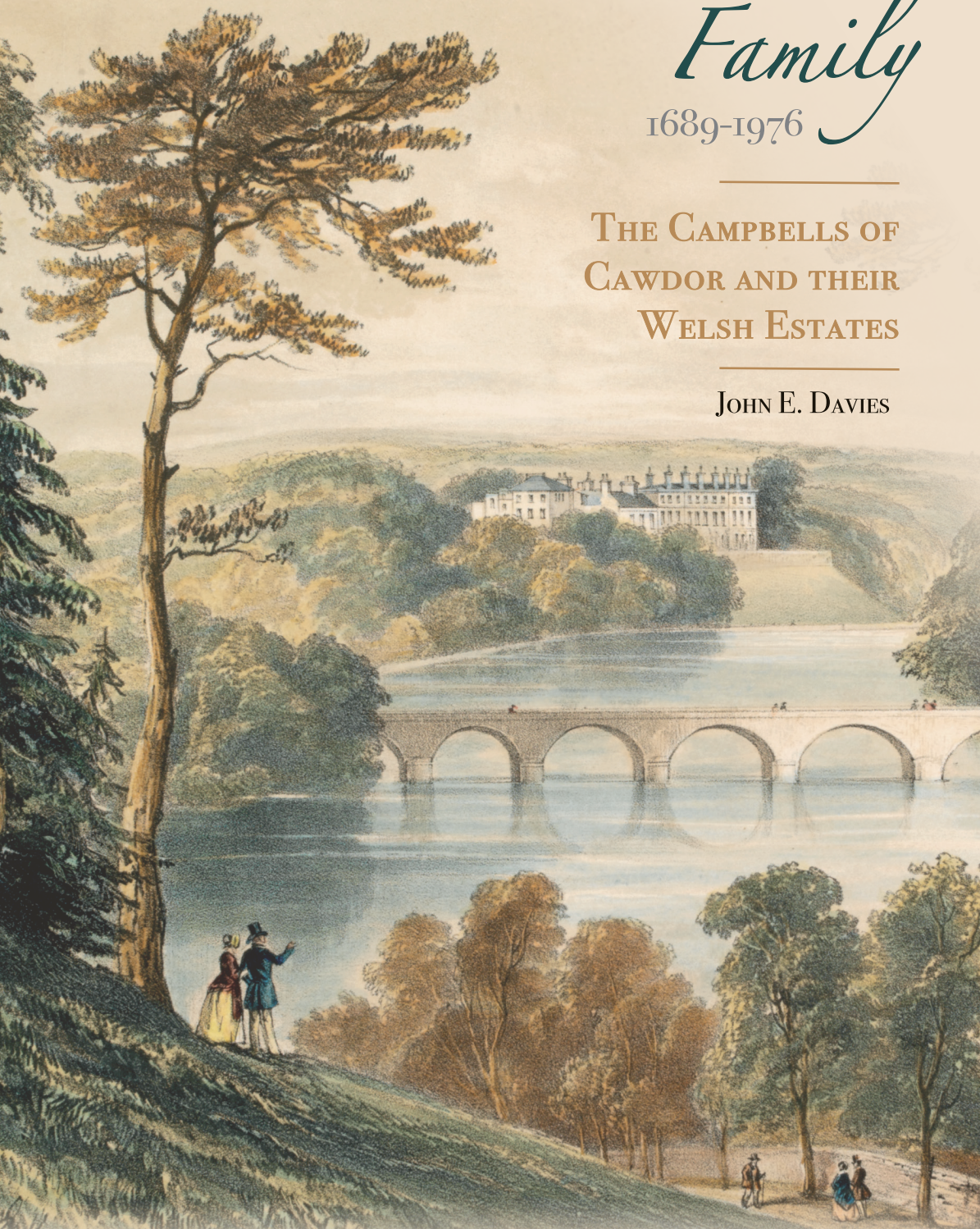


THE CHANGING FORTUNES OF A
*British Aristocratic
Family*
1689-1976

THE CAMPBELLS OF
CAWDOR AND THEIR
WELSH ESTATES

JOHN E. DAVIES



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Abbreviations

<i>AgHR</i>	<i>Agricultural History Review</i>
<i>BBCS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies</i>
<i>BL</i>	<i>British Library</i>
<i>CA</i>	<i>Carmarthenshire Antiquary</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Cawdor Castle</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Carmarthen Journal</i>
<i>CRO</i>	<i>Carmarthen Record Office</i>
<i>DWB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Welsh Biography</i>
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>
<i>JBS</i>	<i>Journal of British Studies</i>
<i>JBWES</i>	<i>Journal of the Bath and West of England Society</i>
<i>JHSCW</i>	<i>Journal of the Historical Society of the Church in Wales</i>
<i>JPHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Pembrokeshire Historical Society</i>
<i>JRASE</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England</i>
<i>NLW</i>	<i>National Library of Wales</i>
<i>NLWJ</i>	<i>National Library of Wales Journal</i>
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PCH</i>	<i>Pembrokeshire County History</i>
<i>PP</i>	<i>Parliamentary Papers</i>
<i>RC</i>	<i>Royal Commission</i>
<i>RCLWM</i>	<i>Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Rural History</i>
<i>RPC Scot</i>	<i>Records of the Privy Council of Scotland</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Select Committee</i>
<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
<i>SHS</i>	<i>Scottish History Society</i>
<i>THSC</i>	<i>Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion</i>
<i>TNA</i>	<i>The National Archives</i>
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>WM</i>	<i>Western Mail</i>

Family pedigree

Sir Hugh Campbell m. Henrietta Steward, 1662
|
Sir Alexander Campbell m. Elizabeth Lort, 1689
|
John Campbell m. Mary Pryse, 26 April 1726
|
Pryse Campbell m. Sarah Bacon, 22 Sept. 1752
|
John Campbell, 1st baron Cawdor m. Isabella Caroline Howard, 28 July 1789
|
John Frederick Campbell, 2nd baron and 1st earl Cawdor m. Elizabeth
Thynne, 5 Sept. 1816
|
John Frederick Vaughan Campbell, 2nd earl Cawdor m. Sarah Mary Caven-
dish, 28 June 1842
|
Frederick Archibald Vaughan Campbell, 4th earl Cawdor m. Edith Georgina
Turnor, 16 Sept. 1868
|
John Duncan Vaughan Campbell, 5th earl Cawdor m. first, Wilma Mairi
Vickers, 15 May 1929, and second, Elizabeth Topham Richardson, 29 June
1961
|
Hugh John Vaughan Campbell, 6th earl Cawdor m. first, Cathryn Hynde, 19
Jan. 1956, and second, Angelika, Countess Lazansky, 28 Dec. 1979



1. Cawdor Castle, c.1880. The castle dates from c.1455 but underwent substantial 'baronialization' in the mid-nineteenth century

Introduction

Cawdor Castle, the ancestral home of the thanes of Cawdor, lies five miles south of Nairn and is the centre of an estate covering about a third of the old county of Nairnshire. The estate prides itself on organic farming as it exploits the fertile lands bordering part of the Moray Firth. To the south of the castle moorland increasingly takes the place of farmland and grouse-shooting draws to Cawdor many visitors hoping to experience the 'Highlands.' The estate is thus one of great contrasts. It was developed and expanded by the thanes of Cawdor from the thirteenth century and reached its zenith in the early seventeenth century, when the estate was granted the whole of Islay. However, the seemingly never-ending localised wrangling amongst – and within – the clans, the grinding economic poverty of the Highlands and its extreme remoteness were ultimately massive stumbling blocks to any further advancements the family desired. The union of the two kingdoms at the beginning of the seventeenth century, followed by dynastic change in 1688 and political union in 1707, all emphasised the importance of London as the centre of politics for anyone, Scots included, hungry for power. After 1688 Scotland seemed to be disintegrating once more into sectarian strife, while politically the Scottish parliament, for decades no more than a nodding shop to the king, had become, at least temporarily, totally moribund. For the Campbells of Cawdor, a mixture of political expediency, political ambition garnered with opportunism, and a desperate shortage of cash stimulated them to look south of the border for their future advancement. A year after the Glorious Revolution, the Cawdors had, for the first time, married outside Scotland: Alexander's marriage to Elizabeth Lort of Stackpole was symbolic of the Cawdors' increasing estrangement from their ancestral home and Scottish politics. The Cawdor estate was left to be administered by relatives and Edinburgh lawyers as the Campbells of Cawdor pursued advancement, both economic and political, in Wales and London. Alexander's son, John, never visited Cawdor, and his grandson, the first baron Cawdor, only visited on rare occasions. In 1810 alienation from the Scottish estate was further emphasised when the whole of the estate was leased in a bid to raise money to placate numerous creditors. However, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the Cawdor Castle estate was enjoying a renaissance of interest – the opening of the railway to Nairn in 1854 enabling infinitely

easier access¹ – as family and political friends gathered during August and September for the annual grouse-shooting. After the death of the third earl in 1911, the family more or less abandoned their Welsh estates to agents and again gave preference to their Scottish estate, with Cawdor Castle once more their principal residence.

