

# Chatsworth House

These teacher's notes are for use by adults leading education groups through the house. These notes are not exhaustive; room guides will be happy to answer questions or give you extra information. Please bear in mind that displays can change, so some items may not be in the same position.

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## General Information

- Please supervise pupils at all times and remind them that:
    - Anything behind ropes is alarmed, so don't lean too far over!
    - Please do not block doorways, stairs or corridors.
    - Touching objects causes damage and is not permitted.
  - Rucksacks must be left at the Lodge before you enter the house. You can collect them again when you leave. Make sure pupils have everything they need for the house and shop if applicable.
  - Allow at least 1 hour for this tour, longer if you wish to spend time doing anything more in depth.
  - Leave gaps of at least 10 minutes between groups entering the house.
  - There are no toilets in the house – go before you start!
  - The route is linear – you can only move forwards until you reach the end. If you need assistance or wish to leave, please speak to a guide who will be able to advise you.
  - In 2010, for the first time, we are able to offer full access to the main visitor route in the house for visitors using wheelchair. Please tell us your requirements in advance, as the number of wheelchairs in use on the top floor of this historic building has to be monitored, for your safety and enjoyment.
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## Before you enter

The rooms around the entrance are often busy. We recommend that you remind pupils of behaviour expectations and explain any activity they are undertaking before you enter. There is plenty of room along the avenue between the Lodge and entrance.



## A. The Ground Floor

### The Entrance Hall

- This used to be the kitchen, and was altered to become the Entrance Hall during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.
- The pictures either side of the stairs show Bess of Hardwick and her husband William Cavendish. Bess of Hardwick lived at the same time as Elizabeth I. She married four times, getting richer as each husband died, using this money to build the first house at Chatsworth.
- Although the columns look modern, they are in fact part of the eighteenth-century decoration.

### The North Corridor

- This used to be an outdoor colonnade, until it was enclosed in 1841. The marble floor was laid to draw attention away from the lack of symmetry in the doors and windows. It used to be so shiny that people could not walk on it..

### The Painted Hall

- This 'entrance' was designed to impress visitors to the house.
- The wall and ceiling paintings are by Laguerre (1663-1721) and represent the life of Caesar. There are mirrors and a labelled plan of the ceiling to use.
- This room was decorated by the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke. It was intended to send a message to the new monarchs, William and Mary, offering the Duke's support to the Protestant rulers by likening them to the successful Julius Caesar. It also contained a reminder about the consequences of abusing power in depicting Caesar's assassination.
- The staircase has been knocked down and changed three times since the eighteenth-century. This one was designed in 1912.
- In 1936 the ceiling nearly collapsed and had to be saved by a forest of scaffolding and two years of restoration.
- The walls were restored to their original colours in 2005-6.

### The Courtyard

- The walls of the courtyard were cleaned in 2009-10 and the courtyard is open to visitors for the first time in 2010.
- The carvings are military trophies, which depict arrangements of weapons or armour. They were carved by Samuel Watson for the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke over 300 years ago.
- The courtyard was once much more richly decorated, with trophies on all sides of the court, statues in niches, and the columns painted pea-green.

*Go back into the Painted Hall, turn right and walk behind the staircase to the Grotto*

### The Grotto

- This is Chatsworth's 'cupboard under the stairs'. It held up the Great Stairs, and was later used as a space where all the hot and cold water pipes ran to supply the flushing toilets.

### The Chapel Corridor

- The black, seated statues are of the ancient Egyptian goddess Sekhmet. She was goddess of war and strife and these statues would originally have been in an Egyptian temple. Until recently they were displayed in the gardens.
- The giant foot is part of an ancient Greek colossus. The other foot is in a Berlin museum.

*At the end of the Chapel Corridor turn left into the Chapel*

### The Chapel

- The chapel has been in this position since Bess of Hardwick built the house in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, although it has been redecorated since.
- The Duke would have sat in the gallery during services.
- Above the door you came through, next to the gallery is a young boy dressed in white and pointing. The message from the artist to the Duke is that the Duke should be paying attention to the religious service.

### The Oak Room

- The wood panelling and pillars were bought at auction in the 1800s. They were originally part of a German monastery, hence the Catholic religious figures in an otherwise Protestant house.
- The marble sculpture was made by Raffaele Monti (1818-81). The 6<sup>th</sup> Duke bought it in 1846.

*When you leave the Oak Room you will be back in the Chapel Corridor. Turn right and return through the Grotto into the Painted Hall. Go up the Great Stairs in the Painted Hall*

### The Great Stairs Landing

- Eighteenth-century children's prams are under the stairs.
- The modern sculpture is called the 'Carefree Man' and was added to the house by the current Duke in 2001. Throughout the house you will be able to see many modern additions to the collection.

