

The University of Chicago

Department of Statistics

Seminar

D. R. Bellhouse

Department of Statistical and Actuarial Sciences

University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario

Canada N6A 5B7

“Lord Stanhope’s Papers on the Doctrine of Chances”

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110 ECKHART HALL, 5734 S. University Avenue

ABSTRACT

The Centre for Kentish Studies holds the mathematical manuscripts of Philip Stanhope (1714–1786), 2nd Earl Stanhope. The manuscripts are catalogued under U1590 C20 and cover a wide range of mathematical topics. The current work focuses only on Stanhope’s work in probability. Stanhope’s work is mainly derivative from de Moivre’s *Doctrine of Chances* and Montmort’s *Jeux de Hazard*. Among the notes on these two authors there is some “new” work that includes an alternate solution to the theory of runs and a simplified solution to a special case of the duration of play. In addition, the manuscript collection contains Stanhope’s transcription of an incorrect solution to the theory of runs by Thomas Bayes. There is also some correspondence with Sir Alexander Cuming that touches on George Berkeley’s criticism of Isaac Newton’s development of the calculus. This correspondence illustrates the lack of understanding of the theory of limits in the mid-eighteenth century. Stanhope was an active and capable mathematician working in the mainstream of the probability theory of his day.
