

ART. XIV. – *The Finances of a former Jacobite: James Grahme of Levens Hall.*

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JAMES Grahme was a remarkable man. After making his way in life through military and government service in the reigns of Charles II and James II his career seemed in ruins when he was tainted with Jacobitism in 1688. He managed however to purchase a substantial estate in Westmorland, and, after spending the 1690s in the political wilderness, to fight his way back to respectability via representation of the county in Parliament. Yet there are doubts about the man which his papers do not satisfactorily answer. By his own account he was a financial victim of events surrounding the Revolution; indeed, in 1711-12 he appealed to Queen Anne and her Lord Treasurer Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, "to be kept from sinking", claiming to have lost £40,000 between 1689 and 1701.<sup>1</sup> Even if this was an exaggeration, it is clear that he was in financial difficulty, especially between about 1700 and 1713, although his problems eased considerably thereafter. Yet the reason for these problems is not altogether apparent. His papers are ambivalent on the question of how much he really lost at the time of the Revolution, and they fail to suggest why he should have been in perennial difficulties. Some of the courses of action open to him, such as timber sales and property sales – the estate was unsettled so that he had no fetters in this direction – were not fully exploited. The available evidence suggests the conclusion that he might have made his problems sound rather more daunting than they really were.<sup>2</sup>

James Grahme (1649-1730) was the second son of a respected Cumberland gentleman, Sir Richard Graham of Netherby, and Lady Mary Johnson, daughter of the first Earl of Hartfell.<sup>3</sup> He was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. His first wife was Dorothy Howard, grand-daughter of the first Earl of Berkshire. The diarist John Evelyn thought him unworthy of such a match.<sup>4</sup> She bore him five children, three boys and two girls. Henry, the eldest son, represented Westmorland in Parliament between 1700 and 1706, and was a groom of the bedchamber to Prince William. He married Charles II's illegitimate daughter Mary Tudor, for which act he was dismissed from the Bedchamber, and gained his father's disapproval.<sup>5</sup> He died in 1707. William, Grahme's second son, was a naval captain and died in 1717, while Richard, the youngest, died in 1697 while still a student at Oxford. Mary, Grahme's eldest daughter, married John Mitchell of Surrey in 1710, but they separated within a year.<sup>6</sup> She died in 1719. Finally, Catherine, his youngest daughter, married her cousin Henry Bowes Howard, fourth Earl of Berkshire in 1709. She died in 1762 by which time her three eldest sons had pre-deceased her. After the death of his first wife in 1700 Grahme married Elizabeth Bromley. She died in 1709 and there were no children by this marriage.<sup>7</sup> However, Horace Walpole was amongst those who believed Grahme was the father of the Duchess of Buckingham.<sup>8</sup>

Grahme's career was a chequered one. During distinguished military service he rose to the rank of colonel, and saw service under Turenne. Following that, in 1679, he was appointed privy purse to the Duchess of York, and shortly afterwards to the duke. During the brief reign of James II he was Keeper of the Privy Purse and also sat in

Parliament as member for Carlisle. He purchased the Levens Hall estate a few miles south of Kendal from Alan Bellingham<sup>9</sup> in February 1689 for £24,000. It seems to have been a bargain since the estate was thought to be worth £40,000 in 1711.<sup>10</sup> The Bellinghams had bought Levens in 1489, and the rest of the property which formed the estate by 1550, but in a few years of indulgent living Alan Bellingham amassed substantial debts which forced him first to mortgage and then – when portions for four of his five sisters required paying during the 1680s – sell the estate.<sup>11</sup>

By this time the 1688 Revolution had seen a dramatic change in Grahme's political fortunes, and in the aftermath of James II's flight he became involved in Jacobite activities. He was sought for high treason after his elder brother Viscount Preston was arrested *en route* for France with treasonable papers in his possession. Grahme was pardoned in February 1692, but after a brief visit to James II in France he was again arrested in June. After being allowed out on bail he went, briefly, to live at Levens. With the discovery of the Fenwick conspiracy in 1696 he was committed to the Fleet prison, and after his release retired to his estate to concentrate on achieving political respectability.<sup>12</sup> His past activities rendered him an easy target for political opponents, but he supported the candidature of his eldest son, Henry, who was returned for Westmorland in the 1700 election. Even Henry Grahme was not immune to criticism, and he spent £1,500 clearing his name in a legal case with Richard Baines who had called him "a Scotch rogue and a papist".<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, this success was encouraging. In 1701 Grahme took the oaths of allegiance, thereby clearing his own name and gaining the political support of Sir Christopher Musgrave and the Earl of Thanet. He then stood at Appleby in the 1701 election, but was defeated following a further political scandal. Arthur Shepherd, servant to Grahme's estate steward Timothy Banks, was involved in a brawl at Appleby during the campaign, in the course of which he "owned the pretended Prince of Wales to be heir to the Crown of this kingdom". The repercussions of this incident were serious for Grahme, since fourteen of his own tenants voted against him at the polls and he was defeated.<sup>14</sup> However, in a five-cornered contest the following year he was returned for Appleby, and in 1705 no opposition was mounted to his candidature. Following his son's death he stood for Westmorland in 1708 and was returned in a three-cornered contest in which the Lonsdale candidate was defeated. He was returned unopposed in 1710, and thereafter reached a tacit arrangement with the Lonsdales. Coupled with his own interest in the county, this was more than enough to ensure his safe return without opposition until he retired from active politics in 1727. In effect, from the death of Sir Christopher Musgrave in 1704, Grahme was the leading Tory gentleman in Westmorland, and this enabled him to break with his old political ally the Earl of Thanet.<sup>15</sup> He remained a Tory throughout his life, although he occasionally voted with the Whigs, as in 1716 over the Septennial Bill which lengthened Parliaments from three to seven years. Many of his correspondents were Tories, but he was reconciled to the Hanoverian succession, and when illness prevented him from visiting London in 1725 the Duke of Montrose told him that George I "regretted that the weakness of your limbs would not allow you to come to St. James' but hoped the Bath and your journey should have so good an effect as he should see you there next winter."<sup>16</sup> Symbolic of his return to the political scene was Grahme's appointment as a deputy-lieutenant of Westmorland in 1715,<sup>17</sup> the year of the Jacobite invasion, and by 1722 he was searching Catholic houses for non-jurors during the Atterbury plot crisis.

