



# THE GOLDEN AGE RETURNS



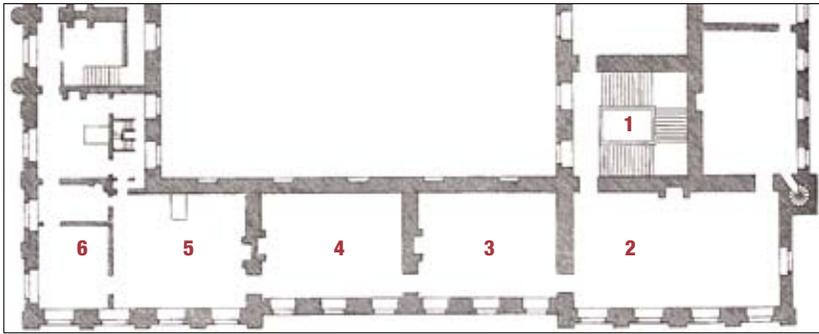
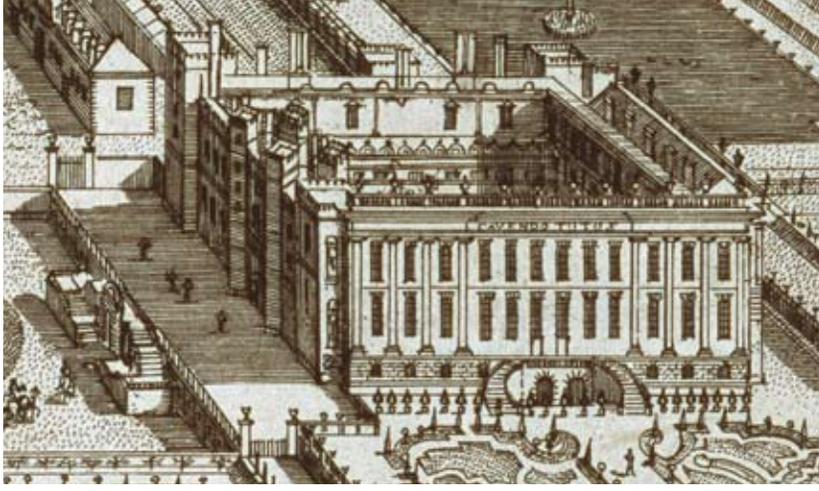
This issue of APOLLO celebrates the redisplay of Chatsworth's State Apartment, a sequence of rooms created for the 1st Duke of Devonshire at the end of the 17th century as a backdrop for baroque court ceremonial. Their purpose is made newly evident by the recent changes, as **Hannah Obee** explains.



**I**n 2005-07 the State Apartment at Chatsworth was redisplayed. The aim of the new presentation, conceived by the Duke and the Duchess of Devonshire, as they explain on pages 22-26, was to give an impression of how these rooms might have looked when built by the 1st Duke in the 17th century, in order best to explain their purpose to visitors. This was achieved by an in-house team led by the family, working with specialist external consultants.

The redisplay was underpinned by research using a variety of primary and secondary sources. The 1st Duke's building accounts contain a wealth of information on what became a 20-year project to rebuild Chatsworth between 1687 and 1707.<sup>1</sup> A further rich seam was letters from the duke's London agent, Aaron Kinton, to the duke's receiver in Derbyshire, James Whildon, in the 1690s.<sup>2</sup> Descriptions by visitors to Chatsworth from the 1690s to the 1770s provided valuable eyewitness accounts.

The photographs illustrating this article are by June Buck unless stated otherwise. Works of art in the Devonshire Collection are reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees. <sup>1</sup> The Great Chamber at Chatsworth, the first room in the State Apartment. The buffet display of silver and ceramics is based on Desportes' *Buffet d'Orfèverie*. The food historian Ivan Day created the pyramid of artificial fruit and commissioned wax flowers from Charlotte Hepworth, woven into garlands by George Smith <sup>2</sup> *Buffet d'Orfèverie* by Alexandre François Desportes (1661-1743), c. 1726. Oil on canvas, 261.6 x 187.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



The King's Apartment at Hampton Court, begun in 1689 and completed in 1702, was another key source. Unfettered by government – unlike his king – the duke was able to work at times on an even grander scale, using the same artists: an account book at Chatsworth contains such signatures as Louis Laguerre, Antonio Verrio and Gerrit Jensen, detailing sums received for work there.<sup>3</sup> The representation of the King's Apartment after the 1986 fire at Hampton Court was particularly influential during the planning of the Chatsworth redisplay.

