

**The Household Accounts of William Cavendish,  
Lord Cavendish of Hardwick, 1597–1607**

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**The Household Accounts of  
William Cavendish,  
Lord Cavendish of Hardwick,  
1597–1607**

*Edited by*  
**Philip Riden**

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

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## **The Household Accounts of William Cavendish, Lord Cavendish of Hardwick, 1597–1607**

The Derbyshire Record Society is delighted to announce the publication of one of the most ambitious projects in its forty-year history, a three-part edition of an exceptionally important volume of household accounts preserved among the Devonshire Manuscripts at Chatsworth. The books are being published by kind permission of the Duke of Devonshire KCVO, CBE, DL and The Chatsworth Settlement Trust, and with the generous financial assistance of the Marc Fitch Fund.

The accounts (Devonshire MSS, HM/23 and 10A) were kept by officers of William Cavendish (1552–1626), second son but *de facto* heir of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury ('Bess of Hardwick'). They cover a ten-year period at the start of which William, married with three young children, was living with his widowed mother at Hardwick, where the New Hall was nearing completion. In 1598 they were able to move into the Hall, but William lost his first wife the same year. He remained single until 1604, when he married Elizabeth, the widow of Sir Richard Wortley, and a year later he was raised to the peerage as Lord Cavendish of Hardwick. When the accounts end, William's second wife was pregnant with their only child, his surviving son William (the future 2nd Earl of Devonshire) was being a troublesome teenager, and his daughter Frances was about to marry an Essex landowner's son whom she barely knew. His formidable mother was still alive in her early eighties.

These accounts provide a marvellous insight into a decade of family life at Hardwick. They tell us what the family ate and drank, what the doctor prescribed for them, what they wore, what books they read, what music they liked, what else they spent their very large income on, who they visited, who came to see them, and how they passed their leisure time. They also provide a day-to-day picture of William's public life as a senior administrator in Derbyshire and as an estate manager, and the work of his large staff of officials, servants and professional advisers.

But they do more than this: William spent half the year in London, at first in lodgings (at Mrs Fidget's in Fleet Street), later in a house in Holborn. When in London, William had business and social dealings with a wide circle of peers and gentry, judges and lawyers, City merchants and officials of the government and Royal Household. He worshipped at St Paul's Cathedral and went to the theatre. He lavished money on clothes and jewellery for his second wife, whose very expensive tastes he was happy to indulge, spent a fortune on his elevation to the House of Lords, and furnished his London home with exceptionally fine furniture, hangings and plate.

Public affairs also feature in the accounts, notably the succession of James VI of Scotland following the death of Queen Elizabeth, when William was concerned for the welfare of his niece, Lady Arbella Stuart.

In short, these accounts contain something for anyone interested in Derbyshire in the late Elizabethan and Jacobean period, in what life was really like in a great house, or in the life of the upper classes in London. There is a wealth of detail for specialists in the history of costume and jewellery, books and music, food and drink, medicine, earthenware, china and glass, silver plate, furnishings of all sorts, travel and transport, horses and horsemanship, farming and estate management, and almost any aspect of material culture and consumption.

The accounts are being published in three hardback volumes in Derbyshire Record Society series style. The first will contain an introduction of about 60 pages and comprehensive indexes running to 150 pages. The second and third, each of 416 pages, will contain the text, presented as a detailed calendar (virtually a transcript) in modern English. This is, therefore, a very big book and inevitably the price has to reflect that.

The work will be published in two stages in the summer and autumn of 2016. Parts 2 and 3 (the text, running to over 800 pages) will appear on 2 July at £50 each, or £30 to members of the Derbyshire Record Society. Part 1 (the introduction and indexes) will come out in October at £40, or £20 to members. Please order on the form overleaf.