

Macartney Papers (D572, D1062/2, D2225, D2731)

Summary



George, Earl Macartney

George Macartney, Earl Macartney (1737-1806) was one of the foremost British diplomats and proconsuls of his day. His distinguished career took him to Russia, the West Indies, India, China, Italy and South Africa - and even back to his native Ireland. In the century between c.1850 and c.1950, his papers have been dispersed in as many directions: some to the scenes of his diplomatic and proconsular activity, and still more to the United States. Fortunately, almost all his papers of relevance to Ireland – both to the one Irish office which he held and to his Co. Antrim estate – have remained in or been returned to his native Ulster, and are now most of them in PRONI. Of the highly fragmented archive, PRONI holds c.3000 documents (counting individual letters in letter-books as single items) and other institutions all over the world c.15,000-20,000 documents (on the same basis). PRONI's holdings documenting Macartney's Co. Antrim estate matters and of his period of office as Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1769-1772, are almost complete and are certainly fuller than those of any other individual or institution. But PRONI also holds almost all the Macartney archive documenting Macartney's abortive mission to Louis XVIII at Verona in 1795-1796, and a significant part of the archive documenting his career in India in the 1780s (notably his campaign late in 1780 to be elected Governor of Madras). PRONI has copied a great many Macartney papers in other institutions, and also took the lead in sponsoring the only modern life of Macartney – Peter Roebuck (ed.), 'Macartney of Lisanoure', 1737-1806 (Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 1983); reprinted 1989 as 'Public Service and Private Fortune: The Life of Lord Macartney', 1737-1806.

[Introduction to the Macartney Papers](#)