

THE DUKE OF HAZZARDS

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Body

Prince Andrew is lampooned as a useless freeloader with dubious friends and a taste for brassy redheads. But he's winning business for Britain in Kazakhstan and he's big in Japan. Perhaps the Pounds 500,000 a year it costs to keep him in the air is money well spent, says Melissa Dunn. The Duke of York has always enjoyed the company of slightly raffish friends, but the recent travails of his old mucker Jeffrey Epstein are scandalous even by his standards.

Epstein is a self-made property developer and asset manager for billionaires who lives in Manhattan's largest private house, a nine-storey pile on the Upper East Side, on 71st Street, just off Fifth Avenue. As well as the Gulfstream jet, the helicopter, the Boeing 727 (on which he once flew President Clinton and Kevin Spacey) and the yacht, he has houses dotted all over the world, including Zorro, a 7,500-acre ranch in Mexico said to be worth \$18 million; a 70-acre island in the US Virgin Islands, Little St James; and a \$6.8 million house in Palm Beach. In these houses he entertains both international high society and the rather more demimonde, and his social life is run by Ghislaine Maxwell, the 46-year-old daughter of the disgraced newspaper proprietor Robert Maxwell. The couple dated for years in the Nineties and stayed close.

Prince Andrew has been to stay with Epstein; sailed on Epstein's yacht off Thailand, surrounded by topless girls including Jenny Frost of Atomic Kitten.

In return, Epstein was invited to the Queen's birthday party in 2000 at Windsor Castle and has spent a weekend at Sandringham. Friends of Epstein recall being introduced to a man they were asked to call 'Andrew' but whom they recognised as the Duke of York at Epstein's house off Fifth Avenue. Epstein also introduced Prince Andrew to the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, who successfully appealed Claus von Bulow's conviction for the attempted murder of his wife, the American heiress Sunny von Bulow. Prince Andrew was later seen sitting at the back of one of Dershowitz's lectures.

It is the sleazier end of Epstein's social life that has led to him standing trial next month for soliciting prostitution. He is also being investigated by the FBI for sexual misconduct with underage girls, after a complaint by a Florida woman. This investigation started nearly three years ago after the woman claimed Epstein paid her 14-year-old stepdaughter Pounds 150 to give him an 'erotic massage'. Epstein, 54 and unmarried, is accused of procuring 'massages, possibly naked, and allow[ing] some touching' from underage girls. Another old friend of Epstein's is fellow entrepreneur Donald Trump, who once said: 'He likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side.' However grand and imposing Epstein's Upper East Side house may be (he tells guests it

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has 'the largest Persian rug you'll ever see in a private home'), the Florida house has a different air. According to the Florida police, the stairs to Epstein's bedroom were lined with photographs of naked girls, two cameras were found hidden in clocks, and photographs of Epstein and some witnesses in the case were found on his computer. One 16-year-old girl complained that Epstein had tried to force her to have sex with him, but let her go when she screamed; he then paid her Pounds 500, according to a statement in the police records, which states 'he gave her a 2005 Dodge Neon, blue in colour, for her personal use'.

Whatever the truth of Epstein's situation, it is very different from the home life of our Queen, with its round of Balmoral, Sandringham, Windsor and Buckingham Palace.

Courtiers were apparently concerned about Prince Andrew's friendship with Epstein from the start, and this latest development must be horrifying.

But then Prince Andrew's friends, like his love life, are a bit of an enigma.

He's not like Prince Charles, who has his series of traditional toff pals.

Until 2001, Prince Andrew was an officer in the Royal Navy (rising to the rank of Commander), which meant the greater part of his life took place behind the secure doors of various ships and mess rooms. It's only in the past few years that he has come into the floodlight of public scrutiny. Since then, there have been sightings on various multimillionaires' yachts. He's a friend of Johan Eliasch, the Belgravia-based Swedish sports entrepreneur and manufacturer of Head tennis rackets.

He was recently seen on Eliasch's yacht in Thailand.

