

# **The Lord Deramore**

## **Richard Arthur de Yarburgh-Bateson**

**April 9, 1911 to August 20, 2006**  
**14 Squadron RAF - Navigator**

The 6th Lord Deramore, who died on Sunday aged 95, was an example of that breed of mildly eccentric hereditary peer whose presence for generations embellished, informed and entertained the "unreformed" House of Lords.

Deramore was a man of diverse talents and enthusiasms. As a young man he won the 1½ litre class in the Paris to Nice Trail in an HRG open sports car, and he held a cycling record of 149 miles in one day - from York to Cambridge.

He became an architect, and was a stalwart of the Conservative Party in north Yorkshire (he briefly abandoned the Tories for the UK Independence Party in the 1990s) and an assiduous writer of letters to editors, his favourite topic being the evils of bureaucracy, both the Brussels and the home-grown varieties. He was also a keen and reasonably proficient amateur watercolourist.

Deramore's chief claim to fame, however, or at least so far as the press was concerned, was as a writer of erotic fiction. Sadly, much of his work remains unpublished - he was engagingly frank about his ever-growing pile of rejection slips.

But success finally came in 1997 when, aged 85, he published his first novel. Illustrated on the cover with one of the author's own watercolours, of a naked girl with a teddy bear, *Still Waters* concerns a young woman who is seduced by a female friend.

After the friend is killed in a motor accident, she falls in love with a divorced man, but cannot have sex with him because she suffers from a rare clinical condition called vaginismus.

According to the author's account, the book concerned "a not very attractive girl who has a bad complex about a small bosom". His inspiration for the more eye-popping gynaecological details came from a newspaper article on an embarrassing medical condition, and his motivation was altruistic: "I wanted to show how there is hope for a woman, even if she is not very attractive."

Eyebrows were raised over some of the book's raunchier passages - "within a minute Diana's naked body was warm beside her and her arms around her... The proximity of the lithe body against her own and Diana's tender kisses stirred in her primitive instincts long dormant...".

While Deramore admitted that parts of the book were explicit (but not, he added carefully, autobiographical), he denied that it was vulgar - "At least, I hope it's not." Asked why he had written such a novel at his age, he replied: "I'm old, so there's not a lot else I can do."

Richard Arthur de Yarburgh-Bateson was born on April 9 1911, the younger son of the 4th Lord Deramore. The barony was created in 1885 for Sir Thomas Bateson, 2nd Bt, who had been MP for Londonderry, then Devizes, and had served for a few years as a junior minister in the Treasury.

Arthur was brought up at the family home, Heslington Hall, in Yorkshire, and educated at Harrow and St John's College, Cambridge. Graduating during the Depression, he went on to study for a diploma at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, then went into private practice as a chartered architect in London and Buckinghamshire and later Yorkshire.

During the war he served as a pilot in the RAF, flying a Martin B-26 Marauder in a bomber squadron carrying out low-level reconnaissance missions over the Mediterranean.

Returning to his architectural practice after the war, he also developed a wide range of other interests, taking a correspondence course in short story-writing from the London School of Journalism and a watercolour course in Suffolk. He succeeded to the Deramore titles on the death of his elder brother, the 5th Lord Deramore, in 1964.

His early literary endeavours met with little success. "I did have a nice letter from the editor of *Annabel*," he recalled in 1975, "and I've got a story called *Why I Never Married with Men Only* at the moment." He had had one article published in the *Country Gentleman's Association* magazine "called *Back to the Bog (Wheel)* - about bicycles". His confidence received a tremendous boost the same year when he won a *Daily Telegraph* Mystery Story competition (prize: £300 and a trip to the Canary Islands for two). His first success, after 46 rejections, was a short story called *A Touch of Bird Lime*.

A mystery based on the eternal love triangle mixed with a dash of espionage, it featured a heady mixture of sex and class: "Afterwards as they lay together, Peter caressed her slender flank and murmured 'you're like a lovely sinuous kitten.' Sheila ran her fingers through his black hair and ached with love for him. 'Your dinner party was a tremendous success,' he said...".

Deramore designed and built himself a house, a comfortable rather than stately pile, at Aislaby, near Pickering, to replace Heslington Hall, which had been sold with its estate in the early 1960s; the hall is now part of York University.

When the Labour government under Tony Blair "reformed" the House of Lords, Deramore lost his seat, but he continued to contribute to public debate, urging the Tories to move in a Eurosceptic direction through the columns of the national newspapers.

Lord Deramore married, in 1948, Janet Ware, who survives him with their daughter.