Until the 19th century, the family's lives focused on Devonshire House in London, suggesting that the State Apartment was little altered in the century after the 1st Duke's death in 1707. Although the earliest inventory of baroque Chatsworth dates only from 1764, those predating the 6th Duke's accession in 1811 all proved useful. His desire to use Chatsworth more extensively led to the building of a new north wing and widespread remodelling of the existing house.<sup>4</sup> He sent much of the house's baroque furniture to Hardwick Hall, where, it was felt, it looked more appropriate.

The cream of the collections, which had centred on London, began an inexorable move northwards that lasted into the 20th century with the sales of Devonshire House and Chiswick Villa. Conversely, much of the 1st Duke's furniture was lost to Chatsworth when Hardwick was ceded to the Treasury, with its contents, in partial lieu of death duties in 1959. These actions radically changed the interiors at Chatsworth, which, all in all, became far richer. Accounts of the display at Chatsworth written by Evelyn Duchess (wife of the 9th Duke) and Deborah Dowager Duchess (wife of the 11th

3 Chatsworth in 1699, an engraving after a drawing by L. Kniff, from Johannes Kip's *Nouveau Théâtre de la Grande Bretagne*, London, 1716, plate 17. The Elizabethan west wing is visible on the left, behind the 1st Duke's new south front, which contains the State Apartment on its top floor

4 Plan of the stairs and State Apartment in the 1st Duke's time, a detail of a plate from *Vitruvius Britannicus*, volume 1, London, 1715. 1 Great Stairs; 2 Great Chamber; 3 State Drawing Room; 4 'Antichamber' (now State Music Room); 5 State Bed-chamber; 6 State Closet

5 *William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire*, after Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723). Oil on canvas, 126.8 x 101 cm. © Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth

Duke) often proved to be the missing link in a confusing chain of movements.

A state apartment is a sequence of reception rooms designed as a setting for the ceremonial life of a palace (Fig. 4). At Chatsworth it would have accommodated the monarch in the event of a royal visit. Each room is furnished more amply and luxuriously than its predecessor, marking a visitor's progress towards the royal presence. The Great Stairs lead into the Great Chamber, which was accessible to most members of the household. From there, visitors progressed only as far as their status permitted, through the State Drawing Room and 'Antichamber', with only the most distinguished courtiers being admitted to the most luxuriously appointed room of all, the State Bedchamber, or the final and most private room, the State Closet.<sup>5</sup> However no monarch slept in the State Apartment until George V and Queen Mary visited Chatsworth in 1913.

When the 4th Earl and future 1st Duke of Devonshire inherited Chatsworth in 1684 it was still the Elizabethan house built for Bess of Hardwick. Destabilised by his father's attempts to update it, the building was 'decaying and weak'.<sup>6</sup> Reconstruction began in 1687. The original intention seems to have been to rebuild only the south front. This had far-reaching implications: the great baroque house that resulted was not designed from scratch but was built to an Elizabethan ground plan (Fig. 3). As a consequence, the State Apartment replaced the Elizabethan High Gallery on the second floor, rather than being constructed on the





*piano nobile*, the first floor, as would have been usual. Its approach was similarly compromised by the ad-hoc rebuild. The Great Stairs that lead up from the ground-floor Painted Hall are interrupted half-way up by a landing, from which steps 'so artfully contriv'd that they seem to hang in the air' lead to the State Apartment, in a revolutionary use of cantilever construction.<sup>7</sup>

The most significant impact on the State Apartment of rebuilding the south front in isolation was its unavoidable design as a single suite. State apartments are usually in pairs, that of the monarch being mirrored by one for the monarch's consort. At Hampton Court, for example, linked apartments were constructed for William and Mary. To create the effect of adjoining apartments at Chatsworth, a mirrored door of diamond-cut panels supplied by Gerrit Jensen was installed in the Great Chamber to reflect and effectively double the enfilade.

Art and politics were indivisible at the Williamite court and therefore at Chatsworth. The 4th Earl was instrumental in bringing over the Protestant William and Mary to replace her Catholic father, James II, in 1688. His loyalty to the new regime is evident in the decoration of Chatsworth.<sup>8</sup> For example, the ceiling of the Great Chamber, painted by Antonio Verrio in 1691-92, shows *The Return of the Golden Age*, in homage to the country's new king and queen.

