

LEEDS CASTLE'S POLITICS & POLITICIANS



THIS BOOK BELONGS TO



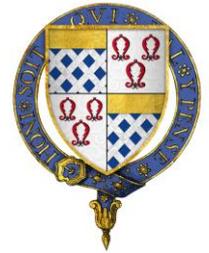
LEEDS CASTLE'S POLITICS & POLITICIANS

WELCOME TO LEEDS CASTLE!

Leeds Castle is a major heritage and tourism site in the south east of England. It dates from the 12th century and is well known as having been a royal residence for over 300 years. Less well known is its political history.

From the 16th century onwards Leeds Castle was privately owned by various people, a number of which were politicians. These include: Sir Anthony St Leger, Sir Richard Smythe, Thomas Culpeper, Thomas Fairfax, Charles & Philip Wykeham-Martin.

ANTHONY ST. LEGER was granted Leeds Castle in 1552, but also held offices such as High Sheriff of Kent (principal law enforcement officer before the days of a police force) and the Lord Deputy of Ireland (the king's representative in Ireland).



Arms of Anthony St. Leger

Many of the politicians who owned the castle were Members of Parliament (MP), often elected and representing the local area such as Maidstone and Kent. They also represented other parts of the country, far away from Leeds Castle where their families owned land and had political connections.

SIR JOHN SMYTHE (owned castle 1628-1632) was a member of parliament for Mitchell in Cornwall. In such areas the number of electors was restricted to a small number of male property owners, male traders (Burgesses) and an appointed male local official (Portreeve). When Sir John Smythe was elected in 1626 the number of eligible voters was only 24! The town of Mitchell is now part of the modern Truro and Falmouth UK Parliament constituency with over 72,000 registered voters, with women making up over half of the electorate.

Another example of a person combining different roles was

THOMAS FAIRFAX, 5TH LORD FAIRFAX OF CAMERON (owned castle 1719-1747) was both a senior army officer, supporter of William of Orange and who also found time to be an MP from 1690 – 1695. He had inherited the castle through his marriage to Catherine Culpeper. Before the Married Woman's Property Act of 1870, women who held any property were required to give it to their husbands on marriage.



Thomas Fairfax's eldest son, - Thomas Fairfax, 6th Lord Fairfax of Cameron – had strong ties to the Colonies in America. Through his family links with Culpepers, the 6th Lord came to be the owner of what was known as the Northern Neck Proprietary – a large area of land granted by the Crown and now part of the modern US State of Virginia. He left the castle to his brother Robert, 7th Lord Fairfax and made his home in America. The 6th Lord himself kidnapped Africans and then used them as labour on his 30 farms. The profits derived from the enslaved persons and farms helped maintain Leeds Castle during this period. The 6th Lord also employed a young George Washington (the first US President) to survey his vast estate. All the enslaved persons and lands were confiscated in 1779 at the conclusion of American War of Independence because the 6th Lord was still loyal to the Crown. To lessen the pain of this loss the 7th Lord Robert Fairfax was awarded £13,758 in 1792, by Act of Parliament as a compensation for this loss.

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In more modern times, politicians, rather than owning Leeds Castle have instead been entertained at the castle or used it to hold important meetings.

Lady Baillie, the last owner of Leeds Castle, a celebrated society hostess, counted several politicians amongst her friends. Her third husband was himself an MP, Sir Adrian William Maxwell Baillie. Sir Adrian first attempt to become an MP resulted in defeat, when he contested the parliamentary constituency of Linlithgowshire.. He was defeated by Labour politician Manny Shinwell in 1929, but ran again in 1931 where he was elected as Unionist Party MP for Linlithgowshire,[where his family home was situated. Sir Adrian was defeated in his attempt at re-election in 1935 by George Mathers (who later became the first Baron Mathers). After the death from influenza of Herbert Spender-Clay, he was then elected as Conservative MP for Tonbridge at a by-election in 1937, but stood down in 1945. Sir Adrian, reportedly "devoted himself to his constituents and to campaigning for improved conditions for agricultural workers.



Lady Baillie & Sir Adrian

Lady Baillie's close friends included leading politicians of the day, such as Henry David Reginald Margesson and Baron Geoffrey-Lloyd.

The following is an excerpt from a speech given by Sir Adrian in the House of Commons in the evening of 6 February 1934 on the subject of Disarmament.

