

Elite Women's Household Management: Yorkshire, 1680-1810  
by Julie Day

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD.

University of Leeds

School of History

**June 2007**

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### **Abstract**

This thesis examines the managerial role of elite women from a range of Yorkshire country houses in the eighteenth century. This group provides a very rich number of cases for this analysis. It first sets contemporary views of elite women in light of the traditional constructions of gendered roles which established a woman's position as a moral and virtuous domestic being. As one of the elite women being studied, particular attention is given to Isabella Dowager Countess of Carlisle's authorship of a work of conduct literature intended for a female readership. Hence, the permanence of household management as a theme in this literary tradition is explored as well as its gendered dimensions and categorised responsibilities as perceived by other conduct authors of similar or contrasting social status to that of Carlisle.

Following the conventional precepts of eighteenth-century conduct literature, the categories of responsibility within household management form the basis of each chapter. Throughout, the elite woman's managerial presence and performance is discussed using surviving documentation such as personal correspondence, bills and receipts, account books and more general housekeeping minutiae such as lists and inventories, and books of memoranda. From these arises a complex picture of authority and deftness with which the elite woman was expected to run the household within the wider departments of the country estate through a businesslike partnership with her husband.

The purpose of the thesis is to challenge eighteenth-century contemporary criticisms of elite women's involvement in her marital home by proving it to have been one of difficult decision-making, influenced at all times by degrees of moral judgement over large numbers of people. It also demonstrates the expression of power elite women could exercise within a sphere traditionally thought of as a female space. The domestic space of the country house had long been associated with feminine accomplishment in the 'delicate' art of needlework or the knowledge of pickling and preserving. In her role as household manager, this space was more heavily imbued with command, authority and organisational skill.



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## **Preface**

The idea of this study first came about whilst pursuing an interest in the history of the decorative arts on the completion of my first degree in art history. Initially, I was eager to discover more about the purchase of fashionable goods made by elite women in Yorkshire in the eighteenth century in order to understand their tastes in personal attire and to what degree they were influenced by the London seasons and the market for clothing, jewellery and footwear.

Household management arose as a subject due to the observation that items of fashionable ephemera such as clothing were chosen by elite women, cleaned and organised by servants, and that they could also be presented as luxurious gifts or used as symbols of charitable behaviour. More intriguing still, were the connections of dress and appearance with conduct, character and affluence, all of which appeared to have had huge bearing on a woman's domestic capability. I decided that this subject needed greater exploration and so the research began as part of a local and regional history degree at the University of Leeds.

For the suggestion that this subject should be taken to a higher academic level, I would first like to thank James Lomax, curator of Temple Newsam who continues to be exceptionally helpful and whose personal notes and unpublished papers are a constant treat for any research student of the Yorkshire country house. The advice, guidance and immense generosity of Sophie Raikes, David Connell and Gerardine Mulachy has been sought on some of the most trivial aspects of my research, without which I am sure the study would have lacked validity in its early stages. And without the help of Professor Christopher Todd, I would never have made any sense of Sabine Winn. In the midst of my research, I depended heavily upon the unwavering support of my supervisor Professor John Chartres without whom I would have given in at five thousand words, and who has always been considerate, necessarily perceptive and fastidious. I would hope that the final outcome of this thesis is a small reflection of his encouragement and extensive academic mind.

Institutions that have given me financial support include the Royal Historical Society and The Economic History Society. Without their help I would

undoubtedly have missed the hospitality of Richard Bond and his family in Horsham and their small patch of 'Capability' Brown garden. My thanks for further financial aid goes to those who have shown both great interest in my research and compassion for the struggling student, Christopher Ridgway and Alison Brisby at Castle Howard, and Richard E. Compton and Stuart Gill at Newby Hall. For a short time, I enjoyed a lively correspondence with Giles Worsley about his ancestors and he was more than generous in his offering of extra snippets of information. His untimely death in 2006 has deeply impressed itself on country house historical research and so this thesis is partly intended in appreciation of his memory.

Throughout my research I have very much been the student pest to all the members of staff at national and local record offices. Their patience and good-humour has been both motivating and entertaining, the National Archives, London; Sheffield Archives; and the West Yorkshire Archives Service, Leeds. The same message of thanks goes to Ruth Larsen, Keith Wark and all the members of front-of-house staff at the houses who have imparted their knowledge and with whom I have exchanged valuable ideas on the social details of country house living in the eighteenth century.

My final thank you is reserved for my family. The time it has taken me to research, write, draft and redraft has kept me substantially busy for nearly four years to say the least. Although they have encouraged me in every way, the research has demanded a certain degree of selfishness on my part, and they have been tolerant and indulgent in equal measure whenever I have shown impatience and frustration. For Andrew Knaggs and the years composed of good and bad times, I am forever grateful and hope that you do not feel repelled by country houses for too long.

## **Note on Sources.**

In most cases all manuscript and printed primary sources have been quoted in the original version. Original spelling, punctuation and capitalisation has been retained unless the text has been difficult to follow, in which case the quotation has been sufficiently modernised for easy reading. Old Style and New Style dates have also been cited in the original version, for example 29 January 1731/32.

References to the archival sources have been written in full on their first appearance in the footnoted text, they have then been abbreviated to the following;

NA:PRO = National Archives at Kew, formerly the Public Record Office.

NYCRO = North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton, North Yorkshire.

WWM = Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments.

WYAS = West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds.

As the WYAS holds the records for more than one house it has been omitted after being written in full on its first appearance for each of these houses. The abbreviations used for these houses are as follows;

HAR = Harewood House

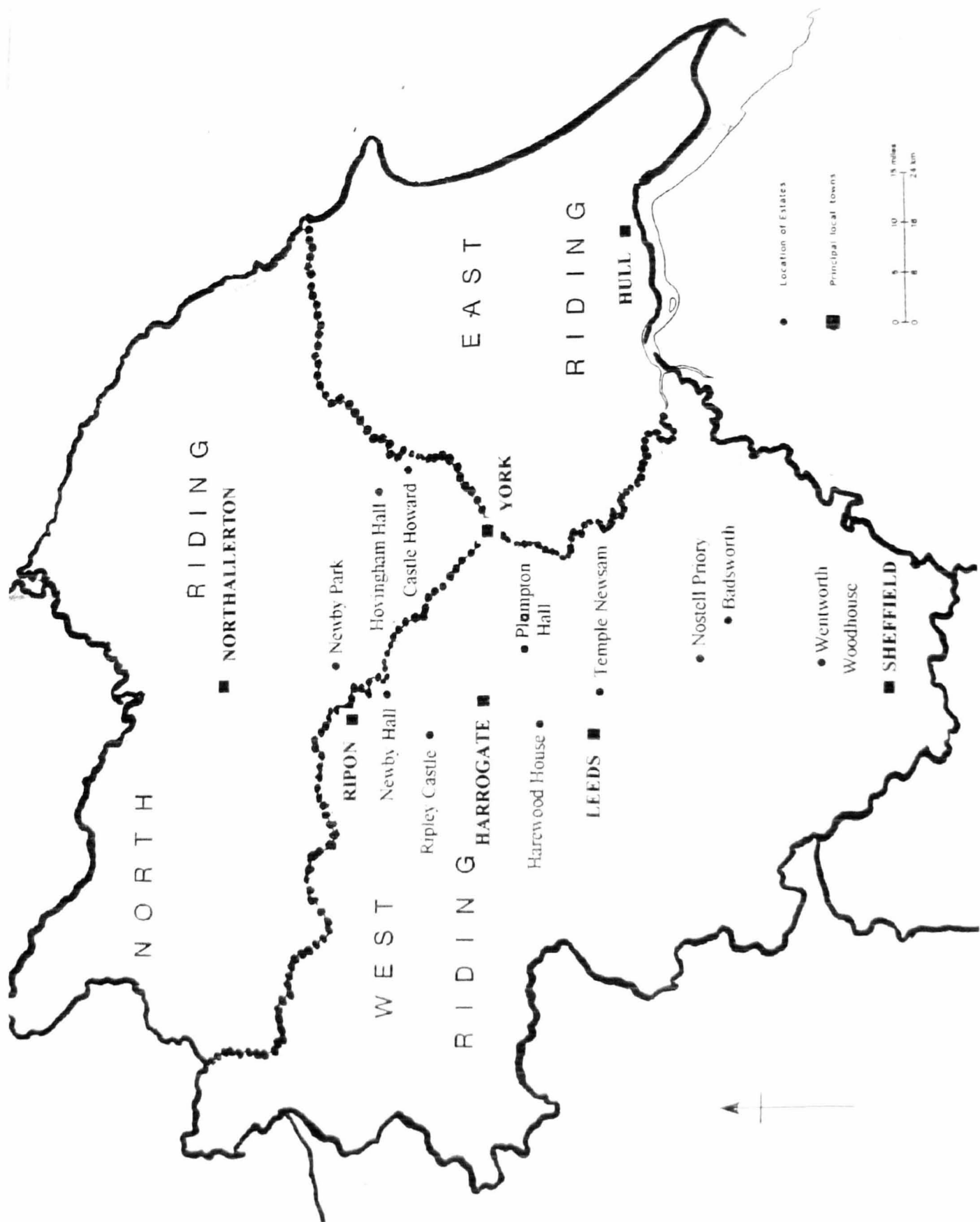
NH = Newby Hall

NP = Nostell Priory

TN = Temple Newsam

A great deal of personal correspondence for Nostell Priory has never been numbered. This should be considered when looking at A1/5A/1-10, the personal correspondence of Sabine Winn. Bundles usually relate to one correspondent, and where this is fairly substantial the letters have been placed together for the same year. The quantity of letters per bundle rarely exceeds twenty to twenty-five.

Map of Yorkshire showing the country houses mentioned the text. An adaptation from P. Roebuck *Yorkshire Baronets, 1640-1760: Families, Estates, and Fortunes*. University of Hull (Oxford, 1980).



## 1. Introduction

The focus of this thesis is elite women's household management between 1680 and 1810. Though interpreted as the 'long eighteenth century', these dates are not intended to have any significance towards historiographical understandings in political, socio-economic, or wider cultural terms. They are instead shaped by archival material and a 'rounding up' of dates on which life-stage events occurred to the elite women of this study such as marriage and death.<sup>1</sup> Definitions of this managerial role, the family and household are established early on with particular reference to their meaning and usage in the eighteenth century. That the house and home were increasingly associated at this time with domesticity is also examined in light of contemporary and modern-day perceptions of elite women's presence as a domestic being *and* as household manager. Crucial to this part of the discussion are understandings of public and private and how these can be applied to the country house. The final section of this introduction examines the importance of this subject within the historiography and the necessity for demonstrating this role for the elite woman in light of contexts in which eighteenth-century elite women's household management were understood and performed.

In defining the term household management, the specifics of such a managerial role could be recognised simply as the organisational model of the family regardless of size and existing hierarchies.<sup>2</sup> A plainer definition will suggest the term to mean the processes involved in running a house and its affairs. The intricacies of this organisational model are not just limited to the family as a unit or as a number of units but all are bound by both financial and social constraints.<sup>3</sup> These in turn create specific material expectations to which the heating, lighting, feeding, and clothing of the family must be applied. The aspects of management in this model rest within the dynamics of the country household as an organisation or community and how it was developed and maintained through efficient relations with subordinates and all employees connected to

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<sup>1</sup> The thesis does highlight some of the academic debates which have incorporated notions of a 'short' or 'long eighteenth century' such as transitions in contemporary understandings of gender and sexuality, and the growth in literature aimed at women from the end of the seventeenth century. It is my intention to avoid overt inclusion of the 'long eighteenth century' debate since the dates shaped by personal events were independent of direct political, socio-economic and cultural change or indeed continuity. See W. A. Speck, 'The Eighteenth Century in Britain: Long or Short?' *The Historian*, 50 (1996), pp.16-18.

<sup>2</sup> Rivka Weiss Bar-Yosef, 'Household Management: An Organisational Model Applied to Comparative Family Research', *Human Relations*, 26, 5 (1973), pp.581-598.

<sup>3</sup> Bar-Yosef, *Human Relations*, 26, 5, p.582. See also, Elizabeth Roberts, *A Woman's Place: An Oral History of Working-Class Women* (Oxford, 1984), pp.125-168.



domestic work.<sup>4</sup> For the elite household mistress it was a conglomeration of techniques for commanding, controlling, planning, and coordinating departments within the household as well as those in charge of the departments.<sup>5</sup> By association, words like supervision and administration can reflect the mechanics of managing the elite household. But such terms have no implication for household structure, size or its requirements as a result of familial growth or economic fluctuation.

Sidney Pollard's examination of management and enterprise during the Industrial Revolution suggested that such processes were reflected in the indirect administration of the landed estate in the eighteenth century which had become a type of economic 'management' due to routine, uniformity and standardisation.<sup>6</sup> Economic changes brought about by familial growth for example were common across most estates and the similarities of responsibilities as a result of such growth were reflected in the pattern of managerial requirements. Pollard emphasised the estate steward or bailiff as employee who had the responsibility of many diverse managerial aspects such as collecting rents, keeping the estate accounts, drawing up leases, and supervising the household. Pollard also highlighted the successor to the Rockingham estates, the Earl Fitzwilliam, who described the desired qualities of his estate steward as ultimately someone who would prevent '...Idleness, Extravagance, Waste and Immorality...'<sup>7</sup>; a description befitting anyone with managerial superintendent status. As a department of the landed estate, the household was equally characterised by managerial routine and uniformity where the elite mistress acted as author and performer of those qualities considered so important for the managerial disposition of the Fitzwilliam steward.<sup>8</sup>

The eighteenth-century elite estate as considered here is ranged from two to three thousand to about one-hundred thousand acres, it supported a country house

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<sup>4</sup> The household as organisation is an adaptation of Arthur H. Cole 'An Approach to the study of Entrepreneurship.' *Journal of Economic History*, VI (Supplement, 1946), quoted in Sidney Pollard, *The Genesis of Modern Management: A Study of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain*. (1968). p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> These are terms crucial to this study and have been taken from N. S. B. Gras, *Business and Capitalism, an Introduction to Business History* (New York, 1939). See Pollard, *Modern Management*, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Pollard, *Modern Management*, pp.37-42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> Crucially, the Earl Fitzwilliam kept the Rockingham steward, Benjamin Hall and notified him in July 1782, '...As Lord Rockingham seem'd always to express great satisfaction in your conduct, that alone would have been a sufficient motive to have induced me to desire you to remain at Wentworth...' Sheffield Archives. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS (WWM) Stw P3 (i) 1 July 1782. [Date of the Marquis of Rockingham's death] Earl Fitzwilliam to Benjamin Hall.

and would have been affected by internal and external factors such as familial, agrarian and industrial growth or decline.<sup>9</sup> A growing number of children in the household for example, would require extra staffing; likewise a purging of untrustworthy servants would cut the number in the household down considerably.<sup>10</sup> Parliamentary achievement or financial investment in stock may also have aided development upon the estate whereby the household became affected by a desire to expand, rebuild and update existing accommodation and utility space. In that instance, organisation, prioritisation and administration were valuable assets needed to control funds as well as individuals.

Who undertook this responsibility, who they answered to, and for whom they were specifically responsible further determines definitions of the household. Contemporary perceptions of managing a household specified it to be predominantly women's work. Histories of the subject have determined this to be an unfaltering distinction but it can be said that the nature of household management changed throughout the eighteenth century especially in the elite household. The elite woman saw her involvement in the household alter due to a number of factors including a growing need for privacy in the country house and the spread of wealth and importation of luxury goods. The house and home were categorised as her 'province' or 'department' in contemporary literature and more specifically, in conduct literature. Yet, the practical side of management – housekeeping – was diminishing and the elite woman evolved into an administrative presence. Yet, a lack of creativity and production was deemed a lack of purpose and she was cursed with idleness, indolence, and apathy for her ever growing number of domestics.

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<sup>9</sup> Definitions of the gentry and elite in terms of landed estate and acreage can also be found in Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (2000), chapter two, 'The Builders of the English Country House,' pp.10-46 Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2000); Heather A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (1982); and John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1984).

<sup>10</sup> Pollard, *Modern Management*. Pollard made reference to the size of firms in his study, but he was concerned with the larger size firm at between 120-150 employees, p. 21. A country house the size of Wentworth Woodhouse might employ more than one hundred if we are to include those on the estate as well as those performing domestic chores, but upwards of 120 was well beyond the realms of Yorkshire country house employment. What Pollard does add however, that by this point in industry it was becoming essential for managers to bring in supervisors or departmental managers, this was something very much a part of the social landscape of this study and had enormous effect upon how the mistress involved herself in the management of the home.

To manage the elite household effectively meant having a capacity for sound moral judgement, an ability to handle the accounts, some medicinal and culinary dexterity, and a strong sense of diplomacy. The partnership founded in elite marriage required qualification for the job where effective communication skills, previous experience and success at working in a team would hopefully whittle away the less accomplished candidate. Elite women therefore had to be prepared for their role upon a large estate, and some were eager to interact with the running of their marital homes through knowledge of accounting, an understanding of medicinal and culinary creations and shrewdness in commanding the servants.

## I

Household management was not a term readily utilised in the eighteenth century. Literature like the conduct book and cookery book, and personal correspondence instead identified the management of the household with quasi-professional titles like ‘the government of the household’, ‘domestic œconomy’, and ‘household œconomy’. The less grand expressions of ‘housekeeping’ or ‘housewifery’ would also determine the processes and outcome of running the household, and marked out the activity as that chiefly carried out by women. The most archaic of these expressions, those which incorporated the ancient ‘œconomy’, of Greco-Roman usage revealed a steady transition which took place throughout the eighteenth century in relation to the performance and value of household management up and down the social scale. Contemporary dictionaries like Kersey’s *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum; or a General English Dictionary* (1708) determined œconomy to mean the government of a house or family. Johnson’s 1760 *Dictionary of the English Language* was slightly more dissecting, offering his definition as, ‘pertaining to the regulation of an household’ and ‘frugality; discretion of expense’.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The modern-day *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the use of the phrase ‘domestic œconomy’ in *The Tatler* (1710), as of similar meaning to these early definitions of household management ‘the manner in which a household or a person’s private expenditure is ordered.’ See also Marie-Claire Rouyer-Daney, ‘The Representation of Housework in the Eighteenth-Century Women’s Press’ in (Eds.) Isabelle Baudino, Jacques Carré and Cécile Revauger. *The Invisible Woman: Aspects of Woman’s Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2005) pp.27-36.

By prefixing words like domestic to the term 'œconomy', the quality and nature of providing essentials like heating, lighting, clothing and food became slightly devalued from the end of the seventeenth century. The expertise of housekeeping was steadily losing esteem even as material expectations gave rise to luxury goods, mass produced ornament and adornment, and greater requirements for comfort and leisure. Influenced by Earle's study on the English middle-class, such a transition has been discussed by Vickery. She has suggested that productive and creative housekeeping – that which highlighted gender divisions of labour in the household and included cookery, confectionery and the making of apparel – was displaced by the spread of wealth at the time of the Restoration. The once sturdy and frugal mistress-cum-housekeepers were essentially bourgeois and could 'devote themselves to spending money and the cultivation of ornamental qualities.'<sup>12</sup> This was also clear in writings of the period where it was deemed somewhat old-fashioned or rustic in practice, and lacked the sheen and modernity of cosmopolitan living with its ready-made wares and foodstuffs.

Vickery's analysis of this change was based upon an elite organisational model of the household, one where the productive and creative forms of housekeeping had previously been performed by a unit of female household members with their mistress at the helm.<sup>13</sup> In Vickery's model, the elite households to which she refers were of a lower social status than those comprising the main focus of this study. Her framework holds relevance here because the household concerns surrounding hierarchical structures and their consumer needs were the same. Indeed, there were few distinctions between the managerial role of the elite women of this study and those examined by Vickery. The main exceptions are the larger number of household members and the more diverse domestic departments accommodated in the country house which required more specialised staff.

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (1989), pp.163-166; Amanda Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998) pp.1-12 and 132. Agreement of this theory has been considered in Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann. *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750*, (2004), see especially remarks made on the divisions of labour in the household, pp.80-83.

<sup>13</sup> This has also been asserted by Mark Girouard in *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (1978) who determined this productive domesticity as entirely female with the term 'island of womanhood', p. 28.

In early modern elite households, this mistress was unafraid of getting her hands grimy and toiled with the rest of them, experimenting with foodstuffs, being involved in the dairy and having charge over small domestic animals such as poultry and pigs, as well as the production of textile creations. Mendelson and Crawford have made the connection with such female involvement and the terms ‘egg-money’ and ‘pin-money’ with their relevance in provisioning and female consumer power within the household.<sup>14</sup>

Elite women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cultivated their expertise in these departments where raw goods could be turned into profit either as ready cash or through female inheritance.<sup>15</sup> The selling of dairy produce and the trade or exchange of hand-embroidered clothes enabled them to be constructive, and expressed social status and gender as productive characteristics. Mendelson and Crawford therefore proposed the material culture of these women to be bound by ‘activities arising from life-stage concerns and the family economy.’<sup>16</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century Vickery declared this female material culture to have been based instead upon a wider consumption of goods, so that even where the daily management of domestic consumption fell to women, they were now governed by a response to fashionable wares.<sup>17</sup> The traditional elite mistresses who had dirtied their hands now became ‘inconsequential decorations’ whilst their female helpmates in the household became ‘degraded skivvies’.<sup>18</sup> This may have been an overstatement by Vickery, but her comments have demonstrated the trenchant criticisms of the elite woman which labelled her intellectually vacuous and domestically unfit.

The archaic ‘oecconomy’ was identified with traditional housekeeping, but incorporated values of household consumerism which still expressed gendered activity, but also the significant impact of luxury expenditure for both elite and middling

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<sup>14</sup> Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England, 1530-1720* (Oxford, 1998). See especially chapter six, ‘Occupational Identities and Social Roles.’ pp.301-344.

<sup>15</sup> Mendelson and Crawford. pp.202-255.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.221.

<sup>17</sup> Vickery. *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.161-194.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

groups.<sup>19</sup> Concepts of management, rather than œconomy or even government did not reach fruition until it was conceived in the title of Mrs Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* (1861), but they were certainly taking shape throughout the eighteenth century. Exotic goods like tea and chocolate, textiles from India, decorative objects in the form of light furnishings, ceramics and glass, and metalwork all had their place in the household but their role evolved to create specific time-slots. This is to say that management rather than housekeeping was developing in connection with new household activities, especially those concerned with mealtimes and taking tea. To that extent, expressions of gendered activity did not change directly through consumerism and elite women still expected to expend their energies in the pursuit of household items including kitchen provisions and foodstuffs. It also meant however, that a transition in elite household structure occurred in which time management and logistics became intrinsic to the organisation of servants, medical and pastoral welfare, and not just the provisioning of heating, lighting, clothing and food – the mechanics of household management.

Elite women of the eighteenth century did not therefore always assume the mantle of inconsequential decoration or the guise of ornament, as higher up the social scale, the more complex and specialised the tasks became. To uphold this, Ulrich has stated that the spinning wheel should finally be disregarded by historians of women's work and that the pocket should take its place since this better symbolised 'the obscurity, the versatility and the personal nature of the housekeeping role.'<sup>20</sup> In the larger households of this study, the symbolic nature of the pocket with the addition of several jangling keys, bundles of bills and receipts and of course, personal correspondence, reinforced perfectly the personal and quasi-professional nature of household management compounded by prioritising and dispensing. Such a distinctive definition of the managerial role has so far had a massive impact on Vickery's own hypothesis which determined the pocket as a symbol in itself of work and household authority for the elite mistress.

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<sup>19</sup> Maxine Berg, 'New Commodities, Luxuries and their Consumers in Eighteenth-Century England', in (Eds.) Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester, 1999), pp.63-85.

<sup>20</sup> L. T. Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England, 1650-1750* (Oxford, 1983), p. 34. Quoted in Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.132-133.

Furthermore, the notion that elite women were mere consumers in the household and were no longer productive or capable of trading, exchanging and selling had reinforced presupposed distinctions on gender roles. The man was essentially productive and economic, but the woman acted as gatherer and keeper of all household affairs. Randolph Trumbach has noted that some men even sought marriage as a means of avoiding concerns of household management; Lord Sunderland for one, revealed such aspirations as marriage let him 'be free of the trouble of accounts and family concerns'.<sup>21</sup>

However, regardless of any transitions in both the activity of traditional housekeeping to elite household management, contemporary understandings of the household itself remained particularly static in comparison. Attention has been paid to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the historiography of household and family where the opposite is true and scholars have devised and developed several guidelines for discussion which have frequently ignored contemporary definitions of household or family units. The 'household' was an extremely rare term in the eighteenth century and the composition of any household recognised through residential occupation and activity for example, were generically known as a 'family'. The intention of many historians has been to facilitate quantitative research to enable comparative studies of household and family types across different cultures and historical periods.<sup>22</sup> This, argued Tadmor, has rendered their studies less illuminating because they have failed to engage with contemporary understandings through word usage and expressions.<sup>23</sup>

The categories for discerning the organisation of a household or family in the historiography have included contexts of anthropological meaning. These have emphasised the development of customs and beliefs as well as social meaning where the nature of relationships and interaction have been considered. The elite household has received precedence in many studies where marriage and familial interaction have been regarded as integral to the growth of landed estate and elite lifestyles in the eighteenth century. Habakkuk initially explored this with his study of marriage settlements in the

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<sup>21</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission. *Portland MSS*, V. 534, in. Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1978), p. 132.

<sup>22</sup> Naomi Tadmor, 'The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 151 (May, 1996), pp.111-140.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

eighteenth century.<sup>24</sup> To discuss the structure of the elite family was not Habakkuk's intention, but his early essay proved influential for later historians who sought a connection between a 'deviation from prudential marriage' and contemporary attitudes toward estate administration and the role of husband and wife in household organisation.<sup>25</sup> Crucially, Habakkuk later included his thoughts on equal marriages and the heiress, illustrating his argument with the unions of Mary Bright with Charles Watson-Wentworth, and that of Frances Shephard with Charles Ingram.<sup>26</sup>

Historians have also examined the shift from patriarchal households to domestic family units from which the elite mistress gained financial and social independence. Amussen quoted from *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599* in order to make the point that the position of women, particularly wives in England was one readily embracing freedom and independence.<sup>27</sup> Platter had been awestruck at English women who 'have far more liberty than in other lands, and know just how to make good use of it, for they often stroll out or drive by coach in very gorgeous clothes, and the men must put up with such ways, and may not punish them for it'.<sup>28</sup> Habakkuk had recognised this same development in economic terms, with discussion on the importance of female inheritance in estate history and the utilisation of the strict settlement arising in the mid-seventeenth century whereby women received jointures and provisions of a modest 'income' still known by that time as pin-money.<sup>29</sup> The elite mistress no longer had to trade her hand-made textiles in order to receive her 'pin-money', it was instead bound by pre-nuptial agreement and the fortune she brought with her into the marriage. She was socially, and to some extent financially independent and this supposedly caused the household to fragment and household compartments to become more distinct with needs for privacy and segregation.

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<sup>24</sup> John Habakkuk. 'Marriage Settlements in the Eighteenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* fourth series. 32 (1950). See also reference to Habakkuk's essay in Eileen Spring, *Law, Land and Family: Aristocratic Inheritance in England, 1300 to 1800* (1993), pp.148-180.

<sup>25</sup> John Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), pp.145-240.

<sup>26</sup> Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System*, pp.182 and 198.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (1988).

<sup>28</sup> *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599*, tr. Clare Williams (1937), pp.181-182, in Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society*: (1988), p. 49.

<sup>29</sup> Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt, and the Estates System*, pp.1-76. See also, Susan Staves, 'Pin Money', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 14, (Ed.) O. M. Brack (1985), pp.47-77; Susan Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).



The 'degraded skivvies' whom Vickery claimed had developed out of the helpmates of traditional housekeeping evolved out of tactics of segregation in the elite household as units made up of kin, servants and temporary workers who were separately disciplined, fed and housed. Girouard has stated that a growing feeling for privacy came hand in hand with a need for fastidiousness by the end of the seventeenth century. The country house was no longer the setting for the display of a united following of all ranks. Girouard believed this was a response to the changing nature of society and the power structure whereby household service lacked the prestige of former times when the male retainer was tied to the lord by service and hereditary loyalty, and bound by shared ceremony and ritual, and was prepared to fight for him.<sup>30</sup> It had much more to do with formality by the late seventeenth century, and reflected the luxury and expense afforded fashionable interiors, the modernisation of the country house front and the storage and display of imported luxury goods. As Girouard has pointed out, this was the age of the salon, of ante-rooms and withdrawing rooms – all were intended to hive off or filter out the lower ranks of householder and visitor and to limit their access to private collections and personal spaces.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, the elite eighteenth-century household was complex and hierarchical, its units influenced by turnover – a growing number of kin, deaths, the dismissal of staff or the need to expand under programmes of refurbishment and rebuilding. In Laslett's definition of the household the focus was anthropological which determined three main criteria encompassing several different cultural understandings and could be sufficiently applied to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century understandings; locational, functional and kinship. Put simply, these meant residence under the same roof, a number of shared activities including production and consumption, and members who were either related to each other by blood or marriage, or were governed by a singular authority.<sup>32</sup>

Stone's research design on the family, sex and marriage represented constructions of the wealthy professional and landed family and was more specialised and structured than Laslett's study. In defence of this bias toward the elite, Stone

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<sup>30</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p. 143.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.126-128. and 144-147.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Laslett, *Household and Family in Past Time*. (1972), pp.24-25.

suggested these classes formed the ‘lead sector’ in society because ‘the most significant changes took place earliest and with the widest impact’ particularly in the eighteenth century. This was, he stated, a time when the patriarchal family slowly gave way to the ‘affective family’ and domesticity.<sup>33</sup> Stone did however, give gracious recognition of Laslett’s criteria, but decided that the general use of the term ‘family’ in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (and indeed the eighteenth century) was too ambiguous despite reflecting the presence of blood relatives as well as resident servants, apprentices, sojourners and other resident labour groups employed in the house or on the estate.

Stone defined an ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ family but neither term encompassed the entire household which incorporated and included kin (blood relatives). Stone instead placed emphasis on those members of the same kin living together under one roof.<sup>34</sup> This is not a satisfactory definition; it is too limited and does not accommodate the real mechanics of the household in the way that eighteenth-century household management has so far been defined. Moreover, the static definition of the word ‘family’ occurred in both conduct literature and personal correspondence of the time and frequently referenced servants, apprentices and resident labour groups. Even Kersey’s 1708 *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* offered a vague distinction of family government which could easily be construed as more than the direction of members of the same kin. Shaped considerably by the source material, the household is hereby defined using Laslett’s criteria and encompasses both kin and resident servants (including apprentices and sojourners), all of whom shared a singular authority under one roof. **Table 1.1** shows how the structure of the elite household is considered within this thesis. Though distinct positions in its hierarchy are given, any specific numbers are not detailed until chapter four (see also appendix four).

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<sup>33</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), p. 394. For discussion and some criticisms of Stone’s definition of the family see Spring, *Law, Land, and Family*, pp.151-154.

<sup>34</sup> Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp.28-29.

**Table 1.1. Framework for the structure of the eighteenth-century elite household.**

Groupings	(Males)		(Females)	
	Non-essential/temp.	Core Members of Household		Non-essential/temp.
Kin		Master  (Children) (co-resident kin = extended visits made by wider family members)	Mistress	
Specialist/ Profession	Chef Valet Tutor Chaplain Surgeon Baker Menagerie man Gardener	Steward Butler Groom Gardener Cook Bailiff/Farmer	Housekeeper Cook Companion Ladies Maid	Governess Nurse Baker Menagerie woman
General	Clerk of the kitchen Underbutler Undergroom	Footman Coachman Porter Gamekeeper Postilion Poultry man	Housemaid Kitchen maid Stillroom maid Laundry maid Dairymaid Poultry woman	Chambermaid Scullery maid Baker maid Nursemaid
Auxiliary (dept. of work)	Stables Servants' hall			Stillroom House Laundry Bakery Dairy Kitchen
	Apprentices and sojourners			

This framework of the eighteenth-century household shows core members, non-essential members, the temporary household member and supplementary/auxiliary members of staff (the latter are discussed in more detail in chapter four). Unlike Stone's or Laslett's frameworks, distinguishable groupings relating to experience and proximity to kin household members have been incorporated in order to prove the dynamics of elite domestic management rather than merely identifying categories of membership. These different members of the household will be referred to here as interdependent compartments within a singular unified hierarchy of the

household in the eighteenth century, or more precisely as a community. This also reflects the terminology used by Stone for characterising elite marriage patterns dictated by ‘affective individualism’, which was based on love and stimulated through intimacy, of the eighteenth century and was to be distinguished from previous patriarchal family types which were based upon estate and finance.

Influenced by Stone, Trumbach’s study into the egalitarian family questioned the abandonment by the elite of a ‘patrilineal ideology’ for a strengthening of the rights of younger children and a quest for marriage ‘not as an alliance but first as an act of incorporation and then of love.’<sup>35</sup> As a means of answering this Trumbach had supposed the decline of the patriarchal household where male interest took precedence, was due to wider political influences and what he called a fusion of four factors – commercialisation, religion, political control, and kindred structures. All of which led to less emotionally restrictive household relations and a move towards domesticity.<sup>36</sup>

In order to define what was meant by this late seventeenth-century embracing of domesticity, Trumbach described rather than explained the replacement of patriarchy with a domestic model by considering the structure of the elite household. The result was an emphasis on the affectionate master and servant relationship and the regard for equal rights to pursue domestic ideals for all those in the household – for example, the permission for servants to marry and form families of their own.<sup>37</sup> Masters may even have wanted to vet prospective suitors of their servants as a means of ensuring fewer disruptions caused by ill-matched couples.<sup>38</sup> The unproductive elite mistress and her removal from other household units through social and financial independence was a consequence of these affectionate terms, claimed Trumbach, and enabled the transition from traditional housekeeping to more managerial forms partly because domesticity still encased values of the master and servant contract.

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<sup>35</sup> Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family*, p. 122.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123

<sup>38</sup> Mary Rockingham was informed by her steward Benjamin Hall of an intended union between the housekeeper, Elizabeth Broughton and the land surveyor William Townley. Townley had addressed a letter to the Marquis with assurance that ‘their abilities shall be faithfully exerted’ in the service of the Rockinghams. Townley was effectively seeking the hand of Broughton from his employer, and clearly understood the significance of this relationship – knowledge which certainly reassured Mary for a time. WWM, Steward’s correspondence, Stw P2/3 1 March 1773.

For Amussen, the focus on the early modern period revealed the doctrines of patriarchy to have had a much wider scope and the changing nature of society and the power structure highlighted by Girouard appeared as part of a political rhetoric. An analogy between the household and state became intrinsic to how authority should be viewed and how the enforcement of order should be applied.<sup>39</sup> The relationship of each person to another in the household had to be viewed differently: that of man to wife, of man to his children, and that of man to his servants. Children were a permanent responsibility whereas servants acted on a contractual basis and owed obedience to the head of the household. In the domestic/affectionate model the role of parent was to be reserved purely for their children, and for Trumbach, the family increasingly came to be understood in modern terms as kin relations towards the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>40</sup> Those who were not members of kin, like servants, were increasingly seen as a threat, particularly around offspring. Trumbach cites John Locke's *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) in which the elite were persuaded to take their children out of the hands of untrustworthy servants.<sup>41</sup> Locke was not alone in this sentiment and comments on the morals and values of servants and their interaction with children was taken up by many others.<sup>42</sup>

Girouard's statement on the development of the formal house from the late seventeenth century onwards can be readily recalled in light of what Trumbach has

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<sup>39</sup> Amussen. *Ordered Society*, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> Trumbach, *Egalitarian Family*, pp.134-150. Trumbach assigned this distinction in household relations to the use of the terms 'little family' and the 'great family' in the eighteenth century – the little family being distinguished purely as kin, the great family being distinguished as the servants and attendants upon the 'little family'. This cannot be applied to how mistresses like Mary Rockingham understood their households, and regularly used the term 'family' to mean both members of kin and non-kin, see pages 182-185 here.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130. Margaret Drabble has pointed out that a copy of *Some Thoughts concerning Education* was given to Richardson's Pamela by Mr B—, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. (Fifth edition. Oxford, 1994), p. 579. Stone has also suggested that Locke's publication reflected elite ideas about domestic behaviour already, and was simply an instrument for their propagation. *Family, Sex and Marriage*, p. 175.

<sup>42</sup> Locke was concerned with the education of women and gave particular emphasis to improving their capacity of educating their own offspring. Locke was therefore critical of elite women because this education was often left to governesses. Traditional domesticity which rendered a woman subordinate to her husband was a threat to any educational authority a woman might gain in the elite household if she took a step back from controlling their educational prospects. Stone cited William Law and Jonathan Swift, 'who addressed the gentry', and John Dunton and Daniel Defoe who 'addressed the bourgeoisie' all of whom had similar concerns to Locke in regards to the education of women. *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp.228-233.

suggested. Trumbach's definition of the egalitarian family purposefully incorporated the growing sense of privacy in the elite household as an essential ingredient of domesticity in the eighteenth century. The domestic model went as far as highlighting affection in kin relations (like Stone's affective family model) but did not extend to other members of the household. For example, Trumbach and Stone have since been criticised by Vickery for their 'perverse' yet symbolic use of elite women employing wet-nurses until very late into the eighteenth century. These elite women were believed by Stone and Trumbach to lack apparent maternal qualities and by extension, devalue the establishment of affectionate relations supposedly so grossly embedded in family structures of that time.<sup>43</sup>

Irrespective of how complex household management had become, elite women therefore represented the main focus of criticism in relation to the values placed upon family or kinship units because they detached themselves from the nurturing processes and practical approaches to housekeeping which were their traditional province. On the one hand, a mistress's administrative presence did not conform to the model of the family as one governed by affectionate relations. On the other, her unproductive role in the household was a response to the belief that she should remain close to members of kin, whilst keeping herself distanced from members of non-kin. Notions that she was an idle creature were borne out of the desire for her to hire more servants, like wet-nurses and she was criticised for playing the part of Lady Bountiful to suit her own fancies in order to keep up appearances of philanthropy and domestic virtue.

## II

The subject of domesticity had become entrenched in two distinguishable paths of historical analysis from the 1970s onwards; becoming fundamental to the public/private dichotomy and separate spheres analysis, and as part of

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<sup>43</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 107; Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*, pp. 271-273; and Trumbach, *Egalitarian Family*, pp. 197-235. For more on wet-nursing, constructions of maternity and the relationship between elite women and their nurses see Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England,' in (Ed.) J. C. Fout, *Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe. Essays from the Journal of the History of Sexuality* (Chicago, 1992), pp.107-137.

family history. The two analyses are prevalent in women's history but have a tendency to be riddled with academic terminology or more concerned with semantics. This detracts from the social description this topic should be allowed. Jean Bethke Elshtain was the first to admit this and suggested that the public and private imperatives as terms were evanescent notions once utilised to describe social reality as a 'theoretical, moral, and political exigency'.<sup>44</sup> Yet, the terms were also linked with other basic notions: nature and culture, male and female, the understanding and meaning of work, ideas of authority, the community, and the family.<sup>45</sup> The public and private became dimensions or occupied spaces equated with different values and characteristics suited to the capacities and abilities of men and women in order to achieve social order.

The patriarchal model of the household further emphasised these gendered capacities and abilities.<sup>46</sup> Poovey has suggested in her study on eighteenth-century women's writing that patriarchal definitions of a woman's role emphasised the importance of the family as a unit of religious and social discipline, but tended to restrict women's activities to narrowly defined domestic duties.<sup>47</sup> A woman's natural function of childbearing prescribed her domestic and subordinate place in the order of things, and it was from this that women were considered a symbol of nature. This had its advantages as well as disadvantages. Women could simultaneously be viewed with awe and disdain since they were capable of carrying and bearing children, but this also meant dealing with 'unsocialised infants and with raw materials'.<sup>48</sup> Perceptions of maleness and femaleness came to be governed by spatial occupation. Women's involvement in the

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<sup>44</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Oxford, 1981), pp.3-16.

<sup>45</sup> Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman*, p. 5. See also Carole Pateman, 'Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy', in (Ed.) A. Phillips, *Feminism and Equality* (Oxford, 1987) pp.103-126.

<sup>46</sup> Anthony Fletcher has asserted that between the 1590s and the 1640s a number of the country's leading puritan clergy even employed gender construction in an attempt to model the patriarchal family anew as the basis for authority and obedience. *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven, 1995), p. 204.

<sup>47</sup> Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (Chicago, 1984), p. 7. This can be seen in John Dod and Robert Cleaver's *A Godly Forme of Householde Government* (London, 1614), like a later publication, Thomas Gataker's *Marriage Duties Briefley Couched Together* (London, 1620) which placed gender and social structure around equal differences where masculine responsibilities were 'without' doors and the feminine were 'within'.

<sup>48</sup> See Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century*. (New York, 1996), p. 159, n.7 where she has highlighted the work of Sherry Ortner who determined the origin of this almost universal association between women and bodily process where the 'infrasocial connotation of the domestic group' has been acknowledged as a counterculture to the rest of society. 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?' in (Eds.) Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, *Women, Culture, and Society* (Stanford, 1974).

domestic sphere and its closeness to nature in this respect made them appear inferior to the cultural sphere and male activities so that women were necessarily viewed as subordinate to men.<sup>49</sup>

For some historians of gender and sexuality the traditions which drew heavily upon and incorporated Aristotelianism, Galenic theory and biblical teachings have constantly been highlighted.<sup>50</sup> Aspects of these theories rested with the essence of man and woman and what physical qualities made them distinguishable from each other through a common physiology, or one-sex model, in flawed and perfect versions.<sup>51</sup> Aristotelian theory was bound by one-seed conception where the male *sperma* was the active substance working on the female passive *catamenia*. This highly misogynistic notion, as Tim Hitchcock has declared denied the significance of the female orgasm and therefore a woman's active participation in sexual intercourse and conception.<sup>52</sup> In the Galenic theory both were considered to be of the same quality, but the woman's seed was regarded as having a less powerful role. The sexes were for that reason, merely different by degree based on the humoral system which portrayed the human body through cold, hot, dry and moist. Women were essentially cold and moist and their bodies were considered leaky vessels with menstruation and tearfulness, whereas a man's body was hot and dry and therefore muscular and stable.<sup>53</sup>

The story of creation sensationally revised these aspects with the punishments meted out to Adam and Eve – he was to toil in the fields and she was to experience the pain of childbirth. The social consequences of these physiological teachings even presented themselves as constructions of gender in essays and sermons in

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<sup>49</sup> Pateman, in *Feminism and Equality*, p. 110.

<sup>50</sup> See Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present*, (1997), pp.130-131. Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36, 2, (Cambridge, 1993), pp.383-414; Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century* (2004), pp.81-89; Tim Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800* (1997), pp.42-57; and Kathryn Shevelov, *Women and Print Culture: the Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989), pp.10-12.

<sup>51</sup> Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, pp.45-47; Roy Porter, 'History of the Body', in (Ed.) P. Burke, *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Pennsylvania, 1991), pp.206-32; Wendy D. Churchill, 'The Medical Practice of the Sexed Body: Women, Men, and Disease in Britain, circa 1600-1740,' *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2005), pp.3-22; and Fletcher, *Sex and Subordination*.

<sup>52</sup> Hitchcock, *English Sexualities*, pp.46-47.

<sup>53</sup> Porter, *Benefit to Mankind*, p. 130; and Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, 1993).



which women appeared as static creatures against their active male counterparts. Martin Luther (1483-1546) vehemently stipulated,

Men have broad and large chests, and small narrow hips, and more understanding than women, who have but small and narrow breasts, and broad hips, to the end they should remain at home, sit still, keep house, and bear and bring up children.<sup>54</sup>

Laqueur argued that new ideas about male and female bodies emerged by the end of the eighteenth century. The sexes ceased to be understood in terms of a common physiology and instead were seen as qualitatively distinct – a two-sex model of sexual difference.<sup>55</sup> Argument does exist however, that both models, especially the one-sex model of physiology ignored the ‘fluid metaphoric language’ with which men and women described their own bodies.<sup>56</sup> Male and female bodies were now perceived as separate and oppositional. Harvey has observed that Laqueur’s book has been crucial to historians of gender as well as being central to commentaries on women’s work and female gender roles. Robert B. Shoemaker, Tim Hitchcock, Anthony Fletcher, and Randolph Trumbach are certainly those in agreement with Laqueur’s theory of bifurcation. However, the timing at which Laqueur claims the sexes became opposite is disputed in their respective works with most citing a much earlier occurrence in the late sixteenth or seventeenth centuries.<sup>57</sup>

Biological differences between men and women were clearly intrinsic to gender construction and the implications this had upon the meaning of work and an *appropriateness* of spatial occupation. Domesticity has therefore become a word of great

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<sup>54</sup> As quoted in Porter, *Benefit to Mankind*, pp.130-131. Porter does not give a source, though it is worth noting bibliographical sources which are relevant such as S. Danielle Jacquart, and Claude Thomasset, *Sexuality and Medicine in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989); Pierre J. Payer, *The Bridling of Desire: Views of Sex in the Later Middle Ages* (1993); and Beryl Rowland, (Ed., and trans), *Medieval Woman’s Guide to Health* (London, 1981).

<sup>55</sup> Laqueur was particularly vague and stated that, ‘in or about the late eighteenth century’ there occurred a shift in the way that human bodies were understood. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), p. 5; Harvey, *Reading Sex*, pp. 5-6, and 78-81.

<sup>56</sup> Churchill, *Social History of Medicine*, 18, (2005) who quoted Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London and New York, 1995); see also Karen Harvey, ‘The Substance of Sexual Difference: Change and Persistence in Representations of the Body in Eighteenth-Century England’, *Gender and History*, 14, (2002), pp.202–23.

<sup>57</sup> Fletcher has noted the late sixteenth-century as pivotal in *Sex and Subordination*, as has Mendelson and Crawford in *Women in Early Modern England*. Robert Shoemaker in *Gender in English Society, 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (1998) has given precedence to the late seventeenth as has Hitchcock.

weight and consequence. Modern-day commentators who made extensive use of the public/private and separate spheres analyses have accordingly made the assumption that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century female inactivity and subordination within the domestic model boiled down to industrial capitalism and the emergence of a class society. The influence of Jurgen Habermas's theories of autonomy have for example, suggested that an overt female involvement in a growing commercial society was the result of a civil society occupying the 'space vacated by a weakened court and indolent church.'<sup>58</sup> The concept of a 'bourgeois public sphere' as constructed by Habermas has for others come to mean a purely middle-class creation dominated by spatial occupancy which became increasingly closed to women.<sup>59</sup> Within this model, the elite woman received criticism because she was abandoning the economic contribution and enterprise of her sixteenth and early seventeenth century counterparts, and fading into the dimly lit corners of the drawing room. These women were now asserting their class or social status through frivolous past-times, letter-writing and ordering servants to do the hard practical work for them. This, of course, does not allow recognition of the elite mistress as a consumer and ignores her participation in a growing commercial society.<sup>60</sup>

For commentators who have focused upon conduct literature as a representation of gender construction in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,

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<sup>58</sup> This was Vickery's criticism in *Gentleman's Daughter* which cited this interpretation of Habermas in John Money's 'Taverns, Coffee Houses and Clubs: Local Politics and Popular Articulacy in the Birmingham Area in the Age of the American Revolution'. *Historical Journal*, 14. (1971) pp.15-47. See also, Lawrence E. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions about Evidence and Analytical Procedure' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29, (1995-1996), pp.97-109. Feminist critique of Habermas can be found in Peter Dews, *Habermas: A Critical Reader* (Oxford, 1999); and (Ed.) J. Meehan, *Feminists Read Habermas* (New York, 1995).

<sup>59</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 226. See also John Brewer, *Party, Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge, 1971).

<sup>60</sup> This might suggest that elite women were in fact characterised by bourgeois and middle-class concerns rather than 'aristocratic' ones. The 'bourgeois' in this instance was reflected more in the mentalités of these women such as a desire for respectability, but their social status permitted them greater freedom outside the private sphere. Indeed, the country house was rarely typical of an entirely private dimension. For criticism of historical writing which has focussed on this view of a growing commercial society and the exclusion of elite women from the debate see Dana Arnold, *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (2003); (Eds.) Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow, 1997); (Eds) John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993); Jessica Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants, 1815-1914* (Oxford, 1994); Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century*. (New York, 1996); Anne Laurence, *Women in England 1500-1760: A Social History* (1994); Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh, *The Woman's Domain: Women and the English Country House* (1990); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, second edition (1996); Irene Q. Brown, 'Domesticity, Feminism, and Friendship: Female Aristocratic Culture and Marriage in England, 1660-1760', *Journal of Family History*, 7 (Winter, 1982), pp.406-424.

the household has been perceived as the emblematic space in which the woman reader understood her object world and her movement within it.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, the conduct book contained the language of domesticity where the home was the backdrop for a system of symbols with which a wife could be persuaded to get involved and perform to her capacity as female as well as understand her responsibilities through expectation. Eighteenth-century conduct literature was riddled with prescriptions for women to follow a virtuous path as nurturers, providers and keepers of material interests in the household, but these are not descriptions of real activity. Isabella Carlisle's *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*,<sup>62</sup> published in 1789, was moulded around this presupposition of a woman's role, and though her treatment of the topic was unique in its format, she delivered very little in the way of real practical value. This was the disadvantage of conduct literature on the whole, and authors merely set out to instruct and guide rather than explain and expose the intricacies of domesticity and the running of a household. Above all, authors ensured that successful household management was the result of integrity and rectitude.

Thus, conduct literature showed that a woman was expected to understand set duties and prescribed activities which defined her femininity and what Nancy Armstrong has advocated as 'femaleness' – the appropriateness of these activities to a woman's sex, predominantly as child-bearer and nurturer.<sup>63</sup> The presupposition of gender through physiological differences was not confined to conduct literature, and the reiteration of womanly duty defined by her female abilities could be found gracing the opening pages of more general household manuals and cookery books. *The English Housewife* by Gervase Markham of 1615 for example described the ideal, if not imaginary woman through physical perimeters and clear gender labour divisions, 'containing the inward and outward virtues which ought to be in a complete woman; as

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<sup>61</sup> See for example, Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford, 1987); Poovey, *The Proper Lady: Shevelow Women and Print Culture*; and (Ed.) Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*. (1990).

<sup>62</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the forms of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*. (1789). Hereafter referred to as *Maxims*.

<sup>63</sup> (Eds.) Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* (1987). See Armstrong's own essay, 'The Rise of the Domestic Woman', pp. 96-141; and Amussen, *Ordered Society*, pp. 43-45.

her skill in physic, cookery, banqueting-stuff, distillation, perfumes, wool, hemp, flax, dairies, brewing, baking and all other things belonging to a household.’<sup>64</sup>

The anonymous writers of *The Lady’s Companion or, Accomplished Director in the Whole Art of Cookery* (1767) made their first sentence thus, ‘As the prudent Management of Family Affairs is your particular Province, I think I may with Propriety, entreat your Acceptance of this Piece...’<sup>65</sup> In an address to her reader in *The Art of Cookery* first published in 1747, Hannah Glasse wrote ‘Nor shall I take upon me to direct a lady how to set out her table; for that would be impertinent and lessening her judgement in the œconomy of her family.’<sup>66</sup>

Books pertaining to more general knowledge of household and estate affairs also found space to include such distinctions. Richard Bradley’s *The Country Housewife and Lady’s Director* (1762) (**Figure 1.1**) was favoured by the Dowager Lady Isabella Irwin in her later years when living in Windsor. In the introduction to his publication a reader like Isabella would have noted Bradley’s supposed philosophical inspiration from Greek historian Xenophon<sup>67</sup>, and that he maintained a deeply traditional perception of gender with this remark, ‘The Art of Œconomy is divided..., between the Men and the Women; to the Men the more dangerous and laborious Share of it in the Fields, and without-doors; to the Women, the frugal Care and Management of every Business within.’<sup>68</sup> With pages and pages dedicated to ingredients, preserving, cooking methods, and bills of fare this comment seems rather more archaic when juxtaposed with culinary creativeness, and he did not hesitate to add, ‘As this at least ought to be the Practice of these Days...’ Women could thus be reminded every time they opened their recipe books of their specific gendered role.

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<sup>64</sup> G. Markham. *The English Housewife*, (Ed.) Michael R. Best (1986), p. 1, title-page for 1615 edition. This has also been quoted in Alison Sim, *The Tudor Housewife*, (1996), p. 43; See Michael Roberts. ‘“To Bridle the Falsehood of Unconscionable Workmen, and for her Own Satisfaction”: What the Jacobean Housewife Needed to Know about Men’s Work and Why’, *Labour History Review*, 63, (1998), Part 1, pp.4-30. Roberts pointed out that Markham was indeed assembling an ideal type of woman, but that it should be remembered *The English Housewife* was intended as a companion piece to a treatise on horsemanship and other such *Husbandman’s Recreations*: something which reflected the knowledge of the author in regards to advising women, or more specifically, other men’s wives.

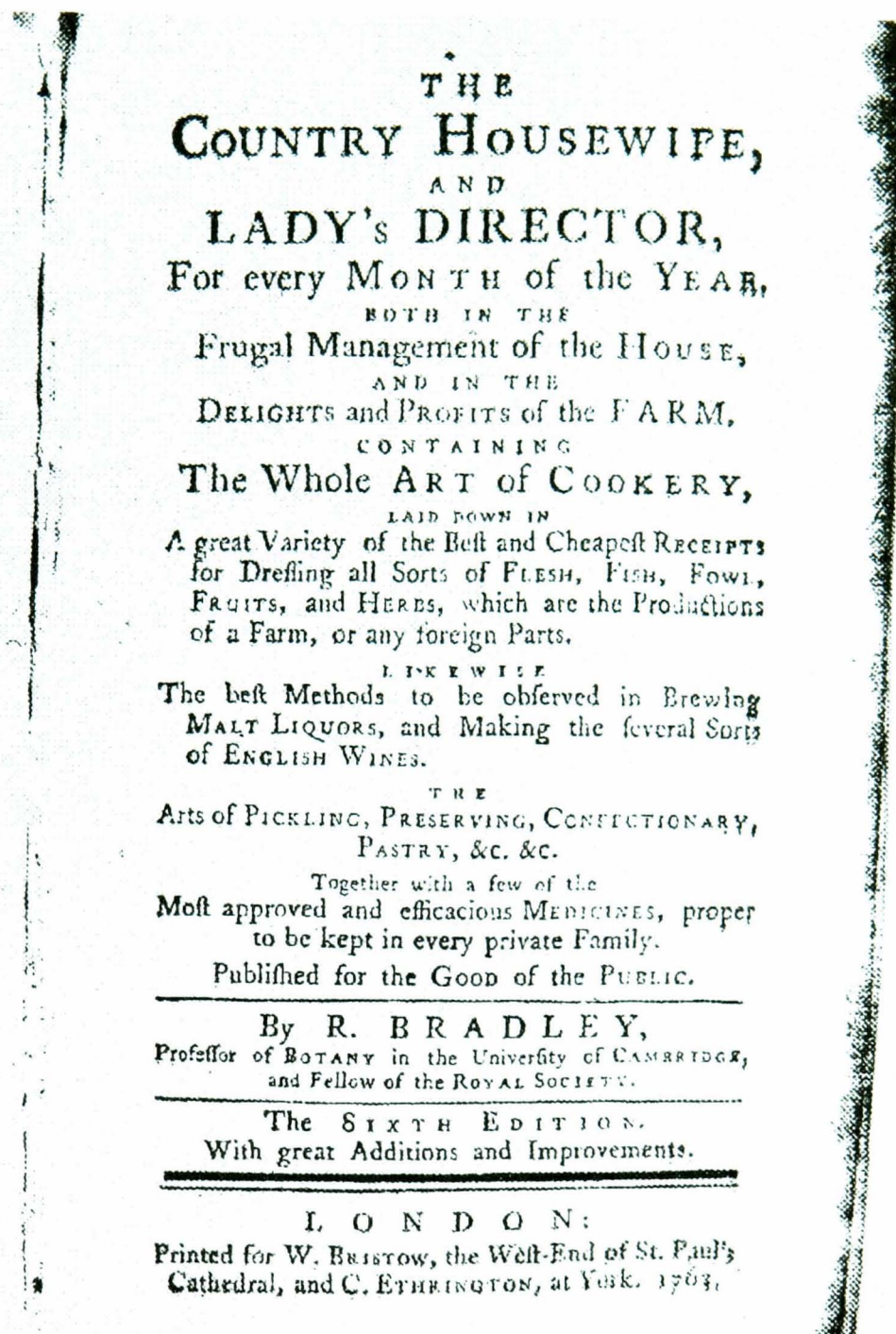
<sup>65</sup> *The Lady’s Companion or, Accomplished Director in the Whole Art of Cookery*, (1767) p. iii

<sup>66</sup> Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*. Introduction to the 1767 edition, p. v.

<sup>67</sup> Xenophon (c.435-354BC) Greek historian, essayist and military commander.

<sup>68</sup> Richard Bradley, *The Country Housewife and Lady’s Director*, (1762) pp.i-ii.

Figure 1.1. Title-page for Richard Bradley's *The Country Housewife* (1762).  
Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online.



Nancy Armstrong has stated that man was clearly meant to be extrovert, practical and proficient, and actively promote economies thought beneficial for his family and the state.<sup>69</sup> A woman's only dealings with money and finances upheld her natural meekness ensuring she spent wisely, practised frugal domesticity whilst remaining attentive to his every whim. This is too sweeping a generalisation, since the idea that women were subjected to a domestic ideology – the 'new domestic woman' as Armstrong termed it – because of industrial and economic growth leaves the impression

<sup>69</sup> Armstrong, *Ideology of Conduct*, pp.96-107.



that some new gender order was really only experienced by women through stricter forms of subordination and marginalisation.<sup>70</sup>

Such a generalisation has also attracted criticism over the historical working experience of women and whether domesticity was really just a repackaging of an older, more traditional role for women.<sup>71</sup> The real feminist critique in public and private analyses lay with the quality of work. Men were no longer toiling the fields per se, but held positions of public administrative authority. Women on the other hand were still experiencing the pain of childbirth and were expected to nurture their offspring accordingly, and in private. It was about the permanence of work versus the temporary, where men could switch off from their daily grind but women were subjected to their share indefinitely. Mendelson and Crawford quoted from Gregory King, who as the great estimator of England's population wrote at the end of the seventeenth century, 'as to Labour & Industry and the Qualifications of the mind which respect the Publick [,] the men are more valuable than the women'.<sup>72</sup> This sentiment was repeated in conduct literature and induced some colourful figurative comparisons in *Female Government* (1779) which only a modern-day soft focus would suit, 'A woman is the downy pillow on which a Man should repose from the severer and more exulted duties of life; from his studies, his labours, and his cares'.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> The term 'new domestic woman' has been heavily criticised by Vickery whose own study into the socio-economic activities of Elizabeth Shackleton in light of this supposed revision of traditional roles for women was ironically utilised and supported by Christopher Christie in *British Country House*, pp. 106-107. For discourse on women's work see Pamela Sharpe, ed., *Women's Work: The English Experience 1650-1914* (1998), this is a valuable resource containing important essays by Bridget Hill, Maxine Berg, Peter Earle and Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall. See Sharpe's own essay, 'Continuity and Change: Woman's History and Economic History in Britain', pp.23-42.

<sup>71</sup> J. M. Bennett. 'History That Stands Still': Women's Work in the European past'. *Feminist Studies*, 14. (1988) pp.269-283.

<sup>72</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p. 263. Gregory King, *Notebook*, p. 248. Also reproduced in (Ed.) P. Laslett, *The Earliest Classics* (1973); and P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost – Further Explored*, (1983), pp.32-33.

<sup>73</sup> *Female Government* as quoted in Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (1989), p. 606. Since analogies of women as soft, meek and tender creatures cropped up in nearly all publications of conduct literature, it would be unnecessary and tiresome to quote them all. Matters of plagiarism should also be contemplated as *Female Government* copied large portions of text from *The Art of governing a Wife*. Some of the better ones however, were excitedly erotic and were unsurprisingly written by men who applauded the pleasurable perspectives of gender roles. See for example, John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy*, (1774) 'A fine woman shews her charms to most advantage, when she seems most to conceal them. The finest bosom in nature is not so fine as what the imagination forms', p. 25. The title-page from a 1790 publication by Adams, *Woman: Sketches*, utilised a quote from the seventeenth century dramatist Thomas Otway, 'Nature made you to Temper Man' where the author expressed faux celebration at the less active and more contemplative character of woman. 'Man, in the

As one of the main critics of the separate sphere analysis, Vickery has argued that this rough division between public and private could be applied to any century or any culture, something which she insisted ‘robs the distinction of its analytical purchase.’<sup>74</sup> Undiminished traditional views of gender therefore go totally ignored. This has meant that the public/private and separate sphere analyses have done little to enhance the understanding of gender relations and the intricacies of mixed social spaces or diversions permitted in any group, country or century.<sup>75</sup> Any actual separation between the spheres has been further blurred by historians like Chalus who have examined the involvement of elite women in deliberately public activities like politics. That elite women were submissive and meek accessories to their politician husbands has been challenged and their influence for gaining political support through patronage and social politics has been demonstrated. In particular, elite women like Mary Rockingham and Frances Irwin enjoyed recognition for their roles in maintaining the family interests, and where they were restricted by social codes, these women made critical use of their homes to further the cause.<sup>76</sup>

These analyses also forbid description of social variety and the accepted outdoor activities women could, and wanted to pursue. Thomas Platter’s captivation at the end of the sixteenth century regarding English women and their more public movements was not based on some spectral hallucination. For an eighteenth-century elite woman, ‘outdoor’ activities like shopping, banking, visiting assemblies, and attending the assizes were bound by equal fascination and rigorous enjoyment. A seasonal trip up to London could represent business-like negotiations with both family and friends and provided an essential facet to her sociability. When Frances Irwin escorted her eldest daughters to the gaming tables at Gloucester House, she was not there for personal gain – it was to hasten suitable matches for them. Her sister-in-law too excitedly narrated the

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middle of his labours..., employing his powers, and commanding nature, finds his pleasure in his industry... But woman..., her pleasures must arise from her virtues; her amusements are her children.’

<sup>74</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, p. 7. See also, Vickery, *The Historical Journal*, pp.384-385.

<sup>75</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman’s Daughter*, pp.6-7.

<sup>76</sup> Reference to these women in this context has also been made by Ruth M. Larsen in ‘Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858.’ Ph.D thesis, University of York, 2003). See also Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c.1754-1790*, (2005); Chalus’s essay, ‘“That epidemical Madness”: women and electoral politics in the late eighteenth century’ pp. 151-178 in (Eds.) Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*; (Eds.) Kathryn Geadle and Sarah Richardson, *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (2000); (Ed.) Amanda Vickery, *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (California, 2001); and Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire* (2001).

early morning shenanigans at Blackheath where it was ‘...the fashion...to eat Oxford sausages, made by a Famous French Cook...’<sup>77</sup> Such exploits do not denote minds beset with homely rituals and formal compliance with domestic virtues. Frances Irwin was strongly against the fake civility of the gaming table because it represented all she disliked about sophisticated metropolitan life, but she readily utilised the mixed space to encourage heterosexual sociability.<sup>78</sup> For her sister-in-law, the sights and smells of a Greenwich morning not only presented her with colourful gossipy material with which to enrich her correspondence but accentuated the social minutiae being acted out in expanding urban districts.

In eighteenth-century conduct literature, the meaning of work, authority and community had not changed but were being addressed differently. The language of domesticity represented virtuous command and retained femininity to the extent that outdoor activities like these could be relinquished and that the ‘private sphere’ could look appealing and not restrained and oppressive. This had been heavily disputed by the likes of Mary Astell and Judith Drake in late seventeenth-century feminist commentary where the pursuit of women for domesticity generated some degree of disappointment. Astell, for example in *Reflections Upon Marriage* (third edition, 1706) worked on her own premise that women were born slaves by adding that men married for the sake of household order, ‘a necessary evil’ which covertly restrained women who could never quit this ‘service’ until their husbands died.<sup>79</sup> From another perspective, McKeon has declared that domestic ideologies actually justified an emergent system ‘by appearing to mitigate or annul the condition of inequality’ proposed by traditional models of sexual hierarchy.<sup>80</sup> The domestic sphere was a powerful symbol of womanly virtue, and it

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<sup>77</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS, Leeds). Temple Newsam MSS (TN) TN/C/23b/17. 10 January 1759. Elizabeth Ingram to Mrs Charles Ingram.

<sup>78</sup> James Lomax has noted Frances’s dislike of such popular pastimes in ‘Temple Newsam: a Woman’s Domain’ (unpublished University of York conference paper, 14 May 2004); Also in *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), pp.89-105. See Edward Pawson’s MSS. Acc 1038 Letter Books 4-10, B6 B23/124 John Waple to Frances, 26 April 1759.

<sup>79</sup> Mary Astell, *Reflections Upon Marriage*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. (1706), Facsimile edition from Bridget Hill. *The First English Feminist: Reflections Upon Marriage and Other Writings by Mary Astell*, (1986), pp. 105-106. A publication attributed to Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1721) also mocked the low levels of recognition women allowed themselves for their roles in marriage and the household, pp. 76-77.

<sup>80</sup> Michael McKeon, ‘The Secret History of Domesticity’ in (Eds.) Colin Jones and Dror Wahrman. *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*. (Berkeley, 2002), pp.171-189, p. 188.



invited women to implement authority over the household; in practice it might not have appealed to everyone, but it allowed for organisational and supervisory aspiration rather than a position of secondary purpose.

For elite women, their most active role coincided with marriage. In their role as mistress of a household, administration, management and organisation fell to them, and most were prepared for this responsibility mainly due to effective parenting or informal tutoring; some even eagerly anticipated their turn in charge of a large establishment. Domesticity therefore, was a semantic device which adopted notions of power balance in the household, making the management of it seemingly delicate and affectionate as well as crucial. The elite woman had to be diplomatic and intelligent but had to refrain from bullish behaviour and outrageous outbursts as these were deemed unfeminine attributes; her management skills were therefore bound by a concoction of prudence, shrewdness and feminine virtue. Terminology such as ‘the government of the household’, ‘domestic œconomy’, housekeeping and the eventual nineteenth-century usage of ‘household management’ may have indicated a shift towards command and authority rather than production and creativity, but it was still significantly a part of any woman’s role and weight within the household community.

### III

Elite domesticity was not all gloomy withdrawing rooms, ante-rooms and formidable salons. A desire to obtain domesticity within the elite household throughout the eighteenth century was compounded by a set of needs – a desire for privacy instigated through segregation, a greater involvement in the upbringing of children and the desire to escape from everyday political and fiscal strains. Yet, it received vicious criticism for lacking depth and sincerity as well as natural interaction and appearing affected rather than affectionate. At the root of this criticism lay the elite woman with her servants, wet nurses and governesses. Household management was merely a term which declared official status whilst the elite woman really spent her days lolling about on her day bed writing letters to acquaintances or meddling with her husband’s state affairs:

I ride out for an hour or two the first thing in a morning and when I come in get out some book or other and lop upon my couch till I am roused... I get myself half dressed by dinner [and] after dinner I come to my couch again and there remain till I am obliged to finish my dress and sally forth. Do not you conceive the sort of thing that when you get into such an Indolent Corso it is very difficult to put oneself the least out of it...<sup>81</sup>

With the awareness that her correspondence would often be shared or read aloud and the contents heard by the close friends and family of the recipient, the elite woman readily mocked the perceptions of her status. The Duchess of Grafton here displayed a thorough lack of daily routine, her sluggish enthusiasm and leisurely fatigue all invoked the image of an eighteenth century elite woman in her attempts to whittle away the hours at home. Yet, there are undertones of cynicism by the particular emphasis she placed on her conscious attempt to remove herself from a lethargic state of mind. The Duchess of Grafton had the opportunity to drift from one soulless activity to the next, surrounded by the hard emptiness of luxuriously gilded interiors softened by the petit point settee and the fine French silk hangings. Her indolence and fatigue were self-inflicted but she was mindful that her time had to be well spent and that the domestic space could be put to better use.

Mary Wollstonecraft made a series of indictments against elite women in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) which ranged from their penchant for idle frivolity to their disaffected attitudes towards family and household. Wollstonecraft also targeted an elite woman's role as an incubator of a future heir and decorative companion to their husbands. Wollstonecraft wrote, 'The most sacred trusts are then considered sinecures, because they were procured by interest, and only sought to enable a man to keep *good company*.'<sup>82</sup> Much to the disapproval of Wollstonecraft, an elite woman's lifestyle proved inspirational to others lower down the social strata with their wish to emulate ladies; 'and the vain pleasures which consequent idleness forces the rich to pursue, appear so enticing to the next rank, that the numerous scramblers for wealth sacrifice everything to tread on their heels'.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> TN/C/23b/94. Letter to Mrs Charles Ingram 15 January 1763? from Anne, Duchess of Grafton, Bond Street, London.

<sup>82</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. With Introduction by Elizabeth Robins Pennell. (1891). p. 208.

<sup>83</sup> Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, p. 208.

The actual moment at which domesticity became so engrained in wider social commentary especially that concerning social rank, has been examined by Davidoff and Hall.<sup>84</sup> They have pointed at the dawn of the nineteenth century, which for them was pivotal and the moment at which domestic ideologies became unimpeded with the 'Queen Caroline affair'.<sup>85</sup> This 'affair' concerned George IV's divorce from the wife he had never liked, Caroline of Brunswick through his unpopular attempts of bringing an action against her in the House of Lords in 1820 and her supposed infidelities and refusal to be excluded from the liturgy. It apparently appealed to the lesser elite because it reinforced the abhorrent sexual adventures and infidelities of kings and queens and represented all that was scandalous in high places, where marriages were devoid of love and the exotic pleasures of the rich maintained exclusivity from plebeian mundanity.<sup>86</sup> All this, stipulated Davidoff and Hall, exemplified the corrupt and evil attributes of elite living where domesticity and stability could not possibly exist.

As one perspective on the rise of domesticity, Davidoff and Hall's assessment has in effect merely bridged the metaphorical gap between what they conceived to be the debauched, opulent and excessive century with that of the strict, restrained and controlled social attitudes of the next. Baird has highlighted this perception in her conclusion on the involvement of a select number of aristocratic women in the arrangement of their homes, suggesting it was far more stifling for Victorian women than for their predecessors due to the requirements of social respectability. The images of a Victorian demure housewife, for example, surrounded by children and a virtuous caring husband united in matrimonial bliss are certainly reminiscent of the group portraiture of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert by Landseer or official court painter, F. X. Winterhalter.

Yet, the example of George IV and Queen Caroline, of marriages without love or scandal in high places can be gleaned from any period.<sup>87</sup> Davidoff and

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<sup>84</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall. *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (1987).

<sup>85</sup> Anna Clark, 'Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of the British Constitution', in *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*. (2004), pp.177-207.

<sup>86</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 150.

<sup>87</sup> Davidoff and Hall failed to pursue these apparently nineteenth-century ideals into the twentieth century since the representation of fastidious morality and family values did not automatically transfer well to the next generation. To this extent, what would Davidoff and Hall have made of Edward VII's naughty

Hall's argument was structured around Hall's 1979 essay on the formation of domestic ideologies which limited its examination of domesticity to late eighteenth and nineteenth-century middle-class, bourgeois ideals of what constituted appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour and activity.<sup>88</sup> Like Armstrong nearly ten years later, Hall had suggested that a new prescriptive model for women was created by Evangelical writers between 1780 and 1830. In this model the 'new bourgeois way of life involved a recodification of ideas about women' with a new emphasis on women as domestic beings and where domestic ideologies legitimised the separation of gendered space. Porter has pointed out that Evangelicalism was characterised by 'impassioned but controlled inner emotional intensity rather than by an intricate theology'<sup>89</sup> something which Hall suggested provided enough religiosity to result in a direct political challenge.<sup>90</sup> A firm belief for national moral improvement was held by the likes of William Wilberforce who were determined to rid society of its vices. Drunkenness, sexual promiscuity and cruel sports had to be replaced with a sober, philanthropic and charitable goodness. For Hall, the 'middle-class' home was symbolic of this change and became a centre of moral virtue where women in particular could blossom as wives and mothers.<sup>91</sup>

Such a crystallisation of 'middle classness' has been criticised by Vickery, and Wahrman before her.<sup>92</sup> Their respective criticisms of Davidoff and Hall's thesis lay in the questioning of the relevance of actual sociological categories like income group, status ranking and occupational sector upon shared cultural identities involving moral codes. Wahrman argued that a commitment to an imperative moral code of domestic virtue and evangelical impulse was not restrictively characteristic of some

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Nineties. Lillie Langtry and Alice Keppel; or indeed the scandal of a twice divorced American woman and an interwar abdication? Anna Clark also highlighted the morality of other eras in *Scandal*.

<sup>88</sup> Hall, 'The Early Formation of Victorian Domestic Ideology', in (Ed.) Sandra Burman, *Fit Work for Women* (1979), pp.15-32.

<sup>89</sup> (Eds.) Jeremy Black and Roy Porter, *A Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century History* (1996) pp. 232-233.

<sup>90</sup> Dror Wahrman, "'Middle-Class' Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, 32, (October 1993), p. 400; Hall, in *Fit Work for Women*; and (Eds.) Black and Porter, *A Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century History*, (1996) pp.232-233.

<sup>91</sup> Hall, in *Fit Work for Women*, p. 15; see also Robert Shoemaker, *Gender*, p. 31.

<sup>92</sup> Vickery, *The Historical Journal*, 36, 2, pp.384-390; Wahrman, *Journal of British Studies*, 32, pp.400-405.

sociologically defined ‘middle class’.<sup>93</sup> Vickery declared it to be some ‘quasi-Marxist’ search for historical analysis which was decidedly unreliable and still hinged upon arguments based on capitalist economies as fruitful ‘middle-class’ pursuits. If entrepreneurialism was characteristic of capitalist growth and therefore distinctly middle class – where did the Rockinghams as elite mine owners, and agricultural innovators stand?<sup>94</sup> Wahrman added that it would therefore be careless to add any explanatory power to Davidoff and Hall’s study since values of domestic morality, appearances of sobriety and serious religiosity impacted throughout the social scale. At the same time as the Evangelical movement, Isabella Carlisle was promoting domesticity in her *Maxims* and it in no way asserted her social rank as middle class or ‘bourgeois’. Indeed, notions of the superior and inferior creature, of the bon-ton, and upper social rank are littered throughout her publication. The elite and middle class simply shared a common interest which was symbolised by a domestic ideology and the pursuit of respectability, of domestic comforts away from busy ‘public’ affairs.

However, Isabella Carlisle’s *Maxims* has even greater value within this area of debate than that of some trite publication. She was the mistress of a large Yorkshire country establishment; she was a practical, accomplished woman whose actions often contradicted her thoughts (**Figure 1.2**). Much of Carlisle’s publication related matters of feminine virtue and responsibility to a woman’s naturally designated role in the household and even stated that an elite woman was in no way exempt from duties of the domestic sphere.

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<sup>93</sup> Wahrman, *Journal of British Studies*, p. 401. For further definitions of the eighteenth-century middle classes see Earle, *English Middle Class*; Paul Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp. 59-121; Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. (Oxford, 2005), pp.205-219.

<sup>94</sup> (Eds.) Jeremy and Porter, *Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century History*, pp.96-97; Vickery, *The Historical Journal*, p. 383; Lawrence and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880*. Abridged Edition. (Oxford, 1986), pp.301-302. They noted that as well as this ‘singularity in agricultural entrepreneurship’ of the Rockingham estates, the elite of the eighteenth century were investing and speculating in government funds and stocks. They were therefore far from ignorant of or unsympathetic towards the practices and principles of men of business.



**Figure 1.2. Isabella Carlisle (née Byron), (1721-1795), by Thomas Gainsborough, oil on canvas, c.1759. Castle Howard Collection.**



Ultimately her publication was intended for an elite audience, but she certainly flirted with middle-class concerns of morality and positively encouraged sobriety and politeness. Indeed, literature of this sort was both the tool and ingredient to a better moral foundation for any woman. If there was any one characteristic of the elite the middle class sought to emulate, it was literacy. However, women were not to hold inquisitive minds; Isabella Carlisle labelled music, theatre, travel and the natural sciences as amusements or subjects to pass the time with. ‘Adapt your studies to your circumstances; there are some attended with much expence [sic], and which may cause

your family to lament your knowledge.’<sup>95</sup> *Maxims* was a means of instruction which marketed modesty and good manners as well as the desire for domestic order and comfort to the young married woman.

A desire to embrace some sort of domestic comfort was often noted in eighteenth-century elite women’s correspondence too. Frances, the young bride of Thomas Robinson, frequently accompanied her husband abroad to Vienna and was to witness both the amusements and hindrances of a diplomatic wife. With false regret she stated in the third person in a letter to her sister Elizabeth Worsley, ‘how well she would have done the honours of a Yorkshire Hall, if that had been her lot’.<sup>96</sup> Such correspondence revealed Frances’s hopes and ambitions both abroad and at home. But her letters from Vienna impress loneliness upon the reader. Borne out of homesickness, she regularly alluded to the comforts of her childhood home at Hovingham by making constant comparisons with the Yorkshire countryside and domestic structures there. She added in the same letter, ‘[I sit] in a salon between a fine avenue and a finer Garden, dispensing Tea, milk, toast and everything that is English for Breakfast...’ On another occasion, both Thomas and Frances had even imagined a dreamy landscape made up of their Yorkshire ties, ‘Mr Robinson and I when we walk, find one place like Hovingham, and another like Studley, and so till we fancy ourselves in Yorkshire...’<sup>97</sup>

Paul Langford has pinpointed the images readily evoked by countless historians and their more accessible counterparts, the librarian, archivist and country house curator. Under their influence, interpretation of the decorative and fine arts rest within a quiet, solitary atmosphere have provided many a visitor with their first impressions of eighteenth century elegance, stateliness and elite fashion.<sup>98</sup> But it has been a history based upon male pursuits and gains; an examination of elite involvement in politics and consequent power in commerce and industry which has maintained an exclusivity of public life populated by men. More specifically, the country household has existed as one smaller segment of the estate structure where servants, wages, provisioning, and consumption have never been fully explored. Instead rentals, tenures,

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<sup>95</sup> *Maxims*, p. 90.

<sup>96</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Newby Hall MSS (NH) Correspondence 2826/10 Frances Robinson, Vienna to her sister Elizabeth Worsley, 3 August 1740.

<sup>97</sup> NH 2826/9 no date, Frances Robinson, Vienna to Elizabeth Worsley.

<sup>98</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp. 1-7.

drainage, building, and agricultural and industrial techniques are examined in light of communication improvements and parliamentary legislative promotion.

These are undeniably important topics necessary for understanding the history of elite social roles nationally. The inclusion of the domestic, the home and the 'private' space to which they returned to at the end of the season, from the assizes, or from Parliamentary attendance has normally been only touched upon. Yet, these were the administrative spaces and were required by the elite male especially to help realise the maintenance costs and hospitality required in upholding his stately lifestyle expected of him. This has been something which Vickery has constantly bemoaned as one of the fundamental flaws in historical writing before the 1990s.<sup>99</sup> The only exception to an entirely male orientated history of the country house has been Mark Girouard's thesis. The previous lack of interest had in turn produced a lack of purpose when interpreting the material culture of country house social history symbolised by the plain austere surroundings of rooms once used as kitchens, staff offices, utility rooms and nurseries. In some instances these rooms have been recently opened to the public – in part due to the latter's demands and renewed inquisitiveness.<sup>100</sup>

For the role of the elite mistress as discussed in the historiography of landed estates this has meant the commitment to paper of only a few sentences. Her appearance was one of prop where she was sidelined in all outdoor activities, seen only as an accompaniment to her husband on business trips, sports and gaming, and to ensure his estates as 'proprietor' were fully maintained in his absence. This is perfectly characterised by Mingay's study of the gentry where such low levels of recognition would stir even Mary Astell to make comment. Mingay wrote, 'Running an estate was not exclusively the responsibility of the male... Unavoidable absences of the proprietor at court, attending Parliament, or at the assizes and quarter sessions... meant that estate affairs were often temporarily or permanently in the hands of wives, daughters, or

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<sup>99</sup> Joanna Martin has also pinpointed Vickery's quest for female inclusion, and of the families included in her *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (2004) stated that themes of the political or administrative variety were common male pursuits, their female contemporaries were not entirely uninterested in these but such themes certainly occupied a great deal less of their time and attention, pp. xv-xx.

