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From Servants to Staff: The Making of a Modern Estate

Chatsworth 1908-1950

By:

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7. Appendix

Letter 1 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10, Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Reference provided by W. H. Foster-Pegg, 09.02.1920

Mr F. Jennings has applied to me for a testimonial as to his character. I personally have known him for the past two years and believe him to be capable and honest. I understand that his leaving the Estate is due to the stress of circumstances which compel the almost closing down of the work on which he has been engaged for 14 years, and for no other reason. He is genial and accessible, and has qualities of character which can be made much of.

Trusting this will meet attention.

I am,
yours etc.

W. H. Foster Pegg.

Vicar.

Letter 2 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Reference provided by U. R. Burke, 09.02.1920

Mr Jennings is 45 years of age, and has been Head Gardener at Chatsworth for 14 years, where he has given every possible satisfaction. The reason why he is applying for this position, is that the Gardens at Chatsworth are being very much reduced, and he would like to obtain some Official post where his knowledge and long experience can, perhaps, be better utilised than would be the case at Chatsworth where everything is to be on a very much smaller scale than in the past. He is, however, leaving for no fault whatsoever, and His Grace is very sorry to lose his services.

Letter 3 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter of Resignation by Frank Jennings to U. R. Burke, 09.04.1920

R. Burke Esq.

I wish to give you notice to leave His Grace's Service from to day.

Yours respectfully

Frank Jennings.

Letter 4 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from Frank Jennings to Victor Cavendish, 9th Duke of Devonshire, 20.04.1920

Your Grace,

May it please Your Grace to excuse the liberty I am taking but I beg most respectfully to approach Your Graces on my resignation from your service. I do not wish Your Graces, to make any excuses or blame any one wrongfully, but as my future depends on your judgement I venture to lay a few facts before you in my own defence. My wife was practically accused of being an imposter playing on people's sympathy & all the time being a brandy drinker, which excused her sickness. Your Graces does it seem feesable that we should spend upwards of £150 on specialists etc. for my wife if that was the cause. I can refer Your Graces to some of the most eminent specialists of the day who operated on her & only just in time to save her life. Viz. Dr Hewetson of Birmingham. Dr Holford of Burton on Trent etc. Our local Dr. was treating her for Brights disease for over 5 years & told her it was a waste of money to see anyone else, these Drs found no trace & said she has had her life spoilt should have been operated on years ago, & said it was wicked. What that poor woman suffered I alone know, I would be up all night with her then she would be better & get up & out, when I returned to dinner she was down again, Your Graces can imagine my home life for these last 6 years, & I have never told anyone as after what our Dr said I expected the end any time & people did not believe, thought we were making a fuss. She did say she can do nothing for 12 months, & Your Graces will understand that this business has not helped her & am sorry to say at the present is very poorly. Referring to myself, Your Graces I have had my faults, & the only excuse was worry, my home life was

ruined through this mistake my lifes work was also ruined, & I was a broken man, I could neither eat or sleep & will admit this last 5 months I have been very indiscreet, but that is all over now. I knew I could not live on at Chatsworth but was waiting until the wife was strong enough to move with me, & hoped something would turn up. I am selling up all my home & the wife & children will live in one place & me in another until I can find something to do. I made a mistake Your Graces but I was sorely tired, no friends to give me a lift & when Mr. Burke told me straight off that misery about my wife, I forgot everything don't know what I did or said I remember nothing until my father came to bring me away. I think Your Graces I need a little consideration after nearly 14 years service, every man has a fall, a kind word would have helped me. Mr. Burke was cross believing a lie & I must say was very hard on me. I should be deeply grateful if Your Graces could give me a reference for my past services, again asking Your Graces Pardon.

I beg to remain Your Graces Obedient Servant

Frank Jennings.

Letter 5 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from Frank Jennings to Roland Burke, 26.04.1920

U. Roland Burke Esq.

Sir,

My Father handed me your letter (which I take concerns the letter I wrote their Graces, with my knowledge, you were with them in London & would see it.) My Father regrets that owing to stress of business he is unable to meet you in London & much prefers me to manage my own affairs. I have told my Father everything, not sparing myself anyway, as there is no need to do so. As I feel confident in my mind you will not understand that owing to force of circumstances & mental strain (not owing entirely to my lapse during the past 5 months) that I made a mistake & gave you the chance I did. But in the face of that Sir don't you think you might have given me a chance?

