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**LIFE ON THE ENGLISH MANOR HOUSE**

**Monika Richterová**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2012*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

As the title of this bachelor thesis suggests, its subject-matter is life on the English manor house. The thesis therefore deals with the life at manors in the past, as well as in the present.

The choice of topic for this bachelor thesis was partly determined by the fact that author's placement was at a country house in Devon in 2008 and 2009, where she was working as an au pair. It is worth stating at this point that the topic was also selected because of her interest in English history and old English buildings.

As far as the structure is concerned, the thesis has been divided into eight chapters.

First chapter is dedicated to the analysis of potential differences between the meanings of words "manor house", "country house", "stately home" and "mansion".

After explaining the words used for grand houses, it is important to describe their main architectural features. This description will be closely analysed in the second chapter, which is going to be subdivided into 5 parts according to which period the houses were built in: Medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian era.

The third chapter concentrates on the actual people that used to inhabit these houses, that is, aristocrats. Not only will this chapter deal with their occupations, but also analyse activities in their spare time.

It is important to note, that one of the most important activities, that aristocrats were interested in, was hunting. This matter will be examined in more detail in the fourth chapter, which will be subdivided into 4 parts: The author's observation of a fox hunt, Rules and procedures of contemporary fox hunting, History of fox hunting, Attitude to hunts in England nowadays.



The fifth chapter will show the glossary of servants working on estates. It is necessary to point out that not only aristocrats lived at country houses, but also servants who looked after the estates.

Chapter six is going to deal with some of the requirements that potential owners have to meet to be able to run their country house. One of the main sources for this chapter will be a documentary series called *Country House Rescue*, episode about Cothay Manor in Somerset and its owners, The Roobs.

The seventh chapter shows that country houses played an important role during the Second World War. It was crucial to send many children from big cities to safety in countryside, away from bombing. Also, one house was used for code breaking Nazi messages.

As a practical part of this thesis, a research was conducted about Thornworthy House, a country house in Devon, at which the author lived during 2008 and 2009. This chapter is subdivided into two parts: it offers detailed analysis of the original meaning of word "thornworthy" and the second part is dedicated to history of Thornworthy House.

For accomplishing this thesis, various sources were used, in order to gather all necessary detailed information. The sources used can be divided into following groups: print sources, Internet sources, radio programmes, television documentary series and other television series and last but not least, two personal interviews.

## **2 TERMS – MANOR HOUSE, COUNTRY HOUSE, STATELY HOME AND MANSION**

Manor houses, country houses, stately homes, mansions; one can wonder whether all these terms have same or at least similar meaning. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines these words as following.

“Manor house” is “a large old house in the country with land belonging to it.” [1]

“Country house” is a “large traditional house in the countryside, especially one which has belonged to the same family for many years.” [2]

“Stately home” is “a large old house which usually has beautiful furniture, decorations and gardens.” [3]

“Mansion” is “a very large expensive house.” [4]

The author's research question is following. What are the differences between terms “stately home”, “manor house”, “country house”, “mansion” according to an English speaking person?

The author's friend Michelle Ranger has been asked about her opinion on these terms. She envisages a stately home like a building called Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire, which was visited by the author and Michelle together many times. At the moment, National Trust takes care of the estate and surrounding buildings. [5]

In Michelle's opinion, a manor house is the house that the lord of the manor would had lived in. It would not be as grand as a stately home or would not have as many bedrooms. She also pointed out that every town and large villages would have a manor house. [6]

A country house, is according to Michelle, just a house in the country, a second home, people would have lived in. They are people, who would spend few months living in a big town and then they would

stay in their country home in order to relax. The size of these houses would vary. [7]

As for mansion, she suggests, it is a modern term and mansions are modern, big houses, similar to stately homes. [8]

It is worth noting that all terms refer to old houses and have similar meaning, except for mansions. This leads us to believe that people can choose the term, they want to use, while talking about big, grand houses. Most of the English speaking people would understand that it is being referred to a big house, whose owners are wealthy.

The author agrees with everything, that her friend had to say about a manor house, a country house and a stately home. On the other hand, she has to slightly disagree with one of her opinion. Michelle pointed out that mansions are only modern buildings, but the author is convinced that mansions can be both new, as well as old buildings. It is important to add that there is an evidence of existence of both Tudor and modern mansions. This information can be found on the Tudor mansions website. [9]

After explaining the words used for the grand houses, it is important to clarify what the main architectural features of the houses were.

### **3 COUNTRY HOUSES IN ENGLISH PERIODS**

The aim of this chapter is to describe and explain main architectural features of country houses in each of English periods, more specifically, Medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian period.

#### **3.1 MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1066 – 1485)**

First of all, it should be mentioned that, medieval manors were not as big as medieval castles and were not built as forts. They may, on the other hand, be sometimes partly fortified. They had moats built around them for the purpose of defence. [10] According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word “moat” can be defined as “a deep, wide ditch surrounding a castle, fort, or town, typically filled with water and intended as a defence against attack.” [11]

Houses were built of stone to show wealth of its owner. Main feature of medieval manor was a great hall. Another feature includes large projecting windows which allowed light inside a house. [12] Specific architectural term for this kind of window is an oriel window. [13] (See Appendix I, image 1)

To illustrate these architectural features of medieval manors, some real buildings can be mentioned, for instance Penshurst Place, in the Kent countryside. This manor has not changed much over the centuries. Surrounded by beautiful countryside, “the original part of the house was built in 1341 by Sir John de Pulteney, a wealthy London merchant”, whose main idea was to build this house not far from London. [14] (See Appendix I, image 2).

Other buildings from Medieval period might be mentioned, for example Cothay Manor in Somerset and Stokesay Castle in Shropshire.

#### **3.2 TUDOR PERIOD (1485 – 1603)**

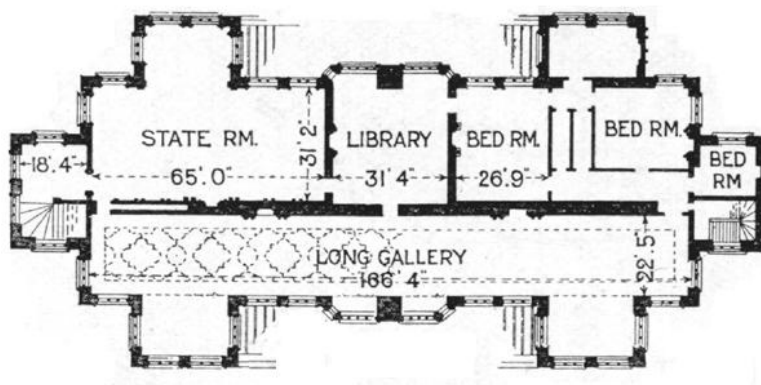
Grand houses in Tudor period were usually “designed to a symmetrical plan”, [15] most often it was a shape of a letter E and H and

were built to impress. [16] Its main features include steeply-pitched roofs, many chimneys and many fireplaces, which were placed upstairs. [17] Houses had many rooms to be able to accommodate a large number of guests and it also needed a separate wing, which was used by servants. It is important to add, that glass was the most important feature of these houses as it showed how wealthy its owner was. We should not forget to mention the fact, that in Tudor period glass for windows was first used to show wealth. That is why it seems that Tudor country houses have more glass in the windows than bricks in their walls. [18]

To name few Tudor country houses, for instance, Barrington Court in Somerset and Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire. The floor plan of Hardwick Hall can be seen below. The picture shows that the house was built with many windows.



**Picture No. 1** - Hardwick hall – Tudor Period [1]

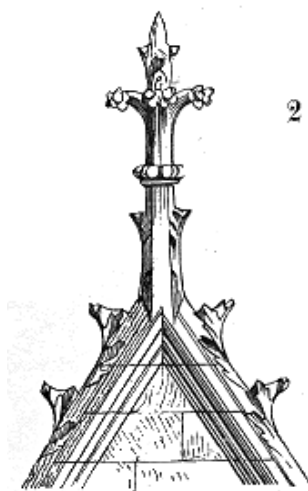


**Picture No. 2** - Floor plan of Hardwick Hall – Tudor period [2]

### 3.3 STUART PERIOD (1603 – 1714)

Author's opinion on Stuart country house architecture is that most of its features are similar to houses built in Tudor period. Similar features include many large windows divided by stone mullions, gables, finials on top of gables, pitched roof with an ornate roofline and symmetrical facade around central entrance. [19] It is important to explain some of the architectural terms used above, for example, stone mullions and finials on top of gables.

