

Marquis of Salisbury



Life Before Politics

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- Dickensian schooling in Hatfield
- Eton was worse for bullying
- Home tutored before Oxford
- “Oxford Movement” introduced him to “High Anglicanism”
- Did not enjoy Law at Lincoln's Inn & left
- “Grand Tour” not Europe, but South Africa, Australia & New Zealand

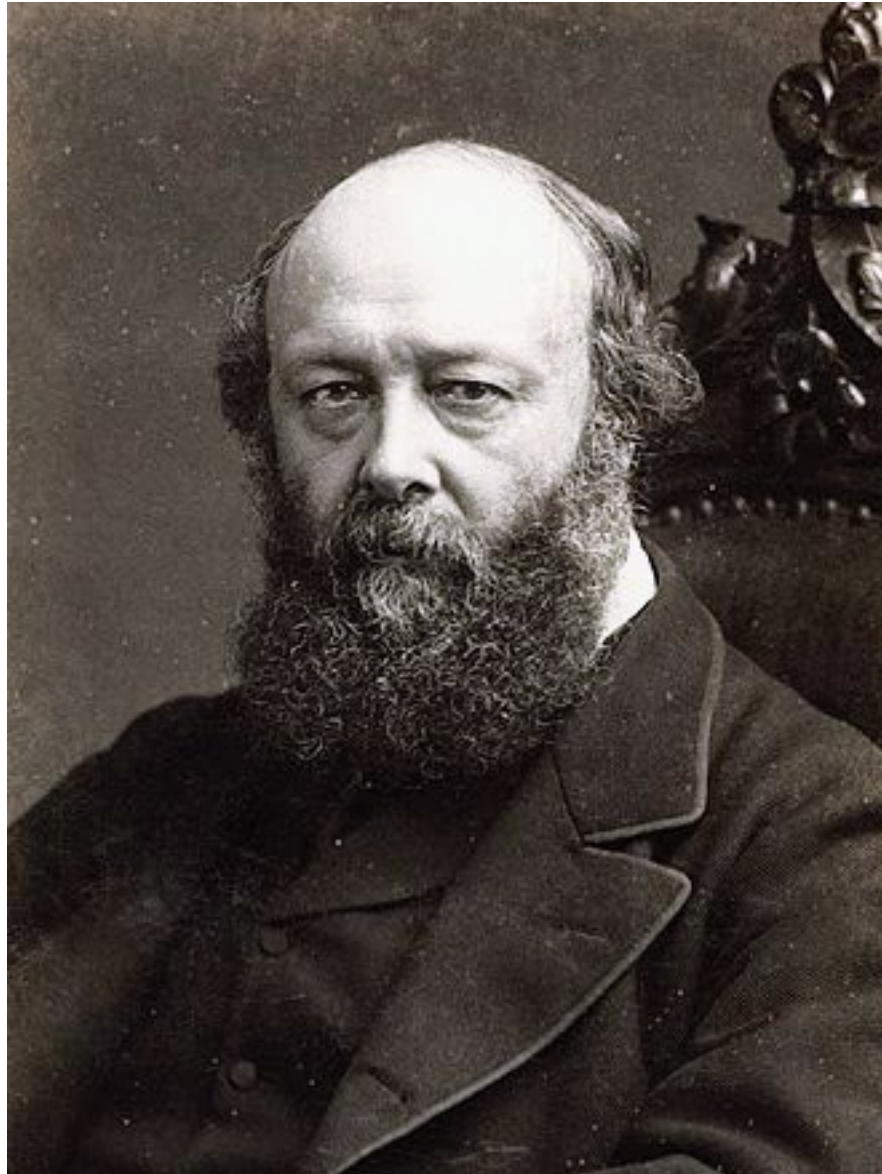
Thoughts on his Tour

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- Greatly liked native South Africans
- Felt that Gold-rush Bendigo to be more civilised than Hatfield!

Politics & Marriage

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- Retained seat unopposed till 1868 when he inherited title & moved to Lords.
- From 1856 enhanced his earnings by writing for Magazines & Papers.
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Ministerial Career



Berlin Conference



Boer War



Aftermath & Retirement



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Information on “Bobby” the 3rd Marquess of Salisbury is hard to come by. His daughter wrote a biography that her brother suggested required a little criticism to achieve balance. The major work is ‘*Salisbury Victorian Titan*’ by Andrew Roberts published in 1999. As with any source scepticism is required, apply the three W’s. Who wrote it. Why was it written. Who is the intended audience. Andrew Roberts is a well-known historian who was asked by the 6th Marquess to write a definitive biography and had access to a huge amount of family papers at Hatfield House.