Grahme's estate in Westmorland was centred on Levens Hall, but included property in various parts of the county. The Hall, medieval in origin, was mainly Elizabethan, dating from the time of Sir James Bellingham (d. 1640). Grahme erected new buildings and carried out renovations during the 1690s, but his efforts were largely undone by a serious fire in 1703 which destroyed the kitchen wing. Although his steward played down the severity of the fire – "I am sure that less than a hundred pound will make it exceeding better than ever" – it seems likely that it cost much more than this since in addition to rebuilding the kitchen wing Grahme had a new range constructed to connect it to the brewhouse and a new main staircase built in the Hall. The total cost must almost certainly have exceeded the £80 recorded in the various accounts.<sup>18</sup> To the south of the Hall Grahme's property extended to Burton-in-Kendal, while to the north and west the manors of Helsington and Crosthwaite and Lyth, along with property in Kendal itself, constituted the Lumley Fee – a quarter of the barony of Kendal – which was granted to the Bellinghams by Elizabeth I.<sup>19</sup> In the same area north of Levens Grahme owned the manors of Underbarrow, Crook, and Staveley and Hugill. North of Kendal were the manors of Skelsmergh, Long Sleddale and Fawcett Forest, while away in north-east Westmorland Grahme owned the manors of Great Strickland and Melkinthorpe, a number of Appleby burgages and the manor of Gaythorn just to the south of the town. He made various small additions over time, mainly to consolidate the existing estate, although he refused other offers which would have given him convenient extensions.<sup>20</sup> Only one substantial sale was necessary, in 1712, although Grahme also netted £3,600 by selling many of his customary tenants into freehold.<sup>21</sup>

The value of the property is difficult to estimate because surviving accounts are scant.<sup>22</sup> A computation carried out in 1660 valued the estate at £1,500, but like another, put together in 1676 by James Bellingham and showing the annual value at £1,915, it is almost certainly too high.<sup>23</sup> Sir Daniel Fleming did not believe it to be worth above £1,000 a year, while Alan Bellingham himself estimated its worth at £931, exclusive of Gaythorn.<sup>24</sup> The paucity of the surviving accounts makes later estimates hazardous, but it seems likely that during the 1690s Grahme's income was between £1,100 and £1,300, and that by the time of his death in 1730 it was £1,300 to £1,400 a year. The only surviving rentals for Grahme's time date from the 1690s, when his income from rents was between £900 and £1000 a year. In 1730 it was £1,089. The sale of 1712 reduced the rental by £182, thereby offsetting the various minor purchases. Even so it is clear that rents were rising: Helsington Laithes for example, let by Grahme for £140 a year in 1691, had risen to £160 by 1730, and to £163 by 1746. Gaythorn rose from £114 in 1673 to £120 by 1700 at which it remained until it was raised to £167 in 1730, although it was only £150 in the 1740s.<sup>25</sup>

Grahme also received about £200 a year from customary estate fines, and he was entitled to a general fine on the death of Alan Bellingham in 1690. His right to levy this was challenged in Long Sleddale, Fawcett Forest and Skelsmergh. Since the fines came in over a long period, it is difficult to estimate his total receipt, although the surviving account books record income of more than £1,100 from this source.<sup>26</sup> Finally, Grahme derived a small income from sales of timber from off the estate. Alan Bellingham estimated that the value of the wood on the estate was £1,500, and in 1693 Grahme purchased a further parcel of wood, at Barrowfield. From there he sold wood valued at more than £720, although how much he bought it for is unknown, and there were still

two thousand trees standing. Oak trees were sold from Levens park in 1717, and a survey of timber at Staveley was made in 1726 with a view to sale. But Grahme did not exploit all the timber on the estate and in 1738 and 1739 the Earl of Berkshire sold more than £1,200 worth out of Barrowfield.<sup>27</sup>

