches: Style and Status in Victorian and Edwardian Architecture* (London: John Murray, 1999), inclines to agree with him; whereas in F.M.L. Thompson, 'Life After Death', 40–61, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2596512>>, Thompson argues that a significant number of wealthy businessmen did purchase country estates; W.D. Rubinstein, 'Cutting up Rich', 350–61, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2597627>>, answered Thompson.

⁹¹ Thompson, 'Prestige without Power?', 1–22 (3–4), <www.jstor.org/stable/3679134> [accessed 2 July 2020].

⁹² George Robb, *British Culture and the First World War*, 2nd edn (London: Palgrave, 2015), p. 47.

⁹³ Camplin, Jamie, *The Rise of the Plutocrats: Wealth and Power in Edwardian England* (London: Constable, 1978), pp. 125–26.

the basis of the Westminster dukedom itself.⁹⁴ Nonetheless it was the *sale* of nobility which debased the aristocracy.

Thompson defines prestige as ‘the esteem and respect accorded by the rest of society to those individuals or groups who exercise some form of power’. He expanded: ‘the successful use of power, that is, on the exercise of influence in ways which some substantial sections of the general public believe is desirable and admirable. The public, in other words, admires success’.⁹⁵ The aristocracy’s original *raison d’être* as protectors, for which they were granted privileges, no longer held validity.

Since the second half of the nineteenth century societal norms had mutated, and were mutating, so that money was admired for its marketable value rather than for the dignity it conveyed; and meritocracy was increasingly prized above privilege. By contrast, the status of the nobility was associated with the more questionable principles of inherited privilege and unearned wealth. In *Survey of London* Sheppard remarked, as the twentieth century advanced: ‘it was becoming “almost a social stigma to be rich. It is fashionable to pretend to be poorer, not richer than you are”’.⁹⁶ The cult of the Bohemians was a fashionable expression of the rejection of wealth and its trappings.⁹⁷

A contributing element to this radical change in public opinion was a burgeoning newspaper and magazine industry which provided a platform to expose to a wider population the trappings and doings of the aristocracy and upper class. The public was both fascinated and appalled.

Since the 1840s, following a trend set by Sunday papers, there was an inclination towards printing sensationalist stories.⁹⁸ By 1911 radical Liberal Member of

⁹⁴ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951* (Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 13.

⁹⁵ Thompson, ‘Prestige without Power?’, 4.

⁹⁶ Sheppard, ed., *Survey of London*, pp. 98–102, quoting from Grosvenor Moor Park Papers, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol39/pt1/pp98-102>>.

⁹⁷ Nicholson, *Among the Bohemians*, pp. 278–80.

⁹⁸ Kevin Williams, *Read All About It! A History of the British Newspaper* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 118–19.

Parliament Charles Masterman was in no doubt of their power to marshal public opinion. He wrote:

Imagine, for example, [...]. England seen through the medium of its Sunday Press — the Press which to seven out of ten of its present inhabitants represents the sole picture they possess of the world outside their local lives — takes upon itself an appearance of violence and madness.⁹⁹

Lord Northcliffe led the charge, which other press barons imitated, to populist journalism. Regular newspapers and the need to attract and retain a wider readership, of women in particular, prompted a circulation war which in turn called for easily digestible news stories and features that were more in tune with the interests and experiences of all classes. The early twentieth century saw a freer writing style with more sport, cartoons, pictures and advertising (which helped pay the bills) and a gossip society column.

The idea of society columns was not new but the character was. The previous generation of columnists, with the exception of Charles Edward Jerningham (alias ‘Marmaduke’) of the *Daily Record* and Colonel Percy Sewell of the *Daily Express*, wrote at second-hand and their columns were more of an account of Society than an exposé.¹⁰⁰ The 1920s produced a set of educated and erudite men and women who represented a different attitude. With the exception of Viscount Castlerosse (born in 1891) of the *Sunday Express*, the new writers were born in the opening decade of the twentieth century and many of them personified that generation’s rejection of their parents’ behaviour, values and habits. Revolted by the Great War, which they regarded to be the result of hypocritical values, they rejected deference in favour of open criticism. Professor Samuel Hynes explains:

The subjects attacked were such as would have seemed unapproachable at the war’s beginning: patriotism, women, mothers, generals, heroes, the

⁹⁹ C.F.G. Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen, 1912), p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Patrick Balfour, *Society Racket: A Critical Survey of Modern Social Life* (London: John Long, 1933), p. 95.

Church. Then the older generation at large, those elders who, in the minds of the young, had declared war in order that their sons might fight and die in it.¹⁰¹

Nancy Mitford in *Highland Fling* (published in 1931) exemplified the mood. Mitford has her young hero, Albert Gates, argue with a retired General who had fought in the 1914 war. The General tells Gates, 'I think it's the shocking thing — the way some of you young people have quite forgotten what your elders suffered in those four years.' Gates replies, 'We haven't exactly forgotten it [...] but it was never anything to do with us. It was your war and I hope you enjoyed it, that's all.'¹⁰²

The new generation of newspaper writers was well-connected and emboldened by self-confidence. They included Lady Eleanor Smith, daughter of Lord Birkenhead (F.E. Smith), who wrote in the *Weekly Dispatch*; Lord Donegall, who became the 6th Marquess of Donegall, filed the 'Almost in Confidence' column for the *Sunday News*; Patrick Balfour, social columnist to the *Daily Sketch*, eventually succeeded his brother as 3rd Baron Kinross. Viscount Castlerosse of 'Londoners Log', which was the first column to bear the name of the author, became 6th Earl of Kenmare in 1941. Many who wrote for papers, including Balfour, Nancy Mitford (who contributed to *The Lady*) and Waugh (who wrote articles for the *Daily Mail*, the *Graphic* and others) were connected by friendship to the Bright Young People and made it their stock in trade to report on that group's habits. Patrick Balfour summed up his generation's attitude when he wrote:

In the past, if a man were rich, he would spend his money according to his natural taste. He would travel, or buy pictures, or hunt or help the poor as the fancy took him. But it is no longer so [...] he is in duty bound to live according to the popular conception of how a rich man should live [...]. This is the "slavery of wealth" of which so much is written. In the past there was no slavery of wealth, because a man spent his money in his own favourite way.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Pimlico, 1992), p. 244.

¹⁰² Nancy Mitford, *Highland Fling* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1975), p. 85.

¹⁰³ Balfour, *Society Racket*, p. 210.

Such journalists and commentators found a great deal in Society that they could expose. Against a background of economic malaise, depressing unemployment and widespread disillusionment, there were many in London who were intent on flaunting their affluence. Some stalwarts of the aristocracy endeavoured to reinstate the life they had known before 1914. The likes of Lady Londonderry and Lady Ellesmere retained the habit of hosting splendid balls and political gatherings. The extravagances of the *nouveaux riches* made good copy: for instance, the exaggerated spending of plutocrats on enormous houses, furnishings or entertainment. Society's new hostesses such as Mrs James Corrigan, Mrs Greville and Nancy Cunard, who would go to great lengths to ensure the rich and famous gathered at their tables, actively courted publicity. And there were the antics of the Bright Young People who, supported by privileged backgrounds and parents' wealth, indulged in fancy-dress parties, wild entertainments and irrepressible behaviour. The penetrating eye of journalists soon turned their private amusements into a public spectacle.¹⁰⁴ After a particularly wild Bright Young People's party, *The Bystander* commented that people could be expected to turn Communist 'when such ill-bred extravagance was flaunted, as hungry men were marching to London to get work'.¹⁰⁵ The juxtaposition between plenty, embodied by the Bright Young People, and want, represented by the hunger marches of the 1920s, was uncomfortable.

Ten years on from the end of the War, the character of new journalism became apparent in the reporting of Grosvenor House's sale in 1924. Viola Tree used her column to write a searing piece in the *Weekly Despatch*. Her objection, contradictorily, was not the creation of convenient flats but the demolition of a historic landmark. She exclaimed: '[it] stuck in my throat [...]. Its pictures, statues, mantelpiece [illegible word], inmates scattered because two people in high places couldn't put up with each other'. It was a veiled reference to Bend'Or's public row with Duchess Violet in 1924.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ D.J. Taylor, *Bright Young People: The Rise and Fall of a Generation 1918–1940* (London: Vintage, 2008), p. 58.

¹⁰⁵ Taylor, *Bright Young People*, pp. 225–26.

¹⁰⁶ WCA, 1049/8/455, 'Viola Tree', *Weekly Dispatch*, 29 January (n.d.), badly torn.

The Evening News on 8 February 1928 hailed, 'The Flat Builders Lead a Revolution in Mayfair'. The author wrote:

Those who remember the shiver of incredulity that seized the whole British race when it was first revealed that you could rent 'digs' in a house in Park Lane, [will be alarmed by] the changes now occurring there and in Piccadilly, and in the Mayfair street behind them, [that] signify a revolution in the life of moneyed Londoners. I found the key to the situation today [...] on a large wooden sign over the ruins of Grosvenor house. It gave the name of a contractor who describes himself in large letters as DEMOLISHER.¹⁰⁷

An article in *The Evening News* quoted Walter Trapper, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, whose view was: 'Dorchester House is to be demolished, the dust has hardly settled from the destruction of Grosvenor House [...] must we see London robbed year by year of the possessions that make it the city we love'.¹⁰⁸ This, the selling of symbols of prestige, was not the way the public thought the rich should be behaving.

Christopher Simon Sykes, an architectural historian, suggests the reaction was a question of confidence: 'If England's richest Duke thought his house a white elephant, what hope was there for others'.¹⁰⁹ Another explanation is Bend'Or was neglecting what others still regarded as the aristocratic duty to embellish society.

'Gadfly' or Everard, of the *Daily Herald*, who regularly lambasted dukes, wrote: 'The Duke of Westminster, you will remember — who is a poor man, drawing not more than a million pounds a year in ground rents from Londoners, recently sold Grosvenor House to an enterprising syndicate. Dook draws his shekels'. Following a scathing attack on the new amenities offered in the flats, 'Gadfly' concludes: 'God's in His Heaven, the Dook's in his steam yacht, and all's right with the west end. Believe me, kid'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ WCA, 1049/8/455, *The Evening News*, 8 February 1928.

¹⁰⁸ WCA, 1049/8/455, *The Evening News*, 29 March 1928.

¹⁰⁹ Christopher Simon Sykes, *Private Palaces: Life in the Great London Houses* (New York: Viking, 1986), p. 324.

¹¹⁰ 'Gee into the Queue, Gadfly', *Daily Herald*, 26 January 1928, p. 7.

The public reaction was similar when Bend'Or sold some art. His selling of *The Blue Boy* by Thomas Gainsborough and *Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse* by Joshua Reynolds was followed by a burst of national emotion that focused on Gainsborough's iconic picture.

The main concern was that *The Blue Boy* might be exported to the United States. It is what happened. Within months the painting was sold to H.E. Huntington, an American transport magnate, who took it to California. Before *The Blue Boy* left it was shown at the National Gallery, where it attracted large crowds. 'Bertha', in *The Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* under the heading 'Our Ladies' Letter', visited the Gallery twice to see *The Blue Boy*. She commented on the painting, 'which is soon off to America having been sold by the Duke of Westminster for, it is said, well over six figures!'¹¹¹

The exclamation mark was due not only to the price the picture commanded but to the fact it was a duke who was the seller. Aristocrats were traditionally associated with being protectors and purveyors of high culture. They were presumed to use their wealth to enhance the country, not to act as an asset-stripper. Selling what was increasingly regarded as national heritage was one thing — but to sell it abroad was another. In the view of the man in the street it was an abrogation of the 'duty' and selfish of a rich duke to make himself richer by selling historic artefacts.

Evasion of duty was the theme by which Sibell Lygon chose to publicly criticize Bend'Or. Discussion on the article she wrote for the December 1933 edition of the *Oxford and Cambridge* magazine has centred on the part it played in the aftermath of the dispute between Sibell's father, William, 7th Earl of Beauchamp and her mother, Lettice, Bend'Or's sister, rather than the substance of the article itself.¹¹² Sibell's intention was to openly disgrace her uncle. Her accusation was that Bend'Or's behaviour was unpatriotic and irresponsible. She maintained that as one of the 'richest of Englishmen' he should 'set an example' and 'his money should do good in and to England'. She continued:

Instead of shouldering his responsibilities, he has two houses in France, a pack of boar hounds, also in France, a yacht on which he spends a great deal

¹¹¹ *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail*, 21 January 1922, p. 5.