I did my work, ask my men & this is about only one that will speak ill of me. I recommended Marples to you (& do not regret it he is worthy of it) well knowing that he would succeed me & helped him in every way I could. Why did you not tell me straight when I moved from the Gardens, you knew quite well I was a marked man, so did I but I trusted your word. I know I've men I've trusted at Chatsworth that have been cutting my throat behind my back & unfortunately those I've been the best friend too. I trust their fate may be more merciful than mine. I've learnt a very bitter lesson trust no man. If every man was punished for a mistake on an Estate how many would be left? I was not wanted & you took the first opportunity to kick a poor devil when he was down instead of giving him an helping hand as a Churchman & a

Gentleman the sooner I shake the dust of Edensor from my feet & settle this miserable business the happier I shall be. You can take it from me Sir as far as my folly was concerned that has finished for ever. My last 6 months at Chatsworth was hell. Had I been in good health I could have fought against it. You took my horse & trap away & I was laughed & sneered at & everything was done to make me feel I was not wanted, you gave my men orders & when I told them to do anything Mr. Burke told me to do so & so, & was practically laughed at. Do you wonder me going wrong & feeling it? All the peaches & figs were tied up & got ready & then the whole thing destroyed my position was the laughing stock of some of those whose tongues had the licence & opportunities of talking to the powers at Chatsworth & who should have been above listening to them especially when a man is not there to defend himself & I can only trust that their object has been obtained & they are satisfied with their work. But its no use raking all this past up again. I could have taken my own gruel like a man, but when you accused an innocent women & not only that a sick woman (& at that the best God ever gave a man, one who never had a wrong word for any one & helped all she could) that was low down & spite on the part of the man who had failed in his profession. I regret this part of the business more that anything & I could have stood anything excepting this blow & of course this matter will have to be cleared up. You might ask Mrs. Marples if my wife's illness was a fake when at her house & also Marples they saw her in some of her worst attacks. I've told my wife everything & the only regret she has is that she is not strong enough to see Her Grace. What you have told Their Graces I know not neither do I care, I admit my fault but think the way you treated me was exceptionally hard, you had the power to help me & be mercifull, instead of that you treated me like a dog, never giving me a chance. When I was doing all the extra work in London & saved pounds & begging Carnations & other plants,

that would have cost pounds, things were different, but as soon as I was not wanted I was kicked out. I may tell you Sir that most people in your district are very upset & think I've been treated very hard.

I hope to settle my affairs at Edensor on May 6th, & then shall trouble you no more concerning myself. There are a foul place ferret box etc. at the house at Edensor, which will be left on the premises. As a last favour may I ask for the services of Heathcote during the sale & the day provisions & to help to clean up, as my wife will be unable to come.

Thanking you in anticipation

I remain respectfully yours

Frank Jennings

Letter 6 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from Roland Burke to Mr. Jennings, father of Frank Jennings, 27.04.1920

27th April 1920

Dear Sir,

I have received a letter from your son in which he says that you are not able to come up and meet me in London this week, as I had suggested. Also that you much prefer that he should manage his own affairs. I quite understand your position, but think that probably if I had been able to have had a talk with you it might have been in the interests of your son's future.

He has written me a letter the contents of which I very much regret, and of course you will understand that I cannot possible help him in the future, which I have always been anxious to do, if he maintains this attitude towards myself.

Yours truly,

Decided not to send this letter

Letter 7 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from W.W. Rhoades, Estates Office, Albury to Roland Burke, 23.07.1920

Private & Confidential

Dear Sir,

Frank Jennings, who I understand was Gardener at Chatsworth, is an applicant for a Head Gardener's place which we have vacant on this Estate, and I shall be much obliged if you can tell me the reason why he left Chatsworth, and whether you can recommend him as a first class gardener and a good manager of men.

I shall also be glad to know if he is hardworking, honest and sober.

Yours Faithfully,

W. W. Rhoades,

Estates Office,

Albury, Guildford.

