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# THE PRYSE FAMILY OF GOGERDDAN AND THE DECLINE OF A GREAT ESTATE, 1800–1960

BY the turn of the eighteenth century, the ancient Gogerddan estate, embracing almost thirty thousand acres of northern Cardiganshire. had become one of the major focal points of the social and political life of the county. Since 1553, when John Pryse, member of the Council of the Marches of Wales, had been returned to Parliament, the house of Gogerddan had regularly provided the parliamentary member for either the county or Cardigan Borough seats. Moreover, by a series of marriages within Welsh county society, the Pryse sphere of interest had extended well beyond the confines of Cardiganshire and the family owned large tracts of land in the counties of Pembroke. Merioneth and Brecon. Ownership of land, of course, conferred power and privilege but at the same time required that owners or life tenants apply themselves to the traditional, and often onerous, duties of local legal administration, poor relief, organisation of the county militia and other important areas of rural life. Thus, besides providing members of Parliament, Gogerddan spawned county sheriffs, lords lieutenant, colonels of militia and justices of the peace in abundance in the years before 1800. Living on a large estate in close proximity to the growing town of Aberystwyth, successive life tenants of Gogerddan enjoyed considerable influence within the town, continually vying with the nearby houses of Nanteos, Hafod and Crosswood for the opportunity to exercise the patronage which was so vital in obtaining the political support of the burgesses. In the county, the Pryse interest was no less influential. The steady acquisition of manor lordships and ecclesiastical livings allowed the house of Gogerddan to ensure political support by the appointment of 'staunch' local people to the numerous offices in the various parishes under its control. Moreover, the fact that both the agricultural estate and the extensive lead-mining holdings were major employers of local labour provided a further vehicle for the dispensing of local patronage.

Following the untimely death, in January 1774, of John Pugh Pryse, M.P., this highly agreeable patrimony devolved upon his cousin Lewis Pryse of Woodstock in Oxfordshire, the son of Walter Pryse of Painswick in the county of Gloucester. Through his step-grandson, George Lewis Langton, who had died without issue in Rome in 1738, Walter Pryse had secured an interest in the Llangors estate in

Breconshire, together with extensive lands in Pembrokeshire and the Abernantbychan estate in south Cardiganshire. In consequence, when Lewis Pryse came into the Gogerddan inheritance he supplemented it by three further Welsh estates. His enjoyment of these estates was to last only four years until his death in 1779, when he was succeeded by his daughter Margaret, wife of Edward Lovedon Lovedon of Buscot Park in Berkshire.2 Margaret had married the cantankerous and gout-stricken Lovedon in 1773 and during the eleven remaining years of her life bore him six children, of whom three survived infancy. Her son and heir, Pryse Lovedon, was merely ten years old in January 1784 when his mother died, having given birth to a child the previous June.3

Of Pryse Lovedon's early days, little seems to be known save that he graduated from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1792 and some six years afterwards, having achieved his majority, assumed by royal licence the name and arms of Pryse.4 During Pryse's minority, the Gogerddan estate and its satellites had been run in absentia by Edward Lovedon who, unlike his son, appears to have had little liking for Wales in general or Cardiganshire in particular. Even so, he was less than willing to hand over the management of the estate to his son when the latter married in 1798, and was only persuaded to do so by the threat of litigation. This quite unjustified behaviour on the part of Lovedon considerably soured the already rather cool relationship with his son. Pryse was particularly incensed by his father's persistent attempts throughout the early years of the century to persuade him to sell off parts of the non-entailed Welsh properties and to use the revenue realised to purchase estates in England within reasonable distance of Buscot. In Lovedon's view there was little advantage in keeping the outlying Welsh estates and considerable benefit to be gained by concentrating the family holdings in close proximity to the principal residence in Berkshire. Indeed, after a

<sup>6</sup> This article is based upon correspondence in the unscheduled Gogerddan and T. G. G. Herbert archives in the National Library of Wales.

¹ See D. Jenkins, 'The Pryse Family of Gogerddan, II', National Library of Wales Journal, VIII (1953-54), 87, and D. Huws, 'The Lewes Family of Abernantbychan', Ceredigion, VI (1969), 150-67. George Lewis Langton was the son of an Irishman, John Langton, by his wife Catherine, daughter of John Lewis of Coedmore and his wife Elizabeth, heiress of the Llan-gors estate. Following the death of her first husband, Elizabeth married Walter Pryse of Painswick and Woodstock (N.L.W., Brigstocke MS. 94). Langton, who graduated from Magdalene College in 1731, is registered in the Lincoln's Inn list of 1731 as being resident at Abernantbychan in Cardiganshire. In his will, which was proven on 27 February 1738, he devised all his real estate to 'his dearest friend', Walter Pryse.

¹ Lewis Pryse's eldest son, Lewis, died without issue in September 1776.
² Edward Lovedon Lovedon was to re-marry twice before his death in 1822. An article

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Edward Lovedon Lovedon was to re-marry twice before his death in 1822. An article dealing with his 1811 divorce is being prepared by the present author in collaboration with J. W. Williams and will appear in a future volume of the New Law Journal.

<sup>4</sup> Alumni Oxoniensis, 1715–1886 (Oxford, 1888), p. 1160. In 1798 Pryse married Harriet, daughter of the 2nd Viscount Ashbrook and widow of the Rev. Ellis Agar. She died on 14

January 1813.

recovery of the entailed Gogerddan estate had been effected in 1813, Lovedon pressed Pryse to sell the property and to abandon Wales altogether. Pryse, who held a genuine affection for Gogerddan and Cardiganshire, retorted angrily, 'I cannot acquiesce in your wishes at present and I trust you will cease to urge it as it totally destroys the pleasure I should otherwise receive in hearing from you.'6 Sensing Pryse's determination to remain at Gogerddan, many of Lovedon's acquaintances exhorted the father to allow his son to enjoy the estate without interference in the interests of harmony between the two men. In April 1813, William Garrett advised Lovedon: 'You are for the world and all it's blushing honors; Pryse for retirement and its peaceful comforts. You are perfectly independent of each other, in God's name why not enjoy yourselves—each in your own wav— Pryse would I assure you be more frequently at Buscot and enjoy it if you will let him enjoy without remonstrance Gogerddan also . . . . '7

In the months following his first wife's death in January 1813. Pryse apparently descended into the depths of a most profound depression and came very close to having a major nervous breakdown. During this critical period Pryse was attended by the physician Dr. Rice Williams, the sister of his dead wife, and a Jane Cavallier, daughter of Peter Cavallier of Guisborough in Yorkshire and eventually his second wife. Besides counselling Pryse as to the therapeutic virtues of riding and sea-bathing, Rice Williams did little to improve his patient's condition. A close friend of Edward Lovedon, Williams regularly reported Pryse's progress to Buscot, making especially sure to incense Lovedon against Jane Cavallier, whom he believed to be exercising far too much influence over the young widower.8 In this endeavour he was aided and abetted by a particularly obsequious and unpleasant individual, the Reverend Charles Cross, chaplain to the Corbet family of Ynysmaengwyn, whose reports to Lovedon hinted at a wide range of scandals taking place at Gogerddan, not the least of which was the suggestion that Pryse may have been having an affair with Jane Cavallier. Not unnaturally Pryse deeply resented Cross's constant prying: 'Crosses behaviour to me has been treacherous in the extreme. I was convinced from your

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Pryse Pryse to Edward Lovedon, April 1813. A 'recovery' was a legal devise by which an entail could be broken prior to effecting a re-settlement of an estate.

<sup>7</sup> William Garrett from Gogerddan to Edward Lovedon, April 1813. The reference to 'blushing honors' may well refer to the fact that Lovedon was a Fellow of both the Royal and Linnaean Societies, a member of the first Board of Agriculture, a correspondent of many of the leading figures of his day and a parliamentarian of some influence.

