

# The Dukes of Marlborough



## ARMS

Quarterly: 1st and 4th, sable, a lion rampant, argent, on a canton of the second a cross gules, Churchill; 2nd and 3rd, quarterly, argent and gules, on a bend sable, between two frettes or, three escallops of the first, Spencer; over all (as an honourable augmentation), in the centre chief point, on an escutcheon argent, the cross of St George surmounted by another escutcheon azure, charged with three fleurs-de-lis, two and one or.

## CREST

1st, a lion couchant and guardant argent, supporting a banner gules, charged with a dexter hand couped argent, Churchill; 2nd, out of a ducal coronet or, a griffin's head, gorged with a collar gemelle gules, between two wings expanded, argent, Spencer.

## SUPPORTERS

Two wyverns, wings elevated, gules.

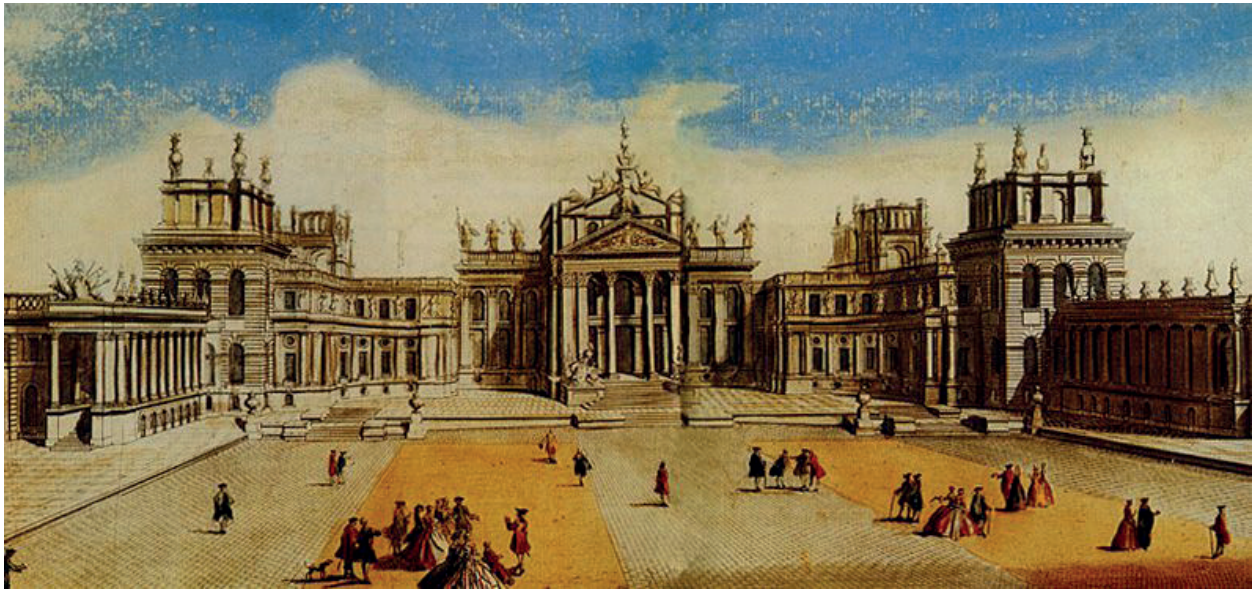
## MOTTO

Faithful, though unfortunate.



Debrett's Featured Family - July 2024

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18th century engraving of The Great Court and North Front of Blenheim Palace

## The Manor of Woodstock

The first Duke was a gifted General who led the British army to many victories, particularly at Blenheim in 1704. As a gift of reward, in 1705 an Act of Parliament was passed which granted the Royal manor of Woodstock to him, along with an order to build a 'splendid palace'. The palace which was built was named Blenheim, after his famous victory.

The manor of Woodstock had been a Royal residence since Henry I built a hunting lodge and enclosed a large park there, where he kept a range of animals including lions. It remained a favourite location for the Royal family and Henry II built a palace there.

Various Royal events have occurred at Woodstock including the birth of Edward, The Black Prince, the imprisonment of the future Elizabeth I, and the signing of the Treaty of Woodstock between Henry III and Llewelyn ap Gruffudd 'The Last' in 1247. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, James I and his wife moved there to avoid the outbreak of plague in London.

