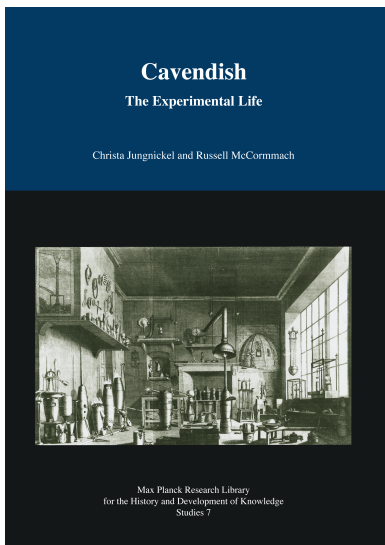


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Christa Jungnickel and Russell McCormach:

Family and Friends



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Chapter 4

Family and Friends

Marriage and Money

On 9 January 1729, Lord Charles Cavendish married Lady Anne de Grey, daughter of the duke of Kent. Charles was in his middle twenties instead of in his middle thirties, a more common age for younger sons of nobility to marry,¹ and Anne, who was born in 1706, was two years younger. We know nothing of the affection between Charles and Anne, but certainly wealth, rank, and respectability would have been considerations in this match. There were earlier connections between the two families too: as we saw in Chapter 1, Charles's and Anne's fathers came together on a Continental tour, and at the beginning of the previous century, Henry Grey, earl of Kent, married Elizabeth, granddaughter of Sir William Cavendish of Chatsworth.²

We begin this account of the new family with what we can speak of with confidence, money. Younger sons of the aristocracy customarily received £300 a year, which is what Charles received since 1725. His father intended for the annuity to be raised to £500 at his death, but he moved to plan ahead starting with Charles's marriage. In addition his father granted him the interest on £6000 and eventually the capital itself.³

The marriage settlement of Charles and Anne involved land as well as money. Following a practice that had been more common in the seventeenth century than in the eighteenth, the second duke of Devonshire devolved property on Charles and his heirs: tithes, rectories, and lands in Nottinghamshire and in Derbyshire. Charles received the rents in 1728 and the lands the following year. At the beginning the rents brought in somewhat over £1000 a year (out of which there were expenses), and after the enclosures of the 1760s and 1770s they increased considerably. Beyond the welcome income, Charles's property brought him intangible benefits in a society, in which "men were measured by their acres."⁴

At the time of his marriage, Charles had a substantial residence on Grosvenor Street off Grosvenor Square, a fashionable location in Westminster.⁵ The marriage settlement enabled

¹Lawrence Stone (1982, 42).

²George Edward Cokayne (1982, 3: cols. 173–174).

³Charles had just turned twenty-one when on 6 April 1725 his father settled on him a £300 annuity. He had use for it, for one week later he was returned as M.P. for Heytesbury. The £6000 paid 3.5% interest. The £500 annuity and the £6000 capital were determined by an earlier settlement, in 1678. *Devon. Coll.*, L/13/9, L/19/31, L/19/33, and L/19/34.

⁴*Devon. Coll.*, L/19/33. H.J. Habakkuk (1950, 15–16, 18, 20–24). J.H. Plumb (1963, 72).

⁵Charles Cavendish appears on the poor rolls of Westminster Parish of St. Margaret's in 1728, paying £5.5.0 annually, the same as the duke of Kent, his father-in-law, who had a house in the parish. Westminster Public Libraries, Westminster Collection, Accession no. 10, Document no. 343. Charles's address in 1729–32 was 48 Grosvenor Street, a three-story, brick, terrace house, with four windows on each floor, and with touches of elegance: extensive panelling, marble chimney pieces, and a "Great Stair Case" in the entrance hall. British History Online, "Grosvenor Street South" (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>).

Charles and Anne to acquire a country residence as well. Securities worth £12,000 and £10,000—Charles's due from his mother's estate and Anne's portion—were transferred to the trustees, who raised a sum for the purchase of the estate of George Warburton's. This consisted of three manners, Lilley, Hackwellbury, and Putteridge, which Charles and Anne made their home, together with several farms, located directly north of London, at about half the distance of Cambridge, in the adjacent counties of Bedford and Hertford.⁶ There was another provision in the married settlement from which Charles would benefit eventually: after the duke of Kent died—he died in 1740—Charles would receive interest on £12,000 left to Anne's trustees.

From the time of his marriage, Charles could probably count on an annual income of around £2000. We get an idea of what this income meant from Samuel Johnson, a professional man who rarely made above £300, who said that £50 was “undoubtedly more than the necessities of life require.” A gentleman was said to live comfortably on £500 and a squire on £1000.⁷ Cavendish's income enabled him to live comfortably, acquire books for his library, and pursue his scientific interests. Within the conventional financial arrangements of wealthy English families, the Cavendishes and the Greys combined to create what was in effect a modest scientific endowment for Charles.

In addition to his active life in the city, at court, and in Parliament, Charles took on responsibilities in the Royal Society, serving on his first committee two years after his election.⁸ The portrait of him included in this book gives us an idea of what he looked like around then (Fig. 4.1). There are two portraits of Anne, one of her together with two sisters, and one of her by herself and somewhat older (Fig. 4.2). Like Charles, she was slender, with distinctive features: large eyes, high rounded eyebrows, and dark hair. At the time of the portrait, she was evidently in good health, which was not to last. There is evidence that she was not strong before her marriage; in the summer before, the house account for the duke of Kent repeatedly recorded “Chair hire for Lady Anne,” while none of the duke's other daughters required chairs.⁹ In the winter of the following year she definitely was ill. Sophia, duchess of Kent, her stepmother, wrote to her father, the duke, that she had just dined at the Cavendish's: “Poor Lady Anne does not seem so well as when I saw her last. Her spirits are mighty low and she has no stomach at all. She has no return of spitting blood nor I don't think she coughs more than she did so that I hope this is only a disorder upon her nerves that won't last.”¹⁰ The next winter, 1730–31, was bitterly cold, colder, William Derham reported to the president of the Royal Society, than the winter of 1716, when the Thames froze over.¹¹ That winter, we believe, Charles and Anne went abroad, possibly in the company of his brother James.¹² From Paris, Anne wrote to her father that in Calais she had been very ill with a “great cold” and that she had been blooded and kept low to prevent

⁶Devon. Coll., L/19/33 and L/5/69.

⁷George Rudé (1971, 48, 61).

⁸On 17 July 1729, Cavendish was appointed to a committee to inspect the library and the collections. It met every Thursday from 24 July until 6 Nov. 1729, and on 11 Dec. it was ordered to continue its work. Minutes of Council, Royal Society 3:28–30, 34–36, 39, 55–56, 114–116.

⁹July 1728. House Account. To ye 28 December 1728,” Bedfordshire Record Office, Wrest Park Collection, L 31/200/1.

¹⁰Sophia, duchess of Kent to Henry, duke of Kent, 21 Feb. 1729/1730, Bedfordshire Record Office, Wrest Park Collection, L 30/8/39/5.

¹¹William Derham (1731/1733).

¹²James was at least abroad at the same time as Charles. On 10 Oct. 1731, James “came to Town from France.” *Weekly Register*, Oct. 16, 1731. BL Add Mss 4457, 76.

fever. She did not expect to see much of Paris for fear of being cold, and in any case they were about to leave the city for Nice.¹³

They would not have gone there as conventional tourists, for although Nice did become popular with English tourists, this did not happen until the second half of the eighteenth century. In 1731, Charles Cavendish was the only Englishman to stay in Nice who did not have commercial or diplomatic ties there, the only permanent English resident being the consul, who did double service as a spy on the French.¹⁴ Owing to the combination of Sun and sea, Nice was considered a suitable location for people convalescing from lung ailments,¹⁵ in all likelihood the reason Charles and Anne went there.

Perhaps her health did improve. In any case, about three months after leaving Paris, Anne conceived; in Nice on Sunday, 31 October 1731, she gave birth to her first child, named after her father, Henry de Grey. No birthplace could have been less predictive of the outcome: beginning life in a sleepy Mediterranean town of about 16,000 inhabitants situated among olive groves, Henry Cavendish grew up to be one of the most confirmed Londoners ever (Fig. 4.3).

In anticipation of Henry's birth, Charles asked the British consul at Turin for help in obtaining permission from the duke of Savoy for "one of the Vaudois Protestant Ministers" to come to Nice to baptize the infant. No doubt Charles knew that the closest region in which the Protestant religion could be practiced was the valleys of the Vaudois in Piedmont. There was a family connection, if coincidental: the Vaudois Protestants, historically a persecuted group, kept in close touch with another persecuted Protestant group, the Huguenots, to whom Charles was related through the Ruvignys. Cyprian Appia, who with his brother acted as chaplain in the British embassy in Turin, and who had studied at Oxford and was ordained as an Anglican priest, was sent to Nice on 15/26 October 1731. His services were performed under the express condition that the "baptism should be performed in a manner as little publick as well might be," reflecting the reserve of Charles and Anne, a trait which would be intensified in Henry Cavendish.¹⁶

The next stage of Charles and Anne's marriage is brief and ends sadly. A year and a half after their arrival on the Continent, they were back in France. From Lyon in the summer of 1732, Anne wrote to her father about her health and happiness. It was with her usual perfected penmanship, the letters large, uniform, and inclined at precisely the same angle, but her hand was unsteady, like that of an elderly person. Yet her fever had not returned, and she was so far recovered that she and Charles were going to Geneva the next day, for a three-day journey. If she handled that well, they would stay there two or three days and then go directly to Leiden. She closed the letter with word of her baby, Henry. "I thank God," she wrote, "my boy is very well and his being so very strong and healthy gives me a pleasure I cannot easily express."¹⁷

¹³Anne Cavendish to Henry, duke of Kent, 4 Nov. [1730], Bedfordshire Record Office, Wrest Park Collection, L 30/8/11/1.

¹⁴Henri Costamagna (1973, 26). Daniel Feliciangeli (1973, 55–56). Anon. (1934, 660–663).

¹⁵"Nice," *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Chicago: William Benton, 1962) 16: 414–15).

¹⁶Sugiko Nishikawa (1997).

¹⁷Anne Cavendish to Henry, duke of Kent, 22 June [1732], Bedfordshire Record Office, Wrest Park Collection, L 30/8/11/2.

The Scientific Branch of the Family

Figure 4.1: Lord Charles Cavendish. Father of Henry Cavendish. By Enoch Seeman. Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth. Courtesy of the Chatsworth Settlement Trustees. Photograph Courtauld Institute of Art.



Figure 4.2: Lady Anne de Grey. Mother of Henry Cavendish. By J. Davison. Courtesy of the Bedfordshire Record Office.

They were going to Holland to see the great teacher and healer Herman Boerhaave. Nearing the end of his career at the University of Leiden, where he taught medicine and until recently botany and chemistry, he was still giving clinical instruction in 1732. Having written major treatises on medicine, he was by many accounts the most famous physician in the world. From all parts, but especially from Britain where his ties were close, students came to Leiden to attend his lectures: of the nearly 2000 students enrolled in Leiden's medical faculty, fully one third were English-speaking. British physicians who had studied under Boerhaave consulted him when their treatment of important patients had not succeeded, and British travelers included Leiden on their itinerary just to meet him.¹⁸ Boerhaave returned the compliment: an ardent admirer of British experimental science, he was one of the first exponents of the Newtonian philosophy in Europe. Anne told her father that they thought it would be right for Dr. Boerhaave to “see me pretty often in order to make a right judgment of my illness.” Since we have no other letters by her, we do not know what Boerhaave decided and prescribed.¹⁹ Tuberculosis was a common disease for which medicine then had no cure.

¹⁸Bolingbroke wrote to his half sister Henrietta, “I was yesterday at Leyden to talk with Doctor Boorehaven, and am now ready to depart for Aix-la-Chapelle.” Letter of 17 August 1729, in Walter Sydney Sichel (1968, 525).

¹⁹Anne Cavendish to Henry, duke of Kent, 22 June [1732]. G.A. Lindeboom (1974, 18); (1970, 227–228).



Figure 4.3: The Honorable Henry Cavendish. Engraving by John Weale from a graphite and gray wash sketch by William Alexander. Cavendish refused to sit for a portrait. To get around this, Alexander, a draftsman in the China embassy, attended a dinner of the Royal Society Club, where he surreptitiously sketched Cavendish's profile and separately sketched his coat and hat hanging on the wall. At home, he combined the two sketches into one. Persons who were shown it recognized Cavendish. Frontispiece of George Wilson (1851).

At some point Charles and Anne returned to England. Three months after her consultation with Boerhaave, Anne was well enough to conceive again, and on 24 June 1733 she delivered another son, Frederick. The next we hear is that Anne Cavendish died at Putteridge on 20 September 1733.²⁰ Henry was not quite two years old, Frederick was three months, and Charles was twenty-nine. For a man in his social position, remarriage was uncommon, and Charles would live for fifty years as a widower.

