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HARDWICK HALL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

BEN COWELL

Like nearby Bolsover Castle, Hardwick Hall is often assumed to have been one of those Houses of the Olden Time which has remained virtually untouched, by virtue of its having been largely abandoned by its owners during the eighteenth century. As Lucy Worsley has shown in relation to Bolsover, however, these assumptions rarely stand up to closer scrutiny: few houses of this status and complexity could have weathered the ravages of time without a fairly constant level of care and intervention.¹

Mark Girouard's guide book to the New Hall at Hardwick notes that the house was 'semi-deserted' by its owners, the Cavendish family, in the eighteenth century, giving rise to its reputation as 'a curiosity, an untouched survival from the past'. Girouard goes on to observe, however, that the extent of Hardwick's abandonment in the eighteenth century 'can be exaggerated', noting in particular the improvements made by the 5th Duke of Devonshire in the last two decades of the century.²

This article attempts to show that the eighteenth century was by no means a quiet time at Hardwick. New research has revealed the extent of the changes that were made to the house under the 1st Duke of Devonshire at the end of the seventeenth century, as well as those undertaken by the 5th Duke, who employed John Carr of York to undertake a series of structural and internal improvements to the New Hall.³ A reappraisal of Hardwick in the eighteenth century will throw light upon a largely unexplored period of the house's history, as well as demonstrate the considerable efforts that were needed to sustain the illusion of abandonment into the nineteenth century.

HARDWICK IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

Accounts for building work at the Old Hall between 1587 and 1591 and at the New Hall between 1591 and 1597 survive in great quantity, and scholarly transcriptions of them have been published.⁴ The accounts for later periods in Hardwick's history have been less well studied, but it is evident that changes continued to be made to both houses throughout the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth.

John Painter (also known as John Balehouse) had supervised Bess of Hardwick's building work at the New Hall, and continued to be employed at Hardwick by Bess's son William, 1st Earl of Devonshire (1552–1626), after Bess's death. Between 1609 and 1612 Painter was paid nearly £1,000 for work on the house, although it is unclear precisely what sort of work was being done.⁵ William died in 1626, and was succeeded by his son William (1590–1628). The 2nd Earl and his wife were responsible for a number of alterations at the New Hall, including alterations to the service area of the house and the purchase of the two canopies that were originally placed in the High Great Chamber and Long Gallery.⁶ The 3rd Earl (1617–84) frequently spent winters at Hardwick when in Derbyshire, although by this time Chatsworth had become the principal Cavendish residence in the county.⁷ It is possible that he was responsible for the conversion of the courtyard area at the end of the west wing of the Old Hall into a tennis court: there were numerous payments made for the repair and improvement of the tennis court under the 3rd Earl.⁸

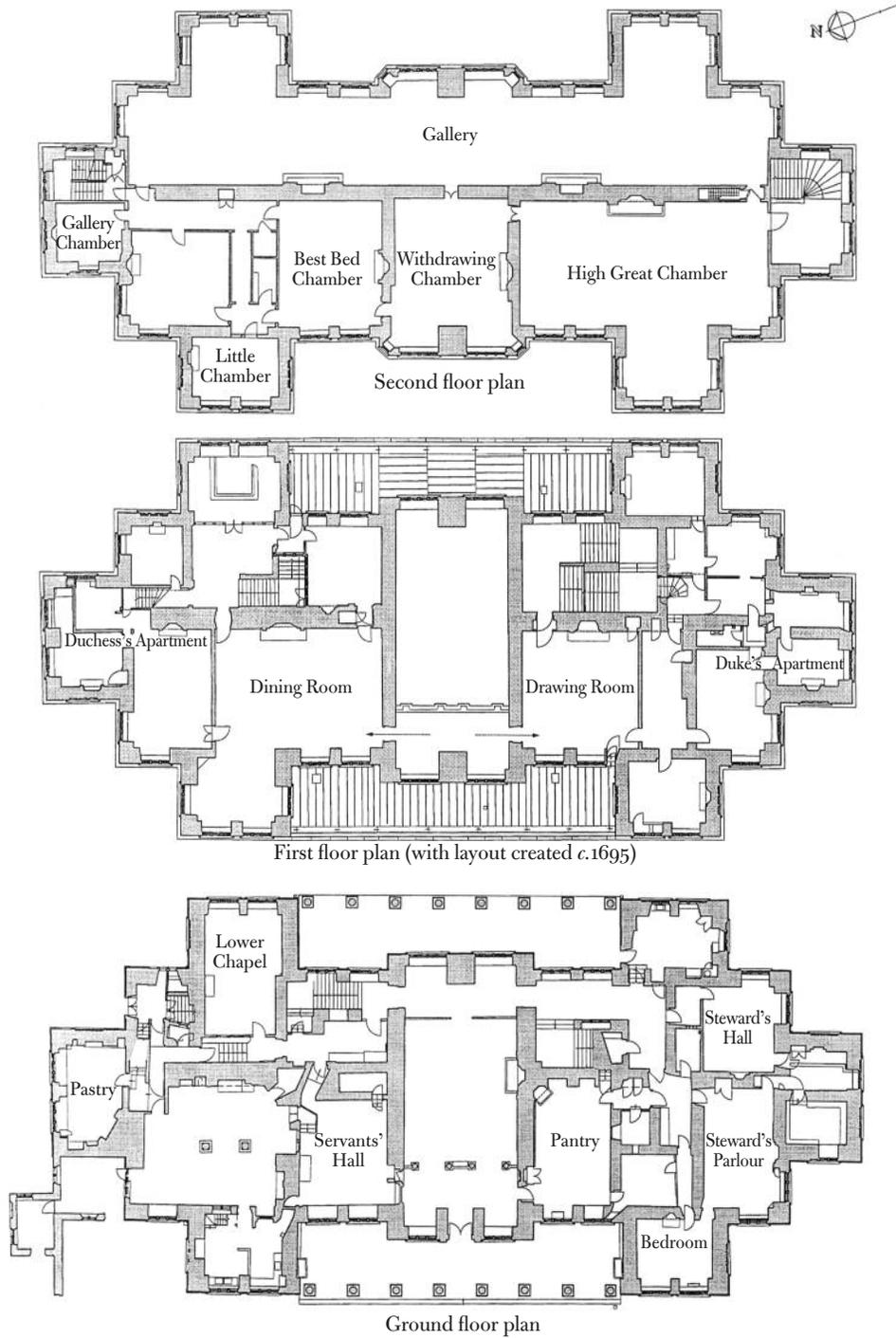
Accounts from the 3rd Earl's time demonstrate the considerable repairs that were needed to keep a house like Hardwick in habitable condition. A storm in 1661 necessitated the rebuilding of several of the chimneys as well as the repair of the 'much broken' windows in the upper turrets in the New Hall, while joiners were frequently at work repairing doors and wainscoting inside the house.⁹ In the late 1650s, a library was fitted up in the west wing of the Old Hall for the use of the philosopher Thomas Hobbes, the 3rd Earl's tutor, who spent many of his later years at Hardwick.¹⁰ As well as shelves and wainscoting, all coated in an 'oyle colour' by Frances Greene of Heath, the library was designed to incorporate nine large oak-wood frames for storing and displaying maps, which came with 'pullies each with two wheels' to enable the 'speedy pulling down [of the maps] to peruse them, and as speedy drawing up again'.¹¹

