

ANNEX B WELBECK AND THE PORTLANDS

OBITUARIES

Lady Victoria Wemyss

LADY VICTORIA WEMYSS, who has died aged 104, was an Extra Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, her second cousin, and a god-daughter of Queen Victoria.

At her christening in 1890, in the private chapel of Windsor Castle (the room where the fire started 102 years later), Queen Victoria stood sponsor to this only daughter of her Master of the Horse, the 6th Duke of Portland, and his wife, Winifred, who later became Mistress of the Robes to Queen Alexandra.

Asked recently whether she remembered Queen Victoria, the sprightly Lady Victoria ("Vera" to her family and friends) replied: "Oh yes, very well. I remember going to Balmoral for her to see me, and sitting on my mother's knee waiting for her... I poked a hole in the yellow silk of the sofa. Then the Queen was wheeled in by her Indian attendant, and she presented me with a horse and cart and a doll."

Lady Victoria had vivid memories of King Edward VII, who often came to shoot at Welbeck Abbey, the Portland family seat in "the Dukery" of Nottinghamshire; of her aunt Lady Ottoline Morrell, the Bloomsbury hostess (of whom she would give amusing imitations); of the Empress Eugenie in the South of France; and of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whose assassination started the First World War.

Her family stayed with the Archduke and his wife in Austria. "It was a charming house," Lady Victoria recalled, "a sort of 'Schloss', you know... it was very comfortable and nice and gay, and we danced... Father asked them to come to shoot at Welbeck... They came in the summer and two or three times in the winter."

The Archduke nearly met his end at Welbeck rather than Sarajevo. "He was shooting," Lady Victoria recalled, "and the ground was slippery, and a cartridge went off and just missed him."

"It was terrible when he was shot in 1914. He had tried to do all that he could down in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but everything was so divided."

Lady Victoria Alexandrina Violet Cavendish-Bentinck was born on Feb 27 1890 and spent much of her childhood at Welbeck, where her father had succeeded the legendary eccentric 5th Duke of Portland 11 years earlier.

The 5th Duke, having been spurned in love by the Covent Garden singer Adelaide Kemble, adopted a highly individual sartorial manner. His trousers were secured above the ankle by a piece of string, he hid himself beneath a vast coat and umbrella, and on top of his long brown wig he balanced a 2 ft hat.

The staff at Welbeck were instructed to pay him no attention, but to pass him by "as they would a tree". He liked to stay in his bedroom, communicating through a letterbox in the door. Each



Lady Victoria in 1918

The fire had started in her mother's maid's room. "In those days electric irons were rather a new idea," explained Lady Victoria, "and somebody had gone in—as a matter of fact to iron a blue sash and some clothes of mine—and they had left the iron on..."

"Our own private fire-engine came busting down, then the Worksop fire-engine, and fire-engines from all over; by half-past six they more or less had it under control."

The only fatality was Lady Victoria's wax doll, Netta, who melted. Her pet tortoise survived, swimming contentedly in the bath in the day nursery.

Until the First World War the family would travel to Worksop through an artificially lit tunnel built by the 5th Duke, which crossed the Welbeck lake via a causeway. "It was the normal route to Worksop in those days," said Lady Victoria. "My father gave strict instructions that on no account were motors to use the tunnel because it frightened the horses."

In his time the 5th Duke had a steel carriage which was drawn by horses through the tunnel to Worksop Station, where it was put on to the train for

affair, with guests including the King of Spain. But life changed dramatically in August 1914. "I remember everyone lining up at Father's study to say goodbye before going to the war," Lady Victoria saw family and friends, among them her husband-to-be, set out for the Front. The young men, she recalled, never spoke of the horrors when they were on leave from Flanders, remarking when questioned: "Well, I suppose I have seen a thing or two."

One evening in 1916, after dining at Hopeston House, near Edinburgh, she heard the eerie rattle of chains outside in the Firth of Forth. The party went on to the terrace, and watched the Fleet weighing anchor and setting out for the Battle of Jutland; Lady Victoria remembered some of the ladies waving their underskirts to wish the men God speed. She remembered, too, that when the Fleet returned there were empty spaces in their formations at anchor.

During the war she worked in a munitions and aircraft factory at Chiswick, which she "enjoyed enormously".

In 1918 Lady Victoria married at Welbeck Capt Michael Wemyss, of the Royal Horse Guards, Chief of the Name of Wemyss of Wemyss, and a nephew of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Wester Wemyss, who, as the representative of the British Empire, had signed the Armistice at Compiègne less than three weeks earlier.

Lady Victoria provided the Duke and Duchess of Portland with their only grandsons, David, born in 1920, and Andrew, born in 1925. They lived on the coast at Wemyss Castle, Fife, in south-east Scotland. After the Second World War, when many other families were reducing the size of their houses, the Wemysses embarked upon additions to their castle.

In 1937 Queen Elizabeth selected Lady Victoria as an Extra Woman of the Bedchamber, a position she held for the rest of her life. In 1953 she was appointed CVO.

Lady Victoria took a special interest in the Wemyss School of Needlework and in the Girl Guide movement. She also had a passion for farming, particularly sheep ("Rather appropriate for a Cavendish, really," she said, "that's how the family started, you know"). Her sheep won championships all over Britain, and towards the end of her life at least one champion was brought to her bedside for inspection.

She took an enthusiastic interest in the military college which took over her family seat. "I am always delighted to read the name Welbeck in the passing out lists from Sandhurst in *The Telegraph*," she would say to the boys. "Good luck to you all—your master will be keeping me in touch and giving me all the 'low-down'."

Well into her 10th decade she would entertain the boys on their visits to perform at Edinburgh Festivals, and drive 50 miles into the city to see them. Lady Victoria was notorious for emerging at

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The staff at Welbeck were instructed to pay him no attention, but to pass him by "as they would a tree". He liked to stay in his bedroom, communicating through a letterbox in the door. Each day he would be posted a roast fowl. His Grace would lurch off one half of the bird and dine of the other.

He undertook extraordinary subterranean building operations at Welbeck, which included an astonishing ballroom—said to be the largest room in Europe without supporting pillars—and miles of tunnels.

The 6th Duke took advantage of his predecessor's work, and entertained lavishly. A champion of the turf, he used his considerable earnings from racing to build old people's homes, known as the "Winnings".

His Duchess, Winifred, was much more than the beautiful hostess portrayed by Sargent, and took a special interest in the welfare of the miners on this vast private domain. The Portlands eventually moved to a smaller, modern house on the estate, and the Abbey later became a military college.

Among Lady Victoria's memories of life at Welbeck—where the figure on top of a fountain in front of the Oxford Wing represents her as a young girl—was a fire in October 1900, when she was woken at 3.30 am by the butler. "I think perhaps you'd better come downstairs," he said.

Lady Victoria in 1918

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In his time the 5th Duke had a steel carriage which was drawn by horses through the tunnel to Worksop Station, where it was put on to the train for London; there it was met by more horses, and driven to his London house.

Lady Victoria's family also used a tunnel (which she described as "rather unsafe") leading to the indoor riding-school: "I remember the horses billeted there in the First World War suffered from melancholia gazing at the wall."