Letter 8 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from Roland Burke to W.W. Rhoades, Estates Office, Albury,

26.07.1920

26th July 1920

Private & Confidential

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter about Frank Jennings. The reasons why he left Chatsworth are as follows,- He was here as Head Gardener for 16 years and gave every possible satisfaction until quite recently. He had a very big job before the War and a large number of men under him, with everything kept up very well. Then the War came and he lost all his able bodied men, and the maintenance of the Gardens was of course a very difficult matter. He had a most difficult job to carry on and he never seemed to be able to adapt himself to the necessarily altered conditions of things at the end of the war when we tried to pick up. This was greatly due, I think, to the serious illness of his Wife, who was frightfully ill for a very long time. Altogether things were not satisfactory and I persuaded him to resign his post.

There was a time also when he became somewhat intemperate, this, in my opinion, was only temporary, during the time he was no doubt very much worried about his Wife and other matters.

I believe, myself, that if he could get a fresh slate elsewhere he would work hard and give every satisfaction, but the Duke agreed that he would be very much better away from here, although he was very sorry to lose him, as he had been a confidential

servant for many years and given every possible satisfaction in the past. He is an undoubted good gardener in fact quite first class, and a particularly nice man to have anything to do with.

I feel that it is my duty to write to you quite frankly about him as I should like you to know all the circumstances and reasons for his leaving here, and if you could possibly see your way to give him a fresh start I really believe that he would give you satisfaction.

If you care to write to me again in confidence I shall be most happy to answer anything further you may like to ask.

Yours faithfully,

Burke.

Letter 9 DC U.R. Burke's Chief Agents Papers, 4/10 Regarding Frank Jennings, Head Gardener, Letter from W. W. Rhoades to Roland Burke, 30.07.1920

Private & Confidential

Dear Sir,

I am obliged by your letter of the 26th instant, with reference to Frank Jennings.

I have since heard from Jennings himself to say, that he has had an offer "outside private work" whatever that may mean, so that I am sorry I wrote to you about him.

Yours Faithfully,

W. W. Rhoades,

Estates Office,

Albury, Guildford.

Letter 10 DC DF15/3/5/9/4 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 10.01.1940

Dearest Duchess,

I think you will like to see the enclosed letter from Miss Littleton & the copy of F. Bloem's letter. You no longer contribute to her pension, as Eddy took it over, & I think he has covenanted for it so it has not been withdrawn up to now. It is very hard on the Coleman's having to exchange their flat for such a vastly more expensive one I suppose Miss M, having given most of her money to found the L.W.H., feels she has a just call on their premises but it was a pity that she didn't move in from the start I think your advice to the Colemans to look for a less expensive flat & give her notice is good - for they cannot possibly afford such a rent it would indeed be a disaster if Tower Hill lost Mr Coleman. I don't think the amount subscribed for his stipend was more than £450. It was to start with, but the Duke gave £50 - you gave £50 & now give £25. Lady Ward no longer subscribes & someone else died or gave up.

How awful to have a big Camp in the Park with a Girls' School at Chatsworth! but won't they enjoy it. I hope it won't be for Canadians for they do seem to be a wild lot. You seem to have got a lot of Chatsworth worries without the power to put things right which I am sure must be very trying to you. I am sorry that Eddy is so overstrained- I wonder what the feeling is about the changes in the Cabinet.

I have got to go to see Miss Wolseley Lewis tomorrow she is having "elevenses" (as people

don't like going out for tea) I think its a horrid idea but I have to go to Guildford anyhow to consult with the W.V.S. head lady as I am organiser for the collection of paper in Bramley. I think I ought to start a donkey cart! It is very cold again & misery of miseries the damp has come on my bedroom wall (where they were supposed to have cured it) + spoilt some of the pretty wall paper. I think the stucco walls do something tiresome when the sun gets on them after frost. It is very cold again.

Yours affly

EL.

Letter 11 DC DF15/3/5/9/6 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 21.06.1940