¹¹² See Chapter 6 'Manliness', pp. 171–76.

of his time in foreign waters, and now I see that he is no longer going to have any race horses in England [...]. Is this setting a good example? Dukes, I understand, are made to look up to. We are told they stand by their country. Where should we be if we copied them? [...] I think one should not shirk duty [...]. Money and position are, in this case, hereditary. Can you blame socialists who think that money should go to those who would spend it well.¹¹³

It was an argument that exemplified a growing view that a payback for privilege was to be accountable to public opinion. Those who were seen to evade their duties were exposed to ridicule. In his play *Private Lives* (published in 1930), when Noël Coward wanted to convey the image of the idle rich, he has Elyot name the Duke of Westminster. Amanda asks, ‘Whose yacht is that?’ Elyot replies, ‘The Duke of Westminster’s, I expect. It always is.’¹¹⁴

The opportunity was being created for a further category of journalists, usually of a left-wing character, seized to spike social gossip with political messaging. Typical of the genre were: C.L. Everard, alias ‘Gadfly’, the chief subeditor of the *Daily Herald*, which from its launch in 1912 supported the Labour movement; Hannen Swaffer, who started ‘Mr Gossip’ columns in the *Daily Sketch* in 1913 before becoming ‘Mr London’ in the *Daily Graphic*; there was ‘Cassandra’ by Sir William Neil Connor in the *Daily Mirror*, which appeared in the 1930s; and Tom Driberg, who worked at the *Express* first as ‘Dragoman’ and then more famously as ‘William Hickey’. Driberg had attended Lancing public school and Oxford University, where he associated with Oxford ‘dandies’ such as Harold Acton, Evelyn Waugh and D.J. Taylor.¹¹⁵ In later years Tom Driberg summed up the approach:

¹¹³ Jane Mulvagh, *Madresfield – The Real Brideshead: One House, One Family, One Thousand Years* (London: Doubleday, 2008), pp. 301–02. Mulvagh quotes verbatim from the article which presumably she found in Madresfield’s archive. Mulvagh claims that the Earl of Birkenhead edited the magazine in the mid-Thirties. In December 1933 the editor was W.G.A. Wayte.

¹¹⁴ Noël Coward, *Private Lives: An Intimate Play* (New York: Samuel French, n.d.), p. 16.

¹¹⁵ Francis Wheen, *The Soul of Indiscretion: Tom Driberg, Poet, Philanderer, Legislator and Outlaw* (London: Fourth Estate, 1990), Chapter 4; Taylor, *Bright Young People*, pp. 11–15, 184–202.

The tone of the column, as far as I could influence it, became more and more satirical. I described in detail the absurdities and extravagances of the ruling class, in a way calculated to enrage any working-class or unemployed people who might chance to read the column: at a time of mass unemployment I felt that I was doing something not without value to the Communist party, to which I was still attached.¹¹⁶

Bend'Or, possibly the richest man in Britain, a duke and a veteran of the Great War, soon became a target of the more aggressive columnists.

The conduct of the privileged was attracting comment. The *Graphic* in 1928 reported details of life on the Riviera. It told of the 'lucky mortals leagued in the pursuit of fitness and diversion while Westminster is flooded and Northern Europe generally ice-bound'. These were 'the Duke of Connaught, the Prince of Monaco, the Grimaldis, Grand Duke Michael of Russia, the former King Manuel and the Dowager Lady Michelham'. In the 'yachting set' there was 'The Duke of Westminster in his monster converted destroyer'.¹¹⁷

1928 was the year that the Thames flooded and engulfed a part of Bend'Or's Millbank estate, destroying, and drawing attention to, a great many of the ramshackle houses. There was at least one death as a result. The contrast between a wealthy landlord leading a luxurious life in the South of France while his tenants died was not lost on the public and journalists made sure of it.

George Ridley confirms that Bend'Or, who had an aversion to publicity, usually maintained a silence when attacked publicly. However, he sued his niece Sibell Lygon in 1934. The case was settled with the defendants, which included the magazine's management, withdrawing the allegations, apologizing, and the Duke's costs were paid.¹¹⁸

Bend'Or sued again when 'Cassandra' impugned his patriotism and social conscience. William Connor's column 'Cassandra' in the *Daily Mirror* specialized in ridiculing dukes. On 14 November 1940 'Cassandra' juxtaposed two snippets from the news:

¹¹⁶ Wheen, *The Soul of Indiscretion*, p. 72.

¹¹⁷ 'The Riviera', *Graphic*, 28 January 1928, p. 6.

¹¹⁸ 'The Duke of Westminster', *Daily Telegraph*, 1 March 1934, p. 9.

Six hundred and forty-three children under 16 were killed in air raids during the month of October.

The Duke of Westminster's famous collection of orchids has arrived in Florida in 15 packing cases, and will be cared for until the end of the war by an expert florist.

Bend'Or's counsel maintained that the juxtaposition of the two items led to an 'obvious suggestion'. In fact the Eaton hothouses had been emptied of orchids and were being used 'only in a way which would assist the national effort'. The *Daily Mirror* withdrew its misleading claim, apologized and paid a settlement as well as costs, which Bend'Or gave to a children's charity.¹¹⁹

Bend'Or was luckier than most of his contemporaries. Legal action was expensive but Bend'Or's purse was deep and his friendship with Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere may have given some protection in the conservative-leaning papers. Moreover Tom Driberg's brother, James (Jim), was an associate of Bend'Or's. Jim, a medical doctor who had earned a Military Cross, never recovered from his experience of the First World War.¹²⁰ Bend'Or had lent him £3,322.11.6, which had not been repaid. The circumstances are not known — it was a personal gesture by Bend'Or.¹²¹

Comparing *The Times*' obituaries of the 1st Duke and Bend'Or shows how society's attitudes had changed over fifty years.

The obituary of the 1st Duke of Westminster appeared in *The Times* on 22 December 1899. It occupied over two column lengths. The Duke was described as 'a great noble man and a great landowner' whose 'philanthropic activities were manifold' and who offered his homes for 'all kinds of charitable and religious activity'. It continued:

¹¹⁹ Law Report, *The Times*, 28 January 1941, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Wheen, *The Soul of Indiscretion*, pp. 134–35.

¹²¹ GA, Adds 679/9, His Grace's Instructions, 1926–28, 24 September 1927, pp. 293–94.

he was able to interest himself in objects so completely apart without ever drawing down upon himself even cavillers' criticism. He could pass from a racecourse to take the chair at a missionary meeting without incurring the censure of the strictest.

The article stressed the Duke's piety, his patronage of art and artists, his distinction on the 'turf' and as a 'useful politician'. The country 'will feel a sense of loss and [...] will pause to reflect upon the numerous claims he had upon its gratitude and respect'. It was emphasized:

In short the late Duke was a fine example of the great noble who, while standing for the great pursuits and amusements, as other Englishmen of wealth and leisure, devotes a considerable portion of his time to the services of those less fortunate than himself and for fulfilling with a strong sense of duty the obligations of his high rank.

Fifty-four years later, the obituary of the 2nd Duke featured in *The Times* on 21 July 1953. It was half the length of his grandfather's. According to it, the 2nd Duke had 'no chosen career'. He had been 'very fortunate' in inheriting 'worldly standing and wealth', a dukedom and 'great estates when young'. But this had diverted him from achieving 'distinction in politics or other of the great walks in life'. His career in the Boer and First World Wars are acclaimed but not enlarged upon. He was 'a keen rider to hounds, [...] a good shot and an enthusiastic polo player'. He was acknowledged as 'an excellent car driver and in the early days he bought and drove with skill the swift Mercedes which were then holding the motor world'.

The emphasis on the car commended him in contemporary terms as progressive. He was (now) admired for pulling down Grosvenor House and as a landlord he was recognized for developing 'on modern lines' his Mayfair and Cheshire estates and for the 'several gifts of land to Westminster City Council and the Westminster Housing Association so that working people could be housed at reasonable rents'.

The emphasis is on progress, social change and speed rather than the pursuits traditionally associated with the aristocracy such as the turf, high culture and philanthropy. There was no comment on Bend'Or's success at maintaining his estates as viable concerns and fit for future prosperity. It was not surprising because, for *The Times* in 1953, estate ownership was not considered an estimable 'career'.

The metamorphosis of society's attitude was a slow-burn change. Andrew Adonis points out that 'in much of provincial Britain the greater magnates remained potent figures in electoral politics and county government until well beyond the First World War'.¹²² J. Mordaunt Crook confirms that 'there was still a good deal of new money in old hands'.¹²³ Indeed, Bend'Or's obituaries in the Cheshire papers are effusive, venerating and traditional.¹²⁴ It also should be noted that the circulation of left-wing papers was small in comparison with that of the *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express*. But a trend had begun of critical journalism which abetted the transference of social deference away from the landed aristocracy and subjected the rich to a critical scrutiny.

For someone who had been brought up in the secure twilight years of Queen Victoria's reign and who had been revered as a hero and a member of the glitterati, it was a bewildering change. Bend'Or might have agreed with John, 12th Duke of Bedford, when Bedford said, 'I do not know how dukes are meant to behave, but apparently I do not conform to what people expect.'¹²⁵ The problem was that public opinion was confused.

¹²² Andrew Adonis, *Making Aristocracy Work: The Peerage and the Political System in Britain 1884–1914* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 275.

¹²³ Crook, *The Rise of the Nouveaux Riches*, p. 178.

¹²⁴ 'The Duke of Westminster Dies Suddenly in Scotland', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

¹²⁵ John, Duke of Bedford, *A Silver-plated Spoon* (London: Reprint Society, 1959), p. 195.

Chapter 10. A Crooked Path

Bend'Or is regarded as an appeaser. His previous biographers have not explained why. Bend'Or's position is all the more surprising since he spent the 1920s and 1930s developing weaponry and because of his friendship with Winston Churchill. It might have been expected that Bend'Or would have followed Churchill's line against Nazi aggression. The fact that Bend'Or did not is explained by Bend'Or's loyalty to a Chamberlain view of politics. In Neville Chamberlain's politics Bend'Or found much with which he could agree. Not only did Neville Chamberlain follow his father, Joe Chamberlain, in advocating tariff reform but, Neville feared another war, especially in circumstances that did not favour Britain. Peace while rearming could sum up Bend'Or's approach as well as Neville's.

During the 1920s and early 1930s Bend'Or jettisoned the ducal way of life that was expected of him. He largely lived abroad but his technical interest in tank warfare, the development of the Canal Defence Light (CDL) in particular, remained one of the few issues, outside his responsibilities as a landowner, in which he retained an interest. With another war looming, it assumed a greater significance for him.

CDL is a device which emits a strong arc of brilliant light (the equivalent of 13 million candles) over which a shutter passes at a rate of 1–2 closures a second, thereby creating a dazzling effect sufficient to blind the enemy.¹ Originally it was designed to be attached to the turret of a tank, but as the model developed it evolved into a special version of a tank itself. In the same tradition that the tank was named 'tank' meaning a water-carrier, to disguise its true purpose, so 'canal defence light' was a verbal camouflage to conceal its true intent.²

The tank was a cumbersome invention which could travel only slowly over rough territory. Its effectiveness was hampered by its vulnerability as an easy target. The aim of CDL was to achieve 'tactical mobility'.³ By dazzling the enemy the

¹ The original instrument was invented some time during 1915–1916. Its inventor was Commander Oscar Aylmer Ellis, Baron de Thoren.

² Bovington, Tank Museum Archive (TMA), E2012.5563, Brian Holden Reid, 'The Attack by Illumination: The Strange Case of Canal Defence Lights', *RUSI Journal*, December 1983.

³ TMA, E2012.5563, Holden Reid, 'The Attack by Illumination'.

device could move undetected by the naked eye and therefore offered ‘the holy grail’ — the potential for effective night combat.⁴

In a document annotated by his own hand, Bend’Or gave 1917 as the date when he first became aware of the invention of CDL.⁵ In July of that year Bend’Or was in Wareham, where he probably met the (future Major General) J.F.C. Fuller. Fuller started his career in December 1916 at the newly formed headquarters of the Tank Corps in Bovington, then known as the Machine Gun Corps’ Heavy Branch.