She stressed that she had "a blissfully happy childhood" at Welbeck in that Golden Age before the First World War. There had, she said, "to be nothing that was at all questionable. Father would have had a blue fit if it had been otherwise. Whenever there was anything that was doubtful one often thought, 'No, Father would not approve of that, because it's not quite straight.'"

"Until I was 18, it was riding morning and afternoon, an egg for tea at 6 pm and then early to bed."

Among her childhood companions was Lady Diana Manners (officially daughter of the Duke of Rutland but in fact the child of the celebrated philanthropist Harry Cust), whom she remembered serving slap into the tennis net in the garden at Welbeck and reprimanding herself, "Come on now, Miss Cust!"

Lady Victoria's coming of age ball in the underground ballroom was a grand

event, David, born in 1920, and Andrew, born in 1925. They lived on the coast at Wemyss Castle, Fife, in south-east Scotland. After the Second World War, when many other families were reducing the size of their houses, the Wemysses embarked upon additions to their castle.

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Well into her 10th decade she would entertain the boys on their visits to perform at Edinburgh Festivals, and drive 50 miles into the city to see them. Lady Victoria was notorious for emerging at speed from the front gates of Wemyss Castle, paying scant attention to other motorists. She adhered steadfastly to her favoured position in the middle of the road, and would park her motor-car on the steps at Wemyss in bizarre positions of which only a helicopter would be thought capable.

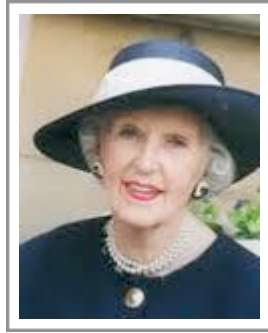
She was a most generous hostess and always loyal to her friends, who came from many walks of life. The Austrian Countess Elizabeth de Baillet Latour referred to her as, "Dear Vera, the salt of the earth made up of the finest qualities and no faults."

A friend recently told her she had been an inspiration to all who knew her. Lady Victoria replied, "That's very kind, but I feel bound to say that I have made absolutely no effort."

She was not interested in publishing her memoirs, but would answer questions about her life from those who were interested; she once gave a memorable interview to the journal of "her" Welbeck College.

Capt Michael Wemyss died, after what Lady Victoria described as a "blissful" marriage of 64 years, in 1992.

Obituary - Lady Anne Cavendish-Bentinck



As a debutante, she was front-page news when she was told to accept the hand in marriage of the nobleman destined to be prince regent of Belgium. But wilful Lady Anne Cavendish-Bentinck refused him, declining to get out of bed when the luckless suitor arrived at her stately home. She later set her sights on the handsome Duke of Leeds, but her family refused her permission to wed and she defiantly vowed never to marry anyone else. Extraordinarily, she kept her promise for the rest of her life.

Equally unusually, the death of Lady Anne at the age of 92 has so far gone publicly unrecorded by her closest relatives - no death notices, no obituaries. All the more curious because Lady Anne, who died on 21 December 2008 was a cousin of the Queen Mother and one of the richest women in the land.

She possessed a fabulous treasure trove of art, including works by Stubbs and Van Dyke, plus a huge silver collection held in a strong room as large as a small house. Lady Anne, the largest private landowner in Nottinghamshire, inherited 62,000 acres including the Welbeck Abbey estate, plus a further 45,000 acres in Scotland, and Bothal Castle in Northumberland. She also owned 30 almost priceless acres around Harley Street in Central London.

Her father, the seventh Duke of Portland, made sure that the remote relation who succeeded him in the dukedom would receive nothing from the estate. The title died out in 1980. The earldom, however, continues, the present earl being actor Tim Bentinck, familiar to Radio 4 listeners as David Archer. When I called to offer my condolences to the family, Lady Anne's great-niece, Daisy, whose father, William Parente, was brought up by his aunt, told me: 'My father is in the bath. He won't be saying anything.'

I can reveal, however, that Lady Anne's nephew William will be the beneficiary of the family riches. At the last count, she was said to be worth £158 million.

William Parente, 57, who now lives at the Abbey with his wife Alison, is the son of Lady Anne's sister, Peggy, a train bearer at the Queen's Coronation, who married an impecunious Italian nobleman.

Lady Anne, who devoted her life to her horses and to racing, was still seen out riding at the age of 90. Says one fellow equestrian: 'She was famously pompous to the point of rudeness. I recall being at a party of hers when a woman came up to say hello, and she said nothing, simply turning her back on the poor.'

FEATURE ARTICLES

LADY VICTORIA REMEMBERS

Lady Victoria Wemyss is 93. She spent the first twenty-eight years of her life at Welbeck. Her name is still on the bell tower near the Seamstress' room.

She was the first-born child of the 6th Duke of Portland and Duchess Winifred, and the sister of the 7th Duke of Portland. The 6th Duke died in 1843. Duchess Winifred, his wife, died in 1954. The 7th Duke died in 1977. Duchess Ivy, his wife, died in March 1962. Lady Victoria's husband, Captain Michael Wemyss, died in September 1982 at their home, Wemyss Castle in Fife, aged 81.

Captain Michael and Lady Victoria Wemyss have twice kindly entertained the parties from Welbeck and the O.W.'s who took part in the Edinburgh Festivals in 1979 and 1981.

Most recently, Lady Victoria and her niece, Lady Anne Borswick, visited the College for Evening on Sunday, May 1st, 1983.

The following interview took place at Wemyss Castle in October 1982. The Editor's comments are in brackets.

Questioner: Lady Victoria, what are your first memories of Welbeck?

Lady Victoria: I rather think they must be of my father's christening in the Chapel at the end of the Library (he was to be the 7th Duke). The Chapel had been built at the end of the 1st Duke of Newcastle's Old Riding School, and I think that this was the first time that it was used.

Questioner: Where were your rooms as a child?

Lady Victoria: Right at the top of the Oxford Wing. My nursery was the end room, which was at one room in those days, and our night nurseries were just along the passage.

Questioner: You were there at the time of the Oxford Wing fire, weren't you?

Lady Victoria: Yes. I had just been given a room of my own, which was on the side looking out on to the front door. I was woken up at half past three in the morning by someone coming into my room saying, 'There's some smoke in the passage. I think perhaps you'd better come downstairs.' (This was the Butler, Clancy). So I was bundled out of bed, and was given time to put on one slipper and a dressing gown, and went into the passage, and there I met our nurse carrying my younger brother, who was only six weeks old, and my elder brother, who was also being carried by somebody, and we proceeded to the end of the Oxford Wing to a round stone staircase. We were taken down the staircase. I remember it was very cold with my one shoe. We got to the bottom, and we went right along the passage, and we eventually reached the House-keeper's room. I don't know whether that's there now. You went to the end of the Oxford Wing on the ground floor and turned left, and at the end of that passage was the house-keeper's room (now B.I.A.). There we were told to wait; and so we waited, and then we heard the fire-engines that kept coming. We heard them above, and then you heard the horse, and then people kept coming down the stairs and telling us that it was getting on. They said that the mines at half-past three in the morning were coming back from the shift, and they heard the fire-bells going, and they all came to the house, partly perhaps

from curiosity, but a great deal to try to help to save some of the things. The first place that they went was the billiard-room on the ground floor to save the billiard-table; which was really rather unnecessary, but anyhow it was very good of them. And so they got as much as they could out of the Oxford Wing, which contained mostly furniture of bedrooms. The tapestries, the pictures and all the valuable things were on the other side of the house, and so they concentrated on keeping that safe and really letting the Oxford Wing more or less go. They collected anything that was valuable, and just saw that the fire did not get to that part of the house.