Mr Roberts is a traditionalist, on the right, a supporter of Margaret Thatcher and Brexit. Views very much in keeping with his subject, small government, and low taxes.

Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury KG GCVO PC FRS DL

Born 3 February 1830. Died 22 August 1903. He was a British statesman and Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom three times for a total of over thirteen years. He was also Secretary of State for India, Foreign Secretary and during his last two years of office Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal.

The branch of the Cecil family to which Robert belonged was from the son of the second marriage of Lord Burghley, Elizabeth’s Spy-Master, who built an enormous house outside Stamford in Lincolnshire, Burghley House. When Robert entered parliament in August 1853 it was as the Member for Stamford. The seat was uncontested until Robert succeeds to the peerage on his father’s death in 1868. The hyphenated surname Gascoyne-Cecil comes from his mother Frances Mary Gascoyne, a Liverpudlian, heiress to a large fortune which swelled the already full coffers of the Cecil’s and presumably earned the hyphen to the aristocratic name.

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Robert, family name Bobby, had a miserable childhood; His father, an MP spent much time in London. Aged 9, Robert's Mother died. He had few friends, and only the servants for company. The Library, he read voraciously, was crucial to his growing up and later life.

His first school, run by the rector of Hatfield the Reverend Francis Faithfull was in the tradition of English private schools and Dickins. Described by Robert in later life “My life existence there was an existence among devils” with endless beatings and bullying. Not a strong child these conditions ensured that he had bouts of debilitating illness for the rest of his life. School shaped his basic thinking, pessimistic with negative views on democracy.

At Eton 1840-1845 it was if anything worse. Very clever, Bobby was moved up 3 classes above his peers and was it can be supposed a swot, and received constant bullying. He excelled at Latin and Greek, studied French and asked to be taught German as well as studying theology and did remarkably well in his exams. Bobby's entreaties to his Father finally worked and he was withdrawn from Eton and privately tutored for his entrance to Oxford University The experience of his schooling particularly Eton cemented his view of the world and brought about bouts of depression and illness over the years. Most people he decided were “cruel, cowardly and that the mob would run roughshod over sensitive people”. (*An interesting view considering his experience to date were private primary schools and Eton*).

Tutored at Hatfield for two years Robert matriculated and was headed to St John's college, Oxford. Oxford at that time was High Anglicanism and High Toryism well suited to Bobbie's natural conservative instincts which together with the highly intelligent fellow students was the positive formative period of his life, counterbalancing the horrors and depressive years of his schooling.

High Anglicanism or the Tractarian wing of the Anglican Church was designed to appeal to the educated upper classes leaving emotion to the Evangelicals. Now called the Oxford movement, or more irreverently the bells and smells division of the Anglican Church it was a perfect match for our traditional Bobby and the High Church was to be a mainstay of his life. Robert received an honorary fourth class in Mathematics conferred by nobleman's privilege due to recurring bouts of ill health.

In April 1850 he joined [Lincoln's Inn](#), but did not enjoy law. Advised to travel for his health, Bobby instead of Europe travelled through [Cape Colony](#), Australia, including [Tasmania](#), and New Zealand from 1851 to 1853.

Thoughts on his Tour

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He disliked the Boers and wrote that free institutions and self-government could not be granted to the Cape Colony because the Boers outnumbered the British three-to-one, and "it will simply be delivering us over bound hand and foot into the power of the Dutch, who hate us as much as a conquered people can hate their conquerors". A view Bobby adhered to throughout the annexation of the Boer states, the annexation of the vast goldfields and the subsequent Boer War and all its cruelties.

He found the Native South Africans "a fine set of men whose language bears traces of a very high former civilisation", like Italian.

In the [Bendigo](#) goldmine in Australia, he claimed that "there is not half as much crime or insubordination as there would be in an English town of the same wealth and population". Ten thousand miners were policed by four men armed with carbines, and at [Mount Alexander](#) 30,000 people were protected by 200 policemen, with over 30,000 ounces of gold mined per week. He believed that there was "generally far more civility than I should be likely to find in the good town of [Hatfield](#)" which Bobby claimed this was due to "the government was that of the Queen, not of the mob; from above, not from below"

Politics & Marriage

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He entered the Commons as a Tory on 22 Aug 1853, as MP for Stamford in Lincolnshire, a seat he retained this seat, uncontested, until he succeeded to his father's peerages in 1868.

