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Living history

Chatsworth House has been home to the same family since 1549. In that time the house has welcomed kings and queens, prime ministers and politicians, and more recently bands and film crews.



The 12th Duke of Devonshire, Peregrine Cavendish, and his wife Amanda have lived at Chatsworth since 2006.

The Duke inherited the house on the death of his father in 2004. He says:

‘My family has lived here for over 450 years. The estate has been passed down the Cavendish family for 15 generations, and I now have the pleasure and responsibility to look after it for the next generation.’

Visitors often see him walking through the house and garden when it is open to the public. He says, ‘Chatsworth is a magical place, and I feel lucky to be able to share it with all of our visitors.’





The most beautiful house in England

Chatsworth is situated in the hills of Derbyshire, in the Midlands. Many people say it is the most beautiful house in England. It has nearly 300 rooms (with 17 staircases and 26 baths) and is set in 35,000 acres of land. It needs 500 staff to run. The art collection includes paintings by Raphael, van Dyck, and Rembrandt. The whole estate is worth about £500 million.

It costs approximately £5m a year to run Chatsworth, so the house has been open to the paying public since 1949, and in 2010 there were around 600,000 visitors. There are often art exhibitions, flower shows, horse trials, and sometimes concerts in the grounds.

The house also earns money from the film industry. **It is a favourite location for period films.** Chatsworth was used as Mr Darcy's house in the 2005 film of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Keira Knightley also starred in *The Duchess* here in 2008.





A house fit for a king!

Most English country houses were built during the 17th and 18th centuries by the aristocracy. The Duke likes to explain the historical background to Chatsworth. 'Visitors arrive, see this huge building in this vast parkland, and wonder why it is so big. The reason is that my ancestors built a house fit for a king. It was designed to impress, and to persuade royalty to visit.'

In 1686 the first Duke built a magnificent suite for a royal visit from King William and Queen Mary.

Unfortunately they didn't come. However, much later Edward VII was a frequent visitor between 1901 and 1910. George V and Queen Mary visited in 1913.

Many of the Cavendish family were politicians. One, William Cavendish, was Prime Minister from 1756 –1757. Today, families like the Cavendish's no longer have the same political influence, but their estates are still huge.