

Well connected locally, he was related to the Buccleuchs of Adderbury House and also to the Earl of Guilford (and his son Lord North) at Wroxton. He and Horace Walpole (son of Sir Robert) were very old friends, since their schooldays at Eton; both were prolific correspondents and it is from their surviving letters¹¹ that we can glean some details about the Cobb Mansion and leisured life in Adderbury.

On 14th April 1768 Montagu [GM] wrote to Walpole [HW] from Greatworth:

'I have settled myself and all that belongs to me at Adderbury in Oxfordshire, where I shall go and abide in about a fortnight.

'I have a charming garden and some pretty little fields adjoining, large dark chambers, to the north indeed, and a pleasant country with good roads; and the whole cheap and for a year [and a] half or two years to try it in.'

This crossed with a letter the following day from HW:

'Mr Chute tells me that you have taken a new house in Squireland, and have given yourself up for two years more to port and parsons. I am very angry, and resign you to the works of the devil or the church, I don't care which. You will get the gout, turn Methodist, and expect to ride to heaven on your great toe... Will you end like a fat farmer, repeating annually the price of oats and discussing stale newspapers? There have you got, I hear, into an old gallery, that has not been glazed since Queen Elizabeth, and under the nose of an infant Duke and Duchess, that will understand you no more than if you wore a ruff and a coif, and talked to them of a call of sergeants the year of the Armada! Your wit and humour will be as much lost upon them as if you talked the dialect of Chaucer.'

Henry Scott, 3rd Duke of Buccleuch, and his recently married wife (a cousin of GM's) were indeed young, 22 and 25, but GM himself was only 55! Nevertheless he was able to reply (from Adderbury) on 12th June that:

'The young Duke in my neighbourhood came most graciously to see me, and today I am to dine with him... He seems modest and good-humoured, and I flatter myself we shall do well together. I like my place more and more, and have all my matters most comfortable about me.'

¹¹ *Horace Walpole's Correspondence with George Montagu*, Vol. 2, ed. W.S. Lewis and Ralph S. Brown, 1948.