The estate was managed by a steward who, apart from being in control of all financial transactions, was also responsible for collecting rent, letting property, managing elections, and holding the fourteen manor courts. Day to day running of affairs including care of the Hall and the home farm, was the responsibility of an under-steward. There was also a full-time gardener, and a number of part-time bailiffs, but all other labour was casual. Grahme had two chief stewards during this period. Timothy Banks held the post from 1689 until he resigned in 1704 to concentrate on a legal business in Skipton. For a while he continued to keep Grahme's courts, since Alan Wilson who succeeded him in 1707 was not an attorney, and he corresponded intermittently until his death in 1724. Wilson was a customary tenant of Grahme's, and held the position until 1731, when the Earl of Berkshire appointed another attorney, Mr John Craven of Lancaster, to run the estate. Banks was paid £40 a year, but Wilson, because he was not an attorney, and the majority of the work of steward was concerned with keeping courts, received only £24. John Harrison, recorder of Kendal, was employed for legal business.<sup>28</sup> Hugh James was under-steward from 1689 to 1695, and James Loftus from 1697 to 1703. In between, Thomas Pierson, bailiff of Levens, and Guillimo Beaumont the gardener shared the duties; the former apparently continued in the post of under-steward after that, and was still doing the job in 1716. Later a Mr Tyson held the post. Guillimo Beaumont was gardener to James II, but settled at Levens after the Revolution, and remained there until Grahme's death. It was he who laid out the famous gardens in the 'topiary' form during the 1690s. More than 1,500 plants and trees were ordered in 1689, and over 1,600 in 1698.<sup>29</sup> An attempt by Lord Weymouth to woo him to Longleat in 1713 was sharply rebuffed by Grahme. How much these various servants received in wages is unknown, but the bailiffs received a small allowance out of their collections; John Brougham for example received £3 7s. 6d. a year as bailiff of Long Sleddale, Staveley and Hugill.<sup>30</sup>

How efficiently was the estate run? In the first place a clear distinction should not be made between the different stewards and under-stewards since while they all communicated with Grahme at various times, often it was on the same topic. Grahme made separate replies, and kept personal accounts while at Levens – perhaps as a double check on those presented to him by the steward. He also left instructions for the steward and under-steward each year, after his visit to Levens, and his attention to detail is recorded in the following instruction to Banks in 1700: "In all your accounts for the future if you charge a bill paid, put the day of the month when it is due and for what, and if in full or in part and so for all other particulars let them be detailed".<sup>31</sup> Grahme was clearly not overconfident in the efficiency of his servants, a point revealed in 1694 when Banks was accused of mismanagement. Even so it was difficult to fault Banks' devotion to duty when in 1696 he continued to correspond with Grahme on estate affairs even though the almost unique position pertained whereby both men were in prison. Grahme was in the Fleet following the Fenwick conspiracy and, probably as a result of his connection with Grahme, Banks was held in Carlisle gaol for a short while.<sup>32</sup> Whatever the management structure however there was no doubt of the importance of Grahme's physical presence in the area for the collection of rents. Banks complained in October 1692 that not a

farthing of rents had been collected since Grahme returned to London a fortnight earlier, and Wilson wrote in 1711 that "Christopher Wilson's rent does not come in whilst your Honour stays at London".<sup>33</sup>

Part of Levens demesne constituted the home farm. In his early years at Levens, Grahme extended the farming interest and when Great Close was ploughed in December 1694 it was "almost twenty years" since it was last touched. However, towards the end of his life it was run down. Wilson commented in 1725 that there was more land "than's necessary for the goods you keep", and by the time Grahme died Levens demesne was leased out. Executorship papers of 1730 do not record any livestock, and when the Earl of Berkshire died in 1757 there were only three cows at Levens.<sup>34</sup> After his retirement from politics in 1727 Grahme spent most of his time with his daughter at Charlton in Wiltshire and it is likely that the farm was wound up.

James Grahme's estate was sufficiently extensive to make him one of the most substantial of Westmorland's few gentry families, and yet for most of his life after 1689 he was apparently in financial difficulties. From his surviving papers the origin of these problems is not immediately apparent. Expenditure on his estate was by no means excessive, and the most obvious place to look for his difficulties seems to be in relation to events during the 1690s. In those years he certainly appears to have been spending money in the Jacobite cause, although for obvious reasons he is unlikely to have kept a written record of such transactions. He seems to have helped his two brothers who were deeply involved in the cause, since in letters written during 1704, Fergus – from exile – mentioned sums of money sent to him by Grahme, while he himself claimed, in 1711 that "my brother Preston's misfortunes" were another drain on his finances.<sup>35</sup> More easily traceable are Grahme's financial dealings with the government, and the debts that he incurred as a result. Two issues appear to have been particularly significant: his dealings with stock in the East India and Royal Africa companies, and the debts incurred while he was keeper of the privy purse to James II. The first of these arose after James II borrowed £6,000 from Grahme when he fled to France at the end of 1688, and repaid the loan in £3,000 of Royal Africa Company stock and £10,000 of East India stock.<sup>36</sup> On 1 March 1689 Grahme was admitted freeman of the East India company and £3,000 was transferred to his name, although the other £7,000 was not accepted since the legality of such a transaction was unclear. The £7,000 had been *given* to James II after he became king, whereas he had *purchased* the £3,000 as a private citizen.<sup>37</sup> By his own account Grahme "... sold in two years time as many shares as of 380 and 390<sup>ds</sup> per share as came to £18,000 they sell very low". In Easter term 1690 the attorney-general issued bills in the court of Exchequer against the companies and separate ones in both cases against Grahme. The companies replied that the transactions had been quite legal. Grahme made no reply, but, by his own account in 1691 he was ordered to repay the £18,000.<sup>38</sup>