Although for Anne who had reached her twenty-seventh year, life expectancy was over sixty in the eighteenth century, life then at any age was precarious. Hygiene was unknown, medicine was largely helpless, and death was indifferent to privilege. Henry and his brother Frederick grew up with one parent, a not uncommon fate under the prevailing conditions of life.²¹

Family of the Greys

As a widower, Charles kept in touch with Anne's family. For this valuable fact we are indebted to Thomas Birch, who enjoyed the patronage of a branch of that family, the Yorkes. Philip Yorke, first earl of Hardwicke, engaged Birch as tutor to his oldest son, also named Philip. He then kept Birch on from 1735 as a secretary with light duties, leaving Birch with plenty of time for his calling, which was writing (Fig. 4.6).²²

In 1740, Philip married Jemima Campbell, granddaughter of the duke of Kent. That same year the duke died, whereupon Jemima became Marchioness Grey and baroness Lucas of Crudwell. (Shortly before he died, the duke of Kent was made Marquess Grey with a remainder to his oldest granddaughter Jemima Campbell and her male heirs, establishing the only continuing title.) In the years to come, in the off-season Philip and Jemima lived at the duke of Kent's country estate Wrest Park in Bedfordshire, and the rest of the time in Kent's townhouse on St. James Square (Fig. 1.6). No match for his self-made father the lord chancellor, Philip rejected his ample opportunities for high political office, withdrawing into his chief pleasure in life, literature. He was personable, languid, reserved, and not robust, spending much of the day dressing, visiting, and reading long letters from Birch.²³

Birch was personally close to the younger Philip Yorke, becoming his secretary, literary assistant, and eyes and ears in the wider world. Although Wrest Park appears frequently at the head of Birch's letters, his principal assignment was London, from which watch he kept his patron informed on literary affairs and also on science. Given Yorke's friends and membership in the Royal Society, Birch expected him to take an interest in, for instance, the test of a chronometer for determining longitude at sea. Jemima Yorke evidently took an interest in science too, for we find Birch writing to her about the contents of the *Philosophical Transactions*. When Philip and Jemima Yorke were in London, Birch joined them for weekly breakfasts at St. James Square.²⁴ The duchess of Kent was usually there along with Mary and

²⁰Four days later, on 24 September 1733, Anne Cavendish was buried in the Grey family vault at Flitton. "Extracts from the Burial Register of Flitton," Bedfordshire Record Office, Wrest Park Collection, L 31/43. We assume that she died of her lung illness, though it could have been related to giving birth.

²¹Stone (1982, 46–48, 54, 58–59).

²²Albert E. Gunther (1984, 8, 35).

²³There are many letters from Thomas Birch to Philip Yorke reporting on scientific news between 1747 and 1762, in BL Add Mss 35397 and 35399. Thomas Birch to Jemima, marchioness de Grey, 12 Aug. 1749, BL Add Mss 35397, ff. 200–201.

²⁴Gunther (1984, 35–39).

Sophia de Grey and other members of the Grey family, including in-laws Lords Glenorchy and Ashburnham. In the presence of Birch, Charles Cavendish visited the Greys often in 1741 and 1742, though less often over the next ten years, sometimes bringing his son Henry to visit his maternal grandmother and aunts and uncles.²⁵ Henry Cavendish may not have had a memory of his mother, but his father made certain that he knew the other dukedom from which he descended.

Great Marlborough Street

In 1738, five years after his wife died, Charles Cavendish sold Putteridge together with the rest of his country estate. To empower the trustees to make the sale, an act of Parliament was needed, and for that, a reason had to be given for wanting to sell; Cavendish said that Putteridge was too far from the rest of his estate. Parliament directed the trustees to sell the country estate for the best price possible.²⁶

It would seem that the property sold for about what it had cost, and the price of the house Cavendish bought in its place that same year was only one tenth of that: for the absolute purchase of a freehold in Westminster, he paid £1750.²⁷ The location was near Oxford Road, at the corner of Great Marlborough and Blenheim, streets named to commemorate a military action of the duke of Marlborough's: a stone tablet in the wall read "Marlborough Street, 1704," the year of his greatest victory, at the battle of Blenheim.²⁸ Later on, when rockets were observed in the middle of Great Marlborough Street, it was not to commemorate victory but to determine Cavendish's longitude from Greenwich (Figs. 4.4–4.5).²⁹

The inhabitants of Great Marlborough Street were gentlemen and tradesmen, about evenly balanced. In its plan, the street was atypical for London: long, straight, and broad, with a touch of Roman-like grandeur. Its drawbacks were that it opened onto no vistas, and its houses were undistinguished, giving the street a uniform, somewhat boring aspect. The house that Cavendish bought, number 13, was unusual in one respect: it was *two* houses, as it had been since around 1710, when John Richmond, who had actually fought at Blenheim and had risen to the rank of general, leased and joined the separate houses. Following the general's death in 1724, the house went on the market as two houses in one. From a newspaper advertisement the next year, we learn of its size and layout. The property was 45 feet wide and 200 feet deep. Behind the house lay a garden, at the end of which was an apartment with a passageway to the house. The apartment was advertised as "beautiful" and "newly built," with its own plumbing, underground kitchen, and four rooms on the single floor above. Adjoining the apartment were stables and a coach house. Parallel to Great Marlborough Street and running behind the house was a backstreet, Marlborough Mews (in

²⁵We do not know the frequency of Charles Cavendish's visits to his wife's family. We do know that he and Birch were at the Grey's together twenty-six times between 1741 and 1751, on two of which occasions, Henry Cavendish came with his father. He was nine and ten at the time. Thomas Birch Diary, BL Add Mss 4478C.

²⁶"An Act for Discharging the Estate Purchased by the Trustees of Charles Cavendish ... from the Trusts of his Settlement, and for Enabling the Said Trustees to Sell and Dispose of the Same for the Purposes Therein Mentioned," Devon. Coll.

²⁷"Assignment of two Messuages in Marlborough Street from the Honourable Thomas Townsend Esq. to His Right Honourable Lord Charles Cavendish," 27 Feb. 1737/1738, Chatsworth, L/38/35. London County Council (1963, vol. 3, pt. 2:261–256).

²⁸E. Beresford Chancellor (1931, 207).

²⁹"Explosions of Rockets Observ'd at Lord Charles Cavendish's. The Middle of Gr. Marlbro St.," Canton Papers, Royal Society 2:13.

1799 Blenheim Mews), giving access to stables and an apartment adapted from stables, or “mews.” We think that as an adult Henry Cavendish lived in this apartment, with the separate address 1 Blenheim St. Thomas Thomson, who knew Henry Cavendish, described his apartment as converted stables.³⁰



Figure 4.4: No. 13 Great Marlborough Street House. Demolished. View of the back premises of the house on Blenheim Street. This was Lord Charles Cavendish’s house from 1738 to the end of his life. Courtesy of the Westminster City Archives.



Figure 4.5: Map of Great Marlborough Street. Detail from Richard Horwood’s Plan of London ... 1792–99, updated to 1813. No. 13 on the corner of Great Marlborough and Blenheim shows a building at the end of the property, designated No. 1 Blenheim Street. There looks to be a divided garden between it and the main house. It seems that Henry Cavendish lived in the rear building.

In the manner described, Charles and Henry maintained partially separate establishments, though mail was sent to him at his father’s address on Great Marlborough Street.³¹

³⁰London County Council (1963, vol. 3, pt. 2:256) Richard Horwood (1966). Thomas Thomson wrote that Cavendish’s “apartments were a set of stables, fitted out for his accommodation.” (1830–1831, 1:59).

³¹James Clerk Maxwell in Cavendish (1879, xxviii).

We find that the rate books for the property do not list Henry until the year Charles died, so that from an official standpoint, Henry lived with his father, who paid the rates. In the rate books for June 1783, two months after his father died, Charles's name still appears beside the assessment for the apartment, but now Henry's name is listed for Great Marlborough Street; notations in the book suggest that the premises behind the house and the main house were both empty.³²

Two years after Cavendish bought the house on Great Marlborough Street, in 1740, he was elected to the local governing body of the parish, the vestry of St. James, Westminster. The vestry dealt with every kind of practical problem of civilized life: road repair, paving, night watch, workhouses, petitions for the commons, rates, levies, grants, and accounts. No detail was too small: the vestry approved a new umbrella for ministers attending burials in the rain. It was characteristic of Cavendish to turn up faithfully at vestry meetings, which were held as needed, roughly once a month. Others who attended regularly included persons he was either related to, such as Philip Yorke, or with whom he served on boards of other institutions, such as Lord Macclesfield. Cavendish served his parish for thirty-three years, attending his last meeting in early 1783, the year he died.³³

Friends and Colleagues

Like the house, the life of science on Great Marlborough Street was double. Here Charles Cavendish lived most of his life, and it was Henry Cavendish's address for over half of his life. Here, together and individually, they carried out experimental, observational, and mathematical researches in all parts of natural philosophy.

The wider setting for the scientific activity on Great Marlborough Street was London. Around the time Charles bought his house, one sixth of the people of England either lived or had once lived in London. During his son Henry's lifetime, owing to an influx from the provinces and from abroad, its population rose to nearly a million. Whereas the filth, poverty, and drunkenness of eighteenth-century London are truthfully depicted in Hogarth prints, the city's allure is equally well depicted in Boswell's London journals. London was wealth, power, patronage, and opportunity to rise in the world. It was the seat of national government, a great port city, the commercial center of a colonial system, headquarters of great trading companies, and the financial capital of the world. Westminster could boast of almost 400 distinct trades, among which were those of special interest to Charles and Henry Cavendish, the flourishing scientific instrument and book trades. Whether a Londoner was rising or was, like a Cavendish, already at the top, he had access to every convenience known to civilization. He could feel himself at the center of the world, yet whenever he felt that

³²Charles Cavendish was assessed rates for his house on Great Marlborough Street based on a rent of £90; his house being double and also end-of-row, his assessment was more than double that of other occupants on his side of the street. Beginning in 1774, he was also assessed rates for the back mews. Rate books Great Marlborough Street/Blenheim Street, parish of St. James Westminster Archives, film nos. D64, D72, D87, D673, D683, D708, D1102–1110, D1260–1265.

³³From Cavendish's election to the vestry on 26 Dec. 1740 (D 1760, 145) to his last meeting on 13 Feb. 1783 (D 1764, 518), Minutes of the Vestry of St. James, Westminster, D 1760–1764, Westminster City Archives. Cavendish had other duties in the parish; he was a trustee, for example, of the King Street Chapel (also known as Archbishop Tenison's Chapel) and its school and met with other trustees at the end of the year to pass the accounts. Great Britain, Historical Manuscript Commission, (1923, vol. 3, 270 (4 Jan. 1742/1743), 306 (4 Jan. 1744/1745)). London and Westminster were geographically distinct until the sixteenth century, when the cities spread onto the fields separating them.

the world was too much with him, he had only to step back out of the street to find himself inside his own house, his castle, “in perfect safety from intrusion.” For Henry Cavendish, who was interested in the great world and at the same time was extremely shy, it was no small advantage of London that there “a man is always *so near his burrow*.”³⁴

For most of Charles Cavendish’s life and for a good part of Henry’s, London was the center of scientific activity in Britain. Even in the second half of the eighteenth century, when much of the important scientific activity took place elsewhere, in the Scottish university towns and in the rising industrial towns such as Birmingham and Manchester, London remained “intellectually pre-eminent,” a “magnet for men with scientific and technical interests,” the “Mecca of the provincial mathematical practitioner.”³⁵ Over half of the British men of science of the eighteenth century who enter the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* worked mainly in or near London. The city was large enough to be home to numbers of experts in every part of science yet compact enough for persons of common interest to meet frequently in halls, coffee houses, and private homes. Scientifically interested and interesting visitors from the provinces and from abroad were welcomed. To paraphrase Samuel Johnson, as Charles and Henry Cavendish might have, anyone who was tired of London was tired of science.

The Royal Society, although it was open to national membership and included foreign members, was the Royal Society of London. For the Londoner Charles Cavendish, the Society was the center of his scientific activity, and his friends, so far as we know them, were almost all fellows of the Royal Society. The membership of the Society reflected the social distinctions of the wider society,³⁶ but in its operations, it was relatively unaffected by them.³⁷ Cavendish’s associations within the Society were based on mutual interest, not on family or aristocratic ties; in that setting, his birth was no advantage and no impediment in his association with persons from other walks of life.

