WHOSE HERITAGE?
RESEARCH RESIDENCY PROGRAMME

A Culture& programme offering residencies to new diverse arts professionals at leading arts and heritage organisations.

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Edward Onslow (1758-1829)
Morgan Beale
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‘Unless the younger generation has access to...cultural repertoires and can understand and practice them, to some extent at least, from the inside, they will lack the resources – the cultural capital – of their own 'heritage', as a base from which to engage other traditions.’

PREFACE: WHOSE HERITAGE?

THE OPEN CALL

Sandra Shakespeare

Whose Heritage? Residencies were undertaken by New Museum School graduates at the following National Trust sites: Sutton House, 575 Wandsworth Road in London, Runnymede & Ankwerwyke and Clandon Park in Surrey. Online organisations Art UK and the Collections Trust and Milton’s Cottage Museum in Buckinghamshire. Researchers brought diverse perspectives to specific areas of research at each organisation. Each researcher was mentored by curatorial, research, or interpretation staff in their quest to reveal new narratives behind objects and sites to connect meaningfully with diverse audiences - those communities who might not feel the collections or sites are ‘for them’.

INTERSECTIONALITY DECOLONISATION ACTIVISM

Residencies allowed researchers creative opportunities for the interrogation language and terminology, traditionally used when classifying or describing objects. The reports capture this tension with contemporary forms of decolonisation practice to challenge accepted institutional practice. For example: Sutton House’s intangible history linked to ‘squatter activism’ explored local communities and new insights conveyed through archives, protest banners and posters through a digital zine. This e-zine also speaks to Gen Z, the accessibility and consumption of heritage through online digital media expressed through non-conformist DIY art forms

At Art UK the research addressed Bi-visibility: the importance of bisexual+ representation in UK art collections. At 575 Wandsworth Road research and re-interpretation of the times and life of the owner Khadambi Asalache will help enhance and understand how BAME visitors experience topophilia at this site. The Whose Heritage? Residencies:

- Revealed new narratives behind objects, collections, sites, and monuments in ways that connect meaningfully with diverse audiences
- Brought new research and interpretation to heritage assets
- Illustrated the value of a diverse workforce
- Supported the careers of graduates through an outcome driven residency with leading heritage organisations
- Shared knowledge with the wider sector with work and outcomes on a new online platform this provides the context for the broader debate of diversity issues across the arts and heritage sector.
MORGAN BEALE

National Trust: Clandon Park, Surrey

Morgan is an artist-researcher and facilitator working across museums, education, arts and campaigns. Their work focuses on co-curation, skill sharing, and accessibility/universal design, with a view to inspire long-term deep engagement with communities. As a researcher, they prioritise making the process collaborative where possible and communicating results to a variety of different audiences. They have so far specialised in queer heritage, media representation, and multisensory storytelling. Morgan also enjoys a diverse artist-maker practice, including costume and props, photography, and audio design.
EDWARD ONSLOW (1758–1829)

Research project by Morgan Beale for the National Trust, Clandon Park as part of the Whose Heritage? residencies in partnership with Culture&.

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Introduction

Edward Onslow (b. 9 April 1758, d. 18 October 1829) was the son of George Onslow, 1st Earl of Onslow, and Henrietta. The younger son of his father, Edward was therefore not directly in line to the title, so is a lesser known figure in the Onslow family history. He is most notable for a ‘homosexual’ scandal involving another man at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1781, which led to his exile to France. (Male homosexuality had been punishable by death in England since 1533.) This story has been the focus of an article in the National Trust’s book, Prejudice and Pride, which centres stories and people from their properties that may now be referred to as LGBTQ+. However, this is not accessible online in full, and Edward’s story is not yet, at the time of writing this, on the Clandon Park website.

Note on language

In this research, I am going to use “homosexual” to refer to the incident that triggered Edward’s exile in 1781, as it is specifically referencing behaviour between two people of the same gender. This is, of course, not how it is described in contemporary sources which use obscure language to describe what happened. I am also steering away from identity labels, such as gay or queer, so as not to prescribe a modern identity onto a historical figure.

Literature review

This research is based primarily on two secondary sources, The Onslow Family 1528-1874 With Some Account Of Their Times by C. E. Vulliamy (1953) and George Onslow by Baudime Jam (2003).

The former is a family history of the Onslows, written with permission of William Onslow, the 6th Earl of Onslow. Vulliamy therefore had access to the Onslow family archive, then held at the ancestral seat, Clandon Park. The archive is now stored at Surrey History Centre, but with limited access. Therefore, this research relies on the material referenced in Vulliamy’s account, which, in regards to Edward, is largely focused on the 1781 scandal and exile, and a little of his family life with his brother Tom. The primary sources mentioned are letters between family and friends mentioning Edward and some extracts of family diaries by the elder brother.

The second source, the 2003 biography of George Onslow (Edward Onslow’s son) by Baudime Jam, provides a wealth of information on Edward’s life in France. Baudime Jam is a music historian so the book does focus on George, but the first part is a detailed background to his parents, in particular Edward. Having accessed the French archives at Puy-de-Dôme (Les archives départementales du Puy-de-Dôme), Jam references dozens of primary letters and other source material, including many of them in full in his book. Puy-de-Dôme is a department in the Auvergne region of central France; its prefecture (seat of administration) is in Clermont-Ferrand, the town that Edward made his home when exiled from England. While there are some online sources from les archives départementales du Puy-de-Dôme, many referenced by Jam have not been digitised for remote access. Neither have these been translated into English, so any mistakes in translation are my own. The letters I have referenced are pulled from the above secondary sources, and available in full (or as much as was extracted) here.
Collection objects

These are the few National Trust collection objects relating to Edward.

John FitzWilliam, 8th Viscount FitzWilliam (1752–1830) playing chess with The Hon. Edward Onslow (right) with George Augustus Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke (1759-1827) and an unidentified Indian servant looking on.

(Pastel on paper, circa 1775. NT 1441467. Destroyed in the Clandon Park fire, 2015.)

Portraits by Anna Rajecka, Mme Gault de Saint-Germain (Warsaw c. 1760 – Paris 1832).

Edward Onslow & Marie-Rosalie Bourdeilles, The Hon Mrs Edward Onslow.

(Pastel on paper in gilt wood frames. 1800. NT 1441474 & NT 1441476.)
1. Family and early life

Edward Onslow was born on 9 April 1758, the son of George Onslow, 1st Earl of Onslow (b. 13 September 1731, d. 17 May 1814) and Henrietta, daughter of Sir John Shelley of Michelgrove. He was the younger brother of Thomas Onslow, 2nd Earl of Onslow (b. 15 March 1754, d. 22 February 1827). Three other siblings, two brothers and a sister, died young. (Vulliamy, 1953)

The Onslows have been associated with their ancestral home, Clandon Park, since 1641 when Sir Arthur Onslow began living there. The National Trust describes Clandon Park as “a typical example of English Palladianism” (National Trust, 2021), built in the 1720s by Venetian architect Giacomo Leoni, commissioned by Thomas, 2nd Lord Onslow. The house interiors were largely destroyed in a fire in 2015. In addition to Clandon Park, the Onslows bought a London home in Curzon Street, in 1761 (Vulliamy, 1953, p.134).