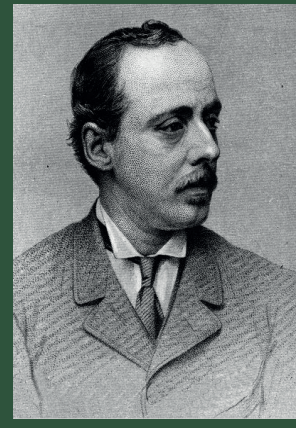
Woodstock Palace was largely destroyed during the Civil War. The ruins of the palace remained until the building of Blenheim Palace, which includes stones from the old palace. By 1723, the ruins of the old palace had been completely removed. Today, Blenheim Palace is considered as one of the UK's greatest houses and in 1987 it was awarded World Heritage Site status.



Charles, 9th Duke  
of Marlborough



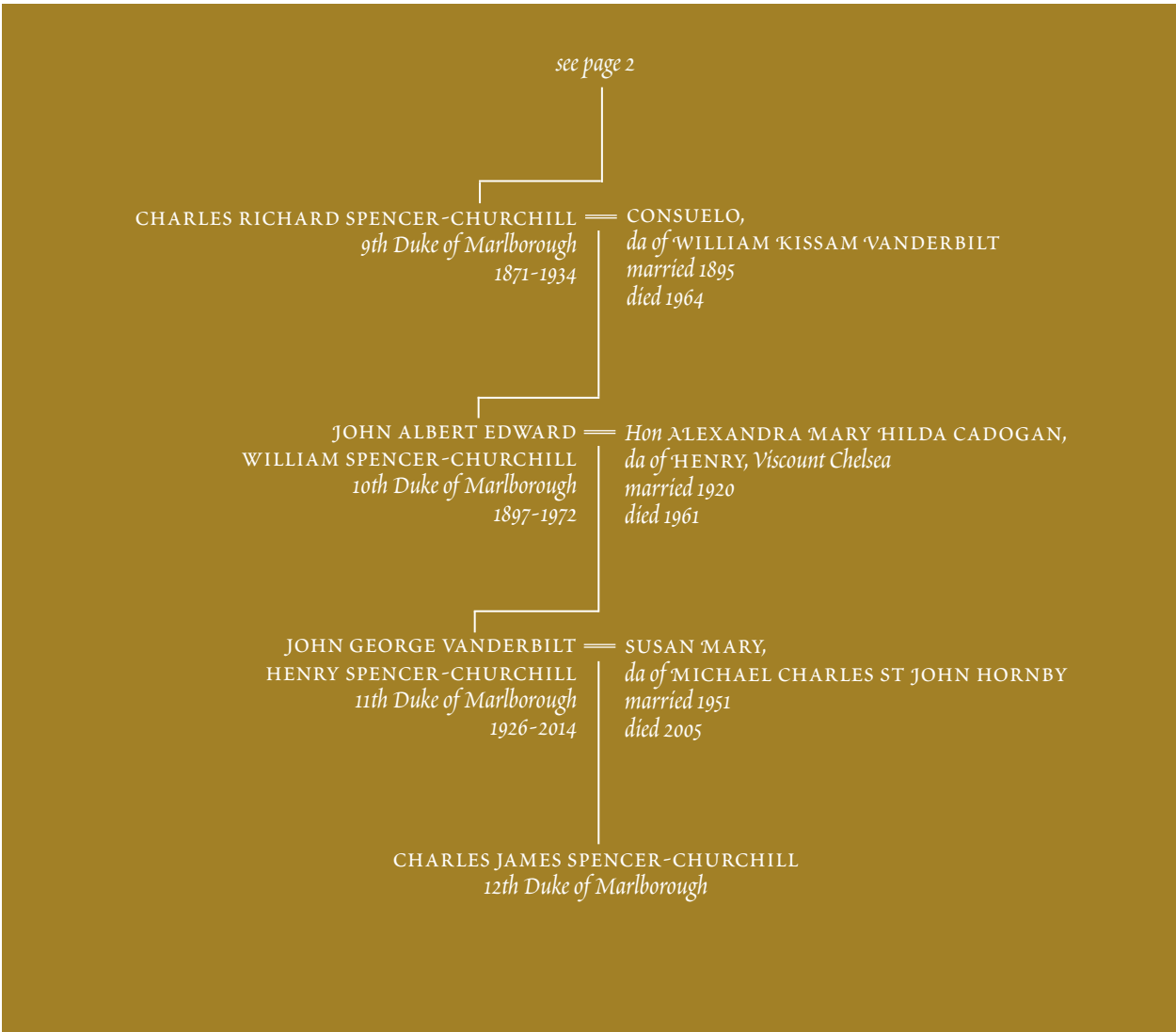
The 4th Duke of Marlborough & Family  
Joshua Reynolds - Blenheim Palace Collection