Dearest Duchess,

I do indeed grieve to think how many extra worries have been added to you. The decision about the children is a crucial one & so perplexing to know what is for the best. Dorothy rang me up last night & said after very long discussions they had decided not to send theirs to Canada. Harold feels strongly they should not be the ones to go. Poor Dorothy hadn't sleep for nights, worrying about it, but declared that now the decision was made she felt better. I am sure Sco would look after the children sensibly, & Barry is so nice; I feel Philippa & Timothy would be all right with them but it is dreadfully difficult after 20 years absence to think of suitable people to help out with older children- Mary Angus is kindness itself but so nervy & figetty she would drive any young thing to distraction, but as regards money surely Forbes would arrange to advance some. They would, I am sure, make a fund together. Barry German re-invested my \$300 Victory Bonds in Price Brothers - I would love these to join the fund - unfortunately the script was lost & I should have to pay £5 to get a new one before the investment could be sold out but it ought to be worth at least £100 by now I think. Dorothy said Diana Gordon Lennox had cabled that she would take 20 children it seems incredible but I feel it is like her. It is all a complete nightmare - but we shall come through - Thank you very much for offering me a home if mine is destroyed. Actually I believe I would like to perish with it - I have so enjoyed my year in it and anyhow I have had a grand life + enjoyed it all!

I went to the Egertons to tea yesterday – principally to get your families' news - when I came back I found your letter but it was too late to catch a post with an answer. Then Dorothy rang up in the evening. I usually spend Sunday nights at Walton with Alice - twins are difficult for her but she is most uncomplaining. If it would help I would write to Mary Angus. I am almost sure that Forbes is a director of the Bank of Montreal + must know all the other directors how about Mr Pope (son of Lady Pope) who is the Manager of the Bank of Montreal in London (at least he was when the Duke was Chairman of it) Would he arrange for a loan?

Yours affly

EL.

It is good that Billy is back safely -

Letter 12 DC DF15/3/5/9/7 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 27.06.1940

Dearest Duchess,

My heart aches to think of you & Anne parting with those darling children. Especially when Henry is so far away - I am sure Scho will look after them very well, she certainly brought her own children up satisfactorily. I wish Rachel could find a nearer spot than Winniepeg for Davina - Have you thought of Enid Owen at Montreal? She had 2 very nice girls. I, too, have wished you could have gone with the children but I see all your difficulties & it is wretched if you do not feel up to much & you simply could not get on without Webb.

The French behaviour is a cruel blow – as soldiers in the line some seem to have fought magnificently. A private told me he always wanted a frenchman next him, as "they were such fighters & full of courage." but they were indeed badly led. We shall do better without them & horrible as it all will be no doubt for us, it will also be pretty grim for any Germans who have to do the invading. We had airraid warnings on Monday & Tuesday nights but I should have slept through both if it had not been for a neighbour! I had given her my key, she woke me up on Monday banging on my bedroom door & then she fell down the first flight of my stairs, banged & cut her nose & bled for 2 hrs & more like a pig - I have never seen such black eyes. I felt somewhat annoyed with her for it was so stupid to come into a strange house without a torch & when she did the same (except for falling) in Tuesday I told her we were both better in our own beds & she replied she only came in case I was nervous! Now I have kept my key!

I suppose you didn't know of anyone else going to Canada who would give an age to 2 children (boy at preparatory school, girl about 12) who are going to friends in Canada. The mother so longs to tack them on to someone.

I have an old aunt coming from London for a week on Tuesday. I wonder if she will get away again. I send Miss Walton's letter I do hope the poor soul won't have to flee her home, I should hate to that more than anything. I think much of you

Yours affly

EL.

Letter 13 DC DF15/3/5/9/19 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 07.11.1942

Dearest Duchess,

I have had no luck about David's watch. The man cannot take any more repairs.

I wonder if the little books are any good. With the cards & postage they cost 5/ 6. Do you want me to look for some more with Bible stories?

I received the enclosed letter from Mrs How. Her writing is difficult to read but the gist of it is that your L.W.H. subscription is asked for and she is too shy!! to ask for it.

I was much amused to read in the Times yesterday under the announcement of the Duke & Duchess of Gloucester's anniversary of their wedding – that “Major Sir Edward Samuel Bart R.A. is 46 today”

I have spent the last two afternoons gardening vigorously but there is still a lot to be done.

I am going to luncheon at Hatchford End on Tuesday.

Yours affly

El

If you want more books don't send any money until I have got them all.

Isn't it wonderfully cheering to think how well things are going in Egypt.

Letter 14 DC DF15/3/5/9/21 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 27.12.1942

Dearest Duchess,

I returned yesterday after spending Xmas with Alice & found 3 letters from you awaiting me here.