From November 1917 Bend’Or was at the Ministry of Munitions, under Churchill, in which capacity he was concerned with the development of tanks and other armaments. It is known that he met Fuller again, because Fuller noted in his diary in February 1918: ‘Churchill comes to lunch [Tanks Corps HQ]. Uzielli tackles Westminster and urges him to urge Winston to replace [Admiral] Moore by Searle’.⁶

Brian Holden Reid writing in the Royal United Service Institute’s journal suggests that in August 1917 the War Office allocated £20,000 to develop the CDL.⁷ Fuller, writing in *The Times* in 1961, states the War Office had rejected the idea both in 1917 and 1922.⁸

In the 1920s, with difficult economic and social circumstances, and against a zeitgeist that wanted peace, the project made little headway. Matters changed after the failure of the Disarmament Conference (1933) and when Nazi Germany showed contempt for efforts at reaching a European settlement. A syndicate was established which included the device’s inventor Oscar de Thoren, Fuller and Marcel Mitzakis, a Greek-born British army officer, as the manager and tactical adviser.⁹ Bend’Or was described as the financier.¹⁰ How much money Bend’Or provided has not been

⁴ TMA, E2012.5563, Holden Reid, ‘The Attack by Illumination’.

⁵ Eaton, Cheshire, Grosvenor Archive (GA), PP19/964, memorandum from Hyde, 27 July 1937.

⁶ TMA, ‘The Private Journal of Lt Colonel J.F.C. Fuller’, 25 February 1918.

⁷ TMA, E2012.5563, Holden Reid, ‘The Attack by Illumination’.

⁸ TMA, E2012.5534, J.F.C. Fuller’s letter to *The Times*, 8 January 1961.

⁹ TMA, E2012.5563, Holden Reid, ‘The Attack by Illumination’.

¹⁰ TMA, E2012.5598, *The Times*, 8 January 1961.

fully established. During 1918–1935 he gave £3,000 and by 1938 the total was £7,000 (£474,708.33 at 2019 value).¹¹ That was not overly generous for a man as rich as Bend'Or, but no accounts have been seen. According to Bend'Or, he funded the project on the understanding that he would not take any profit from the investment. The most he hoped for was to regain his original stake.¹² According to William Charles Crocker, a subsequent Trustee of the Estate, in the end the Invention Board awarded Bend'Or £1,500, but Bend'Or 'had relinquished that in favour of someone else'.¹³ That someone was probably Mitzakis.

In 1934 it was proposed to run a trial of the device at Eaton, but Eaton's supply of electricity proved unsuitable.¹⁴ The trials were held near Marne in France instead. Bend'Or and Colonel Hunter, the manager of his Scottish and French estates, who acted as Bend'Or's military adviser, were given official clearance to attend.¹⁵ Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, who had played a prominent role in developing the tank and was by then Colonel Commander of the Royal Tank Corps, also attended.

A second trial was organized in April 1936 at Châlons-en-Champagne with the French military. The party included General Velpy from the French General Staff; Major General Sir Ernest Swinton, Major General J.F.C. Fuller and Bend'Or from the syndicate, and two officers sent from the War Office.¹⁶ The War Office asked for further trials in England, which took place on Salisbury Plain in February 1937. Bend'Or was unable to attend as he was 'at sea'.¹⁷

¹¹ GA, PP/19/964, Hyde to Mitzakis, 3 September 1935; GA, PP/19/964, Hunter to Denis [Hyde], n.d. 1938; Bank of England Inflation Calculator, <<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>> [accessed 15 June 2020].

¹² GA, PP 19/964, memorandum from Hyde, 27 July 1937.

¹³ GA, PP 19/964, William Charles Crocker to George Ridley, 16 June 1950.

¹⁴ GA, PP 19/964, Mitzakis and Hyde, August–September 1934. Eaton was fitted with alternative-current electricity rather than the necessary direct-current.

¹⁵ GA, PP 19/964, telegram from Mitzakis to Hyde, 10 December 1934.

¹⁶ GA, PP 19/964, Progress Report, n.d.

¹⁷ GA, PP 19/964, Hyde to Mitzakis, 2 February 1937.

The French saw the potential of the device, more so than the British did. Bend'Or was pressed into lobbying the British authorities. He contacted Winston Churchill, with whom he was in the habit of meeting frequently, especially for boar shooting in France, for pheasant at Eaton, and for visits to casinos in Biarritz or Monte Carlo.

In June 1937 Churchill wrote to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field Marshal Sir Cyril Deverell, enclosing a briefing prepared by Colonel Hunter. Deverell's reply assured Churchill that he had received 'full reports' on the invention and he hoped to make a decision 'in the very near future'. Having been informed that the French authorities were willing to pay £50,000 for the patent, Deverell warned:

It will be difficult for us to get anywhere like that money [...]. I quite appreciate that the de Thoren Company cannot allow themselves to fall between two stools because of delays on our part, and the French offer must obviously be financially attractive to them.¹⁸

After the abdication crisis and Churchill's Indian Defence campaign, Churchill's star was at a low point.¹⁹ What Bend'Or needed was an ally within the Government.

Bend'Or went to the top, as a duke could. In August 1937 the Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and his wife Anne stayed with Bend'Or in Lochmore, Bend'Or's fishing lodge in Sutherland. How the invitation was issued is not clear, but what is apparent from Chamberlain's letter to his sister, which described his host and the surroundings in meticulous detail, is that in 1937 Chamberlain and Bend'Or were not well-acquainted.²⁰ However, their backgrounds shared common interests. Neville Chamberlain had stayed at Eaton for a Christmas party in 1903 and Bend'Or had been an associate of Neville's father, Joseph Chamberlain. Joe was the inspiration for tariff reform and imperial preference, policies that Bend'Or had first absorbed from his stepfather, George Wyndham, and had never abandoned.

¹⁸ GA, PP 19/214, Cyril Deverell to Winston Churchill, 10 June 1937.

¹⁹ David Lough, *No More Champagne: Churchill and his Money* (London: Head of Zeus, 2015), pp. 252–60.

²⁰ University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Neville Chamberlain Papers (CRL, NC), 18/1/1017, Neville Chamberlain to Ida Chamberlain, 22 August 1937.

It was Neville who succeeded where Joseph Chamberlain, Arthur Balfour, Bonar Law and the Imperialist faction of the Conservative Party had failed: he introduced in 1932 a limited form of imperial protectionism as Government policy. In doing so, as far as Bend'Or was concerned, he showed himself to be the true inheritor of Joseph Chamberlain's ambition for an empire linked through preferential trading.

More importantly, Neville Chamberlain was a keen fisherman, as was Bend'Or, and Lochmore promised excellent fishing. Also joining the fishing party in 1937 was Colonel Hunter, who acted as host when Bend'Or was absent. The opportunity for Bend'Or and Hunter to talk about War Office sluggishness would have been too great to have missed.²¹ They found that Chamberlain, like his host, believed in the importance of mechanisation of weapons.²²

In October 1937 Hunter reported to Bend'Or:

I think something must have happened [...] because Mitzakis called upon me this afternoon and said he had been sent for by the War Office and found that the whole business [...] has now been placed in the hands of one man a Colonel Martell. [...] but the War Office had not yet, apparently, decided on the amount of the award nor when it should be granted. He [Mitzadis] was also to be taken on by the WO.²³

Meanwhile the French had been left hanging. Mr Hyde, who was working from the Grosvenor office as Bend'Or's secretary, explained the syndicate's situation to Bend'Or: 'if this thing is sold to the French it will not be very long before the natural corruption of French officialdom allows it to become known to other countries'.²⁴ It was a comment symptomatic of an attitude towards the French, whose new government had been elected with the support of the Communist Party.²⁵

²¹ GA, PP 19/964, memorandum, 22 October 1937.

²² John Charmley, *Churchill: The End of Glory: A Political Biography* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 1993), p. 320.

²³ GA, PP 19/964, Charles Hunter to Bend'Or, 22 October 1937.

²⁴ GA, PP 19/964, Hyde to Bend'Or, 22 March 1938.

²⁵ Graham Stewart, *Burying Caesar: Churchill, Chamberlain and the Battle for the Tory Party* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), p. 247.

Hyde continued that the syndicate had ‘deliberately staved off any conclusive negotiations with the French’. Hyde suggested to Bend’Or:

If the Secretary of State [Leslie Hore-Belisha] is to be with you during the National you might possibly take the opportunity of raising the matter with him so that the Syndicate may be informed as to what the Government wishes them to do about selling to the French.²⁶

There is no mention of Hore-Belisha’s name in the Eaton Hall Visitor Book. There was a large party gathered for the Chester Races in May 1938, which included Neville Chamberlain and his wife. From a letter to his sister, it is known that Neville Chamberlain and his wife were staying again at Lochmore in August 1938.²⁷

In March 1940 Hyde told Bend’Or that ‘a number of vehicles have been completed’, and that a ‘special show under active service conditions [against heavy machinegun fire] is being planned somewhere in the south of England’.²⁸ On 3 May Bend’Or wrote from Ham in Surrey, where he was convalescing from a serious illness, to General Sir Edmund Ironside, who was Chief of the Imperial Staff (until the end of that month), to Oliver Stanley MP, who until 11 May was Secretary of State for War, and to Churchill, who had returned to the Admiralty in September 1939. He urged them to be at the trials and that ‘every endeavour be made to push on with production on a large scale so that the long delay experienced with the original tanks is not repeated’. In his letter to Stanley Bend’Or added, ‘I spoke to your father about this matter some years ago and he was very interested and most helpful’.²⁹

The trials were postponed, according to Bend’Or ‘owing to military developments’, a gentle reference to the dire military situation in France.³⁰ On 10

²⁶ GA, PP 19/964, Hyde to Bend’Or, 22 March 1938. The reference to ‘National’ is to the Grand National horse race.

²⁷ CRL, NC 18/1/1061, Neville Chamberlain to his sister Hilda Chamberlain, 6 August 1938.

²⁸ GA, PP 19/964, Hyde to Bend’Or, 30 March 1940.

²⁹ GA, PP 19/964, Bend’Or to Ironside, Stanley and Churchill, dated 3 May 1940.

³⁰ GA, PP 19/964, memorandum from Bend’Or, 13 May 1940.

May Churchill replaced Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister, which he combined with being Minister of Defence. Trials were held during the night of 7–8 June, remarkably quickly after the military and political turmoil in May. Ten days later the War Office commandeered the project and ordered the construction of 300 models.³¹ The project was now out of the hands of the syndicate.

Ultimately, the CDL was never able to prove its effectiveness in hostilities. The chief problem was that it had been kept so secret that none of the fighting higher commanders had knowledge of it; consequently it was not studied or included in any war plan until too late.³² Afterwards Churchill told Bend'Or that, although he, Churchill, regarded it as a most important invention, Field Marshal Montgomery 'had refused to use it'.³³

Bend'Or had tried to draw the attention of politicians he knew, but days when a personal tap on the shoulder or an individual emissary were sufficient to produce an immediate effect were dwindling. A new generation of army commanders, and bureaucrats, were in control, men who would have known Bend'Or only by repute — and in the 1930s his reputation was not held high.

The CDL project's most significant legacy was that it brought Bend'Or and Neville Chamberlain together and they found a common view on the growing menace in Germany.

There is still a tendency to be critical of appeasement — in general terms, the policy of avoiding war through concessions to Hitler.³⁴ Modern historians have revalued and refined the term and given recognition to the varying motivations that the term covered. For some appeasers the policy was inspired by enthusiasm for Nazi Germany, to a point of wishing to emulate the regime. For others it was more a case of admiration

³¹ TMA, E2012.5534, Fuller's letter to *The Times*, 8 January 1961: TMA, E2012.5563, Holden Reid, 'The Attack by Illumination'.

³² TMA, E2009.1549, Brigadier Lipscomb to B.H. Liddell Hart, May 1948.

³³ GA, PP 19/964, William Charles Crocker to George Ridley, 16 June 1950. Crocker described for Ridley a dinner he attended with Winston Churchill hosted by Bend'Or.

³⁴ Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London: Penguin, 2005), p. xv.

but no activism to show for it. Professor Ian Kershaw points out, ‘Some fine works explore the attitudes and mentalities that lay at the root of such policies, though general surveys mean inevitably that there is little space available for the detailed assessment of the views and attitudes of specific individuals’.³⁵

At the time, appeasement was a popular policy. According to Duff Cooper, ‘the mind of the British people [...] was unprepared for war’.³⁶ George Orwell looking back from 1945 claimed:

We forget these things now, but until that time feelings about the war had been noticeably tepid. There was hardly any fighting, the Chamberlain Government was unpopular, eminent publicists were hinting that we should make a compromise peace as quickly as possible, trade union and Labour Party branches all over the country were passing anti-war resolutions.³⁷

Some writers have argued that the reasons for Bend’Or’s appeasement were his diehard principles, anti-Semitism, fear of communism, and admiration for Nazism, which was seen as a bulwark against Russia.