## B. The State Apartment

(Great Chamber, Drawing Room, Music Room, Bedroom and Closet)

This series of rooms was built just over 300 years ago in the hope of receiving a visit from the King and Queen. These State Rooms were meant to be the suite for royal use during a visit to Chatsworth, a space for them to run the government and relax. Unfortunately the King and Queen did not visit.

The King would have primarily used the last room which is the Bedchamber. This meant that the rooms became more important the further along you get. Most visitors would not have got further than the first or second rooms.

The rooms are presented to look as much as possible as they would have appeared in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

### The Great Chamber

- The ceiling was painted by Antonio Verrio in 1691-2. It is called *Return of the Golden Age* and shows vices being destroyed by the virtues. This is another message to King William and Queen Mary, saying that they will return virtue and happiness to the land.
- While painting the ceiling, Verrio fell out with the Housekeeper, a Mrs Hackett. Verrio disliked her so much that he included her in the ceiling painting. She is depicted as one of the Atropos, the Fate who cuts the thread of life. You can find Mrs Hackett wearing green-grey and holding shears.
- This room was a Waiting Room which is why there is very little furniture.
- The 'buffet' at the end was used to feed visitors, but also as a display of wealth and taste. The decoration is based on pictures from the time.
- The huge mirror was placed to create the illusion that there was another suite of rooms in the other direction.

### The State Drawing Room

- This room was a 'withdrawing room' where only select people would be allowed.
- The tapestries were woven in 1635 in London (Mortlake) and are based on Rafael cartoons of the Life of Christ. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century they were cut to fit into these oak frames. This unfortunately means they are stuck on the wall and can't be cleaned or restored. The tapestry behind the door has been protected from sunlight and shows the difference in condition.
- The ceiling painting is by Laguerre (1690) and shows an *Assembly of the Gods*. They are laughing and pointing toward the coving on your right. Here there is an image of Mars and Venus being caught in flagrante by her husband, Vulcan.
- During World War Two, this room was used as a dormitory for Penrhos Girls School which had been commandeered by the government.

### The State Music Room

- Look for the violin – it is hidden behind the half-open door. This is actually a 2D painting and is around 300 years old. This style of painting is called 'trompe l'oeil', meaning 'deceives the eye'.
- The walls are covered in gilded leather, complete with 9 images of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke incorporated into it.

- The large pictures on the right hand wall is *'The Procession of the Dogaressa'* in Venice. The picture below shows a little girl called Magdalena who was artists daughter.
- The two carved and gilded chairs are the coronation thrones of George III and Queen Charlotte.

### The State Bedchamber

- This room was intended for the King, so is the most important.
- It is dark both to protect the items from sun damage, and to show what the room would have been like when it was lit only by candlelight.
- The bed came from a royal palace and is probably the deathbed of George II.
- The bed hangings and curtains are brand new – but recreated so accurately that even the mistakes on the originals have been copied.
- The unusual blue and white porcelain objects are Delft flower vases, a real sign of the wealth and taste of the family.
- The large mirror was made in 1703 at a cost of cost £100. The maker etched his name in the glass.
- The silver object on the floor is an incense burner and is still lit every morning.
- The bedroom has been used by one King – but only in 1933, some time after the rooms were built!

### The State Closet

- Only people who were directly invited by the King or Queen would be allowed in here – it was meant to be the most private room in the suite.
- This room was also called the 'Japan Closet' and was used to display the high status Oriental porcelain.

Though not part of the State Apartment, the China Closet now leads on from the State Closet.

### The China Closet

- The painting near the window shows the house when Penrhos Girls school used Chatsworth during World War Two.
- The wood carving is a demonstration of master craftsmanship. It is reputedly by Grindling Gibbons, the most famous woodcarver of his time. However all the other carving in the house was done by a local man, Samuel Watson.

## C. New displays for 2010

### The South Sketch Gallery

- These objects celebrate the tastes of the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke and Duchess Georgiana.
- Georgiana was a style icon, political campaigner and obsessive gambler who inspired fashions with the art she collected as well as the clothes she wore. She was recently portrayed by Keira Knightley in the film *The Duchess*.

### The West Sketch Gallery

- This display is inspired by the collection of Lord Burlington. His daughter, Lady Charlotte Boyle, married the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke. Their son the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke eventually inherited the collection.
- Lord Burlington was a famous architect. His portrait on the right of the gallery includes a bust of his hero, the English architect Inigo Jones (1573-1652). The bust is also in the gallery.

### The Sabine Room

The Sabine Room is a private room and may be closed occasionally.

