

# The Chatsworth Estate

## Introduction

Chatsworth is the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and has been home to the Cavendish family since December 1549.

Hundreds of thousands of people visit every year and see Chatsworth's public face; the house and its contents, the garden and its waterworks, the park, the farmyard and adventure playground. There are shops and restaurants, and free access to miles of footpaths in the park and woodland. The Chatsworth estate itself extends much further, covering 14,000 hectares (about 35,000 acres) of Derbyshire and Staffordshire, encompassing farms, woods, moor-land, rivers, villages, quarries and other industries, large and small.

The estate plays an important role in Derbyshire as an employer, a place of recreation and a contributor to good causes. It is estimated that more than a million people use the estate in some way every year and several thousand depend on it for all or part of their annual income. Between 1949 and 2005, Chatsworth welcomed more than 19 million paying visitors.

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## Chatsworth and the visitor

Fundamental to the way Chatsworth is managed is the effort to make all visitors to the Estate feel truly welcome. Where possible people are left to wander at their own pace, unlimited by restrictive rules or unfriendly notices. Welcoming so many people to walk and play on land that is also a working, commercial farm and a historic landscape needing protection is not a conflict, but rather a virtuous cycle which encourages more people to use, enjoy and understand the land, its history and current management.

The primary aim of the owners is to maintain and improve the Estate for future generations. Everything you see at Chatsworth has come about through careful management over hundreds of years and the work of generations of skilled staff. The stewardship of the land and its businesses must ensure that its long standing communities will continue to prosper. The Estate must run as a modern, self-supporting business, keeping the best of the past but using modern techniques and technology where necessary.

The economic activity of the Estate is carried out within a policy that insists on the protection of its flora and fauna, and the very special landscape that has evolved over many centuries. We ask visitors to respect this unique and historic working landscape and to leave it as they found it.

In 2001 Chatsworth extended the season by seven weeks into November and December to recover from the effects of foot and mouth. Unprecedented numbers of visitors came to see the specially decorated house and floodlit garden, and annual Christmas opening has since become one of the busiest times of the season.

Each year the Duke and Duchess invite many different charities to hold concerts, fashion shows, coffee mornings and other events in the house, garden, restaurant and park. Estate staff play a large part in the planning and organisation of large scale public events in the park, such as the International Horse Trials, the Rally Show, open air concerts and the Country Fair, all of which attract many thousands of visitors. Some of the money raised by these events contributes to the maintenance of the house, garden and park, and large sums are given to local and national charities.

## The Chatsworth House Trust

In 1981 the house, its essential contents, the garden, park (including the farmyard) and some woodland were leased by the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees for 99 years to a charitable foundation, the Chatsworth House Trust. This Trust was formed to protect Chatsworth from future capital taxation, and thus ensure its long term preservation for the benefit of the public. An endowment fund was provided by the 11th Duke, and the income from this goes towards the running costs of the house. The upkeep is now the responsibility of a Council of Management, which has a majority of non-family members. The 12th Duke and Duchess remain involved in all aspects of the management and future development of the estate.

All admission money from visitors to the house, garden, farmyard and car park supports the work of the Chatsworth House Trust. This includes the renewal and restoration of the fabric of the House, Stables, garden buildings and waterworks, the cleaning of painted ceilings and walls and major conservation of furniture.

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## Managing the Estate

The Chatsworth estate is run by a Land Agent, who is answerable directly to the Duke and his Trustees, and administered from an Estate Office, on the edge of the park near the village of Edensor. This 18th century building was originally a hotel for visitors to Chatsworth, which has always been open to the public.

The five main areas of the Estate:-

**The Main Estate** comprises the house itself and 4982 hectares surrounding it including the park and the villages of Baslow, Pilsley, Edensor, Beeley and Calton Lees. Most Chatsworth employees and pensioners live in these villages, which are wholly or part owned by the Trustees.