That Bend’Or held anti-Semitic views, even beyond the accepted limits of the time, is not in doubt. In a private letter written from the Savoy in London to his sister Cuckoo, the Countess of Shaftesbury, Bend’Or told her he had acquired a small Georgian cottage on Ham Common, ‘to get away from the Jews, who frequent here’.³⁸ Loelia confirmed Bend’Or’s dislike of Jews, claiming that he had a copy of

³⁵ Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, p. xvi; see also Paul M. Kennedy, ‘The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865–1939’, *British Journal of International Studies*, 2 (Oct. 1976), 195–215; Neil Fleming, ‘The Londonderry Herr: Lord Londonderry and the Appeasement of Nazi Germany’, *History Ireland*, 13 (1) (Jan–Feb. 2005), 31–35, <<https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/the-londonderry-herr-lord-londonderry-and-the-appeasement-of-nazi-germany>> [accessed 13 Feb. 2019]; N.C. Fleming, ‘Diehard Conservatives and the Appeasement of Nazi Germany, 1935–1940’, *Journal of the Historical Association*, 100 (July 2015), 412–35 <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1468-229X.12108>>; Lois G. Schworer, ‘Lord Halifax’s visit to Germany: November 1937’, *The Historian*, 32 (3) (May 1970), 353–373 (354–55), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24440688>> [accessed 13 February 2019]; Jonathan Petropoulos, *Royals and the Reich: The Princes von Hessen in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 202.

³⁶ Duff Cooper, *Old Men Forget: The Autobiography* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 196.

³⁷ George Orwell, *In Defence of P.G. Wodehouse* (first published by Windmill, 1945), <<http://www.drones.com/orwell.html>>.

³⁸ Wimborne St Giles, Dorset, Shaftesbury Archive (SA), NE/W/5/18, Bend’Or to Countess of Shaftesbury, 7 September 1939.

a *Jews Who's Who* which 'purported to tell the exact quantity of Jewish blood coursing through the veins of the aristocratic families of England'. To emphasize the extent of Bend'Or's anti-Jewishness, she describes how, while normally careless with his things, Bend'Or took great care of this book, which 'he used to lock up [...] with elaborate secrecy'.³⁹ This too may have been an exaggeration. Bend'Or was not the secretive type — he was too obvious in manner and thought.

In the years preceding his death, Bend'Or's stepfather and lodestar, George Wyndham, was unashamedly anti-Semitic. Writing to Hilaire Belloc in 1911, Wyndham celebrated the South of England's beauty, which 'has not been Jew-ed out'. Four days before he died, George, again writing to Belloc, told of a meal in a restaurant, of which he remarked, 'No Jew was there'.⁴⁰ After Wyndham's death, Bend'Or remained in contact with Belloc, whose anti-Semitism was widely acknowledged.⁴¹ In 1927 Bend'Or suggested to Churchill that Belloc should join them for a cruise around the North African coast — a suggestion that Churchill turned down.⁴² Belloc's name appears in the Eaton Hall Visitor Book in May 1938.

Bend'Or's mistress of eight years, Coco Chanel, was acknowledged to be anti-Semitic by contemporaries. In the South of France, which Bend'Or frequented, he mixed with displaced royals and European aristocracy who harboured strong views on the supposed contribution made by international Jewry to events leading to the Great War. Bend'Or had worked with Major General Fuller on the development of CDL: Fuller was a noted anti-Semite and became a hardcore Nazi supporter.

Allegations of Bend'Or's anti-Semitism are supported by his membership of The Link, an Anglo-German but anti-Semitic group founded by Admiral Sir Barry Domville. Professor Griffiths suggests that Bend'Or joined The Link in late August

³⁹ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia Duchess of Westminster, with a foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 189.

⁴⁰ J.W. Mackail and G.P. Wyndham, *Life and Letters of George Wyndham*, 2 vols (London: Hutchinson, 1925), II, pp. 714, 750.

⁴¹ Bernard Bergonzi, 'Belloc, (Joseph) Hilaire Pierre René', *ODNB*, 2008, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/30699>>. The article asserts, 'The deepest cause of his [Belloc's] antisemitism seems to have been the ancient Christian hostility to the Jews as deicides.'

⁴² *The Churchill Documents, Companion*, ed. by Martin Gilbert, 9 vols (London: Heinemann, 1972–2014), XI: *The Exchequer Years 1922–1929*, part 1 (1979), pp. 1112–13.

1939 on the advice of Henry Newnham, the Editor of *Truth*, a pro-Chamberlain publication, of which more later. That was after Kristallnacht in November 1938.⁴³

By June 1939 The Link had a membership of over 4,300.⁴⁴ The degree of anti-Semitism, and pro-Nazism, exhibited by members of The Link depended on the attitude of its different branches.⁴⁵ There is no evidence that Bend'Or became involved with any local group. On the contrary, he disliked clubs; and a local branch would have made much of his membership if it had happened.⁴⁶ Nor was he recorded as a national organizer, a list which included the Lords Redesdale and Sempill.⁴⁷

Belief in a Judeo-Bolshevik plot was a part of Member of Parliament Captain Ramsay's reasoning to establish the Right Club in May 1939.⁴⁸ Professor Richard Griffiths' extensive research into the Right Club — another anti-Semitic and pro-fascist group — has found no evidence that Bend'Or was a member, nor does Griffiths list him amongst leading supporters of the Anglo-German Fellowship or of any of the other pre-war subversive groups that Griffiths catalogues.

No polemic or considered anti-Semitic article by Bend'Or are evident. On balance Bend'Or's anti-Semitism, although contemptible, was a mark of cultural ignorance rather than politically menacing. Nevertheless it is probable that Bend'Or's anti-Semitism and his fear of Bolshevism combined to incline him to believe in a Judeo-Bolshevik plot aimed at world domination. Wyndham believed in an international Jewish conspiracy. By 1939, through the agency of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, now recognised to be a fraudulent document, communist Russia was widely believed to be conspiring with Judaism to destroy the West. By standing up to the Jews and the communists, Hitler was seen by those

⁴³ Richard Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted: Captain Ramsay, the Right Club and British Anti-Semitism 1939–1940* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), p. 31. Griffiths does not provide a source apart from a vague association with Lady Diana Cooper.

⁴⁴ Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 39.

⁴⁵ Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 41.

⁴⁶ For Bend'Or's views on clubs, see Chapter 6 'Manliness', pp. 164–65.

⁴⁷ Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 40.

⁴⁸ Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, pp. 22–23.

who believed in such a threat as something of a saviour. That was until Nazism began to show its sinister intentions.

Bend'Or might have admired Germany but he was not a fascist. George Ridley advises that, 'he [Bend'Or] had no sympathy for Fascism, Communism or any other totalitarian doctrine, unlike, it should be said, many famous figures of the 1930s'.⁴⁹ This study has shown that after the Edwardian period Bend'Or avoided politics. Even in the 1930s, when both Beaverbrook and Churchill needed Bend'Or's support, Bend'Or was reluctant to take up active politics. Besides, a corporate state would have held little appeal for a duke whose wealth was based on private property.

Bend'Or may not have fully understood the implications of full-blown fascism but, like many, he feared a communist state. Many regarded socialism, associated with the rising labour movement, as the initial step towards an inevitable communism. Ridley, who knew Bend'Or personally, wrote: 'he believed, Germany must strike against Russia, the country that presented the greater threat to the West'.⁵⁰

Smaller considerations are often overlooked. Bend'Or's admiration for Germany may have been reinforced by German proficiency in technology. In the interwar years Hitler invested in ensuring that German racing cars were the fastest on the track. Bend'Or, a recognized 'speed king', no doubt respected German engineering achievement as a reflection of the Nazis' overall efficiency.

A great deal is made of the fact that Bend'Or's wealth was invested in London property and that London would be a natural target for enemy bombs.⁵¹ Undoubtedly this would have been a concern: self-interest may be short-sighted but it is not a crime, and to categorize Bend'Or's unease as being only for physical assets is a disservice to him. He showed himself to be a traditional, paternalistic landowner who would go to some lengths to protect his estates and the people within.

When it became increasingly apparent that Hitler would not make concessions for peace, the vast majority of those who first thought the Nazi Party had something

⁴⁹ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985).

⁵⁰ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 144.

⁵¹ Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, p. 301; Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: The Life of Lord Halifax* (London: Apollo, 2016), p. 179.

positive to offer reconciled themselves to war. According to Andrew Roberts there is a scale:

Whilst it may have been intellectually acceptable to support appeasement at Munich, or even possibly up to March 1939, when Hitler invaded the rump of Czechoslovakia and so brought non-Aryans into his Reich, after that it became a moral issue. The Polish guarantee of April 1939, the Danzig crisis, the invasion of Poland and the Phoney War were all stages along which Britons of almost all opinions gradually joined the consensus that Hitler had to be stopped.⁵²

Bend'Or did in the end reconcile himself to the necessity for war but only during the 'Phoney War', the last possible stage identified by Roberts. If anything, Bend'Or moved in the opposite direction to the majority, in that he appeared a more ardent appeaser once war had been declared. In this Bend'Or differed from many other aristocratic fascist sympathizers such as the Duke of Wellington, Marquess of Tavistock, Marquess of Graham, and the Lords Redesdale, Brocket and Graham, who were proactive in their support for appeasement in the lead-up to 1939.

There is a more serious consideration that may have dictated Bend'Or's attitude. Through his interest in CDL, Bend'Or would have come across experts involved in defence planning and who were acquainted with state of Britain's military preparations. It would have been a topic on which Bend'Or, Lindemann, Churchill and Chamberlain could agree, even if they disagreed on the rate and priority of rearmament.

During the 1920s and 1930s Lindemann was a regular guest at Eaton, where he not only ingratiated himself to Bend'Or but to Bend'Or's daughter Ursula, and Barbara and Isolde Grosvenor, the daughters of Bend'Or's uncle Arthur. Ursula was very taken by Lindemann. She invited him to stay for the Grand National in 1928.⁵³ She then wrote: 'It was very sad you couldn't come to Eaton, I missed you so much. Any chance of you paying us a visit in Scotland this year?'⁵⁴ She told him that she had broken her leg:

⁵² Andrew Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp. 299–300.

⁵³ Nuffield College Oxford, Cherwell Papers (NC, Ch.P), K308/15, Ursula Grosvenor to Lindemann, 1928.

⁵⁴ NC, Ch. P., K308/17, Ursula Grosvenor to Lindemann, n.d.

if you are ever near here please come and see me or even if you aren't near couldn't you come and stay a weekend or a day or two anytime you aren't busy [...] I would love to see you, have almost forgotten what you look like [...]. Please write and I would love to see you.⁵⁵

According to the Eaton Hall Visitor Book, Lindemann stayed fourteen times during 1921–1938 and correspondence shows he made several trips to Mimizan. In 1937 Lindemann wrote to Bend'Or, 'My visits to Eaton are always amongst the most pleasant memories of the year and this was no exception to the rule'.⁵⁶

Professor Lindemann, with whom Bend'Or developed a close relationship, held views akin to white supremacy.⁵⁷ However, whether Lindemann was anti-Semitic is debatable. Lindemann is noted for attracting, and welcoming, Jewish German physicists to his laboratory in Oxford.⁵⁸

In 1935 Lindemann joined the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence under Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, for a year.⁵⁹ The Committee had morphed out of the Tizard Committee, which had a special interest in Aerial Defence. From his own scientific circles, his knowledge of German capacity and with the added information from the Committee, Lindemann 'was gravely perturbed at the inadequacy of British air defences', a sentiment that he shared with Churchill.⁶⁰ On the numerous occasions that he stayed at Eaton or Mimizan there would have been plenty of time for Lindemann to discuss his opinions on air defence with Bend'Or, and vice versa.

⁵⁵ NC, Ch. P., K308/16, Ursula Grosvenor to Lindemann, n.d.

⁵⁶ NC, Ch. P., B17, Lindemann to Bend'Or, dated 21 March 1937.

⁵⁷ Thomas Wilson, *Churchill and the Prof* (London: Cassell, 1995), p. 11; Robert Blake, 'Lindemann, Frederick Alexander, Viscount Cherwell', *ODNB*, 3 January 2008, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/34533>>; Thomas Wilson, *Churchill and the Prof* (London: Cassell, 1995), p. 10.

⁵⁸ Lord Birkenhead, *The Prof in Two Worlds: The Official Life of Professor F.A. Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell* (London: Collins, 1961), p. 24, claims Lindemann had an 'aversion' against Jews but he was welcoming to escaping Jewish scientists.

