DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other university and it is entirely my own work. I agree to deposit this thesis in the University’s open access institutional repository or allow the Library to do so on my behalf, subject to Irish Copyright Legislation and Trinity College Library conditions of use and acknowledgement.

NICOLA CARTER
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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1
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INTRODUCTION

On 30 July 1909, at the Edinburgh Castle in Limehouse, London, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George, spoke to a four thousand-strong audience and introduced his People’s Budget. He exclaimed: ‘The Gorringe case is a very famous case. It was the case of the Duke of Westminster. Oh, these dukes, how they harass us!’¹ The Spectator in line with its conservative outlook³ subsequently disputed Lloyd George’s attack: ‘We hear a great deal about the Duke of Westminster and the Duke of Bedford but the fact that, by far the greatest London landlord is Prudential, a working man’s insurance company, is so much ignored’.⁴ The Spectator’s criticism notwithstanding, the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s speech launched an attack on the aristocracy that would culminate in the Parliament Act 1911. David Cannadine refers to the effects of the Act as ‘whereas the peers survived 1832, prospered after 1846 and enjoyed unprecedented popularity in 1893, there was no such gain or recovery from 1911’.⁵ He goes on to reference Lord Balfour of Burleigh who believed ‘their [the aristocracy] power, their prestige, and their usefulness was greatly and irrevocably diminished.’⁶ The class that had held veto over all government bills, was now politically and economically paralysed. The manner in which the second Duke of Westminster and his closest contemporaries reacted to this change is the central point of this thesis. The historical context of the period with regard to the aristocracy is explained through a review of the main historians of the period, followed by an explanation of my approach and introduction to the Duke and the biographies of his life.

The People’s Budget raised death duties and, coupled with the agricultural depression, attacked the root of the wealth of the aristocracy. Symbolically as well as substantively the political power of the traditional landed society had been broken for good.⁷ The 1911 Parliament Act as much reflected the longer-term changes as drove them. It was part of a wider change in circumstances for the aristocracy. The ways in which the aristocracy adapted to maintain their position in society in light of these attacks are at the centre of this thesis. The second Duke of

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¹This thesis will use cite according to Irish Historical Studies, Rules for contributors, (May, 2003).
⁴The Spectator, 7 Aug. 1909.
⁶ibid.
Westminster as the focus of the verbal attack by Lloyd George is the perfect case study to add to the historiography of the period. This thesis will focus on the political aims of the second Duke of Westminster from his political awakening in the South African War to his brush with the far right in 1940, his public profile in the Press and how he navigated the politics of interwar Britain in his position as Duke of Westminster, London landlord and one of the wealthiest men in Great Britain. His extraordinary wealth makes him a unique case; it places him above most of his peers with his abundant resources and extensive land ownership. However it is how he used these resources and the people that influenced his choices which are worth analysing. It is also incredibly important to take into account his position as the most important landlord in central London.

David Cannadine in his book *Class in Britain*, while tracing class in Britain from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, argues that a ‘Marxist approach to class no longer carries conviction, that is no reason for dismissing class altogether’ as some interpretations have been inclined to do.\(^8\) Class as explored by Cannadine is construed according to three approaches: a ‘hierarchical view of society as a seamless web’, an ‘adversarial picture’ of ‘us’ and ‘them’ and a ‘triadic version’ with three different groups - lower, middle and upper classes.\(^9\) Cannadine details history through the ‘ebb and flow of the appeal of the different descriptions of British society’ he has identified.\(^10\) The decline or ebb of the aristocracy was gradual and it has been argued by Arno Mayer, David Cannadine, and Lawrence Stone that patrician power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was being slowly disintegrated, however, less than thirty years later, in 1940, Winston Churchill’s war cabinet was aristocratic.\(^11\) Cannadine explains this as ‘he [Churchill] used his patricians in the same way Baldwin and Chamberlain had done, to provide a dignified façade’.\(^12\) It was also a world that as the nephew of a duke, Churchill was most comfortable in. The façade that Cannadine refers to is linked to the public’s interest in and perception of the aristocracy as the highest level of class in a class driven country. The fascination with the aristocracy and the way they lived grew out of a more popular press in the inter-war period and the scrutiny that came with this press exposed the faults and foibles of the highest class in Britain. The increase in the divorce rate and the abdication crisis also drew criticism that would expose the aristocracy to reproach in a highly media-driven world.

\(^8\) David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (New Haven, 1998), pp 16-17.
\(^9\) Ibid., pp 19-20.
\(^10\) Ibid., p. 21.
\(^12\) Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 619.
The aristocracy in Britain will be defined as the titled land owning class for the purpose of this thesis. W.D. Rubinstein uses the Grosvenors as an example of a very conventional aristocratic family that rose through the titles of the British peer system and became dukes under Gladstone. A study of the second Duke of Westminster from 1900-1940 and the decline of the aristocracy requires a definition of the aristocracy as it is understood, in the context of this thesis and the relationship of the Duke to both his class and the period of history that spans the South African War and two World Wars. At the beginning of the twentieth century the prominence of the landed, titled, wealthy class was unquestioned. They held the senior positions in the military, led the social gatherings, had the power to veto parliament bills in the House of Lords and were in the highest colonial positions. In the years 1900-1940, their position was blighted by an agricultural depression, stagnant rents, the humiliation of the British military in the first years of the second South African War, Lloyd George’s People’s Budget, the Parliament Act, the First World War, and through the interwar years by the unrest of the General Strike and recession, and the Second World War. David Cannadine in his ground-breaking work, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, uses the term aristocracy to label a patrician group that includes ‘titular aristocracy, the territorial baronetage, and the landed gentry, the British landed establishment or patricians’.

He categorised the upper class into three groups: the titular aristocracy from the three countries of England, Scotland and Ireland; those members of the titular baronetage who held land; and those squires whose landed property amounted to well over a thousand acres. This definition, according to Lawrence Stone,

‘raises methodological problems, since, as he [Cannadine] points out, in 1870 the Duke of Omnium and the small squire were half a world apart...But great dukes and small squires had four things in common. They were gentlemen; they did not work for their living; their income came from land rather than banking, commerce ...industry; and together they ran the country and the Empire’.

Lawrence Stone also points out that ‘in 1870 this group amounted to about seven thousand males – six thousand untitled – plus their wives, children and dependent relatives. But this is too large and loose a definition to be easily handled’.

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14Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, Introduction.
15ibid.
17ibid.
the vast data being used." Professor Coss in his extensive studies of the gentry believes the landed gentry were a type of lesser nobility based on landowning; that is a class of territorial elite but without peerage. Debrett's defines a ‘peer of the realm as someone who holds one (or more) of five possible titles (duke, marquess, earl, viscount, baron) inherited from a direct ancestor or bestowed upon him by the monarch.’ A new, lower, degree was added to the nobility by King James I when he created the hereditary order of baronets in 1611 (the Baronetage). This was, in effect, a hereditary knighthood. Baronets had no political influence integral to their titles; they were quite separate from the peerage and never had seats in the House of Lords. It was not until 1958 the group was enlarged by the Life Peerage Act.

A duke was at the pinnacle of the peerage and the title was hereditary. Mark Rothery, when writing about social mobility, believes that ‘the highly adaptable nature of landed elites in the face of profound changes in modern society and the flexibility of relations between landed and non-landed elites have been amongst the most important findings of scholars of landed society over the past fifty years’ F. M. L. Thompson and David Cannadine, amongst others, have shown that ‘the aristocracy and the gentry were willing to diversify their investments into mining, railways and a range of other urban and industrial ventures as economic conditions came to permit such behaviour’. Rothery goes on to refer to ‘the openness and flexibility of the British landed order during the modern period…The slow and gradual decline of landed elites along with their fluid relations with new aspirants to elite society helps explain, it has been argued, the smooth and evolutionary nature of modernisation in Britain’.

The willingness of the landed elite to diversify and use their resources to survive was part of modern Britain. This fact highlights how individual aristocrats can add to the historical debate regarding the decline of the aristocracy 1900-40. The individual aristocrats differed in the use of their resources and the decisions they took to maintain their ancestral home or homes. Cannadine in both his books on Class, focused on the titled land owners and particularly drew on his previous study of the Devonshires. His work is extensive and important. The nature of his arguments is often heavily substantiated. His later works on the Empire include the creation of the term ‘Ornamentalism’, which has been heavily criticised. Ornamentalism is Cannadine's

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18 https://www.theguardian.com/news/1999/jul/05/guardianobituaries1 (2 March 2022)
22 ibid.
23 ibid.
view of how the British saw their Empire, and sought to integrate hierarchical systems into countries within the Empire. This theory will be discussed in chapter 2. The use of his arguments and theories will be integrated into all the chapters of the thesis. He remains a highly acclaimed historian of the aristocracy and of British social history and was knighted in 2009 for ‘services to scholarship’. Cannadine’s works are central to this thesis which will be focusing on the closest contemporaries to the second Duke of Westminster, those landed hereditary peers who owned houses in London, country estates and who, for the most part, did not work for a living, with the significant exception being the Duke of Devonshire, who served as Secretary of State for the Colonies, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Treasurer of the Household and Governor General of Canada.

The extent to which the aristocracy remained a single self-confident entity was reliant on the creation of other peers in the image of what was already present. The class needed new members to survive and it was important for society to see that to certain members a title was obtainable. When the first Labour government was elected in 1924, the House of Lords was worried that the creation of peers might follow a more working-class model or that the Upper House might be dissolved. Ramsay MacDonald gave peerages to four middle-class Labour supporters in 1924 and to twenty more during his 1929-1931 Labour government. By MacDonald’s second term, it had become obvious that Labour was not going to abolish the House of Lords and that its peerage creations would be similar to those of the other parties. The use of the Upper House as an incentive remained. W.D. Rubinstein does point out that the Labour government did ‘however, broaden the basis of ennoblements and in 1931 gave a peerage to the first genuinely poor man ever to receive one, Henry Snell (Lord Snell), a Labour MP and Secretary of the London School of Economics who had begun life as an agricultural labourer’. During the 1880s, the situation whereby rich industrialists and businessmen were excluded from the aristocracy could not continue and William E. Gladstone during his 1880-1885 Premiership, and Lord Salisbury during his Conservative governments (1886-1892 and 1895-1902), created many peers drawn from business and professional backgrounds: families like Guinness, Bass, Williamson, Gibbs, Harmsworth, Grenfell, Wilson, Wills, Kitson, Montagu, Samuel, Kearley, Pearson, Furness, Mackay, Coats, and Dewar received peerages between 1880 and 1945.

27Ibid.
Nearly one-half of new peerage creations in this period were awarded to businessmen, the others going to other government ministers and MPs, professionals, generals and admirals and colonial administrators. Twenty-eight of two hundred and thirty-six businessmen given peerages between 1880 and 1945 left estates of £1 million or more, which represented approximately one-tenth of all male millionaires deceased in Britain during this period.

W.D. Rubinstein believes that a large elite was created through the merging of the wealthiest middle class of the mid to late Victorian era and the old landed peers. This group created the equivalent to what had been known as ‘old corruption’ and was the prominent new elite created during 1918-1925. Rubinstein further points out that this caused controversy as increasingly chairmen of large significant companies ‘were managers who were not the owners of these companies and were unrelated to the families which did. As a number of company chairmen received peerages in the period, and the question arose as to the sense in which they were “aristocrats” and whether it was appropriate to give a hereditary peerage to such a man’. The adaptable nature of landed elites in the face of changes in modern society and the flexibility of relations between landed and non-landed aristocrats is a source of historical debate. Mark Rothery in his article ‘The Wealth of the English Landed gentry’, which introduces the debate excellently by focusing on the county of Devon, states that the attraction to landownership led the rising middle classes to emulate the aristocracy rather than challenge their status through new forms of culture and politics. Walter Bagehot stated that merchants and manufacturers ‘have no bond of union, no habit of intercourse; their wives, if they care for society, want to see not the wives of other rich men, but better people as they say, the wives of men certainly with land, and, if Heaven help with titles’. Land and title remained the most covetable entities. The use of different families in different areas of Britain to prove or disprove integration makes the arguments very nuanced and at times almost regional. The Guinness family having made their fortune through brewing became Earls of Iveagh and so politically strong that the constituency Southend-on-Sea became known as Guinness-on-Sea. They had, as a family, title,

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29ibid.
land, a seat in parliament and capital. They had acquired social mobility. Could they be seen as the fusion between the landed aristocracy and finance capital? Mayer, Rubenstein and Cannadine all reflect on the fact that the industrial middle class never did possess a political hegemony in Britain. Mayer’s comparison with the rest of Europe widens the argument in particular with regard to the fact that the aristocracy in France, Russia and Germany were violently destroyed leaving Britain’s aristocracy, broadly speaking, in a unique and protected existence with a monarchy that continued to create peers. This was a major factor in the endurance of the aristocracy in leading society in Great Britain and the integration of the new peers into the existing upper class. The Westminster family were the quintessential old family.

The choice of the second Duke of Westminster is linked to his family. The background to the Grosvenor family puts in context the second Duke of Westminster in relation to the aristocracy. The Grosvenor Family can trace its genealogy back to the fourteenth century and to Geoffrey Chaucer’s description of a trial in the Court of Chivalry over a code of arms usurped by the Grosvenor family. The charge was brought by Sir Richard Strope, Chancellor of England and first Baron Strope of Bolton. The Coat of Arms was a gold diagonal stripe on a navy background. The stripe is also known as an azure or bend’Or. The court found in favour of Strope and heard the statements of three hundred witnesses. The influence of Strope was the deciding factor despite the antiquity of the name and the fact that Robert Grosvenor of Holme had been sheriff of Chester from 1284-8. The Grosvenors refused to change the coat of arms and the first Duke of Westminster named his favourite racehorse Bend’Or in deference to the coat and court case. Hugh Grosvenor, second Duke of Westminster, as a child had curly auburn hair and according to his grandfather looked like the chestnut race horse and earned the nickname Bend’Or. The nickname was with him all his life and the correspondence between Winston Churchill and the Duke are addressed and signed Bendor or Benny. The wealth of the Grosvenor family grew from the family seat in Cheshire, which had included land stretching from Cheshire to the Halkyn and Berwyn mountains in the mid-seventeenth century. They were rich landlords who became the wealthiest landlords because of a shrewd marriage and the growth of the capital city. Thomas Grosvenor married Mary Davies in 1677 and became the owner of her assets, which included part of the manor of Ebury that would eventually become

35ibid.
37ibid.
the London areas of Mayfair, Park Lane and Belgravia. The family was raised to the rank of earl in 1784 after the new Earl, Richard Grosvenor, acted as cup bearer at the coronation of George III in 1761. The second Earl, Robert Grosvenor, was a Liberal MP who supported Catholic Emancipation, Repeal of the Corn Laws and the Reform Bill. He was elevated to marquis in 1831 by Lord Grey. 38 Hugh Lupus, the grandson of the first marquis, was elevated to Duke by W.E. Gladstone in 1874. He was a Liberal MP and earned the dukedom from a reputation as an energetic, wise, man in terms of civil service. 39 He was succeeded in the dukedom by his grandson, Hugh Richard Arthur Grosvenor, in 1899. The second Duke inherited the title and an estimated £14,000,000 fortune in 1899. 40 He fought in the South African War and the First World War, had an intimate friendship with Lord Beaverbrook and Winston Churchill; he sold one of his London residences and succeeded in having a long term effect on the politics of Tariff Reform, the Defence of India and British tax law. The Duke in both the way he acted and reacted to the events of his lifetime embodies the continual prominence of the aristocracy up to the Second World War. His incredible wealth did not make him exempt from the effects of death duties and the manner in which he spent his money and used his influence leads to the conclusion that he was yielding power outside of the domain of the House of Lords.

The second Duke of Westminster was not unique in his wealth but the way in which he chose to use his resources gives insight into the type of man he was. He had inherited a title that had influence in society particularly as the largest landlord in London. His reticent nature means that attention needs to be paid to when he did speak and what he chose to put his name to and write about. Sacheverell Sitwell, in the glowing obituary of the Duke in the Sunday Times, wrote ‘Sir Winston Churchill always said that he was not good at speaking or explaining things: but he had an instinct that always led him to do what was chivalrous and daring…George Wyndham and the intelligent circle of [his] friends left influences upon him that grew stronger in later life’. 41 These influences were driven by an imperialist belief in the continuation of a strong British foreign policy and a protection of British interests abroad. This image of a chivalrous and daring duke is certainly born from the context in which Churchill first met the Duke as a young ADC in South Africa.

40Ibid.
41Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 105.
The second Duke of Westminster chose to use his influence outside rather than in the House of Lords and this makes him an invaluable study, as his outlet for his political aims was through wealth and lobbying. The fact that he did not hold a cabinet or colonial position makes his political presence harder to gauge but adds insight in terms of the ways in which the aristocracy reacted to the loss of power in the House of Lords and how power can adapt and shift. The avenues of influence open to a titled man were very different than those open to a man with wealth but no title, and this is extremely relevant when researching the Duke. One of the most significant differences is apparent in the contrast between the Duke and his grandfather, the first Duke of Westminster. David Cannadine states that the contrasted lives of the first and second Dukes of Westminster ‘vividly illustrate the shift from responsibility to indulgence, stability to restlessness, leisure to pleasure’.42 The first Duke was a Victorian gentleman and possessed all the ‘admirable qualities which ought to be associated with the highest rank of Victorian peerage’.43 At his death he was ‘mourned as one of the finest illustrations ever beheld of what a nobleman should be’.44 The second Duke was not an active member of the House of Lords, travelled all the time, gambled, divorced three times and his image earned him the following reflections from Chips Channon: ‘He was restless, spoilt, irritable and rather splendid in a very English way…yet his life was an empty failure: he did few kindnesses, leaves no monument’.45 Sir Henry ‘Chips’ Channon, the famous diarist, had a history of criticising all members of society; he said Edward VIII had a ‘dentist’s smile’ and described ‘Mrs Cavendish-Bentinck as dripping with jewels…looks like a ferret that has got loose in Cartier’s’.46 Channon was an American, Conservative MP, snob, bigot and social mountaineer, who, as described in the Financial Times review of his diaries, ‘perfectly embodied the qualities vital to the task: a capacious ear for gossip, a neat turn of phrase, a waspish desire to tell all, and easy access to the highest social circles across Europe’.47 Nevertheless his description of the Duke shows the image that was presented and believed by many, as is made more evident in the image of the Duke portrayed in the secondary literature.

The second Duke of Westminster’s father died when he was a child and when his mother subsequently married George Wyndham, he gained the second of the two most influential men in his life. He saw his grandfather as the perfect duke and his letters to him began with ‘Dear

42Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 386-7.
43Ibid.
44Ibid.
46Financial Times, 9 March 2021.
47Ibid.
Dads’. The second Duke was educated at Eton and chose to volunteer in the South African War instead of attending university. He was an able messenger and ADC to Lord Roberts. At his return to England to take up his Lords’ seat in 1899 he was the richest landowner in Britain. He returned to South Africa and formed friendships which would shape his life. His closeness to Winston Churchill was so important to Churchill that he made time to see him during the Second World War. The Duke returned to England after the end of the South African War and followed an imperialist agenda in his politics. He was the President of the South African Association, championed the Olympic Fund, the Tariff Reform League and India Defence League. He was one of the youngest peers in the Die-hard movement against the Parliament Act but spoke only once in the House of Lords. He was married four times, lost his son in childhood to septicaemia after an operation for an appendicitis and died without a close family heir. His portrait in the National Portrait Gallery in London is titled Londoner and Soldier. The Duke’s work in the innovation of the armoured car and the eventual creation of the tank coupled with his introduction of Professor Lindeman to Churchill places him in military history. He also funded a scholarship in Christ Church, Oxford University, which would advance radio-location. He was instrumental in the protection of architecture in London and provided housing for working class tenants in areas of London that lacked housing and amenities. The tax case in 1935 brought by the Revenue against the Duke changed tax law and is cited in tax avoidance cases to this day.

The second Duke of Westminster was used by W.B. Rubinstein as a perfect example of the evolution of a family through title, by Lloyd George as the stereotypical London landlord taking advantage of the working class, and by David Cannadine when referencing how the Duke of Westminster would just be another Rockefeller without a title and therefore a wealthy member of the middle class. Both Rubenstein and Cannadine focus on the Duke in terms of his wealth. Cannadine, in particular in his writing, places him squarely in the culturally devoid, horse racing, gambling playboy patrician class. This is something which the records of his divorces substantiate with regard to his more obvious lifestyle choices. This image of him, which in the wider literature appears to be the common perception ignores to a point, the political causes he became entrenched in, including Tariff Reform and the Defence of India movement.

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52Cannadine, *Class in Britain*.  
The Press’s interest in the Duke was part of its wider interest in the aristocracy who had become more visible in the inter-war period. As The Times put it: ‘shop girl and the schoolboy not only know that the countess of X brought her daughter to some fashionable reception and that Lady Y looked pretty in grey and silver at the race course, but they may actually behold these personages taken in unguarded moments in their habits where they live’. The Press as a source is central to the perception of the Duke and his contemporaries. G.S. Street in 1910 called the aristocracy a family: ‘it was a large family, this small community mostly related and mutually known. You were either in or outside it’. Those both inside and outside enjoyed its visibility and this very visibility led to a class that not only could be emulated but was also open to scrutiny. The behaviour of the interwar young aristocracy, in particular those who had not fought in the First World War, was followed by the Press and, in turn, there were groups infamously named the Bright Young Things who courted the Press. Loelia Ponsonby, daughter of a baron who was brought up in St. James’ Palace, was a young socialite during the interwar years and inventor of the ‘bottle party’, and her cousin Elizabeth Ponsonby was one of the leading members of the Bright Young Things. Loelia became the third wife of the second Duke of Westminster and wrote an enduring autobiography that centres on her marriage and casts light onto the world of the second Duke of Westminster, his houses, travel and tastes. She gives insight into the frivolity of his life at times. Evelyn Waugh, Michael Arlen, Noel Coward and Cecil Beaton joined in her circle of Bright Young People before she met and married the Duke.

The use of the Press in this thesis seeks to provide evidence of his political views and causes as well as his private life. The press coverage also allows the thesis to test some of the conclusions Cannadine and others have formed about the Duke. The manner in which the aristocracy was reported and a focused analysis of the main newspapers’ coverage of the Duke of Westminster adds to the historiography of the relationship between the Press and Society during the period of the Press Barons and at a time of the increase in newspaper readership in Britain. Adrian Bingham’s work on the use of the Press as a source for social history has allowed me to build on his research and explore new perspectives of the Duke’s life. The analysis of Press coverage gives the writer access to professional photographs, descriptions and eye witness reporting. The

53 The Times, 4 Jan. 1912.

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position of articles and the political leaning of the newspapers are hugely significant. There is also the fact that the researcher can never know who read or if the articles were widely or ever read by the newspaper’s readership. One of the interesting facts to note in the press coverage is that contemporary press coverage focused more on criticism of the Duke of Bedford’s sale of Covent Garden as a personal affront to the working classes than on the second Duke of Westminster’s sale of land in London, and the painting the Blue Boy by Gainsborough, a fact that will be further explored in chapter 3 and the international coverage of the sale of Blue Boy in chapter 4. The inclusion of the major Chinese papers, the New York Times, The Chicago Times and the Times of India have allowed the thesis to gain insight into the perception of the Duke abroad. The coverage outside of Britain has a more tabloid feel in some instances. Both the tone and detail of the articles published abroad are very different than those published in Britain. The Duke also used newspapers to promote his politics and to fundraise. The Press forms the backbone of the resources used in the thesis.

There are three major biographies of the Duke, the first was written thirteen years after the Duke’s death: Lord of London, a biography of the 2nd Duke of Westminster by Michael Harrison, published in 1966, lacks depth and focuses on his relationships and marriages. It is written in a literary style imposing feelings and reactions to the Duke and those around him in the manner of historical fiction. The book reads like romantic fiction and often describes events in detail which can only be imagined. Bend’Or, the Golden Duke of Westminster by Leslie Field was published in 1983 and focuses on his war record and his possessions. It is a frivolous account which contains historical inaccuracies and lack of research. It is at times biased both in favour of, and against, the Duke. Bend’Or, Duke of Westminster was written in 1985 by George Ridley, his estate manager at Eaton and executor of his will, who had started in the Duke’s employ at the age of seventeen as an estate keeper in 1926. This is an elegy by a loyal worker to a boss he admired and idolised. The writer, in the closing paragraph, admits this: ‘The reader may feel that I have portrayed Bend’Or in a more than favourable light, but he was to me a giant among men, a personality transcending all others whom I have ever met…hard to live with but stimulating, and creating a vitality which permeated his whole staff…To most he was but a name but the name was magic’. The Duke’s widow Anne wrote

57Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 104. George Ridley draws attention to the fact that Leslie Field recounts the fact that the Duke allowed the guards of the Tara prisoners, during the First World war rescue, be shot. This is not the case as attested by the diaries of an eye witness, Captain William and an eye witness account in The Times, 16 March 1963.
the foreword and referred to the author as a ‘guide, philosopher and dear friend’ to the Duke. Ridley was given access to the Duke’s letters and accounts by his widow and focused on the Duke’s military career. The Duke’s personal life and in particular his divorces were given very little coverage. John Brooks’ review of the book in the London Review of Books described the biography thus: ‘Ridley’s protective attitude towards his subject is so undisguised as to be endearing. He paints him as a model of the aristocratic ideal, and explains away or skims over the rough spots…even discounting Ridley’s advocacy, Bend’Or comes through as a generally upright and responsible man’. The biography is organised chronologically and puts a positive slant on everything the Duke did. His explanation of the Duke’s controversial personal life, which was so at odds with the first Duke is almost complimentary when he bestows on the first Duke the title of ‘symbol of Victorian values’ and calls the second Duke from a ‘different generation.’ He sees importance and resonance in all the Duke’s actions up until the end of his life. Ridley also constantly regales stories of how much the tenants and employees of the Duke adored him. The title: Bend’or, Duke of Westminster: A Personal Memoir is very indicative of what the reader is to expect, it does not purport to be anything more than memories from a loyal servant. The book does give access to a great number of primary sources and in particular letters written to family members by the Duke which was of great value to me as I was denied access to his personal papers.

Loelia Ponsonby, his third wife’s autobiography, Grace and Favour, is the story of Loelia’s life before her marriage, during her marriage and ends with her divorce. Her recollections of their engagement, short courtship and hectic life are detailed and informative. She does not gloss over his temper and spoilt behaviour but she does mention that during the Second World War she used her petrol rations to visit him, thereby showing an affection that lasted a lifetime. There are very few insights into anything other than their social life and continuous travel. The vivid descriptions of the houses, parties and trips make it an important addition to the memoirs of the period. Her choice of the title alone shows her own view of the main achievement of her life. She later became a society journalist and covered the marriage of Princess Grace of Monaco for House and Garden. The style of writing in her memoirs is descriptive and accessible. The book holds its own in the genre of memoirs of rich and titled women but has

59Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, Foreword.
61Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 133.
62ibid.
63Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 154.
64Ponsonby, Grace and favour.
none of the barbed wit or insight that the diaries of Chips Channon are brimming over with. Loelia Ponsonby is favourable towards most of her contemporaries and spends the majority of the book writing purely about herself and the Duke. Her choice of career after her marriage is indicative as to how many of her class used their titles and access to the aristocracy to write about great ceremonial events and palatial homes. This also shows the level of interest in that class and a way for some members to make a living from it. Her memoir is full of spirited youthful enthusiasm for a life that was losing its shine for the Duke. The wealth of descriptions and observations is invaluable in light of the primary sources available on his life. The limitation of the book is that there is a long build up to her marriage which makes it a more relevant source for those researching the ‘Bright Young Things’. It was a time before she married her duke, with what is described in a review of her book, as

‘his dangerous charm, his unsteady past, his benevolence, ruthlessness and snobbery. For five years her...marriage survived his terrible jealousy, then failed, and the last chapter concludes the quieter decades to follow which she lived alone....All in all, we learn much more about the Duke than the Duchess, but she gives a social butterfly-eye's view of the period. While it does not have quite the substance or personal lustre of Lady Diana Cooper's books it is for that audience’. 65

The descriptions of her life as a duchess are very much from her point of view. She admits to being ‘scared of him’ which indicates a very unequal relationship but her affection for him resonates right up until his death.66 Her writing style is very accessible and full of personal stories. She is very enthusiastic in her vivid descriptions of the interiors of houses and the jewellery she was gifted. The challenges of the source are in her lack of detail pertaining to the Duke’s life. She writes in a manner that shows the distance between them. He was so much older and even if she was interested in his politics, from her writing it is clear he did not discuss them with her. The strength of the source is in her insight into how little time he spent reading the political papers of causes he was involved in, how restless their lives were and how reticent he was even in his marriage. The memoir is very much her memories and it remains a valuable insight into how she spent her time before, during, and to a lesser sense after her marriage. The weakness of the source is that she knew very little of his life before or after her marriage to him. She admits she doesn’t know how he spent his time before their marriage and from her descriptions of evenings they spent together, she remained on the periphery of his life.67

66Ponsonby, Grace and favour, p181.
67Ibid.
The memoir does have a place as the only memoir written by someone close to him but her youth and the nature of their relationship limits the value of the information within the book. The photographs are for the most part of the duchess and of the houses they lived in which have value and give insight into her personality and the pleasure she took from her appearance.

The approach and shape of the thesis was dictated by the fact that archives at Eaton refused access to anything other than newspaper articles and household lists. These were the same articles I accessed online, with the ongoing theme of the Duke as a war hero. The lists of properties and the number of servants was information already available in George Ridley’s book. George Ridley and Loelia Ponsonby do both reiterate the fact that the second Duke of Westminster rarely wrote or spoke. This makes the image of him difficult to ascertain. The primary sources available to me were the letters from the Duke and from Winston Churchill in the Churchill Archives, the newspaper coverage of the Duke, international and national, and his divorce and military records at the National Archives in Kew. Winston Churchill was an incredibly prolific correspondent with the letters to and from the Duke charting from the early 1900s up to the early 1950s. The topics range from political causes, family matters, military advice to short notes arranging for lunch. The archives are incredibly well digitised and the letters themselves give insight into arrangements, particularly with regard to the closeness between the two gentlemen. Churchill was strong in his opinions at times. The long history they shared made him very direct with the Duke, particularly in 1940, when he included a private anecdote to remind the Duke of their friendship beyond his position in government. The Duke however had no memory of the man that Churchill was comparing the Duke to.68 The familiar tone and sheer volume of the correspondence shows how close the two men were. Churchill asked the second Duke of Westminster for investments, influence in his son’s election campaign, he borrowed a car from him, holidayed with him many times and was always happy to respond to his letters. The Churchill Archives were incredibly valuable to my thesis due to the extensive and varied resources and the period of history they covered. Churchill’s incredible writing skills and his position in British history made his relationship with the Duke all the more historically significant.

68Letter to the second Duke of Westminster from Sir Winston Spencer Churchill, Chartwell Papers (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 19/2A). When working in Chatsworth the wealth of correspondence between Churchill and the Duke of Devonshire was indicative of how much Churchill wrote, often lobbying for a cause.
The voice of the Duke was difficult to find as he was so reticent. His only speech in the House of Lords was his maiden speech and it defined his political agenda as he spoke about his investments in South Africa. His use of the Press to further his political aims through articles and letters was indicative of both the time he lived in and his own respect for the power of the press. The international press varied in its coverage of the Duke. The American papers focused on the more social aspects of his life through coverage of his divorces, while the *Times of India* wrote about his politics and his interest in India. The National newspapers followed his private life, covered his spending and politics. The rise in the readership of newspapers and the creation of pictorial periodicals meant that the third marriage of the Duke was a popular topic reported with photographs. Adrian Bingham’s research was a valuable resource in the two chapters on the press. His two books remain superb introductions to the value of popular press as a resource particularly when studying the coverage of a personality. In the introduction to his chapter titled ‘Gossip and Scandal: Scrutinising Public Figures’ in his book *Family Newspapers Sex, Private life and the British Popular Press 1918-78*, he perfectly describes why the popular press is so useful in studying public figures:

Reporters were always able to write about “ordinary” individuals unexpectedly caught up in extraordinary events, but in order to ensure a steady supply of “human interest” the press also cast its spotlight upon a regular cast of public figures – the royal family, aristocrats, socialites, politicians, actors, and entertainers, sportsmen, and women whose stories could be developed and updated over months and years.\(^69\)

The second Duke of Westminster was one of those people. The saga of his life could be detailed by the Fourth Estate. The more commonly read newspapers hired journalists to hide in plain sight and document the lives of the aristocracy. The reports were well written and full of detail. Cannadine in his book *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* spends just two pages writing specifically about the press and the aristocracy. I have added to the historiography of the aristocracy, and particularly the second Duke of Westminster, through placing the press in a central position as a valuable resource. The wonderful digitisation of the British press has been invaluable to this thesis. The newspapers as a medium are dealt with fully in chapter three and four with a detailed reflection on the newspapers covered. This media gave great insight into the public profile of the Duke and his representation in the printed press. When looking at the coverage of Bedford and Devonshire as comparators it shows how journalists focused on certain aspects of the Duke’s life. This also added to the wider issues of Britain’s responsibility

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to its capital city, its National treasures and the Empire. The coverage of the second Duke of Westminster was indicative of a wider and more nuanced reporting of the aristocracy and the promotion of the image decided by members of the Fourth Estate.

In the wider literature of the period the Duke is at times criticised for his private life and spending. The most recent addition to the history of the aristocracy, *Entitled*, by Chris Bryant, focuses on the Duke’s divorces and anti-Semitism:

> On the eve of the war, Hugh Grosvenor, 2nd duke of Westminster, told the anti-appaisalment MP Duff Cooper that Hitler knew that he could count on England as one of his best friends…Westminster phoned a friend to say that the war would be entirely the fault of the Jews and Duff Cooper…Since Westminster called his dog “Jew” and hounded his brother-in-Law out of Society for his homosexuality, he was probably happy to consider himself Hitler’s friend.  

There are no footnotes or sources for this accusation. Westminster did force his brother-in-law, Lord Beauchamp, into exile due to his homosexuality but calling him a friend of Hitler is unfounded. The title of Nicky Haslam’s review of the book in *The Spectator* is ‘Chris Bhattan bashes the British aristocracy’ followed by the by-line ‘Entitled portrays anyone who has ever held power in Britain as a land grabbing money grubbing despot’. The source of the review taken into account, it is a perceptive evaluation of elements of Chris Byrant’s book, which shows little balance in its history of the class he continually refers to as ‘entitled’. Arno Mayer in his monumental book *The Persistence of the Old Regime, Europe up to the Great War* uses the Duke as a point of reference for the wealthy landlords of England and his involvement in the Die-Hard movement. However, as a whole, Mayer’s wider arguments encompass all of Europe and only deal with the period up until 1914, so the relevant sections were not as informative as David Cannadine’s books. David Cannadine’s description of the Duke in *The Decline and Fall of the British aristocracy* is mainly focused on his wealth, his landholdings, his yachts and he also describes him as a ‘philistine’ in relation to the Duke’s sale of the *Blue Boy* painting. However his use of extensive and varied sources and historical analysis is very insightful. The prominent narrative of the Duke is as his widow Anne described it in 1985: ‘so much has been written about Bend’Or, chiefly on the subject of how many yachts and how

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73Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 115.
many marriages, and so little on all his achievements, his immense patriotism and service to
his country and utter loyalty and devotion shown to him by his tenants, employees and
friends. The Grosvenor wealth overshadowed everything he did. Winston Churchill provides
scope to see beyond Cannadine’s sometimes straightforward view of the Duke. Churchill’s
opinion of the Duke is best read in James Stuart’s autobiography. When Stuart was Chief Whip
under Churchill he described the friendship:

I always admired the fact that Winston appeared to me to be thinking at least thirty years
ahead. Strangely enough, he greatly admired this quality in others-and in one [to me]
very surprising case in particular. He had a great friend in the late Duke of Westminster
with whom he used to dine quite often, even in the war when he seldom went out to a
meal at all. I couldn’t help but asking him once why he usually accepted the Duke’s
invitations but seldom any others. Bend’Or he said is one of my oldest friends. If he had
not been a Duke, he would have got the VC in the first war. He is incapable of
expressing himself, but he is always thinking a hundred years ahead.

This was the reason for the decades of friendship between the Duke and Churchill, they liked
each other’s company. Their closeness is obvious in their letters.

The Duke was mentioned in Noel Coward’s Private Lives as a rich yacht owner; he was the
focal point of Lloyd George’s ire at Limehouse and he appears in the biographies of Coco
Channel as her aristocratic lover. The historical perspectives of the Duke are narrow in focus
and the prominent themes and terms of reference are wealth and romance. Yet he was one of
the youngest campaigning peers against the Parliament Act and was of wider historical
significance particularly in relation to the political causes he was drawn to. The consequence
of these depictions from the perspective of this thesis is to use these generalisations as
indications of how the second Duke of Westminster is perceived historically and why he is
perceived in such a way. His decision not to speak more than once in the House of Lords means
that his legacy is not as easily preserved as the Duke of Devonshire or Bedford, both of whom
were vocal and active in their political careers. The periodicals of the times, personal papers
and memoirs of those close to him form the basis for this study of the second Duke of
Westminster. They are the sources that give the thesis the evidence to reflect on and analyse
the Duke in light of the decline of the aristocracy.

74 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, Foreword.
The second Duke of Westminster is a perfect choice to add to the social historiography of the period 1900-40. His early years were quintessentially aristocratic. He was public school-educated at Eton College and enjoyed hunting, shooting and fishing. In 1908 the Duke represented Britain in the Olympic Games in motor boat racing, leading the crew in his own motor boat, the Wolseley-Siddley. He was a cavalry officer in the South African War and, following his experience, he invested heavily in South Africa. The manner in which he allowed his name to be used and how he spent his money is indicative as to where his allegiances lay. He was an energetic supporter of the Empire. This drew him into the Tariff Reform debate as his step-father joined with Joseph Chamberlain to protect the Empire and agricultural produce at home. The way in which his money was used to promote the movement and maintain momentum through meetings and leafleting helped lead to a political crisis. Churchill enlisted his influence and wealth in funding a delegation of Lords on a trip to meet the Princes in India in order to protect the ‘Jewel in the Crown’. Churchill was adamant that the Duke be involved, possibly having witnessed the Duke from the opposite side of the Tariff Reform debate. It was a cause that easily attracted such a supporter of the status quo in the British Empire. The Duke’s military career reached its peak in the First World War. He financed and led the first armoured car brigade and was awarded the DSO. The extent to which his name and title were held in esteem is pertinent to the haste with which Churchill dealt with the knowledge that his friend had joined a right-wing group in the early stages of the Second World War. His name and title could be not traitorous in the way of the gathering storm.

This thesis does not seek to exonerate or defend the historical image of the second Duke of Westminster. It uses him as point of reference to put forward the argument that the aristocracy did not lose but often adapted their influence and prominence in all areas of British society. The Parliament Act removed the political power of the Peers; they could no longer veto bills however they could amend and discuss bills. The second Duke of Westminster chose to use his name to protect and further the cause of the Empire. His main source of power and influence was his money, and his name drew other Lords to the cause. The Duke’s innovation in the creation of the armoured car did not change the course of the First World War but it did contribute to the invention of the tank and provided an alternative to the cavalry. His interference in the Defence of India movement was instrumental in the drafting of the longest Act in the Statute book, the Government of India Act but was a long term failure for the Defence of India movement and stalled Churchill’s political career.
The relationship between classes defines the perceived decline of the aristocracy. The upper ranks of the middle class did not form its own political group, it sought to rise to the ranks of the titled, live in large houses in the country, hunt and socialise with men whose titles were older and higher ranked than their own. The image which they wanted to emulate was presented in the press which followed the rich and titled to the extent that they recruited aristocrats to write gossip columns and travel abroad as foreign correspondents. They were the celebrities of the interwar period. The Press reported on their financial decisions and change in circumstances. The increase in taxes and death duties was dealt with by using what Cannadine refers to as the ‘Getty effect’, they sold books, furniture and heirlooms to American art dealers, in particular Lord Duveen, or used James Lees Milne to help them sell a house to the National Trust.77 The State often facilitated and financed the upkeep of listed buildings while many aristocrats continued to reside in their often opulent homes.78 There were many families who were ruined by death duties: the Wyndhams lost their estate ‘Clouds’ and the second Duke had to sell Grosvenor House. Lawrence Stone in his criticism of Cannadine draws particular attention to Cannadine’s continued conclusions that the class was destroyed:

David Cannadine devotes several pages to the demise of best of the British landed aristocracy in the killing fields of Flanders. There are long lists of the dead, and moving quotations from the grieving families and friends. It does look like the destruction of a generation. Then suddenly there is inserted a statistic which throws a totally different light on the situation: four-fifths of those of this class who served returned home safely. Now a 20 per cent death-rate is tragically high, but it does not mean the destruction of a whole generation.79

The First World War did have a devastating effect on all classes but the creation of a more egalitarian army had begun after the South African War and the Parliament Act 1911 had already struck at the very essence of the power of the aristocracy. Stone in his review of The Decline and Fall of the British aristocracy claims ‘like a good old social historian of the old school Cannadine starts with money’.80 Cannadine does state that ‘Between 1875 and 1925 very many of the landed establishment especially the less affluent experienced unprecedented financial collapses’.81 The second Duke of Westminster held one of the greatest fortunes in Britain. The death duties of his grandfather did affect him and he did need to sell land. The

77Merlin Waterson, The National Trust, the first hundred years, (London, 1994).
78ibid.
80ibid.
81ibid.
statistical evidence for land sales is lacking in Cannadine’s book as pointed out by Stone but the land survey of W.H. Shepherd does deal with the Grosvenor holdings in London. This thesis chose not to begin with money. The Westminster wealth draws its own questions that will be dealt with in the final chapter. This thesis will begin with the examination of the way in which the second Duke of Westminster was affected by the South African War and how it shaped both his military career and his politics. It will then discuss his behaviour within the confines of the aristocracy without the power of the veto and with a particular reference to his work with the Tariff Reform movement and the Defence of India movement. The third chapter will address the Press’s perception and public profile of the Duke and his contemporaries. The press will add to the sources used in the fourth chapter which will deal with the question of how the Duke preserved his land holdings in London and the way he spent his money and released capital, with particular reference to the sale of the painting the Blue Boy.

In each chapter the wider questions of the decline of the aristocracy and how the second Duke of Westminster personified that decline, his unique position due to his wealth, the Press’s perception of him and the relationship between the State and aristocrats considering the issues of the Empire, National treasures and the protection of London will be explored. The first chapter will introduce the evolution of the Duke’s political life, his friendship with Churchill and his investments in South Africa under the influence of George Wyndham and Alfred Milner. This chapter will ask whether the second Duke of Westminster’s war service in the South African War was connected to his emerging political engagement with the Empire and whether the Duke’s involvement in the First World War was of importance to the State or part of his political awakening and Press image. The question as to the motives behind his involvement with political causes, which were often directed and influenced by others, actually achieved anything, will be further explored in chapter two. The Tariff Reform movement and the Defence of India movement can be seen as natural progressions in the life of a man obsessed by the Empire and the defence of certain colonial acquisitions of Britain. The question as to where significance lies in Westminster’s various ventures into political and especially foreign or imperial policy initiatives shall be posed. The Duke as an example of Cannadine’s ‘ornamentalism’ and Cain and Hopkin’s ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ will also be explored.  

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The Press’s portrayal of the Duke and his close contemporaries will be at the centre of chapter three, looking at the context of the Press particularly in the interwar period. The chapter will have a discussion of the differing treatments of the Duke and his contemporaries according to the politics of certain newspapers, and an indication of both the scale and scope of press coverage more generally. Variations and patterns in coverage will be explored and the differing coverage in international and national newspapers. Was the critical coverage in the *Daily Herald* and *Reynolds’s News* specific to Westminster alone, or were other peers also likely to be given negative coverage and for what reasons? The fourth chapter will bring to the fore the question of the Duke’s wealth, while introducing a discussion of the Grosvenor estates, where the Duke largely abdicated responsibility, beyond specific direct interventions which were founded in his respect for history and protection of property and in particular architecture drawing a comparison with the first duke who was a founding member of the National Trust. The historically significant issue of his sale of the *Blue Boy* and the focus of the Press on Westminster opens up the wider questions as the right of an individual to sell his own property in the light of the State taxing him. The question as to whether the aristocracy has an obligation to hold on to English masterpieces for the State when the sale of those paintings is required to pay the taxes levied on them by the State is an interesting one and was played out in the national and international press. What the aristocracy was doing financially and why and how all this was portrayed to the public by the press is a central question in the chapter.