“A mullion is a vertical structural element which divides adjacent window units. The primary purpose of the mullion is as a structural support to an arch.” [20] (See Appendix I, image 3). Gable is according to a Cambridge Dictionary Online “the top end of a wall of a building where two sloping parts of a roof meet at a point”. [21] Finials have a meaning of ornamentation on top of a gable, [22] which can be seen on the picture below.



Picture No. 3 - Gable Finials [3]

Features mentioned above can be seen on the house called St John's House in Warwickshire. (See Appendix I, image 4). The house is used nowadays as a museum and has interesting toys, dolls and games collection. It also shows what the life of Victorian children would be like at school and at home.

### **3.4 GEORGIAN ERA (1714 – 1837)**

The main features of a Georgian country house are by all means different from all features mentioned above. Firstly, it should be mentioned that Georgian era was a “golden age of the classical country house set in a landscaped park”. [23] It would be usually built of bricks or stone and commonly used colours would be red, tan or white.[24] Other features include symmetrically placed sash windows, regular pattern of doors and windows, classical facade influenced by ancient Rome and Greece with columns and roof hidden from view. [25]

Some of these features may be spotted on the Kelly House, a country house in Devon, which has been a home to the Kelly family for 900 years. (See Appendix II, image 5). [26]

### **3.5 VICTORIAN ERA (1837 – 1901)**

In my opinion, Victorian architecture is rather interesting because it has many wonderful features, namely: beautiful brickwork used in contrasting colours and artful ornamentation.

Victorians were really keen on beautiful ornamentation and contrasting colours. There is a significant difference between Victorian and Georgian houses. Georgian features seem very plain compared to Victorian features. For a building material, bricks and stone would be used in contrasting colours. There was usually a plain facade with gable, variety of windows styles and arched central doorway. Other features include ornate brick chimney stacks and decorative wooden bargeboards. [27] The Oxford English Dictionary defines the word “bargeboard” as “a board, typically an ornamental one, fixed to the gable end of a roof to hide the ends of the roof timbers.” [28]

There are thousands of Victorian country houses across England, namely a beautiful house called Bletchley Park House in Buckinghamshire. (See Appendix II, image 6). This large country house,

used by government for code breaking the messages during the Second World War, was built in 1883. [29]

Now that some information has been given regarding the houses itself, we hereby come to the people that actually inhabited these houses.



## 4 ARISTOCRATS AT COUNTRY HOUSE

### 4.1 ARISTOCRATS AND THEIR OCCUPATION

Owners of great houses were usually aristocrats, who belonged to the Upper class in the social structure. The houses and the whole estate with its land showed their wealth. [30] David Cannadine, Director of the University of London's Institute of Historical Research and author of *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, says in the BBC radio 4 programme called *In Our Time*, that "Land underpins the wealth. Land underpins the political power and land underpins high social status." This shows us that the most important thing for the British aristocracy was a land they owned. As if it was not for the land, they would not be so wealthy. He also mentions the fact, that the eldest son of the family inherited not only the title, but also the land together with the public position. [31]

As mentioned later in the thesis, this land would provide them with rent income from the tenanted farms. This is the reason, why the landlord did not have to work himself, as the income from the farms provided him with enough money. [32]

Aristocrats were very proud of their social status. In 18th century, these country house owners had their homes furnished with the best furniture and expensive accessories, such as, "gilt chandeliers and gold and silver ornaments". Neither would they have forgotten about their gardens, which they would have "filled with fountains, temples, marble statues, streams and private zoos." [33]

Some people may wonder what exactly English aristocrats did for their occupation. Usually, most aristocrats would avoid working, but some men in aristocracy were appointed to "run the various governments of the British Empire, as well as serve as high-ranking military officers." [34] Some other members of aristocracy were interested in helping various charities. Take the case of the Mackay sisters from Hastings, who in 1840

“helped fund St Leonard schools”. Apart from that, they were also involved in “running charitable societies.” One of the sister, Eliza Mackay, who was also a founder of the “Lying-In Society for Poor Lying-In-Married Women”, had such a high status, that she was even “invited to lay the first three bricks of a new railway tunnel being built on Priory Meadows, Hastings” in 1849. [35]

This may seem to some, that all the aristocrats did was attending fine events, but there are also some aristocrats, who were interested in work, namely the Francis Egerton, third Duke of Bridgwater, who had “the first major canal in Britain” built in Lancashire. He needed this canal for transportation of his “coal from his mines at Worsley to Manchester.” [36] The fact, that he owned coal mines, shows that aristocrats were also involved in industry.

## **4.2 LEISURE LIFE OF ARISTOCRATS**

Some aristocrats enjoyed rather leisure than work. Aim of this part of the chapter is to name and explain leisure activities, in which aristocrats were indulged and which were performed on the estates.

Fox hunting, which is going to be explained in more detail in the following chapter, and shooting could not be missing among these activities.

Among other ways to enjoy their spare time was riding horses, walking, reading, painting, organizing garden and house parties and also inviting guest to dinners. Horse riding during the Victorian era, for example, was affordable only by the most wealthy people, because keeping and maintaining horses required stables, riding clothes and, last but not least, people who looked after the horses. Such people would be called grooms. All these reasons show us that riding horses for pleasure indicated the social status of the owner. [37]

Earl Charles Spencer, brother to the late Diana, princess of Wales, describes in his article about British aristocracy, that shooting, together

with organizing hunts, was one of the most important events during the winter months, which the aristocracy spent in the countryside. [38] Shooting game on the estate required a person called Gamekeeper, who was “a person employed to take care of game and wildlife, as on an estate”. [39]

On the one hand, it may seem to some from the information given above, that some aristocrats spent their time entertaining their guest, riding horses and hunting, rather than working properly. But on the other hand, there were some who contributed in building great canals, bridges or differently contributed to the community, for example, helping fund the charity projects. In conclusion, it certainly can be deduced that aristocrats, although they were involved in various projects, for example, helping the community, could not live without their entertainment.

## **5 FOX HUNT MEETS IN ENGLAND**

### **5.1 THE AUTHOR'S OBSERVATION OF A FOX HUNT**

The idea for the topic of this chapter arose during my 1 year stay in Devon, England in 2008.

Chilly November morning in Devon countryside, England seemed absolutely perfect for the occasion I was about to attend. The family that I was working for asked me, whether I was interested in seeing a fox hunt meet which took place not very far from our house.

As I would most definitely not be able to attend similar occasion in the Czech Republic, the decision was easy to make.

Arriving in front of the great country house, many people were already gathered around the horses and their riders. The huntsmen, who were wearing traditional red, black and navy blue hunt coats and hunting trousers, were sitting on their horses, talking to people. It has to be pointed out, that not only adults took part in this hunt, but also some children aged 7-15 years old. People from the village, surrounding houses and farms seemed to take this chance to meet and have a drink with their friends. The whole picture with the horses in the foreground, their riders wearing traditional clothes and the house in the background gave the whole atmosphere the finishing touch. The whole atmosphere was reminiscent of the times back in 19 century.

The owners of the house came to talk to everyone in order to make sure everyone felt comfortable, welcomed and had got a beverage. In the past, "fox hunting in the eyes of its supporters was an institution that bound together farmer and landlord." [40] "To take over the local pack, put on a red coat, provide drink and food for a lawn meet, was to become socially acceptable in a rural society of which the local master of foxhound was a dominant figure. Already in the eighteen century ironmasters and cotton-spinners had bought landed estates for sporting and social purposes." [41] Gatherings as funerals and weddings were

always good for the estate because it helped to bring the people together, but the best activity to emphasize the power of the aristocracy was fox hunting. [42]

In the case of the Devon fox hunt, the person organizing the hunt meet was the owner of the country house. I was told that the family organized it because they wanted to see their friends from the village and do something pleasant for them.

