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INTRODUCTION

CASTLEREAGH PAPERS

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Castlereagh Papers (D3030)

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Summary

The Castlereagh Papers consist of c.7,450 documents and c.40 volumes, 1798-1822 (including some earlier and some later documents), deriving from Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, later 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, including some papers of his wife, Emily, his half-brother and successor, the 3rd Marquess, and the 3rd Marquess's wife, Frances Anne.



Family background



Robert Stewart

Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, was born in Dublin on 18 June 1769. He was the only surviving child of his father's first marriage, to Sarah Frances, daughter of the 1st Marquess of Hertford; and grandson of Alexander Stewart of Ballylawn, Co. Donegal, and Mary (née Cowan) half-sister and heir of Sir Robert Cowan, Governor of Bombay. Castlereagh's father was created in 1789 Baron Londonderry, and advanced to the viscountcy of Castlereagh in 1795, to the earldom of Londonderry in the following year, and finally to the marquessate of Londonderry in 1816.



Political power

Castlereagh's political career began in 1790 when he was returned at the general election for Co. Down, the seat which his father had held from 1771 till 1783. He was again elected for the county in 1797, and at the general election of 1802, which followed the abolition of the Irish Parliament by the Act of Union in 1800, he was returned as county member to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. In 1805, having accepted office as secretary of state, he stood for re-election, but was defeated by John Meade, a protégé of the Downshires. He regained the seat, however, in 1812, and held it for the next Ireland, he successively represented Tregony and Orford in the British Parliament.

In July 1797, Castlereagh was given his first government appointment as Keeper of the Privy Seal with a seat in the Irish Privy Council, and in the following March, when ill health forced Thomas Pelham to leave Ireland, he was appointed acting Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, his 'step-uncle' Lord Camden, in Pelham's absence. Having made a highly favourable impression on Camden's successor, Cornwallis, and on the British Cabinet, by the vigorous manner in which he dealt with the '98 Rebellion, he was officially appointed to the chief secretaryship in November 1798. During the greater part of the next two years, his energies were almost exclusively devoted to promoting the passage through the Irish Parliament of legislation for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland, and this he accomplished in the summer of 1800. By the beginning of 1801, it had become clear that George III was immovably opposed to Catholic Emancipation, of which Castlereagh was a committed advocate, and of which he had been authorised to give assurances, at least tacitly, to leading Irish Catholics in the course of his negotiations over the Union. The King's obduracy on this issue led to Pitt's retirement from office, in February 1801, and both Cornwallis and Castlereagh resigned at the same time.

In June 1802, Castlereagh accepted Addington's offer of the presidency of the Board of Control; and on his return to power in May 1804, Pitt retained him in this office, which he held simultaneously with the secretaryship of state for War and the Colonies from July 1805 until Pitt's death in January 1806. He was reappointed as Secretary for War and the Colonies at the opening of the Portland administration, in April 1807, but resigned in September 1809, when, following the disastrous conclusion of the Walcheren expedition, his discovery of intrigues against him among his Cabinet colleagues and his consequent duel with the Foreign Secretary, George Canning, he decided that his position in the government was no longer tenable.

Portland's successor, Spencer Perceval, appointed Castlereagh Foreign Secretary in February 1812, and following Perceval's assassination in M that year, he accepted the leadership of the House of Commons, in both of which roles he acted until his death in 1822. While Foreign Secretary, Castlereagh served also as British Minister Plenipotentiary at the Congress of Châtillon, February 1814, the first Conference of Paris, April-May 1814, the Congress of Vienna, September 1814-February 1815, the second Conference of Paris, July-November 1815, and the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, August-October 1818; and during these years he established cordial working and personal relationships with both Metternich and Tsar Alexander I.



Death of Castlereagh

After a period of deteriorating physical health, and a complete mental breakdown, Castlereagh committed suicide at his country house at North Cray, Kent, on 12 August 1822, only sixteen months after his succession to the marquessate of Londonderry.



