

**Gender and absentee slave-ownership in late
eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain**

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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

I, Hannah Louise Young, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own.
Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been
indicated in the thesis.

Abstract

This thesis explores the relationship between gender, property and power in the context of British slave-ownership in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, working to unpick the categories of slave-owner, 'West Indian' and absentee. It demonstrates how both men and women played crucial roles as transmitters of West Indian property, acting as conduits who helped to facilitate the transmission of slave-based wealth into metropolitan society.

The heart of the thesis is an analysis of qualitative material. It uses Barbadian slave-owner Thomas Lane as a lens through which to interrogate the complicated relationship between absentee slave-ownership and masculinity, exploring how male absentees, unlike many of their literary counterparts, were able to conceive and present themselves as both slave-owners and gentlemen. But it places a particular focus on female absentees, examining the mediations and constraints that these women faced, while also highlighting the ways in which they were able to carve a place for themselves within these always restricted parameters. Looking at Jamaican slave-holder Anna Eliza Grenville, it examines the ways she negotiated her position as a married woman and substantial property owner, as well as situating her slave-ownership within her broader social, political and imperial worlds. Indeed, nearly a quarter of absentees who claimed compensation following the abolition of slavery in 1834 were women. Using the records of the Slave Compensation Commission the thesis examines, where possible, how the most substantial female slave-owners became claimants and how they bequeathed the Caribbean property they owned or compensation they received. Absentee slave-owners were a large and diverse range of people. This thesis demonstrates just some of the many ways that these absentees, male and female, worked to bring slave-ownership 'home' to metropolitan Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

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Introduction

'The Hope estate is very interesting for me, as belonging to dearest Lady Temple, and I examined every thing very particularly'.¹ Reading this line in Maria Nugent's journal, written during her time in Jamaica, prompted questions that would ultimately engender more than four years of research. Who was Lady Temple? How did she become a plantation- and slave-owner? What was the relationship between this Jamaican plantation and the woman who elsewhere appears in Nugent's journal as a kind godmother and close friend? As an undergraduate and Masters student, I had become interested in studying the position of white female colonists, partly because of the way it challenged how I naively thought about what it meant to be a coloniser or imperialist. I continue to find people's responses to thinking about female slave-ownership fascinating. I have a vivid memory of a trip to the cinema to see *Twelve Years a Slave*, released during the first year of my PhD. During one scene Mary Epps, the plantation mistress, threw a glass at an enslaved woman, Patsy, and the audience in the North London cinema screen let out an audible gasp. This was not replicated in any other parts of the film. The violence and torture enacted by Mr Epps did not induce a similar response. It was the behaviour of his wife, dressed in the apparel of a Southern belle, that was particularly shocking. Whilst this film was set in the deep South and not the British Caribbean, I have often been met with similar looks of surprise when I have mentioned to enquirers the subject of my research. It was an interest in exploring how women like Lady Temple and Mary Epps were able to wield authority that initially prompted my interest in gender and slave-ownership and such questions remain pivotal to my research.

This thesis thus began as an examination of female slave-ownership. With some notable exceptions, including Lucille Mathurin Mair, Cecily Jones and Christine Walker, historians have almost exclusively defined slave-ownership, and particularly plantation-ownership, as a masculine prerogative.² Trevor Burnard even went as far as to suggest that 'the Jamaican plantation had no place for women'.³ In making this

¹ Philip Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Mona: University of West Indies Press, 2002), p. 28.

² See pages 43-45 for a summary of the scholarship exploring female slave- and plantation-ownership. Encouragingly, this is a scholarship that is continuing to expand.

³ Trevor Burnard, 'Inheritance and independence: women's status in early colonial Jamaica', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 48:1 (January, 1991), p. 112.

assertion Burnard was echoing the perspective of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave-owners, who almost always conceived of plantation-ownership as a male undertaking. Antiguan plantation-owner Samuel Martin's bestselling manual *Essay Upon Plantership* was dedicated to 'All the Planters of the British Sugar Colonies', described as 'Gentlemen'. In it he offered advice to 'every man ... who wishes to grow rich with ease'.⁴ Similarly, Jamaican slave-owner Thomas Roughley warned of the dangers which faced an absentee who 'seldom or ever visit[s] the island or his estate', arguing that consequently 'he understands little of the resources it possesses'.⁵ Yet the initial results of the first phase of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project, just beginning to come to light whilst I was undertaking my Masters, seemed to tell a very different story. The bald statistic that 41% of claimants to the Slave Compensation Commission were women in many respects conceals as much as it reveals (something examined in more detail in chapter four). But the discovery that significant numbers of early nineteenth-century women were involved in Caribbean plantation- and slave-ownership prompted more questions. How did these women become plantation- and slave-owners? What constraints did they face? How did they wield power within a patriarchal system that restricted them legally, politically and socially? What did it mean for women to own property? What was, or wasn't, different because this included property held in people?

It was in my Masters thesis that I first began to grapple with these questions. After some digging I discovered that Lady Temple inherited the rather paradoxically named Hope plantation, and the more than 350 men, women and children enslaved upon it, from her mother, Anna Eliza Elletson. Elletson was heavily involved with the administration and management of Hope, writing regularly from her London townhouse to her Caribbean attorneys.⁶ I spent several weeks in Jamaica pouring over this correspondence, hoping that I would be able to glean an insight into the mindset of a female absentee slave-owner. Elletson's letters showed that in the practice of absentee slave-ownership the gendered assumptions and expectations of

⁴ Samuel Martin, *An Essay Upon Plantership*, fifth ed. (London, 1773), pp. v-vi, 3.

⁵ Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate...* (London, 1823), p. 19.

⁶ It was through the work of Linda L. Sturtz that I discovered the correspondence of Anna Eliza Elletson. I have found her illuminating research exceptionally helpful. See 'The "Dimduke" and the Duchess of Chandos: gender and power in Jamaican plantation management – a case study or, a different story of "A man [and his wife] from a place called Hope,"' *Revista/Review Interamericana*, 29 (1999), <http://cai.sg.inter.edu/revista-ciscla/volume29/sturtz.pdf> (accessed 26 August 2015).

late eighteenth-century Britain were variously, sometimes even simultaneously, buttressed, modified and undermined. It may now seem obvious, but this was also when it became clear to me that it was important not only to think about how Anna Eliza Elletson's gender influenced her slave-ownership but also how race and class affected her attitudes, assumptions and ultimately her authority. Elletson's considerable wealth, generated almost entirely from this Jamaican plantation and the labour of those enslaved upon it, enabled her to marry into the highest echelons of the English aristocracy. In 1777 she married James Brydges, third Duke of Chandos, and two years later had a daughter, also named Anna Eliza, later to become Lady Temple. The discovery that San Marino's Huntington Library contained extensive material relating to these women left me eager to find out more about the two Anna Elizas and their experiences of slave-ownership, as well as the ways that slavery could be integrated into aristocratic life. It was then that I decided to embark on a PhD centred on female slave-ownership.

When I began my doctoral work I was keen to uncover more case studies of female slave-owners. I began exploring the Newton family papers, aware that for over a decade in the late eighteenth century Staffordshire sisters Elizabeth Newton and Sarah Holte owned two Barbadian plantations. Yet while the contents of the archive confirmed that these women played a significant role in a complicated web of plantation-ownership and inheritance, there was virtually no material relating to their experience as slave-owners. Indeed, a report undertaken by their distant cousin Thomas Lane, after he inherited the plantations in 1794, suggested that they had not paid great attention to their Barbadian property. It was while pondering this, disappointed that the archive had not produced what I had hoped, that I was led in a somewhat surprising direction. What the Newton papers did contain was Lane's extensive correspondence with his Barbadian attorneys, very similar in nature to that of Anna Eliza Elletson. Reading through these letters I was struck by the perfectly obvious point that Lane's correspondence was no less gendered than that of Elletson. I began to realise that a study of the relationship between gender and slave-ownership would be unnecessarily limited without also considering the men who were involved in the enterprise. How did Thomas Lane's position as a white, middle-class, professional man inform his slave-ownership? What kinds of masculinities did Lane make recourse to in the practice of absentee plantation-ownership?

Part of the reason I had become interested in researching female slave-owners was because of the way they challenged most people's idea of what it meant to be a slave-owner and absentee. These women seemed to have little in common with the most prominent 'West Indians' living in Georgian Britain, perhaps the best known of whom was London Lord Mayor William Beckford, target of such opprobrium and ire. Looking at representations of the 'West Indian' within British literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries showed that absentees tended to be depicted either, like Richard Cumberland's outlandish Belcour, as extravagant, luxurious and foppish or, less commonly, as benevolent men of sentiment and feeling. It was clear that Thomas Lane, a London lawyer, did not conform to these stereotypes any more than female absentees. How and why was Lane different from men like these? How does looking at Lane help unpick the category of 'slave-owner'? In what ways does the existence of men like Lane challenge what it meant to be a 'West Indian' absentee? How were these men able to successfully position themselves within metropolitan society as both slave-owners and gentlemen?

The most substantial archival work for this thesis was undertaken during a three-month research trip to the Huntington Library, where the legal, personal and financial papers of the Chandos and Grenville families are held. Although my initial intention was to explore the slave-ownership of both Anna Elizas, I found that the richest and most interesting material within the Stowe Papers pertained to Lady Temple, known throughout the majority of this thesis as Anna Eliza Grenville.⁷ Most of the papers concerning Anna Eliza Elletson/Brydges covered the period from 1791, when she was declared 'a Lunatic'.⁸ Initially it was difficult not to let my imagination run wild — did Anna Eliza Elletson become a real life 'madwoman in the attic', haunted by her experience of slave-ownership?⁹ But the material in the archives, while extensive, hinted little of her experience of 'lunacy', or even of how others perceived her or her behaviour during this time. Instead there were many, many dry legal documents concerning the administration and management of her estates. Yet whilst this

⁷ The rather unoriginal naming practices of the Brydges/Grenvilles can sometimes make discussions of these individuals confusing. The nature of aristocratic life also meant that the younger Anna Eliza's name and title changed not only on her marriage but at several other stages during her life. See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of the exact names and stylings of the members of the Brydges/Grenville family.

⁸ Huntington Library (hereafter HL), Stowe Papers, STB Personal Box 8 (7), Petition for maintenance allowance for Anna Eliza ..., Duchess of Chandos, a lunatic, 1791.

⁹ Sandra Gilber and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

material may not have been exactly what I was looking for it did highlight how important complex legal mechanisms were to understanding her experience of property-ownership. This was something that only seemed to be confirmed when I placed my focus on Anna Eliza Grenville.

Married at sixteen, before she even reached the age of majority, at no stage did Anne Eliza Grenville own Hope exclusively or unconditionally. Instead, it was bound up in an elaborate strict settlement. As I worked my way through the complicated settlement made upon the 1796 marriage of Anna Eliza Brydges and Richard Temple Nugent Grenville the focus of some of my original questions started to shift slightly and new ones began to emerge. How did the fact that Anna Eliza Grenville was a married woman affect her experience of slave-ownership? What did it actually mean for a married woman to own property that was bound up in trusts and settlements? How were women positioned within the complex apparatus of aristocratic property-ownership and transmission? Did aristocratic women even see themselves as property-owners? What was the relationship between law and practice? It was also when reading this extremely long settlement that I realised that this thesis could not simply be about slave-ownership. Hope plantation and 'all Negroes Slaves Stock Utensils and Appurts' were a particularly important part of Anna Eliza's property portfolio and as such were included in the settlement.¹⁰ This was a very specific form of property; these were fellow human beings. But they were settled 'to the same uses' and for the same purposes as the rest of Anna Eliza's landed estates. Those who composed the settlement did not conceive of her enslaved property as in any way distinct from her other forms of property. They were integrated seamlessly into metropolitan modes of ownership and transmission. Whilst it is important that the historian always remembers that owning Caribbean plantations involved possessing a specific form of human property, for many absentees it was impossible to disentangle different forms of property-ownership. Such an understanding reinforces the sense that the histories of Britain and those of the Caribbean cannot be conceived of separately or in isolation. Rather, they were inextricably intertwined.

While combing the Stowe papers I was also keen to explore how exactly slave-ownership figured in the wider lives of those who engaged in it. How did it contribute

¹⁰ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p. 27.

to an individual's construction of his or her wider sense of self? In many respects the fruits of my archival research were surprising, neither what I expected nor really wanted. Although the collection contained substantial material relating to Anna Eliza Grenville, including diaries, commonplace books and extensive personal and business correspondence, there was very little that related directly to her experiences as a slave-owner or reflected her opinions about the institution of slavery. This is not to suggest it was unimportant to her, as I will show in chapters two and three. Neither do I think it can simply be attributed to the fact that she was a married woman. Her mother, after all, remained actively involved in the management of Hope long after she remarried. However, this relative paucity of material that related directly to slavery and slave-ownership did mean that I needed to think about the subject more holistically. In what ways did — and didn't — Anna Eliza Grenville's slave-ownership inform her metropolitan life? What was the place of slave-ownership with her wider social, political and imperial networks? That slave-ownership was only one facet of Anna Eliza Grenville's identity should not diminish its significance. On the contrary, investigating the variety of ways absentees like Grenville acted in the world helps to expand our understanding of British slave-ownership and its impact on the development of nineteenth-century Britain and the wider British Empire. Hers was just one example of the many ways that slave-ownership could be integrated into the lives of metropolitan men and women, and by extension into metropolitan society.

Anna Eliza Grenville was, of course, just one woman, and a relatively unusual woman at that. Born into the highest ranks of the British aristocracy, her sizeable inheritance made her one of the country's wealthiest heiresses. She cannot therefore be seen as representative of female slave-owners as a whole. A broader analysis of the records of the Slave Compensation Commission, however, enabled me to situate Anna Eliza within a wider context of female slave-ownership.

The Slave Compensation Commission was established in 1833 to facilitate the process of awarding compensation to slave-owners following the abolition of slavery in the British Caribbean, Mauritius and the Cape. Their records provide details of all those who claimed and were awarded compensation for the loss of their enslaved property. One of the most remarkable findings to emerge from the research of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership team, who mined and digitised these records, was the previously mentioned statistic that 41% of claimants to the Slave

Compensation Commission were women.¹¹ This was something that I was keen to probe further. My initial questions were mainly quantitative in nature. What proportion of absentee slave-owners were female? How was the proportion of female slave-owners affected by the size of the claim? Were there differences across colonies?

The LBS team also demonstrated that individuals could claim compensation in a variety of forms: as owners but also as trustees and executors, mortgagees and creditors, annuitants and legatees.¹² I was also keen therefore to try to discern the kinds of relationships that these female claimants and beneficiaries had with their enslaved property. Of particular interest were the women who were among the almost 4,000 absentees living in metropolitan Britain. Who were these women? How did they appear in the compensation records? What was the nature of their 'ownership'? Some slave-owners, like Anna Eliza Grenville, did not even appear in the compensation records or only did so very obliquely, as beneficiaries of trusts. To what extent might the compensation records have actually hidden or obscured female involvement in slave-ownership? What I was not aware of when I began this research was just how difficult, sometimes impossible, disentangling these different forms of property relations would be. It is clear that women across Britain were involved in slave-ownership and that these women were not just aristocrats but 'ordinary' members of the growing middle classes. These women had very different, often heavily mediated, relationships with their enslaved property. This complicates the way we think about female property-ownership and opens up further the question of what it actually meant to be a slave-owner in early nineteenth-century Britain.

In this thesis I use the experiences of individual slave-owning women and, with the example of Thomas Lane, men, to explore the relationship between gender and slave-ownership in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Yet as my research has progressed I have increasingly realised that it is insufficient to think about slave-ownership only through the prism of the individual. This has partly come about because of the discoveries I made in the archive. Slave-owners like Anna Eliza Grenville, Thomas Lane or the women who claimed slave compensation need to be

¹¹ Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 36. The project will hereafter be referred to as LBS.

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 256-257.

situated firmly within the familial networks in which they were embedded. This is true both when thinking about inheritance and the transmission of property and the practice of slave-ownership itself. In emphasising the primacy of family I have also been strongly influenced by wider historiographical developments that have occurred within the field of 'new imperial history'. Case studies by Adele Perry and Emma Rothschild have shown the strength of using the family as a unit of analysis when studying British imperial worlds.¹³ Furthermore, the 2013 special edition of the *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* demonstrated how important thinking about the family is to understanding imperial processes, practices and formations in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁴

This thesis thus uses British slave-ownership as a lens through which to explore the relationship between gender, property and power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It shows how both men and women played crucial roles as transmitters of West Indian property, acting as conduits who facilitated the transmission of slave-based wealth into metropolitan society. In this way the ownership of enslaved people was integrated into metropolitan forms of property-ownership and transmission, itself organised along gender lines. There is no doubting the overwhelming dominance of the patriarchal system in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain but it is also clear that there was some room for negotiation, with women's gendered identities always intersecting with those relating to race, class and family. This thesis explores what it meant — materially, legally, symbolically — for women, and to a lesser extent men, to own property, both metropolitan and colonial, landed and in the form of other human beings, complicating our ideas about what it meant to be a slave-owner. It is clear that for both women and men familial relationships lay at the heart of the practice and transmission of slave-ownership, with the family serving as a concept, structure and network that could both offer opportunities and limitations.

Undertaken in conjunction with the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project (now the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership), this thesis demonstrates some of the many ways that slave-ownership could be integrated into

¹³ See pages 41-42.

¹⁴ Esme Cleall, Laura Ishiguro and Emily J. Manktelow, 'Imperial relations: histories of the family in the British Empire', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 14:1 (Spring, 2013), n. pag.

the lives of metropolitan Britons, thereby contributing to the project's efforts to 'reinscribe slave-ownership onto modern British history'.¹⁵ In 1884 an editorial in *The Times* declared that 'there is no nobler chapter in the history of English freedom than that which ended ... in the emancipation of every slave within the Imperial dominions of the British crown' and such triumphalist descriptions of abolition have continued to reflect the way Britain has viewed itself, as a benevolent, freedom-loving 'anti-slavery nation'.¹⁶ As recently as September 2015, the British Prime Minister David Cameron, whilst in Jamaica, proclaimed that 'Slavery was and is abhorrent in all its forms ... Britain is proud to have ... led the way in its abolition'.¹⁷ This self-congratulatory narrative obscures Britain's more than two hundred year involvement in building and maintaining slave societies in the Caribbean and elsewhere, as well as in the trade of people which sustained them. As a consequence of the efforts of the LBS team, along with those of other academics and local and community historians across the country and globe, there does appear to be a growing public awareness of the importance of recognising the ways that slavery shaped British society. But my own experience of meeting individuals within heritage organisations – many of whom remain reluctant, scared even, to engage with histories of slavery that disrupt a romanticised narrative about the nation's past – suggests that there is still a long way to go.

Historiography

Women and property

By marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs every thing.¹⁸

¹⁵ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶ Cited in J. R. Oldfield, *Chords of Freedom: Commemoration, Ritual and British Transatlantic Slavery* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 90; Richard Huzzey, *Freedom Burning: Anti-Slavery and Empire in Victorian Britain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 5-20.

¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 30/09/17, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/30/jamaica-should-move-on-from-painful-legacy-of-slavery-says-cameron> (accessed 6/12/16).

¹⁸ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England, Vol. I*, 17th ed. (London, 1830), p. 441.

This exploration of gender and slave-ownership is fundamentally rooted in wider debates about gender and property. William Blackstone's quotation has long dominated discussions of women and property in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. Repeatedly reasserted in contemporary legal treatises, by the end of the twentieth century Blackstone's comments on the disabling aspects of coverture had become 'a historiographical commonplace', underpinning arguments which emphasised the restrictions placed on women's property-ownership and economic activity before the late nineteenth century.¹⁹ Historians including Lee Holcombe, Susan Dwyer Amussen and Mary Lyndon Shanley emphasised the impact of the common law principle of coverture on married women's (in)ability to own property. They showed how, upon marriage, a woman's property immediately came under the legal control of her husband, as did any property she might subsequently obtain. Although a wife's land could not be disposed of without her agreement, it was her husband who enjoyed the profits, whilst also enjoying complete rights to any of her personal property or moveable goods. Neither could she, as a 'femme covert', make a will without her husband's consent. Under common law, therefore, a married woman simply did not exist as an independent legal entity.²⁰ In highlighting the restrictions married women faced, these late twentieth-century feminist historians echoed the arguments of their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century counterparts. 'Who made man the exclusive judge', lamented Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792, proclaiming that the restrictions placed on women's civil and political rights made them 'convenient slaves'.²¹

Yet, although ideologically powerful, the principle of coverture was never all-encompassing and in practice its implementation was fragmentary. The system of equity, which first emerged in the fifteenth century, was designed to alleviate the severity of the common law and was a means through which coverture could be

¹⁹ Margot Finn, 'Women, consumption and coverture in England, c. 1760-1860', *The Historical Journal*, 39:3 (September, 1996), p. 705.

²⁰ Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 18; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 72; Mary Lyndon Shanley, *Feminism, Marriage and the Law in Victorian England, 1850-1895* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 8-9.

²¹ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication on the Rights of Woman; with strictures on political and moral subjects* (London, 1792), pp. ix-x.

evaded.²² Originally created to protect landed estates, by the early nineteenth century trusts were being widely used by the growing middle classes; in 1857 Attorney General Richard Bethel described the trust as 'one of the most ordinary relations of life ... among the most common and the most necessary'.²³ Trusts were used by many of the men and women examined in this thesis, from aristocrats like Anna Eliza Grenville to rector's daughter Mary Chandler. There has been considerable historiographical debate, however, about the ultimate purpose of the trust. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued that trusts provided a way for men to manipulate and control women's assets.²⁴ While trusts may ostensibly have made married women property-owners, as Alistair Owens's study of Stockport wills has shown, their terms could be very restrictive.²⁵ Women *might* have received the profits from properties held in trust but they only possessed circumscribed powers over them. Only rarely were women given property held in trust absolutely, or provided with the power to bequeath it as they might have wished.²⁶ Maxine Berg, however, has argued that trusts were not primarily about men controlling women's property but rather a means of ensuring property remained in the hands of a woman's family intact. Protecting a woman's 'sole and separate estate' meant that it could not be used, for example, to pay off a husband's debts or lost in the case of his bankruptcy. It could, in at least some cases, 'ensure women's independent use of their wealth'.²⁷ Ultimately, trusts could simultaneously be both controlling and liberating. Whilst they certainly imposed the wishes and controls of deceased

²² Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 26. As both Erickson and Finn have highlighted, the security offered by the laws of equity was only available to the wealthiest members of society, although there were many other less formal legal practices used to protect married women's property interests. Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp. 103-104; Finn, 'Women, consumption and coverture', pp. 719-720.

²³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 209; HC Deb 21st May 1857 vol. 145, col. 673 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1857/may/21/leave> (accessed 09/03/17).

²⁴ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 210.

²⁵ Alistair Owens, 'Property, gender and the life course: inheritance and family welfare provision in early nineteenth-century England', *Social History*, 26:3 (October, 2001), pp. 309-313.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 312.

²⁷ Maxine Berg, 'Women's property and the Industrial Revolution', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 24:2 (Autumn, 1993), pp. 240-241, 249.

husbands, fathers and brothers — although also mothers and aunts — they could also provide women with some limited economic independence and proprietorship.²⁸

Propertied married women, often aided by men, could thus challenge, undermine and elude the constraints of coverture.²⁹ Neither was this only possible through making recourse to the courts of equity or other legal practices. Much of the most recent work on married women's property-ownership has focused on the disjunctures between formal legal codes and women's everyday experiences of property-ownership. Both Amy Erickson and Joanne Bailey have shown how early modern women continued to see themselves as owners of the property they brought to marriage, regardless of the formal legal situation.³⁰ Danaya C. Wright has demonstrated how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women regularly employed 'informal modes of resistance' to defy coverture and exert control over property.³¹ This work has been particularly useful in helping me think about the symbolic and material, as well as legal, aspects of property-ownership. Nevertheless, it is important not to downplay the impact of coverture on married women's experiences of property-ownership and it seems excessive to suggest, as Allyson M. Poska has done, that 'rigid patriarchal ideologies [were] incompatible with the realities of daily life'.³² As Tim Stretton and Krista J. Kesselring have highlighted, there is a danger that placing so much emphasis on the gap between legal codes and lived reality risks 'misunderstanding coverture and underestimating its power'.³³ Intriguingly, they suggest that it was the very flexibility of coverture that accounted for its remarkable persistence over seven centuries.³⁴ Margaret Hunt has provided perhaps the best

²⁸ R. J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 263.

²⁹ Finn, 'Women, consumption and coverture', pp. 719-720.

³⁰ Amy Louise Erickson, 'Possession — and the other one-tenth of the law: assessing women's ownership and economic roles in early modern England', *Women's History Review*, 16:3 (July, 2007), p. 379; Joanne Bailey, 'Favoured or oppressed? Married women, property and 'coverture' in England, 1660-1800', *Continuity and Change*, 17:3 (2002), p. 363.

³¹ Danaya C. Wright, 'Coverture and women's agency: informal modes of resistance to legal patriarchy', in Tim Stretton and Krista J. Kesselring (eds.), *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), pp. 241-242.

³² Allyson M. Poska, 'Upending patriarchy: rethinking family and marriage in Early Modern Europe', in Allyson M. Poska, Jane Couchman and Katherine A. McIver (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 200.

³³ Tim Stretton and Krista J. Kesselring, 'Introduction: coverture and continuity', in Stretton and Kesselring (eds.), *Married Women and the Law*, p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 5.

summary of the position of married women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain and one that encapsulates the experiences of many of the women discussed in this thesis: 'Female agency was real; so were the inward and outward barriers to its exercise'.³⁵

Over the last decade or so a rapidly expanding scholarship has explored the contribution of middle-class and propertied women to the industrial, financial and commercial transformation of British society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³⁶ These are exactly the sorts of women who appear in the records of the Slave Compensation Commission. Nicola Phillips has stressed that despite facing legal constraints, exclusion from formal business organisations and the dominance of domestic ideologies, female businesswomen 'remained a significant, if not always visible, part of England's expanding economy'.³⁷ Allison Kay and Hannah Barker have shown that both single and married women were important economic agents, engaged in extensive commercial and entrepreneurial activities, including in both 'feminine' sectors like retail, textiles and accommodation and, less extensively, in sectors traditionally regarded as 'male' including manufacturing, auctioneering and transport.³⁸ Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford have argued that there were 'few, if any, economic spheres from which women were completely absent', with Christine Wiskin even going as far as to suggest that credit transactions in the eighteenth century were undertaken by men and women 'on gender neutral lines'.³⁹

³⁵ Margaret Hunt, 'Wives and marital 'rights' in the Court of Exchequer in the early eighteenth century', in Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (eds.), *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 124.

³⁶ Alistair Owens, 'A hidden investment? Women and business in England, c. 1750-1900', English language version of 'Una inverió oculta? Dones i empresa a Anglaterra, 1750-1900', *Recerques: Historia, economia y cultura*, 56 (2007), pp. 61-89, available at <http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/staff/4389.pdf> (accessed 24/11/16).

³⁷ Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 261.

³⁸ Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Allison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c. 1800-1870* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

³⁹ Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford, 'Introduction', in Anne Laurence, Josephine Maltby and Janette Rutterford (eds.), *Women and their Money, 1700-1950* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009,) p. 10; Christine Wiskin, 'Businesswomen and financial management: three eighteenth-century case studies', *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, 16:2 (July, 2006), p. 143.

Yet while these works have been important in making economically active women more visible and demonstrating the scope of their endeavours, Alistair Owens is right to draw attention to the danger of simplifying women's economic experiences.⁴⁰ He has suggested that placing an exclusive emphasis on women's economic agency risks generalising and giving 'the impression that gender did not really matter'.⁴¹ Instead, he proposed that studying families and networks, and emphasising the diffuseness of economic agency, might be a more fruitful avenue for examining the contribution of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women (and men) to the worlds of finance, commerce and trade. He also invited historians to explore further the ways ideas about gender were contested, manifesting themselves differently in different historical situations.⁴² Kathryn Gleadle's recent examination of Janet Taylor, a teacher of navigation and maritime businesswoman in Victorian London, adopted exactly this perspective. Her use of a specific case study enabled an analysis of 'the unstable presentation of gender identities' which underpinned Taylor's endeavours.⁴³ Gleadle showed how Taylor's approach to promotion both used and undercut gendered discourses, often in unusual ways. Developing a strong occupational identity which, unlike that of her male counterparts, was rooted in a distinctly imperial context allowed her to carve out a space for herself in an industry becoming both increasingly professionalised and male.⁴⁴ While it is important not to overstate women's economic agency — just as it necessary not to ignore it — this example shows that interesting developments are continuing to be made in the ways historians expand and complicate understandings of women's economic activity. It is the studies that accept both the existence and complexity of women's business and commercial experiences that I have found particularly useful when thinking about how female slave-owners interacted with their property, whether located in Britain or the Caribbean and in the form of land, goods or people.

In *Women and their Money, 1700-1950* Laurence, Maltby and Rutterford posited that women comprised between 5 and 15 per cent of businesspeople, investors and

⁴⁰ Robert Beachy, Béatrice Criag and Alistair Owens, 'Introduction', in Robert Beachy, Béatrice Criag and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Women, Business and Finance in Nineteenth-century Europe*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 11.

⁴¹ Owens, 'A hidden investment?', p. 34.

⁴² *Ibid*, pp. 35-46.

⁴³ Kathryn Gleadle, 'The riches and treasures of other countries': women, empire and maritime expertise in early Victorian London', *Gender and History*, 25:1 (April, 2013), p. 8.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 13, 14, 18.

'financial decision-makers' in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain.⁴⁵ Whilst these broad figures mask the changes in women's economic activity over a long chronological period, they do echo those found in more in-depth studies of female investors. Mark Freeman, Robin Pearson and James Taylor's analysis of 86 eighteenth- and nineteenth-century stock companies demonstrated that women made up 10.6% of an aggregate 41,450 stockholders. They show that female stockholding was most extensive in the eighteenth century, declining around the turn of the century, with levels increasing again in the 1830s. By the 1840s women constituted around 20% of shareholders.⁴⁶ Rutterford and Maltby have highlighted that the dichotomy between 'active' male and 'passive' female investment is a simplistic and often inaccurate one, showing that some women were involved in the purchase and sale of stocks for capital gain. Yet they also illustrated that the majority of women chose investments that were less risky and offered a more secure return.⁴⁷ Their low risk-nature meant that government bonds were a particularly common form of investment for women.⁴⁸ As Benjamin Disraeli allegedly pronounced, there was nothing like 'the sweet simplicity of the three per cents'.⁴⁹ Although they generally held smaller investments than their male counterparts, David R. Green and Alistair Owens have shown that women, most of them widowed or never married, constituted 34.7% of total investors in government securities in 1810. By 1840 this proportion had risen to 47.2%.⁵⁰ Green and Owens have argued that this extensive female investment in government bonds suggests that women were 'not on the margins of property-ownership ... but at the centre of a system of public finance that provided the government with revenues for imperial expansion and warfare'. Yet they also emphasised that this was a form of income-provision that fitted comfortably within

⁴⁵ Laurence, Maltby and Rutterford, 'Introduction', in Laurence, Maltby and Rutterford (eds.), *Women and their Money*, p. 10.

⁴⁶ Mark Freeman, Robin Pearson & James Taylor, 'A doe in the city': women shareholders in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain', *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, 16:2 (2006), pp. 268, 271-272.

⁴⁷ Janette Rutterford and Josephine Maltby, "'The widow, the clergyman and the reckless": women investors in England, 1830-1914', *Feminist Economics*, 12:1-2 (January/April, 2006), pp. 126, 113-114.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 122.

⁴⁹ Cited in David Kynaston, *The City of London: Volume I, A World of Its Own, 1815-1890* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1999), p. 16.

⁵⁰ David R. Green and Alistair Owens, 'Gentlewomanly capitalism? Spinsters, widows and wealth-holding in England and Wales, c. 1800-1860', *Economic History Review*, 56:3 (August, 2003), pp. 524, 531.

contemporary expectations for middle-class women, offering both domestic and financial security.⁵¹

In contrast to the extensive scholarship concerning women's economic activities comparatively little research has been undertaken on the land-ownership of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women. Inspired by the pioneering work of Amy Erickson, scholars of early modern Britain, including Jane Whittle and Amanda Capern, have examined female land-ownership more extensively than those of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century Britain. Capern's recent work on women, land and the family in early modern England, in which she investigates the complexity of ideas about ownership and possession, has been particularly influential in helping me think about the ways Grenville conceived her property-ownership.⁵² Increasingly, however, attention is being paid to women's role as landowners in the later period. Joan Heggie is currently undertaking an examination of the North Riding Register of Deeds, exploring Yorkshire women's involvement with, and ownership of, property since the late eighteenth century.⁵³ Janet Casson has also recently used evidence from books of reference to show that in the four nineteenth-century English regions she examined (Oxfordshire, County Durham, West Yorkshire and the London area) women owned on average 12.4% of plots of land.⁵⁴

Historians are also increasingly exploring the broader contributions women made to the economic affairs of landed estates.⁵⁵ Almost twenty years ago K. D. Reynolds

⁵¹ Ibid, pp. 525, 529-530.

⁵² Erickson, *Women and Property*; Jane Whittle, 'Inheritance, marriage, widowhood and remarriage: a comparative perspective on women and landholding in north-east Norfolk, England, 1440-1580', *Continuity and Change* 13:1 (1998), pp. 33-72; Amanda Capern 'The landed woman in Early Modern England', *Parergon*, 19:1 (2002), pp. 185-214; Amanda Capern, 'Women, land and family in Early Modern England', Unpublished paper presented at *Women and Gender in Early Modern Britain and Ireland: A Conference in Honour of Anne Laurence*, Institute of Historical Research, 4th June 2016.

⁵³ Joan Heggie, 'Exploring women's involvement with property in the North Riding of Yorkshire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: a pilot study using the Register of Deeds', Unpublished paper presented at *Women, Land and the Making of the British Landscape*, University of Hull, 29th June 2015.

⁵⁴ Janet Casson, 'Women's landownership in England in the nineteenth century', in Mark Casson and Nigar Hashimzade (eds.), *Large Databases in Economic History: Research Methods and Case Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 212.

⁵⁵ Several papers at the 13th Annual Historic Houses of Ireland Conference, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 11th-12th May 2015 also explored the industriousness and estate management of eighteenth and nineteenth-century landed women, including those by Anne Casement, Aintzane Legarreta Mentxaka, Judith Hill, Damien Duffy and Fiona White.

argued that neglecting women's involvement in estate business involves ignoring a crucial component of the management of rural society. She argued that although nineteenth-century women may only rarely have been formally involved in estate management, they were regularly expected to play an economically active role in the family business, whether as significant landowners in their own right or representing absent husbands or infant sons.⁵⁶ More recently, Briony McDonagh has also emphasised the significance of women's superintendence of landed property. She framed her examination of four Nottinghamshire women's involvement in estate management, enclosure, agricultural improvement and landscaping as helping to secure 'women's rightful place' in the social and economic history of the eighteenth century. Her forthcoming monograph promises to further deepen our understanding of elite women's contribution to the management of agricultural estates.⁵⁷ In a recent survey of the field Amy Erickson encouraged historians to stop emphasising the exceptionalism of female property-owners and managers, suggesting that doing so risks reinforcing a whiggish perspective of women's history and perpetuating the very narratives many are trying to destabilise.⁵⁸ While the size and extent of Anna Eliza Grenville's landholding may have been unusual, these studies are important in helping to situate her within a much wider world of female land-ownership.

The relative paucity of in-depth examinations of women's land-ownership and estate management in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries stands in stark contrast to the extensive scholarship concerning women's political activity in this period. Although the political world was largely imagined to be male, over the last few decades numerous scholars have shown the many ways that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women engaged with politics.⁵⁹ As Sarah Richardson recently remarked, debates are now less concerned with the question of *whether* women could participate in political life, but how they did so and the nature and scale of this

⁵⁶ K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), pp. 43-44.

⁵⁷ Briony A. K. McDonagh, 'Women, enclosure and estate improvement in eighteenth-century Northamptonshire', *Rural History*, 20:2 (2009), pp. 144, 158. Briony McDonagh's *Elite Women and the Agricultural Landscape: Beyond the Park Pale, 1700-1830* will be published by Routledge in June 2017.

⁵⁸ Amy Erickson, 'Rethinking the significance of inheritance and marriage in landholding', Unpublished keynote address presented at *Women, Land and the Making of the British Landscape*, University of Hull, 30th June 2015.

⁵⁹ Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 12-13.

involvement.⁶⁰ This broad acceptance of female political participation has partly arisen because understandings of what constitutes the political have expanded, becoming more inclusive.⁶¹ It is now recognised that the Houses of Parliament were just one site of political expression. Homes, salons and the streets were also spaces where political identities and endeavours were formed, revealed and negotiated. Women's political activity, however, was always contested. Women, after all, continued to be excluded from the formal edifices of political power, with the 1832 Reform Act officially enshrining political citizenship as a masculine privilege.⁶² In her brilliant examination of the political engagement of nineteenth-century women, Kathryn Gleadle argued that women were 'borderline citizens'. She showed that although women's everyday political participation was rich and varied their positions, and indeed their own political subjectivities, 'were often fragile and contingent', shot through with ambiguity and contradiction.⁶³ It is important, therefore, to recognise that women's status as political actors was fraught and unstable, underpinned by shifting, often conflicting, ideas about gender that were nevertheless rooted in bedrock assumptions about women's subordinate status.⁶⁴

As the example of Anna Eliza Grenville shows, gendered political identities always intersected with those of class. Much — although by no means all — of the scholarship regarding women's political involvement has focussed on the political agency of elite, and often aristocratic, women. K. D. Reynolds was one of the first who sought to challenge the long-held assumption among historians of the British aristocracy that 'wealth, status [and] power' were 'masculine assets and attributes'.⁶⁵ She demonstrated that aristocratic women participated in both local and national politics, not on equal terms with their fathers, husbands and brothers, but often in

⁶⁰ Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 1.

⁶¹ Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson 'Introduction: The Petticoat in Politics: Women and Authority', in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p.8.

⁶² Catherine Hall, 'The rule of difference: gender, class and empire in the making of the 1832 Reform Act', in Ida Blom, Karen Hagemann and Catherine Hall (eds.), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 125.

⁶³ Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 10, 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 25, 10.

⁶⁵ David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 7. Cannadine used this assumption to justify his failure to include many women in his book, admitting that it was a 'seemingly chauvinistic approach' and that 'there is an urgent need for more women's history of upper-class women'.

collaboration with them.⁶⁶ She suggested that although within their own families their position as women was paramount, 'in relation to the rest of the world, they were aristocrats first and last'.⁶⁷ Although not all aristocratic women engaged in politics, in a world where political, social and familial interests were intertwined, elite women were often expected to play a role in political life, whether through participating in salons, establishing networks and alliances, campaigning during elections or coordinating relationships of patronage.⁶⁸ Politicisation was, Elaine Chalus has argued, 'inescapable for the women of the political elite'.⁶⁹ Yet although wealth, property and privilege could confer on elite women a political agency simply unavailable to the majority of the population, this capacity for political engagement always remained restrained.⁷⁰

Within elite society women's political participation was largely accepted if conceived as familial. Elaine Chalus has shown how women, as wives, daughters and sisters, were expected to endeavour to help further their families' political interests.⁷¹ The family was thus a significant political unit that enabled aristocratic women to undertake important political 'work' and conceive themselves as fully-fledged members of the political nation.⁷² Yet ideas about who or what constituted the family were not fixed or stable. As Kathryn Gleadle has argued, families were 'not monolithic entities' but complex bodies, 'subject to the play of personalities, changing fortunes, individual development, and shifts in circumstance'.⁷³ Family could mean different things to women at different times — perhaps particularly for married women who might find they had allegiances to both their birth and conjugal families — and this had the potential to change the manner and nature of their always precarious political engagement. Collective and individual political identities could coalesce but they did not necessarily do so, certainly not all the time. Thus, while family could offer the possibility of political activity, it could also limit the terms of this

⁶⁶ Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society*, p. 25.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p. 17; Gleadle and Richardson, 'Introduction', in Gleadle and Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics*, p. 13.

⁶⁹ Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, p. 21.

⁷⁰ Amanda Vickery, 'Introduction', in Amanda Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 2.

⁷¹ Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, pp. 13, 23.

⁷² Judith S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Late Georgian England* (London: Routledge, 2003).

⁷³ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 93.

engagement. Women who transgressed the boundaries of acceptable political behaviour could face severe reproof, as the regularly-cited case of the Duchess of Devonshire demonstrates.⁷⁴ Indeed, although the family provided a space for elite women's political engagement this was not universally accepted. 'It is among Peeresses and the wives of Members of Parliament ... that we are to look for the persons whom the rage of politics seizes first', Thomas Gisborne warned in 1797, suggesting that once women 'catch the passions of the other sex, and are transformed into professed partizans' they 'generally exceed their husbands in violence, and bitterness, and a prying spirit'.⁷⁵ Women's political identities, subjectivities and actions always remained fraught, tense and uneven.

Men and masculinities

This thesis is not only concerned with examining female slave-owners but also in exploring the broader ways that gender operated in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. Gender, as defined by Joan Wallach Scott in her seminal 1986 article is both 'a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and ... a primary way of signifying relationships of power'.⁷⁶ Yet while the experiences of 'dead white men' have hardly been ignored in historical writing, it is only comparatively recently that historians have begun to recognise that men were also 'gendered subjects'.⁷⁷ Since the 1990s, inspired by the pioneering work of Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall and John Tosh, historians have begun to explore the ways that men conceived and positioned themselves *as men*. This scholarship has shown that what it meant to be 'masculine' has always been socially, culturally and historically contingent. Masculinities have never been all-encompassing, fixed or stable but rather have been informed by a variety of ideas,

⁷⁴ Those who have debated what provoked such an extreme reaction to the Duchess of Devonshire's conduct during the 1784 general election include: Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society*, pp. 131-132; Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 242-248; Judith S. Lewis '1784 and all that: aristocratic women and electoral politics', in Vickery (ed.), *Women Privilege and Power*, pp. 89-122; Amanda Foreman, *Georgiana: Duchess of Devonshire* (London: Harper Collins, 1999).

⁷⁵ Thomas Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (London, 1797), pp. 322-323.

⁷⁶ Joan Wallach Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91:5 (December, 1986), p. 1067.

⁷⁷ Michael Roper and John Tosh, 'Introduction: historians and the politics of masculinity', in Michael Roper and John Tosh (eds.), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 1.

identities and practices and constituted in ways that were both raced and classed. The study of historical masculinities is not simply about examining cultural modes or individual or collective identities but exploring the ways constructions of masculinity have been bound up with the operation of power.⁷⁸

Examinations of eighteenth-century masculinities have largely focussed on exploring the cultural codes which worked to construct ideals of (elite) male behaviour and in particular ideas about 'politeness'.⁷⁹ The polite and refined gentleman, Michele Cohen has argued, embodied the 'hegemonic masculinity' of the period.⁸⁰ Although its polymorphous nature meant that it has been a difficult concept to define, politeness was principally associated with 'form, sociability, improvement, worldliness and gentility' and has variously been used to characterise individual behaviour, social interaction and a wider urban culture.⁸¹ Whilst he emphasised that polite manliness was not a fixed or stable category, Philip Carter has contended that the concept of politeness had a dramatic impact on notions of ideal manly behaviour. He showed how the polite gentleman was supposed to be compassionate, sociable and generous, a member of mixed as well as all-male society, rooting his manliness in the adoption of qualities like self-control and sense for sociable purposes.⁸² Paul Langford has suggested that the very essence of politeness was deemed to be 'that je ne sais quoi which distinguished the innate gentleman's understanding of what made for civilized conduct'.⁸³ Towards the end of the eighteenth century the concern that demonstrations of politeness could be affective, fake and insincere led to the rise of a culture of sensibility, although Carter has stressed that there was no clear distinction between polite and sentimental ideas about manliness.⁸⁴ Notions of politeness were not so much rejected as modified, G. J. Barker-Benfield has argued,

⁷⁸ Karen Harvey and Alexandra Shepard, 'What have historians done with masculinity? Reflections on five centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), p. 276.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁸⁰ Michele Cohen "'Manners" make the man: politeness, chivalry, and the construction of masculinity, 1750-1830', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), p. 312. The term 'hegemonic masculinity' was one initially coined by sociologist R. W. Connell. R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1995), p. 77.

⁸¹ Lawrence E. Klein, 'Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century', *Historical Journal*, 45:4 (2002) p. 896-898.

⁸² Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), pp. 1-12.

⁸³ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 71.

⁸⁴ Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, p. 93.

increasingly infused with spiritual and moral values.⁸⁵ These ideas continued to have an important impact on the way that men conceived themselves, as ‘gentlemen’.

Yet ideas about masculinity have never been monolithic or stable.⁸⁶ As Karen Harvey has highlighted, it is important not to place too much emphasis on the significance of polite ideals. Critiquing the historiographical dominance of politeness engendered by cultural historians, Harvey has called for more attention to be paid to ‘status, sorts and class’ in the construction of eighteenth-century masculinities. This includes interrogating who could, and could not, be considered ‘polite’ and why, but also recognising the existence of alternative kinds of masculinities which could operate in isolation from ideas about politeness.⁸⁷ In her own work investigating the relationship between domesticity and masculinity in the eighteenth century Harvey declared that ‘power, rather than politeness, is the key theme of this study’.⁸⁸ The interrelationship between social and gendered relations of power has been explored more extensively in examinations of nineteenth-century masculinities. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, in their seminal 1987 book *Family Fortunes*, showed how ideas about masculinity — and femininity — were closely tied to the formation of class identities. In work subsequently built upon by John Tosh, they demonstrated how the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the entrenchment of a particular kind of entrepreneurial, individualistic middle-class masculinity associated, on the one hand, with a strong work ethic and, on the other, with domesticity and the ability to be the head of a household.⁸⁹ While Tosh has contended that there was a clear distinction between notions of gentlemanliness, associated with politeness, and manliness, associated with individualism and work, the example of Thomas Lane has led me to think not just about how ideas about different kinds of masculinities could diverge but also how they could coalesce and intersect.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xvii.

⁸⁶ Matthew McCormack, ‘Men, ‘the public’ and political history’, in Matthew McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 17.

⁸⁷ Karen Harvey, ‘The history of masculinity, circa 1650-1800’, *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), pp. 306-307.

⁸⁸ Karen Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 16.

⁸⁹ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. xv; John Tosh, ‘Masculinities in an industrializing society: Britain, 1800-1914’, *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), p. 331; John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005).

⁹⁰ Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p. 86.

Indeed, there is little agreement about exactly what it meant to be a gentleman in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Certainly, it was a term that during the eighteenth century lost its precise definition denoting a man born into the nobility or landed gentry, with a right to a coat of arms.⁹¹ Yet although it was increasingly used by a much wider strata of society the social implications of the term remained important. It implied not only social exclusivity but the ability to own land. However, Lawrence Klein has argued that men who would have traditionally failed to fulfil the criteria of gentlemanly status increasingly defined themselves as such through situating themselves within polite society. Peter Borsay has even suggested that any man could become a gentleman, irrespective of his background, as long as he looked the part and behaved in the correct manner.⁹² In this respect, gentlemanliness was as much a cultural marker as a social one.⁹³ Yet while Tosh has suggested that long into the nineteenth century 'politeness was the hallmark of the gentleman', it is important to emphasise that gentlemanliness was not necessarily synonymous with politeness but rather could be a much more elusive concept.⁹⁴ Peter Earle and Nicholas Rogers have highlighted the increasing respectability of the trading and mercantile professions, with the latter suggesting that as the eighteenth century progressed 'gentleman-merchants were no longer a misnomer'.⁹⁵ Indeed David Hancock has shown how transatlantic merchants adopted a variety of 'improving' practices in an attempt to be seen as gentlemen.⁹⁶ Acquiring gentlemanly status involved a complicated mix of social, cultural and economic factors. Polite behaviour was important but so were family, income, occupation, and character.⁹⁷

That masculinities could take multiple forms is indicated by the diverse use of the concept of honour, itself often connected with gentlemanliness. Antony Fletcher has

⁹¹ Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p. 65.

⁹² Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), p. 226.

⁹³ Klein, 'Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century', p. 876. The two, of course, were interrelated rather than completely distinct.

⁹⁴ Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, p. 86.

⁹⁵ Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London: Methuen, 1989), pp. 7-8; Nicholas Rogers, 'Money, land and lineage: the big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', *Social History*, 4:3 (October, 1979), p. 446.

⁹⁶ David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 279.

⁹⁷ Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century English Society: Shuttles and Swords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 23.

argued that the notion of honour, associated with the noble ideals of chivalry, courage and reputation, was fundamental to elite conceptions of masculinity in the period before 1700.⁹⁸ He suggested that as politeness became an increasingly important mark of gentility this code of honour came to be seen as archaic and outmoded, out of kilter with a society increasingly dominated by the commercial middle classes.⁹⁹ However, John Smail has shown that honour needs to be conceived of more broadly, not just as part of the self-definition of the landed elites. Instead, he very convincingly located the concept within a commercial and mercantile world.¹⁰⁰ Exploring the relationship between economic activity and cultural identity, Smail suggested that in the fraught world of eighteenth-century commerce, where financial risks were taken on a daily basis, the individuals involved used a language of honour and credit to conceive of their relationships with others. This occurred both in the way they presented themselves to others and through the manner in which they enforced expectations and obligations.¹⁰¹ This commercial concept of honour was closely linked to ideas about masculinity. Not only was it deemed to be a trait possessed by men, losing one's honour was to be unmanned.¹⁰² Toby Ditz has similarly drawn attention to the relationship between masculinity and mercantile representations of honour. She has argued that eighteenth-century Philadelphia merchants recast prevailing ideas about masculinity, using the notion of manly honour to safeguard their own professional reputations and disparage the conduct and business failings of others.¹⁰³ This concept of honour, and its relationship with constructions of different kinds of both gentlemanly and ungentlemanly masculinities, is particularly significant when thinking about British slave-owners, involved as they were in a transatlantic world of risk, trust and obligation.

As these shifting ideas about honour demonstrate, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century masculinities were not only formed in metropolitan settings but were shaped within, by and through colonial spaces and encounters. Mrinalini Sinha has

⁹⁸ Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 126.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325.

¹⁰⁰ John Smail, 'Credit, risk and honor in eighteenth-century commerce', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:3 (July, 2005), p. 439.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 442.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 454-455.

¹⁰³ Toby L. Ditz, 'Shipwrecked; or, masculinity imperiled: mercantile representations of failure and the gendered self in eighteenth-century Philadelphia', *Journal of American History*, 81:1 (June, 1994), p. 53-54.

demonstrated how in nineteenth-century India, the 'manly Englishman' was juxtaposed against the 'effeminate Bengali'. Though colonial forms of manliness could differ from metropolitan masculinities, the latter were nevertheless always constructed within imperial contexts.¹⁰⁴ Shino Konishi, examining British treatment of Aboriginal people at Port Jackson in the late eighteenth century, has suggested that patriarchal masculinities and forms of governance, which combined assumptions of absolute authority with paternalistic practices, endured much longer in colonial than metropolitan settings, an argument that is also pertinent when thinking about slaveholding masculinities.¹⁰⁵ In the Caribbean context, David Lambert has shown how white Barbadian masculinities were configured and performed in different ways from their metropolitan counterparts, as part of the defence of the system of slavery and its corresponding racial hierarchies.¹⁰⁶ However, Natalie Zacek's analysis of the travel-writing of Henry Hulton, a British customs official living in Antigua in the late eighteenth century, demonstrated that living in the West Indies did not necessarily prevent white men from developing and sustaining a polite character. During his travels Hulton came across slave-owning 'gentlemen' who conformed to standards of polite sociability and genteel masculinity.¹⁰⁷ Sarah Pearsall's examination of 'Anglo-Jamaican' plantation-owner John Sharp also demonstrated that there was no clear distinction between metropolitan and colonial forms of masculinity. She argued that the clemency with which Sharp treated the wife who had cuckolded him showed that he conceived himself as a sentimental man of feeling and that polite and sentimental masculinities could cross the Atlantic alongside the men, and women, who traversed it.¹⁰⁸ Colonial masculinities were thus both distinct from and inextricably connected to metropolitan modes of masculinity.

¹⁰⁴ Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

¹⁰⁵ Shino Konishi, 'The father governor: the British administration of Aboriginal people at Port Jackson, 1788-1792', in Matthew McCormack (ed.), *Public Men: Masculinity and Politics in Modern Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 55-57.

¹⁰⁶ David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 195-206.

¹⁰⁷ Natalie A. Zacek, "'Banes of society" and "gentlemen of strong natural parts": attacking and defending West Indian creole masculinity', in Thomas A. Foster (ed.), *New Men: Manliness in Early America* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), pp. 116-131.

¹⁰⁸ Sarah Pearsall, "'The late flagrant instance of depravity in my family": the story of an Anglo-Jamaican cuckold', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 60:3 (July, 2003), pp. 549-582.

New imperial histories

This thesis has been strongly influenced by the work of the ‘new imperial historians’, a diverse group of scholars broadly united by their desire to combine traditional historical empirical methodologies with poststructuralist, postcolonial and feminist ways of thinking.¹⁰⁹ By placing metropole and colony in what Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper have referred to as ‘a single analytic field’, the ‘new imperial historians’ have demonstrated that the two were not distinct or separate entities but were rather mutually constitutive, inherently interconnected and interdependent.¹¹⁰ Particularly significant have been their efforts to investigate and interrogate the markers of difference, most notably those of gender, race and class, but also others including age, sexuality and disability, which were constructed and maintained, subverted and exploited, as part of the process of colonial rule.¹¹¹ These forms of otherness were neither fixed nor stable but rather had to be continually maintained and redefined. The ‘troubled ground of empire’ was always fractious and insecure.¹¹² Relations between colony and metropole, in my case personified by the figure of the absentee slave-owner, were thus cross-cut with intersections of race, class, gender and other markers of difference, which converged in a variety of ways to create

¹⁰⁹ David Lambert and Alan Lester ‘Introduction: imperial spaces, imperial subjects’, in David Lambert and Alan Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire: Imperial Careering in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 5.

¹¹⁰ Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, ‘Between metropole and colony: rethinking a research agenda’, in Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 4; Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830-1867* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 8; Kathleen Wilson, ‘Introduction: histories, empires, modernities’, in Kathleen Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

¹¹¹ Catherine Hall, ‘Introduction: thinking the postcolonial, thinking the empire’, in Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonizers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 16-20; Wilson, ‘Introduction: histories, empires, modernities’, in Wilson (ed.), *A New Imperial History*, p. 3; Shirleene Robinson and Simon Sleight, ‘Introduction: the world in miniature’, in Shirleene Robinson and Simon Sleight (eds.), *Children, Childhood and Youth in the British World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 1-23; Fiona Paisley, ‘Childhood and race: growing up in the empire’, in Philippa Levine (ed.), *Gender and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 240-259; Michael Hatt, ‘Uranian imperialism: boys and empire in Edwardian England’, in Timothy Barringer, Geoff Quilley and Douglas Fordham (eds.), *Art and the British Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 153-168; Esme Cleall, ‘“Deaf to the word”: gender, deafness and Protestantism in nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland’, *Gender and History*, 25:3 (November, 2013), pp. 590-603.

¹¹² Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, p. 17; Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1-23.

multiple and interconnected hierarchies of power.¹¹³ The endeavours of the 'new imperial historians' have been crucial in helping to destabilise the binaries between metropole/colony, coloniser/colonised, inside/outside and demonstrate the complexity of the colonial experience.¹¹⁴ This understanding is as key to a study of British slave-ownership in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as to any other historical examination of nation and empire.

The 'new imperial historians' have thus highlighted the fallacy of Bernard Porter's argument that the British Empire had only a marginal 'and generally superficial' impact on metropolitan society and that most Britons were neither interested in or even largely aware of an empire 'entirely outside their experience ... and knowledge'.¹¹⁵ Kathleen Wilson has shown how 'empire mattered to ordinary people in eighteenth-century England', demonstrating that though there was never a formal, coherent imperial project, the varied practices, ideas and experiences that accompanied imperial expansion and its concomitant anxieties were intimately connected to the development of British — or more specifically, English — national identities during the period.¹¹⁶ Similarly, Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose have illustrated the ways that nineteenth-century Britons 'were 'at home' with their empire'. Although they accept that the impact of imperial influences and sentiments on the metropole was uneven, Hall and Rose demonstrated how empire suffused the lives of most Britons, both consciously and unconsciously, to such an extent that it was taken for granted, part of the mundanity of life.¹¹⁷ Certainly, the impact of the empire on metropolitan society was variable, but whether considering literature or consumption, political activism or ideas about race and sexuality, the endeavours of the 'new imperial historians' have shown that it is simply impossible to argue that it was not significant. Absentee slave-ownership was just one of the many ways that empire 'came home' to metropolitan Britain.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Valerie McLeish, 'Imperial footprints: Lady Aberdeen and Lady Dufferin in Ireland, Canada and India, 1870-1914', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of London, 2002) p. 315.

¹¹⁴ Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 17.

¹¹⁵ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 318, 37.

¹¹⁶ Wilson, *The Island Race*, p. 15.

¹¹⁷ Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose, 'Introduction: being at home with the empire', in Catherine Hall and Sonya O. Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire: Metropolitan Cultures and the Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 5, 2, 22.

¹¹⁸ Hall and Rose (eds.), *At Home with the Empire*.

The concept of 'imperial networks' has regularly been deployed over the last 15 to 20 years by historians keen to draw attention to the myriad links between different imperial spaces.¹¹⁹ Although this thesis focusses mainly on the relationship between Britain and the Caribbean it is important to recognise these links were not only 'vertical', linking the metropole with its colonies, but 'horizontal', fashioning complex connections, exchanges and interdependencies between different colonial sites. As Tony Ballantyne highlighted, the British Empire was structured not like a spoke but a web.¹²⁰ While Gray B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson have suggested that using ideas about networks too broadly risks losing their analytical usefulness, these imperial networks are best understood as multi-directional webs through which people, goods and ideas moved.¹²¹ Neither Thomas Lane nor Anna Eliza Grenville ever left metropolitan Britain, but both were embedded within these broader economic, social and political networks. Zoe Laidlaw has shown how such networks were 'the mainstay of day-to-day colonial governance', facilitating the dissemination of 'influence, patronage and information' across the empire, always in power-laden but locally specific ways.¹²² These networks 'remade both metropolitan and colonial places in the act of connecting them', transmitting identities, meanings and practices across the empire, albeit always unevenly and inconsistently.¹²³ Yet, as Laidlaw highlighted, these 'imperial networks connected people first, and places second'. Personal ties of friendship, family and obligation lay at the core of the networks which spanned the British Empire.¹²⁴

The last decade has seen the emergence of a burgeoning literature concerned with exploring the 'tense and tender ties' of intimacy that underpinned the imperial

¹¹⁹ The term particularly took off after the publication of Alan Lester's *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001).

¹²⁰ Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), p. 16.

¹²¹ Gary B. Magee and Andrew S. Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation: Networks of People, Goods and Capital in the British World, c. 1850-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 45; Laura Ishiguro, 'Relative distances: family and empire between Britain, British Columbia and India, 1858-1901', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, UCL, 2011), p. 22.

¹²² Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 14.

¹²³ Lambert and Lester, 'Introduction', in Lambert and Lester (eds.), *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, p. 8-9; Ishiguro, 'Relative distances', p. 22.

¹²⁴ Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, pp. 35, 15.

project.¹²⁵ Although initially much of this work focussed on sexual intimacy, particularly on the significance of mixed-race relationships in the colonies, understandings of intimacy have since become more complex, with historians including Mary Renda, Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton and Laura Ishiguro stressing that intimacy should not simply be seen as synonymous with sex.¹²⁶ The family has become a particularly important site for explorations of colonial and trans-imperial intimacy. Esme Cleall, Laura Ishiguro and Emily Manktelow have highlighted the many ways in which empire and family, a porous and malleable idea that encompassed unstable notions of kinship, blood and companionship, were intertwined, whether as ‘a key site of imperial processes, a social and economic unit at the heart of colonial life, [or] a building block for imperial relationships and identities’.¹²⁷ The imperial family was simultaneously a site of political patronage, a tool of capital accumulation and an imaginative construct that both reconfigured, and was itself reconfigured by, imperial identities and sentiments.¹²⁸ Emma Rothschild, Adele Perry and Catherine Hall have all recently shown the fruitful possibilities offered by using the family, unstable and disjointed as it could be, as a lens through which to explore the eighteenth and nineteenth-century British imperial worlds.¹²⁹ This literature has been invaluable in informing the way I explore the experiences of British slave-owners, shaped as they were by family and kin. As Elizabeth Buettner has argued, the British Empire was at its very essence a ‘family affair’.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, ‘Tense and tender ties: the politics of comparison in North American history and (post) colonial studies’, *The Journal of American History*, 88:3 (December, 2001).

¹²⁶ Mary Renda, “‘Sentiments of a private nature’: a comment on Ann Laura Stoler’s “Tense and tender ties””, *Journal of American History*, 88:3 (December, 2001), pp. 884-885; Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton, ‘Introduction: the politics of intimacy in an age of empire’, in Tony Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds.), *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 8; Ishiguro, ‘Relative distances’, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁷ Cleall, Ishiguro and Manktelow, ‘Imperial relations’, n. pag.

¹²⁸ Margot Finn, ‘Anglo-Indian lives in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries’, *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies*, 33:1 (2010), p. 49-50; Cleall, Ishiguro and Manktelow, ‘Imperial relations’, n. pag.

¹²⁹ Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Adele Perry, *Colonial Relations: The Douglas-Connolly Family and Nineteenth-Century Imperial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹³⁰ Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire Families: Britons and Late Imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 4.

For those who were separated by distances of thousands of miles letters became the key means of communication, playing a crucial role in creating and sustaining familial relations and ties of affection and obligation.¹³¹ Correspondence was a mode through which ideas about self, family and empire were constantly made and remade.¹³² Through writing letters correspondents, whether located in the metropole or the colonies, could situate both themselves and the intended recipients within a shared imaginative world of kin and community, helping to obviate the considerable barriers of time and distance.¹³³ Women could play a particularly important role in this process. Kate Smith has recently shown how elite women ‘worked’ to engender a sense of familial belonging, employing epistolary practices of home-building to fortify familial identities, albeit often in very different ways.¹³⁴ Neither was the letter only used to reconfigure familial relationships. Charlotte MacDonald has demonstrated how the ‘intimacy of the envelope’ helped to maintain trans-imperial friendships, creating relationships that ‘blurred and entwined, through commerce and culture, the real and the imagined’.¹³⁵ It is important to bear in mind that these relationships, whether ostensibly rooted in friendship or family — indeed there was often no strict delineation between the two — were often riven with tension and anxiety. But ultimately it is difficult, if not impossible, to envisage the British Empire without the letter. Trans-imperial correspondence helped build both the empire and the families and friendships that crossed it.¹³⁶

The Caribbean, slave-ownership and absenteeism

The West Indian colonies lay at the heart of a British imperial network that in the

¹³¹ Rebecca Earle, ‘Introduction: letters, writers and the historian’, in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 2; Elizabeth Jane Errington, ‘Webs of affection and obligation: glimpse into families and nineteenth century Transatlantic communities’, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 19:1 (2008), p. 11.

¹³² Erika Rappaport, ‘The Bombay debt’: letter writing, domestic economies and family conflict in Colonial India’, *Gender and History*, 16: 2 (August, 2004), p. 233.

¹³³ Errington, ‘Webs of affection and obligation’, p. 25-26.

¹³⁴ Kate Smith, ‘Imperial families: women writing home in Georgian Britain’, *Women’s History Review*, 24:6 (November, 2015), pp. 845-846.

¹³⁵ Charlotte Macdonald, ‘Intimacy of the envelope: fiction, commerce, and empire in the correspondence of friends Mary Taylor and Charlotte Brontë, c. 1845-55’, in Ballantyne and Antoinette Burton (eds.), *Moving Subjects: Gender, Mobility, and Intimacy in an Age of Global Empire* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), pp. 90-91, 103.

¹³⁶ Ishiguro, ‘Relative distances’, p. 33.

early 1770s was reaching the zenith of its profit and prosperity.¹³⁷ These islands were, according to Scottish writer John Campbell, ‘shining Trophies [...] extend[ing] the Fame, display[ing] the Power, and support[ing] the Commerce of Great Britain’.¹³⁸ The vast wealth generated from the sale of the 200,000 tons of sugar exported annually from the British West Indies in the late eighteenth century was rooted in the exploitation and expropriation of an enslaved labour force.¹³⁹ Between 1625 and 1807 over 2.7 million enslaved Africans were transported across the Atlantic to the British Caribbean.¹⁴⁰ By 1830 the enslaved population of the British West Indies totalled around 685,000, with approximately 401,000 enslaved people living in Jamaica and Barbados, the islands at the centre of this study.¹⁴¹ Four years later, when slavery was abolished in the British West Indies, Mauritius and the Cape — an event that had come about, in no small part, as a consequence of violent uprisings instigated by the enslaved — the slave-owners were well-recompensed for the loss of their ‘property’. The enslaved themselves, initially forced to work as ‘apprentices’ for their former owners for another six years, received nothing.¹⁴²

A growing literature is paying attention to women’s presence within the slave economies of the British Caribbean. Lucille Mathurin Mair’s groundbreaking study of women in Jamaica still remains the most comprehensive examination of the socio-economic endeavours of elite, free coloured and enslaved women in the Caribbean. Although she is sometimes mischaracterised as simply having argued that ‘the white woman consumed, the coloured woman served and the black woman laboured’, her meticulously researched work demonstrated that free women were involved in a variety of economic activities, many of which relied on the skills and labour of enslaved people, ‘Jamaica’s most pervasive currency’.¹⁴³ Yet these women were

¹³⁷ William Roger Louis, ‘Foreword’, in P. J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol. II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. viii.

¹³⁸ John Campbell, *A Political Survey of Great Britain, Vol. II* (London, 1774), p. 567.

¹³⁹ B. W. Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.104.

¹⁴⁰ Philip D. Morgan, ‘Slavery in the British Caribbean’, in David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery, Vol. 3, AD 1420-AD 1804* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 381.

¹⁴¹ Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 418.

¹⁴² Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 6.