Along the walls of the house there were hounds and the master of the hunt made sure they are all well behaved and not running around.

When the hunt horn was blown, it was time for the hunt to begin and all huntsmen on horseback were seen through the gates. We only stayed for 2 hours at the hunt meet. After all the horses were gone, we went to find our Land Rover in the field nearby, in which all cars were parked.

Huntsmen never know where the hunt will take them. They ride through the woods, fields or on the moors.



**Picture No. 4 - Fox hunt meet in Devon [4]**

## 5.2 RULES AND PROCEDURES OF CONTEMPORARY FOX HUNTING

There are many organized fox hunts across the Britain, but anyone really can organize their own hunt, if the following rules are met:

1. They have to organize hunt on their own property.
2. They have to have permission from other owners' property, through which they may ride. In Appendix II, image 7, we can see a "Letter of Permission" provided by the Countryside Alliance in its Hunting 2006/2007 Handbook.
3. Everyone, participating in the hunt must follow the previously set up rules, for example, if they ride through the gates, these must be shut afterwards to avoid escaping the livestock. [43]

As we can see from the picture below, country houses were usually centre of a busy social life, for example, the Hardwick House, where the fox hunting took place, too. It is not always the case that the hunt takes place in front of a manor or a country house. Sometimes hunts take place in village or town squares, too.



**Picture No. 5** - Meet of fox hounds at Hardwick House, Suffolk [5]

### 5.3 HISTORY OF FOX HUNTING

Fox hunting is definitely an inseparable part of English history. There are many paintings and pictures showing traditional fox hunt meet. If we take a look at one of these paintings and compare it to the fox hunts, which are being held nowadays, we will not see many differences. The reason for this is that English people try to keep the tradition of wearing traditional hunting clothing.

Modern fox hunting is believed to be established by a man, called Hugo Meynell (See Appendix III, image 8) at Quorndon Hall, which was his estate in North Leicestershire in 1753. This man started to breed hounds “for their speed and stamina, as well as their keen scent”. [44]

Hugo Meynell, Esq., was born in 1735, which means that he started breeding hounds in the age of 18. He was the Master of the Quorn Hunt between 1753 and 1800. [45] Quorn Hunt is held to these days. (See Appendix III, image 9). Having owned the land and the country house, this suggests that Hugo Meynell was not employed by aristocrats. He is also believed to be “the father of modern fox hunting”. [46]

According to the article, which is taken from the *Baily's Magazine Sports and Pastimes*, dated February 1805, “on the first day of hunting his noble visitors attended him to cover near Stanford in Nottinghamshire, where there was an assembly of about 300 horsemen and ladies in carriages, among whom were the Duchess of Rutland, Marchioness of Salisbury, the Earls of Essex, Talbot, Stir and Winchelsea, the Dukes of Bedford, Devonshire, and Grafton, besides many more visitors of distinction. The noble visitors were guests at Quorndon Hall for about ten days.” [47] We could conclude from this article and also from his title Esq. that Hugo Meynell was not an aristocrat, but he was a wealthy man, because he was able to invite many noble visitors on his estate.

The hunting stable at Quorndon Hall is said to be 290 feet long, and has a noble appearance at night, being lighted up with an immense number

of patent lamps, which give it the appearance of a street in London. These stables are filled with the finest horses in the kingdom. The kennels are large and spacious, and contain a sufficient number of hounds to hunt four or five days every week. During the hunting season Quorndon and the towns near are filled with gentlemen sportsmen. [48]

- *Baily's Magazine Sports and Pastimes*, February 1805

The description of the kennels as “large and spacious” suggests that Hugo Meynell took very good care of his hounds and horses on his estate. The part of the article, written in 1805, can be seen above.

The Quorndon Hall is II. Listed country house, described by the above mentioned article as “neither very large nor very magnificent; it is built in a plain neat style”. [49] As seen from the picture below, the Quorndon Hall is a very magnificent country house and in my opinion, it is large and spacious. The author’s opinion comes from 1805, which shows that people in that time thought that the house of this size is rather small.



**Picture No. 6** - The Quorn Hall, Leicestershire, England [6]

The Quorn Hall is used nowadays as an International Education Centre and is mainly visited by student groups. The country house employs 16 members of staff and is able to accommodate approximately 104 people. [50]



#### **5.4 ATTITUDE TO HUNTS IN ENGLAND NOWADAYS**

For the past 20 years, some charities and organizations have been taking action against fox hunting and against what they think is cruelty to animals. Their main aim was to stop hounds from chasing and killing foxes at hunts. It is considered barbarian to kill animals this way just for fun. After many years of campaigning against hunting, it was finally banned.

The Hunting Act 2004, which came into force on 18 February 2005, prohibits all hunting of wild mammals with dogs in England and Wales, except where it is carried out in accordance with the conditions of one of the exemptions set out in the Act. It also bans all hare coursing.” [51]

-

Since 2005, fox hunts are illegal but they continue to be held across the country. It was reported that more than 320,000 supporters turned out for annual Boxing Day hunt held in England in 2006. [52] It shows that people enjoy the whole atmosphere of hunts and they like to come and see huntsmen, horses and hounds on their way. Mr. Edwards, one of the former hunt secretaries at the Western Hunt in Madron, said they have also many young people coming to the hunt. They welcome every newcomer, who is supporting them. [53] Since 2005, huntsmen do not chase real foxes. Instead they use scent trail. This method is called “drag hunting, in which a person uses a cloth dipped with special chemicals to lay a scent before the hunt starts”. [54] This way, they can still enjoy the tradition and have a great day out on their horses.

Nowadays, all over the Britain, there are pro-hunters and supporters of this ban. I myself do not see any problem with holding hunts because firstly, there is no harm done to animals anymore and secondly, it is a great tradition, which people do seem to enjoy. Still, I am convinced that the ban should remain in the legislation in order to protect animals.

In 2006, Graham Sirl, former chief executive officer of the League Against Cruel Sports, said to magazine *Horse and Hound*, that LACS has achieved nothing since the ban was established. Mr Sirl changed his views on hunting and stopped supporting the ban. According to him, “hunting with hounds will never, ever be banned in England”. [55]

Explained in the following chapter are people, without whom manor houses could not be run in the past.

## 6 GLOSSARY OF SERVANTS AT MANORS

Servants in manor houses were divided into two groups: Upper and Lower Staff. Higher status among the servants would have the Butler, Housekeeper, Cook, Lady's Maid and Valet. The rest of the servants would have the Lower status, namely, Footman, Head Nurse, Chamber Maids, Parlour Maids, Between Maid, Nurse, Kitchen Maid, Scullery Maid, Laundry Maid, Head Groom, Groom, Head Gardener, Gamekeeper and Groundskeepers. [56]

There was a strict social hierarchy among the servants, which "was reflected in areas such as address, dress, meals and accommodation." [57] Some of the servant's duties are going to be explained on actual characters from the British ITV period drama series *Downton Abbey* set in 1912, which is about servants and their masters (the Earl and Countess of Grantham) who live at their country house, called *Downton Abbey* in North Yorkshire. [58] The name *Downton Abbey* is fictional, as the real name of the house is Highclere Castle. [59]

Some people may argue that as *Downton Abbey* is a fictional series, therefore the props may be unrealistic. Quite the opposite is true, because many of the props in the series, which were used for filming, were antiques.