<sup>8</sup> Rice Williams to Edward Lovedon, 14 April 1813. Pryse's wife, who had been bedridden with a rheumatic complaint for some years, was burnt to death as a result of a fire in her bedroom. At the time it was rumoured that this fire had been caused by a lamp thrown on to Mrs. Pryse's bed by one of the Cavalliers.

letter that there was a spy in my house and often mentioned to Charles my suspicion of others in which he frequently encouraged me. How is it possible I can associate with one so full of deception. As the friend of my Uncle I have ever respected him, as the secret spy over, and reporter of, my words and actions I despise him.'9

Throughout the latter months of 1813, Pryse's letters to his father became increasingly paranoid. He seems to have been convinced that the bulk of the staff of Gogerddan were involved with his father in an evil conspiracy to oust him from his inheritance. Given that Lovedon himself was keen to sever family ties with Wales, there may have been some grounds for Pryse's suspicions. On the other hand, Pryse was a sensitive, highly strung man who at this time was still deeply distressed by the death of his wife and perhaps for this reason tended to over-react to any suggestion of skull-duggery on his father's part. However, as the months passed, Pryse's mental condition gradually improved and he was fully recovered by the summer of 1814. The extent to which Pryse's growing affection for Jane Cavallier aided his recovery may be gauged by the fact that the couple were married on 29 April 1815, slightly more than one month before the birth of their first son, Pryse, on 1 June. Three years (and two sons) later, Pryse Pryse was elected to Cardigan Boroughs parliamentary seat, which he was to hold until his death in 1849. A staunch supporter of Whig principles, Pryse did not enjoy an especially illustrious parliamentary career, largely contenting himself with bringing local Cardiganshire matters to the attention of his colleagues. 10 Basically, Pryse was a country squire with the appropriate attitudes, tastes and ambitions, and although he doubtless enjoyed exercising the patronage which parliamentary membership provided, he was at his happiest following the hounds across his broad estates in England and Wales. Pryse had, of course, inherited the Welsh estates and the Woodstock estate under the will of Lewis Pryse, and with the death of his father, Edward Lovedon, in 1822, the Buscot and Faringdon properties also came into his hands. The latter, Pryse discovered, were heavily encumbered with mortgages which Lovedon had secured to ensure an income for his youngest daughter, Jane Elizabeth, who was eventually to die unmarried at Aberystwyth in 1855.11 The mortgages, totalling £15,760, had been raised from the

Pryse Pryse to Edward Lovedon, 14 October 1813.
 See R. J. Colyer, 'The Pryse Family of Gogerddan; Cardiganshire Political Letters', National Library of Wales Journal (forthcoming).
 Jane Elizabeth Lovedon was born on 24 June 1783 and for many years occupied 26 Bridge Street, Aberystwyth, the town house of the Pryse family. She is reputed to have been the last person locally to use a sedan chair, in which she was carried each Sunday to St. Michael's Church. G. Eyre Evans, Aberystwyth and its Court Leet (Aberystwyth, 1902), p. 116.

Reverend Samuel Wilson Warneford of Bourton-on-the-Hill in Gloucestershire, who, much against her father's will, had married Lovedon's eldest daughter Margaret in 1796. This marriage had created a further charge on the estate in the form of an annual payment to Margaret of £1,000 which, to Lovedon's mortification, she had assigned to her husband. In the years following his father's death, Pryse was constantly plagued by Warneford for the repayment of the mortgage and for his rapidly accumulating arrears of the £1,000 settlement. After long and protracted negotiations, in 1824. he managed to persuade Warneford to agree to a reduction of the mortgage interest from five to four per cent on the strict condition that interest payments were regularly remitted every six months.12 As a means of paying off the mortgage, Pryse desperately sought to borrow money at four per cent and commissioned his solicitor, Charles Deare, to raise the required sum from the commercial money market. Although Deare contrived to persuade the Equitable Assurance Office to advance money at four and a half per cent, Pryse not unnaturally declined to close a mortgage upon which he was already paying only four per cent.13 Warneford was not pleased. 'That we may be longer and older friends I am anxious to get rid of and to settle all our money affairs with each other and that the money which has been engaged on your authority by professional gentlemen of high reputation for you may not be attempted to be thrown back upon them in a way that might justify censure or excite adverse proceedings." In the event, a further six years were to elapse before the Warneford mortgage was finally discharged.

The Warneford mortgage was but one of the financial embarassments confronting Pryse Pryse after his father's death. Under Lovedon's will, his niece, Harriet Thayer, enjoyed an income of £400 per year which, unfortunately for Pryse, his trustees refused to charge to the settled estates.15 Threatened with a Chancery suit, Pryse was forced personally to borrow £10,000 to redeem this annual sum. 16 Throughout 1822 and 1823 sales of bark and timber from the Welsh estates and the letting of Pryse's own house at Woodstock began to relieve the situation, so that late in 1823 Charles Deare was able to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> S. W. Warneford to Pryse Pryse, 10 July 1824.
<sup>13</sup> C. Deare to Pryse Pryse, 7 July 1825.
<sup>14</sup> S. W. Warneford to Pryse Pryse, 14 June 1825.
<sup>15</sup> C. Deare to G. Tennant, 18 November 1823. With the establishment of the family settlement as a means of ensuring the passage of an estate intact from one generation to the next, and for seeking the interest of widows, daughters and younger sons in the property, many life-tenants placed their estates under the control of trustees who would be vested with powers to raise cash for the payment of debts and to organise the financial affairs of the estate. (See G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry* (London 1976,) p. 68).
<sup>16</sup> C. Deare to Pryse Pryse, 22 April 1829; 17 June 1829. In 1826 Harriet Thayer had married Monsieur Thiebault, a Belgian.

observe with satisfaction that Pryse's efforts had reduced his father's outstanding debts by some £5,800.17 It seems that either this temporary relief or Pryse's increasing public duties had weakened his resolve to free himself from debt, for during the next year a disconsolate note crept into Deare's letters. Urging Pryse to attend to his financial affairs, he wrote in 1824; 'I have often said that your extrication from your difficulties depends more upon your own resolution and energy than upon anything that I or anyone else can do for you. If your affairs merely remained in status quo by this want of exertion it might not perhaps so much signify, but they are daily becoming more embarassed.'18

By the middle of 1829, Pryse had borrowed on mortgage some £29,750 since his father's death in 1822. The cautious Deare, somewhat concerned as to the ability of the estate to service further interest charges, suggested additional 'thinning' of the Gogerddan woods as a means of providing ready cash.19 Such a measure, however, would hardly be sufficient to exorcise the latest financial spectre confronting the harassed Pryse. This involved the raising of £36,000 to guarantee the income of his maiden sister Jane Lovedon, following the repayment of the Warneford mortgage. With monotonous regularity Pryse was addressed upon this subject by his sister through the 1830s and '40s: '... were I you and you me I would raise the six and thirty thousand pounds and place it in the Funds by which means you would rid yourself and your heirs of me forever'.20 Jane Lovedon's pleas, cajolings and threats were to follow Pryse Pryse to his grave in 1849 and it remained for his son to agree to pay his elderly aunt £1,200 per annum until the mortgage on her fortune had been discharged.21 He doubtless heaved a deep sigh of relief when the old spinster joined her forefathers in 1855.

Three years before Pryse Pryse's death, a major estate settlement had been effected. Reciting the terms of Lewis Pryse's will of 1779 and a disentailing deed of 1838, by which Pryse Pryse and his son were entitled to dispose of the estates as they thought fit, the Epitome of Settlement of 25 July 1846 settled the Woodstock and Cardiganshire estates upon Pryse Pryse, junior, in tail male.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> C. Deare to G. Tennant, 19 November 1823.
<sup>18</sup> C. Deare to Pryse Pryse, n.d. (1824).
<sup>19</sup> C. Deare to Pryse Pryse, 17 June 1829; 30 October 1830.
<sup>20</sup> Jane Lovedon to Pryse Pryse, 16 July 1842.
<sup>21</sup> Lease and release, 19 October 1850. Dowagers, daughters and younger sons could virtually cripple an already indebted estate by absorbing large proportions of the gross income in the form of annuities, jointures and dowries. Thus some sixty per cent of the £70,000 annual income of the 5th duke of Devonshire in 1865 was taken up by interest on debts and annuities (David Cannadine, 'The Landowner as Millionaire: The Finances of the Dukes of Devonshire, c.1800–1926', Ag. Hist. Rev. XXV (1977), p. 797.)

