

WELCOME TO CHATSWORTH HOUSE



Home of the 12th Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, and their ancestors, the Cavendish family, for over 500 years.

Each generation has altered Chatsworth in some way, collecting items and developing the estate. Their lives and belongings tell us about the family's story and as a whole, the collection gives us an insight into over 500 years of history.

You will find modern art and sculpture alongside historical paintings in this much loved home, which is the bustling hub of the Chatsworth Estate.

CHAPEL



This is the least changed room at Chatsworth. The staff and family of the 1st Duke attended daily prayers here, and he employed the best artists to realise his designs.

Antonio Verrio created the oil painting at the centre of the altarpiece. Louis Laguerre, who also painted at Windsor Castle, painted the ceiling. Derbyshire born Samuel Watson, carved the altarpiece.

Damien Hirst's gold sculpture *St Bartholomew, Exquisite Pain* and two contemporary benches by Tom Price, contrast with the historic features. The Duke and Duchess and their family still use the chapel for special occasions such as family Christenings.

OAK ROOM



This room was completely changed by the 6th Duke, with wood panelling he bought at an auction in 1837. At the time, dark panelled walls were fashionable surroundings for men to socialise in. He thought it would be a great talking point.

“So inconsiderate a purchase was never made – however, look at the result. Is it not charming? What discussions might be raised upon it hereafter!”

6th Duke's Handbook, 1844.

The tusks either side of the fireplace came from Narwhals ‘the unicorns of the sea’. They were bought by Edward, the 10th Duke.

This room provides a great view of one of the oldest features in the garden – the Seahorse Fountain. Built for the 1st Duke between 1688 and 1691 the fountain has survived several programmes of change in the garden.



The fountain was carved by Caius Gabriel Cibber. It consists of four sea horses and Triton. Cibber was a very successful sculptor who worked for the monarchs, Mary II and William III. He created works for Hampton Court Palace, the Monument to the Great Fire of London and St Paul's Cathedral. At Chatsworth, he also carved the marble statue of Flora, which you can see as you leave the garden.

CHAPEL CORRIDOR



Many of the Dukes and Duchesses have been passionate about, and collected, different things.

The large marble foot was collected by the 6th Duke from a family in Lucca in Italy. It originally belonged to an ancient Greek statue of a seated female figure, made of marble and wood.

Towering at 30 foot high, the flesh parts such as the face, hands and feet were made of marble, the other parts from wood. We have the left foot, and the right is in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.

The ceramic vessels around the fireplace are contemporary pieces, made by Edmund de Waal, in response to his visit to Chatsworth. The 'cargo of pots' as he referred to them, are called *A Sounding Line* (2004) because the variations in height evokes the rhythm of music. A close look reveals more differences; in shape, colour and glaze.

GROTTO



The fountain was fitted by the 1st Duke.

Very few houses at the time had running water: he had both hot and cold. It was considered improper to show people around your bathroom in those days, so the Duke decided to build this fountain on the wall adjacent to his bathroom, to show the running water to all. He decorated it with a new sculpture of Roman goddess Diana.

PAINTED HALL



Used to welcome and impress guests, this was the largest and grandest room built by the 1st Duke, between 1689 and 1694. The windows and arches and the painted decoration on the walls and ceiling are the only original features from his time.

The then Earl of Devonshire chose to flatter his monarch by decorating the hall with scenes from the life of Julius Caesar, thereby comparing him with that great leader of Rome.

The inscription above the fireplace was added by the 6th Duke on completion of his renovation of this room in 1840. The inscription says; 'These beloved ancestral halls begun in the year of English liberty, 1688, were inherited by William, [6th] Duke of Devonshire in 1811, and completed in the year of his sorrow, 1840'.

This room is now a great place to pause for a moment and look around.

INNER COURT



The Inner Court is seen from the windows of the corridors and galleries that connect the principal rooms. At first glance it may appear to be a plain space, but it is rich with layers of history.

The fountain in the middle is made from a fossil packed local stone, showing sea creatures called Crinoids that lived in the warm shallow waters that covered this area 350 million years ago. Polished crinoidal limestone is used in many items around the house, including windowsills and mantelpieces. You may also spot it in the dry stone walls of the surrounding Peak District.

Appearing over this fountain is the sculpture *Leaping Hare on a Curly Bell*, by Barry Flanagan, which came with the Duke and Duchess when they moved here in 2006. It has been positioned in many places around the garden and now finds its home here in the Inner Court.