As Julian Fellowes, writer and creator of *Downton Abbey*, says for the Daily Mail, they wanted to "give attention to every detail." [60]

We created the office in the attic of a house in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. It's so important that every detail looks just right so we spent weeks in libraries looking at illustrations of what a Yorkshire solicitor's office would have looked like. [61]

All the props, from the lamp to the clock on his desk, were from the period. It's incredible, but in London there are these amazing repositories where you can walk in and say, 'I need a 1912 office', and

they take you to a corner where there is every kind of prop you could imagine. [62]

He also adds:

The dining room of Highclere is an exceptional room, with three Van Dyck portraits hanging on the walls. We brought in our own props, such as the glasses and crockery, which were all from the period and hired from special props companies. [63]

- Julian Fellowes, writer and creator of *Downton Abbey*

Not only did the makers use period props in the series, they also had a historical adviser Alastair Bruce [64], who apart from the *Downton Abbey* also worked on movies as *The Young Victoria* and *The King's Speech*. [65]

## 6.1 UPPER STAFF

### 6.1.1 BUTLER

The Macmillan Dictionary Online describes the word *butler* as “the most important male servant in a rich person’s house, whose job is to organize the other servants, to welcome guests, to pour wine at meals etc.” [66] He is also responsible for overseeing “the management of the wine cellar, the cleaning and safe custody of the dining silver, the ironing of newspapers, the polishing of loose change and the blacking of boots.” [67] “Employers and their children and guests addressed the butler by last name alone”, while he was referred to as Mr Smith, for example, by other servants. [68] We can observe from the book *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro, in which Stephens serves to Lord Darlington that the butler quite often worked for his Master great part of his life. [69] Owners of country house employ usually male for this position. The word *butler* origins from “Old French word *bouteleur*, which means cup bearer.” [70]

Butler's relationship with the owners is usually very professional as he reports to them on various important issues concerning the household. In the first episode of the British ITV period drama series *Downton Abbey*, Mr Carson, the butler informs the owners about the arrival of John Bates, the new Lord Grantham's valet. Later Mr Carson tells the Lord Grantham that the new valet is not able to do his job properly and therefore suggests firing him. We can assume from this information, that butlers also had power to advice on firing some of his staff. Lord Grantham would, of course, make the final decision, but it seems that he would listen to butler's advice. [71]

Picture of Mr Carson the butler to the Crawley family from the British period drama series *Downton Abbey* can be seen on the photo below.



**Picture No. 7** - Carson the butler and Mrs Hughes the housekeeper in Downton Abbey series [7]

### **6.1.2 HOUSEKEEPER**

Housekeeper is “a person, especially a woman, employed to run a household.” [72] Her “sole duty is to engage, manage and dismiss the female servants, with the exception of lady's maid, nurse and cook, whom the mistress engages.” She would have been referred to as Mrs by other servants, no matter if she was married or not. [73] Housekeeper's responsibility was to keep an account book, in which “she accurately and

precisely noted all sums paid for any and every purpose, the current expenses of the house, tradesmen's bills". Housekeeper was usually employed by the Mistress and to her, the housekeeper also reported. [74]

In *Downton Abbey* series, Mrs Hughes the housekeeper serves well to her Masters. She always makes sure the household is clean, tidy and the bedrooms are neat. She is also responsible for the whole appearance of the house. Nevertheless, she never does the cleaning and tidying herself. This would have been the maid's job. It appears that the other servants pay respect to the housekeeper. While walking along the long corridors, her keys are rattling at her waist. This could have been a sign to servants that the housekeeper is approaching. She does not seem to have any personal life, as she has not got any family and her life is limited to caring for the grand house. It seems that servant's life is sometimes dedicated to serving one family for their whole life. [75]

Mrs Hughes the housekeeper in *Downton Abbey* series can be seen on the photo above together with Mr Carson the butler.

### **6.1.3 COOK**

Among the cook's duties was traditionally to prepare meals for the family, as well as be "in charge of the kitchen staff." [76] As seen in the *Downton Abbey* series, she would have kitchen maids to help her prepare the meals. [77]

### **6.1.4 LADY'S MAID AND VALET**

Lady's Maid is a "private servant for the lady of the house" and valet is a private servant to the master of the house. [78] Both of these servants would be hired by masters themselves, not by the butler or housekeeper. [79]

According to period advertisement, Lady's Maid would have to be a good hairdresser, understand dressmaking and plain needlework. She

sometimes has to agree on living in the city, as well as living in the countryside.

Some of the requirements for Lady's Maid can be seen below on the period advert, published in the United Kingdom in Victorian era. [80]



Picture No. 8 - Victorian Lady's Maid advertisement [8]

## 6.2 LOWER STAFF

### 6.2.1 FOOTMAN

Great houses would usually have at least two footmen, one of whose would have been more important than the other one. They would be called First and Second Footman and would be tall, handsome and representative, when the guests arrive. Among their duties are serving meals to family and assisting the butler with his duties. [81]

As we observe his other duties in the *Downton Abbey* series, he carries prepared meals from the kitchen into the dining room, waits at the table, takes the plates back after the family has finished eating and sometimes can answer the door. When the Duke arrives at Downton Abbey without his valet, Thomas, the First Footman serves him instead, for example, helps him get dressed. [82]

One of the Seconds Footman's duties was to iron newspapers in the morning in order to dry the ink so the master's hands would not get

dirty. Mr Carson, the butler tells William: “Do *The Times* first. He only reads that at breakfast, and *The Sketch* for Her Ladyship. You can manage the others later if need be.” [83]

### 6.2.2 HEAD NURSE

Head nurse would be in charge of the nursing staff in the house. [84] In *Downton Abbey* series, we do not see a nurse as there are not small children living there.

### 6.2.3 CHAMBER MAIDS

Chamber maids are in charge of keeping the bedrooms clean, lighting the fires and responsible for supplying hot water. [85]

### 6.2.4 PARLOUR MAIDS

Parlour Maids are responsible for cleaning, tidying and maintaining the rooms as drawing rooms, libraries, sitting rooms and other living areas in the house. They would have to answer the bells calling for service. [86] As seen from the advert below, parlour maid would have to have knowledge of caring for plates, glass and would have to wait at the table. [87]



Picture No. 9 - Victorian advert - Parlour Maid [9]

### 6.2.5 BETWEEN MAID

Between maid usually worked in parts of the house, in which she was needed. Called “tweenie” sometimes, she would have reported either to the butler, housekeeper or the cook. [88] According to Gladys Saines,



who worked as a “tweenie” at Spains Hall in Finchingfield<sup>1</sup> for the Ruggles-Brise family, she was never permitted to go upstairs, when the family was present. The only exception was the Sir John’s golden wedding. Gladys Saines recalls some of her memories:

I was what you call a tweenie. You helped everybody. You helped the nursery, you helped the dining room and you helped the cook. I loved helping the cook because I would be given a little titbit. I would do anything if they gave me a bun. [89]

The word *tweenie* is a shortened form from the word *between*, that is “a maid between a cook and a housemaid”. [90]

### **6.2.6 NURSE**

The nurse’s job was to care for babies and small children in the house. [91] She would have had a nurse maid to help her look after the children, prepare their meals and help with laundry. [92]

### **6.2.7 KITCHEN MAID**

My friend Michelle Ranger, whom I mentioned earlier in the thesis, has provided me with some interesting information about her grandmother, whose name was Kate Morris and who used to work in a great house as a kitchen maid to Morgan family, who lived in the town called Malvern in Worcestershire. Morgan family have been owners of the *Morgan Motor Company*. [93]

Kate Morris was born in 1913 and when she started working for the Morgan Family, she would have been 14 years old. Her duties would include washing pots, preparing vegetables and learning from the cook how to cook. In 1935, she moved with the family to a new house near

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<sup>1</sup> Finchingfield is a village situated in the Braintree district of Essex.

Maidenhead. The name of the house, unfortunately, is unknown. In that time, she also wrote a letter to her family about her trip to London. As she states in her letter, this was her first trip to London ever. She sounded really excited in the letter and could not wait to go. This letter shows us that staff from great houses did not travel much and when they did, it was a great experience for them. As we can gather from the letter, she travelled to London with some other maids, and according to Michelle, possibly with butler and housekeeper. [94] The copy of the first page of the letter, written on May 5<sup>th</sup> 1935, can be seen in the Appendix IV, image 10.