William, 4th Earl of Devonshire (1640–1707) inherited Hardwick on his father's death in 1684, and became the 1st Duke of Devonshire in 1694. The 1st Duke is best remembered now for the work he instigated at Chatsworth, where the Tudor mansion was rebuilt, in part under the supervision of William Talman. The 1st Duke also commissioned building work at the New Hall, albeit on a lesser scale. The remodelling of the two first floor suites either side of the Entrance Hall, for instance, dated from his time.¹² It is entirely possible that some of this work was supervised by Talman, since the accounts show that Talman visited Hardwick on at least three occasions. In January 1687 £10 was paid for 'Diet, Wine and Ale for Mr Talman at Chatsworth and Hardwick being 7 weeks', while on 14 July 1688 £4 1s. 8d. was paid for 'diet and necessaries for Mr Talman and his man a month and four days at Chatsworth and Hardwick'. A further reference to work at Hardwick was made on 10 September 1688, when the accounts recorded a payment of £1 9s. 2d. for 'Mr Talmans diet twelve days at Chatsworth and one night at Hardwick after my Lord was gone away'.¹³

The 1680s in fact saw major renovations take place at Hardwick, starting with the remodelling of the gardens in 1685–6 which included new walling and gates with decorative pedestals.¹⁴ There are only a few tantalising clues, however, as to what work was being done in the house at this time. In 1687 alterations were made to the Earl's chamber, providing more evidence that the rearrangement of the first floor rooms into two suites was under way at this time (Fig. 1).¹⁵ Few precise details are given in the 'Brief' Day Book of accounts that survives from this period, but one hint is given in the reference to a payment of two shillings to 'Mr Sturgess and [Mr] Jacson when they were employed to give directions for the New Hall dore'.¹⁶ Benjamin Jackson was the mason employed at Chatsworth at this time; while John Sturges was an East Midlands architect who also worked at Chatsworth and went on to collaborate with Talman at Milton House, Northamptonshire.¹⁷ Further evidence that the front door to the New Hall was either remodelled or replaced at this time was given by the payment in August 1688 for 'ordinary repairs about the houses', including 'loading stone for ye new hall dore'.¹⁸ Wainscoting and a chimney piece were taken to Hardwick from Chatsworth in 1690 and 1691 possibly augmenting Mary Queen of Scots' bedroom on the second floor (Figs. 2a and b).¹⁹ Another reference from the Chatsworth building accounts relating to Hardwick occurs in 1693 when Mr Vitti was employed for 'grinding colours and painting at Hardwick'.²⁰

Nicholas Cooper has speculated that these changes were aimed at helping to preserve Hardwick as a house suitable for a royal visit by William III and his wife, Mary (herself of course descended from Mary Queen of Scots). The enhancement of the Mary Queen of Scots bedroom in particular helped to demonstrate the family's ancestral connections with the House of Stuart and their legitimacy and pre-eminence under the new political order.

Fig. 1. Plan of Hardwick New Hall c.1764.





Figs. 2a & b. Seventeenth-century doors at Hardwick New Hall *Ben Cowell*.

HARDWICK IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Although the details of the work overseen by Talman at Hardwick remain vague, there is other evidence to suggest that the house continued to be valued and used by the family as an alternative residence to Chatsworth. In March 1697 a member of the Duke's household wrote to his father James Whildon, the agent at Hardwick, to give him advance warning of a possible visit by the Duchess and her retinue:

My Lord Duke intends to send my Lady Duchess and part of ye Family into Derbyshire some time in Aprill, but I am not certain whether to Hardwick or Chatsworth, some think to Chatsworth, and others think to Hardwick, to be ye further from Haddon to prevent expence.²¹

The Duke's mind had still not been settled in April, when Whildon was advised that 'some Beer ought to

be brewed as soon as can be at both Houses, for if the Family or any part of it happens to go downe'.²²

For much of the eighteenth century Hardwick was used only as a temporary residence by the Dukes of Devonshire. The 2nd Duke (1672–1729) made regular visits after his inheritance in 1707, but these tended to be for short stays only. A minimal household staff was maintained at Hardwick in this period, with additional labour employed as required, such as in 1713 when £1 was paid for 'Helpers when his Grace came and went'.²³ Visits by the 2nd Duke necessitated extra payments for provisions, such as the £26 5s. 5d. spent in 1710 to cover a stay of two and a half weeks, as well as additional expenditure on cleaning the house, 'airing' and mending furniture, and purchasing extra blankets.²⁴ In 1714 payments were needed for building work when a 'great wind' toppled a stack of chimneys and one of

the stone coats of arms, which fell through the roof and into the Long Gallery.²⁵ But aside from such one-off expenses, and from regular maintenance work such as painting walls and replacing windows, the 2nd Duke made little or no architectural contribution to the house.