We, of course, did not quite know what was happening, and we sat down there until about half-past six in the morning, when they said that we'd better get away to London, and that the fire was more or less under control by that time. In those days there were no motors, and they got a carriage, and we were bundled into it, and we went straight up to London, and were kept out of the way. My Father and Mother (the 6th Duke and Duchess Winifred) were up in Caithness, and they were only told by telegram the next day.

The fire started in the room next door but one to my bedroom, in my mother's maid's room. In those days electric iron were rather a new idea and somebody had gone in - as a matter of fact to iron a blue sash and some clothes of mine - and they had left the iron on, although the electricity had been off everywhere all day, but was put on in the evening, and this had set the clothes alight. The maids watchman had seen the flames at the window, and went and alerted the people

Questioner: What are your memories of the visits of the Arch-Duke Franz-Ferdinand and his wife, whose assassinations caused the First World War?

Lady Victoria: I think that we first went to stay with them because she was a relation of the Clarys who were great friends of ours. It was through the Clarys that we got to know them. My parents liked her so much. She was charming. Countess Chotek, Sophie Chotek. When he married her, she couldn't be Empress of Austria, but she could be Queen of Hungary, and that made for complications rather. And then she was a lady-in-waiting to one of the Arch-duchesses, and I think that that didn't go off too well! Anyhow, when we went to Austria about 1910 or 1909, they very kindly asked us to go and stay at their house. It was a charming house: a sort of Schloss, you know. I don't think that there was anything particularly wonderful about it, but it was very comfortable and nice and gay, and we danced. It was great fun. Then after that Father asked them to come to shoot at Welbeck, because he was very keen about the shooting. They came in the summer and two or three times in the winter, backwards and forwards like that.

Questioner: The Arch-Duke was very friendly to you, wasn't he? He was shooting, and the ground was slippery, and a round went off and just missed him.

Lady Victoria: Yes. I rather think there was something like that. A shot went off near him by some mistake, I think.

It was terrible when he was shot in 1914. He had tried to do all that he could do in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but everything was so divided.

Questioner: How did you learn about the 5th Duke who did the tunneling and so on?

Lady Victoria: I don't really very much, except that I rather took him for granted. He was the predecessor there, and he built the underground rooms, and that was that.

Questioner: What I didn't appreciate until you told me just now is that, even in your father's day, the tunnel that goes under the lake, and was the only one with artificial lighting, was used to drive into Worskop until the First World War.

Lady Victoria: Oh yes, we always did it. It was the short way. Often it was after luncheon, and one was jostled in the carriage through the tunnel. My Father gave strict instructions that on no account were motors to use the tunnel because it frightened the horses. I don't know how much they have fallen down now. There was the tunnel up near the Riding-School which was considered to be rather unsafe. I remember going to see the tunnel when it was built.

The tunnel from the house to the Riding School, we used daily it was part of the house, really.

The 5th Duke had a motor carriage which was driven by horses through the tunnel on the way to the train. When it reached London, it was to be used to drive, and driven to his house. I never left his carriage until I left Welbeck.

I remember going to see the tunnel when it was built and how down the tunnel and how a most frightening

Questioner: What part did your parents play in your upbringing?

Lady Victoria: Well, just that they were always there, and that it was absolutely blissful. It was wonderful to see a couple as they were. Everything was absolutely straight. There was no deception of any kind. I had a blissfully happy childhood at Welbeck.

I knew perfectly well that if I wanted any advice of any kind that was right, I would go to Father. There was no question about it, and I knew that I would jolly well get it too. There had to be nothing that was at all questionable. Father would have had a blue fit if it had been otherwise. It was a wonderful preparation for life, to have had that at the back of you, you know. I've often thought about that.

Whenever there was anything that was doubtful one often thought, 'No, Father would not approve of that, because it's not quite straight'.

Questioner: Lady Victoria, you married Captain Michael Wemyss at Welbeck in the family chapel which we use daily?

Lady Victoria: Yes, we were married just two weeks after the Armistice; on the 25th November 1918, at Welbeck. We were married quite early in the morning, at about 9 or 10 o'clock. We wanted to get up here to Wemyss during the day, you see, and at that moment at the end of the war the trains were not very good; so we were married early, so that we could catch the train at Chesterfield, and we came straight up here.

For our wedding some of the guests were in the Chapel, and the doors were open into the Library.

Questioner: We do this as well for Parents' Weekends and so on, which are well attended.

Lady Victoria: I'm so glad, we always did this, but nowadays you'll be lucky if you filled two pews.

Questioner: And for the wedding you had the immediate family, and then -

Lady Victoria: Well, some of the soldiers, from the hospital which was at Welbeck then, the tenants, the family and one's neighbours, and my munition gals. I was working in a factory then.

Questioner: Where did you do that?

Lady Victoria: Chiswick. An aeroplane factory. It was very interesting. I enjoyed it enormously. So they came up, some of them. It was a very nice homely affair.

We had the Archbishop of York, who was a great friend of ours, Cosmo Lang (later Archbishop of Canterbury). He married us.

Questioner: Of course, Nelly Ager remembers it. She's told me about it. The thing that she remembers was your Aunt Ottoline, who was all in green.

Lady Victoria: You know about Aunt Ottoline. I adored her.

Questioner: Queen Victoria was your godmother, and you remember her?

Lady Victoria: Oh yes, very well. I remember going to Balmoral for her to see me, and sitting on my mother's knee waiting for her. I remember I poked a hole in the sofa. Then the Queen was wheeled in by her Indian attendant, and she presented me with a horse and cart and a doll. I have them upstairs.

I remember her funeral, of course.

Questioner: Your Father was Master of the Horse then?

Wing represents you as a young girl?

Lady Victoria: Yes, that's perfectly right. Then my brother (the 7th Duke) is on the other side (in the Rose Garden). They were put up after the fire by the rather well-known sculptor, Legros.

After the fire we went back to the other wing, because the Oxford Wing was all gutted, and I remember that the smell of burning wood haunted me as a child for years.

It was then that the rebuilding started, because, quite rightly, they thought it was a great chance to alter the house. It was very uncomfortable. There was no staircase. That big staircase was put in after the fire. The bedrooms on top of that staircase came right across. They were enormous bedrooms. And there was a little staircase right at the end of the passage where my mother's sitting room was. There were no bathroom very much, and they took the opportunity of making it rather more comfortable. There was no electric light, naturally. I remember the electric light being put in quite well. We used to have lamps, lamps all over the house.

Now, what else?

Yes, the Gothic Hall: that was a dining room in the old days; then it was all changed round. What they call the House Library now used to be where the dining room is now (the Masters' Common Room).

The House Library was the music-room. They had a piano in it, and we used to sit there.