¹⁴³ This is oft-repeated quotation is actually taken from the introduction to the book, written by Hilary Beckles and Verene Shepherd. It is repeated on the back cover but the the text itself, as far as I am aware, does not contain a similar iteration. Lucille Mathurin Mair, *A Historical*

undoubtedly positioned differently to their male counterparts.¹⁴⁴ The majority of female slave-owners were small-scale, often living in urban settings. In early nineteenth-century Bridgetown, for example, 58 per cent of slave-owners were women. These women mostly owned other women, hinting at the kinds of economic enterprises that pervaded urban society. Both white women and free women of colour owned enslaved women who worked in the 'service economy', amongst other things, as hoteliers, washerwomen, cooks and seamstresses. Some sold their bodies, and the bodies of others, for sex.¹⁴⁵ Christine Walker has drawn attention to the various commercial activities undertaken by urban slave-owning women, such as Jamaican merchants Anna Hassall and Elizabeth Callender, who were able to take advantage of the increasing globalisation of such ports and towns to create niches for themselves within an expanding imperial economy.¹⁴⁶

Women were also engaged in the practice of plantership. Kathleen Mary Butler is one of the few historians to have looked for traces of slave-owning women within the records of the Slave Compensation Commission, as well as in deeds and conveyances, Chancery records and slave registers. She argued that women played a crucial role in the plantation economies of Jamaica and Barbados, both as plantation- and slave-owners themselves and as creditors, executors and administrators of other large plantations, a contribution which has largely been ignored.¹⁴⁷ Cecily Jones has also demonstrated the extent to which white women were integrated into the Barbadian plantation economy, suggesting that their presence was 'so common as to be taken for granted'.¹⁴⁸ This participation, she argued, helped to sustain the system of Caribbean slavery and reinforce the boundaries of whiteness that underpinned it.¹⁴⁹ It is important not to overstate women's contribution to the plantation economies of the West Indies. Women in the

Study of Women in Jamaica, 1655-1843 (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2006), pp. xvi, 131.

¹⁴⁴ Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica: Colonial Society and Culture during the Era of Abolition* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), p. 20.

¹⁴⁵ Hilary McD Beckles, *Centring Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), pp. 63-65.

¹⁴⁶ Christine Walker, 'Pursuing her profits: women in Jamaica, Atlantic Slavery and a globalising market, 1700-60', *Gender and History*, 26:3 (November, 2014), p. 495.

¹⁴⁷ Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica and Barbados, 1823-1843* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 92-108.

¹⁴⁸ Cecily Jones, *Engendering Whiteness: White Women and Colonialism in Barbados and North Carolina, 1627-1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 83.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 62.

Caribbean faced the same legal disabilities as those in Britain. Trevor Burnard has argued that married women in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Jamaica were rarely given the equitable right to own their separate estate, although Walker has suggested that eighteenth-century Jamaicans did increasingly adopt such measures.¹⁵⁰ Certainly, men dominated landownership, with Edward Long's 1750 survey showing that ninety percent of Jamaican land was owned by men.¹⁵¹ Yet this should not prevent us from exploring further the myriad ways that women engaged in the plantation economies of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Caribbean.¹⁵²

The focus of this thesis, however, is not resident slave-owners but 'absentees', the men and women who lived, for at least some part of their lives, in metropolitan Britain. The distinction between these categories was not always clear, with many plantation-owners and merchants regularly crossing the Atlantic, spending time in both Britain and the Caribbean throughout their lives.¹⁵³ Indeed, as David Lambert has emphasised, both resident and absentee slave-owners fundamentally conceived themselves as British and stressed the significance of a shared culture, values and political traditions.¹⁵⁴ Trevor Burnard has suggested that Jamaican plantation-owners, regardless of their place of residence or birth, should be seen primarily as 'genuinely trans-Atlantic people, connected to both Britain and Jamaica but not fully part of either polity'.¹⁵⁵ Yet while Douglas Hall may have argued that 'it is difficult to distinguish between resident and absentee owners except on the obvious difference that the former were, and the latter were not, resident in the colonies', this does nevertheless appear to be an important structural difference.¹⁵⁶ As the Legacies of Slave-ownership project has persuasively shown, absentees were 'vital and

¹⁵⁰ Trevor Burnard, 'Family continuity and female independence in Jamaica, 1665-1734', *Continuity and Change*, 7:2 (August, 1992), pp. 184-186.; Walker, 'Pursuing her profits', p. 481. Cecily Jones has also drawn attention to the fact that marriage contacts could be important to Barbadian women. Jones, *Engendering Whiteness*, p. 96.

¹⁵¹ Catherine Hall, 'Gendering property, racing capital', *History Workshop Journal*, 78:1 (2014), p. 34.

¹⁵² Christine Walker, 'Womanly masters: gendering slave ownership in colonial Jamaica', in Thomas Foster (ed.), *Women in Early America: Transnational Histories, Rethinking Master Narratives* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), pp. 160-181.

¹⁵³ Trevor Burnard, 'Passengers only: the extent and significance of absenteeism in eighteenth century Jamaica', *Atlantic Studies*, 1:2 (2004), p. 183.

¹⁵⁴ Lambert, *White Creole Culture*, p. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Burnard, 'Passengers only', p. 189.

¹⁵⁶ Douglas Hall, 'Absentee proprietorship in the British West Indies to about 1850', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 35:1 (2001), p. 113.

immediate agent[s] in the diffusion of slavery into the fabric of Britain'. These men and women made important economic, political and cultural contributions both to the development of nineteenth-century metropolitan society and of the wider British Empire.¹⁵⁷

Much of the historiography of slavery and absenteeism has been dominated by the question of the efficiency of the system of absentee plantation-ownership. Traditional interpretations have emphasised the calamitous effect of absenteeism on the sugar islands of the British West Indies. This reflects the attitudes of many eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century contemporaries. Jamaican plantation-owner Thomas Roughley argued in 1823 that absenteeism was an 'established evil,' a notion echoed by Lowell Joseph Ragatz in 1931 when he insisted that the consequences of absenteeism 'were deplorable in the extreme'.¹⁵⁸ High rates of absenteeism were perceived to have deprived West Indian society of 'its most responsible and able [for which read white, male and upper-class] members' leading to 'disastrous consequences' for the economies, social makeup and political leadership of the islands.¹⁵⁹ The attorneys employed by absentees have generally been presented as self-interested, dishonest and ignorant, defrauding their employers and spending plantation profits enjoying lavish lifestyles.¹⁶⁰ Douglas Hall, however, has emphasised the dangers of assuming that resident owners would have been better managers than the attorneys they employed.¹⁶¹ Indeed, J. R. Ward has shown that the estates of absentee plantation-owners could be as productive as those of their resident counterparts, citing John Pinney's Mountravers estate as an example.¹⁶² Similarly, B. W. Higman has argued that absentees were not always conservative and disinterested, highlighting several instances where absentee proprietors, stimulated by what they saw in metropolitan Britain, encouraged technological and

¹⁵⁷ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 36.

¹⁵⁸ Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide*, p. 26; Lowell Joseph Ragatz, 'Absentee landlordism in the British Caribbean, 1750-1833', *Agricultural History*, 5:1 (January, 1931), p. 13.

¹⁵⁹ Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967), p. 51.

¹⁶⁰ Selwyn H. Carrington, 'Management of sugar estates in the British West Indies at the end of the eighteenth century', *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 33:1 (1999), pp. 29-30.

¹⁶¹ Hall, 'Absentee proprietorship', p. 102.

¹⁶² J. R. Ward, 'The profitability of sugar planting in the British West Indies, 1650-1834', *Economic History Review*, 2nd Ser., 31:2 (May, 1978), pp. 207-208.

agricultural development in the Caribbean colonies.¹⁶³ This is certainly not to suggest that most, or even many, absentees were particularly innovative or their attorneys industrious. Thomas Lane and Anna Eliza Grenville themselves provide examples of absentees who adopted very different, and changing, levels of engagement with their Caribbean plantations, and the attorneys they employed possessed varying degrees of trustworthiness and reliability. Nevertheless, it does reinforce the importance of moving away from unsubstantiated generalisations about the practice of absentee plantation- and slave-ownership.

Britons became absentee slave-owners in a variety of ways. The absentees who have received the most scholarly attention are those who, having made substantial fortunes in the Caribbean, departed for Britain, either temporarily or permanently, in an attempt to establish themselves within metropolitan society. 'Returned to England, the planters' fondest wish was to acquire an estate, blend with the aristocracy, and remove the marks of their origin', argued Eric Williams, with Richard Pares similarly asserting that 'more and more planters looked upon themselves as serving a term of years, and made haste to go home to Great Britain'.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps the most renowned of such absentees was eighteenth-century plantation-owner and politician William Beckford. Perry Gauci's recent biography of Beckford explored both his 'real and symbolic' significance as one of the most important members of the parliamentary West India interest, yet as Simon Gikandi has shown, Beckford was never entirely successful in his attempts to 'remove the mark of [his] origin' and establish himself as a metropolitan man of taste.¹⁶⁵ Returning to the metropole was certainly an increasingly attractive proposition for wealthy plantation-owners but a large number of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britons became absentees in other ways. Many, having never set foot in the Caribbean themselves, inherited plantations and enslaved people — or annuities and legacies secured on this property — or married those who had done so.¹⁶⁶ Both Anna Eliza Grenville and Thomas Lane fall into this category. Others, such as the Yorkshire Lascelles, were merchants who became

¹⁶³ B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Mona: University of West Indies Press, 2005), pp. 28-29.

¹⁶⁴ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 86; Richard Pares, *A West India Fortune* (London: Longmans, 1950), p. 19.

¹⁶⁵ Perry Gauci, *William Beckford: First Prime Minister of the London Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 206; Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2011), pp. 125-144.

¹⁶⁶ Nicholas Draper, *The Price of Emancipation: Slave-ownership, Compensation and British Society at the end of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 186.

slave-owners when they foreclosed on West Indian estates.¹⁶⁷ Thus, absentees were, as Douglas Hall succinctly stated, ‘a heterogeneous lot’.¹⁶⁸ As the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project has shown, the 3,500 absentees who were awarded compensation in the 1830s were found across the length and breadth of Britain — although much less commonly in Wales and Ireland than in England and Scotland — and contained those from almost all walks of life, from aristocrats and MPs to clergymen, slave-owners of mixed descent and aged widows.¹⁶⁹

Methodology and sources

This thesis uses both qualitative and quantitative forms of analysis to explore the relationship between gender, property and power in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It relies particularly on two case studies, those of Jamaican slave-owner Anna Eliza Grenville and Barbadian slave-owner Thomas Lane. This inevitably raises questions about typicality. Neither Lane nor Grenville should be seen as typical or representative and sweeping generalisations about the position of either male or female slave-owners should not be extracted from these narrow case studies. However, what a restricted focus can achieve is a more nuanced precision of analysis.¹⁷⁰ One of the main strengths of using individual case studies is the depth and richness of analysis they offer.¹⁷¹ Adopting a holistic approach can provide insights into the complex, and at times contradictory, attitudes and experiences that underpinned an individual’s thoughts and behaviour.¹⁷² As Cleall, Ishiguro and Manktelow stressed, examining individuals draws attention to the fact that ‘imperial processes, discourses and trajectories were ones that were lived, resisted and confounded by people — not just “avatars of ideas and ideologies,”... but people who lived out familial and individual lives in all of their complexities’.¹⁷³ Examining the lives

¹⁶⁷ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, pp. 234-235; S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1648-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 177-222.

¹⁶⁸ Hall, ‘Absentee proprietorship in the British West Indies’, p. 101.

¹⁶⁹ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, pp. 34-65.

¹⁷⁰ Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 49.

¹⁷² Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum and Gideon Sjoberg, ‘Introduction: the nature of the case study’, in Joe R. Feagin, Anthony M. Orum and Gideon Sjoberg (eds.), *A Case for the Case Study* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 8-12.

¹⁷³ Cleall, Ishiguro and Manktelow, ‘Imperial relations’, n. pag. That people were not just ‘avatars of ideas and ideologies’ was an argument put forward by Lambert and Lester in *Colonial Lives Across the British Empire*, p. 17.

of individual men and women, as well as the familial and friendship networks within which they were embedded, can help elucidate both the configuration of and the fractures in the broader processes and ideologies which they were both shaped by and themselves helped to shape.¹⁷⁴

A variety of personal and family papers, including legal papers, wills, household account books and pocket diaries, have been used in order to glean an insight into the lives and experiences of these particular absentee slave-owners. Of particular importance, however, has been Thomas Lane and Anna Eliza Grenville's personal correspondence. Letters were, after all, the most important means of long distance communication in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. While undoubtedly only a fraction of their entire epistolary output, much of which is likely to have been lost in the mists of time or remains undiscovered in dusty attics, the extensive correspondence examined includes that between family members, friends, business associates and attorneys and which crossed metropolitan Britain, the Atlantic Ocean and the wider British Empire. Letters provide particularly interesting and useful source material because they both describe experience and themselves constitute it.¹⁷⁵ A textual analysis of the correspondence of Lane and Grenville aims to explore how they made sense of the world and their place within it.¹⁷⁶ Of course, letters cannot provide an entirely comprehensive account of a writer's thoughts or feelings. Produced for particular readers and purposes and meditated accordingly, they contained both 'conscious and unconscious silences' about a whole range of subjects, thoughts and feelings.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, it was through correspondences that familial, affective, business, and political networks were formed and sustained. Letter-writing was a vital mode through which ideas about self, family and empire were constantly made and remade.¹⁷⁸

Supplementing these case studies is a broader analysis of the records of the Slave Compensation Commission, which provide a particularly detailed and comprehensive

¹⁷⁴ Finn, 'Anglo-Indian lives in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', pp. 49-53.

¹⁷⁵ Toby L. Ditz, 'Formative ventures: eighteenth century commercial letters and the articulation of experience', in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 63.

¹⁷⁶ Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Ishiguro, 'Relative distances', p. 16.

¹⁷⁸ Rappaport, 'The Bombay debt', p. 233.

account of the almost 3,500 absentees living in Britain at the time of abolition.¹⁷⁹ The Slave Compensation Commission was established in 1833 to administer the payment of compensation. It was the job of the Commission to gather, assess and award compensation claims and their records offer what Nicholas Draper has described as ‘a unique ‘census’ of slave-ownership’ in the age of abolition.¹⁸⁰ These records have recently been digitised by the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project and published in an online database.¹⁸¹ This database allows researchers to undertake analyses of British slave-owners that would previously simply have been impossible. The 47,000 distinct claimants can now be organised, amongst other things, by colony, occupation, address and, particularly significantly for me, by gender. It is also possible to move from the general to the specific. Biographical information and any data relating to the six legacy strands – commercial, political, historical, imperial, physical and cultural – has been added to the entries of the 3,500 absentee claimants.¹⁸² The amount of information can vary considerably, from one line to many paragraphs, and, as is inevitable with a project this size, there will always be some transcription errors and inputting inconsistencies. However, the LBS database remains an invaluable resource. ‘A thorough examination of th[e] ... individual records [of the Slave Compensation Commission] would be both expensive and dispiriting’, argued Richard Lobdell in 2000.¹⁸³ Now such work can be done with the click of a button.

Supplementing the information in the LBS database is an analysis of wills. Wills provide access to one of the most significant legal interactions any person has with property they own. The anticipation of death involves reflecting and making decisions about property, codifying desires about its transmission and dissemination.¹⁸⁴ But wills are about far more than just the transference of property. They are ‘social documents’, telling us as much about people, their attachments to goods and their

¹⁷⁹ Hall et. al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 35.

¹⁸⁰ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, p. 114.

¹⁸¹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/> (accessed 4/4/2016). In September 2016 the newly established Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership launched a new update of the database. The estate, rather than the individual, was the focal point of the new data, with details added of all estates identified in the British Caribbean between 1763 and 1833.

¹⁸² Hall et. al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 264.

¹⁸³ Richard A. Lobdell, ‘The price of freedom: financial aspects of British slave emancipation’, Unpublished paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Social Sciences History Association, Pittsburgh (October 2000). p. 9.

¹⁸⁴ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, pp. 77-78.

relationships with others as they do about particular forms of property.¹⁸⁵ They thus offer particularly rich possibilities for analysis. R. J. Morris, Marcia Pointon and Margot Finn are among those who have turned to these sources to explore questions about gender and race, material culture and the construction and performance of subjectivity.¹⁸⁶ Wills were, as R. J. Morris has suggested, both a 'symbolic description' of an individual's world at a particular moment and a way of strengthening, modifying or re-ordering that world for others.¹⁸⁷ They were important in helping to construct the gendered identities and experiences of both men and women, as well as the families and social groups of which they were a part.¹⁸⁸ Examining the wills of both female slave-owners and their bequeathers thus provides a window into the complex familial and social webs which underpinned British slave-ownership, as well as the ties of emotion, affection and obligation that bound them.¹⁸⁹ However, wills are not unproblematic sources. Subject to legal constraints and conventions, they only provide a snapshot of property-ownership at a particular moment in time and only deal with property in, or expected to be in, probate. This means they cannot convey a great deal about how a person engaged with their property or the ways this might have changed over time.¹⁹⁰ Although wills provide valuable information about the symbolic and material significance of particular forms of property, this can only ever remain one aspect of a much bigger picture.

This thesis places slave-owners at the centre of its study. This is certainly not because I believe the lives of slave-owners were somehow more significant than those of the people they enslaved but because, in line with the aims of the LBS team, I am keen to explore how slave-owners and slave-ownership helped to shape the development of metropolitan Britain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

¹⁸⁵ Janet Finch, Lynn Hayes, Jennifer Mason, Judith Masson and Lorraine Wallis, *Wills, Inheritance and Families* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 1; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 221.

¹⁸⁶ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*; Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Margot Finn, 'Slaves out of context: domestic slavery and the Anglo-Indian family, c. 1780-1820', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 19 (2009), pp. 181-203.

¹⁸⁷ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, p. 100-101.

¹⁸⁸ Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens, 'Introduction', in Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ Hall et al. *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 269.

¹⁹⁰ Margot Finn, 'Imperial family formations: domestic strategies and colonial power in British India, c. 1757-1857', (Unpublished paper, 2016), pp. 33, 38.

centuries.¹⁹¹ Although I am interested in investigating the gendering of property-ownership and the experiences of female property-owners this is not intended to be celebratory or triumphalist. Whilst much of the recent literature on female property-ownership and entrepreneurship, underpinned by a desire to 'secur[e] ... women's rightful place' in the histories of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, adopts a somewhat exalting tone, it is simply impossible to approach the subject from the same perspective when the property that these women owned was that in people.¹⁹² These slave-owners, men and women, were key players in a violent, brutal and degrading system which involved exploiting and expropriating the labour of other human beings for their own economic benefit. Many of the sources that shed light on the lives of enslaved people, including slave registers and the compensation records themselves, demonstrate that these people were largely seen by their owners as little more than transposable units of economic value.¹⁹³ It is important to be aware of the danger of unintentionally replicating these forms of categorisation that served to dehumanise those who had been enslaved. These people were not 'negroes' or 'slaves', listed as a mass alongside real estate, cattle or household stock; they were living, breathing human beings, as distinct and varied as any others on the planet.

Thesis structure

This thesis is interested both in exploring female slave-ownership and in thinking about how gender shaped the experiences of men who were involved in the enterprise. It will begin by using a specific case study, that of Barbadian slave-owner Thomas Lane, to explore the relationship between masculinity and absentee slave-ownership. Chapter One begins by placing Lane within a broader cultural context by examining representations of absentee slave-owners in British literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These men, and they invariably were men, were often depicted as extravagant, foppish and effeminate, a symbol of the corrupting influence of unrestrained commercial expansion. Yet the slave-owner could also be presented in a very different light. In response to the growing anti-slavery movement both pro- and anti-slavery writers began to depict slave-owners as

¹⁹¹ Ibid, p. 5.

¹⁹² McDonagh, 'Women, enclosure and estate improvement', p. 144.

¹⁹³ Draper, *The Price of Emancipation*, p. 115.

benevolent patriarchs, their sympathetic and virtuous polite masculinity reflecting the supposed humanity of the West Indian plantation-owner.

Unlike almost all absentees depicted in metropolitan literature, Thomas Lane did not return to Britain having made his riches in the Caribbean, either to engage in lavish expenditure or to exercise his benevolence. He and his brother John inherited the Newton and Seawells plantations from their cousin Elizabeth Newton in 1794 and neither brother ever visited Barbados. For three decades, however, Lane was actively involved in the transatlantic management of these plantations. Writing from London he corresponded regularly with his Barbadian attorneys and carved a position for himself within gentlemanly networks of planters, merchants and financiers. This correspondence shows how different aspects of the practice and performance of masculinity, associated with politeness, paternalism and professional identity, were dominant at different times. But all were important to the way he conceived and presented himself, as both slave-owner and gentleman.

Chapter Two uses another case study, that of Anna Eliza Grenville, first Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, as a lens through which to examine the gendered nature of property-ownership and transmission amongst the English aristocracy in the early nineteenth century. When Anna Eliza Brydges married Richard Grenville in 1796 she brought to the marriage estates in Hampshire, Middlesex and Ireland, as well as Hope, a Jamaican plantation upon which worked over 350 enslaved men, women and children. Little distinction was made between these metropolitan and colonial properties, all of which were bound up in a complicated strict settlement, the means by which the English aristocracy transmitted property across generations.

A detailed examination of Anna Eliza's relationship with 'her' property paints a much more complex picture of the gendered conceptions of property and property-ownership than is allowed by placing an exclusive focus on either coverture or the strict settlement. Her interactions with both the family's English and Jamaican properties demonstrate that married women were integral to the aristocratic family and its experience of property-ownership, playing a crucial role as acquirers, transmitters and managers of familial property, identity and wealth. Noticeable throughout Anna Eliza's discussion of the familial property, including Hope, is the slippage between pronouns. Different kinds of property were variously referred to as

'his', 'mine' 'ours' and 'yours', suggesting that there was no strict delineation between different kinds of individual or familial property. Yet Anna Eliza does appear to have conceived the Buckingham and Chandos properties differently, having what Joanne Bailey has termed an 'instinctive sense of property-ownership' over the property she brought to the marriage.¹⁹⁴ Whilst this was always unofficial, fragmentary and inconsistent, it appears to have been an important part of how property-ownership was understood.

For many absentees, possessing Caribbean plantations and enslaved people was just one part of a diverse portfolio of social, political and imperial interests. Chapter Three situates Anna Eliza Grenville's slave-ownership within these wider worlds. That slave-ownership was not a dominant part of Anna Eliza's identity does not diminish its significance. On the contrary, exploring the different ways that slave-ownership could be integrated into the metropolitan lives of absentees like Anna Eliza Grenville enables us to expand our understanding of the way it helped shape the development of nineteenth-century Britain and the British imperial world.

Anna Eliza partook in many of the activities expected of an aristocratic wife. She was able to present herself as a paternalistic landed proprietor and establish a position within elite social circles. She was heavily involved in local politics and was unafraid of voicing her opinions on a variety of national political issues. Although Anna Eliza never left metropolitan Britain she engaged in correspondences with friends and family across the empire, working to spread news, establish imperial networks and forge relationships of patronage and power. The social, cultural and legal restraints even elite women faced were considerable and should not be downplayed. But gendered identities, although always bounded, were never fixed, and were enmeshed with ideas about class, race, property and family in ways that could enable elite women to wield significant, although always circumscribed, power. The behaviour of aristocratic women like Anna Eliza Grenville thus could variously reinforce, exploit and even occasionally challenge the gendered assumptions and expectations of both their families and wider British society.

¹⁹⁴ Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 109.

In many ways it is surprising to see just how faintly Anna Eliza's Jamaican slave-ownership figured in her daily life, seemingly having little impact on either her political endeavours or her vision of the British Empire. The reasons for this remain somewhat puzzling, leaving us with questions rather than answers. However, that there are few direct references to Hope, Jamaica, slavery or abolition does not mean that slave-ownership was unimportant to Anna Eliza's construction of herself. Hope plantation was an important part of an inheritance that enabled her to firmly situate herself within aristocratic society, whether as an apparently paternalistic landlady, an effective local politician or an important epistolary conduit. Looking at the example of the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos highlights the complicated and subtle ways that slave-owning could be integrated into the metropolitan lives of British women.

Chapter Four adopts a more quantitative approach, using the records of the Slave Compensation Commission to examine more closely the scope and nature of female slave-ownership, while also providing some contextualisation of the specific case studies. It begins by undertaking a gendered analysis of the claimants and beneficiaries of slave compensation, looking to see how the proportion of male/female claimants was affected by the size of claim and whether the claimant was an absentee or resident, as well as examining similarities and differences across colonies.

The compensation records demonstrate that female property-ownership was widespread; 41% of the total number of claimants and beneficiaries, and 24% of absentees, were women. An examination of female slaveholders, however, demonstrates the many, and complicated, ways that this was mediated. Examining in greater detail the large-scale absentee slaveholders in Jamaica and Barbados indicates how complex ideas about 'ownership' could be. These slave-owners had a variety of different relationships with their property. Whilst some certainly were owners in the strictest sense, others appear in the compensation records as annuitants, legatees, trust beneficiaries and trustees and/or executrices. Through analysing wills it is possible to trace *how* some of these women became compensation claimants, and what they did with any West Indian property they possessed, or compensation they might have received.

Key players in transatlantic familial networks, female absentees played a critical role as transmitters of this property, acting as conduits who helped to facilitate the transmission of slave-based wealth into metropolitan society. Yet whilst the records of the Slave Compensation Commission highlight the economic opportunities open to middle and upper-class women in the early nineteenth century, they also demonstrate that this was always heavily mediated and constrained, most manifestly through the trust. To reiterate Margaret Hunt's astute observation, 'female agency was real; so were the inward and outward barriers to its exercise'.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Hunt, 'Wives and marital 'rights' in the Court of Exchequer', p. 124.

Chapter One. Absentee slave-ownership, masculinity and Thomas Lane

In 1794 brothers Thomas and John Lane inherited Newton and Seawells, two Barbadian sugar plantations. There were almost 450 enslaved men, women and children working on these estates, valued in 1803 at £34,826, and this inheritance transformed the lives of both men.¹ Although the brothers eventually formally divided the ownership of the plantations it was Thomas Lane who, until his death in 1824, undertook the management of both estates. Yet he never visited Barbados. His relationship with these plantations, and the people enslaved upon them, was entirely an epistolary one. A solicitor-clerk at Goldsmiths Hall, from his place of work in Foster Lane he corresponded regularly with the attorneys in Barbados who overlooked the day-to-day running of the plantations. These letters contain detailed discussions of the pragmatics of running an estate and provide a rare insight into the mindset of a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century absentee. Examining closely Lane's slave-ownership, whilst also situating this within his metropolitan life, will shed light on the complicated relationship between absenteeism, slave-ownership and gentlemanly masculinity, something largely hidden in stereotypical representations of the 'West Indian' absentee.

Richard Cumberland's Belcour, the passionate, extravagant and inordinately wealthy hero of the 1771 play *The West Indian*, was perhaps the best-known absentee in late eighteenth-century Britain. *The West Indian* was hugely successful, running for twenty-eight performances at David Garrick's Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and quickly joining the repertoire of travelling theatre companies across Britain, North America and the Caribbean.² One contemporary who saw the play during its initial run remarked that 'the Success which has attended the Performances of *The West Indian* has exceeded that of any Comedy within the Memory of the oldest Man living'.³ In London's West End alone it was performed at least forty-eight times over the next twenty-five years.⁴

¹ Senate House Library (hereafter SHL), MS523/287, Summary of the valuations by Thomas Lane.

² Jean Marsden, 'Performing the West Indies: comedy, feeling and British identity', *Comparative Drama*, 42:1 (Spring, 2008), p. 78.

³ Benjamin Victor, *The History of the Theatres of London, From the Year 1760 to the Present Time* (London, 1771), p. 175.

⁴ Stanley T. Williams, 'Richard Cumberland's *West Indian*', *Modern Language Notes*, 35: 7 (November, 1920), p. 417.

Richard Cumberland was a well-connected civil servant and an acquaintance of the most renowned non-fictional 'West Indian' of the eighteenth century, Alderman William Beckford. It is likely that Cumberland at least partially based his titular character on Beckford, a man he described in his memoirs as being of 'impetuosity' and 'dashing loquacity'.⁵ Beckford was the owner or co-owner of sixteen sugar plantations and over two thousand enslaved people. After returning to Britain from Jamaica in 1745 he used his wealth to become a Member of Parliament for the City of London and later served as Lord Mayor.⁶ A patron and close associate of Pitt the elder, Beckford was able to exert pressure on Pitt in support of the West India interest, a political lobby group comprised of plantation-owners, merchants and colonial agents.⁷ Yet although he became an influential transatlantic politician Beckford was often vilified by his contemporaries. Castigated for his lavish expenditure and ridiculed for his Jamaican lilt, despite his best attempts at positioning himself as part of the mercantile and landed elite, he was always marked by 'otherness'.⁸ The members of the House of Commons, Horace Walpole suggested, looked on Beckford as 'a wild, incoherent, superficial buffoon'.⁹

But while historian Richard Pares may have argued that 'absentee sugar planters were ... the most conspicuous rich men of their time', neither Belcour nor Beckford was representative of the large majority of absentee slave-owners in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain.¹⁰ As the LBS project has shown, absentees were found across the length and breadth of Britain and included not only those who conformed to Pares's caricature but a huge and diverse range of people, from elderly

⁵ Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1806), p. 82.

⁶ Richard B. Sheridan, 'Beckford, William (bap. 1709, d. 1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1903> (accessed 08/09/16).

⁷ Lillian M. Penson, 'The London West India interest in the eighteenth century', *English Historical Review*, 36:143 (July, 1921), pp. 373-392; Kathleen Mary Butler, *The Economics of Emancipation: Jamaica and Barbados, 1823-1843* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), pp. 7-24.

⁸ Perry Gauci, *William Beckford: First Prime Minister of the London Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 206, 25.

⁹ Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Second, Vol. III* (London, 1847), p. 178.

¹⁰ Richard Pares, 'Merchants and planters', *Economic History Review Supplement*, 4 (Cambridge, 1960), p. 38.

widows to provincial clergymen.¹¹ This thesis seeks to complicate what it meant to be a 'West Indian' absentee and slave-owner. Part of the way it does this is by demonstrating that absentees were not only 'rich *men*' (own emphasis). Women, from aristocratic heiresses to middle-class annuitants, were heavily involved in the business of slave-ownership. But most male absentees also had as little in common with the likes of Belcour and Beckford as their female counterparts. Exploring representations of the 'West Indian' absentee within British literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries will allow me to situate Thomas Lane in a wider cultural context. Delving deeply into the life of one man will then facilitate an exploration of the complex, and at times contradictory, masculinities displayed in the attitudes and behaviour of slave-owning absentees.

'The most conspicuous rich men of their time': representations of the 'West Indian'

Every upstart of fortune, harassed in the trappings of the mode, presents himself at Bath ... planters, negro-drivers and hucksters from our American plantations, enriched they know not how ... men of low birth, and no breeding, have found themselves suddenly translated into a state of affluence unknown to former ages; and no wonder their brains should be intoxicated with pride, vanity, and presumption. Knowing no other criterion of greatness, but the ostentation of wealth, they discharge their affluence without taste or conduct, through every channel of the most absurd extravagance; and all of them hurry to Bath, because here, without any further qualification, they can mingle with the princes and the nobles of the land.¹²

This description by Matthew Bramble, the principal character in Tobias Smollett's 1771 novel *Humphrey Clinker*, is a particularly exaggerated version of the caricature of the absentee slave-owner found in Cumberland's *The West Indian* and in many other novels, plays and poems of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

¹¹ Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 35-40.

¹² Tobias Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker* ([1771] London: Penguin, 2008), p. 44.

centuries.¹³ Smollett had himself married a Jamaican heiress and continued to be economically reliant on remittances from the Caribbean. But a Tory under the patronage of the Earl of Bute, he was critical of Beckford and his ilk, sarcastically referring to the Alderman as ‘that eminent patriot of the plantations, so much admired for his eloquence, so warmly beloved for his liberality’.¹⁴ His final novel saw a rehashing of the well-worn West Indian character ‘type’ associated with indolence, extravagance, passion and luxury.¹⁵ These were characteristics that had traditionally been linked with critiques of the aristocracy, whose decadence and excess was seen as a manifestation of immorality and vice and was deemed to have a corrupting influence on the rest of society.¹⁶

The eighteenth century witnessed a shift in meanings about luxury. Increasingly, luxury was associated not with aristocratic extravagance but with a growing consumer consciousness. The new luxuries were associated with the commodities, technologies and goods imported to Britain from around the globe. Consumed by the emerging middle classes, they were intimately connected to ideas about taste and sociability.¹⁷ But whereas the consumption of domestic luxury goods by the growing middle classes was associated with politeness, respectability and modernity, West Indian merchants and absentees — who themselves played a pivotal role, as both facilitators and consumers, in the development of this commercial society — were seen as symbols of excessive, unrestrained and lavish expenditure in a similar manner to their aristocratic forbears.¹⁸ Upon walking around her new house, paid for and furnished by her recently discovered uncle, West India merchant Mr Warner, the eponymous heroine of Frances Sheridan’s *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761) remarked on the grandeur of her surroundings, ‘where wealth and

¹³ Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 12.

¹⁴ Cited in Gauci, *William Beckford*, p. 111.

¹⁵ Wylie Sypher, ‘The West Indian as a “character” in the eighteenth century’, *Studies in Philology*, 36:3 (July, 1939), pp. 503-504.

¹⁶ Donna T. Andrew, *Aristocratic Vice: The Attack on Duelling, Suicide, Adultery and Gambling in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 2, 4.

¹⁷ Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger, ‘The rise and fall of the luxury debates’, in Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 7.

¹⁸ Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 15.

magnificence were displayed even to profusion. From top to bottom there is not the smallest article wanting that luxury itself can imagine'.¹⁹

At the heart of this developing commercial society lay one particularly important commodity, sugar. As agriculturalist Arthur Young asserted in his 1772 *Political Essays Concerning the Present State of the British Empire*, 'this plant, which has made such a prodigious figure in the commerce of the modern world, is of too much importance to be passed slightly over'.²⁰ Following the 'sugar revolution' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this previously prohibitively expensive product was increasingly deemed a necessity by large swathes of the population.²¹ Initially the preserve of the aristocratic elites, the eighteenth century saw the 'democratiz[ation of] the consumption of sugar', which became a luxury to be enjoyed by the leisured middle classes in their homes and, later, by workers at their place of employment.²² Consumed by Britons in ever-increasing amounts, exports from the West Indies reached new heights. By 1770, 200,000 tons of sugar was being exported annually from the Caribbean, 36,000 tons of which came from Jamaica, the largest exporter in the British West Indies.²³ It was, of course, an exploited and enslaved labour power that cultivated the sugar cane, undertaking the planting, reaping and boiling necessary for this sweetener to make its way onto dinner tables across Britain.

Thus, as Simon Gikandi has argued, slavery cannot be separated from the development of a polite consumer society. Rather, it was intimately bound up with it, functioning 'as the great unconscious in the infrastructure of modern identity'.²⁴ Partly this was because of its role at the heart of the system of colonial commerce that underpinned this new culture of consumption. But it was also because defining this

¹⁹ Frances Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* ([1761] London, Pandora Press, 1987), p. 343.

²⁰ Arthur Young, *Political Essays Concerning the Present State of the British Empire* (London, 1772), p. 275.

²¹ B. W. Higman, 'The sugar revolution', *Economic History Review*, 53:2 (2000), pp. 213-236; Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 140.

²² Sidney W. Mintz, 'The changing role of foods in the study of consumption', in John Brewer and Roy Porter (eds.), *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 264.

²³ B. W. Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 104.

²⁴ Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, p. 109.

modern identity, intimately associated with ideas about taste, manners and politeness, involved the constant suppression of those deemed outside of it, in this instance the enslaved. Slavery was thus 'in abstentia, on the margins, but still part of a presence ... both inside and outside the system, a residue of what exists but cannot be acknowledged'.²⁵ 'West Indians', whether residents or absentees, were thus targeted not despite their role in helping to create a polite, consumer society but precisely because of it. They were visible reminders of the institution of slavery that underpinned the entire system and as such themselves became targets of derision. Associated with extravagance and excess, these men were seen as representative of the perils of extreme wealth and thus became one of the most important loci around which fears about the potential corrupting influence of unrestrained commercial expansion were articulated. In Frances Burney's *Cecilia*, for example, the stern and irritable Mr Albany told of how upon inheriting his fortune he left for Jamaica and 'intoxicated with sudden power ... revelled in licentiousness and vice'. It was only after he returned to Britain, and witnessed the death of a former lover he had wronged, that he learnt to put his 'ardent passions' to 'nobler uses'.²⁶ Even then, traces of his dissolute past remained: 'his flightiness, wildness, florid language, and extraordinary way of life had long led ... [Cecilia] to suspect his reason had been impaired'.²⁷

Christer Petley has argued that until the 1770s plantation-owners 'occupied an ambiguous place in the British imagination, generally neither loved nor loathed'. But he suggested that in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, as anti-slavery sentiment spread, 'their reputation plummeted' amongst the metropolitan populace.²⁸ There is no doubt that after the Mansfield decision of 1772 anti-slavery thought occupied an increasingly prominent place in British public consciousness. In 1783 the Quakers presented the first Parliamentary petition explicitly calling for the abolition of the slave trade and six years later, with the formation of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade (SEAST), anti-slavery became an organised political movement.²⁹ The diffusion of anti-slavery sentiment in Britain in

²⁵ Ibid, p. 26

²⁶ Frances Burney, *Cecilia*, 3rd ed. (London, 1783). Vol. 4, pp. 234, 235; Vol. 5, p. 24.

²⁷ Ibid, Vol. 4, p. 239.

²⁸ Christer Petley, 'Gluttony, excess, and the fall of the planter class in the British Caribbean', *Slavery and Abolition*, *Atlantic Studies*, 9:1 (January, 2012), p. 86.

²⁹ Paula Dumas, 'Defending the slave trade and slavery in Britain in the era of abolition, 1783-1833', (Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012), p. 29.

the latter decades of the eighteenth century was, James Walvin has argued, 'dramatic, swift and ubiquitous'.³⁰

Some abolitionist writers began to move away from characterisations that highlighted the extravagance of absentees and instead placed more emphasis on the violent underpinnings of their wealth.³¹ Others, like children's writer Thomas Day, explicitly used ideas about the dissolute 'West Indian', which had been around since at least the 1740s, as part of a wider critique of slavery.³² Yet although the rise of the anti-slavery campaigns changed the way absentee slave-owners were represented — and the way they represented themselves — they were not immediately and universally vilified and condemned. Even SEAST was careful to emphasise that it advocated the abolition of the slave trade and not immediate emancipation.³³ Indeed, depictions of the excessive West Indian 'type' did not disappear entirely. Mr Vincent, the suitor of Maria Edgeworth's eponymous *Belinda* (1802), was described both as an open, generous man and as overly-passionate and possessing 'all the West Indian love for magnificence'.³⁴ But unlike earlier iterations of this character he was unable to distance himself from his West Indian origins, with *Belinda* discovering his predilection for gambling a day before their intended wedding.³⁵ This made him, Edgeworth implied, an unsuitable husband for a respectable English bride.³⁶

Absentee slave-owners were not the only group of men involved in colonial commerce who were attacked for their pernicious wealth. They were occasionally referred to as 'West Indian nabobs', a term that had originally referred to the Muslim

³⁰ James Walvin, *England, Slaves and Freedom, 1776-1838* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), p. 97.

³¹ Charlotte Smith and Walter Scott were just two authors to highlight the violent natures of 'West Indian' characters. Charlotte Smith, *Desmond, Vol. III* (London, 1792), pp.161-165; Walter Scott, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian* ([1818] London: J. M. Dent, 1978), p. 492.

³² Jack P. Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 156-7.

³³ J. R. Oldfield, *Transatlantic Abolitionism in the Age of Revolution: An International History of Anti-slavery c. 1878-1820* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 78-79.

³⁴ Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* ([1802] Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), pp. 217-218, 344.

³⁵ John Hill's *The Adventures of Mr George Edwards, A Creole* (London, 1751), offered another example of a 'West Indian' learning to behave with propriety after residence in the metropole.

³⁶ Interestingly, an 1810 edition of the novel placed much less emphasis on the relationship between Mr Vincent and *Belinda*, removing the prospect of their union, apparently at the insistence of Edgeworth's father and much to her chagrin. Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick (ed.), 'Introduction', *Belinda* (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. xxii.

officials who had helped to govern the Mughal Empire but by the late eighteenth century had more specifically come to refer to East India Company officials who made their fortunes in India before returning to metropolitan Britain.³⁷ Nabobs were characterised in similar ways to their West Indian counterparts; they were presented as decadent, greedy and a potential threat to the British nation.³⁸ These connections between the nabob and the West Indian were made explicit in the 1792 poem *Tea and Sugar; or the Nabob and the Creole*, published under the pseudonym Timothy Taylor, Gentleman. Taylor pulled no punches in critiquing those he considered colonial arrivistes, believing they were having a deleterious effect on British society. The nabob, 'rich beyond compare', having 'stain'd Hindostan's plains with human gore', was directly compared to the creole, 'licentious ... with arrogance beside', made rich by the 'sweat and blood' of the enslaved.³⁹ Both figures were also directly connected to the commodities consumed by men and women across metropolitan Britain. After detailing the procurement of 'Eastern wares, Your Iv'ry Cabinets, and your Iv'ry Chairs', the author went on to explain 'Having shewn how Eastern Luxury is gain'd I'll further shew, how SUGAR is obtain'd'.⁴⁰ It was a poem, Jack P. Greene has argued, that captured 'the spirit, the outrage, the resentment' — and one might also add the anxiety — that had developed around the expansion of colonial trade in the latter half of the eighteenth century.⁴¹

As these examples indicate, eighteenth-century literature was an important medium for debating contemporary issues.⁴² The novel had only recently emerged as a form

³⁷ Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. 49.

³⁸ Tillman W. Nechtman, *Nabobs: Empire and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 135-139. Nechtman argues that West Indian planters were treated with less disdain than nabobs because they possessed land and 'in many cases, they planned to settle permanently in the West Indies' whereas East India Company officials were keen to return to Britain after making their money. Not only does this completely ignore the increasing desire among many Caribbean slave-owners to become absentees, it also masks the fact that there were many connections between East India Company officials and West Indian plantation-owners. Nechtman, *Nabobs*, pp. 156-157; Chris Jeppesen, 'East meets West: exploring the connections between Britain, the Caribbean and the East India Company, c. 1757-1857', in Katie Donington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody (eds.), *Britain's History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery: Local Nuances of a 'National Sin'* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 102-125.

³⁹ Timothy Touchstone, *Tea and Sugar; or the Nabob and the Creole. A Poem in two cantos* (London, 1792), pp. 7, 6, 17, 16.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 10.

⁴¹ Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism*, p. 355.

⁴² Paul Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture* (London: Continuum, 2008), pp. 3-4.

and was thus not a set genre but was informed by a variety of different literary styles.⁴³ Nevertheless, common to much of this literature was a concern with the individual and particularly with the individual's place within a rapidly changing society.⁴⁴ Novels were often unapologetically didactic, with authors viewing themselves as social commentators.⁴⁵ Indeed, Liz Bellamy has argued that the eighteenth-century novel was one of the most important means through which the battles about both public and private morality were fought.⁴⁶ Drama, on the other hand, was a much more well-established form and explored characterisation in very different ways to the novel. The eighteenth century saw the theatre begin to rid itself of its reputation for vice and immorality, becoming what Lawrence E. Klein has termed one of the 'nodal points' of a polite, urban culture.⁴⁷ In this age of politeness, drama functioned as a way of showing good behaviour to be imitated and poor behaviour to be avoided.⁴⁸ Plays were written to educate as well as entertain.⁴⁹ In this context, Lisa A. Freeman has argued that 'character' came to play an increasingly important role. In contrast to novels of the period she suggested there was a 'curious lack of depth' to the characters seen on the eighteenth-century stage. Performative in their very nature, these characters represented different kinds of social and economic identities, though these identities were not only classed but also gendered and raced.⁵⁰

⁴³ Catherine Ingrassia, 'Introduction', in Paula R. Backscheider and Catherine Ingrassia (eds.), *A Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel and Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), pp. 1-2.

⁴⁴ John Richetti, *The English Novel in History, 1700-1780* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 4. A considerable number of the most famous eighteenth-century novels were named after their principal protagonist, from Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748) to Henry Fielding's *The History of Tom Jones* (1749).

⁴⁵ Charlotte Sussman, *Eighteenth-Century English Literature, 1660-1789* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 7.

⁴⁶ Liz Bellamy, *Commerce, Morality and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 9.

⁴⁷ Goring, *Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, p. 78; Lawrence E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 11.

⁴⁸ Andreas H. Jucker, 'Politeness in eighteenth-century drama: a discursive approach', *Journal of Politeness Research*, 12:1 (2016), p. 95.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 96.

⁵⁰ Lisa A. Freeman, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 7, 9.

Representations of masculinity

Anxieties about the luxury, overindulgence and fervency of the 'West Indian' were intimately connected with concerns about appropriate kinds of masculinity. Richard Cumberland's Belcour, described as a 'hot-brain'd headlong spark', arrived from Jamaica with an abundance of luggage, accoutrements and 'full of cash'.⁵¹ Unable to control his impulses — he admitted '[M]y passions are my masters' — Belcour's behaviour contrasted starkly with that expected of a polite gentleman, who was supposed to act with ease and sociability but also, crucially, with control and self-restraint.⁵² It corresponded much more closely with the conduct of the effete fop or overly fashionable macaroni, figures who were representative of men who had taken polite behaviour to its extremes.⁵³ Luxury and self-indulgence associated a man with foppishness and effeminacy, a connection made explicit in a 1773 etching which presented Belcour as 'The Middle Temple Macaroni' (Figure 1).⁵⁴

An obsession with vanity and dress was supposed to be indicative of the macaroni's foppish effeminacy. 'The first and capital article of town-effeminacy is that of *dress*', wrote essayist John Brown in his 1757 bestseller *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, arguing that it was symptomatic of 'modern excess and ridicule'. 'Vanity', he continued, only 'lends her aid to this unmanly delicacy'.⁵⁵ Fops were well-known for adorning their three-piece suits with elaborate accessories like large polished metal buttons and accompanying them with enormous wigs, just like the depiction of Belcour.⁵⁶ If politeness was an important marker of gentlemanly masculinity it is clear that in much eighteenth-century literature the 'West Indian' absentee failed to achieve such a status, as Belcour perfectly demonstrated. Presented as fops and macaronis, these absentees were illustrative of the detrimental effects of extravagance, luxury and excessive consumption.⁵⁷

⁵¹ Richard Cumberland, *The West Indian* (London, 1771), p. 45.

⁵² Cumberland, *The West Indian*, p. 8.

⁵³ Karen Harvey, 'The history of masculinity, circa 1650-1800', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:2 (April, 2005), p. 302.

⁵⁴ Michele Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 5.

⁵⁵ Dr. [John] Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, 7th ed. (Belfast, 1758), p. 15.

⁵⁶ Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow: Pearson, 2001), p. 141.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 154.



Figure 1. Etching from *The Macaroni Scavoir Vivre and Theatrical Magazine*, July 1773 ©Trustees of the British Museum.

This was not solely about personal reputation and character. Felicity Nussbaum has shown how effeminacy was used as one of the 'corporeal indicators' of the good or ill health of the nation, one of the most important markers of the strength and level of

civilisation of any particular society.⁵⁸ Foppishness had long been associated with the foreign and the different; the luxurious manners of the French in particular were contrasted with the polite behaviour of Britons and Indian Hindus were increasingly depicted as effeminate, luxurious and corrupt, something that was explicitly racialised.⁵⁹ But there were also concerns about the impact of effeminacy on metropolitan British society. 'Let us ... enquire, how far the false delicacy and effeminacy of present manners may have weakened or destroyed the *national capacity*', wrote a distressed Brown in 1757, when Britain was in the midst of the Seven Years' War.⁶⁰ It is perhaps unsurprising that West Indian absentees were regularly depicted as effeminate, connected as they were with imperial trade, commerce and fears about the consequences of luxurious overindulgence.⁶¹ Concerns continued to be articulated about the fear that unrestrained commerce would reward the individual bounteously, at the expense of the public good.⁶² Anxieties about empire raised the possibility, as Kathleen Wilson has discussed, that qualities long deemed 'natural' metropolitan characteristics could easily be substituted by their opposites; 'Englishness into savagery, masculinity into effeminacy, femininity into vulgarity'.⁶³ Whereas manliness strengthened the British nation, effeminacy could endanger it.⁶⁴

However, not all of these absentee slave-owners were presented as effeminate fops, corresponding with the caricature of the West Indian 'type'. A very different kind of slave-owner, exemplifying a very different kind of masculinity, can be found in some literature of the period, particularly that associated with the anti-slavery movement.

⁵⁸ Felicity A. Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human: Fictions of Anomaly, Race and Gender in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 59.

⁵⁹ Sally O'Driscoll, 'What kind of man do the clothes make? Print culture and the meanings of macaroni effeminacy', in Kevin D. Murphy and Sally O'Driscoll (eds.), *Studies in Ephemera: Text and Image in Eighteenth-Century Print* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2013), p. 255; Jeng-Guo S. Chen, 'Gendering India: effeminacy and the Scottish Enlightenment's debates over virtue and luxury', *The Eighteenth Century*, 51:1-2 (Spring/Summer, 2010), p. 194.

⁶⁰ Dr. Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, p. 28.

⁶¹ There were, of course, a variety of imperial masculinities. These representations of West Indians as unpatriotic effeminate macaronis can be contrasted, for example, with the heroic masculinity associated with the likes of Robert Clive and William Amherst. Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies, 1680-1780* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), p. 145.

⁶² Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human*, p. 69.

⁶³ Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 6.

⁶⁴ Nussbaum, *The Limits of the Human*, p. 73.

The novel became an important means of diffusing anti-slavery ideas in the late eighteenth century, often using sentimental rhetoric that aimed to raise awareness of the suffering of others by appealing to the emotions.⁶⁵ The ‘noble negro’ became a common trope and expressions of caring for ‘fellow man’ regularly made, although such pronouncements continued to be underpinned by racialised assumptions and hierarchies.⁶⁶ Enslaved characters were robbed of their agency and individuality. Instead, the benign and caring white patriarch was placed at the fore.⁶⁷ The eponymous hero of Sarah Scott’s *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766) was perhaps the best-known of this kind of protagonist.⁶⁸ Ellison, ‘perfectly sober, humane, and generous’, was the classic eighteenth-century man of feeling, displaying a sympathetic, sentimental and virtuous masculinity.⁶⁹ Although he expressed his disgust at ‘the cruelty exercised on one part of mankind’ he argued that ‘the present state of the island’ made abolishing slavery impossible and instead made efforts to prohibit cruelty, building cottages, provision grounds and schools for his enslaved workers.⁷⁰ The enslaved themselves only ever appeared as a grateful homogenous mass, regularly expressing their thankfulness at having such a man as their master.⁷¹ When he returned to Britain he continued to spend his time ‘in the exercise of benevolence’, helping the poor, funding the education of young women and supporting widows.⁷² As Wylie Sypher explained, ‘the pity for slaves [was] ... a mere throb in the pulse of this hero’s benignity’.⁷³

⁶⁵ Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment, and Slavery, 1760-1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 2.

⁶⁶ Wylie Sypher, *Guinea’s Captive Kings: British Anti-Slavery in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Octagon Books, 1969), pp. 257-258.

⁶⁷ Moira Ferguson, *Subject to Others: British Women Writers and Colonial Slavery, 1670-1834* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 93.

⁶⁸ There is some debate as to whether *The History of Sir George Ellison* is even an anti-slavery novel. While Ferguson argues that it resolutely is not, Wylie Sypher and Eve W. Stoddard have contended that it is, with Markman Ellis suggesting that the novel’s ameliorationist position lies somewhere between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery perspectives. Ferguson, *Subject to Others*, p. 104; Sypher, *Guinea’s Captive Kings*, p. 267; Eve W. Stoddard, ‘A serious proposal for slavery reform: Sarah Scott’s *Sir George Ellison*’, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 28:4 (Summer, 1995), pp. 379-396; Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 87.

⁶⁹ Sarah Scott, *The History of Sir George Ellison, Vol. I* (London, 1766), p. 4; Alex Wetmore, *Men of Feeling in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p.

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⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

⁷³ Sypher, *Guinea’s Captive Kings*, p. 267.

Although the links between sentimentalism and abolitionist rhetoric have been well explored, pro-slavery writers were just as likely as their anti-slavery counterparts to deploy a language of sensibility, as Brycchan Carey and George Boulukos have shown.⁷⁴ The growth of anti-slavery sentiment meant that slave-owners were forced to represent themselves in new ways; before this period they simply had not had a need to publicly and systematically defend either the system of slavery or themselves.⁷⁵ Presenting themselves as benevolent patriarchs enabled slave-owners to distance themselves from the violent horrors of the slave system, while simultaneously reinforcing the legitimacy of the institution.⁷⁶ Thomas Bellamy's 1789 defence of slavery, a play first performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket entitled *The Benevolent Planters*, dripped with sentimentalism throughout. The titular characters, resident plantation-owners 'Goodwin', 'Heartfree' and 'Steady', discussed how they displayed 'the happy effects of humanity, in the treatment of those who, in the course of human chance, are destined to the bonds of slavery'.⁷⁷ They staged games for their enslaved workers, united some separated lovers and generally expressed opinions befitting of men of sentiment and feeling: 'The grateful Africans have hearts as large as ours, and shame on the degrading lash, when it can be spared', Heartfree pronounced.⁷⁸ The play must 'have proved not wholly unacceptable to a *benevolent audience*', wrote one 1789 review, 'as it exhibits the humanity of the worthy planter in a pleasing light'.⁷⁹

Ultimately, this 'benevolence' was suffused with self-interest.⁸⁰ Indeed, such pronouncements were not unusual amongst plantation-owners preoccupied with the issue of 'improvement'. In the 1773 edition of his bestselling *Essay Upon Plantership* Antiguan slave-owner Samuel Martin added a section about the management of the enslaved population. 'The Negroes in our colonies are not only regularly fed by their

⁷⁴ Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility*, p. 11; George Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth-Century British and American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 14.

⁷⁵ Srividhya Swaminathan, *Debating the Slave Trade: Rhetoric of British National Identity, 1750-1815* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 127.

⁷⁶ Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave*, pp. 13-14.

⁷⁷ Thomas Bellamy, *The Benevolent Planters. A Dramatic Piece as performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket* (London, 1789), p. 1.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁷⁹ 'The Benevolent Planters' (review), *The Monthly Review or Literary Journal*, 81 (July-December 1789), p. 371.

⁸⁰ Brycchan Carey, 'To force a tear: British abolitionism and the eighteenth-century London stage', in Stephen Ahern (ed.), *Affect and Abolition in the Anglo-Atlantic, 1770-1830* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p. 124.

owners throughout the year ... but have cloathing, warm houses, and spots of land, in which they produce fruits, roots, pulses and vegetables'.⁸¹ Martin's addition was a direct response to the 1772 Mansfield decision, which 'shattered the complacency' of slave-owners, who had never before seen the validity of the institution they relied on questioned so extensively.⁸² It was increasingly common for slave-owners to view and present themselves as benevolent masters whose relationship with the enslaved was characterised by paternalism, duty and loyalty rather than violence and exploitation. Sentimental motives and those related to efficiency and productivity were not seen as separate or distinct, but were deemed to be inextricably linked, bound together by proponents of both pro- and anti-slavery.

Of course, neither of these two stock character types, the extravagant, luxurious West Indian and the kind, sentimental planter, was fixed. Indeed, on occasion authors chose to combine aspects of both the classic West Indian 'type' and the sentimental, benevolent planter. Mr Warner, the uncle of the titular character in Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1796) was both described as a rich, luxurious and 'princely man' with 'violent passion[s]' and a kind, generous benefactor with a 'tender, sympathising heart'.⁸³ *The West Indian* was itself a sentimental comedy and Belcour, despite his foibles, was presented as being an essentially good and generous man. The play ended with Stockwell praising his long-lost son:

Belcour, I have watch'd you with a patient, but enquiring eye, and I have discover'd thro' the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature, fallible indeed, but not incorrigible.⁸⁴

However these absentees were depicted their masculinity was always defined in opposition to one important criterion, that of the men they owned. This was, of course, heavily racialised. While enslaved black men were themselves depicted in a variety of ways, from devoted, grateful slaves to violent and irrational barbarians to apelike sub-humans, they were characterised first and foremost by their

⁸¹ Samuel Martin, *An Essay Upon Plantership*, fifth ed. (London, 1773), p. vi.

⁸² Srividhya Swaminathan, 'Developing the West Indian proslavery position after the Somerset decision', *Slavery and Abolition*, 24:3 (2003), p. 45.

⁸³ Sheridan, *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, pp. 343, 340, 346.

⁸⁴ Cumberland, *The West Indian*, pp. 101-102.

enslavement.⁸⁵ In the majority of novels and plays featuring West Indian absentees enslaved characters did not themselves appear, instead functioning as invisible entities whose labour enabled the behaviour and lifestyle of the absentee. Yet whether an extravagant fop, a sentimental man of feeling or something in between, the absentee slave-owner was always one thing the enslaved were not, free. The luxurious West Indian may have embodied anxieties about overindulgence and effeminacy, but he remained an independent man, free to behave as he so desired, even if this may have been a cause for concern. Similarly, although the sentimental planter may have espoused a rhetoric of equality, he supported amelioration not abolition, presented himself as a benevolent patriarch and reinforced both the legitimacy of slavery as an institution and a sense of difference between master and slave.⁸⁶ Enslaved men, on the other hand, were denied freedom, the ability to own property and 'the social rights of fatherhood'; they were never conceived of as men in the same way as their owners.⁸⁷

Thomas Lane: slave-owner, absentee and gentleman?

These literary representations provide an indication of the significant presence of slave-owning absentees within metropolitan society, and of the concerns and the anxieties that surrounded them. Such representations have continued to influence the historiography of absenteeism, with Eric Williams, Clare Taylor and Alan Gregor Copley among those who have depicted absentees as rich and ostentatious, desperately trying, and usually failing, to integrate themselves within British society.⁸⁸ But it is important to move beyond such generalisations. Most absentees, male and female, did not conform to these stereotypes. Looking at the example of Thomas Lane helps to challenge what it meant to be a 'West Indian' and absentee. Men like Lane, through making recourse to different kinds of masculinities in different

⁸⁵ Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave*, p. 3; Hector M'Neill, *Observations on the Treatment of the Negroes in the Island of Jamaica* (London, 1788), pp. 27-28; Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, Vol. II* (London, 1774), p. 365.

⁸⁶ Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave*, pp. 13-15.

⁸⁷ Diana Paton and Pamela Scully, 'Introduction: gender and slave emancipation in comparative perspective', in Pamela Scully and Diana Paton (eds.), *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 5.

⁸⁸ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 86; Clare Taylor, 'The journal of an absentee proprietor, Nathaniel Phillips of Slebech', *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 18 (1984), p. 71; Alan Gregor Copley, 'Changing metropolitan attitudes to the transatlantic slave trade', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 42:1 (2008), p. 97.

contexts, were able to successfully position themselves within metropolitan society as both slave-owners and gentlemen.

Thomas Lane differed in one very significant respect from most of the absentees who appeared in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century literature, who, having made colossal sums in the Caribbean, returned to Britain to spend their wealth. Like the large majority of absentees discussed in this thesis, the Lane brothers became slave-owners through inheritance. In 1794 they inherited Newton and Seawells, alongside estates in Staffordshire, from their mother's cousin, fellow absentee Elizabeth Newton. These Barbadian plantations had been in the Newton family since the late seventeenth century and Elizabeth had co-owned the estates with her sister, Sarah Holte, since the death of their brother John in 1783. The Newton sisters were just two of the many female absentees living in late eighteenth-century Britain. Yet the complex and somewhat unusual ways Elizabeth Newton ensured that the Lanes would receive her inheritance demonstrate how fundamentally slave-ownership was underpinned by gendered ideas about legitimacy, respectability and property.

In 1776 an almost sixty year-old John Newton married Catherine Seymour, almost forty years his junior. They divorced just six years later. In two scandalous ecclesiastical trials, reported with great relish in the press, over forty witnesses gave depositions detailing Catherine Newton's adultery with numerous men, including her coachman Thomas Cope and Isham Baggs, a ward and protégé of her husband.⁸⁹ Of particular intrigue were the details surrounding the birth of Catherine's son John Newton, born in November 1780. The elder John Newton insisted he had not seen his wife since their separation in 1777, a state of affairs confirmed by almost all of the deponents, even Catherine's sister.⁹⁰ Instead, it was proposed that a Captain Ackland was the father, with servant Eleanor Gould just one of those to claim she

⁸⁹ *The Trial of the Hon. Mrs. Catherine Newton* (London, 1782). In 1791 the by then Rev. Isham Baggs gave evidence to one of the Committees of the Privy Council, supporting the abolition of the slave trade. Explaining that his comments on the West Indies were based on his observations in Barbados, where presumably he had accompanied John Newton, he reported that 'he has certainly seen instances of treatment, which shocked him much'. This included, he explained, seeing 'worn-out slaves' being left to beg in the streets and pregnant women being whipped by their drivers. *Observations on the Evidence given before the Committees of the Privy Council and House of Commons in support of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade* (London, 1791), pp. 27-28.

⁹⁰ *The Second Part of the Trial of the Hon. Mrs. Catherine Newton* (London, 1782), p. 70.

had seen them alone kissing in Mrs Newton's bedroom.⁹¹ The Court awarded that John Newton 'should be divorced from bed, board and mutual cohabitation' from Catherine Newton and in 1782 he obtained, by an Act of Parliament, a formal divorce from his wife.⁹²

John Newton always maintained that as his namesake 'was and is a Bastard' he would not receive any inheritance.⁹³ In his will he implored his beneficiaries, principally his two sisters, 'to withstand to the utmost all attempts which may be made to set up the said Child or Children of the said Catherine as Heir or Heirs to me or my Family'.⁹⁴ Elizabeth Newton was vehement she would do exactly that: 'not a farthing shall go to that nasty little Bastard if I can hinder it, as he was no more my Brother's child than he was mine', she wrote, after her sister's death had brought attention to such matters.⁹⁵ But despite this assurance Elizabeth Newton appears to have been ignorant about the necessary legal procedures; she had to be reminded by a male advisor that if she died intestate the younger John Newton would claim her inheritance. After being asked how she intended to dispose of her estates she responded that she had not yet made up her mind. 'Then Madam they will go to little Newton unless you have yr. Executors John & Thomas Lane Residuary Legatees till you may think proper otherwise to dispose of them', lawyer Mr Legge reminded.⁹⁶ Elizabeth Newton agreed and in her 1794 will made the Lane brothers her residuary legatees and principal beneficiaries.⁹⁷ When she died just a few months later they received a sizeable inheritance, much to the chagrin of other members of Newton's family.⁹⁸ Ideas about legitimacy and family underpinned the system of property-

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 35.

⁹² Ibid, p. 107; Staffordshire Country Record Office (hereafter SCRO) D357/K/2/1, Copy of the Grant of Annuity from John Newton to Catherine Seymour, dated 31st May 1782.

⁹³ SCRO, D357/K/3/4, Copy of the will of John Newton.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ SCRO, D357/K/5/2, Papers relating to John Newton junior, son of Catherine née Seymour (disowned as a bastard by John Newton senior), 1804-1813. Henry Eyres Landor, 27th April 1813.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ PCC PROB 11/1254/296, Will of Elizabeth Newton.

⁹⁸ Poet Anna Seward, 'the Swan of Litchfield', claimed in 1797 that her friends the Ardens had been 'unjustly overlooked in the bequeathed riches of Mrs Newton'. Local historian Allan Howard has suggested that this was because, despite having closer familial ties to the Newtons than the Lanes, the two Arden sisters had been close friends of Catherine Newton and that after the divorce their relationship with the other Newtons disintegrated. Anna Seward, *Letters of Anna Seward, written between the years 1784 and 1807, Vol. IV*, (Edinburgh, 1811), p. 320; Allan Howard, 'The anti-slavery debate around Lichfield: Anna Seward, the Clapham Sect, the Lunar Society, Yoxall Lodge and Kings Bromley',

transmission. It was the Lanes' relationship with their distant cousins, containing both instrumental and affective aspects, that enabled them to become substantial slave-owners.

Barbados was the first British colony in the Caribbean to become involved in the transatlantic sugar enterprise on a large scale.⁹⁹ By the end of the eighteenth century over 250,000 hundredweights of sugar were exported annually from the island.¹⁰⁰ Uniquely among the British West Indian islands Barbados had, by the start of the nineteenth century, developed a self-sustaining enslaved population.¹⁰¹ Most plantations, Newton and Seawells among them, had managed to establish a natural increase amongst the enslaved, meaning Barbadian proprietors had little to fear from the 1807 abolition of the slave trade. Thomas Lane's attorney Robert Haynes recognised the advantage Barbadian plantation-owners had: 'I sincerely rejoice at the abolition of the Slave Trade', he wrote, as it 'will give the Old Colonies the advantage in cultivation'.¹⁰² The nature of the historical record means that it is much easier to learn about the lives of enslavers than it is their enslaved. However, there has been a significant amount of work undertaken on the enslaved population of the Lanes' Newton estate. Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange's comprehensive archaeological investigation of a slave cemetery on the plantation provides illuminating information on mortuary practices and other aspects of the social and cultural lives of the enslaved.¹⁰³ Hilary Beckles and Karl Watson have also drawn attention to the lives of an elite slave family, headed by matriarch Old Doll, which was able to wield significant authority on the plantation.¹⁰⁴ These analyses are vital in helping to remind us of the people who lay at the heart of the Lanes' wealth.

http://www.kbh.org.uk/sites/default/files/general_articles/The%20Anti%20Slavery%20Debate%20Around%20Lichfield.pdf (accessed 13/9/16).

⁹⁹ Hilary McD Beckles, 'The slave-drivers' war: Bussa and the 1816 Barbados Slave Rebellion', *Boletín de Estudios Latinoamericanos y del Caribe*, 39 (December, 1985), p. 85.

