



The Devonshire Collection Archives

GB 2495 DF14

Papers of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1832 – 1911)

1855-1922

Administrative/Biographical History:

Louise Frederica Augusta Cavendish (née Countess Louise Friederike Auguste von Alten; other married name Louise Frederica Augusta Montagu, Duchess of Manchester), society figure, was born on 15 January 1832, the second of the three daughters of Karl Franz Victor, Count von Alten, of Hanover, and his wife, Hermine de Schminke.

While on a family visit to the French Riviera she encountered William Drogo Montagu, Viscount Mandeville (1823-1890), eldest son of the 6th Duke of Manchester. He proposed to her, and they married on 22 July 1852. They had two sons and three daughters.

Duchess of Manchester from 1855, she served as Mistress of the Robes to Queen Victoria under Derby's ministry of 1858–9. Victoria, who had initially been pleased to have a German in her household, rapidly came to disapprove of the Duchess, and urged the Princess of Wales to drop the acquaintance. The duchess, however, remained one of the principal members of the Marlborough House set, sharing with the Prince of Wales a passion for gambling and racing, and a willingness to overlook discreet infidelity.

Her liaison with Spencer Compton Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington (1833–1908), began in the early 1860s and lasted until their marriage some thirty years later. The relationship was well-known in aristocratic society, but never drew public attention.

Manchester died in 1890, and on 16 August 1892 she married Hartington, who had become 8th Duke of Devonshire the previous year. Widely referred to as 'the Double Duchess', she was one of the dominant figures of London society. Her entertainments at Chatsworth, at Devonshire House in London, and at the racecourses were lavish and spectacular. Most notable was her Devonshire House Ball – a fancy dress ball given to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. The Duchess attended as Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra.

The 8th Duke of Devonshire died in 1908; three years later Louise Devonshire had a seizure at the Sandown racecourse, and died the following day, 15 July 1911, at Sir Edgar Vincent's house, Esher Place, Esher, Surrey. She was buried on 18 July at Edensor, Derbyshire.

Principal source: K.D. Reynolds, 'Cavendish, Louise Frederica Augusta, duchess of Devonshire [née Countess Louise Friederike Auguste von Alten; other married name Louise Frederica Augusta Montagu, duchess of Manchester] (1832–1911)', *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 accumulated by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire. Its exact archival history is unknown.

Source of Acquisition:

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

Scope and Content:

The collection primarily consists of correspondence, including letters both sent and received by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, and members of her family.

There are over 80 letters sent to the Duchess by Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (DF14/1/1), as well as over 350 letters and telegrams of condolence sent to her on the 8th Duke's death in 1908 (DF14/1/2). These come from many correspondents, including Winston Churchill, King Edward VII, Queen Alexandra, and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll.

There is a group of letters sent to the Duke and Duchess of Manchester by Liberal politician W.E. Forster (DF14/1/3), as well as general correspondence of the Duchess of Manchester (DF14/1/5). The latter includes letters from Queen Victoria; Lord and Lady Derby; Lord Granville; George, Duke of Cambridge; Princess Alice; the Duke of Manchester; Princess Alexandra; Francis Knollys; Princess Mary of Teck; Lord Hartington; and Prince Edward.

Family correspondence includes letters sent by the Duchess to her children Alice Stanley, Mary Montagu and Charles Montagu (DF14/1/4); correspondence of her first husband William Montagu, Duke of Manchester (DF14/1/3 and DF14/1/7); and correspondence of her children, Alice Stanley (DF14/1/6) and Charles Montagu (DF14/1/8).

The majority of the correspondence dates from the time when the Duchess was Duchess of Manchester; the overall covering dates extend to 1922, after the Duchess's death, as the series includes some correspondence of her son, Charles Montagu.

The only other material in the collection aside from correspondence are some papers relating to jewels and jewellery worn by the Duchess when she was Duchess of Devonshire.

System of Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into two series:

- DF14/1: Correspondence of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, 1855 – 1922
- DF14/2: Papers relating to Jewellery worn by the Duchess of Devonshire, 1893-1908

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:

2 boxes

Language of Material:

English

Preferred Citation:

Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, DF14/1/1 etc.

Related material:

Related material can be found in the Papers of Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (GB 2495 DF6); the 8th Duke's Correspondence Series (GB 2495 CS8); and the Second Series of Family Correspondence (GB 2495 CS2).

<u>DF14/1</u>	<u>Correspondence of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1832 - 1911)</u>	<u>1855 - 1922</u>	<u>Series</u>
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This series includes letters sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, and letters to her family members.