⁵⁹ Blake, 'Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell', *ODNB*.

⁶⁰ Blake, 'Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell', *ODNB*.

If Bend'Or was predisposed to appeasement, which is being argued, then because of his apathy to politics he needed a nudge to be active. While acknowledging it is a culmination of ideas that contributes to a single decision, this thesis suggests that a critical influence on Bend'Or between 1937 and 1939 was Neville Chamberlain.

Chamberlain has not been mentioned by any of Bend'Or's previous biographers in this context but it is proposed that Bend'Or, concerned that Britain was unprepared militarily for another war, and with popular opinion against it, fearing Bolshevism and, being fed a diet of Judeo-Bolshevik fables, was susceptible to the influence of Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, in the crucial years leading to 1939.

Professor M. Kennedy argues that appeasement in the sense of avoiding international quarrels by rational negotiation and compromise had been a perfectly proper part of Britain's diplomatic effort since the middle of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ Given the anti-war mood and the need for a stronger home economy, the continuation of that policy made political sense.⁶² But it was only one branch of the Government's policy. Appeasement with rearmament was the official policy from at least 1935. Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1931 and 1937 in the National Government led by MacDonald and then in Baldwin's second administration, became 'a dominant voice in both rearmament and foreign policy'. Professor Andrew Crozier stresses:

Chamberlain [...] played a critical role in the early stages of rearmament [...] he was unable to allow the costs of the full programme recommended by the defence requirements sub-committee (DRC) in 1934 and determined that the bulk of the spending should be allocated to aerial rearmament. The strength of the Royal Air Force was, therefore, to be increased by 50 per cent.⁶³

⁶¹ Paul M. Kennedy, 'The Tradition of Appeasement in British Foreign Policy 1865–1939', *British Journal of International Studies*, 2 (Oct. 1976), 195–215 (195–96), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20096775>> [accessed 13 February 2019].

⁶² Charmley, *Churchill*, pp. 319–329.

⁶³ Andrew J. Crozier, 'Chamberlain, (Arthur) Neville', *ODNB*, 23 September 2014, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/32347>>.

To pay for further strengthening of the Royal Air Force, Chamberlain raised income tax to five shillings in the pound in the Budget of 1937.⁶⁴

Chamberlain had already demonstrated to Bend'Or that he would follow his father's policy on imperial preference. Chamberlain also advocated the need for strong defences. These were two of the policy tenets of Imperial Conservatism, the essentials of which Bend'Or had absorbed from George Wyndham and Lord Milner, and that Neville had absorbed from his father. It was a principled stand but not one that would be carried on the wave of history.

They had also absorbed a deep fear of another war. Professor David Reynolds puts it, 'Under Chamberlain "appeasement" was no longer a project to pacify Europe but a desperate bid to keep Britain out of war — peace at almost any price'.⁶⁵ Tim Bouverie and Andrew Roberts point out that not all war veterans were pro-appeasement but that in this respect Bend'Or, the Duke of Buccleuch and Lord Londonderry were different. They were appeasers and veterans with 'fine war records'.⁶⁶ More likely their pro-peace agitation was a result of what they had witnessed in the First World War and the rational fear that war introduced in its wake significant economic and social upheaval. The fact that the aristocracy and upper classes had suffered proportionately greater casualties than other classes in the Great War is not a myth.⁶⁷ To want peace rather than war was hardly surprising, and it was the basis of the appeal of appeasement for many, including Bend'Or and Neville Chamberlain.

See also Keith Neilson, 'The Defence Requirements Sub-Committee, British Strategic Foreign Policy, Neville Chamberlain and the Path to Appeasement', *The English Historical Review*, 118 (June 2003), 651–84, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/3489289>> [accessed 3 June 2020];

⁶⁴ Crozier, 'Chamberlain', *ODNB*; see also Keith Neilson, 'The Defence Requirements Sub-Committee'.

⁶⁵ David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2014), p. 427.

⁶⁶ Tim Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler: Chamberlain, Churchill and the Road to War* (London: Bodley Head, 2019), p. 219; Andrew Roberts, *Churchill: Walking with Destiny* (London: Allen Lane, 2018), p. 445.

⁶⁷ J.M. Winter, 'Britain's "Lost Generation" of the First World War', *Population Studies*, 31 (3) (Nov. 1977), 449–66, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2173368>>.

As noted, Neville and Anne stayed at Lochmore, Bend'Or's Scottish home, at least once in 1937, during 8–22 August.⁶⁸ They stayed at Eaton in May 1938 and in August 1938 again at Lochmore.⁶⁹ According to Neville's letters, he and Anne were staying again at Lochmore during 13–19 August 1939 for what was intended to be a fortnight's holiday.⁷⁰ He was recalled to London on 19 August to deal with the news of the Nazi-Soviet pact.⁷¹

Sir Joseph Ball, a shady figure, enters the frame. Sir Joseph Ball was a behind-the-scenes political fixer which the Conservative Party has a habit of producing.⁷² Ball had been an intelligence officer working for MI5 until he was recruited to join Conservative Central Office, initially as a Publicity Officer, and then from 1929 as the first Director of the Conservative Research Department.⁷³ He grew close to the Research Department's creator and chairman, Neville Chamberlain, and became Chamberlain's unofficial Svengali.⁷⁴ Robert Blake, author of Ball's *ODNB* entry, concluded, '[Ball's] influence on affairs cannot be measured by the brevity of the printed references to him.'⁷⁵ The then Chairman of the Conservative Party, J.C.C. Davidson, described Ball as 'undoubtedly tough' and possessing 'as much experience as anyone I know in the seamy side of life and the handling of crooks'.⁷⁶

⁶⁸ BU, NC 18/1/1015; NC 18/1/1017.

⁶⁹ GA, Adds EV1669 Eaton Hall Visitor Book; BU, NC 1/23/61 and NC 1/23/66-66B.

⁷⁰ BU, NC 18/1/112; NC 18/1/1114.

⁷¹ Charmley, *Churchill*, p. 365.

⁷² A full account of Ball's undercurrent career dealings with the Italians is given in William C. Mills, 'Sir Joseph Ball, Adrian Dingli and Neville Chamberlain's "Secret Channel" to Italy 1937–1940', *International History Review*, 24 (2) (June 2002), 278–317, <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40110114>> [accessed 11 June 2020].

⁷³ John Ramsden, *The Making of Conservative Party Policy: The Conservative Research Department since 1929* (London: Longman, 1980), pp. 29, 33.

⁷⁴ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, p. 277.

⁷⁵ Robert Blake, 'Ball, Sir (George) Joseph', *ODNB*, revised, 23 September 2004, <<https://doi-org.ezproxy2.londonlibrary.co.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/30564>>.

⁷⁶ Quoted in Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 160.

One of Ball's *modi operandi* was to disseminate his messaging through the magazine *Truth*, which he had bought by 1936.⁷⁷ *Truth*, a periodical specializing in investigative journalism, had been established by the radical Liberal politician Henry Labouchère. Ball used it purely for Chamberlain's benefit. From 1938 it became overtly pro-German and pro-Italian, aggressively anti-Semitic, and anti-Churchill. One of Ball's contributors was Major-General Fuller.⁷⁸ A letter that Chamberlain wrote to his sister Ida in July 1939 shows that Chamberlain was well aware of Ball's activity. He wrote: '[Churchill] was "distressed, by a couple of witty articles making fun of the suggestion that he [Churchill] would help matters in the cabinet which appeared in *Truth* (secretly controlled by Sir J Ball!)"'.⁷⁹ Ball was also a fishing man, and is reputed to have taught Chamberlain how to fish.⁸⁰ It was fishing that sealed Ball's relationship with Chamberlain, and he and Ball went fishing together frequently in Hampshire.⁸¹

Ball might have entered Bend'Or's life in 1937. Working on the mistaken notion that Göring was less bellicose than Hitler, and that therefore a wedge could be driven between them, Joseph Ball coaxed aristocrats to visit Germany for discussions with Göring and Helmut Wohlthat, a German businessman who worked on economic matters under Göring.⁸² The idea was to flatter Göring, who showed a willingness to treat with aristocrats in the vain attempt that his association with nobles would make him, and the Nazi Party, more socially acceptable. Professor Petropoulos has shown that the assiduous courting of aristocrats by Hitler and his followers before 1942 had serious intent. They hoped that some of the aristocratic 'distinctive lustre' would draw industrialists and other wealthy potential donors as well as signal a

⁷⁷ R.B. Cockett, 'Ball, Chamberlain and *Truth*', *The Historical Journal*, 33 (1) (Mar. 1990), 131–42 (134), <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/2639394>> [accessed 11 June 2020].

⁷⁸ Cockett, 'Ball, Chamberlain and *Truth*', 137–38.

⁷⁹ Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 217.

⁸⁰ Blake, 'Sir Joseph Ball', *ODNB*.

⁸¹ Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 160.

⁸² Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, p. 300.

reassuring message to the conservative elements of German society.⁸³ The Nazis, particularly Ribbentrop when he was the German Ambassador in London, applied the same approach to foreign patricians, especially from Britain, a country for which Hitler held admiration.

An early visitor to Germany was Bend'Or. Referring to German sources, Professor Petropoulos notes that Bend'Or went to Berlin 'in order to meet the leading personalities of the Third Reich (he had a special interest in being received by Göring) and to learn more about the "current Germany"'.⁸⁴ This was in late 1937, after the fishing had stopped.

Lindemann had proposed to take Bend'Or to Germany, although that trip did not happen. Bend'Or had visited the spa town of Baden-Baden in Germany in 1936; whether he was accompanied or visited elsewhere in the country is not known.⁸⁵ That Ball encouraged Bend'Or's visit in 1937 is suspected based on the fact that Bend'Or had other dealings with Ball and the *Truth*.

Other British admirers of Germany found their way to visit the Third Reich between 1938–1939, including Lord Brocket, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Mar and Kellie, the Marquess of Douglas and Clydesdale (who became the 14th Duke of Hamilton in 1940), Lord Redesdale and Lord Aberconway. Martin Pugh cites Bend'Or as amongst them, although it is not clear whether Pugh is referring to the 1937 trip or another made by Bend'Or.⁸⁶ Industrialists and Members of Parliament also went as guests of the Nazis, including Ernest Tennant (commodity broker and council member of the Anglo-German Fellowship), Sir Arthur Wilson MP, Henry Drummond Wolff MP and the historian Arthur Bryant, to name a few.

Chamberlain lost confidence in Hitler's willingness to co-operate for the maintenance of peace after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. Politically and logically he understood that the moment had come to prepare for war. He sanctioned the establishment of the Ministry of Supplies, accelerated

⁸³ Petropoulos, *Royals and the Reich*, pp. 97–98.

⁸⁴ Petropoulos, *Royals and the Reich*, p. 161.

⁸⁵ GA, PP/19/064, Mitzakis to Hyde, dated 21 May 1936.

⁸⁶ Martin Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!: Fascists and Fascism in Britain Between the Wars* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), p. 282.

rearmament and sought emergency powers which Parliament granted him on 24 August 1939. Steps were taken to prepare London for an expected bombing onslaught.

But emotionally Chamberlain still hankered after a resolution with Germany. In the summer of 1939 he remained strong in his belief that only he could negotiate with Hitler. In a letter to his sister dated 10 September Chamberlain explained that one of the reasons for the delay in the declaration of war on 3 September had been the possibility of an Anglo-German agreement. Negotiations had begun with ‘advances from Goering through the neutral and took the form of strong expressions of desire for an understanding if not an alliance’. Later in the letter ‘the neutral’ is referred to as ‘D’, who ‘flew backwards and forwards and alternatively conversed with Goering and Hitler and Halifax and me’. Chamberlain stated that:

I believe he [Hitler] did contemplate an agreement with us [...] but at the last moment some brainstorm took possession of him maybe Ribbentrop stirred it up and once he had set his machine in motion [for the invasion of Poland] he couldn’t stop it.

Chamberlain concluded his letter: ‘It was of course a grievous disappointment that peace could not be saved but I know that my persistent efforts have convinced the world that no part of the blame can lie here.’⁸⁷

Dr Graham Stewart comments:

The truth of the matter, at Munich and in the months after, was that Chamberlain was prepared to ignore an almost limitless number of uncomfortable truths if it meant escaping the haunting spectre of another Great War. For all the years he had been forced to endure the shouts and jeers of ‘warmonger’ from Labour politicians he was a better pacifist than most of them.⁸⁸

Amongst Chamberlain’s ‘persistent efforts’ made, with his Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax, were measures that suggest desperate attempts were made to woo the

⁸⁷ BU, NC 18/1/1116, 10 September 1939.

