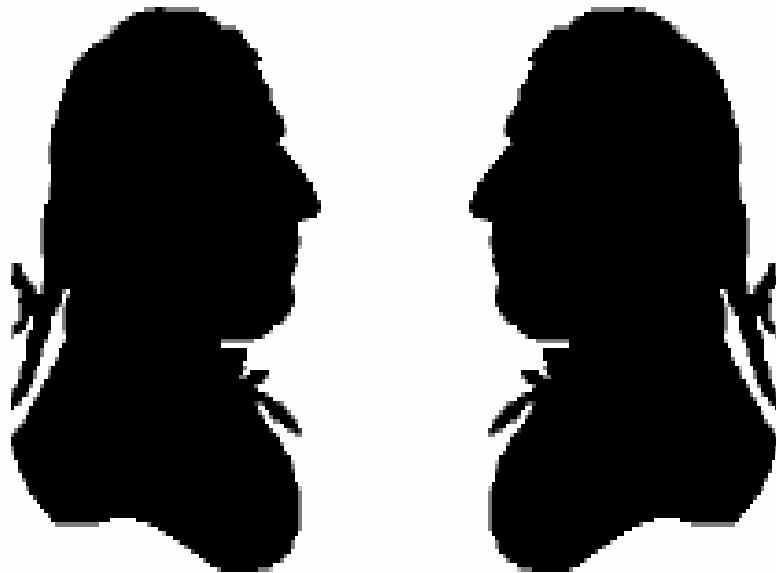


The Manor of Lackham

## Two Georgian Montagus



by

Tony Pratt

## 2 Georgian Montagus

## Introduction

The Manor of Lackham, secure on a ridge west of the River Avon near Chippenham, has been in existence for well over a thousand years. In that time many people have lived, worked and died there - a home and community, refuge and sanctuary.

For just under two hundred years the Wiltshire branch of the influential Montagu family owned Lackham, guiding the estate through the turbulent period of the English Civil War and the centuries beyond.

This concise history looks at two of the last Montagus to live at Lackham, George Montagu and his son, George Conway Montagu.....



## George Montagu (1753 - 1815)



In the century and a half since William Cunnington first published a life of George Montagu <sup>1</sup> a number of articles have considered his contributions to natural history and the work by June, the Countess Badeni <sup>2</sup> details the events of his life. Only Ron Cleevely's excellent articles <sup>3</sup> give a full account of both the life and works of this fascinating eighteenth century Wiltshireman, and there is no account of his son at all....

It has been said that "*George Montagu was just an upright simple-minded English country gentleman who loved Natural History*" <sup>4</sup> but there was far more to him than that.

George Montagu was born, in 1751, 1753 or 1755 <sup>5</sup>, at his family's ancestral estate of Lackham near the small Wiltshire market town of Chippenham. He was the second eldest of 13 children - his elder brother James inherited in 1790, the fifth James Montagu in as many generations to own the estate.

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<sup>1</sup> Cunnington, W (1852) *Memoir of George Montagu* Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine (henceforward WAM) III. pp87 - 94

<sup>2</sup> Badeni, J (1960) *Wiltshire Forefathers*, chapter on Lackham

<sup>3</sup> Cleevely, R (1978) *Some background to the life and publications of Colonel George Montagu (1753 - 1815)* J. Soc. Biblphy nat [sic] Hist 8 (94) 445-480

<sup>4</sup> Cummings, B F (1912) *A biographical sketch of Col. George Montagu (1755-1815)* *English Field Zoologist* Zoolgische Annalen Wurzburg

<sup>5</sup> *The Dictionary of National Biography* vol X Stephen, Sir L & Lee, Sir S (1968) p 693 gives 1751 (hereafter DNB), Cleevely, R (undated) *Chart of singular events in the life of George Montagu* Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B has 1753 and Cunnington, W (1852) *ibid* p 87 has 1755

Nothing is known of George's early life, he recorded that he was attending Urchfont school, near Devizes, in 1765<sup>6</sup>. He and his siblings were raised in the ancient Manor House at Lackham (the current house was not built until much later.)

In 1770<sup>7</sup> George Montagu joined the 15th Regiment of Foot<sup>8</sup>, and two years later married Ann, the eldest daughter of William Courtenay and Lady Jane Stuart. Ann was a granddaughter of the Earl of Bute<sup>9</sup>, Prime Minister<sup>10</sup> during the reign of George III.

George was stationed at various locations in the United Kingdom, for example when Ann and George were married the regiment was stationed in western England. In 1774 it was

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<sup>6</sup> Montagu, G (undated) *Natural History of Wiltshire*, Mss notes in the Library of the Linnean Society.

<sup>7</sup> The Army List for the Fifteenth Regiment of Foot gives that he was an ensign in the regiment 22 June 1770

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.pwstubbs.force9.co.uk/15<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>.htm>

Raised at Nottingham in June 1685 by Col. Sir William Clifton and known initially as *Col. Sir William Clifton's Regiment of Foot*. It was then named after the Colonels of the Regiment until 1751 when it became the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, in 1782 it was renamed as the 15<sup>th</sup> (The Yorkshire East Riding) Regiment of Foot, in 1881 the East Yorkshire Regiment, in 1935 the East Yorkshire Regiment [The Duke of York's Own] before finally, in 1958, it was amalgamated with the West Yorkshire Regiment [The Prince of Wales' Own] to form the Prince of Wales' Own Regiment of Yorkshire. The West Yorkshire Regiment was raised in the same year as the 15<sup>th</sup> and was formerly known as the 14<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot.

<sup>9</sup> <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/adw03/pms/bute.htm>

In 1736 he married Mary Worsley Montagu (see DNB for details of her achievements) and they had five sons and six daughters

<sup>10</sup> <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/adw03/pms/bute.htm>

May 1762 - April 1763

posted to the north of Ireland, and in July 1775 to Dublin <sup>11</sup>.

In December 1775 George was promoted to the rank of Captain, on the same day that the regiment was ordered to America <sup>12</sup> during the American War of Independence (1775 - 1783). The orders were dated 1st December 1775, and the regiment embarked their transports at Cork on the 10 January 1776. They were unable to sail until the 12<sup>th</sup> February, however, because of "*shortages of stores and ships*" <sup>13</sup>. The 15<sup>th</sup> finally arrived in North Carolina on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1776 <sup>14</sup>. Ann stayed with the Montagus at Lackham during this separation, it is uncertain whether she normally accompanied George to his UK postings. It was here that she gave birth to their first child, the other subject of this study, George Conway Courtenay Montagu <sup>15</sup>

At this time three members of the family were stationed in North America. George was with the 15th Regiment of Foot, his uncle Admiral John Montagu was Admiral Commanding the British Navy in the colonies (he was an eye-witness to the Boston Tea Party <sup>16</sup>); and George's cousin <sup>17</sup> John was serving in

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<sup>11</sup> Cleevely, R (1978) *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> Cleevely, R (undated) *An attempt at a timeline of events in the life of George Montagu* Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B

<sup>13</sup> Jones, Robert J (c 1959) *A History of the 15<sup>th</sup> (East Yorkshire) Regiment, Duke of Yorks Own 1685 - 1914*

<sup>14</sup> Cleevely, R (1978) *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Lacock Parish Registers baptised 24 July 1776

<sup>16</sup> Hibbert, C (1990) *Redcoats and Rebels : the war for America 1770-1781* Penguin Classic Military History ISBN 0 141 39021 2 p 21

*As the Mohawks marched away Indian file, to the tune of*

Admiral Montagu's flagship. A brother officer in the 15th was Conway Courtenay<sup>18</sup>. He was cousin to Ann Montagu<sup>19</sup>, which might explain why George was commissioned into the 15th Foot. This would seem even more likely as George and Mary gave the names "*Conway Courtenay*" to their two oldest sons. This remains speculative.