The Palladian south front of Clandon Park before the fire.
(Image by: National Trust/Anthony Parkinson)

Edward’s father, George Onslow, was admitted to the Middle Temple, one of the four Inns of Court, in 1739 (Sturgess, 1949, p. 326). By the time Edward was born, his father had become a Member of Parliament, having been elected for Rye in 1754. Through Edward’s childhood, George then represented Surrey from 1761 to 1774. Vulliamy describes his political stance as “a straightforward Whig in the Onslow tradition - that is, a Revolution Whig of the older school” (p. 134). He served in Parliament alongside his father, Arthur “the Great Speaker” (National Trust, 2021), until the latter’s retirement in 1761.

The sons Thomas and Edward lived with their father at Clandon Park into their adulthood (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 174). In a 1774 letter to their father, John Butler, Bishop of Oxford and friend of George, described Tom and Edward as “the two grave gentlemen, your sons”, which Vulliamy claims to be intentionally facetious as “Nothing, except the shock of actual calamity, could make little Tom serious for a moment” (Vulliamy, 1953, p.211–2). Tom was known to write “rhyming letters”, using the name “great Garbage” to refer to his younger brother in a letter to their father (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 177).

“At Clandon, up to 1781 (when Edward Onslow had to leave precipitately) the family lived in harmony, and it seems clear that George Onslow, however unscrupulous in pursuing his personal ambition, was at least a tolerable father.”

(Vulliamy, 1953, p. 176)
Edward was educated at Westminster from 1766, followed by matriculating at Christ Church, Oxford University in 1774 (Namier & Brooke, 1985) but he took no degree (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 222).

2. Member of Parliament and life in London

According to the memoirs of James Stephen, brother-in-law of the abolitionist William Wilberforce, Edward Onslow “was a man generally esteemed and regarded, both in public and private life; the more so because his manners and conduct formed a contrast with those of his father and elder brother, who were deservedly disliked and despised” (Bevington, 1954, p. 343).

As an Onslow, he was well-connected in London society, and became a member of the Royal Society on 27 January 1780. He then signed the bond agreeing to the Fellowship subscription of 53 shillings in 4 instalments, which begins “I, The Hon: Edward Onslow, do grant and agree...”. It was sealed and delivered in the presence of John Robertson, with an embossed stamp for five shillings.

That the sons of George would become Members of Parliament “was of course a thing taken for granted, it was the Onslow tradition” (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 211). The next in line, Tom, was elected to Parliament for the first time in 1775 (at the age of 21) in his father’s former seat of Rye. He would continue to represent Rye until 1784, then serving for Guildford until his retirement in 1806. As for Edward, his father had originally arranged for him to stand in Arundel at the 1780 general election, but heard from secretary of the treasury John Robinson that it “would not do without money”. (Robinson, 1780) Later that year, at the age of 22, he was elected as the Member for Aldeburgh in the November by-election, having been returned by his mother’s cousin, the Duke of Newcastle (Namier & Brooke, 1985).

In contrast to the prolonged parliamentary careers of his family, Edward would ultimately serve for less than a year.

3. 1781 Scandal

The scandal that changed the course of Edward Onslow’s life took place at Somerset House, during the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1781. In the family biography, this is included succinctly: “In 1780, at the age of 22, he was elected, or returned, for the borough of Aldeburgh. In 1781 he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds, left the country and settled at Clermont-Ferrand in Auvergne” (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 222).

The Exhibition opened at noon on Monday 30 April 1781, and was widely reported and reviewed in the London newspapers, with notes on the artworks on display and the gentlemen and women who had been seen attending. “We should pronounce this Exhibition as valuable, perhaps more so, than in any preceding Year”, the Public Advertiser announced. Edward attended on Wednesday 2 May with “the Miss Keppels” (Morning Herald, 4 May 1781). The following morning, several newspapers reported the first rumours of an incident occurring between “a Gentleman” and an Irishman, Mr Phelim Macartey [McCarthy].

“An affair of the most indecent nature occurred yesterday at the Royal Academy Exhibition; a certain young man, the son of a Peer, was detected in the attempt of an infamous familiarity with a Gentleman, whose indignation was so roused that the honourable aggressor was obliged to run out of the house, with the execrations of the whole company.”
However, it was on the next day, 4 May, that two newspapers (The Morning Herald and London Courant) published lengthy reports into the incident and the following meeting between Onslow and Macartey at Salopia Coffee House.

The Herald writes that Onslow approached and talked to Macartey at the Exhibition, then

"took some indecent liberties with him". Shocked by this, Macartey talked to some friends who advised that he stay in the middle of the room where they could watch Onslow’s behaviour. When the advance occurred again, Macartey objected loudly and struck Onslow: “Mr. M. then called him a scoundrel for his infamous behaviour, and struck at him; but Mr. O. taking to his heels, ran down stairs with great precipitation” (Morning Herald, 4 May 1781).

A meeting was arranged at Salopia Coffee House “at the request of Lord Malden, to give Mr. O---- an opportunity of justifying himself”. They were joined by Mr. Justice Wright and Mr. Bond, and “Mr. M---- then demanded of the Justice to take his information against Mr. O----w, for the assault, which Mr. Wright after hearing the different testimonies, thought proper to refuse, deeming it a frivolous accusation”. The dispute was escalating almost to the point of a formal challenge or duel, but a friend of Macartey “warmly solicited him to the contrary, representing on his own idea, that a wretch like this could not stand on a footing of equality with him, without degrading his character; and besides, that a quarrel of this kind was not a proper subject for honorary discussion.” (London Courant)

Macartey then left the Coffee House briefly to consult a lawyer on whether there was enough to his accusation to prosecute, “being told that whether the fact would amount to the legal definition of an unnatural attempt or not, which the publicity of the place rendered rather dubious, it was clearly a public indecency, and as such indictable”. While he was absent, the London Courant reported that Onslow had gathered “in addition to the former group, the Hon. Gentleman himself, his Right Hon. father, his brother, and many other gentlemen.”