Similarly, although the 3rd Duke (1698–1755) made regular short visits to the Hall, little was spent on improvements to the building under his patronage. Maintenance of the roof required much attention in these years. In 1733 £14 2s. 6d. was paid on re-roofing one of the turrets, while Jeffrey Carpenter was employed in securing a sunken beam in the Long Gallery ceiling.²⁶ Lead worth £111 was purchased in 1736 and laid on the roof by the estate plumber, Francis Mellor, who was at work again in the following year on the turret roofs.²⁷ In 1744 Mellor was paid £40 1s. 1d. for casting and laying more than 15 tons of ‘new sheet lead on the roof of Hardwick new house’, while John Whitworth the blacksmith was employed to affix large iron bars to one of the beams in the house.²⁸ Payments for new leads on the roof continued to be made in 1747, 1748 and 1749, indicating a fairly major programme of maintenance to the roof.²⁹ Other internal improvements may have included the introduction of servants’ bells: in April 1754 Jason Rhodes was paid for ‘hanging a Bell in ye Drawing Room’.³⁰

The only other change of note in the 3rd Duke’s time was the decision to begin the gradual demolition of the Old Hall. Although regular payments continued to be made to the maintenance of the Old Hall throughout the eighteenth century, parts of the building started to be removed and the materials sold at this time. The earliest reference to the deliberate demolition of the Old Hall can now be taken back to 1745, when labourers were paid 14s. 4d. for ‘laying up Bricks in ye Tennis Court’.³¹ In 1747 Peter Olerenshaw began the task of removing ‘some of the old house roof’, and in 1751 the Tennis Court was pulled down and the timber and iron sold for £39 18s. 11d. ³² More demolition work was carried out in 1756–7, no doubt connected with the sale in 1757 of £306 6s. 9d. of old

lead, iron, plaster, wainscot and doors from the Old Hall.³³ A payment for ‘Ale for workmen at Pulling down p[ar]t of the Old house 3s 5d’ in 1767 further implies that the demolition of the Old Hall was a gradual process, carried out over a number of years.³⁴

HARDWICK UNDER THE 5TH DUKE

Like his predecessors, the 4th Duke of Devonshire (1720–64) was a reasonably regular visitor to Hardwick, but no record has been found of any major architectural alterations to the New Hall when it was in his possession. In 1764 his son succeeded as the 5th Duke (1748–1811) aged 16. In 1768 he was sent on the grand tour.³⁵ The Receiver of the Devonshire estates in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Alexander Barker, made some rough calculations of the annual outgoings at both Chatsworth and Hardwick in the absence of the Duke’s household. He estimated that £2,000 *per annum* was needed to keep Chatsworth going at this time, while £400 *per annum* was required for Hardwick.³⁶ In fact, actual annual expenditure on the house frequently fell below this level throughout the century, although it was to considerably exceed it as a consequence of the 5th Duke’s improvements to the house in the 1780s and 1790s.

The impression taken away by many visitors to Hardwick in the later eighteenth century was that the house continued to remain largely unused long after the 5th Duke had attained his majority and taken charge of the property in 1769. Lady Sykes, visiting in 1796, observed that the Duke ‘very seldom comes here, when he does the Servants He brings live at board Wages in rooms by the Stables’. She noted that the house was inhabited by a skeleton staff of just a housekeeper and maid.³⁷ Certainly it is true that there was little need for a large permanent household at Hardwick at this time. In 1786 there were just three permanent estate workers living in or near the house: Samuel Brailsford the park keeper,

John Hall the under keeper, and Elizabeth Brailsford the housekeeper, who lived in the habitable section of the Old Hall.³⁸ But in fact, soon after his marriage to Lady Georgiana Spencer in 1774, the 5th Duke and his family made regular and fairly lengthy visits to Hardwick, usually for a few months at a time. Winter and spring were the preferred times of the year for visits, with the family often arriving in October and staying at Hardwick until Christmas and beyond. Duchess Georgiana was especially fond of Hardwick, and visits by the family coincided with something of a revival in the ancient customs of the house. In 1774 it was said that prayers were read in the chapel for the first time in many years, while in November 1797 the Duchess's daughter wrote of a dance held in the entrance hall of the New Hall in honour of a cousin's birthday, which she learned was 'the first dance here since my papa's grandfather [the 3rd Duke]'.³⁹ According to the household accounts for January 1798 the music for this dance cost £1 1s., while music was also provided for two other balls that year at a cost of £8 8s.⁴⁰

Such new-found delight in Hardwick's old-fashioned qualities, however, was tempered by a desire to improve upon the domestic comforts of a house that had seen little internal alteration in the previous seventy years. New fittings for the domestic quarters were an immediate priority. Visits by the Duke and Duchess led to payments for new mats for the floors in the bed chambers, extra pieces of furniture, and the regular employment of the services of an upholsterer.⁴¹ New curtains were also needed, since, as Duchess Georgiana explained in a letter written from Hardwick in 1781,

The wind is wonderfully high and according to the custom of all old houses, our window curtains are about four yards too short, & of the consistency of table cloaths, which is rather thin as there are no shutters anywhere in the house – we are to have some reasonable curtains by Monday next – & our only fear is that the windy weather will be over before they come.⁴²

Humphry Repton, writing a few years later of a stay

at Hardwick, noted the loose arras on the walls, which

seemed in motion owing to the very stormy night, the wind being but half excluded by the ill constructed casements of Elizabethan date.⁴³

In June 1779 John Shooter was paid 1s. for 'going to Hardwick and putting up curtains in the new house', while in February 1781 Samuel Bryan received £9 6s. 8d. for 140 yards of 'Green China' cloth for 'three large festoon Window Curtains for the Dining Room' and other expenses connected with putting these curtains up.⁴⁴ Further alterations were associated with repairs to the bell system in 1787, when John Shooter the blacksmith was paid 6d for three days' work 'making holes through the walls and hanging the bells', and another shilling for 'mending a bell in the Yellow Room'.⁴⁵

The most important expenditure on Hardwick under the 5th Duke, however, was his patronage of an extensive range of repairs to the fabric of the building. Initially, these repairs were confined to the regular employment of a plasterer, Thomas Nicholls, who carried out the restoration of plasterwork in a number of different rooms over the course of two decades. Nicholls's first appearance in the Hardwick accounts was in May 1766, when he was paid £1 2s. 2d. for 'repairing the cieling at the Top of the Long Gallery at Hardwick Hall' plus additional work.⁴⁶ It is likely that the Nichollses were a noted local family of craftsmen, since a Daniel Nicholls had been employed in 1761 for plastering in the ground-floor cloisters (the colonnaded walkways running between the main towers on the east and west faces of the house), and in 1764 for plastering up the park lodge while Robert Nicholls was later paid for painting at the Hall in 1784.⁴⁷ Thomas Nicholls continued his plastering work in 1770, when he received £12 5s. 6d. for plastering the 'Ceiling & Georges Bedchamber & the outer Evidence room 1770'.⁴⁸ In 1778 he was busy 'shooting the great Stair Case' at a cost of £9 12s. while the following year he received £10 2s. for



Fig. 3. The ceiling of the Long Gallery. The marks show evidence of alterations and repairs to the plasterwork.

