

# THE SAVING OF A YORKSHIRE ESTATE: GEORGE LANE-FOX AND BRAMHAM PARK

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Several classic examples of aristocratic indebtedness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have attracted the attention of historians. The fall of the 2nd Duke of Buckingham and Chandos was a melancholy warning to Victorian landowners during his own lifetime; through politics, entertainment, collecting, land buying and litigation he had contrived to accumulate over £1,500,000 of debt before his financial collapse in 1848. The 1st Marquess of Ailesbury reached an almost equally dangerous position in the 1830's, through rash building and large family provisions, but was saved by careful trustees. Another Yorkshire landowner, the 6th Duke of Devonshire, spent so much on buildings that even he, a great magnate, was compelled to sell his East Riding estate; he left debts of £1,000,000 on his death in 1857. Family charges amounted to over half of the 7th Duke of Bedford's encumbrance of over half a million in 1839; and in the 'forties debt charges consumed £20,000 of Ailesbury's gross income of £54,000, £60,000 of Devonshire's £200,000, £45,000 of the 3rd Earl Fitzwilliam's £150,000 and £26,000 of the 2nd Earl of Durham's £40,000 (he having inherited £635,000 of debt in 1841).'

Such debts arose from many causes. Out few led to the tragedy of the Buckingham sales. Careful Victorian retrenchment and an aversion to Regency profligacy saved some estates, while others were aided by rearrangements of family portions, large-scale agricultural improvements and the rise in mineral and urban incomes. Many new debts were incurred not for traditional gambling, entertainment or political purposes but for ventures which themselves promoted an increase of income. Thus Sir James Graham of Netherby owed a total of £200,000 to the Equitable-Assurance Society by 1838, but used the debt partly to consolidate previous borrowing at a lower rate of interest and partly to improve his estate. And the 7th Duke of Devonshire alternately supported and encumbered his great rural properties by his pioneer industrial ventures at Barrow.<sup>3</sup> There were many similar examples.

The purpose of the present paper is to examine the problems facing the owners of a 'second-line' estate in the nineteenth century and the methods by which they were solved.

The Lane-Fox family of Bramham Park near Wetherby was descended from William Fox, a landowner at Grete in Worcestershire in the reign of Edward IV. In the seventeenth century Joseph Fox served with the Army in Ireland, where he married Thomasine Blayney, the widow of Sir Henry Pierce and daughter of the 2nd Lord Blayney. His son Henry (d. 1719) first married Jane Oliver of Cionodfoy; and in 1691 established the family's fortune by marrying secondly Frances Lane, the daughter of Sir George Lane of Tulskie, the Irish Secretary and later 1st Lord Lanesborough. Her Fox's son George succeeded to the large Lane estates on the death of his uncle James, the 2nd Viscount, and in 1751 assumed by Act of Parliament the additional surname of Lane.

George Fox-Lane (?1696-1773) was Tory M.P. for Hindon in 1734-1741 and for York in 1742-1761. He further enlarged the family's property in 1731, when he married Harriet Benson, the daughter and heiress of Robert, Lord Bingley. Robert Benson was a self-made Tory (and later Whig) who sat for Thetford in 1702-1705 and for York in 1705-1713. He became a Commissioner of the Treasury in 1710 and was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1711 to 1713, a Privy Councillor in 1711-1714 and from 1730, Queen Anne's Ambassador to Madrid in 1713-1714 and Treasurer of the Household for King George II in 1730-1731. Queen Anne's favour led to a Crown grant of land on Bramham Moor, where Benson built his great mansion in the first decade of the eighteenth century. Created a Baron in 1713, Benson supplemented official receipts by acting as a director of the South Sea Company from 1711 to 1715.

On his marriage, Fox-Lane succeeded to most of the Benson estates; Harriet brought him £100,000 and an annual income of £7000. In May 1762 he was himself created Lord Bingley, taking his title from the township where the Bensons had long been lords of the manor — although the Bingley property had passed for life to Benson's natural daughter, Lady Goodricke. Bingley's only legitimate son, Robert, born in 1732, succeeded to the York scat in 1761 — after failing in 1758. Although twice married — to Mildred Bouchier of Benningborough and to Lady Bridget Henley (daughter of the Lord Chancellor, the Earl of Northington) — he died without issue in May 1768. According to Horace Walpole, General Burgoyne was Bingley's illegitimate son. But when the Baron died in 1773, the title became extinct.'