However, for most of the period of this book the family were ensconced in south-west Wales. So, although the Cawdor estate is ongoing and extensive in Scotland, and is the basis of the family's original wealth, the present study focuses on the Welsh estates from 1689 to 1976, and particularly the long nineteenth century, when the Cawdors were at their most powerful, though increasingly in conflict with a changing political climate. In 1689, on acquiring the Stackpole estate, surrounded by the gentle and fertile lands of south Pembrokeshire, Alexander Campbell must have sensed a rich vein of potential. Wales had long since lost any desire for local wars, and politically it was fully integrated with the English parliamentary system. It was here the Campbells put their efforts into becoming one of the most powerful families in Wales and England. Horace Walpole referred to John Campbell, the builder of Stackpole Court, as the 'Welsh Campbell', perhaps realising that Wales, rather than Scotland, was the pathway to power for the family. However, south-west Wales, notwithstanding some improvement wrought by turnpike roads from the late eighteenth century, in the years before railways began piecemeal from the mid-nineteenth century to cover this region, was also remote and isolated, though less so than Nairnshire.² Whilst at Stackpole, John Campbell felt marooned on more than one occasion. In the summer of 1766 he wrote to his friend and political ally, Lord Holland, that 'the Road between this [Stackpole] & Carmarthen the first *great* Town in our way to London, are in some parts almost impassable for any Carriage, and probably this letter may swim several times before it reaches London.'³

It is surprising that the estate, one of the largest in Wales, and family have never had a full study devoted to them.⁴ Admittedly, David Howell and espe-

¹ Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had made Scotland a fashionable destination for the rich when Balmoral was purchased and rebuilt, 1852–56. The royal influence may have been at work in the Cawdors' renewed interest in their Scottish estate.

² Google maps gives a distance of 246 miles from Stackpole to Grosvenor Square, where the family had their London residence, and 573 miles from Cawdor Castle to Grosvenor Square. Given that the terrain in the north of England and Scotland was much more difficult to negotiate than that of south-west Wales, this amounts to a considerable difference in accessibility.

³ John Campbell to Lord Holland, 11 July 1766, in J. E. Davies (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Campbell MP, with His Family, Henry Fox, Sir Robert Walpole and the Duke of Newcastle, 1734–1771* (Oxford, 2013).

⁴ The medieval and early modern Scottish estate was the subject of C. Innes, *The Thaness of Cawdor* (Edinburgh, 1859), which is a work of transcription rather than

cially Matthew Cragoe have used the archive quite extensively, though for specific purposes;⁵ yet remarkably few others have explored its vast riches, and some studies of landed estates in Wales have chosen to ignore it completely. However, for a fuller understanding of modern society in south-west Wales, based as it was on the ownership and working of land, the Cawdor estates are worthy of being closely examined and presented as a separate study.

The fifth earl Cawdor deposited the archive with the Carmarthenshire Record Office in 1961 and 1963 in two large deposits.⁶ A further large deposit was made by the estate's agents Cooke and Arkwright in 1982. Several smaller additions to the collection were made over the ensuing years as and when archive material was discovered. For instance, three of the first baron's diaries, hitherto missing, one of which, from 1797, covered the period of the French 'invasion' of Pembrokeshire, were bought at auction by the earl and placed with the archive in 1979.⁷ Since its deposit with the record office this extensive archive has been divided into separate categories, in an attempt to gain some sort of intellectual control of its contents. What is known as the Cawdor/Vaughan archive relates to the Golden Grove estate and its owners, the Vaughan family, up to 1804. The Cawdor/Lort papers pertain to Stackpole Court prior to its becoming the property of the Campbell family in 1689, while the Cawdor/Campbell papers relate to the Pembrokeshire estate and its Carmarthenshire holdings at Ystradffin, mainly to the end of the eighteenth century (though many items relating to that estate in the eighteenth century remain un-catalogued). Some of these catalogues are very detailed – they are more or less calendars – but they tend to concentrate upon land transactions. Thus, there is a great deal of detailed knowledge regarding how the estate in Wales acquired its acreage. However, for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the archive is only partially catalogued, and until very recently that catalogue only consisted of a rough box list, created soon after the archive was deposited with the record office. This arrangement makes it difficult to unearth material and time-consuming for researchers.⁸ This haphazard way of cataloguing the Cawdor archive has resulted in the varied footnote references to

analysis. Since then very little has been written of the Cawdor Castle estate, with the exception of their involvement in the placating and ensuing management of Islay.

⁵ D. W. Howell, *Land and People in Nineteenth-Century Wales* (London, 1977); and M. Cragoe, *An Anglican Aristocracy: The Moral Economy of the Landed Estate in Carmarthenshire, 1832–95* (Oxford, 1996).

⁶ The archive is nearly 1,000 boxes and several hundred volumes and maps in extent.

⁷ In 1978 the fifth earl persuaded the Public Record Office (TNA) to relinquish the Golden Grove books and deposit them with the Cawdor archive. The Golden Grove books are four volumes of Welsh family pedigrees, compiled in 1703, from much earlier sources.

⁸ This has been rectified recently with regard to the financial records of the estate, most of which have now been catalogued to the current archival standard.

be found: Cawdor box, CAW, Cawdor 2, Cawdor/Campbell, Cawdor unlisted, etc. Additionally, the archive at Cawdor Castle is catalogued but nowhere near item level: bundles of letters, often covering decades, are very time-consuming creatures to unravel, however exciting the occasionally unexpected appears!

Although the archive is large, there are areas where it is lacking. The extant letters are numerous, but there are important lacunae. Most noticeably, the responses to the agents from the lords Cawdor are mostly missing. This tends to lend more importance to the agents than they may, in reality, have had, even though they did enjoy trust and power, one source depicting them as the ‘alter ego of the landlords.’⁹ The most complete group of letters from a family member are those of John Campbell (1695–1777), which date from the early 1730s and continue until just a few weeks before his death. However, the majority of his substantial writings are with regard to the political situation in mid-eighteenth-century Britain and debates in the House of Commons, where he was an MP for forty years.¹⁰ Outside the political letters, Campbell’s writings to his son and grandson are imbued with a Whig philosophy but have little to say directly regarding the management of the estate – except perhaps in exhorting his son not to waste money upon frivolous pursuits, at the top of which was fox hunting.¹¹

The archive – and this is by far not the only one – is also lacking in primary evidence pertaining to the Cawdor women. Virtually no correspondence is extant, and there are only two diaries for the whole of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries written by women – apart from a month-long travel journal written by the future first countess.¹² The silence of the women, or at least their lack of a direct voice, is a sad loss. Caroline, the first Lady Cawdor’s activities are mainly known through Baron Cawdor’s diaries, letters written to her from her friend Charles Greville, and a few agent’s letters. She was an intelligent, well-educated woman, raised in that bastion of Whiggery, Castle Howard, and her views were sought on important matters, such as the future financing of the Welsh estates, yet she is almost entirely heard through the words of men. The second countess leaves only one or two letters and a diary for a single

⁹ *Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire (RCLWM), Report*, 249.

¹⁰ His political letters are a major source from the point of view of an unwavering supporter of Sir Robert Walpole and Henry Fox, the first Baron Holland. See Davies (ed.), *The Correspondence of John Campbell MP*.

¹¹ Although there is a detailed letter book between the Cawdor agent John Hay and Campbell regarding the Scottish estate for the years 1728–31. CC, Bundle 607.

¹² CRO, Cawdor box 244: [European] Travel journal of Elizabeth Campbell, Sept.–Oct. 1816. A few letters from Queen Victoria to Sarah Campbell exist. Sarah was one of the Queen’s ladies-in-waiting. The 1868 letters written regarding the marriage settlement of the future third countess, Edith Turnor, are quite acrimonious but, conventionally, do not involve Edith at all (CRO, Cawdor box 141).

year, written towards the end of her life. Unlike Caroline, she was left out of important decisions by the earl – and appears through the Victorian patriarchal smoke as a largely oppressed woman.