<sup>100</sup> Ruth M. Larsen in the introduction to *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 1.



widows.’<sup>101</sup> Mingay used terminology indicative of the emphasis commonly placed within the historiography of the landed and elite classes and the relationships between man and woman in marriage. His assertion was that the accumulation of wealth and possessions occurred as a result of marriage and inheritance. This has since been criticised by Christopher Clay as ignoring the needs of great landowners who only had daughters to succeed them.<sup>102</sup> The elite woman was granted some acknowledgement, if only as ‘heiress’ by Clay; something Habakkuk had already achieved and a subject later followed up by Eileen Spring in her study on aristocratic inheritance.<sup>103</sup>

Yet, how the elite have been defined historically has affected the ways in which elite women have been given any recognition at all and ultimately how they have become demonised. Studies of the aristocracy and the landed elite have previously attempted to define these terms especially in light of how they were understood within the social strata of the time. The title of ‘gentleman’ has received most attention and the perception of rank through profession or indeed the lack of professional or working credentials. Studies by Tawney, Mingay and Trevor-Roper set out to define the status of the ‘gentleman’ through an existence supported by demesne farming and the exploitation of estate resources rather than manual labour.<sup>104</sup> These studies and later ones by Stone and Stone, Beckett, and Cannon permitted the elite male to have greater significance due to his role in public office, entrepreneurialism and investment.<sup>105</sup> It was also compounded by good fortune, finding the most beneficial environment for work and play, serendipity, and, of course, getting the right wife.

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<sup>101</sup> G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class*. (1976), p. 89.

<sup>102</sup> Christopher Clay, ‘Marriage, Inheritance, and the Rise of Large Estates in England, 1660-1815’, *Economic History Review* XXI, second series (1968), pp.503-518.

<sup>103</sup> Spring, *Law, Land, and Family*.

<sup>104</sup> R. H. Tawney, ‘The Rise of the Gentry,’ *Economic History Review*, XI (1941) and H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Gentry, 1540-1640*, Supplement No.1 to *Economic History Review*, (1953). William Harrison’s view of the gentleman written in 1577 included the following. ‘Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, whoso abideth in the university...or beside has service in the room of a captain in the wars...can live without manual labour, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge and countenance of a gentleman, be called master. which is the title that men give to esquires and gentlemen, and reputed for a gentleman ever after.’ Quoted in Mingay, *The Gentry*, p. 2.

<sup>105</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?* The term ‘elite’ in their study was intended as a way of ‘avoiding the pitfalls of confining attention to the titular peerage’ but they admitted that the term still raised problems with definition, p. 3; J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England 1660-1914*, (Oxford, 1986) and Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*. Beckett in particular has been criticised for this by Gerard who noted his study covered only men’s roles in philanthropy and London Society without mentioning women’s crucial role in both. *Country House Life*, pp.115-117.

However, a freedom from manual labour for the gentleman meant his role at home was purely a managerial one too. Upon his estate he instructed his servants, his labourers and apprentices to harvest corn, toil the fields and take charge of his stables and hounds, he never actually did any of these things himself.<sup>106</sup> A woman's managerial role in the household has not been seen as significant because she was an appendage within these definitions, as someone who brought a marriage portion with her and to provide greater financial bulk to her husband's estate via her father's wealth and fortune. Chalus, Barker and Foreman have deliberately and forcibly questioned this secondary role of elite women in their own studies and have all suggested that such women could have great influence in traditionally public activities.

It has already been seen that Habakkuk sought to examine the role of women in elite marriages, especially in terms of estate growth and familial interaction. As outright owner, the man controlled the property, demanding exclusivity over its manipulation and exploitation for better economic growth and increase in estate earnings. By his careful marriage, the woman helped in consolidating or increasing this wealth. As Cannon has agreed, 'Matrimonial alliances were of great moment to families. The terms were a matter of close and hard bargaining, often protracted over months, the amount of the dowry and the jointure being of particular importance.'<sup>107</sup>

Legally, the elite woman was a 'femme covert' who could not have debts in her own name or make major financial transactions. She became invisible amongst archival material which related to financial turnover and more visually stimulating subject matter like architectural design, building alterations, and furniture and painting commissions. Dana Arnold in her chapter on women and the country house explored the social definition of femininity in the context of a female contribution to her home in the eighteenth century.<sup>108</sup> Her study almost challenged those of Mingay, Cannon and Tawney. Her reckoning was that the elite or 'upper-class' woman already had an important and well established socio-economic position in the country house by this time by highlighting the women who had involvement in design and the processes of architectural improvement and refurbishment. But her study was limited to the aesthetic

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<sup>106</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, p. 73.

<sup>108</sup> Dana Arnold, *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (2003), pp.79-99

evolution of the country house and so viewed the elite woman within the boundaries of a traditionally accepted role as that of delicate supplier of needlework or genteel embellisher of interiors, dairies and grottoes.<sup>109</sup>

To be fair to Mingay in particular, women were mentioned at every turn, and his earlier work of 1963 was far more explicit in detailing what he termed as the supervisory role of the 'Country Ladies'.<sup>110</sup> This was something followed up by Arnold too, who hoped to 'reconfigure established roles' in order to avoid a marginalisation of elite women or their association with sub-groups such as servants, and therefore prompt further research into the dynamics of female involvement in their homes. Gerard did little to stimulate a resolution away from these sub-groups with her study on family and servants throughout the nineteenth century, but was equally angered by the attitudes of historians who had 'exhaustively scrutinised' the role of men and had 'condemned women to rot in idleness'.<sup>111</sup> In recognition of any inconsequential characterisation and gentle essence of elite womenfolk, Mingay did state, somewhat patronisingly, that if more were known, many a 'good lady's' name would be deservedly assimilated with that of her husband.<sup>112</sup>

#### IV

Here lies the initial purpose of this study. Although not one of the main criteria for the examination of elite women's household management, their absence from the historiography and the patronising tones afforded them by historians of the gentry

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp.90-99. A similar perspective was taken up by Trevor Lummis and Jan Marsh in *The Woman's Domain: Women and the English Country House* (1990), where idealised feminine pursuits were given precedence within the surroundings of the country house as a means of identifying elite female concerns for her living space as well as her economic contribution to the estate through marriage. Frances Robinson wrote to one of her sisters describing the sort of dairy elite women maintained in the eighteenth century. 'You never saw such a pretty little dairy as I have got, it is all lined with Putch tile, and all my milk bowls are China; ...all the Ladys that come here think I am quite mad, and wonder what pleasure I can take in such silly things...' NH 2826/9 no date. Frances Robinson. Vienna to Elizabeth Worsley.

<sup>110</sup> Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1963), p. 223. Mingay's findings were mainly based upon manuscripts and primary source materials collated by C. Radcliffe Cooke and G. Eland, whose respective volumes revealed significant references to the gentleman and esquire instructing their wives and daughters in the ways of colliery management, the purchase and sale of butter and livestock, and the transport of coals. See, C. Radcliffe Cooke, 'John Noble's Household and Farm Accounts', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club*, xxxvi (1959), p. 200; G. Eland, ed., *Purefoy Letters, 1735-1753*, Sidgwick and Jackson, (1931), ii, p. 244.

<sup>111</sup> Gerard, *Country House Life*, p. 115. See also, Amanda Vickery, *In Pursuit of Pleasure*, Open University, (2001).

<sup>112</sup> Mingay, *The Gentry*, p. 90.

and aristocracy has provoked a need to reaffirm the position of these women in their households. This thesis examines a femininity which was understood in familial and marital terms – as part of a partnership – rather than through traditional forms of feminine accomplishment and interior embellishment of the country house. In more recent times, partly as a result of studies by Stella Tillyard and Vickery, attempts have been made to overcome these failings in the historiography. In each publication, elite women have had their roles, their expectations, successes and failures examined through a variety of sources ranging from personal correspondence, diaries, bills and receipts, novels and plays. In turn, these documents have revealed the variety and diverse activities eighteenth-century elite women got involved in and can undoubtedly undermine the frivolity many were labelled with by the likes of Wollstonecraft and More.

Ruth M. Larsen's unpublished thesis on the role of the elite woman in the Yorkshire country house for the period 1685-1858 has established a huge range of such activities.<sup>113</sup> Larsen's approach was to encompass a wide scope of interests experienced by elite women surfacing from their expectations in marriage, motherhood and widowhood. Household management was only one segment of her thesis, but her vastly comprehensive study will sufficiently prompt further enquiry into the individual roles of elite women in their homes.<sup>114</sup> As a response to the studies by Chalus or Foreman which demonstrated an elite woman's role in a public 'male' world governed by politics, Larsen's intention was to suggest that those same women could be equally empowered in domestic roles. Moreover, they did not need to undertake masculine tasks in order for them to be influential and important.<sup>115</sup> In relation to Larsen's thesis, the purpose of this study is to prove that through their experiences and expectations elite

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<sup>113</sup> Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity' (2003).

<sup>114</sup> This study of elite women and their household management in the eighteenth century was already being formulated at the time of Larsen's own doctoral research and stems from an earlier dissertation on Frances Irwin: Julie Day, 'Household Management and Domestic Structure at Temple Newsam House, near Leeds, in the second half of the Eighteenth Century.' (MA dissertation, University of Leeds, 2001). As more of an exploration into the domestic movements at Temple Newsam in the second half of the eighteenth century, the dissertation was intended to promote routine and regulation rather than Frances's enthusiasm for interior and landscape work which had previously received tremendous attention through unpublished research. For example, Melissa J. Gallimore, 'Women, Interiors and the Country House'. (MA dissertation, University of York, 2000).

<sup>115</sup> Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity', p. 42.

women were not idle frivolous creatures despite the presence of servants, and that household management could be imbued with a feminine power.

Recent publications have also underlined this empowerment in the home for elite women. Writing about the involvement of elite mistresses in the creation and maintenance of their marital homes, Rosemary Baird has explored the ‘particular symbiosis between a woman and her house.’<sup>116</sup> Baird made it clear that the elite woman had an important part to play in grand houses; a significance which should be addressed in order to counterbalance the documenting of the daily routine of servants and their domestic duties.

Published a year after Baird, Joanna Martin continued where Tillyard had left off by including three of the four Lennox sisters in her study of the powerful Fox-Strangways family in light of their marriages and involvement in the running of both estate and household. Unlike Baird, the ‘symbiosis between a woman and her house’ for Martin meant the intricacies of daily management rather than the influence of elite women over interior design, exterior remodelling and decoration.<sup>117</sup> The intention of these studies into elite women has helped to establish broader perspectives on the experiences felt by these women by focussing upon the influence they had within the domestic sphere.

The research framework for this thesis is based upon a desire to overcome the discrepancies of former studies on the gentry and aristocracy. It exists also as a means to accentuate the values more recently placed upon elite women’s roles in the home whilst providing a detailed analysis of only one of those roles so acutely defined through female occupation of domestic space. There are five Yorkshire country houses around which this study is based; Castle Howard, Harewood House, Nostell Priory, Temple Newsam, and Wentworth Woodhouse. Connections through familial ties such as marriage or merely because of estate proximity provided further documentary evidence encompassing the households of Hovingham Hall, Newby Hall, Newby Park, Plompton Hall, and Ripley Castle (see appendix one).

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<sup>116</sup> Rosemary Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses* (2003), p. xiii.

<sup>117</sup> Martin, *Wives and Daughters* (2004), pp.xvii-xx.

As with any historical exploration, it is limited by its source material and a natural bias founded upon such subjective material like personal correspondence, conduct literature and memoranda is always a possibility.<sup>118</sup> These are supplemented with documents like bills and receipts, account books and culinary and medicinal recipe books which pertain to the purchase of goods for personal and household use as well as those which identify the tastes and beliefs of the elite mistress. Where possible any bias has been surmounted by the inclusion of material which counterbalances the subjectivity of correspondence or memoranda; a complaint against a servant might for example, have justified retaliation on behalf of those causing the initial grievance. Furthermore, the haughtiness or humility of the elite woman as mistress of the household are never played down as her personality traits (where they exist in the surviving documentation) provide appealing exposure to her command of household management and its complexities.

The categories of responsibility in household management form the topics for each chapter. Chapter two discusses the theme of household management in eighteenth-century conduct literature, with precedence given to Isabella Carlisle's own publication and her experience and expectations as one elite woman of the Yorkshire country house. How these transmitted to the pages of her book are compared to the advice offered by other authors of conduct of the late seventeenth century and those writing at the same time as Isabella Carlisle. Chapter three examines the organisation and management of accounts, the degree of involvement an elite woman had in household accounting matters in the marital home and her financial experience before marriage is further explored. Servant organisation and a mistress's household authority are the basis of chapter four. Special attention is given to the awareness of the chatelaine for household cohesion and her own relationship with those servants in direct communication with her – especially the steward and housekeeper. The medicinal and pastoral welfare of the household is explored in chapter five in light of the culture of

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<sup>118</sup> Larsen discussed briefly the nature of letter writing by elite women in the eighteenth century, with the suggestion that women predominantly wrote to friends, relatives, the house steward or the housekeeper between other practical daily tasks. Matters of domestic urgency would have undoubtedly found their way into many a letter, so that as a main resource for the historian of elite women, personal correspondence should not be dismissed as entirely bumptious or composed of self-importance. 'Dynastic Domesticity', pp.31-33. See Bridget Hill, *Eighteenth-Century Women: An Anthology* (1984); Olga Kenyon, *Eight Hundred Years of Women's Letters* (Stroud, 1992).

keeping recipe books for medicinal purposes and the implementation of these as well as her issue of moral guidance to kin and members of non-kin. By extension, the final chapter looks at the role of mistress as a dispenser of hospitality and the use of the country house as a more public space for entertainment or base from which estate produce was sent, particularly by the mistress.

That it is based upon the households of elite Yorkshire families is merely a reflection of the wealth, accessibility and survival of relevant primary source material. Archival collections for Temple Newsam, Nostell Priory and Wentworth Woodhouse are fairly well represented, yet Harewood House and the smaller estates of Newby Hall and Hovingham are not as well stacked. Records relating to the women of these latter houses are therefore scarce and their domestic routines are significantly underrepresented in this study.

Elite women who married into the families of the five main houses of this study came from varied financial backgrounds in terms of the degree of their family's wealth, the origins of that wealth and their independent financial experiences. Frances Irwin (née Shephard) for example, was brought up in London by her father and after his death in 1748 by the trustees of his will became a ward of Chancery. Yet, upon her marriage to Charles Ingram she delighted in country living and often made excuses to avoid a trip to the capital and readily mocked her own provincialism which contrasted to her friends' urban sophistication. After only a few months of marriage she wrote to her best friend, Lady Susan Stewart, 'You fine folks may despise us homely ones as you please...'; a theme which frequently emerged in her correspondence.<sup>119</sup> Sabine Winn (née d'Hervart) was the opposite of Frances entirely. Brought up in Vevey, Switzerland, Sabine Winn's background connected her to a minority of Huguenot refugees who had remained rich, having in the main supported William of Orange.<sup>120</sup> During her marriage to Sir Rowland Winn (later fifth Baronet), his absences due to business left her isolated. Her correspondence with her husband and friends suggested a woman who felt awkward

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<sup>119</sup> National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew. (NA:PRO) Granville MSS. Leveson-Gower, first Earl Granville and predecessors and successors: Papers 30/29/4/2 papers of Lady Susan Stewart (from May 1768, Countess Gower; from March 1786, Marchioness Stafford). Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin).

<sup>120</sup> Christopher Todd 'A Swiss Milady in Yorkshire: Sabine Winn of Nostell Priory', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, (2005), pp.209-211. She had cousins living Southampton and Louth in Lincolnshire.

and exasperated at being left alone in the country. On the one hand women could be pragmatic, attentive, resourceful, and disciplined. On the other, they could be idealistic, naïve and unimaginative; all were evident in the ways in which they managed their households.



## 2. 'The Conduct of His House': Writing Household Management into Eighteenth-Century Conduct Literature.

In 1789 and at the age of sixty-eight, Isabella Dowager Countess of Carlisle published her 'experience and observation' of the world under the title of *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims addressed to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World* (figure 2.1). Isabella's aim was to draw attention to, and 'in some degree correct' the failings of early neglect in a young woman's social conduct.<sup>1</sup> Using moralising imperatives and robust directives, her prescriptive formula stood within a literary tradition of the conduct book. Such a medium sought ways of self-improvement and reflection whilst proposing morally to educate or re-educate female readers in the ways of social expectations and experience. It also represented a development in domestic ideologies citing what was expected of the ideal mistress of the house. Like all books of conduct aimed at a female readership, women's work and domesticity were recurrent themes. They utilised the language of domesticity to persuade and coax women into the domestic sphere by making it seem appealing instead of oppressive. This proved an advantageous tool in stimulating the belief that women could have some leverage in the household. The main disadvantage to this literary tradition was that the tasks of which household management was composed were not always described in their concrete reality. Yet, the activity of household management was certainly given precedence by publications like Isabella's as the unique vocation of wives and daughters.<sup>2</sup>

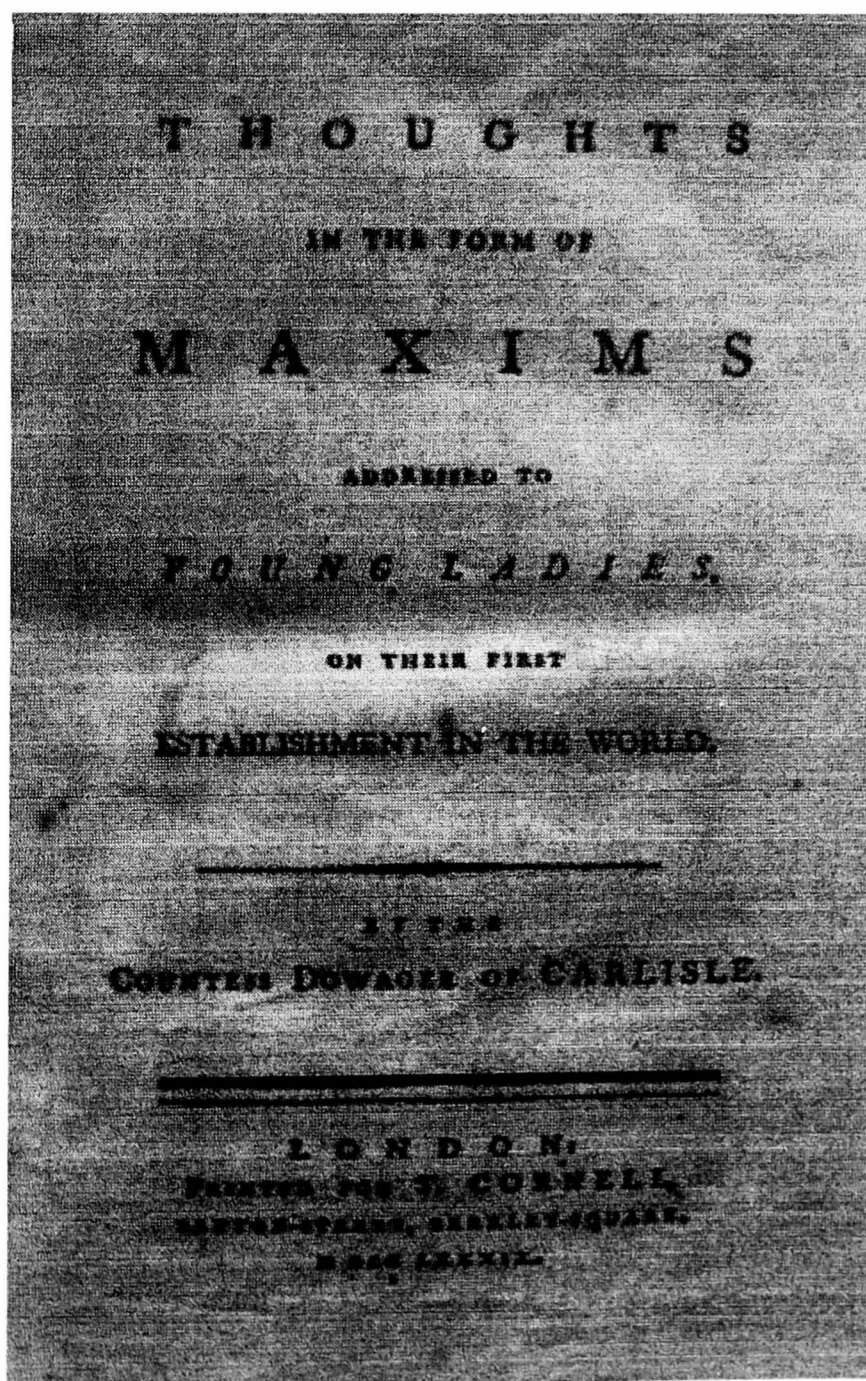
Isabella's own life has been fairly well documented and is given some attention throughout this chapter especially in light of the experiences and observations which prompted her to write *Maxims*. The main focus however, is how she understood her own position in the marital home and a woman's position in society as an author of conduct literature and as an elite mistress of a Yorkshire country house in the eighteenth century. The theme of household management and perceptions of domesticity and social status in Isabella's book are also analysed and compared with earlier publications and

<sup>1</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims addressed to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*, (London, 1789), p. vi. Hereafter referred to as *Maxims*.

<sup>2</sup> Marie-Claire Rouyer-Daney, 'The Representation of Housework in the Eighteenth-Century Women's Press' in (Eds.) Isabelle Baudino, Jacques Carré and Cécile Revauger, *The Invisible Woman: Aspects of Woman's Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2005) p. 27. See also, Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (1989), p. 606.

with those being produced at about the same time. In her publication for example, Isabella made distinctions of dimensions and spatial occupation with notions of the public and private and the values of 'superior' and 'inferior' social rankings upon the relative utilisation and expectation within these spaces. Isabella made use of these distinctions to offer scope to the many ideals and accomplishments she believed a woman should acquire throughout her lifetime. Of these accomplishments, household management was perceived as a dynamic through which accounts management, servant organisation, household welfare, hosting and entertainment were crucial matters which both enabled and reflected a woman's good sense and feminine decorum within female networking, philanthropy, charity and companionship.

**Figure 2.1. Title-page for *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims...* (1789). Castle Howard Collection.**



Isabella is the most significant of elite women to this study because she bridges these themes of feminine accomplishment and experience with her publication and household management in the Yorkshire country house. Her precepts form an illustrative device which can be imposed upon different events and situations as experienced by any of the women examined in this study. As the second wife of Henry fourth Earl of Carlisle, Isabella represented a new hope for the household at Castle Howard. His first wife Frances (née Spencer) had died in July 1742 shortly after all but one of his five children by this marriage had predeceased him.<sup>3</sup> At the age of twenty-two, Isabella was half Henry's age and her youth was to prove dynastically beneficial – she was to bear him four daughters and one son, Frederick, the future fifth earl.

With old feelings of melancholy still lingering at Castle Howard however, Isabella's arrival was eagerly anticipated by many throughout the county. Henry Irwin wrote from Temple Newsam to inform his mother, Isabella Irwin in Windsor that 'at Castle Howard...there will be very soon a bride [,] a daughter of ye Late Lord Biron [sic].'<sup>4</sup> Isabella's character and charm were described affectionately by all who met her. Castle Howard's neighbours at Newby Park and Hovingham were amongst those especially curious to discover more and corresponded with excited chatter about the new bride. Writing to her sister Frances Robinson in Vienna, Ann Worsley remarked that Lady Isabella was 'a little slender Black Miss'.<sup>5</sup> In a portrait by Michael Dahl (**figure 2.2**) painted at the end of the 1730s her appearance is somewhat exotic compared with the later, more graciously poised work by Thomas Gainsborough (page 38.). Her features are dark yet engaging, for which she could easily pass as a Continental beauty. With large brown eyes, wispy jet black hair and slim willowy frame the portrait easily matched the verbal description. Another Worsley sister, Elizabeth, liked Isabella greatly and found her 'A very pretty affible [sic] good natur'd woman, Lord Carlisle [is]

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<sup>3</sup> Diana was the only one to outlive her father: she would eventually marry Thomas Duncombe of Duncombe Park, Helmsley. See Christopher Ridgway, 'Isabella, fourth Countess of Carlisle: No Life by Halves', (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), pp.35-51.

<sup>4</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, (WYAS, Leeds), Temple Newsam MSS (TN) TN/C/16/46 Correspondence 1742-45, 4 June 1743, Henry 7<sup>th</sup> Viscount Irwin to his mother Isabella.

<sup>5</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Newby Hall MSS (NH) NH 2829/5, Ann Worsley at Hovingham to Frances Robinson in Vienna, 1 July 1743.

vastly fond of her...'<sup>6</sup> No doubt such friendship was enhanced by a gift to Elizabeth from Isabella of a Dresden handkerchief.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 2.2. Portrait of Isabella Byron by Michael Dahl, late 1730s, oil on canvas. Naworth Castle, Cumbria.**



As wife to the fourth Earl, Isabella was the complementary counterpart and positively threw herself into the daily running of the house and estate, tackling the job with great enthusiasm. She supervised the household accounts by maintaining her own abstracts and summaries on expenditure, dissecting the weekly incomings and

<sup>6</sup> NH 2829/8, Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham to Frances Robinson in Vienna, 12 July 1743.

<sup>7</sup> NH 2830/10, Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham to Frances Robinson in Vienna, 16 July c.1745.

outgoings as well as variations in the cost of sundries and essential grocery items.<sup>8</sup> Isabella readily experimented with culinary and medicinal dishes and preparations fashioned from ingredients grown upon the estate. Many of these recipes and remedies were written in full with discreet notes on their success or failure upon the pages of Isabella's personal volume.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, in 1758 and after only fifteen years of marriage, Henry died and the atmosphere at Castle Howard became tense and apprehensive. Into less than year of widowhood, and at the age of thirty-eight Isabella felt ready to embark upon her own second marriage. This would be a time of immense personal stress and frustration for her since the union between herself and the barrister and antiquary Sir William Musgrave meant she risked forfeiting her jointure, the custody of her children, and the executorship of Henry's estate while her son was still a minor.<sup>10</sup> Musgrave was fourteen years younger than Isabella, and if familial matters were bad enough, she now faced ridicule from the ever acidic tongues of elite society. Her contemporaries' expectations of a grave, humbled widow were shattered and she was bitterly criticised for 're-entering the world...like a lover of the dress and diversions she had formerly professed to dislike and blame.'<sup>11</sup> Such countervailing must no doubt have had a profound effect upon her and she and Musgrave soon parted. By 1769 they had formally separated. At this point in her life (she was nearly fifty years old), Isabella saw fit to quit England altogether and by 1770 she was living in a self-imposed exile throughout France, Italy and Switzerland. Her time away would last some thirteen years.

From England's capital, her movements were still of constant interest and her contemporaries speculated, often with real disapprobation, that her indulgence in 'the passion of Love' could bring about her disgrace. Supposedly acquainting herself with one baron after another and 'various scrapes about Money', Isabella's travels were a mixture of nervous anxiety and positive excitement.<sup>12</sup> By the late 1770s her family,

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<sup>8</sup> Carlisle MSS, Castle Howard Archives. *An Abstract of the House Accounts, 1744-1755*. H1/1/4. This is discussed further in Chapter Three: Supervising the Household Accounts.

<sup>9</sup> Carlisle MSS. *My Book of Receipts*. J13/1/4. This is discussed further in Chapter Five: Administering Welfare: Pastoral and Medicinal Care; and Chapter Six: 'The Luxury of the Age': Ordering an Elegant Table.

<sup>10</sup> Ridgway, in *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 37

<sup>11</sup> J. A. Home, *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, 4 Volumes, (Bath, 1970). Facsimile reprint of 1<sup>st</sup> edition, David Douglas, (Edinburgh, 1889-96). Volume I, p. 181, n.4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 479.

including her son Frederick, were tirelessly concerned about her behaviour and dispatched an emissary, the Reverend John Warner, to settle all her affairs and bring her home. These attitudes appeared condescending to Isabella and she found their attempts at help more contemptuous than supportive. On numerous occasions she attributed her reluctance to return home to health or the change in climate whilst shrewdly remarking upon the intimate recitals exchanged between herself and acquaintances for which she had stayed up late and done her rheumatism no good. This proved successful cover for her own inclinations and she was to stay abroad a few years more, deflecting any depictions of her as fanciful and extravagant and by the early 1780s she had independently chosen to make an eventual return to England.<sup>13</sup> The ferocity of attitudes toward Isabella on her return were slight, if not insignificant. Upon the arrival of her publication in 1789, views of her had even cooled enough to warrant the title of 'new noble authoress-dowager' from Walpole.<sup>14</sup>

In light of these personal experiences entrenched in hope for fulfilment and domestic tranquillity, *Maxims* provided some liberation for Isabella. At each of these moments in her life, she may have made mental notes on how she could have avoided misunderstanding or achieved greater communication within her second marriage. In her publication Isabella began with statements dedicated to early expectations within marriage, the role of the supportive wife and the extensive female networking required in forming alliances and cementing moral judgment within the house and home. She concluded her publication with thoughts on old age and mortality, with a less insular perspective on improving through acts of philanthropy and charity. Whilst in her self-imposed exile she certainly made a start at jotting these thoughts down and read aloud some of her precepts to the Reverend Doctor Warner, impressing upon him an inclination for authority and conviction;

Before dinner we were all tranquil and harmonious, but in the height of her good humour madam must needs do me the honour to read a moral essay of her own composition, in the shape of maxims for young married women; taking her eyes ever and anon from the paper, and sometimes the spectacles

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<sup>13</sup> Isabella wrote to George Selwyn in September 1780 with her intentions. 'My fixed purpose is to return to England in May, so that I hope to see you and the rest of my friends at that time, when all your winter amusements will be over...' John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England: George Selwyn and his Contemporaries with Memoirs and Notes*, Four volumes. (Boston, 1900-1915?), pp.390-391.

<sup>14</sup> Horace Walpole to Lady Ossory. W. S. Lewis, Lars E Troide, Edwine M Martz, and Robert A Smith., eds., *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, Thirty-four volumes. (1974), vol. 34, p. 89.



from her nose, to see how I relished the gobbets as she gave them...I must have the trouble of copying them...unless I can prevail upon her to charm and instruct the world by printing.<sup>15</sup>

## I

In the introduction to *Maxims*, Isabella made a curious statement which pertained to the chronological position of her publication. She believed her work to be based on a naïve ambition and noted, 'it carries an appearance of temerity in me, to attempt to point out something new, in so beaten a path of instruction.'<sup>16</sup> Such a statement requires some questioning in terms of the reasons she persevered with her work in order to have it published, and to what context of instruction does she refer?

The first question is a little difficult to answer. Certainly, her perseverance had a lot to do with her financial circumstances and so was a means of making money. If her experiences of marriage, motherhood and widowhood were determining factors for her to necessitate some personal liberation in the form of print, then she perceived conduct literature to be appropriate for that purpose. Christopher Ridgway has observed that in the context of her life experiences, *Maxims* may appear as a distillation of her experience and could read rather like a cautionary tract to young women.<sup>17</sup> He added that it could also have acted as an aid to avoiding the sorts of obstacles and shocks she had suffered whilst proposing ways of dealing with the outcomes of life's mishaps and other people's misgivings.<sup>18</sup> Her perseverance was in effect an apologia based upon personal regret and a desire to expound the fragility of her position as a woman in elite society. The medium of conduct literature was critical to this desire because it enabled her to expose some of the hypocrisies of a wider social sphere as well as those of her own rank. Isabella's printed instruction therefore addressed the queries and self-doubt felt by elite women like her before, during and after marriage through the utilisation of a recognised formula of prescription which had accommodated values of morality and social etiquette for centuries.

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<sup>15</sup> Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England*, vol. III, pp.349-350, Rev. Doctor Warner to George Selwyn, Paris, 10 December 1778.

<sup>16</sup> *Maxims*, pp.vii-viii.

<sup>17</sup> Ridgway, in *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 45

<sup>18</sup> One rather sentimental precept was concerned with female accomplishment and amusement, but clearly related to this moment in her life. 'There have been, and there still exist, many sensible persons who lead the life of romance, that can stoop to no vulgar cares; but you will, by pursuing such examples, hurt your fortune, neglect your children, and finally risk, to be awakened from your fairy dream, by some sad, but common event.' *Maxims*, p. 87

The second question is deserving of a more lengthy answer. Conduct literature in the eighteenth century was only one form of printed instruction. Jeremy Black has noted that themes of instruction were far less dominant than current affairs which appeared daily in periodicals, newspapers and magazines with correspondent contribution on business and trade matters, political news, and economic developments.<sup>19</sup> Instruction was still apparent amongst these types of printed material and had the tendency to be quite a recurrent theme, encompassing thoughts on social manners, social responsibility and charitable behaviour juxtaposed with that of serious didactic religious material.

What defined instruction overall was an author's reflective attitude towards 'moral righteousness, religious conviction and the quest for improvement', combined with the intention that their reader would share the same suppositions.<sup>20</sup> This model or formula of instruction was precisely the same in conduct literature. Thoughts regarding the improvement of attitudes towards responsibility were especially rife with several passages pertaining to the virtue and morality found in maintaining the welfare of those in dependent positions like children, elderly relatives and servants as well as the respect and esteem found in polite social interaction. Late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conduct books were full of phrases which set out to identify either a need to rectify the neglect of a person or to enhance their existing social graces. Isabella made no exception with her intention to compose *Maxims* around educating her readers. She even supposed that a reader could instruct others with help from her publication, 'that those for whose benefit I write it, have been well educated... On the other hand, those to whom their parents, guardians, or distant relations, shall have acquitted themselves of this first of important duties, will find my precepts more easy to pursue.'<sup>21</sup>

By addressing other women with her publication, however, Isabella placed herself within an even greater market of printed instruction, something which was also indicative of a growing female readership by the eighteenth century. Conduct literature for women was a blossoming – if not saturated – market by the end of the

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<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (1987), pp.245-276.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>21</sup> *Maxims*, p. vii



eighteenth century and has received some attention in women's history writing. On the one hand, conduct literature designed for a female readership has prompted commentary in regards to this blossoming market and its relationship to a growing literacy amongst women by the end of the seventeenth century. On the other hand attention has also been given to the constructions of gender which the conduct book detailed for this readership and the relevance of the household to these constructions.

It has been emphasised, for example, by Armstrong in her studies on conduct literature that this reading matter for women in the eighteenth century acted as a medium in which sexuality and desire were tools used to construct a socially acceptable female.<sup>22</sup> Armstrong had clearly been influenced by Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984), in which much of Poovey's dynamic was to dissect and challenge the terms 'female' and 'feminine' in relation to constructions of gender in eighteenth-century literature; a femininity which Shevelow labelled, 'fair-sexing it'.<sup>23</sup> Poovey defined constructions of femininity in relation to political and economical status as well as simple social interaction or spatial occupation and suggested that it became psychological and not just physical.<sup>24</sup> As a result Armstrong agreed that female identity formed a single representation in the eighteenth century embodied by passivity and domestic efficiency.<sup>25</sup> Woman was portrayed as having psychological depth with abstract virtues like modesty, humility, and honesty rather than physical attractiveness, qualities which were enhanced with what Langford sardonically pointed out as 'dignified capitals'.<sup>26</sup> Women were carefully groomed with polite, yet decisive terminology and texts suddenly became saturated with feminine qualities which were not only inherently female, but became prerequisites to modesty and humility. Young ladies, proper ladies and polite ladies were the preferred subject matter and audience for these publications.<sup>27</sup> Crucial to the existence of these abstract qualities and their importance to femininity was

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<sup>22</sup> (Eds.), Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse. *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* (New York, 1987), pp.96-103; Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York and Oxford, 1987).

<sup>23</sup> Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen* (Chicago, 1984), pp.3-47; K. Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture: the Construction of Femininity in the Early Periodical* (1989), pp.1-21.

<sup>24</sup> Poovey, *The Proper Lady*, p. xiv.

<sup>25</sup> Armstrong, in *Ideology of Conduct*, pp.104-105.

<sup>26</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 606. Langford cited from James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (third edition, 1766), in which Fordyce expounded the virtues of modest dress and an education of women which was limited to home economics and the morality found in needlework.

<sup>27</sup> Rouyer-Daney, in *The Invisible Woman*, p. 28.

the presupposed suitability of women to the private or domestic sphere. Eighteenth-century conduct book authors made no effort to challenge this and were instead united in their assertions for a functional and virtuous performance of household management.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the household was an essential backdrop to a conduct author's prescriptions. Isabella addressed young wives who were about to enter their first establishment in the world, an intention which gave her enough scope to lay down her own experiences next to those of previous authors who had made use of the family unit to distinguish a woman's role, and to educate as well as perfect her domestic responsibilities. Indeed, only Armstrong and Trumbach have recognised the Dowager Countess of Carlisle as one of many significant conduct authors of this period, and both have highlighted the prominence of household in her publication.<sup>29</sup>

As far as Trumbach was concerned, the substantial use of the eighteenth-century conduct book for women was meant to strengthen his argument for a supposed transition from a patriarchal family to that of a domestic, affectionate family unit. Yet, there was failure to acknowledge the limit of conduct literature as a source in Trumbach's study and its presence as a tool to instruct a female readership. Trumbach utilised conduct literature to place more emphasis upon notions of equal responsibility within the household which were bound by marriages based on affection. Fundamental to this process of a well-balanced household made up of kin and servants, was the quality of expectation. It was about a passive versus positive anticipation for the woman, who could now expect to command a household as mistress instead of being expected to govern it under the direction of her husband as master. As Vickery has stated, 'conduct literature advocated female softness and obedience in one chapter, in another it minutely tutored privileged women on the exercise of power.'<sup>30</sup> Housekeeping belonged to patriarchal times. Household management was the embodiment of such power and authors instructed their readers to find time to manage, govern, observe and inspect all

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<sup>28</sup> Armstrong, in *Ideology of Conduct*, p. 103.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.27-29; also, Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1978), p. 132, fn.41. *Maxims* was also briefly mentioned by Amanda Foreman in her essay on the Duchess of Devonshire in (Eds.) Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow, 1997), pp.179-204.

<sup>30</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998), p. 9.

details of their domestic arrangements in order to maintain balance and above all, tranquillity – a term which Isabella regularly made use of throughout her text. Eighteenth-century conduct literature was merely a reflection of how women should address this expectation of responsibility by prescribing duties to its reader rather than describing them.

For Armstrong, this method of prescription presented emptiness or a lack of real information which had existed from the end of the seventeenth century. The Marquis of Halifax's *The Lady's New Year's Gift; Or Advice to a Daughter* (1688) and Richard Allestree's *A Lady's Calling* (1673)<sup>31</sup> are good enough examples of such unimaginative pieces of work describing the author's more favourable attributes of women. Allestree's concerns were with the role of religion in the household. Allestree himself was a practised divine, chaplain in ordinary to the king, and Provost of Eton.<sup>32</sup> He declared that women had to adhere to rules of its management because it was suited to her 'more constant residence' and was therefore her 'calling' especially as a married woman.<sup>33</sup> Allestree emphasised this notion of constant residency with a note of caution which Isabella would have been reminded of by her contemporaries a century later, 'ladies need not be much at a loss how to entertain themselves, nor run abroad in a romantic quest after foreign divertisements [sic], when they have such variety of engagements at home'.<sup>34</sup> Halifax was less pious than Allestree and dedicated an entire section of his publication to the house, family and children, most of which seemed to summon every single one of his ideals in a virtuous woman. Of caring for children for example, he wrote,

A Woman's *Tenderness* to her *Children* is one of the least deceitful Evidences of her *Virtue*; but yet the way of expressing it, must be subject to the *Rules* of good *Breeding*: And though a *Woman* of *Quality* ought not to

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<sup>31</sup> A copy of Allestree's *A Ladies Calling* dating probably from its first publication date, existed at Temple Newsam House, and was listed in one of several inventories taken of the libraries there between 1644 and 1736. TN/EA/4/15. To whom the copy belonged is unclear.

<sup>32</sup> (Ed.) Margaret Drabble. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. (Oxford, 1985), p. 1065.

<sup>33</sup> Allestree quoted from the bible, citing the first epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy. 'I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house...' Ch. 5, v14. Richard Allestree. *The Ladies Calling: In Two Parts*. A New Edition. London (1787) First Edition, Oxford 1673. Dana Arnold has simplified this in more socio-economic terms by stating that because travel was arduous and time-consuming, plus there was the ever-present needs of the family, women spent more time in the country than men. *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (2003), p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> Allestree. *Ladies Calling*, p. 251.

be less kind to them...[she must] avoid the course Methods which in Women of a lower Size [status] might be more excusable.<sup>35</sup>

However, *The Lady's New Year's Gift* proved popular enough to warrant new editions and had been published five times by January 1696, and was in its tenth edition by 1724, its fifteenth edition by 1765 and was still rolling from the presses in 1784 and 1791.<sup>36</sup>

In both Halifax and Allestree, women had their virtuous development as a good wife and a mother explained to them in terms of power relations in the household. These thoughts were transported into the eighteenth century with the publication of Allestree's *The Whole Duty of Woman in Either a Single or Married State* (1711?)<sup>37</sup> which was unashamedly plagiarised by William Kenrick in his *The Whole Duty of a Woman; Or a Guide to the Female Sex* (1712). By the mid to late decades of the eighteenth century the anonymous *Art of Governing a Wife* was in print and boldly highlighted traditional gender roles with similarly little creativity, as well as Dr. Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774). All have been referred to by Armstrong but she failed to recognise that a male authorship may well have dictated a strong sense of patriarchy which perhaps determined any emptiness or lack of real information for the female reader.

For the most part, these texts took their influence from patriarchal incarnations of a wife's role in the household as delivered by earlier conduct literature particularly that produced in the first half of the seventeenth century. These earlier conduct books were based on the one-sex model of a common physiology where gender roles became distinguished through man's responsibility 'without' doors and woman's 'within'. Early seventeenth-century conduct books frequently reminded their readers that it was a man's house to direct and woman's actual responsibility was limited to a respectful subservience in which her husband determined the practice of œconomy and household morality. Intrinsic to this patriarchal model was biblical teaching and notions of equal difference in man and woman imposed themselves as essential features which

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<sup>35</sup> George Savile, Marquis of Halifax. *The Lady's New Year's Gift: Or Advice to a Daughter*. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. (1724), p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> H. C. Foxcroft, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Savile, Bart. First Marquis of Halifax*. Volume II (1898) pp.379-387.

<sup>37</sup> The attribution of the publication is currently doubtful and would have to have been published posthumously. Allestree died 1681.

would lead to a godly way of life. Those with a greater disposition for producing these earlier publications were, unsurprisingly, some of the country's leading clergy.

Modern-day commentators like Amussen, Armstrong, Shoemaker and Fletcher have stressed the importance of early seventeenth-century conduct books by John Dod, Robert Cleaver, Thomas Gataker, and William Gouge as significant in the portrayal of the patriarchal household as well as being symptomatic of an intended male readership. Fletcher in particular stated that there were some marked differences of emphasis between these texts on how much responsibility wives, and indeed daughters, should be given. Gataker's *Marriage Duties Briefly Couched Together* (1620) explained that it was the wife's duty to be directed in 'the marshalling and managing of domestic affairs' by her husband. William Gouge in *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises* (1622) was less demanding with the suggestion that husbands should not be too exacting in restraining their spouses over details of furnishing, provisioning and control of maids.<sup>38</sup> The position of women in the household as assembled by these authors, regardless of how exacting her husband should be, was still a traditionally submissive one.<sup>39</sup>

Women being addressed as independent readers of literature by the late seventeenth century have been perceived through some assimilation with the rise of the popular press and the priorities of publishers. The growth of conduct literature for women produced by Halifax or Allestree from the 1670s through to the early 1700s has been highlighted by a handful of historians as coinciding with the lapse of the Licensing Act in 1695. Authors supposedly now had a freedom to expand upon both revised and more traditional views in literature of this sort previously pursued by the puritan clergy. Although, it could also be argued that it had more to do with a willingness of printers whose numbers expanded rapidly in both London and the provinces once the Act had expired.<sup>40</sup> Vickery has caustically suggested that scholars of print culture have had a

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500–1800* (New Haven, 1995), p. 205

<sup>39</sup> Mary Poovey has suggested that the puritan contribution to the definition of woman's situation was a complex one which emphasised the importance of the family unit and celebrated 'complete religious equality for the sexes'. In practice, strict emphasis of the patriarchal family organisation based upon the Scriptures 'restricted women's activity to narrowly defined domestic duties'. *The Proper Lady*, p. 7.

<sup>40</sup> Terry Belanger, 'Publishers and Writers in Eighteenth-Century England' in (Ed.), Isabel Rivers, *Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth-Century England* (Leicester, 1982), pp.5-25. It is worth conjecturing on the absence of analytical approaches to editions of the conduct book because of the difficulty in pinning

tendency to acknowledge the failure to renew the Act as a sign of relaxation of censorship which unleashed some paranoia that women were in need of mass control.<sup>41</sup> As if women were of weakness of body and mind and their tendency towards high spirits and materialism necessitated this. Vickery only managed to highlight her own anxieties in regards to eighteenth-century attitudes towards women readers who in her mind appeared to be perpetually nagged at. However, she did avoid discussion of the rising complaints of the late seventeenth century against mass immorality by those who made use of the house and home to embody private moral and modest principles.

Domesticity for example, was manifested in the ethos of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in the 1690s where women as 'the traditional overseers of morality in the family' were regarded potent symbols.<sup>42</sup> Women were not in need of mass control as Vickery claimed. Hunt has shown in her study on gender and family in late seventeenth and eighteenth-century England that the virtue and rational self-discipline society members had set for themselves required at least a partial separation from women for their own good, 'the best way for young men to pursue the path of virtue was through "rational" male-only sociability'.<sup>43</sup> Women were simply better off in the home or concerning themselves with domestic pursuits. Such ideology made its way into the domain of conduct literature where authors were already beginning to suggest the household was a power base for women.

Women as active readers however, have been deposited amongst lengthy debates about class ideologies and the supposed transition from patriarchy to a domestic model which empowered women as both participants in print culture as well as textual subjects. Vivien Jones has recognised the approach of many historians of print culture as forming discourses based upon representations of women in literature like conduct which were predominantly middle class due to literacy levels amongst that section of the

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down authorship as well as problems over effective copyright practices until the Statute of 1709 under Queen Anne and later Acts and Bills passed to support the London Booksellers.

<sup>41</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p.5; see also Armstrong, in *Ideology of Conduct*, p. 99.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996), pp.101-124.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114. Hunt made much use of 'The Societies for the Reformation of Manners: A Case Study in the Theory and Practice of Moral Reform.' T. C. Curtis and W. A. Speck. *Literature and History*, Volume 3, (1976), pp.45-64.

social strata.<sup>44</sup> In the mid-eighteenth century a third of men and two-thirds of women were unable to sign their name, but Langford has stipulated that basic reading and writing skills were becoming an essential working asset for those on the cusp of the lower middling sort.<sup>45</sup> Langford also pointed out that quantity mattered as much as quality and that a vast amount of varied reading material became available throughout the eighteenth century. This has been something which Brewer highlighted as ‘extensive’ reading rather than ‘intensive’ reading – extensive reading was the result of a well-developed print culture in which plenty of varied works were available. In the eighteenth century, extensive reading consisted of biographies, ballads, poems, novels, travelogues, medical advice and culinary tomes. It was also the century in which magazines and periodicals established themselves.<sup>46</sup> Brewer noted that growing literacy and the variety of published works could only exist together, and supply and demand transformed the nature of reading itself.<sup>47</sup>

Identification with the middle class, particularly the middle-class woman has arisen from discussion surrounding this transformation in the context of the book, periodical or magazine as a consumer item. Although rates of literacy amongst women were still significantly lower in terms of the population as a whole, a female readership was both symptom and cause of an increased social mobility. The role of conduct literature for women in eighteenth-century consumer society was concurrently a reflection of the leisured wife so despised by the likes of Mary Wollstonecraft and an indication of a general ‘feminisation’ of material culture.<sup>48</sup> This is to say that the very act of reading for women was just as essential to their virtuosity, modesty and humility as that of spending time overseeing the provisioning and furnishing for their households.

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<sup>44</sup> (Ed.), Vivien Jones, *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, World and Word Series, (1990), pp.6-7.

<sup>45</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 91. For use of statistics see John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1997). Brewer stated that male literacy improved from ten per cent in 1500 to forty-five per cent in 1714 and sixty per cent in the mid-eighteenth century. Female literacy rates were lower – one per cent in 1500, twenty-five per cent in 1714 and forty per cent in 1750. The elite made up the greatest proportion of these figures, pp.167-197. R. A. Houston has observed that European literacy varied according to region, religion, gender, and ‘class’. Houston further highlighted that literacy was considered a threat in the eighteenth century and that ordinary people would criticise the regime or make them dissatisfied with their lot. *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800* (1988).

<sup>46</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 91.

<sup>47</sup> Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1997), p.168-169.

<sup>48</sup> Jones, *Constructions of Femininity*, p. 11.

Shevelow's study on the growth of the early periodical argued that women's participation in print culture by the late seventeenth century, specifically in periodical literature, produced a simultaneous process of inclusion and constraint. Shevelow stated that the late seventeenth century saw literary representations of women – whether as members of an intended audience, as writing subjects, or as textual objects – as bound by an increasingly narrow and restrictive model of femininity.<sup>49</sup> The conduct book author addressed young marriageable women who were either members of the elite or aspired to be such members by acting as guides to achieving a financially beneficial marriage with prescriptions on how to discipline themselves into acceptable forms of femininity bound by private domestic routine. Thus far lay conduct literature's popularity for a female readership. It was a highly saleable commodity because it promoted respectable reading whilst being the very embodiment of quiet reflection through its subject matter.<sup>50</sup>

As the eighteenth century progressed, thoughts of female conduct were being produced by many who wanted to try their hand at advising and prescribing. Quite often their produce proved questionably articulate, or otherwise languid in its content and delivery. Methods of female instruction could be published anonymously with titles like *The Young Ladies Conduct or Rules for Education* (1722), *Female Piety and Virtue: a Poem* (1725), *The Lady's Companion: Or an Infallible Guide to the Fair Sex* (second edition 1740) and *Friendly Advice to the Fair in Particular* (1763). Most of these spoke of envy and pride in dress and obscene fashions. As well as Dr. Gregory's *A Father's Legacy*, other male writers addressed women using a variety of tactics like Daniel Defoe's general address in *The Family Instructor* (1720) and Jonas Hanway's fictional *Advice from Farmer Trueman to his Daughter* (1789). More peremptory were James Fordyce's *The Character and Conduct of the Female Sex* (1776) which proposed the benefits of virtuous women upon the male character; and Thomas Marriott's slightly more condescending *Female Conduct: Being an Essay on the Art of Pleasing* (1759).

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<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-13. See also Shevelow, *Women and Print Culture*, pp.1-21.

<sup>50</sup> The author of *The Whole Duty of Woman in either a Single or Married State*, even offered a basic reading list to their reader which included such pious texts as, *Tay's Holy Living and Dying*, *Bailey's Practice of Piety* and *Dr. Hammond's Practical Catechism*, as well as several books by 'divers other Divines', p. 6.



The popularity of conduct also meant it could provide an author with some further financial security and Lady Sarah Pennington certainly wrote her *An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to her Absent Daughters* (1761) in order to ensure some such help when her disastrous marriage finally disintegrated.<sup>51</sup> Her approach was frothy and stressed 'decorous passivity' and emphasised female education bound by righteous knowledge about nursery, kitchen and confectionery, but Pennington has proved a valuable resource in comparison to Isabella Carlisle. For women like the bluestocking Hester Chapone, her *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* (1773) proved a device with which to address the privileged members of her circle, in this instance Mrs Elizabeth Montagu.<sup>52</sup> Less precocious was the advice of Juliana-Susannah Seymour in *The Conduct of a Married Life* (1753) which warned of bad acquaintances and blind indulgence; and Elizabeth Griffith in her *Essays Addressed to Young Married Women* (1782) who consciously expressed the components of marriage as affection and obedience with which the wife must be ever obliging.<sup>53</sup>

The importance of the household and its management was impressed upon female readers with great force in many of these publications. To leave the domestic space was abhorrently neglectful. Authors reflected upon the use some duties could play in recommending a woman to the world by way of personal credit and greater self esteem, a carelessness or disregard of other duties would certainly bring about censure which would 'be much a heavier Thing than the Trouble you would avoid,' wrote Halifax. The management of the household for Halifax was therefore 'the Province of your Sex, and that the discharging it well, will, for that Reason, be expected of you.'<sup>54</sup> According to Hester Chapone, domestic economy was so very 'important a part of a woman's character, so necessary to her own happiness' that it must be perceived as the absolute framework of all accomplishment. John Gregory calmly stated that 'The domestic œconomy of a family is entirely a woman's province, and furnishes a variety of subjects for the exertion both of good sense and good taste.'<sup>55</sup> Pennington too,

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<sup>51</sup> *The Young Lady's Pocket Library, Or Parental Monitor*. (Dublin, 1790) (Collected works containing four books: Marchioness de Lambert, John Gregory, Lady Sarah Pennington and Edward Moore) Reprint 1995, with introduction by Vivien Jones.

<sup>52</sup> Drabble, *Oxford Companion to English Literature*, p. 185.

<sup>53</sup> Hester Chapone's *Letter to a New Married Lady* (1780) also expressed similar sentiment to that found in Griffith's work.

<sup>54</sup> Savile, *New Year's Gift*, p. 50.

<sup>55</sup> John Gregory M. D., *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Dublin (1774), p. 24.

relayed a similar message with, 'The management of all domestic affairs is certainly the proper business of woman'<sup>56</sup>; a comment which evoked images of administration rather than active participation.

Rules, directions and observations for conduct and behaviour before, during and after marriage were essential keywords for any title-page. Most common to all conduct books of the eighteenth century, was the similarity of address. Many conduct books took the form of letters or essays addressed to the author's own daughters, a niece or younger friend. By doing this, they claimed the authority of parenthood, and as Jones has noted, played across the divide between the private sphere of the family and the wider audience invited by publication.<sup>57</sup>

The number of conduct books for women was definitely on the increase but their growth in popularity can also be witnessed through the patterns of numerous editions. The ebb and flow of first and subsequent editions of conduct literature of the eighteenth century has been frequently ignored by commentators of this genre of print culture. Morgan's *Manners, Morals and Class in England, 1774-1858* (1994) was however, one of the few to consider publication dates of conduct books and has highlighted much of the surrounding literary activity at the time of Isabella's *Maxims*.<sup>58</sup> Morgan has made extensive use of conduct book editions listed in the British Library and National Union Catalogues, and her findings suggest that conduct literature achieved greatest popularity between the 1770s and 1830s. Regrettably, Morgan discussed only two popular publications – Thomas Gisborne's *An Enquiry into the Duties of Men*<sup>59</sup> and Chapone's *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* at any length and many worthy publications of the 1730s and 1740s were disregarded perhaps because they were deemed by Morgan as unsuitable to her timescale.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Lady Sarah Pennington. *Instructions for a Young Lady in every Sphere and Period of Life*. (1762), p. 31.

<sup>57</sup> Jones in the Introduction to *The Young Lady's Pocket Library*, pp.v-xlix.

<sup>58</sup> Marjorie Morgan. *Manners, Morals and Class in England 1774-1858* (1994), pp.12-15.

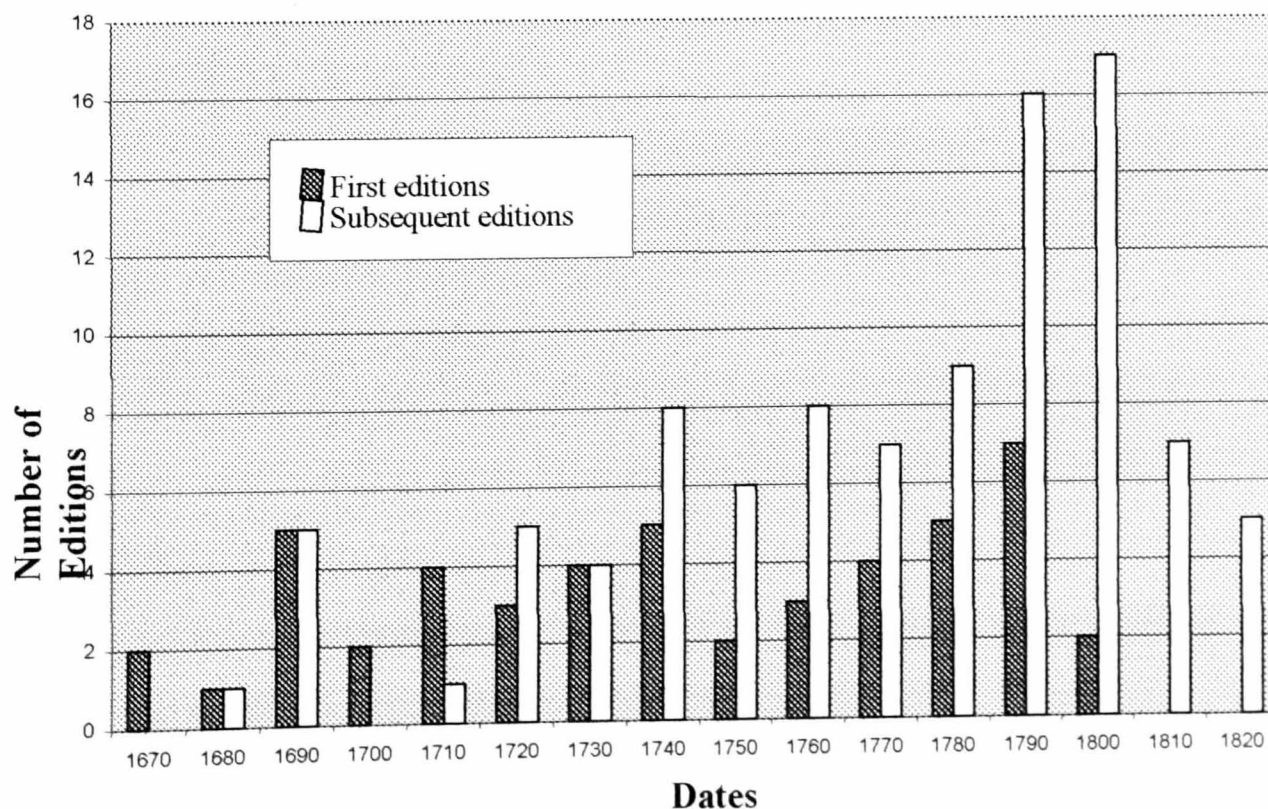
<sup>59</sup> Gisborne also wrote *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1799).

<sup>60</sup> These include publications directed at either male or female readerships. See for example: *The Art of Governing a Wife* (1747), *Advice to the Fair, An Epistolary Essay in Three Parts* (1738), *The Accomplished Housewife, Or the Gentlewoman's Companion. With Some Serious Instructions for the Conduct of the Fair Sex* (1745), and *A Letter to a Lady in Praise of Female Learning* (Dublin, 1739).

Morgan based her study upon the etiquette book and late eighteenth-century conduct literature which fostered proper social behaviour based upon an intense middle-class Evangelical moral foundation. Such a moral movement certainly had a marked influence on the supply and demand of reading matter but it should not be given too much precedence in the way Morgan has done so. If anything, a middle-class sobriety as reflected through conduct literature only set out to distinguish elite opulence and excess from the prudent and discreet. Yet, it has already been suggested that these were shared concerns of the middle and upper classes. The use of the British Library and National Union Catalogues is commendable and has also provided a framework in this study.

Editions of conduct books in which household management and themes of domesticity featured heavily for a female readership from the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth are shown in **figure 2.3**. The chart corresponds to appendix three in which first and subsequent editions of all texts referred to here are listed and drawn up from British Library and National Union Catalogues.

**Figure 2.3. Editions of conduct literature aimed at a female readership in which the domestic setting and household management were main themes.**



Looking at the eighteenth century overall, it is clear that for the first half of the century, first editions of conduct literature for women were slow to match the

output for subsequent editions perhaps as a result of some steady impact for a female readership where authorship was usually male. By the 1740s and 1750s this pattern reversed and subsequent editions began to greatly outnumber first editions which on the whole had decreased only to rise steadily again towards the end of the century. Where this dip occurred as the second half of the century approached the pen of authorship was handed, in the main, over to women writing for themselves and other women. Subsequent editions by both male and female conduct authors peaked dramatically by the closing decades of the century and any new material now incorporated trends in a woman's early education.

Correct conduct became less abstract in form and instead became an asset acquired through careful tutoring. For example, the lesser known Rev. John Bennett published *Strictures on Female Education* in 1798, whilst more prominent writers made the assertion that feminine characteristics had been constructed rather than formed by natural causes. Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) included elite women in its discourse, and suggested that they were even further removed from any natural composition due to their artificial placing in a society based on wealth, superficial beauty and lack of purpose. Five years before her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft had already formulated ideas on similar grounds to that of Hannah More, with the publication of *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787).

In terms of published editions, Isabella's *Maxims* enjoyed three editions – London 1789 and the one referred to throughout this study, was followed by a second edition published in London in 1790, and a further edition in the same year with a Dublin imprint.<sup>61</sup> Her book does not fit in with the typical format of a conduct book and her work can be defined as unique in its approach because it lacked direct parental (or indeed familial) authority as well as any obvious didactic purpose. It may be recalled therefore that this strengthens the notion of her perseverance in having her jottings published at all. It also warrants the notion, in line with Ridgway's assertions, that *Maxims* was certainly a distillation of her own experience imparted upon the young female reader on the brink of starting married life.

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<sup>61</sup> Ridgway has confirmed this in *Maids and Mistresses*, p.51 n.72. The British Library Catalogue lists all three editions.

Isabella perhaps intended her publication to appear as a book of reference rather than a piece of narrative or direct condemnation. She was not entirely eloquent in many of her precepts, but her supposed method of jotting thoughts down did permit some degree of haste and alacrity. Clearly, the sheer bulk of these thoughts necessitated a medium which could plausibly convey so many distinctive feminine roles, and allow them to be published en masse. The increasingly restrictive models of femininity in such print culture were not challenged in *Maxims* nor were traditional models revised by Isabella.<sup>62</sup> Her feminine ideal was bound by a companionship in marriage where the woman emotionally and intellectually supported her husband as well as playing administrative understudy when he was absent. To suggest *Maxims* was unimaginative and unchallenging and a product of a self-effacing mind which hoped to compensate for past experiences unfairly dismisses Isabella and her publication as vacuous.

Isabella was instead determined and eager to see her work published, whether she wished it to be a popular and well-read publication is not so easily assumed. That she set her piece within the framework concerned with a construction of the feminine has everything to do with the very experiences and observations she moulded *Maxims* around rather than a desire to fit into existing textual models. The emphasis Isabella placed upon the domestic setting was therefore a foundation for presenting her ideals within firmly recognised female territory with its own responsibilities and duties. Of greatest importance was the household with its many requirements which summoned knowledge, skill and experience from its mistress. A woman's duties in that sphere were more easily prescribed to her if she was already familiar with traditional perceptions of this gendered space.

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<sup>62</sup> Shevelow's belief concerned the techniques of writers of periodicals in the eighteenth century which promoted domesticity and the delights found in marriage and motherhood, so that although these were intended to be enticing to the reader, the actual representation of women was restricted in position rather than hierarchy – a 'separate but equal' status. Carlisle encouraged her readers to appreciate their roles as young wives but also to expect to show deference toward her husband.

## II

Thoughts on the management of the household were infectious in eighteenth-century conduct literature. They revolved around ideals of the feminine and presuppositions of female gender, but they also incorporated notions of social status. Whether or not the elite woman was able to govern her household was subject to much scrutiny in conduct literature throughout the century. Models of domesticity suggested that she was not. Authors sarcastically pointed out the delicacy of elite women who sat at their dressing tables or draped themselves upon settees and languished all day. But it was a fine line between practicality and humility; virtuous household management was not about getting hands dirty, nor was it about constant observation and assessment.

Authors sought to identify an ideal in subject and textual form which encompassed a range of abstract qualities whilst prescribing these desirable traits against the backdrop of the domestic sphere. Authors therefore found fault with elite women because they misused their domestic space for ornamental purposes rather than maintaining appropriateness in dress or manner. By asserting that an elite wife could still fulfil her female duties, household management became her one saving grace. Isabella cleverly merged her own status with that of the ideal in her publication by promoting the managerial position of any woman and absorbing the abstract qualities necessary for a wife to become the desirable companion.

In her essay on the rise of the domestic woman, Armstrong made brief use of Isabella's *Maxims* to help illustrate the fundamental necessity of domestic œconomy to a woman's character through its emphasis by authors of conduct literature.<sup>63</sup> Her argument was to define her 'new domestic woman' model through the criteria which had been established by eighteenth-century conduct book writers who assimilated abstract qualities with presupposed female responsibility, capacity and ability. For Armstrong, *Maxims* identified the supervisory status elite wives were expected to follow; where housekeeping was becoming the job of female helpmates but household management was the victorious successor. It was a combination of invisibility

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<sup>63</sup> Armstrong in *Ideology of Conduct*, p. 120.

and vigilance which Armstrong believed to personify the new ideal domestic woman – be her elite or otherwise.

Isabella did indeed combine these traits to demonstrate a woman's authority over the entire household from kinsman to servant, 'Your sudden and unexpected appearance, will awaken that diligence among your servants, which a too frequent and familiar communication will lay asleep.'<sup>64</sup> Yet, invisibility and vigilance were of greater profundity than a mere exercise in unanticipated inspection. What Armstrong observed was the superimposition of these traits upon aspects of general female conduct within marriage whereby invisibility became the concealment of domestic affairs and vigilance represented the humbled and restrained talk a woman was meant to accomplish. Such a concept is especially clear from *Maxims*, and of the four hundred precepts on offer, over half determined a respectable domestic regularity through discretion, propriety and humility.

Isabella even warned her readers against the tendency a woman has towards talkativeness (what Pennington had previously described 'that loquacity which renders some women such insupportable companions'<sup>65</sup>) with the recommendation that, 'A good manager, and a notable woman, proves but too often to be a very unpleasant being in society; these duties should be performed in the circle of their own domestic sphere, and are never to be boasted of out of it.'<sup>66</sup> Similar constraints were issued even when a woman or 'good manager' was within her own territory and Isabella compared the mechanisms of running a household to that of a watch or timepiece, 'Conceal from the indifferent spectator, the secret springs, which move, regulate and perfect the arrangement of your household.'<sup>67</sup> Such an analogy was also a reflection of the architectural surroundings and the ways in which the household interacted with the fabric of the building.

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<sup>64</sup> *Maxims*, p. 32. Pennington urged acquaintance with every method of running a household from its expense to the provisioning of the kitchen so 'that you may come to a reasonable certainty of not being materially deceived, without the ridiculous drudgery of following your servants at their heels, and contemptibly peeping into every obscure corner of your house.' *Instructions*, p.33. Isabella agreed, though there was a time and a place for acquainting oneself with all methods of household affairs. 'You will no wise demean yourself, by examining minutely into all details of your household at proper seasons'. *Maxims*, p. 31

<sup>65</sup> Pennington, *Instructions*, p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> *Maxims*, p. 33.

<sup>67</sup> *Maxims*, p. 32. See also Ridgway in *Maids and Mistresses*, where the comparison to a watch or timepiece has also been made. pp.44-46.

With regards to a woman's relationship to men, Isabella established a woman's role in the household through spatial occupation, and again underlined the importance of invisibility and vigilance, 'Do not attempt to destroy his innocent pleasures by pretexts of œconomy; retrench rather your own expences [sic] to promote them'. More specifically, Isabella judged the home to be the power base of any woman, but that it could only embody domestic tranquillity if a woman knew how to construct a desirable mould for herself. Isabella made this one of her earliest precepts,

Make choice of such amusements as will attach him to your company; study such occupations as will render you of consequence to him, such as the management of his fortune, and the conduct of his house, yet, without assuming a superiority unbecoming your sex.<sup>68</sup>

Her ideal woman was patient, discreet and modest: 'The characteristic[sic] of real virtue, are humility, compassion, and benevolence', and a woman should significantly enhance a man's world as helpmate and dependant upon whom he could impart ideas or worries.<sup>69</sup> Isabella viewed a woman's relationship to man from the outset as supportive and trustworthy with the intellectual capacity to uphold the complexities of running the estate and household affairs in his absence. The early pages of *Maxims* were dedicated solely to this relationship using distinctive boundaries or dimensions which would have been recognisable to her reader. A woman supplemented her husband and the better she was at doing this, the better she was at attracting his affection and keeping the marital home happy and stable.

Commentators on conduct literature for women have adhered to definitions of a middle-class domesticity as being essentially anti-elite and that household management was something only the middle sections of the social strata could virtuously pursue. The representation of household management as part of a steady progression of archetypal women's work in conduct literature has therefore eschewed elite thought, practice or knowledge as though it were frivolous and superficial. The significance of social strata in discussions on the representations of household management in conduct literature has been emphasised through feminist historiography. Studies by Shevelov, Armstrong and Poovey have all suggested that the construction of

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<sup>68</sup> *Maxims*, p. 2

<sup>69</sup> *Maxims*, p. 84, and pp. 1-6.



femininity embodied by particular associations with womanhood like love and romance, matrimony, children, and the household marked a harmonisation of middle- and upper-class perceptions of gender roles.

Although ‘demographically problematic’ Shevelow in particular, insisted that cultural codes in many of the sources she used were oppositional to an upper class dominated status quo and did so ‘in relation to an audience that included readers who were not among the educated elite.’<sup>70</sup> Armstrong took this notion further and was of the opinion that previous elite (or aristocratic) values were based upon women who participated in the fashionable world of goods; women who possessed wealth and title rather than practicality and oeconomic gumption. Eighteenth-century conduct book authors wanted to abandon material values and the woman who frittered away idle hours with needlework and tedious letter-writing to instead replace her with a woman of psychological depth who did not depend upon family name and social connections.<sup>71</sup>

Contemporary criticisms of elite wives were more than evident from Wollstonecraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* who was distinctly sharp in categorising the ‘superiors ranks of life’ brought about by ‘unnatural distinctions established in society.’<sup>72</sup> The elite wife existed merely as a tool to direct and wave a wistful hand to her servant for refreshment, and Wollstonecraft grieved at the aspirations of other women to accomplish such a lifestyle where ‘every duty is done by deputies, as if duties could ever be waived...[and] Women, in particular, all want to be ladies. Which is simply to have nothing to do, but listlessly to go they scarcely care where, for they cannot tell what.’<sup>73</sup> A century earlier disagreement with such a statement was propounded by Halifax who would not have allowed the women of his rank to sit idly all day, it was an affront to the patriarchal companionship he advocated and stated that a

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<sup>70</sup> Shevelow. *Women and Print Culture*, pp.2-5 and 6-10. Morgan has stipulated that this move towards a distinctly middle-class culture was the result of reforming middle-class writers who sought the best method and means of instruction through the professions they believed helped reinforce reformed behaviour, such as schoolmasters and governesses. *Manners, Morals and Class*, pp.12-19.

<sup>71</sup> Armstrong in *Ideology of Conduct*, pp.114-116.

<sup>72</sup> This was part of the sub-heading Wollstonecraft gave for her ninth chapter which was concerned with wealthy women. ‘Of the pernicious effects which arise from the unnatural distinctions established in society’.

<sup>73</sup> Mary Wollstonecraft. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. With Introduction by Elizabeth Robins Pennell. London. (1891) p. 208.

'House-keeper shall make a better Figure in the Family than a lazy 'empty airy thing [sailing] up and down the House to no kind of Purpose...' <sup>74</sup> By the time Wollstonecraft was writing, things had not improved and women clearly needed reminding of their role even in the light of feminist thought.

It may be recalled that Wahrman questioned the appropriateness of connecting attributes such as income group and occupational sector with domestic ideologies, separate spheres and Evangelicalism in the way Davidoff and Hall had done. He added that commitment to some specific moral code and shaped gender identities which suited this code cannot be sociologically defined. <sup>75</sup> In eighteenth-century conduct literature for women, domestic ideologies and separate spheres which befitted a middling income group and occupational sector were apparent. In this respect Shevelov was correct, and the domain of women was referred to by authors through the practice of household management which did indeed oppose women of high social ranking, but it had much more to do with finding an ideal readership. Hester Chapone picked her 'models among the most prudent and moderate of [her] own class' and those who felt more comfortable with a slower form of advancement for the sake of security and peace of mind. <sup>76</sup> Lady Sarah Pennington manipulated the theme of outward appearance in order to prove her opposition to elite women and deplored the actions of those women who were 'allowed to pass whole mornings at their looking glass..., adjusting a few curls, or determining the position of a patch'. <sup>77</sup> Pennington instead embraced 'the perfectly clean and neat' female who shaped her daily routine around her household rather than the superficialities of face paint and wig powder.

Words like decency, prudence and propriety made frequent appearances as reminders to their readers that such abstract qualities were appropriate to her 'middling' rank. They were the consequence to her charm and desirability before and during marriage, 'By decency, I mean such an habit as is suitable to your rank and fortune. An ill-placed finery, inconsistent with either, is not ornamental, but ridiculous.'

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<sup>74</sup> Savile, *New Year's Gift*, pp.50 and 52.

<sup>75</sup> Dror Wahrman, ' "Middle-Class" Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, 32, (October 1993), 396-432.

<sup>76</sup> Chapone, *Improvement*, p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Pennington, *Instructions*, p. 40.

wrote Pennington.<sup>78</sup> Vivien Jones has commented on these recommendations as found in Pennington's text, and has suggested that such blatant opposition to elite women was a deeply held disdain for ostentatious display by the author.<sup>79</sup> Pennington showed distaste at the perception of women as gullible consumers and devourers of glittering ornamental goods. For an elite woman such as Isabella, the fanciful occupation of shopping and gathering of useless adornments could lead to ridicule and disapprobation if her reader aspired to fashion with excessiveness and noted that, 'A superior understanding will exclude the little vanities habitual to our sex.'<sup>80</sup> An elite woman could also be aware of her fellow creatures' superfluous behaviour, that it was linked with social ranking was irrelevant. As Paul Langford has stated, any woman could now enjoy access to luxury goods, especially those which allowed her to spend leisurely hours drinking tea or chocolate with friends and close female relatives in her private apartments.<sup>81</sup>

Dress and personal adornment had huge bearing upon outward display of feminine virtue and the wearer could be the subject of ridicule or malicious gossip if she got it wrong or took the transitory nature of fashion too seriously. And while foreign travellers commented on a softness and sweetness in the 'Anglo-Saxon female countenance'<sup>82</sup>, the native population mocked and derided the growing extravagance found particularly in women's dress. Vickery quoted from contemporary correspondence which relished the discomfort of others in fashionable society, 'a lady who going by another, tost her hoop so high that it entangled with the Diam[ond] flowers, &c in the next Lady's Head and had not some officious Gentleman come to their assistance we know not of what Direfull consequence it might have produced.'<sup>83</sup> Fashion was to be

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>79</sup> Jones in the Introduction to *The Young Ladies Pocket Library*, p. xx.

<sup>80</sup> *Maxims*, p. 41. See also pp.39-40 where Isabella stated in several maxims about dress and appearance, 'Follow fashion at a moderate distance, nor blindly adopt such as may expose you to ridicule...'. '...pursue therefore your own path of propriety, and consult your reason, more than your glass.' By finishing this precept with advice on introspection rather than outward visual manipulation, Isabella created special emphasis.

<sup>81</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, pp.600-607. Langford made use of the eighteenth-century author, John Millar (1735-1801) whose *Observations concerning the Distinction of Ranks in Society* (1771) discussed the development of women in society, presenting them as the beneficiaries of commercial society whereby they could partake in the culture of shopping and an urban renaissance like never before because of a newly affluent and mobile society. See also Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989).

<sup>82</sup> American writer, J. Fenimore Cooper, *England*, 3 volumes (1837) I. 200. In Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Characteristics 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000), p. 159.

<sup>83</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.172-174. Letter written by Ann Pellet (no date), maternal aunt to Elizabeth Parker, one of the main subjects of Vickery's study.

studied from a distance, like a fanciful topic or a means of repose, not something which rendered a woman haughty or puffed-up with self importance and petticoats.

More subtle signs of opposition to elite extravagance could be found with the rejection of both elite display *and* the uneducated views of those in service. A 'middle class' which advocated certain moral codes of behaviour was precariously balanced between these two extremes and revealed itself as some snobbish cluster of creatures who abhorred luxury as well as the earthy and unsophisticated. Pennington was highlighted by Jones as revealing her rejection of both social extremes in light of a household made up of family and servants which should at all times be segregated as far as practically possible – a form of discrimination which really underlined the definitions of 'middle-class' domesticity.

Here was the quest for an ideal readership. It has been argued that the harmonisation of middle- and upper-class perceptions of gender roles discussed in feminist historiographies was projected through conduct literature as a means of targeting as many readers as possible. Rouyer-Daney suggested in her 2005 essay on the representations of housework in eighteenth-century literature that some of the terminology utilised by authors might appear quite ironic to the modern-day reader. She pinpointed the use in titles and texts of 'Lady' or 'Ladies', a literary technique which coincided with a moment at which their growing readership were predominantly middle class, a class which was defining itself through literacy and more importantly, reading habits.<sup>84</sup> Rouyer-Daney added that *The Lady's Magazine* for example, emphasised a wide social spectrum for its readership, 'the Housewife as well as the Peeress', when it was in fact fashioning an ideal mistress of the household from the middling sort who revelled in high class aspirations and luxurious material culture. Distinctions of social status in the conduct book were enhanced by social mobility and the domestic ideal advocated by its authors was an unconscious attempt by them to agree on a subject matter which could help smooth out the numerous and subtle differences between ranks.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Rouyer-Daney in *The Invisible Woman*, p. 28.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36; Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, p. 69. Vickery deemed this model of a 'new domestic woman' to be confused in regards to whether she actually epitomised the 'bourgeois personality or was in fact an ornament shared by the middling ranks and the landed'. Vickery was too concerned with the distinctions laid out by Armstrong, when clearly she understood the term to be applicable to both the

Isabella Carlisle's *Maxims* neatly fitted this observation. Even when her title did not evoke a wide span of the social classes as a target audience she ensured a positive approach to gaining popularity with sentiments to the well educated and those 'as are unblest with this advantage'<sup>86</sup>. The vagueness of social ranking suggested through her use of 'young ladies' or the permanence evoked by 'establishment' in her title emulated a traditional tool used by many writers of conduct literature and periodicals. The manifestation of the feminine ideal was pasted against a backdrop of home (establishment), whilst a quasi-elite was assumed through ladylike aspirations. Middle- and upper class women were subjected to the same advice in their respective household sizes – a technique which ensured as wide a readership as possible.