⁸⁸ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, p. 347.

Nazis. Little else could explain the many peace initiatives that were promoted during 1939–1940, some more official than others.

Both Chamberlain and Halifax employed personal unofficial emissaries to negotiate with Mussolini, Hitler and Göring, thereby giving prominence to men who operated outside of Whitehall's orbit. In July Chamberlain unofficially sanctioned E.W.D. Tennant to visit Ribbentrop in Germany, Lord Kelmsley was sent to meet Hitler at Bayreuth and Lord Rothermere was allowed to write to Ribbentrop.⁸⁹ Chamberlain and Halifax encouraged two Swedish businessmen, friends of Göring, to serve as interlocutors between the Field Marshal and the British Government.⁹⁰ At least they, especially Birger Dahlerus (possibly the 'D' Chamberlain referred to in his letter to his sister), actually knew Göring, and for a moment at the end of August 1939 it seemed that something might have been achieved.

One of these initiatives impacted on Bend'Or. In June 1939 one of Chamberlain's closest advisers, Sir Horace Wilson, Chief Industrial Adviser, Sir Joseph Ball and Henry Drummond Wolff met with Helmut Wohlthat, who was working on Germany's Four Year Plan under the direction of Göring, in Bourdon House, Bend'Or's London home.⁹¹ Although Bend'Or was not there, the meeting could not have been held in Bourdon House without his consent. To have two of Chamberlain's closest advisers conspiring in what amounted to a form of economic appeasement was a highly controversial move and it would have acted as a 'propaganda gift to the Axis' powers.⁹²

Knowing what was going on behind the scenes may have led Bend'Or to speculate on his role. Four days after war had been declared, from the Savoy Hotel he wrote to his sister, the Countess of Shaftesbury, and explained why it was that he was lingering in London. 'I have a small room here [in the Savoy] to be on hand if

⁸⁹ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, pp. 374–75; Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, pp. 346–47.

⁹⁰ Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 346.

⁹¹ Pugh, *Hurrah for the Blackshirts!*, p. 294.

⁹² Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, pp. 342–44; Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, pp. 373–74.

they ever want me'. He continued, 'I think this bother may, with a bit of luck, end about Oct. — Hitler hates war at least his higher command do'.⁹³

It may be that Bend'Or was encouraged by Chamberlain's practice of sending amateur missions to further his diplomatic efforts to think he would be called upon. Chamberlain would have had many opportunities, over drams in Scotland in 1939, to discuss with Bend'Or his hopes and fears for his sensitive endeavours. Maybe in 1937 Bend'Or had met Göring at Chamberlain's private suggestion. This would account for the confident way Bend'Or asserts that Hitler's 'higher command' hated war. Maybe Bend'Or's experience in 1918 when he had been used by the Department of Information as an informal and unaccountable agent had led him to think fancifully. There must have been something to cause Bend'Or to have written in the way he did.

It was because he felt he needed to stay in London to be 'on hand' that he had not taken the salute of the Cheshire Yeomanry as it departed for war, which had earned him the disdain of Colonel Verdin.⁹⁴

If Chamberlain felt the war should be avoided for as long as possible, then Bend'Or was inspired to do something, anything, to support Chamberlain and the cause of peace.

What Bend'Or did was clumsy and inappropriate and proves his lack of political finesse. On 12 September 1939 he held a meeting in Bourdon House with a group known to be pro-peace. It was an odd group. Its members adhered to no particular club or party except that they were all appeasers. Bend'Or was the host. The names of those who attended vary in accounts. Bend'Or told Churchill that there were fourteen present.⁹⁵ According to James Lonsdale-Bryans, a charlatan who had a murky history of underhand politics:

There were seven or eight of us, amongst whom the Editor of that excellent weekly, *Truth* (whom I already knew slightly), Rushcliffe [...] and, somewhat

⁹³ SA, NE/W/5/18, letter from Bend'Or to Countess of Shaftesbury, dated 7 September 1939.

⁹⁴ See Chapter 8 'What it was to be a Duke', p. 229.

⁹⁵ CA, CHAR 19/2A/21, Bend'Or to Churchill, 28 September. The details in the letter associate it with the meeting on 12 September, not the later one on 26 September which Bend'Or did not attend.

surprisingly, Mottistone. I remember someone's saying afterwards that he would probably go on straight to Winston, and blow the gaff!⁹⁶

Bouverie bases his account of the meeting on Sir Maurice Hankey's official report (Hankey was Secretary to the Cabinet and to the Committee of Imperial Defence and chair of the Defence Requirements Committee). The report suggests that the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Mottistone (member of the Anglo-German Fellowship), Lord Arnold (also a member of the AGF), Lord Rushcliffe (a former Minister of Labour), Henry Drummond Wolff MP, Sir Philip Gibbs (journalist) and the vicar of St Alban The Martyr in London were present.⁹⁷ It was a group that Bend'Or drew together at comparatively short notice, maybe with the help of Ball (hence the inclusion of Gibbs and Henry Newnham, Editor of *Truth*). It constituted no more than a random group who shared a pro-peace sentiment. Lonsdale-Bryans is not recorded as present but no one has accounted for the complement of fourteen that Bend'Or said were there.⁹⁸

At the meeting Bend'Or read out and sought agreement for a memorandum that was to be sent to Sir Maurice Hankey. Who wrote the memorandum is not known; Field suggests Henry Drummond Wolff but gives no source.⁹⁹ Bouverie quotes from the note that Hankey sent to Halifax. The memorandum began with an attack on newspapers 'controlled by the left and the Jews' which campaigned for the destruction of Nazism.

Bouverie claims that the account continued with a declaration that it was a calamity that 'two races which are most akin' should be fighting one another and

⁹⁶ Michael Harrison, *Lord of London: A Biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster* (London: W.H. Allen, 1966), p. 227. Lonsdale-Bryans was one of Harrison's sources.

⁹⁷ Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 386. Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, p. 301, includes the Marquess of Tavistock, Lord Brocket and Lord Sempill, Lord Mount Temple; Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, pp. 203–04, lists only Buccleuch, and Lords Rushcliffe, Arnold and Mottistone (formerly Jack Seely); Peter Padfield, *Hess, Hitler & Churchill: The Real Turning Point of the Second World War – A Secret History* (London: Icon, 2014) p. 57, includes Buccleuch, Londonderry, Tavistock, Brocket, Noel-Buxton and Harmsworth. The confusion could be between those who attended the first meeting and those the second meeting later on in September which Bend'Or did not attend.

⁹⁸ Lonsdale-Bryans makes no reference to the meeting in his account *Blind Victory: Secret Communications, Halifax-Hassell* (London: Skeffington, 1951).

⁹⁹ Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 262.

that the Government should be prepared to explore peace options at the earliest possible date. The memorandum further commented that it was pointless to continue fighting Germany as it was ‘impregnable on the ground, both in the east and west’, while London constituted ‘the best aerial target on the face of the earth’.¹⁰⁰

What the group hoped to achieve is difficult to tell. It is possible that Bend’Or hoped that a strong message of support from leading appeasers would strengthen Chamberlain’s hand. If so, Bend’Or and his colleagues severely overestimated their social and political influence. Kershaw is nearer the mark when he notes, ‘The individuals who took part, however, carried little weight. They amounted to rank political outsiders’.¹⁰¹

To gather any pro-peace group once war had been formally declared was risky as it could have led to accusations of treason for those involved. More immediately dangerous was Bend’Or’s involvement with Drummond Wolff. Henry Drummond Wolff was Conservative MP for Basingstoke in 1934–1935. He was rich, and a known donor to the British Union of Fascism.¹⁰² He was also an extreme anti-Semite, believing in a Bolshevik-Zionist conspiracy, and he meddled.

Another meeting of Bend’Or’s collection of appeasers took place again on 26 September, but this time Bend’Or was absent, although it was once again held in Bourdon House.

In between the two meetings, Churchill, who was alerted by Hankey to Bend’Or’s activity, wrote to Bend’Or. They were still good friends — politics had not interfered with their attachment in the Edwardian period and it did not now. It is known that the day after the formal announcement of war, on the evening of 4 September, Bend’Or dined with Churchill and Hansel Duke of Pless, Bend’Or’s German nephew by his first marriage.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Bouverie, *Appeasing Hitler*, p. 386.

¹⁰¹ Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler*, p. 301.

¹⁰² Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, p. 210 note.

¹⁰³ Miranda Seymour, *Noble Endeavours: The Life of Two Countries, England and Germany*, in *Many Stories* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2013), p. 417.

Churchill drafted a letter to Bend'Or which is remarkable for its gentle approach. He did not chastise Bend'Or for the meeting but suggested 'the full bearing of which I feel you could not have properly apprehended'. Later in the letter the same suggestion is repeated. Churchill wonders whether Bend'Or had 'really counted the cost, or whether you are not being drawn into courses the true character of which you do not realise'.¹⁰⁴ In other words, Churchill knew of Bend'Or's tendency to rely on others to do the thinking that Bend'Or did not.

Bend'Or took over a week to reply. It was a friendly letter. After expressing pleasantries on Winston's son's engagement, he wrote about the meeting on 12 September:

What happened was that Jack Seely [*sic*] who gave the typed document his blessing, was asked to take them [*sic*] to Hankey — which he did — with the result that I received your letter — at the meeting of 14 people — I and one other a clerk in Holy Orders, were the only two who did not refer to the Prime Minister by his Christian name of Neville so you can infer that they were his friends and backers.¹⁰⁵

It was an extraordinarily naïve reply; but it does suggest Bend'Or's support for Chamberlain as the motive of the meeting. Churchill replied the next day. The sense of relief is palpable in Churchill's response but he still gave Bend'Or a reality check:

My dear Bennie

I only write to you as a duty of friendship, and to warn you off, what I thought might [be] a course which would involve you in worry [...].

In my view, in time of peace, people in a free country have a right to form their views about foreign policy: but when the country is fighting for its life against a deadly enemy, there are grave dangers in taking a hostile line to the decided plan.

The Cabinet Ministers complained to me about certain passages in the Memorandum, especially the one suggesting that all we were fighting for

¹⁰⁴ CA, CHAR 19/2A/22-23, Churchill to Bend'Or, 13 September 1939.

¹⁰⁵ CA, CHAR 19/2A/21, Bend'Or to Churchill, 28 September 1939.

was to make money for the Jews and international finances or words to that effect.

I am delighted to hear from you of the very small and private character of this discussion. It looked as if you were going to put yourself at the head of an agitation which I am sure would carry you very far from your real feelings towards the country [...]. Consider what anger would be in this war when, as is quite probable, the Germans start killing our women and children on a large scale around the munitions factories [...]. Do keep in touch with me.¹⁰⁶

Churchill understood that Bend'Or was neither political nor a rebel. Bend'Or might have been at fault for not foreseeing the logical conclusion of Hitler's menacing regime but he was in the company of many. Bend'Or had been schooled in the political thought that the interest of the Empire must be in the forefront of political decision-making; and until then he had not thought his way out of it.

What is quite clear is that the incident did not ruin Bend'Or's and Churchill's friendship. Bend'Or was ill in January 1940. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that he had 'congestion of the lungs' and that he had to be administered with oxygen.¹⁰⁷ He was reported to be much better the next day.¹⁰⁸ Both Churchill and Chamberlain were concerned. Churchill wrote a note to Chamberlain, which is hard to decipher but it appears to read: 'Bend'Or asked me to come and see him on Saturday. He was vy gallant, but I do not feel vy hopeful. He is fighting hard — but the beast is weakening and his[?] temperature has risen a little this morning.'¹⁰⁹

In April 1940 from the Admiralty, Churchill, stressed by the ill-fated Norwegian campaign, had time to write a tender letter to Bend'Or:

Dearest Benny

I loved your letter. I am so pressed — yet not squashed — that I have not had the time to come and see you. I will do so in the next few days. Fight

¹⁰⁶ CA, CHAR 19/2A/19-20, Churchill to Bend'Or, 29 September 1939.

¹⁰⁷ 'Duke of Westminster', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 January 1940, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ 'Duke of Westminster', *Daily Telegraph*, 10 January 1940, p. 7.

¹⁰⁹ CP, NC7/9/72, Churchill to Chamberlain, 22 January 1940.

on. We are going to win, and you shall be with us to share the relief wh the whole world will feel.