So far as the question of future war is concerned, I think that as a matter of practical politics it could not be in the interests of Germany or of Herr Hitler for some time to come to engage in war. The programme of internal reconstruction which they have set for themselves will take all their time. I will give one more reason for dispelling for the time being all idea of war, and that is that, if a war were to arise in the near future, Herr Hitler must obviously be afraid that the power which he now has would pass from him into other hands.

The United Kingdom declared war on Germany on 3 September 1939, five years after Sir Adrian's speech.

Geoffrey Lloyd was a long-time friend of Lady Baillie. He was elected as Member of Parliament for Birmingham Ladywood in 1931 and held the seat until 1945. During his time in office he held various roles including; Parliamentary Private Secretary to Stanley Baldwin from 1931-1935. the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, the Secretary for Mines, the Secretary for Petroleum, the Chairman of the Oil Control Board, the Minister in charge of Petroleum Warfare Department , the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Fuel and Power and finally the Minister of Information in 1945. Mr Lloyd also was appointed a Privy Counsellor in 1943. During his time as Minister in Charge of Petroleum from 1940 – 1945 he was responsible for operations called PLUTO and FIDO. He served as Governor of British Broadcasting Corporation, 1946-1949, but returned to Parliament in 1950 until 1974. During this time he was Minister of Fuel and Power, and later, Minister of Education. A close friend of Lady Baillie and a frequent visitor to Leeds Castle, Geoffrey Lloyd was created a life peer on 6 May 1974 as Baron Geoffrey-Lloyd of Broomfield, Kent. He helped Lady Baillie to set up the trust to which she bequeathed the Castle and he subsequently became the first chairman of the Leeds Castle Foundation following her death in 1974.

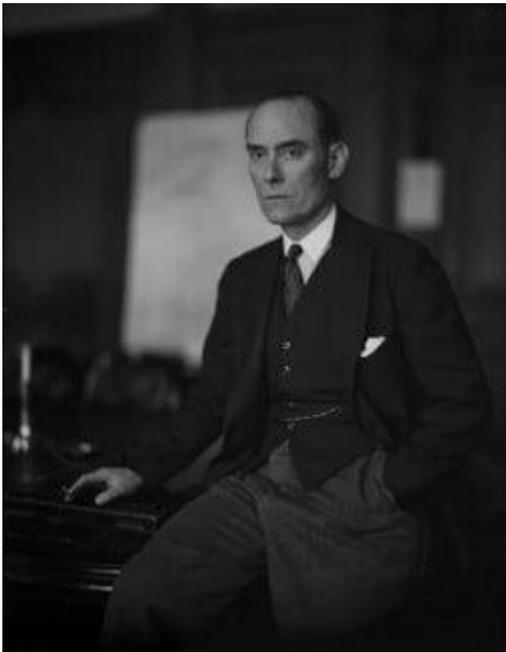


Baron Geoffrey-Lloyd

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Throughout the war, the Castle remained a haven for government ministers and other guests. In 1940 the actor David Niven spent a weekend at Leeds Castle, along with Geoffrey Lloyd, David Margesson who was the Government Chief Whip and Harcourt ('Crinks') Johnstone, the Liberal Whip. It was this visit that David Niven recounted in his autobiography, *The Moon's a Balloon*.

Another biographical account came from Sir Henry. Sir Henry "Chips" Channon, who was an MP for over 20 years wrote in his diaries that he spent a weekend at Leeds Castle in April 1943. "It was a lyrical day – the heat, the gauze-like mist rising from the fruit blossoms, the spinach-green fields – all were intoxicating, as was the grey castle rising from the moat as I approached it. Black swans followed by cygnets were swimming around. I sat in the sunshine, drank champagne and ate plovers' eggs."