Late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century conduct authors who addressed women merely utilised a middle class as middle ground; a safe characteristic which enabled them to exercise notions of correct behaviour without including social extremes and narrow boundaries of rank or fortune. Even Halifax warned against pride and vanity, 'take heed of carrying your *good Breeding* to such a height as to be good for nothing, and proud of it'<sup>87</sup>. Likewise, inferior ranking could be as much of a threat to correct female conduct as pride and haughtiness in the household. Pennington did not want her readers to mingle or 'descend to converse with those of birth, education, and early views in life, [which] were not superior to a state of servitude.'<sup>88</sup> It was the old adage of too much familiarity breeds contempt. Those of inferior status had the tendency to wrangle into personally beneficial situations through flattery and deception, and so must be dealt with a constant mistrust – a trait which did not mix well with feminine humility. Isabella had strictly held opinion on such social inclusion, 'It is more advantageous to live with our superiors, or equals, than with those of an inferior class; it being less the interest of such to flatter our foibles.'<sup>89</sup> She did make it clear that pride was in fact the elite or aristocratic vice whilst familiarity was the wickedness of inferiors

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middling and elite ranks of society. Anna Clark has also observed that a search for middle-class identity was founded upon a propensity for moral clarity, but in reality many an elite male despised the debauched stereotype this placed them in and could be equally family-orientated and quiet as middle-class men. See *Scandal: The Sexual Politics of the British Constitution*. (2004), pp.208-223.

<sup>86</sup> *Maxims*, pp.v-vi.

<sup>87</sup> Savile, *New Year's Gift*, pp.50-51.

<sup>88</sup> Pennington, *Instructions*, p. 36.

<sup>89</sup> *Maxims*, pp.23-24.

like servants, 'Rule as much as you are able with an even hand, and steer between pride and familiarity'.<sup>90</sup> Distanced between the two was the quintessential modest and humble female.

Such stern views were not always widely held. *The Polite Lady* (1769), attributed to Charles Allen, imbued a sense of middle-class virtue whilst advising his reader to be restrained and cautious of their own misgivings towards others,

Thus you see, my Dear, that neither the highest rank, nor the greatest fortune, can be a just foundation of pride; and whenever you find yourself inclined to treat your inferiors with contempt and disdain, let me advise you to reflect how you would bear such treatment from your superiors...<sup>91</sup>

The use of a middle ground surfaced most distinctly within prescriptions for virtuous household management. According to Pennington, household management itself was never actually 'beneath the dignity of any lady, however high her rank...'<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth Griffith also maintained this standard, 'Neither rank nor riches can place any person above œconomy; and perhaps those who possess such advantages in the highest degree, have the greatest occasion for the practice of this humble virtue.'<sup>93</sup> John Gregory also added that no woman could be excused from domestic œconomy 'by any extent of fortune...'<sup>94</sup> Pride was not necessarily rampant among the elite therefore, and writers sought to control any aristocratic aspirations their readers may have had to believing they were better off not troubling themselves with thoughts of œconomy.

To her readers Isabella said, 'If your fortune be moderate, œconomy is absolutely necessary. If considerable, method and prudence will render it doubly beneficial.'<sup>95</sup> Moderation was the keystone to a happy household. It was to be reflected in dress, mannerisms and speech – a modest woman, was a prudent housewife regardless of her station, 'Be neither vain of your birth, nor your present rank; they are accidents,

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<sup>90</sup> *Maxims*, p. 26.

<sup>91</sup> [Charles Allen] *The Polite Lady: or a Course of Female Education in a Series of Letters from a Mother to her Daughter*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Corrected. (1769), p. 234.

<sup>92</sup> Pennington, *Instructions*, p. 40.

<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Griffith, *Essays Addressed to Young Married Women*. (1782), pp.109-110. See also Gillian Skinner, *Sensibility and Economics in the Novel 1740-1800* (1999), p. 91.

<sup>94</sup> Gregory, *Father's Legacy*, p. 24.

<sup>95</sup> *Maxims*, p. 33.

not always acquired by merit; perhaps in the issue, to be lamented.’<sup>96</sup> If anything, Isabella never made any attempts in *Maxims* to disguise her own rank as author and on several occasions assumed her reader to be of similar status with the use of words and phrases like ‘fashionable’ and ‘the bon ton’. Furthermore, the fusing of these assertions with terms like ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ Isabella understood her readership itself to pass among fashionable society and to rank separately ‘from society of a lower degree’.<sup>97</sup> Her definition of ‘superiority’ corresponded to her reader through some sort of familiarisation. From another perspective then, by insisting that household management was to be expected of all women, authors were purposefully addressing elite women instead of letting them flounder amongst ribbons, lace and powders and she was not in fact completely irredeemable. Furthermore, writers and readers of conduct books alike found that themes of domesticity, modesty and humbleness struck similar chords within their own social boundaries of rank and status. An elite author of conduct books was more than capable of producing similarly unimaginative instruction as a writer of the middling sort as their aspirations rested on influencing a greater majority and could set an example for the rest of society.

### III

Isabella’s *Maxims* does not make for easy reading and it is difficult to imagine consuming such a piece of conduct literature as this in a few moments of quiet contemplation. Imperatives which imply insular retrospection like ‘consider’ and ‘reflect’ are juxtaposed with outward assertiveness like ‘avoid’, ‘exert’ and ‘demonstrate’.<sup>98</sup> It is not too audacious to imagine that any reader of *Maxims* must have fingered through the piece on many occasions, marking out particular and personally relevant segments as marginal notes. Marginalia was rare, but the format of *Maxims* requires some degree of conjecture for the way in which it might have been made use of by its reader. Likewise, the author would have read her piece several times and with a more regular reading of the publication comes a little more of the author’s intentions as Isabella would certainly have expected her work to be an instrument of daily routine. The construction of the publication is indicative of this alone as *Maxims* was

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<sup>96</sup> *Maxims*, p. 43.

<sup>97</sup> *Maxims*, p. 24.

<sup>98</sup> Ridgway in *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 46.

intentionally a work of reference rather than a pious tract or narrative promoting idealistic, yet imaginary scenarios. *Maxims* was not meant to be read in the same way as Chapone for example, as *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind* was a continuous discourse broken down into chapters. With the use of precepts, Isabella could assume the authoritative and maintain the directive whilst compartmentalising her thoughts into memorable sayings and snappy sentences.

Isabella certainly eschewed the sentimental and frothy approach within every individual saying, partly as a means of generating seriousness for the feminine ideal so acutely fashioned by modesty and patience. It has already been noted that forms of reading matter could emphasise the appropriateness of quiet contemplation within the domestic model. This did not escape Isabella and she grandly announced, 'Encourage and pursue an inclination to reading early in life; it is laying up a treasure for the latter part of it, provided you collect it from such authors as may guard and guide your steps in it.'<sup>99</sup> No doubt, she saw herself as one of those.

With themes of domesticity and the centrality of the household running through her publication it is not surprising to discover that the value placed upon good, respectable and virtuous household management was attached to many actions not always performed directly within the home itself. Isabella reminded her reader to take heed of talking too proudly of good management outside of the domestic space, she warned against sharing grievances with a husband whose interests were in no way domestically orientated, and urged the concealment of household mechanics from anyone who might be apathetic. Isabella turned her attention to household management with more precision a quarter of the way through her publication. Juxtaposed between thoughts on maintaining beneficial female friendships and networks, and cleanliness in person and dress, household management seemed somewhat out of place.

The management of the household was a skill as well as an accomplishment made up of academic exercise and diplomacy to be performed within compartments of the home. Isabella defined these activities through household accounting, servant organisation, medicinal and culinary practice and some degree of

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<sup>99</sup> *Maxims*, p. 98.



hosting and entertainment. As if to give the topic greater importance, she began with servants, ‘Be extremely cautious in the choice of those who are to be your attendants...’ and again emphasised the propensity of that group for false flattery and manipulative talk. Servants could, if left unrestrained by their mistress, become ‘licentious’ and have little regard for their own responsibilities in the household.<sup>100</sup> Isabella also guided her reader from familiarity or ‘partiality’ towards one domestic and suggested that by doing so it avoided prejudice. The elite mistress was to remain guarded and not hesitate to use scorn when necessary when it came to her servants. They were to make virtuous use of their recreation time under her rule, and observe her ‘adherence to truth’ with constructive reading – obviously supplied by the mistress herself. The relationship between the two parties was contractual, but flavoured with familial undertones; the chatelaine acted as mentor to what could be a considerably large number of people and they performed their daily tasks well if she too had been fair and discerning.

Illustrative of her perseverance in completing her work, Isabella seemed to make reference to the break down of her second marriage with precepts dedicated to the transitional nature of servant employment and their ubiquity within employment. The cautionary tone for her reader revealed itself to be a concern with prevention and shrewdness. ‘Prevent your servants from interfering with, or revealing the embroilments in other families’, was one statement made by Isabella. Another advised to respect the presence of servants when partaking in an otherwise private conversation ‘as they will not fail to take advantage of it at some moment or other.’<sup>101</sup> Servants were identified with the spread of gossip and a mistress had to be accountable for her own reputation as well as that of another. When Isabella’s second marriage did disintegrate, her servants should have been representative of the household’s resolve to continue as a united whole. Unfortunately, the negative events at the top level of the household hierarchy led to a similar effect below and Isabella’s failure was measured by the slovenly practices of her staff.<sup>102</sup> In this instance, household divisions were clearly influenced by each other rather than appearing entirely separated by physical and psychological circumstances.

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<sup>100</sup> *Maxims*, p. 24.

<sup>101</sup> *Maxims*, p. 26.

<sup>102</sup> More of Isabella’s own household will be briefly referred to in chapter four.

With the 'inferior' clearly established and defined by a lack of education and sophistication, Isabella continued to exact the desire for her reader to guide and nurture them. This was meant to be intentional without being patronising though and the moral and physical welfare of the household was not to be ignored. Servants in particular were to be offered 'tender care' in sickness and it would have been extremely remiss of any mistress if she did not allow them to perform their religious duties even if their 'persuasion' was different from her own.<sup>103</sup> Her role as mentor was confirmed with the inclusion of pastoral duties too, but a charitable disposition could also be implemented amongst close friends and family.

Isabella swiftly moved through her thoughts on monitoring the household accounts and the prudential balancing of a moderate or considerable fortune before arriving at precepts dedicated to patience and compassion. These feelings did not escape inclusion in the management of the household as its structure demanded that not only servants were beneficiaries of a moralistic mistress; her virtuosity had to spread further afield. A good household mistress always set an example to all those who depended on her for moral and medicinal welfare. She had to provide them with books adapted to their capacity and to be cautious in permitting them too much freedom with their recreational activities. Her own hours were meant to be sociable as it was no good her administering moral opinion but inflicting bad practice. One early precept highlighted the danger of disrupting the tranquil atmosphere of the domestic by allowing casual and informal visits from female friends in particular, 'Female friendships are but too frequently bars to domestic peace; they are more formed by the communication of mutual errors, than the desire of amending them.'<sup>104</sup> Isabella warned that women were far more inclined to chatter endlessly about domestic tedium than in the actual performance of these duties. They tended even further towards impressionable behaviour and a collective haughtiness which shattered domestic peace and again disrupted the mechanics of the oiled secret springs. Loud laughter and talk were to be avoided in female friends when a young woman's determination to run her household efficiently was of greatest priority. An elite mistress had to be equally assertive with her household and with those who could be welcomed into it.

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<sup>103</sup> *Maxims*, pp.30-31.

<sup>104</sup> *Maxims*, p. 16.

Where the household and guest met and interacted most conspicuously was the dinner table. Here the elite woman could delegate most responsibility to her upper liveried servant, offer her guests fine wines with the meats provided by the estate and proudly draw attention to her offspring as they mingled with their distant relatives, family acquaintances or the family's close political allies. Like dress however, a woman reader was reminded of cost and the irresponsible public image of display which evoked extravagance and frivolity rather than cleanliness and neatness. The dinner table was thus equal to that most public of places for a mistress yet it was to be approached via a series of other domestic and often consciously private spaces; a formality which also accepted the guest into the with-drawing room post-dinner. As a result a woman was able to establish command on familiar ground whilst welcoming unfamiliar conversation. Her success at entertaining and comforting friends and family over mealtimes was to therefore be imbued with 'Neatness and elegance...ostentation and profusion are in general equally united, and equally to be avoided.'<sup>105</sup> In this instance, household management rested greatly with the need for heightened logistical proficiency. Isabella knew to pinpoint neatness as a virtue at the table, but it could only be achieved through communication and time management; neatness was as much about a clinical precision and coolness as it was about seating arrangements and orderly displays of food.

For Isabella Carlisle, household management was written into her publication as a means of emphasising the complexities of a woman's role. For an elite woman like herself, these grew with the size of the household and she promoted power rather discreetly within her precepts in order to support her reader. Managerial power was compounded by delegation, diplomacy and communication as well as extraordinary levels of self-discipline and moral reasoning. Of all the household compartments most likely to react to the mistress's power, the servants came top of Isabella's list of priorities. The discretion she used to promote managerial power was particularly evident here as she immediately noted a mistress's position in the household hierarchy as one of example and worthy of imitation. Such responsibility was to be projected further once guests were invited into the household and the elite woman especially had the added complexities of taking charge of entertainments and hosting great dinners. Good

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<sup>105</sup> *Maxims*, p. 36.

household management was the route to domestic tranquillity but comprised everything but peaceful activity.

## VI

Isabella Carlisle's own life displayed many contradictions. During her first marriage to the fourth Earl of Carlisle, she projected the humble affection so essential to the feminine ideal evoked by authors of conduct literature like herself many years later. Her second marriage and her subsequent self-imposed exile however, revealed an independence and flightiness which her contemporaries found utterly deplorable and her fellow conduct authors would have found equally abhorrent. Yet, her significance within this study is profound since these experiences imprinted a need for justification in the form of instruction. Her *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims addressed to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World* adequately embraced the desires in women for achieving both companionship in marriage as well as a degree of intellectual capacity gained through cultured reading. As an elite woman who married into a leading Yorkshire landed family, her own methods of household management and perceptions of domestic tranquillity are therefore integral to understanding the practicalities of prescribed duties in her publication. That she immediately recognised her position in an already saturated market of conduct literature for women indicated the understanding Isabella had of the education and social graces expected of women prescribed to them by conduct books and other forms of instruction having undoubtedly read several for herself as a young woman.

The household itself was an essential backdrop for most authors of conduct literature for women and for Isabella, the ideal mistress exuded virtue, humility and modesty with the careful and proper management of all those in her charge. The household represented a space which was not therefore vile or barren of productive activity. The eighteenth-century ideal woman had to be fashioned for the home and private sphere with a series of natural assignments suited to her femaleness, and a genteel promotion of keeping recipe books, the overseeing of household account books and the practice of ordering a table were appropriate activities with which to occupy time. Moreover, the management of the household was unavoidable for any woman and by not performing her duty she lacked purpose, stripped herself of femininity and opened

herself up to censure. Conduct literature of this period reminded its reader that of all her responsibilities as a woman, by giving attention to her household she could retain it as her one saving grace if all her other roles had been abandoned for more leisurely pursuits.

When Isabella published her *Maxims*, conduct literature for women had evolved and developed new tactics for alerting women to these roles. Over a century earlier, leading clergy were placing emphasis on the patriarchal household unit in which the husband and wife held equal shares in the household and family responsibility for the sake of godliness and order. Their texts only intended to put women in submissive roles whereby they could be directed by their husbands in anything from organising the servants to provisioning the kitchen. This model was further emphasised by the readers being addressed – men. By the end of the eighteenth century women themselves found they were now being addressed by authors of conduct. Although women were not extracted from the domestic sphere, they were now being guided into understanding their role as having its own hierarchical content whereby a woman could manage, administer and oversee for herself, rather than under her husband's command.

The disadvantages of using conduct literature however, are based upon its existence as purely prescriptive or perceptive rather than acting as an entirely persuasive or commanding device. As a result it lacked real information about the intricacies of managing the household and merely labelled it as a duty with its own symbols of abstract qualities found in frugality and prudence as well as neatness and cleanliness. Conduct literature never actually had the purpose of listing practical methods; these were meant to be found elsewhere in print. Instead, with the focus on abstract virtues an ideal type of woman became the textual subject who was better suited to a less 'hands-on' approach to her household whilst simultaneously adapting her reading matter to fit these virtues. Conduct literature was appropriate because it promoted self-discipline and through its consumption it required reflection and quietude.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Adrian Green. ' "A Clumsey Countrey Girl": The Material and Print Culture of Betty Bowes', in (Eds.), Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory. *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660-1830*. (2004), pp.72-97.

Such virtues were woven into a construction of femininity which itself was imbued with notions of social ranking. Authors constantly made reference to a genteel, clean and neat woman who was content with her family responsibility regardless of her station in life. Yet, the significance of writing household management into their texts allowed them scope to involve women of every social rank but the very lowest. For authors it was a necessary tool for reaching a wider readership; the extravagant elite woman was just as teachable as the middle-class domesticate.

For the elite woman, household management was an exercise in invisibility and vigilance which had to be reflected in both her own disposition and that of the bricks and mortar of the house. For *all* women it was about discretion, and applied to women of both elite and middling social rank. Their servants, their methods and techniques of administration and their everyday domestic routines had to be concealed at every opportunity, and this included from both their husbands and the indifferent visitor. Yet, what made the performance of household management so discreet and unobtrusive were activities which demanded interaction, communication and the necessary talk and verbalisation for their implementation. Eighteenth-century elite women received criticism from contemporary writers for assuming idle pastimes and allowing themselves to be consumed with frivolous letter-writing and high fashion. An elite woman as an author of conduct lamented these accusations and was cautious to remind her reader that high social status was an accident of birth which if a woman be too proud, she risked losing her feminine virtue and by extension, all that made her female. A 'good manager, and a notable woman' therefore did not isolate herself in her dressing room. She knew first hand of the hustle and bustle in the kitchens, cellars and domestic passages, she knew where to access the household account books, as well as keeping copies for herself and remained keen to see that all was cared for and never once neglected.

### 3. Supervising the Household Accounts

This chapter will explore the organisation and management of accounts in the elite household and the supplementary material elite women purposefully maintained for their own benefit. Thus, what follows is a rather different appreciation of the roles, functions and expectations of elite women in light of previous historical analyses of the subject. It was not unusual for an elite woman to access the global account book by transcribing or annotating versions of general housekeeping matters for her own records. Moreover, several elite women took sole responsibility for overseeing disbursements in household expenditure, the regulation of running costs, and took notice of changes to these or any discrepancies which might have occurred. Pocket books containing notes on personal and household expenditure were also part of the accounting and book-keeping landscape of the country house. Where Amanda Vickery's study suggested the pocket book to be the symbol of active participation, it was documentation like the weighty volumes of accounts and bundles of bills and receipts which go much further in discerning this role for elite women in the Yorkshire country house.

The historiography of book-keeping and accounting has neglected, for the most part, the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is a discrepancy lamented by Basil Yamey as intriguing since the period was of major importance in economic history.<sup>1</sup> The reasons Yamey supposed for this neglect ranged from the static nature of accounting practices between 1500 and 1850 to the often low status given to the writing of accounting history. A further criticism should be added to those noted by Yamey with respect to the specialised interests of historians outside the discipline of accounting which so far has been saturated with essays and theses on Italian book-keeping, banking and cost accounting in industry. For the social historian technical perspectives 'delineating the residues of the accounting past' have been actively adopted rather than the processes of organisation and management.<sup>2</sup> Where household management is seen as the organisational model of the family, accounting is viewed in this thesis in light of what Anthony Hopwood has defined as essential areas to which

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<sup>1</sup> B. S. Yamey, 'Some Reflections on the Writing of a General History of Accounting,' *Accounting and Business Research*, 11, 42, (Spring, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> Anthony G. Hopwood, 'The Archaeology of Accounting Systems,' in (Ed.) John Richard Edwards, *The History of Accounting: Critical Perspectives on Business and Management*, four volumes, volume I. (New York, 2000), p. 81.

accounting practices belong – ‘the processes of direction, planning, decision-making, coordination, control and the management of motivation, amongst other things.’<sup>3</sup> Thus, supervising the accounts in the country house was synonymous with all aspects of household management for the elite woman.

Sidney Pollard’s study of modern management in the Industrial Revolution reiterated themes of cost accounting and mercantile systems so common within the historiography of book-keeping and accounting. However, his discussion on the master and servant system does hold huge purchase here for its relevance to household responsibilities and relationships. Pollard’s study highlighted very little of household processes themselves. Yet, his study does offer some insight into the accounting material culture collected, arranged and analysed by those involved in the household management of the eighteenth-century country house.

Supervising the household accounts represented a step into this traditionally perceived dimension of masculine activity for any woman in the eighteenth century. It was a sphere dominated by numerical activity, arithmetic and precision. An accomplished woman who was the very paragon of womanly virtue, modesty and humility could show an interest in the household accounts as part of a quest for self-discipline or regulation. Such a woman could learn to be accommodating, welcoming, assertive and communicative, but her abstract qualities did not teach her numeracy. For the elite mistress it was about gaining confidence in the socio-economic structure of her marital home and not growing ignorant of matters of expenditure and their effects upon staffing and provisioning.

By placing a supervisory eye upon the accounts the elite woman as heiress was also showing awareness of the financial investments being made upon her marriage portion as well as ensuring her lawful right to pin-money during marriage and a jointure if widowed. In this instance, it was crucial for her to pay attention to even the smallest of household expenditure, she might, after all, have found it convenient when meeting her own consumer desires to supplement some of the household costs through her own personal spending. Many an elite woman’s managerial success first rested with

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.83-84.



how much interest she showed in the household accounts, or at least some understanding of what she saw upon the pages of any global account book.

However, it was extremely uncommon for women to be tutored in arithmetic and there is no solid evidence within this study to suggest that the elite women who married into the Yorkshire families here were formally educated in this way. Like contemporary women writers who sought to deconstruct the feminine and arrive at a more natural composition of the female, a profound sense of lamentation existed over the lack of knowledge the fellow members of her sex had of book-keeping or even the practices of arithmetic.

Girls' schools also failed to change this situation. Hannah Wolley's school in Hackney offered instruction in '...all works wrought with a needle, all transparent works, Shell-work, moss-work, also cutting of prints and adorning rooms or cabinets with them...' <sup>4</sup> However, after nearly thirty years of teaching her true feelings came to light when she wrote in her book *A Gentlewoman's Companion* (1675) that 'Man is apt to think we were merely intended for the world's propagation and to keepe its humane inhabitants sweet and cleane; but, by their leaves, had we the same Literature he would find our brains as fruitful as our bodies.' <sup>5</sup>

Early treatises and textbooks which addressed matters of accounting practices and conditions covered styles of entries and arrangement, authentication and the need for supplementary material. <sup>6</sup> The wealth of these publications dealt with the master and steward system of accounting and revealed the standardisation of this system which was an account of the reporting steward's receipts and expenditures of money or goods on behalf of his principal. <sup>7</sup> Consequently they dealt with masculine activity and

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<sup>4</sup> Liza Picard. *Restoration London* (1997). p. 188. No source given.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (1977), p. 228; and also quoted in Picard, *Restoration*. pp.188-89.

<sup>6</sup> B. S. Yamey. 'Early Views on the Origins and Development of Book-keeping and Accounting,' in Yamey, ed., *Further Essays on the History of Accounting*, (1982), reprinted from *Accounting and Business Research*, 10, 37A. Special Issue, (1980), pp.81-82; see also Yamey, 'Compound Journal Entries in Early Treatises on Bookkeeping,' in Basil S. Yamey, *Further Essays*, reprinted from *Accounting Review*, volume LIV, 2, (April, 1979), pp.323-425; and B. S. Yamey, 'Peele's two Treatises in Context', also in *Further Essays*.

<sup>7</sup> (Ed.) Joseph R. Strayer. 'Accounting in the Middle Ages, 500 to 1500', in *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, volume I (New York, 1982), pp.1-24; John Beckett, 'Estate Management in eighteenth-century England: the Lowther-Spedding relationship in Cumberland', in John Chartres and David Hey, *English Rural*

some even persuaded the 'principal' was better suited to learning about household accounting systems than letting a steward act almost independently. An example of this was the anonymously published *The Gentleman Accomptant: or, an Essay to Unfold the Mystery of Accompts* (1721)<sup>8</sup> with a title-page actively encouraging the elite man to take control of his finances in every instance with the inclusion of 'Directions to Persons of Quality and Fortune... [and] a Detection of the Frauds of Stock-Jobbing'.

Literature which did seek to educate or re-educate women in matters of book-keeping existed, but it was scarce and normally addressed those from professional mercantile or farming backgrounds. One such publication deliberately aimed at women as part of a response to the life-long uselessness of inconsequential feminine accomplishments has been highlighted by Margaret Hunt in her study on the middling sort.<sup>9</sup> *Advice to the Women and Maidens of London* (1678) (**Figure 3.1**) had risen from the household manual tradition which sought to define the benefits of book-keeping for women, especially widows,<sup>10</sup> and made a concerted effort to demonstrate the simplicity of book-keeping. Using descriptive and illustrative techniques, the author of *Advice* urged its readers to maintain a yearly system of accounts by listing monthly expenditure, the expense in particulars and finally a ledger with alphabetical index.

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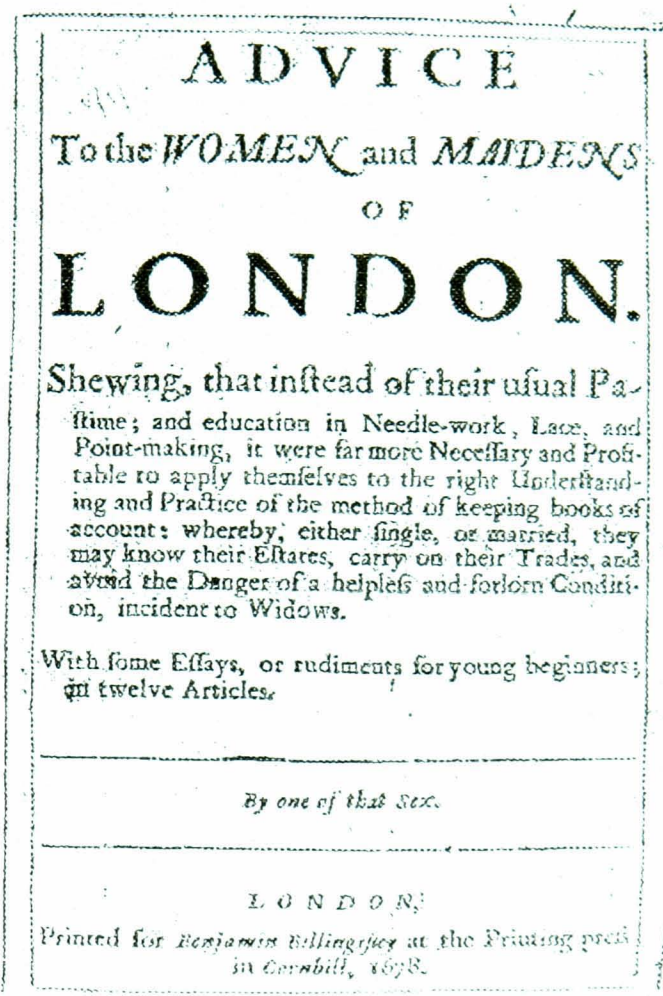
*Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*. (Cambridge, 1990), pp.55-72; and Pollard, *Modern Management*, (1968), pp.246-247.

<sup>8</sup> The date given here is for the third edition.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England 1680-1780* (Berkeley, 1996).

<sup>10</sup> *Advice to the Women and Maidens of London. Shewing, that Instead of their Usual Practice and Education in Needlework Lace and Point-making, it were Far more Necessary and Profitable to Apply Themselves to the Right Understanding and Practice of the Method of Keeping Books of Account*, (1678). Hereafter referred to as *Advice*. Michael Roberts in 'To Bridle the Falsehood of Unconscionable Workmen, and for her Own Satisfaction': What the Jacobean Housewife Needed to Know about Men's Work and Why', *Labour History Review*, 63, (1998), Part 1, pp.4-30 he has cited Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance*, Stanford, (California, 1990) who quoted from Martin Billingsley's *The Pen's Excellencie*, 1618.

Figure 3.1. Title-page for *Advice to the Women and Maidens of London...* (1678), (Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online).



Michael Roberts's essay on household manuals directed at a female readership in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England suggested that although power in the household was clearly hierarchical at that time, women were expected to assert some influence over expenditure. Women had to make 'a true reckoning and account' to their husbands of receipts and payments in the marketplace.<sup>11</sup> The author's intention for *Advice* was to take the mystery out of accounting for women because such practicality was severely lacking from their intellect. It was not promoted for women of the elite but for wives and daughters of professional men who sought the assistance of female relatives with the running of their businesses. The author even related how her father had 'made it my office to call upon persons to an account every night what they had laid out...' as well as ensuring she attended to her writing, 'Arithmetick' and rule of three.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Michael Roberts in 'To Bridle the Falsehood of Unconscionable Workmen, and for her Own Satisfaction': What the Jacobean Housewife Needed to Know about Men's Work and Why', *Labour History Review*, 63, (1998), Part 1, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> *Advice*, p. 3.

*Advice* was a tool for women of professional social ranking to show they had purpose through the performance of masculine activity. Supposedly written by a woman, she asserted the need for women to put down their needles and thread, and instead to find it 'far more Necessary and Profitable to apply themselves to the right Understanding and Practice of the method of keeping books of account'.<sup>13</sup> The author also added something of the need for a confident performance in the male sphere:

Methinks now the objection may be that this art is too high and mysterious for the weaker Sex... To which I answer, That having in some measure practiced both Needlework and Accounts, that I never found this Masculine Art harder or more difficult than the effeminate achievement of Lace-making, gum-work or the like...<sup>14</sup>

The given impression was one of social inclusion. Yet, the absence of an elite readership from its framework was indicative of the author's belief in this social ranking as being one constructed around less professional undertakings whereby wives and daughters could be supplanted by accountants or the steward.

In conduct literature where women of higher social ranking might have had some inclusion, the hope was to inform their readers of the importance of monitoring household expenditure but offered nothing in the way of real practical value. Books pertaining to 'huswifery' or even husbandry were similarly ineffective. Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615), Richard Bradley's *The Country Housewife* (1762), William Ellis's *The Country Housewife's Family Companion* (1750), or Penelope Bradshaw's *The Family Jewel: and Compleat Housewife's Companion* (seventh edition, 1754) were some of the more popular titles on offer, but suggested ways of avoiding unscrupulous tradesmen using the more subjective methods of the author. Ellis proposed finding reputable shopkeepers and dealers, when this was not possible, it was worth the impracticality of taking scales to avoid discrepancies in weights and measurements. He also claimed a woman shopper was at a further advantage if she curbed the tongue of a talkative shopkeeper who aimed to distract whilst cutting portions of meat or preparing his own scales.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> From the title-page to *Advice*.

<sup>14</sup> *Advice*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> William Ellis, *The Country Housewife's Family Companion*, (1750), p. vii.

The obvious uselessness and superficiality of what was taught at schools like Hannah Wolley's was reinforced by the speed at which a young woman could be pulled from her education at any time, usually to help supplement the household structure. For example, Mary, the illegitimate daughter of Sir Robert Walpole and his mistress Maria Skerret, later his second wife, was considered quite a beauty in elite society with many a potential suitor making proposals at the grand social gatherings of the day.<sup>16</sup> Despite her birth she gained the rights of legitimacy and the rank of an Earl's daughter as granted by George II. Walpole expected her to be treated the same way as his children from his first marriage to Catherine Shorter, even having her educated at Blacklands in Chelsea. When Maria Skerret died in 1738, it was a bitter blow to Walpole in many respects and so to help overcome his grief as well as to prioritise his household matters he called upon the assistance of Mary, the nearest female relative whom 'he took home to keep his house'.<sup>17</sup> What Mary was taught at Blacklands is unknown, it can only be hoped that under her father's influence, she gained a wealth of appropriate wisdom with which to essentially replace her dead mother in the lead managerial role of the Walpole household.

This chapter shows that elite women had prevalence for observation and supervision as means to understanding the socio-economic structure of their marital homes and that these were techniques which acted as substitutions for a lack of thorough tutoring. If she had access to accounting textbooks at all she would have known the keywords of any author's injunction which relied on regularity and punctuality.<sup>18</sup> Where she did not have such access, the conduct author could always inform her of their importance. One of Isabella Carlisle's few precepts relating to a mistress's responsibility over the accounting systems read thus, 'Observe the utmost regularity in the keeping of

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<sup>16</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service. (WYAS, Leeds). Newby Hall MSS (NH) Correspondence 2826/58 April 24, possibly 1740. Elizabeth Worsley wrote to her sister Frances Robinson telling her of Sir Thomas Robinson's (Frances's husband) early proposals to Mary several years before Thomas married Frances in 1737.

<sup>17</sup> NH 2826/58, Elizabeth Worsley to Frances Robinson, April 24 1740?

<sup>18</sup> D. C. Coleman, 'The Accounts of John Banks.' (Reprinted from *Sir John Banks: Baronet and Businessman*), (Oxford, 1963), in ed., Basil S. Yamey, *The Historical Development of Accounting: A Selection of Papers* (New York, 1978). Pollard highlighted the types of accountancy adopted by businessmen and entrepreneurs, all of which were based on different needs, but ultimately functioned as an aid to regularity in industry, and also as a reflection on managerial peace of mind. *Modern Management*, pp.251-290.

your household accounts; it is tranquillity to you, justice to your dependents [sic].<sup>19</sup> The mistress who demonstrated this was readily placed in a position to make sense of book-keeping and household accounting before she married. For the mistress who proved otherwise it was too late for confidence building exercises to be established in the marital home, but sentiments of encouragement from relatives were still assiduously forwarded on to new brides.

## I

The desire to reach an answer to the question of how elite women learnt ‘arithmetick’ or at least gained an understanding of book-keeping cannot be fully satisfied. Yamey has identified accounting textbooks which detailed the double-entry system which was so common to landed estate administration, yet, this was not always the method used for reporting the running costs of the household. Publications aimed at a female readership like *Advice to the Women and Maidens of London* were even more exclusive by their author’s intention to address those women whose male relatives or husbands came from professional backgrounds.

Methods of approaching the subject of housekeeping and accounting existed but were scarcely recorded by the women of this study. The most dazzling find within the primary source material and the only one to mention a direct attempt comes from the joint efforts of Frances Robinson and her husband Thomas to educate their eldest daughter (also called Frances). Thomas had taken charge of the eleven year old Frances whilst back in England on business, perhaps to get her accustomed to the vibrancy of commercial and diplomatic life and reported back to his wife in Vienna that she was now ‘studying Œconomy and elegance with a great fat Housekeeper and will make an Excellent English Housewife’. He continued by highlighting what must have been an anxiety within the family overall with, ‘She would have nothing to do abroad with Maitre d’hotel...or officers. Here she thinks she is in her sphere and you know she has a knack of shining in everything she undertakes.’<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*. London (1789), p. 33

<sup>20</sup> NH 2835/54. Thomas Robinson from Tunbridge to Frances Robinson, Vienna, 10 June 1750.



It is not unrealistic to assume that most parents were similar to the Robinsons, and were keen supporters of instigating a relationship between experienced upper-servants and their children. Indeed, women were actively encouraged to seek advice from experienced mistresses of households in order to 'lay in store some knowledge' of the managerial processes 'by entering in a book a memorandum of every new piece of intelligence you acquire'.<sup>21</sup> This may have been the norm accepted in many elite families and may go some way in explaining why it was not often referred to in correspondence. Furthermore, the account books themselves did not record separate payments for the tutoring of girls in this way, suggesting that any teaching of this kind was done closer to home by a servant, parent or relative living nearby. In agreement with Ruth Larsen, the educating of elite daughters was shaped to enable them to become supportive wives to politician husbands. If parents wanted their daughters to have the potential to be influential helpmates with interests in politics, patronage and familial issues – they would need to be educated in key skills which helped fulfil the role of chatelaine.<sup>22</sup>

Experience was a key function for grasping the intricacies of account-keeping in the marital home – whether the knowledge was gained from an experienced 'other' or as a result of careful observation and parental guidance. The book-keeping skills of Lady Grisell Baillie have been well documented by Robert Scott-Moncrieff who suggested somewhat meekly that Grisell may have been a born bookkeeper. Scott-Moncrieff did point out that lessons might have been accessible to her for a sum of £2 sterling in 1701 since her brother-in-law, James Baillie received 'lairning book-keeping in pairt' at that date.<sup>23</sup> Women who proved confident in book-keeping, the possibility that they were coaxed into understanding accounting systems through observing their parents by studying with 'great fat Housekeepers' was perhaps a more widespread practice than what Scott-Moncrieff described. Moreover, the degree of thoroughness to which a child was taught book-keeping was clearly determined as gendered activity. The expense of hiring a qualified tutor was reserved for male children. For the females it perhaps made sense for them to be educated without achieving further expenditure, but

<sup>21</sup> Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (1774), pp.50-53.

<sup>22</sup> Ruth M. Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858.' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 2003), pp.98-113.

<sup>23</sup> (Ed.) Robert Scott-Moncrieff, *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie, 1692-1733*, Publications of the Scottish History Society, (Edinburgh, 1911), pp.xxxiii-xxxiv.

was equally borne out of discretion. Parents like the Robinsons understood that their female offspring would require key skills for her role as ‘an Excellent English Housewife’ but it could be argued that informal rather than formal tutoring better matched the supporting role in marriage a woman was meant to have.

The educating of daughters did seem to cause some worry for parents and approved subjects for girls were sometimes considered restrictive and confined a woman to the role of a more simplistic sort of helpmate. Frances Robinson had previously written to her sister Anne with her apprehension of finding a suitable education for her daughters in Austria. Anne wrote back with the suggestion that French was more than adequate until they were ten years old ‘and where so well and so easily as where they are now’.<sup>24</sup> Music and dancing were considered by Anne to be but trifling amusements that they could do without, and instead she placed great emphasis upon the pursuit of knowledge,

...a good mind and an agreeable manner makes many fine women, I own I love knowledge but one too often hears it condemned yt a woman is forced to hide it, however a girle of good understanding gets Enough (att least for her happiness) by Reading which she naturally loves...<sup>25</sup>

Book-keeping was never a compulsory part of the female education system. Roy Porter believed that the more refined a girl’s school was and the more respectable it was considered to be, the more likely it was to groom a future compliant and decorative role in fashionable society, teaching manners, deportment, religion, French, arts, graces and even cards.<sup>26</sup> All of these denied women the capacity for substantial mathematical exercise.

Isabella Carlisle intended her publication to be an instrument for educating or re-educating her reader, and implied that it was never too late to fill the gap of a young woman’s learning even once married and sufficiently able to manage the marital home. Yet, one elite woman had never had such guidance or clearly the propensity for learning the single skill which would set her confidently within her marital home. When Sabine Winn was left with no money to pay the children’s

<sup>24</sup> NH 2826/46. Anne Worsley to Frances Robinson. 23 March c. 1745.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 23 March c. 1745

<sup>26</sup> Roy Porter, *The Penguin Social History of Britain: English Society in the Eighteenth Century*. (1963), p. 165.



nursemaid when her husband Rowland was away on business, she scolded him severely, marking her anger with underlined segments of correspondence wherever she broke into English:

What can I do? You should it seems to me, always leave a little money, at least when you are absent. I know a certain person who would not be as patient as I am and it is why, I suppose she deserves to be preferred. This is exactly the state of the case. I could not help, when I began to write, mentioning these circumstances, because I really was very much vexed, &c.<sup>27</sup>

In this situation, had it not been better for Sabine Winn to assert some influence before Rowland left and seen that adequate funds had been laid aside for such an emergency? This was surprising since she had been given advice from her mother, Jeanne d'Hervart, in some of the darkest moments of her marriage when her husband was absent. Living at their temporary home of Badsworth, Sabine was to find the solitude too much and described it as 'one of the more desolate and ill-fated corners of the universe'.<sup>28</sup> Her lethargy and sullenness of country living were no doubt reflected in the personal correspondence with her mother, who attempted to steer Sabine away from complete boredom and inactivity. Sabine Winn received lengthy advice from her mother but rarely did she seem to take heed. One highly relevant piece went as follows:

You must study how they manage their accounts of the house where you are, to get an idea of how to do it, so as not to be a complete novice, if by chance you have to do it yourself. It is what women are called on to do, and it is their duty, unless they want to be ruled over by their servants, instead of ruling over them. I urge you to study this well.<sup>29</sup>

The moralising imperatives earnestly matched any of Isabella Carlisle's precepts with the use of 'you must study' and 'I urge you', but Sabine Winn's existing documentation merely represented her as having had a playful attitude towards expenditure. She was absent from the household account books and nearly all her

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<sup>27</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Nostell Priory MSS (NP) A4/1535/6, 9 October 1775. Sabine at Nostell to Rowland. I am extremely grateful for all the help given to me by Professor Christopher Todd in the translating and organising of much of Sabine's personal correspondence.

<sup>28</sup> Rowland and Sabine Winn lived at Badsworth for a time in the early 1760s when it was rented out to them by the second Marquis of Rockingham. Situated about four miles from Nostell, Badsworth was frequently in need of upkeep and maintenance. For Sabine and Rowland this was adequate enough, providing them both with a sufficient taster for married life outside London where they had spent the first few months together. See also Christopher Todd and Sophie Raikes, 'Love, Rebellion and Redemption: Three Generations of Women at Nostell Priory', in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> NP A1/5A, 15 June 1763. Jeanne Esther d'Hervart to Sabine Winn at Nostell.

correspondence with tradesmen, haberdashers and dressmakers denoted impatience and a frivolity so reviled by authors of conduct literature.<sup>30</sup> Maybe Sabine never had sufficient tutoring, the fact that her mother only issued a warning on household management on this, Sabine's second marriage, testified to a horrible neglect of domestic affairs.<sup>31</sup> To hesitate in imposing foreign methods of accounting and management in an English household or to instead acclimatise herself to English methods were perhaps Sabine Winn's only excuses.

In marked contrast was Frances Irwin. The influence of growing up in London Society meant she had plenty of experience with money and accounting matters. Overseeing housekeeping matters was taken for granted by Frances at Temple Newsam as soon as she and Charles took up residency there in 1758. She brought with her huge bundles of bills and receipts as a record of reliable tradesmen or stockists of her favourite goods, as well as a means of keeping a close eye on personal expenditure and perhaps to calculate tax or insurance on specific items. A month before her wedding, she indirectly approached the Temple Newsam steward, Samuel Keeling, through her husband-to-be with enquiries into the housekeeping costs of her marital home.<sup>32</sup>

Up until this point most of the surviving correspondence relating to Frances's impending marriage and her relationship with Charles Ingram revolved around the wishes of her father as laid out in his will. Any financial interest she had previously shown in Temple Newsam had therefore been channelled through her father's trustees. By July 1758, and with wedding plans well underway, Frances was able to attend to more personally interesting matters. Keeling's reply contained historically valuable details into the running costs of Temple Newsam in 1758 which came to an overall sum of £2175 – 0s – 6d (**figure 3.2**). As a piece of surviving documentation the letter serves as a snapshot of household structure with its annual expenses including wages, provisioning, blacksmith's bills, livery uniforms, malt and straw. Frances's response to these figures can only be assumed, but no doubt she made time to view them closely, perhaps even making a personal note to herself. Her enquiry represented an overt interest

<sup>30</sup> The most obvious of this correspondence was that to a Mrs A. Charlton in London. Her letters and their enclosed swatches of fabric have been perfectly preserved in the West Yorkshire Archives at Sheepscar.

<sup>31</sup> Sabine's first marriage was to Major Gabriel May, a man much older than herself. They had married in 1754, but he died five years later of cancer. See Todd and Raikes in *Maids and Mistresses*, pp.77-78.

<sup>32</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Temple Newsam MSS (TN) TN/C/18/128a, Correspondence 1751-1760. Letter from Samuel Keeling at Temple Newsam to Charles Ingram, July 10 1758.

in the finances of her future home; by showing initiative, Frances was readily engaging herself with the prospects of domestic activity.

**Figure 3.2. Portion of Letter from Samuel Keeling to Charles Ingram, 10 July, 1758. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/C/18/128a.**

<i>Servants</i>		L	s	d
To 20 Servants Wages		238	10	0
Livery Cloth making and Lining, Boots & Braoches 18/1		10	6	
		339 10 6		
<i>Collars</i>				
3 Pipes of Wine at 34/-		103	0	0
120 gals Malt at 30/-		100	0	0
Staps & Browning		30	0	0
		312 0 0		
<i>Stables</i>				
7 Coach Horses will consume in a Year 100 gals Water				
which at 12/- amounts to		60	0	0
Saddle Horses as much		60	0	0
Cost for Carting & Cart Horses 50 gals		30	0	0
Blacksmith bills		30	0	0
Druggs and Farriers Bills		20	0	0
Stew		20	0	0
		200 0 0		
Housekeep <sup>r</sup>		1305	0	0
		2175 0 6		

The bundles of bills and receipts which Frances brought with her to Temple Newsam suggested someone who was thoroughly confident and highlight her character as one of an exceptional example of an elite woman who enjoyed handling cash. She also represented the sort of woman who had been permitted a degree of financial freedom, often showing self-assurance and confidence in personal taste. Her father, Samuel Shephard was a representative for Cambridge as a Hanoverian Tory whose political achievements helped him to amass great wealth through investment which was passed onto his trustees according to his will until his daughter married. At the time of Samuel's death in 1748, Frances would have been fourteen years of age and

would already have experienced spending limits of £400 per annum until the age of ten from the interest available from the investment of £40,000 made by her father. Until the age of fifteen she was entitled to £600 each year and by the time of her marriage in 1758, she had access to £1,000 or as much interest as was available.<sup>33</sup>

Furthermore, she had her own account with Drummond's Bank, a small private bank in Charing Cross, and she seemed to settle many financial matters herself even when married.<sup>34</sup> The Drummonds account in particular showed a capital of nearly £50,000, the interest of which Frances used as 'income' and different payments to tradesmen, landlords and for lottery tickets. Frances was paying Margaret Henchman, her housekeeper in London, regular sums of money – a lengthy bill for 1755 came to £55 – 12s – 2d and included travel costs, goods such as jewellery and more general outgoings like rent (**figure 3.3**).

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<sup>33</sup> Adrian Budge, 'Temple Newsam and "The Good Shepherds,"' *Leeds Arts Calendar*, 98. (1986), 8-15, p. 10. *The Gentleman's Magazine for 1748*, (XVIII, 188) noted in Samuel Shephard's obituary: 'Sam Shephard, Esq. member for Cambridge, for which town and county he had serv'd in 8 parliaments; he died vastly rich'. Frances was made a ward of Chancery by Act of Parliament when her father died, and Samuel requested in his will that 'care, tenderness and regard' be shown Frances at all times, including details of her maintenance and education. WYAS, Leeds, DB 213, 28.

<sup>34</sup> Drummond's Bank is now incorporated into The Royal Bank of Scotland which now holds details of all her transactions. History of the bank is fairly thin, see Maxwell Gaskin, *The Scottish Banks: A Modern Survey*, (1965); and Charles W. Munn, *The Scottish Provincial Banking Companies, 1747-1864*, (Edinburgh, 1981). Frances's account runs from 1755 (the year of her twenty-first birthday) to 1807 [boxed 1811], when she died.

Figure 3.3. Portion of the bill from Margaret Henchman for Frances Shephard, 1754. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA12/2 – unnumbered.

*Mrs Shephard Bill from September 9<sup>th</sup> 1754*

	paid for seven yards of Cotton for Mrs Place	1 18 0
	paid for 2 yards of green & flower Muslin for an apron	1 4 0
	half a yard of black Muslin	0 6 0
9 15	paid for three Socks	0 2 4
9 19	paid to Mrs Shephard	0 5 0
9 28	paid for Socks	0 1 6
Oct 7 17	paid for making a new Suttney Gown	0 7 0
Nov 9 17	give Mr Costello and Mr Saag James and his Wife	2 2 0
	2 Dorey Maids and under Secondary Maid	1 1 0
	House Maid Kitchen Maid and Bedchamber	1 1 0
	to Little Betty the old Post Woman and her Household	1 11 6
	the New Bridge at Cambridge	15 0
	give to the Maid at Coningsston and Chapperton	0 2 6
9 5	give Mr Watsons 3 Men	0 2 0
	give to Sam Down	11 11 6
9 13	give Mr Watsons 2 House Maids	0 10 6
9 16	paid to Mrs Shephard	0 10 0
9 20	give to Mr Watsons House Steward	10 10 0
	give to Mr Watsons Coach Man and 2 Boys	1 6 0
9 21	paid for washing and give the Maid at Chapperton	0 2 4
9 22	paid for a Post Chaise from Huddersfield to London	0 17 6
9 23	give Lord Mountforts Coach Man and boy	1 11 6
	paid for a pair of Double Breeches	1 15 0
	paid Mr Saffers	0 3 0
	paid for a pair of Breeches	2 2 6
9 24	give to John Clarke Christmas	4 4 0
9 27	paid Mrs Shephard	0 5 6
Dec 31	paid Mr Saffers	0 2 6
9 11	paid Mr Saffers	0 2 6
9 14	paid Dolton House Maids Bill	0 2 6
9 20	paid for Coach and Chair hire	1 10 6
9 24	paid for 2 pair of Breeches	2 4 0
	paid for a Gown to work Snaps	0 5 0
9 26	paid to Mrs Shephard	0 2 0
9 28	paid to Mr Saffers	0 2 0
		5 0 0

Annual payments to Henchman from the Drummonds account amounted to about the same, excluding what appeared to be one outstanding payment in 1760 for £370 seemingly once Frances was residing at Temple Newsam and was settling old debts.<sup>35</sup> More exciting were the payments to architects, designers and artistes like 'Mr Carr', Josiah Wedgwood, and Felice Giardini. Carr was probably being paid for

<sup>35</sup> Drummond's Bank (Royal Bank of Scotland) DR/427/39 F408. Henchman came with Frances to live at Temple Newsam probably as a ladies maid or companion and appeared in a few bills and receipts as having been representative for the payment of bills in full. This is discussed briefly in chapter four of this study; see also TN/ EA 12/20 Charities, 1600-1801.

consultation on aspects of design or staircase plans for Temple Newsam as the amounts were relatively small, usually between £15 and £70 from 1762 to 1770; payments to Wedgwood never really exceeded £35; and payments to Giardini were more infrequent and only amounted to smaller sums of £20 in the early 1760s.

## II

How did the financial backgrounds, and by extension, the financial experience of these elite women impact upon their marital homes? Since this chapter is an exploration of the organisation and management of accounts in the elite household, this section will answer this question in light of surviving accounting documentation such as global account books, memoranda and bills and receipts. Particular attention is given to the ‘income’ of the country estate and the funds set aside for household expenses. Within the wider concerns of financial administration for the eighteenth-century country house, the household sat as a single department often divided into categories of expenditure which related to wages, foodstuffs and provisioning, and fuel. Global account books generally distinguished these outgoings by internal running costs and the external or outside costs necessary for household well-being and maintenance. The obvious internal payments included servant wages – the organic matter of the household and defined by the organic or human motion and interaction. It also included the costs laid aside for the immediate payment of supplies from tenant farmers, gardeners or estate bailiff. External costs were incurred through the purchasing from an open market and of finished goods required for household consumption and included hardware, further foodstuffs, clothing such as livery, and the essentials for heating and lighting. Both internal and external costs had a category of sundry payments.

The necessity of all these categories of household expenditure determined the financial boundary placed upon any household account. This is to say that the fundamental need for heating, lighting, food, and significant cleanliness, including payments to those in charge of maintaining these determined flexibility with which costs should be met. Unfavourable rising costs as a result of inflation or a change in supplier were the only triggers for financial assessment in the country house domestic expenditure. Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that programmes of building and refurbishment had any long-term effect upon the domestic running costs. From

another perspective, a restriction on servant numbers or purchases made on the open market might have been a temporary solution to the problems of funding expansion or updating a property.

Using a model under which wider management and administration functioned, the origin of country house finances can help establish patterns of household cash flow in the eighteenth-century. Weatherill has distinguished the differences between wealth and income, which although they may not be the same, they are not unrelated. Wealth was made up of fixed items like land and buildings, plus movables including cash and credit.<sup>36</sup> Income was generated from these for example rent from land or produce from agricultural development. This determined the flow of cash through the household and estate, and the settlement of marriage portions and 'income' allowed for the household mistress. This is later discussed in relation to the experience and financial awareness of the elite woman as supervisor and in her presupposed role as 'keeper' for the household.

Household costs were generally the essentials – the living costs incurred in the country house, and referred to as 'housekeeping'. Before and during her marriage, Frances Irwin made use of several tradesmen in London on a regular basis to purchase foodstuffs for herself and hardware for household maintenance. From William Robinson at the Greyhound and King's Arms in Fleet Street she bought teas and coffee, and the occurrence of hardware in personal bills and receipts like mops, brooms, candles and oil suggested that an employer had direct contact with traders and approached them with lists to be purchased in bulk. Frances bought such items from around London, and seemed to have bought locally in 1762 for goods needed to keep Temple Newsam clean and habitable.<sup>37</sup> Global household account books further listed sand for the housemaids which was used to scrub the floorboards and burnish pewter, and fullers earth which probably had use in the laundry as well as for the polishing of silver.

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, the regular servants at Wentworth Woodhouse received a total of about £300 in wages per annum, an amount

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<sup>36</sup> Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, second edition (1996), p. 106.

<sup>37</sup> TN/EA 12/1. See especially bills from Robert Johnson, William Agar, John Shute, and Robert Frisby.

which would increase when extra labour was needed in the event of a grand entertainment. The steward's cash book for 1724-32 showed that over £2,000 was disbursed per annum with the £300 expenditure for household wages and a further £500 for additional labour incurred through building projects and landscaping the parks and gardens.<sup>38</sup> The supply and demand of food at Wentworth Woodhouse depended upon these numbers plus the presence of extra guests at the house as recorded in day books and lists of people invited to dine with the Marquis.<sup>39</sup> Maintaining an appearance of self-sufficiency of the large estate meant variable costs in maintaining the household included foodstuffs like malt, barley and wheat could be supplied by the home farm. Large households made extensive use of home farms and parks but the cost per annum of external purchases could devour funds. For a thirty-year period between 1760 and 1790 at Wentworth expenditure of this sort included lean cattle and sheep, corn, hay and straw, housekeeping, furniture, liveries, cellar costs and incidentals all of which came to about £5,000 each year.<sup>40</sup> The cost alone of fattening cattle and sheep before slaughtering came somewhere between £200 and £300 per annum.<sup>41</sup>

Within the range of households in this study the financial boundaries of such expenditure were different merely by degree. Peter Earle detailed the compartments of expenditure and cash flow of the London businessman which were based upon a central pool of capital or stock. If we add to this the findings of Paul Nunn's thesis on the management of some Yorkshire estates, including Wentworth Woodhouse<sup>42</sup>, the model for the eighteenth-century elite household also encompassed a set of three subsidiary categories of wages and salaries; feeding the household and maintenance of stock and crops; and other external costs such as those to charities, election expenses and investments. The features of the frameworks recognised by Earle and Nunn suggested that there were few significant differences between the patterns of cash flow in the middle-class and elite households. The only exception would be the seigneurial rights of

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<sup>38</sup> Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS (WWM) A-1251 Cash Book of William Clauston – steward. 1724-32.

<sup>39</sup> WWM A-1373, Day book of miscellaneous household meat etc., 1772-1773; and A-1530 Memoranda book, dining lists mainly 1773.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Nunn, 'Aristocratic Estates and Employment in South Yorkshire, 1700-1800', *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (1976). Edited by Sidney Pollard and Colin Holmes. pp.28-41, p. 40 See also, Nunn, 'The Management of Some South Yorkshire Landed Estates in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Linked with the Central Economic Development of the Area.' (Ph.D thesis, University of Sheffield, 1985), pp.520, 565-68.

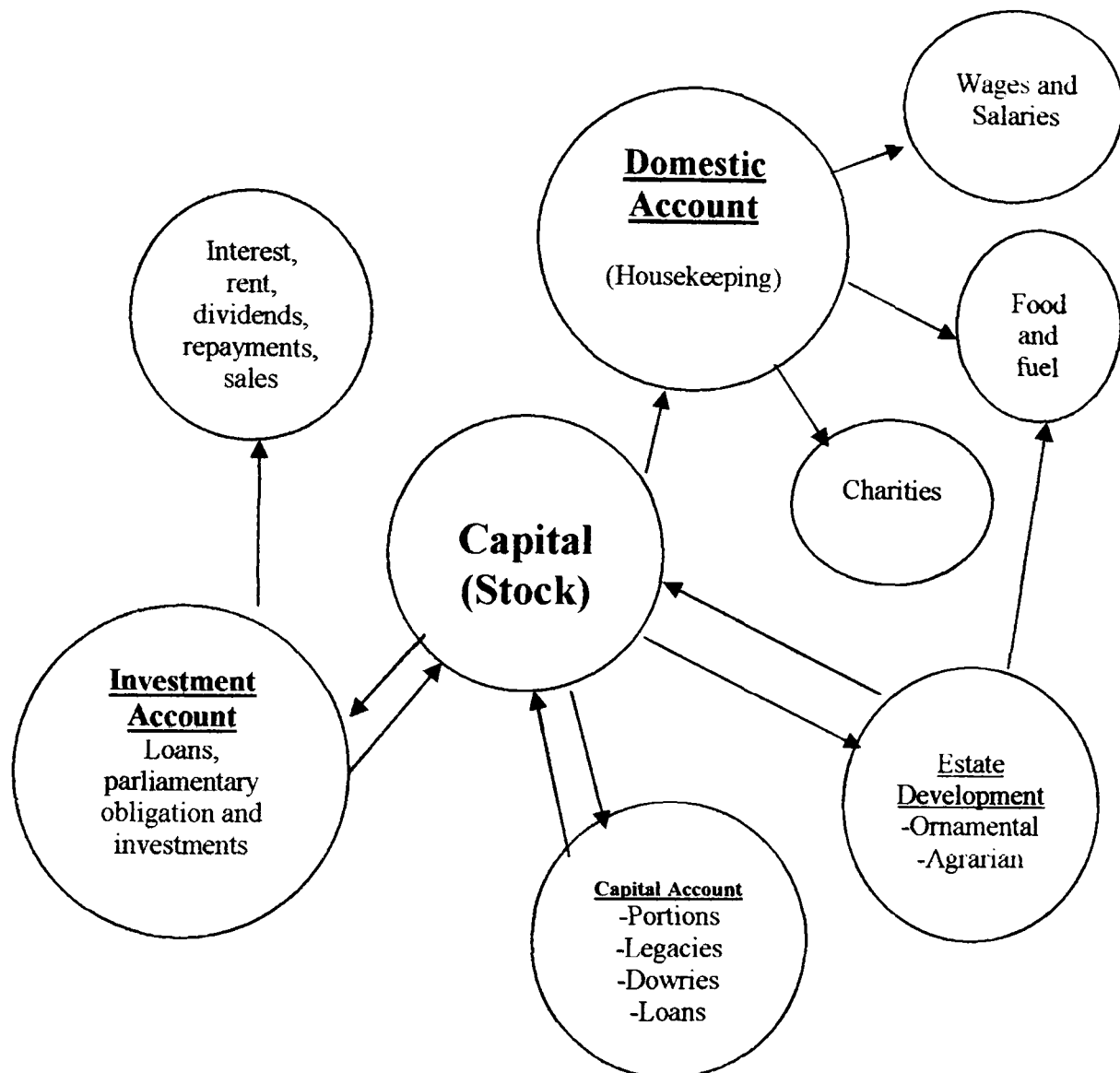
<sup>41</sup> WWM A-1374 and A-1451, Nunn, 'Some South Yorkshire Landed Estates', pp.520-21.

<sup>42</sup> Nunn, 'Some South Yorkshire Landed Estates', pp.516-518.



the elite which gave them a substantial income as a direct result of exacting rents and services from tenants.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, in both, more precise outgoings were the result of travel and carriage expenses, wages, taxes, and costs of repayments, dowries and portions to children (**Figure 3.4**).<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 3.4. Model of income and expenditure in the elite household.**



Charitable payments or provision for the parish tended only to be incorporated into categories of household expenditure when a favourable return could be made to the estate through employment or even finished goods like foodstuffs or material objects. For example, charitable expenses laid out in bills and steward's vouchers at Temple Newsam between 1760 and 1775 came to about £135 for that period and included the furnishing of needlework equipment for a Halton school for poor girls; books and writing equipment for a poor boys' school as well as providing penny loaves

<sup>43</sup> Michael Bush., *The English Aristocracy: A Comparative Synthesis*. (1984), pp.17-34.

<sup>44</sup> Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (1989).

and urgent medical treatment for the poor persons of Halton at the order of Charles and Frances Irwin.<sup>45</sup> Many of those at the receiving end of charitable behaviour were eventually to use their talents and skills upon the estate or within the house. Young boys were made use of in the gardens and stables and young girls found temporary work repairing or embellishing worn clothing and fabrics, or had a brief stay in the kitchen. Young members of poor local families were taught together and usually employed later in this way.

Global account books and memoranda for Temple Newsam and Wentworth Woodhouse certainly noted these patterns of charitable behaviour. Sisters from local parish families were taught needlework by widows Walker, Ellis and Robinson in Halton between 1761 and 1796. The regular occurrence of surnames like Dixon, Hardwick and Hanson indicated the popular desire for families to send their offspring to learn productive skills which would be useful to an aristocratic employer.<sup>46</sup> Parish schools to benefit from the philanthropy of the Rockinghams totalled seven by 1772 and received clothing, tailoring, paper, teaching salaries, and bibles. In previous years those who had been taught in such establishments may have found themselves employed in the provisioning and supplying for future pupils.<sup>47</sup> Any spare hands from the wider community could always be put some use.<sup>48</sup>

Less philanthropic were the parliamentary and investment exploits made by the elite male. These could be expensive and had substantial costs which could not always be predictable such as informal obligations which were to be met by frequent

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<sup>45</sup> TN/EA 12/20, Charities, stewards' vouchers 1600-1801. Those who received bread and medical treatments did so through the parish at Whitkirk. A further proposal for the eagerness of employers to hasten the recovery of the local poor may stem from illness or injury as greatly hampering wage-earners who worked on the estate as seasonal employees. There is little evidence to suggest that hay-makers for example were treated in the event of injury in order to prevent a high turn-over, but the notion is not that far-fetched. For a medicinal perspective on provision for the parish see Samantha Williams, 'Practitioners' Income and Provision for the poor: Parish Doctors in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries,' *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2), (2005), pp.159-186.

<sup>46</sup> TN EA 12/20, Charities. Sally (or Sarah) and Mary Dixon, Grace and Susannah Hanson and Faith Hardwick all received needlework lessons from the three widows. Most notably the Hardwick girl was paid four pence per week for marking linen in 1761.

<sup>47</sup> WWM A-1251, Cash book of William Causton. This lists expenditure connected with the house, park and family. Those related to charity include members of the Bower family repairing children's clothes and 'tending them in sickness', as well as a variety of names related to teaching local children.

<sup>48</sup> Jessica Gerard, 'Invisible Servants: The Country House and the Local Community', in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, LVII, (1984), pp.184-185. See also, Dorothy Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century: a Study in Social and Administrative History* (1926), especially chapter two, 'The Administrative and Financial Equipment of the Parish' pp.57-86.

cash backhanders or ‘garnishes’ and bribes which held the appeal of being beneficial in the long-term.<sup>49</sup> There was also the possibility of a sloppy or misguided investment in stock which had the looming threat of widespread debt if the market crashed. The consultation with an ‘insider’ could lead to buying at an inflated index price and the clumsy investment of £40,000 in only £10,000 worth of South Sea stock by Rich, fifth Viscount Irwin at Temple Newsam in early 1720 sufficiently scarred the Ingrams when the bubble burst in the summer of that same year. The Ingram family struggled to rebuild their capital through a private Act of Parliament which authorised the mortgage or sale of parts of the family estate up to the value of £20,000.<sup>50</sup>

Christopher Clay has suggested that throughout the eighteenth century the growth of landownership was the result of three main factors; marriage and inheritance; the land market; and electoral advantage. All were interdependent and determined significant territorial domination for the elite landowner over the lesser gentry.<sup>51</sup> This also held greater resonance for the elite woman if she brought substantial amounts of land as part of the marriage bargain as it could be in her own interest to help pursue the financial benefits of this additional territory and help stimulate her more mathematical faculties. Clay believed that the smaller estates were coming up for sale with greater comparative frequency than larger estates due in part to the advantages offered up by greater land units. The established owners of large land units were now intent on building up great estates by utilising the natural resources they hoped their accumulation would yield.<sup>52</sup> Many Yorkshire estates were becoming financially enriched by their coal deposits well into the twentieth century including those owned by the

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<sup>49</sup> For material related to the Ingram family and Parliamentary influence see A. F. Hughes and J. Knight, *Hills, Horsham's lost Stately Home and Garden: The Dramatic Rise and Fall of a House, A Garden, and an Eighteenth Century Family* Horsham Museum Society, (1999), Facsimile; and W. A. Albery, *A Parliamentary History of Horsham* (1927).

<sup>50</sup> Adrian Budge, ‘Temple Newsam and the “Good Shepherds,”’ in *Leeds Arts Calendar*, 98, (1986), pp.8-15. This was also due in the main to the fulfilment of the wills of the third and fourth Viscount Irwins by Arthur, the sixth Viscount Irwin. The Irwins borrowed heavily from William Milner, who was one of Leeds’ wealthiest merchants, its mayor in 1697, and a recent but considerable landowner in his own right with his estate at Nun Appleton. See Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley who have briefly discussed the debt of the Irwins in light of the influences of the peerage at county level and the endorsement of their social and political leadership locally. *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880*, pp.15-17.

<sup>51</sup> Clay, Christopher. ‘Marriage, Inheritance, and the Rise of Large Estates in England, 1660-1815’, *Economic Historical Review* XXI, second series (1968) 503-518.

<sup>52</sup> Clay citing Habakkuk, ‘English Landownership 1680-1740’, *Economic History Review*, XXI, 1, (1940); and ‘The English Land Market in the Eighteenth Century’, in (Eds.) J. S. Bromley and E. H. Kossman, *Britain and the Netherlands* (1960).

Gascoigne and Lane-Fox families not included in this study. Nostell Priory was certainly benefiting from coal seams in the late eighteenth century when account books set out by William Dawson in the 1790s recorded several hundred pounds in cash 'as per colliery weekly by account'.<sup>53</sup> The process of estate improvement could then lead many to manipulate and extract its mineral resources as 'windfall' gains.<sup>54</sup>

A factor which had proved far more beneficial for the families of this study over the generations was certainly marriage. Much has been said of the heiress within the studies of Clay, Habakkuk and Spring. It can be recalled that Habakkuk utilised the unions of Charles Ingram and Frances Shephard, and Charles Watson-Wentworth and Mary Bright to help illustrate his argument on marriage settlements. For the elite male, marriage to a wealthy woman brought financial gain through immediate cash in the form of the marriage portion, and if he made the right choice of spouse, a substantial amount of extra estate came too.

Habakkuk's identification of Frances Shephard and Mary Bright deliberately pinpointed the financial similarities and experiences of these two women even though their political beliefs would eventually be in stark contrast to one another. Both Bright and Shephard were thought to have fortunes worth £60,000 each. Where Bright proved advantageous with her inheritance of the estates at Badsworth and Eccleshall and moiety of Ackworth Park,<sup>55</sup> Shephard was a promising catch for the Ingrams when the £20,000 mortgage was paid off as the entirety of her marriage portion. Despite their apparent similarities in wealth and inheritance, their allowances through marriage could not have been more different. Frances was entitled to £3,250 as her marriage settlement as well as £1,000 per annum as pin-money secured by the trustees of her father's will.<sup>56</sup> Mary, on the other hand carried the burdens of the Bright estates which had been weighed down by jointures and debt and though her portion was set at a wholesome £5,000, she would only receive £500 from the Rockingham estates which

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<sup>53</sup> NP C3/1/13/1 (244) Dawson's Account for 1798. Between 1798 and 1801, amounts varied considerably. In January and February 1798 cash received from the Nostell collieries came close to £335, a year later, this was just over £250.

<sup>54</sup> Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, pp.14-26, and 297-351.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets, 1640-1760: Families, Estates, and Fortunes*. University of Hull (Oxford, 1980), pp.243-245.

<sup>56</sup> WYAS, Leeds. Pawson MSS Acc 1038 Letter Book 7 B6 B23a/188 Proposals for a settlement; and also B6 23b/9 Letter of John Waple to Mrs Charles Ingram, 26 October 1758.

upon her marriage had sufficiently swallowed up anything left of the Brights as a separate family entity.<sup>57</sup>

These amounts were better suited to the smaller estate of the Worsleys where in 1738 Thomas Worsley (1686-1750) informed his daughter, Frances Robinson, of his will and its particulars pertaining to existing marriage settlements and the possibility of male issue by his second marriage.<sup>58</sup> Each of his daughters by his first marriage, including Frances herself, were to have £1,000 settled upon them from a portion of £5,000. However, this was under the condition that there was no male issue either by his second marriage or that of his daughters if he were to outlive them. Frances did assume some financial independence from her father's will and her £1,000 per annum certainly allowed her the freedom to order clothing and tableware for her relatives on a regular basis.<sup>59</sup>

However, negotiating elite marriages did not always bring such good feeling. Sabine Winn was set to inherit nearly £70,000 upon the death of her mother including several possessions and a house in Vevey, Switzerland. The Winns were deeply uncomfortable about their heir marrying a foreigner but relatives did recognise some of Sabine's benefits. One relative remarked upon her good character and believed she was likely to be a good fortune and a Protestant.<sup>60</sup> Rowland's sister Mary was much terser in displaying her understanding of the intended marriage by proposing that £70,000 was not something to be sniffed at.<sup>61</sup>

Women like Isabella Byron and Isabella Machell were less conspicuous on the marriage market. The Machells had made good in the 'rag-trade' and Isabella's father, John Machell had successfully acquired property and the parliamentary borough of Horsham.<sup>62</sup> With the death of her two brothers, one as a baby and the other aged only

<sup>57</sup> Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets*, pp.243-250.

<sup>58</sup> NH 2823/1, Thomas Worsley, January 7 1737/8, York.

<sup>59</sup> See especially, NH 2823/7 London, April 17, 1739? Frances Robinson to an unidentifiable sister, and NH 2823/13 (nd) to Anne Worsley.

<sup>60</sup> NP A4/1509/8, 24 April 1760, Nathaniel Cholmley to his brother-in-law Rowland Winn, the fourth Baronet.

<sup>61</sup> NP A4/1541/22, 5 April 1760, Mary Winn to the fourth Baronet.

<sup>62</sup> Hughes and Knight, *Hills*, pp.9-14. Machell's property included some in Hatfield, North Mims (Hertfordshire), Chipping Norton, Over Norton, Blackfriars and Cheapside in London, as well as the 180 acre estate of Hills Place, Horsham.

ten, Isabella and her sons were to become the sole beneficiaries when even her younger sister, Cecilia died in 1700. Isabella Machell had already been married fifteen years by that date and her finances through marriage had long been settled giving her just over £1000 per year. Her father had stipulated in his will that his estate should go into the hands of three friends<sup>63</sup> to act as trustees for Isabella's sons, namely from the second eldest to the youngest since Edward, the eldest son was set to inherit the Ingram estates and the title of Irwin. Several sums of money were also to be 'placed and adventured' by the trustees for Isabella's sons with the 'National Bank of England'.<sup>64</sup> Isabella, however, proved to wield huge control over their money, especially in times of difficulty when she sanctioned financial help for them if their claims could be substantiated in improving the family's political stance.

Isabella Byron's own family background was riddled with good work and misfortune. The Byrons had remained loyal to the Royalist cause during the Civil War but surfaced as impoverished and ruined as so many other Royalist families had done. Isabella's father, the fourth Lord Byron hoped his closeness to the Royal family in the early decades of the eighteenth-century would aid the rejuvenating processes of the Byron estates with a pension of £600 per annum as gentleman of the bedchamber to Queen Anne's consort, Prince George of Denmark. From the late seventeenth century, several petitions had been made by surviving family members (especially widows) for land, pensions and appointments which saw a protracted recoup of financial loss.<sup>65</sup> By 1714, the fourth lord had put in a memorandum asking for consideration as to five hundred trees from Sherwood for the repair of Newstead which was approved so that the age of improving the estate could begin. His son, another William, and brother of Isabella, was to undo all this achievement as the result of a tragic disagreement with a neighbour and eventually became known as the 'Wicked Lord'.<sup>66</sup> Growing more morose, the fifth Lord Byron was to reveal eccentricities which led him to the sale of deer in the

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<sup>63</sup> Joseph Lee of Stoke by Guildford, Samuel Blunt and John Wicker – both of Horsham. See Hughes and Knight, *Hills*, p. 13.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>65</sup> A. L. Rowse, *The Byrons and Trevanions* (1978).

<sup>66</sup> An argument between the fifth Lord Byron and his cousin Mr. Chaworth over game on the estate developed into a overgrown quarrel and ended in a duel. Mr. Chaworth later died of his wound as a result of this duel, but it became a sensation because Byron was a peer and could face the death sentence. He was found guilty but escaped the death sentence only to discover his punishment was one of bitterness from his circle of friends. Horace Walpole later remarked that the exposure of the trial left Byron 'shocked and mortified'. Walpole added how he was sympathetic towards the honour of the Byron family, especially for Isabella. Rowse, *The Byrons*, pp.124-129.

park for much less than market value, the felling of trees, the sale of pictures, and the leasing of the mines at Rochdale at a derisory rental.<sup>67</sup> As the sister of the ‘Wicked Lord’, Isabella was probably keen to present herself as his antithesis – as someone who was both quiet and respectable as well as one who considered her own actions. She certainly proved this with her first marriage. Yet, Henry fourth Earl of Carlisle only made her £1,000 better off upon his death in 1758, even if she were allowed some silver and her jewels.<sup>68</sup>

Very little survives of the financial backgrounds of other women being examined in this thesis. Lady Fleming, the widow of Sir John Fleming, who went on to marry Edwin Lascelles as his second wife, appeared to have left scarcely any reminder of her influence upon the Harewood cash flow, although it could be argued that she made little difference to the massive wealth accrued by Edwin’s father and uncle through the sugar plantations in Barbados. Her two daughters, Dorothy Seymour and Jane who she brought with her to Harewood however, were considered great beauties and attractive catches because of the huge fortune bequeathed to them by their late father. The *Leeds Mercury* reported in 1775 that it was almost £100,000 per daughter.<sup>69</sup> In stark contrast was Elizabeth Lister who was a net cost to the Worsley family as the penniless orphan who fell pregnant by Thomas Worsley. By choosing to marry her, Thomas was creating both a moral and financial dilemma which saw Elizabeth maintain the benefits of an elite wife with an allowance of £330 per year which had obviously not been provided by any paternal settlement upon her. She was to become a substantial drain on the family finances up until her death in 1809 after thirty-one years of widowhood.<sup>70</sup>

The relevance of pin-money in this study lies with the way it could be utilised by many women for personal expenses or to provide goods for the table in informal spaces giving an idea of taste and attitude towards consumption for the

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.127-128.

<sup>69</sup> *Leeds Mercury*, 26 September, 1775. The paper announced the marriage of Dorothy Seymour to Sir Richard Worsley of Appuldurcombe, describing her as ‘a Lady of the finest accomplishments with a fortune of 100,000l.’ See Karen Lynch’s chapter on the women of Harewood, ‘Some Lascelles Ladies’ in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), pp.52-63, in which she pointed out that this was most probably a vast overestimate.

<sup>70</sup> Giles Worsley, ‘The Seduction of Elizabeth Lister and its Implications for the Worsley Family’, *Women’s History Review*, 13, 2, (2004).

household. It is not necessary here to discuss all the legal discourse of the period surrounding women's property rights, but it has been highlighted by Susan Staves, that pin-money was part of a degree of financial independence or 'income' for married women and she has suggested that through heavy negotiation, usually with the help of male trustees, a decent sum could be arranged. Staves has claimed that it was 'one species of married women's separate property', even though it was designated through marriage settlements and the contract by a husband to his wife during coverture.<sup>71</sup> Eighteenth-century attitudes towards securing pin-money reflected both contractual ideology and private bargaining, but in either case it was viewed as appropriate for a woman's maintenance.

For the purpose of this study, pin-money is referred to in terms of partial maintenance, that is, for clothes, tips for servants and some luxury foodstuffs.<sup>72</sup> These social uses of pin-money were evident from every woman's bills, receipts and where they existed, personal account books. Unlike the elite women of previous centuries who were entitled to an 'allowance' through the selling of made goods, the eighteenth-century version of pin-money came in the form of cash rather than exchanged goods. The elite women of this study clearly bought clothes to attire themselves, and these items consequently became imbued with independent status, and because they could not be alienated by her husband she could bequeath them to servants in her will or hand them over to poor widows of the parish. She was equally entitled to buy bank stock or to save her pin-money and purchase larger goods.<sup>73</sup>

Most women were alert and eager to manipulate their 'incomes' once married. The utilisation of pin-money for many was a freedom to supplement household provisioning and as a means to revealing personal taste in adornment or foods. For others it was a vital tool for protecting family interests. In either case, settlements made upon these women were an obligatory expense in elite marriages, but a fortunate

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<sup>71</sup> Susan Staves, 'Pin Money', in (Ed.) O. M. Brack, *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, 14, (1985), 47-77.

<sup>72</sup> Staves has assumed that women had no need to buy food for themselves within the marital home, as this was the role of her husband, but she may have some say over the contents of the purchase. This is to ignore the buying freedoms of many women, who wished to entertain with sweetmeats or expensive confectionery where it would have been considered inappropriate to use household funds for this purpose alone.

<sup>73</sup> Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*. (1993), pp. 187-200.



husband could see that his wife was in fact a help and not a hindrance to estate and household finances if she considered the return her pin-money could make through material goods or by stemming financial losses.

### III

Housekeeping has been easily ignored as insignificant expenditure overall. Mingay went so far as to mention total sums of housekeeping at Wentworth Woodhouse because of their relevance to general matters of elite consumption and highlighted the extravagances embodied by the substantial architectural plan of that house in particular. Mingay pointed out that the second Marquis of Rockingham spent £2,536 in 1759 on his stables and kennels, a sum which nearly matched that for housekeeping at £2,050 for the same year.<sup>74</sup> The feeling gained from the historiography of the gentry and aristocracy is one of disregard for domestic expenditure. This may be because it has not evoked excitement in the same way as lavish architectural embellishment or entrepreneurial risk and agrarian development, even when these ultimately affected both the size of the household and its relative needs. An estate like Wentworth Woodhouse was symbolic of the growth in landownership as recognised by Clay's essay which included marriage, inheritance and electoral advantage. The solid architectural statement of the country house marked it out as a power base and the kind of house an elite male built showed what level of power he was aiming at.<sup>75</sup>

The material culture of household account documentation of the eighteenth century was the product of meticulous notation and endless transcribing and list-making. In the large country establishment this was always carried out by the house steward sometimes liaising with the estate steward and the housekeeper. The briefest of glances at any archive index and catalogue today will provide insight into the immense organisational process involved in upholding the smooth running of these estates. The house steward's role was central to the administrative processes of household book-keeping and he occupied himself in his office-cum-chamber surrounded by papers, books and general reading material – a severe masculine world which could always

<sup>74</sup> G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1963), p. 159.

<sup>75</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978), p. 3; Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 4-25.

permit the presence of the elite female and her housekeeper when it came to discussing housekeeping matters.

The houses of this thesis stood as the bases of central administration for estate management and visually promoted the land and paper securities of ownership and its essential running costs. They were the administrative depots where supplies were ordered from and to where correspondence was sent, and supported the upkeep of the inhabitants. Land accrued through inheritance usually existed on the periphery within a devolutionary structure and where the proper full-time management by a steward could be justified.<sup>76</sup> The elite woman did not distance herself from this structure, but added to it; encroaching upon a traditionally masculine sphere to readily engage herself with all matters of accounting either as her husband's advocate or for her own personal peace of mind.

