

## **Reading the inventory: household goods, domestic cultures and difference in England and Wales, 1841–81**

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**Reading the inventory:  
household goods,  
domestic cultures  
and difference  
in England and Wales,  
1841–81**

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Queen Mary, University of London**

**Submitted for the degree of PhD**

**2011**

The work presented in this thesis is my own

Signature:

Date:

# **Abstract: Reading the inventory: household goods, domestic cultures and difference in England and Wales, 1841–81**

This thesis employs almost five hundred household inventories relating to properties in England and Wales between 1841 and 1881; they provide the first large-scale evidence for what people's houses during this period actually contained. Taking a material culture approach, investigation moves between aggregate analysis, interpretation of individual cases and a qualitative reading of contemporary texts to consider the practical, social and cultural meanings of the contents listed in the inventories.

Firstly, differences between the ways that different categories of people equipped and laid out their homes are identified. This calibrates existing class-based accounts, which are based on sources further removed from actual practice, and finds that differences relating to personal wealth and occupation were substantially moderated by geographical location.

Secondly, the thesis addresses the functional specialisation of space that has been understood as a fundamental principle of nineteenth-century domestic organisation. It finds that, although some specialisations were widespread, in the area of hospitable provision many homes manifested a flexible, pragmatic, approach; strict specialisation was confined to the wealthier middle classes.

Thirdly, the meanings of bedroom goods are tracked in contemporary texts. The bedroom, which has been relatively ignored by historians of the nineteenth-century home, appears as a focal site for ideas about cleanliness, convenience, class, health, science and progress; it was here, in the middle of the century, in the private reaches of the private home, that there was a voluntary adoption of public health measures.

Throughout, detailed interpretation of single inventories counterbalances aggregate analysis. This reveals the complicated ways that individuals adopted, rejected or negotiated norms and throws into relief the way that 'ideal' separations, such as that between home and work, were in practice impossible.



# Acknowledgements

Firstly I thank the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), The Geffrye, Museum of the Home, London (hereafter The Geffrye), and the School of Geography at Queen Mary, University of London, for appointing and funding me to work on this project.

I am enormously grateful to my supervisors, Dr Alastair Owens and Eleanor John, for their guidance and never failing support.

No student could hope for a better institutional base. Queen Mary's School of Geography provides unparalleled teaching as well as encouraging students to participate in its renowned research culture. The Geffrye has offered enviable opportunities: exhibition curation, cataloguing, organising a symposium and, very importantly, research seminars with the Curatorial and Education Departments. Working with the staff there has been a great pleasure.

Colleagues from the academic community – and it turned out really to be a community – were exceptionally generous with their time and their knowledge. Database design and statistics were quite a challenge and I want to thank David Green of King's College London and Marisa Dass, Ben Parker and Tony Stockman, all from Queen Mary, for their reviews. Other scholars have shared information, ideas and their unpublished work. For this I would like to thank Ben Heller, Vicky Holmes, Victoria Kelley, Giorgio Riello, Linda Young and, especially, Jane Hamlett.

The National Archives, The Geffrye, and the London Topographical Society have kindly allowed me to reproduce images in their copyright or care.

And then there are the friends who have understood when I couldn't see them. Liberty and William Mosse have rallied round their distracted mother. And James has been heroic in uncomplainingly putting up with a wife whose interest in the domesticity of the past has pretty much blotted out that of the present.

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# Preface

This thesis is the outcome of a collaborative (CASE) PhD studentship, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). In a CASE project, the collaborating partners – one an academic institution and one an institution from the public or voluntary sector – define a more or less closely specified research question and a student is appointed to work on the project.<sup>1</sup> This particular project was set up by Dr Alastair Owens (School of Geography, Queen Mary, University of London), David Dewing (Director of The Geffrye, Museum of the Home, London) and Eleanor John (Head of Collections and Exhibitions at The Geffrye). I was the fortunate student.

Dr. Owens is an historical geographer, one of whose specialist interests is in material culture and everyday life in nineteenth-century cities.<sup>2</sup> During recent research he and colleagues discovered a substantial series of household inventories for the period 1795 to 1903.<sup>3</sup> This was a particularly exciting find because it had previously been thought that such inventories did not exist, excepted in a scattered way, for the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> The Geffrye is 'a centre for the study of the home, particularly of the urban middle classes in England from 1600 to the present day'.<sup>5</sup> It is the pre-eminent museum in this field and has, since the present project started, set up the Histories of Home Subject Specialist Network. The Geffrye's permanent exhibits – period room displays – are meticulously researched and the rooms for the early periods rely heavily on information drawn from inventories. The discovery of these nineteenth-century inventories was a chance to inform their later room displays in a similar manner and to build up a repository for future research and public use. It was one of the terms of the scheme that The Geffrye would receive a database of the inventory material on the completion of the project.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/postgraduate/pgtrainingpolicy/index4.aspx> (accessed 30.3.2010).

<sup>2</sup><http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/staff/owensa.html> (accessed 9.9.2010).

<sup>3</sup> In the Inland Revenue papers (IR19 series) at The National Archives at Kew.

<sup>4</sup> Riello, G. (2003) "'Things seen and unseen': inventories and the representation of the domestic interior in the early modern period", unpublished paper, Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior, Royal College of Art, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Geffrye Museum (2009) *Corporate plan 2010-11 to 2012-13* London: Geffrye Museum.



# Chapter 1

## Inventories, difference and differentiation in mid nineteenth-century homes

### Introduction

Inventories have a damaged reputation as a source for the investigation of domestic life. But this thesis uses a method that innovatively draws on approaches from material culture studies and historical archaeology to demonstrate their potential for adding to our understanding of nineteenth-century domestic cultures. The areas to which inventories could – and I hope will – contribute in the future are very wide. Here they are brought to bear on the themes of difference and differentiation. The first addresses whether, and in what ways, different categories of people maintained different domestic cultures; the second considers the ways that homes were divided up into different areas, with different functions and meanings. These have both long been understood as fundamental in Victorian homes (and, more broadly, in Victorian society and culture) but this project is the first to examine these themes in the light of extensive empirical evidence, namely a series of household inventories. The inventories are analysed, with reference to a range of representations from advice literature and fiction, for broad patterns of ownership and spatial arrangement but also with the aim of understanding how individual households organised themselves in their own particular circumstances, actively pursuing strategies and making choices rather than simply acting in response to broad norms.

The thesis is arranged in four studies. Two, which focus on day-rooms and bed-rooms (Chapters 3 and 6 respectively), are predominantly concerned with establishing broad patterns of difference. What were these rooms? What did they contain? What were their functions and their meanings? What sorts of people had which sorts of room and which sorts of objects? The other two studies, working through close investigation of individual cases, focus on two specialisations of space, which have both been identified as central to Victorian understandings of the domestic: the importance of specialised provision for hospitality (Chapter 4);

and the separation of home from work (Chapter 5). Were these specialisations apparent in individual households? How were they worked out in practice? Were they as important as expected? And what affected the way they were implemented?

The particular literature relating to the four investigations is discussed in each of the relevant chapters. This introduction discusses the broader themes that thread throughout: differences between people; differences in spatial arrangements; and differences in the ownership of spaces and things. But this is a project in which the main source came before the questions. I developed the questions iteratively; they arose from a combination of familiarity with the inventories and subsidiary sources and an engagement with the historiography; they are necessarily the kind of questions and themes that can be addressed through these sources and methods. For this reason, it is sensible to discuss the main source and the methodological approach before going on to introduce the substantive themes of difference and differentiation and to lay out the structure of the thesis.

## **Inventories and the nineteenth-century home**

'Many projects are begun because a body of source material has been discovered which is thought to have the potential to reveal something new about the past.'<sup>1</sup>

That is the case with the present endeavour. A series of about a thousand household inventories for the period 1795 to 1903 (although there are very few for the period after 1880), compiled just after death for tax purposes, was recently uncovered in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew.<sup>2</sup> This find had great potential for the study of nineteenth-century homes because, in the first place, it had previously been thought that such a large series of inventories did not exist for this period.<sup>3</sup> And secondly, the inventories, while deriving from the part of the population that was wealthy enough to pay death duties (about fifteen percent of the whole

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, C. and J. Press (1996) *Databases in historical research* Basingstoke: MacMillan, 5.

<sup>2</sup> They are held in the Inland Revenue papers (IR19 series).

<sup>3</sup> Morris, R.J. (2005) *Men, women and property in England, 1780-1870* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 49; Riello (2003), 22; Sarin, S. (2004) 'Oilcloth, wachstuch and toile ciree: the floorcloth, its origins, continental connections and place in the eighteenth-century London interior' unpublished MPhil thesis, Royal College of Art, University of London, 57.

population<sup>4</sup>), actually relate to a broad social, occupational and geographical range of people, many of whom fall outside the rather wealthy, London based, middle classes whose domestic arrangements have been the subject of most previous study.<sup>5</sup>

For earlier periods there are two to three million inventories still in existence, which have supported many varied historical studies.<sup>6</sup> These studies are too numerous to catalogue individually but include, for example: biographical work relating to individuals, families and houses;<sup>7</sup> descriptions of everyday life by local historians;<sup>8</sup> local studies of national import;<sup>9</sup> and investigations of changing or different uses of household space.<sup>10</sup> Since the advent of accessible computing power, it has been possible to analyse very large series of inventories to study consumption and production over time and space with a view to understanding major economic and social structures.<sup>11</sup>

There are all sorts of problems which have to be taken into account when using inventories. These are discussed in detail in the next chapter (pages 67-71) but, briefly, the main concerns are about how they relate to the population at large, how comprehensive a picture they give of an individual's possessions, and about how they relate to a household. With particular reference to domestic life, critics have argued that, although inventories can tell us about where things were in a house at a moment in time, they cannot tell us about who used them and when.<sup>12</sup> Inventories provide evidence for the fact of possession but they cannot tell us about

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<sup>4</sup> Green, D., Owens, A., Swan, C. and C. van Lieshout (2010, forthcoming) 'Assets of the dead: wealth, investment and modernity in nineteenth and early twentieth-century England and Wales' in Green D. R., Owens, A., Maltby, J. and J. Rutterford, eds. *Men, women and money: perspectives on gender, wealth and investment, 1850–1930* Oxford University Press: Oxford.