The Papers

The core of 'The Castlereagh Papers' is 37 volumes containing 6,217 letters and papers which were arranged and bound in the 3rd Marquess's time and were selectively published under his remote editorial control as the *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh* (12 vols, London, 1848-1853). Within these volumes, the letters and papers were arranged in chronological order and numbered in roman numerals in indelible red ink. Every item was also given an arabic numeral, but the arabic numerals applied only to the volume in which the item appeared and related to a fairly complete index at the back of each volume. The roman numerals, on the other hand, ran straight through from volume 1 to volume 37 consecutively. At the beginning of each volume there was a table of contents which gave the roman numeral of the document, the date, the parties (if a letter) or the title (if a paper) and the place where the document was published (generally the 3rd Marquess's edition) if it had been published at all. There was no pagination of the documents; each one has a roman and an arabic numeral regardless of how long or short it is. In addition, there are two further, uniformly bound volumes, 38 and 39, which break away from the normal format. 38 is simply a volume of engraved portraits of contemporary personalities with letters from them to Castlereagh mounted opposite. 39 is a box, bound to resemble the 38 volumes, and formerly containing letters between Castlereagh and Lord Melville (1804-1805), letters from Castlereagh and the 1st Marquess of Londonderry to their agent, Rev. John Cleland (1790-1810) and letters between Castlereagh and the future 3rd Marquess about family settlements (1810-1822). Although the boards of the volumes and box date from the 3rd Marquess's time, the spines were replaced in 1930s morocco when the celebrated hostess and philanthropist, Mrs Laura Corrigan, had the volumes re-backed as a present to the 7th Marquess and Marchioness of Londonderry. At that stage they were located in Londonderry House, Park Lane, but they were removed from there at the outbreak of the 2nd World War, and from then until their transfer to PRONI in 1974 remained at Mount Stewart. Following the formal acquisition of the papers in 1976, PRONI's Conservation Section removed the letters from the volumes (into which they had been stuck with a destructive glue and in a way which made photocopying almost impossible) and the loose letters from volume/box 39. The originals were photocopied, the photocopies tipped into the volumes and the volumes restored to their place in what had been the 7th Marquess's study at Mount Stewart and, under the National Trust, became 'The Castlereagh Room'. These photocopies now serve as a security set, while the originals have been placed, in their original sequence, in PRONI's own guard-books.



Sir Charles William Stewart

A number of general points need to be made about the contents of these volumes. First, according to the 3rd Marquess's introduction to his edition, there are 'many [unspecified] chasms and losses'. Second, they derive very much from the successive offices which Castlereagh held (so that the foregoing short resumé of his career is the best indication of content which can conveniently be given. This means that there is virtually nothing for the period between 1809 and 1812 when he was out

of office, and also virtually nothing about the non-departmental office of Leader of the House which he held from 1812 to 1821. Third, when comparison is made between the quantity of papers deriving from one office and that deriving from another, it becomes obvious that the coverage is uneven: the first 10½ volumes contain official papers relating to Ireland, 1798-1802 (though, in actual fact, Castlereagh resigned as Chief Secretary in 1801), while the Board of Control and War and the Colonies, 1802-1806, are represented by only three volumes, and War and the Colonies, 1807-1809, by another five. Above all, the proportion of the material which the 3rd Marquess did **not** publish (and this leaves out of the reckoning that which he bowdlerised and that which he did not purport to publish in full) is very high - never less than one-third of the total contents of a volume, and sometimes as much as nine-tenths. As might be expected, the Foreign Secretaryship material of the period 1813-1816 scores the highest rate of publication; but even here the proportion of unpublished material can, as in the case of one of the volumes for 1815, be as high as two-thirds.