Lord Bingley devised his lands in England and Ireland to his 15-year-old nephew James, the son of Sackville Fox and Ann Holloway, who also inherited the Lanes' Irish estates and name. A man of the world, scholar, raconteur, traveller and philanthropist, Fox-Lane sat in the Commons for Horsham as a supporter of his friend William Pitt, who offered to revive the Bingley peerage for him; Fox-Lane, however, was proud of belonging to 'one of the very few old English families, [being] a commoner (not a trader) of high birth and fortune'. Unfortunately for that fortune, he became a friend of the Prince Regent. Another Yorkshire squire, Sir George Wombwell, 3rd baronet, was said to be the only friend of 'Prinny' who was not financially ruined by the association.

Fox-Lane married the hon. Marcia Pitt, daughter of the 1st Lord Rivers, in July 1789 and died in April 1821, leaving four sons and one daughter. The entailed estates passed

To the eldest son George (who was generally named Lane-Fox) but £300,00 was settled on the widow and the younger children, William Augustus, Sackville Walter, Thomas Henry and Marcia Bridget. Fox-Lane's wife died in London in August 1822, and it was reported that property worth between £8,000 and £10,000 a year then passed to her family. William (1796-1832) served in the Grenadier Guards and married Lady Caroline Douglas; his second son succeeded to the Wiltshire property of Lord Rivers and assumed the name of Pitt-Rivers by Royal Licence in 1880. Sackville entered politics as a Tory and in 1826 married Lady Charlotte Osborne, the only daughter of the 6th Duke of Leeds. Thomas entered holy orders and died without issue; and Marcia married the hon. Edward Stourton, second son of the 16th Lord Stourton, dying in 1826, two years before her husband was created a baronet, as Sir Edward Vavasour of Hazlewood Castle." In general, the younger children were financially secure.

George Lane-Fox, who succeeded to the estates at the age of 28, was a sporting squire who represented Beverley and Pontefract before retiring from politics in 1841 because of ill-health. He was active in Yorkshire society as a Yeomanry major and a Deputy

Lieutenant. But agriculture was his principal interest, and he was keenly concerned in the movement for agricultural improvements. He started the annual shows at Bramham Park and was a vice-president of the Wetherby Agricultural Society. He improved the new lands enclosed by his father under the Bramham Enclosure Act of 1807 and spent considerable sums — some £1300 in 1826, £1000 in 1827, £2500 in 1828, £4300 in 1829 and £3300 in 1830 — on estate repairs and improvements. But his good intentions were not enough and his affairs became increasingly difficult, in several ways.

## II.

The young squire does not appear to have been unduly rash in his expenditure, judged by the standards of his time. Certainly he found it necessary to take a London house for the Season. His father had paid £630 *per annum* for 45 Dover Street for six years from 1808, and the family later took a lease in Old Bond Street. But gentry with much smaller properties had London houses. Undoubtedly, the maintenance of Bramham Park and its great gardens was costly; but when the mansion was ravaged by fire in July 1828 the squire moved to a smaller house on the estate. Lane-Fox sought to benefit from new sources of income. Since 1797 the family had drawn mineral rents from Allerton Bywater colliery. In 1821 Lane-Fox sold about £10,000-worth of timber, and in the following year he leased his lead mines at Rimmington for 21 years. In 1823 he even called in surveyors to report on the possibility of minerals under Bramham Park itself. And he held shares in the Aire & Calder and Calder & Hebble Navigations, the Barnsley Canal and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal (which had bought land from his father). Yet his financial position gradually worsened.