Cavendish also belonged to the Royal Society Club, officially named the Society of Royal Philosophers, its members usually referring to it simply as “the Society.” The Society or Club undoubtedly had a predecessor, but if Cavendish had been a member of the earlier club, as has been asserted, it remains that he was not elected to the new one until eight years after its founding in 1743.³⁸ From the beginning, the Club included close friends of Cavendish’s, such as Watson, Heberden, and Birch, and members of the De Moivre circle, such as Folkes, Davall, Scott, and Stanhope. The occasion of Cavendish’s election was the fatal illness of the president of the Club Folkes, who was also the president of the Royal Society. This was at the end of 1751, when the regular time for electing new members to the Club was many months off. Cavendish as vice president had already taken Folkes’s place in the Royal Society, and on the expectation that he would become the next president of the

³⁴Quoting an acquaintance on the importance of living in London: James Boswell (1963, 3:73). Rudé (1971, 4–7, 25, 28, 32–33).

³⁵A.E. Musson and Eric Robinson (1969, 57). E.G.R. Taylor (1966, 14).

³⁶Cavendish, as son of a peer, was admitted under a special rule of privilege; persons from the lower orders were not admitted at all; and only “rich Philosophers” could afford to pay its admission fee of twenty-two guineas. John Smeaton to Benjamin Wilson, 7 Sep. 1747, quoted in Larry Stewart (1992, 251).

³⁷Richard Sorrenson (1996, 33, 35).

³⁸T.E. Allibone says that the Royal Society Club was continuous with “Halley’s Club,” for which he has several pieces of evidence, but for his assertion that Charles Cavendish was probably a member of Halley’s Club he offers none, and so this lead we are unable to follow up. T.E. Allibone (1976, 45, 97). An opposing view of Halley’s part in the origins of the Club is Archibald Geikie (1917, 6–9). Charles Cavendish was elected to the Club on 25 July 1751 and he became a member on 9 January 1752.

Royal Society, the Club wanted him to take Folkes's place there too. Cavendish's election was made an exception and in January 1752 he assumed the chair at the Royal Society Club.³⁹

For convenience, the Club met on the afternoon of the same day the Royal Society met, Thursday, and when the Royal Society was not in session, the Club continued to meet without a break. Members of the Club did not have to be members of the Royal Society, but normally they were, and the president of the Club was always the president of the Society. Its membership was fixed at forty, though members could bring guests; when Cavendish was admitted, the usual number of members and guests at a dinner was about twenty in the winter and fourteen in the summer. The dinners, which were heavy (fish, fowl, red meat, pudding, pie, and cheese), were held for the first three years at Pontack's and then, throughout Cavendish's membership, at the Mitre Tavern on Fleet Street. The Club provided a fuller opportunity than the formal meetings of the Royal Society for members to discuss science. Cavendish belonged to the Club for twenty years and dined with it often. He normally assumed business responsibilities for the organizations he served, but he did not attend the yearly business meetings of the Club with any particular regularity, unlike Watson, Birch, Heberden, and several other friends, and for that matter, unlike his son Henry, who was a member later.

The Royal Society Club was certainly the most prestigious and probably the largest of the learned clubs in eighteenth-century London, of which there were many. Meeting to discuss science, literature, politics, business, or any other interest that drew men together, London clubs often had a more or less formal membership, with rules and dues, but often too they were informal, certain persons forming the habit of appearing during particular hours at particular coffee houses or eating establishments. Folkes dined not only at the Royal Society Club but also at a club of his own, which met at the Baptist Head in Chancery Lane. Another club of scientific and literary men met at Jack's Coffee House on Dean Street, Soho, and later at Old (or Young) Slaughter's Coffee House on St. Martin's Lane, where in his later years De Moivre solved problems of games of chance for money.⁴⁰ Birch met with groups at Tom's Coffee House and at Rawthmell's Coffee-House on Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, later the place of origin of the Society of Arts, which Cavendish would join. At Rawthmell's, Charles Cavendish and James Cavendish joined Birch and other fellows of the Royal Society, such as William Jones, Richard Graham, John Colson, Daniel Wray, and John Machin.⁴¹ Public houses provided clubs with a measure of privacy in their supper rooms, but because they were noisy at best, private houses offered advantages of intimacy for small groups. A group met at Lord Macclesfield's and Lord Willoughby's houses,⁴² Lord Willoughby also presided at a club that met at a tavern—a life insurance club based on

³⁹28 Nov. 1751, Minute Book of the Royal Society Club, Royal Society. Cited in Allibone (1976, 44–45). Cavendish was a member of the Club for twenty-one years, resigning at the annual meeting in 1772. He continued to take an interest in it, making it a gift of venison five years later. 9 Sep. 1779, Minute Book of the Royal Society Club, Royal Society, 7.

⁴⁰19 Oct. 1736, Thomas Birch Diary. W. Warburton to Thomas Birch, 27 May 1738, in John Nichols (1817–1858, 2:86–88, on 88). Bryant Lillywhite (1963, 280–281, 369–370, 421–423, 595).

⁴¹Parkinson (1854–1857, vol. 2, pt. 1, 221, 280, 322).

⁴²Request to be “admitted to the private meetings, of several learned Gentlemen, at Lord Macclesfield's and Lord Willoughby's.” Rodolph De Vall-Travers to Thomas Birch, [4 Apr. 1757], BL Add Mss 4320, f. 9.

the principles of the De Moivre pupil and mathematician James Dodson, which met at the White Lion Tavern—and at another club that met alternately in his and Birch's houses.⁴³

Another group met at a private house located in the Strand. Charles and Henry Cavendish belonged to it, as did Charles's friends Heberden, Watson, and Israel Mauduit. The other members, so far as the membership is known, were John Ross, Peter Holford, and the physicians George Baker, Richard Huck Saunders, and John Pringle.⁴⁴ The interest that brought these men together was undoubtedly science, though in general outlook there would seem to have been a common spirit of enlightened criticism and reform. Upon becoming bishop of Exeter and entering the House of Lords, the antiquarian John Ross advocated the extension of tolerance to religious Dissenters.⁴⁵ Of Huguenot descent, Israel Mauduit wrote about religious freedom and politics. John Pringle, a president of the Royal Society, made reform of medicine and sanitation in the military his life work.⁴⁶ George Baker having found that in his county drinkers of cider were being poisoned by lead persuaded his fellow Devonians to stop using cider vats made of lead, going on to clarify the whole subject of lead poisoning.⁴⁷ Watson and Huck Saunders were among the twenty-nine "rebel Licentiatees" who joined John Fothergill in urging the Royal College of Physicians to admit physicians who did not have an M.D. from Cambridge or Oxford.⁴⁸ Heberden, from within the College of Physicians, sided with them; a fervent Whig, Wilkite, and supporter of petitioning clergy, he was already a thorn in the side of the College, having denounced mithridatum, a presumed antidote to poison, as an ineffective farrago; the College kept it in its pharmacopeia until late in the century, when Heberden's former pupil George Baker took over the presidency and put an end to it.⁴⁹ Science provided Cavendish not only an outlet for his intellectual and administrative energies but also the company of men who worked for improvement in a wide range of endeavors.

We have a record of fifteen dinners Cavendish hosted between 1748 and 1761, to which a total of thirty-two guests came, or if we include his son Henry, thirty-three. Birch was at all of these dinners, necessarily, for our knowledge of them comes from his social calendar, kept in the form of a diary. Cavendish dined at his guests' houses as well, suggesting that they formed a club.

Cavendish is first mentioned in Birch's diary in 1730 as if he were public news: "Ld Ch Cavendish resigns,"⁵⁰ a reference clearly to Cavendish's resignation as gentleman of the bedchamber to the prince of Wales. Birch's first mention of a personal contact with Cavendish came six years later, in 1736. Their connection then was probably formal, since in that entry and in an entry a year later, Birch identified Cavendish as the brother of the duke of Devonshire.⁵¹ The occasion was Birch's scholarship, for Birch recorded that Cavendish gave him original papers concerning his grandfather William Russell, who, Birch noted,

⁴³Lillywhite (1963, 745).

⁴⁴Andrew Kippis's life of the author published in John Pringle (1783, lxiii–lxiv). Kippis says that the group met at Mr. Watson's. This Watson he identifies as a grocer.

⁴⁵"Ross or Rosse, John," *DNB*, 1st ed. 17:266–267.

⁴⁶"Pringle, Sir John, *ibid.* 16:386–389, on 388.

⁴⁷"Baker, Sir George," *ibid.* 1:927–29, on 928.

⁴⁸Dorothea Waley Singer (1949, 161–162).

⁴⁹Humphry Rolleston (1933, 412–413, 567–568).

⁵⁰12 Oct. 1730, Thomas Birch Diary.

⁵¹29 June 1736 and 1 Aug. 1737, *ibid.*

was beheaded in Charles II's reign.⁵² Here Cavendish was acting as a representative of his family, but he and Birch were to become close personal friends.

A letter from Birch to Philip Yorke in 1750 gives us an idea of Cavendish's social life as it related to science. Cavendish invited Birch and six other "Bretheren of the Royal Society" to a "small Party," at which he offered a "philosophical Entertainment of an artificial Frost by a Solution of Sal Ammoniac in common Water," after which he provided "what was equally relish'd, a very good Dinner."⁵³ (This experiment on artificial frost anticipated Henry Cavendish's later researches on freezing solutions.) If Cavendish performed experiments at his other dinners, we do not know, but it was an acceptable home entertainment or instruction at the time. Earlier that same year, Cavendish attended a dinner at Martin Folkes's house, to which John Canton was invited. Folkes told Canton that Cavendish was "very curious" to see him perform his experiment with artificial magnets, which he could watch "more at ease" at his house than he could at the Royal Society. The next year, when Folkes was ill, Cavendish presided at the Royal Society, where he gave an undoubtedly well-prepared, "excellent discourse" on artificial magnets, for which Canton received the Copley Medal.⁵⁴

To get a fuller idea of Cavendish's social life, we look at who came to dinner at his house on 21 October 1758. He had eight guests, all professional men, all but one middle-aged, some but not all married. They were friends, not persons Cavendish brought together for introductions. They were all active fellows of the Royal Society, though none was on the Council at the time; Birch was a secretary of the Royal Society, and Cavendish was possibly a vice president (he had presided at one meeting that year). It is possible that the social evening was combined with a meeting for a special purpose, perhaps relating to the Royal Society, though the regular meetings of the Society had not yet resumed after the long summer recess. Cavendish, the only aristocrat, at fifty-four was the next-to-oldest member at the party. His senior by two years, Thomas Wilbraham was physician to Westminster Hospital. Birch was fifty-two, like Cavendish long a widower, with an adult daughter about thirty. Watson was forty-three and married, or at least he had been married, with a son of about fourteen and a daughter. Having started out as an apothecary, Watson was practicing as a physician, and had just begun to be listed as "Dr. Watson" in the minutes of the meetings of the Royal Society. Heberden was forty-eight, another widower, with a son about five who was probably living at home. At one time he had lectured on medicine in Cambridge, but for the past ten years he had been practicing in London. Israel Mauduit at fifty was a rich bachelor who liked to entertain at home himself. Samuel Squire, about forty-five, was an ambitious clergyman about to rise to bishop; he was married and probably had children by now (he eventually had three). Gowin Knight, forty-five and apparently unmarried, was then giving attention to the mariner's compass and to his new duties as principal librarian of the British Museum. John Hadley, at twenty-seven the only young man in the company, had just been elected to the Royal Society. He was still trying to find his place, dividing his time between Cambridge, where he was professor of chemistry, and London, where he was soon to become physician to St. Thomas's Hospital. These were men of liberal outlook

⁵²1 Aug. 1731, *ibid.*

⁵³Thomas Birch to Philip Yorke, 18 Aug. 1750, BL Add Mss 35397. The guests were Birch, Folkes, Heberden, Watson, Thomas Wilbraham, and Nicholas Mann.

⁵⁴30 Nov. 1751, JB, Royal Society 20:571–573.

and so far as we know their political leaning, Whig. Some of them were university men, some—including Birch, Watson, and the host—were not.

Among Cavendish's guests that night were several very good scientific men. The year before, Cavendish had been awarded the Copley Medal, as earlier had two of his guests, Watson and Knight, but this dinner was not, scientifically speaking, particularly high-powered. Some of the party were primarily interested in antiquities, which made it a mix like the membership of the Royal Society itself. Only Watson had published extensively in the *Philosophical Transactions*, addressing a variety of subjects including his professional field, medicine, and with considerable success electricity. Knight's papers on magnetism were just that year coming out in a collection. Heberden had published four papers on a miscellany of topics, one, a human calculus, falling within his professional field, medicine. Birch had published five papers, one on Roman inscriptions, belonging to his field, history. Half of the guests were, like Cavendish, one-paper men. Wilbraham had published a medical account of a hydrophobia. Hadley's one paper was yet to come, on a mummy examined in London. Mauduit's paper was on a wasp nest. Squire's was on a person who had been dumb for four years and had recovered his tongue upon experiencing a bad dream. Since the guests were all men of learning, some, like Birch, had substantial publications outside of the *Philosophical Transactions*.