<sup>5</sup> As is discussed in Chapter 3 and throughout the rest of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> Riello (2003), 5.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Wells-Cole, A. (1983) *Historic paper hangings from Temple Newsam and other English houses* Leeds: Leeds City Art Galleries.

<sup>8</sup> For example, Bestall, J and D. Fowkes (2001) *Chesterfield wills and inventories 1604-1650* Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society.

<sup>9</sup> Earle, P. (1989) *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London 1660-1730* Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>10</sup> Buxton, A. (2002) 'Domestic culture in early seventeenth-century Thame' *Oxoniensia* 66: 79-115; John, E. (2008) 'At home with the London middling sort – the inventory evidence for furnishings and room use, 1570-1720' *Journal of the Regional Furniture Society*: 27-51; Priestly, U. and P. Corfield with material by the late H. Sutermeister (1982) 'Rooms and room use in Norwich housing, 1580-1730' *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 16: 93-123.

<sup>11</sup> Overton, M., Whittle, J., Hann, A. and D. Dean (2004) *Production and consumption in English households 1600-1750* London: Routledge; Shammas, C. (1990) *The pre-industrial consumer in England and America* Oxford: Clarendon Press; Weatherill, L. (1988) *Consumer behaviour and material culture in Britain, 1660-1760* London: Routledge.

<sup>12</sup> Melville, J. (1999) 'The use and organisation of domestic space in late seventeenth-century London' PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 9.

the process of acquisition or 'the consuming imagination'.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, by themselves, inventories are not informative about what people felt about their goods.<sup>14</sup> Inventories list physical objects but the same physical object has multiple uses and meanings – practical, emotional and symbolic – which vary from person to person and from time to time; different household members have different relationships with the things around them.<sup>15</sup> Using inventories, it is possible to plot changes in the disposition of types of things over time but this, on its own, does not allow us to make assumptions about the broad social or cultural underpinnings of those changes.<sup>16</sup>

The apparent 'shallowness' of inventories has encouraged a recent attention to sources which provide evidence for people's everyday activities in their own and other people's homes. Court reports often tell of where people were and what they were doing, illustrating inter- and intra-household relationships (for example between employers and servants) and providing evidence for who had access to what spaces at which times. They have therefore allowed for very productive work on the flexibility of domestic space and the nature of domestic relationships. It is noticeable, however, that such sources have as yet barely been used for investigations of the nineteenth-century home.<sup>17</sup> Diaries and other personal accounts have also been much used, not only to provide descriptive accounts of homes but, more recently, to examine the relationships of people both with their

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<sup>13</sup> Pennell, S. (1999) 'Consumption and consumerism in early modern England' *The Historical Journal* 42: 2: 549-564, 560.

<sup>14</sup> Vickery, A. (1993a) 'Women and the world of goods: a Lancashire consumer and her possessions 1751-1781' in Brewer, J. and R. Porter, eds. *Consumption and the world of goods* London: Routledge, 276-277.

<sup>15</sup> Glennie, P. (1995) 'Consumption within historical studies' in Miller, D., ed. *Acknowledging consumption: a review of new studies* London: Routledge, 178-9; Vickery, A. (1998) *The gentleman's daughter: women's lives in Georgian England* New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 183-194, uses personal accounts to track the close relationship between gentry women and their goods in terms of, for example, skill, pride, and family feeling.

<sup>16</sup> Meldrum, T. (1999) 'Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth-century metropolitan household' *Urban History* 26: 1: 27-39, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Examples include: Flather, A. (2007) *Gender and space in early modern England*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press; Meldrum (1999); Melville (1999); Pennell, S. (1998) "'Pots and pans history": the material culture of the kitchen in early modern England' *Journal of Design History* 11: 3: 201-216; Vickery, A. (2009) *Behind closed doors: at home in Georgian England* New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. For nineteenth-century studies, Vicky Holmes, Department of History, University of Essex, is working on a PhD thesis, 'Dangerous spaces: fatal household accidents in Suffolk, 1840-1900', which touches on household space and domestic practices. *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913*, recently made available online for the nineteenth century will facilitate this: <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org> (accessed 8.6.2010).

'things' and with other people through the medium of their things and their domestic spaces. In this area, nineteenth-century studies are fruitfully active.<sup>18</sup>

Such sources offer an extremely rich and valuable way into domestic life and domestic space in the past but their use has sometimes been espoused at the expense of inventories. Tim Meldrum makes a valid point when he writes: '... inventories and architecture can never be sufficient proof of so fundamental a shift in sentiment as an alleged growth of privacy in the eighteenth century ...'. But it is misguided of him to state that inventories and architecture 'seem to be distinctly problematic even when used as supporting evidence.'<sup>19</sup> It is only sensible to recognise that it is not an either/or scenario. Inventories can be used to map and track goods; the nature of those goods and their locations can raise questions as to behaviours and attitudes or can illuminate such questions raised by other sources. Sara Pennell, for example, finds inventories lacking in some respects but nonetheless makes use of them as evidence for the introduction and placement of cooking equipment in her discussion of cooking practices.<sup>20</sup> Inventories can offer hints about the functional and symbolic meaning of goods; Lorna Weatherill's major extensive study of early modern consumption was convincingly able to discuss the ownership of certain luxury and novelty goods in relation to social position.<sup>21</sup> They can suggest the introduction of new types of goods and new types of behaviour; the discussion by Mark Overton and colleagues of the impact on the user of a chest of drawers rather than a chest is a case in point.<sup>22</sup> As Margot Finn points out, inventories can provide a useful starting point for investigations of material culture and family life.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Blunt, A. (2003) 'Home and identity: life stories in text and in person' in Blunt, A., Gruffudd, P., May, J., Ogborn, M. and D. Pinder, eds. *Cultural geography in practice* London: Arnold; Hamlett, J. (2005) 'Materialising gender: identity and middle-class domestic interiors 1850-1910' PhD thesis, Royal Holloway University of London; Hamlett, J. (forthcoming, 2011) *Material relations: domestic interiors and the family in England, 1850-1910* Manchester: Manchester University Press; Keeble, T. (2004) 'The domestic moment: design, taste and identity in the late Victorian interior' PhD thesis, Royal College of Art; Keeble, T. (2007) 'Everything whispers of wealth and luxury: observation, emulation and display in the well-to-do late Victorian home' in Darling E. and L. Whitworth, eds. *Women and the making of built space in England 1870 – 1950* Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>19</sup> Meldrum (1999), 39.

<sup>20</sup> Pennell (1998).

<sup>21</sup> Weatherill (1988).

<sup>22</sup> Overton *et al.* (2004), 90.

<sup>23</sup> Finn, M. and M. Adams (2005) 'Colonial possession: personal property and social identity in British India, 1780-1848' computer file, Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive: SN: 5254.

## Material culture

Inventories can be used as a source for studying domestic history because they are evidence for 'things' and 'things' are essential to human relationships; they are tools which people need to perform almost all of their actions, from the functional, to the social and the relational to the symbolic. This is the fundamental understanding of the broad and interdisciplinary church of material culture studies: 'At the heart of the undertaking, in all its diverse forms and thrusts, are relationships between human beings and the material world involving the use of things to mediate social relations and cultural behaviour'.<sup>24</sup> People use material goods 'as vehicles of meaning through which [they] negotiate their relations with each other and the world at large'.<sup>25</sup> Recent influential work by Daniel Miller and colleagues has investigated the fine grain and complexities of the way that people engage with themselves, with other individuals and with the wider world through their domestic goods. The investigators use ethnographic methods such as participation, observation, interviews and questionnaires – none of which are available for historical studies.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless historians have been increasingly turning to artefacts or their proxies for evidence of complex social relationships and as an integral part, and shaper, of human experience.<sup>27</sup> People use things in all realms but the home has been seen as a particularly important site for material culture studies.<sup>28</sup> If people need things to act, then the things of the home can be used as evidence for the actions in the home.

People use things, but it should also be remembered that things encourage ways of behaving and thinking.<sup>29</sup> For example, new types of cooking equipment in the seventeenth century had implications for the types of food that were produced and new types of hospitality; literacy was necessary if people were to use the new cookery books.<sup>30</sup> Furniture forms require a particular bodily response as well as knowledge of how to use them. Mimi Hellman writes of luxury furniture in

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<sup>24</sup> Martin, A.S. (1996) 'Material things and cultural meanings: notes on the study of early American material culture' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> series: 53: 1, 7, quoted in Harvey, K., ed. (2009) *History and material culture: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources* London and New York: Routledge, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Attfield, J. (2000) *Wild things: the material culture of everyday life* Oxford: Berg, 75.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, D., ed. (2001) *Home possessions: material culture behind closed doors*. Oxford: Berg.