Through Eliasch and his Brazilian girlfriend Ana Paula Junqueira, Prince Andrew has met some of the staples of the international party scene: Hon Lucas White (son of the late entrepreneur Lord White) and his wife Normandie Keith, the ultimate Nineties Knightsbridge blonde, after whom a mansion block just round the corner from Harrods has been named. Robert Hanson is also part of this crowd. Other friends include the model Lisa B, married to the property developer Anton Bilton. Catrina Skepper, the former Pretty Polly model, is an exgirlfriend and still a good friend.

Another ex-girlfriend, Australian onetime PR girl Emma Gibbs, was, a friend said, 'Absolutely fabulous but with a mouth like a fishwife. A sort of Australian Fergie.' As one former palace servant says, 'Prince WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER: PRETTY GIRLS, YACHTS AND THE RICH MEN WHO PROVIDE THEM, OR A WET WALK ON A BORING ESTATE IN SCOTLAND?' Andrew's friends do tend to be a bit naff. They are completely different to Prince Charles's.' While Charles divides his time between the Duke of Westminster, Nicholas Soames, the Van Cutsems and Charlie Palmer-Tomkinson, father of Tara, Prince Andrew is more likely to be surrounded by girls who make a living by looking glossy. Prince Charles is a friend of Emma Thompson, the Oscarwinning actress; Prince Andrew once turned up at Courtney Love's house in LA in the middle of the night looking, according to rock's notorious drug widow, for a party (although despite the debauched image, the Prince has been teetotal since his twenties).

One friend told a story of Prince Andrew being invited to a dinner given by Ivan Lindsay (the gallery owner and grandson of the Earl of Crawford) and his South American wife Marla. 'The room was full of posh girls, but Caprice was there. She was all over him like a rash, sitting in his lap and calling him Andy. He genuinely seemed to prefer that to hanging out with the toffs.

Perhaps that was why he was so happy in the navy.' 'He gravitates to glamour, money and yachts,' said Hon Nick Monson, co-author of *The Palace Diaries: The True Story of Life Behind the Palace Gates*. 'And who can blame him? Which would you prefer: pretty girls and the rich men who provide them, or a wet walk on a boring estate in Scotland?' Also, in these days of media intrusion and the photographic lens, the very rich can pay for privacy.

Then, of course, unlike most British aristocrats, Prince Andrew didn't go to Eton, so stuffed with grandees that real friendships can be formed before people are old enough to be too aware of the material advantages they bring. He

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wouldn't have met many toffs at Gordonstoun and many of his courtiers don't come out of the top drawer. 'The Old Etonian aristocracy tend to look sideways at, rather than up to, royalty. They,' said Monson, referring to the aristocracy (although as his father is Lord Monson and his family have been landowners since the Reformation, he probably means 'we') 'tend to think that the Royal Family are just one of us.' The Royal Family, however, really do think they are different. 'They are descended from the German aristocracy,' said Monson, 'and there is nothing like a German toff for being a huge snob.'

Apart, apparently, from Prince Andrew. Of course, there have been smart women in Prince Andrew's life but these are exceptions rather than the rule. During his marriage, things were different. According to friends, it was Fergie, who was born into the more brainless end of the upper classes (after all, she met him through Princess Diana, whose friend she was), who introduced him to the toffs. 'She brought him into the posh polo crowd. In those days, he used to socialise with people such as Peter Greenall, now Lord Daresbury; Tom Heywood-Lonsdale; and Susannah Constantine,' said a friend. Susannah later became famous as half of Trinny and Susannah, but she went out with Prince Andrew's cousin, David Linley, for eight years.

With Fergie, the couple also became friends with various celebrities, such as Billy Connolly and his wife Pamela Stephenson, and Sean Connery. It's certainly much more exciting for someone like Prince Andrew, who can meet a duke at breakfast any day of the week, to hang out with Hollywood royalty. When Fergie left, the traditional friends largely drifted away to be replaced by a transient bunch of international types who represent exotic locations and decorative scenery, rather than real friendship. The upside is, the Prince still has a coterie of loyal ex-girlfriends. Aurelia Cecil, the former PR guru, remains a good friend. The Prince is also said to be still close to Koo Stark, the great love whom he felt he could not marry after it turned out she had appeared in a soft porn film, Emily. Other girlfriends include Henrietta Pearce; With ex-wife Sarah Ferguson and daughters Eugenie (left) and Beatrice outside Royal Lodge in Windsor another PR girl, Caroline Stanbury; Denise Martell, a former Page 3 model; and also, confusingly, Ghislaine Maxwell, whom Prince Andrew met when she was dating Jeffrey Epstein.