The Pembrokeshire estates were eventually to come to the younger Pryse Pryse under his father's will, dated 3 December 1822. In addition, the Pryse trustees were instructed to mortgage certain lands to raise portions of £10,000 each for the younger sons, Edward Lewis Pryse and John Pugh Pryse, together with an annual sum of £1,000 for Pryse Pryse, junior's wife Margaretta.22 These substantial sums, of course, were raised on the settled estates, thus imposing considerable pressure on estate finances. Pryse Pryse, junior, who had readopted the name and arms of Lovedon in 1849 and had served for a short period as member of parliament for Cardigan Boroughs, died suddenly in 1855 at the age of forty. He was succeeded by his only son Pryse, who had been born in January 1838 and was eventually to be created a baronet in 1866.23

Like his two predecessors, the heir to Gogerddan and its satellites seemed uncertain as to his correct name and three years before the baronetcy was conferred upon him reverted to the style and arms of 'Pryse' in lieu of 'Lovedon'. Educated at Eton, where he was in the habit of wearing a coat of home-spun wool sheared from his father's sheep, Sir Pryse became a cornet of horse guards at the age of nineteen. His mount was either a very heavy or highly stoical animal, for Sir Pryse at this time weighed in excess of twenty stones.<sup>24</sup> As a young man he had travelled widely on the European continent and in Australia, where he interested himself in estate management and farming. Although a staunch Unionist and churchman, Sir Pryse was also a Welsh-speaker, and unlike some Welsh squires of the midnineteenth century, he never attempted to influence the voting behaviour of his tenants during his life tenancy of the estate. Besides providing building land for chapel construction, he built Penrhyncoch and Borth churches and restored those of Llangynfelyn and Llanbadarn.25 These achievements, however, were to come later. Three years after he had taken over the estate, Sir Pryse decided to dispose of the 3,548-acre Buscot property to a Mr. Campbell, an Australian who, in addition to the undisclosed realisation value of the farmland, paid a further £10,160 for the Buscot timber. While this significantly reduced the estate debts, Sir Pryse was still servicing total mortgages of £21,300 in 1860, this being increased three years later by a further

Pryse Pryse Lovedon married on 14 September 1836 Margaretta Jane, second daughter of Major Walter Rice of Llwynybrain, Carmarthenshire.
 Sir Pryse Pryse, 1st Baronet, married in February 1859 Louisa Joan, daughter of Captain John Lewes of Llanllyr.
 H. M. Vaughan, The South Wales Squires (London, 1926).
 Cambrian News, 27 April 1906. Notwithstanding his generosity within the local community, Sir Pryse kept his younger sons very short of money, and local lore has it that they were often forced to subsist by selling oranges outside the Aberystwyth theatres.

£4,500, consequent upon the very sensible purchase of the Cwmcynfelin estate which adjoined Gogerddan.26 Unfortunately, the Gogerddan papers only permit sporadic glimpses of the financial returns of the estate. However, by 1875 the estates in Cardiganshire and Pembrokeshire covered in excess of 33,000 acres and yielded a rental of £11,563 8s. 10d. Mining royalties provided a further £1,529 14s. 11d., giving (with miscellaneous items) a gross income of £14,599 19s.  $7\frac{1}{2}d$ . With total outgoings for that year standing at £13,483 7s.  $5\frac{1}{2}d$ ., a mere £1,116 12s. 2d. was available to meet interest payments on annuities and jointures and to provide an income for Sir Pryse. It was this unhappy situation, coupled with the inevitability of reduced income resulting from rent abatements granted to tenants in the face of the prevailing agricultural depression, which prompted Sir Pryse to set in motion the wave of Gogerddan land sales which continued intermittently till the 1930s. Indeed, in the twenty-year period between 1875 and 1895, when Sir Pryse handed over management of the estate to his son, land to the value of £186,552 had been sold.

In 1895, Sir Pryse became tired of the unremitting struggle of maintaining the solvency of the estate. An ever-increasing list of encumbrances in the form of annuities and jointures, coupled with the new ogre of death duties imposed in 1894, had begun to depress him and he decided that perhaps the time had come to stand aside and allow the running of the estate to devolve upon a younger man.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, his eldest son Pryse Pryse, a thirty-six-year-old captain in the Worcestershire Regiment, was appointed as agent to the estate.28 Under the terms of the appointment, Sir Pryse was to maintain control of the Gogerddan mansion, the Angler's Retreat fishing lodge on the flanks of Plynlimon and the Pembrokeshire estates. Moreover, the estate was to pay him £2,400 yearly, together with a further £550 per annum as allowances for the younger children. Pryse Pryse, who was granted complete power of attorney to grant leases and tenancies, was to receive as remuneration any surplus remaining on the estate account after all outgoings had been met.29 Operating from his office in Lodge Park, Glandyfi, Pryse attempted to effect stringent economies in order to accumulate cash reserves to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> List of Pryse Mortgages, 14 February 1860. The farm bailiff, Dafydd Morgan, who had frequently carried grain from Gogerddan to Buscot, was instructed to carry the Buscot heirlooms to Gogerddan, well-hidden beneath a cart-load of hay (Personal communication: Miss Florence Hamer, Penrhyncoch, great-grand-daughter of Dafydd Morgan).

<sup>27</sup> Death duties upon agricultural property were first imposed under the Finance Act of 1894. Previously estate duty had only been levied on other forms of property.

<sup>28</sup> In 1881, Pryse Pryse had married Louisa, daughter of Colonel William Howell of Penrheol in Carmarthenshire. The couple lived at Lodge Park, Glandyfi.

<sup>29</sup> Appointment of Pryse Pryse, Lodge Park, as agent to Sir Pryse Pryse, 24 May 1895.

meet the inevitable death duties which would arise upon the death of his father. His careful management was such that by the end of 1896 he had used the accumulated proceeds of land sales to discharge a number of outstanding mortgages, at the same time investing substantial sums in stocks. Indeed, by April 1896 the solicitors for the trustees of the settled estates held investments totalling £26.855 in favour of the estate.30 Not only was Pryse Pryse an efficient estate manager, but he was also a man who understood the customs and habits of his tenants and thus enjoyed their respect and affection.<sup>81</sup> Sir Pryse, who seems to have strongly disapproved of several of his younger children, was deeply attached to his eldest son and quite reasonably expected that the estate would remain under his management for many years after his own death. Unfortunately, his expectations were never realised, for during the first week of 1900, Pryse, an inveterate hunter, was bitten upon the hand by a fox and died from septicaemia within a week.32 Sir Pryse's distress at the death of his childless eldest son was intensified by the sobering reflection that the estate would now devolve upon his second son, Edward John Pryse.

Edward Pryse was born in July 1862, and after Wellington and Sandhurst joined the 41st Welsh Regiment in 1881. Having seen active service in South Africa, Egypt and Malta, he returned to Wales in 1891 with the rank of captain. In November of the same year he married Nina Katherine Angharad, daughter of D. K. W. H. Webley-Parry of Noyadd-Trefawr, and arranged by royal licence to assume the additional surnames and arms of Webley-Parry.33 Arrayed with his impressive surnames, Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse joined the Cardiganshire volunteers as a major shortly after his marriage and served for a number of years in South Africa before he was badly injured in a riding accident and finally invalided home in 1902. Sir Pryse was rather less than overjoyed at the prospect of the return of his son and heir, who was already substantially in debt. Following the death of his eldest son in 1900, Sir Pryse had allowed Edward an annual income of £1,000 from the estate. This, however, was quite insufficient to sustain the lavish life-style pursued by the Webley-Parry-Pryses at Noyadd-Trefawr, and Edward was constantly appealing to his father for financial assistance. Sir Pryse, himself an abstemious man, was extremely angry and suggested to

<sup>30</sup> Bridges, Sawtell and Heywood, solicitors, to Pryse Pryse, 8 April 1896.
31 Cambrian News, 12 January 1900.
32 He was buried in St. John's churchyard, Penrhyncoch, in the presence of hundreds of tenants and friends (Bye-gones, 17 January 1900, p. 275). His personal estate of £21,394 was willed to his widow (Bye-gones, 4 April 1900, p. 352).
32 Cambrian News, 25 October 1918.

his son that inevitable bankruptcy would be the only consequence of his rash expenditure on foxhounds and entertaining. To Edward's argument that his 'position' in the county justified additional funds, Sir Pryse bluntly observed, 'Forget about your position—you will be much more respected with money in the bank'.34 Unconvinced, Edward persisted in his 'Regency' way of life and by July 1905 had accumulated debts of more than £14,000, of which £6,200 had been underwritten by the estate.35 Sir Pryse could no longer tolerate his son's profligate spending and when instructing his lawyers, the London firm of Boys and Tweedie, to discharge his outstanding debts, he stipulated that no further borrowing from estate sources was to be permitted. Moreover, every effort was to be made by Boys and Tweedie to ensure that any residual estate funds remaining after Sir Pryse's death did not fall into the hands of Edward as the next life tenant. Thus, he believed, '... the estate will at least get something back'.36

On 21 April 1906 Sir Pryse, weighed down with grief at the death of his eldest son and overburdened with the problems of his stricken estate, died at the age of sixty-eight.37 Under the terms of his will, and in accordance with the various recent family settlements, he assigned £20,000 as portions for his six younger children and the sale of his carriages and farm stock to provide an income for Louisa Pryse, wife of his late son. After the payment of death duties and outstanding debts, the landed estates were to pass to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse as tenant-in-tail. Although his obituary in the Cambrian News records Sir Edward's interest in agricultural and estate matters, there is little evidence in the Gogerddan papers to suggest that the second baronet took any positive step to develop the estate. With the outbreak of the Great War, he acted as recruiting officer for Cardiganshire before volunteering to serve in France with the 9th Welsh Regiment at the age of fifty-three. Despite his years, Sir Edward performed effectively in his capacity as Claims Officer for the regiment, earning the gratitude of the French government in the form of the Ordre du Mérite Agricole, in recognition of services rendered to French

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 13 and 17 June 1902. Edward deeply upset the family and the Court of St. James by insisting upon hunting his hounds during the period of mourning decreed by the king following the death of Queen Victoria (Personal communication: Mrs. F. Loxdale). Borrowing to maintain social status was a fatal obsession with many Welsh squires. It was rightly argued by many nineteenth-century Radicals that the family settlement, by giving the eldest son an irrevocable estate, allowed him to borrow heavily against future expectations, thus encouraging extravagance and eventual mismanagement of the estate.