“The information was taken to the effect contained in the preceding part of this account, but previously all the gentlemen who came as witnesses with the informant, were ordered to leave the room, and he [Macartey] was left with only one friend amidst a crowd of the honourable gentleman’s, who used every unfair and illiberal art to embarrass and inflame him while he was giving his evidence. The noble Lords already mentioned, the father and friend of the prisoner, claiming a privilege as Magistrates to interrupt, threaten, and asperse at pleasure, while their brother Justices, for three were present, all called by the noble Lord, held nobility in too great reverence to interrupt them.” (London Courant, 4 May 1781)

The Justice refused to commit Onslow, saying to Lord Onslow, Edward’s father, “I have made up my mind upon the case, my Lord, and these will be for you to consult Council upon.” Lord Onslow is described raving “like a Bedlamite, calling to prosecutor and his friends conspirators, villains, in league against the life of his son, with a thousand other opprobrious names.” The London Courant writes that Macartey “who so nobly defended the cause of human nature” was dismissed by Onslow and the magistrates “with torrents of abuse in lieu
of that justice he came to solicit”. The article ends with a hint of the consequences of the accusation on someone of such a high social standing.

“We desist at present from giving names for obvious reasons, but that of the Gentleman here alluded to, is one truly respectable, and he is much to be commiserated for being drawn into any connection with so scandalous an affair. He professes his astonishment and disapprobation when the Magistrate appeared, and gave evident marks of disgust at all subsequent proceedings.”

(London Courant, 4 May 1781)

The consequences did not appear immediately however, as the day after the incident at the Exhibition, Edward was back at his seat in the House of Commons, “surrounded by several friends (among whom was [Prime Minister] Lord North) who seemed enquiring of him the nature of the extraordinary charge alleged against him.” (Morning Herald, 4 May 1781)

Alongside the press coverage, there were private correspondences about the scandal, from friends of the Onslows, and others. Published in the Pembroke Papers (1950) is a letter between Lord Pembroke and his son, Lord Herbert. (The family connection to the Pembrokes was via Edward’s mother, the Shelleys (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 223).

“In the name of wonder, My dear George, what is this Mindening story of our cousin Ned Onslow, & Phelim Macarty Esq? The latter must, of course, by his name be a deflourer of Virgins; & I should hope that no kinsman of ours donne dans le sexe masculin. Pray let me know seriously about it by the return of the post… Adieu, my dear George, pray be as quick and as particular as you can about Ned Onslow & Phelim Macarty.” (6 May 1781)

In another private letter, from George Selwyn to Lord Carlisle on 4 May 1781, Selwyn writes, “The story which you will see the papers full of concerning Lord Onslow’s second son is an abominable one, very disagreeable to the family. All the part of the world in which I live seem to acquit absolutely the young man, and the circumstances make the story highly improbable, but how it will end the Lord knows.” (Namier & Brooke, 1985) In fact, the case became well-known enough to be a reference point for similar cases. Another letter by Selwyn in May 1781, re-published in Vulliamy’s biography (p. 223), reads: “I have told you perhaps that a nephew of Lord Chedworth’s...got into the same scrape at Epsom as Onslow did at the Exhibition: ceci prouve la force d’une passion qui est hors de la nature [this proves the strength of a passion that is outside nature].”

One week later the press was continuing to report on the case. “The subject seems now rather to be of a popular nature” wrote the Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, and it seems the popular opinion sided with Macartey, as “the unusual pains taken by Lord O. and his friends to intimidate Mr. M. from giving his evidence, and to embarrass him in the delivery of it, have determined many persons to interest themselves in the cause of the accuser, who in all probability would otherwise have been totally silent in the dispute.”

Private speculation continued and Anthony Storer wrote to Lord Carlisle on 7 May 1781:

“As for poor Onslow, it is all over with him, and he had better be dead. He has made his confession to his father, and is gone off. He acknowledged that the passion he felt was beyond all control, and considering the place, the person, and all the circumstances it must have been no less than frenzy by which he was actuated, otherwise it would have been impossible to have believed either the charge or his confession.
Many other stories have been told since this last, all tending to corroborate the probability of the attack, but his confession and his departure have sealed his doom.”

The case had been due before Mr. Erskine at the Court of King’s Bench on Saturday 5 May, but it was deferred. “It is said that Mr. Erskine entered into the above business with great spirit and alacrity, and observed, upon being instructed in the merits of the case, “Well, I will undertake the affair with pleasure, for though the gentleman you describe was my fellow-student, yet if he is not a fellow-man, I disclaim fellowship with him of any kind” (Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser, 7 May 1781). It seems to have been delayed by one week, to Saturday 12 May.

“On Saturday last a motion was made in the Court of the King’s Bench, for information against Mr. Justice Wright, for refusing to receive the complaint of Mr. Macartey against the honourable Mr. Onslow, and stopping the course of justice. Many affidavits were read, verifying the charge, and stating the circumstances of behaviour of the justice, and also containing a paper, which was carried to the printer of a newspaper by the famous Mr. Bond, to be inserted (as from authority) which was a libel on the accusers, having charged them with a conspiracy against Mr. Onslow. Upon these, and other circumstances, the Court granted a rule.”

(London Courant, 28 May 1781)

On 18 May, just three weeks after the incident at the Royal Exhibition, the London Courant reported that the “young gentleman” had already “retired to the continent” by the time of publishing. The 8 June Morning Herald, however, states that Onslow had been held at Dover and was staying with a clergyman, apparently in the hopes of the news of the scandal not spreading to Europe with him.

“The unfortunate son of a nobleman, who had been lately sent to the continent for dishonouring himself and family, was recalled whilst he was at Dover. The cause of this was to prevent, if possible, the evil communication of manners, which some parts of the continent rather confirm that correct: he is therefore, for the present, put under the care of a worthy clergyman, where he has everything to expect from precept an example.” (Morning Herald, 8 June 1781)

Edward had been advised by his father, or his “patron who put him into Parliament” that he must resign from his seat in Parliament, “accept the Chiltern Hundreds, or stand the consequence of a motion for expulsion” (London Courant, 18 May 1781). Not two weeks later, Parliament motioned to hold another by-election in the constituency of Aldborough, after Onslow had officially accepted the Chiltern Hundreds [was expelled from Parliament] (Whitehall Evening Post, 30 May 1781).

