



**Masculine Gentry Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century:  
A Case Study of Cannon Hall**

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## Abstract

This thesis is centred on the country house estate of Cannon Hall near Barnsley in Yorkshire and the lives of its owners, the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family, during the period circa 1650-1821. Using the rich family archive this thesis explores ways in which successive generations constructed and maintained aspects of their masculine gentry identity and demonstrates how identity was constructed socially, materially and dynastically across the life course. The study draws upon many themes central to the history of the country house, masculinity and the gentry including architectural evolution and the use of space in the small country house; consumption practices and the balance of new goods with old, thrift and luxury in the home; domestic governance and the importance of the role played by dynastic practices, oeconomy, and a collaborative household; and finally social networks and patterns of sociable behaviour in rural and urban settings. The thesis demonstrates that masculine gentry identity was constructed along many lines with often competing influences, and specifically how this manifest itself across three generations of the same family. It informs our understanding of the lives of the largely under researched lesser landed gentry and helps to distinguish them from the middling below and aristocracy above them in the social hierarchy. This research illustrates a strong sense of collective identity, both familial and among others of their social stratum, constructed in part through shared practices and patterns of behaviour both in the home and elsewhere. Through the analysis of change over time, this thesis demonstrates how masculine identity was defined for heads of household at Cannon Hall and how this evolved and shifted with the family's status as they became more integrated within the wealthy elite over time.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

Frequently cited archive collections are identified using the following abbreviations.

All other sources are cited in full in the first instance of each chapter.

BALS	Barnsley Archives and Local Studies
CUL	Cambridge University Library, Department of Manuscripts and University Archives
HHC	Hull History Centre
LUL	Leeds University Library
SpSt	Spencer Stanhope Muniments
WYAS	West Yorkshire Archive Service

## Introduction



Figure 0.1: *Cannon Hall, Barnsley*. Source: Cannon Hall Museum.

Nestled on the edge of moorland in the historic Staincross Wapentake of the West Riding, four miles from the town of Barnsley, sits the country house of Cannon Hall. Raised in an elevated position above the nearby village of Cawthorne, the south front of the Hall has clear views of Dakin Brooke, a tributary of the River Dearne and the life blood of many of the industrial enterprises occupying the locality, as it courses through the estate. This man-made vista culminates beyond the estate's boundaries with the spire of All Saints Parish Church, the spiritual home of the Hall's proprietors and wider community. Cannon Hall became the home to the Spencer family upon purchase by John Spencer (1629-1681) from his step-daughter Margaret Hartley in 1673 and remained the family home for almost 300 years.<sup>1</sup> The house, its history and that of its occupiers mirrors that of many estates both locally and further afield and in many ways it is unremarkable. Yet it is in this typicality that its value lies. Like many of their contemporaries the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes were prolific record keepers and it is from this wealth of information that this thesis examines the

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<sup>1</sup> BALS: SpSt/196/1-2, Feoffment (with counterpart), Margaret Hartley of Cannon Hall to John Spencer (senior) of Cannon Hall, 1673.

mechanisms and cultivators of masculine gentry identity across the long eighteenth century. As such this work contributes to a growing body of research that enriches our understanding of the markers of identity for the landed gentry and how its construction and maintenance was negotiated amidst the furnaces, assembly halls and dining rooms in rural England.

This introduction sets out to do four things: establish the key aims of the thesis; outline the composition of the Spencer Stanhope family and Cannon Hall genealogically, economically and geographically; position the key aims of the thesis in the context of current historiography, particularly the debate on the history of masculinity and manly identity; and examine the sources and methodologies utilised in the thesis.

### **Outline of the Project**

This thesis sets out to investigate the cultivation and maintenance of gentry identity through the experiences of those that owned and lived at Cannon Hall from circa 1680 until 1821. Specifically, this thesis explores how gentry identity is manifest through architectural and consumption choices within the home, domestic governance and household and estate management, as well as social networking within and beyond the local parish and surrounding area. These features of domestic and social life reveal the rich history of the place and its owners, exposing patterns of behaviour intrinsic to the everyday lives of the landed gentry during this period. The research considers multiple generations of a family whose wealth and social status increased across the period studied. Consequently this study allows not only for further exploration into the markers of identity and masculinity for the landed gentry, but also a more detailed understanding of the ways in which these evolved over the period versus patterns of continuity. Whilst my research does not expose any sweeping change to what constitutes masculinity over the period and I am not able to generalise and directly translate findings from one family to the experiences of others, the evidence does allow us to explore different expressions of both individual and collective masculine identity cultivated by the three heads of household. Through this I argue, instead, for more subtle, incremental shifts and consistencies and seek to assess the meanings behind the observed change or continuation of certain behaviours. My findings on this

family will be positioned in relation to our existing understanding of the influence and pressures associated with lineage and within the wider context of the family's rising wealth and social status.

This thesis seeks to expand on a somewhat under-researched field of study concerning the middle ranks of the landed gentry. While a great deal has been written about both the aristocracy and 'middling sort', comparatively little has been said about the sizeable range of landed families who make up the middle ground in between these two groups. The term gentry has typically been used in a pejorative sense to describe landed families and estate owners. The reality of course is that within this group a broad spectrum has always existed between the lower and upper end in terms of wealth, status and influence, and I will return to the ways in which historians have sought to define the ranks of eighteenth-century society shortly. As such this thesis contributes to several growing fields of study, not least the comparatively sparse research on small classical houses such as Cannon Hall.<sup>2</sup> Equally there is very little work which charts the evolution of a building alongside that of its occupiers as is being done here. This thesis will therefore traverse and link existing discussions of space and architecture, material culture, household governance and wider sociability. It will contribute to the field of study on eighteenth-century masculine identity and demonstrate how this was cultivated and expressed on an individual and collective basis, consciously or otherwise, through these different mediums, for a group of the gentry which is often overlooked.

The family's rise in wealth and status was a fortuitous mix of savvy business investment and not insubstantial inheritance. The incremental increase of wealth, generation after generation, ensured that the history of Cannon Hall and its occupiers is one of upward mobility and financial stability until the gradual demise of the house as a financially viable family home in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its eventual sale to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council in 1951. This thesis will explore the ways in which the choices and patterns of behaviour by successive generations of male householders,

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<sup>2</sup> Small classical houses are notably the focus of Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World, 1680-1780* (New York, 2015).

expressing a specific form of masculine gentry identity, contributed to this positive trajectory in the eighteenth century. Driven by key historiographical and sociological findings on the nature of masculinity during the long eighteenth century the thesis will seek to define what constituted masculine identity on an individual and collective level over this period. For each of the three male heads of household studied the thesis will discuss the key traits and practices which were fundamental to their identity, how if at all these changed over the period and the extent to which their identity can be differentiated from those above and below the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes in the social hierarchy. Before positioning the aims and contributions of this thesis within their broader historiographical fields I will introduce the Spencer and Stanhope families, explaining their position within the complex hierarchy of English gentry and how, through marriage and business acquisitions, they set the wheels in motion to achieve financial and social stability over the long term. Before exploring the historiographical field from which this study draws its research questions, I will set out the context of the project, the sources available and a brief outline of some essential contextual details of the family, the house and the pre-existing historiography on the family and the Hall.

### **The Collaborative Doctoral Award**

This thesis is one outcome of an Arts and Humanities Research Council Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA). A CDA is a studentship developed in partnership with an organisation outside of an academic institution. Collaborations aim to offer students the opportunity to gain first-hand experience of working within a relevant industrial sector, broadening both the doctoral experience of students and their future employability. As stakeholders the partner organisation works with the academic institution and is instrumental in defining the research project.<sup>3</sup> This allows partners the opportunity to access in-depth research into an area of significance for their organisation. The collaboration here with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council had a significant impact on the thesis. A positive on-going

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion of the value and potential pitfalls of collaborative projects in country house settings see C. L. Ridgway and Allen Warren, 'Collaborative opportunities for the study of the country house: the Yorkshire Country House Partnership', *Historical Research* 78 (2005), pp. 162-179. The value, impact and legacies of Collaborative Doctoral Awards was the focus of a major AHRC conference, What's it worth? (July 2015), <https://edavalue.wordpress.com/about/> [accessed 30 May 2021].

relationship with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council allowed me to develop a close affiliation with Cannon Hall and its staff and facilitated invaluable open access to the Hall and gardens. As Chapter One discusses, this level of access not only helped to support the research and substantiate findings, allowing theories on the spatial arrangement of the house to be scrutinised and tested, but it allowed direct access to material which transformed the research. The transfer of the Spencer Stanhope Muniments collection from its long-term home at Sheffield Archives to Barnsley Archives and Local Studies early on in the project allowed for a first-time study solely focused on Cannon Hall with unrivalled access to the sizeable archive collection.

This CDA offered numerous opportunities to contribute to the on-going development of Cannon Hall and its gardens as a modern heritage site and museum. My research formed the historical framework for the revised narrative of the new visitor installations across the park, gardens and the house. Simultaneously I had the opportunity to be involved with museum and heritage site processes, from the craft of caption writing to casting and the creation of interactive installations. Furthermore, 2021 brings the culmination of the £3.8 million Heritage and Big Lottery Funded project 'Parks for People: Restoring the Glory, Revealing the Secrets'.<sup>4</sup> The project aims to revive and reinvigorate the design and ecology of the outside buildings, lakes and parkland to reflect the plan implemented by John Spencer (d. 1775) under the direction of landscape designer Richard Woods in the 1760's. My role within the CDA offered stakeholders insight into factual details from the archive but also contextual understanding of the importance of the different spaces of the garden in the eighteenth century. In turn this allowed the present day use and interpretation of the space to reflect those of its original design and intention. When utilised in this way CDAs offer a unique and invaluable experience for all parties and have the potential to facilitate and shape debates happening in country house museums and other heritage sites. The partnership between organisations and CDA's offers the opportunity to construct a more dynamic narrative and visitor experience, one which can help to strengthen the ability of

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<sup>4</sup> Overview of Parks for People: Restoring the Glory, Revealing the Secrets, <https://www.barnsley-museums.com/projects/parks-for-people-restoring-the-glory> [accessed on 30 May 2021].

heritage sites in particular to convey complex messages in relatable ways to a modern audience, something that this CDA has achieved.

## Sources

The archive collections of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family are split between Barnsley Archives and Local Studies (BALS) and the West Yorkshire Archives Service (WYAS) in Bradford. Broadly, Barnsley Archives is home to the parts of the family archive concerning the Spencer family and Cannon Hall and the wider Stanhope family archive is managed by the West Yorkshire Archives, while other fragmentary evidence is located in archives elsewhere in the country.<sup>5</sup> The archives are vast and cover a plethora of information regarding the families, their estates and business interests as well as documents relating to parishes in which they were land owners. The Spencer Stanhope Muniments held by Barnsley Archives were of greatest use for this thesis. The collection has a wide chronological coverage spanning from the eleventh to the twentieth century and is catalogued in four parts according to the content. Part one consists of deeds and executorship papers, manorial records, Cawthorne parish papers, deeds to Cannon Hall estate and wills. Part two includes title deeds and wills. Part three includes business papers, correspondence (including some estate correspondence), personal papers and diaries. Part four comprises of estate accounts, surveys, rentals and valuations, inventories, household accounts and wages books and building accounts; enclosure papers; stewards' correspondence; Cawthorne parish papers; executors' and trusteeship papers.<sup>6</sup> A further section records maps and plans. Of greatest interest here are the personal family records in part three. Correspondence, grouped according to date and recipient spans from fragmentary letters to John Spencer 1658-1718;<sup>7</sup> William Spencer, predominantly in 1738-1756;<sup>8</sup> John Spencer 1739-1775;<sup>9</sup> Walter Spencer Stanhope 1775-1821;<sup>10</sup> and stewards'

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<sup>5</sup> West Yorkshire Archives Service, Bradford: Spencer Stanhope of Horsforth, Family and Estate Records (SpSt). Other fragmentary documents are held at Hull History Centre. Civic records for the area, specifically tax assessments are held at West Yorkshire History centre, Wakefield Archive Service.

<sup>6</sup> BALS: Spencer Stanhope Muniments catalogue.

<sup>7</sup> BALS: SpSt 60502, Letters to John Spencer, 1658-1718.

<sup>8</sup> BALS: SpSt 60505/1-3, Letter book of William Spencer 1739/9-42/3, 1747-55; 60508, Thomas Newsome (attorney) to William Spencer, 1737-54; 60518, Letters from B. Dutton and Spencer's

correspondence 1738-1821.<sup>11</sup> The diaries of the male household heads exist in varying completeness and consistency from 1680 although it is not until the personal diaries of William Spencer spanning 1739-1756 that they are completed routinely and systematically.<sup>12</sup> Other particularly rich sources include inventories, wages books, maps and buildings accounts.<sup>13</sup> Paintings also represent an incredibly valuable and insightful source and are mostly exhibited at Cannon Hall or recorded by A. M. W. Stirling in her family memoir, to which I will return to shortly.<sup>14</sup> Further discussion and detailed analysis of the particular source materials is covered in the introductions to the relevant chapters. The scope and size of the archives makes them particularly well suited for answering the research questions posed here. The review of the literature that follows raised a number of questions that shape the intentions of this study and for which the records of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family are particularly well suited to address.

Despite this wealth of resources there are several notable absences from the archives, as key sources (individual letters and specific pocket books for example) are missing from the

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daughters to William Spencer, 1742-3, 1745-54; 60527, John Spencer (son) to William Spencer, 1735-7; 60528, Benjamin Spencer (son) to William Spencer, 1746-55; 60531, William Spencer (son) to William Spencer, 1743-52.

<sup>9</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537, General Correspondence to John Spencer, 1739-1775; 60538, William Spencer to John Spencer, 1749-59; 60540, John Spencer's Letter Book, 1757; 60542, John and Ashton Shuttleworth to John Spencer, 1774-1775.

<sup>10</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564, General Correspondence to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-1821.

<sup>11</sup> BALS: SpSt 60543, Benjamin Dutton to John Spencer, 1752-74 and John Dutton to John Spencer, 1771, 1775; 60584, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1776-1778; 60585, John Hardy to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1774-1802, 1806; 60586, John Howson to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1789-1821.

<sup>12</sup> BALS: SpSt 60632/1-11, Diaries of William Spencer, 1739-55; 60633/1-27, Diaries of John Spencer, 1739-41, 1750-1775, except 1770, 1771; 60635/1-36, Diaries of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-1817, 1820, except 1777, 1780, 1783-5, 1787, 1804-1805; 60651/12 Diary of Mary Winifred Spencer Stanhope, 1783-1788.

<sup>13</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681; 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763; 60671/5, Inventory for William Spencer, 1756; 60671/20, Probate Inventory for John Spencer, 1775; 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1821-1823; 60672/8 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819; BALS: SpSt 60654/2, John Howson's accounts and cash journals, 1796; 100, Francis Richardson, Plan of Cannon Hall, c. 1758; 101, Richard Woods, Plan for design and improvements to Cannon Hall, 1760; 102, Richard Woods, Survey of Cannon Hall, c. 1765; 106, Township of Cawthorne with colourings to shop ownership, 1806; BALS: SpSt 60686/25, John Spencer, 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall', 1756-1773.

<sup>14</sup> A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni and his kindred, Volumes One and Two* (London, 1911).



collection. It is highly likely that histories undertaken by family members are responsible for the omissions. On the death of Walter Spencer Stanhope in 1821 his second son and heir, John, commenced writing his father's memoirs. In the early twentieth century the research undertaken for the *Annals of a Yorkshire House* by A. M. W. Stirling further resulted in significant sources being removed from the collection.<sup>15</sup> While these archival gaps are unfortunate and prevent a complete and uninterrupted analysis of primary source material, both of these published family histories include part or full transcriptions of some of the missing documents. The archive also notably lacks any significant correspondence from industrial workers and tenants which would have enriched the debate in Chapter Three especially. Despite these issues the project was able to consider an extremely rich body of source material covering an array of aspects of life at Cannon Hall and beyond.

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<sup>15</sup> BALS: SpSt 60645, John Spencer Stanhope's Memoirs of his father, Walter Spencer Stanhope, undated; Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*.

### The Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes: A brief family history

Hailing from Montgomeryshire, John Spencer arrived in Cawthorne on the promise of employment as clerk at Barnby Furnace for his relation Walter Spencer, located in the village.<sup>16</sup> Shortly after the death of his wife Sarah in 1657, John married Margaret, widow of Robert Hartley of Cannon Hall in 1658 (see Figure 0.3).<sup>17</sup> Aided by an inheritance, John Spencer ended a fifteen-year rental period and purchased the Cannon Hall estate, farmland and its 10 acres from his step daughter in 1673 for £1,230.<sup>18</sup>

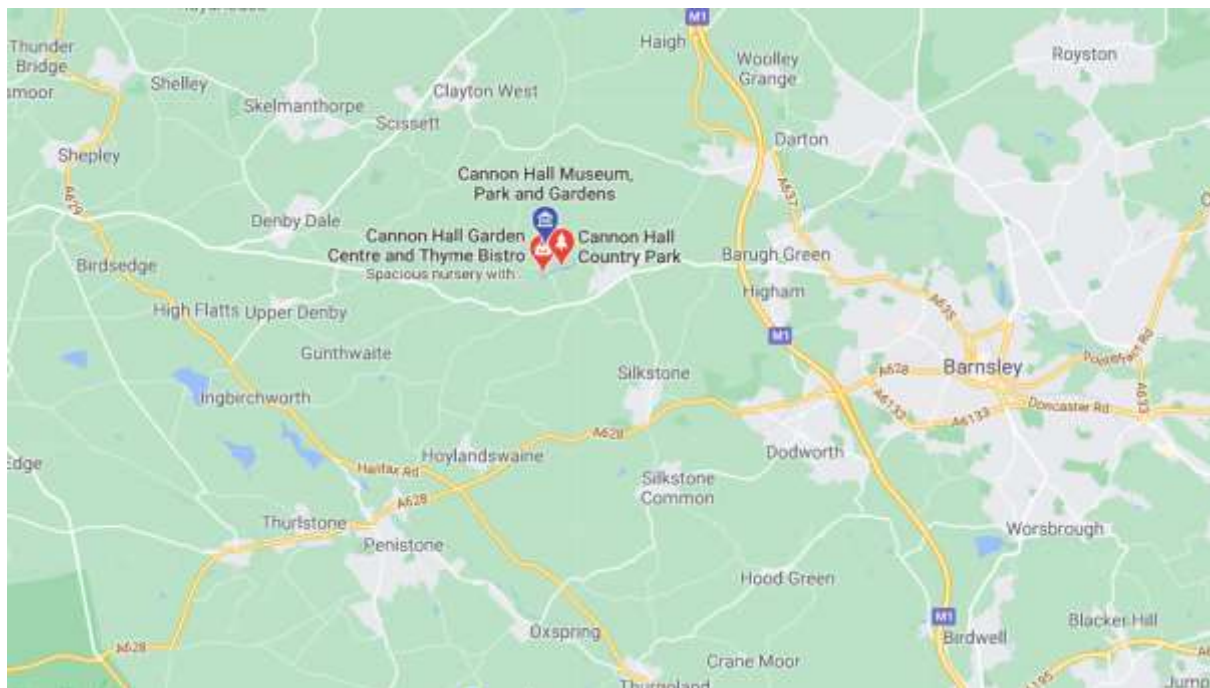


Figure 0.2: Map showing the position of Cannon Hall in relation to the town of Barnsley in the east. *Source:* MapHub, maphub.net.

As Chapter One discusses, during this period Cannon Hall was a small house, nonetheless the land it commanded was of strategic importance for the family's growing industrial assets. Following John Spencer's death in 1681 his son, also John, inherited the estate and business interests and over the course of the succeeding forty years gradually grew the

<sup>16</sup> A. Raistrick, and E. Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters 1690-1750', *Economic History Review* 9 (1939), p. 169.

<sup>17</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire, Volume Two*, p. 349.

<sup>18</sup> BALS: SpSt/196/1-2, Feoffment (with counterpart), Margaret Hartley of Cannon Hall to John Spencer (senior) of Cannon Hall, 1673.

family's industrial assets and created nine major regional iron manufacturing syndicates.<sup>19</sup> Business networks were integral to the Spencers' success in the industrial sector. The wealth of investment needed for the construction of furnaces, forges and slitting mills in addition to the amount of capital tied up in stocks of charcoal and ironstone required a 'constantly changing series of partnerships' and systems of credit to ensure smooth and profitable manufacturing processes.<sup>20</sup> Hopkinson's investigation of the iron industry in South Yorkshire concluded that these partnerships were typically 'vertically integrated organisations' managing the entire process from fuel, ore to final sale and in doing so conglomerates gained greater control of the raw materials and markets.<sup>21</sup> In South Yorkshire this practice was so common 'that by 1727 almost the whole of the charcoal iron industry within the region was in the hands of a very small group of men', and chief amongst them was the Spencer family.<sup>22</sup> The Spencers' tactics ensured that through marriage and purchase they sequentially acquired shares, and in many cases controlling stakes, in all aspects of the region's iron industry.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, John Spencer's (1655-1729) marriage to Ann Wilson cemented ties with the Wilson family of Silkstone's Slitting Mill, while earlier marriages of extended kin connected the Spencers with several other families invested in iron including the Cottons, Wilsons and Woodheads.<sup>24</sup> The success of John Spencer's strategies in industry was commemorated in bricks and mortar with the transformative rebuilding of Cannon Hall from 1697 into a home of aesthetic appeal for polite society. This progression for the family from one of economic success to one of local cultural status is a topic discussed in detail in Chapter One.

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<sup>19</sup> Raistrick, and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron', pp. 168-169.

<sup>20</sup> G. G. Hopkinson, 'The Charcoal Iron Industry in the Sheffield Region, 1588-1775', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 8 (1961), p. 133; Raistrick, and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron', p. 169. For more on the importance of credit networks during this period see Craig Muldrew, 'Rural Credit, Market Areas and Legal Institutions in the Countryside in England, 1550-1700' in C. Brooks and M. Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150-1950* (London and Ohio, 1997), pp. 155-177; Alan MacFarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: the family property and social transition* (Oxford, 1978); John Smal, 'Credit, Risk, and Honor in Eighteenth-Century Commerce,' *Journal of British Studies* 44 (2005), pp. 439-56.

<sup>21</sup> Hopkinson, 'The Charcoal Iron Industry', pp. 133-134.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

<sup>23</sup> Raistrick, and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron', p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-171.

# The Spencer, Spencer Stanhope Family Tree (circa 1630 – 1875)

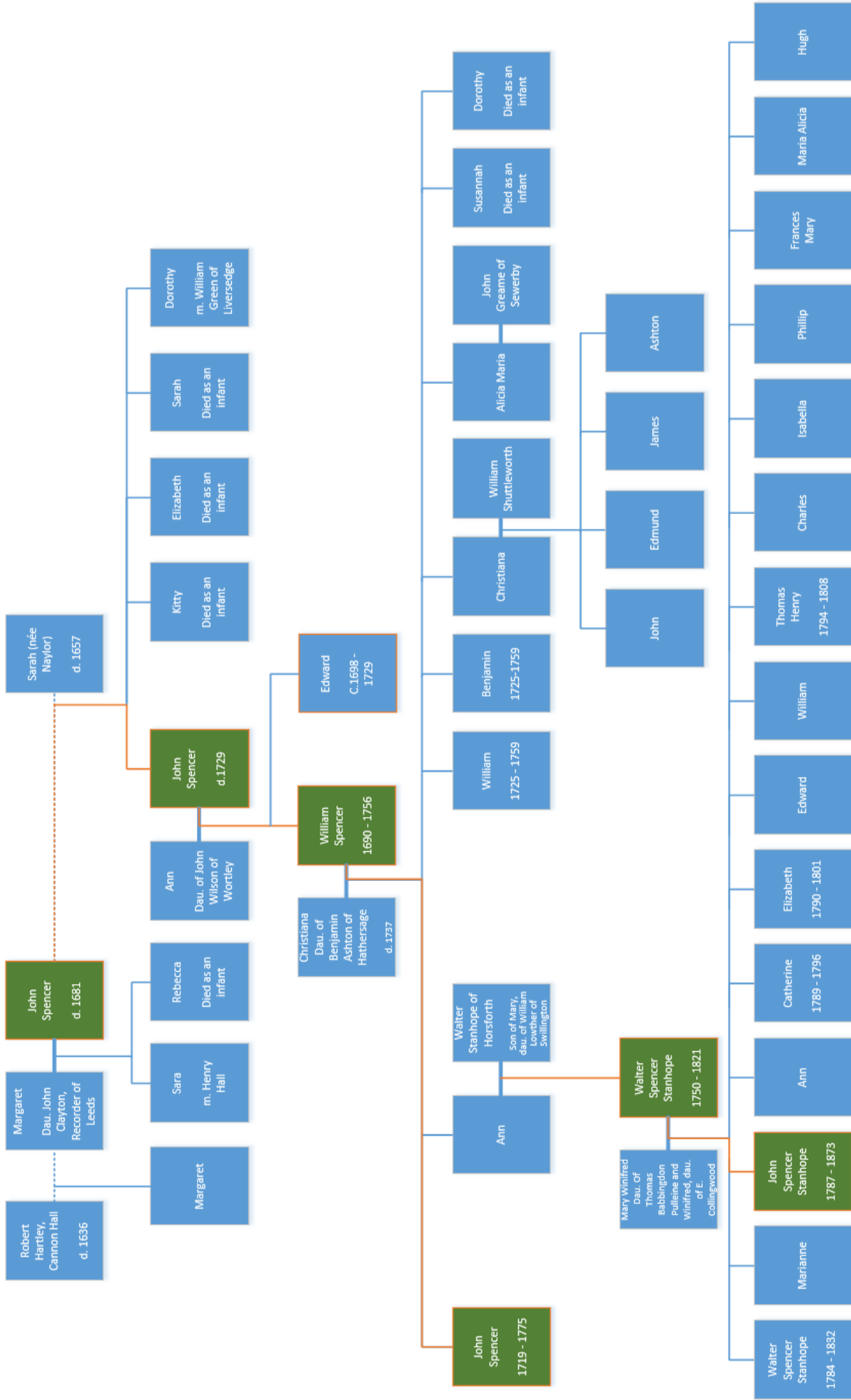


Figure 0.3 (above): Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family tree c. 1630-1875.

On his death in 1729 John Spencer passed the ownership of Cannon Hall to his eldest son, William Spencer and split the family's industrial shares equally between William and his brother Edward. William's inheritance marked something of a turning point for the family and their industrial concerns. William's marriage to Christiana Ashton, sole heir to sizable Derbyshire mining interests and land, a legacy of £14,000 and the paternal home of Hathersage Hall, marked a substantial increase to the family's finances and assets. William Spencer's choices for his children point to a strategic long-term diversification in response to failing iron prices and in-fighting among shareholders as well as a claim to a higher level of gentry status. His eldest son John was educated at Winchester and Oxford followed by the Bar, and William secured a good marriage for his eldest daughter, Ann, to widower Walter Stanhope of Horsforth, a family of renowned barristers and local office holders. William's younger twins were educated at Watt's Mercantile Academy in Little Tower Street, London, where they were schooled in hand-writing, arithmetic and book-keeping.<sup>25</sup> William (junior) was later apprenticed to Liverpool merchant, William Hardman, and his brother Benjamin was placed in an apprenticeship with a London merchant.<sup>26</sup> Benjamin later speculated in the slave trade sponsoring numerous ships, although this was a largely unsuccessful venture and both William and Benjamin died within two months of each other age 33 in 1759.<sup>27</sup> William's (senior) choice of education and marriage partners for his children demonstrated his aspiration for the growth in his family's stature, taking advantage of the appendages of their wealth and reputation in the hope of securing long-term success and stability. These strategies, typical across the elite were, perhaps, all the more necessary in light of heavily fluctuating iron prices and intensive periods of litigation from other syndicate shareholders that preoccupied William Spencer's time, as is discussed in Chapter Four.

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<sup>25</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), p. 374.

<sup>26</sup> BALS: SpSt 60531, Letters to William Spencer from his son, William Spencer, 1743-52; SpSt 60528, Letters to William Spencer from his son, Benjamin Spencer, 1742.

<sup>27</sup> BALS: SpSt 60550, Benjamin Spencer's papers relating to the voyage of several ships he was part owner of, 1751-1759; SpSt 60549, Benjamin Spencer's correspondence with shipping firms, c. 1750-1759.

When other sectors of the iron industry were booming, 1756 witnessed further problems for the Spencer family syndicates. The year of William Spencer's death and the start of the Seven Years War witnessed rapid expansion in the industry. However, as work by A. Raistrick and E. Allen demonstrates, the stock price and profits of one of the more important iron syndicates of this period, the Duke of Norfolk's Association, of which the Spencers were shareholders, took a steep decline.<sup>28</sup> The divisible proceeds of the Duke of Norfolk concerns, always over £1000 between 1744 and 1755, fell to just £243 by 1760.<sup>29</sup> Reasons for this decline are difficult to pinpoint. On a national scale Paul Langford sites a steady transformation across the whole industrial sector, claiming that while 'growth in many sectors during the first half of the century was impressive' by 1735, domestic and small scale manufacturing was being superseded by relatively 'large-scale production, the introduction of specialised processing' and 'the concentration on a national and overseas market' within all areas of industry and manufacturing.<sup>30</sup> The failure of the Spencer partnership to modernise furnace technology is recognised by both G. Hopkinson and Allen and Raistrick. Shortages and soaring prices of raw materials, especially cordwood and on-going litigation between partners was a continuous source of tension for both William and his son John. The decline of the family's investment in the iron industry is predominantly attributed to the lifestyle choices of John Spencer (1719-1775), William's heir, and his preference for leisure.<sup>31</sup> John's continued involvement in a number of iron syndicates including Kirkstall Forge and the Duke of Norfolk Iron Works syndicate into the 1760's suggests this is somewhat partial-sighted and that a range of issues, including the difficulties in profit making and shifting supply systems, made the viability of on-going heavy involvement untenable. Walter Spencer Stanhope inherited and retained shares in a

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<sup>28</sup> Raistrick, and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron', p. 180.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989), p. 650.

<sup>31</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters', p. 177; Geoffrey Gill Hopkinson, 'The Development of Lead Mining and of the Coal and Iron Industries in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire', Ph.D. Thesis (Sheffield, 1958), p. 175, 202; also see J. R. Harris, *The British Iron Industry 1700-1850* (Hampshire and London, 1988), p.176; For details of the debate see, M. W. Flinn, 'The growth of the English iron industry at the end of the charcoal era 1660-1760', *Economic History Review* 11 (1958), pp. 144-153; G. Hammersley, 'The Charcoal Iron Industry and its Fuel, 1540-1750', *Economic History Review* 26 (1973), pp. 593-613.

number of forges and furnaces including those at Kirkstall and Colnbridge. Nonetheless, by the mid-1760's the family were no longer dominant players in the regional iron industry. Alongside involvement in industrial sites, the family owned substantial portions of land in South Yorkshire (necessary for the production of cordwood for use in the iron making process) which produced a rental income and was routinely used to raise funds in the form of mortgages. Records of cash received by William Spencer from 1747-1752 suggests an average of up to £1000 was received annually in rent, although this excludes the family's earnings that came from industry, while rental income from Cawthorne and Barnby assets amounted to around £560 annually.<sup>32</sup>

John Spencer's tenure as household head to the estate brought about substantial changes for the Hall's architecture and the park and gardens. From 1760 until 1768 John was continuously engaged in the improvements to the estate, employing Chertsey-based garden designer Richard Woods and the notable Yorkshire architect John Carr for the works, transforming the gardens and adding single storey wings to the east and west of the house. As a lifelong bachelor John had no legitimate heir to the estate and thus it passed to his nephew, Walter Stanhope, who took the name Spencer upon inheritance. Walter's arrival in 1775 brought an increase in wealth to Cannon Hall from his paternal inheritance and later, the marriage portion from his marriage to heiress Mary Winifred Pulleine, daughter of Thomas Babington Pulleine of Carlton Hall, near Richmond and Winifred, daughter of Edward Collingwood of Dissington Hall. In the broadest sense, the picture painted here then, is of a family of relative newcomers who – through careful marriage and astute business investment – purchased and renovated Cannon Hall as a home fit for their gentlemanly status, thereby incrementally advancing to establish themselves as secure members of the English landed elite by the close of the period studied here.

Current research on Cannon Hall and the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family is limited. Following the transfer of the family muniments into council ownership there was a flurry of interest in the newly available documents by economic historians, particularly A. Raistrick

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<sup>32</sup> BALS: SpSt 60656, William Spencer cash journal 1737-1743; SpSt 60633, Diaries of John Spencer 1750-1775, especially detailed record given in 1772.

and E. Allen and G. Hopkinson, interested in the industrial significance of the area and the family's instrumental role in the rapid success and unusual decline of the charcoal iron syndicates of the South Yorkshire region in the early and middle decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, R. G. Wilson's work on merchant families in Leeds and surrounding areas touches briefly on the family and some of their regional networks and more recently Amanda Vickery has briefly discussed the family in reference to the connections between Elizabeth Shackleton and the Stanhope family.<sup>34</sup> Three PhD projects have consulted the archive collection for their research. Jane Holmes' research utilised several of the family's letters to inform her understanding of the nature of domestic service in Yorkshire between 1650 and 1780.<sup>35</sup> Kate Gibson's project, charting the experiences of illegitimacy in England, utilised the diaries and correspondence of Walter Spencer Stanhope and John Smith, John Spencer's illegitimate son.<sup>36</sup> Tul Israngura Na Ayudhya has made brief reference to the letters between William Spencer and his sons in his discussion of fatherly education.<sup>37</sup> Research undertaken for a proposed restoration project in 2001 gives a brief overview of the family history and a timeline of changes to the gardens in the eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup> The most thoroughgoing discussion of the family is the memoir written by A. M. W. Stirling, which provides a rich source of contextual information, as well as references to letters and other useful source material now lost, including family portraits, although does not provide any analysis of the source material.<sup>39</sup>

So while the family's history has been studied and considered in a number of different contexts, no-one to date has explored Cannon Hall and the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope

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<sup>33</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters', pp. 168-185; Hopkinson, 'The Development of Lead Mining'.

<sup>34</sup> R. G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The merchant community in Leeds, 1700-1830* (New York, 1971), pp. 150, 153, 228; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 37, 106-107, 242, 248, 267, 374-375.

<sup>35</sup> Jane Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire, 1650-1780', Ph.D. thesis, (University of York, 1989).

<sup>36</sup> Kate Louise Gibson, 'Experiences of Illegitimacy in England, 1660-1834', Ph. D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2018).

<sup>37</sup> Tul Israngura Na Ayudhya, 'Men in the Family: Constructions and Performance of Masculinity in England, c. 1700-1820', Ph. D. thesis (Queen Mary, University of London, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Jane Furse, 'Cannon Hall: An Historical Survey with Heritage Landscape Restoration Proposals for the S. W. Fraser 1992 Settlement Trust' (unpublished, 2001).

<sup>39</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*.



family from the detailed perspective of the establishment and expression of masculine gentry identity as this thesis will, focusing on the tenures of ownership spanning the long eighteenth century. There is much to learn from studying the male heads of household during this period given the progressive growth in wealth and status summarised above. How this was reflected in the architectural and decorative alterations to Cannon Hall, practices of consumption and household management and the extent to which this influenced expressions of individual and collective identity through different mediums, as well as some of the challenges these men faced, will form the central foci of the chapters that follow. In light of these aims, the research on the family that has come before, and the archive material available, I will now address the historiography from which the research questions and intentions of this project were formed.

### **The Country Estate**

With the ownership of a landed estate came prestige and social status, or at least the opportunity to claim such status. The belief that ‘property determined power’ was not only incontrovertible in eighteenth-century England but continues to provide country houses with an allure that attracts visitors and a broad readership for histories which focus on all aspects of the country estate.<sup>40</sup> This thesis examines what the architecture, physical spaces, material culture, governance and network of the country house and its owners reveal about their identity and how this changed over time. Country houses need to be considered as multifaceted, multifunctional spaces, expressing quality, status, taste and identity, but also as the centre of a community, a signifier of power and wealth as well as a home and a place of domesticity.

Literature on the country house, both that aimed at an academic audience and publications with a broader readership is considerable, particularly that which traces architectural transformations over the centuries.<sup>41</sup> A great deal of this literature focuses on the grandest of country seats, their architecture and material culture, with historians such as Christopher

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<sup>40</sup> Paul Langford, *Public Life and Propertied Englishmen 1689-1798*, (Oxford, 1991), p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Jon Stobart, ‘The country house and cultures of consumption’ in *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption*, ed. Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (Swindon, 2016), p. 1.

Hussey and Mark Girouard publishing chronological studies detailing the changing styles, fashions and building techniques as well as the reasons for and ways in which interior décor evolved from the medieval period to modern times.<sup>42</sup> Mark Girouard's *Life in the English Country House* (1980) is widely considered the landmark text on the social and architectural history of the country house. Beyond the discussion of architectural and decorative style, Girouard reveals the diverse functions of country houses for their owners, servants and visitors and how the country house acted simultaneously as a social, political and economic space in which people performed particular roles. As already set out, the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family, represent more modest circumstances relative to the upper echelons of the elite which have been the primary focus of previous research such as Girouard's. Chapters One and Two of this thesis are focused on the architecture and material culture of Cannon Hall and will therefore add to this existing field of study on the country house, assessing the ways in which our protagonists' preferences, choices and expressions of identity mirrored or differed from their more established counterparts, and how this shifted alongside the family's growing stature.

Early work has since been joined by a plethora of more recent studies which significantly broadens the field of research. Christopher Christie's text *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (2000) offers a closer examination of architectural construction, illustrating the breadth of the changes that took place.<sup>43</sup> Christie also examines the roles of those who populated the country house, including some discussion of the relationship between the family and those in service and goes on to examine the sociability of the house and grounds and the variety of entertainment that took place there. Christie offers a brief but concise introduction to the topic of paternalism and the relationships between those who populated the estate. Paternalism is a theme I too will consider in an exploration into the changing approaches to household governance during the period in Chapter Three, showing it to be an increasing feature of masculine identity towards the end of the century.

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<sup>42</sup> See C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Early Georgian 1715-1760* (London, 1955); C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Mid Georgian 1760-1800* (London, 1955); C. Hussey, *English Country Houses: Late Georgian 1800-1840* (London, 1955); Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978).

<sup>43</sup> Christopher Christie, *The British Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester and New York, 2000).

Christie's primary focus, however, is upon the sociability and cultural lives of the owners of the country houses, illustrating how political and cultural developments influenced architectural design. I will go on to show that in many ways the various works undertaken at Cannon Hall over the period reveal similar architectural ambitions, with polite sociability similarly at the core of the re-design and later developments.

The contribution to the field of country house study by archaeologists offers a useful tool for considering how the house functioned as a space. Ground plans are frequently utilised, especially for what they can tell us about social structure and household hierarchies.<sup>44</sup> For Nicholas Cooper plans offer an insight into the changing ideology of internal spaces that were in increasing contrast with the symbolic statement made by the external architecture.<sup>45</sup> Susie West has shown how formal building analysis techniques used by both architectural historians and archaeologists create detailed narratives of change in built forms. Those same methodologies will be applied in Chapter One, tracing the historical architectural changes to the house to reproduce suggested floor plans at different points during its development over the century. The plan form allows archaeologists to explore 'spatial organization and the relation to social organization' of a space.<sup>46</sup> House plans reveal two different characteristics of space: firstly, the control of and secondly the permeability of space. This strategy is particularly useful for exploring 'the survival of old houses into new cultural contexts', and whilst floor plans are limited in that they provide a sense of the intended use of space as opposed to the reality, I will address this problem by drawing on evidence from other sources such as inventories and correspondence.<sup>47</sup> Chapter One will therefore demonstrate how the analysis of space in such a way is useful when considering how Cannon Hall functioned over its lifetime and adapted to meet the challenges of new social expectations and behaviour and also how people of different social rank mixed within it.

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<sup>44</sup> Susie West, 'Social Space and the English Country House', in S. Tarlow and S. West (eds) *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of later historical Britain* (London and New York, 1999), p. 105; Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*.

<sup>45</sup> Nicholas Cooper, 'Rank, manners and display: the gentlemanly house, 1500-1750', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002), pp. 291-310.

<sup>46</sup> West, 'Social Space', p. 105.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Work on the social function of the country house by James Rosenheim has illustrated the changes brought about to the interior space due to the significant 'shift in the social function of the house' by the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> Despite some methodological problems, particularly a failure to distinguish between different groups within the 'ruling elite', Rosenheim's analysis of the rise of a national elite offers a detailed consideration of the professional and public roles undertaken by the elite both regionally and nationally. Rosenheim, along with Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, has highlighted the prominent discussions about the country house as a site for display and the formation of taste, indicators of politeness and most interestingly, the self. Further historiography has questioned the extent to which the country house could simultaneously allow for such expressions of the self and the growing desire for privacy in the domestic ideal that developed over the course of the eighteenth century and has questioned whether the public use of the house as a site for patronage stunted the 'development of emotional attachments' to country houses as homes for both men and women.<sup>49</sup> Chapters One and Two of this thesis extend this discussion, exploring in detail how space and contents were manipulated in tandem at Cannon Hall. The impact of display comes through most overtly in the more public areas of the house, but also there was considerable flexibility in the use and expression of space which allowed for privacy, with a strong sense of lineage, taste, status and personal preference emerging as key motivators behind consumption at Cannon Hall.

Most recently, historians have begun to look more closely at small classical houses and to distinguish between the narratives of large elaborate homes of the aristocracy and the comparatively small landed estates of the gentry. Stephen Hague's study of small classical houses and their owners from 1680-1780 poses interesting questions regarding the use of country houses as contributing towards the construction of a specific type of gentry identity.<sup>50</sup> Hague's suggestion that those who built such houses shared a sense of collective

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<sup>48</sup> James Rosenheim, *The Emergence of a Ruling Order, English Landed Society, 1650-1750* (London, 1998), p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Judith Lewis, 'When a House is Not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009), p. 339.

<sup>50</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House* .

identity expressed and facilitated through specific architectural features, the design and build process, décor and gentry networks greatly informs this thesis throughout. For Hague, rather than small classical houses acting as a form of emulation, the processes by which they came to fruition and the points in the life course at which they were built suggests that these houses acted instead as confirmation of the owner's gentlemanly status and 'marked absolute entry into the governing class'.<sup>51</sup> Hague's methodology combined the analysis of material culture and social networks of classical house builders as evidence of important distinctions between the gentry and middling sort. This was displayed through their use of more lavish décor, precise yet flexible architectural design and patterns of sociability.<sup>52</sup> The in depth single-house study in this thesis, covering three generations during a period of financial and social mobility at Cannon Hall, will build on Hague's conclusions by charting the incremental and step changes over the period, utilising the evidence of the rich material culture of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family and their interactions within a tight knit network of social and business contacts, as each generation sought to define and confirm their gentility and masculine identity.

Further work on the nuances of the country house and estate have been undertaken by historians Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery who have, both together and independently, produced a range of work which looks more closely at the lived experiences of several groups involved in the country house beyond that of the owners. This and other work has considered the history of country houses in terms of consumption habits and commercial linkages and networks which stemmed from the country estate as well as charting long-term patterns of consumption driven by heritage and gentry identity.<sup>53</sup> Simultaneously, Jon

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>53</sup> Mark Rothery and Jon Stobart, 'Inheritance events and spending patterns in the English country house: the Leigh family of Stoneleigh Abbey, 1738–1806', *Continuity and Change* 27 (December 2012), pp. 379–407; Jon Stobart, 'Status, gender and life cycle in the consumption practices of the English elite. The case of Mary Leigh, 1736–1806' *Social History* 40 (2015), pp.82-103; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family' *Cultural and Social History* 11 (2015), pp.385-406; Jon Stobart, *Travel and the British Country House Cultures, Critiques and Consumption in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2017); Mark Rothery and Jon Stobart, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, 2016); Jon Stobart, 'Gentlemen and shopkeepers: Supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England', *The Economic History Review* 64 (August, 2011), pp. 885-904.

Stobart and Andrew Hann have collaborated to bring together several bodies of research exploring aspects of the country house aimed at enlivening and developing the field of country house studies through a series of conferences, followed by accompanying edited collections.<sup>54</sup> These burgeoning historiographical debates, particularly those concerning the relationship between the country house and empire, are also being joined by research by heritage professionals aiming to reinvigorate and diversify the histories told to visitors of their managed sites.<sup>55</sup> For example, The National Trust's Challenging Histories programme (2017 – 2019) explored the marginalised aspects of their sites, in particular the experiences of Women and LGBTQ+ communities.<sup>56</sup> With respect to empire, some country houses are re-assessing their display of objects both with overt and hidden connections to slavery to acknowledge these links more openly to visitors exploring the histories of these places.<sup>57</sup> The field of country house studies is therefore growing in complexity with the histories of the thousands of smaller country houses such as Cannon Hall being recognised as integral to a developing understanding of a complex social cultural network. As an in-depth case study this thesis will supplement existing research in developing our understanding of how different aspects of the country house interact and change over time through successive generations and specifically how the enactment and cultivation of identity and masculinity both impacted and was reflected through the country house during the period.

### **Social Hierarchy and Identity**

This thesis enhances our understanding of those social groups that made up the landed gentry, the families who sat between the middling sort and the aristocracy in the social hierarchy. Historically there has been limited research into this substantial social group is surprising given the number of families it comprised, with over ten thousand families of

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<sup>54</sup> Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption* (Swindon, 2016).

<sup>55</sup> Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (eds), *Slavery and the British Country House* (Swindon, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> National Trust, Challenging Histories 2017-2019, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-we-are-challenging-our-history> (accessed on 18th May 2021).

<sup>57</sup> One notable example is Harewood Hall, Leeds, <https://harewood.org/about/the-foundation-of-harewood/> (accessed 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

gentry status in comparison to just two to three hundred families that made up the nobility during the eighteenth century.<sup>58</sup>

Defining the social status and rank of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family is complex and tying them to a specific sub-group within the rank of the elite is contingent upon the factors used to frame the definition. Early historiography which included members of the gentry routinely shoehorned these families into the 'conveniently elastic label "aristocracy" or dismissed them as 'parish gentry'.<sup>59</sup> G. Mingay was a rare exception. Whereas a number of his contemporaries confined investigations to the inhabitants of large country houses or grouped gentry into a monolithic body, Mingay's work recognised the social and economic diversity of the elite.<sup>60</sup> Mingay's *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1963), continues to be praised for its consideration of all three tiers of landowners: peers, gentry and freeholders and for his discussions of the 'factors that cut across clear social distinction [...] which generated a complicated kinship web linking land with merchants, professionals and even with tradesmen'.<sup>61</sup> Although it is now many decades since the book's publication, Mingay's research remains the cornerstone of current thinking on the order of elite society in the eighteenth century and his robust yet somewhat crude categorisation was considered here as an initial way of situating the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope families into the England's complex social hierarchy.

If we consider the position of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family from an occupational perspective they were industrialists, not hereditary landholders, who arrived anew to the parish in the 1650's. The financial rewards of their industrial success provided

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<sup>58</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 14.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13, 14; also see Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> Peter Roebuck, *Yorkshire Baronets 1640-1760: Families, Estates and Fortunes* (Oxford, 1980); Much narrower definitions are offered in J. V. Beckett, 'The Pattern of Landownership in England and Wales, 1660-1880', *The Economic History Review* 37 (1984), pp. 1-22; Lawrence Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984); John Habakkuk, 'English Landownership, 1680-1740', *The Economic History Review* 10 (1940), pp. 2-17. The lesser gentry is discussed by Philip Jenkins, *The Making of the Ruling Class: The Glamorgan Gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983) and David Howell, *Patriarchs and Parasites: The Gentry of South-West Wales in the Eighteenth Century* (Cardiff, 1986).

<sup>61</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 298; G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in Eighteenth Century* (London, 1963).

them with the means by which to purchase Cannon Hall and eventually remodel it, although determining an accurate account of the family's annual income is difficult to determine as discussed above. Whilst the exact monetary value of their assets is somewhat unclear, the accumulation of their business success, land holdings and rental income would almost certainly have categorised them within Mingay's definition of the 'wealthy gentry' by the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>62</sup> Whilst their spending tells us very little about their income it is useful to recognise that, as Chapter One goes on to discuss, building work for the renovations in the 1760's ran to a substantial £11,665 14s 8d and in the absence of funds to pay for it, John Spencer was able to call upon the sale or mortgage of a number of assets.<sup>63</sup> The payment of Miscellaneous Taxes also offers an indication of the family's wealth for the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Carriage Tax records (1753-1762) list the Spencers as in possession of one four wheeled coach and a two wheeled chaise, while the Plate Tax for 1756 (the year of John's inheritance) until 1762, records him owning 500 ounces of silver and paying a duty of £1.5s annually.<sup>64</sup> To compare this with records for the families extended kin and gentry neighbours, John owned more than any of his brothers-in-law, William Stanhope and John Shuttleworth, and more than John Stanhope of Horsforth, but less than half of that owned by Godfrey Wentworth of nearby Hickleton Hall, 300 ounces less than William Wrightson at Cusworth Hall, Doncaster, and just one eighth of that owned by the Marquis of Rockingham at Wentworth Woodhouse.<sup>65</sup>

By the end of the period studied here however, Walter's occupation as a Member of Parliament and the financial benefits of his inheritance of three estates, alongside substantial assets from his marriage, positions the family well within the ranks of the wealthy, political elite. Given these complexities, classifying the family within a fixed subgroup is problematic. It is also noteworthy that any rigid distinction based solely on income or occupation for example would be detrimental and would neglect the many crossovers and interconnections between individuals and families of the middling sort to the poorer

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<sup>62</sup> Mingay, *English Landed*, p. 26.

<sup>63</sup> BALS: SpSt 60686/25, 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall, and by whom paid from the years 1756-1773'.

<sup>64</sup> Furse, 'Cannon Hall', pp. 5-6.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.



aristocracy and the various ways rank was culturally defined. The gentry were a diverse and fluid group that defy a simple and universal categorisation and it is useful to consider this range of factors. For the majority of the period studied there is enough justification to place the family amongst the broad group of 'middling landowners' of the gentry community, while acknowledging the fact that their status was not static.<sup>66</sup> Rank was not defined by wealth alone, but equally built on social culture and reputation. In this way, the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes, whose status was built on business success as opposed to dynastic, hereditary landholdings, will be defined here as members of the lesser landed gentry. In this thesis, we follow the family over a period of upward social mobility across generations, exploring how through different periods their status was cultivated and consolidated, and how change over time to this status both influenced, and was influenced by, their expressions of masculine gentry identity.

Amanda Vickery was among the first to refresh perspectives on the lesser gentry and address the absence of research on this social group through her seminal work on 'genteel' women in rural Lancashire.<sup>67</sup> Vickery's work illuminates the complex social networks which cut across social divides while vividly capturing the uniqueness of the lifestyle and experiences of those of the lesser gentry. More recent studies by Jon Stobart and Susan Whyman have further stressed the interconnectedness of the different groups in society, and in doing so discussed the links between those considered lesser gentry with tradesmen as well as their more affluent neighbours in a network forged through obligation, necessity and mutual benefit, which leads this discussion onto an additional range of topics.<sup>68</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery's *Man's Estate* and the accompanying source book was the first of its kind to focus on the gentry men from the perspective of 'family relationships and dynamics' through the experiences shared in correspondence, rather than the traditional narrative of inheritance, the landed estate and gentry identity based on published social

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<sup>66</sup> 'Middling landowners' is term used by Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance events', p. 380.

<sup>67</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 13.

<sup>68</sup> Stobart, 'Gentleman and Shopkeepers'; Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford and New York, 1999).

commentaries.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, their concentration on gender breathed new life into well-trodden avenues of research on patterns of behaviour and the social identity of landowners, specifically on themes such as thrift and good economy. The formation of gentry identity was intimately tied up with gendered expectations, alongside the more exclusive expectations of lineage and dynasty in the case of landed families. Gentry identity was thus governed by a complex amalgamation of factors according to their hierarchical position, within which their greater levels of privilege above the middling sort was tempered by their lesser levels of security when compared to the wealthier elite. Similarly, the history of cultural and material consumption of the landed gentry has been reassessed by Mark Rothery and Jon Stobart in their important discussion on the impact of inheritance upon the longevity of a family estate.<sup>70</sup> Rather than prioritising the increase in conspicuous consumption over the eighteenth century, their work reveals carefully planned economic management of the estate by stewards, caretakers and executors, enforcing episodes of thrift and cautious spending to counter times of more elaborate indulgences by the family. Recent historiography is beginning to reassess old debates and refocus attention on previously marginalised aspects of these histories. This thesis contributes to our understanding of the material culture small country houses, assessing change over time at Cannon Hall, and how consumption practices and the expression of masculine identity through the home was managed through periods of varying economic stability.

The term 'gentry' covers a breadth of wealth, domestic circumstance and authority. As has been noted, the interconnections between the gentry and those of the middling sort below and wealthy elite above is frequently blurred, nonetheless the sheer comparative size of the gentry, their socio-economic power and networks of national reach ensured that they led the way in taste, fashion and social etiquette.<sup>71</sup> As such, a richer understanding of the

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<sup>69</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), p. 17; Mark Rothery and Henry French, *Making Men: The Formation of Elite Male Identities in England, c. 1660-1900, A Sourcebook* (Basingstoke and New York, 2012)

<sup>70</sup> Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance Events', pp. 379-407.

<sup>71</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 16-18; M. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, gender and the Family in England, 1670-1780* (London, 1996), pp. 193-215; Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), pp. 76-80; Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford and New York, 2013), pp. 1-98, 229-242.

constituent members of this social group through an initial focus here on the lesser landed gentry, and the subsequent investigation into how family and personal status evolves, broadens our appreciation of major social and cultural influences of the long eighteenth century.<sup>72</sup>

### **Masculinity and Identity**

This research seeks to explore the meaning of masculinity for the gentry and the degree to which the expressions and markers of manly identity can be shown to change or continue over time. In recent decades the study of masculinities has become increasingly more prominent, with gender studies on women having set the precedent.<sup>73</sup> Keen to progress and enliven the field, historians have critiqued dominant chronologies and understandings of change over time, the benefits and challenges of methodologies, and the wider implications of a more nuanced and well-rounded appreciation of masculinity.<sup>74</sup> Of great significance is the historiographical review of the field published in a special edition of the *Journal of British Studies* in 2005, edited by Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard. Key to their discussion was the need to address differences in the understanding of the nature of masculinity and change overtime, particularly for the eighteenth century, that had occurred as a consequence of the preference for cultural over social methodological approaches, and to allow for a better understanding of the persistence of masculine traits across the early modern-modern period. Furthermore, they called for greater emphasis to be placed on 'men's social relations with each other and with women, and on subjective experience' over 'cultural codes and representations' to more fully understand the reach of dominant modes of masculinity across society.<sup>75</sup> For Harvey and Shepard, to do this masculinity studies needed to be broadened to consider the relationship of masculinity with other markers of power and status, most notably class, not least because of the idea that specific forms of

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<sup>72</sup> Hague, *Gentleman's House*, p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 3-5; Also see Karen Harvey and Alex Shepard, 'What have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500-1950', *Journal of British Studies* 44 (April, 2006), pp. 274-280.

<sup>74</sup> Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', pp. 275-276; Philip Carter, 'Enlightenment masculinity: towards experience and embodiment' in Lise Andries and Marc André Bernier (eds), *L'Avenir des Lumières / The Future of Enlightenment* (Hermann, Paris, 2019), pp. 123-124.

<sup>75</sup> Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', pp. 275, 277.

masculinity were increasingly associated with different social groups.<sup>76</sup> For historians of the long eighteenth century, this would offer a more rounded view of masculinity outside of the dominant narrative of the 'polite gentleman' championed in cultural studies as the hegemonic form.<sup>77</sup> Studies such as this that explore a rich and varied collection of sources including men's personal papers serve to address this call head on.

Central to the history of masculinity is the debate on patterns of longitudinal change initiated by sociologist R. W. Connell's work on 'hegemonic masculinity'.<sup>78</sup> Hegemonic masculinity is the culturally dominant mode of masculinity that often serves to maintain the dominance of the political classes and patriarchy and is in tension and opposition with other forms of masculinity.<sup>79</sup> The flexibility and usefulness of this model is evident from its popularity and endurance.<sup>80</sup> Historians have explored the parameters of this framework and scrutinised the theory of hegemonic masculinity showing it to be 'highly complex, fluid and full of contradictions' and challenged the assertion of the top down filtration of dominant codes of masculinity.<sup>81</sup> Research on manhood in the seventeenth century by Shepard proposed that, rather than the presence of an overarching domineering archetype over inferior or subjugated masculinities, 'alternative meanings of manhood evolved as expedients [...] rather than as explicit counter codes'.<sup>82</sup> Thus it was possible for several different notions of masculine identity and manhood to exist simultaneously. Similarly, research on the long eighteenth century by Hannah Barker questions the extent to which the idealised form of polite masculinity of the elites was at odds with that of the lower and middle class diarists she studied. Barker proposes that the cultural-historical methodology that prioritises printed literature artificially elevated the tension between 'polite gentlemen'

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

<sup>77</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001); Michèle Cohen, "'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies* 44 (April 2005), pp. 312-329.

<sup>78</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 186-199.

<sup>79</sup> Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p. 278.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York, 2003), p. 249.

and other men and overemphasised idealised masculinities of the political classes.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis on cultural rather than social history exaggerated the shift in masculinity occurring between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. Instead Barker's research and others since, found much greater degrees of continuity across the period.<sup>84</sup>

More recently, research into the landed elite by French and Rothery states that masculine identity is better explained as multiple currents of identity running simultaneously in which deep rooted notions of masculinity exist alongside competing stereotypes.<sup>85</sup> These stereotypes 'were negotiated socially and culturally' in that they were created through personal discourse and materiality, while also requiring a "currency" to endure as a societal archetype.<sup>86</sup> The theory of a balance between stereotypes and "common sense" notions of male authority and power' suggests that elite men 'conceived their gender identity by reference to a number of competing stereotypes, rather than in relation to a single "hegemonic" form'.<sup>87</sup> For French and Rothery the question raised here then, is whether normative change over the period they study (from 1700-1900) 'occurred through the discursive interplay between these different bundles of traits and values' as opposed to much more seismic changes to "hegemonic" regimes'.<sup>88</sup> Ultimately concluding that, while change did occur, this was 'contained within *adaptations* of the existing gendered vocabulary, instead of necessitating the inventions of a new one' and that the most significant 'change came from [...] fundamental challenges to the position, authority, power, and wealth of the landed elite'.<sup>89</sup> The latter of these assertions applicable towards the end of the period they studied and beyond the remit of the research undertaken here.<sup>90</sup> This thesis builds on the conclusions of French and Rothery that the influences on identity were multifaceted and at times competing, but with a deep sense of continuity. I will discuss the

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<sup>83</sup> Hannah Barker, 'Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester', *Social History* 33 (2008), pp. 34-35.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13; Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?', p. 276.

<sup>85</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, p. 14.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

theme of lineage expressed through consumption, and locate continuity in practices of household governance and the preservation of long-standing family relationships as active resisters to change.

Prior to the publication of *Man's Estate*, histories examining masculine identity had failed to distinguish the different ranks within the gentry as distinct from the middling sorts below or the aristocracy above.<sup>91</sup> The gentry were amalgamated into competing types in which the aristocracy were 'kin-oriented, dandiful, lavish, leisured, violent, bloodthirsty, and profligate' and in contrast to a middling sort who were 'individualistic, earnest, serious, hard-working, thrifty, sober, self-controlled, and bound within a privatized family life'.<sup>92</sup> Enduring norms of 'honour, virtue, authority, truth-telling, Christian morality, and understandings of power' were the foundational and unfaltering values consistent for gentry men across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>93</sup> My research continues this evaluation into the nature of change over time to masculine identity but through the focus on a single family across the three generations studied. Markers of masculine identity such as independence and domestic authority, management of the self and others, diligence, frugality and thrift are all evidenced here. What is also demonstrated however, are the ways in which masculinity changed across the life course and how these idealised values were challenged and contradicted, concurring in many ways with French and Rothery's findings. What is more, there are interesting parallels between the masculinity aspired to by the lower and middle class men in Barker's study, which concluded that key traits including 'mastery of the self, devotion to God, hard work and family life' made up the ideal.<sup>94</sup> Crucially, however, where Barker records a fixation with achieving these ideals and perhaps a greater rigidity, here masculine traits are flexible and open to variations. It is important to recognise the unique experiences of the landed gentry and to assess their experiences accordingly. The transmission of specific core values from one generation to the next was particularly crucial for the lesser landed gentry whose authority and social status, cemented through financial stability and reputation, remained precarious and vulnerable and

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>94</sup> Barker, 'Soul, purse and family', p. 34.

contingent on both inherited practices and the personal behaviours of successive generations. As dynastic representatives, children and heirs not only grew up with a sure sense of what it was to be a member of their particular family but in the knowledge that many aspects of their lives were played out in public and had dynastic implications. This thesis seeks to locate and identify these key attributes of masculine gentry identity for the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes by examining their patterns of behaviour and decision-making surrounding key social and cultural features of their lifestyles.

An important topic in analyses of masculine identity among the elite in recent work is that of domesticity. R. Trumbach was among the first historians to highlight the 'increasing importance of domesticity' for the landed, specifically the aristocracy, between 1690 and 1780.<sup>95</sup> Despite Trumbach's openness to Stone's 'linear teleology of emotional development', his findings reflect more modern historiographical research on the emergence of the 'sentimental man' from the 1740's.<sup>96</sup> In more recent years, John Tosh has proposed the idea of a new emergent middle-class masculinity in Victorian England in which he argues that this 'new, historically specific form of middle-class masculinity was characterized by the elevation of "domesticity" as its central principle'.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, Philip Carter's *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* discusses the importance of 'the domestic ideal' for men in the mid-to-late eighteenth century.<sup>98</sup> Covering the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Alexandra Shepard's work demonstrated how manhood was inextricably linked to the mastery over a household.<sup>99</sup> Shepard describes how 'patriarchal prescriptions of male self-sufficiency, economic independence and responsibility towards others' both informed 'subtle status distinctions' and marked out

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<sup>95</sup> R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth Century England* (1978), p 287.

<sup>96</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, p. 187.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186; John Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England* (New Haven and London, 1999). The middle classes have been studied extensively, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987).

<sup>98</sup> Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society: Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001)

<sup>99</sup> Shepard, 'Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England, c. 1580-1640', *Past and Present* 167 (2000), p. 89.

broader social hierarchies.<sup>100</sup> Karen Harvey's work highlighted the importance of the practice of oeconomy in underpinning patriarchal authority in the home, as well as providing a grounding for male public identity and sense of self for men in the eighteenth century.<sup>101</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's work found that masculinity for middle-class men in the early nineteenth century was contingent upon their ability to support their dependants and foster a secure and comfortable home life.<sup>102</sup> Domesticity and mastery over a household is therefore a pivotal and enduring feature of masculinity across society, although it remains the case that modern studies have tended to preference the lives and experiences of the middling sort. It is the small body of research into the domestic lives of the gentry specifically which is of greatest use here as this thesis seeks to explore and understand masculine identity for those whose social status evolved over the course of the long eighteenth-century from the lesser landed gentry defined above. Following Amanda Vickery's early contribution on the social relations and domestic experiences of 'genteel' women, her book *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* considered the varying domestic situations for men, particularly men of middling and lower gentry status.<sup>103</sup> Vickery's work demonstrates the diverse domestic situations for men in the period and the onus placed on the stability of married life and its importance to manly status. Despite evidence that marriage was the desirable status quo, the men here, particularly John Spencer, demonstrate that it was not the ambition for all men.

Work by Kate Retford is rare in its prioritization of the landed elite at home and through the examination of portraiture found that the growing freedom of emotional expression after the mid-eighteenth century is observable in these personal depictions from the period.<sup>104</sup> Composition was purposefully designed to 'emphasize domestic virtues and overlay the realities of daily familial life with images that suggested ideal intimacy and affection' whilst

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<sup>100</sup> Shepard, 'Manhood', p. 89.

<sup>101</sup> Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*.

<sup>103</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*.

<sup>104</sup> Kate Retford, 'Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: The Collection at Kedleston Hall', *Historical Journal* 46 (2003), pp. 533-560; Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 2006).



positioning within the home ensured the paintings retained a political dimension and ‘the intermingling of issues of power and dynasty with the [...] vogue for the sentimental family’.<sup>105</sup> The home was an essential site for the construction and performance of masculine attributes and used for specific and unique purposes by the gentry. The neglect of specific studies on the rural and landed society by historians of masculinity prompted Rothery and French’s recent work *Man’s Estate* which vividly explores the meaning of home, authority and the life course for gentry men and the shaping of a specific form of gentry masculine identity through familial bonds.<sup>106</sup> In their conclusions French and Rothery discuss the difficulties in ascertaining the extent to which there was a “growth” in the importance of domestic ideology within the masculine identity of the landed elite’ because of the interconnectedness of marriage and the ‘perennial “adult” male values, such as authority, autonomy, self-command and responsibility’.<sup>107</sup> Fundamentally, elite masculine identities remained a ‘conservative process’ tied up in a desire for continuity of lineage and the retention of gender values for ‘the preservation of the status quo’ rather than a desire or need for change.<sup>108</sup> For French and Rothery the challenge remains to examine the extent to which elite masculinities were influenced by domesticity and how this concept was manifest in the lives and identities of elite men. Chapter Three of this thesis explores in detail how the home and mastery over a household was the very bedrock of masculine identity for men of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family, and it extends existing scholarship by demonstrating that the physical construction of the house, alongside its governance, was a critical arena in managing patriarchal relations within the home.

### **Structure of the thesis**

While the thesis as a whole aims to explore the manifestations of gentry identity, the individual chapters delve into a series of topics which are central to an understanding the dynamics of the country house and the lifestyle of the lesser landed gentry. The thesis begins right at the heart of Cannon Hall as a place, home and site for the expression of status and masculine gentry identity before moving outwards to consider the family’s

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<sup>105</sup> Retford, ‘Sensibility and Genealogy’, p. 560.

<sup>106</sup> French and Rothery, *Man’s Estate*; French and Rothery, *Making Men*.

<sup>107</sup> French and Rothery, *Man’s Estate*, p. 233.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 242.

relationships with those in the household and tenants in the local village community. The final chapter moves beyond these geographical confines to investigate the wider social network of the male heads of household over the period. Whilst the source materials and research methodologies employed are summarised in what follows below, the nature of the constituent chapters required differing approaches in terms of the research, and so these topics are covered in greater detail within the body of each chapter. That being said, the scope, main research questions and approach for each chapter are as follows:

The first two chapters are concerned with the fabric of Cannon Hall, its architecture and the material culture which populated the rooms and within them I consider what the physical features and practices of material culture tell us about the family, their lifestyle and identity. 'Chapter One: Understanding Architectural Improvements and Space Use at Cannon Hall' sets out to re-imagine the spaces of the Hall by piecing together evidence from a range of source types, not least the physical signs of change evident in the building today. Paintings and sketches alongside household inventories divulge the evolution of the internal spaces, whilst correspondence and bills for works leave further clues on internal architecture and design and the decision-making processes. In recreating how the building evolved architecturally and spatially over time, the chapter considers how practicalities, personal preferences, contemporary fashions and collective identity influenced decision-making on the home. Cannon Hall, like many other similar remodels or newly built small classical houses at the end of the seventeenth century and in the early decades of the eighteenth century shaped the identity of its occupiers, as it did for others across the British Atlantic world.<sup>109</sup> Thus the architectural evolution of the house and its gardens reflects some of the key shifts in the history of the family, not least changes of ownership and the individuals' desire for the status of the building to reflect and facilitate both their social standing and individuality, thus validating and enhancing their own status.<sup>110</sup> The periods of substantial architectural alterations to the Hall are shown to rely on the collaboration of a hierarchy of individuals and the findings extend work on the gentry family, demonstrating that power relations within the household relied partly on collaboration and negotiation. These

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<sup>109</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 4.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

episodes set the foundations for themes discussed in Chapter Three on how the cultivation of gentry identity was contingent on the efforts of many within the household. Ultimately the chapter will demonstrate that despite constraints which prevented the occupiers achieving all their architectural ambitions, evidence demonstrates that they would not compromise on crucial aspects such as the choice of architect and landscape designer and the overall function of the house for the purposes of sociability, as these were integral components of the owner's gentry identity.

'Chapter Two: Consumption and the Domestic Interior, 1683-1822' builds on the architectural study of Cannon Hall in Chapter One as a site of multiple uses, as a home, a place of work and a symbol of status and authority. By examining letters, household inventories and paintings this chapter considers how the consumption habits and design choices for the Hall contributed to each male household head's cultivation of his masculine gentry ideal. Charting the spending patterns and material culture of the Hall exposes thriftiness and good oeconomy as decisive influences for decision-making on spending in the home. The chapter explores how these traits worked in conjunction with other considerations such as heritage, the portrayal of lineage and how economic, as well as symbolic meaning was attributed to household goods and determined the life cycle of the furnishings and objects. In this chapter, I demonstrate that patterns of consumption and material culture at Cannon Hall convey a sense of an on-going balance between the articulation of good taste, refinement and fashionability on the one hand and specific lifestyle preferences alongside constraint and prudence on the other. The contents of the home therefore reflected a material representation of the delicate balance of features central to gentry masculine identity. The chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of the ways portraiture, through its composition and display, reinforced important messages about status, dynastic longevity and belonging and how it was used to memorialise decisive moments in time for the sitters.

Moving on from the visible symbolism of the home to the practicalities of household governance, 'Chapter Three: Keeping up appearances: Mastery of the estate' considers the strategies, relationships and hierarchies instrumental to the management of the estate.