**The West Estate** comprises 2630 hectares and includes land and houses in Bakewell, Ashford, Wetton, Monyash and Buxton. Most of this high ground is made up of stock rearing farms.

**The Shottle Estate** comprises 1424 hectares and includes farms and buildings in and around Shottle, near Belper. This land is suited to both stock and arable enterprises. The majority of Chatsworth's dairy farmers live here.

**The Staveley Estate**, north east of Chesterfield, comprises 1376 hectares and includes both farmland and industrial sites, including Staveley Chemicals and the Staveley Foundry.

**The Scarcliffe Estate**, east of Chesterfield, comprises 3772 hectares and consists of mostly arable farms, woods and houses in and around Elmton, Whaley, Scarcliffe, Heath, Rowthorne and Palterton. In 1968 the M1 Motorway was constructed in this part of Derbyshire and the land on which Junction 29 now stands was purchased from Chatsworth.

The five main areas of the Estate are divided roughly into two categories: the 'in-hand' estate, which means all the farming and other businesses which are both owned and managed by Chatsworth; and the 'let' estate, which means farming and other enterprises which are on estate land and are rented by tenants.

The 'In-Hand' Estate:

The Trustees farm approximately 2500 of the Estates 14,000 hectares 'in-hand', in two separately managed blocks. Elm Tree farm is a 400 hectare "in-hand" arable farm east of Chesterfield, about 20 miles from Chatsworth. Wheat, barley, potatoes and oilseed rape are grown on this flatter, more fertile land. The grassland surrounding Chatsworth is used for dairy, beef and sheep production. The sheer scale of this land, over five miles from end to end, and the fact that both the moor

and the park are huge open areas used for public recreation as well as for grazing, present particular problems to Chatsworth's farmers.

The 'Let' Estate:

The Let Estate consists of more than 120 tenanted farms, and many other businesses. The landlord and tenant system of land tenure enables people to farm without needing large capital sums to invest in buying land and buildings. The farms range in size from holdings of a few fields to more than 300 hectares. Rents are reviewed every three years, enabling agents to check that the farms are being properly looked after and allowing tenants an opportunity to discuss any changes or problems.

Many other businesses pay rent to operate on Estate land, including the Cavendish Hotel in Baslow, the Caravan Club at Barbrook, the Garden Centre at Calton Lees and the craft workshops in Pilsley and the 144 hectare Stavely Works near Chesterfield. There is also a large number of let private houses.

Until the 19th century there was extensive lead and copper mining on the Estate, and areas of mineral production still form an important part of the Let Estate. They are administered by a Minerals Agent, based in Rowsley and range from limestone quarries, producing more than 300,000 tonnes a year, to small masonry stone quarries, producing marble-like slabs containing fossilised marine creatures. They are let to various mining and construction companies.

## The House

Over the three hundred years since being built in its present style by the 1st Duke of Devonshire, Chatsworth house has been both a private family home and a historic house visited by more than 300,000 people each year. Six flats accommodate people who work in the house.

Beneath Chatsworth's half-hectare of lead roof are over 300 rooms, 3426 feet of passages, 17 staircases and 359 doors. There are 397 external window frames and 62 internal window frames with a grand total of 7873 panes of glass. The house is lit by 5 roof lanterns, 60 roof lights and 2084 light bulbs. Thirty baths, 59 hand basins, 29 sinks, 6 wash-ups and 64 lavatories complete these unusual statistics.

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## Working at Chatsworth

**The Comptroller** is responsible for the administration and maintenance of the house itself. His team organises all aspects of opening the house to the public, including the charitable events that take place in the house and on the Estate. He is responsible for a team of skilled workers with a thorough knowledge of the building and its contents, many of whom have worked together at Chatsworth throughout their working lives. This varied team includes joiners, a mason, electricians, plumbers, painters, seamstresses, security guards, telephonists, drivers and general maintenance staff. They can work on anything from the installation of a thirteen ton sculpture in the garden to the restoration of a gilded bed canopy, and play a vital role as members of the fire and salvage teams.