However, both K. D. Reynolds and J. Gerard¹³ have pointed out the central role many women played in the running of landed estates, and despite the scantiness of primary sources, it can be fairly stated that this was so on the Cawdor estates. In the sixteenth century, Muriel, the ninth thane of Cawdor, was head of the Scottish estate from the 1540s until two years before her death in 1575. And at the outset of this study, Lady Elizabeth Campbell (née Lort) was *de facto* head of the entire Stackpole and Scottish estate – and took financial advice from her cousin, Edward (Auditor) Harley.¹⁴ Even so, very little by way of primary source material is extant of her time as estate head: her surviving account book¹⁵ is rudimentary to say the least. However, even if they had limited opportunity to be head of the estates, the Cawdor women were the overseeing managers of the households at Stackpole Court, Golden Grove and, no doubt, Cawdor Castle.¹⁶ This was a central role – the estate could not function without a well-managed household. After the first earl's death in 1860, his widow wrote to the new countess, Sarah Mary, who until then had enjoyed the relatively easy job of running the small household of Golden Grove (with around seven servants) but was about to embark on the management of the Stackpole household: 'You my dear will find a great increase of duties & responsibilities & I pray you may be enabled to fulfil them as I know you would wish.'¹⁷ No doubt those responsibilities were passed on to the third countess and then onwards to her successor. However, such glimpses of the role of the Cawdor women pale beside the survival of the essentially patriarchal papers of the archive.

The aristocratic estates in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were let out to tenant farmers, their owners in the process becoming a class of *rentiers*. However, this did not 'necessarily imply either a desire or even an ability to opt out of the running of the estate', argues John Beckett.¹⁸ Even though estates were managed by full-time agents, the landowner, usually partially absentee, was obliged to make visits to the estate to check up on its smooth running and to make policy decisions in relation, for instance, to size of farms, levels of rent and the type and scale of investments. Landlords were indeed essentially

¹³ K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford, 1998); J. Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 1994).

¹⁴ Edward Harley (1664–1735), of Eywood, Herefordshire, auditor of the imprest.

¹⁵ CRO, CAW 2/1: Notebook of Elizabeth Campbell, 1702–10.

¹⁶ Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain*, 28–42.

¹⁷ CRO, Cawdor box 132: Dowager Countess Cawdor to Sarah Mary, Lady Emlyn, [n.d. but Nov. 1860].

¹⁸ J. Beckett, *The Aristocracy of England 1660–1914* (Oxford, 1986), 136.

partners with their tenants in the business of farming, themselves providing the fixed, durable capital, tenants for their part adventuring the working capital. Contemporary and later criticism has been directed towards the Welsh 'alien' aristocracy and gentry for their failure to act as responsible landlords. The ensuing discussion will seek to determine the quality of estate management as dispensed by the Cawdors; not least here will be the attempt to discover whether they struck a sympathetic rapport with their tenants in the course of exploiting the resources of their estates, as agricultural improvers and supporters of the burgeoning industrial developments in Carmarthenshire.

Besides this consideration of the running of their estates, the promotion of farming, the exploitation of mineral resources and their associated involvement with communications improvements, the Cawdors' role as the traditional political and social leaders of their community will be examined, with special attention being paid to their response to the popular and democratic upheavals that were re-shaping British politics and society over the course of the nineteenth century. Welsh aristocratic and gentry society in particular was to face an unstoppable challenge from the rise of nonconformity and its associated radical and (later?) national agendas embraced by the lower classes of society. This study will accordingly investigate the degree of support that the Cawdors gave the embattled established Anglican church in Wales, including the amount they were prepared to lay out on the renovation and restoration of churches. As part of this same enquiry, the question will be asked whether they were rabidly anti-dissent – as the fiery radical and nationalist Adyfr tried to paint them – or, contrariwise, more lenient in their approach to Nonconformity. A crucial bulwark of Anglicanism and of the traditional hierarchical society was the voluntary system of national schools, and an examination will be made of the level of commitment shown by the various earls Cawdor to these institutions. A major challenge to the old voluntarist system of National and (far fewer) British – undenominational – schools would come with the setting up of school boards following the Education Act of 1870. What was the family's stance towards the new board schools? Arguably the greatest achievement for the spirit of nationality coursing through the public life of late nineteenth-century Wales was the establishment of Welsh intermediate and higher education institutions, the campaign for which was supported by Conservatives and Anglicans and Nonconformists and radicals alike. The important part played by Lord Emlyn in this movement will receive attention. Emlyn's favourable disposition towards Llandovery College will also be contrasted with that of the second earl Cawdor, the latter opposing both St David's College, Lampeter and Llandovery because of the prominence given by both institutions to the Welsh language.

As well as their involvement within the local community with religious and educational issues, the family were expected to play a role both in the

provision of improved communications networks, already alluded to, and the dispensing of judicial and administrative duties. In so far as the latter were concerned, not only did the Cawdors hold the high office of lord lieutenant of the county and serve as magistrates at quarter and petty sessions – this involvement at quarter sessions bringing from the 1860s a new duty as Visitors of the Joint Counties Lunatic Asylum – but they were to sit as members of the new administrative and elected bodies founded from the 1830s onwards, such as the boards of guardians, local boards of health, sanitation boards and school boards. Their level of conscientiousness in dispensing their duties, old and new, will be enquired into, as, too, their attitude, as the traditional paternalist ‘natural leaders’ of their communities, to the new, more democratic bodies. Although these earlier reforms of local administration had reduced the absolute power of the gentry in the ruling of their counties, the real hammer blow to government by an amateur, unpaid gentry was delivered by the Act of 1888 legislating for the establishment of county councils. The way in which this upheaval was viewed by the Cawdors will be scrutinised, as, too, their readiness or otherwise to participate in the new arrangements.¹⁹ A further question that will be raised will be the family’s response to the growing demand in the 1890s – heard throughout Wales – for the inclusion on the bench of more Liberals and Nonconformists so as to reflect the political and social realities of the new Wales.²⁰

This emergence in the late nineteenth century of a specifically Welsh political agenda in British politics and the Cawdors’ attitude towards Welsh nationalist issues forms an important part of the discussion of the family’s role in central politics. What would be their stance, for instance, on the key Welsh goals of disestablishment, land reform, intermediate and higher education, and temperance? The degree and impact of the Cawdors’ involvement in British politics will be examined but will necessarily focus on the career of its single most active political member, Archibald, as both Lord Emlyn and, from 1898, the third earl Cawdor.

As Beckett observes, ‘the country house reflected the power and grandeur of the family’;²¹ and since the point of their income was to enable them to pursue an elite leisure time, a chapter on the private and social lives of the family will open with an examination of the Cawdors’ mansions, gardens and parkland at Stackpole Court and Golden Grove and of the changes made to

¹⁹ W. P. Griffith, *Power, Politics and County Government in Wales: Anglesey, 1780–1914* (Llangefni, 2006), gives a highly detailed account, and is an influential study, of the development of local government on Anglesey.

²⁰ D. W. Howell, ‘A “Less Obtrusive and Exacting” Nationality: Welsh Ethnic Mobilisation in Rural Communities’, in D. W. Howell, G. von Pistohlkors and E. Wiegandt (eds), *Roots of Ethnic Mobilisation* (New York, 1992).

²¹ Beckett, *The Aristocracy of England 1660–1914*, 337.

these establishments over the course of the century. Much of the subsequent discussion will investigate the family's degree of participation in country pursuits and its impact on relations with the wider community, their life of leisure in London and travels abroad and, refreshingly, their prominent patronage of the arts. Always borne in mind in this chapter is the way in which the family sought to use their participation in the pursuits of the countryside, as, too, their family celebrations, to strengthen the ties of social deference, ties which were being gradually loosened as the century drew to a close under the dissolving influences of farming depression, radicalism and democracy.

A final chapter will examine the diminished role played by the Cawdors in south-west Wales in the twentieth century and their retrenchment to Scotland in the second half of that century.