Friends and Colleagues



Figure 4.6: Thomas Birch. Painting by J. Wills, engraving by J. Faber, Jr. Reproduced by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

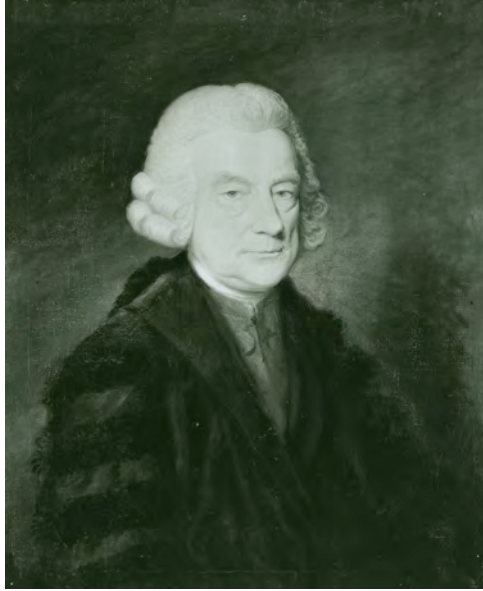


Figure 4.7: William Watson. Painting by L.F. Abbot. Reproduced by permission of the President and Council of the Royal Society.



Figure 4.8: William Heberden. Painting by Sir William Beechey, engraving by J. Ward. Wikimedia Commons.

Over the period for which we have a record of dinners, 1748 to 1762, Cavendish together with Birch also dined at Heberden's and Stanhope's houses as often as at Cavendish's, and at Watson's, Macclefield's, and Yorke's about half as often.⁵⁵ With Birch, together with other men of science and learning, Cavendish dined two hundred times, at houses and at the Mitre with the Royal Society Club.⁵⁶ What brought Cavendish and the others together was, apart from conviviality, a common public life centering on the Royal Society.

Cavendish was especially close to three of the above colleagues, Birch, Heberden, and Watson. Birch was a historian, biographer, and cleric, who met scientific men more than halfway (Fig. 4.6). His membership certificate at the Royal Society, which was signed by Halley, read that he was "well-versed in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy." When Pierre Bayle's biographical dictionary was translated into English in 1709, the London publisher planned a revision with the intention of doing more justice to English notables, and Birch, at age twenty-six, was invited to be one of the three editors. Appearing in ten volumes between 1734 and 1741, three volumes of which were dedicated to presidents of the Royal Society, the revision contained biographies of English scientific notables written by Birch. His most important literary contribution to science was his biography of the seventeenth-century chemist Robert Boyle, which appeared as the third volume of the biographical dictionary, together with his edition of Boyle's papers. He was drawn to Boyle for his religious and scholarly knowledge as well as for his scientific work, a combination of interests Birch himself had. He implied the importance for a scholar's work of living near other scholars, as Boyle did at Oxford, and as Birch did in London.⁵⁷ In 1757, he completed a history of the Royal Society, which he had intended to bring up to date, but in four volumes he did not get past the seventeenth century. He based his history on the original journals, registers, letters, and Council minutes of the Society, reproducing much of the material and chronicling the Society meeting by meeting; his method of history was the method of science, as he understood it, the orderly bringing together of facts.⁵⁸ He depended on clerical livings, even there making a connection with science; he was chaplain to the College of Physicians, and he cited Newton in notes to his sermons.⁵⁹ An irrepressible conversationalist, Birch was "brisk as a bee" according to Johnson, a connoisseur of conversation.⁶⁰ A historian who wrote of science to praise it, a man of facts, convivial and energetic, Birch was a welcome addition in scientific circles.

Like Birch, the physician Heberden met men of science more than halfway (Fig. 4.8). His goal was to make the College of Physicians a medical version of the Royal Society, a proper scientific body. He used his influence in the College—he took on the duties of counselor, censor, and elect, one of the powerful senior fellows who chose the president from among themselves—to establish a committee of papers and a journal modeled and named after the Royal Society's, the *Medical Transactions*. Consistent with his belief that until a

⁵⁵Birch's Diary records dinners at which Cavendish was present at the homes of fourteen persons, all but one of whom were fellows of the Royal Society. The names are familiar: in addition to those mentioned above, they include Josiah Colebrooke, Mark Akenside, Daniel Wray, and William Sotheby.

⁵⁶Thomas Birch Diary. The number two hundred is a minimum, since Birch made his entries hastily, not always giving the names of everyone he dined with. Cavendish's name was probably among those he sometimes omitted.

⁵⁷Gunther (1984, 13–19). Thomas Birch (1744, 113–114, 304–307).

⁵⁸Thomas Birch (1756–1757).

⁵⁹C. Barton to Thomas Birch, 19 Sep. 1754, BL Add Mss 4300, f. 174. Thomas Birch's Sermons, vol. 7, f. 188, BL Add Mss 4232C.

⁶⁰"Birch," *DNB* 2:531.

Newton appeared in the science of the animal world to discover the “great principle of life,” medicine had only one recourse, experience. He regarded his task as the patient and laborious assembling of facts; a painstakingly accurate observer, he made no large generalizations (or discoveries). Despite his admonitions to physicians to publish, he himself was reluctant to do so. His high reputation was based on his medical practice and his knowledge of the classics, a combination then in irreversible decline. Upon being asked what physician he wanted in his final illness, Johnson called for Heberden, “the last of our learned physicians.”⁶¹

More than any other member, Watson made the meetings of the Royal Society rewarding, keeping it informed of major developments in science in Britain and abroad. As the reviewer for the Society, he was well prepared, equally capable of giving the Society a thorough exposition of Franklin’s work in electricity and of Linnaeus’s work in botany. Forceful, knowledgeable (because of his remarkable memory, he was referred to as the “living lexicon of botany”), and a good judge of men, Watson entered energetically into the administration of the Royal Society as he did into that of the other institutions he served, which were more or less the same ones that Birch, Heberden, and Cavendish served.⁶²

We learn more about Cavendish’s friendships and associations by looking at his activity in the Royal Society. Although there is no record of how he voted on candidates for admission to the Society, we know which candidates he recommended and the members with whom he signed recommendations. Before a candidate was proposed for membership, he was usually canvassed by the Council. The candidate had then to be formally recommended by three or more members, who drew up a sheet with their signatures, the candidate’s name, address, and profession, and a brief description of his qualifications for membership. The sheet would be dated and posted by one of the secretaries in the meeting room for the period of several ordinary meetings before the candidate was put to the vote. An exception was made for peers and their sons and various dignitaries, for whom only one recommender was required. Election was by two thirds of those present.⁶³

To further a candidate’s chances of election, other members could add their signatures to the sheet. Ten, not an uncommon number, signed Henry Cavendish’s certificate in 1760. Occasionally there was a groundswell of enthusiasm for a candidate, as there was for Captain James Cook, whose certificate was signed by twenty-five members, including Henry Cavendish. Certain members constantly put up candidates, bearing a good share of responsibility for the early rapid growth of the Society. In the first forty years, the number of ordinary members tripled to three hundred, with the number of foreign members growing even faster, rising to almost half the number of ordinary members.⁶⁴ During the twenty-five years that Cavendish recommended candidates, the growth of the Society markedly slowed. Cavendish’s own contribution was moderate: between 1734 and 1766, he recommended twenty-eight candidates, fewer than one a year.

Birch, who recommended a large number of candidates, on the order of a half dozen a year, signed recommendations with Cavendish more often than any other member, nineteen times.⁶⁵ Next came Folkes with ten recommendations in common, then Watson and Wray,

⁶¹Rolleston (1933, 414–417). Audley Cecil Buller (1879, 16, 21–22). William Munck (1878, 2: 159–164). William Heberden (1802, 483, and appendix, “A Sketch of a Preface Designed for the Medical Transactions, 1767,” 486–494).

⁶²“Watson, Sir William,” *DNB*, 1st ed. 20:956–958.

⁶³20 Aug. 1730, Minutes of Council, Royal Society 3:51, 77.

⁶⁴23 Nov. 1775, Certificates, Royal Society 3:237. Henry Lyons (1944, 125–126).

⁶⁵Between 1748 and 1760, Birch recommended seventy-six candidates. Royal Society, Certificates.

each with nine; the four were good friends and probably knew the same candidates and had similar ideas on qualifications for membership. Next came Jones, from the De Moivre circle, who was Cavendish's own recommender, then Burrow and Willoughby. The one person who signed recommendations often with Cavendish who does not seem to have belonged to his circle was John Machin, professor of astronomy at Gresham College and secretary of the Royal Society, who died early in this account and was in poor health during his last years. It should be noted that Cavendish frequently joined Sloane in his early recommendations until Sloan retired as president in 1741. Among Cavendish's ninety-three cosigners, most of the other familiar names appeared too, though with less frequency: Heberden, Bradley, Stanhope, De Moivre, Macclesfield, Scott, Jurin, Davall, and Richard Graham, to name several.

We turn to the candidates Cavendish recommended. In 1753 the Council resolved that candidates were to be known "personally" to their recommenders, a practice which in the past had usually been followed though not invariably.⁶⁶ We can be reasonably certain that Cavendish was familiar with most if not all of the persons he recommended. Seventeen of the certificates he signed said that the candidates were proficient in the sciences, designated variously as natural philosophy, experimental philosophy, natural knowledge, natural history, philosophical knowledge, philosophy, and various branches of science; six certificates mentioned mathematics, three useful learning, two mechanics, and another two astronomy. Seven of the candidates were said to be distinguished in literature or polite learning, though never that alone. There were a few other accomplishments: antiquities, architecture, medicine, anatomy, musical theory, and (not very helpful) learning and knowledge. Two candidates were professors at Cambridge and Oxford, about whom nothing more needed to be said than the names of their professorships, which in their cases were astronomy and experimental philosophy. For one other candidate no explanation was given other than his position, an underlibrarian at the British Museum. Cavendish recommended three foreign members, whom he did not have to know personally, only their work. They were a French astronomer and two French authors of a commentary on Newton's *Principia*. The persons Cavendish helped to gain entry into the Royal Society favored the physical and mathematical sciences, as might be expected, but they were not narrowly identified with particular fields, a generality which is also to be expected given the composition of the Society.

With one exception, every candidate Cavendish recommended was elected. The exception was the first candidate, a surgeon whose rejection may have been due to a general suspicion of surgeons in the Society. In 1734, Cavendish joined Sloane, two others, and John Stevens, one of the surgeons to the prince of Wales, to recommend John Wreden, another surgeon to the prince of Wales, both of whom Cavendish probably knew, since he had recently served as gentleman of the bedchamber to the prince. The vote against Wreden was decisive.⁶⁷ In general, a recommendation by Cavendish was helpful to a candidate. Joseph Priestley, who unlike Cavendish had to make his living, which he did in part by writing, was informed that membership in the Royal Society would encourage sales of his book on the history of electricity. In discussing his prospects and strategy with his friend John Canton in the Royal Society, Priestley expected that not only Canton but Watson and Richard Price would support his candidacy, constituting the necessary minimum number of three recommenders, and "If L.C. Cavendish could be prevailed upon to join you," he told Canton, "I

⁶⁶ 10 May 1753, Minutes of Council, Royal Society 4:118–119.

⁶⁷ 42 members voted, 24 rejecting Wreden. Maurice Crosland (1983, 171).

should think the rest would be easy.” Canton, it would seem, refused to approach Cavendish on the technical ground that Priestley was not a “personal acquaintance” of his.⁶⁸

A historian of science has placed Cavendish in a small group of fellows of the Royal Society who in the 1750s and 60s acted in concert, especially in the election of officers. Described as the “Hardwicke Circle” owing to the patronage of the first and second earl Hardwicke, they included Wray, Birch, Folkes, Heberden, Macclesfield, Maudit, Squire, Willoughby, and Watson, all familiar friends and colleagues of Cavendish’s. In politics they were Whig, their influence in the Royal Society declining in step with the decline of Whig power in the nation. The group often gathered at Wrest Park, whose present owner, Philip Yorke, second Earl Hardwicke, was Cavendish’s nephew-in-law and close friend. He probably did not benefit from the patronage of the Hardwicks, but through the family tie he was associated with the group. For a biography of Cavendish, the Hardwicke connection is noteworthy, for it relates his scientific life to the Grey side of his family, which tends to be overshadowed by the magnificent Cavendishes.⁶⁹

Relatives

As he grew up, Frederick Cavendish—Fredy, his family called him⁷⁰—followed in his older brother Henry’s footsteps, at a two-year interval, first attending Hackney Academy and then Peterhouse, Cambridge. In the year after Henry left Cambridge, his next to final year at Cambridge, Frederick Cavendish had a bizarre accident, falling from an upper window in one of the courts and striking his head. There is no indication of what he was doing. Riotous behavior at Cambridge was common enough, prompting the poet Thomas Gray to change his living quarters and affiliation from Peterhouse, Frederick’s college, to Pembroke across the street. Whatever the reason, the fall was serious, leaving Frederick’s life in the balance for a time and his head with a deep indentation as a reminder of it. The accident happened in late July or early August 1754; by mid-August Frederick was “mending, but not out of danger.”⁷¹ That summer, Charles Cavendish had been dining frequently with his scientific friends, but then he dropped out due in part to Frederick’s condition.⁷² In mid-October, Thomas Birch wrote to Charles to say that his friends hoped that “Mr. Frederick Cavendish’s Recovery” would soon allow Charles to join them “in town.”⁷³ Frederick did gradually regain his health, but his brain was permanently impaired.