The hierarchical functions of household book-keeping meant the stewards acted as literate messenger for their employer when matters of even the smallest transaction were being processed. The unexpected visit of a poor woman at the door asking for money or clothes might have been dealt with by a housemaid or porter yet any handout had to be issued by the steward and recorded in a household account book. On doing so, permission from the mistress was most definitely required beforehand. Frances Irwin demanded cash handouts be given to poor women on several occasions, sometimes these would amount to only one or two shillings. One entry in an account book for March 1789 showed the healthy sum of half a guinea went out to 'a poor woman by order of her Ladyship' when only in February the year before she sent a poor woman away sixteen shillings and four pence better off in clothing.<sup>77</sup> Temple Newsam was clearly a good bet if the walk could be endured in cold weather.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Christopher Clay, 'Marriage, Inheritance, and the Rise of Large Estates in England, 1660-1815', *Economic History Review* XXI, second series (1968), p. 516. See also, Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880*, Abridged Edition, (Oxford, 1986), pp.202-203.

<sup>77</sup> TN/EA 14/15. Housekeeper's book settled by Samuel Smithson, 1786-96.

<sup>78</sup> Charitable expenses incurred by cash handouts were also recorded at Wentworth Woodhouse as a result of orders made by Mary Rockingham, one example listed for January 1774 marked the giving of ten pounds to 'a Poor distressed Clergyman...the Poor man being recommended to her Ladyship as an Object of Charity...' WWM A-1380, Steward's memoranda Book, Benjamin Hall, 1772-1784.

The global account book could clearly detail the minute financial activities and their importance as documents which were symbolised by the due care and attention given to their presentation and conservation. Paperwork relating to drainage, tenure, rents and assessments, land use and crops made up a substantial sum of the material culture of accounting. Loose documents, rolls and bound volumes gave further bulk to the filing and material culture of administration and included several of the minutiae required in landscape design (tree planting, fencing, ground preparation etc.), travel expenses, transportation of goods and regular tradesmen.

Amongst these rested the weighty volumes containing the relevant notes and tables of accounts relating the household expenditure. Normal practice seemed to have been the exclusive recording of expenditure only and not a double-entry system which was instead reserved for matters of estate debiting and crediting. Any precise correlation between amounts intended for housekeeping and therefore costs incurred have been lost. This was usually done on a weekly basis with sum totals for that period given each time. Occasionally, a record of monthly totals was included and at the end of every year the book was checked and overseen by the master or mistress, or indeed both, and then signed and dated according to their satisfaction that all had been accurately composed upon its pages.

At Nostell Priory, William Dawson's account books for the last decade of the century were perhaps the pinnacle of neatness and efficiency – and one of the few examples in this study of the double-entry accounting system throughout. The main body of each book listed general payments while sections at the back categorised individual items per annum like servant wages, house expenses, ale and wine, sundries, wearing apparel, rents and assessments and cash accountable (**Figure 3.5**).<sup>79</sup> Both the main lists and back sections were intended for quick cross-referencing and one column was reserved for the purpose of registering the page number upon which these items occurred.

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<sup>79</sup> NP C3/1/13/2 (243), 1799-1800. Other account books belonging to William Dawson are: C3/1/13/1 (244), 1798; C3/1/13/3 (245), 1801-1803; C3/1/13/4 (246), 1804-1805; C3/1/13/5 (254), 1825-1827; C3/1/13/6 (167), 1828-1832.



It was not unusual for a house or estate steward to stack the account books under their own name. For example at Temple Newsam, successive house stewards identified previous cash flows at specific dates through the name written on the book's spine or front cover. The estate steward 'honest John' Roades who stood *in loco parentis* for the nine sons of Arthur and Isabella when Arthur died at the age of thirty-seven. Roades maintained several types of account book, the most revealing of which ran from 1688 to 1702 (the year of Arthur's death) and included travel expenses, rents paid, stables charges, and chimney sweeping.<sup>80</sup> This was a hugely comprehensive book and detailed important expenses which affected the wider estate, its tenants as well as hinting at the cost of taxes to the Ingram estate. Outgoings ranged from £2073 – 3s – 11d in October 1690 to over £3000 the year before, and the necessity for witnesses to sign for the disbursements gave the book the added feature of several signatures. Both Arthur and Isabella signed as proof of their supervisory attendance and their names were accompanied by those of her father John Machell (then visiting his daughter and grandsons) and family friend, Thomas Worsley.

The Temple Newsam house steward, Thomas Watterson held books of daily expenditure and cash received which ran from 1734-36 and contained items such as servant and auxiliary wages, foodstuffs, the mending of clothes, and hardware.<sup>81</sup> From 1758-64 a James Shaw had full control of the accounts there as well as settling the housekeeper's accounts.<sup>82</sup> Later in the century a Samuel Smithson displayed the pride and professionalism of the job through the embellishment of books from 1786 to 1796 which included the buying in of kitchen provisions, items of clothing, and rat-catching.<sup>83</sup> Their techniques at recording incomings and outgoings do not differ greatly, but the precision and neatness of Smithson's book in particular far outshone that of his predecessor, James Shaw. That this identified some accounting deftness might be of little relevance, but the ways in which household account books were utilised or referred to necessitated a structured and accessible approach.

The monitor of these account books from the time of her marriage in 1758 to her death in 1807 was Frances Irwin who placed a supervisory eye on the

<sup>80</sup> TN/EA/13/47 John Roades' account and receipt book. 1688-1702.

<sup>81</sup> TN/EA/13/62 Thomas Watterson's daily expenditure, also cash received 1734-36.

<sup>82</sup> TN/EA 14/13 Housekeeping accounts settled by James Shaw, 1758-64.

<sup>83</sup> TN/EA 14/15 Housekeeper's book.

weekly and monthly amounts coming out of the estate. Some proof of this were the notes of disbursements written at frequent but sometimes irregular intervals and signed and dated by her with the purpose of upholding her presence over the expenditure (**Figure 3.6**).<sup>84</sup> Those to have survived ranged over a thirty year period from 1759 to 1789 and each recorded a sum of money given to the housekeeper for a week or several weeks' disbursements. For example, for the week beginning June 26 and ending July 3 1759 there was a total of £21 8s 6d, at other times the total may have been no more than £5. Between 1759 and 1789 the household had fluctuated; the number of children and their attendant servants had grown and diminished and Frances was widowed. The notes of disbursements however indicated that housekeeping expenditure was still relatively stable, ranging from £53 for six weeks in that year and £71 for nine weeks also in 1789.

**Figure 3.6. Handwritten notes by Frances of the disbursements made in housekeeping at Temple Newsam, 1759. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/12/1 – unnumbered.**

<sup>1759</sup>  
Mr Spelling Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 1759

Pay to Mr Carter the sum of four pounds eleven shillings & nine pence half penny for one weeks disbursements by her in housekeeping, from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of February as in her book will appear by me examined & allowed & place the same to Mr Ingram's account. Francis Ingram.

<sup>1759</sup>  
Mr Spelling Feb 27<sup>th</sup> 1759

Pay to Mr Carter the sum of six pounds eight shillings & eleven pence for one weeks disbursements from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of February as in her book will appear by me examined & allowed & place the same to Mr Ingram's account. Francis Ingram.

<sup>84</sup> TN EA 12/1 Housekeeping 1600-1789.

To assume the elite woman was idle was denying her the physical activity demanded by the household hierarchy in this instance. Women like Frances Irwin spoke with the housekeeper, perhaps she made visits to the housekeeper's room in order to sit side-by-side and view the articles drawn up, or had the accounts brought to her private apartments. To legitimise the working relationship in full required such a supervisory role, and evidence of several copies of account books existed along with copied sections of books to be filed separately by different individuals. James Shaw's household account book had several pages copied from it for the years 1760 and 1761 which were to be kept and referred to by the housekeeper. These pages allowed closer inspection and noted the presence of servants and auxiliary staff and recorded the specialist goods which belonged to the department of housekeeping and provisioning with lists made up of mainly grocery items like fuel, lighting and foodstuffs. As they ran over the Christmas and New Year period, they revealed some of the festive goods being bought in to add to the celebrations which included the consumption of copious amounts of beer, and two large 'mincepyes' which together cost one shilling.<sup>85</sup> There can be no doubt that an extra copy or transcribed pages were directly accessed by Frances at Temple Newsam.

These also demonstrated a significant security feature in the financial and administration processes in the eighteenth-century country house and reduced fraudulent behaviour where upper servants might be colluding to trick their employers out of huge amounts of stock.<sup>86</sup> The interaction between a mistress, her housekeeper and the steward was incredibly precious and rested greatly upon trust through reliable and attentive characteristics on all parts.

An indication of this interaction and its value can be found within the vast administrative processes at Wentworth Woodhouse where expenses were logged within a large bound volume between 1769 and 1775<sup>87</sup>. This was a key period in the household which saw the purging of untrustworthy staff and the re-evaluation of running

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<sup>85</sup> TN/EA 14/14 Household accounts. 1760-1761.

<sup>86</sup> Pollard briefly discussed the managerial hierarchies needed to prevent fraud and embezzlement, and highlighted the occurrence of such a crime as common where the owner was frequently absent, or his departmental manager was untrustworthy, *Modern Management*, pp.25-36, 246-251.

<sup>87</sup> WWM, A-1365, Housekeeper's book of stores, 1769-1775. There appears to be only one volume like this in the Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments, though this does not imply that it was the only one ever to have existed and there may originally have been others.

costs. Mary Rockingham personally checked this 'housekeeper's book of stores' and discussed any discrepancies with the steward Benjamin Hall directly. On several occasions she anxiously enquired after the rising costs of goods and what she perceived to be unnecessary quantities of stock being bought in compared to previous years:

I must now add something of my own relative to what you mention about the stores, for the Housekeeper I can't but think they must be better bought in London and when you send me a list of all the sorts that will be seen in Martha's book what quantities have been ordered in other years which I should like an account of and after talking the matter over with the Housekeeper if you find you can apply for a lesser stock this year so much the better.<sup>88</sup>

The book itself was laid out with each month to view on a double page spread in tablature format (**Table 3.1**). Columns related to days of the week, weekly totals including quantities of goods consumed in that week, the replenishing of goods, and the total stock carried forward. What the book of stores does not reveal was the actual cost of goods which had been bought on the open market. On the other hand it does provide some clarity in regards to country house production as an aspect of provisioning, especially with distilled waters and made wines, yet, this practice appeared to have ended by July 1769 when no entries were made for distilled waters and a year later the heading for that column had been abandoned altogether.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> WWM Stw P2/1. 27 June, Saturday night, 1772. Mary Rockingham to Benjamin Hall.

<sup>89</sup> Examples of home made food stuffs included in the book of stores were white thorn, bean flower, red rose, elder flower, peppermint and strawberry distilled waters. Plus orange, cowslip, currant and birch wines. Before July 1769, the total bottles and containers of distilled waters came to nearly four hundred. There seems to have been no explanation for why that column was discarded, neither was there any documentary evidence maintained elsewhere nor proof of how so much produce was even destroyed.



**Table 3.1. Extract from Housekeeper's book of stores at Wentworth Woodhouse for 1773. (Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments A-1365.)**

1773	Sugar						Fruit			Soap		
	Treble loaves	Double Loaves	Single loaves	Fine Powder	Sixpenny	Coarse	Currants	Raisins	Jarr raisins	Ball	Crown Kegs	Rosin
In Hand	17	14	-	42	-	231	50	53	1	1125	3	16
July 12 Mon												
13 Tue												
14 Wed						4						
15 Thur										6		1
16 Fri												
17 Sat		1		4			4	4				
18 Sun												
Total consumed this week		1		4		4	4	4		6		1
Remains	17	13	-	38	-	227	46	49	1	1119	3	15
Brought in				56								
Total in hand	17	13	-	94	-	227	46	49	1	1119	3	15

The format of the household account book was not difficult to fathom for even the most uninterested or uneducated female. It was certainly within her sphere to supervise; she could show the slightest concern, but not ignorance. However, the more subtle material culture of accounting practices in the country house under the guardianship of the steward may have been accessed far less by the elite mistress. Books of memoranda existed as a means of cross-referencing bills, receipts and vouchers and corresponded to individual payments to tradesmen or to servant wages. These supplemented the global account books and noted general expenses which encompassed household matters, charitable payments, livery costs and fabric amounts, servant duties, copies of letters to tradesmen and suppliers addresses. The presence of the elite mistress was felt within the pages of such documentation through her demands or enquiries. Benjamin Hall's memoranda book was one such valuable asset and noted Mary Rockingham's instructions for the grazing of her 'old double Mare and little Grey filley'

as well as building requirements to her tea room and garden.<sup>90</sup> He also recorded book orders made by her and important business addresses to be forwarded on to the housekeeper. One entry for 12 January 1774 recorded a previous order made by Mary for silverware from Hancock, Rowbotham and Co, and included an inkstand, an amber box inlaid with silver and some little bespoke studded boxes.

An especially rare piece of material culture for the period was the 'Copy of George Cook's Cellar Book' for Newby Hall for July 1758. The cellar book was not as obvious in its use as an account book and served more as a form of inventory that appeared to be updated on several occasions.<sup>91</sup> The compiler (presumably a butler) had clearly walked the length of the wine and ale cellars noting the number of bottles stored there as stock was listed either on the 'right hand side' or 'left hand side' of each cellar. Later insertions into the main list showed whether a certain rack was 'now in use' or had been rearranged to accommodate other bottles containing different wines or ales. What can be divulged from this inventory or compilation of the cellar stores is, like Wentworth, the variety of alcohol and the degree to which some may have been supplied by the estate itself. Bottles of Scotch Claret, London Claret or Scotch Burgundy, rum and arrack would have been bought in for example, whereas 'Mrs Allen's Claret' and 'St. Saviour Gate Claret' denote a supplier nearby or perhaps the results of tried and tested recipes.

In contrast to the observational processes in financial administration carried out by Frances Irwin and Mary Rockingham, there were the bound books composed entirely by elite mistresses who desired to compare and cross-examine household expenditure for themselves. Of the most valuable surviving documentary sources available are the account books kept by Isabella Carlisle at Castle Howard and Isabella Irwin at Temple Newsam and as a widow at her house in Windsor. They date from different periods, but this has little bearing on their content and both were varied in their intended use, layout and accounting system.

Isabella Carlisle's abstract or summary of the household accounts at Castle Howard demonstrated an eagerness to view expenditure for herself and to

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<sup>90</sup> WWM A-1380. Memoranda Book.

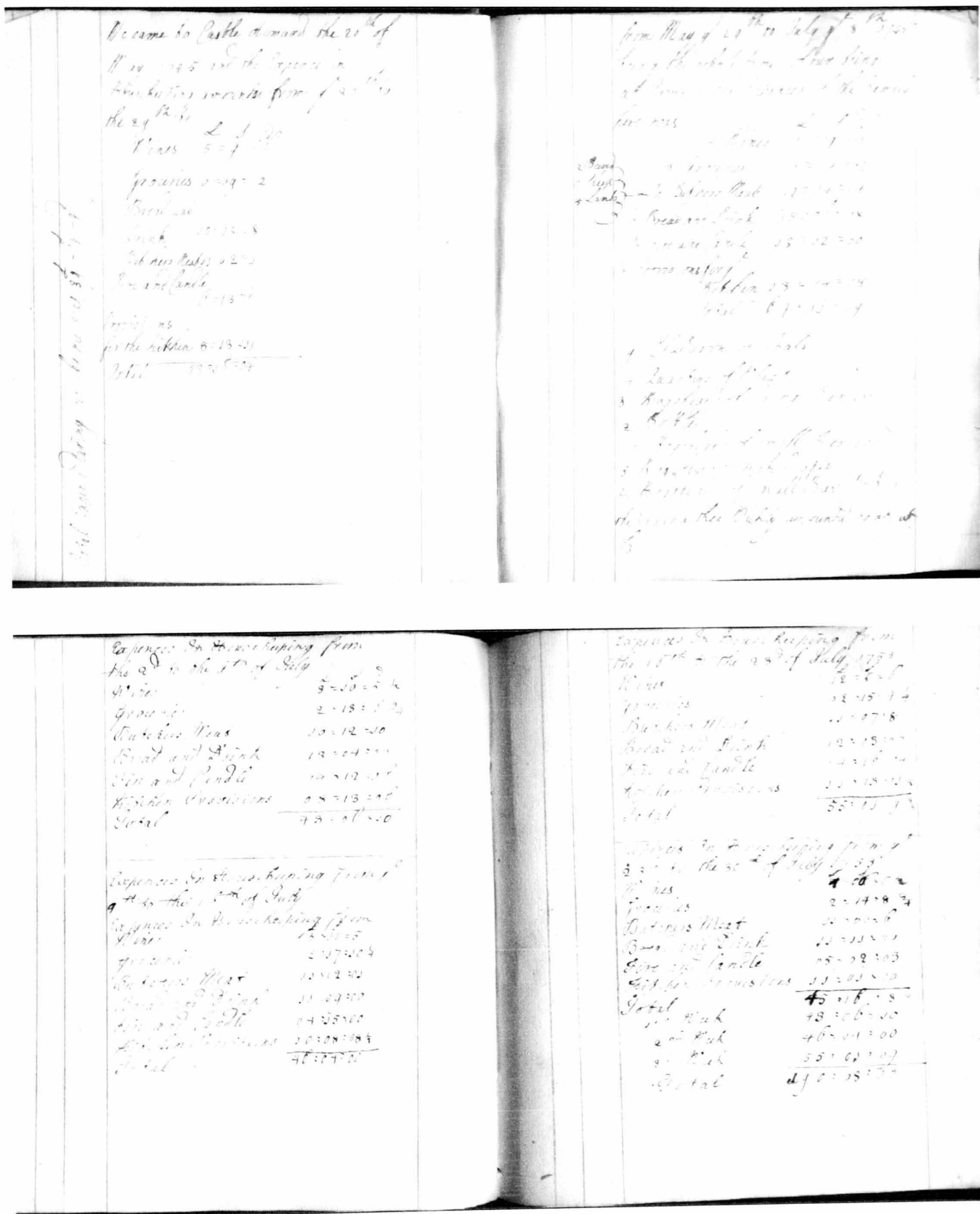
<sup>91</sup> NH 2785 Cellar book of Newby. 7 July 1758.

participate in the discussion of value and necessity of goods. An introductory note inside the front cover of the abstract penned by Isabella provided an opener to the book which gave the expenses while the family were in residence and when they were absent and a skeleton staff resided at Castle Howard. Expenses incurred while the family were away came to £36 – 14s – 8d and in their residency this came to £364 – 17s – 8¼d which included ‘All articles not inserted in the steward’s accounts...which sum is chiefly expended in Coals and Corn for feeding of Swine Pigeons etc...’<sup>92</sup> The rest of the book was written freely rather than in any strict tabular form with weekly and monthly totals for regular items such as wines, groceries, butcher’s meat, bread and drink, fire and candle, provisions for the kitchen, veal, butter and wheat (**Figure 3.7**). Each four-week period was added together to give the monthly total and at the end of each six-month period – when the family left for London – these too were added together. When the family returned, the amounts during their absence were recorded and the process started again. Occasionally there were marginal notes made by Isabella in regards to the cost of butter per pound, the amounts of wine or strong and small beer bottled, and how many chaldrons of charcoal were now in the house provided by the estate. The book was in no way complicated by difficult mathematical or accounting practices – Isabella was simplifying the steward’s accounts for her own purpose, perhaps in order to discuss matters of cost at regular intervals with her husband, the steward himself, or the housekeeper.

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<sup>92</sup> Carlisle MSS *An Abstract of the Household Accounts 1744-1755*. H1/1/14. See also Venetia Murray, *Castle Howard: The Life and Times of a Stately Home* (1994), pp.58-60.

Figure 3.7. Selected pages from Isabella Carlisle's *Abstract of the House Accounts*. Castle Howard Archives.



Isabella did make corrections and annotations throughout the book and even referenced a mistake or deficiency of over fourteen hogsheads of beer found in the main steward's account book which did not match her observations. Overall, the book offers huge insight into the needs of a growing family and household through rising totals in essentials like butcher's meat. In July 1747 for example, butcher's meat cost £5

– 15s – 10d, by August 1755 it was costing the Howards £12 – 09s – 07d. Bread and drink cost £8 – 08s – 0d in July 1747 and £12 – 10s – 4d by August 1755. Indeed, the entire purpose of the book probably became a register of food stuffs and provisions once Isabella started having children and the household grew.<sup>93</sup>

More personal was the handwritten pocket sized book used by Isabella Irwin to record all her personal expenditure (**figure 3.8**).<sup>94</sup> Isabella Irwin's pocket account book ran from 1698 to about 1720 and was roughly divided into 'What my Lord gave me', 'For ye Housekeeping', 'Stables', 'What money my Lord has had in the Year', 'What my son has had off me', and 'What I have spent myself.' Throughout the book there is substantial use of the first person with 'gave *my* son', 'what money *I* had', and 'gave *my* sister'. The recorded items were diverse and covered a multitude of incomings and outgoings as the result of business transactions, basic household necessities, and being a mother and elite wife. Entries included clothing, cash payments, wages, medicines and treatments over much of Isabella's residence at Temple Newsam where housekeeping usually came to anything between as little as £1 and as much as £11 a week (**Figure 3.9**). Isabella became the wife of Arthur third Viscount Irwin in 1685 – the first of their nine sons, Edward, was born the following year. When Arthur died in June 1702 Isabella still continued to reside at Temple Newsam until the marriage of her second son Rich to Lady Anne Howard in 1718 when she took a house in Pound Street in Windsor where she lived until her death in 1764. She still maintained some level of personal accounts once in Windsor with surviving documents recording housekeeping expenditure in general as well as wines, wages, and repairs to clothing and footwear.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Isabella and Henry's children were Anne 1744-?, Frances 1745-1808, Elizabeth 1746-1813, Frederick 1748-1825, and Juliana 1750-1849. By the last entry of the abstract in 1755 the youngest child was just five years old; the oldest, eleven.

<sup>94</sup> TN/EA/14/18 Personal Accounts of Lady Isabella, 1698-1721.

<sup>95</sup> See, TN/EA/14/21 Housekeeping and wines and personalia, 1722/3 and 1747-52; and TN/EA/14/22 Housekeeping and wines and personalia, 1752-56.

**Figure 3.8. Isabella Irwin (née Machell), (1670-1764). Portrait attributed to John Closterman. Leeds Museums and Galleries, Temple Newsam. No date.**



Figure 3.9. Selected pages from Isabella Irwin's personal account book. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/14/18.

for the value of 40s of the year	00	19	06
for 10 pounds 2 bottles for	01	03	00
for 10 pounds for the week			
for the sheeping from the day	3	15	00
London my son David went to do			
for June 10			
for the pocket	3	06	00
for the pocket	00	10	00
for the pocket	00	10	00
July 1 for the week's sheeping	03	10	10
July 2 for the week's sheeping	02	11	00
for my pocket	01	01	00
for the week's sheeping	00	08	00
July 4 for the week's sheeping	03	04	07
July 5 for the week's sheeping	02	13	82
for the horse my son took	04	18	00
for my pocket	01	00	00
for things in the tank	04	3	06
for the week's sheeping	00	10	00
for 10 yds 2 half of silk	00	12	00
for 10 yds of the week's sheeping	03	10	00
sent my boy Churcher	05	00	00
July 6 for the week's sheeping	01	18	00
July 7 for the week's sheeping	02	19	00
for half a year board teaching	14	00	00
for the week's sheeping	04	06	00
July 8 for the week's sheeping	00	17	00
for the week's sheeping	00	08	00



The image shows a page from a handwritten account book. The entries are written in a cursive script, likely Latin, and are organized into columns. The rightmost column contains numerical values, possibly in pounds, shillings, and pence. The entries include various transactions such as payments for horses, goods, and services.

Sept 16	for odd things	00 07 07
Sept 16	for odd things	00 07 07
Sept 23	for 3 horses	00 09 00
Sept 23	for odd things	00 01 32
Sept 23	for 3 horses	00 12 00
Sept 30	for 3 horses	05 09 10
Sept 30	for odd things	00 13 91
Sept 30	for 3 horses	00 12 00
paid Sarah half of hours		01 01 00
waives due last midwit		02 00 00
paid it wage		01 01 00
Oct 7	for 3 horses	03 03 99
Oct 7	for 3 horses	00 19 02
paid it wage		00 08 62
Sept 14	for 3 horses	00 10 00
with spend at Kentish things		06 01 71
Oct 14	for 3 horses	01 04 05
Oct 14	for odd things	00 19 11
at fever chat of Colsetz		11 08 08
Oct 21	for 3 horses	04 19 04
Oct 21	for 3 horses	01 02 05
Oct 21	for odd things	00 11 10
Oct 28	for 3 horses	02 11 02
Oct 28	for odd things	00 10 02
lost it (at)		01 15 00
Nov 11	for 3 horses	02 14 10
Nov 11	for odd things	00 15 10
Nov 11	for 3 horses	00 07 00
Nov 11	for 3 horses	00 07 00

Isabella Irwin's pocket account book for 1698-1720 was exceptional in its details and some of the greater highlights were those of real personal value for Isabella. She noted for example, the cost of someone cutting her hair in 1700 which came to five shillings, the price of a pair of stockings in 1700 which came to £1 – 7s, and for some chocolate and tea in September 1702 she spent £2 – 11s. Most of her daily routine was recorded in this book and can be traced through her expenditure. Her personal maids, for example are distinguishable from those merely passing through or from those supplementing the regular staff at Temple Newsam. Her charitable responsibilities towards servants or tenants were noted and in one case, Isabella gave a Mrs Townley £1 – 5s towards the latter's lying-in after giving birth. She also utilised the book for noting more frivolous outgoings, and her penchant for sport and amusement



was clear when she listed on several occasions the amounts she lost at cards – a rather modest guinea in 1719.

These two elite women were united in their creation of account books through a desire to set living standards by which they could maintain a steady eye on household and estate assets. That Isabella Carlisle's abstract has survived at all was testament to its importance for Isabella, even when she no longer had any significant involvement at Castle Howard. It would have been part of her personal memoranda, boxed and filed away with private papers when not in use; as mistress of Castle Howard it would no doubt have perched on a dressing table or held a place of significance in her ladies secretaire to remain accessible and within reach. Whilst on her self-imposed exile and living in Aix, her former standards remained. Isabella wrote to George Selwyn with general gossip and updates on her travels, accommodation, acquaintances and health matters, and most of these letters were peppered with her observations of successful or failed household routines like finding a suitable cook, of one she commented, 'I have got such a cook as I wish you had. He is so excellent an œconomist as is seldom to be found in this country, never in ours...' <sup>96</sup> Frugality was very much a standard by which Isabella chose to distinguish her staff, particularly whilst living in straitened circumstances. <sup>97</sup> Her concern for the financial structure of her marital home of Castle Howard remained as secure as ever. Isabella even entered the traditionally perceived male sphere of estate management when her strategy for organisation and efficient management stretched to informing her daughter-in-law, the fifth Countess of the best methods for improving one of the fields at Castle Howard with buckwheat and corn after further drainage. <sup>98</sup>

Similar interest in estate turnover – and understanding in 'male' gendered activity – was projected by Isabella Irwin who was careful to communicate her

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<sup>96</sup> John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England: George Selwyn and his Contemporaries with Memoirs and Notes*, Four volumes. (Boston, 1900-1915?), vol. 4, p. 59. The Dowager Countess of Carlisle to George Selwyn, no date.

<sup>97</sup> Ridgway in *Maids and Mistresses*, pp.39 and 43. In November 1771 she began to have money difficulties when her bill of credit was refused and funds from England were delayed. Ridgway amusingly asserted that though life was cheaper on the Continent than in England, Isabella recognised that her table was poor in comparison to how it once was, and that this was probably determined by her modest lifestyle as well as her frugal cook. Also, Carlisle MSS, *Letterbook* (J13/1/3), letters 34, Coligny, 24 May 1772; 35, Coligny, 1 June 1772.

<sup>98</sup> Carlisle MSS, *Letterbook*, (J13/1/3) letter 12, Beaucaire, 10 December 1771. This advice is also interesting on the grounds that Isabella was unafraid of the responsibilities associated with the masculine sphere – a characteristic she clearly hoped her successor would demonstrate.

concerns over the price of household supplies on several occasions and was keen to observe the consequences of indirect taxation on consumables upon the domestic account.<sup>99</sup> She asked her steward John Roades to enquire after good quality white and brown sugars and hops that could be got fairly cheaply. Her correspondence showed that she was even eager to get samples of these before purchasing them in larger amounts.<sup>100</sup> Isabella Irwin's account book, as well as her later documents relating to purchasing from her Windsor home showed her to be prodigiously involved. All show her to have had direct active involvement within the household and upon the estate, employing charwomen for sweeping, dusting, washing, and scouring, plus her noting of the income gained from selling sheepskins and hides each year.

Isabella Irwin proved herself to be quite the formidable household mistress if it was required of her, especially when it came to the financial adventures of any one of her nine sons. Ruth Larsen has discovered that she indeed became ill-tempered when crossed. For example she caustically annotated a conciliatory letter from her son's steward, Robert Hopkinson who had suggested an amiable resolution between mother and son with, 'Friendly advice to give up my Inst writ to an ungrateful son wholly governed by ye proud family of the Howards who never served any body but for their own interest.'<sup>101</sup> She was certainly unafraid to threaten litigation against her eldest sons in order to protect the interests of the younger ones and endeavoured to secure the two parliamentary seats of her home town, Horsham, by contributing the yearly sum of her pin-money in order to keep the family afloat.<sup>102</sup> Once she became a widow, Isabella acted as the 'breadwinner', and such an action demonstrates the resourceful and utilitarian attitude she had even if it was borne out of great necessity. That she felt she should keep such a meticulous and comprehensive personal account book was utterly befitting for a woman wanting to sustain control of financial matters.

Isabella Carlisle and Isabella Irwin were two active managers and observers of their domestic expenditure. Parental influence or early experience as young

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<sup>99</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Pawson MSS, Ac 1038, Volume 7 (April 1691-December 1704), Charles Drury to John Roades, Temple Newsam, 27 February 1694.

<sup>100</sup> TN/C/9/14, Mary Wettenhall to John Roades, London, March 4 1700/01; and TN/C/9/21, Thomas Wettenhall to John Roades, London, August ? 1701.

<sup>101</sup> TN/C/12/27, Robert Hopkinson to Isabella Irwin, 13 December 1718. See James Lomax in *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 102, n.5. Also Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity', (2003).

<sup>102</sup> Hughes and Knight, *Hills*, p. 23.

girls and adolescents taught them frugality and groomed them towards a prominent supervisory role when it came to accounting matters. Overall, an elite woman's involvement in supervising the household accounts challenged the presumed role of her as a delicate female, and appointed her instead as responsive to the financial minutiae of her household. In doing so she trespassed into the 'masculine art' of arithmetic with her watchful eye by enquiring and questioning rising costs and apparent discrepancies. Her only feminine characteristic allowed her in this department of management was the privately kept volume intended for her sole use which could always become a tool for comparing the expenditure she witnessed with that recorded by the house steward. Her personal documentation therefore became valuable material within a wealth of large bound volumes, ledgers and rolls. The masculine world was defined by anything from the weighty volumes to dusty cellar books. The feminine world of accounting in the country house was more intricate in its form by supplementing and furnishing this bulk of bound paper with notes of disbursements, pocket books, abstracts and summaries and copies of expenditure.

#### IV

Overall, the women of this study had different techniques for supervising their household expenditure. Isabella Irwin noted everything in her personal bound volume for Temple Newsam and once widowed, at her house in Windsor. Isabella Carlisle made summaries of the family's expenditure at Castle Howard, and Frances Irwin consulted the global account books and agreed disbursements with the housekeeper. Larsen has suggested that these techniques were influenced by wider social and cultural shifts where the polite household changed or evolved through sentimental domesticity to arrive at romanticism.<sup>103</sup> Attitudes towards involvement in the running costs of the household therefore moved away from the practical to the personal. This of course, was not strictly true and excluded women like Frances Irwin who did not keep personal accounts or abstracts but preferred to observe from a distance – and still with regularity. Such a theory certainly excludes Sabine Winn who appeared to have dismissed it altogether. The diligently kept working record of household affairs and expenditure should not be assumed to be a signifier of wider cultural shifts having

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<sup>103</sup> Larsen. 'Dynastic Domesticity', p. 53.

influence over the household in this examination since there can be greater emphasis placed on experience, parental authority and individual impulse on understanding the financial environment of the marital home.

As supervisor of the household accounts, the elite mistress established herself confidently in her marital home. It was in the department of accounting that she had to comprehend her surroundings and effectively 'take stock' of the financial composition of her husband's estate. Most women of this study fully recognised the interdependency of estate and household matters in this case and both Isabella Carlisle and Isabella Irwin showed that this could become personally significant by keeping their own account books or summaries. Discrepancies could at once be openly challenged in a meeting with the house steward or housekeeper. Knowledge of income and expenditure in the household gave any chatelaine an advantageous stance in controlling the rest of the community. This was certainly not a notion lost on Sabine Winn's mother.

However, warnings issued to women by their relatives on a need for observation and supervision could be heard but not entirely grasped. Jeanne d'Hervart was impressing upon her daughter the need to show interest in her marital home as a means of promoting activity and to steer her away from idleness. That she encouraged a pursuit in household accounting as a woman's duty stood to be a meaningful proposition. It highlighted an acceptance for d'Hervart that such a practice was the instant answer to assessing other managerial processes. It is surprising therefore that Sabine Winn did not take after her mother and bring to her second marriage an equally resourceful mind.

Educating elite daughters in methods of accounting was not a procedure thought essential to their later roles in marriage, but this study proves that whether they actually got involved in the financial processes of their marital home or not, expenditure and its attendant paperwork were actually considered vital for a mistress as a business partner and spouse. In her managerial role it was something most women took for granted – but it was always going to be a reflection of either how well she had been tutored or how compulsory it was for her to interact with the financial circumstances of the parental home. Elite women like Frances Irwin who had always had huge sums to play with were lucky, yet even she proved to be an exceptional example with her investment and confident banking.

A woman's confidence with finances came from experience: what she had observed in the parental home, how far she had been allowed to learn this for herself, and how important it was considered by her own family to control and manipulate funds. This was all the more crucial where she carried a large sum as a marriage portion. Experience would teach her to be concerned in wider family affairs as her pin-money might become a useful aid to quick financial support towards a member of her offspring or provide something supplementary for the dinner-table. An elite woman's 'income' was certainly a stimulant for greater involvement in household accounting. As supportive wife, and one who was eager to complement her husband in her position as the managerial mistress, the importance of pin-money to her supervisory role lay in its origin in the marriage bargain. To this extent her experience with finances could show her to be either a great catch or a net cost. Her marital home depended upon the land and further material wealth she might bring, so for her it was prudent to study the outcome of her inheritance. Amongst Isabella Irwin's personal papers and accounts she noted the hindrance of lavishness for the household, and took it as an injustice when prices rose. In 1709, she complained to her steward of the cost of meat, 'I never remember provisions so dear as this year. You can't get a good chicken for under 8 groats...for my part I grudge everything that is more than plain meat'.<sup>104</sup> For the household community and its running costs this meant a considerate and careful mistress who monitored growing expenses in line with familial growth and one who kept extravagances to a minimum.

Moderation was also something recommended by Isabella Carlisle in her *Maxims*, and a concept to be adhered to for any mistress irrespective of social status. More emphasis was put on words like regularity and punctuality though, and were frequently connected to household accounting. Regularity evoked the constancy which dominated thoughts on female domesticity, whilst punctuality resembled the need for awareness and performance. Rather interestingly such phrases even corresponded to the image created by Isabella Carlisle of the timepiece and all its working parts. Supervising the accounts gave a chatelaine peace of mind, but as Carlisle reminded her reader, it was also justice to her dependents.

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<sup>104</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Pawson MSS, Acc 1038, volume 8 (January 1705-1716), Isabella Irwin to John Roades, Temple Newsam, 14 April 1709.

#### 4. Servant Organisation and Household Authority

This chapter explores the relationships the elite mistress had with her staff and how these were determined by levels of communication as well as her own ideals and awareness in assessing behaviour and the mentality of her household community. If overseeing the accounts was the first step to gaining confidence in her marital home, then her grasp of household authority was the first step to monitoring social cohesion and the household community and its effect upon the reputation of the marital home.

Studies on the eighteenth-century domestic servant have persistently highlighted the conditions of service in relation to the hierarchical interdependence of households and the wider local community.<sup>1</sup> Rarely has discussion focussed upon an elite woman's role as either a figure of authority over her household community or the organisational skills she acquired as chatelaine. The trials and tribulations of servant organisation experienced by Elizabeth Shackleton and exposed by Vickery suggested women of the lesser gentry had their daily routines consumed by the supervision of staff and the delegation of domestic duties.<sup>2</sup> Vickery's inclusion of such female domestic management has provided great insight into levels of communication and the successes or failures in reliance within the structured community.

An absence of elite women higher up the social scale than those of Vickery's study within the subject has been influenced by the complexities of running a larger household. With this, there has been the assumption that the delegation of domestic duties was handed over to upper servants like stewards and housekeepers, and that she was not the outright employer. Too much association with domestic boundaries and the servant as sub-category to the country house has led others to disparage the skill of organisation and authority for fear of stereotyping the hierarchical role of the elite mistress.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> D. A. Kent, 'Ubiquitous and Invisible Servants: Female Domestic Servants in Mid-Eighteenth Century London,' *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 28 (Autumn, 1989); Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender, 1650-1750: Life and Work in the London household*, (2000); Gerard, *Country House Life: Family and Servants, 1815-1914* (Oxford, 1994); Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domestic in the Eighteenth Century* (1996); and Dorothy Marshall, *The English Domestic Servant in History*, Historical Association, General Series G.13, (1949).

<sup>2</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998), pp. 138-147.

<sup>3</sup> Dana Arnold, *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (2003), p. 79.

The identity and singularity of the domestic servant is deliberately omitted here to allow for the attempts at coordinating large numbers of staff to be understood in light of a mistress's expectation for household order. Exclusivity such as this has previously invited criticism within the historiography of the eighteenth-century domestic servant as early as Dorothy Marshall's essay in 1929.<sup>4</sup> Bias towards the elite as employers has been considered detrimental to the study of the domestic servant since there was reliance on subjective texts as well as unpublished material produced almost entirely by the elite as the (literate) employer class. Marshall made use of this material to compensate for the illiteracy of much of the servant population of the time. She also identified the rising 'servant problem' which occurred on two levels through expressions of complaint and discontent towards wage increases and servant 'insubordination, insolence and luxury'.<sup>5</sup>

The eighteenth-century press bemoaned the excesses of the servant class projected through their dress, tea-drinking and extravagant pastimes. The elite as employer was forced to admit that their servants were displaying independence and acting above their station. Nothing contributed more to this show of independence than the system of tipping or the giving of vails. In the country where families entertained frequently and often quite excessively themselves, the custom of giving vails was blatant and invidious for the master who as Marshall claimed had to observe his servants publicly extracting money from his guests.<sup>6</sup> By the 1760s this custom had become utterly deplorable and several members of the elite subscribed to a 'Resolution not to permit their servants to take vails on any Occasion...'. Those who signed numbered nearly three hundred and included several of the Yorkshire elite including Edward, Edwin and Daniel Lascelles, Thomas Duncombe, Thomas Wentworth, Thomas Robinson, and Stephen Tempest.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Dorothy Marshall, 'The Domestic Servants of the Eighteenth Century', *Economica*, 9, (April 1929), pp. 15-40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. See also Hill, *Servants: English Domesticity*; E. S. Turner also makes this a main theme in *What the Butler Saw: Two Hundred and Fifty Years of the Servant Problem*, (1962).

<sup>6</sup> Marshall in *Economica*, no. 9 (April 1929), pp. 23-25

<sup>7</sup> Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse MSS (WWM) Pamphlets. *A General and Correct List of the Gentry &c who came to a Resolution not to permit their servants to take vails on any Occasion, from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 1763*. The fact that this petition exists amongst the Rockingham papers might suggest that at Wentworth Woodhouse a similar belief was held, or that the second Marquis simply recognised the political discourse this could represent.

Whilst continuing with the notion of counterbalancing any bias, and nearly seventy years after Marshall's essay, Bridget Hill debated the disadvantages and advantages of service measuring the 'attractiveness' of domestic work against the sacrifices in independence, personal identity and self-respect. This was what made the domestic space political, and Amussen has questioned the way in which individuals sought to order their households with the help of doctrinal instruction which employed the analogy of household and the state in the seventeenth century. The eighteenth-century household was considered in more familial and affectionate terms but equally constricted individuals due to the insistence on reverence for superiors and on the reciprocal duties of superiors to those they governed.<sup>8</sup> This left little room for the individuality which Hill argued had become so much a part of servant life-cycle. Hill was part of a later wave of interest in the eighteenth-century domestic servant which also brought about some vital examination of the neighbourhood and communities surrounding the country house and its effect upon household structures.

Receiving the most criticism for failing to adopt this 'bottom-up' perspective was Hecht in 1956 who sought to differentiate the exact roles and qualifications of the eighteenth-century domestic servant with respect to the master/servant contract and its conditions and rewards. Although a pivotal study, and still highly influential, Hecht was criticised because he reflected the social concerns and prejudices of his own sources – those of the elite. Yet, by his own admission, Hecht intended to compose a study by descriptive and impressionistic method; a research framework which was limited to the available source material. Indeed, Meldrum declared that it has been 'churlish' to criticise previous historians of the subject without the acknowledgement of an increasing range of sources now accessible to social historians.<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of concentrating solely upon the authoritarian role of the elite woman here is intended to both complement and support these existing studies. It is meant as a response to the need for utilising a vast array of correspondence and other

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<sup>8</sup> Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford, 1988), pp.53-66.

<sup>9</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p. 5.



documentation in which the eighteenth-century domestic servant has surfaced as a subject inviting a spectrum of emotional display from the female head of the household. This approach does rely on a predisposition towards the employer perspective. Yet, it demonstrates the awareness of research still needed to explore how the elite woman has repeatedly been viewed as a negligible member of her marital home. Dana Arnold may well have been eager to resist inclusion of the elite woman and her association with sub-groups such as servants, but the organisation of servants actually saw the mistress exercise the most social aspect of her domestic power.

A lack of involvement for the mistress in servant organisation can also be detected through further assumptions on the nature of servant employment. D. A. Kent observed the higher levels of communication between a mistress and her female staff. Thus indirectly stating that the most notable and identifiable positions of steward, footman or butler – those customarily filled by men – never required much interaction with a female mistress.<sup>10</sup> Her authority seemingly only applied to members of her own sex, as if it were unbecoming to discuss household and even estate management with the agent, bailiff or steward. How she then accomplished or fulfilled her duties within any boundary of management when her husband was absent must only be imagined. Kent's study deliberately attempted to challenge the dominance of male authority and male servitude in the historiography to include the notion that domestic service was 'sufficiently attractive' for women too, but this still failed to accentuate the significance of the active females undertaking domestic roles under the watchful eye of a female manager.

Much of the source material used by historians of the domestic servant has limited their approach to this 'island of femaleness' because elite women were apt to greater shows of affection towards their women servants. On the other hand, female managers were quick to judge other women in their households in light of their own understandings and principles on appearance, manners and feminine virtuosity. Elite women have constantly been highlighted as generous in their gifts of clothing and ephemera to female servants. This point does hold great significance here, but does not really recognise the common ground these women had in terms of dress, needlework and

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<sup>10</sup> D. A. Kent, *History Workshop Journal*, 28, p. 112.

simple sewing to the extent that these gifts would have been obvious. It also ignores the emphasis some of these elite women placed upon more financially sound gifts or bequests to male servants in wills. Frances Irwin certainly singled out many female servants for large sums of money in her will, but did not forget her butler, Henry Caddy or the gardener Richard Taylor both of whom were to receive fifty pounds along with other male members of staff such as James Pitts and John Pickersgill.<sup>11</sup> An elite woman's working relationship with her steward in light of house and estate administration was discussed very little in her personal correspondence but her business negotiations through him are noted here. However, the more interesting and fiery episodes in a mistress's attempts at household authority were definitely the result of personality clashes and closer female interaction between mistress and maid.

Where the elite mistress has come to dominate substantial texts in more recent historiography, particularly those by Baird and Martin, the female managerial role as servant organiser has barely commanded a few paragraphs, never mind chapters.<sup>12</sup> This is also compounded by contrived attempts at reiterating the contractual as well as personal relationship between employer and servant. Stella Tillyard's examination of the four Lennox sisters constantly drove home the message of interdependence, and stressed that it was frequently the mistress who rested upon her staff rather than some 'servile dependence upon the rich' on the part of her servants.<sup>13</sup>

Within the large household servant organisation was time-consuming, often very frustrating but equally rewarding. Yet, a chatelaine's reputation could become quite vulnerable where she could be accused of excessive delegation to irresponsible and lazy servants, a 'plundering' bailiff and 'pilfering' housekeeper<sup>14</sup> who together devalued domestic service and isolated their mistress who contented herself by fashion and luxury goods. The monitoring of large numbers of staff with the assistance of upper servants

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<sup>11</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, (WYAS, Leeds). Temple Newsam (TN) Additional MSS. 3997 34 (7). Copy of the will of Frances Lady Irwin. January 9 1806. It is not known as yet the entirety of the roles of these male servants at Temple Newsam at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

<sup>12</sup> Rosemary Baird. *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses* (2003). Joanna Martin. *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (2004).

<sup>13</sup> Stella Tillyard. *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832*. (1994). p. 222. Tillyard's main focus, when her discussion turned to that of the servant and mistress relationship, was mainly on Louisa Lennox and her household.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Allestree. *The Ladies Calling: In Two Parts*. A New Edition. London (1787) First Edition. Oxford 1673. p. 243.

has prompted debate on gender roles in such households. More specifically, debate has centred upon the increasing number of female servants who supposedly had creative housekeeping duties conferred upon them once the elite woman started to withdraw to her dressing room.

This 'feminisation' of domestic service has been better suited to urban middle-class social rankings found in the studies by D. A. Kent and Tim Meldrum.<sup>15</sup> Leonard Schwarz has observed that from another perspective, menservants were 'a flagrant example of degeneracy, which in turn was a product of the love of luxury' and that they 'served' as signs of conspicuous consumption. The 'feminisation' debate has far more in common with the rise in general servant requirements in urban households where the maid-of-all-work was uprooting her more specialised ancestors.<sup>16</sup> She was a permanent fixture, a shadowy, nameless and faceless figure and yet ubiquitous where several urban middle-class households existed together in large towns and cities. In the country, maids-of-all-work were not similarly placed within the household hierarchy. A maid who had the capacity to partake in several departments ranging from kitchen to laundry was known simply as the char or help. Her transience and occupancy at the very bottom of the servant hierarchy does not therefore warrant inclusion in the feminisation debate.<sup>17</sup>

However, Girouard has pointed out that the social landscape of the country house was steadily being supplemented by females, and that the old fashioned male retainer was seeking employment elsewhere by the seventeenth century. Domestic

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<sup>15</sup> D. A. Kent in *History Workshop Journal*, 28, pp.111-128. Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, pp.6 and 18-21.

<sup>16</sup> L.Schwarz, 'English Servants and their Employers during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Economic History Review* 52 (2) (May, 1999), pp.236-256. Schwarz drew heavily from the Servants Tax of 1771 which exempted those trades or callings 'by which the master or masters of such servant earn a livelihood or profit' (see footnote 24 in this chapter). Contemporary estimates suggested that about one third of England's 'servants' were luxury consumption goods. John Chartres has noted that the tax as designed should have targeted only this consumption in a manner that left those who employed servants for production untouched. 'English Landed Society and the Servant Tax of 1777' in (Eds.), Negley Harte and Roland Quinault, *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F. M. L. Thompson*. (1996), pp.34-56; see also Peter Laslett, *Household and Family*. Female servants were defined far more as production servants, a distinction which led many to view the tax on females as deeply unpopular in the early 1780s.

<sup>17</sup> There has been little debate against the feminisation of domestic service, especially where the middle-class household has come to dominate the secondary literature. The argument, suggested Schwarz is better suited to London domestic employment and even then to a later date between 1851 to 1871. *Economic History Review*, 52 (2), p. 18.

service was enticing to women and pushed men away because the latter now considered it demeaning as well as finding it compromised their independence and therefore their masculinity because of its need for deference and servility. In the elite household this coincided with needs of privacy as well as cheap labour to which 'docile and devoted' servants like women and boys were better suited.<sup>18</sup> It was also influenced by the tax on male servants towards the end of the eighteenth century and lower wages and wider social connection which further persuaded men out of service. Undervalued female domestics were considered so because of the dwindling practice of elite families sending their adolescent sons and daughters to live with a friend or relative for a few years to finish their education. Domestic labour was no longer peopled by kin but by strange and unfamiliar faces that required good character references and previous experience.

Recently, Lehmann has argued that there was a more conscious development of female roles in the elite household from the late seventeenth century into the eighteenth century. She stated that it was the role of the housekeeper which actually had positive bearing on 'the public face a household presented to the world as a dispenser of hospitality.'<sup>19</sup> Lehmann's study was refreshing within a subject consumed with discussion on employer/servant relations and the role of housekeeper is given special precedence later in this chapter, yet the presence of a housekeeper did not denote an overall upheaval towards total feminisation in the elite household. Her role was supportive and semi-professional, though training was probably gained with smaller households, and she implemented every order of the mistress whilst proving her own initiative. She had to remain close to the mistress but be firm and detached with the other female domestics as well as several lower male servants. Feminisation in this context only applied to the growing necessity felt by elite households to have a housekeeper at all rather than the specific tasks and routines she undertook.

The elite woman received criticism for handing out her female responsibilities in the household to other women. One main criticism of the feminisation debate has questioned whether these roles were merely revised within elite households

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<sup>18</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978), p. 142; and C. Fairchilds, *Domestic Enemies: Servants and their Masters in Old Regime France* (Baltimore, 1984) quoted in Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup> Gilly Lehmann, 'The Birth of a New Profession: the Housekeeper and her Status in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in (Eds.) Isabelle Baudino, Jacques Carré and Cécile Revauger, *The Invisible Woman: Aspects of Woman's Work in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2005), pp.9-25.

rather than revolutionised by an onslaught of female labour. In their use of inventories, Overton et al., have suggested that from the late seventeenth century there was an increase in small-scale food and drink processing activities which they believed to be a strong indicator of the employment of female servants in large numbers.<sup>20</sup> Yet, it should be remembered that Mary Rockingham criticised her housekeeper for a lack of frugality and that application for a lesser stock from London was her preference for the coming year. Furthermore, the Wentworth book of stores revealed a vast removal of home-made distilled waters from its pages before 1770.<sup>21</sup>

The division of labour in the household meant that cleaning, scouring, polishing and cooking or preparing foods had always been viewed as women's work. Bridget Hill proposed that changing lifestyle and modes of living amongst the aristocracy and the middle classes who had higher social aspirations brought about luxuries such as textiles, ceramics and upholstery which eventually replaced plain necessities and increased the number of household tasks. All of these things required more washing, more cleaning and more polishing and in fact actually rendered the female domestic servant typically ubiquitous but unskilled.<sup>22</sup> So while they were ridding carpets of dust and polishing wooden floors, it was the responsibility of the experienced male servant to buff the silverware and add extra sheen to newly bought china for a lady's dressing room cabinet. The transient charwoman represented a growth in female labour but men still outnumbered women in the main servant hierarchy.

As a result the chatelaine actually had rather more frequent communication with male servants than has been allowed her in the historiography. Perhaps it is not so audacious to assume that in fact the male head of the household had less communication with these non-kin members because female servants were his wife's responsibility. The nature of an elite woman's relationship between her upper male servants and her upper female servants differed though. Male domestics certainly held more specialised roles which demanded articulate correspondence, quick decisions and responses between mistress and employee. Female domestics, although specialised

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<sup>20</sup> Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann. *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750*. Routledge Exploration in Economic History Series, no. 19, (2004), pp. 80-85.

<sup>21</sup> WWM A-1365 Housekeeper's Book of Stores, 1769-1775.

<sup>22</sup> Hill, *Servants: English Domestics*, p. 40. Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 80-81.

in some degree, were either involved at a level of companionship (ladies maid) or as confidant-cum-deputy (housekeeper).

The elite mistress collaborated with several of her servants, male or female, in order to recognise better organisation. This might have been the result of logistical changes in the household through building or remodelling, or through an eagerness to settle her servants within a more efficient routine. Once married, many women brought personal servants with them to the marital home. Frances Irwin was accompanied by her housekeeper-cum-companion, Margaret Henschman from London to Temple Newsam, whilst Sabine Winn brought one or more French speaking maid servants with her to Nostell Priory. Often these groups of women or companions acted as familiar support in such times of important life-changes like marriage and any elite woman would have wanted them to feel as equally accommodated as she was. Sabine Winn in particular wanted constant feedback from her personal maids and compiled inventories with them at Nostell as well as seeking their help in arranging the servants' hall at mealtimes (**Figure 4.1**). A long-standing personal maid was the indispensable assistant and could add to an elite woman's household authority.



very unsafe and unlikely for her to turn out a very steady servant' and hoped another house would employ her.<sup>23</sup> In the same breath, Mary asserted that Molly Vickers, the upper store-room maid had 'more the look of a servant than any in the house', and fancied her a 'solid clever woman.'<sup>24</sup> Mary was always ready to promote the need for some social mobility of her staff whenever she suggested a servant to find employment elsewhere, even if it was a much smaller establishment than Wentworth Woodhouse.

Conversely, the absence of the elite woman as household mistress is also crucial to this argument because such physical vulnerability of female domestics could penetrate deeper family values. Females in situations of close master/servant proximity could be a threat or viewed as promiscuous, something which the swift transition from maid to mistress for Elizabeth Lister at Hovingham Hall becomes ever more poignant.

The authoritative aspect of servant organisation was determined by numbers, responsibilities and the extent of household communication. The household hierarchy and servant structures within the country house differed only in cases of employer requirement or personal interest, for example a penchant for horses or landscaping brought about greater reliance on grooms and gardeners respectively. Some households had live-in clerics or doctors where others did not, and as families grew the need for tutors, governesses and nurses expanded. Although in effect a pyramid of power with kin positioned at the top and the servant sprawl providing sound footings and foundations, the elite household structure can be better viewed as a framework consisting of core staff members and family, non-essential members and supplementary staff (refer to **Table 1.1** p.19). Authority was therefore based upon groupings of professional/specialist servant (defined by good levels of literacy and their ability to gain immediate or direct communication with the employer); general servant (a less immediate or indirect level of communication); and auxiliary staff (little or no level of literacy and therefore no direct communication with the employer) by which point the numbers had almost quadrupled against those who communicated directly (**Figure 4.2**). In the elite household the number of all servants was usually considerable. What this

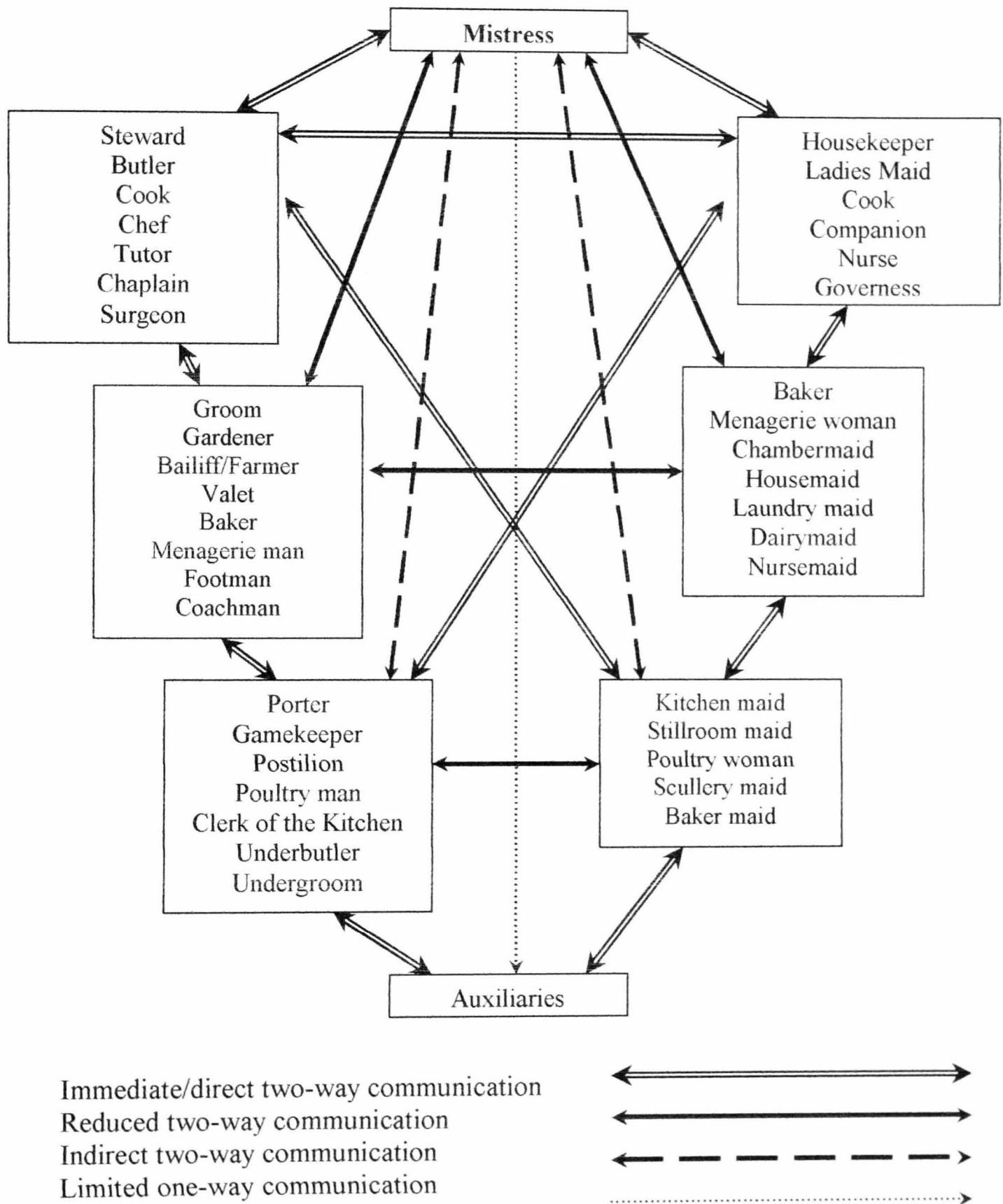
<sup>23</sup> WWM Stw P2/37 (1). Wimbledon Monday night, March 25 1773.

<sup>24</sup> WWM Stw P2/37 (1). See also Jane Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire 1650-1780.' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 1989), pp.65-66, where she talked of the attractiveness in both male and female servants as consequence to their employment and made use of the same piece of correspondence between Mary Rockingham and Benjamin Hall.



framework clearly represented was a complicated web of communication up and down the hierarchy where the elite mistress held enormous sway.

**Figure 4.2. Framework of household communication.**



## I

Numbers of servants in elite households are not always easy to come by, unless for reasons of debiting and crediting the whole household was listed in accounts or ledgers. At Nostell Priory one such ledger, together with a list of board wages both compiled at the end of the eighteenth century showed an estimated twenty-one male domestic servants and thirteen female domestic servants.<sup>25</sup> At Wentworth Woodhouse categories like 'The Steward's Room', 'The Lobby', 'The Servants' Hall', and the 'Coach and Stack Stables' concluded with a total of eighty-five members of staff overall in 1767/8, the wages of the men servants alone came to nearly £600.<sup>26</sup> For those undertaking primarily 'indoor' or domestic work the numbers were slightly less, with a total of thirty-three male servants and just eighteen female.<sup>27</sup>

A newly built Newby Hall had twelve male and eight female servants under Sir Edward Blackett in the early 1700s at a cost of just over £93<sup>28</sup> and at Temple Newsam by the middle of the century, lists for housekeeping reveal a slightly larger sized household with seventeen male and eleven female with their total wages coming to £233.<sup>29</sup> For Harewood, the steward's accounts in the 1780s and 1790s show twenty-five male domestics and fifteen female.<sup>30</sup> Venetia Murray's study of Castle Howard has

<sup>25</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Nostell Priory MSS (NP) C3/1/6/11. Ledger, 1792-1815; and NP C4/2/2. 1797. List of board wages.

<sup>26</sup> WWM R2A-39, List of Family at Wentworth, October 31, 1767. The actual amount was £575 – 1s. See Nunn 'Some South Yorkshire Landed Estates' on this category of expenditure, p. 518. Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire', cited in Vickery *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 134. Holmes actually counts 81 servants for Wentworth Woodhouse which Vickery describes as 'a veritable army' of staff. The list in the Wentworth Muniments itself was compartmentalised which unfortunately allows for discrepancies where servant duties appear to overlap, some names belong to more general categories and may have been listed by surname only.

<sup>27</sup> If we are to exclude roles undertaken in the coach and stack stables as well as agrarian duties which were all compiled together in the original list, the remaining roles which occupied domestic space ranging from administration, house, laundry and kitchen duties, there was a greater presence of males in the household outnumbering the females almost 2:1.

<sup>28</sup> These were the findings of Frank Felsenstein whose research has been quoted by Richard Compton in the Newby Hall guidebook (2000), pp.3-4.

<sup>29</sup> TN/C/18/128a, Correspondence 1751-1760. Letter from Samuel Keeling at Temple Newsam to Charles Ingram, July 10 1758. The actual amount was £183. This number of servants does not account for when children became a presence. In that case governesses and nurses would have to be added, so too would a tutor and possibly a resident chaplain.

<sup>30</sup> See J. J. Cartwright, 'List of Persons in Yorkshire who paid the tax on male Servants in 1780', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 14 (1898), pp.65-80. This brief essay examined the Act which was passed in 1777 under which there should be paid a yearly sum of twenty-one shillings for every male servant. Frances Irwin had fifteen male servants, Edward Lascelles at Harewood had sixteen, and at Wentworth Woodhouse

portrayed the mid-eighteenth-century household there through the use of rooms and the existence of spaces which indicated a vague notion of servant numbers; an estimate would suggest upwards of twenty male servants and about fifteen female servants.<sup>31</sup> An overview of servant numbers and positions in the eighteenth-century elite household is given in appendix four. Not all the houses discussed in this thesis had every servant position listed, nor were they always referred to by that particular job title, yet, vast similarities in domestic hierarchies existed between the smallest and largest households even when children were present or otherwise.

The body of servants within the elite country household then was a conglomeration of different degrees of knowledge, skill and experience. They could also be defined through permanence of position and constant residence where they had their own accommodation. Others had a temporary presence where they lived as tenants upon the estate or nearby and made a daily journey to the main establishment. Entire floors of houses would be dedicated to departmental offices where the cook had a room near the kitchens and larders (as at Temple Newsam) (**Figure 4.3**, see also appendix five for flow charts on the movement between service and dining areas), the butler and steward were situated between the pantries and service areas (as at Wentworth Woodhouse) (**Figure 4.4**, and appendix five), and the housekeeper would undoubtedly have been settled amongst the sounds and smells of washhouse, dairy, kitchens and laundry in order to exact her control quickly and efficiently (as at Castle Howard) (**Figure 4.5**, and appendix five).

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the Marquis of Rockingham had sixty-two. Servants included were mainly household or domestic staff, but the tax stretched to stables, gardens, park and game departments.

<sup>31</sup> Venetia Murray, *Castle Howard: The Life and Times of a Stately Home* (1994).

Figure 4.3. Ground floor plan of Temple Newsam House, c1808. An adaptation of the plans found in William Wheater, *Temple Newsam: its History and Antiquities...* (Leeds, 1889).

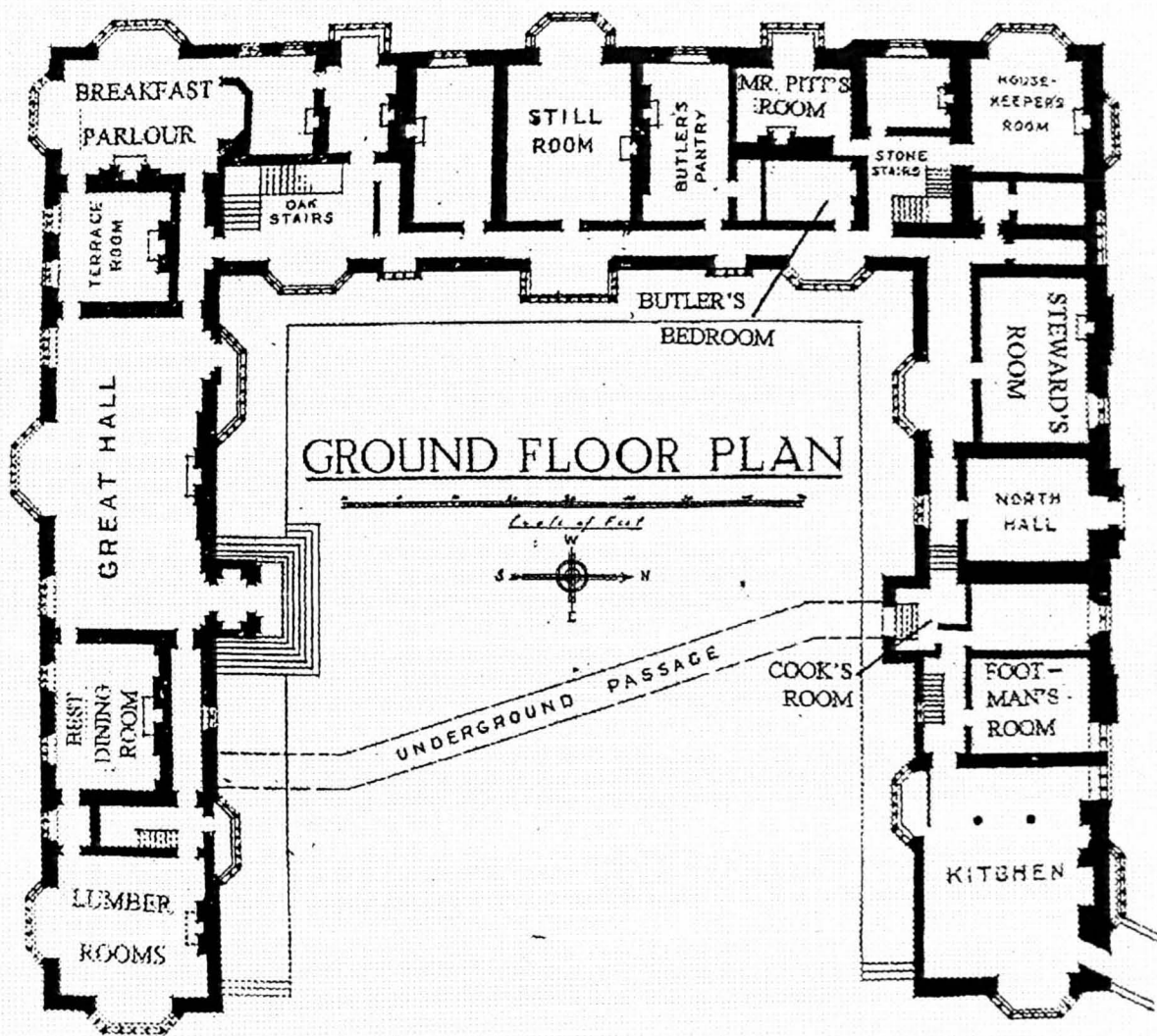
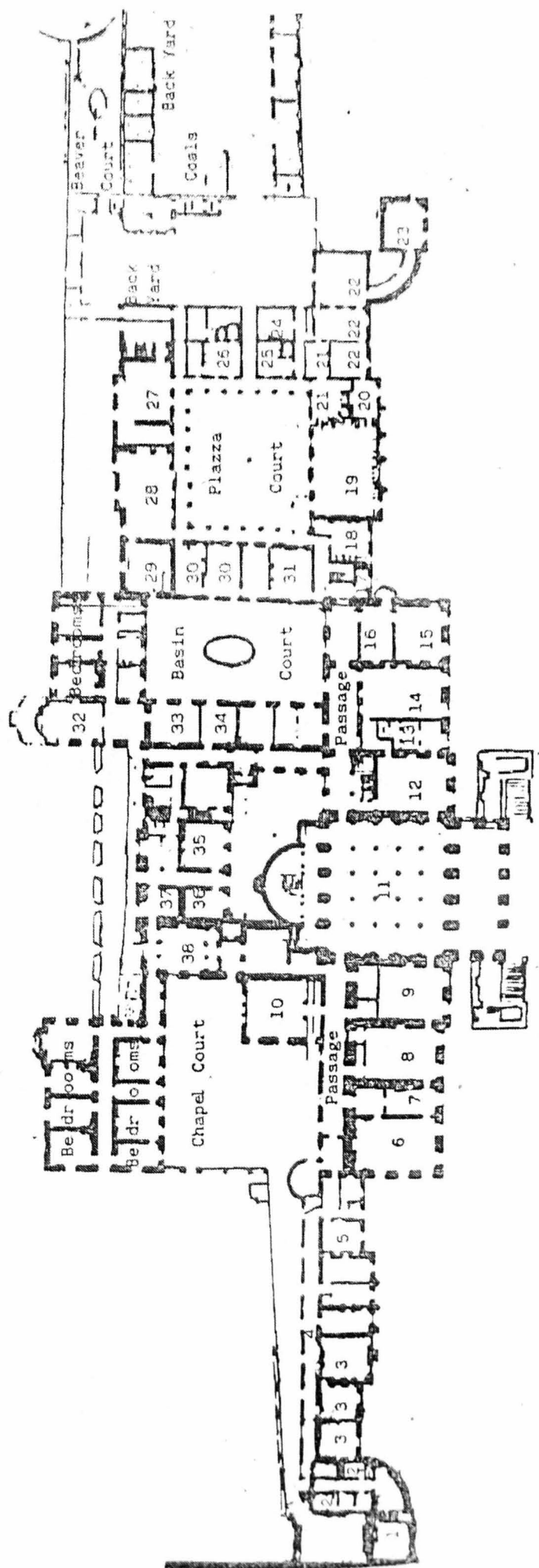


Figure 4.4. Ground floor plan of Wentworth Woodhouse, c1765. Taken from Marjorie Bloy, 'Rockingham and Yorkshire', (Ph.D thesis, University of Sheffield, 1986), p. 56.

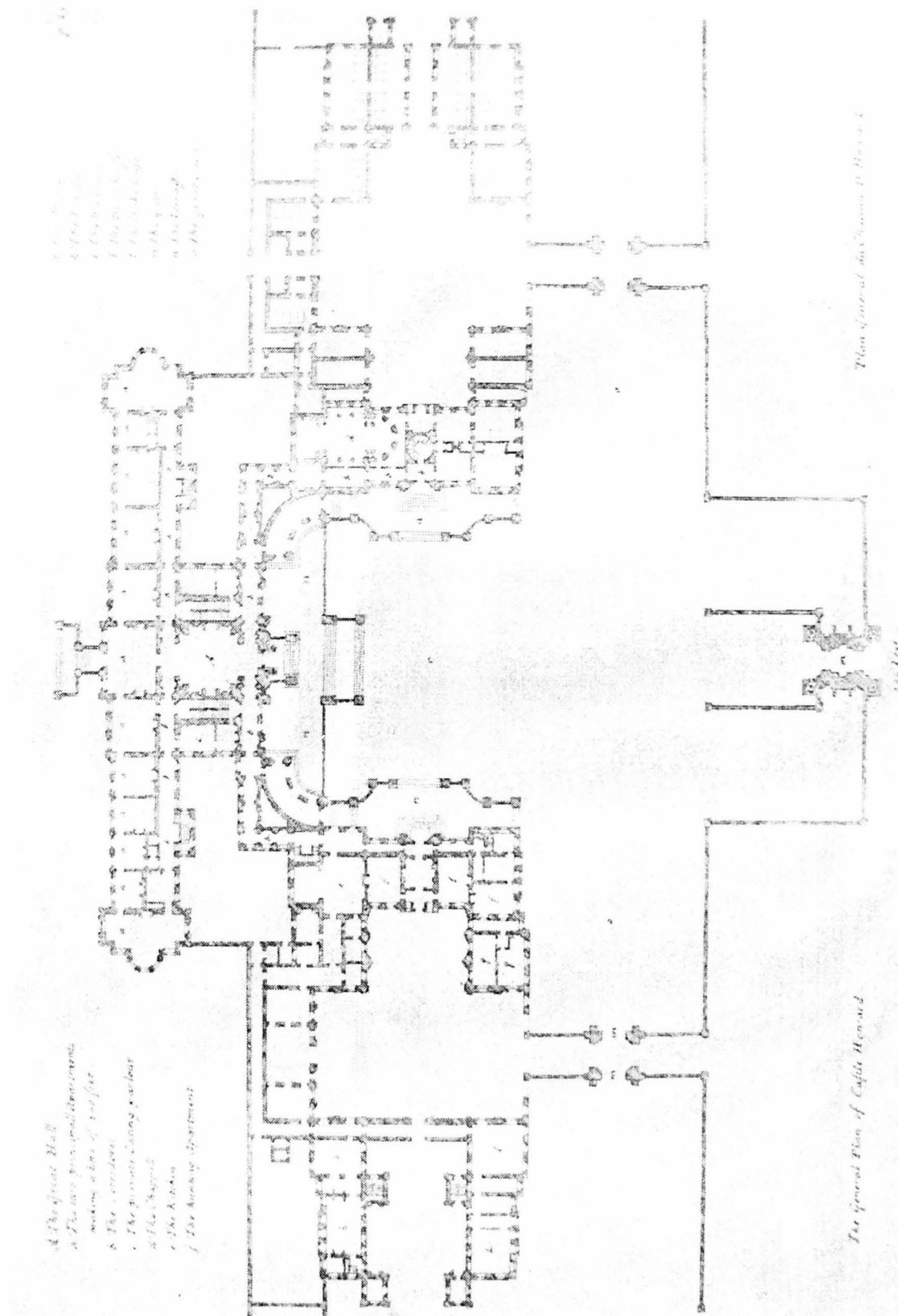


1. Men's room
2. Coals
3. Men's bedroom
4. Bedlam passage
5. Office
6. Low dining room
7. Waiting room
8. Painted drawing room
9. Ante-room
10. Chapel
11. Pillared hall
12. Butler's pantry
13. Butler's quarters

14. Servants' hall
15. Steward's room
16. Porter's hall
17. Pickle closet
18. Confectioner's room
19. Kitchen
20. Pastry
21. Scullery
22. Larder
23. Stores
24. Gloryhole
25. Still
26. Bakehouse

27. Brewery
28. Laundry
29. Wash house
30. Dairy
31. Housekeeper's room
32. Upholsterer's room
33. Capt. Buck's room
34. Steward of the Chamber's bedroom
35. Porter's bedroom
36. Valet's room
37. Shell room
38. Billiard room

Figure 4.5. Plan of Castle Howard, from C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol. I (1715), p. 63.



The core specialist servant – predominantly male – had training and expertise which set him apart from the rest and made up about thirteen percent of the servant body. His training qualified him for the job and was something which held him in high regard as an upper servant in charge of most, if not all male domestic and estate staff. Candidates for steward – the most dependable of upper servant – had to be versatile and were often considered semi-professional until the nineteenth century when

more formal training was on offer.<sup>32</sup> Edward Lawrence wrote in *The Duty of a Steward to His Lord* (1727) '[He] should be a good Accomptant, but also that he should have a tolerable degree of Skill in Mathematicks, Surveying, Mechaniks, and Architecture...'<sup>33</sup> Beckett has examined the diverse reputations the estate steward has been afforded, and has uncovered examples of incompetence and dishonesty as well as men of integrity.<sup>34</sup>

The steward would act as go-between for the mistress, relaying messages back and forth until her wishes had been carried out. At Harewood, Jane Fleming earnestly pushed Samuel Popplewell to get a good character of a gamekeeper. She suggested he ask Frances Irwin what her recommendations were and if the steward at Temple Newsam knew of anyone in particular. Jane Fleming was eventually informed of the wages and responsibilities of the Temple Newsam gamekeeper but Popplewell found that Samuel Keeling 'seem'd backward in recommending anyone' other than someone who could shoot well but presently worked in the gardens.<sup>35</sup> On another occasion, Popplewell appeared lethargic in responding to one of Jane's requests – even when his letter was full of commissions which had previously been completed – and readily changed the subject to cautiously inform her that the painter had broken an oval glass when he had lost his footing on the ladders (**Figure 4.6**).<sup>36</sup> It has been noted by Larsen that the indirect communication between Frances and Jane was particularly striking in light of gender patterns of behaviour.<sup>37</sup> With Popplewell and Keeling corresponding on behalf of their female employers with regard to estate management – assumed to be a male preserve – Larsen suggested that presupposed responsibilities

<sup>32</sup> John Beckett 'Estate Management in Eighteenth-century England: the Lowther-Spedding Relationship in Cumberland', in (Eds.) John Chartres and David Hey, *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*. (Cambridge, 1990), pp.55-72; and Christopher Clay, 'Landlords and Estate Management in England', in (Ed.) Joan Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, volume v, 1640-1750* (Cambridge, 1985). For a nineteenth-century perspective on country house estate administration and the professional role of the estate steward see David Spring, *The English Landed Estate in the Nineteenth Century: its Administration*. (1963).

<sup>33</sup> Edward Lawrence, *The Duty of a Steward to His Lord* (1727), p. 24, cited in J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (1956), p. 34; and Beckett in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*. (Cambridge, 1990), pp.55-57.

<sup>34</sup> Beckett in *English Rural Society, 1500-1800*, pp.56-57. He has cited several authors of the subject including ones which hold relevance here, Gary Firth, 'Roles of the West Riding Land Steward, 1773-1803' *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 51, (1979), pp.105-116; E. M. Jancey, 'An Eighteenth-Century Steward and his Work', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 56 (1957-8), pp.34-48; and Peter Roebuck, 'Absentee Landownership in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: A Neglected Factor in English Agrarian history', *Agricultural History Review*, 21 (1973), pp.1-17.

<sup>35</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Harewood MSS (HAR) Steward's Correspondence HAR/SC/4/5 1782 no date.

<sup>36</sup> HAR/SC/7 no date.

<sup>37</sup> Ruth M. Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858.' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 2003), pp.84-86.



could be challenged by elite women. Larsen went on further to state that an interest in wider estate matters illuminated the status of these women who were ‘freed of the restrictions of their sex’, but this seems too broad a statement when approachability and frankness were key attributes for maintaining the smooth running of both the estate and household. Status merely placed these women within the dimensions of the large establishment and its management. Any interest outside the domestic sphere for these women was not the result of a conscious challenge to traditional gendered roles but essential to their supportive marital participation.

**Figure 4.6. Jane Fleming (née Coleman), (1731/2-1813). Portrait by Henry Singleton, oil on canvas c.1795. The Earl and Countess of Harewood and the Trustees of the Harewood House Trust.**





Most of the elite women of this study had close business relationships with their stewards like Mary Rockingham and Benjamin Hall at Wentworth, and Frances Irwin and Samuel Keeling at Temple Newsam. Hall and Rockingham especially made contact nearly everyday about domestic matters and estate management. Isabella Irwin was on exceptionally good terms with the early eighteenth-century steward, John Roades at Temple Newsam. As one of the executors of Arthur's will, Roades had to maintain intense levels of communication with Isabella on a daily basis, and their letters could often be peppered with jaunty snippets of gossip. Whilst her eldest son, Edward was on his Grand Tour through Europe, Isabella reported back with the news of his travels to John Roades to whom Edward had directly addressed in 1704 with, 'when you think of a wife, to marry a dutch woman for ye be both beauttiffull, & rich & good housewives, & ye greatest Commidations of all, ye most Obedient Wives in ye world. If all these good qualitys wont tempt you I know not wt will.'<sup>38</sup> Roades seemed to have been persuaded by the prospect of obedience and good housewifery and left service when he went onto marry Isabella's housekeeper Mildred Batchelor in 1709. Isabella even offered herself as godmother to their child.