During 1776 the regiment was involved in a number of battles, including those at Brooklyn, White Plains and Fort Washington<sup>20</sup>. It was during the time that it was in America that the Regiment earned one of its nicknames, *The Snappers*

*"The Regiment had exhausted its supply of musket balls, but still had powder. They were told to keep "snapping" which was the act of charging a musket with powder only and firing it off (rather similar to today's blank ammunition). By doing this the*

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*a fife, Admiral John Montagu, Commander-in-Chief on the North American Station, threw up a window of the house of an American loyalist friend with whom he was dining and called out to them*

*"Well boys, you have had a fine pleasant evening for your Indian caper haven't you? But, mind, you have got to pay the fiddle yet"*

*"Never mind, Squire" one of them shouted back, "just come down here if you please and we will settle the bill in two minutes"*

<sup>17</sup> son of Admiral John Montagu

<sup>18</sup> Jones, Robert J (c 1959) *ibid*

<sup>19</sup> Repko, K (2003) *perss. comm.*

<sup>20</sup> Cleavelly, R (1978) *ibid*

*Regiment convinced their attackers that they still had ammunition and the attack was beaten off" <sup>21</sup>*

This was during the Battle of Brandywine, which was fought on the 11th September 1777. In this battle the 15th were part of the 3rd Brigade, under General Cornwallis <sup>22</sup>, which routed Sullivan's Division. The 15th were then posted in Concord on September 13th and the army eventually occupied Philadelphia on the 25th of September. Four days later the regiment was engaged in the Battle of Germantown <sup>23</sup>.

Few army records mention George Montagu by name, but the Regimental Muster Rolls show that "*Pte. Matthew Lyon, of Capt. George Montagu's Company was killed on the 4th of November*" <sup>24</sup>. George retired from the regiment less than two weeks after Pte. Lyon's death, on November 11th 1777 <sup>25</sup>.

This may have been due to his unhappiness with the experiences he had:

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.pwstubbs.force9.co.uk/15th/15th.htm> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> <http://earlyamerica.com/portraits/cornwallis.html>  
"*Charles Cornwallis (1738-1805)*  
*British general and colonial governor, served with distinction in American Revolution, won battle of Brandywine, captured Philadelphia in 1777 and Charleston in 1780, forced to surrender to Washington at Yorktown in 1781 ending the war.*"

<sup>23</sup> *The Regiment* issue 44

<sup>24</sup> Jones, Robert J (c 1959) *ibid* p212

<sup>25</sup> Cleavelly (undated) *ibid*

*"the misery which often fell on the inhabitants of the scattered villages and lonely dwellings, from the brutality and licentiousness of the soldiery, was painful to him in the extreme; and in narrating anecdotes of the war to his children in after years, he was wont to allude to circumstances of this nature with abhorrence "* <sup>26</sup>

which might refer to the German Troops (Hessians) who

*"acted so shamefully towards the inhabitants, who had been assured of immunity from outrage, that the population retaliated "* <sup>27</sup>

It was while he was in America that George Montagu first started his work as a naturalist - initially *"by shooting any of the more interesting American birds* <sup>28</sup> *"*, although initially this was only so that he could show them to his mother <sup>29</sup> or wife <sup>30</sup>.

After George returned to England he and Ann lived at Rowde in

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<sup>26</sup> Cunnington, *ibid* p88, a quote from George's daughter Louisa (married Mathew Crawford)

<sup>27</sup> Jones, Robert J (c 1959) *ibid* p204

<sup>28</sup> Crawford, L (1838) *"Autobiographical Sketches of Lackham House and Laycock"* Metropolitan magazine September p191

<sup>29</sup> Cunnington, W (1852) *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> Moroney EH (1965) *Col Montagu and his harrier* Country Life, Aug 26 p516-517, and Badeni, J (1960)

Wiltshire.

When Thomas Hedges of Alderton (George Montagu's maternal grandfather) died in 1782 <sup>31</sup> he left George a small bequest of £200 per year <sup>32</sup> which made him independent of his father.

In 1780 their daughter Eleanora Anne was born <sup>33</sup> followed by Frederick Conway Courtenay in 1783 <sup>34</sup>. Later in 1786 the family moved to Surrendell, part of the Hedges estate near Alderton, where they remained until September 1788 when they moved to Easton Grey near Sherston <sup>35</sup>. Their second daughter Louisa was baptized exactly two months later <sup>36</sup>.

This was the same year in which Elizabeth Hedges, widow of Thomas Hedges, died <sup>37</sup>. Whether there is any connection to

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<sup>31</sup> Alderton Parish Registers Wiltshire County Record Office (hereafter WRO) fiche 1078/3

<sup>32</sup> Will of Thomas Hedges WRO P1/H/1291 B. This was the largest annuity - Thomas' sister Eleanor (George Montagu's aunt) was granted £200 per annum, his brother James Montagu junior also received £200 per annum as long as his father James Montagu senior lived, and Thomas Hedge's servant John Mansfield received a bequest of £100 and £30 per annum

<sup>33</sup> Rowde Parish Registers (transcriptions in WANHS Library) 17 April 1780

<sup>34</sup> Rowde Parish Registers *ibid* 11 March 1783

<sup>35</sup> Cleevely (1978) *ibid* 10 September 1788

<sup>36</sup> christened 1788 (Easton Grey Parish Registers). She married Matthew Crawford, barrister, of the Middle Temple, and died Tuesday December 29<sup>th</sup>, 1857. She wrote several articles about her family homes, and provided interesting accounts of the old Manor houses at both Lackham (which she never lived in) and Alderton (where she spent her early childhood). Some of her statements should probably be regarded with caution.

<sup>37</sup> Alderton Parish Registers *ibid*

the move to Easton Grey is unknown.

At some time around 1789 or 1790 George met Mrs Elizabeth Dorville in London <sup>38</sup>. It is known he

*"formed a deep and lasting attachment to [her], the wife of a city merchant <sup>39</sup>, a woman of talent and education, who made beautiful drawings for his books " <sup>40</sup>*

Elizabeth Dorville was the daughter of George Wolff of Balham, her brother was Jens Wolff <sup>41</sup>. Elizabeth Wolff married John Dorville. Exact details are unclear but it would appear that John Dorville and George Wolff were partners in a London company <sup>42</sup> which later went bankrupt <sup>43</sup>

John and Elizabeth Dorville had three children <sup>44</sup> before she

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<sup>38</sup> The exact date is unknown but given other dating evidence it must have been around 1790.

<sup>39</sup> John Dorville

<sup>40</sup> Lacock inscriptions WRO Monumental Inscriptions fiche

<sup>41</sup> Wolff, G (1825) *Last Will and Testament* Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. folio 14 dated 8 August 1825, codicil dated 3 April 1826

<sup>42</sup> The firm of Wolff, Dorville and Ernest (later Dorville and Wolff,) is mentioned in the East Kent area between 1783 and 1807 (East Kent Archive Centre EK-U1453/B5/4/1425). In 1807? the firm came under the control of Jens Wolff, Elizabeth's brother, and probably moved to London.

<sup>43</sup> In his will (Dorville, J (>1815) *The Will of John Dorville* Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. folio 15) John Dorville refers to "*the dreadful calamity of the bankruptcy of Dorville and Wolff in 1812*".

<sup>44</sup> John William, Elizabeth and George Phillip (Dorville, J (>1815) *ibid*)

separated from him, presumably to be with George Montagu. It was certainly her idea, John Dorville referred to it as an "*unhappy separation*"<sup>45</sup> .