<sup>35</sup> Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 6 July 1905.
36 Sir Pryse Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 22 August 1905.
37 In his will, dated 21 July 1904, Sir Pryse directed that he be buried in the churchyard at Penrhyncoch and that a monument similar to that of his son be erected over his grave.

agriculture in the prevention and settlement of damage to land and crops. The appalling conditions of trench warfare, however, seriously undermined his health and he died shortly after his return to Wales in 1918.38

Like his elder brother, Sir Edward died childless and the baronetcy and estate accordingly passed to the third of old Sir Pryse's sons, Lewes Thomas Lovedon Pryse. Educated at Winchester and Exeter College, Oxford, from which he graduated in 1883, Lewes Pryse seems to have been perpetually in debt as a young man. 39 Moreover. having alienated himself from both his father and his brothers, he received nothing of the £20,000 which Sir Pryse had settled on his younger children in the 1880s, so that apart from the £4,000 which he received upon his marriage in 1894, his income from the estate was a nominal £100 per annum. This was hardly sufficient for Lewes, who shared his brother Edward's rather grandiose tastes. However, his persistent pleas to Pryse Pryse for further money from the estate fell upon totally unsympathetic ears. As agent, Pryse, who had little time for his younger brother, was not prepared to burden the estate with any further charges, although he did agree to continue the yearly payment of £100 after Sir Pryse's death. 40 Lewes, firmly believing that Sir Pryse had some private reason for not allowing him more money and was not merely withholding funds to recoup his debts incurred at Oxford, complained bitterly to his brother: 'I think the Governor the d - - - dest skunk alive to have cut me out of the younger children's coin.'41 By 1897, Lewes's debts had reached sufficient proportions to cause him to consider leaving the country in order to escape his creditors. On discovering her husband's financial straits (quite by chance, as it happened), his wife Florence appealed to Pryse Pryse for an advance of £200 to cover immediate debts and thus to prevent Lewes's flight from their home at Aberllolwyn.42 Although this sum was granted, an appeal two years later for a loan of £500 from Sir Pryse was flatly refused by the old martinet. Arguing, rather pathetically, that he required this money to pay off his overdraft

<sup>\*\*</sup> Cambrian News, 25 October 1918. In a letter to Lady Webley-Parry-Pryse, the chaplain of the 19th Division referred to Sir Edward's fortitude, courtesy and bravery in enduring illness and discomfort under wartime conditions. The chaplain mentioned also Sir Edward's 'way' with the French and his considerable skills in settling claims for compensation: 'He won their hearts and left harmony in the place of discord'.

\*\* In 1894, he married Florence Madeleine Howell, divorcing her in favour of Marjorie Howell in 1938. (The late H. M. Vaughan informed Major Herbert Lloyd-Johnes that as a young man, Lewes Pryse travelled widely and pursued some bizzare occupations, including working as a waiter in the Long Bar in Shanghai and performing as the hind-leg of an elephant in a travelling show: personal communication: Major Herbert Lloyd-Johnes, Cirencester.)

\*\*O Pryse Pryse to L. T. L. Pryse, 24 May 1896.

\*\*L. T. L. Pryse to Pryse Pryse, 3 June 1896.

\*\*Pryse Pryse to Sir Pryse Pryse, 31 October 1897.

and refurbish the garden and poultry house at Aberllolwyn, Lewes transferred his appeal to Pryse Pryse as agent to the estate.43 While expressing the deepest sympathy for his brother's predicament, Pryse once again re-affirmed the total inability of the estate to help.44 Lewes, who in 1904 was serving as manager of the Welsh National Agricultural Society which he had founded, continued to accumulate debts in the early years of the new century. The succession of Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse to the estate in 1906 doubtless caused Lewes to entertain the highest hopes that here was a fellow-sufferer who had long been heavily in debt himself and who would be prepared to help clear up his brother's financial predicament. This proved to be the case and in 1909 Sir Edward agreed to allow Lewes a voluntary gift of £200 per annum on condition that the interest upon the latter's £4,000 marriage settlement, amounting to £160 a year, be assigned towards paying off some of the outstanding debts.45 This seems to have satisfied Lewes, who continued to live quietly at Aberllolwyn until he succeeded to the estate and baronetcy in 1918.

During his long life-tenancy, Sir Lewes was to preside over a gradual decline which finally culminated in the dispersal of the estate a generation later. Although by 1918 the Gogerddan estate rental had contracted dramatically as a result of forty years of land sales, the number of Pryses expecting to draw an income from the estate continued to expand. The following schedule of estate liabilities, drawn up in 1921, illustrates the predicament facing Sir Lewes and the Gogerddan trustees:

#### Under the resettlement of 1880 (a)

(1) Dowager L	ady Pryse's (Sir Pryse	
Pryse's v	vife) jointure	£1,000 per year.

(ii) Mrs. Louisa James's (Pryse Pryse's wife) jointure £500 per year.

(iii) Lady Nina Webley-Parry-Pryse's iointure £800 per year.

## Capital Sums

- (i) Mrs. E. A. L. Powell (née Margaret Louisa Pryse, daughter of Sir Pryse) £1,250
- (ii) Mrs. R. J. R. Loxdale (née Florence Mary Pryse, daughter of Sir Pryse) £1,250

<sup>L. T. L. Pryse to Pryse Pryse, 1 December 1899.
Pryse Pryse to L. T. L. Pryse, 3 December 1899.
Boys and Tweedie to G. R. Pryse, 25 November 1909.</sup> 

	(iii) Mr. G. R. Pryse (fifth son of Sir Pryse)	£6,250
	(iv) Interest to Messrs Jessop and Davies	2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
	on mortgages	£2,393
(b)	Under the resettlement of 1919	
	(i) Allowance to J. P. H. Pryse during	
	the life of his father, Sir Lewes	£400 per year.
	(ii) Mortgage to Messrs Richards and	00.000
	White	£8,000
(c)	Under trust of 1,000 years term	
	(i) The executors of Sir Edward	
	Webley-Parry-Pryse	£825
	(ii) For furniture as heirlooms	£1,000
	(iii) To Sir Lewes Pryse	£2,500
	(iv) Repayment of mortgage	£7,205
	(v) Sir Lewes Pryse's life insurance policy	£5,000
	(vi) Estate duty	£40,000

Faced with this formidable list of debts, Sir Lewes desperately sought means of raising money to pay off estate duty and finally to discharge the encumbrances on the estate. In 1923, when the trustees had called in the Official Receiver to review the Gogerddan finances, Sir Lewes suggested to the trustees that £89,000 be raised by land sales and an additional £26,000 be loaned to the estate by the trustees.46 As security, he proposed to insure his life for the sum loaned. The trustees, realising that the premiums required to insure the life of the fifty-nine-year-old Sir Lewes could not be met from present estate income after all other charges had been paid, promptly rejected this proposal.47 They were convinced that only further land sales and severe retrenchment could provide cash for insurance premiums and, indeed, save the estate from imminent bankruptcy.48 Midway through 1924 came an unexpected reprieve in the form of a reduction in estate duty demands by the Inland Revenue from £40,000 to £15,000.49 This windfall did not, however, reduce indebtedness sufficiently to persuade the trustees to dispense with the services of the Official Receiver. Objecting to the fact that the

<sup>Pryse Lewes to Margaret Pryse, 29 July 1923.
Pryse Lewes to Sir Lewes Pryse, 19 October 1923.
Pryse Lewes to Sir Lewes Pryse, 27 February 1924.
Pryse Lewes to Sir Lewes Pryse, 25 June 1924.</sup> 

receiver and his entourage of lawyers and accountants were being paid from estate funds, Sir Lewes complained to the trustees, 'It is awfully uncomfortable for me, because people cannot understand how it is that when we are in such a poverty stricken condition we chuck away money like this.'50