The letters sent to the Duchess include: letters from Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire (DF14/1/1); letters of condolence on the death of the 8th Duke of Devonshire (DF14/1/2); letters from W.E. Forster (DF14/1/3); and general correspondence (DF14/1/5) which includes letters sent to the Duchess by members of the British Royal family.

The letters to her family members include: letters sent by the Duchess to her children Alice Stanley, Mary Montagu and Charles Montagu (DF14/1/4); and correspondence of her first husband William Montagu, Duke of Manchester (DF14/1/3 and DF14/1/7) and her children, Alice Stanley (DF14/1/6) and Charles Montagu (DF14/1/8).

The covering dates for the correspondence extend to 1922, post-dating the Duchess's death, as the series includes some correspondence of her son, Charles Montagu.

674 letters

DF14/1/1	Letters from Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8 th Duke of Devonshire, to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire	1873 - 1906	Item
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Letters sent by Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire, to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, before and after their marriage in 1892. The Duke was styled as the Marquess of Hartington up until 1891, and the Duchess was previously titled the Duchess of Manchester, through her marriage to William Drogo Montagu, Duke of Manchester.

84 letters

DF14/1/2	Letters and telegrams of condolence sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, on the death of her husband, Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8 th Duke of Devonshire	March 1908 - July 1908	Item
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221 letters and 135 telegrams sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire on the death of her husband, Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire. Includes letters of condolence from Winston Churchill, Queen Alexandra (and a telegram), King Edward VII (and a telegram) and Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll.

DF14: Papers of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1832-1911)

356 items

DF14/1/3 Letters sent by W.E. Forster to the Duke and Duchess of Manchester 6 March 1876 - [24] March 1884 Item

24 letters

DF14/1/4 Letters sent by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire to [her son Charles Montagu, her daughters, Alice Montagu and Mary Montagu and her sister-in-law, Lady Louisa Egerton] [c.1870 – c.1902] Item

Mainly letters sent by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire [to her son, Charles, and daughters, Alice and Mary]. There are two letters addressed to "Dear Louisa" which are thought to have been sent to Lady Louisa Egerton, the Duchess's sister-in-law (rather than her daughter Louisa Acheson), as they refer to tapestries at Hardwick. The majority of letters were sent by the Duchess when she was married to William Montagu, Duke of Manchester, as many letters are signed Louise Manchester. Some letters were sent at a later period and are signed Louise Devonshire.

Also includes 1 letter addressed to Charlie [Charles Montagu] from Francis Knollys, Private Secretary to the Prince of Wales, dated 3 July 1897, concerning the Prince of Wales's opinion that the [Devonshire House] Ball was a success.

The letters sent by Duchess Louise are not dated by year.

79 letters

DF14/1/5 General Correspondence of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire 1855 - 1889; 1903; 1905 Item

Letters sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, when she was Louise Montagu, Duchess of Manchester. Only one letter was sent during her time as Duchess of Devonshire.

Includes, but is not limited to, letters from: Queen Victoria (letters 5 and 10); Lord Derby and Lady Derby (letters 6, 8, and 27); Lord Granville (letters 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 39, 40a, 40b, 79 and 80); George, Duke of Cambridge (letters 9, 13 and 54); Princess Alice (letters 11, 12, 25 and 76); the Duke of Manchester (letter 26); Princess Alexandra (letters 32, 52 and 63); Francis Knollys (letters 34, 35 and 73); Emily Russell (letters 40 and 41), Princess Mary of Teck (letter 43); Lord Hartington (letters 44, 45, 46, 48, 59 and 60 (telegrams sent from the War Office)); Prince Edward (letter 47 – a telegram); and Lord Reay (letters 66, 67, 61, 69, 70, 71 and 78).

Also includes a newspaper cutting dated 5 June 1903 featuring a caricature of the Duke of Devonshire (number 72), and 5 empty envelopes.

80 letters

DF14/1/6 Letters sent by family members to Alice Stanley (née Montagu) c.1874 – c.1908 Item

Letters sent to Alice Stanley by her mother, Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire; her father, William Montagu, Duke of Manchester; her sister, Louisa Acheson, Countess of Gosford; and Spencer Compton Cavendish, 8th Duke of Devonshire.

Also includes a letter dated 8 April 1908 addressed to Lord Stanley, Alice's husband, concerning the Duke of Devonshire's provision for the Duchess of Devonshire in his will, [sender's signature unidentified].