George's sister Arabella married Ralph Dorville Woodford<sup>46</sup> some three or four years before this. It is tempting to speculate that it was through his brother-in-law that George came to know Mrs Dorville, but this is unknown. No Dorville Woodford is associated with Elizabeth's family, as far as can be found out, and it may be a coincidence of surnames.

In 1790 George's father James Montagu died<sup>47</sup> leaving the estate to the eldest son, James.

George joined the Wiltshire Militia, he was with them in South Wales during 1790 and 1791; in the latter year he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and commanded the regiment<sup>48</sup> .

It is thought that Mrs Dorville accompanied George to his military postings. Their first child Henry Dorville was born sometime during this period; he was not baptized until 1792

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<sup>45</sup> Dorville, J (>1815) *ibid*

<sup>46</sup> WRO 137/39/6 partial transcript of James Montagu's will, codicil dated 4 July 1797, £2000 was left to be invested for dividends to provide annual gratuities of £200 for "*my sister Arabella. Wife of Ralph Dorville Woodford*"

<sup>47</sup> 25 April 1790 Lacock Parish Registers

<sup>48</sup> Clevely, R (undated) *ibid*

when he was said to be "*about two years old*"<sup>49</sup>. This was the same year in which George published his first book, entitled *The Sportsman's Directory*

In 1794 the regiment was stationed in Sussex and in the following two years in the south west of England.

In 1795 George was elected a Fellow of the prestigious Linnean Society, proof that he was already much respected as a naturalist.<sup>50</sup> He published his first paper in their journal the following year.

James Montagu died on 12 September 1797. He had never married and in his will<sup>51</sup>, dated 6 September 1792, he set up three trustees to run the estate and handle bequests. The first two bequests in his will were not for his immediate family, but secured annuities for life for his two illegitimate children, George and Sophie Angles. After other bequests he willed

*"The capital messuage or mansion house at Lackham aforesaid and with the closes, gardens, grounds and lands .....upon trust to and for the use and on behalf of my dear brother George Montagu Esq Lt Colonel in His Majesties Wiltshire regiment of Militia during his natural life and then reverting to*

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<sup>49</sup> Millbrook Parish Registers, in Blackmore, M (1965) *Note on baptism of Anna Elizabeth and Henry Dorville* Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B Folio 23. (L Mss Mon /23)

<sup>50</sup> George was nominated by T. Lamb, J. Latham and W. Peete and was elected a Fellow on 21 July 1795.

<sup>51</sup> WRO137/39/6 p11 onwards

*the Trustees"* <sup>52</sup>

This was changed, however, in a codicil James added 20 September 1792 <sup>53</sup> which said that

*"My brother George Montagu shall not live or reside in my Mansion House at Lackham unless he shall so live with his wife"*

This she refused to do <sup>54</sup> and in 1801 the Trustees were ordered to

*"Enquire whether the defendant George Montagu the elder had resided in the Mansion House at Lackham since the Testator's decease and under what circumstances, and whether Ann Montagu his wife had resided there and under what circumstances, and was it proper "* <sup>55</sup>

The problems of the succession were not made public. In 1797 the Rev. Samuel Denne FSA wrote that a friend of his was staying with Colonel Montagu who had been left

*"by his brother a noble house built within*

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<sup>52</sup> WRO137/39/6 *ibid* p13

<sup>53</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. folio 10 p13

<sup>54</sup> which was probably because of Mrs Dorville

<sup>55</sup> WRO 137/59-6, *ibid*

*the last five years<sup>56</sup> situated in the midst of a good estate and the manor extensive to the river Avon meandr'ring by a considerable part of it "<sup>57</sup>*

It is very likely that George's association with Mrs Dorville was also the major cause of his problems with the Militia . In 1799 three of the officers in the Wiltshire Militia (Captains Awdry, Houlton and Phayre) brought Col Montagu before a court martial on five counts of abusing his position as Commanding Officer and conduct unbecoming a Commanding Officer, after what one observer has described as "*some provocative marital skirmishing*"<sup>58</sup>.

The Court Martial was held in Plymouth, where the regiment was stationed at the time, between 28 September and 15 October 1797<sup>59</sup>. The Court comprised 4 Colonels, 2 Lieutenant Colonels, 4 Majors, 4 Captains and was presided over by Col. Francis Rodd of the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Cornish Militia. George was found guilty and dismissed from the regiment

*"For conduct derogatory to his situation as Field Commanding Officer of the Regiment and that his actions were not consistent with the need for good order and harmony within*

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<sup>56</sup> actually it was probably no more than 18 months or two years old by this time, the House was certainly built by the middle of 1796 (Pratt, T, (2003) *The Manor Houses of Lackham*, Wiltshire College Lackham)

<sup>57</sup> Lacock Inscriptions *ibid*

<sup>58</sup> Badeni, J (1960) *ibid* p70 gives details of the actual charges, Allen (*ibid*) gives the "*marital skirmishing*"

<sup>59</sup> Clevely, J (1978) *ibid* p449

*the Regiment" <sup>60</sup>*

Cunnington was writing very close to George's lifetime and so it is perhaps understandable that neither George's association with Mrs Dorville nor his court martial makes an appearance in the account at all <sup>61</sup>.

In 1800 George Montagu moved to Knowle, near Kingsbridge, Devon, <sup>62</sup> close to where his wife's family came from. Elizabeth Dorville had been resident there since December 1797 <sup>63</sup>.

This was not a good year for George Montagu - he and his surviving son George Conway Courtenay Montagu fell out which may not have been helped by the fact that George senior

*"Was a colonel, an upright and honourable man, with a mind perhaps a little too conscious of its own rectitude, very susceptible to outrage, and a temperament somewhat irate according to type" <sup>64</sup>*

Cleevely, however, formed a different opinion of his character:

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<sup>60</sup> Cleevely, J (1978) *ibid* p448

<sup>61</sup> None of this, or its consequences, makes an appearance in Cunnington's Memoir but then, as Cleevely notes, his "*accounts were subjected to the restraints imposed by family sensitivity. As a consequence the more colourful aspects of Montagu's behaviour that might have attracted wider interest were omitted*" Cleevely, RJ (1978) *ibid* p 446

<sup>62</sup> Badeni, J (1960) *ibid* p7

<sup>63</sup> Cleevely, R (unknown) *ibid*

<sup>64</sup> Cummings, BF (1912) *ibid*

*"My own readings indicate that he was of excellent character; honest, sincere, responsible, considerate, reliable and exhibited all the other traits that warrant a commendation "*<sup>65</sup>

This indeed supports Louisa Montagu's assessment that her *"father's temper was remarkably sweet and serene"*<sup>66</sup>.

Following this family contratemps George Conway brought a law suit against the Trustees for failing in their duties and colluding with his father, allowing him to strip the assets of the estate.<sup>67</sup> This and further litigations eventually resulted in the sale of the estate, although this was after the time of both Georges. It may well be that this very public brawling, as well as his association with Elizabeth Dorville, played a part in George's removal from the Wiltshire Militia.

George Montagu lived at Knowle House, near Kingsbridge in Devon, for the rest of his life. During this period his major books appeared and he was constantly busy with his studies.