1

Cawdor and Campbell

The Family

The first record of the Cawdor¹ family is found in 1295, when Donald, the first thane,² was listed as juror at the Nairn assize. In 1310 his son, William, was granted a charter of hereditary thanage, rendered for political services to King Robert I.³ Thanage was a dedicated geographical area, and the thane held powers, particularly judicial and financial powers, over those residing within its border, giving the thane real consequence locally. The thanes of Cawdor were eager to enhance their power further, and did so by acquiring land. Almost the only record of the early thanes, from Donald onwards, is of their land transactions: land acquisition, then and for centuries to come, was inextricably linked with the pursuit of political power, both locally and in the national arena. To varying degrees, whilst obeying the vagaries in the ebb and flow of economic reality, the pursuit of land was undertaken by the Cawdors into the twentieth century.

The continued expansion of Cawdor land possessions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries attracted the interest of the land-greedy chiefs of the clan Campbell, the earls of Argyll, who were seeking to expand their influence eastward. When John, the eighth thane of Cawdor died in 1498, he left two underage heiresses, and the second earl of Argyll saw an opportunity. When

¹ 'Cawdor' has been used throughout this book, as a preference to the older name 'Calder', to avoid confusion.

² The English King Edward I created the office of thane in c.1305. A thane was an 'official in the pre-feudal system of administration of, chiefly, royal lands, responsible for the management of a particular area of land, estate or the like, including the collection of revenues in it and judicial authority over it. The office declined but did not entirely disappear after feudalisation, becoming, rather, increasingly incorporated into the system of hereditary land tenure.' *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (dsl.ac.org).

³ C. Innes, *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor* (Edinburgh, 1859), 3; the charter cites tenure of thanage back to the rule of King Alexander III (1241–86). A. Grant and K. J. Stringer (eds), *Medieval Scotland: Crown, Lordship and Community, Essays Presented to G.W.S Barrow* (Edinburgh, 1998), ch. 3: A. Grant, 'Thanes and Thanage from the 11th to the 14th Centuries', 58.

Janet, the eldest girl, died, her sister Muriel, who was about nine years old, became the ninth thane of Cawdor,⁴ and Argyll's prime target. He abducted her, and in 1510 married her to his third son, Sir John, when she was about twelve years old.⁵ Thus, the thanes of Cawdor became inextricably linked with the clan Campbell.

Sir John Campbell sought 'incessantly to increase his possessions and extend his influence' and acquired great power in the north of Scotland, so much so that the Campbells of Cawdor almost came to rival their clan chiefs, the Argylls.⁶ However, Sir John died in 1546, leaving Muriel as head of the Cawdor estate, a position she maintained until 1573, when, two years before her death, she granted the thanedom to her grandson, John Campbell, her eldest son Archibald having died in about 1551. John Campbell, like his grandfather before him, acquired tracts of land in northern Scotland, but in doing so he also acquired large debts: land and indebtedness – two traits that recur in the history of the Cawdors (along with most other landed families). Campbell married Mary Keith, sister to Agnes, countess of Moray, who became countess of Argyll upon her marriage to Colin, the sixth earl, in 1573.⁷ When the latter died in 1584, Campbell of Cawdor became the tutor and one of the principal counsellors to the eight-year-old Archibald Campbell, seventh earl of Argyll. After Agnes died in 1588, a power struggle ensued which 'led to rivalry, internal dissension, and a bitter feud that threatened to split the Campbells apart'.⁸ John Campbell of Cawdor effectively became the head of the clan when he kidnapped the young earl and assumed control of the Argyll household. However, Campbell's rule lasted barely four years. In one of the more violent episodes of this internecine power struggle, Campbell of Cawdor was murdered in February 1592, in a conspiracy led by Archibald Campbell of Lochell and George Gordon, sixth earl of Huntly, the former hoping to become the leader of the clan Campbell.⁹ Campbell's murder triggered years of hostility between the Campbell and Gordon clans, which was only resolved when John Campbell, son of the murdered Cawdor, was gifted the proprietorship of Islay and Jura in 1615,¹⁰ as a reward for his endeavours in the clan wars after the murder of Sir John.

⁴ In Scottish law there was no bar to women holding land.

⁵ Archibald married Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of John Stewart (c.1430–95), known as Lord Darnley until 1488, when he was created first earl of Lennox.

⁶ Innes, *The Book of the Thaness of Cawdor*, xxii.

⁷ Colin Campbell (c.1542–84), sixth earl of Argyll.

⁸ *ODNB*: Archibald Campbell (1575/6–1638), seventh earl of Argyll.

⁹ Campbell's murder was part of the same conspiracy that resulted in the murder, in the same year, of James Stuart (1565–92), second earl of Moray.

¹⁰ For a detailed examination of this affair see E. J. Cowan, 'Clanship, Kinship and the Campbell Acquisition of Islay', *SHR*, 58 (1979), 132–57.

Sir John Campbell died in 1642, though twenty years earlier he had signed the estate over to his son John, 'the Fiar' Campbell, upon the latter's marriage. 'The Fiar' lived until 1654, though in 1639 he had been declared a lunatic¹¹ and the Privy Council of Scotland had awarded his brother Colin management of the estate. Unfortunately Colin died in c.1647 whilst still a student at Glasgow University, and the Cawdor estate devolved upon John the Fiar's uncle, Hugh Campbell, son of Colin Campbell of Ardersier and his wife, Elizabeth.¹² Hugh was knighted in 1660, and two years later married Lady Henrietta Stuart, the daughter of James Stuart, fourth earl of Moray. Sir Hugh Campbell's lairdship ushered in a period of peace within the family, after over half a century of turmoil which had seen four lairds since the murder of Sir John. Hugh was regarded as 'a gentleman of learning and knowledge and of great benevolence',¹³ In 1661 he became MP in the Scottish parliament for Nairnshire, a seat he held until 1693, the year in which he relinquished the estate to his son, Alexander. Sir Hugh supported the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and was appointed privy councillor a year later. However, by the second session of the Scottish parliament for 1690 he had been fined for non-attendance and had become a member of the opposition club.¹⁴ Two years later he was not reappointed as a privy councillor, and was excepted from pardon by the king. In letters to friends he claimed that poor health had kept him from attendance.¹⁵ Campbell's move away from support for the administration was further emphasised when, first, his younger son Archibald married the daughter of Duncan Macpherson of Cluny, a prominent Jacobite, and second, in 1707, he opposed the political union between Scotland and England. He enjoined his followers to support the 1715 Jacobite rising and the Cawdor estates were only saved from forfeiture by Sir Hugh's death in March 1716.

In 1688, Sir Hugh's eldest son, Alexander, was betrothed to Elizabeth, co-heiress with her brother Sir Gilbert Lort¹⁶ of Stackpole Court, Pembrokeshire.

¹¹ *RPC Scot*, viii, 62–3, 24 Aug. 1638: his brother Colin declared, 'he is distracted in his witts and unable to governe his own persone or manage his affairs'.

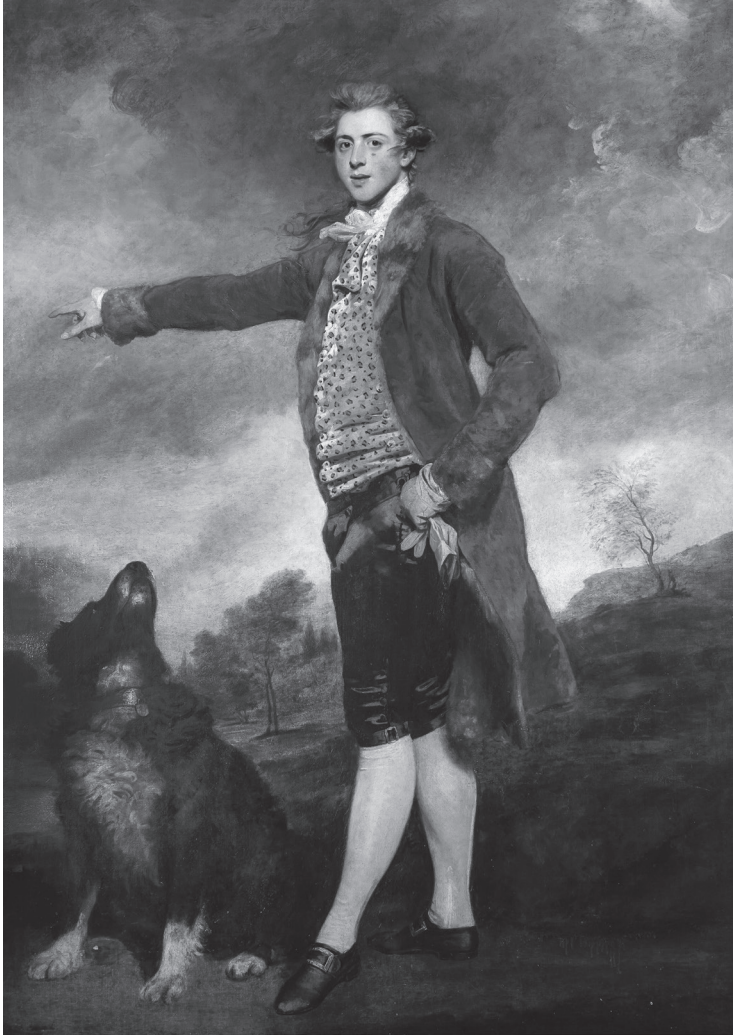
¹² Elizabeth was the daughter of David Brodie of Brodie, Morayshire.