Kate Morris enjoyed going to the theatre in London, when she got last minute tickets and one story tells us that she was once so late, that one day ended up (as Michelle put it) “slopping down the aisle in her wellington boots”. [95]

### **6.2.8 SCULLERY MAID**

Responsibilities of scullery maid were “to assist the cook; to keep the scullery clean, and all the metallic as well as earthenware kitchen utensils.” If she was a good observer, she may have learnt some helpful tricks concerning cooking and running the kitchen. [96]

### **6.2.9 LAUNDRY MAID**

Among her duties was washing bed linen and towels. Apart from that, she was responsible for washing, drying and ironing clothes for all members of the family, living in the house. [97]

“All the white things being washed, the coloured articles should undergo the process of two rubbings and one rinsing in clean cold water; but not boiling, unless the clothes be servants', and very greasy.” This fact taken from the *Cassels Household Guide* indicates that she also took care of servant's clothes. [98]

### **6.2.10 HEAD GROOM**

At great households, Head Groom would have been in charge of running the stables. He would have grooms to help him. [99]

### **6.2.11 GROOM**

Groom is responsible for caring for horses and stables itself that is, cleaning stables, feeding and grooming horses. [100] As seen in Downton Abbey series, the Groom also gets the horse ready, which is, saddling him, when a member of family wishes to ride. [101] There may also be a Stable Boy helping in the stables with various jobs. [102]

### **6.2.12 HEAD GARDENER**

As the name of the occupation suggests, Head gardener is in charge of staff, which looks after the gardens at manors. Great houses can be surrounded by many different types of gardens, “such as the formal garden (also English garden), lawns, white garden, Japanese garden, miniature or bonsai garden, tropical garden” a others. [103]

### **6.2.13 GAMEKEEPER**

Gamekeeper was responsible for making sure that there are enough wild animals on the estate to shoot. Employed usually by a landowner, he maintained different parts of the estate, for example, woods, moors, as well as the wild animals living there, for example, pheasants, deer and other wild animals. [104]

### **6.2.14 GROUNDSKEEPER**

Working under the supervision of the Head gardener, groundskeepers would do anything that was needed to be done around

the gardens, for example cutting grass, cutting and planting trees and other important jobs. [105]

From the glossary of servants above can be deduced that great number of people needed to be employed at great houses as it certainly could not be run just by one or two people. In conclusion, it needs to be pointed out that country houses provided employment for people.

In the next chapter, explained we can find some requirements, which potential owners have to meet to be able to run their house.

## 7 REQUIREMENTS FOR RUNNING COUNTRY HOUSES NOWADAYS

Hidden away in the deepest Somerset, Cothay Manor is one of the finest Medieval country houses in England. 15 years ago Mary-Anne and Alastair Robb bought it as an empty shell. Since then they have spent all their time and money restoring Cothay. [106] (See Appendix V, image 11)

These are the opening lines from *Country House Rescue* series. After having seen this part about Cothay Manor, it has become author's dream to go and visit this place one day. Although it has to be beautiful to live there, people do not seem to realize that it might take all their effort and strength to run it. Mary-Anne and Alastair (See Appendix V, image 12) do not have any employees and they do all the work around the gardens and house themselves. [107]

Country houses are usually old and things around it get broken all the time. Repairing things, of course, requires time. The author has experienced this herself while living at the country house in Devon. The owners always had full list of things to do around the house and the garden. In spite of the fact, that they are employing a gardener, who comes to cut the grass and look after the plants every week, they still have to do lots of jobs themselves. They once said: "You know this is really a never ending job." Mary-Anne from Cothay Manor pointed out that she spends approximately 8 hours a day working in their garden. After that she is very tired. [108] On the other hand, they are very proud and passionate about their achievements.

Owners can very easily get into financial problems while running the house. In the series *Country House Rescue*, the Robbs said that they are not making very much money. Their estate is worth 3.5 million pounds and it costs 40.000 pounds a year to run. The gardens are opened to the public, but only attract around 6.000 visitors a year. This gives them profit

of only 27.000 pounds a year. According to Alastair, they have never made a profit. They were given an advice on how to make the profit higher. They should be showing the house and the gardens to the public, as well as provide the visitors with light lunches, tea, coffee and cakes. Another advice recommends that they should encourage their current visitors to come back, which means planning different events for them. If they want to keep Cothay, they have to start making more money. [109]

Financial problems do not only trouble the current owners but also some owners nearly 150 years ago. Some of these owners of manors also got into financial problems, but this not happened until the 1870, when the agricultural depression hit the British aristocracy. Before the 1870, the estates were able to make enough money to be able to pay for themselves. The money came, for example, from inheritance, letting farms to tenants or selling vegetables and fruit that was grown on the estate. [110] Period literature about aristocratic life at grand houses denotes to us that some aristocrat's income came from their inheritance. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by *Oscar Wilde*, for example, we can see that aristocrat Dorian Gray inherited a big sum of money together with an estate in London. [111]

“By 1880, the agricultural depression had led some holders into financial shortfalls as they tried to balance maintenance of their estate with the income it provided.” Some owners sought the solution of their financial problems in “funds from secondary sources such as banking and trade.” [112]

The agriculture depression was also known in England as The Great Depression and lasted from 1870 until 1914. The depression was a result of “wet summers that damaged crops” between 1873-1879. “Cattle farmers were hit by foot-and-mouth disease, and sheep farmers by sheep liver rot.” [113] We can assume that all the above mentioned reasons could result in financial problems that some country houses used to have,

mainly because, as mentioned earlier, the estates had farms which provided them with source of their income.

Of course, there are many people in England, whose descendants were not aristocrats and who can afford to buy grand manor houses nowadays. The sentence in the previous paragraph describing the British aristocracy being hit by the agriculture depression of the 1870s suggests that 150 years ago, most manor owners were members of aristocracy.

Motivation of the current owners lies in their passion for everything old, traditional and with a bit of history. Another reason may be that some owners of expensive homes want to show other people that they can afford to buy a big house.

The real point of keeping a country house and surrounding land nowadays is not entirely simple. Many houses have been in families for hundreds of years. An owner of the house Mr Butler from *Midsomer Murders* series said to DCI Barnaby, "I was only born to run things here at Haddington. That's all we are, caretakers. We don't own these places, they own us." [114] It shows us that not all the time does living on an estate makes people happy. Their task is sometimes only to keep and preserve their houses for next generations.

After explaining the requirements, that potential owners have to meet, we come to a completely different matter connected to country houses, that is, the important role country houses played during the Second World War. Not only were they used as an accommodation for evacuated children, but one house was also used for code breaking. Both matters will be examined more closely in the following chapter.

## 8 MANORS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR

### 8.1 CHILDREN ESCAPING BOMBING WERE EVACUATED TO MANORS DURING THE II. WORLD WAR

During the Second World War, many children from London were evacuated to countryside. Some of them stayed in cottages, but some were picked by wealthy families, living at country houses. Taking evacuees during the Second World War to country houses is an important part of the history of some country houses. It is said, that approximately 3.5 million people, but mainly children, were sent to countryside to be kept safe from the bombs, which the Government believed, would be targeting the cities. [115]

Parents were informed about the possibility of sending their children to safety by posters on the streets. One of the posters can be seen below. A man encouraging the little boy to leave London can be seen on the poster. Other posters may say: "Children are safer in the country. Leave them there." [116]



Picture No. 10 – WW2 Evacuation Poster [10]

Evacuation started on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 and it was called *Operation Pied Piper*. It must have been very difficult for the children to leave their parents, but it was necessary. [117]



Some children recalled good memories of the life in the countryside and some were homesick and unhappy there. This would be the case of Cynthia Gillett who was evacuated to manor house in Edworth, a village in Bedfordshire. She recalls her memories of parlour maid, who was responsible for looking after her and her sister, but instead she was beating her, when she saw that Cynthia was reading a book, as she did not think that working class people should be reading. Her little sister, whom she had to take care of herself later together with Cynthia, ran away from the house. [118]

This gives us an impression, that some children were really unhappy in their host families.

On the other hand, there were children, evacuated to manor houses, whose memories of the living at manors are very happy, for example, a girl, called Hazel, whose last name is unfortunately not mentioned in the sources and who was twelve years old when she was evacuated. She and her two friends were chosen by the Lady of the Manor in Ashford, Kent. [119]

Hazel remembers what the life at the manor was like:

The Lady of the Manor chose two girls and as there was only one of us left, we pleaded with her to stay together. She said 'oh, very well, I will ring the butler and tell him to put up another bed.'