Part of the trouble lay in the family's domestic affairs. James Fox-Lane's will had starved the estate of capital by lavishly providing for his wife and younger children. This difficulty continued. In 1814 George Lane-Fox had married Georgiana Henrietta, the daughter of Edward Pery Buckley of Minestead Lodge and his wife, Lady Georgiana West. They had one son and two daughters, but the marriage failed and in 1824 a deed of separation was negotiated, under which Mrs. Lane-Fox received an annuity of £500. Lane-Fox and his wife parted bitterly, but in January 1826 Lane-Fox proposed a reconciliation. Mrs. Arbuthnot advised her friend to accept the offer, but to make certain that the financial arrangements were satisfactory. However, by 1827 Mrs. Lane-Fox appeared to be accepting the long-continued blandishments of the 6th Lord Chesterfield, and Mrs. Arbuthnot, now much less friendly, thought he was 'wasting himself'. By 1829 Chesterfield and Mrs. Lane-Fox were virtually living together, offended the Duke of Wellington by staying unchaperoned at Walmer Castle and caused a stir in High Society by issuing invitations to the Doncaster races. Mrs. Arbuthnot 'would not act the *Madame Conmure*' and now found Mrs. Lane-Fox 'a person ... to whom it was impossible to give advice'. Although far from prudent herself, she wished her contemporaries would '*pull up* a little and set their laces against the barefaced liaisons that were becoming the fashion'; Chesterfield's arrangement was 'too bad'. Other social gossips were equally shocked. Thomas Creevey met the couple at the Duchess of St. Albans' in 1826 and at Lady Sefton's (where they 'came together and sat together all night', among other 'most notorious and profligate women') in 1829. And in October 1830, when Chesterfield surprised everyone by announcing his marriage to the hon. Anne Forester, it was Charles Greville who carried the news to the harshly-rejected mistress. Even Mrs. Arbuthnot was angry at Chesterfield's 'barbarous' act, believing that he had dropped Mrs. Lane-Fox because when she finally yielded and for two years lived with him he had 'felt the inconveniences of his attachment' through Society avoiding him. Mrs. Lane-Fox could only affect not to care a pin' in public, but actually protested even to Wellington. She consoled herself with the friendship of the Prince of Orange, and by 1834 her house, noted Greville.

had become 'the great rendezvous of a considerable part of the Cabinet . . . It certainly was a droll connexion'.

The heir to the estate, the second George, had expensive tastes as a young man. Educated at Eton and Christ Church, he was rusticated from Oxford because of his excessive devotion to sport. He was a regular race goer, a member of the Four-in-Hand Driving Club who often drove the Tadcaster stage coach and the Glasgow mail, and he hunted four or five times weekly. When, in 1837, he married Katherine Mary, the daughter of John Stein, a former M.P. for Bletchingley, his father provided a jointure and pin-money. Lane-Fox's cider daughter, Georgiana Marcia, lived at home, but her sister, Frederica Elizabeth, was married in 1845 to the hon. Adolphus Frederick Octavius Liddell, a Fellow of All Souls and eighth son of the 1st Lord Ravensworth. Lane-Fox had to provide for both Liddells, along with increasing sums to his wife and various retired retainers and workers. Frederica Elizabeth alone had £20,000 settled on her in 1845.<sup>2</sup>

Through these trying years Lane-Fox attempted to maintain his estates with reasonable efficiency. In 1837, when financial troubles were reaching a serious state, he reviewed his expenditure on

Repairs and improvements on his Yorkshire Estate from 1825 to BD inclusive, with a General Estimate of the Sum expended in Substantial Improvements for the benefit of the Property not necessary for Mr. Fox as Tenant for life to have laid out if he had not been anxious to have brought the Estate into the best possible condition.

The steward, Thomas Kell, reported that repairs and improvements had cost over £4200 in 1831. £3000 in 1832 and 1833, £2800 in 1834, £3100 in 1835, £2400 in 1836 and £2100 in 1837. The estimated expenditure on 'substantial improvements for the future benefit of the Property' in the same years was over £2700, £1100, £1400, £1900, £1700, £990 and £1200. Between 1825 and 1837 repairs and improvements cost £33,574. 11. 1. and long-term improvements £18,235. 13. 3. Average annual expenditure was something over £4300 — a fairly high recurrent investment for a gross income which amounted to rather under £20,000 by 1837.<sup>3</sup> In order to maintain his level of expenditure Lane-Fox turned to that saviour of Victorian landowners, an insurance business. But by 1839 the British Commercial Insurance Company was threatening to inaugurate legal proceedings against him over a debt of £80,000.