Seemingly the final entry on the case in the Burney Collection is from 7 June. The London Courant comments on the impartiality of the Prime Minister: “Nothing can evince Lord North’s impartiality and his extreme freedom of access than by his late very distinguished grant of a place; the gentleman, Mr McCarthy, on whole representation Mr. Edward Onslow obtained the Chiltern Hundreds, being a perfect stranger to the Premier.” The article goes on to speculate on past expulsions from Parliament.
“A list of the several gentlemen who have from time to time been honoured with this place of the Chiltern Hundreds, with several motives and actions also in array, would, if not too nefarious for publication, be a very curious supplementary article to the red book. Sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt male plura. [some things indifferent, and some worse.]” (London Courant, 7 June 1781)

All of this press coverage, which nod to the “popular” nature and gossip surrounding Edward’s case, was a factor, though not the only one, in lowering the reputation of the Onslow family at this time. Family biographer Vulliamy writes that George Onslow, as the 1st Earl, had more to lose and further to fall than his predecessors and “by a retributive irony” coincided with their steady decrease in influence in their home county of Surrey, “partly due to the lowered reputation of the Earl himself, partly to the eccentricity of his eldest son, Tom Onslow, and the exile of his second son, Edward, as the result of a scandal that was not generally known but was probably suspected” (p. 209). According to this family history, it would take until the 4th Earl of Onslow to revive the Onslow name. It is only in the later book *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1754–1790* (Namier & Brooke, 1965), that the authors explicitly state “Onslow was accused of homosexual behaviour”.

4. Exile to France

Edward Onslow’s exile to France in 1781 is a blindspot in Vulliamy’s family history, but Baudime Jam, the French biographer of George Onslow (1784–1853, the son of Edward), researched much of Edward’s arrival and later life in France. All letters and documents referenced are presented in Jam’s biography *George Onslow*, which are kept at les archives départementales du Puy-de-Dôme.

Edward arrived in France hoping to leave the Exhibition scandal behind him, having left his home country, family, friends, and career. However, despite the loss of reputation suffered by his father and wider family, it seems that Edward was well taken care of in his exile. A 1782 letter from Charles-Antoine-Claude de Chazerat, the Intendant of Auvergne at the time, mentioned that George Onslow went ahead, visiting France several times, before settling Edward by November 1781. The same letter reveals that George had been granted permission to settle the family in Clermont-Ferrand, by the diplomat Charles Gravier de Vergennes. The small town is in the central region of Auvergne, which Jam speculates would have made a suitably isolated and picturesque place to rebuild a life away from the scandal in England.

As well as his closest family, Edward was remembered by close friends, such as John Butler, the Bishop of Oxford. He wrote in October 1781 to George Onslow,

“In your next, I beg to hear the best account you can give of Mr. E. O., who I remember was once very anxious for my recovery, and I am bound in common justice to be solicitous for his, – as the warmest friend he ever had” (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 223). Despite warning that France was a “Popish country”, the Bishop encouraged George to settle Edward there, hoping he would be able to leave the scandal behind him, though is unsure whether English society will forget it: “I think he will be so in a Country, where Men are more at liberty to be charitable on one Subject. I protest I am afraid to encourage you to hope for the same temper here...Yet I do not pretend to foresee the power of time” (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 223).

The Onslow family visited Edward in Clermont-Ferrand several times, including when his older brother Tom became engaged in 1782. Vuillamy writes “At the moment of this announcement Tom’s father (and probably his mother also) was visiting his other son, Edward Onslow, at Clermont-Ferrand” (p. 214). The Onsloes in England were at this point still accepted in society. Tom’s new wife, Charlotte, became a Lady in Waiting to Queen Charlotte, and the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) was known to visit Clandon Park to dine. (Vuillamy, 1953, p.215–7)
“His father, indeed, seems to have visited him frequently and for long periods and to have shown, in this unpleasant family disgrace, an affection and attentive solicitude which are greatly to his credit. (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 223)

To maintain the reputation of the Onslows in England, Edward seems to have been advised to stay away but Vulliamy does reference “a few occasional visits” (p. 224), which there is further evidence of in the Puy-de-Dôme archive.

5. Marriage

As he was beginning to establish himself in society in Clermont-Ferrand in early 1782, Edward visited the Convent of the Ursulines at Blesle “where the daughters of the best families of Auvergne lived in boarding school” (Jam, 2003, p. 14). Here he met Marie-Rosalie de Bourdeilles de Couzances of the Brantôme family, daughter of Le Chevalier Jean de Bourdeille, Lord of Coutances. Both Jam and Vulliamy describe “le coup de foudre” [love at first sight] (Jam, 2003, p.14).

However, this was hindered by a reluctance from Marie-Rosalie's father, who objected to his daughter marrying an Englishman, but was quickly resolved: “Seeing this, Edward became Edouard and announced that he had no other intention than to settle in Auvergne” (Jam, 2003, p. 14). Lord Onslow smoothed the deal further by acquiring a mansion for the new couple. Edward’s parents gave him 20,000 pounds - almost £3.5 million today (CPI Inflation Calculator) - to purchase the mansion at rue des Carmes, in parish of Saint-Genès, as well as supplying an “annual pension of 800 pounds sterling [£138,500 today]” (Jam, p. 14).

Edward and Marie-Rosalie were married, for the first time, on 7 March 1783 with Edward's parents present (Vulliamy, p.225). Jam claims that the marriage was a well-balanced match, with the Onslows providing the fortune to a “young girl well born but very poor”, while the Bourdeilles brought the “respectability of their name”. Among their connections in the region were Marie-Rosalie’s brother, Francois-Maurice de Bourdeilles, the dean of the canons of Brioude, and their cousin Louise Espinchal, countess of Laizier, who would later become their eldest son’s godmother (Jam, 2003, p.20).

5.1 Catholic objection to the marriage

With the difference in nationalities put to one side, Edward and Marie-Rosalie then discovered objections on account of their religions - despite already being married. The wedding was blessed by the parish priest, but the Bishop of Clermont, Francois de Bonal, objected to the Catholic-Anglican union and refused to recognise their marriage in Marie’s Catholic church. Therefore there was the risk that they would be considered as living together while unmarried, which could ruin Marie-Rosalie’s reputation. The whole dispute would take around two years to resolve.

A file kept in the Puy-de-Dôme archive (ref. 1 G-1723) documents this topic. In answer to the Bishop’s objection, Edward and the Bourdeilles petitioned the Minister of Foreign Affairs “who granted a Patent which allowed in the name of the King, the celebration of the marriage [March 16, 1783] in the hall of the Ambassador of England and in front of the embassy chaplain”.

However, the Bishop and parish priest at Saint-Genès, Jean Petit, still considered the marriage void and Marie-Rosalie “comme criminelle” ["like a criminal"], and denied her access to sacraments in the Catholic church (Jam, 2003, p.16). Marie-Rosalie hired a solicitor named de Miromesnil. A letter from de Miromesnil to the Bishop of Clermont on 31 July, 1783, reiterates that their marriage is legal:
“The King’s Declaration of 1724, article 17, forbids all King’s subjects to consent or approve that their children or those of whom they will be guardians or curators, marry in a foreign country, without express written permission from His Majesty, signed by one of the State Secretaries. It is by virtue of a permission certificate, in the form prescribed by the Declaration of 1724, that Mlle de Bourdeilles, under the authorization of Count de Siougeac de Brion, her uncle and curator, married M. Onslow, second son of Lord Onslow, Peer of England.” and accuses the clergy of “far from doing the good of Religion, ... [only acting to] remove from it a person”.