The approach that I have taken has been dictated, somewhat by the nature of the Duke. His historical significance lies in his title. He did not need to and was not required to be anything other than the Duke of Westminster. His position in Society was unquestioned. His reticent nature meant that the means of researching him required the use of the Press, the Churchill Archives, biographies and the perceptions of others. The common perception of the Duke as a frivolous uncultured spindrift aristocrat is true in certain instances, however, there was more to him than one would assume merely from secondary sources.

As a young soldier, the Duke was nurtured by Sir Alfred Milner and George Wyndham and he held onto an imperialism, borne out of his own heritage and his experience in the South African War, throughout his life. The Duke’s political life was a series of involvements in schemes and political causes that historically were more significant in their legacy than in contemporary times. The constant in the Duke’s life was the protection of the Empire through his position and wealth. David Cannadine agrees with the choice of the second Duke of Westminster for a case study when he described

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The contrasting lives of the first and second Dukes of Westminster vividly illustrate this shift from responsibility to indulgence, stability to restlessness, leisure to pleasure….By virtue of their colossal riches and their distinct personalities, the first and second Dukes of Westminster illustrate in a larger-than-life way the changes in the social attitudes and social circumstances of the titled and territorial classes between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the Second World War. 83

This thesis will test the case and bring the second Duke of Westminster into the argument regarding the decline of the aristocracy 1900-40.

83 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp386-7
CHAPTER 1

The political awakening of the second Duke of Westminster and the South African War.

The second Duke of Westminster saw active service in the South African War and in the First World War. He served as Aide-de-camp to Alfred, Viscount Milner in the South African War, witnessing first-hand the meetings with Paul Kruger, before he was twenty-one. While his military career did not have any real impact on the British military it can be argued that it was the South African War that defined the Duke and the imperialist policies he pursued throughout his life. The personal effect the Duke’s military experiences had on exactly how he used his substantial wealth and also allowed his name and title to be used throughout his life is where I believe the historical significance of the Duke as a soldier sits in the overall argument of this thesis. The second Duke of Westminster’s involvement in the South African War has been attributed as an alternative to university and also to the influence of his step father, George Wyndham, who had visited South Africa before his appointment as Under Secretary of War in 1898. The Duke was sent, in November 1898, to attend a course in military skills at the King’s Hussars in Shorncliffe. While he was training he rode point-to-point and visited the bioscope with Lord Suffolk and ‘Gerry’ where he watched George Wyndham receive the Sirdar at Dover. The description of his training, peppered with social outings, was prophetic of his experience at war in South Africa. He sailed to South Africa in January 1899. The Colonel in command of the Duke at Shorncliffe commented that he had learned all ‘that was needful’. Perhaps he was referring to the kind of active service a duke would encounter.

Aristocrats became officers because a military career was compatible with their high status and often constituted a family tradition. This was very different from the middle-class male for whom entering the army constituted only one career alternative among several others. While the middle-class man may have shared a taste for a physically active life with his aristocratic colleagues, he must live on his income and maximise his chances of success as he had no alternative means of support. Prior to the First World War the nation’s future elite was being groomed to regard war as a necessary challenge. Ross McKibbin asserts the claim that the

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84 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 29.
85 There is no further information on who Gerry was. Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 30.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.
socially inert nature of post-war Britain, the Reform acts and the First World War were a profound step in a loss of influence by the aristocracy in the traditional power bases of a class steeped in prestige and entitlement. The broader change in society was reflected most explicitly in the loss of control over the military. Feudalism had created a necessity for loyal nobility. The anointed king needed a loyal army that could be trusted not to form a separate military, which could threaten the governing class. David Cannadine refers to the leisureed classes as duty bound and historically conditioned to protect civil society from invasion.

The lessons leading to honour, glory, courage, chivalry, gallantry, loyalty and leadership were all learned on the hunting field. The perceived high social position of the upper class meant that the Protestant succession was somewhat protected; the armed forces would not form a separate military interest that might threaten the patrician governing class. The Duke of Cambridge, Commander in Chief of the Army (1856-95) stated that the British officer should be a gentleman first and an officer second. The traditional relationship between the aristocracy and the army was facilitated by the necessity for a private income to supplement the salary. The annual cost of living for an officer in the army in 1900 was £600 in excess of the meagre salary and an additional £1,000 was needed to buy the uniform of an officer. The abolition of the purchase of a commission in 1870 and the introduction of an exam for entry into Sandhurst in 1907 also influenced the makeup of the officer classes. The exam did however continue to protect the public schoolboy profile of the majority of entrants to Sandhurst. Bernard Law Montgomery wrote in his memoirs that the annual fees were £150 and a private income of £100 was necessary for life as a member of even the country regiments. The more fashionable regiments and the cavalry required up to £400 extra a year to live on. He also claimed that the army did not attract the best brains. In 1900 W.E. Cairns, in a book written for future officers, stated categorically that ‘the fact remains that men will follow a gentleman much more readily than they will an officer whose social position was not so well assured’.

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89 Richard Carr, Veteran MPs and Conservative Politics in the aftermath of the Great war, the memory of all that, (Farnham, 2013), p.1.
90 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 264.
92 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 270.
94 ibid.
95 The existence of the exam meant that all entrants needed a level of education to pass the exam thereby creating a self-selecting group.
97 ibid.
98 ibid.
much concerned with the expense attached to being an officer. ‘The youngster will make a fatally false start if by any chance he goes to the wrong outlet for the wrong article’ is a warning from the publication.\textsuperscript{100} Wully Robertson, a captain in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Dragoon Guards, was only able to survive financially through leading an abstemious life and working as a translator.\textsuperscript{101} The decision to join the army as an officer was often steeped in family tradition, patriotic obligation or the lack of other gentlemanly employment.\textsuperscript{102} As the South African conflict seemed imminent and Alfred Milner was gathering what would become known as his ‘nursery’, George Wyndham thought his step son perfectly suited to a commission in the cavalry. He would pass the army examinations, take a commission and join Milner as an ADC.\textsuperscript{103} The athleticism and horsemanship inherent in the personality and physique of the heir to the Dukedom of Westminster made the cavalry a traditional and an obvious choice and one steered by his step-father.

The second Duke of Westminster was a cavalry officer in the yeomanry in the South African War. The use of the yeomanry outside of Britain for the first time in the South African War was the forerunner to the formation of the County Associations under the lord lieutenants in 1908. The Duke’s experience in the South African War formed his personal political agenda for the rest of his life. His interest in military innovation and the protection of British interests abroad formed the basis for his political lobbying and financial investments throughout his life. The title of Duke of Westminster came with influence and money both of which made him a veritable ally. The Duke understood the importance of mobility and speed during war and became an innovator and leader in armoured car vehicles during the First World War which was to a certain extent at odds with tradition in his cavalry-wedded class. The military positions he held were by virtue of his aristocratic status and not his military knowledge and his military career was interrupted by the responsibilities of his title and his own wishes. The importance of the Duke’s military career in this thesis is twofold: firstly by virtue of the influence his experience had on his political life, in particular his lifelong friendship with Winston Churchill and secondly, his image in the Press which will be dealt with in chapter three. The Duke is mentioned by name in Churchill’s book on the South African War.\textsuperscript{104} They enjoyed hunting jackals together on Table Mountain. Andrew Roberts’ biography of Churchill states that

\textsuperscript{100}ibid.
\textsuperscript{101}ibid.
\textsuperscript{104}Reference to the second Duke of Westminster in Winston Spencer Churchill’s book on the South African War (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/399).
‘Churchill’s experiences in the Boer War had won him great fame, given him several chances
to display tremendous physical courage, earned good money as a journalist and made him
several friends for life, such as Hamilton and Westminster, whose best man he was to be in
1930’.\(^{105}\) The importance of the Duke to Churchill was one of friendship which will also be
referenced throughout the thesis.

The Duke shared Alfred Milner’s imperialism with a group of Oxford graduates who became
known as Milner’s kindergarten who were recruited to help Lord Milner resettle the Transvaal
after the Second Anglo-South African War. Many of these men went on to form the South
African civil service under Lord Milner. They included Leopold Amery, journalist with The
Times during the South African War, who served as Under Secretary of State at the Colonial
Office, John Buchan, who became Governor General of Canada 1935-40, and Edward
Frederick Linley Wood (later Lord Irwin and then Viscount Halifax) who became Viceroy of
India.\(^{106}\) That these men had diverse and exceptional talents is obvious in their later careers.\(^{107}\)
Milner chose them for their intelligence and encouraged and mentored them. The Duke,
although not an active political member of the kindergarten, did invest hugely in the agricultural
evolution of British farming methods in South Africa following the South African War. His
hunting lodge in Mimizan, France was interestingly modelled on the lodge built by Cecil
Rhodes for Rudyard Kipling in Capetown.\(^{108}\) He remained close to Leo Amery throughout the
Tariff Reform movement and is noted as having dissuaded Amery from travelling to the Front
in 1918,

Stray tourists are not popular with staffs in crisis. I found Bend’Or shared this view very
strongly and was going to ask me not to come [to the Front]. He said Churchill couldn’t
realise that he wasn’t popular on these occasions, just because people received him
reasonably politely.\(^{109}\)

The importance of the South African war to the Duke’s political life led to his involvement in
the protection of the interests of the British Empire through the Tariff Reform movement,
investment in property in the countries in Britain’s spheres of influence and the Defence of
India movement. The connections that the Duke made during his time in South Africa, not-

\(^{106}\) For further information on Milner’s kindergarten please see Saul Dubow, ‘Colonial nationalism and the
Milner kindergarten and the rise of South Africanism 1902-10’ in *History workshop Journal* No. 43, (1997) and
\(^{108}\) Information Panel at Mimizan.
withstanding Winston Churchill, influenced both his political and financial life, and, through his press connections, would form the basis for his political interests throughout his life. The interests of the Duke of Westminster can be seen in the form of where he allowed his name and money to be attached to a cause.

Thomas Pakenham in his award-winning book on the South African War, *The Boer War* refers to the war as the gentleman’s war. It was the last British imperial war aimed at maintaining control over resources and it changed the structure of the military forever in Britain. The South African War was personified by what Pakenham refers to as an informal alliance between Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner and the firm of Alfred Beit the dominant Rand-mining house.¹¹⁰ The Empire was at the very heart of the South African War and the British were proud of their Empire and that pride was not confined to the aristocracy. At the time of the South African War Joseph Schumpeter remarked that there was not a beggar in London who did not speak of our rebellious subjects.¹¹¹ It was a war that exposed the weakness of the British Army overseas. The horses were unable to withstand the climate and the infantry were often from undernourished backgrounds. The weakness of the cavalry was noted by the Duke in letters to his stepfather.

The second Duke of Westminster’s eagerness for war was palpable.¹¹² He had no understanding of the reality of warfare, in fact, he was terribly afraid there might not be a war. On 5 July 1898 he wrote to his mother stating: ‘things are buzzing along here now better than a week or so back and I think we shall get what we all pray for here, namely war’.¹¹³ He was incredibly naïve and energetic. But this thirst for war was certainly a precursor to his later politics, fuelled, to an extent, by jingoism and the protection of British political and financial interests abroad. On 19 April 1899 he became more aware of the actual war and wrote about the transport system: ‘South American horses in this country seems a farce entirely...if matters come to an extremity out here none of these South American horses would be the slightest bit of use’, he wrote in a letter to his stepfather.¹¹⁴ The horses were unaccustomed to the climate whereas the South African horses were able to withstand the heat. The Duke’s youth and military jingoistic naivety is recorded in his letter to his mother dated 6 September 1899 when he informed her: ‘The only

¹¹⁰ ibid.
¹¹⁴ ibid.
thing for the Transvaal is 2 regiments of cavalry, 6 batteries of artillery—and squash they would go…Tell George we have only to kill 200 Boers in the first round and the others will go home quietly’. His absolute belief in the inherent superiority of the British army and their imperial entitlement is something which steered his politics for the rest of his life. On 30 May 1899, Milner had brought the Duke to the Bloemfontein conference with Kruger, which was not unusual for an ADC, however it does show there was a positive relationship between them. He described

Sir Alfred is without doubt the very man to see it through in the most satisfactory manner to both parties…on one side an honest straightforward English Gentleman, and on the other an ignorant, cunning, unscrupulous scoundrel, but I think Oom Paul has really met his match and will have to give in. The Duke’s judgement of the enemy reeks of schoolboy rhetoric bordering on racism. The use of the adjective ‘ignorant’ shows a complete lack of respect for the leader of the Boers but is perhaps understandable, taking into account his youth. Alfred Milner refused to negotiate with Kruger’s proposals for a new constitution for the Transvaal and thereby committed Britain to war. The Duke urged Wyndham to support Milner in the closing paragraphs of the letter. Wyndham was a Junior Minster to Lord Lansdowne and was referred to as the leader of the Milnerites in Thomas Pakenham’s book The South African War. He advised Lord Lansdowne in December 1899 that the use of the yeomanry was the only way to match Boer mobility. The war was inevitable.

The manner in which the British army and in particular the cavalry exposed their weaknesses in South Africa resonated after the war. In 1904 Churchill in the midst of the debates on army reform referred to ‘thousands of British cavalry…engaged during the South African War dragging sword and lance from one end of the country to the other… discard the lance’. Many British officers of 1899 fitted the stereotype of wealthy men who affected professional ignorance as part of an accepted social code and were content to treat their regiments as an episode comparable to an agreeable club prior to embarking on a later civilian career. In 1899 the second Duke of Westminster could be perceived as fitting that stereotype and subsequently, then, being protected from performing as a traditional soldier. On 12 December 1899 the Duke

115ibid.
116ibid.
117ibid.
118Debates on Army Reform, HC Deb 08 August 1904 vol. 139 cc1380-438.
wrote an angry letter to his grandfather, the First Duke of Westminster. He had persuaded General French to offer him a post as ADC but he was not allowed to take the position. General French was the cavalry commander and had led the charge at Elandslaagte when lancers had ridden through retreating Boers. His letter is full of indignation:

George’s two cables of yesterday the 11th and today the 12th surprised me a good deal and annoyed me as I do not understand my position…General French offered me the other day as galloper to him on Divisional staff mind you not Brigade staff. Leave not having been sanctioned by you surprised me… I can assure you to sit down at Cape town and play footman whilst great things are going on…the sooner a glass case is bought and measured for me and I put into it and carefully consigned to Chester Museum—the better.\textsuperscript{120}

He knew he was being singled out and it angered him. He was clearly frustrated with the reality of his own soldiering and wanted to be more actively involved. The first Duke died before he received the letter and his grandson returned to England to take his peerage in December 1899 and returned to the War in March 1900 as an appointed ADC to Lord Roberts which was a more prestigious appointment. His letter describing the fighting reads like a child’s adventure story. On 13 March he wrote: ‘In the last fight at Driefontein I was lucky enough to get up into the fighting line, and enjoyed it in a casual, excited sort of way while it lasted’.\textsuperscript{121} The description of the entrance to Bloemfontein on the same day is very ceremonial, akin to a conquering army entering the promised land. Lord Kerry described the scene, (he was also an ADC as was the Duke of Marlborough), ‘First Chief riding alone, then 4 ADCs, the rest of HQ staff in fours, military attaches kept in order by Lord Down, escort of cavalry regiment, men decorated with red, white and blue rosettes walked along side singing’.\textsuperscript{122} On 21 May the Duke at Kroonstadt wrote: ‘I fear there will not be much more fighting. I think it is a pity from the point of view of our not being able to kill…and bring the horrors of war a bit more forcibly, burn more farms…so that no disturbance of our line of march would occur again’.\textsuperscript{123} This is an indication of the wider view in South Africa, of methods that would suppress the Boers as quickly as possible.\textsuperscript{124} The ongoing narrative from the aristocracy at war bears no resemblance to any empathy with real suffering. The Duke was enthusiastic and boyish in his military career in South Africa. He attempted to steal Paul Kruger’s hat by visiting Mrs Kruger, who met him

\textsuperscript{120}\textsuperscript{Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 40-7.}
\textsuperscript{121}\textsuperscript{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{122}\textsuperscript{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{123}\textsuperscript{ibid.}
\textsuperscript{124}\textsuperscript{Aidan Alexander Henry Forth, ‘An Empire Of Camps: British Imperialism And The Concentration Of Civilians, 1876-1903’ (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2012).}
happily, but the prank failed.\footnote{Ridley, \textit{Bend'or, Duke of Westminster}, p. 48.} The Duke was the first British officer to fly a flag over Pretoria and earned a cigar for this feat.\footnote{ibid.} His actions during the South African War fit into the criticisms of the army up to and including the First World War but as the Duke matured as a soldier he began to reflect on innovations in the army such as the armoured car and the tank. Westminster’s interest in the Empire and army formed the basis of his political life after the South African war.

The position of ADC to Lord Roberts was aristocratic and very representative of the manner in which the British military was commanded in 1900-14. Westminster as ADC was valuable as a means of communication to George Wyndham. He wrote to him constantly and to Wyndham’s wife, the Duke’s mother. The position and way the Duke viewed the war was representative of the overall military in Britain at the time. The South African War was fought by Boer commandoes with the latest weapons and in a manner whereby the mobility of the British forces was emphasised. During the last two years of the war the British fought with mounted infantry. It was seen as a chivalrous war with daring escapades and sporting valour.\footnote{Kenneth O. Morgan, ‘The South African War and the Media (1899–1902)’ in 	extit{Twentieth Century British History}, Volume 13, Issue 1, 2002, Pages 1–16, (https://doi.org/10.1093/tcbh/13.1.1.)923 (June 2021).} The impression of the Duke while in South Africa is one of a mischievous boy. Viscountess Milner remembered her husband’s staff, and in particular Lord Milner’s private secretary Ozzy Walrond, who she remembers as a great ally of Bend’Or’ whose ‘youthful indiscretions he palliated and concealed’.\footnote{Viscountess Milner, \textit{My Picture gallery 1886-1901} (London, 1951), p. 133.} On one occasion the Duke took Lady Edward Milner on a shopping trip to buy bulbs and orchids to send home deciding that Mr. Chamberlain ought to wear an orchid common to this country\footnote{Lord Belgrave to Mrs George Wyndham, 23 August 1899, (Westminster Papers, WP 1/11, Eaton Archives).} a reminder of the war they were fighting for him. This story shows how the Duke was passing is time during the South African War. He truly believed in the cause but favoured youthful exuberance over militaristic training and reflection.

The period of 1899-1901 for the Duke was a pivotal one. He made friendships that would inform his future political, financial and military decisions. The associations made by him influenced how he spent his fortune and which political causes he lobbied for and added funds to. The reason he was in the position he was in was due to his step-father and his title. This would create a path that would lead him towards an entirely imperialistic political life. It would also create a climate where connections to him were sought. The associations with H. A
Gwynne, the founder of Lord Roberts’s *The Friend* and future editor of the *The Morning Post*, Lord Roberts, Lord Milner, Winston Churchill and Leo Amery were all founded in South Africa. The South African War had been his university and his political awakening to Imperialism.

The Duke’s military career continued into the First World war where he saw active service in Europe and Africa and travelled to the Front with Winston Churchill, when Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty in 1914 and, then again in 1918, when Churchill was Minister for Munitions. According to his military record held at the National Archives in Kew he was a Captain on 16 January 1902 and Major on 19 June 1906 and Hon Colonel on 26 May 1917.130 During the War he began to focus on the improvement of the armoured cars, building on his experiences in South Africa. He was hugely influenced by what he saw and heard in South Africa. His commitment to military improvements and the protection of the Empire fuelled his pursuit of military improvements. He described his time in France as follows: ‘Hugh Dawnay and I work together link-up with the different armies from HQ. We also do a bit of reconnoitring and pick positions’.131 Major Hon. Hugh Dawnay DSO, 2nd Life Guards, was killed in action near Ypres on 6 November 1914.132 The Duke’s enthusiasm for the war was born from his military experience and he used this experience to become more than a chauffeur-driven aristocrat in the First World War. This was born out of his aforementioned perception of how he was overlooked in South Africa. In the broadest sense his political loyalty to the Empire was personified in his commitment to improvements in the protection of the British military image and the Empire as a whole. The Duke’s war experience was reported extensively and his resulting DSO was spoken about by Clementine Churchill. This will be covered in the two chapters on the image of the Duke in the Press.

Commander Sampson of the Royal Navy commanded the British armoured cars on the continent. The British armoured cars were developed by Felix Samson and were largely unreliable and prone to overheating and gaining little ground in Europe. On 26 September, Churchill and the Duke travelled to see Field Marshal Sir John French in an attempt to discuss the development of armoured cars. French was not convinced. The Duke subsequently transferred from the army to the Royal Navy and was gazetted Lieutenant Commander RNR on 21 November 1914 with authority to form his own squadron which became No 2. Squadron

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131 Ridley, *Bend’or, Duke of Westminster*, p. 78.
RNAS.\textsuperscript{133} The Duke made his own cars in Britain and France available and his chauffer, George Powell, drove the Duke’s converted Rolls Royce in the first armoured car squadron. The Duke wrote a letter to Churchill in 1915 discussing the shells attached to the armoured cars. Westminster had 12 cars with 3pn shells. The problem he believed was the weight and he asked for 6pn firing lyddites to be sent over ‘if you have any of these to spare’.\textsuperscript{134} The emotion throughout the letter is palpable. He says the interviews with the various military authorities are ‘most touching and there is generally not a dry eye when we take leave of each other’.\textsuperscript{135} He had experimented with the 18pn that he had been assigned but with no real success. The Duke included the information that President Poincare had seen the Rolls Royce and was impressed.\textsuperscript{136} He was excited by the improvements made in army vehicles. The Duke’s assessment of the use of the cavalry and his maxim cars echoes the decisions made by the War Office to move the cars to Africa. He wrote in the summer of 1915 that he could not see them being used yet.\textsuperscript{137} The Duke’s armoured car squadron was used to effect in the Second Battle of Ypres. The armoured cars assisted the 10\textsuperscript{th} Hussars and the Blues and did ‘excellent work’.\textsuperscript{138} There is no reference as to how much influence Westminster had in the deployment of the cars but his close association with Churchill is borne out by his correspondence and travelling with him to France. On 30 October 1914, Francis Grenfell had written to Churchill asking for an armoured car with a machine gun for his squadron.\textsuperscript{139} Grenfell had previously written to Churchill on 27 July 1912 congratulating him on his speech on the army estimates and Germany Naval Law.\textsuperscript{140} On 9 November Grenfell wrote again giving an account of fighting at Messines, a shortage of machine guns and his own wounds.\textsuperscript{141} It is not clear whether he was given an armoured car but the Imperial War Museum does have a record of a Belgian armoured car assigned to the Northumberland Hussars to co-operate in case of emergency in Nouveau Monde 10 March 1915.\textsuperscript{142} The function of armoured cars in Europe from primary sources was for transport and back up of artillery.

\textsuperscript{133}Ridley, \textit{Bend’or, Duke of Westminster}, pp. 83-84.
\textsuperscript{134}Ridley, \textit{Bend’or, Duke of Westminster}, p.87.
\textsuperscript{135}ibid.
\textsuperscript{136}ibid.
\textsuperscript{137}\textit{The Times}, 13 July 1918.
\textsuperscript{138}\textit{The Times}, 4 Sept. 1915.
\textsuperscript{139}Letter from Francis Grenfell to Sir Winston Spencer Churchill requesting an armoured car (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 13/14/68-74).
\textsuperscript{140}Letter from Francis Grenfell to Sir Winston Spencer Churchill congratulating Churchill on his speech on army estimates (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/5/7).
\textsuperscript{141}Letter from Francis Grenfell to Sir Winston Spencer Churchill commenting on the shortage of machine guns (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 13/45/75-78).
\textsuperscript{142}Harold Robson/IWM (Q 50727), Imperial War Museum, London.
The Duke also spent time travelling as an assistant to Winston Churchill and witnessing the planning of operations. The Duke had met Winston Churchill in South Africa, as already mentioned. He is named briefly in Churchill’s South African War book as a companion on a train. They did, however, as is reflected in their correspondence, form a strong friendship. They dined out regularly together, holidayed together and shared a clear mutual appreciation of each other. In my research into the Churchill Archives I have found significant correspondence between Churchill and equivalent dukes including the Duke of Devonshire but the sentiment in the letters, memos and telegrams to the second Duke of Westminster show genuine care and loyalty.143 During the course of the First World War, the Duke travelled twice with Churchill. In September 1914 Winston Churchill travelled from Calais to La Fere en Tardenois and he took the Duke as his companion as already mentioned. Their aim was to convince Field Marshal Sir John French to send troops to the Channel coast to liaise with the Navy and also to discuss armoured cars.144 The second time Churchill asked for his companionship was when he was sent by Lloyd George to ascertain what the French were doing and what exactly was the tactical plan at higher command? The second Duke of Westminster was Winston Churchill’s sole companion and his writing acknowledges and mentions him by name. His position with Churchill was not in an official capacity but his fluency in French made him a popular companion and Churchill, throughout his life, sought the company of the Duke. They left on a destroyer and stopped off at British General Headquarters at Montreuil. Sixty divisions were being directed from this point, which was half of all those fighting in the War. From La Basee southward the battle was at an intense pitch. Churchill was aware of this and he was surprised at ‘how the oddly calm almost somnolence of this supreme nerve centre of the army contrasted with the gigantic struggle shattering and thundering on a fifty-thousand-yard front fifty or sixty miles away’.145 ‘The Commander in Chief, Douglas Haig, was taking his afternoon ride and, ‘There was an absence of excitement. No one accustomed with the Great War would have believed it possible that one of the largest and most bloody and critical battles was being skilfully and effectively conducted from this point’.146 He questioned Douglas Haig about the intentions of the French and witnessed the movement of divisions by telephone. While the Duke and Churchill were present, Haig accepted the delivery of the telegram regarding the German occupation of Mont Didier. Haig’s reply to Churchill in assessing the French was ‘No doubt

143Devonshire/Chatsworth Archives, Chatsworth House and Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University.
144Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, pp. 87-90.
145Ibid.
146Ibid.
they are doing their best’. They then visited Clemenceau in Paris, Foch in Beauvais and Haig between Amiens and Beauvais and Petain in Paris. The Duke was with him at all times as throughout the article Churchill refers to ‘we’. The descriptions of the luncheons they ate of meat, chicken, bread and whisky and soda is a world away from soldier rations. They were present at a meeting between Clemenceau and Haig, just as Jack Seely of the Canadian cavalry had stormed the Bos de Moreuil.

Whether Churchill was thinking ahead and wanted the Duke to experience meetings with British and French high command or if the motive behind Churchill’s decision to bring the Duke was purely one of companionship is hard to ascertain. Churchill had been instructed by David Lloyd George to use Lloyd George’s name to gain access to the highest powers. The Duke and Churchill maintained a strong friendship and corresponded throughout their lives. The Duke also had the finance to help if anything became difficult. At this time Churchill’s mother was still married to George Cornwallis West who was the Duke’s brother-in-law and the couple were financially aided constantly by Westminster. This marriage further connected the two men. The fact is Churchill may have needed advice and backing as he travelled. Winston Churchill returned with little insight into the intentions of the French who were very concerned with protocol and the appropriate use of vehicles for the transportation of Churchill. The entourage could not leave until the highest level of military car was in place. Why the Duke was there is unexplained but taking into consideration the relationship between the two men, companionship seems to be the most logical answer. He was also a soldier and had a public profile as the Duke of Westminster. Churchill was travelling in his capacity as Minister for Munitions but his decision to meet the Supreme commander before meeting the president, and with the Duke, indicates that his prime purpose was military information. He was also under the impression that as the troops recognised him as a politician, they were happily reminded of party politics at home which was a distraction from the task at hand. The mission culminated when Lloyd George joined them on 4 April in Paris for strategy meetings. The Duke was in a position of influence due to his friendship and fluency. Churchill trusted him and valued his input. He was at the centre of an important mission at the

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147 Ibid.
148 Details of these loans and the correspondence between Winston Churchill and Westminster are available in the Chartwell papers in the Churchill archives, Churchill College, Oxford University, CHAR 2/516, CHUR 2/448.
150 Ibid.
height of the First World War travelling with Winston Churchill to meet members of the high command.

During the War the Duke also lost his old friend Lord Roberts who died in November 1914 on his way to inspect the Indian army. His stepfather, George Wyndham, had died suddenly in 1913 and was followed by his son Percy, the Duke’s half-brother who died in Service. The resulting death duties led to the collapse of the Wyndham estate, Clouds. The Duke’s family connections were directly touched by the war. The war also brought opportunity for the Duke who understood the weaknesses of the British forces first hand in the South African War. He embraced his opportunity to finance, lead and improve the armoured car squadrons. The aristocracy declined in military importance during the period 1918-40 firstly because of the manner in which warfare was changing, in the same way industry was evolving, secondly because of the destruction of families through fatality on the battlefield and thirdly because the political climate had changed irreversibly after the Parliament Act of 1911. The Duke’s experience in both the South African War and the First World War was in the manner of a Duke of one of the richest families in Britain. However, the way in which he was able to steer his fortune was one of the reasons why he remained interested in the military. It was his choice to resign from the army after the First World War and when he wished to return in 1940 war had moved considerably into a new age. The First World War spelt the obsolescence of the horse and the advent of barbed wire, poison gas and mass citizen armies.\footnote{Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 276.} War was no longer an extension of country pursuits, it was now a scientific, intellectual affair.\footnote{ibid.} The conservative nature of the majority of aristocrats in the army had held sway for too long. The Duke had a function as the Duke of Westminster, his friendship with Churchill and the nature of both the fighting and the hierarchy of British army in the First World War gave him a position of importance in 1914. He chose to leave the military and when he sought to help Churchill in the Second World War he had no real avenue of influence anymore.

The second Duke of Westminster in his military career and for his entire life was an imperialist fighting for the protection of the British Empire. His politics were inextricably linked with his class and influenced by the politics of Alfred Milner and George Wyndham. His university had been the South African War and this shaped the way he spent his money and used his influence for the rest of his life. He was a cavalry man who recognised the need for change in mobility...
and he partnered that knowledge with his own wealth and influence. The political battles he fought were for the good of the Empire and the persistence of his own class. The second Duke of Westminster spoke only once in the House of Lords yet he was unquestionably politically active. The period of his life when he was not engaged in war was influenced by his interest in political causes intrinsically linked with the British Empire but he did use the political forum of the Houses of Parliament. On 24 January 1903 he wrote to his mother explaining his reasons for not speaking at the opening of parliament:

If I had a boy I should be proud to see him get on his legs and say what he thought without the pompous flourish and the ordinary routine of moving the address...I am in a position of knowing that in politics, one is not wanted personally but it is one’s influence and money that is most needed, so before I hurriedly decide I am going to look around. 153

The understanding of how important he was to any cause was an aspect of the inheritance of a title, that was its own profession. He was the second Duke of Westminster, that was his function in society and in the wider world. His name and incredible amounts of money were at the disposal of those who he chose to allow use them. His youth when he inherited the title, meant he had no intention of joining the ‘pompous’ ceremony. It is interesting to note that the letter to his mother was written eight years before the Parliament Act, which would remove the political clout of the aristocracy, an act which as much reflected longer-term changes as was driven by them. The organisation of the British Parliament as it stood in 1909 was unsustainable with the veto of the House of Lords in place. The Duke already knew where his political power was and it was in money and influence. The financial influence of the second Duke of Westminster is unquestionable but without his title he was, as Cannadine described, no more than a Rockefeller, Mellon or Gates. 154 The second Duke of Westminster’s income in 1899 was estimated at £1,500 a day. 155 At the age of twenty he was a member of the House of Lords, the most important landlord in London and a veteran of the South African War. He had youth, influence and money.

This chapter and the following chapter seek to introduce, develop and analyse the Duke’s interest in British foreign policy from the end of the South African War to 1940, with particular reference to a variety of key debates: the debate concerning Gentlemanly Capitalism; the relationship between the Empire and the pursuit of economic and landed interest, raised by

153 Ridley, Bendor, Duke of Westminster, p. 69.
154 Cannadine, Class in Britain, p. 186.
P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins; the Tariff Reform movement; the decline of the aristocracy in the political sphere following the Parliament Act of 1911; the Defence of India movement, and the significance of the Pacifist Peers in 1939. This chapter sets the scene for the Duke’s interest in the Empire. His experience in South Africa and the First World War instilled in him a protection of the British Empire that would form the basis of his pre First World War and interwar political life. I make my arguments based on the evidence that the influence of the aristocracy became more implicit after 1911 and political agendas were pursued through back rooms and often the sitting room of Grosvenor House. The fact that the Duke’s name on a letter head still carried political clout and he remained a conduit to Winston Churchill are central to this chapter’s argument. Grosvenor House and the tennis courts at Eaton were places where politics were debated and connections were made. The location and the name of the Duke were held in high regard by politically ambitious men like Lord Lindemann and his money was central to his importance as it could pay for lobbying through meetings, leaflets, dinners with speeches and delegation trips to India. The Duke was driven by prestige, paternalism and imperialism and aided each case in turn by his resources. It is where and how these aims manifested that shows his importance in politics in Britain from 1900-40. His letter to his mother as mentioned referred to politicians, ‘repeating a few words parrot like that he had been told to say’. His own political agenda can be traced back to the influence of George Wyndham, a protagonist of imperial politics and supporter of Tariff Reform.

When the Duke left South Africa as one of the soldiers who had fought to preserve British imperialism, he immediately invested in the land near Bloemfontein thereby becoming economically linked to the Empire and an interested party in tariffs. The Duke was intrinsically linked to the Tariff Reform movement which had devastating effects on British politics; it was his wealth that financed Churchill’s attempt at paralysing Indian Independence and his brush with fascist ideology that caused Churchill to immediately intervene. He was central to key issues and yet not politically vociferous in the Houses of Parliament. This makes his influence hard to measure in its effectiveness and more implicit than explicit but, as a peer who chose to neither utilise his seat in the House of Lords or seek election as an MP, as the first Duke had, the second Duke of Westminster engaged in a very specific political life on his own terms and

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157 For more detail, please refer to chapter 2 of this thesis.
158 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 69.
used his wealth and name to promote his own agenda and protection of the Empire, an Empire he had actually fought to protect.

David Cannadine’s view in *The Decline and Fall of the British aristocracy* is that the 1870s was the last decade of undisturbed patrician pre-eminence.\(^{159}\) The following chapter will address this certainty and argue that the use of the term pre-eminence leans towards total control but does not deny the political influence of the aristocracy beyond Victorian times. Is the Duke of Westminster representative of his contemporaries or by the very extent of his wealth does he wield more political capital? What were his political aims and how was he influenced by the legacy of his mentor in South Africa, Alfred Milner, by his stepfather, George Wyndham, and by his lifetime friendship with Winston Churchill, who would become Prime Minister in 1940. The second Duke of Westminster served in the South African War with the Imperial Yeomanry until 1901 as an ADC to Lord Roberts and Lord Milner. When the Duke returned to England he was immediately invited to become president of the Imperial South African Association which was the first political position he held outside of Cheshire. He was now actively engaged in Imperial politics. The Association had been founded in 1896 to protect the political and economic interests of the British in South Africa. During the South African War its main function had been the transmission of information. Thomas Pakenham called it ‘the principal jingo pressure group in England’.\(^{160}\) The Duke’s stepfather, George Wyndham, was chairman of the central committee and Lord Windsor was the president of the association at its outset. George Wyndham had used it as a lobbying group.\(^{161}\) The choice of the Duke as president in light of his young age and his lack of political experience is significant in the indication that it was his name, his public profile, his title, money and influence that the organisation was interested in. The fact that he was a bright young veteran of the war with a wish to invest in land in South Africa made his selection all the more promising for the interests of the British in South Africa. The documentation from the early years of the association dealt with how the Transvaal should be governed.\(^{162}\) The annual meeting, as reported in *The Times*, involved a toast from Churchill to ‘the Imperial and Colonial forces’ and the declaration of Mr. Alfred Lyttleton K.C. M.P. that the aim of the association was ‘to counteract all anti-British and anti-Imperial influences that might be at work in South Africa’.\(^{163}\) The Duke held the position of

\(^{159}\)Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 9.


\(^{161}\)ibid.

\(^{162}\)Imperial South African Association: case for the British subjects in the Transvaal. issued by the Imperial South African Association, 66 Victoria street, Westminster*, s.w.appendix to the *Journals of the house of representatives*, 1 Jan. 1899.

\(^{163}\)*The Times*, 13 June 1903.
president until 1909 when the constitution of South Africa was written. It was at this time that he invested heavily in South Africa establishing an estate there. At the height of his tenure he wrote a letter to *The Times* explaining the function, support and activities of the association: ‘to maintain British supremacy…through publication and distribution of pamphlets and by organising public meetings’.

He described it as a non-party organisation but added that Liberal support had significantly reduced due to the controversy surrounding the use of Chinese labour in the mines in the Transvaal. The Chinese labourers were imported for use in mines for periods of up to three years. Churchill, who was Under-secretary of State for Colonies at the time was behind the process. When questioned in the House of Commons he gave the statistic ‘The Transvaal Chamber of Mines reported… [on] January 31st the "Indravelli" [ship] had arrived with 1,943 coolies, and that 1,590 were on sea in the "Cranley," which appears to have arrived yesterday. I am not aware in which mines the men from the last ship-load are working’. Churchill when questioned as to whether Britain would remove the ordinance for the use of Chinese labour answered:

> The earliest contracts will not expire before May, 1907, by which date the Transvaal will have become a self-governing colony. In these circumstances, His Majesty's Government, while reserving to themselves entire freedom of action upon the general question of the conditions under which Chinese labour is carried in, do not propose to cancel the provision of the Ordinance referred to.

Churchill’s defense of the use of the Chinese gives some insight into his view of colonial subjects. He refers to the difficulty of importing Indian workers as they are British subjects and therefore could compete with ‘white labour in merchandising, peddling, in trades and in various occupations’. Churchill believed the use of white policemen would help protect against outrages in the mine. This defense of the position of the British Imperialist was to form the backbone of Churchill’s stance on British foreign policy until his death. The importance of protection of British interests at all costs was also foremost in the Duke’s mind. The Duke raised a toast to Lord Milner at all the dinners he hosted on behalf of the Association and followed his stepfather’s political views up to George Wyndham’s untimely death in 1913. Wyndham was a stalwart imperialist launching *The Outlook*, a periodical described by Joseph Conrad in 1898 as ‘a new weekly …its name *The Outlook*…its attitude -literary; its policy-

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164 *The Times*, 29 Dec. 1905.
166 ibid.
167 ibid.
168 ibid.
Imperialism tempered by expediency’. He left the publication in 1904 due to political commitments as an MP. George Wyndham was a traditionalist in many ways. He believed in the right of the aristocracy to govern. T.S. Elliot wrote in 1920 that he was ‘a peculiarly English type, the aristocrat, the Imperialist, the Romantic, riding to hounds across his prose, looking with wonder upon the world as upon a fairy-tale’. He was referring to the writing of Wyndham but the impression of Wyndham encompasses his political and life choices. This was a man who had a profound influence on the second Duke of Westminster in his unique position as his stepfather.

Historical arguments around foreign investment and cultural imperialism are influenced by J.A. Hobson’s theory of anti-aristocratic radicalism. J.A. Hobson was a war correspondent for The Manchester Guardian during the South African war and introduced his ideas in Imperialism, a Study in 1902. He condemned the South African war and believed that Britain was acting in the interests of the mining companies. He believed that imperialism occurred when productive capacity grew faster than consumer demand, there was very soon an excess of this capacity (relative to consumer demand) and, hence, there were few profitable domestic investment outlets. Foreign investment was the only answer. But insofar as the same problem existed in every industrialised capitalist country, such foreign investment was possible only if non-capitalist countries could be ‘civilised,’ ‘Christianised,’ and ‘uplifted’- that is, if their traditional institutions could be forcefully destroyed and the people often with force brought under the domain of the ‘invisible hand’ of market capitalism. So, imperialism was the only answer. While exact estimates of British overseas investment in the 19th century vary, there is general agreement that by 1914 Britain acquired a historically unprecedented position as a global creditor. Between 1865 and 1914 as much British investment went to Africa, Asia, and Latin America as to the United Kingdom itself. Between four to eight percent of GNP was being sent out of the country by British investors in the years 1871-1913, a number significantly higher than that for other developed nations at the time. Davis and Huttenback computed

172 ibid.
173 ibid.
rates of return from company accounting records. Their sets of data are taken from the records of 482 British firms, operating either at home, in the empire, or in the rest of the world. As with M. Edelstein, they find that overall, from 1860 to 1912, British firms operating in the Empire had higher returns than domestic enterprises, and also outperformed British companies operating overseas outside the empire.\textsuperscript{177} The importance of the Empire and the link with the economy was never more obvious than during the First World War when Canadian wheat brought Britain from the brink of starvation in 1917.\textsuperscript{178}

It is David Cannadine’s theory that best supports the argument in this chapter; he states that British Imperialism was controlled by professionals influenced by industry but mirroring aristocracy. His belief is that ‘the driving force behind Britain’s conceptions of how an Empire should be organised and governed were mainly aristocratic, culled from centuries of ruling Britain itself’.\textsuperscript{179} John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson argue that imperialism was political and economic, formal and informal but mainly based on the ‘exploitation of the empire’.\textsuperscript{180} An alliance forged between southern investors, the city and landed interests was to play a leading role in Britain’s overseas expansion until well into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Lance Davis and Robert Huttenback put forward the claim that 64.9\% of imperial and 52.2\% of overseas investment came from London and the Home Counties.\textsuperscript{181} The profits from the Empire were accrued largely by the upper classes.\textsuperscript{182} This puts the second Duke of Westminster right at the centre of the argument. He invested heavily in Africa and was at the apex of Britain’s class structure.\textsuperscript{183} Westminster’s interest in Tariff Reform, the Imperial Fund, the Defence of India and pursuit of peace in 1939 were influenced by his experience in the South African War and the necessity of the Empire for his foreign investments in the light of the People’s Budget. The defence of the

\textsuperscript{177} M. Edelstein, \textit{Overseas investment in the age of high imperialism: The United Kingdom, 1850-1914} (New York, 1982).
\textsuperscript{182} ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} Managed from Canada, the international wing of Grosvenor was created in 1953 when the estate made its first big expansion outside Britain by acquiring the 485 hectare Annacis Island in the middle of the Fraser river in Vancouver. The major expansion of the Westminster invests came after the death of the Duke. (https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/nov/07/duke-of-westminster-offshore-firms-wealth-paradise-papers) (20 Aug. 2021).
Empire was a defence of his investment and investment opportunities. He had bought 30,000 acres of land near Bloemfontein in South Africa. Millions of trees were planted and shorthorns were sent out from Eaton to form a herd.\textsuperscript{184} The Duke, while making investments financially, also had a deeper commitment on a cultural level thereby investing in cultural imperialism. It was this commitment that gave rise to his main political causes which all stemmed from his involvement in the South African War.

\textsuperscript{184}George Ridley, \textit{Bend’or, Duke of Westminster}, p. 71.
CHAPTER 2

What was the political presence and influence of the Duke of Westminster on the Foreign policy of Britain 1900-40?