The red drawing room, they redid it, but it was only used when they had parties there; ordinarily it wasn't used. When my father arrived in 1879, all those tapestries were in - as a matter of fact to iron a blue sash and some clothes of mine - and they had left the iron on, although the electricity had been off everywhere all day, but was put on in the evening, and this had set the clothes alight. The maids watchman had seen the flames at the window, and went and alerted the people

The 5th Duke lived on that first floor with the letter boxes at the door. He lived there, and his brother, Henry Borswick, who had the hounds, the Blankney Hounds. He used to ride two or three times a week to Lincoln and back (he started hunting).

Questioner: The 5th Duke was the MP for King's Lynn, wasn't he?

Lady Victoria: Yes, he was. It was one of those pocket boroughs.

Questioner: Was the Queen Mary bedroom named after the consort of King George V?

Lady Victoria: No, not at all. The name came from the fact that there was a large four-poster bed there that my mother had bought in Edinburgh. It was supposed to have been like one that belonged to Mary Queen of Scots, but it was a copy and quite modern.

Now, what else?

Yes, before the fire - when the dining-room was what is now the Gothic Hall - the food was brought from the Kitchen Wing (which new houses Fred Smith's stores, and the changing-rooms) by heated trolleys along railway-lines through the underground passages. (The lines are still to be seen on the floor between the College Prefects' studies and the Seamstress' Room).

in the house. Then our own private fire-engine came busting down, then the Worskop fire-engine, and fire-engines from all over; and by half-past six they were more or less had under control.

Questioner: And that fire-engine, I think, is in Kensington?

Lady Victoria: In Edinburgh. I remember it so well. It used to come down on practices. It would arrive down at front of the houses, all the men with gleaming helmets, everything absolutely gleaming, and the horses of course. The horses were up in the Wood Yard next door to the strong-room. Their stables were there, and their harnesses were kept strong up above them, and were round there who mended the fire-engine.

Questioner: Why is it in Edinburgh?

(There is a Welbeck fire-engine in the Science Museum in Kensington).

Lady Victoria: Well, it was sold, of course. It was a hand-pumped thing, and I think they were collecting old engines. It's got 'P' and everything on it. Haven't seen it. I've always been meaning to go and look at it. It was always great fun when there was a practice, and we used to go and help to pump the water. The man in charge was a man called Hammy, I think he did nothing else.

Questioner: There's still a Hammy's Lodge.

Lady Victoria: That's where he lived, up in the Wood Yard.

Questioner: It is true that the figure on the top of the fountain in front of the Oxford



Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand on a visit to Welbeck not long before the First World War. Photograph taken at the 'Couch Stables', where Mr. J.G.C. Thomson and Mr. Purlington were seen here.

Miss Helen Lee, Lady Victoria, her father was 8th Duke of Portland, Sophia, wife of Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand, Winifred, Duchess of Portland and Arch-Duke Franz Ferdinand.

Lady Victoria: Yes.

Questioner: Were you in the funeral procession?

Lady Victoria: No. We saw it outside the Royal Wells; there was a stand there. It was so funny; as children we were dressed in black - imagine that now! Everyone was dressed in black.

Questioner: Queen Victoria never visited Welbeck, did she?

Lady Victoria: No, she was too old, really. It was that period when she never came out anywhere.

Questioner: But Edward VII often came to Welbeck?

Lady Victoria: Of yes, often. He used to come to shoot.

Questioner: Have you ever heard of a Welbeck ghost? The boys talk of an Oxford Wing ghost.

Lady Victoria: Not at all. I've never known a less spooky house. They may be thinking of the Ghost of Rufford. But never at Welbeck.

Questioner: What quality of the many that have been connected with the word 'Welbeck' would you like this generation to keep alive?

Lady Victoria: Oh, quite certainly 'happiness'. It has always been a very happy place, and that is the most important thing to keep alive. As I have said many times, I was enormously happy as a young person there, and happiness is my wish for the present generation, who now carry on.

THREE HUNDRED & FIFTY YEARS ON Welbeck to the Canongate Church, Edinburgh, 1966 and 1983

In 1633 King Charles the First stayed at Worskop Manor and dined at Welbeck on his journey to Edinburgh to be crowned as King of Scotland. At his own request this coronation was to take place at the Canongate Church and not in Saint Giles' Cathedral.

Perhaps he remembered John Knox's treatment of his Grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots. Anyway, he was lavishly entertained at Welbeck by William Cavendish, first Duke of Newcastle, whose Riding School now houses our Chapel and Library; that 'Loyal Duke' was later to command Charles's northern armies in the Civil War. Ben James wrote an 'entertainment', which was performed before the King after he had dined. The Duke's second wife later recorded that 'This entertainment cost my Lord between four and five thousand pounds'.

(Incidentally Charles invited himself to Welbeck the next year, this time to stay! The Duchess recorded that this visit 'cost us all between fourteen and fifteen thousand pounds').

This year, exactly three hundred and fifty years later, another party sets out from Welbeck to perform 'Salomon AP' at the Canongate Church at 8.00 p.m. from August 19th to 26th at the Edinburgh Festival.

We estimate that our entertainment will cost about one thousand five hundred pounds. We aim to raise this before we reach Edinburgh, so that all the carriage money may go to Erskine Hospital for Disabled Servicemen.

Obituary

DUCHESS OF PORTLAND DIES AT 91

"ANGEL" OF MINERS

DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORTER
Winifred Duchess of Portland, mother of the Duke of Portland, has died aged 91. She was the widow of the sixth Duke, who died in 1943.

She was noted for her kind and gentle nature. As recently as April, in spite of an illness which had lasted several months, she appealed for funds to help alleviate the sufferings of animals in British Guiana.

She was the inspiration behind the Portland Training College for the Disabled near Mansfield, of which she was President. It was opened in 1950 by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

Her husband once described her as "the queen of my heart, and the queen of all hearts wherever she goes." Throughout her life she worked tirelessly to relieve sickness and suffering, to Nottinghamshire pit-workers, who benefited largely from her thoughtfulness, she was known as "the miners' friend."

Her marriage in 1889 was regarded as one of the great romances of the time. As Miss Winifred Dallas-Yorke, of Walmgate, Lincs, she was first seen by the late Duke on a railway station; mutual friends later introduced the Duke to her, at his earnest request.

KINDNESS TO MINERS

In the mining towns and villages around the Welbeck estate she was a familiar and beloved figure. She secured specialist medical attention for many in need and invited wives to stay at her Grosvenor Square house if their husbands required lengthy treatment in London.

The Duchess was reputed never to forget a face. On a visit to a disabled former colliery worker, who had opened a fried-fish shop at Mansfield, she helped to cut and fry the potatoes and served behind the counter.

In 1935 Nottingham miners referred to her as their "angel" in a petition to King George V asking for recognition of her work on their behalf. She was subsequently created a Dame of the British Empire.

Her love of animals led her to protest at all forms of cruelty. To her stables at Welbeck she brought many old and sickly horses and pit ponies to be looked after with the greatest care. She once seized the whip from a man ill-treating his horse.

As president of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, she campaigned for adequate sanctuaries, and frequently protested against the fashion for wearing osprey, bird-of-paradise and other plumes which involved unnecessary killing. She was vice-president of the R.S.P.C.A.

The Duchess served Queen Alexandra as Mistress of the Robes from 1913 to 1924.