¹⁰⁰ Otis P. Starkey, *The Economic Geography of Barbados: A Study of the Relationships Between Environmental Variations and Economic Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 102.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, p. 75.

¹⁰² SHL MS523/620, R Haynes to T Lane, 26th September 1806.

¹⁰³ Jerome S. Handler, and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

¹⁰⁴ Hilary McD Beckles, *Centering Women: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Society* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), pp. 125-139; Karl Watson, *A Kind of Right to Be Idle: Old Doll, Matriarch of Newton Plantation* (St. Anne's Garrison, Barbados: Department of History, the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, 2000).

The practice of absentee slave-ownership

The relationship between absentee and attorney underpinned the practice of absentee slave-ownership. The attorney's role was to act in the place of the absentee proprietor, concerning himself not necessarily with the day-to-day goings on but with the overall supervision of the plantation, the provision of plantation supplies and the shipments of sugar.¹⁰⁵ Between 1794 and Thomas Lane's death in 1824 he employed three men as attorneys of his plantations: Sir John Alleyne, Sampson Wood and Robert Haynes. Whilst the former, one of the island's most successful plantation-owners and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, appears to have paid little attention to Newton and Seawells, the latter two both regularly communicated with Thomas Lane — and occasionally with brother John — about the process of managing the plantations.

Lane's correspondence reflects the extent to which absentee slave-owners were entirely dependent on their Caribbean attorneys. As a metropolitan lawyer he was well aware that both he and his brother lacked 'colonial knowledge of our own to set in opposition to yours', and that consequently they were entirely reliant on the efforts and abilities of their attorneys.¹⁰⁶ 'I desire you will not consider anything written by me to be imperative', Lane assured Haynes after providing him with some suggestions, 'I am perfectly contented to be guided by your opinion'.¹⁰⁷ Thomas Lane, understanding that he was writing from a position of comparative ignorance, was reluctant to offer directions or orders, or even to ask for the reasoning behind certain decisions. 'I am sure you need ... not to be told again that I have implicit confidence in all you do', he reiterated to Sampson Wood, hoping that his requests for clarification would not lead Wood to 'suppose me either suspicious or troublesome'.¹⁰⁸ He utilised a language of obligation to negotiate the complex situation in which he found himself, simultaneously both master and dependent. 'I am much obliged to you Sir for the observations you have favoured me with', Lane assured Sir John Alleyne in 1796 and almost a decade later similarly wrote of his obligation to Robert Haynes, 'your being so infinitely more capable of forming a

¹⁰⁵ R. B. Sheridan, 'Simon Taylor, sugar tycoon of Jamaica, 1740-1813', *Agricultural History*, 45:4 (October, 1971), p. 288.

¹⁰⁶ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 23rd May 1806.

¹⁰⁷ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 19th June 1805.

¹⁰⁸ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 5th September 1801.

correct opinion on all plantation affairs'.¹⁰⁹ When over 4,000 miles separated Thomas Lane from his Barbadian plantations, the endeavours of his attorneys was critical to their success.

This was, however, a reciprocal relationship. Whilst Allan L. Karras has suggested that attorneys were left virtually unsupervised, Lane's frequent and detailed correspondence demonstrates that accountability lay at the heart of a successful relationship between attorney and absentee.¹¹⁰ In his examination of fellow Barbadian absentees the Lascelles, S. D. Smith demonstrated that attorneys were not only required to regularly correspond with their employers but also to provide regular, systematic and up-to-date accounts, ledgers and reports. This was a critical aspect of effective transatlantic decision-making, something Thomas Lane was perfectly aware of.¹¹¹ When looking for a replacement for the recently deceased Sampson Wood, he highlighted Robert Haynes's reputation as a man who was 'able at his Pen & ... ready to give ... every necessary information by every opportunity'.¹¹² Gaps in communication provoked considerable irritation: 'To leave us so much unnoticed I must confess to you has been far from satisfactory', Lane warned Haynes, having heard neither from him nor overseer Mr Farrell in a considerable period of time.¹¹³ Neither did Lane's desire for news and information decline as the years passed. In 1823, just a year before his death, he again complained about the lack of updates, something that several years of poor returns meant was of considerable concern. In such worrying times he emphasised that 'there can be no great trouble in writing a few lines by every packett'.¹¹⁴ Regular communication was the linchpin of absentee plantation-ownership.

Thomas Lane was well aware that his attorneys were an embodiment of his own authority on the plantations. Although attorneys did not necessarily live on the

¹⁰⁹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Sir J Alleyne, 3rd May 1796; T Lane to R Haynes, 1st January 1805.

¹¹⁰ Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 71; B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica, 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Mona: University of West India Press, 2005), p. 94.

¹¹¹ S. D. Smith, *Slavery, Family, and Gentry Capitalism in the British Atlantic: The World of the Lascelles, 1684-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 234.

¹¹² SHL MS523/568/1, G Blackman to T Lane, 7th April 1804.

¹¹³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 5th April 1810.

¹¹⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Reece, 21st February 1823.

estates they managed, Sampson Wood did and Lane was quick to stipulate that 'Being a Gentr. we therefore ought to give him the best situation'.¹¹⁵ He was disturbed to discover that the principal dwelling house on Newton was largely unfurnished: 'I am at a loss to conceive how it could possibly happen that the house should be so bare'.¹¹⁶ In order to rectify this unsatisfactory situation, Lane sent Wood a hundred pounds to furnish the house. Wood himself recognised that this was important, not simply because it would improve his quality of life, but because the house was a material expression of his power as a white man and his command over the enslaved: 'I am sure you both wish I should enjoy all the reasonable and gentlemanly comforts', he emphasised.¹¹⁷ At a time of 'vast uncertainty', when Lane was clearly worried about the strength of the sugar market, it is striking that he deemed it necessary to send such a large amount of money to Wood, giving him 'a carte blanche' to improve the interiors of the house.¹¹⁸ It suggests that the plantation house was not solely important for resident planters, for whom its symbolic grandness was a demonstration of power, wealth and English identity.¹¹⁹ The attorney may have occupied a more liminal status but, physically present on the plantation, he personified the absentee's authority.

Both contemporaries and historians have argued that many attorneys were lazy, profligate and deceitful. Jamaican plantation-owner Thomas Roughley argued that most attorneys were 'engrossed by their own interested speculations [...] too ostentatious, proud and supine to contribute to the good of their constituents', a perspective subsequently echoed by, amongst others, Lowell Joseph Ragatz, Eric Williams and Orlando Patterson.¹²⁰ Whilst the correspondence between Thomas Lane and his attorneys suggests that the latter could be active and industrious, it also hints at a degree of evasion. In 1799 Lane wrote to Sampson Wood, assuring him that 'you have managed them very much to our satisfaction', suggesting that he had

¹¹⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Sir J Alleyne, January 1796.

¹¹⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 19th December 1798.

¹¹⁷ SHL MS523/458, S Wood to [?] Lane, 18th November 1801.

¹¹⁸ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 23rd May 1802.

¹¹⁹ Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, p. 116.

¹²⁰ Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter's Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate* (London, 1823), p. 7; Lowell Joseph Ragatz, 'Absentee landlordism in the British Caribbean, 1750-1833', *Agricultural History* 5:1 (1931), pp. 7-24; Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 86; Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1967).

‘really performed wonders’.¹²¹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, Wood’s constant reiterations of the efforts he was willing to undertake for his employers were somewhat obsequious. ‘I have served you with the diligence & industry of an honest & faithful servant, & with the zeal & enthusiasm of a fast friend’, he attested, simultaneously utilising both a language of servility and friendship to emphasise his trustworthiness.¹²² There were other indications that he was indeed a diligent employee. Thomas and John’s brother Richard, a Captain in the Royal Navy, visited Newton during his time in the Caribbean, relaying to Thomas that Wood was ‘going on well’. He described the well-ordered state of the plantation and suggested that his brother was ‘in high luck to get such a Man as Manager’.¹²³ However, following Wood’s death it quickly became clear that he had not been completely open with Lane about the state of the plantation. Lane initially lamented the loss of ‘a most invaluable man’ but soon discovered, with immense surprise, that the estates were heavily indebted.¹²⁴ ‘It really gives me as much pain to have cause to alter my opinion of him, as does the actual certainty of his having involved us in debts’, Lane admitted.¹²⁵ The exertions of Sampson Wood certainly improved the profitability of Newton and Seawells and several decades later Lane would recall this period of prosperity with nostalgia. However, his example also suggests that the trust absentees placed in their attorneys was not always warranted.

Gentlemanly networks: Thomas Lane’s ‘friends’

His attorneys, however, were not the only individuals Lane relied on for the long-distance management of his estates. Gentlemanly networks of planters, merchants and financiers were crucial to the practice of absentee plantation-ownership. Particularly significant was Lane’s relationship with those who consigned his sugar, the London merchant George Blackman and the Daniels of Bristol. Both had previously enjoyed business connections with the Newton family and used their extensive experience to provide advice on a wide range of matters. Thomas Lane relied on the opinion of Mr Blackman, for example, to challenge Wood’s order of two

¹²¹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 5th November 1799.

¹²² SHL MS523/321, Wood to J Lane, 8th September 1797.

¹²³ SHL MS523/333, R Lane to T Lane, 25th February 1797.

¹²⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Mrs Wood, 14th January 1804, T Lane to R Haynes, 1st January 1805.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

carts — ‘they would kill your horse he thinks’ — and also adopted his practice of having regular valuations of the properties.¹²⁶ Similarly, in one of his earliest letters to Barbados Lane directly quoted Messrs. Daniels and Sons, who reported that the twelve hogsheads they had received were ‘of a very inferior quality’.¹²⁷ The relationship between Lane and his merchants was not entirely free from contestation. He complained vehemently about the misconduct of the Messrs. Daniels after some plantation stores had failed to arrive, proclaiming ‘I find my confidence in their house ... shaken’.¹²⁸ However, Lane was also aware that his own inexperience in the sugar trade meant that he was necessarily reliant on others. After Robert Haynes complained that he was compelled to consign the sugar to Blackman and Daniels, Lane’s response was telling: ‘I am not aware of any fault to be found with either of their houses’, he responded, ‘but my ignorance in mercantile concerns may prevent me from finding out what others may have discovered’.¹²⁹ The merchants were linchpins of the whole sugar enterprise, but adopted a particular significance for metropolitan absentees.

The relationship between Thomas Lane and George Blackman also hints at the complex interplay between commercial and personal concerns. Naomi Tadmor has brought attention to the plurality of eighteenth-century meanings of friendship, highlighting that the term could apply to political, economic and occupational connections as well as sentimental, sociable and kinship attachments.¹³⁰ There is no doubt that the business relationship between Lane and Blackman was underpinned by personal ties. Sociability was key to the maintenance of these gentlemanly networks and Lane and Blackman regularly dined together, with Blackman lamenting that his friend was unable to attend a dinner given in honour of Lord Seaforth, Governor of Barbados, ‘as you was put on my right hand’.¹³¹ However, the pair’s closeness did not withstand one particularly serious occasion, ‘which has much surprised numbers of mercantile men in this country’, the bankruptcy of George

¹²⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 3rd April 1799, 19th October 1801.

¹²⁷ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Sir J Alleyne, 12th September 1795.

¹²⁸ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 21st May 1799.

¹²⁹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 3rd February 1808.

¹³⁰ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 167.

¹³¹ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, ‘Gentlemanly capitalism and British expansion overseas I. the old colonial system, 1688-1850’, *Economic History Review.*, new ser., 39:4 (November, 1986), p. 509; SHL MS523/566, G Blackman to T Lane, 6th March 1804.

Blackman (who was from 1821 styled Sir George Harnage).¹³² By this time Lane was no longer consigning his sugar to Harnage but he was still incensed by this 'disgraceful' event as 'numbers of his oldest & best friends have been grossly taken in!'¹³³ This supports Toby Ditz's argument that merchants viewed bankruptcy, particularly when it was associated with dishonesty, as a sign of debasement and of having been unmanned.¹³⁴ If we accept Tadmor's suggestion that friendship, regardless of its nature, was best conceived of as 'a moral and reciprocal relationship' it is perhaps unsurprising that business failure could lead to the disintegration of personal relationships.¹³⁵

There were other indications that these mercantile connections were not based simply on economic self-interest but on a complicated amalgam of business, personal and even familial concerns.¹³⁶ In 1816 Thomas Lane informed Robert Haynes that for several years his son had been 'qualifying himself for business', having been placed with Mr Robert Small, 'a Gentln. in this City in a commercial concern of good promise'.¹³⁷ Although principally an East India concern, the company was keen to expand its West India interests and consequently Lane ordered that consignments of sugar be sent to this house. Most immediately disadvantaged by this were the Daniels of Bristol, who would no longer receive Lane's exports. It is clear that this was not an economically motivated decision. 'Fair attention to the Interest of my own Son ought (I think) to give way to him', proposed Lane, adding 'neither would I for a small personal advantage to myself deprive my Son of greater advantage to him in his profession by continuing consignments to Bristol which might come to him'.¹³⁸ In an early nineteenth-century world where commercial affairs were underpinned by structures of kinship, familial interests and economic concerns were interconnected.¹³⁹ Even after Lane had stopped sending

¹³² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146635292> (accessed 16/03/17).

¹³³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 15th December 1823.

¹³⁴ Toby L. Ditz, 'Shipwrecked; or, masculinity imperiled: mercantile representations of failure and the gendered self in eighteenth-century Philadelphia', *Journal of American History*, 81:1 (June, 1994), p. 71.

¹³⁵ Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England*, p. 213.

¹³⁶ Sheryllyne Haggerty, *'Merely for Money'? Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750-1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012).

¹³⁷ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 8th March 1816.

¹³⁸ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 15th March 1817.

¹³⁹ Toby L. Ditz, 'Formative ventures: eighteenth-century commercial letters and the articulation of experience', in Rebecca Earle (ed.), *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter-Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p. 66

consignments to the Daniels he was reluctant to cut off all ties: 'it is very painful to me to give up an Old Connexion, altho' my own Son is in the appointed scale', he wrote.¹⁴⁰ Relieved they had parted 'good friends' Lane ordered Haynes to continue sending sugar on Daniels' ships, thereby 'doing them a service for which I know they will feel obliged'.¹⁴¹

Lane was also located within a wider fraternity of West India gentlemen. As David Hancock has argued, focusing solely on one individual can be misleading as they are 'only one piece of a large puzzle, one character in a complicated story'.¹⁴² Informal gentlemanly networks were vital in helping to sustain both the West Indian sugar enterprise and the wider British Empire in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Lane, for example, was keen to hear of the state of his plantations from fellow absentee George Barrow, who had recently visited the island and the Lanes' estates. 'It will give me very great satisfaction to have an opportunity of conversing with you', he eagerly assured him, hoping that he would be able to 'acquir[e] by it much useful knowledge on the subject of our property in Barbados'.¹⁴³ New acquaintances or employees tended to be friends or connections of others and personal introductions, whether by epistolary or direct means, were necessary when establishing new relationships. When searching for a new attorney following the death of Sampson Wood, Lane relied on a 'very strong recommendation' from another plantation-owner in order to find a suitable replacement, also recognising that the only way of beginning the connection was 'thro' your personal introduction'.¹⁴⁴ Lane's response to a warning received from his attorney about an unknown Mr Goodrige highlights the centrality of these pre-established networks. 'I receive your caution as to this Gentleman with thanks', he insisted, 'but you might be assured I shod. not enter into much serious conversation with a Stranger'.¹⁴⁵

Within Lane's correspondence women appeared only as the enslaved, or as dutiful, and largely passive, wives. Contained within his use of the masculine pronoun to describe the West India plantation-owner — he suggested that 'it is to the Injury of

¹⁴⁰ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 8th March 1816.

¹⁴¹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 26th May 1818, 15th March 1817.

¹⁴² David Hancock, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 10.

¹⁴³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to G Barrow, 1st January 1805.

¹⁴⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 6th July 1802.

¹⁴⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 23rd May 1802.

the planter to ship *his* sugars before they are quite ready' [my emphasis] — was an implicit assumption that the plantation-owner was male.¹⁴⁶ Sampson Wood's wife was occasionally mentioned, with Wood himself suggesting that she was 'an excellent Helpmate on the Estate'.¹⁴⁷ However, the exertions of Mrs Wood were always presented as conforming to traditional female roles, whether through 'her care for the sick', 'her nurture of the little Negroes' or 'her churning of butter'.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, following the death of Samson Wood Lane promised, in a letter to Wood's wife, not to 'trouble you with any matter of business', despite her assurances that she had remained busy dealing with 'the books of both plantations'.¹⁴⁹ Merchant George Blackman may have suggested the possibility of Mrs Wood continuing on the estates as attorney and manager but Lane never entertained the possibility, privately indicating a desire to expel her from the property as soon as possible.¹⁵⁰ It was difficult for women to escape a stereotype that conceived them only as wives, mothers and helpmeets.

Also significant was Lane's relationship with his brother John. Thomas took primary control of the management of both Newton and Seawells plantations. This continued even after the brothers had begun dividing the properties, a process which started in 1803 but was not formally completed for several decades. Thomas regularly emphasised that he was writing on behalf of 'my brother & myself' and occasionally acted as a middle-man, communicating John's concerns at his behest.¹⁵¹ Lane also took account of his brother's opinions when making important judgements. When deciding about the appointment of Robert Haynes and overseer John Farrell, Thomas refused to commit himself until he had spoken to John. 'In a matter of so much consequence, I dare not chuse to act decisively without conferring ... with my bro.', he insisted, waiting until John had visited him in London before agreeing upon their appointment.¹⁵² Similarly, although Thomas adopted the role of transatlantic superintendent, John utilised different skills and contacts for their mutual advantage.

¹⁴⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 6th July 1802.

¹⁴⁷ SHL MS523/335/1, S Wood to T Lane, 24th April 1798.

¹⁴⁸ SHL MS523/334, S Wood to T Lane, 31st March 1798.

¹⁴⁹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Mrs Wood, 14th January 1804; SHL MS523/967, Mrs Wood to Thomas Lane, 19th March 1804.

¹⁵⁰ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to G Barrow, 6th June 1804.

¹⁵¹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Sir J Alleyne, 3rd May 1796, T Lane to R Haynes, 7th September 1820.

¹⁵² SHL MS523/967, T Lane to G Barrow, 7th May 1804.

He may have ‘almost continually [resided] in the Country’ on his Staffordshire estate but his access to different social networks proved beneficial.¹⁵³ In 1815 the House of Commons passed a bill that required the British West Indian colonies to register their enslaved populations. This provoked great contestation in Barbados and when Thomas Lane received a report of this dispute he promised, ‘to forward it accordingly to my Brother who has many parliamentary acquaintances to whom probably he could. write or speak to on the subject’.¹⁵⁴ John Lane may not have been actively involved in the management of the plantations in the same manner as his brother, but his input was nevertheless vital.

John Lane was not the only family member Thomas made recourse to in his correspondence. In the early years of his Barbadian proprietorship Lane helped to establish his own authority by emphasising his close relationship with the Newtons, situating himself within a long-standing plantation-owning lineage. Immediately upon inheriting the plantations Lane wrote to Sir John Alleyne, thanking him for continuing ‘that friendship which the late Mr Newton & our very good friends his sisters experienced from you for a series of years’.¹⁵⁵ The Newtons were not merely ‘good friends’ to the Lanes but ‘worthy relations’ and ‘great benefactors’.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, Thomas Lane maintained connections with George Blackman and the Daniels precisely because they had ‘each of them [been] the old Connection of the Newtons whom I have succeeded’ and consequently he ‘ha[d] no reason but to think well of each of them’.¹⁵⁷ Thomas Lane was clearly aware of the reputation of his benefactors and kin. This familial identity continued to be important to the way he conceived himself as a Barbadian slave-owner.

Lane’s relationship with his enslaved

One of the most important aspects of managing Caribbean plantations was governing the people who were enslaved upon them. Andrew O’Shaughnessy has argued that white West Indians conceived of the enslaved population as an internal enemy and an articulation of racial difference certainly underpins much contemporary

¹⁵³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 23rd May 1806.

¹⁵⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 8th March 1816.

¹⁵⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Alleyne, 12th September 1795.

¹⁵⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Alleyne, 3rd May 1796.

¹⁵⁷ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 3rd February 1808.

writing on the Caribbean.¹⁵⁸ Eighteenth-century understandings of race were, however, complex and uneven. Roxann Wheeler has shown that ideas about difference associated with culture, civility and religion were as important to the way people viewed themselves as physical characteristics like skin colour or texture of the hair, arguing that it was only towards the end of the century that skin colour became ‘the primary signifier of human difference’.¹⁵⁹ Late eighteenth-century writers used explicitly racialised language to present the ‘negroes’ as embodying the lowest level of civilisation.¹⁶⁰ ‘The negro is possessed of passions not only strong, but ungovernable; a mind dauntless, warlike and unmerciful; a temper extremely irascible; a disposition indolent, selfish and deceitful’, wrote Hector M’Neill in 1788, with Edward Long famously comparing black men to ‘the oran-outang’.¹⁶¹

There was not one single, central and accepted idea about the racial difference of the enslaved. Rather, there was a spectrum of hierarchical assumptions of racial difference. The language Lane used to describe his enslaved people, with its religious underpinnings, was not explicitly dehumanising. ‘I feel for the situation of those poor creatures’, he wrote, arguing that ‘every feeling of humanity towards a fellow creature’ prompted him to ‘pay all due attention to their health & comfort’.¹⁶² Lane also used similar sentimental language, common to both the pro- and anti-slavery campaigns, during a period of intense drought, when he lamented, ‘I feel very much for the poor negroes. The crop I think of by far the last consequence’.¹⁶³ Undoubtedly, economic self-interest was a prime motivation, as Lane himself admitted: ‘good treatment must necessarily make them work more cheerfully — and with more serviceable ability’.¹⁶⁴ However, his use of a paternalistic rhetoric — Lane even referred to the enslaved as ‘a sort of family’ — and his apparent interest in their welfare also hints at the ambiguous position of the absentee slave-owner.¹⁶⁵ Being geographically and psychologically removed from the site of exploitation allowed them to distance themselves from the violent horrors of the slave system.

¹⁵⁸ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, p. 34.

¹⁵⁹ Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race*, p. 7.

¹⁶⁰ Swaminathan, ‘Developing the West Indian proslavery position’, pp. 52-53.

¹⁶¹ M’Neill, *Observations on the Treatment of the Negroes*, pp. 27-28; Long, *The History of Jamaica Vol. II*, p. 365.

¹⁶² SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 6th March 1799, T Lane to R Haynes, 8th April 1815.

¹⁶³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 12th April 1800.

¹⁶⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 3rd April 1799.

¹⁶⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 15th October 1805.

Lane's orders about maintaining a standard of care over the enslaved were accompanied by one telling caveat. They were only to be treated with a comfort and attention that was 'consistent with their subordination & not incompatible with their dependent situation'.¹⁶⁶ 'I wish to promote their Comfort as far as propriety will allow', Lane assured his overseer in 1822, 'but am well aware that great prudence is required to preserve a due subordination amongst them'.¹⁶⁷ The 'negroes' were therefore characterised first and foremost by their enslavement. Their treatment, however ostensibly generous, had to be conceived within these parameters. Richard Sheridan has drawn attention to the similarities between the relationship between master and slave and the patriarchal family unit.¹⁶⁸ Paternalistic figures, however, did not simply act, as the West Indians liked to represent themselves, with duty and benevolence.¹⁶⁹ Underpinning their absolute control was the sense that they also possessed the authority to punish as they saw fit; slave-owners, even at a distance, always maintained the right to inflict physical punishment on those they enslaved.¹⁷⁰ Their enslaved status meant that these people occupied a completely different conceptual space to Lane, his associates and his family. Despite the lack of explicitly dehumanising language Thomas Lane's slave-ownership was rooted in a hierarchically-conceived assumption of racial difference. His language of paternalism and protection contained an implicit assumption of superiority that was itself racialised. Lane's whiteness cannot be separated from his identity as a free, independent man and it was this that lay at the heart of his power over the enslaved.

Despite Lane's rhetoric that sometimes suggested otherwise, the enslaved were first and foremost conceived of as property. The reports of the enslaved he regularly received included valuations. The people were listed according to their occupation groups, with those valued highest listed first. In 1803 Hercules, a mason, was valued at £200. Stock keeper Bella, on the other hand, was worth just £5 and the old and diseased were simply described as 'useless'.¹⁷¹ Ultimately, the enslaved people were

¹⁶⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Farrell, 18th February 1805.

¹⁶⁷ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Reece, 16th September 1822.

¹⁶⁸ R. B. Sheridan, 'The rise of a colonial gentry: a case study of Antigua, 1730-1775', *Economic History Review*, new ser., 13:3 (1961), p. 344.

¹⁶⁹ Lambert, *White Creole Culture*, pp. 31-32.

¹⁷⁰ Diana Paton, *No Bond but the Law: Punishment, Race, and Gender in Jamaican State Formation, 1780-1870* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 4.

¹⁷¹ SHL MS523/279, Surveys and Valuations of Newton, 11th May 1803. For a full transcription of this list, and of a similar one for Seawells, see Appendices Five and Six.

considered as little more than units of economic value.¹⁷² Lane praised overseer Robert Reece for his 'proper attention to the comfort of those who are so serviceable to us', sending over some port and two inscribed plates to congratulate him for 'their Increase in the two proceeding years'.¹⁷³ This shows the extent to which the fertility of female slaves was deemed quantifiable and suggests that rather than being concerned for the welfare of the enslaved Thomas Lane was primarily interested in his own economic well-being. Indeed, throughout Lane's correspondence were hints of the violence and exploitation that underpinned the plantation system. When work at Newtons was being disturbed by a group of women who Lane referred to as 'female plagues' he ordered that these 'ungrateful and wicked' women were 'immediately disgraced and disposed of'.¹⁷⁴ What this involved is impossible to know but he made quite clear to Wood that 'Master you must be'.¹⁷⁵ Thomas Lane might have wished to distance himself from the darker side of the slave system but there is no doubting the cruelty and brutality that characterised the ownership of people as property. Ultimately there was an acceptance, even at a distance, that violence was structurally inherent in the system of slavery.

Thomas Lane's papers provide a unique insight into the family of Old Doll, an 'elite' slave family who lived on the Newton estate. The preferential treatment they received, Karl Watson has shown, was a result of John Newton having brought Old Doll's mother back to Barbados without the consent of her husband, a man formerly enslaved by the Newtons who had remained in Britain. A court ruled that 'Hylas therefore being free, his wife must necessarily be allowed to be free also', although this ruling was never adhered to.¹⁷⁶ Whilst Lane never expressed knowledge of this event his treatment of the family suggests he was aware of it. He recognised that they were 'favourites' of their previous owners and emphasised that 'respect to the memory of our good friends should lead us to wish that any Indulgence that could without impropriety be shewn to them should be shewn'.¹⁷⁷ It is also clear, however, that their liminal position provoked considerable anxieties. Such indulgence was only acceptable if it was 'received with becoming gratitude & repaid by suitable

¹⁷² Michael Craton and James Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park, 1670-1970* (London: W.H Allen, 1970), p. 126.

¹⁷³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Reece, 31st October 1815.

¹⁷⁴ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to Wood, 6th March 1799, 21st May 1799.

¹⁷⁵ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to Wood, 6th March 1799.

¹⁷⁶ Watson, *Kind of Right to Be Idle*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁷ MS 523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 3rd May 1796.

behaviour', demonstrating that even the apparent leniency this family received was located within circumscribed parameters.¹⁷⁸ Lane later ordered that every individual on the plantation ought to have an occupation, including the family of Old Doll. He insisted that he would not suffer any idleness as it afforded a bad example to the rest and was 'an incumbrance not to be endured'.¹⁷⁹ It was a struggle, however, to realise this objective. Although Mrs Wood managed for a time to put them to work in the house her efforts were ultimately futile. Having 'a kind of right to be idle', Wood wrote in a 1796 report, these 'negroes' remained 'at their care & leisure'. 'They have not learnt to do any thing', Wood continued, 'but there is no remedy, therefore, we must be content as it is'.¹⁸⁰

Few enslaved people were literate. However, several members of this family wrote to Thomas Lane, another indication of their comparatively privileged position. Jenny and Dolly, two of Old Doll's daughters, both wrote to Lane in an attempt to purchase their freedom. Both adopted a courteous, respectful and deferential tone, with Dolly even thanking him for 'All your Former kindness to me and [my] family'.¹⁸¹ Both requests, along with those also made by their cousins Kitty and Mary Thomas, were successful, probably because Lane saw them as 'very useless people ... [who] ... set bad examples to the rest'.¹⁸² These women, however, adopted particularly interesting strategies when negotiating the purchase of their freedom. Jenny and Dolly promised to 'give ... two field negroes in exchange for themselves', and Kitty and Mary also agreed to provide the value of themselves and their two children and 'release all their Claims on all or any of the Negroes'.¹⁸³ Thomas Lane was dismissive of this suggestion, understanding the legal significance of their claims was 'perfectly nugatory'.¹⁸⁴ Yet Jenny, Dolly, Kitty and Mary do appear to have conceived themselves as quasi-slave-owners, even using this as a bargaining tool. Despite privately dismissing their claims Lane did not challenge them, not wanting to incite unrest in 'the minds of the people on whom they pretend to have Claims'.¹⁸⁵ It

¹⁷⁸ MS 523/967, T Lane to S Wood, 6th July 1796.

¹⁷⁹ MS 523/967, Letter from Thomas Lane to Sampson Wood, 19th July 1798.

¹⁸⁰ MS523/288, List and report on negroes at Newton, S Wood, 1796.

¹⁸¹ MS523/652, Dolly Newton to T Lane, 26th November 1807.

¹⁸² SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 15th October 1805.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 23rd May 1806.

appears, by their own reckoning at least, that several members of Old Doll's family were enslaved slave-owners.

Thomas Lane never visited Barbados but he did meet with two people who had been enslaved on his plantations. In 1801 another of Old Doll's daughters, Elizabeth Newton, by this time identifying as Elizabeth Ann Miler 'a free black woman', appeared in London desiring an appointment with Lane.¹⁸⁶ Complaining about the cruel and unjust behaviour of overseer Mr Yard, Elizabeth explained that she had run away because 'she believed he woud. have killed her'.¹⁸⁷ Wishing to return to Barbados so that she could see her family, Elizabeth asked Lane for her freedom. His response was telling. 'She is free', he replied, 'by setting foot on English ground', refusing her request.¹⁸⁸ Neither did Lane respond to any of her accusations, hinting at a contradiction between his paternalistic rhetoric and his wilful ignorance of the violent reality. A similar response was found in Lane's reaction to John Thomas, another member of Old Doll's family, who arrived in Britain a decade later. John Thomas had been a carpenter on Newton and also complained of 'ill usage' by John Farrell.¹⁸⁹ Whilst Lane was initially sympathetic, upon hearing Haynes' allegation that Thomas was 'a worthy Villain' and 'an Idle Drunken fellow' he quickly changed his mind, despite the fact that his own impression of him had been a positive one.¹⁹⁰ The opinion of a white man trumped that of an enslaved 'negro'. Of much greater concern was 'the fallibility with which this Man appears to have got away'.¹⁹¹

Thomas Lane and articulations of masculinity

John Smail and Toby Ditz have both demonstrated how commercial notions of honour, reputation, and industry were inextricably bound up with ideas about masculinity.¹⁹² This was something that became particularly significant in a transatlantic context, when thousands of miles could separate associates or employer and employee. Thomas Lane regularly repeated his view that he believed it

¹⁸⁶ SHL MS523/441, Case and petition of Elizabeth Ann Miler, 25th May 1801.

¹⁸⁷ SHL MS523/973, Report on an interview with Elizabeth Newton, [1801?].

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 1st September 1813.

¹⁹⁰ SHL MS523/709, R Haynes to T Lane, 21st October 1813, MS523/715, R Haynes to T Lane, 12th February 1814.

¹⁹¹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to R Haynes, 20th November 1813.

¹⁹² John Smail, 'Credit, risk and honor in eighteenth-century commerce', *Journal of British Studies*, 44:3 (July, 2005), pp. 439-456; Ditz, 'Shipwrecked', p. 53-4.

was important for his attorneys to act with ‘honour and integrity’, something he associated directly with their ‘exertions’. ‘I have not the smallest doubt of your being a Man of the strictest honor & integrity’, Lane assured overseer John Farrell shortly after his appointment.¹⁹³ He also reminded Wood of his ‘perfect reliance on your Honour & Exertions’ and articulated his belief that Haynes’s ‘Integrity & knowledge of plantation affairs’ would confirm what he had heard of ‘the fair and honourable conduct that would be pursued by such a Man’.¹⁹⁴ The extent to which this conception of honour was bound up with ideas about masculinity was made explicit when Lane described a ship captain, who he believed had acted dishonourably and dishonestly, as ‘unmanly’.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, after praising the good work of overseer Robert Reece, Lane added that he hoped his words would be ‘gratifying to your feelings as a man’.¹⁹⁶ In a world where trust was ever-important, masculinity was inextricably interlinked with reputation.

This language was not only used to describe the behaviour of others. It was also intimately connected to how Lane conceived of himself as a plantation-owner. He emphasised the importance of the sugar being of the highest quality, constantly repeating his desire to be one of the finest plantation-owners on the island. ‘I want to be the first in the market and I think we shall be’, Lane wrote confidently in 1798, an endeavour he was still aiming for a decade later.¹⁹⁷ K. Tawny Paul has argued that in the credit-based economies of the eighteenth century personal reputation was an important form of currency.¹⁹⁸ This explains why Lane was so angry to discover that the sugars sold in 1805 had fetched a lower average price than those of Barbados as a whole. ‘Your Ire. says they were not of the first quality’, he lambasted: ‘Pray how has this happened? I shod. hope our sugars might be as good as any on the island. Why not?’¹⁹⁹ Lane made it clear that this was not simply about profit. Praising the quality of a different year’s sugars, which had sold particularly well, he wrote: ‘it gives me great satisfaction, not altogether for the high price, but for the Credit it attaches to

¹⁹³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Farrell, 22nd August 1807.

¹⁹⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 18th September 1796. T Lane to R Haynes, 1st January 1805. T Lane to G Barrow, 6th June 1804.

¹⁹⁵ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to Wood, 19th October 1801.

¹⁹⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Reece, 31st October 1815.

¹⁹⁷ SHL MS 523/967, T Lane to Wood, 19th October 1801.

¹⁹⁸ K. Tawny Paul, ‘Credit, reputation and masculinity in British urban commerce: Edinburgh, c. 1710-70’, *Economic History Review*, 66:1 (February, 2013), p. 226.

¹⁹⁹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 6th September 1805.

the Estate and its managers', as well, of course, to himself.²⁰⁰ On yet another occasion when Lane repeated his desire to become one of Barbados's top plantation-owners he emphasised how 'independent of profit, it is so honourable be at the head of one's business or profession, whatever it may be'.²⁰¹ For Thomas Lane successful plantership was very much equated with a particular kind of honour, reputation and respectable masculinity.

John Tosh has demonstrated how important work was to nineteenth-century ideas about masculinity but, as Smail has shown, the links between economic practice and cultural identity were also a part of eighteenth-century conceptions of masculinity.²⁰² Certainly, the links between work, masculinity and commercial identity were evident in Thomas Lane's turn of the century correspondence. The 'West Indian' absentee may have most readily been associated with extravagance and excess but, at least in his professional dealings, Lane advocated a very different kind of practice. Upon discovering that purchases were necessary to improve the condition of the estates he insisted that they were undertaken 'in the most prudent & economical manner'. He was happy to permit any 'reasonable expense' but it was important to him to ensure that they were 'carried out with judgement and strict economy'.²⁰³ Lane regularly returned to ideas about judgement, prudence and economy in his correspondence and this discipline was deemed to be applicable to personal as well as economic matters. 'I utterly disapprove of Idleness, & myself never indulge in it', Lane declared, ordering Sampson Wood to establish a strong work ethic amongst those working on the plantation, including amongst the enslaved.²⁰⁴ Wood presented himself as leading from the front, again making an association between industriousness and masculinity. 'What is it a man cannot do — in process of time of common intellects ...[and] uncommon Industry & attention', he proclaimed.²⁰⁵ As already hinted, Lane's own business experience and reputation were important to the way he conceived his own identity, status and authority. 'I have been actively engaged in business a great number of yrs., & I know from long experience the great utility & comfort of method

²⁰⁰ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 12th July 1814.

²⁰¹ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Farrell, 22nd August 1807.

²⁰² John Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity? reflections on nineteenth-century Britain', *History Workshop*, 38 (1994), p. 185-186; Smail, 'Credit, risk and honor in eighteenth-century Commerce', p. 440.

²⁰³ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Alleyne, 3rd May 1796.

²⁰⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 6th July 1796.

²⁰⁵ SHL MS523/458, Wood to [J?] Lane, November 18th 1801.

and particularity', he warned Haynes, considering his attorney's letter-writing somewhat haphazard in comparison.²⁰⁶ Prudence, frugality, simplicity and self-discipline were important to how Thomas Lane conceived himself, both as a slave-owner and a man.

Lane's vision of masculinity, associated with coalescing ideas about honour, industry, reputation and self-discipline, manifested itself perhaps most conspicuously in his concern with ensuring that he remained clear of debt. 'The arrearages of debt and the mixture of accounts I had no conception of', Lane wrote shortly after inheriting Newton and Seawells, making Wood to promise to resolve this, as there was 'a very Serious Evil attending it'.²⁰⁷ He was similarly shocked and appalled to discover that Wood had hidden the extent of his indebtedness. 'I trust however that we shall now be soon be out of debt, & never in the like situation again', Lane warned new attorney Robert Haynes, repeating this command almost annually.²⁰⁸ In some respects this was unsurprising. The perception of 'servile dependency' in the marketplace could bring both a reduction in status and a sense of being unmanned, with large and out-of-control borrowing viewed as both a financial and moral failing.²⁰⁹ However, Lane's constant preoccupation with ensuring he did not get into debt also suggests a disconnect with the experience of most plantation-owners. Indebtedness was a common and accepted part of the practice of planting. Yet Lane made it quite clear that he despised being indebted: 'I cannot bear to be in Debt', he underlined in 1821, echoing a sentiment he had repeated many times.²¹⁰ This aversion to indebtedness appears to have been tied up with Lane's view of himself as a prudent, self-disciplined and thus implicitly manly individual. It also suggests, however, that as an absentee he was somewhat removed from the reality of plantation-ownership.

Thomas Lane's metropolitan life: becoming a gentleman

Plantation-ownership was not the only facet of Thomas Lane's identity. In many respects, it was not even a major one. Lane had been born in 1754 to John Lane and

²⁰⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 23rd May 1822.

²⁰⁷ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 18th September 1796.

²⁰⁸ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 18th February 1805.

²⁰⁹ Ditz, 'Shipwrecked', p. 71; Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, p. 247.

²¹⁰ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 19th December 1821.

Sarah Fowler. The Lanes considered themselves an ancient family, having first entered England with William the Conqueror, and their position as lineal descendants of Colonel John Lane who, with his sister, helped King Charles II escape following the battle of Worcester, allowed them to conceive themselves as traditional English gentlemen.²¹¹ However, by the end of the eighteenth century the family no longer enjoyed such an elevated status. A professional man and lawyer, the elder John Lane had been a solicitor-clerk for the Goldsmith's Company, thereby occupying what Peter Earle has argued was 'an intermediate position between the upper and middling parts of mankind', perhaps envisaging himself as belonging to the upper classes but much more readily associated with the middling sorts when it came to income and lifestyle.²¹² Thomas Lane followed his father into the legal profession, taking over the position of solicitor-clerk of the Goldsmith's Company in 1785, while also working as a solicitor with his own private practice.²¹³ Lane's professional occupation was important to him and he littered his correspondence with legal phrases, establishing his education, legal knowledge and professional status. 'Audi alteram partem', he wrote to Wood after reports had reached him of his overseer's dishonesty, claiming he would never forget 'one of the Maxims of my profession'.²¹⁴ The significance of Lane's legal occupation was indicated by his insistence that he would love to visit Barbados 'were I master of my own time'. That his 'professional situation' meant that it was 'out of my power to be absent for such a length of time' provides an indication that it was this that was Lane's ultimate priority.²¹⁵

²¹¹ John Burke, *The Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, Vol. 1* (London, 1834), p. 175-176; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 92, Part 1 (January-June 1822), p. 415.

²¹² Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 5

²¹³ Christine E. Micklem, 'MS 523: the Newton papers: a hand-list', (Senate House Library, 1969).

²¹⁴ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Wood, 20th October 1796.

²¹⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 23rd May 1806.



Figure 2. Thomas Lane by Charles Turner, after William Beechey, 1814 © National Portrait Gallery, London

It was this professional identity that appeared front and centre of an 1814 portrait of Thomas Lane by Sir William Beechey, engraved by Charles Turner. Having your portrait painted was a significant status symbol. It allowed the sitter to leave to posterity an image of how they wished to be remembered.²¹⁶ Choosing a renowned artist with fashionable clients also enabled individuals to locate themselves squarely within elite society, creating an association between themselves and luminaries from the worlds of politics, nobility and the arts.²¹⁷ Beechey was a celebrated portrait painter who enjoyed the patronage of George III and Queen Charlotte and had painted the likes of Horatio Nelson, Spencer Perceval and John Carr. He possessed a reputation for simplicity, choosing to eschew the extravagance of some of his contemporaries, making him particularly popular amongst successful mercantile and professional men.²¹⁸ Mezzotinting was the most common means by which portraits were reproduced and could either be commissioned privately by the sitter — as seems likely in this case — or printed commercially for mass reproduction.²¹⁹ Charles Turner was ‘the most important mezzotint engraver of his day’, engraving several of Beechey’s portraits, as well as paintings by Sir Henry Raeburn, Sir Thomas Lawrence and J. M. W. Turner.²²⁰ The portrait gives the impression of a ‘straight-forward man’, in every sense.²²¹ Looking directly forward, the image presents Lane as man of confidence, learning and professional respectability. His simple, sombre but stylish clothing — with his coat providing just a hint of wealth and luxury — suggests a man of taste but not extravagance, contrasting dramatically with the foppish depiction of Richard Cumberland’s Belcour in the 1773 etching. The books and papers on the table allude to Lane’s work; the *Acts of Parliament* and *Trials of the Pix* (spelt incorrectly) relate directly to his legal employment at Goldsmith’s Hall. This print now lies in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, where the

²¹⁶ Katie Donington, ‘The benevolent merchant? George Hibbert and the representation of West Indian mercantile identity’, (Unpublished doctoral thesis, UCL, 2013), p. 218.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

²¹⁸ John Wilson, ‘Beechey, Sir William (1753–1839)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1949> (accessed 06/10/16).

²¹⁹ Desmond Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians: Eighteenth-Century Portraiture and Society* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1990), p. 26.

²²⁰ Gillian Forrester, ‘Turner, Charles (1774–1857)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27842> (accessed 06/10/16).

²²¹ Shawe-Taylor, *The Georgians*, p. 81.

description of the sitter as 'Secretary to the Goldsmith's Company' entirely conceals his role as an absentee slave-owner.²²²

Domesticity and the household

In 1784, a decade before the Lane brothers inherited their Barbadian and Staffordshire estates, Thomas married Barbara Fowler, probably a distant cousin. Over the next ten years the couple had six children, five of whom survived into adulthood. It is important not to neglect the significance of the domestic in an analysis of Thomas Lane's masculinity. As John Tosh has argued, the home was becoming an increasingly important site for the articulation of gentlemanly masculinity; establishing yourself as the head of a household of dependents — including a wife, children and servants — was a necessary part of the attainment of full manhood.²²³ Yet while the *paterfamilias* was expected to be an authoritative figure, master of his house and home, this paternal authority was supposed to be underpinned by love and affection.²²⁴ From the mid-eighteenth century to be a refined gentleman one also had to be a caring husband and a kind father.²²⁵ Lane's response to the death of his wife in 1823 suggests that theirs was indeed a loving and companionate marriage. Informing Haynes of 'the death of an affectionate and beloved wife', he spoke of this 'domestic calamity' as 'the most severe that could befall me'.²²⁶ As Eric Williams noted, an involvement in the violent and exploitative practice of slavery did not preclude men from being thoughtful and kind fathers, husbands and friends.²²⁷ Indeed, the demonstration of such attributes was necessary if they desired to present themselves as gentlemen.

It is also worth thinking about where Lane's servants fit into a complicated picture of unequal power relations.²²⁸ There were thirteen people listed as working for Thomas

²²² National Portrait Gallery, Thomas Lane by Charles Turner, after William Beechey, <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw195932/Thomas-Lane?#sitter> (accessed 06/10/16).

²²³ Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity?', p. 185.

²²⁴ Tosh, 'What should historians do with masculinity?', p. 185; Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 329.

²²⁵ Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, p. 99.

²²⁶ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 3rd September 1823.

²²⁷ Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, p. 46.

²²⁸ Hay and Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century English Society*, p. vii.

Lane in 1818, from footman Joseph who earned £23 per annum, to Ellen, a housemaid, who earned £10 a year.²²⁹ That these servants were employees, their names accompanied by a wage rather than a valuation, illustrates that they were conceived of fundamentally differently to the people Lane owned, listed only as possessions. Similarly, whereas those enslaved on Thomas Lane's plantations were coerced into their labour it is notable that five of Lane's servants 'quitted' their positions in 1818, demonstrating a freedom of movement that was simply unavailable to the enslaved 'negroes'. For many young men and women domestic service was a necessary but temporary stage in the life cycle.²³⁰ Lane's domestic servants do not appear to have felt any great loyalty to him, and while his propensity for buying cloaks for his servants could suggest a reciprocal exchange of work and material benefit, there were no indications that Lane conceived of his servants as members of a household family.²³¹ Although never mentioned in Lane's household accounts, which only go up to 1818, Mary Rose, a 'black servant residing at Leyton Grange with Thos. Lane', was baptised on 24th March 1819.²³² Whether Mary or any of her family had ever been enslaved on one of Lane's plantations is impossible to know. However, it does hint at possible links between Lane's domestic servants and his Barbadian slave-ownership.

In 1796, two years after he had inherited Newton and Seawells, Lane used his increased income to purchase Leyton Grange, a substantial suburban villa about seven miles outside of the City of London. This was an important moment in the development of Lane's gentility. Since the mid-eighteenth century anxieties about the deleterious impact of London's uncleanness, poor sanitation and overcrowding had been intensifying. London was a 'region of dirt, stink and noise', warned Arthur Young, suggesting that the capital's overcrowding had been 'pernicious to the population of the kingdom' by promoting vice and debauchery.²³³ Women and children of the middle classes were deemed particularly in need of protection.²³⁴

²²⁹ Waltham Forest Archives (hereafter WFA), Acc. 10196 Farm and household account book kept by Thomas Lane, 1798-1818.

²³⁰ Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 17.

²³¹ Hay and Rogers, *Eighteenth-Century English Society*, p. 196; Tadmor, Naomi. *Family and Friends in Eighteenth Century England*, p. 28.

²³² WFA, Leyton St Mary Parish Registers, Baptisms, 1813-1899.

²³³ Arthur Young, *The Farmer's Letters to the People of England* (London, 1768), pp. 334, 340.

²³⁴ Katie Donington, 'The benevolent merchant?', p. 174.



Figure 3. Leyton Grange, built by previous owner David Gansel, shortly after its completion in 1820. *Britannia Illustrata* (London, date unknown)

Suburban villas were ideal for aspirational professionals as they allowed such men to establish genteel homes away from the hullabaloo of the city, separating home from work while still maintaining easy access to the capital.²³⁵ Lane spent £8,404 on the acquisition of Leyton Grange and a further £2,707 repairing and furnishing the property.²³⁶ The Palladian villa had been built in the early eighteenth century and enjoyed ‘considerable architectural pretensions’; villas were built to be shown.²³⁷ A 1860 plan of the property that accompanied its sale described a ‘suite of rooms on the ground floor [that] went round the hall, including a library, morning room, dining room and drawing room’, as well as a kitchen and ante-room, a space where

²³⁵ Ibid, p. 175.

²³⁶ London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), Papers of John, Thomas and John Lane, CLC/B/143/MS11457/001 Private and household accounts, 1788-1796.

²³⁷ W. R. Powell (ed.), *Victoria County History: A History of the County of Essex*, Vol. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 186-187; Julius Bryant, ‘Villa views and the uninvited audience’, in Dana Arnold (ed.), *The Georgian Villa* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing Limited, 1996), p. 12.

domestic life could be appropriately segregated and ordered.²³⁸ With its Corinthian pillars and considerable grounds and gardens, the purchase of Leyton Grange allowed Lane to house his family in both comfort and style.²³⁹

Thomas Lane was a meticulous account-keeper and his annual accounts provide a fascinating insight into the experience of becoming a gentleman. In 1788 Lane spent £906 on private and household expenses. A decade later — after he had inherited Newton and Seawells — this figure had almost tripled, with expenses totalling £2,581 in 1798, not including the money spent furnishing the Grange.²⁴⁰ Hints of Lane's lifestyle emerge throughout his accounts. The £80 a year spent on wine, for example, suggests that he was happy to engage in a gentlemanly culture of sociability.²⁴¹ Lane also regularly bought new volumes of *Boydell's Shakespeare*, an illustrated edition of Shakespeare's works featuring paintings and engravings by eminent artists, extremely popular at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁴² This hints at the way Lane wished to position himself, as a man of learning and taste. Polite gentlemen were expected to be cultured and refined, displaying an interest in both literature and the arts.²⁴³

Lane also invested significant expenditure in the upkeep of Leyton Grange's gardens, farm and park, with £389 spent on their immediate improvement and around £200 a year given for their maintenance.²⁴⁴ Some time before 1809 Lane even consulted with celebrated landscape gardener Humphrey Repton, although it is unknown whether Repton was ultimately commissioned.²⁴⁵ During this period aristocratic families expended huge sums of money improving their estates and planting elaborate gardens, a symbol of their wealth and prestige.²⁴⁶ Yet landscaped gardens, associated closely with the development of polite society, were also

²³⁸ John Kennedy, *A History of the Parish of Leyton, Essex* (Leyton, 1894), p. 317; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 359.

²³⁹ Powell, *Victoria County History*, pp. 186-187.

²⁴⁰ LMA CLC/B/143/MS11457/001 Private and household accounts, 1788-1796; WFA Acc. 10196 Farm and household account book kept by Thomas Lane, 1798-1818.

²⁴¹ WFA Acc. 10196 Farm and household account book kept by Thomas Lane, 1798-1818.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Donington, 'The benevolent merchant?', p. 197.

²⁴⁴ LMA CLC/B/143/MS11457/001 Private and household accounts, 1788-1796; WFA Acc. 10196 Farm and household account book kept by Thomas Lane, 1798-1818.

²⁴⁵ Stephen Daniels, *Humphrey Repton: Landscape Gardening and Georgian England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), pp. 255, 259.

²⁴⁶ J. V. Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1986), p. 9.

important expressions of affluence and status for those lower down the social scale, a visual expression of their ability to own land.²⁴⁷ Like many men from middling backgrounds with significant disposable incomes Lane was keen to use his wealth in an attempt to enter 'the privileged sphere of gentility'.²⁴⁸ Leyton Grange may have been a suburban villa rather than a vast country estate but Thomas Lane's experience suggests it was not just the aristocracy who used their colonial wealth to improve their metropolitan estates.²⁴⁹

Land-ownership, however, was far from the only marker of a gentleman's status. Thomas Lane also had to *act* like a gentleman. Through his philanthropic endeavours Lane was able to present himself as a man of justice, benevolence and compassion, whilst also demonstrating his influence and authority.²⁵⁰ In 1818 Lane spent over £600 on charitable donations. The beneficiaries were wide-ranging and included educational, religious, medical and financial institutions. The charities receiving annual subscriptions included: Leyton School for Boys; the Insolvent Debtors' Children's School; the London Hospital Accumulating Fund; Leyton School of Industry; the National Society for Educating the Poor; Essex Clergymen's Widows; the Small Debts Society and a lying-in charity. He also gave large one-off donations — of £200 and £100 respectively — to a Society that built churches and chapels and towards the building of a church in Stepney.²⁵¹ Whilst some of these charitable institutions were national it is interesting to note how many of them were local to the Leyton, or at least London, area. These philanthropic endeavours enabled Thomas Lane to establish himself as a pillar of the local community, something buttressed by his experience both as a churchwarden and as an overseer of the poor. Lane also donated £40 to the Barbados Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.²⁵² Reverend T. H. Orderson had written to 'all absent Landholders' to request their

²⁴⁷ Tom Williamson, *Polite Landscapes: Gardens and Society in Eighteenth-Century England* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 18, 8, 113.

²⁴⁸ Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 225, 231.

²⁴⁹ Susanne Seymour, Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins have shown how Sir George Cornwall was involved in projects of agricultural improvement on both his Grenadian and Hertfordshire estates, highlighting many overlapping concerns in the management of land, labour and finance. Susanne Seymour, Stephen Daniels and Charles Watkins, 'Estate and empire: Sir George Cornwall's management of Moccas, Herefordshire and La Taste, Grenada, 1771-1819', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 24:3 (1998), p. 341.

²⁵⁰ Hancock, *Citizens of the World*, p. 319.

²⁵¹ WFA Acc. 10196 Farm and household account book kept by Thomas Lane, 1798-1818.

²⁵² SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 4th August 1819.

assistance in helping him to establish ‘a more efficient system of education among the lower classes’ and, although Lane’s charitable focus was otherwise exclusively metropolitan, he was happy to oblige.²⁵³

Lane’s philanthropic activity was closely bound up with his religious as well as class identity. In early nineteenth-century Britain the spiritual and the social were inextricably intertwined.²⁵⁴ A practising Anglican, Lane regularly attended St Mary’s, Leyton’s Parish Church, where between 1800 and 1816 he acted as churchwarden and funded the erection of a gallery for up to a hundred Sunday School boys.²⁵⁵ Since the 1780s the Anglican church had been increasingly infused with Evangelical thought, a mode of religious thinking adopted most vociferously by those from mercantile and gentry backgrounds, as the group of most notable Evangelical Anglicans — the Clapham Sect — demonstrates.²⁵⁶ Evangelicalism stressed the significance of qualities Thomas Lane valued closely: professionalism, frugality, prudence, while also valorising the domestic family unit and the male head of household.²⁵⁷ Proselytising and activism were deemed particularly important. Transforming the lives of others was seen as a practical expression of the gospel, increasing the likelihood of personal salvation.²⁵⁸ This helps to explain Lane’s support of the Sunday School and various charitable organisations. Although his experience as a slave-owner may appear completely antithetical to this, Thomas Lane’s endeavours enabled him to both view and present himself as a Christian, a philanthropist and a humanitarian.

Thomas Lane spoke with disdain about those who he believed did not embody acceptable standards of behaviour. This is particularly noticeable in his treatment of his wayward younger brother. In an attempt to rid Newton Charles Lane — commonly called Charles — of his profligate ways Thomas set him up on a small farm in Cambridgeshire. Brimming with confidence Charles spoke of how ‘it is

²⁵³ SHL MS523/815/1, TH Orderson to T Lane, 12th April 1819.

²⁵⁴ John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow: Pearson, 2005), p.161.

²⁵⁵ Kennedy, *A History of the Parish of Leyton*, p. 54.

²⁵⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 81.

²⁵⁷ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1785-1865* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 7; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 108.

²⁵⁸ John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Nottingham: Inter-varsity Press, 2006), p. 19.

impossible to fail in giving a very comfortable living', although his brother had more sanguine aspirations, merely hoping that that his 'conversion is sincere', a proclamation with clear religious connotations'.²⁵⁹ Thomas Lane was right to limit his expectations. Charles constantly wrote to his 'dear Tom' requesting further pecuniary contributions and although he insisted that he looked after every 'farthing more than I [previously] did a hundred pounds' Thomas soon began to run out of patience.²⁶⁰ Emphasising that his original advance had been provided 'to insure a compleat change in your conduct' he refused to provide any further financial help, severely reprimanding his brother.²⁶¹ Thomas Lane repeatedly referred to the qualities that he deemed so important to his own business undertakings. 'Will it be prudent to do so, with your own Example', Thomas admonished after Charles had requested more financial support, questioning the latter's claims that he had acted with honour: 'Honour or Dishonour?' Thomas lambasted.²⁶² Charles appealed to Thomas's religious sentiment, pleading 'remember that religion you profess. Judge you not and you shall not be judged', but Thomas was not to be swayed.²⁶³ Using an extremely potent metaphor — particularly considering the source of much of Thomas Lane's wealth — he told his brother that 'you have forged ... your own fetters, and you will not permit any Man to take them off'.²⁶⁴ Presenting him not simply as a dependent but as a slave Thomas Lane completely sheared his own brother of any claims to gentility, reinforcing the notion that conduct was of prime importance to a free, independent gentleman.

Conclusion

King performed the part with universal applause; but though it had a good and pleasing effect on the stage, it cannot be said to be a copy from life. The foibles, the humours, and the real manners, of a West India planter, are not delineated with truth and accuracy. Be that as it may, it was a

²⁵⁹ SCRO D357/K/2/3, T Lane to N C Lane, [no date]; D357/K/2/2, NC Lane to T Lane, 29th September 1798.

²⁶⁰ SCRO D357/K/2/27, NC Lane to T Lane, 26th April 1799.

²⁶¹ SCRO D357/K/2/53B, T Lane to NC Lane, 1st June 1800.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ SCRO D357/K/2/52, NC Lane to T. Lane, 10th June 1800.

²⁶⁴ SCRO D357/K/2/53B, T Lane to NC Lane, 1st June 1800.

favourite comedy at the time, and has ever since kept its rank on the stage.²⁶⁵

This judgement of *The West Indian*, made in 1801 by Irish playwright and biographer Arthur Murphy, can hardly be considered objective. Murphy's uncle, Jeffrey French MP, was a Jamaican plantation-owner who had disowned and disinherited his nephew after he refused to go and work on his plantation.²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, it is difficult to disagree with Murphy's conclusion that *The West Indian* did not offer an accurate rendering of the large majority of slave-owning absentees (whether or not it had a 'good and pleasing effect on the stage' is something I thankfully cannot confirm). The frequency with which 'West Indians' were depicted in British literature of the late eighteenth century, both before and after the rise of the anti-slavery campaigns, attests to the significance of their presence within British society, as well as to the anxieties and concerns that this presence generated. But few of these absentees, male or female, had much in common with their literary counterparts. It is only by moving beyond these stereotypes that we can begin to investigate the varied and diverse ways in which British slave-owners helped to shape metropolitan society.

Locating himself within a polite world, Thomas Lane was able to construct an identity for himself that was far removed from the distant reaches of the plantation societies of the West Indies.²⁶⁷ He was one of many who normalised his wealth, derived from the labours of enslaved people, by expending it in a manner of the polite English gentleman. The letters between Lane and his attorneys in Barbados also demonstrate that constructions of a different kind of gentlemanly masculinity, associated with honour, industry and prudence, were important for this particular absentee. Lane's occupational reputation was a key part of his identity. Far from being contradictory, polite notions of gentlemanly masculinity could sit aside and even converge with those more readily associated with honour and professional reputation. Professional and gentlemanly identities were not incongruous or incompatible. Thomas Lane could simultaneously be lawyer, slave-owner and gentleman.

²⁶⁵ Arthur Murphy, *The Life of David Garrick* (Dublin, 1801), p. 311.

²⁶⁶ R. Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1715-1754* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1970), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1715-1754/member/french-jeffrey-1701-54> (accessed 20/02/17).

²⁶⁷ Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, p.150.

The example of Thomas Lane also demonstrates that it is important to unpick the supposed distinctions between land-ownership, commercial activity and professional occupation in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society. Lane was simultaneously a lawyer, Barbadian plantation-owner and English property-holder, an embodiment of the way that landed, commercial and professional interests could both intersect and cross the metropole/colony divide. Thomas Lane was certainly not an absentee who hoped, through the acquisition of landed property and judicious marriage, to establish himself within the highest echelons of the British aristocracy. However, his example suggests that monied professionals, including those with colonial wealth, could enter the lesser ranks of the genteel classes without too much difficulty.²⁶⁸ As Cain and Hopkins famously argued ‘the gentleman capitalist was not a paradox’.²⁶⁹ There is no doubt that landed wealth remained the beacon of metropolitan status and influence well into the nineteenth century. But Thomas Lane, with his legal occupation, colonial land-ownership, well-gardened suburban villa and familial links with the Staffordshire gentry, demonstrates that professional, commercial and landed interests were not necessary antithetical. They could be and were symbiotic.²⁷⁰

Thomas Lane was far from the sole participant in this sugar enterprise. Whether thinking about his Barbadian attorneys, metropolitan merchants or the networks of West India gentlemen, when over 4,000 miles separated Lane from his Barbadian plantations, the endeavours of a whole host of others — not least the over five hundred men, women and children enslaved on his estates — were critical to his success. Familial networks also underpinned Lane’s plantation-owning experience. Most obviously, Thomas’s brother John was co-owner of Newtons and Seawells, acting as a confidant and consultee, and making use of his own network of friends and connexions to aid his brother’s endeavours. Younger brothers Richard and Newton Charles also played significant roles in Thomas Lane’s life, albeit in somewhat different ways. Whereas Richard was a trusted relayer of important

²⁶⁸ Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, ‘Introduction’, in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1991), p. 14.

²⁶⁹ Cain and Hopkins, ‘Gentlemanly capitalism and British expansion overseas I’, p. 508.

²⁷⁰ Nicholas Rogers, ‘Money, land and lineage: the big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London’, *Social History*, 4:3 (October, 1979), p. 438.

information, Charles, constantly asking for money, was more problematic. Thomas Lane's regular allusions to his cousins and benefactors also suggest that the Lane brothers were keen to conceive of themselves as belonging to a slave-owning lineage, something apparently confirmed by Thomas's desire to introduce his son into the mercantile business, presumably in preparation for his future inheritance. Finally, although appearing only obliquely in Lane's correspondence, Barbara Lane, as well as being mother of Thomas's five children, appears to have been a loving and supportive companion. Rather than being autonomous actors, therefore, it is evident that absentees like Thomas Lane were embedded within families and familial webs.²⁷¹ It is not possible to make sense of the economic, social and cultural experiences of slave-owners like Thomas Lane without recognising the primacy of the family.

²⁷¹ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. xvi.

Chapter Two. Negotiating coverture: gender and property-ownership in the aristocratic world

Thomas Lane, like many of his contemporaries, conceived of absentee plantation-ownership as a male undertaking.¹ Although less likely to be absentee slave-owners than their male counterparts, significant numbers of women were involved in the long-distance ownership and management of Caribbean plantations. Jamaican absentee Anna Eliza Elletson was one such woman. In 1775 she inherited Hope estate, a Jamaican sugar plantation upon which worked over 350 enslaved men, women and children. Like Lane, she never visited the Caribbean but regularly wrote to her attorneys on the island. Elletson displayed an awareness of gendered expectations about plantation-ownership, suggesting that planting ‘seldom happens to be the subject of contemplation with Women’ and arguing that ‘our mode of Education does not qualify us for such employments’.² She also framed her reliance on her attorneys in a different way to Thomas Lane. Whereas Lane referred to the ‘obligation’ he felt towards his attorneys, Elletson adopted a language of dependence, stating that she was ‘relying on your protection’ and thanking them for helping to ‘protect the property of the Defenceless’.³ Yet although she may have claimed to have known ‘but little of plantation business’ Elletson’s knowledgeable, detailed and forthright letters suggested otherwise.⁴ Influenced by the spirit of agricultural ‘improvement’ sweeping the British Atlantic she gave precise instructions about how to plant the sugar cane, built a new distillery on the plantation and paid meticulous attention to the accounts she regularly received from Jamaica.⁵

Anna Eliza Elletson also adopted an attitude towards her enslaved people that was similar to Thomas Lane’s. She implored her overseer to ensure that the enslaved

¹ Thomas Roughley, *The Jamaica Planter’s Guide; Or, A System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate, or other Plantations in that Island* (London, 1823), p. 19; Samuel Martin, *An Essay Upon Plantership*, fifth ed. (London, 1773), pp. v-vi, 3.

² National Library of Jamaica (hereafter NLJ), MS29A, Anna Eliza Elletson (hereafter AEE) to Pool and East, 17th January 1776.

³ Senate House Library, MS523/967, T Lane to Sir J Alleyne, 3rd May 1796; T Lane to R Haynes, 1st January 1805; NLJ MS29A, AEE to Pool and East, 23rd January 1777.

⁴ NLJ MS29A, AEE to Pool and East, 12th March 1780.

⁵ NLJ MS29A, AEE to Pool and East, 17th January 1776; Justin Roberts, *Slavery and the Enlightenment in the British Atlantic, 1750-1807* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 39-40; Veront M. Satchell, *Hope Transformed: A Historical Sketch of the Hope Landscape, St Andrew, Jamaica, 1660-1960* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2012), p. 179.

were 'well taken care of in sickness or health, and their ... situations rendered as comfortable as possible', emphasising to attorney Edward East that 'it is a matter of the greatest consequence to me that they should be content'.⁶ Yet these proclamations were again accompanied by an important caveat. Elletson may have ostensibly instructed her overseer to 'continue that humane plan, and never to use any Correction to them', but this was followed by an important qualifier: 'unless you see it absolutely necessary, to preserve that authority with which you are invested'.⁷ Underpinning Anna Eliza's language was — as with Lane — a sense of absolute authority and control, something that was imbued with racial connotations. The enslaved people were, she argued, 'born to labour in a manner peculiar to their colour', although she did suggest that 'we who reap the fruits of that labour, ought to soften it for them'. This was the only hint in her entire correspondence of an underlying discomfort with this system of forced labour and even here, there was another important caveat: 'as much as possible'.⁸ The way Anna Eliza discussed her enslaved population was thus imbued with contradiction; they were both people and property. Her use of a paternalistic rhetoric and apparent interest in the welfare of the enslaved hints at the ambiguous position of the absentee slave-owner, whether male or female. Being geographically removed from the site of exploitation allowed both Anna Eliza Elletson and Thomas Lane to psychologically distance themselves from the violent horrors of the slave system.

