



The Devonshire Collection Archives

GB 2495 DF3

**Papers of William Cavendish,
5th Duke of Devonshire (1748–1811)**

1764 - 1811

Administrative/biographical history:

William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire (1748-1811) was the eldest of the four children of William Cavendish, 4th Duke of Devonshire and his wife, Charlotte Elizabeth Boyle, Baroness Clifford (1731-1754), daughter and heir of Richard Boyle, third earl of Burlington. He was known by the courtesy title Lord Cavendish until his mother's death, when he succeeded her as seventh Baron Clifford; from his father's accession to the Dukedom in 1755 he was known as Marquess of Hartington. On his father's death on 3 October 1764 he became 5th Duke of Devonshire and inherited vast estates in England and Ireland valued at over £36,000 a year. These included the properties of Chatsworth House and Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, Londesborough House and Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire, Lismore Castle in co. Waterford, Chiswick House in Middlesex, and Devonshire House and Burlington House in Piccadilly, London. Further family estates were settled on his brother George, later first earl of Burlington. After the deaths of his parents Devonshire was brought up by his three bachelor uncles – Lords Frederick, George, and John Cavendish – and was presented at court in the spring of 1765. He travelled on the continent in 1767-1768, and his uncles kept him informed of their management of his interest at the 1768 general election.

On 7 June 1774 Devonshire married the seventeen-year-old Lady Georgiana Spencer (1757-1806). Georgiana bore him three children: Georgiana Cavendish (1783–1858), Harriet Cavendish (1785–1862) and William George Spencer Cavendish (1790-1858, later 6th Duke of Devonshire). Before his marriage he had fathered an illegitimate daughter, Charlotte Williams, by a London milliner, Charlotte Spencer (d. 1781).

Devonshire came from one of the wealthiest and most powerful Whig families. However, he possessed no great political ambition. He was Lord High Treasurer of Ireland and governor of Cork from 1766 to 1793, and Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire from 1782 to his death, but three times refused cabinet office. He was appointed a Knight of the Garter on 19 April 1782.

In May 1782 the Devonshires met Lady Elizabeth Foster (1757-1824), daughter of Frederick Hervey, 4th earl of Bristol, bishop of Derry, and estranged wife of John Thomas Foster MP. Together the three formed a *ménage à trois* whose conspicuous interdependence provoked much gossip and speculation. Lady Elizabeth gave birth to two children fathered by the Duke: Caroline St Jules (1785-1852), and Augustus William James Clifford (1788-1877), later a naval officer and a baronet.

Devonshire House remained the focus for the Foxite Whigs through the 1790s. The Duke regarded himself as bound to the Whig tradition by heredity. He was not a natural leader, and those who thought he could succeed Fox as the focus of the whig party when Fox temporarily retired from politics were disappointed.

From middle life the Duke increasingly suffered from bouts of ill health and spent less and less time in London, preferring Chatsworth, Chiswick, or visits to Bath. The death of Georgiana in 1806 shook his life both personally and politically. Lady Elizabeth Foster took over as female head of the household and they married at Chiswick House on 19 October 1809.

Devonshire died at Devonshire House, Piccadilly, London, on 29 July 1811 and was buried at All Saints' Church, Derby. He left an estate estimated at £125,000, but expenditure on the acquisition of land and on property development during his lifetime, including The Crescent at Buxton, Derbyshire, as well as the burden of Georgiana's gambling losses and the other demands of the Devonshires' expensive lifestyle, had burdened the estate with debts calculated at £593,000 in 1814.



DF3: Papers of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire
(1748–1811)

Source: Michael Durban, 'Cavendish, William, fifth duke of Devonshire (1748-1811)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). By permission of Oxford University Press.

Custodial History:

Most of the material in the collection was created or acquired by William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire, and remained within the family; its exact archival history is unknown.

Acquisition:

The material was extant in The Devonshire Collection prior to 1 August 2011.

Scope and content:

This small collection consists of the personal papers of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire. It is largely made up of accounts, which include: account books of the 5th Duke spanning the dates 1764 – 1811, with a gap in the series between 1785 and 1796; a receipt book concerning the Burlington Estate, 1773 – 1791; and a summary accounts volume covering the years 1773 – 1810, which distinguishes the Duke's paternal and maternal from his purchased estates, and lists incumbrances affecting the whole of his estates in the year 1810, along with the net income and expenditure for his Chiswick and Chatsworth properties in the same year. The only other item in the collection (DF3/2/1) is a commission issued by the Duke appointing his nephew, William Cavendish, as Major in the Old Militia of the County of Derby.