Of how Frederick occupied himself in the years after his accident, there is no record, but we have his father’s view of his mental “state.” As was the custom, in married settlements the younger son Frederick’s eventual prosperity was looked after by his mother, who at her death

⁶⁸Joseph Priestley to John Canton, 14 Feb. 1766, Canton Papers, Royal Society 2:58. Priestley was elected that year without the help of Cavendish, Benjamin Franklin joining the other three instead. Joseph Priestley to Richard Price, 8 Mar. 1766, in Priestley (1966, 17–19, on 19).

⁶⁹Other members were Davall, Charles Yorke, and John Ward. Considered their successes in elections were Birch and Paul Maty as secretaries and Macclesfield, Morton, and Pringle as presidents of the Royal Society. David Philip Miller (1998, 75–77, 81, 89).

⁷⁰Henry Cavendish referred to “Fredy’s” letters and expenses in “Papers in Walnut Cabinet,” Devon. Coll.

⁷¹Charles Cavendish’s legal case involving his marriage settlement and Frederick’s expenses, 30 Apr. 1773, Devon. Coll., L/114/32. Anonym, “Memoirs of the Late Frederick Cavendish, Esq.,” *Gentleman’s Magazine* 82 (1812): 289–91, on 289. Lord Hartington to the duke of Devonshire, 17 Aug. 1754, Devon. Coll., no. 260.119.

⁷²Charles Cavendish hosted a dinner at his house on 17 July 1754; the next time he dined with his friends was at Stanhope’s house on 2 Dec. of that year. Thomas Birch Diary.

⁷³Thomas Birch to Charles Cavendish, 17 Oct. 1754, BL Add Mss 4444, f. 180.

in 1733 left him her one quarter share of the duke of Kent's Steane estate. This was sold and converted into stock, which was placed in the hands of trustees. In 1772 the last surviving trustee, Lord William Manners, died, and his son declined the inherited trusteeship. This meant that Charles Cavendish had to choose new trustees, who would have to be persuaded of the legality of the way the trust had been used in the past. He wrote out a justification of his practice and submitted it for legal opinion. He had been receiving the profits from the Stean estate and after its sale the dividends from stock because "it was manifestly improper to pay the money" to Frederick during his minority. Frederick was then thirty-nine, and "even now," Cavendish said, "it appears to be doubtful whether it is prudent to do it." Cavendish had spent the earnings from the trust on the "maintenance & education" of Frederick, the "expense of which greatly exceeded the income of the estate, except in some of the first years of F's life." The legal opinion he solicited, however, held that the trustees had no power to permit him to receive that money for the purpose he gave, for it was a father's duty to support his child. In the eyes of the law, then, although it was not put this way, in skirting his duty Cavendish had been profiting from his disabled son, and he and his heirs, who would be Henry, were accountable to Frederick for the money taken from him. Despite this ruling, the new trustees chosen by Cavendish, all members of the family, agreed to let him continue to accept all dividends and interest from the funds in their name. Henry as well as Charles was a party to the new—but in fact the old—financial arrangements for Frederick's support. Several lawyers became involved, but in the documents we have seen there is no suggestion that Frederick himself was unhappy with the arrangements. What we have learned is that in Charles's judgment, his son Frederick was incompetent to take care of his affairs.⁷⁴

Charles Cavendish took on responsibilities for his siblings. James, the brother with whom Charles had traveled abroad as a youth, was the older of the two, but he deferred to Charles in family matters, asking Charles to dispose of their mother's estate and giving him power of attorney in all matters of their joint executorship.⁷⁵ The reason was, at least in part, that as colonel of a foot regiment, he was away in Ireland or Cuba or elsewhere. In his final year, he served as a Member of Parliament for Malton, dying young, presumably of a tropical disease, in 1741.

William, Charles's eldest brother, was interested in art and also, to some extent, in science. Elected to the Royal Society in 1747, William subscribed to a number of scientific books to which Charles also subscribed; for example, books by De Moivre, Roger Long, and Colin Maclaurin.⁷⁶ Charles acted as a political go-between for William,⁷⁷ but in general William and Charles led very different lives, due in part to temperament and in part to their order of birth. They started out the same way, as Members of Parliament, but Charles left politics and William did not and realistically could not. After their father's death in 1729,

⁷⁴"Copy Case between Father and with Mr. Perryn," 30 Apr. 1773. Charles Cavendish to S. Seddon, 27 and 29 July 1772. "Discharge from the Right Honourable Lord Charles Cavendish to John Manners Esqr as to Trusts for his Lordship and the Honourable Henry Cavendish & Frederick Cavendish His Sons," Devon. Coll., L/14/32. The new trustees were Philip Yorke, earl of Hardwicke, and Charles's nephews Frederick and George Augustus Cavendish. In his will, Charles left his son Frederick £4000 for his having received profits from his mother Anne's estate and dividends from the stock bought with the money arising from the sale of that estate. Devon. Coll., L/69/12.

⁷⁵James Cavendish to Charles Cavendish, 25 Mar. 1727 and 23 Aug. 1732, Devon. Coll., no. 34/2.

⁷⁶Lists of subscribers to Abraham de Moivre, *Miscellanea analytica de seriebus et quadraturis* (London, 1730); Roger Long (1742, 1764, 1784, vol. 1); Colin Maclaurin (1748).

⁷⁷In a dispute over appointments between the duke of Devonshire and the duke of Newcastle, for example. Duke of Devonshire to Lord Hartington, 8 and 20 May, 15 and 24 June 1755, Devon. Coll., nos. 163.51,52,60, 62.

William as third duke of Devonshire sat in the House of Lords, where he rarely spoke, and when he did it was with such a soft voice that no one could hear him. Not a leader of the party and not a fighter, William accepted high office without high ambition. Like his father, he was a friend of Walpole's, doing favors for Walpole in kind and helping to keep him in office. Walpole did favors in return, appointing William lord privy seal and then lord lieutenant of Ireland, a highly lucrative post because of its patronage. Local government was the basis of political power in the eighteenth century, and the lord lieutenant of a county was the highest local official, though the lord lieutenant of Ireland had a trace of derogation; in any event, William carried out his work competently for seven years.⁷⁸ William was a hard drinker, a gambler, not overly smart, and distinctly lazy. He was also cautious and duty-bound, family traits which were regarded as strengths of character. Johnson, who rarely saw anything he could admire in a Whig, saw in William a man who was "unconditional ... in keeping his word," a man of "honor."⁷⁹ The record we have of Charles's relationship with his brother William has entirely to do with money or property. That is so even during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745, when an army led by the Stuart pretender advanced south as far as Derby, menacing Chatsworth. By subscription, William raised a regiment in Derbyshire to stop the invasion, while Charles served as William's surrogate banker and advisor in London. Unless William's medals at Chatsworth were "sent out of the Kingdom," Charles told him, he did not think they could be saved if the French landed to aid the pretender, since there would be a rising right there.⁸⁰ Nothing, it turned out, had to be done, since the invading army was forced to retreat.

William had confidence in his youngest brother. Two years after succeeding to the dukedom, he made out his will, in which he left to William Manners and others his horses but named twenty-seven-year-old Charles Cavendish, his wife, Anne, and Robert Walpole trustees for his seven children.⁸¹ Of his four sons, three entered politics, all staunch Whigs and allies of Fox, the fourth entering the military, which by then was an uncommon career for a Cavendish. The youngest son, John, who was Henry Cavendish's age and went through school with Henry, was by far the most determined in politics, rising to cabinet positions. The oldest son, William, was the most determined in love, choosing for his wife the sixteen-year-old Charlotte Boyle, a distant relation of the seventeenth-century chemist Robert Boyle, knitting together the two great aristocratic families in science. From the point of view of the Cavendish fortune, she was a prize, the sole heir of the immensely rich Lord Burlington. As it happened, the Burlington family was talked about more for its scandals than for its wealth, which decided William's mother, herself a commoner before becoming duchess of Devonshire, against the match. William's father the duke supported it, the marriage took place, and the duke's own marriage came apart as a consequence. The practical result of this turmoil was that the already fabulous Cavendish estate nearly doubled in value.⁸² To young

⁷⁸J.H. Plumb (1956–1960, 1:42–43, 235–236, 2:280).

⁷⁹John Pearson (1983, 89–91); quotation from Johnson on 90.

⁸⁰Lord Hartington to Dr. Newcome, 14 Dec. 1745; Charles Cavendish to duke of Devonshire, undated, Devon. Coll., nos. 260.58 and 211.3; John Whitaker to Dickenson Knight, undated [1745]; Ralph Knight to Dickenson Knight, undated [Dec. 1745]; John Holland to Ralph Knight, undated [1745], in Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1893, 164–165). Duke of Devonshire to Robert Wilmot, 25 Oct. 1745, in Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1925, 2:349). Richard Burden to [Viscount Irwin], 7 Dec. 1745, Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1913, 138).

⁸¹Duke of Devonshire, "My Will," 1 Oct. 1731, Devon. Coll., no. 163.95.

⁸²Pearson (1983, 93–103).

William's sorrow, his wife did not live long enough to become duchess, and he himself did not live many years after becoming the fourth duke. Charles Cavendish was the responsible family intermediary, meeting several times with the third duke's lawyer in connection with his son's marriage to Charlotte Boyle.⁸³ There is a legend that Henry Cavendish lived for several years in his youth in Burlington House in Piccadilly, but it seems rather improbable.⁸⁴

Like his son William, the third duke's daughters made advantageous marriages. Rachel married Horatio Walpole, a relative of the well-known writer Horace Walpole. Caroline married William Ponsonby, second earl of Bessborough, who at the time was secretary to the third duke as lord lieutenant of Ireland; to their son, the third earl of Bessborough, Henry Cavendish would leave a sixth of his great fortune.⁸⁵ Elizabeth married John Ponsonby, of the same family; to make up her dowry the duke, who was rich in property but short of cash, borrowed from Charles Cavendish.⁸⁶ When the third duke died in 1755, Charles Cavendish found his will, which had been lost, written on a sheet of letter paper, almost worn out and very plain, in keeping with everything else about the third duke.⁸⁷

Charles Cavendish assumed various obligations for the women of his family. Together with his uncle James, he served as executor of the estate of his aunt Elizabeth (Cavendish) Wentworth.⁸⁸ The second duke of Devonshire, after his daughter Diana died in childhood, set aside lands to raise dowries for each of his three surviving daughters, Rachel, Elizabeth, and Anne. When Rachel and Elizabeth were about to be married, their brother Charles was named representative for Anne, who was without prospect and in the event never did marry. To keep the lands within the Cavendish estate, the women were paid off in cash with interest, requiring Charles to talk hard to bring Anne around to the logic of it, she being "extremely jealous, & fearful of being injured."⁸⁹ Rachel, who married Sir William Morgan of Tredegar,

⁸³Charles Cavendish's involvement is reflected in the statement of expenses presented to the third duke by Hutton Perkins, the duke's lawyer, on 13 May 1748. Devon. Collection, no. 313.1.

⁸⁴"The scientist, Henry Cavendish, lived there [in Burlington House] for several years in his youth." D.A. Arnold, Royal Society of Chemistry, "The History of Burlington House" (<http://www.rsc.org/AboutUs/History/bhhist.asp>). Royal Society of London (1940, 65). The owner of Burlington House, Richard Boyle, third earl of Burlington, is said to have had an interest in natural philosophy, but he is known for his interest in the arts and especially for his talent as an architect, being instrumental in introducing the Palladian style in Britain and Ireland. Horace Walpole called him "the Apollo of the arts." When his daughter and heir Charlotte Elizabeth Boyle married William Cavendish, Henry Cavendish was about to begin his university studies. When the earl died in 1753 and Burlington House passed to his daughter, Henry Cavendish had completed his university education. It is unclear what connection Henry could have had with Burlington House. We know that Henry's heir George Augustus Henry Cavendish used the house for at least two spells.