Anna Eliza Elletson's wealth, the large majority of which was generated from Hope's profits, enabled her to remarry into the highest echelons of the English aristocracy. In 1777 she married James Brydges, who shortly after inherited the dukedom of Chandos. That a marriage between the head of one of England's most prominent aristocratic families and a gentry-born Jamaican absentee was met with little disapproval suggests that the dividing lines between different strata of society, although firm, were not impenetrably rigid. The role of West Indian heiresses seems to have been particularly significant in this respect. Absentee heiresses do not appear to have attracted the same kind of reproval as their male counterparts. In Frances Sherdian's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, for example, although the eponymous heroine's West Indian uncle is depicted as a passionate and luxurious

⁶ NLJ MS29A, AEE to Ballard, 13th January 1776; AEE to East, 13th June 1776.

⁷ NLJ MS29A, AEE to Ballard, 13th January 1776.

⁸ NLJ MS29A, AEE to East, 13th June 1776.

man, the virtuous Sidney displays none of these characteristics — indeed she does not even know of her uncle or his origins until he saves her from a life of penury. Neither does her status as beneficiary of his riches and his future heiress alter the sympathetic portrayal of the leading character.⁹ Marrying a West Indian heiress could enable a much-needed injection of finance into an aristocratic family. In an eighteenth-century world where the Caribbean colonies were one of the most vital areas for British wealth-creation a marriage between landed wealth — still a beacon of British status and influence — and colonial commerce could be mutually beneficial.¹⁰

In 1780 the Duchess of Chandos gave birth to a daughter, Anna Eliza Brydges, who was to be the couple's only surviving child. On the 16th April 1796, aged just sixteen, Brydges married Richard Nugent Temple Grenville, Earl Temple, son of the Marquis and Marchioness of Buckingham. A unification of two of Britain's most prominent families, the partnership had initially been proposed by the Duchess of Chandos when her daughter was just six years old. Whilst the Marquis admitted that the situation was 'ludicrous' he was nevertheless happy to acquiesce. 'The girl ... is heiress to £7000 per annum from her mother [her income from Hope], and to twice that estate from her father', he informed his brother.¹¹ This marriage was, according to John Habakkuk, little more than a 'property contract'.¹²

Gender, property and the strict settlement

Most historians who have looked explicitly at the relationship between gender and property have focussed on the middle classes. Yet the security offered by the courts of equity regarding the protection of married women's property was only accessible to Britain's wealthiest elites.¹³ The strict settlement was the device through which the

⁹ Frances Sheridan, *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1767).

¹⁰ P. J. Cain and A.G Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly capitalism and British overseas expansion: the old colonial system, 1688-1850', *Economic History Review*, new ser., 39:4 (November, 1986), p. 518; G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 28-29.

¹¹ Cited in John Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 102.

¹² John Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 221.

¹³ Lee Holcombe, *Wives and Property: Reform of the Married Women's Property Law in Nineteenth-Century England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), p. 46.

English aristocracy transmitted their property, landed and otherwise, across generations. Usually executed on the marriage of the heir, the strict settlement had two main purposes. Most importantly, it aimed to preserve and enhance the wealth and status of any particular dynasty, protecting it from the potential improvidence or profligacy of current or future generations.¹⁴ The ostensible owner of the family estates — usually, although by no means always, the eldest son — was thus only actually ever a life-tenant. Whilst enjoying their profits, they only possessed very circumscribed powers over the properties. They could not sell, bequeath, lease or mortgage the estates unless the settlement had specifically stipulated so.¹⁵ The strict settlement established a form of succession known as the entail, establishing life estates for persons yet unborn, usually along the male line of descent.¹⁶ The eldest son was thus an individual who, according to the interestingly chosen words of Randolph Trumbach, ‘could regard himself as the slave of his family’s interest’.¹⁷

The other significant role of the strict settlement was to provide for other family members. Jointures were provided for a wife’s widowhood and portions bestowed on younger sons and daughters. Much of the debate concerning the gendered implications of the strict settlement has focussed on the extent to which it was primogenital. Whereas Lloyd Bonfield has argued that the strict settlement was not essentially primogenital, offering ‘potentially generous’ provisions for daughters and younger sons, Eileen Spring has contended it was ‘primogenitive in thrust’ and was little concerned with providing portions for younger children or protecting a widow’s jointure.¹⁸ Yet these technical debates, rather generously characterised by Amy Erickson as ‘esoteric but entertaining’, do not always add to our understanding of gendered property relations amongst the aristocracy in particularly meaningful

¹⁴ Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 32.

¹⁵ Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ Barbara English and John Saville, *Strict Settlement: A Guide for Historians* (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1983), pp. 20, 22-23.

¹⁷ Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), p. 74.

¹⁸ Lloyd Bonfield, ‘Affective families, open elites and strict family settlements in early modern England’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 39:3 (August, 1986), pp. 352-353; Lloyd Bonfield, ‘Strict settlement and the family: a differing view’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 41:3 (August, 1988), pp. 461-466; Eileen Spring, ‘The strict settlement: its role in family history’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 41:3 (August, 1988), p. 459. Others who have engaged in these debates include: Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family*, pp. 69-117; Susan Moller Okin, ‘Patriarchy and married women’s property in England: questions on some current views’, *Eighteenth-Century Women’s Studies* 17:2 (Winter, 1983-1984), pp. 121-138; Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System*, pp. 77-89.

ways.¹⁹ As Susan Staves has highlighted, women are represented in this historiography as either a means of increasing assets or simply as dependents whose very existence drains resources away from the rest of the estate. A clear distinction is made between the social and economic interests of the family as a whole and those of women, with little recognition that the two cannot be clearly separated.²⁰ Exploring the ways women negotiated their position within the aristocratic family, and examining their complex relationships with their own and their family's property, would provide a more fruitful and interesting area of debate.

In this context it is necessary to think more about what exactly is meant by the 'ownership' of property. There is little consensus, amongst lawyers, philosophers or historians, as to what owning property actually means. In the Western liberal paradigm property usually refers either 'to the objects in which people hold rights' or 'to the rights themselves', almost always understood to be individual and exclusive, held either against other particular individuals or the wider world more broadly.²¹ As John Locke declared in his immensely influential *Two Treatise of Government*, men's — and it was specifically men's — 'Lives, Liberties and Estates ... I call by the general Name, *Property*'.²² Yet, as the strict settlement demonstrates, property was seldom conceived, in either law or practice, as absolute.²³ Social anthropologist C. M. Hann has drawn attention to the emphasis placed on the formal codification of property-ownership within liberal thought, arguing that understandings of property should not be limited to these formal legal codes but must be expanded to include explorations of *how* these codes operate within society.²⁴ This is particularly important in discussions of the relationship between gender and property. Amy Erickson, for example, has shown that how married women perceived their possessions was not

¹⁹ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 102.

²⁰ Susan Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 203.

²¹ Jack Goody, 'Dowry and the rights of women to property', in C. M. Hann (ed.), *Property Relations: Renewing the Anthropological Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 201.

²² John Locke, *Two Treatise of Government* ([1689] Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p. 368.

²³ R. J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 254.

²⁴ C. M. Hann, 'Introduction: the embeddedness of property' in Hann (ed.), *Property Relations*, p. 7.

necessarily synonymous with their legal entitlements.²⁵ It is much more productive, therefore, to understand property-ownership not as a means of asserting exclusive rights of individual ownership but as a complex amalgamation of rights, entitlements and relations that could be both — perhaps even simultaneously — individual and collective. Both materialistic and symbolic, property-ownership was something that was contested and negotiated not only in the nation's courts but in the everyday lives of men and women across Britain and the empire.²⁶

Gender and the strict settlement: Anna Eliza and Richard Grenville

The marriage between Anna Eliza Brydges and Richard Nugent Temple Grenville was not solely about the transmission of property. It was also a marriage based on love.²⁷ For two years preceding their marriage the couple were involved in a clandestine correspondence, with occasional secret meetings. 'You need not be afraid my not seeing you for a month or two will alter my sentiments as wherever I am they will always remain the same', Anna Eliza declared in July 1795, although she was often more restrained, knowing the importance of 'the delicacy & propriety of a young woman's conduct'.²⁸ This secret relationship worried Lady Caroline Leigh, Anna Eliza's aunt and guardian, who believed that at just fourteen she was too young to be making such attachments.²⁹ Fellow guardian Sir Frances Buller was in agreement: 'My only object will be to see the young Lady happily settled, & with that view I shall wish to have her introduced into the World in a way which may give her a fair Opportunity of forming her own Choice amongst those who are proper for her', he wrote to the Marquis in July 1794.³⁰ It would be another two years until the connection between the two was formalised in matrimony.

²⁵ Amy Louise Erickson, 'Possession-and the other one-tenth of the law: assessing women's ownership and economic roles in early modern England', *Women's History Review*, 16:3 (July, 2007), p. 379.

²⁶ Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens, 'Introduction' in Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 2.

²⁷ J. V. Beckett, 'Family matters', *Historical Journal*, 39:1 (March, 1996), p. 255.

²⁸ Huntington Library (hereafter HL) STG Box 74 (Folder 35), Anna Eliza Grenville (hereafter AEG) to Richard Grenville, 'Sunday Night', before 19th July 1795; STG Box 74 (35) AEG to Mary, before August 1794.

²⁹ Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, p. 103.

³⁰ HL STG Box 3, Sir Francis Buller to George Grenville, 3rd July 1794.



Figure 4. Anna Eliza Grenville by William Beechey, c. 1802-4 © Stowe House Preservation Trust

Yet property was intrinsic to the marriage. As the Marquis of Buckingham intimated, Anna Eliza Brydges was a substantial heiress. Her father had died seven years earlier and as an only child she was the sole heir-at-law of his Chandos estates. The

will of the Duchess of Chandos, written in 1789, also stipulated that the younger Anna Eliza would inherit her mother's estates upon the latter's death, including 'my Plantation called Hope Plantation ... and ... all the Negro and other Slaves belonging to the said Plantation'.³¹ There was extensive negotiation between the respective parties before a marriage settlement was made and on the 14th and 15th of April 1796 both the Buckingham and Chandos properties were settled according to the terms of a strict settlement. The age of the couple — Anna Eliza was sixteen and her husband twenty — meant that an Act of Parliament had to be passed in order for a settlement to be formulated, 'notwithstanding the[ir] respective Minorities'.³² A close examination of this settlement allows an exploration of the gendering of aristocratic property and slave-ownership. Placing this settlement alongside other of the Grenville family's personal and legal papers, particularly correspondence, enables an examination both of the means by which the property-ownership of aristocratic women was restricted and the ways women like Anna Eliza Grenville contested these constraints. What was the relationship between law and practice? What did it actually mean for a married woman to 'own' property in this aristocratic world?

The property Anna Eliza inherited from her father was resettled on her marriage. This included 'Divers Freehold Manors Messuages Lands Tenements and Hereditaments' in the counties of Middlesex, Southampton, Wiltshire and in several Irish counties, most, although not all, of which she was entitled to absolutely.³³ An assessment of Anna Eliza's personal fortune undertaken prior to the marriage calculated that the rents from these estates would total £6,020 4s 1d a year.³⁴ The settlement also mentioned personal property as well as land, including Anna Eliza's £5,000 portion and a legacy of £1,000 she was entitled to under the will of her father.³⁵

³¹ HL STB Personal Box 8 (6) Will of Anna Eliza Brydges, Duchess of Chandos, November 9th 1789. This will was written shortly before the elder Anna Eliza was certified a lunatic and all her properties placed in trust.

³² HL STG Personal Box 11 (11) 'An act of Parliament to Enable ...'.

³³ HL STG Personal Box 12 (1) Proposal by Marquis of Buckingham for a settlement on articles of marriage proposed between Richard Grenville and Lady Anna Eliza Brydges, pp. 3-8. The properties not held absolutely were Easton in Southampton, held under leases for lives, Minchenden House in Middlesex, the estate of her mother for life and East and West Wellow, to which Elizabeth Duchess Dowager of Chandos (who was the third wife of Henry Brydges, Anna Eliza's paternal grandfather) was entitled for life. All these estates were also subject to a rent charge of £2,000 a year for her mother's jointure.

³⁴ HL STG Personal Box 11 (7) Miscellaneous Papers concerning the fortune of Anna Eliza Brydges.

³⁵ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) 'Brief on Petition', p. 13.

Significantly, once all rent charges, portions, jointures and any other burdens had been paid, any residue would then be ‘vest in and become the absolute property of the sd. Richard Earl Temple’.³⁶ Indeed, an early proposal of the settlement mentioned that ‘Lady Anna Eliza is intitled to the clear Surplus of the Rents and Profits of the sd. Freehold Ests. in Msex, Hants and Wilts’. Yet the present tense ‘is’ was scribbled out and replaced with ‘was’, an example of coverture in action.³⁷



Figure 5. Richard Temple-Nugent-Brydges-Chandos-Grenville, 1st Duke of Buckingham and Chandos by Robert Cooper, after George Sanders (Saunders) © National Portrait Gallery, London



Figure 6. ‘A view of a temple near Buckingham’ by Robert Dighton, 1811 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Settled to the same uses as the properties inherited from the Duke of Chandos were ‘all such Manors Messes. Lands Tenemts. & Heredits (whether in England, Ireland, Jamaica or elsewhere) as the sd. Lady Anna Eliza Brydges should become intitled’ after her mother’s death.³⁸ This included some metropolitan leaseholds ‘supposed to

³⁶ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p.22.

³⁷ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) ‘Brief on Petition’, p. 13.

³⁸ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) ‘Brief on Petition’, p. 18.

be about £1,300 per annum', some small copyhold and leasehold estates with an annual income of several hundred pounds and a position as Head Lessee of an Irish estate in perpetuity, from which it was supposed she would derive '£1,700, £1,800 or £1,900 a year'.³⁹ However, it was the Duchess of Chandos's Jamaican estate, Hope plantation, that was of particular salience. Whilst it was understood that the produce of the plantation 'has been and must from the nature of it be fluctuating', it nevertheless had 'been commonly estimated at about £6,000 a year', although whether it was actually making anywhere near this amount of money is open to question.⁴⁰ It was also understood that the value of Hope came not just from the plantation itself, but from the property that was held on that land, including the people enslaved upon it. 'All Negroes Slaves Stock Utensils and Appurts' belonging to Hope estate were to be 'conveyed settled limited and assured to the same uses' as the rest of Anna Eliza's properties.⁴¹ A list of 'negroes' on Hope Plantation compiled the previous decade showed that on the 1st January 1788 there were 351 men, women and children enslaved upon the estate, including 33 children between one month and six years old.⁴² That a considerable proportion of Anna Eliza's property came in the form of people does not appear to have concerned those who executed the settlement. It is interesting, although not surprising, that one of the trustees of this settlement was Richard Grenville's uncle, William Wyndham Grenville. Grenville was Prime Minister from 1806 to 1807 and it was under his ministry that the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was passed.

Anna Eliza's property was settled for various uses. One of the most significant of these was securing her pin money, an annual sum paid to a wife throughout her marriage and one of the only categories of property that a married woman could be said to own unequivocally.⁴³ Susan Moller Okin has highlighted the danger of overemphasising the significance of pin money, arguing that it was rarely a wife's to spend or save exactly as she desired.⁴⁴ Indeed, the very idea of pin money was mocked by some contemporaries. In Catherine Gore's successful 1831 novel *Pin*

³⁹ HL STG Personal Box 11 (7) Miscellaneous Papers concerning the fortune of Anna Eliza Brydges.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p.27.

⁴² HL West Indies Box 3 List of Negroes on Hope Plantation, 1st January 1788.

⁴³ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁴ Okin, 'Patriarchy and married women's property in England', p. 136.

Money the female protagonist Lady Frederica Rawleigh declared to her husband ‘let the odious word of PIN MONEY be forgotten between us’, suggesting that she had ‘proved myself incapable of the management of my revenue’.⁴⁵ Whilst it is difficult to know how Anna Eliza viewed this payment, or how she spent it, the 1796 settlement did clearly specify that an annual sum of £1,200 was to be paid to Anna Eliza ‘for her sole and separate use and benefit exclusive of the said Richard Grenville ...’ or alternatively to such persons as she ‘notwithstanding her coverture’ should direct and appoint.⁴⁶ That Anna Eliza wrote to Coutts bank in 1834 informing them that she had deposited with them a sum of £1,224 ‘for her separate use subject to her future direction’ suggests that she did indeed receive this money.⁴⁷

The settlement also provided portions for ‘all and every such Child or Children of the said Richard Grenville ... by the said Lady Anna Eliza Brydges other than and except and not being an eldest or only son’. £5,000 was provided for one child, £7,500 was to be split between two, £10,000 between three and £12,500 between four or more.⁴⁸ Anna Eliza was provided with input into the decision as to when these portions were to be paid; at ‘such age day or time’ as Anna Eliza and Richard Grenville were to ‘jointly appoint’, although, of course, it is impossible to know just how ‘joint’ such appointments were.⁴⁹ Provisions were also made for the education and maintenance of these children and up to £1,000 was promised for any younger son(s) in order to place them ‘in any Office Business of Employment ... for his or their advancement preferment or benefit’.⁵⁰ Certainly, provision for Anna Eliza and any younger children was an important part of the settlement of her estates.

Some of the uses to which the Buckingham properties were settled were also intended for Anna Eliza’s benefit. Most important was her jointure, an annual sum of money paid to a widow in lieu of dower. If Anna Eliza were to survive her husband she would receive ‘a yearly rent Charge of £2,000’ to be taken from various estates situated in Buckingham, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Dorset, Somerset, Essex,

⁴⁵ Catherine Gore, *Pin Money: A Novel, Vol. II* (Philadelphia, 1834), p. 187.

⁴⁶ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p. 61.

⁴⁷ HL STG Box 264 (40) AEG to Messers Coutts, 17th March 1834.

⁴⁸ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, pp. 63-64.

⁴⁹ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) ‘Brief on Petition’, p. 17.

⁵⁰ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p. 67.

Cornwall and several Irish counties, believed to be of a total yearly value of £22,048.⁵¹ Susan Staves has argued that jointures of £1,500 a year were ‘at the upper end of the scale’, suggesting that jointures of this value were rare.⁵² It is notable, however, that this was only to be paid ‘during the joint lives of herself and the said Anna Eliza Duchess Dowager of Chandos’, suggesting that the land Anna Eliza was due to inherit from her mother was intended to be her main means of support during her widowhood.⁵³ Additional portions for any younger children were also provided from the Buckingham properties: £15,000 for one child (i.e. a daughter), £22,000 between two, £30,000 between three and £37,500 between four or more.⁵⁴ The uncertainties of demography — how many children a couple might have, the length of time a widow might survive her husband — could thus have considerable implications for a family’s finances. It is perhaps unsurprising that widows and daughters were often seen as little more than a drain on a family’s estate.

Whilst Lloyd Bonfield was right to stress that the strict settlement should not be regarded as completely primogenital, this settlement certainly had a distinctly primogenital and patrilineal flavour.⁵⁵ Anna Eliza’s resettled properties, whilst charged with several burdens, including the aforementioned pin money, portions and her mother’s jointure, were ultimately conveyed ‘To the use of the sd. Richard Earl Temple for his life’, with remainders firstly to Anna Eliza for her life and then ‘to the first and other Sons of the said intended Marriage Successively in Tail Male’.⁵⁶ These properties were thus to be transmitted along the male line. Preserving contingent remainders — helpfully defined by eighteenth-century jurist Charles Fearné as ‘remainder[s] limited so as to depend on an event or condition which may never happen or be performed’ — was an important part of the strict settlement.⁵⁷ Their purpose was to ensure that an heir could not alienate any part of the property, thereby guaranteeing that an estate remained intact and future unborn children were

⁵¹ HL STG Personal Box 12 (1) Proposal by Marquis of Buckingham ...

⁵² Staves, *Married Women’s Separate Property*, p. 95.

⁵³ HL STG Personal Box 12 (1) Proposal by Marquis of Buckingham ...; English and Saville, *Strict Settlement*, p. 26.

⁵⁴ HL STG Personal Box 12 (1) Proposal by Marquis of Buckingham ...

⁵⁵ Bonfield, ‘Affective families’, p. 353.

⁵⁶ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) ‘Brief on Petition’, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Charles Fearné, *An Essay on the Learning of Contingent Remainders and Executory Devises* ([1772] London, 1971), p. 3.

provided for.⁵⁸ But the eldest surviving son of the marriage, and his eldest son, were privileged and found themselves in the strongest position.⁵⁹ An order of inheritance was also stipulated in case there was a failure of such male issue. Even then, sons continued to be preferred to daughters in the pattern of succession. In the event that Anna Eliza and Richard Grenville failed to produce any surviving sons her 'first and other Sons by any after taken Husband Successively in Tail Male' were preferred to any daughter the couple may have, highlighting the social and cultural importance of producing a male heir.⁶⁰ It is thus difficult to find evidence to support Randolph Trumbach's assertion that the development of the strict settlement demonstrated that 'domesticity was winning out over patriarchy'.⁶¹ This was a patrilineal system that unquestionably placed sons in an advantageous position. The intention was always to settle property on a male heir.⁶²

However, only sixty per cent of marriages produced male children. While the impetus of the strict settlement was towards a primogenital pattern of inheritance, the vagaries of demography meant that estates frequently came into the possession of women.⁶³ After all, Anna Eliza was herself an only child and a considerable landed heiress. The 'strict' settlement was therefore not completely strict. Indeed, the Grenville settlement shows that had Anna Eliza and Richard Grenville failed to produce a male heir there would have been some room for manoeuvre, with Anna Eliza permitted a role in the decision-making process. Had she survived her husband her properties were to descend 'To the use of such person and persons ... and with such Limitations and Remainders over as the said Lady Anna Eliza Brydges ... should by any Deed or Deeds Instrument or Instruments' or will 'direct limit or appoint'.⁶⁴ It was only in the failure of such appointment that the estates would transfer to sons by any future husband. And should there be neither appointment nor other sons they were to be equally divided between 'all and every the Daughters or Daughter of the body of the said Lady Anna Eliza Brydges' as tenants in common

⁵⁸ H. J. Habakkuk, 'Marriage settlements in the eighteenth century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 32 (1950), pp. 17-20.

⁵⁹ English and Saville, *Strict Settlement*, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁰ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) 'Brief on Petition', p. 15.

⁶¹ Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family*, p. 71.

⁶² Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, p. 67.

⁶³ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 5.

⁶⁴ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, pp. 57-58.

‘and the heirs of their respective bodies’.⁶⁵ Neither was Anna Eliza robbed of all agency even if she were survived by her husband. Should the couple have remained childless then the properties would descend ‘To the use of such person and persons’ and subject to such charges, payments, powers, provisions and restrictions as Anna Eliza should by her Will ‘notwithstanding her coverture as if she were sole and unmarried direct limit or appoint’.⁶⁶ In both these instances, no heirs or appointments would have meant that the estates would have eventually reverted ‘To the Use of the said Lady Anna Eliza Brydges her heirs and assigns forever’.⁶⁷ Ultimately none of these complicated scenarios came to pass. In 1797 Anna Eliza gave birth to a son, Richard Plantagenet Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville. Yet it is important to recognise that in the case of the failure of male issue the supposedly ‘strict’ settlement could be somewhat flexible. Female family members were not completely omitted from the process and practice of inheritance.

Women were, however, not always able or allowed to enjoy the provisions made for them in their marriage settlements.⁶⁸ Susan Staves has shown how, even when marriage settlements ostensibly provided women with absolute control over their estates, they were still often prevented from mortgaging or alienating their property.⁶⁹ Indeed, it is notable that in Anna Eliza’s will, written not long after her marriage, she devised all the property mentioned in her marriage settlement ‘unto my dear husband’. Whilst it is perhaps significant that by this point Anna Eliza had given birth to a son, making the failure of male issue much less likely, it is interesting that she used any powers she might have had over her property to give it to her husband, leaving only comparatively small monetary legacies for, predominantly female, family members.⁷⁰

It was not only women who were disadvantaged by the strict settlement. Patrimonial inheritance strategies were, as Toby Ditz has shown, ‘highly inegalitarian’, with every family member finding themselves subordinate to the main heir.⁷¹ Younger brothers

⁶⁵ Ibid, pp. 58-59.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 60.

⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 59, 61.

⁶⁸ Staves, *Married Women’s Separate Property*, pp. 203-204.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 136.

⁷⁰ HL STG Personal Box 15 (1) Anna Eliza Brydges Grenville, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos. Will and Codicil, 9th December 1800.

⁷¹ Toby L. Ditz, *Property and Kinship: Inheritance in Early Connecticut, 1750-1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 31-32.

and sons also regularly found themselves in a dependent and potentially precarious position, as Thomas Grenville, Richard Grenville's uncle, articulated. 'The kindness of my Cousin has given me a good income', he admitted in a letter to Anna Eliza, 'but the limitations of it have left me no control or disposal over any part of it, the funded property as well as the landed estate being all placed in strict settlement, & therefore being entirely out of my reach of power'.⁷² Certainly, the claims of women, whether daughters, sisters or wives, were generally subsidiary to those of male family members, but uncles, brothers and younger sons could also find themselves subordinate to an older sibling.⁷³ The strict settlement contained a multiplicity of different hierarchies and it is important to think about how these different hierarchies interacted, as well as the ways the terms of settlements were variously complied with, ignored, and manipulated when legal directions were put into practice.

There was one other interesting stipulation in the settlement made on the marriage of Anna Eliza and Richard Grenville. This was 'that the said Earl Temple and the Issue Male of the said Intended marriage shall take and use the name of Chandos in addition to their own names and titles'. Additionally, they were required to 'bear the arms of the said James late Duke of Chandos in addition to their own arms', endeavouring to obtain a Royal Licence for such a purpose.⁷⁴ Thus, from 15th November 1799 Anna Eliza's husband became the rather long-winded Richard Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville and when he received a Dukedom in 1822 the pair became the first Duke and Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos. This was not in itself an unusual action amongst the British aristocracy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A requirement for a husband to adopt his wife's name was regularly a condition of elite marriage settlements and explains why Richard Grenville's names were so numerous. Aristocratic identity in Britain was based around three main tenets: name, title and land.⁷⁵ That Anna Eliza was the daughter of a Duke meant that, although she could not hold the title in her own right, she brought with her to the marriage a particularly high status. Anna Eliza contributed name, title, money and land to the Buckingham/Chandos marriage, exemplifying the crucial role that women played both as (pro)creators and as transmitters of familial

⁷² HL STG Box 7, Thomas Grenville to AEG, 20th December 1827.

⁷³ Ditz, *Property and Kinship*, p. 31.

⁷⁴ HL STG Legal Box 2 (12) 'Brief on Petition', p. 21.

⁷⁵ Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family*, p. 50.

wealth, identity and status and showing how seamlessly slave-ownership could be integrated into aristocratic modes of property-ownership and transmission.⁷⁶

Law v practice: Anna Eliza's property 'ownership' in everyday life

Whilst the laws of equity did provide a means of allowing married women access to property, it is ultimately difficult to conceive of Anna Eliza's settled property as legally 'owned' by her during her marriage. After all, although he had no powers of alienation and there were a range of burdens to be fulfilled, it was her husband Richard Grenville who was to 'receive and take' all residue and surplus of 'the rents Issues and profits of the said Hereds. and Premes.' during 'the joint lives of himself and the said Lady Anna Eliza Brydges to and for his and their own use and benefit'.⁷⁷

However, there could be considerable differences between the formal codes that stipulated how married women were required to live and the experiences of their everyday lives. Legal regulations were not necessarily coterminous with social practice.⁷⁸ Whereas discerning the legal restrictions placed on women's property-ownership in the early nineteenth century is relatively straightforward, determining how wives responded to these constraints is a much more difficult task.⁷⁹ The ideological underpinnings of coverture may have continued to shape aristocratic ideas about and experiences of property-ownership, but a more detailed examination of Anna Eliza's relationship with 'her' property during her life paints a much more complex picture of the gendered conceptions of property and property-ownership.

For the first thirty years of her marriage there is little evidence to suggest that Anna Eliza was particularly actively involved in the management of the family finances or properties, either metropolitan or colonial. This, however, changed in August 1827. The family's financial problems mounting, Richard Grenville, now the first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, embarked on a yachting expedition around the Mediterranean that was to last for several years.⁸⁰ Shortly after his departure Anna

⁷⁶ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, pp. 203-204.

⁷⁷ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p. 62.

⁷⁸ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, p. 25.

⁷⁹ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 223.

⁸⁰ Donald Sultana, 'The First Duke of Buckingham and Chandos in Malta and Gozo in 1828', *Melita Historica*, 13:3 (2002), p. 5, <http://mhs.eu.pn/mh3/20024.html> (accessed 16/12/14); K. G., *The Private Diary of Richard, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, Vol. I* (London, 1862), p. 26; Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, p. 147.

Eliza made a discovery that triggered a much closer involvement in such matters, something that was to be maintained for the rest of her life. The extensive correspondence between the Duchess and her family, friends and advisers between this moment and her death in 1836 raises a number of interesting questions about the relationship between gender, family, property and identity amongst the British aristocracy.

In 1819 son Richard Plantagenet Grenville married Lady Mary Campbell and the Buckingham and Chandos properties were resettled in a new strict settlement.⁸¹ However, in 1827 Anna Eliza discovered that of the properties she had brought to her marriage only her Irish and Jamaican estates were included in this resettlement. This meant that should Richard Plantagenet Grenville fail to produce a male heir the whole of Anna Eliza's metropolitan property, while subject to her own life estate, could then be bequeathed, sold or mortgaged by her husband and son.⁸² This directly contravened the terms of the Duke and Duchess's own marriage settlement, which had stipulated that in such a situation Anna Eliza had the right to dispose of her properties, serving to confirm Susan Staves's suggestion that the protection supposedly offered by marriage settlements could often be ignored.⁸³

Jurist, MP and fellow Jamaican slave-owner Edward Hyde East was a lifelong family friend of Anna Eliza and served as one of the trustees of her marriage settlement.⁸⁴ He acted as her legal and financial adviser, reporting that he had informed the Duke's agent that 'you had not supposed it possible, without your consent & cooperation, for any part of your own property to be directed from the channel it had been placed by your marriage settlement' and otherwise would 'certainly have objected to it'.⁸⁵ The use of the second person pronoun here is particularly interesting. In any legal sense this cannot really be considered to be Anna Eliza's 'own' property, yet it was clearly conceived as such. Neither was such language unusual; it was used throughout their correspondence. Anna Eliza was indeed 'much

⁸¹ HL STG Personal Box 19, Proposals for Settlement previous to the Marriage of Richard Grenville ... with the Lady Mary Campbell, 11th May 1819.

⁸² HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 31st December 1827; Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, pp. 148-149.

⁸³ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, pp. 203-204.

⁸⁴ The relationship between the families went back decades. Edward Hyde East's father had been the Jamaican attorney of Anna Eliza Elletson/Brydges, who kept a close eye on a young 'Ned' as he was growing up in the metropole.

⁸⁵ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 10th December 1828.

grieved' to discover this startling information and East was concerned that the Duke might yield 'to the temptation of selling the remainder of your property either to pay personal debts of his own incurring, or to disencumber his paternal Estates'.⁸⁶ Whilst he would have needed his son's consent to do this, and the existence of several generations of male heirs meant there was no immediate danger, Anna Eliza fully understood that this left her family estates in a potentially precarious position. She was vehement that these estates should be restored to their original state.

Anna Eliza would have been powerless had either her husband or son objected to such a proposal. The Duke did, however, agree to resettle the properties, weakly insisting that he had always believed the Chandos estates would eventually revert to Anna Eliza and that his lawyers must have disobeyed his instructions.⁸⁷ Thus, in an Act of Parliament — necessary in order for the terms of a settlement to be changed before the coming of age of the heir — most of the Chandos estates were settled 'on Chandos [the moniker adopted by Richard Plantagenet Grenville after his father had attained the Dukedom] his heirs male & female' and in case of their failure were to be given 'to the Duchess, to be disposed of according to her last Will and Testament'. This ensured that the properties Anna Eliza brought to her marriage would be neither sold nor mortgaged and that what the Duke admitted were 'her estates ... for whom my concern & interest must be, & is, so very limited' would not end up in the hands of his collateral relations.⁸⁸ Again, the issue of who actually owned these properties is not completely clear. That Anna Eliza played a key role in the formulation of this resettlement is, however, undoubted. The business of negotiating settlements was not, as Staves suggests, solely left to men.⁸⁹ East forwarded proposals for her consideration and responded to her instruction. 'Do not think for a moment ... that I would shrink from any responsibility by which I could effectually serve to ... restore to you a Home of Comfort & Independence', he assured.⁹⁰ There seems to be general agreement that this resettlement was of great significance, ultimately saving the Chandos properties (for several generations at least) by ensuring they could not be sold off. John Beckett has even gone so far as to argue that Anna Eliza's 'foresight

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ HL STG Box 6 (20) Richard Grenville to Edward Hyde East, 4th February 1828.

⁸⁸ Ibid; HL STG Personal Oversize Box 6 'An Act for granting various powers to Trustees of Chandos estates of Richard, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 1850. [restating terms of 1828 legislation]'.
⁸⁹ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, p. 205.

⁹⁰ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 16th February 1828.

and strength of character saved the dukedom from becoming a landless title within a quarter of a century of its creation'.⁹¹

There are several facets of this resettlement process that raise interesting questions about the relationship between gender and property. The first is that briefly discussions were had about whether the Duchess should adopt the stewardship of the Duke's properties. Having met a prospective manager of Villers, one of the settled Irish properties, Edward Hyde East wrote to Anna Eliza, updating her on the situation:

Permit me dear Lady Duchess to say that if you determine to investigate & to conduct in future your own affairs, & to be the Steward of the Duke's (& it is my deliberate conviction & advice that you undertake both) the services of this man ... are not to be disregarded but if possible secured.⁹²

This was not, for reasons unknown, the path that was ultimately followed. However, that it was even deemed a possibility, and that East supported it so forcefully, certainly complicates the ways historians have traditionally thought about gender and guardianship. Implicit to the idea of stewardship or guardianship was a hierarchy of authority, an authority that was intrinsically gendered. Normally, fathers, uncles, brothers or other male family members were expected to act on behalf of minors or other dependents, usually women, who were somehow deemed to be incapable, although women had long been expected to take control of their husband's property in times of absence and war.⁹³ That Anna Eliza was deemed perfectly capable both of managing her 'own affairs' and of acting as a steward for her incompetent and itinerant husband subverted the idea that a married woman's legal existence was automatically subsumed into that of her husband. It demonstrates that women were not necessarily expected to be reliant on others — whether the law or specific male

⁹¹ Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, p. 100.

⁹² HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 26th August 1827.

⁹³ David. R. Green and Alistair Owens, 'Introduction: family welfare and the welfare family', in David. R. Green and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Family Welfare: Gender, Property and Inheritance since the Seventeenth Century* (London: Praeger, 2004), p. 17; Margaret R. Hunt, 'The sailor's wife, war finance and coverture in late seventeenth-century London', in Tim Stretton and Krista J. Kesselring (eds.), *Married Women and the Law: Coverture in England and the Common Law World* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), pp. 139-162.

individuals — for their protection, suggesting that the gendered ideologies underpinning property-ownership were not always reflected in practice.

Also notable was Anna Eliza's insistence that her granddaughters be able to inherit 'her' estates. Whilst East emphasised that he did not believe the Duke would wilfully disinherit a granddaughter 'for the sake of collateral kindred', in the 1828 resettlement of the Chandos estates Anna Eliza made clear that her female descendants were to be included in the line of inheritance.⁹⁴ This was particularly important because Chandos's eldest child, born in 1820, was a daughter — named, of course, Anna Eliza. Although his wife subsequently gave birth to a son there was still a reasonable chance that his daughter would find herself as Chandos's sole surviving descendant. The Duchess's main concern, succinctly stated by Edward Hyde East, was to 'extend the certainty of possessing your property to Lord Chandos's daughter or the daughters of Lord Temple [her grandson] in case of failure of your issue male'.⁹⁵ It was also important to ensure that any further daughters of Lord Chandos would be provided for. Chandos 'left it altogether' to his mother 'to give your directions', suggesting her judgement was highly valued.⁹⁶ He did, however, express a preference that 'his own living daughter whom he did know' be preferred in the line of succession to any daughters his son might subsequently have, illustrating Eileen Spring's argument that fathers were likely to provide more generous provisions for living children than for hypothetical grandchildren.⁹⁷ This shows that there was some room for women to manoeuvre within this generally restrictive system. Women could individually, and often necessarily in tandem with male family members, express disagreement with the primogenital and patrilineal emphasis of the laws of inheritance.⁹⁸

The family finances

Protecting the Chandos properties was particularly important because of the dire financial situation the Grenville family found themselves in. The Duke was an

⁹⁴ HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 26th December 1827.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 27th February 1828.

⁹⁷ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 25th May 1828; Spring, 'The strict settlement', p. 455.

⁹⁸ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 20.

extravagant and profligate figure and over several decades had amassed debts of at least £223,000.⁹⁹ This was a 'painful subject' for Anna Eliza. She wrote to Thomas Grenville explaining that while she had initially believed she should remain quiet 'now that all our attempts to save or to raise money to meet the clamorous demands that daily assail the Duke's House have failed' it was 'a Duty' to inform him of the situation, erroneously hoping he might be able to advance them £10,000.¹⁰⁰ To make matters worse Chandos had picked up his father's bad habits. He admitted in March 1828 that he was £58,000 in debt and even then his mother continued to have doubts about his complete honesty.¹⁰¹ Edward Hyde East wrote to Anna Eliza, emphasising how important it was for her to find out about 'how his purse stands' as 'this would enable you to see more distinctly how far your available funds could assist him'. Although it is not completely clear who this 'you' refers to — just Anna Eliza or both herself and the Duke — East's admission that little could be taken from 'the Duke's current income' does suggest that the Duchess had managed to amass her own separate property.¹⁰² Certainly, Anna Eliza did not underestimate the severity of the situation. Several years later she refused to allow Chandos to sell her diamonds, kept 'in my name at Coutts', maintaining that 'his [the Duke's] difficulties are much more serious than you seem to apprehend'.¹⁰³ Noticeable throughout this whole discussion was a slippage between pronouns. Different kinds of property were variously referred to as 'his', 'mine', 'ours' and 'yours'. This suggests that there was no strict delineation between different kinds of familial property but rather that there was a flexibility to how ideas about 'ownership' were understood.

Anna Eliza regularly used a language of sacrifice to describe her response to this 'distressing & harassing situation'.¹⁰⁴ Almost all understood that the Duchess's collaboration was necessary if the family hoped to improve their financial situation. With 'your Grace's assistance' the Duke's debt's 'may be nearly met', East somewhat overoptimistically rejoiced in early 1828.¹⁰⁵ Over the next few years Anna Eliza's relationship with the Duke was regularly strained yet she remained dedicated to her husband. 'However lightly you may now be taught to think of my affection for you, it

⁹⁹ Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, p. 146.

¹⁰⁰ HL STG Box 364 (24) AEG to Thomas Grenville, 20th December [1827?].

¹⁰¹ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 21st March 1828.

¹⁰² HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 12th December 1828.

¹⁰³ HL STG Box 95 (63) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 20th September 1833.

¹⁰⁴ HL STG Box 364 (7) James Buller East to AEG, 30th May 1833.

¹⁰⁵ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 15th March 1828.

has remained steady under all trials', she insisted, continuing 'there certainly is no one who would sacrifice so much or devote herself so entirely to secure your happiness as your Wife'.¹⁰⁶ Here Anna Eliza was clearly articulating traditional assumptions about the respective roles played by husband and wife. Women were believed, at least by the — normally male — conduct book writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, to be 'designed ... for a state of dependence and consequently of submission'.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, when she informed the Duke that she had paid eight hundred pounds to Avington's manager Mr Baker out of her own pin money she was careful to highlight that she claimed no merit for performing what she considered a duty.¹⁰⁸ Neither was this sense of sacrifice restricted to a marital setting. 'Be assured My Dear Lady Chandos I have never withheld any personal sacrifice', the Duchess wrote to her daughter-in-law, emphasising the importance of placing long-term familial interests ahead of short-term gains that might have detrimental consequences for her 'dear' grandchildren.¹⁰⁹ There is no doubt that Anna Eliza saw herself as something of a martyr, willingly sacrificing herself for the good of the family.

Neither were the Duchess's proclamations simply empty platitudes. In the late 1820s £44,000 was raised from a number of Chandos properties not included in the resettlement, which Anna Eliza agreed could either be sold or mortgaged. A reversion on a property in Spitalfields and the Somerset estate of Batcomb were sold and mortgages were placed on a lease of New College, Oxford as well as Dodington estate in Somerset and Norton Farm in Hampshire.¹¹⁰ This was done, Anna Eliza informed her son several years later, 'to release your father from great pecuniary difficulties'.¹¹¹ Interestingly, this was a decision that she would come to bitterly regret. 'I severely blame myself for ever having yielded to consent to any Sales or Mortgages, which have only encouraged a wanton waste of money for which you & your Father are so bitterly suffering', she admonished Lord Chandos in 1833.¹¹² Indeed, despite repeated badgering she refused to ever again 'lend myself to such

¹⁰⁶ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville [c. 6th May?] 1832.

¹⁰⁷ James Fordyce, *The Character and Conduct of the Female Sex, And the Advantages to be Derived by Young Men from the Society of Virtuous Women* (London, 1776), p. 40.

¹⁰⁸ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832.

¹⁰⁹ HL STG Box 50 (45) AEG to Mary Grenville, 12th February 1834.

¹¹⁰ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 15th March 1828.

¹¹¹ HL STG Box 95 (62) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 16th October 1832.

¹¹² HL STG Box 95 (63) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 27th September 1833.

destructive Measures', remaining firm in her determination that no further properties of 'hers' would be mortgaged or sold.¹¹³ Susan Staves has suggested that any legal authority married women had to their own separate property could be negated by the emotional, and perhaps physical, power of their husbands and male family members.¹¹⁴ Yet this does not seem to accurately reflect what happened here. Anna Eliza's decision to agree to the sale and mortgage of some of the Chandos properties may have ultimately been for the benefit of her husband and family but this does not automatically mean she was lacking in agency. That she subsequently refused similar requests suggests that this sacrifice was very much of her own volition.

Anna Eliza fully understood the need for economic retrenchment, far more than either her husband or son. She was willing to shut up her beloved Avington, the principal country seat of the Chandos estates, in order that the Duke might live more comfortably at Stowe, his principal Buckinghamshire residence.¹¹⁵ 'I can with the greatest sincerity say I think much more of you than myself & shall most cheerfully & willingly agree to every retrenchment that can be put into effect', she insisted, claiming she was happy to abstain 'from all indulgence for myself'.¹¹⁶ She was also forthright in her encouragement that other family members similarly restrict their expenditure, recommending, for example, that the Duke give up hunting anywhere but Stowe. While Anna Eliza did continue to spend the majority of her time at Avington, she emphasised that her own expenditure 'was drawn as light as possible'.¹¹⁷ She kept abreast of the money being spent on the management of the estate but insisted that no money could be spared in the employment of its labourers. Interestingly, she suggested that were the labourers to find themselves unemployed it would be the Duke who 'being chief Proprietor here' would 'have the weight of them', again demonstrating just how flexible conceptions of ownership could be.¹¹⁸ There is no doubt, however, that Anna Eliza took her own contribution to the attempted improvement of the family finances very seriously.

¹¹³ HL STG Box 95 (62) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 16th October 1832.

¹¹⁴ Staves, *Married Women's Separate Property*, p. 135.

¹¹⁵ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>1st June] 1832.

¹¹⁶ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832, 2nd June 1832.

¹¹⁷ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Anna Eliza's engagement with family 'business'

As has already become clear Anna Eliza had a very close friendship with Edward Hyde East, one that crossed the boundaries between sociability and business.¹¹⁹ East ensured that Anna Eliza was fully knowledgeable about a whole range of financial and business matters. This included very specific information about the various sales, mortgages and leases relating to the family properties. He informed her, for example, that the purchasers of the Spitalfield properties were having doubts, worried their title might be impeached by the Duke's encumbrances.¹²⁰ The two also extensively discussed what should be done with Pall Mall House, one of the Duke's unsettled Buckingham properties, and whether it should be let or sold.¹²¹ East did sometimes use a gendered language of protection as a rationale for his contribution, promising to do all he could to 'protect the virtues' of Anna Eliza's 'kindly gentle heart'.¹²² Yet he also recognised that it was not only acceptable, but necessary, for Anna Eliza to be possessed of the legal and financial knowledge needed to keep her abreast of the situation. Anna Eliza greatly appreciated East's assistance; 'a kinder or better friend' the family could not have, she wrote to the Duke. In a time of great confusion and uncertainty Edward Hyde East was, in the Duchess's view, an 'independent honourable Man', embodying, she seemed to imply, a kind of respectable masculinity not evident in her profligate aristocratic husband.¹²³

Neither was Anna Eliza's absorption of this knowledge and information merely passive. She helped to influence a variety of familial decisions pertaining to property, business and finance. This influence was generally both assumed and accepted. Not only was East himself eager to hear Anna Eliza's opinions and reflections, he believed that the rest of the family would benefit from them too. 'I cannot believe that Lord Chandos would in matters of ... great monument act without your advice', East

¹¹⁹ East insisted to Anna Eliza that his help stemmed both from his concern for her welfare and happiness for its own sake and for the sake of 'one of my most beloved & respected friends long since removed from our sight, but still living as fresh as ever in my memory, & to whom I can never be sufficiently grateful'. He is surely talking about Anna Eliza's mother, who had been heavily involved in his own upbringing. HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 27th February 1828.

¹²⁰ HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 31st December 1827.

¹²¹ HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 16th November 1827.

¹²² HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 22nd September 1827.

¹²³ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 18th September 1835.

insisted, imploring her to 'exert your influence' over her son.¹²⁴ By 1835 James Buller East, Edward Hyde East's son, had taken over from his father the role of the family's legal advisor. Again, he recognised the necessity of keeping Anna Eliza informed. Having forwarded her some of Lord Chandos's papers he refused to offer his own advice, leaving them instead 'to your Grace's own unbiased judgement & strong sense'.¹²⁵ Others relied on the Duchess's powers of persuasion over her husband. A Mrs Wright wrote to her Hampshire neighbour regarding a Chancery suit between Mr Wright and Richard Grenville. Providing a detailed accompanying statement about the case she requested Anna Eliza intervene and 'convince the Duke of Buckingham ... that he has been deceived'.¹²⁶

The Duchess was certainly not afraid to challenge her husband. Upon discovering that the Duke was contemplating sending the books of his metropolitan properties to prominent West Indian MP William Burge Anna Eliza vehemently stated her opposition to the plan. 'He can have no feeling of regard or intent for you of whom he knows so little', she protested, suggesting that he 'can know nothing of English Farming or the requisites of a large English establishment'.¹²⁷ Her opposition to the idea of making a Mr Ledbrooke one of the Duke's trustees — in 1832 all of his estates had been put in trust — was even more forceful. 'There are I believe insurmountable objections from his low birth & very limited understanding', she proclaimed, believing he was of insufficient 'rank of life' to adopt the management of 'our large property' (my emphasis).¹²⁸ The extent to which Anna Eliza's opinions were listened to her and demands acted upon is difficult to know, but that she was unafraid to express such views does suggest that she possessed at least some degree of influence. Certainly, it provides a serious challenge to Susan Moller Okin's view that a husband was in 'a position of power over ... every decision or action' of his wife.¹²⁹

The Duke was, however, rarely completely transparent with Anna Eliza, something that greatly annoyed and displeased his wife. 'I shall ever assert my right to your confidence because I do feel that I deserve it', she angrily admonished, using the fact

¹²⁴ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 16th February 1828, 9th June 1828.

¹²⁵ HL STG Box 364 (14) James Buller East to AEG, 17th June 1835.

¹²⁶ British Library, Morgan-Grenville Papers, Add MS 70992, Mrs Wright to the Duchess of Buckingham, 19th October[?] 1829.

¹²⁷ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832.

¹²⁸ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 27th September 1835.

¹²⁹ Okin, 'Patriarchy and married women's property in England', pp. 133-134.

that she had paid Avington's staff from her own pin money as evidence that she was 'worthy of being trusted and consulted'.¹³⁰ One specific articulation of her irritation at her husband's unwillingness to share information is particularly revealing and worth quoting at length:

Mr Baker has communicated to me by your directions a letter which he has received from you respecting the management of this place [Avington]. You cannot but suppose that it must have generally pained me to receive such a communication from a Steward when the same Post brought me also a letter from you in which you made no reference to business whatever! ... I have long deplored your total want of confidence in me but more especially as to what concerns the state of your affairs where an attached & honest wife may I should imagine be of as much use as a West Indian Attorney or a Militia Surgeon!! If I had not brought you one penny being your Wife I should have had a right to your confidence but in the situation it pleased God to place me surely I have an additional & powerful right to be consulted, so large a portion of the property being mine.¹³¹

As well as demonstrating that Anna Eliza was well versed in the language of absentee slave-ownership — she understood the utility of a good Caribbean attorney — this extract shows that she believed her position as a wife in itself demanded knowledge about the family's business dealings be shared. That she had brought extensive property to the marriage, however, meant that she considered her desire for information and influence especially warranted. This seems to confirm Joanne Bailey's argument that although the contributions wives brought to a marriage did not necessarily imbue them with any formal or legal power, it did regularly provide them with a sense of entitlement. Although it was always unofficial, fragmentary and inconsistent, married women like Anna Eliza could have an important 'instinctive sense of property-ownership'.¹³²

¹³⁰ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>1st June] 1832, 2nd May 1832.

¹³¹ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832.

¹³² Joanne Bailey, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 109.

Mary Grenville, Lord Chandos's wife, shared Anna Eliza's frustration, although she framed her discontent in somewhat different ways. In 1834 she wrote to the Duchess in the hope of learning 'the real state of the case', although her insistence that she had never before 'attempted to interfere, even by inquiry, respecting matters of business', indicates that she did not want to be seen as going beyond what might be deemed acceptable behaviour for a wife.¹³³ Anna Eliza's response was telling. While helping Mary Grenville as best she could she admitted that she had barely seen her son over the last two years and that he had 'never conversed with me about business'. She was thus 'perfectly ignorant of the state of his Affairs', and even more concerningly, 'nearly as much so of the Duke's', who she complained 'never consults me or informs me of his difficulties except when he thinks I can be useful'.¹³⁴ This demonstrates how difficult it could be for women to negotiate their position within the aristocratic family. Whilst it is clear that Anna Eliza was an important cog in the Grenville machine — and she certainly viewed herself that way — the behaviours of both husband and son undoubtedly limited the extent of her endeavours, much to her frustration. It meant that she was particularly reliant on a wider friendship and kinship network, including most obviously the Easts but also the wider web of Grenvilles, to establish her authority within this rather dysfunctional family.¹³⁵

Yet Anna Eliza was herself actively engaged in the familial business, dealing with the managers and agents of several of the Buckingham and Chandos properties. She regularly corresponded with Mr A. O. Baker, who kept her up to date with the management of Avington, her principal Hampshire estate. His letters included information about the building of cottages, the disappointing harvest and updates on the tenants living 'on your Grace's Estate'.¹³⁶ He also provided her with a detailed overview of the accounts between 1824 and 1828, enabling her to have a comprehensive understanding of 'the present state of Finances here'.¹³⁷ Neither was Anna Eliza solely concerned with the properties she had brought to her marriage. She was in regular contact with Thomas Crawford, the Duke's agent. Frequent topics of discussion included the Duke's debts, the benefits of letting Mincheden and

¹³³ HL STG Box 7 (15) Mary Grenville to AEG, 10th February 1834.

¹³⁴ HL STG Box 50 (45) AEG to Mary Grenville, 12th February 1834.

¹³⁵ Maria Ågren, 'His estate' or hers? Three chapters in the history of married women's property rights in Sweden, 1350-1850', *Gender and History*, 25: 2 (August, 2013), p. 223.

¹³⁶ HL STG Box 363 (3-5) AO Baker to AEG, 8th July, 4th August and 17th August 1828.

¹³⁷ HL STG Box 363 (6) AO Baker to AEG, 21st August 1828.

Buckingham Houses and 'your Grace's Irish concerns.'¹³⁸ She also enjoyed a correspondence with the bank Coutts & Co., who wrote to her with details of various transfers of money, sales and stocks.¹³⁹ Indeed, Anna Eliza's opinion of the bank was so favourable that she impressed on her husband 'the absolute necessity of keeping them friends'.¹⁴⁰ Actively involved in helping to manage the family properties, the Duchess was an important node in the complex web of familial and kinship networks through which the Buckingham and Chandos estates were administered.

Most of the time, Anna Eliza was acting on behalf of Richard Grenville rather than completely independently. In August 1827, in a somewhat unusual attempt to save money and distance himself from family disputes, the Duke embarked on a two-year long sojourn around the Mediterranean in his yacht, the *Anna Eliza*.¹⁴¹ During the Duke's travels Anna Eliza was left to adopt her husband's mantle and take responsibility for the family affairs. 'In the absence of the Duke of Buckingham I trust you will forgive my troubling you respecting a business which is of the utmost consequence to him', she wrote to Lord Goodrich in 1828, insisting his assistance would be greatly appreciated and 'most valuable to us'.¹⁴² Similarly, she assumed a particularly active role in the family's business endeavours in 1835, when the Duke was suffering from illness. 'We regret extremely to learn that the Duke of Buckingham still suffers from Gout', Coutts wrote to Anna Eliza in October 1835, adding that 'under such circumstances we shall have no hesitation in paying every attention to the order for payment of Interest and any other order signed by your Grace during the Duke's inability to write'.¹⁴³ Anna Eliza acted as she believed her husband wished, and kept him up-to-date with her endeavours. 'I hope you have agreed to my plan of writing to Coutts', she wrote to her husband after corresponding with the bank.¹⁴⁴ Yet a sense of her confidence in her own abilities also underpinned this communication. In a similar letter she implored her husband to cease his 'constant fretting'. Most obviously, this betrayed a concern for his health and welfare; she was worried that it would 'bring on Gout & every other ill'.¹⁴⁵ Yet it also contained

¹³⁸ HL STG Box 363 (29-32) Thomas Crawford to AEG, 5th-12th October 1827.

¹³⁹ HL STG Box 363 (19-28) Coutts & Co. to AEG, 3rd June 1834-10th October 1835.

¹⁴⁰ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 21st September 1835.

¹⁴¹ Jonathan Roberts and Gerard Morgan Grenville, *No Ordinary Tourist: The Travels of an Errant Duke* (Bridport: Milton Mill, 2006), p. 29.

¹⁴² HL STG Box 364 (36) AEG to Lord Goodrich, [c.1828].

¹⁴³ HL STG Box 363 (28) Coutts & Co. to AEG, 10th October 1835.

¹⁴⁴ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 30th September 1835.

¹⁴⁵ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [9th October] 1835.

an implicit assumption that Anna Eliza believed herself perfectly capable of dealing with the situation. That she was in many respects ‘just’ acting as an agent for her husband does not negate the significance of her work. Anna Eliza provided the knowledge and expertise necessary in order to facilitate a continuation of the family’s business undertakings when the Duke was unable to undertake such endeavours himself.¹⁴⁶ That her business dealings occurred in a familial context rather than completely independently should not diminish the significant role she played as an ‘incorporated wife’, acting in the world of business and economics as a promoter of her marital, and familial, interests.¹⁴⁷

Anna Eliza’s position as a married woman did mean that she faced additional restrictions. Upon discovering that Coutt’s were demanding additional security on a £23,000 loan, James Buller East wrote to the Duchess to discuss the situation. Lord Chandos refused to provide the security and the family found themselves in a difficult predicament. Anna Eliza was keen to help but there was little she could do. ‘I am not aware what security your Grace could give or enter into unless it were an undertaking to pay the Interest of this Sum in case of your surviving the Duke’, Buller East remarked, continuing ‘as a married Lady’ no obligation or security could be put on her ‘except ... were [it] to join at once in the Mortgages, which would pledge and involve you beyond the necessity of this Case’.¹⁴⁸ Anna Eliza’s ability to contribute to the family business was clearly constrained. Even with a complex marriage settlement, she could not completely escape the legal restrictions placed on married women by the principle of coverture.

Yet her position as a wife and mother also placed on Anna Eliza unique familial responsibilities. The Grenvilles were a family riven by quarrels, divisions and deception and the Duchess frequently acted as arbitrator between family members. When the Duke returned to Britain following his Mediterranean sojourn his uncle, Thomas Grenville, implored Anna Eliza to ‘use your best efforts to restore that harmony & friendship between him & all his relations’, something that was ‘so

¹⁴⁶ Joanne Bailey, ‘Favoured or oppressed? Married women, property and ‘coverture’ in England, 1660-1800’, *Continuity and Change*, 17:3 (2002), pp. 360-361.

¹⁴⁷ Hilary Callan, ‘Introduction’, in Shirley Ardener and Hilary Callan (eds.), *The Incorporated Wife* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1984), pp. 1-24.

¹⁴⁸ HL STG Box 364 (13) James Buller East to AEG, 16th June 1835.

necessary to their mutual happiness'.¹⁴⁹ Her role as an intermediary between her often warring son and husband was particularly significant. While Anna Eliza herself had disagreements with both men, she regularly made attempts to mollify the two and improve their relationship. When discussing the 1828 resettlement it was Anna Eliza who was charged with the delicate task of informing the Duke that his son was keen to include some of the Buckingham properties in the resettlement. 'Your advice to him upon this subject would doubtless be most acceptable to him, & help him to prove his course in the best manner', Edward Hyde East insisted.¹⁵⁰ Thomas Crawford was even more forceful. 'Your Grace's natural kindness and persuasive influence will do much to cement & confirm that Bond of Union [between father and son] so necessary for the preservation of your Estates', he proclaimed. Crawford did not understate the gravity of this responsibility. Through 'united efforts and a well regulated & judicious system of economy' these family estates may 'still pass forward & continue attached to the Hereditary Honours in your Family for many generations', he proclaimed.¹⁵¹ Anna Eliza may not have received the accolades, or reprovals, conferred on her male relatives, but those close to her placed on the Duchess the responsibility for the future success of the whole family.

Hope

Thus far the focus has been placed almost exclusively on Anna Eliza's metropolitan properties. Whereas Anna Eliza Elletson continued to undertake the long-distance management of Hope even after her remarriage, it was Richard and not Anna Eliza Grenville who adopted primary control of the Jamaican estate the latter inherited after her mother's death in 1813. The Duke was not a particularly conscientious correspondent, perhaps reflecting the declining economic significance of the Jamaican sugar plantation. Accounts received from Jamaica showed that by the early 1820s Hope was struggling to generate half of the £6,000 annual profits expected from the sale of its sugar in the 1790s and subsequent accounts suggested that even this may have been a dramatic overestimation. By 1825 the estate was losing money.¹⁵² Yet the Duke did continue to receive updates from the attorneys on

¹⁴⁹ HL STG Box 7 (48) Thomas Grenville to AEG, 21st December 1827.

¹⁵⁰ HL STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 27th February 1828.

¹⁵¹ HL STG Box 363 (57) Thomas Crawford to AEG, 20th September 1828.

¹⁵² HL West Indies Box 4 (1) Hope Plantation. Accounts of Sugar Sales, 1821-2; STG Box 6 (20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 11th March 1828.

the estate, including details about shipments of sugar, the ‘very promising’ prospects for the ensuing crop and the behaviour of those enslaved upon the plantation.¹⁵³

Edward Tichbourne, Hope’s attorney in the mid-1820s, wrote to the Duke emphasising that he hoped ‘your Grace will be satisfied that I have been situated in this business solely for your Interest’.¹⁵⁴ Not only does this show that Tichbourne wanted his employer to have a good impression of him, it also provides another example of coverture in action.¹⁵⁵ Any interest Anna Eliza may have had in the property was subsumed within that of her husband. Richard Barrett adopted similar language several years later when he wrote to Richard Grenville informing him of the rebellion that had broken out on the 27th December 1831 in the west of the island. Whilst Hope’s distance from this ‘unfortunate rebellion’ had given ‘reason to rejoice’ it had nevertheless ‘delayed the completion of your Grace’s plans’.¹⁵⁶ These utterances also indicate that the restrictions faced by married women need to be placed within a broader context that acknowledges a wide range of structures of freedom and unfreedom. ‘The negroes have established the fact that their ideas of freedom do not extend beyond the license of a savage life’, Barrett insisted, ‘they began their freedom by the demolition of all traces of civilisation’.¹⁵⁷ Anna Eliza Grenville may have been positioned within an inherently patriarchal system but as a white, aristocratic woman she was still in a hugely privileged position, particularly when compared to that of the people she owned.

Here both Tichbourne and Barrett seem to have conceived of Hope as solely belonging to the Duke. Other examples, however, hint at how messy ideas about ‘ownership’ could be. In March 1833, Barrett wrote to Robson, Richard Grenville’s London solicitor, on the topic of ‘his family Estates in Jamaica’ (my emphasis). In this instance Robson framed this ownership not as individual or exclusive but rather as

¹⁵³ HL STG Box 433 (2) Edward Tichborne to Richard Grenville, 1st May 1822; ST West Indies Box 1 (16) A Return of Slaves on Hope Estate, 28th June 1823.

¹⁵⁴ HL STG Box 433 (4) Edward Tichborne to Richard Grenville, 16th December 1824.

¹⁵⁵ Tichbourne eventually left the plantation in scandalous circumstances. He left for England, taking Andrew Bogle, an enslaved man from Hope, with him. Joy Lumsden has written about Bogle’s life with Tichborne in Dorset and his subsequent immigration to Australia. Joy Lumsden, ‘The true and remarkable history of Andrew Bogle’, *Jamaican Historical Society Bulletin*, 11:4 (October, 1999), <http://jamaica-history.weebly.com/andrew-bogle.html> (accessed 3/11/16); HL STG Box 433 (7) Edward Urrén to Edward Robson, 14th February 1826.

¹⁵⁶ HL STG Box 433 (23) Richard Barrett to Richard Grenville, 12th February 1832.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

familial.¹⁵⁸ The Duke himself understood the necessity of informing his wife of developments on the estate, recognising that his plans could not be executed without her consent. When discussing the prospect of mortgaging Hope he ordered Robson to ensure that the whole subject be explained to Anna Eliza ‘without which I cannot ask her to sign the deeds’.¹⁵⁹ That Richard Grenville recognised that the deeds needed to be signed ‘by all parties’, including his wife, again demonstrates that the issue of marital property-ownership was a complex one.

It is noticeable that the Duke simply assumed the Duchess’s consent. Indeed, despite his platitudes, Richard Grenville was not as forthcoming in securing his wife’s permission as these letters would suggest. The following year Anna Eliza wrote to her son, furious at the discovery that a mortgage had been taken out ‘upon *my* West India property’ (my emphasis). Discussing a previous notification she had received, she declared that her response had been unequivocal, determining ‘not to add to the Ruin of his property by consenting to any Sale or Mortgage on any of *my* Estates’ (my emphasis).¹⁶⁰ The Duke’s superintendents claimed to have been misinformed about this resolution, insisting that they had only discovered Anna Eliza’s opposition long after the arrangements had been made. The Duchess did not feel a need to contain her wrath, deploring the ‘contemptible conduct’ of those who had failed to inform her ‘until my sanction was required of arrangements concerning my own Property made unknown to me!’¹⁶¹ Several strongly worded letters were also sent to William Burge. ‘The Duchess cannot condescend to take more notice of such extraordinary neglect of all consideration of her feelings & the respect due to her’, she admonished, reinforcing her objections to ‘incumber[ing] her WI Estate’.¹⁶² That Anna Eliza’s opinions were either strategically evaded or explicitly ignored highlights the difficulties female property-owners faced, even when the law was supposedly on their side. Yet the vociferousness and vigour of her refusal to acquiesce also demonstrates that, when it came to property conceived of as their own, such women were prepared to stand up for themselves.

¹⁵⁸ HL STG Box 433 (36) Richard Barrett to Robson, 29th March 1833.

¹⁵⁹ HL STG Box 433 (22) Richard Grenville to Robson, 2nd September 1831.

¹⁶⁰ HL STG Box 95 (62) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 16th October 1832.

¹⁶¹ HL STG Box 95 (62) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 25th October 1832.

¹⁶² HL STG Box 364 (38-9) AEG to Mr Burge, dates unspecified, [1832].

There were several occasions when, as with the couple's metropolitan properties, the Duchess took on the transatlantic management of Hope. During the Duke's Mediterranean trip Anna Eliza received detailed accounts from Hope, notifying her of the amounts of sugar produced, the produce that had been received in England and the amounts for which this had been sold. Edward Hyde East was keen to bring her attention to discrepancies between these accounts and his own calculations and to ensure that Anna Eliza was well 'familiarised with' the accounts she received.¹⁶³ Indeed, it appears that Anna Eliza paid greater attention to Hope's accounts than Richard Grenville ever had, perhaps because she had a greater personal investment in the success of the plantation. The Duchess also received several letters from attorney Richard Barrett when the Duke was suffering from illness. That Barrett begged her 'to assure the Duke that no waste has taken place in Medicines or any other store which can be avoided by me' and 'to inform the Duke that the crop throughout this Island will be barely one half of what used to be an average crop' demonstrates that she was very much acting on behalf of her husband rather than independently.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, she wrote to her husband promising that 'I will do all you wish respecting the Jamaica concern'.¹⁶⁵ Yet these letters from Barrett were detailed and precise, assuming a great deal of knowledge, both about the practice of plantership and the process of shipping and selling sugar. Barrett also promised to send some arrow root, coffee and oil, 'as your Grace demands', suggesting that writing to the Duchess was not merely an extraneous endeavour.¹⁶⁶ When necessary, Anna Eliza was perfectly happy to involve herself in the murky masculine world of West Indian commerce.

Of particular concern was how the family should spend the compensation money they received following the abolition of slavery. Neither the Duke nor the Duchess directly received the £6,630 successfully claimed for the 379 men, women and children enslaved upon Hope. It was instead awarded to John Campbell, the second Marquis of Breadalbane, and George Neville Grenville, both trustees of the 1819 marriage settlement between Richard Plantagenet Grenville and Mary Campbell.¹⁶⁷ Yet Anna Eliza made her opinions on how this money should be spent quite clear.

¹⁶³ HL STG Box 6 (8) Edward East to AEG, 11th March 1828, 12th March 1828.

¹⁶⁴ HL STG Box 434 (22) Richard Barrett to AEG, 3rd May 1836.

