

THE BANKRUPTCY OF THE SUDELEYS AT GREGYNOG TOWARDS THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Lord Sudeley

Readers may know that Gregynog, the manor house near Newtown left by the two Davies sisters to the University of Wales, belonged for exactly one hundred years, from 1795 till 1895, to my old English family the Tracys, later Hanbury-Tracys and created Lords Sudeley at Queen Victoria's Coronation. We inherited Gregynog from our Welsh cousins and patrons of the old Welsh bards, the Blayneys, who had been there since the fifteenth century. The Carved Parlour at Gregynog records the illustrious descent of the Blayneys from early Welsh royalty.¹

The present Librarian at Gregynog, Mary Oldham, felt that compared to the Blayney period and the period of the two Davies sisters who made Gregynog so justly famous between the two wars, the Sudeleys have been overlooked. To repair that omission, she wrote an admirable piece for the Journal of Newtown's Local History Group, *The Newtonian*, and here is my sequel to her endeavour.²

The old Tory view of property is that it creates obligations. Without evictions, allowing ample abatements of rent, and incurring a large debt, we carried our estate at Gregynog through the earlier phases of the agricultural depression at a time when our tenants were unprotected by the welfare state. When we left, there was great sorrow. It happened because Lloyds Bank filed for bankruptcy against us. Their decision to file for bankruptcy was controversial, we still have no full knowledge of why it happened, and I argue that this decision could have been avoided. Out of our case I was always told I would never get retroactive justice, but might well see changes in the law.

I

The full history of my Tracy family is given in *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington*.³ We are descended from Edward the Confessor's nephew Ralph Earl of Hereford, who upon the accession of his uncle to the throne was endowed with great estates. These estates included Toddington in Gloucestershire, which we kept for nearly a thousand years, till the end of the nineteenth century when, together with Gregynog,

1 W. Scott Owen, 'Parochial History of Tregynon', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 30 (1898), 1–168; Lord Sudeley, 'Gregynog before 1900', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 62 (1971–72), 166–82; Michael Siddons, 'The Heraldic Carving at Gregynog', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 88 (2000), 53–62; Glyn Tegai Hughes, 'The Montgomeryshire Blayneys – the Poets and After', *Montgomeryshire Collections*, 95 (2007), 55–69; *Gregynog*, ed. by Glyn Tegai Hughes (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1977).

2 Mary Oldham, 'The Sudeleys of Gregynog and Newtown, in the Nineteenth Century', *The Newtonian*, 58 (2014).

3 *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington*, ed. by Lord Sudeley (London: The Manorial Society of Great Britain, 1987).

it was taken from us. How was it that at the end of the eighteenth century we came to inherit Gregynog from the Welsh Blayneys?

In his book *The Royal Tribes of Wales* Philip Yorke of Erthig has left a magnificent portrait of Arthur Blayney who died a bachelor at Gregynog in 1795, a man of outstanding modesty who stipulated in his will the more perishable the material of which his coffin was made the better.⁴ He had also inherited from his mother's family, the Weavers, the property of Morville near Bridgnorth in Shropshire, which now belongs to the National Trust.⁵ Arthur Blayney left both that property and Gregynog to the last Lord Tracy of Toddington in Gloucestershire because Lord Tracy had married a Weaver. Lord Tracy's only child and heiress married her first cousin Charles Hanbury, a third son of the Hanburys, ironmasters of Pontypool in Gwent, a prosperous industrial town whose Park House has been inherited by its current owner, Sir Richard Hanbury-Tenison, former Lord Lieutenant of his county.⁶ Charles Hanbury enlarged his name to Hanbury-Tracy and at Queen Victoria's Coronation was made Lord Sudeley. On his elevation to the peerage he turned round and round on one foot and said: 'How happy I am.' Complete master of his wife's inheritance before the passage of the Married Women's Property Act (1882), he was able in 1815 to sell the estate at Morville in order to enlarge the estate at Gregynog and bring it up to its grand total of 18,000 acres. He was also instrumental in the completion of the Montgomeryshire Canal to enable the easy transport into Montgomeryshire of lime and manure to fertilize the soil,⁷ and of shale for the construction of roads when previously there had hardly been any, so that many goods had to be drawn on sledges; and then the easy transport out of Montgomeryshire of the oak trees felled on the Gregynog estate, which were much needed by the Merchant Navy before the introduction of ironclads. It was the sale of oak trees which largely paid for the building of the new Toddington, which Charles Hanbury-Tracy had personally designed. Hanbury-Tracy (first Lord Sudeley to be) afterwards became Chairman of the Commission for the Rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament for which his Toddington had been the forerunner.⁸ Both buildings have the same original blend of Perpendicular Gothic and Picturesque styles.