Other Obituaries—P3

The odd lord of the

Heartbroken lover or one of our greatest aristocratic eccentrics? **Damian Whitworth** on the strange story of the burrowing duke

The first indication that we are treading in the footsteps of one of the greatest of British eccentrics comes on the approach to Welbeck Abbey. In front of a gardener's cottage, amid spreading cedars, three skylights pop up out of the lawn.

"The cellars," explains Derek Adlam, my guide on what is to prove a very strange tour. The immediate questions: why did the cellars extend so far from the cottage, and what did a gardener need with such subterranean facilities? "Most of the business went on under ground," says Adlam. "The piggeries were down there — out of sight. And the laundry rooms. The duke didn't want clothes flapping around above ground in full view."

Of all the singular aristocratic creatures who illuminated the 19th century, William John Cavendish-Bentinck-Scott, 5th Duke of Portland, was one of the more peculiar. A recluse from his family and society, he holed up in his corner of Nottinghamshire and used his enormous wealth to create one of the grandest and oddest of English country estates.

Most famous for constructing a network of tunnels that earned him the sobriquet "the burrowing duke", he became the subject of myth and legend in his own lifetime. Now a new exhibition at Welbeck seeks to sift fact from fiction — though shedding light on the motives for his mysterious behaviour is altogether harder.

Lord John, the second of four sons, spent his youth riding and hunting until his elder brother died and he became heir to Welbeck and succeeded his brother as MP for King's Lynn. Politics seems to have offered little appeal and he quickly resigned the seat, blaming ill health.

We know that in 1842 he proposed to a well-known opera soprano, Adelaide Kemble, and that she turned him down. Adelaide married someone else but she and John apparently remained on good terms. Could a broken heart have triggered the extraordinary behaviour that followed? The evidence is scant but it remains a popular theory.

PAGE ONE

John became 5th Duke on the death of his father, inheriting large and highly profitable estates that included large chunks of Central London, as well as the extensive estate on the edge of Sherwood Forest and other land. He was hugely wealthy and quickly demonstrated that he knew how to spend his riches.

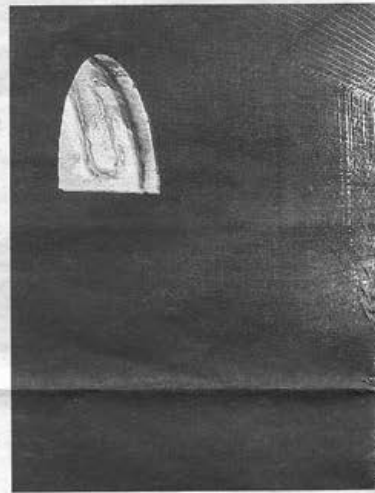
In 1860 he embarked on a monumental building programme at Welbeck, moving into the former abbey full-time to supervise the work. He started with the kitchen gardens. Those at Windsor Great Park were 17 acres, so he made his 22 acres. He erected one of the largest riding schools in the world, second only to one in Moscow. His hunting stables alone covered an acre. He built a host of other buildings, so that a small village grew up around the abbey. The poultry house was magnificent — plenty of people at the time would probably have been happy to live in it. Not satisfied with his endeavours above ground, he excavated a huge subterranean

hall at the northern end of the house. This was used by later generations as a gallery for paintings and a ballroom. Other rooms around the hall were dug, some of them linked to tunnels.

An army of men was then employed to go on to dig at least two and a half miles of tunnels across his land. One, wide enough to drive two carriages side by side, stretches more than a mile to the edge of the estate in the direction of Worksop. The duke would use this to come to and from his home when he took the train.

The tunnels, illuminated by thousands of gas lamps, seem to have been designed to allow the Duke to move around unseen and to enable goods wagons and other business traffic to pass across the estate without spoiling the view when he was walking about his land.

It has also been suggested that the massive earthworks could even have been some sort of job creation scheme. Whether or not it was the duke's aim, employment was provided for thousands of people. At one stage there was an



entire encampment of Irish labourers known as "Sligo".

John was a benevolent and much-loved master who provided donkeys for his employees to get about and umbrellas to keep them dry. He built numerous, high-quality "wedding cake" houses for his staff. Elizabeth Butler, a laundry-maid who wrote an account of her time at Welbeck, recalls him organising races for estate children and helping them to gather chestnuts. He built a roller-skating rink that was flooded in winter and turned into an ice rink. He encouraged them to row on the lake and would shout instructions from the water's edge.

The duke's benevolence extended beyond the borders of his estate. During what he called the "great cotton calamity" — when the American Civil War brought penury to Lancashire by cutting off supplies from the Deep South — he personally supported hundreds of cotton workers.

Yet despite his huge outlays, the duke always lived within his means. He expected his staff to pass him by without showing any special deference and he appears to have been never happier than when he was out among the workers supervising his great projects. He



THE HISTORY OF WELBECK ABBEY

Welbeck is the largest of the abbots in North Nottinghamshire collectively known as THE BISHOPS. The park of nearly 3,000 acres is part of Sherwood Forest and has long been famous for the quality of its oak trees.

The history begins in 1143-79 when a Franciscan monastery was founded. A church and some of the buildings of the abbey can be seen in the OXFORD WING and S.B. House Drive from the mid-13th century. This whole area was rebuilt in the mid-18th century as a riding school, which was later converted into the library and chapel.

1530 The monks were expelled and the abbey was made a priory of St. Andrew.

1534 Thanks to JOHN OF BUCHANAN'S influence the property passed to his third son, Sir Charles Cavendish, whose son William was to be created EARL OF BUCKINGHAM. He was a great horseman and sought Stephen, architect of Hardwick and Wollaton Halls and of Bulstow Castle, to build a riding school, which was later converted into the library and chapel.

1623-3 Welbeck was fortified and improved during the CIVIL WAR when Newcastle was the Royalist base in the North. In 1639 it was occupied by the Roundheads, only to be recaptured the following year. The second Duke of Newcastle died without heirs. His daughter married John Holles, Earl of Clare, now the traditional name in England. He was created Duke of Newcastle, going to Lord Falkland who acquired CLAREBORO, the neighbouring estate. The daughter was left Welbeck and she married Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford. On his death she rebuilt THE OXFORD WING, first reconstructed in the early 17th century, and replaced the old house in the south-west wing, the latter being the earlier plan. Two kitchens were built parallel to the riding school, forming THE OXFORD WING. In her death the estate was inherited by her daughter who had married William Cavendish, the EARL OF DEVONSHIRE whose family it has since remained. The OXFORD WING and several other parts of the abbey. Beyond the famous architect and landscape gardener of the 18th century, Captain the Honourable Augustus and last Duke of Devonshire, the Duke, who became the first Duke into a baronet. The Duke was depicted and entombed in one of the chapels.