The trustees still insisted that the receiver remain until sufficient money was available from the interest accruing to investments from land sales to cover the heavy premiums on Sir Lewes's recently acquired life policies. They explained quite bluntly that if Sir Lewes wished to see the withdrawal of the receiver, he should take immediate steps to sell further packages of land.51

At this stage, the late Sir Pryse Pryse's fifth son, George Pryse, began to take considerable interest in Sir Lewes's activities, for in the event of the death of the latter's son, John Pryse Howell Lovedon Pryse, the estate would devolve upon him and his heirs. Although satisfied with the rate of progress of land sales in the later 'twenties, George was horrified by Sir Lewes's proposal to sell off the mansion house and the family heirlooms. In a letter to his solicitors, Boys and Tweedie, in March 1930, he made his views abundantly clear: 'Sir Edward [Webley-Parry] Pryse was so sure that unless the estate was resettled that all would be dissipated by Sir Lewes and his son Mr. John Pryse owing to the number of times that he [Sir Edward] had already assisted Sir Lewes financially and also knowing how Sir Lewes on previous occasions had been so assisted by the late Sir Pryse Pryse and the late Mr. Pryse P. Pryse that he felt it of the utmost importance to secure a safe settlement'. He regarded Sir Lewes's proposed sale of the mansion and heirlooms as grossly irresponsible and could only assume that his objective in selling was to ensure that nothing remained for the rest of the family.<sup>52</sup> However, despite affidavits made out against him by George Pryse and Boys and Tweedie, Sir Lewes appealed to the High Court and was granted permission to sell the mansion house and some of the family heirlooms. 53 By November, a state approaching open feud existed between the two brothers. Writing to Boys and Tweedie, expressing his contempt for a judicial system which had allowed Sir Lewes to sell off family heirlooms. George observed that his brother's actions were motivated by personal hatred of himself. Furthermore, 'To myself as an ordinary, quite ordinary, man it passes my understanding alto-

<sup>Sir Lewes Pryse to Pryse Lewes, 27 April 1924.
Pryse Lewes to Sir Lewes Pryse, 24 June 1924.
G. R. Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 12 March 1930.
G. R. Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 16 July 1930 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS.,</sup> un-numbered).

gether as to why all the elaborate document called a settlement was ever drawn up and executed by various parties when such a document can be practically thrown into the fire by the Tenant for life who may so desire.'54 As it happened, the mansion house was not sold. Sir Lewes contenting himself with disposing of other properties to raise the £50,000 which the trustees considered needed to be invested to increase income sufficiently to meet outgoings.55

Under the terms of an agreement dated 30 December 1931, Sir Lewes was allowed a salary of £800 a year as 'manager' of the estate. subject to a reduction of £200 if the estate account did not yield sufficient surplus to pay the higher sum. Such was the case in 1934, when the trustees reduced his salary to £600. Upon learning this, Sir Lewes, who since the death of his childless son John in Spain in 1934 seems to have become largely indifferent to the management of the estate, informed the trustees that unless his original income were restored he would take no further interest in estate matters. While this was of some concern to the trustees, who sent Sir Lewes an ultimatum to the effect that unless he changed his attitude they would appeal to Chancery for permission to appoint an agent to be paid from his allowance, Boys and Tweedie took the view that the estates could be managed more effectively if Sir Lewes no longer played an active part. 56 Although an agent was appointed two years later, the seventy-two-year-old Sir Lewes remained as life-tenant until his death in May 1946. While the Gogerddan papers shed little light on his personal contribution to the estate during the last ten years of his life, the fact remains that by the time he died he had managed, with the help of the receiver and the trustees, to clear the estate of mortgages. This was achieved largely through land sales which had realised £110.742 2s. 0d. between 1920 and 1934. Naturally this action resulted in a severe reduction in estate income which stood at £7,000 a year by 1946 and was entirely absorbed in the payment of jointures and annuities.<sup>57</sup> The Gogerddan mansion, despite renovations carried out in 1936 under the direction of the trustees, was

<sup>&</sup>quot;G. R. Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 20 November 1930 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS, un-numbered.). A number of the family portraits had already been copied by C. G. Adams in 1907: see J. Steegman, A Survey of portraits in Welsh Houses, I (Cardiff, 1962). It has been suggested that Sir Lewes Pryse had arranged for copies of other portraits to be made prior to the originals being sold (Personal Communication: Major Herbert Lloyd-Johnes, Cirencester).

<sup>44</sup> G. R. Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 14 May 1930 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS. un-numbered).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Pryse Lewes to G. R. Pryse, 9 January 1935; Boys and Tweedie to G. R. Pryse, 8 March 1935 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

<sup>17</sup> G. R. Pryse-Saunders to the manager of the Midland Bank, Aberaeron, 14 December 1946 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

badly affected with dry rot and the houses and farm buildings on the estate had received no attention for many years.<sup>58</sup>

Such was the condition of the estate when George Rice Pryse-Saunders inherited the baronetcy in 1946, having some ten years previously hyphenated his name upon his wife's inheriting the Saunders estate of Glanrhydw near Kidwelly. Born in February 1870, George was educated privately in Brighton under the direction of a Mr. Watkin. Subsequently he served briefly on H.M.S. Worcester a naval training vessel, before pursuing a course in civil engineering at the Polytechnic College in Zürich. After a period of time in South America, he returned home in 1900 and joined the Board of Agriculture as an assistant inspector.<sup>59</sup> Two years later, while investigating an outbreak of swine fever on behalf of the Board, George fell ill and was forced to leave his work, spending the majority of 1902 convalescing at the house of his brother Edward at Neuadd Trefawr and that of his uncle John at Bwlchybychan. 60 Sir Pryse Pryse, who was very fond of his younger son, offered in 1903 to sponsor an extended period of convalescence in the south of France. George, however, preferred to remain at home in Wales, living on his wife's income and the monthly allowance of £10 from Sir Pryse. 61 By 1905 he had completely recovered and had taken up residence at Ty Mawr, Ciliau Aeron. Since the onset of George's illness, Sir Pryse had been trying to persuade his eldest surviving son, Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, to employ his younger brother as agent to the estate following Sir Pryse's death. 62 Thus, 1907 found George acting as his brother's agent, serving in that capacity until the outbreak of the Great War when he joined the Welsh Horse Yeomanry and saw active service in Egypt before becoming Commandant of the Detention Centre at St. Albans. 63 After the war George Pryse-Saunders lived quietly at Tŷ Mawr, supervising the Tŷ Mawr estate, riding to hounds, depleting his cellars and attending to county matters.

MSS., un-numbered). Pryse-Saunders believed that Sir Lewes's installation of central heating in the mansion had largely been responsible for the dry rot. As prospective life-tenant, he had complained in 1936 of the large sums which he would eventually have to find to restore the mansion. Boys and Tweedie had agreed that such monies could be borrowed from trustees' capital and repayed by annual instalments. Pryse-Saunders, however, maintained that as Sir Lewes had allowed the mansion to deteriorate, he should be forced to pay all repair costs during his lifetime and not allow them to burden the succeeding life-tenant: G. R. Pryse-Saunders to Boys and Tweedie, 7 and 12 May 1936 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS. un-numbered)

MSS., un-numbered).

\*\*Cambrian News, 17 September 1948; Who Was Who, 1941-50. He had married Geraldine Mabel Abadam of Middleton Hall in 1895.

<sup>Sir Pryse Pryse to Boys and Tweedie, 22 December 1902.
Sir Pryse Pryse to G. R. Pryse-Saunders, 4 February, 31 March and 4 April 1903.
Sir Pryse Pryse to G. R. Pryse-Saunders, 20 December 1902, and to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 24 December 1902.
Cambrian News, 17 September 1948.</sup> 

Crippled with arthritis, the new baronet moved into Gogerddan in 1947, having let Tŷ Mawr as a school for evacuees. At seventy-six vears of age he could hardly have been expected to pull round the estate which had fallen into such a depressed condition. On the other hand, he made a determined effort to prevent the trustees from selling the whole estate to meet the Inland Revenue's demand for the £30,000 payable in death duties on the passing of Sir Lewes. He fully realised that as Sir Lewes's life insurance policies would only realise a proportion of this amount, limited sales would be necessary. but not the sale of the whole estate.<sup>64</sup> He took the view that once death duties had been discharged, the remainder of the estate should be let at an economic rent, and he even entertained the suggestion that the home farm and mansion might profitably be established as a Farm Institute. 65 Sir George's difference of opinion with the trustees was exacerbated by the fact that after all these years the trustees still employed a receiver to collect the rents from the estate. As he complained to Boys and Tweedie, 'Many other tenants on the Estate wonder if I really have anything to do with the estate and do not know to whom they turn when in difficulties'.66 As estate income was entirely absorbed in jointures and annuities. Sir George himself lived in a state of genteel poverty. Writing to Lady Madeleine Pryse, divorced first wife of Sir Lewes, Sir George sympathised with her 'reduced circumstances' in Tenby, but was quite unable to provide her with financial assistance over and above her jointure. 'We live at Gogerddan', he wrote, 'with one General Servant and an odd man & we are working like slaves to try and restore some semblance of repair.'67 By 1948, two years of hard work and frustration had taken its toll. In July Sir George reported to Boys and Tweedie that he was suffering from rheumatism and had declined in weight from fifteen to eleven stones.68 Six weeks later, on 9 September 1948, he died and was succeeded by his son Pryse Lovedon.