4 Philip Yorke, *The Royal Tribes of Wales* (Wrexham: John Painter, 1799).

5 Manuscripts on the Morville estate listed and stored in the Sudeley Archive at the Gloucester Record Office; pamphlet by D. J. Watkins-Pitchford on the history of Morville (1930); Katherine Swift, *The Morville Hours: The Story of a Garden* (London: Bloomsbury, 2009).

6 Richard Hanbury-Tenison, *The Hanburys of Monmouthshire* (Aberystwyth: The National Library of Wales, 1995).

7 On the Montgomeryshire Canal, see Eva Bredsdorf's local history museum at Welshpool.

8 See Sir Richard Hanbury-Tenison's paper on the first Lord Sudeley as amateur architect of the Gothic revival in Sudeley (ed.), *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington*, pp. 222–34; *Visual Aspects of Toddington in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Lord Sudeley (unpublished conference proceedings; Society of Antiquaries, 2006); *The Houses of Parliament*, ed. by Michael Port (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976); First Lord Sudeley, *Observations on the Plans for the New Houses of Parliament (1840–1841?)* (gifted to Lord Clive at Powis Castle, copy held at the Record Office of the House of Lords). The leading authority on Toddington was Professor Michael McCarthy, educated at Toddington and author of *The Origins of the Gothic Revival* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1987).

The first Lord Sudeley's grandson, my great-grandfather fourth Lord Sudeley, inherited our estates of Gregynog and Toddington in Gloucestershire owing to the premature death in 1877 of his elder brother the third Lord. Much of the debt which he also inherited was due to the third Lord's building of a new church at Toddington, designed by George Edmund Street, to house John Graham Lough's Gothic tomb of the first Lord and Lady Sudeley in the Mortuary Chapel. It was an estate church, built to correspond to what the third Lord perceived to be his position in Victorian society, so too large for the village. Today, the clergy in Gloucestershire continue to complain about the cost of the church's upkeep, even though thanks to its exceptional standards and acoustics the church is hired out very lucratively for sound recordings.

Moreover, our estates had fallen into a very derelict condition. Yet the fourth Lord could feel very confident that land would remain, as it always had been, the surest source of wealth. The onset of the agricultural depression in 1879, just two years after he inherited, must have been a great shock to Sudeley. An intermittent run of bad seasons from the close of the 1870s was more than compounded by overseas competition. To start with, outside Wales, on our English estate, we could not compete with wheat grown on the virgin soil of the North American prairies, nor with the import of refrigerated meat from the Argentine by the Vestey family, who were butchers in Liverpool. From the mid-1880s, Welsh livestock and dairy farming began to be affected by the import of wool from Australia and butter and wool from New Zealand. Because of such difficulties, Gladstone had no excuse for persevering with free trade instead of re-introducing protection for agriculture. The reason is obvious. After the passage of three Reform Bills England had become a democracy, which meant any government which put up the price of food would be voted out of office. Today we still have a democracy, and it is a clean word. But its essential flaw is to override minority interests, of which farming is one, in a way which would never have happened under medieval corporativism. Years ago, two critics of democracy, De Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, warned us against its dangers of majority voting.