Ben Cowell.

‘repairing the ceiling in the State Room’ (the High Great Chamber).⁴⁹ A detailed voucher for this work gives some insight into Nicholls’s methods. In three weeks in January he was paid, along with his assistant and an apprentice, for making a scaffold, pulling down the existing plaster ceiling, and putting new laths in place. In February the three-man team began the task of laying on the plaster, as well as ‘mending the walls in the State room, & walling & plaistering the window bottoms in too terrets’ [*sic*]. The work on the ceiling continued into the first week of March, and the job was finished on 16 March 1779 after a week spent ‘mending & washing the cornish in the State room, and mending Sundry places’.⁵⁰

Nicholls was at work again in 1780. From February to May of that year he and his assistant replastered the ceilings of the Long Gallery and the ‘Best Staircase’ (Fig. 3). The first task again was to erect scaffolding and then to pull down the existing plasterwork. Over the course of nine weeks several

coats of plaster were applied, and the entire effect finished with a coat of whitewash. For this work he was paid a total of £16 os. 8d.⁵¹ In 1781 he was whitewashing and ‘mending’ in the Servants Hall, and in 1783 he was employed to plaster in two of the garrets.⁵² His next phase of employment at Hardwick was in 1786 when he was paid £8 3s. 6d. for plasterwork done to the Long Gallery, the Keeper’s Lodge and Great Hall. In the Long Gallery he was at work ‘pulling up part of the Long Gallery floor’, and then ‘pulling down a partition . . . and part of a plaster floor’. In May 1786 he was at work with his labourer ‘lating up & plastering a double partition’ in the Long Gallery and replastering the plaster floor. In between work in the Long Gallery, the work in the Great Hall included removing the tapestries and helping to erect a scaffold, and 22 days replastering and whitewashing the Keeper’s Lodge.⁵³ Nicholls’s final entry in the Hardwick accounts was a payment of £1 13s. 6d. in December 1787 for ‘Blacking the Fireplaces & mending & whitewashing sundry places &c’.⁵⁴ Aside from Nicholls’s plasterwork, the only other major architectural repairs of this period relate to the renovation of the cloisters in 1770–1, at a combined cost of £64 11s. 8d.⁵⁵

JOHN CARR AT HARDWICK

1785–1791

A more systematic approach to the house began around 1785–6, however, when the architect John Carr began a seven-year commission that was to see a much more extensive campaign of architectural restoration in the new Hall. Carr worked on the estates of several Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire landowners, who could trace a lineage ultimately back to Bess of Hardwick herself: the Duke of Portland at Welbeck,⁵⁶ Portland’s brother Lord Edward Bentinck (who was responsible for moves to build Assembly Rooms and a grandstand in Nottingham),⁵⁷ and the Duke of Kingston at

Thoresby.⁵⁸ Carr's associations with the Dukes of Devonshire dated as far back as the 1740s, when he worked at Kirby Hall, Yorkshire, with the 5th Duke's grandfather, the 3rd Earl of Burlington, and was cemented in the 1770s and 80s by his work for the 5th Duke's uncles, Lord George Cavendish (at Holker and Latimers) and Lord John Cavendish (at Billing).⁵⁹ For the 5th Duke Carr built the Assembly Rooms in the Crescent at Buxton c.1780–90,⁶⁰ and supervised redecoration of the private apartments at Chatsworth, c.1782–4, where he was responsible for the main structural alterations as well as the decoration of chimney pieces, door-cases and windows, and the addition of several ornate pier tables.⁶¹

Carr probably came to Hardwick no more than a few days each year during the period of his commission. Two visits must have been made in 1788, since John Shooter, a whitesmith, was paid 2s. on 9 April 1788 for 'all Day Cutting Ceilings and floors &c for Mr Carr to inspect,' while on 11 December of the same year Thomas Sykes, a carpenter, was paid 12s. for '4 days attending Mr Carr'.⁶² Thomas Sykes was also paid 9s. in September 1789 for '3 Days attending Mr Carr', a visit that was also recorded in the pocket book of Lexey Malinson, the Hardwick estate steward.⁶³ Carr returned again in April 1790 when Thomas Sykes received 10s. 6d. for '3 days attending Mr Carr at Keeper's Hous'.⁶⁴

The craftsmen employed to carry out Carr's instructions appear on vouchers covering seven years, 1785 to 1791, all of which have Carr's signature at the bottom. It is likely that these men were hired directly by Carr, although Thomas Mellor the plumber and glazier may well have been a relative of Francis Mellor, the estate plumber and glazier for most of the mid-eighteenth century, who made his last appearance in the building accounts in 1784.⁶⁵ During this seven-year period Carr's work absorbed just over £1,226 in payments: more than three times the expected annual outgoings of the house at this time. Regular annual payments were made to John Ball, the mason, and Thomas Sykes, the carpenter, as

well as the plasterers Thomas Allen and John and Joseph Brocklehurst. These men were given a variety of jobs around the house and the estate, most of which were aimed at renovating the living quarters and modernising the facilities available to the 5th Duke and his family. Plaster walls and ceilings were replaced in the Long Gallery, Dining Room, State Room and Great Hall, while the suite of service rooms on the ground floor, such as the kitchens and the servants' hall, were replastered and fitted with new fireplaces and furniture. Internal structural changes were confined to the building of a new water closet, and new work outside Mary Queen of Scots' Room, and it is possible that Carr was responsible for the insertion of the floor into the two-storey chapel in order to create a new servants' room. External repairs were mostly carried out by John Ball, who renovated the decorative stonework on the roof. Other building work on the estate supervised by Carr included the building of a bridge in the park, repairs to the ponds, and the erection of a new house for the park keeper.