1860-79 The fifth Duke began his great building programme. The new Riding School was completed in 1869, the second largest in Europe. The complex of buildings including Stable Court, Squire's Court, The Headmaster's House, the HOSPITAL and the WORKSHOPS were built. In addition miles of tunnels were excavated, the longest reaching the old Workshop road and more than a mile long. He began THE UNDERGROUND BALLROOM in 1875 intending it to be a chapel. It is one of the largest rooms in the world without supporting pillars, measuring 159 feet by 63 feet. The pictures are of some historical value, the most interesting being the original cartoon by Sir Joshua Reynolds for part of the west window of New College Chapel, Oxford, presented to the third Duke, who was twice Prime Minister, to commemorate their friendship. We enter the ballroom by the HORSE CORRIDOR, which gets its name from the pictures by Diepenbeke and his assistant Symons of the Duke of Newcastle's managed horses. We leave by the GLASS CORRIDOR and CLASSROOM which were intended to be a library suite, but which were used as supper rooms. The RAILWAY LINES, used to link the Kitchens with the Gothic Hall and dining room were laid down at this time. The Duke also built the roller-SKATING RINK, used also for ice-skating and encouraged boating on the lake. On his death the sixth Duke completed the excavations by creating a SUNKEN GARDEN, known as the Italian Garden, out of a projected ballroom.

1879 The Welbeck Cricket Club was founded and the pavilion and FIELD were created. The wicket soon became one of the best, and county cricket was played on the ground in 1901.

1884

F.T.O.

1889-96 The old riding school was converted into the present LIBRARY and Chapel. The conversion was designed by J. B. Sedding, but was carried out by his assistant Henry Wilson. The inlaywork in the Library is of Derbyshire alabaster, and is a fine example of 'Art Nouveau'. The CHAPEL owes a great deal to the sixth Duke's stepmother, Lady Solsover who supervised its conversion and is commemorated in the bronze entrance doors. The altar picture 'The Adoration of the Shepherds' is by the Dutch Artist Honthorst (1623). The altar front is of Sheffield plate, the domed roof displays all the major and many of the minor prophets, the stall carvings illustrate the Benedictines. The huge Ionic columns of pink marble were originally intended for Chatsworth and there is a reconstructed mediaeval crucifix above the font. The VIRGINS' WING was built as a link with the main building. The upper floor was used to display engravings and porcelain, and the lower housed the maids, hence the fresco over the Library arch portraying the foolish virgins.

1900-02 A fire severely damaged the Oxford Wing. It was rebuilt and at the same time the exterior and interior of the building was extensively improved under the supervision of Sir Ernest George. The WALTER HALL which bears the date of the Countess of Oxford's rebuilding in 1749 was extensively altered. The two alcoves were used to display silver-gilt plate. The MASTERS' COMMON ROOM is the most successful of these alterations and was used as the dining room. The pictures are of Strafford by Van Dyck, which was presented by the sitter to the first Duke of Newcastle, and of John Holles (see under 1691). The DUKE'S STUDY was known as the Erasmus room, so-called as Newcastle is believed to have written his famous book on the subject in it. The BUNYAN'S STUDY was the dressing room, and is one of the very few rooms to have escaped restoration. It has stone walling of c 1610, a carved fireplace displaying the crests of the Cavendish and Ogle families, and the original panelling. Of the HOUSE ROOMS: Harland used to be the principal guest room, the Queen Mary Bedchamber; York, the Duke's business room.

1902-14 It was during this period that the Abbey became a centre of European Society. Trees were planted by visiting royalty on the cricket field.

1943 The present Duke, the seventh, inherited the title but continued to live at Welbeck Woodhouse.

1945-51 The Abbey was leased to the War Office as Army College North.

1953 Welbeck College founded.

1970 The DAVIS RICKARDS BUILDING opened.

Quick Summary

2th Century Original Abbey founded, although the present remains in the basement date from mid-13th century.

1623 Old riding school (library and chapel shell).

1742-55 Oxford Wing rebuilt.

1749 Kitchen block built, forming Chapel Court.

1790-95 Lakes excavated and earth moved to Mall turning the first floor into basement.

1860-79 Fifth Duke's building programme: new riding school, complex of buildings around it; tunnels; underground ballrooms; classrooms.

1879- Sunken Garden.

1884- Cricket pavilion and field.

1889-96 Old riding school converted into library and chapel and linked to main building by Virgins' Wing.

1900-02 Oxford Wing rebuilt after fire. Most of the exterior and interior was improved.