Instead of being profitable, land became a source of debt. Much of it was abandoned, and many farmers emigrated to the USA.⁹ What was Sudeley to do about his own property? At Toddington, Sudeley diversified into fruit, which was not touched by the agricultural depression. R. W. Sidwell, who ran the Horticultural Museum at Pershore, wrote about the great orchards Sudeley planted – 600 acres, when no such area had ever been planted with fruit before.¹⁰ In his correspondence with me, Sidwell mentioned there was some mismanagement, but never to the extent of jeopardizing the economic viability of the whole enterprise. There was no doubt in Sidwell's mind that Sudeley got a raw deal out of his orchards, and

9 F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1963); see also David Cannadine's survey of how the aristocracy was affected by the agricultural depression, given in his *Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). An excellent case study on the Arkwright family at Hampton Court, Herefordshire, is provided in Catherine Beale, *Champagne and Shambles: The Arkwrights and the Country House in Crisis* (Stroud: The History Press, 2009).

10 R. Sidwell, 'Fruits of a Great Endeavour', *Country Life*, 19 October 1989.

ascribed his loss of them to other causes. In his article for *Country Life*, Sidwell wrote that the magazine was not the place to attempt to unravel the complicated financial transactions that robbed the Sudeleys of their inheritance, adding that it was sufficient to say that a hundred years later some of these happenings were still unexplained, further on adding, that even, apparently, highly respectable finance houses seemed to lose their virtue when Sudeley came within grasp.

In Wales, Sudeley joined his cousin, Lord Penrhyn's, North Wales Property Defence Association, because he felt that Welsh tenants had been generously treated by their landlords during the agricultural depression and the reformers' 'land cry' was something got up for party political purposes by the Radicals in the Liberal Party. But did he have here the best perception of his own very awkward position? The existence of Lord Penrhyn's organization reflects the seriousness of the situation; and even if it was not aimed for by Welsh land reformers, the enfranchisement of tenants could have been a natural corollary of their agitation and discontent. In Ireland, where tenants did enfranchise under Wyndham's Land Act of 1903, compensation for landlords was very reasonable.¹¹

Placed at Gregynog in a less easy situation than Irish landlords who had been so conveniently bought out, Sudeley borrowed money to the extent of a third of the value of both of his estates to renovate them. Because of the agricultural depression, his expenditure never fetched what ought to have been its appropriate capital return, and under such circumstances he should have spent less. Much of the expenditure was on drainage, a principal feature of 'high farming' during the prosperous aftermath of the repeal of the Corn Laws, which, during the agricultural depression, could have been more sensibly set aside.

Mary Oldham has written much about Sudeley's heavy losses in the textile industry at Newtown, and we need to understand his motivation. Most of his tenants were sheep farmers, and he wanted to give them a market for their wool. Peter Lewis, who established the Welsh Textile Museum at Newtown, told me Sudeley's essential mistake was a failure to appreciate that if you are to manufacture woollen goods you must have a constant source of supply. I believe the reason for the success of his commercial rivals, the Pryce-Joneses, was that much of their wool came from outside Wales.¹² Towards the end of the nineteenth century there was an orgy of chapel building in Newtown. Sudeley was an Anglican – yet he facilitated the building of the Welsh Congregational Chapel at Milford Road in Newtown, which has now been converted into an extension of Lydia Twigg's school for very young children. He was more generous in providing land than most landowners,

11 David Howell, 'The Land Question in Nineteenth-Century Wales, Ireland and Scotland', *The Agricultural History Review*, 61 (2013), 83–110 (p. 28). On the farmers' discontent, see, in particular, James Edmund Vincent, *The Land Question in North Wales, Being a Brief Survey of the History, Origin, and Character of the Agrarian Agitation and of the Nature and Effect of the Proceedings of the Welsh Land Commission, 1897* (London: Forgotten Books, 2013); 'Resolution', House of Commons (HC) Deb 29 June 1888, *Hansard*, vol. 327, cc. 1792–844; 'Land Tenure (Wales and Monmouthshire) Bill', HC Deb 19 May 1897, *Hansard*, vol. 49, cc 817–69.