The majority of the seven letters sent to Alice Stanley from her sister are undated and sent from Monte Carlo; one letter is dated 30 November 1892 and was sent from 22 Mansfield Street, Cavendish Square.

The four letters sent by Alice's father, the Duke of Manchester, are dated between 1874 and 1888.

The two letters sent by Alice's mother are undated; however, one letter is signed Louise Manchester and the other letter is signed Louise Devonshire

The letter sent from the Duke of Devonshire is dated 27 December 1907.

14 letters

DF14/1/7 Letters sent to William Montagu, 7th Duke of Manchester 1850 – c.1880 Item

Letters sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire's first husband, William Montagu, Duke of Manchester. Includes, but is not limited to, letters from: the Duke's father, George Montagu, 5 December 1850; [the Duke's brother Richard Montagu], 3 April 1868; [Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of] Beaconsfield, 25 November [1876]; [M.E.] Hicks Beach, 1 and 4 March 1878; Frederick Young, 5 January 1882; and the Duke of Marlborough, undated.

10 letters

DF14/1/8 Letters sent to Charles Montagu c.1876 - 1922 Item

Letters sent to Charles Montagu, from the following family members:

His sister, Alice Stanley (two letters, one undated, and one dated 18 December 1886); his father, the Duke of Manchester (11 letters, dated 1876-1884); his mother, the Duchess of Manchester (three letters, undated); Lord Hartington/8th Duke of Devonshire (two letters, dated 1892 and 1898).

DF14: Papers of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1832-1911)

Also includes: a letter from Charlotte Knollys concerning a Christmas gift of a Fabergé box given to the Duchess of Devonshire by the Queen (dated 17 December 190[8]); two letters of condolence sent on the death of his mother, Louise, Duchess of Devonshire (dated 16 and 17 July 1911); and a letter dated 22 September 1922, headed Coldstones, Gullane, East Lothian, with an illegible signature.

22 letters

DF14/1/9	<p>Letters from [Archibald Primrose, 5th Duke of Rosebery], to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire</p> <p>Letters sent to Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire by [Archibald Primrose, 5th Earl of Rosebery].</p> <p>6 letters</p>	1907 - 1908	Item
DF14/1/10	<p>Letters sent by an unknown correspondent from Helouan, Egypt</p> <p>Letters sent to an unknown recipient from an unknown correspondent; one letter is signed [Eddy?]. The correspondent refers to time spent with Duchess Louise and Lord Hartington [8th Duke of Devonshire?]. The letters concern an illness suffered by Lord Hartington and the correspondent's time in Helouan, Egypt.</p> <p>3 letters</p>	20 - 26 February 1908	Item
DF14/1/11	<p>Letters sent by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire</p> <p>Four undated letters (two of which are mounted) written by Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, and an unidentified note. The letters are as follows:</p> <p>1 & 2: Two mounted letters addressed to Mr [Sully] declining two separate invitations to dinner.</p> <p>3: Letter addressed to [Lady Maud] accepting and invitation to act as patron of an upcoming charity concert (25 April).</p> <p>4. Letter addressed to Lady Ilchester: an invitation to dinner (21 September).</p> <p>5. Undated note from an unidentified writer, "off to Sandringham till Wednesday".</p> <p>5 letters</p>	c.1900	Item
<u>DF14/2</u>	<u>Material relating to jewellery worn by Louise, Duchess of Devonshire</u>	<u>1853-1909</u>	<u>Series</u>
DF14/2/1	<p>Analysis of stones broken from old ornaments to make a diadem, together with other material relating to jewellery</p>	1853-1908	Item

DF14: Papers of Louise Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1832-1911)

An envelope labelled "An analysis of stones broken out of old jewels, together with stones supplied, and mounted as diadem", also stored with some additional material. Contents are as follows:

1. The list of jewels, taken to make diadem, 8 April 1893.
2. List of jewels returned (not broken down) to Duchess Louise Cavendish, April 1893.
3. Voucher from A.E. Skinner and Co., goldsmiths, pearl and diamond merchants for a ball shaped bonnet pin and three-row graduated pearl necklace, 27 June 1892.
4. Correspondence with Duchess Evelyn Cavendish relating to jewels, August 1908.
5. A brief note of the costs of a four-row pearl necklace, 1 June 1853.
6. A note on the provenance of various pieces of jewellery, no date, but possibly c.1830.

DF14/2/2	List of jewellery and other articles deposited at the London and Westminster Bank and removed by Duchess Louise Cavendish in November 1909	6 November 1909	Item
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