¹³ 'A Succinct Account of the Family of Cawdor', in J. R. N. Macphail (ed.), *Highland Papers*, i (Edinburgh, 1914), 141–91. Macphail's account is based on Revd Lauchlan Shaw, *The History of the Province of Moray* (Edinburgh, 1775).

¹⁴ See J. Halliday, 'The Club and the Revolution in Scotland, 1689–90', *SHR*, 35 (1966), 143–59.

¹⁵ In May 1693 Sir Hugh apologised to the Lord Secretary of the Session: 'I am unable to attend this session of Parliament by reason of my Infirmitie that hes much increased vpon me of late ...' (CC, Bundle 600).

¹⁶ Sir Gilbert Lort (c.1670–98) was the third and last baronet. His father, Sir Roger Lort (1607/8–64), had been made first baronet in 1662 for giving his support to the Restoration, after years of 'trimming' between Parliamentarian and Royalist causes. E. Laws, *History of Little England beyond Wales* (London, 1888), 358, believed Sir



2. John Campbell, first baron Cawdor (1755–1821) by Sir Joshua Reynolds, painted in 1778, soon after he had become the head of the estate

The marriage took place in 1689: it was the first Cawdor marriage outside Scotland and as such was symbolic of a move away from Scottish politics for the family. It also began a 250-year association with Pembrokeshire and south-west Wales. However, at the turn of the seventeenth century a series of abbreviated lives caused the estate to be left with a minor at its head. Alexander

Roger was prepared to 'adhere to any principle or religion that would bring him wealth'.



3. Isabella Caroline, Lady Cawdor (1771–1848) by William Beechey, in the year of her marriage, c. 1790

died whilst visiting Islay in August 1697, leaving Elizabeth the head of the Scottish estate and of a young family of four: Anne, Susanna, John and Gilbert, the latter becoming the heir to the Welsh estate in 1698 when Gilbert Lort died unmarried. However, since Gilbert Campbell was a minor, Elizabeth became *de facto* head of the Welsh estate. When Gilbert died in 1711, the sixteen-year-old John became the heir, and when Elizabeth died in 1714,¹⁷ John assumed the role of head of the estate, though he was only nineteen.

Born in October 1695, John Campbell would play a part in national political life while continuing to distance himself from Scottish politics. In April 1726 he married Mary, the daughter of Lewis Pryse¹⁸ of Gogerddan. As an heiress Mary had held disparate lands in her own name, in the counties of Cardigan, Merioneth and Montgomery, including the Aberllefenni estate, containing large slate mines. In 1752, their son, Pryse Campbell, married Sarah Bacon, the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Edmund Bacon,¹⁹ premier baronet of England. Sarah died in May 1767 and Pryse in December the following year, leaving seven children to be raised by their grandparents. Pryse's eldest son and heir to the estate, John, was born on 24 April 1755 in London. He succeeded to the estate in 1777 upon his grandfather's death in September of that year. John Campbell was thirty-four when he married the eighteen-year-old Lady Isabella Caroline Howard (known as Caroline), in July 1789. Her beauty was an obvious

¹⁷ Elizabeth Lort died 28 Sept. 1714, aged forty-nine. She is buried in Westminster Abbey near to the monument marking her brother Gilbert's burial.

¹⁸ Lewis Pryse (1684–1720) of Gogerddan, Cardiganshire was a prominent Welsh Tory and Jacobite, lamented upon his death as a 'most worthy patriot'. Mary was born in 1704 and died in Oct. 1773.

¹⁹ Sir Edmund Bacon (1680–1755), sixth baronet, of Garboldisham, Norfolk. Sarah's mother was Mary, daughter of Sir Robert Kemp (1667–1734) of Ubbeston, Suffolk.

attraction²⁰ though her family and political connections would also have been a bonus, since she was the eldest daughter of the impoverished Whig grandee, the fifth earl of Carlisle²¹ of Castle Howard. Seven years later, on 21 June 1796, Campbell was elevated to the peerage as a reward for his, albeit short-lived, support for Pitt's pro-war policy, as Baron Cawdor of Castlemartin in the county of Pembrokeshire.

Campbell was a close friend of John Vaughan of Golden Grove in Carmarthenshire, who had succeeded to that heavily encumbered family property in 1780. Upon the latter's untimely death in 1804 – he died in his study at Golden Grove at the age of forty-seven – his entire estate passed to Baron Cawdor. Although coming as a shock to various remnants of the Vaughan family, some of whom mounted a protracted, though ultimately unsuccessful, lawsuit to ascertain whether or not Cawdor was entitled to all or part of the estate, Vaughan's will, made in 1786, clearly stated that in the event of a failure of male heirs and of female heiresses (and there were none as the marriage was childless) and in the event of his wife's death (she had died in 1796), the property should go to his friend John Campbell of Stackpole Court.²² In thus bequeathing the estate to Campbell, Vaughan was conforming to the eighteenth-century belief that an estate was above the family who ran it, who were, through the agency of strict settlement, merely life tenants. The Golden Grove estate debts exceeded £50,000 so perhaps Vaughan calculated that none of the surviving family would be able to cope with such a burden, albeit the Stackpole estate was itself burdened with an even larger debt.²³

²⁰ CRO, Cawdor box 129. The sculptor Antonio Canova wrote of Caroline thus: 'All the English Gentlemen have spoken to me of your adorable bride, as being of a truly ideal beauty of mind and body' (trans. by Robert Rayner). Art-dealer Thomas Jenkins and Lord Minto also commented upon her beauty, though the latter could not remember to whom she was about to marry! Countess of Minto (ed.), *Life and letters of Sir Gilbert Eliot, first earl of Minto*, i (London, 1874), 332.

²¹ Frederick Howard, fifth earl of Carlisle (1748–1825), of Castle Howard, Yorkshire. Among his political offices were those of treasurer of the household, 1777–79, first lord of trade, 1779–80, lord steward, 1782–83 and lord privy seal, 1783. In 1798 Howard became the guardian of the poet Lord Byron, to whom he was related via his mother, Isabella Byron, grand-aunt of the poet. Byron later lampooned Carlisle in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Carlisle also wrote several political pamphlets, poems and plays, and he was a patron of artists such as Henry Fuseli and Henry Tresham, to whom he left an annuity.

²² CRO, Cawdor 10/249: will of John Vaughan; F. Jones, 'Vaughans of Golden Grove', *THSC*, iv (London, 1966), 13–25, discusses the lawsuit in detail.

²³ Other families in Carmarthenshire had experienced a similar severing from their estate. Sir John Stepney, deep in debt, had attempted to sell his Llanelli estate in 1787 and again in 1791. By the terms of his will he bequeathed the estate to a variety of friends before his family. And when Stepney died in 1811 the Llanelli estate came

Baron Cawdor died in his apartment in Great Pulteney Street, Bath, and was buried in its Abbey on 21 June 1821.²⁴ Ownership of the extensive Nairnshire, Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire estates thereupon passed to his thirty-one-year-old son, John Frederick Campbell. He had been MP for Carmarthen Borough in 1813 when his unfortunate uncle, Admiral George Campbell,²⁵ the reluctant sitting member, took the Chiltern Hundreds. In September 1816 John Frederick married Lady Elizabeth Thynne, the daughter of the second marquis of Bath, at the latter's Grosvenor Square house. In October 1827, John Frederick was elevated to an earldom,²⁶ as Earl Cawdor of Castlemartin and Viscount Emlyn of Emlyn in the county of Carmarthen, the latter title to be held by the heir to the estate. As will be shown later, he continued his father's efforts to promote agriculture in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire and, like his forebears, fully involved himself in the public life of the region, though he remained an absentee landlord as far as his Scottish estate was concerned. He died on 7 November 1860 at Stackpole Court.

