East Shropshire and Staffordshire, and for 30 years of his life, the interest of his uncle's estates which amounted to about £110,000 per year. His uncle being Francis, Duke of Bridgewater. In comparison, the Earl Gower, who in fact was advanced in the peerage in 1786 to Marquis of Stafford, had much less to leave his younger son but plans were formulating in his mind - probably soon after the death of John Gilbert.

Probably the first outward sign of his forward planning was the sale in 1796 by William Reynolds of the Donnington Wood Furnace to John Bishton - who already worked the Snedhill Furnaces with his brother Thomas Bishton. It is rumoured that Earl Gower forced William Reynolds' hand in this matter, refusing to renew his lease of the furnaces. Exactly a year later John Bishton sold a moiety of 1/8 share of the Donnington Wood Furnaces to John Onion, the Broseley Ironmaster. At the time that Bishton bought the Donnington Wood Furnaces he also leased what is now Furnace Lane from Allen Pickering of the Moss. In 1758 a previous Allen Pickering had signed an Indenture of Lease allowing Abraham Darby and Richard Reynolds to make a wagon-way down the full length of his fields to the 'ancient way' from Donnington to Hadley for the purpose of transporting coal and ironstone for use at Ketley and Horsehay. Now Bishton wanted the use of this route. He also bought a tiny piece of land at the top of the lane on which he built a Counting House or Office with stable. This was the office for the furnaces and stands today called "Old Office Place".

An "Indenture of Four Parts" dated 1st January 1801, recites a number of indentures beginning with those of 7th and 8th September, 1764. A concluding note shows the fourth part of the Earl Gower and Co. formerly held by Thomas Gilbert of Cotton, now deceased, was with the agreement of Earl Gower (now Marquis of Stafford) to be purchased by Granville his son, for a sum of £20,000. That sum was to be regarded as the full and final settlement with Thomas Gilbert's relatives.

It was in 1802 that Earl Gower approached John Bishton, James Birch, John Onion and William Phillipps with the view to the formation of a new partnership. On 24th July 1802, the Lilleshall Partnership came into being. Because the total assets of Earl Gower & Co. were being brought into the new partnership - the miners at Donnington Wood, quarries and limeworks at Lilleshall, the canal and branches, together with all the mines and minerals in lease at Wrockwardine Wood, the Nabb and Poive Lane (St. Georges) it was agreed that a payment of £12,000 be made to Granville Lord Levenson Gower (the son) and that Earl Gower should take a moiety of 8/16s of the shares. John Bishton would take 5/16s and Birch, Onion and Phillipps 1/16 each. Upon the death of Earl Gower (Marquis of Stafford) in October 1802, the younger son Granville became chairman of the partnership. Somerset House has confirmed that all the former Earl Gower's shares in various undertakings - including Lilleshall - were willed to his younger son, Granville. Thus was launched a firm that was well within that century to gain world wide renown for the quality of the iron they made and for the excellence of their large variety of engineering work.