Nor was the editor applying a simple criterion of value in making his selection. A number of Castlereagh's copies of letters written by him during his term as Chief Secretary have apparently been excluded for the sole reason that (owing to his use of a rather primitive method of damp press copying) they are extremely hard to read. Others have been excluded because of the editor's fear that the contents might reflect badly on the reputation of his brother or some other member of the administration of the day. This is particularly true of the chief secretaryship papers, and even more particularly of the correspondence carried on between Castlereagh and members of the British administration in the months leading up to the passing of the Act of Union. (The popular conception of Castlereagh as the cynical and unscrupulous purchaser of parliament support for the Union has now been rejected by most historians of the period as politically naive, but the 3rd Marquess suffered from a certain sensitivity on the subject.) Where papers have been excluded on the basis of a value judgement, that judgement is usually questionable: whole categories of Castlereagh's papers were ignored because they did not relate to matters of national or international importance. Notable among these are the papers relating to Co. Down politics in the period 1805-1830, and his correspondence with members of his own family. Though many of the transcriptions in the edition are incomplete, no indication is given where phrases, sentences and in some cases substantial passages have been omitted. Thus, for example, references to the inducements held out to opponents of the Union to change sides are frequently omitted. Similarly, unflattering comments on the conduct of such opponents are often discreetly suppressed. Occasionally, the editor took it upon himself to replace with innocuous expressions phrases which he evidently found rather 'strong' (including, in one or two cases, so mild an epithet as 'damnable'). The obvious conclusions to be drawn are that the published edition, which was long regarded as definitive, is in fact far from being either exhaustive or entirely reliable; and that a significant portion of the archive remains virtually unexplored territory.



Chief Secretary

The PRONI list of the 6,217 documents, which is in part based on the text of the tables of contents at the start of the old volumes, states if and where a document has been published, and only provides a summary of content when the document had not been published. The broad content of the documents may be defined from the foregoing description of the offices which Castlereagh held.



Prime Minister. William Pitt

Predictably, the papers which relate to his term as Chief Secretary are dominated by the two major events of the time, the 1798 Rebellion and the passing of the Act of Union. The former include letters and reports about the military campaign, about the trials of rebels, about information received from government informers and agents abroad, and about the landing and movements of the French invasion force and the steps taken to resist it. The papers which relate to the Union include material on the defeat of the measure on its first introduction in

the Irish House of Commons in 1799, on the revision of various clauses of the bill, on Irish trade, on the line, cotton and distilling industries, on the 'Regium Donum', the Maynooth grant and tithes, on parliamentary representation, the representative peerage, the disfranchisement of Irish boroughs, the strength of the leading borough proprietors, and the negotiations with the more influential opponents of the measure to persuade them to change their minds. Other topics arising in the papers of this period include the new university proposed for Ulster, the possibility of a canal network for Ireland, and Catholic Emancipation.

Castlereagh's correspondents during his term as Chief Secretary include: William Pitt; the Duke of Portland, Home Secretary; Lords Camden and Cornwallis, successive Lords Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord Buckingham, a former Lord Lieutenant; Lord Clare, Lord Chancellor of Ireland; John Foster, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons; Edward Cooke, Under-secretary; and Thomas Pelham who, although he continued to hold the office of Chief Secretary until November 1798, had left Ireland on grounds of ill-health in 1797; William Wickham; Sir Ralph Abercromby as Commander-in-Chief, and other officers serving in Ireland; Rev. Robert Black, as representative of the Synod of Ulster; Sir John C. Hippisley, 1st Bt; and Richard Griffith.



President of the Board of Control

The papers which relate to Castlereagh's terms as President of the Board of Control refer mainly to affairs in India and Persia, and the East India Company's interests there, and consist largely of correspondence and reports, some of them in cipher, from British diplomats resident in these countries, who include Lord Wellesley, Lord Elgin, Harford Jones, Jonathan Duncan, and Samuel Manesty.



