

The Dukes of Portland Hugh Watson (Part 1)

Most of the landed gentry in the 18th and 19th centuries were principally aimed to secure the survival of their vast estates and the family name and any title connected to them. This certainly applied to the Dukes of Portland who in the 19th century owned vast estates stretching from Caithness in the north of Scotland to Buckinghamshire in the south of England as well as Ireland.

The 3rd Duke of Portland had an active political career. He was Prime Minister twice¹ albeit 24 years apart, and in the intervening years Home and Colonial Secretary as well as other posts. He was a favourite of the King George III. Some criticised him as an ineffective PM similar to another of the King's favourites who also became Prime Minister - the 3rd Earl of Bute who had been the King's Tutor.

It would appear that the political interests of the 3rd Duke of Portland distracted him from the management of his estates leading to financial short comings. He hoped that his son would restore the family fortunes by marrying well. His father had done this, when as the 2nd Duke of Portland, he married Margaret Cavendish Harley, sole heiress of the Earl of Oxford. This restored the losses incurred by his grandfather the 1st Duke of Portland which were incurred in the "South Sea Bubble", an early Stock Market crash.

In 1794 the 3rd Duke of Portland was taken into William Pitt the Younger's Government to provide much needed Whig supporters for the encouragement of more votes to go to the "minority" Tory Government². Another leading member of Pitt's Government was Henry Dundas, a Scotsman, who had made his mark in Parliament and who provided patronage across Britain and the British Empire especially in India. He was also a guardian of the late General John Scott's (died in 1775) three daughters "pretty Miss Scott" "witty Miss Scott" and "rich Miss Scott" who were relatives of Dundas.

Dundas realised that the 3rd Duke of Portland was actively seeking a match for his son and such was the Duke's financial plight was even contemplating marrying him to a "commoner" which was extremely unusual as normally a Duke would not marry someone well below his station.

Duke was first in the Peerage "league table" of Great Britain followed by Marquis then Earl, Viscount, and lastly Baron. All of which entitled the holders to a seat in the House of Lords. Baronets were excluded although the title was still heritable. Commoners were well off the chart and interestingly when the duke's son became the 4th Duke he threatened to disown any sons or daughters who contemplated marrying a commoner! There must have been a considerable amount of money, estates and stocks and shares on offer here to attract the 3rd Duke but where did most of this wealth originate?

¹He became Prime Minister twice in 1783 and in 1807-1809 Government History at <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/william-bentinck-duke-of-portland> accessed October 2018

It was said that the aristocracy in Georgian times were addicted to gambling.

We have a record of the 3rd Duke of Portland gambling at cards with Lord Harcourt. Such games could last all night long finishing early in the morning. At some time in the night probably the Duke was winning and possibly Harcourt had run out of money but still wished to gamble so he rashly bet his London Town House - Harcourt House- which the Duke went on to win and it became the Duke's of Portland London Town House for a number of years.

Some 400 miles away in Edinburgh another Town House - Dundas House - changed hands over a game of cards - probably whist. This was a game between Lawrence Dundas and General John Scott of Balcomie (father of the three girls mentioned). Lawrence was a cousin of Henry Dundas and at one time exerted a strong influence on Edinburgh Burgh Council. He was also a Midlothian MP and was also owner of Orkney and Shetland and several estates in England and Scotland. He made his money by providing supplies to the British Army during the "Seven Year's War" and more recently doing the same task for "Butcher Cumberland" in the 1745 Rebellion and aftermath. His influence was such within Edinburgh that he managed to alter the "New Town Plan" to get his new Mansion House built on the intended site of St Andrews Church in St Andrews Square. St George's Church was built as planned in Charlotte Square at the other end of George Street. St Andrew's Church was intended to be built facing St George's Church at the opposite end. The plans were changed to accord with Laurence Dundas' wishes and St Andrews Church was built on the side of George Street.

Following the gambling debt, a compromise was proposed by Scott suggesting to Lawrence that he could keep his new house if he got the Adam Company of Architects to design and build Scott a Town House equally as good for him. Scott's Town house was subsequently erected near York Place in Edinburgh where his eldest daughter Henrietta was born in 29 May 1774 - "rich Miss Scott"- followed by the other two girls. Scott died in 1775 as apparently the result of a hunting accident and the last daughter was still unborn when he died.