⁸⁵Entries for the second and third earls of Bessborough, in Brydges (1812, 7:266–267). Francis Bickley (1911, 207).

⁸⁶"Bond from His Grace the Duke of Devonshire to the Rt Hon^{ble} Lord Charles Cavendish," 22 Sep. 1743, Devon. Coll., L/44/12.

⁸⁷R. Landaff to duke of Devonshire, 6 Dec. 1755; Thomas Heaton to duke of Devonshire, 6 Dec. 1755, Devon. Coll., nos. 356.5 and 432.0. Theophilus Lindsey to earl of Huntington, 24 Dec. 1755. Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission (1928–47, 3:111–114, on 113).

⁸⁸"Probate of the Will of Ly Eliz. Wentworth 1741," Devon. Coll., L/43/13. Lady Elizabeth was the widow of Sir John Wentworth of Northempsall. Seven years later, Charles and James Cavendish were released from any further claim on them as executors by another Lady Wentworth, Dame Bridget of York: "Ly Wentworths Release to Lady Betty Wentworths Executors March 5 1748." Charles kept a notebook for Lady Betty's personal estate for twenty years, from 1741 to 1761. After 1748 Charles and James regularly received a small dividend from 200 shares of South Sea stock. After James's death, his part went to Richard (Chandler) Cavendish and, eventually, to Charles Cavendish.

⁸⁹"Deed to Exonerate the Estate of the Duke of Devonshire from the Several Portions of Six Thousand Pounds ... to be Directed to be Raised for Lady Rachel Morgan, Lady Elizabeth Lowther and Anne Cavendish the Three

had four children;⁹⁰ Charles kept in touch with her family, and when her daughter Elizabeth married William Jones of Llanarthy, Charles was a party to the settlement.⁹¹ In 1723, his sister Elizabeth married the Member of Parliament for Lanchester Sir Thomas Lowther; his long and consequential involvement with her family we take up in the next section.

Through another family member, a younger first cousin, Charles Cavendish came into a large inheritance. Elizabeth (Cavendish) Chandler's father was Lord James Cavendish, Charles's uncle (not his brother of the same name), a fellow of the Royal Society, with interests in mathematics and natural philosophy.⁹² Her mother was Anne Yale, daughter of Elihu, a rich diamond merchant and governor of Fort St. George in Madras, after whom Yale University is named. In 1732 Elizabeth married the politician Richard Chandler, son of Edward Chandler, bishop of Durham, the year after her brother William had married another Chandler, Barbara. In 1751 Elizabeth's father and brother both died, and as she had no children and her mother had died earlier, she and Richard Chandler alone constituted that branch of the family. Her father left his real estate to Richard Chandler provided that he took his wife's surname.⁹³ When Richard (Chandler) Cavendish died, Elizabeth became sole owner of a house in Piccadilly, a good deal more real estate, and a large sum in securities and mortgages. In her will, other than for her real property, she left her estate after payment of legacies, debts, and funeral expenses to Charles Cavendish, her executor and only living male first cousin on the Cavendish side. Shortly before her death, she added a codicil to her will, naming as co-executor with Charles the prominent lawyer and politician Lord Charles Camden. The two executors were to hold the Piccadilly house in trust, but otherwise as far as Charles Cavendish was concerned, the will was practically the same.⁹⁴ Charles Cavendish took upon himself the task of executing it. Three and a half years after Elizabeth, Charles Cavendish died, having fully completed the executorship but before the residue had been deposited in his account. It was left to Charles Camden, the surviving executor, to transfer Charles Cavendish's inheritance, £97,000 in bank annuities and £47,000 in mortgages, from Elizabeth to his heir, his oldest son. In this way, at the end of 1783, a considerable fortune became the property of Henry Cavendish,⁹⁵ on his way to becoming the "richest of the wise."

Holker Hall

Holker Hall is a grand manor on the northwest coast of England, in the county of Cumbria, formerly in Lancashire (Fig. 5.3). It is situated among splendid gardens on hilly park-like

Surviving Daughters of William Second Duke of Devonshire," 28 July 1775, Devon. Coll., L/19/67. Charles Cavendish to John Heaton, 28 Aug. 1775, draft, and "Account of Deeds to Be Executed by Lord Charles Cavendish," Devon. Coll., 86/comp. 1.

⁹⁰Brydges (1812, 1:356). Page (1971, 2:190). Geoffrey Holmes (1967, 222).

⁹¹Articles on the marriage of William Jones and Elizabeth Morgan, daughter of Lady Rachel Morgan, to which Charles Cavendish was a party, 4 July 1767, Devon. Coll., L/43/16.

⁹²James Cavendish and Charles Cavendish together recommended Gowin Knight for fellowship in the Royal Society for his "mathematical and Philosophical knowledge," 24 Jan. 1745, Certificates, Royal Society 1:14, f. 297.

⁹³"The Surname of Cavendish Witnessed by W. Goostrey All Proved by Mr Chandler 20th December 1751," Devon. Coll.

⁹⁴Elizabeth Cavendish's will, 26 Feb. 1778, Devon. Coll., L/31/37. In a codicil of 31 Jan. 1779, among other changes, she left her land to Dudley Long instead of to the duke of Devonshire, and she left her house in Piccadilly to Charles Cavendish and Charles Camden to hold in trust for members of the Long family, especially Dudley.

⁹⁵"Lord Camden and the Honourable Henry Cavendish Assignment and Deed of Indemnity," 31 Dec. 1783, Devon. Coll., L/31/37. "Copy of Mr. Pickering's Letter to Mr. Wilmot," 26 Apr. 1780, *ibid.*, L/86/comp. 1.

grounds with woodlands overlooking Morecambe Bay (Fig. 5.4). Built in the sixteenth century, it was altered in the 1780s and again in the next century. Today it belongs to the Cavendish family and is open to the public. Its library contains many books from Henry Cavendish's library.

Late in life, Henry Cavendish had a conversation with a colleague John Barrow about Holker Hall. Barrow thought that it belonged to Lord George [Augustus] Cavendish. Cavendish corrected him: "It did belong to him, Sir; but he left it to my father, from whom it descended to me, and will next go to another Lord George [Augustus Henry Cavendish]."⁹⁶ Barrow's recollection of the conversation is detailed and plausible, but it raises questions.

It is at odds with published sources, which agree on a succession of ownership of Holker Hall, in which Charles and Henry Cavendish do not enter. According to this version, Holker Hall came into the Cavendish family in 1756, when Lord George Augustus Cavendish acquired it from a Lowther cousin. When Lord George Augustus died in 1794, it passed to his brother Lord Frederick. When Lord Frederick died in 1803, it passed to Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish, who held it until his death in 1834. We will look at the tangled affairs of the Cavendish and Lowther families, which may shed light on the confusion over Holker Hall and how it came about. The episode shows the effort Charles Cavendish was willing to make to help his family.

The relevant history begins with the last Lowther to live at Holker Hall, Sir Thomas Lowther, the son and heir of Sir William Lowther, a large landholder in Lancashire and Yorkshire, who had been raised to a baronetcy at the end of the seventeenth century. Known as an independent country Whig, Thomas Lowther was a Member of Parliament for Lancashire, spending part of his time in London. The rest of his time he spent mainly at his country house and family seat Holker Hall, near the village of Cartmel. The rectory and manor of Cartmel also belonged to his estate, as did an abbey and considerable land in Furness, at some distance from Holker. His Yorkshire estate at Marske contained another large tract. He received returns from crops, timber, and minerals and rents from his many thousands of acres, but he was nevertheless constantly in debt and in the habit of borrowing money from his estate steward, a telling dependency.⁹⁷ The settlement shows that Lady Elizabeth Cavendish brought £6000 to the marriage, a welcome addition to Thomas's precarious finances.

Charles often saw his sister Elizabeth, who named him godfather to her second child, a daughter who lived only a short time.⁹⁸ In a report on their daughter's death, Thomas wrote that Elizabeth was "in very great concern & trouble,"⁹⁹ and in letters beginning around this time, Thomas included regards from his sisters but no longer regularly from his wife, as he had in the past. The spunky Elizabeth, who wished she had been a boy so she could have gone abroad with her brothers Charles and James, was placed in the hands of physicians "to try what effect it will have upon her to make her of better behaviour." She was considered insane by the time she died. Her husband, Thomas, a sportsman who was fond of horse racing, a kind but improvident man, lapsed into heavy drinking and more debt.¹⁰⁰ In 1745 he died without a will. In the month after his death, at his surviving child William's request,

⁹⁶John Barrow (1849, 146).

⁹⁷The first survey of the Lancashire estate in 1775, thirty years after Sir Thomas's death, listed Cartmel-Holker at 2,860 acres and Furness at 3,559 acres. J.V. Beckett (1977b, 47–51).

⁹⁸Thomas Lowther to James Lowther, 8 Aug. 1728, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/W/ 39.

⁹⁹Thomas Lowther to James Lowther, 26 Sep. 1728, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰His debt was £4880 at his death. Beckett (1977b, 51).

Charles Cavendish together with the duke of Devonshire and another relative Lord Lonsdale agreed to serve as guardians during William's minority.¹⁰¹

Elizabeth declined the executorship, and William asked Charles Cavendish to be administrator of the estate for his benefit.¹⁰² To carry out his responsibility, Cavendish corresponded with the steward at Marske in Yorkshire and with the steward at Holker in Lancashire, John Fletcher, requesting full information about the estate, which included a variety of properties in addition to buildings and land such as iron pits and a fishery. In his many letters and lengthy notebooks dealing to his administration, Cavendish considered a range of issues, including debts, arrears, rents, bonds, interest, dividends, furniture, pictures, books, household expenses, repairs, taxes, corn, hay, pigs, asses, cattle, and horses. Having learned that the "proper method" for an administrator was to publish a sale, he pressed Fletcher for valuations of everything that was to be sold, overlooking nothing. "As to the dogs you [Fletcher] say that people are more inclined to beg than to buy, but my business is to sell & not to give & therefore I desire you will inquire whether you can get any thing for them." He supposed there would be no point in selling the dogs to the guardians for William to use, for by the time he came of age, "they will most of them being worn out."¹⁰³ Cavendish was both administrator and one of the guardians, which added a level of complexity as he wished to avoid any dispute between the two. On various points, he obtained an opinion from the attorney general. As the executor, he was well-organized, thorough, and insistent on adhering to the methods he set out.

Problems naturally came up, the first of which was Fletcher, who was slow to understand and made mistakes in his accounts, causing Cavendish "a great deal of trouble."¹⁰⁴ He was told to prepare as soon as possible a "perfect state of all the effects whatsoever belonging to Sir Thomas at his death & all of the sums due from him at that time."¹⁰⁵ Cavendish was dissatisfied with the result: "I can't suppose you think it [what Fletcher sent him] such an account as I asked for, nor such as is necessary for me to have in order to know the true state of Sr Thomas's affairs." The next month he wrote again, explaining how to make up his accounts. "I think this method necessary for the regularity of my own accounts in which I must enter a state of all moneys due to the personal Estate of Sr Th. Lowther at the time of his death & of all debts then due out of it."¹⁰⁶ Cavendish repeated his instructions over and over. Fletcher was old and ill, and in the spring of 1746, he died, succeeded by his capable son-in-law, William Richardson, easing Cavendish's work. Cavendish told the new steward that in dealing with Sir Thomas's creditors, "I have laid it down for a rule to pay every body in proportion as every creditor has an equal right & I suppose is equally desirous to receive his money, & if I depart from that rule in one case there will be no end of solicitations, so that though I am very sorry any person that wants his money should be kept out of it I see no help

¹⁰¹Edward Butler to John Fletcher, 16 May 1745, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/3/1.

¹⁰²Charles Cavendish to John Fletcher, 18 July 1745, draft, Devon. Coll., L/43/14. Charles was sworn in as administrator on 30 July 1745. Charles Cavendish to John Fletcher, draft, 30 July 1745, Devon. Coll., box 43/14. This bundle contains one notebook of Cavendish's guardian account for William and two notebooks of his administrator's accounts and correspondence for Thomas Lowther's estate. Drafts of his letters to the estate stewards and copies (probably incomplete) of their letters to him are contained in this correspondence, 1745–48. Administrator appointment, 17 Aug. 1745, Devon. Coll., box 31/11.

¹⁰³Charles Cavendish to John Fletcher, 27 July 1745, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/5.

¹⁰⁴Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 13 Mar. 1746, draft, Devon. Coll., box 43/14.