Evidence discussed here demonstrates how long-term mechanisms of household management for the lesser landed gentry, particularly those who were frequently absent or without a spouse to oversee the estate, were dependent upon wider kinship networks alongside a hierarchy of paid employees. Hereditary practices and rituals shored up these features of household governance and reinforced practices of good oeconomy. Moving on, the chapter explores the challenges caused by this form of household management not least the extent to which it could lead to servant unrest. As the chapter argues, from the 1760's there was an increasing divergence between the ideals of the gentry and those they employed in service. This chapter questions the extent to which the events at Cannon Hall reflect the atmosphere and actions of those in service elsewhere, and the evidence of governance practices changing over the period studied, as the household heads sought to maintain control and order over the estate.

The discussion leads on to consider how those in service acted as a form of conspicuous consumption for their employer, especially through the long-term use of livery and depictions of servants in artwork commissioned and on display in the house. To conclude, the chapter explores how a servant's knowledge of this form of co-dependency between themselves and their master and the significance of good household management to the broader masculine identity of the household head could be a source of strength for servants seeking to uphold or improve their rights and privileges. This chapter finds that for all generations of men who headed the household of Cannon Hall the ability to fulfil the manly ideal of a household head was contingent upon a collaborative household in which key members were similarly invested in ensuring its success and protecting its reputation.

In 'Chapter Four: Networks and Sociability over the Life Course, 1739-1821' the social and business networks of three successive generations of male owners of Cannon Hall are explored for what they reveal about relationship patterns not only over the individual's life course but also generationally. Using samples of the recorded interactions from the pocket books kept by all three men this data has been analysed to re-create, as much as possible, a representation of the networks of each successive generation of the family. Network diagrams show how these evolved over time, and qualitative assessment of the data and

contextual information will identify the possible agents of change. The degree of sociability was substantial and an integral feature of life both at Cannon Hall and when residing in the capital. Networks are thus defined geographically, as well as by business or convivial sociability and for all men both locations had immensely tight knit social groupings within which they would meet on a highly frequent basis. Male conviviality and mutuality was a resounding feature for all the social networks and periods covered. A sense of mutuality between members of the men's personal social networks was a driving force and produced the most enduring connections over the life course. These patterns over the life cycle correlate closely with work by Whyman on elite social networks from the mid seventeenth to the mid eighteenth century, and demonstrate that dynastic sentiment and duty characterised sociable practices for the lesser landed gentry as well as the wealthier landed elite.

As I argue, social relationships followed familiar patterns over the life course, with a dominance of interactions with individuals connected to the lineage family taking precedence in youth and when in residence at Cannon Hall, then becoming less dominant as the men forged their own friendships and connections. The relationships the three men chose to encourage, compared to those they allowed to slip away, show how social networks enabled the construction of status and feelings of belonging and ultimately specific forms of masculine gentry identity.

## **Conclusion**

As the following chapters demonstrate, the extent of personal documents from multiple generations enables a thorough examination into the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family. Classified amongst the under-researched lesser landed gentry at the start of our period, this thesis tracks the growth in their wealth and status over the long eighteenth century to members of the wealthy elite. The social and cultural history of the Hall and its occupiers that follows in this thesis demonstrates how masculine, familial and collective identity was intrinsic in shaping and influencing many of these practices and behaviours. By analysing these strands of gentry lifestyle it is possible to situate the findings made here with other recent work on identity for the landed elite. Given the distinct lack of research on the

specific social status of the lesser gentry, this research offers evidence of how the practices and behaviours of the lesser landed elite correspond with and differ from those above and below them in the social hierarchy. The chronological coverage, evidence of material culture and transactions and the qualitative evidence of attitudes and practices found in these men's correspondence and pocket books sustains an in-depth study of many different facets of gentry masculinity across the life-cycle, within and without the home, as friends, husbands, sons and masters.

## Chapter One

### *Understanding Architectural Improvements and Space Use at Cannon Hall*

The marriage of John Spencer and Margaret Hartley in 1657 heralded the arrival of the Spencers at Cannon Hall; home, place of work and outward symbol of the wealth, success and authority for the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family through to the eventual sale of the estate in 1951. Nestled among the rolling hills of the surrounding landscape the views from the façade are of its far-reaching estate, yet the village of Cawthorne and the town of Barnsley are within easy reach. Over the course of the eighteenth century, multiple heads of household rebuilt, extended and altered the exterior and interior of the building and the gardens to reflect contemporary style, personal taste and to meet ever changing domestic requirements. This chapter explores household inventories, personal letters and house plans to understand the architectural history of the house and how it functioned as a space and a site for domesticity, work and sociability. It will also discuss how and why rooms and room use changed and what this tells us about concepts such as privacy, accessibility and domestic life over the period.

The active role of the male heads of household during this period is of particular importance and this chapter will set the stage and ready the scenery and props for later discussions of the sociability and masculine identity of William Spencer, John Spencer and Walter Spencer Stanhope, enriching our understanding of them as individuals, through the choices they made for their homestead and how their social and family lives interacted with and were played out at Cannon Hall. The archives for the house are vast and it would have been entirely possible to pursue such an investigation solely using this archival material. However, newer historical perspectives and approaches employed by historians such as Adrian Green and Susie West make using the house as a source itself both plausible and highly valuable. By positioning the objects listed in inventories back in their place of origin something far more tangible can be gleaned from otherwise quite lifeless and mundane household records. The country house acts as the stage in which the family can be observed. It is not static; its constant manipulation at the hands of the proprietors allows us great insight into the influence of individuals and the cultivation of a specific form of identity through the

material culture of the home. While this chapter provides context and illuminates the scene in which the later discussions are set, I will also look beyond the mere description of the furnishings and fittings to explore how the men of the house adapted and manipulated the spaces. Critically I will consider the key motivating factors behind the male heads' decision-making and what this reveals about the construction and negotiation of contemporary values associated with elite masculinity expressed through the country house. "Manly" self-control, thrift, independence of judgement, good taste and refinement were all essential components of eighteenth-century elite masculinity, and alongside personal interests and preferences, had significant influence on architectural and design choices in the home.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, correspondence between Walter Spencer Stanhope and his butler provide interesting insight into a servant's views on the works undertaken and introduces the household as a collective endeavour, where vested interest extended beyond the lineal family, as further discussed in Chapter Three. In rebuilding a picture of Cannon Hall and how this image changes over time, we start to understand the spending habits and priorities for each successive generation and what might have influenced those decisions, which in turn will contribute significantly to our understanding of the country house as a fluid and active environment in which design and consumption decisions reflects much more than austere displays of taste and wealth.

### **Historiography of the Country House Interior**

For both contemporaries and modern-day onlookers the country house is widely seen as a symbol of wealth, status and power, accentuated through its dominance over the landscape and for what it speaks about the permanence and longevity of the family that lived there. The expression of status and grandeur was typically continued through the objects which adorned the walls and populated interior spaces. As already touched upon in the introduction to the thesis, there is an abundance of literature on the country house spanning a broad spectrum of themes and approaches. For much of the last century, work on the country house commonly focused on architectural significance and the history of contemporary design. The current field of study has its origins in the 1970's, when historians

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<sup>111</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 181-182.



sought to reassess the conventional narrative on the country house, moving away from a narrow focus on architectural schemes and studies on single houses, to a broader consideration of the 'intersection of social, cultural and political contexts and their relevance for developments in both architecture and interior ornamentation'.<sup>112</sup> John Cornforth and John Fowler's in depth investigation of interior décor and Peter Thornton's work on the interior design and decoration from the 1620's not only provided the first thorough surveys of the English country house but also catapulted these somewhat forgotten buildings into the national consciousness.<sup>113</sup> The seminal work by Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* established research into the social history of the country house and the history of its design.<sup>114</sup> Girouard explored both the architectural and social history of the country house, noting 'the diverse functions of the country house for their owners, servants and visitors'.<sup>115</sup> Girouard's identification of the architectural and stylistic transitions from the 'formal house' (1630-1720), to the 'social house' (1720-1770) and to the 'informal house' by the end of the eighteenth century (1770-1830) is key to understanding changes that occurred to the spatial layout at Cannon Hall.<sup>116</sup> As I will go on to discuss, the timings and nature of the successive architectural and spatial alterations to Cannon Hall fit precisely into Girouard's chronology.

During the 1980's design historians began to amalgamate economic, cultural and social histories into their assessment of interiors.<sup>117</sup> Charles Saumarez-Smith investigated the artistic conventions used to create visual representations of interiors and their intended meanings to broaden awareness of what historic interiors actually looked like and how décor changed over the eighteenth century.<sup>118</sup> Artistic representation of life in the home

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<sup>112</sup> Hannah Greig and Giorgio Riello, 'Eighteenth-century Interiors- Redesigning the Georgian: Introduction', *Journal of Design History* 20 4 (2007), p. 274.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279-280; John Fowler and John Cornforth, *English Decoration in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1974); Peter Thornton, *Authentic Décor: The Domestic Interior 1620 – 1920* (London, 1984).

<sup>114</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978).

<sup>115</sup> Susie West, 'Social Space and the English Country House' in Sarah Tarlow and Susie West (eds), *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of Britain from 1550* (London and New York, 1999), p. 105.

<sup>116</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English*, pp. 119-162, 181-244.

<sup>117</sup> Greig and Riello, 'Eighteenth-century Interiors', p. 280.

<sup>118</sup> Charles Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, 1993), pp. 8-9.

was also used by historians charting the history of the family. Work by Lawrence Stone on social and family relationships used family group portraits to trace the foundations of the 'affective individual' and the 'nuclear family' firmly in the eighteenth century.<sup>119</sup> Stone's assertions, whilst not specifically linked to the country house, had foundations in the suggestion that the new preference for privacy somewhat isolated the family as an insular unit and acted to distinguish the home from other public places of work and from wider networks.

Historians have since questioned the degree to which the home was viewed as a private space away from the prying eyes of wider society and work by Linda Pollock and Amanda Vickery and others demonstrated that the presentation of the house and how it was run was central to men's social and masculine status.<sup>120</sup> Literature on the Georgian interior also began to consider country houses as a site for multifarious activities ranging from private domestic life to the vital role of the home as a site for sociability.<sup>121</sup> Histories were emerging that combined understandings of architecture and interior décor with new consideration given to consumption and design choices, exploring fundamental eighteenth-century values such as good taste through architectural design, internal layout and the fabrics and furnishings that adorned the walls and populated interior spaces.<sup>122</sup> Whilst not exclusively

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<sup>119</sup> L. Stone, *Family Sex and Marriage in England, 1500 – 1800* (London, 1977), pp. 221-267. The conversation piece and other family group portraits have been reassessed by Shearer West, 'Public nature of private life: The conversation piece and the fragmented family', *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18 (1995), pp. 153-172.

<sup>120</sup> Linda Pollock, 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of Family History* 23 1 (January 1998), pp. 3-27; Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres: A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *Historical Journal* 36 (1993), pp. 383 – 414.

<sup>121</sup> Judith Lewis, 'When a House is Not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009), pp. 336-363; Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1995); Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford and New York, 1999); Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009).

<sup>122</sup> Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape, and Society* (Stroud, 1998); Amanda Vickery and John Styles (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006); Jeremy Aynsley and Charlotte Grant (eds), *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London, 2006). Also work on consumption and luxury, Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (eds), *The Birth of Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982); Maxine

concerning the country house, studies also analysed the interior as a site of emotional display and the impact on individuals and their personal domestic affairs. In more recent years studies on the country house have focused on the networks and systems of supply in the building and furnishing of the country house and closer attention has been paid to the many ways in which the country house as a home could express selfhood and identities for its inhabitants.<sup>123</sup>

### Sources for Understanding Interiors

This study of Cannon Hall will contribute further to a field still in its relative infancy, assessing the influence of gender and particularly gentry masculine identity, on how the country house functioned as a space; simultaneously a home, place of work and, as will be explored more in Chapter 2, also a site for display, and how these concepts shifted over the period. Subject to changing fashions, close scrutiny and a range of functional practicalities and pressures, the country house and its contents evolved over time according to the requirements, style and personal preferences of its occupants. Changes to architectural trends, preferences for privacy and practical considerations gave reason for proprietors to expand and alter their country seat. Longer-term change and its analysis helps us to understand and explain how the spaces functioned as a site for domesticity, work and sociability. I will draw upon a rich body of inventories for the years 1681, 1750, 1756, 1763, 1775, and 1821-23, to assess and explore the important themes and key motivating factors governing the manipulation and usage of interior space.<sup>124</sup> First, the chapter will discuss the physical changes to the building, with an emphasis on addressing the challenges involved in creating a cohesive narrative on the evolving spatial layout of a building which has been

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Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke and New York, 2003); Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York, 2005); Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (Abingdon and New York, 2004).

<sup>123</sup> Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016); Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, 2016); Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World, 1680-1780* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015).

<sup>124</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681; 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763; 60671/5, Probate Inventory for William Spencer; 60671/20, Probate Inventory for John Spencer, 1775; 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1821-1823.

altered on numerous occasions. Secondly, I will consider the probable uses for these spaces, how they changed over time and why and how the different rooms communicated and functioned together. Within the context of this research, the third part of this chapter will consider the importance of private spaces and identity within the house, using the occasional yet revealing personal accounts and letters which provide valuable clues into individuals' personal influence on and feelings about the spaces they inhabited. Here I will discuss the extent to which practicality, personal preferences and interests and contemporary fashions influenced the changes. In doing so key themes of privacy, pleasure, authority, power, collective identity and decision-making will be considered and we will assess the extent to which the house was governed by and facilitated these important eighteenth-century characteristics of masculinity.

As Vickery asserts 'interiors do not easily offer up their secrets'.<sup>125</sup> To recapture how the house was furnished and lived in is a difficult task when the sources most readily to hand are often created at 'moments of crisis or transformation in the life of a household'.<sup>126</sup> Work on inventories is extensive as they offer 'a more complete record of what households possessed in the way of durables than any other single source' and as such, despite the aforementioned limitations, they offer value to a range of research fields.<sup>127</sup> Their applications span from the history of agricultural production and crop yield through to material consumption and representations of the self through material possessions.<sup>128</sup> Within this thesis inventories will be considered from two perspectives: in this first chapter to enhance understanding of room purpose and usage through the recorded contents, and in the subsequent chapter to analyse in greater detail the consumption practices of the family in residence over the period. Most significantly for the methodology of this chapter is the recent research of the country house by Rosie Macarthur and more directly Jon Stobart. Both use inventories to assess how interior spaces and their décor convey a history of aspiration, heritage, individuality and social status through alterations to furniture and

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<sup>125</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 3.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> Carole Shammas, *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990), p. 2.

<sup>128</sup> For a thorough overview of the field see Tom Arkell, 'Interpreting Probate Inventories', in T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (eds), *When Death Do Us Part* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 72-102.

room use over the eighteenth century.<sup>129</sup> Work by Stobart, and also in partnership with Mark Rothery, considered how the house simultaneously conveyed its occupants' appreciation of contemporary taste and style, respect and acknowledgment of their heritage alongside the practical requirements of a country house in eighteenth-century England.<sup>130</sup>

Whilst inventories have been shown to be immensely useful when reflecting upon the household interior and its contents, due diligence needs to be paid to their weaknesses and limitations. Probate inventories are particularly problematic as they reveal only goods held at time of death and 'nothing of the nature of property-holding throughout the life cycle, or of the material and social function of the goods acquired'.<sup>131</sup> However, by looking at a series of inventories over more than 140 years it is possible to witness changes in patterns of ownership of one household. Furthermore, probate inventories are supported here by several household inventories taken some years previously which help to identify variations in goods listed at time of death. As work by Margaret Ponsonby illustrates, the qualitative use of even a small selection of inventories can be immensely revealing about the lived experience of a house and how individuals lived in and 'organized their homes as mediations of the prevailing ideals of the period, and as expressions of particular circumstances of their lives'.<sup>132</sup> Inventories may only offer a static reflection of a more fluid and transitory reality and yet when set amidst the context of other evidence about typical consumption and decorative habits of the period and specific details about the preferences

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<sup>129</sup> Rosie Macarthur, 'Settling into the country house: the Hanburys at Kelmarsh Hall', in Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016), pp. 135-144.

<sup>130</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1717-1819', *Regional Furniture* 27 (2013), pp. 1-43; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, *Consumption in the Country House* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 53-108.

<sup>131</sup> Amanda Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), p. 276.

<sup>132</sup> Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2007), p. 7.

of our subjects' tastes and motivations they allow us to recreate something of the domestic environment and to understand more about the individuals that lived there.<sup>133</sup>

The nature of early modern record keeping means that there was no set standard for what was included and excluded from inventories. These discrepancies and regional variations suggest that inventories were 'taken according to unwritten rules about what was countable and what was not' and the very fact that inventories were taken by people either managing the household at the time or by someone well known to the deceased will have influenced the nature of the recording.<sup>134</sup> Inventories for the wealthy are more likely to itemise specific types of objects, for example different types of chairs, ceramics, soft furnishings and kitchen utensils, likely to aid the valuation process.<sup>135</sup> So whilst we must accept that some items would have been left out, there is a considerable level of consistency between all the inventories for Cannon Hall in terms of the descriptive detail offered. The inventories conducted sporadically by the Spencer family record lower value items, such as small ceramics like soap dishes and damaged china, than those inventories taken following the death of the household head, but all inventories prioritise large items of furniture and linen, and none record personal effects. As Ponsonby discusses the choice of words used by those conducting the inventory is incredibly telling and indicates specifically what contemporaries considered important about each piece of furniture. The language and phrases used to describe household items 'were not used indiscriminately but seem to have been used judiciously in accordance with the quality of the goods on offer'.<sup>136</sup> Thus use of the term 'fine', 'elegant' and 'new' or 'old' or 'neat' is demonstrative of their value to the maker of the inventory, and by inference, the owner.<sup>137</sup> The probate inventory for John Spencer in 1775 conducted by Edwin Elwick is exceptional among the inventories considered here in the level of detail used to describe the items in the principal rooms along the south front. As the furniture designer responsible for furnishing Cannon Hall during the 1760's remodelling,

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*; For a discussion of the difficulties in charting room use through inventories see Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings', p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> John Bedell, 'Archaeology and Probate Inventories in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Life', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31 2 (Autumn, 2000), p. 228-229.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>136</sup> Ponsonby, *Stories from Home*, p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

Elwick's detailed descriptions reflect his personal involvement in their creation. That said, even the more basic item descriptions do offer up consistent clues which allow the life span of some objects to be traced through successive inventories.

Moving on, I will now discuss some of the methodological considerations in using Cannon Hall itself as a source of evidence. The form and structural typology of space has dominated architectural studies (particularly that of vernacular architecture) for many years, and thus the interpretation of the use of spaces has been somewhat neglected, largely because of a building's inability to divulge the ways in which they were lived in.<sup>138</sup> As Nathaniel Alcock describes;

Buildings are silent witnesses to society. The life that once throbbed within and around their walls is still, their artefacts dispersed and destroyed. As evidence for the understanding of this past life they are uninformative, though in providing its environment their physical structure crucially conditioned it.<sup>139</sup>

The structural layout of houses reveals relatively little about how the house was lived in and used, especially if the house has been altered multiple times since it was built or adapted for use, as is the case at Cannon Hall. Some rooms offer obvious clues to their usage, particularly utilitarian spaces, for which the structural fabric reflects its use. At Cannon Hall, the stone floored 'Common setting room' is listed alongside the formal drawing room and best room with a greater degree of comfortable soft furnishing and floor coverings. For more general rooms, however, it is much harder to determine their use without other supplementary documentation which describes how it was used.

To date there has been a great level of speculation and uncertainty surrounding Cannon Hall and its architectural development. Past curators of the house have previously conducted in-depth research into the landscape and gardens and how they were altered, particularly for the late eighteenth century and beyond, however, the interior spaces have not been subject to the same scrutiny. Prior to the research for this thesis the late-seventeenth-century

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<sup>138</sup> Nathaniel W. Alcock, 'Physical Space and Social Space: The Interpretation of Vernacular Architecture', in Martin Locock (ed.), *Meaningful Architecture: Social Interpretations of Buildings* (Hampshire and Vermont, 1994), p. 207.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

rebuilding of the Hall was mere speculation and the extent of the alterations undertaken by John Carr from the 1760's was little understood. The aim of this chapter, then, is to explore how the house evolved architecturally and how the space was moulded and changed by successive generations and significantly to understand what prompted these changes. A lack of formal house plans somewhat hinders a detailed understanding of the structure and layout of the house throughout its history. My research will combine information from maps, surveys and plans, inventories, letters detailing building work and bills for work completed, alongside a reading of the building itself to look past those alterations and changes which the building has undergone since its conversion to a visitor attraction. Although the house has been extended multiple times by later generations of the family, these renovations appear to have had little impact on the house that was created by the end of the time period studied here. Similarly, it is fortunate that the house has been altered very little under the ownership of the council and the addition of partition walls and fire doors are obvious and have little impact on the ability to reimagine the space described by contemporary sources.

During this research, it has also been possible to gain insight into the house and gardens from several local and professional experts. The research for this thesis benefited from the insights of the architectural historian Adrian Green, who offered his knowledge of the tell-tale signs of change within the interior of the Hall as well as local archaeologists who provided fruitful discussions to better understand the Richard Woods plunge pool in the pleasure grounds.<sup>140</sup> The overall output from this research will reveal and explain some of the changes which occurred to the structural fabric of Cannon Hall through the long eighteenth century and reimagine how the space functioned for those that occupied it. As the building remains, this gives the opportunity to situate and locate the spaces of former years (as described in the historical documents and sources) within the modern structure of the building and adds tangible reality to matters discussed in the letters and inventories.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Tour of Cannon Hall with Adrian Green, October 2016; Archaeological excavation of the plunge pool site, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

<sup>141</sup> For an in-depth evaluation of the uses of buildings as historical sources see William Whyte, 'How do buildings mean? Some issues of interpretation in the history of architecture' *History and Theory* 45 (May, 2006), pp. 153-177.



This research therefore will help to greatly inform the understanding of the house for those who work there daily and who explore the space during their visit, as well as for the wider historical questions of this project.

Caution does need to be paid concerning the extent to which it is possible to achieve a thorough understanding of how the space was constructed and used. The wealth of sources available is certainly formidable and helps to abate some of these issues. Nonetheless, as Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann explain inventories alone 'do not enable us to reconstruct house plans, merely the number of rooms'.<sup>142</sup> The systematic nature of how inventories were conducted can lead one to perceive that they indicate the structure of a building, however the very purpose of the inventory could lead to some rooms being omitted from the inventory entirely, especially if the room was empty or the goods in the room not deemed worthy or necessary to be recorded. Similarly, movement through the spaces is harder to explore using inventories as they do not record every space in the house with corridors, passageways and vestibules typically absent. It is therefore generally expected that 'the number of rooms recorded in inventories to be underestimates'.<sup>143</sup> Significantly however 'it is more likely that appraisers would record rooms in larger houses than in smaller ones, producing an upward bias in the number of rooms counted'.<sup>144</sup> For Cannon Hall therefore, it is highly likely that all principal rooms were recorded, and by examining a series of inventories for the house it is possible to compare records to flag any omissions from particular years. Other historians, particularly Jon Stobart have found that the names ascribed to some rooms alter frequently and typically in association with room use.<sup>145</sup> Whilst in some cases the name change reflects an altogether different room usage (Music Room to Library for example), others reflect a more subtle change in the way a room was used or perceived by its occupants, reflecting how the usage of individual spaces adapted throughout the eighteenth century, 'Common Setting Room' to 'Stone Parlour', for example.<sup>146</sup> At Cannon Hall room names changed at particular junctures such as upon

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<sup>142</sup> Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, p. 122.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby', pp. 4-7.

<sup>146</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750; 60671/5, Inventory for William Spencer, 1756.

inheritance or following renovations. Few rooms retained the same name throughout the period and as the house expanded room use became more specialised. As Stobart asserts, 'names alone do not tell us a great deal about the character and use of a room'; to understand the space one must explore both the nature of the items it contained and the relationship it had, both in proximity and contents to that of its neighbouring rooms.<sup>147</sup> Here, I will assess the extent to which the name ascribed to a room and the furniture within it correspond for the same room usage over an extended period, rather than the room name always being placed on the same physical space.

The archive evidence for the physical structure of the house initially appears vague and incomplete. No house plans survive and while accounts for improvements and building work to the property exist in significant volume, they lack specific details of the work undertaken. For this reason it is necessary to combine numerous source types including maps, plans and surveys, letters regarding building work, a plan of the basement of the new house built in 1698, inventories and the house itself to try to piece together how the house was built and how it evolved over the century. Whilst there are difficulties which hinder certainty around some of the room locations, these sources, alongside architectural analysis and comprehensive work by historians such as Girouard, can be assessed within the wider understanding of typical house layouts and expectations for a modest country house. In contrast, work by Alcock on vernacular architecture states that examination of 'physical structures gives little direct evidence for the social spaces they contained' and furthermore, 'a common plan form does not necessarily reflect common room use'.<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless, structural typology and information regarding room type and use by analysing catalogued contents of rooms can help to create a picture of the typicality of a space and thus inform spatial layout. Inventories reveal the type and amount of large furniture within each room and some of the compositional details including materials and colour. The inventories also offer a sense of how populated each space was at that given time and, along with the knowledge of the physical space, size and scale during the period of the inventory, allow us

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<sup>147</sup> Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby', p. 6.

<sup>148</sup> Alcock, 'Physical Space and Social Space', p. 210.

to reflect on how the room might have felt, how cluttered or sparse it was, and subsequently what it may have been like to have lived and worked there.

### **The old Hall and its remodelling, 1683-1698**

As discussed in the Introduction to the thesis, the size and status of Cannon Hall in the seventeenth century is difficult to prove. There is no known contemporary plan or design for the full house and the history of the house presented here is the culmination of numerous source types. Contemporary maps for Yorkshire show Cannon Hall first as a small house (c.1720) and then as a larger one, although the property was not as big as nearby Bretton Park or Gunthwaite as the maps do not show palings (a wooden or metal fence), which would indicate a deer park and an estate used for pleasure alongside agricultural production.<sup>149</sup> The surveys of land ownership taken between 1648 and 1713 recorded the value of lands owned by Cannon Hall at £193.3.15.<sup>150</sup> The 1674 Hearth Tax return contains two entries for 'Mr. Spencer', one for 4 hearths and another for 5.<sup>151</sup> Within the parish of Cawthorne two other properties paid a higher hearth tax than Cannon Hall, Bank's Hall home to Mr Greene with 6 hearths and the home of Mr Allott with 9 hearths.<sup>152</sup> Both Mr Greene and Mr Allott had land holdings of similar value to that of Cannon Hall in 1648.<sup>153</sup> At 4 and 5 hearths the houses owned by John Spencer were substantially more modest than the neighbouring homes of the Marquess of Rockingham, Wentworth Woodhouse, Tankersley Hall and Ledson Hall that had 43, 25 and 31 hearths respectively.<sup>154</sup> The Kaye family, who feature heavily across all the networks of William and John Spencer and Walter Spencer Stanhope from 1739 until 1821 discussed in Chapter Four had residences of 20 and

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<sup>149</sup> Jane Furse, 'Cannon Hall: An Historical Survey with Heritage Landscape Restoration Proposals for the S. W. Fraser 1992 Settlement Trust' (unpublished, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>150</sup> BALS: SpSt 165/2, Survey of Land Ownership in Cawthorne, 1648-1713.

<sup>151</sup> D. Hey, C. Giles, M. Spufford and A. Wareham (eds), *Yorkshire West Riding Hearth Tax Assessment Lady day 1672* (London, 2007), p. 371.

<sup>152</sup> Hey, Giles, Spufford and Wareham (eds), *Yorkshire West Riding*, p. 371.

<sup>153</sup> BALS: SpSt 165/2, Survey of Land Ownership in Cawthorne, 1648.

<sup>154</sup> David Hey, 'The West Riding in the Late Seventeenth Century' in D. Hey, C. Giles, M. Spufford and A. Wareham (eds), *Yorkshire West Riding Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1672* (London, 2007), pp. 58-59.

22 hearths at the time of the 1672 Lady Day Hearth Tax assessment.<sup>155</sup> Homes with 3 or more hearths, typically more sophisticated than the average house, offered heated first floor chambers and different heated spaces for cooking, pleasure and sleeping; those of four hearths or more, like Cannon Hall, were generally considered to be large houses.<sup>156</sup> That being said, up until the end of the seventeenth century the size of Cannon Hall paled in comparison to the homes of the local elite with whom the Spencer family eventually became closely acquainted.

The household inventory for 1681 describes Cannon Hall as consisting of just 10 rooms, including service rooms.<sup>157</sup> The house contained a 'Hall' and 'Best Parlour', 'Red Chamber' and 'Green Chamber' and further 'Kitch'n chamber' and 'two chamber above entrance' as well as 'servants lodgings', a 'kitchen', 'back kitchen and milkhouse' and 'dayrey'.<sup>158</sup> The inventories describe a house in which space was divided according to function with living occurring primarily in the hall, sleeping in the chambers and cooking in the kitchens. From the mid to late seventeenth century, however, sizable houses were often further divided and fashion increasingly called for multiple smaller rooms for more discrete socialisation alongside larger rooms for group gatherings.<sup>159</sup> Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann found that in Kentish homes the hall had ceased to be the primary living space and mention of a sizeable hall had declined by more than half between 1600-29 and 1720-49, with the majority of the decline taking place at the time of this inventory, between 1660-89 and 1690-1719.<sup>160</sup> At Cannon Hall, the hall retained its dominance as the main living space and alongside tables and chairs, there were 'cushioned' furniture, carpets, books and a clock.<sup>161</sup> Although the house offered a more formal alternative in the 'Best parlour' the limited spaces for different forms of sociability was restrictive and outdated by the end of the seventeenth century. As Saumarez Smith describes, by the early eighteenth century the

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<sup>155</sup> Colum Giles, 'Wealth Distribution, the Hearth Tax and Housing' in D. Hey, C. Giles, M. Spufford and A. Wareham (eds), *Yorkshire West Riding Hearth Tax Assessment Lady Day 1672* (London, 2007), p. 64.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 68.

<sup>157</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Alcock, 'Physical Space and Social Space', p. 223; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 293.

<sup>160</sup> Overton, Whittle and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, pp. 125-129.

<sup>161</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and Chattels of John Spencer, 1681.

interior ceased to be perceived as ‘a neutral envelope for multifarious activities’.<sup>162</sup> Rather the space was divided according to its specific function as perceptions changed on the distinction between social and private spaces in the home.<sup>163</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century ‘the way in which polite elite used and conceived of their living space began to change’.<sup>164</sup> The home became the new setting for sociability, expressing the essential values of good taste, polite conversation and complementary activities such as tea drinking and entertaining.<sup>165</sup>

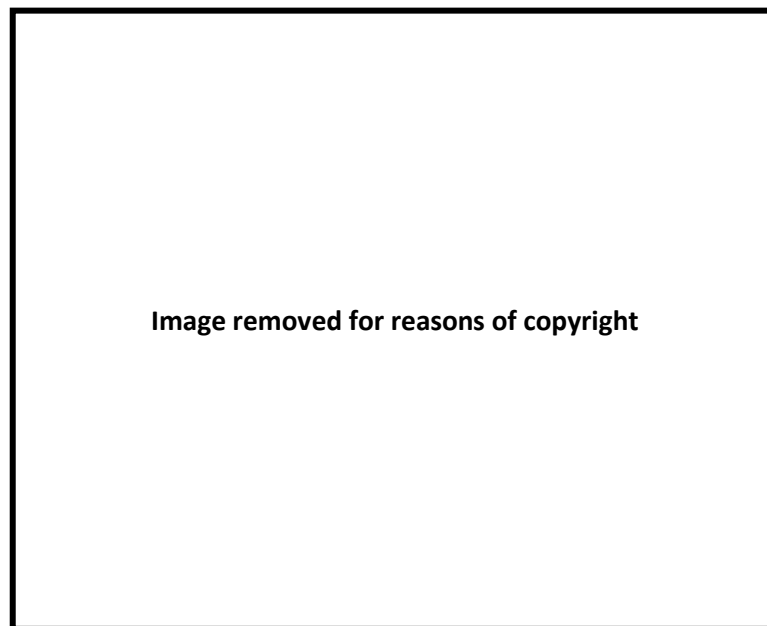


Figure 1.1: Samuel Bucks, *Cannon Hall*, 1719, Source: Mr. Warburton’s collections of Yorkshire, containing a great many views of towns, ruins, gentlemen’s seats, & chiefly pen and ink sketches (1719-1720).

By 1704 Ralph Thoresby’s account of Window Tax payments recorded in his diary lists ‘Mr Spencer’ as one of two chief landowners in Cawthorne, along with Mr Green, and thus among those paying the top 10s tax.<sup>166</sup> This tax would correspond to a house of between 10 and 20 windows and suggests that the house was somewhat larger than that recorded in

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<sup>162</sup> Charles Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, 1993), p. 78.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>164</sup> Karen Lipsedge, *Domestic Space in Eighteenth Century British Novels* (Basingstoke and New York, 2012), p. 22.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> LUL: YAS/MS28, Diary of Ralph Thoresby, 1704.

the 1674 Hearth Tax. The first known visual representation of the house is the drawing in Samuel Buck's *Yorkshire Sketchbook* (1719) which depicts the central block of Cannon Hall as it stands today (Figure 1.1). Despite previous uncertainty as to the origins of the present day building, archival evidence confirms it was rebuilt at the end of the seventeenth century under the instruction, at least in part, of 'Msr Ety', most likely William Ety and master joiner William Thornton.<sup>167</sup> The only contemporary plan for the house (Figure 1.2) entitled '*The Ground plot of a house designed for Mr. Spencer of Cannon Hall, 1698*', which corresponds well with the present day cellar space, confirms that John Spencer initiated the rebuilding of the house at this time.<sup>168</sup> Internally the large hall was embellished with stylar style wainscot incorporating a carved coat of arms and date plate (Figure 1.3) which memorialized for posterity the rebuilding of the house. Articles of Agreement between John Spencer and bricklayers Henry Walker and William Twist stipulate Spencer's intention to 'build a house att Cannon Hall', the duration of the works and the condition of payment.<sup>169</sup> Further to this, bills and sample lath nails (Figure 1.4) dated 1700 and bills issued by bricklayer William Bullock for chimney stacks and sash windows dated 1701 confirm work was well underway at this time.<sup>170</sup> Bills issued by master joiner turned architect William Thornton for a range of internal fittings including 'chimney glasses', 'Rail, banister, Stepps, Halfspacers for Best Stairs', oak wainscot and '8 pieces of carving' (wooden carvings for internal decoration) from 1701 until 1711 suggests the house was a work in progress during these years.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> BALS: SpSt 60674/1, Documents relating to building work at Cannon Hall, 1698-1712. Previous speculation has suggested William Ety's father, John Ety, was responsible. William Ety's involvement with both William Thornton and as architect at nearby Castle Howard suggests it was most likely William Ety who was employed at Cannon Hall and not his father.

<sup>168</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/5, Ground plot design of Cannon Hall, 1698.

<sup>169</sup> BALS: SpSt 160/1, Articles of Agreement for the Building of Cannon Hall, 1698.

<sup>170</sup> BALS: SpSt 60674/1, Documents relating to building work at Cannon Hall, 1698-1712.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*

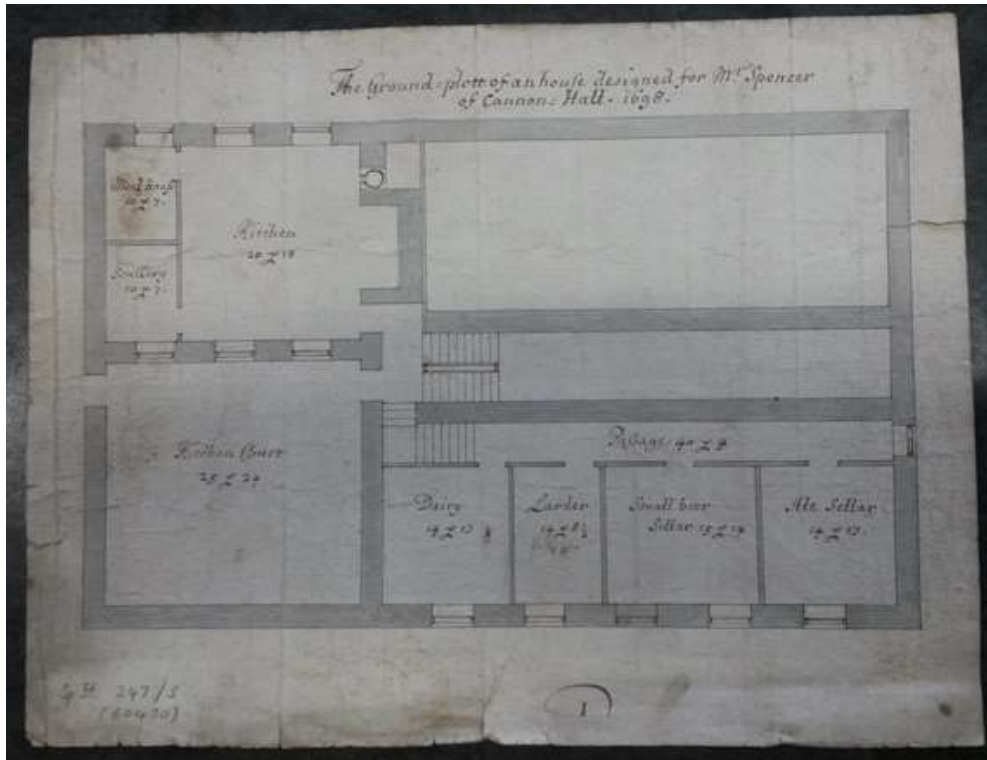


Figure 1.2: Ground floor plan for the rebuilding of Cannon Hall.

Source: BALS: SpSt 247/5, 'The Ground plot of a house designed for Mr Spencer of Cannon Hall, 1698'. Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.



Figure 1.3: *Wainscott panel and date plate, 1697, Cannon Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019, photograph by author.*

The involvement of William Etty and William Thornton is notable. Both men worked with Sir John Vanbrugh on the building of Castle Howard from 1701. Thornton worked with owner turned architect John Bouchier on the construction of Beningbrough Hall, where he was responsible for the elaborate and much renowned cantilever staircase.<sup>172</sup> Thornton was also later responsible for the elaborate staircase at Treasurer's House, York and is also credited

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<sup>172</sup> National Trust History of Beningbrough Hall, <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beningbrough-hall/features/people-of-beningbrough-hall> [accessed 15 May 2021].



with the grand staircase at Wentworth Woodhouse.<sup>173</sup> It is difficult to ascertain if the present day staircase at Cannon Hall or any parts of it were made by Thornton at the beginning of the eighteenth century but it offers up some strong suggestions that parts of it could be. The leaf form of the balusters of the present-day staircase feature an acanthus design which would fit with contemporary preferences, but the square fluted form below the leaf is very unusual, making dating difficult to state with certainty.<sup>174</sup> Each one of these decorative balusters would have been carved by hand: a time consuming and therefore very expensive commission, yet one that would fit with Thornton's reputation and craftsmanship elsewhere. At £16.10 for the rail, banisters, steps and 'halfspacers' alone, Thornton's commission suggests this was a significant financial outlay.<sup>175</sup> The importance of the staircase as a transitional space and site for display is discussed in Chapter Two and implies the staircase had an enduring architectural prominence. For Bushman the choice of stairs which ignored the practical benefits of an enclosed staircase (heat retention and space saving) in favour of wider, more open and centrally located stairs indicates that architectural design in the more public areas of the home prioritised the symbolic over the practical and those 'occasions of formal entertainment when gentility achieved its climactic expression'.<sup>176</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, the walls of the stairs were, by the mid-eighteenth century at least, adorned with a large collection of pictures, some of which could have been portraiture celebrating the family heritage and pedigree. John Spencer's choice of such a staircase to complete his rebuild of the Hall implies that it was intended to perform a symbolic function displaying wealth, good taste and lineage and likely leading specially invited guests to the 'best chamber' on the first floor.

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<sup>173</sup> National Trust introduction to Treasurer's House, York, <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/place/treasurer's-house,-york> [accessed 15 May 2021].

<sup>174</sup> Many thanks to the curator at Cannon Hall, for their expertise and sharing their thoughts on the possible date of the staircase.

<sup>175</sup> BALS: SpSt 60674/1, Documents relating to building work at Cannon Hall, 1698-1712.

<sup>176</sup> Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992), pp. 118-120.



Figure 1.4: Letter showing sample lath nails to be used in the construction of Cannon Hall.

Source: BALS: SpSt 60674/1, William Bullock to John Spencer (undated), c. 1698-1712.

Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.

The expense and attention to modern design is also evident in the window choice. The bill for the window sills, cornices and casements for sash windows dated December 1699 amounted to a substantial £93.11.05. Louw and Crayford suggest a timeline of the assimilation of sash windows from royal palaces to the homes of the elite as occurring between circa 1672 and 1700.<sup>177</sup> The inclusion of modern sash windows at Cannon Hall, while not uncommon, was relatively early for a small classical house of this type.<sup>178</sup> In the absence of more substantial evidence regarding the internal details of Cannon Hall after it was rebuilt, the expense of the staircase, windows and the involvement of an increasingly eminent master craftsman presents an image of an interior décor transformed beyond recognition to that described in the 1681 inventory.

<sup>177</sup> Hentie Louw and Robert Crayford, 'A Constructional History of the Sash-Window, C. 1670-c.1725 (Part 2)', *Architectural History* 42 (1999), pp. 174-175.

<sup>178</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 28.

The architectural details of the house itself are typical of the late seventeenth century. Considering only the original central block of the house, it has a symmetrical composition consisting of a triple pile square plan with five bays per storey (see Figure 1.5). It rests on a raised basement, is adorned with rusticated quoins and fitted with modern sash windows. When first built the windows were shorter than they appear today with alterations to enlarge and lengthen them to the ground occurring between 1800-1804 under the ownership of Walter Spencer Stanhope; similarly, what now presents as a large central window was originally a doorway. Prior to the alterations the windows would have appeared as the first-floor windows, with both the windows on the ground and first floors ornamented with pulvinated frieze and moulded cornice.<sup>179</sup> The involvement of York-based architect William Etty, at a period of time when his expertise was being called upon by local affluent elite signifies the extent to which John Spencer was celebrating his success in business and publicising his wealth and social status. John Spencer had been in possession of the Hall since the death of his father twenty years earlier in 1681. The delay to his rebuilding project and the expense endured fits within the narrative of house builders discussed by Stephen Hague.<sup>180</sup> The architectural details described here act like something of a checklist of features commonly used to differentiate gentleman's houses from the homes of those of lesser ranks and marked owners such as John Spencer out as above the 'polite threshold'.<sup>181</sup> The likely layout of the rooms with the centralised staircase and hall reflects the small scale formal house discussed by Girouard such as Coleshill House designed by Roger Pratt and was a layout that came to dominate during the decades up to 1720.<sup>182</sup>

Lasting more than a decade from architectural survey to completion of the staircase, the rebuilding of Cannon Hall was lengthy and expensive. The very endurance and dedication of resources was, however, a social strategy and conveyed status and wealth.<sup>183</sup> Like other contemporary gentleman builders creating homes on this scale, it was an act of self-

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<sup>179</sup> Historic England Listed Buildings description for Cannon Hall, <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001159> [accessed 20 May 2021].

<sup>180</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, pp. 1-52.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. Also see Girouard, *Life in the English*, p. 129.

<sup>182</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English*, pp. 122-126.

<sup>183</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 26.

confidence, both of John Spencer's social position and good taste.<sup>184</sup> The rebuilding of Cannon Hall in such a way elevated it to a home more befitting of its gentlemanly occupiers and distinguished the Spencer family from others in the parish. The employment of both well-respected and up and coming architects and craftsmen, a pattern also reflected later in the eighteenth century to which I will return to shortly, suggests this was a serious undertaking. The rebuilding of Cannon Hall, while still fairly modest in size, commanded a degree of quality, unlike some of the similar houses discussed in Hague's research.<sup>185</sup> In doing so the Spencers at Cannon Hall had the potential to align themselves with other affluent families in the region and make statements of their gentility through the design of their home. The typical and refined architectural features outwardly expressed the status and wealth of John Spencer and were the physical manifestation of his rise to industrial dominance within all local iron syndicates.<sup>186</sup>

### **Space Use and Architectural Ideals**

The likely formation of rooms in the old house, whilst typical of large vernacular houses with a central Hall with parlour and kitchen leading off it was, certainly by the late seventeenth century, considered old fashioned and not appropriate for a family of increasing wealth and social status. It is likely that this was one of the factors that fuelled the family's desire to create a property which better reflected their position as leading members of powerful industrial syndicates and advertise their increasing wealth and power to both the surrounding neighbourhood and visitors to the estate. The story of the expansion and architectural improvements at Cannon Hall mirrored the rise in wealth and social status of the family. It is also telling of more personal influences, described through room use and the choice of furnishings that marked out complex values alongside practical considerations.

Domestic sociability and the demands of polite society cast the spotlight firmly upon the interior spaces of the home. The results were two-fold. The increasing time spent at leisure in each other's homes created a 'more sophisticated visual culture', through which wealth,

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>186</sup> A. Raistrick, and E. Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters 1690-1750', *Economic History Review* 9 (1939), pp. 168-185.

education and taste was expressed, for the reading and interpretation of their guests.<sup>187</sup> Correspondingly the spatial layout and architectural style of the house began to change to facilitate the requirements of domestic sociability. Palladian planning was popular for creating specialised spaces for specific functions and its ability to adapt to the needs of architects and patrons.<sup>188</sup> It advocated internal layouts around a central hall and staircase with rooms stretching out from the core of the house, or which encased the central body in a square plan.<sup>189</sup> Adoption of this style in England occurred around the mid seventeenth century and was championed by the likes of Roger Pratt in his double pile design.<sup>190</sup> More formal rooms were commonly located on the first floor, such as the drawing room and dining room, whilst those more informal spaces such as the parlour were positioned on the ground floor. Central to this form of spatial planning was the concept of greater separation and the specialisation of 'units' of the house, with guests directed into the spaces dressed for show.<sup>191</sup> Significantly, and central to the linear sequence typical of the formal house, was the concept that 'each successive room was more private and exclusive than that before it'.<sup>192</sup> Space now had a more fixed and obvious hierarchy in which specific areas catered for the needs of family, guests and servants. This hierarchy of space retained dominance in English architecture, particularly for smaller country houses, and is in evidence at Cannon Hall for much of the eighteenth century.

The ideas of Palladio, Pratt and later Ware illustrate the mainstay of architectural training and expose the theoretical framework for country house building. Despite this, as with all prescriptive literature, this did not automatically fully translate to the reality of the buildings themselves. As Stobart and Rothery explain, 'country houses were not simply transposed from the design book onto the landscape'; the theoretical principles form only part of the

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<sup>187</sup> Lipsedge, *Domestic Space*, p. 22; Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration*, p. 78.

<sup>188</sup> Lipsedge, *Domestic Space*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 122-123; Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *The Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880* (London and New York, 2007), p. 115; Lipsedge, *Domestic Space*, p. 25.

<sup>191</sup> Lipsedge, *Domestic Space*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>192</sup> Tom Williamson, *Polite landscapes: Gardens & Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stroud, 1995), p. 27.

story of the country house design.<sup>193</sup> As already mentioned, Palladian design and later the English formal plan were popular because of their flexibility to accommodate the needs of many, yet as Bold discusses the seventeenth- and indeed eighteenth-century house evolved in response to ‘a strongly articulated demand for privacy and convenience’ as well as broader determinants of ‘family and pedigree, respectability and convenience’ alongside ‘competing visions and materialities’.<sup>194</sup> Many contemporaries called for greater separation of space, especially the distinction between household family and service spaces. Roger North and others used ‘the house plan to guard against the possibility of accidental contact’ with servants which the previous plan design with hall and cross wings, where many rooms were through rooms with a shared staircase, could not avert.<sup>195</sup> This was not only to prevent the householder from sights of domestic labour and their accompanying accoutrements but also as ‘part of a defensive strategy against unwelcome and unpredictable territorial encroachments’ which might come about if the ‘householder were to meet domestic staff as they both went about their business’.<sup>196</sup> ‘Linkage between plan form and the increasing segregation of inhabitants through time’ is often discussed as the rise of privacy.<sup>197</sup> At Cannon Hall there is evidence that the family were influenced by and aspired to create a space which complied with modern architectural and decorative ideals as well as meeting social and cultural expectations for a house of its size and a family of increasingly elevated social status. The new Hall conformed to polite expectations and offered, through its enlarged size and spatial layout, more specialised spaces offering increased privacy and comfort.

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<sup>193</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 54.

<sup>194</sup> John Bold, ‘Privacy and the Plan’, in John Bold and Edward Chaney (eds), *English Architecture Public and Private: Essays for Kerry Downes* (London and Rio Grande, 1993), p. 108; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 54.

<sup>195</sup> Bold, ‘Privacy and the Plan’, p. 114.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, p.115.

<sup>197</sup> West, ‘Social Space’, p. 106.

**Cannon Hall, circa 1699-1765**



Figure 1.5: *Cannon Hall south front*, photograph by Cannon Hall Museum.



Figure 1.6: *Cannon Hall west side*, photograph by Barnsley Council, Cannon Hall Museum.

From the end of the seventeenth century through to the first inventory in 1750 details for the inside architectural composition and décor of Cannon Hall are extremely limited. Using close examination of inventories, letters and the house itself, what follows proposes the internal layout of the main living spaces of the ground floor of the house at the three most

notable points in time for the development of the living spaces of the hall: between its rebuild circa 1699-1765; after the work completed by John Spencer, the architect John Carr and mason John Marsden in 1765 which added two, large ground floor wings to the house and lastly, the layout following alterations made by Walter Spencer Stanhope in 1778-1779 and 1780-1783. Work undertaken from 1794-1804 to enlarge the windows, remodel the eastern end of the south front to add a billiard room and water closet and a second storey to the side wings will also be discussed. The building itself, its exterior architectural detailing including the placement of windows, doors, ornamental features, contemporary chimney stacks and even the thickness of the walls offer clues to the original special layout and stylistic design of the interior. In communicating the works to be completed, masons, architects and stewards were required to describe what came before and the ways in which the new improvements were altering the existing structure of the house. It is therefore possible to extrapolate some details of the positioning of walls, doors, whole rooms and other features from these sources. When supported by details offered in inventories and the physical building itself it is possible to piece together a sense of the layout of the building before, during and after these alterations were undertaken.

The series of three inventories for 1750, 1756 and 1763 all describe a very similar house in terms of internal structural layout and room use.<sup>198</sup> When compared, the inventory for 1756 represents the house most fully and lists both living spaces and services rooms, some of which are absent from one or both of the inventories conducted in 1750 and 1763. The inventory for 1756 suggests it had at least twenty eight rooms, including closets, store rooms and service rooms, and more formal spaces and spaces for daily use.<sup>199</sup> Four of these rooms, in 1750 named the 'Drawing Room', 'Music Room', 'Common Setting Room' and 'Hall', offered living space for the family and guests, which along with the pantry were located on the ground floor.<sup>200</sup> While it was typical of larger houses for a number of formal socialising spaces to be located on the first floor, with family rooms clustered together on the ground floor, at Cannon Hall the only formal socialising space on the first floor was the

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<sup>198</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/5, Probate inventory for William Spencer, 1756; 60671/1, Household Inventories 1750 and 1763.

<sup>199</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/5, Probate inventory for William Spencer, 1756.

<sup>200</sup> BALS: 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750.



'best room'.<sup>201</sup> The first and garret floors accommodated twelve bed chambers, eight closets and a store room. There were a further three service rooms at lower ground floor level; the kitchen, back kitchen and brewhouse, although there would certainly have been more contained in the cellars and the locations of other rooms such as offices and storage for family muniments are also not traceable. The house was typical of others of its size in containing much larger rooms on the ground floor and a succession of much smaller rooms the higher up the house one travelled, with the smallest rooms in the garret reserved for servant quarters.

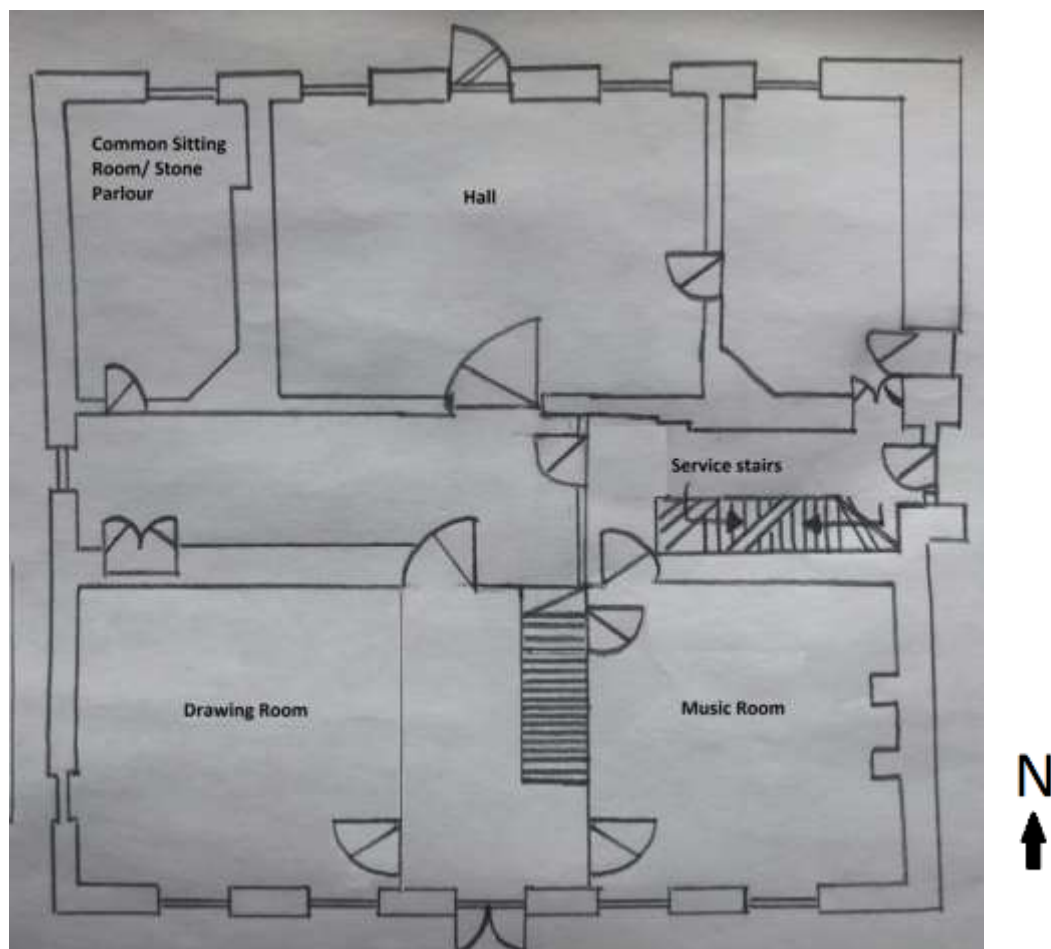


Figure 1.7: *Speculative ground floor plan of Cannon Hall, 1698-1765, produced by the author.*

The simple square plan form accommodated the main staircase at its centre which led up from the entrance on the south front of the property behind which lay the Hall, also

<sup>201</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 181-212.

accessible from the northern courtyard (see Figure 1.7). A separate stone service staircase, which remains in its original position today, allowed servants to travel from the basement or lower ground floor service spaces and all the way up to the garret storey. The inventory for 1750 indicates that the best stairs were situated along the joining wall with what was then called the music room with under stairs storage accessible in the music room and the drawing room or parlour on the opposite side.<sup>202</sup> The elevation of the staircase was almost certainly ascending from the south of the house and arrived at the centre of the first floor (rather than ascending from the centre of the ground floor and arriving at the south side of the first floor) as the positioning of the walls and windows along the south front would not accommodate such a substantial feature. In the north of the house was the hall flanked either side by two smaller rooms, the purpose of which is somewhat difficult to say with certainty, although according to the 1750 and 1756 inventories they were most likely the room known interchangeably as the 'stone parlour' or common sitting room in the north west and, somewhat surprisingly given its mundane use, the pantry. The thickness of the walls and positioning of the chimney stacks was imperative to the structural integrity of the building and suggests the layout of the north side of the house has not been altered since its construction at the end of the seventeenth century. A letter from Ann to her father William in 1742 records the movement of large lime trees from the gated entrance to the Hall and her delight that it 'made yr Dining Room much more pleasant, as it is so much lighter'.<sup>203</sup> Given the position of the old road it is likely that she was referring to the hall or the parlour which would place it in the west of the house. The positioning of smaller rooms around a larger centralised hall conforms to contemporary design preferences of the formal house.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> BALS: 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750; Also see proposed floor plan presented in Figure 1.7.

<sup>203</sup> BALS: SpSt 60518/30, Ann Spencer to William Spencer, 9th February 1742.

<sup>204</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English*, pp. 122-126.



Figure 1.8: Part of a survey of the estate showing the simple square plan formal of the house and axillary buildings and stables in the east. *Source:* BALS: SpSt 100, Part of 'A Survey of the Estate of Mr John Spencer of Cannon Hall' By F. Richardson, 1758. Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.

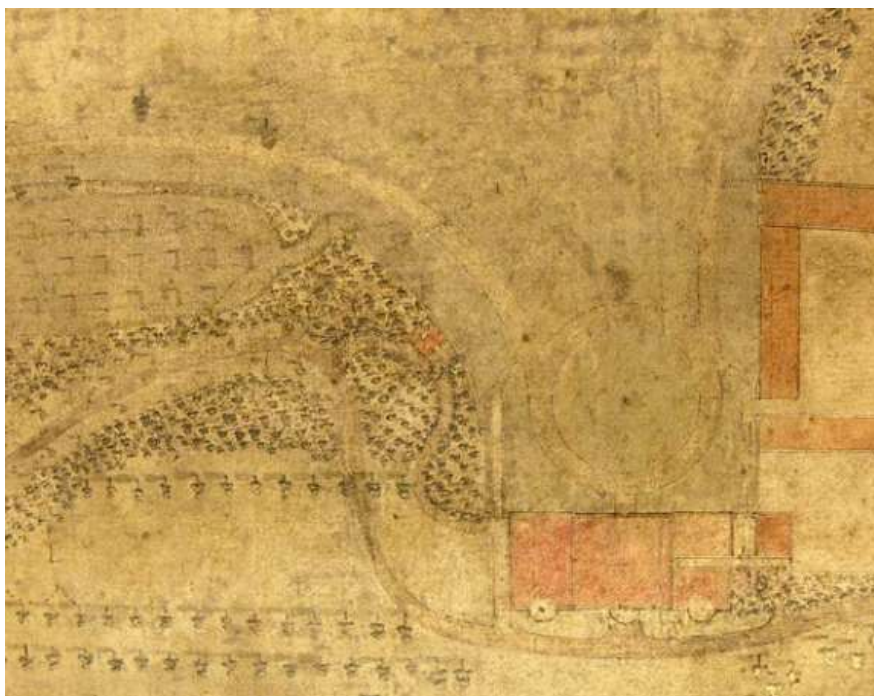


Figure 1.9 (above): Part of a proposed plan by Richard Woods showing the ground plan of Cannon Hall. *Source:* BALS: SpSt 101, Richard Woods proposal for the gardens at Cannon Hall, 1760. Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.

Plans and surveys for the estate also offer clues as to the likely architectural evolution of the house. The earliest detailed plan of the estate entitled 'A Survey of the Estate of Mr John Spencer of Cannon Hall' By Francis Richardson (Figure 1.8) was commissioned by John Spencer in 1758 and letters between John and his steward, Benjamin Dutton confirm that Richardson visited the Hall during this time.<sup>205</sup> Richard Woods, the Chertsey based landscape designer, was employed in 1760 to draw up plans (Figure 1.9) following which he was employed to carry out his proposed alterations in the same year with the work continuing until 1765.<sup>206</sup> The plans (Figures 1.8 and 1.9) show Cannon Hall as corresponding to the size and scale as suggested by the window tax and Buck's sketch with stables and other auxiliary buildings to the east. The plans also show further buildings directly to the east of the main house which the ground plans for 1698 confirms was the kitchen, sitting slightly lower than the ground floor of the main house due to the sloping landscape and therefore at cellar height from the north and south sides of the house but ground level in the east.

The next known visual source for the house is a painting (Figure 1.10), circa 1770, possibly by William Marlow, that was commissioned by John Spencer to celebrate the completion of the major works to both the park and gardens (including the pinery visible to the east) and the single storey extensions to the Hall.<sup>207</sup> This painting confirms the size, scale and architectural features of the house during the two decades in the hands of John Spencer. Commissioning art to celebrate and memorialise the changes made to the estate positioned the house within the 'owner's story' inviting valuation and judgement onto himself and the design choices he made for his home.<sup>208</sup> This painting celebrates the transformation of the

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<sup>205</sup> BALS: SpSt 101, 'A Survey of the Estate of Mr John Spencer of Cannon Hall' By F Richardson, 1758.

<sup>206</sup> BALS: SpSt 60686/25, 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall, and by whom paid from the years 1756-1773'.

<sup>207</sup> Furse, 'Cannon Hall', p. 11.

<sup>208</sup> Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, p. 132.

house and gardens under his ownership and emphasises the importance of the improvements to John's expression of identity and social status to which we will now turn.

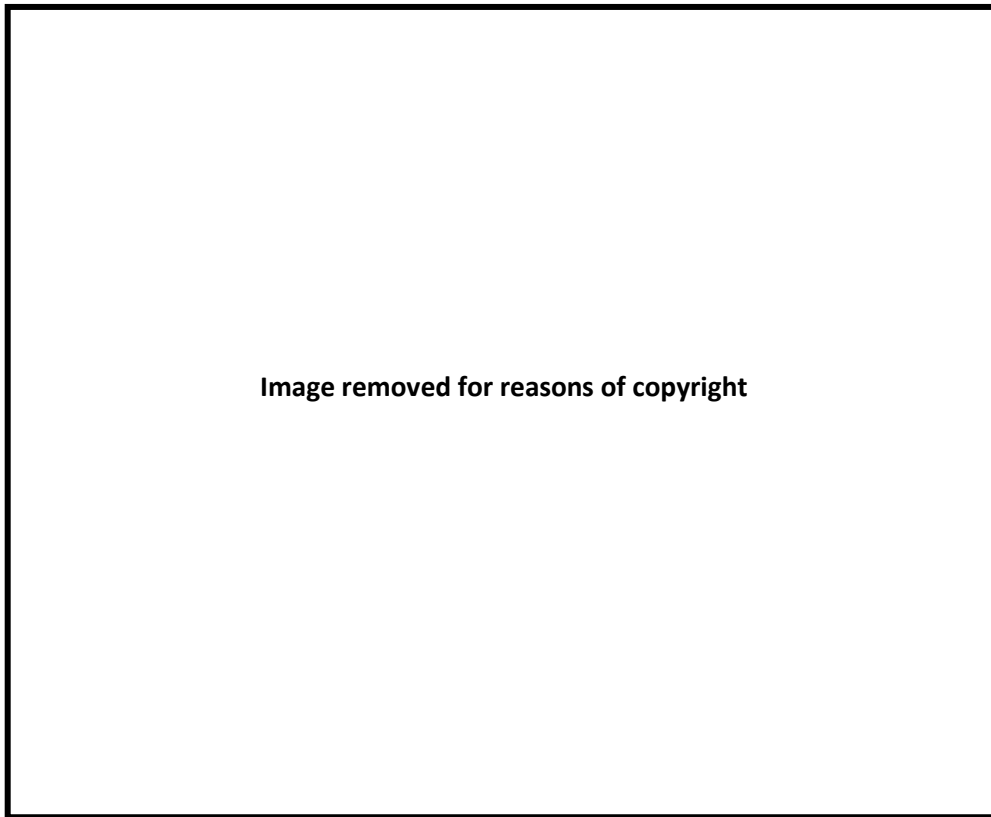


Figure 1.10: William Marlow [speculation], *Cannon Hall from the south front*, c.1770, Cannon Hall Museum, Barnsley.

### **Expansion and Space for Sociability: John Spencer, 1756-1775**

Politeness, explained by contemporaries as 'the art of sociability, the art of pleasing in company, an art involving self-presentation, inter-subjectivity, and self-love' had significant and 'particular implications for the use and design of domestic space'.<sup>209</sup> This section will consider the changes that occurred at Cannon Hall under the ownership of John Spencer in detail and show how polite ideals were central to the decision making behind the alterations at Cannon Hall, mirroring the motivations for the design preferences of the social house popular throughout the period of John's ownership.<sup>210</sup> The expression and display of

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<sup>209</sup> Lawrence Klein, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury and the Progress of Politeness', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18 2 (1984- 1985), p. 191; Hannah Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century Interiors in Image and Text', in Jeremy Aunsley and Charlotte Grant (eds), *Imagined Interiors: Representing the Domestic Interior since the Renaissance* (London, 2006), p. 116.

<sup>210</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English*, pp. 181-112.

politeness alongside other crucial masculine values of taste and intellectual interests were key motivating factors behind the designs for the two new wings added to the Hall, and as we will first turn to, Richard Woods' overhaul and re-landscaping of the grounds.

Commencing in 1760, John Spencer, under the direction of the landscape designer Richard Woods, set about the substantial and costly undertaking of remodelling the grounds of the estate (see Figure 1.11 below). Notably prioritised ahead of the interior renovations to the house and taking almost five years to complete, the project was of great importance to John, and enough to disrupt his annual trips to London from June 1761 until March 1763 whilst he oversaw the work.<sup>211</sup> John fastidiously records in his diary days spent overseeing and participating in the setting out and planting of trees and walking the grounds with Woods to view progress.<sup>212</sup> Comments that he 'planted shrubs in the shrubbery along with Mr Woods' potentially suggest he was hands on with the work and he was heavily involved in the design of the Palladian bridge.<sup>213</sup> The work undertaken had a dramatic impact on the estate and introduced many notable features; including widening and installing cascades to the river, one of which was directly in line with the south front of the house, two new bridges, a well-stocked menagerie, a lime avenue, numerous decorative follies, a new walled garden, a large pleasure ground with stone-lined cold plunge pool and a sizeable glass pinery, visible in the painting commemorating this work (Figure 1.10). The historic value and importance of this landscape design is discussed extensively by Fiona Cowell.<sup>214</sup> Most significant here is how these garden features worked collaboratively to continue the polite, sociable spaces of the home out into the landscape, the choice of features and their very specific positioning conveyed important messages about wealth, status and gentlemanly interests in science, exotic botanicals and medicine. The positioning of the pinery (used for the cultivation of exotic fruits, particularly pineapples) and the walled kitchen garden is unusual as, contrary to usual convention, these features were placed on the public parade route from the south front entrance to the Hall to the pleasure grounds in

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<sup>211</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/13-16, Diaries of John Spencer, 1760-1763.

<sup>212</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/14-17, Diaries of John Spencer 1761-1764, see especially 60633/13, 1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> April, 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> October 1761 and annually in April and October thereafter.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*; SpSt 60633/17, Diary of John Spencer, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1764.

<sup>214</sup> Cowell, *Richard Woods (1715-1793)*, pp. 41-42, 52-71, 88-100, 122-137.

the east. Along with 'exotic' flowers planted along the oval lawn opposite the pinery this route guests would have moved from the house and past an impressive collection of botanical specimens. The front facing walled kitchen garden is also unusual and, as is discussed in Chapter Three, suggests John and Woods were simultaneously showing off the prestige of the estate gardeners as well as provoking contrast between those at leisure and those at work in these spaces. This route culminated in the pleasure grounds, a sociable space where John records playing back gammon with Mr Radcliffe and where Mary Winifred enjoyed tea in their garden tent, but also home to a stone lined cold plunge pool, a medicinal treatment John frequently recommended to his sisters and participated in himself both in the bagnios in London and those in the towns of Bath and Harrogate.<sup>215</sup> As an experience, the re-vamped spaces of the garden and their planting schemes were designed to excite curiosity, whilst celebrating John's good taste, the workmanship of his skilled staff and his mastery over them, while the pleasure grounds offered space to promenade, entertain and socialise.

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<sup>215</sup> BALS: SpSt 6033/15, Diary of John Spencer, 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1762; 60651/12, Diary of Mary Winifred Spencer Stanhope, 1783, 'sat in the tent playd at card', 'drank tea in the tent'; WYAS: SpSt 6/1/58, Letters from John Spencer to sister Ann Stanhope, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1754; 6/1/57, Letters from Walter Stanhope to John Spencer, 18<sup>th</sup> April 1758; SpSt 6/1/94, Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, c. 1765; See for example SpSt 60633/3, Diary of John Spencer August 1750, 'had a bad night however I set out for Scarborough', 'went to the rooms but did not drink the waters'; 60633/4, Diary of John Spencer, 13<sup>th</sup> April – 15<sup>th</sup> May 1751, 'had a consultation of Dr Wilmot & Mr Sunny when Dr Wilmot orderd me a [...] Drink for six weeks & to bath in the warm Bath for three weeks & after that to go to Buxton for a month'.