Butlers of course had to be sober, often undertaking several tasks in the household as 'Maitre d'Hotelle, secretary, confectioner and Linguist...Serves a small table admirably well and by the quickness of his eye supplies the want of every one at Table...'<sup>39</sup>, so too did chefs, and the prestige of having a French cook signified that Gallic was often a further requirement.<sup>40</sup> At Temple Newsam by the middle of the century, the cook received only £12 to the steward's (or possibly valet's) £26 suggesting that not all members of the elite preferred a modish hand in the kitchen. Gardeners and grooms needed more than a basic knowledge of the differences between genera and breeds respectively before they were even short-listed. In comparison, the few specialist female servants made up about two percent of the servant body and were the

<sup>38</sup> TN/C/9/311 Isabella Irwin to John Roades. 20 June 1704.

<sup>39</sup> NP A1/5A/4, Sabine's Personal Papers. Letter from the Countess of Dundonald to Sabine concerning requirements in her butler including a hopeful expression that Sabine herself had a respectable man for the post at Nostell, 22 May 1776.

<sup>40</sup> Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire' p. 50. Holmes noted that French cooks were not cheap, and were often more inflexible than their English counterparts due to their specialised position in the household. See pages 233-245 here. Also Peter Brears et al., *A Taste of History: 10,000 Years of Food in Britain*, (1993), p. 227; E. S. Turner, *What the Butler Saw*, pp.153-158; and also Hecht, in *The Domestic Servant* who describes such sub-divisions of servant hierarchical processes as 'specialisation of function', pp.35-70.

housekeeper, cook and ladies maid. The last had to be educated; her main responsibilities were to read, sew and converse well, and another language might also have stood her in good stead. Sabine Winn's personal maids she brought with her to Yorkshire from Vevey certainly included a companion and perhaps a ladies maid. Proof of their existence at Nostell Priory comes from several lists and inventories in different handwriting commissioned by Sabine herself once residency was taken up after the death of the fourth baronet. Mainly for linen and clothing, all the lists were written in French so it was possible that Sabine and her female companions trawled the house together, noting down every item including night caps, embroidered shirts, dress jackets, breeches, muslin camisoles, and waistcoats. Fabrics and trimmings were even noted as well as colours and tailoring.<sup>41</sup> More unusual was a list of kitchen equipment and utensils dating from 1774 (again written in French) which Sabine may well have had limited access to, and included dishes, fish and soup plates, goblets, pans, egg cups, and candlesticks. Presumably undertaken when the kitchen was not in use, it can only be assumed that Sabine Winn and her personal maids maintained lists of stock in order to oversee storage use and avoid any pilfering. The ladies maid was therefore an obvious target for spite from other servants when her role kept her so close to the mistress.

An inventory of kitchen equipment also demonstrated the cost of running such a space and equal caution was needed when employing upper servants to serve up and prepare food. Like the butler and chef, the cook had to abstain from alcohol, but similarly the female cook had to understand the principles of frugality and prudence in the kitchen. It was no good having a wasteful, greedy or opportunist cook who reaped the benefits of having access to luxury foodstuffs. The mistress would discuss menus with her and devise lengthy recipes using home-grown fruits and vegetables, and it would not be so unbecoming of a mistress to make an appearance in the cook's own room to hand over some new culinary ideas or illustration for fashionable table displays.

The core general servant worked directly below these positions, and remained under their guardianship until they either bettered themselves or took their

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<sup>41</sup> NP C4/1/18 List by Sabine of clothing and linen. c.1765. Sabine had certainly inherited this need for making lists and inventories from her mother whose pamphlets and personal papers revealed linen inventories from the 1720s and 1730s. see relevant papers belonging to her mother under NP C4/8/8 Culinary and medicinal (11 volumes) 1662-1770.

place. Overall, general servants might have made up nearly sixty percent of the servant body; males came to about twenty-seven percent, whilst females came slightly higher in total to about thirty-one percent. Qualifications would have been sought whilst in the post and training was probably supplied by those they worked under. Such general positions ranged from footman, clerk of the kitchen and undergroom to kitchen maid, housemaid, stillroom maid and nursemaid. A wage book for Nostell Priory dated between 1740 and 1770<sup>42</sup> was filled with general female servant positions but rarely do they work longer than a year. Names appeared twice, generally to establish their appointments such as housemaid or kitchen maid and again when they left (whether or not this was under duress was not stated). Furthermore, one of only two male names mentioned in the Nostell wage book was that of Edward Frost listed next to his wife Elizabeth where the two of them took charge of poultry matters between the dates 1763-72.<sup>43</sup>

Of the general male domestic most likely to interact with the elite mistress, the footman was charged with multifarious duties which entered into different spheres of servant responsibility and obligation. It was he who acted as an effective display of the family's wealth both inside and outside the home. Provided with livery, the footman was an essential body for display whose routine endowed him with the highest visibility.<sup>44</sup> The cost of updating livery was not always hefty, but it was a continuous process involving the provision of cloth, trims, accessories and hosiery. Furthermore, his good character and decency was determined by outward appearance and the effects of upbringing. Henry Irwin forwarded his wife Anne's requirement for a footman to the Temple Newsam steward and demanded,

...gett a footman for Lady Irwin... he must be a sightly fellow & one that has been in service before & knows something of waiting & if possible one that has had smallpox. We chuse rather to have one out of the country than an intire London one for they are apt to be too saucy...<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Indexed as 1740-1765, as most of the dates go to 1765, there are however, a few dates that reach as far as 1774.

<sup>43</sup> The other male name mentioned is that of a Mr. Gregson who was also listed alongside his wife for two years wages in January 1740/1.

<sup>44</sup> Hecht, *The Domestic Servant*, p. 53.

<sup>45</sup> TN/C/15/136 Correspondence 1736-1742. Letter from Henry, seventh Viscount Irwin to steward Robert Hopkinson 11 Nov 1738.

Mary Rockingham was substantially happier with her own footman, Robert Needham when her husband accused her of discharging several maids for their insubordinate manner but continued with Needham who was clearly of the same temperament. To Benjamin Hall she noted her husband was indeed correct, 'there is some Truth in that', she wrote and Needham promptly followed the maids.<sup>46</sup>

Those at the very bottom of the servant structure – the casuals or auxiliaries made up the remainder of the household at around twenty-five percent, and acted as supplementary staff normally when the family were in residence. This part of the servant body has been labelled by Gerard as the 'invisible servant' because such transience did not warrant them an identity and because their roles were undefined and interchangeable depending on existing skills and requirements of the household. Gerard's essay on these part-time or casual workers underlined the lack of previous interest modern historians had in recognising household roles and by extension the connections between the country house as a mass employer and its neighbourhood.<sup>47</sup> Paul Nunn identified such a pattern of recruitment at Wentworth Woodhouse where liveried servants were hired from a wider community together with the housekeeper and some female servants, but the upper hierarchy of servants tended to have local connections. Compared with the regular members of staff, casual workers were usually ill paid.<sup>48</sup> Male casual workers seemed to have been few and far between and probably only got involved in specific tasks as at times of building, rebuilding, harvesting or when large scale entertainment required more staff. In the domestic sphere, females outweighed the male auxiliary servant greatly but both were significant helpers and were an essential component of the country-house community. Their roles could cover a

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<sup>46</sup> WWM Stw P2/6. June 15 1773.

<sup>47</sup> Jessica Gerard. 'Invisible Servants: The Country House and the Local Community', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, LVII, (1984), 178-188. Gerard made reference to J. Franklin, 'Troops of Servants: Labour and Planning in the Country House, 1840-1914', *Victorian Studies*, XIX (1975-76), amongst others to help highlight the lack of consideration given to part-time and casual work in studies on country house labour. Regrettably, Gerard's study is specific to the nineteenth century where 'the Victorian obsession with timetables, segregation and compartmentalisation, required an orderly, well regulated household routine'. Such a focus as this makes no allowance for equally complex routines and procedures a century earlier. Holmes included Gerard's argument in her thesis on the domestic servant in Yorkshire, but made no reference to actual numbers at any specific house. See also, John Vince, *The Country House: How it Worked*, (1991), pp.6-7.

<sup>48</sup> Paul Nunn, 'Aristocratic Estates and Employment in South Yorkshire, 1700-1800, in (Eds.) Sidney Pollard and Colin Holmes, *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (1976), pp.28-41.

remarkably exhaustive list of tasks including sewing, cooking, knife-cleaning, boot-cleaning, window cleaning and furniture-moving.<sup>49</sup>

The housekeeping accounts for Temple Newsam between the time of Frances and Charles' marriage in 1758 to the mid 1790s show enormous amounts of auxiliary servant work throughout the house, kitchen, laundry and dairy. A charwoman appeared almost weekly in the house, so too did 'Saturday's woman', as well as weekly and fortnightly females who overlapped domestic areas by working in the kitchen and dairy or kitchen and house over a two or three day period.<sup>50</sup> At the other Ingram seat in Horsham, Sussex a 'charwoman 23 Days at 6d' and a 'woman to Wash and Iron 7 Days at 8d' can be found in a grocery bill for June 1773.<sup>51</sup> Even when tasks were listed, such as scouring, washing, and general cleaning, it was always a woman fulfilling the role. The great flexibility of employment could be found in activities like 'help in the kitchen', '21 Days help in the House', and 'help in the laundry'. Although not discernibly female, the transient and interchangeable nature of these as with other domestic work related items in the books does indicate a female majority in the auxiliary workforce. In households that could afford a ready water supply, methods of cleaning changed too, but did nothing to quicken the cleaning process itself. This may explain weekly or fortnightly auxiliaries in the kitchen and laundry specifically, since these contained the more onerous tasks which would have to be completed before Sunday in order to observe this day of rest.

None of these female auxiliaries had any communication with the elite mistress, but their proximity to her, her belongings and private space meant that they would have still required examination for faults or bad characteristics; a task that was probably done by the housekeeper. Meldrum has pointed out that working in bedchambers particularly brought servants to the most intimate part of the house and many of the auxiliary females would have been involved in entering their mistresses' bedrooms to help light the fire in the morning or warm the bed in the evening.<sup>52</sup> The elite

<sup>49</sup> Jessica Gerard in *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, LVII, p. 181.

<sup>50</sup> Auxiliary staff would commonly be found listed amongst everyday items like payments towards coopers and chandlers as well as food and cleaning items. See especially TN/EA 14/13 1758-1764. Housekeeping accounts; and TN/EA 14/15, Housekeeper's book.

<sup>51</sup> Horsham, Machell Ingram MSS, 801.63. Bills and receipts, 21 June 1773. Lists also included items such as eggs, peas, cucumbers and lettuce, and game.

<sup>52</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender*, p. 150.

woman would have seen these females on their daily round, perhaps even given an extra command or an errand to follow. She may have given them a message to be passed on, or ignored their presence completely; after all, they were not regular faces. They may have been at the very bottom of the servant pile, but the elite woman still had the responsibility of them. In consultation with the housekeeper or the steward in some instances, she had to recognise the necessity for auxiliary workers in her household and the weekly or monthly cost of paying them (usually in hand). If she never once saw an unfamiliar face, she knew they existed simply by overseeing the household account books.

Male auxiliaries were an oddity and again appeared to be far more skilled or trained in specific trades or activities.<sup>53</sup> Amongst the bills and receipts kept by Frances at Temple Newsam in the late 1750s for example, there was one for a Thomas Dixon who seemed to have performed a few tasks over several days in 1759 whilst receiving payment for his work plus items like needles and thread.<sup>54</sup> The transience of domestic working activity here was less defined and men occurred more and more as apprentices, journeymen and tradesmen where ties to actual domestic work became more remote. Tasks which could last several days like the catching of rats and mice, and the sweeping of chimneys were predominantly carried out by men, although these were not strictly part of a domestic routine in the same way general cleaning and polishing were defined.

All servants within all groupings in the hierarchy were crucial when it came to the smooth running of the household mechanisms; they were the anatomy of the household and the fleshy and bony structure of the internal movements. When Isabella Carlisle referred to household management as the 'secret springs', servants would no doubt have been the main focus for her analogy. Keeping them concealed and secret might easily be remedied with back stairs or underground passages to segregate them from the rest of the family. For the chatelaine it was also about making the right choice and reassuring herself that she had employed principled people to meet the domestic needs of the family. She needed to know social management and understand the community mentality of her household in order for the hierarchy to perform as a united

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Earle made this point too in *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650-1750*. (1994) p. 82 as cited by Hill in *English Domesticity*, p. 41.

<sup>54</sup> TN/EA 12/2 Clothing and materials 1600-1789.

group. Problems between staff were not only a nuisance but affected the smooth running of the household unit. A letter addressed to Sabine Winn made reference to such disagreements within the servant ranks and revealed the dire irritation felt by staff when they were dissatisfied with their working environment,

...no Doubt Butt a many things has been Wrong misrepresented to your Ladyship concerning the woman that I have put in the scullery – But she is the most Abusivest Durtty Idle Woman I Ever met with and I hope your Ladyship Entends parting with her as it is impossible for me to put up with her any Longer...<sup>55</sup>

The organisation of servants was about avoiding personality clashes, the enforcement of regularity and routine and effective decision making. Both the master and mistress considered job specifications for many of these posts. In his absence she had to ensure her own principles were adequate for hiring and firing servants, usually with the guidance of the steward where he too was trustworthy and reliable. The mistress was not entitled to govern only ‘indoor’ servants like maids then, but had to seek characters of estate staff. However, her gendered responsibility over domestic affairs demanded her first attention to staffing come at a time when the family grew and her children required disciplining and tutoring. This could be a morally testing time for the elite woman and any mismanagement on her part would lead to downfall and a threat to her reputation. Every woman wanted her house to be aired, to smell fresh, to be ordered and set by strict routine. Her children had to be washed, read to, their clothes pressed and free of dirt. Through marriage, motherhood and widowhood, if the opposite were apparent the elite woman was criticised for neglect and ignorance; her virtue lost and her one saving grace dismantled to expose her as the frivolous, flighty creature assumed by conduct authors and commentators.

## II

Richard Allestree noted that once married women were better employed in the home because their presupposed gendered capacity gave them a constant residency.<sup>56</sup> Domestic ideals that prescribed to women these private roles rested upon

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<sup>55</sup> NP/A4/1532/21, James Lamm to Sabine at Nostell. 17 November c. 1796.

<sup>56</sup> Allestree, *Ladies Calling*, p. 243. Many women of this period enjoyed time away from the country, and it is worth remembering at this point that elite women like Frances Irwin, who despite her dislike of the bustle and fake civility of the Capital, made extensive use of London’s metropolitan spaces. Frances utilised her

their femaleness. For the mistress of any household, finding the right wet-nurse, governess or tutor was fundamentally bound within her domestic and maternal role. Immediately, the physical, earthy nature of these female servants set quite a tense relationship with the mistress, but their heavy involvement with such vulnerable household members like children meant the mistress was always anxious to prove her organisational prowess.

All women wrote a great deal about pregnancy and motherhood to close female friends and relatives, but there seems to be little evidence surrounding any standard by which many of the elite women in this study might have procured a nurse and later, a tutor or governess. Even less can be said about the division of labour between a mother and her nurse. As a result, Vickery is probably correct when she suggested that nursemaids performed the menial tasks like cleaning, washing, making children's meals and sewing, while mothers amused, educated and disciplined their children.<sup>57</sup> This level of participation for the mother led many a didactic conduct writer to criticise the elite woman as either neglectful or foolishly over fond of her offspring. The presence of a housekeeper, several maids and a regular back-up of auxiliaries had its disadvantages for the elite mistress and it reinforced criticisms of her as idle and frolicsome. John Essex in his *The Young Ladies Conduct* (1722) noted satirically,

The great Fatigue, or rather Slavery, of House-keeping [...] is but too much neglected by Ladies of Fashion, as [...] too mean and insignificant for Persons of their Quality; and rather fit for Women of inferior Rank and Condition, as Farmers Wives. &c. or, at best, is most proper for their Housekeepers; when at the same time this is only an Excuse for their Laziness.<sup>58</sup>

Contemporary comments on the presence of other females in the household were rife. The delegation of duties to deputies like the housekeeper was

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time in the Capital with shopping trips, discussing financial matters at Drummond's Bank or chaperoning her daughters. More notably, the wives of politician husbands knew the importance of maintaining contacts and socialised in various public activities like the assemblies, balls, assizes, theatre and recitals. Commercial entertainment was a growing industry in the eighteenth century, especially in London. Allestree's work in this respect would appear dated in its restraint of women. See Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989); J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Ma., 1989); and John Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (1997).

<sup>57</sup> Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> John Essex, *The Young Ladies Conduct or Rules for Education*. London (1722), pp. xxxiv-xxxv. Also quoted by Lehmann in *The Invisible Woman*, pp. 15-16.



criticised as irresponsible, but it was the persistent use of wet-nurses which angered many more. The elite woman was perceived as detached and unnatural in the upbringing of her offspring in this way; a notion greatly aided by the apparent lack of consultation with her husband on the matter. Yet Larsen has pointed out that the elite woman was not the ‘disinterested incubator of future aristocrats’ some would suppose and that the prospect of motherhood actually empowered women in the household.<sup>59</sup> Women confided in their female friends and relatives when it came to all aspects of motherhood, and finding the most suitable servant – be it wet-nurse or nursemaid – was a main worry.

Disappointingly, Isabella Carlisle made no concrete assertion in her *Maxims* as to how women of her social ranking should conduct themselves throughout early motherhood, which was a pity considering the contemporary correspondence produced by her neighbours at Hovingham which detailed the health of her infants. Elizabeth Worsley wrote to one of her own siblings with, ‘Dear Sister... Lord Carlisle[’s] little Girl is [a] fat healthy child but for want of a spritely nurse... her own Mother... who really is a most Charming Woman she is with Child again but has no fears nor affectation...’<sup>60</sup> A few years later, Anne, the Dowager Lady Irwin wrote to Frances Robinson to inform her of Isabella’s lying-in, ‘My Brother Carlisle is a Grandfather to one of his own sex... you never saw a prettier little Mother than Lady Bell, nor a finer child than she has brought...’<sup>61</sup>

Many women readily exchanged thoughts on servant organisation in light of methods of upbringing and they regularly criticised their own if these methods were not deemed acceptable. Ann Worsley condemned her sister Mary Constable for placing her children under the guardianship of the servants too frequently, ‘... Miss Molly learns everything vulgar and disagreeable... and as to poor Tommy he has never been loved nor minded at all, seems quite surprised and pleased at being played with and taken notice of...’<sup>62</sup> By concerning herself with the most suitable servants to employ at the time of her lying-in to her offspring’s later years could be the earliest signs at which the elite woman proved herself to be either a success or a failure in the organisation of the servants.

<sup>59</sup> Larsen, ‘Dynastic Domesticity’, p. 148.

<sup>60</sup> NH 2830/10 Elizabeth Worsley from Hovingham (to her sister Frances Robinson?) 16 July no year

<sup>61</sup> NH 2828/43. Anne Lady Irwin to Frances Robinson, December 16, no year.

<sup>62</sup> NH 2826/50 no date, possibly 1740. Anne Worsley to Frances Robinson.

Whilst contemplating making changes to her nursery arrangements, Frances Robinson worried that a new nursemaid for her children might not like to be too far away from friends and relatives as this might affect any attention given the children in the short term (**Figure 4.7**). Her anxiety was quickly checked by her sister Elizabeth and the children's nurse who both reassured Frances that the present maid, Polly, was more than adequate for the time being. Besides, with chores which included keeping the nursery clean, fetching and carrying, washing linen and mending the children's clothes she would be hard pressed to find someone else as willing.<sup>63</sup> Things did not improve however, and Frances still found the situation less than favourable. By 1740 anxieties included the religion of her children's nurse, but she was harshly mocked by her sister who encouraged Frances to simply stop fretting about any influences the nurse may have over the children.<sup>64</sup> In the same breath Frances was advised somewhat unsympathetically to give Polly who 'continues stupid', 'a little mercury or a German Husband.'<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> NH 2825/48 no date, possibly 1739. Elizabeth Worsley to Frances Robinson.

<sup>64</sup> NH 2826/29 9 January 1740. Elizabeth Worsley to Frances. 'I hope your being in low spirits was the occasion of your whole Letter or else sure you would never vex yourself about Nurse's not Reading the Bible, she is certainly a good nurse and as to her Religion I don't think it signify's one farthing...'

<sup>65</sup> NH 2826/27 Elizabeth Worsley to Frances, Hovingham, 18 January 1740. This was an extremely intriguing statement, but it is unclear what Elizabeth really meant by her advice. Her words should be viewed as a reaction to Frances' constant worry, and there were certainly undertones of irritation in many of her replies, but in this instance Polly was probably in need of some firm discipline compounded by some boisterous masculine presence. See Paul Langford in *Englishness Identified: Manners and Characteristics 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000) for contemporary attitudes toward Germany and its people.

**Figure 4.7. Frances Robinson (née Worsley), (1716-1750). Portrait by Van Mytens, 1748, oil on canvas. Newby Hall Collection.**



For Frances Robinson, the nationality of her servants was incredibly important whilst abroad in Vienna and by surrounding herself with English staff before the birth of her first child she assured herself that they would take good care of everything.<sup>66</sup> Her anxieties were never fully dissipated and she expressed some serious concern to her sister over the availability of English wet nurses whilst away. Elizabeth wrote back, ‘I don’t know what to say about the German nurses, for tho’ their milk may agree very well with their own country women, yet I think they are too robust for your child...’ Her advice was for Frances to suckle the child herself, ‘if Mr Robinson likes it, and you could bear it’, but reminded her absent sister that this too could be quite risky

<sup>66</sup> See for example, NH 2824/21. Elizabeth Worsley to Frances, Hovingham, September 14 1738.

and daring.<sup>67</sup> Sabine Winn was less attentive to the dynamics of the nursery but otherwise delighted in the joys of motherhood, 'My little girl read me a whole page today and my darling boy chatters away and laughs like a blessed being'. but she later stated that despite them both being well, 'Everything still worries me...'<sup>68</sup> Her nursery maid had apparently made the young Rowland quite ill on one occasion, the response from her friend the Countess of Dundonald was one of immediate alarm, 'It made me tremble to think of the Danger Your Sweet infant was in from his Nurse after such a Risque it is a Mercy he has soon recover'd his appetite...I'm heartily glad your Ladyship had got so good and well experienced a dry Nurse for him...'<sup>69</sup>

In other instances, regular female servants might be called upon to lend a hand in times of a difficult labour or immediately after a birth. Knowledge of health matters and midwifery made the female domestic servant a valuable asset. For Frances at Temple Newsam the swiftness at which her second daughter was born meant the midwife was not there to act in time and instead a nurse Tyson took her place. Frances later recognised this crucial help in a letter to her close friend Lady Susan Stewart by remarking,

I have been so happy as to produce a very fine girl...My little one was in such a hurry that the performer could not arrive in time enough. I am therefore obliged to nurse Tyson for her assistance in time of need and she acted the part of *sage femme* with the utmost skill & propriety...Don't imagine I write this kind of stuff to any living soul but yourself.<sup>70</sup>

When the absence of very young children meant less worry and need for extra organisation the praise of any servant could be less forthcoming and might instead be apparent in extra cash bonuses or presents at festive periods. Jane Holmes showed that some women had no qualms about giving clothes away as well as small extra sums on top of annual servant wages. Holmes highlighted Isabella Irwin's gesture towards her two personal maids, Betty Brown and Betty Redford when in 1754 she paid them a year's wage and 'over and above each a gowne'<sup>71</sup> Isabella's pocket account books

<sup>67</sup> NH 2824/15, no date. Elizabeth to Frances.

<sup>68</sup> NP A4/1535/8. Nostell Priory, 14 October 1775; and A4/1535/10 Nostell 3 November 1775.

<sup>69</sup> NP A1/5A/4. Letter from Jane Countess of Dundonald at Bellavilla, to Sabine, 19 June 1776.

<sup>70</sup> National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew. (NA:PRO) Granville MSS, Leveson-Gower, first Earl Granville and predecessors and successors: Papers 30/29/4/2 papers of Lady Susan Stewart (from May 1768, Countess Gower; from March 1786, Marchioness Stafford). Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin). Letter from Frances to Lady Susan Stewart, 4 October 1762.

<sup>71</sup> TN EA/14/22. Housekeeping and wines and personalia. Isabella Irwin's own accounts, 1752-1756.

showed a vast assortment of goods given away which included petticoats, coats, fabrics and Christmas boxes, but her two maids were definitely the greatest beneficiaries.<sup>72</sup> Holmes went as far as to suggest that women like Isabella had in fact discovered a very pleasing way to reward their staff, knowing that such ornaments would probably go down well with female servants in particular. Indeed, Isabella Irwin did not forget her two maids in her will and she ordered her son George to have her clothes divided up between them, with Betty Redford receiving the more generous portion.<sup>73</sup>

Yet, a show of favouritism and familiarity would always be warned against. Isabella Carlisle cautioned her reader that any definitive shows of affection in this way were careless since they could lead to a succession of errors both upon the part of the servant, and the mistress. Mary Rockingham was very much aware of her own existing prejudices and understood them as a hindrance to the smooth working of a household when she sought to replace one of her maids, ‘...there is no doubt of my liking her, I only hope I shall not spoil her, which I fear I am apt to do.’<sup>74</sup> In achieving a fine balance between pride and familiarity the chatelaine was to rule with a cool diplomacy, ‘On the first discovery of a fault, obstruct not a free confession of it by excessive severity’, suggested Isabella Carlisle.<sup>75</sup> Servants were also apt to stray if their mistress did not lead by example or in a plain, distinct manner.<sup>76</sup>

The more servants there were the more complex this ordering became. Conduct authors maintained that women should consider themselves ‘responsible for the morals and happiness of so many of their fellow-creatures, designed like themselves for immortality.’<sup>77</sup> Hester Chapone noted that persons of high rank may be placed above the little attentions and employments with which a gentlewoman may find to occupy her time. The larger household was like a commonwealth; ‘the more numerous and

<sup>72</sup> Holmes, ‘Domestic Service in Yorkshire’ pp.120-125.

<sup>73</sup> TN Additional MSS, 3997 23 (2). Note on clothes being divided up (no date). The full note ran as follows: ‘My Son George, I devide my Cloathes, may be devided in three parts, two to be given to Betty Readford & one to Betty Brown in case they live with me, when I dey & if not, to Any other two servants that live [with] me in these places.’

<sup>74</sup> WWM Stw P2/4 (1), Wimbledon, Friday night, May 7 1773. See also Holmes, p.133.

<sup>75</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*. London (1789), p. 27

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.26-27; Lady Sarah Pennington, *Instructions for a Young Lady in every Sphere and Period of Life*. (1762), p. 37.

<sup>77</sup> Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (1774), p. 70.

luxurious it becomes, the more difficult it is to govern it properly.’<sup>78</sup> This was the trigger for a mistress’s overall success or failure. The community mentality of her household was fundamental to her understanding of its physical and moral needs as well as the interactions of flesh and brick. With more people to manage and organise, the greater the need for delegation, but she had to remain on her guard.

Of all the elite women being examined in this study, it was unfortunate that gossip relating to Isabella Carlisle allowed her to become the subject of criticism in terms of her supposed neglect and ignorance in servant organisation. It was marriage this time, not motherhood which demanded a show of organisational prowess in the household. With hopes of achieving a renewed optimism and by placing all her energies into her union with William Musgrave in 1759, Isabella failed to lead by example in her household. The result was a profound distraction over the acidic tongues of elite society who had expected her to withdraw from fashionable circles once widowed. The gossip may have made her more determined to succeed, yet it was clearly her household management that suffered a great deal. Having spent some time with her grandmother in Windsor through the summer of that year, Isabella Ingram reported back to her sister-in-law Frances at Temple Newsam with stories relating to the fashionable females of London society. Ingram’s letter revealed that Isabella Carlisle was present on many occasions, portraying the latest trends in clothes and hairdressing, but Ingram placed special emphasis on the following; and Isabella Carlisle’s respectability seemed overwhelmingly flimsy:

...her [Lady Carlisle] four footmen who all lay in her Hall, occasion such a perfume this warm weather, and her House is so brimful, that many people think it must end in some epidemic distemper...I never heard of anything so filthy, many of her servants are going to leave her, not being able to bear the close cramming.<sup>79</sup>

Isabella Carlisle would later go on to note in several of her maxims the importance of a sound household structure peopled with dependants who sought the diplomatic nature of a good mistress to ensure their livelihood was secure. The essential knowledge on family affairs was only effective if ‘moments of uneasiness’ were duly separated from domestic routines, and were not permitted to give rise to an unsettled and

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>79</sup> TN/C/23b/215. Isabella Ingram, Windsor to Frances at Temple Newsam, 9 May 1759.

unhappy household.<sup>80</sup> For someone like Isabella Carlisle, whose intellect, wit, practicality and enthusiasm for life justified the contradictory descriptions of her character by contemporaries who thought her on the one hand restless, on the other, independent. Walking a fine line between being a discreet household manager and yet knowledgeable and demonstrably efficient was by all means difficult. Setting up home with her new husband meant that she was to blame for any unruly and ungovernable servants, not him. And whilst she appeared at social gatherings in expensive attire her servants discussed their threats of departure.

The route of gossip about Isabella can be determined through wider social interaction which has been linked with servants as 'highly mobile, propertyless individuals who existed in the shadow of another person.'<sup>81</sup> The domestic servant was part of an estimated ten per cent of the London population by the time of Ingram's letter.<sup>82</sup> This invisibility of domestic servants was generated in part by contemporary attitudes to staffing. Isabella Carlisle constantly assured the reader of her *Maxims* that servants relied as a group upon a good mistress for religious guidance, literacy and honesty. A servant's ubiquity or omnipresence provided some covert method with which Isabella Carlisle's reputation was blemished. A servant population in London of ten per cent evokes more than a substantial image of streets teeming with men and women running errands, fetching and carrying, and accompanying their masters and mistresses to help complete a day's provisioning. The chance that familiar faces from neighbouring households might meet is undeniable, and gossip would be exchanged readily. For this to filter back up the social scale is less easily described. Perhaps an inquisitive ear caught the careless chatter of two servants on a back stair. The household – both kin and non-kin members – were certainly the moving parts of the domestic setting but were also the mobile parts. Nevertheless, such gossip was always unforgivable – the perpetrator could ultimately be dismissed. Carlisle herself even saw the problem of such talk important

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<sup>80</sup> *Maxims*, pp.26-31.

<sup>81</sup> A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 1981) cited in Kent in *History Workshop Journal*, 28, p. 111.

<sup>82</sup> Kent in *History Workshop Journal*, 28, p. 112. Population estimated 675,000 in 1750, 10% = 67,500 servants. Hecht had previously highlighted this by suggesting that servant numbers in London were concentrated in a relatively small area; their social interaction was animated by a strong sense of solidarity or group loyalty, something which unfortunately for mistresses like Isabella Carlisle led to an 'active combination for the purpose of defending and advancing common interests', *The Domestic Servant*, p. 85. See also, John Chartres 'English Landed Society and the Servants Tax of 1777', in (Eds.) Harte and Quinault, *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F. M. L. Thompson*, (1996), pp.34-56.

enough as to suggest her reader find some preventative methods to deter servants from 'interfering with, or revealing the embroilments in other families.'<sup>83</sup>

What Frances eventually thought of this piece of gossip is unknown. She was certainly acquainted with Isabella Carlisle despite being thirteen years younger, and correspondence addressed to Frances survived from Carlisle whilst the latter made her way through Europe. The content of the Ingram letter is fanciful and jaunty though, and many of her letters to female relations and friends were peppered with news of social chit-chat, scurrilous affairs and high fashion. The inclusion of disloyal servants and a distracted household mistress was not unusual fodder.

A mistress's successes and failures in organising the servants certainly began in marriage. There is no surviving evidence that the women examined in this study held any similar authority other than that within their marital homes. This suggests that many elite households preferred such organisational power to have come directly from master or mistress level. Younger women were therefore merely taught to observe techniques of command and to understand their own principles in judging the healthy continuation of a household's social needs. Women were entitled to fret over the right nurse or nursemaid as it determined their first authoritative calling in the household – they had to succeed for the benefit of the future generation. This put added pressure on any woman, but for the chatelaine her diplomacy and tact had to be distributed broadly over a conglomeration of different degrees of servant skill in the household which in turn influenced servant groupings and levels of communication.

Chapone's comparison of the large household to a commonwealth evoked images of strict rank, routine and politicised discipline, but this makes the elite household seem detached and spiritless. Yet, such a statement was intended to stimulate expectation and the elite woman anticipated her authoritative role to be one of complete control. In the marital home, this started with the dynamics of the nursery but did not end with widowhood. Servants remained as companions and were recognised in wills, through bequests and financial support. The role of neighbourhood and wider community therefore asserted the need of the mistress to depend upon a servant structure

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<sup>83</sup> *Maxims*, p. 27.



composed of both constant and temporary residency. The 'commonwealth' was not detached and a mistress expected to arrange the flesh and bone of her household as the result of some social mobility of her staff and the transience of certain positions. Servant organisation was as much about filling a vacancy as it was about getting the ideal person to complete the social landscape of the household.

### III

I almost despair to find such a one as I wish to have, Honest. Carefull, sensible, prudent and polite, notable in all Huswifery, capable to contrive and write the Bellafa're for Dinner and Supper...the principal use of a servant in that station I have ever thought is to see ev'ry servant in the Family do their Duty – but such a One I have long sought for in vain...<sup>84</sup>

Most important to an elite woman's household authority was the position of personal maid or upper female servant. The personal maid was part of an early support system for the elite mistress when she was establishing herself in the marital home, and could gain substantial footing for herself, yet her role was rarely defined by actual domestic work. Margaret Henschman regularly worked with Samuel Keeling at Temple Newsam in gathering payments towards charities or from tradesmen on behalf of Frances but she never actually appeared in account books as a receiver of an annual wage.

The upper female servant who interacted directly with the mistress and received a wage in return for defined domestic work was the housekeeper. Her relationship with the mistress was bound by proximity in work which inevitably demanded she be an honest, stern and hardy creature. The housekeeper's greatest asset was the ability to stand her ground when it came to disciplining the other female domestic servants. Yet, the mistress had to have confidence in her upper female servant and a close working relationship certainly permitted a tremendous amount of strain and reassurance in equal measures. The housekeeper was crucial to the country house social landscape of the eighteenth century, but her capacity as disciplinarian determined the length of her stay.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> NP A1/5A/4. Countess of Dundonald to Sabine at Nostell Priory, 2 March 1776.

<sup>85</sup> The role of the housekeeper has received a great deal of attention in secondary source literature concerned with servants and country house domestic arrangements. Her relationship with her employer plus the requirements of her post are most readily commented upon by R. Bayne-Powell, *Housekeeping in the Eighteenth Century* (1956); Christina Hardyment, *Home Comfort: A History of Domestic*

Chapone and Pennington alluded to the large household as being made up of complex departments peopled with liveried servants, and house, kitchen, dairy, brewhouse and laundry maids. The housekeeper was deputy in charge of one or more of these departments. Since she was entrusted with power an upper servant like the housekeeper, wrote Chapone, could not be 'too nicely enquired into; and the mistress of the family must be ever watchful over their conduct.'<sup>86</sup> The extent of this power depended upon the needs of the household, but the general rule was that as the head of all female domestic servants, the housekeeper had primary charge of stores. She had to ensure soap, candles, writing-paper and ink were attended to as well as the household linen, china and non-decorative silverware intended for servant use only.<sup>87</sup> An inventory for Temple Newsam which was taken after the death of the fourth Viscount Irwin in 1714 shows the housekeeper's room there to have contained little more than servant bedding, whilst an adjoining room accommodated a mass of linen. By 1740, and more noteworthy of an evolving role for the housekeeper and her duties, an inventory showed her main room to have contained amongst other things 3 presses, 2 cupboards and boxes for candles, linen and spices.<sup>88</sup> The adjoining room held 'a Coffee-Miln', 'Gelly Frame', a tin plate for baking pies and a bowl for washing china.<sup>89</sup>

These inventories identified the evolution of the housekeeper's role in elite households throughout the eighteenth century. Lehmann's essay on the rising professional status of the housekeeper was careful to note that such a role and involvement in the household had everything to do with specialisms of other staff

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*Arrangements* (1992); E. S. Turner, *What the Butler Saw* (1962); and Merlin Waterson. *The Servants' Hall: A Domestic History of Erddig* (1980).

<sup>86</sup> Chapone, *Improvement*, p. 72.

<sup>87</sup> Hardymont. *Home Comfort*, p. 39. One of Lady Rockingham's letters to Benjamin Hall mentioned the housekeeper's responsibility over 'China and other little things...'. WWM Stw P2/10 (1). An inventory taken at Wentworth in 1750 listed items in the 'custody' of the porter, butler and housekeeper. The porter had charge of objects including nine spoons, one soup ladle, one mustard pot and twelve travelling spoons. The butler had a wide range of objects used in dining such as plates, spoons, two large salves, one punch ladle, two fish plates, and five dessert knives. The housekeeper's range of goods were far more functional and plain, and included two milk pots, one kettle, one pan, two ladles, one funnel, copper pans and sauce pans. WWM M26/3.

<sup>88</sup> This is further supported by the recording of payments to the 'hous-wife' [sic] and housekeeper as well as noting duties in John Roades' account and receipt book for 1688-1702. TN/EA 13/47.

<sup>89</sup> A typed transcription of the 1714 inventory forms part of uncatalogued papers filed at Temple Newsam House. Otherwise see WYAS Leeds, TN/EA/3/16 Particular of Goods of Edward Machell, Lord Irwin. In same volume, Particular of Estate of Rich. Lord Irwin, June 1721. For the 1740 inventory, see TN EA 3/21.

members or the mistress herself. For example, Lehmann looked back to the seventeenth century by utilising the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby for the years 1599-1665. As household mistress Lady Hoby made remedies and preserves herself since these skills were generally more creative and required attention to precise measuring of expensive ingredients as well as the ability to read a recipe. Lady Hoby's personal maid, Annie France, was illiterate, so activities like preserving were most likely carried out alone by Lady Hoby on a frequent basis or under the strictest guidance.<sup>90</sup>

Lehmann has asserted that the active mistress like Hoby was still the norm in all households but the largest by the end of the seventeenth century. But literature pertaining to the running of a household (including of course, conduct literature) gave no direct suggestion that even a mistress of a large establishment could abandon her domestic cares altogether to the housekeeper.<sup>91</sup> Also, with notions of prestige connected to distilling and preserving due in the main to the expense of raw ingredients and equipment, the elite mistress could dabble to her heart's content with some degree of involvement.<sup>92</sup> Once the housekeeper role eventually found footing an elite woman's familiarity with foodstuffs and preparatory recipes threatened her polite status. Lehmann highlighted *The Ladies Dictionary* of 1694 which plainly advocated the use of servants in all things culinary since ladies who chose to meddle found it 'not very pleasing to their Maids, whose proper Province it is'.<sup>93</sup> As Overton et al., have stated the main role of the wife frequently became more that of supervision, the more genteel aspects of culinary and medicinal approaches were adopted in the form of collecting recipes and regulating her table with elegance and frugality.<sup>94</sup> The practicalities of which were now done vicariously through a servant structure.

The more solid and sturdy housekeeper type who held responsibility over female domestics had indeed become an independent position. Isabella Irwin at Temple Newsam gave regular sums of money to Mildred Batchelor for housekeeping expenses from 1698 to 1710, and with a designated housekeeper's room at the time of

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<sup>90</sup> Lehmann in *The Invisible Woman*. pp.12-13.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Anon, *The Ladies Dictionary* (London, 1694). p. 420. Also quoted in Lehmann in *The Invisible Woman*, p. 15.

<sup>94</sup> Overton et al., *Production and Consumption*, pp. 80-85; Pennington, *Instructions*, pp.32-33.

the 1714 inventory, it seems reasonable to uphold a late seventeenth century take-off point. The required character reference of the housekeeper was nearly always the same at every house. The robust and sturdy housekeeper was to work to her own initiative, to be of 'notable', 'trusty and clever' disposition so the elite mistress could have complete confidence in her.<sup>95</sup> Networks of people scouting for suitable candidates would be set to work by the mistress until entire families could be enquiring after housekeepers. At Nostell Priory in particular, Sabine Winn approached local haberdasher Elizabeth Cotton to search for a housekeeper who in turn wrote to her own mother elsewhere in Yorkshire with the particulars, the following provides a clear insight into how important the role was:

...as I told you in my Letter to you yesterday her Ladyship begs you will make very particular enquiry into what follows: the reason of her Leaving her place, if she is a good œconomist, if she is sober and no ways addicted to liquor, if she understands the requistory [sic] of a family and keeping all the servants at a distance and not suffering them to be familiar with her...and above all that she will be particularly watchfull of what passes in the family and acquaint her Ladyship with it and that she will be particularly active and a very early riser...<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, at Wentworth Woodhouse, Lady Rockingham informed her steward, Benjamin Hall, of the housekeeper's duties and assured him the position was only to be filled with someone who would 'have some spirit and not be got the better of by the rest of the servants'.<sup>97</sup> If the elite mistress was not around to make immediate decisions she had to have a replacement; the power of delegation started with the housekeeper. The housekeeper had to be bright, literate, be able to think on her feet and communicate with the mistress on every level. Often the layout of the house itself would suggest this need for practicality as at Temple Newsam by the end of eighteenth century where Frances Irwin's bedchamber and the housekeeper's room were adjacent and accessed by only a few flights up the informal family staircase.

The Mrs Medlock of Burnett's *The Secret Garden* imposed images now taken for granted of the housekeeper with her quintessential badge of office. Yet, the

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<sup>95</sup> WWM Stw P2/4 (1) May 7 1773, and Stw P2/8 July 24 1773. These were sentiments also used by the Worsley sisters in their correspondence, for example NH 2823/7, London 17 April, no year, when Frances Robinson wrote of one of her female domestics, probably her housekeeper, '...I have got a very good servant she is about 38yrs old [...] very grave and carrful...'

<sup>96</sup> NP A1/5A/8. Letter from Elizabeth Cotton, no date and unsigned, though it has been annotated by Sabine Winn on the back, 'Lettres de la Cotton Sur La Marwood quell a engage &c...'

<sup>97</sup> WWM Stw P2/10 (1) Wimbledon, March 20 1773?

ring of keys at her waist gave the housekeeper access to servant areas, family apartments and the myriad of cupboards, presses and drawers which held expensive goods and sometimes luxury items the elite mistress used for herself like tea and chocolate. When a little silver key belonging to Mrs Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham went missing, one of the maids looked diligently everywhere but to no purpose, clearly the spare was required and it was hoped the housekeeper had it to hand.<sup>98</sup> Susanna Whatman noted the intricacies of this relationship between the mistress and housekeeper in her *Housekeeping Book* (1776), 'The mistress of a large family can neither afford the time, nor even have it in her power, to see what her servants are about, she must depend upon the Housekeeper to see all her orders are enforced and every rule kept up'.<sup>99</sup> But such a specific job description left little manoeuvrability if a clash of personalities did occur.

Mary Rockingham found her housekeeper, Mrs Broughton, quite unsatisfactory when too much money was being spent on the household stores. To remedy this she approached her, but to no avail, 'I am sorry my last conversation with her had so little effect in bringing about an amendment in her attention'. Once an impending marriage between Broughton and the Wentworth Land Surveyor, Mr Townley was announced in March 1773, Lady Rockingham wryly asserted that in 'changing her name [she may] also change her behaviour in a more diligent care of all the particulars of her department'.<sup>100</sup> Broughton remained a constant theme of Mary's letters to her steward at Wentworth until the summer of that year when the Rockinghams were forced to let Broughton go altogether. The power of delegation had to work both ways, 'It will of course be our own fault, if we delegate too much power to such as have not judgement to use it,' wrote Carlisle.<sup>101</sup> The sloppy housekeeper was a disgraced creature; thrift was her most important virtue.<sup>102</sup> Indeed most of the complaints made against the housekeeping profession reflected her wastefulness and superfluity.

For Sabine Winn at Nostell Priory a trusty and clever disposition in her housekeeper was seriously lacking and any hopes she might have had in communicating

<sup>98</sup> North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) Hovingham Hall MSS (ZON) 13/4/132 William Schoolcroft at Hovingham to Mrs. Elizabeth Worsley at Clarges Street, London, 19 April 1788.

<sup>99</sup> Susanna Whatman, *The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman*. (1776) Introduced by Christina Hardyment. The National Trust (1997). p. 32.

<sup>100</sup> WWM Stw P2/3 March 1 1773.

<sup>101</sup> *Maxims*, p. 25.

<sup>102</sup> Hardyment, *Home Comfort*, p. 37.

orders and enforcing household government were dashed from the moment she arrived as the wife of the future fifth Baronet (**Figure 4.8**).

**Figure 4.8. Portrait of Sir Rowland Winn, fifth Baronet, and his wife Sabine (1734-1798), Portrait by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, 1767, oil on canvas. National Trust, Nostell Priory.**



At first things were relatively comfortable for the couple. It was not until Rowland was increasingly away for ever lengthy periods of time on business that Sabine was given a bitter taste of running and maintaining a large household. What could have been a simple interest and exercise in domestic matters turned into a dire struggle for a sound servant structure ruled by a reliable female in the form of a housekeeper, and Sabine constantly battled for a notable one to fulfil the role. In 1775 she wrote from Nostell to her husband in Thornton urging him to correspond with the steward Mr Leadbetter in order to find someone suitable,

I need a brave and honest housekeeper. May he move heaven and earth to find one. Above all things, I would not wish this article to be disregarded. The one that I have, allows all the girls access to the sideboard,

and each of them helps herself and she so prodigiously protects the junior staff that Mrs Barr declares that she would not dare to undertake to manage the house in our absence, with the girls spoiled by the housekeeper.<sup>103</sup>

When Pennington urged her readers to ‘suffer no extravagancies of unnecessary articles to pass unnoticed’ she was undoubtedly thinking of the consequences under which Sabine Winn was suffering, but this was the least of Sabine’s worries. She dubbed her housekeeper ‘an adventuress’ who was uncontrollable and despicable, ‘whether we find somebody else or if, I will send her away... Today she treated the poor Mrs Barr like a dog. I thought she wanted to seize her by the throat in front of me...’<sup>104</sup> Having confronted the housekeeper about her attitude and exorbitant ways Sabine had her anger renewed and wrote to Rowland. She accused the Nostell staff of ruining her reputation by turning the house into a brothel, ‘the dairymaid who is moreover a whore’ was colluding with the housekeeper and spreading gossip about while a male upper servant was ‘twenty times a day in the housekeeper’s bedroom’. Sabine was clearly at the end of tether and boldly told Rowland it was now his turn at disciplining, ‘I leave to you the pleasure of surprising these two rascals together.’<sup>105</sup>

A year later she was still evidently troubled by her head female, and wrote to her friend the Countess of Dundonald enclosing her grievances and sadness at the disobedience allowed to permeate throughout her household. The Countess wrote back with sympathy since the housekeeper in question had proved a valuable asset in another family, ‘...servants nowadays are so inconsistent as to behave well in one place and ill in another, Idleness, Dress and Insolence are their Prevailing vices...but it is one thing to know and another to Perform Ones Duty.’<sup>106</sup> This letter was riddled with contemporary themes of criticism against the servant class in general. Yet, Christopher Todd’s essay on Sabine Winn has linked such bad behaviour with a degree of xenophobia. Sabine received deep personal criticism from a cousin of the Winns, Catherine Harrison (later to become the Unitarian philanthropist, Mrs Catherine Cappe) who noted in her memoirs that the ‘sparkling radiance’ exhibited by Sabine Winn hid a rather more shallow nature.<sup>107</sup> Todd has remarked that Cappe was always eager to show

<sup>103</sup> NP A4 1535/6, 9 October 1775, Sabine at Nostell to Rowland in Thornton.

<sup>104</sup> NP A4/1535/8, 24 October 1775, Sabine at Nostell to Rowland in Thornton.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 October 1775.

<sup>106</sup> NP A1/5A/4, Countess of Dundonald to Sabine, 23 September 1776.

<sup>107</sup> Christopher Todd, ‘A Swiss Milady in Yorkshire: Sabine Winn of Nostell Priory’, *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, (2005), pp.218-219.



herself to advantage in her own narrative, and such spiteful comments were probably reflected in the views of the Nostell servants.

Sabine Winn had problems later on in finding a suitable male cook for Nostell and she commissioned friends and the more reliable of her staff to search tirelessly for one. Many letters to Sabine from her later housekeeper, Mrs Nicholson promised good character references and interested candidates for the role, but none seemed to be acknowledged. Letters from Lydia Hudson, a friend of the Nostell governess, Mrs Lambelet showed that staffing problems were ever present in the minds of the Winns when even she was asked to track down suitable men for the position.<sup>108</sup>

The Worsleys' London housekeeper, Mrs Peterson proved disobedient enough for Thomas himself to express his own displeasure at her conduct to their accountant and steward, Mr. Seton. When she wished to leave service in November 1786, Mrs Peterson had demanded a quarter's notice which Thomas refused to pay. Seton promptly reported back to Mrs Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham reminding her that the 'heavy Drain of Mrs Peterson' had meant the family 'were nearly obliged to observe great Economy' and her bills should be settled with immediate effect since Thomas was liable to ill-temper whenever the subject was brought to him.<sup>109</sup> A rather ominous comment in an earlier letter from Mr. Seton related to a female servant's misconduct which he believed could have been avoided, 'I should have thought that last year's Business would have put her on her Guard.'<sup>110</sup> Whether this was the housekeeper or not is unclear but Mrs Elizabeth Worsley nevertheless had the support of Seton if Mrs Peterson was any further trouble until her departure.

Things were slightly brighter for Mary Rockingham once she found a new housekeeper for Wentworth Woodhouse and she was full of optimism, despite the applicant having a young boy of two years old. She wrote to Benjamin Hall asking for his opinion, '...I really think that under your direction she is likely to be the sort of person wanted for that place, a notable managing person who will execute everything,

<sup>108</sup> The personal papers of Sabine, letters from Lydia Hudson, NP A1/5A/6 mainly 1779.

<sup>109</sup> NYCRO, ZON 13/4/94 Ja Seton at Adelphi to Mrs Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham, 10 November 1786, and ZON 13/4/95 Ja Seton at Adelphi to Elizabeth Worsley, 25 November 1786.

<sup>110</sup> NYRCO, ZON 13/4/46 Ja Seton at Gray's Inn Court to Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham Hall, 19 December 1782.



she is order'd without any airs of her own...' <sup>111</sup> For Mary Rockingham her concern was the adaptability to and capability of handling such a large household as Wentworth. Of the new housekeeper, Mary told her steward that experience was wanting but had written down a few instructions for her to follow anyway. Likewise, when the baker maid intended to leave, Mary hid her worries behind a façade of disdain at the maid's flirtatious nature with male servants, 'I cannot say that I have such a high opinion of her as to behaviour and disposition, as to suppose it will be any very terrible loss, for except in the article of Bakery which is a difficult thing in so large a family to do well'. <sup>112</sup>

As an upper servant, and generally literate too, the housekeeper defended her corner if she thought she was not being taken seriously enough. The disappointment felt by a housekeeper at Nostell was recorded in an undated letter addressed directly to Sabine Winn sometime in the 1770s but there is no way of telling whether this was the same woman who Sabine had previously labelled an adventuress,

...I had no body to support me in my place and nor was I ever treated as a housekeeper since I came...there were some things no doubt your Ladyship may think I do not do my Dutey [sic] in, it is not in my power to mend it as I never took orders as a housekeeper, [as] I find I am not treated as such it gives me Reason to believe your Ladyship does not think me a servant to sute [sic] her... <sup>113</sup>

It was not all bad news for the elite mistress and housekeeper relationship, and in many houses the latter became a trusted treasure for the chatelaine. A rather tentative note to Sabine Winn in 1779 from Samuel Thompson, the butler, recorded the imminent arrival of housekeeper Mrs Nicholson at an under-prepared Nostell with a less than welcoming reception,

...what an uncomfortable reception Mrs Nicholson met with, instead of a warm Bath to comfort her, a dismal cold one took place, and of course a violent Cold ensued and Mrs Nicholson is indeed very ill, for her reception there was no room aired, not a bitt [sic] of fire, no sheets aired, no bed made...for my ungratitude [sic] to Mrs Nicholson I pay my Duty to Her twice a day to know how she does. <sup>114</sup>

<sup>111</sup> WWM Stw P2/4 (1), May 7 1773.

<sup>112</sup> WWM Stw P2/37 (1), Wimbledon, Monday night, 25 March 1773.

<sup>113</sup> NP A4/1549/12, letter to Sabine Winn, unsigned and undated.

<sup>114</sup> NP A1/5A/5, Letters from Mrs. E. Nicholson, Housekeeper though this letter actually concerned Nicholson. Samuel Thompson to Sabine Winn, 19 December 1779.

Sabine Winn's reply is not known, but her relief to hear Mrs Nicholson had recovered came enclosed with typically restless orders for her to answer a wanted advert regarding a governess in a London household.<sup>115</sup> An efficient and fluid relationship better suited the nature of communication between elite mistress and her housekeeper. It could clearly be quite a thankless position in the household too, something which differed between mistress and personal maid due to the necessity of paying wages in return for domestic work. The housekeeper was not always intended as a companion and her supportive role followed a set of instructions rather than confidential moments of private discourse.

Such females in the household would receive criticism from the elite mistress as a consequence of her own principles and moralistic views towards obedience and female conduct. Mary Rockingham scolded her female domestics for their slovenliness by implying such attitudes had something to do with a female sensuality. On other occasions she accepted it had more to do with the vast working mechanisms of the household and their ability to cope within a large servant hierarchy. Male domestics were commented on far less because a mistress made fewer associations over their obedience and conduct in relation to her own principles. Male servants operated on three levels in the elite household; as the specialist/professional, as the object of conspicuous consumption, and as the labourer. The female domestic operated on only two levels; as the companion, and as the labourer. The mistress was therefore more inclined to show affection for her female domestics as well as judge them morally so she could exercise authority through leading by example in the way Isabella Carlisle might have desired in her *Maxims*. They may well have been her social inferiors but their femaleness placed them on common ground with their mistress.

The housekeeper reinforced this relationship through her subordinate position to the mistress, but was expected to lead by example throughout the rest of the household especially with other female domestics. The strain felt by Sabine Winn was a result of many factors rather than just a mere clash of personalities. Sabine demanded to be distanced from her servants so a good housekeeper in this instance had to be both messenger and disciplinarian. As the only surviving letter from a housekeeper suggested,

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<sup>115</sup> NP A1/5A/5 Copy of a letter to Mrs. Nicholson, no date, though Sabine sent on her best wishes for a quick recovery.

any lack of fluid communication could actually render the mistress as weak, indecisive and self-absorbed and the housekeeper ineffective and unsuccessful.

#### IV

The image of the elite mistress surrounded by utterly docile maids, meting out strict instruction and tedious chores whilst contemplating a day of wasteful frivolity defined her most social of household managerial roles through contemporary feminist critique. Mary Wollstonecraft despised the aspirations of women who appeared to seek indolence and lethargy instead of practicality and a worthwhile education. Hannah More concerned herself with the irresponsible nature of women of 'rank and fortune' who never gave a second thought to calling for their hairdressers, dressmakers or carpenters on the Sabbath day whilst reminding her readers that such women misinterpreted their power in society for personal gain rather than charitable exertion.<sup>116</sup> Yet, in the household the elite mistress was well aware of her social responsibility over servants and the authoritarian position this afforded her. Certainly, it was deeply embedded within understandings of the master/servant contract as each existed as interdependent relations, but her authority was also bound by the hierarchical structure of servant organisation which demanded attention to this most social and often emotive role.

Communication with the steward would reveal some of the most subjective aspects of servant organisation, and the extent to which an elite woman considered it important. In order to employ a servant at any level within the household hierarchy, she devised job specifications in tune with her very own principles and the wider household needs. Servants were not to be spoilt, nor be given over to a lack of self-restraint where they held responsibility for other staff. Likewise, they had to be bold enough to fit in with the existing household anatomy and physiology in order to perform their own duties well. The mistress did not waiver responsibility and could even find herself troubled by her own inclinations to permit excess or insubordination.

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<sup>116</sup> Hannah More, *Thoughts on the Importance of the Manners of the Great to General Society*. (1788); and *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education with a View of the Principles and Conduct Prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune*. (1799), pp.34-37.

A mistress's anxieties over successful servant organisation were not necessarily confined to her female domestics either. Her household authority had to be rather more elastic and stretched to a business-like communication with her steward, consultation with the butler, clerk of the kitchen and in some instances, the chef or male cook. Her routine was not a simple set of dialogues with the housekeeper (a relationship itself beset with difficulties, personality clashes and disagreements) as the mistress's involvement with the servants was the reviewing of domestic structures, including appraisals as well as the reluctant dismissal. The tendency for debate towards a feminisation of domestic employment throughout this period has been limited to the smaller household and is not applicable to the elite household because male servants greatly outnumbered females up and down the core servant hierarchy. The only exception to this rule was demonstrated with the growing number of 'skivvies' or charwomen who were not part of the regular household and therefore did not receive annual wages. Furthermore, the level of interaction with these women compared with other staff members with the mistress was often negligible. Domestic work was certainly being done increasingly by females, but in the elite household, male domestics still held precedence for some time.

For the elite mistress the organisation of the servants was an exercise in social arrangement and a show of awareness in the community mentality of her household. As a commonwealth, the large household had to function through routine as well as some degree of familiarity. It was not informality between mistress and servant, but one established throughout the hierarchy whereby large numbers of people had to work together as a united group for the reputation and welfare of the household. The mistress had to ensure the positive social interaction of her servants in order for their work to seem fulfilling as ultimately this determined the response to instruction, and shaped their enthusiasm as otherwise they may have made plans to leave. Isabella Carlisle was momentarily distracted by family matters and her servants became neglected. She was a necessary presence in their everyday direction but her smelly house could have equally been the result of dissatisfied and disgruntled staff that had grievances with one another and not their mistress. By communicating with other servants the mistress was able to avoid misunderstandings between them and recognise the cohesion needed for a pleasant working environment.

Servant organisation was all about communication, delegation and careful diplomacy. Where this proved successful through countless memoranda or letters to the steward, as at Wentworth Woodhouse for example, a woman's household authority was akin to business management and showed her to be alert and attentive to the flesh and bones of the domestic mechanisms. When this did not prove successful, as at Nostell Priory, the mistress appeared as impatient, over-insistent and ungrateful. Failures at servant organisation were the result of slack communication or too much delegation. The difference between success and failure was embedded in the interdependence of the mistress and her servant and her dedication to observe domestic activity rather than to separate herself from it entirely.

## 5. Administering Welfare: Pastoral and Medicinal Care.

This chapter is an examination of the moral and physical welfare of the household by the elite mistress. The ornamental, structural and sanitary maintenance and preservation of the country house was a never-ending process of communication with, and organisation of, servants, craftsmen, journeymen and labourers. It was about inter-reliance and meant that recognition and provision of medical help in cases of physical injury brought about through both domestic and estate employment was essential, as was observation of moral behaviour where men and women occupied the same working space. In other words, maintenance and preservation encompassed wider concerns for employer and employee where good character and well-being was equally fundamental to the longevity of the country house as simply bricks and mortar. The country house was a community which had its own distinct social accountabilities and shared facilities.

In this context, the mistress assumed distinctive moral superintendent status in the household. Isabella Carlisle was sure to include her thoughts on humility and tenderness in her *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*. Otherwise, books other than conduct covering a wide spectrum of medicinal treatments were available for consumption. Perhaps the most comprehensive was *The British Housewife: Or, the Cook, Housekeeper's, and Gardiner's Companion* (1756) by Martha Bradley (**Figure 5.1**), which contained culinary recipes, practical instructions for the gardener and remedies for all kinds of ailments.<sup>1</sup> In the introduction to the facsimile edition of 1996 however, Gilly Lehmann has asserted that Bradley's own expertise appeared far more developed in the culinary section, and that remedies for diseases were evidently gleaned from other sources.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gilly Lehmann has pointed out that Bradley's work probably began its life as a serial publication in weekly parts in 1756, but may have been prepared for publication in book form later that decade. *The British Housewife: Or, the Cook, Housekeeper's, Gardiner's Companion* (1756). Facsimile edition with introduction by Gilly Lehmann, (Totnes, 1996). pp.10-14.

<sup>2</sup> Lehmann in the introduction to Bradley, *The British Housewife*, Facsimile edition, pp.7-9.

Figure 5.1. Title-page for Martha Bradley's *The British Housewife* (1756), (Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online).

7749. v. 4.

THE  
**BRITISH HOUSEWIFE:**  
OR, THE  
COOK, HOUSEKEEPER'S,  
AND  
GARDINER'S COMPANION.  
CALCULATED FOR THE  
Service both of LONDON and the COUNTRY;  
And directing what is necessary to be done in the *Providing for, Con-  
ducting, and Managing a FAMILY* throughout the Year.  
CONTAINING  
A general Account of such *Provisions of all Kinds*. Of the several *ways*  
*of dressing* the same, *pickled, or otherwise prepared*; and the *different* *Uses of Spices,*  
*Herbs, Sugars, and other Ingredients used in Pickling and Preserving of Things.* Show-  
ing what each is, *where it is brought, and what use it is to be put to.*  
Together with the *Nature of all Kinds of Meats, and the Method of dressing*  
*them to different CONSTITUTIONS;*  
A *Rule of Fare* for each Month, the *Art of choosing out the best* *Provisions of all*  
*Kinds; and the making as well as chusing of* *Hams, Tongues, and other* *Score Dishes.*  
All *Directions for plain Roasting and Boiling*; and for the *Dressing of all Sorts of* *Stalk*  
*Dishes in various Fashions; and the preparing the* *Stew in all its* *Articles.*  
Containing a greater Variety than was ever before published, of the most  
Elegant, yet least Expensive *RECEPTS* in  

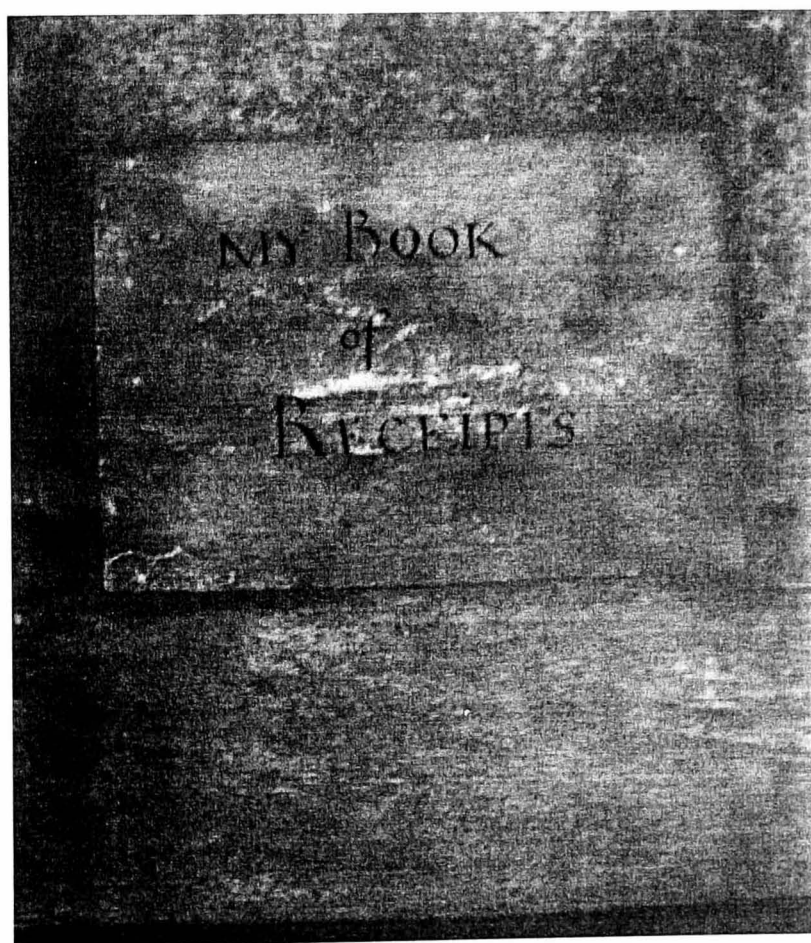
COOKERY,	†	FRICASSES,	†	TARTS,	†	DRY'D FRUITS,
PASTRY,	†	MACOUTS,	†	CAKES,	†	SWEETMEATS,
PUMPKINS,	†	SCUMPS,	†	CREAMS,	†	MADE WINES,
PRESERVES,	†	SALADS,	†	CONFARDS,	†	CORDIALS, And
PICKLES,	†	JELLIES,	†	CANDIES,	†	INFILLERY.

*To which are added,*  
The *Art of CARVING*; and the *Terms used for cutting up various Things*;  
and the *proper and safe Manner of doing the* *Honour of the Table*. The *whole* *Pre-  
face of Pickling and Preserving*; And of *preparing such* *Wines, Beers, and* *Liquors.*  
As also of *distilling* all the *useful* *Kinds of* *Cordial and* *Simple Waters.*  
With the *Conduct of a Family* in *Respect of* *Health*; the *Diseases* to which they  
are every *Month* *liable*, and the most *approved* *Remedies* for each.  
And a *Variety of other valuable Particulars, necessary to be known in all* *Roasting and*  
*nothing* *indeed but what has been approved by* *EXPERIENCE.*  
All the *Ordering of all Kinds of* *profitable* *Beasts and* *Fowls*, with *respect to their* *Chews, their*  
*Breeding and* *Feeding*; the *Diseases* to which they are *generally* *liable* each *Month*; and *Prognostics*  
for their *Care*. Together with the *Management of the* *plague, pestilence, and* *Spill* *Cholera.*  
THE WHOLE  
Embellished with a great Number of *various* *COPPER PLATES*, showing the  
*Manner of* *Roasting* all *Kinds of* *Game, wild and* *domest Fowls, &c.* as also the *Order of*  
*setting out* *Tables for* *Dinner, Supper, and* *Grand* *Entertainments, in a* *Method never* *before*  
*attempted*; and by which even *those who* *cannot read* will be able to *instruct* *themselves.*  
By Mrs. MARTHA BRADLEY, *late of* *BATH*;  
Being the *Result of upwards of* *Thirty Years* *Experience.*  
The *whole* (which is *deduc'd from* *Practice*) *completing the* *entire* *Reader,*  
*from the* *highest to the* *lowest* *Degree, in every* *Article of* *English* *Housewifery.*  
L O N D O N.  
Printed for S. Crowder and H. Woodgate, at the *Golden* *Ball in* *St. Dunstons* *Street.*

Copying and collecting from other sources was nothing new in published form and rather echoed the general practice of gathering recipes for personal volumes in any household. Both culinary and medicinal recipes had traditionally been passed down through the female line of many families since the Middle Ages, with some being discarded or simply updated over the years. In most cases the two types of recipe were kept together regardless of their purpose and recipe books and papers in the Yorkshire country house appear richly varied in content as well as in their appearance as a result of more than one contributor. At Temple Newsam no voluminous documents have survived, instead the scrappy collection of culinary and medicinal recipes in note form suggest a varied approach was taken where ideas for sauces and puddings, and purgatives and ointments were laid down by several hands. At Nostell Priory, Sabine Winn filed her mother's eleven volumes of recipes with her own papers and copied

remedies from several published volumes to add to her collection. Similarly, at Castle Howard, Isabella Carlisle enhanced her personal recipe book with the addition of ideas from friends and acquaintances, many of which were gathered through her travels in Europe (**Figure 5.2**). Ingredients for both culinary and medicinal recipes made them seem like intriguing experiments in health and nutrition. For example, one slip of paper in the Temple Newsam documents from February 1770 recommended lavender as a means of flavouring a cake which also contained rhubarb and appeared to be a remedy for improving the blood or cardiac strength.<sup>3</sup> Many of Sabine Winn's volumes were written in German, but an earlier recipe book for Nostell dating from the 1720s and compiled by one of Sabine's predecessors showed that spices such as cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, and saffron were not unusual ingredients for jellies, puddings and waters.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 5.2.** The front cover for Isabella Carlisle's *My Book of Receipts*. Castle Howard Archives.



<sup>3</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS, Leeds), Temple Newsam MSS (TN) TN/F/8 Recipes, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This particular recipe is difficult to read and contained many unfamiliar terms. It appeared to have been signed or initialled by a doctor or apothecary rather than a household member.

<sup>4</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Nostell Priory MSS (NP) NP C4/8/1; also, NP C4/8/2.



The use that these recipe books were put to by the elite mistress in her respective country house also varied. Some women depended on them far more than published books by the likes of Martha Bradley, yet other women chose both formats and regularly dipped in and out of them in tried and tested fashion. Published and handwritten volumes may very well have been consulted by the mistress herself, but how much she communicated with her children's nurse, the governess or tutor, a visiting doctor, the housekeeper, gardener or cook depended upon both her assertions and level of interest in superintending and maintaining general care of the household as a family unit.

To this extent, the definition of the word 'family' in the eighteenth century had a huge influence over the mentalités of elite women; 'family' was used as a collective noun for anyone living under the same roof.<sup>5</sup> Tadmor has interpreted this to mean that seventeenth- and eighteenth-century perceptions of household, to include its diverse dependants, such as servants, apprentices, and co-resident relations.<sup>6</sup> This is an appropriate consideration particularly in the language used in wills and bequests where servants might be left a sum of money on the condition that they were 'now in my family'.<sup>7</sup> The inclination of the elite woman towards protecting the household (or family) against physical and moral misfortune could therefore be recognised as altruistic. Mary Rockingham for one had almost abnormal levels of anxiety about her staff (perhaps as a consequence of having no children of her own to care for) as well as displaying hypochondriac tendencies herself. Some women preferred medical knowledge to be a part of private gain, a theoretical pursuit rather than a practical application.

In the instances where no mistress was present due to a temporary absence, the owner not marrying or high mortality rates in the female line, attitudes towards medical and pastoral welfare did not necessarily diminish. The family still existed as a unit and due attention was paid to its protection, although the master of the

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<sup>5</sup> Samuel Johnson. *A Dictionary of the English Language*. In two volumes. (1760). s.v. 'family'.

<sup>6</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p.18-19.

<sup>7</sup> WYAS, Leeds. Temple Newsam Additional MSS. 3997 (7) Copy of the will of Frances Lady Irwin, 9 Jan 1806.

household might exert greater pressure on his steward to avoid large expenses in medical care than any mistress would.

Moral guidance in a household free of elite female company however, was a little more ambiguous and it is difficult to state whether an elite female presence would account for fewer occurrences of sexual misdemeanour and general immoral conduct. The fifteen year old Elizabeth Lister was 'the poor girl who had not one farthing' and so was taken under the protection of Anne Worsley (née Robinson) as the girl was 'liable to be ruined'.<sup>8</sup> Yet, Elizabeth Worsley, the sister of Thomas who eventually ran away with the pregnant Lister, revealed her shock at his behaviour before rebuking her mother's 'ill luck with virgins'.<sup>9</sup> Presumably she regarded the maids as both pure and yet enticing, but no similar incident was made reference to in any other surviving correspondence. It is worth noting that Anne's belief that the girl would be 'ruined' if left to fend for herself, as this was actually more applicable within the household rather than without. Clearly a charitable mistress was not equally endowed with frequent astuteness. A master might have had better luck in decoding male and female behaviour under his roof especially where he was not given over to too sympathetic a disposition. Daniel Lascelles at Plompton Hall proved that like servant organisation some departments of household management were not always better suited to a presupposed feminine responsibility when he was faced with the presence of a female servant's new born baby. Often it was beneficial in the long-term for an employer to judge immoral behaviour from a distance especially in cases of idleness. Confrontation was only applicable once behaviour was viewed as promiscuous, sexually aggressive or involved theft and deceit.

Medical and pastoral welfare in the household were part of a female response to a social code of behaviour for the elite mistress but her outlook could be either altruistic or almost perfunctory under this code. An understanding of the family as a household unit, including so many divisions of dependants, made the task of protecting and maintaining them all quite complex. Very few women fully disregarded the exercise of administering welfare and instead considered varied types of involvement in

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<sup>8</sup> WYAS, Leeds. Newby Hall MSS (NH) NH 2833/90. Correspondence. Elizabeth Worsley to Frances Robinson, York, 23 May 1748.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 May 1748.

household health and morality. These ranged from the consultation of medicinal recipes to the willing payment of apothecary bills, to the unwearied offering of a second chance or the gentle coaxing of spiritual guidance, the elite woman rarely shrugged off the responsibility of care.

## I

Both moral and physical welfare of the household have been linked to the treatment of servants and employees generally and have become a critical element to the historiography of the domestic servant experience of the eighteenth century. Writing about the conditions of service and master/servant relations, Hecht has been criticised in recent times for maintaining the employer bias and for the utilisation of notions of patriarchy in his sources. Granted, Hecht did place too much emphasis on contemporary sources advocating the humble servant virtues of obedience, humility and lowliness. These were better suited to the strictly regimented household where separate dining and sleeping arrangements occurred. Yet, the perceptions of family hierarchies can still hold sway especially where Hecht's argument was one of master/servant obligations for which 'maintenance' stood as a key word. Hecht wrote, 'On accepting a place the servant undertook to perform a certain type of work; in return the master engaged to maintain him as well as give him a stipulated wage and other emoluments.'<sup>10</sup> As head of the family, the employer had far-reaching obligations towards their staff. This was indicative of the organic family unit which again relied upon interdependence. Indeed the patriarchy to which Hecht made use of was evident in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century understandings of the family and the mutual dependence members had within the household unit.

For the Yorkshire country household, this stance has been keenly reinforced by Jane Holmes in her unpublished study on domestic service where the religious grounding for patriarchal family structures precluded any sense of master/servant relations as merely contractual.<sup>11</sup> Thus, even the largest households formulated notions of familial duty and welfare. Mary Rockingham frequently used the

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<sup>10</sup> J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (1956), p. 72

<sup>11</sup> Jane Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire 1650-1780.' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 1989), p. 113.

term 'family' when indicating general grouping of household members. In her estimation, some servants could not adapt themselves to 'so large a family' and were immediately palmed off to somewhere less noble and extensive. At other times the 'family' were the insiders, the core members of staff or troupe travelling to and fro from London with the seasons.<sup>12</sup>

It may be recalled that Stone failed to utilise contemporary usage of the term 'family' which included non-kin, boarders, apprentices and resident servants, but he did recognise the household as a composite group. For lists of servants at Wentworth, and the organisation of servants in the servants' hall at Nostell, this made sense of the variety of indoor and outdoor servants present, their contribution to the household and their entitlement to levels of consumption, care and benefits in employment. The morality of this household-family definition as Tadmor perceived it to be was emphasised through precepts for the productive use of free-time for each member.<sup>13</sup> After all, vice had long-term effects on household relations and rendered a hard-working servant restless, ill-mannered and idle. For master and mistress the possibilities of uncovering drunkenness, gaming, promiscuity and theft were limitless – observing household recreation was as important as overseeing its intricate mechanisms which kept it ticking over in the first place.

However, moral welfare was not easily monitored within the household or upon the estate, in many cases it rested upon sources perceived as unreliable in a fellow servant or household member. More fundamental to the elite woman's role was the infliction immoral behaviour in the large household had in securing her a bad reputation. Sabine Winn was well aware of lower level servants and habits she viewed as despicable, plus an indolent housekeeper who together made whoring and thievery exciting pastimes, but felt useless against them without her husband to help successfully eject them from the household. Their behaviour caused more and more anxiety for Sabine because she felt her reputation was under threat, especially in London society

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<sup>12</sup> At Wentworth Woodhouse, the use of 'family' occurs several times in accounts and memoranda books. Benjamin Hall notes 'A List of the Most Honourable ye Marquis of Rockingham family at Wentworth House' for the annual duty on malt. It also occurs in a copy letter for 16 January 1772 concerning a desire for two footmen or porters 'as the family is in great want of two proper Persons.' Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (WWM) A-1380, Memoranda Book, 1772-1784.

<sup>13</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 64.

where bad household management formed as interesting a topic for gossip as that of fashionable dress and the latest love affairs.

In attempts to correct immoral behaviour, the elite woman had to be able to identify its triggers in her household and conclude whether this was a cause for dismissal. Immediate effects of firing a servant were incredibly harsh; although even without a good character to recommend them elsewhere, an ex-servant could still find work. For family members who crossed the boundaries of morality the immediate response was the equivalent to a knee-jerk reaction. Hurt and mistrust echoed throughout the family and a severance of communication or the deliberate lack of financial and emotional support rendered the perpetrator a reviled creature. The orphaned servant, Elizabeth Lister, seduced by Thomas Worsley was no blood relative of the Worsleys, but it was her lowly status before marriage and the perception of her as promiscuous which unfortunately meant she was made the eventual outcast.

Long-term corrective methods for immoral behaviour proved far more beneficial within the elite household; perhaps because the dismissal of a servant was deemed too much hard work or required an uncomfortable face-to-face encounter. Elite women persuaded unruly members of the household instead to consider and reflect upon the triggers of their misdemeanours, usually through biblical influence, religious ceremony and obligations to attend family services. More often women offered a second chance in the household, especially in cases of disobedience and carelessness.

Gaining the upper hand was certainly important, many a conduct book included suggestions for instigating careful surveillance of domestic staff in particular. Yet, conduct literature offered little information on moral guidance other than that of religious piety through reading the New Testament or attendance at service. Isabella Carlisle gave insufficient coverage on this topic, 'Read with constancy the New Testament, that your memory may be furnished with sure but chearful [sic] admonition.'<sup>14</sup> Her advice was short when it came to religious matters and her precepts rarely involved intimate detailing of religious application. Instead she focused upon the 'seriousness' of reading and its moral value with the elite mistress as role model rather

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<sup>14</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*. London (1789), p. 99.

than direct advisor within the household so that servants in particular were coaxed into moral understanding, 'If inclined to read, give them books adapted to their capacity, and prohibit such as may endanger their principle.'<sup>15</sup> For Richard Allestree the ill government of the family was purely the result of religious ignorance, 'that the name of God was mentioned to any other purpose than that of blasphemy...' and that the universal complaint set against servants was simply a result of the employer who had neglected to strengthen their few moral instincts.<sup>16</sup> Servants were not 'philosophers', they had to be led by example; a woman was expected to exercise discipline with vigour in this department.

Any difficulty in correcting immoral behaviour led the elite mistress to become frustrated and dissatisfied with those in her charge, and where reputations were threatened, dismissal was always an option. It was better to have no servant than a deceitful one. The Rockinghams were inclined to let Elizabeth Broughton go because her manner was unsuitable to their domestic reorganisation at Wentworth Woodhouse. The previous worries Mary Rockingham may have had about discrepancies in the housekeeping stores were later discovered to be completely correct when Broughton was discovered to have taken 11¼ pounds of common green tea and 446 pounds of ball soap with her upon her sending away.<sup>17</sup> The theft of such a weight of goods suggests that Broughton had her accomplices and that the ball soap was either taken from Wentworth in smaller amounts or more covertly in one single attempt at embezzlement. Mary should have been made aware of the advice of William Ellis in his *The Country Housewife's Family Companion* when he presented an example of 'A Lady now living, who...refused to hire any [servants] in her own Neighbourhood...because she thought her Goods the better secured from...the Enticements of wicked Parents or Neighbours'.<sup>18</sup> The thought of making money from the sale of Wentworth ball soap and tea was clearly enticement enough for Broughton and her husband.<sup>19</sup>

Cases of dismissal were rare, except where the situation had grown too difficult to cope with for the employer overall. At Wentworth Woodhouse, the dismissal

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Allestree, *The Ladies Calling: In Two Parts*. A New Edition. London (1787) First Edition, (Oxford 1673), p. 245.