<sup>27</sup> Harvey (2009), 2-3.

<sup>28</sup> Blunt, A. and R. Dowling (2006) *Home* London and New York: Routledge, 22-4; Miller (2001), 3.

<sup>29</sup> With reference to the home and cultural anthropology, see Miller (2001), 10-13.

<sup>30</sup> Overton *et al.* (2004), 96-102.

eighteenth-century France that ‘Tables, chairs, and other decorative objects were social actors that both facilitated and, in a sense, monitored the leisure acts of privileged society’.<sup>31</sup> The design historian Adrian Forty has tracked the way that the form of certain mass-market objects expresses cultural or social meanings and solicits behaviour which reinforces those meanings. Twentieth-century white goods, for example, demonstrated cleanliness but also showed up dirt and so encouraged people to work at keeping them white. In this case the makers and designers of the goods picked up on already circulating norms and ideals and, by incorporating them into products, reinforced their strength.<sup>32</sup> In this way the agency of things was harnessed, through the market, to reflect and reinforce dominant or widely desirable norms. This is applicable to the form and layout of market-led speculatively-built housing.<sup>33</sup> And it has underpinned numerous more intentional attempts to promote particular ideas of domesticity. In many later nineteenth- and early twentieth-century projects to provide housing for the working classes, the arrangement and equipment of individual units was designed to foster health, cleanliness, sobriety and privatised family life.<sup>34</sup> This kind of intervention can have fundamental effects on behaviour by encouraging the internalisation and embodiment of regulation.<sup>35</sup> But, equally, it is not always effective on its own. Southgate Council, for example, in the early twentieth century provided its tenants with large gardens but the extensive written rules and regulations suggest that such provision was not, by itself, sufficient to induce the desired use of the facility.<sup>36</sup>

## Historical archaeology

### Approach

A recent review of work on the British domestic interior in social and cultural history concludes that the most stimulating investigations are ‘those which use the study of

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<sup>31</sup> Hellman, M. (1999) ‘Furniture, sociability, and the work of leisure in eighteenth-century France’ *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32: 4: 415-445.

<sup>32</sup> Forty, A. (1986) *Objects of desire: design and society 1750-1980* London: Thames and Hudson, 180.

<sup>33</sup> Blunt and Dowling (2006), 88-90.

<sup>34</sup> Burnett, J. (1978) *A social history of housing 1815-1970* London: Methuen, 215-243; Swenarton, M. (1981) *Homes fit for heroes: the politics and architecture of early state housing in Britain* London: Heinemann Educational.

<sup>35</sup> Foucault, M., trans. Sheridan A. (1977) *Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison* New York: Pantheon.

<sup>36</sup> Peat, J.T.W. (1941) *The tenants' handbook: a reference book for municipal tenants in Southgate* Southgate: Southgate Borough Council.

material artefacts to draw out aspects of the social world that were hitherto hidden' and that historians need to make further use of material objects in questioning existing categories and assumptions.<sup>37</sup> In the present project, it is historical archaeology's approach to material culture that has provided the framework which allows inventories to do this and to reveal more than their critics have thought possible. Historical archaeology is a developing, interdisciplinary, field much influenced by social and cultural anthropology, which concerns itself with 'the role of material things in human social life.'<sup>38</sup> Its studies are centred on artefacts but, crucially, rely on tacking backwards and forwards between objects and documents of various sorts (such as paintings or oral histories as well as texts). Documents are used mainly to identify the occupants of an archaeological site, to illuminate the socio-cultural context in which the site was occupied and to understand the social meanings of the artefacts under review.<sup>39</sup> Nineteenth-century studies have the advantage that so much information was gathered at the time about individuals, places and occupations and that it is becoming ever more easily accessible through online sites such as Ancestry (census and civil registration records), DocumentsOnline (wills and service records), Genuki (UK and Irish place information), Histpop (historical population reports) and British Newspapers 1800-1900.<sup>40</sup> This makes it a relatively simple matter to contextualise inventory goods with biographical information about the households.

I take the goods listed in inventories as similar to archaeological artefacts although there are also significant differences between the two.<sup>41</sup> Artefacts found at domestic sites are most often things that had lost their value and had been thrown away whereas the items in these inventories were only recorded if they had a monetary resale value. Archaeological items are rarely items of furniture or textiles or large-scale items; they are much more often fragments of ceramics or metal

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<sup>37</sup> Hamlett, J. (2009a) 'The British domestic interior and social and cultural history' *Cultural and Social History* 6: 1: 97-107, 103.

<sup>38</sup> Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry (2006) 'Introduction: the place of historical archaeology' in Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry, eds. *The Cambridge companion to historical archaeology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Wilkie, L. (2006) 'Documentary archaeology' in Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry, eds. *The Cambridge companion to historical archaeology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 16.

<sup>40</sup> Ancestry <http://www.ancestry.co.uk/>; Documents online <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/>; Genuki <http://www.genuki.org.uk/>; Histpop <http://www.histpop.org/>; and British Newspapers 1800-1900 <http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/>, all accessed 12.6.2010.

<sup>41</sup> Hicks, D. and A. Horning (2006) 'Historical archaeology and buildings' in Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry, eds. *The Cambridge companion to historical archaeology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 277.



ware. Archaeological sites often include food remains, whereas small unsaleable items of food are not evidenced in inventories. The pins and needles that are frequent in archaeological remains are not apparent in inventories at all, but the reverse is true for sewing boxes.<sup>42</sup> Whereas inventories record possessions at one particular moment, archaeological deposits often provide evidence for change over time at an individual site.<sup>43</sup> An even more crucial difference is that inventories give little insight into the materiality of the objects listed; they provide names-for-things, with rarely even a basic description of colour or pattern or style.<sup>44</sup> Other differences are more to the advantage of inventories: they give a sense of how internal spaces were organised; as documents they give considerable contextual information about the owners and about the value of the goods; and they provide insights into contemporary terms for the objects. In spite of these differences, historical archaeologists themselves consider that inventories 'provide the same kind of evidence we recover from the ground – provenance and associations. We see in what rooms items were found, and with what other objects they belonged'.<sup>45</sup>

Historical archaeology makes complementary use of two methods: the empirical and the interpretive.<sup>46</sup> The former, known as artefactual studies, is the staple of traditional archaeology and involves, for example, classifying ceramic fragments by date, manufacturing method, style and location of finding. The data resulting from this meticulous empirical approach provide an informing context for the interpretive work which focuses on the close relationship between people and things in day-to-day life, in a way similar to anthropological studies of material culture. In combination, the two 'fold together broader narratives (geographical or temporal) with rich and nuanced local stories ...'<sup>47</sup>

The focus on individual or local cases seen against the background of large-scale narratives can be adopted to allow inventories to be a source of richer more 'human' stories than previously suspected. But, in addition, the emphasis on the

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<sup>42</sup> Beaudry, M.C. (2006) *Findings: the material culture of needlework and sewing* New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

<sup>43</sup> As in examples given by Wilkie (2006).

<sup>44</sup> Discussed by Pennell, S. (2009) 'Mundane materiality, or, should small things still be forgotten? Material culture, micro-histories and the problem of scale' in Harvey, K., ed. *History and material culture: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources* London and New York: Routledge, 176 ff.

<sup>45</sup> Wilkie (2006), 17.

<sup>46</sup> Cochran, M.D. and M.C. Beaudry (2006) 'Material culture studies and historical archaeology' in Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry, eds. *The Cambridge companion to historical archaeology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 203.

<sup>47</sup> Hicks and Beaudry (2006), 7.

individual affects the understanding of the work of material culture. Material culture (by which, as just discussed, I mean people-and-their-things) has been seen as reflecting social ideas and large scale patterns at a variety of levels. Traditional structural anthropology sees the home and its contents and its occupants arranged as a mirror/mould of society at large.<sup>48</sup> Somewhat closer to the surface are theories which see ideas of home and the physical form and contents of residences as determined by broad social structures. A well-known example in archaeology is Matthew Johnson's argument that a marked change in housing types, from the feudal, open, hall house to the closed, private, symmetrical form was associated with a change from the older pre-capitalist mode of existence to individualistic scientific capitalism.<sup>49</sup> And then, at a more contingent level, the layout of home and its equipment and use are seen as reflective of social and cultural norms.<sup>50</sup> For example, Witold Rybczynski traces a connection between the changing location of beds and the changing relations between family, servants and guests.<sup>51</sup> This changing location not only signals the social relationships but also embodies and performs them.

All of these theories present the material and conceptual form of the home as determined by or reflective of large-scale structures. But recent historical archaeology has moved to see 'buildings and their associated material culture as "not simply a reflection of social ideals or large-scale patterns but equally the response of individuals ... to such trends"'.<sup>52</sup> Individual behaviour is seen not just as formed by these patterns but as actively contributing to change. Anthony Giddens' structuration theory informs the understanding that individuals create their own lives on a daily basis rather than being entirely constrained to follow cultural rules; they are active agents in their social worlds and through their actions they participate in constructing society and culture.<sup>53</sup> The imagined categories that

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<sup>48</sup> For an overview of structuralist readings of the home see Miller, D. (2001) 'Behind closed doors' in Miller, D., ed. *Home possessions: material culture behind closed doors*. Oxford: Berg, 4-6. For a classic example of such a reading see Tambiah, S.J. (1969) 'Animals are good to think and good to prohibit' *Ethnology* 8: 4: 423-459.