The earliest recorded evidence of Carr's employment at Hardwick is in a voucher dated April 1785 recording payment to Thomas Allen for work at Hardwick, which has Carr's signature at the bottom. Allen received £35 5s. 2d. for '1935 [cubic] feet 7 inches of molded work in the hall', as well as for 55 square yards of 'plain white wall', 115 square yards of ceiling work, and 78 square yards of plaster flooring in the Long Gallery.⁶⁶ The following June he was employed to pull down the hall ceiling, for whitewashing and blacking some fireplaces in September, and for plastering and whitewashing in October, for which work he was paid £2 10s. 10d. Allen's work in the Long Gallery in 1785 and the Great Hall in 1786 was presumably carried out in association with that of Thomas Nicholls, who was responsible for much of the repair work in the Long Gallery and Great Hall in 1786, and continued to work at the house until 1787. Thomas Sykes the carpenter was also first employed by Carr in 1785,

when he was paid for making a gate in the park, repairing the brewhouse and pump, and helping with the ponds. In April 1786 Sykes was set to work assisting the repair of the Long Gallery floor, erecting scaffolding for the use of the plasterers, framing ‘partitions’ (frames for plaster), and fixing deal boards. When the work in the Long Gallery finished at the end of May, Sykes was set to task in the estate slaughterhouse, mending the floors and making new inner and outer doors. June and July were also spent partly in the east and west colonnades on the ground floor of the house, fixing gutters and putting in a new roof beam. In October more carpentry work was needed in the Long Gallery when ‘a pair of foulding doors’ were hung to replace the former doors between the Long Gallery and the Withdrawing Room, and architraves were fitted.⁶⁷

Aside from plasterwork and carpentry, Carr was also responsible for repairs to the stonework. John Ball, Carr’s mason, was first at work at Hardwick in 1786 when he was paid £8 2s. 5d. for work at the slaughterhouse.⁶⁸ In 1786–7 Ball carried out repairs to the masonry at a cost of just under £100. Most of this was for materials and labour in restoring the stonework on the rooftop and mending the flues of several chimneys, as well as for paving work on pathways around the house and in the stableyard. The work on the rooftop included ‘272 feet 6 of Chimney Cornices’ at £6 16s. 3d., and for working 1,223 cubic feet of plain ashlar stone ‘included in the new chimney tops’, at £25 9s. 9d. The purpose of this work was probably to do no more than to improve the heating in the main rooms of the house, as Ball was also paid for ‘contracting with stone work many of the chimneys within the rooms to prevent their smoking’. The rest of Ball’s payment related to the construction of a bridge on the estate at the cost of £19 18s. 1d.⁶⁹

From 1788 to 1789 a new phase in Carr’s work at Hardwick began. Substantial payments on repairs were made in these years, and Carr’s craftsmen were employed more or less on a full-time basis. From January to March 1788 John Ball was carrying out

mason’s work in Lexey Malinson’s apartment, mainly setting a new fireplace and chimney piece, and paving floors. From 8 March to 5 May Ball was again employed on major restoration work on the rooftop of the house. Much of this was a continuation of his work the previous year at the chimneys, replacing cornices and stonework in plain ashlar. In addition, he was paid for replacements of the decorative coronets and Bess of Hardwick’s ‘E.S.’ initials on the balustrade, as well as for putting a blocking course of stone directly behind the coronets and letters. Ball’s other duties this year included repairing the decorative window mullions in the ‘nursery’ (the top floor mezzanine above the Withdrawing Room) (Fig. 4), repairs at the ponds, and walling and flagging at several bridges.⁷⁰



Fig. 4. The ‘nursery’ in the attic above the Withdrawing Room, replastered during the repairs supervised by John Carr. *Ben Cowell.*

Thomas Sykes, the carpenter, and Thomas Allen, the plasterer, were also busy at Hardwick in 1788. Sykes was employed in April 1788 to erect scaffolding in the Drawing Room, as well as to provide deal laths for the plasterers. For much of the rest of the year Sykes was employed to repair several 'floors'. Carpentry work was also needed to the roof. On 3 May Sykes and eight other men were employed '[t]o Puling down & getting Beams down', and later in the month to 'Repairing roof cieling'. On 7 June four men were paid for six days' work each 'To puding in the Roof beam & making good the roof', and on the 20 June three men were paid for similar work 'To Lining Middle Storey floor & puding in New beam'. Meanwhile an explicit reference to the location of Sykes' work is provided by the payment on 14 June of 4s 'to Lining Passeg floor betwixt state room & Galerey', and a week later 'to Lining Beams puding in Scilight'. The first week in July saw repairs to the State Room floor, 'puding on irons &c' (joist hangers, still visible today) and to the cloister roof. Then in August Sykes's attention shifted to the Drawing Room, where he was paid for putting up wainscoting, and 'puting morgerts Round Drawing room floor for Mating'. It might be assumed that 'morgerts' were 'margins' for the edges of the mats that lined the floor of the Dining Room, as they do still, and another reference to them in Sykes's accounts suggests they were made from poplar wood. Similar work was next carried out by Sykes in the 'Black Room', formerly the Ship Bedchamber on the first floor (now known as the Cut Velvet Bedroom). In September Sykes was supervising work on several doors in the house, in the attic, the bedchambers and in the turrets on the rooftop. The arrival of the 5th Duke and his family in November 1788 created more work for Sykes in repairing a dresser in the kitchen, making a dressing table in the 'Cloakrooms', making some packing cases and building a cupboard in the Pastry. One curious reference occurs towards the end of Sykes' account for 1788, with a payment of 3s. for 'Supporing Hall

& Chappels floors'. The nature of the 'supports' Sykes provided in this context is unclear, but it is perhaps significant that Sykes refers to 'Chappels floors' in the plural.⁷¹ Thomas Allen, meanwhile, seems only to have been at Hardwick for half the time that Sykes was in 1788. In August he was at work plastering and whitewashing fireplaces and plastering in 'the Dining Room and the Room adjoining'. The garrets (the top floor mezzanine again) were replastered in September, when work was also carried out on the staircases. In October the Servants' Hall was replastered, while similar work was carried out in the stables. In total Allen was responsible for 498 square yards of new ceiling, 662 square yards of plaster floors, 687 square yards of plasterwork on 'partitions', 24 square yards of similar work on walls, and 246 cubic feet of plaster mouldings.⁷² The supplies for this work came via the Chesterfield Canal, as indicated by a payment on 19 August 1788 for the wharfage costs of 49 tons of plaster.⁷³

Improvements to the house in 1789 included Sykes's repairs to 'Mr Fletchers room' and 'Mr Malinson's hous', the residences of estate stewards. The most significant alteration in the house in 1789, however, was the insertion of a new Joseph Bramah water closet, at a cost of £11 8s. 3d. (Fig. 5).⁷⁴ Thomas Sykes was paid £1 11s. 8d. in June for planks for the 'floor over whatercloset', and in the following month set two men to work 'straightening & lining floors making doorways to closet &c'. Sykes was in fact at work for most of August at the 'closet floor', and 'attending the man from London aboutg closet', while Thomas Mellor was employed to fix lead pipes for the closet in July and August.⁷⁵

From September to December 1789 Carr employed two new plasterers, John and Joseph Brocklehurst. For most of September the Brocklehursts supervised plastering work in the Long Gallery and garrets, moving on in October to the 'housekeeper's room', the chapel, the areas below and at the bottom of the stairs, and in the 'pasidge leading to the closet'.