### III.

The Lane-Fox Yorkshire estates lay mainly in Bramham, Rigton, Bardsey, Alwoodley, Walton, Grimston, Netherton, Elsack and Rimmington. There were smaller properties at Lotherton, Oglethorpe, Wothersome, Collingham, Scarcroft, Wrenthorpe, Bingley, Farnhill, Hamblethorpe, Skipton, East Halton and Carlton. House rents brought in £151. 2., and the coal rights at Allerton Bywater (where the surface land had been sold to Thomas Davison-Bland of Kippax Park) were a valuable source of income. In 1837 the total rent amounted to £17,377. 1. 7. Woods added £1269 and the land in hand was worth £1176 *per annum*.<sup>4</sup> But by the 1840's Lane-Fox's affairs were becoming progressively worse. In 1838 he mortgaged some of his property to Edward Marjoribanks and Sir Edmund Antrobus, and thereafter became increasingly indebted to the two bankers, after disentailing the estates. He secured a mortgage of £50,000 in 1838 and a further 80,000 in 1839, adding £27,000 in 1841, £15,000 in 1842 and £25,400 in 1846 — a total of £197,400. He managed to make only one small repayment of £1450, in 1841. The debts might be transferred, by both creditors and debtor, but such sums remained as huge burdens on the estate. By 1848 Lane-Fox's mortgages with Messrs. Coitus amounted to £195,450, with Messrs. J. W. and C. Farrer £21,000 and with Marjoribanks' trustees £10,000. Three bonds made the total indebtedness £232,799. 10. 0.

By 1846 Lane-Fox and his son resolved that new arrangements must be made for the management of their debts. Their legal adviser, Burrell, proposed in October that all the estates should be charged in mortgage to Marjoribanks and Antrobus for the sum required and that the Bowcliffe estate should be taken in reconveyance from the devisees of Fenton Scott and (with all lands bought since 1838) used as security with the bankers. Furthermore, Lane-Fox should demise all his estates, except Bramham, Oglethorpe, Bardsey, Coilingham and Scarcroft woods, to his son for 99 years, while the son should arrange that all the rents and profits of the estates should be paid into the Farrers' in a joint account though the bank should act only on his own orders. After accepting this arrangement, father and son worked out their expenses between 22 July and 1 November 1847. Interest of £3454. 13. 1. was due to Coutts, £539. 13. 9 to James Farrer's executors and £194.3.4. to Marjoribanks' trustees. Lane-Fox himself drew £2250 quarterly and his estranged wife (who had negotiated for the payment of her debts and an additional annuity 1843) took £546. 1. 11. a quarter. George's wife received only £100 half-yearly, as did Mrs. Liddell, while Liddell had £150 per quarter, plus £50 as auditor, and George was paid a quarterly sum of 050. Sundry small pensions and fee farm rents made total outgoings £8155.7.1. by mid-October. In contemporary circles 129000 a year for the owner or such an estate and £3000 for an heir who had broken the entail would not be considered too generous. But there were further expenses. 'Mr. Kell's drafts during the above period last yr. amtd £1400. 9. 3.', and £2491. 14. 11. was due to Farrers, naming the total estimated expenditure £12,047. 11. 3. for 10: days. The only expected income was 023. 3. 4. from the Aire & Calder Navigation and (if the 1846 sum were repeated) £750 from coal rents. Consequently, by 1 November 1847 the current account would be overdrawn by £10,474. 7. II. The Yorkshire rents were not yet due, but, as the harassed squire noted,

since this year commenced, nothing has been remitted on account of the Irish Estate, and from the present state of Ireland it is quite uncertain whether any and what remittance will be made therefrom.

The Ireland of the Famine paid little to its landlords. With his affairs in this state, Lane-Fox died on 15 November 1848.

#### Iv.

On succeeding to the estates, the new squire inherited nearly a quarter of a million of debt and annual payments totaling £14,092. 8. 7. Interest on £204,399. 10. took £8414. 9. 6., family payments £4570, pensions £466. 5., the rent of a house and stables in Eaton Square £370 and insurances and miscellaneous items £271. 14. 1. His account with the Farrers stood at £3467. 19. 2.: 'the recent receipt of the Yorkshire Rents has placed the account in Cash', he noted, 'but there are payments to make this and the next for Interest fee. between 5 and 6000 pounds'.