In life he was a colourful man being eventually a General in the Army and a Member of Parliament in a total of 20 years in Caithness, Tain and latterly in Fife. Most of his considerable wealth seems to have been due to his phenomenal skill and luck at cards and dice. An online site 'The History of Parliament' states that "General John Scott of Balcomie may have gained as much as £500,000 during a lifetime of Gambling"³. The result of a Burgh Election in Dingwall he was involved which was overturned in 1759 by The Court of Session due to blatant bribery of Scott. But he was not disqualified as he had support in high places pleading to his cousin Lord Mansfield who was the Lord Chief Justice in England and Scott won a subsequent election in Kirkwall.

He is also mentioned in "The History of Gambling" by John Ashton where he is found as a mere Captain

Scott "with a modest income and a few debts" gambling with an aristocrat Lord John Bland at White's Gentlemen's Club where Bland is £32,000 down (today's equivalent about £3,000,000). This brought a crowd onto the London Streets

³ <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/scott-john-1725-75> accessed October 2018

with the rumour that an army officer was about to strip the wealth of a Lord. This happened in 1755 probably as Scott was in London following his election as Member of Parliament for Caithness with Government support in 1754. In 1756 as a post note Sir John Bland shot himself on the way to Paris probably due to his mounting debts.

Major General John Scott of Balcomie had the nickname of "Pawky" Scott - meaning clever in a sly way- and he even signed himself "Pawky Scott". Although he had a way with women he remained unmarried until 1770 when he married 16 year old Mary Ann Hay. Rumour had it that this marriage was a settling of a gambling debt.

The young lady in question was the granddaughter of the 4th Earl of Kilmarnock executed in 1746 for supporting "Bonnie Prince Charlie." One of his sons, James Boyd, fought on the Government side and was able to get his father's lands but not the title. He later obtained the title of Earl of Erroll when a great aunt died but he had to change his surname to Hay from Boyd.

Scott married Mary Ann Hay on 2nd November 1770 and she gave birth to a boy who did not live long. The birth apparently was recorded in the session records of Crail Church but the relevant page is missing. Scott may have suspected the father was a young officer in his regiment called Captain Sutherland of Duffus whom he suspected of having an affair with his young wife. This was quite close to the outbreak of "The War of Independence" in America. Scott planned to send Captain Sutherland to America to check on the situation and report back to him. As well as providing needed intelligence it would keep Sutherland well away from Scott's young wife.

He invited Captain Sutherland to dine at Balcomie Castle in Fife as recorded in the divorce proceedings the following year. The details of the case reads almost like the book "Tom Jones" by Henry Fielding (who lived about the same time as Scott and the "Tom Jones" part being played by Captain Sutherland of Duffus) with an elopement followed by a chase. On the eve of the elopement Mary Ann (Scott's wife) told her husband that she needed to write some letters and he should not wait up and so she would not waken him she would sleep elsewhere. On awakening Scott asked a servant where his wife was. He was informed that she had gone with Captain Sutherland and Sutherland's servant at 2 am taking Scott's best carriage. Scott assembled his supporters and they left Balcomie Castle heading south stopping at Edinburgh to collect Scott's writer and then travelling into England heading for London.

Scott's party caught up with the eloping couple at "The Red Lion" at Barnet outside London. On sight of Scott, Captain Sutherland shut and bolted the bedroom door. Then he leapt out of the window running across the fields wearing just his nightclothes and night cap and not stopping until he could hide in a haystack. Meanwhile Mary Ann feared for her life but Scott said "Have no fear for your life but the marriage is all over". Scott hired Captain Sutherland's servant possibly so he would have another witness for the divorce proceedings. On obtaining the divorce Scott then headed for America and did not return until 1773.

Subsequently he married Margaret Dundas the youngest (aged 30) daughter of Robert Dundas, President of the Court of Session, half-brother of Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate in 5th June 1773.

Thus Scott became related to one of the most powerful political and legal families in Scotland, and he is already a cousin to Lord Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice in England. The start of his second marriage came very close to the end of his life as he died of a hunting accident age 50.(he dies in 7th December 1775)

Nevertheless "Pawky Scott" fathered three children, two girls and the third unborn child when he died. Scott gambled right up until his death. He was at White's Gentlemen's Club when he heard of the birth of Henrietta his eldest daughter (born 29 May 1774) as he is £8000 down he immediately doubles his stakes and by close of gambling the next morning he is £15,000 up.

Major General Scott of Balcomie had been dead for nearly 20 years when the 3rd Duke of Portland and Henry Dundas contemplated the marriage of the Marquis of Titchfield age 27 (the Duke's son and heir) to a commoner "Rich" Miss Scott age 21 (Scott's Heir). Scott's will remained a hindrance to the marriage as it stipulated that none of his daughters was to marry a peer or son of a peer. As one of their guardians, Henry Dundas had the duty to see the terms of the will were upheld. Dundas had the reputation as a fixer and by the time of the marriage one of the other girls Lucy - "witty" Miss Scott - had already gone against these instructions by marrying Lord Doune, son of the Earl of Moray. The third daughter Joan Scott, "Pretty Miss Scott" married George Canning, Dundass' protégé, in 1800 whose social status accorded with her father's wishes. Joan and George signed an agreement leaving the bulk of the inheritance with Henrietta although they took £100,000 into their marriage.