Although Grahme assured both Robert Harley and Queen Anne that he paid this sum, it is difficult to square his account with the surviving evidence. When the attorney-general was informed that Grahme had sold £2,500 of the Royal Africa company stock he demanded only the remaining £500. The disputed £7,000 of East India stock was transferred to the Crown, without any prosecution being brought against Grahme. By May 1691 "satisfaction had been made to their Majesties for the [£3,000 East India] stock".<sup>39</sup> Also in May 1691 Craven Howard entered into four bonds for £2,964 "which

his Majesty has been pleased to accept as the balance of the account of the said James Grahme of the moneys received by him of the said transferred shares. When the untransferred shares [are] secured to their majesties Grahme [is] not to be prosecuted on account of any of the shares with which he was entrusted".<sup>40</sup> Since Grahme had been under a proclamation for his arrest since February 1691, and was not found – he was thought to be abroad – he presumably could not have paid the other £15,000.<sup>41</sup> In February 1692 Howard paid £600 and the remaining £2,364 was assigned to Grahme on a bond to the King to pay by 1 April 1693.<sup>42</sup> To pay the debt Grahme negotiated through Lord Godolphin to sell the king his lease of Bagshot Park, a 458 acre royal estate in Surrey, which was granted to him by Charles II in 1682. The lease was extended for a further 31 years in 1687. At first it seemed likely the king would offer £3,000 and remittance of the debt, but partly because the lump sum was reduced to £2,000 and partly as a result of Grahme's behaviour, the deal fell through and Grahme did not, in the end, part with the estate until 1699.<sup>43</sup> The failure of these negotiations meant Grahme was unable to meet the deadline in 1693, and by 1697, when the bond was assigned to Major-General Erle, he had still paid only £500. He finally cleared it in 1699.<sup>44</sup>

Grahme maintained that it was two years before he sold all the shares he parted with, which would imply a date of about February 1691. From that time until the beginning of 1692 he was outlawed and could certainly not have paid the £15,036, so either Craven Howard or someone else paid it for him and he later refunded it – for which there is no evidence – or else Grahme only paid £2,964, or even £2,364, on account of the shares. He originally gave James II £6,000 and was recompensed with stock to the value of £13,000, which he sold for £18,000. Grahme implied that he lost £24,000 (£18,000 plus the £6,000 he gave James), but the surviving evidence suggests that he could have made nearly £9,000 profit on the transactions. If this was the case however, there would be some question of why Grahme could not pay his debt to the king. It is unlikely that the money was used in the purchase of Levens, which was bought by a transaction dated less than a month after James II transferred the shares and before Grahme was admitted to the East India company.

Grahme's second government debt was incurred whilst he was keeper of the privy purse, and concerned 'healing medals', medallions given to people touched by the sovereign for the 'King's Evil', in ceremonies arranged by the keeper. Grahme was charged in the Exchequer for £1,250 issued to him for providing the medals, and, after failing to render account when called upon to do so during the 1690s, had process issued against him in 1702. In April 1703 Grahme successfully petitioned Queen Anne, who had restored the practice of 'touching', which had been in abeyance during William III's reign, and the debt was cancelled.<sup>45</sup>

Although it is difficult to square all the evidence with Grahme's claims, it is clear that during the 1690s he found himself progressively deeper in debt, until in April 1699 he mortgaged Milnthorpe, Long Sleddale, Helsington and Fawcett Forest to Sir Christopher Musgrave, for £3,000. This enabled him to pay off more than £1,500 including the remainder of his bond to the king – which had been assigned – but it brought only temporary relief. In September he borrowed a further £500 and the following year another £200 from Sir Daniel Fleming, to whom he complained that "I have met Sir with great disappointments from my tenants, and other occasions in the public account hath employed my money and more elsewhere". Also in 1700 he had to pay a marriage

portion of £1,000 to Alan Bellingham's sister Dorothy. This may be why he borrowed £1,000 from Anne Howard of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and in 1702 another £700 on various different bonds. In November 1702 he repaid £1,000 to Musgrave, but his finances continued to deteriorate, and between 1705 and 1707 he borrowed a further £5,415 which included an additional £2,000 on the Musgrave mortgage. In 1708 his cousin Richard promised to "do what lays in my power as to the procuring of the £100", and by the end of the year Grahme was borrowing from a maid.<sup>46</sup> The signs of financial trouble were clear enough in these years. He required the steward to account for every penny spent, he kept estate expenditure to a bare minimum and he frequently railed at his tenants' slowness in paying rents. From around 1700 he began to call in bonds and mortgages, to put into mortgage part of his estate; and to encourage tenants to enfranchise. He also sold personal property, including diamonds, a ring and a picture for £171 in 1702, and complained of "the scarcity of money and the low rates of corn, wool and cattle",<sup>47</sup> all at the time when he needed to pay off his debt to the king and find Dorothy Bellingham's portion of £1,000. For a few years after that, although the estate was still in mortgage, his position was difficult but not desperate, possibly because his second wife received a £400 annuity from Lord Halifax.<sup>48</sup> His difficulties cannot have been too excessive since he spent at least £240 on elections in 1701 and 1702 (of which £125 was still unpaid in 1704) and he also embarked on a project to reclaim some derelict lands at Aulkborough in Lincolnshire. The four hundred acres were valued at sixpence an acre, and Grahme, with Charles Howson, petitioned the Lord Treasurer in 1704 for a grant of the land. Two years later he was told that a request to William Lowndes would probably secure it, but a grant was never made, although in April 1707 he received £300 by way of compensation.<sup>49</sup>