12 M. Richards, *Outline of the Newtown Woollen Industry* (Roseholme: Golwgdyre Lane, Newtown, 1971).

and made a very helpful financial contribution.¹³

Sometimes it has been remarked of Sudeley's misfortune and loss of Gregynog that if you borrow money you have to accept your creditors' terms. Should Sudeley have borrowed so heavily? It was easy for him to do so. The massive inflation of the last century on a scale unwitnessed since the Tudors has accustomed us to high rates of interest. In Sudeley's time it was quite different. The sovereign at the end of Queen Victoria's reign was worth more than at the beginning of it, and interest rates were remarkably low.

An outstanding feature of Sudeley's bankruptcy was the unexpectedness of that event. During the fireworks to celebrate the coming of age in 1891 at Toddington of my great-uncle Charles Hanbury-Tracy (afterwards fifth Lord Sudeley), the Head Gardener tipped up a wheelbarrow of sixpences so that the tenants and the workpeople could help themselves. During the celebration of his coming of age at Gregynog my uncle said: 'Let us hope we have seen the last of bad times and that agricultural depression is a thing of the past.' How wrong he was. The year 1892 saw in the second wave of the agricultural depression, owing to the import of wool from New Zealand, which affected Wales most severely.¹⁴ Yet it was in that same year of 1892 that Lady Sudeley inherited half of the large fortune accumulated by her uncle Algernon Tollemache, moneylender in New Zealand who made many settlers into minor gentry.¹⁵ Her daughter, my great-aunt Ida Whitbread, who used to take me out to lunch at Eton, tells us in a memoir of her childhood that when this happened we assumed we had much more money than before, so she was given a bigger allowance.¹⁶

In 1893, in a memorandum of his financial troubles given to me by my old heir-presumptive Claud Hanbury-Tracy-Domville, Sudeley remarked that the possibility of dire financial disaster coming to him had been entirely overlooked. Equally in her memoir, Ida Whitbread remarks on the sudden shock of the loss of our estates, with little premonition it would happen. At that time, solicitors occupied the superior position of being general financial advisers to the aristocracy, and Sudeley's solicitors Godden Holme have been criticized for not having warned him of the vulnerability of his position when he carried such a high level of debt.

Mary Oldham tells us that Sudeley's attempt to relieve himself of the full extent of his indebtedness made him into a bit-part player in the failure in 1890 of Barings Bank, which shook the world of credit to its foundations. She also refers to Sudeley's ill-fated attempt to restore the great financial house of Murietta to early

13 Lord Sudeley's correspondence with Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes, whose father was a famous Methodist minister in Newtown (Sudeley's and Hughes' private archives).

14 Lord Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present* (London: Longmans, 1936); report given of the coming of age celebration in *The Montgomeryshire Express*, 19 April 1891.

15 Algernon Tollemache's ample correspondence in the Alexander Turnbull Library at Wellington in New Zealand, and in a massive scrapbook of Tollemache history compiled by the fourth Lord Sudeley, a copy of which is held by Sir Lyonel Tollemache, Baronet, at Buckminster in Lincolnshire. As a moneylender, Algernon Tollemache did not allow any second mortgages, and if any of his clients got into difficulty said to him: 'Forget it.' This dexterous ploy brought in much extra custom.

16 Ida Whitbread, *My Golden Childhood* (Eton: Alden and Blackwell, 1948).

profitability.¹⁷ Compared with the rest of his debt, Sudeley's loss here, arising out of a misunderstanding with the Bank of England's lawyers, was not considerable and he remained still a very rich man. But his creditors got together to apply to the High Court of Justice for a Deed of Arrangement, under which, as a document at the Public Record Office (now The National Archives) shows, they doubled their claims because these claims were not independently and adequately audited. Receivers were appointed on 16 August 1893,¹⁸ and it was then that the extensive renovation of the church at Tregynon, the cost of which was being defrayed almost entirely by Sudeley,¹⁹ had to stop.