David Cannadine’s theory of ‘Ornamentalism’ describes a conceptional link between British culture and the British Empire. Cannadine believes that the British saw their Empire through the prism of their class or their status rather than as structured by racial difference. The strength of this theory is the fact that class and status are relevant to any consideration of how the Empire was constituted in British culture. He does take into account the idea that how the British viewed their Empire was linked to the class that was viewing the Empire and also in control directly and indirectly, of policymaking. Which class was more interested in the Empire? Bernard Porter points out that the upper classes were most cognisant of Empire, as part of their ruling class duties, that the middle class were much more focused on Free Trade and evangelical Christianity and that the working classes, generally speaking, were not much interested at all. The South African war according to Paula Krebs and Laura Nym Mayhall marked a moment for British political mobilisation than had not been previously thought. Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins offered an interpretive schema for understanding the connection between Britain and its Empire, arguing that the Empire was shaped by the domestic structures of social relations that settled into place from the end of the seventeenth century with a theory already mentioned called Gentlemanly Capitalism. It is Cannadine and Cain and Hopkins whose theories best support my thesis. The importance of class in Cannadine’s theories did not gain support in all quarters. There are critics of his theories particularly regarding the simplification of the culture of Empire ignoring the importance of gender and religion. Richard Price defends the theory citing the fact that ‘it does however work to explain the mediation of the coloniser and colonised in particular in India. However even in India the idea of Prince Ranjitsinhji the celebrated cricketer was the Indian equivalent to the Duke of Westminster, that [idea] had to grow as part of an historical concept of accommodation and rule’. Once one moves below the level of nizams and princes and, in particular, out of India the treatment and respect for hierarchies becomes more racially

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187 ibid.
motivated. Some hierarchies were more respected than others and this was very obvious in the treatment of tribes in Africa. There was so much vitriol against Cannadine’s Ornamentalism that there was an entire issue dedicated to arguing against it of the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial history*. The cornerstone of the arguments against Cannadine are concerning his focus on class when analysing imperial culture throughout the Empire and also the fact in certain instances political interest in the Empire was not widespread. P.J. Marshall describes Ornamentalism as the term that Cannadine used to describe the outward and visible effects of attempts to order the Empire by binding its hierarchies together, '[O]rnanetalism was hierarchy made visible, immanent and actual.' The crux of Cannadine’s theory is further explained by P.J. Marshall when he states ‘He [Cannadine] urges those who see race as determining all to reflect that past societies and empires, predicated on individual inequality, had ways of dealing with race that contemporary societies, dedicated to collective equality, do not’. P.J. Marshall synopsis

He [Cannadine] believes that in the period with which he is concerned British officialdom generally was committed to conservative ideals of cherishing tradition and hierarchy throughout the empire. It is no part of David Cannadine's brief to prove that the world was remodelled according to British prescriptions of hierarchy. All that he has to prove is that there was a strong aspiration to do that. This he proves convincingly for most, if not perhaps for all, of his hundred years... It is not a total explanation of how the British saw their empire, but it does not claim to be…the cult of hierarchy will hereafter be given a prominent place among the perspectives devised by British people to try to make sense of their vast empire.

The second Duke of Westminster was part of that aspiration to remodel the Empire according to the British hierarchical system. This was a method of paternalistic control that had evolved from his experience in South Africa. The Duke’s political agenda took shape through his indirect and direct involvement in policy making through the Tariff Reform movement and the Question of Indian independence. He was guided by his mentor Alfred Milner and stepfather George Wyndham and formed an alliance with Churchill during the Defence of India campaign.

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191 ibid.


194 ibid.
There was never a question that the protection of the Empire was foremost in the Duke’s mind when he was involved in political causes. It can be argued that fighting in an Imperial war in his teens had shaped his view of the Empire and how it should be protected for the rest of his life. His loyalty to Britain as a member of the British army who had fought for it was part of his identity.

The South African War was fought to retain economic and political control of growth areas for British investment and trade. It was the war that linked financial and imperial expansion. Thorstein Veblen described it as a war inspired by commercial adventurers and imperialistic politicians.\textsuperscript{195} The gold reserves underwrote Britain’s capacity to finance Free Trade on a global scale. J.A. Hobson backs up the claim that the South African War was to safeguard British assets; finance was the governor of the imperial engine.\textsuperscript{196} This belief brings in the political cause of Tariff Reform, which as a political force was radical conservatism\textsuperscript{197} and had come out of the failure of Joseph Chamberlain to persuade his cabinet to retain the temporary advantage given to imported colonial corn during the South African War.\textsuperscript{198} As is becoming increasingly relevant, the South African War was at the centre of imperial policy in the years following its outcome. Joseph Chamberlain introduced the policy of Tariff Reform in a speech in Birmingham in May 1903. The Tariff Reform League was founded two months later. Its mandate was the employment of tariffs to consolidate and develop the resources of the entire Empire and defend the industries of the United Kingdom in the face of the growing markets of the USA and Germany. George Wyndham invited his step-son to take on the role of head of the Chamberlain Birthday Fund which was the main source of income for the Tariff Reform movement. The fund was established by George Wyndham on 8 July 1912, which was Joseph Chamberlain’s 76\textsuperscript{th} birthday. Leopold Amery MP hoped the fund would raise £100,000 for Tariff Reform.\textsuperscript{199} The Duke was then appointed vice president of the Imperial Tariff Reform League clearly on the advice of his stepfather who was a major influence on his life.\textsuperscript{200} In February 1904 Westminster allowed the Tariff Reform Women’s League hold their inaugural


\textsuperscript{198}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{200}\textit{The Times}, 19 Oct.1903.
meeting in Grosvenor House and he sent his support by letter.\textsuperscript{201} The Tariff Reform League was a very well-funded organisation. £42,000 was collected by the fund in 1910 and over 600 branches were established, one with a thousand members.\textsuperscript{202} In 1907 alone nearly £23,000 was collected.\textsuperscript{203} His name and public profile was financially advantageous to the fund. In order to improve the cause George Wyndham believed that local nationalists needed to be reconciled with wider participation in the Empire. The more interest in the local branches the more power that could be yielded in Westminster. Wyndham to this end was the president of the Lancashire, Cheshire and North Western Counties divisions of the League.\textsuperscript{204}

The crux of the argument for Tariff Reform was preference rather than protectionism. Wyndham, in a 1908 letter regarding Tariff Reform, explained that if Tariff Reform was not achieved and if ‘Britain continued its drift towards dependence on invisibles it would become a nation of bankers and commission agents supporting the armies of unemployed loafers’.\textsuperscript{205} It was essential that Britain protect its markets to maintain its economy. The main fear was that Canada would form a stronger trade relationship with the USA than Britain thereby endangering the relationship between Britain and its dominions. The second Duke of Westminster, who had investments in South Africa and interest in Canada, had both financial and political reasons behind his involvement in the League. Preference to the produce of his estates outside Great Britain was the focus of his political agenda and the appeal of Tariff Reform to him was both political and economic, epitomising his sentiments and economic necessity in the face of growing markets in the United States of America.

The interest groups’ anatomy of the Tariff Reform campaign carried out by the journalist H.A. Gwynne confirmed that the banking opinion was solidly against Tariff Reform but also indicated that there was substantial support for Chamberlain’s proposals in the insurance trade and on the stock exchange; City versus industry, production versus services.\textsuperscript{206} The second Duke of Westminster, as one of the established elites, was a leading member of the old imperialist class. He was a traditionalist and a landlord of three farm estates in England, Scotland and Wales and his position as one of the main fundraisers was important to encourage

\textsuperscript{201}The Times, 15 Feb. 1904.

\textsuperscript{202}The TRL secretary TWA Bagley estimated that nearly £160,000 had been received in subscriptions and donations over the period 1903-1910 and that £45,000 had been spent on meetings alone. Bagley to Ridley 23/11/1910 Ridley (Blagdon) Papers, Northumberland Record Office 2RI25/99.

\textsuperscript{203}ibid.

\textsuperscript{204} Wyndham’s obituary in Monthly News described him as ‘the life and soul of the tariff reform movement in Lancashire’, see Monthly Notes , July 1913, p.21.


\textsuperscript{206}H.A. Gwynne, Memorandum on ‘Arguments against Mr. Chamberlain’s policy’, Dec. 1903, (H.A. Gwynne papers, Bodleian library, Oxford, MS Gwynne, Box 27).
the view that Separatism and Free Trade were the enemy. It was not just his wealth the fund wanted, it was also the appeal of his name and the weight of his position in society. George Wyndham in a letter to Leopold Amery on 18 October 1911, explained the political question very clearly, stating that the policy of Tariff Reform would ‘tighten the Union with Ireland and relieve our industrial centres from the back wash of ruined husbandmen. It is a Unionist policy for all the United Kingdom…a square fight of Unionists against Separatists and Socialists’.207 The League was funded entirely by subscriptions. If the movement had any chance of success the economic ramifications had to be linked with the greater question of the continuation of the Empire and the fight against socialism. Chamberlain also saw it as a way to breathe life into Liberal Unionism.208

P.J. Cain leads the historians who put Chamberlain’s motives as imperial unity.209 It was Chamberlain who linked fiscal union with commercial reciprocity and the fact that there was little alterative to preferential tariffs if the empire was to be kept together.210 The motives behind Tariff Reform were of concern to Milner and Amery. In 1904 Leo Amery, following conversations with the Duke and Lionel Curtis, founded the Compatriots Club, which was a body of keen imperialists who wished to make certain that Joseph Chamberlain’s campaign for Tariff Reform and Imperial Preference preserved its Imperial tone and not swamped by manufacturers concerned only with the narrow idea of industrial protection for their own business.211 They were a Conservative party ‘think tank’ and members included Leo Amery, Lord Milner, J. W. Hills and Arthur Steel-Maitland. The second Duke of Westminster was a major contributor.212 It functioned as an organisation from 1904-14 and had a branch in South Africa. In 1905 the Compatriots’ lectures were published and L.L. Price noted that ‘their creed is…comprehensive…it embraces not merely fiscal but other matters…In their opposition to laissez faire’.213 They agreed with John Seeley’s remark that ‘Britain had conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind, for they felt that although territories had been

207Mackal and Wyndham, Life and Letters of George Wyndham, p. 541.
acquired no attempt had been made to create a proper imperial structure.’

Milner as president of the club tried to influence the colonial conference of 1907 publishing in the *National Review*, a plan for reforming Imperial relations which contemplated the removal of the Secretariat of the conference from the control of the Colonial Office and the separation of the affairs of the dominions from the colonies with the appointment of a new Ministry of Dominions. Despite the support he got from Prime Minister Jameson of the Cape, Alfred Deakin, Australian Prime Minster, and Joseph Ward, Prime Minister of New Zealand, the conference ended in failure to agree to Milner’s plans.

Compatriots Club remained a meeting club for discussion of imperialist policy but was never a political party, it is not clear whether the Duke’s involvement continued.

The Duke, as a peer, had more extensive political power in Westminster up until 1911, and his first speech reflected his investment in the Compatriots Club in 1904. The Duke’s maiden and only speech in the House of Lords was delivered on 27 March 1906. Lord Lovat introduced the debate regarding safeguarding the interests of British farmers, who had taken land under the Land Settlement Ordinance in the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies. Lovat argued the point that British settlers were fundamental to Britain holding on to South Africa, ‘what we have got in South Africa we intend to hold’. The sum of £3,000,000 out of the £35,000,000 loan was given for land settlement. £1,000,000 had already been spent on the Transvaal and £1,250,000 in the Orange River Colony. Lovat wished to improve the British dominance in the countryside areas where the Boers were more prevalent. The Duke spoke second and gave his reasons for speaking as threefold: ‘my personal connection and close connection with South Africa and with the Orange River Colony in particular; secondly, and chiefly, from the Imperial point of view of settling Englishmen in the country; and thirdly because of the bright prospects…which exist there for agriculturalists’. He recommended irrigation schemes and counted the railways as having helped the land appreciate in value. The Duke had encouraged the settlement of over twenty families. His admiration for the superior quality of the English settler was apparent in the words: ‘The English man, with his knowledge of agriculture, his modern implements, and his desire for work, could, without much difficulty, once he is settled

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218 ibid.
219 ibid.
there treble the amount produced by the Dutchman. The country had ‘been gained by the blood of our kith and kin…the question of land settlement will [should] not be given over to the possible Government of the Orange River Colony but will be kept for some time in the hands of the Colonial Office’. Lord Elgin thanked the Duke and reported the establishment of a department of agriculture. Viscount Milner closed the debate by reiterating the importance of protection of the settlers and proper consideration of land settlement which would be conducive to the favourable reception of fresh constitutional arrangements in the Orange River Colony. The Duke never spoke again in the House and his speech, though well received, was short and supportive of the policies of Milner and Wyndham. Lord Elgin, then secretary of state for colonies, stated

My Lords, I am sure that your Lordships have listened with great interest to the speeches which have just been delivered by the two noble Lords. They have both had the courage of their convictions, and have taken a great practical interest in this work in the South African Colonies; and I might be allowed also to express what I am satisfied is the gratification of your Lordships at the appearance once more in our debates of the name of the noble Duke who spoke last. I am in rather an unusual position this evening. It is generally the case that a Minister is called upon, often at very short notice, to give an amount of information on very complicated matters; but in this case I come rather to hear from the noble Lords an account of the work which they have taken part in and which they have done so well…I prefer myself in this connection simply to refer to the remark of the noble Duke, when he spoke of the good and friendly relations he had found between the two races in South Africa on the farms with which he was connected. I think that is a good augury for the future.

When the State provided less finance than was requested by Milner it became obvious that private investment was required. The resulting figures according to Lord Elgin, were ‘The actual settlers number 700 heads of families, of which 598 are British and 102 Dutch.’ The association between Wyndham and Milner was a long established one with Wyndham supporting Milner’s agenda in South Africa in the House of Commons. The Duke spoke about his passion, the Empire and in particular South Africa. The speech as his only speech in Westminster can be seen as the embodiment of his political agenda and one which was heavily influenced by Milner, Wyndham and his own experience in South Africa.

219 ibid.
220 ibid.
222 ibid.
The Duke in his political affiliations embraced what can be described as the new dimensions of Tory Ideology, Imperialism and Democracy, after 1911. The Parliament Act of 1911 had removed the power of veto of the House of Lords and the Duke’s membership of the opposing Peer Diehard movement is seen as a natural progression into the Tariff Reform League by Cannadine. ‘The rule of the middle classes is at an end…Democracy has arrived’: the Duke lamented in 1912. The Duke believed ‘we must either unify the Empire …allow it to disintegrate’. In 1912 he wrote that they were one and the same: ‘Imperialism is merely the latest and I think the highest incarnation of our democratic nationalism’. His function as the figurehead of the Imperial Fund (which was the new name given to the Chamberlain Birthday Fund) enabled the fund to reach out to landlords from the Home Counties. This was particularly important as agriculture was the first industry to be investigated by Chamberlain’s committee. The Tariff Reform League needed the high investment of wealthy landlords who followed the lead of the second Duke of Westminster. The political value of the Duke in the Tariff Reform movement was very much linked to the social status of the Duke. This status at the beginning of the twentieth century was impeccable; the royal family attended the races at Chester and stayed at Eaton every year. The Duke’s movements were documented in all the newspapers. The Times continually referenced all events that took place in his homes.

The list of main subscribers at the Imperial Fund dinner on 30 July 1912 includes many leaders of the British aristocracy. The reference to industrial security and national safety shows the imperialist necessity of the fund. The Duke of Bedford was the most generous subscriber promising £5,000. The Cunninghams of Craigends promised to contribute only for meetings in Scotland highlighting the local interests of landed aristocrats. Viscount Hythe and E. Meyer

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224 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 511.
227 ibid.
228 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 387.
229 The movements, accidents, horse racing results and any meeting held in Grosvenor house was most likely documented in *The Times*. This point is further explored in the chapter of the Press.
230 The papers of LS Amery MP (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, AMEL 1/2/21).
231 Details of subscriptions to the Imperial Fund, (Papers of L.S. Amery MP, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, AMEL, 1/2/21).
also had locality conditions.\textsuperscript{232} The Appeal letter was sent in the Duke’s name. The obvious intention was that the Duke’s name would open doors and expand the social networks. The Imperial Fund was intended to finance the lobbying of the Tariff Reform League. The description of the Fund in the Australian \textit{Adelaide Observer} is informative. The article stated that the fund was being kept open in order to ‘give Mr. Chamberlain’s friends across the sea the chance to contribute’.\textsuperscript{233} The Fund, according to the article, was to be used for whatever Mr. Chamberlain wanted-Tariff Reform. (Receipts were signed by George Wyndham and were emblazoned with Joseph Chamberlain’s face in the same fashion as a bank note). The same article quotes a letter from Chamberlain to Wyndham referring to Tariff Reform as one of the most ‘important movements of our time’. The educational function of the Fund was described in the \textit{Saturday Review} as ‘urgent and must be paid for’.\textsuperscript{234} The Fund was to finance, educate and lobby the movement in the Home Counties and abroad and Wyndham wanted his step son at the forefront as the richest and most prominent landlord in London.

The decision to appoint the Duke as head of the Fund shows two things: firstly the political, social and economic clout of the Duke and secondly the openness of certain members of the aristocracy a new kind of political influence. The account was held in Lloyds Bank in the Duke’s name.\textsuperscript{235} The Duke had little regard for speaking in the House. He rarely sat in the House of Lords and chose to host fundraising events to lobby support for political causes he supported instead. George Wyndham, his stepfather, had strongly influenced him in his formative years as his main father figure. The Imperial Fund was the financial backbone of the Tariff Reform League. It was to finance the education of voters regarding the need for Imperial Preference. It was deemed necessary and in the Duke’s view, of the utmost importance to educate all elements of society about Tariff Reform. Meetings were held at local level and this was fundamental to the success of the League. The names of the main subscribers of the Imperial Fund and those who backed Tariff Reform included, as already mentioned, the Duke of Bedford, Bathurst and Baron Willoughby de Broke. Willoughby had been the de facto leader of the Die-hard peers who had opposed the Parliament Act. On 12 July 1910 he rallied peers to fight against the Parliament Act. By 20 July eighty peers met at the Duke’s Grosvenor House and pledged not to surrender.\textsuperscript{236} A committee was set up and Halsbury was chairman with Willoughby and F.E. Smith as secretaries. Westminster gave them a room in Grosvenor to whip

\textsuperscript{232}ibid.
\textsuperscript{233}\textit{The Advertiser}, 19 Aug. 1912.
\textsuperscript{234}\textit{Saturday Review}, 28 Sept. 1912.
\textsuperscript{235}ibid.
\textsuperscript{236}Cannadine, \textit{Decline and Fall}, p. 523.
The Die-hard movement went on to support the Ulster covenant. Westminster did not sign the British covenant in support of Ulster but supported the cause. David Spring surmises that Westminster like Devonshire, Salisbury, Bedford, de Broke, Walter Long, Londonderry, and Norfolk, who also did not sign, ‘found it prudent, or, seemly, not to’. By 1914 two million signatures had been collected. Spring refers to this support of Ulster Unionism as ‘aristocratic resistance to duly constituted government’. The link with the die-hard movement shows a policy of maintaining the status quo and supporting the Unionist cause protecting its position within the Empire. However Westminster’s interests did not extend to Irish politics.

The Duke’s medium for promoting causes was on the written page. He wrote an engaging and informative article in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1912. Before discussing the article it is worth giving background to his chosen medium. The periodical was famed for the standard of its articles under editor W.L. Courtney. It had been founded by Thackeray in 1865 and Rudyard Kipling was one of its contributors. Kipling, like Gwynne and Amery, had strong associations with the South African War. Westminster’s aim in his piece is clear. He advocated the ideals of the Imperial Fund and the necessity of imperialism itself. It is a fundraising article. The Duke’s imperialism was strident and he wrote about it in a personal way. He called it ‘practical’ compared to the ‘arm chair’ imperialism of the Liberals: it was founded on a design for a British world state. For Westminster it was either this or nothing: ‘We must either unify the Empire or allow it to disintegrate. By unifying it…it will continue to be the greatest state in the world.’

The rise in imperialist feeling must, in his eyes, be ‘constructive as distinguished from sentimental’. True Patriotism was the strong sense of national solidarity. He used the terms ‘kindred stock’ and ‘family feeling’ when referring to the colonies. The Duke continually referred to imperialism as a ‘natural and thoroughly democratic sentiment’. The unification of the Empire is for development and defence. The defence of the Empire must be through an imperial army that is centrally controlled. He sees no place for conferences and envisages the

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238Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p.528.
240ibid.
241ibid.
242*Fortnightly Review*, no. DLIII (1 Jan. 1913).
244ibid.
dominions as councils in the administration of the Empire. The impassioned sentiments of the Duke reached their apex in his call for finance. The movement as a great political movement needed money for organisation. Imperial preference is described by the Duke as a way to ‘grasp the hands which the daughter states are so eagerly stretching forth to us across the sea’. The majority of British people, he felt, were imperialistic. They just need to be educated about the necessity of Tariff Reform. He called for everyone to give as much as they can and appealed in the first instance to the wealthy to follow his example through contributions. The practical application of imperialism through tariff preference moved away from the sentimentality of imperialism and towards the application of economic protection of British money abroad. The use by the Duke of familial terms shows his affinity with the Empire and his strong belief in all the colonies as being part of one large family. He wants the readers to feel at one with the colonies but his use of the term daughter shows his paternalistic attitude. This rings true when regarding his own position as a duke of the realm. The Press reaction to the call for subscriptions focused on his paternalism. The Daily Herald referred to his urge to produce a ‘self-supporting Empire no longer at the mercy of American speculators…Men leadership, organisation and money: these are what he wants to carry on a political campaign to carry out these proposals’. The Birmingham Daily Gazette referred to him as a ‘most enthusiastic supporter of Colonial preference’. The subscriptions started at £1 but donors of £1,000 qualified the subscriber as a founding member. The Pall Mall Gazette on 6 January 1913 listed the most recent subscribers as Sir Henry Pellat CVO of Toronto at £500 and Mr. James Carruthers of Montreal who gave £100. Cheques were made payable to the Duke of Westminster and should be marked Imperial Fund. As the Ulster Question became more prominent following the Government of Ireland Bill 1912, the Duke replied to a question in the Cheshire Observer on 13 February 1913, regarding the aims of the fund and the relationship with the Unionist Party. The use of his own words to describe the aims and the objectives of the fund further emphasised his own personal commitment to Imperialism. The Duke wrote

the immediate object of the fund, the carrying out of the policy of Imperial Preference which we believe to be vital to Imperial unity is bound up with the success of the Unionist Party. The party pledged clearly and unequivocally to the policy of Imperial Preference and is determined to carry it out…the proceeds are being actually disbursed throughout the Tariff Reform League…the reason for which is this organisation has the

247 ibid.
249 The Birmingham Gazette, 2 Jan. 1913.
250 Pall Mall Gazette, 6 Jan. 1913.
machinery throughout Great Britain which enables it to place the policy of Tariff Reform and Imperial Preference plainly before the electors without confusing it with other issue[s].

He referred to the speech made by Bonar Law in Edinburgh on 24 January 1913, which advocated ‘a moderate tariff on foreign produced goods and …for the dominions a market preference…co-operation throughout the Empire in trade as well as defense’. This represented a synergetic relationship between the colonies, dominions and Great Britain with the caveat of Britain being in control.

The issue of defence by the Duke is prophetic. He referred to the organisation and funding of the defence of the Empire. The British Empire had a necessity for a centrally organised and controlled military. P.K. O’Brien endorses the theories of Davis and Huttenback in their interpretation of defence spending as by far the greatest of all imperial subsidies whose beneficiaries were at home ‘those at the top end of the income and social scales of British society’. The Duke, in this reading, was safeguarding his own interests. There was a correlation between the defence of the realm and the movement of money out of Britain. In a letter to his own father on 23 January 1911, George Wyndham discussed the cotton plantation that the Duke was working on in South Africa: ‘This venture is exactly the kind of thing which rich people ought to do and all cotton magnates are agog with interest’. The affluent British, following the People’s Budget, had begun to move their capital out of Britain to the British Colonies. The Duke had witnessed first-hand the defence of a British Colony in the South African War. He formed his political opinions based on his experience of colonial war and at a time when his stepfather was Under-Secretary of State for War. He believed in Britain’s right to a place in the sun and responsibility to protect it and the resources they had obtained. The Imperial Fund was a natural progression from financing overseas enterprises as he needed to protect his assets. He had the means and the influence to promote his cause.

George Wyndham invited Andrew Bonar Law to the Imperial Fund dinner on 30 July 1912, so that the movement could be given the blessing of the party leader. Bonar Law had ‘looked in’ and George Wyndham wrote thanking him and showed his appreciation for Bonar Law ‘having said all that was needed to ensure success’. The Duke, he assured Bonar Law is ready to

251 *Cheshire Observer*, 8 Feb. 1913.
'throw himself into the fight'. The dinner had yielded £21,250. All attendees had to pledge £1,000 to the fund in order to attend.\textsuperscript{255} The main fundraiser behind the Imperial Fund, Sir Francis Trippel, had hoped the take up would be higher if Bonar Law made an appearance. Bonar Law was unable to attend the next banquet in October but his support for the Duke and his associates is palpable in his letter describing his appreciation as warm: ‘No one can realise more keenly than I do the necessity laying the first constructive policy of our party before the electorate in all its aspects, above all in its Imperial aspect. No one can appreciate more warmly the efforts of those who are determined to ensure that this necessary task shall be effectively carried out’.\textsuperscript{256} Sir Francis Trippel wrote to Bonar Law on 10 January 1913 informing him that the Duke’s article about the Imperial Preference would be in the issue of the \textit{Outlook} the following day. A copy of the journal was to be ‘distributed to every member of the House’.\textsuperscript{257} The media, finance and the Duke’s name were inextricably linked to the lobbying process orchestrated by George Wyndham. The Duke could afford to lobby in a very privileged manner by writing in his stepfather’s journal. This medium was not available to all individuals and classes. The financial backing of the Duke and his work in encouraging more subscriptions moved the issue to the forefront of British politics and literally into the hands of every MP. The Duke’s political agenda had reached national level and his support of the Imperial Fund had a part to play in the split between Conservative Party MPs and their government coalition allies in the Liberal Party and was an important factor in its defeat in 1906, to the Liberals promoted Free Trade.

The debates in the House of Lords against Tariff Reform were championed by the Duke of Devonshire. He felt that the Liberal Unionist Association was being used to promote the Tariff Reform agenda.\textsuperscript{258} Devonshire wrote to Chamberlain ‘that the Liberal Unionist Association cannot be employed in the active support of the [protectionist] policy without serious risk, if not the certainty of break.’\textsuperscript{259} Devonshire resigned from the government in 1903, and from the Liberal Unionist Association the following spring, in protest against Tariff Reform. Devonshire said of Chamberlain’s proposals:

I venture to express the opinion that [Chamberlain] will find among the projects and plans which he will be called upon to discuss, none containing a more Socialistic

\textsuperscript{255}ibid.
\textsuperscript{257}Letter from Sir Francis Trippel to Andrew Bonar Law (Parliamentary Archives, London, BL/28/2/49).
\textsuperscript{258}The Duke had written to Chamberlain complaining that Chamberlain Birmingham May 15 speech was being distributed by a friend of Devonshire’s at the London Office to constituency offices as official policy. See Bernard Holland, \textit{The Life of Spencer Compton, Eighth Duke of Devonshire} (London,1911), pp 305-6.
\textsuperscript{259}ibid.
principle than that which is embodied in his own scheme, which, whether it can properly be described as a scheme of protection or not, is certainly a scheme under which the State is to undertake to regulate the course of commerce and of industry, and tell us where we are to buy, where we are to sell, what commodities we are to manufacture at home, and what we may continue, if we think right, to import from other countries.\(^{260}\)

He believed it was too controlling and too centralised. The State had too much power. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Marquess of Lansdowne, in the House of Lords, had previously described Devonshire’s aims as ‘not to attack the Government, but directly to attack the Tariff Reform League. He went on to argue that because the Tariff Reform League has gone further than we have, we should denounce its doctrines …and that we should pass a kind of sentence of political outlawry on Mr. Chamberlain and those who act with him.’\(^{261}\) When Devonshire resigned he was able to use his influence to push for Free Trade. On 12 December 1903 he published an open letter advising Unionist voters not to support candidates for Tariff Reform. Liberalism was a lesser evil than protectionism. There were two byelections on 15 December 1903 and the results showed support for Tariff Reform.\(^{262}\) Frans Coetzee argues that Devonshire saw Tariff Reform as an attack on the pre-eminence of the aristocracy.\(^{263}\) His proposals against Tariff Reform in the House of Lords referring in particular to food stuffs were defeated 121 to 57.\(^{264}\) Devonshire’s issue was state control whereas Westminster supported the paternalism of Tariff Reform in light of the Empire and particularly when he had agricultural interests in South Africa. Two prominent dukes understood the issue of the Empire and aristocracy in very different ways.

The failure of Tariff Reform to take shape and Balfour's abandoning of his pledge that it would be put to the public in referendum (made in Edinburgh in January 1913) did not see the end of the policy. During the First World War wartime tariffs (McKenna Duties) were introduced by the Liberal Chancellor, Reginald McKenna in 1915. The Tariff Reform League was disbanded shortly after the First World War, however there were other organisations that took its place: the Fair Trade Union created by Joseph Chamberlain's son, Neville, Leo Amery and the British Commonwealth Union, led by Patrick Hannon. Tariff Reform became official Conservative policy under Stanley Baldwin and was a controversial issue in the 1923 general election.

\(^{260}\) Tariff Reform Debates, HL Deb 22 February 1906, Vol 152 cc 456-86.

\(^{261}\) Tariff Reform Debates, HL Deb 21 July 1905 vol 150 cc471-577.


\(^{263}\) ibid.

\(^{264}\) ibid.
Protectionism was introduced by the Ottawa Agreements in 1932 (Joseph's son Neville was Chancellor at the time) and then dismantled at US insistence (Article VII of the wartime Lend Lease Agreement) in the 1940s. The failure of the campaign in the early 1900s is explained by R.A. Rempel and Alan Sykes as rooted in the change in social order and the political acumen of Balfour who changed his policies to reflect the domestic issues at hand, which had culminated in the miners’ strike of 1912. Domestic issues became much more urgent and the question of Tariff Reform had split the conservative vote in 1906. The Tariff Reform League as mentioned was disbanded after the First World War. The Duke had become part of a movement but failed to attend the House of Lords debates. His involvement in conservative radicalism shows how the Duke tried to exercise his power to drive an organisation through his wealth, access to the Press and influence. The motives for his involvement can be traced back to the South African War and his subsequent investment in South Africa.

The Duke of Westminster’s interest in world affairs, both political and economic was shaped by his understanding of constructive imperialism. He had land in South Africa, Rhodesia and Australia. He had been president of the South African Association until the constitution was written in 1909. During the First World War he worked as an assistant to Winston Churchill and saw active service in Egypt. In the interwar period, Westminster became politically involved in the opposition to Indian independence. The Indian Press had covered the Tariff Reform League with particular reference to Indian Cotton. The Duke was one of 100 peers in the India Defence League, founded on 1 June 1933 under the presidency of Viscount Sumner. The India Defence League was a British pressure group dedicated to keeping India within the Empire. It grew from the parliamentary India Defence Committee and was founded with the support of 10 Privy Councillors, 28 peers, 57 MPs, 2 former Governors and 3 former Lieutenant-Governors of Indian provinces and including members of the armed forces and the judiciary. Viscount Sumner was its Honorary President, with Lord Carson, Rudyard Kipling, Winston Churchill, Sir Henry Page-Croft, the Marquess of Hartington, and Viscount FitzAlan holding the Vice-Presidencies. It eventually had over 100 peers as members. The India Defence League also helped Admiral Keyes win the Portsmouth North by-election in 1934.

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265Sykes, Tariff Reform in British Politics.
266This point will be expanded on in chapter 4 of this thesis.
267Times of India, 8 April 1913 and Times of India, 4 Nov. 1912.
The involvement of the Duke in the India Defence League concerned the protection of the Empire as it stood in the 1930s and also the support of his friend Winston Churchill, who needed a rich ally in his pursuit of Stanley Baldwin through the India question in 1930-5. Churchill’s dislike for Baldwin was extreme, once having stated that ‘it would have been better had he never lived’.269 He was adamant that India would not be a dominion, forecasting widespread British unemployment and civil unrest if India was given dominion status, something for which the Indian National Congress was pushing. There has been much written about Churchill’s pursuit of the Defence of India question.270 Younger Conservatives such as Duff Cooper later described Churchill’s campaign as the most unfortunate event that occurred between the two wars.271 Churchill’s pursuit of the Defence of India was detrimental to his political career in the short term. He never held another cabinet position under Stanley Baldwin after the Government of India Act in 1935. The Act was a major defeat for Churchill, enacting the reform of Indian governance based around provincial legislatures and governments which had been the policy of the National Government.

Although Churchill and Westminster were on opposite sides of the Free Trade debate, India and its permanent membership as a colony of the British Empire was something they were both passionate about. Many historians see Churchill’s attitude to India as unchanged from his attitude during his early military career and subsequent stance as Prime minister. Manfred Weidhron in his introduction to the series of Churchill’s speeches on India likened his attitude to India to his attitude towards the Nazis. ‘Churchill was great in 1940 in part because he was too pugnacious, stubborn, deluded and conservative to be able to adjust to the new order in Europe—traits he had shown in the matter of India’.272 On 16 April 1933, Winston Churchill wrote to the Duke requesting his involvement in the India Defence League in the House of Lords. Churchill subsequently wrote to Lord Lloyd on 2 May 1933 expressing his concern that Westminster’s name was not on the invitation to the Peers to join the India Defence League. He described a meeting of the three men in Westminster’s house to discuss India. He stated he would ‘like to see him [Westminster] in our show’.273 He wanted the Duke involved both financially and as a name on a letterhead. The Duke agreed and co-financed a luncheon on 27 June 1933. It is curious that Churchill had discussed the matter with Lord George Lloyd

270Stewart, Burying Caesar.
273Letter referencing the Defence of India movement in the Chartwell Papers, (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/197/52).
previous to his correspondence with the Duke, and he felt it significant to mention the fact to the Duke. The members of the India Defence League as mentioned included Rudyard Kipling, Lord Carson and Winston Churchill. Kipling had visited South Africa in 1898 and had a warm regard for the politics of Milner having also written for the *Friend* publication established for Roberts’s troops. He visited South Africa annually, staying with Cecil Rhodes. The group within the Peers became known as the Diehards. The Duke of Westminster was vice president with prominent members including Lord Lloyd, Lord Fitz Alan, Lord Howe, Lord Carson, Field Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, Brigadier General Henry Page Croft, Lord Hartington and Winston Churchill. The White Paper, which preceded the Government of India Act of 1935, involved the creation of a federal government and the transfer of judiciary and police to India. This White Paper was part of the policy of the National Government under Ramsey Mac Donald to begin the process of self-government for the sub-continent. The Government of India Act passed in July 1935 resulted in a new Indian constitution which made the country’s eleven provincial administrations responsible and answerable to the mostly elected legislature and it also extended the franchise from six to thirty six million.

Westminster spoke at length at an India Defence League lunch at which he presided in July 1933. He criticised the White Paper and Stanley Baldwin in particular, referring to his gestures towards the USA and Japan and the case of British disarmament. He laid down his conviction that the White Paper would never be passed. His biographer George Ridley claims that ‘Although Bend’Or certainly agreed with the aims of the league, it cannot be doubted that, then as later, he was always willing to follow Churchill’s lead in politics’. Churchill spoke after Westminster and vowed his resolute defence of British control over India and the responsibility of Britain to the masses in India, echoing the words of the *Manchester Guardian*. The second Duke of Westminster also chaired the India Defence League meeting held on 28 April 1934 in Chelsea Town Hall where Lord Lloyd and Lord Fitz Alan spoke. The meeting was controversial because it was held in the constituency of Sir Samuel Hoare who was Secretary of State for India at the time. The speeches at the meeting were relayed by loud speaker from

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277 Ridley, *Bend’or, Duke of Westminster*, p. 143.
278 *Times of India*, 30 April 1934.
the auditorium into two adjacent halls. The Times of India reported ‘the hall was packed and speeches were relayed to two overflow meetings in the adjoining room. Lord Lloyd, the chief speaker, said that they were ‘determined at all costs to see that the Government’s policy of surrender was brought to nought…withdrawal of British control at this early stage must spell disaster to India as well as Britain’ A resolution was declared ‘carried’ stating that the White Paper proposals were a ‘danger to India and to the Empire’. The constant repetition of the argument that the White Paper was a danger to the people of India shows an attitude of imperial ownership whereby the administration of India had been in the control of the crown since 1858. The meeting in Chelsea was pointedly controversial. There is an understanding within the House that members of the same party do not speak in the constituency of a fellow party member without some kind of invitation. Sir Samuel Hoare was not informed of the meeting and had made the decision not to hold any meeting in his constituency until the report of the Joint Select Committee on India had been heard. There was the question as to whether peers should be held under the same obligation as members of the House of Commons. The issue of political influence is of importance here. The members of the House of Lords had chosen to ignore etiquette and hold a meeting without informing the relevant MP and this was pure disregard for accepted political manners. The Chairman of the Chelsea Conservative Association issued a statement declaring the meeting both unrepresentative of Chelsea and held to do harm to, firstly, the National Government and, secondly, Samuel Hoare, whose hands were tied by membership of the Select Committee. The Duke had received a telegram regarding the meeting on 25 April 1934, from Churchill: ‘So glad all arranged about meeting Sure will be great success You must not mention whitewash’. Churchill was delighted to have Westminster on board. The meeting had gained great publicity and a significant audience for Churchill’s cause.

In order to ensure the defence of India, it was necessary to form an alliance with the Princes in India. On 8 March 1934, a delegation representing the Diehards touched down in Delhi. H.A. Gwynne had sent a telegram to Churchill in which he regretted that Churchill had been unable to persuade the Duke to go to India with the delegation. He stated that ‘he was anxious about

280 Times of India, 30 April 1934.
281 Tej Bahadur Sapru and Zafrulla Khan, ‘Indian Public Opinion on the White Paper’ International Affairs Vol 12, (1938) pp. 611-628,
282 Manchester Guardian, 22 July, 1933.
283 Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/224).
the trip’. The delegation consisted of Viscount Limington from the House of Lords and Jack Courtauld, a director of the Morning Post, from the House of Commons. The Duke of Westminster financed the trip. Their mission was to invoke support against the White Paper from the Princes of India who had nothing to gain from independence and democracy in India. It was deemed a success. Courtauld believed they had set the grounding for the rejection of the proposed federation by 80 of the 104 Princes in the chamber. Direct communication with the Princes was needed to ensure there was no real tangible support on the home ground and it was seen as necessary to fly to India again.

The second mission to visit India included Winston Churchill’s cousin George Spencer Churchill and left London on 9 June 1934. The delegation travelled 5,700 miles and resulted in the open letter to the Princes in July 1934 by 40 Diehards promising their support ‘against any attempts to encroach upon their [the Princes] rights and privileges’. The Times of India printed the letter on 18 December 1934. The letter referred to great danger. They [the government] will not proceed upon their course [the White Paper] unless the Princes of India support the scheme…if you yield your destruction is certain, if you stand firm you have nothing to fear. We have no hesitation in assuring you of the strong and increasing opposition to the White Paper in this country, already the best part of the Conservative Party is either openly opposed or secretly critical of the scheme. The signatories amounted to forty-one male peers along with one woman, Lady Houston.

The peers included the Duke of Argyll and Buccleugh, Viscounts Lymington, Chaplin, Fitz Alan, Wolmer and Hereford and Lord Cornwallis, as well as Winston Churchill. The report of the visit to India written by George Spencer Churchill was sent to Westminster with a note stating that it would anger him. The Duke was suitably angered at the treatment of the Princes by the British Regime. His paternalism towards the Princes of India is clearly part of his constructive imperialism. The loss of allies on the ground could result in the independence movement growing stronger. The defence of India was reliant on the finance of Westminster and he was in the midst of the communications. Winston Churchill knew what would anger his

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284 Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, Char 2/224/145).
286 Ibid.
287 Times of India, 18 Dec. 1934.
288 Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/225/16).
friend and his main aim was to gain access to more funds for his cause and his vendetta against Baldwin. The Duke as a member of the hierarchy in Britain had an affinity with the hierarchy in India.

Churchill wrote a long letter to Westminster openly asking him for money on 8 August 1934.\(^{289}\) He blamed the postponement of the report of the Joint Parliamentary committee extending to 18 months. Churchill compared the end of the organisation as being akin to ‘demobilising before the war’.\(^{290}\) He explained the plan of subscriptions through the *Morning Post* once the report was published. Churchill had already spent £500 on a privilege case which he had pursued in the House of Commons. The letter explained that Churchill had put more money into the cause:

> The Privilege case cost me £500, and I am going to subscribe another hundred now. I have been very glad to do this and that I can afford it and I only mentioned this because I would not ask you for a further subscription if I could not feel that I was doing my share. I have written to Rothermere and several others who are engaged in this cause and I will be most grateful on public grounds if you will give a further subscription.\(^{291}\)

He had pursued Sir Samuel Hoare and Lord Derby claiming that they had pressured the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to change evidence they had given to the Joint Select Committee considering the Government of India Bill in June 1933. The report found no breach of privilege and Churchill could find no ally in the House to debate the report on 13 June. The financial backing of the Duke of the India Defence Fund kept it alive. He sent £500 following the letter from Churchill in July 1934.\(^{292}\) Churchill enlisted the help of two major editors Viscount Rothermere owner of the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, the *Glasgow Daily Record* and the *Sunday Pictorial*, and H.A. Gwynne, editor of the *Morning Post*. Gwynne had been one of a number of journalists, including Rudyard Kipling, who had created a newspaper for Lord Roberts’ troops in Bloemfontein called *Friend*. Churchill telegrammed Westminster on 29 January requesting him to telegram Gwynne directly to personally appeal for help in the *Morning Post*. Westminster wrote to Churchill on 17 April 1934 discussing the movement and congratulating Rothermere ‘putting down useful words’.\(^{293}\) Rothermere had become very

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\(^{289}\)Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/227/10-11)

\(^{290}\)ibid.


\(^{292}\)Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement in the Chartwell Papers, (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University CHAR 1/285/186).

\(^{293}\)Letters from Winston Spencer Churchill regarding the Defence of India movement in the Chartwell Papers (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/213).
right wing in the 1930s and Gwynne had reacted to events in Ireland, Egypt and India by turning more and more to the right.  

The joint parliamentary select committee, chaired by Lord Linlithgow had read the White Paper proposals in 1934. On the basis of this White Paper, the Government of India Bill was framed. The Government of India Act was designed in the words of the viceroy Lord Linlithgow to ‘hold India to the Empire’. This was to be achieved through fully elected ministers in provincial governments, communal elections and the involvement of the Princes in a federal structure all with the safeguards of British control of defence and fiscal policies. The essential principal of the Act was the complete abolition of provincial dyarchy. The Indian Council was replaced by an advisory body. There was provision for an All India federation with British India territories and princely states. The increase in the size of legislatures and extension of the franchise did not take away from the safeguards and the supremacy of the British government but the most important feature of the Act was provincial autonomy. The entire provincial administration was instructed to the ministers who were controlled and could be removed by the provincial legislatures. This provision meant two important things, firstly, the provincial governments were wholly, responsible to the provincial legislatures and secondly, provinces, were free from outside control and interference in a large number of matters. In the provincial sphere, the Act of 1935 made a fundamental departure from the act of 1919. The Act divided the powers between the Centre and provinces in terms of three list Federal List, Provincial List, and Concurrent list. Residuary powers were given to the Viceroy. The degree of autonomy introduced at the provincial level was however subject to important limitations: the provincial Governors retained important reserve powers, and the British authorities also retained a right to suspend responsible government. The ultimate aim was to weaken the India National Congress and strengthen the moderates. In reality the Congress was itself strengthened through its election victories. The Defence League was essentially a pressure group designed with the sole purpose of keeping India with in the empire. The Duke’s main concern was defence. The belief was that the princes as the stalwart of conservatism in India would aid in the stalling of the Act. The reality was that the federal element of the Act never truly came to fruition and the British underestimated the effect that the elections would have. The main legacy of the

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294 Adrian Bingham has written extensively on the Press of this Period. See Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy Tabloid Century: The Popular Press in Britain, 1896 to the present (Oxford, 2015).
Act was the amazing success of the India National Congress in the elections thereby encouraging the India Independence movement. The Congress had electoral success in diverse areas like Madras and Northern West India. This coupled with the continued reluctance of the princes, Britain’s supposed conservative bulwark at the centre, to join a federal system created a climate whereby though designed to undermine the nationalists, the legislation instead gave Congress a golden opportunity to aptly demonstrate its governing abilities. The League had done nothing but influence the safeguards which would most likely have been in the Act as a conservative part piece of legislation anyway.

The Duke’s third wife remembers her husband attending a meeting to renounce the White Paper on India: ‘he had not dreamt of reading the white paper which he had come to denounce. He was very popular in London where he was known as a benign landlord and his appearances were so rare that they always aroused interest’. The second Duke of Westminster was bringing his presence, no knowledge and no preparation. The power he had was his name and title. People wanted to see him, and Winston Churchill, having been around him and dukes for most of his life, knew the power the aristocracy had on society and the attention they would receive from the Press.