Chatsworth was equally influenced by a monarch reviled by the English, Louis XIV. In 1669, the 4th Earl went on embassy to Versailles. Despite the frequent wars with France, artists with experience of working at Versailles, such as Verrio and Laguerre, were popular in England. William III hung designs of the chateau of Marly, on which the west façade of Chatsworth is modelled, in his Closet at Hampton Court, where the 1st Duke may have seen them.<sup>9</sup>

There are few accounts of the State Apartment written in the 1st Duke's time. Celia Fiennes visited in 1697, when its furnishing was largely complete. She described it as 'all painted very finely on the top,

**6, 7 The State Apartment was previously used for museum-like displays. Above is the State Bed-chamber in the 19th century, as furnished by the 6th Duke with a 17th-century canopy of state and George III or Queen Charlotte's throne. Below is the Great Chamber in about 2004. Photos: © Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth**

all the windows the squares of glass are so large and good they cost 10s. a pannell; there was sweete tapestry hangings with small figures and very much silk, they look'd as fresh as if new tho' bought severall years, there were no beds up.<sup>10</sup> By 1760 when Horace Walpole visited, the State Apartment was looking tired and unfashionable: 'painted ceilings, inlaid floors, and unpainted wainscots make every room sombre. The tapestries are fine, but not fine enough, and there are few portraits.'<sup>11</sup> Philip Yorke commented in 1763 that it was 'of little use but to be walked through'.<sup>12</sup>

Eighty years later, this was also the opinion of the 6th Duke of Devonshire, who deplored 'this great unappropriated apartment, which consumes in useless display the best habitable part of the house. What bed-rooms there might have been...but...as a museum of old furniture, and a walk in bad weather, I am well contented to retain this dismal ponderous range of Hampton Court-like chambers.'<sup>13</sup>

Instead, he repaired the 'sinking floors and threatening ceilings' and turned his attention to the rooms' decoration, replacing the old furniture with pieces relevant to himself. The Great Chamber received marble busts of his and his parents' contemporaries and antiquarian objects that he had collected, including, for example, Henry VIII's rosary. The coronation thrones of William IV and Queen Adelaide, perquisites of the 6th Duke when Lord Chamberlain, were placed in the State Music Room, and the State Bedchamber became the 'Third State Room' (Fig. 6), containing a 17th-century canopy of state now in the Presence Chamber at Hardwick.





The State Apartment was little touched until Evelyn Duchess oversaw more repairs and a significant rearrangement in the early 20th century, 'removing fussily designed Victorian furniture from the Staterooms and rescuing many fine 16th to 18th Century pieces from the Servants quarters, or the storerooms. The earlier period pictures and furniture were sent to Hardwick Hall, later period objects being brought from there to Chatsworth.'<sup>14</sup>

This work was quickly undone with the outbreak of World War II. With its contents stored, the State Apartment became a dormitory for a girls' boarding school, Penrhos College. The task of returning the house to its former splendour was accomplished from the 1950s onwards by the 11th Duke and Deborah Duchess, whose furnishing of the State Apartment was inspired by the 6th Duke (Fig. 7).

It was against this background that the redisplay of the State Apartment took place in 2005-07. A precise re-creation of the 1st Duke's interiors was neither possible nor appropriate in a house that has evolved over 300 years. A draft of the proposed contents of each room was provided by an advisor, Jonathan Bourne, a former Director of French and Continental Furniture at Sotheby's. Works of art that could be identified as having come from other houses, such as large gilt tables made for Chiswick that had been shown in the Great Chamber, were excluded. Objects related to the 6th Duke were concentrated in the State Music Room, for reasons explained below, or moved elsewhere, as were many later 18th-century works of art. 'Fine old China'<sup>15</sup> previously scattered around the house, was brought together to cluster around baroque furniture.

**8 The State Drawing Room. The Mortlake *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries are believed to have been here since the 18th century**

**9 The State Music Room, which has been left as remodelled and decorated by the 6th Duke in 1836, with Boulle furniture**

Alterations took place during two successive closed seasons when the house is shut to visitors (January to mid-March). Works of art were rearranged, and a new pathway of laminate flooring was laid, allowing visitors greater access to the rooms than had previously been possible. One of the great challenges of the project was to light the rooms effectively yet unobtrusively, especially as the last two rooms use solely artificial light. The solution, installed by Lighting Design Partnership, is a combination of freestanding uplighters and fibre-optic lights suspended from the cornices. They provide an even wash over the walls and ceilings,



enhanced by spots directed onto works of art.

