



Chatsworth: The House

Deborah Mitford , Simon Upton (Photographs)

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Chatsworth is one of England's ten most visited great houses. In this tour of the house, Deborah the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire takes the reader into the private as well as the public rooms, and goes behind the scenes to explain the management of the household and the work of the staff needed to keep it going.

Chatsworth: The House Details

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Author : Deborah Mitford , Simon Upton (Photographs)

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From Reader Review Chatsworth: The House for online ebook

Linnea says

An interesting overview of the history of Chatsworth, one of the great homes of England, still lived in by the Devonshire family (written by Deborah Mitford Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire). It would be more interesting in conjunction with an actual visit to the house.

Lezley says

An enchanting book. I felt as though I was transported to Chatsworth and give a personal walking tour by the Duchess of Devonshire. A trip to Chatsworth is now on my bucket list.

Michael Heath-Caldwell says

Interesting book on Chatsworth House in England.

Lezley says

An excellent introduction to Chatsworth House. I appreciate the Further Reading List

Jan Polep says

House goes way, way back and when they instituted "death taxes", what did they sell off between 1950-74...books! Fascinating what they kept, how they opened the house to the public, great pictures. House recently in the news for auctioning off more items for upkeep. Cost 4million pounds a year to run.

Rhonda says

Since I love "house museums" and am fascinated with the Mitford sisters, this book was a pleasure. The Mitford wit is evident in the writing. The needs of a house like this (roof=1.3 acres)boggle my mind -- I am now convinced that I would enjoy another trip to Great Britain just to tour a number of these great houses, beginning with this one! Although our local library had a copy of this book, I was able to also purchase one reasonably to add to my own library!

Maura says

Another Mitford sister link - their family fascinates me for some reason. This book also interested me because it was mentioned in the last couple of books I read relating to architecture.

The author is one of the Mitford sisters; she married Andrew Cavendish who later inherited the title of Duke of Devonshire. They live in one of the premier old house in England, Chatsworth. She begins the book with a brief history of the house and family before launching into descriptions of the house itself. A previous Duke known as the Bachelor Duke had written a booklet describing the house in some detail; excerpts from this booklet are followed by comments from the Duchess to update the reader on changes made since the Bachelor Duke's writing. She mentions "visual indigestion" to describe the dulling of the senses that occurs after seeing too many ornate rooms stuffed with too many old treasures; the same thing happens after reading too many descriptions of the aforementioned rooms and so I skimmed through some of them. Every so often she includes a personal tidbit - an amusing incident that happened in this room, or the comfort she feels in that room with the dogs and papers all around her, and these are the best parts of the book to me. Every so often one of these items or a description of some detail would seem familiar, and then I'd realize that it was very likely something that Nancy Mitford had used in her books "Love in a Cold Climate" and "The Pursuit of Love". Most hilarious to me: the book titles that the family chose for the false book spines that filled in a section of wall made to blend into the bookshelves around it. One example: "Studies in Sentiment" by E. Motion.

Her descriptions of all the various staff and their responsibilities were informative; long ago big estates were an important part of the economy of an area with the number of job opportunities they provided. But work was hard for the lowly - long hours with physically demanding work for the maids, footmen, etc. Probably the saving grace was that many of the estate owners were only there for a few weeks or months at a time; the rest of the time the staff could relax a bit.

Bettie? says

[Bettie's Books (hide spoiler)]

Lucy says

Fascinating English country house that belongs to the Duke of Devonshire. Book written by then-current duchess, who was born Deborah Mitford, youngest of the six Mitford sisters. The book details the history of the house and the nobility who owned and occupied it. Excellent pictures, both current and historical, of various parts of the house, though of course never enough. Details room by room of the public tour, and shows some of the private parts of the house as well. Especially interesting are quotes from the Bachelor Duke (the sixth duke, early 19th century) about the house, with updates by the Duchess on what has changed and what hasn't. Then still lived in, I don't know about now. Book published in 2002. That duke, the 11th, died in 2004.

Chapters are The Story of the House (early history, the first ten dukes, Chatsworth since 1950); Touring the House (the public route, the private rooms); Behind the Scenes (household, areas including the kitchen, cellars, laundry, attics, theatre, roof). The end papers show the family genealogy and a plan of the house covering the public route, including the ground floor, second floor, and north wing.

Highly recommended for people who like English history, architecture, English country houses, especially if you have toured the house or plan to someday.

Gretchen says

I was inspired to read this by reading *How Buildings Learn* by Stewart Brandt (if memory serves). I started with the original, but preferred the coffee table version. Much better pictures and better integration of the Duchess' and the Bachelor Duke's descriptions. Now I shall have to read about Georgiana Spencer and one of Nancy Mitford's novels.

Jennifer says

After reading *Wait for Me*, I had to read the book she wrote about the house. The photos and stories about each room, yes even the private family rooms not on the tours...I loved the details of each piece. Now I really need to go to England.

Herb says

This is a very interesting account of the history of a British estate that has been in one family for centuries. Part two of this book is a room-by-room tour hosted by the Duchess of Devonshire herself, a running commentary that is also assisted by the handbook of a former duke who lived some centuries ago.

Karleen Koen says

This was for fun and research. I'm intrigued with the Mitford sisters. This one is the Dowdger Duchess of Devonshire and helped make Chatsworth one of the estates to visit in England.

Linda says

When I toured this spectacular "house" in May 2014, I purchased the most recent edition of this book. I had wanted to see the huge estate for years - it far exceeded my high expectations. This book is a history of the family, the house, and the gardens with wonderful photos of much of it. If you saw the 2005 production of *Pride and Prejudice*, you got glimpses of Chatsworth House which is Mr. Darcy's Pemberley in the film. Even the big screen cannot do justice to this palace-like house, filled with treasures - it's even deemed a Treasure House of England. The book features the 30 opulent State Rooms on tour (there are actually 300 rooms in all) with photographs of them and some of the treasures. Several pages are devoted to the gardens, and the working estate. All of it is very interesting. This is an excellent keepsake for your trip albums, as it's very well written and answers a lot of questions. If you're a *Downton Abbey* fan, Chatsworth House will blow your mind. If you don't tour the house in person, the house will give you a very good introduction to it.

I highly recommend the guidebook - it's one of the better ones.