The social connection that came with money and prestige was something the Duke could provide and throughout his life he remained a facilitator of social connections through his energetic social life that in one case greatly impacted on history. The Duke was conduit to Churchill and showed a willingness to help fund causes he believed in. The physicist Professor Frederick Lindemann was invited to Eaton in the summer of 1921 to play tennis. Lindemann was an excellent tennis player having been taught by Victor Cazalet to a level that allowed him an invitation to the Westminster’s tournament at Eaton. Frederick Lindemann wanted to enter the upper echelons of English society and, perhaps because of his German birth, he needed a talent that would make him attractive and acceptable. He played in the tournament with Clementine Churchill and was included by design at a dinner party in London where Westminster made sure Winston Churchill met the Professor. It was orchestrated, specifically, for the two men to meet by the Duke. Lindemann was intriguing to Westminster, who went on to sponsor a scholarship in Lindemann’s college in Oxford.

296Ponsonby, Grace and favour, p. 92.
297Professor Frederick Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell, became the special scientific advisor to Churchill and his government during the Second World War, establishing the Special branch and contributing to decisions regarding transportation of food and strategic bombing. Churchill affectionately referred to him as the Prof.
298Lindemann Papers as quoted in Adrian Fort, Prof, the life of Frederick Lindemann (London, 2004).
299Ibid.
University. Professor Lindemann was subsequently invited to and stayed in Chartwell in April 1924 and worked with Churchill on an article about the new advancements in warfare.\textsuperscript{300} The connection led to Professor Lindemann being appointed the leading scientific adviser to the government in the Second World War and he attended all the war cabinet meetings, all the conferences abroad and wielded more influence than any other civilian advisor.\textsuperscript{301} He had the ability to explain science to Churchill in a simplistic manner, which was invaluable. He was referred to by Churchill as the Prof and was at the centre of every technological decision made by the Prime Minister.\textsuperscript{302} The Duke had made the connection between the men possible. The Professor was aware of the manner in which society in Britain was a stepping-stone to political clout and had found an avenue of introduction, which led him to Winston Churchill. The Duke of Westminster was clearly seen as a way to meet Winston Churchill. The Lindemann Papers in Nuffield College, Oxford, chart the relationship with Westminster. The Professor kept the programme of the tennis tournament, which is in his archives, and wrote a gushing thank you to the Duchess: ‘one of the most delightful memories of my life…a perfect week every moment of which was full of pleasure and interest’.\textsuperscript{303} The tournament was held on 11 August 1921 on behalf of the St John Ambulance Brigade City of Chester Nursing Division. The friendship made in South Africa had forged another connection which gave the wartime Prime Minister his Prof.

As Churchill’s career faltered and the second Duke of Westminster continued to avoid the Houses of Parliament the 1930s, the historiography of the aristocracy links Westminster with rightist movements and fascism. One of the more controversial elements of the Duke of Westminster’s political ideology was his attitude towards Jews. It opens up a vista into the role of the aristocracy with regard to anti-Semitism and the Nazis. A letter dated 5 September 1921 from Professor Lindemann, returning a book on insects the Duke had lent him, refers to the caterpillar as Jewish-looking.\textsuperscript{304} On 29 June 1927, the Duke sent a letter to Winston Churchill, with a gift of salmon, whose ‘facial expression resembles some of our Hebrew friends that should undoubtedly be taxed in the near future’.\textsuperscript{305} Churchill was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

\textsuperscript{300}ibid.
\textsuperscript{301}The Earl of Birkenhead, \textit{The Prof in Two Worlds, The official Life of Professor F.A. Lindemann, Viscount Cherwell} (London, 1961).
\textsuperscript{302}ibid.
\textsuperscript{303}Programme for Tennis tournament 11 August 1921 and letter to Duchess of Westminster 19 August 1921, (Lindemann Papers CSAC80.4.81 K308/7, Nuffield College, Oxford University).
\textsuperscript{304}Letter from Prof. Lindemann to the second Duke of Westminster referencing a book about insects in the (Lindemann papers, Nuffield College, Oxford University, CSAC80.4.81 K308/39).
\textsuperscript{305}Letter from the second Duke of Westminster to Winston Spencer Churchill referencing a salmon he had caught (Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 1/194/57).
at the time. Both correspondence seem frivolous in tone but anti-Semitic in content. Loelia, his third wife described his anti-Semitism:

he used to lock up one book with elaborate secrecy. This was called the Jew’s who’s who and it purported to tell the exact quantity of Jewish blood coursing through the veins of the aristocratic families of England. According to Benny, the Jews themselves not liking to be revealed in their true colours, had tried to suppress this interesting publication and his copy was the only one that had escaped some great holocaust.306

She believed he kept it locked in case she destroyed it.307 In July 1939, the Duke joined a group called ‘The Link’, an organisation that wanted ‘mutual sympathy and understanding between the people of Great Britain and Germany’.308 It was chaired by Admiral Sir Barry Domvile, ex-director of Naval Intelligence. There was a belief that the Jews were the cause of aggression between the two countries. On the night of the invasion of Poland, Diana Churchill recounts meeting with the Duke when he referred to Hitler as a friend of Britain and abused the Jews.309

It is possible that his feelings towards the Jews were known and he was an obvious target for a group like ‘The Link’. The question of the involvement of the Duke in what is remembered as a pro-Nazi association is interesting. It puts us squarely into the debate about the behaviour of the aristocracy in the early years of World War II. All texts consulted were hugely dependent on each other. Each author referred to another. Ian Kershaw in Making friends with Hitler claims that the Duke was a member of the association ‘The Link’ at the beginning of the war.310 His source for this information is a book by Richard Griffiths : Fellow travellers of the Right.311 He also cites the telegram that the Duke sent to Lord Londonderry in 1938 congratulating him on his part in establishing contact between the leading statesmen of Europe, which had enabled the signing of the Munich agreement.312 Londonderry cherished the telegram. Griffith’s book is damming of the Duke, claiming that he joined before the war and quotes the date as July 1939. He described the peace movement as a core group of positive enthusiasts for Germany and stated that the Duke was pro-German and anti-Semitic. It is not clear where his suspicion

306 Ponsonby, Grace and favour, p. 189.
307 ibid.
308 Field, Bendor, p. 262.
309 ibid.
310 ibid.
313 Telegram from Duke of Westminster to Lord Londonderry, (Public Records Office, Belfast, PRONI 3099/2/19/138).
of Jews came from, but it is widely written about.\textsuperscript{313} Griffith cites Cowling as his source and links Westminster with Lords Reesdale, Simpall, Brocket and Mottistone.\textsuperscript{314} Maurice Cowling, however, merely mentions a pacifist organisation of 1939.\textsuperscript{315} It is Maurice Cowling’s book, \textit{The Impact of Hitler. British Politics and British Policy 1933–1940}, that begins to give the clearer picture. He described the peace movement as having three parts: firstly, from various positions on the left, it was the work of the independent Labour party Lords Arnold, Ponsonby and Noel Buxton and secondly on the Right it was the work of three conservative MPs, Wilson, Calverwell and Southby and, thirdly three conservative peers Buccleuch, Brocket and Westminster.\textsuperscript{316} The group that Westminster was part of is described as anti-communist and pro-Nazi. Cowling described the situation thus: ‘They had been rebuked by Halifax and Chamberlain though not highly regarded by either and in general they could all be ignored so long as serious politicians believed that the war could be won’.\textsuperscript{317} He states ‘Westminster was in touch with Ball, Hankey and Churchill. Brocket (ex-Tory MP) and Buccleuch (a household officer) were in touch with Halifax and Chamberlain though not highly regarded by either’.\textsuperscript{318} There is also a reference to a ‘Link’ letter sent to \textit{The Times} in October 1938 in Cowling’s book. The letter is described by Barry Domvile in his autobiography, \textit{From Admiral to Cabin boy} as innocuous.\textsuperscript{319} Domvile was a council member of the Anglo-German Fellowship and founder of ‘The Link’. The letter, sent on 6 October 1938 is a statement of friendship and co-operation between Germany and England. It states that it is necessary for the ‘establishment of enduring peace not only in Western Europe but also in the rest of the World….The Munich agreement was nothing more than a rectification of one of the most flagrant injustices of the peace treaties’.\textsuperscript{320} The Duke was not a signatory as he was not yet a member. Londonderry was one of the signatories. Domvile does state that he had welcomed the membership of the Duke into ‘The Link’, ‘I was particularly glad to welcome the Duke of Westminster in this manner; a firm opponent of humbug and chicanery. I only wish that he and his kindred played a more prominent part in public life in recent years’.\textsuperscript{321} Domvile was chairman of ‘The Link’ and was


\textsuperscript{314} Griffiths, \textit{Fellow Travellers of the Right}, p. 308.


\textsuperscript{316}ibid

\textsuperscript{317}ibid

\textsuperscript{318}ibid

\textsuperscript{319}Barry Domvile, \textit{From Admiral to Cabin Boy} (New York, 1982), p. 74.

\textsuperscript{320}\textit{The Times}, Oct. 12 1938.

\textsuperscript{321}Domvile, \textit{From Admiral to Cabin Boy}, p. 76.
interned subsequently during the Second World War for his promotion of Nazi propaganda. On 12 September 1939 Maurice Hankey wrote to Viscount Halifax to warn him that Mottistone had reported that a meeting of a very defeatist character had taken place in the Duke of Westminster’s house and had been attended by Sir Arnold Wilson and a sprinkling of MPs.\(^{322}\) The Duke had organised a meeting of like-minded peers numbering fourteen including the Duke of Buccleuch, Lord Arnold, and Lord Rushcliffe, in Bourbon House to listen to a paper purportedly by Henry Drummond Wolff who was an admirer of Herman Goering. It was this meeting that Hankey was referring to in his letter to Halifax. The paper or memorandum was read by the Duke himself and in it he praised Hitler who ‘flung down the system by which the international financier, who is an exploiter, never a producer, has accumulated his power’.\(^{323}\) He recommended that Britain leave ‘the continent to the continentals and cultivate her imperial garden’. He was upfront in his admiration for the dictator.\(^{324}\) Churchill immediately wrote to Westminster (13 September 1939) warning him tactfully that the speech contained ‘some very serious and bad things…and the pursuance of this line will lead you into measureless odium and vexation’.\(^{325}\) The letter though clearly jovial and friendly, had a threatening tone. He opens the letter with ‘I only wrote 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’.\(^{326}\) Churchill continued that ‘when a country is fighting a war of this kind, very hard experiences lie before those who preach defeatism and set themselves against the main will of the nation’. He wondered if the Duke had ‘really counted the cost or whether [he] is being drawn into courses the true character of which you do not realise’.\(^{327}\) Churchill was clearly drawing the Duke’s attention to treason and the possibility of his own internment while giving him an opportunity to blame others. The content of the memorandum read at the meeting was documented in a letter to Horace Wilson from Joseph Ball at the Ministry of Information. It was a summary of the last interview Henry Drummond Wolff had with Hermann Goering. Goering had always suggested that provided Germany was allowed to have Danzig and ‘no obstacles were put in the way of their economic expansion in Eastern Europe, they would be completely satisfied’.\(^{328}\) Ball went on to explain, in the same letter, that if Churchill had heard of the group who are backing negotiations with Germany and the ‘virtual abandonment of Eastern Europe to the Germans and for our


\(^{323}\)Memorandum from Hankey’s letter to Halifax (The National archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, PREMI/379).

\(^{324}\)ibid.

\(^{325}\)Letter from Winston Spencer Churchill to the second Duke of Westminster warning about his right-wing politics (Chartwell Papers Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 19/2A).\(^{326}\)ibid.

\(^{327}\)ibid.

\(^{328}\)Letter from Wilson to Ball 16 September 1939 (The National archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. PREMI/379).
concentration upon trade development within the Empire’ he would ‘press hard for their immediate and categorical rejection’ and the Prime Minister will not be able to avoid giving him ‘some assurance’. Ball in the introductory paragraph made an interesting point, in stating that he felt that there was ‘no necessity’ for the PM to pay any attention to the group ‘with the exception of the Duke of Westminster’. He reiterated his intention to speak directly to the Duke in his closing. The Prime Minister had received a copy of Churchill’s letter directly from Westminster which he forwarded two days after it was received (15 September). Westminster also provided the Prime Minister with a copy of his response. Westminster wanted the Prime Minister to be fully informed: he stated that there can be ‘no secrets as far as the Prime Minister of England is concerned’. He felt it was ‘his duty’ to forward the letter and awaited a response. The Duke had asked Neville Chamberlain’s advice, who swiftly sent Joseph Ball, a senior counter-intelligence agent, to see the Duke. The Duke did not attend a second meeting of the group that was held on 26 September a fact which was also reported to Halifax. Ball reported by telephone to Sir Horace Wilson that ‘he had straightened the matter out with the Duke…[Westminster] wished the PM to know this. He [the Duke] agreed that it was a stupid move at this present time’.

The Duke assured Churchill of the small number who had attended the meeting, in a letter dated 28 September 1939. He placed the meeting in context as small and certainly not illicit. It was a meeting of fourteen people and he cited the fact that ‘I and one other a Clerk in Holy orders were the only two who did not refer to the Prime Minster by his Christian name of Neville…so you can infer they were his friends and backers’. Churchill replied on 29 September in a clear cut statement where he reiterated his warning that opinions on foreign policy ‘when a country is fighting for its life against a deadly enemy, [there are] grave dangers in taking a hostile line to the decided plan’. The content of the memorandum was then referred to with shock and outrage at the charge that the British were fighting to make money for the ‘Jews and international finance’. The relevance of Ball’s visit with the Duke was twofold. He knew the

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329 ibid.
330 ibid.
331 ibid.
332 ibid.
333 Field, Bendor, p. 262.
334 Letter from Hankey to Halifax (The National archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, PREMI/379).
335 ibid.
336 Series of letters referencing meetings of Nazi sympathisers in London (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University CHAR 19/2A/21).
337 ibid.
338 Series of letters referencing meetings of Nazi sympathisers in London (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR19/2A/19-20).
group had to be quashed if Churchill was to be satiated and Chamberlain’s appeasement policy was dead and the phony war was beginning—the country had to be plunged into the war effort behind the Prime Minister. Any move towards peace was dangerous at this point. The development of a pressure group within the Houses of Parliament made up of what could be seen as Nazi sympathisers was dangerous in the extreme, particularly when the wealth and influence of the Duke of Westminster appeared to be heavily involved. Nicholas Bethell believes that the Duke and his associates were not far from the feelings of Chamberlain in 1938 when he had stated that ‘war wins nothing, cures nothing, and ends nothing’, and when he had written to Roosevelt that ‘we shall win not by a complete and spectacular military victory…but by convincing the Germans they cannot win’. The Duke had stated ‘world war settles nothing in the last analysis’. There was a worry that the Duke had added to the mood of lethargy and complacency that characterised Chamberlain’s last months in power. It was imperative that the Duke of Westminster’s money and influence be firmly situated behind the war effort. Churchill needed to warn his friend of the dangers of what the Duke may have perceived as imperialist anti-European rhetoric at a time when Britain was at war with Germany.

The Duke was not alone in his brush with political activism. Salisbury, Hinchingbrooke and Acland are referred to by Cannadine as marginal activists. The Duke of Buccleuch in 1940, called upon Lord Dunglass, the PPS to the Prime Minister urging that peace be made at once with Hitler whom he admired. The Duke of Bedford conducted peace negotiations with the Germans through their embassy in Dublin in 1940 and in 1942, and made a speech to the House of Lords on the subject of peace. The Lord Chancellor called his opinions ‘utterly irresponsible and completely pestilential’. In June 1940, in the list that Churchill received of those arrested under the new Defence of the Realm Regulations, there were one hundred and fifty names and two of the first three were his own relatives, Lady Mosley and George Pitt-Riveres. The relationship between the Duke and Winston Churchill had been very beneficial to Churchill; Westminster had provided money, canvassers and cars for his son Randolph’s

340 ibid.
341 ibid.
342 ibid.
343 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 623.
346 ibid.
unsuccessful election campaign as an independent diehard conservative candidate in 1935.\textsuperscript{348} He had offered Eaton Hall to the Duke of Windsor, when Churchill was trying to persuade the former king to return to England during the Second World War. The Duke allowed his homes to be used by the State during the Second World War. The extent to which Churchill was able to use Westminster’s extensive resources depended on the will and political intentions of the Duke. The Duke of Westminster as a Nazi sympathiser with his influence and money was a dangerous possibility and something which Churchill was able, through his tact and friendship, to defuse. Churchill even recounted a story from their past of a Dr. Clarke, a Kruger sympathiser, to express his cloaked warning to his friend. This failed to work as the Duke asked ‘who the hell is Dr. Clarke?’\textsuperscript{349} Churchill wanted to make sure Westminster was not interned. The historian Martin Pugh believed that Lord Halifax did the same for the Duke of Bedford, however the Duke of Bedford was watched by MI5 throughout the war.\textsuperscript{350} The records of these operations are available in Kew and detail every movement of the Duke of Bedford including trips to the village to buy the newspaper.\textsuperscript{351}

The importance of Society in politics cannot be ignored when the Prime Minister is the cousin of the Duke of Marlborough and his close friend is one of the richest men in Britain. The Rolls Royce Churchill used during the First World War was courtesy of the Duke.\textsuperscript{352} His fondness for the French Riviera was facilitated by his friendship with Westminster who owned two vessels.\textsuperscript{353} Clementine Churchill enjoyed a long cruise with Hilaire Belloc and the Duke before the war. Professor Lindemann, based in the Admiralty and one of Churchill’s confidantes during the Second World War, had been introduced to Churchill by Westminster at Eaton Hall in 1921.\textsuperscript{354} ‘The Duke’s wealth and property were used by the war effort. In 1944 he gave the British Council 18 and 20 Grosvenor Square.\textsuperscript{355} Saighton House was a hospital, Eaton Hall was used as a convalescent depot for the western Command with aerodrome building (part of the house was knocked down for the runway) and ammunition was stored in an Anderson shelter

\textsuperscript{348}Letter from Winston Spencer Churchill to the second Duke of Westminster thanking him for his help in the election campaign of his son. (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/246/36).

\textsuperscript{349}Letter from the second Duke of Westminster to Winston Spencer Churchill referencing the rightest movement in England (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 19/2A).

\textsuperscript{350}Pugh, Martin, ‘Hurrah for the Blackshirts!’: Fascists and Fascism in Britain between the Wars, (London, 2006), p. 207.

\textsuperscript{351}Surveillance of the Duke of Bedford during the Second World War (National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, KV2/794).

\textsuperscript{352}David, Cannadine, The Aristocratic Adventurer (Yale, 1994) p. 31 ff.

\textsuperscript{353}ibid.


\textsuperscript{355}Letters referencing the loan of a property to the British Council by the second Duke of Westminster (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 20/62/69-85).
in Lochmore. Churchill stepped in to ensure that the house at Lochmore was not acquisitioned.\textsuperscript{356} It had been a misunderstanding and only the land had been requisitioned. But there were limits: he did not help the Duke's wife's cousin leave France or help in the matter of the internment of one of the Duke’s German friends, the Prince of Pless, despite begging letters. The Prince was interned in the Isle of Man but left to consult his lawyers in London and returned to the camp.\textsuperscript{357}

There was one other incident during World War II that came to light in the examination of the records of MI5. The Duke was involved with a woman called Mrs. Betty Baudelot who was entangled with three men in 1940. These men were involved in a plot to start a revolution in Morocco. During the course of the investigation the Duke was allowed to make his statement directly to the Prime Minister in the form of a note. There is no record of the content of this note in the MI5 file. The report is very unflattering but it does show the image that the Duke had to the general public. MI5 considered ‘he had been used by these people as a means of getting attention in high places’.\textsuperscript{358} He had been asked to get Navy certs and had no idea what one was. The conclusion of the report is that ‘Westminster has acted improperly’. One of the gentlemen in question, Rickett, professed to having seen Westminster write ‘a chit on the back of a Savoy menu card to the Prime Minster and told the hall porter to wait till Winston gave his reply’.\textsuperscript{359} The Duke’s proximity to the Prime Minister and his abundant wealth had made him a target and his own naivety had put him right in the middle of a plot to gain access to the oil of Morocco. Nicholas Bethell in his book \textit{The War Hitler Won} described the Duke as ‘a man without office but a lion of the social scene, well acquainted with many powerful people including many Cabinet Ministers’\textsuperscript{360} This made him prey to people who needed connections. To a certain degree the lifestyle he had enjoyed and was reported in the Press in the 1920s had exposed him as a weak link to the Prime Minister. He was visually close to the Prime Minister as they dined out together in London. It has been accepted that the society of London was more accessible than New York. There was less racism and prejudice and entry into the ‘scene’ was not difficult. The prevailing issue with the second Duke of Westminster was not only his position in Society but the outside perception of his position and influence. To an extent the perception was just as powerful and potentially harmful as the Duke’s actual political influence. The image presented by the Press is explored in the next two chapters.

\textsuperscript{356}ibid.
\textsuperscript{357}Letters regarding relatives of the second Duke of Westminster during the Second World war (Chartwell Papers, Churchill Archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 20/137C/263-4).
\textsuperscript{358}File on the Morocco Plot (National Archives, Kew, Richmond Surrey PREMI/443).
\textsuperscript{359}ibid.
The Duke of Westminster’s formative years were spent under the influence of traditional imperialists in the form of his stepfather, George Wyndham, his commanding officer in South Africa, Lord Milner and his contemporary Winston Churchill. The resonance of his experiences during the South African War can be seen right up to his correspondence with Lindemann during the Second World War. The influence that a man of his incredible wealth and social standing had cannot be ignored. The decisions he made regarding what movements he would attach his name to and place his finances behind had a significant impact on the course of the foreign policy of Britain. He was sought out and treated with sensitivity at all junctures. The social connections he had and the introductions he could make were invaluable. The Duke helped finance and publicise the continuation of the Tariff Reform League and the education of the electorate at local level on the question of Imperial Preference. He saved the Defence of India Fund from demise, at Churchill’s request. The controversial rightist movement that attracted many aristocrats in the 1930s was a cause he chose not to foster and this may be attributed to his friendship with Churchill and the intervention of Neville Chamberlain. Westminster’s behaviour was not beyond reproach but his political influence is beyond question. Aristocratic elites had influence upon European imperial policies and imperialism had a major impact sometimes accelerating the rate of change but in other ways retarding it. Veblen, Hobson and Schumpeter all agree that the elites or parasites, as Hobson referred to the aristocracy, owed their longevity to the fact that Empire and imperialism helped them maintain their vigour. The second Duke of Westminster was the embodiment of the aristocracy and a leading member of imperialist movements in the period 1900-40.

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362 ibid.
CHAPTER 3


Adrian Bingham introduces his book *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1919-78*, with the statement: ‘Newspapers have played an important role in establishing and policing the boundaries between public and private…proving a forum for the discussion of politics, business and international diplomacy. The press helped to create what the social philosopher Jurgen Habermas called the public sphere’.  

Lucy Maynard Salmon in her 1923 book *The Newspaper and the Historian* stated that newspapers like people have different personalities. These personalities were controlled by the owners. Newspapers as historical sources reflect the agenda of the newspaper owners and their intended readership. The urgency to get the newspaper to print, and word count constraints, make newspapers challenging as historical sources. John Horgan, the former Irish press ombudsman and doyen of Irish scholars working on the history of journalism, best describes the conundrum of using newspapers:

Newspapers are generally understood to be secondary sources for historians but, I would argue, this is not always the case. Their utility as primary sources can, I think, be advanced in limited but not insignificant ways. Sometimes they are the only record of things that actually happened. Sometimes they provide brief items of information, unavailable elsewhere, that can contribute important missing parts of a much larger historical jigsaw puzzle. And sometimes, precisely because they do not know what happened next, they are important witnesses to, and evidence of, the general mindset of populations and elites – and, of course, of journalists, who straddle both these categories. This in itself can be of considerable help to contemporary historians as they attempt to evaluate the motives, choices, decisions, context and actions of historical figures without yielding to the siren song of hindsight.  

The second Duke of Westminster was the subject of news stories at a time when the popular press was at its height. David Cannadine identifies the *Daily Mail* as the main protagonist of the ideal of ‘the middle-class identity and concern reinforcing the idea that the middle class

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were the people of the country’. He believes that this was a role that the *Daily Mail* fulfilled in the 1920s and was aided in this endeavour by the *Mirror, Express* and *Telegraph* in the 1930s.\(^{366}\) He sees the period from 1880s to 1930s as the time when the ‘old, liberal, rational, provincial press was gradually superseded by the new cheap, vulgar, chauvinistic, mass circulation, London based papers…They were the papers of a semi-literate democracy, and they sought to influence events as much as to report them’.\(^{367}\) The manner in which the second Duke of Westminster was represented in the Press both popular and traditional was very much reflective of the owners of the Press and the agenda they wanted to sell.

The close relationship between the Press Barons and the establishment influenced the reporting of the aristocracy and the manner in which the majority of the Press reported on the aristocracy was, as Ross McKibbin concludes, with respect and admiration.\(^{368}\) The image presented to the reading masses of the second Duke of Westminster reflects McKibbin’s assessment for the most part. The coverage of his divorces and weddings appeared in publications as far apart geographically as *The New York Times* and the *Times of India*. The tone in the majority of the articles on his weddings in England and abroad was congratulatory and focused on the opulence. The records of his heroic deeds in the First World War were printed in national newspapers, including the left-wing *Reynolds’s News*, all lauding him as a courageous soldier.\(^{369}\) The prominent newspapers in the International Press, *Times of India*, *The New York Times*, *The Peking Gazette* and *The North China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, printed news reports of marriages, divorces, financial investments and the military career of the Duke usually echoing the news stories in English newspapers and in particular the *Times*. The *Mirror* and *Reynolds’s News* used him often as a figurehead for rich landowners along with the Duke of Bedford but to a lesser extent than other large, titled landlords. The tone particularly in the *Reynolds’s News* is one of sneering ridicule towards Bedford. However the coverage in *Reynolds’s News* of Westminster is very balanced, listing all financial aid given to the working classes by the Duke. The theatre critic, Hannen Swaffer, writing in the *Daily Herald* held the Duke to ridicule from 1931 onwards. The trends in the news stories followed the main events in the Duke’s life and his involvement in causes of local and international significance. Following 1911, there were news reports of rich landlords retracting funding from local charities and becoming less involved in their estates and particularly their tenants’ lives.

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366 Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p.130
367 ibid.
369 Bingham, *Family Newspapers*, p. 86.
and welfare. The second Duke of Westminster became Duke in 1900 and did not appear in these stories as his behaviour towards his tenants was not particularly altered by the 1911 Parliament Act.

The interesting aspect of the relationship between the Press and the Duke was that he was not an inactive reader and subject of news stories. He used the medium to promote his own agenda. The second Duke of Westminster spoke in the House of Lords only once but wrote articles and letters for *The Times*, the *Spectator* and the *Fortnightly Review*, defending his stance on foot and mouth disease, Tariff Reform and lobbying for the Imperial Fund thereby engaging with the Fourth Estate. He valued the Press to the extent that he also attempted to invest in it. He sued his own niece for questioning his loyalty to the British Empire in a college newspaper and by avoiding his own divorce court proceedings, he allowed the stories of infidelities and marital misbehaviour appear in the dailies undefended. Examination of press coverage of the Duke shows that he was observed extensively and written about constantly. He forged relationships with the Press and Winston Churchill asked for his help to gain press support for his son Randolph’s election campaign, a necessity in a time when the Fourth Estate was more independent of political parties as newspapers like the *Westminster Gazette* folded. Newspaper articles were now flooded with descriptions and photographs or illustrations of aristocrats which more people than ever were reading. The Duke lived his life in the spotlight. The second Duke of Westminster’s third wedding was inundated with onlookers and cameras were mounted on cars. The Duke drew attention from the Press because he was elusive. The second Duchess, Loelia Ponsonby, who wrote an autobiography of her life with the Duke, gives great insight into this fact. Her marriage at twenty-eight propelled her into an antiquated world which she found oppressive. She found her husband, after their marriage, unwilling to attend parties and a man no one said no to, he was petulant and difficult. He rarely went to London. However he was perceived by many as the golden Duke of London who had a friendship with Viscount Rothermere and Baron Beaverbrook. His movements were watched and family events reported. The world in which the Duke resided was very different from his grandfather and this exposure came in the context of the greater circulation of the newspapers and the era of the

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370 Letter from Winston Spencer Churchill requesting the second Duke of Westminster’s help with his son Randolph Churchill’s press coverage in his election campaign (Churchill archives, Churchill College, Cambridge University, CHAR 2/246/36). Randolph was Tariff reform candidate.

371 Loelia Ponsonby, *Grace and favour, The memoirs of Loelia Duchess of Westminster* (London, 1961) tells a story of the Duke sweeping a dressing table set from Lady Blessington’s collection, a gift from George IV, into a waste paper basket and then replacing it at a later date (p. 201), reports the Duke hosting a dinner party while she being presented to King (p. 196) and writes ‘Benny insisted on refusing every invitation’ (p. 195).

372 Field, *Bendor*. 

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Press Barons. In order to put in context the coverage of the second Duke of Westminster and the aristocracy in the press, the relationship between the aristocracy and the Press and Society needs to be presented and explained.

The importance of the Press is linked to the circulation of the major newspapers, in particular the *Daily Express* and *The Times*, which increased in the interwar period. More people were reading newspapers due to an increase in literacy and the consequence of the exposure of the aristocracy to the glare of the Press was both courted and shunned. The newspapers were more attractive, they had photographs, advertisements, illustrations and were more affordable. David Cannadine believes, as already mentioned, that the British Press changed from the 1880s to 1930s with the decline of local papers and the increase in emphasis on features and articles about London. They no longer printed entire speeches from the House of Commons but tried to influence their readership. The newspapers used gimmicks to attract readers and sought to influence rather than report. Lord Salisbury referred to the *Mail* as ‘a paper written for office boys by office boys’. The aristocracy in Britain became more exposed in the inter-war period; they were an attractive topic, they looked good, did interesting things and travelled to exotic places. Lord Northcliffe believed ‘nine women out of ten would read about an evening dress costing a great deal of money…the sort of dress they will never in their lives have a chance of wearing …than the simple frock they can afford’. Gossip columns abounded: there was ‘The Talk of London’ in the *Daily Express*, ‘The People and their Doings’ in the *Daily Mail*, ‘Today’s Gossip’ in the *Daily Mirror*, ‘Echoes of the Town’ in the *Daily Sketch*, ‘The Londoner’s Diary’ in the *Evening Standard* and the ‘Gossip of Today’ in the *News of the World*. The periodical *The Tattler* had seven articles dedicated to following society in England: ‘Round and about Town’, ‘Letters of Eve’, which was the correspondence of the Hon. Evelyn Fitzhenry with her friend, Lady Betty Berkshire, ‘Society in Town and Country’, ‘Gossip of the Hour’, ‘Society Gossip’ and ‘Court and Society Gossip’ and also a gossip column covering the Riveria, ‘Our Riveria Letter’. *The Tattler* remembered birthdays and covered tennis matches and referred to the Duke as ‘Bravo Bend’or’ in two articles referring to his generosity in giving the English Polo team ponies. The *Daily Mail* reported the details of an entire evening of the

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374 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 327.
375 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 328.
377 *The Tattler*, 4 June 1913 and 9 Sept. 1914.
Duke of Westminster and his bride-to-be, Loelia Ponsonby, in 1930: they had dinner with Winston Churchill, went to His Majesty’s theatre, then on to the Embassy Club and Chez Taglioni until 2am. A journalist was watching them all night and described her red gown and shoes and jewellery. The evening was described in sumptuous detail.

Adrian Bingham’s work *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1919-78* seeks to chart the use of titillation in the popular press to sell newspapers. A survey carried out by the *News Chronicle* in 1933 revealed that the most read articles were accidents, divorces, crime and human interest. Bingham’s focus is on family newspapers and he uses his introduction to cite Lord Northcliffe, the founder of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Mirror*, who told his staff in the early 1900s that ‘Sex things were always news’. Bingham believes that the twentieth century saw newspapers identifying their readership. Northcliffe’s *Daily Mail* identified itself as a women’s newspaper as did the *Daily Mirror*. The *Times* advertised itself as the paper for ‘top people’. After the First World War the daily readership of a newspaper was spreading throughout society. This rose into the mid-century when Britons read more newspapers per capita than any other people. The preservation of the archives of perceived elite newspapers like the *Guardian* and *The Times* is cited by Bingham as proof of their perceived superior image, and it is only with increased access to and recognition of the value of the popular press, by scholars such as Bingham, that it is now possible to explore the role that papers such as the *Mirror* and the *Mail* played in the presentation and perception of the Duke. The increase in visuals in the newspapers with a strong reliance on advertising changed the way newspapers looked, making them more attractive to the reader. Gail Savage and Anne Humphries have both worked extensively on the press coverage of the divorces, arguing that attitudes changed towards regulation as the newspapers carrying reports circulated ever more widely and the accounts of the sexual indiscretion of the upper classes posed damage to the institution of marriage and the hierarchy. Sir Archibald Bodkin, the Director of Public Prosecutions told Cecil’s Select Committee on matrimonial cases in 1923 that ‘although the

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378 Bingham, *Family Newspapers*.
381 Norman Angell, *After All, The autobiography of Norman Angell* (London, 1951), p. 120.
details of matrimonial cases were pale and colourless beside the things he had to read every day he considered it harmful that the public had conjugal infidelity rammed down their throat in every evening newspaper…again the next morning, when newspaper space could be so better occupied.\footnote{Parliamentary papers 1923, VII, Select Committee on the matrimonial Causes (Regulation of Reports ) Bill (SCRR0 Minutes of evidence 34, 62, 65).} Bingham believed that with the most sensational cases receiving such extensive publicity that they became melodramas, the protagonists obtained the sort of attention usually accorded to film stars. Courts glamorised immoral life styles.\footnote{Bingham, \textit{Family Newspapers}, p. 135.} After 1926 there was a ban on reporting divorce proceedings and according to Ralph Blumenfeld, the editor of the \textit{Daily Express} from 1902 to 1929, writing in 1933, ‘practically all reputable newspapers welcomed the Regulations of Reports Act…and it was…justified.’\footnote{\textit{R. D. Blumenfeld, The Press in My Time} (London, 1933), p. 134.} They could still use the basic details and the summing up by the court judge but not the proceedings in full. Frank Owen, the editor of the \textit{Daily Mail}, told the Royal commission on the Press that ‘every journal in Fleet Street of any responsibility welcomed the Act’.\footnote{Royal Commission on the Press 1947-49 Minutes of evidence 28 July 1949 (https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/1949-07-28/debates/0cda59e1-d49d-421d-b895-578401dd2633/RoyalCommissionOnThePressReport) (22 June 2019)} These Acts helped protect the privacy of all those whose divorces were of public interest. The second Duke of Westminster divorced three times, two of which were full of tabloidesque detail.

By the mid nineteenth century, the whole look and the format of newspapers changed, illustrations were beginning to have a central place in popular print culture. \textit{Punch, Illustrated London News}, and the \textit{Penny Illustrated Paper} used machine made illustration. In 1891 the first half tone newspaper photograph was printed, it was of George Lambert, a Liberal parliamentary candidate, in the \textit{Daily Graphic}.\footnote{Bingham, \textit{Family Newspapers}, p. 203.} Nearly a decade later the advent of the rapid rotary printing of half tone photography by the \textit{Daily Mirror} made it possible to use them in wider circulation.\footnote{Bingham, \textit{Family Newspapers}, p. 204.} Over the next century, press photography and illustrated advertising ensured that the visual dimension of the newspaper became as important as the textual one. These visuals added to the gossip pages. The task of the gossip editor was to ‘collect and present in brightly written paragraphs information about the characters and doings of persons who have achieved prominence’. In the 1920s the upper classes remained at the top of the prominent list Bagehot called it ‘the theatrical show of society’\footnote{W. Bagehot, ‘The English constitution’ cited in A.C.H. Smith \textit{Paper Voices: The popular Press and Social Change 1935-65} (London, 1975), p. 205.}
Left-wing newspapers like the *Daily Herald* and the *Reynolds’s News* were also drawn to respond and tried to puncture the glamour by juxtaposing images of ostentatious luxury with evidence of poverty and distress. On 17 June 1925, the *Daily Herald* published photographs from Ascot and a commentary describing scenes showing society flaunting its wealth mostly unearned [while] official figures were revealing the increasing suffering of the working class. Many of the highest in the land …were self-centred and self-indulgent…[there were] no day passes without proof being given to the extent to which the canker of luxurious life, requiring vast sums of money to satisfy it, has eaten into that class.394

By 1936 six out of seven newspapers devoted more space to human interest than public affairs and in some cases three to four times as much.395 The interest in people and how they acted and dressed built a readership for the gossip columns. The relationship between class and the newspapers is also inherently connected to the fact that the Press Barons were created peers-Lord Beaverbrook and the Harmsworth brothers, Lord Rothermere and Lord Northcliffe. Following the death of Lord Northcliffe in 1922, four men, Baron Beaverbrook, Lord Rothermere, Viscount Camrose and Viscount Kemsley became the dominant figures in the interwar press. In 1937 they owned nearly one in every two national and local daily newspapers sold in Britain, as well as one in every three Sunday newspapers that were sold. The combined circulation of all their newspapers amounted to over thirteen million.396 The newly acquired social class of the Press Barons was a part of their cultural identity and one they had sought, and the extent to which they could help form public opinion would reflect this. Beaverbrook told the First Royal Commission on the Press that he ran the *Daily Express* ‘merely as for the purpose of making propaganda and with no other motive’, it was a medium for his amusement.397

In Great Britain *The Times* was the most influential prestige newspaper, although far from having the largest circulation, it placed more emphasis on serious political and cultural news. Outside of Great Britain the leading International Newspapers which published stories about the Duke included *The New York Times, Times of India, The Peking Gazette* and the North-

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394 *Daily Herald*, 17 June 1925.
China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette. The Times of India was coined ‘the leading paper in Asia by Lord Curzon at the turn of the twentieth century’.\textsuperscript{398} It remained, throughout the Duke’s life, the newspaper of record for British India. Sir Stanley Reed was the editor from 1907-24 and was very respected as a leading figure on Indian current affairs. The North-China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette was the most influential British newspaper in English speaking China, and, at its peak circulation, was at 7,817 copies. The Peking Gazette was, according J. C. Sun in his publication Modern Chinese Press, a paper designed ‘entirely for officers of the Chinese Government. It was not a paper but rather a government bulletin a forerunner of newsprint in Chinese media.’\textsuperscript{399} The New York Times is famed for the line ‘All the news That’s fit to print’ which has appeared on the front page since 1897. It achieved international scope and Sunday circulation hit 780,000 in 1934.\textsuperscript{400} The mantra of the newspaper was that they printed only real news stories ignoring gossip. As I further investigate the stories printed in The New York Times, particularly in the chapter dealing with the coverage of the finances of the Duke, it is clear the stories printed were predominantly of American interest.

In order to put this chapter and the next in context, it is necessary to introduce the main newspapers of interwar Britain and how they had become leaders in the communication of ideas and news. The London press dominated the country and in particular the morning newspapers.\textsuperscript{401} The Manchester Guardian increased its readership under the editorship of C.P. Scott and Geoffrey Dawson was a very successful editor of the Times. He had been a secretary to Milner during the Boer War.\textsuperscript{402} Lord Beaverbrook became owner of the Daily Express in 1916 and The Evening World in 1928. The Berry brothers bought the Amalgamated press in 1924-6. In the 1930s competition for the highest circulation was at its most intense. In 1933 the highest circulation was the Daily Express at 2 million copies.\textsuperscript{403} Many newspapers had even taken to offering insurance and free gifts to subscribers.\textsuperscript{404} By the 1930s newspapers were the most important form of communication in Great Britain as a study completed in 1939 showed that 69% of the population over the age of 16 read a national newspaper. In 1910 the readership

\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{398}Sangita P. Menon Malhan, The TOI Story How a Newspaper changed the rules of the game (Noida, 2013).}
\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{400}The New York Times, 8 Jan. 2017.}
\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{401}Charles Loch Mowat, Britain between the wars (London, 1972), p. 244.}
\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{402}Stanley Morrison, The History of the Times IV Part 2 (London,1952), Chapters 17 and 19.}
\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{403}Kurt Von Stutterheim The Press in England (London, 1952), pp113-71 ,pp. 186-211.}
\textsuperscript{\footnotesize{404}ibid.}}
of the *Daily Express* was ½ million by 1939 it was 2 ½ million. In 1920 there were only two newspapers with a million plus circulation. In 1930 there were five. *The Times* had a readership of 45,000 in 1910 and 213,000 in 1939. *The Daily Telegraph* had a readership of 230,000 in 1910 which had reached 640,000 in 1939. In the interwar period the more traditional newspapers took the lead of the more popular press by beginning to phase-out advertisements on the front page and introducing a more jigsaw style of layout. Headlines became much larger and more illustrations appeared. National news also took prominence.

The leadership of the national newspapers is evident through the decline of the provincial papers. Regional morning provincial newspapers numbered 41 in 1921 falling to 25 by 1947. The evening provincial newspapers numbered 89 in 1921 and 75 in 1947. The Communist *Daily Worker* was founded in 1930 and *The Daily Herald*, a Labour Party paper, was founded in 1930. *Reynolds’s News* was bought by the Co-operative Press in 1921. The main function of the Co-operative Press was to publish the *Co-operative News* and to ‘connect, champion and challenge the global co-operative movement.’ The editor they appointed in 1929, Sydney Elliot, did try and improve the presentation of the paper but it remained marginalised and radical. There was, in British newspapers, for the most part, an inclination towards reflective journalism rather than radical commentaries, which made for a happier readership. However this did not always follow, particularly with regard to foreign policy. *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Times* could take up different issues than the more left-wing *Daily Chronicle* and *The Manchester Guardian*. As the readership of national newspapers increased and they endeavoured to become more attractive to the reader it was also the time when glossy periodicals were launched. *Vogue* was founded in 1916 and the *Radio Times* launched in 1923. *Homes and Gardens* established in 1919 was followed by *Harpers Bazar* in 1929. These illustrated periodicals favoured at least one aristocratic contributor. The third Duchess worked as a features’ editor for *House and Garden* magazine after her marriage ended. The aim of the writers and editors was to reflect and inspire society. The middle classes had little or no interest in seeing clothes and homes they could afford. They wanted to see what they could never afford. They wanted entertainment and fantasy. Their wish was to be transported to a world they couldn’t possibly afford, but the representation of it was a fantasy they could enjoy dreaming about. The first significant survey of the Press was completed in 1938 and attested to this fact,

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406 See also Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid Century, the popular Press in Britain 1896 to the present* (Oxford, 2015).
407 History of the News Co-op. (https://www.thenews.coop/about/) (3 Nov. 2019)
the ‘Report of the British Press’ by a policy organisation Political and Economic Planning. The conclusions of the authors were that ‘dangerous tendency has recently been manifesting itself by which entertainment ceases to be ancillary to news and either supersedes it or absorbs it.’

Readers were described as ‘ill-informed and unable to participate intelligently in political debate’. Prophetically a tribunal and a Press Institute were recommended.

The Twenties and Thirties were the era of three major Press Barons, brothers Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere, and the Canadian financier Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook. Alfred and Harold Harmsworth who, as noted, were elevated to Lord Northcliffe and Rothermere respectively, had been educated in grammar school. When Alfred, the elder brother, set up the company Answers, his younger brother left the civil service to join him in the publishing world, which would eventually result in the brothers controlling the major newspapers the Daily Mirror, the Daily Mail and The Times. Lord Beaverbrook had made his money in Canada before the Daily Express became the most successful of all newspapers in British history. Northcliffe had successfully used his ownership of The Times to oust Herbert Asquith. Rothermere and Beaverbrook attempted to oust Stanley Baldwin who claimed the Press had ‘power without responsibility – the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages’. The campaign led by Lord Northcliffe and Lord Rothermere successfully backed anti-waste candidates in three by-elections in 1922. Harold Harmsworth acquired the Daily Mirror in 1914 and founded the Sunday Pictorial in 1915, and, on his brother’s death in 1922, became the most powerful newspaper proprietor in the country. He served as wartime director for the Army clothing department authority in 1916-17, Minister for Air 1917-18 and Director of Propaganda for neutral countries in 1918. His relationship with class on a personal level is informative as when he was bestowed with his title of Viscount at the end of the War he stated that ‘I shall accept although this kind of decoration has little value in these times’. He is, however, credited with being one of the first callers to Andrew Bonar Law demanding an earldom for himself and a cabinet position for his son Esmond, Conservative MP, in return for support for the new government. The story is recounted in the Memoirs of a conservative by Lord Davidson who

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410 Ibid.