Secretary of State for War and the Colonies

The papers which relate to Castlereagh's two terms as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies concern aspects of the conduct of the war in Europe, affairs in Spanish America and in the West Indies, the strengthening of the British army and the equipping and payment of troops, the raising of militia regiments, the Peninsular War, military affairs in Egypt, public finances, and the iron tax. Also included is material relating to the Penal Laws and Catholic Emancipation and to the slave trade, and correspondence concerning Castlereagh's duel with George Canning and his resignation from the government in 1809. His correspondents include: George III; Pitt; Nelson; Admiral Lord Collingwood; Sir Sidney Smith; Generals Miranda and Dumouriez; Generals Sir David Baird, Sir Hew Dalrymple, Sir John Moore and Sir Arthur Wellesley; Lord William Bentinck; William Congreve (of 'Congreve Rocket' fame); the Duke of Portland, mainly as Prime Minister; Spencer Perceval, his successor; Lords Elgin, Cathcart and Melville; and George Canning.



Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons

The topics covered by the papers which relate to Castlereagh's term as Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons include: developments in the war in Europe, the Treaty of Fontainebleau, the Congresses of Châtillon and Vienna, the conclusion of peace and the Treaty of Vienna, subsequent diplomatic relations among the allies, and the Congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle and the Troppau, the Anglo-American War, the peace negotiations at Ghent and the Treaty renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1813, the tithe system and distress in Ireland, Catholic Emancipation, economic depression, industrial unrest, the movement for social and political reform in England, cash payments, the supply of bank-notes and other fiscal matters, the Queen Caroline affair, agricultural distress, grain imports and exports, and taxation. The correspondents in this group include: the Prince Regent; Tsar Alexander I; Lord Liverpool, Prime Minister; Sir Arthur Wellesley, now Marquess and Duke of Wellington; General Lord Cathcart ; General Sir Thomas Graham; Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies; Lord Burghersh, Aberdeen, Clancarty and Stewart (Castlereagh's half-brother); Sir Edward Thornton; Sir George H. Rose; Frederick Lamb; William A'Court; Stratford Canning; Sir Augustus J. Foster; Prince Metternich; Prince Hardenburg; Prince Talleyrand; Count Nesselrode; Count Lieven; Count Pozzo di Borgo; Cardinal Consalvi; Sir John C. Hippisley; William Wilberforce; Thomas Clarkson; and Zachary Macaulay.



Numerically arranged papers

The rest of 'The Castlereagh Papers' (including the contents of volume/box 39, which are not counted among the 6,217) were not drawn upon by the 3rd Marquess at all. They therefore follow on from the 6,217 in the PRONI arrangement.



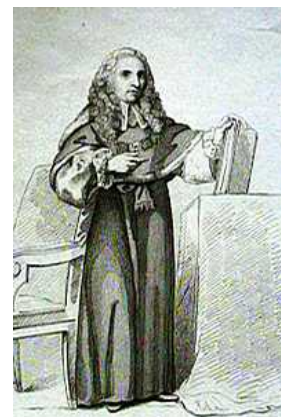
Official papers of Castlereagh

Of this additional material, the first component is official papers of Castlereagh, again deriving from his various offices, as follows: a bound volume of printed and MS letters from Pius VII, Cardinal Borgia and the Cardinal of York to Sir John Coxe Hippisley, 1799-1800; 10 volumes of copy official correspondence of the Board of Control with the Madras Presidency, 1802-1805, nine volumes with the Bengal Presidency, 1802-1805, and three volumes with the Bombay Presidency, 1804-1805; correspondence, mainly between Castlereagh as President of the Board of Control and his predecessor, Henry Dundas, 1st viscount Melville, and chiefly about Indian affairs, 1802-[1813]; printed correspondence between Lord Liverpool, Lord Wellesley and Lord Castlereagh, on the one hand, and United States diplomatic representatives and British diplomatic representative in Washington, on the other, about Anglo-American relations, 1810-1812; MS and printed statements of accounts relating to the expenditure of secret service money during Castlereagh's terms as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies (1805-1806 and 1807-1809) and as Foreign Secretary (1812-1815), 1810, 1812 and 1820; and printed queries and observations on Castlereagh's secret service accounts for the period July 1819-July 1820.