At this point, the proper course would have been rescheduling and an ordered sale of some assets only at a comfortable pace to fetch their proper value. Instead, in November 1893, Lloyds Bank, low down on the list of creditors, filed a petition for bankruptcy against Sudeley which completely destroyed him, because it undermined confidence in him and so destroyed his capacity to borrow more to give himself enough time for the arrangement of an ordered sale.²⁰ Overnight, Sudeley was put on the wrong side of a bank foreclosure with the forced sale of all assets at gross undervalue. Much of Lady Sudeley's fortune disappeared also because of her guarantee of Sudeley's loan from Lloyds Bank.²¹ The most obvious asset, which Sudeley could have sold at a comfortable pace, was his Swiss stained glass, one of the outstanding collections in Europe.²² There were many more spare pieces of this glass than were fitted into the widows of the cloisters at Toddington.

The bankruptcy could not have happened without usury in its old sense of

- 17 Bank of England 2490–2492, *South American and Mexican Files*; Charles Jones, 'European Bankers and Argentina 1880–90', unpublished paper given at Cambridge University Centre of American Studies, 1971; D. C. M. Platt, *Business Imperialism 1840–1930: An Inquiry based on British Experience in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927); W. Skinner, *The London Banks* (London, 1885); *The Statist*, 27 (1890), 28 (1891), and 29 (1892). For a summary and interpretation of these sources by Dr Chapman see his paper, 'Sudeley in the City: The Financial Problems of the Fourth Lord Sudeley', in Sudeley (ed.), *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington*, pp. 253–67.
- 18 Sidwell, 'Fruits of a Great Endeavour'.
- 19 Records kept in the parish chest at Tregynon.
- 20 *Lloyds Bank Minute Book*, No. 11, 27 March 1893 to 2 September 1893.
- 21 Correspondence of the Department of Law at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth with Lord Sudeley on the continuous danger of banks' guarantees where no sufficient explanation of them is given to women (Sudeley's private archives).
- 22 Paper in Sudeley (ed.), *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington* on the Swiss glass by Sibyll Kummer-Rothenhäusler of the Galerie für Glasmalerei in Zurich, pp. 242–52; Dr Hans Lehmann, *Die Ehemalige Sammlung Schweizerische Glasmalereien in Toddington* (München: Hugo Helbing, 1911); Robert Durrer, *Heinrich Angst, Erster Direktor des Schweizerrischen Landesmuseums* (Glarus: Tschudi and Co., 1948), pp. 173, 187–89, 314; Chantal Lafontant Vallotton, *Entre le Musée et le Marché: Heinrich Angst, Collectionneur, Marchand et Premier Directeur du Musée Nationale Suisse* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2007). In her *Glasgemälde-Katalog der Sammlung des Schweizerischen Landesmuseums Zürich* (Stafa: Theo Gut and Co, 1970), Jenny Schneider records that 28 pieces of stained glass at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich are from Toddington. Out of the whole collection of 240 pieces at Toddington, 24 were acquired for £250 in 1890–91, before the opening of the Swiss National Museum in 1898. Following the great sale of the Toddington glass in Munich in 1911 for 500,000 gold marks, most of it was scattered. For descriptions of various panels, see *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (CVMA Publications) in Europe and North America.