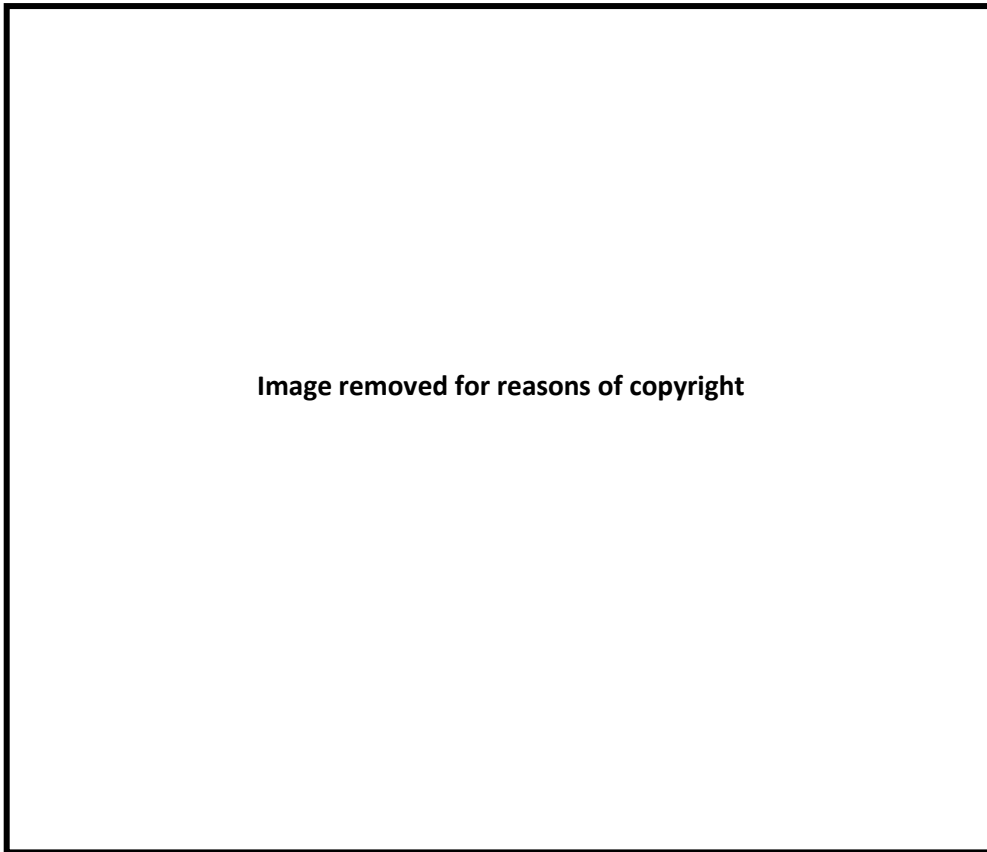


Figure 1.11: Richard Woods plan for Cannon Hall showing the suggested improvements including the widened river in the south and new walled garden and pleasure grounds to the east of the Hall. *Source*: BALS: SpSt 101, Richard Woods proposal for the gardens at Cannon Hall, 1760, reproduced by Jane Furse in Fiona Cowell, *Woods (1715-1793), Master of the Pleasure Garden* (Suffolk and New York, 2009), p 139.

We will now return to the house itself and consider the changes made to the interior of Cannon Hall during the eighteenth century. We will expose the past layouts of the Hall by paring back the later alterations undertaken by John Spencer and even more so those commissioned by Walter Spencer Stanhope. In these sections I explore in more detail the balance of personal and wider factors determining the choices made by these men making the alterations that took place, focusing on key themes of politeness, privacy, pleasure and decision-making.

As Girouard describes, the social house prioritised the needs of hospitality and often elaborate social events and required a carefully designed interior space which allowed



guests to move seamlessly through a series of interconnected rooms.<sup>216</sup> The domestic layout, particularly for new urban town houses, accommodated this social requirement and it is also highly likely a key consideration in John Carr's design for the new wings commissioned by John Spencer in 1765, which allow guests to circulate through and around the main rooms on the ground floor. The two wings, whilst fairly ordinary and lacking the ornate and elaborate details of other contemporary buildings, tripled the size of the ground floor living space and were both considered and intentional to suit the contemporary preferences for social encounters in the domestic environment. To the southeast John Spencer had an elegant drawing room fitted out with the 'finest French furnishings' and in the north two further rooms, most probably the steward's room and butler's pantry according to the order ascribed in the inventory for 1775.<sup>217</sup> The west wing accommodated a much longed for library to the south and a bedroom and accompanying dressing room in the north. With the addition of new spaces for sociability on the ground floor and the easily accessible gardens, the house could now accommodate its guests in these spaces, reserving the first floor for bedrooms and the family's privacy. This is reflected in the disappearance of the first-floor 'best room' by 1775, discussed in more detail in the following Chapter Two.<sup>218</sup> From what we can glean of the new layout, we can begin to understand how these wings both contributed to the overall accommodation but also how movement around this space would have been.

The English formal plan prioritised flow through from the central space of the house, in this case the Hall and passageway, to other spaces which could equally be opened up to create a large, often circular socialising space. At Cannon Hall the additional wings adhered to these conventions and offered much grander social spaces unlike any in the house previously. The rooms along the south front had a linear layout with doors in each room running parallel to each other ensuring that when open they created the sense of a long continuous space. Guests would have entered the house into either the Hall or the entrance on the south front directly in front of the stairs. Were guests to enter into the Hall, they would have proceeded

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<sup>216</sup> Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, pp. 189-194; Greig, 'Eighteenth-Century Interiors', p. 116.

<sup>217</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate Inventory of John Spencer, 1775.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

forward into a corridor which had doors leading off to the ground floor lodging room and dressing room, the Library and the Dining Room or 'Little Breakfast Room'. Once in the Library one could proceed sequentially through the rooms of the south front. The new Drawing Room in the south east of the house was, however, only accessible to the family and guests through the 'Little Breakfast Room', whilst the servants had access via doors leading through to the service corridors and kitchens beyond. This sequential layout does somewhat jar with the new sense of fluidity gained by the addition of the two wings, however the failure to improve the access points and movement around the centre of the house suggests that addressing the overall ambiance and interconnectivity of the space (in line with Palladian ideals of the time) was not of principal concern. Whilst it is possible that John and his architect sought a greater degree of seclusion in the formal drawing room, it is more likely that this unconventional and somewhat dated layout was a consequence of the mechanics of the space and John's financial constraints preventing the complete structural overhaul of the central block of the house, work which was later completed by Walter Spencer Stanhope.

The domestic interior was both a home for its more permanent residents but also a place of wider sociability. As such, the notion of privacy is one which preoccupied architects and home improvers increasingly throughout the period. Privacy, however, is a complex idea it is incredibly difficult to quantify in the country house.<sup>219</sup> As Greig writes, 'a common concern of eighteenth-century letter-writers was that family homes doubled as crowded assembly rooms'.<sup>220</sup> The drawing room for example, would have been an important site for sociability, indicated by the wealth of the furnishings in the room by 1775. Despite the absence of a central corridor creating discrete spaces, the lack of access points would have prevented this room becoming a thoroughfare, as would have been the case in a square, circuit plan popular in urban townhouses with numerous doors for servants and guests. Privacy, as a motivating factor in the internal layout of the house, was a keen desire of Walter Spencer Stanhope also, to which we will return later.

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<sup>219</sup> For a discussion of privacy and the self in the country house see Lewis, *'When a House is Not a Home'*, pp. 340-341.

<sup>220</sup> Greig, *'Eighteenth-Century Interiors'*, p. 116.

A précis of John Spencer's expenditure entitled 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall, and by whom paid from the years 1756-1773', written by John Spencer himself, records all the major works undertaken to the house, including services areas, stables and gardens.<sup>221</sup> Cumulatively the works amounted to £11,665 14s 8d, with the most substantial and expensive work being completed between 1761 and 1766 and totalling more than £1000 for each of those years except 1763 (Carr was employed in this year but work had not yet begun). To fund this work there is substantial evidence in John's pocket diaries of his attempts to fix mortgages and the purchasing and resale of land. The majority of his efforts were in securing a mortgage for land near Cannon Hall with a Miss Grammars and her sister Lady Gresley throughout 1761, finally securing a deal at 4 per cent interest.<sup>222</sup> John subsequently loaned out a significant portion of this money at a higher interest rate than his own borrowing, presumably recognising the long-term benefit of the earnings through interest. One of the most notable is a loan to Mr Battie, the husband of the Cusworth heiress, William Wrightson's daughter, who also employed Richard Woods during the same period as John. The loan, extended over a three year period and was charged at 5 per cent interest, a percentage higher than his loan with Miss Grammars and Lady Gresley.<sup>223</sup> A later bond for £1200 to Catherine Neville for £1200 with interest was recorded in July 1765.<sup>224</sup> Records of debts owed in the back of his pocket diary for 1774 (the year before his death in November 1775) records his sundry creditors upon his death, and the amounts are considerable.<sup>225</sup> His 1761 mortgage to Miss Grammars and Lady Gresley stood at £7,900, still under terms of 4 per cent interest and still being paid and negotiated by Walter Spencer Stanhope four years after his uncle's death in 1779.<sup>226</sup> John owed his brother-in-law Mr Greame £1500, his steward Benjamin Dutton (who had predeceased him) £950 and a Miss

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<sup>221</sup> BALS: SpSt 60686/25, 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall, and by whom paid from the years 1756-1773'.

<sup>222</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/14, John Spencer's Diary, 1761.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 29<sup>th</sup> October 1761.

<sup>224</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/18, John Spencer's Diary, July 1765.

<sup>225</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/25, John Spencer's Diary, 1774.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*; 60687/18, Jane Grammars to John Hardy (steward), 8th March 1779.

Clarkson and Mr Purslove £900.<sup>227</sup> The debts owed amounted to a substantial £13,121.<sup>228</sup> In a likely bid to offset some of these debts John additionally recorded the purchasing of 22,000 acres of land for an annual rental income of an average of £520 and he is consumed for much of the year with trying to sell a large portion of the Derbyshire estates inherited from his maternal family, eventually selling some of them at auction in October 1774 for £6,246, with a further portion of land valued at £7,865 which was yet to be sold.<sup>229</sup> The fine financial balance described here and John's precise record of expenditure suggest that the improvements made to the estate were meticulously considered, and indicate John's awareness of costs and how they would be met. Despite the sizable debit, John's behaviour suggests he was acutely conscious of limiting the impact of his spending on the longer-term financial viability of the estate and to the detriment of his nephew and heir, a theme which will be returned to in Chapter Two.

Under these terms the work was completed between 1765 and 1768. Letters confirm that by January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1766 the 'Plasterers [were] ready to go into dressing and lodging rooms' and the 'masons [were] flagging new cellars in communication with old ones'; the communications between old buildings and wings were completed before the plasterers started work on the finish and a long running dispute with a Mr Robinson was being reconciled as the steward showed him 'how badly his men left the windows in the Hall'.<sup>230</sup> In April that year the roof was finished and by 31<sup>st</sup> May 1768 furniture was being commissioned for the new drawing room, whilst bills for a 'Gothick barn and stables', back dated to 18<sup>th</sup> June 1769 and 29<sup>th</sup> September 1770 respectively, but issued to Walter Spencer Stanhope and the executors of John's estate on his death, show that the architect John Carr worked on a number of buildings after the work on the house was complete.<sup>231</sup> John expanded the size of the Hall, and spent a large sum of money on the internal furnishings and went to great lengths to improve the park and gardens but did very little, if anything to

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<sup>227</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/25, John Spencer's Diary, 1774; 60584/37, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 5th December 1778.

<sup>228</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/25, John Spencer's Diary, 1774.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, October 1774.

<sup>230</sup> BALS: SpSt 60543/34, Benjamin Dutton to John Spencer, 22nd January 1766.

<sup>231</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/21, Diary of John Spencer, 1768; 60705/7, John Carr to 'The Executor of John Spencer Esq', 14th December 1775.

alter the original central block of Cannon Hall. To understand more about this space it is necessary to explore the alterations which took place shortly following John's death and after the inheritance of the estate by Walter Spencer Stanhope.

### **Decision-making: Client, Architect and Others, Walter Spencer-Stanhope, 1775-1821**

In 1778 the first of a series of substantial physical alterations to the original central block of the Hall were finally undertaken, alterations which would have dramatic implications for the internal layout of the ground and first floor. Having returned from a period of travelling and his Grand Tour in 1770, this section will explore the expression of his personal identity and the influence of his travels on the design features of the home. We find references and details of the work in a particularly rich collection of letters addressed to Walter, dated from 1778-79 and 1783-84. Letters from the estate steward or butler as well as a number from the architect all describing the same scheme of work, allow for cross examination of the source material to build a cohesive image of the alterations, but also some of the discussions around the decision making processes during the works. The time difference between the letters is also helpful and often reveals additional details about a space as well as confirming if work had happened or had been abandoned due to concern for wider structural implications, expense, or simply unwanted disruption. From careful analysis of the letters from the architect John Carr and the workers on the estate, it is clear that the extensive alterations carried out in 1778 were primarily centred on the movement of the stairs. Once centrally located on the south front they were moved to their present-day location as a split-level staircase rising from the western end of the original central building. Coupled with the removal of the wall between the hall and passage this work created a more open and welcoming entrance to the house.<sup>232</sup> The work was predictably time consuming, messy and disruptive to much of the central part of the house from the ground floor upwards. It involved the moving of several walls and the repositioning of rooms on the first floor. The letters reveal that there was often 'bad news' regarding missed deadlines, 'exceedingly slow' progress and a great deal of dust and dirt resulting in the furniture in some of the rooms needing extensive cleaning.<sup>233</sup> The on-going exchanges back and forth

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<sup>232</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/130, John Carr to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 19th June 1778.

<sup>233</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/151, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 26th July 1779.

between Walter, architect, estate steward and butler reveals the extent to which Walter remained updated on the work as he took retreat in the capital from the chaos at home.

Notably all three men write regularly to inform Walter of the same events and decisions which need to be made. Read collectively, as Walter would have done, they imply a sense of urgency and anxiety. It seems surprising that Walter required all three to inform him of the progress, or lack of, on such a continuous basis. Letters from the architect himself are rare, despite repeated mentions in letters from John Dutton (the steward) stating that Carr had been at Cannon Hall on numerous occasions. The collection of letters from John Smith (the butler) who was largely observing, rather than managing the changes to the Hall also raises interesting questions about the role he played and the nature of his relationship with the family, the dynamics of which we consider here and explore further in Chapter Three in the context of his involvement in issues of governance as part of a collaborative household.

In describing the work undertaken the letters also expose the layers of decision-making involved in completing such complex and extensive alterations and how the opinions and preferences of client, architect and household staff all contributed to the final details of the build. By examining the outcome of the renovations, it is possible to explore the extent to which their interjections may have influenced the final decisions. As Hartigan-O'Connor, Vickery, Walsh and others explain, decision-making, financial authority and responsibility were integral to eighteenth-century consumption practices.<sup>234</sup> The dynamics of decision-making was informed by social and cultural expectations which both influenced and was governed by personal preference and taste.<sup>235</sup> As the next chapter explores, personal taste and indulgence, contemporary fashion, polite restraint and limited finances were all a part of consumption decisions and simultaneously at play for the eighteenth-century consumer in which a balanced equilibrium between all was the desired result. In her description of

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<sup>234</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 101-118; Claire Walsh, 'Shops, Shopping and the Art of Decision-making in Eighteenth-Century England', in A. Vickery and J. Styles (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006), p. 171; Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, 'Collaborative Consumption and the Politics of Choice in Early American Port Cities', in A. Vickery and J. Styles (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006), pp. 125-128, 146.

<sup>235</sup> Walsh, 'Shops, Shopping and the Art', p. 171.

‘proxy shopping’, Clare Walsh explains that, ‘in an age anxiously concerned with propriety and solvency, family or peer-group review was there, practically or symbolically, as an effective restraint on excess’.<sup>236</sup> Decision-making was therefore often a burden shared, conversely however ‘the social network was also the crucible of desire’ and it was often these relationships that spurred many into parting with money and consuming beyond their means and needs.<sup>237</sup>

Whilst much of the work on decision-making focuses on the idea of ‘proxy shopping’ by friends, relatives or servants, the language and practices discussed are relevant to the decision-making exhibited in the letters between Walter Spencer Stanhope and those involved in the redesign of Cannon Hall. Evidence of power being disseminated through the act of decision-making is telling and reveals the nature of the relationship between the parties involved. Using the language and constructs of Muldrew’s work on credit, Hartigan-O’Connor links consumption to a wide network of individuals and a system of credit, within which servants acted as agents for employers, family members shopped on behalf of other relatives, and the more connected put in a good word for their less influential friends.<sup>238</sup> Decision-making was typically informed by an acute awareness of the consumer’s preferences in terms of taste and budget, consequently proxies could be trusted to survey the market and make small purchases which not only fit with the consumer’s style preferences but also secured at the best price. There were however limitations to the decisions which could be made on another’s behalf and whilst ‘proxies were useful for general provisioning’ goods of higher quality and value were typically chosen by the consumer. Items such as fabric for clothing were often deemed too personal and too culturally important to be chosen by another.<sup>239</sup> To this end, there is significant evidence of an array of different decision-making ‘by proxy’ during the renovation of Cannon Hall and indeed within the daily life of the family. As discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, family letters reference John Spencer’s sound taste and record his sister’s instructions for him to

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<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998); Hartigan-O’Connor, ‘Collaborative Consumption’, pp. 128-146.

<sup>239</sup> Hartigan-O’Connor, ‘Collaborative Consumption’, p. 128.

be trusted to pick fabric for gloves and riding coats whilst in London, while the letters between Carr and Walter illustrate the on-going discussions and decision-making which was required to fulfil the seemingly never-ending tasks to complete the renovations.

In the summer of 1778 structural work was underway. The letters which kept Walter abreast of the progress also crucially reveal a great deal about both the internal layout of the ground floor rooms, both prior to and after the work was completed and the details about the type and nature of the decision-making.<sup>240</sup> Amidst the mundane descriptions are episodes of personal insight and interjection. The letter from John Carr dated June 1778 largely describes the work completed, the work left to do and the resolution of a number of on-going issues; however, it also reveals the extent to which correspondence was essential for the decision-making process and reveals the nature of the relationship between patron and architect. The role of the architect was to bring the functional requirements and aesthetic ambitions of their clients together under a viable scheme of work. Increasingly, the client played an active and hands-on role and some even chose to manage the build themselves. The smallest details mattered, and decision-making was a reciprocal responsibility in which the client targeted their own needs and ambitions whilst the architect worked to showcase their signature style and craftsmanship. In the final passage of the letter Carr wrote 'in my opinion the old wainscot should be taken out of the dining room, and the room finished with stucco, which should be painted Green or some other pretty colour; think of this if you please, and let me know your sentiments and you will very much oblige.'<sup>241</sup> Whilst Carr is sympathetic to Walter's opinions and allows final decisions to lie with him, here he also imparts his own preferences, validated by his experience and knowledge of contemporary style. Carr shows his eagerness to remove what he considers

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<sup>240</sup> The most significant alteration during this period was the movement of the staircase which required significant structural work including making sound the structural integrity of the first floor with supporting beam, the removal of the dividing wall between the then dining room and the staircase, the movement of the door and wall leading to the servants stairs and pantry as well as the accompanying alterations to the decoration and furnishings of the ground and first floor rooms and the removal of part of the south wall of the Hall which joined the room with the passage and new staircase, BALS: SpSt 60584/35, 36, 37, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1778-1779; 60564/130, 133, 134, 151, 166, select letters from John Smith and John Carr to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1778-1779.

<sup>241</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/130, John Carr to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 19th June 1778.



outdated decorations and to finish the room in a fashion more befitting of a mid-eighteenth-century drawing room.<sup>242</sup> The wainscot was, however, original to the rebuild of the house at the end of the previous century and contained a carved family crest and date plate, so whilst not significantly old it commemorated the financial and industrial success of the family and their increasing power over the locality. The fact that the discussion regarding the removal of the wainscot continued for several months and its repurposing in what was a central bed chamber, later used as the principal bedroom for Walter's eldest son and the estate office or steward's room on the ground floor, implies that, despite its eventual removal from the dining room, it held some significance for the family and was likely a point of contention between architect and client.<sup>243</sup> As Stobart explores, there was something of a dichotomy between the new and the old as markers of the 'status and identity of the owner' in which 'emphasis was increasingly placed on fashion and taste' whilst 'patina (in the broad sense of older, inherited goods) became far less significant as the meaning and definition of gentility shifted away from pedigree and heritage and towards individual traits and behaviour'.<sup>244</sup> However, as Stobart finds at Canons Ashby, this was not a guaranteed stance and in reality 'gentry and aristocratic families continued to place considerable store by markers of their lineage'.<sup>245</sup> Whilst Carr would certainly have been mindful of these characteristics, imposing his own identity as an architect and compiling a tasteful modern interior was fundamental to his role. Here, decision-making is viewed as a reciprocal and respectful process yet ultimately it was swayed by cultural appendages such as taste and style which triumphed over the outdated, albeit symbolically significant decoration.

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<sup>242</sup> Wainscot panelling had fallen out of fashion by the 1750's in preference of stucco or plaster work, Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015), p. 90.

<sup>243</sup> A letter from the steward John Dutton confirms that they were 'obliged to take the wainscot down on the east end of the Dining Room' so that a second beam could be 'got in to carry the joint over it' which was settled upon the east side of the service stairs and passage. By December that year the wainscot is removed entirely from the dining room and either stored for repurposing later or immediately rehoused in the room where it now resides to the east of the Hall, BALS: SpSt 60584/35, 37, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1778.

<sup>244</sup> Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings', p. 7.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*

An equivalent letter from John Dutton confirms the removal of the wall between the dining room and staircase to 'take it (the old staircase) into the dining room'.<sup>246</sup> Despite the provisional structural work being well under way by the summer of 1778, the Butler John Smith writes to report that by 20<sup>th</sup> July 1779 the replacement floor where the stairs had once sat was significantly delayed and 'not abord [was] laid in the dining room'.<sup>247</sup> Further significant alterations took place in the hall during the same period. The early letter from John Carr in June 1778 describes the hall as being finished with 'plain stucco with neat and small cornice' and that 'the columns in the Housekeepers room to be placed in the centre of that side of the room leading to the Dining room & stair case'.<sup>248</sup> Further letters from Smith, dated August 11<sup>th</sup> 1778 and then September 13<sup>th</sup> describe the details of the work involved in opening up the Hall and positioning the pillars in the opening. The fragility of the 'wall opposite the nine inch wall' or south wall of the hall was such that it would 'not stand cutting' and instead required 'propping well until the old wall is taken down part of the way' and the columns put in place.<sup>249</sup> This evidence suggests that the original hall was a room in itself, distinct from the passage and formal staircase beyond. Further structural work resulted in the 'door and partition between old staircase and passage to the kitchen' being 'taken down and made behind the architrave of the door into the music room', thus bringing part of the back passageway into the central and more public part of the house with the new length of 'back passage towards the new staircase to be the same width as the passage to the pantry'.<sup>250</sup> For the 'Hall passage to new staircase' and the hall itself Smith wrote that 'Carr proposes a hexagon floor' the eventual outcome of which remains in the house today.<sup>251</sup> The absence of plans or descriptions of the proposed alterations means it is difficult to determine the extent to which the work being described here was as intended. The back and forth between patron, architect, steward and butler reporting problematic structural factors reveals perhaps a degree of compromise and flexibility within the design ambitions and how decision-making could involve on-going negotiations.

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<sup>246</sup> BALS: SpSt 60584/ 35, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1778.

<sup>247</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/151, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1779.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>249</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/134, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 13<sup>th</sup> September 1778.

<sup>250</sup> BALS: SpSt 60584/35, John Dutton to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1778.

<sup>251</sup> BALS: SpSt 60584/36, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 4<sup>th</sup> September 1778.



Figure 1.12: *Drawing Room with pillars, Cannon Hall.* (Circular place markers are indicative to the computer software.) *Source:* Cannon Hall 3D interactive, Matterport, Barnsley Museums.

What is described here is an altered internal layout prioritising the flow and movement through the house for the family and guests. Together with decorative ornament this created the sense of cohesion and Neo-Classic understanding. The statement made through the decorative and architectural language of the house reflected Walter's travels and his Grand Tour from 1769-1770. The importance of the Grand Tour and its role in shaping masculine identity for the wealthiest in society is well discussed by many historians, most

notably Michèle Cohen and more recently Henry French and Mark Rothery.<sup>252</sup> Despite episodes of social opposition to the Grand Tour and the perils of travel, for elite families travel in the years between leaving education and marriage was a vital 'way by which the full attributes of elite authority, autonomy, civility and power could be rehearsed and realized'.<sup>253</sup> For Walter, his experiences influenced both his sociable habits and networks, discussed in Chapter's Two and Four and was reflected in his the architectural and design choices for Cannon Hall.

The non-loadbearing decorative pillars positioned in the drawing room (Figure 1.12) are composite, a mix of Ionic and Corinthian styles and very typical for the neo-classical period, but with small lion's heads above them, an unusual decorative detail. Coupled with the Doric columns in the hall these two sets of pillars mark the beginning and end of the route around the Hall. The dining room and the library both have elements of the Corinthian, while the music room has some elements typical of the Ionic order but is mostly decorated with standard Classical motifs. This stylisation suggests that the 'parade route' of the house followed the path illustrated in Figure 1.13 with guests entering into the hall and moving through into either the drawing room or the music room and then moving towards the east into the dining and billiard rooms or west into the drawing room and library as appropriate.<sup>254</sup> The pillars in the drawing room acted, therefore, as a form of 'crescendo' of the decoration and the 'essay' in Classicism conveyed through its architectural decoration.<sup>255</sup> To the east in the dining room, the ocre and white marble fireplace, fitted in 1767 under John Carr's direction, is flanked by marble Ionic pillars that mirror some of the decorative details of the pillars in the west and north of the house. Not only was this style extremely tasteful and the height of popularity in the 1770's and 1780's, but it infused the house with Italianate design that marked out Walter's understanding and appreciation of

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<sup>252</sup> Michèle Cohen, 'The Grand Tour. Language, National Identity and Masculinity', *Changing English* 8 2 (2001) pp. 129-141; Michèle Cohen, 'The Grand Tour: Constructing the English Gentleman in Eighteenth-century France', *History of Education* 21 3 (1992), pp. 241-257; Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 137-184.

<sup>253</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, pp. 138-140, 141.

<sup>254</sup> Bushman, *The Refinement of America*, p. 120.

<sup>255</sup> I am grateful to Melissa Gallimore for our discussions and her invaluable architectural expertise that helped me to understand the different symbolic motifs in the house.

these architectural styles but more importantly, signified his belonging within an exclusive, fashionable elite. Like other house improvers, Walter was keen both to express his learning and personal interest in Italianate interiors and his personal experience of classical architecture through the features of his home.

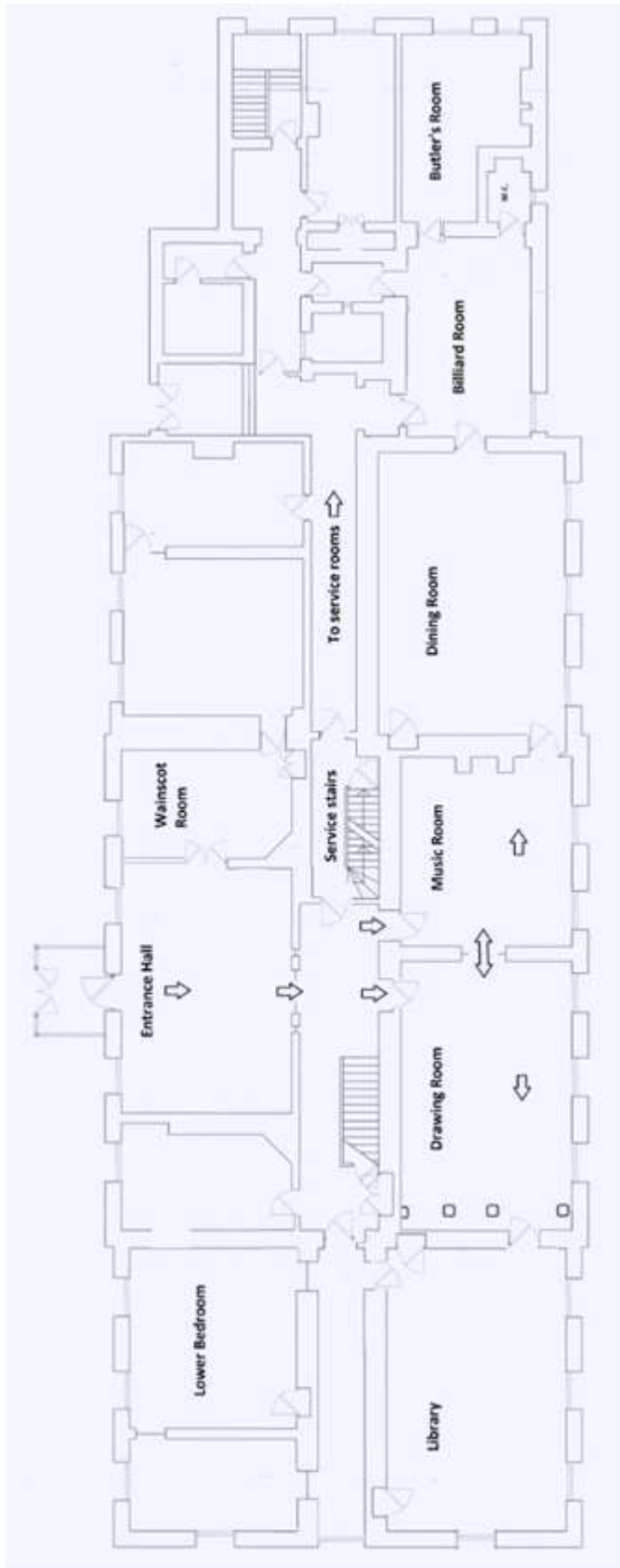


Figure 1.13: Ground plan of the house following renovations made by Walter Spencer Stanhope c. 1780's.

Letters regarding building work from the butler, John Smith, are of particular interest. His correspondence is largely informative, although his tone is notably less formal than the steward and architect, and there are substantial errors in spelling reflecting his lesser education. His letters mirror precisely the details of those sent by the steward John Dutton which raises the question as to why both men were informing Walter of the same work. This is likely a consequence of distrust or a potentially strained relationship between Dutton and Walter, which ultimately led to Dutton's replacement. Nonetheless, it is intriguing that Walter should look to the butler, rather than a steward from his estate in Horsforth given the regularity with which they travelled to and from each site, and it informs us about the order of authority amongst the staff at Cannon Hall, discussed in Chapter Three. Walter's reason for this is also possibly evident in the letters from Smith. Despite their formal relationship as master and servant, Smith is matter of fact and assertive of his own opinions regarding the alterations to the house. After signing off the letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> August 1778 Smith adds a lengthy postscript in which he writes;

P.S permit me to make 3 observations which I could wish'd you to have been hear for the first is the flue from the Chince Dresing room as it is seldom wanted & the aucard [awkward] appearance it will have on the outsid: the next is the Pantrey: which now is so well fitted up & convenient for Every part of the House. The third is the Disperporstion of hight & the aucard appearance now of the fire place in the Dining room: now sir as the workmen can go on afortnight or three weeks without meddling with the above if you would consider it in that time let know Mr Carr lay hear 28 last month.<sup>256</sup>

It is not surprising that the butler should have strong opinions regarding the practicalities of the pantry or knowledge of the frequency with which the 'Chince Dressing room' fire was lit, indeed as Hannah Wallace states it was much more common for servants of larger houses to influence alterations to interior spaces for which they were the expert.<sup>257</sup> However, the very fact that John Smith had the confidence to air such thoughts and opinions regarding the visual appeal of other aspects of the decoration so openly with Walter suggests a convivial relationship with his employer. Smith was clearly on cordial terms with Walter with a

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<sup>256</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/133, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 11<sup>th</sup> August 1778.

<sup>257</sup> Hannah Wallace, 'Servants and the Country Estate: Community, Conflict and Change at Chatsworth, 1712-1811', Ph. D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2020), pp. 254-255.

competent grasp of both Walter's personal taste and wider contemporary fashion. The tone is also one of concern, stemming from Smith's long-term affiliation with the Hall and his strong opinions on both its aesthetic appeal and practical suitability, likely born out of his personal interest and lasting stake in the house as a working resident. In Styles', Hartigan-O'Connor's and Walsh's explorations of consumers, they found that employers in particular 'imparted some consumer knowledge to their servants [...] hoping to indoctrinate them with a particular sense of "taste"', which in the context of consumption allowed servants to act as 'agents of their owners desires' and subsequently play an active role in the 'material life' of the families and individuals they worked for.<sup>258</sup> Indeed employers would also draw upon the 'individuality and specialized knowledge among those who worked for them'.<sup>259</sup> Smith had an intimate knowledge of the house. His job role required it and his lengthy tenure guaranteed this knowledge was thorough, illustrated by the names he uses in his letters to describe the different rooms in the house. Whilst Carr and Dutton refer to the 'Dining Room', Smith calls it the 'Little Breakfast room' which corresponds to the name given to the space in John Spencer's probate inventory. The familiar and informal room names reflect the intimacy of the butler's attachment to the house and the family, adding legitimacy to his concerns and qualifying his opinions. These findings therefore suggest servants were acutely aware of the principles which guided consumption choices and thus the material culture of their masters' and mistresses' homes and selves. The examples offered by Hartigan-O'Connor show that albeit for low value items, servants had an active part to play in the cultivation of the domestic space and expressions of identity and self, created through clothing and items of the home. An appreciation of this knowledge and role helps to explain how the butler at Cannon Hall was able to offer personal insight into matters of the home, both practical and decorative, something which on the face of it appears beyond his remit. This is not, however, an isolated example of John Smith acting beyond the bounds of his basic contractual obligations to the family. As I will return to in Chapter Three, nor is it the only time we get a sense of the servants of Cannon Hall having an appreciation of how the principles and values of their masters were bound up and expressed through matters of the household.

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<sup>258</sup> Hartigan-O'Connor, 'Collaborative Consumption', p. 135.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 136.



By late 1779 the work began to focus on decorative details, finishing touches and smaller building projects including a number of new doors and windows, the building of a flat roofed portico off the Hall to the north (which from this date became the main entrance to the house) a new ventilation system to an either brand new or pre-existing water closet off the billiard room, as well as numerous decorative additions such as marble fireplaces.<sup>260</sup> Despite this, Carr was still employed well into 1780 and a letter from him in April reveals Walter's significant dissatisfaction with the colour of the unpainted stucco, issues with the water supply to the new water closet, and concerns that the structural work continued with the removal and re-positioning of the wall dividing the old dining room and little breakfast room which made the little breakfast room square as it is today, apparently a potentially undesirable proportion.<sup>261</sup> Further additions which took place from 1790 and 1804 included the raising of the wings to two storeys, likely to provide bedrooms for Walter's fifteen children, and the building of the entirely new wing to the east of the house to provide accommodation for visitors.<sup>262</sup>

## Conclusion

Using this evidence and the architectural and structural details of the house today, which had evaded any substantial alteration to the main block of the house since the early nineteenth century, it has been possible to confidently propose the layout of the ground floor of Cannon Hall from the rebuild in 1699 through to the addition of the ground floor wings by John Spencer in 1765 and following the structural alterations commissioned by Walter Spencer Stanhope from 1778.<sup>263</sup> Through appreciating the extent of the alterations made to the Hall during Walter's tenure we are able to both recreate a sense of how the

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<sup>260</sup> BALS SpSt 60564/166, 166b, 167, Letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope, October 1779; Also see, SpSt 60645/8, John Spencer Stanhope's Memoirs of his father, Walter Spencer Stanhope, undated.

<sup>261</sup> CUL: MS Add. 9450/D4/4, Letter from John Catt to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1780.

<sup>262</sup> BALS: SpSt 60586/55, 57 Letters from John Howson to Walter Spencer Stanhope, June 6<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 1800. Archival evidence is sparse and largely missing from the collection regarding these alterations. Evidence is provided by A.M.W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire Country House, Volume Two*.

<sup>263</sup> Evidence for this work is scarce. Brief details can be found in vouchers and accounts of the house and in Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House Vol. Two*. Stirling suggests Carr returned to complete the additional work in 1790 and 1804 respectively.

house changed over time and appreciate the significance of the work undertaken since his inheritance. Changes to the architectural and spatial layout of the Hall mirrored the chronology of stylistic change that occurred at a national level as described by Girouard. This highlights a degree of typicality and uniformity within popular styles for country house builders and how changes to the country house reflect broader social and cultural dynamics and shifting preferences in lifestyle, fashion and modes of sociability. Alongside this there are signs that other factors influenced specific design features and the timing of alterations including region, social status, personal requirements and practicality. For John Spencer the house was likely too cramped and lacking spaces which could be opened up to accommodate sociable gatherings alongside a greater refinement in the specialisation of room use. John Spencer's personal interests, particularly his fascination with collecting, especially books (explored further in Chapter Two) directed the internal layout and room use choices. With significantly more money at his disposal, Walter was able to complete the structural overhaul of the house and make further updates to the decorative style, amount of accommodation and architectural dominance of the house to meet the needs of his growing family, and to communicate both fashionable and personal preferences through the symbolic language and spatial layout of the home. The processes involved in undertaking these alterations reveal the extent to which practicalities, personal taste and circumstance, as well as the influence of other interested parties, all contributed to and shaped the design of the architectural and spatial alterations and the decorative formation of domestic spaces of Cannon Hall, arriving at the end result which can largely still be seen today.

This chapter has explored the architectural and decorative developments of Cannon Hall from its re-modelling at the turn of the eighteenth century. Cannon Hall was converted from ten room house to a much larger triple pile, square plan country house built and furnished by some of the most important local craftsmen of the period. The sizeable undertaking of rebuilding of the house was embarked upon once the family possessed wide reaching industrial investments and had the financial security to support such a sizeable project, in doing so the house transformed their wealth into a visible display of status. The rebuilding of the Hall was confirmation of the family's social status and belonging within the local

gentry, behaviour that ties closely with patterns described by Hague of other gentleman builders of small classical houses in the early decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>264</sup> Subsequent changes by John Spencer from 1765 enlarged the social spaces of the house and modernised the layout to accommodate guests entirely on the ground floor, and more specifically along the south front with views out over his redesigned gardens and parkland. This was achieved through the choice of architectural and landscape designs that provided more spacious living arrangements, and interconnected ground floor rooms and gardens that prioritised leisure and the display of intriguing exotics. The house and gardens worked simultaneously to exhibit John Spencer's personal interests and good learning, through the choice of the types of rooms he chose to include, specifically the library, as well as the medicinal cold plunge pool hidden within the pleasure grounds alongside more ostentatious exhibits such as the glass pinery for exotic fruits. Architectural and decorative schemes and the employment of specific designers and craftsmen were used by the family yet again to mark out their status but also to unite them with other members of their social networks who were also employing these individuals and designing their domestic spaces along similar aesthetics. The choices made by these men simultaneously marked them out as individuals, but within a clear subset of the gentry that was both regional and personally affiliated, a theme discussed more in Chapter Four.

Interiors were capable of conveying complex messages regarding status, learning and personal experiences. The alterations to the house following Water's inheritance in 1775 enhanced the overall flow of the internal spaces by establishing a clearer circular route. The decorative and structural embellishments created an architectural essay in classicism and communicated Walter's classical Italianate understanding. Later changes to expand the accommodation by adding a second storey to the wings alongside an indoor mechanical toilet point to alterations motivated by convenience and comfort for Walter's sizeable family, demonstrating the point that homes of the elite were improved for a variety of interconnected and complex reasons.

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<sup>264</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 156.

Decision-making processes explored through correspondence between Walter Spencer Stanhope and the long serving butler, John Smith, reveals the extent to which Smith was invested in the changes to the Hall and not only regarding the functionality of the spaces, but equally the aesthetics of the home. John Smith's readiness and comfort in stepping beyond his contractual obligations in passing opinion on proposed changes provides an interesting insight into a servant's involvement in the decision-making of the lineal family. While historiography on proxy shopping demonstrates that servants could make small purchase decisions on behalf of their employer, this extends that discussion as an example of a servant sharing an opinion on more significant choices in the home. Furthermore, this episode introduces the important concept of the collaborative household as a mechanism of household dynamics that is central to the discussion in Chapter Three.

Having discussed the changes to the Hall, and how, when and why they came to fruition, Chapter Two will expand on this material, exploring the contents of the home to better understand the functions of the different spaces and the identities of the owners, expressed through their consumption habits and choices through the period.

## Chapter Two

### *Consumption and the Domestic Interior, 1681-1822*

Building on the themes of Chapter One and our appreciation of the developing structure and spaces of Cannon Hall, I now return to the series of household and probate inventories for a more detailed assessment of the household contents. Furniture, art and other material culture will be analysed and compared across the century, charting the introduction of new goods and materials and what these signified about the owners of Cannon Hall. Amongst the excitement for the new I will also consider what stayed the same and the influence of heritage and above all the concepts of thrift and oeconomy on householders and their spending habits. The role of portraiture as an important component in the creation of individual and familial identity and the role it played in marking key stages and events of the life course will conclude the chapter.

Historians working on the importance of the home in the eighteenth century have highlighted key issues concerning the complex role it played as a site for the cultivation and projection of familial, gender and personal identity, power and status, as well as its sentimental and emotional importance, particularly through consumption and display. Spatial segregation and specialisation of room use had implications for the permeability of the home, privacy and comfort for its inhabitants. This chapter will draw and build upon these themes by exploring the changes to room use and furnishings at Cannon Hall, and particularly the influence of men in creating a home within the country house. The notable absence of wives from Cannon Hall for a consecutive period of almost fifty years in the mid-eighteenth century offers the opportunity to assess consumption choices largely driven by men or other members of the 'household family'. Whilst the rooms in the house were more resistant to changes over time, furniture by contrast has a more fluid existence and is 'easily bought or sold; moved from one room to another, or disposed of via bequest, gift or sale'.<sup>265</sup> The changes in consumption habits over time and the life cycles of varied household furnishings will therefore help to reveal the extent to which each generation was influenced

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<sup>265</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Inventories and the changing furnishings of Canons Ashby, Northamptonshire, 1717-1819', *Regional Furniture* 27 (2013), p. 1.

by practicalities, taste and the pressures of inheritance and changing conceptions of domesticity.

The role of gender, social rank and consumption has driven research on the home. Amanda Vickery's *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* is an early example that explored a range of different homes and the meaning of home for individuals across the social spectrum and life course.<sup>266</sup> This work has particular importance here for what it says about the homes of single men during the period and the relationship between domesticity and masculinity. Other scholarship by Vickery, John Smail, Margaret Ponsonby and Karen Harvey have all explored the meaning of home for the middling sort.<sup>267</sup> Honing in on the homes of the more prosperous elite, Judith Lewis explored the role and influence of elite women and the extent to which the country house served as a retreat, place of comfort, domestic setting and site of female authority.<sup>268</sup> As Lewis notes, the large chasm-like spaces of the country house do not foster typical notions of comfort and homeliness and yet these houses were peoples' homes.<sup>269</sup> In raising these questions Lewis finds that the practices of domesticity found in the large, elaborate homes was one that was unique to the aristocracy and the conditions of living in such spaces. Lewis' study raised the suggestion that the markers and comforts of home were adaptable and could be expressed in a myriad of ways.<sup>270</sup> Until Lewis, historiography on the country house had largely failed to consider the emotional relationship between these large houses and their occupiers, instead prioritising the functionality of the country house as a site for display and a place of work. Historians now recognise the complex relationship between consumption and display, gender, space use, heritage and pedigree in the country house and the interplay between these factors.

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<sup>266</sup> Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009), p. 3;

<sup>267</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1999); John Smail, *The Origins of Middle-Class Culture: Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780* (New York and London, 1994); Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2007); Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and domestic authority in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2012).

<sup>268</sup> Judith Lewis, 'When a House is Not a Home: Elite English Women in the Eighteenth-Century Country House' *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009), pp. 336-363; Also see Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*; Dana Arnold, 'Defining Femininity: Women and the Country House', in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape, and Society* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 79-99.

<sup>269</sup> Lewis, 'When a House is Not a Home', pp. 336-340.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

Early research into the factors that facilitated and drove consumption habits focused heavily on the idea that the emulation of the fashions coined by the wealthiest trickled down the social hierarchy and thus fuelling a consumer revolution through the influx of affordable alternatives.<sup>271</sup> Despite the weaknesses within this theory, it opened the debate surrounding the breadth of motivating factors for consumption and the types of goods available for those across the different social ranks.<sup>272</sup> Work on the diversification of goods and luxury further broadened understanding of the material culture of the country house and opened discussion into important themes for eighteenth-century consumer culture.<sup>273</sup> Research into luxury goods and new materials by Margot Finn and Kate Smith led to a highly ambitious project: 'The East India Company At Home' (2012-2013), that illuminated the country house and its varied interactions with foreign imports, whilst challenging modern perceptions regarding the heritage and monocultural nature of the country house among present day communities.<sup>274</sup> Discussion on the role of empire in shaping the nature of goods available and considered desirable within the country house and in other domestic spaces has come increasingly to the fore, recognising challenging histories of these spaces and the importance in addressing them.<sup>275</sup> A collection of essays edited by Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann considers some of these factors and others which influenced spending habits in the

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<sup>271</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Gentlemen and shopkeepers: supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England', *Economic History Review* 64 3 (2011), pp. 886-887. Also see Neil McKendrick, 'The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England', in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J. H. Plumb (eds), *The Birth of Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1982), pp.9-20.

<sup>272</sup> John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London and New York, 1993); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture, 1660-1760* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London and New York, 1996).

<sup>273</sup> Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford and New York, 2005); Maxine Berg, and Elizabeth Eger (eds), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke and New York, 2003); Helen Clifford and Maxine Berg, *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe 1650-1850* (Manchester and New York, 1999); Jon Stobart, and Mark Rothery, 'Men, Women and the Supply of Luxury Goods in Eighteenth-Century England: The Purchasing Patterns of Edward and Mary Leigh', in Deborah Simonton, Marjo Kaartinen and Anne Montenach (eds), *Luxury and Gender in European Towns, 1700-1914* (Oxon and New York, 2015), pp. 97-114.

<sup>274</sup> Margot Finn and Kate Smith (eds), *The East India Company at Home 1757-1857* (London, 2018).

<sup>275</sup> Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (eds), *Slavery and the British Country House* (Swindon, 2013); Finn and Smith (eds), *East India Company*; Jon Stobart, *Travel and the British Country House, Cultures, Critiques and Consumption in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2017).

country house, including patina and heritage, the desire for goods from the East, fashion, extravagance and utility and the many uses of the country house as a site for display from the eighteenth century through to today.<sup>276</sup>

Substantial research by Jon Stobart, and together with Mark Rothery and others, has broadened understanding on the changing material culture, patterns of consumption and the networks facilitating them by the owners of large country estates.<sup>277</sup> Work on the impact of inheritance, luxury and consumption practices of men, women and other members of the household highlight gendered distinctions that were tempered by the importance of managed spending and the balance between new goods and those that signified pedigree and heritage. Cumulatively this research demonstrates the myriad of different factors at play and the complex messaging in the country house. Most recently work has highlighted the importance of warmth, convenience, privacy and human connection as essential determinants of a comfortable home, including the country house.<sup>278</sup> Research by Vickery, Lewis, Stobart, Rothery and others demonstrates that the country house as a home was a complex arena for the presentation and enactment of ideals, identities, status, belonging and emotional wellbeing. Achieving a home in which these attributes were realised was precarious and contingent on factors within and outside of an individual's control.

The majority of the studies on consumption and material culture of the country house mentioned above prioritise the experiences of the large estates owned by the very

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<sup>276</sup> Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016).

<sup>277</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Gentlemen and shopkeepers: supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England', *Economic History Review* 64 3 (2011), p. 886; Jon Stobart, 'Status, gender and life cycle in the consumption practices of the English elite. The case of Mary Leigh, 1736–1806' *Social History* 40 (2015), pp.82-103; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, 'Inheritance events and spending patterns in the English country house: the Leigh family of Stoneleigh Abbey, 1738-1806', *Continuity and Change* 27 3 (2012), pp. 379-407; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family, New and Old in the Georgian Country House', *Cultural and Social History* 11 3 (2014), pp. 385-406; Stobart and Hann (eds), *The Country House*; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, 2016).

<sup>278</sup> Jon Stobart (ed.), *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe, 1700-1900* (London and New York, 2020).



wealthiest in eighteenth-century society. Stephen Hague's work on the small classical homes of the gentry covers varied ways in which their homes contributed to their presentation and enactment of status. Furthermore, his research raises interesting ideas about the country house as key site for expressions of collective regional identity, used to set themselves apart from those above and below them in the social scale. Whilst I agree with Stephen Hague's suggestion that neither 'emulation' nor 'differentiation' offer the flexibility required to fully articulate the behaviours of the landed gentry discussed here, there is considerable fluidity in the practices of consumption and the role of material goods in the home up and down the social hierarchy.<sup>279</sup> The mixture of old and new luxury items, the prominence of thrift and sound oeconomy and the importance of portraiture for the display and projection of succession and pedigree are all practices commonly reflected in research into the owners of country houses of greater size and status than Cannon Hall. As this chapter will go on to discuss, many of the practices and behaviours around consumption evident at Cannon Hall reflect traits seen in the behaviours and patterns described of either the middling sort below them or the wealthier elite and aristocracy above.

Lastly, it is important to introduce the importance of gender in consumption practices in the home. As David Hussey explains, the concentration of early research into female consumption habits has characterized shopping as a female domain creating an 'uneasy tension between masculinity, domesticity and the acquisition of goods'.<sup>280</sup> In order to break free of these restrictive assumptions historians such as Margaret Ponsoy and David Hussey broadened the discussion on domestic consumerism, finding that 'masculine consumption habits were eclectic and mirrored the acquisitive disposition traditionally if rather uncritically ascribed to women'.<sup>281</sup> Their work was joined by others including Margot Finn, Jon Stobart, Mark Rothery, and Karen Harvey, exploring the role of material goods and

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<sup>279</sup> Stephen Hague. *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World, 1680-1780* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015), p. 140.

<sup>280</sup> David Hussey, 'Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats? Male Consumer Activity and Domestic Shopping in Late-Eighteenth and Early -Nineteenth-Century England', in Margaret Ponsoy and David Hussey (eds.), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Oxon and New York, 2016), p. 56.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

consumption for middling to aristocratic men.<sup>282</sup> The dominance at Cannon Hall of unmarried and widowed men for the middle decades of the eighteenth century offers the opportunity to contribute to the understanding of consumption of goods for the home for men in the absence of direct female influence.

The Cannon Hall inventories for the years 1681, 1750, 1756, 1763, 1775, and 1821-23 have again been analysed, considering important themes governing the interior spaces and particularly their decoration.<sup>283</sup> Conspicuous consumption fuelled by contemporary obsession with good taste is evident from the inheritance of the Hall by John Spencer in 1756 and had substantial consequences for the Hall's future from this point. It is through a focused case study on the consumption habits of John Spencer using the inventories and contextual detail covering the period of his tenure from 1750 to 1775, that the main aims of this chapter are realised. The contents of the inventories demonstrate how the furniture, utilitarian items and soft furnishings changed over the period. By exploring these changes it is possible to chart patterns in ownership and acquisitions over the duration, and ultimately begin to expose residents' motives and considerations in spending their wealth on the family home.

### **'Old' and 'New' Luxury**

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century witnessed a shift in the types of materials being used in the domestic interior. As a consequence of new preferences for china and glass alongside increasing popularity for more sumptuous and less hardy furnishings including floor carpets and wallpaper 'goods became less important as stores of economic value and more important as cultural symbols signifying status and identity for

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<sup>282</sup> Margot Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine possession in the consumer revolution', *Social History* 25 2 (2000), pp. 133-155; Harvey, *The Little Republic*; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, esp. pp. 109-139; Amanda Vickery and John Styles (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006); Benjamin Jackson, 'Men and Sporting Paraphernalia', *Furnishing Masculinity: Men's Material Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2020), pp. 273-299.

<sup>283</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681; 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763; 60671/5, Probate Inventory for William Spencer; 60671/20, Probate Inventory for John Spencer, 1775; 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1821-1823.

their owner'.<sup>284</sup> By mid-century there was an extensive range of products catering for a vast and ever growing consumer market including foreign imports, national and provincially made furnishings and decorative items.<sup>285</sup> Historiography on the emergence of what is termed 'New Luxury' in the eighteenth century has categorised it as a middle class phenomenon in the 'restless pursuit of novelty and the gratification of anticipated pleasure' that was in stark contrast to the desirable attributes of restraint and stability.<sup>286</sup> Using a range of new materials, new luxury goods offered variety that imitated material possessions once the preserve of the elite and thus making a whole array of consumerables accessible to those lower down the social strata.<sup>287</sup> These new luxury goods were consumed by the middling sort and wealthy elite alike, yet for the wealthiest their place in the home was alongside fittings and furnishings that demonstrated other crucial messages of status such as pedigree and dynastic power. The wealthiest continued to differentiate themselves through their purchasing power and markers that were unattainable to many.<sup>288</sup>

There is much debate over the realities of 'emulative consumption' coined by Neil McKendrick; however, it is clear that in response to an influx of goods replicating high end fashions and styles, there was a continued aspiration amongst the elite to distinguish themselves, particularly through the sustained cultural significance of 'old luxuries'.<sup>289</sup> 'Old luxury' was characterized by indulgence, the exclusive preserve of the wealthy and seen as 'the enemy of virtue' as an expression primarily of wealth and personal excess.<sup>290</sup> Old luxury 'served primarily as a social marker, a means of discriminating among people, times and places'.<sup>291</sup> Jan de Vries argues that it was the emerging middle classes and new luxuries, rather than the elite that began to dictate fashion, an argument recently challenged by

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<sup>284</sup> Stobart, 'Inventories and Changing Furnishings', p. 7.

<sup>285</sup> For a discussion of the range of new goods see, Berg and Eger (eds), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>286</sup> Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, p. 19.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>288</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>289</sup> Neil McKendrick, 'Commercialization and the Economy', in Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and John Plumb (eds), *The Birth of a Consumer Society, The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England* London, 1982), pp. 9-33.

<sup>290</sup> Jan De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution. Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 44.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44-45.

historiography which has shown that many elites continued to influence the material culture of the communities around them.<sup>292</sup> The argument around luxury and the dissemination of fashion in the eighteenth century is complex. Whilst new luxury goods were appealing to many households of the middling sort and above, spending on unique, elaborate or expensive goods by the wealthy continued to set them apart.<sup>293</sup> The perceived vulgarity of the excessive consumption of the aristocracy was alleviated by concepts of taste and politeness, seen to legitimise the conspicuous consumption of items of old luxury.<sup>294</sup>

Alongside fashion for new goods, other factors also influenced spending habits including guidance from contemporary conduct literature and education on prudence and thrift in youth by parents and guardians. Recent historiography has also begun to consider concepts such as patina and heritage as a key factor in determining the ownership of goods, challenging the suggestion that the house was merely a site for display.<sup>295</sup> Whilst historiography on new luxury goods particularly depicts a feverish desire for luxury spends and acquisitions, specialised case studies by Jon Stobart on the longevity of inherited objects in the home, Margaret Ponsonby on sentimental attachment to objects and work on patrilineal portraiture by Kate Retford, have shown that the desire for the new was somewhat curbed by feelings of sentiment and the preservation of familial heritage.<sup>296</sup> Objects retained for generations symbolised heritage, longevity and permanence and held

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<sup>292</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Also see Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford and New York, 2013),

<sup>294</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Introduction: The country house and cultures of consumption' in Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016), p. 2; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 11. Also see Nicola Pickering, 'Mayer Amschel de Rothschild and Mentmore Towers: Displaying 'le gout Rothschild'', in Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016), pp. 175-186.

<sup>295</sup> Stobart and Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family', pp. 385-406; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*.

<sup>296</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country*; Margaret Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850* (Aldershot and Burlington, 2007); Kate Retford, 'Patrilineal Portraiture? Gender and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century English Country House' in John Style and Amanda Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006), pp. 315-340; Kate Retford, 'Sensibility and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century Family Portrait: The Collection at Kedleston Hall', *Historical Journal* 46 (2003), pp. 533-560.

particular cultural significance for elite home owners for whom history and prestige was such an integral part of families' identity. This research will build upon these themes by looking at the various influencing factors at play for the Spencer Stanhope family over the course of the long eighteenth century. By utilizing the particular concentration of inventories from the mid to late eighteenth century, combined with a wealth of additional archival resources for this period particularly letters, this chapter sets out to reassess what is known about consumption habits among the landed gentry, contributing to limited research on how these changed over time and the key motivators for this.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, this research will contribute to our wider understanding of early conceptions of domesticity and the self through consumption and material display within gentry households in the eighteenth century.

### **Source Critique: Inventories**

Among the plethora of prior studies, it is the recent work by Vickery, Stobart, Rothery, Overton, Arkel and others which has used inventories to expose patterns of consumption and what they reveal about attitudes to material objects and the purpose of consumption for the middling ranks and elite. Primarily these studies investigated consumption patterns through the quantitative assessment of large numbers of probate inventories. Historians have more recently begun to recognise the value in studies on individual households and the opportunity to explore 'the full breadth of the elite's changing material culture' and 'the mundane consumption practices through which their ambitions and taste were brought to fruition', a field to which those already contributing acknowledge as being significantly under-researched.<sup>298</sup>

Work by Carole Shammas and Lorna Weatherill used inventories alongside other source material to examine changing consumption practices and the social meaning in the

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<sup>297</sup> A similar study was conducted by Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance events and spending patterns, pp. 379-407

<sup>298</sup> Stobart, 'Gentlemen and shopkeepers', p. 886.

ownership of goods in the domestic environment.<sup>299</sup> Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann also used probate inventories to chart the arrival and persistence of objects in Cornish and Kentish homes to assess cultures of consumption, ultimately finding large regional variations in consumption habits as well as a cyclical pattern to the ownership of goods, with new goods arriving in households as others disappeared, albeit in lower to middle ranking households.<sup>300</sup> Similarly, work by Stobart and Rothery has charted the movement of goods around the home, finding that in large country houses specialist rooms were used to contain furniture not in use, but also not for disposal.<sup>301</sup> It is within this body of work that the themes and topics discussed within this thesis fit most closely. The study of inventories offers an opportunity to inspect ownership of larger household items, both luxuries and durable necessities, and to trace patterns in ownership and acquisition over time, and to date there remains only a few historians who have examined changes to the furnishing of one country house over an extended timeframe such as is explored here.<sup>302</sup> The chapter will therefore contribute to an already rich field, focusing upon the consumption practices of one family and taking into consideration the influence of masculinity and the importance of privacy, display and personal taste on their consumption habits. Tracking these within a single household over an extended period will provide a unique perspective on how these influences shifted over the time studied.

Some of the limitations and consideration needed when using inventories was covered in the previous chapter, and a further criticism more relevant to the aims here is that their usefulness is somewhat limited to quantitative research. In isolation inventories fail to answer more complex questions about reasons for ownership and patterns or ambiguities which emerge geographically, a limitation Vickery finds with research that places too great

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<sup>299</sup> Carole Shammas, *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture, 1660-1760* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn, London and New York, 1996).

<sup>300</sup> Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean and Andrew Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (Abingdon and New York, 2004), pp. 13-32, 87-120.

<sup>301</sup> Stobart and Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family', pp. 385-406

<sup>302</sup> Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, pp. 88-98. Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance events and spending patterns', pp. 379-407; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*.

an emphasis on inventory sources. For Vickery, the exclusive use of inventories is problematic for a study wishing to understand anything more beyond the simple fact of acquisition asserting that 'social meaning cannot be read off the bare fact of ownership' and that inventories offer 'little or no insight into motives for acquisition'.<sup>303</sup> Inventories remain a hugely rich source of information, but these scholars do highlight the importance of supporting findings from other source material. Work by Lorna Weatherill, for example, draws on supporting sources to help to reveal the cultural significance of items and the interconnection between material goods and the indicative behaviour and attitudes associated with them. This study too is interested in the 'symbolic importance' of the items listed in inventories and this will be a key consideration in understanding the 'meaning of ownership in social and other terms.'<sup>304</sup> The benefit of a single-house study with such a rich archive is that it allows us to explore letters between estate stewards, family members and architects, as well as personal diaries and account books, providing the context to explain the patterns and consumption choices revealed by the inventories. Using these varied source types it is possible to investigate the purchasing of new goods for the home and chart the lifecycle of others to better understand the balance between new goods and old, personal taste and fashion and the role of key influencing factors including prudence, thrift, masculine and familial identity on consumption and display in the home. Situating findings within the historiographical context set out above will also help to reflect the extent to which the experiences and consumption habits of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family, and particularly here John Spencer, were typical of others within their social rank.

### **Consumption and the Prudent Economist**

The 1681 probate inventory for John Spencer (Snr), the earliest surviving account of the household interior of Cannon Hall, suggests a comparatively modest space. Beyond the main entrance, residents and guests would find the well-furnished hall, a comfortable dining and living space adorned with carpets, cushions, a collection of books and a clock.<sup>305</sup> Alongside was a 'best parlour' and two further bed chambers, all complete with beds and

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<sup>303</sup> Amanda Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), pp. 276.

<sup>304</sup> Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, p. 5.

<sup>305</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681.

their complementary furnishings, clothes chests and window curtains. Beyond these rooms lay the domestic quarters: a 'dayrey' and servants lodgings.<sup>306</sup> Significant redevelopment and expansion of Cannon Hall meant that a household inventory taken some 69 years later, in 1750 described an altogether different property with a suite of five rooms now welcoming guests on the ground floor.<sup>307</sup> Furnished throughout with an abundance of fine yet somewhat dated walnut and chestnut furnishings (rather than newer and more fashionable mahogany) the interior reflected the traditional staunchness of its industrialist occupiers, yet card tables and a harpsichord reveal a preference for more genteel pastimes and entertainment, and a single mahogany tea tray and two spring candles suggest the family's awareness of conveying good taste whilst in company.<sup>308</sup> This redevelopment and concurrent increase in the amount and value of the contents listed in the century and a half the inventories cover is an upward pattern reflecting other research in this area. Weatherill found that the number of durables owned by the 'middle ranks' increased considerably between 1675 and 1725.<sup>309</sup> Although the owners of Cannon Hall were more affluent than those studied by Weatherill, the patterns and records of objects owned tally closely with her findings. Woodruff Smith's research on consumption patterns over the long eighteenth century further ratifies this view, showing that by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century 'the variety, and the value of household objects have increased sevenfold'.<sup>310</sup>

Following further renovations during the 1760's the Cannon Hall interior of 1775 was one of opulence and refinement. Marble slabs, soft furnishings in damask and 'large handsome glasses in burnished gold frames' accompanied a host of mahogany tables and 'fan backed chairs' reflecting contemporary taste and the design and carpentry of the skilled craftsman tasked with fitting out the new interior.<sup>311</sup> By the end of our period in 1821, the volume of goods accounted for is substantial and each room is densely populated with fixtures and

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<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750; 60671/5, Inventory for William Spencer, 1756.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> For discussion of the social status of Weatherill's subjects see Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 13-14. For discussion of the increase in ownership of domestic goods see Chapter Two in Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, pp. 25-42.

<sup>310</sup> Woodruff Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York and Oxon, 2002), p. 181-182.

<sup>311</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate inventory for John Spencer, 1775.



furnishings of notable worth and cultural significance.<sup>312</sup> Bell pulls and dumb waiters and the new addition of a designated 'bathroom' speaks of the increase in personal privacy for the family and formalisation and segregation between residents and guests and domestic workers. The household inventories, then, appear to reflect a substantial increase in the family's wealth and consumption habits over the period. How and where the family chose to spend that wealth within the interior of the country house is of potentially greater significance here, seemingly fed by the role material possessions played in the display of status, wealth and good taste, alongside personal interests and comfort in the home, as will be discussed shortly.

Comparisons between inventories for different years, particularly for the period from 1750 to 1775, allow a far more in-depth study than a quantitative assessment of household contents at a point in time. The study of change reveals when, in which rooms, and on what items money was being spent and facilitates discussion on the ways in which the balance between key factors was managed by the different heads of household. Beneath the more tangible and visible desire to display good taste, wealth and heritage, key characteristics of elite masculinity, thriftiness and prudent economy were also governing consumption habits at Cannon Hall. Interestingly the inventories reveal that for guests entering the house between 1750 and 1763 there would appear to have been few changes. The principal furniture for the majority of rooms remained the same during this time and despite the upward trend in the level of consumption in the long term, when examined more closely the inventories suggest spending was by and large, much more controlled and restrained. The control in spending during this period is worthy of consideration as it bridges the inheritance of the estate by John Spencer, a transition typically associated with a peak in spending on a country estate such as this. Research has shown, however, that the tales of exuberant spendthrifts who ruined their family estate through elaborate and costly improvements were far from the norm and were 'unrepresentative of the general behaviour of landowners'.<sup>313</sup> Research into the spending patterns of Stoneleigh Abbey, for example, revealed that the Leigh family enjoyed 'surges in conspicuous consumption following

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<sup>312</sup> SpSt 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1821-1823.

<sup>313</sup> Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance events', p. 380.

inheritance' but later return to 'moderate and sedate spending regimes'.<sup>314</sup> Reasons for this are embedded in hereditary practices of primogeniture and family settlement in which 'an heir to a settled estate was in essence an hereditary trustee or limited owner, during his lifetime serving as the guardian of the family patrimony in order to pass it on intact to the next generation'.<sup>315</sup> Essentially each successor acted as caretaker to the estate and was responsible for ensuring it remained intact for the next generation. Sound management of finances, stretching as far as thriftiness for many, thus became an essential component of respectable elite masculinity. Heirs who squandered the family wealth or accumulated huge debts were seen as frivolous, wayward and burdensome to the next generation.<sup>316</sup>

As discussed in Chapter One, when Walter Spencer Stanhope inherited from his uncle in 1775 he quickly set about improvements to Cannon Hall in typical fashion, continuing enhancements to the interior under the same architect his uncle had commissioned ten years prior. John, upon his own inheritance of the estate in 1756, was more tentative, perhaps as a consequence of his ambition to overhaul both the gardens and the house and the substantial financial outlay that would entail. Nonetheless, low levels of expenditure recorded in his personal record of spending on improvements to the estate for the years between 1756 and 1761 show it was almost five years into John's inheritance before any work began, demonstrating a level of restraint and planning.<sup>317</sup> In contrast, Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley found that some childless men such as Sir John Griffin Griffin were considerably frivolous in their expenditure on household improvements, and without an immediate heir the financial stability of the estate for future generations was far less of a

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 381.

<sup>315</sup> Heather A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (London and New York, 1982), p. 15.

<sup>316</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 30-33; Rothery and Stobart, 'Inheritance events', p. 380; G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry: The rise and fall of a ruling class* (New York, 1976), pp. 126-130.

<sup>317</sup> BALS: SpSt 60686/25, 'Buildings and Improvements at Cannon Hall, and by whom paid from the years 1756-1773'. As discussed in Chapter One, John's diaries suggest he had no spare capital when he inherited in 1756, with much of it tied up in land purchases made before his father's death. John's diaries also show that he borrowed money from his neighbours and agent and by 1761 he was attempting to raise a mortgage for a large estate near Cannon Hall with a Miss Grammars and her sister Lady Gresley, BALS: SpSt 60633/14, John Spencer's Diary, 1761.

concern; this sense of carefree frivolity was apparently not shared by John Spencer when he inherited in 1756.<sup>318</sup>

In the letter from John's sister, Ann Stanhope, written shortly after he inherited she is eager to pacify any apprehensions John may have had regarding spending on the estate. She wrote:

You may depend on me not being extravagant, but I see no reason in ye World why you sh[oul]d not spend your Fortune in every respect as you like; I am sure my dead Father thought you richly deserv'd every shilling he left you, & I much fear you'll never have a successor will equall you in Taste & Judgment.<sup>319</sup>

Ann qualified her reassurances of his prospective spending in relation to John being both deserving as well as possessing the good 'Taste & Judgement' to spend it wisely. Ann's somewhat double-edged statement and reference to her 'fear' that John would not produce an heir, meanwhile, alludes to common anxieties over the succession of a family estate.<sup>320</sup>

As will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, succession was a fundamental consideration for the sound management of an ancestral estate, and Ann's less than subtle comment here is perhaps an attempt to exert some pressure on John to at least leave a legacy through other means that would be of benefit to the family. Despite John's initial parsimony, his good taste, often referred to in family correspondence such as the example above, validated his desire to undertake improvements to the house.<sup>321</sup> In exercising good taste the elite differentiated themselves and 'gave them an identity separate from other social groups'.<sup>322</sup> Spending on the estate was deemed appropriate and agreeable because of John's good taste and his lack of a direct heir to rival it.

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<sup>318</sup> Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley, *The Building of the English Country House, 1660-1880* (London and New York, 2007), pp. 308-313; Rothery and Stobart, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 170.

<sup>319</sup> BALS: SpSt 60672/27, Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, undated c. 1756.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*; A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House from the Papers of a Macaroni and His Kindred, Volumes One* (London, 1911), pp. 114-116, letter from Ann Spencer to her father William, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1749 states, 'beg you'l take my Bro Opinion as I don't know anybody's taste in dress I admire more'.

<sup>322</sup> Stobart, 'Introduction: The country house', p. 2.

Despite Ann's encouragement for John to spend some of his inheritance, the letter also reveals a concern for thriftiness and the careful management of finances. When informing John of new beds that she had instructed to be put up in the house Ann reassures John that he 'may depend on me not being extravagant'.<sup>323</sup> There was clearly a balance to be struck between tasteful display and economic stability. The letter illuminates some of the concerns of a 36-year-old bachelor as he embarks upon his tenure bringing to the fore the interplay between traits of thriftiness and careful management of expenses against the desire to indulge in consumption and improvements to the home. As discussed in Chapter One and later in Chapter Four, John Spencer's financial situation was complicated and at times insecure due to fluctuation in ironware prices. John's ambition to redesign and modernise both the house and gardens were likely motivators for his control and initial restraint over spending on the domestic interior immediately following his inheritance. Typical for many elite sons of the period, the 'manliness of good economy and the sound management of finances' formed part of John's educational upbringing and was fundamental to expectations of an honourable gentleman.<sup>324</sup>

Just days before journeying home back to Cannon Hall for Christmas in 1740 John Spencer penned a reply to a letter his father had sent over a week previously.