Lane-Fox now started the long task of saving the estate. By 1848 only £1950 of the mortgages had been paid off, but in 1851 and 1852 he paid a further £7737.10 A valuable new source of income was the sale of land to the railways. The family initially disliked the brash newcomer to the countryside ; in 1815 George Hudson Complained at a meeting of the York & North Midland that the Earl of Harewood and Lane-Fox had objected to the construction of the Harrogate line. But in April 1846 Lane-Fox sold Harrogate land to the company and in May agreed to sell land also to the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway. His son followed this lead, selling strips to the Lancashire Yorkshire, the Leeds Bradford, the Great Northern, the Midland, the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway.

Tramore Railways. He bought shares in the Sligo line, the pioneer City of London & Southwark Subway and other companies.'

Another kind of help came from Lane-Fox's uncle, Sackville Walter, now a Protectionist M.P. His wife, Lady Charlotte, died in 1836, leaving two sons and two daughters, the eldest son becoming Lord Conyers and Darcy (and Count Mertola in the Portuguese peerage) in 1859 on the death of the 7th Duke of Leeds. The 6th Duke, who died in 1838, was a large Yorkshire landowner, whose North and West Riding estates produced some £24,500 in 1821. While the entailed estates passed to his son, the 7th Duke, Leeds left his London mansion and personal property to his son-in-law. In 1847 it was decided that rather than help to clear Lane-Fox's debts his uncle would use part of the Leeds revenue to bring up his children. As Lane-Fox had three sons and three daughters this arrangement was no doubt very helpful.

However carefully Lane-Fox saved on personal expenditure, certain payments were essential. After nearly five years as life tenant, his situation was still difficult. Between 18 May and 1 November 1853 the estate account was estimated to receive either £11,274. 9. 6. or £11,774. 9. 6. The total was made up of a balance of £6731. 2. (or £7231. 2. in another estimate), Aire & Calder dividends of £617. 7. 6., Irish rents of £2770 (as in 1852) and coal rents of £1156 (also estimated on the previous year's receipts). Family payments would take £5157. 8. 1., interest £4486. 18. 7., and estate expenditure (following 1852 accounts) £1560. 17. 6., leaving an estimated balance on 1 November of £69. 5. 4. (or £569. 5. 4.). The estate costs were obviously unavoidable - and were scarcely over-generous. Equally obviously, the monthly interest had to be paid. Even the family payments seemed inescapable. Lane-Fox himself took £3000, his wife £97. 1. 8., his mother £970. 16. 8., the Liddells £388. 6. 8. and his aunt Georgiana the same; and small pensions and allowances amounted to £312. 16. 5.<sup>3</sup>

This situation was embarrassing for one of the largest landowners in Yorkshire and Ireland, and it had serious consequences for the estates. At a time when other mid-century landowners were engaged in great improvement schemes, the Lane-Fox lands were starved of capital. In 1852 the Yorkshire agent, Kell, called in William Smith to survey the property. Smith's report told a sad story and he was obviously embarrassed in sending it to Kell. 'I am sorry not to have it in my power to have given a more favourable account of the condition of the Property', he told Kell in October.

but having learnt from you and from some of the Tenants, in whom I had reason to place confidence, that you had not been provided with the means for several years to make the necessary improvements on the Estate, or even to effect the ordinary repairs, it was not to be wondered at that many of the Tenants would neglect their duty by allowing their Premises to become dilapidated.

I have considered it necessary to express my opinion strongly in order to show the necessity of a considerable outlay of Capital by the Owner of the Estate, together with a revision of the lands so as to allot them more convenient for occupation and which may *enable* you to have the Estate so arranged that will *enable the* Tenants to farm their land to the best advantage, for thus only can they be expected to do well for themselves and the Estate.

