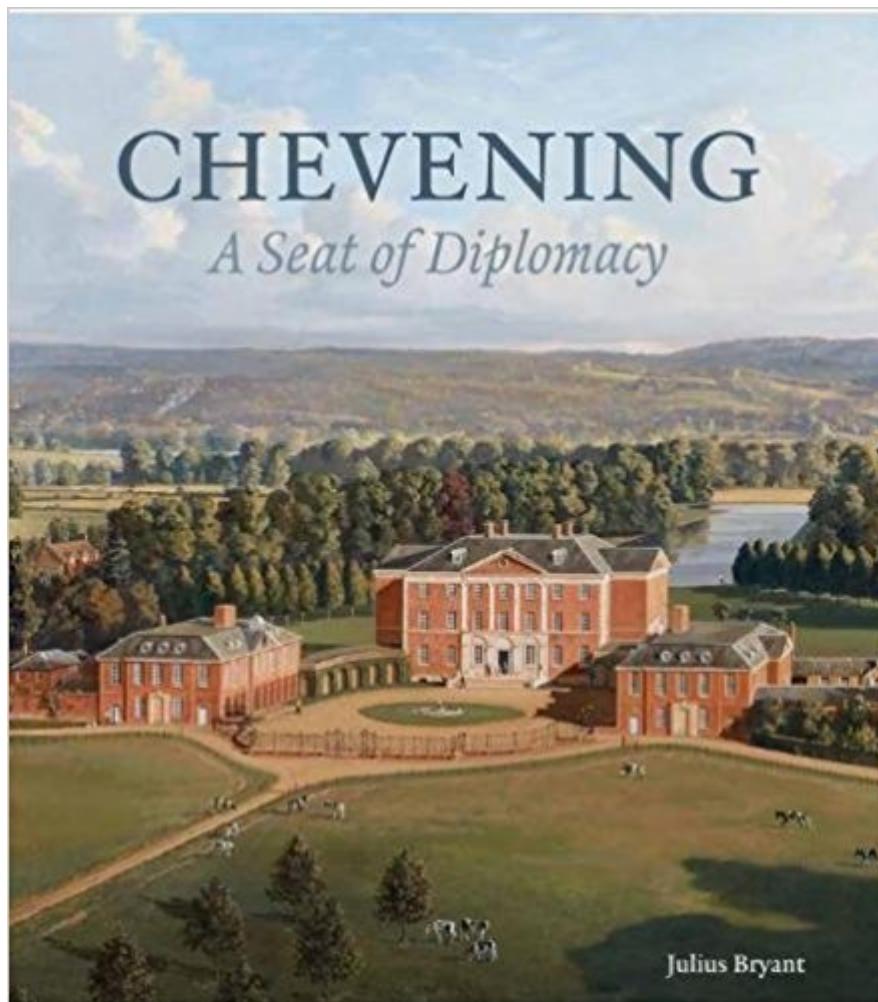


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Chevening: A Seat Of Diplomacy



Synopsis

Chevening stands in a magnificent park below the wooded escarpment of the North Downs in Kent. It has a history dating back around 800 years, but the house we see today is almost entirely the creation of seven generations of the Stanhope family, building on the original Inigo Jones house of 1630. For 250 years the Stanhopes served their country as soldiers and statesmen and at Chevening as patrons of architecture and art. This new guide highlights the contributions of the Earls and Countesses Stanhope to the building, furniture, pictures, gardens and landscape of Chevening. It also gives a short account of the family in the wider world in order to set their creations in context. The decoration and architectural features of each of the rooms – from the Entrance Hall with its spectacular swirling staircase of c. 1721 to the sumptuous Tapestry Room with its rare Berlin tapestries woven by Huguenot craftsmen in 1708 – are described and illustrated, and significant and unusual works of art highlighted, such as important portraits by Allan Ramsay, Thomas Gainsborough, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The Estate consists of some 3,000 acres, and the gardens include a lake, maze, parterre and a double hexagonal walled kitchen garden. The history of the garden is explored, from the extensive landscaping in the formal style by the 1st and 2nd Earls in the early 18th century, to the naturalistic style created in 1775 – much of the character of which survives today – to the re-formalizing in the 19th century, with the creation of the Italian gardens, a maze and hedged alleys. The wonderful restoration of recent decades and the replanting to the designs of Elizabeth Banks is celebrated with new photography. Published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Chevening Act coming into effect with the death of the last Earl Stanhope and the 300th anniversary of his family's acquisition of Chevening Estate.

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"The wider history of the house, park and gardens is also celebrated in a new book, Chevening: A Seat of Diplomacy by Julius Bryant, to be published by Paul Holberton Publishing" (Country Life)

Julius Bryant is Keeper of Word and Image at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

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