

## A timeline of Holker Estate

This timeline has been put together from a variety of sources in order to understand who owned and who lived on the estate and when various building works and alterations took place. It will also help to identify certain members of the family whose titles changed during their lifetime.

1557 **Christopher Preston** leased some property in Cartmel for 30 years from the Crown that once belonged to Cartmel Priory and had been confiscated when the monasteries were dissolved. This included Frith Hall on the coast that was the original dwelling.

1594 **Christopher Preston** died

1609 **George Preston** built a new dwelling on the site of the present Holker Hall and moved there. Frith Hall appears to have become a dower house or was occupied by other members of the Preston family.

1640 **George Preston** died

1642 By this date the estate had been purchased by the Preston family.

1644 The estate was confiscated from **Thomas Preston** by Parliament, but was later restored to him.

1697 **Thomas Preston** died

1698 Catherine, daughter of Thomas Preston married **Sir William Lowther** of Marske, Yorkshire, a junior branch of the Lowthers of Westmorland. King William 11 gave Lowther a baroncy on 15 June 1697.

1699 **Sir Thomas**, Sir William and Catherine's only son, was born.

1723 **Sir Thomas**, son of Sir William and Catherine, married Elizabeth Cavendish, daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire on July 9th. She was known as Lady Betty. He was MP for Lancaster. Thomas and his wife Elizabeth created the first formal gardens at Holker. In Jan 1723 it had been reported that Sir Thomas of Holker had been dangerously ill with smallpox.

1725 Steward at Holker was **John Fletcher**.

1727 **Sir William**, Thomas and Elizabeth's eldest son was born. He inherited Holker estate.

1745 **Sir Thomas Lowther** died in March and the estate passed to **Sir William** his son. John Fletcher the steward at Holker died on Feb 23 1745/6 and his burial entry in the Parish Register states “Holker 20 years steward’. He was succeeded by his son in law William Richardson.

1755 **Sir William** inherited the Whitehaven estates from his 4<sup>th</sup> cousin once removed.

1756 When the unmarried **Sir William Lowther** died in April 1756 Holker Estate passed to his sister, Catherine Lowther, via the family settlement for her life.

1764 Catherine Lowther died and the estate passed to **Lord George Augustus Cavendish**, 2nd son of William, the 3rd Duke of Devonshire. The Whitehaven estates went to his 4th cousin James Lowther (1736-1802), the earl of Lonsdale from 1745, also known as wicked Jimmy.

1782 **Lord George Augustus Henry**, the 3rd son of William, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, born in 1754, married Elizabeth Compton, the daughter of the Earl of Northampton.

William Richardson was steward to estate until his death in Oct 1782. He had married John Fletcher’s daughter and William followed his father in law to become estate steward in 1745/6.

1783 New Hall, possibly designed by John Carr of York or John Hird, a local joiner, builder and architect, was built at Holker. John Hird originated from Yorkshire and he married Margaret Atkinson of Cark in 1756. He worked on Leighton Hall (1765), Sizergh Castle (1777) and Bigland Hall (1781). He lived at Cark and then Cartmel Church Town from about 1766 to 1797. John Carr was employed by the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire in the 1780s to transform Buxton into a spa town. The 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire was the uncle of Lord George Augustus Cavendish who owned the Holker Estate between 1764 and 1794. During the following 10 years the Holker Hall gardens were redesigned.

1794 **Lord George Augustus** died suddenly as he was returning to London after a stay at Holker Hall. His younger brother **Lord Frederick (Field Marshall Lord Frederick Cavendish)** inherited Holker Hall.

1795-6 John Robinson was steward to Lord Frederick.

1803 **Lord Frederick** died in October He was born in 1729 and did not marry. He was a British Army Officer. **Lord George Augustus Henry Cavendish, his**

**nephew**, inherited the Estate. He was born in 1754 and married Lady Elizabeth Compton in 1782. He was very interested in horse racing.