The fifth baronet, who had served in France in 1914-18 and in India and Mesopotamia in 1939-45, had married a woman some years older than himself and was childless. 69 It was for this reason,

Boys and Tweedie to Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders, 11 July 1947 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert

MSS., un-numbered).

"Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders to D. P. Thomas, Castle Hill, 5 December 1947 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

"Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders to Boys and Tweedie, 23 October 1946 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

"Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders to Lady Madeline Pryse, 1 October 1947 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

"Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders to Boys and Tweedie, 26 July 1948 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

"Sir G. R. Pryse-Saunders to Boys and Tweedie, 26 July 1948 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

MSS., un-numbered).

10 In 1938, he married Emily Georgiana Harriet, daughter of Captain Henry Crompton Frederick Cavendish, R.N.

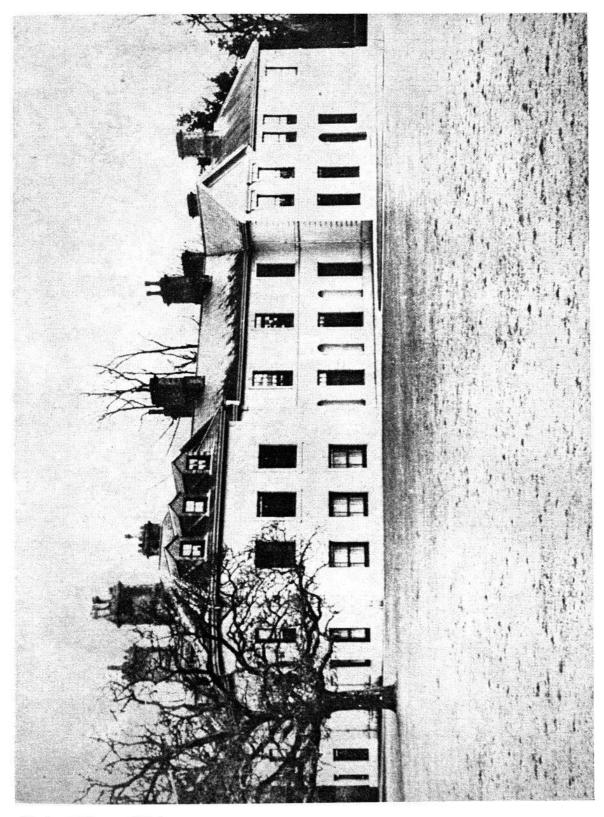
perhaps, that he had little sympathy with his father's efforts to keep the last few thousand acres of the old estate within the control of the Pryse family. Thus, as tenant-for-life under the Settled Land Act of 1925, Sir Pryse Lovedon Saunders-Pryse decided to sell the Gogerddan estate. In the University College of Wales, which required additional facilities for its much-renowned Department of Agriculture, he found a willing buyer, and a draft agreement for the sale of 3,839 acres was drawn up in November 1949.70 The purchase price, which was to include the mansion house and home farm, was set at £95,700.71 However, certain legal technicalities had to be circumvented before the sale could take place and the estate conveyed to the College. In particular, a problem arose over the mansion, which could only be sold legally with the consent of the Settled Land Act Trustees, who were not prepared to give such consent without direction from the Chancery division of the High Court. After appropriate petitions had been filed, on 22 May 1950 the High Court ruled that the sale could proceed.72 In addition, the fact that a vesting deed of 23 July 1927 had settled the estate on Sir Lewes Pryse, subject to the powers and provisions of the family settlement of 1919, meant that Sir Pryse Lovedon Saunders-Pryse had to secure a further deed vesting Gogerddan in himself before he could sell the estate in fee simple free of encumbrances. The appropriate deed was secured from the Settled Land Act Trustees on 27 September 1950.78 Under the terms of the agreement for sale, the vendor had reserved the option to repurchase the mansion house and surrounding demesne within twenty-one years of sale at an agreed price of £4,500, together with any incidental sums expended by the purchasers upon improvements. Whether or not he was influenced by the discovery of the College surveyor that £4,000 needed to be spent on repairs to the mansion is not clear, but Sir Pryse waived his option by a deed of release in September 1950.74

Following the sale of Gogerddan, Sir Pryse retired to Glanrhydw, where he lived until his death in 1962. With the eventual (and, one suspects, misguided) sale of estate farms by the University College,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> E. L. Ellis, The University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1872–1972 (Cardiff, 1972), p. 282. Sir Pryse died at St. George's Hospital, London, in January 1962 at the age of 65 years (Cambrian News, 12 January 1962).

<sup>11</sup> Agreement for sale of the Gogerddan Estate, 7 November 1949. I am indebted to Mr. Denys Evans of Roberts and Evans, the College solicitors, for kindly allowing me to inspect this and other documents relating to the sale of the estate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Ruling of Mr. Justice Vaisey, in the office of Roberts and Evans, Aberystwyth.
<sup>73</sup> Conveyance and Vesting Deed, in the office of Roberts and Evans, Aberystwyth.
<sup>74</sup> Release by Sir Pryse Lovedon Saunders-Pryse, September 1950, in the office of Roberts and Evans, Aberystwyth; U.C.W., Council Minutes, 1949-50, p. 61 (I am grateful to the College Registrar, Mr. T. A. Owen, for allowing me to see these volumes of minutes.).



(National Library of Wales

PLATE 3
PLAS GOGERDDAN ca. 1910



(National Library of Wales)

PLATE 4
SIR EDWARD WEBLEY-PARRY PRYSE IN THE UNIFORM OF THE NINTH WELSH REGIMENT, 1915

the ancient Gogerddan estate was finally and irrevocably dismembered. The end of the estate, the inevitable result of more than a century of economic mismanagement, an ever-increasing burden of mortgages executed to raise annuities, and, finally, the crippling blow of death duties, destroyed for ever the influence of a family which, for better or for worse, had dominated north Cardiganshire for many centuries. Like their neighbours, the earls of Lisburne, who had been forced to sell large tracts of land to meet the demands of bond debts and annuities, and their kinsmen at Golden Grove in Carmarthenshire, where 59,000 acres were sold at various times throughout the nineteenth century, the Pryses had enjoyed power, patronage and privilege commensurate with their vast patrimony.75

As he looked across the expansive lawns of the mansion during the final months of his occupation, the last baronet may well have pondered upon the eclipse of his family's fortunes, and perhaps even to have recalled the words of the prophet Jeremiah, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.'

RICHARD COLYER

Aberystwyth.

<sup>&</sup>quot;J. M. Howells, 'The Crosswood Estate (1547-1947)', Ceredigion, III (1956-59); F. Jones, 'The Vaughans of Golden Grove', Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymm. (1966). See also J. Davies, 'The End of the Great Estates and the Rise of Freehold Farming in Wales', ante, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December 1974), and D. Spring, 'English Landownership in the Nineteenth Century: a critical note', Econ. Hist. Rev., IX (1967).