Non-official papers relating to public affairs

Next are letters and papers which, although of non-official and even family and personal kind, nevertheless to a considerable extent relate to public affairs, as follows: a letter written by Castlereagh in 1777, as an eight-year-old schoolboy, expressing youthful enthusiasm for the American Revolution; letters from Charles Pratt, 1st Earl Camden, to Castlereagh, his step-grandson, together with one letter from John Jeffrey's Pratt, 2nd Earl Camden, Lord Lieutenant, to Castlereagh, [c.1787]-1796; four volumes of typescript copies of letters mainly among members of the Stewart family or between members of the Stewart and Pratt families, 1775-1827; bound volume containing minutes of two meetings of the committee of the first and second Volunteer companies of Newtownards, April and May 1787, together with draft Co. Down grand jury presentments, 1778, 1787 and c.1810]-1822; correspondence of Robert, 1st Marquess of Londonderry, consisting largely of letters from him to Castlereagh, 1796 and 1809-1820; letters mainly from Robert, 1st Marquess of Londonderry, Castlereagh, General Sir Charles Stewart (afterwards Lord Stewart and 3rd Marquess), and Frances, Marchioness of Londonderry (wife of the 1st Marquess), to or about James Cleland of Newtownards, brother of Lord Londonderry's agent and captain of the Newtownards yeomanry, 1797-[c.1821], with one letter from a descendant of Cleland presenting these letters to the 7th Marquess of Londonderry, 1921; papers of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Marquesses of Londonderry about Co. Down politics, [1805-1824]; letters, mainly to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Marquesses of Londonderry, about Co. Down elections, 1805-1830; letters and copy letters, mainly from the future 3rd Marquess to Castlereagh, his half-brother, largely about the Peninsular War and Stewart's subsequent diplomatic career, 1809-1827; letters and dispatches from Stewart to Castlereagh about the Peninsular War (many of them copies of the foregoing), 1808-1812; and miscellaneous correspondence and papers of Castlereagh, 1795-1822.



Charles Pratt



Correspondence between Castlereagh and the future 3rd Marquess

The run of letters between Castlereagh and the future 3rd Marquess deserves particular mention. Its very survival, together with another run of the same correspondence now in the Durham Record Office, throws some doubts on the accuracy of the 3rd Marquess's statement in his introductory memoir that his 'intimate fraternal correspondence for 25 successive years' was lost at sea while *en route* to an editor in India. Though Castlereagh held no office during much of the Peninsular War, the letters written to him during that period by his half-brother, then General Stewart, who was adjutant to Wellington, provide details accounts of events as well as candid and frequently critical observations on the British military leadership in the Peninsula. During Castlereagh's foreign secretaryship, Stewart, who was then pursuing a diplomatic career, kept up a prolific private correspondence which is useful for its off-the-record comments on political and diplomatic affairs in Berlin, Stockholm and Vienna, where he successively resided. The letters relating to Co. Down politics provide much information about the rivalry between the Londonderry and Downshire families, which dominated the county's political life; and the unrestrained language in which Londonderry and Stewart express themselves reveals the often acrimonious nature of that rivalry.