Ownership of the vast Cawdor patrimony then passed to his son, John Frederick Vaughan Campbell, second earl Cawdor and third baron. He was born on 11 June 1817 in the family's London home in Grosvenor Square. In June 1842 he married Sarah Mary Cavendish, the second daughter of the honourable Henry Frederick Compton-Cavendish, son of the first earl of Burlington, at St George's, Hanover Square, London.²⁷ They had seven children,²⁸ and until the first earl Cawdor's death in 1860 resided at Golden Grove, thereafter moving to Stackpole Court, where Lady Cawdor died in 1881. The second earl, who gives no indication of his being other than an archetypal high-Tory aristocrat, and

into the possession of the earl of Cholmondeley. See M. Symons, *Coal Mining in the Llanelli Area: 16th Century to 1829*, i (Llanelli, 1979), 111–12.

²⁴ *The Complete Peerage* (Stroud, 2000); *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage*, 104th edn (London, 1967).

²⁵ Admiral Sir George Campbell, 1759–1821, MP for Carmarthen Borough, 1806–13. He joined the navy at the age of thirteen, became the commander of HMS *Terrible* and, for a short time, of HMS *Berwick*. He took part in the battle of Genoa (1795) and spent time in Jamaica as commander of the squadron. Campbell was made admiral of the blue in 1814 and of the white in 1819. He was made commander-in-chief of The Downs, 1808–11, and of Portsmouth Harbour, 1818–21, both senior navy positions. He took his own life on 23 Jan. 1821, in his office at Portsmouth. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 91, i (1821), 87. See Ch. 7, and fn. 40.

²⁶ Courtesy of Lord Lansdowne. See parliamentaryhistoryonline.org entry for Campbell 1820–32. BL, Add. 38297, f.10 and Add. 40395, f.94.

²⁷ This was a double wedding – the other couple being Emlyn's sister Lady Elizabeth Campbell and the third earl Desart. Their marriage was later beset with financial problems, Lady Desart frequently appealing to her father for money, and at one point Desart explained that he had no money to pay her allowance.

²⁸ Four girls: Rachel, Evelyn, Muriel and Victoria; and three boys: Alexander, Ronald and Frederick.



4. John Frederick Campbell, first earl Cawdor (1790–1860) by J. R. Swinton, 1848

who strove to defend his patriarchal and paternalistic position at every opportunity, participated in public life, as was expected of him. As Lord Emlyn, he was MP for Pembrokeshire between 1841 and 1860, though there is no record of him ever speaking in the Commons, and as second earl he became lord lieutenant and *custos rotulorum* for Carmarthenshire and deputy lieutenant for

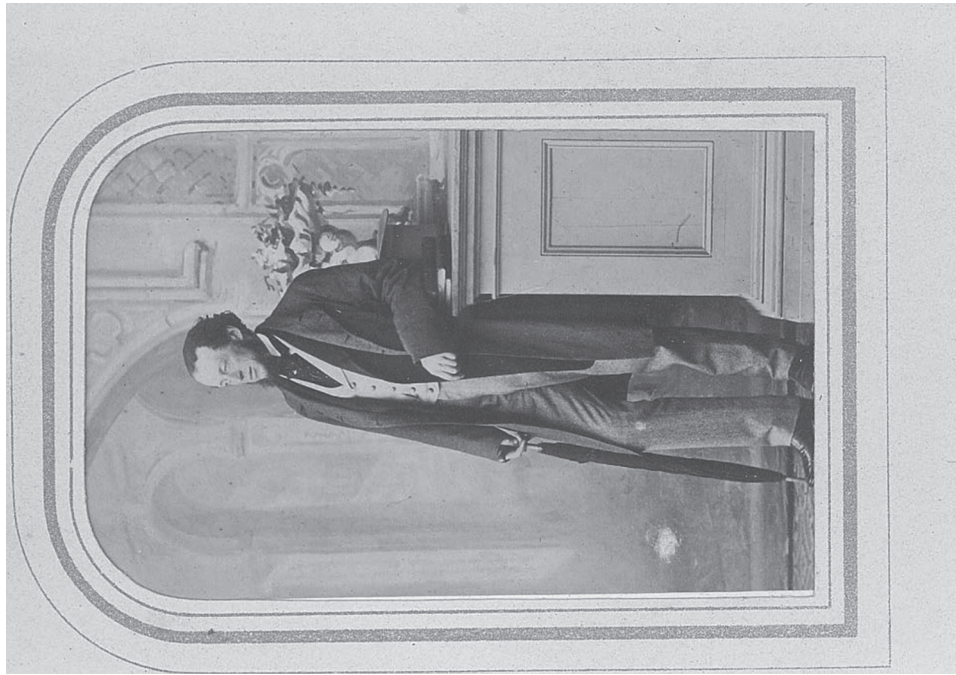


5. Elizabeth Thynne, first countess Cawdor (1795–1866), unfinished by T. Lawrence, c.1827

Inverness-shire. As a landowner he continued the precedents of his father and encouraged agricultural advancements, particularly with the improvement of cattle and horse breeding. Under the second earl's auspices, the estate reached its zenith.

Following the second earl's death in February 1898, ownership of the Cawdor estates passed to his son, Frederick Archibald Vaughan Campbell, the third earl and fourth baron, who was born on 13 February 1847 at St Leonard's Hill, Windsor.²⁹ In 1868 Archibald married Edith Georgina, the daughter of Christopher Turnor of Stoke Rochford, Lincolnshire, and they had ten children together. His involvement in public affairs was impressive and diverse – as the Tory MP for Carmarthenshire between 1874 and 1885, as lord lieutenant of Pembrokeshire from 1896 and as an ecclesiastical commissioner from 1880, both offices being held until his death in 1911. He was

²⁹ He was baptised in Clewer church on 21 March 1847 and given the surname Emlyn, which was, rather, his title.



6. John Frederick Vaughan Campbell, second earl Cawdor (1817-98) and Sarah Mary, second countess Cawdor (1813-81)

a member of the Lunacy Commission between 1886 and 1893, a very able chairman of the Great Western Railway for ten years from 1895, and president of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1901. As third earl he became president of the Institute of Naval Architects in 1908, a position he kept until his death in 1911. However, possibly his greatest achievement was as First Lord of the Admiralty, from March to December 1905, an office cut short by a change in government and his own poor health. *The Complete Peerage* comments upon his appointment to the first lordship thus: 'his appointment to the highly important post of First Lord of the Admiralty occasioned some surprise, as he had never held office before: the way in which he administered the department, however, fully justified his selection.'³⁰ Out of office he continued to be the Tory spokesman upon naval matters until his death.

His son, the fourth earl, Hugh Frederick Vaughan Campbell, only survived until 1914, dying of pneumonia in a sanatorium on the Isle of Wight at the age of forty-four. His early death devolved the earldom upon his son, the fourteen-year-old John Duncan Vaughan Campbell, and caused a huge shockwave to the family as death duties, the third demand since 1898, rocked the finances of the estate at a time when confidence in wealth from land was under attack from various sources. Around this time, the family resided increasingly at Cawdor Castle, leaving the Welsh estates under the management of agents. The fifth earl rarely visited his Welsh property,³¹ preferring not only London and the Cawdor Castle estate, but also frequent travels and serious explorations of some of the more exotic locations around the globe. In 1924–25 he accompanied the botanist and explorer Frank Kingdon-Ward on a year-long expedition to eastern Tibet, collecting seeds.³² They traversed the fifty-mile gorge of the Tsangpo river, the first Europeans to do so. They brought back to Britain seeds of the giant cowslip, and a large number of blue poppy seeds. However, a journey to Mexico undertaken in 1938–39 ensured the earl's voice was not added to the defence of a large portion of the Stackpole estate when it was requisitioned by the army for tank training.³³

The sixth earl, Hugh John Vaughan Campbell,³⁴ completed the process of withdrawal from Wales, and systematically dismantled the estates in both Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire from the early 1960s onwards.

³⁰ *The Complete Peerage*, 124.

³¹ *Western Telegraph*, 5 Oct. 1983: 'The Rise and Fall of the House of the de Stackpools.'