#### APPENDIX

#### YOUNGER SONS OF THE PRYSE FAMILY

## (a) Edward Lewis Pryse, second son of Pryse Pryse (1774–1849)

Edward Lewis Pryse was born at Woodstock on 27 June 1817. He moved with his parents to Gogerddan, where he was privately educated prior to joining the Carabineer Regiment in 1837. On the death of his eldest brother in 1856, he took charge of the Gogerddan property during the minority of his nephew, handing over the estate when the latter came of age and married in 1859.76 Two years previously he had become lord lieutenant and colonel of militia for the county of Cardigan. Living at Peithyll on the Gogerddan estate, where he farmed some 200 acres, 'more for exercise and love of nature than profit', Pryse maintained the remnants of the famous Gogerddan pack of foxhounds after the main body of animals was sold in 1870.77 After eleven years in the House of Commons as member for Cardiganshire, he resigned his seat in 1868, 'though solicited on all sides to retain it, as he preferred the quiet pleasures of a country life, being heart and soul devoted to hunting and all field sports'. 78 Although a man with rather rigid views as to the relative positions of the classes, Pryse was regarded both in the county and in Parliament as a genuine Liberal who sympathised with the nonconformist interest.79 During his later years, however, he became a strong conservative force in the local Liberal camp, finding that the 'robust radicalism' of latenineteenth-century Cardiganshire did not correspond to his notions of Liberalism. According to the radical Cambrian News, which published his obituary in 1888, Edward Pryse was kindly and patronising to his inferiors, but 'haughty to all Democrats and Radicals and other vulgar persons who ignored those differences in social position which he never failed to maintain'. Nevertheless, as lord lieutenant he had always commanded respect and earned the approval of the county by nominating many Liberals to the commission of the peace.80

On 29 May 1888. Pryse left Peithyll on horseback to enjoy a day's fishing at the Rhosrhydd pools. Shortly after mid-day his dead body was found beside his horse near Pwllcenavon farm on the Peithyll-Goginan road. Despite his wish to be laid with his forefathers in the family vault in the church of Llanbadarn Fawr, the Secretary of State would not permit the opening of the vault and Pryse was eventually buried in a grave on the south side of the chancel. The burial service, conducted in Welsh by the Reverend E. James, a Calvinistic Methodist minister, was attended by almost six hundred persons. 81 In his will, dated 12 January 1888, Pryse,

<sup>74</sup> The Country Gentleman, 10 April 1880, p. xv. He managed the estate during his nephew's minority, with the assistance of Henry Charles Fryer, who had married Pryse Lovedon's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Bye-gones, 6 June 1888, p. 119.

The Country Gentleman, idem.

The Country Gentleman, idem.

I. G. Jones, 'The Elections of 1865 and 1868 in Wales with special reference to Cardiganshire and Merthyr Tydfil', Trans. Hon. Soc. Cymm. (1964), p. 58.

Cambrian News, 1 June 1888, p. 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Bye-gones, 6 June 1888, p. 119.

who had never married, left substantial bequests to charities and the residue of his estate, amounting to £11,812 17s. 8d., to his niece Viscountess Caroline Parker.82

### (b) John Pugh Vaughan-Pryse, third son of Pryse Pryse (1774–1849)

John Pugh Vaughan-Pryse, who was born on 16 September 1818, seems to have devoted the whole of his life to country pursuits. Educated privately, he abandoned his studies at the age of nineteen and devoted himself entirely to the management of his father's kennels and stables. In 1851, seven years after he had married Mary, daughter of J. W. Phillips of Aberglasney, he moved to Bwlchybychan, near Llanybydder. 83 Thin, lithe and weatherbeaten, John Vaughan-Pryse ('Vaughan' was assumed in 1866) was an inveterate sportsman who considered a week ill-spent unless four days of it had been passed in the hunting field. His passion for hunting was reflected in the décor of Bwlchybychan, which was a ghoulish symphony of foxes' masks, hares' heads and otters' poles. The overall effect was doubtless intensified by the stuffed fox which served as a footstool on the hearthrug of the dining-room.84

Vaughan-Pryse's first wife died in June 1851. Two years later he married Decima Dorothea, daughter of Major Walter Rice of Llwynybrain, who bore his only surviving son, John Carbery Pugh Vaughan-Pryse-Rice, in 1859. Following the death of Decima in 1893, Vaughan-Pryse, at the age of seventy-seven, married for the third time. His wife, with whom he lived until his death on 24 October 1903, was Anna, widow of William James Dundas Cloete of Somerset.

#### (c) Richard Humphrey Edmund Pryse, fourth son of Sir Pryse Pryse (1838-1906)

The Gogerddan papers shed little light upon the early life and career of Sir Pryse Pryse's fourth son, who was born on 1 May 1867. In 1894 he married Emily Beatrice Imray of Beckenham and three years later departed for India, where he served as clerk of the scales, secretary and starter at race meetings. According to a testimonial letter, he achieved a standard of 'excellence' at this curious trade. However, he returned to England in 1899 and after some difficulty obtained employment as manager of the Starting Machine Company of south London.85 Shortly afterwards he solicited a grant of £250 from the estate in order to furnish his recently acquired London quarters. Writing to his brother Pryse, who by this time was managing the estate on behalf of Sir Pryse, Richard justified his claim on the grounds that he had hitherto taken far less from estate sources than his remaining brothers. However, both Pryse and his father refused to help, unless he and his wife were prepared to help themselves by reducing their lavish expenditure.86 Pleading letters both from Richard and his

<sup>Bye-gones, 16 January 1889, p. 14. Viscountess Parker was the second daughter of his eldest brother, Pryse Lovedon.
The Country Gentleman, 30 January 1886, p. v.
H. M. Vaughan, op. cit., p. 54.
R. H. E. Pryse to Pryse Pryse, 1 June 1899.
R. H. E. Pryse to Pryse Pryse, 11 June 1899.</sup> 

wife failed to move the old man, who insisted that they dispose of their servants and country house in Wales and live modestly on the £105 a year which Mrs. Pryse enjoyed in her own right. Only then would he allow them a modest income from the estate.87

According to a series of letters which passed between Sir Pryse and his solicitors, Boys and Tweedie, early in 1904, Richard Pryse seems to have been mentally sick throughout the first four years of the new century. Sir Pryse concluded at one stage that his son was either 'a thoroughly bad lot, or is not accountable for his actions'.88 Tweedies, it appears, had been keeping a close eye on Richard's activities. Sir Pryse congratulated the firm upon preventing Richard from 'taking any stimulants except under doctor's directions', and suggested that if the man's mind were affected, somewhere 'in safe keeping' should be arranged.89 On the other hand, Sir Pryse was at this time rather sceptical of the doctors' claims that his son was insane, believing that his 'insanity' was merely a ploy by Richard and his wife to procure additional money from the estate over and above the £60 per year which Sir Pryse had recently allowed. Although Lady Pryse had suggested that Richard be 'put to a clergyman', her husband steadfastly believed that his son's salvation lay in being 'shut up somewhere and compelled to work'. Eventually, however, Lady Pryse persuaded her husband to seek a suitable clergyman who would accept £100 annually to look after Richard and his wife. 90 This was on 29 February 1904. By 23 March Sir Pryse was convinced that his son was insane, and although he resolved to have him confined in one of the government asylums in the Orkneys, he eventually yielded to his wife's entreaties, and May found Richard in the care of the Reverend Seymour Terry in a Brighton nursing-home. 91 Shortly before, upon the advice of her trustees, Mrs. Pryse had left her husband Richard who, besides spending her allowance, had been apparently paying his addresses to another woman.92

The couple's separation precipitated a lively debate between Sir Pryse and his other sons. Pryse agreed with his father that Richard's best interests would be served if he were kept apart from his wife and even went so far as to remove his brother from the Reverend Terry's charge to take him to an undisclosed hide-away. Sir Pryse believed that in view of Richard's irrational fear of his wife, a meeting between the two would drive the unfortunate man completely insane. Accordingly, he was highly critical of Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse's attempts to effect a reconciliation, stressing that if such a meeting took place the consequences would be entirely the responsibility of Edward himself.<sup>93</sup> Edward, however, was persistent, and his threats to involve the police in the case unless Sir Pryse and Lewes allowed him to arrange a meeting between Richard and his wife deeply angered the old man. In a strongly-worded letter reflecting his

<sup>Sir Pryse Pryse to Mrs. Beatrice, Pryse, 31 December 1900; Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 8 October 1900.
Sir Pryse Pryse to M. Tweedie, 7 January 1904.
Sir Pryse Pryse to M. Tweedie, 24 January 1904.
Sir Pryse Pryse to M. Tweedie, 29 February 1904.
Fir Pryse Pryse to M. Tweedie, 23 and 28 March 1904; Sir Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 26 May 1904.
Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 26 May 1904.
Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 9, 14 and 18 May 1904.</sup> 

deep animosity towards his eldest son, Sir Pryse admonished Edward for acting against his parents' wishes. He dward, however, was quite unmoved and having discovered Richard's whereabouts in the last week of June, he took his wife Beatrice to see him. This visit, which Richard himself had been anxious to avoid, resulted in his already shattered nerves being further strained by his wife's hint that the family were shortly to have him permanently immured in an asylum. Sir Pryse was so angered by this absurd suggestion, and so exasperated by the prospect of a family feud, that he flatly refused to concern himself further in the matter or to answer any letters containing references to his unhappy son.