411 Curran & Seaton, Power Without Responsibility, pp 44-75.


413 Cudlip, The Prerogative of the Harlot, p. 150.
was within earshot of the Prime Minister’s private secretary.\textsuperscript{414} He used his position in 1922 to progress the anti-socialist line the \textit{Daily Mirror} held. All factions except one, that of Ramsay MacDonald, were accorded a special \textit{Daily Mirror} issue. When MacDonald formed a cabinet made up of eleven working-class men out of a possible twenty positions, Rothermere saw this as an affront to the natural ruling classes: the amiable aristocrats, those who were groomed for leadership through proper education.\textsuperscript{415} Perhaps the most interesting and informative, though biased, view of him is in the words of Stanley Baldwin: ‘There is nothing more curious in modern evolution than the effect of an enormous fortune rapidly made and the control of newspapers of your own…we are told that unless we make peace with these noblesse, candidates are to be run all over the country’.\textsuperscript{416} The editorial policy of the \textit{Daily Mail} was totally under Rothermere’s control from 1922-37 and his was the only popular paper which had a predominantly upper and middle class readership. His pro-fascist headlines, included ‘Youth Triumphant’ on 10 July 1933, was used as propaganda in Nazi Germany.\textsuperscript{417} A.J. Cummings, writing in the \textit{News Chronicle} in August 1937 summed up Rothermere: ‘There is nothing in modern politics…to match the crude confusion of the Rothermere mentality as revealed in the Rothermere Press it blesses…every swashbuckler who threaten peace of Europe…then clamours for…more armaments to defend Britain’.\textsuperscript{418} Rothermere’s elder brother Alfred, Lord Northcliffe, was a particularly controversial character. The attacks made by him on Haldane and Kitchener resulted in Service Clubs banning \textit{The Times} and the \textit{Mail} after a particularly vicious attack on Kitchener written by Northcliffe.\textsuperscript{419} His support of the generals during the First World War meant there was no mention of the carnage of 1916 or 1917 in either of his newspapers. He also attacked the National Insurance Bill in \textit{The Times}.\textsuperscript{420}

Lord Beaverbrook, Max Aitken, was the inspiration for the character of Rex, Julia Flythe’s Canadian husband in Evelyn Waugh’s homage to the aristocracy, \textit{Brideshead Revisited}, and Northcliffe was the basis for the newspaper owner in Waugh’s satire on newspapers, \textit{Scoop}.

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\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{415}Cudlip, \textit{The Prerogative of the Harlot}, p. 151.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{418}Cudlip, \textit{The Prerogative of the Harlot}, p. 174.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{419}A.C. Mitchell, ‘The Unionist Press and the Politics of the Great War’ D. Phil Thesis University of York, 1999.}
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Aitken had made a million before he was thirty and was the most successful of the Press Barons in his integration into British society. His main passion was the Empire. He was able to enter Society through his friendship with Andrew Bonar Law, a fellow Canadian from Brunswick. When Max Aitken entered Britain he bought a controlling share of the Rolls Royce company and was given an introduction to Stanley Baldwin by Rudyard Kipling. He took control of the Daily Express in 1916 and followed with the control of the Evening Standard and the establishment of The Sunday Express. Beaverbrook became a central part of both the failed Empire Crusade with Rothermere and the abdication crisis. A.J.P. Taylor, a friend and a biographer of Beaverbrook, was opposed to the Empire crusade and was critical of his friend’s cause of Free Trade throughout the empire. The dominions rejected the idea of Free Trade throughout the Empire outright at the Imperial Conference of 1930 in the light of the economic crisis that had eclipsed the issue in 1929. Beaverbrook as a Canadian believed Free Trade would be advantageous to the Canadian economy.

Beaverbrook became embroiled in the reporting of the abdication crisis, a crisis that was inextricably linked with the status quo of the old order and the necessity of the upper classes to protect the Crown. Beaverbrook had been an MP since 1910 and was elevated to the peerage for services to come, in 1916. The King had refused his baronetcy on the basis that Max Aitken should only appear on the Canadian list not on the British list. In February 1918 when Aitken was asked by Lloyd George to be Minister of Information he refused without a ministerial rank, the Prime Minister gave him the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. Beaverbrook in his own words described the reaction of George V:

> It was reported that the King was disturbed by…a Presbyterian administering the ecclesiastical preferments of the crown…I was told that he was really hostile to me and that his dislike flowed in part from the old story when Balfour lost the leadership of the Tory party that behind the scenes [I] was the little Canadian adventurer.

The three Press Barons destroyed personal papers on their deathbeds. Beaverbrook left instructions with his son, while Northcliffe burned his and Rothermere threw them out of a ship’s port hole. The newspapers which they controlled helped form the opinion of their readers and reflected their outlook. The importance of revenue meant that the political agenda of the owners had to have popularity or the revenue would decrease significantly. Bingham makes the point that the power yielded by the Press was at a time when there were far fewer alternative

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422Max Aitken, 1st Baron, Beaverbrook Men and power 1917-1918, (London, 1950).
sources of information. The Press had power to restrict the BBC news broadcasts and these restrictions remained in place until after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{423}

The relationship between the aristocracy and the mainstream press was one of mutual admiration for the most part. However, the increased exposure did bring scrutiny and the Press’s descriptions of the aristocracy did bring ridicule as well as envy. The second Duke of Westminster was both at times at the centre of the criticism of his class and also at the centre of the emulation. In order to identify patterns and draw conclusions it is first necessary to highlight the main stories and the number of articles about the second Duke of Westminster. The coverage of his life in the period 1900-40 took the following form in foreign media: \textit{The New York Times} ran one hundred and twenty-six front page articles including articles on First World War bravery, his divorces, his sale of the \textit{Blue Boy} painting, Tariff Reform, and sailing. \textit{The Times of India} for the same period made at least seven hundred and ninety-five references to him. The main themes were the Empire and India. There was extensive coverage of his work with the Indian Defence League, the Imperial South African Association and the Olympic Fund. Analysis of the coverage of the Duke in \textit{The Times} in the first half of the 1900s shows articles on his charitable works, Tariff Reform, the Imperial Fund, South Africa, speeding, travel, hunting and racing but all positive reflections of his life. The \textit{Daily Mirror} and \textit{Daily Mail} focused heavily on his weddings and divorces, though both were respectful and reference his generosity. The \textit{Daily Mirror} took the opportunity to mention him in passing for example, ‘These are indeed economical days I saw Earl Spencer who has just followed the example of the Duke of Westminster and presented Spencer House his stately palace in town to the government rent free for the period of the war.’\textsuperscript{424} \textit{The Tattler} had one thousand five hundred and ninety articles referencing the Second Duke of Westminster for the period 1900-39 including posed photos of his wives and daughters. Readers could follow his life and read about his hobbies, his relationships and his travels. He was to all intents and purposes a soap opera character. The December edition cover was the new Duchess of Westminster on a horse in full hunting attire.\textsuperscript{425} There are posed photographs of the Duke with his daughters and his wife with their daughters. The portrait in the National Portrait Gallery by William Orpen was reproduced in \textit{The Tattler} and there are photographs of the Duke at the races, at picnics and on his estates.\textsuperscript{426}

\textsuperscript{424}Daily Mirror, 21 Dec. 1916.
\textsuperscript{425}The Tattler, 1 Dec. 1920.
\textsuperscript{426}The Tattler, 3 May 1914, The Tattler: at the Races, 01 June 1919, The Tattler, 27 Aug. 1919 with his daughter.
There is a significant predominance of rural themed photographs. The image portrayed is one of a benevolent and delightful duke with a beautiful family. The cover of the 27 June 1917 issue is a full page photograph of the Duchess and her eldest daughter, Ursula. The Duke is described below as having done ‘magnificent service with the motor car regiment’. All articles were gushing with admiration for him and his lifestyle. The Daily Mirror reported the wedding of Lady Ursula on their front page and listed amongst the guests a road sweeper, Pat O’Brien. There were four photographs, one of the bride, one of the Duke, one of Pat O’Brien and one showing the rush, which, according to the newspapers, was kept back by the police with four women hurt in the crush. The political agenda of the Duke held traction in the more Establishment Press both at home and abroad while the society news of marriages and divorces were the stories that interested the popular press with more opportunities for accompanying photographs and descriptive text. The coverage of his First World War service was the first significant event covered in newspapers at home and abroad.

The Press coverage of the Duke included a very positive reporting of his military career in the First World War. When the War began the young Duke insisted on travelling to France to help the French army and the press immediately grasped at an act of bravery described by the Duke as ‘many excitements…I picked Francis Grenfell up after he was wounded and motored him into town’. He stayed with Grenfell at Bavai until his wounds were dressed. The newspaper coverage included The Times reporting the incident and giving thanks to him as part of Captain Francis Grenfell’s will attributing the duke with saving Grenfell’s life. The coverage abroad included the New York Times which referred to the ‘great personal risk amid galling fire …rushed through the battle zone and carried Grenfell to safety’. Francis Grenfell was a twin and had been a contemporary of the Duke at Eton, he had played polo and holidayed with Churchill in Westminster’s villa in France in early 1914. The article implied that he was ‘in the company of Grenfell because of his brother Percy’. Grenfell had fought in the Boer War in the King’s Royal Rifle Corps and was a member of the 9th Queen’s Royal Lancers in 1914. A magnificent polo player, he had been awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in Andregnies in Belgium on 24 August 1914. The Daily Sketch led with the headline, ‘How die hard duke

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427 The Tattler, 27 June 1917.
428 Daily Mirror, 24 July 1924.
429 Daily Mirror, 24 July 1924.
431 www.GrenfellHistory.co.uk
saved Grenfell’ after Grenfell saved the guns. The daring pair of aristocrats were at the centre of the fighting and had narrowly escaped death. Westminster’s presence gave credence and even dashing bravery to the story.

Westminster was at the front by choice and he began to focus on the improvement of the armoured cars, building on his experiences in South Africa. The Duke’s main contribution to the war was the command and development of armoured cars. This new type of military transport was of major interest to the Press and also appears in the Duke’s correspondence with Churchill. As early as 24 August 1914 The Times referred to armoured cars: ‘when the enemy has taken possession of one village or passed through a stretch of new country. Armoured cars are sent… to the next village followed by the cavalry… 20 miles can be covered in a short space of time’. The Times reported that the Duke wrote in the summer of 1915 that he could not see them being used yet. The Duke’s armoured car squadron was however used to effect in the Second Battle of Ypres. The Times reported that the armoured cars were used to assist the 10th Hussars and the Blues and did ‘excellent work’.

The War Office decided to move the armoured car squadron to Africa in 1916. The terrain was more amenable to cars. At this time the armoured cars numbered seventy-two Rolls and twenty-four Lancesters and twenty Seabrook armoured lorries. Two squadrons were kept in Flanders. In 1916 the Duke arrived in Egypt as he was sent out to join General Peyton. It was here that the Duke’s reported heroic nature was grasped by the Press in a very enthusiastic manner. His description of the surroundings described a holiday like scene: ‘glorious hot sun, blue sea…Roman remains and camels’. A new front had opened in December when a Senussi army had invaded Egypt led by Nuri Bey, half-brother of the Turkish leader Enver Pasha. The first incursion was repelled and the second too. It was in this arena that the armoured cars came into their own. The column comprised of infantry from South Africa, an Australian Camel Corps, a field ambulance, a Royal Engineers company, Yeomanry from Dorset and the Armoured Car squadron under the command of the Duke, now a lieutenant colonel. Tars occupied the Halfaia pass and with the infantry suffering terribly from the heat,

434Daily Sketch, 1 Sept. 1914.
435The Times, 24 Aug. 1914.
436The Times, 13 July 1918.
437The Times, 4 Sept. 1915.
438Ridley, Bend’or: Duke of Westminster, p. 86.
439Ridley, Bend ‘Or, Duke of Westminster, p.87.
440Ibid.
General Lukin ordered the Duke to pursue the retreating army that had abandoned Sollun. The speed and agility of the cars caught the Turks off guard. The Turks were only able to fire eight rounds before the cars were on top of them. This was the first of a new way of fighting, speed and agility in the face of a sitting army hidden in sand dunes. Reuters sent a long dispatch describing the entire escapade.\textsuperscript{441} The enemy was apprehended at Bir Asisa Wells. The battery consisted of nine armoured cars and one open-topped car with a machine gun mounted on it. The enemy was ‘completely smashed up with only one injury. It was a magnificent and unique piece of work from start to finish’. The only casualty was Lieutenant Jack Leslie who recovered quickly and left the following account. ‘One gallant fellow who manned it is impossible to speak too highly …the Duke of Westminster’s name will by now be on everyone’s lips for the intrepid manner in which he pushed the pursuit home and committed his command to the final attack. It was a knockout blow…and a fine finish for the campaign’. He described his injury as ‘not much’ and that he had ‘a splendid time’.\textsuperscript{442} The subsequent attack on the Senussi was described as a ‘record’ in the history of war. The speed and mobility of the armoured cars was the first of a new era. The \textit{Saturday Review} called it a ‘brilliant affair, well planned and dashingly executed’.\textsuperscript{443} Clementine Churchill wrote to her husband of the dashing exploits that everyone was talking about.\textsuperscript{444} The aristocracy had one of their own to talk about and he was a dashing duke and he was in the newspapers. Jack Leslie goes on to describe the congratulations they received from the Sultan of Egypt, Maxwell and Kitchener. The significance of the event is the fact that it proved the importance of the armoured car. No cavalry could have covered the distance (100 miles a day) or successfully carried out the attack. It was, in hindsight, a turning point in war tactics, which would lead to tank warfare.

The event that Churchill refers to as a ‘gleaming personal exploit’ in his obituary of the Duke written in 1953 occurred in the desert.\textsuperscript{445} The crew of the HMS Tara were close to death following their incarceration by the Senussi at Birhakim. The ship had been torpedoed in the bay of Sollum on 5 November 1915. They had been marched for 11 days, held captive for over three months and were starving. The Duke requested permission to rescue them. He set off on 14 March with a convoy of forty two vehicles; nine armoured cars, three Fords armed with maxims, eleven other Fords, ten ambulances, a Wolseley and five staff cars including the

\textsuperscript{441}ibid.
\textsuperscript{442}ibid.
\textsuperscript{443}\textit{Saturday Review}, 25 March 1916.
\textsuperscript{445}\textit{Manchester Guardian}, 22 July 1953.
Duke’s own Rolls’ Royce. This was the first long-range motor desert raid in history. The land was unmapped and the raid was unplanned. One survivor’s letter published in The Manchester Guardian stated ‘the motors arrived in the nick of time or we should have all died of starvation’. A second officer wrote a letter also published in the Manchester Guardian describing the scene. The ‘gallant Duke…A godsend… and a glorious sight to see armoured cars dashing up to us’. The Arabs were immediately killed and the prisoners transported. Clementine Churchill wrote to her husband: ‘I was excited to read of Bendor’s dashing exploit. I suppose he will get the DSO or be made an Archduke. All his many friends are thrilled’. The Duke was given the DSO and recommended for the Victoria Cross by Peyton. He did not receive the VC and Churchill was under the impression that the reason for this was Kitchener or class. Peyton thought it was perhaps bureaucracy. Peyton’s opinion is confirmed in the memoirs of the Duke’s third wife where she believed he deserved it but through paperwork did not receive it. Privates and other equivalents formed the bulk of the army and therefore the majority of Victoria Cross awards were given to enlisted men. Only ten, nineteenth century Victoria Cross recipients were nobility and these included six honourables, two lords, one sir and one viscount. The Duke was however promoted to colonel on 26 May 1917 as a result of his bravery and he was named honorary colonel of the regiment. The story of the bravery of the Duke appears in Steel Chariots in the Desert with detailed analysis of the use of armoured cars by T.E. Lawrence and Prisoners of the Red desert also detailed the rescue. Captain R. Gwatkin-Williams RN’s full account of his rescue by the Duke in In the Hands of the Senusi is the most informative. The Duke questioned him as to his treatment and tried to save the guards from execution. The armoured cars ‘raced over the hummocky ground, pitching, bumping, sometimes flying in the air’, T.E. Lawrence described the armoured cars as ‘so enduring was the running board that we did ordinary work with the car for the next three weeks and took her so into Damascus…Great was Rolls and Great was Royce.’ The glamour of the car and the

446 Manchester Guardian, 22 April 1916
447 Manchester Guardian, 9 April 1916
449 Rid, Bend’Or, Duke of Westminster, pp.87-90.
450 Ponsonby, Grace and favour.
452 London Gazette 26 May 1917.
453 SC Rolls, Steel Chariots in the desert, the story of an Armoured-Car driver with the Duke of Westminster in Libya and in Arabia with T.E. Lawrence (Uckfield, 2018), pp 50-57.
454 Captain R. Gwatkin-Williams, RN, In the Hands of the Senusi (London, 1921)pp 105-6.
455 Rolls, Steel Chariots in the desert, p.55.
bravery of the Duke was also reported in the *New York Times*.\textsuperscript{457} The second Duke of Westminster would not have been in the position he was in without his money and his title, however his bravery and enthusiasm cannot be questioned. Jack Leslie’s account of serving under him is testimony to his leadership skills: ‘nothing but his amazing confidence and innate optimism could have ever started off a convoy prepared to do 300 miles to find them, he would class with any general as a great leader of men, having extraordinary confidence’.\textsuperscript{458} The Press grasped at the stories of his exploits particularly when they included a new military vehicle, Arabian deserts and hostages.

The Press coverage of the Duke at war also comes from his personal relationship with Churchill then serving as Minister for Munitions. When Churchill had been summoned to Downing Street on 28 March 1918\textsuperscript{459} he went on to publish an article on his trip titled ‘The Bulldog, a day with Clemenceau amid French Battlefields’ in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The Duke of Westminster was Winston Churchill’s sole companion. The Duke had been suffering from a fever from June 1916 and was not pronounced fit for active service again. His position with Churchill was not official but his fluency in French made him a popular companion and Churchill throughout his life sought the company of the Duke. As mentioned they travelled on a destroyer via Montreuil.\textsuperscript{460} Churchill reported a long conversation with Petain, where Petain gave his impression of the War in March 1918: ‘the battles in the war passed through phases, the first is the phase of men of establishing a front and the second is that of guns’. Petain implied that the war was in its final phase.\textsuperscript{461} The article ends abruptly after the conversation with Petain. Churchill, impressed with Clemenceau, finished the article thus: ‘When we reached Paris at one the next morning, having been seventeen hours in ceaseless activity and stress. Clemenceau, alert and fresh as when we started dismissed me. Tomorrow I must work. But Petain has arranged for you to be received wherever you wish’.\textsuperscript{462} The Duke left the army after the First World War and the focus of the Press coverage of his life was reflective of both the inter-war Press agenda and his own behaviour. His separation from his first wife had begun during the First World War and his persistent pursuit of both a wife and means of entertainment and engagement were covered by the Press up until his death.

\textsuperscript{457}The *New York Times* 19 March 1916.
\textsuperscript{458}Ridley, *Bend’Or, Duke of Westminster*, pp.87-90.
\textsuperscript{460}ibid.
\textsuperscript{461}ibid.
\textsuperscript{462}ibid.
The interest in the Duke’s personal life was both a reflection of his behaviour which could be seen as unbecoming of a Duke and of the interest in stories of infidelity and divorce in newspapers in both Great Britain, India and America. This focus on the Duke’s marriages and three divorces reflected the increased coverage of human interest stories noted by the Report on the British press in 1938. The differing approaches is noteworthy. Pall Mall’s description of him following his first divorce, was cutting:

I suppose there never was a man since the Regency who had afforded the gossips so many chances of speculation as the Duke of Westminster. Not particularly good-looking he is one of those men who, quite apart from his title and many possessions has a curious fascination for women. Possibly the caressing Grosvenor voice has something to do with it. The poor duke looked worried when I saw him last night and no wonder, for he found a whole crowd of people outside Bourdon House when he got home late. [he commented to the crowds] I’ve nothing to say.463

The second marriage ended in divorce and the Daily Mail carried the story of the ejection of his wife from Bourdon House, while their Atlantic edition led with the headline ‘Dancer’s surprise that would shock society’464 when Miss June Day, an American dancer, was named as correspondent in the Duke’s second divorce. The Daily Mail embraced the third wedding of the Duke covering the entire front page with photographs of the wedding and the yacht used to leave for the honeymoon. The description of the bride’s trousseau was full of sumptuous descriptions of clothes’ style and fabrics in the same issue. British Pathé covered the third wedding and it appeared in the newsreels of the 1930s.465 There are cameras visible on mounts on top of cars and throngs of reporters and onlookers. The departure for the honeymoon was by boat in order to avoid the crowds. The Duke was of interest to the readership. He sold newspapers. The readers wanted to see his next wife and read about his wedding. He was a celebrity that personified the wealth of the aristocracy and his wealth was not hidden. He was visual in his opulence, in the way he dressed and lived. Loelia, his new young bride with her stooped head and velvet coat added to stories of furniture from his homes being transferred to the setting of the wedding.466 The Duke could not sit on an ordinary chair. Winston Churchill was his best man linking him to politics and another important aristocratic family. The Daily Mail as a self-identified women’s newspaper was interested in the wedding and in particular

463Pall Mall, 17 June 1919.
464Daily Mail, 14 June 1926.
466ibid.
photographs of it and both *British Pathé* and *The Tattler* were visually orientated so an event like the Duke of Westminster’s wedding was an obviously newsworthy event. *The Tattler* in all articles referenced even his most distant in-laws and relatives according to their relationship to the Duke. His first wife’s family was constantly linked to the Grosvenors as were the Wyndhams. A story was elevated in its importance and newsworthiness when the focus of the story was linked with a higher ranking aristocrat. There was a fascination with his name and the use of it made others more interesting in *The Tattler*.

The interest in private lives and in particular divorces was widespread and not confined to Dukes. The *Sunday Chronicle* described divorce parties of the elaborate order including a fake judge and fake witnesses. The man in question is not named but the party was given by a popular young man to celebrate his return to single blessedness. His friends acted as counsel and judge. The Bright Young Things of the interwar period craved publicity and they pursued it. They had wild parties, drove fast cars and enjoyed midnight bathing and scavenger hunts. Since many were titled they were perfect fodder for the press. They drank too much, were noisy and experimented with drugs. Access to their events was only through an aristocrat. In 1926 the *Sunday Express* hired the young Irish man, Lord Castlerosse, to write the paper’s *London Diary*. There followed Lord Donegall and Lady Eleanor Smith who all wrote articles. Society was publishing itself. Paul Chen Portheim, a German writer described his astonishment:

> The interest which the whole nation takes in society is astonishing. Every newspaper tells you about the private lives…perpetually publishing photographs of them, their parties, their dresses, their weddings, their christenings and funerals their houses and their travels were all described and depicted…it is above all the vast lower middle classes that are most passionately interested in what sort of dress the duchess was wearing.

There was also a cult of youth and the Press nurtured it. According to the popular press, rich young aristocrats rushed from party to party, which was all sensationalised in the Press and everyone was having a ball or reading about it. The War had cast a shadow of frivolity on the generation who recognised mortality. The interest in the second Duke of Westminster was part of a wider trend in journalism.

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The use of society columnists was born out of, in some cases, the necessity for employment on behalf of aristocrats like Patrick Balfour and Lord Castlerosse, and the substantial audience for a diary style of gossip column.\textsuperscript{469} Sarah Newman has written an article detailing the evidence from the extensive letters and diaries of Patrick Balfour, the Earl of Kinross, the gossip writer of the \textit{Daily Sketch} 1928-32 and Valentine Browne, Viscount Castlerosse, later Earl of Kenmare, who was the first signed gossip columnist with his ‘Londoner’s Log’ in the \textit{Daily Express} in 1926 and Sir Bruce Lockhart editor of the \textit{Evening Standard’s} ‘Londoner’s diary’ in the 1930s. Her argument is that the gentlemen journalists looked towards their gentlemanly status to make sense of their celebrity status.\textsuperscript{470} They allowed themselves to believe in their lifestyle choices and the defensive nature of, in particular, the letters of Lord Kinross to his parents illustrate his belief that what he was doing was noble. The fact that there was an audience for these gossip columns shows the interest was there. Evelyn Waugh’s \textit{Vile Bodies} has a central character who was a journalist, Mr. Chatterbox. The character reflected the nature and appeal of this type of gossip journalism. Hundreds of fan letters were received by gossip columnists and they had a cultural resonance. A report on the British press stated that the gossip column was at least glanced at by two thirds of newspaper readers.\textsuperscript{471} Patrick Balfour called it ‘lordolatry’. The details in the columns were often designed to show the personal knowledge the writer had of the person and place they were writing about, thereby promoting the writer themselves and showing how integrated they were into the social scene they were reporting.\textsuperscript{472} Ross McKibbin believes gossip columns glamorised privilege and helped to ‘legitimise a hierarchical and profoundly unequal society that they lived in’. The ‘idea of a lord…titillated middle class readers in particular with a combination of awe and almost lascivious excitement … Society as it was understood in the inter-war period had come to rely on the immense publicity … it could not exist without them [popular newspapers].’\textsuperscript{473} There was however animosity amongst the regular staff as documented by the memoirs of Lady Eleanor Smith (\textit{Sunday Dispatch}) and the Marquis of Donegall (\textit{Sunday News}). The resentment was due to these columnists gaining their position through their titles and connections. The writing they did was a record of their social lives and they did not work long hours to work their way up to staff journalist. They had no training and yet were well paid, respected and had celebrity status. Their very existence in the newsroom was through their title. Patrick Balfour stated that ‘post-

\textsuperscript{471}ibid.
\textsuperscript{473}McKibbin, \textit{Class and Cultures}, p. 23.
war diarists like Hannen Swaffer, Charles Graves, Alan Parsons, and Percy Sewell were the first social commentators to know the world they wrote of.\textsuperscript{474} They knew how to write about the aristocracy in an intimate manner which made the reader feel a part of the world of glamour and wealth. The gentleman journalist could integrate and commentate in a manner that drew the reader into the aristocratic world not just as an observer but almost like a participant. Swaffer enjoyed criticising as well as commentating, even as a theatre critic, he enjoyed holding the second Duke of Westminster up to ridicule.\textsuperscript{475} As noted above, newspapers were changing in many ways, journalism was changing, becoming more visual and female orientated. The records of Beaverbrook attest to this. The \textit{Evening Standard} wage list shows 94 staff journalists, the highest paid member of staff was the cartoonist David Low earning £5,500 a year and Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, the columnist who earned £3,000 per annum. In the weekly records of \textit{The Express} on 29 November 1930, there were 23 reporters, 21 artists and 4 photographers.\textsuperscript{476} From the mid-1920s columnists, Lady Eleanor Smith, Lord Castlerosse and the Marquis of Donegall all placed emphasis on their own society status. The Duchess of Argyll stated that the gossip columnists Viscount Castlerosse, the Marquis of Donegall and Tom Driberg were ‘invited to all the parties we went to, and they mentioned us daily in their columns, probably because they could not avoid us’.\textsuperscript{477} The aristocratic journalists signed with their full titles. They described their own lives as the same as those who they were writing about. Patrick Balfour enjoyed lunch at the Ritz in Paris and mentioned it in his column. His conversations with Lady Lavery and her peers were written about in an intimate fashion and Lord Kinross wrote to his mother about endless parties, day and night. Patrick Balfour wrote describing the dresses, the food and the furnishings. In the \textit{Daily Sketch} in November 1928, he described Princess Arthur ‘dressed in petunia geortete …no jewellery except a solitary row of pearls and long earrings. Her sister was wearing black relieved with diamante’. There is no doubt that he saw himself as a journalist but also as an aristocrat. The fact that Lord Beaverbrook sought to maintain and expand his own society presence through his holidays in France and dinner parties, where he socialised with Lord Birkenhead and Lady Diana Cooper meant that it was of utmost importance that he knew all the gossip. Birkenhead was a close friend of the second Duke of Westminster. Beaverbrook was friends with Castlerosse and they had even attempted to buy the periodical \textit{People} together. Castlerosse abandoned a career in stocks to take up the position of columnist for his friend who had tested first the writing of Castlerosse. Beaverbrook

\textsuperscript{474}Balfour, \textit{Society Racket}, p. 22.  
\textsuperscript{475}Daily Herald, 18 Nov. 1936.  
\textsuperscript{477}Margaret Campbell, duchess of Argyll, \textit{Forget me not, the autobiography of Margaret Duchess of Argyll} (London, 1975), p. 49.
was ‘sick of lickspittle journalists who appended feeble jokes or snobbish chatter to lists of names, in return for free hospitality and nodding terms with the so-called elite’.\textsuperscript{478} He wanted Castlerosse to write in a new form of journalism in which the writer who surveyed the contemporary scene was just as important, rather more thoughtful, and certainly more opinionated, than the people about whom he was writing. Beaverbrook wanted a column as a ‘calming anecdote to feckless…trivial and trashy in Society’\textsuperscript{479} He did, however, request gossip without discretion privately, which he duly received in private correspondence. Castlerosse thus, while brandishing a wholesome image of respectability, was feeding gossip to his employer as a sign of loyalty.

The presence of a gentleman journalist was a sense of moving into modernity within the Press. The gentleman journalist could enter society parties as a member not as a pariah. The existence and presence of these gentleman journalists became a stark physical symbol to society, of the growing power of the popular press. Patrick Balfour, the son of the Earl of Kinross, had begun his career in the \textit{Glasgow Herald} before moving to the \textit{Sunday Dispatch} and then the \textit{Daily Sketch}, where he had disappointed his parents terribly who, having left their son in London, after a visit in 1931 wrote ‘hoping that …you were going to enter a new phase of life, by going abroad …to redirect yourself from the futility of your misspent life in London in the last 3-4 years. Surely your mother and I have suffered enough’\textsuperscript{480} Balfour in later years described his life as a joke really.\textsuperscript{481} The fact that Balfour found the life of 1920s society frivolous attests to the fact that society radically changed after the War, which does bring to mind the point made by Evelyn Waugh that the reaction of the post-war generation was a reaction to the War and what their older siblings and parents had suffered. Hannah Barker and J.H. Weiner wrote extensively about the change of newspapers from political commentators to proponents of leisure, entertainment and consumerism.\textsuperscript{482} Queenie Leavis, the literary critic, lamented how the press promoted a facetious denigration of serious values.\textsuperscript{483} The reasons for this move was that the consumer wanted more Society news and the Press Barons knew this. Northcliffe wanted the gossip columnist to be a man on the inside who

\textsuperscript{479}ibid.
\textsuperscript{480}Balfour, \textit{Society Racket: A Critical Survey of Modern Social Life} (London, 1933), details his relationship with his parents to his chosen profession and his ultimate regrets.
\textsuperscript{481}ibid.
\textsuperscript{482}Newman, ‘The Celebrity Gossip column’.
actively partook and moved in the social world. Northcliffe declared in May 1919 that the most important piece of news in the newspapers that morning was that Lady Diane Manners had become engaged to Duff Cooper. He believed that was the story his readers wanted.

The question posed is what was the actual representation of Society in the newspapers and what was being written about? Hamilton Fyfe, biographer of Northcliffe, and Ross McKibbin both question the reasons why the aristocrats wanted to be in the society pages? Fyfe believed that aristocrats wanted their name in the society pages because it gave them power and influence, whereas McKibbin believes that Society changed its public representation to fit in with the modern image of a cosmopolitan café society and transatlantic film stars. The gossip columnists were known and were not excluded from society: they were courted. If the aristocracy wanted to be protected from gossip they could have excluded the columnists from social gatherings. The Duke of Argyll accused his wife ‘you have created nothing in life…you have only created yourself’. Many believed that the Duchess had a press agent who coached her on how to appear before the cameras, a fact that she denied. The second Duke of Westminster posed for The Tattler and his movements were predictable as he maintained a suite in the Ritz in Paris and frequented the same clubs and restaurants. The death of his son and the necessity for a new young bride brought him into contact with younger people and a more active social life. The non-aristocratic names in the gossip columns were sports’ stars, dancers, cultural and international celebrities. Sarah Newman’s study of the make-up of the gossip columns of the Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror, Daily Sketch, Evening Standard and the News of the World produced evidence of society names in the gossip papers up to 1930 but the mention of society names drops to become more varied after 1930. By 1930 the amount of column space devoted to society figures had halved to 16.6%. It had been 32.83% in 1922. The reasons for this can be surmised, to be the growth of interest in world politics, the decline in the antics of the ‘Bright Young Things’ who were marrying and settling into society. In 1938 Society coverage in the six national papers had reduced again to 11.6% of column space. The mention of the names of society figures in a sample of the Express columns in 1922 was 58% and 40%

487 Ibid.
489 Ibid., p. 109.
in the *Daily Mail*. The references were mainly to attendance at social gatherings.\textsuperscript{490} In the *Daily Mail* the royal family was always the opening line in the social columns. There was a huge focus on women’s dresses and accessories described in great detail for the middle classes to emulate.\textsuperscript{491} Of the 62 paragraphs sampled for Newman’s thesis in the *Daily Mail* only five were about non-British celebrities, three were French, one American and one referring to the Spanish Royal family. The *Sketch* in 1922 was 50\% based on British figures, 29\% society people and 17\% society events. The *Daily Mirror* in 1922 contained 25\% on the Royal Family and, society events featured much less here than in the other national newspapers.\textsuperscript{492}

The question now posed refers to the actual substantive press coverage of the Duke. It is clear that the Duke was concerned with what was written about him. He was engaged in two important libel actions, one with his niece regarding a piece in a college newspaper and the second against an accusation of frivolity at a time of war. But the day-to-day coverage of him and his family was for the most part very congratulatory. In a sample taken of the *Daily Mirror* of the period 1900–40, there were 495 articles, only two have negative implications: one about an application made regarding his two daughters,\textsuperscript{493} which is vague but must be about custody, and a second referring to his libel case in 1941.\textsuperscript{494} He is congratulated on his generosity: ‘His grace never refuses to lend Grosvenor House for any deserving charity festivity.’\textsuperscript{495} Details are also published about his DSO and the Mohammed Ali medal he received in Cairo.\textsuperscript{496} The front page on 21 February 1901 is dedicated to his first wedding with four photographs. The Duke’s first engagement had also gained front page coverage. The *Daily Mirror* also reported when the Duke gave the country, Canada, a picture, *Death of Wolfe*, through Lord Beaverbrook to Sir Robert Borden, Prime Minster of Canada who thanked the Duke and there was applause.\textsuperscript{497} The Duke was close enough to Beaverbrook to donate a picture through him to his country and have it received by the Prime Minster of that country. There is no further explanation of the gift but the fact that it was given through Beaverbrook does imply he was part of the decision. The Press Baron had a link to the Duke. A sample of the coverage in the *Daily Mirror* from 1914-18 includes details of his travel on 5 August 1914, a lunch he was at on 10 July 1916, the Chester races 5 May 1915, theatre attendance 5 May 1915, coming home 21 December 1916,

\textsuperscript{490}Ibid., p. 55.
\textsuperscript{491}Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{492}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{493}Daily Mirror, 16 July 1914.
\textsuperscript{494}Daily Mirror, 28 Jan. 1941.
\textsuperscript{495}Daily Mirror, 31 May 1916.
\textsuperscript{496}Daily Mirror, 23 Nov. 1916.
\textsuperscript{497}Daily Mirror, 1 May 1918.
his charities 31 May 1916, his health and ‘splendid physique’ 1 November 1916, ‘looking very bronze and fit’ 15 May 1916 and again on 29 May 1916, resting on 10 December 1915, visiting his mother 9 June 1916, racing 15 June 1918 and meeting Spanish royalty 4 June 1918. On 10 December 1915 there was a long article about a restaurant in the ‘This Morning’s Gossip’ column: ‘Quite a big crowd at Ciro’s during the last few days. The Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Newcastle and some others. In the grill room at Orange Street now they speak of the restaurant as the upper chamber’.498 The story of his daughter Ursula’s wedding stated that the interest in the wedding was so much that women were injured in the crush and the police had to be used to control the crowds. These stories were all factual but the tone used when imparting the news was one of almost admiration. The readers like the crowds at Ursula’s wedding should be interested in the Duke and his life and the society he was a part of. The Daily Mail believed even where he dined was newsworthy. The Duke’s second engagement had warranted a double spread at pages 8 and 9 and four photographs. The third engagement resulted in one page but on page 1. The Daily Express published coverage of the wedding on page 1 and the following day published a honeymoon photo, also on page 1, and also covered his libel case against his niece.499 The Daily Mail records his second divorce in 1926, and his marriage in 1934, his chairing of Randolph Churchill’s conservative meeting in Wavertree by-election and the establishment and contribution to the Jubilee Trust.500 The enormous spread in the Illustrated London News of the christening of his son is impressive. The king was godfather and the entire scene was drawn in sumptuous detail by S. Begg.501 Across the Duke’s life The Sunday Times dealt with his coming of age, his heroic military career, his charitable causes and the sale of the Blue Boy painting. The Daily Telegraph covered the weddings and engagements in less detail and referred to the speech given by Sir T. P. Whitaker criticising the land tax as that would not hit the Duke of Westminster but other small landowners.502 The wedding of the Duke’s daughter, Ursula, was covered in less detail with two photographs on page 14.503 The trends show the popular press focusing on his personal life and charitable acts while the more establishment newspapers also cover his political lobbying and financial endeavours.504

The foreign press particularly focused on his divorces. His first and second divorces were very acrimonious. The newspapers in England were restrained from publishing evidence of divorces

498Daily Mirror, 10 Dec. 1915.
502Daily Telegraph, 6 July 1909.
503Daily Telegraph, 24 July 1924.
504The coverage of the Press of the Duke’s financial endeavours will be covered in the next chapter.
in the Judicial Proceedings Regulation of Reports Act of 1923. Ross McKibbin attests to the fact that the majority of the popular press reported on Society with respect and admiration and coverage of the Duke would support that view. Frank Harris lost his job over his salacious reporting in the late 1800s. Patrick Balfour stated that if you ask a social columnist to politely keep his mouth shut it is quite often the case he will do. The proprietor of the *News of the World*, Riddell, also attested to the fact that the work of a newspaper was often to protect men whose names had appeared on the list of a Westminster brothel. Beaverbrook covered up for Lord Birkenhead when he was caught with a prostitute who gave his name to the police. Even with such reticence there was extensive coverage of the Duke’s first divorce in the British newspapers. *The Times* ran half a page spread, detailing the finer details of the case. This amounted to three columns on page 10 on 8 June 1919’s issue. The full case was recorded including details of the Duke’s desertion and the many attempts at reconciliation on behalf of the Duchess, which read like a slapstick comedy. In 1911 she attempted to join him at a hotel in Egypt, writing first, to give notice of her arrival, but he had left before she arrived and in August 1912 when she again attempted to join him at Eaton Hall, where he had hosted a party. He left before she arrived leaving three of his guests at the house. *The Times* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* reproduced a letter written by the Duke from Mimizan dated 5 January 1913 offering the Duchess an income of £13,000 a year and the use of the yacht which she could lease in order to make money. He had even increased the recommended allowance because she would need to rent a house in the city and the country. He promised to continue his allowances to her parents. The use of his houses, however, was not offered to her and she was excluded from them. The Duchess refused the terms offered in an effort to maintain her status as the Duke’s wife and mother of his children who, at this time, had been made wards of the court. The details of her life with him from late 1909 onwards are of him avoiding all contact with her and spending nights away from their homes. The *Pall Mall Gazette* sub headlined the article with ‘Story of Long Neglect’. The Duchess had her husband followed in an effort to prove adultery and he was witnessed meeting and spending a night with a woman in Brighton. The article makes for salacious reading. The details of the divorce are printed in the majority of the provincial newspapers although the language and tone does differ. The focus is on the

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506 *The Times*, 8 June 1919.
507 Letter from Beaverbrook to Robertson, 13 June 1932 (Beaverbrook Papers H/97).
508 *The Times*, 18 June 1919.
509 *The Times*, 18 June 1919.
510 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 June 1919.
511 ibid.
amount offered to the Duchess and the fact that the Duke chose to allow the case to be undefended. *The Times* even referenced the date when the Duke decided to cease marital intercourse in late 1909, which the Duchess, when asked in court, answered sincerely. The newspaper clearly focuses on the desertion aspect and the fact that the Duchess refused an extraordinarily generous offer. *The Tattler’s* gossip column, in its paragraph on a chic committee for the opening of Hendon flying club, noted the committee had included the Duchess of Westminster and made a quip at the Duchess’s expense: ‘wasn’t it tiresome her divorce case coming off just on the first day of Ascot?—but it was all very pure and nice so no one missed anything much’. The *Illustrated Police News* indicated that the case was to be defended as per the list but as the proceedings commenced the case was changed to the undefended list. The Duke did not attend, but the Duchess gave full testimony. Adrian Tinniswood in his study of *The Long weekend: Life in the Country House between the Wars* comes to similar conclusions to this thesis with regard to the press coverage of the Duke’s first divorce: ‘Some reports let the Duke off quite lightly simply mentioning the Duke and Duchess were in the divorce lists (along with three other pairs of peers)…Others went into much more detail.’ Both the Duke and Duchess had remarried by the end of 1920. She remained in his life as mother of his two daughters and he continued to subsidise her parents and her brother, who married Winston Churchill’s mother.

The Duke’s second divorce in 1926 appeared as part of a list of sixty-two. The coverage in the two years before had caused a stir. *The Times* reported on the injunction sought by the then Duchess, Violet Mary, to prevent the Duke from ejecting her and her servants from their home in Davies Street-Berkeley Square West, where her maid was being refused food by the other servants. *The Times* covered the case again in the Law Reports where it was alleged that the Duke had allowed the Duchess residency in Bourdon House after their separation in January 1924 but not after she was served with divorce papers on 18 August. During the course of the case the Duke’s counsel had offered £8,000 a year and a suite of rooms in Claridge’s. She felt she deserved £15,000 a year and Bourdon House. The case was closed with the injunction refused, as the house was the Duke’s only London residence. The Duke and Duchess were

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512 Details of the Duke’s first divorce are available here - National Archives, Kew, London (J77/1297/9606).
514 *The Illustrated Police News*, 26 June 1919.
516 *The Illustrated Police News*, 26 June 1919.
517 *The Times*, 28 Aug. 1924.
518 *The Times* 11 Sept. 1924.
abroad at the time of the case, but when she returned she told a reporter from the *Daily Express*:

‘I cannot tell you what I will do next…I no longer have a home…my situation is unimaginable’.\(^{519}\) The gossip column in the *Star* referred to the Duke anonymously as ‘the future of a certain duke whose conjugal tousle was recently in the news’.\(^{520}\) The third divorce was a quiet affair after years of separation in 1947. The underlying theme in the reports of the first two divorces, is of greedy women in unhappy marriages with an unfaithful husband prepared to release the women with ample resources.\(^{521}\) The first two duchesses courted the Press, clearly wanting to be viewed sympathetically, while the Press knew that the details would sell newspapers. Both duchesses were offered generous settlements but had endured serial infidelity and wholly unreasonable treatment.\(^{522}\) The Duke made no comment in either divorce and allowed his legal team to fight for him. The figures thrown around the courts and the reference to the Duke only having one home in London raised the level of interest in a class that was beyond the reach of the majority.\(^{523}\) The Duke could do what he pleased and pay off his unhappy wives. The reality of the lives of the three duchess who he divorced varied somewhat. The second duchess was ‘knocked about’\(^{524}\) and the third duchess’ memoir includes a description of a Cartier crystal clock with diamond hands shattered against a wall,\(^{525}\) an account of her birthday party in 1934 when he ridiculed her friends\(^{526}\) and the belittlement of her father as a courtier and her mother’s shrill voice which he described ‘once had shattered a glass’.\(^{527}\) Her marriage was described by James Lees-Milne as a definition of unadulterated hell.\(^{528}\) Her divorce was not publicised as it occurred after years of separation and was a quiet quick affair. It was the second divorce that was the most publicised due to the outspoken nature of Violet, his second duchess.