Although George was living at Knowle he is known to have been at Lackham after this -

*July 1813 Wednesday midnight, as George Montague, Esq, of Lackham near Laycock was shooting in company with a Gentleman who*

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<sup>65</sup> Cleavelly, R (1978) *ibid* p463

<sup>66</sup> Crawford, L (1838) *ibid* p191

<sup>67</sup> Badeni, J (1960) *ibid* p69

*was on a visit at his house Mr Montague's gun accidentally went off and lodged its contents in the body of his friend who survived only a short period Mr M's state of mind is indescribable*<sup>68</sup>

George Montagu was never a man for ceremony and

*"preferred to live a secluded life spending his days beating through thin brushwood to identify the song of a woodwren or collecting sea worms from the mud at Kingsbridge or dredging in Tor Bay. "*<sup>64</sup>

George and Elizabeth's youngest daughter, Arabella, was born in 1801<sup>69</sup>

1802 saw the publication of George Montagu's most influential book, the *Ornithological Dictionary* and the following year his study of British shells, arguably the start of British Conchology, *Testacea Brittanica*. (see Appendix 1 for a discussion of George's contributions to natural history)

He did not spend all his time on natural history however. His military skills were still in demand

*"Napoleon's Grand Army, massing on the*

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<sup>68</sup> handwritten transcription in Kite, E (undated) *Pedigrees of Wiltshire* vol II 2 volumes of bound mss in WANHS collection, Devizes. Probably from the local paper; although it reads like the *Gentlemans Magazine* it was not found in the relevant volume.

<sup>69</sup> Kingsbridge Parish Registers, St Edmund's Church *"Arabella, daughter of Mrs Elizabeth Dorville"*

*cliffs of Boulogne in 1803, waited only a fair wind to cross the channel to invade England. The Royal Navy, too, waited. And Col. Montagu raised a regiment of Yeomanry at Kingsbridge to repel invaders "*<sup>70</sup>

George was in charge of the Guides for Napoleonic defence. He wrote

*"Armaments and thoughts of invasion engross the mind in these turbulent times... I have been overpowered in persuasion to agree to the extensive command of the Corps of Guides of South Devon"*<sup>71</sup>

For the remainder of his life George was deeply involved in his studies.

George Montagu died of lockjaw on 28th August 1815 after stepping on a rusty nail. (See Appendix 2 for Mrs Dorville's account of his last days.)

A copy of George Montagu's will is held in the Museum Library at Devizes and another in the General Library at the Natural History Museum. It is addressed as both "*Lackham, Wilts*" and "*Knowle, Devor*".

George gave annuities to "*My wife Ann Montagu from the Wilts estates at Alderton and Sevington etc as bequeathed to me by*

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<sup>70</sup> Moroney EH (1965)

<sup>71</sup> letter to James Sowerby, dated 14 Dec 1809, from Cleevely, RJ (1978) *ibid.* footnote 28, p475

*my worthy friend Thos Hedges*<sup>72</sup> " and he made provision for his legal children.

He stipulated that if all the children should die before Ann their money should go to "*Elizabeth wife of John, merchant / London*<sup>73</sup>". This part went on to say that if Elizabeth should die the money was to go to "*her younger children who may be alive and born since the separation from her husband Henry Isabella, Georgina D*" (the D here is exactly as written by George, and confirms this is Mrs Dorville)

George went on to bequeath all the Wiltshire property to Ann and

*"all my belongings re property landed and personal, about Knowle House parish of Kingsbridge and elsewhere not bequeathed before, my library of books, collections of natural history, cabinets, manuscript publications and copyrights thereof also coins, plate, jewels, rings, watches, household furniture to my beloved friend Elizabeth Dorville as an acknowledgement for the very great assistance she has given me in my pursuits of natural history "*<sup>74</sup>

He referred to Eliza as his "*dear friend*" in several places.

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<sup>72</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. *ibid* folio 2 *Copy of the Will of George Montagu*

<sup>73</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. *ibid*

<sup>74</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. *ibid*

The distance between him and his son was made very clear in the final part of the will where he instructs that

*"One consideration shall be my son George Montagu may not be concerned directly or indirectly with my will or my Executor if Elizabeth D does not act [as the executor] but Mrs Wolff to be instead "<sup>75</sup>*

The will was witnessed at Kingsbridge by Thos Ellis and Arthur Goodyear and probated 27 July 1815 to Elizabeth Dorville.

He specified that the funeral costs should not exceed £50 and that *"I am to be buried where I die or at the Parish Church of my dear friend and executor"<sup>76</sup>*. By the end of the nineteenth century the location of George's tomb was a mystery -

*"It is said Montagu was buried in Kingsbridge Church [but] no stone exists in the church that I can find neither does the parish register show any entry of burial "<sup>77</sup>*

In 1897, however, an unsuspected crypt was found at Kingsbridge parish church, containing two very badly damaged coffins, and a plate, attached to one of them, with the inscription

*"George Montagu Esq*

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<sup>75</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. *ibid*

<sup>76</sup> Nat. Hist. Museum GL Mon B. *ibid*

<sup>77</sup> Elliot, EAS (1897) from *The Field*, quoted in *Supplement to the Kingsbridge Gazette* Friday 2 July 1897

*Born 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1753  
Died 20<sup>th</sup> June 1815 aged 62 " <sup>78</sup>*

The discovery confirmed George's resting place as being in Kingsbridge Parish Church. The discovery was made by Dr. Elliot, he and previous searchers had missed the burial in the parish registers; it was eventually located by the Vicar <sup>79</sup> and reads "Col George Montagu Kingsbridge June 24 1815 62" <sup>80</sup>



**George Conway Montagu (1776 - 1847)**



George Conway Montagu was born in 1776, at the ancient manor house at Lackham, which has been described as

*"Deserv[ing] a passing mention. It exhibited specimens of various periods from the Norman downwards, and presented an appearance of rude grandeur rather than the beauty of regular architectural proportion. It stood completely embosomed in woods. The great hall was hung with armour " <sup>81</sup>*

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<sup>78</sup> Lane, R (1897) in *Supplement to the Kingsbridge Gazette* *ibid*

<sup>79</sup> the Rev H A Birks (Crockford's *Clerical Directory* 1898 p1618)

<sup>80</sup> "Mentor" (1897) *Kingsbridge Gazette* Friday July 2 1897 the "Kingsbridge" in the entry may indicate that the entry is actually in the Churchstow Registers, not Kingsbridge. This is not clear but the vicar of Churchstow was also responsible for Kingsbridge. This might explain why the entry was missed in the preceding 80 years; it seems very strange that it was not found at all until after the discovery of the burial.

<sup>81</sup> Cunnington W (1852) *ibid* p87

see Pratt, T (2003) *ibid*.for more information on the houses at Lackham

When George Conway was aged six the family moved to Alderton, another ancient manor house. It isn't known when George Conway left home, but his sister mentions that he was in the Navy for a time <sup>82</sup>. Nothing further is known, and he did not make a career of it; there is no other evidence that he was at sea at all.

George Conway Montagu was a spendthrift and

*"even in 1797 <sup>83</sup> he had already started to sign promissory notes for ready cash, and by 1799 he was living in the north of England and elsewhere under an assumed name (sometimes more than one!) in an effort to dodge his creditors. Thereafter he spent some time, on and off, living under Kings' Bench Rules and thus came the gradual sale of the estate " <sup>84</sup>*

One of these assumed names was "*William Thompson*"; in 1803 (when he was 27 years old) he "*was embarrassed in his pecuniary circumstances [and] went to reside in Liverpool where he assumed the name William Thompson <sup>85</sup>*". It was here that he "*paid his addresses*" to Margaret Green Wilson, who

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<sup>82</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Louisa Crawford's deposition

<sup>83</sup> The year of James Montagu's death, when the estate went into trust instead of being inherited by Col Montagu.....