I do not pretend to [...] be a great Master of Oeconomy as yourself, but I am sorry that you should think I have been profuse in any Thing, more particularly so in my Dress. To me a Coxcomb is as detestable as a Sloven, all my aim is to be as Horace expresses it Simplex Munditiis. But wh[en] one is at Rome, you know they must do, as they do at Rome.<sup>325</sup>

In response to his father's criticism and advice to follow sound oeconomy John, aged 22, exposes some of the dichotomies at play for elite gentlemen during this period. Like many of his contemporaries John's consciousness of thrift and financial constraint reflects entrenched masculine values, successfully imparted by his father during his adolescence and early life when living away from home and learning to live off and manage a finite

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<sup>323</sup> BALS: SpSt 60672/27, Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, undated c. 1756.

<sup>324</sup> Mark Rothery and Henry French, *Making Men. The Formation of Elite Male Identities in England, c.1660-1900: A Sourcebook* (Hampshire and New York, 2012), p. 8.

<sup>325</sup> BALS: SpSt: 60537/19, John Spencer to William Spencer, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1740.

allowance.<sup>326</sup> Young elite men were ‘forced to, or trained to, restrict their spending’, cultivating virtues which were essential for the long-term success of the family and the estate, a condition unique to the landed elite.<sup>327</sup> As a young man away from home, John recognised the expectations of a respectable gentleman of his standing, however, the desire to emulate the fashion and style of his contemporaries, as well as the need for him to uphold his sociability, was reason enough to spend more excessively than his father would have liked. As work on the importance of spending habits for the long-term success of a landed estate testifies, the ability to practice balanced and responsible financial management was more important than the practice of strict settlement.<sup>328</sup>

Evidence of such restraint at Cannon Hall is further exposed through the comparison of successive inventories which reveal the extent to which furniture and furnishings were re-purposed around the house over their useful lifecycle. In analysing the placement of the new and more expensive purchases, this practice also provides an insight into the areas of the home where spending was most widely prioritised and vice versa, as well as the balance between old and new goods on display in different areas of the Hall.

### **Show and Pleasure in the ‘best room’**

The movement of furniture around the bedrooms between 1750 and 1763 illustrates that restraint and prudent economy were very much at play during this period. The ‘blue room’ was replaced by a newly created ‘workd room’, named after the heavily embroidered or ‘workd’ fabrics which covered the chairs and wall hangings, once considered some of the most important and status conveyors owned by the family. Furnishings including ‘blue room bed stocks and curtains’ were retained in storage, rather than being disposed of altogether

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<sup>326</sup> Education in financial management is discussed in Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man’s Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 61-62. The sound balance of finances and good ‘oeconomy’ for the middling-sort is discussed at length in Harvey, *The Little Republic*.

<sup>327</sup> Stobart and Rothery, ‘Inheritance events and spending patterns’, p. 380; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 32.

<sup>328</sup> Stobart and Rothery, ‘Inheritance events and spending patterns’, p. 381; Lloyd Bonfield, ‘Affective families, open elites and strict family settlements in early modern England’, *Economic History Review* 39, 4 (1986), pp. 341–54.

suggesting that despite being taken out of use they were still worthy of being kept.<sup>329</sup> Furnishings previously adorning the ‘best room’ were moved by 1763 to the ‘workd room’ and this made way for an entirely new suite of furnishings for the ‘best room’; the only room in the house to have been completely refurnished in the 1763 inventory. The setting aside of a specific ‘best’ room was a common practice and ‘by the period 1720-1749 over 50 per cent of houses had a “great’ or ‘best’ chamber’.<sup>330</sup> Typically ‘distinguished by their contents [...] from other bedchambers’ the ‘best’ room ‘often featured new luxury materials or finishes such as mahogany, cane or enamel and lacquer, or new luxury goods such as tea tables or pier glasses’.<sup>331</sup> This was not the bedroom of the household head as the inventories routinely list a separate bed chamber and closet for William and John.<sup>332</sup> The multifunctional nature of the ‘best room’ as a ‘bed-sitting room and bedchamber, which could be used for sleeping, playing cards, receiving visitors and taking small meals’ meant it was a semi-public space.<sup>333</sup> It served the dual function of providing privacy in the highest level of comfort and luxury afforded by the householder whilst displaying desirable attributes of good taste to specially invited guests. No evidence has been found to indicate who specifically would have slept or socialised in this room, although presumably it was reserved for select visitors and overnight guests, which research for Chapter 4 on social engagements and networks shows to have been a regular occurrence.

The best room’s multifunctional credentials are already observed in the 1683 inventory, containing vastly more chairs and tables (2 tables, 11 chairs and 4 stools) than any other bedchamber and indeed more than the room commonly given over for dining, the hall, in which 3 tables, 3 chairs and 6 stools were recorded.<sup>334</sup> Contrary to the suggestion that only small, select groups would be entertained in the best room, at Cannon Hall it seems this room accommodated much larger gatherings. The use of the term ‘parlour’ suggests that its dual function fell more in favour of social activities than more typically secluded or sedate activities of sleeping and resting. In this way it functioned similarly to the eighteenth-

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<sup>329</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763.

<sup>330</sup> Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, p. 133.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*; Clifford and Berg, *Consumers and Luxury*, p.72.

<sup>332</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763

<sup>333</sup> Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, p. 133.

<sup>334</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of Goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681.

century parlour researched by Frank E Brown in the types of activities enjoyed there and the room's private and sociable nature.<sup>335</sup> By 1750 the 'best' room was more ornately decorated with furnishings including a 'japan table', a 'quilt of Indian calico', 'two worked screens' and 'five knotted chairs', a form of highly elaborate embroidery popular for upholstery for suites of furniture in the eighteenth century.<sup>336</sup> The only spring candles (a spring loaded mechanism which kept the candle light at a particular height and prevented wax spilling) in the house are also listed here. Compared to other principal bedchambers it is the quality rather than quantity of the furnishings listed here that sets it apart. By 1763 the room has been treated to a new, full suite of furniture. A 'best mahogany chest of drawers', 'chinese mahogany dressing table with gilt pier glass over it' 'two chandeliers', 'five china jars', two large and five small 'mahogany chairs with chintz and check covers' and matching window curtains adorned the room.<sup>337</sup> The adjoining dressing room contained a selection of 'four china flower pots' and 'two glass candlesticks' alongside upholstery to match those of the bed chamber.<sup>338</sup> Although similar furniture is also found in John Spencer's own bedroom, particularly the chairs with 'chintz and check' covers, this room is significantly more ornate and contained a greater variety of new luxury materials, such as mahogany and glass as well as a number of rarely recorded decorative objects, than any other room in the house. It is in this room for all inventories from 1683 to 1763 that new materials and luxury items were predominantly located. The best room preserved the finest the family could afford, and the concentration of evidence from the period of ownership by John Spencer suggests it was his performance piece. As discussed in Chapter One, the inventories suggest the best room was situated on the first floor of the house and that guests would have arrived at this room via the best staircase with walls covered in family portraiture, to which we will return to shortly. The room simultaneously created a quasi-private space but one which expressed and advertised John's good taste and awareness of the latest fashions for his own enjoyment

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<sup>335</sup> Frank E. Brown, 'Continuity and change in the urban house: developments in domestic space organisation in seventeenth-century London', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28 (1986), p. 584. Also see, Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>336</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household inventory 1750; For a discussion on the great chamber see Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House, A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London, 1978), p. 88; Whittle, Dean and Hann (eds), *Production and Consumption*, pp. 133-134.

<sup>337</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1763.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*

and in full view of invited guests, whilst the journey to the space prioritised the expression of lineage, wealth, and dynastic pedigree.

It is evident that careful restraint and control on the purse strings was at times contradictory to John's desire to indulge his good taste and appreciation of the latest fashions. Thoughtful renovation and careful expenditure on specific areas of the house perceived to have the greatest impact and exposure signifies this and, indeed, many gentry families' consumption habits. Progressive movement of furniture from one room to another emphasises a control over spending through the retention of perfectly serviceable furnishings, whilst also revealing a carefully managed hierarchy to the bedchambers, with new goods reserved for the principal bedchambers and areas of the house most used for the entertainment of guests and residents. It is likely, given contemporary attitudes towards prudence and the forcefulness with which William Spencer insisted upon John Spencer's thriftiness that this was not uncommon practice. The values exhibited in the example of the 'best room' typify ideal behaviours of the prudent, refined and respectable gentleman. As recent research by Hannah Chavasse illustrates, despite considerable expenditure on new sets of furniture by Sir John Griffin Griffin he also had a number of items reupholstered, retaining many and updating existing furnishings, suggesting 'reuse should be considered an economically determined compromise with limited finances restricting the individual's consumption possibilities, even among the elite'.<sup>339</sup> Repurposing furniture, using unwanted materials for reupholstery and buying second-hand goods was also a feature noted of London's fashionable beau monde.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Hannah Chavasse, 'Fashion and 'affectionate recollection': material culture at Audley End, 1762-1773', in Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (eds), *The Country House: Consumption and Material Culture* (Swindon, 2016), p. 64.

<sup>340</sup> Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford and New York, 2013), p. 41.



## Luxury Goods and Tasteful Interiors

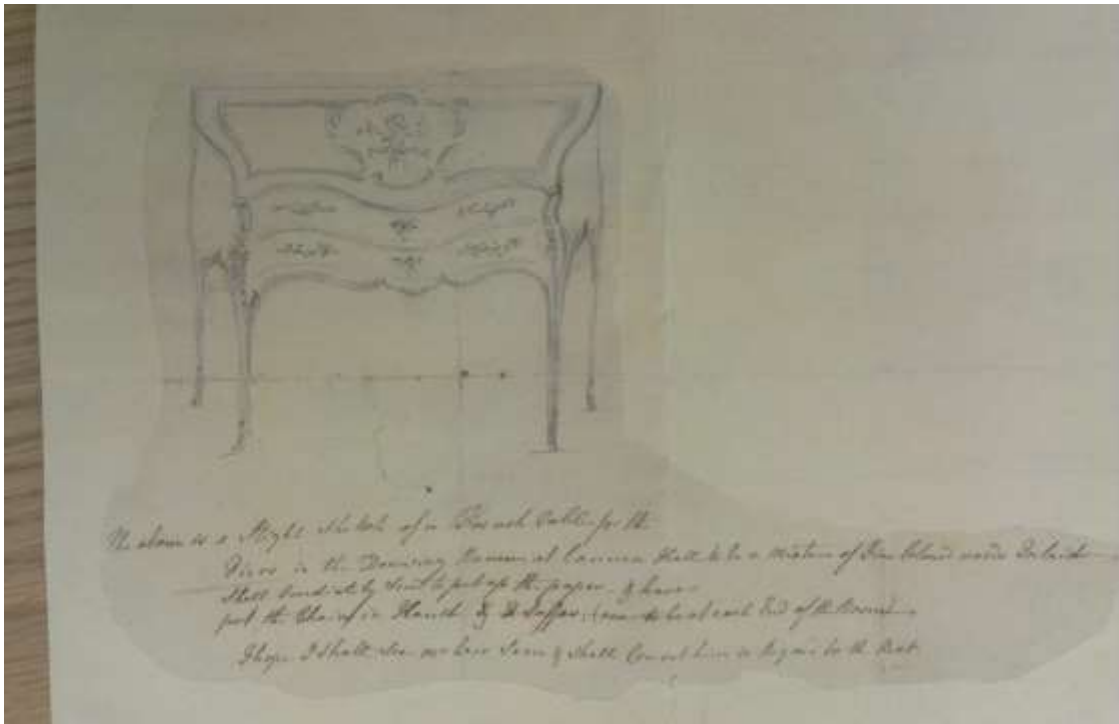


Figure 2.1: A drawing by Edwin Elwick described as, ‘a Slight sketch of a French Table for the Piers in the Drawing Room at Cannon Hall to be a mixture of fine coloured woods In laid’.

Source: BALS: SpSt 60537/122, Edwin Elwick to John Spencer, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1768. Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.

As discussed in Chapter One, in 1764 John Spencer commissioned the revered architect John Carr to design and oversee the addition of the two new wings to the existing layout of Cannon Hall to allow for the accommodation of a suite of rooms more adept at facilitating the activities of polite sociability, his taste and personal interests. Edwin Elwick, a notable and talented local furniture craftsman was commissioned to source and create the suite of furnishings to populate the newly decorated spaces. Like many patrons, John had taken his time over commissioning these improvements and the craftsmen he commissioned, and had visited several cabinet makers, including Chippendale with John Carr in 1768.<sup>341</sup> Letters between patron, architect and furniture maker reveal the ever-present preoccupation with careful financial management and prudent economy.

<sup>341</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/18, Diary of John Spencer, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1768.

I am sure I have Estimated Every thing to the Lowest that is possible to go [...] If you choose a gilt board I can furnish you with any pattern as Good as you can have in London or Glasses for the piers & as to French tables which Mr Carr in a letter to me communicated your intentions of having one in each pier they will be fine pieces of furniture better furnished in [...] than they are in London.<sup>342</sup>

Elwick's plea that he has 'Estimated Every thing to the Lowest that is possible to go' when sourcing the luxury fine furnishings stipulated by John Spencer suggests a dichotomy between John's desires and expectations and his frugality. Further correspondence reveals that John took a keen personal interest in selecting the exact furnishings for the house and had very particular opinions on them. In Elwick's letter to John he stated that 'Mr Carr in a letter to me communicated your intentions of having one in each pier they will be fine pieces of furniture' portraying John as both proactive and opinionated when it came to choosing some or all of the furnishings and fittings for his modernised interior.<sup>343</sup> As Hussey notes 'propertied men of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century were skilful and assiduous consumers of goods' purchasing an array of goods beyond the 'horses, clothes and wine' which some research suggests often dominated male spending.<sup>344</sup> The lists of expenses recorded in John's diaries also attest to a lifelong desire for new commodities, particularly books and paintings. While fashion and good taste were important components for the material culture of the middle classes, for elite consumers it was central to the desire 'to mark their rank and dignity', a system in which your consumption choices and material culture of the body and home aligned you with specific political, cultural and social persuasions.<sup>345</sup> Through his consumption choices and his active involvement and specific preferences for the exact finish of the household interior John was cultivating and expressing his sense of self as a man of good taste, fashionability and more.<sup>346</sup> As David Hussey describes, 'these goods freighted important socio-cultural inferences that served to describe the quality of the household and the discernment of its occupants and to give material weight to the wider discourse of politeness that were centred within the domestic

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<sup>342</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/122, Edwin Elwick to John Spencer, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1768.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>344</sup> Hussey, 'Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats?', p. 56.

<sup>345</sup> Stobart, 'Introduction: The Country house', p. 2.

<sup>346</sup> See David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham and Burlington, 2012), esp. chapter 2 and 3.

milieu.<sup>347</sup> As has been discussed, however, constructing an identity around wealth was consistently ‘tempered by ideals of the tasteful man of learning’ and other elite masculine traits such as thrift, in which ostentation and excess were just the other side of the fine line of good taste and respectability.<sup>348</sup>

The distinct fashion and taste of the elite not only succeeded in differentiating and maintaining a cultural and artistic hierarchy but also served to foster a sense of group identity, affirmed through material culture and evident amongst John Spencer and his neighbours. Such expressions extended beyond the contents of the home with the architecture and surrounding landscape an equally conspicuous display of good taste and judgement. During the same period of John Spencer’s appointment of Richard Woods and later John Carr as landscape designer and architect respectively, numerous other households around Cannon Hall chose to engage in renovation works of similar style and design, employing the same architects and providing each other with plant specimens and labourers. From December 1761 Woods was employed by John Battie Wrightson to undertake a large-scale redevelopment to the park and gardens of Cusworth Hall, the results of which contained remarkably similar features to the work at Cannon.<sup>349</sup> Additionally, John’s diary reveals that Woods visited Sir George Armytage at Kirklees Hall in 1760 and in 1764 Woods designed and built a new bridge for Sir Thomas Wentworth at Bretton Hall in a similar style to the new Palladian bridge built at Cannon earlier in the same year.<sup>350</sup> A shared interest in horticulture prompted Wentworth to send John gifts of established pines on completion of his pinery and hot house, and gifts of pineapples as well as game were typical, often noted in John’s diaries and letters as being circulated amongst his social group.<sup>351</sup> An entry in John Spencer’s diary implies that Woods was also commissioned for some minor work at Haigh Hall for Thomas Cotton and also provided a

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<sup>347</sup> Hussey, ‘Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats?’, p. 51.

<sup>348</sup> Stobart, ‘Introduction: The Country house’, p. 2.

<sup>349</sup> Fiona Cowell, *Richard Woods (1715-1793): Master of the Pleasure Garden* (Suffolk and New York, 2009), pp. 25, 44-47, 114, 118, 122.

<sup>350</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/13, Diary of John Spencer, 5<sup>th</sup> August 1760; 60633/14, Diary of John Spencer, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1761; 60633/17, Diary of John Spencer, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1764.

<sup>351</sup> BALS: 60633/13, Diary of John Spencer 29<sup>th</sup> August, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1760; BALS: SpSt 60537/119, Basil Bacon to John Spencer, 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1768.

plan for John's friend Thomas Stapleton of Carlton Hall.<sup>352</sup> Similarly, the architect John Carr was employed to undertake work at Harewood House and we can also see numerous similarities in design features between the work completed there and Cannon Hall. All of these men were a part of John's London or Yorkshire network, the importance of which is explored in Chapter 4 of this thesis and suggests that male bonding or affectionate relationships played a part in practices of architectural design and consumption.

The commissioning of the same architects for similar works not only illustrates John Spencer's potential influence but also a sense of neighbourliness, friendship and likely friendly competitiveness with his social network. These men clearly took an interest in each other's estates and John's diaries tell us of a host of neighbourly visits to Cannon Hall during renovations to the park and gardens. In April shortly after work had begun John records that his brother in law Mr Stanhope visited Cannon 'to look at the intended kitchen garden'<sup>353</sup> and just a few weeks later that 'Mr Stanhope rec[eive]d a Letter from Mr Woods about his Plan for Pinary'.<sup>354</sup> During a visit to dine at Cannon 'Mr Walker and Mr Bullock [...] went over the grounds' mostly likely inspecting the work with John as he did almost daily during Mr Woods visits.<sup>355</sup> Following this, the diary is littered with accounts of Mr Woods visiting Puill Hill, the home of Mr Walker.<sup>356</sup> Richard Woods was also employed to design and oversee the work at Cusworth Hall, the home of the John Battie, to whom John Spencer loaned money during the period. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which competition or collaboration had a part to play in his neighbours' choice of architect and design, but clearly this is no coincidence and commissioning similar work by the same architects and designers helped to shape recognisable regional identity among friends and those of similar social standing. Indeed John Soane advised those considering building or acquiring a new country house to 'take the opinion of his friends' to aid in the process and ease any 'doubts and

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<sup>352</sup> Cowell, *Richard Woods*, p. 26.

<sup>353</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633, Diary of John Spencer, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1760.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1760.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, 7<sup>th</sup> April 1760.

<sup>356</sup> Whilst there is no evidence to confirm Richard Woods was employed at Puill Hill the number of recorded visits there and Mr Walker's interest in the works undertaken at Cannon Hall suggests it is highly likely.

difficulties' that they may have when embarking on such an endeavour.<sup>357</sup> The links between all the men named here, the known extensive sociability of the group evidenced in Chapter Four, and John's extensive recording of these occurrences imply a more personal vested interest as a result of recommendation and collaboration. These actions are ultimately indicative of a group identity, visible through the shared style preferences which influenced the design decisions they made for their homes, parks and gardens. The pattern seen here has interesting parallels with John Smail's work on Halifax which, although focused on the middle classes, found that the appropriation of new practices and fashionable goods from outside of the community was 'shaped by the local context'.<sup>358</sup> The use of localised services and goods shaped cultural expectations and 'helped define the members of an increasingly distinct group' of commercial and professional elite.<sup>359</sup>

Returning to the interior of Cannon Hall, the design choices visible through John Spencer's probate inventory conducted in 1775 were similarly bound up in group identity and expressions of the self through material culture. An amalgam of modern French design and more traditional, somewhat old-fashioned choices for artwork expose something of John's political and cultural identity. The inventory for 1775 reveals that throughout the house consideration had been given to renewing the furnishings in almost every room. There was a greater focus on the more public spaces along the south front of the house, but particularly those reserved for John Spencer himself and specially invited guests: the library, the 'Low lodging room' and 'Mr Spencers own bed chamber'; it is in these rooms where the most elaborate and expensive furnishings are listed.<sup>360</sup> The style and nature of the furnishings is consistent throughout the house, with mirrors, gilt frames and sumptuous and colourful fabrics illuminating each room. In the 'Drawing room' the principal furniture listed in both the 1750 and 1763 inventories was entirely the same; 8 walnut chairs, 3 velvet window cushions, a 'japan tea table', a round mahogany table, card table, gilt leather

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<sup>357</sup> John Soane, *Plans Elevations and Sections of Buildings* (London, 1788), p. 6, quoted in Wilson and Mackley, *The Building of the English Country House*, p. 107.

<sup>358</sup> Smail, *The Origins of Middle-Class Culture*, p. 14.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>360</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate inventory for John Spencer, 1775.

screen, chimney glass, 2 sconces and fire utensils.<sup>361</sup> In 1750 three pictures are recorded as adorning the walls and a clock is also listed.<sup>362</sup> By 1763 a Turkey carpet is included, however the pictures and clocks which featured in 1750 are not listed.<sup>363</sup> The inventory taken in 1763 also records a tea service and mahogany tea tray, whilst these items are absent from the 1750 inventory a stand for a kettle is listed suggesting tea was consumed in this space but the service was not left on display.<sup>364</sup> By 1775 none of the previous furnishings remained in the drawing room, and had been replaced with substantially more luxurious and comfortable items. 'Two large handsome glasses in burnished gold frames' '2 marble slabs' with 'gilt frames', '4 cabriolet elbow chairs white & gold coverd green mixd Damask & check cases', ten further chairs in the same fabric 'with elbows to suite', a 'Large handsome sofa with bolsters' and '3 p[ai]r venetian W[indow] curtains' adorned the space and created a comfortable environment for personal enjoyment and the entertaining of numerous guests.<sup>365</sup> In all rooms except those for the exclusive use of the servants mahogany and elm was favoured over more old fashioned walnut or oak. Gold and gilt frames, checks and damask fabrics, china jars and pier glasses spoke of 'French Rococo naturalism' and Elwick's alignment with Chippendale amongst others for creating a refined, lighter atmosphere.<sup>366</sup>

The purchasing of books and the cultivation of a library formed a 'typical area of elite male spending – communicating taste, discernment and learning'.<sup>367</sup> Reasons for collecting varied, and some collectors 'aimed at assembling impressive collections, characterised by the quality, rarity and completeness of its contents; others sought to build a library that would be useful and used' and for almost all collectors specially created libraries acted as personal sanctuaries and sites of display.<sup>368</sup> Just as the cabinet of curiosities was preferred by some, the consumption of books conformed to and satisfied the 'typical elite male

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<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>362</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, 1763.

<sup>364</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671, Household inventories, 1750 and 1763.

<sup>365</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate inventory for John Spencer, 1775.

<sup>366</sup> Christopher Christie, *The English Country House in the Eighteenth Century* (Manchester and New York, 2000), p. 232.

<sup>367</sup> Stobart and Rothery, 'Men, Women and the Supply of Luxury Goods', p. 100.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

practices of collecting'.<sup>369</sup> The new library at Cannon Hall housed over 500 books, each one meticulously listed in the annual inventory completed in the last week of the year, a time which John notes as being kept 'busy cleaning and putting my Books in order'.<sup>370</sup> The books were often bought in bulk from the auctions and private sales John attended during his many visits to the capital each year. Others were bought on recommendation or for discussion with friends, often Godfrey Bosville who wrote to share his thoughts on 'the two new volumes of that Dealer in Sermons and Bawdy Tristram Shandy'.<sup>371</sup> John's training as a lawyer meant his collection included numerous legal books, alongside books on the 'History of Great Britain' and the 'History of various nations' Voyages, Travels. Antiquityse' (83 in total), 'Libri Classical' (92) which contained numerous works by Xenophon and 'English Poetry, Translations and other miscellaneous Books' (69).<sup>372</sup> Other books listed as 'English' included multiple texts on 'Poison', 'The Use and abuse of Parliam[en]t' and 'Whistons Theory on the Earth'.<sup>373</sup> There was also an abundance of books discussing the country house, 'Switzers' books on Gardening' and the essential 'Landed Gentleman's Companion' amongst many, reflecting a 'tradition of the gentleman architect' keen to perfect the art of good husbandry and to play an informed and active role in management and cultivation of his estate.<sup>374</sup> The inclusion of Xenophon is particularly telling and while it is impossible to know the extent to which John engaged with this text, the collection of works in his collection suggests he was well aware of Xenophon's theory of oeconomy. As Harvey describes, Xenophon, through Bradley's contemporary translation, promoted 'Honour and Reputation' and 'taught self-governance', considered to be 'perhaps the key virtue of any man seeking masculine status'.<sup>375</sup> John's vast collection of books were the only objects he stipulated must remain in the house after his death. Bibliophiles like John Spencer were influenced by a diverse set of motives when choosing books to collect. John's collection contained books for professional and practical reasons, and to show taste, whilst novels

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<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>370</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/23, Diary of John Spencer, 28<sup>th</sup> December 1772.

<sup>371</sup> HHC: U DDBM/X1/32/9, Godfrey Bosville to John Spencer, 20th January 1765.

<sup>372</sup> BALS: SpSt 60675/2, Lists of books and prices updated cataloguing, 1764-1774, 1775-1781.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*; Stobart and Rothery, 'Men, Women and the Supply of Luxury Goods', p. 101.

<sup>375</sup> *The Science of Good Husbandry: or, the Oeconomics of Xenophon* (trans. Richard Bradley, 1727), pp. 1-2; Harvey, *The Little Republic*, pp. 39-40.

showed an awareness of fashionable genres. John's collection reflected desirable attributes of a learned, tasteful, enquiring and refined gentleman.

The completion of the new library united John's vast collection of books which had been previously housed on bookcases scattered throughout the house. Accompanied by collectively the most expensive furnishings in the house this room conveyed a sense of refinement, education and modern sensibilities. Along with the drawing room, the library replaced the 'best room' (which is no longer listed as a room by 1775) as the site for personal relaxation and display, the library not only housed John Spencer's extensive collection of books but also a host of furnishings which spoke of an awareness of sound craftsmanship central to the Palladian style through the fitted bookshelves and 'mahog[an]y fan back chairs Cov'd black leather'.<sup>376</sup> The room performed several functions indicated in the ample seating and table space for meals for small groups with additional furniture including '2 elbow chairs [with] pincushion seats in the same black leather', a writing table, dining table and breakfast table all made of mahogany and another breakfast table in oak.<sup>377</sup> Display in the newly furnished rooms was centred on the personal qualities and interests of the man, rather than the more generic and inherited patterns of show and consumption previously on display in the best room.

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<sup>376</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate Inventory for John Spencer, 1775.

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*





Figure 2.2: Artist unknown, *Still Life with Dead Game*, 17<sup>th</sup> century, Dutch School. Situated in the over mantel in the Library, Cannon Hall. Copyright – Barnsley Museums, Cannon Hall Museum Collection.



Figure 2.3: Cannon Hall Museum, The Library with fireplace installed during the renovations c.1765 featuring the painting 'Still Life with Game', 17<sup>th</sup> century. The furnishing of this room is a modern interpretation. *Source*: Cannon Hall Museum.

As discussed in Chapter One, the library served as a private place of retreat and learning but, for its curator John Spencer, it also functioned as the ultimate self-expression through the titles that littered the shelves and the artwork which adorned the walls. Inlaid into the handcrafted fire surround installed by John Carr was a seventeenth-century Dutch painting depicting the bounty of John's favoured pastimes of shooting and hunting (shown in Figures 2.2 and 2.3). Such depictions of dead game and platters of fruit ready to eat were symbolic of the connection between the countryside and the wealth of a gentleman's table and his health and wellbeing.<sup>378</sup> As is evident from John's social activities explored in Chapter Four, whether alone, with one other or hosting groups of men for large seasonal events, hunting in the fields and moorland surrounding Cannon Hall was a common pastime. Country pursuits were the embodiment of elite masculinity and 'a kind of 'voluntary labour' for the

<sup>378</sup> Christie, *The English Country House*, pp. 204-205.

country gentleman' which was wholesome and noble.<sup>379</sup> As recent research by Benjamin Jackson discusses, contrary to some traditional narratives on hunting as in opposition to polite masculinity, the “gentleman sportsman” was a materially constructed and practiced masculine identity in eighteenth-century England’, projected in the display of the hunt and its luxury paraphernalia in the home.<sup>380</sup> The celebration of the hunt within the home served to align blood sports with other expressions of polite masculine identity also shown through material culture, such as scientific instruments or here, John’s vast library collections.<sup>381</sup> Sociability centred on the hunt was therefore not in opposition to seemingly more refined activities but was equally an expression of polite masculinity and for the diarists, especially John, central to self-fashioning and displaying these aspects of his masculine identity. The inclusion of such Dutch art as the focal point to the library was symbolic of how John wished to be presented as a man of traditional values, learned in the arts with sound taste and accomplished in essential hobbies of his social class. Whilst the art displayed in the Library here denotes personal interests and masculine attributes, family portraiture also played an important role in the expressions of familial pedigree and heritage, equally essential for families within the elite and the aristocracy.

### **Portraits, Lineage and the Life Cycle**

As a highly public phenomenon, art, and particularly portraiture was a popular device for the cultivation and public display of identity.<sup>382</sup> As Chapter Four describes, Cannon Hall frequently played host to numerous family members, friends and other guests. Part of the draw of domestic sociability was the ability to view and show off the decorative choices of

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<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>380</sup> Benjamin Jackson, ‘Men and Sporting Paraphernalia’, *Furnishing Masculinity: Men’s Material Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2020), pp. 275, 328.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328.

<sup>382</sup> Kate Retford, ‘Sensibility and genealogy in the eighteenth-century family portrait: The collection at Kedleston Hall’, *The Historical Journal* 46 3 (2003), p. 535; For the public nature of portraiture, see Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 159-175; Shearer West, ‘Public nature of private life: The conversation piece and the fragmented family’, *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18 (1995), pp. 153-172; Shearer West, ‘Patronage and power: the role of the portrait in eighteenth-century England’, in Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (eds), *Culture Society and Politics in Britain 1660-1800* (Manchester and New York, 1991), pp. 135–6.

the home, not least the art on the walls. Family portraits were seen by visitors to the house and as such acted as semi-public confirmation of lineage. Before looking more closely at the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family portraits, it is useful to consider how the inventories inform our understanding of art and its display at Cannon Hall. Such is the irregularity of the record keeping in inventories that the inclusion of paintings is sporadic, regardless of whether the inventory was for probate or household records. Nonetheless the evidence available suggests the family had a sizeable collection of art and numerous family portraits.<sup>383</sup> The household inventory for 1750 records 3 pictures in the drawing room and 7 'Family pieces and others' in the 'common setting room'.<sup>384</sup> Six years later the probate inventory of 1756 records the same with the addition of a 'Picture Magna Charta' in the 'Musik Room' and 106 pictures covering the walls of the best staircase.<sup>385</sup> Notably the sentimental significance of the family paintings marked them out in the 1756 probate inventory as different to 'others' and they are the only items listed but not ascribed a monetary value.<sup>386</sup> Hung in the more informal family space of the 'common sitting room', termed the 'Stone Parlour' in 1756, these 'family pictures' were for specific viewing enjoyment by the family or close acquaintances.

Moving forward in time, the probate inventory for 1775 does not list any family paintings. Two pieces of art, a 'Van Dykes Family' and 'Susan & Elders in Troy' were recorded, although their value was grouped with other decorative objects including candle sticks, vases and artificial flowers.<sup>387</sup> Finally, the inventory of 1822 lists 4 pictures in the Entrance Hall, 22 pictures in Drawing and Music Rooms, 6 pictures in the Library, 1 large picture in the Dining Room and a further 69 paintings recorded in the bedrooms and dressing rooms, 3 of which were hung in the stewards room.<sup>388</sup> The lack of distinction made between the artworks in

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<sup>383</sup> BALS: SpSt 247/3, Inventory of goods and chattels of John Spencer, 1681; SpSt 60671/5, Probate inventory, William Spencer 1756; SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventories, 1750 and 1763; SpSt 60671/20, Probate Inventory, John Spencer 1775; SpSt 60671/3, Household Inventory 1822 and 1823.

<sup>384</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/1, Household Inventory, 1750.

<sup>385</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/5, Probate Inventory for William Spencer, 1756.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, Probate Inventory, John Spencer, 1775.

<sup>388</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1822-23. The breakdown of the paintings recorded in the bedrooms are as follows: 3 paintings in 'The Batchelors Room', 3 in the blue bedroom, 10

this latter inventory and the overall dearth of descriptive detail unfortunately prevents close analysis of the types of art in their collection. When read together, however, the absence of paintings recorded in the 1775 probate inventory which only recorded objects of saleable value and the lack of monetary value attributed to the majority of the paintings, suggests that they were a large collection of family portraits or other personal pieces, potentially paintings of the estate horses or hounds that were popular during this period.<sup>389</sup> Family portraits are heirlooms rather than commodities and as such 'resists the parameters of exchange value' unlike the other goods recorded in the inventories examined here.<sup>390</sup> The value of these portraits lay not in their saleable worth but in their role as signifiers of dynasticism and familial heritage; they were integral and specific to the house and the family that lived there.

Of significant interest for understanding both how the spaces of the house functioned together and the role of the consumption of art and portraiture by the family are the 106 pictures recorded in the 1756 inventory as covering the walls of the staircase. Grander houses than Cannon Hall were designed for entertainment on two levels with ground floor reception rooms and a large ballroom spanning the first floor, for example. In the transition from one suite of rooms to the next the staircase was part of the space experienced by invited guests on the 'parade route'.<sup>391</sup> As discussed in Chapter One there is some evidence that the staircase acted in a similar manner at Cannon Hall, possibly leading guests to the Best Room, a room the inventories suggest was almost certainly on the first floor until this room name disappears from the inventories following John Spencer's renovations in the 1760's. The broad staircase designed and made early in the career of William Thornton, one of Yorkshire's leading early eighteenth-century master craftsmen and architects as discussed

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pictures in 'The Wainscot Room or Mrs S Stanhope's Dressing Room', 13 in 'Mr Stanhope's Dressing Room', 2 larger and 6 small pictures in 'Mr Stanhope's other dressing room', 3 in 'East end of the house the young lady's bedroom', 3 in 'Miss Ann Stanhope's bedroom', 10 pictures in another 'Miss Stanhope's bedroom', 14 pictures and 3 'maps in frames' in 'W Stanhope's study and finally 3 pictures in the Stewards room.

<sup>389</sup> Christie, *The British Country House*, pp. 205-207.

<sup>390</sup> Kate Retford, 'Patrilineal Portraiture? Gender and Genealogy in the Eighteenth-Century English Country House' in John Style and Amanda Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006), p. 339.

<sup>391</sup> Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992), p. 120.

in Chapter One, was a notable centre piece to the house and as such it most likely functioned 'to sustain refinement along all the passages through which guests might proceed'.<sup>392</sup> The adornment of the walls of the staircase with a large number of pictures, certainly by the middle of the century, emphasises the function of this space for display. The pictures hung here were most likely prints but it is also possible that there were a number of family portraits too. The cumulative value of £2 was listed alongside the pictures in the 1756 inventory.<sup>393</sup> Such a low amount suggests that of the 106 pictures a few held some commercial value, it could also be the case that others were exempt from valuation as family heirlooms. Nonetheless, what this evidence describes is a highly decorative and expertly crafted staircase, flanked by walls covered in a large collection of art and possibly family portraiture, in full view of guests as they entered and moved through the more public spaces of the home.

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<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120; See Chapter One, some features of the stairs including the new balusters were billed for in 1711 by joiner William Thornton, BALS: SpSt 60674/1.

<sup>393</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/5, Probate Inventory for William Spencer, 1756.



Figure 2.4: *The best staircase at Cannon Hall showing square acanthus balusters, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021, photograph by author.*



Figure 2.5: *Acanthus detailing on the frame of the portrait of John Spencer, frame attributed to Edwin Elwick, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, photograph by Barnsley Museums, Cannon Hall Museum Collection.*

It is interesting to speculate the impact of such a large number of pictures lining the staircase and the connotations for such a display, particularly if family portraits were included amongst them. When hung in this way the pictures would have cumulatively conveyed the family's taste and aesthetic but also a sense of status and heritage as guests journeyed from the reception rooms to the intimate 'best chamber'. It is notable that John Spencer, when commissioning the revered cabinet maker Edwin Elwick of Wright and Elwick in June 1768 to produce a frame for his portrait, stipulated that it should be in the style of Carlo Marrati, a design which typically used gilded acanthus leaf ornament, the same design that features on the balusters of the staircase (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5). In the absence of a dedicated picture or long gallery like those seen elsewhere, it is possible that the Spencer family utilized and elaborated the role of the highly crafted staircase as a transitional



showpiece.<sup>394</sup> A lack of specialised space did not deter them from deploying the same markers of taste, lineage and pedigree typical of the larger homes of wealthier families.<sup>395</sup> The inventory for 1822 suggests that by the end of the period the collection, or parts of it, had been dispersed around the house, most likely due to the decline in the use of the upstairs parts of the house for sociability.<sup>396</sup> Pictures and the space used for their display were substantial investments and markers of taste and heritage. Furthermore, family portraits were important for the upholding of dynasticism for the industrial owners of Cannon Hall as well as substantially more affluent families, a point further demonstrated by the limited collection of paintings of the family for which records remain.

I will now turn to discuss the small collection of family portraits presently known about and what they communicate about the family and their identity across the period. The paintings discussed here are either on display in the house today, recorded by A. M. W. Stirling in 1911 (and prior to the estate being dispersed) or those I have located as modern auction lots. Mid-twentieth-century clearance sales dispersed much of the family's art collection, although several family paintings were retained by the family, many of which now hang in Cannon Hall as a museum. The auction catalogue for the sale at Banks Hall (the final home of the last descendant to live at Cannon Hall) includes a sizeable list of paintings, sketches and watercolours.<sup>397</sup> Although it is unknown if these works were purchased during the period studied here it is possible that the nine seventeenth-century Dutch School paintings including work by Wouwerman, Sir Anthony van Dyck and Jan Steen as well as the two paintings by Yorkshire artist Richard Wilson and later eighteenth century works by Sir Augustus Wall Calcott and George Barret could have been contemporary procurements.<sup>398</sup> A van Dyck, was recorded in the 1775 inventory and the ownership of other Dutch works would not have been out of place alongside the seventeenth-century still life adorning the over mantel in the library. Fortunately the family memoir written by A. M. W. Stirling contains several copies of family portraits whose location is otherwise unknown and this

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<sup>394</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 61-62. Also see Retford, 'Patrilineal Portraiture?', pp. 327-329.

<sup>395</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>396</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/3, Household Inventory, 1822-23.

<sup>397</sup> BALS: Banks Hall sales catalogue, 16-17<sup>th</sup> September 1965.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

offers something of a brief chronological insight into family portraiture commissions.<sup>399</sup> In many ways the collection of portraits to be discussed here is highly typical of the style for the period and reflects a widely recognised development in portraiture style, particularly the shift to the way in which children and families were depicted in increasingly more sentimentalised and affectionate ways from the mid to late eighteenth-century.<sup>400</sup> As Retford stresses, those that commissioned portraiture were deliberately appealing to their audience and conveying, through composition, pose, and an often fictionalised narrative within the portrait, a set of idealised messages regarding status, familial life, domestic virtues and taste.<sup>401</sup> The small collection of portraits discussed here demonstrates how art functioned as a conveyor of these attributes for the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family and similarly how portraiture was used as a mechanism for recording, preserving and articulating notable events in the life course both for contemporary viewers and for posterity.

The earliest portraits are a set of three half-length paintings depicting the sons of William Spencer; John Spencer (born 1719) and his twin brothers, Benjamin and William (born 1725), painted circa 1729 (Figures, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8). While the reproductions shown here are monochrome, the description by A. M. W. Stirling describes John as wearing a 'blue-velvet coat with lace ruffles', while his brothers' coats are 'crimson velvet crossed with blue scarves', and all three children are wearing short, white wigs.<sup>402</sup> Benjamin is depicted holding a goldfinch tethered on a ribbon while William is petting a King Charles spaniel. The animals could have been family pets but they are certainly artistic devices possibly conveying the family's royalist sympathies, while the tethered goldfinch has both Christian and Dutch emblematic significance.<sup>403</sup> As was typical of paintings of children during the period, the imagery used here constructs a narrative and conveys specific societal values or those specific to the parents, while also showing familial likeness.<sup>404</sup> The portraits are typical

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<sup>399</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House, Volumes One and Two*.

<sup>400</sup> Retford, 'Sensibility and Genealogy', p. 536.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>402</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*, p. 39.

<sup>403</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 177-179.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

in nature and communicated respectability, wealth and good taste through dress, particularly the numerous large buttons and swags of fabric, displaying material wealth and status.<sup>405</sup> These portraits, typical of others of the period, specifically male children, were used by way of indicating 'hope for the future of the family and an assertion of confidence' in the progression of the family through widely recognised and easily communicated symbols.<sup>406</sup>

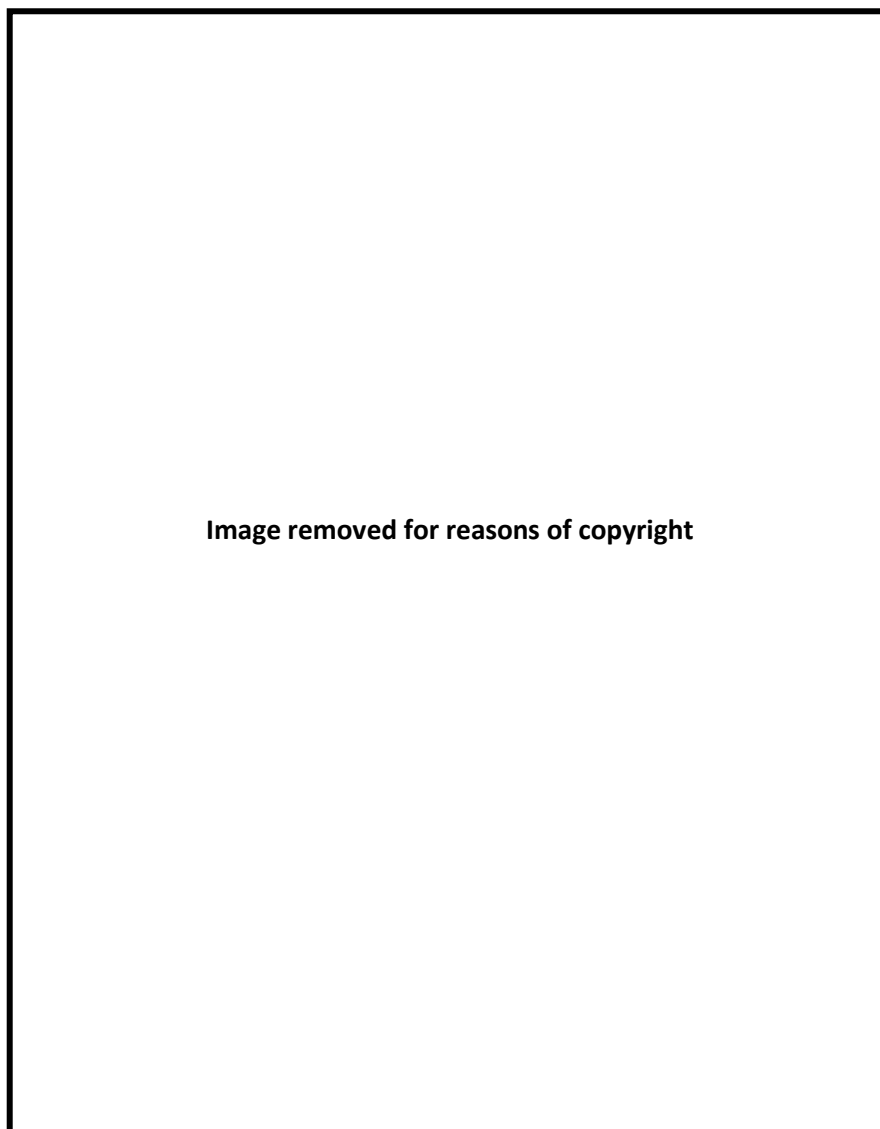


Figure 2.6: Artist unknown, *William Spencer*, c.1729, in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni, Volume One* (London, 1911), p. 40.

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<sup>405</sup> Marcia Pointon, *Portrayal and the Search for Identity*, (London, 2013), p. 156.

<sup>406</sup> Shearer West, 'The Public Nature of Private Life: The Conversation Piece and the Fragmented Family', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18 (1995), p. 164.

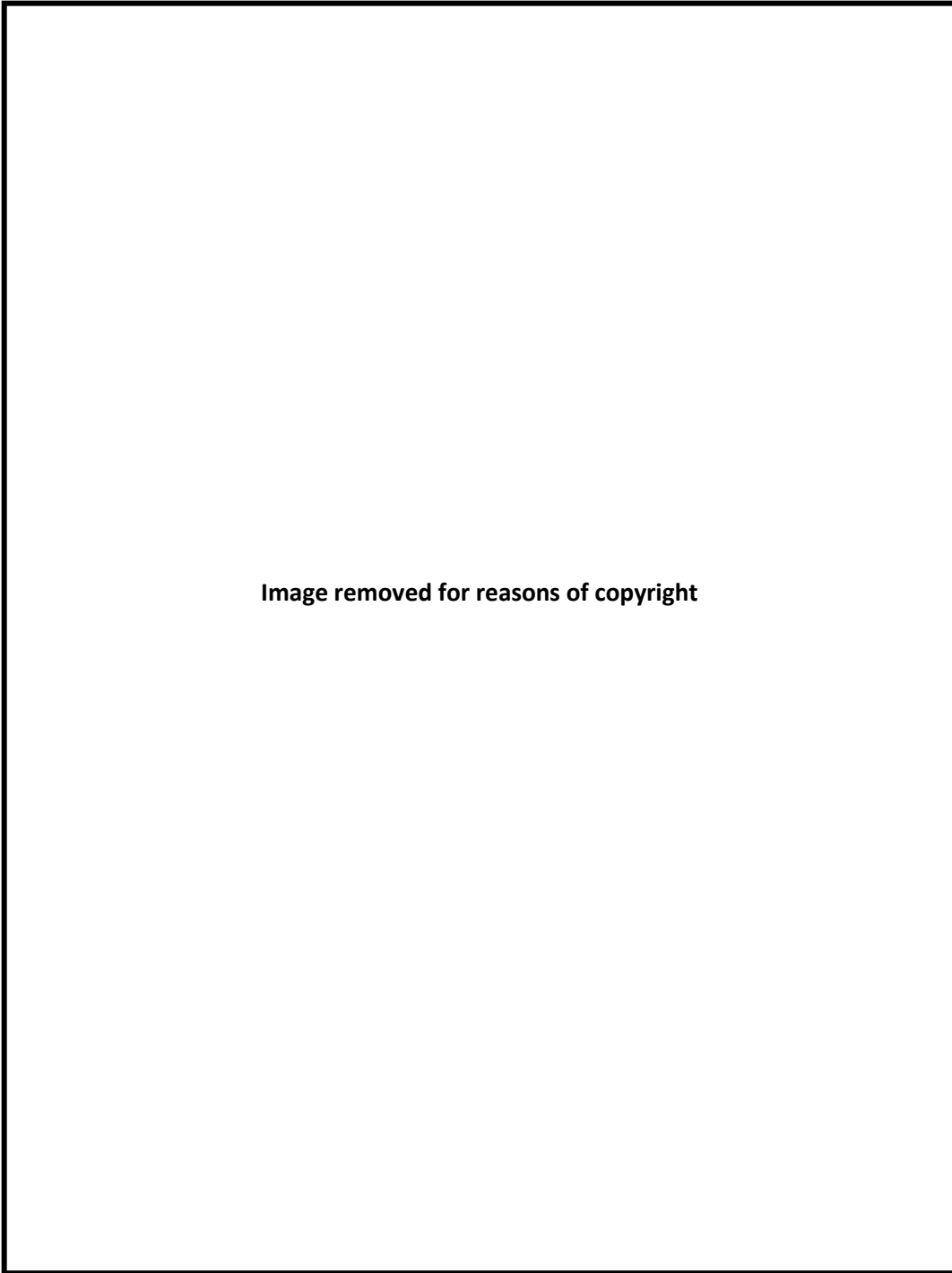


Figure 2.7: Artist unknown, *Benjamin Spencer*, c.1729, in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni, Volume One* (London, 1911), p. 40.

Image removed for reasons of copyright

Figure 2.8: Artist unknown, *John Spencer*, c.1729, in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni*, Volume One (London, 1911), p. 44.

The contrast between these paintings and the portrait by John Hoppner of Mary Winifred Spencer Stanhope with her eldest child, Walter Spencer Stanhope (born 1784) in 1787 demonstrates the shift in portraiture style depicting children over the period. The pose, dress and back drop conform to contemporary expectations of affectionate domesticity and ‘encapsulate contemporary ideals of domestic life’.<sup>407</sup> Mary is depicted as the epitome of the sentimental mother championed in contemporary literature through her intimate affection and loving gaze towards her child.<sup>408</sup> Similarly, Walter is presented as joyful, chubby and enjoying physical intimacy and play with his mother in contrast to the formality of the earlier portraits, although his young age also plays a part in this display.<sup>409</sup> Like many of their contemporaries the collaboration between the Spencer Stanhopes and Hoppner created an image designed to ‘emphasize domestic virtues and overlay the realities of daily familial life with images that suggested ideal intimacy and affection’.<sup>410</sup> Mary’s gaze towards her child, rather than out towards the viewer was a device used to emphasise the ‘sitter’s attention to her domestic duties’ and the mother’s ‘sole and proper concern with the welfare and development of her children’.<sup>411</sup> The focus and concentration of Mary’s gaze and the softness of her expression impressed a sense of authenticity which was essential to depictions of motherly affection.<sup>412</sup> Artists such as Reynolds, Romney and Hoppner were celebrated for their ability to capture the virtues of the sentimental mother which translated so unequivocally to the viewer as to promote the attributes of domestic love and harmony to those that looked upon it.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> Retford, ‘Sensibility and genealogy’, p. 560.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 540.

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 560.

<sup>411</sup> Kate Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life: Family Portraiture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven and London, 2006), p. 97.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.



Figure 2.9: John Hoppner, *Mary Winifred and Walter Spencer Spencer Stanhope*, c.1785, oil on canvas, Cannon Hall. Copyright – Barnsley Museums, Cannon Hall Museum Collection.

As Retford observes it is telling that such commissions were primarily produced to celebrate the birth of a male offspring, reflecting the role portraiture played in reinforcing notions of heritage and lineage.<sup>414</sup> Walter, however, did not inherit Cannon Hall and it passed to his brother John on account of Walter's ill health and disabilities in the form of regular 'convulsions' from just a few months old.<sup>415</sup> Despite this, the portrait uses recognisable devices, including the use of muted tones for the sitters dress and hair in contrast to the red swag curtain in the background of Mary and her child.<sup>416</sup> The complimentary painting of Walter (Figure 2.10) utilises the same deep red curtain to tie the two portraits together and as a device to indicate status.<sup>417</sup> Whilst Mary looks inward to her child and the nurturing of her family, Walter's gaze is directed outward to the viewer, claiming the scene, family and household as his own. The positioning of these images in the home, to convey their intended messages to the viewer, is an important aspect of their display. It is unknown where these two paintings were displayed at Cannon Hall during the period studied, but today they sit side by side in the dining room. It is certain, however, that these portraits would have been displayed to intentionally convey to guests the comprehension and enactment of 'tender pater familias' and the 'doting mother'; altogether a specific model of family life endorsed by the Spencer Stanhopes.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100.

<sup>415</sup> BALS: SpSt 60651/12, Dairy of Mary Spencer Stanhope, 1783-1785.

<sup>416</sup> Retford, *The Art of Domestic Life*, p. 104.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> Retford, 'Sensibility and genealogy', p. 560.





Figure 2.10: John Hoppner, *Walter Spencer Stanhope*, 1791, oil on canvas, Cannon Hall. Copyright – Barnsley Museums, Cannon Hall Museum Collection.

The final group of portraits to be examined here are those depicting John Spencer and Walter Spencer Stanhope. John Spencer's portrait, c. 1768, (Figure 2.11), attributed to Benjamin Wilson is currently on display in the dining room at Cannon Hall. In the context of the themes of this thesis the most notable feature of this painting is the setting. John is depicted as sitting in front of an oval window, much like the oval windows of his garden room at Cannon Hall. The garden room, built by John Carr under John Spencer's direction is a somewhat intriguing building tucked beside the kitchen garden designed by Richard Woods. A small space, it consists of two rooms with two symmetrical oval windows that face south towards the parkland. Correspondence between Ann Spencer and her brother in 1767 suggests this space was used as a study and she describes overseeing the seasonal removal of his desk from the library into the garden room.<sup>419</sup> While this setting and backdrop to the painting is somewhat speculative, its choice - if correct - emphasises the importance of the gardens, the interconnection between the outdoor and indoor spaces of the Hall and the sense of seclusion and privacy afforded in this discrete and unobtrusive garden room for John Spencer.<sup>420</sup> It implies that personal and perhaps sentimental meaning could be concealed within lineage portraiture.

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<sup>419</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/93, Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1767.

<sup>420</sup> While there is no documentation that confirms the garden room as the setting for this painting the curators of Cannon Hall, following detailed examination of the image and the garden room are confident in their attribution.



Figure 2.11: Benjamin Wilson [attributed to], *John Spencer*, c.1768, oil on canvas, Cannon Hall. Copyright – Barnsley Museums, Cannon Hall Museum Collection.

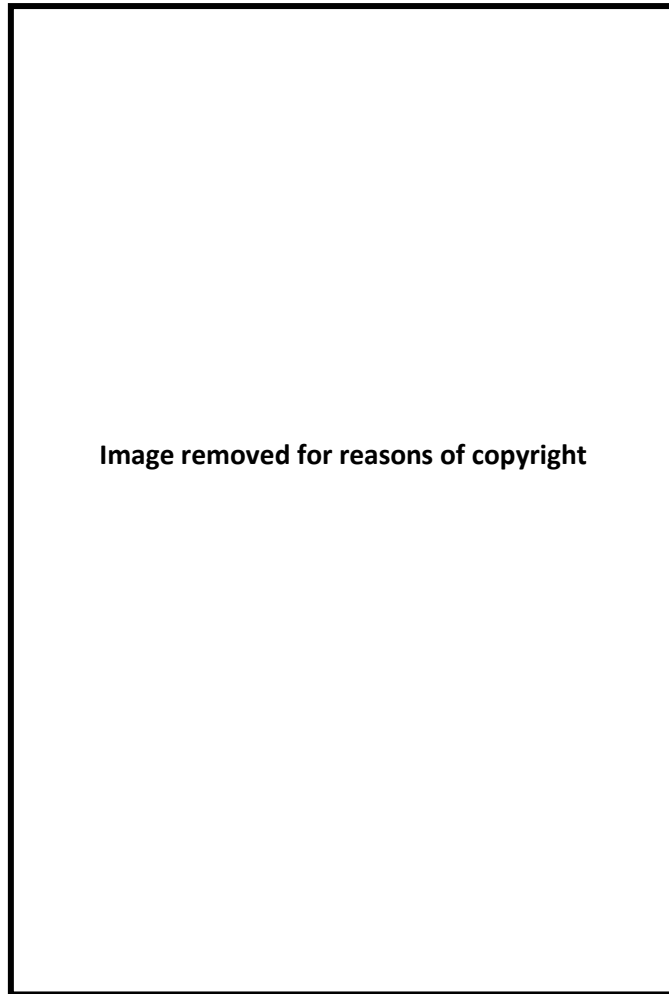


Figure 2.12: Artist unknown, *Walter Spencer Stanhope*, 1770, in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni*, Volume one (London, 1911), frontispiece.

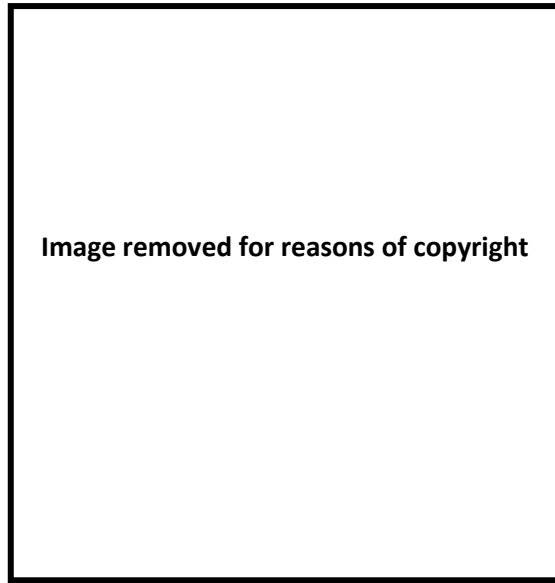


Figure 2.13: Artist unknown, *Walter Spencer Stanhope*, 1770, in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni*, Volume one (London, 1911), p. 28.

Image removed for reasons of copyright

Figure 2.14: Joshua Reynolds, *The Dilettanti Vase Group: Sir Watkin Williams-Wynn, 4<sup>th</sup> Bt. (in President's robes); John Taylor; Stephen Payne-Gallway; Sir William Hamilton; Richard Thompson (in Arch Master robes); Walter Spencer Stanhope; John Smyth. 1777-1779. Oil on canvas, 196.8 x 142.2 cm, in Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti* (New Haven and London, 2009), plate 134.*



Image removed for reasons of copyright

Figure 2.15: William Hilton, *Walter Spencer Stanhope*, c. 1808-1810. Oil on canvas. 124 x 102 cm. *Source*: Adam's Auctioneers, Ireland, [www.adams.ie](http://www.adams.ie) [accessed 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021].

Portraits were commissioned for a variety of reasons and by people other than the sitter or their family. Of the collection of paintings of Walter Spencer Stanhope known about at the time of writing all of them were commissions to commemorate a specific life event, from a royal wedding, acceptance into a London club to the death of a child. Portraits served as a

timeless record, situating the subject in a time and place and their display marked a deliberate expression of association between the sitter, the scene and the site of display.

The pair of miniature portraits (Figures 2.12 and 2.13) were commissioned during Walter's visit to Versailles for the wedding of Marie Antoinette and Louis XVI in 1770 and depict Walter Spencer Stanhope at age twenty-one.<sup>421</sup> The personal subject matter and compact size of miniature portraits made them a popular keepsake, and an important part of 'memory culture' which grew in popularity in the eighteenth century, as a consequence of improvements made to the materials used in their making.<sup>422</sup> This pair acted as a souvenir of Walter's presence in Paris during the marriage of the monarch. As souvenirs, miniatures commemorated specific special events such as weddings or deaths and were often gifted to be worn or kept on the person as a reminder of a loved one or displayed in the home as a conversation piece.<sup>423</sup> The full-length composition (Figure 2.12) is less typical than the bust portrait (Figure 2.13) and serves to show off Walter's attire akin to the macaroni; including dainty, slipper-like shoes, embellished cane, blue coat and white, tightfitting garters and stockings.<sup>424</sup> Walter's pose, with his left hand in his pocket, serves to hold back his coat to expose his full leg and the shape of his torso. His frame and stance depict him as muscular, elegant and self-assured. Pale and tight-fitting leg-ware imitated bare skin and accentuated his muscles, a popular feature in the second half of the eighteenth century 'as a marker of a particular kind of manly strength', mastered through self-control and restraint.<sup>425</sup> Walter is simultaneously expressing his belonging within the fashionable and leisured elite and important manly attributes of self-control and strength that would have been viewed and read by those who looked upon it.

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<sup>421</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House, Volume Two*, frontispiece.

<sup>422</sup> Karin Schrader, 'Telling Objects' – Miniatures as an Interactive Medium in Eighteenth-Century Female European Court Portraits', *Etudes épistémè* 36 (2019), pp. 1, 2.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>424</sup> Peter McNeil, 'Macaroni Men and Eighteenth-Century Fashion Culture 'The Vulgar Tongue'', *The Journal of the Australian Academy of the Humanities* 8 (2017), p. 60.

<sup>425</sup> Karen Harvey, 'Men of Parts: Masculine Embodiment and the Male Leg in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies* 54 4 (October 2015), pp. 811-812.



Whilst the painting by Joshua Reynolds (Figure 2.14) was not for display at Cannon Hall, it is useful for understanding the varied uses of portraiture and how it was used to mark specific life events, and as a tool used by individuals and social groups to underpin their identity within an 'associational world'.<sup>426</sup> The painting by Reynolds is of a select group of members of the Society of Dilettanti and was one of a pair that were designed to hang in a purpose-built space at the Star and Garter Tavern in Pall Mall - the Society's headquarters.<sup>427</sup> The paintings were commissioned during a period of resurgence in the Dilettanti and Walter was among twenty-eight new members in the 1770's, all with an interest in classical antiquities, and all of whom had participated in the Grand Tour.<sup>428</sup> The composition and design of the paintings is 'emblematic and celebratory' of key virtues of the Dilettanti and celebrates the spirit of the 'collector, the elite libertine, the convivial society, and the spirit of Enlightenment inquiry'.<sup>429</sup> Full of overt and hidden symbolic meaning, the paintings exhibit complex intellectual ideas that honour sixteenth-century Venetian masters, while staying true to earlier Dilettanti portraitist George Knapp in its display of 'the bacchic, the sexual, the classical, and the sacrilegious'.<sup>430</sup> Simultaneously, the paintings are more ordered and show greater restraint than earlier works by Knapp, reflecting the less frivolous, scandalous nature of the Society in its 1770's revival.<sup>431</sup>

The painting depicts Sir William Hamilton (centre) gesturing to his vast vase catalogue, *Antiquites Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, laid out on the table whilst Sir Watkin William Wynn admires the antique, decorative storage jar alongside it. Both are engaged in the Society's principal endeavour of virtue.<sup>432</sup> The attention of the other members of the Dilettanti, including Walter (top right), is directed elsewhere in the enjoyment and pursuit of 'Eros and Dionysos', conjugal pleasures and fine wine.<sup>433</sup> The depiction of men enjoying

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<sup>426</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford and New York, 2000).

<sup>427</sup> Jason M. Kelly, *The Society of Dilettanti* (New Haven and London, 2009), p. 209; Bruce Redford, *Dilettanti: The Antic and the Antique in Eighteenth-Century England* (Los Angeles, 2008), p. 97.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>430</sup> Redford, *Dilettanti*, p. 100.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*; Kelly, *The Society*, p. 214.

<sup>432</sup> Redford, *Dilettanti*, pp. 100-101.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101

drink, especially wine is typical of portraits of club members in the eighteenth century, including work by Godfrey Kneller and Joseph Highmore.<sup>434</sup> The Dilettanti especially were known for their consumption of alcohol with Horace Walpole famously remarking that, 'The nominal qualification [of membership] is having been in Italy, and the real one, being drunk'.<sup>435</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter Four the consumption of alcohol, and its lucid and inebriating effects was believed to encourage lively and free debate, key objectives of the Society, while bonding the members together through ritual and ceremony.<sup>436</sup> Here fine wine in elegant stem wine glasses are enjoyed and held aloft by Walter's neighbour, Richard Thompson, as though to call a toast. Thompson is also pointing to the woman's garter held by John Taylor, assumed by Jason Kelly to be a symbol of his marriage, and his smile is suggestive of conjugal pleasures.<sup>437</sup> The toast, therefore, is possibly in recognition of Taylor's marriage, nonetheless Walter's eyes are firmly fixed on the wine glass and its contents, as though enthralled, along with other members in tasting, smelling and critically engaging with the contents of their glasses. In depicting the only partial interest in virtu and greater preference for drink, Reynolds is alluding to the importance of the liberal enjoyment of alcohol for the group to participate in full and fluid debate, but also the wine as expensive and exclusive and all reinforcing the values of the Society.

The composition and styling of the paintings takes inspiration from numerous artists; particularly Paolo Veronese and his paintings *Marriage at Cana* (1563) and *Feast in the House of Simon* (1570), artwork Reynolds and other members of the Dilettanti saw during their time in Italy.<sup>438</sup> Reynolds' deliberate use of artistic devices and compositions that mirrored works seen on the Grand Tour, alongside references to personal life events, made the true reading of the paintings the preserve of those who had the appropriate experiences and knowledge to interpret them. Such paintings emphasised the exclusivity of the Dilettanti, celebrating shared taste and cultural experience, in a similar fashion to the structural pillars and decorative elements inside Cannon Hall, and discussed in Chapter One,

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<sup>434</sup> Karen Harvey, 'Ritual encounters: Punch parties and masculinity in the eighteenth century', *Past and Present* 214 (February 2012), p.181.

<sup>435</sup> Redford, *Dilettanti*, p. 2.

<sup>436</sup> Harvey, 'Ritual Encounters', pp. 184.

<sup>437</sup> Kelly, *The Society*, p. 214.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212-214; Redford, *Dilettanti*, p. 97.

for the particular appreciation of those educated in Italianate and classical design. As ‘ensemble portraiture’, a genre of painting in which numerous paintings were designed in reference to each other, Reynolds’ paintings, hung in the Star and Garter and surrounded by other works with which they were specifically designed, formed ‘a visual correlation to and intensifier of the societies’ “associational world”.<sup>439</sup>

The final portrait is of Walter around age sixty, seated as though paused in the act of reading and was painted circa 1808-1810 by William Hilton. As a renowned historical painter Hilton did not produce many portraits of contemporaries and it is likely this commission came about through fellow apprentice (to John Raphael Smith) and brother-in-law Peter De Wint who produced several watercolour scenes of the West Riding, including Cannon Hall (see Chapter Three).<sup>440</sup> While there is no formal documentation to confirm that this painting is of Walter in mourning, the somewhat sombre and reflective composition, coupled with the date at which it was completed, aligns it closely with the death of Walter’s fifteen year old son, Thomas Henry. Thomas (1794-1808) was Walter and Mary’s fifth son, and the only male child of theirs to die during Walter’s lifetime; the other two children to predecease Walter were daughters, Catherine (1789-1795) and Elizabeth (1790-1801). Unlike the posthumous portraits discussed by Retford which include the deceased, the portrait of Walter Spencer Stanhope is of him alone. The painting is stylistically similar to Hilton’s portraits of his friends, the romantic poets John Keats and John Keble, and exhibits the contemporary preference for a style akin to the old masters, of which he was so accomplished. This style incorporated an ‘overall stress of generous human sentiments’ by the way it captures a sense of sorrow and wistfulness.<sup>441</sup> Similar to the portraits by Hoppner (Figures 2.9 and 2.10), red drapery is used to convey rank and pedigree. Cumulatively the paintings of Walter Spencer Stanhope demonstrate how portraiture was used as a means of commemorating and recording specific life events of symbolic importance.

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<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 17.

<sup>440</sup> National Portrait Gallery Biography of William Hilton, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp02193/william-hilton?role=art> [accessed 20 May 2021]; Sylvanus Urban, *The Gentleman’s Magazine, Volume XXXII July to December* (London, 1849), pp. 322-323.

<sup>441</sup> Marcia R. Pointon, ‘The Italian Tour of William Hilton R. A. in 1825’, *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972), p. 339.

Portraiture tied individuals to others, specific events and places and whether pocket sized or on large canvas, paintings followed artistic conventions to convey status messages in the public or semi-public areas of the home or sociable space. Paintings were an important conveyor of status and dynasticism, exclusivity and belonging, evident in the variety of forms, styles and display at Cannon Hall.

## **Conclusion**

We have seen how upon inheritance John's approach to domestic consumption illustrates his recognition of the sentiments of thrift and sound oeconomy and how central they became to his decision-making. The 'tension in masculine consumption between the imperatives of restraint and display' are the cornerstone of the values governing consumption practices demonstrated here.<sup>442</sup> The requirement for careful management of finances was in many ways in direct competition with the display of status through goods in the home. The consumption and display of a range of new and old luxury objects and materials were essential components for the creation and maintenance of status, heritage and self-expression in the home. This is evidenced by the concentration of spending on those areas of the house (the best room and later the library) providing both personal comfort and maximum impact in terms of displaying taste and identity. As proprietors of often vast estates, on which the financial health of future generations was dependent, prudence and the ability to be restrained in spending became a defining feature of elite masculinity. As Stobart and Rothery found 'passing on intact a viable and increasingly valuable estate could be seen as the ultimate measure of successful financial management by the land-owning elite'.<sup>443</sup> And yet, consumption for the display of wealth and particularly good taste was pivotal for elite sociability, governing a household and maintaining dominance and prestige within the manorial and wider gentry community. John Spencer's later reluctance to spend, stemming from his new-found authority and responsibilities, is

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<sup>442</sup> Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, 'Men, Women and the Supply of Luxury Goods in Eighteenth-Century England: The Purchasing Patterns of Edward and Mary Leigh', in Deborah Simonton, Marjo Kaartinen and Anne Montenach (eds), *Luxury and Gender in European Towns, 1700-1914* (Oxon and New York, 2015), p.100.

<sup>443</sup> Stobart and Rothery, 'Inheritance Patterns at Stone Leigh Abbey', p. 400.

exposed by his sister's telling letter, through which she simultaneously reveals her own desire to see John express his fine taste through the family estate.