<sup>49</sup> Johnson, M. (1993) *Housing culture: traditional architecture in an English landscape* London: UCLP.

<sup>50</sup> As discussed by Blunt and Dowling (2006), 7.

<sup>51</sup> Rybczynski, W. (1988) *Home: a short history of an idea* London: Heinemann.

<sup>52</sup> Hicks and Horning (2006), 280, quoting Lucas, G. and R. Roderick (2003) 'The changing vernacular: archaeological excavations at Temple End, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire' *Post-medieval archaeology* 37: 2: 165-206, 198.

<sup>53</sup> Giddens, A. (1979) *Central problems in social theory: action, structure and contradictions in social analysis* London: Macmillan; Gregory, D. (2000, 4<sup>th</sup> edition) 'Structuration theory' in Johnston, R., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and M. Watts *Dictionary of human geography* Oxford:

organise social relationships are seen as constantly changing or worked at, rather than as fixed structuring drivers.<sup>54</sup> In this respect, historical archaeology also draws on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice,<sup>55</sup> which perceives individuals acting in specific circumstances to achieve desired ends while their actions are not entirely 'rational' or even thought through; they act within understood and accepted 'rules of the game'; 'practice [is] the product of processes which are neither wholly conscious nor wholly unconscious, rooted in the ongoing process of learning which begins in childhood, and through which actors know – without knowing – the right thing to do.'<sup>56</sup>

So, in the present project, finding that the ownership of certain types of goods or certain spatial arrangements were common is interpreted as showing the acceptance of norms by a large number of individuals. But it does not indicate that all people, all of the time, fitted into those patterns. And, if people act through their things then 'by studying things, we reveal situations that do not fit patterns, and in which we can come closer to understanding what people really hoped to accomplish through the production, consumption, collection, display or use of material goods'.<sup>57</sup>

### **Object of study**

Historical archaeologists have largely directed this approach to uncovering the actions and ideas of people whose voices have been under-represented in the textual or visual record. They, like social historians, have since the 1960s turned their attention to previously understudied and apparently under-documented groups and to the average people of the past.<sup>58</sup> But, further than that, historical archaeologists also look to undo mis-representation by encouraging artefacts to 'speak' for people whose voices have been ventriloquised by others. Much work has been done in this respect around 'the slum'. Nineteenth-century depictions of slums painted an enduring picture of places of vice, poverty, degradation and

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Blackwell; Orser, C., ed. (2002) 'Post-processual archaeology' in *Encyclopedia of historical archaeology* London and New York: Routledge.

<sup>54</sup> King, J (2006) 'Household archaeology, identities and biographies' in Hicks, D. and M.C. Beaudry, eds. *The Cambridge companion to historical archaeology* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 304.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu, P. trans. Nice, R. (1990) *The logic of practice* Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>56</sup> Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu* London: Routledge, 72.

<sup>57</sup> Cochran and Beaudry (2006), 203.

<sup>58</sup> King (2006), 296.

hopelessness.<sup>59</sup> Many historical archaeology projects have refused to collude in these depictions and instead have concentrated on reading the personal possessions found on site – domestic ornaments, china and glass, tools of trade, slide rules and compasses, buttons and pig bones – as unmediated first-hand evidence of cultural knowledge, of neighbourhoods rich in material culture and of people making choices and decisions rather than being completely determined by their undoubtedly impoverished circumstances.<sup>60</sup> The slide rules and compasses, in an area of Melbourne written off as hopeless, suggest education, application and skill;<sup>61</sup> corset hooks and pork bones found in a first-generation immigrant Jewish house in late nineteenth-century Chicago suggest that the occupants chose to assimilate rather than cling to the customs of their religion and European place of origin.<sup>62</sup> Not that the archaeologists empathetically or naturally understand the meaning of objects from the past: ‘We can assume no familiarity with the past, no unbroken links of comprehensibility, no hidden reality awaiting discovery.’<sup>63</sup> Objects on their own are not very telling and the recovery of their meaning depends on recovering as much as possible about the circumstances in which they were owned and used.<sup>64</sup>

Even then any conclusions are an interpretation made by the researcher; they are plausible stories and become more plausible the more contextual information – about the people, the place and the goods themselves – can be brought in. It is fully recognised that this method does not provide historical certainties. When Nigel Jeffries and his colleagues consider the meaning and use of the moralising china found in association with some nineteenth-century working-class households in Sydenham, they investigated local and household circumstances in considerable detail. But, even with a wealth of contextual

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<sup>59</sup> Mayne, A. and S. Lawrence (1999) ‘Ethnographies of place: a new urban research agenda’ *Urban History* 26: 3: 325-348.

<sup>60</sup> For example: Mayne and Lawrence (1999); Praetzellis, A. and M. Praetzellis, eds. (2004) ‘Putting the “there” there: historical archaeologies of West Oakland’, report prepared for the California Department of Transportation <http://www.sonoma.edu/asc/cypress/finalreport> accessed 11.6.2010; and Yamin, R. (2001) ‘Respectability at New York’s Five Points’ in Mayne, A. and T. Murray, eds. *The archaeology of urban landscapes: explorations in slumland* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>61</sup> Mayne and Lawrence (1999), 342-343.

<sup>62</sup> Praetzellis, A. (2004) ‘Becoming Jewish Americans’ in Praetzellis, A. and M. Praetzellis, eds. ‘Putting the “there” there: historical archaeologies of West Oakland’, report prepared for the California Department of Transportation <http://www.sonoma.edu/asc/cypress/finalreport> accessed 11.6.2010, 68-71.

<sup>63</sup> Mayne, A. (2008) ‘On the edges of history: reflections on historical archaeology’ *American Historical Review* 113: 93-118, 103.

<sup>64</sup> Mayne and Lawrence (1999), 345.

information, they are able to provide four or five equally plausible interpretations. They do not claim to know which, if any, is correct and, they make a positive use of ambiguity and open endedness, encouraging the active engagement of the reader.<sup>65</sup>

### **Historical archaeology and the present project**

These approaches and theoretical underpinnings from material culture studies and historical archaeology are used in this project in an effort at 'retrieval'. The present investigation does not enter 'slumland' because the inventories at its heart required the people concerned to have a certain level of wealth. However, many of them do relate to people with very limited disposable income and/or with what would be considered working-class occupations. These are people whose domestic life has been under-represented or mis-represented. Most contemporary depictions of working-class homes were produced by outsiders for reforming or journalistic reasons and generally concentrated on the very poor.<sup>66</sup> Many were shocking. Even sympathetic depictions, like those by Elizabeth Gaskell or Charles Dickens, showed the 'other' for readers of a different class.<sup>67</sup> Thus Peter Williams notes that 'The overwhelming power of middle-class values in this era makes it difficult to extract the realities of working-class family life'.<sup>68</sup> But, additionally, we might argue that even the realities of middle-class life are obscured by the overwhelming power of middle-class values and that they too need to be 'retrieved'. The rhetoric of middle-class ideals and the domesticity associated with them was pervasive. Like the idea of the slum, this dominant picture of the middle-class home still has huge potency and here too the myth blots out the complexities, the differences and the day-to-day negotiations of middle-class material domestic life. As slide rules and compasses

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<sup>65</sup> Jeffries, N., Owens, A., Hicks, D., Featherby, R. and K. Wehner (2009) 'Rematerialising metropolitan histories? People, places and things in modern London' in Horning, A. and M. Palmer, eds. *Crossing paths or sharing tracks: future directions in the archaeological study of post-1550 Britain and Ireland* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 323-349.

<sup>66</sup> Bulmer, M., Bales, K., and K. Sklar (1991) *The social survey in historical perspective 1880-1940* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Mayne, A. (1993) *The imagined slum: newspaper representation in three cities, 1870-1914* Leicester: Leicester University Press; Thompson, F.M.L. (1988) *The rise of respectable society: a social history of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* London: Fontana Press, 177 and 182.

<sup>67</sup> Steedman, C. (1999) 'What a rag rug means' in Bryden, I. and J. Floyd, eds. *Domestic space: reading the nineteenth-century interior* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>68</sup> Williams, P. (1987) 'Constituting class and gender: a social history of the home, 1700-1901' in Thrift, N. and P. Williams, eds. *Class and space: the making of urban society* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 182.

can re-write the vision of the slums,<sup>69</sup> so can floor-cloths and bed-hangings nuance and complicate the stories of the better off.

Margaret Ponsonby's recent work with a small series of later eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century inventories has employed a similar interpretive method to very interesting effect.<sup>70</sup> She draws on material culture studies and ethnographic anthropological approaches in her qualitative analysis of individual inventories, read in the context of their specific circumstances and against the background of broader cultural and social patterns. Although Ponsonby has not drawn on historical archaeology itself, her method and her interpretations are in the same vein and the title of her book, *Stories from home*, can be read as hinting at the fictional nature of the individual narratives and raises the question of the identity of the story-teller. Her book has had a large influence on this thesis but the present project develops and 'grounds' her method by using the twofold approach that is characteristic of historical archaeology. Here, the intense scrutiny of particular, highly contextualised, cases is brought together with a larger scale quantitative analysis that is the equivalent of historical archaeology's artefact studies. The latter provides empirical evidence of broad patterns of ownership and behaviour which can be understood as accepted norms. These actual norms calibrate those presented in the texts and images on which nineteenth-century studies have hitherto relied so heavily.