The Bishop defends the action of the priest who refused Marie-Rosalie in his reply on 8 August 1783, saying he had no complaints brought against him by the parish. At this impasse, the couple travelled to England to marry again on 15 December 1784, by which time their first son George had been born on 27 July. The archive file states that the family may have stayed in England for three or four months, where “according to public rumor, the marriage was celebrated again, before an Anglican minister” and “blessed in London by the Catholic Bishop of that city”, again attended by the Onslows.

The matter was finally resolved in January 1785 when the Council of Conscience debated the following questions [partial translation]:

1. Can the marriage, celebrated according to the King's Brevet, before the minister chaplain of the Ambassador of England, be regarded as a real marriage, at least in the forum of Consciousness?

2. What would be implications for his honour, the fortune of his wife, and the fate of his child?

3. Will the new marriage, which is claimed to have been celebrated in England, if it is real, be regarded as valid, in such a way as to authorize the confessors to absolve Marie-Rosalie on her return...in front of the own Catholic parish priest?” (Jam, 2003, p. 18).

They returned the resolution that the couple had obtained permission from the king and as the wedding had been blessed by a Catholic priest it was a valid marriage, “proved by the act of celebration that he did not encounter any hindrance” (Jam, 2003, p. 20).

6. Family and Château de Chalendrat

As Baudime Jam puts it, “in just a few years, a scandalous exile had turned into a beautiful love story coupled with successful social integration” (p. 24). Edward and Marie-Rosalie had four sons: George (b. 1784), Maurice (b. 1786), Arthur (b. 1788) and Augustus (b. 1790) (Jam, 2003, p.24).

After the first three children, the family moved into an even larger home. Edward bought the château and land at Chalendrat on 12 May, 1789, for 190,000 pounds - almost 10 times the cost of their first home, and worth almost £30 million today. The château, surrounding orchards, and vineyards were located on the south bank of the Allier, 20km from Clermont-Ferrand. Chalendrat would remain the Onslow home for more than forty years (Jam, 2003, p.14).
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Chalendrat pictured on postcards. (CPArama.com, 2012)
7. Clermont-Ferrand society

During this time, the Onslows were firmly part of Clermont-Ferrand society. Their friends included the aforementioned Charles-Antoine-Claude de Chazerat (1729-1824), the Intendant of Auvergne since 1773 (Jam, 2003, p.21). He used his position to help the Onslows again, in 1785 requesting permission for Edward to be able to return to England, in a letter to the Count de Vergennes. In the subsequent letter to Edward, de Chazerat writes “it will always be with the same eagerness that I [prove] my ability to you...my attachment and respect...I beg you to offer Milady the homage of my deep respect and do not forget me to your son.” He seems to have become friends with the English Onslows, too. Vulliamy writes that in 1787 de Chazerat gifted him “a magnificent folio of engravings at Clandon” (p.228).

De Chazerat hosted balls for the nobility at this mansion in Clermont-Ferrand (Dousse, 1944, p.65), which the Onslows almost certainly would have attended. Edward and Marie-Rosalie also spent evenings at the theatre in Clermont, as a letter from 1788 describes:

“I glanced over the galleries...we [saw] some beauties...Madame Onslow, for example, would be noticed all over the country. A very rich Englishman married her for her pretty face...All the officers fluttered around her.”

(Letter from Miette Tailhand-Romme to her cousin Chabory, Gimaux, June 29, 1788).

Another of their friends was Georges Couthon, a lawyer (and later revolutionary), who Edward met through joining the Freemasons. Clermont-Ferrand had three masonic lodges at the time, detailed in Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire’s book The Freemasons of Clermont-Ferrand (1991). He writes that Edward was first a member of a hunting society called Compagnie des Chevaliers du Noble Jeu de l’Arc, at some point before 1785. This society merged with the Saint-Maurice lodge on 1 May, 1785, so Edward became introduced to that company. Edward was officially ‘initiated’ on 14 January, 1789 (Baurepaire, p.66) before the lodge was closed in 1792 amidst the Revolution.

“Whether they are temporary or permanent immigrants, the Clermont lodges offered to all a reception structure which mitigated the harshness of their ‘exile’, and facilitated their acclimatisation in local society. It was also the opportunity offered to forge links and useful friendships.” (Beaurepaire, 1991, p.3)
8. During the French Revolution

8.1. 1790-1794: House arrest and imprisonment

The stability of Edward's life in France ended as the Revolution began in 1789-90. Clearly aware of how the political situation was worsening, Edward became a French citizen on 20 February, 1790, accompanied by Couthon and others from the Noble Jeu de l’Arc society, as registered in the volumes of municipal decisions of Clermont. The Onslow biographer Vulliamy writes that Edward was arrested by Couthon in 1789 (p.225), but this differs from the account in Jam’s research, in which it appears that Edward spent at least the first few years of the Revolution in relative peace at Chalendrat (p.30).

King Louis XVI was executed on 21 January, 1793 and the Extraordinary Criminal Court was formed on 10 March. This accelerated the unrest - hundreds of people were imprisoned, churches vandalised, and the calendar replaced with the republican names of fruits, vegetables and flowers. It was the same in Clermont-Ferrand as in Paris, where house inspections and arrests were common and the famine caused looting. Saint statues were destroyed and crosses replaced with the French flag. The church where Edward had married and his sons baptised was converted into a grain warehouse. In November the same year, Couthon ordered that a guillotine be built - “there was no execution of great lords, but many peasants and priests were condemned to death” (Jam, 2003, p. 31).

It was the decree “article 4” on 10 October, 1793 that affected Edward directly: “All English, Scottish, Irish Hanoverians, of both sexes and generally all the subjects of the King of Great Britain, who are presently within the scope of the Republic, will be this moment of the receipt of this decree, placed under house arrest”. One week later, on 18 October, Edward was arrested and his home and papers searched. The minutes of his arrest (held at the archives at Puy-de-Dôme) read:

“[We were] led into the apartment where his papers were locked up. Monsieur Onslow introduced us to a small cabinet...we saw that it contained papers which appeared to be relative to the correspondence of Sieur Onslow; as the examination would have taken too long, we [were given the key]. We also had the seal affixed to a small
cassette that we saw on a small office table which was in the said cabinet, which had no key. Having asked Sieur Onslow if he had papers in other apartments, he told us no. Madame Onslow being here, we asked her for her wallet; she showed it to us on the spot and after having done an examination of the papers contained therein, we found nothing suspect, and handed her the wallet.”

