



Public Record Office  
of Northern Ireland

# INTRODUCTION

## 7<sup>TH</sup> MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY

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# 7<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Londonderry Papers (D3099)

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## **Summary**

The Londonderry Papers in D3099 derive from the 7th Marquess of Londonderry (1878-1949) and his wife, Edith Helen, née Chaplin, consist of c.400 files and c.10,000 letters, and relate primarily to the career of Lord Londonderry.



## **Background**

Lord Londonderry was educated at Eton and Sandhurst and entered the House of Commons as a Conservative in 1906. He succeeded to the title in 1915. After in the First World War, he was appointed Finance Member of the Air Council in 1919. A year later he became Under-Secretary of State for Air, a post which he resigned on the setting up of the Northern Ireland government in 1921. As leader of the Senate and Master of Education for Northern Ireland between 1921 and 1926, he prepared and piloted through Parliament the controversial 1923 Education Act, which became known as 'the Londonderry Act' (see D3099/5).

In 1928 he was appointed First Commissioner of Works, and reappointed on the formation of Ramsay MacDonald's National government in 1931. Later in the year he was appointed Secretary of State for Air, which he remained until 1935. An enthusiastic aviator himself, he spurred on the re-equipment of the Royal Air Force and ensured that Northern Ireland obtained its first civil aerodrome, at Newtownards (see D3099/6). In 1932 and 1933 he attended the disarmament conference at Geneva. On the formation of Baldwin's government in 1935, Londonderry served for a short period as Lord Privy Seal, but his ministerial career came to an end later in the year (see D3099/2/17). As an influential private individual, he laboured to bring about Anglo-German reconciliation, befriending Goering and Ribbentrop, and exposing himself to the charge of being 'pro-German' (see D3099/2/18-19). In 1942 he was appointed first regional commissioner of the Northern Ireland Air Training Corps.

Besides Mount Stewart, the family seat in Co. Down, Londonderry owned extensive English and Welsh estates, which included Wynyard Park in Co. Durham (see D3099/11) and valuable coal mines in the vicinity of Seaham Harbour (see D3099/9). He was Chancellor of both the University of Durham and of The Queen's University of Belfast (see D3099/16). He was also Lord Lieutenant of Co. Durham and HML of Co. Down and was active in Conservative politics in both areas (see D3099/7 and D3099/8). At national level, he was President of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations.

Lady Londonderry was a powerful influence on her husband's career. In her own right she was a prominent figure in a number of spheres: she played an active part in numerous war-and peace-time organisations and charities (see D3099/14); she was intimate with many of the leading lights in the social, literary and political world of her day, particularly with the Prime Minister and Labour Party Leader, Ramsay MacDonald (see D3099/3 and T3412); and she carried on the 6th Marquess and Marchioness's tradition of political entertaining for the Conservative Party, particularly at Londonderry House, Park Lane (see D3099/15).

All these activities, responsibilities and individuals are fully represented in the archive. In addition, it includes the papers of Lady Londonderry's father, Henry Chaplin, 1st Viscount Chaplin (1840-1923), for many years MP for the Sleaford Division of Lincolnshire and, among other things, President of the Local Government Board, 1895-1900. His papers relate to his career as a Conservative politician and to

his sporting interests, which include the famous Blankney Hunt, Lincolnshire (see D3099/1).

Some other papers of the 7th Marquess of Londonderry and his wife have been deposited in the Durham County Record Office; these relate to family, political, estate and colliery affairs, including matters also covered by this collection. Cross-references to the Durham papers have been made where applicable.



## The Papers

The different components of the Londonderry Papers in PRONI are as follows:

- D654** The Londonderry Estate Office Archive, 1629-c.1940, consisting of most of the Irish estate papers and the mercantile papers of Alexander Stewart and Sir Robert Cowan.
- D3030** The Castlereagh Papers, c.1780-1850, consisting of the bulk of the political and personal papers of the 2nd Marquess, of which only a small quantity are in Durham; and such correspondence of his half-brother, the 3rd Marquess, and the 3rd Marquess's wife, Frances-Anne, as are not in Durham.
- D4127 and D2784/19** The Stewart-Bam/Stewart of Ards Papers, 1771-1849, deriving from a junior branch of the family and closely linked with D654 and D3030.
- D714 and D3232** The Cleland Papers, principally of the Rev. John Cleland, perpetual curate of Newtownards and Londonderry agent, mainly about 'the Saintfield informer', Nicholas Magin, United Irish activity, the '98 Rebellion in Co. Down, the Rathgael yeomanry, estate management, etc, 1797-1803.
- D1088** The Cassidi Papers, including those of the Rev. Mark Cassidy, 1810-1839, as perpetual curate of Newtownards and, apparently, a trustee for Londonderry family settlements, about local charities, Co. Down elections, c.1810-c.1820, etc.
- D665** The Galway, McIlwaine & Seeds Papers, a Belfast solicitor's archive including title deeds, legal papers, accounts and testamentary papers relating to the estates of the Marquesses of Londonderry in Co. Down, 1812-c.1880, with particular reference to the settlement of the affairs of the 2nd Marquess following his death in 1822.
- D2977** The Antrim Estate Papers, including agent's correspondence and reports, 1840-1865, about Lady Londonderry's Co. Antrim estate.

- D2846** The Theresa, Lady Londonderry Papers, the rest of which, together with those of her husband, the 6th Marquess (1852-1915), are in the Durham County Record Office.
- D3099** The 7th Marquess of Londonderry Papers, consisting of the bulk of the papers of the 7th Marquess (1878-1949), and his wife, Edith Helen, the rest of which are in Durham; together with the papers of Lady Londonderry's father, Henry, 1st Viscount Chaplin.
- D3084/C** The H. Montgomery Hyde Papers, containing some Londonderry Papers (Hyde was private secretary to the 7th Marquess, and biographer of members of the Londonderry family).

