

## Obituary - John Francis Arundell 1907-1944

### A Tragic Home-Coming



Joy at the anticipated home-coming of Captain the Lord Arundell of Wardour was turned to sorrow on Monday when it was learned that he had died from his wounds in a military hospital at Chester the previous night.

Lord Arundell was repatriated from Germany with the last batch of prisoners who arrived in England recently. He was wounded and captured at Dunkirk and when Lady Arundell received a telegram announcing that her son would be arriving at Wardour on the Monday prior to his death, arrangements were immediately made for his welcome home.

A second telegram informed her that he had been taken to a military hospital at Chester where he was dangerously ill. Her Ladyship, and members of the family, went immediately to his bedside and were with him when he passed away on Sunday night.

Born on June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1907, he was the only son of Lord and Lady Arundell of Wardour, the 15<sup>th</sup> Baron. He was educated at Stonyhurst College and New College Oxford where he obtained his B.A. On leaving college he became a member of the London Stock Exchange and he was subsequently added to the Commission of the Peace for Wiltshire, sitting on the Tisbury Bench. He succeeded to the title in March 1939, as the 16<sup>th</sup> Baron on the death of his father. He was extremely fond of the Wardour Castle estate, and, of a charming disposition he had a cheery word for everyone. He was an excellent shot and the woods on the estate gave him ample opportunity of indulging in shooting.

#### Taken Prisoner at Dunkirk

Prior to the start of war, he had obtained a commission in the Wiltshire Regiment (Territorial), but shortly after the outbreak of war he volunteered for service abroad and was posted to a Wiltshire Regiment, and with them went to France where he fought with great gallantry. He was wounded and taken prisoner at Dunkirk and had been in captivity in Germany ever since. It was known that Lord Arundell was ill from his wounds, and hopes were entertained that he would be repatriated with the first party, but it was not thought that this illness was so serious.

The title carries with it that of Count of the Holy Roman Empire, an honour bestowed upon the first Lord Arundell in 1605, who, as a volunteer in the Imperial Army fighting in Hungary, captured the banner of the Turks, thus causing them to cease activities. The banner was brought to England, and that, as well as the helmet which Lord Arundell was wearing when he captured the banner, still hangs in Tisbury Parish Church, where a number of the holders of the title are buried. The slabs covering the tombs have become worn by constant use. Captain the Lord Arundell presented a very fine carpet to the church, to be laid over the slabs in order that they might be preserved, and on his last leave, shortly before he was taken prisoner, he visited the church to see the carpet which had recently been placed in position.

Western Gazette Friday 29 September 1944

### Funeral at Wardour

#### Large and Representative Gathering

The funeral of John Francis, 16<sup>th</sup> and last Lord Arundell of Wardour, took place in the private chapel at Wardour Castle on Thursday.

The body was brought from Chester on Tuesday and rested in the Castle for the night. On Wednesday it was lying in state and tenants and friends filed past the coffin until 7pm when it was taken into the chapel and rested before the altar for the night.

The Lord Bishop of Clifton, the Right Rev W Lee, presided at the funeral service and mass was said by Monsgr Coughlan, vicar gen of H M Forces. After the requiem mass the absolution was given by the Bishop of Clifton, who also said prayers at the graveside. He was assisted by Canon J Hyland of Salisbury and Canon Hudson of Trowbridge. An address was given by Bishop Mathew (Bishop Auxiliary of Westminster).

Other clergy present included Father L Belton SJ of Stonyhurst College, Father D Hyland of Wardour, Father Mortland of Tisbury, Father Buckley, Bishop's Secretary, and the Rev J Rea DD. After the coffin, upon which had rested the deceased officer's cap and sword, had been lowered into the family vault behind the High Altar, trumpeters of the Wiltshire Regiment sounded "Last Post" and "Reveille".

Members of the Regiment also filed past the tomb, led by Major C H R Burns, who represented the Wiltshire Regiment and also General Sir Wm Platt, Colonel of the Regiment. The trumpeters and bearers were from the Regimental Depot at Devizes.