The power of individual agency in governing and shaping consumption practices highlights a different narrative from the otherwise quite prescriptive influences on spending. Purchasing for the best room illustrates John's lust for the new and fashionable interior, both for his personal satisfaction and to display essential attributes to visiting eyes. Furthermore, his keenness to personally oversee the selection of items for the new interior to ensure they matched his exacting standards while simultaneously restricting spending to the confines of a budget further exemplifies the treacherous balance between display and restraint. John Spencer was not just updating Cannon Hall, he was adorning his home with the latest interior fashions of the day and always expressing his 'good Taste and Judgemnt'. Whilst spending on the best room was a somewhat temporary fix when finances were constrained and focused elsewhere, particularly on the garden improvements, later full-scale renovations and the resulting opportunity to re-furnish new spaces fulfilled John's personal ambitions linked to notions of dynastic impact, and the desire to impart a sense of self onto the architectural fabric and interior decoration of his home. As Hussey notes, 'during the eighteenth century, the home formed one of the main arenas through which conceptions of polite masculine gentility –mannered deference, restraint, sensibility of thought and action, decency and civilizing action of mixed company – were encoded.'<sup>444</sup> The specific consumption choices reveal both a sense of collective identity situated amongst and specific to his profession and wider social network, and convey his personal and political identity to contemporary visitors to Cannon Hall and those who continue to experience the spaces today.

Whilst the concepts of heritage, patina and sentiment were denoted by the continued display of 'old luxuries' amongst the sociable spaces of the home, it was through the proud display of family portraiture where dynasty was most overtly celebrated. Family portraits and their display in the home could create a type of 'pictorial family tree', emphasising the

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<sup>444</sup> Hussey, 'Guns, Horses and Stylish Waistcoats?', p. 56.

family's status through its history.<sup>445</sup> Furthermore, to the knowing reader, portraiture served to convey other more specific narratives. John Spencer's portrait which established his place in the family's dynastic lineage simultaneously projected elements of an interior self through his choice of location in the garden room.<sup>446</sup> Walter's portraits meanwhile celebrated key life experiences and symbolic associations to influential people and events. In such ways, portraiture played a key part with the material culture and expression with the home, simultaneously marking out the subjects' status, self and belonging within both the family line and on a more personal level, their individual and wider collective identities.

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<sup>445</sup> Retford, 'Patrilineal Portraiture?', p. 327.

<sup>446</sup> Retford, *Art of Domestic Life*, p. 82.

## Chapter Three

### *Keeping up appearances: Mastery of the estate*

In Chapters One and Two, display, consumption and architectural aesthetics were examined as ways in which the Spencer Stanhope family constructed and conveyed their gentry identity through choices in the home. This chapter moves on to explore the nuanced approach taken by the three landowners in managing the household and hierarchical relationships both in the home and in the local community and will further inform and contribute to the wider conclusions of the thesis around the creation and maintenance of gentry identity.

This chapter will consider the ways in which practices of household management and other mechanisms were used by the Spencer Stanhope family to convey and build their gentry identity and project this to others. Frequent and extended travel away from the estate and an absence of wives to share in and oversee aspects of household management for a substantial period in the mid eighteenth century presented certain challenges for the masters at Cannon Hall. Beginning by dissecting the ways in which each managed their household, particularly through delegation of responsibilities to senior employees and female kin, this chapter will expose some of the methods through which masters kept control and attempted to ensure the smooth running of the estate. I will also consider the importance placed on heritage, both as markers of familial identity and as long-term mechanisms of household management at Cannon Hall through successive generations. The chapter will move on to consider the significance of specialist servants and how servants were themselves utilised as a form of conspicuous consumption, particularly through the long-term provision of livery and explicit depictions of domestic servants in commissioned artwork adorning the walls of Cannon Hall. The chapter will conclude by examining the ways in which the mechanisms of household management used here were challenged by servants, whose actions and attempts to assert what they believed to be their rights and privileges posed at times a deliberate risk of sabotaging their masters' on-going attempts to construct and substantiate their identity through the mastery of their estate.

Throughout our period the household and its management was integral to the pursuit, acquisition and creation of masculine values for English male householders across the social divide.<sup>447</sup> For the gentry their masculine identity was bound up in their right to govern, a 'patriarchal blueprint' which 'privileged some men above others, based on assumptions about their ability to discipline both themselves and others'.<sup>448</sup> In their own eyes their wealth and position in the social hierarchy legitimised their authority to govern those lower down the social order.<sup>449</sup> As Linda Pollock states, 'elite understanding of the world and its proper ordering was based on a set of principles: run a well-ordered home, exercise judicious authority, be seen as fit to govern, provide for dependents.'<sup>450</sup> Mastering each simultaneously was a tall order and the frequent contest between them continuously challenged patriarchal authority. As Pollock explains, conflict between any number of these principles was a common cause of disquiet for the patriarch. Balancing these conflicting facets of household life on a daily basis required displays of power but also compromise between the dominant authority and the subordinates. As Tim Meldrum states 'households were not merely sites of oppression, paternally benign [...] they were dwelling places whose occupants, differentiated by age, status and customary role, worked out the bounds of their domestic relations on a daily basis and beyond social and economic parameters which tended to change only slowly'.<sup>451</sup> As Karen Harvey warns, historians should be vigilant in their use of patriarchy as a term to describe authority in the home, particularly in describing male authority as dominant and at the detriment to the authority of others in the household.<sup>452</sup> Rather, we should think of domestic patriarchy as 'a system of order in the household in which different individuals may each have access to different kinds and levels

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<sup>447</sup> Following Amanda Vickery's early contribution on the social relations and domestic experiences of 'genteel' women in *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, c.1660-c.1900* (Oxford, 2012) explore the meaning of home, authority and the life course for gentry men and their pursuit of masculinity.

<sup>448</sup> Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 87.

<sup>449</sup> Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 87-89.

<sup>450</sup> Linda Pollock, 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of Family History* 23 1 (January 1998), p. 5.

<sup>451</sup> Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and work in the London household* (Harlow, 2000), p. 36.

<sup>452</sup> Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2012), p. 4.



of power', but where the male head's overall management and governance of this microcosm of power relationships was one important measure of masculine prowess.<sup>453</sup> Here then, is the opportunity to examine more closely how elite men governed their homes. Their methods, systems and decision-making are one route to understanding their broader public and personal identity as members of the gentry, and while patriarchal order was the goal, it was often contested and needed to be continually managed and reasserted.

In what follows, these topics will be explored through the wealth of archival records available for three successive generations of the masters of Cannon Hall. I will consider a number of aspects which were central to good mastery and governance: benevolence, payment and remunerations; the handling of disputes, misconduct and discipline; and the mutual benefits of the master-servant relationship as measured through reputation and the changes to the living conditions for servants over the long eighteenth century. The main body of sources is formed from family correspondence (principally between the householder and those overseeing the care of the estate, including other family members, the estate stewards and bailiff), personal diaries of the householders, household accounts, wills, probate documents and household inventories. Evidence of changing approaches to ensure the smooth running of the estate and household governance, alongside episodes of negotiation, mitigation and disharmony which challenged the patriarch's ability to master the four principles coined by Pollock, reveal how relationships of power and authority played out at Cannon Hall. Furthermore, by assessing the motivating factors behind such episodes and the responses and outcomes, I will discuss the extent to which there is evidence of a gradual shift in the dynamics of the master-servant relationship at Cannon Hall. It is recognised that this source material is largely top-down in its nature, and that we can only get a limited sense of household attitudes and conflicts without evidence from the servants' perspective, which is largely lacking. Nonetheless, we can infer some important topics for discussion and explore these further through the reading of the sources and their tone, as well as supplementary detail. Wage lists, records of rituals, remunerations, livery, household inventories for servants' rooms as well as provision for servants when travelling away from Cannon Hall allow me to examine the extent to which servants' domestic lives

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<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*

were improved over the period and shed light on the attitudes and values placed on them by the family, and by association whether the servants themselves had any tangible influence on positive change. More broadly the chapter will explore wider shifts in both attitudes towards servants and the ideological framework which the family adopted in governing their estate. Levels of authority were contested and could not be taken for granted, especially by men who spent so much time away from the home, and the successful maintenance of their aspired gentry identity required continual effort and skill. For each successive generation then, their style of governance is of great significance as an outward reflection of the key attributes with which they identified as a self-projection of their own identity as an eighteenth-century gentleman.

### **Size, Shape and Cost of the Household**

Before these topics are explored, it is necessary to examine the size and shape of the household at Cannon Hall. The data displayed in the following tables is useful for understanding both the household structure and wages and remunerations given to servants. Here it will be used to discuss the former and will be drawn upon again later in the chapter for what it suggests in relation to improvements (or otherwise) to servant remuneration and by inference their comparative value to the heads of household.

The account books for Cannon Hall convey the extent to which its running was dependent on the skills and labour of its varied and at times sizeable workforce. Numerous records list an unspecified number of 'sundry labourers' or 'women for haymaking & shearing' alongside the names of workers in permanent or more frequent seasonal employment as well as in-house domestic servants and provide a flavour of what the population of the estate looked like over the period.<sup>454</sup> The term 'household family' was used by contemporaries to describe all those living within the house of the master, including the conjugal family, servants and often apprentices.<sup>455</sup> At Cannon Hall the household followed a

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<sup>454</sup> BALS: SpSt 60654, Account book, John Howson (steward), 1790; SpSt 60656, William Spencer's cash journals, 1739.

<sup>455</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the 'household family' see Naomi Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England: Household, kinship, and patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), especially pp. 18-43.

consistent structure over the period studied with the household head typically supported by wives or extended kin and an estate steward assuming senior responsibilities and control over the daily running of the estate. Household servants such as the chamber maids and kitchen hands were overseen by the butler and housekeeper. Within the grounds the gardens and parkland were managed by the farm manager and gardener under whose management was a large contingent of labourers and specialist servants who tended to the hounds and horses used for hunting. Many of this ever-changing group of workers came from the village of Cawthorne or other local villages, as well as from further afield as the century progressed. Records for household servants are fragmented for the period before 1775, but we can see in 1739 the 'Total worker' outlay amounted to £100.9.4.<sup>456</sup> James Middleton, the farm manager, records the names of five women and in two cases their daughters alongside John Smith the butler suggesting these women were likely the household servants.<sup>457</sup> The list of 'daily workers' for 1743 records fifty-three individuals working for the family across various areas of the estate including household servants and estate labourers, as well as potentially those working at the family's iron forges in various managerial and labouring capacities.<sup>458</sup> Evidence suggests the domestic household consisted of a small group of servants, primarily a butler, cook, chambermaids and several male servants in positions akin to a footman or under butler who are recorded as travelling and staying with the family on visits. It is, however, highly likely that the household was more substantial than the scant sources convey and family correspondence and diary entries for this period also talks of a housekeeper, Mrs Eger.<sup>459</sup> In 1775 under John Spencer the annual bill for servants amounted to £94.6 with a further £148.10 paid out to what appear to be seasonal servants managing the hunt and the additional requisite responsibilities (see Table 3.2).

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<sup>456</sup> BALS: SpSt 60656, William Spencer's cash journals, 1739.

<sup>457</sup> BALS: SpSt 60652, Accounts of James Middleton, Farm Manager, November 1739.

<sup>458</sup> See table 3.1. The records do not allow for a further break down of who each individual was and their role.

<sup>459</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/20, Diary of John Spencer, June 1767.

**Table 3.1:** Names and wages given to 'daily' workers, 1741. Transcription from source.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Wage</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Wage</b>
Houghelton	7.2.2	Tanan	1.18.0
Smith	4.19.2	G. Haigh	1.1.4
Tyafs'	7.4.9	Hall	0.14.8
Broadbent	4.10.8	North	0.14.8
Bunkhead	2.14.10	Handearsley	1.1.4
White	3.2.8	Fawley	2.12.8
Jackson	10.10.8	Miller	1.8.8
Copley	10.7.4	Gill	0.17.4
Tunton	10.19.0	Child	0.17.4
Frogarts	2.10.0	Hopworth	1.14.0
Broomhead	1.14.01	Bole	0.6.0
Tim Taylor	6.0.0	Tunton	[no wage recorded]
Taylor's son	0.7.4	Town	0.2.0
Earnshaw	1.9.0	Peace	1.3.0
Rowland (pond maker)	45.16.4	Brook	0.6.0
Thacker	1.12.4	Wilkinson	0.2.8
Turner	0.10.0	Kay	1.13.0
Fox	0.11.0	Firth	1.13.0
Winter	5.11.4	Cockshutt	0.2.0
Houghetton, Jon	6.8.0	Allen	1.0.0
Hogden	1.7.4	Weeder	[no wage recorded]
Sam Hilton	3.2.11	Stones	10.10.0
Beaum	0.17.16	Bedforth	[no wage recorded]
Senior	2.1.10	John Longley for lime in 1740	16.13.6
Armatage	1.13.2	Norman Sadler	1.9.9
Shaw	2.1.4	Crosley	3.176.9
Blackburn	0.11.4	Sam Cawthory	3.6.4

Booth	1.5.4	Shawchop	4.13.10
Hayle	1.3.4	Brickmaker	4.16.3
Batey	1.12.0	Slech	5.10.9
Hadfield	1.1.4	Coals	4.10.0
		Hand horse man	[no wage recorded]

*Source:* BALS: SpSt 60656, 'A comprehensive list of 'daily worker[s]' names and wages' listed in the receipt book written on 18 June 1741.

**Table 3.2:** Wage amounts for servants, 1775. Weekly wage amounts translated to annual sum and rearranged to show hierarchy and range of wages given. Transcription.

Name	Role	Wage per annum
<b>Employed for at least a year</b>		
John Smith	Butler	26.5
William Rooke	Gardener	19
Mrs Bonnington	Housekeeper	14.14
James Spurr	Whipper-in	12.12
William Sadler	Huntsman and Groom	10.10
William Marsh	Husbandman	10
Elizabeth Clayton	Cook	10
George Shooter	Keeper	8.8
Jacob Hollingworth	[Unknown]	6.10
James Gibson	Under butler	5.5
John Hepworth	Brewer	[no wage recorded]
Thomas Winter	Herdman	[no wage recorded]
<b>Employed for less than a year</b>		
Sarah Hague	Chambermaid	5.5
Sarah Ibbotson	Pantry maid	4
Thomas Beet	Dog Feeder	No annual wage given Paid £4.12 for 23 weeks
William Bradshaw	In stables	No annual wage given Paid £3.12 for 12 weeks
Mary Stephenson	Dairy maid	3.10

Source: BALS: SpSt 60705, 'A List of Servants at Cannon Hall who have been a year Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1775'.

**Table 3.3:** List of wages and total expenditure on wages and household commodities recorded by John Howson (estate steward), 1796. Transcription.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Account of payment</b>	<b>Amount</b>
George Fisher		on account of wage	6.6.0
Peggy Haigh	laundry maid	a years wage	10.10.0
Richard Bell		a years wage	14.14.0
Richard Bell		allowance for leather breeches mending	1.11.0
Richard Bell		bill for travelling	4.19.2
M Batchelor		1/2 years wage	5.15.6
M Batchelor		bill for travelling	1.19.2 1/2
George Fisher		on account of wage	5.5.0
John Walker		on account of wage	5.5.0
Elizebeth Walker	laundry maid	18 weeks board	3.3.0
George Shooter		a years wage	8.8.0
George Shooter		allowance for breeches mending	1.11.0
George Shooter		bill for sundry trips	3.3.0
John Smith		on account of wage	5.5.0
George Fisher		on account of wage	3.3.0
<b>Totals</b>			
<b>Servants</b>			<b>148.4.8</b>
House			858.1.8
Labourers			83.18.10
Stables			201.6.2
Gardeners			114.9.0
Myself [John Hardy, steward]			294.10.10
<b>Total workers</b>			<b>842.9.6</b>

*Source:* BALS: SpSt 60654/2, John Howson's (estate steward) accounts and cash journals, 1796.

The records show a fluctuation in the number of servants in the household as commensurate with the necessity for them as determined by the life course of the householders. The seventeen servants recorded in 'A List of Servants at Cannon Hall' (Table 3.2) accompanying the 1775 probate inventory shows a concentration of labour in the stables and only seven servants maintaining and providing for the house, thus reflecting John's bachelor status and limited service requirements given the lack of a conjugal family in residence. Records for ten years earlier show that John employed at least two other liveried servants who 'waited at table' and accompanied the family and associates when travelling by coach; the fragmented reference to other servants in letters implies there were more besides.<sup>460</sup> By 1796, some twenty years into the ownership of the estate by Walter Spencer Stanhope, the bill for in-house servants had grown to £148.4.8 with the total cost of household servants, labourers, stable workers, gardeners and the estate steward amounting to a substantial £842.9.6 (see table 3.3).<sup>461</sup> Notably the amount paid out for labour was only marginally less than the total bill for expenditure in the house at £858.1.8. The increase in expenditure and size of the household was a consequence of the upward rise of the family's social status, wealth and crucially the size of the conjugal family. By 1796 Mary Winifred had birthed ten of her fifteen children for whom an increasingly large body of servants was required for their care. During the decade following the marriage of Walter and Mary in 1783 the household was at its largest, averaging seven maidservants.<sup>462</sup> It is also the period during which, after an eight year absence, the role of housekeeper returned to the list of those in service, albeit only briefly.<sup>463</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> WYAS: SpSt 5/11/22, 'Minutes relating to servants livery, in consequence of a new regulation', 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1763.

<sup>461</sup> BALS: SpSt 60654/2, John Howson's accounts and cash journals, 1796.

<sup>462</sup> In 1784 fifteen servants worked at Cannon Hall. This number rose to 16 in 1788 before steadily falling to the year 1791 when 12 servants were employed there see, BALS: SpSt 60672/8 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819.

<sup>463</sup> A Mrs Saunders was employed as housekeeper from 1784-1786 and a Mrs Heaton commenced work as the housekeeper on 27<sup>th</sup> March 1786 with the last recorded wage payment on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1786, although there is no evidence in the wage book of the termination of her employment. It is possible that responsibility for payments to the housekeeper came under the care of Mary Winifred rather than the steward as did the employment of the children's nurse.



The household family likely grew further when the full family was in residence. Other employees, such as the children's tutors and nursemaids, would almost certainly have been present, although not explicitly logged in the records available. The size of the household decreased towards the end of the eighteenth century as the family were increasingly spending more time in their London residence at Grosvenor Square and Walter and Mary's children were being educated and living elsewhere. The only long-term and permanent resident at Cannon Hall was Walter's eldest son, also Walter, who from his birth in 1784 suffered with seizures and remained at Cannon for his entire life.<sup>464</sup> Additionally, throughout the whole period studied, account receipts for building work record many additional hands contributing to the temporary and seasonal workforce on the estate. The hierarchy of the household servants at Cannon Hall was typical in that those with greatest responsibilities and specialist skills such as the butler, gardener and workers seasonally employed with the hunt received the largest wages. Increasingly specialised hierarchies of up to eighty servants have been observed amongst the estates of the aristocracy while the household of the genteel was considerably more modest and typically managing with less than ten.<sup>465</sup> Compared to these standards of the period, the overall evidence from the employment records of Cannon Hall depicts a household of changeable size and scope reflecting more modest household of the period.

### **Cannon Hall in the Village of Cawthorne**

As one might expect, the data from employee records highlights the Spencers' utilization of the local parish and neighbouring villages as the primary source for their workers. It is important to acknowledge that the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family were one of the main employers and landlords in the area but by no means alone in that position, and for the early part of the period at least were one of several reasonably wealthy families offering employment opportunities to local residents as well as other employment opportunities in local trades and crafts. Tadmor's research discusses the strong familial presence and lineage of the master and his family as 'an active force in shaping social relations' in a locality,

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<sup>464</sup> BALS: SpSt 60651/12, Diary of Mary Winifred Pulliene.

<sup>465</sup> J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956) pp. 35-70; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 134.

especially in small face-to-face communities where the squire was both the 'sole and omniscient employer' and landlord.<sup>466</sup> Tadmor's account of Thomas Turner's experience further informs us that while many villagers would rarely, if ever, interact with the family of the great estate they could still hold intimate knowledge about them and took a keen interest in their lives for a variety of purposes, not least out of a sense of entitlement to paid employment on the local estate or charity doled out by the local elite and the parish. For the landed family, the local celebrities of their day, such interest gave added impetus to fostering positive ties with local communities. While the connection between the Cannon Hall estate and the village was evidently strong, the Spencers themselves were comparative newcomers to the village as their position as occupiers of the major estate in the parish was brought about through marriage rather than longer term inheritance. So while recruiting from the local area had the obvious practical and economic benefits, it may also have served to strengthen ties with their community and build the family's standing and reputation in the local area.

In order to explore the systems of household governance employed within the walls of the estate and beyond, it is useful to understand the make-up of the workforce and extent to which the family of Cannon Hall was integrated into the local community, both as an employer and as a family of local stature and influence. Cross referencing the names which appear in 'A comprehensive list of daily worker[s]' for 1741 (table 3.1 above) with parish registers suggests that of the 63 people listed as being employed in some capacity, in the house and on the estate or in one of their industrial concerns, at least 39 (62 per cent) were directly traceable as being baptised in the parish.<sup>467</sup> Of the 17 household servants working for John Spencer on his death in 1775 13 (76 per cent) were either born in the parish or settled there during their employment and remained in Cawthorne for several generations

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<sup>466</sup> Tadmor, *Family and friends*, p. 82; Steve Hindle, 'Representing Rural Society: Labor, Leisure, and the Landscape in an Eighteenth-Century Conversation Piece' *Critical Inquiry* 41 (2015), p. 632.

<sup>467</sup> The list does not specify where each was employed and four men on the list are either not listed by name or temporary specialist workers brought in from elsewhere. Many of the surnames of those employed in that year, including Beaumont, Copley, Turton, Frogat, Smith, Fawley, Turner, Armatage, Senior and Cockshutt are family names found throughout Parish records from the mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, family names of Green, Beaumont, Turton, Copley, Booth, Turner, and Smith all employed by the Spencers in 1741 are names historically associated with the parish and are listed in BALS: SpSt 123/2, 'A note of every mans stall or room in the church', 1617.

after. Comparison with the servants listed as being employed in the household from Walter Spencer Stanhope's inheritance in 1775 to his death in 1821 shows that of the 97 individuals employed in service at least 58 (60 per cent) hailed from the parish, with others travelling from nearby parishes of Silkstone and Penistone.<sup>468</sup>

There is a correlation between the roles in which the servant was employed and ease of traceability, certainly within local parish records. Firstly, men employed as footmen, postilions, undergrooms and coachmen after 1775 were largely untraceable. It is likely that Walter sourced the men employed to oversee his coach and travel from London, where he spent most of his working and eventually home life. Individuals employed in these positions account for 32 members of the total workforce for the post 1775 period.<sup>469</sup> Similarly, cooks and housekeepers came from outside of the area as did all gardeners employed throughout the period studied. It appears then the more specialized servants were more regularly sourced from outside of the locality, casting a wider net to land the specific expertise and experience needed. Recruiting from beyond the local community for senior positions reduced the risks of pre-existing relationships intervening with the good management and discipline of servants under their care (housekeepers). Additionally, findings show that by the late 1790's female servants in lesser positions including the house, laundry and kitchen maids were also increasingly, but not exclusively, being sourced from outside the parish. Often cited as a way to reduce household matters and gossip spreading throughout the village, it is also likely a consequence of increasing opportunities in the wider labour market which reduced the number of workers available locally. If concerns over household matters and gossip reaching local villages did play a part in such decisions, this appears less so at Cannon than discussed elsewhere with local recruitment for a range of positions continuing throughout the period. It is, however, important to bear in mind that the convenience and apparent availability of a local workforce may have trumped any concerns regarding gossip about the family spreading around the parish. It was perhaps the case that sourcing

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<sup>468</sup> BALS: SpSt 60705, 'A List of Servants at Cannon Hall who have been a year Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1775'; SpSt 60672/8, 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819; Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812.

<sup>469</sup> BALS: SpSt 60672/8, 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819.

primarily lesser servants from the village, and more senior servants from further afield, reinforced the hierarchical relationship between the house and the village community.

Before a comprehensive assessment of the governance structures in place at Cannon Hall and their relative success it is worth also considering some of the patterns in staffing and service duration. The extent to which Cannon Hall was successful in recruiting and maintaining a stable workforce can give us some indication as to the relative effectiveness of the household management. Similar to other trades, it was not uncommon for several members of the same family to be employed at Cannon Hall, often in the same or similar positions. The skills and knowledge possessed by servants who sometimes inherited roles from close family members would have been important considerations at the time of hiring. Children often followed in their parents' footsteps; with Norman Sadler's son William following his father into the position of groom from 1741 to 1775, and Tim Taylor and his son worked on the estate in 1741.<sup>470</sup> Sarah Iberson, a chambermaid, brought her twelve-year-old daughter into service as a laundry maid in 1784, with her wages stipulated as given 'to the Mother'.<sup>471</sup> Relations Henry and John Houghleton were both employed in 1741 and sisters Martha and Jane Gelder joined the household in 1802 and 1804 respectively, both for two years of service, as laundry maid and house maid.<sup>472</sup> The family names of Fox, Earnshaw, Smith, Beaumont, Brook, Longley and Crosley appear in lists of servants for both 1741 and records post-1775.<sup>473</sup> This evidence highlights the practice of parents passing on their skills and trade to their children, but would also indicate that Cannon Hall was seen by these families as a stable option and route into employment for the next generation.

As was very typical for the period, junior maid positions were filled with a steady stream of young, local women cutting their teeth in the world of work prior to marriage. Pantry maid Sarah Iberson, and subsequently her daughter Amelia, both worked in service at the Hall up

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<sup>470</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*; See Table 3.1.

until their respective marriages.<sup>474</sup> The same can be said for the laundry maid Sarah Spink, the dairy maid Elizabeth Earnshaw, the cook Elizabeth Clayton and housemaid Francis Crosley, all of whom wed local men from the parish of Cawthorne.<sup>475</sup> There is only one record of a marriage between two members of the household, Mary Hudson, dairy maid, who left service after two years in 1808 to marry the estate farmer David Johnson.<sup>476</sup> All the maids ceased service on marriage except the comparatively long serving Francis Crosley, who continued to work at Cannon Hall for over a year after her marriage to Joseph Shirt in 1809 and unlike other maids was paid board wages from 1808, suggesting she lived outside of the house for this period, a situation which would not have been entertained fifty years earlier.<sup>477</sup> The regularity to this pattern of service turnover suggests a stint of anything between 12 months and five years was part of the life cycle before marriage for young women living in the locality of Cannon Hall, a practice typical across the country.

Cawthorne, like similar communities, was made up of families for whom a trade or skills passed down the generations, while others in the community had a varied and sporadic working lives taking opportunities as they arose in the mines and iron works, in grain milling and cloth making, and as day workers and labourers on the Cannon Hall estate more broadly.<sup>478</sup> Proximity to home or a sense of surety to the employment at Cannon Hall may explain the longevity of service for some of those employed there. Unusually for the period, 12 of the 98 servants employed between 1775 and 1821 served for eight years or more with 45 in service for at least three. While Jane Holmes found similar patterns of lengthy service among servants at Burton Constable, Hull and the upper ranks of servants at the nearby home of the Marquis of Rockingham, Wentworth Woodhouse, examples of lengthy service

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<sup>474</sup> BALS: SpSt 60705, 'A List of Servants at Cannon Hall who have been a year Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1775'; SpSt 60672/8, 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819; Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812.

<sup>475</sup> BALS: SpSt 60705, 'A List of Servants at Cannon Hall who have been a year Nov 9<sup>th</sup> 1775'; SpSt 60672/8, 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819; Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812.

<sup>476</sup> BALS: SpSt 60672/8, 'Servants' wages and receipts for wages', 1775-1819; Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812.

<sup>477</sup> Francis Crosley was among the longest serving maids working at Cannon Hall for five years. BALS: SpSt 60632/7, Diary of William Spencer, 1753 states that he 'turned Ann Lewkes, Cook, away, she being married to Senior'.

<sup>478</sup> D. J. Smith, *Aspects of Life in Old Cawthorne, South Yorkshire (Sheffield, n.d)*, p. 6.

among notably lesser servants (such as maidservants) seen at Cannon Hall are comparatively rare.<sup>479</sup> Recent research by Hannah Wallace, however, finds similar lengthy patterns in studying servant turnover at Chatsworth in the eighteenth century, discussing that this was likely a consequence of the isolated, rural nature of the larger country estate.<sup>480</sup> The length of service in the country house was evidently longer than those reported by urban employers who described a servant crisis, caused by servants abandoning their posts after a few short weeks.<sup>481</sup> The Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family certainly represented a substantial employer for the area in the absence of other large local industries such as emergent textile manufactures, which offered ‘opportunities for less demeaning work’ in other regions, although these opportunities were most appealing to women.<sup>482</sup> The areas around Cannon Hall were not without other employment opportunities, however, and the parish registers for the period include records for clockmakers, basket weavers, shoe makers, nail makers, cloth weavers, butchers, and cordwainers and grain millers at Lowett House mill, owned by the Spencers from 1705.<sup>483</sup> Local coal mines, part owned by the Spencers, were considerable employers for the area until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as was Barnby Furnace, an ironworks unit that was part of a syndicate supplying pig iron to a range of Yorkshire forges.<sup>484</sup> By 1821 there were 298 families in and around Cawthorne of which 164 were ‘engaged in some trade or handicraft’, 91 families were employed in agriculture and 58 by other means.<sup>485</sup> It may be that the family were regarded as comparatively good employers, providing suitable wages and remunerations for their employees. It was also the case that the family were increasingly absent from the Hall throughout Walter Spencer Stanhope’s ownership, paying servants up to 43 weeks board wages in 1796. Service at Cannon Hall could on that basis

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<sup>479</sup> Jane Holmes, ‘Domestic Service in Yorkshire, 1650-1780’, PhD thesis, (University of York, 1989), pp. 102-104.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*; Hannah Wallace, *Servants and the Country Estate: Community, Conflict and Change at Chatsworth, 1712-1811*, Ph. D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2020).

<sup>481</sup> Holmes, ‘Domestic Service in Yorkshire’, p. 102; R. C. Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2010), pp. 175-193.

<sup>482</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter*, p. 137.

<sup>483</sup> Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812; Smith, *Aspects of Life in Old Cawthorne*, p. 27, 29.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>485</sup> BALS: SpSt 60699/1, ‘The number of Inhabitants Males & Females, resident in the Township of Cawthorne the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1798’.

have represented comparatively undemanding and more regular work given the local alternatives, such as labouring outdoors on the estate or in the coal and iron furnaces which populated the region.

Having considered the trends in recruitment and local sourcing of the workforce, as well as the patterns in staff retention and length of service, it is equally important to gain an appreciation of the wider labour market and alternative employment opportunities on offer for context. The overall increase in the local population is testament to the growing prosperity and opportunities afforded both on the estate and in the locality. Evidence from parish registers suggests a rapid upward growth during the period, particularly for the last quarter of the seventeenth and first quarter of the eighteenth century, correlating with the considerable increase in stable employment opportunities in the furnaces and forges in the area.<sup>486</sup> Records of all householders for the period 1798 to 1821 show the parish population again grew substantially, in this case by more than fifty per cent.<sup>487</sup> Cumulatively, therefore, records show Cawthorne to be an expanding parish, a place of opportunity and most likely prosperity. Servants who had travelled to the estate from elsewhere chose to settle in the parish and to baptise and raise their families there, including the groom William Bradshaw and the three of the longest serving servants; the groom Richard Bell, George Shooter the game keeper and his predecessor George Fisher. The growth of Cawthorne and the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes' propensity for sourcing their staff from the local population throughout the period suggests that while they may have faced problems common to elite

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<sup>486</sup> Geoffrey Gill Hopkinson, 'The Development of Lead Mining and of the Coal and Iron Industries in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire', Ph.D. Thesis (Sheffield, 1958), pp. 290-292.

<sup>487</sup> Cawthorne Parish Registers, Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Leeds, 1653-1812. Parish Registers are useful in demonstrating population growth. The records of births, marriages and deaths record 274 different family names between 1653 and 1700 with the first quarter of the period, from 1653-1675 containing 168 different family names in 900 register entries. From 1675-1700 there were 1785 entries submitted into the Parish registers including 106 new family names. BALS: SpSt 60699/1, 'The number of Inhabitants Males & Females, resident in the Township of Cawthorne the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1798', a census type listing recorded 999 total inhabitants in the parish, comprising of 205 families and 481 males and 518 females. A count taken in 1801 shows the total population had increased to 1055, by 1811 the number had increased again to 1207. The record conducted twenty years later in 1821 recorded 1518 inhabitants, including 766 males and 752 females living in 293 different households throughout the parish, 138 of those listed as 'in the town and Tividale', suggesting the majority of properties remained dispersed throughout the rural parish rather than in the village itself.

households concerning retention of servants and their suitability for employment, they had a ready pool of prospective employees, particularly the youth for whom service at the house was a well-trodden route through their early adult years. Fundamentally, the relationship between the Hall and the local community is one of co-dependency, in which local labour provided for the house and family, whose wealth, derived from exploiting the riches of the earth and the hard toil of their employees alongside gains through inheritance, in turn sustained and bolstered the parish. Equally as the local area around Cannon experienced a healthy period of growth and increasing employment opportunities across a range of industries, Cannon appears to have maintained a strong position and reputation as a local employer and healthy levels of staff service and retention. What is unclear, however, is the degree to which the family had to work to ensure the loyalty of their workforce and the degree to which this posed a challenge for those governing the household. Against this backdrop, the discussion will now turn to how the male heads of Cannon Hall managed and governed their growing household through this period of change, both within the comparative privacy of the estate itself and in the public settings of the wider community.

### **Governance, Mastery and Household Management at Cannon Hall**

Each successive generation of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family rigorously concerned themselves with maintaining domestic patriarchy while running the Cannon Hall estate. This section will examine the strategies these men adopted in their practice of oecumeny to ensure the smooth running of the estate and the upholding of their outward appearance of good mastery. Like all masters, those at Cannon Hall sought to maintain patriarchy, but owing to the distinctive circumstances (frequent absence of masters away from the estate, the prolonged absence of wives and the close relationship between the great house and the local community) they faced particular challenges and opportunities in doing so. An absence of wives for over forty-five years (1739-1783) is particularly notable and of heightened significance to the ranks of the gentry, not least because so much of their identity was bound up in the transmission of authority and status through ancestral lineage. Tadmor's seminal discussion of the concept of 'lineage-family' demonstrates the



significance of longevity and preservation of lineal succession.<sup>488</sup> This is explored particularly through male progeny, the upholding of familial unity and continuity across the generational divide which passed, unlike membership of the household family, through 'birth and blood'.<sup>489</sup> However, in a society in which a man's position as householder or lodger spoke more loudly than his marital status, the absence of a wife was not implicitly barring to a man's successful social and economic life for whom, in stark contrast to female contemporaries, 'marriage was not the sole passport to adulthood'.<sup>490</sup> It was their position as gentry householders, rather than lodgers, which gave the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope men their social standing, access to local office holding, domestic sociability and access to the mechanisms by which mastery and manhood were measured.<sup>491</sup> This chapter will develop the discussion on the absence of a wife, whether intentional or unintentional, as therefore not materially detrimental to one's masculine status as a householder but a scenario which did pose specific challenges. The result for Cannon Hall's male householders was the need to directly navigate more of the domestic responsibilities of the home, placing more weight and reliance on their relationships with their senior servants, and added pressure on the continuation of the family name and power dynamics in the locality, otherwise secured organically through future progeny.<sup>492</sup>

The tradition of strict settlement collectivised and united individuals of an elite family under the banner of the family name. Each generation had a collective responsibility as the caretakers of the estate for future generations, upholding the family name through the respectable running of the household and wider estate. It is perhaps telling that the estate was, prior to William Spencer's death and John's inheritance, already bequeathed to the eldest son of the eldest daughter, should no heir materialise from the male line. John's relationship as father figure to his nephew and heir Walter, whose own father had died in 1759, illustrates how bonds of kinship framed by strict settlement extended further than

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<sup>488</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 73-102.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>490</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 77.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>492</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 74-75.

that of direct descendancy.<sup>493</sup> This to some degree explains John Spencer's and his father's apparent lack of concern over his lifelong bachelor status. As we will go on to discuss at length in Chapter 4, John Spencer, like other contemporary bachelors, carved out a life for himself of an 'old fashioned squire', an existence dominated by tavern sociability and networks of colleagues, college friends and kin. He split much of his time between social and gentlemanly pursuits, enjoying the contents of his extensive cellar and attending church. John's dynastic contribution was to care for an estate for which the subsequent ownership had been predetermined before his tenure had even begun. Strict settlement was one way in which '[e]lite men bound members of their "family"' to the cause.<sup>494</sup> The use of strict settlement was, as Whyman found of the Verney family in the late seventeenth century, a way of instilling a 'dynastic mind set' and the control of marriage by fathers bolstered a sense of 'shared values'.<sup>495</sup> Strict settlement and the collectivism encouraged by the importance of lineage-family made the success of the ancestral home the responsibility to a degree of all those within the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family.

We see explicit evidence of rituals and practices associated with lineage and inheritance in the daily management of the Cannon Hall estate. The importance of passing on and imparting knowledge from father to son was important for families of middling status and the elite, and at Cannon Hall these life lessons extended beyond youth.<sup>496</sup> The links between thrift, personal conduct and sociability and their direct implications on personal masculine identity have been well documented by Shepard and Muldrew, amongst others.<sup>497</sup> The command of oeconomy was the practice by which individuals were able to meet these

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<sup>493</sup> For a discussion on how kin could take on these responsibilities see, Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Childless Me in Early Modern England, in Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 158-183.

<sup>494</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 177.

<sup>495</sup> Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England* (Oxford and New York, 1999), p. 143.

<sup>496</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, pp. 169-182.

<sup>497</sup> Alexandra Shepard, 'Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England, c. 1580-1640', *Past and Present* 167 (2000), pp. 75-106; Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Hampshire and New York, 1998), pp. 157-172; Craig Muldrew, 'Class and Credit: Social Identity, Wealth and the Life Course in Early Modern England', in H. French and J. Barry (eds), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800* (Hampshire and New York, 2004), pp. 147-177; Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 133-139.

needs through the proper management of the household and ‘proof-positive of the right to govern and be a citizen’.<sup>498</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, during John Spencer’s early days as a student of law in London in 1739-1740, his father William Spencer was keen to stress the values of financial prudence in pressing his son to become a ‘Good Oeconomist’.<sup>499</sup> William Spencer’s instruction, including detailed descriptions of how he managed his own money during his youth ensuring after expenses he ‘always had money enough in my Pockets’, bares similarities to Smail’s ‘prudential masculinity’ that ‘glorified diligence, prudence, and thrift and defined masculinity in terms of integrity, honesty, and quiet achievement’ among the middling ranks.<sup>500</sup> Embedding these positive attributes of ‘manhood and the good management of the house’ at an early age served to secure the long-term reputation of the household and the family estate through the correct behaviours.<sup>501</sup>

More mundane forms of household management convey signs of traditional practices contributing to the sustenance of heritage and lineage in how they were passed down through generations. Their observance by successive generations shows the value placed on upholding familial traditions. John Spencer routinely spent the days around New Year cleaning and re-cataloguing his book collection, housed from January 1767 in his new library.<sup>502</sup> John involved his young nephew and heir, gifting him books from the collection as part of the process and thus passing on the practice to the next generation.<sup>503</sup> Bolstered by testate instructions in John’s will that his library was to be kept intact for posterity, Walter continued the tradition of the annual cataloguing.<sup>504</sup> As discussed in Chapter One the library was furnished as much for sociability as for private use and was a crucial marker of status and identity for John Spencer particularly. In this way libraries such as that at Cannon Hall

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<sup>498</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 23.

<sup>499</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/4, Letter from William Spencer to John Spencer, 13<sup>th</sup> December 1740.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*; John Smail, ‘Coming of Age in Trade: Masculinity and Commerce in Eighteenth-Century England’ in Margaret Jacob and Catherine Secretan (eds), *The Self Perception of Early Modern Capitalists* (New York, 2008), p. 239.

<sup>501</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 23.

<sup>502</sup> BALS: SpSt 60675/1, Catalogues of books, 1755; 60675/2, Lists of books and prices, updated cataloguing, 1764-1774, 1775-1781; 60675/7, Lists of books 1795-98; 60633/20, Diary of John Spencer, 1767.

<sup>503</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/19, Diary of John Spencer, 1766; 60675/2, Lists of books and prices updated cataloguing, 1764-1774, 1775-1781; 60675/7, Lists of books 1795-98.

<sup>504</sup> John Spencer’s library remains intact and is in the possession of Leeds University Archive.

acted as 'patriarchal strongholds, testaments of a noble lineage of acquisition and intellectual prominence'.<sup>505</sup>

More elaborate practices than those found at Cannon Hall have been uncovered for men of the emerging middling sort, whose creation of domestic manuscripts or 'patrilineal text[s]' helped to create a sense of lineage and identity where the more traditional markers of elite lineage were absent.<sup>506</sup> Harvey's research concluded that the act of passing on and creating these shared histories bound up with household management and family life was an act committed largely by men, and that while women undoubtedly played significant roles in household management, it was foremost men who inscribed these practices into their own lives and in so doing produced a defining sense of familial lineage.<sup>507</sup> The governance of the household was intrinsic to daily practices of men but was also bound up with ritualised practices of heritance. The unusual long-term absence of wives at Cannon Hall serves to reiterate how conveying and upholding good household management was important for all men of varied status: widowed, life-long bachelor or young heir seeking marriage prospects. The dissemination of teachings regarding good household management and, of particular note here, those physical, traditional habits such as the annual cataloguing of the library could escalate the seemingly mundane to markers of identity and status, a practice previously identified in the middling ranks, is also evident here in the continued preservation of gentry lineage. Householders built both masculine and gentry identities through these practices in the home. Similar practices to those utilised by the middle classes were also used by their gentry superiors. Their commitment to familial lineage and name illustrates how the identity that the men were trying to construct took priority over that of the individual. The collaborative endeavour in household management was therefore not only shared among those in the household family and kin but also spanned the generations.

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<sup>505</sup> Barbara M. Benedict, 'Reading Collections: The Literary Discourse of Eighteenth-Century Libraries', in I. Ferris and P. Keen (eds), *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity, 1700-1900* (Basingstoke and New York, 2009), p. 175.

<sup>506</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 172.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 173-174.

The absence of wives also caused masters to seek assistance from kinswomen with the management of the house and estate in areas traditionally undertaken by the wives. Between 1737 and 1785 Cannon Hall was without the command of a wife as mistress, with William, John and to a lesser extent Walter all relying heavily on kinswomen to perform their household management duties for significant periods. Following the early death of Christiana Spencer in 1737 the instrumental role played by all three of William and Christiana's daughters, Ann, Christiana and Alicia Maria, in the running of Cannon Hall estate continued to varying degrees throughout the ownership of the estate by their father, elder brother John (1756-1775) and until the marriage of Ann's son Walter (heir 1775-1821) in 1783, at which point his wife Mary Winifred Pulliene restored the role of wife to the estate hierarchy. Interestingly the sisters continued to supervise the running of Cannon Hall beyond their own marriages which attest to their comparative mature age of marriage and the continued need for them to assist their brother in his bachelorhood and thus maintain the family's lineage.<sup>508</sup> Christiana and Ann acted as housekeeper to Cannon Hall in an ad hoc manner whenever the need arose and after the death of her husband, Walter Stanhope in 1759, Ann retired to a vacant property owned by the Spencers in Cawthorne, following which her involvement in the housekeeping at Cannon Hall recommenced in earnest, although evidently not on a full time basis.

The absenteeism of the head householder also changed the relationship of the landholder to his senior servants. Absenteeism of the household head was characterized by contemporaries as a common fundamental challenge for the country's estates with servants seen to require the constant guidance of a master.<sup>509</sup> The desire of men (when present on the estate or otherwise) to have a woman oversee their housekeeping in this regard is well discussed, and there is a wealth of evidence which elevates the importance of good housekeeping and the respective roles performed by both men and women in ensuring

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<sup>508</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 128-131.

<sup>509</sup> For detailed discussion on the impact of absenteeism on labour relations see P. Roebuck, 'Absentee Landownership in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: A Neglected Factor in English Agrarian History', *The Agricultural History Review* 21 (January 1973), pp. 1-17. For the impact of longer term, long distance absenteeism see G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in Eighteenth Century* (1963), pp. 23, 42-46.

sound oeconomy and household management as mentioned above.<sup>510</sup> During a week-long visit to Cannon Hall in the summer of 1765 Ann Stanhope wrote to her brother, John Spencer, that she was 'looking over, & Delivering yr charge of your things to your new Housekeeper'.<sup>511</sup> Ann describes how she 'found everything very exact' but later complained about the 'bad management' of furniture and linens in the house, alluding to potential reasons why the change in housekeeper was required.<sup>512</sup> Ann shows great concern for the need for John to address issues within his 'ffamily' (household) stating 'there has been very great anxietys & uneasinesses in your ffamily since you left it'.<sup>513</sup> She continues by stating that the Housekeeper 'never had any serrvants to assist her wch has been a great let down to your ffamily'.<sup>514</sup> For his sister many of these issues would be fixed by marrying and she expresses her 'wish' that he 'w[oul]d have a more regular ffamily'.<sup>515</sup> The exact meaning behind the use of the word 'regular' is impossible to say, nonetheless Ann's use of this word suggests that John Spencer's family at that time was lacking certain compositional or behavioural expectations, perhaps most obviously read as the absence of a wife to oversee the management of the house. While kinswomen were widely called upon by unmarried men to oversee the care of their households and kinswomen themselves found satisfaction and status from undertaking such responsibilities, this arrangement was nonetheless perceived to lack the benefits of a harmonious partnership between husband and wife in this regard.<sup>516</sup>

A hierarchical system ensured household heads retained knowledge and authority over the estate and their industrial concerns despite frequent and extended absences from the estate itself. Decision-making was delegated and managed via letters to and from those in specialised managerial roles such as the bailiff, husbandman or kinswomen responsible for housekeeping. In the absence of the male head, responsibilities were divided up between

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<sup>510</sup> For discussions on the desire of men to have women oversee their housekeeping see Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, esp. Chapter 2.

<sup>511</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/93, Letter from Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, 1767.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>513</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>514</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>515</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>516</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 127-160.

senior male servants and kinswomen. Regular overviews were typically reported back to the masters by the stewards, whose authority was in turn utilised by other employees to raise urgent matters or legitimise concerns. John Spencer particularly troubled himself with the granular details of running of the estate and demanded to be kept abreast of the daily activities of each and every servant, insisting in a letter of 10 March 1757 that his steward ‘write me a particular account how the Family goes in all Respects; and the Business each particular Serv’t is employ’d in’.<sup>517</sup> This structure of governance and delegated authority not only ensured the household head was kept informed of all important news but it provided surety and validation should disagreements arise. The extensive correspondence received by John Spencer regarding the various works he commissioned on the Hall has already been discussed in Chapter One, and amongst the letters from 1767 we find a disagreement between John Carr, architect, and Ben Dutton, the steward, which centred around whether each had informed John Spencer of architectural alterations, each contingent upon proof of their word ascribed in their letters.<sup>518</sup>

The role of the steward at Cannon Hall is particularly noteworthy and is an aspect of estate management recently explored in depth by Nigel Cavanagh and Carol Beardmore.<sup>519</sup> Not listed among the household servants, the estate stewards were nonetheless waged employees as well as tenants while also typically, and certainly for all the stewards employed at Cannon Hall, amongst the wealthier members of the parish community. As such they held a unique position within the household hierarchy and a great level of responsibility for the day to day running of the estate and industrial outlets rested with them. They also had the status and thus authority to influence the decision-making of their masters, and in this sense their influence grew when the land owner was absent. A positive

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<sup>517</sup> BALS: SpSt 60540, John Spencer’s letter book.

<sup>518</sup> BALS: SpSt 60543/34, 35, Letters from Benjamin Dutton to John Spencer.

<sup>519</sup> Nigel Cavanagh, ‘Industrialising Communities: A Case Study of Elsecar Circa 1750-1870’, Ph. D. thesis (University of Sheffield, 2016); Carol Beardmore, Steven King and Geoff Monks (eds), *The Land Agent in Britain: Past, Present and Future* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 2016). The management of the Cannon Hall estate is overseen by a succession of stewards: Benjamin Dutton (1740 -1779), John Howson (1779-1804), John Hardy (c. 1775-1817). James Middleton, the estate bailiff reports more than issues with tenancies and rents, and his letters also cover issues with farming and grain prices. Letters from William Marsden (c. 1740-1755) discusses the sale, purchase and condition of farming stock, crops, gardens and difficulties in finding temporary labourers.

word from steward to master could result in the favourable treatment of the tenants in question, a view Benjamin Dutton regularly asserted. Dutton's survey of John Spencer's buildings in 1772 stressed at length the good character of John Senior as a 'very poor but industrious man, a large family of small children & has done all in his Power about their Buildings' which despite his apparent efforts were in a state of disrepair requiring substantial maintenance.<sup>520</sup> Conversely, the poor behaviour of Anthony Rawden, a sub tenant of George Dyson in Cawthorne, who had failed to pay rent and refused when requested to return the key to his poorly maintained house, resulted in a recommendation that the house be demolished.<sup>521</sup> It is unknown whether the house was pulled down on Dutton's recommendation, but what this does suggest is that the stewards at Cannon Hall not only acted as intermediaries in upholding the power of their masters, but also possessed some power themselves. Stewards, kin and specialised servants upheld the status and authority of their absent masters, bridging the gap between the lineage-family and their tenants, overseeing and at times influencing crucial aspects of asset management and charitable giving.<sup>522</sup>

The ultimate success of this somewhat delegated and hierarchical form of governance from a distance is impossible to quantify and it is difficult to discern the degree to which it was coincidental and ad hoc rather than pre-planned and managed. Evidence here does suggest that despite their frequent absence from the estate, its management was essential for upholding the social and manly status of the household heads.<sup>523</sup> The men kept a close eye and a short leash on their managerial employees, frequently checking their cash books and requiring regular correspondence. Further to this, the role of collective responsibility within both the lineage and the household family is evident in the delegation of housekeeping responsibilities to female kin and senior servants. Maintaining strong and trustworthy relationships with these individuals would have been instrumental to the smooth running of the household and wider estate. This ties into some of the contextual evidence explored earlier in the chapter through the continued recruitment from the immediate locality for

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<sup>520</sup> BALS: SpSt 60674/5 'State of Buildings upon the Estate of John Spencer Esquire, 1772'.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>522</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 84-86.

<sup>523</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 189.



non-specialist positions, generational investment in Cannon Hall as an employer from serving families with children following in the footsteps of their parents, and longer than average stints of continued service amongst the lesser positions. The collective effort to uphold the reputation of Cannon Hall and the ancestral family had direct implications by association on the masculine identity of the household head. The lynchpin motivating those others involved in the running of the estate was as much for their own long-term preservation and benefit given that the significance of their responsibilities was inextricably tied to their master's reputation. Despite delegating a degree of responsibility to these individuals the household heads remained cautious to ensure that they personally were both kept informed and maintained ultimate authority over estate matters. Whilst we will come onto discuss examples where the systems of household authority were contested, broadly the evidence from Cannon Hall points to this having been an effective way or at very least an intentional way in which these men, to return to Pollock's principles, sought to 'run a well-ordered home' whilst still cultivating the other aspects of their gentry identity which demanded such extended stays away from the estate.

### **Keeping face: Authority and Display**

The relentless efforts to ensure the smooth running of the household discussed above fed into wider concerns in ensuring the family name and reputation held up to external scrutiny. This section will explore the practices in creating and expressing the identities of the estate, family and master. Despite the plethora of conduct literature it is important to recognise that 'not surprisingly such godly, well integrated, households [depicted in such literature] always represented an ideal and they were constantly extolled precisely because the real world was often very different'.<sup>524</sup> In reality 'households interacted with their local social milieu, ensuring service involved constant negotiation and renegotiation' which was additionally influenced by the personal temperaments of those involved.<sup>525</sup> Historians who have focused on the experience of servants find that the exchange of 'the social currency of mutually-reinforcing reputation', and the ability of both servants and masters to have positive and negative effects on each other's reputation, served to bind together patriarchal

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<sup>524</sup> Richardson, *Household Servants*, p. 145.

<sup>525</sup> Meldrum, *Domestic Service*, p. 36.

social relations.<sup>526</sup> Servants were part of the ‘family’, a term which ‘was understood to encompass those in paid service as well as the resident matrimonial and blood relatives of the nuclear family’.<sup>527</sup> In this sense servants, like blood relatives, represented the household for whom they worked. Reputation and the role it played in the interplay of power within the household and reputation within the community are important themes within this chapter. The benefits of the reputation and success of the estate cultivated through collaborative contribution were, to an extent, shared by all, but at an individual level the influence of the master-servant relationship on reputation and identity was reciprocal. A master’s uncomplimentary reference could hinder future employability for servants, while public displays of poor household management and a loose grip on domestic authority served as a potentially powerful means of semi-public protest by servants towards their master. Evidence for both is found in the archives for Cannon Hall, to which we shall turn shortly.

Ever keen to enforce their competence and good mastery, one way in which masters displayed their status and heritage in the community was via their use of specialist, skilled or liveried servants. As Hecht describes, all domestic servants were employed to varying degrees, with those in livery particularly, ‘to advertise the extent of his master’s wealth’.<sup>528</sup> By their very presence they indicated the master’s ability to pay out in return for productive work.<sup>529</sup> Some specialist servants such as Thomas Beet and William Bradshaw, employed seasonally for the hunt and to whom we will return to later, commanded a considerably higher wage than all other servants employed in 1775 due to their specialist skills, and thus helped to bolster the success and consequently reputation of John Spencer’s hunt. Most effective at advertising wealth and status were liveried servants as their routines and lifestyle ‘endowed them with the highest visibility’ and ‘the livery itself emphasised their

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<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>527</sup> Tim Meldrum, ‘Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth -century metropolitan household’, *Urban History* 26 1 (1999), p. 29; Historians who have recognised this contemporary usage of the term include, notably Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 24-6; Ann Kusmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 7; Naomi Tadmor, ‘The concept of the household-family in eighteenth-century England’, *Past & Present*, 151 (1996), pp. 111-140.

<sup>528</sup> J. Jean Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 1956), p. 53.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*

remoteness from productive labour'.<sup>530</sup> As for many servants the liveried 'coachmen' at Cannon Hall in 1763 performed broader tasks than those ascribed in their title, by waiting tables as well as driving the coach, and they ensured maximum visibility of the livery when at home and abroad.<sup>531</sup>

In response to 'a new Regulation with respect to Vails & of Consequence to Wages' John Spencer penned a memorandum entitled 'Minutes relating to yr Serv'ts' dated November 22nd 1763 in which he detailed the 'agreement' he made with his 'livery Servants'.<sup>532</sup> A livery, a uniform typically purchased by the employer once a year, was worn by servants in closest proximity to the master or by servants who would be seen in public such as a butler or coachman. The recipient servants were given a whole livery suit 'consisting of Hat, Coat, Waistcoat, Breeches & one pair of Stockins & also a Fashion Frock & two stable waist coats in every year'.<sup>533</sup> Looking at two coachmen particularly, named Richard and Mark, we see that the allocation of livery varied in accordance with position, with a greater number and more expensive items given to the more senior coachman.<sup>534</sup> John Spencer concludes the memorandum stating the provision was 'fully sufficient for that purpose, I expect everyone of them to keep himself neat & clean, & to appear so, & wait at Table every day when ~~they~~

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<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>531</sup> WYAS: SpSt 5/11/22, 'Minutes relating to servants livery, in consequence of a new regulation', 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1763. For examples of the multifarious activities undertaken by coachmen, footmen and others see Hecht, *The Domestic Servant*, pp. 51-59.

<sup>532</sup> A copy of this resolution or petition can be found in Sheffield Archives. Wentworth Woodhouse MSS (WWM) Pamphlets, 'General and Correct List of the Gentry 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'. It was signed by almost 300 members of the elite including many from Yorkshire. By the 1760's the custom of giving vails to servants was seen as deplorable and this petition was one of the ways in which those opposed to it sought to formalise its decline. Subsequently employers adjusted wages and other remunerations to servants to reflect their loss of vails, including giving clothing cast-offs and a greater allowance of livery, although some continued to give vails well into the nineteenth century while others were opposed to improving wages to reflect the servants loss.

<sup>533</sup> WYAS: SpSt 5/11/22, Minutes relating to servants livery, in consequence of a new regulation, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1763.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.* Richard, the senior of the two, received one great coat a year, 3 hats, 2 dress coats, 2 scarlet waistcoats, '2 pairs of scarlet small clothes', 2 further waistcoats, 2 pairs of leather breeches, 4 aprons and 2 blue jackets, which were worn when travelling with a Miss Cohen. Mark, in contrast, received just 1 great coat every two years, 1 pair of boots, leather breeches, a scarlet jacket, a scarlet waistcoat, 2 hats and one 'dress suit of livery' and hat, worn when driving Miss Cohen to a wedding. Although the identity of Miss Cohen is unknown, accompanying her to the wedding was evidently befitting of separate, more superior livery, being a public show of wealth and discernment.

are he is at Home'.<sup>535</sup> With the decline in the giving of vails, additional payments given to servants often by visitors or guests or in return for a particular service, many masters substantially increased servants' wages to reflect their loss. Some masters gave a monetary value to livery so that if it was not in need of replacing a servant would not lose out.<sup>536</sup> Part of John Spencer's direct response to the decline in vails was to provide a whole new suit of livery every year, whether it needed replacing or not. Similarly concerned with his servants' outward appearance, John's nephew Walter replied to a prospective servant's enquiry of whether he would be required to wear livery, stating 'I mean he should wear one, and that while he is in my service he will be decently cloathed'.<sup>537</sup> Other gentry men were similarly concerned with the appearance of their servants; Richard Newdigate insisted on an elaborate livery for those most frequently in his presence when receiving visitors or traveling away from home.<sup>538</sup> Unlike John Spencer, however, the cost of the livery was deducted from their wages rather than being given in addition.<sup>539</sup> John Spencer was seemingly more determined than some of his peers in ensuring that his household employees were presented in a manner which reflected well on him and in giving them annual livery, whether required or not, his servants had little by way of excuse for not dressing accordingly and representing him how he saw fit.

Historians offer opposing views regarding the attitudes towards livery as the eighteenth century wore on. Contrary to the suggestion by Stephen Hague and R. Richardson that the use of livery 'seems not to have been typical of most gentlemanly owners' and was largely the preserve of the elite, at Cannon Hall it persisted throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>540</sup> Hecht too found attitudes towards the livery and being well-dressed to be more widely favourable across the social strata, including families with no more than a single maid

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<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>536</sup> At Cannon Hall, at least under William Spencer vails were accumulated and distributed as part of wages, his groom being given 'six pounds a year and three parts vales', 22nd March 1751, also see 9th March 1751 and 6th November 1752, BALS: SpSt 60632/6-7.

<sup>537</sup> BALS: SpSt 60687/8, Letter from Walter Spencer Stanhope to John Hardy (steward), 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1772.

<sup>538</sup> Steve Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall: Sir Richard Newdigate and his household staff, c.1670–1710', *Historical Research*, vol. 85, no. 227 (February 2012), p. 78.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>540</sup> Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's Country House in the British Atlantic World 1680-1780* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015), p. 122; Richardson, *Household Servants*, pp. 107-109.

servant.<sup>541</sup> Similarly, it was found to be amongst one of several significant public displays of traditional “‘dynastic” forms of consumption’ on which the Leighs of Stoneleigh Abbey spent their money.<sup>542</sup> For the Leighs, concludes Jon Stobart, spending was closely aligned with ways in which they could mark out status, where livery and an elaborate coach marked with their coat of arms formed noteworthy parts of their consumption.<sup>543</sup> Similarly, Walter Spencer Stanhope commissioned a lavishly decorated new chariot shortly after his marriage, decorated with ‘Beads painted Carbean [sic] colour with arms & crests in mantles on the Doors and Footboard’ which was attended by some of the numerous new coachmen, postilions and footmen he employed following its completion.<sup>544</sup> In contrast to Corfield’s suggestion that during the eighteenth century ‘power was resynthesized’ from past prestige and lineage into more modern notions of consumption, taste and display, at Cannon Hall as at Stoneleigh Abbey, livery and the family crest continued to play a significant role in asserting authority through more traditional signs of status.<sup>545</sup>

Contemporary commentators increasingly interpreted the livery as a badge of servitude and from the mid-eighteenth century onwards as a practice which ‘merely enhanced the stigma attached to service’.<sup>546</sup> While this may have been the view held by servants, especially those in the capital, livery remained a marker of a servant’s proximity to the master and seniority of their position in the household. In communities such as Cawthorne where service at the Hall or on the estate was a common source of employment and the estate so integral to the

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<sup>541</sup> Hecht, *The Domestic Servant Class*, p. 122.

<sup>542</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman’s Country*, p. 122, 192; Richardson, *Household Servants*, pp. 107-109; Jon Stobart, ‘Gentlemen and shopkeepers: supplying the country house in eighteenth-century England’, *Economic History Review* 64 3 (2011), pp. 885–904.

<sup>543</sup> Stobart, ‘Gentlemen and shopkeepers’, p. 902.

<sup>544</sup> BALS: SpSt 60674/3, Accounts for work done for W. Sp. Stanhope, (at Cannon Hall, Grosvenor St., and building a post chariot), 1784-1785. For the increase in servants associated with the coach and horses see SpSt 60672/8, ‘Servants’ wages and receipts for wages’, 1775-1819.

<sup>545</sup> Penelope J. Corfield, ‘Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain’, *History* 72 234 (1987), p. 61; Stobart, ‘Gentlemen and shopkeepers’, pp.885-904. See Chapter One for a discussion of the use of the family crest in the interior decoration of the Hall and Chapter Four for its inclusion on gifts given at the funeral of William Spencer, 1756.

<sup>546</sup> Holmes, ‘Domestic Service’, p. 92; also see Beverly Lemire, *The Business of Everyday life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600s-1900s* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 123-126; Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade Before the Factory, 1660–1800* (London and New York, 1997), p. 8.

success of the local parish, it is more likely, though not documented, that servants found elevated status from the livery as it set them apart as superior amongst their own peers. Livery also had the added benefit of providing suitable and in many cases more elaborate and luxurious clothing than recipients could otherwise afford. In this way, and irrespective of the possible personal and emotive reactions to livery, the practice was employed by the Spencer and Spencer Stanhopes to embody their prestige and signify their status through the conspicuous presence and pleasing appearance of their servants. Whether attending to guests of the estate or accompanying their master in the surrounding parish or on business, their neat and orderly presentation was the combined manifestation of the household head's stature, taste and mastery over his household. The outward expression of good order simultaneously alluded to sound household management and by association the master's own command of vital masculine attributes, consolidating the contemporary themes of masculine gentry identity.

The consideration and utilisation of servants in fostering an image of respectability and reputation is evident elsewhere at Cannon Hall, and a conscious factor in the landscaping of the grounds and even the art adorning the interior of the house. The deliberate contrast between labour and leisure in a shared space of the gardens was a device used in the new landscaping design in the 1760s, discussed at length in Chapter 1, with the walled garden and pinery in full view of guests travelling to the pleasure grounds.<sup>547</sup> The proximity and arrangement of these contrasting spaces is particularly notable in that guests would pass the working garden en route to the pleasure grounds. It is possible that John Spencer was not only showing off his knowledge of horticulture and the skill of his gardener by having his rare exotics collection in plain sight, but also emphasising his status by exaggerating his leisure comparative to his workers' labour. Commissioned artwork in the Hall further supports that this contrast was a conscious and deliberate display employed by both John Spencer and Walter Spencer Stanhope.

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<sup>547</sup> For an at length discussion of the dichotomy between labour and leisure in eighteenth-century paintings see Hindle, 'Representing Rural Society', pp. 615-654; John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The rural poor in English painting, 1730-1840* (Cambridge, 1980); John Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday fashion in eighteenth century England* (New Haven, 2007).

Image removed for reasons of copyright

Figure 3.1: Artist unknown, '*Cawthorne Church from the Park*', c.late-1760s, Cannon Hall, Barnsley. *Source*: Cannon Hall Museum.

The over mantel above the fireplace to the ground floor bedroom at Cannon Hall contains a painting believed to commemorate the completion of the landscaping of the park and gardens in the mid-1760s (Figure 3.1). John Spencer witnessed first-hand the exertion encountered by his work force during the countless sessions spent personally overseeing

and indeed directing much of the work required to bring Richard Woods' landscape design to fruition.<sup>548</sup> The perspective of 'Cawthorne Church from the Park', the name attributed to it by modern-day curators, places the viewer amidst the pleasure ground looking down through the purposefully constructed avenue of trees to the lakes and All Saints Parish Church in Cawthorne beyond. The dense borders to the painting lead the eye through and to the church, the vista celebrated here with views out across the landscape to the lakes and cascades, being one of the central elements to the new landscape design. However, the depiction of light also illuminates the labouring gardener in the foreground and in the middle ground the gentry wanderers, possibly John Spencer and a guest, who are ambling and exploring the gardens.

The figures are small, in contrast to the volume and substance of the mature trees, emphasising the grandness of the estate, its dominance and endurance through its age and size. The painting conforms to the early eighteenth-century convention of aggrandising and romanticising the reality of the subject matter, a convention which prevailed, according to McElwee, throughout much of the eighteenth century, even after preferences for artistic form changed from the conversation piece to landscape.<sup>549</sup> Patrons, particularly those commissioning commemorative works, paid for the depiction of a 'classical idyll', or to take it a step further, an 'escapist fantasy', in the commemoration of their contribution to their estate and regional, indeed national, garden design.<sup>550</sup> This painting celebrates John Spencer's aesthetic ambition through his depicted assessment of the landscape, as well as the achievement of contemporary design ideals. Thus, he quietly acknowledges the expertise and labour commanded to pull off such transformations to the landscape while continuing to highlight the disparity between those at leisure and those at work. Hung in the lower bedroom, directly opposite the library it is possible that this room was

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<sup>548</sup> Richard Woods was employed to provide a plan for redesigning the park and garden in 1760. Work was carried out and continued until 1765.

<sup>549</sup> Penelope McElwee, *The Non-Representation of the Agricultural Labourers in 18th and 19th Century English Paintings* (Cambridge, 2016), p. 31; For a discussion on the contradiction between the reality and idealised representation in paintings see Anne Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989).

<sup>550</sup> McElwee, *The Non-Representation of the Agricultural Labourers*, p. 31; Hugh Prince, 'Art and agrarian change, 1710-1815', in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds), *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 98.



multifunctional, serving as an extension to the south front suite of rooms and accommodation for overnight guests. Situated at the most private end of the ground floor this painting would have been viewed by more significant and specially invited guests.

The composition gives the appearance of being accidental, casual and the presence of the labourer goes unnoticed by the two figures; instead, the man is gesturing towards what would have been the location of the pleasure ground with grotto and plunge bath beyond the trees. The motivation to include a visual representation of the labourer was universal and designed to convey 'a series of binary oppositions—rich and poor; landlord and tenant; employer and employee; the leisured and the labouring.'<sup>551</sup> Steve Hindle discusses the eighteenth-century tradition in landscape paintings which 'emphasized social distinction, yet paradoxically represented that division' as harmonious.<sup>552</sup> In contrast to other examples of its kind, however, the labourer in this painting is in the foreground.<sup>553</sup> Deliberately poised and idyllic, social distinction is evident in this painting, where the sedate poise of the labourer contrasts starkly with the realities of hard toil faced by those working the land and tending the gardens. The strategic composition of this piece articulates to contemporary viewers Spencer's status as a country gentleman; his vast knowledge in contemporary landscape design, and mastery of his workforce. Fundamentally the painting celebrates and elevates his social status as a man of leisure through the juxtaposition with the labourer.

Other tell-tale signs from the garden layout itself strongly indicate that this close juxtaposition between labour and leisure was an intentional mechanism employed in Woods' design. Fiona Cowell, the leading historical expert on the work of Richard Woods, pointedly stresses the unusual location of the pinery and the kitchen garden, both being

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<sup>551</sup> Hindle, 'Representing Rural Society', p. 628.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 626-627.

<sup>553</sup> The painting does share similarities with conversation piece portraiture in which a narrative is created through the presentation of active and engaged individuals discussed by Kate Retford, 'From the Interior to Interiority: The Conversation Piece in Georgian England', *Journal of Design History* 20 4 (1997), pp. 291-307. Also see Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, pp. 14-33; and Kate Retford, 'The Topography of the Conversation Piece: A Walk around Wanstead', in Gill Perry, Kate Retford, and Jordan Vibert (eds), *Placing Faces: The Portrait and the English Country House in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, 2013), pp. 20-41.

highly visible from the house and on the ascent to the pleasure grounds to the east.<sup>554</sup> It is of course to be expected that John Spencer would wish to show off his rare exotics and indeed the expertise of his head gardener, both of which were key markers of his learning and wealth. Other patrons chose to enclose their glass houses within the walls of the kitchen garden, only exhibiting the produce at the dinner table or on display elsewhere. Here a 'very plain and functional pinery', very different to the more elaborate glasshouses or orangeries of the period, was positioned in full view of passers-by and elevated in importance through being flanked on the south side by an ornamental garden with low growing and floral exotics.<sup>555</sup> It was only through the labours and expertise of his gardener that John was able to proudly record in his pocket diary that he 'Cutt the first pineapple out of my Hot house' in October 1760, a rare and expensive luxury with which he could impress his social network.<sup>556</sup> The riches of his estate and the labour of his workers were put on show to cement status and gentry identity.

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<sup>554</sup> Fiona Cowell, *Richard Woods (1715-1793), Master of the Pleasure Ground* (Suffolk and New York, 2009), pp. 136-137.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>556</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/13, Diary of John Spencer, 23 October 1760.