Following the search, Edward was arrested and taken to the Convent of the Ursulines - where he had first met Marie-Rosalie a decade earlier - which had been requisitioned for use as a prison (Jam, 2003, p.32). Here, Edward pulled on his connections and wrote to Couthon asking clemency. Couthon’s response was unforgiving though [brief translation]:

“You told me, brothers and friends, of an exception for an Englishman philanthropist who lives within our walls. This exception cannot happen. The last decree is too formal. It is distressing, no doubt, [but] you know what responsibility would entail an act contrary to the general view of the law.”

(Letter from Georges Couthon to Edward Onslow, 24 October, 1793).

When this failed, Edward wrote a “plea to the citizens” (Jam, 2003, p.33) via a letter to the Supervisory Committee of Clermont-Ferrand [partial translation]:

”[Having lived] in this town for twelve years...[it is my] duty to claim your favour and sensitivity. He does not come to ask you to grant him his freedom, but only to convert his prison by putting him under arrest at home. Though the law confiscates his property and reduces it to not having a piece of bread to feed his unhappy family, he would patiently endure this misfortune. [...] How would he not be touched by the situation of his companion who is overwhelmed...that her separation from her husband is increasing every day?

His position is unlike that of any other inmate, and yet who better than he has fulfilled the duties of a citizen? He is today what he has always been, [and did not look for] the approval of men, and did not need their popularity. He sought to do good for the sole pleasure of doing it and of being useful to the unfortunate.

Deign therefore, Citizens, to follow the movements of your heart, and remember that softness is not incompatible with the law...because he had the misfortune of being born in a country that he abdicated from twelve years ago.

He is French in fact and in intention; his wife and children are; he swore to live and die under French laws since he accepted your Constitution... So let yourself be touched and grant him what he asks of you.”

(Letter from Edward Onslow to Supervisory Committee, 13 November, 1793)

This could have worked seeing as the Supervisory Committee described Edward as “gentle, philanthropic, very charitable, and a popular character, never having shown uncivil opinions. He is of English origin, but he is naturalised in France, having married a Frenchwoman [and] having not left France since the Revolution” (Mège, 1877, p.319). Whether it influenced Couthon or not, he did grant Edward’s wish. In a letter from 22 November, 1793 addressed to the district administrator, he writes: “According to the information taken from the petitioner’s account, the representatives of the people, and the Supervisory Committee, Edward Onslow will be arrested at his home, in the custody of a man whom he will pay and who will be appointed by the Supervisory Committee. The seals affixed to Onslow will be lifted in the presence of two members of the Committee before the transfer which will only take place if he does not did not have any suspicious papers.” Edward’s letters were searched without
finding anything that indicated him a counter-revolutionary, so after four weeks of imprisonment, he was returned to Chalendrat. He was escorted by two guards and was banned from “any communication with any person under pain of incurring the rigor of the law” (Minutes of his house arrest, 22 November, 1793).

After five months of house arrest however, Edward then attempted to press for more freedoms. He presented a medical certificate and wrote to the Supervisory Committee again on 28 April, 1794: “The bad state of my health, the violent headaches, and the lack of exercise causes a very plump body, accustomed to a habitual and very considerable exercise...force me to address myself to your justice [to gain permission to go out and walk around].” Again, his wish was granted and on 1 May he was allowed to take exercise in the town of Clermont, accompanied by one of his guards. His next requests were that his wine at Chalendrat be sold at Clermont, and that the servants be given a day in the chateau to clean and repair furniture (17 June, 1794). By December, he asked that his confiscated weapons be returned to him. With these all accepted, the Supervisory Committee eventually dismissed the guards at Chalendrat as well by the end of 1794 (Jam, 2003, p.35).

8.2. 1795–97: Period of calm

By 1795, some calm had gradually returned. In Paris, the revolutionaries Robespierre, Couthon and others were arrested and guillotined, which was well-received in Clermont-Ferrand (Jam, 2003, p.36). For Edward and his family, this meant a return to relative mundanity, managing the Chalendrat estate and the education of the children.

In a 1796 letter to a teacher from Auxerre (quoted by H. Luguet in A Study on G. Onslow, 1889, p.59), he describes in detail his four sons [partial translation]:

“The oldest of my children, (who are all four boys) is eleven years old and half; he is extraordinarily gentle and docile. He reads and writes perfectly and loves reading a lot. He knows geography and mythology fairly well. The beginnings of history are not unknown to him, but this branch of education is still above his intelligence. He has not yet started Latin, [due to difficulty] finding a person able to instruct him in that language. I hope you will fix the time lost in this regard, and that in three or four years you will teach him Latin as well. He knows how to speak and even write English well, but only knowing grammar imperfectly, he did not learn it on principle. I only speak to him in English. He draws quite well; but the talent in which he excels is music. He is a good musician...fortepiano [is] a talent that I want him to keep. I believe that these talents are as useful as they are pleasant.

My second son is nine and a half years old; long and severe illnesses have [slowed his education]. He doesn’t read well, and he’s just starting to write. His mother takes care of it. [He is] excessively gentle, and shows the greatest desire to learn. He does not speak English, but he can hear what is said to him fairly well. The third is almost eight years old, and has only just begun to read and write. He, as well as the last, of five and a half years, is very gentle. They are still too young to go into details about them. It may be necessary to say a few words about the important article of religion. [My children] will be brought up in their mother’s. I have always [thought of] a good Catholic and a good Protestant as the same religion. It is very indifferent to me...Provided they are just and beneficent (it should not be more to be a Christian), and sworn enemies of the new so-called philosophy, the gates of Paradise will be opened to them.”
Edward paid for the teacher’s travel to Chalendrat and a salary of 800 pounds (almost £100,000 today), despite the family money having declined during the years of house arrest.

8.3. 1797: Bois-de-Cros affair

The Revolution was not over however and the tension between royalists and republicans continued. In Clermont-Ferrand, an incident known as the ‘Bois-de-Cros affair’ took place in spring 1797 and involved Edward Onslow (Jam, 2003, p.39).

It began as annual elections were set to take place, with both sides, royalist and republican, represented. There were “royal feasts” of 200 or 300, where people cast their ballots, and Edward was caught up in apparent bribery. “We saw Milord Onslow, son of a peer of England, lead in bands of farmers, pay their share and then provoke citizens...at the same time, other farmers [who held] vouchers for drink, signed by the same Onslow, enter the different inns in the municipality, eat and drink there, and then pay with the vouchers which, during the holding of the assemblies, circulated like cash”, a report quoted by Jam (p.40). (Edward would later defend himself by saying providing local people with food and drink was common tradition in English elections.)