The Prince is, apparently, currently seeing 37-year-old actress Angie Everhart, who appeared in Bugs, an episode of Law & Order: Special Victims Unit and, once, a film called Bordello of Blood.

Everhart, like Cecil, is a beautiful redhead in the Fergie mould. Yet despite all the ex-girlfriends and there have been over a dozen since he and Fergie split Prince Andrew has never remarried.

Instead, his relationship with his wife seems extremely close according to friends, and also according to poor Princess Beatrice's love-rat ex-boyfriend, Paolo Liuzzo. He split all after his ten-month relationship with the Princess (six years his junior) foundered when it was discovered that Liuzzo had beaten up another student in a fight at university (the student later died). The original charge of manslaughter was commuted to assault and battery, and Liuzzo did community service.

Liuzzo described how Fergie would come over most Sundays for lunch at Royal Lodge, the 17th century house in Windsor Great Park that Prince Andrew inherited from his grandmother, the Queen Mother. Prince Andrew would carve the roast himself (despite the butler, footman and two cooks), sit opposite his wife with his children around him, and chat and joke. 'He hugged Fergie and kissed her on the cheek. They were best friends. I've never seen divorced people who have such a good relationship,' said the gruesome Liuzzo, who also described a room at Royal Lodge that he said Princess Beatrice called 'Mummy's room'. In it Bea showed him a tiara, in a drawer, that she said had been given to her mother when she married.

When Paolo asked if her father's girlfriends of whom Paolo said he met a few over the ten months he and Beatrice were together; he describes a half-Thai model and a Norwegian girl ever slept there, Beatrice was shocked, and said, 'Absolutely not!

They sleep there,' pointing to a long corridor of spare rooms. Paolo said he got the impression that 'Daddy loved Mummy more than Mummy loved Daddy, but Mummy loved her title and Daddy couldn't marry again because she would lose it.

The room was established by Andrew; maybe it was for Andrew,' Paolo said.

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'There were pictures of "Mummy and Daddy" everywhere. I got the impression that in his [Andrew's] mind he and Sarah would one day get back together again.'

This closeness was confirmed by the CNN journalist Richard Quest, who recently spent four days with the Prince on a trip to Kazakhstan in the Prince's role as the UK's special representative for international trade and investment. 'He kept getting text messages. I said, "Do you text, Sir?" And he looked at me as if I were mad and said, "Of course I text. Why wouldn't I? I've had texts this morning, from my daughters and an ex-wife.'" Richard Quest then brought up the question of the Prince's relationship with his former wife. Prince Andrew said, very clearly, 'We agreed there would be joint custody of the children. We are both fully involved in every aspect of the girls' lives.' 'If the Duke and Sarah Ferguson had lived before all this media intrusion,' says Nick Monson, 'they would have had an old-fashioned marriage where both had a bit on the side, but stayed together because they loved and respected one another.' What is true without question, despite a preference for gin palaces over castles and cosy armchairs to frosty aristocratic dames, is that the Prince does do a good job for Britain. Although the tabloids dub him 'Air Miles Andy' because of his constant travelling, his role as Britain's ambassador for trade has brought him an enormous amount of respect; he is unpaid, although the travelling expenses are estimated to cost the taxpayer about Pounds 500,000 a year. (Luckily his mother gives him Pounds 249,000 a year.) 'Even if all he did was fly around the world playing golf with the right people, it's only what most non-executive directors do,' one friend pointed out, but in fact the Prince does a great deal more.

Various Kazakhstan-based British businessmen could hardly praise the Prince enough for the hard work he has put in, in this fantastically oil and gas-rich new Central Asian republic, born out of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Nor, according to Quest, did he bring his golf clubs to Kazakhstan another frequent tabloid criticism is that the Duke's business trips are just excuses for jollies.

Quest, who travelled on Prince Andrew's plane out to Kazakhstan as well as following him around, was full of admiration for not only how hard the Prince worked, but also the value of what he did.