Fig. 5. The water closet at Hardwick, located on the first floor (south-east corner) *Ben Cowell*.

In November they were again at work in the ‘chappell pasidge’, as well as in the cook’s room, the kitchen passage, and the Long Gallery. Further speculative evidence for the creation of a new servants’ hall from the former two-storey chapel is given by the payment which the Brocklehursts received for work done on 16–21 November for ‘plaistering the alterations in servants hall kitchen old servants hall and pasige leading to cellar’. The reference to an old (and by implication also a ‘new’) servants hall lends weight to the theory that it was around this time that the chapel was divided by an inserted floor. Duchess Georgiana had remarked upon ‘the odd form &

furniture of the Chapel’ in 1774, presumably when it was still in its original state, and a remark by the 6th Duke (born in 1790), that the Chapel had been ‘open’ in his youth, tends to confirm Girouard’s speculation that the floor must have been inserted no later than c.1800.⁷⁶ The Brocklehursts’ work continued into December 1789, when they were paid for ‘two men Whitewashing in staircase Chapel and pasiges and Servants Halls [*sic*]’.⁷⁷

At about the same time Thomas Sykes, the carpenter, was at work in a number of significant locations. In September, aside from helping out on repairs to a road leading to the kitchen, he was preparing more ‘margins’ for mats and making rails on which to hang tapestries. These tapestry rails were put up in ‘Abrahams room’ and the nursery. ‘Abrahams room’ was the Withdrawing Room adjacent to the High Great Chamber, where the Abraham tapestries now hanging in the Green Velvet Room were formerly hung.⁷⁸ Further repairs to this room in this month included a payment for ‘Making good the doorway betwixt state room and abrahams room’, where the crude nature of the alterations to the sixteenth-century wainscot by Carr’s workmen is still visible. Sykes was also responsible for repairs to the 5th Duke’s bed, including the construction of a new head board for it in early October. Towards the end of October work was being carried out in the garrets, where Sykes’s labourers were ‘Casing Garret doors seting on handles & boults puding up centor to wall, puding up old shelves & pins’. By November the carpenters were back in the Long Gallery, ‘Making moulds & ruts for plasterers for galery ceiling’, as well as putting up new shelves in the housekeeper’s pantry and making a cupboard in the passage leading to the servants’ hall. More repairs to general furniture and fittings continued in December, including payments for hanging some swing doors, repairing the steward’s table, buying and fitting new handles and locks, making a cupboard, shelves and an oven door for the kitchen and putting up a cupboard in the pantry. It is

possible that some of the living quarters in the Old Hall were being shut up at this time, as there was also an entry in Sykes's account for 'Shifting things from old hous', and later in the month for 'shifting furniture'. In addition Sykes was responsible for the purchase of '12 Elm chairs with leather bottoms' for £7 4s. A long and detailed list of the materials purchased and used by Sykes was written up as part of his account, the cost of these materials alone coming to £146 7s. 8d.⁷⁹

John Ball and his team of masons continued to work regularly for Carr in 1789, as recorded by Byng when he visited the Hall in that year and noted the 'many masons here now at work in the inside'.⁸⁰ Much of the masons' time was expended on jobs around the estate, such as on the troughs in the brewhouse, walling and paving in unrecorded locations, and repairs in the 'Butler's pantry'. From May to August there were payments for much work 'cutting holes for Beams &c', again in unspecified places, although perhaps these beams were intended for the creation of new floors for the water closet and the chapel. Stone was taken from the quarry and worked up by Ball and his team on site, as suggested by payments for 'hewn work' for a variety of stone products, including ashlar, cornices, steps, coping, window mullions and paving squares for the entrance to the Hall. From March to September Ball was also at work at the Carr ponds in the park, repairing the pond heads, a weir and a bridge.⁸¹

Carr returned to Hardwick in 1790 to attend to work at the 'keeper's house'.⁸² This was the house of John Hall, the underkeeper and later keeper of the park, which seems to have been completely renovated with new door-cases, new stairs, new shelves and windows, and new wainscotting.⁸³ John Ball also supervised the stonework in Hall's house, at the chimney-piece and hearth, while Thomas Mellor, the plumber, was paid for fitting new window glass.⁸⁴ Towards the end of 1790 John Ball and Thomas Sykes were working together at the wash house and laundry. Ball was responsible for new chimney pieces

for the 'Stewards Parlour' and the laundry, as well as for some new 'mangle weights'. Sykes meanwhile was at work trussing beams and repairing doors and a cupboard.⁸⁵ Work inside the house in 1790 included a payment in October of £3 12s. to a Mr Faulkner for 'papering the Rooms'.⁸⁶

Carr's name appears for the last time on Thomas Sykes' voucher for carpentry work done in 1791. This included payments for new chairs, new door-cases in the house, repairs to the dog kennel doors and roof, 'fixing seats in necessaries' and making packing cases.⁸⁷ This payment effectively marked the end of Carr's work at Hardwick, although new repairs continued to be carried out. In 1793 the Drawing Room was undergoing redecoration work, with new mats provided by John Finney, a cabinet maker in Derby, at £8 8s., and printed calico cloths for the furniture from Messrs Peel Yates & Co at £23 11s.⁸⁸ In December 1797 four cases of pictures and some tapestries were removed from Devonshire House and transferred to Hardwick.⁸⁹ The house and estate continued to be in regular use by the 5th Duke and his family, who were resident at Hardwick, for example, from 29 October 1797 to 8 February 1798.⁹⁰ The following year the house was used for a week by the newly-wed daughter and son-in-law of Lady Hunloke from Wingerworth Hall, Derbyshire, for whom the Duke of Devonshire ordered that 'they should be supplied with everything the place affords'.⁹¹ Regular payments were made for furniture to the house in the first years of the nineteenth century, as well as in 1802 for 'W & A Dutton Dance Playing' £4 4s.⁹² After the death of Duchess Georgiana in 1806, however, there is less evidence that the 5th Duke was in attendance at the house. Aside from one visit in October 1809 with his second wife, formerly Lady Elizabeth Foster, there is little to suggest that the 5th Duke ever returned to Hardwick. A visit in 1809 was suddenly sprung upon the Hardwick steward Thomas Clarke by the London agent William Bromehead, who ordered Clarke to prepare the house as best as possible at just four days' notice.