The Lady of the Manor and her family were very rich people. They lived in a huge house with a home farm attached. We three girls were told to go downstairs with the butler and his wife (who was the cook). They were Austrian and spoke very little English. One day, the Lady called us into the sitting room and said 'we could play anywhere in the gardens except in front of the drawing room'. [120]

Another girl, Norma Reeve, who was 7 years old at the time, was evacuated with her brother and older sister to the village of Monkton Combe in Somerset. They were taken by a lady called Mrs. Shore-Bailey, who lived at the house called Monkton Court. Norma Reeve states, she felt like in a fairy tale, living in a big house for 15 months. She remembers that she has never been to car before and never before saw running water from the tap. After they woke up the first morning at the house, they saw, (as she put it) “the endless, rolling green lawns of the front garden it seemed they had arrived in Paradise.” [121] The photograph of Monkton Court can be seen in the Appendix V, image 13.

We can see that some host families treated children well and tried to provide the children with care and made them feel welcome.

Some manors hosted more evacuated children than one or two, for example, the Old Manor House in Wendover became a nursery school. On the photograph below, the boy can be seen in the garden in front of the house. [122]



**Picture No. 11** - Nursery school, the Old Manor House in Wendover, 1944 [11]

## **8.2 SOME CZECH CHILDREN ESCAPING NAZI REGIME WERE PLACED AT MANORS**

It is interesting to see from the author's research, that also some Czech children were evacuated to Britain, and some of these children, according to records, also lived at manors. They were, of course, evacuated for completely different reasons, than British children. As the British children were evacuated from big cities to escape bombing, the Czech children were sent to Britain, to escape the Nazi regime.

Reports, which can be seen in the Appendix VI, image 14, show the names of the children and also the addresses of houses, where they were placed. Other information about the life of children at the houses, therefore, is not to be found. Among the children, who were placed to live at the manor was Tomas Frank, who was born in 1926, and stayed at Edmonton Castle, nr. Carlisle. Tomas's mother Martha Frank gives her thanks to Mr. Winton in her letter for organizing a place to live for Tomas in England. [123] The letter can be seen in the Appendix VII, image 15.

Other children who found themselves living at grand houses were Rosenzweig Inge, who lived at Elton Hall in Peterborough. [124] Elton Hall's gardens and house are open to public nowadays. [125] (See Appendix VIII, image 16).

All this would never had happened without a man called Nicolas Winton, who helped organizing the trains from Prague to Liverpool Street Station in London from March to September 1939 and by doing that saved 669, mostly, Jewish children. [126]

## **8.3 CODEBREAKING AT BLETCHLEY PARK**

Another time, in which one of the manor houses became very useful, is when it was used for code breaking during the Second World War. The name of the house is Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire. [127]

Before the war, nobody was really interested in the town of Bletchley. As architectural chronicler Nikolaus Pevsner stated that “it had nothing to offer”. [128]

Bletchley Park was chosen for code breaking before the war and it had to be kept secret for the whole time, code-breakers lived there. They could not tell anyone about the work they did every day. [129] Before, the code breaking department was located in St. James Park in London, but for security reason it was moved to countryside, to a town of Bletchley, as there was a suspicion that London buildings could be destroyed by German bombs. [130]

Some of the code breakers recall their thoughts of the house itself. Sarah Baring said: “It’s a nightmare. It’s hideous.” She adds that they used to call the house “The Victorian Monstrosity”. The rest of the people living there liked it, as normally, they could not afford living in house like that. [131]

If people were chosen for the secret work at Bletchley Park, they had to work long hours, but they had some spare time, too. During summers they would swim in the lake which was just beyond the manor, in the winters they would ice-skate on it. Later in the war, tennis courts were built on command of the Prime Minister Winston Churchill, when he was visiting Bletchley Park. [132]

It should also be mentioned, that if it was not for a work the code breakers did at Bletchley Park, the war could had lasted for two or three years longer than it did. [133]

An example of a document, which the code breakers at Bletchley would be trying to crack during the war, can be seen in the Appendix VIII, image 17.

In the next part of the Bachelor thesis, there will be an opportunity to show, what my experience was, while living at country house, Thornworthy House in Devon.

## 9 THORNWORTHY HOUSE IN DEVON

This chapter deals with Thornworthy House in Devon, England, at which the author lived during 2008 and 2009. (See Appendix IX, images 18, 19 and for the garden see Appendix X, image 20) Therefore she has got personal experience with this house. Her personal memories are written in the Appendix XI, image 22.

In this chapter, the reader can learn about the original meaning of the word “thornworthy” and also about the history of this house.

### 9.1 ORIGINAL MEANING OF THE WORD THORNWORTHY

The word *thornworthy* is believed to be “originated in Anglo-Saxon times”. [134] It is used as one word nowadays but originally it is made of two words: *thorn* and *worthy*. If we take a look at the map of Dartmoor National Park in Devon, we will be able to find many place-names with ending *-worthy*, to name few, Fernworthy, Foxworthy, Godsworthy, Ponsworthy, Teignworthy and others. [135]

The Legendary Dartmoor website presents 2 different theories of origin of the word *worthy*. One theory is that this word comes from Anglo Saxon times and its old name is *worðig*, which means “an enclosed homestead, farm or curtilage” and the second is that this word comes from the word “*wurth*, which means soil, again this can be associated with a farm.” [136]

It should be mentioned that Thornworthy is not only the name of the house but also of the whole area on the edge of Dartmoor, rather a hamlet with only three houses, that is, Thornworthy House, Thornworthy Farm and Thornworthy Lodge. Thornworthy House and Farm used to be run together. Nowadays, both the house and the farm have different owners. The old name of the Thornworthy Farm is *Thorn worðig*. [137] There are other place-names at Thornworthy, for example, Thornworthy

Tor and Thornworthy Down. Thornworthy Tor is one of many high rocks which can be found on Dartmoor and which is situated about 1 mile from the house.

Word *thornworthy*, together with word *fernworthy* is “self-explanatory.” [138] We can assume from this information that there may have been some thorny bushes, after which the area was named.

Fernworthy is an area not far from Thornworthy House, where the Fernworthy Forrest and Fernworthy Reservoir can be found. Fernworthy, as another “self-explanatory” [139] word, is probably named after having a high proportion of ferns growing in the area.

## **9.2 HISTORY OF THORNWORTHY HOUSE**

Now that some basic information has been given regarding the original meaning of the word “thornworthy”, we hereby come to the history of Thornworthy House and the people who used to live there.

The first thing that needs to be said is that the history of the house dates back to 1840s when it is believed to be built as a hunting lodge. There were servants at Thornworthy House, because the servant’s bell box remains in the hallway, but it does not work anymore. Also, the now open-plan kitchen used to be divided into 3 separate rooms that were used by the cook and the maids.

According to the author’s research about history of this house, one of the first owners is believed to be a man, called Samuel Edmund Waller, born in June 1850. Samuel Waller was an historical painter and illustrator. He painted mainly horses and their riders set in the rural countryside. [140] One of his paintings, called *Before the morning ride*, estimated at the price between 20,000 – 30,000 GBP in 2005, [141] can be seen in the Appendix X, image 21. He married Mary Lemon Fowler, a portrait painter. Samuel Edmund Waller died in June 1903 in London. [142]

The author was told that a son of Samuel Waller was called Mark Waller. He lived at Thornworthy House with his wife Lady Dorothy Waller (former Dorothy Varwell). Dorothy Waller was also called Dot by her friend, Freya Stark, British travel writer. [143] Freya stayed at Thornworthy House many times with the Wallers. [144] The letters from Freya Stark's travels were coming regularly to Thornworthy House. In one of those letters from 1928, Freya Stark is curious to know what the news at Thornworthy is. Such a letter can be seen in one of her books called *The letters from Syria*. [145] The letters also suggest that Lady Dorothy and Mark Waller lived at Thornworthy in years around 1928.