The Gogerddan papers contain no further reference to Richard Pryse. It appears that he spent the closing years of his life as a vagrant, and several days before he died at the dining table of Tŷ Mawr, he had been found destitute in a barn on a farm near Aberystwyth. He was buried with other members of the family in the churchyard of Penrhyncoch in the winter of 1929.<sup>95</sup>

#### (d) Herbert William Pryse, sixth son of Sir Pryse Pryse (1838–1906)

Herbert Pryse was born on 7 November 1872 and, as a second lieutenant in the Suffolk Regiment, was married to Ethel Schuler on 23 July 1896. Under the terms of the family settlement, Herbert was entitled to a guaranteed income of £150 a year from the estate, in addition to the £60 granted him by Sir Pryse following his marriage. However, he manged to persuade Sir Pryse to invest £2,500 on his behalf in the London firm of Dixey and Company in lieu of the annual income. Herbert was no lover of hard work, and once the investment had been made, he retired to Ysradyrallt, Nantgaredig, and left his side of the business under the supervision of a manager and a solicitor. 96 This, of course, was a recipe for disaster. Early in 1897, the firm's solicitors wrote to Tweedies pointing out that since Herbert had joined the business he had taken no interest whatsoever in it. Moreover, owing to Herbert's absence from London, Mr. Dixey had had to remain in town, with the result that the debts owing to the firm of glass and china dealers had not been collected. 97 It appears that when Herbert had invested in the firm, he had not realised that he had become personally responsible for the firm's debts of £2,000, and the unpleasant shock of discovering this fact in September 1897 had precipitated (according to his wife) 'congestion of the brain'. Both his wife and mother-in-law, having been flatly refused any assistance by Sir Pryse, wrote to Pryse Pryse as manager of the estate to advance £1,200, 'to save his brother's life'. Herbert's mother-in-law, Mrs. Parsons, wrote of 'the agonies of pain and often delirium' which her son-in-law suffered on account of his debts, arguing that it had been quite unfair of Sir Pryse to buy him into a business and not grant him sufficient capital effectively to manage it. 98 Neverthe-

<sup>&</sup>quot;Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 21 June 1904.
"Sir Pryse Pryse to Edward Webley-Parry-Pryse, 30 June and 25 July 1904; personal communication (Mr. David Jenkins, National Library of Wales; Miss Florence Hamer, Penrhyncoch).

<sup>\*\*</sup> Pryse Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 11 September 1897.

\*\* M. Tweedie to Sir Pryse Pryse, 27 April 1897.

\*\* Mrs. Herbert Pryse to Pryse Pryse, September 1897; Mrs. G. S. Parsons to Pryse Pryse, 7 September 1897.

less, both Pryse Pryse and the rest of the family hardened their hearts and no financial assistance was forthcoming.99

In February 1898, Herbert was declared bankrupt. His mother-in-law, angered by the failure of the estate to come to his aid and mortified by the odium of bankruptcy, complained bitterly to the Gogerddan family solicitors: 'If I had known the nature of the contract [with Dixey's] he had signed with his father's consent, I would never have consented to him marrying my daughter'. 100 Tweedies, however, were quick to remind Mrs. Parsons that they had themselves suggested that the marriage should not take place until Herbert had proved his worth in business. Furthermore, they had urged him to pay personal attention to the affairs of the company, which the Official Receiver believed would have enjoyed excellent prospects with effective management. 101

Herbert next appears in 1909 at Oulton Broad, near Lowestoft, where he was living in considerably reduced circumstances. Appealing to his brother George for money, he complained of being plagued with rheumatic gout and, to make matters worse, of a severely burned foot which had resulted from an accident in the foundry where he was working.<sup>102</sup> The following year his poverty intensified and his health deteriorated. 103 In September he fell from his bicycle while smoking his pipe and sustained injuries to the roof of his mouth. The injury, he told George, was of minor consequence compared to the loss of five shillings from his jacket pocket which had left him entirely destitute.104

The following month Tweedies had managed to secure for Herbert a rather more remunerative job in the Daimler factory at Coventry, but by the spring of 1911 he had resigned this post, being unable to sustain the pressures involved. 105 Later in the same month he wrote to George from an address in Fulham Park Gardens, London, complaining that not only was his wife no longer with him, but that as Sir Edward would allow him no money he was entirely deprived of any means with which to advertise his services. 106

For the next twenty years, Herbert fades into obscurity. By 1931, however, he was once again living with his wife in a house in Essex, the mortgage of which was being paid by a cousin, Miss Parsons. The couple were living in very 'distressed' circumstances, their only source of subsistence being Mrs. Pryse's yearly income of £100, and appeals were made to George Pryse and his two sisters, Mrs. Powell and Mrs. Loxdale, to provide an additional £1 a week which 'should make the difference between just sufficient and starvation'.107

<sup>&</sup>quot; Pryse Pryse to Mrs. Herbert Pryse, 6 September 1897.

<sup>100</sup> Mrs. Parsons to Tweedie, 12 February 1898.
101 Tweedie to Mrs. Parsons, 14 February 1898.
102 Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 18 July 1909.

<sup>102</sup> Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 18 July 1909.
103 Dr. Dalrymple to G. R. Pryse, 24 April 1910.
104 Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 18 September 1910. Several months earlier he had explained to George that his only 'security' was his old mare at Nanteos, valued at £10 (Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 24 April 1910).
105 Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 9 March 1911.
106 Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse, 104 (late March 1911).
107 Tweedie to G. R. Pryse, 8 October 1931 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered). Herbert served in the trenches during the Great War, having at one stage suffered the shattering experience of being buried for three days at 'Hell Fire Corner' (Personal communication: Mrs. F. Loxdale).

In 1946 Herbert was living at Plas Wigwam, Cwmsymlog, where, according to the Welsh Gazette, 'At Christmastide he extends warm hospitality to the Carol-singers in the grand old style of his ancestors at Gogerddan'. Two years later, at the age of seventy-six, he begged his brother George, who was now life-tenant of Gogerddan, to allow him to rent Royal Oak as he intended to sell Plas Wigwam, 'being too lonely and very sick'. He died shortly afterwards and was laid to rest in the churchyard at Penrhyncoch.

### (e) John Pryse Howell Lovedon Pryse, son of Sir Lewes Pryse (1864-1946)

John Pryse Howell Lovedon (Jack) Pryse (b. 1897), the son of Sir Lewes Pryse, lived a highly colourful life. He was married in 1918 to the widow of Oscar Wilde's eldest son, Major C. S. Holland, with whom, it is averred, he made a living by 'card-sharping' on ocean-going liners plying to South American ports. After the termination of his marriage in 1922, he lived for some time in Park Lane with a young man from the Gogerddan estate. Being unable to pay their accommodation bills, in 1923, Jack and his companion fled to a cottage at Cwmsymlog in the mountains to the east of Aberystwyth.

Shortly afterwards, Jack procured a pack of beagles from Captain Otho Paget for which he was unable to pay. In order to help him out of this embarrassing predicament, Major Herbert Lloyd-Johnes of the Pembrokeshire Yeomanry, together with other Yeomanry officers and several local farmers, agreed to take over the pack of which Jack was to be huntsman. Jack, however, was infuriated when the consortium refused to pay him for the hounds for which he, of course, had not paid a single penny. One Saturday evening in September, Lloyd-Johnes and two friends called upon Jack to discuss the matter. Upon arrival they were given whisky, after a glass of which the three men were virtually immobilised. They revived at 4.00 a.m., Jack Pryse's wish to throw them in the nearby river having been frustrated by his young companion's refusal to help, and managed to return to Aberystwyth some hours later when the local inhabitants were dutifully making their respective ways to chapel and church.

It transpired later, after one of the victims had been hospitalised for three weeks, that the whisky had been drugged with morphine. Shortly afterwards, Jack and his companion fled the country on the proceeds of the Talybont Flower Show, spending the next ten years travelling in Belgium and Spain, in both of which countries Jack was imprisoned for fraud on various occasions. Jack Pryse died in Spain in 1934, his remains being returned to England for burial in the cemetery at Tenby. 110

Welsh Gazette, 31 October 1946.

109 Herbert Pryse to G. R. Pryse-Saunders, 31 July 1948 (N.L.W., T. G. G. Herbert MSS., un-numbered).

<sup>110</sup> Mrs. F. Loxdale, grand-daughter of Sir Pryse Pryse, is not convinced that the body interred at Tenby was that of J. P. H. L. Pryse (Personal communication: Mrs. F. Loxdale). A full transcript of the 'morphine affair' was placed by Major Lloyd-Johnes in the hands of Mr. David Jenkins, Librarian of the National Library of Wales, to whom I am grateful for allowing me to see it.