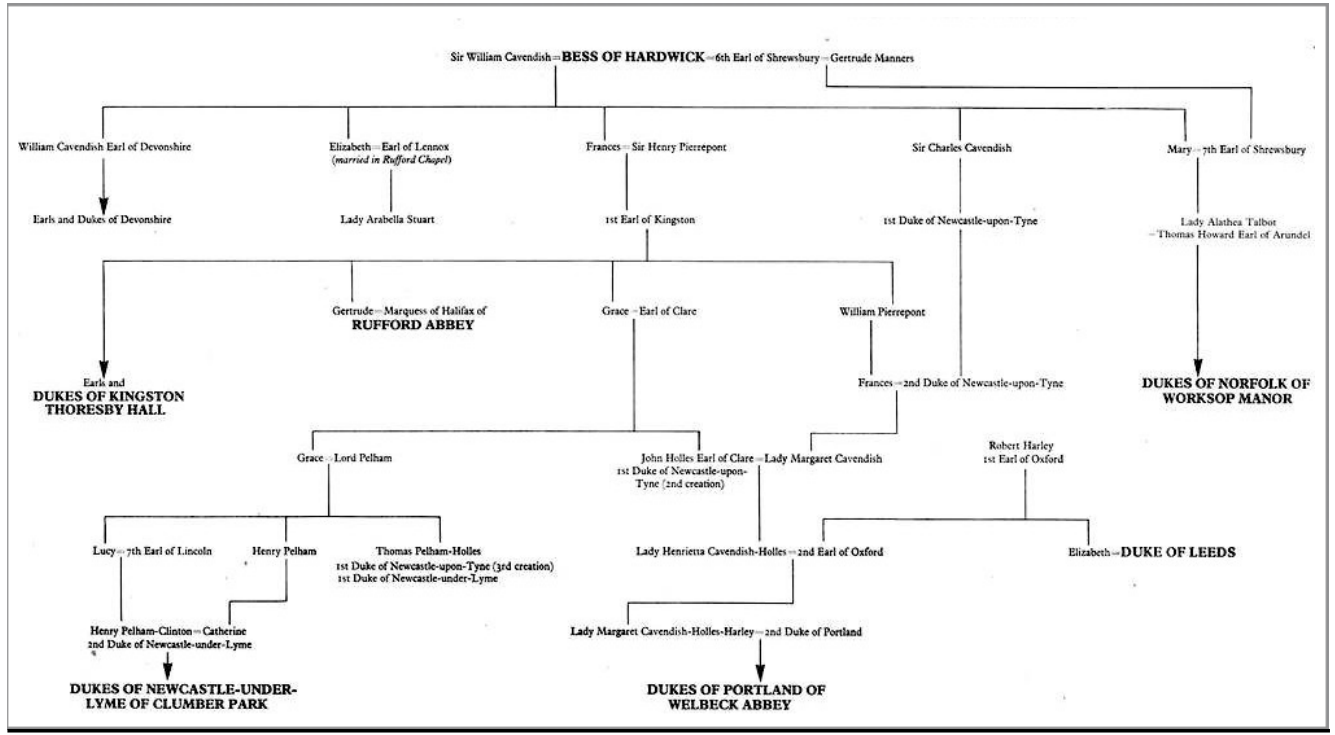
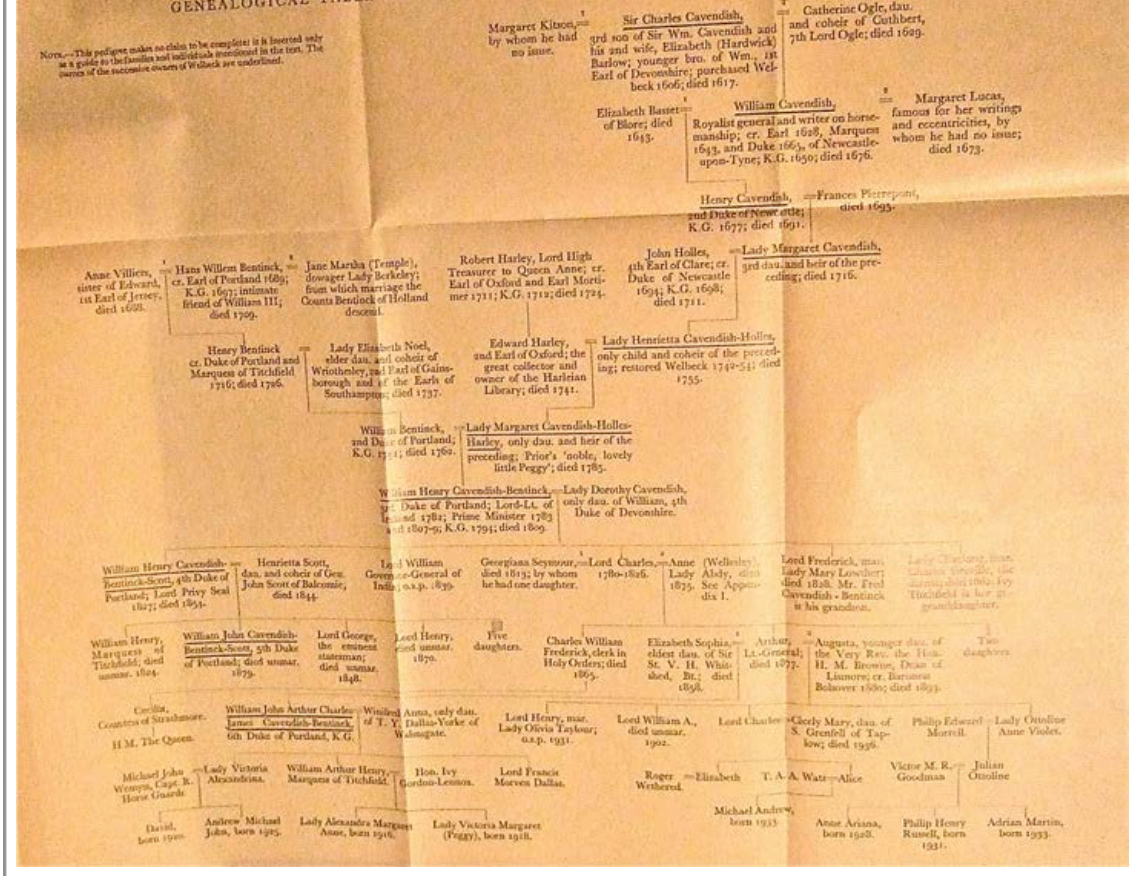
1945-51 Abbey used as Army College North.

1953 College founded.

1970 David Rickards Building opened.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CAVENDISH, HARLEY, AND BENTINCK FAMILIES

Note.—This pedigree makes no claim to be complete in its insertion only as a guide to the families and individuals mentioned in the text. The names of the successive owners of Welbeck are underlined.

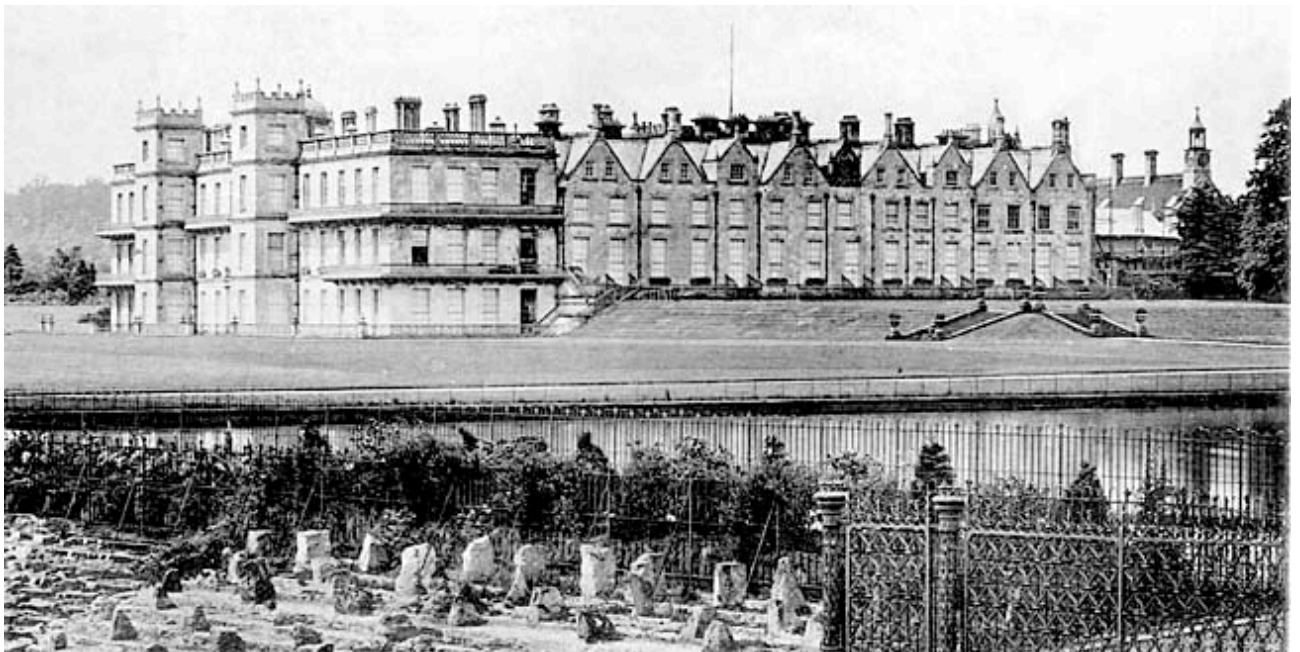


<http://www.rotherhamweb.co.uk/h/welbeck.htm> Home to the Dukes of Portland, Welbeck Abbey is a landscaped park with much woodland, and documented as a deer park in 1301 and during the late 16th and early 17th century ROTHERHAM

<http://www.nottshistory.org.uk/Jacks1881/welbeckp1.htm>

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE HISTORY

IN November, 1878, by favour of the late Duke of Portland, I was permitted to visit Welbeck Abbey, and the stupendous works connected with it, for there is no exaggeration in what has been written and rumoured concerning their magnitude. I reached the abbey at eleven o'clock one morning, after a drive of nine miles through a racy air, with just a touch of "winter's sting." The long grass on either side of the undulating park-drive had a thin, crisp covering of hoar frost, which sparkled in the rich November sunlight, that gave a more golden hue to the dying foliage of oak and elm.