lending money without taking a share of the risk, about which I have written a pamphlet for a Parliamentary Pressure Group, the Forum of Stable Currencies, and here is a summary of what I said. To define usury, Aristotle said that money is a medium of exchange only and should never be permitted to become the mother of interest. Later on, usury was condemned by Mahomet, St. Thomas Aquinas, and President Abraham Lincoln of the USA. With the use of Lincoln's debt- and interest-free greenbacks, the American West was developed very successfully and Lincoln was assassinated, as is often suggested,²³ by the bankers. The chief parties to debt are the banks themselves, under their system of Fractional Reserve, lending fraudulently way beyond their reserves in a ratio often given as 10:1 but in reality, with hedge funding, much higher. Today in Malaysia, in keeping with the strictures in the Koran on usury, equity participation in business enterprises is insisted upon and usury dispensed with. By contrast, the Christian churches have forgotten their own teaching on this important subject. With its concomitant evils of intensification of business cycles and the slumps which follow them, and inflation, usury has become so ingrained in our monetary system that we may never anticipate its complete eradication. The best we may hope for is some spasmodic improvement in much the same way as the cells of early Christianity came to be formed.

Ours is not a simple case of the bank and the other creditors wanting to get their money back, because they never got it. At the end of the day, with assets being sold at gross undervalue and the excessive fees always charged by insolvency practitioners, all the creditors got was sixpence in the pound. The bankruptcy could only have happened because Sudeley had an enemy. Which was the family running Lloyds Bank, why did they allow themselves to be used by this enemy, and who was he?

The Lloyds have lived at Dolobran in Montgomeryshire since the fifteenth century.²⁴ While we inherited Gregynog from the Blayneys at the end of the eighteenth century, the Lloyds are proud of their own earlier connection. The first entry in their pedigree, in *Burke's Landed Gentry* for 1969,²⁵ gives the marriage of their earliest ancestor, Evan Teg, or 'the handsome', to Mawd, daughter of Evan Blayne of Tregynon. At the Restoration, the Lloyds became Quakers and were locked up for refusing to take any proper oath of allegiance to the Crown. During the eighteenth century they started their bank in Birmingham. They then married into the branch of the first Lord Sudeley's Hanbury family, which had been planting tobacco in Virginia. (There is a chapter on this branch of the Hanbury family in A. Audrey Locke's two volumes on the history of the whole of the Hanbury family, giving all of its many branches endowed with a wonderful commercial flair.)²⁶ Banks do bend to political pressure, and with Lloyds Bank having originated in Birmingham it has been very plausibly suggested that Lloyds Bank filed their petition for bankruptcy against Sudeley because they were subdued into doing so

23 Edward Steers Jr., *Blood on the Moon: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2005).

24 Humphrey Lloyd, *The Quaker Lloyds in the Industrial Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1975).

25 See entry on Lloyd of Dolobran, *Burke's Landed Gentry*, 18th edn, vol. 2 (London: Burke's Peerage, 1969).

26 A. Audrey Locke, *The Hanbury Family* (London: A. L. Humphreys, 1916).

by a very powerful politician, Joseph Chamberlain, who completely dominated Birmingham. In 1883, he was responsible for the Bankruptcy Act which kept the old imbalance in favour of creditors against debtors.²⁷

Why did Joseph Chamberlain wish to destroy Sudeley? Mary Oldham mentions how active in politics Sudeley was as a Liberal Unionist. The Liberal or Whig Party was split by a vicious feud between, on the one hand, members of the old Whig aristocracy like Sudeley and his principal creditor, Chief Whip and Treasurer of the Liberal Party, the Grosvenor Lord Stalbridge;²⁸ and, on the other hand, by the middle-class Radicals headed by Joseph Chamberlain who was jealous of the aristocracy. When in 1886 Gladstone came down in favour of Irish Home Rule and Chamberlain crossed over to the Conservative Party, both Sudeley and Lord Stalbridge, for whom Chamberlain had conceived a very particular animosity, stayed behind as Liberal Unionists. In her book *Nellie – Letters from Africa*, Lord Stalbridge's granddaughter Elspeth Huxley tells us how it was owing to the Sudeley bankruptcy that Lord Stalbridge was forced out of politics and had to go into railways.²⁹