- This private room was until recently a family bedroom. The 11<sup>th</sup> Duke slept here when he was a young boy, and the artist Lucian Freud has stayed here.
- Originally it was not a bedroom, but a central room that linked different areas of the house. Notice the hidden doors in each corner.
- The 300 year old murals depict the Rape of the Sabine Women. Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, decided that he and his followers needed wives. They obtained said wives by kidnapping the women of the neighbouring Sabine tribe. The Sabine women took this rather well and after their forced marriages ultimately sided with the Romans against their own tribe. Hersillia, the wife of Romulus, stood up to her father on behalf of her husband. The womens' efforts resulted in peace breaking out. This story was aimed at Queen Mary, who was the daughter of the King of England and had married William of Orange against his wishes. The Duke supported William and was flattering Mary by likening her to a strong character from mythology.

### The North Sketch Gallery

- This gallery was created in 2009-10 out of a series of service rooms.
- The walls are hung with 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century pictures collected by the 11<sup>th</sup> and the present Duke and Duchess. These include a video portrait of the Duke and Duchess's daughter-in-law, Laura Burlington made by Michael Craig-Martin in 2009. Each combination of colours will almost never be repeated.
- The cabinets contain treasures from the vaults.

### The Oak Stairs

- The 6<sup>th</sup> Duke created the Oak Stairs to lead to his new North Wing. His lantern was restored and revealed in 2009-10. It had been covered since the 1920s.
- These walls are hung with portraits of every previous Duke of Devonshire, and some of their family and friends.

## D. The Exhibition

*This exhibition begins and ends on the Oak Stairs. You may choose to miss it out and continue with the main tour. We recommend you allow 1 ½ hours to explore the exhibition in full.*

- Deborah Devonshire, the mother of the present Duke, has led a fascinating life. She has helped create this exhibition to celebrate her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

*Now go back the way you came to the North Sketch Gallery, turn right and go down the stairs. You will come out onto the Oak Stairs again before continuing to the North Wing.*

## E. The North Wing

This area was built as an extension during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The library is part of the original house, but everything from the Dome Room onwards is the 'new bit'.

### The Library

- There are 17,000 books and five libraries at Chatsworth. Some books are over 500 years old.
- The library is still used by the family and researchers.

### The Ante-Library

- The owner of the scientific instruments was Henry Cavendish, grandson of the second Duke. He was the first man to work out the density of the earth.
- The chess set is Indian ivory. The Black pieces are only marked on their base. The King and Queen are represented by Elephants and two of the Bishops ride camels.

### The Dome Room

- There is a portrait of Henry VIII copied from the Holbein. His eyes follow you as you move.
- The bronze statue is of Mercury, the Roman messenger god. He is standing on the breath of Zephyr, the West Wind.

## The Great Dining Room

- This is one of four dining rooms in the house. The others are not open to the public. It was used by the family until 1939.
- This room was redecorated in 1996 – the curtains are copies of originals.
- The first dinner given in this room was for Princess Victoria (later Queen Victoria). She was thirteen and it was her first ever meal with adults. There was a full cooked rehearsal the day before.
- The table is laid for desert.
- The portrait of a family shows Christian Bruce with her children. She was married to the 2nd Earl, who was a big spender and involved in a number of legal disputes. Fortunately for the Estate, if not for him, the 2nd Earl died young and his wife stepped in to save the family fortune.

## The Vestibule

- The balcony above was designed so musicians could play there during dinner without being too noisy for diners.
- The area to the left was where the servants gathered to serve meals after dishes were carried from the kitchen downstairs. You can still see the oven used to reheat food.
- The two bronze busts are by a French sculptor as part of an abolitionist statement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- The statues set into the walls are from India and Burma. The Indian ones are Jain figures, the Burmese one is a Buddha.

## The Sculpture Gallery

**NOTE:** Many statues are nude. Neo-classical sculptors believed the human body and materials to show the highest level of skill.

- This room has recently been returned to its original decoration using descriptions and old photographs.
- Some notable pieces include a bust of Napoleon who is flanked by his mother and sister. This sister was Pauline Borghese and apparently a lover of the 6<sup>th</sup> Duke.
- The tools of the sculptor Canova are set into the wall in a corner. His bust is set high into the far wall on the left. He sculpted a number of pieces in this gallery.
- There are a number of classical figures including Endymion, Achilles, Mars, Venus, Cupid and Hebe.
- The huge lions weigh 3.5 tons each.
- It would have been usual to view the sculpture gallery in candlelight. The flickering would have given an impression of movement, making the pieces seem almost alive.

This is the end of the house tour. After you leave the Sculpture Gallery, you will walk through the Orangery Shop to get to the garden. There are 105 acres of garden to explore, or turn left to go back to the car park.