¹⁶⁵ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 23rd August 1835.

¹⁶⁶ HL STG Box 434 (22) Richard Barrett to AEG, 3rd May 1836.

¹⁶⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/19451> (accessed 06/01/2015).

‘You will I see by the Papers soon receive the W. India Compensation Money which will amply enable you to get out of all debt [to] Humphries & leave you a good surplus to pay off whatever presses most’, she wrote to her husband in September 1835, speaking of the mortgage that had been placed on the property without her consent.¹⁶⁸ When she became aware that this plan was not to be followed her chagrin was more than apparent:

I am greatly disappointed at what you say respecting the appropriation of the Compensation Money for the Hope Estate. I was fully aware that the Estate being in Settlement both Chandos’s Trustees & myself had a right to give in our Claims but I would not do that or even allude to it, feeling that the best thing for all Parties under existing Circumstances was to devote that Money to clear off Mr Humphries entirely & regain the property, for you will not have another opportunity of doing so. The money must not be otherwise appropriated.¹⁶⁹

Whether Anna Eliza did have any legal right to claim compensation for the enslaved people on Hope Estate is difficult to discern. She never submitted a counter-claim — although her son Lord Chandos unsuccessfully did — so it is impossible to know whether any such claim would have met with success. Regardless, that Anna Eliza believed that she had a right to claim compensation for Hope’s enslaved population and did not do so is in itself surely significant. It again suggests that notions of individual and familial ownership were very much intertwined. Any personal interest Anna Eliza may have had in the enslaved property was subsumed within a familial one; she acted as she believed was best not just for herself but for the family as a whole. That she was unafraid to chastise her husband when she believed he was not acting in the best interests of the family also suggests that this attitude cannot simply be attributed to her position as a woman or a wife.

Anna Eliza’s emigrant project

At no stage did Anna Eliza acknowledge the people who were the source of this money, the formerly enslaved men, women and children who continued to be

¹⁶⁸ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 9th September 1835.

¹⁶⁹ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 15th September 1835.

exploited for the Grenville family's economic benefit. Yet she was undoubtedly concerned about the impact of emancipation upon the plantation. During the period of apprenticeship, initially intended to last six years, those 'formerly' enslaved were supposedly being prepared for freedom, whilst still being compelled to work for their former masters for up to 45 hours a week.¹⁷⁰ 'I am happy to inform your Grace that the negroes on Hope are behaving sufficiently well in taking off the crop', attorney Richard Barrett wrote in March 1835, several months after abolition had been effected in Jamaica. 'We are making nine & ten hhd[s] [hogsheads] a week which is as much as was made formerly', he continued, claiming the 'negroes' were being paid three and a half pence an hour for their time.¹⁷¹ Yet plantation-owners continued to be concerned about the impact this system might have on the productivity and profitability of their estates. From 1832 Anna Eliza organised the emigration of British labourers, who were sent to work on Hope alongside those still apprenticed on the estate.¹⁷² The organisation and management of these 'fine young men' occupied a great deal of her time and effort between 1832 and her death in 1836 and actually constituted her closest involvement with the plantation.¹⁷³

Anna Eliza's concerns about labour shortages in the Caribbean were far from unique. In January 1836 Guianan plantation-owner and Liverpool merchant John Gladstone wrote to Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co., a Calcutta shipping company. Aware that they had recently sent a large number of Bengalese labourers to work in Mauritius, he inquired whether similar arrangements might be made in the West Indies.¹⁷⁴ The shipping company was happy to agree to Gladstone's plans, suggesting a group of people just north of Calcutta would be particularly well-suited, being 'very docile and

¹⁷⁰ James Latimer, 'The apprenticeship system in the British West Indies', *The Journal of Negro Education*, 33:1 (Winter, 1964) p. 52.

¹⁷¹ HL STG Box 433 (69) Richard Barrett to Richard Grenville, 21st March 1835.

¹⁷² Veront Satchell has discussed this project in his book *Hope Transformed*, although he states that it was the Duke who sent out these labourers, something very much not the case. He also suggests that the majority, if not all, of these labourers were not English but Irish. He states that although 'it is not clear from the reports whether they were English or Irish ... contemporary documents ... indicate that they were Irish'. I have yet to find these contemporary documents. While it is certainly possible that there were Irish immigrants living in Avington, nowhere in her correspondence to the Duke does the Duchess give any indication these labourers were Irish. In contrast, she referred to 'the English party'. Satchell, *Hope Transformed*, p. 204; HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>15th September] 1835.

¹⁷³ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>15th September] 1835.

¹⁷⁴ Madhavi Kale, *Fragments of Empire: Capital, Slavery, and Indian Indentured Labor Migration in the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p13.

easily managed, and hav[ing] no local ties, nor any objection to leav[ing] the country.¹⁷⁵ It is estimated that almost 500,000 indentured labourers were transported to the Caribbean from India in the decades following abolition.¹⁷⁶

Neither was Anna Eliza the only former slave-owner to promote European immigration. In 1841 Thomas Price encouraged the emigration of white indentured servants from Britain to Worthy Park, his family's Jamaican plantation, although he managed to find just two recruits.¹⁷⁷ Lord Seaford, owner of five estates in the Jamaican parishes of Hanover, St Catherine and St James, also believed that the industriousness of white European labourers would provide a good example to the 'negro' labourers who remained on his estates. In 1835 a community of 251 German immigrants was established in the newly-named Seaford Town.¹⁷⁸ Such undertakings were relatively unusual. But not only was Anna Eliza one of the very few slave-owners to send labourers directly from their metropolitan estates to their Caribbean plantations, she may even have persuaded others to embark on similar ventures. In September 1835 she reported to her husband that 'Mr George Ricketts & Ld Vincent are both sending out English labourers to their Estates'.¹⁷⁹ Ricketts, Lord Vincent's uncle, lived in Hampshire for most of his life. He married Laetitia Mildmay, whose family were prominent members of the local landed gentry, and in 1826 was living in Twyford, just seven miles from Avington.¹⁸⁰ It seems reasonable to suppose that Ricketts and the Duchess were well-acquainted and perhaps even that Anna Eliza persuaded her neighbour to send English labourers to New Canaan, his Jamaican estate. The striking similarity between the projects suggests that at the very least the pair were in consultation over their plans.

This project should also be located within the wider context of the organised emigration of the rural poor. In 1833 the London Emigration Committee, a precursor to the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, was established to manage programmes of emigration to Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Cape.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 16.

¹⁷⁶ Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 19.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Craton and James Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation: A History of Worthy Park* (London: W.H. Allen, 1970), p. 218.

¹⁷⁸ B. W. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Mona: University of West Indies Press, 2005), p. 237.

¹⁷⁹ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 21st September 1835.

¹⁸⁰ <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/18896> (accessed 31/10/2016).

Targeting the 'respectable poor', these schemes offered assisted passages to those capable of labour and supposedly of good character, including female household servants, skilled husbandmen and farm labourers. Young married couples, especially those without children, were deemed particularly attractive.¹⁸¹ The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act also provided for the emigration of the poor, hoping that colonial emigration would both minimise discontent at home and offer new possibilities for paupers abroad.¹⁸² Anna Eliza hoped Parish Officers might be persuaded to provide financial assistance for her emigration project so that more 'Volunteers' might be able to travel to Jamaica.¹⁸³ This was not a completely fanciful idea. Between June 1835 and July 1837 over 6,000 paupers left England, mostly headed for Canada, including 182 from Hampshire.¹⁸⁴

The recruitment of prospective volunteers was an undertaking the Duchess took seriously. 'At this moment I am very busy looking out for proper Volunteers for Jamaica', she informed her husband in September 1835.¹⁸⁵ Ensuring the volunteers were of a respectable character was of supreme importance and Anna Eliza sought to 'obtain ... [the] characters of all' prospective emigrants.¹⁸⁶ Although the Duke did attempt to recruit volunteers from his own Buckinghamshire estates, his wife always prioritised her own Hampshire labourers. This was rooted in her belief that accepting any Methodists or Dissenters would be a dangerous move, 'for one Preaching Person would do incalculable mischief & the neighbourhood of Stowe is sadly tainted'.¹⁸⁷ Anna Eliza also believed that procuring an overseer was necessary in order to prevent the volunteers from 'becoming mischievous'.¹⁸⁸ Confident that 'none that are respectable would go without a good allowance' she proposed that a hundred pounds a year would be enough to 'tempt some good honest person' but her husband refused to agree to such a sum'.¹⁸⁹ 'It is a great pity that you cannot

¹⁸¹ Robin Haines, "The idle and the drunken won't do there': poverty, the new poor law and nineteenth-century government-assisted emigration to Australia from the United Kingdom", *Australian Historical Studies*, 27:108 (1997), p. 7.

¹⁸² Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831-60* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), p. 80.

¹⁸³ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 9th April 1832.

¹⁸⁴ Dudley Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 71.

¹⁸⁵ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [> 3rd September] 1835.

¹⁸⁶ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 27th September 1835.

¹⁸⁷ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd September 1835.

¹⁸⁸ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 23rd September 1835.

¹⁸⁹ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd September 1835.

send a good Overseer with this Party', the Duchess lamented, fearing it would undermine the success of the whole endeavour.

Anna Eliza appears to have had few difficulties in recruiting volunteers. When the first group of emigrants set out on their expedition in 1832 she admitted that 'more [had] wished to go' and when organising a second voyage several years later similarly declared that 'many more fine young men have offered to go' than she could accommodate, deciding that 'those of our own Parishes must have the preference'.¹⁹⁰ A language of paternalism infused these discussions. A poor harvest and a lack of employment meant that many of Avington's labourers were living in poverty and the Duchess seems to have seen Jamaican emigration as a means of reducing the labour surplus on her estates. 'I hope I have got a vent for the fine fellows who we must reject for the Hope Estate not belonging to our Parishes' she admitted, aware of the 'distress amongst the Labourers from the want of work'.¹⁹¹ That Anna Eliza was not just looking for young men also suggests that she genuinely believed a permanent and self-sustaining settlement of English labourers could be established on the plantation. 'It is of consequence that another decent Woman should be added to the little Settlement to wash & cook & work for the young Men who are all single', she insisted, observing that she was aware of a suitable couple who were 'without Children & extremely respectable'.¹⁹² She also keenly encouraged local labourer Topher to travel to Jamaica with his son and three daughters. 'I really think they would be an acquisition' she proclaimed, confident that Topher's daughters would make good wives for the young men already settled in Jamaica.¹⁹³ The nineteen men and women who began their journey to Jamaica in the autumn of 1835 were, Anna Eliza insisted, 'well qualified for that destination'.¹⁹⁴ They were 'hard working labourers' who would 'look on the change to Jamaica as greatly to their advantage'.¹⁹⁵

Having led the recruitment of volunteers, Anna Eliiza then took charge of organising the acquisition of provisions and the emigrants' transatlantic voyage. 'I have much to

¹⁹⁰ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, 9th April 1832; (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>15th September] 1835.

¹⁹¹ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 21st September 1835.

¹⁹² HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd September 1835.

¹⁹³ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 15th September 1835.

¹⁹⁴ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd September 1835.

¹⁹⁵ HL STG Box 433 (61) Richard Barrett to AEG, 23rd December 1834.

do in arranging for the Emigrants', she informed her husband, explaining that she was uncertain when she would be free to join him at Stowe.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, A. O. Baker, Avington's manager, suggested that her 'anxiety to furnish comforts' meant that she 'had supplied many things not strictly necessary'. This included paying for their friends and family members to accompany them on their journey to Cowes.¹⁹⁷ It is worth pointing out that these metropolitan emigrants were not provided with complete freedom. In exchange for their transatlantic travel, a house and garden ground to raise provisions, and a limited amount of maintenance, they, like indentured labourers, had to agree to work on Hope for seven years. In some respects this could also be compared to the status of the apprentices, attached to the estate for a period of six years. Yet there was one clear difference. Updating her husband during her second recruitment process, Anna Eliza reported that she had found twelve willing recruits but admitted that 'perhaps when they find they are to serve for seven years they may change their minds'.¹⁹⁸ The supposedly free apprentices, of course, had no such choice in the matter.

The reports the Duchess received from Jamaica highlighted the comparatively advantageous position the English emigrants found themselves in. Informing Anna Eliza that her 'Avingtonions' had arrived safely, attorney Richard Barrett went on to describe the village he intended to build for them, in 'an open space uninterrupted by any high land between it & the sea'. Continuing this paradisaical description, he detailed his plans for gardens and fruit trees, explaining that their village was just a mile from a chapel and promising that every care would be taken to ensure their religious instruction.¹⁹⁹ In contrast, well-worn stereotypes were used to describe the behaviour of the formerly enslaved apprentices, demonstrating the extent to which post-emancipation plantations continued to be characterised by racial hierarchies. 'The laziness of the negroes increases, & I don't know what would have been the consequence had we not the English labourers to assist us', Barrett asserted. None of the labourers were as 'trustworthy & hardworking as the Avington people', he fawned, proclaiming 'the Duke & your Grace influence in a high degree the conduct of your villagers even at this distance'.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>15th September] 1835.

¹⁹⁷ HL STG Box 363 (8) AO Baker to AEG, 12th November 1835.

¹⁹⁸ HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [>15th September] 1835.

¹⁹⁹ HL STG Box 433 (61) Richard Barrett to AEG, 23rd December 1834.

²⁰⁰ HL STG Box 434 (21) Richard Barrett to AEG, 12th March 1836.

Yet despite these hyperbolic platitudes this emigration project was, perhaps unsurprisingly, an abject failure. West Indian plantation-owners as a whole failed to adapt to the new relations of production and the demands of wage labour, the conditions on sugar plantations remaining destructive for all who worked upon them.²⁰¹ Indeed, several emigrants died shortly after their arrival in Jamaica. After hearing of the death of one of these young men Anna Eliza admitted that she was ‘quite grieved at the loss of one of our little Party’ but the fact that he had drowned and ‘Climate had nothing to do with it’ meant that her enthusiasm for the venture remained undiminished. Indeed, this man’s death did not prevent three of his younger brothers following his example and emigrating to Hope.²⁰² It was only after Anna Eliza’s own death that Barrett admitted the project had been a complete catastrophe, largely in an attempt to save his own skin. ‘My error has been ... to comply with the desire ... that the property shd. be cultivated by European labourers’, he wrote to the Duke. Suggesting that the project might have had more success if the labourers had been of a superior class, he complained that ‘the bad habits of the English’ meant that the majority were permanently intoxicated. The Duchess’s demands ‘for the indulgent treatment of these people have proved incompatible with due subordination & industry’, he protested.²⁰³ Whether Barrett’s attempted defence contained any grain of truth is impossible to tell but the plantation was certainly in a dire condition. Investigations by Hope’s Trustees had discovered that the estate was ‘in a ruined state’ and had been entirely neglected.²⁰⁴ Anna Eliza’s attempts to establish a white settler population on the plantation, and sustain Hope’s profitability beyond the period of slavery, were completely unsuccessful.

Conclusion

Cudjoe, 70, driver; Libby, 33, second field gang; Prince, 11, hog-meat gang. These were just three of the 391 men, women and children who in 1813 were enslaved

²⁰¹ James A. Delle, *The Colonial Caribbean: Landscapes of Power in the Plantation System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 182.

²⁰² HL STG Box 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, [before 3rd September] 1835; STG 74 (44) AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd September 1835.

²⁰³ HL STG Box 434 (24) Richard Barrett to Richard Grenville, 17th October 1836.

²⁰⁴ HL STG Box 434 (23) George Pigott to Richard Grenville, 10th August 1836.

upon Hope estate.²⁰⁵ Owning enslaved people was a distinct form of property-ownership, the legal possession of other human beings. But although Hope plantation and the people enslaved upon it were an important part of Anna Eliza Grenville's property portfolio — indeed, Hope was one of the few properties Anna Eliza brought to her marriage included in the 1819 resettlement — this enslaved property was treated in the same way as her other forms of real property. It was settled 'to the same uses' and for the same purposes as the rest of Anna Eliza's landed property.²⁰⁶ Through mechanisms like the strict settlement 'West India property', a nebulous phrase that conceals far more than it reveals, could be seamlessly integrated into aristocratic forms of property-ownership and transmission.

It is clear that there was little consistency in the way the ownership of the properties Anna Eliza brought to her marriage, metropolitan and colonial, was conceived. Certainly, they were often envisaged as familial, both by others and Anna Eliza herself. She referred both to 'our Avington men' and 'our poor Emigrants', also describing one of the Duke's properties as 'our House in Pall Mall'.²⁰⁷ That attorney Edward Tichbourne spoke of 'his Grace's Estate in Jamaica' and referred to 'his Grace's Negroes' also suggests that the ideological impact of coverture remained significant.²⁰⁸ Yet whilst Richard Barrett's reference to the Duke's 'family estates in Jamaica' ostensibly suggests that familial properties were conceived as belonging to the head of the family, the reality was more complex than that.²⁰⁹ It is perhaps better to see the family properties as belonging to a collective group of kin rather than one specific, normally male, individual.²¹⁰ Anna Eliza herself warned her son that he could not 'have a separate interest' from his father and that no one would gain any benefit from 'acting singly', only when recognising they had 'one common cause'.²¹¹ Thomas Crawford concisely summed up conceptions of property-ownership amongst the

²⁰⁵ HL ST West Indies Box 1 (12) A General List of Negroes on Hope Estate, 1st January 1813. For a full transcription of this list see Appendix Four.

²⁰⁶ HL STG Personal Box 12 (4) Marriage Settlement of Anna Eliza, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, p.27.

²⁰⁷ HL STG Box 95 (59) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 11th February 1815; HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 9th April 1832; HL STG Box 364 (36) AEG to Lord Goodrich, [c.1828].

²⁰⁸ HL STG Box 433 (8) Edward Tichborne to Edward Robson, 18th February 1826; (7) Edward Urren to Edward Robson, 14th February 1826; William Jackson to Richard Grenville, 12th February 1826.

²⁰⁹ HL STG Box 433 (36) Richard Barrett to Robson, 29th March 1833.

²¹⁰ Green and Owens, 'Introduction', in Green and Owens (eds.), *Family Welfare*, p. 16.

²¹¹ HL STG Box 95 (63) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 27th September 1835.

aristocracy when he warned Anna Eliza that only 'united efforts' could ensure 'the preservation of your Estates' so they might 'pass forward & continue attached to the Hereditary Honours in your Family for many generations'.²¹²

Yet individual conceptions of ownership also remained important. Anna Eliza repeatedly referred to Hope as 'my West India Property', also alluding to 'my Hampshire Estates' and 'my Estates in this Country'.²¹³ When she complained about the lack of information she was receiving about the family estates she defended her demands by claiming 'so large a portion of the property being mine'.²¹⁴ Others also sometimes conceived of these properties as belonging to Anna Eliza individually. Jamaican attorney Richard Barrett referred to 'your Grace's own estates' and Edward Hyde East also referred variously to 'all your property' and 'your Middlesex property', as well as making a distinction between 'your own & the Duke's Estates'.²¹⁵ While undoubtedly both were understood as familial, the Buckingham and Chandos properties were conceived differently. They were settled for different purposes and the Duke himself claimed that he had 'never contemplated the Chandos estates going further with my paternal estates than in the direct line of Chandos & his heirs'.²¹⁶ Elsewhere, Edward Hyde East made mention of Anna Eliza's 'own family property' and promised her he would refuse to act for the Duke 'unless he consented to fulfil your own just expectations from him in respect to your own inheritance'.²¹⁷ These properties were often conceived as belonging, whether individually or on behalf of her distinct familial line, to the Duchess.

Aristocratic property-ownership may have been principally organised along patriarchal lines but it is necessary to provide room for the place of married women in understanding how such ownership was conceived and experienced. Examining Anna Eliza's relationship with 'her' property has painted a much more complex picture of the gendered conceptions of property and property-ownership amongst the aristocracy than is allowed by placing an exclusive focus on either coverture or the

²¹² HL STG Box 363 (57) Thomas Crawford to AEG, 1st March 1830.

²¹³ HL STG Box 95 (62) AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 16th October 1832, 25th October 1832.

²¹⁴ HL STG Box 74 (40) AEG to Richard Grenville, 2nd May 1832.

²¹⁵ HL STG Box 434 (21) Richard Barrett to AEG, 12th March 1836; HL STG Box 6 (19) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 31st December 1827, 26th August 1827.

²¹⁶ HL STG Box 6 (20) Richard Grenville to Edward Hyde East, 4th February 1828.

²¹⁷ HL STG Box 6 (19-20) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 26th December 1827, 6th February 1828.

strict settlement. Very little of Anna Eliza's property could be legally considered hers, certainly not exclusively, but looking at her experience of property-ownership suggests that it is inadequate only to consider married women's property-ownership within a legal framework. Anna Eliza's interactions with the Grenville's metropolitan and colonial properties demonstrates that married women were integral to the aristocratic family and their experience of property-ownership, playing a crucial role as acquirers, transmitters and managers of familial property, identity and wealth. Examining the ways Anna Eliza negotiated her position as a wife and her attitudes to the property she 'owned', including that in people, complicates the ways female property-ownership is understood, recognising that there can be no strict delineation between that which is conceived as individual and that which is conceived as familial. Ideas about property-ownership were not fixed but were rather negotiated and contested by married women throughout their lives.

Chapter Three. Situating slave-ownership: Anna Eliza Grenville's social, political and imperial worlds

One of the main aims of the Legacies of British Slave-ownership project has been to 'reinscribe slave-ownership onto modern British history', investigating both the direct and indirect connections between the social, political, financial and imperial activities of Caribbean slave-owners and the development of nineteenth-century Britain.¹ The impact these men and women had on the configuration of British society was varied. Douglas Hall has demonstrated that absentees were 'a heterogeneous lot', imploring historians to move away from unsubstantiated generalisations and situate absentees within their specific spatial and temporal contexts.² This involves complicating understandings of what it meant to be an absentee slave-owner. Part of the reason it has been so easy for historians to neglect the impact of slavery on Britain is exactly because of the widespread perception of slave-owners either as evil sadists, far away in the colonies, or as ostentatious, foppish and dissolute absentees. But as the example of Thomas Lane shows, owning Caribbean plantations and enslaved people did not preclude absentees from establishing themselves as respectable members of British society. Indeed, for many absentees slavery was just one part of a diverse portfolio of social, political and imperial interests. It is therefore crucial to situate the slave-ownership of British absentees within these wider worlds. Slave-ownership was only one facet of Anna Eliza Grenville's identity, and only a relatively small one at that. To say this is not to diminish its salience. On the contrary, investigating the variety of ways absentees like Anna Eliza Grenville acted in the world only serves to expand our understanding of British slave-ownership and its impact on the development of nineteenth-century Britain and the wider British Empire.

The country house was a potent symbol for members of the nineteenth-century aristocracy. A material manifestation of their status and authority, a landed estate helped provide elite families with a sense of identity and the illusion of permanence.³ Yet, as Margot Finn has argued, it is important to interrogate just how 'English' the

¹ Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 2-3.

² Douglas Hall, 'Absentee proprietorship in the British West Indies, to about 1850', *The Journal of Caribbean History*, 35:1 (2001), p. 101.

³ G. E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 209.

English country house actually was.⁴ While the houses of absentee slaveholders were unlikely to be filled with the imperial objects found in the homes of East India Company men and women, the recent English Heritage collection *Slavery and the British Country House* has demonstrated the myriad links between England's stately homes and the British Caribbean colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵ Anna Eliza's emigrant project is the most obvious manifestation of the links between her metropolitan and colonial properties. But even when the connection was not so tangible, it always remained significant. Anna Eliza Grenville was not only a Jamaican plantation- and slave-owner, she was also a metropolitan landholder and a society wife, with an active interest in politics and the wider British Empire. It is impossible to fully understand her slave-ownership without also situating her within these wider worlds.

Anna Eliza inherited Avington, her Hampshire country estate, after the death of her father in 1789 and she was extremely attached both to the house and to the surrounding area. This 'elegant and favourite residence' had been in her family since the Elizabethan period and the Duchess spent a great deal of time at her ancestral home, situated 'in a beautiful and secluded valley' four miles from the city of Winchester.⁶ In keeping with the increasing preference amongst elite society for the 'idyllic solitude' of rural life, Anna Eliza spoke with great warmth about Avington and the quiet summers she spent there.⁷ 'The Country is now quite perfection' she wrote to her cousin Percy Grace in May 1834, several months later adding 'I am too thankful for the enjoyment of this dear old Place to wish to leave it'.⁸ She spoke of being dragged away from the estate 'with the greatest reluctance' and when elsewhere often yearned for the solitude of Hampshire.⁹ While resident with her

⁴ Margot Finn, 'Rethinking the English country house: 'Indians' at home', UCL Lunch Hour Lecture, March 19th 2015.

⁵ UCL's East India Company at Home project explored how 'how the acquisition, use, meaning and circulation of Asian luxury goods came to shape the British country house'. <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/about/> (accessed 17/11/16); Madge Dresser and Andrew Hann (eds.), *Slavery and the British Country House* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2013).

⁶ *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures, etc.*, 3rd series, 6:36 (December 1, 1825), pp. 311-312.

⁷ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 217.

⁸ Huntington Library (hereafter HL), STG Box 4 (27), AEG to Percy Grace, 7th May 1834, 18th July 1834.

⁹ National Library of Wales (hereafter NLW), Aston Hall Estate Records, C452, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, c. 15th May 1806.

husband at Stowe she once admitted she was ‘ashamed to confess how often I have wished myself at Avington’.¹⁰



Figure 7. ‘Avington the Seat of his Grace the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos’, in *The Repository of Arts, Literature, Fashions, Manufactures etc.*, third series, vol. VI, no. XXXVI, 1st December, 1825

William Cobbett, in his *Rural Rides*, referred to the house and estate as belonging to the Duke.¹¹ Yet within the family at least, Avington was always a place conceived as belonging to the Duchess. Mary Grenville, Anna Eliza’s daughter-in-law, pleaded that she might join them at Stowe, but Mary admitted that this was a ‘selfish wish, as I know you prefer your own Avington’.¹² This language was echoed by Anna Eliza herself when, one Christmas, she contemplated what would happen to the estate in the event of her death. ‘Watch over my favourite Avington and continue your kindness to my poor people’, she implored her husband.¹³ Peter Mandler has suggested that country houses ‘only became homes in the late nineteenth century’ but it is clear that for Anna Eliza this Hampshire edifice, and the intimacies, comforts

¹⁰ HL STG Box 4 (29), AEG to Percy Grace, 9th February 1836.

¹¹ William Cobbett, *Rural Rides* ([1830] London: Penguin Classics, 2001), p. 103.

¹² HL STG Box 7 (14), Mary Grenville to AEG, Thursday [?], 1826.

¹³ HL STG Box 74 (38), AEG to Richard Grenville, 24th December 1824.

and attachments it offered, constituted home.¹⁴



Figure 8. Avington House, 2016

Traditional histories of the English country house have paid surprisingly little attention to the role of women within these spaces.¹⁵ Owning land could imbue women with significant, although always circumscribed, local authority, particularly when a proprietress was able to position herself within a family lineage containing longstanding ties to the local area and community.¹⁶ Within what Kathryn Gleadle has termed the ‘parochial realm’ elite and propertied women could display their local authority by invoking paternalistic attitudes and practices, reinforcing a social hierarchy that positioned themselves at, or at least very near, the top. Ruling, guiding and helping were, David Roberts has suggested, the most important duties ‘the conscientious paternalist of superior rank felt *he* must perform’ [own emphasis], but

¹⁴ Peter Mandler, *The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 129; Judith S. Lewis, ‘When a house is not a home: elite english women and the eighteenth-century country house’, *Journal of British Studies*, 48:2 (April, 2009), p. 363.

¹⁵ Lewis, ‘When a house is not a home’, pp. 336-337; Dana Arnold, ‘Defining femininity: women and the country house’, in Dana Arnold (ed.) *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Thrup: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2003), p. 79.

¹⁶ Kathryn Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens: Women, Gender and Political Culture in Britain, 1815-1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 217.

such activities were undertaken by women as well as men.¹⁷ Anna Eliza Grenville regularly engaged in such behaviour, donating money for the poor, procuring medical advice during bouts of cholera and building new cottages — allegedly ‘Castles in the air’ — for her labourers.¹⁸ Her annual Christmas dinner was an ostentatious display of paternalism. ‘I look forward with great pleasure to Christmas Day, she wrote in December 1810, reporting that more than 400 people, ‘the poor of three parishes’, were expected to attend.¹⁹

In return for such protection and charity parishioners were expected to behave respectably, with orderliness and deference. A well-functioning paternalistic relationship was supposed to be characterised by interdependence and reciprocity, although this was always power-laden.²⁰ ‘We hope that you will Excuse Wee for making so Bold as to Send to you’ began some labourers when they decided to complain to the Duchess about the behaviour of a new tenant-farmer, before continuing ‘Wee don’t like his rules. Wee are afraid that he Will Currrupt all our masters’.²¹ John Goodwin employed well-worn deferential tropes when applying for assistance on behalf of his ‘aged and helpless Mother ... formerly a servant in the family of your Ladyship’s Ancestors’, making recourse to ‘the well known humanity and goodness of your Ladyship’.²² While it is difficult to discern the extent to which Anna Eliza Grenville responded to these requests — K. D. Reynolds has highlighted that many supposed paternalists ‘paid only lip-service to their duties to their tenants’ — she does appear to have been particularly successful in *presenting* herself as a caring and benevolent landowner.²³ ‘The unbounded scope of charities, extensive as her benevolence, comprised within its sphere the wants and necessities of the poor and indigent of every class of life’, wrote one newspaper shortly after her death, while reports of her funeral claimed that behind her coffin followed ‘all her Grace’s servants, labourers upon the estate, and almost every individual belonging to [her]

¹⁷ David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 4-5. I have used ‘paternalistic’ rather than ‘maternalistic’ here because, despite its gendered implications, it reflects more accurately the way Anna Eliza conceived her relationship with those who lived on her estates.

¹⁸ HL ST110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 1:1807; HL STG Box 4 (25), AEG to Percy Grace, 25th July 1832; HL STG Box 4 (27) AEG to Percy Grace, 7th May 1834.

¹⁹ HL STG Box 4 (5), AEG to Percy Grace, 23rd December 1810.

²⁰ Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, p. 6.

²¹ HL STG Box 10 (20), Local Complaint, Winchester to AEG, [c. 14th November 1828].

²² HL STG Box 364 (19) John Goodwin to AEG, 5th December 1821.

²³ K. D. Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 13.

parishes'.²⁴ Indeed, the reputation of the Duchess as a 'virtuous woman' who treated her tenants with kindness and generosity remains to this day.²⁵ Yet such displays of paternalism were, as E.P. Thompson argued, 'as much theatre and gesture as effective responsibility ... a studied technique of rule'.²⁶ Deploying a paternalistic rhetoric, and undertaking corresponding activities, was a crucial aspect of the maintenance of the hierarchical structures that underpinned rural society, helping to sustain and reinforce Anna Eliza's own power and authority within the locale.²⁷

The warmth with which Anna Eliza spoke about Avington, and the people who lived and worked on the estate, contrasted dramatically with the way she described her husband's family seat.



Figure 9. 'Stowe House', in *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, From Drawings by J. P. Neale, Vol. I* (London, 1818)

²⁴ HL STG Personal Box 23 (24) Newspaper clippings & other papers re. death of Anna Eliza Grenville. Her memorial inscription in St. Mary's Church, Avington, similarly emphasized Anna Eliza's supposed virtuous generosity, stating she was conveyed from earth 'amidst the ... tears' of those she had helped. See Appendix 4

²⁵ A tour guide at Stowe House in 2015 described Anna Eliza Grenville as a 'virtuous woman'. Avington Park, having been sold in 1847 and again in 1951, remains in private ownership. Guided tours are run on Sundays during the summer by the lovely Vera Edwards, who had a similar impression of the house's former owner. Neither of these guides knew anything about Anna Eliza's Jamaican slave-ownership.

²⁶ E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (New York: The New Press, 1993), p. 64.

²⁷ Judith S. Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism: Gender, Class and Politics in Late Georgian England* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 5.

A 'princely edifice' with vast and impressive gardens, Stowe and its grounds had been extensively refurbished by the Duke's father and grandfather and the estate was described by a contemporary guide book as 'the chief ornament' of the county of Buckinghamshire.²⁸ Stowe was a place renowned for its extravagant parties, dinners and dances, attended by the highest echelons of British society, from aristocrats to princes.²⁹ In 1810 eight hundred people attended a New Year's Day dinner to celebrate the birthday of the Marquis of Buckingham, Richard Grenville's father.³⁰ Anna Eliza, however, appears not to have enjoyed these soirees. Her comments to good friend Louisa Lloyd following a visit by the French Princes in the winter of 1805 were telling. 'We have been very formal & I have had my best company face on', she reported, describing her alarm at being obliged to dance with one of the Frenchmen.³¹ She used a similar language of obligation to describe a five day visit to Stowe by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, an extravagant occasion that involved two concerts, a ball and a garden illumination.³² 'Lord T. would not let me remain quietly in my room but made me enter into all the gaieties', she complained, hoping the upcoming presence of her friend would 'console me for the horrors of all the Grandeess at Stowe'.³³ Whereas Anna Eliza had a strong emotional attachment to her own ancestral home it is clear that she did not share the same fondness for her husband's palatial pile. 'It is impossible to express how dismal this house appears', she bemoaned, suggesting that rather than feeling any sense of belonging to Stowe, she felt like a somewhat reluctant guest in someone else's home.³⁴

²⁸ *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, From Drawings by J. P. Neale, Vol. I* (London, 1818), n. pag.

²⁹ John Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710 to 1921* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 77.

³⁰ HL ST110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 2: 1810.

³¹ NLW, C442, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 1st January 1805.

³² NLW, C445, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 12th July 1805; British Library (hereafter BL), Morgan-Grenville Papers, Add MS 70976, Diary of Anna Eliza, Lady Temple, 1805.

³³ NLW, C447 and C446, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 22nd August 1805 and 21st July 1805.

³⁴ Lewis, 'When a house is not a home', p. 338.



Figure 10. Stowe House and Gardens, 2015

Given Anna Eliza's preference for the solitude of Avington, it is hardly surprising that she was no huge fan of life in town. John Beckett has suggested that aristocratic women spent much of their time trying to persuade their husbands to base themselves in London, close to fashionable society, but this was patently not always the case.³⁵ 'I am sorry that you are obliged to return to hot stinking London', Anna Eliza wrote to her husband when parliamentary work had drawn him to the capital, revealing her less than favourable opinions of urban life.³⁶ Indeed, when the Duke tried to persuade his wife to come and join him in London she steadfastly refused, merely responding, 'I am not equal to Parties [and] I feel in London I can contribute to the amusement or comfort of no one'.³⁷ Neither was hers a particularly unusual attitude. Isabella Fitzroy wrote to Anna Eliza whilst the latter was in London during the season, sympathising with the situation her friend found herself in. 'I am sure you must be tired of such a long sojourn there', she wrote, agreeing that 'the amusements of London ... are very insipid after the more agreeable pleasures of ...

³⁵ Beckett, *The Aristocracy in England*, p. 366.

³⁶ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, Friday [25th May] 1832.

³⁷ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, Saturday [2nd June] 1832.

the Country'.³⁸ Anna Eliza preferred rural recreation to urban entertainments. 'How beautiful the mountains must look at this delightful time of year', she wrote to Louisa Lloyd whilst the latter was touring around Wales, adding 'the very idea of them refreshes us poor Londoners'.³⁹

Yet though she came to despise urban life, in her younger years Anna Eliza spent much of the parliamentary season 'in town', participating fully in the social scene that lay at the heart of London life. Her diaries spanning the years 1798-1811 demonstrate that during her summer trips to London she regularly went to the opera and the theatre and attended numerous dinners, balls, assemblies and masquerades.⁴⁰ As a young woman — Anna Eliza was still only in her twenties at this point — she seems to have largely enjoyed the activities she came to despise as she grew older. 'I went to a famous masquerade last night', she wrote to Louisa Lloyd in July 1808, explaining 'We went a party of five all in character & enjoyed it uncommonly'.⁴¹ But such socialising was also simply expected of an aristocratic wife, an important means of wielding social power.⁴² As a young married woman who needed to establish herself in society Anna Eliza had little choice than to dutifully partake in such engagements. 'I began my campaign the evening of my arrival', she wrote to Lloyd during one such London trip. She went on to detail her plans for the upcoming week, including going to an assembly at the Duchess of Rutland's, supper at Lady Castlereagh's, a party at Lady Northwick's, a ball at Lady Camden's and to the Vauxhall gardens, a supposedly 'open' and inclusive public space in reality characterised by the performance of social exclusivity.⁴³ Such activities were not undertaken simply for pleasure. They were a vital part of creating, sustaining and extending the social and political networks that underpinned elite society.⁴⁴

³⁸ HL STG Box 6 (6), Isabella Fitzroy to AEG, 20th February 1811.

³⁹ NLW, C2454, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 30th June 1806.

⁴⁰ HL ST110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 1: 1807 and Vol. 2: 1810; BL, Morgan-Grenville Papers, Add MS 70970-70979, Diaries of Anna Eliza, Lady Temple, 1798-1811.

⁴¹ NLW, C2470, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 1st July 1808.

⁴² Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croom Helm, 1973), p. 41.

⁴³ NLW, C2467, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, June 1807; 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), p. 51.

⁴⁴ Hannah Greig, *The Beau Monde: Fashionable Society in Georgian London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 2.

Neither was socialising restricted to urban settings. From the mid-eighteenth century country house visiting became an increasingly popular pursuit amongst the landed classes, allowing elite men and women to observe and reflect upon the nation's landscapes and its forms of cultivation.⁴⁵ Anna Eliza spent a great deal of time visiting the houses of friends, family and acquaintances across the country, from the Lake District, where the scenery 'astonishe[d] & delight[ed]', to Wales, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, as well as a variety of residences in the home counties and the South West.⁴⁶ Although country house visiting was a popular pastime undertaken by many gentry families 'in pursuit of novelty and amusement', the trips undertaken by Anna Eliza generally involved longer sojourns in the houses of friends, associates and kin.⁴⁷ As well as regular visits to Wotton, another Grenville property, Anna Eliza also spent time at Castle Hill in North Devon and Audley End in Essex, the homes of political allies of her husband.⁴⁸ She also frequently stayed at Adlestrop and Stoneleigh Abbey, estates owned by the Leigh family, to whom she was related through her paternal aunt.⁴⁹ Whilst these visits, like their London counterparts, were undertaken for practical as well as affective reasons, Anna Eliza appears to have found these trips much less of a chore, speaking, for example, of her sadness at having to leave the Lloyd family and Shropshire's Aston Hall.⁵⁰

Yet the most frequent of her visits, and those she appears to have enjoyed the most, were to small coastal towns with naval and military bases. The Grenvilles had a long-standing connection with the Buckingham Militia, a relationship formalised in 1813 when Richard Grenville was made Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire. In 1803 Anna Eliza 'spent three very happy months' with them in Harwich, Essex and similarly passed much of 1805 in Devonshire, when the Militia were stationed in barracks near Exeter, reporting 'I liked the situation very much'.⁵¹ It is clear that her

⁴⁵ Katharine Glover, *Elite Women and Polite Society in Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), pp. 155-156.

⁴⁶ HL STG Box 4 (11), AEG to Percy Grace, 9th September 1816; HL ST110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 1: 1807.

⁴⁷ Richard Wilson, 'Novelty and amusement? Visiting the Georgian country house', *Historian*, 70 (Summer 2001), p. 4. This quotation is taken from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and is used by the Gardiners to describe their tour of Derbyshire and visit to Pemberley.

⁴⁸ NLW, C2458 and 2601, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 17th September 1806 and 16th August 1816.

⁴⁹ HL STG Box 6 (10), Harriet Chester to AEG, 17th August [1799?]; HL STG Box 4 (9), AEG to Percy Grace, 27th September 1814.

⁵⁰ NLW, C2448, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, c. 30th September 1805.

⁵¹ NLW, C2419, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 20th November 1803; HL STG Box 4 (3), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th September 1808.

husband's position was largely a ceremonial one. When the then Lord Temple had plans to travel to the Netherlands with his regiment his wife admitted that she would 'be really surprised to hear of his going upon actual Service'.⁵² Dutifully attending dinners, balls and plays again appears to have been the most important role of the Lord-Lieutenant's wife. Whilst in Dover Anna Eliza explained that although tiredness meant she would have preferred not to have had to attend a play performed by the garrison 'I should have affronted the Bucks if I had not gone'.⁵³ Yet on the whole she appears to have enjoyed these social occasions far more than their London equivalents. 'We have had Dinner parties & Balls without end', she reported to Louisa Lloyd when in Dover, proclaiming 'this is certainly the gayest Quarter I have ever been in ... The society is entirely military & all inclined to be agreeable'.⁵⁴ Indeed, she explained that she had herself established a weekly dance amongst the military 'which succeeds famously'.⁵⁵ Anna Eliza maintained many friendships with her military and naval connexions. 'I have added many to my list of naval acquaintances', she wrote after one soir e, adding that a Capt. Cateret had been her favourite.⁵⁶ Her attachment to the officers and soldiers of the Buckinghamshire Militia was reflected in her enquiries to cousin Percy Grace. Aware that he was likely to come across 'our' battalion, she enquired about their well-being, adding 'I feel anxious about them all having seen so much of them during the six weeks I spent at ... Portsmouth'.⁵⁷ While Anna Eliza generally viewed socialising as a duty rather than a pleasure, the naval and military towns of the South coast provided one of the few places she appears to have felt genuinely comfortable fulfilling the expectations of the 'polite tourist' and dutiful wife.⁵⁸

Although the spread of evangelical Protestantism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was closely associated with the development of middle-class identity, the aristocracy were not exempt from the widespread diffusion of this

⁵² HL STG Box 4 (9), AEG to Percy Grace, 16th January 1814.

⁵³ HL STG Box 4 (6), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th September 1811.

⁵⁴ NLW, C2480, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, c. October 1809.

⁵⁵ NLW, C2478, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 29th August 1809.

⁵⁶ HL STG Box 4 (6), AEG to Percy Grace, 30th October 1811.

⁵⁷ HL STG Box 4 (9), AEG to Percy Grace, 28th May 28th 1814.

⁵⁸ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting* (London: National Trust, 1998).

religious zeal.⁵⁹ Anna Eliza Grenville, having been raised a devout Anglican, was one of the many aristocratic women who belonged to the Church of England and her strong religious convictions underpinned much of her social, philanthropic and political activity.⁶⁰ Several obituaries highlighted the centrality of the Duchess's religious identity, with *The Hampshire Advertiser and Salisbury Guardian* reporting 'the hand of death has snatched away a sincere friend of the Established Church, and a zealous supporter of the cause of true religion' and *The Hampshire Chronicle and Southampton Courier* dramatically declaring 'no one was more sensible than herself of Salvation through the Saviour ... Religion was truly her delight'.⁶¹ Whilst such hyperbolic platitudes might be expected in obituaries, Anna Eliza's religious leanings certainly infused her daily life. Religious sentiments were dotted throughout her correspondence. 'The Almighty has been most merciful to me & enabled me to perform many duties to others & the recovery of my Boy is a blessing', she wrote after her son had experienced a period of illness.⁶² Such proclamations were most pronounced during periods of personal, familial or national crisis. 'I humbly hope with the Blessing of God to support & not repine at any trials or disappointments it may be fit I should experience', she wrote in May 1832.⁶³ Her personal diaries also indicate how seriously she considered her religious convictions. She began each year with a long prayer-like passage, expressing her thanks for 'the mercy of the Almighty', though believing herself undeserving: 'O God look down upon me, pardon my Sins, strengthen, support me & if it be thy divine will prolong my life...'.⁶⁴ This Protestantism underpinned the way Anna Eliza viewed both herself and the wider world.

Family, unsurprisingly, was central to much of Anna Eliza Grenville's thoughts, actions and experiences. The 'family' was not a fixed or stable entity but a set of relationships bound together by mutable ideas about blood, contract and intimacy, a 'dense tangle of love, hate, pity, care, duty, loyalty, calculation, self-interest,

⁵⁹ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 76; Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society*, p. 73.

⁶⁰ Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, p. 103.

⁶¹ HL STG Personal Box 23 (24) Newspaper clippings & other papers re. death of Anna Eliza Grenville.

⁶² HL STG Box 4 (7), AEG to Percy Grace, 2nd April 1812.

⁶³ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, [c. 6th May] 1832.

⁶⁴ HL ST 110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 6: 1819.

patronage, power [and] dependency'.⁶⁵ Anna Eliza used a language of both obligation and affection in her descriptions of her wider kinship family, who appear to have constituted the majority of her correspondents and intimates. When her maternal uncle, Sir Richard Gamon, was in a 'most deplorable state of Spirits', she complained that 'he adds greatly to my grievances as he expects my constant attendance upon him' but still kept a miniature of her 'Dearest uncle', that she left to cousin Percy Grace when she died.⁶⁶ She also maintained close relationships with her husband's kin. After all, marriage brought not just alliances between two different kinship groups, but their incorporation.⁶⁷ To the Marquis of Buckingham she was thus 'my loved daughter' and to Thomas Grenville, the Duke's uncle, 'my Very Dear Niece'.⁶⁸ Both of these sentiments appear to have been reciprocated. When the Marquis died Anna Eliza explained he 'was ever the kindest & most affectionate parent to me' and similarly told Thomas Grenville that 'no one can prize your kindness & affection more than I have ever done'.⁶⁹ Many of the Duchess's other correspondents, including Louisa Lloyd and Maria Nugent, were more distant members of this extensive kinship network. Providing love, support, gossip and advice, these relationships were an integral part of Anna Eliza's conception of herself, her family and the world in which she lived.

Indeed, it was Anna Eliza's relationships with her immediate family that were the most troublesome. A thirteen-year-old 'Dico' wrote to his mother from Eton, promising to 'do every thing that is in the power of an affectionate and ever dutiful Son', but such assurances did not comfort his 'dearest Mamma' for long.⁷⁰ 'It is very difficult to reconcile him to any situation but that of perfect indolence & indulgence', she wrote of Dico just three years later, adding 'Time I hope may make him wiser'.⁷¹ Yet Richard continued to disappoint his parents. 'He has not allowed his Father or

⁶⁵ Leonore Davidoff, Megan Doolittle, Janet Fink and Katherine Holden, *The Family Story: Blood, Contract and Intimacy, 1830-1960* (Harlow: Longman, 1999), pp. 4-5, 7.

⁶⁶ HL STG Box 4 (6), AEG to Percy Grace, 7th May 1811; HL STG Box 7 (2), AEG to Sir Richard Gamon, [c. August], 1794; HL STG Box 74 (28) Percy Grace to Richard Grenville, 28th June 1836.

⁶⁷ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 133.

⁶⁸ HL STG Box 7 (13), George Grenville to AEG, 15th January [c. 1813]; HL STG Box 7 (45), Thomas Grenville to AEG, 13th May 1820.

⁶⁹ NLW, C507, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 21st February 1813; Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (hereafter CBS), Miscellaneous Grenville Papers, D 54/15, AEG to Thomas Grenville, 12th April 1833.

⁷⁰ CBS, D 54/20, Second Duke of Buckingham to AEG, 11th February 1810.

⁷¹ HL STG Box 4 (8), AEG to Percy Grace, 2nd April 1813.

myself the enjoyment of one happy moment', Anna Eliza complained of her eighteen year old son, insisting that he had 'sacrificed Parents, friends, character & all' for 'a Gang of the most atrocious sort'.⁷² Although she placed great stock in his 1819 marriage to Mary Campbell, the daughter of the Marquis of Breadalbane, an apparently 'evangelical, bookish, rather austere Scot', Chandos — as he was known from 1822 — seems to have inherited the spendthrift and licentious habits of his father.⁷³ The already tense relations between husband, wife and son were only exacerbated by the disclosure of the family's severe financial difficulties, which added feelings of anger and betrayal to the 'dense tangle' of familial ties, obligations and emotions.⁷⁴ The Duchess often tried to act as a mediator between husband and son, but also had severe disagreements with both. That families, while remaining extremely important emotionally and practically to an individual's identity and sense of self, were precarious, uncertain and riven with conflict was made particularly evident in one of Anna Eliza's letters to her son in September 1833, after she had refused to sell or mortgage any of her properties:

How greatly must your feelings be altered towards me my dear Dico to induce you to say "you can have little claim upon my recollection!!" If you could but know half the anxiety I have felt during the last four years about the distressed state of your affairs & the additional misery I have lately experienced in reflecting upon your present position You would indeed be sorry for having been so unjust towards me. A Mother's Affection ends but with life!⁷⁵

Politics in the locale

Land-ownership continued to lie at the heart of the political power of the aristocracy, enabling property-holding women to enjoy considerable political authority. This was particularly the case when women owned land in areas in which their families had long-held political interests. By identifying with their families' political heritage aristocratic women were able to place themselves within a 'cross-generational political tradition', something that could continue to inform their activities long after

⁷² HL STG Box 4 (11), AEG to Percy Grace, 11th December 1816.

⁷³ Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles*, pp. 112-117.

⁷⁴ Davidoff, Doolittle, Fink and Holden, *The Family Story*, p. 7.

⁷⁵ HL STG Box 95 (63), AEG to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 27th September 1823.

marriage.⁷⁶ Anna Eliza Grenville's extensive dealings within local politics derived from her family's heritage as important Hampshire landowners. The Chandos family had enjoyed an interest in the borough of Winchester since George Rodney Brydges bought Avington in the late seventeenth century. The constituency was a close borough under the joint patronage of the Chandos interest and the family of another prominent local landowner, Sir Henry St. John Mildmay, and Anna Eliza's maternal uncle, Sir Richard Gamon, had been one of Winchester's two MPs since 1784.⁷⁷

Anna Eliza's interventions in Winchester show how family and property could provide women with considerable political influence. They also, however, demonstrate the fragility of this authority. In the official history of the House of Commons, R. Thorne wrote that following Anna Eliza's 1796 marriage the then Earl Temple 'was expected to nominate on her interest'.⁷⁸ Yet he also admitted that Temple failed to persuade the corporation to support his own nominee in preference to Gamon, suggesting that a husband could not simply appropriate his wife's long-held familial ties to the local community. Indeed, when Richard Gamon resigned his parliamentary seat in 1812 it was Anna Eliza who coordinated his replacement's campaign. 'Sir Richard declined Winchester & I have some hope that Chandos Leigh [her cousin's son] will succeed him', she wrote to Percy Grace, telling Louisa Lloyd that she had been 'most busy' working for Leigh's return'.⁷⁹ Yet her letters to her husband hint at the precarious nature of women's political engagement. Whereas Anna Eliza's epistles to Lloyd spoke of her political activity in the first person, in those to her husband she referred to 'our interest' in the borough. Although she stated plainly that Chandos Leigh should stand as an independent candidate, despite his slim chances of success — Sir Richard Grace's late resignation meant the Mildmays had been canvassing for both seats — she nevertheless felt the need to add the caveat that this 'might lead to future good if you think the Seat worth preserving'.⁸⁰ Anna Eliza thus found herself as something of a quasi-patron in Winchester. Whilst her husband officially controlled the parliamentary seat of the Chandos interest, it was she who undertook the work of

⁷⁶ Ibid, pp. 104-105.

⁷⁷ R. Thorne (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1790-1820* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1986), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1790-1820/constituencies/winchester> (accessed 8/6/15).

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ HL STG Box 4 (7), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th September 1812; NLW, C504, AEG to Louisa Lloyd, 6th October 1812.

⁸⁰ HL STG Box 74 (37), AEG to Richard Grenville, 3rd October 1812.

proprietor and patron. Her position as the daughter of the Duke of Chandos may have provided her with a local authority her husband simply could not obtain but the expression of her opinions and influence still had to be rooted in traditional assumptions about the appropriate role of woman and wife.

Anna Eliza's relationship with Sir Edward Hyde East, MP for Winchester between 1823 and 1831, further demonstrated the ways she simultaneously found herself both a crucial player within the borough's political networks and restricted by the system of political patronage. East was returned unopposed when he was first elected to Parliament, an election 'clearly ... directed', according to the *History of Parliament*, by Anna Eliza's husband Richard Grenville, now the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos.⁸¹ Yet it was suggested by Sir James Mackintosh that the Duke was so unpopular amongst the electors in Hampshire that they refused to do his bidding and the Duchess had to be informed 'will [only] elect a Member who is connected with her and has no connection with her husband'.⁸² East was, after all, Anna Eliza's lifelong friend, confidante and adviser and by 1822 they had become related by marriage.⁸³ Throughout his time as an MP he wrote to her regularly, providing her with insider knowledge of a whole range of Westminster wranglings. Yet the Duke assured his friend and supporter William Fremantle that 'East has sworn allegiance to me exclusively', adding 'I mention this in order to settle any question about a divided interest in Winchester'.⁸⁴ The fear of a 'divided interest' was particularly significant because the Duke and Duchess had radically different opinions on the issue of Catholic Emancipation. Whereas Richard Grenville was an active supporter of Catholic relief, Anna Eliza vehemently opposed it. East seems to have seen himself as something of a mediator. 'I believe I have acted...[with] Honor & Character', East told Anna Eliza, tellingly adding '& therefore ... also for the real political interests of the Duke'.⁸⁵ Indeed, he did ultimately vote in favour of Catholic Emancipation. This suggests that even within single families the operation of

⁸¹ D. R. Fisher (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1820-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/constituencies/winchester> (accessed 8/6/15).

⁸² Cited in *Ibid.*

⁸³ Edward East's son, James Buller East, married Caroline Leigh, the daughter of Anna Eliza's first cousin James Henry Leigh and sister of Chandos Leigh.

⁸⁴ CBS, Fremantle Manuscripts, D-FR/46/11/76 and 71, Duke of Buckingham to W. H. Fremantle, 16th September 1822 and 10th February 1823.

⁸⁵ HL STG Box 6 (20), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 12th January 1828.

patronage was far from smooth. Women may certainly have engaged in political patronage work on behalf on their families but this was not always absolute, particularly when a woman was married.⁸⁶

Anna Eliza was, however, heavily involved in electioneering in the borough, directing the canvassing during Winchester's occasionally contested election campaigns. Like many elite women, her inability to vote did not prevent her from playing an active and conspicuous role in helping to shape the outcomes of local elections.⁸⁷ This was particularly significant in the general election of 1832, the first since the Reform Act had passed and the electorate greatly expanded.⁸⁸ 'Mr East has been working very hard the last three days at Winchester & has managed so judiciously that he certainly has made progress with the Enemy', Anna Eliza reported to her husband, explaining that her 'kind & active' canvassers had visited almost 700 people.⁸⁹ 'Everything has been arranged as far as possible' in an attempt to return East, she promised, although she was forced to admit 'in these times an Anti Radical has little chance'.⁹⁰ These arrangements included organising a charity bazaar to be 'patronized by most of our Respectable Allies'. This was a classic example of the kind of social ritual of electioneering associated with women; philanthropic endeavours were a socially acceptable way for women to undertake political activity.⁹¹ Anna Eliza, however, still felt the need to justify this behaviour. She insisted it was her husband's desire 'to preserve the Interest as long as possible under the New Constitution' that motivated her 'to exert myself to the success of the undertaking'.⁹² East did go on to lose his seat in the 1832 election but with the help of the Duchess and all her 'friends actively

⁸⁶ Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, p. 69.

⁸⁷ Elaine Chalus 'That epidemical madness': women and electoral politics in the late eighteenth century', in Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (eds.), *Gender in Eighteenth Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities* (Harlow: Longman, 1997), p.166.

⁸⁸ Anne Lister was another prominent female landowner who canvassed in her locale in support of the Tories and the anti-Reformist cause during this election, although she was mercilessly lampooned for doing so. Jill Liddington, *Female Fortune: Land, Gender and Authority: the Anne Lister Diaries and Other Writings, 1833-36* (London: Rivers Oram, 1998), p. 173.

⁸⁹ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG To Richard Grenville, [c. 29th April] 1832.

⁹⁰ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, Friday [25th May] 1832.

⁹¹ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, [c. 6th May] 1832; Frank O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 100; Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 80.

⁹² HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, [c. 6th May] 1832.

aiding in the canvass' he was re-elected in early 1835, remaining in the seat until his retirement in 1864.⁹³

As Anna Eliza's organisation of the bazaar during the 1832 election campaign indicates, in the aristocratic worlds of the early nineteenth century political and social activities were intimately intertwined.⁹⁴ Much attention has been placed on the role of political hostesses, women who, whether in London townhouses or country estates, established their homes as centres of extra-parliamentary political activity.⁹⁵ Anna Eliza's 1807 diary shows that she was very much part of this world. She dined several times with the Duchess of Rutland, a Whig hostess described by Elaine Chalus as 'a consummate female politician of the unreformed political world', and also spent several evenings with Lady Castlereagh, whose husband, eminent Tory politician Lord Castlereagh, was Secretary of State for War and the Colonies.⁹⁶ A prominent hostess in London and Ireland, Lady Castlereagh was to become one of the '*très grandes dames*' of the exclusive assembly rooms Almack's, where Anna Eliza occasionally attended.⁹⁷ Neither did her encounters with influential men and women only occur within the presence of 'official' hostesses, but in dining rooms and salons, at the theatre and opera and even on the street.⁹⁸ At Stowe, in London and elsewhere, Anna Eliza socialised with a range of powerful figures including, amongst others, the Duke of Wellington, a man who enjoyed intimacies with several influential women.⁹⁹ Social spaces were important arenas for political women, offering them

⁹³ HL STG Box 74 (42), AEG to Richard Grenville, 11th December 1834.

⁹⁴ Elaine Chalus, 'Elite women, social politics and the political world of late eighteenth-century England', *The Historical Journal*, 43:3 (September, 2000), p. 679.

⁹⁵ Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society*, p. 168.

⁹⁶ HL ST111, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 1: 1807 ; E. H. Chalus, 'Manners, Mary Isabella, Duchess of Rutland (1756–1831)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68363?docPos=10> (accessed 9/6/15); HL ST110, Diaries of Anna Eliza Grenville, Vol. 1: 1807.

⁹⁷ Mark Knowles, *The Wicked Waltz and Other Scandalous Dances: Outrage at Couple Dancing in the Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Centuries* (Jefferson: Macfarland & Company, 2009), p.195.

⁹⁸ Sarah Richardson, 'Well-neighboured houses': the political networks of elite women, 1780-1860', in Kathryn Gleadle and Sarah Richardson (eds.), *Women in British Politics, 1760-1860: The Power of the Petticoat* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 67.

⁹⁹ Philip Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Mona: University of West India Press, 2002), p. 259; Peter Mandler, 'From Almack's to Willis's: aristocratic women and politics, 1815-1867', in Amanda Vickery (ed.), *Women, Privilege and Power: British Politics, 1750 to the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 155.

influence over political debates and decisions unattainable in the formal edifices of parliamentary power.

National politics

Anna Eliza kept well abreast of the most important political issues of the day, sharing opinions, news and advice with her various correspondents. As already mentioned, Catholic Emancipation was a subject that completely divided her family. Strongly Protestant, the Duchess was vehemently anti-Catholic and fervently opposed any form of Catholic relief. She wrote to Percy Grace expressing her admiration at Admiral Evans's attempts 'to save his Country from the Dominions of Liberals & Catholics'.¹⁰⁰ Chandos shared his mother's sympathies, stating in the House of Commons in February 1829 that he would give 'all the opposition in his power to the course the Government have resolved upon in respect of the Catholic claims'.¹⁰¹ However, the Duke's mother and sister were both Catholic and he consequently became a strong supporter of Catholic Emancipation, one of the only issues that continued to largely unite the disjointed remains of the Grenvillite faction.¹⁰² This divide pitched kin against kin, provoking intense inter-familial squabbles and much 'personal conflict'.¹⁰³ Sir George Nugent, keen to maintain cordial relations with Anna Eliza, wrote apologetically to her, explaining why he saw the need to support George Nugent Grenville, even though 'my political sentiments ... are generally speaking diametrically opposite to those he entertains'.¹⁰⁴ Although Edward Hyde East, who updated the Duchess regularly on all relevant parliamentary developments, did obey the Duke's instructions and voted in favour of Catholic Emancipation, he was careful to explain to Anna Eliza that this support was not ideologically-driven: 'This I fear is now the only Compromise left to the Government to prevent ... the dissolution of the

¹⁰⁰ HL STG Box 4 (22) AEG to Percy Grace, 3rd April 1829.

¹⁰¹ HL STG Box 6 (21) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 9th February 1829.

¹⁰² James T. Sack, 'The decline of the Grenvillite faction under the first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, 1817-1829', *Journal of British Studies*, 15:1 (Autumn, 1975), p. 132.

¹⁰³ The Duke was forced to entreat his parliamentary supporters not to associate with his son and there were several fraught and antagonistic meetings between Chandos and the Duke's supporters in the family's Buckinghamshire constituencies. Fisher (ed.), *The History of Parliament*, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/temple-nugent-brydges-chandos-grenville-richard-1797-1861> and <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/constituencies/buckinghamshire> (accessed 9/6/15); HL STG Box 6 (21), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 24th February 1829.

¹⁰⁴ HL STG Box 8 (33), Sir George Nugent to AEG, 21st February 1829. The Duke was by this stage enjoying his jaunt around the Mediterranean.

Union, or the suppression of the Catholic Question by force of arms'.¹⁰⁵ The Grenville family's divergent opinions on Catholic Emancipation demonstrate that a family's political identity was subject to disruption from within as well as without. It suggests that it was possible for at least some elite women to maintain independent religious and political identities after their marriage, much to the chagrin of their husbands and conjugal families.

Neither was Catholic Emancipation the only matter of national political significance with which Anna Eliza engaged. Like much of the nation, she became preoccupied with the issue of Reform.¹⁰⁶ Whilst thousands of men and women across the country were clamouring for parliamentary reform, the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, unsurprisingly, adopted an ardently anti-Reformist agenda. 'I can think of nothing but the approaching Revolution', she wrote to Percy Grace, dramatically declaring that should the Reform Act pass 'I should despise my Country & almost wish to emigrate'.¹⁰⁷ This was an issue on which the Duke and Duchess very much agreed.¹⁰⁸ She congratulated her husband on his 'powerful impressive speech' made in the House of Lords, which she assured him 'will have a great effect amongst all Classes'.¹⁰⁹ She presented his parliamentary work as analogous to that of a military officer. 'You have an imperious duty to perform now', she proclaimed, 'and every influential Person should be at their Post'.¹¹⁰ Many of Anna Eliza's anti-reformist sentiments were couched in warlike terms and she appears to have adopted the mentality of one under siege. She was unflinching in her condemnation of 'Dictator Grey' and suggested that William IV, who promised Grey that if necessary he would create enough Peers for the Reform Bill to pass through the Lords, was 'an actual Prisoner to a Revolutionary Gang'.¹¹¹ She even warned the Duke to move his valuable items from Stowe, insisting that during these uncertain times it was 'an

¹⁰⁵ HL STG Box 6 (21), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 17th January 1829.

¹⁰⁶ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 181.

¹⁰⁷ HL STG Box 4 (24), AEG to Percy Grace, 15th March 1831.

¹⁰⁸ On this occasion it was with her son whom Anna Eliza disagreed. Avowing himself 'a moderate reformer', Chandos put his name to the amendment that enfranchised 'tenants-at-will' paying more than £50 a year in rent. This helped Chandos earn his reputation as 'the Farmer's Friend'. David Spring, 'Lord Chandos and the farmers, 1818-1846', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 33:3 (May, 1970), pp. 259-260.

¹⁰⁹ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, 13th April 1832. This was perhaps somewhat generous; the Duke was not a natural orator. HL Deb, 11th April 1832, vol 12, cols. 220-235), <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1832/apr/11/parliamentary-reform-bill-for-england> (accessed 10/6/15).

¹¹⁰ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, Saturday [2nd June] 1832.

¹¹¹ HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, [c. 22nd May] 1832, [c. 6th June] 1832.

unwarrantable risk' to leave them 'within the reach of the Birmingham Army'.¹¹² Neither were the Duchess's fears entirely unwarranted. Eric Evans is among those who have suggested that modern Britain has never been closer to revolution than during this period, an opinion shared by many of Anna Eliza's contemporaries.¹¹³ Yet whilst aristocratic women in particular may have had much to lose from a Reform Act that both widened the franchise and, for the first time, explicitly excluded women from it, her opposition was predicated on much more than the possibility of personal loss.¹¹⁴ 'Adieu to all hope of a firm vigorous Government', she lamented after the Reform Bill had finally passed into law, 'Can there be a surer mode of ruining this Country?'.¹¹⁵

The Duchess continued to inveigh against the measures implemented by the post-Reform government. Those Winchester inhabitants of good repute were 'looking with awe to the working of the Two Radical Bills the Poor Law & the Municipal [Corporations Act]' she informed her husband, insisting that 'the respectable and influential are quite determined' to render them 'as little pernicious as possible'.¹¹⁶ It is likely that as Anna Eliza aged she felt more confidence expressing her political opinions and authority.¹¹⁷ But although the clamour around the Reform Act was unusual and unprecedented, an 'intensely politicising experience', she appears to have kept a close eye on parliamentary concerns even in less remarkable times.¹¹⁸ Her correspondence indicates that she was involved in political discussions and debates with a range of people on a wide variety of subjects, from the Queen Caroline affair, to 'the Sutte question' and the Corn Laws.¹¹⁹ Yet it is noticeable that,

¹¹² HL STG Box 74 (40), AEG to Richard Grenville, [c. 14th April] 1832.

¹¹³ Eric J. Evans, *The Great Reform Act of 1832*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 54.

¹¹⁴ Reynolds, *Aristocratic Women and Political Society*, p. 143; James Vernon, *Politics and the People: A Study in English Political Culture, 1815-1867* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 39.

¹¹⁵ STG Box 74 (42), AEG to Richard Grenville, 11th December 1834. Anna Eliza was far from the only aristocratic woman to rally against the Reform Bill. The Duke of Wellington regularly corresponded with Lady Shelley as the bill passed through the Commons and the Lords, encouraging her to persuade Lord Gage to vote against the Bill. 'I know you are a sensible woman, and will manage the affair with discretion', he added. Duke of Wellington to Lady Shelley, September 24th 1832, Cited in E. A. Smith, *Reform or Revolution?: A Diary of Reform in England, 1830-2* (Stroud: A. Sutton Pub. Limited, 1992), p. 88.