Representations have been particularly dominant in studies of Victorian domestic culture because there are so many of them. Developments in printing, photography, publishing and advertising, the increasing numbers of published social investigations, increasing literacy and the contemporary taste for realistic paintings of interior scenes have left us with a rich and engaging array of images and descriptions. Many scholars have carefully analysed them for the social and cultural models and norms they presented across a range of domestic contexts: for example, gender roles;<sup>71</sup> social and moral order;<sup>72</sup> comfort;<sup>73</sup> privacy;<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Mayne and Lawrence (1999), 342-343.

<sup>70</sup> Ponsonby, M. (2007) *Stories from home: English domestic interiors 1750-1850* Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>71</sup> Davidoff, L. and Hall, C. (1987) *Family fortunes* London: Routledge; Hamlett (2005); Tosh, J. (1999) *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England* London: Routledge.

<sup>72</sup> Driver, F. (1988) 'Moral geographies: social science and the urban environment in mid-nineteenth century England' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 13: 275-287.

consumption and taste;<sup>75</sup> class;<sup>76</sup> and, recently, modernity.<sup>77</sup> They have also long been used as evidence for what Victorian homes were really like, materially<sup>78</sup> – with varying degrees of anxiety.<sup>79</sup> That anxiety has grown and become more fully articulated.<sup>80</sup> In recent years scholars have become increasingly careful in specifying how they use such sources.<sup>81</sup> And the production, form and dissemination of representations have become objects of study, both in their own right<sup>82</sup> and in order to be more specific about their part in consumption practices.<sup>83</sup> Inventories are themselves representations but, intended as a legal record of ownership, they provide good evidence that the items listed were actually present. They therefore offer the opportunity to ask whether the pictures provided by a range of specified contemporary representations match the pictures the inventories themselves provide. Whether they do or not, this is an exercise in calibration which makes those representations more historically useful.

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<sup>73</sup> Crowley, J. (2000) *The invention of comfort* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press; and Grier, K. (1988) *Culture and comfort: people, parlors and upholstery, 1850-1930* Rochester: Strong Museum.

<sup>74</sup> McKeon, M. (2005) *The secret history of domesticity: public, private, and the division of knowledge* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>75</sup> Cohen, D. (2006) *Household gods: the British and their possessions* New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>76</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987); Young, L. (2003) *Middle-class culture in the nineteenth century: America, Australia and Britain* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>77</sup> Dennis, R. (2008) *Cities in modernity: representations and productions of metropolitan space, 1840-1930* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Keeble (2004); Sparke, P. (2008) *The modern interior* London: Reaktion Books; and Sparke, P., Massey, A., Keeble, T. and B. Martin, eds. (2009) *Designing the modern interior from the Victorians to today* Oxford & New York: Berg.

<sup>78</sup> For example, Banham, J., MacDonald, S. and J. Porter (1991) *Victorian interior design* London: Cassell; and Flanders, J. (2003) *The Victorian house: domestic life from childbirth to death* London: Harper Collins.

<sup>79</sup> In my own previous work I moved from not appreciating the problem to a full recognition that such representations were not a reliable guide to what people actually had in their homes: Gere, C. with L. Hoskins (2000) *The house beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the aesthetic interior* London: Lund Humphries; Turner, M. and L. Hoskins (1988) *Silver Studio of design: a design and source book for home decoration* Exeter: Webb & Bower.

<sup>80</sup> Lees-Maffei, G. (2003) 'Studying advice: historiography, methodology, commentary, bibliography' *Journal of design history* 16: 1: 1-14

<sup>81</sup> Kelley, V. (2005) 'Soap and water: cleanliness, class and gender 1880-1914' PhD thesis, Royal College of Art, introduction; Hamlett (2005), chapter 2.

<sup>82</sup> Aynsley, J and C. Grant, eds. (2006) *Imagined interiors: representing the domestic interior since the Renaissance* London: V&A Publications; Aynsley J. and K. Forde, eds. (2007) *Design and the modern magazine* Manchester: Manchester University Press; Ferry, E. (2003)

"Decorators may be compared to doctors": an analysis of Rhoda and Agnes Garretts' suggestions for house decoration, 1876' *Journal of Design History* 1: 16: 15-34; Ferry, E. (2006)

'Home and away: domesticity and empire in the work of Lady Barker' *Women's History Magazine* Autumn; Ferry, E. (2007) "... information for the ignorant and aid for the advancing ..." Macmillan's "Art at Home Series", 1876-1883' in Aynsley J. and K. Forde *Design and the modern magazine* Manchester: Manchester University Press; Lees-Maffei G., ed. (2003)

'Domestic design advice' special issue *Journal of Design History* 16:1.

<sup>83</sup> Keeble (2004).

## Substantive themes

Having outlined the approach and the main source of evidence, I now move on to discuss the substantive themes of the thesis – difference and differentiation. The ‘differences’ considered are different domestic practices and whether they relate to differences in the wealth and occupation, geography, gender or chronological position of the owners of the goods listed in the inventories. The discussion is most extensive in relation to class, where theoretical frameworks for understanding difference are explored. ‘Differentiation’ is one particular form of domestic practice, relating to the division of space in the premises represented in the inventories. Both have been considered key to understanding nineteenth-century homes.

## Difference

Almost every discussion of the nineteenth-century home specifies the class of the occupants and either implies or claims that it is central to the form and nature of that home. This applies as much in recent work as in older studies, even though there have been marked shifts in the way that historians theorise class, the importance that they attach to it and the degree of usefulness that they consider it has as a category.<sup>84</sup> Some scholars, in a move which is found across topics and across disciplines, have turned to looking at nineteenth-century homes with reference to structures or themes that a previous emphasis on class had underplayed: for example, gender; transnationalism; business and life cycle; and modernity.<sup>85</sup> Yet in all these cases class remains present as a framework. But if so

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<sup>84</sup> Joyce, P. (1995) 'The end of social history?' *Social History* 20: 1: 73–91, offers a thorough-going and influential critique. Simon Gunn responds in, for example, (2000) *The public culture of the Victorian middle class: ritual and authority and the English industrial city 1840-1914* Manchester: Manchester University Press and demonstrates the continuing value of class as a category of explanation. See also Kidd, A. and D. Nicholls (1999) 'Introduction: history, culture and the middle classes' in Kidd, A. and D. Nicholls, eds. *Gender, civic culture and consumerism: middle-class identity in Britain 1800-1940* Manchester: Manchester University Press for a review of the debate.

<sup>85</sup> Blunt and Dowling (2006) provide a broad overview of current approaches to home. As examples: on transnational homes, Blunt, A. (2003), 71-87; somewhat glancingly, on the impact of business and life-stage see Morris (2005). The literature on gender and home is huge but as examples see Hamlett (2005); and Kinchin, J. (1996) 'Interiors: nineteenth-century essays on the "masculine" and the "feminine" room' in Kirkham, P., ed. *The gendered object* Manchester: Manchester University Press; and Rose, S.O. (1992) *Limited livelihoods: gender and class in nineteenth-century England* London: Routledge, chapter 6; Tosh (1999). For modernity see Sparke (2008) and Sparke, P. (2009) 'General introduction' in Sparke, P., Massey, A., Keeble, T. and B. Martin *Designing the modern interior from the Victorians to today* Oxford & New York: Berg.



much has already been written about class and the nineteenth-century home, what can the present project add?

Firstly, the project's empirical findings are fruitfully used to bring together two approaches to discussing the classed home – the socio-economic and the cultural.<sup>86</sup> On the one hand, social or economic historians see income, employment and occupation as the basis of class difference. This was at its most active in the materialist work of the 1970s and 80s, at a time when class – and largely the working class – was a central concern for social historians and historical geographers.<sup>87</sup> On the other hand, and increasingly in more recent work, cultural parameters (using culture here to mean 'way of life'<sup>88</sup>) have been of more interest, both in the domestic and non-domestic realms.<sup>89</sup> These are not always conceptually different approaches since socio-economic analyses imply the cultural and the cultural is often seen as dependent on the socio-economic but the aim in this project is to empiricise the links between the two, making a more robust assessment of class differentiation and the home.<sup>90</sup> Secondly, most of the attention has been directed at the middle-class home. This focus has limited discussion to what has been estimated as comprising somewhere between fifteen and twenty-five percent of the population.<sup>91</sup> The inventory series used here, while restricted in scope to those liable to Death Duties and therefore of a certain level of wealth, nevertheless offers the opportunity to move descriptively outside the well-covered

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<sup>86</sup> There is a third approach, with class understood as a discursive construct rather than a social structure. This traces the contemporary uses and meanings of class terms and understands them as making categories rather than reflecting them. See Crossick, G. (1991) 'From gentlemen to the residuum: languages of social description in Victorian Britain' in Corfield, P., ed. *Language history and class* Oxford: Basil Blackwell. Wahrman, D. (1993) "Middle-class" domesticity goes public: gender, class, and politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria' *The Journal of British Studies* 32: 4: 396-432 tracks the different meaning of class terms in different contexts. However, as Gunn (2000), 4, points out, a discursive understanding tends to neglect issues of power and inequality.