Henrietta Scott, born in Edinburgh was usually described as a Fife heiress. On her father's death, she inherited Balcomie Estate in Fife, Ratho Estate near Edinburgh, and Ladywell estate in Caithness. At the age of twelve in 1786, her Guardians bought her Kilmarnock Estate from the 14th Earl of Glencairn. In the same year Robert Burns published his Kilmarnock Edition with the 14th Earl of Glencairn as his patron for the subsequent Edinburgh Edition.

Her Guardians also bought for her Cessnock Estate, Galston, Mount Estate and Grange Estate, Kilmarnock in successive years. Cessnock Castle became the ducal seat in Ayrshire as Dean Castle in Kilmarnock was unusable because of a fire in 1735.

On 29 May 1795 when Henrietta reached her majority, Kilmarnock Burgh Council asked the inhabitants to rejoice and illuminate their windows and a celebratory meal was held in Sun Inn Kilmarnock.(Glasgow Courier)

The Glasgow Courier announced on 23 June 1775 "that the Marquis of Titchfield is very soon to receive the hand of Miss Scott in Marriage". On 4th August 1775 she married the Marquis of Titchfield in her mother's London house in Piccadilly and became the Marchioness of Titchfield. They were married by the Reverend Goodenough, the Marquis' former tutor at Eton.

The ante-nuptial contract on the Portland side ensured that the young couple were to take over the estate recently inherited by the 3th Duke of Portland - Welbeck Abbey. This looked more like a Palace than a Mansion standing as it did in 20 square miles of grounds (13,000 acres) although there was a large mortgage over it of £72,000 - roughly about £7 million today. If his

son and daughter in law took this off the Duke's hands it would help him to balance his books (although not that much as on his death the 3rd Duke of Portland still left debts of £500,000).

On the Scott's side Henrietta's guardians wanted the Scott name added to that of Portland and also any estates bought by Scott's money such as the Kilmarnock Estate as well as other wealth created by Scott to be inherited only by people of Scott's blood. Later this would cause the Portland inheritance to split when the 5th Duke of Portland died without issue. Scott's coat of arms was also to be included in the Portland's.

The new Marquis and Marchioness of Titchfield moved into Welbeck Abbey in September 1795. Shortly afterwards the Marquis received "The Freedom of Kilmarnock" from Kilmarnock Burgh Council. The Marquis placed the Scott name within his name and the Scott Coat of Arms within the Titchfield Coat of Arms according to the terms of the marriage contract. He changed his signature to "Scott Titchfield" and on becoming the 4th Duke 1809 (on his father's death} to "Scott Portland".

The Coat of Arms reflect which Dukes and Barons have Scott blood and which do not. The 4th Duke placed the Scott Coat of Arms in the centre of the Portland Arms with the Cavendish Snake symbol to the Right and the Bentinck Feathers to the Left.

His son the 5th Duke put double the amount of Scott Coat of Arms in his Portland Arms. Probably stating the obvious that" he had real Scott's blood whilst his father had none" as he did not seem to like his father. This son inherited because the real heir died in 1824 because of typhoid making way for a much less favoured son and the Duke and he did not seem to get on at so many levels becoming the 5th Duke of Portland in 1854.

This Duke had the nickname of "The Mole" because he was famous for digging 12 miles of tunnels under Welbeck Abbey. These tunnels were just below the surface all having sky lights and 4,000 gas lamps underground. He also had a gas producing plant which extracted gas from coal. Unpopular amongst his fellow peers, his workers although finding him strange appreciated his generosity and care for them in general level of wages, housing in sickness and old age.

The Coat of Arms of the 6th Duke of Portland does not have the Scott Coat of Arms showing he has no Scott blood. The 5th Duke had died without issue but there was still Scott blood and because all his three brothers had predeceased him the Scott part of the Portland inheritance then flowed down the Portland Female line with the surviving three sisters Margaret Harriet Scott Bentinck, Charlotte Scott Bentinck married in 1827, now Lady Ossington, but with no children and finally Lucy Joan Scott Bentinck married in 1828 to Charles Augustus Ellis, 6th Lord Howard de Walden who died in 1868 and by 1889 she was known as the Dowager Lady Howard de Walden. She had 7 children - six boys and one girl and on her death, her out of favour son Frederick Augustus Ellis the 7th Lord Howard De Walden inherited. He lasted only 4 months and on his death his son inherited aged 19 Tommy Evelyn Scott Ellis. His Coat of Arms includes two Scott Coat of Arms recognising his line from General John Scott of Balcomie. This is underlined by converting Scott's grave in Kilrenny Fife into a Mausoleum with the Inscription "In Memory of General John Scott of Balcomie who died 20 December 1775 and his wife Margaret Dundas died 23 August 1797.

