

The Russian Princess of Tullichewan Castle



Tullichewan Castle from the air

A couple of years ago Jim Biddulph told me about a story his father, Albert Biddulph, often told: that when he was a young lad just after the First World War, a Russian Princess and members of her family were frequent visitors to Tullichewan Castle and Estate. At this time Albert lived in Argyle Street and he said that he often came across the Russians out walking on the main road. To Albert and his pals the Russians were an exotic sight and the boys followed them from the South Lodge up the south drive, which still exists, towards Bromley House and the Castle, until they were chased away by a gamekeeper. Jim and I were a bit suspicious of the story since we'd never heard of any Russian aristocracy being at Tullichewan Castle or anywhere else in the Vale.



Tullichewan South Drive Lodge and Gate (both are still there)

However, while looking for something else I found a Russian Princess who was indeed connected to Tullichewan Castle. She was Princess Ekaterina Galitzine, who was born in St Petersburg in 1897 and was the daughter of Prince Paul Galitzine who had been Master of the Imperial Hunt and a State Councillor to the Tsar Nicholas 2nd of Russia. The Russian aristocracy was made up of a number of very large families who filled the great many positions of state around the Tsar, and the Galitzines were one of the most numerous and important. Their family tree positively drips with Archdukes, Princes and Princesses all leading a life far removed from that of the ordinary people of Russia. The Galitzines were so numerous that trying to figure out who most of them were and what they did in the Tsar's government would be a huge task.

Princess Ekaterina was especially well connected. She was a maid of honour to the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna (equivalent to a Lady-in-Waiting in present day Britain). The Grand Duchess was very formidable lady with a fabled jewel collection (which was smuggled out of Russia for her after the Revolution). She was the daughter-in-law of Tsar Alexander II of Russia and the aunt of the last Tsar, Nicholas II. However, there was no love lost between Nicholas and the Grand Duchess, and she ran a rival court to his in St Petersburg, so being one of her maids of honour was a high profile position in the Russian aristocracy for the young Princess Ekaterina.



Princess Ekaterina, known in the UK as Princess Catherine Galitzine Campbell

Most of these aristocratic Russian families built holiday homes in the south of France along the Riviera from the 1850's onwards, and it was to France that a great many of them fled after the Russian revolution of 1917. The Russian emigres were known as White Russians and while the menfolk mainly stayed in Russia to fight the Bolsheviks (the Reds), the ladies made their way to places like Cannes, Nice and Antibes and their family palaces.

The emergence of the French Riviera as a rich-person's bolt-hole began in the 1850's and was largely the creation of the British upper-classes. Some of the Vale factory owners were quite familiar with the Riviera. The Orr-Ewings of what became the UTR were amongst those who wintered there, indeed John Orr-Ewing of Croftingea died in Cannes in 1878 while Henry Brock after whom the Vale's first hospital was named and who was a director of the

UTR amongst many other companies, also died in Cannes, in his case in 1915. So local wealthy businessmen and their families were regular visitors to the Riviera and the habit continued after the First World War.

One such was James Haldane Adair Campbell, the son of Adair Campbell and the grandson of James Campbell the last of the Campbell patriarchs to live exclusively at Tullichewan Castle. James was himself well connected: he was a great-grandson of a mayor of New York, William F Havermeyer, a second cousin to a British Prime Minister, Henry Campbell Bannerman and friends with the British Royal family. He had been born at Tullichewan in 1894 and was Adair and Blanche Havermeyer Campbell's eldest child. While serving as a Captain in the army, James had been wounded at Gallipoli in 1915 and ill-health caused by the wound dogged him for the rest of his life. Just after the end of World War One, he went to the south of France to recuperate and there he met Princess Ekaterina. They soon struck up a relationship and became engaged. He brought her back to Scotland with other members of her family and they stayed on the Tullichewan Estate, probably in Bromley House, which is when Albert Biddulph and his pals would have seen her and her accompanying Russians.



Bromley House, later the Henry Brock Hospital (the Brocks never lived there)

It's a fair assumption that their dress and language would have looked and sounded different to anyone in the Vale, especially young boys and girls, and its no surprise that they followed them more out of curiosity than maliciousness.

The couple were married, not at Tullichewan Castle, but in London at St Philips Church Buckingham Palace Road on Sunday 12th November 1922. It was a big society wedding and among the guests was Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, who was Queen Victoria's daughter, and who was a long-standing family friend of the Campbells – she spent a lot of time at her residence at Rosneath Castle and they met regularly at local social events.

Within six weeks of the wedding, Tullichewan Castle and Estate were finally sold (it had failed to reach its reserve price when put up for auction in May 1922) so the Tullichewan connection to the Princess was lost – almost. The couple went off to live elsewhere and the next we hear of James is when he dies in Edinburgh in 1945 aged 52, never having fully recovered from his World War One wound. His wife, Princess Ekaterina outlived him by no less than 43 years. She died in 1988 in her 91st year. The couple had no children. After her husband's death Princess Ekaterina had made a career for herself as a journalist and writer.

But even after her death she was still the subject of an interesting story. While serving as Grand Duchess Pavlovna's Lady-in-waiting, the Grand Duchess had given her a present of a jewel-encrusted gold cigarette case, which had been made by perhaps the best known jewellers in the world, Faberge. These days a cigarette case would probably seem an unusual gift to give to a young lady but seemingly not at that time.



To the Grand Duchess with her enormous jewel collection this was probably no more than a trinket but Princess Ekaterina kept it for the rest of her life. Many years after her death her descendants put it up for sale at Sotheby's and they provided its provenance right back to the jeweller in Faberge's who had made it in 1895. It sold for \$30,000 – not too bad for a cigarette case.

One final twist to this story is that in December 1922, just over a month after the Princess's wedding in London, Dan O'Hare and Hughie McIntyre, the two Communist councillors who came to dominate Vale politics for the next 25 years, were first elected to Bonhill Parish Council. A meeting between the Princess and Dan would have been well worth attending, but they never met and by December 1922 the era of the Campbells at Tullichewan was as over as the era of the Galitzines in St Petersburg.