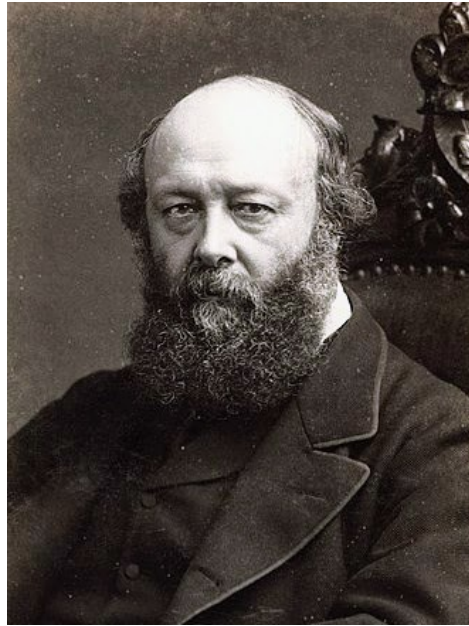
His view of his constituents was summed up in an answer to his brother Eustace, also an MP complained of being addressed by constituents in a hotel, Cecil responded: "A hotel infested by influential constituents is worse than one infested by bugs. It's a pity you can't carry around a powder insecticide to get rid of vermin of that kind".

Late 1856 Robert began writing for magazines and newspapers to help his meagre allowance from his father. The extra money became essential when Robert fell madly in love with Georgina Alderson, also a Tractarian four years older, something of a blue stocking and the possessor of a fine wit. Robert's father demanded that Robert marry upper class money. Georgina was not from a wealthy family and a family, in the view of the Cecil's, that was irredeemably middle class.

They married on 11th July 1857. The ceremony boycotted by the Cecil Family, the rift with his father would take 7 years to heal. They had eight children which by 1864 Robert could bring up in a safe warm loving household with the proceeds of his journalism. Georgina could and did lift Robert out of his periodic depression. She soothed him, enthused him, was politically savvy and provided a stable background to support him in his writing and politics.

Bobby at 27 was tall 6'4", he had a growth spurt after leaving Eton, Nicknamed "the Buffalo", he was already putting on weight and had the beginning of a stoop. He was ready to embark on a literary and political career.

Ministerial Career



That career as we have already seen included Secretary of State for India, Foreign Secretary and during his last two years of office Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal and three periods as Prime Minister totalling 13 years. The following are two examples of his skills and successes;

First from his time as Foreign Secretary

followed by one from his Premierhips.

Berlin Conference



Prior to the conference Russia had been at war with the Ottoman Empire, that was once a great Empire holding vast tracts of land in the Balkans but now weak and thought of as the sick Man of Europe. The Russians had taken back vast areas of the Balkans which it considered to be its natural lands, ie: Slavic and orthodox Christian. The rest of Europe, in particular Britain, was wary of Russia (believing she was looking to take over India) had supported Constantinople against Russia. The peace treaty of San Stefano was signed in March 1878 granting a great deal of territory to Russia, the Balkans and Greece which would give Russia ports on the Mediterranean. Britain considered the Mediterranean to be theirs and Salisbury, as Foreign Secretary, in March 1878 realised that to succeed he would have to alter the San Stefano treaty.

On the 29th of March he wrote what is generally regarded one of the greatest State Papers in British history. The Salisbury Circular which was sent to all the Great Powers outlining Britain's objections. The main objection was that the treaty reduced the powers of Constantinople to almost nil. Constantinople had controlled access to Aegean which would now be controlled by Russia. The treaty broke the conditions of the 1856 Treaty of Paris, and all signatories must convene to reach a new settlement. The Conference called by the German Chancellor Bismark took place from 13/06 until 13/07 1878. The results were initially hailed as a success for peace in the region, but most of the participants were not satisfied with the outcome. The Ottomans were humiliated, confirmed as the "sick man of Europe". Russia resented the lack of rewards, despite having won the war. Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece all received far less than they thought they deserved, especially Bulgaria which was left with less than half of the territory envisioned by the Treaty of San Stefano. Bismarck became hated by [Russian nationalists](#) and [Pan-Slavists](#), and later found that he had tied Germany too closely to Austria-Hungary in the Balkans. Although Austria-Hungary gained substantial territory, this angered the [South Slavs](#) and led to decades of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, culminating in the [assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand](#) and the First World War. Britain was awarded Cyprus giving it a legitimate base in the Mediterranean. Salisbury and Disraeli were awarded the Order of the Garter by Queen Victoria.