Erected by Thomas Evelyn Ellis Scott 8th Baron Howard de Walden their great great grandson."

Thomas puts General Scott's coat of arms clearly in the Howard De Walden coat of arms with a diagonal repetition, he also for a time reversed his name to Ellis Scott but perhaps on the advice of his lawyers that this was not a good idea changed it back to Scott Ellis (his Great Aunt Lady Ossington changed her name by Royal Licence to Charlotte Scott). The 6th Duke of Portland and Thomas Evelyn Scott Ellis were at last longer term holders for their respective titles, the Duke 64 years and 47 years for the 8th Howard de Walden.

At this time the split in the Duke of Portland's inheritance much favoured the 6th Duke of Portland in number of estates inherited. Originally the title of the 6th Duke of Portland was awarded to his father who died at age 52 - two years short of the death of the 5th Duke. The title was then inherited by his son who was unmarried, aged 22 and an officer in the Coldstream Guards. This son was the only child to his first wife who died 4 days after the birth of his birth. His father subsequently re-married Augusta Browne and he had 3 sons to her with one daughter - Ottoline Cavendish Bentinck (Ottoline Drive Troon is named after her). On inheriting the title and some six estates, his son initially visited the ducal seat at Welbeck Abbey with his stepmother and stepsister Ottoline (a Dutch name). Although Ottoline was only six at that time she was later wrote down her impressions of Welbeck Abbey that day. The previous occupant of the building, the 5th Duke, had built 12 miles of tunnels just below the surface of the Abbey and building operations had been going on for 18 years. He was in the midst of installing a plumbing system when he died. So with all the piles of rubble and trenches and mud all over the site, access to Welbeck Abbey was nearly impossible. Some workmen cleared rubble at the entrance and laid planks of wood over the trenches to enable the 6th Duke and his party to enter the Abbey. The Duke's first thoughts was to turn tail and head for his Gentleman's Club in London but his stepmother, Augusta Cavendish Bentinck persuaded the Duke to stay and restore the Abbey . The work took at least 3 years but afterwards they were able to wine and dine the Prince Regent and his large Party.

Disraeli invited the 6th Duke to meet him late in his second term as prime minister at the height of his fame. He wanted to return a favour to the Portlands given when he had been leader of the Conservative Opposition when such a post required him to be a landowner and to represent a County. He acquired a loan of £25,000 from the Portlands to buy Hughenden in Buckinghamshire to achieve eventually his ambition to become Prime Minister. So he asked the 6th Duke what he wish for. The 6th Duke asked that his stepmother Augusta Cavendish and his stepbrothers and stepsister be given some honour to raise them from their present status as they had missed their elevation to duchess, lords and lady. Disraeli met with Queen Victoria who she agreed to elevate Augusta to 1st Baroness of Bolsover and her sons and daughter to as lords and lady.

So "Lady of Welbeck Abbey" for ten years was his stepmother Augusta Cavendish Bentinck - elevated to 1st Baroness of Bolsover about 1880. She was very popular with the staff whom she provided help for their welfare and supervised the collections of art at Welbeck and rescued the buildings and grounds from the "building site" status the 5th Duke had left of his unfinished "8th Wonder of the World".

As time past the servants and his friends speculated if the duke would ever marry. After all it was over 45 years since Welbeck Abbey had the last duchess the 4th Duke's wife Henrietta Scott who died in 1844. The 6th Duke's "love" was breeding and racing thoroughbred racehorses after all he had inherited a 100 stall stable one of the biggest in Europe and he had met with much success with "Ayrshire" winning the Derby in 1888 (this horse had won £35,000 since 1880).

On 11 June 1889 he married a Winifred Dallas Yorke – the same year his horses made a record amount of winnings of almost £73,000 (about £7 million in modern money) - and one of them "Donovan" won the Derby about the same time. He had been en route for a spot of grouse shooting at Ladywell Caithness, another of his estates, when he had to change trains at Carlisle and there he saw Winifred Dallas Yorke on her way to visit her grandparents at Murthly Castle Perthshire, her birthplace.