¹⁰⁵Charles Cavendish to John Fletcher, 20 July [1745], Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/5.

¹⁰⁶Charles Cavendish to John Fletcher, 13 Aug. 1745, *ibid.*

for it.” In the case of creditors who refused to accept only part of the principal, “unless they will agree each of them to take a part of their debt I must offer the whole to some of them & I should chuse to do it to those who make the most difficulty & I desire you will acquaint them with it.”¹⁰⁷ In the case of tenants who were in arrears and who would not immediately pay what was due from them, Cavendish directed the steward to distrain their effects. Where this method was not legally allowed, he would recover arrears by legal action; Cavendish told the steward to send him the names of persons calling for that action. A year and a half after he had taken charge of the estate, Cavendish could write to the steward, “I can now be pretty certain that when Sir William comes of Age there will be money enough to pay all the debts, & it will save some trouble.”¹⁰⁸ In his decisions, Cavendish was firm and clear, and he usually got the results he wanted.

Cavendish’s sister and now widow Elizabeth needed care. He paid sums to “Dr Mead,” likely the London physician Richard Mead, the head of his profession, “Dr Wilmot,” “Dr Monroe” who received an “allowance,” and an apothecary.¹⁰⁹ Elizabeth did not long outlive her husband, dying in 1747, while Cavendish was still active as administrator. In the same year, another Lowther, John, died, leaving most of his estate to William on the death of, or in jointure with, his mother, and Cavendish had to sort out the details of this property as well.¹¹⁰

Cavendish kept on friendly terms with his ward. When Sir William—after his father he was baronet—was at the university, Cavendish sent him books he asked for. He introduced William to his society, inviting him to dinner at his house with scientific friends.¹¹¹ In 1753 William was appointed lord lieutenant of Westmoreland, and in 1755 he succeeded his relative Sir James Lowther in the Cumberland seat, a promising start on what looked to be a fine career.

Sir James Lowther was born in London and educated at Oxford and Middle Temple. Through inheritance, he became owner of valuable collieries and other properties around Whitehaven in Cumberland, on the northwest coast of England. He expanded his estate, lived frugally, and in time grew immensely rich, reputed to be the richest commoner in England. He made important improvements in the extraction and trading of coal, encouraged the production of iron in Cumberland, improved the harbor at Whitehaven, making it a major port for shipping coal, adopted technical improvements at his collieries, and was the first to install a Newcomen steam engine in Cumberland. After a visit to Whitehaven, Richardson said that he “did not imagine to have found so many new contrivances.”¹¹² Lowther’s colliery steward Carlisle Spedding dug the second undersea coal mine in England, Saltom Pit. Thomas Lowther reported to James after a shipment of coal from Saltom had arrived that everyone said that these were the “finest coals that ever came into this country.” William

¹⁰⁷Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 13 Mar. 1746, draft; Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 20 May 1746, draft; Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 20 May 1746, draft, box 43/14. William Richardson to Charles Cavendish, 2 May 1746, copy, *ibid*.

¹⁰⁸Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 21 June 1746; Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 27 Dec. 1746, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/7.

¹⁰⁹On his sister’s behalf he also paid “Mr. Duffield,” who received regular pavements up to £180 each time, and “Mrs. Potter.” Various dates in “Guardians Account” and in an untitled notebook containing six pages of accounts, 1745–48, Devon. Coll., box 43/14.

¹¹⁰On 9 Jan. 1747, the steward, Danby, for the Yorkshire estate informed Charles that John Lowther had died. “Sir W. Lowther’s Estate,” Devon. Coll., box 43/14.

¹¹¹5 June 1753, Thomas Birch Diary.

¹¹²Thomas Lowther to James Lowther, 6 June 1734, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/W.

Brownrigg, a physician in Whitehaven who took a medical interest in the firedamp that miners breathed, was “earnestly solicited” by Lowther to study the problem.¹¹³ In 1736, Lowther was elected to the Royal Society, with Charles Cavendish’s support.¹¹⁴ Progressive and scientifically minded—a friend mentioned Lowther’s “old Acquaintance Sr Isaac Newton”¹¹⁵—Lowther was the kind of industrialist Charles and Henry Cavendish shared interests with.

Thomas had been close to James; they corresponded regularly, and Thomas paid visits to Whitehaven.¹¹⁶ James died in January 1755, and having no children of his own, he left his collieries and extensive lands in Cumberland to Thomas’s son William. James was not related to the Cavendishes, but William of course was, and his inheritance was viewed as a coup for the family. Lord Hartington, soon to be fourth duke of Devonshire, was congratulated, “I must wish yr Lordship Joy of the very great Acquisition made by your near Relation Sr W. Lowther, which I am credibly informed, is 4000 £ a year in Land, Coal Mines bringing in 11,000 £ a year, & not less than 400,000 £ in Money. Sr James Lowther has 100,000 £ & an Estate in Middlesex.”¹¹⁷

In the spring of the following year, 1756, William Lowther contracted scarlet fever. Katherine, wife of the recently deceased third duke of Devonshire, wrote to the fourth duke William that “every body is in great pain for Sr Wm Lowther.” He had been ill for a week or ten days, attended by “Shaw & Heberden.” The day she wrote, William had had “a very bad night,” and his doctors had called in “Willmot,” who ordered more blisters. She wrote a postscript to the letter, saying that Charles Cavendish was just there to tell her that Sir William had died.¹¹⁸ On the same day, the duke received a consoling letter saying that persons who knew William thought he had “left the Chief part of His fortune to Your Brothers.”¹¹⁹ The “Chief part of His fortune” referred to Holker Hall, which we return to below.

A second Sir James Lowther was remembered in the will of his relative Sir James Lowther of Whitehaven. When William Lowther died, he was twenty-eight and unmarried, and because he had no children, the Cumberland estates, which he had recently inherited, reverted by Sir James Lowther’s will to young James Lowther, then age nineteen.¹²⁰ Commenting on this inheritance, the Reverend Theophilus Lindsey wrote to the earl of Huntingdon of the “immense accession to young Sir James Lowther’s own fortunes by the death of Sir William, and the distribution of the unentailed fortunes of the latter among the Cavendishes, Lords John, George and Frederick, his relations.”¹²¹ The fortune of young James Lowther caused Horace Walpole to fear that England was becoming the “property of six or seven people.”¹²²

¹¹³Joshua Dixon (1801, 5).

¹¹⁴Cavendish signed Lowther’s certificate. 20 May 1736, JB, Royal Society 15:331.

¹¹⁵Henry Newman to James Lowther, 26 Aug. 1732, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/L1/1/53.

¹¹⁶Thomas Lowther to James Lowther, 11 July 1734, *ibid.*, D/Lons/W/37. There are many letters from Thomas to James Lowther in the Carlisle archive. Charles Cavendish also visited Whitehaven.

¹¹⁷H. Fox to Lord Hartington, 4 Jan. 1755, *Devon. Coll.*, no. 330.30.

¹¹⁸K. Devonshire to duke of Devonshire, 15 Apr. 1756, *ibid.*, no. 344.8. We assume the letter writer is Katherine, wife of the recently deceased 3d duke of Devonshire.

¹¹⁹Ducannon to duke of Devonshire, 15 Apr. 1756, *ibid.*, no. 294.46.

¹²⁰Beckett (1977b, 52). Also William left all of the buildings at Cockermouth, near Whitehaven in Cumberland, to Charles Cavendish to hold in trust for young James Lowther.

¹²¹Theophilus Lindsey to Francis Hastings, 10th earl of Huntingdon, 25 May 1756, in *Great Britain, Historical Manuscripts Commission* (1928–47, 3:117).

¹²²Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 20 Apr. 1756, in *Walpole* (1937–1983, 9:183–187, on 185).

In his will, William named his former guardian Charles Cavendish as his executor.¹²³ He left his money, stock, goods, chattels, and personal estate not otherwise specified to Cavendish in trust to pay for his funeral expenses and his legacies and to pay off his debts. What remained of the personal estate after these payments he left to Cavendish as his executor. Because he lived in London, Cavendish depended on the steward at Holker, Richardson, to provide him with information he needed from William's estate at both Holker and Whitehaven. His letters to Richardson tell us about his actions and problems. Other than for the pictures, which were to remain in Holker Hall, none of the furnishings in any of William's houses was specifically given in his will, so "the whole" belonged to Cavendish. That was the easy part. He needed to know what particulars belonged to William's personal estate and what their values were and which of them young Sir James wanted to buy. Because much of William's estate was in Cumberland, he depended on John Spedding, steward to the late James Lowther and after him to the late William at Whitehaven. To keep the money coming in, Cavendish allowed Spedding to continue to use what he needed from the personal estate to carry on the coal trade. He told Richardson to go to Whitehaven and talk to Spedding to learn what at the collieries belonged to William's personal estate. He sent him off with a list of particulars that he thought belonged.¹²⁴ Cavendish set about with evident total confidence to settle the affairs of this complex estate.

There was a difference of opinion on who owned the steam engines at the pits, and on the value of the ships and of the leasehold collieries and estates. Cavendish confided to Richardson his concern about having to depend on Spedding for valuations, asking how much trust he could place on the accounts he received from him. He understood that Spedding would be partial to the owner of that estate, who was then young James, but he was "intitled to a full discovery [of all Sir Williams personal estate] by Law as well as from the principles of justice." In all disputes of interest, he told Richardson, it was his "desire to act with perfect openness & candour," having "not in the least desire to get anything which I am not justly intitled to." He suspected that measurements of the quantities of some stores "may not have done me strict justice," but he did not know what to do about it other than to insist that Spedding give him strong assurances of the "truth" of the inventory before signing an agreement with him. Richardson thought that some of the prices Cavendish demanded were too high. Cavendish told him that he had no objection to lowering them if he saw fit, explaining that he did "not desire to have a farthing more than I have a right to."¹²⁵ Charles Cavendish spoke of "principles of justice," "strict justice," "openness," candor," and "truth." We meet these words again in his son Henry's business affairs.

From letters to his steward, we see the estate from Cavendish's point of view. We have another point of view from Catherine Lowther, who told her son, young James, that "Lord C – is determined to give you all the trouble in his power; you must therefore make the best of it."¹²⁶ Having "great calls for money,"¹²⁷ she was "very pressing to have the affairs at Whitehaven settled," but Cavendish would not settle until he knew what the personal

¹²³ Will of William Lowther, dated 7 Apr. 1755, probated 22 Apr. 1756, Devon. Coll., L/31/47.

¹²⁴ Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 27 Apr., 13, 27 May 1756, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/7. Cavendish's list: arrears of rent; bonds, notes, etc.; furniture, plate, etc.; coal debts; coals raised; wagons, carts, etc.; horses; tools; corn, hay, etc.; timber in yard; timber felled; material for buildings not used; ships; engines; leasehold estates & collieries.

¹²⁵ Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 26, 29 June and 27 July 1756, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/7.

¹²⁶ Catherine Lowther to James Lowther, 11 July 1756, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/L1/61.

¹²⁷ Catherine Lowther to James Lowther, 8 July 1756, *ibid*.

estate consisted of and what parts of it her son wanted to buy.¹²⁸ Cavendish was not without sympathy, but he would not bend his principles. He accommodated her immediate needs by advancing her any money she asked for from William's legacy to her of £6000, in discharge of all demands of the estate.¹²⁹

We come to a major disagreement, which had to do with £30,000 in New South Sea Annuities that were put in trust to finance the transfer of William's estate to young James. Cavendish thought that the annuities were his because the transfer could not take place in the specified time, James not being of age. In July 1756, Cavendish and James agreed that the latter would bring a bill in the Court of Chancery against Cavendish to "have the right relative to the 30,000" and also the right relative to the leasehold estates and the steam engines and other equipment that went with them. Cavendish and James agreed on two other points: Richardson and Spedding between them would decide the values of the collieries and the furniture in the house at Whitehaven; and the legacies would be paid and the personal estate and the stock would be given to James when he came of age, while in the meantime he would receive dividends.¹³⁰ Upon reading the agreement, Catherine wrote to her son, "I think most of it very unreasonable," in keeping with "His Lords conduct."¹³¹

We will look at Cavendish's claims, for they show his hardheaded determination to acquire what he believed he was entitled to, even if only because of a legal technicality. Cavendish agreed that by Sir James's will, young James was entitled to the properties in Cumberland (with the exception of houses and land in Cockermouth) and to all of the stocks except the £30,000 in New South Sea Annuities. The main issue was whether this sum fell back into the stock from which it was taken (James's case) or whether it was separated and fell into the residue (Cavendish's case). Cavendish insisted that the £30,000 belonged to him as part of the residue of William's estate, since William died before young James was twenty-one, making the exchange of estates impossible. Cavendish also insisted that Sir James's leasehold estates in Cumberland, consisting mainly of coal mines together with steam engines and other equipment affixed to the estates, passed to him as William's residuary legatee. The cases were debated, and council on both sides was heard. The court decided that the £30,000 in annuities and James's leasehold properties belonged to James, and that Cavendish had to pay over the interest from the annuities to James. Whether the steam engines and so forth stayed with the land or went to the Cavendish as executor was left to the opinion of the master of the rolls. Cavendish appealed the decision.¹³²

Repeatedly in his letters to Richardson, Cavendish used the expression "what belongs to me," or its equivalent. His letters read as though he was furthering his own interests, and that is how we originally read them.¹³³ But this was his way of speaking: he meant by it, what belonged to him in trust for uses specified in the will, with anything left over going to him as specified in the will. He administered a very large estate, and he went about it with his customary conscientiousness. There is another consideration. William was generous—

¹²⁸ Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 8 May 1756, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/7.