EAST FRONT IN 1900

WARSOP WEB

During my school days we heard many stories about the mad Duke of Portland. Tunnels had been dug all over the district so that the mad duke could come and go in secret. "The mad duke was disfigured and he had a terrible disease." "The tunnels allowed lovers to come and go without gossip and some of the tunnels went for many miles." "One tunnel went to Worksop railway station and several others to various gate lodges." "A tunnel from Welbeck ended at the old Warsop rectory." Our elders had passed down these stories and as a youngster I believed every tale. Many Warsop residents still talk of a "mad duke" and some think the earth is riddled with tunnels leading to Welbeck Abbey. Rumours are like snowballs rolling down a slope and no doubt some present day accounts will be more embellished than I show above.

<http://nottstalgalia.com/forums/index.php?showtopic=4819>

WELBECK AND ITS SUBTERRANEAN TUNNELS

Abbey and it's subterranean tunnels

Other threads on subterranean workings have proved popular previously on here. I'm assuming that one or two have a similar fascination to me on this subject.

I've always been intrigued about Welbeck Abbey and the Fifth Duke of Portland's commissioning of several miles of sophisticated underground tunnels, a huge ballroom, billiard room and a library amongst other things. Apparently his ambitions for the abbey created work for 15,000 folk local to the area.

Does anyone have any first-hand experience or anecdotal material about Welbeck's underground system?

A bit of info below regarding this interesting story, including a photographic investigation of one of the tunnels:



Type to enter text

Click on the site
photographs.

address for lots of

<http://www.wlhg.co.uk/book/part7.htm>

PART 7

WELBECK

A brief history of Welbeck is contained in the Souvenir Programme of the Welbeck Abbey Historical Pageant held on 7th and 8th of August, 1939 to mark the Golden Wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Portland. The Pageant is remembered by many older Whitwellians as one of the last great occasions in the old style to be held before the Second World War. The programme notes help to identify episodes relating to Whitwell. They tell us, among other things, that the Abbey of Welbeck was founded by Thomas of Cuckney in about 1154 for a colony of Premonstratensian canons from Newhouse Abbey in Lincolnshire. The order was founded at Premontre in France. A large tract of land between Cuckney and Belph was given by Thomas to the canons for their new monastery and they built their church of St. James, with its cloisters and domestic buildings on a level piece of ground by a brook named the Wellebek. The present house stands on this site.

The Portland Peerage Romance

y Charles J. Archard

THE FIRST BENTINCK A HERO

What a delightful story is that of the Portland peerage, in which fidelity, heroism, chivalry and romance are blended and interwoven in the annals of the noble families of England. Who that has been to Welbeck Abbey, that magnificent palace in the heart of [Sherwood](#) with its legends of Robin Hood and his merrie men, with its stately oaks and undulating woodlands, stretching away to fertile pastures, dotted over with prosperous farmsteads, as far as the eye can reach, does not feel interested in the fortunes of the noble owner; and who that has seen the Duke and Duchess on some festive occasion at Welbeck, moving to and fro among their thousand guests, a perfectly happy couple, in which the course of true love runs smooth, and whose supreme delight appears to be to spread happiness around them, is so churlish as not to wish them long life, as types of the English nobility it is a delight to honour?

FROM WIKIPEDIA

Dukes of Portland (1715)

- [Henry Bentinck, 1st Duke of Portland](#) (1682–1726), second son of the 1st Earl
- [William Bentinck, 2nd Duke of Portland](#) (1709–1762), eldest son of the 1st Duke
- [William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, 3rd Duke of Portland](#) (1738–1809), eldest son of the 2nd Duke
- [William Henry Cavendish-Scott-Bentinck, 4th Duke of Portland](#) (1768–1854), eldest son of the 3rd Duke
 - [William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, Marquess of Titchfield](#) (1796–1824), eldest son of the 4th Duke, predeceased his father unmarried
- [William John Cavendish Bentinck-Scott, 5th Duke of Portland](#) (1800–1879), second son of the 4th Duke, died unmarried
- [William John Arthur Charles James Cavendish-Bentinck, 6th Duke of Portland](#) (1857–1943), grandson of Lt.-Col. [Lord William Charles Augustus Cavendish-Bentinck](#), third son of the 3rd Duke
- [William Arthur Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, 7th Duke of Portland](#) (1893–1977), eldest son of the 6th Duke, died without male issue
- [Ferdinand William Cavendish-Bentinck, 8th Duke of Portland](#) (1888–1980), great-grandson of Maj.-Gen. Lord Frederick Cavendish-Bentinck, fourth and youngest son of the 3rd Duke, died without issue
- [Victor Frederick William Cavendish-Bentinck, 9th Duke of Portland](#) (1897–1990), younger brother of the 8th Duke, dukedom became extinct upon his death

- William James Cavendish-Bentinck (1925–1966), only son of the 9th Duke, predeceased his father without issue

[\[edit\]](#)

Earls of Portland; Second creation (1689; Reverted)

- [Henry Noel Bentinck, 11th Earl of Portland](#) (1919–1997), great-great-great-great-grandson of William Bentinck, 1st Graf Bentinck, third son of the 1st Earl
- [Timothy Charles Robert Noel Bentinck, 12th Earl of Portland](#) (b. 1953), only son of the 11th Earl

The [heir apparent](#) is the present holder's eldest son William Jack Henry Bentinck, Viscount Woodstock (b. 1984).

[\[edit\]](#)

Counts Bentinck of the Holy Roman Empire (1732-present)

In 1732 the title **Count (Graf) Bentinck**, of the [Holy Roman Empire](#), was created by [Emperor Charles VI](#) for William Bentinck, Baron of the [Duchy of Guelders](#) and second surviving son of [Hans Willem Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland](#). A Royal Licence of 1886 was created which allowed the use of this title in England as well. The title is inherited in [male primogeniture](#) line by the descendents of William Bentinck. Already the 7th Count Bentinck since 1932, Henry Bentinck became also the 11th Earl of Portland in 1990. After his death in 1997, the titles are currently held by the actor Tim Bentinck.

- William Bentinck, 1st Count Bentinck (1704-1774) (eldest son of the 1st Earl of Portland and his second wife Jane Martha Temple)
- William Gustavus Frederic Bentinck, 2nd Count Bentinck (1762-1835) (grandson of the 1st Count Bentinck)
- John Charles Bentinck, 3rd Count Bentinck (1763-1833)
- Charles Anthony Ferdinand Bentinck, 4th Count Bentinck (1792-1864)
- Henry Charles Adolphus Frederick William Bentinck, 5th Count Bentinck (1846-1903)
- Robert Charles Bentinck, 6th Count Bentinck (1875-1932)
- [Henry Noel Bentinck, 7th Count Bentinck](#) (1919–1997) (also the 11th Earl of Portland)
- [Timothy Charles Robert Noel Bentinck, 8th Count Bentinck](#) (b. 1953) (also the 12th Earl of Portland)

The heir apparent is the present holder's eldest son William Jack Henry Bentinck (b. 1984), who is also Viscount Woodstock.

[\[edit\]](#)