The results of the election of the ‘Municipal Administration’ returned a majority of Royalists in Clermont – out of the 216 existing members, only 13 were re-elected, and 250 monarchists entered the assemblies (p.42). In contrast however, in the majority of other communes in the region, Republicans were in the majority. Jam writes that the apparent “hijacking of the rural electorate” (p.41) stirred the tension between the two factions. On 9 April, 1797, Royalists gathered in the town with weapons, and “threats, insults, violence - everything was used to intimidate the Republicans and make them drop out of the game.” These following details are from the denunciation of the events of Bois-de-Cros to the Directory, 1797 (MS 635), as quoted by Jam.

From the majority in Clermont, the Royalists wanted to take back other communes, aiming to start with Riom, the closest municipality. By 25 April, several banquets, including a 500-person dinner, were organised for Royalists “under chairmanship of Onslow”. Therefore, gradually, Edward Onslow became an “emblematic figure of the Clermont royalists: perhaps his role somewhat exaggerated by the whistleblowers” (Jam, 2003, p.45). Following the Royalist dinner at Riom, the group travelled to the castle at Faubourg des Gras, where the Jacobins [Republicans] of Bois-de-Cros met. Marc de Vissac’s book The Criminal Court of Puy-de-Dome (1897) states: “The patriots flocked under the arbors and in the ancient rooms of the castle...freely discussing destinies of the Republic and singing mountain choruses...the Club du Bois-de-Cros therefore constituted monarchy, an insult, a threat, a nightmare that needed at all costs to free oneself” (p.345). The Royalists ambushed the Jacobins, who ran for cover and some were seriously injured. The injured were delivered to the court as “conspirators”, and Tixier, the director of the jury, ordered them into custody (Balme & Tezenas, 1961, p.158).

This first attack spurred the Republicans to plan revenge attacks. A list of targets was drawn up including Tixier, and Edward Onslow. On 9 July, the second ‘affair’ occurred. Inspectors were sent from the Municipal Administration to Bois-de-Cros, where they found the workers peaceful. This was badly received by the crowd who wanted to revolt again. “This time, the royalists let out their anger: they invaded the hall of the board and accused the directors of collusion” (Jam, 2003, p.45). As an official and two guards tried to quell the crowd, they were attacked with a hail of stones. The guards were injured and retaliated by shooting one of the people in the crowd, causing chaos.
The crowd then marched to Bois-de-Cros. Republicans fled, hiding in cupboards and wheat fields. The denunciation reads “They are all joined, hunted down, flushed out and put to death...the attackers shoot the runaways regardless of age or gender...A little girl is shot; a woman has her thigh torn off by a bullet, another has her arm broken with a blow of the butt; the men are strangled with the belt or slaughtered at the cries of sabers”. The castle was ransacked under the pretence of tracking down Jacobin terrorists. Four people died in the attack and many injured.

The Royalist Administration caused more anger by charging the Republicans for not dispersing when ordered, viewing them as the culprits, not the victims in the attack. 13 people were arrested in the following days.

However, the tide was about to turn as in France more widely, there were rumours that the results of the elections - which had put Clermont Royalists in power - were to be invalidated. This did happen, and the March–April elections of 1797 were effectively annulled in 49 departments, including in Puy-de-Dôme (Jam, 2003, p.46). In a short 48 hours, the 13 prisoners were acquitted. The Republican laws, including those against emigres, returned and there was a purge of elected officials known for being Royalists.

As the situation had reversed so quickly and completely, Edward Onslow had good reason to fear another arrest.

8.4. 1797: Second arrest

The director of the jury Tixier was quickly replaced by Republican Guillaume Pellet and 124 arrest warrants were approved in Clermont-Ferrand, including for Edward Onslow. However, it was delayed by investigations into the Bois-de-Cros affair (Jam, 2003, p.48). Their suspicions were roused by a large group seen travelling to Chalendrat.

“Citizen, the enemies of the government renew their homicidal plots; he paved for us that a gathering of about thirty men on horses, one of which was on foot, took place on the last 29 Brumaire at Chalendrat near Mirefleurs. [We invite you to] follow step by step the various maneuvers of the [royalist] Englishman, whose goal is to renew the disastrous scenes...”

(Letter to the Municipal Administration, 19 November, 1797)

The results of the administration several days later, however, “did not reveal anything new... [one inhabitant] informed him that “the individual who was on foot and who passed in the boat was the music teacher of the Onslow children”. The rumours were acknowledged: “Having continued my research in this town of Mirefleurs, I saw that Chalendrat caused a lot of fear and even terror to the small number of republicans who are in this commune...based on the continual comings and goings” (Letter to the Municipal Administration, 28 November, 1797).

Despite little findings beside rumour, a detailed report was then sent to the Minister of Police on December 3:

“Citizen Minister, on the 29th of Brumaire [19 November] last, a citizen of this department informed us that he had seen about 30 men on horseback reach the Allier river to return to the place of Chalendrat, belonging to Onslow, a native Englishman. This citizen has acquired the certainty that this house often receives armed individuals unknown to the canton. We would like to point out to you, Citizen Minister, that Onslow has long seemed animated with uncivil feelings, and that public opinion points it out in these countries as one of the main agents of the Clichy faction
[a royalist party, popular in the provinces]; we reproach him (and we believe that this is not unfounded), to have spilled [money] during the last elections, to have provided in the hostels of this common part of the great expenses that were made there to treat several hundred workers or farmers, of whom, by this means, the royalists won the votes...The presence of this restless man worries the Republicans; we consider him indeed extremely dangerous by the connections which he maintains, and the maneuvers that he never stops working in the opposite direction to the Constitution. It would be desirable that the government took against a party such that it was no longer able to harm us. " (Letter from 3 December, 1797)

On 14 December, the ministry authorised prosecution as soon as possible:

“Gather in the deepest silence the clues and the proofs; make sure that the individuals seen in armed troops and on horses went to Chalendrat...and when you have gathered this mass of clues against the Englishman Onslow, form an official denunciation [and] arrest warrant that the justice of the peace must issue against Onslow...The police officer will examine the papers found with the accused or on his person; he will examine likewise with the greatest care the passports of all individuals that will be there. He will arrest all those who are not in good standing, or who, by examining the accused’s papers, would be designated as his accomplices. " (Letter from 14 December, 1797)

Finally, on 22 December, 1797, Edward was arrested and imprisoned for just one night in Clermont. He was released on 23 December for “lack of a leader” (Jam, 2003, p.50), which only increased the resentment towards him. On 25 December, the commissioner of the canton of Martres-de-Veyre sent to Municipal Administration: "Citizen friend, what is the evil genius that hovers over France for having procured the release of the infamous Onslow. This villain is back home since Saturday [23 December]”. (Letter from 25 December, 1797). This meant that Edward could spend Christmas with his family and the group of visitors who had caused such a stir by travelling to Chalendrat.