**The Head Housekeeper** and her team ensure that the house always looks its best for visitors. Every morning throughout the year one third of a mile of red carpet is vacuumed, and over sixty clocks are wound once a week. During the ten weeks of the closed season the housekeeping team thoroughly cleans the rooms on the

visitor route. Every piece of china is cleaned, the floors and furniture receive careful treatment, glass chandeliers are washed, carvings are dusted and leather bindings are treated. Their painstaking work is crucial in maintaining the good condition of all the important items on display.

**The Collections Department** comprises of the Head of Art and Historic Collections, the Curator of Fine Art, the Curator of Decorative Art, two Archivists, the Silver Steward, Photo Librarian, Library Assistant, Collections Secretary and a small team of volunteers. It is responsible for looking after the works of art in the house and the cataloguing and upkeep of all the artefacts and archival material. This includes over 40,000 books, paintings, furniture, Old Masters drawings, prints, tapestries, maps, letters and diaries, painted ceilings, sculptures, gold, silver gilt and silver objects, porcelain, jewellery, taxidermy and other curiosities gathered here over 450 years.

The Head of Art and Historic Collections and the Comptroller supervise large-scale restoration projects undertaken here. Major works completed in recent years include the cleaning of the painted ceilings and painted walls, the restoration of the State Bed, the re-gilding of external window frames, the restoration of the stonework of Flora's Temple, the Cascade House and the Cascade itself, the repair of woodworm damage to lime wood carvings and repair work to the conservative wall.

Artefacts are regularly loaned to exhibitions or sent away for detailed restoration. Between 1979 and 1999, 2,019 objects were lent to 421 exhibitions. Almost three hundred treasures from the collection toured American museums between 2003 and 2005. The collection and archives can also be studied by scholars and students by appointment.

**The Head Seamstress** and her team are responsible for the conservation and restoration of the tapestries, curtains and other fabrics in the house. They work with textiles historians to recreate fabrics from original designs using traditional methods. They also create new work for other family properties, hotels and

organisations such as the National Trust. A team of volunteers assists in the repair of tapestries and old fabrics, and a sewing school is provided for members of the public.

**The Devonshire Educational Trust** is a charity closely linked to the Chatsworth House Trust, providing education about the economic, environmental, social and cultural contributions that landed country estates make to our society. It aims to teach diverse audiences about the Devonshire family's estates at Chatsworth and Bolton Abbey in North Yorkshire, including the art collection, family history, estate management, the activities carried out across the estates and the communities living and working on them.

At Chatsworth this involves working with colleagues in various departments to develop a range of educational resources, including guide books, audio guides, display panels, guided tours and school activities, as well as a programme of events for schools, teachers and families. The DET also works closely with the team of Room Guides and Tour to help visitors learn about the history and art collection in the house, and provides ongoing training and learning opportunities for Estate staff.

Countryside Days for schools are a long standing annual tradition begun by the 11<sup>th</sup> Duke and Duchess, and are now coordinated at the Chatsworth and Bolton Abbey estates by the Devonshire Educational Trust. Over a thousand local primary school children are invited to visit the park free of charge over two days. Each outdoor department puts on a display or an exhibition to demonstrate and explain their work. The children and teachers have an opportunity to ask questions, to see the work for themselves and to try hands-on activities.

**The Garden Department** consists of twenty-two gardeners, employed to look after Chatsworth's 105 acres of lawns, flower beds, greenhouses, hedges, trees, paths and the maze. A trainee gardener is also invited each year to gain experience in all areas of horticulture. Successive generations of the Cavendish Family have added new features to the garden, as well as ensuring the work of previous generations is

preserved. The greenhouses protect rare species and, together with the kitchen garden, provide the house kitchen with fruit and vegetables. The 300 year old water system still feeds the 1st Duke's Cascade, the 6th Duke's Emperor Fountain, the fire hydrants and the turbines, which in turn generate about 25% of the house's electricity. Some of the produce from the garden is sold from a shop in the stable yard throughout the season.