Always your devoted friend

Winston.¹¹⁰

Bend'Or was ill again in May 1940. A recent writer suggests he may have had a coronary thrombosis, but this has not been verified.¹¹¹

Griffiths has suggested that Bend'Or was still involved with Drummond Wolff and Arthur Bryant, and the organization they established, Union and Reconstruction. According to Roberts, it was 'ostensibly a think-tank for post-war issues, but was in fact an anti-war lobbying organization and propagator for national socialist economic ideas'.¹¹² Griffiths cites Bend'Or involvement but his reasoning is tentative.

Griffiths wrote (emphasis added):

The Duke of Westminster was among the most overtly anti-Semitic of the other [i.e. Buccleuch and Brocket] peers. During the first months of the war he *appears* to have kept a fairly low profile, apart from the initial meeting of peers that he organized in September 1939. By March 1940 he does, however, *seem* to have been getting involved with Bryant's and Drummond-Wolff's [sic] ventures with Union and Reconstruction. On 2 May, for example, he sent a telegram to Bryant, asking to see him and Drummond-Wolff some time in the next week; and, in a letter to Luttmann-Johnson in May discussing the Bryant-Wolff proposals, C.G. Grey made a cryptic comment which *seemed* to point to Westminster *being thought* of as someone who could be of use in this context (even though Grey tended to dismiss the idea): 'What you say about "Bend'or" is interesting [...]. What a pity that he is not a great leader himself. But I am afraid that even his vast wealth could not make more impression on the Jewry of this country'.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ GA, P19/822, Winston Churchill to Bend'Or, 11 April 1940.

¹¹¹ Robin Rhoderick-Jones, via word of mouth.

¹¹² Roberts, *Eminent Churchillians*, p. 307.

¹¹³ Griffiths, *Patriotism Perverted*, pp. 207–08.

The source for the telegram Bend'Or is said to have sent on 2 May is not given.

In view of Churchill's letter of April 1940, it is unlikely that in the period of March to May 1940 Bend'Or was still cavorting with the appeasers. In addition, in May 1940, as already noted, Bend'Or was once again concentrating on CDL to support the British war effort.

Ursula, Bend'Or's daughter, wrote a letter to Churchill in June 1940 which suggests the same:

Daddy asked me to write to you and say that he is now well: which is true but what is breaking his heart is not having anything to do for his country and I know he wanted me to write and say how well he is as he thought you would believe it more [...] it is nearly driving him frantic having to sit and watch. He also told me to tell you he's done all in his power about the tanks which he says you already know [...]. I know if you feel you can you will help him.¹¹⁴

Following Ursula's letter Churchill made a determined attempt to find Bend'Or something to do. It was a small offering. At sixty-one Bend'Or was too old for active service, and a position such as he had held in the Ministry of Munitions in 1917 was not possible in the more bureaucratic civil and armed service. In August 1940 Brendan Bracken, Churchill's Parliamentary Private Secretary and close colleague, commented on a badly drafted letter that R.A. Butler had prepared for Churchill to sign and send to Bend'Or. The letter was to offer Bend'Or a role in helping house stranded Norwegians in London. Bracken suggested, 'wd it not be better for you to ask the Duke of Westminster to lunch and make him the offer verbally?'¹¹⁵

In the summer of 1940 Bend'Or tried to do what he could to offer housing to Norwegians;¹¹⁶ he also allowed Churchill to offer Saughton Grange to the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to encourage them to return to England. The Duke of Windsor's

¹¹⁴ CA, CHAR 20/12/119-20, Ursula Filmer-Sankey to Churchill, 21 June 1940.

¹¹⁵ CA, CHAR 20/8/09-71, Bracken to Churchill, 19 August 1940.

¹¹⁶ NC, Ch. P., K308/2, letter from Bend'Or to Lindemann, 14 October 1940; Field, *The Golden Duke*, p. 264.

time in Spain and Portugal during June and July 1940 caused the British Government great anxiety. Whether the duke was aware of it or not, the Germans had concocted a plot, Operation Willi, in the hope of enticing the Duke of Windsor to lend his support to the Axis powers.¹¹⁷

The suggestion that the Windsors should base themselves at Bend'Or's estate in Cheshire is telling: if Churchill suspected in any way that Bend'Or was still involved in an anti-war effort, he surely would not have suggested that Bend'Or and the Duke of Windsor should coexist as neighbours.

Ultimately Bend'Or was a patriot. He had been led by Chamberlain, whose political ruthlessness is now being better understood, into believing peace could be obtained by negotiating with the Nazis.¹¹⁸ Bend'Or's chief fault was political naivety, which Churchill understood and from which he strove to protect him.

In September 1940 Churchill sent a telegram to Bend'Or: 'If you are ever in London and can come and see me, luncheon or dinner. Rejoice you are so much better Winston'.¹¹⁹ Bend'Or's reply was sent by Mr Hyde, who asked: 'The Duke would be greatly obliged if the letter could be sent to Mr Churchill immediately'.¹²⁰ The Duke's enclosed letter is not in the Churchill archive but a copy is in the Grosvenor archive and is quoted by Ridley.

Bend'Or's reply dated 14 September was about a development in the CDL project. In early 1940 Hyde had first mentioned to Bend'Or a new gadget designed by Mitzakis, who had been approached by the Air Minister 'to produce a scheme for using the same idea in the air, and he has already submitted such a scheme which is now being considered by the expert of the Air Force'.¹²¹ Mitzakis had built on the

¹¹⁷ Philip Ziegler, *King Edward VIII: The Official Biography* (London: Collins, 1990), p. 422; Michael Bloch, *The Duke of Windsor's War* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), p. 81.

¹¹⁸ Cockett, 'Ball, Chamberlain and Truth', 140.

¹¹⁹ CA, CHAR 20/8/72-73, Churchill to Bend'Or, 2 September 1940.

¹²⁰ CA, CHAR 20/8/74, Hyde to the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, 14 September 1940.

¹²¹ GA, PP19/964, Progress Report, Hyde to Bend'Or, 30 March 1940.

technology of the CDL to forward an idea of using complementary colour to dazzle and illuminate enemy aeroplanes and which could also assist in measuring range.¹²²

The Air Force rejected Mitzakis' design, calling its assumptions 'completely erroneous' and saying the pilots were against it.¹²³ Bend'Or alerted Lindemann, who had become and remained Churchill's Chief Scientific Adviser throughout the war. Lindemann robustly challenged the Ministry's conclusion and advised that the scheme should be returned to be reconsidered by Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté, who was soon to be Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Coast Command, but at that time was heading up the Interception Committee.¹²⁴

It was in support of Mitzakis' air searchlight proposal that Bend'Or wrote to the Prime Minister on 14 September 1940. The letter reads:

My dear W,

Listening in to last night's wireless, I heard it mentioned that one of our pilots had encountered an enemy plane with very bright lights on it. It occurs to me that we ought to waste no time in getting our lamps trimmed like the wise virgins — you — better than anyone — knows what happened about the tanks in the last war. The fatal delays, etc. — we must not repeat that error. It looks as if we are going to be done in again on this De Thoren plan and I pray that you will intervene with all your power. Professor has received a letter from A. Chief Marshal Dowding which he will tell you about.

The great thing is to get a move on — there is no expense and you might get a stupendous result out of it — I would suggest that the expert Mitzakis, the professor and A.M. Dowding should meet soonest and have a talk. Can you possibly arrange this. In June 1937 you very kindly wrote to the WO on behalf of the De Thoren Co. I do implore you to let me act as I suggested in my last letter and let us give the project a try out. To my mind at this moment speed is essential in this matter.

¹²² NC, Ch.P, G 353, catalogue.

¹²³ NC, Ch. P., G353/17, Pye, Ministry of Aircraft Production to Lindemann, 7 September 1940.

¹²⁴ NC, Ch. P., G353/17, Lindemann to Pye, 9 September 1940.

The Prof will himself explain that the beam is in itself a protection to the pilot. It has been proved in the W tests that you cannot shoot at the lights — so I do so hope it will not be necessary to go through long drawn out experiments again.¹²⁵

Churchill replied immediately. He advised, 'I am always in the closest touch with Dowding and so is the Prof. The Prof thinks well of aerial searchlights, and I have given directions for the subject to be presented as coming from me'.¹²⁶ Ridley suggests that Bend'Or was 'very willing to pay for' the new equipment.¹²⁷

Joubert's committee reconsidered the proposal but remained unimpressed by 'the search light idea'.¹²⁸ Lindemann turned to Churchill, who issued the following firm order to General Ismay:

Let precise orders be given for an experiment to be made with chemical searchlight without further delay. Professor Lindemann will draw up the general specification of the experiment which you should embody in a note and show me this day. (Intd) WSC 18/9/40.¹²⁹

In spite of this the venture did not flourish.

Bend'Or went on putting forward new ideas for weapons to Lindemann, such as projectiles with parachutes to be used as a barrage against enemy aircraft, or for the manufacturing of cryolite.¹³⁰ He also continued to contribute funds to support Lindemann's work at the Clarendon Laboratory. From 1923, until his death, Bend'Or funded the Duke of Westminster Studentship to support research in

¹²⁵ GA, P/11/218, Bend'Or to Churchill, 14 September 1940: reproduced in Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 149, with no date.

¹²⁶ GA, PP/19/45-50, Churchill to Bend'Or, 13 September 1940. Churchill's reply is clearly dated '13 September' but the letter would only make sense if it had been written after Bend'Or's letter dated 14 September.

¹²⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 149.

¹²⁸ NC, Ch. P., G353/20, Lindemann to Churchill, 17 September 1940.

¹²⁹ NC, Ch. P., G353/21, Churchill to General Ismay, 18 September 1940.

¹³⁰ NC, Ch. P., G471/5-6, papers concerning Geoffrey Scrimgeour's invention; NC, Ch. P., G471/14, papers concerning Mr Owtram, 10 April 1942.

Physics at the Clarendon Laboratory.¹³¹ The first student was E. Bolton King, who went on to work on ‘rockets’ under Sir Alwyn Crow during the 1939–1945 war. Another Westminster Student, Dr Roaf, who worked on radar during the war and went to America to work on atomic physics, said: ‘his work was kept secret hitherto on account of its military significance in the design of the atomic bomb’.¹³²

Revealingly, in 1949 Nancy, Bend’Or’s fourth wife, wrote to Lindemann to thank him for their visit to the Clarendon Laboratory, remarking:

He [Bend’Or] bitterly regrets not having asked you if he might have a small piece of your ‘bouncing putty’! Is it precious? I think he was if possible more impressed by that than with all the wonderful things we saw in the lab!¹³³

Bend’Or’s interest in inventions, shown in his interest in armoured cars through to the bouncing putty, and his connection with Lindemann’s work, provides an insight into his character which has largely been overlooked. It is not one associated with a playboy image, or with a rich landowner, or a political diehard, but it sits more easily with Coco Chanel and her emphasis on modernism and innovation. And Bend’Or’s inclination to modernise reveals itself in his approach to managing his Grosvenor inheritance.

The degree of his involvement with the development of gadgetry illustrates another point. Bend’Or’s contribution to armoured cars was crucial. By direct action, whether by supplying resources, networking with senior army commanders or by brave performance, he encouraged the army to take notice of armoured cars. He was instrumental in the development of the tank by being able to connect different strands of opinions and developments. On CDL he was not so effective. His networking ability diminished as a new generation took over Whitehall. Influencing events was still possible for those with the resources and determination, but it would take more than social status. Ducal influence did not count as much as it once did.

¹³¹ NC, Ch. P., B125/4, note on the Duke of Westminster Studentship scheme, 28 January 1946.

¹³² NC, Ch. P., B126/18 report on Westminster Studentship scheme, 28 January 1946.

¹³³ NC, Ch. P., K308/21, Nancy, Duchess of Westminster to Lindemann.

Epilogue. Sundown

The last years of Bend'Or's life were spent with Nancy Sullivan, whom he married in February 1947. Those who knew him say that this short marriage (he died on 19 July 1953, six and a half years later) was happy. With Nancy Bend'Or achieved a companionship which had hitherto eluded him. Nancy's priorities coincided with his and she had the wit and the inclination to work with the grain of Bend'Or's character, not against it. For Bend'Or, the years of trying to live by a Victorian ideal of dukedom were over. Age and Nancy's benign influence softened and encouraged him to live out his last years pursuing his own interests.