³² Most accounts consider the expedition to have been Kingdon-Ward's finest. He and Cawdor found many plants that were new to Europe. See T. Musgrave, W. Musgrave and C. Gardener, *The Plant Hunters* (London, 1998); F. Kingdon-Ward, *The Riddle of the Tsangpo Gorges* (London, 1926) is an account of the expedition.

³³ See Chapter 9.

³⁴ 1932–93.

The Estates

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Cawdor Castle estate comprised around 50,000 acres, mostly within Nairnshire, though with around 3,200 acres in neighbouring Inverness-shire, all the result of four centuries of land acquisitions. Additionally, from 1615 until 1727 the estate held the whole of the western island of Islay, about 150,000 acres. The latter was a continual strain upon the estate finances as a large annual feu duty was payable to the crown, as well as ‘large bribes, assuredly exacted by courtiers, others possibly paid to the king, for the gift.’³⁵ Additionally, the Campbells had endless problems with Islay tenants loyal to clan Macdonald who were reluctant to pay rent. In 1727, John Campbell sold the lease of Islay to his cousin, the Glasgow merchant Daniel Campbell of Shawfield. Thereafter the Scottish estate remained (and remains) centred around Cawdor Castle. By Scottish standards it was a modestly sized estate, and was relatively neglected, as the Cawdor branch of the clan Campbell strove to establish themselves in Wales.

The Stackpole estate Alexander Campbell acquired upon his marriage was a very compact one.³⁶ In 1782, it was around 5,458 acres in extent and situated in four parishes.³⁷ However, with the purchase of the Bangeston and Wiston estates, in 1786 and 1793 respectively, the estate expanded greatly in size – as did indebtedness.³⁸ Thus, in 1794, it comprised a tract of land within Castlemartin hundred, south Pembrokeshire, and was described by estate surveyor Charles Hassall as follows:

From Freshwater East Bay, along the southern coast by Freshwater West, round the south cape of Milford Haven, and up the Haven for several miles;

³⁵ Innes, *Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, xxviii.

³⁶ The Stackpole estate was of medieval origin, Elidyr de Stackpole, the earliest recorded owner, being mentioned by Gerald of Wales writing in 1188. By the first half of the fifteenth century, the house and manor had passed from the Stackpole family to Richard Vernon of Hadden Hall, Derbyshire, and then, via the marriage of Margaret Vernon, to Thomas Stanley of the Stanley family, earls of Derby. Both the Vernon and the Stanley owners were absentee landlords, leaving the estate in the hands of estate stewards. In 1611, one of those stewards, George Lort, managed to purchase the entire estate from Margaret Stanley.

³⁷ NLW: Maps vol., 87/94/8/2: Surveys and valuation of the estate of John Campbell in the County of Pembroke, 1782, copied from the surveys of James Hassall, Henry John, Richard Jones and John Butcher by Messrs Maxwell and Hand, Graveley, Herts. Of the total acreage, 1,395 was for the Stackpole demesne, so it could be this was one of two or more volumes since it seems a very large demesne for an estate of just over 4,000 acres of working farmland.

³⁸ A sale particular for the Wiston estate in the parishes of Wiston and Slebech gives an acreage of 3,981 (CRO, Cawdor/Campbell 3/44). Bangeston was bought for £52,318 and Wiston for £38,000.

comprehending a tract of country of about 14 miles in length, and of various breadths from 7 to 4, including the entire parishes of Stackpole, St. Petrox, Bosherton, St. Twinnels, Warren, Castlemartin and Angle; together with a considerable part of the parishes of Rhoscrowther, Pulcroghan and Pembroke, containing about 16,000 acres, is the intire property of Mr. Campbell of Stackpole Court, and forms one of the finest and best connected estates that has ever fallen within my observation in any part of the kingdom; being all valuable land, without the intervention of mountain, waste, or common.³⁹

In 1629 Sir Henry Lort of Stackpole purchased the former monastic manor of Nant-y-bay, which included the Ystradffin estate, in north-east Carmarthenshire.⁴⁰ In 1717 the Campbells purchased the freehold of around 8,000 acres, centred on the Ystradffin estate, mainly in the parishes of Llanfair-ary-bryn and Cilycwm, no doubt with an eye to the rich lead-veins in the area. By 1793–94 John Campbell was receiving around £1,400 in gross rental from this Carmarthenshire estate.⁴¹ From the mid-1760s, income received from all their properties, in the counties of Cardigan, Carmarthen, Inverness, Merioneth, Montgomery, Nairn, and Pembroke, amounted to just under £5,000. The estate at this time, however, like so many other landed estates in eighteenth-century Britain, was encumbered with debt, which became deeper and increasingly entrenched as the eighteenth century drew to a close. Campbell had been trying to sell his diverse properties in mid-Wales since 1783.⁴² The estate extended over the three counties of Cardiganshire, Montgomeryshire and Merioneth, and in total amounted to 19,182 acres, much of which was rocky land and sheepwalks.⁴³ In 1794, Campbell's friend and supervisory agent John Mirehouse⁴⁴ reported that the estate owned three distinct properties within

³⁹ C. Hassall, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Pembroke* (London, 1794), 13–14; David Williams, *The Rebecca Riots* (Cardiff, 1955), 5.

⁴⁰ It was purchased for £4,420 (about £350,000 today). CRO, Cawdor/Lort 17/678 and 21/806. According to a fine of 8 April 1633 between Henry Lorte and Lewis Gwyn, the estate was spread over seven parishes in the north-east of Carmarthenshire, and was in total 17,200 acres. This would have made the Lort family the largest landowner in the county. However, fines are notoriously inaccurate in that they are very generalised (CRO, Cawdor/Lort 10/547).

⁴¹ CRO, Cawdor/Campbell 3/65: Rental of the Carmarthenshire estates belonging to John Campbell, 1793–94.

⁴² John Campbell had raised a mortgage of £4,000 on the estate in 1735 (CRO, Cawdor 2/5/92).

⁴³ NLW: Maps vol., 52/94/9/4: Plans and valuations of the several farms in the parishes of Dolgelly, Llanfihangel y Pennant, Tallylyn, and Llangelynin in the county of Merioneth, the estates of John Campbell esquire by George Maxwell, Graveley, Herts, 1778. This is volume iii and iv. Volume i, for Cardiganshire is at CRO, Cawdor 3/17/3, while volume ii for Montgomeryshire is not extant.

⁴⁴ See below Chapter 2.

Montgomeryshire: Aberllefenni, Penygroes, and Llanwrin and Mallwyd, with a total rental of £1,413 (which had been increased from £554 in 1778). However, annual repairs expenditure and agent's salary came to £185 while encumbrances in the form of mortgages and bonds amounted to £22,000. Mirehouse concluded that 'a very inconsiderable income' was enjoyed from the estate, and until the rent rise of 1778, Campbell 'was a loser by it'.⁴⁵ Very little interest had been shown in purchasing these estates, though the Aberllefenni estate was almost sold in 1794–95 to Lord Mansfield, but 'from the Circumstances of the Times He must retire [from] being a Bidder for the estate'.⁴⁶ Mansfield died in 1796, and Aberllefenni was finally sold to Countess Mansfield a year later just a few months before she remarried, to Robert Fulke Greville, brother of Lord Cawdor's close friend and future overseeing agent, Charles Greville.⁴⁷ Other parts of the mid-Wales estate were sold in 1802 and 1803.⁴⁸

By 1798 the Stackpole estate was encumbered to the large sum of £153,000, while the total income from all properties, Welsh and Scottish, was around £17,000.⁴⁹ However, it was believed that £100,000 could be raised from selling land: Greville expected £30–40,000 from the sale of the Ystradffin estate, including the lead mines.⁵⁰ That estate and the mines were not sold, but by 1802 Cawdor had sold about 10,000 acres of land in the five counties of Wales as well as much of his valuable and highly regarded art collection. Additionally, the whole of the Scottish estate was leased from 1810, realising a yearly rental

⁴⁵ CRO, Cawdor box 129: Mr Campbell's estates in the counties of Merioneth & Montgomery.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* The asking price was £22,000 including the timber on the estate.

⁴⁷ For Charles Greville see below Chapter 2; Mirehouse had offered to buy all of the Montgomeryshire properties, for the valuation price of the Aberllefenni estate, but his offer was declined. The subsequent sale to Greville's soon to be sister-in-law may have been the origin of a wide rift between Greville and Mirehouse, the latter refusing to communicate with Greville, whom he believed dishonest. CRO, Cawdor 129a: Mirehouse to Cawdor, 17 April 1796.

