

'The New State of England'?



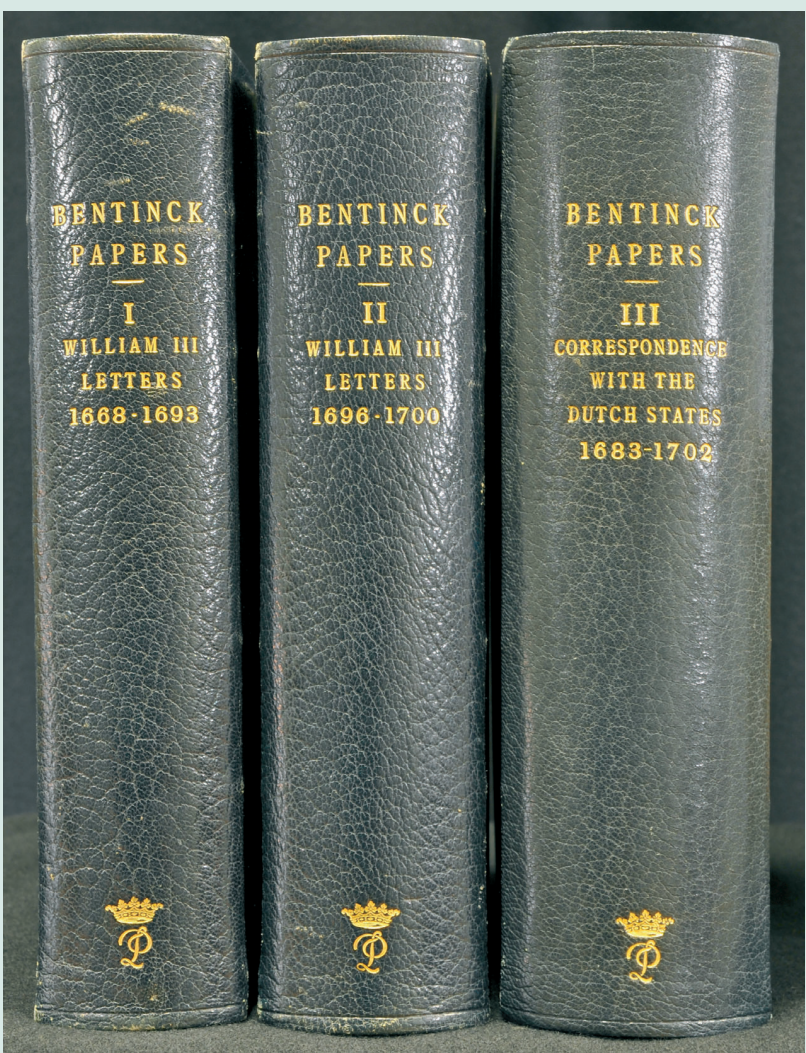
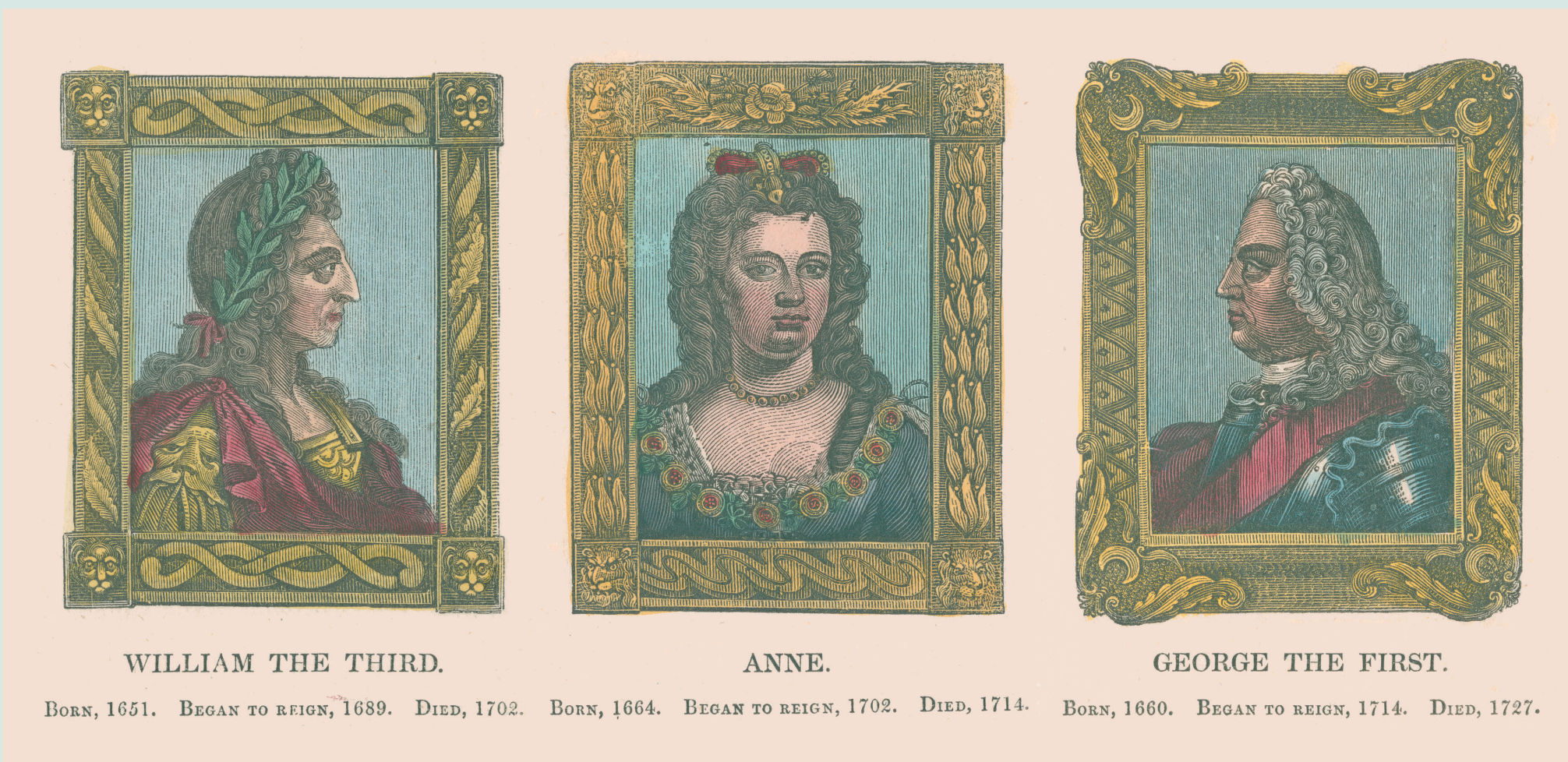
Above: Based on Edward Chamberlayne's year book *Angliae Notitia* (first published in 1661), Miège's popular handbook went through many editions. In 1707 his updated version *The present State of Great Britain* took account of the union with Scotland under Queen Anne. Special Collection DA460.M4