Fig. 6. Hardwick Old Hall, as depicted in the *European Magazine* (1799).

Bromehead added, however, that he would not be attending himself since the 5th Duke planned to stay for one week only.⁹³

While the New Hall was extensively modernised under the 5th Duke, the nearby Old Hall was being deliberately abandoned and left to function purely as a picturesque landscape feature. As more and more of the structure was removed, so the building became increasingly unstable. In December 1781 William Bunting was paid 2s. for examining the safety of the Giants' Chamber, and in September of the following year he supervised the propping-up of the walls of the room, using timbers felled in the park.⁹⁴ As late as 1789 the housekeeper continued to live in a wing of the building, but there was perhaps little point in continuing this tradition after the extensive repairs to the living quarters in the main house by John Carr and his craftsmen. The reference

to 'shifting things from old house' in 1789 may well therefore indicate the final abandonment of the housekeeper.⁹⁵ As some support to this theory, in 1793 Carr's mason John Ball received a payment for 'pulling down shed old house and walling the doorway up'.⁹⁶ Further evidence for the deliberate ruination of the Old Hall in the 1790s lies in the payment to William Hardwick in 1793 of £1 9s. 2d. for 'planting in the Old House, paddock &c'.⁹⁷ By 1799 a print in the *European Magazine* showed the south face of the Old Hall surrounded by trees, creating a picturesque view of the house's ruination (Fig. 6).

HARDWICK AND THE MYTH OF THE OLDEN TIME

Hardwick came alive one more time before the 5th Duke's death in 1811, with a grand entertainment thrown in the grounds of the house on the occasion of the 21st birthday of Lord Hartington. It is not known whether the 5th Duke or his son attended this event, but it is likely they did so given the amount spent on the preparations. Most of this went towards the food and drink, which included £224 18s. laid out on wine, £159 14s. on ale and porter, £126 on rum, £166 15s. 6d. for '5 fat oxen' for roasting, and £101 19s. 3d. on meat. In addition the revellers were entertained by a fireworks display laid on (by E. Petro) at a cost of £20.⁹⁸ The event was remembered with some notoriety as a result of William Howitt's account published nearly three decades later in 1838. Howitt described a scene of chaotic revelry, with the bodies of inebriated guests lying strewn all over the park, and the walled gardens besieged by a throng of noisy and overexcited locals. In the front court of the house a huge feast was underway attended by those tenants and local dignitaries lucky enough to receive an invitation. This feast was only momentarily disturbed when a man who had attempted to scale the wall of the court fell to his death after one of the decorative spikes gave way and crushed him; but according to Howitt 'the body was soon conveyed to an outbuilding, and the tide of riot rolled on,' notwithstanding a further fatality following an unwise leap over the top of the high wall in the park.⁹⁹ For Howitt the occasion was a feudal celebration reminiscent of 'old England', a decidedly voguish subject matter.

A plate in Joseph Nash's popular *Mansions of England in the Olden Time* (1839–40) also evoked the Elizabethan associations of the house, depicting a travelling party arriving at the New Hall gates at night, illuminated only by moonlight and blazing torches.¹⁰⁰ In reality, Hardwick in this period was being rapidly modernised and made fit for purpose by the 5th Duke's heirs: the 6th Duke, who oversaw

the removal of many pieces of furniture and tapestries from Chatsworth to Hardwick, and the 7th Duke, who commissioned a modern service wing to the north side of the house by Charles Lindley of Mansfield.¹⁰¹ Under the 6th Duke in particular the house gained a reputation as being surprisingly comfortable for its age: Princess Victoria, visiting in 1832, is said to have commented that despite its obvious antiquity the house was 'yet so liveable that it looks as if it is not as old as it is'.¹⁰²

As has been demonstrated, however, none of this was new. Hardwick had been subject to more or less constant repair, maintenance and modernisation since its earliest days, and certainly for much of the eighteenth century, giving the lie to the notion that it was an untouched gem of the Elizabethan era. Ironically, it was only through fairly constant repairs and enhancements that the house was able to retain its appeal as an antique curiosity of the Olden Time.