First I must thank you very much indeed for your kind Christmas present & card I badly need a firm little table & now will look out for one. I am most grateful to you. I am much mortified to hear of the unsuitability of some of the little holy books I sent. The shop was very crowded & I was rather rushed for time so went by the advice of the assistant, but it was stupid of me to have had them posted direct. I ought to have brought them back to read & look over.

Anne may have told you that Bromley was recently bombed & some friends of mine – an old couple of 80 & 76 lost their lovely house. They hated the thought of hotel life so I suddenly thought of offering to rent my house to them for one month or 2 at the longest. They jumped at it & now I am having a dreadful time turning out for they want to come in on Thursday – I shall go to Alice 52a High Street, Walton on Thames, Surrey for most of the time. She is terribly overdone, there are so many rules & restrictions & her staff is always fluctuating & many are so inefficient. I think I ought to be able to help her. I made hundreds of mincepies for her before Christmas.

Now about poor Shimwell – Moucher is definitely worried about his position & I am sure wants it to be improved. I did suggest that S. might take Jackson's place but she felt that would be an intolerable position for him – Jackson being so easy going, is very popular. Shimwell, or anyone who replaced him, would have a stiff task but it would be particularly hard for Shimwell –

1. He would appear to have pushed J. out
2. Owing to his vigour & perhaps somewhat uncompromising manner, he is not very popular, except with men like Bond or Alsop & Maltby.
3. He is fond of Mr Hartopp but he would get no backing from him

I am very much afraid that as long as Mr Hartopp is agent, Jackson will remain & I never heard any suggestions that Clive might be put into Chatsworth but when the change does come Shimwell as Subagent or assistant Subagent would be admirable. Though Bolton would be better for he has always to live down at Chatsworth his humble origin – a despicable attitude of many country people.

As I see it there will be no vacancy for S. as long as Mr Hartopp is at Chatsworth for he likes & relies on Jackson & would not consent to a change – such a change would mean a tightening up in many ways – letters of complaint would go to the Estate office & to Eddy. There must be a vigorous agent behind a zealous Clerk of the works, when reforms have to be put through.

I just can't see a way out at Chatsworth as things are at present. It is deplorable that a man of such ability, who has served you so very very faithfully, should come to such a pass – that it is due to war conditions makes it no easier for, at such a time, efficiency, such as his, should

be put to full use.

If you could have a calm talk with Moucher to find out if there was any hope of a future position for Shimwell it would be worth while for him to continue to mark time, in the knowledge that it would not be for long but if it is too indefinite I think he should be urged to cut adrift. He will be miserable but with so much influence & so many openings now, he ought to get a job which would interest & absorb him & then he would be happier. If it was in the Sheffield district he would be in touch with his Mother.

When I write to Moucher I will tell her that I think you have Shimwell's position a good deal on your mind & then perhaps she will bring up the subject.

I have to interrupt this to listen to the Archibshop's service – what a lovely service it was. I was fond of it.

May the New Year bring you more happiness & less worry

El.

I am very sorry about David's knee-

Letter 15 DC DF15/3/5/9/29 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 24.09.1944

My dearest Duchess,

I was so very touched that, in all your shattering grief, you thought of sending me a message through the Egertons. As you know, your sorrows are my sorrows & my heart aches to think of you in such unhappiness. You will be unhappy in your own great loss, but, more still, in thinking of all it means to Moucher & Eddy

Billy had turned out so well – his was such a charming personality & with so much ability too, he would have gone far. It all seems too cruel.

I think Andrew has really a sterling character too, he will steady down & be worthy of the position he will occupy. I do pray daily for his safety.

I was away on Monday & Tuesday. Maud telephoned to me on Wednesday, she told me Moucher was wonderful.

I hope you will get away for a bit but fear that, wherever you go there is sorrow. I am glad Rachel is with you – Dorothy gave me such a very nice account of Philippa and Timothy, she thought them both quite charming & unspoilt. I am glad Canada has proved a success for them – All these dear children will be a help to you.

My thoughts are ever with you in so much sympathy

Your devoted

El.

Letter 16 DC DF15/3/5/9/30 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 06.01.1945

Dearest Duchess,

Your letter reached me yesterday the news grieves me very much, though the grounds for hope were so slender it is but human to cling to them & so much anxiety & uncertainty must have undermined poor Lady Caroline's strength to bear the blow now it has finally fallen. I know how much you suffer for her. It always seems so utterly tragic when an only son is killed but to have 3 sons & to lose them all is a 3 fold agony. I know how wrapped up she was in her children & how she has loved & cared for Bowood for them.