The collection does not include any of the 5th Duke's correspondence, which can be found in two other collections at Chatsworth: the 'First Correspondence Series' (GB 2495 CS1) and the 5th Duke's Group (GB 2495 CS5).

System of Arrangement:

The archive has been arranged into two series:

- DF3/1: Accounts of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, 1764 - 1811
- DF3/2: Official Papers of the 5th Duke of Devonshire, 1804

Conditions Governing Access:

The collection is open for consultation. Access to the archive at Chatsworth is by appointment only. For more information please visit: <https://www.chatsworth.org/art-archives/access-the-collection/archives-and-works-of-art/>.

Conditions Governing Reproduction:

Copies of material in the archive can be supplied for private study and personal research purposes only, depending on the condition of the documents.

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Extent: 1 box

Language of material:

English.

Preferred citation:

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(1748–1811)

Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, DF3/1 (etc).

Related Material:

Correspondence of the 5th Duke of Devonshire can be found in two other collections within the Devonshire Archives: the First Correspondence Series (GB 2495 CS1), and the 5th Duke's Group of correspondence (GB 2495 CS5).

DF3: Papers of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire
(1748–1811)

<u>DF3/1</u>	<u>Accounts of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire</u>	<u>1764 - 1811</u>	<u>Section</u>
	<p>This series comprises account books of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire, spanning the dates 1764 - 1811, with a gap in the series between 1785 and 1796. It also includes a receipt book concerning the Burlington Estate, 1773 - 1791, and a summary accounts volume covering the years 1773 - 1810.</p> <p>8 volumes</p>		
DF3/1/1	Account Book of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire	1764 - 1770	Item
	<p>Volume titled: 'Lords George, Frederick and John Cavendish, Guardians to the Duke of Devonshire, their account with Messrs Snow and Denne'.</p> <p>1 volume</p>		
DF3/1/2	Account Book of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire	1770 - 1784	Item
	<p>Volume titled: 'His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, his account with Rob[er]t Snow, W[illia]m Denne and W[illia]m Sandby.'</p> <p>1 item</p>		
DF3/1/3	Receipt Books of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire, concerning the Burlington Estate	1773 - 1791	Item
	<p>Two volumes. Receipts by the Duke of Devonshire's stewards for the Burlington Estate.</p> <p>2 volumes</p>		
DF3/1/4	Account Book of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire	1797 - 1802	Item
	<p>1 volume</p>		
DF3/1/5	Account Book of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire	1803 - 1807	Item
	<p>1 volume</p>		
DF3/1/6	Summary of the Accounts of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire in the years 1773 - 1810	1810	Item
	<p>Accounts and statements showing: the income of the Duke of Devonshire in the years 1773-1810; distinguishing his paternal and maternal from his purchased estates; the amount of money laid out in estates purchased since the year 1773; the [incumbrances] affecting the whole of his Grace's Estates in the year 1810; the net income and the expenditure in London, at Chiswick, and at Chatsworth in the year 1810; with an appendix showing the purchase invoices paid for the estates not in settlement, and the amount of his Grace's personal estate.</p> <p>1 volume</p>		
DF3/1/7	Account Book of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire	1807 - 1811	Item

DF3: Papers of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire
(1748–1811)

Includes entries which post-date the 5th Duke of Devonshire's death.

1 volume

DF3/1/8 Ready Reckoner 1804 Item

A handbook of tables. Volume kept alongside the Account Books of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire.

1 volume

DF3/2 **Official Papers of William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire** **1804** **Section**

Comprises a Commission issued by William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire, appointing his nephew, William Cavendish, as Major in the Old Militia of the County of Derby.

1 item

DF3/2/1 Commission issued by William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire appointing William Cavendish as Major in the Old Militia of the County of Derby 16 May 1804 Item

Commission issued by William Cavendish, 5th Duke of Devonshire in his role as Lord Lieutenant of the County of Derby, appointing his nephew, William Cavendish, as Major in the Old Militia of the County of Derby.

1 item