<sup>84</sup> Lacock inscriptions *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Preamble

was 10 years his junior and "*in the month of December 1803*"<sup>86</sup> *they went together to Gretna Green in Scotland and were there lawfully married in their own proper names*"<sup>87</sup> This last was important although they did not use the name Montagu for a long time; even when Margaret wrote to her aunt, Mary Wilson, to explain that "*she had the previous day married George, and in this letter she falsely signed herself Margaret Thompson*"<sup>88</sup>.

The newly weds lived in Edinburgh until 1804, under the name of Thompson<sup>89</sup>, before moving to Hornsea near Beverley in Yorkshire. Here their eldest son Frederick was born<sup>90</sup>. At this time they were living under the name "*Conway*"<sup>91</sup>. They then stayed briefly in Liverpool before moving to Lackham, where they lived between 1806 and 1808.

According to Louisa Crawford's deposition, the *family* lived at Lackham but George Conway was usually away on business and only returned to visit every now and then. Ann Montagu was living at Lackham at this time with Louisa, her remaining daughter, and seems to have remained there until she died.

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<sup>86</sup> "*On or about 29 December*" WRO 44/1 *ibid* Judge's declaration and pronouncement

<sup>87</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Libel section 1

<sup>88</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* transcription of letter in Evidence

<sup>89</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Mrs. Allen's testimony. They were living in two rooms in Mrs Allen's house at 1, St. James Square

<sup>90</sup> 3 Oct 1805

<sup>91</sup> WRO 44/1 George Crosbie's testimony. He had returned from Russia in 1806 and was met at Hull by George Conway Montagu, who told him that they were living in Hornsea under the name Conway. This must have been shortly before they moved to Liverpool for a short stay.

Apparently she was not prepared to live there with her philandering husband but did so when George sen. moved to Knowle.

George Conway Montagu was also known by his real name in this period. George Crosbie described how, in 1807, he witnessed George Conway under arrest at the Sheriff's house in Newcastle Street in the Strand, and accompanied him to the Kings' Bench Prison, where he was detained in the name of Montagu<sup>92</sup> .

George Conway and Margaret had two sons, Frederick Courtenay and Humphrey (no details known) . There was also a daughter, Eleanora Christine Courtenay Montagu, who was born in 1811; she married Thomas Keeld Harvey in 1842, having two children.

The concerns with the inheritance of Lackham were a continuing problem; it appeared that shortly before his death James Montagu had borrowed £10,000 from Lord Ellenborough to purchase land. He had repaid the loan before his death but the interest was still outstanding and so the estate remained entailed until this was sorted out. George Conway brought an action against his father and the trustees in June 1817<sup>93</sup> to get the interest paid but it did not succeed.

George Conway, Margaret and the family moved around the country throughout the early decades of the nineteenth

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<sup>92</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid*

<sup>93</sup> WRO 137/39/6 p22 a very large bundle of transcripts, not signed, of the will, and synopses of the various court actions. These are not the original documents but a solicitor's record collection, those of Mr. Tugwell Robbins, George's solicitor and lifetime friend.. (20 Barnard St, Russell Square)

century. They lived at Lackham between 1808 and 1810, then moved to Wallingford in Berkshire. After a short time there, and in London, they removed to Alnwick Hill near Worcester for a couple of years <sup>94</sup>.

In 1814, George Conway stood as a candidate in the Parliamentary election in Grampound (between Truro and St Austell) in Cornwall, but was not elected <sup>95</sup>.

The family were again living at Lackham in 1815 (when George Montagu sen. died), and then in Crescent Place, in London, from 1816 until August 1817. They then moved to Northampton Square, Islington.

Sometime in the spring of 1818 they returned to Liverpool, and very shortly after this George Conway returned to London "*under pretence of breaking up the Housekeeping in Northampton Square*". He shut down 18 Northumberland Square and then rented number 4. While there Mary Baldwin was employed as a servant and shortly thereafter George Conway carried on an adulterous relationship with her <sup>96</sup>, with the end result that Mary gave birth to George Conway's illegitimate child at Hoxton Poor House, Middlesex, in December 1819 <sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Preamble

<sup>95</sup> PRO C 202/202/22A "*Oaths of Parliamentary Candidates for Grampound, co Cornwall* dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1814

<sup>96</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Libel section 12

*"and they frequently and at night lay naked and alone in one and the same bed and had carnal use and knowledge of each others bodies"*

<sup>97</sup> The poor house is long gone but the site is clearly shown on Roque's 1745 map of London, and can still be located in Hoxton, between Hoxton Street and Pitfield Street, south of where they meet Hide (now Hyde) Road. *The*

If this was not enough Mary's sister Sarah, also employed at Northampton Square as a servant, bore George Conway an illegitimate child in the same workhouse, in January of 1820.

Margaret did not find out about this, however, until 1823. In March of 1823 George Conway once again left on business, to France. At this time the Montagu's were living in Ramsgate, in Kent. It is certain that they never lived together after March <sup>98</sup>. Although Margaret stated that George Conway's indiscretions "*only came to her knowledge in or about the month of December 1823*" <sup>99</sup> it may be this is not strictly true - it is obvious from a letter written by Margaret in September that someone had told her something very negative about George Conway, and it may well be that she knew earlier than she said.

George Conway was still in Paris on business, possibly trying to obtain finances but this was apparently unsuccessful. He eventually arrived in Calais penniless -

*"I am here by a sort of miracle again from the interior after waiting the results of many fruitless applications without money, clothes or the means of procuring any and ... without a franc piece in my pocket and expect hourly the refusal*

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*workhouse is now St Leonard's Hospital*

<http://www.mdx.ac.uk/www/study/maps.htm> for a representation of Roque's map, modern information from London Street Atlas (1995) map 62, E2 Geographers A-Z Map Co. Ltd 0 85039 244 6

<sup>98</sup> WRO 44/1 Libel 10

<sup>99</sup> WRO 44/1 Libel 11

*of common sustenance.* "100

Whether Margaret replied is unknown, nor how George Conway was able to return to England, but he did. He then had to deal with Margaret's suite as she

*"commence[d] divorce proceedings against him ..... for the furtherance of obtaining a divorce from Bed Board and mutual cohabitation.* "101

George Conway's defence was that the marriage was not legal in the first place. The court found the marriage lawful and proved on Thursday 7 July 1825. It has not yet been possible to locate the result of the divorce case but it is likely this was proved in about 1826 or 27 and a separation granted.

It is interesting to note that George Conway may have tried to fake his own death in 1819, about 4 months before his first illegitimate child was born..... "On Friday last, [late August] aged 43, suddenly George Conway Montagu esq of Lackham House in this county" 102, which agrees with Vernon 103 and also with an article about George Conway Montagu published in the

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<sup>100</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid* Evidence no 4 Letter from George Montagu to Margaret Montagu, 13 Trafalgar Terrace Ramsgate. Post marked 1823. Not dated but evidence from other submissions gives September 20. This is a quite extraordinary letter and is reproduced in full in Appendix 3

<sup>101</sup> WRO 44/1 *ibid*, Preamble

<sup>102</sup> Devizes and Wilts Gazette September 2nd 1819, Death notices

<sup>103</sup> Vernon, TE (1969) *A short history of the Lords of the Manor of Lackham from Saxon Days* Lackham College

Wiltshire Times by Kite <sup>104</sup> .

Kite's article provoked a letter from an alleged granddaughter of George Conway, then living in Armadale, Australia. In her letter to the Editor <sup>105</sup> she says that George Conway

*"was born on June 24th 1776 and died on May 30th 1847, aged 71, his death having been caused by a painful internal malady through the last three months of which my mother was his devoted nurse. "*

This discrepancy does fit with the date given by both Brocklebank and the Dictionary of National Biography <sup>106</sup>. Jane Courtenay Montagu said that six years after the death of his first wife in 1834 George Conway married Jessy, daughter of John Elphinstone Campbell and they had 2 daughters - the author of the letter, Jane Stewart Courtenay Montagu, and Edith Mary Wortley, who was born in 1847 <sup>107</sup> and died in 1911. This would mean he was 58 when he married Jessy and died the same year as his youngest daughter was born.