Boer War



The **Second Boer War** ", (11 October 1899-31 May 1902), was fought between the British Empire and the two Boer Republics (the South African Republic and the Orange Free State)

The conflict broke out after the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference, and the Boers attacked colonial settlements in nearby British colonies. The Boers besieged Ladysmith, Kimberly and Mafeking, and won a string of victories at Colenso, Magersfontein and Stomberg. Despite large increases in troops brought to South Africa, it was not until Lord Roberts and Kitchener replaced General Buller that British fortunes changed. They relieved the three towns and invaded the two Republics with 180,000 troops. The Boers did not attempt to contest this invasion and Britain officially annexed the two republics in 1900. Lord Salisbury attempted to capitalise on British military successes by calling an early General Election (the Khaki Election).

The Boer fighters, led by generals such as Louis Botha, Jan Smuts and Koos de la Rey launched a guerilla campaign against the British, lasting for the next two years, which gave the British Army a very hard time, being completely un-used to guerilla tactics, and the Boers were well supported by the civilian population. The British resorted to scorched earth policies, destroying farms, killing livestock and removing over 100,000 mostly women and children, and also Black Africans, into hastily created Concentration Camps. An almost complete failure to provide the necessary logistic support to those running the Camps, over 26,000 Boers and 20,000 Africans died, mostly of starvation and disease (These figures have been disputed by other sources ever since).

The British also used mounted infantry units to engage individual Boer guerrilla units; and by this stage, all battles being fought were small-scale skirmishes with few casualties on either side (most casualties were caused by disease).

Lord Kitchener began to offer generous terms of surrender to remaining Boer leaders to bring an end to the conflict and the majority of Boer commanders accepted the British terms in the Treaty of Vereeniging, formally surrendering in May 1902. The former republics were transformed into the British colonies of the Transvaal and Orange River, and in 1910 were merged with the Natal and Cape Colonies to form the Union of South Africa, a self-governing Dominion within the British Empire.

Aftermath & Retirement



Despite International public opinion being generally sympathetic to the Boers and hostile to the British, reaction at home was generally positive to Salisbury's policies. However, many consider the Boer War as marking the beginning of the questioning of the British Empire's veneer of impenetrable global dominance; this due to the war's surprisingly long duration.

On 30th November 1899 Bobby's beloved Georgina, Lady Salisbury died at Hatfield, perhaps hastening Bobby's decision to retire. After much political manoeuvring over the next three years he handed over the premiership to his nephew Arthur Balfour on 12th of July 1902. Perhaps coining the phrase "Bobs yer Uncle"

Breathing difficulties and a heart condition were exacerbated during 1903 by blood poisoning from an ulcerated leg, he died in August. He was buried at St. Etheldreda's Church, Hatfield. He is commemorated by a monument in the Church, a statue outside Hatfield House and a monumentall cenotaph near the west door of Westminster Abbey.

Bobby, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, served his country with distinction for 21 years, thirteen of those years as a very successful Prime Minister and yet he is unknown. The Prime Ministers of the same period Gladstone and Disraeli have statues, streets named and many trinkets, Salisbury has two statues and a miss-spelt plate. Queen Victoria declared late in Life that Bobby was her favourite PM, even more than Disraeli. Monarch and Prime Minister were both "small C" conservatives.

Historians agree that Salisbury was a strong and effective leader in foreign affairs, with a wide grasp of the issues. His personality has been characterised as "deeply neurotic, depressive, agitated, introverted, fearful of change and loss of control, and self-effacing but capable of extraordinary competitiveness." A representative of the landed aristocracy, he held the reactionary credo, "Whatever happens will be for the worse, and therefore it is in our interest that as little should happen as possible." It's been said that instead of seeing his party's victory in 1886 as a harbinger of a new and more popular Conservatism, he longed to return to the stability of the past, when his party's main function was to restrain demagogic liberalism and democratic excess.