The sentiment in the coverage of the second divorce leant towards sympathy for the Duchess trying to save a loveless marriage but the generosity of the Duke is also duly noted. The coverage within Britain ranged from Aberdeen to Belfast. The *Dundee Evening Telegraph* gave two fifths of the front page to coverage of the second divorce. It led with the headline ‘Unhappy


\(^{520}\)Ibid.

\(^{521}\)New York Times, 9 May 1913.

\(^{522}\)Details of the Duke’s first divorce are available here - National Archives, Kew, London (J77/1297/9606).

\(^{523}\)Details of the Duke’s second divorce are available here - National Archives, Kew, London (J77/2100/5757). The second divorce proceedings include a record of violence against the duchess.

\(^{524}\)Ibid.

\(^{525}\)Ponsonby, *Grace and favour*, p. 232.

\(^{526}\)Ponsonby, *Grace and favour*, p. 197.

\(^{527}\)Ponsonby, *Grace and favour*, p. 196.

\(^{528}\)The *Telegraph*, 4 Nov. 1993.
turn in romantic marriage'\textsuperscript{529} and detailed the entire proceedings with reference to the failure of the Duchess to secure access to Bourdon House. The \textit{Belfast Telegraph} led with the headline ‘The Duchesses [sic] failure’.\textsuperscript{530} The \textit{Sheffield Daily Telegraph} referred to ‘painful revelations’\textsuperscript{531} and all newspapers referred to cruelty. The \textit{Cheltenham Chronicle} used the words ‘great cruelty’.\textsuperscript{532} The \textit{Times of India} led with the more sympathetic ‘Matrimonial troubles’, reporting through Reuter’s special service, they focused on the Duke’s right to ‘his own house…and property’.\textsuperscript{533} The Duke’s second wife had courted the publicity in her exposure of the details of her marriage and the private letter he had sent, which she had read out in court. There was clearly a revenge motive and a need to return to her role as Duchess of Westminster. She openly stated that she did not want an end to the marriage but his lifestyle had forced her to ask for him to change and he had refused. She claimed the Duke had promised her Bourdon House and later refused her entry through his servants. The judge immediately questioned her right to the house that was the Duke’s only London residence, and that is where she lost the case. She was refused ownership of Bourdon House and the divorce was granted on the basis of desertion and misconduct. The challenge to the Duke’s property and the fact that the Duchess had removed vases from the houses superseded his behaviour towards his wife in the coverage. There was no issue with him providing for his wife but the house was his and the papers reflected that fact, allowing the wife appear greedy and crass. The judge focused on that fact that the Duke had been and was being generous. His lifestyle choices were not developed and the depth of his cruelty towards his wife was not reported in the press. The focus on the Duchess’ behaviour in light of his generosity was developed more. Violet Grosvenor wanted the house and £15,000, which made her appear to be grasping and insatiable rather than sympathetic. While coverage was still relatively favourable towards the Duke, the Press had become increasingly interested in his personal life from the moment of his first divorce. The \textit{Pall Mall Gazette}, as already mentioned, on 26 November 1920 referred to the Duke as a ‘much harassed man’ who on his return from the honeymoon of his second marriage had found a crowd outside Bourdon House. He said ‘I have nothing to say’.\textsuperscript{534} The \textit{Illustrated Police News} of 25 June 1925 gave more information on his second divorce stating there were accusations of frequent misconduct with a Mrs. Cosby and another allegation relating to 27 January 1924 at the Hotel de Paris in Monte Carlo. The Duchess’ statement was recorded as was her record of

\textsuperscript{529}Dundee Evening Telegraph, 10 Sept. 1925.
\textsuperscript{530}Belfast Telegraph, 11 Sept. 1924.
\textsuperscript{531}Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 11 Sept. 1924.
\textsuperscript{532}Cheltenham Chronicle, 13 Sept. 1924.
\textsuperscript{533}Times of India, 12 Sept. 1924.
\textsuperscript{534}Pall Mall Gazette, 26 Nov. 1920.
the admission of ‘the Duke…that he was living with several women’, and that ‘he would live just as he like[d]’. The newspaper also noted that the Duchess had employed a man to follow the Duke in order to give evidence.535 The Atlantic edition of the Daily Mail of 22 November 1924 also reported on the case and included the threat of a dancer, June Day, named as a respondent ‘unless the duchess relents … I will spring a surprise attack which will be more than an ordinary shock to society’.536 Perhaps linked to such behaviour, the main biographer of the Duke, George Ridley, categorised the middle years of the Duke’s life as ‘dissatisfied restlessness’.537 He blamed the deaths of George Wyndham and Hugh Lupus on the moral descent of the Duke. Although both men had difficulties in their marital lives, George Wyndham had been in love with Lady Plymouth while married to the Duke’s mother, and Hugh Lupus was unfaithful, Ridley confirmed: ‘both had conformed to the morals of their time, and kept a face of domesticity unbroken to the world. Bend’Or was of a different generation, and was without the personal flexibility that might have enabled him to keep up appearances with Shelagh [his first wife]…He refused to ‘compromise’ and ‘dishonesty in private…[was] like an anathema to him’.538 This can be perceived as a very biased way of describing the actions of a man who, because of his protected status and incredible wealth lived a life in whichever manner he wished and ignored the publicity that surrounded his private life.

The patriotic image that the Duke wished to present was very important to him, as is obvious from his two libel cases. In 1941, the Duke brought an action against the Daily Mirror. The article in question, published under the subheading ‘Fragrant Fragments’ had claimed that the Duke had been ‘spending money sending orchids to America while poor children whose parents cannot afford to send their children across the water are being killed’.539 The statement had been repeated by Lord Haw Haw on German radio. It was an opportunity for Haw Haw to discredit the establishment and belittle the British aristocracy. The case was settled out of court and the money paid was given to a charity for children who were victims of air raids. The truth was that the Duke had sold orchid plants to America and thereby generated American currency. The libel against the Duke’s niece is further evidence that his patriotic image was incredibly important to him. The Duke issued a writ, which was reported in the Daily Mirror on 4 January 1934, against Lady Sibell Lygon claiming damages for an article written by her that appeared

536Daily Mail, 22 Nov. 1924.
537Ridley, Bend‘or, Duke of Westminster, p. 133.
538Ridley, Bend‘or, Duke of Westminster, p. 413.
539Ridley, Bend‘or, Duke of Westminster, p. 148.
in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* Christmas edition.\(^{540}\) She had accused her uncle of being unpatriotic and wholly indifferent to his responsibilities to his country. The writ against the editor and Sibell was settled out of court with an apology from both.\(^{541}\) The Duke’s behaviour towards his niece in light of the article appearing in a college seasonal newspaper clearly shows that people’s perception of him as anything other than patriotic, was very important to him and, any insult was dealt with within the court system. The idea of the Duke behaving in any way unpatriotic was against his inherited position and the Empire was his *raison d’etre*. His concern about his image was not connected to stories of overspending or adultery or even mistreatment of his wives but a college magazine calling him unpatriotic brought him to court, which shows he was aware of what was being written about him.

The Press outside Great Britain particularly America, China and India also published stories about the second Duke of Westminster. The international coverage of the Duke can be categorised into three different themes, reports of his divorces and movement, how he spent his money and political causes in which he was involved. The tone of the reporting varied in small ways. The *Times of India* did hold his backing of the Indian princes to ransom somewhat and *The New York Times* certainly enjoyed reporting his divorces. The main Chinese periodicals covered his bravery in the First World War, his first divorce and the sale of his paintings. A study of *The New York Times* from 1900-40 show 129 front page references. *The New York Times* was interested in his private life and the money. The tone of the articles tend to be very non-committal. The reference to the Duke being ‘one of the richest men in England’,\(^{542}\) and ‘the richest British Peer’.\(^{543}\) The reporting of his personal life is extensive and included photographs. The Duke’s first three marriages as mentioned ended in divorce. Westminster had signed a separation deed before he went to War in 1914, even though the Duchess had asked for a divorce, the Queen had persuaded against it.\(^{544}\) The newspaper had previously reported that they had been ‘long unhappy’ and the Duke had sued for divorce naming the Duke of Alba as a correspondent.\(^{545}\) The couple were however able to show a united front when their daughter Mary came out.\(^{546}\) There was even an article referring to Mlle. Lenglen denying her engagement

\(^{540}\) *Daily Mirror*, 4 Jan. 1934.

\(^{541}\) *Chicago Tribune*, 11 July 1937.


to the Duke in 1926. A story about a non-story even made print because it was possibly scandalous.

The Times of India published 795 articles on the Duke for the period 1900-40. The decade with the most exposure was 1910-19 with 224 articles. The most interesting being the discussion around the Olympic Fund and the Defence of India League. The Olympic Fund appeal letter from the Duke was published on 12 September 1913 on page 12. A month later, on 11 October 1913, the paper printed a series of written arguments both for and against donating to the fund. However, there was a definite bias against the fund. The article closed by questioning of the reasons for even entering the Olympics ‘what’s the point’. The title of the article regarding the defence of India was The Diehards and Indian Princes. The article which was printed on page 12, questions the accuracy of the letter from the Lords supporting the Princes. It then criticised the grammar, sees it as ‘no real indication of how completely the younger Tory Extremists misunderstand the mind of their own country people…letter is ungrammatical as it is disingenuous, utilising the princes for the purpose of a party fight in England’. The Times of India felt that the Defence of India was a cause, that was being dragged into and used for political gain in what it believed to be, infighting within the Tory party. The letter meant nothing and was badly written. This had followed on from an article on the appointment of the Duke as the Vice President of the Defence of India League. The newspaper claimed that

the White Paper has created great uneasiness throughout the British Empire… the Establishment of a so-called democratic institutions in the provinces at the same time as responsible government is set up … would whatever the safeguards in the existing state of Indian society hazard the lives and liberties and the fortunes of 350,000 of our fellow subjects.

The newspaper was criticising the White Paper and blaming it for anxiety in the British Empire. The viewpoint is taken that the readers of the Times of India did not want Indian governance being used by the Conservatives in their squabbles. It is a valuable insight into how the Press in India, albeit the newspaper that represented the British establishment in India, clearly viewed the debates about India as political machinations in London attempting to solve the India Question while rowing amongst themselves.

548 Times of India, 9 Dec. 1934.
549 Times of India, 14 June 1933.
The second Duke of Westminster was good looking, sporty, incredibly rich, had a tempestuous personal life and was a war hero. He also avoided the press when he did not need to promote a cause. When researching the Duke and his relationship with the newspapers it is notable that his money and his properties take centre stage both in the ownership and control of the newspapers and what the newspapers wrote about him. The interesting thing about the coverage of the Duke is at times how balanced it was particularly in the left-wing newspaper Reynolds’s News and how the international press differed between countries in what interested them. When the Daily Express was in difficulty the Duke gave £5,000 to Oliver Locker Lampson’s and Claude Lowther’s subscriptions without implicating himself.550 Locker Lampson was an MP for Huntingdonshire and Claude Lowther was the cousin of the fifth Earl of Lonsdale and had lost his seat in the Liberal successes of 1906 but got it back in 1910. By late August 1912 Locker Lampson had collected a total of £47,500 from Buchanon, Westminster, Howard de Walden, Carlile, Sir George Cooper and John Mix.551 The necessity to hold on to the newspaper is referred to by Locker in the words ‘it is the only half penny paper the party possesses in London’.552 Following the Parliament Act it was heavily in the interests of the Duke to invest in a Tory newspaper. In 1915, there is a record of Ronald McNeill writing to Andrew Bonar Law requesting he bring influence on Viscount Ridley and the Duke of Westminster to help save the Manchester Weekly Times. He states: ‘he did not know many wealthy people and…was very bad at asking for money for enterprises in which I am interested’.553 The need for money became obsolete as Lord Leconfield saved the paper with a cash investment of £2,000.554 Ronald McNeill was the first Baron Cushendun, a Northern Irish Unionist and a proponent of the Imperial Fund. Clearly, it was a recognised fact that the newspaper business was something the Duke would possibly invest in. It went further when Collin Brooks, in his published diary, recounted the moment his mentor, Rothermere, in 1935, told him to phone the Duke of Westminster to get a house for the Air League. He did, and was immediately given a house in Grosvenor Square.555 The Air League was a national league of Airmen headed by Norman Macmillan. Rothermere had spearheaded a campaign to have an established Air League which was part of a larger imperialist programme, and was deeply hostile to the League of Nations.556

551Details of investments 28 August 1912 (Beaverbrook Papers H/115).
552Memorandum Mr. Locker Lampson’s scheme May 1912 (The Steel and Maitland Papers).
553McNeill to Bonar Law 29 December 1914 and 9 January 1915 (Bonar Law Papers 35/5/62 . 36/1/11).
554Ibid.
556Ibid.
The supporters of the organisation were Westminster, Major General Fuller, Mark Kerr and Admiral Sir Murray Sueter. The Air League was founded by Rothermere with the sole intention of using pilots who would tour the country warning of the peril from the air. To help finance the campaign Collin Brooks was sent to Lady Lucy Houston, the owner of the Saturday Review. Her newspaper was right-wing and her personal views were one of conspiracy theories about the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, and Russia. She paid £10,000 and Rothermere was ecstatic. He then backed Randolph Churchill in the byelection and requested Captain Norman Macmillan, the pilot who was to be president of the association, write an article in the Mail about the possible bombing of Liverpool. Both Macmillan and Rothermere spoke for Randolph Churchill in his campaign.

The Duke and Lady Houston had helped push the right-wing agenda into a reality that would form part of the Conservative press power.

On 18 April 1927 a Daily Express article put forward the paper’s opinion of the greatest eighteen Englishmen and The Saturday Review attacked the choice: ‘Each member …is a multimillionaire’. The article was titled ‘naming England’s greatest men’. The list included the Duke of Westminster, the Duke of Portland, Lord Rothermere and Lord Iveagh. The Saturday Review ended its criticism with this point: ‘It is the attitude of mind behind this thing that matters. Money making per se is exalted; the golden calf is pedestalled for the adoration of Demos: the youth of England is told that it must make money or make room for those who do.’

The article failed to distinguish between inherited money and new money and was clearly offended by wealth as a measure of success. The extraordinary wealth of the second Duke of Westminster was the main source of the attack used by the Daily Herald. The period 1910-19 contained sixty-eight references to the Duke, this decreased to forty-six in the period 1920-29 and increased again to eighty-six from 1930-39. The articles cover his generosity, his marriages, gambling, houses, racehorses, and is the only paper to cover the fact that he was at the introduction of the cure for Tuberculosis with many titled people including the Aga Khan, Lady Wolverton, Lord Wolverton, Lady Seaforth, Lord Alington, Lady MacRobert, Sir James Reynolds, Sir Philip Reckitt and Mr Jack Reynolds on 30 January 1930. The doctor, Dr Spahlinger had continued his research thanks to financial donations organised by Lord Astor. The revelation was made on 28 January at Lady Seaworth’s house in 49 Berkley Square. The

557Ibid.
560Barry Smith ‘Gullible’s Travails: Tuberculosis and Quackery 1890-1930’, Journal of Contemporary History Vol. 20, No. 4 Medicine History and Society (October 1985)
success of the cure was very limited and his results questioned. There are no other references to the meeting in other newspapers and the doctor thanked the *Daily Herald* for its support. The article stands out in the midst of the coverage of the Duke’s racing achievements, family occasions and investments. The *Daily Herald* had begun as a newspaper owned by the Trade Unions Congress and the Labour Party in 1922 and in 1930 the TUC sold their share to Odhams Press. The newspaper was left-wing and carried articles supporting strikes and was the opponent of the conservative *Daily Express*. The Duke’s involvement was only covered in the *Daily Herald*. The list of those present showing the benevolence of the aristocracy is a part of the story but does bring to light a positive slant on the coverage of the Duke in the context of the *Daily Herald*’s otherwise negative coverage of the Duke.

There were two columnists in the *Daily Herald* who singled out the Duke for ridicule, G. R. Everard, writing as Gadfly, who wrote a particularly vicious attack on him on 3 May 1929, and the drama critic Hannen Swaffer. One explicit reference to the Duke by Swaffer was rather pointedly petty. He described how copyright runs out in the use of plays, but not in landowning and then directly refers to the Duke of Westminster. Gadfly’s attack on the Duke was directed at the Duke’s wealth and referred to the ‘kakistocracy’ while stating ‘Londoners who are paying hundreds and thousands into the Grosvenor treasury must be awfully bucked to hear that their prospective landlord is good-looking…we can always count on having our laws made for us in the long run by dukes and we can always count on our being permitted to pay them rent until the cows come home’.

He began the article: ‘Even dukes must live don’t ask me why’ and ends with ‘dukes…they never die’. The Duke of Westminster is the only named duke in the article. When he chaired Randolph Churchill’s election meeting in Wavertree the fact that he was chairing a ‘conservative democracy’ candidate was laughed at. A duke and democracy were polar opposites. When the national Prohibition and Reform Party formed and proposed an end to private ownership, the *Daily Herald* pointed that such a thing would ‘cause equal inconvenience to the *Daily News* and the Duke of Westminster.’ The Duke’s article in the *Fortnightly Review* on Tariff Reform and

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561 ibid.
562 *Daily Herald*, 18 Nov. 1936.
563 *Daily Herald*, 3 May 1929.
564 ibid.
the Imperial Fund was totally ‘ducal economics’, which are ‘lamentably vague’ and result in ‘money for someone…Who are the someones and to what class do they belong’.

The *Daily Herald* focused on Westminster as the icon of the aristocracy. The quintessential duke was ‘no Adonis’ and had vague policies with laughable habits on holidays. There was a description of the Duke and his relatives travelling in Bordeaux dressed as gypsies. He even had his valet and all servants dress as gypsies. The news came from the newspaper’s Paris correspondent. The second Duke of Westminster was newsworthy and as with the Limehouse speech he was the Duke that could be constantly held up as the beacon of the aristocratic landlord. The lack of direct attacks on him show that in light of his actual behaviour as a landlord there was little fodder for attack. The Land Nationalisation Bill would only add to his wealth, but as an owner of land he was not a unique case. His image in London and abroad was prominent as is obvious in *The Tattler*’s photographs, Lloyd George’s Limehouse speech and the fact that he was the most well-known London landlord by virtue of the extent of his land holdings in the city. This prominence led to his ridicule in the *Daily Herald* to the extent that their Paris correspondent saw fit to cover the story of the Duke and his family dressing up in Bordeaux. The behaviour of the Duke and his party in 1912 in Bordeaux, as previously mentioned, when they dressed as gypsies was prophetic of the behaviour of the Bright Young Things, described by journalist Patrick Balfour in his book *Society Racket* as ‘not a specific society…but simply what the name implies: a group of people who were bright, young hitherto, innocuous… Though not explicitly a society there were … a definite group of people linked by a community of impulses’. An article in *The Evening Standard* claimed an attendance of two hundred Bright Young Things at a party. Who were they? Harold Acton, Nancy and Diana Mitford, Evelyn Waugh, Anthony Powell, Cecil Beaton were named by Balfour. Their heyday was 1926-9. They were young, rich and usually titled. The third Duchess of Westminster, Loelia Ponsonby, was often referred to as a member. The press publicised these people and their antics to sell newspapers. The fact that a member of the Bright Young Things was being courted by the Duke of Westminster brought Press attention

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569 There is a wider discussion regarding the left-wing media and their portrayal of the finances of the Duke and his contemporaries in chapter 4.
570 *Daily Herald*, 30 April 1923.
571 *Daily Herald*, 5 Aug. 1912.
573 *ibid.*
574 *ibid.*
to the couple on a daily basis. Lord Northcliffe instructed his staff ‘get more names in the paper. The more aristocratic the better, if there’s a news story around them…Everyone likes reading about people in better circumstances than his or her own…Write and seek news with at least the £1,000 a year man in mind’. The _Bystander_ article of 1929 explained the trend towards cocktail parties as easier than a several course meal and they could be held in flats. The way the aristocracy dressed, drank, entertained and spoke was constantly in the newspapers.

On 17 April the Duke (in what is described by his biographer as a rare letter) wrote to Winston Churchill concerning his attack on the Conservative leadership: ‘I must say Rothermere has put in some useful work for us’. The great Press Baron was reduced to loyal servant of the Duke in one pen stroke. The Duke was investing in newspapers through his support of Rothermere and the main newspaper barons were pushing the agenda of the aristocracy. They wanted to foster the same lives as they witnessed. The Press coverage of the second Duke of Westminster in Great Britain is inextricably linked with the treatment of the aristocracy by the Press and the social climate that produced the Press Barons. There was strong regard for the aristocracy and the existence of aristocratic commentators made the upper classes more accessible to the readers. There is a whole new argument to be made regarding the treatment of the Duke and his contemporaries regarding finances, and, in particular the treatment by the left-wing and the tabloids, which I will discuss in chapter 4. The two elements of the Duke’s life that were of particular interest to the Fourth Estate were his money and his marriages. The relationship the Duke had with the Press was acrimonious at times and also beneficial when he wanted to promote a cause. His lifestyle was glamorous and bountiful and drew readers to read about him. Adrian Bingham in his chapter on scrutinising public figures makes the point that rather than spreading scandal, most gossip columnists focused on recording notable events involving Society families – births, deaths, engagements, weddings, divorces, property transactions and such like – describing the parties and entertainments of the Season…reports [that] emphasised the wealth, beauty and taste of the people they described.

This was true for the Duke, there was appeal for stories and photographs of his life and it was balanced. He avoided the Press unless he needed it but was mindful of his position in Society and used his influence when he needed, to defend himself or lobby a cause. Cannadine

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575 Taylor, _Bright Young People_, p.12.
576 Ridley, _Bend’or, Duke of Westminster_, p. 143.
577 Bingham, _Family Newspapers_, p. 235.
concludes that ‘in short, to the traditional territorial aristocracy, the advent of the popular press was seen as the symbol…for all the corrupting forces which were at work in British society’. The Duke’s relationship with the Press was somewhat more nuanced as will be explored in the next chapter focusing on his finances. The Press in America and India and in particular the Times of India and The New York Times focused on news stories of local interest. The divorces were of an almost tabloid nature and made more interesting when accompanied by a posed photograph of the deserted wife on a ship bound for America. The sale of a Gainsborough to an American collector made more engrossing when the journalist defended the right of the Duke to sell to whomever he pleased. As the Duke became embroiled in the Defence of India, his name appeared throughout the coverage and was linked to criticism of the behaviour of members of the Conservative party. He was a known aristocrat in the midst of British imperialist policies. The Press interest in the Duke was constant and varied and will be further explored in the next chapter.

The growth of print media between the wars established a new form of critical commentary that was accessible to the majority of the population in Britain. The power of the Press Barons and their relationship with both the crown and the aristocracy gave rise to a Press that upheld the status quo. The creation of gossip columns with aristocratic writers put the reader into the heart of society. The reader was now able to imagine the scene in minute detail and feel a part of the event with vivid descriptions of the clothes, food and houses. The increase in the readership of newspapers and the content of the newspapers was in keeping with the prominence of the aristocracy. The coverage of the society hosts was comparable to the coverage of celebrities and the aristocracy projected an image that was superior to the rest of society. The increase in photography and sketched images meant that the public could now recognise the great dukes and duchesses and consequently become more interested in their lives, which bore little resemblance to their own. The scandals of the rich and famous were talked about, and written about in the frivolity of the inter-war period. It was aristocratic society and did not reflect the Depression that was to befall Britain in the 1930s. The generation that had missed the war embraced the joie de vivre that was the antithesis of the horror their older siblings had experienced. The Daily Mail in 1927 reported ‘The greatest social problem of today is the effect of the impact of modern youth impelled by enthusiasm and force of new ideas upon a disillusionment of the older generation which has passed through the grim forcing house of

578Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 328.
world war’. \textit{Bystander} blamed the Defence of the Realm Act for restrictions on nightclubs ‘a humiliating discomfort as a permanent result of having won the War’.\textsuperscript{580} The aristocracy maintained a prominence in the ownership, content and policy of the leading newspapers of the 1920s. The interest in the private lives of the aristocracy and the way the Bright Young Things courted the press exposed all of the aristocracy to the glare of the Fourth Estate. The second Duke of Westminster, unable to prevent his first two wives from exposing their marital discord or the paper of record from reporting on the law courts, did involve himself in protecting his image as a patriotic leader of society. His extensive financial resources were used to protect the papers of the establishment which would duly protect the status quo. The fact is the Press Barons, in particular, Lord Beaverbrook, trusted the old aristocracy and wanted to be a part of them and they had little interest in criticising what they wanted to maintain. The left-wing print media never reached a readership that had any hold on Society in Britain and consequently the aristocracy were under no real threat from print media. The second Duke of Westminster used the Press to influence and spread his political ideals when he wanted and was pushed to libel in the face of accusations of anti-British actions. His exposure due to his wealth and his interesting private life drew some scrutiny and conclusions about his personality. The aristocracy were now more accessible. The Duke was more newsworthy because he, as he got older, was rarely seen in London. He spent his time in France, Scotland and Eaton. His friendship with Winston Churchill and young beautiful wives drew photographers to him. He was rarely in the same place for long and this made him more newsworthy through his elusiveness. The five years of his third marriage to Loelia are described as ‘the exhausting restlessness of our lives which resulted in constant tiredness and tension’. During their entire marriage they spend a maximum of three weeks in the same place.\textsuperscript{581} Loelia in her memoir stated ‘the one thing I emphatically do not miss is the limelight in fact I get quite a kick out of walking past the Press photographers unrecognised and unwanted remembering the jostlings and the scurryings the blinding flashes the just one more please that used to be my lot.’\textsuperscript{582} The interest in the aristocracy did increase after the abdication crisis and the public lowering of morality of the crown exposed the classes to more criticism and inspection.

\textsuperscript{579}\textit{Daily Mail}, 6 May 1927.
\textsuperscript{580}\textit{Bystander}, 30 Jan. 1929.
\textsuperscript{581}\textit{Ponsonby, Grace and Favour}, see chapter XIV, Abroad with Bendor.
\textsuperscript{582}\textit{Ponsonby, Grace and Favour}, p.136.
CHAPTER 4

Those poor Dukes, Death duties, Masterpieces and the Press.

David Cannadine opens his chapter on finance in *The Decline of the Aristocracy* with the following statement: ‘In strictly economic terms there can be no doubt that the British patricians
were a failing and a fragmenting class from the 1870s–1930s. He spans fifty years and includes all patricians. In his book *Class in Britain* he states that if Britain did give up its class system then this would ‘abolish the sense of upper-class separateness. The duke of Westminster would still be a very rich man as the non-ducal Mr Grosvenor. But he would no longer be an aristocrat. Instead like Rockefeller or Mellon or Gates, he would be a very wealthy member of the middle class’. The whole class system of England would have to be rearranged without titles and the result would create a society like America with a significantly large middle class. The Duke’s money and title were linked and the financial drain of death duties on the aristocracy affected him and was reported on by the Press. The beginning of the decline of the aristocracy in British political and economic history can be connected to the Liberal government 1908-15 and its Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George. The loss of income for the aristocracy was a direct consequence of the People’s Budget of 1909. David Lloyd George’s speech at Limehouse, in one of the poorest districts of London, on 30 July 1909 was a blatant attack on the aristocracy’s wealth. He explicitly referred to the ‘fraud of the few and the folly of many’ and pronounced that ‘the landlord is a gentleman who does not earn his wealth’. He named the Duke of Westminster as a man who exploited businesses. His motives were clear: he would introduce a series of taxes on the rich to fund the welfare of the poor. Who exactly were the British aristocracy he was targeting and how did historians describe them? Arno Mayer using the proviso ‘on the whole’, and declared that ‘the aristocracy remained landed and accounted for England’s most substantial fortunes…admittedly, the landed establishment became increasingly intertwined with the business world, nearly one third were business directors, notably of large railroad, insurance and international trading firms’. W.D. Rubinstein’s use of probate material to argue that the industrial elite of the late Victorian period and the landed gentry merged to form a cohesive wealthy elite, without the industrial elite actually joining the landed elite, by buying land has been widely criticised to the extent that it is now accepted as a flawed argument. Therefore it is Cannadine’s argument that wealth and class and particularly title were not mutually exclusive that holds most sway in this chapter, drawing from the Press’s portrayal of the actions of the Duke in light of the death duties, how

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583 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, Intro., p. 136.
584 Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p. 186.
586 Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall*, p. 89.
588 Rothery, ‘Wealth of the English Landed Gentry, 1870-1935.’
he spent his money, maintained his London estate and his accumulation of land. The focus of
this chapter is on the Duke as a landowner and an aristocrat and how the Press reported his
financial dealings and used him at times, as Lloyd George did, as a figurehead, of the worst of
the financial elite. The focus of the Press coverage was firstly on his ownership of land in
London and secondly on the ways in which he released capital through selling what many felt
were British masterpieces that should remain in the country of their creation and in particular
the painting the Blue Boy. The true source of the Duke’s wealth was his land holdings
particularly in London but he chose to delegate the majority of the decisions regarding
management of the properties, intervening when he felt the architectural facades were at risk.
The Duke was guided by financial advice that protected his vast fortune and was able to
navigate death duties through astute decisions cushioned by vast wealth.

The most valuable resources of the second Duke of Westminster were his land in Great Britain,
rural and urban, his landed estates abroad both in Europe and Africa, his paintings and the
income he received from rents. He allowed control of his estates to be wielded by his estate
managers and the trend I have discovered is that he interfered when matters were historically
significant or linked to his family. He intervened during renovation of his London properties,
personally involved himself in the creation of an estate in his name in South Africa and enlisted
the aid of his friend Winston Churchill in his creation of a Trust to transfer his assets and thereby
avoid taxes. The effect of the 1911 Act to a man of such immense wealth was multi-layered.
Focusing on buildings, he re-leased a property in London and initiated a building programme,
while selling Halkyn Castle and redesigning the gardens at Eaton. The Act and subsequent
death duties had an effect on all his financial dealings and the release of capital from the sale
of Blue Boy in 1922 resulted in a huge injection of cash.

The most valuable land the Grosvenor family owned was in central London, in Mayfair, an
asset from a marriage between Thomas Grosvenor and Mary Davis. By the time Thomas
Grosvenor’s grandson, a new Marquis, was dead, the rent on the London lands alone had
increased to £60,000 per year, in addition to the Cheshire, Pimlico and Belgravia rents.589 The
Marquis had also bought the Agar Ellis collection of paintings for 30,000 guineas, which
included The adoration of the Magi by Rubens, thereby bestowing an incredible asset on his
grandson, the second Duke of Westminster. The wealth of the second Duke of Westminster is
unquestionable but the People’s Budget, which imposed a 20% tax on the unearned increase in

589Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, pp.13-14.
value of land, payable at death of the owner or sale of the land, and ½d. on undeveloped land
and minerals directly affected the wealthiest landlord in Britain. This chapter seeks to explain
how the Duke spent his money and how he and his peers reacted to the financial challenges of
the period 1900-40 and what was the reaction in the Press to two of the major decisions by
Dukes, the sale of Covent Garden by Bedford and the sale of the Blue Boy by Westminster.
When focusing on land as a resource this chapter will largely deal with the London properties
while referencing the purchase of land abroad and the use of covenants to avoid taxation when
paying workers at Eaton. The wealth of the second Duke of Westminster makes him a valuable
case study because he is so rich. His wealth did not prevent him selling land and chattels in the
face of the consequences of the People’s Budget. The manner in which he spent his money
confirms aspects of Cannadine’s arguments but also makes the theory that the interwar period
saw the decline of the aristocracy a more nuanced argument.

The end of the nineteenth century had already threatened the wealth of the aristocracy. The
introduction of the importation of grain in the 1880s from America and the refrigeration of meat
from Europe struck at the main income of the upper classes. The rents on agricultural land were
the same in 1936 as they had been in the 1880s. In what the Earl of Althorp, Charles Spencer,
described as a pincer movement, the financial attack continued with the death duties raised on
properties valued at over one million from 8% in 1894 to 60% in 1939 and up to 75% in 1948.
This measure alone caused a myriad of problems for the landed aristocrats of 1900-40.590 The
First World War of 1914-18, welcomed by the class that took on the mantle of leadership of
the military, was not their salvation as expected, and between the wars approximately seven
million acres were sold by the upper classes.591 This amounts to a quarter of the land in England.
Land in Wales and Ireland was sold first as it had the least impact on the family’s life style and
was less visible to their contemporaries. Cannadine declared emphatically ‘they all sold
land’.592 The sale of land gave short term financial relief and at times ensured long term income
through the investment of the profits of the sale. A case in point is the Grahams of Netherby.
They owned 26,000 acres in Cumberland which carried debts of £275,000. Between 1882 and
1905 the gross rents fell by more than 25% from £26,718 to £20,000. Before 1941 half the
estate was sold and half the debt was paid and the rest was put into shares. The result was that
the Grahams’ net income rose from £14,000 to £16,000. The Stanhopes sold off peripheral

590 Charles Spencer, ‘Enemies of the Estate’ Vanity Fair (2010),
591 ibid.
592 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 13.
properties in Buckinghamshire, Devonshire, Derbyshire and Ireland. The decrease in the income of the upper classes, which prompted no sympathy from the other classes, themselves hit by sharp unemployment and agricultural depression, meant many families were forced to liquidate their assets, and in some instances sell their London properties or lease their houses to the National Trust. The necessity to survive in their inherited circumstances led to the extending of invitations to the paying public and made the upper classes a commercial entity. The aristocracy needed to sell themselves and become accessible by using their name as a selling point if they were to survive as the largest landowners in England. The inheritance of a title came with a trusteeship and a duty to preserve the inheritance at all costs. The relationship between the heirlooms and houses of the families and their current owner was one of significant importance. They were caretakers for the next generation. As Edmund Burke put it ‘society is...a partnership not only between those who are living but between those who are dead and those who are yet to be born’. The value of the title was even more relevant in the city where aristocrats were sought as company directors who enjoyed salaries for their name only. When Cecil Rhodes returned to England and needed investors he was advised by Salisbury to find directors of political and social standing before applying for the charter, which he duly did. There was a perception that a title ensured financial security and gave weight to a company.

The death duties forced even the largest landlords to sell land. The majority of the land sold by the second Duke of Westminster was sold in Flint in Wales. Land in Wales was easy to sell and maintained its value. Between 1910 and 1914, almost every major landowner in Wales disposed of land: Lord Powis in Montgomeryshire, Lord Marlech in Cricciew, the Rhug estate in Merioneth, the Williams-Wynn holdings in Denbigh and Montgomeryshire and Lord Wimborne in Glamorgan. The Duke of Bedford sold land in Covent Garden, London, which was covered extensively by the Press, something Westminster wanted to avoid. Lord Duveen made a career from buying paintings from the English and selling them to the Americans. The National Trust Act of 1907 was amended after the First World War to deal

597 ibid.
with the increase in the number of properties being leased to the National Trust.\textsuperscript{598} The reaction in the House of Commons by titled MPs to the Bill brings to light the familial responsibilities at odds with financial necessity.\textsuperscript{599} There is no question as to the significant decline in the aristocracy with regard to, what were in some cases, the devastating affect the death duties and economic depression had on the aristocracy all a direct consequence of the loss of veto of the House of Lords in the Parliament Act of 1911.

Cannadine believes the period 1870-1880 was the real downturn of the fortunes of the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{600} F.M.L. Thompson prefers to focus on the financial effects on the lesser gentry whom he sees as having more scope for diversification and therefore a valuable source of empirical evidence.\textsuperscript{601} The fact is the People’s Budget of 1909 was the real culmination of what is described in the \textit{Estate Gazette} ‘as successive governments laying siege to the landed interest and the aristocracy responded by hiding in the bosom of the conservative party’\textsuperscript{602} The loss of the Lords’ veto in 1911 removed the protection against unfavourable Financial Bills the aristocracy had previously enjoyed. Duty on wills in the form of stamp duty was introduced in 1694. In 1780 beneficiaries paid a legacy duty on personal inheritance and from 1853 a successive duty was also applied to personally inherited land, which was followed in 1889 with the introduction of an estate duty at 1\% on estates valued at over £10,000. Harcourt then introduced an estate duty on sales up to 8\% on estates worth more than £1,000,000.\textsuperscript{603} The Lords allowed this to pass through parliament as it did not apply to entailed estates.\textsuperscript{604} H.H. Asquith in 1907 proclaimed that people had started to question hereditary wealth for the first time.\textsuperscript{605} Lord Malmesbury denounced the attack as ‘violent, uncalled for and unjust’.\textsuperscript{606} Lloyd George was single-minded in his pursuit of the landed aristocracy describing in a speech in Cardiff in 1906 ‘The present state of things on the land mean that the labouring man is often sacrificed to the sport of the idle few and this vicious system of land ownership accounts for the exodus from the country’.\textsuperscript{607} The budget was introduced with the aim of raising money to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{598} All National Trust Acts are documented in pdf form on www.nationaltrust.org.uk and www.api.paliament.uk/historic-hansard/acts/national-trust-act-1907.
\item \textsuperscript{599} National Trust bill debates, HC Deb 26 June 1907 vol.176 cc1372-3 1372.
\item \textsuperscript{600} Cannadine, \textit{Decline and Fall}, p. 136.
\item \textsuperscript{602} Estates Gazette, 11 Nov. 1911.
\item \textsuperscript{603} Bryant, \textit{Entitled}, p. 93.
\item \textsuperscript{604} Bryant, \textit{Entitled}, p. 298.
\item \textsuperscript{605} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{606} Roy Douglas, \textit{People and Politics} (London, 1976), p.160
\item \textsuperscript{607} Herbert du Parcq ed., \textit{Life of David Lloyd George} vol. 4 :Speeches (London, 1912), pp 627-8.
\end{itemize}
wage an implacable war against poverty and squalidness.\textsuperscript{608} The top estate duty was raised to 15\%, a higher rate of income tax for incomes over £2,000 and super tax for those over £30,000.\textsuperscript{609} Tax on undeveloped land and minerals was introduced and a 20\% appreciation tax on the value of land was also introduced with a new national valuation system. The 1889 tax was introduced to pay for the navy and was only to remain in place for seven years but was not repealed. The budget of 1909 was perceived to be an attack on the fibre of the large land-owning families. The aim of Lloyd George and his ally Winston Churchill was the redistribution of wealth. Lloyd George questioned whether it was unfair …unequitable that Parliament should demand a special contribution from those fortune owners towards the defence of the country and the social needs of the unfortunate in the community, whose efforts have so materially contributed to the opulence they are enjoying.\textsuperscript{610}

When the Lords had been referred to as ‘a constitutional watchdog’ in the House of Commons in 1906, Lloyd George’s retort was that it was ‘Mr Balfour’s poodle’.\textsuperscript{611} The Finance Bill rejected by 350 to 75 in the House of Lords was finally agreed on 28 April 1910 following the re-election of the Liberals with the support of Labour and the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Parliament Act of 1911 ensured that the Budget was passed in 1911 with the intervention of George V, who threatened to create more Liberal peers. Lloyd George had succeeded in what Fabian Wise, editor of the \textit{Morning Post}, called, appealing to ‘the worst and most dangerous prejudices’.\textsuperscript{612} Churchill predicted ‘savage strife between class and class’.\textsuperscript{613} The Lords’ failed opposition and consequential loss of veto created a politically weak second house. It could delay public bills for a maximum of two years but could neither amend or veto finance acts. The political power of the landed aristocracy in Westminster had been removed for good.\textsuperscript{614}

The second Duke of Westminster’s landholdings spanned from Chester to South Africa. He had interests in landed estates in South Africa, Scotland, Wales and a small holding in Bordeaux which he used for hunting. His constant travelling meant his personal influence on his landed estates and urban property was limited to periodic interventions. The main source of the Duke’s income was from rent from his London properties, however, he avoided London and largely

\begin{footnotesize}
\item \textsuperscript{608} Bryant, \textit{Entitled}, p. 298.
\item \textsuperscript{609}bid.
\item \textsuperscript{610}Budget Debates, HC Deb 29 April 1909 vol. 4 cc532-6.
\item \textsuperscript{611}Budget Debates, HC Deb 26 June 1907 vol.176 cc1372-3 1372.
\item \textsuperscript{612}A. Adonis, Making Aristocracy work: the Peerage and the Political system in Britain, 1884-1914 (Oxford 1993), p. 149.
\item \textsuperscript{613}The Collected Essays of Sir Winston Churchill Vol I. (London, 1976).
\end{footnotesize}
abdicated responsibility in favour of his estate managers, barring some specific direct interventions regarding architectural wishes. This was an unusual combination of neglect and paternalism. Following the South African War, the Duke had, at the suggestion of Milner, bought a large estate in South Africa. The size of the estate was 30,000 acres. Those acres were located on the high veld near Bloemfontein. Sir Herbert Baker, the architect of the South Africa House in Trafalgar Square and the parliament buildings in Pretoria, who was working with Lutyens in New Delhi, built and designed sixteen farms and roads and services. The property was named Westminster and the original intention was to build a manor house and that the Duke would return frequently. When he visited in 1903 he decided the house that had been built for his agent would be a suitable residence for himself. He imported foxes, horses and pedigree shorthorns, all from Eaton, and planted millions of trees. He also imported thoroughbreds, even winning the Cape Derby in 1914 with his horse Water baby. The tenants were to come from Cheshire and could bring their wives or marry daughters of existing colonists within the district. The size of the holding differs, and according to South African sources, the estate was nearly ten thousand morgen (a morgen is approximately two acres) of grassland costing about eight pounds a morgen. On the north side there was a home for the Duke, outbuildings, stables and an agent’s house, the rest was divided into farms of about four hundred morgen each with a house and stable. Water was found for each farm and a windmill erected. Except for Ormonde, which was named after a famous horse belonging to the Duke, the farms were named after various Westminster estates in Britain.\textsuperscript{615} A schoolhouse was built on the top of a rising near Westminster station. The Duke wrote to his mother, in 1905, that the house he was living in reminded him of the Wyndham house at Clouds and ‘the settlers are all of good farming type and they all mean having a good try to make the thing a success’.\textsuperscript{616} His intention was to visit often. In 1906, he visited again and reported that ‘everything [is in] capital working order and the various tenants have made great strides’.\textsuperscript{617} He played a football match for Westminster against Thabanchu and went to a service held by St Augustine Anglican fathers. However in 1908 the fever he had contracted during the South African war returned and in 1916 it reoccurred in Egypt, and, blaming hot climates, the Duke never returned to South Africa. In a study commissioned by the National Museum Publications in South Africa and written by Derek Du Bruyn, there is the belief that the construction of estates like Westminster’s was

\textsuperscript{615}The estate was divided into areas named after Westminster owned lands and family names like The names are Belgrave, Eaton, Grosvenor, Madersfield, Broxton, Aldford, Newlands, Malpas, Beauchamp, Lumley, Eccleston, Halkyn, Shaftsbury, Wyndham, Crichton, Chesam and Ormonde.

\textsuperscript{616}Ridley, \textit{Bend’or, Duke of Westminster}, p. 72.

\textsuperscript{617}ibid.
cathartic for the area and helped to heal the land after … the South African war: … it is important to place Westminster and its garden in the context of the post-Anglo-Boer-War period of the Free State’s history. Milner’s Land Resettlement Scheme and the subsequent Anglicisation of the Free State’s country districts are factors that shaped Westminster’s (estate) history. On the one hand, the first few years that followed the end of the War represented a period of unashamed imperialism and political interference by Britain. On the other hand, this period also represents a time of rebuilding, when the ravaged and war-torn Free State landscape was revitalised by tree-planting and gardening on a scale that had never been seen before. Most of these efforts may be attributed to the influence not only of the British colonial government, but also of British immigrants who had settled in the towns and on the farms.618

The gardens had been maintained as an example of South African and British plants a horticultural metaphor for the English settlers in South Africa. On 2 November 1906, The Times, reported on Colonel Wilford Lloyd, private secretary to the Duke speaking at the Mayor’s banquet at Chester. Lloyd gave an outline of the Duke’s holdings in South Africa: he had ‘bought 19,000 acres, housed 18 families of British blood in 18 farmhouses. There are seventy souls there now’. He had spent £150,000 with no return yet but with a possible return of 2%. It was not started for self-aggrandisement The Times reported, but for the love of the country.619 What the Duke believed, and was obvious in his actions, was that in order to truly colonise a country you must create a mirror image of Britain. He adamantly believed in cultural imperialism. The Duke wanted to import a small part of his English estate into his estate in South Africa. This was one of his first outlays of capital as Duke.