A further contribution to Bend'Or's contentment was the appointment of George Ridley as his Chief Agent. It was an inspired choice. A self-educated man who found his vocation in working on the Grosvenor Cheshire estate, Ridley advanced from forestry-boy to taking responsibility for all the Grosvenor estates. He was pragmatic, loyal and soaked with a deep knowledge of agriculture and forestry. It was just what Bend'Or needed as he planned the future security of the Grosvenor inheritance. It was Bend'Or's main focus.

Under the careful eye of Ridley and the Trustees, the Estate's property portfolio diversified away from London. There was nothing sentimental about this approach. After the Second World War taxes reached unprecedented levels and, in the knowledge that agricultural and forestry land were rated at zero for death duties, a greater concentration on horticulture made financial sense.

The shift in policy began during the war but accelerated afterwards. Over 100,000 agricultural acres were bought at a cost of some £2.5 million. It included estates in Norfolk, Shropshire, Surrey, Cheshire, Lincolnshire, Durham, Westmoreland and Denbighshire. Smaller holdings were bought in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.¹

Bend'Or was the first major landowner to participate in the Government-sponsored Dedication of Woodland Scheme. On the Eaton estate he offered his tenant farmers financial support to meet the cost of providing more woodlands. Of

¹ The estates involved were Melton Constable and Ketteringham estates in Norfolk; the Bridgewater land in Shropshire; the Park Hatch estate in Surrey, and Coddington in Cheshire, the Manby portion of the Brocklesby estate in Lincolnshire; Brancepeth estate in Durham; Whinfell in Westmoreland; and 20,000 acres in the Vale of Edeyrnion in Denbighshire.

the newly acquired land, 16,000 acres were to be wooded by 1955.² Investment in forestry helped restore the woodlands' productivity, especially in broadleaves planting, but it also took full advantage of assistance offered by way of tax relief to private owners.

Tax avoidance, as opposed to tax evasion, was normal practice. It was an attitude summarized by the Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, Lord Tomlin, who had presided over the Duke's appeal in *Inland Revenue Commissioners v. The Duke of Westminster*, first heard in 1933. The case revolved around payments to the Estate's pensioners by Deeds of Covenant, which attracted tax relief. The Estate won the case. The judge was reported in the *Daily Herald* as saying: 'every man was entitled if he could alter his affairs so that the tax attaching under the appropriate Acts was less than that it would otherwise be'.³

With repressive tax levels on capital and income continuing, the Estate's policy became more ambitious. The 1901 Resettlement was altered to allow the Trustees to invest abroad.⁴ Sheep farms, shops and office blocks were bought in Australia. On Annacis Island in British Columbia, Canada, 1,200 acres of 'solid soil' were acquired for an industrial estate, with additional development land nearby. Pimlico was sold in 1953 to pay for the Annacis site and to prepare for Bend'Or's death duties.

Ridley claims that the purchases overseas were made 'to fulfil a [Bend'Or's] lifetime's ambition' to invest in the Commonwealth.⁵ Bend'Or's obituary in the *Cheshire Observer* — probably written by George Ridley — stated that the idea was to encourage British firms' presence in the North American export market.⁶ The investment in Canada might have pleased Bend'Or, but in reality, rather than following Imperial ambitions, the investment policy made commercial sense. The days of pursuing political principles were past.

² 'Soldier, Sportsman, Landowner', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

³ 'Duke's Surtax Dispute', *Daily Herald*, 8 May 1935.

⁴ George Ridley, *Bend'Or Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir* (London: Robin Clark, 1985), pp. 188–89.

⁵ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 187.

⁶ 'Soldier, Sportsman, Landowner', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

It was not all about responsibility for the Estate's security. Some land was bought for the enjoyment of Bend'Or and Nancy. Nancy was as keen on fishing as Bend'Or. Bend'Or had begun fishing at Bossekop in Norway with Coco Chanel. With Nancy he bought a fjord at Bossekop, which they fished from chartered boats. The properties Bend'Or bought in Ireland, Fortwilliam in County Waterford and Bruree Stud in County Limerick when he wooed Nancy, were added to by the purchase of Derrinstown House in County Kildare. To the latter he sent, in March 1948, his champion herd of shorthorn cattle. Bend'Or had bought the herd, which had a celebrated stock line, in 1912.⁷ Throughout his life he invested in the herd and the shorthorns remained one of his preferred interests. Morangie Farm in Tain consisting of nearly 700 acres was purchased in 1950, complete with its stock. And in Wales the sporting estate of Fron Heulog in Bala, Merioneth, was acquired.⁸ Morangie, Fron Heulog and Lochmore were left in Bend'Or's Will to Nancy for her personal use, as was the stud at Eaton.⁹ It is an apt demonstration of Nancy's personal priorities.

Bend'Or's peripatetic life continued but it was not so frantic. Most senior aristocrats who owned more than one seat would spend a proportion of the year in each house. Visits to Eaton revolved around shooting on the Cheshire estate and in North Wales. The Grand National at Aintree and Chester Races remained fixed features in the calendar — with the customary house parties. The pack of dachshunds that became the signature of both Nancy and Bend'Or were tolerated by the keepers, but only just. Bend'Or's habit of hunting rabbits with them was seen as eccentric.¹⁰

Bourdon House remained their London home from which to visit friends, who included Churchill, and to attend to Grosvenor business. Mimizan burnt down in 1947. It was not rebuilt; instead, Bend'Or based himself in the timber annexe. But it was no longer the destination of choice; his days of hunting boar ceased with age.

⁷ 'Ducal Herd for Eire', *Daily Telegraph*, 16 March 1948, p. 4.

⁸ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, pp. 174–75; Leslie Field, *Bendor: The Golden Duke of Westminster* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), p. 269; Norman Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk: Fifty years a gamekeeper for the Dukes of Westminster* (Cambridge: White Lion Books, 2001), p. 119.

⁹ 'Will of the Duke of Westminster', *Nantwich Chronicle*, 31 October 1953, p. 11.

¹⁰ Mursell, *Come Dawn, Come Dusk*, pp. 119–20.

Scotland became Bend'Or's preference. Bend'Or and Nancy based themselves in Lochmore Lodge, surrounded by tall trees and a loch in the Reay Valley in Sutherland. Access depended on one road, or from the sea, either way requiring a long journey.¹¹ It is a typical Scottish Victorian hunting lodge. Imposing in its simplicity, it was built of weathered grey stone with no ornament except pointed gables and hexagonal hatted towers. Lochmore was where, Loelia claims, Bend'Or was at his happiest, especially when the weather supported fishing.¹² The naturalist and author Seton Gordon understood Bend'Or's affinity with the Scottish Highlands. He wrote: '[Bend'Or] was the very spirit of that wild and rugged country of the North-West Highlands, and no one was held in so great a degree of affection and respect by deerstalker, shepherd or estate worker.'¹³

In Scotland Bend'Or was able to combine his personal inclinations with those of the Grosvenor Estate. An afforestation scheme of 3,500 acres of the Reay Forest, Sutherland, was begun with the support of the Scottish Department of Agriculture and Forestation and Sutherland County.¹⁴ The emphasis was on providing local employment, not just in forestry but quarrying, landscaping and husbandry, in an area where a lack of job prospects had encouraged an exodus from the Highlands. A special interest was the development of modern and sustainable fishing facilities in Kinlochbervie, making it into a local hub.¹⁵

Bend'Or had twelve houses built on the Reay Forest estate, which he offered to his employees rent-free.¹⁶ It reflected his insistence that the Westminster estates should always look after the weak and vulnerable.

¹¹ Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, *Grace and Favour: The Memoirs of Loelia, Duchess of Westminster, with a Foreword by Noël Coward* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1961), p. 212.

¹² Loelia, *Grace and Favour*, p. 211.

¹³ Raymond Eagle, *Seton Gordon: The Life and Times of a Highland Gentleman* (Moffat: Lochar, 1991), p. 231.

¹⁴ 'Soldier, Sportsman, Landowner', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, pp. 183–84.

¹⁶ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 184.

George Ridley makes it clear that an immense amount of work went into planning Bend'Or's Will. Even so, after Bend'Or's death the final settlement of death duties came to about £19 million.¹⁷

There are three salient points to the otherwise complex Will. Firstly, Bend'Or left nothing to charity. The briefing explained that 'the late Duke had continuously during his life made substantial gifts for charitable purposes by way of subscriptions and donations and death duties would constitute a heavy burden on the estate'.¹⁸

Secondly, the effect of his outlay in horticulture meant that after his death there was no immediate probate to pay.

Thirdly, the estate was left divided between three prospective heirs. Bend'Or's immediate successor was his cousin William, the son of the 1st Duke's third son, Henry. William was born prematurely and suffered brain damage. The *Cheshire Observer* noted that he lived on a farm in Kent with his carers and ducks. He was quoted as saying, 'All I wish is to be left in peace to breed my ducks.'¹⁹

The 1901 Resettlement had given Bend'Or the power, if he had no son, to dispose of his property as he wished. The Grosvenor inheritance was therefore divided between the sons of the 1st Duke's eldest son by his second marriage. Gerald Hugh became the 4th Duke in 1963 and his brother Robert George became the 5th Duke in 1967. Gerald was left six twentieths of the estate, while Robert initially received two twentieths. As Gerald had no children, three twentieths were added to Robert's share. Robert did have a son, Gerald Cavendish, who was born in 1951. The child was initially left three twentieths, but he gained a further six twentieths in lieu of Gerald Hugh's having no issue. Newspaper reports noted, 'In view of the fact that Colonel Robert Grosvenor's son is only two years old, this means that there will be a long period of accumulation of income which should help substantially towards the restoration of the Grosvenor fortunes.'²⁰ Gerald became the 6th Duke in 1979.

¹⁷ Ridley, *Bend'Or*, p. 202.

¹⁸ 'Bequests by the Duke of Westminster', *The Times*, 23 October 1953, p. 5.

¹⁹ 'Soldier, Sportsman, Landowner', *Cheshire Observer*, 25 July 1953, p. 10.

²⁰ 'Will of the Duke of Westminster', *Crewe Chronicle*, 31 October 1953, p. 11; 'The Late Duke of Westminster', *Cheshire Observer*, 24 October 1953, p. 16.

Bend'Or died from a heart attack at Lochmore on 19 July 1953. His body was returned to St Mary's Church, Eccleston, Cheshire. A bust of him was erected overlooking his grandfather's. Nowhere is the contrast between the two dukes more marked. The 1st Duke's cenotaph is topped by a recumbent effigy of him in Garter robes. He is sleeping and guarded by a dog. It is medieval in concept and Victorian in grandeur. Bend'Or's memorial is simpler. He is awake and alert, and in military uniform adorned only by his medals. He is how he wanted to be seen.

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Plate 5	The Rt Hon. George Wyndham MP	© The National Portrait Gallery
Plate 6	Eaton Hall	Source: Robert Head, <i>Cheshire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century</i> (Brighton: W.T. Pike, 1904)
Plate 7	Saighton Grange	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 8	St David's Preparatory School	Author's Collection
Plate 9	Young Bend'Or with Sibell Grosvenor	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
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Plate 13	The Main House, Westminster Estate, South Africa	Source: https://www.artefacts.co.za
Plate 14	The Stables, Westminster Estate, South Africa	Source: https://www.artefacts.co.za
Plate 15	Constance (Shelagh) Cornwallis West, Bend'Or's 1st Duchess	© National Portrait Gallery
Plate 16	Ursula and Edward Grosvenor	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
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Plate 19	Edward's grave, Eccleston, Cheshire	Author's Collection
Plate 20	Free Trade League Poster	Author's Collection
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Plate 23	Armoured Car in the Western Desert, 1917	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 24	Map of the Western Desert, 1917	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 25	Bend'Or's 2nd Duchess, Violet Mary Rowley, with Michael Rowley	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 26	Bend'Or in a brown tweed suit	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 27	Coco Chanel	Source: <i>Daily Mail</i> , 17 February 2014
Plate 28	Loelia Ponsonby, Bend'Or's 3rd Duchess, with Bend'Or	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 29	Loelia with dachshunds	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 30	Anne (Nancy) Winifred Sullivan, Bend'Or's 4th Duchess	© Grosvenor Estate Archive
Plate 31	Lochmore in Scotland	Source: <i>Daily Mail</i> , 17 February 2014
Plate 32	Bend'Or and Neville Chamberlain	© Chamberlain's papers, The Cadbury Library, University of Birmingham.
Plate 33	Cenotaph of the 1st Duke and Bend'Or's memorial in Eccleston Church	Author's Collection
Plate 34	Bust of Bend'Or in Eccleston Church modelled by Gilbert Ledward	Author's Collection

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