The Portland Collection at The University of Nottingham contains original manuscripts and books which provide a fascinating insider's view of a critical period in British history, as a century of political, financial and religious crises came to a close in the 1690s.

The New State of England by Guy Miège (1691) inspires the exhibition title and provides its poster image. It describes the country after the achievements of the Glorious Revolution, when the last Stuart king, James II, was forced to abdicate in favour of his daughter Mary and his nephew, her Dutch husband, William III.

The story is one of both high drama and fundamental constitutional change, establishing a Protestant parliamentary monarchy. In the following decades external threats led to costly wars abroad, a national deficit and financial crises. At home, while opinion was swayed by a lively press, public concern to maintain domestic stability led to further constitutional arrangements imposing constraints on royal succession. Neither William and Mary, nor Mary's sister Anne, left direct heirs. In 1714 a new period began, with the arrival of the closest Protestant claimant, George, Elector of Hanover.

The exhibition uses family archives and publications to illustrate these events and their continuing relevance to Britain today. At the centre of the story is a Dutchman, William Bentinck (1649-1709), close friend and advisor to William of Orange, stadtholder of the Netherlands. His critical role in the Glorious Revolution is shown through his personal and official papers and recognised in several political honours, including the title Earl of Portland. Different aspects of the narrative are illustrated in the papers of other families, particularly the powerful Harley and Cavendish circles, to which Bentinck's heirs as Dukes of Portland became allied by marriage.



Above: Image of the monarchs William, Anne and George, constructed from *Portraits and characters of the kings of England*, (London, 1825). Briggs Collection Pamphlet LT210.DA/P6

Left: Central to the record of William Bentinck's influence with the king are the volumes of correspondence in the collection. Portland Collection Pw A.



The national significance of the Portland Collections at The University of Nottingham has been recognized in the award of Designation status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