David Margesson



Harcourt Johnstone



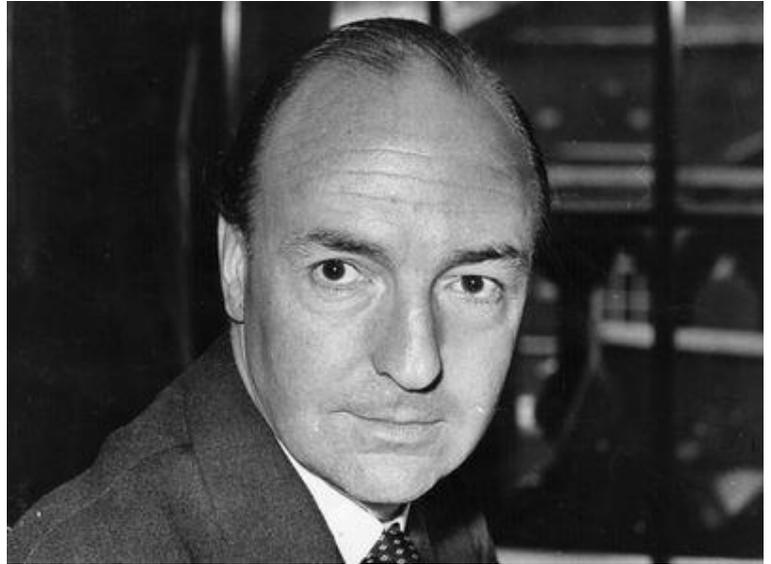
David Niven



Henry 'Chips' Channon

LEEDS CASTLE'S POLITICS & POLITICIANS

After the war, politicians continued to find a haven at Leeds castle, and In 1963, John Profumo, the minister of war in Harold McMillan's government was spending a short break at Leeds Castle. Over the weekend news broke of his involvement in a major political sex scandal. He was able to take refuge inside; the castle and moat keeping the press reporters and photographers from all the leading newspapers.



John Profumo

Following Lady Baillie's death, the castle was still able to host meetings and has hosted many.

July 1978 -

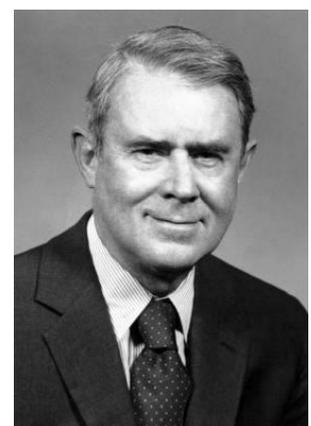
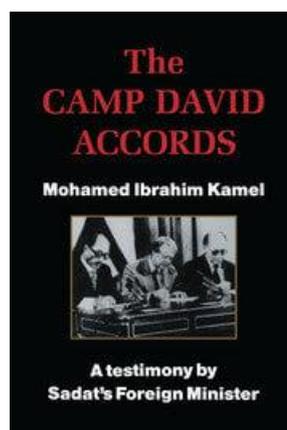
In July 1978, a meeting was held between US, Israeli and Egyptian Foreign Ministers at Leeds Castle. Chaired by US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, this meeting was regarded a vital stepping stone towards what was known as Camp David Accords later in 1978 which are seen as one of most events in Arab-Israeli peace diplomacy.

Present at the meeting were also Moshe Dyan, the Israeli Foreign Minister and Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, the Egyptian Foreign Minister. Security was exceptionally tight, and included divers in the moat!

In 1986 Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel published his book entitled The Camp David Accords, in which there is a chapter entitled Inside the Ramparts of Leeds Castle.