By 1709 Grahme's problems had reached an all-time low, and he even asked a local lawyer to look out for a purchaser for the whole estate.<sup>50</sup> The immediate cause of this gloom was the need to find portions for his daughters. Grahme had decided that each of his daughters should have a marriage portion of £3,000 and his two younger sons were to have £2,000 to set themselves up. Richard died in 1697 before his became due, and there is no indication that William's was paid before he became heir to the property on the death of his elder brother Henry in 1707, although he was by then twenty-six.<sup>51</sup> In 1709 however, Grahme's eldest daughter married, and to find her portion he mortgaged Levens, Hincaster, Skelsmergh, Gaythorn, Crosby Ravensworth, and property in Appleby and Kendal to a fellow Tory MP, William Bromley, for £4,000.<sup>52</sup> When his younger daughter Mary married the following year her portion was not paid, but when the couple separated, Grahme's son-in-law demanded payment of the money. He considered a further mortgage, but on the advice of his steward finally decided on a property sale. The obvious properties to sell were Great Strickland and Melkinthorpe, which he had contemplated exchanging with Lord Lonsdale in 1697, since they lay adjacent to the latter's property and detached from his own main area of interest. The deal fell foul of legal rights to timber, but negotiations were re-opened two years later by Lord Lonsdale only to flounder once again on legal points. Once sale became necessary in 1712 Grahme decided that these were the manors to go, and he added for good measure his Appleby burgages since he now sat for Westmorland and had no further use for them. For political reasons he offered the property to the Earl of Thanet, who excused himself, clearing the way for Grahme to re-open negotiations with Lady



Lonsdale (on behalf of her son the second viscount who was still a minor). The timber was again a contentious issue, and Grahme was disappointed that Lady Lonsdale refused to purchase the detached manor of Gaythorn. However, a deal was struck for £4,120.<sup>53</sup> Of this £3,000 went to Grahme's son-in-law, £1,000 to pay off the mortgage to Anne Howard, and just £120 to Grahme's own use.<sup>54</sup> Grahme's problems were by no means over. A correspondent in November 1712 declared himself "so angry with your other letter that I would not write to you; not go to the Bath that is necessary you say for your health, for want of money, is a jest or worse."<sup>55</sup> In the summer of 1713 he borrowed £460 from the Duke of Chandos, and a year later William Bromley was looking for a purchaser to buy the lease of Grahme's London house on Stratton Street, Piccadilly. Bromley was not convinced that Grahme seriously intended to sell the property since "you cannot be without a house in town, and I am persuaded will always spend a good part of your time here". His surmise proved to be correct.<sup>56</sup>

When the financial problems finally began to ease, Grahme's attitude to redeeming his outstanding debts was ambivalent. Mortgages he organised but smaller debts held on bond he tended to ignore. By 1722 he was able to pay off the Musgrave mortgage, although this stretched his resources too far and the following year he borrowed £500 from Sarah Eden. This was not repaid in his lifetime, but he did redeem half of the sum outstanding to William Bromley. By 1730 the estate was still mortgaged for £2,500. Sarah Eden was repaid in 1732 and William Bromley in 1741.<sup>57</sup> Grahme also left bond debts of £1,600, many of them longstanding. John Brougham of Gray's Inn, a lawyer employed by Grahme from time to time, wrote a series of letters after 1704 demanding payment of fees amounting to £112. The final surviving letter, written in 1722 after Grahme had at last paid £20, stated bluntly that ". . . that sum would not do . . . I was not willing to stay seven years for the remainder after having stayed twenty-one".<sup>58</sup> In 1718 Richard Dalton requested payment of "a debt due to me of £12 4s. 6d. tis now five years since you paid me the last ten pounds".<sup>59</sup> The Duke of Chandos's bonds had not been redeemed in 1729 when he threatened legal action to recover the money. He was incensed to discover from Grahme that "you think it hard that this money should be expected back again, and that you looked upon it as a gift". Chandos finally agreed to a further bond. However Grahme died shortly after it was executed and Chandos was reduced to writing to his successor for redemption of the debt.<sup>60</sup>

Grahme's failure to repay his creditors appears to have been deliberate, since at times he was clearly in a position to have done so had he chosen to. Despite his claims to poverty at times he was actually lending money. In 1689 a neighbouring gentleman borrowed £670, while Richard Washington probably received the £150 he asked for in 1693. In 1702 Grahme instructed a steward to "tell all people that owe me money on bonds or attorneys that you must know it by Candlemas, that my credit lies at stake, and give them directions to pay it."<sup>61</sup> Thereafter Grahme's finances prevented him from lending except for a mortgage of £260 in 1721 to a Mrs Strickland. But although Grahme generally refrained from lending money on bonds or mortgages after 1700, towards the end of his life he found sufficient cash to invest in government funds. In 1720 he was one of the Members of Parliament involved in a shady deal whereby he accepted South Sea Company stock (£2,000 at 280) without paying for it, with the right to "sell" it back to the company if the price rose, taking the difference as profit. By 1725 he had £1500 Bank stock and £500 of South Sea annuity stock, and by 1730 £1,000 Bank stock and



the South Sea stock.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore despite the apparently desperate financial position which led to Grahme contemplating selling the whole estate, only one property sale was actually necessary, only moderate sales of timber were made, and neither, as far as can be seen, did he sell the goods entrusted to him by James II. The inventory taken after his death showed him to have had goods at his two houses – Stratton Street in London, and Levens – valued at £121 and £670 respectively, while plate and cash amounted to £623.<sup>63</sup> When added to the money in government funds it is clear that Grahme's finances had recovered by this time even though he did not consider it worthwhile paying off the remaining £2,500 mortgage. This was in spite of the fact that he was paying 5 per cent interest and his government investments yielded only 6 per cent and 5 per cent respectively.

