

ORMSBY-GORE, WILLIAM GEORGE ARTHUR (1885 - 1964), 4th BARON HARLECH politician and banker

Name: William George Arthur Ormsby-gore

Date of birth: 1885

Date of death: 1964

Spouse: Beatrice Edith Mildred Ormsby-Gore (née Gascoyne-Cecil)

Child: David Ormsby-Gore

Parent: Margaret Ethel Ormsby-Gore (née Gordon)

Parent: George Ralph Charles Ormsby-Gore

Gender: Male

Occupation: politician and banker

Area of activity: Economics and Money; Politics, Government and Political Movements; Art and Architecture; Royalty and Society

Author: Gwyn Jenkins

Born in London, 11 April 1885, son of George Ralph Charles Ormsby-Gore (who became 3rd Baron Harlech in 1904) and Lady Margaret Ethel (née Gordon). The family home was Brogyntyn, near Oswestry, Salop. He was educated at Eton and Oxford and in 1913 he married Lady Beatrice Cecil, a member of a prominent Conservative family.

In 1910 he was elected M.P. for the Borough of Denbigh by only eight votes but in 1918 he moved to a safer seat in Stafford and was a M.P. there until 1938 when he succeeded his father to the House of Lords. He became an expert on the Empire colonies and was Colonial Under-Secretary from 1922 until 1929 apart from the short period when Labour was in power in 1924. In that year he headed the Commission that visited East and Central Africa. He was a member of the Cabinet, 1931-38, and in 1936 he was appointed Colonial Secretary, for which post his extensive experience in the field was invaluable. However, one of his chief political enemies, Neville Chamberlain, became Prime Minister in 1937 and the following year he resigned in bitter circumstances. He opposed the foreign policies of Chamberlain and he was a constant critic of the Nazis. In brief, he was a sincere and prominent politician although occasionally impulsive.

After retiring from political life he turned his attention to banking and to his interests in the arts. He had already published *Florentine sculptors of the fifteenth century* (1930), *A guide to the Mantegna cartoons at Hampton Court* (1935), and *Guides to the ancient monuments of England* (3 volumes). He and his father deposited a valuable collection of Brogyntyn manuscripts at the National Library of Wales and he was the President of the Library, 1950-58. He was also Pro-Chancellor of the University of Wales and Constable of Harlech and Caernarfon castles. He died 14 February 1964.

Author

Gwyn Jenkins

Sources

Obituaries from 'The Times', 1961-1970; Including an index to all obituaries and tributes appearing in 'The Times' during the years 1961-1970 (1975), 350

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

John Harvey (ed.), *The diplomatic diaries of Oliver Harvey 1937-40* (London 1970)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [William Ormsby-Gore, 4th Baron Harlech](#)

Sound and Film

Welsh Political Icons: [William Ormsby-Gore](#)

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