He carefully admitted the possibility of errors and insisted that he did not intend to offer any criticism of Kell. But the attached report, based on detailed examination of each tenanted farm, offered little consolation. At Bramham and East Halton estate properties were mixed with freeholds, making it difficult to apportion the land conveniently. Property at Barwick-in-Elmet, Clifford, Wothersome, Rigton, Bardsey, Elsack and Carlton was badly managed; Wothersome, Rigton, Bardsey, Elsack, Rimmington, Steeton, Farnhill and Hamblethorpe needed draining; the Grim stop cottages were in a bad state; fences and repairs were required in several townships; land at Bingley should be let in small lots, because its nearness to industry made it valuable. Only the

Skipton land (where the Earl of Thanet's 3,526 acres had an annual value of £12,499 in 1840) was in a good state.'

Such a report must have appeared almost mortal to a man financially harassed yet deeply proud of his lands. Certainly, he took for himself twice as much as was spent on the estate, but his household and 'social' expenditure was moderate when compared to that of many contemporaries. Lane-Fox carried out the almost obligatory duties of a prominent landowner, as a magistrate, a Deputy Lieutenant of Yorkshire and Leitrim and High Sheriff of the latter county in 1846 and the former in 1873. Such work, coupled with sporting interests, involved considerable expense; but the squire indulged in none of the expensive vices which attracted some of his fellow-squires. His popularity was undoubted, and an obituary writer recalled over forty years later that<sup>2</sup>

about the year 1856 the whole body of Mr. Lane-Fox's tenantry came forward and offered to raise their rents for him. That complimentary offer was declined in kindiy and grateful words ...

While the farmers proceeded to present Mrs. Lane-Fox with a portrait of her husband by Sir Francis Grant, the squire reluctantly decided that the last hope of saving his estate was to sell some portions of it.

## V.

In 1855 and 1856, as prosperous years opened for British agriculture, Lane-Fox sold sizeable acreages at Skipton, Bardsey, Seacroft, Clifford, Alwoodley, Bingley, Netherton, Boston and on the Grimston estate at Dunnington. In 1859 he negotiated an exchange of his mineral rights at Allerton Bywater with John Davison-Bland of Kippax. Further Bingley land was sold in the 1860's and 1870's, and the manor house at Gawthorpe was sold to a Bradford manufacturer, John Horsfall, in 1854. Properties at Henbury and Westbury in Gloucestershire were sold in 1872, and ten years later Lane-Fox sold his manorial rights over the Bingley market, together with town property, to the local Improvement Commissioners for £800. In addition, land was regularly disposed of to railway promoters, at Bardsey, Halton, Horbury, Rimmington, Skipton, Stanley-cum-Wrcnthprpc, Thorner, Thornton and Roscommon. In 1857 and 1888 estates in Waterford were sold, and waterworks undertakings bought land at Bingley, Halton, Eccup, Keighley and Addlebeck.<sup>3</sup> With his new money, Lane-Fox began to pay off debts, improved his estates and granted annuities.

The Irish lands remained very large in area. In April 1876 Lane-Fox still owned 5219 acres in Waterford and 18,850 acres in Leitrim, according to a return for the 'New Domesday' survey by B. Banks, the secretary to the Irish Local Government Board; the rateable values were reported to be £4350. 10. and £7524. 18., respectively. Four months later the Irish Government published a second Return, roughly similar to those published for England, Wales and Scotland; here Lane-Fox was credited with 5422 acres in Waterford and 18,890 in Leitrim, with annual valuations of £4490 and £7321 respectively. Lane-Fox himself later confirmed the first acreages and estimated the gross annual values as £3000 and £6000.<sup>4</sup> He took considerable interest in Irish affairs, serving in local government and encouraging railway construction around his seat at Dromahaire.

Lane-Fox's main interests, however, lay in the West Riding. Here the 'Sporting Squire' was a popular figure in the hunting field. For 48 seasons he was Master of the 13ramham Moor Hunt, which was founded by George Fox-Lane in the 1740's and which

attracted a large following from the industrial towns.' He was a patron of John Nicholson, 'the Airedale Poet', to whom he erected a memorial at Bingley, and he served on many charitable committees. Early in 1846 he was asked by his close friend, William Busfield Ferrand of St. Ives, to contest the West Riding seat against Viscount Morpeth, but declined on the grounds of ill-health. No doubt he was influenced then, and on several later occasions, by his financial troubles. But he played a vigorous part in County Tory politics, bellowing out an old-style philosophy from the hustings. In 1868 he was a leader of the successful Conservative campaign in the Eastern division of the West Riding, condemning Free Trade for having produced 'bacon at 31-d. a pound and . . . Mr. Gladstone's very beastly claret'. His aversions, *The World* once reported, were 'Roman Catholics, Radicals and pheasant preserves, the latter being his especial abomination'.<sup>2</sup>