Members of the family and relatives present were Lady Arundell of Wardour (mother), Hon Mrs Hanbury-Tracy and Hon Mrs Fagan (sisters), Wing Commander Collingwood (representing Wing Commander Fagan (brother in law), Brig-Gen E Segrave (uncle), Col and Mrs Edgar De Pentheny O'Kelly, Mrs David Hanbury-Tracy (also representing Wing Commander and Mrs Hargreaves) and Mrs Gerald Freeman (also representing Mrs Weld of Chidwick)

#### GENERAL MOURNERS.

Others present included Nina, Duchess of Hamilton, the Earl Nelson, the Duke of Somerset (lord lieutenant of Wiltshire), the Countess of Denbigh, Lady Crofton, (also representing Sir Henry Crofton), Air Vice-Marshal Sir Charles Lambe, Sir Gerald Grove (also representing Lieut.-Col. and Mrs. J. Bennett-Stanford), Lady Clare King (also representing the Hon. Mrs. Agennon Hanbury-Tracy and the Hon. Mrs. Nicholson), Mrs Rimington (also representing Gen. Sir John and Lady Burnett-Stuart) Supt. T Barrett (also representing the Chief Constable of Wiltshire, Col Sir Hoel Llewellyn), Lieut.-Col. Lancing and Capt. McCarthy (of the U.S. Army), Lady Margaret Drummond Hay, the Hon. Gertrude Best (also representing the Hon. Marion Best), Hon. Mrs. Atkinson, Mrs Shand, Mrs. Troyte Bullock, Brig.-Gen. R. A. Berners, Hon. Mrs. Morrison (also representing Major John Morrison M.P.), Mrs. Gerald Wills (also representing Major Wills), Lieut.-Col. Atkinson (also representing the 3rd Batt. Wilts Home Guard), Brig.-Gen R. T. Hamrick (also representing the Wilts Territorial Army Association and the Tisbury branch of the British Legion), Mrs. Hope-Johnstone, Mrs. Claude Magniac, Miss Macdonald, Capt. W. E. Scott-Hall, Capt. and Mrs. G. A. Bull Mr. N. Rimington.

The Tisbury Bench was represented by Col F S. Kennedy Shaw (chairman), Messrs. M. Waters, E. Young, T. Doggrell (chairman of the Mere and Tisbury R.D.C.), Inspector G. W. Townsend, Mr. G. Leopold Lush (clerk), and Mr. H. E. Jackson (deputy clerk).

Mr. Thomas Hall represented Messrs. Rawlence & Squarcy (Salisbury), and Capt. J. Fawcus (who was for two years in the German prison camp with Lord Arundell, and who was repatriated with him) represented the Mess at Ofag 4 C, and "The Boys" who had been left behind.

Canon Barnes and Miss Barnes (Tisbury), the Rev. E. J. Mitchell (Donhead St. Andrew), Major and Mrs. Ernest Southan, Mrs. Andrew Forbes, Miss Dennistone, Col. A. C. Allen, Mrs. Whitehead, Miss Lilah Campbell, Mrs. Saville (also representing Col. Saville), Mrs. Dwyer, Miss Pelham Clinton, Mr. Howard Hiscott (Mere).

Estate employees present were Messrs. F. G. Fisher (sub-agent), C. J. Foyle, C. Lever, J. Lever, S. Ashberry, L. Harrison, T. Mullins, J. Randall, A. Fuller and H. Jackson.

Members of the congregation included Messrs. M. Alexander, D. Cox, T. Kelyon, H. Gurd, J. Randall, B. Foyle, E. Parsons, A. Parsons, John Fisher, J. Gurd, G. Handsford, H. J. Oliver (Tisbury), R. A. S. Cridland, M. T. Richards, C. Barnes, G. Pickford, L. A. Green and E. A. S. Brooks, Mesdames E. Grove, Bradley, A. E. Killow, L. Lever, Joliffe, Leo Harrison, Woods, Ball, Francis Fisher, Lewis Fisher, Hill, Herring Cooper, M. Woods, Gorsnell, T. Parsons, Yates, Steele, Joe Lever and Geo. Gurd, Mrs. Alexander and Miss Page (Salisbury), Miss G. Lambert, Mr. and Mrs. E. Tolfree, Miss O'Mara, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Burt (Sutton Veny), Mr. and Mrs. Hill (Donhead), Miss Harrison, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Burt, Mr. J. P. Doggan (Hindon), Mr. and Mrs. H. Damsey, Mr. S. Parsons, Mr. C. S. Ridout, Miss L. A. Lever, Miss Angelheart, Mrs. Bristo, Mr. and Mrs. Hindley, Mrs. Monty (Swallowcliffe), Mr. A. P. Poulett and Mr. R. Shelly (Bath).