<sup>17</sup> WWM, A-1365, Book of Stores, 1769-1775.

<sup>18</sup> William Ellis, *The Country Housewife's Family Companion*. London (1750), pp.iv-v.

<sup>19</sup> It may be recalled that in chapter three, Broughton married the Land Surveyor, Mr. William Townley.

of a large number of servants in one go in 1773 was a result of expense, but highlighted the need to rid the huge household of untrustworthy individuals.<sup>20</sup> In Marjorie Bloy's thesis on Charles Watson-Wentworth and the Rockingham estates in Yorkshire she candidly remarked that such a clean sweep undoubtedly had a large effect on the size of the food bills besides cutting the amount of wages considerably.<sup>21</sup> In most cases servants and other household members were given a second chance or coaxed into understanding their faults.

Faults were especially numerous where so many people mixed and worked together. For Frances Robinson, the ever troublesome nursery maid, Polly, was accused of grave irresponsibility which influenced the running of the nursery; on the whole '... she is surely very idle, spends all her money on Tea, and her time in smoaking [sic] tobacco, a bad thing for a Nursery...'<sup>22</sup> Mary Rockingham regularly complained about her male and female servants to her steward, and her remarks leave the impression that the men were given over to high alcoholic consumption and the women were far more inclined to revel in flirtation and promiscuity. On the dismissal of one of the Rockingham footmen, she wrote, 'In short we have been obliged to discharge William my Footman on a sudden, for behaving strangely, staying out at alehouses, gambling without our knowledge almost all day till [sic] Eleven O'clock at night and when we left him at Wimbledon [,] staying out all night.'<sup>23</sup> Such an obvious nuisance was the culmination of a bad approach to work, an inclination for breaking the master/servant contract plus the evident lack of sufficient obedience. The untrustworthy servant was considered 'saucy' in their tendencies. It can be recalled that Henry Irwin's request for a suitable footman for his wife Anne also took this unsavoury characteristic into account.

Both Henry Irwin and Mary Rockingham realised the distractions England's capital city held for both prospective and existing servants. 'Sauciness' was a weakness not favoured by any employer and proved troublesome, yet there was always

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<sup>20</sup> This was certainly what Marjorie Bloy has claimed, but it had been argued by Paul Nunn ten years earlier that a cessation of vails and the required increases in servant wages might have contributed to acrimonious relations between the steward and leading servants between 1771 and 1775. Marjorie Bloy, 'Rockingham and Yorkshire: The Political, Economic and Social Role of Charles Watson-Wentworth, the Second Marquis of Rockingham.' (Ph.D thesis, University of Sheffield, 1986). Nunn in (Eds.) Pollard and Holmes, pp.28-41.

<sup>21</sup> Bloy, 'Rockingham and Yorkshire', p. 60.

<sup>22</sup> NH 2834/14. To Thomas or Frances Robinson, signed by Ann Worsley, no date.

<sup>23</sup> WWM Stw P2/14. no date.

the possibility for alteration. Of one of the Wentworth baker-maids, Mary noted in her typically wry tone, ‘...some few years ago, her saucy Temper and a connection with 2 lovers at a time made me quite dislike her, but of late I believe she has lost them which may account for her amendment in humility and meekness...’<sup>24</sup> This comment is not dissimilar to that from Mary concerning the impending marriage of Elizabeth Broughton to the Wentworth Land Surveyor, William Townley. Mary was definitely willing to observe the unravelling of immoral behaviour to see how far things could continue before enough was enough, only then would she intervene; a gesture which suggests her patience was great.

Vices like drunkenness, gambling, illicit sex, theft and the crossing of social boundaries were common, but were not limited to the more transient members of the household like servants – although the latter were considered to be weak-minded and more susceptible to immoral behaviour. It is important to understand the significance of the abundance of servants in the country house, the accessibility to socially acceptable ‘pastimes’ for them, and what financial cost to them such pastimes meant. Drinking and gaming could be achieved in a fairly discreet manner in any one of the resident servant rooms, the same can be said of illicit sex. The temptation for stealing could no doubt be profound, and fraudulent activity clearly went on in the Wentworth housekeeping stores.

The contexts of immoral behaviour are what matter here. Vices and a penchant for thievery may have been tantamount to criminal activity but it was the act of carrying them out under another’s roof which became the singular emblem of untrustworthiness and sauciness. Servants were not the only ones capable of breaking down reliability and confidence in household relations. Seduction and marrying for love showed impertinence towards family tradition rather than being considered entirely immoral on sexual grounds, but the elite household resonated with objection and repulsion at either if estate, inheritance and the family’s reputation were at stake. Such behaviour easily equated to immorality. At Hovingham Hall all were at stake when Thomas Worsley seduced his mother’s orphaned servant.

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<sup>24</sup> WWM Stw P2/37 (1), Mary Rockingham, Wimbledon, 25 March to Benjamin Hall.



The protection of Elizabeth Lister under the guardianship of Anne Worsley (née Robinson) eventually led to disaster when she became pregnant by the eldest son, Thomas Worsley. Such a circumstance has prompted historians to compare it to a Samuel Richardson novel.<sup>25</sup> This had huge repercussions for the Hovingham household. Thomas and Elizabeth eloped and Thomas eventually married her only to leave her a widow at the age of about fifty some thirty years later. She appears to have left little imprint on the house, and there is no portrait of her. Yet, despite the discerning letters written by Thomas's sister, (also Elizabeth) concerning his affairs, Lister eventually showed herself to be highly capable of estate management and successful in handling the career and fortune of her younger son, George.<sup>26</sup> Many of the elder upper servants were thoroughly dependable and Lister found some support in maintaining both household and estate management within their roles as advisors.

The Worsley family's misgivings were endless however, and she saw little support from them when Thomas died in 1778. The eventual establishment of a commission of lunacy for her eldest son, Edward produced violent rows over his custody when Lister was in her mid-sixties. Furthermore, her position in elite society was fragile, something reflected in the inability to marry off her two daughters. Giles Worsley has said of his ancestor that her position was insecure. She was a net cost to the family because she brought no money to the marriage and outlived her husband by thirty-one years, and she still received an income of £330 a year which could not be set against any jointure.<sup>27</sup> Leaving her widowed so early in her own lifetime meant that she was the one persecuted for the advantage Thomas had taken of her whilst she was still very young. The thoughts of Anne Worsley are strangely absent from any correspondence, but there are other females, like another sister of Thomas, Mary Constable, who had plenty to say about his dalliance and summarised the general mistrust of the Worsley family towards the marriage and the weakness Thomas had shown. Writing to Frances Robinson, she snidely remarked,

I suppose you have heard ye way of Life my Brother is fallen into  
which is neither likely to Prove a happiness to himself nor a comfort to any

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *Creating Paradise: The Building of the English Country House 1660-1880* (2000), p. 337.

<sup>26</sup> Giles Worsley, 'The Seduction of Elizabeth Lister and its Implications for the Worsley Family', *Women's History Review*, 13, 2, (2004), pp.289-90.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.299-300.

of his family, he and I have had no correspondence ever since upon my advising him to avoid entering into such an attachment.<sup>28</sup>

The absence of a formidable mistress in this instance (emphasised by the lack of existing correspondence by Anne Worsley on the subject) had long-term effects upon the moral foundation of the household. By taking the young orphaned Lister into service, the elite mistress had responsibilities to uphold. These, of course, could not be active at all times and the girl's position in the household became immensely vulnerable if her female guardian was not present. However, an elite mistress's 'ill luck with virgins' only proved to sound flippant in creating a portrait of Lister as some precocious teenager.

Thomas's seduction of Elizabeth Lister produced grumbles of discontent and displeasure which never seemed to have voted for a voice of authority and stability, be it male or female. In other words, no one person took charge before circumstances became uncontrollable. Yet, household discipline could often be forged with masculine mediation, and although the amount of existing correspondence regarding any management of the household was limited, judgements on household morality were still penned as noteworthy comments to the steward. Daniel Lascelles's intervention in one significant incident is particularly interesting on the grounds that in even the most serious of cases, patience and diplomacy were better remedies than simple dismissal.

The exceptionally well hidden pregnancy of the Plompton cook, Sarah Lister would have continued so if it were not for the delivery of a healthy baby boy almost a month early. Lascelles had the incident described to him by the family doctor, Dr. Richardson who had been present during the labour, and the steward Samuel Popplewell who took some responsibility in defending the woman's position in the household. Sarah Lister had planned to take leave for her relations when she believed the baby was due, but giving birth a month earlier than expected thwarted all plans of her maintaining such high levels of secrecy. Lascelles now had an otherwise highly regarded female servant to approach on delicate terms. Sarah Lister was fortunate to have secured support from her male colleagues with both the doctor and Popplewell emphasising her wish to stay on in service whilst also complimenting Lascelles on his existing good

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<sup>28</sup> NH 2833/88, Mary Constable to Frances, 9 May 1748.

nature. Popplewell rather optimistically hoped this would be further realised in this instance and reminded Lascelles that she was ‘an excellent cook’<sup>29</sup>. Dr. Richardson was a little more objective:

...she says if you have so much compassion for a miserable wretch [.] forgive this great offence and continue her in your service, she will be bound by duty and gratitude to do everything in her power to serve you right. If you don't think fit to continue her she begs [sic] you will not expose her but give her a character that she may get her Bread in some other part of the world...<sup>30</sup>

Luckily for Sarah Lister, Daniel Lascelles eventually responded compassionately – not because he was entirely sympathetic to her misfortune, rather it was due to ‘the unpardonable thing in this affair was that the scene of this business should be laid in my house’, his forgiveness was therefore bound to keeping the ‘unlucky affair hushed...for the sake of good order in my house.’<sup>31</sup> More unfortunate for Lister, however was exactly how public the affair had become; a circumstance which led several workmen at Plompton to taunt and sexually harass her.<sup>32</sup> Both Lascelles and Popplewell admitted her ‘freedoms with any of ye men servants’ had damaged her authority in the household, but hoped it could be quickly restored, especially as Lascelles had overlooked the affair and had similarly expected everyone else to do so.<sup>33</sup> Taunts and bullish behaviour were unacceptable, whether her authority had diminished permanently is not known but at least Lascelles and Popplewell remained adamant (and somewhat patronising) in their agreement that Sarah Lister was one of the ‘better female Cooks in ye County and not many Housekeepers who sends up a Dessert in a prettier manner...’<sup>34</sup>

Retaining a servant who proved good in their department regardless of their irresponsible behaviour outside of it saved time on hiring and firing but anxieties clearly persisted where trust had been broken under the roof of an employer. For Lascelles, authority was paramount to safeguarding the order of the household. For

<sup>29</sup> WYAS. Leeds, Harewood MSS (HAR) HAR/SC/2/3 (36). 10 February 1759, Samuel Popplewell to Daniel Lascelles.

<sup>30</sup> HAR/SC/2/3 (4). 6 January 1759, Dr Joseph Richardson to Daniel Lascelles.

<sup>31</sup> HAR/SC/2/3 (37). 13 February 1759, Daniel Lascelles to Samuel Popplewell.

<sup>32</sup> HAR/SC/2/3 (40). 19 February 1759, Samuel Popplewell to Daniel Lascelles.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 19 February 1759.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 19 February 1759.

Sarah Lister, her supposed sexual dalliances at Plompton left her mentally and physically vulnerable within a male environment, where men were in charge of all managerial affairs, as well as occupying wider space in the house as the building and interior work progressed.

There is no evidence that the presence of a household mistress would have prevented these events from occurring at Plompton. Lascelles's attitude was very much on a par with that of Mary Rockingham at Wentworth, so a feminine responsibility for household welfare as recommended by contemporary conduct authors is not applicable if the desire to retain a servant went no further than convenience. A servant's promiscuity had implications for the servant themselves; whilst an employer's patience and diplomacy were meant as cool warnings for other household members to remain circumspect. Daniel Lascelles, like Mary Rockingham offered a second chance, but could easily have made examples of servants caught up in scurrilous events.

Mary Rockingham was in certain ways unique to this component of household management since her requirements for both physical and moral welfare outshone those of many other women (**Figure 5.3**).

**Figure 5.3. Mary Rockingham (née Bright), (1736-1804). Portrait by unknown artist. National Portrait Gallery.**

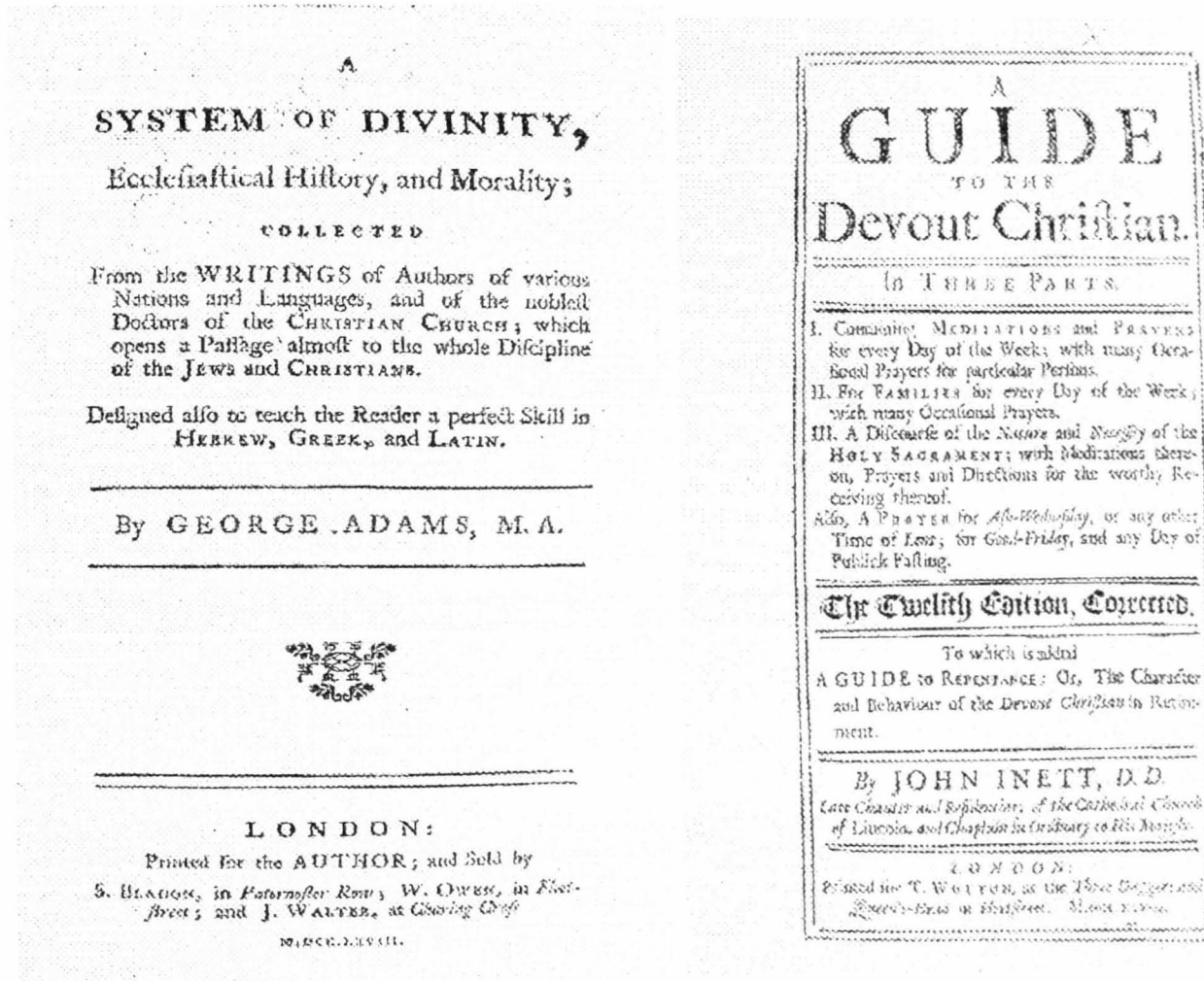


For Mary, the household unit with its familial connotations compounded by religious teachings was intrinsic to her own religious practices. She was a committed Christian, a virtue harshly mocked by Walpole for he believed this influenced the political manoeuvrings of the Marquis, ‘Is it true that [Lady Rockingham] is turned Methodist? It will be a great acquisition to the sect to have hymns set by Giardini – Pope Joan Huntingdon [Lady Huntingdon] will be disposed, if the husband becomes first minister.’<sup>35</sup> Benjamin Hall made a note of the delivery of books for her collection in July 1772, most of which were full of religious piety like, *System of Divinity and Morality in a Series of Discourses on all the Essential Parts of Natural and Reveal'd Religion; A Guide to the Devout Christian; The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice*

<sup>35</sup> W. S. Lewis, Lars E Troide, Edwine M Martz, and Robert A Smith. (Eds). *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*. 34 volumes. (London University Press, 1974), vol. 29, p. 323. Horace Walpole to Lord Strafford, 25 June 1768.

and ye Nature of ye Preparation Required with Suitable Devotions; and A New Manual of Devotion (figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4. Title-pages for moralistic/religious books ordered by Mary Rockingham in 1772, (Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online).



Indeed, her religious devotion was markedly strong when it came to her household welfare. When the Wentworth coachman, John Tomlinson was seized by painful cramps and a cough – a consumptive disorder probably brought on by cold weather in 1772, Mary's response upon hearing his reaching an untimely demise raised flickers of emotion in even the most hardened,

...ye soul and Mind may be call'd for first... I hope and trust that he is ready for the Summons, and that we will make it our daily study to prepare our own... I hope he is also truly resign'd to the will of a Wise and good God in whom I hope he puts his whole trust, and looks up to him through the Merits and Mercies of Jesus Christ...<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> WWM, Stw P2/26 Wimbledon, 7 June 1772

In the same letter, notions of family were acute too and Mary advised Hall to summon as many people to the funeral as possible suggesting, 'I would have you and Broughton and as many of the family as can go to the Church with him, and the Coach to carry you...'<sup>37</sup>

For literary connections between religion and household-family definitions, Tadmor has cited Samuel Richardson's *The Apprentice's Vade Mecum* (1733) in which connotations of master and servant relations were settled upon a contract referred to with the biblical word 'covenant' which also emphasised the solemnity of this relationship.<sup>38</sup> An untimely demise was about as solemn as it could get in even the largest household. The elite mistress could not afford to be supercilious in these circumstances and Isabella Carlisle summarised this offering of unassuming gratitude in her *Maxims* as thus, 'Take tender care of them in sickness; give them suitable consolation in distress; and, at such periods, put away the Superior, to assume the Christian alone.'<sup>39</sup> The attendance of a mistress at the bedside of a sick servant was always an option as far as Isabella Carlisle was concerned.

In cases of work-related accidents or illness, the employer had to be more than courteous and controlled by custom in order to take care of them, it was a necessity. For the elite woman, it was part of a social code which directed her in achieving moral and physical well-being as an extension of her nurturing capacities and abstract qualities of virtue and humility. The physical well-being of her household also bound her to one of the few remaining traditional activities that had been required of her since the Middle Ages – that of dispenser of medicinal treatments. Unique to the elite woman because of her status rather than her sex, was the choice she had in approaching this role. Unlike the effect moral welfare might have had on her personal reputation, the involvement she had in dispensing medicinal treatments was varied and ranged from the practical to the supportive. Her status meant that she could in fact forget all about growing herbs, making tinctures and oils, and treating scalds and burns and instead pay for such things to be brought in from elsewhere. She could in effect be involved internally with the household or dare to invite those with training and external qualifications into her domestic space.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 7 June 1772.

<sup>38</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 57.

<sup>39</sup> *Maxims*, p. 31.



The two approaches reflected her position within a national or regional perspective too. She could exert her confidence and assertiveness through experience gained from a cosmopolitan structure where professional medical assistance was regulated and observed. Otherwise she could claim her own territory by methods of trial and error which did not allow for a supposed imposition by any professional at all. It came down to a personal preference which determined whether the apothecary was a better cure than the handed down, handwritten remedy.

## II

There was a variety of approaches taken by the elite mistress to providing medical care in her household. When she paid for external assistance, apothecary or doctors' bills were the most revealing and offered a breakdown of treatment as well as listing those who received attention. Her correspondence might also have suggested consultation with household members or the need for them to give a quick opinion or permission for a child to receive a specific sort of treatment. Isabella Irwin was informed by the housekeeper to both her eldest sons away at Eton, Edward and Rich, that they were suffering from worms and must 'take Physick' immediately. By the time the letter had been sent Isabella would no doubt have been pleased to know that the housekeeper had sought medical help and the boys were on their way to recovery.<sup>40</sup> Within a more domestic environment, Isabella Irwin made time to note in her pocket account book that 'Readhead' (a maid perhaps) was given ten shillings in September 1713 for setting her knee – had Isabella suffered a bad fall?<sup>41</sup>

The diversity of treatment and the scope of minor ailments or injuries found within the documentation was nonetheless enlightening and confirms both the contractual nature of employer/servant relations as well as the obvious benefits in many

<sup>40</sup> TN/C/9/116. 1701-05. Charles Drury to Arthur Irwin, Eton 1701, no date.

<sup>41</sup> TN/EA 14/18 Personal Accounts of Lady Isabella. 1698-1721. More specific bills for apothecaries in particular have suggested that a single practitioner could be responsible for any number of treatment ranging from accidents and injuries like fractures and dislocations, bruises and sprains, sore throats, leg and mouth ulcers, boils and abscesses, and sore eyes. Irvine Loudon, *Medical Care and the General Practitioner, 1750-1850* (Oxford, 1986), pp.78-79. See also Samantha Williams, 'Practitioners' Income and Provision for the poor: Parish Doctors in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries.' *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2), (2005), pp.159-186.



cases of having a caring and charitable mistress. Such emphasis has been the norm in the historiography and has usually been found as components to discussion on domestic service – its perquisites as well as its more unfavourable conditions. The obvious benefits of being employed upon a great estate were numerous. The liveried servant received a basic consignment of undergarments and footwear as well as his uniform; the female domestic might have been lucky enough to gain fancy goods and clothes as gifts; and food and accommodation were often better than most could experience at home with their own families. The temporary labourer who worked for several months at a time could also find himself treated to a grand dinner if his time ran over the festive season. Hard work was always rewarded with refreshment in ale or small beer and a little something ordered up from the kitchen, proving that old traditions of hospitality had never really waned. Some women even planned appropriate dishes for their servants as a way of measuring levels of consumption. Frances Robinson made preparations for the visit of a family member in the summer of 1748, and worried that her house might not seem in order, ‘But expect everything dear, and nothing tolerably good. You will have a chaplain here...that will be some comfort to thee’, she then added, ‘I must now find the buttery [sic] de cuisine, and all the servants’ dinner...’<sup>42</sup> Servant organisation in this instance was a combination of a desire for household efficiency and strict adherence to routine which allowed the elite mistress fully to intrude into the more informal and unceremonious aspects of servant employment.

The disadvantages of employment on a great estate were bound by the nature and degree of ‘work’ which ranged between the gracious handling of hefty paperwork and at worst the lifting, fetching and carrying necessary for providing essentials like water, heat and light. Most employment was therefore laborious, and any employee either domestic or otherwise could experience an accident in the workplace. Straightforward physical welfare was paramount for the employer and burns, scolds and broken bones are some of the items found treated and paid for in both household accounts and medical bills. In this instance many employees would not be ignored and their names and treatments would be listed next to those of family members with the cost, and sometimes effectiveness registered for future reference, especially in the case of illness.

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<sup>42</sup> NH 2833/45 Aix. 31 August 1748. Frances Robinson to Madame Robinson.

At Temple Newsam some magnificent apothecary and doctors' bills for medical treatment have survived throughout the main part of the eighteenth century but unfortunately nothing like these seemed to have lasted the test of time at other houses. In regards to servant health and fitness particularly, a bill dating from 1760 from apothecaries Atkinson and Bradley which came to a total of just over £30, itemised treatments for the housemaids, the housekeeper Mrs Carter, the groom's boy, the postilion, the gardener, and the dairymaids.<sup>43</sup> One of the kitchen maids had clearly suffered a work related injury to her arm which was immediately treated at a cost of five shillings. Less obvious was the attention given to Jos Ellis who probably received surgery on a boil when the 'opening and curing' of his neck cost half a guinea.<sup>44</sup>

Some of the largest apothecary bills corresponded to the treatment paid for by Henry and Anne Irwin in the 1740s and 1750s to Henry Atkinson.<sup>45</sup> The outstanding amount on the first bill was £268 – 6s – 1d and included tinctures, bleeding, vitriol, leeches, and juleps. Atkinson made a note of several of the ingredients to these remedies such as cinnamon, aniseed, manna, sugar, and liquorice perhaps as means of justifying the cost and to break down the essential items. Many of these ingredients were some of the sweetest natural commodities and had distinct flavours, manna in particular was even sweeter than sugar and its taste was a result of glucose, fructose and sucrose – though for medicinal purposes it was normally used as a laxative.<sup>46</sup> No doubt these sweeteners were also preferred for their ability to mask the flavours of the more unsavoury ingredients. The bills also included the receiver of treatment; a practice which persisted in many apothecary bills. At Temple Newsam in the middle of the century Anne Irwin had received attention for a bad finger which had to be dressed, the steward

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<sup>43</sup> TN/EA 12/9. Bill for apothecaries Atkinson and Bradley, 1760. Other bills date back to October 1754 until July 1758, it is likely therefore that they relate to Henry and Anne Irwin who settled their bill with them upon the arrival of Frances as the bride of Charles to Temple Newsam in August 1758. None of the bills have been numbered for archival identification and have been rolled together in no date order.

<sup>44</sup> Samantha Williams has briefly discussed the sort of work done by medical practitioners in the eighteenth century, highlighting how it was normally done on an 'item of service' basis. This means they would have been paid separately for visits, medicines, surgical procedures, midwifery and maybe even vaccinations. Apothecary bills have shown evidence of this with dates of specific visits and treatment carried out at that time listed over weeks and even months. Williams in *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2), pp.159-161.

<sup>45</sup> TN/EA 12/9 1642-c.1760. Apothecary bill from Henry Atkinson, 1743-51. Bills for Atkinson appeared intermittently in the documents and the amounts were usually vast, ranging from £32 to £132 for annual treatment.

<sup>46</sup> Alan Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food* (2002), pp.570-571. Apart from sugar itself, the roots and seeds used were, in their purest form, far sweeter than sugar anyway.

received treatment, so too did an apprentice Mr. Keeling, and the cook also received some medical attention.

Often the apothecary or doctor could be a little remiss when it came to the laying out of bills however, and when a patient was not identified, those providing payment for consumption of medicines could become irritable and frustrated. At Plompton, Daniel Lascelles expressed anger at Samuel Popplewell when it came to the cost of treating the whole household. Popplewell had at some time tried to diffuse the situation by suggesting that the apothecary bill in question represented an entire year of medical attention when really it was for just six months. Daniel's reply was flavoured with a little wit;

I have perused the very Extraordinary Bill of the Apothecary's and don't doubt but every Article is just and has been taken, but he has omitted saying... who was the patient. I find in talking to Mrs Sparrys [?] that he was sent for several times without her knowledge, if the like should ever dare to be done I shall immediately order the servant to be discharged... I don't believe there is a family in the County swallows so much Physick...<sup>47</sup>

He may have had qualms about keeping Sarah Lister on as cook, but Lascelles was certainly impatient to rid the house of someone who was a financial cost, and was not willing to justify such extravagancies and freedoms. Sarah Lister had escaped dismissal on the grounds that she was excellent for the job; if this servant had ever been found out at all the outcome may not have been the same. They had been secretive and deceptive as far as Lascelles was concerned and had taken advantage of his wealth and position which entitled his household to some access to medical help at a cost to him, not to mention the inconvenience of tracking them down. Lascelles seemed to have been absent a great deal from Plompton, which might account for such occurrences amongst his staff. He might not have been inclined towards an over sympathetic judgement in the same way as Anne Worsley at Hovingham, but he most certainly needed someone to step in when he was away; a female presence was definitely compulsory for him. Yet, he was divorced and he never seemed to summon assistance of a female relative.<sup>48</sup> In a more controlled household, the cost of medicines would have

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<sup>47</sup> HAR/SC/4/1 (56) 1763. Daniel Lascelles to Samuel Popplewell.

<sup>48</sup> Daniel married Elizabeth Southwick, but they were divorced in 1751.

been dealt with as well as the liberties taken by the servant in need of them; in his absences a woman would have been his salvation.

The joint efforts of both master and mistress could provide a better outcome in dealing with servant well-being. Charles and Frances seemed to have gone to great lengths to seek professional treatment of their household. Later in the century, they were paying the apothecaries Partridge, Hallifax and Holditch for treatment running from March 1772 to May 1773 (**figure 5.5**).<sup>49</sup> With the persons being noted for their treatment in this case, the bill showed nearly every member of the household received something over the course of fourteen months. A footman received salts and a manna, Charles and Frances were both given two to six draughts of an undisclosed nature on a regular basis, some of the children also had draughts with one being given an eye water, and the coachman received salts, manna and an electuary. Other prescribed treatments included boxes of pills, tinctures of castor or rhubarb, drops, and spirits of lavender or hartshorn.

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<sup>49</sup> TN/EA 12/9 1642-c.1760. Apothecary bill from Partridge, Hallifax and Holditch. 1773 addressed to 'Lord Viscount Irwyn [sic]'.



members of the elite in general; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu had publicised inoculation by reporting the procedures carried out by Turkish women who held smallpox parties where a vein would be opened and a small dose of the disease was then applied.<sup>51</sup> This gruesome method was slow to catch on, even when George II had his two daughters inoculated, and whilst on the Continent Catherine the Great had her whole family done by the English surgeon, Thomas Dimsdale.<sup>52</sup> Isabella Carlisle highly commended Frances Robinson for having her children inoculated in the early 1750s<sup>53</sup>, although by the time Frances Irwin was having her children treated over a decade later, it was still a relatively unusual practice in England.

It is not unfair to respond to Frances's actions with the belief that she exhibited immense confidence in the medical profession. Her willingness to make use of outsiders or non-family members to provide better health care was further emphasised through her enthusiasm to provision the household and equip its departments using London suppliers. Upon her marriage to Charles, she closed most of her accounts with them by paying off any outstanding debts and then reinstating them as her suppliers through her husband. Hardware, groceries and even cosmetics were bought from London makers, others from Bath, and in some instances from Leeds. Such diversity indicated the fondness an elite woman had for shopping but more importantly, the experience this gave her when dealing with tradesmen and businessmen. A medical professional was better than an unproven home-made remedy. Moreover, Frances probably found it easier to turn down an outsider's help if she thought their treatments inappropriate rather than a long-standing familiar face in her household if the risk was an injury to the latter's pride and self-assurance in their own medicinal practices.

What the documents for Temple Newsam also showed were the range of treatments and the language used by apothecaries of the time. Writers on the history of medicine have tended to focus on the development of medical attention in light of scientific advances so that the social aspect of tending to patients, cost and payment, and

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<sup>51</sup> Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present*. (1997). pp.274-75.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.275-76.

<sup>53</sup> NH 2835/2. New Year's Day, 1750/51? From her sister, Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham. 'Lady Carlisle says you look charmingly she envys [sic] you being in a situation of inoculating your children...' Frances Robinson appeared to have separated the children from the rest of the family at the time of their inoculations, and rented a house elsewhere for that purpose.

methods of recording medical services has received little debate. For example, Isabella Irwin paid a Samuel Baker two guineas on behalf of his employer Edward Coatsworth for several medicinal items between March and May 1706, and a few of the treatments are not so easy to identify as mere drops, pills or juleps (**figure 5.6**).<sup>54</sup> As well as aperients like senna which would have been regarded as part of a weekly purge,<sup>55</sup> her servants received four purging potions, one of her sons was given cordials and a male servant received a dose of vomiting powder. Strong painkillers like the opiate diacodium were also given. Often entire bills could be made out in strict medical terminology which no doubt led to confusion at the bedside as well as when it came round to eventually paying bills. In the event of a misunderstanding, Isabella could always turn to volumes like *Medicina Britannica* (1747) by Thomas Short for reference.<sup>56</sup> Porter has asserted that with the labours of the botanists and the importation of new drugs and ingredients, the apothecary's trade was booming by the end of the sixteenth century, though for many the apothecary remained by that time a wretch vending poisons.<sup>57</sup> By the eighteenth century some still held this belief, and for many women the presence of a male doctor or professional produced feelings of mistrust (in light of how the female body was understood, such beliefs were not so unfounded) and lengthy semi-Latin phrases could not have helped.

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<sup>54</sup> TN/EA 12/9. 'To the Lady Irwynn [sic]', 1705/06, bill paid 29 May 1707.

<sup>55</sup> Dulcie Lewis, *The A-Z of Traditional Cures and Remedies* (2002). Senna comes from the tropical species of Cassia, a relative of cinnamon, of which the dry leaves and dry fruits both produce the same effect. Senna is still a key ingredient in modern day treatments for constipation.

<sup>56</sup> TN/EA 3/26, Sale Catalogue of all the Household furniture, plate, linen etc., of Lady Dowager Irwine [sic] at her late dwelling house at Windsor, 11 October 1764.

<sup>57</sup> Porter, *Benefit to Mankind*, p. 194.

Figure 5.6. Apothecary bill made out to Isabella Irwin at Temple Newsam, 1707. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/12/9 – unnumbered.

1707. To the Lady Irwin -

March 10	four purging potions	Perote	00	00	—
April 13	A Ball of gascognis powder	Lady	00	15	—
	Saffron		00	00	6
14	Two Cordiall Pills	Pen	00	02	0
	Five Cordiall Draughts		00	02	—
18	Oyle of Mint Lees	Lady	00	02	—
	Plantain Water		00	00	2
19	A Cordiall Rectified Draught	Pen	00	07	—
20	The same		00	07	—
	Diacodium 3j		00	00	3
21	Oyle of Mint Lees	Lady	00	02	0
	The Draught as last	Pen	00	01	0
22	The same		00	01	—
29	A purging potion		00	01	—
May 1	The same		00	01	6
5	A Dose of vomiting powder	Pen	00	02	0
8	Scum	Lady	00	01	4
12	Chamomile flowers		00	00	6
			02	02	9

London May 4<sup>th</sup> 29. 1707

Received the Contents of this Bill by the hand of  
 of Mr. George Hollings in full of all Accts for  
 for the Rt Hon<sup>ble</sup> the Lady Irwin for his  
 Use of my Master Edw. Coatsworth  
 J me Wm. Baber

With a trusted doctor or apothecary regularly called upon to treat household members, the threat of implementing new drugs was minimal. At Temple Newsam throughout the eighteenth century the existence of such comprehensive apothecary bills served as a statement that professional help was often preferred over home remedies; something reinforced by the survival of mere scraps of paper.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Most of the culinary and medicinal recipes at Temple Newsam had been sent enclosed in letters from friends and relatives; others appeared within private papers where the mistress had scribbled on the nearest



Elsewhere the reliance on trained medical professionals like apothecaries and doctors was a rare gesture and the scales were firmly tipped in favour of traditional home-made remedies rather than the strange and unfamiliar presence of professionalism.

### III

By seeking professional medical treatment from doctors, surgeons and apothecaries an elite woman was gaining assistance externally, and allowed a degree of public and private interaction within the household. The domestic sphere was invaded by outsiders who had the sole purpose of managing the dysfunctions and malfunctions of the most private of objects – the body.<sup>59</sup> Pregnancy and childbirth did appear as topics in elite women's correspondence; some aspects of it have already been noted, but generally women seemed to have followed traditional procedures and had other females around them during their confinement. This is in stark contrast to the findings of Adrian Wilson who has declared the decision by wealthy mothers to seek the assistance of the man-midwife in the hope that it would set them apart from the women of lower rankings of society who used the traditional female midwife and who 'served as a tangible reminder that ladies were mere women.'<sup>60</sup> The man-midwife was a trained practitioner who offered an austere clinical edge to the otherwise social occasion of an all-female attendance at the delivery. A mistrust of medical professionals in general however, did not appear to be all that widespread, but it existed.

Apothecary bills, items listed in household account books and correspondence all signified an ease at which some women felt they could approach an outsider for his skill and professional know-how. For those few who had little regard for trained professionals, the only alternative was to look internally and to place greater

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bit of paper in her urgency to write it down. Isabella Irwin made use of the space on a letter from one of her sons and noted some instructions for baking a pudding. TN/C/17/126, George Ingram to his mother Isabella Irwin, 2 July 1749.

<sup>59</sup> Wendy D. Churchill, 'The Medical Practice of the Sexed Body: Women, Men, and Disease in Britain, circa 1600-1740.' *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2005), 3-22. Churchill noted the emergence of male-centred care of women around this time, citing Adrian Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery: Childbirth in England 1660-1770*. (1995); E. Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies: A Social History of Women's Encounter with Health, Ill-Health, and Medicine* (New York, 1982); and D. Porter and R. Porter, 'Doctors and Women' in *Patient's Progress: Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1989).

<sup>60</sup> Wilson, *The Making of Man-Midwifery*, p. 191. He suggested that this practice came about by the middle of the eighteenth century.

emphasis on the assistance of those already in the household. Such women also had a deep sense of self-confidence which was not always a good characteristic.

The tradition of keeping volumes of compiled medicinal recipes handed down through generations was the most significant symbol of this internal assistance. There were no vast differences between the types of remedies being collected. Generally every house had its treatment for worms, dropsy, sore mouths and throats, colic, loose teeth, and an ague (fit of shivering or fever). Viewed with modern eyes, some remedies seemed far more unusual, if not entirely revolting. A common treatment viewed sometimes as a 'cure-all' was the snail or slug water thought beneficial for the blood and a treatment for the symptoms of consumption, and normally had a quantity of earthworms thrown in for good measure. A treatment for a dog bite or madness was also common and similar recipes were present at both Castle Howard and Temple Newsam.<sup>61</sup> Sabine Winn guarded eleven volumes of handwritten (mainly medicinal) recipes handed to her by her mother.<sup>62</sup> On the one hand, they represented a profound interest in self-sufficiency and independence from intrusive treatments offered by the professional practitioners. On the other hand they emphasised the insecurities Sabine already had within her household and the solitary moments in which she frequently found herself.

There was some level of outreach for Sabine Winn as she readily interacted with published volumes which contained medical treatments and household hints. A note from Rowland written to the bookseller John Murray, gave direction on finding some credible books on herbs and simples for Lady Winn, who was,

Desirous to purchase a few books on officinal Botany, is at a loss to know which are the Best and most esteemed Modern works of that kind... [she] is desirous to be truly informed about the real virtues of simples, and prefers such authors as Lay down plain and Practical Directions how to prepare the best Medicines from simples, How they are to be taken and used and what is a proper dose.<sup>63</sup>

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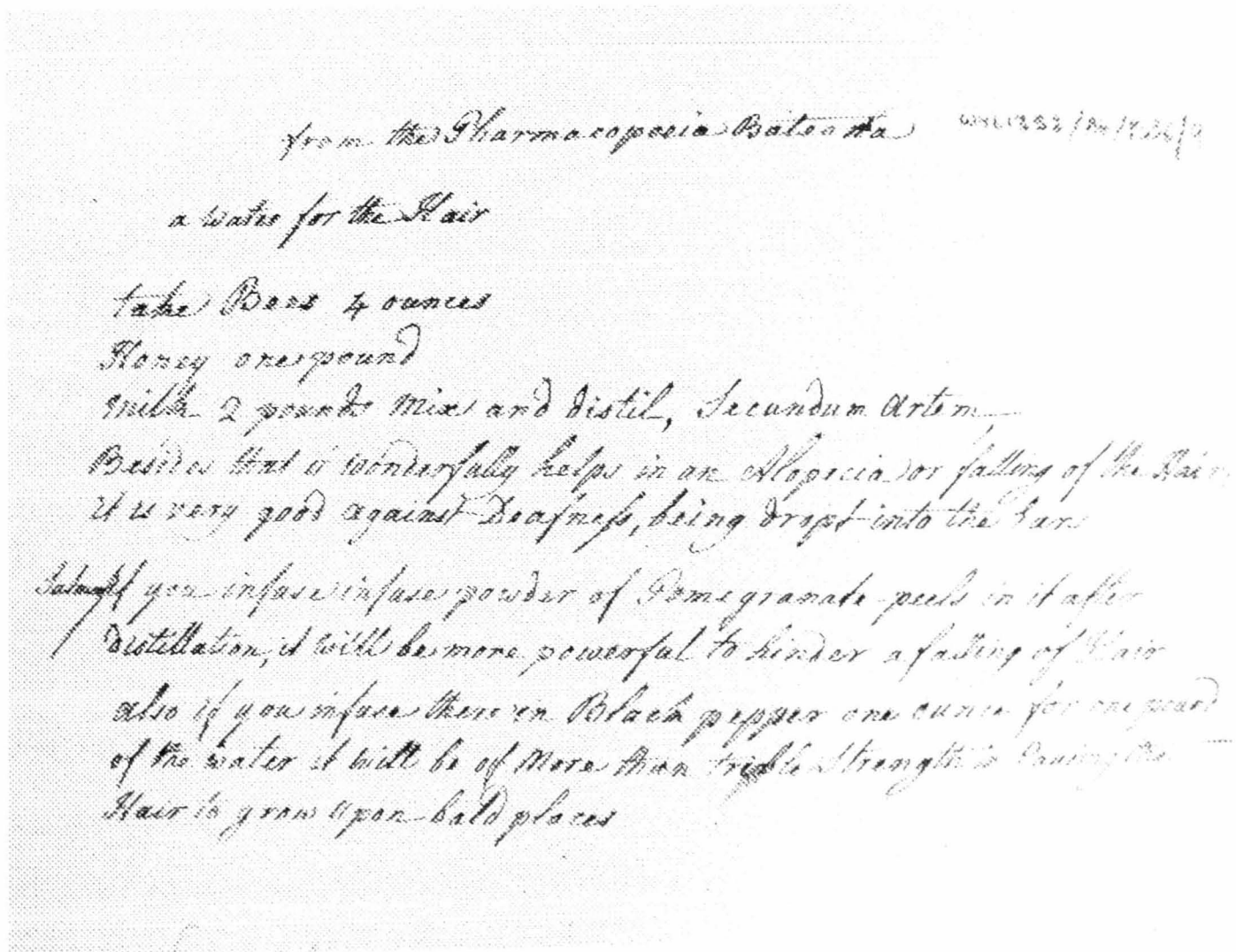
<sup>61</sup> Castle Howard Archives, Carlisle MSS, *My Book of Receipts* J13/1/4, p. 21; TN/F/8. 'The following receipt for the Cure of a Bite of Mad dog, was communicated by a Gentleman who assures as that for sixteen years it has not failed in the cure of any one Person out of many who have taken it...' Written on a slip of paper and no date given, possibly first half of the eighteenth-century.

<sup>62</sup> NP C4/8/8, Culinary and medicinal, 1662-1770.

<sup>63</sup> NP A4/1536/17, Tradesmen commissions and medicinal requests.

Murray wrote back recommending Lewe's *List of Materia Modesa* (4 volumes), *A New Dispensatory* (8 volumes), and Pernet's *List of Drugs* (4 volumes). In a note to herself, Sabine Winn also recorded her possession of William Salmon's *The New London Dispensatory* (1678), and George Bate's *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* (1700). From these Sabine copied out several recipes and herbal remedies to be either pasted into a separate book or to be filed away with similar purpose. From Bate's *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* she copied 'a Water for the Hair' which used bees, honey and milk. To this she added a paragraph from Salmon's *Dispensatory* that also guarded against hair loss using black pepper and powder of pomegranate peel (**figure 5.7**). Her personal papers even included articles copied from the *York Chronicle* for curing dropsy, and made notes of adverts for further publications like John Mudge's *A Radical and Expeditious Cure for a Recent Catarrhus Cough* (1779).<sup>64</sup>

**Figure 5.7. Copies of medicinal remedies made by Sabine Winn. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 1352/A4/1536/9.**



<sup>64</sup> Christopher Todd and Sophie Raikes, 'Love, Rebellion and Redemption: Three Generations of Women at Nostell Priory' in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), p. 80. Mudge was a Plymouth surgeon and also published *A Dissertation on the Inoculated Small-Pox* (1778).

A great deal of these medicinal remedies were for cosmetic problems; hair loss, grey hair, dry skin and wrinkles. Others were for dental problems like loose teeth, and Sabine Winn worried obsessively about teeth and the mouth overall. To Rowland she wrote with great anxiety over his health when he was away on business and begged him to take care of himself and to avoid the stresses of work, 'I am not sending you any more from the garden, except for some lettuce, Celery and horseradishes, and in addition 20 pears to cool your mouth.'<sup>65</sup> Sabine was well aware of the effects of stress and hard work on the body. Yet, such similar health matters occurred regularly in personal papers or recipe books. The earlier Nostell volume of c.1720 (presumably compiled by Letitia Winn, née Harbord) also had notes for 'fastening the teeth', sore mouths or dry skin but Sabine Winn's more personal approach registered a paranoia over professional help; something which was imbued with far deeper cultural misgivings rather than a personal mistrust.

Christopher Todd's own research into Sabine Winn has suggested that like her mother, she showed a suspicion of British doctors.<sup>66</sup> It could also be argued that given a wider dislike and xenophobia between British and French professionals at this time in particular, Sabine Winn simply portrayed the attitudes of this rather sour cultural relationship.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, after Rowland's death in 1785 Sabine isolated herself from the world outside Nostell and allowed the relationship between herself and her two children to deteriorate. This mirrored her attitude toward her own health which steadily broke down. By 1791, she could no longer write as the gout in both her hands was so serious, and seven years later with only a month before her death, her sister-in-law noted how Sabine had 'so far lost the use of her limbs as to be obliged to be lifted by two people in and out of bed'.<sup>68</sup> Such a decline represented a lingering fear of outsider help and

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<sup>65</sup> NP/A4/1535/10, Sabine at Nostell to Rowland at Ableby. November 1775.

<sup>66</sup> Todd in *Maids and Mistresses*, p. 79.

<sup>67</sup> Colin Jones, 'Pulling Teeth in Eighteenth-Century Paris.' *Past and Present*. 166 (February, 2000) pp.100-145. There were developments and a prevailing competitiveness in medicine and dentistry between the two countries which ultimately bred some degree of mistrust when professionals interacted on each others' soil.

<sup>68</sup> NP/A4/1542/7 Mary Winn to her niece, Esther Williamson, August 1798. Ruth Larsen has highlighted the importance of William Cadogan's *Dissertation on the Gout* (1771) which had caused great debate upon its publication. Ruth M. Larsen, 'Dynastic Domesticity: The Role of Elite Women in the Yorkshire Country House, 1685-1858.' (Ph.D thesis, University of York, 2003). pp.223-226. It is not clear at present that Sabine had her own copy of the book, yet it was referred to by Frances Irwin who ordered the book in 1771. TN/EA/12/18. Bills for books, stationery etc.

culminated in a pitiful claustrophobic old-age. In contrast to Sabine Winn but as evidence that similar xenophobia existed in the English mind. Isabella Carlisle noted down a few French remedies whilst travelling through Europe, and her recipe book revealed she often had some sent to her from England, perhaps as a result of familiarity, but also as a mark of her mistrust of French doctors.<sup>69</sup>

Isabella Carlisle was more practical and more sociable in her decision to compile a recipe book. It contained both culinary recipes and medicinal remedies most of which seemed quite standard and only mildly experimental and creative, others referenced friends or acquaintances, or were simply passed throughout her social circle, for example ‘Lady Berkeley’s Mouth Water’ or ‘Lady Giffard’s Pudding’ (**figure 5.8**). The more adaptable part of her nature saw many of Isabella’s medicinal remedies being acquired whilst she was in Europe and letters to her daughter showed she was unafraid in implementing one or two for the sake of ridding herself of a stomach ache.<sup>70</sup> Like the Nostell volume and Sabine Winn’s papers, Isabella’s book also contained many valuable beauty tips such as ‘Hair Water to make it grow when falling off after illnesses’; with all her recipes for hair care and beauty treatments this particular recipe would have been something Sabine Winn would have admired.<sup>71</sup> The book even included handy household hints such as ‘To take out the Smell of Paint in any apartment newly fitted up’ which would have been gratefully received by Jane Fleming when she complained to Samuel Popplewell in 1781 about the painter who ‘must have finished everything within Doors, on account of my dislike to the Smell...’<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Layinka Swinburne, ‘Of Each a Handful – Medicinal Herbs in the Country House’. (Paper presented to Castle Howard Archives, 2000).

<sup>70</sup> Christopher Ridgway, ‘Isabella, fourth Countess of Carlisle: No Life by Halves’, in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses*, p.42; Carlisle MSS *LetterBook*, (J13/1/3) letter 27, 25 March 1772. The recipe she used was for an orange flower water, *Receipts* p. 140.

<sup>71</sup> See mainly, NP A4/1536/2, ‘pour faire croître les cheveux’ and ‘pour les cheveux Blanc dans la Jeunesse’; 1536/6 which was a formula for a powder to make the hair grow using roots of long cypress, red roses, red coral, amber and Benjamin (though the last ingredient was a common cure for dysentery and worms, see Dulcie Lewis, *A-Z of Traditional Cures*, p. 30.); 1536/8 was a formula for making the hair grow; and 1536/9 was a copy made by Sabine from Bate’s *Pharmacopoeia Bateana* also for a water for the hair.

<sup>72</sup> Carlisle MSS, *Receipts*, p. 41; also HAR/SC/4/3 (31) 1781. Jane Fleming to Samuel Popplewell.

Figure 5.8. Selected pages from Isabella Carlisle's *My Book of Receipts*, pages 2 and 121. Castle Howard Archives.

2

How to make the Artificiall M<sup>l</sup>k for a Cough  
 Take one ounce of Tringa Root one ounce of Beerd Barley  
 One Dozen of Trails bruise them in a Quart of Water  
 And then boile it with the other Ingredients if the Persons  
 Stomach can bear it put two parts M<sup>l</sup>k to one part  
 Water if not two parts Water to one part M<sup>l</sup>k take it  
 Morning and Evening till y<sup>e</sup> Cough be better it may be  
 taken without M<sup>l</sup>k but it is not so good \*

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A Cure for a sore Throat

Take a Pint of New Milk, and just before y<sup>e</sup> Patient goes to bed  
 Heat a Flint Stone Red Hot and immediately flinging it into  
 the Milk let it be drunk with the heat that the Flint causes  
 and it seldom fails to cure a sore Throat.

121

To make Lady Giffards Pudding

Take a little more than half a Pound of Suet cut small,  
 put to it half a Pound of Raisins send three Spoonfull  
 of Flour one Nutmeg grated & a little Salt beat two  
 Eggs Yolks and Whites put to it a Spoonfull of fair water  
 as you find necessary mingle all these together it must be  
 so thick as a Spoon will stand on End in it, wet and Flour  
 the Pudding Bag when you put it in, it must be five or  
 six Hours boiling and there is no Difference between this and  
 the plain Pudding but the leaving out the Plumbs

Isabella's recipe book also contained personally relevant concoctions which placed great emphasis upon the hopes and fears of women throughout their lifetimes regardless of social rank. The most significant of these was 'for a medicine for anything after a miscarriage'<sup>73</sup>. Isabella suffered a miscarriage in 1749 when she was seventeen weeks pregnant which gave enormous concern for her neighbours at Newby and Hovingham who were equally anxious over their absent sister, Frances Robinson who was presumed to be 'with child' but had suddenly taken ill after the lengthy journey between Yorkshire and London.<sup>74</sup> At Temple Newsam, Frances suffered a miscarriage in 1760 about which an old friend of her father's and trustee of his will, John Waple delicately addressed her husband with profound hopes that she would take care of herself in future.<sup>75</sup> Isabella's book was evidently teeming with tried and tested recipes, medicinal or otherwise as over half of them were marked with a small yet distinctive cross. If these crosses were intended to denote a failure then the medicine for anything after a miscarriage proved more than a disappointment and its ineffectiveness was marked for posterity.

With her tendencies towards hypochondria and obsessive clamour for pills and powders, Mary Rockingham stood between Sabine Winn and Isabella Carlisle as both solitary compiler and as one open to medicinal suggestion. Looking to the household for internal assistance with medicine, Mary regularly communicated with the Rockingham's very own doctor, Mr. Bourne. Perhaps as a consequence of the Marquis's frequent bouts of illness, Mr. Bourne's presence was meant to serve as the familiar and supportive professional who could be contacted in cases of medical urgency.<sup>76</sup> For the servants, a Dr. James was called upon for assistance, but his presence seemed to be based on a temporary residency rather than the constant one afforded Mr. Bourne. Mary's interaction with these two men differed due to the people they treated in the household and when it came to the medical treatment of her servants, she was more than happy to interfere probably on the grounds of avoiding troublesome expense as well as

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<sup>73</sup> Carlisle MSS. *Receipts*, p. 14.

<sup>74</sup> NH Correspondence, 2834/42. Thomas Robinson? to one of his sisters, 7 May 1749.

<sup>75</sup> TN/C/23/137, Ripley, 9 March 1760 from John Waple to Charles Ingram.

<sup>76</sup> Bloy, 'Rockingham and Yorkshire', p. 60 n. 5, where she cited a letter from Lady Malton to Lord Malton, 1 September 1741, WWM M7-55; see also, WWM Stw P2/19 March 21 1775? Mary wrote to the steward and reported that the Marquis had '...the stiff neck, and pain in his ear is thought to be from some fresh cold, and I hope with care will go off again...'; also Stw P2/28 (1), 22 July, no year.



proving her charitable considerations for the household. When John Tomlinson became ill Mary wrote to Benjamin Hall, 'Dr. James...is very desirous that when the heaviness [John] complains of begins, he should instantly have one of the Broth remedys. and not delay it upon any account, and the Doctor has no objection to a wish of mine that he should try one week without taking the powders or anything...' <sup>77</sup> Her underlining was full of purpose and indicated a thoroughly formidable part of her character; medicine and the general health of her household were part of an active involvement in which she took immense interest.

Letters from Mary to Benjamin Hall made tireless mention of poorly household members. John Tomlinson received most attention and Mary had his symptoms relayed to her by Hall on several occasions, including a fear that he may have taken some quack pills given to him by someone from Bristol <sup>78</sup>. Yet, she was always sure that John himself was a willing participant for anything she might have recommended. One of the maids, Kitty Cobb was found to have discovered a lump in her breast and Mary delegated to Hall to send assurance to the girl's parents that her thoughts were with them at such a distressing time. Mary ushered her love to Kitty's parents, but added, 'I wish you would write by the return of the Post particulars about who attends her, and what their opinion is...' <sup>79</sup> Mary could always prove herself to be not so formidable if it was to benefit the mental and emotional well-being of her household, and by extension, their own families. She was even aware of the advantages a large estate had on the dispensing of cures or simple natural remedies. On an unknown servant she wrote to Hall,

...I am sure he should lose a little blood, especially now the warm weather is coming on: this is the time of year to expect his Rash, if it will come out, therefore caution him to be very watchful and careful if any does appear. I advise him to go and get milk whey at the farm when he first rises, and to eat Water Cresses with his bread and water and Tea at breakfast: for those are Spring medicines and may be of vast service to him... <sup>80</sup>

In this instance, Mary's offerings of advice could easily be plucked from any medicinal publication, something which confirms the assertion that she was not that

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<sup>77</sup> WWM, Stw P2/18, 7 March, no year.

<sup>78</sup> WWM, Stw P2/21 (1) no date.

<sup>79</sup> WWM, Stw P2/36, 26 January 1778.

<sup>80</sup> WWM Stw P2/20 no date.



dissimilar to Sabine Winn. However, there is no surviving documentation which so far suggests that she interacted with published volumes. What did indicate Mary Rockingham's quest for household well-being through an acceptance of professional assistance though, was her desire to obtain Mr. Bourne's personal papers when he died in December 1777. Mary had knowledge of Bourne's recipes and papers being stored in bundles and was anxious to know for herself if he had left them to anyone, 'My meaning to know whether...I can have the sight of them, as there are his cholick Pills and some other things, that I should be sorry not to have the receipt of ~...' <sup>81</sup> Mary Rockingham anticipated the desires of others in the household for wanting to view what she believed to be extremely valuable papers and was eager to pursue their whereabouts as she was sure 'good things may be fished out of them with a little pains.' <sup>82</sup>

#### IV

The interdependent relationship between employer and employee of the large estate has weighed down previous studies into the country house social landscape, notions of family and household, and domestic service. Their value has rested with the emphasis placed upon a master/servant contract and the advantages and disadvantages of country house accommodation and consumption. However, the responsibilities of household groups has become limited within these criteria. Household interdependence was compounded by physical and pastoral welfare, by setting examples and the awareness of its organic existence. It was about a contradictory set of principles which permitted notions of servant moral inferiority whilst allowing them access to expensive and physically beneficial treatments with the intention of maintaining them as part of a labour workforce.

Yet, such activity and social interaction was not the established norm in every elite household. Where the employer had different priorities for physical and pastoral welfare in particular, their involvement with expensive medical treatment might have been on the one hand gloriously extravagant, on the other hand rather more perfunctory. Add to this the presupposed nurturing and attentive presence of a female to

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<sup>81</sup> WWM Stw P2/34 (1) Wimbledon, 1 January 1778.

<sup>82</sup> WWM Stw P2/36, 26 January 1778.

help guide the house in the form of a wife, and the scope and dynamics of inter-reliance changed.

Indeed, her very own expectations were bound by an understanding that she would lead by example in her household. Application to both physical and pastoral welfare in the household was best achieved through prescription and experience. This was certainly true of monitoring the morals of household members and conduct literature as well as existing religious practices aided the fluidity of obedience and obligation. Any strong or dramatic religious convictions of many elite women has unfortunately remained strangely subdued. Although at Wentworth Woodhouse, Mary Rockingham's unrelenting patience proved that a degree of piety helped her keep control of lazy, promiscuous and drunken members of staff.

These were mere triggers in immoral behaviour and any eventual cause for dismissal might be suspended through careful guidance. Bad behaviour in the household could therefore be solved through methods of correction which had either immediate or long-term effect. Dismissal required uncomfortable confrontations but offered a quick cure whereas coaxing and gentle persuasion demanded more time and effort in observation and close communication.

The involvement in physical welfare was also a result of prescription and experience for the elite woman. For some the interactivity with published works was more than adequate, and for others this could be supplemented with a vast array of handed-down remedies. The latter were commonly tried and tested methods which were better suited to a more personal approach and one given over to internal and solitary practice. Yet, in terms of the dynamics of household welfare, the very presence of home-made remedies reinforced the gendered role of women as a dispenser of medicinal knowledge and as nurturer. In Sabine Winn's mind, such dispensation other than that to her husband was unnecessary, and she remained a solitary compiler.

More practical approaches to compiling remedies in the way Isabella Carlisle preferred were productive and creative. They necessitated time and patience in the compiler who sought ideas from friends and acquaintances and a keen eye for the properties of the essential ingredients. The results would often have been very

rewarding, though it was not unusual to discover how methods of trial and error determined the occasional failed attempt which had to be avoided in future. Experience taught these women that in some cases it was better to seek professional attention. Treatments for fevers or an ague for example, were regular entries in handwritten recipe books and although the effectiveness of home-made remedies is not known here, some women persevered with their own experimentation. A more cosmopolitan approach through apothecary and professional medical assistance might have suggested that an elite woman had neither time nor interest to look to the medical welfare of her household. External assistance was in fact far more appropriate to the needs of a large household even when the cost was high. This was because professionalism often indicated a regulated body of trained and knowledgeable people. There was always the risk of quack practitioners who were more than willing to hand out suspicious pills and powders to unsuspecting patients, but this did not discourage women like Frances Irwin who had plenty of confidence in the outsider.

The welfare of the elite household was the consequence of a process which claimed time and patience from its mistress. This process followed a vicarious route through notions of interdependence that put emphasis upon moral guidance and physical maintenance. As was expected from her feminine capacity and responsibility, a woman was suitably endowed to regulate, advise and influence her household in moral terms and to distribute and issue medical attention when it was required. The personal preference of the elite woman determined how far this attention to the welfare of her household would go, and by extension the real interest she took in the flesh and bones of household mechanics. Without them, she would after all have no authority over regulation, no power to advise, and no place to exercise her influence.

## 6. 'The Luxury of the Age': Ordering an Elegant Table.

The following is an exploration of the notion that food was almost exclusively a female concern regardless of a woman's elite social status. It could be one of the few departments where a master might flounder and seek the help of a female relative or the employment of an exceedingly good housekeeper-cook. The divorced and childless Daniel Lascelles had neither of these to completely depend on in his household and as Mary Mauchline has comically stated, 'even the arrival of a turtle could throw him into a minor panic'.<sup>1</sup> The poor reptilian creature became a culinary embarrassment and was accordingly sent to Gawthorp by carrier from London with slightly restless instruction from Daniel, 'I have nobody here to dress it, nor should I know what to do with it.'<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Henry Irwin handed over all kitchen organisation to his wife Anne when he inherited the title and estate of Temple Newsam in 1736. She not only took charge of servant wages but had the final decision in keeping the present cook who had served under the last Lord Irwin.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, an elite woman's involvement with the culinary department of the marital home was governed by her role as hostess. This role was further endowed with notions of architectural and social interaction. The dining space could be manipulated as a vibrant physical assembly of social discourse through decorative backdrops and the luxurious and sensual displays of taste, textures and aromas.

Food and luxury have always been linked through the consumption of dining accoutrements, and historians of the subject have tended towards discussion on the importation of Eastern goods or industrialisation and mass produced wares planned for the table. Maxine Berg for example, has placed special emphasis on glassware and Chinaware of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as being celebrated commodities of the period destined for the 'polite' table.<sup>4</sup> Often these most expensive and yet functional items in any household were associated with meals and dining. These were the material symbols of a dining culture which represented wider trade connections

<sup>1</sup> Mary Mauchline, *Harewood House: One of the Treasure Houses of Britain*, second edition, (1992), p. 31

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, (WYAS, Leeds) Temple Newsam MSS (TN), TN/C/15/35, Correspondence 1736-1742. Letter from Henry, seventh Viscount Irwin to steward Robert Hopkinson, 1736, no date.

<sup>4</sup> Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, (Oxford, 2005), p. 117.

and Britain's own position within the global commercial market.<sup>5</sup> Food historians have added to this debate with essays stating the influence of foodstuffs upon these commodities and that luxury goods themselves were the result of commercial supply and demand; a demand for new delicacies, new flavours and new methods of cookery.<sup>6</sup>

Peter Brears has noted that trading connections brought allspice or Jamaica pepper and chocolate from the West Indies, coffee from Arabia and Turkey, cochineal from Mexico, and sago from Malaya. Sugar also became more plentiful as a result of colonial trade with Barbados.<sup>7</sup> With the merger of the 'old' and 'new' East India Companies in 1709, movement of further foodstuffs and spices and of course, tea became even more extensive. Ideas of luxurious and novelty foodstuffs and equipage were discussed in most women's correspondence of this time, and were often associated with politeness. Langford has even highlighted the attitudes towards luxury and politeness as forming a narrative history of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the term 'the luxury of the age' was a common expression found in both contemporary literature and correspondence, and it defined a growing sense of change and variety in mealtimes as well as household consumption.<sup>9</sup> A revealing comment penned by Anne Worsley to her sister Frances Robinson sometime in the 1740s spoke of a novel piece of such modern consumer goods. It was a small silver trowel which their uncle had sent from Barbados, 'he said the luxury of ye age had introduced it'.<sup>10</sup> The trowel was intended to slice and serve cake with, and Anne added that '...some people could not eat pudding, but with a knife, others with a spoon [the trowel] ends all disputes.'

The trowel or cake slice was a symbol of civility and decency but had a novelty purpose associated with a luxurious and sweet adage to eating and the enjoyment

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<sup>5</sup> Berg, *Luxury*, pp.7-10; see also Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, (1996); (Eds.) Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850*, (1999); and Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption*, (1996 edition).

<sup>6</sup> Peter Brears, Maggie Black, Gill Corbishley, Jane Renfrew and Jennifer Stead, *A Taste of History: 10,000 Years of Food in Britain*, (1993), pp. 182.

<sup>7</sup> Brears et al., *Taste of History*, pp.185-86. Sidney W. Mintz has noted that England was the most prolific of countries in its trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with the most important product of that system being sugar followed closely by coffee, chocolate (cacao), nutmeg, and coconut, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, pp.19-73

<sup>8</sup> Paul Langford, *Polite and Commercial: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), pp.3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Berg, *Luxury*, pp.4-5 She cited the *Universal Magazine of Knowledge and Pleasure*, pp.65-66, where an essay entitled 'Of the Manners of the Age, as Refined by Luxury', was published as late as 1772.

<sup>10</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Newby Hall MSS (NH . )NH 2829/13 Anne Worsley to Frances Robinson, no date.

of food. It further represented a transformation from ordinary tools into the realm of 'high culture', where consumption was defined by refinement and modernity.<sup>11</sup> Its attractiveness lay in its gleaming silver. Its function was rather more superfluous but was endowed with polite usage which complemented an array of silverware already established in the feminine sphere of taking tea.<sup>12</sup> In the surroundings of her drawing room, the eighteenth-century elite woman might encourage conversation around the tea-table. Topics may well have included new food phrases, places of food origin or changes to routine and exciting new commodities with which to dispense food and drink while she delightfully took charge of the refreshment. The luxurious was a combination of expense; of ingredients; the levels of consumption (and waste); and, by extension, the techniques for producing and serving.

However, a woman attracted by the luxurious pleasures of the table had to be reminded of her abstract qualities of which modesty and prudence were essential domestic requisites and where frugality was a word irrepressibly linked to ordering a table. Isabella Carlisle knew first hand the cost of elite entertaining and its associated key phrase, 'The luxury of this age, exacts from the mistress of a great house, or indeed a smaller, some attention to a table; disdain not therefore to give a proper application to that study.'<sup>13</sup> Crucially, extravagance and lavishness had to be replaced with neatness and elegance. These words were constantly emphasised by authors of cookery books and conduct literature alike, and just like a woman's abstract qualities were also printed with dignified capitals to ensure they did not go unnoticed. Ordering an 'Elegant' table was part of an intricate form of hospitality in the household with the elite mistress at its pinnacle. A comfortable position at the table was always assured but she had to remain aware of her own role as gracious hostess as well as the hard toil and steady bustle required to implement culinary delights from below stairs.

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<sup>11</sup> Berg in *Consumers and Luxury*, p. 66, n.9. She has quoted R. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and Demand for Art in Italy, 1400-1600* (Baltimore and London, 1993), p. 249. Notions of high culture have been a consistent part of the language used in essays on consumption, apart from Maxine Berg, see Brewer and Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993); and (Eds.) R. Samuel and G. Stedman Jones, *Culture, Ideology and Politics* (1982).

<sup>12</sup> Berg, *Luxury*, p. 163. Silver teaware became an indication of politeness and civility, items like kettles, urns, jugs, sugar tongs, and caddies pots were only part of the teatime culture.

<sup>13</sup> Countess Dowager of Carlisle, *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World*, London (1789), p. 35.

Thus when it came to provisioning for the household, the more expensive luxury items might have to have been sanctioned by her husband. Yet, many of the elite women of this study claimed personal possession over several foodstuffs and related equipage. Moreover, food and dining were only a part of a woman's responsibility in this department since luxury could be covertly accompanied by tried and tested recipes which testified to the preservation of the female world of gathering expertise in the use of plants and herbs from the kitchen garden for dishes and medicines. Ingredients were stored and recipes collected and listed in books to be referred to time and again, either for a mistress's own use or for exchange with other women.<sup>14</sup> The luxury of the age where food was concerned became entwined with established cultures of female gathering processes. It extracted from the elite mistress the desire to entertain and to prove her manipulation of her residency in the country home through utilisation of both local produce and new, more intriguing foodstuffs.

## I

It has been argued that food was (and is) often the main source of a woman's power in the household<sup>15</sup>, and that she both expected and was expected to 'display private splendour in refined hospitality at the table'.<sup>16</sup> In this instance, the luxury of the age was a feature of female hosting. This was something which simultaneously demanded imagination and decorum, and was very much a part of the ideology of the cookery books of the period. Martha Bradley dedicated an entire chapter to a 'Doing the Honours of the Table' in her *The British Housewife* of 1756 and placed great emphasis on female performance in light of contemporary trends toward 'refined' French dining rather than a more rudimentary English style.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, authors like Eliza Smith, Charlotte Mason, Mrs Elizabeth Price, Elizabeth Raffald, and Mary Cole were all

<sup>14</sup> Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford. *Women in Early Modern England, 1530-1720* (Oxford, 1998). pp.224-225.

<sup>15</sup> Amanda Vickery has declared food to be 'the most bountiful expression of housewifery' in *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven, 1998), pp.151-153. See also Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner: the Origins, Evolution, Eccentricities, and Meaning of Table Manners*. (1991), p. 276, citing K. Lewin. 'Forces behind Food habits and Methods of Change', in *The Problem of Changing Food Habits*. Bulletin 108, Washington, National Research Council, 1943. pp.35-65. and also J. Stead, *Food and Cooking in Eighteenth-Century Britain: History and Recipes*. English Heritage, (1985).

<sup>16</sup> Berg, *Luxury*. p. 118; and Douglas and Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> Martha Bradley, *The British Housewife: Or, the Cook, Housekeeper's, Gardiner's Companion*. (1756) Facsimile edition with introduction by Gilly Lehmann. Prospect Books. (1996), volume I, pp.73-75. and volume III, pp.201-202.

of the same opinion that women appeared at their best and most accommodating when placed centre-stage at the head of the table. Such authors also observed how dining had developed a female sensibility by replacing male joviality.<sup>18</sup> The elite mistress was asserting her public self and helped in transforming the private domestic sphere into a bustling space occupied by both sexes and a blend of conversation topics when she undertook this role. As household mistress this was further compounded by the presence of servants who had to be sufficiently trained in order to represent the respectability and politeness of their employer. A clumsy or unsophisticated butler and footman reflected badly on the hostess.<sup>19</sup>

The hostess rarely found herself in the kitchen department of her marital home. She might have passed on a revised menu to the cook or an annotated recipe but the role of hostess did not require for her to have an active interaction. Her position was one of high visibility 'above stairs' which was enhanced through architectural features and dining equipage. Food itself became a symbol of her sophistication and knowledge of traded goods as well as cultural diversity, regional variety and a demonstration of person taste. Within the country house such a role was pivotal to its function as a centre of hospitality, of sociability, generosity, and authority. As Stone and Stone have observed, hospitality was as much an integral part of the fabric of the building as it was for the elite owner to socialise and entertain.<sup>20</sup> This again recalls the symbiotic notion made by Isabella Carlisle in her *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World* of brick and organic matter.

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<sup>18</sup> Brears et al., *Taste of History*, p. 230. Bradley, *British Housewife*, facsimile edition, volume I, pp.73-75. Dana Arnold has assumed that the dining space was deemed to be male space, 'the site of sybarite pleasures and excessive eating and drinking' because at the end of the meal women would retire to the with-drawing room while the men continued to discuss and debate at their own leisure. *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (2003), p. 89. This does not allow for the surreptitious change in use of the main eating space where the sensuality of dining was replaced with stupefying commentary. Therefore Girouard has been far more punctilious when he suggested that as the two rooms were becoming used for similar lengths of time into the eighteenth century, they tended to be of the same size. *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 1978), p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> Such servants were luxuries, and represented conspicuous consumption, if they performed badly, they were faulty products and the mistress had chosen incorrectly those she wanted to have serve her guests. Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner*, p. 90. The image of the eighteenth-century hostess has also been discussed by R. Bayne-Powell. *Housekeeping in the Eighteenth Century* (1956) passim; and Vickery, *Gentleman's Daughter*, pp.196-197.

<sup>20</sup> Lawrence Stone and Jeanne C. Fawtier Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880*. Abridged Edition. (Oxford, 1986), pp. 261, and 211-214.



Indeed, the eighteenth century saw a great wave of rebuilding, remodelling and redecoration for the country house in which the function of polite and refined hospitality was an influential objective to be met. C. Anne Wilson has observed this growing trend and the inconvenience it unduly placed upon the movement of food or anything else destined for the table.<sup>21</sup> The hall or great hall was no longer the main eating place for the entire household. Servants were relegated to their own hall, usually in a basement area and close to the kitchen and food related offices, and the family (or kin) plus their guests attended their meal in the new room. Eighteenth-century country house design evolved entire new wings and blocks to accommodate the arrangement of kitchen space and its associated departments to lessen the effect of fire risk. This also proved acceptable on the grounds that cooking smells could no longer permeate through new or expensive remodelled interiors, including the dining room itself where it might have been the height of neo-classical fashion and realised in wood and plaster by Robert Adam like at Harewood and Newby Hall.<sup>22</sup>

The longer distances over which hot food had to travel was not always a consideration of authors of cookery books who would insist upon the importance of retaining the heat in dishes fresh from the oven. Martha Bradley repeatedly insisted upon dishes being 'sent up hot'<sup>23</sup>. In some instances however, some authors did suggest adding a piping hot gravy or sauce at the last minute as well as to resist garnishing a hot dish before it was sent to the table. For the mistress, lukewarm food was at worse an embarrassment, for the kitchen staff it was something to be lamented, especially when meat dishes had taken several hours to cook, not to mention the numerous days needed to soak specific ingredients.

At Nostell Priory, the old medieval architectural arrangement where the kitchen and its associated offices were laid out close to the main eating area and still in use in the early decades of the eighteenth century was almost swept away by the 1760s.

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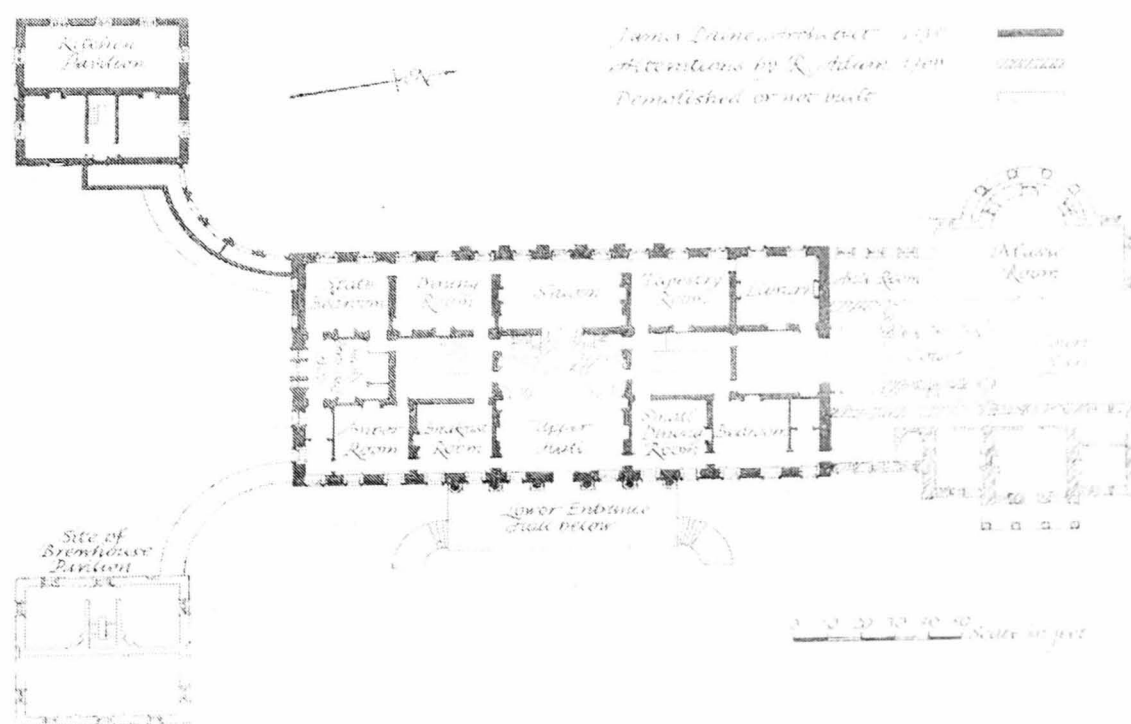
<sup>21</sup> C. Anne Wilson. *The Appetite and the Eye: Visual Aspects of Food and its Presentation within their Historic Context*. (Edinburgh University Press, 1991). pp.43-48.

<sup>22</sup> Girouard has pointed out that the trend for moving the kitchens (which had started in the 1680s) had the practical advantage of taking smells out of the house. 'a convenience which seems to have been thought to make up for the distance between kitchen and eating rooms', *English Country House*, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> Bradley, *British Housewife*, facsimile edition, a recipe for baked plaiice. This has also been quoted by Christopher Ridgway and formed the basis of the title to his *Send it up Hot: How to be an Eighteenth-Century Cook* (2005), p. 81.

Much of the new house was finished by this date and the kitchens were placed in a subordinate pavilion (**figure 6.1**, see also appendix five).<sup>24</sup> As a result the once piping hot dishes now had quite a distance to travel as well as being exposed to the open air by which they could cool down.<sup>25</sup> A house like Harewood also had the advantage and convenience of modern design assisted by the local landscape which sloped away from the site to the rear of the house. For John Carr the landscape was a necessary tool and hid the kitchen and its associated departments from visitors approaching the front, but allowed access for kitchen staff and other servants at the sides. Carr's design did not place the cooking smells away from the house completely but placed the kitchen underneath the gallery and dining room space, effectively placing them 'below stairs' (**figure 6.2**, see appendix five). This was the 'rusticated storey' which was distinguishable from the upper smooth-faced storeys and in many houses, including Wentworth and Nostell, was filled with cellars and service rooms.<sup>26</sup>

**Figure 6.1. Plan of the principal floor at Nostell Priory c. 1770. Taken from C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Early Georgian*, Vol. I. (1984-85).**

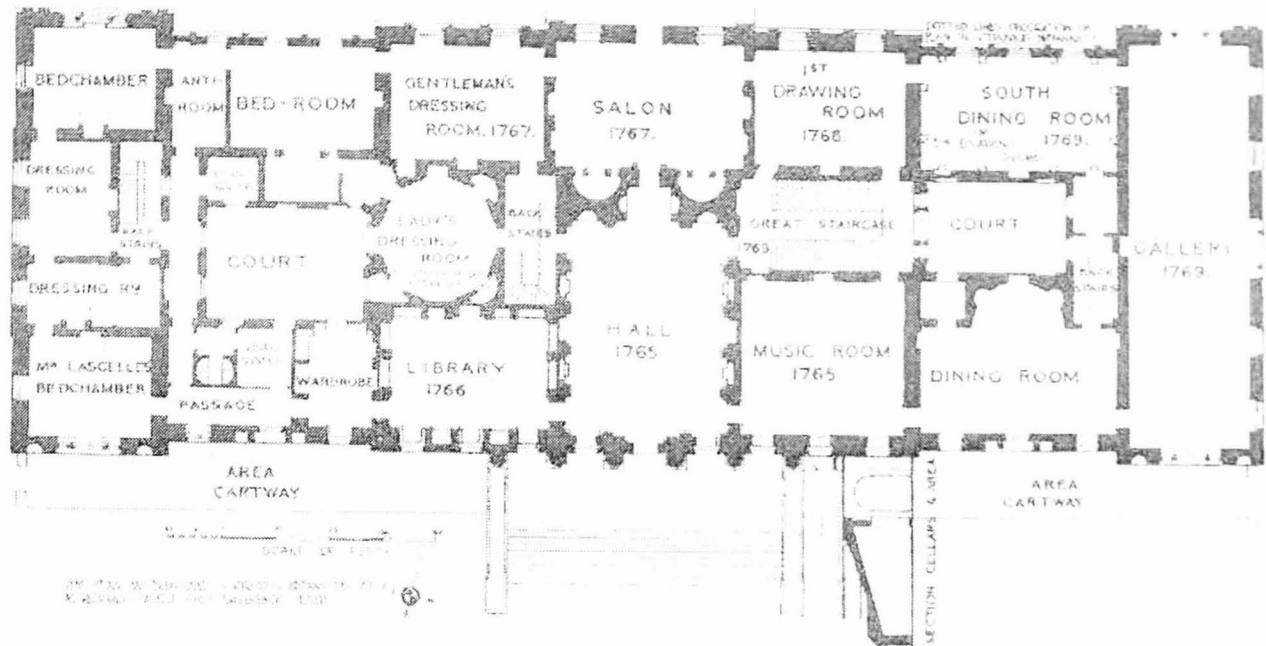


<sup>24</sup> For the new house, the 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet commissioned gentleman-architect, Colonel James Moyser and later, James Paine to build a Palladian inspired villa complete with curving corridors leading to stable blocks, kitchen and brew-house pavilions. See Sophie Raikes, in *Nostell Priory Guidebook*, National Trust, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> The desire for symmetry usually required a second pavilion and numerous different variations appeared. At Nostell today, all symmetry has since been lost due to the demolition of the brew-house pavilion in 1824 on the south side, and the building of a Palladian 'Family Wing' on the north side (finished by 1780) to the designs of Robert Adam.