James Grahme died at Charlton, on 26 January 1730, and his estates passed to the family of his only surviving child, Catherine. Her husband was created Earl of Suffolk in 1745. Apart from an annuity to his surviving brother, Fergus, and legacies to servants, Grahme left the majority of his estate to his grandsons. Grahme's personal achievement in being able to obtain an estate and to find acceptance in county society during the 1690s despite his Jacobite connections, was muted by the lack of a male heir and his recurrent financial difficulties. The Levens estate was large by Westmorland standards, and it made Grahme one of the most substantial landowners in the county, even though his income probably never exceeded £1,500. In the years immediately after he bought it his enforced absence from London in the search for political respectability allowed him time to take an interest in developing the estate. However, the passing of time, and in particular the death of his second wife and the lack of a direct male heir, led him to spend much of his time with his daughter in Wiltshire, to whose family he bequeathed the estate.

But Grahme remains an anomalous character about whom there are many unanswered questions. The surviving evidence and his own claims do not always fit, most notably in the case of his repayments of the Royal Africa and East India stock transferred to him by James II. Since Grahme was certainly not averse to using situations to his own ends, there must be sufficient doubt about his claims to have repaid £18,000, to leave the question open. Two examples of this trait in his character illustrate the point further. In the first place he incorrectly ascribed the Levens fire to "the last reign" for Queen Anne's benefit in 1711, when it actually took place in 1703. Secondly he refused to pay small debts during the 1720s when his finances had sufficiently recovered for him to have been able to afford to do so. Indeed, paying debts was not his strong point, as witness his holding of money in the funds during the 1720s, at the same time as he had outstanding debts. There are other questions as well; why did he not meet his debts by selling more land – since the whole estate was unsettled – or by increasing the mortgages in 1712? Why did he not sell more timber when the crisis was most severe and why did he spend more on Levens than the bare minimum following the fire, and engage in drainage schemes in Lincolnshire, when at the same time he was claiming to be so poverty stricken it was necessary for him to sell household goods? If he did not pay large sums of money to the government – as it is possible to argue from the surviving evidence – then the question remains of where his debts originated?

It is difficult to draw conclusions about Grahme because the evidence is scant in some areas – such as the accounts – and contradictory in others. What is clear, however, is

that Grahme was the younger son of an established gentleman, who made his way in the world through his army career and government office only to be thwarted by the Revolution which forced him to spend the last thirty years of his life in a virtual political wilderness, although he received a government pension before his death.<sup>64</sup> There certainly were financial problems to be overcome, but his success in keeping the majority of his estate together, and recovering his social position after being heavily involved in Jacobitism, was in itself considerable, although it will perhaps never be known how dependent he was on the generous help of leading Tory friends including Robert Harley, William Bromley, Sir Christopher Musgrave and Lord Weymouth. As it was, his epitaph of "servant to King Charles and King James the Second" was perhaps a fitting comment on his frustrations.<sup>65</sup> With his death the Levens Hall property was absorbed into the territory of the Earl of Berkshire and temporarily lost its separate identity.

### Acknowledgements

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### Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> Hist. MSS Comm. *Portland MSS*, v, 14, James Grahme to Robert Harley, 29 June 1711 (with petition).
- <sup>2</sup> What follows is not intended as a full biography of Grahme. Accounts of his life have been published in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, vii, 320-2 (under Graham), and by J. Bagot, *Colonel James Grahme of Levens* (London, 1886). I am primarily concerned here with the extent of his financial troubles.
- <sup>3</sup> No evidence has survived of why James Grahme changed the spelling of his surname from that of his father, but it seems to have been purely to distinguish him from his father.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer (1959), 1005.
- <sup>5</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box D, T. Robinson to J. Grahme, 10 July ?; H. T. Dickinson, 'Letters of Bolingbroke to James Grahme', CW2, lxviii, 123.
- <sup>6</sup> F. E. Paget, *Some Records of the Ashted Estate* (1873), 99.
- <sup>7</sup> Some authorities including Bagot, *op. cit.*, p. 33, suggest that Grahme's second wife was the sister of William Harvey, who represented Appleby between 1705 and 1708. The *D.N.B.* appears to be correct in its ascription however since after the marriage Grahme was living in a house in Stratton Street, London, leased in 1695 to "Madam Elizabeth Bromley". Levens Hall MSS, Box 16, bundle of leases of London houses.
- <sup>8</sup> H. Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 14 Mar. 1743, in *The Letters of Horace Walpole*, ed. P. Cunningham (1906), i, 234.
- <sup>9</sup> Alan Bellingham (1655-1690), entered Queen's College, Oxford in 1674. He represented Westmorland in three parliaments between 1678 and 1687, succeeded his father in 1680, and reputedly went into exile with James II. See J. R. Magrath, *The Flemings in Oxford*, i (1904), 197-8.
- <sup>10</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 10/7; Box B, T. Carleton to J. Grahme, 26 Nov. 1711.
- <sup>11</sup> J. F. Curwen, *Historical Description of Levens Hall* (1898), 4-5.
- <sup>12</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box E, bundle 'MSS papers 2', 'Copy of the Order of the Warden of the Fleet . . . 2 Mar. 1696'; Hist. MSS Comm., *Downshire MSS*, i, 639, 662, J. Grahme to Sir William Trumbull, 11 Mar., 15 May 1696.
- <sup>13</sup> Levens Hall MSS Box 15, bundle 'Papers relating to legal disputes with Baines and Dawes'.
- <sup>14</sup> Levens Hall MSS Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 18 Oct. 1701.
- <sup>15</sup> R. Hopkinson, 'Elections in Cumberland and Westmorland, 1695-1723' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1973), 43.
- <sup>16</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box D, Duke of Montrose to J. Grahme, 1 May 1725. Grahme's occasional cross-voting has led some historians to the conclusion that he was a Whig by 1722: R. Sedgwick, *The House of Commons*

