

= George Villiers (1759 ? 1827) =

George Villiers (23 November 1759 ? 21 March 1827) , styled The Honourable , was a British courtier and politician from the Villiers family . The youngest son of the diplomat Lord Hyde (later Earl of Clarendon) , he was an intimate of Princess Amelia and personal supporter of her father , George III . His favour within the Royal Family and his father 's influence brought him a number of sinecures to support him . However , Villiers was more interested in the operation of the royal farms at Windsor Castle than in politics or the duties of his offices . When his bookkeeping as Paymaster of the Marines was carefully examined in 1810 , Villiers ' carelessness and the speculation of his clerk had left him in debt to the Crown by more than £ 250 @, @ 000 . This exposure touched off a public scandal ; Villiers promptly surrendered all his property to the Crown and threw himself on the king 's mercy . The misconduct of Joseph Hunt as Treasurer of the Ordnance to some extent obscured Villiers ' own misconduct , and he was able to retain other sinecures and a stable , if reduced , income from them until his death in 1827 .

= = Upbringing and political career = =

Villiers was the youngest son of Thomas Villiers , 1st Earl of Clarendon and Charlotte Capell . His maternal grandparents were William Capell , 3rd Earl of Essex and Jane Hyde . George , like his brother , was educated at Eton College and then St John 's College , Cambridge , graduating with an MA in 1779 . It was presumably through the influence of his father , then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster under the first Pitt ministry , that he was appointed a Groom of the Bedchamber to George III on 13 January 1783 , and Clerk of the Council and Registrar of the Duchy of Lancaster in August 1786 . A polished courtier , Villiers earned the nickname " Tiger " among his party for his vehement support of the king ; although as Fanny Burney observed , his " remarkably slim , slight and delicate person " did not match the nickname .

In 1792 , Villiers purchased the support of Lord Warwick , and was returned as Member of Parliament for Warwick in the by @-@ election of 18 January 1792 as a Tory . On 19 March 1792 , shortly after his entry into Parliament , Villiers was appointed to the office of Paymaster of Marines , a sinecure which would ultimately prove his undoing . The salary of the post was fixed at £ 600 p.a. after a reform in 1800 . In 1794 , Villiers became the captain commanding the newly raised Western Troop of the Hertfordshire Gentlemen and Yeomanry @-@ Cavalry .

He was elected unopposed in 1796 , but did not stand for the borough in 1802 . Though a friend of Pitt 's government , he rarely attended the House ; George Rose commented in a letter that Villiers 's loss would have no impact on the Tories . While a member of parliament , in 1798 , he married Lord Boringdon 's daughter , Theresa , who would bear him ten children over the next two decades . After leaving Parliament , Villiers continued his presence at Court , and carried messages from the Princess Royal in Stuttgart to the king . In 1803 , the duties of his office as paymaster were extended , and on 9 May , he was reappointed as Paymaster and Inspector @-@ General of Marines , with a salary of £ 1 @, @ 000 p.a. In the same year , he was commissioned a captain in the Watford Volunteer Cavalry . Villiers was prepared to intercede with the king on behalf of Pitt to fulfill the latter 's desire for a more comprehensive ministry , which , however , was frustrated ; and to bring Pitt 's friends into the Ministry of All the Talents in 1806 .

Villiers , indeed , enjoyed considerable favour with the king , who granted him a private bounty of £ 400 p.a. in 1804 after being compelled to refuse him an office at Windsor Park . He was allowed to hold simultaneous office as a groom of the bedchamber and paymaster , and the king determined to place him in charge of his farms at Windsor as bailiff . Villiers and his family lived at Windsor Old Lodge until 1805 , when he was appointed ranger of Cranbourne Chase and he moved into Cranbourne Lodge , newly renovated as his residence . Villiers and his wife were particularly intimate with Princess Amelia , the king 's favourite daughter , accounting in part for the Royal favour shown him . With the fall of the Ministry of All the Talents in 1807 and the formation of Portland 's government , the Duke of Cumberland vigorously lobbied Portland to grant Villiers the mastership of the Buckhounds or some other office , on the grounds of Villiers having rendered " very serious and

important services " to the Royal Family , but was unsuccessful .

