

Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford


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Horace Walpole



Horace Walpole by Joshua Reynolds 1756
National Portrait Gallery, collection London .

Born September 24, 1717

 London, England, UK

Died March 2, 1797



Berkeley Square, London,
England, UK

Occupation Author, Politician

Parents Robert Walpole and Catherine Shorter

Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford (24

September 1717 – 2 March 1797), more commonly known as **Horace Walpole**, was a politician, writer, architectural innovator and cousin of Lord Nelson. His *Letters* are highly readable, and give a vivid picture of the more intellectual part of the aristocracy of his period.

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Biography

He was born in London, the youngest son of British Prime Minister Robert Walpole. He was educated at Eton College and King's College, Cambridge. His homosexuality revealed itself early, and he is believed to have had affairs with

the poet Thomas Gray, and with the 9th Earl of Lincoln (later the 2nd Duke of Newcastle-under-Lyne). Gray accompanied Walpole on the Grand Tour, but they quarrelled, and Walpole returned to England in 1741 and entered Parliament. He was never politically ambitious, but remained an MP even after the death of his father in 1745 left him a man of independent means.

His lasting architectural creation is Strawberry Hill, the home he built in Twickenham, south-west London in which he revived the Gothic style many decades before his Victorian successors.

Politician

Following his father's politics, he was a devotee of King George II and Queen Caroline, siding with them against their son, Frederick, Prince of Wales, about whom Walpole wrote spitefully in his memoirs. Walpole's home, Strawberry Hill, near Twickenham, was a fanciful concoction of neo-Gothic which began a new architectural trend. From there, Walpole was a frequent visitor to Boyle Farm, Thames Ditton, to meet both the Boyle-Walsinghams and Lord Hertford. In 1764, he published his Gothic novel, *The Castle of*

Otranto, setting a literary trend to go with the architecture. From 1762 on, he published his *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, based on George Vertue's manuscript notes. His memoirs of the Georgian social and political scene, though heavily biased, are a useful primary source for historians. In one of the numerous letters, from January 28, 1754, he coined the word serendipity which he said was derived from a "silly fairy tale" he had read, *The Three Princes of Serendip*. The oft-quoted epigram, "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel," is from a letter of Walpole's to Anne, Countess of Ossory, on 16 August, 1776. The original, fuller version was in what he wrote to Sir Horace Mann on 31 Dec., 1769: "I have often said, and oftener think, that this world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel – a solution of why Democritus laughed and Heraclitus wept." His father was created Earl of Orford in 1742. Horace's elder brother, the 2nd Earl of Orford (c.1701–1751), passed the title on to his son, the 3rd Earl of Orford (1730–1791). When the 3rd Earl died unmarried, Horace Walpole became the 4th Earl of Orford. When Horace Walpole died in 1797 the title became extinct.

The Orford Walpoles were not related to the

popular Twentieth Century novelist, Hugh Walpole (1884–1941).

Formal styles from birth to death

- Mr. Horace Walpole (1717-1741)
- Mr. Horace Walpole, MP (1741-1742)
- The Hon. Horace Walpole, MP (1742-1768)
- The Hon. Horace Walpole (1768-1791)
- The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Orford (1791-1797)

External links

- The Literary Encyclopedia.
- Works by Horace Walpole, 4th Earl of Orford at Project Gutenberg
 - The Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume 1
 - The Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume 2
 - The Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume 3
 - The Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume 4
 - Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume I

- Letters of Horace Walpole, Volume II
- The Castle of Otranto
- The Friends of Strawberry Hill
- The Twickenham Museum - Horace Walpole

Parliament of Great Britain (1707–1800)		
Preceded by Thomas Copleston Isaac le Heup	Member for Callington with Thomas Copleston 1741–1748, Edward Bacon 1748–1754 1741–1754	Succeeded by Sewallis Shirley John Sharpe
Preceded by The Lord Luxborough The Hon. Thomas Howard	Member for Castle Rising with The Hon. Thomas Howard 1754–1757	Succeeded by The Hon. Thomas Howard Charles Boone
Preceded by Sir John Turner, Bt Horatio Walpole	Member for Kings Lynn with Sir John Turner, Bt 1757–1768	Succeeded by Sir John Turner, Bt Thomas Walpole
Peerage of Great Britain		
Preceded by	Earl of Orford 1791–1797	Succeeded by Extinct

George Walpole	Baron Walpole 1791–1797	Succeeded by Horatio Walpole
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