"I think this is much the best site we have found for it as it can be seen from several sides and heights as visitors progress around the house route. I like it because it is an odd combination of an object and an animal."

Duchess of Devonshire

INNER COURT



Tudor mansions, including the one built by Bess & William Cavendish, usually had a central courtyard. Although the house you see replaces that earlier building, the courtyard space remains.

The wall with the carved trophies is the oldest section of the Inner Court, built by the 1st Duke between 1689 – 1691. The 23 ½ carat gold leaf that protects the frames was meant to impress visitors, and it lasts longer than paint! The other three sides were added by the 6th Duke between 1820 – 1838. All are constructed of millstone grit, a type of sandstone, from a nearby quarry.



Needlework of Tudor Chatsworth house, worked c1590-1600.
© The Devonshire Collections

GREAT CHAMBER



You are in the first of a suite of five rooms, intended to accomodate a king and queen. This was a waiting room designed for those who wished to speak to Queen Mary II and King William III, jointly crowned in 1689, but unfortunately they never came to Chatsworth.

Antonio Verrio (1639- 1707) painted the story of the *Triumph of the Virtues over the Vices* from Greek mythology directly onto this ceiling. The painting shows figures representing virtues and vices, with the virtues on top, driving down the vices. This was meant to show the family's support for King William and Mary, depicting their reign as good for the country.

The 1st Duke's housekeeper, Mrs Hackett, is immortalised in the ceiling painting as a vice, one of the Three Fates, Atropos. She cuts the thread of life with her 'abhorred shears'. You may wonder if Antonio Verrio did not like Mrs Hackett much.

As a waiting room with plenty of space for people, it was sparsely furnished, and it offers impressive views of the garden.

STATE DRAWING ROOM



This room is lavishly decorated, with ceiling paintings and tapestries covering the walls.

Practical and beautiful, tapestries were the ultimate statement of wealth, and were designed to be rolled up and travel with their owners to keep them warm in draughty homes.

These English Mortlake tapestries were conserved in a ten year programme which was completed early in 2020. During their conservation, a hidden section of tapestry with its original vibrant colours was discovered. It was unaffected by light and had been protected from dirt. This helped us to date them to 1630s: much earlier than we had thought before.

Chatsworth House Trust has spent over £330,000 ensuring they are in the best possible condition. The price of your entrance ticket directly supports this work.

STATE MUSIC ROOM



This room holds one of the most remembered art works at Chatsworth.

On the wall opposite the windows is a door that the 6th Duke inserted, and behind it is what appears to be a violin and blue bow hanging from a door. It is actually a painting, an example of *trompe l'oeil* (French for deceives the eye).

Made by Jan Van der Vaardt (c 1653 – 1727) it miraculously survived a fire that destroyed Devonshire House, the family's London home. The 6th Duke placed it in this spot in 1836 and the room became known as the State Music Room.

This house contains many examples of art that are intended to appear real. In this room, the shadows on the curved coving paintings, joining the walls and the ceiling, make the figures appear three dimensional.

STATE MUSIC ROOM



Jan Van der Vaardt; *Trompe l'oeil Violin and bow hanging on a door*, c.1723
© The Devonshire Collections

OLD MASTER DRAWINGS CABINET



The painting of a man dressed in a fur-trimmed cloak and wearing a white turban, is by Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn.

Commonly known just by his first name, Rembrandt was a prolific painter of the 1600s. He painted many portraits, studying people intensely from life. In this portrait, Rembrandt uses contrast to highlight features and direct our attention.

This window-less room was created to display delicate artworks that are hundreds of years old and would be irreversibly damaged by too much light. Although we see them as old, at the time the artists were making these works, and when they were acquired for the Devonshire family collection, they were new.

OLD MASTER DRAWINGS CABINET



A Man in Oriental Costume, Rembrandt © The Devonshire Collections

OAK STAIRS LANDING



This floor-to-ceiling space connects the older parts of the house, with the younger North Wing which you are about to enter.

Much like a grand version of a family photograph collection, the portraits here bring together many generations of the Cavendish family.

These portraits not only capture their likenesses, but also give us clues about their characters too.

Blanche Georgiana Howard was the much-adored niece of the 6th Duke, and married William Cavendish, who later became 7th Duke in 1858.



Sadly Blanche died very young in 1840; the 6th Duke was heart-broken and placed a large stone urn in a prominent position at the end of the Broad Walk as a memorial to her. It remains there today.