- 1715-1754 (1970), ii, 76-7. In fact, Lord Lonsdale was unable to bring in two Whigs for Westmorland in 1722 and Daniel Wilson had to give way to Lonsdale's brother Anthony. The Whig-Tory compromise with Grahme was not disturbed.
- <sup>17</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 1/6.
- <sup>18</sup> Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *Westmorland* (1936), 151; N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cumberland and Westmorland* (1967), 268-9 Levens Hall MSS Box 18I, 1693 account.
- <sup>19</sup> Nicolson & Burn, i, 63.
- <sup>20</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box C, H. James to J. Grahme, 21 Dec. 1693, 22 and 27 Sept. 1694; Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 18 and 28 Sept. 1694, 28 Sept. 1696.
- <sup>21</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, J. Beck to J. Grahme, 8 May, 11 July, 15 Sept. 1710; J. Grahme to J. Loftus, 2 Dec. 1702; Box 13/58-9; Box 14.
- <sup>22</sup> When the Historical Manuscripts Commission listed the Levens Hall manuscripts in the 1890s, they recorded a series of account books from 1689 to 1730 which had disappeared when I examined the papers in the 1970s. A number of reasonably comprehensive accounts survive for the 1690s in boxes 18N and 18I, but after that time the evidence is, unfortunately, scant, and has to be pieced together from the correspondence and other estate papers.
- <sup>23</sup> James Bellingham prepared this estimate when Alan came of age, and probably exaggerated it in an abortive effort to attract a bride; Cumbria Record Office, Kendal (K.R.O.) D/Ry, Box 29; Magrath, *op. cit.*, i, 519.
- <sup>24</sup> K.R.O. D/Ry, 1781, Sir D. Fleming to Sir J. Lowther, 14 Nov. 1676; Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle (C.R.O.) Box 'D/Lons 5 Le Fleming MSS', MSS N (I), fos. 63-9.
- <sup>25</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 2/3, Box 4/8, Box 6/20-1, Box C (2nd series) deed of 13 Sept. 1723, Box 14/29, Box 14, bundle of unlisted deeds; C.R.O. D/Lons.L, A2/35.
- <sup>26</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 18I, 'General Fines received since 1 Oct. 1692'; Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 24 Oct. 1692.
- <sup>27</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 15 May, 19 June 1693, 18 Oct. 1701, Box B, H. Fletcher to J. Grahme, 6 May 1717; Box 7/12; Box C (2nd Ser.) 8, 9. C.R.O. Box 'D/Lons 5 Le Fleming MSS', MSS N (I), f. 65.
- <sup>28</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 9, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 7 Feb. 1703; Box 14/4, deed of 10 July 1724; Box 5/1. Harrison's letters to Grahme are in Box C.
- <sup>29</sup> Levens Hall, Box E, bundle 'Guillaume Beaumont', 64, 68; Box C, H. James to J. Grahme, 3 Dec. 1694; Box B., J. Loftus to J. Grahme, 25 Jan. 1703.
- <sup>30</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, J. Loftus to J. Grahme, 11 Feb. 1703; Hugh James' letters are in Box C; Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 25 May 1695; Box E, Lord Weymouth to J. Grahme, 10 and 24 Aug. 1713; Box 18N/3, 22; Box 18I, Mar. 1695 - Pent. 1697; Box 6/5.
- <sup>31</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 18N/3-6; Box E, bundle of letters from Grahme to Banks including instructions left with Banks; bundle 'MSS papers 1'.
- <sup>32</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 14 Aug. 1694, 16 May 1696.
- <sup>33</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box D, T. Banks to J. Grahme, 15 Oct. 1692; Box E, A. Wilson to J. Grahme, 20 Mar. 1711.
- <sup>34</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box C, H. James to J. Grahme, 12 Mar. 1694, Box E, A. Wilson to J. Grahme, 1 Nov. 1725; Box 18I, Mart. 1695-Pent. 1697; Box 13/74.
- <sup>35</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, F. Grahme to J. Grahme, 29 Apr., 29 June 1704, 24 Nov. 1709; Hist. MSS Comm., *Portland MSS*, v, 14, J. Grahme to R. Harley, 29 June 1711. Grahme's elder brother Richard (1648-95) was created Viscount Preston in the Scottish peerage in 1681. After being seized *en route* to the Pretender in January 1689 he was condemned to death and forfeited both his English baronetcy and his estates. He was pardoned in June 1689 but his estates were only restored to the family in 1696, after his death. G.E.C., *Complete Peerage*, x, 677-81; *Cal. Treasury Books*, xi (1696-7), 229.
- <sup>36</sup> K. G. Davies, *The Royal Africa Company* (1957), 14; W. Foster, *John Company* (1926), 32-34; Hist. MSS Comm., *Bagot MSS*, 329-330, James II to Sir William Turner, and to Benjamin Bathurst, both letters dated 21 Dec. 1688.
- <sup>37</sup> Public Record Office (P.R.O.) E/112/679, no. 101; T/70/82, f. 56.
- <sup>38</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box E, bundle 'MSS papers 2', statement of Grahme; P.R.O. E/112/679, nos. 100-1; E/126/15, nos. 406-7.
- <sup>39</sup> P.R.O. E/126/15, nos. 406-7; Foster, *op. cit.*, 135; *Cal. Treas. Books*, ix, (1689-1692), 1170, entry for 22 May 1691.