The most dramatic change was to the Great Chamber (Fig. 1). The 6th-Duke-inspired 'museum of old furniture' is now a largely empty room to demonstrate its purpose as a room of assembly. The 1764 inventory lists few contents here: 'Six Long Stools four Square Stools 2 Round Stools Cushions Covered with Crimson Velvet & Gold Stuff... Look.g Glass door, a Pyramid of Old delfth in ye Chimney'. Unlike the Delft (see pages 90-97), the seat furniture cannot be reinstated. Made by Thomas Roberts in 1702, it was taken in the 19th century to Hardwick.<sup>16</sup> Instead, visitors now walk unfettered around the room's perimeter, able to appreciate the woodcarving by Lobb, Davis and Watson and views of the 1st Duke's Cascade House to the east and Canal Pond to the south. Following a contemporary sketch by Samuel Watson, marble sculpture from the collection has been placed on four of the room's wall-mounted wooden pedestals.

The room is occasionally referred to in the 1st Duke's building accounts as a 'dineing room', hence the buffet display of plate. This provided an opportunity to showcase a rare surviving ensemble of baroque silver still belonging to the family for whom it was made. Inspired by a painting by François Desportes (c. 1726; Fig. 2), the buffet acts as a focus for the west end of the Chamber.

An account of the State Drawing Room (Fig. 8) by the Duchess of Northumberland in 1766 reveals that further royal perquisites had been added. Described by her as 'hung with Tapestry', the room was furnished with 'the coronation Chairs of their present Majestys a Silver Ground with Gold & colour'd Flowers'.<sup>17</sup> These, the thrones of George III and Queen Charlotte, carved by Katherine Naish and upholstered by Vile and Cobb, are once again in this room. The *Acts of the Apostles* tapestries were at Chatsworth in 1696. William III owned the original Raphael cartoons, ensuring that the Mortlake copies were highly fashionable, and the Duke considered bringing his set of these tapestries to London.<sup>18</sup> However, in 1764 they were recorded at Chatsworth in the Chapel Bedchamber and the smaller Leicester Room, both since remodelled. The State Drawing Room's previous, unidentified tapestries were replaced with the *Apostles* by the 5th Duke, the 6th Duke merely renewing their 'shabby mouldings'.

The State Music Room, originally the 'Anti-chamber', provides a temporary break from the 1st Duke's rooms of state in an important acknowledgment of the 6th Duke's influence. His major alterations to this room in particular included moving the door from the State Closet to link the State Apartment to his new Sketch Gallery behind. This is the only room in the apartment to retain the name the 6th Duke gave it.<sup>19</sup>



**10 The window wall in the State Bedchamber. John Gumley supplied the mirror in 1703. The new curtains match the restored state bed**

Chatsworth is indebted to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire for the enthusiasm and commitment they showed this project. I am grateful to so many colleagues at Chatsworth, and the advisory team, particularly Jonathan Bourne and Annabel Westman. Thanks are also due to staff at the National Trust and the Royal Collection for generously sharing their knowledge and expertise with us.

1 Investigated in Francis Thompson, *A History of Chatsworth*, London, 1949.

2 Devonshire Mss., Chatsworth (DMC), Whildon Collection. I am grateful to Elizabeth Scott for assistance with this correspondence.

3 DMC, Chatsworth Building Accounts 1687-94.

4 These alterations are recorded in the 6th Duke of Devonshire's *Handbook to Chatsworth and Hardwick*, London, 1845.

5 The rooms were known by a variety of names in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Apart from the State Music Room (for reasons given below), the present names derive from the 1st Duke's Building Accounts and the 1764 Inventory of Furniture at Chatsworth.

6 Thompson, op. cit., p. 33.

7 Charles Leigh *The Natural History of Lancashire, Cheshire and the Peak in Derbyshire*, Oxford, 1700.

8 Peter Day, *De-Coding the Decorations: the Painted Politics of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Devonshire*. ms. typescript of a lecture held at Chatsworth as part of a series in November 2000-Spring 2001.