More direct support for Jane Stewart Courtenay Montagu's statements is found in no less a publication than Burke's *Landed Gentry* (1937).

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<sup>104</sup> Wiltshire Times February 7<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 1929

<sup>105</sup> Wiltshire Times 1931, *Lacock Inscriptions* *ibid*

<sup>106</sup> DNB XIII pp 693-694  
George Conway Courtenay Montagu 1776 - 1847

<sup>107</sup> Victoria State records, Australia. Unfortunately parents are not given on this certificate, it was not a requirement at the time.

In 1826, both George Conway and his eldest son were living in Bloomsbury, London; George Conway was living in Connaught Terrace, Portman Square, and Frederick was in Queen's Square<sup>108</sup>. In 1827 the two Montagus sold land to John Lodge of Connaught Terrace<sup>109</sup>. John Lodge was the agent for Joseph Neeld<sup>110</sup>, and the land involved was the manor of Alderton, where George Conway had grown up:

*"Memorandum of an agreement made and entered into this sixteenth day of November one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven between John Lodge of Connaught Terrace in the county of Middlesex and Tugell Robins (inserted) late of Queen Square Bloomsbury in the same county (inserted) bachelor of Magdalene College Cambridgeshire of the first part George Conway Montagu of Connaught Terrace Portman Square in the said County of Middlesex esquire and Frederick Conway Montagu of Queens Square Bloomsbury (inserted) aforesaid esquire of the second part and Joseph Neeld the Younger of the Inner Temple London esquire of the third*

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<sup>108</sup> WRO 137/39/6 *ibid* p26, Details given for a court case when selling off some of the Lackham estates. George was said to be "*late of Lackham, now living at..*"

<sup>109</sup> WRO 1305/9

<sup>110</sup> An incredibly wealthy young man, who had inherited a fortune from his uncle only recently. He eventually owned large areas of northern Wiltshire; Alderton was his first purchase in the county.

*part. " 111*

This agreement allowed Joseph Neeld to start planting the manor before formally purchasing the estate. The estate was sold to Mr. Neeld the following year. George Conway is also mentioned in papers dated 1835

Only Frederick Montagu, however, is mentioned after 1837.

And at that point the narrative ended when this booklet was ready to publish. However tucked into a large bundle of land lease records in Wiltshire County Record Office a slim, fragile slip of paper was found<sup>112</sup> which turned out to be George Conway's death certificate!<sup>113</sup> From this it is certain that George Conway *did* marry Jessie but they didn't stay in Australia. Sometime before his death George Conway and Jessy returned to England. He died on May 13<sup>th</sup> 1847 at 15, Albert Street, New Town, Bermondsey. The death certificate shows that his "*long painful illness*" was "*disease of the rectum and prostrate gland and debility of old age*"<sup>114</sup>. Jessy was present at the death and informed the Coroner.

Jessy and George's daughter Mary was born in Bermondsey in 1845<sup>115</sup>. In the first edition of this booklet it was thought that George and Jessy had emigrated to Australia but it now

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<sup>111</sup> WRO 1305/16 *Memorandum of agreement as to the planting of the Alderton Estate without prejudice to the pending investigation of the site*

<sup>112</sup> WRO 44/8 on the day the booklet was due to be printed!

<sup>113</sup> WRO 44/8 Death certificate of George Conway Montagu

<sup>114</sup> WRO 44/8 *ibid*

<sup>115</sup> BMD Surrey 1837-69 vol 4 p69

seems they lived in south London until George's death. Jessy did go to Australia; shipping records show that Jessy, Mary and Jane sailed for Australia on the *James L Bogert*, a vessel that shows up frequently in Australian immigration records. Interestingly Cyrus Mason, whom Jessy later married, was a passenger on the same ship, as was Anne and August mason. Augustus was Cyrus' brother and so it would seem that the widowed Jessy Montagu and her two daughters were on the same boat to Australia as the man she later married and his brother's family. It seems very unlikely that some connection did not form on the voyage, even if they did not know each other previously.....

There was distant Montagu family in Australia at the time; one of the sons of Edward Montagu, who married Barbara Fleetwood in 1792, was John<sup>116</sup> and he married Jessie Worsley in 1823. John had fought at the Battle of Waterloo with the 52nd Regiment of Foot. He then served in Tasmania in 1823 when it was still a penal colony and was Colonial Secretary of Tasmania between 1834 and 1842 after which he was Colonial Secretary in South Africa, so he and his family were in Australasia at the time George Conway Montagu married Jessy Campbell. It is noted that Worsley and Wortley are not that dissimilar as names, and John's son, Alfred Worsley Montagu married both his wives in Queensland. It is not known whether these two lines of the Montagu family were known to each other.<sup>117</sup>

There is much that is still uncertain in the lives of both George Montagus but hopefully this will be clarified in due time.

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<sup>116</sup> 21/8/1797 Lackham - 4/11/1853 Brighton

<sup>117</sup> The DNB has a Mary Wortley Montagu (XIII pp706-710)

**Acknowledgements:**

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Tony Pratt, Chippenham. 2003

(Text updated February 2008, but not enough to justify a new edition - Tony Pratt 2008)

## Appendix 1

### George Montagu - naturalist

George Montagu might hardly be remembered at all save that he was a famous naturalist. He published several books on natural history (see below for a full list), the best known of which were the *Ornithological Dictionary* (1802) & *Testacea Brittanica* (1803). George Montagu travelled widely to study natural history but much of his work was done locally, in Wiltshire and in Devon.

Colonel Montagu's *Testacea Brittanica* contains many references to Wiltshire snails, at Lackham alone he found 35 species. Here Montagu discovered *Clausilia laminata* and *Ena montana*, which he called *Helix lackhamensis*<sup>118</sup>

His description of his discovery of *Ena montana* at Lackham is typical:

*"we first found it in a moist wood at Lackham in Wiltshire in one small spot only adhering to the trunks of ash and hornbeam trees and afterwards tolerably plentiful in the woods belonging to the Marquis of Lansdowne at Bow Wood in the same county not very distant from the former place and in no other part"*<sup>119</sup>

(This description does not imply that Montagu was working with others at the time, he habitually used the term "we" when

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<sup>118</sup> Swanton EW *The Molluscs of Wiltshire* WAM XXXVI p58

<sup>119</sup> Montagu, G (1803) *Testacea Brittanica*

describing his own activities.)

He named many other species, for example the very rare *Helicella cantianna* and *Hygromia fusca*, and he discovered *Clausili laminata biplicata* at Easton Grey.

His Ornithological Dictionary (1802) was very well respected, and much of his work concerned birds - in 1808, in a paper entitled "*On Birds newly discovered in Great Britain*", he mentioned the "*little white heron*" which is now known as the buff backed heron. It is listed in the Handbook of British birds as being first recorded "*near Kingsbridge (Devon) end of Oct 1805*". The record is George Montagu's. He also described *Falco cineraceus* and *F. pagargus* and, after his death, the French naturalist L P Viellot named it *Montagu's Harrier* in his honour, by which name it is still known.