Lady Dorothy and Mark Waller had a son, called Richard, who also lived at Thornworthy House. He and his wife Yvonne later moved to the house by the gate, Thornworthy Lodge, which was mentioned earlier. Yvonne still lives there alone. She used to have many of Samuel Waller's oil paintings but nearly all of them were sold off at auction.

Many years after the Wallers were living at Thornworthy, this house was a home to a British novelist, Mary Wesley, who published her first book when she was 70 years old. Her most famous book is called *The Camomile Lawn*. [146] She had lived at Thornworthy from 1955 for 5 years with her second husband Eric Siepmann. They had rented Thornworthy for 30 pounds a month in order to write novels there. Mary Wesley claimed that the happiest time of her life was when she lived at Thornworthy. [147] In the Mary Wesley's biography, called *Wild Mary* by Patrick Marnham, it is described how Mary and her husband Eric were enjoyed sitting behind their desk in an office, looking out at their goats on the lawn. [148]

Current owners are Philippa and John Waddell, whom the author worked for in 2008. They absolutely adore this place and the surrounding countryside. They keep a horse and a pony nowadays and go riding on moors regularly. Philippa runs a holiday cottage called Barn Cottage

which is situated next to Thornworthy House. Many people come to stay at this house throughout the whole year as there are always many things to do and see on the moors and on the Dartmoor National Park.



## 10 CONCLUSION

With respect to the results of this Bachelor thesis it is clear that manor houses, from the point of view of life on them, are not what they used to be in the past. People still own country houses these days, gaining them, either by inheritance from the previous ancestors or purchasing them. However, these houses had seen their best days in the time when aristocrats and their servants lived there and great fox hunt meets were held.

At the beginning of this Bachelor thesis, the reader was given some thoughts about the potential differences between words having the meaning of grand houses. Finding that there is not a significant difference between them, the author has therefore used them freely throughout the whole thesis.

In the second chapter, the reader was familiarised with the main architectural features of country houses during Medieval, Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian era.

In the following chapter, life of aristocrats was closely examined. Not only did aristocrats live their life through the entertainment on their estates, but some of them also contributed in different projects, which were helping the community.

The thesis dealt with the analysis of life at manors in the past, as well as in the present, showing examples of aristocrat's life and current owners, who try their best to keep manors running. Nowadays, many private owners struggle to finance their grand homes and are therefore forced to open them to the public, while organizing different events to gain as much money, as possible. They do not live the same life as the aristocrats did, for example in Victorian era. According to analysis, the land was the most important source of money for aristocrats, as everything was connected with it: the farms let to tenants, agriculture, but

also mineral resources. As a result, grand houses could be kept and social status was guaranteed.

As mentioned above, fox hunting played an important role in aristocrat's life and the chapter about fox hunting shows that even though the fox hunting is banned in England since 2004, fox hunt meets are still very popular among some of the English people and that they still enjoy attending them.

Other areas of research cover the life of the servants at manors and their endless work around country houses. Not only does the glossary show that each servant was assigned to perform a particular job in the house, but also that there was a strict hierarchy among the servants.

Completely different field connected to manors was researched by the author, that is, some country houses played an important role during the Second World War, firstly, when some of the children were placed there to escape bombing in big cities. Memories of some children show that for some of them this was the happiest time of their life, but others were extremely unhappy there. Secondary, it is rather interesting to see from the records, that also some Czech children were sent to country houses while escaping the Nazi regime. Finally, Bletchley Park, a country house in Buckinghamshire, was secretly used for code breaking during the war. It is said, that if it was not for the work that was done at Bletchley, the war could had lasted for two or three years longer than it did.

Thornworthy House in Devon, where the author stayed for a year, was not such a grand house as others mentioned in the thesis, yet, it used to have few servants in the past. In the time the author was there she performed similar duties as them, but did not feel as a servant, as the times have changed and most au pairs are not treated as servants anymore, but rather as part of the family. In the past, undoubtedly

servants would not dine in the same room as their masters, but the author was eating the meals with the family and enjoyed the life at this house. This gave her an extraordinary experience, which she will never forget.

Therefore this thesis can be considered as a small contribution to raise of public awareness about this topic. Suggestions for further research can be propounded, for example, what has become of country houses or the prices, at which the country houses are sold on the British property market.

## 11 ENDNOTES

(Endnotes are in the text in the square parentheses)

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## **ENDNOTES OF THE PICTURES**

(endnotes of the pictures are in the text bellow each picture)

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### **13 ABSTRACT**

This bachelor thesis deals with the the life at English manor houses in the past, as well as in the present. In the historical part, the reader can gather information about main architectural features of country houses and also about its owners – aristocrats, and their servants. Their life has been compared to the life of current owners of some English country houses.

Life at manors was examined from different historical periods. Research shows that some manors played very important role during the Second World War, that is, when they were able to accomodate some of the evacuated children escaping bombing in cities.

The objective of this thesis was to present to the reader the differences of life at manors in the past and in the present. The author collected the crucial informations while living at Victorian country house in Devon, therefore some examples about life at country house were given from her own experience.

## 14 RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá životem na anglických venkovských sídlech jak v minulosti, tak i v současnosti. V historické části se čtenář může dozvědět, jaké jsou hlavní architektonické prvky venkovských domů a také o jejich majitelích – aristokratech, a jejich sluzích. Život aristokratů byl porovnán se životem některých současných majitelů venkovských sídel.

Život na sídlech byl zkoumán z pohledu různých historických období. Výzkum ukazuje, že některá sídla hrála důležitou roli během 2. Světové války, to znamená, že byla schopna ubytovat některé z evakuovaných dětí, které tak unikly bombardování ve velkoměstech.

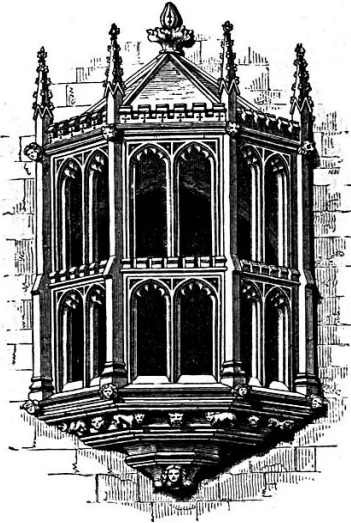
Cílem této práce bylo představit čtenáři rozdíly mezi životem na sídlech jak v minulosti, tak i v současnosti. Zásadní informace autorka nasbírala v době, kdy pobývala na venkovském domě z Viktoriánské doby v Devonu. Z tohoto důvodu jsou některé příklady o životě na anglickém sídle dány z její vlastní zkušenosti.

## 15 APPENDICES

Sources of appendices are to be found on pages 74 - 75.

### Appendix I

1.



2.



3.



4.



## Appendix II

5.



6.



7.

“ Address of farm or land: .....

.....

.....

Date: .....

Dear .....

I hereby give permission to the ..... hunt to enter onto or use my land to carry out exempt hunting as defined within Schedule 1 of the Hunting Act 2004 or for any other activity involving hounds which is not prohibited by the Act.

Signed: ..... owner/occupier ”  
(delete as appropriate)

## Appendix III

8.



9.





## Appendix IV

10.

On May 5<sup>th</sup> 1935, an old man sat in an armchair by the kitchen window, reading a newspaper in a large house near Maidenhead. In the same room was his wife and a group of girls. "I" was one of the girls & we were all busy, for that night was the eve of ~~the~~ "King George 5<sup>th</sup> Silver Jubilee May 6<sup>th</sup>", & we were packing our lunches, for we were going "up to London" for the occasion.

We were up early the next morning May 6<sup>th</sup> was a beautiful dawn & looked as if it would be a lovely day.

After breakfast we made our way to the station & had plenty of time to catch our train which left Maidenhead 6.46 am, this train had been decided on, because it was a cheap trip train 1/4, the later trains cost 3/4, I had received a money present of 3/- from one of my sisters so I felt quite rich, & would have gone on the dearest train, had we missed the first one. It was the beginning of a very exciting day for 2 of us for we had not been to London before, on the journey we passed the Factory near at Slough, this was "Oh Boy Gem"



Appendix V

11.