<sup>87</sup> For example: Burnett (1978); Crossick, G. (1976) 'The labour aristocracy and its values: a study of mid-Victorian Kentish London' *Victorian Studies*: 19: 3: 301-328; Daunton, M. (1983) *House and home in the Victorian city: working-class housing, 1850-1914* London: Edward Arnold; Davidoff and Hall (1987); Muthesius, S. (1982) *The English terraced house* New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Thompson (1988); and Williams (1987).

<sup>88</sup> 'Culture' can be used to mean 'way of life' or it can refer to the broad fields of the arts, letters, manners, and scholarly pursuits; see Gunn, S. (2005) 'Translating Bourdieu: cultural capital and the English middle class in historical perspective' *The British Journal of Sociology* 56: 1: 49-64, 53. I use the term mostly to mean 'way of life'; I indicate if the other usage is intended.

<sup>89</sup> For the public sphere see particularly Gunn (2000); and Morris, R.J. (1990) *Class, sect and party: the making of the British middle class: Leeds, 1820-50* Manchester: Manchester University Press. For the domestic sphere see particularly Davidoff and Hall (1987); Rose (1992); and Young (2003).

<sup>90</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987) and Young (2003) see a link between the two.

<sup>91</sup> Burnett (1978), 95; Green *et al.* (2010, forthcoming); Rubinstein W.D. (1988) 'The size and distribution of the English middle classes in 1860' *Historical Research* 61: 65-89, note 7, 69.

ground of the middle-class home. Thirdly, the thesis addresses the question of whether the single-minded focus on class as the source of difference is justifiable? The wealth of personal information attached to the inventories gives the opportunity to consider whether other differences should be brought to the fore, as modulating or cutting through class. Can geography, life stage or household composition be seen to have an effect? And what about gender, which has been seen to be so central to the experience of domesticity?

### **Class – social and cultural**

The problem of defining, recognising or even establishing the existence of nineteenth-century classes has long been seen as intractable.<sup>92</sup> John Burnett pointed out, in attempting to estimate the size of the middle class, that this is partly because of incomplete data but, more fundamentally, because of the difficulty of setting limits to its membership.<sup>93</sup> Linda Young summarises and critiques the historiography of nineteenth-century class divisions, stressing that there is a difference between approaches which prioritise contemporary views (which varied very much over time and by context) and those which are more structural and relate broadly to amount and source of income, employment and occupation.<sup>94</sup> Although there is no complete consensus on a socio-economic definition it is nonetheless useful to indicate some of the more common and popularly accepted parameters as reference points for the present investigation. William Rubinstein gives a clear economic analysis relating to the middle of the nineteenth century; he categorises those who paid income tax on incomes from business, the professions, government or public employment as the middle class.<sup>95</sup> His grouping excludes landowners (the upper class) and farmers (ambiguous class-wise) but includes some better-off shopkeepers and small businessmen and lower professionals, since the starting point for payment of income tax was only £100 or £150 per annum (depending on the exact date under discussion). This group therefore includes what he and social historians such as Geoffrey Crossick have seen as the lower middle class, broadly distinguished by occupation and taking in both the petty bourgeoisie – shopkeepers and small businessmen, for example – and the growing

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<sup>92</sup> Dennis, R. (1984). *English industrial cities of the nineteenth century: a social geography* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 186-199.

<sup>93</sup> Burnett (1978), 94.

<sup>94</sup> Young (2003), 54-68.

<sup>95</sup> Rubinstein (1988).

group of white-collar salaried workers, such as school teachers, clerks, and probably some minor professionals.<sup>96</sup> Crossick, by taking account of evidence for shared or distinct cultures (meaning attitudes and ways of living), finds that these two sub-groups became increasingly distinct as the century progressed.<sup>97</sup>

Many discussions and descriptions of nineteenth-century homes similarly propose that different occupationally-based class groups not only had different economic power and therefore accommodation of differing quality but that they also had different attitudes to the organisation of their homes. However, some homes have received more attention than others. For the historians of the working classes, as August's recent overview shows, the focus has generally been on community cultures, economic and social structures and networks outside the home.<sup>98</sup> This is because class formation, which was a major concern of social historians of the 1960s through to the 1980s, has been understood as related to shared experiences, associated with socio-economic conditions, in the public arena rather than in what might be seen as the private, individualised arena of home. Matters of rent, housing type and social segregation were the main focus of interest and there has been relatively little attention to life in the home.<sup>99</sup> In this context, both John Burnett and Stefan Muthesius meticulously link accommodation and facilities with socio-economic capacity but, although their studies give some attention to how housing types related to matters such as privacy, the internal material detail of working-class domesticity is hardly addressed.<sup>100</sup> And Crossick, in his investigation of labour aristocracy values, dealt with the type of areas and the type of houses that skilled workers lived in but did not cross the threshold.<sup>101</sup> Some studies, focusing on aspects of working-class life such as gender, privacy, women's or children's work or household structure, have caught domestic arrangements out of the corner of their eyes.<sup>102</sup> But it is only Martin Daunton's excellent book, now

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<sup>96</sup> Crossick, G. (1977) 'The emergence of the lower middle class in Britain' in Crossick, G., ed. *The lower middle class in Britain 1870-1914* London: Croom Helm, 12.

<sup>97</sup> Crossick (1977), 35.

<sup>98</sup> August, A. (2007) *The British working class, 1832-1940* Harlow: Longman.

<sup>99</sup> Gauldie, E. (1974) *Cruel habitations. A history of working-class housing 1780-1918* London: Allen and Unwin; Tarn, J.N. (1973) *Five percent philanthropy: an account of housing in urban areas between 1840-1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>100</sup> Burnett (1978); Muthesius (1982).

<sup>101</sup> Crossick (1976).

<sup>102</sup> Examples are: Anderson, M. (1971) *Family structure in nineteenth-century Lancashire* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Davidoff, L. (1979) 'The separation of home and work? Landladies and lodgers in nineteenth- and twentieth-century England' in Burman, S., ed. *Fit work for women* London: Croom Helm; Hewitt, M. (1999) 'District visiting and the constitution of domestic space in the mid-nineteenth century' in Bryden, I. and J. Floyd, eds. *Domestic*

almost 30 years old, that deals centrally with the practicalities as well as the concepts of working-class domesticity.<sup>103</sup> This remains an important reference text although its coverage is a little too late for the present study, as it deals almost entirely with the post-byelaw-housing period of the 1870s onwards.

It is a different matter for the middle-class home and there are many books which address both the appearance of the interior of the house and the life that was lived in it.<sup>104</sup> This is partly a matter of the availability of sources. Visual representations, whether paintings, drawings, photographs or illustrations from catalogues relate largely to well-to-do homes and have informed extensive and well-researched publications on the middle-class and élite Victorian home.<sup>105</sup> The 1970s and 80s saw a growing popular interest in conservation and restoration and numbers of books on Victorian interior style appeared for this market, which has not much diminished.<sup>106</sup> Many of these books relied on Burnett's and Muthesius's surveys in order to locate the class of the houses and households under discussion. Others were more casual in their ideas of class.<sup>107</sup> But all of them, with their detailed discussions of the way the interiors were laid out and furnished, inevitably concerned themselves with the way of life of the occupants. The underlying assumption was that classes or segments of classes, defined by occupation and income, shared a domestic culture.

This assumption was firmly conceptualised in Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes*, first published in 1987.<sup>108</sup> This book is still in print (with a new introduction in 2002) and in spite of considerable scholarly critiques of various aspects of its thesis, it remains a central text in discussions of the

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*space: reading the nineteenth-century interior* Manchester: Manchester University Press; Humphries, J. (2010) *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Kelley (2005); and Rose (1992).

<sup>103</sup> Daunt (1983).

<sup>104</sup> This literature is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. A useful overview is given in Ferry, E. (2009) 'Introduction. Part one: the late nineteenth-century interior (1870-1900)' in Sparke, P., Massey, A., Keeble, T. and B. Martin *Designing the modern interior from the Victorians to today* Oxford & New York: Berg.

<sup>105</sup> There are many examples; the following are worth special notice: Gere, C. (1989) *Nineteenth-century decoration: the art of the interior* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Gere, C. (1992) *Nineteenth-century interiors: an album of watercolours* London: Thames and Hudson; Gere with Hoskins (2000); Lasdun, S. (1981) *Victorians at home* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson; Long, H.C. (2001) *Victorian houses and their details: the role of publications in their building and decoration* Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann; Thornton, P. (1984) *Authentic decor: the domestic interior, 1620-1920* New York: Crescent Books.

<sup>106</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991); Barrett, H. (1987) *Suburban style: the British home, 1840-1960* London: Macdonald; Flanders (2003); Turner and Hoskins (1988); and Wedd, K. (2002) *The Victorian Society book of the Victorian house* London: Aurum.

<sup>107</sup> Turner and Hoskins (1988).

<sup>108</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987).

nineteenth-century middle-class home and is a main point of reference for this thesis. It is hardly necessary to recapitulate its thesis but, in outline, it argued that a particular culture or way of life, based around a gendered, religiously directed, family-oriented domesticity, was central to the formation of a robust middle-class consciousness in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Domesticity affected all areas of life, including business and religious activities, and it certainly included ideas about organising, equipping and furnishing the house in order to facilitate and highlight the importance of family life.<sup>109</sup> But although they put culture centre stage in class formation, Davidoff and Hall were still materialists – they saw culture as dependent on economic structure and located it in the context of industrial development.