- <sup>40</sup> *Cal. Treas. Books*, ix (1689-1692), 1170.
- <sup>41</sup> N. Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* (1857), ii, 162.
- <sup>42</sup> *Cal. Treas. Books*, ix (1689-1692), 1483, 5 Feb. 1692; Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/14.
- <sup>43</sup> *Cal. Treas. Books*, ix (1689-1692), 355; *Calc. Treas. Papers*, (1702-1707), 387; see also letters of Edward Norman to Grahme in Box C at Levens.
- <sup>44</sup> P.R.O. T/27/14, fos. 69, 100; T/27/15, f. 99; *Cal. Treas. Books*, x (1693-1696), 822; xi (1696-7), 361; Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/14.
- <sup>45</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 5/16; *Cal. Treas. Papers*, (1702-1707), 97, 142. The 'King's Evil', also known as scrofula, was tuberculosis of the lymphatic glands.
- <sup>46</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/2, 4, 11, 13, 18, 19, 50; Box 18N/3, 5; Box C., R. Grahme to J. Grahme, 12 July 1708, letters of Mary Kittridge to Grahme; K.R.O. D/Ry, 5500, J. Grahme to Sir Daniel Fleming, 28 Apr. 1700; Box 29, bond of 1699.
- <sup>47</sup> British Library, Addnl. MSS 29, 588 f. 480, J. Grahme to ?, 5 June 1703; Levens Hall MSS Box 18N/3.
- <sup>48</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 18N/3, 5.
- <sup>49</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B bundle C 'The Honourable Colonel Grahme's account for ye two elections . . .'; Box C, C. Howson to J. Grahme, 4 Sept. 1703, 17 Apr., 5 June 1704; Box D, R. Powys to J. Grahme, 12 Apr. 1707; Box C, Lord Godolphin to J. Grahme, 26 Oct. 1706; *Cal. Treas. Books*, xix (1704-5), 791.
- <sup>50</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/52, T. Carleton to J. Grahme, 23 Dec. 1709.
- <sup>51</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/47; Box 10/7.
- <sup>52</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/22.
- <sup>53</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box C, Lord Lonsdale to J. Grahme, 5 Dec. 1697, 16 Oct. 1699; Box E, stray letters and papers, W. Fleming to J. Grahme, 3 Oct. 1697; A. Wilson to J. Grahme, 24 Nov. 1711 (and subsequent letters); Box D., T. Banks to J. Grahme, 19 Dec. 1699, 27 Jan. 1700; Box B, T. Carleton to J. Grahme, 15 July, 22 Nov. 1711 (and subsequent letters).
- <sup>54</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box C, J. Harrison to J. Grahme, 26 Dec. 1711; C.R.O. D/Lons/L. A2/6, f. 18.
- <sup>55</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box C, J. Johnston to J. Grahme, 11 Nov. 1712; Box E, A. Wilson to J. Grahme, 3 Apr. 1714.
- <sup>56</sup> Huntington Library, San Marino, California, ST, 57, vol. 33, f. 279, Duke of Chandos to Mr Jones, 14 Oct. 1729. Levens Hall MSS, Box B, W. Bromley to J. Grahme, 5 Jan. 1714; Box 16, bundle of leases of London houses.
- <sup>57</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box 13/4, 25-6, 69, 74, 75.
- <sup>58</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, J. Brougham to J. Grahme, 6 Mar. 1722.
- <sup>59</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, R. Dalton to J. Grahme, 20 Apr. 1718.
- <sup>60</sup> Huntington Library, ST 57, vol. 33, fos. 161-2, Duke of Chandos to Earl of Berkshire, 26 June 1729; f. 178, Chandos to J. Grahme, 5 July 1729; fos. 297-8, Chandos to Grahme, 28 Oct. 1729; f. 323, Chandos to Grahme, 13 Nov. 1729; vol. 34, f. 1. Chandos to Grahme, 27 Nov. 1729; f. 113, Chandos to Grahme, 5 Jan. 1730; f. 157, Chandos to Berkshire, 5 Feb. 1730.
- <sup>61</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box B, J. Grahme to J. Loftus, 11 Nov. 1702. Little is known about when Grahme repaid the bond debts he incurred between 1700 and 1712. Most of them were recorded in his personal account books which end in 1709 before any substantial repayments had been made. More information on his repayments would throw further light on how long his financial worries lasted. Box 18N/3-5.
- <sup>62</sup> Levens Hall MSS, Box E. R. Washington to J. Grahme, 18 Dec. 1693; A. Wilson to J. Grahme, 7 Jan. 1721; Box B, S. Cranmer to J. Grahme, 20 July 1725; Box 13/49; Box 1/8: *Commons Journals*, xix, 569.
- <sup>63</sup> Hist. MSS Comm., *Bagot MSS*, 329, James II to William Chiffins, 21 Dec. 1688; Bagot, *op. cit.*, 34; Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation*, v, 414; Levens Hall MSS, Box 1/8.
- <sup>64</sup> Luttrell, *op. cit.*, v, 414; Levens Hall MSS, Box 1/8. £500 was owing on the pension when Grahme died.
- <sup>65</sup> Bagot, *op. cit.*, 36.