9 Stefan van Raaij and Paul Spies, *The Royal Progress of William and Mary*, Amsterdam, 1988, p. 78.

The room's present furnishings convey the way that the 6th Duke, too, was influenced by France. A contemporary bust of Louis XIV that he acquired provides a bridge across the generations.<sup>20</sup> Inspired by Fontainebleau, he hung the walls of this room and the State Bedchamber with stamped and gilded leather – *cuir repoussé* – inserting portraits of himself in the leather frieze, to his later embarrassment. Boulle furniture entered the collection across three centuries and was first described at Chatsworth in 1735.<sup>21</sup> A *bureau mazarin* displayed here has been at Chatsworth since at least 1764 and may have been acquired by the 1st Duke.<sup>22</sup> The 6th Duke acquired Boulle during its 19th-century revival, a fashionable passion that cooled on closer acquaintance.<sup>23</sup>

There were few paintings at Chatsworth in the 1st Duke's time. The State Music Room, known by the mid-18th century as the Green Velvet Room because of its wall hangings, was the exception.<sup>24</sup> By 1764, eight full-length portraits, now at Hardwick, were hung here. In their place now are Old Master paintings, including a portrait of the Earl of Arundel, seen in the State Apartment by Walpole in 1760, and *Magdalena, the Artist's Daughter* by Cornelis de Vos. Paris Bordone's *A Lady and Gentleman with their Daughter*, which belonged to Charles I and Jan Six, was acquired by the 6th Duke in 1831. Thus the room both celebrates the 6th Duke's interventions and acknowledges its earlier role as the apartment's principal room for the display of paintings.

'In the State Bedchamber [...] One fine Lookg Glass betwixt ye Windows, a Marble Slabb under it on an Iron frame...the Hang.g of this Room is Tapestry.'<sup>25</sup> John Gumley was paid £200 for two



mirrors in 1703. The more elaborate, with blue glass and the Garter star on the cresting, hangs in the State Bedchamber as described (Fig. 10). Below it, a bracket table has been slotted back into its original holes in the wainscot. Four mirrored silver-gilt wall sconces of 1697 by Jonathan Bodington punctuate the walls, as in Daniel Marot's *Design for a Bedchamber* (Fig. 11) A silver perfume burner attributed to Philip Rollos scents the air, stimulating the senses in this night-time scene.

In addition to lending a sense of baroque drama, the decision to show the Bedchamber and Closet as at night was taken to protect the textiles. The earliest description of the tapestries in the State Bedchamber (illustrated on pp. 74-75) is by William Pritchard in 1746: 'The Subject Perseus and Andromeda, Jupiter & Leda, Daphne & Apollo'.<sup>26</sup> A set of late-17th-century Brussels tapestries in the house matched this description and proved to fit the walls to within an inch. A method of hanging them round corners and standing proud of the stamped leather underneath was devised in-house, incorporating techniques used at the Palace of Holyroodhouse. Charles Noble, Chatsworth's Curator of Fine Art, selected a group of Old Master paintings suitable for a bedchamber of this period, including the 1st Duke's *An Allegory of Peace* by Simon Vouet. Watercolours of the State Apartments at Hampton Court in 1819 show paintings hung over tapestries; this approach, whilst not baroque in origin, provided a precedent that avoided moving pictures to store.<sup>27</sup>

Investigation by Annabel Westman showed that only the Bedchamber and the south window in the Closet had curtains.<sup>28</sup> The 1811 inventory describes 'two Old crimson silk damask Window curtains in Rags' in the State Bedchamber. These matched the room's original bed, upholstered by Francis Lapiere (only the tester of which survives, at Hardwick; see p. 70), posing a dilemma: to recreate the 1st Duke's original curtains or to match the bed now *in situ*?

The decision was settled by the fact that the fabric surviving on the Lapiere tester, the sole source for recreating the pattern, was insufficient for the purpose. Multiple trials based on the present

**11 *Design for a Bedchamber* by Daniel Marot (1663-1752), 1703. Engraving. Bridgeman Art Library**

**12 *The State Closet. The silver chandelier was taken to Chatsworth in 1694***

10 Christopher Morris, ed., *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes c.1682-c.1712*, Exeter and London, 1988, p. 106.

11 Letter from Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 1 September 1760, in Peter Cunningham, ed., *The Letters of Horace Walpole Fourth Earl of Orford*, vol. III, London, 1891, pp. 337.