<sup>26</sup> Girouard, *English Country House*, p. 160.

**Figure 6.2.** Plan of the principal floor at Harewood House as designed by John Carr c. 1770. Taken from C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Mid Georgian, Vol. II* (1984-85).



Dana Arnold's chapter on defining femininity in the country house attempted to explore the architectural interests women may have had in their homes. Arnold's conclusion was that women generally appeared to have commissioned designs and acted as patrons. Any direct contribution to their homes lay with the cosmetic finish – in choice of fabrics, materials and colour schemes – rather than the solid, austere and 'masculine' association with building stuffs.<sup>27</sup> This observation certainly holds true with women like Lady Fleming whose involvement at Harewood appeared to have been limited and was far more active in planning the garden and plantations around the house.<sup>28</sup> At Wentworth Woodhouse Mary Rockingham spoke to the steward on several occasions with concerns about the new wall hangings, fireplaces and carpeting, and showed personal interest in the engravings for furniture designs supplied by tradesmen and master craftsmen.<sup>29</sup>

In the Yorkshire country house, any female manipulation of architectural arrangement fell at the point of two extremes. Frances Irwin got involved in the plans for remodelling the south wing at Temple Newsam, and removed the old kitchens from an old annexe there to place them in the basement of the north wing of the house in the late

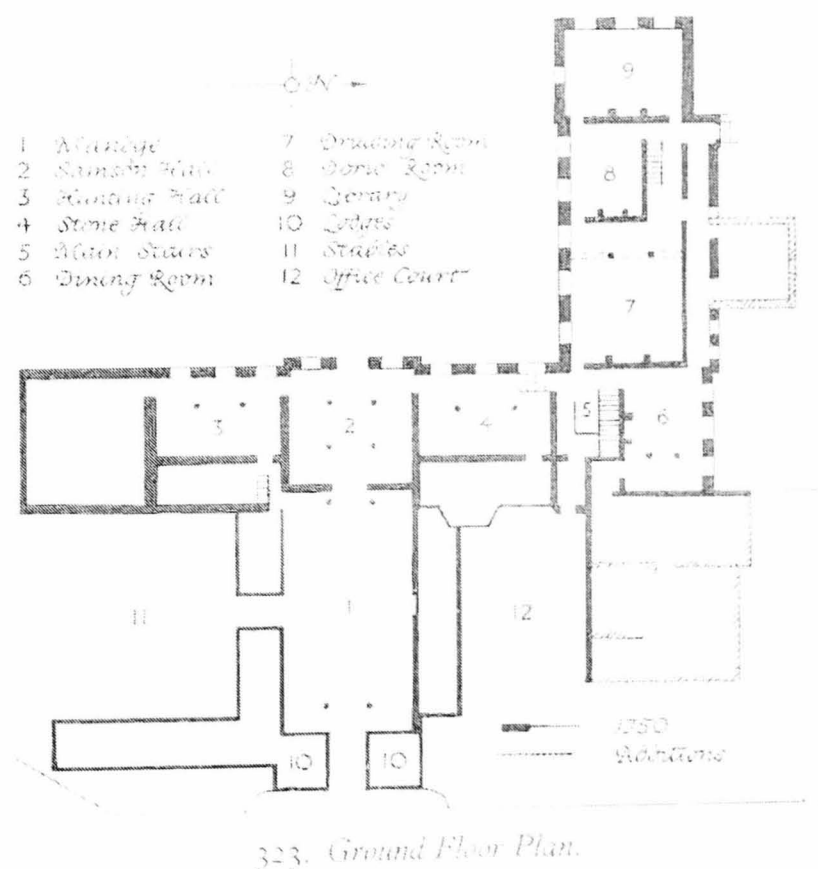
<sup>27</sup> Arnold, *Georgian Country House*, pp.85-93.

<sup>28</sup> Karen Lynch 'Some Lascelles Ladies', in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen, *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (WWM) WWM Stw P2/4 (1). May 7 1773 Wimbleton, and Stw P2/12. December 28 1774 Wimbleton.

eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> She announced with pride to her good friend, Susan Stafford, ‘...I amuse myself wonderfully and I may say prodigiously for I have attacked a huge wing of Templenewsam and have pulled down walls as thick as the Tower [of London] for the sole pleasure of building them up again...’<sup>31</sup> In contrast was Mrs Elizabeth Worsley, the wife of Thomas who had no say in the building of Hovingham Hall in the early 1750s, and the house was entirely constructed upon his own ideals (**figure 6.3**).<sup>32</sup> It was intended as a Palladian stable quadrangle, and literally built upon his great passion for the schooling of horses.<sup>33</sup> Giles Worsley has noted the impracticality of the house, approached through a riding house, with the principal apartments built over the stables, and a ‘straggle of rooms’ which suggested that Elizabeth had little or no influence over his actions.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 6.3. Ground floor plan of Hovingham Hall. Taken from C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Early Georgian, Vol. I. (1984-85)*.**



<sup>30</sup> These were the plans as drawn up in her husband's lifetime, with architects being consulted mostly during the 1760s and 1770s.

<sup>31</sup> National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew. (NA:PRO) Granville MSS, Leveson-Gower, first Earl Granville and predecessors and successors: Papers 30/29/4/2 papers of Lady Susan Stewart (from May 1768, Countess Gower; from March 1786, Marchioness Stafford). Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin) 30/29/4/2/54 Frances Irwin to Lady Stafford, June 14 1795.

<sup>32</sup> Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, pp.336-339.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 337; Giles Worsley, 'The Seduction of Elizabeth Lister and its Implications for the Worsley Family', *Women's History Review*, 13, 2, (2004), p. 293; and Giles Worsley, 'Hovingham Hall, Yorkshire', in *Country Life*, 188, 15 September 1994, pp.90-94.

<sup>34</sup> Worsley, 'Seduction of Elizabeth Lister', in *Women's History Review*, 13, 2, p. 293.

Thomas Worsley was evidently unacquainted with the prospect of unpleasant aromas in the principal apartments at Hovingham. The architectural layout of Hovingham was hilariously commented upon by the visiting Arthur Young. 'I should suppose that when they [the riding house] are well stocked with horses in hot weather, it would be easy enough to *smell*, without being *told* that these two rooms (the best in the house) are built over the apartments of the *Huhnhyms* [sic].<sup>35</sup> A woman's involvement in the interior finish of her home proved most prominent in her eagerness to have the smells and aromas pervading new interiors diffused. As well as Lady Fleming's dislike of the smell of fresh paint at Harewood, once redecoration was near to completion at Wentworth Mary Rockingham placed special emphasis on cleanliness and orderliness ensuring the windows were opened in order to keep the house 'sweet and fresh' or 'airy and dry'.<sup>36</sup> The results of such a command made by Mrs Elizabeth Worsley at Hovingham would rarely have been realised.

At the dinner-table the elite mistress's input was far easily expressed. On the one hand the elite woman could prove quite formidable amidst talk of political manoeuvrings and estate improvements. The dinner-table could also be the scene of her downfall if she misunderstood the finer points of her husband's involvement in the public sphere; its theatrical connotations providing her with psychological stresses which were defined by the impulse to converse interestingly. Her role at even the most informal of dinners was meant as intellectual ornament and one which would bolster her husband's career or interests. This role was taken seriously by many women who manipulated their supposed secondary authority in relation to that of their politician husband and formulated extensive networks. Often these were necessarily discreet in order to burnish political support for her husband or the family's contribution to agrarian developments, international trade, and commercial investments.

For women born to political families, hosting dinners with 'overt or covert political purposes' was something expected of them and formed an essential part of their early education in the home.<sup>37</sup> Elaine Chalus has pointed out that the eighteenth-

<sup>35</sup> Arthur Young, *A Six Months Tour through the North of England*, (1770), p. 293

<sup>36</sup> WWM Stw P2/12, 28 December, and P2/17, no date.

<sup>37</sup> Elaine Chalus, 'Elite Women, Social Politics, and the Political World of Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Historical Journal*, 43, 3 (2000), pp.669-697.

century politician used private visits and dinners *en famille* as marks of favour.<sup>38</sup> Chalus was of the opinion that elite women's attitudes to hosting for the purposes of politics could be evenly split. Some women found it a tiring incumbency whilst others accepted the responsibility and took delight in initiating these sorts of meetings. An invitation to dine with Mary Rockingham was known to be political as well as social and she was, as Chalus has claimed, likely to act on her own as with her husband.<sup>39</sup> Mary initiated many of these politicised dinners by turning her London home into the Whigs' headquarters. Chalus has even placed special emphasis on how Mary had 'influence' in these situations, when it was not always agreeable to everyone;

Mr Arskine & Gilbert Elliot came to see me...I told him of Lady Rockingham having invitd [sic] Mr Townsend to supp with her, & that she had done the same by Mr Conway when he was supposed to be cool towards the Ministers; that a fine Lady wd always have influence, & I wish'd they wou'd not accept of her invitations.<sup>40</sup>

The best hostesses had to be charming, good at handling people, as well as sensitive to social nuance and the workings of the political world.<sup>41</sup> For Frances Irwin stringent political manipulations over the dinner table came later on in her lifetime whilst controlling the Ingram family's interests in Horsham (**figure 6.4**).

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<sup>38</sup> Chalus, in *Historical Journal*, 43, 3, pp.687-690.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 688.

<sup>40</sup> J. A. Home, *The Letters and Journals of Lady Mary Coke*, 4 Volumes, Bath, (1970), facsimile reprint of 1<sup>st</sup> edition, David Douglas, (Edinburgh, 1889-96), vol.I, p. 178, London 16 March 1767.

<sup>41</sup> Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c.1754-1790*, (Oxford, 2005), pp.95-97.



**Figure 6.4.** Frances Irwin (née Shephard), (1734-1807). Portrait by Benjamin Wilson, oil on canvas c.1758. Halifax Collection.



Like other elite women performing similar political tasks in directing campaigns, Frances's widowhood gave her a greater independence in honing her political capabilities. Although she was unable to vote and was limited to directing others' votes her position was an incredibly powerful one. Her awareness of this role was to be seen in her ability to 'transcend class barriers' and mix affably with burgesses and freeholders over the dinner table in politically charged spaces.<sup>42</sup> One of these was The King's Head Inn in the centre of Horsham town where Frances was struggling to regain mastery over

<sup>42</sup> (Eds.) Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow, 1997), p. 159.

the Borough whilst entertaining her ‘faggot-voters’ under the pretext of canvassing their support for her candidate with ‘A very elegant dinner’.<sup>43</sup> In opposition was the Whig Eleventh Duke of Norfolk who entertained potential voters at The Anchor Inn.

Frances’s hopes of winning votes through the stomachs of men where ‘nothing was wanting to enrich their tables; even pines were not excluded from the Bill of Fare’ had some impact as the Irwin interest remained unchallenged – as it had done for nearly forty years by that point.<sup>44</sup> The pines (pineapples) were supplied from the Temple Newsam greenhouse – the personal pride of Richard Taylor, the gardener – and were said to have weighed five or six pounds each.<sup>45</sup> These were Queen Pineapples which were quite a small variety, but less acidic and mild in flavour. The significance of such a flavour was a reflection of the host’s character when it meant winning votes, and as the tone of the newspaper article suggested, would have been intended as a tool for marking generosity through delicacy and fine treats.<sup>46</sup> As Charles Carter’s preface to his *The Compleat City and Country Cook* (1732) stated, such provisioning was not to be admired; it proved vain and extravagant because the use of foreign foodstuffs promoted luxury rather than simplicity and suggested blatant disregard for native goods. Yet, as the status fruit of the period, the pineapple was a vehicle for Frances’s own political convictions, and its fashionable significance as a symbol of hospitality further endowed her manoeuvrings with clever yet, fake informality and approachability.

At home on the estate the dinner-table was still the ideal place for political chit-chat, although mixed company did not always guarantee political conversation, having the right guests ensured some support for a family’s faction. Many elite women were capable of hosting with aplomb up and down the social scale when it came to election time. But they could invariably mock members of their own sex for displaying vulgarity, inappropriate dress and decorum, and silly socio-political

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<sup>43</sup> *The Sussex Advertiser*, 8 September 1788 in W. A. Albery, *Parliamentary History of Horsham* (1927), p. 131. The term ‘faggot-voters’ implied that the Irwins had assembled voters with bribes, and that they were merely voters in name rather than qualification. However, the tone of the paper should be viewed with suspicion since the franchise in Horsham was given to burgesses.

<sup>44</sup> Albery, *Parliamentary History of Horsham*, p. 242.

<sup>45</sup> *The Cottage Gardener*, 16 January 1855, ‘Temple Newsam [sic]’ pp.300-301.

<sup>46</sup> For elite women as hostesses, the pineapple was a symbol weighed down with notions of expense and hospitality; many a guest would feel honoured by a hostess who was willing to spare nothing when it came to static display, flavour and tactility. See Alan Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food* (2002), p. 729.



movement. Frances Irwin's support for the Tory cause cemented her judgment of Mary Rockingham when the latter was discovered to have been visiting the lady mayoress of London, 'the Gentle Marchioness I hear has been twice to visit the Lady Mayoress what regard they must have for each other! such Patriotesses'.<sup>47</sup> Chalus highlighted that it was *de rigueur* to view the lady mayoress as the epitome of vulgarity.<sup>48</sup> Hers was a bought status, a mere temporary title and no matter how grand her attempts at hosting were for the likes of the Rockinghamites, her dining table was little more than a superficial display of transitory elegance.

With the routine slaughter of cattle and tame beasts throughout the year for the dinner-table came the complementary delight in maintaining a steady flow of wildfowl and game beasts into the kitchens as the accomplished elite male made hunting and shooting venerable pastimes. For elite women, these activities were highly regarded as a show of support for her husband within the surrounds of his estate as well as an instrument for furnishing neighbours, close friends and relatives with tender meats. When the season demanded, the country house and its parkland became populated with men and women idling chatting whilst nearby pheasants, woodcocks, pigeon and ducks were killed in preparation for a later feast or to be transported to an acquaintance's estate elsewhere. Outdoor pursuits were a symbol of generosity, of boasting about self-sufficiency as well as excess where the mistress became Lady Bountiful, 'a *great* Lady in the Country'<sup>49</sup> and the witty, intelligent ornamental hostess. Moreover, the hunting season provided elite women with greater involvement in her husband's hobby and sporting prowess when it meant keeping an open house.<sup>50</sup> Defined with capitals by Elaine Chalus and Amanda Foreman, these Public Days were part of the informal political protocol which literally peppered the countryside.

<sup>47</sup> NA:PRO 30/29/4/2/47 Frances Irwin to Lady Gower, 2 April, 1770.

<sup>48</sup> Chalus, in *Historical Journal*, p. 683.

<sup>49</sup> Mrs Burgoyne to Duchess of Argyll, Kensington Palace, October 7 1773. *Intimate Society of Letters of the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Duke of Argyll, 2 volumes (1910), I, p. 175. in Barker and Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 158.

<sup>50</sup> Some women could get it marvellously wrong by attending the hunt as though dressed for town. The ever satirical Isabella Ingram wrote to her grandmother Isabella Irwin in 1749 informing her of Lady Rockingham's [Mary Bright's mother-in-law] overdressed appearance whilst following her husband on a shoot at Wentworth Woodhouse, 'Her clothes are white satin embroidered with silver & colours and all over vastly fine'. WYAS, Leeds. Pawson MSS Letter Book 6 B20/236. Letter from Isabella Ingram to her grandmother 1 July 1749.

Stone and Stone quoted Richard Steele who commented in 1710, 'that a vainglorious fox-hunter shall entertain half the county for the ostentation of his beef and beer, without the least affection for any of the crowd about him. He feeds them, because he thinks it a superiority over them that he does so, and they devour him, because they know he treats them out of insolence.'<sup>51</sup> For those families involved in politics, these weekly Public Days were the main staple of country house living and the associated refinement of large entertainments throughout the year. They were a positive social obligation which combined the pleasures of sociability and friendship with those of display and ostentation.<sup>52</sup> Luxury was all in the display, which itself was the main tool for meeting the demands of the guest as well as winning them over. Arrogance provided the means to an end because it helped to conceive the schedule for flamboyant activity; of grand house, elegant furniture, plate, liveried servant, and fine fare.<sup>53</sup>

Public Days were an opportunity to show off as a family and were jointly hosted by husband and wife and regularly featured children.<sup>54</sup> For the Rockinghams the mix of visiting local gentry and elite could total upwards of forty over the year, but often only five to ten people could be present on any one day.<sup>55</sup> Chalus has maintained the key to Public Days was entirely political with new connections being made with those who looked unsure about their political stance. For a lucky few, the chance to stay the night and mingle with a more select crowd the following day might even help them to stop their dithering and encourage them step into the faction. For the hostess, this meant a great deal of planning, organising and arranging far in advance. Reputable servants had to be earmarked for the occasion, food and drink discussed with the cook and suppliers, and invitations had to be promptly issued under much of the guidance of her husband. When the day came, the elite mistress as hostess would have to be approachable – it was the hospitable role she was trained to play.

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<sup>51</sup> Stone and Stone, *An Open Elite?*, p. 215.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.215-216.

<sup>53</sup> Comments made by a German visitor in 1826 described hospitality in the English country house as seemingly tiresome to the hosts who were persistently expected to use up a considerable fortune for the maintenance of hospitality. Stone and Stone *An Open Elite?*, p. 214, no source given.

<sup>54</sup> Barker and Chalus, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England*, pp.156-58.

<sup>55</sup> WWM A-1530 Memoranda Book: Dining lists. This book gives numbers for Public Days in 1773 only. Guests included the Rev. Mr. Wilkinson, a Mrs Marriott and children, Colonel Thornton, Sir George Savile, and the Duke of Portland, for August to November 1773.

Etiquette was certainly founded upon moral codes suitable for social gatherings at the table, and such pleasantries supported any heterogeneous discourse which an elite woman had the power to direct over servings of venison and stewed vegetables.<sup>56</sup> As Isabella Carlisle observed, ‘Let your attention at your table be universal; nor sit down to it like a stranger’<sup>57</sup>, the moments involving food were as socially valuable as some of the ingredients’ material value delivered upon the platter.

For someone like Sabine Winn at Nostell, her role as hostess in crucial political manoeuvrings and debates at the dinner table were definitely limited. The Winns were less well established in eighteenth-century politics than the Irwins and certainly the Rockinghams and her presence would have to have been truly astonishing. Unfortunately, prior to her marriage to Rowland, the Winns were pessimistic and her future father-in-law was in no doubt that her foreign tongue and ignorance of English politics would eventually lead to an unsociability which in turn would cause irreparable damage. Rowland was told by his father to picture a foreign wife at the head of the dinner-table and unable to converse, and that above all a love match was not enough to ensure a happy marriage since, ‘without connections and means a man will but make a mean figure in this country’.<sup>58</sup> It is difficult to view Sabine Winn as a universal conversationalist as Isabella Carlisle might have wished, instead she most certainly sat down to it a stranger on more than one occasion. A politically minded wife was a beneficial tool at large gatherings where supporters mingled and ditherers could be coaxed into the faction. A female mind absorbed in formulating less serious discourse was a blunt tool that negated the purpose of political dining.

When an elite woman found herself entertaining royal guests, it would be assumed that only grand feasts were the norm. This was half true, and in these instances the formal spaces of dining rooms were deemed to be graciously accommodating for any small party. Yet, informality could still be realised and food would simultaneously mark the pride, taste and status of those entertaining, whilst eschewing the lavishness and frivolity associated with total elite grandeur. When the elderly Frances Irwin and her two eldest daughters, Lady Hertford and Lady William

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<sup>56</sup> John Tusler, *The Honours of the Table*. (1788)

<sup>57</sup> Carlisle, *Maxims*, p. 37.

<sup>58</sup> WYAS, Leeds. Nostell Priory MSS. (NP) NP A1/1509/7, Letter from Fourth Baronet to his son, Rowland, June 1759.

Gordon greeted the Prince Regent at Temple Newsam in October 1806 while the latter was embarking upon a tour of Northern England, the *Leeds Intelligencer* reported how the Prince 'was received with every mark of that politeness and hospitality which so eminently distinguish the present owner.' On his visit the Prince was treated to a luncheon of partridge pie in the best dining room.<sup>59</sup>

The hospitality so eagerly publicised by the *Leeds Intelligencer* was soon to be greatly overshadowed by the lasting role Lady Hertford was to have in the Prince's affections – a role which would receive enormous satirical attention from the contemporary national Press. At the time of the Prince's visit however, Temple Newsam was very much the impression of a dower house, as Frances had been widowed nearly thirty years. The house would have contained little solitude however, and Frances enjoyed the company of her upper female servants, Alice Scott and Elizabeth Scholefield,<sup>60</sup> visits from her daughters and grandchildren, as well as arranging to make visits away herself. Leading the quiet life was a possibility on several occasions yet, the housekeeper's accounts from 1797 to 1804 showed the food and drink they enjoyed together and presented the tastes of the household and family as distinctly rich and varied with fish, seafood, dairy produce, exotic fruits, and of course game on the menu.

Lady Hertford even wrote to her husband regarding the preparations being made, entertaining him with thoughts of elderly female servants dressing up in their finery for the welcome visitor.<sup>61</sup> The informality of this occasion compares with that of a statelier visit by the Prince to Wentworth Woodhouse in 1789 when the fourth Earl Fitzwilliam invited the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Rawson and Lord Clermont, amongst others, and even the general public were indulged in with sixty hogsheads of strong ale.<sup>62</sup> But, the circumstances of the two visits differed greatly and at Temple Newsam the intentions of the Prince were entirely a show of fondness for one of the hostesses.

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<sup>59</sup> Taken from documents transcribed and currently filed by James Lomax at Temple Newsam. Letter to Lord Hertford. 28 September 1806. BL Egerton MSS 3260 ff 159-162.

<sup>60</sup> Alice Scott was mentioned in the chimney sweep's account from 1773 and had her room close to the nursery in the 1808 inventory. She was bequeathed £100 for a ring by Frances Irwin. Elizabeth Scholefield was the sister or wife of Michael Scholefield who was steward at Temple Newsam between 1792 and 1842. she had rooms in the servant attic and was bequeathed £500 as well as a annuity of £50 by Frances

<sup>61</sup> Letter to Lord Hertford. Sept 28 1806. BL Egerton MSS 3260 ff 159-162.

<sup>62</sup> Graham Hobson. *Wentworth – A Brief History*, research deposited at Sheffield Archives. 2 volumes, vol. I, (1996). Volume I, p. 32.

The elite woman was not limited to transitory appearances at the dinner-table but recognised the processes involving the estate and household which were needed to create entertaining mealtimes. In socio-political situations this might have even extended to accompanying her husband and his supporters on cold autumnal mornings to retrieve game birds for a later dinner, or instructing garden staff to export exquisite specimens from the hothouse for flavoursome amusement in order to win over eligible voters. Food therefore mechanised the symbolic status of the eighteenth-century dinner-table through its sensual presence and also as part of the process with which an elite woman arranged her own political performance on the domestic stage. Food and dining characterised an interlocking of private domesticity with elite public duty for which the elite woman had to take main responsibility.

## II

Dining was a tool for aiding social interaction and the food being served simultaneously provided a backdrop and instrument for topics of conversation. Away from the sphere of dining however, foodstuffs offered cultural, regional and personal identities which added another ingredient to the household as being hospitable and bounteous. The cultural identity of food in the eighteenth century, and the subject of this section, was invariably linked to the human constitution. The tea-drinker was criticised because he or she allowed the British economy to become drained since the money being spent on such substances ought to have been better diverted towards improving the country instead. Moreover, because tea came from China writers like Jonas Hanway were angered because their tea rituals and ‘custom of sipping’ gave them a degrading air of effeminacy which steadily erased the military prowess for which the English were so renowned.<sup>63</sup> More emphasis was put on the fleshiness and physicality between that of the English people compared to the French, and the latter were believed instrumental in introducing luxury into English dining and culinary practice.

Regional identity was governed far more by traditions surrounding the utilisation of local produce, methods of preparation and the practice of conveying estate produce upon others. Personal identity was more an indication of preference and was

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<sup>63</sup> Jonas Hanway, ‘An Essay on Tea,’ *A Journal of Eight Days Journey*, 2 volumes. (1757), volume 2, p. 17.

reflected in the spending habits of those who wanted to experience different tastes or already valued certain flavours. Cultural, regional and personal identities were all linked through accessibility and convenience for the elite mistress. Luxury was epitomised by her search further afield for consumer goods like tea, and whether such goods supplemented the household diet or instead made up a large portion of its eating and drinking habits.

The cultural identity inspired by food was a blossoming topic throughout the period, entrenching itself into both the Press and cookery books. It has become a chief subject for food historians and can only be given minor treatment as part of this study. Writing about the cookery book in particular, C. Anne Wilson has noted that the French had had a cultural influence on English food and cookery since Norman times. By the eighteenth century it has been suggested by Jennifer Stead that due to the political climate and the sporadic conflict between Britain and France during much of the century patriotism was encouraged wherever the French appeared to have even the slightest influence.<sup>64</sup> This was in spite of the fact that French was the language of diplomacy and of educated society.<sup>65</sup> The authors of cookery books were particularly keen to advocate 'Englishness' in food preparation and presentation. Several authors even made nationality a focal point with its inclusion in titular form such as *The Experienced English Housekeeper* (1769) by Elizabeth Raffald; *Domestic Economy; Or, a Complete System of English Housekeeping* (1794) by Maximilian Hazlemore; *The English Art of Cookery* (1794) by Richard Briggs or Martha Bradley's *The British Housewife*. Food was established within this identity through display and quantitative value of meaty juices and natural flavours. In other words, it was constructed around notions of complicated, 'French' or fussy food versus plain, unadorned English food. As a supplier and consumer of varied foodstuffs, the elite country estate embodied the mentalité of this cultural identity through its process of cattle breeding, slaughter time, seasonal hunting

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<sup>64</sup> See Brears et al. *A Taste of History*. Jennifer Stead's chapter 'Georgian Britain', pp.218-261

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227; see also, (Ed.) Eileen White, *The English Cookery Book* (2004). Wilson's chapter, 'An Introduction to the Cookery Book Collections in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds', pp.19-27, and Ivan Day's chapter, 'From Murrell to Jarrin: Illustrations in British Cookery Books, 1621-1820', pp.98-130. For the wider influence of France see (Eds.) Jeremy Black and Roy Porter, *A Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century History*, pp.257-259; Paul Langford, *Englishness Identified: Manners and Characteristics 1650-1850* (Oxford, 2000), pp.85-92; and David A. Bell's essay, 'Jumonville's Death: War Propaganda and National Identity in Eighteenth-Century France,' in (Eds.) Colin Jones and Dieter Wahrman, *The Age of Cultural Revolutions: Britain and France, 1750-1820*. (Berkeley, 2002), pp.33-61.

and shooting, and a penchant for lavish dinners set out with red meat, poultry and fish dishes.

Such views were also contradicted and the elite were criticised for eschewing the trend for an 'English' tradition in cookery because of their use of French cooks, French culinary practices and Continental flavourings. This perhaps reflected the sophistication of the elite as the incarnation of 'educated society' on the one hand, and their desire to emulate the cultural leader of Europe at the time on the other. Food and drink worked as great signifiers of cultural awareness. They were accompanied by forms of etiquette (an obvious word of French origin) which helped distinguish the educated from the rest of society. However, this labelled the elite as a susceptible group in the social strata and French cooks, French culinary practices and flavourings were not always so characteristic of the Yorkshire country house kitchen department.

Varey has pointed out that cookery books were mediums of some cultural disdain between both England and France and conveyed a desire for meat in the English appetite as something with clear political dimension.<sup>66</sup> The English were hearty eaters of beef which made them 'strong and hale', while the French liked their delicate sauces. As a result, the English believed the French feeble and ridiculous; while the French maintained that in fact the English were coarse when they themselves were refined.

It was also about wastefulness. Horsham resident Sarah Hirst made a note in her diary in 1759 of 'nothing but made dishes' at Lord Irwin's, she added further, 'I am difficult & doubt I shou'd be starv'd in such a family. Luxury is I think as little excusable as any vice.'<sup>67</sup> 'Made dishes' were elaborate and were considered part of the skill of French cooks especially, who used a gravy or 'cullis' to create the main feature of the dish. The Ingrams employed French and Hanoverian cooks who would dress their more prestigious meals, and paid them for all expenses incurred in procuring the food in

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<sup>66</sup> Simon Varey's essay, 'The Pleasure of the Table' in (Eds.) Roy Porter and Mary Mulvey Roberts, *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp.36-47.

<sup>67</sup> *The Diaries of Sarah Hirst 1759-1762: Love and Life in Eighteenth-Century Horsham*. Transcribed by Barbara Hurst. Edited by Susan C. Djabri. Entry for Wednesday, 29 August 1759.

addition to a substantial professional fee.<sup>68</sup> However, some native cooks often sought to imitate their continental counterparts as a means of getting work.<sup>69</sup>

Authors of eighteenth-century cookery books ensured luxury was imbued with negativity and often lamented the fashion for extravagance, even the word luxury was replaced with something else. Hannah Glasse in particular gladly poo-hooped French cooking in her *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1747) and luxury in her mind was mere 'blind folly',

A *Frenchman* in his own country will dress a fine dinner of twenty dishes, and all genteel and pretty, for the expence [sic] he will put an *English* lord to for dressing one dish. But then there is the little petty profit... So much is the blind folly of this age, that they would rather be imposed on by a *French* booby, than give encouragement to a good *English* cook!

Glasse published a whole chapter on made dishes which included fricassees and ragouts, but attempted to make amends by highlighting examples of French expense in the following chapter. Charles Carter intended for his publication to be a guide on 'good housewifery than Luxury... [and] to instruct how to order those Provisions our Island is furnished with...'<sup>70</sup> He went on to add that it was the fault of the nobility and gentry that traditional customs in English cookery were floundering amongst 'French Customs'. In almost all cookery books, emphasis was decidedly placed upon the worthiness of a recipe due to its 'Englishness' and defined by simplicity and neatness of preparation and display. Anything that sounded even remotely foreign was, as Mary Cole put it, 'purposely rejected' or at best offered to the reader with subtle apology for its inclusion with the promise that neither extravagance nor expense would be required in the

<sup>68</sup> Peter Brears, *The Gentlewoman's Kitchen: Great Food in Yorkshire, 1650-1750* (Wakefield, 1984), p. 4.

<sup>69</sup> An unsigned letter to Sabine Winn in 1781, at the time she was searching for a reputable cook for Nostell, disclosed some information on a Jonathan Morris who had been cook for the Dowager Lady Gower. '... she parted with him because he was not cook good enough for her... did not seem to have much notion of Œconomy...' Extravagance was a distinctly French feature, but in this instance frugality was clearly something regarded as intrinsic to upper kitchen staff even amongst elite correspondents. Morris evidently did not receive the glowing character he would have hoped for, but had moved on elsewhere by the time of the letter to Sabine. NP A1/5A/8, 14 September 1781. It could be argued that a male cook was far more sought after rather than a French one because although they demanded high wages, they were not as expensive to keep as foreign cooks, and also offered more prestige than a female English cook. It is worth remembering that by the middle of the century, the male cook at Temple Newsam was receiving wages per annum just under half that of the steward or valet there.

<sup>70</sup> Charles Carter, *The Compleat City and Country Cook or, Accomplish'd Housewife* (1732), Preface, pp. v-vi.



provisioning and cooking processes.<sup>71</sup> When Sarah Hirst penned her thoughts on the Ingram family's made dishes, she was openly ridiculing their fondness for fancy 'French' sauces and unnecessarily complicated platters. However, it is worth remembering that Isabella Carlisle congratulated herself on finding a French cook who proved 'so excellent an œconomist' when living in Aix that there were always exceptions to the rule.

Meat really did ignite the debate however, and Roy Porter has noted the role of meat in an Englishman's diet as a consequence of a predominantly agrarian society where 'handsome eating was a token of success; generous hospitality was expected and admired.'<sup>72</sup> At the heart, and stomach of this cultural identity lay the traditional dish of roast beef which Porter named the Englishman's 'sacramental meal', whereas C. Anne Wilson quoted foreign traveller Per Kalm who believed it to be the Englishman's principal dish and 'delice'.<sup>73</sup> Meat could be imbued with regional characteristics but offered cultural identity and also patriotism. It had to be simply dressed and lightly seasoned, and the men who ate it had to maintain this in analogous form. Englishness was sober and stuffy, not extravagant, and as Langford has highlighted it contested the 'horrifying foppery and effeminacy' openly displayed by the macaronis and many young men of education with creative instincts and enthusiasm for (mainly Italian) continental living.<sup>74</sup>

The quantity of meat consumed in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was considered enormous in comparison to the rest of Europe too. Quantity was measured purely by weight, but also by the great variety of meaty foodstuffs the English were said to enjoy; roasted meats, forcemeats and stuffing, hashes and broiled meats. Add to this the types of meat themselves which ranged from mutton, lamb, beef and ham to partridge, pheasant, chicken, duck and pigeon and the awe felt by Per Kalm

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<sup>71</sup> Mary Cole, *The Lady's Complete Guide; or, Cookery and Confectionary in all its branches*, (1789) Preface, p. iv; and Elizabeth Raffald, *The Experienced English Housekeeper, for the Use and Ease of Ladies, Housekeepers, Cooks &c.* p. ii.

<sup>72</sup> Roy Porter, *The Penguin Social History of Britain: English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1963), pp.20-21.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21; C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink in Britain: From the Stone Ages to Recent Times*, (1973), p. 97; Per Kalm, *Account of his Visit to England... in 1748*, trans. J. Lucas (1892), pp.14-15.

<sup>74</sup> Langford, *Polite and Commercial*, p. 576.

in the 1740s who commented that ‘any Englishman who is his own master has never eaten a dinner without meat’ can certainly be understood.<sup>75</sup>

Meat certainly accounted for a large percentage of dinner table space in the household of the Yorkshire elite. Cultural distinction was emphasised in the quantity of meat dishes, but the connotations of English strength and heartiness were similarly constructed around nutrition and the benefit of meats within celebrations of health. In May 1751 (and a year before his marriage to Mary Bright) Charles Watson-Wentworth came of age. To mark this occasion a large banquet was held in which four oxen, fifteen sheep, nine calves, fifteen lambs, 100 dozen pigeons, 177 fowl and chickens, and forty-eight pigs were slaughtered.<sup>76</sup> The charges made for these goods and the carriage of them, including several functional items like ladles, tables and benches came to £422 – 6s – 11d.<sup>77</sup> Over a longer period of time, that of nearly nine months at Wentworth Woodhouse between February and October 1772 meat consumption was still staggering and consisted of 1296 joints of mutton, 928 pieces of beef and 120 pigeons. Out of thirteen types of meat, compare this with the lesser consumption within those same nine months of six partridges, five geese and only one pig.<sup>78</sup> An account book for January 1773 to March 1774 categorised meat consumption within housekeeping and farming sections to indicate either home-grown varieties from the estates or that bought in from tenant farmers.<sup>79</sup> Together these departments totalled £1868 – 7s – 2½d ensuring meat production was indeed expensive for the country house.

Eating meat also involved the messy and unpleasant processes of provisioning the household. In the 1770s, the same decade as the Wentworth housekeeper’s book of stores, a bull was slaughtered with all its particular weights and measurements recorded by the steward.<sup>80</sup> Before ‘slaughtering’ (probably means butchering) the four quarters weighed 26st 7lb. The processes of weighing the slaughtered beast including its entrails, paunch, head, heart, liver, hide, feet and blood

<sup>75</sup> C. Anne Wilson. *Food and Drink*. pp.95-104.

<sup>76</sup> Graham Hobson. *Wentworth*. vol. I, pp.49-59.

<sup>77</sup> WWM A1 (previously A-1407). Account Book of Evan Evans. Jan 1750/1 to April 1752. This document shows that charges made that year to housekeeping alone came to £2413 0s 9¼d and included the festivities undertaken to mark Charles’ birthday.

<sup>78</sup> WWM A-1373 Day book of household meat etc.. 1772-1773.

<sup>79</sup> WWM A7 (previously A6) Account Book of Benjamin Hall. January 1<sup>st</sup> 1773 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 1774.

<sup>80</sup> WWM A-1380 Memoranda Book.

came to an estimated 22st 9lb. Despite a 12lb difference, most of this processing would have found its way to the table. Some of the by-products of slaughter time included the blood which went into black pudding, suet into forcemeats and sweet puddings, marrow into pies and the jelly into both sweet and savoury dishes.<sup>81</sup> Isabella Carlisle's recipe book listed methods for making a 'Beef Pye with Blood', 'To make Calves Head Hash', 'To make Potted Beef', and 'Black Puddings'.<sup>82</sup> The last dish was a firm favourite with Mary Rockingham who was rather particular about how it was made. When the new housekeeper, Mrs Crofts established herself in the Wentworth household, her recipe for black pudding differed greatly from that of her predecessor and Mary wanted to know which recipe she was using so to 'inform her which method to keep to'.<sup>83</sup>

At Nostell Priory, a predecessor of Sabine Winn, Letitia maintained a recipe book from around 1720 which contained several recipes including fruit jellies made with raspberries, grapes and Pippins.<sup>84</sup> Jellies at this time were very much a part of the vogue for elaborate decorative dishes used at the second course, providing what C. Anne Wilson has described as background water for 'floating island' or 'rocky island' tableaux.<sup>85</sup> Meat jellies were seasoned with salt and pepper, sometimes ginger or cinnamon flavourings. Unusually in this case, fruit jellies were not seen as so appetising until later into the eighteenth century and were advocated by writers like Elizabeth Raffald who recommended using grapes, lemons and oranges as the predominant flavourings.

Such creativity was deemed extravagant and although criticism was not limited to the wondrous effects of table display. Another aspect of cultural identity inspired by food lay in the transition from simple and sensible English cooking and dining to that of an art – reached only by means of the luxurious. This was most staunchly highlighted by Eliza Smith who believed cookery had rather become a spectacle; a superficial exercise in displaying wealth and even illustrated her point with

<sup>81</sup> C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink*, pp.106-07.

<sup>82</sup> Carlisle MSS, *Receipts*, pp. 66, 71, 93 and 86.

<sup>83</sup> WWM, Stw P2/51 (1) no date, Mary Rockingham to Benjamin Hall. Black pudding may also have had some cultural connotation in its meatiness, since there were versions of it all over Europe, the French black pudding in particular, and was seasoned with mixed spices and pepper, using chopped onion to soak up the blood unlike the English variety which used oatmeal. Davidson, *Companion to Food*, p. 98.

<sup>84</sup> NP C4/8/1, Culinary recipes c.1720.

<sup>85</sup> C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink*, pp.106-107. See also Peter Brears, 'Transparent Pleasures: The Story of the Jelly, Parts One and Two, in *Petits Propos culinaires*, 53 and 54. (1996).

biblical references.<sup>86</sup> Charles Carter maintained that his text ‘gives not Direction so much for Foreign Dishes, but those we have at home...we have no need of them, nor their methods of Cookery... [they] endeavour to supply by Art, what is deny’d by Nature.’ Martha Bradley had the image of the table more in her mind when she stated that, ‘To please the Palate is one Design of this Branch of Study, and to please the Eye is the other’, as though the two should have been performed separately so that necessity could not be beaten by magnificence.<sup>87</sup>

An example of how an elite woman could undermine criticisms of luxury, extravagance, wastefulness, and ‘Frenchified fussiness’ could often have been the result of necessity. More specifically it was a resulting need for a nutritional meal which reflected a quest to uphold neither English heartiness nor a desire to disparage foreign food culture. It had rather more to do with refreshment and nourishment. Before travelling back to Wentworth from London, Mary Rockingham made vague demands for a meaty meal she and Charles had hoped would greet them back in Yorkshire, ‘I hope we shall get to Wentworth in good time on Wednesday, possibly for dinner, therefore you will have some of My Lord’s [illegible word] soup and chicken ready and a joint of mutton [or] some chops, that we may have it immediately in case we should want it.’<sup>88</sup> This briefness of instruction within her letter suggested a level of informality which allowed for the simple direction to pass as a quick addition to more thorough demands for servant organisation.

Yet, these dishes required time to prepare. Soup itself was a ‘remove’ dish which would be set at the head of the table and eaten first, then removed to make way for fish or meat dishes. It was an elegant French alternative to pottage which by the end of the eighteenth century had begun to be regarded as labourer’s food. Many ingredients had to be soaked over night, especially vegetables, which then had to be

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<sup>86</sup> Smith referred to the moment the Israelites ask for a king in order to safeguard their own wealth and vanity to be like the rest of their neighbours (Smith appeared to be identifying the English with the Israelites), or as Smith noted became ‘fashionists’. Preface to *The Compleat Housewife* (1727), no page numbering. ‘And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers’. 1 Sam viii. 13.

<sup>87</sup> Bradley, *British Housewife*, facsimile edition. Preface. Elizabeth Raffald was in direct disagreement with Bradley when it came to notions of display and flavouring and wrote, ‘I have made it my Study to please both the Eye and the Palate, without using pernicious Things for the sake of Beauty’, p.ii. Harmful they were not, but Raffald did not hesitate to create awe with the inclusion of recipes for floating islands, fish ponds and transparent puddings in her publication.

<sup>88</sup> WWM Stw P2/16 no date.

mashed and sieved, left to simmer and served up with bread and butter.<sup>89</sup> More than likely, the dinner expected by the Rockinghams on their return to Yorkshire was set to look like an assembly of side dishes rather than a complicated repast.

Conversely, it could be argued that meat was of secondary importance in some dishes often described as French ones, but still represented significant nutritional value. Isabella Carlisle's first recipe to appear in her recipe book was for a French soup.<sup>90</sup> It recommended using a leg of beef, a leg or knuckle of veal, 'and if convenient, a Fowl'. These were to be placed in a pot along with six turnips, six carrots, six large onions, six leeks, a bunch of celery, four heads of celeriac, six parsley roots, sweet basil, one handful of salad burnet, and chives. When all these had been allowed to boil for up to ten hours before being strained the mixture was left to stand overnight in order for chervil, turnips, endive, French sorrel, cabbage, lettuce, white beet and more onions and celery to be added. The end product was a wonderfully nourishing vegetable soup where undoubtedly the meat created flavour similar to a roux and the mix of vegetables added a substantial amount of texture and character to the dish.

Like most of the recipes in her book, it had been collected whilst Isabella was travelling through Europe in the 1760s and 1770s. This particular one probably came into her hands while she was living in the South of France. Ridgway has pointed out that the overall composition of the recipe – despite its title – suggested it was destined for an English palate because of the absence of garlic, although the range and adventurous combination were not common in England at this time.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, the final touch suggested by Isabella was to add a 'French rowl' before serving it up, adding balance and a gesture which provided a hint of delicacy to an otherwise robust dish.<sup>92</sup>

Isabella Carlisle had become acquainted with Lord and Lady Berkeley – the former being Ambassador for France and with whom she readily exchanged ideas including the culinary and medicinal. It may be recalled that Isabella had received a

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<sup>89</sup> Brears et al., *Taste of History*, pp.67-68.

<sup>90</sup> Carlisle MSS, *Receipts* J13/1/4, p. 78.

<sup>91</sup> Ridgway, *Send It Up Hot*, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Alan Davidson has distinguished the dry sweetness of French breads from the more heavy English varieties. Isabella Carlisle suggested using 'the top of a French rowl' which was likely to have meant the crusty end of a baguette, which was already coming into fashion in the eighteenth century. Davidson, *Companion to Food*, p.380-381.

medicinal recipe entitled 'Lady Berkeley's Mouth Water'; from Lord Berkeley Isabella obtained a recipe for breaded lamb cutlets.<sup>93</sup> Her instructions were to cover them with crumbs of stale white bread, minced parsley and a little salt and pepper, to then lay them on a gridiron 'over a well kindled and quick charcoal fire, turning them often to prevent the gravy running out in which consists their goodness.' A recipe for a sauce was also noted which had the effect of adding a sweet tartness to the dish with its ingredients of verjuice (made with crab apples and sour grapes) and lemon juice. It is not difficult to imagine Isabella and such acquaintances discussing their personal tastes and those flavours which were most pleasing to their palates. Living in straitened circumstances, Isabella was probably far more interested in dishes which were cheap but also nutritious and her French soup and lamb cutlets were obviously attractive options.

Cultural identity was therefore decidedly ambiguous. It could be assumed that Sabine Winn was more inclined towards fussy French culinary methods than her English counterparts. Yet, her surviving personal documents merely suggested she oozed greater enthusiasm for arranging dinners; something which cannot be truly associated with her own cultural background. Rare examples amongst the documentation for the Yorkshire country house are two notes for menus or bills of fare formulated by Sabine Winn and her cook in the 1770s. They were for a large but unknown gathering and composed entirely in French, and included an array of meat dishes (**figure 6.5**). Although the handwriting has become difficult to read and where the ink has been rendered pale over time, it is still possible to make out mainly meaty dishes consisting of servings of mutton, pigeon, beef, veal, rabbit and pork. Any dishes that could readily be related to her French Swiss background were probably only the cheese sauces and pâtés, though such dishes were neither uncommon to the English nor unusual in handwritten recipe books by this time anyway.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Carlisle MSS *Receipts* J13/1/4, p. 79.

<sup>94</sup> This has often been stated by food historians when debating the cookery book, but for a more generalised view see Elizabeth Burton, *The Georgians at Home, 1714-1830* (1967), pp.188-199. Isabella Carlisle's book contained recipes for French bread, fish sauce, as well as those culinary recipes she collected whilst in her self-imposed exile. At Nostell, both loose and bound recipes showed that 'made dishes' were common throughout the eighteenth century (the Ingrams were clearly making use of them by the middle of the century) with a made dish of apples, cheese sauce, and sauces for chicken all which pre-date Sabine. NP C4/8/1.



Nostell certainly had a period where the kitchen was governed by a French cook (probably of French Swiss origin like Sabine) during Sabine Winn's time as mistress and several documents suggest that the culinary department there was subject to a regular examination of accounts not always at the request of Sabine herself. An inventory of all kitchen equipment and utensils made in 1774, and written in French has already been mentioned in chapter four. Yet, the existence of a notebook of meat and provisions composed entirely in French around the same time exposed both the variety of stock and the ambiguity of cultural identity in the elite household despite the presence of a foreign mistress. The 'memoire' was begun in September 1776 and listed types of meat or wares and their quantities held in the Nostell larder and stores. Examples of meat ranged from mutton, veal, chicken, beef, duck, hare, and partridge – typical country produce – as well as quantities of lemons, sugar, and candles. An unusual entry was for 'Pluvie' or pluvier – the plover – a wading bird which can be found mainly in Africa and North America. The one listed in the 'memoire' was probably the ringed plover, a bird the size of a pigeon, and a native of much of Britain and the Continent. It must be assumed that the notebook was the result of a conscientious cook, or at least someone working in that department as Sabine Winn's own interaction was never obvious.

For Isabella Carlisle, any foreignness to her food was irrelevant if it offered flavour and nourishment. Notions of cultural identity were not made in bold statements for either a like or dislike of a specific dish and ingredients not commonly utilised in England suggested a palate eager to experiment or compare and contrast the preferred tastes of others and at best a desire to add variety to a monotonous diet. England's rival in the culture of culinary distinction asserted itself through refinement, but it could be argued that in the French philosophy of civility and finesse in this identity was equally static. The English could not be happy without a meaty adage to their plates, but the French were criticised in England for their fussiness and consistent use of made dishes and extravagant œconomy. Elite women did not substantially demonstrate either one of these identities but appeared to mingle the two for the sake of the senses, dietary requirements and personal choice on flavours.

More intriguing was the thought that wastefulness and extravagance implied foreignness in the culinary department. Criticisms in cookery books bemoaned creativity and art prevailing food preparation and display particularly by the elite. Dishes



of blatant French origin, however, had become so entrenched in the English diet that all signifiers of 'refinement' had long since disappeared. Mary Rockingham's request for soup instead of the traditional pottage as one example highlighted a disregard for the etiquette which surrounded the soup as a remove dish. Instead of being formally waited upon, it is realistic to imagine the ease at which this dish would have been consumed alongside the mutton or chops. The bills of fare arranged by Sabine Winn and her cook are unique amongst the source material in the case of grander entertainments but unfortunately tell us very little of the final appearance of the dinner table on that single occasion. If there is one thing which remains to be said of the cultural identity of food in the elite household, it is the observance of the elite woman to make considerable use of the meaty produce of the region and the estate itself; a gesture less indicative of sheer luxury and a better reflection of expediency and the appearance of self-sufficiency. Where a diet consisted mainly of meat and supposedly signified cultural difference, there was no need to look any further afield than the household and by doing so she eliminated wastefulness and promoted home-grown creations.

### III

Regional identity was founded upon the notion of the great estate in the country, of fresh produce and wild game. Little can be said of any Yorkshire identity per se, there was no signature dish amongst the households of this study. Although handwritten recipe books showed that dishes made up of pickles, stews and preserves were most common as well as savoury dishes of meat or fish and added to with dishes of vegetables, sauces or soups. Regional identity was therefore a mix of home-grown hospitality and carefully selected goods thought representative of wholesome estate supply.

A good supply to the household was of special importance to the mistress. At Castle Howard during Isabella Carlisle's residency there, the Kitchen Garden was doubled in acreage and the number of stove-houses for growing exotics increased too, so that she had unshackled access to an overwhelming array of natural

produce.<sup>95</sup> At Harewood, Edwin Lascelles had great enthusiasm for the gardens but tended to favour grand scale landscaping showing only a little interest in the more intimate encouragement of flower beds and home-grown produce. Jane Fleming however, maintained her own garden with its vegetables, flowering sweet peas, mignonettes, and roses to add to the already established and more exotic crops of peaches, pineapples, strawberries and French beans.<sup>96</sup>

The elite mistress would also demand regular updates on the health of estate stock as well as the treatment and diet received by those creatures destined for the table. In response to her husband's worries for the health of game birds on the Wentworth estate, Mary Rockingham noted in a letter to her steward, 'I have almost forgot to mention the Pheasants, my Lord is concerned that their disorder [came about] entirely from [giving] them rich food too early... James says putting a little [powder] in the water is the best way but pray do not waste my powder...'<sup>97</sup> Jane Fleming was particularly eager to have updated accounts of game and poultry sent to her by Samuel Popplewell at Harewood. One of her main concerns was that the poultry maid, Betty Cooper was not attending to her proper business when Jane discovered her to be taking in some of the neighbourhood washing for an extra income. Jane reminded Popplewell that such disobedience might affect the quantity and quality of the poultry. Jane's interest for estate produce also existed in discourse relating to sheep and cattle, 'I am sorry I have lost the little Scotch Cow & some of my Lambs'.<sup>98</sup> She put this down to the bad weather and naturally hoped that things would improve, although her letter did suggest that she relied upon Popplewell to inform her of this rather than make the trek herself across fields.

One of the chatelaine's additional roles surrounding foodstuffs was the bestowing of food and drink on her guests as well as her servants and kin. This was considered an act of female nurturing but it could be imbued with sensuality, as though

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<sup>95</sup> Christopher Ridgway, 'Isabella, fourth Countess of Carlisle: No Life by Halves' in (Ed.) Ruth M. Larsen. *Maids and Mistresses: Celebrating 300 Years of Women and the Yorkshire Country House* (The Yorkshire Country House Partnership, York, 2004), p. 42.

<sup>96</sup> WYAS, Leeds, Harewood House MSS (HAR) HAR/SC/4/3 (37), May 1781. Samuel Popplewell to Edwin Lascelles and Lady Fleming. This letter also contained a note for further foodstuffs. '[I] have delivered your [Ladyship's] orders to the gardener who says that he has not got any Scarlet Beans by him...' See also Mary Mauchline, *Harewood House*, p. 109.

<sup>97</sup> WWM Stw P2/1, 27 June 1772. Mary Rockingham to Benjamin Hall.

<sup>98</sup> HAR/SC/4/4 (24) Lady Fleming to Samuel Popplewell, 1782.

food in the elite household was the embodiment of fecundity and plenty, and like cultural identity, had everything to do with meaty produce. Elite women made it their aim to have meats sent to friends and relatives as often as the weather permitted them to do so. With this act they upheld their own reputation as some prosperous provider of a generous disposition. It also led others to recognise them as acting on their own rather than someone who depended upon a household community for the preparation and packaging of such goods.

As Varey has stated, the pleasure of eating could certainly be the pleasure of experiencing the country.<sup>99</sup> Elite women very much made use of their expected role as provider. Acting as the Lady Bountiful they could exchange or confer food as gifts to friends, relatives and acquaintances, even tenants on the estate. Mrs Elizabeth Worsley (née Lister) had 'Hovingham Partridge' sent to friends in 1782.<sup>100</sup> Later that year she sent a brace of woodcocks and some moor game to the Hovingham accountant and steward, Mr. Seton, who agreed that the woodcocks were excellent though the moor game had not travelled so well.<sup>101</sup> Sabine Winn took personal pride in sending meaty goods to her absent husband as a gift from the Nostell estate, 'I thank you for the two pheasants...I am sending you in return some of my game, that is to say a good haunch of venison.'<sup>102</sup>

Mary Rockingham was a little more prolific in her sending of meaty goods to friends and relatives. Her reasons for delivering such food to others ranged from simple well-wishing to philanthropic duty. In 1779 she arranged for two pheasants to be sent as a gift to a friend, six years earlier she instructed Benjamin Hall to have some game sent from Wentworth to her husband in London, and in 1775 enquired about the distribution of meat 'that the Butcher disposes of to the poor, who it is to, what prices, and how often they have it'.<sup>103</sup> Frances Irwin also made gestures of goodwill with the sending of venison to her sister-in-laws and distant friends.<sup>104</sup> These women were

<sup>99</sup> Simon Varey in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, (1996), pp.36-47.

<sup>100</sup> North Yorkshire County Record Office, (NYCRO). NYCRO, ZON 13/4/26, E. Stainforth to Mrs Worsley, 9 January 1782.

<sup>101</sup> NYCRO, ZON 13/4/37 Ja Seton to Mrs Worsley, 28 March 1782; and ZON 13/4/41, 29 August 1782.

<sup>102</sup> NP A4/1535/6. Nostell 9 October, 1775 to Rowland at Appleby.

<sup>103</sup> WWM, Stw P2/45, 19 March 1779, Mary Rockingham to Benjamin Hall; Stw P2/7, Mary Rockingham to Hall; and Stw P2/15, 11 December 1775.

<sup>104</sup> See the bundle of correspondence which is mainly made up of that to and from friends, especially to her from her sister-in-law, Isabella Ingram and her friend Grace Sondes TN/C/23 188-239.

aware of the energy needed in slaughtering and preparing meat for this use, but definitely took the credit for bestowing it upon others. Luxury only infiltrated this practice if the conveying of meat was considered a means of offloading surplus amounts, but even in that case it could not be deemed an extravagant gesture.

A gift of goodwill might be also sent with instruction for cooking or serving. Mary Rockingham ordered sheep trotters to be sent two or three times a week to an ill tenant farmer, 'and tell him they are very good boil'd in milk...one wou'd assist him, and any sort of food of that kind would be good for his situation.'<sup>105</sup> For the farmers at Wentworth Woodhouse the meal they were treated to at rent days could occasion comparisons to those menus set out by Sabine Winn at Nostell Priory. Seated in the Steward's room they were to be served boiled chicken, roast and boiled beef, veal, lamb and mutton. The total meat required over the rent day period, per day, included five pieces of boiled beef, four legs of mutton, four quarters of cold mutton and four pieces of cold roast beef.<sup>106</sup> In all houses beef was most popular, followed closely by mutton and lamb, and dishes like these at Wentworth would have been supplied through home-grown produce from the extensive sheep-runs of the Wolds, North Yorkshire Moors, Pennine Hills, and the Derbyshire Peaks.

Different techniques of meat preparation could also be enough to distinguish dishes throughout counties or localities. With the arrival of Frances as the new bride at Temple Newsam fast approaching, the staff were making arrangements for an elaborate dinner with which to welcome her and Charles. Whilst answering some early enquiries made by Charles, the steward, Samuel Keeling further expressed his desire to have Frances accommodated to her own tastes. Although the tone of his letter is slightly tinged with anxiety, regional distinction was certainly a consideration for the staff in their hopes for welcoming the new bride. Keeling wrote;

I am for York this morning and there will take care about the Wine[.]  
We are Brewing Ale, Small Beer[,] the Caterer has provided ffwols [sic] & I  
have Wrote for ½ a Dozen Hams into Craven without orders being  
Apprehensive Miss Shepheard may not dislike a Yorkshire Dish of Ham and  
Fowls[.]<sup>107</sup>

<sup>105</sup> WWM, Stw P2/59 (1), 20 February 1782, Mary Rockingham to Benjamin Hall.

<sup>106</sup> WWM A-1380 Memoranda Book.

<sup>107</sup> TN/C/18/128a, Letter to Charles Ingram, from Samuel Keeling, 10 July 1758.

No doubt this meal was thoroughly enjoyed by all, but the emphasis on county styled food was meant not only as a celebratory tool for the newly married couple, but also as a reflection upon the status of regional produce and cooking techniques. Yorkshire Hams or York ham as this may have been, was the name of a curing method which allowed the meat to be eaten cold if desired. This was certainly a popular dish at Temple Newsam as the Ingrams purchased York Ham regularly and previous amounts included '25lbs and halfe' in 1728 for their house in London.<sup>108</sup> The meat had to be allowed time to mature – a process which could take up to several months – so some quantity must have been made readily available in time for the feasting to begin. For an elite woman who would eventually show great enthusiasm about sending fine meats to her friends and acquaintances, as well as entertaining royalty, this would have been a grand taster of what the Yorkshire countryside could offer.

Alongside meat, fish dishes provided a much needed variety to the diet and identified the scope of fishing activity as well as much needed preservation techniques for the movement of fish normally between regions. Sea-water fish would have travelled from the major harbours on the east coast where the greater bulk of sea-water fish originated from the North Sea, while fresh-water fish came from local streams and rivers. The markets where fish could be obtained were at Sheffield, Leeds and most importantly, York. The last had its Company of Fishmongers, but it has been highlighted by Brears that York did not have a monopoly on selling fish, and that individuals, manors, companies and boroughs had fishing rights of particular stretches of river.<sup>109</sup>

Most, if not all country houses were supported by a fish pond – a necessity where certain fish types were at their best when eaten fresh and where carp, perch and pike would have been common. As transport and the state of the roads improved toward the end of the century fish from the sea could be carried fairly quickly to towns in barrels of seawater. This development has led some food historians to believe that many a landowner then allowed their ponds to lapse into ornamental waters

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<sup>108</sup> As mentioned in Brears. *The Gentlewoman's Kitchen*. p.31. TN/EA 14/8 5 February 1728. York Hams were dry salted with coarse sugar, saltpetre and common salt for ten days before being smoked. Brears noted an unproven Yorkshire tradition which suggested that they were smoked in the oak chippings produced by the joiners and carpenters when building the Minster!

<sup>109</sup> Brears. *Gentlewoman's Kitchen*, pp.45-52.

for the sake of dining on better tasting fish.<sup>110</sup> But despite the evident popularity of a vast array of fish in the Yorkshire country house, it was rarely mentioned in correspondence, and has survived merely as entries in account books or documents destined for accounting purposes. This would suggest that it did not form an integral part of some cultural or regional identity in the same way that meat dishes were considered essential to a strong constitution, but had instead a nutritional adage which stemmed from religious practices of fasting especially during Lent.<sup>111</sup> More importantly, meat had market value. It did not need to be preserved for transportation in the same way fish did because most beasts could travel as live goods, and annual financial assessments of estates always included an account of the cattle, corn, malt, and stable stocks.<sup>112</sup>

The significance of fish in the English diet had everything to do with preservation and storage as much as taste and characteristic flavour; something which distinguished it from red meats. C. Anne Wilson has pointed out that oysters for example could be eaten by the rich and the poor alike since they kept for as long as twelve days in salty water.<sup>113</sup> Many varieties of fish like prawns, smelt, herrings, lobsters, crabs, salmon and cod (as well as the cost of transporting them) could be found in weekly or monthly kitchen lists and account books of the Yorkshire country house (**figure 6.6**). At Nostell, Letitia Winn filled her recipe book with plenty of culinary creations where fish appeared regularly. Oysters found themselves in pies; lobster had its own recipe too in which it was to be boiled and several other fish dishes were listed under 'F' regardless of type and individuality.

Sea fish appeared to have had a great appeal despite attempts at raising revenues through taxation on salt. Cookery books included recipes for salt cod and herring, but fish dishes needed specialised kitchen equipment for salting as well as reversing this method and the eventual journey to the dinner table. Regular 'batterie de cuisine' were taken as well as inventories which showed fish pans, fish plates, knives,

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<sup>110</sup> C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink*, p. 49; Stead in Brears et al., *A Taste of History*, p. 234.

<sup>111</sup> C. Anne Wilson has highlighted Hannah Glasse's section on appropriate dishes for fasting which was a 'curious conglomeration of dishes based on fish, vegetables and eggs...' *Food and Drink*, pp. 46-47

<sup>112</sup> NH 2881/31, 'An Account of the Stock of Cattle upon Newby Lands taken the 27 July 1757' (plus corn in the granary): On the death of the first Marquis of Rockingham: 'An Account of the stock at the Marchioness Dowager of Rockingham's farm the 15<sup>th</sup> Day of December 1750', WWM M26/9; and as part of the inventory taken after the death of Frances Irwin, 'The Temple Newsam 1808 Inventory', *Leeds Arts Calendar*, 99 and 100 (1987).

<sup>113</sup> C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink*, p. 48.

oyster buckets, kettles and covers, designated fish tables (usually made of stone), and even a turbot pan and cover.<sup>114</sup>

**Figure 6.6. Kitchen list drawn up for Temple Newsam showing expenses, 1759. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/12/1 – unnumbered.**

26 Feb 1759	
2 Turbot	3-6
2 Teal	1-5
2 Franks	0-8
Gallon Eley for kitchen	1-4
Cheese 2 1/2 lb	8-0
Loin pork 1 lb	2-0
2 Earthen pans kitchen	0-5
6 pigeons	2-0
9 lb Butter	5-8
6 whisks	0-10
2 Lobsters	2-0
5 lb 1/2 Butter	2-4
1 Glenn & six Chickens	3-6
2 fowls	1-0
6 lb Butter	3-6
ott meal	2-0
spert	2-0
1 quart best oil pantry	2-6
6 pots Mrs Carter	0-6
Loin pork 5 1/2	1-10
2 wild Ducks	3-0
2 Lobsters	1-10
60 crusts	2-0
40 smelts	1-2
2 pigeons	0-8
Turnips	0-2
	£ 2 = 15 = 10

For the Ingram family at Horsham, shellfish and salt-water fish like oysters, prawns, herrings and lobster were regular foodstuffs and appeared almost

<sup>114</sup> WWM M26/3, Inventory of Wentworth Woodhouse, 1750; 'The Temple Newsam 1808 Inventory', *Leeds Arts Calendar*, 99 and 100 (1987); NP C4/1/17 Inventory of Kitchen Equipment and Utensils, 1774. See Vince, *The Country House: How it Worked*, pp.30-40; Stead in Brears et al., *A Taste of History*, who highlighted the sort of kitchen equipment thought essential by William Verral in *A Complete System of Cookery* (1759), p.224-225. See also, Pamela Sambrook and Peter Brears (Eds.) *The Country House Kitchen, 1650-1900*. National Trust (1996).

monthly in housekeeper's lists from August 1723.<sup>115</sup> Less commonly recorded items like a dozen dab fish and a dozen whiting also appeared, giving the impression of a substantially varied diet supported by links to fishing towns on the south coast. At Wentworth Woodhouse crabs, salmon and cod were popular, whilst at Temple Newsam a small entry in the housekeeping accounts for July 1759 suggested a hint at culinary experimentation with a pound of anchovies being bought for two shillings.<sup>116</sup> Wilson has commented that the anchovy's role in cookery started as a supportive one in the form of a garnish or condiment. Into the eighteenth century they became a part of salads and meat dishes as sauces or stuffing.<sup>117</sup> The amount recorded however, suggests the former role and little else than an appetiser, or as part of salmagundi.<sup>118</sup> At Castle Howard, Isabella's interest in fish was similar to that of her contemporaries and fish dishes ranged from boiled pike and pickled salmon to Dutch sauces for fish and a sauce for carp.<sup>119</sup>

Regional identity expressed through foodstuffs indicated a greater variety in the diet than that allowed by debates on the cultural significance of tastes and display. The Yorkshire country house was a veritable host to an assortment of meat and fish dishes, the main ingredients of which could be got from the estate and from the open market. In contrast to a cultural identity, the provincial nature of such food provided diversity which was easily accessible to the elite household and its mistress who included many meat and fish dishes in her recipe book or utilised them in offerings of goodwill. Regional identity was as much about the intake of locally reared produce as it was the exploitation of the image of self-sufficiency and the bounteous country estate.

#### IV

When Arthur Young made his visit to Wentworth Woodhouse in the early 1770s, he was enthused by the Marquis of Rockingham's agricultural innovations

<sup>115</sup> Horsham, Machell Ingram MSS, bills and receipts under 4057.25, 4057.87, and 4057.161 have examples of these lists containing fish and seafoods.

<sup>116</sup> TN/EA 14/13. Housekeeping accounts, 1758-1764.

<sup>117</sup> C. Anne Wilson, *Food and Drink*, p. 55.

<sup>118</sup> Alan Davidson cites Hannah Glasse who had three recipes for salmagundi, but it was basically a salad dish made with chopped meats, anchovies, eggs, and anything else thought suitable to the overall flavour. pp.820-821, it was also another dish of French origin – Salmigundis – which was eventually anglicised to Solomon Gundie. *Companion to Food*, pp.820-821. Anchovies also appear amongst a large bill from the 1720s, TN/EA 12/14 Travelling expenses, chiefly servant expenses, 1669-1776. No measure is given but they cost 5d and are listed with several sundry items such as foodstuffs, charring and repairs.

<sup>119</sup> Carlisle MSS, *Receipts*, see recipes pp. 62, 90, 63 and 77.



and improvements, particularly in the unrefined and earthy 'management of composts' utilised upon the estate. Surveying the land about him and the monuments which dotted the park he added without a pause, '[there is] a small but very neat room, looking down upon a beautiful valley, and over a fine and extensive prospect, where Lady Rockingham sometimes drinks tea.'<sup>120</sup>

Much has been said about the role of tea in the domestic setting and the feminisation of routine surrounding tea-drinking. Peter Brown has asserted that by 1685 tea-drinking was firmly established as a medium for social discourse. Berg has stated that such discourse was generally presided over by women who made and served the drink amongst an atmosphere dictated by courtesy and 'informal familial activity'.<sup>121</sup> Adshead's study on the position of China in world history has declared the very practice of drinking tea in England to be an almost entirely feminine one, in contrast to the male space of the coffee house. Between 1720 and 1800 when the annual import rose, tea-drinking became a social accomplishment – a culture which demanded its own room, time and clothes as well as imposing its own pattern of behaviour and its own set of social skills.<sup>122</sup>

Central to the discussion of tea-drinking was this role in daily ritual as a domestic event and one which easily embraced feminine civility, virtue and the presupposition for private activity. Influenced by a Foucauldian reading of the 'disciplined' body, Kowaleski-Wallace has emphasised the physical manipulation of this environment by the household mistress through the motion of consumer goods like tea equipage, but also the direct interaction with colours and aromas.<sup>123</sup> Thus, the tea room at Wentworth Woodhouse became associated with Mary in name – Lady Rockingham's

<sup>120</sup> Young, *Six Months Tour*, p. 177.

<sup>121</sup> Peter B. Brown. *In Praise of Hot Liquors: The Study of Chocolate, Coffee and Tea-Drinking 1600-1850* (Fairfax House, York, 1995), p. 55; Berg, *Luxury*, p.232; Lorna Weatherill, 'The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour in Late Seventeenth- and Early Eighteenth-Century England, in (Eds.) John Brewer and Roy Porter (Eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (1993), pp.214-215; Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1996), pp.19-36.

<sup>122</sup> S. A. M. Adshead, *China in World History* (New York, 1988), pp.288-290. Interestingly, Adshead remarked that by the dawning of the nineteenth century and as a result of industrialisation, Yorkshire was one of the main exponents of tea because it was more sociologically advanced than Lancashire, although the people of both counties were in need of early evening refreshment due to that part of the country's inclement weather!

<sup>123</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, pp.25-27; Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York, 1979); see also (Eds.) C. Jones and R. Porter, *Reassessing Foucault: Power, Medicine, and the Body* (1993).

Tea Room. But it was to be imbued with the proprieties of social ritual as expressions of feminine accomplishment and personal taste which in turn supported desires for the fashionable commodities which heightened the pleasure of taking tea.

Yet, as a luxury commodity, tea, and by extension the culture of tea-drinking, epitomised extravagance in many ways. It was associated with delicate feminine accomplishment and the private domestic space and represented the impulsive and superficial responses elite women in particular were supposed to have as consumers. The ritual of tea-drinking demanded a portion of time in the day which would be both unproductive and private because it did not involve the non-kin members of the household. By excluding these members, the elite woman was making a statement on her personal expenditure through the misuse of domestic space for the pleasure she derived from amusements embodied in material goods rather than her household community. Her lack of productivity – even as an administrative presence – enabled her to act frivolously amongst family and close friends with whom she could chat idly about domestic duties rather than in the performance of such responsibilities.

Tea-drinking allowed for the disruptive presence of female friends especially; and it is worth remembering that their collective haughtiness and complacency threatened domestic peace according to Isabella Carlisle in her *Maxims*. Kowaleski-Wallace has highlighted some of the eighteenth-century publications which sought to satirise female conversation at the tea-table, most of which put special emphasis on the elite woman and her social circle. Eliza Haywood noted the sarcasm of women that had tainted topics of conversation, ‘Scandal, and Ridicule seem here to reign with uncontented [sic] sway, but rarely suffer the intrusion of any other themes.’<sup>124</sup> Elite women were overwhelmed with a desire to compete against each other, to be destructive rather than nurturing and supportive, and tea was the chemical substance which aided the exposure of these most abhorrent characteristics.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Eliza Haywood, *The Tea Table, or A Conversation Between Some Polite Persons of Both Sexes at a Lady's Visiting Day* (1725), p. 1.

<sup>125</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, p. 30. She also quoted from Edward Young whose poem ‘Love of Fame, the Universal Passion’ presented women as vicious creatures who could not exist without the daily ritual of scandal and gossip.

Eliza Haywood as the editor of *The Female Spectator* was concerned far more with the influences of tea-drinking on socio-economic situations and suggested that tea perverted female taste. The consumption of this luxury commodity was the 'utter Destruction of all Œconomy – the Bane of good housewifery – and the Source of Idleness, by engrossing those Hours which ought to be employed in honest and prudent Endeavour to add to, or preserve what Fortune, or former Industry has bestowed.'<sup>126</sup> Within the dynamics of the household tea was considered an instrument for an encroaching weakness in female principles. The argument for tea-drinking interpreted the act as refined and sociable, but those against tea viewed it as something potent, and as a substance which governed women's appetites, distracted them from their domestic duties and reinforced their propensity towards immodest behaviour and sensuality.

Hanway wrote an essay on tea as part of his *A Journal of Eight Days Journey* (1757) in which he implied that tea was at the heart of a decaying wise, active and warlike English society. Tea emasculated society by its cultural origin, substance and methods of preparation and ritual participation.<sup>127</sup> Elite women were part of this decaying process because they were ignorant of their wet-nurses' tea consumption.<sup>128</sup> One of the main criticisms presented by Frances Robinson over her nurse Polly's neglectful behaviour included the maid's tendency to spend all her wages on tea and tobacco. One of Frances's sister commented that this was surely a bad thing for a nursery, but more serious discourse against tea suggested that children were left malnourished, not to mention the cost to family resources.

The elite woman was also criticised on deeper moral grounds which related to the trading of luxury goods like tea, chocolate, coffee, and sugar since her uncontrollable appetite could not be restrained by the growing concerns for anti-slavery.<sup>129</sup> The elite household mistress was recognised as both domestically unfit and vacuous on the grounds that by consuming luxury goods she had abandoned her

<sup>126</sup> (Ed.) Eliza Haywood, *The Female Spectator*, four volumes (1745), volume two, p. 96.

<sup>127</sup> Jonas Hanway, 'An Essay on Tea,' pp.17 and 189; Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, pp.30-34, who has cited John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore, 1977).

<sup>128</sup> Hanway, 'An Essay on Tea,' pp.50-55. Also Ruth Perry, 'Colonizing the Breast: Sexuality and Maternity in Eighteenth-Century England,' in (Ed.) J. C. Fout, *Forbidden History: The State, Society and the Regulation of Sexuality in Modern Europe. Essays from the Journal of the History of Sexuality* (Chicago, 1992), pp.107-137.

<sup>129</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, her chapter on sugar, pp.37-51.

dependents on a social and international scale. The tea-table was an isolated apparatus which enabled the mistress to maintain direct control over social interaction within a smaller dimension. Mary Rockingham's tea room was the symbol of this isolation in the Yorkshire country house since it was the continuation of the house as realised in brick and organic matter but was significantly placed away from the main building. By physically withdrawing from the rest of the household in this way, elite women like Mary showed themselves to be playful and self-absorbed creatures who mimicked the intricate machinery of vital household processes involved in provisioning.<sup>130</sup>

A critical stance such as this suggests that elite women were exploiting their households in order to project themselves as sophisticated beings rather than the humble, nurturing and modest types that authors of conduct would hope they could become. However, the chatelaine rarely intended to provide tea and other luxury foodstuffs for the household but fully expected to purchase these goods with their own pin-money; a gesture which established a more positive image of tea consumption in the elite household. At Wentworth Woodhouse, tea was accounted for within the housekeeper's book of stores alongside coffee and chocolate until July 1773. Its expense and therefore its luxurious status was hinted at through its limited accessibility; something which did not stop the crooked Mrs Broughton when she was accused of stealing eleven and a half pounds of common green tea upon her dismissal.<sup>131</sup>

Another luxury commodity – sugar – was listed in household account books in larger quantities which were clearly destined for the kitchen for example, but personal accounts, bills and receipts detailed smaller amounts alongside tea intended to be kept under lock and key in a lady's private apartments. Figure 6.7 shows a receipt addressed to Frances Irwin in 1763 which contained several luxury commodities like 4lbs of green tea, 6lbs of fine green tea, 4lbs of chocolate and a quarter of a pound each of nutmeg and mace. Single and double refined sugar came in the biggest quantities suggesting Frances was keen to have housekeeping stores well-stocked as these were an essential ingredient for preserves and sweets. Isabella Carlisle had several recipes which

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>131</sup> WWM A-1365. Housekeeper's Book of Stores.

required plenty of sugar – usually a pound or half a pound of double refined sugar – especially in those for a pineapple preserve and a syllabub.<sup>132</sup>

Indeed, the use of sugar as a sweetener in food as well as at the tea-table was indicative of personal taste but also had semiotic meaning in the ‘sweetness’ of femininity and female sexuality.<sup>133</sup> Sugary essences were connected to the domestic setting and female production in the household like making preserves or confectionery – acceptable housekeeping activities still being undertaken by many elite women at the beginning of the century. As Mintz has pointed out, sugar was firmly connected with hot drinks and all became known in Britain at approximately the same time.<sup>134</sup> Yet, Dr Frederick Slare writing in 1715, as cited by Mintz, readily accepted women to become ‘Patronesses of the Fair SUGAR’ because they were, according to him, more liberal in its uses.<sup>135</sup> John Oldmixon, a contemporary of Slare wrote, ‘[without it] the finest Pastries could not be made nor the rich Cordials that are in the Ladies’ Closets, nor their Conserves...’<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Carlisle MSS *Receipts*, ‘to preserve pineapples’, p128, and ‘to make sillibubs [sic]’, p. 131

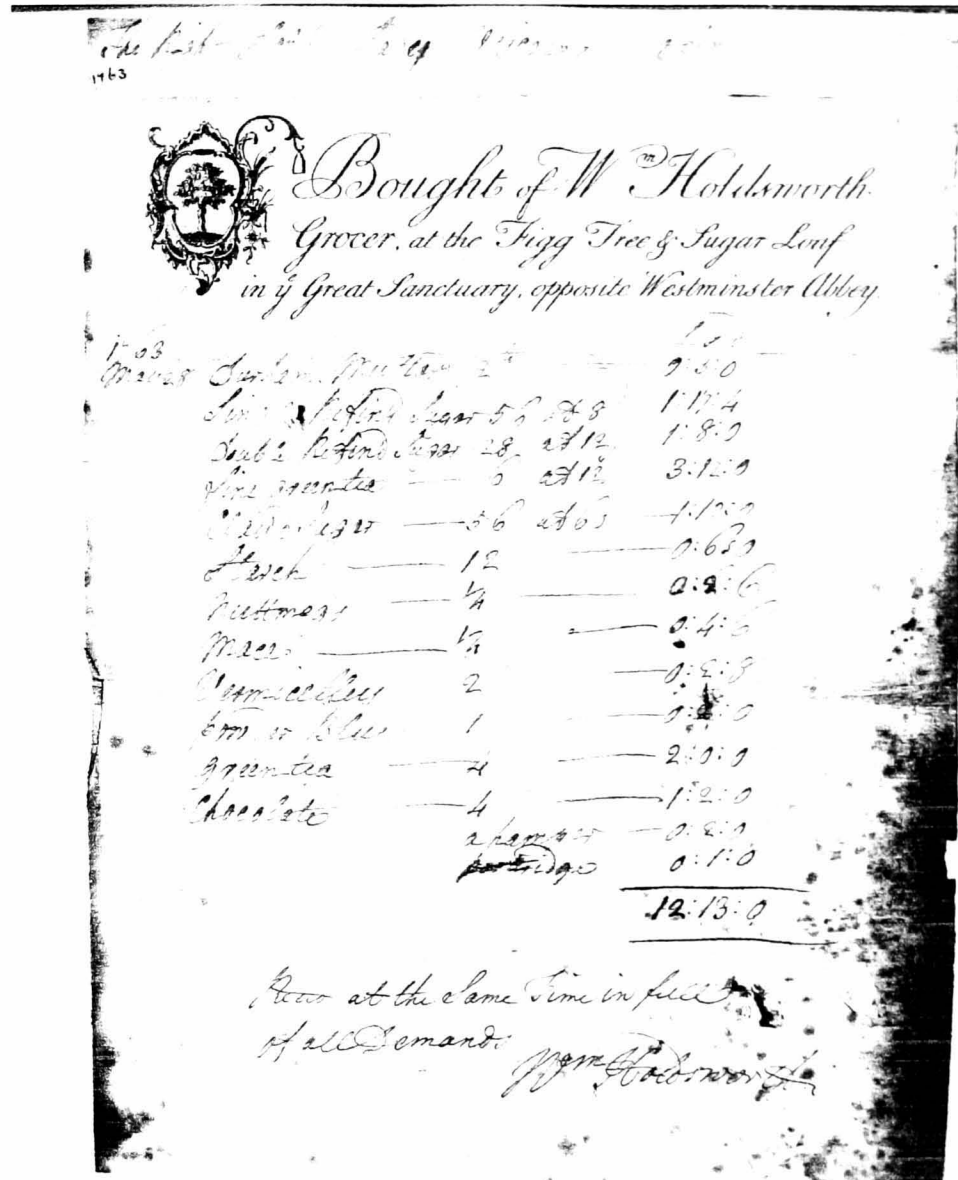
<sup>133</sup> Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, pp.40-41.