George, 8th Duke  
of Marlborough







## The Titles



John,  
1st Duke of Marlborough  
(1650-1722)

John Churchill, the first Duke, was granted several peerages during his lifetime with the rare remainder that they should be allowed to pass down not only to his male heirs but also to his daughters' male heirs. As he died without surviving male issue, his eldest daughter, Anne, became the second holder of the titles in 1722.

The Duke was first awarded the Lordship of Churchill, of Eyemouth, county Berwick (a Scottish peerage) in 1682; this was the only title not covered by the remainder and it therefore fell extinct in 1722.

In 1685, he received the barony of Churchill, of Sandridge, county Hertford; in 1689, the earldom of Marlborough. Then in 1702, he was raised to the highest rank of the peerage when he was given the dukedom of Marlborough; at the same time he was created Marquess of Blandford.

The Duke was also created a Prince of the Holy Roman Empire in 1704 and Prince of Mindelheim in Swabia (in 1705).

## Some Family Connections

Throughout history, the Marlboroughs have married into various titled and landed families. One of the most famous brides was the American heiress, Consuelo Vanderbilt, who married the 9th Duke in 1895. She was the only daughter of William Kissam Vanderbilt, a New York businessman, and the heir to the Vanderbilt fortune. Consuelo was opposed to the marriage, especially as she was already engaged (secretly) to Winthrop Rutherford; in the end, her mother's demands that she marry the Duke were successful, but it was not a happy union.

Lady Anne Churchill, the daughter of the 1st Duke and mother of the 3rd Duke, married Charles, 3rd Earl of Sunderland. Her elder sister, Henrietta (who had married the 3rd Earl of Godolphin in 1681), had succeeded to the dukedom upon the death of their father, but died without surviving male issue and so the title fell to Anne's son, Charles, who became the 3rd Duke in 1733.

The Earls of Galloway provided two Marlborough brides. The first was Lady Susan Stewart, who married the 5th Duke in 1791 at her father's house in London. She was the mother of the 6th Duke who married his cousin, Lady Jane Stewart, in 1819.

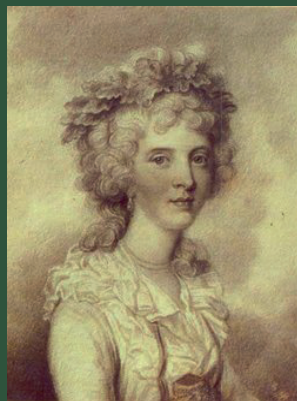
Lady Albertha Hamilton, who married the 8th Duke, was the daughter of the 1st Duke of Abercorn, who was created Viceroy of Ireland in 1866. Albertha bore her husband four children, only one of whom had issue (the 9th Duke); shortly after her husband succeeded to the title, the couple divorced and she reverted, by choice, to her previous style of Albertha, Marchioness of Blandford.

The wife of the 4th Duke was Lady Caroline Russell, daughter of the 4th Duke of Bedford, who was First Lord of the Admiralty (1744-48), Lord Privy Seal (1761-63) and who also served as British Ambassador to France in 1762.

Lady Frances Vane, who married the 7th Duke, had 11 children in total, including Randolph Churchill, the father of Sir Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Duchess was created a Lady of the Royal Order of Victoria and Albert, in recognition of her charitable work. She was also a popular hostess, transforming Blenheim Palace into the 'social and political focus for the life of the nation'.



Consuelo Vanderbilt  
ca 1910  
Duchess of Marlborough



Lady Susan Stewart  
Duchess of Marlborough



Lady Frances Anne Emily Vane,  
ca 1850  
Duchess of Marlborough