In 1809 , upon the death of John Fordyce , Surveyor General of the Land Revenues of the Crown , Portland proposed to replace that office and that of the Surveyor General of Woods , Forests , Parks , and Chases , then held by Lord Glenbervie , with a three @-@ man commission (the Commissioners of Woods and Forests) , and to make Villiers one of the junior commissioners . This reorganisation of the Crown Lands temporarily halted upon Portland 's resignation and the formation of a new government under Spencer Perceval . This created an embarrassing difficulty for Villiers and his interest ; George Canning did not choose to serve under Perceval , and Villiers ' brother @-@ in @-@ law , the 2nd Lord Boringdon , was Canning 's friend . Nor was the proposed appointment of Villiers universally popular ; Lord Glenbervie , the proposed senior commissioner , vented his anger at Perceval 's nomination of Villiers in his journal :

Nonetheless , Villiers continued to press his claims to office on Perceval , in a letter of 18 October 1809 . He had , he said , turned down a pension of £ 1 @,@ 200 p.a. for " reasons ... which can never be publicly alluded to " and had received a promise from Portland to replace Fordyce as Surveyor General of the Land Revenues (a post worth £ 2 @,@ 000 p.a.) ; Villiers would , however , be satisfied with the commissionership and £ 1 @,@ 000 p.a. in addition , provided that he might retain his office of paymaster . In fact , that office was about to become the engine of Villiers ' political destruction . He appears to have received the sinecure offices of registrar of the Vice @-@ Admiralty Court of Gibraltar and marshal of the Vice @-@ Admiralty Court of Antigua around this time .

= = Scandal and disgrace = =

The value to the sinecurist of an office like that of Paymaster of Marines lay not so much in the official salary attached to it , but in the lax accounting procedures associated with disbursement of funds , which allowed the official to retain large sums of public money in his own hands for many years until accounts were made up . The office of Paymaster General had been reformed in 1783 to avoid these abuses , but these changes had not yet been extended to the Marines during Villiers ' tenure .

He appears to have taken little interest in his official duties both as paymaster and inspector @-@ general , leaving affairs in the hands of Edmund Waters . Waters had been his private secretary , and when Villiers came to office as paymaster , Waters was appointed chief clerk in that department , rising to deputy paymaster in 1797 . Waters and Villiers invested in real estate with some of the money passing through the office ; unfortunately for Villiers , Waters was also diverting some of the funds to his own interest in the Opera House , and the accounts of the office were in a shambles .

Well aware of the parlous state of the office 's accounts , Waters retired from the Marine Pay Office in 1807 as an independently wealthy man (only to lose the fortune in his Opera House investments) . The lax regime in the Pay Office rattled on , however , until 27 December 1809 , when Perceval became aware of the state of Villiers ' accounts . Villiers , to his credit , immediately resigned and took responsibility for his official debts . Perceval allowed him to proffer his resignation directly to the king , but Villiers could not face his master ; Perceval informed the king of the state of affairs in a letter of 15 January 1810 , laying the blame for the situation largely on Waters . Perceval 's letter noted that " reports were circulating on the subject to such an extent as to make it impossible to hope that it would not become the subject of Parliamentary observation . " By this time , Villiers 's accounts had been audited through the year 1804 , revealing him to be in arrears by the staggering sum of £ 280 @,@ 000 through that point . On the advice of his brother @-@ in @-@ law Boringdon , Villiers offered up all his property to the Crown , although he could not hope to pay off the entire sum found wanting by this means . The episode left him in a condition of nervous prostration , the more so as he by now had five children to support . A letter by " A.B. " in Cobbett 's Political Register of 27 January 1810 assailed Villiers for his delinquency and estimated that his debt , with interest , might run to £ 500 @,@ 000 .