¹¹⁶ HL STG Box 74 (44), AEG to Richard Grenville, 15th September 1835.

¹¹⁷ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 260.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 189.

¹¹⁹ HL STG Box 50 (40), AEG to Mary Grenville, Thursday [2nd November?] 1820; HL STG Box 6 (22) Edward Hyde East to AEG, 30th June 1832; HL STG Box 4 (10), 15th March 1815.

apart from Edward Hyde East, most of these correspondents were members of either her close family or her wider kinship network. Anna Eliza's example demonstrates that familial political identities were rarely fixed or stable, particularly within a family as fractious as the Grenvilles. Within this wider familial framework there was therefore a space for elite women to construct and negotiate their own political identities, subjectivities and opinions. Yet these were always developed within an understanding of politics that continued to privilege male family members, particularly the head of the household.¹²⁰ It was, after all, Anna Eliza's husband and son who were able to take their seats in the Houses of Parliament.

There was one political issue of huge national significance that is conspicuous by its absence in Anna Eliza's correspondence. Over 5,000 petitions supporting the abolition of slavery were presented before parliament between the years 1828 and 1830 but, in sharp contrast to the way she passionately decried Catholic Emancipation and parliamentary reform, Anna Eliza made no mention of the debates concerning abolition. Jamaican attorney Richard Barratt did inform the Duke of the 1831 rebellion but tellingly he seemed most concerned with the consequential deficit in that year's crop.¹²¹ Husband and wife do not appear to have discussed the subject between themselves, at least not by epistolary means. Neither did Anna Eliza discuss either the rebellion or the campaign for abolition with Edward Hyde East, himself a substantial Jamaican slave-owner.¹²² East did, however, speak in the Commons defending the behaviour of West Indian plantation-owners. In 1826 he argued that West Indian proprietors had always believed it their duty to manage their estates 'in the way most advantageous to the slaves', and had placed a great emphasis on efforts 'for ameliorating the condition of the slaves'. Perhaps surprisingly, even at this relatively early stage, he 'concurred in the question for the abolition of slavery', although this came with one important caveat, as long as the slave-owners were appropriately compensated.¹²³ This perhaps helps to explain why Anna Eliza remained quiet on the subject of abolition. Whereas many of those in the Caribbean adopted vociferously pro-slavery positions, by the 1830s a considerable

¹²⁰ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 94.

¹²¹ HL STG Box 433 (23), Richard Barrett to Richard Grenville, 12th February 1832.

¹²² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/16601> (accessed 16/03/17).

¹²³ HC Deb, 1st March 1826, vol. 14, cols. 995-996, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1826/mar/01/abolition-of-slavery> (accessed 11/6/15).

number of metropolitan absentees reluctantly accepted the inevitability of abolition. Indeed, that Chandos served as the Chair of the Society of West India Planters and Merchants from June 1829 to February 1832, when he was thanked 'for the zeal and abilities with which his Lordship has continued to maintain the Interests of the West India Body', indicates that the family's connexions to the Caribbean continued to be important to them.¹²⁴ Chandos lobbied the Duke of Wellington and made several speeches in the Commons on the Society's behalf. Yet although he did present a petition to parliament that pleaded that any measure of abolition 'should be on the principle of the fullest compensation for any loss or depreciation of property it might occasion', he was primarily concerned not with abolition but with reducing duties on West Indian sugar and rum, an issue he returned to repeatedly.¹²⁵ It should perhaps then not be surprising that Anna Eliza failed to be gripped by the issue of abolition as she was by Catholic Emancipation and Reform. Her silences on the subject do not necessarily suggest she was disinterested in the matter, but rather perhaps that she had reluctantly accepted that her family's six decades of slave-ownership were coming to an end.

Anna Eliza's empire of letters

Anna Eliza Grenville never left British shores but she engaged in vital empire (and home)-building work. She acted as a key metropolitan conduit, corresponding with friends and family across the empire, from Calcutta to Nova Scotia, Gibraltar to the Cape. At their simplest level these were letters that strove to maintain intimate relationships built in the metropole. But they did far more than that. These epistles helped to spread family gossip and political news, establish new imperial connections and networks and forge relationships of patronage and power, in the process contributing to the making and remaking of both metropole and colony, as well as the families and friendships that crossed them.

Unsurprisingly, many of these letters were filled with personal news and family and society gossip. Anna Eliza's correspondence with her cousin Percy Grace, an officer

¹²⁴ Senate House Library, West India Committee Archives, M915, Reel 4: West India Merchants and Planters minutes, 22nd March 1822-21st February 1834.

¹²⁵ HC Deb, 13th December 1830, vol. 1, cols. 1047-1048, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1830/dec/13/west-india-colonies-slavery> (accessed 11/6/15).

and later Captain in the Royal Navy, lasted over thirty years, from the time he joined the navy to her death in 1836. While Leonore Davidoff has shown that ‘the cousin relationship is the most attenuated of all genetic ties’, Anna Eliza’s relationship with Grace was a close one, bound for their entire lives by ties of both affection and obligation.¹²⁶ She regularly updated him on the affairs of his immediate family. She informed him, for example, that his brother Sheffield had ‘decided to study the Law’, although also admitted that she thought he would ‘find that profession very unpleasant and will soon be tired of it’.¹²⁷ Anna Eliza also updated her cousin when she had seen any of their mutual friends, and of any births, marriages or prospective unions within their kinship and social circles. In 1810 she notified him that Mary Harvey’s suitor had ‘departed some time [ago] and his heart has not suffered’, confirming her less than favourable opinion of the Major. A year later she was happy to share the news that Mary had accepted the proposal of Captain Sutton, although this was at present ‘a great secret’.¹²⁸ Neither was Grace the only correspondent with whom Anna Eliza shared such gossip. Richard Pigott, writing from Calcutta, asked her to pass on his best wishes to Lady Nugent, adding ‘I hope she has found ... a wife for my brother’.¹²⁹ Regular transmission of personal news and gossip across the empire was vital in helping to sustain a sense of connection, intimacy and belonging in ever-changing social and familial worlds.

This transmission of news was not restricted to personal information. Reports on births and courtships were interspersed with reports of political, naval and military developments. ‘The late victories by Sir Arthur Wellesley over the French have put us all in good spirits’, Anna Eliza informed Percy Grace in September 1808, reporting that ‘Our Troops’ had demonstrated ‘much coolness and determined courage’ whilst fighting in Portugal.¹³⁰ Over the years she updated him on a whole range of matters of national significance, from the King’s illness and the regency debates to Lord Moira’s appointment as Commander in Chief and Governor of India.¹³¹ That she felt she needed to apologise when she had no news to convey hints at the significance

¹²⁶ Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker Than Water: Siblings and their Relations, 1780-1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 185.

¹²⁷ HL STG Box 4 (3), AEG to Percy Grace, 18th December 1806.

¹²⁸ HL STG Box 4 (5), AEG to Percy Grace, 3rd November 1810; HL STG Box 4 (6) AEG to Percy Grace, 30th October 1811.

¹²⁹ HL STG Box 10 (6), Richard Pigott to AEG, 23rd July 1818.

¹³⁰ HL STG Box 4 (4), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th September 1808.

¹³¹ HL STG Box 4 (5), AEG to Percy Grace, 23rd December 1810; HL STG Box 4 (7), AEG to Percy Grace, 22nd December 1812.

of these reports.¹³² This transmission of news and information was multi-directional. She received ‘on the ground’ information from Edward Hyde East in India about the impact of Lord Cornwallis’s ‘radically defective’ judicial reforms and of his land revenue system that ‘tho’ good in principle, was too hastily executed, & has great omissions’.¹³³ In 1815 she wrote to Percy Grace, now stationed in North America, asking him to ‘say as much as you can with safety’ about the ‘truly grievous’ sacrifices made at the battle of New Orleans.¹³⁴ Elaine Chalus has argued that knowledge, particularly early knowledge, of important news was a significant barometer of social and political influence for elite women, a ‘marker of insider status’.¹³⁵ Anna Eliza’s disappointment that *The Barbadoes*’ long-awaited arrival from India and the Cape brought only ‘the official account of the taking of Banda which is now an old story’ indicates how highly she valued this insider knowledge.¹³⁶ Sending and receiving such ‘public news’, Anna Eliza’s trans-imperial letter-writing both connected metropolitan British life to the distant colonies and helped to bring the empire back home.¹³⁷

Yet Anna Eliza’s work as a metropolitan conduit involved far more than simply spreading news. As Zoe Laidlaw, and many others, have argued, personal networks lay at the heart of nineteenth-century imperial governance and having friends and acquaintances in the colonies could provide invaluable professional, social and emotional support.¹³⁸ Richard Bourke, Governor of New South Wales, went as far as to suggest that ‘to find a cousin is better than a mistress in every port’.¹³⁹ Lady Hester Macleod expressed similar sentiments in her epistles from Madras. ‘You can have no idea my dear Lady Temple of the delight it is to meet friends in this remote corner of the Earth, so far away from all that we know’, she wrote, explaining that meeting Colonel and Lady Elizabeth Murray had been ‘just like meeting with a Brother and Sister in England’.¹⁴⁰ As an aristocratic woman with many important naval, political

¹³² HL STG Box 4 (20), AEG to Percy Grace, 17th February 1827.

¹³³ HL STG Box 6 (9), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 23rd January 1814.

¹³⁴ HL STG Box 4 (10), AEG to Percy Grace, 15th March 1815.

¹³⁵ Elaine Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life c. 1754-1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 82.

¹³⁶ HL STG Box 4 (6), AEG to Percy Grace, 4th July 1811.

¹³⁷ HL STG Box 4 (6), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th April 1811.

¹³⁸ Zoe Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections, 1815-45: Patronage, the Information Revolution and Colonial Government* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 13.

¹³⁹ Governor Richard Bourke, 26 October 1834. Cited in Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁰ HL STG Box 8 (17), Hester Macleod to AEG, 21st February 1813.

and imperial connections Anna Eliza's assistance in providing introductions proved particularly useful. Percy Grace inquired whether she had any 'friends to recommend to [his] acquaintance' whilst he was stationed in Halifax, to which she promised to introduce him to Mr Dover of the *Grampus*, 'a particularly gentlemanlike and pleasant' man.¹⁴¹ When Richard Pigott arrived in Calcutta one of his first actions was to call upon Sir Edward Hyde East 'with your kind letter' and the two quickly became firm friends. 'I like him exceedingly', Pigott declared, revealing that during one soirée they had both 'drank to your health'.¹⁴² Anna Eliza did not need to be in the colonies herself to help build the networks that underpinned the imperial project.

Within these traditional channels of personal influence elite women could play a significant role as patrons and brokers.¹⁴³ Anna Eliza regularly engaged in such work, acting as an intermediary and helping to further the imperial careers of a range of friends, family and acquaintances. When the Macleods were struggling in Madras Lady Hester wrote to her explaining that they would face financial ruin unless her husband soon received a Command. 'Every thing will depend on our Friends in England making an exertion to get Col. Macleod recommended strongly', she exhorted, adding that 'if any friend of yours comes out' as either Governor or Commander-in-Chief, 'I depend upon your naming Col. Macleod to him'.¹⁴⁴ William Nevill Junior similarly requested whether his brother, resident in Sydney, might obtain 'through your Grace's kind influence' one of the positions of Landing Waiter — a customs officer — in either Port Jackson or Port Stephens, or indeed 'any appointment in New South Wales in the gift of the Government'.¹⁴⁵ Letters from prospective patrons and influential friends suggest that Anna Eliza was happy to oblige these requests. Lady Theodosia Caradoc, wife of General John Francis Caradoc, Commander-in-Chief at Madras, wrote to her friend informing her that although 'the Gouny man your Ladyship mentioned to me' had not yet arrived, 'you

¹⁴¹ HL STG Box 4 (8), AEG to Percy Grace, 28th January 1813. These letters of introduction could, of course, easily be disregarded.

¹⁴² HL STG Box 10 (6), Richard Pigott to AEG, 23rd July 1818; STG Box 10 (7) Richard Pigott to AEG, 5th October 1819.

¹⁴³ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 51. Although J. M. Bourne's assumes the practice of patronage to be a male prerogative, Elaine Chalus and Judith S. Lewis have both shown how elite women were expected to participate in the system of political patronage in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. J. M. Bourne, *Patronage and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 6; Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life*, particularly ch. 4; Lewis, *Sacred to Female Patriotism*, particularly ch. 3.

¹⁴⁴ HL STG Box 8 (17), Hester Macleod to AEG, 21st February 1813.

¹⁴⁵ HL STG Box 8 (22), William Junior Nevill to AEG, 1st March 1830.

may be assured of our shewing him any attention in our power'.¹⁴⁶ In a similar fashion, India-bound Sir George Nugent promised Anna Eliza he would 'For your sake ... do all in my Power to serve Sir Isaac Head's Son in Law, & consider him a friend of yours'.¹⁴⁷

Anna Eliza paid particularly close attention to the fortunes of Percy Grace. Her interest and assistance in furthering his career was part of what Leonore Davidoff has termed the 'lattice-work of interdependence' that characterised close kin relationships.¹⁴⁸ 'I hope you will now be promoted very soon', she wrote in July 1806, shortly after he had rejoined his ship *The Greyhound*. Almost thirty years later she was still advising the Captain on his career progression, insisting that 'if you think employment desirable you cannot have a better or pleasanter mode of obtaining the object than thro' the aid of an Old Friend'.¹⁴⁹ She used her connections with well-placed friends to help Grace in any way she could. When Captain Fremantle was made one of the Lords of the Admiralty in 1806 Anna Eliza immediately wrote to Grace to inform him of this appointment, 'which I trust will enable him to be of use to you'.¹⁵⁰ This was indeed a very useful connection. Anna Eliza personally thanked Fremantle for 'the kind interest you take in Percy's prosperity' and assured her cousin 'I ... am certain if you fail it will not be from the idleness of your friends'.¹⁵¹ Yet Anna Eliza's efforts to help her cousin were often reliant on the aid of her husband. 'You may depend upon his exerting himself to the utmost', she promised.¹⁵² After Percy Grace was appointed a Commander in 1822 she responded to his letter of thanks, insisting 'it is to Temple only that you are indebted for your Ship'.¹⁵³ What prompted this proclamation is difficult to discern. It is perfectly possible that, as a well-connected aristocratic MP, her husband had access to networks that Anna Eliza simply could not utilise. Yet it is also possible this downplaying of her own role was rooted in a desire to fit within socially-acceptable understandings of metropolitan femininity and of the appropriate roles of husband and wife. Women certainly

¹⁴⁶ HL STG Box 6 (9), Theodora Caradoc to AEG, 8th March 1805.

¹⁴⁷ HL STG Box 8 (29), Sir George Nugent to AEG, 14th June 1811.

¹⁴⁸ Davidoff, *Thicker Than Water*, p. 194.

¹⁴⁹ HL STG Box 4 (3), AEG to Percy Grace, 14th July 1806; HL STG Box 4 (25), AEG to Percy Grace, 22nd March 1832.

¹⁵⁰ HL STG Box 4 (3), AEG to Percy Grace, 18th December 1806.

¹⁵¹ CBS, D-FR/32/7/18, AEG to Admiral Sir T. F. Fremantle, [no date]; HL STG Box 4 (9), AEG to Percy Grace, 8th June 1814.

¹⁵² HL STG Box 4 (7), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th April 1812.

¹⁵³ HL STG Box 4 (16), AEG to Percy Grace, 21st January 1802.

undertook important patronage work, and Anna Eliza's trans-imperial writings were a crucial part of the empire-building process, but these were always underpinned by gendered — as well as classed and raced — opportunities, assumptions and expectations.

Bringing empire home

It was not only letters that crossed the oceans and linked metropole and colony. Gift-giving was an important way of uniting those separated by huge distances and gifts formed part of the practice of patronage, a material embodiment of ties of affection and obligation.¹⁵⁴ These gifts served both to shape metropolitan Britons' understanding of empire and imperial careerers' conceptions of family and home.¹⁵⁵ Percy Grace regularly sent his cousin gifts during his imperial ventures, whether wine from the Cape of Good Hope, 'Indian Ink' or a 'beautiful set of gilt glass', ornaments, and vases from the Levant.¹⁵⁶ Anna Eliza spoke of the 'magnificence' of the latter collection, promising she would 'most gladly place them in my collection of Valuables'.¹⁵⁷ Hester Macleod apologised for being unable to send any gifts from Bangalore. 'This is not the land for good presents', she insisted, suggesting that instead 'Bengal is the place for that'.¹⁵⁸ Anna Eliza was also happy to return the favour, sending fashionable European goods to the colonies. The lack of appropriate gifts in the Caribbean — rum and turtles were about the only commodities sent — meant that Maria Nugent never dispatched presents from Jamaica.¹⁵⁹ She did, however, thank the 'dear Lady Temple' for the 'lovely things' she had received from Britain, including dresses and a 'little Hat' that was 'much admired'. 'Such Things are indeed very rare here, for it is impossible to get the commonest article of dress without paying immensely dear for it & then it is always of the worst quality — dirty,

¹⁵⁴ Margot C. Finn, 'Colonial gifts: family politics and the exchange of goods in British India, c. 1780-1820', *Modern Asian Studies*, 40:1 (February, 2006), p. 204.

¹⁵⁵ Kate Smith, 'Empire and the country house in early nineteenth-century Britain: the Amhersts of Montreal Park, Kent', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, 16:3 (Winter, 2015), n. pag.

¹⁵⁶ HL STG Box 4 (4), AEG to Percy Grace, 12th September 1808; HL STG Box 4 (5), AEG to Percy Grace, 3rd November 1810; HL STG Box 4 (18), AEG to Percy Grace, 30th September 1825.

¹⁵⁷ HL STG Box 4 (18), AEG to Percy Grace, 30th September 1825.

¹⁵⁸ HL STG Box 8 (17), Hester Macleod to AEG, 21st February 1813.

¹⁵⁹ Diane Kirkby, Tanja Luckins and Barbara Santich, 'Introduction: of turtles, dining and the importance of history in food, food in history', in Diane Kirkby and Tanja Luckins (eds.), *Dining on Turtles: Food Feasts and Drinking in History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 3.

faded old things', Nugent complained, adding 'so you will easily conceive how valuable your Presents ... were to me'.¹⁶⁰ Such clothes were a visual display of Maria Nugent's elite status. Gifts from metropolitan kin enabled Nugent to dress herself in the attire of power.¹⁶¹

The relationship between Anna Eliza Grenville and Maria Nugent was interesting in another significant respect. Margot Finn has shown how women in East India Company families 'deployed female love, friendship and rituals to promote their families' accumulation of wealth, status and power', particularly through organising and maintaining reproductive strategies and patronage systems across domestic and imperial spaces. This 'labour of their love' was vital to the functioning of the eighteenth- — and early-nineteenth- — century British Empire.¹⁶² One of the most significant of these 'labours' for metropolitan women was taking care of the children of their trans-imperial kin.¹⁶³ This was a job Anna Eliza was more than happy to undertake for her 'truly loved & valued' friend.¹⁶⁴ She acted as godmother to Maria's 'darling children' and as their guardian during the Nugents' years in India, helping to raise, educate and socialise them appropriately.¹⁶⁵ The Nugent children maintained a strong attachment to their godmother. 'We are enjoying this delightful place in the company of the dear Duchess', Emily wrote to her sister during a visit to Avington with her own young children many years later. 'She is so kind and so feeling ... one cannot help loving her', she continued, nostalgically explaining that she had shown her son 'our old haunts'.¹⁶⁶ Sister Louisa expressed similar sentiments, telling Anna Eliza 'to you, my dearest Duchess, I owe a great part of the happiness I ... enjoyed in my childhood'.¹⁶⁷ Just like Finn's East India Company women Anna Eliza, Maria and the Nugent children can be located within a female world of love and empire that was

¹⁶⁰ HL STG Box 8 (37), Maria Nugent to AEG, 14th February 1802.

¹⁶¹ Rappaport, 'The Bombay debt', p. 243.

¹⁶² Margot Finn, 'The female world of love and empire: women, family & East India Company politics at the end of the eighteenth century', Unpublished lecture, Gender and History Annual Lecture, University of Glasgow, 13th May 2016.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* Between January 1811 and October 1813 George Nugent was Commander in Chief in India.

¹⁶⁴ CBS, D-FR/233/2, AEG to Louisa Fremantle, 27th October 1834.

¹⁶⁵ HL STG Box 4 (8), AEG to Percy Grace, 20th May 1813.

¹⁶⁶ CBS, D-FR/233/2, 'Emily' [presumably Maria Amelia Clayton née Nugent] to Louisa Fremantle, [no date].

¹⁶⁷ HL STG Box 7 (1), Louisa Fremantle to AEG, 11th April 1824.

a vital part of the functioning of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British Empire.¹⁶⁸

For someone who throughout her life possessed a significant economic interest in Jamaica it is interesting how little mention there is of the colony in Anna Eliza's correspondence and how faintly Jamaica figured in her imaginative construction of empire. In her diaries covering her time in Jamaica Maria Nugent wrote of her visit to Hope, explaining it 'is very interesting for me, as belonging to dearest Lady Temple'. She noted she 'examined every thing very particularly', recounting in detail the topography of the estate, its buildings, the annual sugar yields, and the overseer, a 'vulgar, ugly, Scotch Sultan'. She even described speaking 'to the black women, who told me all their histories'.¹⁶⁹ Yet her letters to Anna Eliza do not mention this visit. Instead, she recounted extravagant dinners and drunken dances.¹⁷⁰ Whilst a sense of unease provoked by the Haitian slave rebellions underpinned much of her correspondence — she admitted that 'the Blacks here ... will no doubt in Time attempt to follow their example' — there is no reference to her friend's personal investment in the island or the system of slavery. Indeed, Nugent even promised 'not tell you of any of our Jamaica ... Politicks', adding 'they will not interest you'.¹⁷¹ Neither did Anna Eliza discuss Hope, the West Indies or slavery with any other of her friends or family. An allusion to a porter working in one of her London dwellings, 'a black', perhaps hints at one of the ways slavery came back to the metropole but it is striking that, both before and after the Duke's Mediterranean sojourn in the late 1820s when she began to receive accounts from Hope, there was little discussion of Jamaica and no reflection on what it meant to be a slave-owner.¹⁷² Despite her strong beliefs about the mortgages on Hope, what should be done with the compensation money, and her emigrant project, it appears as if Anna Eliza largely conceived of her relationship with Jamaica and Hope in business and economic terms. Neither her plantation, nor the people enslaved upon it, figured significantly in the ways she imagined empire.

¹⁶⁸ Finn, 'The female world of love & empire'.

¹⁶⁹ Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica*, pp. 28-29.

¹⁷⁰ HL STG Box 8 (37), Maria Nugent to AEG, 14th February 1802.

¹⁷¹ HL STG Box 8 (39), Maria Nugent to AEG, 3rd August 1804; HL STG Box 8 (38), Maria Nugent to AEG, 8th October 1803.

¹⁷² HL STG Box 4 (1), AEG to Percy Grace, 30th June 1803.

The West Indies as a colonial space was thus noticeably absent from Anna Eliza's vision of empire. For her empire was not a site of slavery but of naval supremacy and military success, a space offering the possibilities of both personal and national triumph.¹⁷³ As Kathleen Wilson has argued, empire shaped the national imagination, and imperial prosperity was seen as reflective both of the strength and character of domestic political institutions and of the people who governed and populated them.¹⁷⁴ This perhaps explains why Anna Eliza had such an investment in Percy Grace's naval endeavours; she saw them as a broader manifestation of Britain's national and imperial success. In 1806 she implored him to write to her regularly and 'tell me what share you get in the Prizes lately taken by the *Greyhound*', and upon receiving news of his promotion to Acting-Lieutenant joyfully proclaimed 'Perhaps a few years hence we shall have a repetition of the scenes of Trafalgar & Lord Grace first on the list of Heroes!'¹⁷⁵ Indeed, the interconnectedness of personal, imperial and national character was made explicit in a note to Percy Grace during the War of 1812. 'I hope a peace with America will not take place both for your sake & the Country's', she wrote, 'as we have lost much and gained nothing, not even Glory'.¹⁷⁶ This indicates how closely the early nineteenth-century British Empire was associated with war, and with national success. What was the empire for, if not for glory?

There was also a darker side to this triumphalist rhetoric. Empire may have been a place that promised success, but it was also a site of disease and death. There were many references in Anna Eliza's correspondences to the dangers of the unseemly climate, as well as a variety of unpleasant, sometimes fatal, illnesses and contagions. Richard Pigott was one of the many British aristocrats to serve in India, which had by the early nineteenth century replaced Jamaica as the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire. He spoke of the 'prodigiously warm' Indian climate and the necessity of taking 'every precaution not to expose myself unnecessarily to the sun'. This was of vital importance. Pigott 'lament[ed] in telling' that many of his 'fine Soldiers [had] fallen sacrifice', perishing either from a 'vile' outbreak of cholera or

¹⁷³ Of course, you cannot really separate economic and business interests from military and naval ones, as the latter are so dependent on the former, but Anna Eliza never made this connection.

¹⁷⁴ Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-85* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 24.

¹⁷⁵ HL STG Box 4 (4), AEG to Percy Grace, 11th January 1808.

¹⁷⁶ HL STG Box 4 (8), AEG to Percy Grace, 20th May 1813.

from the heat of the sun.¹⁷⁷ Hester Macleod similarly complained about the impact of the Indian climate on her health. Writing from Madras, she explained that she 'liked this Climate a great deal better than Calcutta', where she had suffered two feverish attacks. Yet it was to Bangalore, with its reputation of being 'a very healthy station', that she yearned to go. 'It is called the England of India', she proclaimed, expressing her delight that 'it is so cold that for nine months of the year they put Blankets on their beds'.¹⁷⁸ Neither were these Anna Eliza's only correspondents to complain about ill health in India. Edward Hyde East explained that his son, though now well, had suffered from a particularly 'sharp' fever, and Theodosia Carradoc reported that her husband had had an 'attack of the liver' that had caused him a great deal of suffering.¹⁷⁹ These anxieties about health, climate and disease highlighted the dangers of the colonies, reinforcing a sense of otherness that positioned the metropole as inherently superior.

Representations of imperial subjects also served to create and reinforce 'anatomies of difference' that positioned the coloniser and the colonised as innately unlike.¹⁸⁰ Shortly after his arrival in Calcutta Edward Hyde East wrote a long letter to Anna Eliza describing all he had seen there. With an orientalist gaze he described the Indian nabobs, the practice of palanking and, in particularly great detail, the unusual dress, manners and customs of 'the Servants of this Country ... a striking object of attention'.¹⁸¹ For the women traversing the empire as wives of imperial careerers it was often local women, mostly presented disparagingly and unflatteringly, who were of particular interest. 'Such a sett as the Indian Ladies in general you never saw', Hester Macleod wrote from Bangalore. The women in her Cantonment were principally 'half Casts' she continued, 'disgusting' girls, desperately searching for husbands. She remarked on how much she would appreciate having '2 or 3 pleasant women' to pass the time with, for 'I do not wish to make an intimacy with women in this country that I should be ashamed to acknowledge at home'.¹⁸² Similar sentiments were expressed by Lady Stanhope during her time in the Mediterranean.

¹⁷⁷ HL STG Box 10 (6), Richard Pigott to AEG, 23rd July 1818.

¹⁷⁸ HL STG Box 8 (17), Hester Macleod to AEG, 21st February 1813.

¹⁷⁹ HL STG Box 6 (16), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 23rd January 1814; HL STG Box 6 (9), 8th March 1805.

¹⁸⁰ Catherine Hall, 'Introduction: thinking the postcolonial, thinking the empire', in Catherine Hall (ed.), *Cultures of Empire: Colonisers in Britain and the Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 20.

¹⁸¹ HL STG Box 6 (16), Edward Hyde East to AEG, 23rd January 1814.

¹⁸² HL STG Box 8 (17), Hester Macleod to AEG, 24th July 1813.

The women she had seen in Gibraltar were ‘very ugly’ and those in Sicily, where Britain had an important military garrison, were described as ‘in short the dirtiest wretches I ever met with’.¹⁸³ Of course, such representations were far from unique. Many scholars have demonstrated how colonial writings, including personal correspondence, worked to produce and fortify notions of cultural superiority and what Partha Chatterjee has termed ‘the rule of colonial difference’.¹⁸⁴ But they help to show how imperial sentiments were brought back home, shaping an imaginative construction of empire for those who never left metropolitan shores.

Conclusion

In many ways it is surprising to see just how faintly Anna Eliza’s Jamaican slave-ownership figured in her daily life, seemingly having little impact on either her political endeavours or her vision of the British Empire. British absentee slave-owners were a diverse group, and whilst the likes of William Beckford and Sir Christopher Bethell-Codrington were well-known as ‘West Indians’, their position as slave-owners continuing to enmesh their metropolitan identities, there were many more absentees who enjoyed a diverse range of interests and for whom slave-ownership was just one facet of a much broader identity. It is only by situating Anna Eliza’s slave-ownership within these broader social, political and imperial worlds — themselves aspects of her life that should not be seen as completely distinct or separate but as intimately interconnected — that it can be properly understood. It is possible that the absence of any discussion of Hope or of slavery in the majority of Anna Eliza’s correspondence was part of the process of distantiation, a way of disassociating herself from the violent horrors of the slave system with which she was embroiled.¹⁸⁵ Yet while questions remain about why Anna Eliza’s slave-ownership figured so faintly in her correspondence, that there were few direct references to Hope, Jamaica, slavery or abolition does not mean that slave-ownership was unimportant to Anna Eliza’s sense of self. Hope plantation was part of an inheritance that allowed her to firmly situate herself within aristocratic society, whether as an apparently paternalistic

¹⁸³ Robert Holland, *Blue-Water Empire: The British in the Mediterranean since 1800* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), pp. 20-21; HL STG Box 10 (12), Catherine Stanhope to AEG, 12th April 1812 and 1st June 1812.

¹⁸⁴ Rappaport, ‘The Bombay Debt’, p. 242; Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Post-colonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 10.

¹⁸⁵ Hall et. al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 17.

landlady, an effective local politician or an important epistolary conduit. Looking at the example of the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos highlights the complicated ways that slave-owning could be integrated into the metropolitan lives of British women.

Nineteenth-century ideas about gender were fundamentally rooted in the assumption that there was a 'natural' and fixed difference between the sexes, with conduct books increasingly presenting women as physically, biologically and intellectually distinct from and often implicitly — and sometimes explicitly — inferior to their male counterparts.¹⁸⁶ The social, cultural and legal restraints even elite women faced were considerable and should not be downplayed. But gendered identities, although always bounded, were never fixed, enmeshed with ideas about class, race, property and family. Gender could function, Kathryn Gleadle has suggested, in a 'chameleon-like' capacity — being ... differently evoked in different contexts', providing elite women with the potential to wield significant power, although always in circumscribed ways.¹⁸⁷ The behaviour of aristocratic women like Anna Eliza Grenville could thus variously, and even simultaneously, reinforce, exploit and even occasionally challenge the gendered assumptions and expectations of both their families and wider British society. Anna Eliza should certainly not be seen as representative of the average nineteenth-century woman, just as she should not be seen as representative of absentee slave-owners as a whole. But what examining in depth the thoughts, actions and behaviour of one particular woman does allow is an exploration of the tensions and fissures that characterised the daily lives of elite women (and indeed men).¹⁸⁸ Aristocratic women certainly played an important role in the making of nineteenth-century Britain, whether in the social, political or imperial realms, but this was always delimited, shot through with ambiguity and contradiction.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), pp. 15-43.

¹⁸⁷ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, p. 265.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

¹⁸⁹ Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, p. 52.

Chapter Four. Women, property and slave-ownership in the compensation records

'It is quite inconsistent with the character of the noble Englishman to reduce aged widows to beggary by forcibly taking their property from them'.¹ So wrote 70-year-old widow Dorothy Little in a petition to Lord Stanley, Colonial Secretary in September 1833. Little, who lived in Clifton, near Bristol, was the owner of thirteen enslaved people in the Jamaican parish of St James and she successfully claimed £297 1s 6d for the loss of her property.² Yet as a slave-owner who did not possess any land she believed she was in a particularly jeopardous position. 'There is a wide difference between the situations of those who ... are Owners of Slaves only and those who are owners of Estates and also of the Slaves', she noted. Whereas the latter would remain in possession of their plantations, the former, who generated income by hiring out enslaved people, would lose all of their property.³ 'Your Petitioner ... believes that there are many in her situation, but they are principally Widows and Orphans and she is sorry to perceive that the large Proprietors have not had the generosity to put forward their peculiar situation', she added.⁴ She believed the proper role of the 'noble Englishman' was to provide for any dependents who were reliant on him for financial support. Little deliberately and persistently used her position as an elderly widow to present herself, both to Lord Stanley and the Commissioners of Slave Compensation, as vulnerable and in need of protection.

Dorothy Little was not particularly unusual in presenting herself in such a manner. Pro-slavery campaigners emphasised the distressing impact abolition would have on the 'dependent widows and orphans, deriving their subsistence from the colonies, but residing in every county and almost every parish throughout England'.⁵ Even abolitionists were willing to admit that there were 'many widows and orphans who are the unconscious stipendiaries of this wicked system', keen to stress that 'emancipation does not involve the confiscation of the estates from which these widows and orphans derive their subsistence'.⁶ This chapter will explore the

¹ The National Archives (hereafter TNA), T71/1608, petition, 27th September 1833.

² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/24020> (accessed 12/05/16).

³ TNA, T71/1608, letter from Dorothy Little, 27th September 1833.

⁴ TNA, T71/1608, petition, 27th September 1833.

⁵ George Saintsbury, *East India Slavery*, 2nd ed. (London, 1829), pp. 4-5.

⁶ Anon., *Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery; Chiefly Addressed to the More Influential Classes* (London, 1826), pp. 214-215.

relationships that some of these female absentees, who included wives and never-married women as well as widows, had with their West Indian estates and enslaved property. While few of the women discussed in this chapter could be considered ‘unconscious stipendiaries’ this expression is particularly interesting because of the way it helps us broaden the way we think about ‘ownership’. While many of the female absentees were indeed owners in the strictest sense, others were annuitants, legatees and trust beneficiaries, occasionally executrixes and trustees. The compensation records show that female slave-ownership was widespread and this chapter will examine the ways that women helped to transmit slave-based wealth and West Indian property, which before 1834 included property in people, into metropolitan society. Yet they also indicate the many, and complicated, ways that this ‘ownership’ was mediated.

Women’s presence in the Legacies of British Slave-ownership database

The database created by the LBS project contains the details of the 47,341 men and women who were either claimants or beneficiaries of slave compensation in the 1830s.⁷ Not all of these people were slave-owners, or even direct beneficiaries of slave-ownership. Many were trustees, executors or administrators, claiming compensation on behalf of others.⁸ Nevertheless, this digitised reproduction of the records of the Slave Compensation Commission provides the nearest possible approximation of the universe of people closely and directly involved in the business of slave-ownership at the point of abolition. It serves therefore as the perfect jumping off point from which further analysis can be undertaken.

Table 1 breaks down the claimants and beneficiaries of slave compensation by gender. It demonstrates that 41% of the 37,183 claimants were women, one of the most remarkable statistics to emerge from the LBS team’s research.⁹ This figure

⁷ The LBS database is being constantly updated, which means this, and all subsequent figures cited, will change. All figures and statistics used are accurate as of 1/4/2017.

⁸ Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 255.

⁹ It is important to note that this is the universe of claimants whose gender is known. There are 10,158 claimants and beneficiaries in the database whose gender is not known, the large majority of whom (9780) were associated with claims in Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope. In the majority of the remaining cases it has been impossible to discern whether someone is male or female because an initial was listed rather than a forename.

seems to support the work of those including Alistair Owens, Hannah Barker and Nicola Phillips, who have emphasised the significance of female economic activity in the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries.¹⁰ It also, crucially, hints at the key roles that women played as part of the familial networks that worked to uphold the slave economies of the Atlantic world, as well as the sexual economy that underpinned the plantation system.

	Men	Women	Total	Men as percentage of total	Women as percentage of total
All claimants and beneficiaries					
Absentees	2,625	819	3,444	76%	24%
All (absentees and residents)	22,030	15,153	37,183	59%	41%
All claimants and beneficiaries with over 100 enslaved					
Absentees	1,711	393	2,104	81%	19%
All (absentees and residents)	2,406	534	2,940	82%	18%

Table 1 Breakdown of claimants and beneficiaries by gender

Table 1 confirms that women were less likely to be absentees and less likely to be the owners of significant numbers of enslaved people than their male counterparts, with women constituting just 24% of absentees and 18% of those who claimed compensation for more than one hundred enslaved people. These statistics support the research of those including Hilary Beckles, Christer Petley and Christine Walker, who have shown that women were generally not the absentee owners of large plantations, but smaller-scale, resident, urban slave-owners.¹¹ Yet this comparatively

¹⁰ Alistair Owens, 'A hidden investment? women and business in England, c. 1750-1900', English language version of 'Una inversió oculta? Dones i empresa a Anglaterra, 1750-1900', *Recerques: Història, economia y cultura*, 56 (2007), pp. 61-89, available at <http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/docs/staff/4389.pdf> (accessed 24/11/16); Hannah Barker, *The Business of Women: Female Enterprise and Urban Development in Northern England, 1760-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Nicola Phillips, *Women in Business, 1700-1850* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006).

¹¹ Hilary McD Beckles, *Centring Woman: Gender Discourses in Caribbean Slave Society* (Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 1999), pp. 63-65; Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica:*

small proportion of female absentees also partially reflects the fact that absentee slave-owners were more likely than their Caribbean counterparts not to be claiming compensation themselves but to have others acting as trustees and executors of this property. In the large majority of cases (92%) these trustees and executors were male.¹²

It is important to remember that the Caribbean was not one giant homogenous entity. Slave-owners claimed compensation for enslaved people from nineteen different colonies in the British West Indies, from Jamaica to Grenada, Bermuda to Trinidad. These colonies had different histories, demographics and experiences. Table 2 compares the numbers of male and female claimants and beneficiaries in Jamaica and Barbados, the islands at the centre of my thesis and two of the largest and longest established sugar colonies, along with British Guiana, a colony that had a very different experience of British colonisation.

It is noticeable that Jamaica and Barbados had similar proportions of female slave-owners, at 47% and 43% respectively. They also, somewhat surprisingly, had very similar proportions of female absentees, despite being islands with very different traditions of absenteeism. Barbados, as the Caribbean island with the longest uninterrupted experience of British colonisation, had a relatively well-established settler community and in the 1830s just 7% of people who claimed compensation for enslaved Barbadians were absentees. Jamaica, on the other hand, had much higher rates of absenteeism. By the end of the eighteenth century at least 23% of Jamaican land was owned by those not permanently resident on the island.¹³ Yet in both Jamaica and Barbados women constituted around 25% of absentees. It is clear that absenteeism was not an exclusively male phenomenon.

Colonial Society and Culture during the era of Abolition (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), p. 20; Christine Walker, 'Pursuing her profits: women in Jamaica, Atlantic slavery and a globalising Market, 1700-60', *Gender and History*, 26:3 (November, 2014).

¹² Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 37.

¹³ Trevor Burnard, 'Passengers only: the extent and significance of absenteeism in eighteenth-century Jamaica', *Atlantic Studies*, 1:2 (2004), p. 184.

	Men	Women	Total	Men as percentage of total	Women as percentage of total
Jamaica					
Absentees	1,189	402	1591	75%	25%
All claimants and beneficiaries	6,251	5,553	11,804	53%	47%
Barbados					
Absentees	256	85	341	75%	25%
All claimants and beneficiaries	2,805	2,145	4,950	57%	43%
British Guiana					
Absentees	359	75	434	83%	17%
All claimants and beneficiaries	1,651	967	2,618	63%	37%

Table 2. Breakdown of claimants and beneficiaries by gender and colony

Only formally becoming a British colony in 1814, British Guiana was one of only two British West Indian colonies whose sugar output was continuing to grow in the decades preceding abolition.¹⁴ Mercantile men were able to generate huge sums of money in a relatively short period of time; of the 25 absentee merchants awarded the highest levels of compensation, more than half engaged primarily with British Guiana.¹⁵ The significance of these masculine mercantile networks might mean we would expect to see fewer female claimants. Certainly, the proportion of female claimants and beneficiaries in British Guiana was smaller than in Jamaica and Barbados, with women constituting 17% of absentees and 37% of all claimants and beneficiaries. Yet even these figures reflect a considerable level of female economic activity. Cassandra Pybus has shown how women like Doll Thomas, a formerly enslaved free woman of colour, could through participating in the wider 'service

¹⁴ Nicholas Draper, 'The rise of a new planter class? Some countercurrents from British Guiana and Trinidad, 1807-33', *Atlantic Studies*, 9:1 (2012), p. 68.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 71-72.

economy' become wealthy land and slave-owners.¹⁶ Even in colonies like British Guiana, with a recent history of heavy investment by male merchants, women were ever-present in the slave economy.

Absentee plantation-owners in Jamaica and Barbados

The rest of this chapter will focus on female absentees who owned enslaved people in Jamaica and Barbados and those who were involved in claims for over one hundred people. I have chosen this number as a marker for several reasons. Firstly, and most obviously, on a practical level it provides me with a manageable number of female claimants of whom I can undertake greater and more in-depth analysis. Secondly, the most substantial claimants are those most likely to have left wills and other sources that enable further investigation of their slave-ownership. Finally, as the example of Anna Eliza Grenville indicates, it is important to recognise that female slave-owners were not only 'Widows and Orphans' like Dorothy Little who only owned a relatively small number of enslaved people and no land. The records of the Slave Compensation Commission demonstrate that female absentees owned large plantations and considerable numbers of enslaved people. These women, just like their male counterparts, contributed in various and significant ways to the development of nineteenth-century Britain.

There were 164 female absentees involved in claims for over one hundred enslaved people, 133 in Jamaica and 31 in Barbados. This approximately reflects the different levels of absenteeism in the two colonies — the number of absentees in Jamaica was around 4.5 times larger than in Barbados. It is important, however, to delve beyond these general figures and examine in more detail the relationship these women had with their Caribbean property, in people and in land. This involves exploring further the complex understandings of 'ownership'. As already explained, not all the compensation claimants were actually slave-owners.¹⁷ In order to explore the relationship that these 164 women had with their enslaved property, and the ways that this was often mediated, I have attempted to group them according to the

¹⁶ Cassandra Pybus, 'Tense and tender ties: reflections on lives recovered from the intimate frontier of empire and slavery', *Life Writing*, 8:1 (March, 2011), p. 7; Kit Candling and Cassandra Pybus, *Enterprising Women: Gender, Race and Power in the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015), p. 114.

¹⁷ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 255.

specific capacity in which they claimed or were awarded compensation. By looking more closely at the individual claims I have classified these women in the following ways: as owners, as annuitants or legatees, as trust beneficiaries and as trustees or/and executrixes (there are also a small number who do not fit into these categories I have designated 'other'). These categories are certainly not fixed or precise. In some cases a lack of material or information has made it very difficult to tell how women should be classified and in others they appear to have belonged in multiple categories. Many of the executrixes, for example, also received an annuity from the will they were helping to administer. For the sake of simplicity I have tried not to classify these women twice, but rather have chosen the category that reflects most closely the manner in which they claimed compensation. In order to analyse the entangled relationships these women had with their property I have had to make use of categorisations that do not always fully reflect the complexity of such dealings.

Not all of these women were awarded the total compensation for their claim. A small proportion (30) were unsuccessful claimants or had died by the time compensation was paid. A much more significant number (116) were co-claimants, claiming compensation with others. These were sometimes creditors, mortgagees, trustees or executors. Often, however, they were other family members: brothers, sisters, husbands, nieces, and nephews. Dorothy Boehm, for example, claimed compensation with her nephew for 126 enslaved people on an estate in Barbados. The award of £1,803 8s 2d was split equally between the two, each receiving £901 14s 1d.¹⁸ In many of these cases it is not possible to discern exactly how the compensation money was split. Yet the frequency with which women claimed compensation with other family members demonstrates just how significant familial networks were to the functioning of the slave economy, as well as the extent to which women played a key role as both acquirers and transmitters of familial property and wealth.

The size of the compensation claims in this sample varies hugely. Anna Maria Briscoe, Emma Doherty and Mary Eliza Doherty were a beneficiary (Briscoe) and co-awardees (the Dohertys) of a claim for £901 14s 1d for 136 enslaved people on Lower Berney's Plantation in Barbados (the two Dohertys were awarded two-thirds of

¹⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/4795> (accessed 11/04/16).

the compensation and the trustee for Briscoe's marriage settlement one-ninth). At the other end of the scale Dame Catherine Haughton Clarke was, with her son, awarded £27,515 for 1,481 enslaved people on six Jamaican estates, as executrix of her late husband.¹⁹ Co-claimants, of course, received varying proportions and amounts of compensation. Others were unsuccessful in their claims, or did not themselves economically benefit from the money awarded. Davidoff and Hall have suggested that a family needed to earn between £200 and £300 per annum to be considered a member of the middle classes.²⁰ The majority of claimants in this sample were such women; they were not all wealthy West Indian heiresses like Anna Eliza Grenville.

Of these 164 women, 68 appear in the compensation records as owners, 28 as annuitants and legatees, 25 as trustees or executrices and 23 as trust beneficiaries. There are also 20 women who do not fit into any of these categories and are classified as 'other'. Five of these women had died before the compensation process began, and a further two applied to the Commissioners too late to make a claim. The remaining 13 women claimed compensation in various different capacities, as mortgagees, assignees, receivers, guardians, judgement creditors, administrators and remaindermen.²¹ These 164 claimants were thus twice as likely to be claiming compensation as owners of enslaved property than as annuitants, legatees, trust beneficiaries or trustees and executrices. But they were also more likely to fall into one of these latter categories than to be claiming as owners.

It is clear that marital status had a significant impact on women's ability to own enslaved property and claim compensation. Unsurprisingly, those who were unmarried or widowed greatly outnumbered married women. Of these 164 claimants 120 did not have a living husband; there were 77 widows and 43 women who were unmarried, including 4 minors. The common law principle of coverture, of course, meant that without a marriage settlement a married woman could not own her own property. Yet, interestingly, there are still many married women who appear within the compensation records; 43 of these claimants were married.²² Sometimes this is

¹⁹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/2732>; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/42273> (accessed 12/04/16).

²⁰ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), p. 23.

²¹ The LBS book contains a glossary defining all these terms. Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, pp. 281-283.

²² There was also one woman, Frances. F. Jones, whose marital status is unknown.

because they were the beneficiaries of marriage settlements, but certainly not always. In the majority of instances the husbands of these women appear as co-claimants, but again this was not always the case. How this affects the way we think about married women's property-ownership is something that I will explore in more detail later in this chapter.

Women and wills

In order to trace *how* these women became compensation claimants, and what they did with any West Indian property they had or compensation they might have received, further sampling has been necessary. The overwhelming majority of female absentees in the compensation records inherited their enslaved property. Examining closely these women's wills allows an exploration of the complicated ways in which women received, controlled and transmitted enslaved, real and personal property. In the majority of cases I have relied on wills registered in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, although this been supplemented in a few cases by the examination of wills held in family papers. I have not, unfortunately, been able to access any wills proved in Jamaica or Barbados. Whilst this is unlikely to be a problem for the female absentees, whose wills were mostly proved in the UK, it is likely that in some cases I have been unable to find the wills of their predecessors. A lack of accurate indexing means that it is difficult to know how large this number might be. When women died after 1858, when wills stopped being proved by Church courts, I have gleaned as much information as possible from the probate records, which show evidence of wills having been left, if not the wills themselves.

This is, of course, not a representative sample and perhaps means that the focus is placed on those who possessed the most agency, having the power to bequeath their property. Suzanne Lebsack has suggested that in nineteenth-century Virginia propertied women were actually more likely to leave wills than their male counterparts.²³ There are several reasons, however, why women may not have done so. It is perfectly possible that by the time of their deaths some of these women no longer possessed any property, whether real or personal, in the West Indies or in Britain. Equally, they may not have had the power to bequeath property they did

²³ Suzanne Lebsack, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860*. (New York: Norton, 1984), p. 133.

ostensibly own, such as that in which they only possessed a life interest. Wills were also often written within just a few months of a testator's death, during, for example, a period of illness.²⁴ A sudden death might therefore mean someone who would otherwise have written a will died intestate. Perhaps even more significantly, married women could not leave wills without their husbands' permission. Privileging those who left wills thus also skews this sample in favour of widows, who were particularly likely to leave wills, and those who never married.²⁵ This, unfortunately, is unavoidable.

Owners

Those who claimed compensation as owners of their enslaved property were ostensibly those with the most power and authority over it. These women appear to have inherited their enslaved property, and the plantations upon which these people laboured, from a variety of sources. Usually, however, it came from male family members, whether brothers, uncles or, less frequently, fathers. Mary Ann Peterkin inherited Jamaica's Chatham plantation, and the 144 people enslaved upon it, from her brother, as did Catherine Wordie, the owner of the Schwalenburgh estate.²⁶ But not all these slave-owners inherited their property from male relatives. Wilhelmina Barbara Trail received Salters plantation in Barbados from her adopted mother Mary Salter Dehany. Dehany, after providing some small legacies for male relatives, bequeathed all her real and personal property, in Britain and the West Indies, to her daughter 'her heirs & assigns for ever & entirely at her disposal'.²⁷

In some instances this inheritance appears to have been a consequence of the absence or death of male descendants. Yorkshire slave-owner Anne Sill inherited both the Providence estate in Jamaica and land in Dent, Yorkshire, previously owned by her uncle, after the death of her father and three brothers.²⁸ Eleanora Atherton inherited her enslaved property in a similar way. Her uncle William Atherton had

²⁴ R. J. Morris, *Men, Women and Property in England, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 91.

²⁵ Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 207.

²⁶ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/19203> (accessed 13/04/16); PCC PROB 11/1879/247, Will of Catherine Wordie.

²⁷ PCC PROB 11/1801/80, Will of Mary Salter Dehany.

²⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1287751141> (accessed 12/04/16).

bequeathed the residue of both his Jamaican and British estates to his brothers, Richard and Henry Atherton, as tenants in common.²⁹ A lack of male successors meant that, as one of two surviving daughters of Henry Atheron, Eleanora was awarded £3,409 16s 7d as her proportion of the total £16, 639 5s 17d awarded for 726 enslaved people on the Spring Vale Pen and Green Park estates.³⁰ On the other hand, the existence of male relatives did not necessarily preclude women from appearing as compensation claimants. Jamaican slave-owner David Bernard left his wife Judith 'Twenty house negroes' and a life interest in a pen named Bona Vista, as well as an annuity of £500. He then bequeathed his eldest son a legacy of £1,000. The residue of his estate, however, was given 'to all my children including the one now expected to be born in this year, share and share alike'.³¹ The compensation for David Bernard's portion of the Eden Estate was thus split between both his wife and his three surviving children, both male and female.³² The majority of female claimants who owned *part* of an estate absolutely claimed compensation with one or more of a small group of siblings or family members, both male and female, mostly on equal terms.

A significant proportion of those who were absolute owners of their enslaved property had spent some time in the Caribbean themselves. Mary Lovell was one such absentee. Indeed, Lovell was still resident in the Caribbean at the time of emancipation and shared with her sister the £3,460 10s 6d awarded for 166 enslaved people on the Chancery Lane estate.³³ Yet by the time she wrote her will in May 1840 she had travelled across the Atlantic and was living in Britain.³⁴ Several other absentee claimants had come to the UK from the Caribbean. The aforementioned Judith Bernards settled in Cheltenham but both mother and daughter had been born in Jamaica.³⁵ Dorothy Boehm, who inherited a share of her family's Barbados plantation, lived in exclusive addresses in Marylebone's Manchester Square and at Hampton Court Palace, her will directing that she be buried with her

²⁹ PCC PROB 11/1403/224, Will of William Atherton.

³⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/43274> (accessed 12/04/16) The same amount was awarded to the trustees of her sister's marriage settlement. London merchant William Harrison received the remainder.

³¹ PCC PROB 11/1426/244, Will of David Bernard.

³² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/22789> (accessed 12/04/16).

³³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/4435> (accessed 12/04/16).

³⁴ PCC PROB 11/1984/162, Will of Mary Lovell.

³⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/46391>; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/16119> (accessed 12/04/16).

husband in the Isle of Wight.³⁶ Yet the census of 1841 indicates that she was born in 'F[oreign] parts', in all likelihood Barbados. Her husband had been a West India merchant, so it seems likely that, as with many of the Caribbean born absentees, it was her marriage that brought her to the UK.³⁷

Perhaps the most interesting fact about the women who claimed compensation as owners of enslaved people is that many of them did not actually own this property absolutely. Many of the widows who claimed compensation as slave-owners only possessed life interests in their estates, which had been put in trust by their deceased husbands. This meant that although they could enjoy the profits of such plantations, they did not have the power to sell or bequeath them. The husband of Sarah Gray directed in his will that 'the proceeds of my West India Estates' were to be used for his wife's maintenance and support during her life but after her death were to pass to his nephews James Gray and William Low. Sarah only inherited personal goods, including 'household furniture, plate, clothes, bed and table linen, liquors, carriage and horses' absolutely.³⁸ Similarly, although Susanna Harriott Gordon was to receive all 'rents, issues, profits and produce' of her husband's plantations during her life, they were ultimately settled on Sir Orford Gordon Baronet, with remainder 'to the use of his first and other Son and Sons successively in tail male'.³⁹ Yet what is interesting about both Gray and Gordon – and several others – is that they both claimed, and were awarded, compensation as owners. Both of these women were the sole awardees for these claims. Gray received £5,235 6s 1d for 304 enslaved people on Hanover's Friendship plantation and Gordon a colossal £15,946 11s 8d for 798 enslaved people on three estates in St Mary and St Ann.⁴⁰

These trusts could impose additional restrictions. In a trust established in his will Spencer Thomas Vassall left his wife, Catherine Chetham Strode, 'the surplus interest or yearly produce' of both his British and Jamaican property during her life, as well as a legacy of £800. But there was one important condition. This was only 'provided she shall remain unmarried and support maintain and educate such

³⁶ PCC PROB 11/1957/153, Will of Dorothy Boehm.

³⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/4871> (accessed 12/04/16).

³⁸ PCC PROB 11/1459/207, Will of Patrick Gray.

³⁹ PCC PROB 11/1721/114, Will of Robert Home Gordon.

⁴⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/13189> (accessed 13/04/16).
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19742> (accessed 13/04/16).

children as I may have at my decease'. Should she remarry then Vassall stipulated that 'only one half or moiety of the said yearly income interest or produce of my said property shall be paid to my said wife during her life', with the other half being put towards the maintenance of his children.⁴¹ Strode did indeed remarry, explaining why she appears alongside her son Spencer Lambert Hunter Vassall in the compensation records.⁴² Not all husbands imposed such restrictions but this does hint at the extent to which control over women's assets was an important part of the function of the trust.⁴³

Nor was it only widows who inherited property held in trust. Ann Launce Hill received the Hermitage plantation in Jamaica from her mother, Ann Newell. Like Sarah Gray and Susanna Harriott Gordon she claimed compensation as owner-in-fee, and was awarded £3,518 4s 1d for 194 enslaved men, women and children, despite only possessing a life interest in the plantation.⁴⁴ Hermitage (also known as Red Hassall), and 'the Slaves thereon or belonging thereto', was only devised to Hill for 'the term of her natural life'. She was permitted to take all the rents and proceeds of the plantation but prevented from breaking the entail, which directed that the plantation be passed firstly to Hill's husband, Reverend Hugh Hill, during his life, and then to the use of any legitimate child or children of Ann Launce Hill, to be equally divided as tenants in common.⁴⁵ Hill's own will, however, referred to a Joseph Brough as 'my Attorney residing on my estate called the Hermitage Estate'.⁴⁶ Not having absolute ownership of the plantation did not prevent Hill from conceiving of herself as owner the property.

Not all the trusts were as restrictive as these. Frances Lee inherited the Wheelerfield plantation, and those enslaved upon it, from her close friend Mary Powell Royall. Although she received the estate in trust, and there were several legacies and annuities charged upon it, it was conveyed to Lee 'her Heirs Executors Admons and Assigns ... for ever'.⁴⁷ This meant that Lee did not only possess a life interest in the

⁴¹ PCC PROB 11/1465/21, Will of Spencer Thomas Vassall.

⁴² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/23805> (accessed 13/04/16). The other claimants, Elizabeth and John Munro, were the sister and brother-in-law of Spencer Thomas Vassall. PCC PROB 11/1725/140, Will of John Vassall.

⁴³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 210.

⁴⁴ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/21624> (accessed 13/04/16).

⁴⁵ PCC PROB 11/1551/248, Will of Ann Newell.

⁴⁶ PCC PROB 11/2082/45, Will of Ann Launce Hill.

⁴⁷ PCC PROB 11/1587/279, Will of Mary Powell Royall.

estate but the power to bequeath it as she wished. This was, however, the only one of these 'hidden trusts' where the claimant was not just a life tenant but also had the capacity to control, settle and convey their property.

These 'hidden' trusts were evident amongst those who claimed compensation in groups as well as those who were sole claimants. Sisters Isabella Pallmer and Louisa Massy-Dawson were two of a large group of relations who claimed compensation as co-owners of two estates in the Jamaican parish of St Mary. Their claim stemmed from a trust created in the will of their maternal grandfather, Francis Dennis. Dennis had attempted to establish an entail along the male line of descent. His Jamaican 'Messuages Plantations or Sugar works Penns Lands Tenements Slaves and Hereditaments' had been devised 'to the use of the first Son of my body lawfully begotten and the heirs of the body of such first Son lawfully issuing' and in default of such issue 'then unto and to the use of the second third fourth and all and every the Son and Sons lawfully begotten severally successively and in remainder one after the other as they shall be in seniority of age and priority of birth'. It was only if Dennis did not have any sons that the estates would descend to his two daughters 'equally share and share alike' as tenants in common. As Chris Jeppesen has shown, many West Indian plantation-owners adopted primogenital practices common in the metropole in order to safeguard their family property and ensure that it fulfilled its economic capacity. Yet whilst many 'went to great lengths to ensure that their daughters did not inherit land', nature dictated this was sometimes unavoidable.⁴⁸ Maria Francis and Eliza Jane Dennis inherited their father's property because they had no brothers. The former, who in 1808 married Charles Nicholas Pallmer, was awarded half of the £4,922 5s 6d compensation for those enslaved on the Pembroke Hall Estate. The remaining portions were split between the six children of the late Eliza Jane.⁴⁹

Those claiming compensation as owners were ostensibly those whose relationship with their property was least mediated. Several of these women did own their Caribbean estates outright. Ann Sill, Mary Gilpin and Catherine Wordie all inherited their plantations, and the people enslaved upon them, absolutely, from a variety of

⁴⁸ Chris Jeppesen, 'Will making among West Indian families', (Unpublished paper, 2015), p. 20.

⁴⁹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/16227> (accessed 15/02/17).

sources, and each of these three women subsequently passed on this property in their own wills. However, many of those who claimed compensation as owners only actually possessed a life interest in their enslaved property. This only reinforces the significance of the trust to women's experience of slave-ownership in the early nineteenth century. What is particularly interesting about these claims, however, is that it is not the trustees who claimed compensation but the trust beneficiaries themselves. In many instances they appear to have seen themselves as owners of the property and took an active role in claiming compensation. This has interesting implications for the way we think about the role and function of the trust.

Trust beneficiaries

A clear distinction should be made between the women who successfully claimed compensation for property they 'owned', and the trust beneficiaries who received compensation indirectly, through the figure of the trustee. These women played a much less active role in the compensation process and appear in the LBS database only as beneficiaries. The LBS team has identified the beneficiaries of compensation when they have been named in the underlying compensation records. This, however, only occurred on a piecemeal basis, and it has been impossible to identify all the beneficiaries of slave compensation, something that only a close analysis of wills and marriage settlements would allow.⁵⁰ These trusts were established in a wide variety of ways, in wills and in marriage settlements and even by the Commissioners themselves. The majority of trusts examined here were those created in wills and were established by a variety of people, including husbands, fathers and grandfathers, but also other family members, including nieces and cousins. There is little doubt, however, that 'owning' property in trust was a particularly heavily mediated form of property-ownership.

Several of the trusts underpinning compensation claims were fundamentally primogenital, aiming to establish an entail that privileged the male line of descent. Chris Jeppesen has demonstrated how common this practice was among Jamaican landholders, a way of protecting both their West Indian and British estates from dissolution.⁵¹ Matthew Henry Scott, George Scott and Richard Lee were awarded

⁵⁰ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 260.

⁵¹ Chris Jeppesen, 'Will making among West Indian families', p. 20.

£2,501 16s 11d for 323 enslaved people on two Jamaican plantations, as trustees appointed in the will of John Scott.⁵² John Scott's widow, Elizabeth Favell Scott was a beneficiary of this trust, which provided her with an annuity of £800 secured on these estates, as well as payment for the education and maintenance of their children. Yet John Scott's will also ordered that 'all my Jamaican property, land, slaves and all else there' be placed in trust for the use of his eldest son, John James Scott and his legitimate male heirs.⁵³ Scott may have undertaken measures to ensure his wife and younger children were provided for, but there was no doubting his privileging of the eldest son.

However, not all of these trusts attempted to establish a system of primogeniture. As Christer Petley has argued, it is useful to 'think of primogeniture as a dominant custom or practice rather than as the hard and fast rule of property division'.⁵⁴ Instead, many slave-owners employed some form of partible inheritance, a practice increasingly used by the emerging middle classes who desired more flexibility in their inheritance strategies.⁵⁵ Mary Chandler was one of three sisters who inherited equal portions of Clarendon's Seven Plantations estate. Her father Rev. Dr. George Chandler left all his property, in both England and Jamaica, to his three daughters as tenants in common.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the Reverend had himself inherited the property from his aunt, on the condition that he adopt the surname Chandler, suggesting that inheritance was as much about the continuation of family identity as the transmission of property in and of itself.⁵⁷ In her own will, Mary Chandler placed all her property in trust, firstly for her mother Harriet Chandler for life, and then for her uncles Joseph and Sabine Gascoyne and aunts Sarah Burt and Mary Gascoyne 'to be equally divided share and share alike as tenants in common'.⁵⁸ Sarah Burt, Sabine Gascoyne, Mary Gascoyne, Sarah Lushington — Joseph Gascoyne's daughter — and the latter's husband Charles were thus all beneficiaries of the £4,387 0s 2d awarded to trustees William Cotton and Thomas Crafer, with the other quarter share

⁵² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/18339> (accessed 13/04/16).

⁵³ PCC PROB 11/1551/83, Will of John Scott.

⁵⁴ Christer Petley, 'Legitimacy' and social boundaries: free people of colour and the social order in Jamaican slave society', *Social History*, 30:4 (November 2005), p. 488.

⁵⁵ Anne McCrum, 'Inheritance and the family: the Scottish urban experience in the 1820s', in Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 169.

⁵⁶ PCC PROB 11/1495/321, Will of Rev. Dr George Chandler.

⁵⁷ PCC PROB 11/1234/190, Will of Sarah Chandler.

⁵⁸ PCC PROB 11/1818/508, Will of Mary Chandler.

awarded to Mary Cotton and Augustine Ellis as co-heirs of Mary Chandler's sister.⁵⁹ This family were a truly trans-imperial one. Through her marriage to Charles Lushington, Sarah Gascoyne joined one of the most prominent East India Company families, demonstrating the ways that familial networks could span the worlds of both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans.⁶⁰ While Mary Chandler's decision to split her interest in the family property equally between her aunts and uncles was no doubt affected by the fact that she was both female and childless, that her father chose to place his estates in trust for his three daughters does show that not all men practiced primogeniture or restricted the ability of female relatives to control their property. Whether he would have adopted the same approach should any of his children have been male is another question.

In at least one instance a trust was explicitly established not to prevent a woman from controlling her property but rather to enable it. Perhaps not coincidentally, this trust was established by a woman herself. Priscilla Franks died in 1832, putting considerable land, in both Britain and Jamaica, in trust for her niece Lady Isabella Cooper. While Cooper was 'to have receive and take the rents issues and profits' of the estates it was trustees Robert Pitches and Henry Allen Johnson who were in ultimate control and it was they who were awarded £6,379 12s 5d in compensation for the enslaved on Duckenfield Hall plantation.⁶¹ Yet the trust established by Franks was also much less restrictive than most. The trustees had permission to sell, dispose of, convey or transfer any part of the property if directed to do so by Cooper. Indeed, Franks's will stipulated that should Cooper outlive her husband her trustees were to 'give devise and bequeath the same and every part' of the property held in trust to Cooper 'for ever to and for her ... own sole and proper use and benefit'.⁶² This trust thus appears to have been established solely to mitigate the effects of coverture, a way of protecting Cooper's property from the interference of her

⁵⁹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/12408> (accessed 14/04/16).

⁶⁰ Chris Jeppesen, 'East meets West: exploring the connections between Britain, the Caribbean and the East India Company, c. 1757-1857', in Katie Donington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody (eds.), *Britain's History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery: Local Nuances of a 'National Sin'* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 102-125. Sarah Lushington accompanied her husband to India during his time as Secretary to the government of Bengal, publishing an account of her travels entitled *Narrative of a Journey from Calcutta to Europe, by way of Egypt, in the years 1827-28* (London, 1829). <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1274609792> (accessed 02/02/16).

⁶¹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/24495> (accessed 15/02/17).

⁶² PROB 11/1809/28, Will of Priscilla Franks; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/24495> (accessed 13/04/16).

husband or from his possible bankruptcy. Other family members, male and female, also occasionally made similar attempts to ensure that their inheritances were free from the control of husbands. The will of Sir John Moore also appointed trustees to administer his Moore Hall estate for the benefit of his sister Susanna until her husband's death, when they were to pass to her absolutely.⁶³ For some at least, trusts were clearly established to liberate rather than to constrain.