1808 **William Cavendish** born, son of William Lord Cavendish. William junior eventually became 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Burlington and later seventh Duke of Devonshire. Other titles included Lord Cavendish, 7<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Harrington and 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Devonshire.

1812 **William, Lord Cavendish**, Colonel Cavendish, the eldest son of Lord George Henry died in a coach accident on Holker Estate. He was born in 1783 and had married Louisa and they had 3 young children. Louisa died in 1863.

1829 **William Cavendish** married Lady Blanche Georgina Howard

1831 **Lord George** was created Earl of Burlington by William IV in 1831 and William, his grandson, became known as Lord Cavendish from this date.

1834 **Lord George, the Earl of Burlington, died and was succeeded by his grandson William, the second earl**, who became seventh Duke of Devonshire in 1858.

1835-1841 Alterations undertaken to the 1783 Holker Hall by George Webster (1797-1864), a Kendal architect whose grandfather Robert Webster had been a stone mason on the Holker Estate, for William, the second Earl of Burlington. According to Stockdale's notes demolition started on April 21<sup>st</sup> 1835. With advice from Joseph Paxton the gardens were altered over the next few years. The fountain was added between 1838 and 1842. A walled garden was also built and the bricks were made on the estate close to Reake's Cottage where a brick and drain tile works was created between 1841 and 1851.

1840 Lady Blanche died and **William, The Marquis of Harrington** retreated to live at Holker, his favourite residence. His title was because he was the heir to the Dukedom.

1845 **George Drewry** was appointed land agent for Furness and Cartmel Estates.

1858 **William, Earl of Burlington became the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire**, on death of his cousin, William George Spencer Cavendish, sixth duke of Devonshire. From this date he was only able to spend half the year at Holker.

He was particularly associated with the development of Barrow-in-Furness, where he assisted to establish the iron mining and steel producing industries. He

was chairman of the Barrow Haematite Company on its constitution on 1 Jan. 1866, and with (Sir) James Ramsden promoted the Furness railway and the Devonshire and Buccleuch docks, which were opened in September 1867. He was also closely associated with the growth of both Eastbourne and Buxton, where he owned much property, as watering places.

1859 -1861 Alterations undertaken to inside of Hall to design by Caldecotts of London. Paley of Lancaster dealt with masonry work.

1864 Stable courtyard built.

1871 Serious fire at Holker Hall destroyed Webster's main block. New wing designed by Paley and Austin, similar in design to Webster's block but built in red sandstone rather than limestone. A conservatory was built onto the west wing of the house and further formal gardens with terraces and balustrades were added over the next few years.

1882 **Lord Frederick**, born in 1836, was the second son of the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke. He was murdered in Phoenix Park, Dublin as he walked with Thomas Henry Burke, the permanent Under-Secretary who was the intended victim. Lord Frederick was newly appointed as chief secretary and had arrived in Dublin that day to take the oath of office. After the ceremony he had gone for a stroll with Burke.

1891 **William, 7th Duke of Devonshire** died on 21 Dec. 1891 at Holker Hall, his favourite residence and was buried at Edensor, near Chatsworth, on 26 Dec. **Spencer Cavendish**, William's second but eldest surviving son, became the eighth Duke of Devonshire. He was known as the Marquis of Harrington as he was the heir to the Dukedom. **Victor Cavendish**, the eldest son of Edward, William's third son, inherited and continued to live at Holker Hall from 1891.

1908 **Spencer** the 8<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire died and his nephew **Victor Cavendish** became 9<sup>th</sup> Duke. With much regret Victor and his wife left Holker Hall to live at Chatsworth and his brother **Richard** took over the estate. Richard's wife was **Lady Moyra**. Thomas Mawson worked with Richard and Moyra to improve and alter the gardens. The Pergola was designed by Mawson.

1913 The conservatory was demolished and was replaced with an arcaded summer house.

1988 New cascade and pool built.

Pat Rowland, March 2021