Blanche Howard (1812 – 40)
John Lucas (1807 – 74) ©The Devonshire Collections

DOME ROOM



Kneeling, her body enrobed in a fine garment gathered at the waist by a belt, this figure holds a flame reverently before her. Her head is covered by a veil and crowned with a floral headdress, the carving is so skilful that the veil appears see-through.

This sculpture in marble is a veiled Vestal Virgin and was created by Raffaele Monti (1818–1881)

On the 18th October, 1846, just 6 days after visiting Monti's studio in Milan, the 6th Duke commissioned this work.

In Ancient Rome, the Vestals dedicated their lives to Vesta, goddess of the hearth. They looked after the sacred fire burning on her altar, which was regarded as crucial for the safety of Rome.

DOME ROOM



Raffaele Monti: a veiled Vestal Virgin, 1846 – 1847
© The Devonshire Collections

GREAT DINING ROOM



In 1832, the first dinner held in this dining room was for 13 year old Princess Victoria, who later became Queen. Her host was the 6th Duke, William Spencer Cavendish (1790–1858). He loved welcoming visitors, and built the wing you stand in now as a suite of rooms in which to entertain. Here his guests would dine accompanied by music played from the balcony in the next room.

Today the table is decorated with Victorian glassware called 'Cranberry Glass' that gets its red colour from gold salts added to the molten glass. The silver candelabras were commissioned from one of the best known silversmiths of the 1800s, Paul Storr. This room is still occasionally used for formal dinners. There are often 5 candelabras on the table so there may be as many as 41 candles to be trimmed and fitted for every meal.

As modern day visitors to Chatsworth, you are part of the next chapter of this story which started over 500 years ago. Your admission fee goes to the Chatsworth House Trust, which looks after Chatsworth House, garden and park for the long term benefit of the public.

SCULPTURE GALLERY

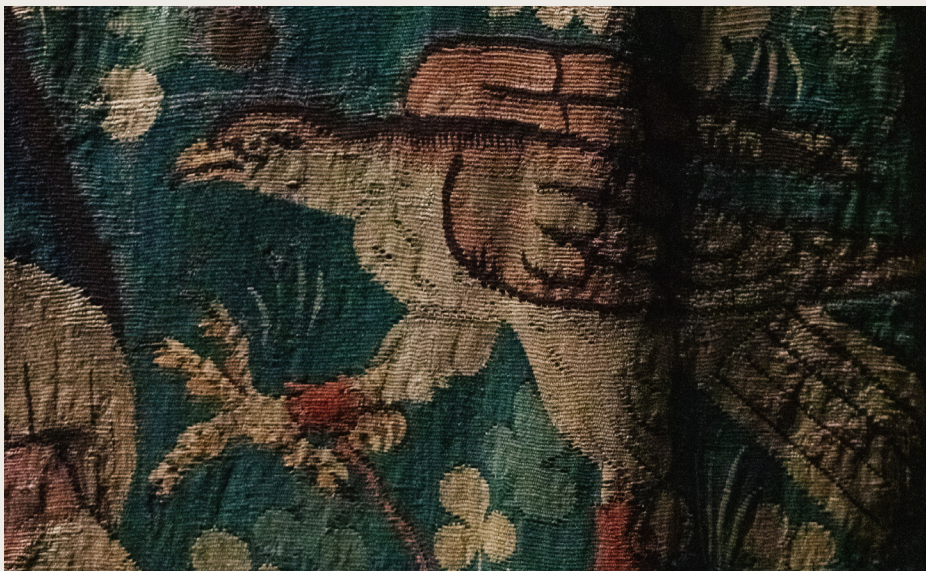


Taking inspiration from a gallery in the Vatican, the 6th Duke built this room to display his sculpture collection.

Some sculpture has been moved to make it possible to display two of The Devonshire Hunting Tapestries. They are on loan to us from the V&A in London until January 2022.

The space you see them hanging in now, is the same place they once occupied in the 1900s.

These decorative and useful tapestries lined draughty rooms and could transform them into magical forest glades.



Detail of The Devonshire Hunting Tapestry: Falconry
Photo © Chatsworth House Trust, Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum, 2021



Welcome to Chatsworth Garden. Over 100 acres of ever-changing views set within a carefully designed and managed landscape.

Each corner has been shaped and improved by generations of the Cavendish family and their gardeners.

It is packed full of layers of history, design, horticultural innovation, extensive planting and blooms for you to enjoy.

Now looked after and loved by a team of gardeners, trainees and volunteers, the garden continues to inspire the next generation of garden lovers, plant collectors and artists.

Click on the link to be taken to our interactive map which will help you explore and discover more.

[Interactive map](#)

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