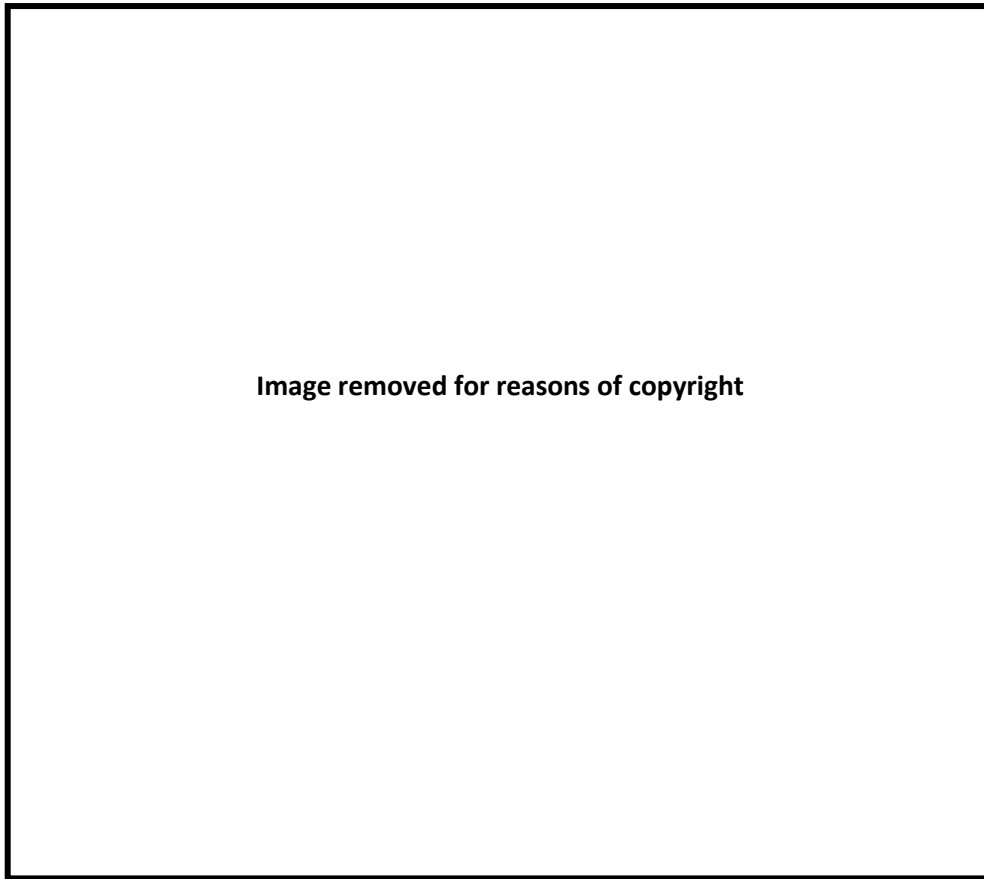


Figure 3.2: Peter De Wint, *Walter Spencer Stanhope and his Gamekeeper George Fisher*, 1813 in A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni and His Kindred, Volume Two* (London, 1911), p. 74.

Over fifty years later in 1813 George Fisher, the estate gamekeeper, was depicted on the moors grouse shooting alongside his employer Walter Spencer Stanhope in a landscape painting by Peter De Wint (Figure 3.2). George Fisher is recognised here as an instrumental figure, attributed as having established the grouse drive, a form of organised red grouse shooting which hugely popularised the sport itself and Cannon Hall as a popular hunting destination. The hunt was, as Chapter Four explores, the pinnacle of the social calendar for many of the rural elite. The diaries of all three masters, but particularly those of John Spencer, describe a feverish timetable of daily activities during the high season. The wages of those specialist servants employed to run and oversee the hunt and its associated requirements neatly illustrate the hunt's importance to the family, particularly the men, and the seasonal calendar of the estate. Despite the rather obscure and menial job titles afforded to Thomas Beet ('dog feeder') and William Bradshaw (listed as 'in stables') their

abilities in dog handling, stable management and in preparing and managing the hunt, the temporal nature of their seasonal yet skilled roles commanded comparatively high wages.<sup>557</sup> The expertise of these men served to protect the family's reputation as superior horsemen and hunters, and the prominence of specialised roles of the outdoor servants reflects the Spencer family's interest in, and national reputation for, their horse stud and pack of hunting hounds. Indeed, on John Spencer's death almost a third of the servants employed were engaged in some way with hounds, horses or the hunt. As the final chapter will discuss, the hunting season and the host of visitors it brought to the estate each year was fundamental to the annual calendar. In this regard, specialist servants of the hunt were themselves a form of conspicuous consumption.

### **Servant Conduct and Empowerment**

Earlier discussion highlighted how practices such as the use of a livery, which died out in urban settings, could persist in the country house and its community. The rural context, the awareness locals had of the house and the likelihood of employment there likely reduced the stigma servants faced and some may even have felt pride in representing the household and the status the uniform conveyed. In Chapter One, the butler, John Smith, took great personal interest in ensuring the building improvements to the house functioned domestically but also bothered himself with the aesthetics and the extent to which they were befitting of the family and property. Servants could care about the place they worked, acting to preserve or uphold the best interests of the estate and people within it, not least because the reputation and success of their employer had direct consequences for them as well. In turn servants were acutely aware of the extent to which the reputation of the household underpinned the reputation of the family and that of the individuals within it, especially the master and mistress. Whilst we have discussed collaborative projects involving senior servants, and the manufactured portrayal of authority and good order, the

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<sup>557</sup> The absence of a recorded start date or annual wage amount for Thomas Beet and William Bradshaw suggests their employment was of a more casual nature, but intriguingly the wage amount received by Beet would equate to an annual wage of £10.4 while Bradshaw would have earned an annual wage of £15.6 for his role in the stables. Both wage amounts placing them among the highest paid of all the servants recorded in the inventory. Thomas Beet, recorded as having been employed for 15 weeks by 9th November, was therefore brought in for the annual grouse shooting season which extended from 12 August to 10 December.

realities of the master-servant relationship were complex, and as recent work by Stobart has illustrated, far from confined within the bounds of contractual obligation.<sup>558</sup> Exploring some rare examples from the archives and accounts from Cannon Hall, I will now consider a number of specific case studies, sometimes unusual, which expose the practical complexities of master-servant interactions, extending our understanding of the relationship beyond conduct literature and exploring the potential impact servant behaviours could have on the household's reputation and in turn their masters' identity. Furthermore, the particular challenges posed by both the absence of wives and periods of absence of the heads themselves at Cannon Hall will be considered, which in some ways gave more power to the servants with limited candidates to pick up responsibility for the estate.

At Cannon Hall, John Smith, the long-standing butler who was discussed in Chapter One, reveals something of an emotional bond between himself and those he worked for. As Stobart points out, servants are all too often seen as fulfilling the 'physical rather than social and emotional needs' of their masters and there is very little work, if any, on the intimate relationship between butlers and their masters in the eighteenth century.<sup>559</sup> Knowledge of the full extent of John Smith's duties and responsibilities is severely hampered by a dearth of records. Nonetheless it is clear that he was responsible for the personal care of John Spencer, alongside overseeing instruction of at least some of the servants and, from the inventories of his pantry, ensuring the safe keeping of, among many other things the dining linen, the glassware, several pistols and other more mundane accoutrements concerning dining.<sup>560</sup> Following the succession of the estate to Walter Spencer Stanhope, Smith's responsibilities broadened. His later letters detail his brewing activities, employment and dismissal of servants, and disputes with the steward and other servants alongside other day to day matters on the estate.<sup>561</sup> In many ways, his letters reflect those of the stewards

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<sup>558</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Housekeeper, correspondent and confidante: the under-told story of Mrs Hayes of Charlecote Park, 1744–73', *Family and Community History* 21 2 (July, 2018), pp. 96-111.

<sup>559</sup> Stobart, 'Housekeeper, correspondent and confidante', p. 96.

<sup>560</sup> BALS: SpSt 60671/20, 'An Appraisalment of the Household Furniture at Cannon Hall belonging the late John Spencer Esq taken November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1775 by E. Elwick'.

<sup>561</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/133, 134, 136, 143, 151, 166, Examples of letters from John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope discussing these issues.

across the period in their depth although his tone is more conversational and perhaps more informal. It is, however, his intimately caring and detailed accounts of John Spencer on his death bed which are most striking and only visible in a handful of letters hurriedly written to Walter Spencer Stanhope in the last weeks of John Spencer's life. Suffering considerably 'with Goutey pains all over his whole frame' and with the 'Greatest pain in his shoulders, arms & hands which pates him to the Greetes torter emajanable', John Spencer's death was slow, painful and indeed in terrifying proximity to John Smith, who reported a fever which 'so effected his [John's] nerves and memory and all of his breath', 'a rash out all over his whole body' and finally resulted in the loss of 'his speech so that we cannot understand' him.<sup>562</sup> Smith promises to 'do every thing in my power' to care for him to the extent of 'keeping him with in bounds' and 'to try Every stratigam in my power to keep him in bed as his life is at stake', actions which Smith insinuates may otherwise have proved provocative of John Spencer's wrath.<sup>563</sup> Indeed the closing passage that 'your Hon[ou]r is no stranger to my masters temper tho I have been in Greet favour During his whole illness & he has been Good in Doing everything I desired' neatly demonstrates the complexities within the relationship between master and servant.<sup>564</sup> John Spencer's temper, evidently known to all, was cause for caution in Smith's daily care of him and it was noteworthy that John had succumbed to Smith's personal care of him. In the last days of his life John Spencer was therefore all but alone except for a steady stream of doctors and his household servants, principally his butler. Now dependant on his servant, the power dynamic between them had clearly shifted.

These letters not only expose and verify the personal temperament of John Spencer but also demonstrate how his servant navigated these challenges and nonetheless continued in service, diligently and intimately caring for his master in his most vulnerable and weakest moments. Furthermore, John Smith was given the responsibility for overseeing events immediately following his ailing master's death should this come when his nephew and heir was not present and, it seems, to update John Spencer's closest companions on the ever

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<sup>562</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/5,6,8,9,10, Letters from John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775.

<sup>563</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/8, Letter from John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 8<sup>th</sup> November 1775.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

worsening state of his health. Smith's acute awareness of rank and his discomfort in performing tasks outside of his usual role were exposed through his correspondence with Walter. Smith repeatedly describes himself as 'distressed' regarding whether it would be appropriate or not to send his letters via the more expensive 'Express' or by regular post; on the occasion he does send as an express he is at pains to stress his decision to do so was supported by Samuel Phipps, curate of All Saints Parish Church, Cawthorne and close personal friend of John Spencer.<sup>565</sup> The limitations and bounds of his rights and responsibilities were a cause of anxiety; moreover letter writing, as is apparent from the scarcity of those that survive from him, was evidently not something he was accustomed to doing regularly, at that time at least. Smith's role as the primary and indeed only informant of his master's health and imminent death and his responsibility to deal with the necessary affairs which followed were unfamiliar and daunting for him. It was also the butler who informed John Spencer's close friend John Cholwell of his illness and sent another servant James Spurr to fetch the lawyer overseeing Spencer's last will and testament.<sup>566</sup> In his hour of need it was his butler who stepped up, cared for him and wrote to his family and friends. While this relationship may well have been typical of others between butlers and the men they served, they are not widely documented. Furthermore, the evidence from this case-study shows the extent to which the master-servant relationship could extend beyond contractual obligations and the prescriptive expectations set out in conduct literature.

Although we have little evidence of housekeeping directives or instructions for the household servants at Cannon Hall, we do know that contractual agreements with the employees would have included expectations with regards to their conduct.<sup>567</sup> The example of Smith above reveals the more extreme end of the scale whereby a servant exhibits concern and a sense of duty to Cannon Hall based more upon sentiment, even personal loyalty and friendship, having known John Spencer for so long, than any contractual obligation. The convivial and frank tone to Smith's later letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope further illustrates some of the more nuanced aspects of the master-servant relationship and

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<sup>565</sup> Letter from John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, SpSt 60564/9.

<sup>566</sup> Letter from John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, SpSt 60564/11, 9.

<sup>567</sup> Carolyn Steedman, 'The servant's labour: The business of life, England, 1760-1820', *Social History* 29 1 (2004), pp. 1-29.

how servants could fulfil some of the social and emotional needs of their master. Although the position of Butler was not directly representative of the wider servant population, this does provide a clear example of a household servant who understood both their own influence and vested interest in the continued success of the family and the estate for themselves and the wider community. At the opposite end of the scale, however, and indicating a very different aspect of labour relations to the example of Smith diligently caring for his master and seeking to maintain household order, we find similarly exceptional examples where the actions of household servants, deliberate or otherwise, caused disruption or posed a risk to the reputation of their employer.

In 1767 Sir Thomas Wentworth, owner of nearby Wentworth Castle and close acquaintance of John Spencer, stopped by at Cannon Hall.<sup>568</sup> Despite this likely being an unexpected visit, the reception received by Wentworth's servants, including the food provided for them, was reported to have been deemed well below their expectations. Writing to her brother, Ann Stanhope relayed their complaint that 'w'n they Din'd here they were sorry you was so poor, t'r next time they came, they woud bring their Dinners along w'th them'.<sup>569</sup> Not only does this imply that servants could be as 'status-conscious as their masters' but that the poor service was seen as a direct reflection on John Spencer's governance and success.<sup>570</sup> This particular episode provoked Ann Stanhope's letter, who was compelled to inform her brother that this incident was symptomatic of wider disruption and disharmony between his household servants. The letter reveals fractured relationships between servants and a the possibility of collective behaviour that was remarkable and demanded direct management. In the same letter Ann describes taking a walk around the pleasure garden giving directions regarding fruit while also giving 'orders to your Gardiner [...] & told him I insisted upon his Behaving well to yr present Housekeeper, he said your House was go into a very bad Character', 'all yr Inferior servants seem to hang together & have made great complaints'.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>568</sup> Presumably Frederick Thomas Wentworth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Strafford.

<sup>569</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/93, Letter from Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, 1767.

<sup>570</sup> Holmes, 'Domestic Service in Yorkshire', p. 98.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*



This episode indicates that the household servants were actively and collectively refusing to work for the new housekeeper and deliberately causing disruption. When Wentworth's servants described Spencer as 'poor', their criticism was levelled at the master of the house not at their employed equivalents.<sup>572</sup> It is hard to assume ignorance of the direct and dire consequences of their actions on the reputation of the household when the Cannon Hall servants refused to assist the housekeeper in providing for the visitors. It is important then to consider why the servants thought it necessary to make such a grand and relatively public protest. Whilst we cannot trace any direct outcome of this event in terms of changes at Cannon Hall, the outward projection was of John Spencer's failure to fulfil his obligations as master, particularly while absent from Cannon Hall, prompting the anxious tone of Ann's letter. Furthermore, the acts of protest by the Cannon Hall servants are particularly noteworthy in light of large-scale protests by footmen in London in the same year, action which had occurred repeatedly since the decline of vails in 1763.<sup>573</sup> Nationally, there was an emerging pattern of servants becoming increasingly rebellious. In another documented example (which we return to in greater detail in the next section of this chapter) John received correspondence from his sister Ann airing the complaints of his cook and housekeeper over shared lodgings, which are described occurring amidst a fractious household in which Ann states there had been 'very great Animosities and Uneasiness in your family since you left it'.<sup>574</sup> For kinswomen, episodes of this nature added further weight to their wider assertions that a mistress in residence was much needed to oversee and manage the good order of the household in the absence of the master, the lack of which was an enabling factor in the behaviour and self-empowerment of servants in 'acting up' to discredit the household. Word that John Spencer would shortly be returning to the estate due to his 'uneasiness' with the situation described to him was greeted with great optimism by his sister who wrote that 'I am vastly glad to hear you propose comg down so soon as, I hope you will make your family more happy'.<sup>575</sup> Spencer's presence in order to directly

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<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>573</sup> Bridget Hill, *Servants: English Domesticity in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 83-92.

<sup>574</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/93, Letter from Ann Stanhope to John Spencer, 1767.

<sup>575</sup> A. M. W. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House: From the papers of a Macaroni and His Kindred, Volume Two* (London, 1911), pp. 128-129.

govern, recognise and indeed discipline was seen as the most likely route to resolving the problems within the household dynamics.

Such semi-public displays of dissidence, and the threat of or short-term withdrawal of labour are viewed as attempts by workers to press for alterations to their working conditions or remunerations. As Hindle asserts, these examples epitomize the 'febrile nature of labour relations transacted within the confined space of a household where the boundaries between a gentleman's domestic authority and his public reputation were fluid and contested'.<sup>576</sup> The issue of whether the reputation of the household head and the Spencer Stanhope family name was at stake is in these examples only implicit. However, while we cannot know how the parish viewed the goings on in the household, it is highly likely, given the close ties between the village and the house, that a scandal would not stay hidden for long. Certainly these conflicts had the potential to undermine the authority of the household within the parish and beyond to the homes of other gentry neighbours. Furthermore, the goings on at Cannon chime with servants' insurrectionary behaviour elsewhere suggesting a strong possibility of the deliberate nature of these servant protests was a means of seeking change. As part of the household-family the servants' position bestowed onto them a small amount of influence over the reputation of the household and householder, exploitable for their own gains. These examples clearly demonstrate a sense of the servants' awareness of their empowerment within a collaborative household and the opportunity therefore to initiate change. Whilst the evidence here does not provide an answer as to the direct outcome and measure of success of these particular disputes, this chapter will now proceed onto an evaluation of longer-term changes in the approach to governance and remuneration at Cannon Hall, which may have been driven in part by such events over time.

### **Remunerations, Expectations and Charity**

In an effort to quantify change over time to the style of governance and approach the different heads of household took to the treatment and reward of their staff, this chapter will now return to a more detailed exploration of the records on remunerations presented

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<sup>576</sup> Hindle, 'Below Stairs', p. 73.

earlier in the discussion of the household size and structure. This section will chart the changes to the wage structure at Cannon alongside exploration into other forms of remuneration recorded and documented amongst the archived records. Positioned alongside the existing historiography on remuneration from comparative households, this will provide a strong indication of the extent to which servant conditions at Cannon Hall improved over the period, relative to the national picture. This section will go on to discuss how strongly the evidence relates to the comparative circumstances, personalities and individual identities of the three male heads.

The 1775 probate inventory (Table 3.2), discussed above, records an annual wage bill as £135 19s, excluding the seasonal amounts given to Beet and Bradshaw and the unknown sums paid to the brewer John Hepworth and herdman Thomas Winter.<sup>577</sup> It also excludes amounts paid to the estate steward, for which there is no conclusive record across the period. Estate steward John Hardy, who oversaw both Walter's Horsforth and Cannon Hall estates, received 294.10.10 in 1796 (Table 3.3) suggesting that this important job may have commanded a large wage across the period. Amounts given to individual servants were comparable to those afforded in other estates of a similar size to Cannon Hall, although considerably lower than servants received in London over the same period or in households of titled families. Jacob Field's research found housekeepers received an average wage of £13.5, suggesting the slightly higher wage of £14.4 received by Mrs Bonnington in 1775 (Table 3.2) potentially reflects her length of service.<sup>578</sup> The butler John Smith's wage of £26 5s is substantially higher than average, especially considering he had an assistant under butler, an addition which usually resulted in lower wages as the role could be shared. Christie found butlers typically received £9 or £10 per annum, although this could be much higher in larger houses.<sup>579</sup> Tying into his seemingly strong relationship with John Spencer discussed above, Smith's inflated wage clearly indicates his superior position in the household, the importance he held in the eyes of his master and his long service. Maid

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<sup>577</sup> Joseph Shaw the brewer at Thoresby Hall, Nottinghamshire received £12 13s for eleven out of twelve months, see Pamela Sambrook, *Country House Brewing in England, 1500-1900* (London and Ohio, 1996), pp. 179-181.

<sup>578</sup> Jacob F. Field, 'Domestic service, gender, and wages in rural England, c. 1700-1860', *Economic History Review* 66 1 (2013), p. 254.

<sup>579</sup> Christie, *The British Country House*, p. 121

servants in 1775 received between £5 5s and £3 3s. A wage of £6 a year for senior servants between the 1770's and 1790's was about average nationally, so with the exception of John Smith, wages under John Spencer can be viewed as broadly typical for the period. At Cannon Hall post-1775 wages increased considerably under Walter Spencer Stanhope, although it should be noted that this was also a period of wage inflation at a national level. Maid servants typically received between £5 5s and £10 10s, the housekeeper by 1784 received £42 6s, while the groom Richard Bell had incremental increases of £1 1s each year plus additional payments for clothes mending, new breeches and travel expenses. These incremental increases were typical at Cannon Hall for the period from 1775, and including the sizeable sum paid to the housekeeper meant wages at Cannon Hall rose largely in line if not slightly higher than national figures.<sup>580</sup> Employment within the house therefore represented a stable income and a good wage.

It was not just wages to line their pockets which kept servants largely appeased and continuing in their employment. The topping up of wages with additional payments was the norm and widely expected by servants of all status. The limited evidence available on the nature and levels of remuneration and additional reward afforded by William and John Spencer suggests both were less than generous when it came to recognising their workforce, and even the hard labour of those employed during the harvest. John Spencer insisted that particularly fastidious accounts of all beer and ale were kept, which in turn were diligently checked by both himself and his estate steward. In the letter of 10 March 1757, John Spencer demanded the steward ensure the housekeeper 'keep a particular Account of all the Ale us'd in my Absence, I would have none given to any Workman whatsoever'.<sup>581</sup> This is a particularly unusual action given that nationally, small beer and ale allowances were given as standard remuneration alongside wages.<sup>582</sup> Furthermore, the type of drink consumed and the rituals surrounding it helped to underpin hierarchy among household servants who worked in Cannon Hall. As was fairly common of middling to larger

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<sup>580</sup> Hecht, *Domestic Service*, pp. 141-149. Hecht shows that on average housemaids received between £4 10s to 10 guineas; cooks between £9 and 14 guineas and cook-housekeepers between 12 and 20 guineas.

<sup>581</sup> BALS: SpSt 60540, John Spencer's letter book, 1757.

<sup>582</sup> Sambrook, *Country House Brewing*, pp. 228-229.

households, the upper servants at Cannon Hall would leave the servants hall after the main course and proceed to the housekeeper or butler's room for better quality beer and dessert.<sup>583</sup> For Sambrook the actions at Cannon Hall, by which they would "sink their beer", viz. throw the inferior beverage out of the glasses which they carried with them to the sink, in order to claim the better drink which awaited them' was unusual in its ceremony.<sup>584</sup> As we will explore in more detail below, the disparity between servant expectations towards remunerations at Cannon Hall and the reality was a cause of disquiet, and consequently threats to leave were frequently looming, especially among the outdoor labourers. One small example, however, suggests John Spencer could act with greater consideration towards his servants. A condolence letter to Walter Spencer Stanhope on the death of his uncle reveals John Spencer had commissioned 'a Pice of Pillowe of his own waveing [...] for the Servants' from one of his nephews.<sup>585</sup> Whilst no more detail on the item is known it is nonetheless an intriguing example of a gesture or gift being extended to the servants.

Conversely, Walter and Mary Spencer Stanhope gave a range of remunerations to their staff. These included payments for clothing items such as breeches and boots (given to all servants working in the stables, coaches or gardens), payments for the 'mending of cloathes', the usual payment of board wages when the family were absent from the Hall and more unusually £1 1s for the purchase of tea which was given to almost all female servants from 1775 onwards. The combination of these additions could in some instances more than double the servants' income. As Steve Hindle states the 'granting of supplementary gratuities and rewards indicates that, among the servants of the gentry in particular, the relationships between work, service and remuneration were discretionary rather than fixed.'<sup>586</sup> The additional remunerations received by servants reflected either of, or both, their bargaining potential and the good will and generosity of the master.

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<sup>583</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>585</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/21, Letter from Bridget Downes to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 6<sup>th</sup> December 1775.

<sup>586</sup> Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall', p. 73.

One surviving example of documented expectations regarding servant behaviour and reward at Cannon Hall is an apprenticeship indenture for Benjamin Dutton, employed in March 1740 as clerk to the Spencers' iron forges and furnaces. Formulaic in its content, the indenture stipulated that for his seven-year apprenticeship Dutton should avoid 'imbezelling wasting misspending or purloining any of the Goods, Money, Writings or Chattels of him the said William Spencer' nor 'at any time or times absent himself from His said Master's service without his Consent'.<sup>587</sup> The indenture further required of Dutton never to 'directly or indirectly disclose or make known any of his said masters secrets or Business', alluding to all servants knowledge and access to the family and their industrial and personal business.<sup>588</sup> As would have been the case for many servants, Dutton's role overseeing estate and business matters demanded a level of discretion to prevent the family's reputation being damaged by gossip. The contract concludes by specifying that in return Dutton would be 'informed and instructed in all the useful and necessary Business' and provided with 'sufficient Meat Drink Washing and Lodging' alongside an annual wage of ten shillings.<sup>589</sup> Whilst the wage, as one would expect, is fixed and not open to interpretation or negotiation, the living arrangements are not defined beyond 'sufficient' and the detail of these terms would have been worked out more informally.<sup>590</sup> Where servants slept, provisions of food, drink and other comforts were ultimately at their master's discretion and, as is alluded to in the examples that follow, at times required on-going negotiations.

A failure to meet servants' or labourers' expected requirements is the most typical complaint described in the correspondence for Cannon Hall, particularly on the commencement of employment. The absence of precise and documented particulars for lodgings, food and customary practices on which the new housekeeper and cook undertook employment in the house was a source of some disagreement in the months following appointment in the late 1750s.<sup>591</sup> The cook, reported Ann Stanhope to her brother John,

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<sup>587</sup> BALS: SpSt 60518/2, Apprenticeship Indenture for Benjamin Dutton 1740.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>591</sup> The exact date of the letters from which this evidence is pertaining is unknown as they are among those letters lost when they were removed from the rest of the family archive by A. M. W. Stirling

‘expected to dine in ye Housekeeper’s Room, as it was always ye Custom where there was a second Table for ye Cook to dine at it and wch she did in her last Place’.<sup>592</sup> Evidently, these servants felt the space and provision of furnishings denoted a customary right typical of many households the size of Cannon Hall and servants pressed for more favourable rights afforded to them elsewhere to be honoured in a new place of work.<sup>593</sup> Lodgings caused additional complaints and the cook disliked the practice of ‘ye Maids all layg together in one room’ preferring for her and the housekeeper to keep a room to themselves.<sup>594</sup> Despite further intervention from Ann in conveying on their behalf that for the housekeeper particularly, ‘Layg wth ye other Maids [...] will make them so familiar, she can’t have proper Comand over them’ John repeatedly refused their requests. He writes in response: ‘With respect to my grand Servants, I shall insist upon the Housekeeper sleeping in the same Chamber with the other Servants, & by that means she will have a proper Awe & Command over them’. ‘Sleeping arrangements’, found Vickery ‘were directly proportional to status’; when new to the household the senior servants jostled for rights and privileges, which they may, or may not, have received with previous employers.<sup>595</sup> For the more senior servants, their proximity to the lower ranking servants for what were increasingly deemed as the private activities of sleeping, dressing and similar, had implications for their own authority within the household hierarchy.<sup>596</sup>

Similarly, the gardener William Crament, via the estate steward John Howson, spent many weeks in spring 1812 bartering the terms of his move from the family’s Horsforth estate to Cannon Hall. A particular sticking point was his requirement to be employed in the manner that ‘Mr Fawkes keeps his gardener’, whom he stated ‘Eats in the House when the Family

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circa 1910. Many of these missing letters were recreated in full in Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*.

<sup>592</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*, vol. 1, pp. 125-126.

<sup>593</sup> For details of changes to servants sleeping arrangements see Richardson, *Household Servants*, pp. 98-100.

<sup>594</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House*, vol. 1, pp. 125-126.

<sup>595</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 38.

<sup>596</sup> Evidence from household inventories at Cannon Hall shows that servants were provided with gendered sleeping accommodation in 1684, considerably earlier than some historians suggest. For this discussion in full see, Tim Meldrum, ‘Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth -century metropolitan household’, *Urban History* 26 1 (1999), pp. 27-39.

are there, and board wage when they are absent', alongside at least 50 guineas wages.<sup>597</sup> In a letter to Walter, Howson stressed that:

this man seems particularly bent upon Eating in the House, when there is Housekeeping, as he observes that he expects having very frequently to come into the House, and that it very often happens his being asked to have a horn of ale or Beer with a little bread or meat as might be about, and that it might at some times be unpleasantly represented, in that case says it would make him very uncomfortable, and he should not like to engage upon any other Terms.<sup>598</sup>

For the gardener, it seems, not only was he concerned with being employed on terms similar to others of his profession but he required formal clarification of his rights indoors as distinct from his domain outdoors and his privileges within it to be stipulated, thus avoiding the potential for accusations and clarifying and substantiating his rights. In a further example, a new servant of Walter Spencer Stanhope tried his luck requesting 'rather too much wages' with Walter insisting he 'get him for twelve pounds if not less' plus livery stipulating that 'while he is in my service he will be decently cloathed'. There is no record of whether or not this servant was successful.<sup>599</sup> The provision of clothing was in addition to wages and was typically provided alongside lodgings. On employing a junior servant in 1738 William Spencer gave '6 (pounds) clear wages for a year but no Cloathes'.<sup>600</sup>

While the most vocal complaints came from senior servants, estate workers and seasonal labourers are also found protesting a loss to their expected rights and privileges, or exhibiting clear preferences in their work and responsibilities. In February 1742 'new man Ben' hired upon a recommendation of an associate, refused to work 'unless he drives the first Team', a responsibility beyond his capabilities.<sup>601</sup> In 1748 the behaviour of John Heap (dog handler) was exceptional or controversial enough for both Ben Dutton and John Middleton, estate steward and farm manager respectively at the time, to inform William Spencer that Heap had collected his clothes and absconded from the estate.<sup>602</sup> On returning

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<sup>597</sup> BALS: SpSt 60586/304, John Howson to William Spencer Stanhope, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1812.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>599</sup> BALS: SpSt 60687/8, Walter Spencer Stanhope to John Hardy, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1772.

<sup>600</sup> BALS: SpSt 60656, William Spencer's cash journals, 29<sup>th</sup> September 1738.

<sup>601</sup> BALS: SpSt 60518/32, Letter from Alicia Maria Spencer to William Spencer, 16<sup>th</sup> February 1742.

<sup>602</sup> BALS: SpSt 60632/5, Diary of William Spencer, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1748 notes the start of Heaps employment.



a week later to collect his gun he was confronted by Dutton who learned that Heap had 'found fault with his Victuals and had not the allowance of Liquor as usual'.<sup>603</sup> Accosted by Dutton for 'very indigent' behaviour considering Spencer 'had kept him all winter' 'he settled again & since has gone out frequently with the Dogs'.<sup>604</sup> Similarly, Christiana informed her father that labourer Robert Roe, who was assisting with planting trees on the estate, left his position as (according to the steward) William Spencer had 'taken no notice about him'.<sup>605</sup> It is curious to consider what was meant by this and in what ways William Spencer should have taken notice of him. It may have been in reference to his level of remuneration or perhaps Robert Roe fostered expectations of other forms of recognition for his work. We can only speculate as to the true nature of his grievance, but this supports the argument that servants at all levels had expectations regarding their rights and remunerations as well as standards relating to their perceived position and seniority within the working hierarchy. The threat or decision to leave Cannon Hall appears impulsive yet may have been perceived as the only mechanism by which they could resolve such frustrations. While overall servant remuneration, and wages in particular, varied regionally and over the time studied making direct comparisons challenging, the evidence here suggests a level of consistency between William and John in their somewhat modest approach to additional forms of remuneration. Both household heads offered what would seem to be comparable wages versus to other regional houses of a similar size, but neither appeared to be especially generous when it came to other forms of remuneration, leading to some of the episodes of dissatisfaction described above. There was however evidence of a generational shift in approach on the arrival of Walter Spencer Stanhope to the estate, with a marked increase in the value and types of additional remuneration afforded to his large body of serving employees.

With known associations to the evangelical Clapham Sect and Anglican Christians, his support of some social and political reform was a notable feature of Walter's identity and

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<sup>603</sup> BALS: SpSt 60518/76, Letter from B Dutton to William Spencer, 27 March 1748; SpSt 60518/77 Letter from B Dutton to William Spencer, 6 April 1748.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>605</sup> BALS: SpSt 60518/14, Letter from Christiana Spencer to William Spencer, 19<sup>th</sup> November 1742.

can be traced as a motivating factor behind some of his some of his behaviours.<sup>606</sup> The Spencer Stanhopes actively engaged in charitable practices in the wider community. Monetary gifts to the poor<sup>607</sup>, bequests in wills<sup>608</sup> and at funerals<sup>609</sup>, feasts for tenants on rent days<sup>610</sup> and at harvest are all evidenced. After 1790 Walter Spencer Stanhope dedicated more of his income to community endeavours, funding new pews for All Saints Parish Church in 1810 and new school building in 1815, alongside vaccinating his tenants in both Horsforth and Cawthorne against smallpox. Contrary to those who cite a decline in aristocratic paternalism, evidence at Cannon Hall from Walter's tenure indicates a greater level of community involvement compared to his ancestors, and well into the nineteenth century. Not all these interventions would have been welcomed by the local populace; some involved the loss of customary rights or charity. As discussed by Tadmor and Thompson among others, this was considered by some as a serious misuse of authority.<sup>611</sup> While not affixed in law, common rights were considered by many poorer sorts in the community as their entitlement through longevity and custom. Despite this, evidence through Walter's actions and political allegiances show that he openly championed his beliefs, testament to the strength with which they formed part of his identity.

The following is one example of a traditional right of the residents of Cawthorne which was overthrown by the household head of Cannon Hall, possibly as a consequence of his own and wider held beliefs about the barbarity of rural sport. On July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1794 Walter Spencer Stanhope's diary records how he 'Took up a man as a Rogue & Vagabond for travelling with

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<sup>606</sup> Walter was a known associate and political supporter of William Wilberforce, founding member of the Clapham Sect.

<sup>607</sup> For example see BALS: SpSt 60633, Diary of John Spencer 1754, 1763, 1768, 1772; SpSt 60635, Walter Spencer Stanhope 1786, 1801, 1804.

<sup>608</sup> BALS: SpSt 133/5, Will of William Spencer, 1759; SpSt 269/10, Will of John Spencer, 1775, legacies left to servants Jacob Hollingsworth, William Sadler and William Marsh.

<sup>609</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/9, Diaries of John Spencer, 1756; SpSt 60649/1, Cash book of Ann Stanhope, 9<sup>th</sup> July 1770, gifts of ribbons given to servants.

<sup>610</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/108, Letter from from Ann Stanhope to Walter Spencer Stanhope, no date, evidence of this practice being upheld at Horsforth is found in letters, 'yr women below are very busy in preparing for yr Rent Day & I hope Mrs Clough will give ye tenants a satisfactory Dinner, and that they will pay their Rents wth great cheerfulness wch that they may long do, to your Dear self, is I daresay yr sincere wish of every individual here'.

<sup>611</sup> Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, esp. pp. 85-89; E. P. Thompson, 'Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture', *Journal of Social History* 7 4 (1974), pp. 382-405.

a bull to bait in Cawthorne. Before 11 o'clock the man consented to shoot him [the bull], and I bid the Constable to release him'.<sup>612</sup> The somewhat anecdotal account retold in Walter's diary and John Spencer Stanhope's biography of his father's life describes how Walter apprehended the man and escorted him to the grounds of the estate while 'behind him the crowd followed threateningly', before ordering the man to kill the bull (presumably as a more humane end than the more gruesome fate to which it was previously destined).<sup>613</sup> On refusing, the man was detained and a constable sent for. By eleven at night the man succumbed to Walter's request and shot his animal, following which, according to local rumour recorded by A. M. W. Stirling, Walter 'gave him a guinea and with that, and a good allowance of old ale, he went away fully satisfied'.<sup>614</sup>

There is evidence then that these same values of paternalism and reform influenced the shift in the nature of governance at Cannon Hall by the end of the eighteenth century, a shift which is highly reflective of nationally changing notions of paternalism, underpinned by a resurgence in evangelicalism more commonly associated with the middling sort in the nineteenth century. Following the succession to the estate by Walter Spencer Stanhope and most notably from his marriage in 1783, there was an increase to the allowances and improvements to the treatment of servants and workers on the estate, some of which have already been mentioned above. Throughout the period studied but particularly from the 1780's there is an acceleration of paternalistic behaviour towards both servants and tenants. While the ways in which this was expressed were not grandiose or hugely exceptional there was clearly a change in the approach and style of household management from the ownership of William Spencer to that of his grandson Walter Spencer Stanhope in the early nineteenth century.

The lack of direct evidence from workers and tenants means it is difficult to determine if pressure from below prompted this change to the style of governance. Some of the evidence (increase in wages and living conditions for servants particularly) was part of a

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<sup>612</sup> BALS: SpSt 60635/14, Diary of Walter Spencer Stanhope.

<sup>613</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House, Vol. Two*, p. 96.

<sup>614</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

national trend, and Walter's increased wealth and status compared to his predecessors could have translated to increased wages and remuneration. Considered, however, alongside other factors such as consistency and longevity of service, continuity in terms of the same families working at Cannon over generations, Cawthorne being a prosperous and growing community (people were travelling there to find work) and the comparative (although by no means absolute) lack of alternative employment, Cannon Hall appears to have been a place somewhat less exposed to the external pressures and competition which would force improvements in conditions to attract employees. Similarly, the research into past episodes of servant requests, protests and rebellion provided little evidence that such actions were directly successful in securing measurable change, thus suggesting that the Cannon Hall heads of household were equally resistant to internal pressures from the workforce itself.

The cases discussed above therefore suggest that Walter Spencer Stanhope's social and political values were a significant influence on his decision-making as master. Findings here strongly correlate with historiography on the impact of the evangelical revival and Tory paternalism from the late eighteenth century (for example work by Davidoff and Hall, Stephen Tomkins, Joanna Innes), especially the impact of the Clapham sect, a group with which Walter Spencer Stanhope was closely associated as a close personal friend of William Wilberforce and others.<sup>615</sup> Events at Cannon Hall therefore reflect wider national religious and political events among an elite minority which spread to include large groups of the middling sort by the early decades of the nineteenth century. The evidence available means, however, that it is impossible to assess the extent to which the shifts were solely influenced by gentry paternalism and not a product of negotiation with servants.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter set out to explore the household of the Cannon Hall estate and the ways in which it was managed over the long eighteenth century, principally the methods utilized by

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<sup>615</sup> Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London, 2002), pp. 76-106; Stephen Tomkins, *The Clapham Sect: How Wilberforce's Circle Transformed Britain* (Oxford, 2010); Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics: Social Problems and Social Policies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 184-215.

the masters of the Cannon Hall estate to keep control and ensure the smooth running of their household. These men were motivated to ensure that the estate and family name prospered, because the success of the household was both a direct reflection of their masculine gentry identity and essential to the dynastic investment integral to what it meant to be a Spencer. Set against the challenges of absenteeism and continuous absence of wives for more than fifty years, these men, kinswomen and a hierarchy of servants found alternative ways to ensure the estate and household were managed well. As the early section in this chapter on the demography of the household shows, residents of local villages were entwined with the estate and the family. As Chapter Four will go on to explore, local families were generationally connected to the workings of the estate, with the family's industrial concerns and as tenants. While the geographical proximity and long-term relationship with the family and estate led some to be heavily invested in the household, it also presented challenges for the master of the house in guarding against threats and scenarios, deliberate or circumstantial, which risked damage to the family's local reputation.

The absence of wives here reveals how households could thrive through the uniting of wider kinship networks, with kinswomen ready and willing to step in to oversee the affairs of the estate in the master's absence. The wider household, including extended kin, stewards and other upper servants, collaborated to ensure the estate continued to run as smoothly as possible. These behaviours were driven by a range of motives, ensuring the success of the estate, and in turn the security of the family name, of wages and long-term employment for current and future generations of workers. Whilst we can only hypothesize as to their individual motivations, it is true for all that they had a vested interest in, and much to benefit from the success and prosperity of the Hall. For the three sisters, the wealth and status of the Spencer family estate also had a longer-term impact on their own lives and that of their children, with both Ann and Christiana's children benefiting from generous inheritance following John's death, something which would have also eased the burden of Christiana's financially challenging marriage.

The bachelorhood of John Spencer perhaps most encouraged the sense of collective endeavour of the lineage family for whom the longer-term ownership of the Spencer family

assets was destined, decades prior to its succession, for their own children. Perhaps then the kinswomen worked not only for their own ambitions and short-term achievement and to plug the gap in times of need, but also to ensure no detrimental impact to the estate and family name prior to their own sons' succession. Evidence here shows that women had an investment in the successful running of the businesses and homes of their birth family well beyond their own marriages, overseeing a variety of aspects of household management. Alongside specialist servants, such as the butler John Smith who stepped up in periods of crisis, kinswomen formed a collaborative household united in their shared endeavour. Despite this, the panicked correspondence to the master from kinswomen when this alternative management structure came under scrutiny is telling of the impact of absenteeism and the inability of these somewhat ad hoc supervisions to maintain order, especially at times of change in the household family. Furthermore, though these methods for running the house and estate appear, from the sources examined to be largely successful, they were at times to the detriment of the order and wellbeing of the servants. While many of these strategies would have served to display good order, status and wealth through a well-managed household and thus help to construct and substantiate the reputation of the household head, much of what is discussed here constitutes the everyday management of simply getting things done, rather than a series of continuous and deliberate strategies which were thought out with the consequences in mind.

Servants played an important role in ensuring the projection of gentry authority to those that visited the Hall but also outwardly to the parish and beyond. Yet as the examples here show, for the servants lower down the household hierarchy, the reputation of the household and dynastic family was not always their first priority. Without further evidence it is impossible to say how successful any of the projections of authority discussed here were, although the longevity of some practices, such as livery, was perhaps in part a consequence of its success. The evidence of servant complaints and disruptions at least suggest that managing a household in this way was not always straightforward for the masters of the Cannon Hall. Practices of heritage and perpetuating dynastic memory, evident through the family's consumption habits discussed in the previous chapter, were also enduring governance mechanisms for ensuring the longer-term success of the estate

and family reputation. The practices, especially those that were visible and material such as the continued use of the coat of arms and the annual cataloguing of the library, demonstrate the active engagement undertaken by the men in cultivating these rituals generation upon generation. The material and immaterial processes had the potential to emotionally bind members of the family, the living with the dead, in the active process of building and reinforcing ritual and heritage.

The first two chapters of this work focused on the individual homeowners' masculine gentry identity and how this was expressed through the architecture and material culture of the home. This chapter has explored the ways in which the wider family and household could both reinforce or challenge those notions of identity through the outward projection of control and good governance. What is very much apparent from the discussion above is that mastering the latter was essential for maintenance of the former. Whilst we cannot directly comment on the success of the systems and strategies deployed by the three household heads of Cannon Hall, the evidence has exposed the many ways in which the family attempted to maintain and display their sound management of the estate. As we will explore however in the next and final chapter of this thesis, the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family maintain strong regional and national connections within the landed-gentry community well into the nineteenth century, suggesting that the family reputation, and the relationships critical to their continued success, endured the challenges we have discussed.

## Chapter Four

### ***Networks and Sociability over the Life Course, 1739-1821***

The diaries of the three male heads of the Cannon Hall household from 1739-1821, William Spencer, John Spencer and Walter Spencer Stanhope reveal rich and varied details about their lives. They record money spent and owed, business dealings, and progress with household improvements as well as events of national importance. Yet overwhelmingly what their diaries record most fastidiously is who they saw, spoke with, supped and dined alongside: the noteworthy relationships of their everyday lives. The networks of these three men were interconnected webs of kin, merchants and industrialists, in-laws, gentry, clergymen, artisans, politicians, lawyers, servants, tenants, farmers, and tradesmen. The networks emanated outwards from the nuclear family and the country house, the village of Cawthorne and surrounding parishes, into the centres of Barnsley, Leeds and York, and, ever increasingly, the capital and abroad to France, Italy and America. The diarists' networks overlapped and intersected, while also evolving in crucial ways across the life course and generationally. While there were many significant and enduring crossovers between William, John and Walter's networks, the variables which governed their social networks altered over time and in response to their changing occupations, social status, life experience and personalities. Networks were forged and defined through a range of different factors including obligation, most notably of contract, kin and credit; by place, notably rural or urban conventions of sociability but more specifically by the individual sites in which they interacted; and by common interest and life experience, often convivial friendships, the most meaningful of which held deep sentimental importance for the diarists.

As Whyman states, 'sociability was a fundamental element of power in a society based upon personal connections'.<sup>616</sup> The diarists' involvement with the range of individuals in their networks was formative in shaping their masculine gentry identity. This chapter seeks to recreate the overlapping networks of the three male heads of the Cannon Hall household

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<sup>616</sup> Susan Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England* (Oxford and New York, 1999), p. 4.



from 1739-1821. It examines how they intersected, changed over both the life course and generationally and explores the diverse networks of each generation which saw these household heads shift in occupation from industrialist to man of the law and leisure to a Member of Parliament. Instrumental to the enactment of these networks were shifting modes of sociability and the role that taverns, clubs, private homes and the countryside played in associational activities.

Much has been written about sociability both in the country house and in urban environments.<sup>617</sup> Most notable here is the research that highlights the benefits to understanding the nature of sociable living in the eighteenth century for what it contributed to the construction and projection of masculinity and social status. For the eighteenth-century Scottish historian William Robertson, 'the disposition and manners of men are formed by their situation and arise from the state of society in which they live'.<sup>618</sup> For Robertson the attributes of manliness were acquired through specific forms of socialisation. Similarly, Bernard Mandeville wrote that sociability bettered the person through the replication of desirable attributes stating, 'we all look above ourselves, and, as fast as we can, strive to imitate there, that some way or other are superior to us'.<sup>619</sup> As Peter Borsay described, 'sociability was considered one of the foremost civilizing influences of the era' progressing once crude urban communities into civilised inhabitants through the 'meeting and mixing with fellow human beings'.<sup>620</sup> The imitation and emulation of social superiors through socialisation and the art of conversation acted as a means of refinement. The image of rural gentry, especially the 'boorish country squire', excessively fond of drink, hunting,

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<sup>617</sup> Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford and New York, 1989); Paul Langford, *Polite and Commercial People* (Oxford, 1989); Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009); Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1999); Whyman, *Sociability and Power*; Markman Ellis, *The Coffeehouse: A Cultural History* (London, 2004); Ian Newman, *The Romantic Tavern: Literature and conviviality in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge and New York, 2019); Karen Harvey, 'Ritual Encounters: Punch Parties and Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present* 214 (February, 2012), pp. 165-203.

<sup>618</sup> William Robertson, *The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (1777) (New York, 1841), p. 131.

<sup>619</sup> Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits: With, An Essay on Charity and Charity-schools; And, A Search Into the Nature of Society, Volume 1* (1755), p. 98.

<sup>620</sup> Borsay, *The English Urban*, pp. 257-258.

horses and dogs was a popular eighteenth-century trope marking the distinction between the crude and the civilised and encapsulated the aims and ambitions of the civilising process.<sup>621</sup> The distinction between the civilised urban gentry and the ‘boorish’, drunken squire bears more than a little similarity with the lifestyles and behaviours of the three protagonists here. Yet their experiences and daily activities demonstrate the complexities inherent in this polarising narrative.

As recent and important research by Ian Newman discusses, behaviours termed excessive and boorish had a significant influence on what was regarded as the ‘ideal of mutually rewarding discourse’ in the second half of the eighteenth century in the development of a convivial public sphere.<sup>622</sup> The essential practices of this form of sociability, centred on toasting, singing and drinking to excess, facilitated what Newman terms the ‘three pillars of conviviality’, ‘humour, pleasure and mutuality’.<sup>623</sup> For Newman the tavern and its specifically lucid but socially regulated form of masculine sociability is crucial for understanding the development of the public sphere.<sup>624</sup> For men, and for some women, taverns were increasingly central to literary and political progress and the reinforcement of masculine identities.<sup>625</sup> Seen in this light and as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, the recording of sociable encounters in the pocket books of these three men served as a way of proving their manly education through socialisation. The diarists’ relationships with their respective social groups, maintained in a variety of specific locations and venues, was a mechanism for fostering strong and deliberate group identities, in relation to which they positioned themselves. Recording their participation in these relationships affirmed to themselves and future readers a belonging to these collectives and the diarists’ sense self in relation to their social networks.

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<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, p.262; Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (New Haven and London, 1999), p. 328.

<sup>622</sup> Ian Newman, *The Romantic Tavern: Literature and conviviality in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 2.

<sup>623</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>624</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 25.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17; Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 6.

Using network analysis alongside other more traditional qualitative approaches, this chapter will investigate the social relationships of the three male heads of the Spencer later Spencer Stanhope family. This analysis will then be used to re-create, as much as possible, the social milieu for each of the successive generations of the family, how these evolved over time and to identify the possible agents of change and continuity. First, the chapter will consider networks of obligation as a mechanism for exploring those relationships of kin and contract which often endured across the generations. Combining evidence from the network analysis alongside contextual details will demonstrate how and why relationships endured or receded. The requirements and expectations of polite sociability influenced the behaviour and network structure of these men and it is especially telling at the point of inheritance when the mutual investment in upholding familial ties was high. The interconnected nature of business interests, regional proximity and long-term kinship ties resulted in a number of sustained long-term affiliations. The other most obviously enduring determinant of relational bonds was associational and convivial acquaintance, which was especially prominent in the long term bonds formed by John and Walter with those from the same collegiate and professional background. All of these distinct networks were maintained and reinforced through the behaviours of polite sociability and conviviality, the necessity to correspond, entertain, visit and enjoy shared pursuits. The importance of place, particularly the country house estate and urban tavern informs understanding of social relationships as well as for emotional and psychological reasons.

To explore these themes the chapter will proceed thematically and reflect on the nature of business and regional ties traceable from the mid to late seventeenth-century and enduring throughout the three diarists' networks. Relationships of kin and regional association were upheld at key points in the life course. Here, the funerals of William and John are examined for what they can tell us about both the ways in which relationships were routinely renewed and how these relationships reinforced behaviours of masculine gentry identity. Moving on, the chapter will consider how the family's industrial involvement and the shifts within the partnerships and share distribution shaped both William's real time networks but also had lasting impacts for his heirs. Lastly the chapter will consider the dichotomy between rural

and urban sociability with a particular emphasis on the impact of homosocial gatherings and tavern and club culture on the social networks and collective identities of John and Walter.

This chapter explores engagements and relationships with others beyond the parameters of the diarists' immediate family and household in the context of gentry identity. The relationships discussed in this chapter were rarely built on a sense of duty or obligation but were instead forged from shared experiences, mutual beliefs or interests. It was within the context of these relationships that the three heads of household learned, adapted and shared many of the values and attributes essential to gentry masculinity. Paternal education and the display of pedigree and lineage shaped some practices discussed in Chapters One and Two but it was also in the context of their wider relationships and shared cultural values that decisions on architecture and consumption were framed. Chapter Three explored the ways in which governance was a crucial facet of masculine identity and some of the specific ways it was manifest and negotiated. The evidence under discussion here illustrates how these men needed to be more than just the head of a household or leaders within their small rural communities, and explores how the relationships and roles these men held in the context of their social lives informed some of the specific types of masculine traits and values they exhibited elsewhere and provides some evidence of how these men were viewed by their peers.

### **Social Network Theory - Value and Uses**

Amongst other methods, social network theory will be deployed here to help to quantify the range of relationships recorded by the diarists and to trace patterns and connections between them. Combined with the qualitative study and assessment of the rich information recorded in the diaries, this will deepen our appreciation of how and hypothesise as to why relationships and groupings formed, endured or fell away. The use of network theory as a research approach has grown in momentum over the last two decades, with large scale projects utilising it as a valuable research methodology, most notably the University of Oxford project 'Culture of Knowledge: Networking the Republic of Letters 1550-1750' and

'Mapping the Republic of Letters' by Stanford University.<sup>626</sup> These projects apply network analysis and complementary computer software to create visual representations of the scope and spread of interactions in a range of case studies, each with a specific geographical or thematic focus. The development and advancing application of social network theory to historical studies is testament to the benefits of interdisciplinary working between sociology, mathematics and historical studies.<sup>627</sup>

Historians of the early modern period have enthusiastically adopted network analysis as a tool for studying a whole range of social events and as an indicator of the interconnectedness of individuals. The development of network theory as a methodological approach to the study of history has its roots in local community studies; particularly those of the 1970's by Alan Macfarlane, shortly followed by the ambitious project by David Levine and Keith Wrightson.<sup>628</sup> Levine and Wrightson's work explored community dynamics of the village of Terling in Essex by piecing together evidence from a range of local administrative sources to map out the social connections defined by geographical boundaries. While such studies highlighted the benefits of utilising such records, the confines of research in which communities were defined according to geography or institution placed artificial emphasis on these factors as shaping the networks and thus the communities they recorded.<sup>629</sup> Studies of community, society and neighbourhoods were, and still are, susceptible to artificial parameters or definitions imposed by historians. The benefit of social network theory is that it is both 'neutral' and 'flexible' enough to capture a range of relationships in a multitude of settings.<sup>630</sup> As Kate Davison states, if used correctly, network theory 'sidesteps

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<sup>626</sup> See Culture of Knowledge: Networking the Republic of Letters 1550-1750, University of Oxford <http://www.culturesofknowledge.org/> and Mapping the Republic of Letters, Stanford University <http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/> (accessed 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021).

<sup>627</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the advancements of network theory see Kate Davison, 'Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges', *The American Historical Review* 124 2 (April, 2019), pp. 456-482.

<sup>628</sup> Alan Macfarlane, 'History, Anthropology and the Study of Communities', *Social History* 2 (May, 1977), pp. 631-652; Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (London, 1979). For another example of a community study utilising network theory see Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750* (London, 1984).

<sup>629</sup> Davison, 'Early Modern Social Networks', p. 463.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 466.

the assumption underpinning earlier work that people interacted in neighbourhoods, kin groups, or other bounded solidarities: it opens up the study of a wide range of relationships, wherever they were located and however they were structured'.<sup>631</sup>

Network theory, then, has a broad application to a range of historical enquiries.<sup>632</sup> Interest in the connectedness of society underpinned the collection of essays curated by Shepard and Withington which included Ian Archer's analysis of the networks of Samuel Pepys.<sup>633</sup> Shani D'Cruze applied the mathematical principles of the theory to reveal links between individuals and the density of community connections in eighteenth-century Colchester.<sup>634</sup> Whilst D'Cruze considered first (friend) and second order (friend of a friend) relationships, opposed to my evidence which is limited to first order, the study illustrates how the mathematical theory can be confidently and appropriately applied in a historical context to reveal the social structures of networks and communities of the past. Crucial for what is

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<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>632</sup> For work which utilises network theory to examine business communities and interactions see David Hancock, 'The Trouble with Networks: Managing the Scots' Early-Modern Madeira Trade' *The Business History Review* 79 3 (Autumn 2005), pp. 467-491; John Haggerty and Sheryllyne Haggerty, 'The life cycle of a metropolitan business network: Liverpool 1750–1810', *Explorations in Economic History* 48 2 (April 2011), pp. 189-206; John F. Wilson and Andrew Popp, 'Districts, networks and clusters in England: An Introduction', in John F. Wilson and Andrew Popp (eds), *Industrial Clusters and Regional Business Networks in England, 1750-1970* (Oxon and New York, 2013), pp. 1-18; John F. Wilson and John Singleton, 'The Manchester Industrial District, 1750-1939', in John F. Wilson and Andrew Popp (eds), *Industrial Clusters and Regional Business Networks in England, 1750-1970* (Oxon and New York, 2013), pp. 44-67. For the importance of networks to systems of trust and credit see, Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 1998); Margot C. Finn, *The Character of Credit: Personal Debt in English Culture, 1740–1914* (Cambridge, 2003); Laurence Fontaine, *The Moral Economy: Poverty, Credit, and Trust in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2014), esp. chapter 1. Also see, John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400-1434', *The American Journal of Sociology* 98 6 (May, 1993), pp. 1259-1319.

<sup>633</sup> Phil Withington and Alexandra Shepard (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, place, rhetoric* (Manchester and New York, 2000); Especially, Steve Hindle, 'A Sense of Place? Becoming and Belonging in the Rural Parish, 1550–1650', in Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric* (Manchester, 2000), 96–114; Ian Archer, 'Social networks in Restoration London: the evidence of Samuel Pepys' diary', in A. Shepard and P. Withington (eds), *Community in early modern England: Networks, place, rhetoric* (Manchester and New York, 2000), pp. 76-94. Also see Christine Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England', *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994), pp. 340-380.

<sup>634</sup> Shani D'Cruze, 'The Middling Sort in Eighteenth-Century Colchester: Independence, Social Relations and the Community Broker', in Jonathan Barry and C. W. Brooks (eds), *The Middling Sort of People: culture, society and politics in England, 1550-1800* (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 181-207.

attempted here, D’Cruze demonstrates that robust and useful information can be gleaned from focusing on the network of a single individual, as we will do in the analysis which follows.

Other historians have taken an ego-centric approach to uncover behaviours, norms and values of the middling and upper ranks of English society. Amanda Vickery and Susan Whyman use the principles and research approach at the heart of network theory (although not the mathematical models) to analyse rich collections of diaries and letters to investigate the dynamics of the social structures and networks of individuals and families, as well as the practices of sociability that underpinned them.<sup>635</sup> More recently Ileana Baird’s edited collection utilised a range of methodological approaches, including social network theory, to suggest a new framework for understanding the eighteenth-century culture of sociability.<sup>636</sup> Baird’s research shifted the ‘focus from a cultural-historicist approach to sociability to the rhizomatic nature of eighteenth-century associations’ in order to better account for ‘the extraordinary diversity of the eighteenth-century associations and their intricate process of ideological exchange’.<sup>637</sup> Scott Breuninger’s contribution is of particular importance here for what it tells of the significance of clubs and the networks forged within them to the improvement and dissemination of knowledge and behaviours.<sup>638</sup> In the broadest sense, the contributors to Baird’s collection demonstrated how social networks and modes of sociability contributed to the creation of a new public sphere that influenced political discourse in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>639</sup> Whilst the men discussed in this thesis were on the periphery, charting their sociable habits, particularly the dominance of the tavern as a site for collective sociability, contributes to our understanding of the process by which this change came about.

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<sup>635</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Whyman, Sociability and Power*.

<sup>636</sup> Ileana Baird (ed.), *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014).

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, abstract; Ileana Baird, ‘Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: The Public Sphere Revisited’, in Ileana Baird (ed.), *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014), p. 28.

<sup>638</sup> Scott Breuninger, ‘The Social Networks of the Irish Enlightenment: The Public Philosophical Society and Royal Dublin Society’, in Ileana Baird ed. *Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: Clubs, Literary Salons, Textual Coteries* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2014), pp. 55-76.

<sup>639</sup> Baird, ‘Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: The Public Sphere Revisited’, p. 28.

Network theory, therefore, has great value for understanding relationships and connections between people in the past. There are, however, some limitations to this approach. While this approach can suggest the depth of attachment of the connections between individuals, it cannot prove them. Frequent interactions between individuals does not by implication suggest the relationship held emotional value. This weakness can be somewhat overcome with contextual details from other ego-sources such as letters but this will not be possible in all cases. Secondly, this research approach is highly dependent on the quality and limitations of the underlying sources, which are inevitably incomplete and uneven, as I will go on to discuss below regarding some of the sources used here.

This chapter will study the networks of the three male protagonists in this thesis, demonstrating the types of sociable encounters in which they were most commonly engaged and the venues in which these encounters took place. It will also examine relationships at particular moments in the men's lives (a synchronic approach), and draw comparisons across the life-course of the three men. It will provide the first thoroughgoing analysis of its kind for individual gentry landowners and industrialists. This chapter will drill down into the dynamics of eighteenth-century associational life, alongside other complementary modes of sociability to explore what the sites, activities and patterns of sociability can tell us about collective and individual identity across the period.

### **Sources**

The diaries of William Spencer (11 diaries spanning 16 years), John Spencer (27 diaries spanning 25 years) and Walter Spencer-Stanhope (36 diaries spanning 45 years), have been used as a window into their relationships.<sup>640</sup> For contemporaries, the importance of keeping a close check on both financial accounts and social engagements was deemed an essential skill and part of a good education. Keeping a well-ordered diary was 'training in self-

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<sup>640</sup> BALS: 60632/1-11, Diaries of William Spencer, 1739-1755; 60633/1-27, Diaries of John Spencer, 1739-1775; 60635/1-36, Diaries of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-1820.



discipline' in which 'order, control and constant self-monitoring' was key.<sup>641</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, age 21 John Spencer received several letters from his father complaining of his over spending. As well as pressing him to be a 'good oeconomist' William emphasised the importance of diary keeping stating,

The affection & Respect I have yet for you, puts me upon reminding you once more, that I expect you shall henceforth keep and Exact Diary of yr Expences and Transactions, and likewise make yourself a Master of accounts and Bookkeeping (as well as study the Law).<sup>642</sup>

For William, John's failure to have 'shown to me your Diary and Cash Book which I have often requested you to do' was indicative of his lax attitude to good financial and personal order and control, essential life lessons managed and cultivated by the pocket diary.<sup>643</sup>

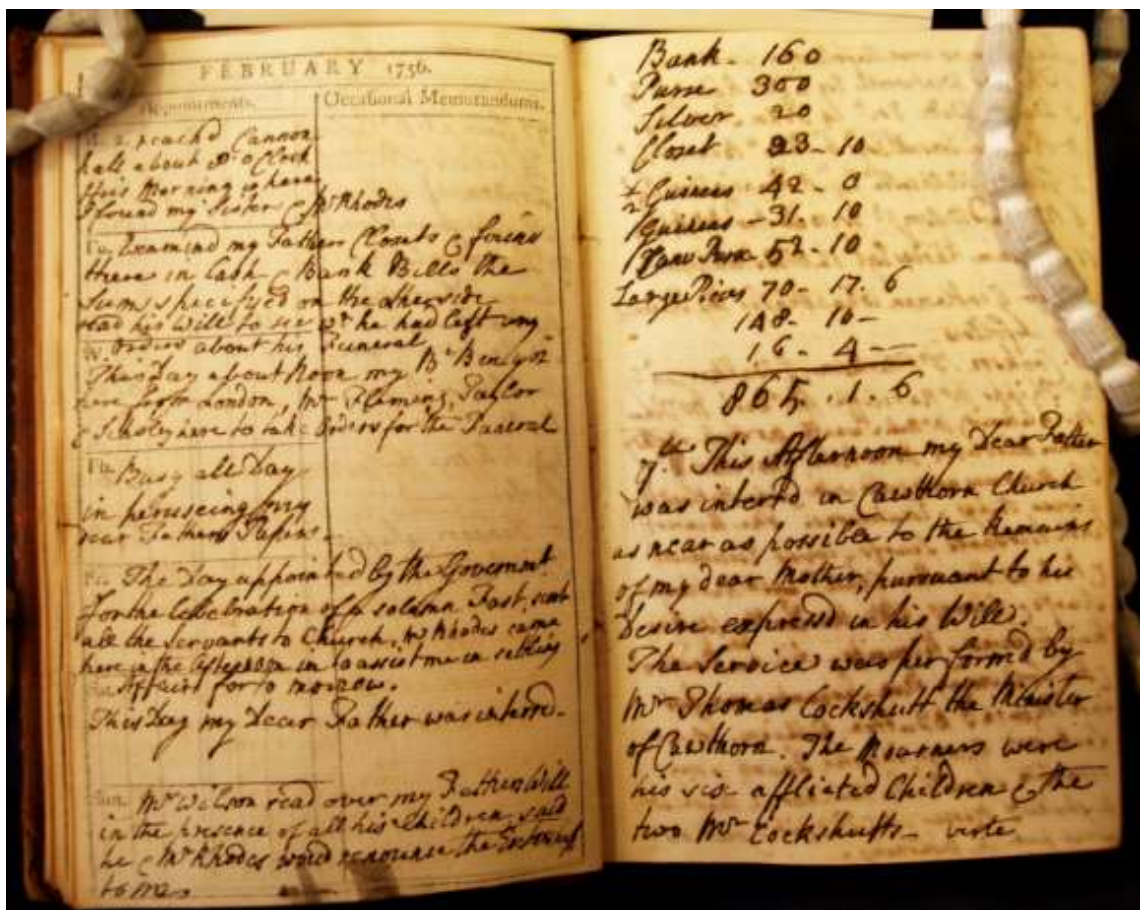


Figure 4.1: BALS: SpSt 60633/9, Diary of John Spencer, February 1756, photograph by author. Reproduced with kind permission of Barnsley Archives and Local Studies.

<sup>641</sup> Amanda Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf: The Rise of the Pocket Diary in Eighteenth-Century England', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 54 3 (Spring 2021), pp. 674, 672.

<sup>642</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/4, William Spencer to John Spencer, 13 December 1740.

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*

As research by Amanda Vickery and Jennie Batchelor shows, pocket books had a subtle but varied meaning for men and women.<sup>644</sup> For men, the typical frontispiece of printed diaries and parental instruction regarding their use pitched the pocket diary as central to personal 'administrative control'.<sup>645</sup> As Vickery succinctly summarises, 'pocket books were tools of self-government, the economy of time and money, and the management of social relations'.<sup>646</sup> As such they were less records of interiority and more about the management of 'external "transactions" and relationships'.<sup>647</sup> Nonetheless, by their very nature as highly popular consumable goods with formulaic structure and intent, they suggest 'the power and comfort of structured identities'.<sup>648</sup> As shown in Figure 4.1, the pocket diaries most commonly used by the three men studied here were printed, with four sides for each week. The first page for each week provided space for recording 'Appointments' and 'Occasional Memorandum', followed by two blank pages for notes and a fourth side with a printed table for the recording of expenses and cash received. The diarists largely kept to this format, as well as filling the pages at the front and back of the diary with additional information including births, marriages and deaths in the family, recipes for medicines, for both humans and animals, and totals of farm stock, hay harvested and other goods. The record keeping of these diarists reflected typical practice kept by other diary users.<sup>649</sup> As Vickery explains, in habitually conforming to the specific requirements of the pocket diary record structure, individuals were also expressing a preference for the specific type of identity, centred on order and self-management, classified by the genre and reinforced through the daily (or weekly) habit of performing up to it through the physical practice of keeping the diary.<sup>650</sup>

As a source type, then, this type of diary offers historians a wealth of information regarding daily interactions and engagements. The diaries or pocket books kept by the three men

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<sup>644</sup> Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf', p. 670-679; Jennie Batchelor, 'Fashion and Frugality: Eighteenth-Century Pocket Books for Women', *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 32 (2003), pp. 1-18.

<sup>645</sup> Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf', p. 673.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 682.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>649</sup> Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, pp. 146-147.

<sup>650</sup> Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf', pp. 669, 681-682.

studied here are highly typical of the time and take a basic format, used primarily to record with whom and where the diarist dines or spends the evening alongside brief details of any other notable features of their day. They act as a reminder of social and business meetings, bets undertaken and, in their recording of on-going expenditure, debts and payments, a tool of financial management. In this format the diaries are both 'the commonest surviving form and invite the scantiest entries', revealing few personal feelings towards their daily activities or those they encountered and although comments of this nature are rare, they are not entirely absent.<sup>651</sup> Nonetheless diaries such as the Spencers' still offer a unique insight into the everyday. Whilst letters often offer more revealing and qualitative information, diaries are unparalleled in revealing daily movements and encounters.<sup>652</sup> There are some notable exclusions from the diaries; in particular there is little mention of tenants, labourers and servants. These individuals are not entirely absent but where they are included it is largely to record transactions or debts, and the location or nature of their meeting is lacking. Stewards or senior foremen are mentioned by name more commonly, but there are some inconsistencies to the recording habits. The invisibility of these individuals comparative to the business or convivial encounters is, however, of little surprise given the overall nature of record keeping in the diaries. Annual social events, such as the Hay Harvest and Cawthorne feast are noted but there is no elaboration of the costs, attendees or what these events entailed. Any sense of convivial hospitality being extended to tenants, workers or lower social ranks was not for recording in their pocket diaries. With the exception of kin there is also a notable lack of women represented in the networks of William and John especially. As I will go on to discuss below this is not only a consequence of the source type or choices made by the diarists, but reflects the concentration of homosocial groupings that dominated their sociability, in part encouraged and underpinned by their life-styles and bachelor and widowed status. It is certainly the case, however, that the diarists would have had many more encounters with women than is recorded here, and even in the often male-

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<sup>651</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 54.

<sup>652</sup> Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York, 1990), p. 9.

dominated London taverns recent research demonstrates that women would have been present, and would certainly have been serving them.<sup>653</sup>

The diaries, therefore, are a somewhat narrow lens for exposing a fully inclusive and all-encompassing social network of the three men. Instead, the networks exposed by the diaries are limited to transactional and convivial interactions between equals or superiors. As Vickery describes, as a 'social logbook' pocket diaries 'invited and charted the elaboration of the exterior self'.<sup>654</sup> Pocket diaries, in their mundane and prescriptive form, promoted a sense of self that conformed to the rituals of oeconomy, self-control and order, essential attributes of the polite and respectable gentry. Furthermore, diaries of this sort reveal specific types of relationships, in which status, profession and shared cultural interests dominate. As a source they are hugely valuable for examining lifestyle patterns, the endurance and meaning of certain groups and relationships, and the sociable practices that facilitated them. It is as a 'social logbook' that these diaries are most intriguing.<sup>655</sup> The very practice of recording who they socialised with, where and what they did together is pivotal for understanding how these men shaped and understood their masculine identity in relation to others around them. The significance of association with people and place has already been discussed at length in Chapter Two through the medium of portraiture, as a marker of collective identity and shared values. The sites for the public and private social encounters recorded in the men's diaries are an important crucible for the formation of these values and the enactment of their public identity. These men were recording their belonging to specific groups, who met together in certain distinct spaces. It is in relation to others that these men constructed and projected their identity and sense of self. As I will go on to discuss, different taverns and clubs held different meanings and importance, and although the evidence regarding what the diarists discussed is virtually unknown their choice of recording these meetings is no less significant. In recording specific social groups and the places they frequented, the diarists were asserting their belonging within the

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<sup>653</sup> Ian Newman, *The Romantic Tavern: Literature and Conviviality in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge and New York, 2019), pp. 17-20.