**The Farmyard**, opened in 1973, is designed to be an interesting, educational but non-sentimental way of explaining the lifecycles and ultimate uses of the commercial livestock on the estate and in the British farming industry generally. Since it opened there have been over 3 million visitors to the farmyard and adventure playground, with around 200,000 visitors each season. In 1998 the facilities were improved to include a new adventure playground and provide better access for visitors with disabilities. A dedicated education team provides educational options linked to the curriculum for schools and youth organisations. A purpose built access trailer enables visitors to enjoy and learn about previously inaccessible parts of the Estate.

At Christmas, in addition to traditional crafts and entertainment there are daily nativity plays for school groups or visitors. These are fully costumed, narrated, orchestrated and include real animals in a real stable. They have proved a very successful part of a commitment to promoting a more traditional Christmas. In the winter months most of the animals return to the "in-hand" Chatsworth farm.

**The Domain Department** cares for the 450 hectare park, which is freely accessible and used by more than 750,000 people each year. The park was created for the 4th Duke in the 1760s by Capability Brown to provide a grand and natural-looking setting for the house and garden. It is home to herds of red and fallow deer, as well other livestock. The Domain Department maintains the nine-mile deer fence, walls, footpaths, drains and trees, as well as the conduits and lakes which supply the garden system with rainwater from the moors.

**The Forestry Department** is responsible for the upkeep of the woodland areas which cover approximately a tenth of the Estate, and include an internationally significant collection of ancient oaks. The main blocks of woodland are at Chatsworth and Scarcliffe, with smaller blocks scattered over the entire Estate. The Foresters need to balance the aims of timber production with those of amenity and conservation. The income from timber sales does not meet the expenditure incurred, but the proper maintenance of the woods is an essential element of the Trustees' stewardship of the estate.

**The Game Department** looks after important moorland habitats, maintains the pheasant shoot and controls vermin which damage birds and young trees. The Gamekeepers also help visitors walking on the many miles of "permissive" footpaths.

**The Fisheries Department** takes care of Estate's fishing rights on stretches of the rivers Derwent and Wye. Both stretches are 'in-hand', and members of the fishing club pay an annual subscription for the right to fish during the season. Three water bailiffs patrol the rivers and are responsible for the maintenance of the banks and weirs.

**The Land Agent** is responsible for the overall administration of the Estate and looks after the Let Estate, including farms, houses and commercial tenancies.

**The Survey Department** holds maps and records of all land owned, bought or sold by the Estate, and the Surveyor is responsible for the exact measurements of land, boundaries, drains, rights of way and all other information needed to establish and maintain accurate records.

**The Buildings Contracts Manager** supervises the local firms of contractors who maintain the buildings on the Estate, including more than 450 houses and all the farm buildings.

## Trading at Chatsworth

### House shops

The House Shops include the Orangery Shop in the house, the Chatsworth Interiors and Garden Shop in the stables, and the Farmyard gift shop. They stock a range of gifts, china, food, clothing and books, many of which are associated with the Estate or the history of the family. A percentage of turnover is passed to the Chatsworth House Trust in lieu of rent.

### Farm Shop

The award-winning farm shop was established in 1977 to add value to the farms' produce by selling directly to the consumer. With its on-site butchery and bakery, the Farm Shop focused initially on Chatsworth meat, game, bread and cakes. It has since expanded to sell a wider range of local and national food and wines.

### Catering

The Carriage House Restaurant in the Stables was opened in 1991 and caters for over 30,000 people each month. The Cavendish Rooms, refurbished in 2008 to designs led by the Duchess, include a restaurant, coffee room and two function rooms. Various private and charitable functions take place throughout the season, and in 2008 the Stables became a popular venue for weddings. More outlets in the park, farmyard and garden provide food-to-go. A percentage of turnover is passed to Chatsworth House Trust in lieu of rent.