It would not suit the image of Lloyds Bank to be shown to have bankrupted Sudeley for political purposes, allegedly compounded by financial foul practice. In his paper on the Sudeley bankruptcy in *The Sudeleys – Lords of Toddington*, Dr Stanley Chapman records how Ernest Terah Hooley moved in on the Toddington estate at gross undervalue.³⁰ The Independent Banking Advisory Service advises that collusion of this kind is hard to prove. But because the opportunity is there Parliament may become sagacious enough to judge it does arise. Before his bankruptcy, and to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Hooley had presented to the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral a set of gold communion plate. Upon Hooley's bankruptcy, the Church of England insisted on selling the communion plate to satisfy Hooley's creditors. During his gentleman's residence, after Vatican II, at the Travellers' Club, Monsignor Gilbey told me that the Church of Rome would have made no such gesture.

Mary Oldham drew much of her information about the Sudeley bankruptcy from the above paper by Chapman. I wrote in vain to the Chairman of Lloyds Bank, Sir Jeremy Morse, to ask if Dr. Chapman could have the information behind the bank's decision to foreclose and the discussion which followed – all information which should still have been kept in correspondence, reports to directors, and other internal memoranda. Morse's reply to me, that he held no such information because in his experience of banking only bare records of transactions are kept, has to be a weak answer. Banking is about keeping records; without records banks would not make any money. Lady White, whose father Thomas Jones was really the mind and

27 For a biography of Joseph Chamberlain see, for example, J. Garvin and J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London: Macmillan, 1935).

28 The document of the Stalbridge loan, transferred to the Gloucester Record Office by the fourth Lord Sudeley's solicitors Godden Holme.

29 *Nellie, Letters from Africa*, ed. by Elspeth Huxley (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980).

30 S. D. Chapman, 'Sudeley in the City: The Financial Problems of the Fourth Lord Sudeley'. See also the entries on E. T. Hooley in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* and the *Dictionary of Business Biography*.

moving force behind the two Davies sisters who made Gregynog into the famous place it became between the wars,³¹ felt that after such a long period of time the information for which I sought should be disclosed and that the subject merited a debate in the House of Lords on the keeping and disclosure of banks' records. It was upon her encouragement and support that on this matter in 1994 I put down my Amendment No. 97 to the Deregulation and Contracting Out Bill. Here I observed how the old argument that banks cannot throw the expense of storage of records on to their shareholders is now greatly weakened thanks to the ease and economy with which information can be stored with modern computer technology. Because foreclosures are dirty business, the evasiveness of banks on why they foreclose is predictable, and the Independent Banking Advisory Service calls for proper search powers such as are held by Customs and Excise.

Sudeley's land agent at Gregynog, W. Scott Owen, made an entry in his *Commonplace Book* for the year 1894 that the Welsh Land Commission had sat in Wales that year and held five meetings at Newtown.³² No evidence was tendered from the estate and no evidence was given against us – and much was said in our favour. The Commission reported in 1896 in favour of a Land Court and other Radical reforms. The report covers over 1,000 pages and is practically a dead letter. We are not surprised. Here was just another of the various occasions on which governments make use of a Royal Commission to shelve an important question to which it does not wish to give a proper solution.³³ Despite Joseph Chamberlain's speech in its favour delivered at Birmingham in 1903, domestic protection for agriculture, rescinded under the Repeal of the Corn Laws, was never re-introduced until at last free trade was abandoned because of the Depression of the 1930s.³⁴ In his memorandum on his bankruptcy to which I have already alluded, Sudeley said it was his ultimate intention to sell the Gregynog estate. If Lloyds Bank had not stepped in first, my guess is that the sale would have happened in about 1920, when due to a temporary resurgence of agricultural values more land changed hands than had ever happened since the dissolution of the monasteries.