8.5 1798-1801: Second exile

Eventually the growing power of the Republicans and the hatred of the English forced Edward into exile for a second time. He left Clermont-Ferrand for Lyon before arriving in Paris in September 1798, where he was ordered to leave France within four weeks. He was accompanied by a favourite servant called Claude Charazin and his eldest son, George. According to a letter from Marie-Rosalie Onslow to the Administration of Puy-de-Dôme (22 February, 1799), they first stopped in Rotterdam from 23 September to 10 December, then in Hamburg from 27 December, 1798.

Edward recounted the circumstances of his exile in a letter to his friend Madame d’Alagnac, written in Hamburg in 1799 and cited in A Study of G. Onslow by H. Luguet (1889). Edward describes leaving, the impact on his wife, and argues that he would have nothing to gain by being a Royalist [partial translation]:

"With the exception of my eight-month prison and the sequestration of my property in the time of the Terror, I enjoyed so much peace and satisfaction that can be enjoyed in a country as unhappy as France, and with the different sources of grief and affliction that I have had more or less since I reached the age of reason. I have therefore vegetated in a bearable way until a little before the 18th fructidor of the year 1797, and I even enjoyed a kind of consideration on the part of those who usurped the name of patriots and who had until then always left me alone despite the enormous distance that they knew between their principles and mine. Our department
was even distinguished by its moderation, and there was no bloodshed. By the time I am telling you about, everything has changed; we have put in place bloodthirsty and atrocious people, and moderation has been replaced by a frightful Jacobinism!

...a victim since of the fame that my Riom affair had given me, and there is no disgusting fable or slander that they have vomited against me as agent of Pitt, royalist reactionary, conspirator, having paid for the elections which were broken in Fructidor...All these atrocities and insults that I received made me take leave to Lyon to see if opinion would change and if I would receive justice. My journey was a new source of slander, and being able to enjoy no peace, I decided to leave my family and to take refuge in Paris. My hopes for tranquility were still deceived, and the rage of my enemies pursued me to the capital, where they reported me twice to the police as dangerous conspirator...

...my whistleblowers...decided to denounce me to the Directory, who, on the report of the Minister of Police, served me in the month of September to leave after a month in France, and three days in Paris...[My wife], as soon as she could get out of bed, against the advice of all his friends, ...she came there alone, without a maid, coughing up blood and in a terrible state. [I] spent these fifteen days that I was allowed to stay in France...to present petitions to change my order to surveillance of the Municipality of Clermont where I offered to return and live among my denouncers, my enemies and my judges; all [my] steps were useless, and I was forced to go and leave her almost dying in Paris, where she remained a month without leaving her room, with a nurse and doctor...My wife, back in her home province, and knowing me and George calm, found herself in better health after a month.

[The accusations were] atrocious and disgusting lies of six or seven individuals distinguished at all times by their immorality. An Englishman who has been living in France for seventeen years, having his wife, his children and his property (therefore having everything to lose and nothing to gain by conspiring against the State), cannot be a foreign agent and a royalist reactor, unless in a state of absolute dementia.

The sole source and cause of all widespread atrocious slander against me, is my pronounced hatred against all the tyrants under some colours that they show themselves, against the disorganisers and the anarchists, and those who profess to be friends of Robespierre."

During his second exile, Edward made arrangements for George to continue studying piano, and sent him to London to learn with the masters Nicolas-Joseph Hüllmandel (1751-1823), Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812), and Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858) (Jam, 2003, p.60).

8.6 1801-1803: Return to house arrest in Clermont-Ferrand

Almost two years later, the French Revolution officially ended on 9 November, 1799 with the formation of the Consulate, led by Napoleon. 8 months later, a letter from Minister of Police Joseph Fouché to the Prefect of Puy-de-Dôme on 24 July, 1800, read: "I warn you that I have allowed Edward Onslow, born English and domiciled in France for twenty years, to return to his home. I authorise you to receive him and place it under the mayor’s supervision until further notice."

They were able to return to Clermont-Ferrand and Chalendrat. However, another two years passed before finally, on 31 January, 1803, the prefect of Puy-de-Dôme informed the mayor of Clermont that surveillance of Edward was lifted indefinitely, by which point he was 45 years old, and George 18 (Jam, 2003, p.61).
9. Later life, descendants and death

Edward lived in Clermont-Ferrand the rest of his life. Following the Revolution, their finances were affected, and Edward still relied on his father for support. He wrote to George Onslow on 15 August, 1808: “I beseech you not to fail to have put into the funds the first rents that Mr. Boughton will receive for me...P.S. For God’s sake let every means be taken to raise some of my farms, and to engage Kirby not to oppose the raising of all the other farms except his - The additional yearly expense occasioned by George’s marriage (which my love and my principles cou’d not let me miss) will distress me terribly, and keep me in a constant state of alarm and suffering” (Clandon MSS, Vulliamy, 1953, p.227).

After the unrest of the previous decade, Edward was able to travel again to England. He was certainly in London in November 1815, when he was initiated into the Freemasons lodge of Bolton Street (Hogg, 2012, p.86). The English Onslows likely began to visit him in France again as well. Vulliamy writes of Arthur, son of Tom, “One would like to know whether, in the course of his travels, Arthur George visited his uncle Edward and his family at Clermont-Ferrand. It seems probable that he did so” (p.245).

As for his own sons, George became a popular pianist and composer. He married Delphine de Fontanges, the daughter of a rich landowner, in 1808. Edward writes of her: “Delphine is in every respect all I cou’d wish her to be, and has had an exceedingly good education” (Vulliamy, 1953, p. 227). The younger three sons all joined the army - Maurice as an infantry officer; Arthur as captain in the royal guard; and Augustus as a cuirassier officer. Arthur and Augustus also had some moderate success as painters (Jam, p.38). Maurice(1786-1834) married Magdeleine Claire Bec du Treuil on December 7, 1814, in Blesle. Arthur (1788-1876) married an Englishwoman, Emilia Charlotte Wetherell, and travelled extensively, including for a post in Buenos Aires as chancellor of the French consulate. Augustus (1790-1859) married Marie-Alix Desaix in 1819.

Edward died aged 71 on 18 October, 1829. He is buried at the Carmelite Cemetery, which is the oldest active cemetery in Clermont-Ferrand.

Of his more distant descendants, Vulliamy writes “later members, instead of crossing the Channel to England, crossed the ocean to Canada” (p.225).
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4. Exile to France


5. Marriage


5.1 Catholic objection to the marriage


6. Family and Château de Chalendrat

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8.1. 1790-1794: House arrest and imprisonment


8.2. 1795-97: Period of calm


8.3. 1797: Bois-de-Cros affair


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8.4. 1797: Second arrest


8.5 1798-1803: Second exile


8.6 1801-1803: Return to house arrest in Clermont-Ferrand


9. Later life, descendants, and death