<sup>134</sup> Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (1985), p. 109.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.106-108 Mintz has also highlighted the way in which Slare had simultaneously reported on the success of sugar while attracting additional attention to it. ‘I will refer the reader to the Confectioner’s shop, or the Stores for Sweet-meats in the Places of the Rich. or rather to a Banquet. or Dessert serv’d up at generous feast, with the Encomium of Eloquent ladies at the End of a Treat...’

<sup>136</sup> Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, p. 109.

**Figure 6.7. Bill from William Holdsworth made out to Frances Irwin, 1763. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/12/1 – unnumbered.**




Frances Irwin invariably conveyed a particularly sweet tooth and was regularly supplied with goods deemed suitable accompaniment for the tea-table like macaroons, sugar almonds or dragées, as well as fruits, iced creams and savoury delicacies from London traders across Covent Garden and The Haymarket (figure 6.8).<sup>137</sup>

<sup>137</sup> TN EA/12/1. Housekeeping. See especially receipts and bills for Frederick Kuhff, in bundles for dates 1756, 1759, 1760 and 1773; grocery bills from William Holdsworth near Westminster Abbey, 1759, 1761 and 1763; John Roades throughout the 1780s, based further east at Tower Hill; and also J. Barrett, in St. James's, Haymarket, for dates 1760 and 1764.

Figure 6.8. Frederick Kuhff bills, confectioner, Haymarket, London. West Yorkshire Archive Service, Sheepscar, Leeds. WYL 100/TN/EA/12/1 - unnumbered.

Miss Shepherd


 Bought of Frederick Kuhff  
Confectioner & Bisket Maker  
to Her Royal Highness Princess Dowager of Wales  
at the Royal Biskets in the Hay Market

1758

June 28	1 Pint of plain Cream	in Dec	0 2 0
	1/2 lb of Pistachio Nuts		0 1 3
	1/2 lb of Macaroons		0 0 4
July 15	1 Pint of plain Cream	in Dec	0 2 0
July 21	1 Pint of plain Cream	in Dec	0 2 0
August 1	1 Pint of plain Cream	in Dec	0 2 0
	1/2 lb of Savoy Biscuits		0 1 3
	1/2 lb of Macaroons		0 0 8
16	1 Pint of plain Cream	in Dec	0 2 0
Recd the above in full			0 13 6

by W. W. G. G. G.

Charles Ingram Esq

 Bought of Frederick Kuhff  
Confectioner & Bisket Maker  
to Her Royal Highness Princess Dowager of Wales  
at the Royal Biskets in the Hay Market

1760

March 15	1 Pint of Raspberry Cream	in Dec	0 2 6
	1 Pint of plain Cream		0 2 0
12	1 Pint of Raspberry Cream	in Dec	0 2 6
	1 Pint of plain Cream		0 2 0
19	1/2 lb of Pistachio Nuts		0 1 3
	1/2 lb of Sprung Biscuits		0 0 4
27	1/2 lb of Savoy Biscuits		0 1 3
April 19	1/2 lb of Pistachio Nuts		0 1 3
	1/2 lb of Sprung Biscuits		0 0 4
May 10	1/2 lb of Sprung Biscuits		0 1 3
16	Received the full Contents of this bill & all demands for the use of Mr Kuhff		0 14 0

by me G. G. G. G.

She made a good choice according to Dr. Trusler who recounted his experience of London produce and wares as something clearly despicable in *The London Adviser and Guide* (1786), 'persons used to the country...will not relish the vegetables and fruit generally sold in London' and he recommended they should make some arrangement with a market gardener or go to Covent Garden where the prices might be high but the

quality was on the whole far more satisfactory.<sup>138</sup> Crucially, Frances ordered from the same traders of confectionery for most of her life, before and after marriage. Frederick Kuhff was her main supplier in the Haymarket, followed closely by Negri and Wetten in Berkeley Square. The importance of hot drinks and sugar as attractive and luxurious commodities were even established in their shop names such as The Pot and Pineapple, The Fig Tree and Sugar Loaf, The Green Canister and Two Sugar Loaves, or The Three Sugar Loaves. The latter proved that exotic goods were readily available outside London since it was the name of a grocer and confectioner situated in Stonegate, York.

Knowledge of who sold the best quality tea, sugar or exotic and novelty foodstuffs was very much a part of an elite woman's personal identity and taste. It also complemented the more culinary creativity and traditional female practice of collecting recipes. The consumption of tea depended on the commercial ability of companies and a reliable trading base, plus the market upon which the goods could be sold. This also applied to sugar, citrus juices and spices used in flavouring tea throughout the period.<sup>139</sup>

As their surviving documents show, the elite women of this study purchased many tea related items as well as quantities of tea, and showed great interest in its origin, use and flavour. Treatises on specific foods and drinks, for example, were casually sought after by several elite women. Isabella Irwin could easily have put her ninety-four years down to a lifetime of varied tea-drinking. So much was her fascination with this hot liquor she requested that the Temple Newsam steward John Roades find J. Ovington's *An Essay upon the Nature and Qualities of Tea* (figure 6.9) in September 1704.<sup>140</sup>

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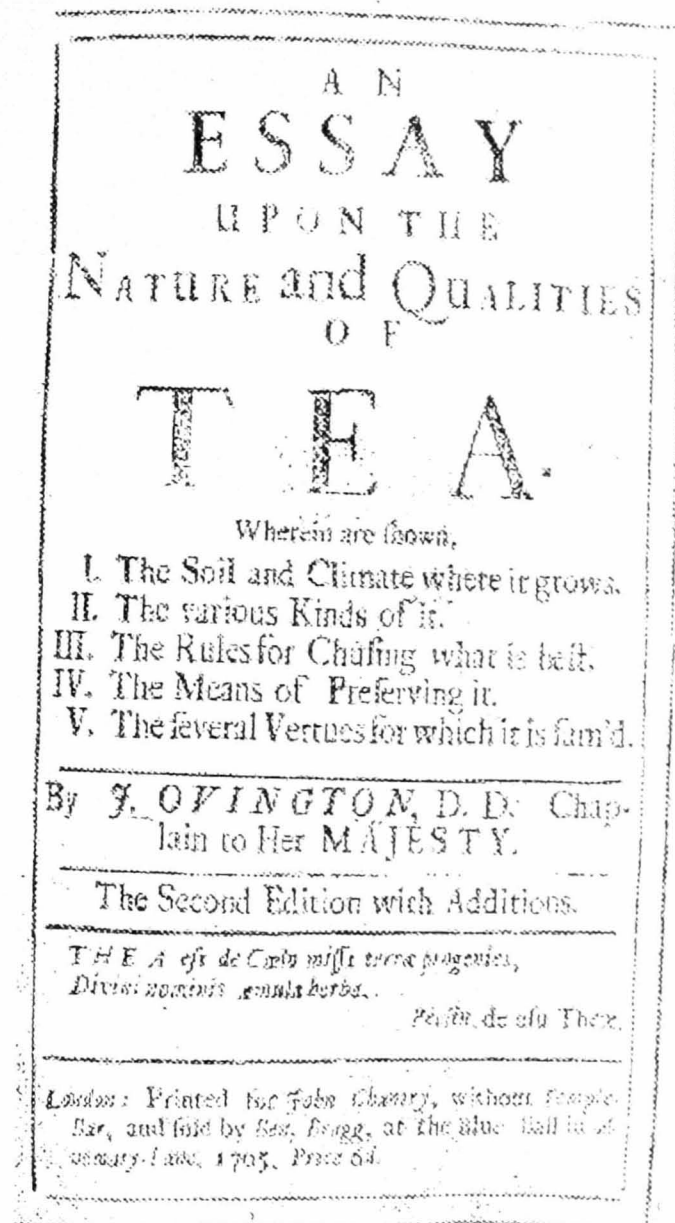
<sup>138</sup> J. C Drummond and Anne Wilbraham, *The Englishman's Food: A History of Five Centuries of English Diet* (1939), p. 192.

<sup>139</sup> Peter B. Brown, *Hot Liquors*, p. 59.

<sup>140</sup> TN/C/9 Isabella Irwin to John Roades, September 1704.



Figure 6.9. Title-page for J. Ovington's *An Essay upon the Nature and Qualities of Tea* (1704), (Eighteenth Century Catalogue Online).



Peter Brown's study into the consumption and social etiquette surrounding tea and hot drinks noted the great quantities being imported from China throughout this period. The most expensive teas used the younger leaves of the tea bush, whereas the cheapest varieties were the larger, coarser leaves.<sup>141</sup> Many tea drinkers like Isabella Irwin consumed most varieties of tea. Their accounts showed how these were sub-divided into green tea (unfermented) and black tea (fermented); Heyson (or Hyson) and Bohea teas proved most popular with the elite women of this study as much as coffee and chocolate.<sup>142</sup> Household members who were absent from the estate were often

<sup>141</sup> Peter B. Brown, *Hot Liquors* (1995), p. 55.

<sup>142</sup> See for example bills and receipts for Frances Irwin and for Isabella Irwin, TN EA/12/1 Housekeeping, 1600-1789; also WWM A-1380, Memoranda Book.

asked to bring back specific luxury goods on their return<sup>143</sup> and housekeepers might also have been told to enquire after stockists of tea or certain spices and sweets at the request of their mistress. While still in office, a note from Elizabeth Broughton for Mary Rockingham showed Twinings could be contacted at 'Deverent and Passgrave Head Court, Temple Bar, London' in April 1772.<sup>144</sup>

As consumers, the elite women of this study left subtle hints toward their personal taste, and by extension identities which were unintentionally formed upon cosmopolitan or slightly more provincial appreciation. All women sought goods from the Capital between the fashionable London seasons, or sourced their favourite products whilst paying a visit to Bath, but some preferred to implement recipes of their own as well as those exchanged between friends and acquaintances wherever the occasion arose. The utilisation of the tea-table as a symbol of this type of identity highlights the consumer desires of the elite mistress. The cosmopolitan could be juxtaposed with the provincial through purchase and eventual use of a commodity so that something tasted in London became a part of the rural domestic setting. Mary Rockingham's isolated tea room in the park of Wentworth Woodhouse accommodated the luxurious but was embraced by the country estate. Moreover, this personal identity was based implicitly upon the act of making and serving tea and other hot drinks alongside delicate confectionery items which the mistress had independently researched the market for in order to suit her own preferences.

By the end of the century, elite women were asserting their personal identities through the consumption of luxury commodities in a different way and one where the domestic setting was very much a space for recognising political ability. Emphasis has been placed upon the sugar boycotts of 1792, and it has been argued by Charlotte Sussman that the literate woman knew how to manipulate the dynamics of domesticity which could be regulated by 'keeping its contents separate from the economic dynamics of colonial trade.'<sup>145</sup> Elite women tea-drinkers were far from idle,

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<sup>143</sup> NP A4/1532 Personal papers of Sabine Winn (French), 1760s-1790s; and 5A/8 Personal business and commissions, 1760s-1790s.

<sup>144</sup> WWM A-1380. Thomas Twining opened the first Tea Shop for Ladies in 1717.

<sup>145</sup> Charlotte Sussman, 'Women and the Politics of Sugar, 1792', *Representations* (1994), 48:65, as cited in Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, pp.41-42. See Sussman, *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protest, Gender and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford, California, 2000); See also, Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834* (New York, 1992), and Clare

domestically unfit or vacuous, but showed themselves to be active consumers who eagerly purchased goods outside the domestic sphere. This meant that they were capable of manipulating the consumer processes of the household due to necessity, hierarchies of space and value, where luxury foodstuffs were supplementary to wider household consumption. Sussman's observation of the role upper-class women had in boycotting a section of imported goods also signified that women were aware of their consumer power in relation to the household.

The elite women of this study were undoubtedly fond of their tea and other consumables associated with tea-drinking. Yet, all women were aware of the distinctions which connected necessity to expenditure from the domestic account and luxury to expenditure from their own pocket. Family resources as realised through funds in this way were not affected by individual purchases of fashionable or extravagant goods so long as the mistress knew how far her pin-money would stretch to accommodate these purchases. However, criticisms which employed notions of the misuse of family resources frequently directed their attack away from actual financial activity and more towards the social impact of luxury rituals like tea-drinking within the household. Children were left unsupervised by their nursemaids, the milk of the wet-nurse was tainted, and elite women freed themselves of the burden of management to flatter themselves and update each other on the scandals at court.

There was little defence for the elite woman here. Frances Robinson's nursemaid was proof enough of the anxieties felt surrounding the neglect of children due to the susceptibility toward luxury in servants. Scandal or scurrilous antics involving other members of the elite (usually other females) abounded in women's correspondence, and the 'loquacity which rendered women such unsupportable companions', as Lady Sarah Pennington claimed was a compulsory pursuit when taking tea. What was fundamental to this criticism was the misapplication of time and unproductive use of the domestic space which excluded non-kin members of the household. Segregation may well have been founded upon a desire for privacy, but the women of this study were always guided by their communities and performed the necessary duties for well-oiled households. The luxury of unnecessary ritual was

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Midgley, *Women Against Slavery: The British Campaigns, 1780-1870* (1992). Kowaleski-Wallace has given an overview of this argument in her chapter on sugar in *Consuming Subjects*, pp.37-51.

therefore isolated and private because it was never intended to be part of household management and existed not as an oppositional activity but one which initiated hospitality on a much smaller scale.

## V

The luxury of the age was a notion which comfortably embraced eighteenth-century food and drink consumption. It indicated a conscious awareness of cultural development in the form of importation of exciting produce, of expensive tableware, and of updated and modernised eating spaces. Together these transformed the experiences of the entire household in most aspects of the culinary department of the country house. Goods such as tea were demanding new daily rituals to be practiced that reflected a desire for simple refreshment rather than a need for nourishment. The tea-table became the apparatus for playful and informal gatherings, and for the elite woman was enhanced through sugary additions to the tea-time offerings. Sugar for the tea was supplemented with biscuits and cakes, the last, of course, being assisted in its display by the shimmering silver cake slice.

The personal gathering of kin positioned around the tea-table with the mistress at the helm excluded the rest of the household on the basis of expense as well as establishing an independent role for the mistress as hostess amongst her family group. To this extent, it mirrored the grander entertainments where femininity formed the main component of country house hospitality and where food became the signifier of the female as provider. The ordering of an elegant table then became an expression of identities through which the mistress could explore flavours, nutritional values of foods like meaty produce from the estate, and the accessibility of foodstuffs which were significant to the diet or merely supplemented it. She could also prove to be a shrewd hostess by plying her guests with exotic home-grown produce in order to exact control over their political beliefs.

At the tea-table, the woman served and made the drinks, at the dining-table she instigated conversation over dishes she had planned with her cook. In both instances, she was in control of who attended. This has been reinforced by Douglas and Isherwood who asserted the notion of food as a female concern. They have suggested

that different patterns of consumption were defined by spatial occupation in which a woman occupied herself with household needs first and secondly by the home as a place of displaying to those she 'invites into her house, what parts of the house she makes available to outsiders, how often, what she offers them for food, drink and conversation...' <sup>146</sup> The hospitality of the country house ranged from the informality generated from private domestic space like the with-drawing room, to the formality of large public spaces of hall, salon and dining-room. In each case, the elite mistress presided over the sensual aspects of eating and drinking such as smell, taste and texture which in turn would hopefully be complemented by the sight and sounds of social interaction.

The sensuality of eating and drinking operated on two other levels in the country house in which the chatelaine could be viewed as either manipulative and competitive, or more appropriately as provider and attentive hostess. The tea-table was the setting for female sensuality because it was where the elite woman displayed her personal taste in pleasurable surroundings. Yet, this triggered criticism which set out to highlight her voracious appetite for all things luxurious, wasteful and extravagant. This was an aggressive sensuality which was heightened by the notion that women could only converse at the tea-table about sexual scandal or compete over fashionable frivolities like dress and tableware. The modern-day spectator of such sexual distinction must be made aware at this point of the tea-time rituals in the workplace which are often accompanied by glossy magazines full of celebrity scandal, diet fads and fashionable attire – all have been assimilated to some constant female predilection for the fripperies of society.

A more suitable form of sensuality which connected the elite mistress to her table was the embodiment of bounteousness and the country estate. This was not an aggressive sensuality nor did it represent the consumer desires of the mistress as impulsive and superficial. This was because the sensuality of the country was established through greater social codes of hospitality – of giving and receiving – and unlike the tea-table permitted greater involvement from the entire household. It was therefore purposeful and productive and allowed the elite woman to respond in her managerial

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<sup>146</sup> Douglas and Isherwood, *The World of Goods*, p. 37. Also Amanda Vickery 'Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions', in (Eds.) Brewer and Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods*, p. 277.

role as provider and nurturer as well as project her capabilities as hostess and intelligent conversationalist.

In ordering an elegant table the mistress of a large household had to be responsive to the industry of the culinary department, so that hospitality was consequently the combination of managerial creativity and domestic labour. The luxury of the age therefore proved to be as demanding as it was stimulating for the mistress of the Yorkshire country house. It was about finding the right cook and efficient kitchen staff who understood frugality; a keenness to have kitchen supplies maintained; plus communicating ideas on specific flavours and ingredients. This sort of interaction was further influenced by the bricks and mortar of country house architecture which either excluded the diplomacy and organisational role of a mistress like at Hovingham Hall or was in fact shaped by her authority, as at Temple Newsam. As food was believed to be the main source of a woman's power in the household, the elite woman was clearly well situated for the role of charming hostess as well as inventive wife.

## Conclusion

Household management for the eighteenth-century elite woman was an expression of power in the domestic sphere. Here she exercised the command, control and coordination of groups of people as well as those in charge of household departments like the housekeeper or steward. Her gendered role was governed by the presupposition that she was expected to attend to homely pursuits. Her status required her to be the supportive but resourceful spouse who understood the value of the household as a community. Thus, she was governed by both a sense of domestic duty and by social responsibility in which she had to project self-assurance and remain astute.

The definition of the household as an active community with its organic matter and interdependence was an image readily evoked by many. The larger the household unit, the more complex this business was to run and her management skills could be tested to the limit especially when particular members of the community, whether staff or kin, represented long-term problems. Isabella Dowager Countess of Carlisle in her *Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on their First Establishment in the World* (1789) likened the household to a mechanical device such as a timepiece with 'secret springs'. She identified the household (the organic matter) as the cogs and internal bits and pieces essential for a structural process which continued the external fluidity of what she determined as tranquil domesticity. Hester Chapone repeated the sentiments of early conduct authors such as John Dod, Robert Cleaver and William Gouge by comparing it with a form of organised society or State – a polity perhaps – by describing the household as a godly commonwealth.<sup>1</sup> Management was therefore constructed upon degrees of organisation, prioritisation and administration. Elite women did not run their households by getting their hands dirty, but neither did they commit themselves with unrelenting observation and assessment.

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (1774), p. 71. Susan Dwyer Amussen highlighted this analogy between the household and the State as being a tool for representing authority and the enforcement of it, but it should be recalled that this also limited the individual within the State rather than at those head of this organised society. *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford, 1988), pp.36-39. Chapone's use of 'commonwealth' however, was rather more in tune with thoughts on managerial deftness of a large number of people.

Yet, elite women were criticised as being self-absorbed and lazy creatures that were influenced by luxury which was neither modern nor refined. It was instead embodied in their appetites for unnecessary wares or foodstuffs and their playful attitudes towards daily routines which pulled them away from their domestic duties and into private drawing rooms. They were believed to be detaching themselves from the nurturing processes deemed so fundamental to performing homely pursuits, and instead seeking frivolity whilst their servants attended to the needs of the kitchen, laundry and nursery. In order for her to maintain this lifestyle of indolence surrounded by cooks, maids, her housekeeper and steward, the eighteenth-century elite woman eschewed her abstract feminine qualities such as humility, modesty and virtue. They did not befit the whimsical approach she supposedly had towards household order where she could gesture dismissively for refreshment or for her offspring's wet-nurse. Her role in marriage was to merely furnish her husband with more land and an heir to his estate. Her femininity was a contrived mixture of pathetic accomplishments in petty needlework exercises or obtrusive visits to friends and acquaintances.

These criticisms were valid in so far as describing a shift from creative housekeeping to that of an administrative role for the elite mistress which was affected by a widespread desire for privacy. Yet, criticisms of elite women as idle and frivolous must be revised. The managerial was replacing the practical; regulation and observation were replacing production and industry. Architectural remodelling or rebuilding reinforced this desire, but the elite mistress had not abandoned her household to the cold basements or draughty attics. In her role as manager she had to interact. It was about putting the domestic space to good use, and becoming motivated into preventing idleness, extravagance, waste and immorality within the community and within herself. Isabella Carlisle wrote that status was rather something to be pitied because it induced pride and haughtiness which in turn led those of a lower status to erroneous aspiration. The elite mistress had to set examples to her household and understand both the moral and physical well-being of the working environment in order for the secret springs to continue in their set motion.

Eighteenth-century household management was not only proclaimed to be a woman's province, but it was also her proper business. This term was indicative of professionalism as much as it was of dutiful behaviour symbolised by keys, pocket, bills,



receipts and correspondence. She communicated directly with the upper servants, kin, agents and professionals in order to achieve and maintain the smooth running of both the house and estate, and had to view herself as a vital component to a management partnership; as an employer and as spouse. Thus the mistress assessed the performance of her staff, demanded the satisfactory completion of work and observed the credit and debit of the estate including the disbursements made upon housekeeping. She had to be firm and confident. It was of no benefit to the household if she were either too meek or apathetic towards their needs. Of course, like Sabine Winn, such women existed and their household communities suffered, tending to splinter into groups which sought to support themselves rather than the managerial direction of their mistress.

A confident mistress was aware of the social structure of her marital home and made sense of the community mentality and its needs. In order to do this well, she first had to supervise the household accounts. She had to make assessments on the running costs of the household and purchases made from the estate or capital stock especially towards kitchen provisions, heating and lighting essentials, charities and wages. She observed price rises made by regular tradesmen or inflation, often noting a sense of personal injustice when this occurred, as Isabella Irwin had done in letters to her the Temple Newsam steward. Sabine Winn's mother Jeanne d'Hervart made the connection of efficient performance with confidence in this department by urging her daughter to interact. As Isabella Carlisle had suggested in her publication, it was justice to those who depended upon the mistress. Yet, Sabine failed in her role as manager and was rendered powerless because she lingered in her constant residency without purpose and realisation of how far her managerial position could take her. Sabine may simply have found herself in an impossible situation, where she encountered prejudices which had become deeply entrenched amongst her servants due to their mistress's foreign tongue. The mentality of such a household community was most certainly shaped by the ignorance of the few rather than the many. With the support of others, Sabine may have come to see the few as entirely expendable; but this led her to fear for her reputation as an inconsistent employer.

The organisational skill of the mistress was certainly influenced by reputation. The household were the moving parts and also the mobile parts of the domestic setting. Servants especially helped spread gossip as well as being viewed as a

major feature of a woman's managerial success or failure. Confidence in this instance would have enabled the elite woman to realise the leverage she had in hiring and firing non-kin members of the household once their immoral behaviour had become utterly incurable. On the one hand, an elite mistress had to be an active source of authority. She had to be instrumental in helping to promote the good of the family and estate ensuring its prosperity, security and resources were safely entrusted to the next generation. The servant portion of her household had to meet specific criteria which formed vital elements of continuity. So it was crucial for her to understand what personalities, mannerisms and appearances suited the requirements of the existing community. On the other hand, a mistress who proved far too confident could ruin her own reputation if she boasted about her managerial prowess. Isabella Carlisle warned, 'A good manager, and a notable woman, proves but too often to be a very unpleasant being in society' should she discuss her domestic matters outside their own sphere. A good mistress also stood for discretion.

Discretion applied to how a 'notable woman' would interact inside and outside the domestic sphere, and formed part of the social code under which she performed and portrayed herself to others. She had to conceal household mechanics from anyone who might be apathetic and she could not run to her husband with complaints when his interests were in no way domestically orientated. Judith Drake's *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex* (1696) made a bold statement in regard to the male attitude towards domestic affairs which became a contrivance because men neither understood the value nor the cost of regulating, ordering and governing. Without the care of women in the household, wrote Drake, 'their Houses wou'd be meer *Bedlams*; their most luxurious Treats, but a rude Confusion of ill digested, ill mix'd Scents and Relishes... Thus they are beholden to us for the comfortable Enjoyment of what their Labour or good Fortune hath acquir'd...' <sup>2</sup> This was certainly true of many men who, like Thomas Worsley, balked at the very idea of even discussing the housekeeper's wages, or those like Robert Walpole who would not hesitate to retrieve their daughters from their schooling in order to aid with housekeeping. Yet, the elite women of this study disregarded the advice for complete discretion and readily discussed the positive and

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<sup>2</sup> Judith Drake, *An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex*, (fourth edition, 1721) pp.76-77.

negative aspects of their managerial roles including provisioning, staffing and the nurturing of children with friends, close relatives and indeed, their husbands.

In the marital home, household management formed part of an elite woman's response to her domestic environment. Days filled with nonsensical letter-writing to counteract the boredom of a constant residency were considered a favourite pastime of an elite woman by her critics. Yet, this was an artificially constructed model of elite womanhood which could easily be challenged; she needed only to assess her worth as a household manager and establish herself in the community early on. She therefore responded on a social level first through the assessment of household finances and the organisation of large groups of people. This was also done on a moral level through observation of community cohesion and distinguishing between the triggers of immoral behaviour.

Not all responses to her marital home were this functional. The other ways in which she responded to her domestic environment were rather more indicative of individual expectation and what the elite woman would envisage as intrinsic to female duty in the home. Several elite women of this study identified their expected role in the household as manager or even superintendent – though these terms were not used outright. The language of domesticity which beckoned to women to find tranquillity, harmony and order in their households was instead projected through homely imagery. Pennington spoke of the unfashionable rusticity of domestic œconomy, as if the elite women would be repulsed by such activity and shun it forever.<sup>3</sup> Frances Irwin delighted in such archaic occupation when she referred to herself as a 'downright old fashioned country gentlewoman in an old worn out house'<sup>4</sup> in comparison to her close cosmopolitan friends who she labelled the 'fine folks'. Moreover, Frances Robinson made romantic allusions to domesticity with her husband to picturesque settings and quaint English tea-time rituals as part of an ordered daily routine. She prided herself on maintaining a dairy whilst commenting on the amazement of the local ladies who

<sup>3</sup> Lady Sarah Pennington, *Instructions for a Young Lady in every Sphere and Period of Life*. (1762), p. 31

<sup>4</sup> National Archives (formerly Public Record Office), Kew. (NA:PRO) Granville MSS, Leveson-Gower, first Earl Granville and predecessors and successors: Papers 30/29/4/2 papers of Lady Susan Stewart (from May 1768, Countess Gower; from March 1786, Marchioness Stafford). Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin). Frances to Lady Susan Stewart 'Thursday night' [c.1765]

wondered why she 'had not rather be in town playing at Cards than seeing of cowes milked in the Country.'<sup>5</sup>

However, the women of this study did not consider their managerial roles to be a playful element of the partnership of marriage. They managed the different departments of the marital home using a variety of techniques which best suited their own, personal capacities. Some kept summaries of accounts or their own personal pocket book which helped to supplement the more masculine weighty volumes found on shelves in the steward's room. Others noted disbursements with the housekeeper or monitored the direction of outgoings by viewing the household accounts and discussing them with upper servants and her husband. Some women chose the aid of professionals for medicinal welfare, whilst others delved into their compilation of recipes or consulted published works. The fulfilment of their managerial roles was a strong reflection of their backgrounds and influenced most prominently by financial circumstances in the parental home. Fluctuating or unsteady finances in the parental home probably persuaded them to show gumption and courage as managers of often large numbers of people. Moreover, their backgrounds were instrumental in forging attitudes towards country living, and how far they derived comfort or displayed hospitality from the domestic sphere as 'constant residents'.

The notion of a constant residency indicated some form of restraint for these women, as though they should have expected very little leverage in their marital homes or indeed any social interaction. Certainly, elite women endured extended periods in the country home when their husbands were absent on business, but they were not placed within a dimension which enforced idleness. Apart from spending time in London or Bath themselves, the nature of running the country house itself had altered. Practical and creative housekeeping was evolving into that of a more administrative role, but it was still an incredibly active position for the mistress.

By the end of the century, the importance of this role was not only judged by the power of the household mistress but by its quality as an academic subject. Women and young girls of high social ranking were not intermittently tutored by parents

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<sup>5</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS, Leeds) Newby Hall MSS (NH) NH 2826/9 no date, Frances Robinson, Vienna to Elizabeth Worsley.

or specialist servants in the ways of domestic œconomy, but were efficiently marched into classes on methodical household management. The old-fashioned 'œconomy' often kept its prefix of 'domestic' but it became thoroughly anglicised. Exercises in frugality, thriftiness and retrenchment were supplemented with 'high-class cooking', table arrangement and a knowledge of dress-making.<sup>6</sup> Conduct literature which had developed a more educative streak did little to offend traditional domestic ideologies and still recommended women support the morality and order of their homes. It was just as well that with domestic economy so high on the agenda when educating girls into the nineteenth century, they could consult any one of the growing number of publications dedicated to the subject. The most obvious was of course, Mrs Isabella Beeton's *Book of Household Management* (1861). It was not alone, and there was an array of publications like *Homely Hints on Household Management* (1862) by Clara Lucas Balfour, or the anonymously published *The English Housekeeper* (1851)<sup>7</sup>.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, old-fashioned 'housekeeping' was still in usage and identified the material culture of domestic management – the bills, accounts, collections of recipes, foodstuffs, hardware and the coins and bank notes put aside for relevant payments. Management was the action and process for obtaining these, ordering and circulating them. Such distinctions and definitions were precise; the pursuit of a domestic ideal by a middle and upper class also became more prominent and women were judged worthy females by their steady and life-long governance of their homes.<sup>8</sup> With her morality embellished with graceful bywords she became the 'angel in the house'; a paragon of womanhood.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Angela Holdsworth, *Out of the Doll's House: The Story of Women in the Twentieth Century*. (BBC Books, 1988), pp.39-59

<sup>7</sup> The full title exemplified the exact role of manager, with *The English Housekeeper or, Manual of domestic management: containing advice on the conduct of household affairs and practical instructions ... The whole being intended for the use of young ladies who undertake the superintendence of their own housekeeping*. Use of the British Library Catalogue proves that similar titles were being published throughout the nineteenth century, showing a further development in management and domestic rule that was aimed solely at women.

<sup>8</sup> Holdsworth, *Out of the Doll's House*, pp.15-38. She asserted that women of any rank were deeply entrenched in homely activities, 'they were born at home, married from home, nursed at home and died at home.'

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. This has also been stated by Olga Kenyon in *Eight Hundred Years of Women's Letters* (Stroud, 1992), pp.122-150.

**Appendix One: Table showing the type of documentation examined for this thesis.**

The following includes personal papers of each elite woman from the five main Yorkshire country houses discussed in this study and more general material. The supplementary material follows for Hovingham Hall, Newby Hall and Newby Park, Plompton Hall, and Ripley Castle

House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Castle Howard</u>	<b>Isabella Carlisle</b>	George Selwyn Frederick Howard (son) Julia Howard (daughter) Horace Walpole	None	Personal bound volume	Abstract of house accounts	None	Publication- <i>Thoughts in the Form of Maxims to Young Ladies on Their First Establishment in the World (1789)</i>
<u>Harewood House</u>	<b>Jane Fleming</b>	Samuel Popplewell (Lascelles' steward) Edwin Lascelles (husband)	None	Correspondence	None	None	Steward's vouchers Memoranda

House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Nostell Priory</u>	<b>Sabine Winn</b>	Sir Rowland Winn (husband)  Jeanne d'Hervart (mother)  Countess of DunDonald  Lydia Hudson  Elizabeth Cotton (haberdasher)  Mrs Nicholson (housekeeper)	Clothing and hardware	Personal papers  Bound volumes	None	None	Household accounts  Estate Ledgers  Wage books  Memoranda

House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and Receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Temple Newsam</u>	<b>Isabella Irwin</b>	John Roades (steward)	Housekeeping and Clothing  Hardware	Apothecary and doctors' bills	Bound volume	Draft 1750	Household accounts for Temple Newsam and for her Windsor house  Inventories
		Robert Hopkinson (steward)		Personal library			
		Family members (including all of her nine sons, her granddaughters and grandsons)		Correspondence			
		*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	<b>Frances Irwin</b>	Charles Ingram (husband)	Housekeeping and Clothing  Hardware	Apothecary and doctors' bills	None	Copy 1801	Household accounts  Steward's vouchers  Bank accounts
		Lady Susan Stewart		Personal library			
		John Waple					
		Samuel Keeling (steward)					
		Family members (including sisters-in-law)					



House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and Receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Wentworth</u> <u>Woodhouse</u>	<b>Mary Rockingham</b>	Husband-Charles Watson-Wentworth  Benjamin Hall	None	Personal papers  Personal library	None	None	Household accounts  Memoranda

Supplementary

House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and Receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Hovingham Hall</u>	<b>Anne Worsley</b>						
	<b>Elizabeth Worsley</b>	Frances Robinson (sister)	None	None	None	None	Memoranda
	<b>Mary Worsley</b>						
	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****
	<b>Mrs Elizabeth Worsley</b>	Ja. Seton (accountant/agent) William Schoolcroft K. Couse	None	None	None	None	General bills and estate and household receipts and vouchers

House	Household Mistress	Correspondence (recipient)	Bills and Receipts	Medicinal and Culinary	Personal Accounts	Wills	Other
<u>Newby Hall/Newby Park</u>	<b>Frances Robinson</b>	Anne/Elizabeth/Mary Worsley (sisters) Thomas Robinson (husband) Anne Dowager Lady Irwin	None	None	None	None	Household bills, receipts and vouchers  Inventories
<u>Plompton Hall</u>	<b>Lascelles property</b>	Samuel Popplewell Edwin Lascelles	None	Steward's Correspondence	None	None	Memoranda  Steward's vouchers
<u>Ripley Castle</u>	<b>Ingilby property</b>	None	Lady I. Amcotts (late 18 <sup>th</sup> century)	None	None	Margaret Ingilby, 23 Sept. - 1697	Inventories  Library contents

**Appendix Two: Biographical Index.**

The following are the main women included in the study. Each entry begins with the name(s) they preferred to use in everyday life and their correspondence. Also included are women who were key correspondents with the main women of this study and remained key characters for the realisation of how elite households were managed in the eighteenth century.

**CARLISLE, Isabella (née Byron).** (1721-1795) Daughter of William, fourth Lord Byron of Newstead Abbey. Isabella married Henry Howard (1694-1758), as his second wife, on 8 June 1743, aged twenty-two. She was mother to four girls and one son by this marriage. Remarried in 1759, to Sir William Musgrave, but they soon separated. She travelled to Europe, establishing herself mainly in France where she was said to have had an affair with a Baron de Weinheim (Monsieur Latcher).

**CONSTABLE, Mary (née Worsley).** Daughter of Thomas Worsley and his first wife Mary Frankland. She married Marmaduke Constable (c.1704-1762).

**FLEMING, Jane, Lady (née Coleman).** (1732-1813) Daughter of William Coleman. Jane married firstly, John Fleming of Brompton Park who was created Baronet in 1763. As a widow she married secondly, Edwin Lascelles in 1770 as his second wife. Jane brought her two daughters by her first marriage to Harewood, Jane and Dorothy Seymour Fleming. Although Lascelles was created Lord Harewood in 1790, she continued to retain her title of Lady Fleming rather than be known simply as Mrs Lascelles. She predeceased her second husband by eighteen years, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

**INGRAM, Isabella.** (1729-1762). Daughter of Colonel Charles Ingram and Elizabeth Scarborough. She married Fretchville Ramsden in 1761, but died in childbirth a year later. Isabella corresponded greatly with Frances Irwin, her sister-in-law; her letters were often full of very witty and intelligent observations of polite society.

**IRWIN, Anne, fifth Viscountess (née Howard).** (c.1696-1766). Daughter of Charles Howard, third Earl of Carlisle. Married firstly, Rich Ingram, Viscount Irwin in 1718, but

widowed in 1721. She remarried in 1737, to Colonel William Douglas. No children by either marriage.

**IRWIN, Anne, seventh Viscountess (née Scarborough).** (c.1699-1766). Daughter of Charles Scarborough of Windsor. Married Henry Ingram in 1728 and became Viscountess in 1736. Both Henry and Anne moved from Temple Newsam in 1758 to allow Charles and Frances (later ninth Viscount and Viscountess Irwin) to take up residency there, and established themselves at the other Ingram seat of Hills Place, Horsham, Sussex. Anne was widowed in 1761. No children.

**IRWIN, Frances, ninth Viscountess (née Shephard, Gibson).** (1734-1807) The illegitimate daughter and heir of Samuel Shephard, M.P. Her fortune included £60,000. She married Charles Ingram in August 1758 at the age of twenty-four, and became Viscountess in 1763. She was mother to five daughters all of whom were evidently good catches on the marriage market (the youngest, Louisa Susanna married Mary Rockingham's half brother Sir John Ramsden in 1787). Frances was widowed in 1778, but continued to take a profound interest in Temple Newsam until her own death in November 1807.

**IRWIN, Isabella, third Viscountess (née Machell).** (1670-1764) Daughter of John Machell of Hills, Horsham. She married Arthur Ingram in 1685 at the age of fifteen and became Viscountess in 1688. Her fortune included the Elizabethan house of Hills Place as well as the pocket borough of Horsham that returned two MPs to parliament. She was mother to nine sons, all of whom predeceased her. Isabella was widowed in 1702, but continued to live at Temple Newsam until the marriage of her second son Rich Ingram in 1718 when she moved to a house in Pound Street, Windsor until her death in 1764.

**ROBINSON, Frances, first Lady Grantham (née Worsley).** (1716-1750) The third daughter of Thomas Worsley of Hovingham Hall, and great-great granddaughter of Oliver Cromwell. Frances married Thomas Robinson (1695-1770) of Newby Park, (Secretary of State and Ambassador to Austria) in July 1737. Her fortune included about £5000. By 1739 they had firmly established themselves in Vienna by setting up home there. They returned to England nearly a decade later. She was mother to four daughters and two sons. She predeceased her husband by twenty years, dying at the age of thirty-four, probably of consumption.

**ROCKINGHAM, Mary, second Marchioness (née Bright).** (1735-1804). Daughter and heir of Thomas Bright. She married Charles Watson-Wentworth, second Marquis of Rockingham in 1752 at the age of sixteen. Her fortune included £60,000 and the estates of Badsworth and Ecclesall, near Sheffield. Mary was widowed in July 1782 but settled at Hillingdon House, near Uxbridge, Middlesex by 1785 until her death in 1804. The marriage was childless, but she left the bulk of her estate, including £10,000 to her step-sister Elizabeth, widow of William Weddell of Newby Hall.

**STAFFORD, Susan, first Marchioness (née Stewart).** (1742/3-1805). Daughter of Alexander Stewart, sixth Earl of Galloway. She married, as his third wife, Granville Leveson-Gower, second Earl Gower and later first Marquis of Stafford. As well as having four children of her own she showed immense affection towards those of her husband's previous marriages. Her later political differences put paid to a few of her early friendships, such as that with Mary Rockingham. She was one of Frances Irwin's greatest friends and their correspondence revealed a close bond from an early age, perhaps through the political connections of their fathers.

**WINN, Letitia, third Lady Winn.** (d.1722). Daughter of Sir William Harbord of Grafton Park, Northants. She married Rowland, third Baronet in 1702. Some of her documents still survive at Nostell Priory including a hard bound recipe book.

**WINN, Sabine, fifth Lady Winn (née d'Hervart).** (1734-1798). Daughter of Baron d'Hervart of Vevey, Switzerland. She married firstly Major Gabriel May in 1754. As a widow she married secondly Sir Rowland Winn, fifth Baronet in December 1761. Her fortune of around £70,000 was regarded in family correspondence as one of the few advantages she brought to the marriage. They lived firstly in London where both their children would later be born, one son and one daughter before moving to Badsworth in 1763 in a house lent to them by the Marquis of Rockingham. They eventually settled at Nostell Priory by 1765. Sabine outlived her husband by thirteen years and died in September 1798, probably from a protracted illness brought on by gout and obesity.

**WORSLEY, Anne (née Robinson).** Daughter of Sir William Robinson of Newby Park, and sister of Thomas Robinson (1695-1770). She was responsible for taking in the local

orphan, Elizabeth Lister at Hovingham Hall in the mid 1740s, and employing Elizabeth as maid to her youngest daughter.

**WORSLEY, Anne.** Daughter of Thomas Worsley and his second wife Anne Robinson. She married William Bastard of Kitley, Devon. A main correspondent of Frances Robinson, first Lady Grantham, her half sister.

**WORSLEY, Elizabeth.** Daughter of Thomas Worsley and his second wife Anne Robinson. She married William Stainforth. A main correspondent of Frances Robinson, first Lady Grantham, her half sister.

**WORSLEY, Mrs. Elizabeth (née Lister).** (c.1730-1809). Orphaned daughter of James Lister (later pedigrees described him as the Rev. J. Lister). She was taken in by Anne, the second wife of Thomas Worsley (1696-1750) and soon became maid to the family's youngest daughter, Nancy. Elizabeth was seduced by the eldest son, Thomas Worsley (1710-1778), a man twice her age and when she fell pregnant he refused to abandon her. They eventually married nine years later having had many children, most of whom died in childbirth.

**WORSLEY, Mary (née Frankland).** (d.1722). Daughter of Sir Thomas Frankland of Thirkleby, she married Thomas Worsley (1686-1750) in 1718. Her fortune included £4000. She predeceased her husband by twenty-eight years. She was mother to four children by this marriage. Thomas chose to remarry; his second wife was Anne Robinson of Newby Park.

**Appendix Three. Editions of conduct literature referred to in the text.**

Title.	Date of first edition.	Dates of subsequent editions.
Allestree, Richard. <i>The Ladies Calling ... By the author of the Whole Duty of Man</i> [Formerly attributed to Lady Pakington, or Archbishop Sterne].	1673	1693, 1720, 1787
Wolley, Hannah. <i>The Gentlewoman's Companion; or, a Guide to the Female Sex... Whereunto is added A Guide for Cookmaids.</i>	1675	1682
Savile, George, Marquis of Halifax. <i>The Lady's New Years Gift: or, Advice to a Daughter.</i>	1688	1696, 1724, 1734, 1741, 1752, 1765, 1791
Astell, Mary. <i>A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the advancement of their true and greatest interest ... By a Lover of her Sex.</i>	1694	1695, 1696, 1697
Anon. <i>Ladies Dictionary.</i>	1694	
de Lambert, Marchioness. <i>Advice of a mother to her daughter.</i> [Translated by Thomas Carte for 1727 edition.]	1696	1727, 1790
[Drake, Judith.] <i>An Essay in Defence of the Female Sex. In which are inserted characters of a pedant, a squire, a beau, a vertuoso, a poetaster, a city-critick, &amp;c. In a letter to a lady. Written by a lady</i>	1697	
Rogers, Timothy. <i>The Character of a Good Woman ... In a funeral discourse on Prov. 31. 10 ... occasion'd by the decease of Mrs. Elizabeth Dunton. With an account of her life and death; and part of the diary writ with her own hand, etc.</i>	1697	
Anon. <i>Accomplished Female Instructor: or, a Very Useful Companion for Ladies &amp;c.</i>	1704	
Brown, Thomas. <i>A Legacy for the Ladies, or, Characters of the women of the age. With a comical view of London and Westminster: or, the Merry Quack ... In two parts. The first part by Mr. Tho. Brown: the second part by Mr. Edw. Ward.</i>	1705	
[Allestree, Richard.] <i>The Whole Duty of Woman in Either a Single or Married State.</i>	1711	
Kenrick, William. <i>The Whole Duty of a Woman: or a guide to the female sex... Written by a Lady.</i>	1712	1739, 1793, 1797, 1807



[Berkeley, George.] <i>Ladies Library</i> . (Published by Richard Steele.)	1714	1722, 1732
Defoe, Daniel. <i>The Family Instructor</i> . In three parts. With a recommendatory letter by the Reverend Mr. S. Wright.	1715	1718, 1720, 1741, 1766, 1806
Essex, John. <i>The Young Ladies Conduct: or, Rules for Education...with Instructions Upon Dress ... and Advice to Young Wives</i> .	1722	
Anon. <i>Female piety and virtue</i> . A poem.	1725	
Singer-Rowe, Elizabeth. <i>Letters moral and entertaining, in prose and verse</i> . By the author of <i>Friendship in Death</i> . To which are added, ten letters by another hand.	1728-32	1733, 1755, 1756, 1768, 1784, 1797, 1814, 1827
Lyttelton, George. <i>Advice to a Lady</i> .	1733	1808
Anon. <i>Advice to the Fair: an epistolary essay, in three parts: on dress, converse, and marriage: address'd to a sister</i> . [In verse.]	1738	
Anon. <i>A Letter to a Lady in Praise of Female Learning</i> .	1739	1749
Munro, Alexander. <i>The professor's daughter: an essay on female conduct contained in letters from a father to his daughter</i> .	1739-45	
Anon. <i>The lady's companion: or, an infallible guide to the fair sex</i> . Containing, observations for their conduct thro' all ages and circumstances of life: in which are comprised all parts of good housewifry, particularly rules, and above two thousand different receipts in every kind of cookery.	1740	
Wilkes, Wetenhall. <i>A letter of genteel and moral advice to a young lady: being a system of rules and informations; digested into a new and familiar method, to qualify the fair sex to be useful, and happy in every scene of life</i> .	1740	1741, 1744, 1748, 1751, 1753, 1760, 1766
Anon. <i>The Art of Governing a Wife; with Rules for Batchelors</i> . To which is added an Essay against Unequal Marriages.	1742	1747
D'Ancourt, Abbé. <i>The Lady's Preceptor</i> . Or, a letter to a young lady of distinction upon politeness. Taken from the French of the Abbé D'Ancourt, and adapted	1743	

<i>to the religion, customs, and manners of the English nation. By a gentleman of Cambridge.</i>		
Moore, Edward. <i>Fables for the Female Sex.</i>	1744	1749, 1771, 1777, 1778, 1782, 1786, 1787, 1790, 1800, 1802, 1806, 1808
Seymour, Juliana-Susannah. <i>The Conduct of a Married Life. Laid down in a series of letters to a young lady, her relation, lately married.</i>	1753	1754
Marriott, Thomas. <i>Female Conduct, being an essay on the art of pleasing to be practised by the Fair Sex, before and after marriage. A poem in two books, etc.</i>	1759	1760, 1775
Pennington, Lady Sarah. <i>Instructions for a Young Lady in Every Sphere and Period of Life.</i>	1761	1766, 1767, 1770, 1784, 1786, 1790
Anon. <i>Friendly Advice to the Fair in Particular.</i>	1763	1790
[Allen, Charles.] <i>The Polite Lady: or, a Course of Female Education.</i>	c.1769	
Chapone, Hester. <i>Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady.</i>	1773	1777, 1801, 1802, 1804, 1806, 1811
Gregory, John. <i>A Father's Legacy to his Daughters.</i>	1774	1776, 1789, 1790, 1792, 1793, 1796, 1800, 1801, 1815, 1816, 1820
Fordyce, James. <i>The Character and Conduct of the Female Sex, and the Advantages to be Derived by Young Men from the Society of Virtuous Women ... A Discourse [on John xi. 5] in three parts.</i>	1776	
Chapone, Hester. <i>A Letter to a New-married Lady.</i>	1777	1780, 1822, 1828
Griffith, Elizabeth. <i>Essays Addressed to Young Married Women.</i>	1782	
Wollstonecraft, Mary. <i>Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: with Reflections on Female Conduct, in the more important duties of life.</i>	1787	
Anon. <i>The Parental Monitor.</i>	1788	1790, 1796
Hanway, Jonas. <i>Advice from Farmer Trueman, to his daughter Mary, upon her going to service. In a series of discourses, designed to promote the welfare and true interest of servants, etc.</i>	1789	1796
Carlisle, Countess Dowager of. <i>Thoughts in the Form</i>	1789	1790

<i>of Maxims Addressed to Young Ladies, on their First Establishment in the World.</i>		
Various. [ <i>The young lady's parental monitor.</i> ] <i>The young lady's pocket library, or parental monitor; containing, I. Dr. Gregory's Father's legacy to his daughters. II. Lady Pennington's, Unfortunate mother's advice to her daughters. III. Marchioness de Lambert's, Advice of a mother to her daughter. IV. Moore's, Fables for the female sex.</i>	1790	1808
Anon. <i>The ladies' library: or, Encyclopedia of female knowledge, in every branch of domestic economy, etc.</i>	1790	
Bennett, John Rev. <i>Strictures on female education; chiefly as it relates to the culture of the heart, in four essays.</i>	1791	1798
Anon. <i>The Female Mentor; or, Select Conversations.</i> [Edited by Honoria.]	1793	1802
Wright, George. <i>The Lady's Miscellany; or pleasing essays, poems, stories and examples, for the instruction and entertainment of the female sex in general, in every station of life.</i>	1793	
Dodderidge, Philip (preface). <i>The friendly instructor; or, A companion for young ladies and gentlemen.</i>	c. 1796	
More, Hannah. <i>Strictures on the modern system of Female Education, with a view of the principles and conduct prevalent among women of rank and fortune.</i>	1799	1800, 1806, 1811, 1818, 1826
Hamilton, Elizabeth. <i>Letters addressed to the daughter of a Nobleman, on the formation of religious and moral principle.</i>	1806	
Broadhurst, Thomas. <i>Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind and the Conduct of Life.</i>	1808	1810

**Appendix Four: The average number of servants and their positions in the eighteenth-century elite household.**

Male	Nos.	Female	Nos.
House Steward	1	Housekeeper	2
Estate Steward	1	Gentlewoman/ladies maid	1
Tutor	1	Chambermaid	2
Chaplain	1	Governess	1
Surgeon/doctor	1	Nurse	1
Chef (French man-cook)	1	Store/stillroom maid	1
Cook	1	Housemaid	2
Clerk of the Kitchen	1	Nursemaid	2
Gentleman/Valet	1	Laundry maid	2
Baker	1	Baker	1
Butler	2	Baker maid	1
Underbutler	2	Cook	1
Baliff/farmer	1	Dairymaid	2
Footman	4	Kitchen maid	2
Coachman	1	Scullery maid	1
Groom	2	Menagerie Woman	1
Postilion	1		
Undergroom	2		
Gamekeeper	1		
Gardener	2		
Porter	2		
Menagerie Man	1		
.....		.....	
Totals	31		23

These numbers represent the permanent servant positions in the eighteenth-century elite household, and have been taken from the surviving documentation for five of the main houses of the study; Castle Howard, Harewood House, Nostell Priory, Temple Newsam, and Wentworth Woodhouse. As averages, it should be noted that not all houses had every servant position due to the requirements of that particular household, and that some may have had more or less than the numbers listed here.

Documents referred to;  
Wentworth Woodhouse

R2A-39

List of Family at Wentworth Woodhouse, 31 October 1767.

R2A-40

List of Male and Female Servants and wages, 1753.

A-1380

Memoranda Book of Benjamin Hall, 1772-1784

A1 (previously A-1407)  
1752

Steward's Accounts, Evan Evans, Jan 1750/1- April

Nostell Priory

C4/2/1-2

Wage books, 1740-c.1765; 1797

C4/2/8

Table plan of servants' hall, c.1775

Temple Newsam

EA/12/19	Wages of Irwin retainers, 1632-1760
EA/12/1 1789	Housekeeping (groceries and hardware), 1600-
EA/14/3	Housekeeping accounts, 1690-1707
EA/14/15	Housekeeping accounts of Samuel Smithson, 1786-96
C/18	1751-1760

J. J. Cartwright, 'List of Persons in Yorkshire who paid the tax on male Servants in 1780', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 14 (1898), pp.65-80.

John Chartres, 'English Landed Society and the Servant Tax of 1777' in (Eds.), Negley Harte and Roland Quinault, *Land and Society in Britain, 1700-1914: Essays in Honour of F. M. L. Thompson*. (1996), pp. 34-56.

J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (1956).

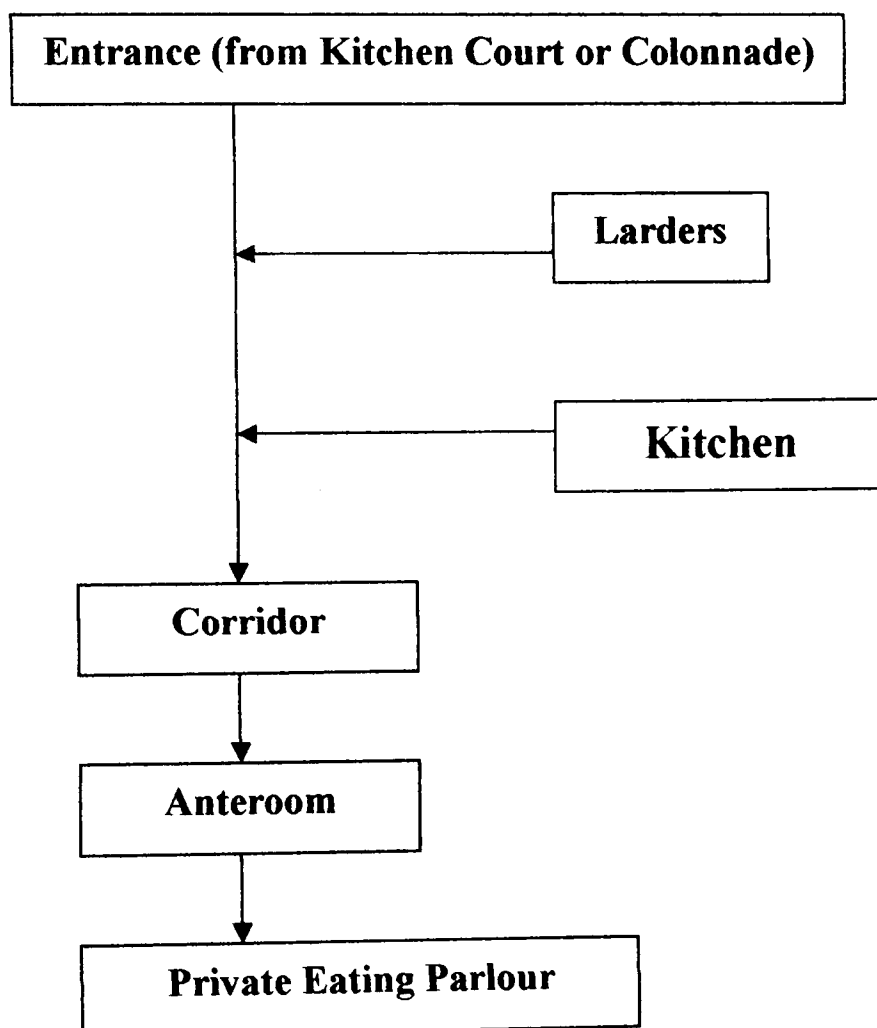
Peter Laslett, *Household and Family in Past Time*. (1972).

E. S. Turner, *What the Butler Saw: Two Hundred and Fifty Years of the Servant Problem*. (1962).

**Appendix Five: Flow charts representing the movements between service and dining areas in five Yorkshire country houses between 1700 and 1800.**

The following flow charts for Castle Howard, Harewood House and Nostell Priory have been taken from Pamela Sambrook and Peter Brears, *The Country House Kitchen, 1650-1900*. National Trust (1996). Those for Temple Newsam and Wentworth Woodhouse are unique to this study.

Castle Howard (as planned by Vanburgh, c.1700)



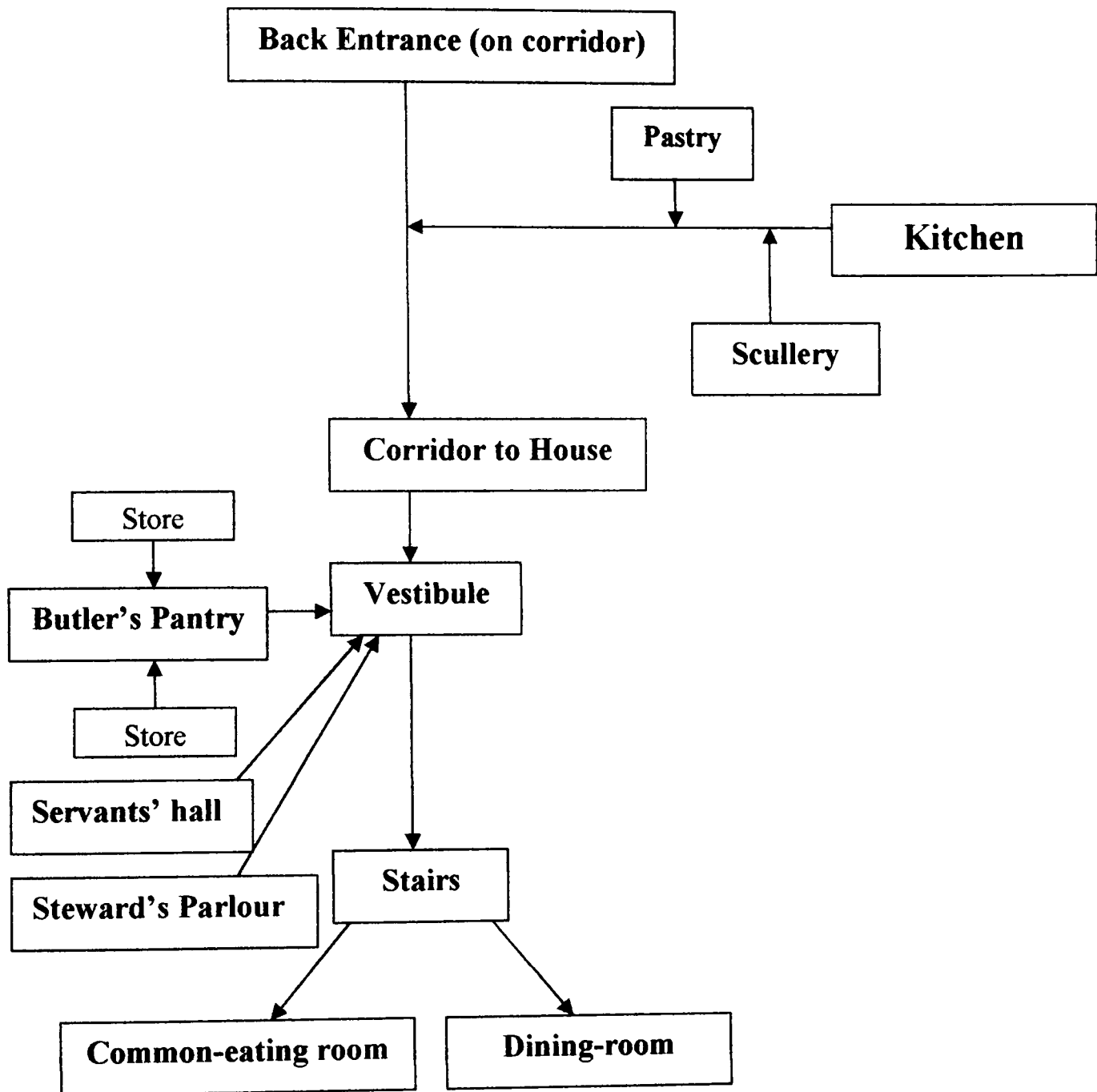
**Outer Wings**

Brewhouse  
Bakehouse

**Other Wings**

Stables  
Chapel

Nostell Priory (as planned by James Moyer and James Paine, c.1730)



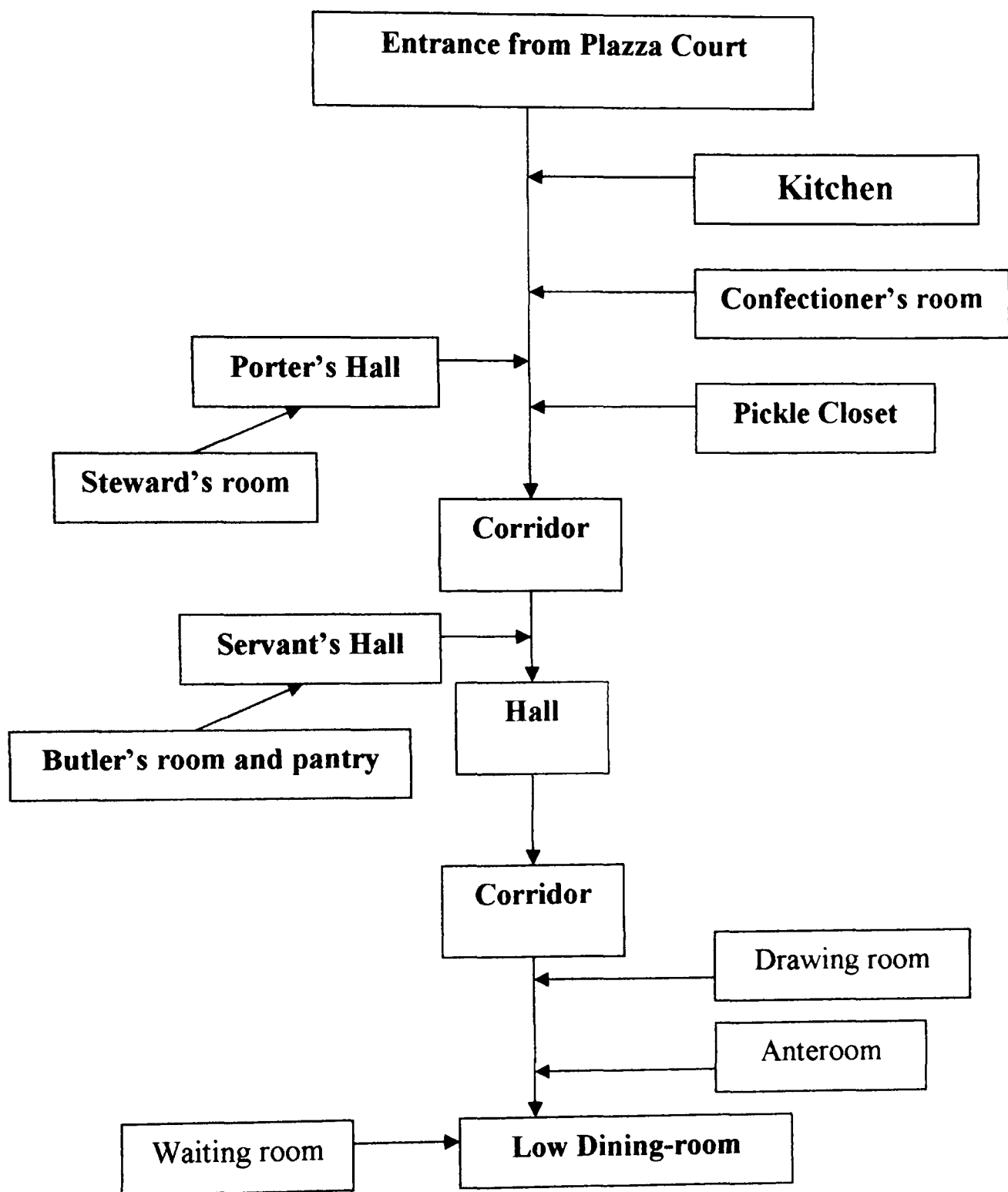
### Other Wings

Dairies

Brewhouse

Washhouse and Laundry

Wentworth Woodhouse (c.1760)



**Outer Wings**

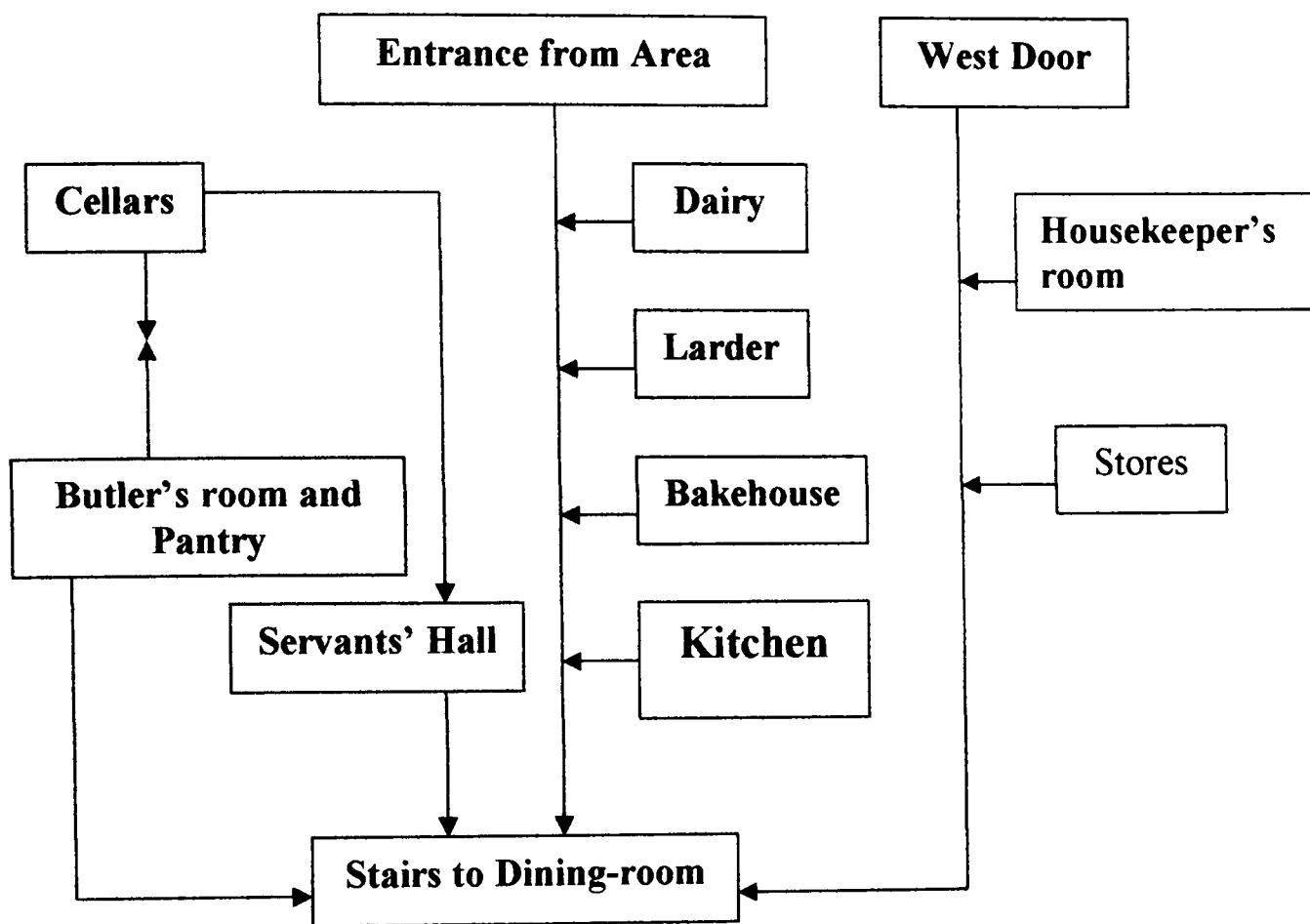
- Brewhouse
- Bakehouse
- Washhouse and Laundry
- Dairy

**Other Wing**

- Chapel

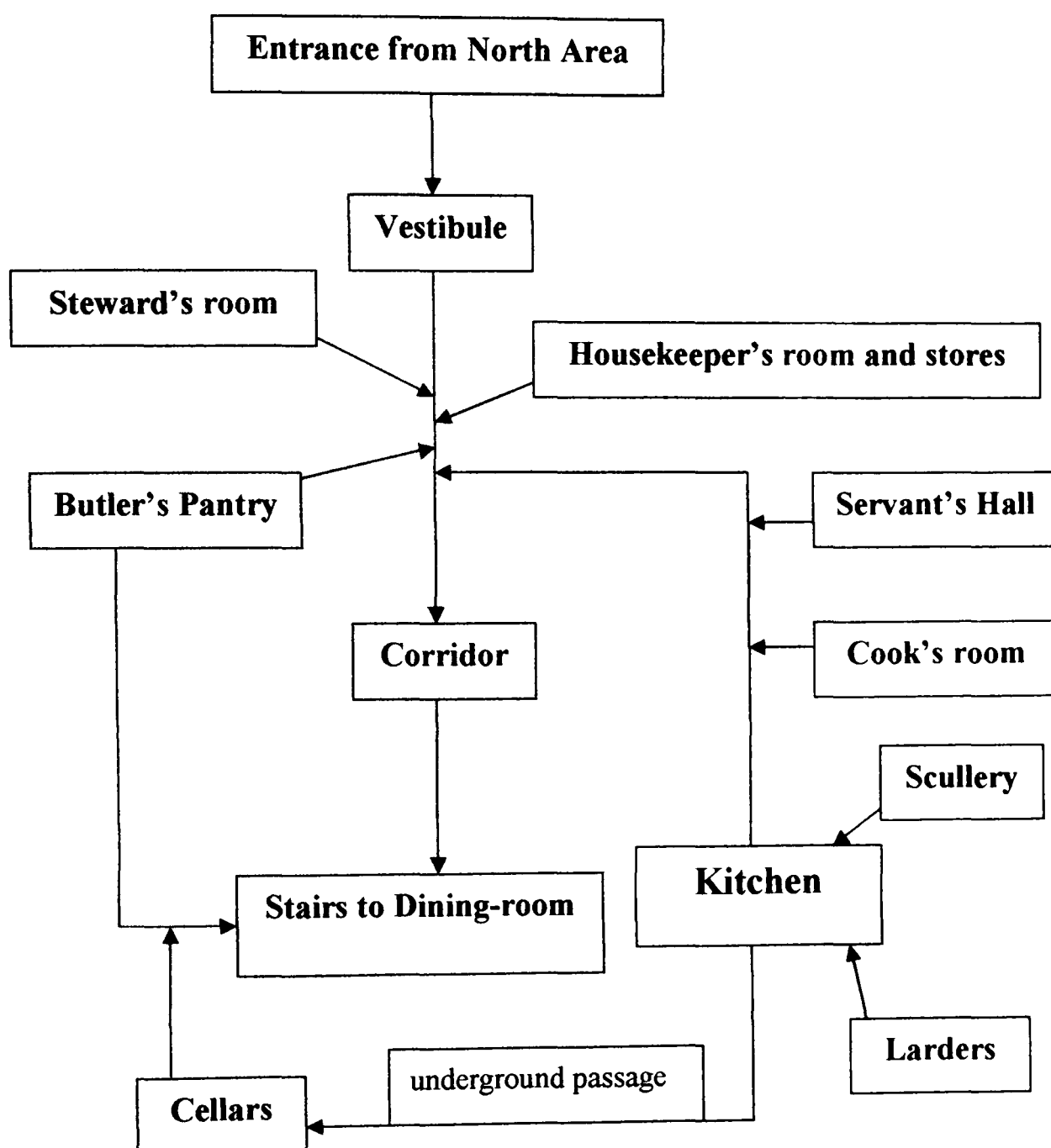


Harewood House (as planned by John Carr, c.1770)



**Other Wings**

Dairy  
 Brewhouse  
 Laundry  
 Stables

Temple Newsam (c.1800)**Other Wings**

Brewhouse

Dairy

Laundry

Stables

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 30/29/4/2/6 Letters from Frances Shephard (from 1758, Mrs Ingram; from April 1763, Viscountess Irwin).

##### Castle Howard Archives.

##### **Carlisle MSS**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| H1/1/4  | An Abstract of the House Accounts, 1744-1755 |
| J13/1/3 | Letterbook                                   |
| J13/1/4 | My Book of Receipts                          |

##### Horsham Museum.

##### **Machell Ingram MSS**

##### Accounts and receipts

- |            |                         |
|------------|-------------------------|
| 4051.1-293 | 1714-1737 (and no date) |
|------------|-------------------------|

##### Bills and miscellaneous

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 801.4-66 | 1723-1773 |
|----------|-----------|

##### Correspondence

- |          |             |
|----------|-------------|
| 792.1-42 | c.1720-1736 |
| 794.1-15 | 1749-1764   |

##### North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton.

##### **Hovingham MSS (ZON)**

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 13/4/1-198 | Correspondence of Mrs Elizabeth Worsley, c.1764-c.1800 |
| 13/6/8     | Estate matters including wages.                        |
| 13/8/10-11 | General bills.   |

##### Sheffield Archives.

##### **Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments (WWM)**

##### Pamphlets

- A General and Correct List of the Gentry...

##### Steward's Correspondence

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| Stw P2/1-65 | Letters from the Marchioness of Rockingham. |
|-------------|---|

Estate Administration

R2A-33	List of Stable Staff.
R2A-39	List of Family at Wentworth Woodhouse, 31 October 1767.
R2A-40	List of Male and Female Servants and wages, 1753.
R2A-41	Haymaker's Bill.
R2A-42	List of Labourers, December 1768.
M26/3	Inventory of Wentworth Woodhouse, 1750.

Accounts and Memoranda

A-1251	William Clauston's Cash Book, 1724-1732
A-1365	Housekeeper's Book of Stores, 1769-1775
A-1373	Day Book of Household Meat, 1772-1773
A-1374	Miscellaneous household Accounts, 1733-1737
A-1380	Memoranda Book of Benjamin Hall, 1772-1784
A-1385	Cellar Book, 1754-1764.
A-1451 and 1452	Notes on meat killed, 1743-1749
A-1530	Steward's Book of Memoranda and dining lists, 1773.
A1 (previously A-1407)	Steward's Accounts, Evan Evans, Jan 1750/1- April 1752
A2 (previously A-1397)	William Martin's Accounts, June 1765-Dec 1768.
A7 (previously A6)	Benjamin Hall's Accounts, Jan-Dec 1773.

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Leeds.**Harewood MSS (HAR)**Correspondence of Samuel Popplewell (HAR/SC)

SC/1/1-3	1754-1756
SC/2/1-3	1757-1759
SC/3/1-3	1760-1762
SC/4/1-5	1763-1782 (and various dates)
SC/7	various dates

**Newby Hall MSS (NH)**Family Papers

2730	Family settlements and wills (copies)
2778	Miscellaneous family papers
2785	Newby Cellar Book, July 1758

Correspondence

2823	1737/8
2824	1738
2825	1738/9
2826	1740
2827	1741
2828	1742/3
2829	1743
2830	1744/5
2833	1747/8
2834	1748/9
2835	1750

**Nostell Priory MSS (NP)**Estate Administration (NP/C3 and C4)

C3/1/13/1-2	William Dawson's account books, 1798; 1799-1800
C3/1/6/1	Account book volume 1 (blank), c.1770
C3/1/6/11	Nostell estate ledger, 1792-1815
C3/1/6/36	Various memoranda, no date
C4/1/13	Inventory of clothing, 1780
C4/1/17	Inventory of kitchen equipment, 1774
C4/1/18	List of clothing and linen, c.1765
C4/2/1-2	Wage books, 1740-c.1765; 1797
C4/2/7	Porter's duties, c.1760
C4/2/8	Table plan of servants' hall, c.1775
C4/2/13	Notebook of meat and provisions (French), 1776-1777
C4/7/16	Letters to Sabine from Mrs Charlton, 1783-1785
C4/8/1	Culinary recipes, c.1720
8/2	Medicinal and Culinary recipes, 18 <sup>th</sup> Century
8/5	Medicinal and Culinary, 1753-1902
8/6	Sabine Winn's Drafts of menus, 1770-1775
8/7	Medicinal and Culinary (mainly French), 1765-85
8/8	Sabine's personal papers, 11 volumes (French) 1662-1770
8/9	Entrées according to season, c.1780

Personal Correspondence of Sabine Winn (A1/5A)

5A/1	Letters from her mother, 1763
5A/2	Letters from her husband, 1756-1758
5A/4	Letters from Countess of DunDonald, mainly 1776
5A/5	Letters from housekeeper, Mrs Nicholson, 1779-84
5A/6	Letters from Lydia Hudson, 1779
5A/8	Personal business and commissions, 1760s-1790s
5A/10	House matters (London, St. James's Sq.), 1785

Eighteenth-Century Correspondence (A4)

1509	Personal papers of fourth and fifth Baronets, 1720s-1770s
1532	Personal papers of Sabine Winn (French), 1760s-1790s
1535	Fifth baronets to his wife Sabine, 1760s-1770s
1536	To Sabine Winn from tradesmen etc., various dates
1538	Bills and receipts addressed to Sabine Winn, 1780s-1790s
1539	Personal papers of Sabine Winn, 1760s-1770s
1549	Letters from servants and tenants, 1760s-1770s
1551	Mostly Sabine Winn, 1770s-1790s
1554	Marriage of Rowland to Sabine, 1760-1761

**Ripley Castle, Ingilby MSS (RP)**

- 3275 Notebook of books in Library. 1794.  
 3415 Will of Margaret Ingilby, 23 September 1697.  
 3518 'Woman's Almanack' 1710/1711 (Martha Brown –  
 housekeeper/maid)  
 3524 Bills addressed to Lady I. Amcotts  
 3554 Letter addressed to Lady Ingilby, 30 July 1785.

**Temple Newsam MSS (TN)**Estate Administration (TN/EA)

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 Irwin, deceased at Windsor, to be sold by auction by Mr.  
 Pervil on the above date. 11 October 1764.  
 EA/4/15 Catalogue of books, 1644-1764  
 EA/12/1 Housekeeping (groceries and hardware), 1600-1789  
 EA/12/2 Housekeeping (Clothing and materials), 1600-1789  
 EA/12/9 Apothecary bills, 1642-1760  
 EA/12/14 Travelling expenses: chiefly servants, 1669-1776  
 EA/12/19 Wages of Irwin retainers, 1632-1760  
 EA/12/20 Charities, 1600-1801

Accounts (under estate administration, TN/EA)

- EA/13/47 John Roades' account book, 1688-1702  
 EA/13/62 Thomas Watterson's daily expenditure, 1734-1736  
 EA/14/3 Housekeeping accounts, 1690-1707  
 EA/14/6 Housekeeping weekly accounts, 1728-1731  
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 EA/14/12 Windsor accounts for housekeeping, 1739-1741  
 EA/14/13 Housekeeping accounts of James Shaw, 1758-1764  
 EA/14/14 Housekeeping accounts, 1760-1761  
 EA/14/15 Housekeeping accounts of Samuel Smithson, 1786-1796  
 EA/14/16 Housekeeper's book, 1797-1800  
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 EA/14/21 Housekeeping/wines/personalia of Isabella Irwin, 1722/3;  
 1747-1752  
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- C/6 1690-1694  
 C/9 1701-1705  
 C/12 1718-1722  
 C/15 1736-1742  
 C/16 1742-1745  
 C/17 1746-1750  
 C/18 1751-1760  
 C/19 1761-1798  
 C/23 (a and b) (Mainly to Miss Frances Shephard, and as Lady Irwin) c.1755-1767

Family Papers (TN/F)

- F/8 Recipes, 17<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> century

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3997 34 (7) Frances Irwin copy of will, January 1801  
 3997 21 (4) Isabella Irwin, draft of will, January 1750  
 3997 23 (2) Note on Isabella Irwin's clothes, no date

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