Aside from his bankruptcy, Sudeley had a distinguished career. He was instrumental, when an MP, in the passage of two Admiralty Orders in Council in 1876 to effect important reforms of the Royal Navy,³⁵ he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and he sat on the front bench of the House of Lords under Gladstone's administration of the early 1880s. In 1903, Sudeley applied successfully for his discharge from bankruptcy to recover his seat in the House of Lords, which he used

31 On the contribution made by the two Davies sisters to Gregynog see Eirene White, *The Ladies of Gregynog* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1985).

32 Gregynog estate archives, held by Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes.

33 Another good example is given by the appointment of the Wakeham Commission on the future of the House of Lords after, and not before, the eviction in 1999 of most of the hereditary peers. We were told there could be no Stage II of reform without Stage I of the eviction of the hereditaries. We are still without Stage II.

34 John Biggs-Davison, *Tory Lives* (London: Putnam, 1952).

35 The fourth Lord Sudeley's three scrapbooks on his naval career (Sudeley's private archives); John Wells, RH, *The Royal Navy: An Illustrated Social History, 1870–1982* (London: Sutton, 1999).

to establish the first guide lecturers for museums.³⁶

In 1999 I had prepared a Bill on audits in bankruptcy to prevent creditors from fraudulently enlarging their claims (provoking opposition from bankers in preliminary discussions), but was stopped by my eviction from the House of Lords as a hereditary.³⁷ At the end of the day it is doubtful whether public opinion will tolerate the bankers' argument that there can be no independent auditing because there is nobody willing and able to pay for it.

And around this time I was involved in securing the provisions of our new Enterprise Act which virtually demolish the old cardinal rule in business (which Sudeley, sadly, had failed to observe) that cash flow is more important than capital. For somebody in Sudeley's position now, a receiver is appointed, not only by the bank but also by all the creditors, and directed, within a year, to sell some assets – only at a comfortable pace to fetch their proper value, and the debtor can keep the rest. What Lloyds Bank did to Sudeley in 1893 no bank can do again today.

II

Here ends the main burden of what I have to say. Let me conclude more lightly with Mary Oldham's lively description of the lavish celebrations for the Anstruther wedding at Gregynog in August 1889.³⁸ Sudeley's eldest daughter, my great-aunt Eva, novelist, playwright, and practitioner of the black arts of magic, who was made a Dame for her services to the troops during the First World War, married Henry Anstruther because she anticipated he would reach the Liberal Cabinet. When he failed, she did not see him again. They had two children, Douglas and Joyce. Douglas fathered Ian Anstruther, heir to the coalescence of the Carmichael-Anstruther and Anstruther of Balcaskie baronetcies, and author of a book on the Eglinton Tournament.³⁹ Under the pen name of Jan Struther, Joyce Anstruther wrote a famous novel, *Mrs Miniver* (1939), which did exceptionally well in the USA when Americans were hesitating about entry into the war and wondering what English people were really like, which *Mrs Miniver* told them. Because the character of Mrs Miniver was criticized for her complacency, a competition was set up to parody her. Under a *nom de guerre*, Joyce put in her own entry and won the competition.⁴⁰

36 The fourth Lord Sudeley's scrapbook on his work for museums and Lord Sudeley's correspondence with Giles Waterfield of the Dulwich Picture Gallery (Sudeley's private archives); House of Lords Deb 29 April 1913, *Hansard*, vol 14, cc 348–62.

37 Lord Sudeley's correspondence with Christopher Arkell, accountant, who helped draft the Bill (Sudeley's private archives).

38 A long report on the wedding is given in the *Montgomeryshire Express*, 23 April 1889.

39 Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella: An Account of the Eglinton Tournament, 1839* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1963).

40 Joyce Anstruther's unpublished autobiography (Robert Maxtone Graham's private archives); see also the witty biography of Joyce by her grand-daughter, Ysenda Maxtone Graham, *The Real Mrs Miniver* (London: John Murray, 2002); Joyce's second husband Adolf Placzek was the celebrated editor of the *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1982).