'We followed him from morning to night and we were exhausted at the end of every day. It was breakfast, right the way through to some kind of delegation dinner in the evening,' said Quest, who added that Prince Andrew had inspired him to keep his shoes polished, even in the wilds of Kazakhstan. 'He is a very large, tempting target but when you actually see the access that having him there brings, and the way he attacks the job We flew all over Kazakhstan [a country the size of Western Europe]. Royal presence will get you access you don't get with an ordinary person. He met the President; we saw business leaders, oil fields; we went to a hospital that the British Council had been helping. These are highly targeted trips, designed to promote or lend support to particular aspects of industry or commerce.

Kazakhstan is very important for oil and gas.' Nonetheless, there are stories of Prince Andrew behaving inappropriately with female guests at a British embassy party in Delhi. 'He was all over some of the women. Some of them really didn't like it. It was embarrassing,' one Old Etonian guest said.

'If he'd done that to my wife, I'd have thumped him.' But fundamentally, most people who have seen him in action think he is doing a good job.

Certainly, UK Trade and Investment is very keen on the Duke. 'He has been the UK's special ambassador for trade for about five years, since he left the armed forces,' said a spokesman. 'He adds a lot of value to anything overseas, which in this country is largely ignored, partly because of the complicated relationship between the Royal Family and the media.' According to the Prince's office, he did 234 engagements overseas last year. The UK Trade and Investment spokesman cited a mobile phone conference in Barcelona this spring, where Prince Andrew recorded a podcast.

'He doesn't go anywhere willy-nilly. He's going to Japan for us in a week's time.' Japan may be the golf capital of the world, but it is also full of factories. 'Lots of Japanese aerospace companies have work for UK companies.

It's all high-end stuff, mutually beneficial,' says the spokesman.

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'There are massive opportunities in commercial airlines and defence. The guys from Mitsubishi meet the guys from Airbus. And the Japs love meeting the Royal Family.' Quest, who said he certainly saw no glamorous, scantily clad ladies on the Kazakh trip, thinks that Prince Andrew's character, as well as his royalness, is the key. 'He's not a philosopher like his brother.

But his 20 years in the Royal Navy make him uniquely qualified for the task; he goes in with a mission to accomplish and a strategy as to how it should be done, does it and leaves.

I came away very impressed. The criticisms come from people who are envious.

They can't have his lifestyle, so they think that he shouldn't either.

So what if it costs half a million a year? If you break it down into packets of fags and pints of beer, sure it sounds like a lot, but we are talking about companies that deal in billions.' Prince Andrew, like so many members of the Royal Family, is in a no-win situation. And as Nick Monson points out: 'One thing Prince Andrew has over all the other Royals is that he saw active service in the Falklands. He was there in his helicopter and he did his stuff. For that alone he deserves respect.' In class-ridden Britain, the envy of his birthright is so intense that people want to scotch any happiness or fun he has at all.

The pity of it all is that the desire to escape this should lead him into the dubious world of Epstein and his like.

Graphic

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: ON A VISIT TO THE ROYAL MILITARY SCHOOL LAST YEAR; GOLFING WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON ON MARTHA'S VINEYARD IN 1999; JET-SKIING IN THAILAND RECENTLY, DURING A STAY ON THE YACHT OF SPORTS EQUIPMENT MAGNATE JOHAN ELIASCH; THE SCANDALOUS JEFFREY EPSTEIN AND A YOUNG FRIEND; ON HMS INVINCIBLE IN 1982 WITH EX-WIFE SARAH FERGUSON AND DAUGHTERS EUGENIE (LEFT) AND BEATRICE OUTSIDE ROYAL LODGE IN WINDSOR LADY FRIENDS, FROM LEFT: CURRENT DATE ANGIE EVERHART; AURELIA CECIL; SUSANNAH CONSTANTINE; THE DUCHESS OF YORK THE EX-FACTOR, FROM LEFT: GHISLAINE MAXWELL, WHO DATED THE PRINCE'S DISGRACED TYCOON FRIEND JEFFREY EPSTEIN AS WELL AS THE PRINCE HIMSELF; CAPRICE; CATRINA SKEPPER; AUSTRALIAN PR EMMA GIBBS WITH THE GOVERNOR OF THE CHINESE PROVINCE OF JIANGSU, IN HIS ROLE AS THE UK'S SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT

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