Papers of Emily Stewart

A further section of the papers derives from Castlereagh's wife/widow, Emily (née Hobart, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire), and consists of: a bound MS copy of 'The Statutes of the Order of the Garter' relating to the investiture of the 1st Earl of Strafford (a maternal ancestor of Lady Castlereagh), 1713; volume of typescript copies of letters, 1790-1828, to Lady Castlereagh, later as Marchioness of Londonderry, from the future 3rd Marquess, the Rev. John Cleland, etc, together with typescript copy letters of condolence to Lady Londonderry on the death of her husband; two volumes of typescript copies of the letters Castlereagh wrote to his wife during their frequent periods of enforced separation in the years 1794-1821; and newspaper cuttings relating to Castlereagh's career, 1816-1822. The text of PRONI's detailed calendar of Castlereagh's career, 1816-1822. The text of PRONI's detailed calendar of Castlereagh's letters to his wife is based on these two typescript volumes; but obvious omissions and misreadings have been rectified where possible by reference to the original documents, which are deposited in the Norfolk and Norwich Record Office. (The calendar therefore supersedes the volumes, since it provides a more reliable text; and in order to avoid confusion the volumes have been closed to the public.) Taken together with the letters from his father and brother, they create a picture of Castlereagh's character which is in sharp contrast with the oft-quoted assessments pronounced by his associates in public life. The man who was described by Cornwallis as 'so cold that nothing can warm him' and by Napoleon's plenipotentiary at Châtillon as 'passionless', emerges as one possessed of an impish sense of humour and capable of both inspiring and entertaining strong and lasting affection.



Letters and papers of the 3rd Marquess

The last 50 documents of the 6,217 already described are in fact letters and papers of the 3rd Marquess, mainly relating to events immediately after Castlereagh's suicide in August 1822 or consisting of material solicited or collected by the 3rd Marquess with a view to publishing an account of Castlereagh's career. Other papers deriving from the 3rd Marquess are: correspondence between General Sir Charles Stewart, later Lord Stewart, and Edward Cooke, Under-Secretary of State to Castlereagh in his successive offices, 1808-1816; letters and other papers of Lord Stewart about his military and diplomatic careers, 1808-1822; letters and other papers of the 3rd Marquess, mainly about Irish and British politics and foreign affairs, 1822-1854; letters of the 3rd Marquess about the colonelcy of the Londonderry militia and his hopes of promotion in the UK peerage, 1822-1825; draft dispatches and memoranda from the 3rd Marquess about claims on the Spanish government of former members of the British Auxiliary Legion, 1838-1841; and a bound, printed account of the 3rd Marquess's career up to 1838, [c.1840s].



Papers of the 3rd Marquess's second wife

The remaining letters and papers derive from the 3rd Marquess's second wife, Frances Anne (née Van-Tempest, daughter and heiress of Sir Henry Van-Tempest, Bt, and the Countess of Antrim in her own right), as follows: letters to Frances Anne, Marchioness of Londonderry, from Benjamin Disraeli, Prince Gortchakov, Count Brunov and Mary, Duchess of Gloucester, [1850s]; letters and addressees relating to the marriage of her eldest son, Viscount Seaham, 1846; letters to Lady Londonderry from her children, [c.1840-1860s]; two volumes of miscellaneous papers of Lady Londonderry, 1813-1841 and 1848-1849; volume of letters to Lady Londonderry from Tsar Alexander I, [c.1820s]; volume of copy letters to Lady Londonderry's handwriting about a visit to Russia, [c.1840]; bound journal in Lady Londonderry's handwriting of a continental tour, [c.1840]; volume of 'extracts' from a fictitious newspaper called 'The Wynyard Weekly Post' (after the Vane-Tempest family seat, Wynyard Park, Co. Durham), [c.1840s]; and bound history of the Vane-Tempest family, including some related original letters, [c.1850s].



Structure of the archive

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

- D654** The Londonderry Estate Office Papers, including the business papers of Alexander Stewart and Sir Robert Cowan, merchants in Belfast and Bombay respectively
- 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
- 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
- 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
- D2977** The Antrim Estate Papers, including agent's correspondence and reports, 1840-1865, about Lady Londonderry's Co. Antrim estate
- 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)
- D3099** The Londonderry Papers, consisting of the bulk of the papers of the 7th Marquess, 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
- D3984** The H. Montgomery Hyde Papers, including some original Londonderry correspondence (Hyde was private secretary to, and biographer of, members of the Londonderry family)
- 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