¹²⁹ Cavendish to Richardson, 27 Apr. 1756.

¹³⁰ "Heads of What Is Agreed on between Ld Charles Cavendish & Sr James Lowther," [before 19 July 1756], Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/L1/62.

¹³¹ Catherine Lowther to James Lowther, 19 July 1756, *ibid.*, D/Lons/L1/61.

¹³² Packet of papers labeled in Henry Cavendish's hand "Sr W. & Sr J. Lowther's Wills & Papers Relating to the Law Suit between L.C.C. & Sr J. Lowther." *Devon. Coll.*, 31/17.

¹³³ Christa Jungnickel and Russell McCormach (1999, 93–94).

he tripled Spedding's pay when he acquired James Lowther's estate¹³⁴—and his will was generous, granting specific legacies totaling £79,000.¹³⁵ At the time he made out his will, this sum, large as it was, would have been realistic, owing to his recent inheritance. The elder James Lowther's annual income was well above £20,000 a year, a good portion of which would have gone to William,¹³⁶ and his income from his father's estates, of the order of £4000,¹³⁷ would have paid part and perhaps most of his living expenses.¹³⁸ He could not have foreseen that he would benefit from James Lowther's wealth for so short a time. To realize the intent of William's will, Cavendish would have wanted to claim everything possible as personal estate and turn it into money. In his letters to Richardson, he spoke of his appreciation of his former ward, "a benefactor whose great fortune enabled him to do what the generosity of his temper prompted him to."¹³⁹

When Catherine Lowther informed her son about William's death, she gave him advice about the great wealth coming to him. The "acquisition of fortune, cannot be any recompense for the want of so worthy a friend [William] & will only make you more the subject of envy than you have already been, & can in no shape conduce to yr happiness, either in this world or another, unless you use it, as he did, in doing good, otherwise will only draw upon you, misery in both."¹⁴⁰ Six months later, she reminded him that "it is a debt due to that Great Being, who has made you accountable for so large a portion of this worlds goods; which if properly managed, will not only make you happy here, but eternally so." The world at first would look on him favorably "as a person endow'd by providence with the power of relieving the distress'd, & making happy his fellow creatures," a power denied to a poor man, who can offer only prayer and hope.¹⁴¹ James disregarded the advice, using his money for a different kind of power. He did some good for Whitehaven, for example, by setting up a manufactory for copper and stockings, but he grew into one of the "profligate wicked wretches" and "villains" his mother warned him against. He became known throughout the region as the "bad earl," distinguished equally by his unenviable character as by his immense wealth. James Boswell called him a "brutal fellow." Horace Walpole said he was "equally un-amiable in public and private." The Reverend Alexander Carlyle, a leader of the Church of Scotland, said that he was "more detested than any man alive." Through lavish expenditure, he kept mistresses and controlled nine members of Parliament known as "Sir James's Ninepins," who were required to vote as he ordered.¹⁴² Otherwise, he was miserly, showing his contempt for common people by traveling in a rundown carriage pulled by ungroomed horses.¹⁴³ In his attitude toward money, James could hardly be more different

¹³⁴Beckett (1977b, 52).

¹³⁵Plus several small annuities.

¹³⁶Beckett (1977b, 64). Not all of James's income would have gone to William. For example, he left his South Sea annuities to young James, who would have received the dividends. Sir James Lowther's will, 1754, Devon. Coll., L/31/17.

¹³⁷Beckett (1977b, 52).

¹³⁸Because of his very short life as a very wealthy man, not much can be learned. His income from 5 July 1755 to 25 May 1756 (the month after his death) was £11,640. His expenses were £8251, which included large payments to Girolamo Belloni, the head of a family bank in Rome. "Sr William Lowther Bart His Account with Robt Snow & Willm Denne 1755," 5 July 1755 to 25 May 1756, Devon. Coll., box 43/14.

¹³⁹Cavendish to Richardson, 8 May 1756. Cavendish directed his steward to continue William's generosity by distributing £50 to persons in the neighborhood who were most in need, as William would have done were he alive.

¹⁴⁰Catherine Lowther to James Lowther, Apr. 1756, Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, D/Lons/L1/61.

¹⁴¹Catherine Lowther to James Lowther, 28 Oct. 1756, *ibid.*

¹⁴²"Lowther, James, Earl of Lonsdale (1736–1802)," *DNB*, 1st ed. 12:217–220, on 219.

¹⁴³William Donaldson (2002, 409).

than William, his benefactor. Horace Walpole wrote to Montague five days after Williams' death making the comparison: "Sir William Lowther has made a charming will, and been as generous at his death, as he was in his short life ... but what do you think of young Sir James Lowther, who, not of age, becomes master of one or two and forty thousand pounds a year."¹⁴⁴ We do not know what Cavendish thought. Through his execution of William's will, he helped make possible this outcome, but he had no responsibility for it. That rested with Sir James's character and the forces that shaped it.

To this point, we have not looked at what William placed at the head of his will and gave most attention to, Holker Hall. William left this house along with other manors, buildings, and lands to William Cavendish third duke of Devonshire and his eldest son "to the several uses upon the trusts." Holker Hall was to go first to his own male offspring, of which he had none, in which event it was to go to his aunt Catherine Lowther for her "use" over the course of her life; and upon her death, the estate was to pass to George Augustus Cavendish for his use during his life; after his death, it was to pass to his younger brother Frederick Cavendish for his use during his life; and after his death, it was to pass to the youngest brother John Cavendish for his use during his life.¹⁴⁵ The three brothers were the younger sons of the third duke of Devonshire, nephews of Charles Cavendish's, and first cousins of Henry Cavendish's. None of the three brothers married.

Not long after William died, Cavendish heard from friends of Catherine Lowther "that she has thoughts of making over the estate to Lord George Augustus Cavendish for a proper consideration."¹⁴⁶ This evidently was soon done. Lord George became the first male Cavendish to live at Holker Hall, making it his home for nearly forty years, until his death in 1794. In his final will he spoke of "the person or persons who shall upon my decease succeed and become entitled to the said House [Holker Hall] and Estate at Holker,"¹⁴⁷ wording which might suggest that there was uncertainty about his successor, but as directed by William Lowther's will Holker Hall went next to Frederick Cavendish, who held it until his death in 1803.

Nowhere in William's will is Charles Cavendish said to be entitled to Holker Hall, nor is he in George Augustus Cavendish's and Frederick Cavendish's wills. If what Henry Cavendish told John Barrow is correct, that Holker Hall was left to his father and his father left it to him, it is unlikely that his father acquired it from George Augustus Cavendish as Henry said it did; for by Sir Williams's will, Frederick Cavendish was next in line. When Frederick died, his younger brother John, who was next in line, was already dead, and the beneficiaries named in Sir William's will came to an end. If there was uncertainty, it may have come at this juncture, but so far as we can judge from his will, Frederick did not think there was any uncertainty, treating Holker Hall no differently than the rest of his property. With the exception of special legacies, he left "the Capital messuage or mansion house of Holker Hall with the park lands and hereditamenti" in the parish of Cartmel, Lancashire, together with his other properties to his nephew George Augustus Henry Cavendish and his

¹⁴⁴ Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 20 Apr. 1756, in Walpole (1937–1983, 9:184–185).

¹⁴⁵ William Lowther's will, 7 Apr. 1755, probated 22 Apr. 1756, Devon. Coll., L/36/47. He died on 15 Apr. 1756.

¹⁴⁶ Charles Cavendish to William Richardson, 28 Dec. 1756, Lancashire Record Office, DDCa 22/7.

¹⁴⁷ George Augustus Cavendish's will, signed 9 Mar. 1792, probated 12 July 1794, Public Record Office, National Archives, Prob 12/1247. He died on 2 May 1794. He used the same expression for his estates in the county of Huntingdon: "at the time of my decease unto the person or persons who shall upon my death succeed or become entitled to those estates."

heirs and assigns.¹⁴⁸ This George was also Henry Cavendish's principal heir and the Lord George that Henry told Barrow he was going to leave Holker Hall to. The land tax returns for Lower Holker, which includes Holker Hall, list Frederick Cavendish through 1803, the year he died, in 1804 the name changing to George [Augustus Henry] Cavendish.¹⁴⁹ Henry Cavendish's name does not appear. If he was entitled to Holker Hall, he did not occupy it and he did not pay land taxes on it. By the time Frederick died, Charles had been dead for ten years, and Henry had seven years to live. Henry Cavendish's conversation with Barrow was unlikely to have taken place before Barrow was elected to the Royal Society in 1805, at which time Henry had five years to live. Other than in contemplation, he had no occasion to enjoy the splendor of the mansion overlooking Morecambe Bay.¹⁵⁰

There are three possible reasons why Henry Cavendish's ties to Holker Hall remain elusive. One is that we have missed something, either a document that has not yet been found or a right that a legal scholar would understand. Another is that Barrow's recollection is wrong, though it seems unlikely that he would remember Cavendish having said that he owned the manor if he did not say it. Third, Cavendish was confused about the ownership. He was normally very accurate, and we do not consider this possibility lightly. But let us see. To begin with, he certainly knew about his father's involvement with the Lowthers. When Charles Cavendish was appointed administrator of Thomas Lowther's estate in 1745, when he was Sir William's guardian in 1745–48, and when he became executor of Sir William's estate in 1756, Henry was fourteen to seventeen, and twenty-five. He was away at school for part of the time, but at other times he was home, and he would have known that his father made journeys to the Lowther properties and why. Later he himself was involved: Charles Cavendish and after him Henry were trustees of Cartmel Rectory, part of the Lowther estate: the bishop of Chester leased Cartmel Rectory to Henry Cavendish in trust for the persons entitled to it under Sir William Lowther's will, who were the persons entitled to Holker Hall, George Augustus Cavendish and Frederick Cavendish, followed by George Augustus Henry Cavendish.¹⁵¹ After his father's death, Henry made an inventory of the contents of a walnut cabinet he kept in his own bedchamber, which included William Lowther's and James Lowther's wills and papers relating to the lawsuit between Charles Cavendish and James Lowther.¹⁵² Henry made a list of his father's papers, which contained letters about William Lowther's estate,¹⁵³ and he made a list of keys, which included keys to William Lowther's chest of drawers and trunk.¹⁵⁴ Henry lived among the relics of his father's dealings with the Lowther family, including all the paperwork, but he may never have looked at it. It is written in legal language and is extensive, and the transfer of Lowther property was, as we have seen, complicated. It would have taken him time to master it, to no obvious purpose. In light of the history of the Lowther estate, if Henry made a mistake about it, he is forgiven.

¹⁴⁸Frederick Cavendish's will, signed 24 Jan. 1797, probated 29 Oct. 1803, Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 112/1399/369.

¹⁴⁹The 1803 land tax return was dated 7 July. The 1804 land tax return was dated 28 June. George Augustus Henry Cavendish's name is listed from 1804 through the year of Henry Cavendish's death, 1810, and beyond. Lancaster County Archives, QDL/LN/23.

¹⁵⁰From his conversation with Barrow, it seems that Cavendish knew the manor and its setting. Possibly his father brought him there on one or more of his visits. In 1786, on a journey with Blagden, he passed into Cumbria, but there is no mention of Holker Hall. Blagden to Banks, 4 Sep. 1786.

¹⁵¹The documents are in Devon. Coll., L/36/62.

¹⁵²Henry Cavendish, "Walnut Cabinet in Bed Chamber," Devon. Coll.

¹⁵³Henry Cavendish, "List of Papers Classed," *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴Henry Cavendish, "Keys at London," *ibid.*

He may have remembered incorrectly, or misinterpreted something his father once told him about Holker Hall, or was given an account by his father at variance with the record, part of which his father disputed. The interest of this episode is what it tells us about our subject: Henry Cavendish had the normal English aristocrat's desire to improve his country estate, recalling his maternal grandfather Henry de Grey's ambitions for Wrest Park.