Fortunately for Villiers , his case was not to be prosecuted with the utmost rigour . He was to some degree protected by the joint efforts of Boringdon 's friends and the Whig George Tierney , as well

as his own quick action in surrendering his property through writs of extent ; and the delinquency of Joseph Hunt , Treasurer of the Ordnance attracted attention and saved Villiers from the full wrath of the finance committee . Their report on the matter noted that the writ of extent had been to the amount of £ 264 @, @ 000 , but only £ 91 @, @ 000 had been raised from the sale of his property , and about £ 30 @, @ 000 from securities and the bond posted for him when he took office . The committee recommended the abolition of the office of Paymaster of Marines and the transfer of its duties to the Treasurer of the Navy , a recommendation which was not immediately acted upon . Villiers was left , in Boringdon 's estimation , with a debt of £ 1 @, @ 500 ? 2 @, @ 000 , an annual income of £ 2 @, @ 000 ? 3 @, @ 000 , and the property in Cranbourne Lodge .

However , his disgrace was not over . After his resignation , Villiers had been replaced by Lord Mulgrave 's brother , Edmund Phipps , as paymaster and lost his prospective place as a commissioner of woods and forests . Then , he was informed on 4 May 1810 , after the release of the finance committee 's report , that the king had removed from him the supervision of the farms at Windsor (he also lost the rangership) . The news threw him into a state of great mental distress ; he wrote to the king begging him to suspend judgement on the points raised by the committee 's report . The king replied that it was " indispensable " to remove Villiers from his office under the circumstances , but extended his sympathy and suspended judgement on him .

The final disaster for Villiers occurred in November , when Princess Amelia died . After her death , Villiers and his wife attempted to blackmail the Royal Family by threatening (in a letter to her doctor , Sir Henry Hallford) to release some of her correspondence , much to the shock of her sister , Princess Mary . The family finally moved out of Cranborne Lodge in 1812 .

The untangling of his accounts dragged on until 1819 , prolonged by his enemies at the Navy Office and his own fiscal incapacity . At length a balance of £ 220 @, @ 000 was found against him , but by this time his career was hopelessly ruined . He left office as a groom of the bedchamber in 1815 , but retained his vice @-@ admiralty sinecures until his death . In 1824 , he became heir presumptive to the Earldom of Clarendon but died in 1827 without inheriting it .

= = Marriage and children = =

On 17 April 1798 , George married Theresa Parker . She was a daughter of John Parker , 1st Baron Boringdon and his second wife Hon. Theresa Robinson . Her maternal grandparents were Thomas Robinson , 1st Baron Grantham and Frances Worsley . They had ten children :

Georgiana Villiers (12 February 1799 ? 16 March 1799)

George Villiers , 4th Earl of Clarendon (27 January 1800 ? 27 June 1870)

Thomas Hyde Villiers (24 January 1801 ? 3 December 1832)

Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers (3 January 1802 ? 16 January 1898)

Lady Maria Theresa Villiers (8 March 1803 ? 9 November 1865) . Married first novelist Thomas Henry Lister on 6 November 1830 , they had a daughter (d . 1863) . After her first husband 's death , she married politician Sir George Cornwall Lewis , 2nd Baronet on 25 October 1844 .

Frederick Adolphus Villiers (17 February 1805 ? 21 November 1806)

Hon. Edward Ernest Villiers (23 March 1806 ? 30 October 1843) . He married Elizabeth Charlotte Liddell , daughter of Thomas Liddell , 1st Baron Ravensworth , leaving a son and three daughters . Their daughter Edith Villiers married Robert Bulwer @-@ Lytton , 1st Earl of Lytton and became Lady of the Bedchamber to both Queen Victoria and Her Majesty Queen Alexandra .

Augustus Villiers (2 March 1808 ? 24 March 1808)

Hon. Henry Montagu Villiers (4 January 1813 ? 9 August 1861) , Bishop of Durham from 1860 to his death .

Lt. Hon. Augustus Algernon Villiers , RN (14 April 1817 ? 13 July 1843) , died unmarried , Knight of Isabella the Catholic