Entranced by the sight of her, he was eager to formally meet her which he did early in the New Year. An engagement followed in the spring and they married in June 1889. At last the ducal estate Welbeck Abbey had a duchess. It seems later they found out that they had both had been born in Perthshire within 5 miles of each other so close the same doctor attended at their birth! His stepmother Augusta Cavendish Bentinck shortly after the arrival of the Duchess, moved to her London Mansion.

That year Winifred suggested he use some of his record horse winnings to help his estate workers who were old or disabled. He built a village of substantial houses and unwisely called it "The Winnings". His friends accused him of bragging about his gambling winnings so put an explanation underneath the sign which did little to quell the uproar. After all the much criticised 5th Duke would regularly build houses for his workforce and estate workers not needing to await windfalls and doing it as part of the regular needs of the estate. Winifred Dallas Yorke is remembered in Kilmarnock by Yorke Place in Bonnyton.

The following list shows the streets associated with the Marquis of Titchfield, 4th Duke of Portland, 5th Duke of Portland and the 6th Duke of Portland in **Kilmarnock**;

- 1) Bentinck Street Dukes of Portland family name of 4th Duke.
- 2) Duke Street Built 1859 named provisionally Victoria Street but changed to Duke Street when 5th Duke gave the vital last contribution which enabled the street to be built.
- 3) Fullarton Street named after 4th and 6th Duke's favourite summer residence Fullarton House in Troon.
- 4) Henrietta Street named after the 4th Duke of Portland's wife Henrietta Scott.
- 5) Portland Road time of 5th Duke of Portland.
- 6) Portland Street time of 4th Duke of Portland.
- 7) Scott Road perhaps named after Henrietta Scott wife of 4th Duke of Portland
- 8) Titchfield Street probably named after Marquis of Titchfield who became the 4th Duke of Portland.
- 9) Turner place named after the factors to the Dukes of Portland - the Turners 10) Welbeck Street named after the ducal seat Welbeck Abbey.

- 11) Woodstock Street named after one of the 4th Duke of Portland's other titles 'Viscount of Woodstock'
- 12) Yorke Place named after the 6th Duke of Portland's wife Winifred Dallas Yorke **Total**
12 places

Places in Troon

- (1) Balcomie Crescent named after General John Scott of Balcomie father in law of the 4th Duke of Portland.
 - (2) Bentinck Close Crescent and Drive - Dukes of Portland family name.
 - (3) Cavendish Court Lane Place another family name of the Dukes of Portland acquired through marriage at a time they also obtained Welbeck Abbey
 - (4) Cessnock Road probably named after the 6th Duke of Portland Ducal seat in Galston.
 - (4) Dallas Court, Place named after 6th Dukes of Portland wife Winifred Dallas Yorke.
 - (5) ,Dukes Road probably named after the Dukes of Portland.
 - (6) Ottoline Drive named after the 6th Duke of Portland's step sister Ottoline(derived from Dutch) Cavendish Bentinck (married name Morrell).
 - (7) Portland Street Terrace, probably after 4th Duke of Portland.
 - (8) Titchfield Road after Marquis of Titchfield who became the 4th Duke of Portland.
 - (9) Welbeck Court Crescent, named after the British ducal seat in Sherwood Forest Nottingham.
- Total** 18 places

Galston

- (1) Bentinck Square Street, named after 4th Duke of Portland.
- (2) Cessnock Place Road, named after Cessnock Castle the Portland's Ayrshire ducal seat in Galston Ayrshire.
- (3) Duke Street named after the 4th Duke of Portland.
- (4) Henrietta Street named after the 4th Duke of Portland's wife Henrietta Scott.
- (5) Titchfield Street named after the Marquis of Titchfield who became the 4th Duke of Portland.
- (6) Welbeck Road named after the British ducal seat in Sherwood Forest Nottinghamshire.

Howard de Walden

Kilmarnock.

- (1) Charles Street Place named after Charles Augustus Ellis 6th Lord Howard de Walden who married Lucy Joan Scott Bentinck 4th Duke 1828.
- (2) de Walden Terrace named after second half of Howard de Walden name.
- (3) Ellis Street the surname of the Howard de Walden's who came to Kilmarnock.
- (4) Howard Park given to the people of Kilmarnock by The Dowager Lady Howard de Walden (who inherited "The Kilmarnock Estates" in 1889 ,formerly was a piece of Barbados Green.
- (5) Scott Ellis Playing Field named after Howard de Walden original surname Ellis and the additional surname denoting Scott blood which he acknowledged as the source of his wealth.
- (6) Seaford Street Howard de Walden held two titles the other being the Baron of Seaford an area in Kent.