<sup>654</sup> Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf', p. 678.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*

collective identity of those specific groups and curating their social lives both for themselves and in the eyes of future readers.

It is also important to consider the impact of the semi-public nature of these documents as heirlooms. It is notable that for all three heirs their collection of diaries is most complete, or in the case of William and Walter only exists, for the period after inheritance. These documents were not only to be read and checked by financially anxious parents but were retained for posterity within the family muniments, mused over by heirs, and eventually other family members, for both practical and reflective purposes. In a similar way to the writings of middling-sort men, discussed by Karen Harvey, such documents designed to be read by or added to by their children and future generations created 'a corporate identity that would transcend time and reinforce the "lineage family"'.<sup>656</sup> For the diarists there were several factors at play that influenced their record keeping. These were not designed as introspective documents and were rarely used as such; they were intended to be read and checked by others and they provided a structured and predictable way to record income and expenditure and memorandum, yet they were also one of the only items to be carried everywhere with the diarist, completed diligently as part of a structured routine, a constant performance and reiteration of the 'exterior self'.<sup>657</sup> As Harvey describes, the varied nature of the types of records kept in personal account or pocket books illustrates 'how telling stories about one's ancestors, one's self, and one's offspring was literally bound up with the practical tasks they performed daily as household managers'.<sup>658</sup> In summary, the diaries themselves represent a performance of order and self-regulation, a self-affirming record of the diarists' identity and belonging in relation to others, whilst vetting and curating the full extent of their recorded sociability in construction of their idealised public self.

The diaries are therefore hugely informative for understanding social relationships that were deemed by the diarists as important to creating and upholding a specific form of identity, though due consideration is given to the fact that they are not exhaustive. All 74

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<sup>656</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 172.

<sup>657</sup> Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf', p. 678.

<sup>658</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 172.

diaries were read for their considerable qualitative value, but the confines of time and space prohibited the recording of every interaction for all the individual years they cover. Instead, sample years were selected on the basis of the men's age at the time of writing to allow comparability and even spread between the diarists and across the life course. For William Spencer the diaries for the years 1739-1740, 1744-1745 and 1755-1756 were chosen as the sample years. For John Spencer 1739-41, 1750-51, 1760-61 and 1774-1775 have been recorded and for Walter Spencer Stanhope the diaries for the years 1776, 1781, 1791, 1801, 1812 and 1816 were used as the sample. Due to the fragmented nature of Walter Spencer Stanhope's diaries these years were chosen because they are among the most complete.<sup>659</sup> Rigorous and yet comparable, the exploration of the networks and relationships across all three men helps to uncover possible motivations behind patterns of behaviour and why some relationships were maintained at the expense of others. In doing so we will build a stronger picture of these three men and how their recorded social engagements reflect the family's growing status and the collective, masculine, gentry identity with which each generation associated.

All encounters, including the location and activity, between the diarist and another, even if he met with one individual multiple times in the day, were recorded. To neglect all meetings would deprive the research of potential crossovers between networks and therefore any appreciation of how and potentially why relationships expand. The diarists, particularly John, often give summative names when referring to specific social groups and at times it is possible to deduce who members of 'the 27' or the 'Northern circuiters' were. However to avoid potential inaccuracies caused by inference, individuals have only been counted if they are explicitly named by the diarist as being present and the term used to group individuals has been recorded separately. Furthermore, due to the nature of diary keeping certain assumptions have been made. Firstly, where minor spelling discrepancies are suspected and where there is additional evidence to suggest these are errors, names have recorded in accordance with the assumed correction. Secondly, unless individuals were named explicitly

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<sup>659</sup> As other historians have done Work by Vickery and Archer illustrates that sampling in this way is an effective means of assessing the breadth of an individual's social network and for measuring change over time For a discussion of Vickery's methodological approach see Appendix 4 in Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 385-386; Archer, 'Social networks in Restoration London', pp. 76-94.

then they have not been counted within a social event. For example, when Mr Groves stayed at Cannon Hall for several weeks in the summer of 1775 it is possible he attended the hunts, dinners and other sociable gatherings along with John Spencer and would thus be connected to the others who John listed as being present. However, as this is not explicit and John did not record his presence, he has not been recorded as in attendance.

The network data has been assessed in a number of different ways with the most common surnames appearing in each of the diaries forming the main focus of the qualitative analysis. I consider and discuss the geographical makeup of the family's networks over the period, and the balance between relationships of varying nature (industrial, social, political, familial) and how this varies for the three heads of household. I will draw particular attention to those interactions recorded at specific points in time, most notably the year of inheritance and year of death (or nearest to each where possible), charting changes over the lifespan of each individual. Finally, patterns of sociability were explored through the different locations recorded against the diary entries, both geographically and with regards to specific venues, drawing comparisons between rural and urban modes of sociability, and the significance of club and tavern culture in the latter. As a predecessor to these discussions, the network data has also been analysed using the software programme Gephi, to help visualise the personal networks that made up the communities of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family. The size of the 'node' illustrates the intensity of a given individual within the network (measured by the number of recorded references in the diaries), and the strength of the connection between two nodes is indicated by the thickness of any connecting 'edge' (measured by the number of occasions two individuals are recorded together). Each network will be centred on the diarist, known in network theory as the 'ego'. Despite criticisms of simplicity and subjectivity, this approach does provide a network overview anchored firmly from the perspective of one person and in this case is determined by the insular and personal nature of the source material.<sup>660</sup>

Individuals appearing in 5 or more entries are included in the visualisations, which, as I will go on to demonstrate, are useful for highlighting social clusters and potential 'key players'

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<sup>660</sup> Mitchell, 'The Concept and Use of Social Networks', p. 14.

within the diarists' recorded networks.<sup>661</sup> Network visualisation allows these groupings to become more readily visible. Although these graphs cannot inform how the connections between people were established, they can, when examined alongside the other contextualising data, offer a framework within which we will develop an understanding of what may have motivated these connections beyond the simple facts of the activity or place. What follows is an exploration into the networks and social and business connections of the three diarists. Starting with the Gephi diagrams for each period sampled, and an overview of the key points we can infer from these, the chapter will then consider the geographical scope of these networks. The discussion then moves on to examine both the role of funerals as mechanisms for the reinforcement of social networks between generations, and the role the family's business investments played in their social networks over time.

### **Rural connections: Business, marriage and death**

As the largest constituency in Britain and containing almost half of the voters in the country, Yorkshire was home to a substantial number of influential gentry families.<sup>662</sup> Cannon Hall's situation in the depths of the West Riding ensured the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope's were in close proximity to numerous other landed gentry, as well as the homes of other significantly more prosperous elite. As Vickery points out of rural Lancashire, land was not the only marker of belonging within the genteel ranks, and alongside the landed lived numerous professionals, especially doctors, lawyers, and clergy with whom families were well acquainted.<sup>663</sup> Analysis of the network samples illustrates the breadth of the diarists' networks and the heavy integration of regional gentry families throughout the period (see Maps 4.1 and 4.2 below).

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<sup>661</sup> Due to the ego-centric nature of the data including the entire network within each diagram made them illegible.

<sup>662</sup> Published in *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754-1790*, ed. L. Namier, J. Brooke, 1964. [http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/constituencies/yorkshire#footnoteref13\\_bumhwmy](http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/constituencies/yorkshire#footnoteref13_bumhwmy) (accessed 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021).

<sup>663</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 17.



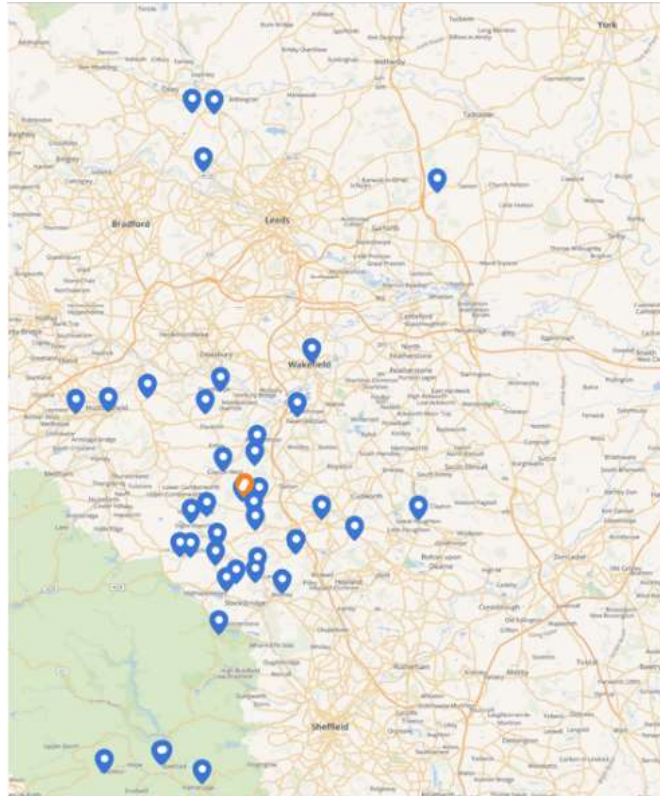


Figure 4.14: Close-up of the West Riding. Each marker is the county residence of a gentry family. Cannon Hall is indicated in orange. *Source:* MapHub, maphub.net.



Figure 4.15: Markers indicate the family residences for the eighty most frequently referenced family names across all three diarists. *Source:* MapHub, maphub.net.

Figures 4.14 and 4.15 indicate the ancestral home or known address of those individuals or families that feature most prominently across the records of the three diarists. What they demonstrate is the dominance of families with primary residences or ancestral estates in Yorkshire across the whole period, with a cluster around London. Aside from the other scattered markers in the south and north east of England, mostly indicating the homes of collegiate friends of John or political associates of Walter, the vast majority of those with whom the diarists interacted had homes centred within one specific area, close to or within the West Riding. As I will go on to discuss further, the enduring connections between regional families both in their heartland but especially elsewhere, demonstrates the importance of local and regional connections to all the diarists. The family was tied to local families through business, political alliance, marriage and familiarity, bonds which in some cases endured across the whole period studied. The endurance of ties with local gentry, and especially families who shared industrial interests with the Spencers, is testament to the heavy integration and enduring obligation shared between them. As was typical for increasing numbers of the middling and elite ranks of the population as the eighteenth century progressed, London also played a pivotal part in the sociability and networking of the diarists, and all three frequently attended the London season. During the months of roughly November through June the diarists, like the majority of landowners across the country, flocked to London.<sup>664</sup> The metropolitan lifestyle had significant implications for the generational shifts observable within the networks, with John and Walter's networks especially weighted towards those associations forged and most frequently maintained in the capital. Before moving on to discuss the significance of rural and urban modes of sociability both for the construction of social networks and the social identities of the diarists, it is useful to offer an outline of the network overall and to look closely at the impact of industry, kinship and obligation on the family's long-term networks.

The networks of the diarists show that their leisured sociability and business dealings were transacted between multiple individuals who were often connected to the family both

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<sup>664</sup> Valerie Capdeville, 'Club Sociability and the emergence of new 'sociable' practices', in Valérie Capdeville and Alain Kerhervé (eds), *British Sociability in the Long Eighteenth-Century: Challenging the Anglo-French Connection* (Suffolk and New York, 2019), p. 52.

historically and as kin. Their networks were further influenced by politics, religion, economic and business investments, and personal and professional connections. Families came together according to rituals of the life cycle, as well as the annual calendar of events. Shared activities with friends, kin and associates shaped and upheld expectations of what it meant to be a gentleman in eighteenth-century England.<sup>665</sup>

As discussed in the introduction to the thesis, the family's involvement in the regional iron industry since the 1650's had long term and significant implications for their networks. At its height in the closing decades of the seventeenth century through until the late 1720's, the industrial syndicates involving the Spencers were concentrated around Sheffield, Huddersfield and Barnsley but they also held interests stretching as far north as Burnley in Lancashire and Gloucestershire in the south.<sup>666</sup> The wealth of investment needed for the construction of forges, furnaces and slitting mills in addition to the amount of capital tied up in stocks of charcoal and ironstone required a 'constantly changing series of partnerships' and systems of credit to ensure smooth and profitable manufacturing processes.<sup>667</sup> Similarly to the networks of Bristolian gentlemen clothiers discussed by Stephen Hague and the Scottish Madeira trade researched by Hancock, networks, to varying degrees of success, were instrumental to the mechanics of trade and industry during the period.<sup>668</sup> Similarly, work by Stobart on the merchant community in Chester illustrates the importance of mutual reliance and trust between partners which was encouraged by the 'intensely personal nature of [...] merchants' business networks'.<sup>669</sup> The business community in Chester was 'contingent on interaction and communication' in which 'business was conducted on an interpersonal basis' with little or no 'distinctions between personal and business links'.<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, p. 21.

<sup>666</sup> A. Raistrick and E. Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Ironmasters (1690-1750)', *The Economic History Review* 9 (May 1939), p. 169.

<sup>667</sup> G. G. Hopkinson, 'The Charcoal Iron Industry in the Sheffield Region, 1588-1775', *Transactions of the Hunter Archaeological Society* 8 (1961), p. 133; Raistrick and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters', p. 169.

<sup>668</sup> Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's Country House in the British Atlantic World 1680-1780* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015), p. 142; Hancock, 'The Trouble with Networks', pp. 467-491.

<sup>669</sup> Jon Stobart, 'Personal and commercial networks in an English port: Chester in the early eighteenth century', *Journal of Historical Geography* 30 (2004), p. 278.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

For families such as the Spencers financial and business relationships were a defining feature of their networks and marked out their economic and social status.<sup>671</sup>

Similarly bonds of kinship were used to cement financial obligations among business partners in the south Yorkshire iron industry and to forge bonds of trust between them. While marriage alone would not have been enough to ensure fixed loyalties the rate of intermarriage within the industry goes some way to suggesting it was deemed an important feature of bonding these partners together. The Spencers were connected through marriage to a number of other shareholders including the Wilsons, Cottons, Clays, Allots, Cockshutts, Greens, Woodheads, Oates and Halls.<sup>672</sup> As a group these families amassed almost complete control of the iron production process for the region, owning stakes, if not majority shares in all of the production syndicates for a period of more than seventy years. Alongside the forges, furnaces and slitting mills were the requirements for the use of land, woods and waterways.<sup>673</sup> Where these could not be obtained through purchase they were acquired through permissions from substantial land holders, thus expanding these industrial networks to encompass families that included the Wentworths, Kayes and Bosvilles. These families feature consistently across within the network diagrams for both William and John, and the Bosvilles, as one of the four main landowners within the parish of Cawthorne and surrounding areas, continue to have close affiliations with Walter throughout his life also.<sup>674</sup> These families formed the backbone of the late seventeenth, early-eighteenth-century iron industry, managing syndicates and industrial production streams taking raw material 'from ore to saleable article' including wrought iron bars, nails and frying pans, a process of production that was both remarkable in its uniqueness and regarded as the main contributor to the success of the regional enterprise.<sup>675</sup> The dominance of many of these industrialist families in the networks of all three diarists is testament to the strength of obligation and cohesion that kept families of varying rank and religious persuasion especially integrated and invested in each other's lives. The endurance of these family connections

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<sup>671</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, p. 142.

<sup>672</sup> See Gephi diagrams, all except Figures 4.10 and 4.13 includes one or more of these family names.

<sup>673</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'South Yorkshire Ironmasters', p. 173.

<sup>674</sup> See Gephi diagrams 4.2-4.9 and 4.12, 4.13; BALS: SpSt 106, Map of the township of Cawthorne, with colourings to indicate ownership, 1806.

<sup>675</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Ironmasters', p. 173.

across generations, and the modes of sociability used to uphold them, is neatly exposed upon the deaths of each household head in turn.

### **Death, Inheritance and Network Structure**

Examining social relationships at particular moments is another approach which reveals crucial facets of these men's social ties. John Spencer's diary entry for 7<sup>th</sup> February 1756 records how on that day his father, William Spencer, was 'interred in Cawthorne Church as near as possible to the Remains of my dear mother, pursuant to his Desire expressd in his Will'.<sup>676</sup> Performed by Mr Cockshutt, the minister, the service was attended by William's 'six afflicted children' as 'the Mourners' alongside 'the two Mr Cockshutts',<sup>677</sup> twelve bearers and twelve other gentlemen of the congregation who John Spencer felt worthy of noting in his daily diary entry.<sup>678</sup> The bearers, all wealthy men of the wider Yorkshire area, particularly Wakefield, were Thomas Wentworth (Bretton Hall, Wakefield), William Radcliffe (Milnsbridge House, Huddersfield), Walter Wade,<sup>679</sup> John Fell (Attercliffe Forge and clerk of the Duke of Norfolk Works), Ralph Elmsall (Thornhill, near Castleton), Thomas Beaumont (Chapelthorpe Hall, Wakefield and Darton, Barnsley), George Walker Senior (Hunshelf Hall, Thurgoland), Francis Wood (Barnsley), Richard Wilson Junior (lawyer and Recorder of Leeds), Reverend Mr Ashton<sup>680</sup>, William Rhodes (Wakefield),<sup>681</sup> and Mr Walter Stanhope, William's son-in-law. These men represented the wealthiest families to feature in William's network as well as new family alliances gained through his marriage to the Aston family heiress and his daughter Ann's marriage into the Stanhope family. The majority of these families feature frequently throughout the networks diagrams for William and John but they have lost dominance (or their interactions are not recorded) amongst Walter's networks towards the end of the period studied.

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<sup>676</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/9, Diary of John Spencer, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>677</sup> John Cockshutt of Huthwait Hall, Thurgoland. He inherited Wortley Top Forge, Low Forge, Tin Mill and the three Thurgoland wire mills from his uncle Mathew Wilson and on his death in 1765 his brothers James and John inherited the estate. The Wilson family were connected to the Spencers through the marriage of Ann Wilson to John Spencer (d.1729). John Spencer was responsible for the rebuilding of Cannon Hall c. 1698, discussed in chapter one.

<sup>678</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/9, Diary of John Spencer, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>679</sup> The Wade family resided at Headlingly and were connected as kin to the Stanhope's.

<sup>680</sup> A relation of William's late wife, Christiana Spencer nee Ashton.

<sup>681</sup> William Rhodes was agent, receiver of rents and trustee to the Ashton estates.

The other attendees listed were other local men, some of whom held positions within the iron industry, some were professionals and the majority featured heavily in William Spencer's recorded networks over the period (See Figures 4.2-4.4). Doctors Cookson and Clarkson, George Walker (Hunshelf Hall, Thurgoland), Samuel Phipps (Vicar of Silkstone), Mr Radcliffe, Mr West (Underbank Hall, near Stocksbridge later Cawthorne), Mr Jonas Micklethwait (Annat Royd Farmhouse, Ingbirchworth), Mr Hall, 'Mr Hall Apothecary' and three employees were listed by John Spencer as attending.<sup>682</sup> Proper ceremony was observed and church and servants were 'put into mourning' and shrouded in black cloth, according to William's direction.<sup>683</sup> Mourners were 'serv'd with crepe Hatbands, Gloves, Rings & Esetheons', while bearers received the same, along with the addition of a scarf and 'tenants and workers' were gifted 'gloves & biscuits'.<sup>684</sup> As was typical and expected the invitation, ceremonial role and gifts all helped to uphold ties between the deceased individual and his family with those important members of his social network and helped to ensure that crucial bonds were not severed. Mourning dress and decoration visually enhanced the event for all, not least for parishioner onlookers and reaffirmed the estate's reputations and position of power.

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<sup>682</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/9, Diary of John Spencer, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1756; SpSt/60652, Statements and accounts for Cannon Hall and Barnby, 1740-1748. The three employees were James Middleton, John Beet and Thomas Allot, all of which performed functions for farm management or bailiff at Cannon Hall, while the Allot family were also distant kin and involved in the families industrial concerns.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1756.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

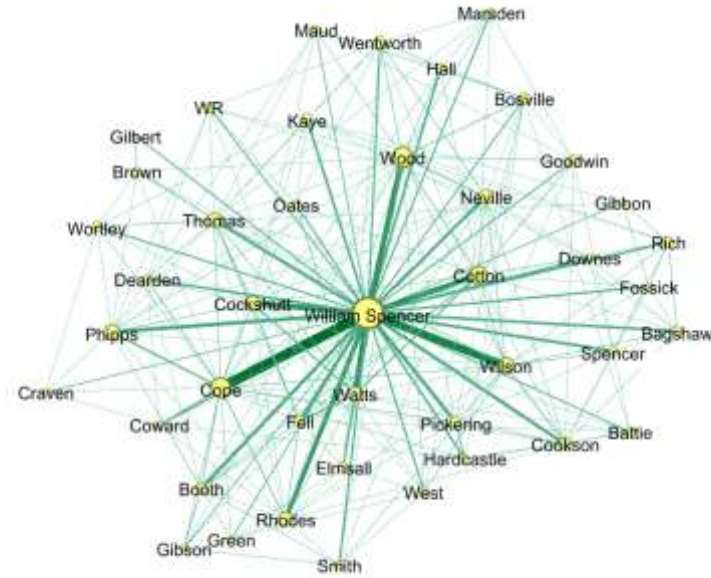


Figure 4.2: William Spencer recorded Network 1739-40

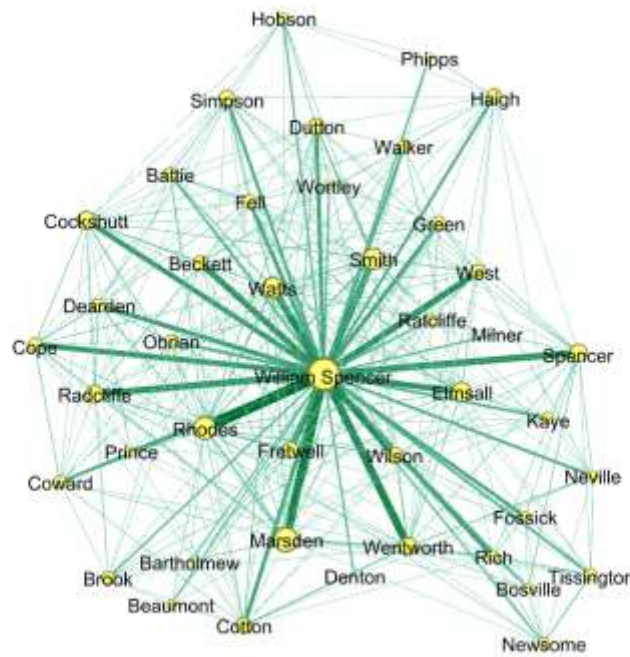


Figure 4.3: William Spencer recorded Network 1744-45

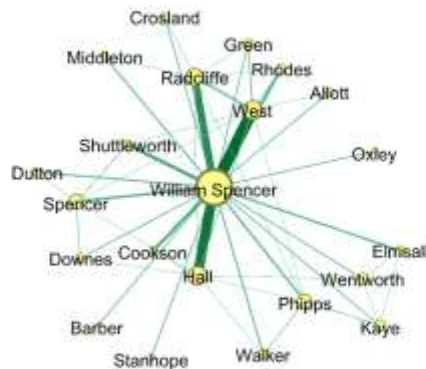


Figure 4.4: William Spencer recorded Network 1755-56

John Spencer spent the following weeks and months overseeing and familiarising himself with his father's affairs.<sup>685</sup> For a month after the burial and before John's return to London on 8th March 1756 he was consumed with the tasks of his inheritance. He spent his time examining title deeds, checking over and valuing stock which amount to £1106.19.6, distributing his father's legacies to his kin and executors, and paying tradesmen their funerary bills.<sup>686</sup> Just a week after the burial he received Mr Greame to Cannon Hall with the intention of making his address to Alicia Marie, John's last unmarried sister.<sup>687</sup> During this time John hosted or visited thirty-one different local families. Several afternoons were spent with Samuel Phipps, the Vicar of the nearby church and with Mr and Miss Wentworth of Bretton Hall, and he 'dined and supp'd' with Mr Walker and the Hall family the night the following day.<sup>688</sup> Their departure saw the arrival of Mr Radcliffe, followed by Mr Clarke for tea and Mr Allot and Mr Clay 'to stay' and he hunted with the Mr Ashton and Mr Lister Kaye;

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, especially 8-22<sup>nd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February, 5-7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April and 4<sup>th</sup> May.

<sup>686</sup> *Ibid.*, especially 9<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, 8<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>688</sup> *Ibid.*, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> February 1756.



all of these families were local landed gentry with modest country estates.<sup>689</sup> John's sisters left and returned frequently, as did the family attorney and executors of the will.<sup>690</sup> This intense activity and the eagerness with which these local families rallied to discuss their mutual affairs is testament to the expectations of polite sociability and the opportunities afforded to them by John's succession. For John too this marked an important transition and according to custom his response to expectations during this period had reputational implications. The integrated investments of these families with the Spencers, particularly in terms of their industrial assets, would have provided extra motivation to ensure these relationships continued in a positive manner.

Nineteen years later, on the death of John Spencer in November 1775, Walter Stanhope wrote in his diary for the first time in months to record, in a mix of Italian and Latin, 'Questo giorno muoia il mio avunculo Spencer' ['On this day my dearest Uncle Spencer died'].<sup>691</sup> As was discussed in chapter three, Walter had been kept abreast of the advancing illness and death of his uncle by John Smith, the butler at Cannon Hall. The familiar jostling from kin and associates of his uncle to find favour with the new heir ensued. Between his uncle's death in the November and mid-April of the following year Walter received at least forty letters of which eighteen were from kin or friends expressing condolence, thanking him for honouring his uncle's obligations and pressing him to not get caught up in 'Country life' at a time when 'all your attention & abilities are requird in the House'.<sup>692</sup> Mr Hawksworth's advice here is perhaps not only alluding to the enjoyment of country pursuits but the distractions of his new responsibilities. Walter sent mourning rings to John's kin and friends and gifted oysters to Mr West, the Spencer family attorney in Cawthorne and the Hawksworth family. In doing so he established new ties of patronage with families with whom the Spencer family had long been acquainted.<sup>693</sup> Walter corresponded with lifelong friends of John who consoled and congratulated him on the 'very considerable addition you

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<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.*, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, 8<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> February 1756.

<sup>691</sup> BALS: SpSt 60635/1, Diary of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 9<sup>th</sup> November 1775.

<sup>692</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/18, 21, 22, 25, 27, 29, 30-32, 34-36, 40, Letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-1776; SpSt 60564/40, Letter from Mr Hawksworth to Walter Spencer Stanhope, March 24<sup>th</sup> 1776; SpSt 60705/7, 19, Executors' and trusteeship papers relating to John Spencer.

<sup>693</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/21, 32, 40-41, Letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-76.

have gained to your fortune' in equal measure.<sup>694</sup> He wrangled with John Wilson, distant kin and son of iron industrialist, over books promised to him from Spencer's library, took guidance of due process for 'using the name Spencer before your own' (a stipulation made by John in his will) and received warnings to 'provide for yourself, the only thing your uncle was deficient in' and settle 'down as a married man early in the summer' from John's friends, fellow Middle Templers and Oxford alumni.<sup>695</sup> Others reminded him of his duty to uphold financial support to his Aunt Shuttleworth, demanded the settlement of John's unpaid bills and marvelled at the news of John Spencer's secret, illegitimate child.<sup>696</sup> Politeness and obligation deemed it expected that Walter should amiably acquaint himself with expectant kin and those with whom he could later find himself assisting or in need of support from.<sup>697</sup> Correspondents were liberal with their advice, quick to call out John's faults and eager to arrange for Walter to pay them a visit. The correspondents were keen to curry favour with the new heir and eager to ensure bonds of mutual benefit extended to the new generation. The advice dispensed and compliments passed reveal the mutual understanding of the ways in which Walter would go on to be judged against that critical markers of masculine identity that were discussed in Chapter Three. The responsibility to act appropriately as an heir through successful marriage, alongside financial and social obligations speaks to the heart of what it meant to be an honourable and reputable man during this period.

Walter travelled between London, his estate at Horsforth and Cannon Hall throughout the year after he inherited the estate, spending forty five per cent of his time at Cannon Hall in 1776.<sup>698</sup> While Walter's diary for 1775 reveals very little about his whereabouts or sociable

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<sup>694</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/14, 18, 29, Letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-76.

<sup>695</sup> Yorkshire man Robert Dyneley and Christopher Robinson, who studied with John at Oxford, respectively

<sup>696</sup> BALS: SpSt 60564/16, 21, 22, 30, Letters to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1775-76; SpSt 60705/7, John Spencer's executors accounts; SpSt 60554, Letters from or relating to Mrs Smith, 1775. John's liaison with Mrs Smith is not recorded in any of his surviving diaries. There is a theory that that the diaries for 1770-1771 are missing due to them containing references to Mrs Smith and their illegitimate son.

<sup>697</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, pp. 33-36.

<sup>698</sup> BALS: SpSt 60635/2, Diary of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 1776. Cannon Hall is Walter's primary residence for a total of 163 days in 1776.

behaviour, his uncle's fastidious diary accounts for the two years prior to his death suggest that Walter only visited Cannon Hall once, for a five day stay in the July of 1775.<sup>699</sup> The change to Walter's behaviour following inheritance would therefore represent a substantial shift and signifies the importance of making formal acquaintance with those families associated with the Cannon Hall estate, despite already being heir to his father's estate in Leeds. Walter was quick to host regional gentry and on returning from his ancestral estate of Horsforth Hall to Cannon Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1776, and before his return to London on 21<sup>st</sup> of the month he entertained or visited all of the same regional gentry his uncle was socialising with when at Cannon Hall just months before.<sup>700</sup>

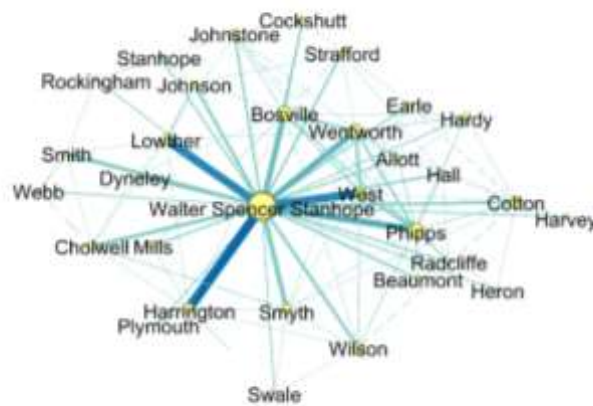


Figure 4.9: Walter Spencer Stanhope recorded Network 1776

On Walter's return to Cannon Hall in July his sociable habits followed a similar pattern and he hosted Whig politician Sir George Savile alongside other wealthy Yorkshire men and key members of both his uncle's and grandfather's networks. The revelry of prominent landowners Mr Beaumont, Mr Radcliffe and the local vicar, Reverend Samuel Phipps lasted well into the night of 2<sup>nd</sup> July.<sup>701</sup> Just days later, Mr Beaumont and Mr Phipps returned to

<sup>699</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/26, Diary of John Spencer, 1775. Walter stayed at Cannon Hall from 23<sup>rd</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> July 1775.

<sup>700</sup> The first group to dine consisted of Mr Hall, Mr Butler, Mr Phipps, Mr Brooks, Mr West, Mr Wentworth and Mr Allot with a smaller group of Mr Wentworth, Mr Phipps, Mr Allot and Mr West dining a few days later.

<sup>701</sup> BALS: SpSt 60635/1, Diary of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1776.

Cannon Hall alongside the newly appointed Sherriff of Yorkshire Sir George Armytage, Sir John Kaye and Mr West, local attorney.<sup>702</sup> Aside from West and Phipps who resided in or near Cawthorne during this period the other three men journeyed from their neighbouring estates to the west of the Riding suggesting close regional, political or landholding connections. A month later a similar grouping to those that dined in January reoccurred and Wentworth, Phipps and West were joined in the Cannon Hall dining room by landowner, and close friend of John, Godfrey Bosville, and Mr Pickering and Mr Cotton, industrialists and distant kin.<sup>703</sup> Stanhope was hosted by the Bosville's at Gunthwaite Hall alongside Mr Wentworth, Phipps and West shortly after. In his first year as heir to the estate Walter recorded that during his time in residence at Cannon Hall he dined, supped, hunted, called upon or was visited by other members of local gentry on eighty-two occasions. This is reflected in Walter's network for that year (Figure 4.9) where local gentry such as Bosville, Wentworth, Cotton and Wilson are amongst the most prominent. The vicar of Silkstone church, Samuel Phipps and local attorney Jonathan West were two of the other most prominent members of both William and John's networks and during 1776, meeting with Walter on a weekly basis. Overall, the individuals with whom Walter recorded hosting at dinner during 1776 accounted for forty five per cent of William Spencer's recorded network during the two years before he died.<sup>704</sup> In 1812 and 1816 many of the same family names feature routinely in Walter's social network and the bonds of family alliance were sustained throughout the period studied.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>702</sup> Mr West, Samuel Phipps, Sir Wentworth, Sir Smyth and Bosville represent 17.9 per cent of all recorded encounters in 1776. Walter socialises frequently with a small number of individuals, recording 5 or more encounters with just 16 individuals that represented 43.6 per cent of all recorded interactions. 9 of the 16 were from the area around Cannon Hall and a further 4 men socialised with John in London including two of John's closest friends, Mr Cholwell and Mr Dyneley.

<sup>703</sup> BALS: SpSt 60635/1, Diary of Walter Spencer Stanhope, 13<sup>th</sup> August 1776.

<sup>704</sup> The fourteen names recorded as dining with Walter at Cannon Hall in 1776 they accounted for between ten and forty five per cent of all interactions recorded by William and John in the sample years.

<sup>705</sup> A comparison of all names recorded for each of the sample years for the three diarists found the following family names present in 1739-1740 and 1812 and 1816: Wilson, Wentworth, Rhodes, Kaye, Oxley, Allot, Micklethwait, Fenton, Hall, Radcliffe and Beaumont.

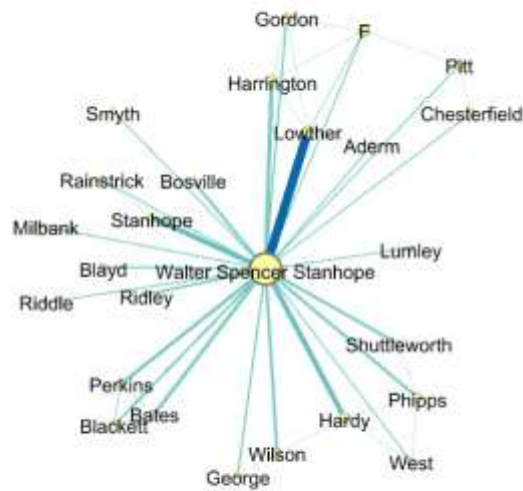


Figure 4.10: Walter Spencer Stanhope recorded Network 1781

The conventions and expectations revealed by the diaries and letters of John and Walter in the months after inheritance demonstrate the importance of inherited networks and connections and the mechanisms of sociability that facilitated their continuance. What is illustrated here is the continued recognition of the family's requirement to maintain bonds and affiliations through hospitality at family events such as these.<sup>706</sup> Furthermore, maintaining these relations with local, regional gentry families through hospitality in the home remained constant throughout the period studied. The consequences of failing to do so could have 'upset the family's fragile balance of power'.<sup>707</sup> Sociability between the new heir and the community of the ancestral estate, 'exhibited rank, confirmed networks, and worked out power relationships'.<sup>708</sup> Through these performances Walter and John were portraying themselves to be the archetypal heir. The chapter will now turn to consider the roots of these familial connections, what united these families beyond purely regional

<sup>706</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 196.

<sup>707</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, p. 90.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*

associations and what the network diagrams and data analysis suggests about how John and Walter engaged with these inherited networks whilst cultivating relationships of their own, and how the patterns of sociability shift over time for the household heads at Cannon Hall.

### Networks and Business Relationships

Extensive research by Raistrick and Allen identified that South Yorkshire iron production was managed through a series of nine smaller syndicates, each roughly comprising of ‘ironstone mines and charcoaling sites connected with the furnace and charcoal woods, and occasionally slitting mills associated with the forge’.<sup>709</sup> In terms of production, ‘the furnace produced pig iron which passed to the forge to be made into rod and bar iron’, this rod or bar iron was then either ‘sold in that form, or passed to the slitting mill to produce sheet and slit rods for nail making’.<sup>710</sup> The Spencer family were involved to varying degrees in all nine syndicates from their conception in the early 1660’s, through to their gradual decline from the mid 1730’s onwards. John Spencer eventually relinquished his shares of the largest of these syndicates, known as the Duke of Norfolk works, in 1765, but involvement in the other partnerships, particularly that involving Colnbridge and Kirkstall Forge, continued until around 1785.<sup>711</sup> Table 1, from Raistrick and Allen’s extensive research into the formation of three of the industrial syndicates, offers a good example of the level of interconnectedness of the Spencer family and their kin and how they were bonded together through investments and familial relations.

Table 4.1: *Shareholdings of three of the main iron production syndicates, 1713 – 1727.*

Principal Furnace and Forge Partnerships		Partners and shares
1713	Holme Chapel Furnace and Forge, Lancashire	J. Silvester and R. Wilmot ½, N. Burley and <b>J. Spencer</b> ½
1723	Barnage Forge (Gloucestershire), Silkstone Wire Mill, Silkstone Slitting Mill	<b>W. Spencer</b> 1/6, <b>E. Spencer</b> 1/6, <b>M. Wilson</b> 2/6, <b>J. Oates</b> 1/6, W. Murgatroyd 1/6

<sup>709</sup> Raistrick and Allen, ‘South Yorkshire Ironmasters’, p. 168.

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>711</sup> BALS: SpSt 60633/18, Diary of John Spencer, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1765.

1727	Wardsend Forge (Sheffield), Attercliffe Forge, Chappell Furnace, Stone Forge, Upper Bank Furnace, Marshbrough Slitting Mill,	D. Heyford 4/16, <b>J. Fell</b> 5/16, <b>W. Spencer</b> 5/32, <b>F. Watts</b> 2/16, <b>J. Oates</b> 1/32, A. Speight 2/16
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Source: Raistrick and Allen, 'South Yorkshire Ironmasters', p. 172. Marked in bold are members of the Spencer family or those connected to them as kin.

The 1745 division of ownership of the Duke of Norfolk Works records the possession of shares by many of the same names: 'Mr Simpson 4/32; Mr Spencer 5/32; Mr Fell 10/32; Mr Clay 5/32; Mr Milner 4/32; Mr Watts 2/32; Miss Watts 2/32'.<sup>712</sup> Despite a change to the share distribution this syndicate continued in much the same formation until 1767.<sup>713</sup> The importance of the family's business connections is strongly evident in the social networks recorded in their diaries. For the sample years 1739 and 1740 (see Figure 4.2) William's network consisted of 178 recorded individuals.<sup>714</sup> The most frequent encounters occurred with men involved in the trade (Mr Cope, Mr Wilson, Mr Cotton and Mr J Watts) and he met most frequently with Cope and Wilson, who were overseeing the production processes across a number of industrial sites.<sup>715</sup> Mr Cope and Mr Wilson were also the most interconnected, with both men linked to thirteen members of William's entire network. Of the thirty-one members of William's network with whom he records meeting with on six or more occasions in 1739 and 1740 only three were not directly associated with local industry. Of these thirty-one individuals there are several members of the same families including the Watt brothers, the Cockshutts and the Booths, whilst members of the Cotton, Wood and Wilson families also feature within William's wider network.

By 1744 a considerable shift had occurred within the most prominent members of William's network (see Figure 4.3). Of the eleven most encountered individuals during this sample

<sup>712</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'South Yorkshire Ironmasters', p. 179.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>714</sup> BALS: SpSt 60632/1-11, Williams Spencer's diaries span an eighteenth year period from 1739 to his death in 1756.

<sup>715</sup> These men account for 13.8% of all recorded meetings during 1739-1740, with Mr Cope and Mr Wilson alone responsible for 8.7% of all encounters.

year only two, Mr Watts and Mr Cope, were engaged in the charcoal iron industry. Although the prominent members of the previous sample such as Mr Cotton and Mr Cockshutt were still within the top thirty most encountered individuals, they were now far from dominant. The cause of the decline and also the likely reason for the dominance of these family names during the earliest sample years can be attributed to a series of disputes. Between 1738 and 1743 William was embroiled in conflict with the Cotton family of Haigh Hall regarding broken contractual agreements over the rights to and price of cordwood (used to make charcoal, the cleanest fuel required to make the purest iron).<sup>716</sup> Furthermore, long running and intense litigation between William, his two uncles of the Wilson family, and John Cockshutt over disputed inheritance rights during this period offers a convincing explanation for the dominance of these family names within the data for both William and his son John.<sup>717</sup> Thus the networks for both men for 1739-1740 were heavily influenced by relationships that could be described as hostile rather than sociable.

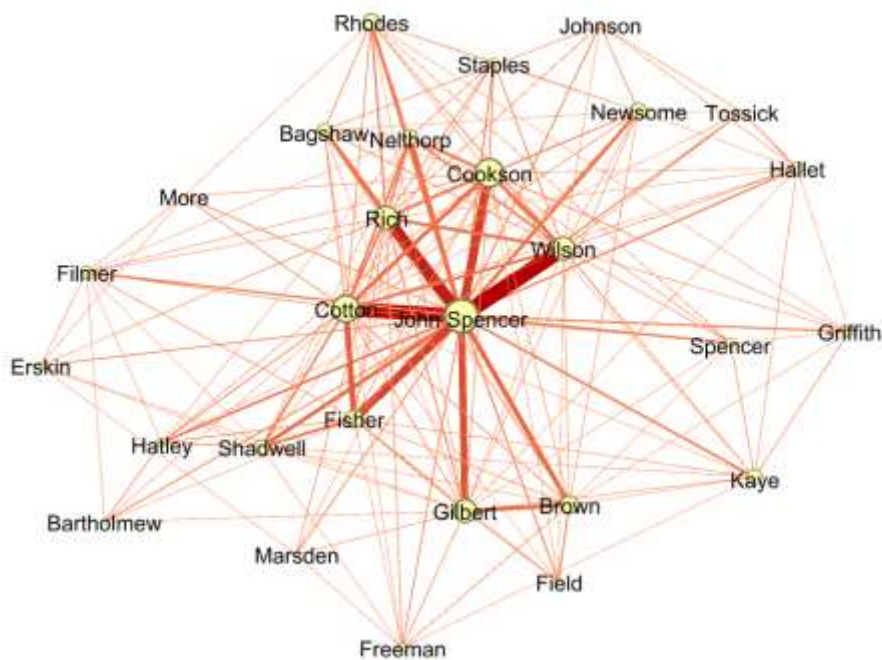


Figure 4.5: John Spencer recorded Network 1739-40

<sup>716</sup> Geoffrey Gill Hopkinson, 'The Development of Lead Mining and of the Coal and Iron Industries in North Derbyshire and South Yorkshire', Ph.D. Thesis (Sheffield, 1958), pp. 208-211;

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 203-204.



During the same period the network for John Spencer bears interesting similarities (Figure 4.5). During 1739 and 1740 John spent all of his time in London. Aged 20, John was studying at the Middle Temple as well as acting as agent for his family, delegating and overseeing the intricate legal processes during a period of intense litigious activity towards the Spencers by other shareholders and extended kin, notably Mr Wilson, Mr Cockshutt and members of the Cotton family.<sup>718</sup> John's network was firmly centred around men from Yorkshire families and other members of Middle Temple, with many of his interactions including other sons of regional gentry also studying at the bar. The 1749-40 network diagram for John is dominated by just six of the ninety-five individuals he records interactions with over this period; Wilson, Cotton, Rich, Cookson, Fisher and Gilbert were all from the same Yorkshire families his father was similarly engaged with.<sup>719</sup> Despite this being a London-based network, interactions with these six Yorkshiremen account for 45.5 per cent of John's recorded social encounters. Furthermore, of these six individuals Mr Wilson and particularly Mr Cotton, both also studying at the bar, play a central and uniting role within the group. In total John records eighty-six individual meetings with Mr Cotton during. Together they attend the opera and playhouse, enjoy games of cards and billiards in the tavern, walks in St James's and Hyde Park, tea at Gilbert's chambers and dinner in the Commons. As a significant figure in John's network, William Cotton is present for 62 per cent of the recorded encounters between 1739 and 1740. The dominance of this relationship is all the more notable given it all but disappeared ten years later, a likely fall out following the

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<sup>718</sup> William inherited Cannon Hall outright from his father but shared the industrial assets with his brother Edward. Edward died shortly after their father in 1729 and his shares transferred to his heirs. William refused to recognise his brother's will and his uncle, Matthew Wilson as a shareholder, resulting in a decade of on-going legal disputes. William was later forced to relinquish control of one of the main forges under dispute to Wilson's heir, John Cockshutt, in 1739-1740 and pay a £1000 fine after the case was submitted to arbitration. BALS: SpSt 60533, Papers relating to Edward Spencer's will and case of Wilson versus Spencer, 1729-1745; SpSt 60505, Letter book of William Spencer, 1738-1743; SpSt 60512 papers relating to Wortley Forge, 1728-1739; SpSt 60537, Correspondence of John Spencer, 1739-1743. The family were also embroiled in managing the complex affairs of Little Pastures Mine, a coal mine acquired via William's marriage to Christiana Ashton throughout this period.

<sup>719</sup> BALS: SpSt 60527/4, Letter from John Spencer to William Spencer, 1739. Mr Gilbert acts on behalf of William Spencer and facilitates John's financial allowance. Three of these men, Wilson, Cotton and Gilbert related to the Spencer's by marriage.

conclusion of the legal disputes between the men's fathers discussed above.<sup>720</sup> Unfortunately, the records don't provide conclusive evidence as to the true nature of John's relationship with Wilson and Cotton, however, the range of activities enjoyed and the frequency with which their interactions are recorded during this period suggests their encounters were at least in part convivial in nature. What is evident here then, is that despite on-going and intense legal disputes between the families, this did not initially appear to translate to the relationships of the children. However, the decline in prominence of both individuals from John's network over the longer term suggests ultimately that these relationships were either not strong enough to endure the outcome of the legal disputes, or that the men grew apart in the absence of the bond their fathers had historically forged through shared business interests.

By examining the change to William's dining companions during 1739-41, 1744-45 and 1755-1756 it is possible to witness the much broader pattern of change across his entire network. In 1739-41 William dines regularly with other partners in the iron industry, particularly members of the Cotton, Cockshutt, Bagshaw and Cope families. By 1744 William dined with members of these families on just two occasions and he also dined much less frequently with other members of his business partnerships than in 1739-41. By 1744 members of the Cawthorne community and other local landowning elite such as the Bosvilles, Kayes and Wentworths were most commonly William's dining companions, and this is reflected in the corresponding network diagram (Figure 4.3) where a cluster of these names emerges. While no written accounts concretely confirm this, the disruptive and costly litigation mentioned above, coupled with the fluctuating profitability of the Spencers' iron interests from the early 1730's perhaps marks the beginning of a sociable shift away from industry for William Spencer and towards establishing the family among the leisured elite. Despite his connections of kinship which had been used to strengthen business ties for decades, by 1744 William chose to prioritise alternative relationships with notable individuals and families within the vicinity of Cannon Hall. The decline in his relationships with industrialists and extended kin in favour of local landed elite and office holders is one

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<sup>720</sup> John Spencer recorded meeting with Cotton on just ten occasions in the sample years 1750-51, 1760-61 and 1774-75.

which continued until his death in 1756 and is visible in the absence of families, particularly the Cottons and Clays, once strongly bonded to the Spencers, at his funeral. The shift in William's network, then, is suggestive that his earlier relationships were instrumental and maintained through commercial necessity, rather than personal relationships. Additionally, the move away from commercial contacts to the landed elite speaks, perhaps, of social aspiration and an assertion of status through sociability. William's behaviour as a father is also useful for understanding these shifts to his social network.

Over the same period William sent John to Winchester, Oxford and then the Middle Temple and his intentions for doing so are alluded to in a letter to John in 1740 which states,

I have lookd back [...] into your Expences at Winchester, which were very Great, but I woud not then Bauk you, as I was desirous to Give you a Better Education, then my estate would bear the Expence of, in hopes of your reaping a greater advantage.<sup>721</sup>

Despite the potential financial strain, John's education was deemed an important route to help ensure his success. William stresses the importance of John taking advantage of opportunities offered him by 'Gentlm'n wellwishers' and his 'desire' that John should 'seek the acquaintance' of reputable lawyers from the Yorkshire region also residing in London, listing several by name.<sup>722</sup> Connections and networks were viewed as instrumental both to John's education in the law and for the associational benefits they could provide. Over the same period William secured the marriage of his eldest daughter to a reputable local lawyer and sent his youngest sons, William and Benjamin, to Mr Watt's Mercantile Academy in Little Tower Street and later securing apprenticeships with merchants in London and Liverpool, as discussed in the Introduction to the thesis.<sup>723</sup> What is observable here is William "placing" his sons "into the world" as a means of forming and reproducing masculine identity that was dependent upon the 'rehearsal' of core values in 'circumstances of physical, financial, and moral hazard', a parental choice consistent well into the

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<sup>721</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/4, William Spencer to John Spencer, 13 December 1740.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>723</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 374. BALS: SpSt 60531, Letters to William Spencer from his son, William Spencer, 1743-52; SpSt 60528, Letters to William Spencer from his son, Benjamin Spencer, 1742.

nineteenth century.<sup>724</sup> William's choice of different destinations for each of his children, particularly his sons, dependant on birth order is also noteworthy and reflects the dominance of the system of primogeniture among the landed elite but also the importance of enlarging or diversifying networks for the benefit of long term family stability.<sup>725</sup> It was not just the immediate professional benefits that were gained from time away from home. As was discussed earlier in the chapter, life lessons in independence, personal conduct and good order, moderated by the pocket diary, were dispensed aplenty. Making beneficial acquaintances and fostering respectable social networks was part of the experience. William used his network of associates in the capital to act as guardians to guide, instruct and financially assist John when away from home.<sup>726</sup> A Mr Gilbert (distant kin) and Mr Rhodes managed John's allowance and acted as intermediaries when John was in London and William was elsewhere.<sup>727</sup> Similar patterns of assistance and moral education are reflected in letters some thirty years later between John Spencer and his sister Christiana on account of the help John provided in trying to secure employment with the East India Company for his nephew, and in providing moral instruction to another of Christiana's sons. The patterns observed in William's social networks, from relationships of commercial importance to an increasing prioritisation of social engagements with landed elite, alongside his investment choices in relation to his children's futures outside of industry, allude to his ambition to secure a stable future for his family in the face of commercial uncertainty. Steering the course of his family's future prosperity and status through the marriages and training of his children was a fundamental part of William's fatherly duty. Whilst industry continues to be a source of income for many decades and the associated relationships remain a feature of both John and Walter's recorded encounters, there is an observable shift in the lifestyles of

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<sup>724</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, c.1660-c.1900* (Oxford, 2012), p. 87. Also see, Henry French and Mark Rothery, 'Upon your entry into the world': masculine values and the threshold of adulthood among landed elites in England 1680–1800, *Social History* 33 4 (2008), pp. 402-422.

<sup>725</sup> On the experiences of younger sons see, Henry French and Mark Rothery, 'Male anxiety among younger sons of the English Landed Gentry, 1700-1900', *The Historical Journal* 62 4 (2019), pp. 967-995. On primogeniture see, Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2012), pp. 95-96; Joan Thirsk, 'Younger sons in the seventeenth century', *History* 54 (1969), pp. 358-377. On the importance of diversifying networks see Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 172.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-119, on tutors performing this role see pp. 91-92.

<sup>727</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/4, William Spencer to John Spencer, 13 December 1740.

William and John which is reflected in the overall balance of their networks as the century progresses. Whereas his father was heavily occupied with matters of business, John's broader network and patterns of behaviour becomes much more closely aligned to a life of sociability and leisure as I will now discuss.

### **John Spencer: Rural versus Urban Sociability and Homosocial Networks**

A defining feature of William, John and Walter's diaries is the degree to which their daily lives were spent in the pursuit or enactment of sociability and it is to the forms of this intense activity that this chapter now turns. A range of venues and forms of homosociability were important for all three diarists and what follows is a close examination of these social activities through a case study on John's diaries, focusing specifically on the features of rural and urban sociability, and for the latter the overlooked role of the tavern in fostering social networks and underpinning masculine values.

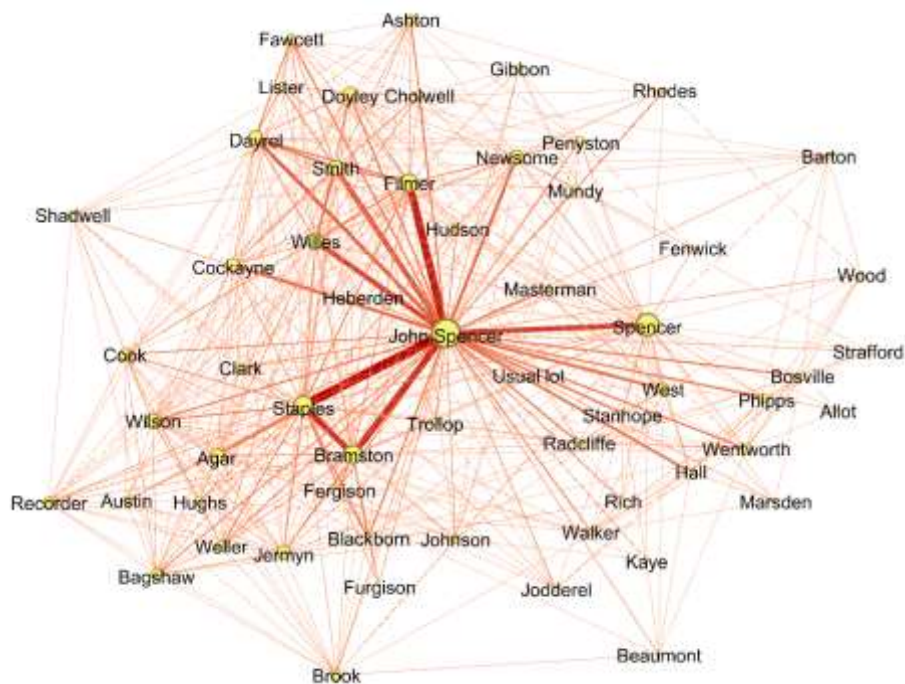


Figure 4.6: John Spencer recorded Network 1750-51

Over the period between 1750 and 1775 when not in London, John split his time between Cannon Hall, other regional towns and his sisters' marital homes. He maintained an active social calendar, upholding family ties and establishing himself in local networks of sociability

through dinners and hunting trips with members of the local elite, while meetings in the towns fulfilled civic and business duties. During 1750-51 (Figure 4.6) 40 per cent of the recorded encounters in Yorkshire happened at Cannon Hall while others took place in the homes of neighbouring gentry.<sup>728</sup> John made at least one visit during the summer months to many of Yorkshire's provincial towns including Doncaster and Barnsley for the horseracing, as well as Wakefield, Sheffield, York, Leeds and Scarborough, often incorporating the management of business affairs or to fulfil civic or political duties. Close examination of those others in attendance show enduring connections of the Spencer family's investment in the charcoal iron industry as many of the men also present had an interest or shares in affiliated industries. Mr Clay, Mr Fell, Mr Allott and Mr Nelthorp, who were either agents on behalf of the Duke of Norfolk Iron Works or shareholders in another area of ironware production, are amongst the names listed in the diary entries, although with the exception of Mr Allot none feature heavily in John's overall network.<sup>729</sup> Whilst business was often high on the agenda, sociability and reacquainting with the county's elite at regional events would also have been a consideration when traveling, and it is the regional-gentry family names of Wentworth, Bosville, Kaye, Stanhope, Radcliffe and Hall, as well as Allot, that come through as the more significant connections within the network diagrams for John. As Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes state, 'these forms of provincial sociability affirmed a sense of elite masculine identity by providing meetings of approximate equals not constrained and confined by the roles of host and guest'.<sup>730</sup> While attendance at regional events such as the races, balls and formal dinners were largely for sport and recreation, at the same time they were a valuable opportunity for John to socialise with influential members of the wider community. John's sense of community when residing at Cannon Hall therefore was less determined by geographical proximity (at least within the county boundary) and more by professional and social status.

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<sup>728</sup> Most frequently the Bosville family estate at Gunthwaite, Bretton Hall, home of the Wentworth's and the homes of Mr West, Mr Samuel Phipps, Mr Frank Hall and Mr Walker. These men and families were all either engaged in business with the Spencer's or were associated landed gentry.

<sup>729</sup> Raistrick and Allen, 'The South Yorkshire Iron Masters'.

<sup>730</sup> Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales 1500-1700* (London, 1994), p. 310.

A more detailed comparison of John's Yorkshire and London sociability also exposes the common, if somewhat predictable feature of a notably small number of individuals making up the majority of interactions, with 57.4 per cent of meetings in Yorkshire occurring with just 13 individuals (12.8 per cent of John's Yorkshire community). However, in contrast to the frequency and regularity with which he meets members of his London based networks, he meets with those from Yorkshire far less frequently. The vast majority of recorded encounters are with Mr West (7.3 per cent of all encounters in Yorkshire), Mr Hall (6.6 per cent) and Mr Wentworth (4.6 per cent) who he engages with on 81 occasions; by comparison he records meeting Mr Staples alone 97 times when in London. The huge disparity between the amount John socialises in London and in Yorkshire is explained by their urban and rural environments. Factors such as proximity, ease and convenience of travel, upholding expected urban modes of sociability and a desire for company when lodging alone would have encouraged interactions when in London. Socialising in Yorkshire was a different affair in which attending a dinner, breakfast or days hunting required guests to travel in some cases great distances. Nonetheless as research by Whyman illustrates, upholding the regular visits to local elite and family members was an expected part of rural sociability in which 'members of the [local] elite conducted their daily affairs with some reference to their standing among their neighbours' and with a conscious eye on maintaining it.<sup>731</sup> The size and span of John's network through his adult years reflects the level of his sociability he maintained, notable considering many of the relationships mapped in the diagrams would have involved fair distances being covered by John and his connections, travelling between the family estates of across the West Riding.

Hunting, shooting and fishing were important activities for masculine sociability and leisure time and featured heavily for all three diarists.<sup>732</sup> For John Spencer particularly, sporting pursuits are recorded regularly throughout his diaries. In London he watched or played tennis and cricket and when he was in Yorkshire hunting, shooting, fishing and horse racing were frequent diversions and he commanded a highly regarded stables, pack of hounds and a well-stocked menagerie. After dining, animal sports were the second most popular form of

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<sup>731</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, pp. 89-91; Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry*, p. 283.

<sup>732</sup> Borsay, *The English Urban*, pp. 176-180; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 272-275.

sociable activity John participated in with others when in Yorkshire throughout the sampled years. As discussed in Chapter Three, specialist seasonal servants employed to oversee the hunt represented a sizeable proportion of John's expenditure on servants even in the year of his death, indicating the importance John placed on this feature of his estate, and the associated sociability and leisure time. Beyond outdoor sporting pursuits and hunting, activities such as supping, dining, visits to the playhouse, assembly rooms and spa towns, walks in urban pleasure gardens, routs, ridottos and gambling and even a trip to see a rhinoceros are just a fraction of the assortment of sociable activities recorded by the diarists.

Returning to John's network of 1750 and the network diagram for this and the following year (figure 4.6), this shows the start of a segregation between those relationships based in Yorkshire and those with his collegiate and professional associations in London. While there were crossovers between these two groupings and a number of sons of Yorkshire families also practiced at the bar, the relationships forged in youth when away from home become a substantial, life-long bond and separated John's core network along a rural and urban divide with distinct social networks forming according to place. Modes of sociability at Cannon Hall and London were broadly similar in that the consumption of food and drink, shared leisure activities and gifting had important roles regardless of place. The specific nature of urban sociability and particularly here club and tavern culture, however, highlights the importance of urban homosocial networks of 'elective groups of like-minded people rather than family, feudal or institutional units' and some of the ways in which homosociality was integral to the realisation of appropriate masculinity both at Cannon Hall and elsewhere.<sup>733</sup>

During 1750-1751 prior to him inheriting the Cannon Hall Estate, John spent marginally more of his time in London than at Cannon Hall or travelling throughout Yorkshire (53.3 per cent of recorded entries traced to London, 46 per cent elsewhere). Compared to 1739-41, John's recorded network had grown significantly and, as a result, encounters with extended kin and other industrialist families such as the likes of Rich and Wilson declined in numerical

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<sup>733</sup> Judith Hawley, 'Taste and Toasts in Early Eighteenth-Century Club Culture', in Hans-Peter Wagner and Frédéric Ogée (eds.), *Taste and the Senses in the Eighteenth Century* (Teirling, 2011), p. 299.



significance, although these two names remained amongst the twenty most prominent individuals within the network. When in London the majority of John's social engagements took place in a small number of locations. John regularly dined or spent the evening at the Mitre Tavern, Inner Temple Gate, the Crown and Rolls on Chancery Lane and the Devil Tavern, Temple Bar.<sup>734</sup> Located next to the law courts these taverns and coffee houses were commonly frequented by men training or practicing at the bar, they were a place to find a meal and company when lodging at the Inns of Court and away from their home network. John dined or spent the evening at one of these establishments in 40.7 per cent of all recorded interactions for 1750-51, with the Mitre Tavern alone the meeting place for 32 per cent of all encounters. The regularity with which John spent time here suggests a habitual pattern to his dining and evening entertainments, evident throughout the period studied. Despite a life-time of annual trips to London, John continued to rent accommodation at the Middle Temple throughout, most commonly finding food and entertainment away from his lodgings and typically at one of a number of taverns or the homes of friends.<sup>735</sup> John like his father and nephew, rarely dined alone. These habitual practices not only inform understanding of bachelor and homosocial patterns of behaviour but also fit within a new and growing discourse of the role taverns played in the development of convivial male homosociality.

Taverns, clubs and societies were enjoyed frequently by the diarists and for contemporaries they formed both a practical and ideological purpose in providing refreshments and the atmosphere and social groupings for intellectual betterment. Overwhelmingly male and designed to 'promote homosocial bonds while also serving as arenas of educational, political, scientific, or philanthropic initiatives', the significance of these venues in the formation of the men's social groups and shared identity will be discussed shortly.<sup>736</sup> As Judith Hawley postulates, while the true origins of 'club' in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century context is somewhat unclear it is likely to stem from 'clubbing together'

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<sup>734</sup> Bryant Lilywhite, *London Signs: A Reference Book of London Signs From Earliest Times to About the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (London, 1972), pp. 364, 150, 145.

<sup>735</sup> Vickery finds similar patterns of dining among bachelors in chapter two 'Men Alone' in Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, pp. 49-82.

<sup>736</sup> Baird, 'Social Networks in the Long Eighteenth Century: The Public Sphere Revisited', p. 18.

and thus rooted in the practice of splitting, of sharing to divide the costs of dining and drinking between the like-minded.<sup>737</sup> In turn, these intellectual environments gave rise to societies to facilitate formalised discourse in moral, artistic or scientific interests. Notable among them are The Royal Society of London established in 1660, later joined by Walter's son John in 1816, and The Society of Dilettanti established in 1734, of which Walter was an enthusiastic member.

For Hawley, a proper understanding of club and club-like behaviour is rooted in Pierre Bourdieu's definition of taste. Taste according to Bourdieu depends on 'splitting, separation, rejection, or distinction'; 'Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinction they make'.<sup>738</sup> This definition is important for what it says about eighteenth-century club and tavern culture in which 'eating habits, aesthetic judgement, and membership of social, political or cultural classes come together', where the consumption of specific beverages and the sharing of specific foods cemented membership within the group.<sup>739</sup> Taste then is integral to the concept of the club or club-like groupings as it 'bonds the group through their shared values, and distinguishes them from others'.<sup>740</sup> Here shared life experiences and education, sociable habits and recreational activities bound these men of comparable social rank together under a collective masculine identity. As Hawley's work goes on to demonstrate, toasting was a crucial device for uniting and reinforcing group identity. Toasting, gifts of food and verse like that penned by John's friends at the Devil Tavern, below, united those engaged in the shared practice of jovial companionship, conviviality and remembrance:

'Quoth Smith to our Preses, Here's a Pye for ye Ten, Sir;  
And a letter, quoth Staples, a Goose Pye from Spencer!  
But Lo & behold when the Letter was read  
No name at the bottom, Nor Date at the Head.

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<sup>737</sup> Hawley, 'Taste and Toasts', p. 300.

<sup>738</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (translated by Richard Nice, with a new introduction by Tony Bennett, London and New York, 1984), p. xxix.

<sup>739</sup> Hawley, 'Taste and Toasts', pp. 300-301.

<sup>740</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 301.

Doubts began to arise- which brought on a Debate,  
 And the House it was thought, would have sat very late,  
 When a Motion was made, & approv'd by the Chair  
 Which quickly determin'd this doubtful Affair,  
 'Twas to bring on their Merits- When 'twas voted Nem. Con.  
 That they certainly came from our Worthy Friend John-  
 For the Pye was so good, That it cou'd not be better  
 And Friendship appear'd by the Wish in the Letter.  
 Then 'twas quickly resolv'd, As indeed was meet,  
 To thank for the Verses, as well as the Treat;  
 So we thank you for both- Staples bid me be civil-  
 But the truth is, we all wish you was at The Devil! <sup>741</sup>

The date of the verse above is unknown although such was the consistency and frequency with which John dined or spent the evening at the Devil Tavern, it could have been sent to him at any point during his life after his admittance into the Middle Temple.<sup>742</sup> Despite this, it is most likely that it dates from a period after 1760 when time spent in London temporarily declined while he oversaw improvements to Cannon Hall. The verse is in thanks to John for previously marking his absence from London with a gift of 'Goose Pye' along with his own 'verses' conveying his 'Friendship'.<sup>743</sup> Gift giving, as was touched upon earlier, was common and all the diarists record sending barrels of oysters, venison and books to their friends or associates.<sup>744</sup> As this chapter has already discussed upholding bonds between kin or associates was an integral benefit of eighteenth-century sociability. Sending gifts for

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<sup>741</sup> A. M. Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire House from the Papers of a Macaroi & his Kindred*, Vol., p. 137.

<sup>742</sup> The Devil Tavern was situated between Temple Bar and the Middle Temple gate. John Spencer was admitted to the Middle Temple on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1735 and called to the bar on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1743, Register of Admissions to the Middle temple, <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/archive/archive-information-access/sources-resources/digitised-records/registers-admissions> (accessed on 02/05/2021).

<sup>743</sup> Stirling, *Annals of a Yorkshire*, Vol. 1, p. 137.

<sup>744</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/70, 74, 79, 80, Letters of John Spencer. The importance of gifting venison is discussed in a letter from John Smith (illegitimate son of John Spencer) to Walter Spencer Stanhope who remarks its importance for maintaining friendships and 'good opinion' of the recipient, BALS: SpSt 60556/2, John Smith to Walter Spencer Stanhope, 10<sup>th</sup> October 1782.

sharing at a mutual meeting place, such as the Devil Tavern, simultaneously reinforced the values of these spaces as well as the convivial bonds between those within the group.

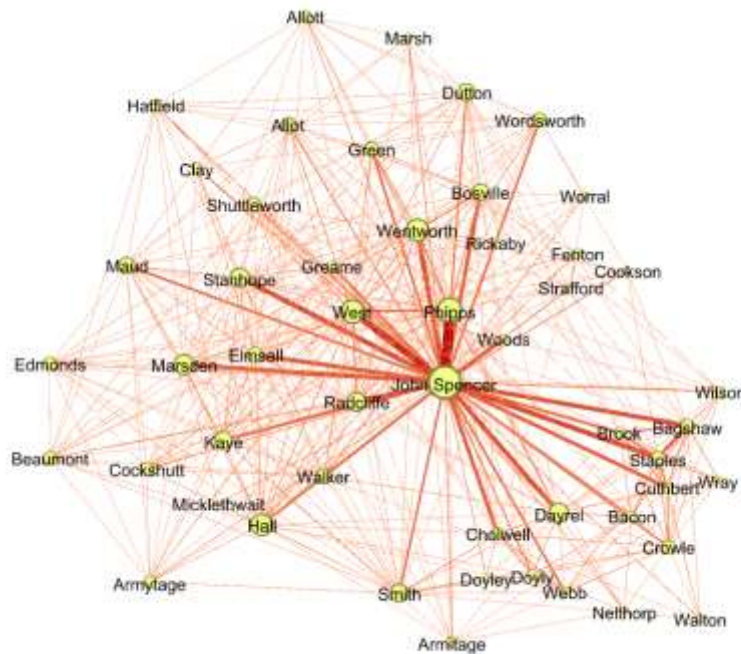


Figure 4.7: John Spencer recorded Network 1760-61

Following the death of his father in 1756 and once he had embarked upon the improvements to the gardens, John abandoned his usual annual travel to London and remained at Cannon from June 1761 to March 1763. Evidence of John's commitment to this project is extensive and is discussed in Chapter One. John's intense level of involvement in this project accounted for much of his time and grounded him in Yorkshire throughout this period. The recorded network from this period is extensive (Figure 4.7); nevertheless, there is a marked segregation in the diagram between John's Yorkshire and London networks, and the same core individuals with whom John spent a significant amount of his time remain. Samuel Phipps, vicar of Silkstone and Mr West, a local attorney, are prominent and accounted for 17 per cent of all recorded interactions in 1760-61, they were also the most heavily integrated in John's network, alongside the regional gentry families already mentioned above forming the main nucleus of John's Yorkshire network, most of whom had also attended William's funeral 4 years earlier, again emphasising the practice of preserving these bonds across generations.