The protection of the Land — its agriculture, sports and inhabitants, including 'Charley Turnip-Top', the labourer — was at the root of Lane-Fox's attitudes: he saw himself as a defender of gentle rural society against 'the sewage from the towns'. Mechanical innovations were anathema, and foreign travel was ridiculous. 'Pray why should she go abroad?', he asked, when a guest expressed surprise that a fellow-visitor had never seen the Continent. 'I have never been abroad. Bramham, Yorkshire and England are good enough for me.' His later holidays were spent at Torquay, but the High Society of the Metropolis which had once enmeshed his mother had little attraction for him. His satirical bluntness at sporting occasions became as famous as his hunting achievements and devotion to traditional ways. 'A thousand thanks for your kind present of Grouses,' he wrote to Ferrand in 1877:<sup>3</sup>

You never forget me and I am so glad to be reminded of happy days on the old Moor. Now the old style of shooting has gone out, how few men now have a Pointer. Downes asked me to shoot with him on his Moor near Whitby. I said I was too old and idle. He begs me to come and sit on a horse and see his Pointers working. I hear it is a beautiful sight - he says people tell him he is mad because he takes such delight in this old-fashioned and sportsmanlike style of killing his Grouses..

To a man with such tastes business management did not come easily. Yet Lane-Fox joined the undertakers of the Aire & Calder Navigation, during their long struggle with the railways. He did not enjoy the experience and in 1862 told the chairman, William Aldam,<sup>4</sup>

As there is to be a new Director . . . chosen at the Meeting to be held on the 14th, I write a line to you to ask if you think I might resign in the hope that my son might be chosen to fill my place. You know how useless I am as a Director - my son might perhaps take to the work and by degrees become usefull.

Lane-Fox devoted himself to his estates.

In 1873 the official *Return* on landowners reported that Lane-Fox had 15,017 acres in the West Riding, with a gross estimated rental of £21,896. 1. 0., and ten years later, as the 'golden age' was allegedly passing, the old squire stated that about 15,000 acres had a gross annual value of around £17,000. The total English and Irish estates amounted to 39,069 acres in 1883, worth £26,000 *per annum*. The long fight to save the estate had succeeded, although much had been sold, including the minerarrights. In his later years Lane-Fox still maintained his interests, leading the Hunt in a black coat after his wife's death in 1873. His eldest son, George Sackville, was educated at Eton and Christ Church and served with the Yorkshire Hussars Yeomanry; the other sons, James Thomas Richard and Henry, joined the Grenadier Guards and the Royal Horse Guards respectively. The eldest daughter, Marcia, was unmarried, while Carolina Alexina married Major John Orred and Kathleen Mary married her cousin, Francis Liddell.



Along with the tragedy of his wife's death, Lane-Fox faced other blows. His sister, Lady Liddell, died in 1867 and his third son in 1876. Perhaps equally distressing to the stout Anglican sportsman was his eldest son's career. The charming, opinionated, fashionable George threw himself into the activities of the Tractarians in the 1860's, becoming especially interested in the restoration of monastic life in the Church of England — a scheme to which he drew young Charles Wood, later 2nd Viscount Halifax. In 1866, in his usual rapid fashion, he became a Roman Catholic, and only long conversations with Cardinal Manning convinced him that he had no vocation for the priesthood. This was too much for the old squire: a Papist, even a hunting, Tory Papist, was unthinkable at Bramham.' George had given up his inheritance when he planned to become an Anglican monk, and, although he was later twice married and had ten children, it was never restored.' When Lane-Fox died, in November 1896, Bramham passed to James, whose eldest son, George, after a distinguished political career, accepted the revival of the Bingley Barony in 1933.

Whatever thoughts marred his pleasure, however, Lane-Fox could look with pride to one notable achievement: by careful management, sensible sales and personal moderation, he allowed Bramham. to remain a great estate and his grandson to restore and return to Robert Benson's great house.<sup>2</sup>