The Duke’s landholdings in Europe extended to France. Loelia, the Duke’s third wife believed that possibly his favourite place outside of Eaton was Mimizan, where he employed the architect Detmar Blow to design a Dutch-style hunting lodge, and horses and hounds were brought over from England. The area in Bordeaux was beautiful and the locals referred to him as ‘Notre Duke’. The lodge in Mimizan was built at the exact spot where the Duke had shot a boar. The house keeper, Therese Deleste, hid the chateau’s silver from the Nazis in the forest during the war and it was all recovered intact after the war. When Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, both Madame Deleste and the French chauffeur, Fournier, were invited to the Park

619 The Times, 2 Nov. 1906.
Lane viewing stand which the Duke had provided for members of his staff in the estates. They were brought over from France to enjoy the spectacle of the English queen. The Duke also bought Lochmore estate in Scotland in 1920. His grandfather had rented it from the Leveson-Gowers since 1866. It was 100,000 acres and had the river Laxford running through it. The estate had a permanent forester, Sinclair Mackay, and two gardeners, Alex Maclean and John Scobie. In 1926 he bought the Rosehall estate in East Sutherland. The fishing lodge is the only known house in Britain to have been decorated by the then lover of the Duke, Gabrielle ‘Coco’ Chanel. She used simple beige walls and painted wooden fireplaces most unusual at the time and even had a bidet installed. There is no doubt that the Duke’s main reason for the purchase of land in Scotland and in France was based on his preferred leisure activities. Coco Chanel loved to fish and Winston Churchill writes of her fishing all day. The fact that the Hall was sold in 1930, the year after the affair with the Duke ended, may signify the necessity to sell a property decorated by a past lover when he was married to the third Duchess. His reasons for buying land were largely based on his own extravagance and favourite hobbies except in the case of South Africa. This purchase was a product of his belief in placing something of England, in what he believed, was Britain’s sphere of influence in Africa. As a veteran of the South African war the Duke was happy to be a part of the land resettlement project fostered by Milner. It is possible that he felt, because he played a part in the victory over the Boers, it was his responsibility to consolidate the victory through investment.

London properties were central to the survival of many large landlords. The gross income of the Duke of Westminster in 1880 was £290,000 from 19,749 acres, all in England, the greatest income coming from the three hundred acres in London spanning Belgravia, Mayfair and Pimlico. The death duties of the first Duke presented for the first time the need to sell some of the Westminster London estate, something, which the second Duke fought all his life. In 1902 Watneys bought the freehold of Victoria Street as part of their brewery, and in 1906 Westminster City Council bought land near Victoria Station and St George’s Hospital bought part of its site at Hyde Park Corner. The last instalment of duty was paid that year. The fact that the Duke was affected by death duties was not missed by the Press. The Daily Mirror reported that ‘the process of pulling down and rebuilding on the Grosvenor Estate is checked

620 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster.
622 Rubenstein, Men of Property, pp.1 94-5.
and leases are being renewed at high premiums. The death duties weigh heavily on the property and these premiums will help pay them off.’\textsuperscript{624} The irony of the Duke investing in land abroad and increasing rents at home was not lost in the article published in the same newspaper just over a week later. The language in itself is very telling. The title of the article is ‘The Duke’s colony’ and tells the story of return of the Duke ‘having spent some weeks in South Africa furthering his scheme for the colonisation of the large tract of land acquired by him in the Orange River colony. His Grace believes the scheme will be a success’. The column refers to the ‘colony’ again and states it will grow cereal and tobacco.\textsuperscript{625} The position the Duke took with regard to his new property in South Africa was the complete opposite of his decisions in London at the same time. He invested in land abroad and fostered agricultural schemes like irrigation through ensuring all the South African holdings had water. He clearly felt that it was a part of a higher purpose, that is the protection of the Empire, while London was a source of income to be protected and that income could also be increased. There is also the obvious distinction of rural agricultural land and urban property management.

That is not to ignore the moments when the Duke took interest in the architectural historical features of his buildings in London. When the Duke inherited his London properties, he insisted that all rebuilding schemes that had not commenced were to be halted and there was no rebuilding until 1906. There was some recovery building, which began in 1906-14, but it never approached that of 1886-96. The fact that in London, for the first-time, property values were falling in the early twentieth century shocked all speculators. The Grosvenor Estate Board admitted the market was bad in 1904,\textsuperscript{626} and in 1905 the Duke was informed of the drop in applications for renewal of leases: some houses remained unoccupied.\textsuperscript{627} It was actually more cost effective to take a suite in a London hotel than to maintain a London residence. In 1906 Sir Christopher Furness stated in his application for a renewal of No. 23 Upper Brook Street that ‘he was undecided as to whether to take a fresh house in some other part of London as the neighbourhood was becoming so depressing by reason of so many notice boards and empty

\textsuperscript{624}The Daily Mirror, 27 Nov. 1903.
\textsuperscript{625}The Daily Mirror, 7 Dec. 1903.
houses. The depreciation lasted until 1909 and was particularly significant in larger houses. An estate agent in 1909 stated that the value of houses in Grosvenor Square had fallen by 50% since 1901 and that year alone, ten houses were available to let, which was a fifth of the Square. The lease of Hampden House on Green Street to the Duke of Abercorn was renegotiated by the Estate board from a rent of £1,000 and a premium of £25,000 in 1904 to a rent of £850 and a premium of £10,000 plus works estimated at £2,400. The fall in values extended throughout the West End and the Duke of Abercorn’s agents forecasted in 1909 that the Depression that year seemed likely to become more acute especially in view of prospective legislation. The second Duke of Westminster was able to maintain the heritage of his London estate through intelligent business decisions that he often personally agreed to. The policy of the Grosvenor Estate, London, under the direct instruction of the second Duke was to keep the leases to less than 10 years. This was a major issue for tenants for a number of reasons. It was impossible to invest trust fund money in a short lease. The short-term leases also meant that the lease holder was less inclined to do any maintenance on a short-term lease property. William and Haden Tebb, who were London speculators, bought eight houses on the best streets in 1902 for a total of over £61,000 and all except one had a lease of less than ten years. By 1906 they sold No 41 Brook Street at a loss of over £7,000. They had renovated No. 6 Grosvenor Street at a cost of £8,500 and it was reported that Mr Tebb would sell for £3,000 or even less. The Grosvenor Estate Surveyor, Eustace Balfour, was adamant the market would improve at 10% per decade. However, the stress of the attraction of the Portman Estate meant that in the spring of 1905 the Board advised the Duke to give longer renewals. His solicitor, G.F. Hatfield, wrote in January 1907: ‘being that having regard to future legislation it would be well to get houses occupied for longer terms’. The Board now granted renewals for 63 years in the principal streets and it was believed by the Board that these long leases would also encourage the tenants to improve and keep the properties better. F.W.H. Sheppard surmises in his survey of London that without the change in policy to these leases there was a chance that many of these large houses would not have survived. He refers explicitly to No. 59 Grosvenor Street re-leased in 1910, No. 76 Brook Street re-leased in 1911, and No. 34 Grosvenor Street in 1905. Long leases

629 ibid.
630 ibid.
632 ibid.
were subject to large premiums and modernisation, which was often carried out by the lease holder. The longer leases gave security to both the tenant and the landlord and protected the architecture of the area. This was a direct intervention by the Duke to protect his properties. The Duke was considered a reasonable landlord and a protector of the architecture of London. The *Saturday Review* of 28 August 1909, in an article entitled ‘Those Dukes’, declared, of Westminster as a duke, that

no holder of that rank in the peerage has been more roundly abused than the Duke of Westminster…we have a tenant on the Grosvenor estate in London bluntly proclaiming in a letter to the *Times* his conviction that the ordinary man in the street would prefer to be a tenant of the Duke of Westminster than of the Crown…there was dismay amongst the tenants on one of the Duke of Bedford’s estates when that landlord announced his intention of selling.

The *Saturday Review* had, in the previous week’s edition, pointed out the fact that the Corporation of Glasgow and London County Council, who had held up land for a good market and pocketed the increment from the reversions of the leases were applauded for their wisdom while, ‘when done by the Duke of Westminster is denounced as spoliation’. George Ridley in his usual praising manner described the Duke as a great landlord and recounts when severe flooding occurred in January 1928, the Duke along with the Mayor of Westminster gave the city five acres of land at an estimated cost to him of £200,000 to alleviate the homelessness caused by the flooding on working class tenants. He also gave £130,000 towards the cost of building and an annual grant to enable the rents of protected tenants to be maintained at the current level. He had previously, in 1924, handed over land to construct homes for three hundred people in Pimlico to be rented over ninety-nine years at one pound per annum.

The *Observer* reported the story on 31 May: ‘His grace has specified that preference must be given to tenants with families. It is a fine thing to preach social service: but the Duke’s way of doing things is ever so much more useful’. He also gave a long lease to the National Play Fields Association at 128 Ebury Street and another lease of two houses in St George’s Street for a Toc H centre (Christian charity) in the name of his mother. The Duke was president of the Buildings By-Laws Reform Association created in 1902, an organisation with the intention of

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633*ibid.*
634The *Saturday Review*, 28 Aug.1909.
635The *Saturday Review*, 11 Aug.1909.
637*ibid.*
638*ibid.*
639*Observer*, 31 May, 1924.
securing ‘that official control of private buildings shall not extend beyond the demands of public health and safety and thus prevent encroachments on individual liberty’.641 This protected the landlord from unnecessary upkeep costs. It must be noted that as the value of land in London did rise the landlord did not gain from it until the lease was renewed whereby the landlord could increase the rent. The Gorringe case cited by Lloyd George in the Lime-house speech detailed the increase in rent of the property from a few hundred to four thousand a year in line with the increase in the value of the land.642 The Saturday Review again defended the Duke proclaiming emphatically that if the land had been owned by the State then the tenant would have been charged the same rent as the State would have been ‘compelled to extract every penny of rental value from its tenants’.643 The point being that in the eyes of the tenant the landlord is often inconsequential. The State was just as liable to increase the rent as the private landowner.

Edmund Wimperis, the Grosvenor Estate surveyor from 1910-28, took over the rebuilding policy. Balfour, his predecessor, had abandoned individual building programmes referring to them as ‘disastrous from the point of view of general improvement that is only in cases of special necessity that I now advocate it’.644 The cost, in the light of the People’s Budget, was to be avoided. However, in 1911, a ten-year building programme was initiated. The plan was to build businesses downstairs and flats upstairs. The estate was to be divided into fifteen blocks thereby maintaining the façade of each block. The personal preferences of the Duke were often difficult to obtain as the Duke disliked London and seldom attended board meetings. He was, however, very strong in his preferences in some areas. This can be seen in his association with Detmar Blow, who was commissioned as an architect, and then, as his personal assistant. The restoration of 44-50 Park Street (even numbers) and 37-38 Upper Grosvenor Street was personally designed by Blow. This site overlooked the garden of Grosvenor House and it was essential to the Duke that the redesign was attractive enough to overlook his own London residence.645

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641The British Architect, 17 Feb 1905.
643Saturday Review, 21 March 1914.
645Ibid.
The Duke was affected when the relationship between the private London landlord and the land they owned changed. They no longer had to worry about the upkeep of the roads. Hatfield stated in 1905: ‘legislation is constantly changing, curtailing the rights of the landowner and extending the power of the Public authorities over all new buildings thus reducing the necessity for street widening and such improvements at private expense.’ The loss of rights came with the reduction in outlay. London was becoming more public property. The Duke did however have a personal impact on two houses in Mayfair and Belgravia: he refused in 1907 to allow the rebuilding of No.s 9-16 South Audley Street contrary to his surveyor Eustace Balfour, and at a loss of income. No. 44 Grosvenor Square was also protected against Balfour’s advice. This was where the news of Waterloo was brought to the Prime Minster, Lord Liverpool, on 21 June 1815, and where, in 1820 the CATO Street conspirators planned to assassinate members of the cabinet. The discovery of a Georgian mural in the same house resulted in a remission of rent in consideration of the expense and inconvenience of preserving it. The Duke attempted to prevent the demolition of Somerset House as it had historical association. The loss of £6,000 a year was stated by the Duke on a big estate like the Grosvenor to be ‘something had to be sacrificed for sentiment and association’. This fact begs to differ with Cannadine’s assumption that the Duke was a philistine. One of the greatest examples of domestic Georgian architecture on the London Westminster estate, 12 North Audley Street, shared its façade with No 11. In 1913 the Board, with a view to demolition and the joining with the newly purchased site on Balderton Street, started the process of asking the Duke for permission. The Board was told the house should neither be let nor pulled down. The Duke did not want the destruction of an architecturally unique house permitted. The house was eventually reunited with No 12 and was the home of the Duke’s daughter, Lady Ursula Filmer Sankey. The Duke also had plaques added to buildings to show famous past dwellers like Warren Hastings and Benjamin Disraeli and personally prevented a bow window on Disraeli’s house, 93 Park Lane, being removed. The renovation at the estate’s expense of Bourbon House, Davies Street 1909-11, No.s 53 Davies Street 1922, 66 Brook Street 1925-6 and No. 6 Audley Street 1930-2, were all personally approved by the Duke. The intactness of the estate was admirable; small pieces of Pimlico and Belgravia were sold to pay death duties, as mentioned, but very little land was sold.

646 ibid.
647 ibid.
648 ibid.
649 ibid.
650 ibid.
651 ibid.
652 ibid.
after 1906 bar the Thames bank distillery in 1909 and land to the council in Pimlico. The fact that the second Duke of Westminster did intervene particularly at times when the architectural authenticity was at stake shows that he was constantly aware of what was happening on his London estates. The significant decisions were made by him. He was protective of the heritage he had inherited and wanted to commemorate historically significant events that had occurred in his houses on his square in his London.

Interestingly at this time in 1911 the second Duke bought an estate in Western Rhodesia where he pioneered cotton farming. On his own volition he had introduced cotton farming up to 300 acres, which yielded 60 bales, selling at an estimated 10d. to 1s. per lb. in Liverpool. He owned 10,000 acres in South Africa. In order to maintain his estates abroad and pay debts he sold Halkyn Castle in 1911. This was one of many sales while he was investing abroad. Between 1917-23 he sold some of his London estate and he sold the western portion of the Eaton Estate in Cheshire for £330,000 between 1917 and 1920, and between 1920 and 1923 portions of the Pimlico properties which yielded £1,100,000. By 1921 the mortgages and family charges of over £900,000 had been paid and the remaining encumbrances amounted to some £400,000. No. 75 South Audley Street was sold in 1925, which was the only London sale since 1923, and it was sold to the Egyptian Legation and would become the embassy, which was considered a suitable function for the building. The sale of houses and land was carefully decided on. ‘No residential area of the West End has preserved so nearly or so long its original character as it (Mayfair) had’, Mr Christopher Hussey proclaimed in 1928.

The management of the Grosvenor Estate in light of the Duke’s intermittent intervention fell on the estate manager. Detmar Blow was hugely important in the staff of the second Duke of Westminster; he became a permanent member of Westminster’s staff in 1916. He had been a member of the practice of Blow and Billerey, one of the most distinguished practices in London from 1905-14. Blow had also been commissioned by Kitchener to restore Broome Park but Kitchener’s death ended that project. Westminster had known Blow for many years. He had designed the Hunting Lodge in Mimizan in 1908 and in 1911 he had redesigned the gardens at

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653 ibid.
654 *The Times*, 26 Jan. 1911.
655 Grosvenor Archives, Eaton hall, Chester.
Eaton. He was appointed the Duke’s private secretary after the departure of Colonel Wilford Lloyd. The architect J.T. Wimperis had been engaged in improvement before re-leaseing which was profitable for the Duke. It was preferable for the Duke to invest in his property and take the risk of finding another tenant rather than sell to a speculator who would possibly make a profit. No. 58 Park Street was a case in point, with improvements of £570 yielding an increase in value annually of £100. The arrival of Blow created an atmosphere whereby Wimperis offered his resignation in 1920 and eventually resigned in 1928. Blow wanted the Duke to be more engaged in the management of his London properties but in practice was himself effectively in control of the estate. The Duke decided his solicitor should only concern himself with legal matters, so Blow was the real point of contact for everything in the Grosvenor estates. He lived on the estate at No. 31, then No. 9 Upper Grosvenor Street and then No. 3 Carlos Place. He was the executor of the Duke’s will and witness to the Duke’s third marriage. In 1930 he sometimes had power of attorney and he discontinued the Board minutes that had begun in 1789. A builder trying to get hold of the Duke for a signature informed London County Council: ‘I have sent the paper on to Mr Blow, who acts for the Duke in all matters’. This was an arrangement the Duke would regret.

Town planning was not introduced in the area of London where Westminster owned the most property until 27 May 1935, leaving the protection of the area at the behest of the owners.\textsuperscript{664} There was also the issue of the juxtaposition of residential and business premises which was not just about location, it was also about the image of the area. W.E. Hill, the violin makers were refused the lease of 75 Grosvenor Street due to objections of tenants in 1914 and a private lease was not found until 1917.\textsuperscript{665} The Board had to allow a house agent take the house against the objections of a dentist at No. 82 in 1912.\textsuperscript{666} He said his patients would feel he was losing class if he had a business next door. The Estate did allow for the provision for working class houses in Pimlico where land was leased at a peppercorn rent to Westminster City Council and the Board offered more land than the Council actually needed. In 1928 Milbank land worth £200,000 was leased to the Council and £113,000 was donated towards the cost of building on the land. In the mid-1920s only half of one per cent of the buildings on the estate were unoccupied and the income on it was rising.\textsuperscript{667} The management of the properties changed when Detmar Blow resigned under a cloud in March 1933 and his redesign of the Grosvenor Square with Billerey and Lutyens was ceased. He had been investigated for fraud by the Duke’s solicitors and chose to resign amidst strong evidence. His job was taken by the assistant surveyor George Codd. Loelia Grosvenor, gave a vivid account of the end of the association with Detmar Blow. She described how he always arrived with papers to sign just as they were leaving London. When he came to Lochmore to fish and was about to do the same last-minute pounce, the Duke changed his mind and the decision was made that they should all use the yacht to travel down to Liverpool and then on to Eaton and London. Blow was asked to bring the papers to the Duke during the thirty-six-hour sail and immediately the Duke noticed that there were ‘Three houses in Mount Street with ninety-nine-year leases and a premium of five pounds the lot’. He forensically examined each lease. Blow was investigated and left the Duke’s service.\textsuperscript{668} The Duke felt let down and his trust totally taken advantage of.\textsuperscript{669} He lived in a world where the price of something was not an issue. Loelia described the joy of buying something without worrying about the price.\textsuperscript{670} However even with the immense wealth of the second


\textsuperscript{665} ibid.


\textsuperscript{667} ibid.

\textsuperscript{668} Ponsonby, Grace and favour, p. 184-5.

\textsuperscript{669} ibid.

\textsuperscript{670} Ponsonby, Grace and favour, p. 236.
Duke of Westminster he was not immune to the impact of death duties or a dishonest employee.671

The Estate sold part of Milbank estate in 1929 and in 1930-2 Connaught House, Mayfair House, Claridges, Fountain House, Nos 139-140 Park Lane, No. 32 Green Street Nos 415 and 417 and 419 Oxford Street were all sold. Under the Settled Land Act of 1925 life tenants could be granted 999-year leases.672 This meant that the control was maintained, as was the income. Gas Light and Coke Company in 1928 at Fountain House Park Lane took a lease of 999 years and in return paid substantial rent and large capital and redesigned the building according to the wishes of the Duke.673 Gorringe had also submitted his building plans to the Duke before his lease was renewed. The Times referred to the Duke as the biggest private landlord in this country and probably the world and it was the management of his vast estates that his life found its best expression and achievement.674 In June 1931 he gave one of his tenants, a struggling London department shop called Gamage’s a loan of £300,000 and it was reported in the Mirror but in no other newspaper.675 There is no explanation of his motives. At the beginning of the Second World War he placed many of his empty properties at the disposal of London City Council.676 It can be noted that neither of these decisions had any real effect on the Duke’s financial prowess. The rental on the London properties sustained the income of the Westminsters. After his death it was reported in The Times that the State had been taking 95% of his income in taxes. His estate was valued at £10 million.677 As the largest landlord in London his decisions about his properties were of immense importance firstly regarding how he was viewed in the city and secondly the manner in which his estate in London faired architecturally. He was intermittently involved in the same way he was with his estate in South Africa however his health had dictated that decision. He tended to allow others to take some control as he took a more removed although paternalistic view. Detmar Blow clearly relied on this behaviour for long time.

The position of the Duke as the richest landlord in London drew criticism particularly from the left-wing press. The Daily Herald and Reynolds’s Newspaper focused on his money, as they

671Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p. 167.
672The Times, 26 Oct. 1932.
674The Times, 21 July 1953.
675The Mirror, 23 June 1931.
676The Mirror, 12 Sept. 1940.
held the Duke of Bedford and Duke of Westminster up to criticism and often ridicule. Reynolds’s News on 7 November 1909 in an article entitled ‘Poor but Honest Duke’ referenced a speech given by Lord Roseberry describing Dukes as of a ‘poor but honest class’. It then lists nine dukes who had decided to cut charitable subscriptions (Earl of Londonderry, Dukes of Buccleuch and Somerset), cut wages and employees (Dukes of Portland and Buccleuch), stopped celebrating occasions with their tenants (Duke of Bedford), and threatened violence on Churchill and Lloyd George and socialists (Dukes of Rutland and Beauford), The Marquis of Londonderry had decided to no longer donate game to those less fortunate and the Duke of Marlborough was ‘at his wits end’. The article listed the vast estates of all the Dukes beside their proclamations of poverty. It advised ‘our readers can judge the extent of their poverty by the following statistics’. I speculate that the omission of the Duke of Westminster is indicative of the fact that the journalist had no evidence to use against him in this instance. The list is as comprehensive as it is damning.

The decision by the Duke of Bedford to sell his Covent Garden estate was the focus of the majority of the Press criticism of him as a Duke. The Times referred to Bedford as one of the pioneers in a process known as the ‘breaking up of estates’. Bedford had previously defended his ownership of the land in The Times. He had been accused of possessing vast slums in London where ‘tenants live under conditions of misery and squalor’ at an election meeting in Dunstable in 1911. In the letter in The Times refuting the claims he stated that such attacks ‘made by Radical orators and journalists, for their own political purposes, without enquiry or regard for the facts were an ominous portent for the future’. The land duties imposed by Lloyd George’s budget put the Duke of Bedford in a financial situation where he made the decision to sell the whole of the Covent Garden estate to Mr Harry Mallaby Deeley, Unionist MP for Harrow and land speculator. This was the ‘most sensational estate transaction on record’. The sale hit many legal difficulties including the moment when the Duke, upon the realisation that his theatre boxes in Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatre were included in the sale, wanted the terms changed. Mallaby Deeley sold his option on the sale in June 1914 for £250,000 to Sir Joseph Beecham who bought the property on 6 July 1914. The theatre boxes were included in the sale but were to be leased to Bedford. The front page of Reynolds’s News was incensed at the sale of the area. It declared that it was wrong that

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678 Reynolds’s News, Nov. 7 1909.
679 The Times, 17 Dec. 1913.
680 The Times, 7 Aug. 1911.
681 The Pall Mall Gazette, 16 Dec. 1913
such a mine of social wealth should have been bought and sold purely as a private business transaction… value of such plots as Covent Garden and its environment depends entirely upon the brains and labours of the communities… the Russell family consumed the good things other people produced and increased their wealth from the labour of others.  

The *Daily Herald* showed how popular the story was: ‘The Duke of Bedford land sales is competing with the sack murder as the best newspaper bill of the day…the streets are filled with men bearing newspapers posters of all colours announcing that the Duke sells more land…in much the way they would have shouted Another Sack victim’. The *Daily Herald* had reported Bedford’s behaviour in September 1913, in an article entitled, ‘fat gets together to fight wicked workers’, the Duke of Bedford was one of a group who had joined a scheme to set up an organisation called the United Kingdom Employers’ Defence Union that could be called on to ‘smash strikes’. The language used was indicative of the tone of the short article delivering the news that, now employers were uniting against workers in an aggressive manner. The sale of Covent Garden was yet another act against workers. The area had been built by the working classes and the amenities should be protected not sold as a commercial property. There was a belief that the land in London was part of the national heritage and private landlords were just holding it in trust. The necessity to sell in order to pay taxes was a difficult point to understand in the light of the vast amount of land these landlords owned.

*Reynolds’s News* took a more general approach to the budget and strongly supported land tax, referring to the monopolists in London, the Duke of Bedford, Westminster, Portland, the Earl of Cadogan and others in terms of ‘the greed of the ground landlords’. Calling the budget ‘the most historical and epoch-making Budget introduced since the famous budget of Sir Robert Peel in 1846…Squires may squeal, millionaires may moan and landlords may cry in lamentation…Lloyd George…the first democrat to deal with the finances of the nation in the right way’. The Corn Laws had protected food and now this would protect land. The pincer movement against the aristocracy, as coined by Charles Spencer, was popular in the popular Press and any sympathy towards, particularly, the London landlords was lost in the left-wing press. Westminster was treated in a more balanced way than Bedford particularly in

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685 *Daily Herald*, 26 Sept. 1913
686 *Reynolds’s News*, 9 May 1909
Reynolds’s News with reports of his generosity and acts of kindness. There was a report of ‘his’ barber giving free haircuts to homeless men and bringing 1,400 tenants children to the pantomime every Christmas.\(^{688}\) That is not to say that his sale of London property deemed of public interest was not heavily criticised or when the Duke increased the rent it was not reported. In 1933 when Westminster sold Lambeth Bridge and Victoria Station Reynolds’s News accused him of reaping a ‘golden harvest’ as he sold the eight acres for £1,000,000 including Lambeth Bridge which had been built with a toll of £102,500 to the public works.\(^{689}\) The Duke was profiting from the public spending while selling a public amenity. In 1934 when the Duke raised the rent from £395 in Buckingham Palace road to £4,000 with a fine of £50,000 at the end of a sixty three year lease, it was referred to as ‘one of the most flagrant cases of plunder’.\(^{690}\) The interest the Press took in the behaviour of the two major London landlords reflected the belief that the land they owned and leased was of common interest especially when it had been improved with public money. The bridge at Lambeth and Covent Garden market were amenities, and the fact that they were both privately owned and sold by aristocrats was something that drew criticism from the left-wing press. However, when the Duke of Westminster insisted on only renting tenements to those families with children in 1923, Reynolds’s News was happy to cover the story.\(^{691}\) The manner in which the major aristocrats saved money in a legal fashion was covered at length in the Press. In 1909 Bedford reduced pensions and instructed the pensioners to apply to the State.\(^{692}\) The Duke of Westminster, in particular, had a team that was very adept at saving him money. This will be covered later in the chapter. In 1934 he used annuities in his employees’ salaries to claim a tax rebate and it was deemed legal.\(^{693}\) The Judge, Justice Finlay, declared it legal for the Duke to pay his employees partly by covenant and that the part paid by covenant could be used to claim a rebate of income tax.\(^{694}\)

The second Duke of Westminster can be compared to his contemporaries in the manner in which they coped with mounting debt duties. The Duke of Bedford, was eventually forced to open his country house at Woburn in 1955 and never really recovered from death duties. The Devonshire’s history of investment in industry sustained them. The worst time in the finances of the Cavendish family in the period 1900-40, was following the death of the seventh Duke in


\(^{692}\)Reynolds’s News, 10 Jan. 1909.


\(^{694}\)ibid.
1891. The eighth Duke wrote to his sister in 1894 about the family finances and declared, ‘I do not think they were ever this bad…an immense amount of capital in the shape of coal and iron royalties has been used up and sunk into unproductive Barrow investment…I can’t see anything at present to be done but to shut up Chatsworth and Hardwick and make large reductions there.’ His statement in the next letter could not be more privileged in tone when he states empathically: ‘money cannot be shorter anywhere than it is here’. Devonshire, although rich in property had little disposal income. The estate revenue had plummeted to £65,000 in 1892-3 and the dividend income was down to £15,000 in 1896 with more than half his income being used to service debt. Devonshire wrote to Harcourt pointing out the difficulties his successor would have with heavy mortgages and a depleted income. Harcourt had introduced death duties of 10% on one million. Harcourt was totally unsympathetic. The Punch cartoon called ‘the depressed dukes’ shows the Duke of Devonshire saying, ‘if this budget passes I don’t know how I am going to keep up Chatsworth’. Westminster replies ‘If you come to that we may consider ourselves lucky to keep a tomb over our heads’. This was a play on death duties as the root of all the problems of the aristocracy.

The Duke of Devonshire blamed his solicitors for his deficit and used Price Waterhouse to investigate. His firm of solicitors, Curreys, produced evidence that they were not to blame, but the noteworthy point is that the expenditure on the estate between 1895-1905 was reduced by half of what it had been in 1880-94. The eighth Duke sold the jute works of Barrow enterprises for £10,000 in 1894-6 and in 1903 the steamship company was wound up. The most lucrative decision was when the Naval Construction and armaments Company was sold to Vickers for £125,000 in 1897 for the freehold and £300,000 worth of debenture shares in the new company. The onset of the First World War made that decision very profitable. By 1930 the ninth Duke had a token holding of one hundred and eighty ordinary shares and sixty-seven preferential shares in the Steel Company. The Devonshires retained overall control of the Furness railway but this vanished in 1923 when it was absorbed by LMS.

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695 Eighth Duke of Devonshire to Lady Egerton 6 April 1894 (Devonshire Archives, Chatsworth House, Chatsworth MSS 340.2551).
697 Devonshire to Sir William Harcourt (Devonshire Archives, Chatsworth House, Chatsworth MSS 340.2556).
also sold holdings in the Waterford, Dungarvan, Lismore railways and in the Buxton baths.\textsuperscript{702} There were two mortgages, one of £550,000 to the Equitable in 1894 and £400,000 to Scottish Widows in 1897.\textsuperscript{703} By the time of the death of the eighth Duke in 1908 the mortgages had been reduced to less than half a million with interest charges of £20,000 a year taking only 15\% off the income of the Duke. Between 1911 and 1916 the death duties on the eighth Duke had amounted to £540,000 and the loans were increased by £200,000 to £600,000.\textsuperscript{704} By 1933 both loans were paid off. The business acumen of the Duke of Devonshire was aided by the sale of land amounting to £790,000 in Ireland and Derbyshire up to 1899. The succession and estate duty for the seventh Duke had been £40,000. By the year 1914, when another half a million had been paid, it was down to the sale of lands in Ireland and Derbyshire amounting to £660,000.\textsuperscript{705} The Duke sold Barrow venture shares and invested in US, British, colonial and government bond shares and the dividends from his share in Vickers increased with the military orders during the First World War. The dividends from the government bonds amounted to 30\% of the income of the eighth and ninth duke. The sale of land continued amounting to £640,000 between 1919 and 1923, the estates were in Somerset, Sussex and Derbyshire. Devonshire House was sold in 1919-20 for £750,000.\textsuperscript{706} By the mid-1920s over two thirds of their income was coming from dividends and they maintained, what Cannadine referred to as a life that was ‘landed in its mode of expenditure but increasingly plutocratic in its source of income, with this income amounting to £110,000 a year in the early 1920s’.\textsuperscript{707} The Devonshires had managed to live out the 1920s and 30s in a manner which belied the changes and the challenges of the preceding half century. The ninth Duke was a cabinet minister and Governor General of Canada and in 1936 King George V convalesced in Compton Place, just as his brother Edward VII had stayed there with the eighth Duke.\textsuperscript{708} The ninth Duke’s funeral maintained the traditions of a ducal ceremony and Chatsworth remained intact bar the demolition of the great conservatory in 1920. The plants had died due to neglect during the War because of labour shortages and the necessity to fuel eight coal fire burners, which was inadvisable in times of austerity.\textsuperscript{709}

\textsuperscript{702}ibid.
\textsuperscript{703} Duke of Devonshire and Scottish Widows Fund and Life Assurance Company Mortgage, 30 August 1897.
\textsuperscript{704} Duke of Devonshire and Equitable Assurance Co Mortgage 8 November 1894 (Currey MSS).
\textsuperscript{705} ibid.
\textsuperscript{706}ibid.
\textsuperscript{707}ibid.
\textsuperscript{709}www.chatsworth.org (17 June 2019).
The Press often focused on the extravagant lifestyles of Devonshire, Westminster and Bedford. On 11 March 1923, Reynolds’s News recounted the famous story of a former duke of Devonshire defending his right to have four confectionary chefs in his house with the claim ‘A man must have a biscuit’.\(^{710}\) Bedford kept his own box with a separate entrance in the two theatres in Covent Garden free from other patrons at all times.\(^{711}\) It could not be used even if the theatre was full and he was not using it. The Duke of Westminster even had his own musical director, Sydney Kyte, for fourteen years.\(^{712}\) There was a private train station at Eaton. These were all noted in the press during a period when the working classes were suffering from low incomes and often living in tenements.

The decision to sell chattels and treasures to pay tax was reported sympathetically in *The Times*. In 1892, the Spencer family of Althorp sold one of the greatest libraries in the world. It contained some 40-50,000 volumes collected by the second Earl Spencer, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His descendant, the fifth Earl, announced in June 1892 his intention to sell the library at public auction owing to falling agricultural prices, which, as *The Times* put it ‘have made themselves severely felt by nearly all the great landowners of the country.’\(^{713}\) Spencer’s announcement caused fear that a great library would be broken up, or if not broken up, sold abroad to a rich American. Mrs John Rylands of Manchester, wishing to commemorate her husband by founding a school and library for students of theology, offered £210,000 for the library en-bloc and her offer was accepted. The story goes that if the Earl and his agents had shown less haste to sell, the New York Public Library would have come forward with an offer of £300,000.\(^{714}\) The Spencers, by 1874, had a mortgage debt of £54,000. Farm rents began to fall; between 1875 and 1895 they fell from £48,000 to £27,300, a fall of about 43 percent. Library proceeds went to paying off the debt and to fattening an equities portfolio established in the early 1870s. By 1898, with a rising farm rental, no interest payments, and an annual stocks dividend of £6,263, the Spencer income, although not completely restored, was now substantially so.\(^{715}\)

\(^{710}\)Reynolds’s Newspaper, 11 March 1923.

\(^{711}\)Reynolds’s Newspaper, 30 Dec. 1900.

\(^{712}\)Reynolds’s Newspaper, 9 May 1937.


\(^{714}\)Ibid.

The Earl of Orford sold his books in two lots in 1895 and 1902; the Crawfords sold historical manuscripts and stamps in three sales between 1902 and 1914.\textsuperscript{716} In 1904 the trustees of the Marquess of Anglesey sold the entire contents of Beaudesert and Anglesey Castle including silk nightshirts and jewelled walking sticks.\textsuperscript{717} The second Duke of Westminster sold his own library in 1953 to the Philadelphia based dealer, A.S.W. Rosenbach for £4,500. Many of the books had been published in the 1700s. There were 400 books and Rosenbach considered it a bargain. He could not understand why English dealers did not buy en-bloc.\textsuperscript{718} The Duke sold much later than most of his contemporaries but at a time when Eaton Hall was becoming a millstone. The loss of the library was less obvious to the naked eye and visitors to the house.

David Spring maintains that members of the aristocracy were shocked by the value of their ‘bric-a-brac’.\textsuperscript{719} They sold because they needed the money and their tastes had changed.\textsuperscript{720} The Duke of Norfolk sold Holbein's *Duchess of Milan* for £72,000 in 1909, a Holbein having sold in 1885 for £5,000. W. Agnew, an art dealer observed in 1912: ‘Owners at the moment are staggered at the value of their pictures.’\textsuperscript{721} A National Gallery list gives a rough impression of how much they had sold of their stock of pictures before 1914.\textsuperscript{722} The art market that developed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century combined a number of factors: it was international and depended on a supply of objects, referred to in *Sold* by Nicholas Faith as ‘a seemingly inexhaustible supply of objects from the homes of an increasingly impoverished British aristocracy’.\textsuperscript{723} The buyers were usually international. In the years prior to the 1880s the sellers of major collections were not aristocrats but speculators down on their luck or, scholars whose descendants were either in need of the money or uninterested in the collections.\textsuperscript{724} The Settled Land Acts of 1882 allowed the trustees of lands to sell off lands and chattels including works of art providing the trustees maintained the proceeds.\textsuperscript{725} The aristocrats wanted to keep the land

\textsuperscript{716} Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{717} Estates Gazette, 20 May 1891, 2 December and 9 December 1899 and 15 October 1904.
\textsuperscript{719} David Spring, ‘Land and Politics in Edwardian England’ in *Agricultural History*, vol. 58, no. 1, 1984, pp. 17–42.
\textsuperscript{721} Spring, ‘Land and Politics in Edwardian England’.
\textsuperscript{724} Ibid.
and the life style. The Act gave rise to a number of incredible art sales. Christie’s, in the thirty
years before 1914, recorded nearly fifty sales above £50,000.\footnote{Faith, Sold, p. 23-25.} The year 1884 saw the great
sale of the picture gallery at Blenheim. This was referred to as the first of many panics that the
National Heritage was in danger.\footnote{ibid.} The early 1900s witnessed a change in the market which
had begun with the US government levying 20% tax on old Masters in 1887.\footnote{ibid.} That year the
French art market had exported ten million francs worth of art to America.\footnote{ibid.} The agricultural
crisis had, in effect, excluded the British landowners who had been the biggest art buyers in the
previous one hundred and fifty years. The new moneyed English were more interested in
spending their money on political causes in order to gain influence and titles or large houses to
improve their social status.\footnote{ibid.} American collectors had, up to this point, bought French art
particularly from the Barbizon schools. The French dealers also purchased art that had been
exported in the previous hundred years due to the Revolution in France.\footnote{ibid.} The start of the
twentieth century saw the rise of the institutional buyers which changed the market and would
give rise to the most reported sale of the period, the sale of the \textit{Blue Boy} by the second Duke of
Westminster.

The first major art collector cited in the book \textit{Sold} is Dr Wilhelm von Bode of the Kaiser
Friedrich Wilhelm Museum in Berlin who enjoyed the patronage of Kaiser Wilhelm II. He
came to London a number of times a year. In America James Pierpont Morgan spent over £10
million on art between 1900-1913.\footnote{ibid.} The sale of old masters would create a multi-million
pound industry. The costliest work of art ever sold before the 1880s was a gilt and enamelled
cup made in Nuremberg in 1550 by Werzel Jamnitzer for which Karl Meyer Rothschild paid
£32,000.\footnote{ibid.} Between 1880 and 1914 only three major Christie’s sales were purely of old
masters; the majority were of modern pictures and \textit{objets d’art}. Lord Duveen of the Duveen
brothers, bought J.M. Turner’s \textit{Rockets and Blue Lights} for $129,000 in New York just below
the record in 1910 at the Charles T. Yerkes sale in New York. Lord Duveen used a unique
technique to sell the art.\footnote{ibid.} He was descended from Dutch Jewish antiquity dealers and had
begun dealing in his youth at the age of seventeen.735 The competition he orchestrated between his clients resulted in an unprecedented upward spiral in picture prices.736 Duveen was intent on making a lot of money through attaching the history of the ownership of the paintings to the product. The Herald Tribune recorded each time Lord Duveen arrived in New York with a fanfare of what he had brought to America. On 19 February 1926, it was reported that ‘Sir Joseph Duveen, the art dealer has bought the Wachtmeister Rembrandt for $410,000, one of the highest prices ever paid for a Rembrandt…The painting was sold by Count Carl Wachtmeister and it had been in his family for 200 years.’737 On 18 July 1927, ‘Sir Joseph Duveen, international art dealer, bought in London yesterday the entire collection of one hundred and twenty Italian old masters belonging to Robert H. Benson. It will be brought in tact to New York. The purchase price was $3,000,000.’738 Duveen targeted the Devonshire family with a view to purchase. The first reference to Duveen in the letters of the Duke of Devonshire is on 17 June 1913. Duveen had been looking at the furniture in Chatsworth: ‘Duveen thinks that one sofa and two chairs are very much better than the others. He was much taken with the pictures…he keeps saying the markets are uncertain. No confidence in either America or here. Apparently the stock exchange is very bad and one or two big houses are very shaky.’739 On 9 July 1913, the letter described the Duveen family coming ‘in force, they kept praising everything’. Duveen was unable to secure any purchases from the Devonshires much to his own despair.740 The tone of the letters gives the impression that Duveen was biding his time using terms that would possibly bring down the price of the paintings. The second visit of the family of Duveens yielded nothing for either party. The Duke did not make any arrangement with Duveen and no profit was made. Duveen clearly had access to Chatsworth and was in conversation with the Duke of Devonshire, which is indicative as to how engrossed in Society he was.

In 1912 the Duke of Devonshire had sold twenty-five books printed by William Caxton and a collection of 1,347 volumes of plays acquired by the sixth Duke, including four Shakespeare folios and thirty-nine Shakespeare quartos to the Huntington Library.741 Cannadine as mentioned refers to this method of releasing capital as the ‘Getty factor’. The art market in

735ibid.
737The Herald Tribune, 19 Feb. 1926.
738The Herald Tribune, 18 July 1927.
739Letters referencing the sale of furniture (Devonshire Archives, Chatsworth House, G2 3048).
740Secrest, Duveen, p. 135.
particular exploded after the war. The ‘drain’ of art from England was thanks to ‘the combined pressures of taxes and temptations’. The Duke of Hamilton, according to Cannadine, inaugurated the second phase by selling £240,000 of silver, furniture and paintings, then the Duke of Leeds sold the contents of Hornby Castle, including in the sale the Canalettos for £85,000. The most important masterpiece at this time came from the second Duke of Westminster who was at the centre of the most significant purchase by Lord Duveen. Enthusiastically described by Meryle Secrest, in her biography of Duveen, as a painting that is second only to the Mona Lisa in its universal appeal was the Blue Boy by Thomas Gainsborough. Cannadine describes the sale as ‘the most spectacular’ and ‘an agreement directly between Samuel (sic) Huntington and the Duke.’ The sale was more complicated but just as controversial and played out in the Press. It was bought by H.E. Huntington through Duveen for £728,000 in 1921, which was the highest price ever paid for a painting. The painting had been owned by the Westminster family since 1809 and its credentials were recognised as unquestionable. Duveen’s father had attempted to buy it in 1900 but the offer of £50,000 was refused. The second offer made in 1910 of £100,000 was also refused. H.E. Huntington was interested in the painting and had approached the Duke on his own to no avail. The Duke’s correspondence between Duveen and his agent, Colin Agnew, shows that they had been attempting to buy the painting from 1919 to 1921. The knowledge that Duveen brought to the negotiations was that the painting, had at one time, hung in the drawing room in Grosvenor House opposite a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds’ Mrs Siddons as the Tragic Muse. This painting had been put up for auction in 1919, at Christie’s, with a reserve of £60,000, but it was withdrawn when it only reached a bid of £50,000. Duveen knew that the Duke wanted to sell the Reynolds so he believed an offer to buy the Reynolds and the Blue Boy would entice the Duke. He successfully bought the Blue Boy with the Reynolds and The Cottage Door by Gainsborough for £200,000. H.E. Huntington subsequently bought the Blue Boy for $728,000. Duveen had bought three paintings for $800,000 and sold them for over $1 million. Duveen was able to take advantage of sellers who had taken for granted the art that had hung in their homes for centuries some paintings they didn’t particularly care for. He knew the market and

was in constant contact with buyers. Those buyers were purchasing a piece of history; the story and the origin of the art was priceless.

The fact that the Blue Boy was leaving England for America, forever, prompted a backlash that the Duveen company was aware of and the buyer was asked to keep the purchase quiet. The newspapers reported that no gallery could afford to buy the painting. It was exhibited from 3 January to 25 January 1922 in the National Gallery in London. Ninety thousand people came to see it; there was a Cole Porter song lamenting its export which contained the line ‘from gilded galleries in Park Lane to the Wild West across the winter sea.’ The director of the National Gallery, Charles Holmes, wrote Au Revoir on the back of the painting before it was transported and this was reported in the New York Times. It was exhibited in the Duveen gallery and was then transported to the Huntington museum. The painting sealed the name of Duveen as the greatest dealer in the world and the Duke was vilified in some quarters for selling his own property. Cannadine described the Duke as a philistine: ‘to philistines like the second Duke of Westminster, who did not care about art and were happy to pocket the money, this [the dispersal of family heirloom] did not matter’.