Whilst there is a varying level of interconnectivity between John's social contact and groups throughout the periods sampled, John's central London group is enduring and easily identifiable within the network diagrams spanning 1750 to 1775, (Figures 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8). The grouping is prominent in all three diagrams and dominated in the main across all three samples by six individuals; Staples, Filmer, Smith, Willes and Dayrel, Doyley and Cholwell. John Staples, who was part of John's network throughout the period studied met with John most regularly and with others form part of a London clique termed 'the usual lot' due to the regularity of contact with the group in the same location. The 'usual lot' dine or spend the evening exclusively at the Mitre Tavern, although individually some members of the group (particularly Staples) also dine or spend the evening with John in other establishments, principally The Devil Tavern, within Temple Bar, Fleet Street. The interconnectedness of John's London community alongside the habitual nature of his dining and evening activities suggests that rather than formally arranging to meet it may often have been the case that he met his dining companions by chance or because of the habits, regularities and similarities of their day.

Clubs, taverns and coffeehouses were quasi-domestic spaces providing sustenance and the setting for the social engagements of familiar groups of men, men who in many cases here not only clubbed together to dine, providing companionship and familial-like closeness, but enjoyed other recreational activities together. In many ways they appear less pressurised than these men's family homes in which they were expected to uphold order and assert control as was discussed in Chapter Three.<sup>745</sup> The nature of these venues freed those in attendance, temporarily at least, from the constraints of household governance. Gentlemen kept company in taverns and coffee-houses for 'different and hypothetical reasons; to "discourse", learn news, to be seen in urbane "society"'.<sup>746</sup> Company was enjoyed for personal reasons such as shared interest in business, country pursuits and familiar conversation, whilst 'drinking was also a central feature of the dramatic rituals of male

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<sup>745</sup> Newman, *The Romantic Tavern*, p. 24.

<sup>746</sup> Phil Withington, P., 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England', *Social History* 32 3 (2007), p. 301.

bonding'.<sup>747</sup> Clark suggests that the 'drinking house was at the heart of the social world of pre-modern Europe' and the central location for both formal and informal gatherings, which extended through to the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>748</sup> John never explicitly comments on the significance of the taverns in which he socialises, but historians such as Withington have discussed how regular attendees of the taverns formed a 'distinct social body within the [...] social institution'.<sup>749</sup> The shared activity and habitual nature of tavern culture fostered a sense of comradeship which is characterised by Shepard as 'the loss of an individual sense of self to a group identity' based 'on transient and temporary loyalties'.<sup>750</sup> That John and 'the usual lot' met frequently in this type of place, and in fact in one venue in particular, demonstrates how such groups came to exist and function as a distinct social body, and hints at the important functions such societies fulfilled.

John also records regular social engagements at the Middle or Inner Temples over a similar period. In contrast to the large assemblies described above, John met with Smith, Willes, Filmer, Doyley, Dayrel and Cholwell in smaller groups but still clearly defined by location.<sup>751</sup> Most commonly he met with Willes, Smith and Cholwell as a group, whilst Smith and Dayrel, and Filmer and Dayrel would more commonly meet in pairs with the occasional gathering with all three in attendance. Meeting as a large group occurred just three times in this sample. As well as evenings spent at the Crown and Rolls (25.4 per cent of all interactions with this group) and the Mitre Tavern (35.6 per cent), a distinguishing feature of John's social group during 1750-51 is the time spent in each other's chambers or lodgings (17.5 per cent of all interactions with this group). John visits the residence of Doyley, Filmer, Smith and Willes regularly, whilst occasional trips out of the city took John to Mr Smith's in

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<sup>747</sup> Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York, 2003), p. 103.

<sup>748</sup> Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (New York, 1983), p. 14; also see Corey E. Andrews, 'Drinking and Thinking: Club Life and Convivial Society in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Edinburgh', *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 22 (2007), pp. 65-82.

<sup>749</sup> Withington, 'Company and Sociability', p. 304.

<sup>750</sup> Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 95.

<sup>751</sup> All of these men are listed as attendees of the Middle Temple, Registers of Admission to the Middle Temple, 1501-1781 and 1782 – 1909, <https://www.middletemple.org.uk/archive/archive-information-access/sources-resources/digitised-records/registers-admissions> (last accessed 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021).

Leatherhead, Surrey for extended visits hunting and playing cards. Meetings with Mr Willes occur most commonly in either John's or Willes' chambers with 37.7 per cent of their interactions occurring there (28 per cent of engagements in Willes' chambers) and with just one exception when Mr Doyley also joins them. Their time spent in each other's chambers is not recorded as being in the presence of others. Dining always occurs in taverns<sup>752</sup> but in contrast the time spent in chambers was to drink tea, play chess or simply spend the evening there. Unlike meetings over dinner in the same popular location, meetings with someone alone and especially in a private domestic space suggests a more personal arrangement whether for an opportunity to discuss legal cases, business or for recreational activities. Despite the more secluded location, codes of polite sociability will still have held true in these more domestic settings. In truth, little is known or written about private but still homosocial interactions such as these, nevertheless, the recreational nature of their activities together and the regularity of their meetings in this example suggest a bond of friendship, defined by trust and a close affinity with another which is sustained and enduring. It can be inferred then that the most enduring of John's relationships such as that held with Willes among others, went beyond obligation and held personal value.

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<sup>752</sup> Mitre Tavern 26 per cent of all their encounters and the Crown and Rolls 19.6 per cent of all their encounters.

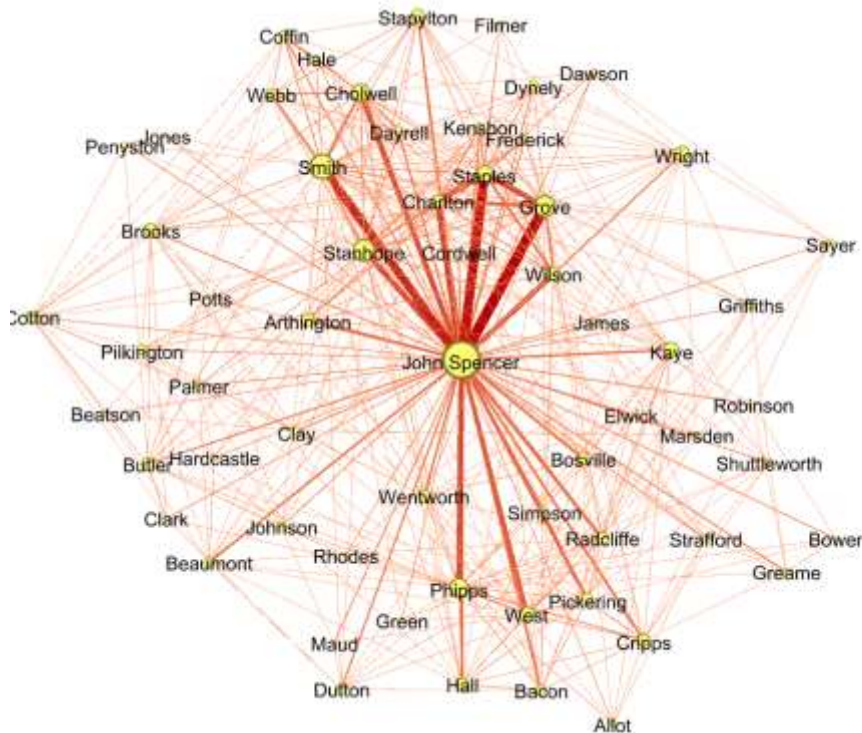


Figure 4.8: John Spencer recorded Network 1774-75

John's London community retained a significant presence throughout his life, with central nodes of Staples, Wilson and Smith remaining the most prominent through to his death in 1775, whilst Dayrel, Cholwell and Sir John Filmer also remained throughout the later years (see Figure 4.8). His community in London does however change and new members feature in cliques where others were once prominent. In 1774-1775, John roughly divided his time between London and Cannon Hall equally and recorded a similar number of interactions when in the capital as other sample years. Despite this, John's network there is now much smaller, dominated by a core group of Staples, Smith, Groves, Stanhope, Sir Francis Charlton (Treasurer of the General Post Office) and Wilson, who account for 44.4 per cent of recorded interactions, with the latter three individuals connecting all other prominent members of John's London scene between them (Figure 4.8).<sup>753</sup> This pattern shows that while his network altered somewhat it continues to have at its centre a core group with whom he spent most of his time. Key individuals remain constant throughout his life as do the places they frequent and the Devil Tavern that first appeared in 1750-51 remains the most popular location to dine or spend the evening. Now aged 55 the exciting social scene

<sup>753</sup> William O. Hultgren, Quentin R. Kuehl, *Charlton: Picturing Change* (Charlton, 2008), p. 12.



of *ridottos*, masquerades, plays and the opera no longer appear, however, John remained socially active as in previous years. In contrast to early samples John's network for the last years of his life was significantly more concentrated and focused around a smaller core group of men with whom he met with almost daily. Well established within his social group John was perhaps more secure in his sense of self, masculinity and gentry identity and no longer felt the need or perhaps the inclination to spend the same time and energy cultivating it through social activities. Rather John's time during 1775 was more concerned with settling business affairs and arranging financial matters. The fastidiousness and volume of letters recorded in his diary for this sample year is evidence of his heavy involvement in settling accounts and managing mortgages.

John Spencer's network is defined by familiarity, consistency and habit. His London profile fits the archetypal club member and just as other bachelors of the day he 'thrived in the professional society of men, exploiting to the full his connections through school, college', his profession and family.<sup>754</sup> John's seasonal behaviour changes very little year on year and his daily routine is just as habitual. Hunting and dinner with friends was an almost daily occurrence in Yorkshire and when in London John dines in familiar establishments and repeatedly participates in the same social activities. Prominent figures within the community of Cannon Hall as well as core members of his London network remain so until his death, some having been a part of his network since 1739. The rhythmic, mundane continuity of John Spencer's friendships from aged 20 to his death aged 56 suggests John did not harbour the same motivations discussed by other historians such as Ian Archer, who describes how the construction of Samuel Pepys' social network was actively influenced by his motives for upward social mobility.<sup>755</sup> Reasons for the consistencies in the network are complex and perhaps bring into question those variables that are difficult to assess statistically. Fundamentally, however, John's habitual behaviour and the regularity with which he conducts his everyday life is informed and sustained by his lifelong bachelorhood. Without the stability of marriage at home he sought stability as well as companionship in his wider social life with those whom he shared similar interests and life experience.

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<sup>754</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 77.

<sup>755</sup> Archer, 'Social networks in Restoration London', p. 90.

The urban and rural environments provide their own explanations for the distinctions between John's London and Yorkshire communities. When in London contact with members of his network was frequent and the meeting places conveniently located close to John's chambers in the Middle Temple. John had a core group of men with whom he regularly found company at dinner or in the evening and some individuals with whom he participated in more convivial or recreational activities such as those with whom he spent time alone in their private lodgings or attending entertainments. Group identity was a central feature of John's sense of belonging, self and potentially masculinity, and tavern culture was heavily grounded in such feelings of camaraderie. The meeting place was central to these relationships and the codes of public behaviour, in some cases particular to the establishment, governed and framed their meetings. Attractive and reassuring, these characteristics will have fostered a sense of belonging to both social group and place, and encouraged the relationship to continue. The longevity of many of his London friendships and the evidence offered by the limited number of letters reveals how these relationships went beyond obligation and formed close bonds of lifelong friendship. Whilst it is difficult to assess the degree to which John's close associates could be termed 'friends' in the modern sense of the word, the longevity of those relationships with 'the usual lot' and others and the evidence that these bonds provided domestic comforts of companionship and shared hospitality, implies a degree of intimacy and meaningful emotional connections.<sup>756</sup>

At different times in his life John maintained personal ties for a variety of reasons. Societal obligations, familial and business links or personal bonds of friendship are all identifiable features common to London and Yorkshire relationships. Upholding urban and rural codes of sociability such as the round of visits or attendance at the races fulfilled the same purpose as attendance in the tavern, chophouse or coffeehouse in London in providing John with stability and familiarity, and encouraging more intimate friendships. Relationships were complex and when he invited guests to dinner and enjoyed a day's hunting with them,

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<sup>756</sup> Naomi Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England: Household, kinship, and patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 212.

regional obligations will inevitably have remained a defining feature when land boundaries were so contentious, land minerals so precious and the desire for advancements in infrastructure would inevitably cut through estates. Nevertheless attendance at the social round promoted personal connections of varying intimacy and loyalties to each other, encouraged by mutual obligation but cemented through familiarity and bonds of trust. John's Yorkshire network remained consistent throughout his life. As we might expect, the local elite formed a strong clique for whom the round of visits fulfilled obligations and secured friendships and ultimately John's position amongst the landed, whilst relationships with members of the local professional and mercantile class were essential for business and civic affairs. Others including his relationship with Mr West and Mr Phipps appear to serve no immediate social, political or business benefits for John. They were of different professional status and met regularly in each other's homes to dine or to spend the evening. Together with the longevity of these relationships it can be inferred that these were some of John's most personal friends, whose company he enjoyed and sought year on year. Above all, the consistency and intimacy with which he engaged with some of his network suggests that bonds of friendship, loyalty and trust were defining features of John's relationships. Unmarried and childless, John found a sense of community, belonging and unity in the habitual nature of his daily activities and by maintaining those relationships which lasted throughout his life and into his later years. The real value of studying relationships over a lifetime is in understanding friendship and intimacy beyond those definitions for which utility and obligation are the central motivating factor.<sup>757</sup> Whilst intimate or personal friendships often stemmed from and were originally governed by these social ligatures, the longevity of relationships was heavily dependent on habit and a personal desire for a sense of belonging, community and conviviality.

### **Walter Spencer Stanhope (1750-1821): Networks of the Fashionable Elite**

Continuing the generational shift away from the rural communities of Yorkshire, Walter was heavily connected with a wealth of men and women from England's political classes as he

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<sup>757</sup> The nature of friendship defined by Tadmor, *Family and Friend*, pp. 167-215.

built his career as a politician. Sir James Lowther, a second uncle from Walter's paternal side as well as other notable characters such as William Pitt and Sir Charles Fox are amongst some of the most prominent members of his network. Walter was a frequent attendee at many of London's clubs and societies including the Dilettanti and paid subscriptions to Almack's and Brookes club. For the earliest years studied, 1776-1801, Walter was a frequent visitor to many private gambling houses, the majority of which were in the homes of and run by women, several of whom were the wives of politicians. Walter's network and socialising habits not only reflect his political interests but also his sense of style and identity as a member of the country's fashionable elite, self-stylising as a Macaroni. The way in which Walter embraced this masculine identity brings to the fore interesting questions regarding the formation of social habits, homosocial networks and domestic lifestyle. Despite the negative portrayal and perception of the fop by contemporary commentators such as Horace Walpole, and reflected on and analysed by historians such as Philip Carter, the men who socialised together at Almack's and gambled at ladies' parties in the evening, fundamentally formed a close personal community rooted in this shared identity, and united by fashion, ideology and politics.

While Walter's social habits in Yorkshire discussed above reflect his new status as heir, his sociability in the capital reveals altogether different features of his lifestyle. After many months of campaigning and negotiating with Sir James Lowther, his political patron and kin, Walter secured his first position as a Member of Parliament for Carlisle in 1775, making his first speech to the house in November of that year.<sup>758</sup> Walter met frequently with Lowther (reflected in Figure 4.9 by the bold connecting arc between the two men), often over dinner at Lowther's house and occasionally they attended the opera together. The relationship between the two men reflected their professional roles and as his patron Lowther regularly expected Walter to conduct bureaucratic tasks to bolster support and aid his bills through parliament. The most socially prominent group in Walter's network for this year were politicians including most notably Charles James Fox, William Young, who studied with

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<sup>758</sup> Biography of Walter Spencer Stanhope, *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1754-1790/member/stanhope-walter-1750-1821> (accessed May 2021).

Walter at Oxford, Lord Chesterfield, Lord Rockingham, Sir Blakett and Sir George Savile, Member of parliament for Yorkshire. Although Walter records meeting with these men sparingly and therefore they only appear in his recorded networks sporadically, they represent a core of highly influential political elites and prominently marks one or both of two things: Walter's greater rank and status above that of his predecessors reflected through his network, and Walter's own political ambitions played out through the engagements he recorded. It is worth noting here the contrast between the record-keeping of Walter compared to John and William. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Walter's diaries are considerably less populated than his predecessors', indicating that he was perhaps less habitual as an individual, but equally more secure in his own sense of self and belonging in relation to his peers, not demonstrating the need to perform the ritualistic recording of his daily life and social encounters. Walter did however display his strong sense of identity and belonging within his social groups through other means as we will now discuss.

In 1770 Walter returned home from his Grand Tour where he had spent the final days in France, and coinciding with the celebrations of the marriage between Louis-Auguste Dauphin of France and Marie Antoinette. Amongst his possessions Walter returned with a miniature of himself commissioned during his visit (See Chapter two, figures 2.12 and 2.13). The profile shows him dressed in Parisian finery, a blue coat with gold trim cut close to the body and a 'bag wig' 'with side curls and short tail', unique to the Macaroni.<sup>759</sup> Walter's distinctive dress would have ensured he stood out to his contemporaries and served to align him with the lavish tastes and conspicuous collective identity of the group. Walter's social habits also reflected his belonging to this club. The Scavoir Vivre and Almack's Assembly Rooms were popular and well-known haunts of the Macaronis and were both places Walter visited regularly during 1776. Run by six female patrons Almack's flourished throughout the 1770's as an exclusive club for society's fashionable elite. Walter was well acquainted with prominent members of the Macaronis including Charles James Fox. Walter also makes almost nightly visits to the home of Lady Harrington in Blackheath. Lady Harrington hosted nightly card parties at which Walter won and lost in equal measure. Unfortunately, Walter's

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<sup>759</sup> Phillip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), p. 143.

diaries do not reveal who else was in regular attendance at these parties and he only mentions taking a companion, Sir Granby, there once. Lady Harrington, the eldest child and wealthy heiress of Sir John Fleming was by 1780 among society's influential elites and was regarded for her beauty and generosity.<sup>760</sup> Details of her gambling evenings are hard to come by so uncovering the extent of Walter's social network here is difficult. Nevertheless, it is highly likely that Harrington's was similar to the array of other female led gambling houses which sprang up around London during the 1770's. Popular with men and women alike these gambling houses become notorious with 'such behavior [...] widely condemned as a sign of the moral degeneracy and irresponsibility of the fashionable classes' and a focus of concern for politicians and social commentators by the 1790's.<sup>761</sup>

A significant feature of Walter's lifelong network is the greater proportion of women. Unlike the networks of his uncle and grandfather, Walter records meeting with women regularly both when he attended social gatherings in their homes and when wives accompanied their husbands to dinner at Cannon Hall. Research has shown how many women were conducting active social and political lives, making and accepting visits, attending music concerts, balls and assemblies as often as their husbands, brothers and fathers.<sup>762</sup> In the capital and other provincial towns, 'new-style urban socializing presented women from the better-off classes with significant occasions for enhancing their social visibility and recognition'.<sup>763</sup> Men and women mixed in clubs and societies yet it remained that 'the greatest volume of social contact – with kin, friends, neighbours, and strangers – occurred in the private space of the

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<sup>760</sup> Lady Harrington appears a number 13<sup>th</sup> in *Gentlemen of Pleasures Pocket Book. The Scale of Beauty, or, A List of the most celebrated Toasts of the year 1780, with their various Gradations of Beauty, Grace and Elegance, 1780.*

<sup>761</sup> See Gillian Russell, 'Faro's Daughters': Female Gamesters, Politics, and the Discourse of Finance in 1790s Britain', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (Summer 2000), pp. 481- 482; Phyllis Deutsch, 'Moral Trespass in Georgian London: Gaming, Gender, and Electoral Politics in the Age of George III', *The Historical Journal* 39 (September, 1996), pp. 637-656.

<sup>762</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 225-271; Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford and New York, 2013); Rosalind Carr, *Gender and Enlightenment Culture in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2014); Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790* (Oxford and New York, 2005).

<sup>763</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford and New York, 2000), p. 190; also see Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, pp. 225-271.

home'.<sup>764</sup> By the second half of the eighteenth century the home played host to 'several new kinds of public sociability' including routs and card parties which encouraged an array of strangers to freely enter the domestic space. Some women such as Lady Harrington, Lady Plymouth, Lady Harland and Miss Lowther took advantage of the new social function of the home and established themselves and their houses as sites for gambling and entertainment. Walter attended many of these and his network up until the early 1800's is littered with the names of women in the homes of which he and other men including Fox and Brookes lost and won sometimes sizeable sums of money on a nightly basis. Walter's diaries also reveal how women were engaged in political discourse and were keenly aware, if not actively involved in the important political work of their husbands. Work by Elaine Chalus illustrates how women used their social position and the new social role of the home as a way of initiating political conversation and of expressing their own, or more commonly their husband's, perspective on a particular political or civic matter.<sup>765</sup> These domestic gatherings acted both as social facilitators for women and private meeting places for the country's fashionable and political elite.

Philip Carter's detailed account of the lifestyle and public perception of numerous deviant yet often fashion-led forms of masculine identity, such as the fops and Macaronis, describes the negative perception of such men who were often the attendees at these social events. Carter's arguments stem from the barrage of criticism expressed by James Boswell and Horace Walpole, who wrote scathingly in a letter to Viscount Nuneham in 1773 that "there is scarce a soul [...] but Maccaronies lolling out of windows at Almack's like carpets to be dusted".<sup>766</sup> Whilst Carter notes that both men use the term Macaroni in different ways he summarises that for contemporaries it was primarily negative and 'served as a form of gentle satire encapsulating a series of undesirable characteristics'.<sup>767</sup> Carter's discussion, although thorough in analysing the ways in which these forms of masculine identity were manifest, neglects to acknowledge that many of the men self-consciously engaged in this stylisation were members of Parliament and the county's elite, active in decision making

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<sup>764</sup> Clark, *British Clubs*, p.192.

<sup>765</sup> Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790*, pp. 75-105.

<sup>766</sup> Horace Walpole 1773, quoted in Carter, *Men and the Emergence*, p. 152.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

and the leadership of the country. Here it is important to recognise the social function of belonging to such groups, however socially contentious, and what value was obtained from it. Through dress and his nightly social habits Walter was actively engaged in the lifestyle of a Macaroni, an identity shared by other members of the political elite who formed a new social and professional community, within what was otherwise a network somewhat dominated by the friends and associates of Walter's uncle and father.

Walter's social habits and network by 1781 changed very little. Sir James Lowther continued as the most prominent member of his network although he meets with him only half as many times as in 1776, perhaps reflecting Walter's more established and independent role in his Carlisle constituency. Walter continues frequenting Lady Harrington's card parties but only records ten evenings there during the course of his time in London. Unlike the previous sample years Walter spent considerably more time visiting his Yorkshire estates and only a third of the year was spent in the capital. Walter's network reflects this and his agent Hardy and members of his extended family including his uncles Shuttleworth and Stanhope are amongst those most regularly encountered across his network, whilst he dines with Samuel Phipps, vicar of Silkstone and Godfrey Bosville of nearby Gunthwaite estate, both friends of his uncle, several times when at Cannon Hall. The pattern of visits by Phipps indicates that it may have become something of a tradition to entertain Phipps at Cannon Hall each week after Sunday service and on the odd occasion when Walter does not attend church Phipps dines at Cannon Hall early in the following week and often joins Walter on hunting trips arranged to entertain guests at Cannon Hall. Walter's network for 1791 suggests that this habit continued and Phipps is the most encountered member of Walter's network for this year. This pattern suggests that either codes of hospitality were still at play but in addition that Walter shared a close bond with the now aged parson. By 1781 Walter's entire recorded network had grown only slightly (from 129 to 153 individuals); however, he met regularly with just under a third of his network, with most of his recorded encounters with individuals he only met once or twice during that year. This pattern reflects Walter's more transient lifestyle, as he spent much of the year travelling around Yorkshire paying visits rather than residing primarily in his lodgings in London or on the Cannon Hall estate as was the case or earlier years in the network sample.



In 1783 Walter married Mary Winifred Pulleine and by the time of the next sample year in 1791 had served time as MP for Hasslemere followed by a four year term at Kingston-Upon-Hull.<sup>768</sup> Walter's change in marital status is very much reflected in his network for 1791 and while Mr Phipps is the most prominent member, Mr Collingwood, who acted as agent for the marriage of Walter and Mary, is now a regular visitor to Cannon Hall. Mr Roddam, a cousin of Collingwood who became guardian to Walter and Mary's fourth son, William, is also a regular dinner guest. Members of the local elite including Sir Wentworth and Lord and Lady Strafford both attend and host dinner parties on numerous occasions during the year. Whilst in London the vast majority of Walter's social encounters are with other eminent politicians including Sir James Johnstone and Lord and Lady Wake. Although Walter did not hold office again until 1800 his well-established career ensured his network in the capital was firmly centred around the political elite. Secure in his career and social circles and with little variation year on year to his sociable habits, Walter's social status and network was somewhat static through these and subsequent years, not appearing to undergo substantial change following his marriage in 1783.

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<sup>768</sup> Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 375.

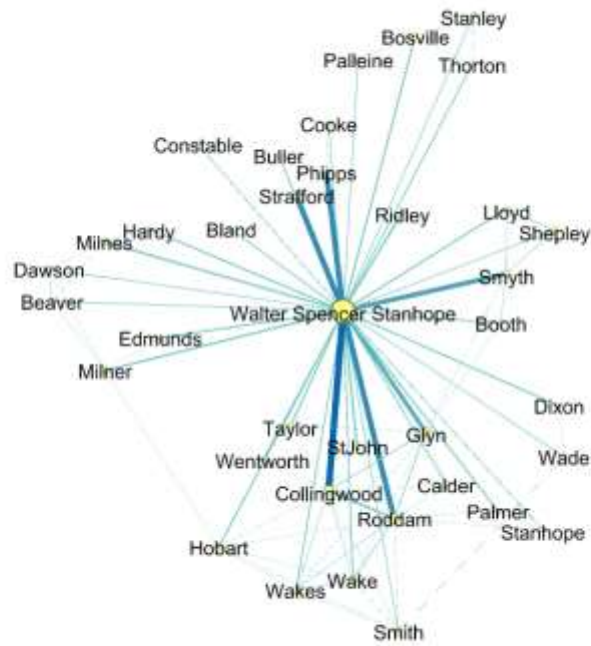


Figure 4.11: Walter Spencer Stanhope recorded Network 1791

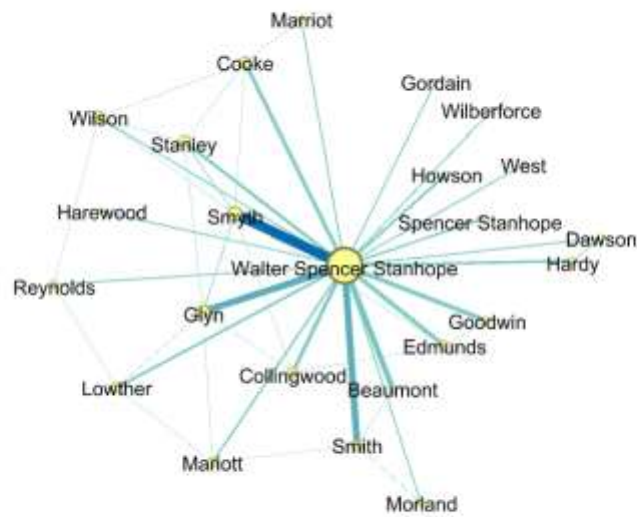


Figure 4.12: Walter Spencer Stanhope recorded Network 1801

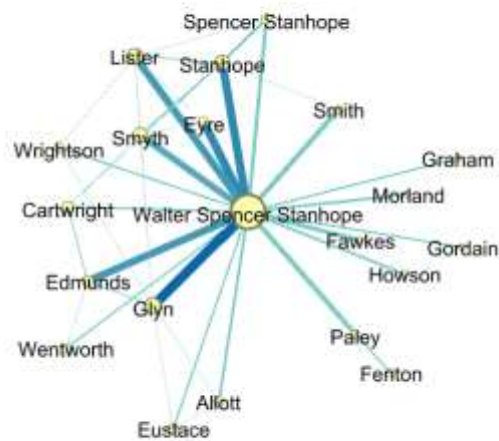


Figure 4.13: Walter Spencer Stanhope recorded Network 1812

From 1815 the content of Walter's diaries dwindles and he ceases to record his daily encounters. Instead he prioritises the recording of meetings that were especially notable because of who he met with or the purpose of the occasion. Mundane meetings with his agent are no longer recorded, although dinner with a prominent MP or member of the landed elite continues to be noted. By 1820 no social encounters are recorded and the diaries act simply as a record of transactions, purchases and debts owed. The diaries for 1816-17 contain records of just 143 encounters, a notable reduction from previous sample years. Walter's pocket books for this period reflect his decline in life. Walter continued friendships with many of the same individuals for the last 20 years of his life and he meets most frequently with a Miss Edmunds, the Eyre family, and the Smyth family of Heath Hall Wakefield and the Kaye family of Denby Grange near Wakefield, both of whom were prevalent in the networks of his grandfather some 75 years previously. Walter continued to affiliate with friends from Westminster School, dining with Sir Richard Glyn (former Lord

Mayor of London) and his wife Elizabeth, and Sir Lowther and the Wrightson families again often at dinner. He maintains a somewhat active social scene and although the majority of recorded sociability occurs at Cannon Hall he also attends the homes of others to dine or spend the evening, including the home of Lord Westmorland (Lord Privy Seal) and Sir Glyn (Lord Mayor of London). Walter also continued his involvement in local civic affairs, recording trips to Barnsley to attend meetings with other local landowners. The absence of detailed records for the latter years of his life makes it difficult to assess how Walter's network changed over the course of the last decade. Nonetheless it is evident that he maintained the closest bonds of friendship with a small group of landed elite who mainly resided in the area surrounding Cannon Hall, much in the same way as his grandfather and uncle before him.

As was the case for his grandfather but even more so his uncle John, Walter's network was shaped by his social habits, changes to his professional status and how he established himself aside from his familial identity. On inheritance Walter assumed the role of archetypal nephew and heir, performing the necessary visits and proving himself as host in his new country seat. Numerous mentions of 'nephew Watty' visiting Cannon Hall throughout John Spencer's diaries from 1765 suggest Walter would have already been well acquainted with members of the local community by 1775. His role as heir would, however, have required him to engage with these families in a new way to ensure collaboration and community cohesion continued into his tenure and beyond. It is clear that Walter's relationship with some members of this group, Godfrey Bosville of the nearby Gunthwaite estate and the vicar of Silkstone, Samuel Phipps particularly, extended beyond the routine of obligation to one of friendship. Whyman illustrates that heirs certainly did not always acknowledge the obligation to uphold codes of politeness and maintain connections with family and the local community even in the first year of inheritance.<sup>769</sup> The endurance of Walter's relationship with Phipps and Bosville some twenty years after John's death suggests that a personal bond rather than simply obligation and politeness was the motivating factor here.

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<sup>769</sup> Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, p. 36.

## Conclusion

The pocket books and diaries of the male heads of household at Cannon Hall record many things. Providing memorandum for the management of their estate, business affairs and accounts, as well as their daily sociability. Here this chapter has focused on the significance of the people, places and activities that these diarists chose to record over the duration of their adult lives. Simultaneously the practice of keeping a diary acted as a practical reminder to the diarists of key masculine traits of sound management and self-regulation. All of these men engaged in the ritual of diary keeping upon if not before their inheritance of the family estate. As a 'taught' practice, it ricocheted between generations and ranks, continuing the records and accounts of the family. Notably however, this is a practice less well observed by Walter than John and William, evident in the comparative sparseness of his record keeping. Whilst this could be a feature of the individual, it is also a potential consequence of Walter's upbringing, and more secure position in terms of wealth and status amongst the ranks of the political elite.

Through the assessment of the networks of the men discussed here, the significance of status-driven social connections for the continued success and influence of the family business and estate is evident through the inheritance and continued maintenance of regional connections across all three generations. Over time there is a visible shift from William's early network, largely rooted in his industrial interests and business partners, many of which are reflected in John's recorded interactions over the same period, to the more sociable connections with local gentry which continue to grow significantly as a feature of John's network following his inheritance of Cannon Hall as the family cemented its place among the ranks of the regional gentry, a status reflected through the alterations made to the Hall during this time that were explored in Chapter One. The detailed case study into John Spencer's patterns of sociability throughout his adult years emphasised how urban sociability offered young men the opportunity to shape their own networks outside the inherited family ties. Based on shared mutual interests, age and experience, rank, values and conviviality, these bonds were forged and cultivated amongst the city's clubs and taverns, binding the homosocial groups under a shared and celebrated collective identity.

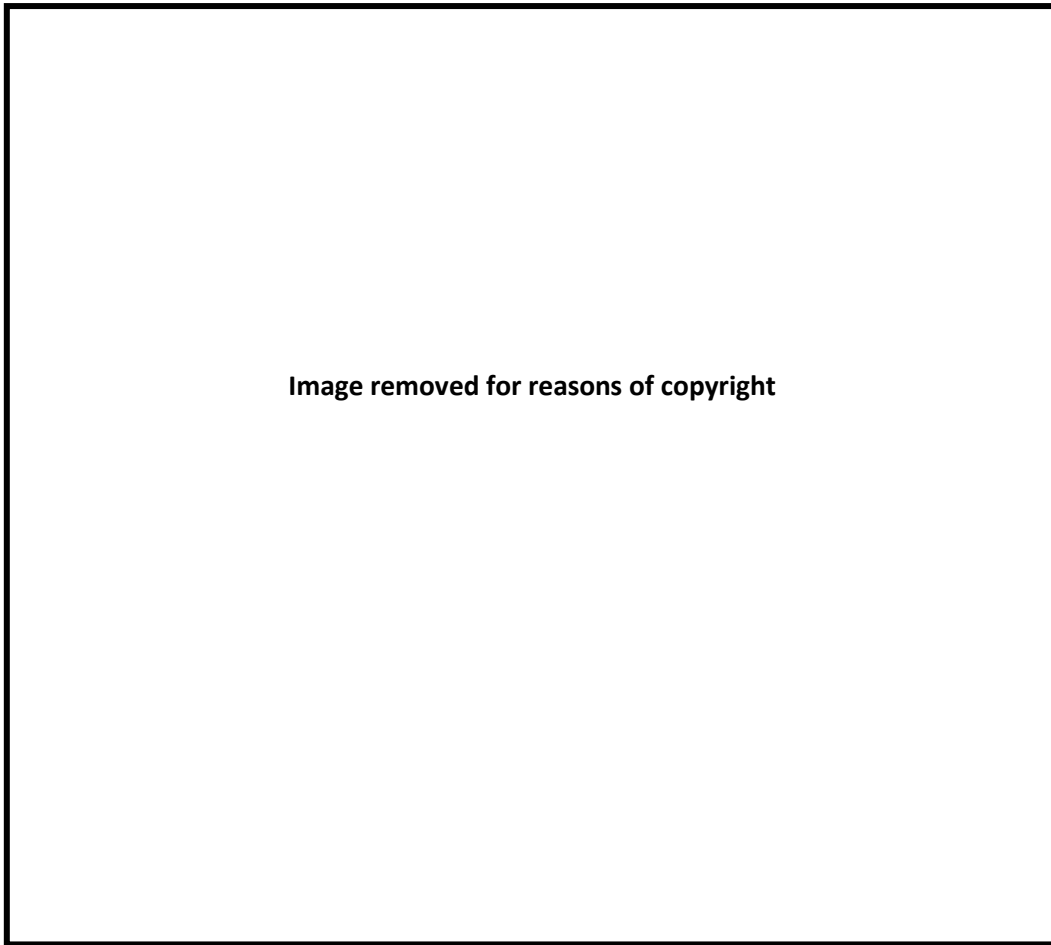


Figure 4.16: Section of a letter from Godfrey Bosville to John Spencer, 20 January 1765.  
HHC: U DDBM/X1/32/9.

You have Gardens [to] walk in, and hounds to ride after and Books to read [if] you are so inclin'd. We have to go to Public places: but [altho]ugh we do, it is but a public life in appearance for every [...] conversation is in a manner confin'd within the Compass of a few particular Acquaintance. The Nobility hold themselves uncontaminated with the Commons: you seldom see a Lord & a private Gentleman together: I know a Lady, made so by Marriage who denys herself on Sundays to the Nobility & is at home every [missing] which favour they are not to expect but up on the Lords day: by which smuggling of her small Acquaintance she keeps that nice division between Lords/and Gentlemen unjumbled together. An ~~Indian~~ American

that saw a Regiment of foot draw up, might think the Officers & soldiers mighty sociable. Just so is the Company at Soho Square, all together and all distinct.<sup>770</sup>

In January 1765 John Spencer received the above letter from his close, lifelong friend and rural neighbour, Godfrey Bosville.<sup>771</sup> Bosville's letter is useful in drawing conclusions on this chapter for various reasons, not least for what it tells us about the importance of rural and urban settings for the gentry and the sense of disharmony felt between the reality and perception of public sociability in the capital. Bosville used the country lifestyle of 'Gardens [to] walk in, and hounds to ride after and Books to read' to help drive home his frustrations with 'public life' in the city. The contrast between rural lifestyle versus the experiences in the city is found in other letters received by John from his friends, stressing the aesthetic beauty of the rural landscape and country estate and presenting the rural lifestyle, sociable and familiar community as a point of difference to life in London.<sup>772</sup>

It is clear then from the above investigation into the social networks of John and Walter particularly, that both rural and urban settings held strategic and emotional significance and played a role in the cultivation and projection of their masculine gentry identity within the broader collectives in which they positioned themselves. Rural and urban situations, the hunt versus the tavern, offered different but complementary mechanisms for the display of personal attributes, and the luxuries of space, comfort and rural pursuits found at home were highlighted by Bosville as an idyllic antidote to the urban lifestyle. Furthermore, men, and especially single men, as was the case for much of the period discussed here, sought out ways to forge emotional connections with others and the comfortable and sentimental aspects of domesticity in urban settings when away from their ancestral home. Spending time in each other's company both in private settings of chambers, or the more public but no less exclusive groups in the arena of the tavern and other venues of urban sociability, would have satisfied some of the need for emotional connection and stability more often

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<sup>770</sup> HHC: U DDBM/X1/32/9, Letter to John Spencer, Cannon Hall, from Godfrey Bosville, 20th January 1765.

<sup>771</sup> Godfrey Bosville of Gunthwaite Hall, Penistone. Historically the Bosville family owned the Cannon Hall estate and surrounding land. Godfrey studied at the bar alongside John, and was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1737.

<sup>772</sup> BALS: SpSt 60537/70, 80, 81, Letters to John Spencer.

fulfilled through partnership and marriage. For lifelong bachelor John Spencer the evidence here suggests that this practice stretches beyond his youth and into his later years, as he continues to replicate some of the sentimental and emotional bonds of home in his city life through habitual living.

The challenging balance between urban and rural living was widely recognised, from the dire consequences of absentee landowners discussed in the previous chapter, to the benefits of the clean air, the latter openly acknowledged through the rationale behind public pleasure gardens as providing ‘the illusion of rural delights’ in the city centre.<sup>773</sup> Yet, for the owners of landed estates, and as I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, their ancestral home equally provided a complex source of personal expression within, to a degree, the parameters of a range of social and cultural expectations. Modes of rural and urban sociability similarly contribute to this dynamic, and despite the pleasures and demands of the ancestral home, John and Walter understood the need for urban sociability as well, which at times they prioritised and perhaps preferred. The mechanisms central to each were broadly similar, predominantly involving physical activity and the consumption of food and drink, yet the experiences of the diarists here suggest that home and city life offered quite different personal and emotional meanings. The relationship between the rural country estate and urban living was complex. Recorded in Boswell’s *London Journal*, Samuel Johnson’s views on taverns, which can be extended to a number of other similar venues, speak highly of the ability of the tavern to offer a ‘freedom from anxiety’ for both host and patron.<sup>774</sup> Sociability in a private house required ‘always some degree of care and anxiety. The master of the house is anxious to entertain his guests; the guests are anxious to be agreeable to him’.<sup>775</sup> Taverns, in contrast, provided the ‘domestic comforts, [...] in a financial economy, rather than an economy of hospitality’ which therefore allowed the guest to ‘command absolute authority’.<sup>776</sup> The eradication of the obligations of domestic

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<sup>773</sup> Penelope Corfield, *Vauxhall, Sex and Entertainment: London’s Pioneering Urban Pleasure Garden* 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (London, 2012), p. 3.

<sup>774</sup> James Boswell, *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, ed. George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford and New York, 1887), p. 451; Newman, *The Romantic Tavern*, p. 23.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.*



sociability could, Newman states, result in ‘a utopian vision of domestic happiness’.<sup>777</sup> Whilst the vision conjured does ignore the dangers of the tavern, it does offer a sense that urban life could provide an escape from some of the impediments of rural sociability, such as those strongly evident in the behaviours of John and Walter following inheritance of the estate, and the pressures it brought.

The picture presented then, is a complex one. On the one hand, some contemporaries record a sense that urban life offered a freedom from the obligations of managing a household and performing the somewhat burdensome and anxiety fuelled expectations of domestic sociability. On the other, the artifice of ‘public life’ in the city resulted for some in insincerity and exclusion. To take Bosville’s statement a step further, the sociability in the confines of the rural home or the wilds of the moors was more authentic and allowed those that enjoyed it to do so with comparative ease. For the diarists here the balance between the two was a fundamental aspect of their annual calendar and for Walter especially, whose political career and the purchase of a permanent London residence served to solidify his belonging in the capital even further, sociability in the urban public sphere was an important way to uphold urban centric networks and develop those aspects of masculine identity performed in its spaces. Whilst travelling to London may at times have presented a welcome escape from the responsibilities of the family home, similarly the taverns and clubs of the capital themselves acted as a safe and familiar environments; they brought the like-minded together under a shared masculine identity, and a temporary rest bite from the ‘public life in appearance’ which Bosville describes.<sup>778</sup>

The patterns of sociability uncovered in all three diaries contributed the formation of the masculine and gentry identity of the three subjects which was formed, in part at least, in relation to those around them. Whilst the overall functions of sociability remain constant, the forms in which it took for each diarist were different, depending on their personalities, marital status, age and life-cycle, and career interests (including business and politics).

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<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> HHC: U DDBM/X1/32/9, Letter to John Spencer, Cannon Hall, from Godfrey Bosville, 20th January 1765.

Despite some limitations of the evidence, network analysis has helped us to draw conclusions from the networks and interactions sampled from the householders' diaries, by summarising large amounts of information and pointing to patterns we might not have otherwise seen.

## Conclusion to the Thesis

The Deer-Park[...] is very pleasantly varied, shaded by fine old timber; while an extensive piece of water, formed from a branch of the River Dearne, flowing at the foot of two sloping hills, gives light and spirit to the composition. The House, which does not boast of much architectural ornament, is convenient and suited to the accommodation of a numerous family. [...] The Library contains a very valuable collection of books, made principally by the late John Spencer, Esq. It contains, likewise, a great curiosity, in the bow of Little John, the famous outlaw.<sup>779</sup>

### Aims and Themes of Thesis

The country house from large elaborate mansion to small classical house is well versed as a marker of status which delineated power and wealth of the owners to all those who gazed upon it. In his 1819 collection of illustrations of *Seats, Mansions, Castles etc of Gentlemen and Noblemen in the County of York* James P. Neale favourably described Cannon Hall as an extensive estate with a 'very pleasantly varied' deer park, 'very beautiful' pleasure grounds and the artificial cascades and pools in Daking Brook are described as 'an extensive piece of water' which 'gives light and spirit to the composition'.<sup>780</sup> Of the interior of the Hall he notes some curious historical artefacts and John Spencer's carefully curated library. On the exterior of the house, however, Neale is less complimentary stating it 'does not boast of much architectural ornament', instead it is 'convenient and suited to the accommodation of a numerous family'.<sup>781</sup> For Neale, Cannon Hall was fairly unremarkable as a country house. Its lack of distinction is telling and aligns the house and its owners with the values espoused by the eighteenth-century gentry for whom fitting in was the point.<sup>782</sup> Nonetheless, Neale's description exemplifies the key signifiers of status and how the power and identity of landowners lay in part in their expressions of wealth exhibited visually through the country

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<sup>779</sup> J. P. Neale, *Views of the Seats, Mansions, Castles etc. of Noblemen and Gentlemen in the County of York* (London, 1819), p. 14.

<sup>780</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>781</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>782</sup> Stephen Hague, *The Gentleman's House in the British Atlantic World 1680-1780* (Basingstoke and New York, 2015), pp. 42, 48.

house estate. Neale's focus on the scale, dynastic heritage and conspicuous consumption displayed at Cannon Hall waivers little from the main draw of the country house estate for today's visitors, and these were very real and deliberate intentions for eighteenth-century country house owners, including the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope families.

The long-term dominance of this somewhat reductive and one-dimensional narrative prioritising the physical expression of status neglects the myriad of complex, painstakingly considered decisions in architecture, interior décor and domestic management, alongside the daunting financial management of a landed estate. These reductive narratives also neglect the estate community, whose presence and behaviour helped to establish the status and success of the estate. The Spencers' acquisition of Cannon Hall through marriage to a notable widow and later purchase from John Spencer's (1655-1729) step daughter was characteristic of the 'by any means' route taken by many aspirational industrialists and woollen merchants of the wider West Riding.<sup>783</sup> What is strongly evidenced within the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family is the gradual and intentional manipulation of wealth, assets and business interests, kinship connections and sociability, alongside the generational championing of a specific type of masculine identity, to ensure generation after generation benefitted in a way which incrementally improved the social status of the family over a 150 year period. As shown by Amanda Vickery, Stephen Hague and others, merchants and other aspirational families purchased their estates and infiltrated the "'parish gentry'", leaving it to later generations to advance to county or national level'.<sup>784</sup> While this is a somewhat simplistic linear vision, broadly speaking at Cannon Hall it was the preservation of wealth and pivotal social networks, alongside the ritualised practice of heritage which ensured that by Walter Spencer Stanhope's inheritance in 1775 and beyond (bolstered by the inheritance of his paternal estates in Horsforth, Leeds and marriage to a wealthy heiress) the Spencer and Stanhope names were well established within the upper echelons of the landed elite. The family's advancement from men of iron to self-supporting landed gentry was thus complete.

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<sup>783</sup> For other examples see R. G. Wilson, *Gentlemen Merchants: The merchant community in Leeds, 1700-1830* (Manchester and New York, 1971), p. 211-212.

<sup>784</sup> Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1999), p. 298.

In this context, the thesis set out to explore the many facets of gentry identity involved in this evolution and how these developed over the long eighteenth century, and to position Cannon Hall and the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family within their active and ever-changing environments. Architecture and consumption practices, social activities and relationships, conduct, governance style and authority, have all been analysed as parallel agents of identity and masculinity across four successive generations of the same family at Cannon Hall. These discussions advance our understanding of the specific markers of masculine identity for the period, how they were portrayed and the pressures this created for the individual. Ultimately, in ascertaining how these men aligned themselves more broadly in a shared collective identity this thesis enhances an otherwise somewhat scarce body of work on those lesser landed families that sat between the middling sort and aristocracy.

#### **The Materiality of Gentry Identity: Architecture, Space and Consumption at Cannon Hall**

As Chapter One discusses, rebuilding the Hall at the close of the seventeenth century transformed it from a modest ten room house to a triple pile five bay square plan house resting on a raised basement, adorned with classical architectural ornament, which outwardly expressed the status and wealth of the family. Internally the large hall was embellished with a wainscot incorporating a carved coat of arms and date plate which memorialized for posterity the architectural elevation of Cannon Hall to a home more befitting of its gentlemanly occupiers. The enlarged Cannon Hall was a physical manifestation of John Spencer's (1655-1729) rise to industrial dominance within all regional iron syndicates and symbolically distinguished the status of the Spencer family above those in the parish. Architecturally the house followed a distinctive contemporary style and in its stylistic similarities with numerous other small country houses in the locality, spoke the architectural language which expressed the proper combination of fashion and vernacular restraint affiliated with the elite.<sup>785</sup> As this thesis has shown, in the deployment of such visual mechanisms and markers, Cannon Hall served to confirm the Spencers' belonging within the gentry, distinguishing them from the yeomanry below and aristocracy above. For

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<sup>785</sup> Hague, *The Gentleman's House*, pp.26-42.

Hague the architectural symbolism evident in small country houses was a sustained endeavour in cultivating a sense of collective identity and for the individual it was ‘one important step in a slow, incremental process of social mobility’, or at least an identifying marker, aligning themselves within their desired social group.<sup>786</sup> The remodelling of Cannon Hall was a staunch confirmation of the Spencers’ social status and wealth, adding weight to Hague’s conclusions that rather than attempting to emulate those above them the builders of small classical houses were making their own distinct collective identity.<sup>787</sup> Despite this and as this thesis demonstrates at numerous points, consumption was guided by a degree of emulation both with their comparative equals and those above them in the social order. Collective belonging with their neighbours and members of their social networks continued as a driving force for the architectural and consumption choices later in the century through the patronage of architects and features of architectural, garden and furniture design. Shared aesthetics, like the shared values, social networks and interests discussed in later chapters of the thesis were mechanisms which affirmed the family’s social rank and identity within local, national and specifically personal collectives.

The motivations for architectural improvements and consumption were driven by a combination of wider cultural imperatives – sociability, politeness and taste – alongside dynasticism and expressions of the familial and the desire to express selfhood, identity and the cultivation of a comfortable home.<sup>788</sup> By deconstructing the architectural and spatial layout of Cannon Hall in Chapters One and Two it was possible to better understand how the house functioned and, alongside patterns in spending and consumption which witnessed periods of frivolity and periods of restraint both across the life span and generationally, exposing fluctuations in the significance of these interconnected motivators for each successive generation. While it is evident that all the owners of Cannon Hall studied in this thesis had ambition, not all had the opportunity or inclination to make equally grand

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<sup>786</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>787</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>788</sup> Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, 2016), p. 271. Themes also discussed by Judith Lewis, ‘When a House is Not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House’, *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009), pp. 336-363; Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009).

statements when stamping their identity on the house and estate.<sup>789</sup> Sociability as a driving force in architecture and spatial design influenced the homes of the elite long before the eighteenth century.<sup>790</sup> But the elaborate spending under John Spencer (1655-1729) transformed Cannon Hall in a style typical of the compact box design which offered flexibility and allowed for multifaceted uses, more suitable for newer forms of sociability with its preference for frequent smaller and more discrete gatherings, alongside larger events in the retained hall. This significant undertaking and statement of wealth was, however, followed by a period of stagnation and restraint by William, brought about through complex economic and industrial uncertainty which saw him grapple with both industrial shifts and challenges for the family business, coupled with long periods of familial unrest and litigation. While William may have had a desire to make his own mark on the estate, he refrained from making any significant alterations and his preoccupation with the dynastic security of the estate drove his decision making both as the household head and as a father. For William's son and heir John Spencer (1719-1757), increasingly free from the ligatures of industry, spending on the Hall was again more readily available, although the spatial deconstruction undertaken in Chapter One exposes that his plans for the final building scheme and luxury items which filled it were still somewhat curtailed. While it is probable that limited finances halted ambition, it is also the case that the balance between display and restraint was deliberate and essential to the masculine ideals of the gentry.

A lifelong bachelor, John Spencer's verve for the single life was perhaps partly rooted in his enjoyment and freedom to pursue his own architectural and personal priorities to a level less often available to the married.<sup>791</sup> The case study into the improvements made to the estate under John Spencer exposes the multi-layered motivations for such alterations, principally sociability, conformity and personal pleasure and how the outdoor spaces and each room of the Hall, distinguished by use and aesthetics, contributed something different to the cultivation of identity for the owners. While the décor and furnishing suggest

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<sup>789</sup> Similar features were noted of country houses in Northamptonshire in Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 114.

<sup>790</sup> Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp. 292-293; Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House* (New Haven, 1978), pp. 119-163.

<sup>791</sup> David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham and Burlington, 2012), p. 6.

schematic unity, the subtle distinctions in the materiality of each room suggests the home was a *'habitus, [...] a collage of overlapping spaces and identities'*.<sup>792</sup> Attributes of taste and refinement were accentuated in the drawing room while the library, a room of great personal pleasure for John, fashioned him as a man of learning and scholarship. John's architectural remodelling created a quintessential social house with larger more lavish spaces for all manner of activities. The horizontal relationships of friendship, central to the social house as described by Girouard, dominated John Spencer's tight knit social networks and are evident in the increased levels of domestic sociability taking place both at Cannon Hall and in London during his period of ownership of the Hall.<sup>793</sup> The improved spaces and the activities within them *'assumed a deeper importance'* for a single householder both in facilitating crucial social engagements and in expressing his gentry identity through display.<sup>794</sup> While the improvements made to the estate were driven by his interests and desires, awareness of the expectations of sociability is ever present.

Displays of show are immediately evident throughout the period, more discrete is the influence of values such as frugality and restraint. The prioritisation of spending on the best room from 1681 to 1763 is the most enduring and striking example of the balance between restraint and show at Cannon Hall during the period studied and the role that conforming to expectations of sociability served as a driving force for consumption. The repurposing of redundant *'best'* room furnishings revealed a spatial hierarchy to the Hall and is one manifestation of the lessons in prudence and good oeconomy passed on from father to son, the importance of which for eighteenth-century masculine identity is widely discussed.<sup>795</sup>

The balance at Cannon Hall between conspicuous consumption of new luxury items and the continued importance of objects denoting heritage and lineage, strongly aligns with findings

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<sup>792</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 268; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984), pp. 169-175.

<sup>793</sup> Judith Lewis, *'When a house is not a home'*, p. 345; For his discussion of the role of sociability in the social house see Girouard, *The English Country House*, pp. 189-195.

<sup>794</sup> Hussey and Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker*, p. 5.

<sup>795</sup> Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and domestic authority in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2012).



by Stobart and Rothery.<sup>796</sup> The language of spaces in the house was influenced by the mix of old and new, tastefully fashionable and virtuous. In the home of William Spencer paintings and family portraits littered the staircase transforming this transient space into a gallery elevating the family's dynasticism and rank; close by the dining room was distinguished by its fashionable materials and tea wares and next door the family's virtuosity was signalled through their collection of musical instruments. The deliberate use of old luxuries alongside the new is most blatant in the furnishing of John Spencer's library and drawing room, which together conveyed John's distinct sense of self as a peculiarly specific blend of traditional country squire, learned bibliophile and man of taste. The continued use of livery and choice of family crest emblazoned on Walter Spencer Stanhope's new chariot discussed in Chapter Three are further examples of how the markers of old luxury continued to characterise their consumption decisions. The retention and maintenance of vast quantities of documents in muniment rooms at Cannon Hall, long after their immediate usefulness had waned, is further testament to the power and weight of lineage and dynasticism as a solidifying force for this family. Contrary to Corfield's suggestion that old markers of status, particularly dynastic tropes, were replaced by new notions of consumption, at Cannon Hall old luxuries and traditional markers of heritage continued to play a vital role in the construction of identity.<sup>797</sup> The blending of new luxuries alongside old distinguished this family, as well as those more affluent studied by Stobart and Rothery.<sup>798</sup> In this way the materiality of the home served to confirm and uphold their rank and authority.

Frugality and restraint, fundamental traits of elite masculinity, underpinned many decisions made by successive generations in their efforts in displaying good taste and cultivating their personal reputation whilst preserving the long term financial stability of the family estate. The balance between competing priorities was one of the most defining features for the multiple generations at Cannon Hall. While positional goods signalling wealth are aplenty (John Spencer [Snr]'s complete remodelling of the Hall, John Spencer [Jr]'s library and 'fine

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<sup>796</sup> Jon Stobart and Mark Rothery, 'Fashion, Heritage and Family, New and Old in the Georgian Country House', *Cultural and Social History* 11 3 (2014), pp. 385-406; Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*.

<sup>797</sup> Penelope J. Corfield, 'Class by Name and Number in Eighteenth-Century Britain', *History* 72 234 (1987), p. 61

<sup>798</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 262-263.

French furnishings' or Walter Spencer Stanhope's gilded chariot), spending was largely measured and controlled, as exemplified in the circulation of goods around the home. John Spencer's and Walter Spencer Stanhope's exuberance in youth was tempered by age and growing responsibilities, either for the dynastic survival of the estate or in the case of Walter Spencer Stanhope, his growing family. Each generation enlarged and improved the estate, balancing finite resources and ensuring the maintenance of the family's rank and status by aligning themselves through the architecture and materiality of the home with the appropriate values and thus others within their social status. Cannon Hall was a subtle 'collage' of competing notions of display, personal pleasure and practicalities which ebbed and flowed alongside longer term and more enduring notions of masculine, gentry identity and dynasticism.<sup>799</sup>

### **Household Governance and Relationships of Authority and Reciprocity**

The architectural choices and material culture of the home acted as visual markers of rank, identity and masculinity and formed the physical environment within which the dynamics of household relationships played out. As Linda Pollock demonstrates and as discussed in Chapter Three, the four principles required for a well ordered elite society; 'run a well-ordered home, exercise judicious authority, be seen as fit to govern, provide for dependents', placed men's governance and ability to sustain a household at the fore.<sup>800</sup> Whilst ownership of a household was an essential marker of manhood, its sound governance proved the man.<sup>801</sup> At Cannon Hall commonplace daily practices of household and estate management were underpinned with habitual processes of heritage, most visible in the education of younger generations and practices such as the annual cataloguing of the library. The evidence here of specific male-centric rituals did more than to ensure good oeconomy; they elevated mundane habits to markers of identity and dynasticism. The succession of the estate was imperative and a dominant concern for each successive generation. The legal underpinning of inheritance through processes such as strict settlement was reinforced visually in the materiality of the home and practically in the daily

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<sup>799</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 268.

<sup>800</sup> Pollock, L., 'Rethinking Patriarchy and the Family in Seventeenth-Century England', *Journal of Family History* 23 1 (January 1998), p. 5.

<sup>801</sup> *Ibid.*; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*; Harvey, *The Little Republic*.

governance and rituals of domestic life. The family's commitment to lineage and name illustrates how the construction of identity rooted in the past took priority over that of the individual and was reinforced through the habits created and continued by successive generations. The inclusivity of the 'household family' and collaborative nature of estate and household management was therefore not only a momentary concern shared among the household family and kin but one that transcended generations.

The behaviours and structural processes of household management and governance underpinned domestic patriarchy, in which members of the household family, including some servants, had the capacity to assert authority in their specific area of expertise, and they were endorsed and implicitly understood by those within the household.<sup>802</sup> The 'grid of power' at Cannon Hall was fundamentally collaborative and responsibilities extended beyond the household head to other family members, evident in the hierarchical system of delegated authority, in which senior servants and female kin were lent upon to uphold standards when the male household heads were absent from the estate.<sup>803</sup> Collaboration was critical in balancing the maintenance and good order of the household while allowing the male heads to pursue personal endeavours and social and business activities away from the estate. The collective nature of the household was not only governed by managerial strategies but by a shared reciprocity and in some instances emotional investment in the success of the estate and what it represented symbolically and projected to outsiders.

Servants, like blood relatives, represented the household for whom they worked. Reputation and the role it played in the interplay of power within the household and within the local community were essential to the relationships at Cannon Hall. The benefits of the reputation and success of the estate cultivated through collaborative contribution were, to an extent, shared by all, but at an individual level the influence of the master-servant relationship on reputation and identity was reciprocal. Stewards for example, in their role as intermediaries, not only upheld the power of their masters, but also possessed some power

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<sup>802</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, p. 4.

<sup>803</sup> Mike Braddick, M.J., and John Walter, 'Introduction. Grids of power: order, hierarchy and subordination in early modern society', in M.J. Braddick & J. Walter (eds), *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 39.

themselves in choosing which local residents to support. Similarly, other senior servants who held a personal relationship with the household head combined with an emotional investment in the Hall through years of service were afforded a voice, or at least emboldened to share their opinion on matters of the estate.

Servants themselves also formed a type of conspicuous consumption for the owners of the Hall. The persistent use of liveried servants for much of the period, the depiction of servants in artwork adorning the walls of the house, and the deliberate landscaping of the gardens to put worked areas very much on display, are all evidence of a calculated effort to emphasise the command of master over servant as something to be celebrated and made visible for the acknowledgement of others. Cannon Hall appears to have 'bucked the trend' in terms of the longevity and extent to which servants were 'paraded' in the local community. Where servant co-operation and good behaviour benefitted the household reputation when on display, the contrary was also true. With servants utilised so prevalently in the overall display of good governance and mastery of the household, the impact of servant behaviours on the household's reputation and in turn their master's identity could potentially have negative, as well as positive, ramifications. The chapter highlights some more exceptional examples of both scenarios. On the one hand, a butler went beyond contractual obligation in tending to his dying master and taking on a variety of new responsibilities to maintain the day to day workings of the house and ultimately aid the transition of the estate to the eventual successor. At the opposite end of the scale, a group of servants apparently sabotaged a visit from William Wentworth and executed their duties to standards well below the travelling servants' expectations. These events chime with episodes of servant unrest in protest at the decline of vails elsewhere in the country. It raises the question, that the sources available here are unfortunately unable to answer, as to whether the servants lower down the household hierarchy were less invested in the values of dynasticism and collective responsibility held by upper servants and the family, but it is certainly highly plausible.

When discussing examples of servant dissent or unrest seen at Cannon Hall, the common cause in the majority of cases was a disconnect between the level of remuneration afforded

to the household and individual or (as in the case mentioned above) collective expectations. There is a clear shift over the period in the attitude toward remunerations, somewhat in line with national trends, but significantly these changes also reflect the different personalities and beliefs of the respective household heads. Over the period studied there developed a greater onus on domestic morality. Possibly driven by his religious beliefs and Tory paternalism, Walter Spencer Stanhope championed these virtues and instructed those under his supervision and care to demonstrate the same. Despite the influence of these values on day-to-day practices, research in this thesis shows that they emerged alongside more enduring notions of masculinity, rather than challenging them as some contemporaries and historiography suggests.

The Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family cultivated a system of household governance in response to the distinctive character of the Hall, the increasing absenteeism of the household head and the prolonged absence of wives to oversee the management of the estate. While it is difficult to discern the success of the mechanisms of household governance and projections of authority, the evidence of servant complaints and disruption at least suggest that it was not always smooth sailing for the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family. Nonetheless the distinct set of circumstances for the owners of Cannon Hall required and shaped a system of household governance which utilised the collaborative endeavour of all those invested in the family name and success of the estate. Despite the distinct circumstances the family found ways to operate within gentry norms.

### **Networks of Sociability**

The final chapter in this thesis explored the nature and role of the different networks of sociability for each successive generation and in doing so marked out those collectives with which the heads of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family aligned themselves. Social networks were informed by bonds of family, profession, geography and sociable interests. At times these groups were intentionally amalgamated, a feature particularly evident during the decades around the turn of the eighteenth century when marriage was used as a tool for unifying business interests through familial allegiances and again in the mid-eighteenth century in the unifying of the Spencer and Stanhope families. The coming together of

kinship groups was a particularly powerful tool in ensuring business success and for bolstering reputation. These successful partnerships provided the financial catalyst for the Spencer family's elevated social status.

The thorough surveys of the social networks for three heads of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family conducted in Chapter Four revealed intriguing patterns over their life course. Particularly notable is the cyclical importance of bonds of kinship and neighbourhood which dominate the early periods of each network following inheritance before giving way to a sense of greater personal freedom to re-join or establish anew their own social circles. The observance of expected social codes both for kinship groups and within the locality of Cannon Hall served to bolster social acceptance of the new heir and played a crucial role in upholding familial reputation and the authority of the individual.

Each household head existed as part of numerous collectives including the collaborative household and social networks distinguished by location (rural or urban, tavern, coffeehouse or club), pastime and vocation (the hunt, industry and politics). Kinship groups remained active and significant across the period, although interaction with wider kinship networks shifted and old allegiances, while routinely honoured, were increasingly less dominant within their network and new families became more prevalent as marriages and partnerships were formed. As the family's links with their industrial past slipped away, the marriage of daughters helped to form new status-building allegiances. Choices made by William Spencer concerning the education and marriages of his children were deliberate mechanisms to help ensure the continuity of his family's status, reputation and security. The evidence strongly suggests that wider kinship networks were maintained for specifically tangible reasons, such as reputation, and as the benefits slipped away so too did their presence within the social networks examined here.

For all three men the intensity of their recorded social activities was greater when away from Cannon Hall, particularly during their time in the capital. These networks were also unique to each household head, an obvious consequence of the practical and geographical constraints and narrowness of rural communities in contrast with the expansive possibilities

that London offered. The examination of their social networks enlivens and informs aspects of the preceding chapters. Understanding the endurance of John Spencer's core groups of friends, for example, reveals how these men informed each other's decision-making practices in architecture and consumption. For Walter Spencer Stanhope these patterns of belonging are most visible in his association with the Society for the Dilettanti and other self-styled 'Macaronis' which simultaneously informed his dress, sociable habits and political career. Exposing these influences illustrates the undeniable power of fraternal social networks to the construction of the self for eighteenth-century landed male elite. For the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family the complex balancing act between dynastic pressures, personal satisfaction and collective identity was again evident through the study of their social activities and interactions.

Lastly, it is useful to return to the social distinctions marked out by Godfrey Bosville in his letter to John Spencer in 1765 in which he describes the 'Company at Soho Square' as 'all together and all distinct'.<sup>804</sup> Bosville's description vividly conveys the importance of display as a tool for the construction of identity and how this artifice masked the deep social divisions at play within the upper echelons of society. As the research into network patterns in this thesis demonstrates, it also defined the remit for many of the quite narrow social networks of provincial and rural areas. The sociability and networks of the three men studied here shows that social networks, particularly those of deep personal resonance were defined by social rank above all else and marked out and solidified by shared customs, practices and values.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

This thesis has explored some of the ways in which three generations of one family experienced, practiced and maintained notions of elite masculine identity through the home and their relationships. Here enduring masculine values of 'virtue, honour, authority, independence', self-management and self-control, diligence, thrift and restraint were

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<sup>804</sup> Hannah Greig, "'All Together and All Distinct": Public Sociability and Social Exclusivity in London's Pleasure Gardens, ca. 1740—1800', *Journal of British Studies* 51 1 (January 2012), pp. 50-75.

perpetuated by and underpinned the practices, habits and relationships of daily life.<sup>805</sup> This research demonstrates how the gentry constructed and maintained a masculine identity that shared traits from those both above and below them in the social hierarchy. Consumption patterns revealed aspects of emulation through the purchasing of certain positional goods in the home, and like the wealthier elite, dynastic portraiture was instrumental in the projection of their status values. Early life experiences such as their education and participation in the Grand Tour, their rural and urban leisured lifestyle, and club-like homosociality was only possible because of their wealth. Nonetheless, as their wealth and social status was more precarious than the aristocracy there is also an endurance of practices, such as the use of livery and public use of the heraldic crest that helped to bolster their claims to status. Traits of restraint and frugality, the education in and use of practices of oeconomy and a household that collaborated for the benefit of the family name and generational success, show some elements more typically associated with the middling sort. Lastly, architectural choices and patterns of sociability suggest this group forged a sense of identity in relation to each other. The fastidious recording by the three diarists of their social, political and business networks situated them firmly in relation to those they spent their social time with. Cumulatively, this family and possibly other similar gentry families constructed their masculine and gentry identities often simultaneously from an amalgamation of mutually beneficial traits in a bid to ensure stability and long term success of themselves and their family name.

What is clearly demonstrated is the generational investment in ensuring that rank and status was not only upheld but consolidated. The practices and rituals which ensured this were deeply wedded to what it meant to be a member of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family through their shared heritage. As dynastic representatives every facet of the lives of the household heads examined here was informed by overarching responsibilities to uphold 'the accumulated social, economic, political, and cultural authority of their families, in their 'personal' as well as their 'public' lives.'<sup>806</sup> Like men of the middling

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<sup>805</sup> Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), p. 2.

<sup>806</sup> French and Rothery, *Man's Estate*, p. 238.



sort, their gender was, therefore, intimately bound up in social and cultural 'reproduction'.<sup>807</sup> For the continuation of the rural landed gentry as a distinct social group, men not only had to 'act within the normative bounds of 'common-sense' manliness, but also [...] within the overlapping boundaries that framed their social and familial identity'.<sup>808</sup>

Extending Stobart and Rothery's work on masculinity and consumption practices, this investigation shows how the additional lenses of architecture, domestic governance and social networks demonstrates how masculine identity was developed through different mediums: 'materially' through the architectural choices and consumption habits of the home, 'discursively' through conduct literature and parental instruction, behaviourally in the enactment of rituals and everyday practices of domesticity and through the collectivisation of shared ideals, and socially through interactions and shared experiences and values within dominant personal networks.<sup>809</sup> Furthermore, this research demonstrates some of the tensions and contradictions at play for gentry men and the dynamics of their masculine gentry identity, where for example, youthful excess was tempered by frugality, or polite sociability was set aside for drunken homosocial gatherings. As such, whilst this research supports patterns of behaviour and masculine traits recorded elsewhere, by charting the balance of these behaviours and their significance across three generations of a single family, this thesis has exposed the cultivation of masculinity in a process, considering the interactions and behaviours of each individual in relation to what came before them. Woven throughout this thesis are examples of how the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family marked themselves out as members of the gentry, distinct from those above and below their social rank. Their place in this complex hierarchy was, however, not solely contingent on wealth but a myriad of factors. Also evident here are some of the 'complex palette of gender archetypes' from which the men of the Spencer and Spencer Stanhope family selected and how these changed over the life course and across generations.<sup>810</sup> This research shows that masculinity was flexible and able to transcend provincial and urban

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<sup>807</sup> Harvey, *The Little Republic*, pp. 169-189.

<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>809</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p. 264.

<sup>810</sup> Stobart and Rothery, *Consumption in the Country House*, p. 265.

differences, yet it was fundamentally insecure and required continual, active reinforcement through the behavioural and material practices of their daily lives.

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