His bird collection, started so long before in North America, was purchased from his heirs by the British Museum; the original proposal was for £3,000 but this was reduced to £1,200 on the advice of Joseph Banks<sup>120</sup>

Although chiefly remembered as an Ornithologist, George Montagu also carried out pioneering studies of British marine life. Edward Forbes, Professor of the University of Edinburgh, and a later contemporary of Montagu's, was impressed with his "*acute powers of observation*" and said

*"In cases where Marine Animals were concerned [I] have been astonished at the extent, variety, and minuteness of [Montagu's] researches. He laboured, moreover, at a time when there were few*

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<sup>120</sup> Cumings, BF (1912) *ibid*

*persons who took an interest in Marine Zoology, or who cared to investigate the structure and habits of Sub-marine Animals in their native haunts. Montagu, however, did not shrink from his work because he met few companions, or found little sympathy. He steadily pursued his chosen task, and laid the foundation of that thorough investigation of the natural History of the British seas, which now forms so distinctive, and appropriate a feature of the science of our country. "* <sup>121</sup>

Here, too, he named many species, an example being the sea slug *Thecacera pennigera* <sup>122</sup>. Montagu's harrier isn't the only name that recognises George Montagu work, there is *Montagu's blenny*, *Montagu's ray*, *Montagu's sucker* and *Montagu's sea snail* <sup>123</sup>

George Montagu was a very early Fellow of the Linnean Society, and also corresponded with Gilbert White, as well as many other eminent naturalists of his day. It has been said that he "*played a not insignificant role in the development of*

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<sup>121</sup> Cunnington, W (1852) *ibid* p 94

<sup>122</sup> Rudman, W.B., (1997) *Sea Slug Forum*.

<http://seaslugforum.net/thecpen.htm>

*Thecacera pennigera* (Montagu, 1815)

Order: NUDIBRANCHIA

Suborder: DORIDINIA

Family: Polyceridae

Subfamily: Polyceridae

Distribution : originally reported from the Atlantic coast of Europe, it is now known from South Africa, Pakistan, Japan, Brazil, eastern Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>123</sup> Cleavelly RJ ( 1978) *ibid*

*modern biology*"<sup>124</sup>.

*"His great contribution was to establish scrupulous standards in the acceptance of evidence which for many years were not to be surpassed. This was precisely what [natural history] needed at that particular stage in its history: a man without blinkers, prepared to charge about the country making certain of his facts by looking at them with his own eyes."*<sup>124</sup>

Charles Darwin said that "*few more careful observers ever lived than Montagu*"<sup>125</sup> and quotes from George's works in several places.

Which is a fitting tribute to this versatile and colourful character.

### Principal works

- *The Sportsman's Dictionary ; or a Treatise on Gunpowder and Fire Arms, &c.* London, 1792, re-printed in 1803, 8vo.
- *An Ornithological Dictionary ; or Alphabetical Synopsis of British Birds*, 1 vol., 8vo., 1802.
- *Testacea Britannica; or Natural History of British Shells*,

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<sup>124</sup> [http://www.Montagumillennium.com/research/h\\_1815\\_george.htm](http://www.Montagumillennium.com/research/h_1815_george.htm)

<sup>125</sup> Darwin, Charles (1896) *The descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Species* quoted at [http://www.Montagumillennium.com/research/h\\_1815\\_george.htm](http://www.Montagumillennium.com/research/h_1815_george.htm)

*Marine, Land, and Freshwater, including the most minute, systematically arranged and embellished with figures*  
4vo., London, 1803.

- *Supplement to the preceeding [sic.] 1809, with plates and descriptions of new species.*

In the Transactions of the Linnean Society he published the following papers :-

- *Description of three rare species of British Birds* vol. IV, 1796.
- *Description of several Marine Animals found on the coast of Devonshire*, vol. VII, 1802
- *On some species of British Quadrupeds, Birds, and Fishes*, vol. VII, 1803.
- *On the larger and lesser species of horse-shoe Bats, proving them to be distinct, with a description of Vespertilio barbastellus taken in the south of Devonshire* vol. IX, 1805
- *On the Natural History of the Falco cyaneus and Pygargus*, vol. IX, 1807
- *Of several new or rare Animals, principally Marine, discovered on the south coast of Devonshire* vol. XI, 1809.
- *Of some new and rare British Marine Shells and Animals.*

## Appendix 2

George Montagu - Account of last hours and death  
12 June 1815

by H Dorville <sup>126</sup>

On Thursday or Friday the 9th of June Col Montagu stepping back from a board trod on a nail which pierced his heel and made it bleed profusely - the pain was not great and he soon walked about and was so well that he fixed to dine at Moulton in Salcombe on Friday 9, but on the Thursday he complained of an awkward stiffening of his jaw and the root of his tongue which prevented mastication. On Friday when the carriage was at the door he said that he had got the rheumatism so bad that he could not go and I remained at home with him. He was cheerful but at dinner he said "*Its well I am no epicure for I cannot bite anything hard*" and dined on bread and dairy. Towards evening he was worse I sent for the surgeon who ordered some ?? I attended him all night he slept comfortable and at dawn on the Saturday the surgeon called again. Whilst he was conversing with him he was taken with very acute spasms in the back and through to the chest which very much affected his breath. Embracing me affectionately he said "*Eliza I fear it is all over*". Copious doses of laudanum being given gave ease and the violence of the spasms abated. He slept for some hours a Physician was sent for who arrived y three o'clock and found him so much better that he pronounced his hope that altho an affliction of the nerves yet he hoped it would not be a totally locked jaw. He could however open his mouth but very little and swallow only small quantities of liquid at once. On Sunday the spasms continued

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<sup>126</sup> WANHS ms 593

but not so violent one surgeon always remaining with him night and day. On Monday he declared himself much better and put us all in spirits. He appeared comfortable and cheerful and slept for several hours together. In the evening it was however evident that his strength was fast going. We laid him comfortably and he was moved from the position. The spasms continued at intervals the Whole Night and I slept also for hours but it was with great difficulty he swallowed his last medicine at 5 o'clock after that was difficult in the extreme. He was delightfully composed and slept or laid quite still except when he asked for cold water which was applied to his hands and face and if they ceased to fan him he instantly, called for it appearing to enjoy any species of refrigeration often saying "*I should like anything cooler then cold water*". On Tuesday the 12 June at rather before nine in the morning he resigned his spirit in the hands of his maker without a roan, patience and reasoning were his to the last what a loss to his surviving friends. God grant them his help to support it. Died 12 June 1816 aged 62.

## Appendix 3

Letter from George Conway Montagu to Margaret <sup>127</sup>

This letter may seem overly dramatic to the modern reader, and may be rather flamboyant even for its era, but it is not unusually "over the top" for George; other letters written by him are structured along very similar lines <sup>128</sup>. It is included here to give a taste of how he wrote and, maybe, some idea of how he felt about the world. It is important to recall, however, that this letter was written very shortly after he heard bad news from his wife. This may have been that she was suing for divorce, having presumably just been informed of his infidelity with the Baldwin sisters.....