Davidoff and Hall's argument is about the formation of a group identity. Linda Young, in her more recent book about the making of the middle class, positions her thesis within the same period and the same economic, industrialising, evangelical and gendered context but she takes the cultural component further. While sufficient financial resources and a non-manual occupation were necessary for membership of the middle class, there was also, she argues, the requirement of 'gentility' – effectively the life style – of the middle class at this time.<sup>110</sup> Young does not specify the exact meaning of 'gentility'. Contemporary literature suggests that it was not the same as a socio-economic definition of class but was related to the idea of the gentleman, as this extract from *Great Expectations* shows. Dickens presents the humorous and sophisticated young Londoner, Herbert Pocket, attempting to explain Miss Havisham's background to Pip, a country boy:

'Her father was a country gentleman down in your part of the world, and was a brewer. I don't know why it should be a crack thing to be a brewer; but it is indisputable that while you cannot possibly be genteel and bake, you may be as genteel as never was and brew. You see it every day.'

'Yet a gentleman may not keep a public house; may he ?' said [Pip].  
'Not on any account,' returned Herbert 'but a public-house may keep a gentleman.'<sup>111</sup>

As the extract indicates, and as Crossick has discussed, the exact referent of gentility was hard to pin down.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), see especially chapter 8, "My own fireside": the creation of the middle-class home', 357-396.

<sup>110</sup> Young (2003), chapter 2.

<sup>111</sup> Dickens, C. (1861) *Great expectations* London: Chapman and Hall, Vol. 2, 37-38.

<sup>112</sup> Crossick (1991).

Young acknowledges that the middle class was not homogenous but she stresses that 'the totality can be identified as all those sharing the basic menu of ideals and actions'<sup>113</sup> which involved a specific material culture.<sup>114</sup> Her detailed delineation of the material components of that gentility, particularly with regard to the home, is of special interest to the present project and is referred to in the substantive chapters, especially 3 and 4. She emphasises that it was not just ownership that was required but also the knowledge of how to use things correctly; she therefore understands material goods as taking an active role in shaping behaviour. She further argues that the possession and correct use of these goods was not simply a claim to middle-class status but was actually constitutive of middle-class identity and belonging. Her model is performative: 'Assiduous and energetic, the early nineteenth-century middle class created itself by living the life of the middle class.'<sup>115</sup>

In making this argument, Young draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, especially *Distinction*.<sup>116</sup> She understands 'middle classness' as a *habitus* – a series of related dispositions to prefer particular types of goods and behaviours (of all kinds). And, similarly drawing on Bourdieu, she understands middle-class material culture as an active element of power relations. Bourdieu argued in *Distinction* that different class groups had different patterns of behaviours and preferences – tastes – but that taste is not neutral. Some groups are more powerful than others and the shared taste of the dominant segment is widely understood as 'better' than that of most other groups. The tastes of this group are themselves expensive and/or require considerable expenditure of time and effort, generally requiring financial outlay, to acquire. However, although these tastes actually depend on the possession of economic competence and familial or institutional training, they have the appearance of being natural or ingrained and embodied. Taste, then, is a transposition of material inequalities and further solidifies inequality. Those outside the dominant sector respond variously. Groups which have no possibility of achieving the tastes of the dominant maintain their own patterns of taste; they are doubly disadvantaged because not only are they not

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<sup>113</sup> Young (2003), 14.

<sup>114</sup> Young (2003), especially 173-188, for the equipment, furnishing and decoration of the middle-class dwelling.

<sup>115</sup> Young (2003), 10.

<sup>116</sup> Bourdieu, P. (1984) trans. Nice, R. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Young (2003), 20-23. Gunn (2000) and Gunn (2005) also use *Distinction* to understand middle-class formation, but here in the public arena.

able, through poverty or lack of education, to acquire the tastes of the dominant but they often concur in the judgement of the dominant that their own tastes are inferior.<sup>117</sup> Groups or class fractions that are strong in education and cultural knowledge (cultural capital)<sup>118</sup> but are economically weak valorise alternative standards. Some individuals attempt to assimilate by adopting the preferences and possessions of a more advantaged group. This involves having enough money to do so but it also requires the embodied knowledge of how to behave and use the necessary goods. This is often an intergenerational project since the most convincing kind of cultural capital is acquired informally through family or social networks; taste becomes embodied and appears natural rather than learnt. Groups already in positions of privilege attempt to repel interlopers by making changes in what is acceptable or adopting behaviours that are hard to achieve.<sup>119</sup>

Bourdieu developed his theory in the context of mid-twentieth-century France and the material details and structures of his findings are not transferrable to other times or places but Simon Gunn, whose work focuses on the public cultural (in both senses) components of nineteenth-century middle-class formation, has discussed in rather more detail than Young how it can be used to understand nineteenth-century middle-class solidarity.<sup>120</sup> He notes, for example, that the public schools of the 1840s onwards were part of the intergenerational project of inculcating a shared, embodied and apparently natural cultural competence in people born to disparate backgrounds. And he argues that, although they were reliant on socio-economic competence, it was the cultural and moral meanings of class that predominated throughout the nineteenth century; it was only later on that it became recognised as a social, economic or political category.

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<sup>117</sup> Jenkins (2002), 104-110.

<sup>118</sup> 'Culture' and 'cultural capital' in Bourdieu's work refers to the arts, letters, manners, scholarly pursuits and so on.

<sup>119</sup> Andrew Trigg discusses the similarities of Bourdieu's theory to that proposed in Thorstein Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption. Bourdieu provides a more complicated and subtle model. Although both Bourdieu and Veblen understand consumption practices as an active element of class relations, Bourdieu's matrix of cultural and economic capital offers more varied class positions than Veblen's straightforward three tier system. This allows for a variety of responses to other groups' preferences – refusal and contestation as well as the upward-looking emulation of Veblen's model. And Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as a series of naturalised and, most effectively, unconscious dispositions and preferences means that consumption preferences are not as consciously strategic as proposed by Veblen. In this model inconspicuous consumption is as important as conspicuous because all behaviours, not just those that are seen by others, are part of a *habitus*. Trigg, A. (2001) 'Veblen, Bourdieu and conspicuous consumption' *Journal of Economic Issues* 35: 1: 99-115; Veblen, T. (1899) *The theory of the leisure class: an economic study in the evolution of institutions* New York: MacMillan.

<sup>120</sup> Gunn (2000); Gunn (2005).

*Distinction* proposes that struggles over entry occur at the permeable edges of class groups. The defence of group boundaries by those in possession can be seen in the elaborate etiquette and material goods of the early nineteenth-century British élite, described by Leonore Davidoff.<sup>121</sup> She understands early nineteenth-century 'Society's' development of increasingly rigid codes of behaviour and associated material practices as a way of regulating entry at a time of increasing social and physical mobility. Similarly it can be seen in the way that the late-nineteenth-century established middle class ridiculed lower-middle-class ways of living.<sup>122</sup>

Thad Logan also calls on Bourdieu's work in her reading of the Victorian parlour although she uses it less for its discussion of class boundaries than to help explain how individual choice was possible: 'Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* ... explains how acts can be spontaneous (rather than literally mandated by rules or determined by teleological imperatives) yet not simply "free" or random.'<sup>123</sup> She adopts the term 'regulated improvisation', meaning choice within an acceptable set of parameters, as applicable to the practice of decoration. And certainly the many decoration and furnishing advice books of the last quarter of the century emphasised the importance of exercising individual choice – but within the bounds of an acceptable aesthetic. Young also finds Bourdieu's model useful in this way; she reads it as offering room for individual choice which production-based structural models of class do not, although this does underplay Bourdieu's insistence that cultural dispositions are rooted in the material conditions of existence. The way Logan and Young use the model shifts Davidoff and Hall's conceptualisation of class formation into the area of individual social identity and personal membership of a group. When Young writes that 'Believing like the middle class, performing like the middle class, consuming like the middle class, constituted agents as the middle class' she presents individuals not just as the products of their circumstances but as acting through choice – choosing to be middle-class.<sup>124</sup>

On this reading, material culture is an expression and a tool of class relations and of patterns of dominance. But Dror Wahrman has identified a

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<sup>121</sup> Davidoff, L. (1973) *The best circles: society etiquette and the season* London: Croom Helm.

<sup>122</sup> Bailey, P. (1999) 'White collars, gray lives? The lower middle class revisited' *The Journal of British Studies* 38: 3: 273-290; Hammerton, J. (1999) 'Pooterism or partnership? Marriage and masculine identity in the lower middle class, 1870- 1920' *The Journal of British Studies* 38: 3: 291-321.

<sup>123</sup> Logan, T. (2001) *The Victorian parlour* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 78.