⁴⁸ NLW, Derry Ormond estate, 148–9: Lease for 1,000 years of the Llanfread estate, for £7,050.

⁴⁹ CRO, Cawdor box 253; Cawdor box 2/68; Cawdor box 234: rental of Lord Cawdor's estates in the Counties of Nairn and Inverness, 1804.

⁵⁰ CRO, Cawdor box 129: Greville to Campbell, undated but c.1800. Greville used William Marshall, the agricultural writer, to survey the estate. Marshall gave a sale value 'of detached property', at twenty-seven years' purchase on the full rental value of £110,000 on the agricultural lands, though he makes reductions for unspecified reasons of £30,000. CRO, Cawdor box 129: 'Sale Value of detached property', Anon., but by William Marshall (n.d. but c.1800). To avoid panic by local bondholders who may have called in their debts upon hearing Cawdor was selling land, Greville suggested 'you should proceed quietly', and as an extra precaution, dealt with Cawdor's affairs via his home in Paddington.



7. Golden Grove, c.1855–60. This may have been taken by Lord Emlyn, since he was an enthusiastic user of daguerreotype in the mid-to late-1850s. The garden workers are obviously posing and perhaps the scythes are an outmoded way of cutting a lawn, since the lawn mower was becoming popular by this time

of £3,091. The sale of lands realised £123,900,⁵¹ enough to wipe out much of the debt. At the same time, the whole of the Cawdor property was placed in a trust, with Greville and Cawdor's father-in-law, the fifth earl of Carlisle, as trustees.⁵² However, other debts were soon incurred.

Golden Grove estate in Carmarthenshire, the home of the Vaughan family since the twelfth century, was by far the largest and one of the most valuable estates in the county. However, this property was also weighed down by a seemingly inevitable burden of debt. Additionally and unfortunately for the estate, by the mid-seventeenth century, direct male heirs were becoming rare. John Vaughan, third earl of Carbery, though married twice, only had one surviving child, Anne. So he passed the entire estate to a cousin, also John Vaughan, who died childless in 1735, the estate then passing to the aforesaid Anne. Her disastrous marriage with the extravagant marquess of Winchester⁵³ in 1713 necessitated the heavy mortgaging of the estate, though as Francis Jones states, the Vaughans as a whole had a 'penchant for running into debt'.⁵⁴ Although the

⁵¹ CRO, Cawdor box 234: sales particulars, 28 and 29 April 1802.

⁵² At one point John Mirehouse was to be a third trustee.

⁵³ Charles Powlett, third duke of Bolton (1685–1751), styled the marquess of Winchester until 1722. He was MP for Carmarthen, 1715–17.

⁵⁴ Francis Jones, 'The Vaughans of Golden Grove, *THSC*, iii (1964), 167.

financial position had been somewhat improved under the careful oversight of John Vaughan of Shenfield, a cousin to whom the estate was bequeathed by the childless Anne in 1751, when his grandson, yet another John, inherited the estate in 1780 it still shouldered mortgages in excess of £23,000. Such was the dire situation facing John Vaughan that part of the estate had to be sold in 1783 to satisfy importunate mortgagees. However, recovery remained impossible in the face of Vaughan's extravagance so that debts at the opening of the 1790s reputedly stood at around £50,000.⁵⁵

Under the terms of John Vaughan's will of 1780, John Campbell of Stackpole Court was to be bequeathed the whole of the Golden Grove estate. Vaughan died at the beginning of 1804, and on 31 January of that year Campbell, now first baron Cawdor, received the following memorandum from the previous and continuing agent, the super-efficient Thomas Beynon:

The Golden Grove Estate, in Carmarthenshire, consists of about 27,000 acres, is let for about £8,000 per annum, including the demesne lands in hand, and, if out of lease, would, according to the best of my judgement be fairly worth £15,000 per annum, but I am inclined to think, considerably more. The Newcastle Estate consists of 6,740 acres and is estimated to be worth £3,096 though at present Rental only amounts to about £1,300.⁵⁶

The Golden Grove estate was a much less compact property than either the Pembrokeshire or the Nairnshire estates. Indeed, the estate comprised several detached properties spread around the county, which included the Newcastle Emlyn estate, the Carmarthen town estate, the Gelli Dywyll estate in Cenarth parish (purchased by John Vaughan in 1778), the Piode estate in Llandybie parish (its moiety purchased by John Vaughan in 1780), the Cilycwm estate, as well as the Golden Grove home estate. The whole property was surveyed by the notable Welsh cartographer Thomas Lewis between 1781 and 1790, and was measured at 22,251 acres.⁵⁷

Insofar as the Campbell-owned properties in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire were concerned, it will be recalled that Hassall had talked of the Stackpole estate covering 16,000 acres and it has also been stated that the family's estate in north-east Carmarthenshire stretched across 8,000 acres. However, it has been shown that 10,000 acres in Wales were forcibly sold in 1802, so that in 1804 the family owned around 14,000 acres in the region. Their

⁵⁵ F. Jones, 'The Vaughans of Golden Grove: The Earls of Carbery', *THSC*, i (1963), 231–6; idem, 'The Vaughans of Golden Grove', *THSC*, i (1966), 188; CRO, Cawdor/Vaughan 41/5777.

⁵⁶ CRO, Cawdor box 131: Beynon to Cawdor, 31 Jan. 1804.

⁵⁷ Lewis charged 6d per acre and his total bill came to just over £1,000. He produced five volumes of maps of individual farms and a map of Vaughan properties in Carmarthen town, but not of the estate as a whole.

inheriting the Golden Grove estate in 1804 brought them ownership of a further 27,000 acres, so that the total land owned by the family in south-west Wales was something like 41,000 acres. By this date, the mid-Wales holdings had been drastically reduced and amounted to a few hundred acres.

In the course of the nineteenth century, tracts of land were sometimes alienated, at other times added to the Cawdor estate, though the trend was to increase the estate's holdings. Such activity was normal for any manner of estates in Britain. By the 1870s, when the estate was at its zenith, John Bateman recorded the Cawdor acreage in Wales at 51,538 with a gross annual value of £35,042.⁵⁸ Additionally, the Scottish estate amounted to 50,119 acres – 46,176 in Nairnshire and 3,943 in Inverness-shire – at a gross annual value of £9,620. The discrepancy between the values of the Scottish and Welsh estates is marked, with much of the Scottish estate consisting of relatively unproductive moorland.

According to Bateman's figures, in a ranking of the top forty great landowners of Britain the earl Cawdor was the nineteenth largest. In Wales, the Cawdor property was the third largest, behind the Wynnstay estate of Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, who owned 145,770 acres, and the Powis Castle estate of the earl of Powis who possessed 60,559 acres,⁵⁹ though within the three counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke and (comprising a mere 21 acres) Cardigan, Cawdor lands comprised the largest estate in south-west Wales.⁶⁰

These figures referred to agricultural land. Lewis's survey revealed that the Vaughan family also owned some seventy-seven properties in the borough of Carmarthen in 1786.⁶¹ This made Lord Cawdor, upon his inheriting the Golden Grove estate, one of the three principal owners of property in the borough, along with Robert Morgan, the iron master, and the Stepney family of Llanelli. (Prior to 1804, the Campbells owned very little urban property: they owned nothing in Haverfordwest and only one or two cottages in Tenby.) Estate rentals reveal that in 1869 the Cawdor family owned 111 properties in the borough of Carmarthen, though seventeen had been sold in 1868. However, this number slowly fell in the last quarter of the century, so that by 1899, the estate owned forty-three properties in Carmarthen. During the course of the nineteenth century the Cawdors also acquired properties in the emerging

⁵⁸ J. Bateman, *The Great Landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (4th edn, London, 1883), 83; J. V. Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership and Estate Management', in E. J. T. Collins (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vii, 1850–1914 (Pt 1) (Cambridge, 2000), 704.

⁵⁹ *Return of Owners of Land, 1873*; Beckett, 'Agricultural Landownership', 704.

⁶⁰ For figures from the *Returns of Owners of Land, 1873*, see B. Ll. James, 'The "Great Landowners" of Wales in 1873', in *NLWJ*, xiv, 3 (1966) 301–20.

⁶¹ Carmarthen was one of the largest and most economically active towns in Wales at this time, with a population of around 3,000.