The terms of trusts could also be contested. George Carrington was a lawyer and trustee who submitted a counterclaim on behalf of Emily Arabella Aldis (née Brome) and her mother, Elizabeth Ann Brome. Barbadian slave-owner John Brome opened his will by providing his 'dear wife' with a £500 annuity secured on his plantations. He also bequeathed £5,000 to Aldis, his youngest daughter, to be paid either on her twenty-first birthday or on the day of her marriage, whichever came first. After providing several smaller legacies Brome then placed his Barbadian property in trust for his son John Brome 'to have receive and take all the produce and profits of my said plantations and estates for his own use and benefit'.⁶⁴ George Carrington was a lawyer and trustee, both of John Brome's will and of a 1833 deed that was drawn up shortly before Aldis's twenty-first birthday and was concerned with the transfer of her father's legacy, securing Elizabeth Ann Brome's £500 annuity and a sum of £3,500 for Aldis.⁶⁵ Carrington submitted a counterclaim for compensation on behalf of Emily Arabella Aldis and her mother. What is interesting, however, is that the person who submitted the original claim was the women's son and brother, John Brome. Ultimately, the Commissioners did not have to adjudicate; Carrington's counterclaim was withdrawn, probably because the issue was settled privately.⁶⁶ Suits related to contested claims could however end up in the Court of Chancery and family ties were disrupted and broken in battles over probate; a suit involving the descendants of Thomas John Park was still ongoing in 1870.⁶⁷ Trusts were thus intimately bound up with the making and remaking of the propertied family, as well as the disputes and contestations that inevitably coloured these relationships.

⁶³ Jeppesen, 'Will making among West Indian families', p. 14.

⁶⁴ PCC PROB 11/1748/381, Will of Rev. John Brome.

⁶⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/3161> (accessed 14/04/16).

⁶⁶ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/-876764319> (accessed 14/04/16).

⁶⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/24687> (accessed 1/02/17).

Annuitants and Legatees

Legacies, and particularly annuities (a sum of money paid annually) were an obviously gendered form of property-ownership. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall have argued that ‘the annuity may be seen as the classic form of income for the dependant’, whether a servant, child or, most commonly, wife.⁶⁸ All those claiming compensation as annuitants in this research were indeed widows, left annuities in the wills of their husbands. London merchant John Higgin gave to his ‘dear wife Mary Higgin in gratitude for her virtuous deportment and unbarring love and attachment to me’ an annuity of eight hundred pounds sterling ‘payable out of all and singular my several plantations or estates pennis lands [and] Slaves’, as well as a house in London Fields.⁶⁹ Annuities were regularly established in trusts and were seen as stable, secure sources of income, a way for husbands to ensure that their wives were provided for, while also displaying their control over property from beyond the grave.⁷⁰

It is significant that considerable numbers of annuitants appear in the records of the Slave Compensation Commission as claimants and awardees. We might expect to find them only recorded in the LBS database as beneficiaries, with trustees having claimed compensation on their behalves. Often these annuitants and legatees were claiming themselves because the annuity was in arrears. James Pinnock placed his ‘several Estates in the Island of Jamaica called Old Pera & New Pera & all my Slaves Cattle Stock Instruments of husbandry & furniture thereon’ in trust and ordered that an annuity of £1,200 was to be paid to his wife Elizabeth Pinnock in four equal quarterly payments.⁷¹ But wills recorded the property and income a testator expected to have at death and did not necessarily record that which they actually possessed. If plantations became unprofitable or indebted it might not be possible for a trustee or executor to implement bequests that had been made potentially decades earlier. Elizabeth Pinnock never received her annuity. She submitted a counterclaim to the Slave Compensation Commission, claiming compensation ‘in part discharge of the sum of seventeen thousand one hundred pounds sterling ... the amount of the arrears now due to her in respect of an annuity of twelve hundred pounds’

⁶⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 211.

⁶⁹ PCC PROB 11/1714/455, Will of John Higgin.

⁷⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 212.

⁷¹ PCC PROB 11/1521/387, Will of James Pinnock.

bequeathed to her in her husband's will.⁷² The Commissioners agreed and Pinnock was awarded the large majority of the £6,199 7s 3d awarded for the 322 enslaved people on the Old and New Pera estates.⁷³

Although the compensation claims do not always demonstrate this as directly, it is clear that others who were awarded compensation as annuitants also possessed annuities in arrears. Rebecca Ann Weekes submitted a counterclaim as an annuitant of her late husband, John Palmer.⁷⁴ Again, the annuity established in his will appears not to have been paid. In Weekes' own will she left 'all the arrears of my annuities charged on the Rose Hall and Palmyra Estates in the island of Jamaica' to her son Nathaniel Weeks and daughter Mary Ann James.⁷⁵ Scottish slave-owner John Graham also provided an annuity for his spouse in his will, marking his attachment to Matilda Graham by referring to her as his 'beloved wife' and leaving her £800 a year.⁷⁶ This annuity was also never paid. The £3,189 6s 0d compensation for 170 people on Jamaica's Three Mile Estate was awarded in its entirety to Matilda Graham based on this unpaid annuity, which by the time of her own death in 1839 had risen to almost £8,000.⁷⁷

Annuities are often seen as particularly passive forms of property-ownership. The beneficiary had little control or decision-making power over their assets, simply receiving an annual sum of money.⁷⁸ It is interesting, therefore, that these women adopted a very active role in the compensation process, determined to claim money that they felt was rightfully theirs. These women had sometimes been made one of several trustees by their husbands but that they never mentioned this in their claims nor appeared as awardees alongside other trustees suggests that this was not the capacity in which they submitted their claims. Neither was this always the case. Elizabeth Pinnock, for example, was not a trustee or executor of the will that provided her with an annuity. That these women had to take recourse to such action demonstrates that annuities, particularly when they were secured on economically-

⁷² TNA T71/1200 Counter-Claims, Jamaica: St Thomas in the East 265.

⁷³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/23097> (accessed 27/04/14).

⁷⁴ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/24769> (accessed 14/04/16).

⁷⁵ PCC PROB 11/2049/293, Will of Rebecca Ann Weekes.

⁷⁶ PCC PROB 11/1616/188, Will of John Graham.

⁷⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1485679471>;
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19419> (accessed 27/04/16).

⁷⁸ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, p. 295.

struggling Caribbean plantations, were not always the secure and stable source of income it was presumed. That there were many instances of women claiming compensation as annuitants in arrears demonstrates that trust beneficiaries were not simply the recipients of 'passive' property-ownership but were actively willing to claim what they were owed. It does, however, also highlight that women could very easily find themselves in a vulnerable economic position. After all, the compensation awarded to these women did not come close to equalling that which had supposedly been provided for them.⁷⁹

Legacies were not as obviously gendered as annuities. It was common to see legacies, albeit often of different amounts, bequeathed to both male and female family members, including children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, as well as friends and servants. Some individuals claimed compensation as a means of paying a legacy that had been provided for them in the will of a slave-owner, secured on their West Indian plantations and enslaved property.⁸⁰ Merchant and coffee planter Arthur Savage, for example, left £500 to each of his seven nieces and nephews, the children of his sister Faith Munkhouse, as well as bequeathing £1,000 to each of his 'natural' sons, Arthur and Richard Savage.⁸¹ The Savage brothers received the majority of the compensation for the 109 enslaved people on their father's Strawberry Hill estate and were awarded £680 0s 4d each. Each of the surviving Munkhouses was awarded £136 0s 1d, although that of Fildelia Hill (née Munkhouse) was collected by her husband, Robert Keate Hill.⁸² This is just one example of the compensation being split between many legatees, male and female, within the same family.

Trustees and executrixes

The divisions and categorisations made can sometimes mask the more complex interactions compensation claimants had with their property. As already indicated, several of those claiming compensation as annuitants were also trustees, appointed

⁷⁹ Annuitants whose payments were up to date were unlikely to appear in the compensation records, except perhaps as trust beneficiaries. This greatly underestimates the number of women who had annuities secured on Caribbean estates and thus the relative importance of annuitants as transmitters of slave-based wealth to metropolitan Britain.

⁸⁰ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 281.

⁸¹ PCC PROB 11/1565/541, Will of Arthur Savage.

⁸² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/16418> (accessed 27/04/16).

by their husbands. Similarly, many of the women who claimed compensation as trustees or executrixes also received annuities or other kinds of legacies. Nevertheless, this distinction between annuitants/legatees and trustees is important because it reflects the manner in which the compensation was claimed. Whilst this distinction is not always completely clear, it does reflect that these women were being positioned differently within the compensation process.

The overwhelming majority of trustees and executors were men, making up 97% and 85% of those claiming compensation under these categories.⁸³ Executors tended to have a short-term role, dealing with the property arrangements of the recently deceased.⁸⁴ Trustees, on the other hand, could be appointed in a number of ways. Some were long-standing trustees, appointed in wills or marriage settlements. Others were appointed by the Commissioners, especially when Special Awards in Trust were established for awards over £200 given to infants, married women and 'lunatics'.⁸⁵ All trustees, however, were expected to be respectable, responsible and dependable, characteristics increasingly associated with nineteenth-century notions of masculinity.⁸⁶ They were thus often male friends or relatives, although a significant number in the compensation records were London merchants.⁸⁷ The large majority of women claiming compensation as trustees or executrixes were widows, appointed in the wills of their husbands. This was a reasonably common practice amongst the propertied classes of nineteenth-century Britain. Alistair Owens has shown that in early nineteenth-century Stockport, married men appointed their wives as trustees or executrixes in 84 per cent of wills. This does not necessarily mean that they received financial benefit. Owens described such women as 'the linch-pin of intergenerational provision systems while being its least rewarded beneficiary'.⁸⁸ However, trusteeship was, as Nicholas Draper and Rachel Lang have shown, 'not ... a neutral administrative role insulated from slave-ownership'. Trustees made decisions that

⁸³ That the overwhelming number of trustees and executors were male is indisputable but these statistics do need to be taken with a pinch of salt. Many more individuals, both male and female, claimed compensation as trustees and executors than is recorded in the compensation records.

⁸⁴ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 211.

⁸⁵ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 258-259.

⁸⁶ Chantal Stebbings, *The Private Trustee in Victorian England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 22.

⁸⁷ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 259.

⁸⁸ Alistair Owens, 'Property, gender and the life course: inheritance and family welfare provision in early nineteenth-century England', *Social History*, 26:3, (October, 2001), p. 310.

had a huge impact, both on the lives of the men, women and children enslaved in the Caribbean and those of the slave-owners on whose behalf they were working.⁸⁹ In almost all instances where women appear as trustees or executrices they were one of the beneficiaries of the trusts or wills they were administering, although rarely the principal one. Eliza Elmslie, the widow of Scotsman John Elmslie, claimed compensation as his executrix, alongside co-executors William Forbes-Stuart and Edmund Francis Green.⁹⁰ They were awarded a one-fifth share of the compensation for the Serge Island estate (of which Elmslie owned a fifth-part) and the total compensation for 133 enslaved people on Islandhead plantation. Elmslie's estates had been placed in trust for the benefit of his three children equally as tenants in common and an annuity of £700 provided for Eliza.⁹¹ Yet his 'dearly beloved and excellent wife' was only appointed trustee for as 'long as she shall continue my widow and unmarried', indicating how declarations of affection and trust could also be bound up with strategies of control.

Most of these men directed that their trustees should be involved in the careful management of their estates. John Elmslie, for example, ordered that his trustees should 'manage my said estates and property in Jamaica ... in such measures as shall be requisite for the due management thereof and cause the said Estates and premises to be kept in a good condition and ... in at least as good and effective a state as the same shall be found at my decease'.⁹² James Lawson similarly instructed that his trustees, which included his wife, were to 'manage conduct and cultivate' his plantation 'to the best advantage'.⁹³ Of course, that these female trustees were given such powers does not necessarily mean that they used them and it is noticeable that women were rarely made sole executrix or trustee. It seems particularly likely that, when the other trustees were experienced West India merchants, widows played a more peripheral role in the management of these Caribbean estates. Kean Osborn, for example, made his wife Elizabeth trustee and executrix of his four Jamaican plantations, alongside West India merchants Thomas Fletcher and Joseph Brook Yates. The three were together awarded a total of £14,737 4s 8d compensation for 715 enslaved people on the four estates. Elizabeth

⁸⁹ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 259.

⁹⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/18119> (accessed 27/04/16).

⁹¹ PCC PROB 11/1759/270, Will of John Elmslie.

⁹² PCC PROB 11/1759/270, Will of John Elmslie.

⁹³ PCC PROB 11/1766/467, Will of James Lawson.

Osborn was, however, not only one of the trustees made responsible for 'conducting and managing the said estates and trust premises in the most advantageous manner possible'. She also, after certain annuities and legacies has been paid, was herself to receive the rents and profits of the plantations, and was provided with the power to settle and convey the estates as she saw fit, a power she went on to execute in her own will.⁹⁴

Those who were not widows were generally appointed trustees or executrixes because they held a position of responsibility in relation to others and were probably not directly involved in the transatlantic management of the West Indian estates for which they were responsible. Harriet Williams was made one of the trustees and executors of her father, Charles White Williams, alongside 'his friends' West India merchant William Morrice and brother-in-law Henry Blatch and the three were awarded £5,274 14s 5d compensation for 284 enslaved people on Williams's Duckworth plantation.⁹⁵ Perhaps more significantly, these three were also made guardians of Williams's younger children. As Williams's eldest daughter, Harriet was ordered 'to keep house in England for the benefit of her younger sisters [and] as a home for her brothers'. In order to do this she was provided with '£100 a year for her own use, £100 a year for the children still at home and £300 a year to reimburse her for the expense of occasionally receiving her brothers who may be out in the world'.⁹⁶ It seems likely that Harriett Williams was appointed as trustee and executrix because of her caring and domestic responsibilities rather than because she was expected to engage in the management of her father's Jamaican estate.

Charlotte Pinnock was one of the few women to be appointed trustee directly by the Commissioners of the Slave Compensation Commission. Although Pinnock was born and educated in Bath she spent much of her life in Jamaica, only returning to Britain in 1833 after the death of her husband.⁹⁷ She submitted a counter-claim as the 'natural guardian' of her son George Pinnock, adding in an accompanying letter, 'I

⁹⁴ PCC PROB 11/1642/411, Will of Kean Osborn.

⁹⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/12046> (accessed 29/04/16).

⁹⁶ PCC PROB 11/1798/7, Will of Charles White Williams.

⁹⁷ 'Memoir of George Pinnock' (1901), transcribed at <http://www.jamaicanfamilysearch.com/Members/MemoirGeorgePinnock.htm> (accessed 29/04/16).

presume I can be the trustee for my son, when the money is to be invested'.⁹⁸ Her frequent correspondence with the Commissioners also indicates that she was actively involved in managing her son's interests in Jamaica. On one occasion she asked whether she needed to contact anyone in the island and on another referred to having recently 'received a letter from Mr Townson of Jamaica'.⁹⁹ Pinnock was, along with Senior Clerk of the Board of Trade Edward John Lack, awarded £373 5s 2d as trustees of George Pinnock, his proportion of the compensation on New Shaftston Pen.¹⁰⁰ They were awarded this compensation in the form of three per cent consolidated bank annuities, the Commissioners directing that they were to 'receive the Dividends and annual produce thereof' on George Pinnock's behalf during his minority, transferring 'the said Bank Annuities and all accumulations' to him upon his turning twenty-one.¹⁰¹ Female trustees could thus, albeit occasionally, play an important role in helping to manage the property of others, if not always their own.

Relationship with West Indian and enslaved property

Wills are, in many respects, static documents.¹⁰² Although they may tell us what property was inherited, and in what form, they only very occasionally provide us with details about how these women engaged — or didn't engage — with these plantations and those enslaved upon them. Testators did sometimes indicate that the women to whom they bequeathed their estates were expected to take an active role in their management. Sarah Gray inherited a life interest in her husband's Friendship estate. She was also appointed one of his executors and personally provided with the power to 'have the sole and exclusive nomination and appointment of all managers attorneys and overseers to be employed in the management and direction of my said Estates'.¹⁰³ How effective an absentee manager Gray was is perhaps open to question. Attorney Isaac Jackson, who in 1839 had received a power of

⁹⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/16691> (accessed 29/04/16); TNA, T71/ 1009 Compensation Claims and Certificates, Original. Jamaica: Westmoreland 414; T71/1608 Charlotte Pinnock to James Lewis, 27th July 1835.

⁹⁹ TNA, T71/1608 Charlotte Pinnock to James Lewis, 27th July 1835, Charlotte Pinnock to Henry Hill, 21st September 1835.

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/16234> (accessed 29/04/16).

¹⁰¹ TNA, T71/1378 Special Awards in Trust, Jamaica. Westmoreland, 414.

¹⁰² It is, however, important not to overemphasise the staticity of wills. Going through probate could be a long process, and was often contested. The meanings of wills could thus remain in flux.

¹⁰³ PCC PROB 11/1459/207, Will of Patrick Gray.

attorney from Gray, wrote to London merchants Hawthorn and Shedden, promising to do his 'utmost for Mrs Gray's Estate, which is now in a deplorable condition'.¹⁰⁴ Her own will, however, seems to confirm that she was actively involved in the economic development of this plantation. In it she conveyed lands 'attached to the Friendship Estate in the same Island and used as provision grounds'.¹⁰⁵ That she did not possess the ability to pass on the property she inherited suggests Gray may have purchased this additional land. She may have not been the most capable or diligent transatlantic correspondent but it does appear that Gray was actively engaged in superintending the estate.

Other wills also provide indications that at least some of these women were involved in the management of their West Indian estates. Anne Launce Hill left £100 to Joseph Brough, 'my Attorney residing on ... the Hermitage Estate in the parish of Portland', suggesting that she had a close working relationship with him.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, executrix and probable life tenant Margaret Ann Simpson thanked her 'faithful agents Messers Irlam and Higginson of Liverpool' in her will, requesting that her nephew and heir not call in any money remaining in the hands of these merchants without giving them six months' notice.¹⁰⁷ Yet although these wills do provide some traces of women's economic engagement they rarely provide much information about the way they interacted with their property. Lady Cooper received her Jamaican estates in trust from her aunt Priscilla Franks. Yet although Franks provided Cooper with the ability to sell or mortgage the estates, Cooper's will provides no indication of her having done so. We might also have expected her trustees to undertake the transatlantic supervision of her plantation. The correspondence between Cooper and trustee Robert Pitches, however, indicates that Cooper was regularly sent updates both about her West Indian plantations and about the compensation process, and was expected to respond with her own instructions. He notified her, for example, when the sum of £1,132 3s 10d had been received 'for your share of the compensation money for the Slaves on the Grand Bras Estate in Grenada',

¹⁰⁴ Isaac Jackson to Hawthorn and Shedden, 29th September 1839. Cited in B. A. Higman, *Plantation Jamaica 1750-1850: Capital and Control in a Colonial Economy* (Mona: University of West Indies Press, 2005), pp. 155-156.

¹⁰⁵ PCC PROB 11/1947/98, Will of Sarah Gray.

¹⁰⁶ PCC PROB 11/2082/45, Will of Anne Launce Hill.

¹⁰⁷ PCC PROB 11/1867/220, Will of Margaret Ann Simpson.

immediately adding 'I shall be happy to receive your directions accordingly'.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Pitches informed Cooper that he had written to West India merchants Messers Hankey & Company 'as you directed' regarding the number of attorneys on the Duckenfield Hall plantation. He sent her their reply, explaining that although he disagreed with them 'you must however give the casting vote'.¹⁰⁹ This highlights the extent to which wills can only provide small glimpses of the ways individuals engaged with property they owned. Unfortunately, correspondence like this is rarely available, meaning that in the majority of instances it is impossible to discern how exactly these women interacted with their West Indian plantations and enslaved property, if indeed they did so at all.

Examining the wills of those from whom the 164 claimants and beneficiaries inherited their property does indicate, however, that the West Indian plantations, and those enslaved upon them, were normally the most significant form of property bequeathed. Indeed, it was not unusual for a testator's Jamaican or Barbadian plantations to be the only real property mentioned in their will. Some did also bequeath metropolitan estates. Ann Newell placed both her freehold property in Southampton and her Jamaican estates in trust for the benefit of her daughter Ann Launce Hill during her life.¹¹⁰ Neither was it unusual for testators not to refer specifically to particular freehold property, whether metropolitan or Caribbean, but instead to bequeath all 'real and personal property whatsoever in England, Jamaica or elsewhere', suggesting they had a portfolio of property interests.¹¹¹ Certainly, in some cases the metropolitan property bequeathed was more significant than a devisee's Caribbean estates, or their interest therein. Mary Higgin, for example, received an £800 annuity from her deceased husband, secured on his 'several plantations or estates penns lands Slaves'. This, however, was only discussed in his will after he had bequeathed her absolutely his dwelling house in Hackney.¹¹² It is likely that this house had an affective and sentimental significance his Jamaican estates did not and presumably, being her place of residence, a practical one too.

¹⁰⁸ London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), Acc/0775/81, Robert Pitches to Lady Cooper, 25th November 1835.

¹⁰⁹ LMA, Acc/0775/89, Robert Pitches to Lady Cooper, 3rd January 1838.

¹¹⁰ PCC PROB 11/1551/248, Will of Ann Newell.

¹¹¹ PCC PROB 11/1818/508, Will of Mary Chandler.

¹¹² PCC PROB 11/1714/455, Will of John Higgin.

But this does not appear to have been a common pattern. For most of these women their Caribbean property was the most significant part of their inheritance.

The West Indian property these women received was inherently different from freehold property held in the metropole. It should never be forgotten that before 1834 this included property held in people. Very occasionally the wills of their antecedents betray the distinctive, human form of this property-ownership. A codicil attached to the will of Patrick Gray ordered that 'a Man Slave named James Sinclair' should be manumitted and paid 'a free year annuity of ten pounds Jamaica Currency' for the rest of his life.¹¹³ Similarly, the first thing Ann Newell did in her will was to 'manumize empowerize and set free from all servitude and slavery whatsoever my Negro woman slave named Kitty' and to provide her with an annuity of ten pounds Jamaican currency, to be taken from the rents and profits of the plantation she had formerly laboured on.¹¹⁴ This raises the question of what the affective significance of those named may have been, helping us think about the emotional labour that enslaved people may have been expected to undertake and that may, or may not, have been rewarded.

Yet what is striking about these wills is the extent to which the people who laboured on these plantations were generally not perceived any differently from any other form of property. It was only rarely that they were recognised as individuals, or even as people. It was far more common for 'negroes' or 'slaves' to simply be listed alongside other commodities necessary for the operation of a sugar plantation. James Pinnock placed his two Jamaican estates 'and all my Slaves Cattle Stock Instruments of husbandry & furniture thereon' in trust, securing several annuities and legacies on them.¹¹⁵ Charles Gordon Grey did talk more specifically about his 'freehold Negroes' enslaved on the Virgin Valley and Prospect Pen estates. He gave them and 'all the increase of them' to his eldest son John Robert Acourt Gray upon the condition 'of his keeping the same Negroes and Increase working on the said Estates'.¹¹⁶ Ultimately these enslaved people seem to have been easily aggregated into an undifferentiated mass of property, these men, women and children regarded as little more than units of economic value. Yet that enslaved people were occasionally

¹¹³ PCC PROB 11/1459/207, Will of Patrick Gray.

¹¹⁴ PCC PROB 11/1551/248, Will of Ann Newell.

¹¹⁵ PCC PROB 11/1521/387, Will of James Pinnock.

¹¹⁶ PCC PROB 11/1665/159, Will of Charles Gordon Gray.

named and acknowledged in wills does also indicate that they could be recognised as subjects and agents even when positioned within a legal structure that was designed to rob them of their individuality, humanity and freedom.

The language of legitimacy remained a central part of the practice of will-making and of the transmission of property, both in the Caribbean and in the UK. Bequests were regularly made to heirs 'lawfully begotten'. Those born out of wedlock, if provided for at all, were designated 'natural' or 'reputed' children, positioning them clearly at the bottom of the familial hierarchy.¹¹⁷ Interracial relationships with both free and enslaved women – often, of course, involving some level of coercion – were commonplace in the slave societies of the West Indies and are brought to light through the wills of male slave-owners. Christer Petley's examination of the wills of 24 resident Jamaican slave-owners showed that 11 of these men left some sort of bequest to a free person or people of colour, whether a 'housekeeper' or their 'reputed' mixed-race children.¹¹⁸ Although the extent to which legitimate, metropolitan families were privileged is both patent and unsurprising, there are several hints in the wills I have examined of the illegitimate 'outside families' that could span the Atlantic.¹¹⁹ John Scott, for example, established a trust that provided an annuity of £800 for his wife Elizabeth, secured on his Jamaican estates, and ordered that legacies of £9,000 and £6,000 taken from the rents and profits of 'the Jamaican property' be paid to his children George Henry Cussans and Elizabeth Scott respectively. In contrast, an annuity of £40 was provided for 'my late housekeeper' Jane Anderson and her five 'reputed' children Favell, Eleanor, George, Henry and Jerry, Scott utilising language that reinforced their servile and subordinate status. Even more starkly, he directed that 'a Sambo woman named Nanny ... and her two children of whom I am the reputed father' be manumitted. Nanny then received a one-off payment of £50 and £25 was given to each of her children.¹²⁰

Sometimes members of these 'outside families' did receive more extensive bequests. Arthur Savage, 'late of Kingston in the Island of Jamaica but now residing in the City of London', left a £500 annuity to his sister, Faith Munkhouse, and legacies of £500 to each of her seven children. He also, however, left £500 to Jane Borsie 'my late

¹¹⁷ Jeppesen, 'Will making among West Indian families', p. 14.

¹¹⁸ Christer Petley, 'Legitimacy' and social boundaries', p. 488.

¹¹⁹ Jeppesen, 'Will making among West Indian families', p. 14.

¹²⁰ PCC PROB 11/1551/83, Will of John Scott.

housekeeper residing at Clifton Hill in the Island of Jamaica' and £1,000 each to Arthur and Richard Savage, his 'natural sons' by Borsie, also directing that they should be educated in England. These legacies also contrast dramatically to those left to 'mulatto boy[s]' Thomas, 'the Son of my Negro Woman named Nancy', and Charles, 'the Son of my Negro Woman named Dido', who were manumitted and provided with just £100 each.¹²¹ These 'outside families' could thus themselves contain complicated, and racialised, hierarchies. Despite being designated a 'housekeeper', and probably a free woman of colour, Jane Borsie and her sons received bequests that were as or more extensive than those Savage left to his metropolitan family. They were positioned very differently to Savage's sons by 'negro' women who continued to remain enslaved.

Francis Dennis also bequeathed £2,000 to his 'natural daughter Mary Dennis by my late housekeeper Hannah Woodroof', to be paid to her upon her marriage or reaching her majority. He also included her as one of his remaindermen. It was only in the event, however, that Francis Dennis's two legitimate daughters died without issue that daughter Mary would become entitled to Dennis's estate.¹²² This did not come to pass. It was the families of Maria Frances and Eliza Jane Dennis who were ultimately awarded the £8,523 13s 7d for 461 enslaved people on the Prospect Pen and Pembroke Hall estates, and Mary Dennis does not appear anywhere within the records of the Slave Compensation Commission.¹²³ Mary's position in the line of inheritance, behind that of Dennis's legitimate daughters, shows clearly her marginal position within the hierarchies of the transatlantic family. Yet at the same time her very acknowledgement situates her within an affective universe of 'family'. There were clearly vast numbers of men who did not recognise children and they were not legally required to do so. Mary's marginality, and that of other women and children who constituted 'outside families', still lies in stark contrast to those who lived their lives enslaved or without any financial resources. What the wills cannot inform us of is the material and emotional considerations that affected how and why bequests were made to the members of these 'outside families'. Or, indeed, whether a choice was made not to acknowledge these families at all.

¹²¹ PCC PROB 11/1565/541, Will of Arthur Savage.

¹²² PCC PROB 11/1270/19, Will of Francis Dennis.

¹²³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/43435> (accessed 18/04/16).

West Indian property in women's wills

The wills of these 164 women demonstrate that when choosing how to transmit and disseminate their property, both metropolitan and colonial, a variety of different decisions were made. Some of those who possessed the power to bequeath their Caribbean plantations chose to convey their property absolutely, to children, relations or friends, adopting a variety of strategies when doing so. Others established trusts themselves, enabling them to maintain some control over their estates from beyond the grave. As Marcia Pointon has argued, writing a will was 'an imaginative as well as a legal act'.¹²⁴ These wills not only provide an indication of how these women conceived their Caribbean plantations, or interests therein, they also hint at their broader priorities, hopes and expectations. They provide a window into the social and familial networks in which these women were both embedded and themselves helped to constitute, as well as the ties of emotion, affection and obligation that bound them.

Interestingly, a considerable number of these women placed their plantations in trust, not so that others could benefit from the proceeds but so they could be sold. Among them were Anne Sill, Catherine Wordie, Mary Gilpin and Sarah Gray. Wordie, for example, placed her Jamaican plantation Schwellenberg in trust and ordered that her trustees should 'after my decease make sale and absolutely dispose of the same either together or in lots ... for the best price or prices that can or may be gotten'.¹²⁵ While Sill never visited Jamaica, Wordie, Gilpin and Gray all spent at least some time living on the island, suggesting that such decisions were not simply made because of a lack of emotional attachment to the estates or the islands upon which they were located. Rather, this was likely simply seen as a sensible way of dealing with unprofitable plantations, a way of extracting wealth from estates that would otherwise have been nothing more than a drain on resources. Whereas in 1774 the West Indian colonies had been described as 'shining Trophies [...] extend[ing] the Fame, display[ing] the Power, and support[ing] the Commerce of Great Britain', by the 1820s Jamaican plantation-owners were receiving returns on their investment about

¹²⁴ Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 2-3.

¹²⁵ PCC PROB 11/1879/247, Will of Catherine Wordie.

half that of the previous century.¹²⁶ Offering neither the status nor the wealth they had done previously, selling Jamaican plantations in particular was often a more enticing option than retaining them.

Of those who mentioned West Indian property in their wills, the majority referred to specific named estates. Perhaps unsurprisingly, this was particularly pronounced in the wills of women who were born or who had lived in the Caribbean. Those who had spent their entire lives in metropolitan Britain were more likely to vaguely refer to 'Jamaica property', although many did also discuss particular estates.¹²⁷ Neither was it uncommon for those who had lived in the Caribbean to only obliquely discuss their Jamaican or Barbadian estates. The will of Barbados-born Mary Lovell only broadly alluded to real and person property 'in the West Indies' and Jamaican-born Judith Bernard senior similarly only made a loose reference to her real estate 'whether situate in England, Jamaica or elsewhere'.¹²⁸ On the whole there do not appear to have been dramatic differences in the ways that women who had and had not been resident in the Caribbean chose to transmit their property, although the wills of the former were perhaps more likely to mention 'the Slaves Cattle ... Utensils Fixtures and Appurtenances' attached to a plantation. This, of course, was only seen in the wills written before the abolition of slavery.¹²⁹ By the time of Mary Sandby's death in 1841, these 'slaves', unlike her cows, bulls or plantation tools, were no longer her property to transmit.

The majority of those with the power to bequeath West Indian property did not possess similar metropolitan estates. Anne Sill's will discussed in great detail her estates in Dent before moving on to her Jamaican property, suggesting her Yorkshire land was the most significant part of her property portfolio.¹³⁰ Lady Cooper also prioritised her English estates, bequeathing her mansion and lands in Berkshire and Wiltshire before her Jamaican plantation, although it appears that both of these properties were of more significance than her leasehold house in Portland Place.¹³¹

¹²⁶ John Campbell, *A Political Survey of Great Britain, Vol. II* (London, 1774), p. 567; Christer Petley, *Slaveholders in Jamaica*, p. 86.

¹²⁷ PCC PROB 11/1968/303, Will of Catherina Brandreth Backhouse Chetham Strode.

¹²⁸ PCC PROB 11/1984/162, Will of Mary Lovell; PCC PROB 11/2038/277, Will of Judith Bernard Senior.

¹²⁹ PCC PROB 11/1944/454, Will of Mary Sandby.

¹³⁰ PCC PROB 11/1853/190, Will of Ann Sill.

¹³¹ LMA, Acc/0775/008, Draft will of Dowager Lady Cooper, 18 March 1847.

The above mentioned Mary Lovell and Judith Bernard senior were among other absentees who made reference to metropolitan property. These women, however, were among the minority. The West Indian property these women possessed was often the only freehold property they bequeathed, although it was often accompanied by personal property of various kinds. By the mid-nineteenth century Jamaican and Barbadian sugar plantations were certainly not generating the profits they had done several decades earlier – indeed in many instances they were losing money. But it is clear that for a significant proportion of female absentees they remained *the* major part of their property portfolio.

Those who are recorded in the LBS database as trust beneficiaries, often with life estates in West Indian plantations, were, however, more likely to mention metropolitan property in their wills. Sarah Burt was one of the beneficiaries of a trust established by her aunt Mary Chandler and received a share of the £5,849 6s 10d awarded for 322 enslaved people on Clarendon's Seven Plantations.¹³² In her will she left 'my house at Twickenham in which I reside and all my furniture therein' to sister and fellow beneficiary Mary Gascoyne, who subsequently bequeathed this house 'and all my Estate and interest of and in the Seven Plantations Estate' to her nephew Rev. Robert Gascoyne.¹³³ Ann Shickle was another trust beneficiary to bequeath metropolitan real estate in her will. She left a 'Cottage and Garden lately purchased by me' in Laugharne, Wales – given that this will was written 1840 quite possibly with the compensation money she received – to her daughter Elizabeth Amelia Gifford 'for her great kindness and attention to me during my late illness'.¹³⁴ Those who received compensation as beneficiaries of a trust were perhaps more likely to find their interest in West Indian property was part of a much wider property portfolio, although it is noticeable that in both of these examples these properties were houses rather than substantial estates.

¹³² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/12408> (accessed 15/02/17).

¹³³ PCC PROB 11/2027/307, Will of Sarah Burt; PCC PROB 11/2206/320, Will of Mary Gascoyne.

¹³⁴ National Library of Wales, St. David's Probate Records, 1556-1858 9933041602419, Will of Ann Shickle.

Women's bequeathing practices

The women with the power to transmit their Caribbean property adopted a variety of bequeathing strategies. Some left all of their property to just one devisee. Anne Launce Hill, after providing some small legacies for friends and family and the upkeep of her mother, sister and husband's graves, bequeathed all the remainder of her estate 'whether real personal or mixt or whether situate in Great Britain, the Island of Jamaica or elsewhere' to her daughter Ann Newell Hill.¹³⁵ In the majority of instances, however, some form of partible inheritance was practised. Women with children regularly split their estates equally between both sons and daughters. Mary Lovell ordered that all her real and personal property, in England and the West Indies, was to be split equally between her two children Phillip Lovell and Mary Hamden as tenants in common.¹³⁶ Similarly, the will of Eliza Elmslie referred to 'a large sum of money due to me' in respect to an annuity charged by her husband on the Grays Inn, Serge Island and Islandhead estates. She ordered that the arrears of this annuity be split into thirds and divided between her son Graham Elmslie, her daughter Helen Elmslie and her two grandchildren William Francis Henry and Charlotte Elmslie, the children of her late son. A codicil added later, however, did stipulate that Graham Elmslie, as trustee, could have full control over the final third in order to 'purchase from time to time ... his promotion in the army', as long as he was 'personally responsible' for ensuring that his niece and nephew received their portion when they became entitled to it.¹³⁷ The economic necessities of life could thus sometimes trump an ideal bequeathing strategy; establishing a career in the army was an expensive business.

It was not only women with children who chose to practice partible inheritance. Catherine Wordie ordered that the money arising from the sale of her Schwellenberg estate be used to pay several legacies in Jamaica and Scotland, including £500 'to Mary Amos a free Mulatto Woman now residing in the Parish of Saint Anne'. The remainder of this money, along with the rest of any real and personal estate, was split between her Jamaican-based god-daughter Catherine Ann Rougé and 'my friend Elizabeth Finlay now residing with me'.¹³⁸ Sarah Gray similarly ordered that her

¹³⁵ PCC PROB 11/2082/45, Will of Ann Launce Hill.

¹³⁶ PCC PROB 11/1984/162, Will of Mary Lovell.

¹³⁷ PCC PROB 11/2163/15, Will of Eliza Elmslie.

¹³⁸ PCC PROB 11/1879/247, Will of Catherine Wordie.

trustees were 'to pay and divide ... equally' the money generated from the sale of the Friendship estate between Elizabeth Gray, James Clark, Charles Clark and Catherine Clark, probably her nieces and nephews.¹³⁹ Yorkshire-born Ann Sill placed her Jamaican estate in trust to be sold as 'soon as conveniently may be after my decease'. The money arising from this sale was to be split between a huge range of Yorkshire-based friends and relations. Fourteen different people, both men and women, some designated as 'my Relation' some not, received either a tenth or a twentieth part of the cash produced by the sale of Sill's estates, including orphan turned proprietor Richard Sutton, allegedly the inspiration behind Emily Brontë's Heathcliff.¹⁴⁰ It is difficult to uncover Sill's motives. Was she choosing to recognise affective relationships, honour obligations and responsibilities, or did this simply reflect changing attitudes towards inheritance and property-ownership? Regardless, it is clear that by the mid-nineteenth century many of these former slave-owners chose to use the sale of their unprofitable West Indian property to provide for numerous members of their familial and social networks, often on relatively equal terms.

Some women did privilege male relatives in their inheritance practices, bequeathing real estate to brothers and annuities or legacies to sisters. Mary Sandby left her brother Rev. George Sandby 'all my undivided part share & interest' in Hanover's Trial estate, giving her sister Elizabeth Jackson 'the sum of one thousand pounds in the three pounds ten shillings per cent reduced bank annuities'.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Frances Lee devised to her brother the Wheelerfield and Rose Hall estates, providing her sister Favell Bourke Bevan with £3,000 placed in trust.¹⁴² However, it was more common for women to privilege female relatives, presumably recognising their potential economic vulnerability. Mary Gilpin ordered that the profits from the sale of her Cascade estate should be invested in securities to be paid to her daughters Mary James and Laura Gilpin for the rest of their lives should they remain unmarried. It was only if these two daughters were to marry that the securities were to be split instead between Gilpin's five children, including her two sons and other married

¹³⁹ PCC PROB 11/1947/98, Will of Sarah Gray.

¹⁴⁰ PCC PROB 11/1853/190, Will of Ann Sill; Christopher Heywood, 'Yorkshire slavery in *Wuthering Heights*', *The Review of English Studies*, 38:150 (May, 1987), pp. 184-198. Heywood argues that both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* were partly inspired by the Brontës' knowledge of the Sill's involvement in slavery and slave-ownership.

¹⁴¹ PCC PROB 11/1944/454, Will of Mary Sandby.

¹⁴² PCC PROB 11/1920/153, Will of Frances Lee.

daughter.¹⁴³ Ensuring that her two unmarried daughters were provided for throughout their lives appears to have been Gilpin's ultimate priority.

There were only two women who chose to establish a system of entail, although neither of these was strictly primogenital. In her will Lady Isabella Cooper placed both her metropolitan and West Indian estates in trust, establishing a strict settlement. Cooper's real estate in England, namely Chiltern Lodge in Berkshire, was placed in trust for the use of her grandson William Honeywood during his life and then for the use of 'the first and every other Son of the sd. William Honeywood lawfully begotten successively according to their respective priorities of birth & the heirs male of the body of such son & sons lawfully issuing'. Her West Indian estates, however, were settled upon her daughter, Elizabeth Dawkins, for life. Yet although Elizabeth Dawkins received a life interest in her mother's Caribbean plantations, after the latter's death they were similarly to be settled on Dawkins's son Edward Henry Frederick Dawkins, 'with remainder to his first & other Sons successively in tail male'. Should he die without male issue then the remainders would pass firstly to Dawkins's eldest nephew and then to his younger brother. Only if all failed to have male children would the remainder pass to the 'first & other Daughters successively', firstly of Edward Henry Fredk. Dawkins and then of the two Honeywood brothers.¹⁴⁴ There is no doubt, therefore, that Cooper chose to privilege her male family members. It is, however, perhaps important to highlight the distinctiveness of women like Lady Cooper. As the heiress of a very 'prominent and wealthy' mercantile family, she adopted inheritance practices far more in line with those of the aristocracy than the emerging middle classes.¹⁴⁵

In her will Elizabeth Osborn was clear to emphasise that husband Kean Osborn had provided her with 'absolute powers of appointment' over his Jamaican estates. This meant, Osborn insisted, she had the power to 'dispose of by this will the various plantations and estates namely Caswill Hill in the parish of Vere, Richmond Park coffee plantation in the parish of Clarendon, Montpelier estate in the parish of St Thomas in the East, [and] Mount Ephraim Pen [in] St Thomas in the East'. She chose to give to her granddaughters Margaret Eleanor Osborn and Isabella

¹⁴³ PCC PROB 11/2204/301, Will of Mary Gilpin.

¹⁴⁴ LMA, Acc/0775/008, Draft will of Dowager Lady Cooper, 18 March 1847.

¹⁴⁵ William D. Rubinstein, *Who Were the Rich? A Biographical Directory of British Wealth-holders, Vol. 1, 1809-1839* (London: Social Affairs Unit, 2009), p. 82.

Catherine Montgomery the sugar estate of Montpelier and Mount Ephraim Pen for their lives, directing that they then be passed to their 'first and other sons successively'. Failure of such male issue would lead to the estates being transferred to Osborn's nephew, the Reverend Willoughby Crewe, 'and his heirs for ever'. Osborn's will also directed that it was Crewe's second son, Henry and his heirs who was to receive Caswell Hill and Richmond Park, with remainder to his older brother Ottley Crewe and his heirs. She later changed her mind about this bequest. In a codicil written in 1846 Osborn revoked this endowment, instead also placing Caswell Hill and Richmond Park upon trust 'for my daughter Frances Eliza Osborn and my granddaughters Margret Eleanor Osborn and Isabella Catherine Montgomery and for the survivors & survivor of them'. Again, however, upon the death of the last surviving of these women the estates would revert to Rev. Willoughby Crewe and his heirs.¹⁴⁶ Entails did not have to be strictly primogenital, but these still had a distinctly patrilineal flavour.

Of course, a significant number of absentees who appear in the LBS database as claimants or beneficiaries of compensation did not have the power to bequeath their West Indian estates or their interest therein. The money these women received as compensation was never mentioned specifically in their wills and it is difficult, if not impossible, to know what they actually did with any compensation they received. However, it is certainly likely to have formed part of their wider personal property. Indeed, almost all of the women who wrote wills left personal property of some description, whether in the form of a monetary legacies, stocks or consolidated bank annuities. Occasionally these women also possessed some kind of metropolitan freehold or leasehold property. Dorothy Boehm was the widow of West India merchant Edward Boehm and was living in a grace and favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace at the time of her death.¹⁴⁷ In her will she discussed various freehold and leasehold properties situated in the county of Devon, ordering in a codicil that they be sold and the profits invested in stocks for the use of John Murray 'Son of the Honorable John Murray Esq' and his children.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ PCC PROB 11/2034/301, Will of Elizabeth Osborn.

¹⁴⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/4871> (accessed 21/04/16).

¹⁴⁸ PCC PROB 11/1957/153, Will of Dorothy Boehm.

The regularity with which government bonds and consolidated bank annuities were mentioned in the wills of female absentees reinforces how important this form of investment was for nineteenth-century women.¹⁴⁹ Mary Sandby was just one of many female absentees to possess such securities, ordering in her will that ‘the sum of one thousand pounds in the three pounds ten shillings per cent reduced bank annuities’ was to be paid to her sister Elizabeth Jackson.¹⁵⁰ In at least one instance there was a direct connection between these consols and Caribbean property. Mary Chandler, in a codicil to her will, mentioned that the sum of ‘about £20,000’ invested in three per cent consolidated bank annuities in the Bank of England had ‘been purchased with money arising from the produce of ... [my] ... West India Estates’.¹⁵¹ In many respects these consols conform to the way we think about economic provisions for nineteenth-century women. Investors received a yearly annuity, as Davidoff and Hall have shown, ‘the classic form of income provision for the dependant’.¹⁵² These were respectable, reliable, secure and risk-free forms of investment, ‘a substitute masculine provider – the ideal husband that widows and spinsters ... did not have’.¹⁵³ Yet the example of Mary Chandler seems to support Sylvia Hahn’s argument that unmarried and widowed women did not just wait to receive investments but were rather investors who constantly made choices — albeit inherently gendered ones — about how to provide for themselves, their children and other people.¹⁵⁴

Neither did the investments that have come to light through these wills always conform to nineteenth-century gendered expectations. Life assurance was for many ‘the epitome of masculine responsibility’, a way of protecting dependent wives and children in the case of the death of the primary, almost always male, income provider.¹⁵⁵ Yet the wills of these absentees show that women did occasionally see a need to protect their dependents in the same way. The will of Catherine Chetham Strode explained that she had ‘insured my life at the Eagle Insurance Office’ for

¹⁴⁹ Janette Rutterford and Josephine Maltby. “‘The widow, the clergyman and the reckless’: women investors in England, 1830-1914”, *Feminist Economics*, 12:1-2 (January/April, 2006), p. 12; David R. Green and Alistair Owens, ‘Gentlewomanly capitalism? Spinster, widows and wealth-holding in England and Wales, c. 1800-1860’, *Economic History Review*, 56:3 (2003), pp. 524, 531.

¹⁵⁰ PCC PROB 11/1944/454, Will of Mary Sandby.

¹⁵¹ PCC PROB 11/1818/508, Will of Mary Chandler.

¹⁵² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 211.

¹⁵³ Green and Owens, ‘Gentlewomanly capitalism?’, p. 530.

¹⁵⁴ Sylvia Hahn, ‘Women in older ages — “old” women?’, *History of the Family*, 7:1 (2002), p. 52.

¹⁵⁵ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 213.

£2,000, 'which with the accumulated sums now amounts to £2,098 7s 3d'. Although £1,000 of this had been used to pay off a loan, she ordered that the rest be placed in trust for the benefit of her grandson in case the sum provided for him from the 'Jamaica property shall fail'.¹⁵⁶ This indicates both that Strode was aware that Jamaican plantation-owners were in an economically precarious position and that she believed one way of mitigating the effect of this was to take out life assurance, 'one of the first duties of civilised man'.¹⁵⁷

Amy Erickson has demonstrated that in the early modern period women's wills tended to be more 'personalist' than men's, taking account of a wider variety of both friends and kin, a pattern that Robert Morris has shown continued into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁵⁸ Certainly, this pattern of diffusion was very commonly seen in the wills of the female absentees. Ann Sill left bequests of both land and personal property to a huge range of kin.¹⁵⁹ Both male and female relatives regularly appeared as additional legatees, those not the principal beneficiary of a will but who received some sort of legacy. Susanna Harriot Gordon provided a legacy of £1,000 for her 'dear sister Florence Mellor', also ordering that her brother and his children were to receive £4,000, to be invested in public stocks or parliamentary funds, and providing smaller legacies to several other members of her wider kinship network. This contrasts quite dramatically with the two hundred guineas Gordon provided for her 'dear daughter' Dame Mary Inglis.¹⁶⁰ Although her use of this term of endearment implies a close and affectionate relationship, in the 1790s Gordon had been involved in a scandalous divorce case and she had not seen her daughter since, suggesting that this bequest was largely a symbolic one.¹⁶¹ Female relatives, often sisters, nieces or granddaughters did, however, appear more frequently than their male counterparts. Elizabeth Osborn provided substantial legacies for her two granddaughters, Margaret Eleanor Osborn and Isabella Catherine Montgomery, making no mention of her grandsons.¹⁶² This supports the notion that women did often privilege other women in their wills, not only as a way of marking sentimental

¹⁵⁶ PCC PROB 11/1968/303, Will of Catherina Brandreth Backhouse Chetham Strode.

¹⁵⁷ Birmingham Victorian Benefit Building Society, *Rules and Regulations* (Birmingham, 1850). Cited in Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, p. 213.

¹⁵⁸ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 213; Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, pp. 100-101.

¹⁵⁹ PCC PROB 11/1853/190, Will of Ann Sill.

¹⁶⁰ PCC PROB 11/1721/114, Will of Susanna Harriott Gordon.

¹⁶¹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19742> (accessed 22/04/16).

¹⁶² PCC PROB 11/2034/301, Will of Elizabeth Osborn.

ties but as a means of helping to provide economic security in an uncertain world.¹⁶³

Another indication that these women were aware of the need to protect female family members was the number of references in their wills to providing a 'sole and separate estate'. This was a way of preserving a woman's interest in a specific property during her marriage, protecting it from the rights her husband could claim through the principle of coverture.¹⁶⁴ This was, quite obviously, particularly important when bequeathing property to married women. Frances Lee was careful to stipulate that the £3,000 she was placing in trust for the benefit of her sister Favell Bourke Bevan was 'for her sole and separate use and benefit' and used almost identical language to describe the payment of the £100 legacies she was providing for her nieces.¹⁶⁵ Susanna Harriot Gordon similarly left £100 for her 'dear sister' Florence Mellor, explaining that this was 'for her sole and separate use benefit and disposal' and that 'her receipt alone' was to be a sufficient discharge.¹⁶⁶ Ann Shickle went into even more detail, explaining that the cottage left for her daughter Elizabeth Ann Gifford was 'for her sole and separate use free from the control debts and engagements of [her] said Husband'.¹⁶⁷ Neither was it only current husbands from whom women needed to be protected. Mary Gilpin was careful to stipulate that 'if any of my daughters who shall be beneficially interested under this my Will shall be married when any sum of money shall become payable to her or shall be married at any time thereafter' then her trustees were to pay her share for 'her own sole and separate use so as to be free from the debts contracts or engagements of the husband ... of any such daughter'.¹⁶⁸ Mary Sandby was equally clear that the £1,000 reduced bank annuities she left for her sister was 'to be transferred in her name to & for her own use and benefit free from the debts control or engagements of her present or any future husband'.¹⁶⁹ Such statements were evident both in the wills of women who established trusts and those who did not and slightly more frequently than appeared in the wills of their fathers and brothers. Whilst it is certainly possible

¹⁶³ Allison C. Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship: Enterprise, Home and Household in London, c. 1800-1870* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p. 28.

¹⁶⁴ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 221. It also protected a woman's property from being used to pay her husband's debts.

¹⁶⁵ PCC PROB 11/1920/153, Will of Frances Lee.

¹⁶⁶ PCC PROB 11/1721/114, Will of Susanna Harriot Gordon.

¹⁶⁷ National Library of Wales, St. David's Probate Records, 1556-1858 9933041602419, Will of Ann Shickle.

¹⁶⁸ PCC PROB 11/2204/301, Will of Mary Gilpin.

¹⁶⁹ PCC PROB 11/1944/454, Will of Mary Sandby.

to question how binding such pronouncements were, it does at the very least demonstrate that women were aware of the need to protect the property rights of their daughters, sisters and nieces.

A considerable number of women left legacies not only to female family members but to friends and close acquaintances. Frances Lee, for example, left 'to my friend Margaret Bell Dickson of Blandford Place Regents Park the sum of one hundred pounds, to my friend Mrs Catherine Green Widow the sum of fifty pounds and to my friend Elizabeth Ann Boyd of Margate the sum of fifty pounds'.¹⁷⁰ That Mary Gascoyne left £1,500 to be invested in government bonds to a woman she described as 'my very dear friend Mrs Connell', suggests the bequest was of emotional as well as economic value. She also tantalisingly added that 'it is my particular wish and desire that all my papers except those relating to my property and affairs and which are not deposited in a Green box may be destroyed by my Executors, without reading the same'.¹⁷¹ There were also many more women who left legacies to named individuals where there is no evidence of a familial link, suggesting that it was common for women to leave small legacies to friends with whom they were close. It is surely not coincidental that the majority of these recipients were female. These wills certainly seem to confirm that what Alison Kay has referred to as a 'female economy of financial support' was important to many of these absentees, a way of both marking emotional attachments and offering some means of financial aid for female friends.¹⁷²

Nineteenth-century women's wills, Robert Morris has suggested, were also more likely to mention servants than those of men.¹⁷³ Servants were certainly regularly mentioned in the wills of these female absentees, particularly when there was more than one heir or residuary legatee. Elizabeth Pinnock left £100 to 'my Maid', the same amount she also gave to her son-in-law and nephew.¹⁷⁴ Ann Launce Hill similarly gave £100 to her servants Mary Ross and Cara Ellitson, with an additional £19 18s given to Elizabeth Bran.¹⁷⁵ Frances Lee chose to provide an annuity of ten

¹⁷⁰ PCC PROB 11/1920/153, Will of Frances Lee.

¹⁷¹ PCC PROB 11/2206/320, Will of Mary Gascoyne.

¹⁷² Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship*, p. 28.

¹⁷³ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, p. 243.

¹⁷⁴ PCC PROB 11/1870/300, Will of Elizabeth Pinnock.

¹⁷⁵ PCC PROB 11/2082/45, Will of Ann Launce Hill.

guineas to Sarah Maria Griggs, 'who formally lived with me as a Servant' and an annuity of twenty guineas to footman George Easton 'if he shall be in my service at the time of my decease'.¹⁷⁶ The majority of servants who received bequests, however, were female. While this, of course, reflects the fact that the majority of those working in domestic service were women it also suggests that women recognised a need to protect not just their female friends and family members but also their female employees.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, Susanna Harriott Gordon, in addition to providing one year's wage for 'each of my servants who shall be living with me at the time of my decease' bequeathed £1,000 to servant Elizabeth Halbo 'for her sole and separate use benefit & disposal', protecting this property from any husband in the same manner as she did for female relatives.¹⁷⁸ It also demonstrates that servants continued to be bound up with the notion of the 'household-family'.¹⁷⁹ That these were occupational, contractual and hierarchical relationships did not prevent them from being infused with ties of affection and obligation.

Objects also tended to figure more prominently in the wills of nineteenth-century women than their male counterparts. This demonstrates the extent to which bequesting was underpinned by emotional and affective as well as material considerations, suggesting that for some women the symbolic significance of a bequest could be as critical as its financial worth.¹⁸⁰ It is also possible that bequeathing objects worked as a way of compensating for a lack of real estate. Interestingly, individual possessions appeared particularly frequently in the wills of women who established trusts in order to sell their Caribbean plantations. Yet many of the female absentees, whether owners, annuitants or trust beneficiaries, clearly did bequeath objects that were of deep emotional significance. Frances Lee gave to her sister 'the portrait of my said dear brother Richard Lee painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence' and a gold watch and silver teapot and stand 'which belonged to our dear brother Matthew Allen Lee'.¹⁸¹ Watches and books were bequeathed particularly frequently. Catherine Wordie made reference to both, leaving her gold watch to god-

¹⁷⁶ PCC PROB 11/1920/153, Will of Frances Lee.

¹⁷⁷ Carolyn Steedman, *Labours Lost: Domestic Service and the Making of Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 40.

¹⁷⁸ PCC PROB 11/1721/114, Will of Susanna Harriott Gordon.

¹⁷⁹ Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 28-29.

¹⁸⁰ McCrum, 'Inheritance and the family', in Stobart and Alistair Owens, (eds.), *Urban Fortunes*, p. 169.

¹⁸¹ PCC PROB 11/1920/153, Will of Frances Lee.

daughter Maria Rougé and ‘all my printed books’ to friend Anne Finlay.¹⁸² It was also common to bequeath jewellery. Dorothy Boehm gave ‘my gold bracelet with diamonds and rubies’ to Mrs Berney, her brother’s widow, and ‘my pearl necklace with a diamond clasp’ to Mrs Anna Maria Ogle.¹⁸³ Margot Finn has suggested that items such as these were ‘well calculated to recall the descendant’s memory or physical presence’, serving not simply as a form of memorialisation but as a way of exerting agency over legatees.¹⁸⁴ This was also evident when money was bequeathed specifically for the purpose of buying mourning rings. Elizabeth Osborn left £50 to her ‘esteemed friend Mrs June Brown as a token of my sincere friendship’ so that she might purchase ‘a ring in remembrance of me’, thereby reinforcing a particular set of expectations, both material and emotional.¹⁸⁵ Neither were the recipients of these objects solely family members or friends. Susanna Harriott Gordon left ‘my marble statue in imitation of Canova’s Venus and also two Alabaster vases’ to ‘my faithful and attached Servant Elizabeth Haldó’, a physical marker of loyalty, affection and esteem.¹⁸⁶ Objects were vital in helping to mark and reaffirm emotional, affective and instrumental ties, both in life and in death.

The wills of these absentees also regularly contained charitable bequests. These women may simply have believed such contributions were important in and of themselves, seeing no contradiction in donating wealth derived from the slave economy into philanthropic endeavours in Britain.¹⁸⁷ But engaging in philanthropic activity also enabled absentees to view and represent themselves as respectable, benevolent and compassionate individuals. Intimately tied to the development and expression of particular kinds of classed identities, in the early nineteenth century both men and women began to engage in philanthropic activity to unprecedented degrees.¹⁸⁸ The majority of bequests in the wills of female absentees were, like those of Thomas Lane, given to local institutions. Lady Cooper gave £200 to the Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of Isleworth ‘to be applied for the benefit of the poor of the said parish’, also giving £25 each to Mrs Ingram’s Almshouses and Mrs Tolson’s

¹⁸² PCC PROB 11/1879/247, Will of Catherine Wordie.

¹⁸³ PCC PROB 11/1957/153, Will of Dorothy Boehm.

¹⁸⁴ Margot Finn, ‘Imperial family formations: domestic strategies and colonial power in British India, c. 1757-1857’, (Unpublished paper, 2016), pp. 33, 38.

¹⁸⁵ PCC PROB 11/2034/301, Will of Elizabeth Osborn.

¹⁸⁶ PCC PROB 11/1721/114, Will of Susanna Harriott Gordon.

¹⁸⁷ Hall et al. *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 52.

¹⁸⁸ Kathryn Gleadle, *British Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 65-66.

Almshouses 'for the advantage of th[ose] charit[ies]'.¹⁸⁹ Mary Gascoyne similarly left £30 to the vicar of Twickenham for 'the poor of the parish'.¹⁹⁰ Social obligation, as well as personal concern, motivated such bequests. Mary Sandby gave £100 to her executor, brother George Sandby, 'to be paid to or distributed by him amongst such one or more charitable institutions in such shares or proportions & at such time & times & in such manner as he in his discretion may think fit & proper', increasing this sum to £200 in her codicil.¹⁹¹ These bequests could be considerable. Eleanor Atherton was one of the richest women in Britain when she died in 1870, leaving effects of £400,000.¹⁹² A 'prolific but unostentatious philanthropist', during her life Atherton gave philanthropic bequests amounting to around £100,000, including £18,000 for the building of Holy Trinity Church, Hulme, £5,000 for industrial and ragged schools in Manchester and £10,000 for the building of almshouses in Prescott, dedicated to the memory of her sister.¹⁹³ The philanthropic endeavours of upper- and middle-class women, who were able to present these ventures as a natural extension of their domestic duties, were a fundamental part of this nineteenth-century 'age of charity'.¹⁹⁴

There are many wills that I have not accessed because their writers died after 1858, when wills were no longer registered in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and are thus not available at the National Archives. Probate records, however, do give some indication of the wealth these women possessed at their death and that was ultimately transmitted to others. Judith Bernard junior died in Cheltenham in November 1876, leaving effects under £12,000 and Ann Trotman died in Clifton, Bristol in January 1874, leaving effects under £9,000.¹⁹⁵ Mary Augusta Gray, Emma Louisa Knatchbull, Sarah Maria Wetherall and Maria Frances Pallmer are amongst the other absentees who died after 1858, leaving estates worth between £600 and

¹⁸⁹ LMA, Acc/0775/008, Draft will of Dowager Lady Cooper, 18th March 1847.

¹⁹⁰ PCC PROB 11/2206/320, Will of Mary Gascoyne.

¹⁹¹ PCC PROB 11/1944/454, Will of Mary Sandby.

¹⁹² Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 53.

¹⁹³ Joyce F. Goodman, 'Atherton, Eleanora (1782–1870)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56094> (accessed 22/04/16).

¹⁹⁴ Dorice Williams Elliott, *The Angel out of the House: Philanthropy and Gender in Nineteenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002), p. 4; A Country Lady, *Females of the Present Day Considered as to their Influence on Society* (London, 1831), pp. 138-139.

¹⁹⁵ National Probate Calendar, 1876; National Probate Calendar, 1874.

£4,000.¹⁹⁶ Probably the last of these absentees to die was Frances Dickinson, who was still an infant and ward of Chancery at the time of compensation and whose £3,852 15s 0d was awarded to parties in this suit.¹⁹⁷ Dickinson, a well-connected woman who was friends with Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens, died in Siena, Italy on June 26th 1898, with effects of £1,507 14s. 6d.¹⁹⁸ Although unfortunately it is not possible to discern how these women chose to transmit their property, these probate records do help to demonstrate the extent to which the wealth of these absentees, of which their West Indian estates and slave compensation were surely a significant contributing factor, continued to be transmitted to friends and family throughout the nineteenth century.

Wives

Placing a focus on wills does, of course, ignore one important subsection of female claimants and beneficiaries, those who were married. Married women could not write wills without their husband's consent and of the wills I have examined only one was written by a married woman. Mary Ann Peterkin was awarded £2965 2s 10d in her own name as the owner of 144 enslaved people on Chatham estate in the Jamaican parish of St James.¹⁹⁹ In 1832 she had married East India Company official Colonel Peter Grant and the couple adopted the surname Grant Peterkin, suggesting Peterkin was the partner who brought significant property to the marriage. Her will, however, still had to begin by stating that it had been written 'with the special advice and consent of my said husband'. In it she explained that in her marriage settlement her Scottish estates of Grieshop and West Grange had been conveyed 'to and in favour of myself and the heirs male of my body of the marriage', subverting gendered norms by providing an annuity of £600 for her husband if he was still alive when she died. Her real and personal estate not mentioned in her marriage settlement, presumably including her Jamaican property, was placed in trust. Her husband was made one of the trustees and, if he was still living at the time of her death, Peterkin

¹⁹⁶ National Probate Calendar, 1870; National Probate Calendar, 1871; National Probate Calendar, 1858; National Probate Calendar, 1873.

¹⁹⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/19181> accessed 19/04/16).

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/19181> (accessed 19/04/16).

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/19203> (accessed 26/04/16).

ordered that he should have 'sole power' to manage and execute the trust, also receiving all its benefits.²⁰⁰ In many respects Peterkin's will was largely superfluous.

Married women do, however, regularly appear in the compensation records alongside their husbands. 'William Dawson and Letitia his Wife' submitted a counterclaim as devisees of part of the Sportsmans Estate, which had been inherited by Letitia Dawson as one of the heirs of John Stockade Brown.²⁰¹ The couple were subsequently awarded £1,173 10s 2d for their share of the compensation, the other moiety being awarded to Dawson's sister Helen Brown.²⁰² There are dozens of similar examples among the 43 married claimants and beneficiaries who were the largest-scale absentees. Lady Lillias Oswald, Jane Fitzgerald and Helen Mackeller were three more women who were named, alongside their husbands, as claimants or awardees, all having brought enslaved property to their marriages.²⁰³ In other instances married women appear more obliquely, while still being listed as co-claimants. The seven individuals who claimed compensation for 342 enslaved people on Hanover's New Miln's Estate were recorded as 'William David Longlands and Uxor, George Ingram Fisher and Uxor, John Mckenzie and Uxor, and Mary Pendrill'. Sisters Judith Campbell Longlands, Elizabeth Fisher and Margaret Campbell McKenzie, were, along with Pendrill, heirs of their maternal grandfather William Campbell. Yet their identities were reduced entirely to the status of wife, their presence merely serving to signal the rights to property-ownership acquired by their husbands. Indeed, a note attached to the claim simply stated 'Married women, stand over!'²⁰⁴

It is difficult to grasp what is meant by the fact that so many wives appeared alongside their husbands as claimants in the compensation process. In some respects it demonstrates that the common law principle of coverture was never all-encompassing. That these women, particularly those who were named as co-claimants, were not completely subsumed by the identity of their husbands is surely

²⁰⁰ PCC PROB 11/2231/107, Will of Mary Ann Peterkin.

²⁰¹ TNA, T71/874 Registers of Claims, Jamaica: Trelawney; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/1780708599> (accessed 26/04/16).

²⁰² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/16167> (accessed 26/04/16).

²⁰³ TNA, T71/856 Register of Claims, Jamaica: St Mary 267; T71/855 Register of Claims, Jamaica: St Thomas in the Vale 294; T71/873 Register of Claims, Jamaica: St James 397.

²⁰⁴ TNA T71/872 Register of Claims, Jamaica: Hanover 4; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/14916> (accessed 26/04/16).

significant. Yet this was hardly a negation of coverture either. In almost all of these instances it is very difficult to discern who actually received the compensation money, whether these women had any control over the money they were awarded or whether the fact that they nominally appeared as awardees was in practice irrelevant and their husbands adopted full control, as the claim from William Campbell's descendants might suggest. The limits of the evidence available mean that it is impossible to know how these women perceived their slave-ownership, or the impact that slave compensation had on their economic positions, within their marriages, families and lives.

Neither does the fact that husbands and wives were awarded compensation together necessarily mean that the award was uncontested or free from dispute. Francis Glasse submitted a counterclaim for compensation for 112 enslaved people on Jamaica's Java estate, as an annuitant under the will of his brother-in-law William Stimpson.²⁰⁵ Stimpson had been the owner of the plantation and in his will bequeathed Java to his nephew Francis Philip Glasse, the son of Francis Glasse and wife Eliza, as well as providing an annuity of one hundred pounds for his sister 'for her separate use'.²⁰⁶ The younger Glasse died in 1834, leaving the plantation to his 'beloved mother' for her use for the rest of her life.²⁰⁷ Yet a letter Eliza Glasse wrote to the Commissioners highlights the uncertain position that married women could find themselves in. She explained that she was entitled to an annuity under her brother's will and that her son 'dying last year left ... the Property to me'. She continued, however, by voicing her fears that 'being a divided family' the claim could not be adequately settled, 'only by the Chancellor'.²⁰⁸ Ultimately the compensation was adjudged to 'Francis Glasse and Eliza Glasse', although again it is difficult to disentangle what exactly this meant.²⁰⁹ Was the listing of Eliza Glasse as an awardee of little practical significance? Or did the Commissioners, recognising her vulnerability, decide to split the compensation to ensure that Eliza would be at least partially recompensed? Regardless, this example indicates how easily married women could find themselves in an economically precarious position. While women

²⁰⁵ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/13069> (accessed 26/04/16).