I can't think that Rachel means to be unkind – she could hardly have been serious in saying she lived in terror as a child for she really had a most marvellous time. "Ton Ton" adored her & was always inclined to humour or spoil her & in Canada her life was one round of fun.

How strange it is that nearly everyone looks back to their youth & when recounting its details always picks up on something – such as wearing an unbecoming hat – to make fun of. I am sure if challenged by someone outside the family they would all declare how much they loved their life at Holker, at Lismore & at Bolton - & what children ever had more glorious times?

How Rachel used to tease Dorothy till she cried. I certainly never remember that she, herself, was ever put upon or scared!!

It is a difficult position when daughters return home after years away & perhaps she feels she has not much scope & gets unconsciously a bit bored. She is really such a darling. I expect she is, as times, a but perturbed at having to cope with Davina.

It is very nice about Maud & such a very well deserved decoration – The Sheffield Telegraph had a nice bit about her & a beaming photograph – I must dash to the post

Your devoted Ex sec

El.

Letter 17 DC DF15/3/5/9/31 Letters Exchanged Between Evelyn Cavendish & Elsie Saunders, Elsie Saunders, Private Secretary, to Evelyn Cavendish, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire, 19.02.1945

Dearest Duchess,

I have spent 2 nights thinking over your letter. I quite agree that if Eddy & Moucher return to Derbyshire you are too close to the centre of things at Edensor equally, I think that, if they go to a corner of Chatsworth, Andrew & Debo would be too near, that is, if it is to be an all the year round home – but this is their affair.

I really hate the thought of Hardwick for you because of its loneliness & the fact that there are so few walks on the flat. If you did decide to go there London for the worst months of the winter would be essential. In any case, I do not think the move could be this summer (1) Isn't Hardwick packed with furniture? (2) Wouldn't domestic staff be impossible until the war is well over? [written in red] unless your present one would go with you. [end of red] with the £10 limit to the house renovations wouldn't it be impossible to get the pantry alteration done? (4) If Debo did go to Edensor wouldn't they want to wait till Andrew was out of the Army & had made some plan about his future career?

Are the Oliviers likely to stay on at Ashford Hall? I know you wouldn't like Churchdale but Ashford has such possibilities.

I have been to the Egertons today & I thought how happy you could be in a house like theirs – (garden now gay with snowdrops, aconites & seillas) away from the annoyances of a

mismanaged estate but I suppose you never would consider renting a house in Surrey. I do not agree that you are too old.

I shed no tears over Heathy Lea for I did not like the idea of it for you. Old Hartopp can't rumble round much longer so perhaps the Clives will soon move into his house & Heathy Lea will be let.

Couldn't you tell Eddy or Moucher that you had always looked on Edensor House as a war time arrangement & were naturally prepared to vacate it when conditions allowed for the change.

I am sorry you think of doing without Ilott I don't think you could, or should, live at Hardwick without a manservant though one who was less of a Butler might be better. I think, in any case, servants are now counting their hours on duty & will take time off constantly I have seen this happening so much lately, it is going to make things very difficult and certainly a Duchess can't answer her own front door bell! Do keep Ilott on for as long as possible, to have someone you can depend on is worth a few drawbacks.

I was so sorry to see that Mrs Holroyd Smyth had died suddenly - what will that family do without her & who will ring the church bell & do all the chores she took on herself? I expect she died of over work.

Why did Mrs Clifford B-Taylor die?

I heard from Jane Abraham in answer to my letter when the old Bishop died – he was 88 – he had the great happiness of seeing his bishop son from Canada before he died.

I hope David has got his commission & that he is getting quit of G.

I wonder how Maud is. I thought her looking far from well & she was due back at work in a week's time. She told me a funny story:-

A woman went into a maternity hospital to have her fourth child there. The matron said to her “Well we’ll soon be having another chip of the old block” to which she replied “Well, no, I’m afraid this is a splinter from a Pole!”

It is good of you to go to Bowood such visits are so heartbreaking but it will help Lady Caroline to have you to talk to. I hope she is not getting worse.

I wish this was a more helpful letter

Yours affly

El.

If you address your letters Bramley Guildford Surrey They come a day quicker.

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