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NOTES

- 1 Lucy Worsley, 'Bolsover Castle in the Eighteenth Century', *Georgian Group Journal*, XI 2001, 169–184.
- 2 Mark Girouard, *Hardwick Hall*, National Trust, 1996, 39–40, 42.
- 3 Brian Wragg (ed. Giles Worsley), *The Life and Works of John Carr of York*, York, 2000, 153–54.
- 4 B. Stallybrass, 'Bess of Hardwick's Buildings and Building Accounts', *Archaeologia*, 64 (1913), pp. 347–398; D. N. Durant and P. Riden (eds.), 'The Building of Hardwick Hall Part 1: The Old Hall, 1587–1591', *Derbyshire Record Society*, IV, 1980; D. N. Durant and P. Riden (eds.), 'The Building of Hardwick Hall Part 2: The New Hall, 1591–98', *Derbyshire Record Society*, IX, 1984.
- 5 Chatsworth, Archives [hereafter cited as CA], Hardwick MS 29. The accounts refer to Painter's 'book of building', which unfortunately does not appear to have survived.
- 6 Girouard, *op. cit.*, 37–8.
- 7 CA, Hardwick MSS 33, 36, and 16, Brief Day Book 1668–87.
- 8 CA, Hardwick MSS 35, 42a.
- 9 CA, Hardwick MSS 38.
- 10 CA, Brief Day Book 1655–68; Brief Day Book 1668–87.
- 11 CA, Brief Day Book 1655–68; *ibid.*, Hardwick MSS 38, September 1663.
- 12 Girouard, *op. cit.*, 38–9.
- 13 CA, Chatsworth Building Accounts, Volume 1.
- 14 CA, Hardwick MSS 39.
- 15 CA, Chatsworth Building Accounts, Volume 1, 24 March 1687/8. The full entry reads: 'Imprested then to Richard Derrey to disburse for my honble Lord's use at Hardwick to pay for husbandry, house and park charges, & for some alterations in my Lord's chamber, & ordinary repairs, as appears by a note thereof in a quarter of a yeare from Christmas to this day the sum of £52 7s. 1d.'
- 16 CA, Brief Day Book 1668–1687, 'A Breefe of Richard Derrey's Disbursements . . . Lady Day 1686 to 1687'.
- 17 Francis Thompson, *History of Chatsworth*, London, 1949, 34; Howard Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600–1840*, New Haven and London, 1995, 216–7.
- 18 CA, Chatsworth Building Accounts, Volume 1. It is possible, however, that the reference is to a new door at the Old Hall, which was still in use at this time.
- 19 Girouard, *op. cit.*, 39.
- 20 CA, Chatsworth Building Accounts, Volume 2, Lady Day to Michelmas 1693.
- 21 CA, Whildon Collection, B v 17.
- 22 CA, AS 25. Unnumbered bundle.
- 23 CA, AS 1649.
- 24 CA, AS 1647 and 1122.
- 25 CA, AS 150 and 191.
- 26 CA, L/94/58.
- 27 Sheffield, Sheffield Archives [hereafter cited as SA], Bag C 496; CA, 193.
- 28 SA, Bag C 496.
- 29 SA, Bag C 496; CA, C25.
- 30 SA, Bag C 496.
- 31 SA, Bag C 496.
- 32 CA, C25 and C24.
- 33 SA, Bag C 496, 1756, 1757; CA, AS 194.
- 34 CA, Hardwick Vouchers, 1767.
- 35 John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701–1800*, New Haven and London, 1997, 296.
- 36 CA, AS 375.
- 37 Sledmere House, Yorkshire, MS *Lady Sykes' Journal of a Tour in 1796*; transcript held at National Trust East Midlands Regional Office, Clumber Park (Notts.).
- 38 CA, AS 556; C.B. Andrews (ed.), *The Torrington Diaries*, London, 1935, II, 30, 'The housekeeper was fetched from the old house' (1789).
- 39 CA, Family corresp. *temp.* 5th Duke, 32; CA Family corresp. *temp.* 5th Duke, 1412.
- 40 CA, C 184.
- 41 SA, Bag C 496.
- 42 John Cornforth, 'Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire', *Country Life*, CLXXXIX, August 24, 1995, 36–41.
- 43 Ann Gore and George Carter (eds.), *Humphry Repton's Memoirs*, Norwich, 2005, 105. Repton also recorded how on a night-time exploration of the house, he mistook an ailing member of the household at rest in bed for a corpse. 'The poor creature was still in a half-fainting state, and probably would not have been sought for by the servants but for my fancy of exploring the ghostly haunts of Cruel Bess of Hardwick!' [*ibid.*, 106].
- 44 CA, Laundry Room Voucher Box 1781.
- 45 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1787 (Voucher 599)
- 46 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1767 (Voucher 20).
- 47 SA, Bag C 496; CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1785.
- 48 SA, Bag C 496.

- 49 CA, AS 1005; CA, AS 1504.
 50 CA, AS 1504.
 51 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1780.
 52 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1781, 1783.
 53 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1786.
 54 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1787 (Voucher 598).
 55 SA, Bag C 496.
 56 Wragg, *op. cit.*, 218.
 57 Wragg, *op. cit.*, 185.
 58 J.H. Hodson, 'The Building and Alteration of the Second Thoresby House, 1767-1804', *Thoroton Society Record Series*, 21, 1962, 16-20.
 59 Wragg, *op. cit.*, 165-6, 40.
 60 Ivan Hall, 'Buxton, The Crescent', *Georgian Group Journal*, II, 1992, 40-55.
 61 Wragg, *op. cit.*, 40; Ivan Hall, 'A Neoclassical Episode at Chatsworth', *Burlington Magazine*, CXXII, June 1980, 400-414.
 62 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1788 (unnumbered) and 1789 (Voucher 400).
 63 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 400); CA, AS 533. The entry for Thursday 17 September 1789 records that 'Mr Carr came to Hardwick', while another note on Saturday 19 records that '[Mr Carr] Left and went to Chatsworth'
 64 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1790 (Voucher 334).
 65 His earliest appearance in the Hardwick accounts was in 1732 (CA, AS 192), his last in 1784 (CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1785).
 66 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1787.
 67 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1787.
 68 CA, AS 1068.
 69 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1787 (Voucher 595).
 70 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1788 (Voucher 562).
 71 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1788 (Voucher 563).
 72 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1788 (Voucher 561).
 73 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1788.
 74 CA, AS 1071.
 75 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 400), 1789 (Voucher 401).
 76 CA, Family corresp. *temp.* 5th Duke, 32; William George Spencer Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire, *Handbook to Chatsworth and Hardwick*, privately printed, 1846, Girouard, *op. cit.*, 42.
 77 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 398).
 78 Girouard, *op. cit.*, 68.
 79 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 400).
 80 *Torrington Diaries, cit.*, II, 30. His view on the carpenters' work was that it was 'only befitting a farm-house'.
 81 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 399).
 82 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1790 (Voucher 334).
 83 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1790 (Voucher 334).
 84 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1790 (Voucher 334).
 85 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1790 (Voucher 334).
 86 CA, AS 1072.
 87 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1791 (Voucher 357).
 88 CA, AS 1075; Geoffrey Beard and Christopher Gilbert (eds.), *Dictionary of English Furniture Makers 1660-1840*, Leeds, 1986, 300.
 89 CA, Family corresp. *temp.* 5th Duke, 1420.
 90 CA, C184.
 91 CA, AS 558.
 92 CA, C184.
 93 Nottingham, Nottinghamshire Archive Office, WD 69 /q.
 94 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1780-1.
 95 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1789 (Voucher 400).
 96 CA, Hardwick Vouchers 1793.
 97 CA, L/91/8.
 98 CA, T34.
 99 W. Howitt, *The Rural Life of England*, London, 1838, I, 336.
 100 Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home*, New Haven and London, 1997, 48.
 101 CA, Hardwick Vouchers, 1859, Estate/50.
 102 James Lees Milne, *The Bachelor Duke*, London, 1991, 106.