12 Travel Journey of Philip Yorke (afterwards 2nd Earl Hardwicke), 1763. Copy in Grey papers, Bedfordshire Record Office.

13 6th Duke, op. cit. p. 119

14 DMC, Gilbert H. Jenkins, *Memorandum relating to the work designed and supervised by W.H. Romaine-Walker, ARIBA, in partnership with Gilbert H. Jenkins, FRIBA*, September 1956.

Romaine-Walker and Jenkins worked for the 9th Duke in 1911-12

15 DMC, Inventory of the Furniture at Chatsworth, 1764.

16 DMC, Chatsworth Building Accounts 1700-06, 2 June 1702, p. 66. Roberts was joiner to the Royal Household.

17 The 1st Duchess of Northumberland's travel journals, August 1766: extract in Chatsworth archives.

18 DMC, Whildon Collection, C98: Kinton to Whildon, 24 Sept. 1696,

19 For example, see Stephen Glover, *The Peak Guide*, Derby, 1830.

20 The bust, after Coysevox, was bought at the duchesse de Berri sale in 1836. See 6th Duke, op.cit. p. 131.

21 Sarah Markham, *John Loveday of Caversham 1711-1789: The Life and Tours of an 18th Century Onlooker*, Salisbury, 1984, p. 193.

22 I am grateful to Orlando Rock for this observation.

23 6th Duke, op.cit., p. 123.

24 Thompson, op. cit., p. 156. He believed the hangings were unchanged since the 1st Duke's death.

25 DMC, Inventory of the Furniture at Chatsworth, 1764

26 William Pritchard 'A Ramble Dedicated to Mrs. Hart', part of a letter begun on 25 May 1746, Derbyshire Local Studies Library, Acc. No. 3379 (reference provided by Roger Flindall).

27 Thomas Campbell, 'William III and "The Triumph of Lust"', *APOLLO*, vol. CXL, No. 390 (August 1994), pp. 23 and 25 (plates I and II).

28 Spike holes were found above these windows only. There are also marks for tiebacks on the carved window surrounds in the State Bedchamber.

29 DMC, Lowman to Whildon E XCV 2, 15 May 1694.

30 *Through England On a Side Saddle in the time of William and Mary Being the Diary of Celia Fiennes*, London, 1888, p. 80.

31 Markham, op. cit., p. 193.

state bed's counterpane were considered by the Duchess of Devonshire, Annabel Westman and David Mlinaric before Richard Humphries wove the new silk damask. Braid and buttons, also matching the bed, were supplied by Brian Turner. The architect Peter Inskip designed window cornices and curtain pelmets to echo the bed, which were made by the house's joiners and sewing staff. The new damask was also used to re-cover the bed's headboard, which had lost its original silk (for the restoration of the state bed, see pp. 68-75).

The State Closet was a private, intimate space in which the monarch could work and relax, surrounded by personal possessions. In the absence of these, it was decided to add to the existing display of porcelain in imitation of a 17th-century China Closet (Fig. 12). The silver chandelier, a travelling piece, was recorded in a shipment of goods going to Chatsworth in 1694.<sup>29</sup>

The Closet is on the corner of the south and west fronts. The lack of evidence for curtains suggested that the present west window was not expressed internally in the 1st Duke's time. Kipp and Knyff's view of Chatsworth (Fig. 3) shows the Elizabethan west wing intact, its turret partially concealed behind the new south front. When the west front was rebuilt in 1700, a window was required for symmetry on the exterior. Inside, however, there was no window to balance it, since the mirrored door occupied the space at the opposite end of the enfilade. The decision was therefore taken to fill the window with a temporary panel over which hangs the second 1703 Gumley mirror, echoing the mirror at the far end of the apartment. Recorded in the Scots Apartment at Chatsworth in 1764, the mirror is a fitting reminder of the 'peers of Looking glass' that Gerrit Jensen incorporated with Coromandel lacquer panels in the Japan Closet, which was replaced by the 1st Duke with the State Closet.<sup>30</sup> These panels were turned into coffers, one of which is displayed in the room.<sup>31</sup>

The challenge of redisplaying these rooms to evoke the 1st Duke without obliterating the impact of later generations was considerable. The integrity of approach, coupled with the desire to make the space easier for visitors to interpret, is characteristic of the duty of care felt by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Thus Chatsworth continues to evolve, the achievements of previous generations providing sure foundations on which the next can build.

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