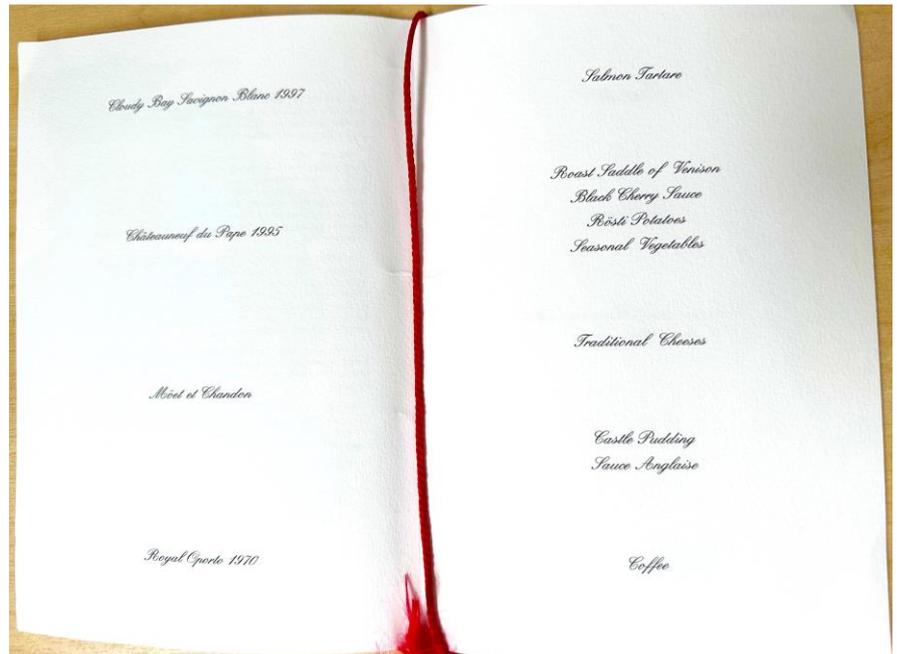
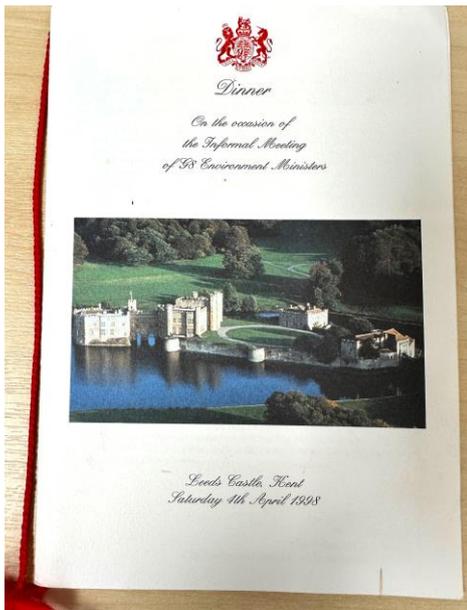
Moshe Dayan



Cyrus Vance

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On Sat, Apr 04 1998 Leeds Castle played host to a 2 day summit of G8 Environment Ministers. British Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott attended together with ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States. The gathering was organised principally to discuss ways to meet the 5.2 percent reduction in emissions of six greenhouse gases pledged by 2008-2012 in the Kyoto pact signed in Japan in December.



The menu for dinner that evening

The following day, Jon Prescott agreed to a photo shoot in the Leeds Castle Aviary. The newspaper reported 'A PARROT left John Prescott squealing with pain yesterday - after it bit his finger.' That's wildlife for you," said the Deputy Prime Minister, as he posed for photographs with it at an environmental summit at Leeds Castle in Kent. Then he bravely let Chuckie carry on up his arm - until somebody said: "Watch out, sir, he's after your ear lobe." Later an expert said: "The bird could easily have crushed his finger flat. It's the way they open Brazil nuts."



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In September 2004 Leeds Castle again hosted peace talks. This time between Britain and Northern Ireland. Delegates included the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, the Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern. Security was again very tight, seeing the divers return and constant bag searches, car checks etc for all staff working on the estate.



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Table of political owners and guests at Leeds Castle.

Name		Highest Political Office	Link to Leeds Castle
Sir Anthony St. Leger (Sellenger)	c.1496-1559	MP	Owner
Sir Richard Smythe	1563-1628	MP	Owner
Sir John Smythe	c.1592-1632	MP	Owner
Sir Thomas Colepeper (Culpeper)	1575-1662	MP	Owner
Thomas Fairfax, 5th Lord. Fairfax of Cameron	1657-1710	MP	Owner
Robert Fairfax, 7th Lord Fairfax of Cameron	1707-1793	MP	Owner
Charles Wykeham-Martin	1801 – 1870	MP	Owner
Philip Wykeham-Martin	1829 – 1878	MP	Owner
Sir Adrian William Maxwell Baillie, 6th Baronet	1898 – 1947	MP	Husband of Owner
Henry David Reginald Margesson, 1st Viscount Margesson, PC	1890 - 1965	British Minister of War	House Guest
Geoffrey William Geoffrey-Lloyd, Baron Geoffrey-Lloyd	1902 – 1984	Minister of petroleum, Minister of Information.	Trustee
Moshe Dayan	1915 – 1981	Israeli Foreign Minister	Middle East Peace Talks at Leeds Castle in 1978
Cyrus Vance	1917-2002	US Secretary of State	Middle East Peace Talks at Leeds Castle in 1978
Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel	1927 – 2001	Egyptian Foreign Minister	Middle East Peace Talks at Leeds Castle in 1978
Sir Winston Churchill	1874 – 1965	Prime Minister	House Guest
John Profumo	1915 – 2006	British Minister of War	House Guest
Sir Anthony Eden	1897 –1977	Prime Minister	House Guest