*To you my wife. to the only ear and head I feel disposed to approach in the present afflicting errors of my appalling disastrous life - whose extinguishment I had cherished the hope of vaulting over the trammels of a remorseless fate ere the malignant star, which hovered in the horizon of my luckless birth, should 'ere arise to the zenith of its destructive course and enlist in its baneful train the compact of villainy recently formed against my name, family and property. Your only letter, my so equally suffered wife, which at length reached me and which would innocently urge me to the vortex of a devouring crater, has afforded me by its shortness little means of judging of the march of untouched events since last we met. I*

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<sup>127</sup> WRO 44/1 Undated, but probably September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1823

<sup>128</sup> His letter was transcribed by a legal firm, and so the punctuation was removed. I have inserted punctuation to make it (slightly) more readable Author

*was prepared, however, for the worst as I ever am when I fix my resolve, and already feel myself the persecuted and the outlawed - deserted by all, even those the so warmest corner of my heart had fondly cherished. You leave me to the conjecture only of who tendered such advice, but there is only one who could with an unblushing affrontery have directed such to the ear of a wife, and from such one would I receive it with indignation proportional to the wicked diabolical intention of the projector whose word, or promise, were never yet preserved in one single instance with one single person with whom he had been concerned. Better to repose on the generosity and feeling of avowed and consistent enemies than lulled by the plausible sophistry of such diabolical pretended friends, who first entrap that they may, with less personal risqué, plunder and destroy their unfortunate reposing victims. Enquire of the countless round of those whose peace property and happiness have been (torn) ----- [sic] to his remorseless and damning villany if I am incorrect -*

*That I have deep drank, my wife, of the bitter chalice of life's heaviest afflictions; some future and, perhaps, some early day, may tell when the grave will bury all my faults and rescue me from all my enemies.*

*I am here by a sort of miracle again from the interior - after waiting the results of many fruitless applications - without money, clothes or the means of procuring any and if I had not a passage here given to me must have dated this to you from a more remote period and to get across is impossible, even if advisable, without a franc piece in my pocket and expect hourly the refusal of common sustenance.*

*Thus situated, and to dwell on the misfortune which must equally affect yourself and my suffering family, and which are*

*to my own feelings paramount to all other misfortunes that assail me, and almost dispossess me of reason, trusting that you followed my advice at our parting and have written to those who hold my property, alas, for a small consideration to the comparison of its yearly value . How many days I may linger here, or whether one friend may advance to our common rescue ,is yet in the womb of fate. If you write to me, which I hope you do may be early, write fully my dear Margaret; whatever disappointment may engender from you I may hope for naught but the gentle soothing of a wife under present grief almost too much to sustain. With affectionate love and blessings to you all believe me to be, Margaret, yours most truly GCM*

*Address me post restante  
a Calais*

Addressed to  
Mrs Montagu  
3 Trafalgar Place  
Ramsgate

Appendix 4                      Timeline for George Montagu<sup>129</sup>

- 8 Jun 1753    Born (various dates suggested by other authors)
- 1765    At Urchfont school, south of Devizes
- 22 Jun 1770    Enlisted in the 15<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot, as Ensign.
- 1773    Married Ann Courtenay
- 17 Jun 1775    Regiment in Dublin after being in Belfast
- 1 Dec 1775    Promoted to Captain  
                  Regiment ordered to America
- 1776
- 10 Jan    Embarked transports at Cork
- 12 Feb    Sailed
- 3 May    Arrived in North Carolina
- 24 Jul    Birth of George Conway Montagu, eldest son
- Aug - Nov    Fought in the battles of Brooklyn, White Plains, Fort Washington and Fort Lee
- 1777
- May - Sep    Fought in the battles of Peekskill, Danbury, Ridgefield, Brandywine, Whitemark and Georgetown
- 16 Nov    Resigns commission, leaves regiment returns to England
- 1777 - 1786    Living at Rowde, near Devizes
- 17 Sep 1780    Daughter Eleanora Ann baptised at Rowde
- 1782    Death of maternal grandfather Thomas Hedges of Alderton - annuity of £200
- 11 Mar 1783    Son Frederick baptised at Rowde

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<sup>129</sup> After a timeline constructed by R. Cleevly, in the Nat Hist Museum Library

- 1786 - 1788 Living at Surrendell, near Alderton
- 10 Sep 1788 - 1792 Living at Easton Grey
- 10 Nov 1788 Daughter Louisa baptised at Easton Grey
- c1789 / 90 Met Elizabeth Dorville, probably in London
- 25 Apr 1790 Father James died, estate inherited by older brother James
- 1790 - 1791 In South Wales with Wiltshire Regiment of His Majesties' Militia
- 25 Mar 1791 Promoted to Lt Col in Militia, CinC Wiltshire Militia
- 1792 - 97 Family living at Alderton House
- 1792 Publication of *Sportsman's Directory*
- 24 Jan 1792 Baptism of Ann Elizabeth Dorville and Henry Dorville at Millbrook Parish Church near Southam, Henry "about 2 yrs old"
- 1794 With Militia in Scunford camp, Sussex
- 1795 - 1796 With Militia in SW England
- 21 July 1795 Elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society
- 1796 First paper published with the Linnean Society
- 1797
- 12 Sep Death of James Montagu, estate entailed
- Dec Elizabeth Dorville at Knowle House, Kingsbridge Devon
- 11 Sep 1798 Militia in Devon
- 1799
- July Events leading to George's court martial
- 28 Sep - 15 Oct Court martial of Lt Col George Montagu. Found guilty and dismissed

- from the Militia
- 1801 Baptism of "Isabella, daughter of Mrs Elizabeth Dorville" at St Edmund's Church, Kingsbridge
- 1802 Publication of *Ornithological Dictionary*
- 1803 Publication of *Testacea Brittancia*  
George oversaw Napoleonic defences in Devon.
- 12 Dec 1803 Son GCM eloped with Margaret Green Wilson, married at Gretna Green "*in their own names*"
- 10 Mar 1805 George made Will
- 16 May 1811 Son Frederick killed at Alburra, Portugal
- 18 Feb 1815 Died of lockjaw at Knowle House

## Appendix 5      Timeline for George Conway Montagu

- 24 June 1776 Born at Lackham
- 1783 Moved to Alderton with the family
- <1799 Living in northern England "*under an assumed name*"
- 1803 Living in Liverpool as "*William Thompson*"  
Courts Margaret Green Wilson
- Dec. Eloped to Gretna Green and married  
Margaret (29<sup>th</sup> December)
- 1804 Living in Edinburgh under the name  
"*Thompson*"
- 1805 Moved to Hornsea, Yorks. Living under the  
name "*Conway*"
- 3 Oct Eldest son Frederick Courtenay born  
Moved briefly to Liverpool
- 1806 - 1810 Living at Lackham
- 1806 Met George Crossbie in Hull, still living in  
Hornsea
- 1807 Arrested in London under the name  
"*Montagu*"
- 1811 Daughter Eleanora Christine Courtenay born  
Moved to Wallingford, Berks.
- 1812? - 1815 Moved to London and Alnwick Hall, Worcs
- July 13 1814 Stood as candidate at Grampound, Cornwall
- 1815 Moved to Lackham
- 1816 - Aug 1818 Living Northampton Square, Islington
- 1817 Brought court action against his father and  
Trustees
- Early 1818 Returned to Liverpool, George Conway living  
in London
- 2 Sept 1819 Death notice for George Conway published in  
Bath paper
- Dec Illegitimate child born to Mary Baldwin

- Jan 1820 Illegitimate child born to Sarah Baldwin
- 1823? Family together in Ramsgate, Kent
- March 1823 George Conway visited France on business
- Sept 20 Margaret wrote letter to George Conway.  
George Conway fled Paris penniless
- Dec Margaret informed of illegitimate children
- 1824 Court case to establish legitimacy of  
marriage
- 7 July 1825 Marriage proved legal, George Conway pays  
alimony to Margaret
- 1826? Separation granted
- 1826 George Conway living in Portman Square,  
Frederick living in Queens Square
- 1827 Sold Alderton to Joseph Neeld
- 1834 Margaret died
- 1840 Married Jessy Campbell
- 1843 Daughter Jane Stewart Courtenay Montagu  
born
- 1845 Daughter Edith Mary Wortley Montagu born  
Bermondsey
- 30 May 1847 Died in Bermondsey

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