#### Love for Wardour

In the course of his address, Bishop Mathew referred to the excellent qualities of the deceased officer, of deep fortitude, steadfastness and loyalty. As his friends knew, he had a deep devotion and love for Wardour and the people on his estate, and a high sense of the responsibilities which it entailed. The centre of his life was Wardour. His steadfastness of purpose and loyalty was well known to them all and he was devoted to agriculture and the welfare of England. His memory would be to them a most steadfast encouragement for none had a greater sense of duty.

The large number of floral tributes included those from Tisbury British Legion, USAAF, ARC, Office Colleagues, Depot of the Wiltshire Regiment.

There will also be a wreath from the following officers of Stalag 4C Germany, but it could not arrive in time for the funeral - Charlie Hopetown, David Walker, Pat Campbell Preston, Charlie Forester, Colin Mackenzie, Michael Burn, Martin Gilliat, Phil Pardoe and Jack Fawcus.

Western Gazette Friday 06 October 1944

Captain Lord Arundell of Wardour, The Wiltshire Regiment, who was wounded and taken prisoner at Dunkirk and was recently repatriated, has died at Chester Military Hospital. John Francis Arundell, who was born in June, 1907, was the only son of the 15th Baron, and succeeded to the barony in March 1939. He was educated at Stonyhurst and New College, Oxford and before the war held a commission in The Wiltshire Regiment, T.A. Lord Arundell of Wardour was unmarried and the title becomes extinct. He was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, a dignity which was conferred on Sir Thomas Arundel in 1595 for services in the Imperial Army in Hungary when he took the standard of the Turks with his own hand; on his return home he was created 1st Baron Arundell in the peerage of England in 1605.

The Times, September 26 1944

Captain Lord John Arundell possessed a character of great fortitude founded upon a sense of duty which was singularly traditional and untarnished. He was devoted all his life to Wardour and to its people. His very literal mind was in all things exact and resolute. His political and religious values were conceived as clear and firm. There was a zest as well as a care in all his actions. In these respects his life was based upon a sense of history. His appreciation of the rural English scene was both innate and sensitive. He loved the people of the English countryside, its land and woods and houses. His nature was profoundly loyal. Few men have had a more prepared readiness to serve their country.

The Times, September 29 1944

There must be, among those of us who were and those who still are prisoners of war in Germany, many who mourn the death of John Arundell. Throughout those long and difficult years of imprisonment his courage and personality were a source of inspiration to all who knew him. His refusal to allow adversity to get the better of him helped, by its example, may a less courageous spirit to face the grim emptiness of prison life. During the first months of imprisonment, when I was with him in hospital, John was a tower of strength, inspiring in others, by his sympathy and understanding, a confidence and a will to recover, which were sorely needed. As such he will always be remembered by us. F.A.V.P.

The Times, January 10 1945

Captain Lord Arundell of Wardour, The Wiltshire Regiment who died in September 1944, left unsettled estate valued at £50,285. He left £9,000 to form a fund for relief of poverty, distress, and unemployment among employees, tenants, or residents of the Wardour estate or inhabitants of Tisbury.

The Times, September 10 1945

"Here at Obermassfeld (Germany), I underwent a number of operations for the removal of burn scar tissue about my upper face, and subsequent skin transplants from my arms to my face. The other wounded prisoners under treatment around me told me that I was one of the lesser beauties of our surroundings. This did not bother me though, since I could not look at myself. While waiting for my grafts to heal, I became acquainted with several of my fellow prisoner patients, one of whom had a considerable stabilizing effect on me.

Captain Arundell was his name and he had been a prisoner for more than two years before my arrival. I later learned that Captain Arundell was Lord Arundell of Wardour and that he had developed tuberculosis after several years in a Nazi stone dungeon. Because of his condition, Captain Arundell was almost a total bed patient and had been listed for repatriation.

His illness, however, did not prevent us from having many hours of pleasant conversation. During discussions about his home and his feelings regarding nature, I began to learn about tranquillity and peace of mind, although I probably did not realise it at the time. Arundell of Wardour was a never failing spirit and was as serene an individual as I have ever encountered. I was pleased, when permitted to take a parole walk through the fields around the hospital, to pick wild flowers for Arundell's bedside. It was a great satisfaction to see his face light up when I brought in a few bright blossoms.

I was dismayed when informed months later that Arundell died upon his repatriation and return home. I have always regretted that I was unable to thank this wonderful man for the way in which he helped me to regain my composure. Without this "calming down" I certainly would have had an even more difficult time facing the long year of prison camps and forced marches ahead of me".

Lt. Burton M. Joseph, Brunswick, March 15 1944