The press coverage of the sale focused on a number of questions, firstly did the Duke have the right to sell his own possessions, secondly should the State have intervened and protected a part of England’s heritage and thirdly had the taxation of the aristocracy gone too far and was the state now suffering through the loss of its own masterpieces to foreign lands? The Daily Mirror in 1921 described the news that the painting is in danger of leaving this country for America raises again the … inadvisability of letting our great art treasures be exported like so many hams and sewing machines…Italy…has long since prohibited their unchecked exports…The Italians decided that their great masterpieces were primarily the property of the nation, and were in fact national assets.

The article deemed that ‘the right of the private owner to do what he wants with his property is to be admitted so long as the community does not suffer for actions’.

The Blue Boy had been loaned regularly to the National Gallery and there was irony in the article written in the Daily Herald in January 1922 four days following the departure witnessed by ‘a little knot of well-

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749 Ibid.
751 Cannadine, The Decline and Fall, p. 115.
752 Daily Mirror, 5 Oct 1921.
753 Ibid.
dressed men and women’. The newspaper then described the sale of one of the finest Van Dycks, from the Panshanger collection of the family of Earl Cowper, by Lady Lucas at ‘a very modest price’. This painting was to be hung in place of the Blue Boy. The inference being that the Duke of Westminister could have sold his painting at a modest price to the Gallery if he so chose. The Blue Boy was private property and had only had a place in the National Gallery when its owner had given it on loan. When the sale was agreed there was secrecy surrounding its new home. Duveen had in his own words, promised in the same newspaper that ‘I shall hope to find an English purchaser so that they can be kept in this country’. Duveen had already been in contact with Huntington and knew the painting was leaving England. The Mail on 1 February published an article suggesting that a collection fund be created or that any paintings sold to the state be exempt from death duties. The French had attempted to dissuade the sale of their National treasures through increasing export duties but that had been repealed after only a month. The conclusion of the front-page article was that even with a National fund, private sales were inevitable and the establishment of a National Fund may even increase the prices. The most significant of all the reactions to the sale was from Charles Holmes, director of the National Gallery. He explained the reason why England has failed to protect its masters: it does not actually value the work of English men in England. He directly referenced the sale of the Blue Boy for what he believed was a price tag of £150,000 and said that people believed that the price was ‘grossly exaggerated by the Press… as nothing an Englishman ever did could be worth so much money and the buyer must have been a fool or a lunatic. Would the French have behaved so? Not they.’ His solution was local patriotism and the creation of a permanent collection of Gainsborough’s paintings to attract world attention. He does not mention the Duke but his closing remarks are indicative of his attitude to the sale: ‘It is, after all, on men like these, [Gainsborough and Constable] and not on any momentary commercial or political triumphs that our place among civilised nations must ultimately depend’. The Duke’s sale was a commercial triumph. He had sold a painting that he did not really like for an extraordinarily large amount of money. The sale had drawn more attention to the failure of the State to protect and value its treasures than to the Duke who had profited from its sale.

754Daily Mirror, 26 Jan.1922.
757The Mail, 1 Feb. 1922.
758Daily Mirror, 20 Oct. 1927
759ibid.
Two major foreign newspapers covered the story from a different perspective. *The New York Times* praised the Duke for selling the *Blue Boy* as did the *Times of India*. They both defended the right of a man to sell his possessions. They believed that a man had a right to sell his own property and paintings. Cannadine strongly disagrees and treats the second Duke of Westminster as the antithesis of Lord Crawford, who stated that the family collection formed ‘the apanage of our family, and their loss will cause us profound distress. Books and pictures combine to make Haigh one of the great and famous houses of England, stripped of these treasures the place would be uninhabitable’.*760 The *Blue Boy* painting had hung in the Duke’s own study in Grosvenor House, but this was a mansion which he would sell in 1924 having vacated it for the Ministry of Food for the duration of the war. He had no sentiment for the painting and he had not lived in the house in which it hung for many years. The *Times of India* defended the Duke’s actions:

No one can blame the Duke of Westminster for selling it. In England, for the present (though no one can tell how long it will last) every man has complete control over his own possessions and if he finds himself so heavily taxed that he is obliged to give up his big London house and sell off his choicest possessions to the highest bidder instead of giving them or selling them on special terms to the nation which after all is supposed to be the chief gainer by the taxes which have induced the sale. So, we have to let The Blue Boy go to a richer country…it will probably never return to the country where it was painted.761

The reference to America as the richer country shows an inference that India was criticising and drawing attention to the downturn in the British economy during the interwar period. The obvious regard for the sale in America as the final destination of the painting is clear but the *Times of India* has an interest beyond Indian affairs and more as a part of its position as a colony and also uses the news story to defend the right of the Duke to sell his own property. The Duke is newsworthy as is the sale of the Gainsborough. The use of the term ‘we’ does show the attitude of the newspaper as part of the Empire. The paper served the Britons in India and was appealing to their imperialism.

The fact was that *Blue Boy* was not the only important sale the Duke had made. In 1913, the Louvre bought a Van Der Weyden triptych from him for $130,000.762 It had been bought by

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761 *Times of India*, 6 Feb, 1923.
the dealer Francois Klienberger and he had offered it to the French government at the price he paid for it. If they did not buy it then he was going to sell it to an American dealer. It was the most important purchase since 1878 for the Louvre. The Times did not reflect negatively on the sale perhaps because it was a Dutch master sold to a French gallery. The heritage of Britain was not affected. When the Blue Boy was owned by the Duke of Westminster the British population did have intermittent access to it and they knew it was in Britain. The Times reported the loan of the painting to the National Gallery on 27 June 1908, followed by the loan of a Rembrandt, Man with a Hawk on 23 October 1909. Private owners were constantly giving galleries paintings on loan. The question as to whether in the light of financial restraints the aristocracy should remain caretakers of the great masters or whether their right to sell them was unquestionable is controversial. The establishment of a National Collection Fund in 1906 with the patronage of the King secured the purchase of Holbein’s Duchess of Milan. The King encouraged subscriptions in a letter from his secretary published in The Times: ‘we most earnestly invite all those who are disposed to assist in preserving works of art for the nation’. The repetition of the words ‘our society’ in the letter insists that the masterpieces are the entitlement and preserve of all society. The Observer on 19 November 1922 detailed an exhibition of privately-owned masterpieces at the houses of Messrs. Agnew and sons in aid of Lord Haig’s appeal for ex-Service men. The writer P.G. Konody referred to ‘many shiploads of precious masterpieces have found their way across the Atlantic…from the spoil of old English homes’. He almost jeered that the ‘treasures seem inexhaustible and hitherto unknown masterpieces are constantly being brought to light from their hiding place’.

The Blue Boy was a known masterpiece leaving Britain. Why was the nation so transfixed with the Blue Boy specifically? The Grosvenor collection had been established by the first Earl in the 1760s. But the paintings in the hands of the aristocrats were often left to disintegrate, covered in varnish and tarnished by the smoke and damp of old houses. The Duveens’ visit to the Chatsworth collection, immediately drew attention to the restoration needed. The Blue Boy had lost its colour and was actually green in the Duke’s study at Grosvenor House. The fact that it was restored to its former glory through the sale and before it was shown in the London and New York exhibitions proves that, in some instances, the masters had more chance of

763 ibid.
764 The Times, 27 June 1908.
766 The Times, 14 June 1909.
767 ibid.
768 Observer, 19 Nov. 1922.
longevity in galleries or collections run by art experts or curators. These great aristocratic collections were beginning to disintegrate in drawing rooms with damp and smoke and dust. Roy Strong laments the loss of family collections ‘to walk around the Rijksmuseum or the Boymans, the Metropolitan Museum, the National Gallery in Washington and every other collections formed in the US and to note the provenances of these pictures one is made painfully aware of the steady sale in this century (20th) of masterpieces and of all periods from all collections in this country’. He warns ‘above all we hope that those who have ultimate responsibility for the heritage of the English Country House and its preservations will prove to be sufficiently enlightened by what’s at stake’. Why was it so important to keep the masters in England and yet the State was completely incapable of preventing them leaving the country? The fact was that the market was in America and there were no buyers with the same capital and longing for the masters in England. The truth, also clear in Duveen’s book, and the letters from the Duke of Devonshire was that the paintings were suffering from neglect and needed to be restored in order to prevent decay beyond repair. Deborah Mitford spent an entire chapter in her memoir as Duchess of Devonshire listing the diseases that affected the furniture in Chatsworth and how impossible it was to prevent birds from flying in and soiling everything. Paintings were often covered in varnish to improve them and make them look cleaner. The rooms were too hot or too cold. Many Dukes saw these artworks as means of capital and had very little attachment to them. There were even rumours that Duveen had men watching failing dukes with paintings ready to sell. In 1929 he was given a position on the Board of the National Gallery; this was in part due to his relationship with Ramsay MacDonald and it was the first time an art dealer had been given such a position. The position was revoked by Neville Chamberlain in 1937 but the friendship with MacDonald held. In 1933 he was given a barony. MacDonald had announced at a party that ‘I think I know what Sir Joseph’s ambition is, if it’s the last act of my life, I shall get it for him’. He had petitioned the galleries of England to ask the King to elevate Duveen to the peerage. Duveen was now equal to his clients and he chose to be Lord Duveen of Millbank where the Tate stood. The man responsible for the sale of one of the greatest paintings owned by a Briton was now a peer.

771 ibid.
773 ibid.
The Press reported on many sales but never before or after with as much vigour as the *Blue Boy*. The Nassak diamond was sold by the Duke in 1927 to a New York jeweller for £80,000 and reported in the *Daily Herald*. In 1934, the same newspaper claimed the Duke denied selling books. In 1914 with a clearly snide tone the *Daily Herald* reported that ‘To meet the heavy burden of death duties the Duke of Devonshire sold his Caxton’s and Kemble plays. Poor Soul’. The loss of so many paintings and heirlooms, at a time when many large landowners were investing abroad, and diversifying their fortunes show that the aristocracy had the power to liquidate assets that were often priceless. The second Duke of Westminster from a young age had made choices as to where to invest his money. The Duke’s eventual sale of Grosvenor House was following his decision to move out and lease it to the State during the First World War. It was one of two of his London houses and he owned areas of Pimlico, Mayfair and Belgravia. These were decisions based on his own choice on how to raise money. His choices, although peculiar to him, and his extreme wealth does prove that in many cases the People’s Budget required accounting skills but did not result in any great changes to the lifestyle of the aristocrat depending on his assets and resources. The Duke’s decision to sell the *Blue Boy* was a personal one and what is surprising is that the Press did not attack him on a more personal level. It opened up the wider argument of the right to sell personal possessions and the responsibility of the State to save these treasures from leaving England and even accepting the fact that they were National treasures. The fact that the Duke chose to spend his money on his passions of hunting, race horses and the protection of Empire does show his utter independence from pressure to conform when it was his property. The Press’s criticism was more confined to the State rather than the seller.

On 27 October 1930, Winston Churchill signed an affidavit for the Duke. There is a copy held in the Churchill Archives. The affidavit was signed before a Commissioner of the Peace. It listed all the paintings, furniture and jewellery which the Duke wished to sell to his trustees. This meant that the trustees would hold possession of the chattels for the family. The family would retain control of the articles as family heirlooms but they would not pay death duties on them and if the Duke wished to sell anything, then he would be required to buy back the heirlooms. The application was successful. Churchill stated in the document that he was

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774 The painting was returned for a short period to the National Gallery in 2022 and Press coverage was just as significant and varied.
775 *Daily Herald*, 24 March 1927.
777 *Daily Herald*, 19 March 1914.
778 Details of Winston Spencer Churchill’s involvement in the Westminster application in Churchill archives, (Churchill college, Cambridge University, CHAR 1/215/70-76).
personally familiar [with the objects] having been for many years a frequent visitor at Eaton Hall and Bourdon House… [and that in his] opinion it would be a serious matter for a family occupying the position of the Grosvenor family that the pictures and jewels and the rare pieces of furniture should pass out of their possession…the possession in the hands of the family of rare and beautiful objects is in some measure a ['social’ crossed out and ‘duty’ inserted] duty and responsibility which owners are expected to shoulder.779

In the final point, Churchill has removed the words ‘very general custom’ and replaced them with ‘a sense of public duty’ and replaced the term ‘families of the social position’, with ‘ancient families of rank’. When the application was successful, the solicitor firm, Boodle, Hatfield and Co. wrote to Churchill to thank him and stated, ‘the judge evidently attached the greatest importance to all that you said and highly appreciated the very valuable assistance you had given to the court’.780 The judgement refers to the fact that Churchill stated ‘the pictures, generally, the jewels and the greater part in value of the furniture…represent the kind of valuable and artistic possessions to retain in their natural home is a sense of duty’.781 In the affidavit, Churchill had mentioned that to ‘refurnish even a wing of such a mansion [Eaton Hall] with furniture and pictures of such a quality and distinction as would naturally be expected of the owner of Eaton Hall would certainly be a task of immense difficulty and expense’.782 The judge stated that

People’s views may differ, as to what is for the benefit of persons interested under a settlement…the Court ought to be guided by the views of persons who are familiar with the way in which families who are entitled to such an estate as the Grosvenor Estate are accustomed to live. In this case…an affidavit by Mr Winston Churchill …who does know how families such as the family of the Duke of Westminster do live.783

The judge was taking his guidance about the chattels of a Duke from the nephew of Duke and providing the Grosvenor family with a financial solution to their income and death duties in the future. Chris Bryant refers to this as ‘squirrelling away substantial assets so as to preserve them intact’.784 He explicitly refers to the Duke of Westminster. The Trustees chaired by the Duke ‘dole out benefits and payments to members of the family while keeping the assets separate from any individual’s estate’. Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs was entitled to a specified

779 ibid.
780 ibid.
781 ibid.
782 ibid.
783 ibid.
784 Byrant, Entitled, p. 350.
percentage of the value of the fund every ten years after the Trust had been created. Bryant describes it as a ‘way in which the family Trust can...provide a house, an income, a lifestyle...without fearing inheritance tax’.

The judgement in the case of Westminster entitled the State to a percentage of 90% of the valuations of the assets. This was a legal method of protecting assets and ensuring that the family would not suffer from death duties to the same extent again.

The ability of other members of the aristocracy to transition into the business world and the relationship between the City and the aristocracy holds interesting comparisons with the larger landlords and their access to saleable resources. The valuable commodity of a title was exploited by many impoverished aristocrats. It is another case in point when looking at the weight a title carried. The Press both at home and abroad knew the attention that a title yielded and the Duke himself had lent his name and title to funds and causes. The creation of companies on the estates of the aristocrats was something connected with the Industrial Revolution harping back to the Bridgewater Canal Trust. The establishment of railway and canal companies of local importance or companies that exploited the non-agricultural resources of estates was common. However, in the late 1800s and early 1900s the number of peers who were company directors increased exponentially. By 1896 according to Burke’s Complete Peerage one hundred and sixty-seven peers were company directors and by 1910 this numbered two hundred and thirty-two. F.M.L. Thompson explains that until the 1880s it was not usual for peers to become company directors. The lax company laws in England allowed companies both limited and unlimited to be formed with only seven members. These laws were not changed until after the Second World War. Cannadine’s examination of directors of companies who were peers between 1896 and 1920 yields the following information: in 1896 many were from the new plutocracy, for example, Lords Pirrie, Armstrong, Inchcape and Rhondda. In 1896 there were eleven peers who were directors of six companies or more, of whom, six were bona fide members of the landed peerage who appear in Bateman, there was one landless peer: By 1920 a total of forty-one directors were peers and of those forty-one, four had old titles but were non-landed. Thirty-two of both lists were authentic peers in terms of title, lineage and land. Nine were landless or younger sons, nine owned land in Ireland, which was disappearing due

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785 ibid.
786 Details of Winston Spencer Churchill’s involvement in the Westminster case (Churchill archives, Churchill college, Cambridge University, CHAR 1/215/71-76).
to the Land Purchase Act, and six held land in Scotland. Of the eight that remained, five held less than 10,000 acres. One was a Rothschild and two were at the very bottom of the middle landowner category. All peers with extensive City involvement were patricians whose families had never been well off and who were hit hard by the Irish troubles and/or the agricultural depression. Apart from Glenconner and Rothschild all landowners who were company directors were impoverished.789 William Weston, a company director who was unimpressed with the peer invasion described it in the following statement: ‘wat, said Sir George Dead broke, Brt., Lord Arthur Pauper, Viscount Damphule…and others of that ilk, are always ready to lend the charm of their great names to these enterprises and to attend board meetings, for the moderate consideration of one Guinea per meeting.790

Cecil Rhodes, following Salisbury’s advice, enlisted the Duke of Abercorn who was selling Irish land, the Duke of Fife who was selling off land in Moray and Banff and Earl Grey who was selling encumbered estates, as directors.791 The use of the title as a means of making money in the business world could be achieved in two ways. The titled could use their title to give an air of authenticity and grandeur to a business or they could invest in shares. The increase in titled directors, however, did not withstand criticism. The Times relayed ‘the ornamental director is fast becoming an object of alarm rather than of awe to the average investor’.792 As with the Funds that the second Duke of Westminster chaired, the name alone, of a peer gave authenticity in a country where title held sway and drew attention. George Cornwallis West’s (brother-in-law to Westminster) own business crashed after the First World War. ‘My sole motive for having gone into business, apart from having something to do was to make sufficient money to pay off my mortgages on family estates’, attested George Cornwallis West.793 His autobiography gives a picture of a frivolous life full of blood sports and parties.794 His own embarrassing finances did not have a major impact on his lifestyle as he constantly borrowed from his brother-in-law. There were many aristocratic business successes, Viscount Churchill, who sold off his lands became a successful businessman. He was chairman of the British Overseas Bank, the Great Western Railway and director of P&O and the British Indian Steam

792 The Times, 25 Jan. 1930.
793 G. Cornwallis-West, Edwardian Heydays (London, 1930), pp. 121,137
794 ibid.
Company. His son recounted: ‘In those days in England, well paid directorships were not too hard to come by if you happened to have a hereditary title particularly if it was thought you had some influence in politics or at court. My father had all three, and was alive and alert too.’

By 1936 a random sample of four hundred and sixty-three companies, eight percent of directors were titled. Probably half were ornamental.

Cannadine closed the chapter entitled ‘Leisured class to Labouring Aristocracy’ in *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* with the assumption that as the new vulgar rich were busily engaged in buying titles, so the new aristocratic poor were busily engaged in selling theirs. The necessity was due to the accumulation of debts and mortgages and also due to an unsustainable lifestyle as well as political and economic changes beyond their control.

The second Duke of Westminster did not look for a paid position as he did not need the status or the revenue. There were two Funds that the Duke became involved in which are indicative of how he used his money and title to promote aspects of life he was passionate about. In 1913 he organised the Olympic Fund and enlisted Lord Rothschild as honorary treasurer with Lord Roberts. In his letter to Lord Roberts, he asked if Roberts would ‘join him [Rothschild] as co-honorary treasurer. All we should ask you to do would be to sign cheques about once a month’. The Duke was ‘undertaking the collection of monies up to £50’. *The New York Times* reported ‘An appeal for 100,000 ($500,000) to enable Great Britain to play a proper role in the next Olympic games has been issued by Earl Grey, Lord Harris, Earl Roberts, Lord Strathcona, the Duke of Westminster, and Lord Rothschild’. The Fund was met with apathy and was largely unsuccessful. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote extensively in support of the Fund most energetically in a letter entitled ‘Olympic Games Lethargy’ published in the *Daily Express* on 24 May 1913 accusing the population of lack of public interest. The Duke’s name did not always attract interest in positive attention and money. *Reynolds’s News* had also reported on what it referred to as a ‘snobs’ dinner’ when it ran the story of the dinner organised for the Imperial Fund at Grosvenor House. The attendance of 200 guests at a price of £1,000 a ticket had only yielded £60,000. The article mocked ‘even allowing for some at half price, the

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797Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p. 419.
801*Daily Express*, 24 May 1913.
deadheads must have been there in considerable force’. There is slight amusement at the price tag of the tickets and the ability of the invitees to avoid paying.

The second Duke of Westminster’s decisions with regard to how he spent his money took an interesting turn when he created a studentship in Oxford under his friend Professor Lindeman. The studentship was founded on 2 May 1924. The terms laid out in the indenture, state that the Duke will pay £300 per annum after tax annually for ten years for a studentship referred to as ‘the Duke of Westminster studentship’ in experimental Physics. The governing body of the college will elect from nominations and without nominations the money should be used in the Clarendon Laboratory. The indenture was signed by the Duke in the presence of Detmar Blow. In January 1949 the Duke and his fourth wife Nancy visited Lindeman, and Nancy wrote a gushing letter and referred to how, ‘Benny was so glad to meet his scholar and asks me to thank you for arranging it’. He also was taken to the laboratory and was hugely amused by ‘bouncing putty’ which she requests a sample of. The Westminster bursary was extended in 1946 for a further seven years with the provision that the ‘balance so accumulated might be applied to some purpose connected with research in the Clarendon Laboratory approved by the Duke of Westminster and by Lord Cherwell (Lindeman)’. After the Duke’s death, his heirs, Colonel Gerald Grosvenor and Colonel Robert Grosvenor agreed to continue the studentship to the sum of £300 per annum and £100 per annum respectively for seven years from July 1954. Research into the students and work funded through the Trust in Nuffield College archives brings forth particular reference to Dr. Roaf who worked on radiolocation of aircraft during the Second World War. The Duke had invested in military science through his choice of student.

In 1936, the second Duke of Westminster changed British tax law. He had been paying a number of his staff according to covenants for specific tasks. The staff included laundry women, architects and one particular gardener, Frank Allman of Vine Cottage, Aldford. The amounts ranged from 12s to £2,000. The Revenue thought this was tax evasion and brought the Duke to

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803 Details of the scholarship given to Oxford by the second Duke of Westminster (Lindeman Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford University B125/4).
804 Letter from the Duchess to the Professor thanking him in (Lindeman Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford University, K308/21).
805 Details of the scholarship given to Oxford by the second Duke of Westminster (Lindeman Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford University, K308/21).
806 Details of the scholarship given to Oxford by the second Duke of Westminster (Lindeman Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford University, B126/19).
807 ibid.
808 ibid.
court. The case was won by the second Duke of Westminster and the judge, Lord Tomlin, declared

Every man is entitled, if he can, to order his affairs so that the tax attaching under the appropriate Acts is less than it otherwise would be. If he succeeds in ordering them so as to secure this result, then, however unappreciative the Commissioners of Inland Revenue or his fellow tax-payers may be of his ingenuity, he cannot be compelled to pay an increased tax.809

The court case is still quoted in tax avoidance cases.810 The staff was well paid and the Duke was able to write the covenants off as a tax-deductible expense. The second Duke of Westminster had succeeded in using payment for work as an asset in financial terms. This arrangement would not have been feasible if his staff had not been amenable to the arrangement. The state was the only one who lost out on revenue. In the later years of his life, the Duke was happy to sell things he did not value. An enquiry into the possible sale of Audubon’s book ‘Birds of America’ is recounted by George Ridley in his biography during the Duke’s fourth marriage.811 The Duke had sold it to his trustees in 1930 for £250 and the offer from the dealer was £6,000. The Duke bought back the book, attached the many pages that had been left in different houses and resold it at a substantial profit.812 The buyer enjoyed the hospitality of Eaton and the book was presented to him in the library. The sale was a ceremony in itself. The book was laid out for the buyer to see and the Duke happily engaged in the process to make a profit even flirting with the wife of the buyer.813 Ridley in his recounting of the story as always holds the Duke in an excellent light.

The ways in which the aristocratic class dealt with the financial decline of their resources because of orchestrated government policies, was both dependent on the extent of their wealth and their wishes. The second Duke of Westminster avoided the sale of London property until it was necessary. The Duke of Bedford sold Covent Garden, opened his house and became part of the Woburn experience. The dukes who embraced the City, did it, either, as bona fide investors in search of a dividend, or directors with titles to attract connections and investors. The Establishment fostered a respect for title both in society and in business and the titled exploited it to survive. The wealth of the aristocracy was dented by the death duties attached to the People’s Budget but they often had in their possession the means to pay the duties and the

810 Details of tax laws which include references to the second Duke of Westminster (21 Aug. 2021)
811 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster, p.166.
812 ibid.
813 ibid.
lawyers to avoid taxation where ever possible. In 1952 the Grosvenor Estate with the aid of John Pennycuik QC won a court case, where Revenue challenged the tax relief of deeds of covenant to ex-employees as pensions. The estate had brought pensioners from Eaton as witnesses and put them up in London. The case was fought because an employee of the Duke had questioned why the wages were higher on another estate and was answered with the fact that a part of the wages at Eaton were put towards a pension. The outcome of the case was the Grosvenor Pension scheme which was signed by George Ridley on behalf of the Duke. It allowed for 1-½ % of wage per year of service and 60% to his (the employee) wife if he predeceased her.\textsuperscript{814} When the Duke died in 1953, the tax on his estate amounted to £19,100,000, one of the largest death duties ever paid and it took a separate sub-department of the Inland Revenue sixteen years to finish the valuation and agree on a figure.\textsuperscript{815} It led to the estate and in particular, Geoffrey Singer, establishing a trustee system whereby direct inheritance was avoided.\textsuperscript{816} The death duties of the fourth Duke of Westminster were avoided entirely when the estate was able to persuade Revenue that the Duke had died serving his country, even though he died twenty three years after his injuries in the Second World War and the cause of death was cancer. There is no suggestion of any wrongdoing by the Grosvenor Estate. But John Christensen of the Tax Justice Network plainly stated ‘The family has been at the forefront of the use of tax avoidance mechanisms. If you are rich enough, you don't face the tax bills the rest of us expect to pay’.\textsuperscript{817}

The second Duke of Westminster’s use of his wealth to promote his politics was at the heart of his financial decisions. He used his money to promote the Tariff Reform movement and to send a delegation to India to form an alliance with the Indian Princes. But it was his intermittent paternalism and almost neglect that at times cost him money and bad press. He was shrewd in his decisions and sold only that which he wanted to. He used his money to preserve areas of London and yet at the same time he gambled\textsuperscript{818} and bought copious amounts of jewellery.\textsuperscript{819} Milner recognised him as a potential investor into South Africa after the South African War and he acquiesced and named the estate in South Africa after himself. The most high profile financial decision made by the Duke was the sale of Blue Boy which opened up the wider

\textsuperscript{814}Ridley, \textit{Bend’or, Duke of Westminster}, p. 200.  
\textsuperscript{815}ibid.  
\textsuperscript{816}ibid.  
\textsuperscript{818}Reynolds’s \textit{News}, 21 June 1925.  
\textsuperscript{819}Ponsonby, \textit{Grace and favour}. 

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argument of the State’s responsibility to value and protect national masterpieces. The Press reporting of the sale supports that responsibility and calls on the State to change. Bedford was happy to sell his Covent Garden estate but wanted to keep his private theatre boxes, and Westminster was selling a true masterpiece to an American tycoon but had bought land in Africa, Scotland and France. The second Duke of Westminster had, at an early age, realised his power was in his money and his title, and that the decisions he made regarding the use of both had a wider influence that included London and parts of the Empire he invested in. His actions effected the architecture of London, tax laws and added to the wider argument of the sale of English masterpieces. His acts of philanthropy had equal coverage in the press and his paternalism did not go unnoticed. It cannot be ignored, however, for the most part he acted in his own interests and had the means to protect his interests while pursuing and reflecting his imperial political agenda. His incredible wealth made him a unique case in a period when the State was focused on increasing its taxation of the aristocracy. The Duke had the means to weather the storm and so the more pertinent factors were how he chose to spent and release his capital.
CONCLUSION

In 1940, George Orwell described England as ‘the most class ridden society’.\(^{820}\) His view of class was based around a three tiered class system: upper, middle and lower. The upper class was at the forefront of the hierarchy. Orwell’s view was based on his own political agenda but it was more than an astute observation. Hilaire Belloc expanded on this theme expressing his point in the following statement: ‘The whole of this remarkable complex of honorific labels is worthy of note by anyone who would seek to understand modern England because it testifies to an appetite for diversity in unity or, as some would call it, for inequality which marks the English people’.\(^{821}\) Class was part of the fibre of being English. R.H. Tawney believed that the British saw their society as a ‘hierarchical social order which was so venerable and all pervading, so hallowed by tradition and permeated with pious emotion that it seems inconceivable to its adherents that any other system should exist’.\(^{822}\) The endurance of the hierarchy was part of the cultural identity of the British people. The second Duke of Westminster held the highest possible rank in the British peerage system below Prince, he was the wealthiest London landlord and a decorated veteran of the South African War and the First World War. He was unique in his wealth, and, the area of London he owned put him at the very centre of Society. David Cannadine agrees with the choice of the second Duke of Westminster for a case study when as I have mentioned, he described

> The contrasting lives of the first and second Dukes of Westminster vividly illustrate this shift from responsibility to indulgence, stability to restlessness, leisure to pleasure….By virtue of their colossal riches and their distinct personalities, the first and second Dukes of Westminster illustrate in a larger-than-life way the changes in the social attitudes and social circumstances of the titled and territorial classes between the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the Second World War.

The two Dukes existed in wholly different worlds. The political sphere of the interwar era was unquestionably aided by the European disintegration of the ruling class and the rise of extreme politics. Britain was stable and the monarchy prevailed. Both Stanley Baldwin and Ramsay MacDonald exploited the class structure and as David Cannadine refers to it: ‘actively engaged in recasting and reviving hierarchical Britain’.\(^{823}\) The honours system was changed to include all classes. The Creation of the OBE and MBE gave an outlet for the social aspirations of those


\(^{821}\)H. Belloc quoted in Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p. 142.

\(^{822}\)R.H.Tawney quoted in Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p. 142-3.

\(^{823}\)Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, pp. 175-6.
who were not rich and famous. The vice regal regimes of the Empire were based on rank and station and the governor generals remained overwhelmingly royal or aristocratic in background. The second Duke of Westminster’s politics were linked to his short military career and it was a teenage lord who entered the South African War as part of a yeomanry. His succession to the Dukedom in 1899 brought unimaginable wealth. This wealth and his position as the most important landlord in London brought the wrath of Lloyd George. Despite the historiographical depiction of him as a sometime quintessential rich philistine, it was not his money that factored most importantly in his historical presence but rather how he used it coupled with his title. He established his position to his mother on his membership to the House of Lords: he would not be a puppet. He was acutely aware of his own resources and influence and chose where and when he spent his money. The second Duke was a duke at a time when the aristocracy had lost its veto in the House of Lords and was suffering financially from death duties but his political influence adapted according to his personality and the world in which he inhabited.

This thesis has sought to use the Duke as a case study for how the aristocracy reacted to the changes in their circumstances: the pincer movement Earl Spencer refers to, of political and economic pressures on the aristocracy’s prominence in British Society. The financial resources that the Duke was in possession of makes him a unique case and the approach the thesis has taken was borne from the lack of access to family papers. This thesis has sought to prove that the Duke remained in prominence despite the changes in the circumstances of his class and his closest peers, while at the same time, reflecting on the extent to which he was really involved in politics and how the Press perceived and reported his endeavours. The political interests of the second Duke of Westminster were the product of the major influences in his life in his formative years and his lifelong devotion to the British Empire. His father dying when he was young and the replacement of a father figure by his grandfather and George Wyndham gave him an introduction into his responsibility as a duke of the British Empire. Wyndham was instrumental in the Duke’s military posting in South Africa where he met Sir Alfred Milner who subsequently drew the Duke into investment in South Africa and leadership of the South African Association. The Duke chose not to speak more than once in the House of Lords and followed his political aims in less conventional ways. The aristocracy had lost their veto and therefore their political prominence was removed from the Houses of Parliament. The Duke

824 Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p.140.
825 Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall*, pp. 175-6.
826 Ridley, *Bend’or, Duke of Westminster*, p. 69.
chose to use his name, influence and title to promote the political causes that interested him. His own perception of himself was as a soldier, Duke, and Londoner. The Duke continued his soldier’s career in the First World War where he was instrumental through influence and financial investment in the creation firstly, of the armoured car regiment which he led and secondly, the creation of the tank. Churchill mentions this fact in his obituary. The second Duke of Westminster was an aristocrat with a penchant for using his influence to maintain the prevalence of both his own class and the status quo of the British Empire. The awarding of the DSO to the second Duke of Westminster can be taken as monumental in the context of the historical evidence that the aristocratic class were not awarded medals lightly. The removal of the cavalry as a fighting force through the mechanisation of warfare and the attempt at an equalitarian army had impacted on the Duke to the extent that he engaged in innovation and used his knowledge and wealth to modernise transport during the First World War and to form a financial and social bond with the man who would become Churchill’s main advisor during the Second World War, Professor Lindeman. The Duke, although not university educated, left a legacy of a scholarship in Oxford that remained intact for decades after his death. His name was, as a result, linked to research in radio location in the Second World War.

It was the South African War that truly influenced the Duke and the only time he spoke in the House of Lords was to promote investment in South Africa. The end of the House of Lords’ veto struck at the cornerstone of the political power of the aristocracy. The Upper House could no longer paralyse the democratic outlet of the people. A third of the working class voted for the Conservative party giving the traditional ally of the aristocracy the people’s mandate which allowed the status quo to remain intact when the Conservative party was in power. By 1924, when the 400 Liberal M.P.s elected to parliament in 1906 were reduced to a mere 40, the former Prime Minister and Leader of the Party, Herbert Asquith, having lost his seat for Paisley, commented 'We are a dying party, set between the upper and the nether millstones’. Baldwin and MacDonald both used the honours system to promote title and influence which bought into the hierarchical system in Britain. When the question of Tariff Reform was forefront it was the Duke of Devonshire who chose to resign in the face of a possible end to Free Trade. The second Duke of Westminster under the influence of Alfred Milner and George Wyndham helped finance the Tariff Reform movement. The Tariff Reform movement split the Liberal party and

827 Ridley, Bend’or, Duke of Westminster.
left a legacy of financial acrimony between the city and agriculture. The legacy of the Tariff Reform movement created a climate that would influence the Imperial Preference system up until after the Second World War. The lobbying power and investment of the second Duke of Westminster enabled the Tariff Reform movement reach a crescendo of influence over party politics. The importance of his name, title and wealth helped keep the cause financed and extended nationwide.

When Winston Churchill wished to protect colonial power over India, his use of both the name of his old friend, the second Duke of Westminster, and the Duke’s wealth enabled, him to send delegations of aristocrats to India to form an alliance with the Indian Princes. He had hoped that the Duke would travel but the Duke did not oblige.830. The political clout of the Duke was implicit but measurable. His name with other titled Britons in a widely published letter to the Princes of India had the intention of adding legitimacy to the cause. The regularity of the use of the Duke’s name in correspondence is indicative of how important his title was to the promotion of the India Defence League. Churchill not only wanted access to his friend’s wealth but also to his influence, which was outside of Westminster. The act was an abject failure for Churchill and ruined his career in the short term. It was part of his own personal attack on Baldwin and his wider argument regarding the proposed dominion status of India in 1931. At no time did the Duke actually take part in the government debates about the future of India. It was his title that held sway in Churchill’s opinion and his money which was required for lobbying and travel. The second Duke of Westminster had no interest in using the House of Lords and in his youth had already adapted to the role of influence and money in the protection of the Empire. The press coverage of the political aims of the second Duke of Westminster are varied and depended on the political agenda of the newspaper and on whether it was a National or International paper. The recognition of his involvement and coverage of his opinions shows how his name did warrant press coverage. His power lay in the fact that his name carried weight in the newspapers. People were interested in what he was doing. His imperial political agenda had been born from his own rite of passage as an ADC to Lord Roberts. The protection of India within the Empire was a cause that was natural to him.

The interwar period was the height of the exposure of the young aristocrats and their behaviour in light of the shadow cast by the First World War. The second Duke of Westminster was drawn into the world through his search for a second and then a third wife in pursuit of an heir. The


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Duke’s movements were followed and reported on and his third wedding features in the British Movie Tone newsreel of 1930 under the title board ‘Public swarm to Duke’s wedding’ and on British Pathé under the title ‘dense crowds throng the streets for hours to see marriage of the Duke of Westminster and Miss Loelia Ponsonby’. The press coverage of his life was complimented by his own use of the medium. He wrote for the Outlook, the Fortnightly Review, wrote letters to The Times and had a personal connection to Lord Rothermere. The Press Barons, to an extent, protected the hierarchy which was particularly evident during the abdication crisis. The medium of writing in the Press and meeting with Press barons was not an avenue of influence open to all strata of society. The Duke used his privilege to his advantage and sporadically. The fact remains that as his third wife, Loelia Ponsonby and George Ridley, his agent, attest, the second Duke of Westminster rarely spoke in public or wrote letters or articles. This private image made him more interesting to the Press and the public. The evening he met his third wife, he was with Lord Beaverbrook, the quintessential Press baron. The public wanted to see the aristocracy and read about their clothes, habits and travel. The power of exposure was also the death of obscurity. The second Duke of Westminster of the Lime-House Speech was also reported on for the sale of his paintings, his marriages, his politics and his divorces were scrutinised. The details of his private life were covered in newspapers in New York and India in celebrity-style coverage. The fox hunting, fishing, wild pig hunting, gambling behaviour of the aristocracy was covered in England and abroad because it attracted readership in a period when the circulation of newspapers was at an all-time high. The media attention in the aristocracy created a form of influence on the middle class who aspired to look and act like the members of the upper class. The press coverage of the second Duke of Westminster was extensive and particularly significant when taken in comparison with his closest contemporary, London landlord: the Duke of Bedford. When Bedford sold Covent Garden, the Press published articles lambasting him for greed over the greater good. Westminster suffered very little vitriol regarding his land sales due in part to his own charitable acts and his protection of the architecture of Grosvenor Square. When he sold the Blue Boy the State was held up to criticism for allowing the masterpiece leave the country. The Duke was an avenue to a greater debate about responsibility and private ownership. The Duke’s non engagement with the House of Lords and controversial private life made him even more intriguing to the Fourth Estate.

Lawrence Stone’s review of David Cannadine’s book, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* draws attention to the fact that most social historians begin their research with money. This thesis chose to end with money. The second Duke of Westminster left such wealth that by the time of his death the duties of £18 million took from July 1953 to August 1964 to pay off, a fact that is recorded in the *Guinness Book of Records*. He lived at a time when the wealth of his class was under attack and this affected him. He sold land and paintings and chose to invest in political causes that he believed in. His wealth was not unique. The Duke of Bedford owned vast areas of land in London and chose to sell it in the face of mounting death duties. The wealth of the second Duke of Westminster allowed him the opportunity to use his money in certain ways. He created a scholarship in his name, he protected the historic architecture of his London estate and created covenants to give his employees’ security. His wealth was immense and the saleable resources he possessed meant the State had little control over him, however, even with his vast wealth, he was touched by the People’s Budget. His use of trusteeships and covenants changed British taxation law. These court cases proving that if an individual had wealth then they could, in certain circumstances, use that wealth to avoid tax. The Westminster fortune makes the Duke an incredible source for research in two ways, firstly by looking at the manner in which he chose to spend and invest his money and secondly how he was influenced by others who were very much aware of his politics and the extent of his wealth and influence. It is his choices and influences that create a pattern of imperialism and tradition and investment in the very status quo that he was a part of.

The approach of this thesis was directed by the primary sources available. The incredible amount of material in the Churchill Archives is a testament to second Duke of Westminster’s friendship with Winston Churchill which was the most enduring relationship of his life. He had made his acquaintance during the South African War and Churchill, as the nephew of a duke and a young soldier clearly enjoyed the friendship of another aristocrat. The exchange of letters and telegrams and constant meetings are a major resource in the research of the Duke’s politics. In 1936 Churchill sent a telegram to Lochmore with the words ‘Am horribly tired with wretched fixtures but want so much to see you plenty of rain here.’ And in 1938: ‘Please let me know when you are next near London. I am distressed we have not met for several months’.

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most telling is his letter of 16 December 1936: ‘It gives me comfort to think how long our friendship has lasted in this world of shock and change’. Churchill’s esteem for his friend in the light of his position with regard to the Tariff Reform movement and the Parliament Act in itself, was a function of the adaptability of the friendship. Churchill’s own cabinet during the Second World War was wholly aristocratic, Addison sums it up in the following words

In Churchill, the descendant of Marlborough and historian of past glories, the oldest strain of ruling tradition had resurfaced…For five years an aristocrat steeped in a romantic vision of his nation’s role was the undisputed leader of an overwhelming working class nation, of whose social conditions and daily concerns he was largely in ignorance.

The Second World War was a people’s war but the leadership continued to come from the titled elite who had maintained their influence through adaptability and implicit influence. David Cannadine summarises ‘between 1940 and 1945 the British war effort was far more patrician in its supreme direction and its high command than it had been between 1914-18’. C.P. Snow describes Churchill as ‘the last aristocrat to rule—not preside over,-rule-this country’ Cannadine refers to the second Duke of Westminster ‘among his [Churchill’s] oldest and closest friends’. They were extremely close. Winston Churchill was a prolific correspondent. He wrote thoughts that he wanted to share with the Duke and sought his support, advice and also reprimanded him in a very careful manner. The depth of their friendship gives an indication of the personality of the Duke in a very masculine setting.

The prominence of the aristocracy and the use of titles and finance in the promotion of the politics of the Empire and the maintenance of the status quo was at the heart of the political agenda of the second Duke of Westminster. When Churchill could gain his support he knew the Duke’s title and wealth held a certain amount of traction and gained press coverage.

The prominence of the Press as a source for the thesis has been hugely aided by both the digitisation of newspapers and the work of Adrian Bingham. The period 1900-40 was a time of increasing circulation and readership and also the increasing prominence of the national newspaper as opposed to provincial newspaper as the most widely read medium. These national newspapers published articles of national importance and about people who were prominent in

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838 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 607.
839 Cannadine, Decline and Fall, p. 608.
840 ibid.
London and held important titles. The second Duke of Westminster who was good-looking, rich, intermittently part of London Society, owned race horses, was adulterous, a gambler and a decorated war hero was an attractive topic for all newspapers. His name was known, he had featured in a Noel Coward play and Lloyd George’s Limehouse Speech. What the Press wrote and the tone in which they wrote about him adds to the historiography of both the history of the media and the history of the aristocracy particularly in the interwar period. Adrian Bingham was one of the first historians to highlight the importance of tabloids as historical sources.

This Press coverage helps to put in context the biographical background written by Loelia, the Duke’s second wife and George Ridley his estate manager in their accounts of the Duke.

The period in which the second Duke of Westminster lived most of his life brought him into contact with men who changed the course of history in the shape of social, political and military matters. His friendship with Churchill and involvement in interwar society allowed the thesis to create a bridge between the aristocracy and the period under the guise and through the eyes of the second Duke of Westminster. His reticent nature and relationship with his own image and the written word made for a challenging yet ultimately satisfying conclusion. The resources about and from him led the writer to conclude that in the face of the challenges to his class, his contemporaries and the Empire, the second Duke of Westminster had the means and the acumen to adapt his influence and use his wealth to promote his ideals. The upper class did decline and lose explicit political and financial power that they had enjoyed for centuries, but the essence of British society was hierarchical and they remained through title at the very apex of the hierarchy. The middle class and plutocracy wanted to mirror the aristocratic lifestyles making the aristocracy an enviable class. There is no question that the People’s Budget struck at the very foundation of the ruling class but the upper elements of the ruling class had the sustenance to adapt and maintain its superiority through Press adulation, valuable resources, land and the protection of the State through the National Trust and tax breaks. The essence of English heritage was inextricably linked to the aristocracy. Britain in 1940, in the first years of the Second World War, was led by the grandson of a duke and as the second Duke of Westminster entered his fourth decade as a peer, he had been partly responsible for the beginnings of the tank and introduced Churchill to his main advisor Professor Lindeman. His wealth and name had allowed him the power to move in circles and choose the causes that he could help to finance. The decline of the aristocracy in 1900-40 is a more varied and controversial historical

debate that can be answered in a single definitive statement. As Cannadine stated in his book titled *The Decline and Fall of the British aristocracy* and specifically in the chapter dealing with the Second World War ‘On the eve of the Second World War, there may still have been an identifiable wealth elite, ruling class and status stratum in Britain’. The second Duke of Westminster was part of that elite and would leave a vast fortune and legacy of commitment to the Empire that forms the basis a more nuanced conclusion than straightforward decline or survival. The second Duke of Westminster used his wealth and influence to bolster the Empire and protect and expand his own interests thereby exercising a more implicit political power while avoiding and courting the Press.

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842 Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, p.606.
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