12.



13.



## Appendix VI

14.

FLUSSER	Lieselotte	5176	2. 2.28	As above	As above.	As above.
FRANKEL	Frieda	5173	31. 7.28	As above <i>Stepney Jewish School The Ace, London</i>	Czech Section	Czech Section
FRANKEL	Jenty	5172	3. 7.27	<i>as above C.T. Hostel Edmonton Castle W. Castle.</i>	Czech Section	Czech Section
FRANK	Tomas	1823	31. 7.26		Kosina M. Philp, Renee, The Grove, Clacton on Sea.	Czech Section
FRANKL	Hanna	5886	29.11.30	N.Staffs.Committee Hostel, Stoke/Trent.	N.Staffs.Committee.	Czech Section
<del>FREUDENBERG</del>	<del>Margit</del>	<del>7726</del>	<del>29. 1.22</del>	<del>e/o Norman Crossman, 18 Melville Street, Pollokshields, Glasgow.</del>	<del>Movement.</del>	<del>Movement.</del>
FRUND	Wrtz	1725	6. 7.29	with guarantor <i>Redwin Esling, 13 High St, Old Basford Nottingham.</i>	Personal Guarantee	Personal Guarantee
FRUND	Peter Bedrich	12387	8. 5.26	e/o (Moravian Church Board, 32 Fetter Lane, E.C.4.) Moravian School for Boys, Fulneck, Leeds.	Moravian Church Board, 32 Fetter Lane, E.C.4.	Bank Guarantee
FRUNDLICH	Julius	1820	7. 6.27	Rugby Cttee. Hostel.	M. Daniels, North Western Hospital, Lawn Road, N.W.3.	Czech Section
FRIED	Pavel	12388	23. 2.25	King's School House, Macclesfield, Ches.	Thos. Taylor Shaw, Kings School House, Macclesfield, Ches.	Bank guarantee
FRIEDENFELD	Gerhard	1047	17. 9.24	<i>Maun Farn Tilgith, Beds.</i>	Movement.	Youth Aliyah, At Youth Aliyah farm school.
FRIEDENTHAL	Grete	5619	28.12.31	With Guarantor	S. Laxon, The Towers, Park Hill, Kenilworth.	Czech Section
FRIEDMAN	Margit	4658	7. 6.30	e/o Miss Lang, Idon Green, Benenden, Kent.	Miss M. L. Hoare, Church Cottage, Benenden, Kent.	<del>XXXXXXXXXXXX</del> Czech Section

Permit obtained  
through Movement  
Movement list.

## Appendix VII

15.

Prague, August 15<sup>th</sup> 39

Dear Mrs. Winton,

I got your adres from my brother in law: Mr. Henry Frank. He informed me, that especially you, helped him so much to find a new home for our son Tommy Frank.

We know very well what troubles you, dear Mrs. Winton, must have had with.

I thank you with all my heart for your help. Thousand parents of our country thank you heartiest, as we do - thousands wait for the news from you and the Gloom~~ing~~ House, Gloomsbury Street W.C.1. London, as we did.

God may bless and thank you and your assistants: Mr. Lewinsolw and Mr. Klaus, for your troubles, your love, your work and your help. We never will forget what you did for us and what you will do for other children.

Sincerely yours.

Martha Frank,

Praha VII. Habrmanova 45

Appendix VIII

16.



17.

**MOST SECRET.**

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY: NEVER TO BE REMOVED FROM THE OFFICE. THIS FORM IS TO BE USED FOR AIR INTELLIGENCE MES

ITALY AND AFRICA  
AIR OPERATIONS.

*EX/MS*  
*Action being taken by*  
*Pr. d's Com.*  
*27.5.42*

RUSH OPERATIONAL.

TELEGRAM FROM FLIEGERFUEHRER (IA) TO A.O.C. IN C. SOUTH, FLIEGERKORPS (ROMAN) II, AND FLIEGERKORPS X AT 4.15 pm. 26/5:

"ONLY 14 JU 87 HAVE ARRIVED. LARGE SCALE OPERATION THUS ONLY WITH REDUCED FORCES."

(A)

NOTE: THIS IS UNDOUBTEDLY CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH THE ORDER REPORTED IN MSS/1016/T2.

REF. CX/MSS/1016/T10, THE FOLLOWING WAS PASSED AT 3.45 pm. 26/5/42 GMT AS: MK 5862/AL 5290/WD 2514/AIC.

*C*  
*Refer textually by my initials to Gen A. This is the following 1.11 27.5*

EARLY THIS MORNING 26TH ONLY 14 JUNKERS 87 HAD ARRIVED IN CYRENAICA. FLIEGERFUEHRER APPRECIATED THAT IN CONSEQUENCE THE "LARGE SCALE OPERATION" WOULD HAVE TO BE WITH SOMEWHAT SMALLER FORCES. REFER MK 5859.

BB/AM/ADY/WO.

AHJK/MS

1805/26/5/42



Appendix IX

18.



19.





## Appendix X

20.



21.



## Appendix XI

22.

### THE AUTHOR'S EXPERIENCE OF LIVING AT COUNTRY HOUSE

Thornworthy House, a Victorian country house, set in the rural countryside on Dartmoor National Park in Devon, England was my home for 1 year in 2008. Working as an au pair for the family, I looked after their two children. The house is built of granite under a slate roof.

Having expected the house of a normal size, I was rather surprised by its size when seeing the picture of it for the first time. The picture was one thing but the reality was something quite different. The house was really beautiful.

As my arrival to the house happened to be in the night I could not see the house until the next morning. Coming to the house in the narrow country lanes, stopping by a house, called Thornworthy Lodge, which was originally a gate house, opening the gate and then driving slowly up the narrow lane, I could only make up the silhouette of the house in the dark.

Having worked as an au pair for the two previous years near London, the experience of coming to somebody else's house did not feel so strange. I was welcomed by the family and by a dog (Hungarian Vizsla), called Yoda.

During the 1 year stay at this house I even experienced to be cut off from the outside world because the road to the house was snowed in. This took 2 weeks before the snow melted. We did not mind that we had to stay around the house and children did not mind that they could not go to school. We took walks on the moors and watched wild Dartmoor ponies grazing through the snow.

Both summer and winter afternoons we would go to the beach, either situated in Devon or Cornwall and take a walk along the beach. Other time on a fine sunny day we would have a picnic in the garden or take a walk to the nearby Fernworthy Reservoir, a supply of water for Torbay. Sometimes we would spend our time playing tennis on the tennis court in the garden.

Among my duties as an au-pair was taking care of two children, a girl aged 4 and boy aged 7. I used to take the little girl to pre-school every morning by car as we lived in a remote area. The boy would go to school on the school

bus, which came to pick him up every morning by the gate. After school I went to town to pick them up again. In the meantime I cleaned the house and after I had finished that, I would have gone for a walk with the dogs. This was not among my duties but I enjoyed the fresh air and the never-ending moors, where I could see for miles ahead of me.

I also played different games with the children inside while raining and sometimes played Hide-and-seek in the garden on the nice days. The garden at Thornworthy House is spacious enough to have a pond and a tennis court. There is still plenty of space left for the children to run around and play.

Preparing breakfast, lunch box to pre-school and dinners was also among my duties. I enjoyed it as I could learn cooking traditional British meals, namely Sheppard's pie, Cottage pie, Fish pie, Cornish pasties and others. Cooking in 3-oven Aga Cooker was great as it is hot all the time and we do not have to pre-heat the ovens. It makes the cooking easier and quicker.

Even though it does not look as I had much free time, I always had few hours to myself. In the winter time, I lit the fireplace for myself in the drawing room, because it was really cold in the other rooms. Before that the dogs came outside with me to get some logs from the log shed.



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#### **Appendix VII**

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#### **Appendix IX**

18. Thornworthy House, Source: Richterová (2009)
19. Thornworthy House, Source: Richterová (2009)

#### **Appendix X**

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