



**The Devonshire Collection Archives**

**GB 2495 DF32**

**Papers of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1672 - 1729) and  
Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1674 - 1725)**

**1705 - 1727**

### **Administrative/biographical history:**

William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1672–1729), politician and art collector, was the second but first surviving son of William Cavendish, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1641–1707), and Mary (1646–1710), second daughter of James Butler, first duke of Ormond.

Following his father's accession to the earldom of Devonshire in 1684 he was known by courtesy as Lord Cavendish, and after his father's elevation to the dukedom in 1694 he was called Marquess of Hartington.

Lord Cavendish was educated privately. On 21 June 1688, he married Lady Rachel Russell (1674–1725), the eldest daughter of William Russell, Lord Russell, a political associate of his father, who had been executed for complicity in the Rye House plot, and Lady Rachel Russell. They had five children: William (1698-1755, who became 3rd Duke of Devonshire); Rachel (1699-1780); Charles (1704-82); James (d. 1741); and Elizabeth (d. 1747).

Hartington entered parliament as MP for Derbyshire at the election of 1695, becoming a prominent Whig politician; he held office in Derbyshire between 1695 and 1701, in Castle Riding in 1702 and in Yorkshire between 1702 and 1707. By the time of his father's death, on 18 August 1707, Hartington had acquired a considerable reputation; he succeeded his father in most of his offices and took his seat in the House of Lords on 23 October 1707.

When Queen Anne visited Cambridge University in April 1705 both Hartington and his father were awarded honorary doctorates of law. He was invested as a Knight, Order of the Garter (K.G.) in March 1709/10 and he held the office of Lord President of the Council from 1716 to 1717 and 1725-29.

The Hanoverian succession in 1714 saw Devonshire named as a lord justice to rule the country until the arrival of George I and in November 1727 George II chose Devonshire as his own replacement as a governor of Charterhouse.

Beyond politics, Devonshire maintained his interest in art. Having bought part of Lord Somers's collection at its dispersal in 1717, in 1723 he bought 225 drawings that had belonged to Nicolaes Anthoni Flinck, whose father Govaert Flinck had been a pupil of Rembrandt. In addition to Rembrandt, artists represented in the purchase included Rubens, Raphael, Mantegna, Barocci, and Annibale Carracci, contributing to the Devonshire collection's reputation as unequalled at the time in England.

In March and May 1729 Devonshire was still active in national affairs, but he was reported to be dangerously ill at the end of May 1729, and gout was blamed for his absence from cabinet. He died on 4 June 1729 at Devonshire House, Piccadilly, London, and was buried in All Saints' Church, Derby.

Rachel Cavendish, née Russell, Duchess of Devonshire (1674-1725), was born in January 1673/74. She married William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, on 21 June 1688. As a result of her marriage, Rachel Russell was styled as Duchess of Devonshire from 18 August 1707. She died on 28 December 1725 aged 51.

Principal source: Stuart Handley, 'Cavendish, William, second duke of Devonshire (1670/71-1729)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). By permission of Oxford University Press.

**Custodial History:**

The material in the collection was created or accumulated by William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, and his wife, Rachel Cavendish. Its exact archival history is unknown.

**Source of Acquisition:**

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

**Scope and Content:**

This is a very small collection which consists of the following items:

- A single, possibly incomplete, letter written c. 1715 by Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to [R. Barnes?] – who refers to the Duchess as his aunt; the letter has been mounted with images of Rachel Cavendish and her husband William, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire.
- Three items of a financial nature: a Power of Attorney dated 1723, signed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire and his wife giving Thomas Snow authority to manage stock and capital of the Governor of Merchants of Great Britain Trading to the South Seas and Other Parts of America and for Encouraging the Fishery; a list of jewellery bought between 1705-7 from Mr Mussard and Mr Papavoine; and some booksellers' accounts dating from 1712-27.
- A printed broadside ballad in 21 stanzas entitled 'The Seven Wise-Men of England' [1719], which likely alludes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire as 'Allmost the tallest of the seven'.

**System of Arrangement:**

The material has been arranged into three series, as follows:

- DF32/1: Correspondence of Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire [c. 1715]
- DF32/2: Financial Papers of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, and his wife Rachel (1705-27)
- DF32/3: Literary material relating to William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire [1719]

**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:**

The material is in the copyright of Chatsworth House Trust. Copies of material in the archive can be supplied for private study and personal research purposes only, depending on the condition of the documents.

DF32: Papers of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1672-1729) and Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1674-1725)

**Extent:**

3 series; 5 items.

**Language of Material:**

English

**Preferred Citation:**

Devonshire MSS, Chatsworth, DF32/1/1 etc.

**Related Material:**

Further correspondence of both William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, and his wife Rachel, can be found in the Devonshire Archives' 'First Correspondence Series' (GB 2495 CS1).

<u>DF32/1</u>	<u><i>Correspondence of Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire</i></u>	<u>[c.1715]</u>	<u>Series</u>
	<p>This series contains one item only: a letter from Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, to [R. Barnes?]</p> <p>1 item</p>		
DF32/1/1	Letter from Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire to [R. Barnes?]	[c.1715]	Item
	<p>Mounted letter, possibly incomplete, written and signed by Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire. The letter is a response to an enquiry into whether the Duke of Devonshire had written to [Father] Gilbert. Includes a footnote signed [R. Barnes?] in which the writer refers to the Duchess as his aunt.</p> <p>The letter has been mounted alongside images of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, and his wife.</p> <p>1 item</p>		
<u>DF32/2</u>	<u><i>Financial Papers of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, and Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire</i></u>	<u>1705 - 1727</u>	<u>Series</u>
	<p>This series contains three items of a financial nature: a Power of Attorney dating from 1723; list of jewellery purchased; and some booksellers' accounts.</p> <p>3 items</p>		
DF32/2/1	Power of Attorney signed by William Cavendish, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire and Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire	26 March 1723	Item
	<p>Power of Attorney giving Thomas Snow the authority to manage stock and capital of the Governor of Merchants of Great Britain Trading to the South Seas and other Parts of America and for encouraging the Fishery.</p> <p>1 item</p>		
DF32/2/2	List of jewellery purchased	1705-1707	Item
	<p>Several items of jewellery purchased during 1705-1707 from Mr Mussard and Mr Papavoine. The purchaser is not recorded, but is presumed from the dates to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire.</p> <p>1 item</p>		
DF32/2/3	Booksellers' Accounts	1712-1727	Item

DF32: Papers of William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1672-1729) and Rachel Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1674-1725)

Manuscript accounts tipped into a [late 19<sup>th</sup>-century?] binding.

1 item

**DF32/3**      **Literary material relating to William Cavendish, 2nd Duke of Devonshire**      **Series**

DF32/3/1      Broadside ballad: *The Seven Wise-men of England*      [1719]      Item

A printed ballad in 21 stanzas that likely alludes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire as "Allmost the tallest of the seven" Wise Men of England.