²⁰⁶ TNA T71/1190 Counter-Claims, Jamaica: Manchester 464.

²⁰⁷ PCC PROB 11/1871/169, Will of Francis Philip Glasse.

²⁰⁸ TNA T71/1606 In-letters, original: Jamaica (Middlesex), Mrs Eliza Glasse to the 'Commissioners of the Compensation Money', 3rd December 1835.

²⁰⁹ TNA T71/860 Register of Claims: Jamaica, Manchester 464.

might be provided for during their marriage, they often had little recourse if things went wrong.

There were a small number of cases where, like Mary Ann Peterkin, married women appear in the compensation records on their own, without their husbands. Emily Mary Markham (née Packharnis) was, alongside her two sisters, awarded £2,194 8s 3d for 104 enslaved people on the Carton Estate in the Jamaican parish of St Ann. She had married Charles Markham 'Clerk of Lieutenancy and of the Peace for the county of Northamptonshire' in 1811 and was still living with him in Northampton in 1841.²¹⁰ The compensation claim for the Packharnis sisters, however, gives no indication that Markham was a married woman and that her husband should therefore be entitled to her property. Markham's sister, Frances Cox, applied to the Commissioners 'on behalf of herself and her two sisters, Eliza Mary Markham and Sarah Anna Parkinson, as joint owners-in-fee'. There was no reference to Charles Markham.²¹¹ Interestingly, several of these women were awarded compensation not with their husbands but with their brothers-in-law. Emma Reignolds was one such woman. She and Thomas Scott Reignolds, her brother-in-law, were together awarded a small part of the compensation for the enslaved on Jamaica's Hyde Estate.²¹² Further investigation, however, sheds light on this unusual eventuality. In June 1837 Reignolds's husband Robert appeared before the Court House in Lincoln's Inn Fields, applying for relief as an imprisoned insolvent debtor, suggesting that the reason he did not claim compensation with his wife is because he was in prison.²¹³ His brother, therefore, was probably acting as his representative *in absentia*. The fact that Reignolds was not awarded compensation with her husband does not necessarily mean that this property was hers and hers alone.

Married women's involvement in slave-ownership is often less immediately visible than that of their single and widowed counterparts. Yet that married women were crucial linchpins in the transatlantic system of inheritance and transmission is indicated by the number of men who claimed compensation 'in right of wife'. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to obtain a sense of how common this was. There is no way of comprehensively searching for the number of husbands who claimed

²¹⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/42787> (accessed 26/04/16).

²¹¹ TNA T71/857, Register of Claims, Jamaica: St Ann 13.

²¹² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/19355> (accessed 25/04/16).

²¹³ *The London Gazette*, 12th May 1837, p.1242-1243.

compensation this way. However, searching for this phrase within the LBS database's 'notes search' can provide us with a sense of the ways this legal claim was used. This expression appears in 38 claims relating to Jamaica and Barbados. Robert Gray of Dublin, for example, claimed compensation for 157 enslaved people on Jamaica's Green Pond estate as 'Owner in fee in right of wife'.²¹⁴ Gray's correspondence with the Commissioners provides an indication of how claiming compensation in this way was intended to work. They wrote to him stating that when a claim was filed by a husband in right of his wife 'the consent of the latter to an award being made in her Husband's favour must be obtained and lodged at this Office before such award can be made' and that it must be certified by a Magistrate or person of similar authority.²¹⁵ Gray sent such a document, 'containing the assent of Mrs Gray', and he was solely awarded £2,964 5s 8d in compensation.²¹⁶ We do not even know the name of the woman who was the source of this property. Whilst it is important to ask how freely such consent could be given, as this example indicates, a husband's right to claim 'in right of wife' was not accepted without question. Transatlantic merchant Robert Johnston initially claimed compensation for the Harmony Hill estate in Jamaica as owner 'in right of wife'. He was not, however, successful in his claim and the compensation was awarded not to Johnston but to the trustees of his marriage settlement. Without knowing the exact terms of this settlement it is difficult to know whether Robert or his wife, Catherine Cole Johnston, most benefited from this compensation money. Yet we do clearly have another example of a trust working to protect a wife's property interest from her husband.²¹⁷

The inconsistencies in the way that the 'in right of wife' claims have been recorded in the compensation records is reflected in the LBS database. Whilst some entries, like that of Robert Gray discussed above, do mention that the claim was submitted 'in right of wife', an examination of the Registers of Claims indicates that such claims were far more common than the database would suggest. Of the 38 claims or counterclaims submitted 'in right of wife' in the parish of St Ann only 12 entries in the database indicate that the claim was made in this way. Sometimes the wife has been named in the database alongside her husband as awardee, beneficiary or

²¹⁴ TNA, T71/860, Register of Claims, Jamaica: Manchester 415; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/14542> (accessed 26/04/16).

²¹⁵ TNA, T71/1593, Out-letters: domestic, Henry Hill to Robert Gray, February 2nd 1836.

²¹⁶ TNA, T71/1593, Out-letters: domestic, Henry Hill to Robert Gray, 6th July 1836.

²¹⁷ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/18637> (accessed 26/04/16).

unsuccessful claimant, hinting at the nature of the claim. In 23 of these instances the name of the married woman on whose behalf the claim for compensation was supposedly being made has not been recorded. This suggests that the overall statistics derived from the database, demonstrating that women constituted 41% of claimants and beneficiaries, may actually underplay the extent of female involvement in slave-ownership and particularly women's significance as conduits through which enslaved property was transmitted.

Visibility/Invisibility

Another way of exploring this less visible presence of women within the compensation records is to examine more closely the trustees who were awarded compensation, and the trusts they administered. As already mentioned, trust beneficiaries were not recorded systematically in the compensation records and although the LBS team has identified these beneficiaries where possible, this inevitably cannot be comprehensive. Anna Eliza Grenville, for example, was a slave-owner with a life-long interest in 'my West India property', yet she does not appear in either the LBS database or the underlying compensation records.²¹⁸ Trustees were overwhelmingly male but these unrecorded trust beneficiaries were often female, again suggesting that broad statistical analysis could actually understate women's involvement in slave-ownership.

There were 202 claims made by trustees resident in Britain for compensation for enslaved people on estates in Jamaica and Barbados.²¹⁹ Figure A illustrates the gender of the people from whom this enslaved property, held in trust, originated. This

²¹⁸ HL STG Box 95 (62) Anna Eliza to Richard Plantagenet Grenville, 16th October 1832. As discussed in Chapter Two, Anna Eliza did not claim compensation, although she believed she could have done so. The compensation was awarded to George Neville Grenville and John Campbell, 2nd Marquis of Breadalbane, the trustees of her son's marriage settlement. Although she ultimately disagreed with how the compensation was spent, Anna Eliza was one of the beneficiaries of this settlement.

²¹⁹ This does not, of course, necessarily mean that the trust beneficiaries were absentees, although in the majority of instances they were.

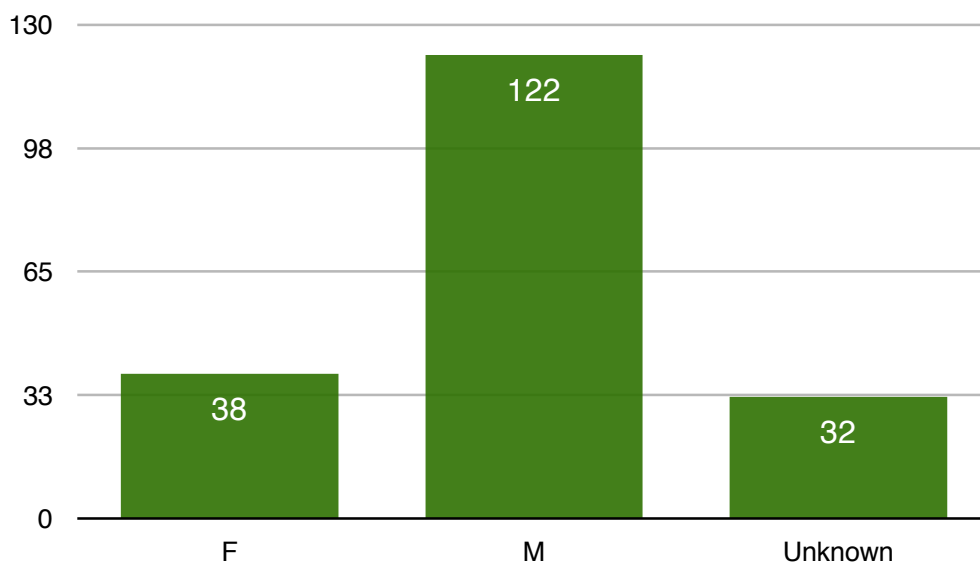


Figure A. Source of property (absentee trustees, Jamaica and Barbados)

could be the person from whom the property was inherited or the person who possessed the estate before a mortgagee laid claim to the title. When these trusts were in the form of marriage settlements it is the partner who brought the property to the marriage who has been recorded. Anna Susanna Taylor, for example, was the niece of Simon Taylor, described by Maria Nugent as ‘the richest man in the island’.²²⁰ Although her prospective husband, George Watson, was believed to possess an ‘excellent character’ her family were concerned about his lack of personal fortune and Taylor was careful to ensure that any settlement would provide a ‘sufficient jointure’ for his niece before he was willing to consent to the marriage.²²¹ The Taylor family’s substantial wealth meant they were able to negotiate a favourable settlement and it was to the trustees of this marriage settlement that, two decades later, compensation was awarded.²²² Anna Taylor Watson was one of 38

²²⁰ Philip Wright (ed.), *Lady Nugent’s Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801 to 1805* (Mona: University of West Indies Press, 2002), p. 65.

²²¹ Senate House Library, Taylor and Vanneck-Arcedekne Papers, Reel 10, Simon R. B. Taylor to Simon Taylor, 1st March 1809 and 5th July 1809.

²²² Simon Taylor did actually leave his ‘land and enslaved people in Jamaica’ to Anna’s brother, Simon Richard Brissett Taylor, but the latter died just two years after his uncle so

women out of a total of 160 — whose gender is known — from or through whom this enslaved property held in trust was originally transmitted. Interestingly, this proportion — 24% — reflects closely the overall proportion of female absentee slave-owners claiming compensation.

The proportion of women who were beneficiaries of these trusts, however, was somewhat different. Figure B illustrates the gender of the beneficiaries of these trusts.²²³ It shows that women were the sole or co-beneficiaries in 59% of trusts when the gender of the beneficiary is known. These included women like Isabella Bryan King, who had been left 22 enslaved people for life in the will of her husband, John Bryan King. The Commissioners established a trust for King and London merchants Nathaniel Mason and John Mitchell junior were awarded £431 15s 11d in slave compensation as her trustees. A Special Award in Trust dictated that this compensation must be invested in the purchase of three per cent consols, the dividends of which were paid to King for the rest of her life.²²⁴ The ‘mixed’ category includes trusts with both male and female beneficiaries. The most obvious examples

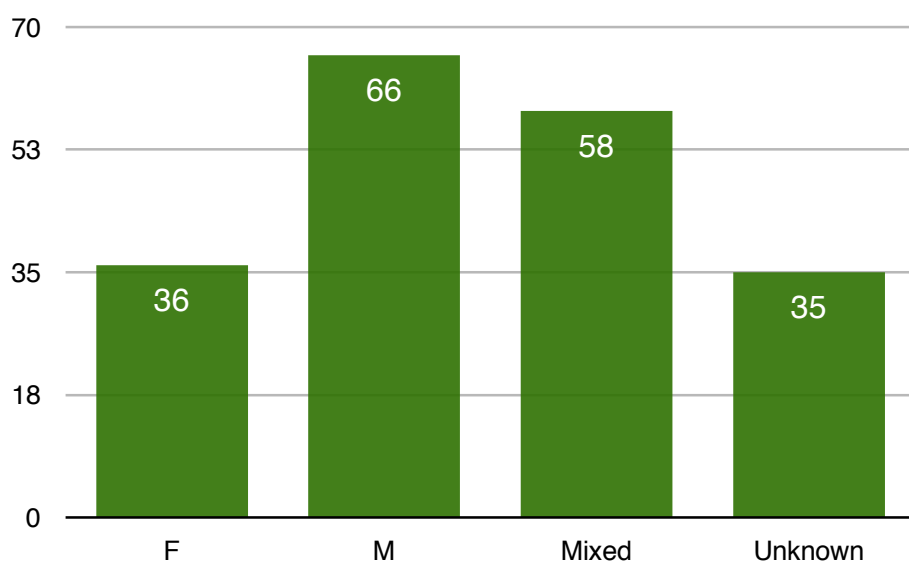


Figure B. Benefitting from trusts (absentee trustees Jamaica and Barbados)

Anna inherited the properties. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/2146634174> (accessed 23/11/16).

²²³ Of course, being a beneficiary of a trust did not necessarily mean one had access to the compensation money.

²²⁴ TNA, T71/1378 Special Awards in Trust, Jamaica: Portland 83.

of these were when trusts were established for the benefit of minors, such as that created for infants Nathaniel Phillip, John George and Sarah Goodwin Taylor.²²⁵ But many different kinds of trusts had multiple beneficiaries. Indeed, the difficulty of discerning the exact terms of marriage settlements and the fact that both partners were often beneficiaries in some form, means I have also classified marriage settlements in this manner.

Although trust beneficiaries have sometimes been included in the LBS database, and are included in their overall statistics, their inclusion can be somewhat piecemeal. Neither the aforementioned Isabella Bryan King nor the Taylor siblings, for example, are listed in the database.²²⁶ That women were at least co-beneficiaries in 59% of trusts administered by absentees (when the gender of the beneficiary is known) yet constituted just 3% of trustees thus suggests that women were indeed involved in the ownership and transmission of enslaved property in ways that are not always reflected in the statistics derived from the LBS database. However, Figure B also illustrates that there was a high proportion of male trust beneficiaries, showing that 78% of sole or co-beneficiaries in trusts where the gender of the beneficiary is known were male. This perhaps somewhat challenges the way we think about the role of the trust. Although many of the male beneficiaries, like Arthur Mackenzie and Alexander Campbell, were infants or like Captain William Clark, were 'of unsound mind', certainly not all were.²²⁷ Rev. Charles William Davy and Rev. George Porcher, for example, were awarded compensation as trustees of Henry Shirley III 'tenant in tail ... for life' of the Etingdon estate in Trelawney.²²⁸ This demonstrates that the trust was not just used as a means of providing for dependents and taking responsibility for those who could not effectively care for themselves but was an intrinsic part of the process of property-transmission in the early nineteenth century.

²²⁵ TNA, T71/1380 Special Awards in Trust, Barbados: 1274.

²²⁶ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/21813>; <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/3150> (accessed 24/11/16). The work of the LBS team is on-going and as they keep updating the database trust beneficiaries continue to be added.

²²⁷ TNA, T71/1378 Special Awards in Trust, Jamaica: Clarendon 6; Manchester 300; Westmoreland 503.

²²⁸ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/15122> (accessed 24/11/16).

Conclusion

The ownership of enslaved people was a distinctive form of property-ownership. It involved the possession of human beings: of men, women and children, old and young. Yet it is also clear that the patterns of property-ownership displayed by these female absentees conforms strongly to what we know about the experiences and practices of metropolitan property-holding women. They inherited this enslaved property from a variety of people, although in the majority of instances from someone with whom they enjoyed familial ties, and in a variety of forms: absolutely, both by themselves and with others, in trust, and in the form of annuities and legacies. Those with the power to bequeath these estates, or the money generated from their profits, sale, annuities secured on them or slave compensation, adopted a variety of strategies when passing them on. Some left all their property to just one devisee, but most made more diffuse choices, leaving legacies to a wide range of friends and kin. The extent to which women privileged other women is noticeable; this was a way of providing financial support for female family, friends and servants in an economically uncertain world. Ultimately, therefore, West Indian plantations and the people enslaved upon them, when transmuted across the Atlantic, became just another form of property. Female absentees played a critical role as transmitters of this property, acting as conduits who helped to facilitate the transmission of slave-based wealth into metropolitan society.

Ultimately, it is clear that female slave-ownership was extensive, even in metropolitan Britain. Women made up almost a quarter of absentee claimants to the Slave Compensation Commission. Neither were these women the ‘unconscious stipendiaries’ of a system of which they remained unaware.²²⁹ They often played an active role in the compensation process, were unafraid to demand money or property that they felt was rightfully theirs and bequeathed West Indian, as well as a variety of metropolitan and personal property, in their own wills. Indeed, many had spent time in the Caribbean themselves. Yet also patent is the extent to which women’s interaction with their property, colonial and metropolitan, real and personal, was often heavily mediated. This occurred in a variety of different ways. Most obviously, the common law principle of coverture meant that married women, without the aid of a

²²⁹ Anon., *Letters on the Necessity of a Prompt Extinction of British Colonial Slavery*, p. 214.

marriage settlement, were not the legal owners of any real property they brought to a marriage. What was meant by the fact that they regularly appeared alongside their husbands as claimants and awardees is something that requires further investigation. But unmarried women and widows could also face restrictions. Annuities secured on West Indian property, as well as being only temporary, fixed and immutable interests in the estates, appear to have regularly been left unpaid. Trust beneficiaries often had little control over their property, with trustees claiming compensation on their behalf. Even many of the women who claimed compensation as owners of their enslaved property only possessed life interests in their Caribbean estates.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the significance of the trust when discussing women's property-ownership in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It enabled women of the middle and upper classes, including those who were married, to own property, yet also regularly restricted the terms of this engagement. Trusts could, as Robert Morris has argued, provide women with 'small but significant fragments of independence', but this apparent economic independence, although undoubtedly important to these women, was almost always both confined and contingent.²³⁰ Trusts often had a dual function. They certainly protected a woman's income, and her interest in any particular property, and could provide her with a range of powers over them. Yet they also imposed the wishes and controls of, usually male, others. It is important to recognise the significance of both these functions; trusts could variously, and perhaps even simultaneously, liberate and constrain.

These absentees' experiences also reinforce how pivotal the family was to women's experiences of property-ownership, both colonial and metropolitan. The overwhelming majority of women who claimed or were beneficiaries of compensation became slaveholders through inheritance, the majority inheriting from family members, whether husbands, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or siblings. Those who had the power to do so, like their male counterparts, generally passed on their property to those to whom they were related, including children, siblings and nieces and nephews, although their bequests also highlight how significant female friendships were to nineteenth-century women. Women frequently claimed and were

²³⁰ Morris, *Men, Women and Property*, p. 263.

awarded compensation alongside other family members. They were a fundamental part of the complex kinship networks that helped build and maintain the transatlantic slave economy. It is not possible to demonstrate that women's slave-based wealth was invested in the railways, canals and industries that helped to build Victorian Britain, although this will have undoubtedly happened in at least some cases. However, the significance of women's role as transmitters of this property and wealth should not be underestimated. As key players in 'the intergenerational transmission of plantation wealth' wives, daughters, sisters and nieces helped inject such wealth into British society.²³¹ The ties between metropolitan Britain and its West Indian colonies were not just those of money, wealth and property but also those of family and kinship, affection and obligation. Women were often the linchpins of this complex transatlantic nexus.

²³¹ Hall et al., *Legacies of British Slave-ownership*, p. 20.

Conclusion

This thesis is both a work of women's history, examining women as absentee slave-owners, and gender history, exploring how gender operated to shape the experiences of both slave-owning women and men. It uses gender as a means of analysis through which to unpick the categories of slave-owner, 'West Indian' and absentee. It considers how absentee slave-owners conceived and presented themselves as men and, in particular, explores the position of female slave- and property-owners in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain.

It is quite clear that female involvement in absentee slave-ownership was far more extensive than has often assumed, by both eighteenth- and nineteenth-century contemporaries and historians. That masculine pronouns were frequently used to describe slave-holders indicates the extent to which slave-ownership was simply assumed, perhaps unconsciously, to be an activity undertaken by men. 'There is no class of men on earth more calumniated than the West Indian planter', admonished Mrs Carmichael in 1833, herself a 'planter's wife' and one of the few women to publicly profess her pro-slavery position.¹ But such pronouncements masked widespread female involvement in the business of slave-ownership. That 24% of the absentee claimants and beneficiaries of slave compensation were women demonstrates that it was through women as well as men that slave-ownership 'came home' to metropolitan Britain. Indeed, this statistic probably underplays the number of women who, while not necessarily owners of enslaved property in the strictest sense, were involved in slave-ownership. As the example of Anna Eliza Grenville demonstrates, the fact that such women do not appear in the LBS database does not necessarily mean that they were uninterested in slave-ownership or the compensation process.

To argue that women were more extensively involved in absentee slave-ownership than has traditionally been assumed is not to suggest that the experiences of absentee slave-owning women were the same as their male counterparts. They absolutely were not. These women were situated within a patriarchal system that

¹ Mrs Carmichael, *Domestic Manners and Social Condition of the White, Coloured, and Negro Population of the West Indies, Vol. I* (London, 1833), p. 16, 21.

fundamentally restricted the terms of their engagement. Legal curtailments, political restraints and social and cultural expectations served to limit and shape women's experiences of slave-ownership and the opportunities available to them. Most obviously, the common law principle of coverture severely restricted married women's ability to own and control property. Even when the legal constraints of coverture could be evaded, its ideological impact remained strong. Indeed, a history of the University of West Indies's Mona Campus published in 2004 referred to Hope plantation as 'the property of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos'.² But it was not just married women whose experience of slave-ownership was heavily mediated. Widows, daughters and sisters as well as wives found their experiences of property-ownership circumscribed precisely because they were women. That coverture was never all-encompassing and that there could be room for women — married, widowed and never-married — to express agency, economic or otherwise, should not take away from the fact that they were located within a system that restricted them legally, politically and socially. The assessment of the positions, power and authority of these women also depends on the perspective from which they are being viewed. In comparison to their fathers, brothers and husbands these women's ability to own property was heavily bounded. But they did not just own property, they owned people. The restrictions they faced were nothing compared to those of the men, women and children they owned.

It is also clear that there were a variety of ways that ideas about property-ownership were understood. Most obviously, female (and male) slave-owners 'owned' this property in many forms: absolutely, both by themselves and with others, in trust, and in the form of annuities and legacies. Yet one of the most interesting findings to emerge from this close analysis of female compensation claimants is that the manner in which many of these women successfully claimed compensation did not always reflect their legal entitlements. Indeed, the symbolic aspect of property-ownership was vital to how female property-ownership was understood. Anna Eliza Grenville repeatedly referred to 'my West India Property' and 'my Hampshire Estates'. Regardless of the formal legal situation, 'owning' property was important to her sense of self, a way of asserting an identity that was not merely 'Grenville' or wife.

² Suzanne Francis Brown, *Mona Past and Present: The History and Heritage of Mona Campus, University of the West Indies* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2004), p. 22.

Measuring rates of female property-ownership only in legal terms, whether enslaved or otherwise, can thus only ever take one so far, providing just one aspect of a much broader, and messier, picture.

If there is one attribute that united almost all of the slave-owners discussed in this thesis, male or female, it is that they did not return to Britain having made their riches in the Caribbean, but rather inherited their enslaved property. This narrative may not be quite as dramatic as that depicted in many novels and plays of the late eighteenth century but inheritance was probably the most important means by which slave-ownership was transmitted into metropolitan society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A whole range of factors served to shape these inheritance practices — law, custom, expectation, sentiment, chance — and both men and women made a range of choices in deciding how to bequeath their property. It is impossible, however, to properly understand how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century property was owned and transmitted without recognising the significance of the trust. It is a device that has reappeared throughout this thesis, used by the Grenvilles and shaping the ways that many men and women benefitted from slave compensation. As these examples indicate, trusts could have many different purposes. They were used by the aristocracy — and many of the most prominent West Indian families — to protect their estates and transmit their property across generations.³ But they were also increasingly used by the growing middle and propertied classes, both as a way of providing ‘dependents’ with access to property and for a variety of other reasons. These trusts fundamentally shaped many women’s experience of property-ownership, serving both to liberate and constrain.

It does not make sense to think about slave-ownership only through the prism of the individual. For both men and women family was central both to the transmission and the practice of absentee slave-ownership. The men and women discussed in this thesis overwhelmingly inherited their enslaved property from family members, whether from mothers, fathers, husbands, siblings, aunts, uncles or cousins. These inheritance practices, like all inheritance practices, worked to disrupt, modify and reformulate ideas about family, identity and belonging. Women as well as men were key members of the complex kinship networks that sustained the transatlantic slave

³ Chris Jeppesen, ‘Will making among West Indian families’, (Unpublished paper, 2015), p. 20.

economy and played a vital role in helping to transmit slave-based wealth and property into metropolitan society.

Expanding on the work of Douglas Hall and the Legacies of British Slave-ownership team, in this thesis I have demonstrated that absentee slave-owners were a varied and complex group.⁴ The frequency with which 'West Indians' were depicted in novels and plays of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries attests to the significance of slave-ownership to the economic, social and cultural development of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, as well as to the concomitant anxieties it aroused. But while the likes of William Beckford may have attracted both attention and approbation, the majority of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century absentees, both male and female, did not correspond to the foppish, extravagant and dissolute West Indian 'type'. Equally, they were far from the sentimental, benevolent patriarchs portrayed by both pro- and anti-slavery campaigners. Yet as Thomas Lane's declaration that he perceived the enslaved as 'a sort of family' shows, such depictions were much more closely related to the ways that at least some slave-owners chose to conceive and represent themselves.⁵

This thesis has primarily been concerned with examining absentees who owned or possessed an interest in plantations and not those, like Bristolian Dorothy Little, who only owned comparatively small numbers of enslaved people. Yet it demonstrates how important it is to challenge traditional ideas about what it meant to be a 'West Indian', plantation- and slave-owner and absentee. London lawyers and English aristocrats, Welsh cottagers and Manchester philanthropists, widowed annuitants and teenaged writers, absentee slave-owners were a large and diverse range of people. David Lambert, Trevor Burnard and Douglas Hall have all drawn attention to the dangers of overemphasising the distinctions between resident and absentee slave-owners, quite rightly highlighting both that there were many similarities between the two and that the distinction between such categories was not always

⁴ Douglas Hall, 'Absentee proprietorship in the British West Indies to about 1850', *Journal of Caribbean History*, 35:1 (2001), pp. 97-121; Catherine Hall, Nicholas Draper, Keith McClelland, Katie Donington and, Rachel Lang, *Legacies of British Slave-Ownership: Colonial Slavery and the Formation of Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁵ SHL MS523/967, T Lane to Haynes, 15th October 1805.

clear-cut.⁶ Many individuals and families crossed the Atlantic with such regularity that it does not make sense to think of them as either 'residents' or 'absentees'. But it also seems misguided not to recognise that the slave-ownership of those discussed in this thesis was fundamentally shaped by the fact that they did not live in the Caribbean but almost 5,000 miles across the Atlantic. This was perhaps particularly the case for those who never visited the plantations they owned or spent time in Jamaica or Barbados, who never observed or met those they enslaved. That slave-ownership was for these people not something tangible but largely an imaginative act surely enabled them to distance themselves from the realities they were largely unable, or unwilling, to conceive.

The ways that slave-ownership was integrated into the lives of Thomas Lane, Anna Eliza Grenville and the claimants and beneficiaries of compensation also varied significantly, shaping their lives and experiences in many different respects. Whereas for Lane inheriting Barbadian plantations was a transformative experience, Hope was just one part of Grenville's extensive property portfolio and thus perhaps did not adopt quite the same significance, at least not economically. But the fact that Anna Eliza Grenville had multiple property interests does not make her slave-ownership less worthy of exploration. Indeed, this thesis is not solely about slave-ownership – because it can't be. Slave-ownership was not somehow insulated or isolated from the wider lives and experiences of these absentees. For neither Thomas Lane, Anna Eliza Grenville nor any but the most renowned 'West Indians' was slave-ownership the only, or even the primary, facet of their identity. Thomas Lane was also a lawyer, father and gentleman, Anna Eliza a mother, wife, aristocrat, local politician and epistolary conduit. It is only by investigating the variety of endeavours undertaken by such absentees that we can begin to fully understand the complex ways that slave-ownership was integrated into British society – and that of the wider British Empire – in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Anna Eliza Grenville's general lack of engagement with Hope, slavery and slave-ownership does remain puzzling to a contemporary historian. It stands in contrast not only to her mother's active involvement with the transatlantic management of the

⁶ David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 2; Hall, 'Absentee proprietorship', p. 113; Trevor Burnard, 'Passengers only: the extent and significance of absenteeism in eighteenth-century Jamaica', *Atlantic Studies*, 1:2 (2004), pp.178-195.

plantation but also with her interest both in her own family's financial position and her engagement with contemporary military and political issues, both metropolitan and colonial, particularly Catholic Emancipation and Reform. What prompted this silence, and her subsequent interest in sending emigrants from Hampshire to Jamaica, remains unknown. Even at the end of my research many questions remain unanswered. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that Thomas Lane conceived of his relationship with his enslaved in a paternalistic way. Yet both Lane's professions of care and Grenville's silence regarding her enslaved can be seen as different ways in which slave-owners psychologically distanced themselves from the violence and torture of the system in which they were embroiled. In the same way that knowing about exploitative labour practices does not prevent twenty-first century Britons (including myself) from buying cheap, disposable clothing, the ways in which Anna Eliza Grenville and Thomas Lane articulated — and did not articulate — their relationship with their enslaved can be seen as forms of disavowal, a way of denying responsibility and wilfully ignoring the violent reality.

This thesis has shown just some of the ways that absentee slave-owners helped to bring slavery 'home' to metropolitan Britain. Through their endeavours slave-owning was transmitted into the economy and society of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. The histories of Britain and the Caribbean thus cannot be conceived of separately; they were inextricably interconnected and intertwined. Yet although slavery was, as Katie Donington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody have recently argued 'part of everyday life in Britain', this history is regularly, indeed purposefully, 'forgotten', the emphasis instead placed on triumphally celebrating Britain's role in abolition.⁷ This is itself, Catherine Hall has argued, a form of 'disavowal and distantiation', a way of abrogating responsibility for slavery, the unequal legacies of which continue to pervade both British and Caribbean societies today.⁸ It is not possible for either Jamaica (or any of the other former Caribbean colonies) or Britain to 'move on from this painful legacy', as David Cameron blithely suggested in September 2015.⁹ Efforts continue to be made, by academics, local historians,

⁷ Katie Donington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody, 'Introduction', in Katie Donington, Ryan Hanley and Jessica Moody (eds.), *Britain's History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery: Local Nuances of a 'National Sin'* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 1-2.

⁸ Catherine Hall, 'Gendering property, racing capital', *History Workshop Journal*, 78:1 (2014), p. 24.

⁹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/30/jamaica-should-move-on-from-painful-legacy-of-slavery-says-cameron> (accessed 6/12/16).

community activists, heritage professionals and a whole host of others, into thinking about how we best ‘remember’ and represent this history.¹⁰ I hope that this thesis can, in some small way, help to contribute to that work.

Reflections

This research has been made particularly interesting, but also difficult, by the fact that it explores an area on which very little work has currently been undertaken. Thus, although I hope to have opened up some important questions, inevitably much more remains to be done. One way of developing my research — and perhaps helping to make this work more cohesive as a whole — would be to look at men’s as well as women’s presence within the compensation records. It would be particularly interesting to compare the ways that men and women claimed compensation, how (and indeed if) they inherited their enslaved property and how they chose to bequeath their property, helping to show the different ways that property-ownership and transmission was gendered in nineteenth-century Britain.

I am also aware that although this is ostensibly a study of ‘British’ slave-ownership, the slave-owners I have examined in this thesis have overwhelmingly been English. Both of the individuals who formed my case studies were English and although some of the women sampled from the records of the Slave Compensation Commission were Scots (and there was one Welsh woman!), my use of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury probably means that the sample is disproportionately skewed towards the English. This is significant not only because it underplays the extensive involvement of Scots in the business of slavery, and fails to recognise the ways that slave-ownership was integrated into the lives of absentees north of the border but also because, as Ann McCrum has shown, inheritances strategies in Scotland could be different to those practised in England.¹¹ This is certainly an area where more work remains to be undertaken. Paying greater attention to the national variations in how property, including enslaved property, was conceived, owned and transmitted will only serve to expand and deepen my analysis.

¹⁰ Donington, Hanley and Moody (eds.), *Britain’s History and Memory of Transatlantic Slavery*.

¹¹ Anne McCrum, ‘Inheritance and the family: the Scottish urban experience in the 1820s’, in Jon Stobart and Alistair Owens (eds.), *Urban Fortunes: Property and Inheritance in the Town, 1700-1900*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 149-171.

There are other areas in which my analysis could be further developed. The use of in-depth case studies, whilst being useful in showing in detail the complex ways that individuals operated, inevitably raises questions about typicality. Undertaking further research will, however, enable me to investigate the extent to which the slave-owners examined in this thesis were or were not exemplary. In the immediate future, there are a number of individuals and families of particular interest. The Library Company of Philadelphia holds the marriage settlement of Jamaican slave-owners Catherine Cole Taylor and Robert Johnston, the trustees of which were awarded compensation for 120 enslaved people on the Harmony Hill estate.¹² The collection also contains the couple's correspondence and during an upcoming research trip I look forward to exploring how they conceived and practiced their slave-ownership. I am also keen to delve into the archive of Lord and Lady Holland, held at the British Library. The former was awarded part of the compensation for the enslaved people on three estates his wife brought to their marriage.¹³ V. E. Chancellor's examination of Henry Richard Vassall Fox stated that 'by the unexpected death of his wife's first husband in 1800, Holland found himself the reluctant, but effectual, proprietor of the Vassall plantations in Jamaica'.¹⁴ An investigation of Lord Holland as 'slave-owner and anti-slaver', it barely mentions Lady Holland, but Chancellor's references indicate that she was involved with the management of the estates both before and after the death of her husband.¹⁵ I hope that looking at the Holland House papers will enable me to further explore the ways that slave-ownership was integrated into the British aristocracy and the ways that West Indian heiresses conceived and negotiated their position within these structures.

This is in many respects an exploratory thesis. It has begun to open up an area that has thus far received little scholarly attention, unpicking and interrogating the relationship between gender and absentee slave-ownership in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. But much remains to be done.

¹² <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/18637> (accessed 15/03/17).

¹³ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/person/view/46368> (accessed 15/03/17).

¹⁴ V. E. Chancellor, 'Slave-owner and anti-slaver: Henry Richard Vassall Fox, 3rd Lord Holland, 1800–1840', *Slavery and Abolition*, 1:3 (1980), p. 263.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 263-275.

Final thoughts

One Sunday morning several years ago, whilst undertaking research in Jamaica, I visited Hope Botanical Gardens, a beautiful 200-acre park and gardens on the outskirts of Kingston. The Blue Mountains looming in the distance, it was the perfect day to relax and unwind in the green open space. The Gardens were filled with families eating picnics and playing football on the grass; a couple were even having wedding photographs taken by the flowerbeds. It is difficult to describe how I felt as I wandered around this tranquil environment. Neither Anna Eliza Grenville nor her mother ever visited Hope or travelled to Jamaica. Yet here was I, standing in the middle of a site of huge significance to them, which helped them to establish and maintain a position in the highest echelons of the British aristocracy. More significantly, and as difficult as it may have been to imagine on that peaceful May morning, this was this was a site on which, over a period of more than 180 years, thousands of people were enslaved.¹⁶ A portrait of Anna Eliza Grenville continues to hang in the dining room at Stowe, now a prestigious private school. She has also recently been brought to life in the House's new visitor 'Discovery Centre', which contains a multimedia exhibition telling the Grenville family's tumultuous history.¹⁷ The men, women and children who were enslaved on Hope have not been memorialised in the same way. It is only through reading slave registers and 'lists of negroes' that we can even learn their names. But they too were an integral part of this history.¹⁸

As the failure of Anna Eliza Grenville's emigration project indicates, after the abolition of slavery and the end of apprenticeship the Grenvilles struggled to find a way to resolve the labour shortage on Hope estate. Whilst the profitability of the plantation had been in decline for a number of years, by the early 1840s it became clear that

¹⁶ Major Richard Hope, 'a member of the conquering British army', first established a sugar state on Hope in the 1660s. B. W. Higman, *Jamaica Surveyed: Plantation Maps and Plans of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Mona: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), p. 123.

¹⁷ It would be more accurate to say the animated Anna Eliza tells part of the family's history. There is no mention in this exhibition of their links with slavery and slave-ownership.

¹⁸ HL STG Box 1 (12-21), Returns of Slaves, 1813-1829; STG Box 3 (7-11), Lists of 'Negroes' on Hope Estate, 1776-1788. See appendix four for a full transcription of this list. Appendices five and six contain similar lists for Newton and Seawells.

this decline was terminal. By 1842 the estate had virtually stopped producing sugar.¹⁹ This only compounded the family's metropolitan problems. Richard Plantagenet Grenville, who in 1839 had become the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, never learnt to curb his spendthrift habits and continued to add to his burden of debt.²⁰ In 1848, as well as organising a sale at Stowe of the entire contents of the great house, the second Duke's son — later the third and final Duke of Buckingham and Chandos — leased Hope to the Kingston and Liguanea Water Works Company.²¹ In 1871 the Jamaican government purchased the site, the majority of which lay in ruins, ushering in a period of great transformation.²² In the following decades, first an agricultural experimental station and, later, an accompanying public gardens were established on the estate.²³ By the last few years of the nineteenth century over 18,000 people, excursionists and botanists alike, were visiting Hope Botanical Gardens, home to a huge array of rare plants, trees and flowers.²⁴ Veront Satchell has argued that the Gardens 'injected new life and interest not just into the fading Hope plantation, but also into the entire agrarian economy and society of Jamaica'.²⁵ Beautiful, peaceful and serene, Hope Botanical Gardens in the twenty-first century is a world away from its seventeenth-, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century antecedents. Yet physical traces of the site's history remain. The refurbished overseer's house, the ruins of works yard buildings, and perhaps most notably Hope aqueduct, provide jarring reminders of the site's brutal and violent past.²⁶

The Barbadian plantations of Thomas and John Lane remained in their descendents' possession for slightly longer than Anna Eliza Grenville's Jamaican estate. Newton plantation remained in the Lane family until 1920 and sugar continued to be cultivated on the estate until at least 1982.²⁷ In the late 1960s and early 1970s Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange conducted an archeological investigation

¹⁹ Veront M. Satchell, *Hope Transformed: A Historical Sketch of the Hope Landscape, St Andrew, Jamaica, 1660-1960* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2012), p. 183.

²⁰ John Beckett, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 192-204.

²¹ *Ibid*, pp. 241-247; Satchell, *Hope Transformed*, p. 227.

²² Satchell, *Hope Transformed*, pp. 239, 247.

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 253-280.

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 268.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 280.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 379-383; Brown, *Mona Past and Present*, p. 20.

²⁷ Robert S. Corruccini, Jerome S. Handler, Robert J. Mutaw and Frederick W. Lange, 'Osteology of a slave burial population from Barbados, West Indies', *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, 59:443-459 (1982), p. 443.



Figure 11. Hope Aqueduct, 2012. Photograph taken on the University of the West Indies Mona campus

of a slave burial ground on the plantation, the largest and oldest to be discovered in Barbados.²⁸ Desiring to preserve and protect the site, in 1993 it was acquired by the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, who in 2015 proposed it as one of the possible sites for a museum dedicated to exploring the history of slavery in Barbados and the Caribbean.²⁹ Seawells, inherited after John Lane's death by his son John Newton Lane, had a somewhat different history. It remained in the family until 1937, when it was sold to the government of Barbados, who built Seawalls Airport on the site.³⁰ Renamed in 1976, the Grantley Adams International Airport sees tens of thousands of passengers arrive daily from across the Caribbean, North America and the UK. The site of Seawalls thus continues to link Barbados to Britain, with numerous flights a day arriving from the former imperial metropole, a link that would not exist (or would certainly be very different) without Britain's 341-year colonisation of the island. It is hard to imagine that many of these travellers, whether sun-seeking

²⁸ Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

²⁹ <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/newton-plantation-collection>;
<https://www.facebook.com/barbadosmuseum/posts/10153645944913383> (accessed 15/03/17).

³⁰ <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/lbs/claim/view/3185> (accessed 15/03/17).

tourists, business passengers or those visiting family, give much thought to the ground on which they are landing and its role in that history.

Appendix One: The Brydges and Grenville family titles

The frequency with which the British aristocracy added names and attained or abandoned titles — some of which were official and some of which were just courtesy ones — can make researching their history somewhat confusing. This is certainly not helped by the unoriginality of their forenaming practices!

The following list indicates the names and main titles held by the members of the Brydges and Grenville families most frequently referred to in this thesis. In the most part I have referred to them by abridged versions of their name (e.g. Anna Eliza Grenville), although titles (e.g. the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos) have also been used when chronologically appropriate. I have used the appendix of John Beckett's *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles* to help me compile this list.

Anna Eliza, third Duchess of Chandos

Anna Eliza Gamon d.o.b unknown-1770

Anna Eliza Elletson 1770-1777

Anna Eliza Brydges 1777-1813

Third Duchess of Chandos 1777-1813

Anna Eliza, first Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos

Anna Eliza Brydges 1779-1796

Anna Eliza Nugent Temple Grenville 1796-1799

Anna Eliza Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville 1799-1836

Lady Temple 1797-1813

Second Marchioness of Buckingham 1813-1822

First Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos 1822-1836

Richard, first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos

Richard Temple Nugent Grenville 1776-1799

Richard Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville 1799-1839

Viscount Cobham 1779-1784

Fourth Earl Temple 1784-1813

Second Marquis of Buckingham 1813-1836

First Duke of Buckingham and Chandos 1822-1836

Richard, second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos

Richard Plantagenet Temple Nugent Brydges Chandos Grenville 1797-1861

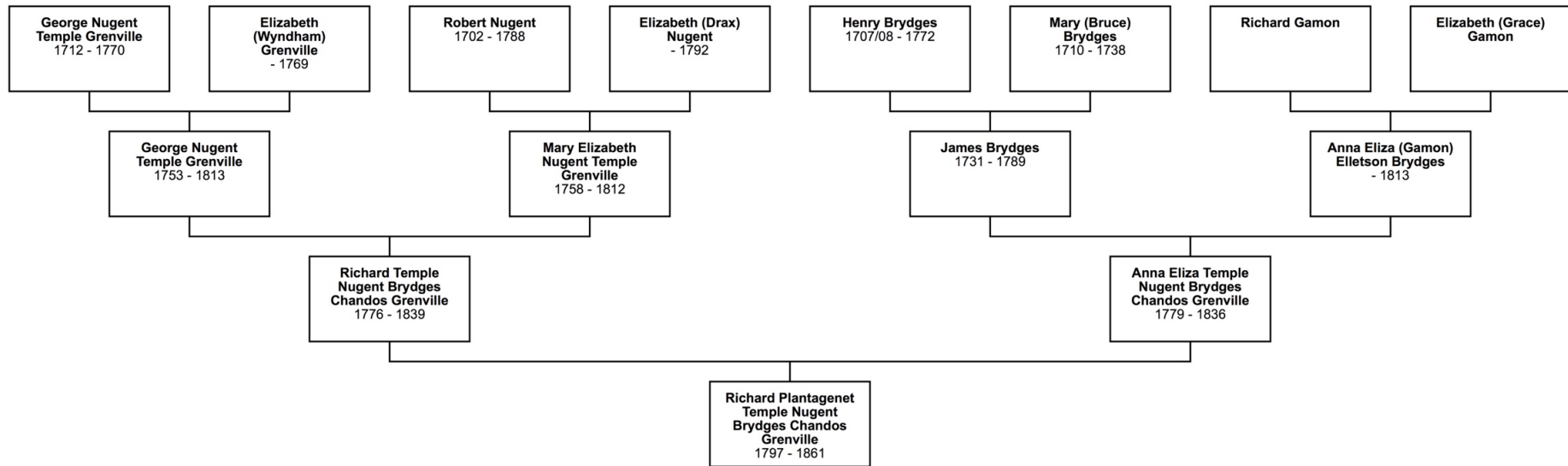
Viscount Cobham 1797-1813

Fifth Earl Temple 1813-1822

Marquis of Chandos 1822-1839

Second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos 1839-1861

Appendix Two: Grenville/Brydges Family Tree



**Appendix Three: Memorial inscription to Anna Eliza Grenville in St Mary's
Church, Avington**

Near this place
repose the mortal remains
of the Most Noble Lady ANNA ELIZA BRYDGES
Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos
Daughter and Heiress of JAMES the last Duke of Chandos
and Consort of RICHARD GRENVILLE NUGENT TEMPLE
Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, K. G.
She died
at Stowe in the County of Buckingham,
on the 16th of Mar in the Year of Grace, 1836
and in the 57th Year of her Age.

Her virtues would have adorned a Cottage,
as highly as they did
Her illustrious rank and Royal descent.
She valued both only as they gave her the means
of extending her charities and administering to the wants
of the poor around her.
Amidst their blessings She sought her great reward,
and amidst their tears
She was conveyed to this her last home on earth.

“When the ear heard HER, then it blessed HER,
When the eye saw her, it gave witness to HER.”

Appendix Four: 'A General List of Negroes on Hope Estate, 1st January 1813'.

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Drivers				
Davie	61		Weakly	Well disposed
Jack	48			
Charles	34		Healthy	
Toney	65		Weakly	Driver of the Watermill
Cudjoe	70			Seldom able to work
Carpenters				
Harry	32		Sickly	
Norfolk	26		Healthy	
Ruthland	24			
Sambo	16			
Rodney	22			
Quacow	19			
Peter	19			
Richmond	17			
Roger	13			
Coopers				
Jacob	42		Healthy	
Romney	34			
Duke	33			
Watt	29			
Toney	25			
Atlas	23			
London	23			
Greenwich	27			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Quaco	13			
Masons				
George	40		Healthy	
Caesar	36			
Attending Hot House				
White	29		Healthy	Well disposed
Billy	14			
House Boys				
Mulato, Andrew	13		Healthy	
Ellis	13			
Stable Man				
Nonsuch	26		Healthy	
After Cattle				
Devonshire	26			
Gould	14			
Romeo	13			
Luck	14			
After Sheep				
Harrod	46		Weakly	
Little Quacho	8		Healthy	

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
After Hogs				
Sambo, Will			Sickly	
Wain Men				
Ludlow	46		Healthy	
Sam	23			
Sharp	26			
Frank	20			
Coote	22			
Somerset	19			
Able Men				
Adam	19	Field Great Gang	Healthy	
Alfried	21			
America	40			
Jas. Bird	48			
Moc. Charles	44			
Cash	19			
Camp	34		50	Often runaway
Cato	20			
Derry James	42			
East	50			
Fig	50			
Fortune	19			
Hector	42			A notorious runaway
Little Kent	19			Ditto
Mos. John	40			
Mosess	20			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Mingo	32			
Oak	41			A notorious runaway
Paul	46			
Primus	34			
Portland	29			
Piper	24			
Quamina	22			
Quamin	21			
Sanders	38			
Smith	35			
Snow	46			
Shoeman	26			Often away
Sancho	24			Ditto
Stafford	48			
Tobey	30			Very often runaway
West	46			Ditto
William	20			
Yano	24			
Sand	42			
Little Paul	16			
Wilks	22			
Gale	45			
Weakly Men				
Lang	47	Field Small Gang	Sickly	
Poole	48			
Sampson	44			
North	54			
Warwick	45			
Kitt	36			
Swift	46			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Fish	46			
Little Harvey	14		Healthy	
Little Dick	14			
Little Davie	14			
Watchmen				
Quashie	36		Sickly	
Black Will	48			
Bob	44		Weakly	
Bacchus	64			
Cross	40			Low feet
Godfrey	68			
Guilford	46			
Guy	67			
Havannah	64			
Halifax	32			
Jackie	54			
Kent	54			
Lister	19			
March	49			
Mars	54			
Maxwell	36			
Maurice	28			All over with scurvy
Punch	46			
Smart	60			
Little Tom	48			
Moc. Tom	50			
Beach	46			
Hercules	47			
Old Dick	120		Invalid	
Little White	40			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Able women				
Abigail	27	Field Great Gang	Healthy	
Amy	31			
Agness	33			
Ann	26			
Beauty	34			
Black	34			
Beneba	18			
Bazilla	19			
Bell	40			
Clarissa	23			
Camilla	28			
Cathrine	24			
Caroline	23			
Doll	24			
Dianah	28			
Deborah	26			
Esey	21			
Europa	25			
Moc. Fanny	35			
Little Fodelia	19			
Fame	22			
Friendship	24			
Johanna	38			
Cham. Grace	34			
Little Hannah	19			
Little Johanna	18			
Sambo Judy	26			
Ivey	30			
Jenny	36			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Juliet	22			
Jannet	24			
Cr. Kate	36			
Lucinda	36			
Love	20			
Little Lucey	18			
Big Lucey	31			
Maria	34			
Matilda	19			Often runaway
Martha	23			
Olive	24			
Cuba Peggy	32			
Penny	32			
Princess	31			
Little Quinn	25			
Rhubey	34			
Rainbow	28			Very often runaway
Cr. Sally	36			
Moc. Sally	31			
Sarah	28			
Strawberry	28			
Sultanna	26			
Susey	35			
Libby	33			
Violet	27			
Little Quashiba	16			
Delligance	16			
Big Eve	34			
Little Eve	16			
Chloe	16			
H. Hannah	44			
Bess Cuba, Abba	16			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Handsome	44			
Elinore	15			
Constant	48	Field 2nd Gang	Sickly	
Countess	40			
Cilia	36			
Cham. Dido	35			
Little Dido	27			
Easther	47			
Flora	40			
Juno	34			
Myra	30			
Margrat	46			
Dick Nancy	46			
Beck	47			
Baddo	48			
Blackie	44			
Bess Cuba	46			
Bella	46			
Clarinda	50			
Catelina	50			
Dauphney	39			
Dutchess	36			
Black Nelly	48			
Mountain Phoebe	49			
Big Queen	36			
Saphina	50			
Little Nelly	13		Healthy	
Xmas Abba	13			
Little Sarah	13			
Patience	13			
Phoebe	13			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Penelope	13			
Rosanna	13			
Jane	13			
Black Judy	34		Weakly	
Monomia	46			
Margritta	48			
Field Cooks & Nurse				
Cretia	54		Weakly	
Charity	48			
Old Fodelia	52			
Plass	46			
Rosey	30		Sickly	
Hope Quashila	61			
Grass Cutters				
Hagar	50		Weakly	
Eves Juba	58			
Cha. Moll	46			
Ratchell	57			
Synie	58			
Driveress				
Sykie	38		Healthy	
House Women				
Malata Dolly	44		Healthy	
Ditto Polly	36		Sickly	

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Quadron Nancy	13	Learning to be seamstresses		
Ditto Magret	13			
Dorinda	34	House Cook		
Washer Women				
Malata Nelly	36		Healthy	
Delia	29			
Bess, Betty	38		Sickly	
Midwives				
Judy	53		Sickly	
Clarie	46		Healthy	
In the Garden				
Peachey	50		Weakly	
Fowl House				
Bessey	48		Weakly	
Attending Children				
Christmas	47		Sickly	
Barbara				
Amber				
Black Dolly				
Brown				
Invalids				

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Hatty	56		Sickly	
Prue	49			
Old Lucey	48			
Amelia	56			
Bess	28			Subject to fits
Cherry	24			Kings evil
Dinah	60			
Old Eve	80			
Nanny	58			
Betty Rose	47			
Phillis	68			
Mina	28			All over with scurvy
Little Betty	48			
Madam	67			
Boys				
Stafford	13	Field Hogsmeat Gang	Healthy	
French	13			
Candis Sambo	12			
Mercury	12			
Phillip	12			
Agness James	11			
Prince	11			
Monomia Cudjoe	11			
Hannah Cudjoe	11			
Dianah Adam	11			
Myras, Andrew	10			
Camilla, Dover	10			
Graces Cuffie	9			
Bells George	9			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Hatty	9			
Princess Sharp	9			
Countess Tobey	8			
Constant Quashie	8			
Dollys Anthony	7			
Rhubey's William	7			
Fanny Ludlow	7			
Camilla Bacchus	7			
Nancys Richard	7			
Ameys Hampshire	7			
Prudence Ned	7			
Sambo Judy Bob	8			
Girls				
Bessy's Finday	11	Field Hogsmeat Gang	Healthy	
Moc. Fanny's Mary	11			
Countess' Cuba	11			
Juno's Cicly	11			
Kate Kate	11			
Johanna Diannah	10			
Eves Doll	10			
Beauty Abba	10			
Myrtilla Abba	10			
Flora Susannah	10			
Roses Betty	10			
Eves Eve	12			
Libby Bella	7			
Deborah Clarinda	7			
Cilias Monomia	7			
Violets Mimba	8			
Iveys Elina	8			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Queen Annie	9			
Cilias Elsey	9			
Nancy Phoebe	9			
Sultana Pamilla	8			
Luseys Lusey	8			
Cathrine Molly	7			
Rhubey's Phillis	7			
Dorinda Kattey	7			
Nursery				
Iveys Adam	4		Healthy	
Beauty Daniel	3			
Dolls' Edward	5			
Olives Frederick	3			
Abigail Harry	3			
Juno Guy	3			
Whanica James	3			
Delias Ned	3			
Mona Pitt	3			
Joans Simon	4			
Fame Gilpin	3			
Violet Critia	5			
Abigail Esther	5			
Countess Amber	5			
Cilia's Amey	3			
Iveys Bessy	4			
Judy's Black	4			
Beck Darsie	4	Twins		
Beck Frankey	4			
Queens Eliza	2			
Bells Frankey	2			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Camilla Flora	3			
Dolly Jannet	6			
Libby Judy	4			
Myra Lydia	4			
Graces Prince	5			
Whanica Penelope	5			
Johanna Phoebe	5			
Johanna Polly	3			
Martha Kate	4			
Queens Princess	5			
Dido Pricilla	4			
Deborah Polly	3			
Violet Princess	3			
Beauty Lally	5			
Camilla Lally				
Dorinda Betty	2			
Countess Lady	2			
Love Patience	2			
Mina Bessey	4			
In the ya[rds?]				
Sultana's Cuffee	3			
Flora's Cambridge	4			
Moc. Fanny's Frank	5			
Juno's Neplum	3			
Freindship's Poole	5			
Cherry's Quashie	3			
Nanny's Sam	5			
Juno's William	5			
Lusey's Beauty	3			
Grace's Bella	5			

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Lucinda's Clarie	3			
Diannah's Diannah	4			
Moc. Fanny's Fanny	3			
Letise's Famila	3			
Lusey's Gracey	5			
Agness's Fairwell	3			
Grace's Hagar	4			
Lucey's Molly	4			
Europa's Piggy	3			
Amey's Lue	4			
Constant's Whanica	5			
Caroline's Archie	3			
Children at the Breast				
Diannah's Crossman				
Myra's Jasper				
Ann's Ralph				
Rosey's Charles				
Cathrine's Tom				
Deborah's Joe				
Cherry's Hignall				
Hannah's Jacob				
Lettise's Badhead				
Lucy's Marina				
Judy's Nanny				
Abigail's Betty				
Sultana's Flora				
Cham. Grace's Dolly				
Jannet's Beneba				
Delia's Sykie				
Moc Fanny's Simon				

Names	Age	Occupation	Condition	Remarks
Olive's Williams				
Beauty's Fanny				
Martha's Charlotte				

Huntington Library, ST West Indies Box 1

Appendix Five: Valuations of enslaved on Newton plantation, 1803.

		£
Tradesmen and Officers		
John Thomas	Cooper & Carpenter	150
Ned Thomas	Cooper	150
Davy	Cooper & Mill Carpenter	140
Tommy	Cooper	130
George	Cooper	140
Bob	Cooper & Carpenter	120
Hercules	Mason	200
Toby	Mason	100
Reynold	Ranger	80
Peter	Boiler & Field Man	150
Tongcah	Boiler & Field Man	150
Harry	Clarifier & Field Man	70
Billy	Boatswain	40
Cudjoe	Boatswain & Field Man	150
Julius	Boatswain, Carter & Field Man	150
Cudjoe	Carter & Field Man	150
Johnny	Distiller & Field Man	130
Cussey	Groom	65
Ren	Groom & Field Man	140
Apprentices		
Bob Morris	Carpenter	120
Henry Morris	Taylor	80
John Scut	Mason	80
Sam William	Cooper	80
1st Gang - Field Men		
James		100
John Rogers		100

		£
Rochester		150
Sam - Brewster		150
Little Harry		150
Pawby		150
Tom		150
Cambridge		150
London		150
Jack		140
Mingo		130
Tim Quamin		80
Sammy		80
Jackey		80
Baram		140
Dublin		50
Martin		140
Bango		100
Will		50
Conny		100
Francis		65
Sam		75
Bob Lewis		100
Field women		
Phibbah		100
Bettybah		100
Sarry - Thomas		80
Tanbah		120
Betsy		100
Lettice		100
Kitty - Jane		150
Aubah		80
Bessy		150

		£
Mimbah - Juba		150
Little Bennybah		150
Cuba		130
Phibbah - Straker		130
Judey - Esther		100
Sabina		130
Mary - Nell		80
Quasheba		75
Lilly		50
Dorinda		150
Little Lilly		130
Esther Cam.		150
Little Betty		100
Coobah - Brewster		130
Sarry - Frankey		150
Bella - Moll		130
Phibbah - Moll		150
Jemmima		130
Princess		100
Willoughby		150
Eley		150
Phillis		130
Joanney		80
Beck		80
Susannah		75
Bookey		70
Sally		50
Peggy - Esther		130
Hanon		70
Little Sally		140
Hannah		40
Joaney		50

		£
Great Bennybah		75
Dolly		75
Peggy		100
Matty		80
Dinah		50
Bella		50
Betty		50
Sur		25
Great Aubah		15
Drivers of the 1st Gang		
Dicky - Bud		200
Theophilus		150
2nd Gang - Field Boys		
Bob		140
Bacchus		130
Bevis		140
Arron		100
Jimmy		100
Adam		65
Quamin - George		130
Julius		100
Amboy		80
Hannibal		80
Cudjoe		80
Sharper		75
James Thomas		90
Rito		65
Ellic		90
Charles		20
Lammy		75

		£
Robin		75
2nd Gang - Field Girls		
Judey		100
Eve		80
Chloe - Flora		100
Phillida		50
Taubah		130
Betsy - Ann		130
Fanny		100
Princess		100
Philly - Christmas		120
Hoban		120
Bessy - Rose		100
Hannah - Green		100
Sarry - Ann		80
Betsy - Bess		80
Christian		75
Juba		75
Molly - Quash		60
Frankey		75
Katy		50
Maria		75
Moses - Driver		100
3rd Gang - Field Boys		
Stephen		80
Johnny, 1st		70
Johnny, 2nd		75
Quashey		70
Quamin		70

		£
Sammy		65
George Thomas		75
Joe		75
3rd Gang - Field Girls		
Little Fanny		75
Lilly - Anser		75
Little Princess		65
Venus		70
Attah		70
Nanny Lubba		70
Sue		60
Sarey		65
Fredelia		65
Meat Pickers, 4th Gang - Boys		
Lovelace		65
Salisbury		50
Sam - Alec		45
Robin		40
John Lewis		40
William		50
Neddy		55
Jeffery		45
Lewis		40
John - Pit		40
Nat - Charles		25
Neddy		40
Isaac		25
Meat Pickers, 4th Gang - Girls		

		£
Jane		60
Jenny		60
Lucy		60
Polly - Amelia		55
Hannah - Christian		60
Fanny - Thomas		50
Latta		55
Leah		50
Mary - Ford		55
Mary - Ann		60
Mercy - Ann		60
Nancy		60
Little Jenny		60
Eliza		45
Wampah		50
Mary - Joan		50
Charlotte		50
Kitty - Christian		45
Hannah - Amber		45
Muggy		40
Philly - Ann		40
Juba		40
Sacalinda		40
Myrtilla		40
Little Aubah		40
Sukey		45
Sarry Nanney		45
Mercy - Driver		40
Children in Arms & Sucking		
Boys		
Toby		20

		£
Thomas		20
John William		20
Richard		10
Winnie		20
George Edward		15
Ned George		10
Friday		10
Jimmy Jessamin		5
Sam William		15
Girls		
Jenny - Cam		15
Mary Adams		15
Dissey		15
Peggy - Bess		20
Mary-Ann Saer		15
Celia		10
Nancy		10
Cornelia		10
Judy - Phillis		10
Patience		10
Sarey - Green		10
Assey - Patience		10
Betty - Judey		10
Pimmy Grace		10
Sukey Richards		5
Willoughby		5
House People - Men		
Ned - Butler		75
Hamlet - Butler & Field Boy		130
Ned - Butler & Field Boy		100

		£
Monday - Cook		130
Toby - Under-cook & Field Boy		130
House People - Women		
Old Betty - Washer		75
Fanny - Ann Do.		75
Esther Rose Do.		60
Jenny - House-keeper		130
Infirm yet useful - Men		
Cubbenah - Mason & Boiler		20
Peter - Clayer		25
Dickey		25
Infirm yet useful - Women		
Phillida - Dairy Woman		15
Aucoo		15
Jubah - Sick Nurse		40
Bella - Stock keeper		5
Molly		25
Moll		15
Hagar - Doll		20
Obing		30
Amba - Cook-Pot Gang		30
Patience		25
Jug		15
Daphne		10
Sempstresses		
Dolly		80
Kitty - Thomas		80

		£
Mary Thomas		80
Nanney - Doll		75
Polly - Kitty		40
Old - useless - diseased		
Saboy		5
Panby		5
Bristol		
Joley		
Glasgow		
Neddy		
Pathena		
Wampah		
Priscilla		
Lucy Alleyne		
Juba		
Sarey		
Old Doll		
Mary-Ann		

MS523/279, Newton Papers, Senate House Library.

Appendix Six: Valuations of enslaved on Seawells plantation, 1803.

	£
[2nd Gang - Boys]	
Tommy - Field	100
Sam William	100
Ben	100
Sam John	100
Cudjoe	100
Tom Peter	100
Anthony	100
David	100
Dick	100
Cuffey	90
John Lyte	100
Corbenah Williams	90
Isaac	90
Ben Quan	80
Nicholas	90
George	75
Frank	85
[2nd Gang - Girls]	
Sarry My.	100
Kate	100
Sally	100
Hannah	90
Mary Rose	100
Sucked Lyte	125
Hannah Bell	100
Fanney	125
Betsey	90
Grace	90

	£
Bessy	90
Mary William	90
Polly	90
Nanney	90
Leah	90
Old Sarry, Driver	50
[3rd Gang - Boys]	
Jack Thomas	75
Richard	75
Harry	75
Jackey	75
Peter Williams	50
Tom Peter	50
Cuffey Thomas	30
Ellick Thomas	30
Sam Adam	30
Billy Francis	30
Scipio	20
Richard Lane	15
[3rd Gang - Girls]	
Fanney Matt	80
Mimbah	80
Hester	80
Nanny Mimbah	75
Jubah Mimbah	80
Meribah	80
Becky	80
Nanney Hannah	75
Beck	75
Patience	75

	£
Mary Sue	75
Mary Jane	75
Betty Dido	65
Dorcas Affey	65
Maria	70
Hannah Maria	70
Hagar Grace	70
Molley	75
Kitty Grace	50
Cornelia	75
Eve	55
Elsey Ann	45
Bess Williams	75
Children in Arms & Sucking	
Sampson	10
Betsey Phebe	40
Sarey Doll	40
Betsey Christian	40
Sarah	40
Mary Charlotte	20
Parthenia	20
Nanney Thomasin	20
Minnah	20
Betty Rose	20
Priscilla	20
Mary Ann	20
Barbary	15
Ned John	10
Tim Quamin	10
Betty Cubah	10
Betty Lemon	10

	£
Jenny Mary	5
Salley William	5
Betsey Grace	5
Susan	5
House Women	
Grace	100
Betsey	100
Kitty Earl	100
Old Betsey, Sick Nurse	40
Easter, Driving 3rd Gang	50
Old, Infirm & Diseased Men	
Great Cudjoe	25
Great Simon	15
Great Charles	15
Robin - Leper	0
Dick - Ditto	0
Franck - Ditto	0
Women	
Old Phebey	10
Aucoo	5
Thomas - Leper	0
Great Juddey	5
[Men - Tradesmen and 1st Gang]	
Dick Mingo	100
Doe	150

	£
Peter	75
Joe	10
Jack - Carpenter	120
Nick - Mason	150
Jeffrey - Do.	125
Tom - Do.	125
Frank - Do.	150
Toney - Carter & Field	125
John - Groom	125
Nocko - Boiler	80
James - C. & field	150
Quashey - C. & field	75
Anthony - Distiller	100
Simon - B. & field	150
Ellick - field etc.	150
Mingo - field etc.	150
Fredrick - field etc.	150
Tim - field etc.	150
Sam - field etc.	150
Ned - Do.	150
Thomas - Do.	150
Bob - Do.	150
Black Jeffery	150
Tom	100
Cudjoe	100
Harry	100
Jack	150
Little Charles	80
Willey	80
Bacchus	80
Yealow Jeffrey	150
Ayoe	75

	£
Laurence	75
Ankwe	50
Araham	80
Great Ned	30
Kitt - Driver	175
[Women - 1st Gang]	
Delia - field	150
Joan - Do.	150
Phillia - Do.	150
Celia - Do.	150
Doll - Do.	150
Little Bettey	130
Lemon	120
Betty Bantham	150
Gracey Ann	100
Rinah	100
Jenny Mary	100
Margaret	100
Hoban	150
Minnah	100
Satina	100
Dolly	150
Coobah	130
Little Judey	130
Mary Ann	130
Nancey	100
Little Phebe	100
Sabina	25
Queen	100
Matty	75
Peggy	100

	£
Betty	75
Phibbah Nurse	75
Phibbah Bess	75
Eady	75
Tamar	60
Jug	40
Juba	100
Quasheba	25
Assey	15

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