<sup>124</sup> Young (2003), 20.



weakness in the cultural definition of class for the nineteenth century.<sup>125</sup> He argues, in relation to Davidoff and Hall's *Family fortunes*, that justifying the categorisation of subjects by reference solely to common traits and cultural and behavioural characteristics is unsatisfactory, partly because further evidence of a shared understanding of life experiences is absent. He notes that, on such an analysis, anyone working-class or aristocratic who pursued the same normative characteristics would thus simply have to be considered bourgeoisified. Geoffrey Crossick had previously made a similar argument: although both the middle classes and the skilled working classes adhered to an apparently similar code of respectability, that code meant different things to the two groups; the artisan class was not simply adopting middle class values.<sup>126</sup> This critique can be extended to take in Young's understanding of material culture as defining class. There is certainly a problem in moving, as Young does, from a list of material goods, derived from prescriptive, normative literature, to the assertion that people who owned those goods were in fact middle-class. Perhaps they were – but it needs some further corroboration from another field. Young herself examined approximately 100 inventories from Australia, Scotland and America for evidence of actual practice but her sample was predefined as middle-class.<sup>127</sup> It therefore has no edges and we are not presented with a material culture from which it is crucially different. But, without boundaries, how can we know that this material culture is *distinctively* middle-class? Young certainly allows that middle-class membership depended on a minimum economic standing and a non-manual income source but, in her focus on the cultural, she stresses that the baggage of gentility was available to suit a wide range of purchasing power.

Using the present group of inventories and staying with Bourdieu's *Distinction* provides a possible way of responding to Wahrman's critique. As Daniel Miller points out, Bourdieu's model potentially 'provided a novel mechanism by which analysts could study social relations in some objectified form – here as a pattern of taste.'<sup>128</sup> We can perhaps read class from people's possessions but only if we can identify the distinctions – the differences – which are so crucial. Bourdieu developed his theoretical position out of an empirical study of over 1,000

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<sup>125</sup> Wahrman (1993).

<sup>126</sup> Crossick (1976).

<sup>127</sup> With thanks to Linda Young for her personal communication on this matter.

<sup>128</sup> Miller, D. (1995) 'Consumption studies as the transformation of anthropology' in Miller, D., ed. *Acknowledging consumption: a review of new studies* London: Routledge, 267.

respondents from across the social spectrum, which revealed statistically significant associations between identifiably different preferences and identifiably different social or class groups, as defined by occupation and education.<sup>129</sup> It was a mapping exercise. And mapping is essayed in the present project, which aims to identify significant fault lines in material culture and to investigate whether they can be aligned with fault lines in the circumstances of the deceased.<sup>130</sup> Mapping is used directly in chapters 3, and 6 but it needs to be acknowledged that it falls far short of Bourdieu's model, which was set up as a sociological survey and which asked direct and pointed questions of its participants. Here, in a much smaller sample, I work with data that are already available and attempt to interpret them in terms of preferences and distinctions. Bourdieu looked for cultural distinctions that are finer than those made in inventories; he asked, for example, about whether respondents preferred naturalistic or abstract pictures. Such discriminations hardly appear in these inventories. Nonetheless some – broad – differences in material culture can be discerned and these can be aligned with differences in the type of people concerned; this helps to calibrate existing cultural interpretations and to locate them more precisely. Some of these differences in types of people can be related to their class position, as understood in socio-economic terms.

However, it is understood in the present mapping project that any broad patterns that emerge are statistical constructs; individual cases can diverge from generalisations for any number of reasons. This is addressed in the interpretive case studies which counterbalance the extensive analysis. Secondly, although the socio-economic position of the householder is always considered as a factor, I do not want to suggest that it is the only, or even the central, difference that affects the way that people lived at home. This thesis is alert to several other potential sources of difference, although not all of them make a strong showing in the analysis.

### **Difference according to geographical location**

Each of the inventories in the present study relates to a (more or less precise) address. This allows a consideration of whether differences in domestic culture are discernible according to geographical location.

We might expect that any such differences would 'smooth out' during the century, as Margaret Ponsonby outlines with regard to furniture. At the beginning of

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<sup>129</sup> Bourdieu (1984), 13.

<sup>130</sup> In lieu of Wahrman's 'shared understanding of life experiences': Wahrman (1993), 401.

the century in middle-class homes, vernacular furniture (by which she means that made locally by carpenters and joiners, usually of local woods or of deal) was already relegated to bed-rooms and service areas. She notes that the rationalisation of furniture making, especially in London, increased production and lowered prices. The advent from early in the century of the big 'furnishing drapers', which sold ready-made bought-in furniture, produced in London or by big provincial manufacturers, was detrimental to provincial bespoke cabinet makers. These big stores, which were accessible by rail in larger towns, also produced printed catalogues so that customers could shop remotely. These changes, she argues, in furniture making, in transport networks, in methods of distribution and retailing, and in consumer attitudes all contributed towards the development of a national taste and a national market.<sup>131</sup>

The inventories do not distinguish between provincially made furniture and that bought from furnishing drapers. Nor is the short time span covered likely to reveal the rather slow moving changes identified by Ponsonby. However, her argument does raise the question of whether a national taste was visible in other aspects of domestic material culture, as in the ownership of particular items of furniture or particular rooms. And, if geographical differences are visible in the inventories, do they appear to be moderated by, for example, class or wealth? Was, say, the domestic culture of the wealthy more national than that of the poor?

However, there are difficulties with investigating this. How are addresses to be grouped? It is not easy to classify an individual inventory as being located in, say, a town or a rural area or in a particular region.<sup>132</sup> Even at the time, it was hard to establish a definition of a town.<sup>133</sup> And anyway towns differ in their size, their relationship to their surroundings, their facilities and their populations. The same town means different things to different people.<sup>134</sup> And towns change; in this period some towns changed very rapidly, growing or shrinking, gaining or losing influence.

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<sup>131</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 23-48.

<sup>132</sup> Thompson, F.M.L. (1990) 'Town and city' in Thompson, F.M.L., ed. *The Cambridge social history of Britain, Volume I. Regions and communities* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2-14.

<sup>133</sup> Lees, L.H. (2000) 'Urban networks' in Daunton, M., ed *The Cambridge urban history of Britain, Volume III, 1840-1950* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 67-69; Waller, P.J. (1983) *Town, city, and nation* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1.

<sup>134</sup> Everitt, A. (1979) 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 29: 79-108, 80.

The same is true of regions.<sup>135</sup> The regions with which we are familiar today were not necessarily the same – nominally, administratively, culturally, economically or politically – in the nineteenth century. Nor were regions similar to each other in their size or make up. As Jon Stobart demonstrates, some, such as the north west and west midlands, were by the middle of the nineteenth century, large areas that were economically, politically and culturally cohesive. Others, such as the east midlands were diverse, without an identifiable regional capital.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, different aspects – cultural, social or economic – of what might be seen as a region did not necessarily map spatially directly on to each other. Jack Langton’s argument that regional identities intensified, firstly, in response to local industry and the development of the canals as intra-regional transport links and, subsequently, as a self-conscious positioning in opposition to the centralising moves of government and the national networks provided by the railways cannot therefore be seen as applying throughout the country.<sup>137</sup>

Where did London stand in all this? Peter Borsay shows it as a centre of innovation, fashion and trade, and as comprising a huge, sophisticated and affluent market.<sup>138</sup> It was the centre for élite society, increasingly so as railways made transport from the country easier. William Rubinstein suggests that not only did London have a higher proportion of middle-class inhabitants than other parts of the country<sup>139</sup> but that it also had a specific type of middle-class culture, aligned with that of ‘old society’ and distinct from the middle-class culture of the new manufacturing cities.<sup>140</sup> And Simon Gunn has found a distinctive culture of the provincial middle class.<sup>141</sup> Although Borsay sees London as dominating and influencing non-metropolitan culture, Rosemary Sweet takes a different perspective, arguing that London’s influence had diminished by the 1840s and that,

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<sup>135</sup> Stobart, J. (2001) ‘Regions, localities, and industrialisation: evidence from the East Midlands circa 1780-1840’ *Environment and Planning A* 33: 1305-1325, 1305-1309, gives an overview of recent work on the varied nature and scale of regions in the nineteenth century.

<sup>136</sup> Stobart (2001).

<sup>137</sup> Langton, J. (1984) ‘The industrial revolution and the regional geography of England’ *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* NS 9: 2: 145-167.

<sup>138</sup> Borsay, P. (2001) ‘London, 1660-1800: a distinctive culture?’ in Clark, P and R. Gillespie, eds. *Two capitals: London and Dublin, 1500-1840* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 167-185.

<sup>139</sup> Rubinstein (1988), 78-79.

<sup>140</sup> Rubinstein, W.D. (1977b) ‘The Victorian middle classes: wealth, occupation, and geography’ *Economic History Review* NS 30: 4: 602-623, 619-621.

<sup>141</sup> Gunn (2000).

anyway, it was the 'other' against which provincial or regional identities sharpened themselves.<sup>142</sup>

To deal adequately with geography and domestic culture would be a research project in its own right. All I am able to do within the scope of the present study is to group inventories into convenient but arbitrary regional categories, based on contemporary census divisions, for the purposes of aggregate analysis (Chapter 2, 82-83). But even this produces interesting and statistically significant results, which indicate very considerable differences between ownership and domestic cultures in different parts of the country. They are, as expected, related partly to the fact that some parts of the country had wealthier inhabitants than others. But at the same time geography often cuts through differences of wealth and class.

### **Differences by gender, marital status and age**

No historian of the domestic culture of any period would now fail to appreciate the role of gender.<sup>143</sup> Davidoff and Hall identified a female-centred familial domesticity as becoming a dominant ideal in the late eighteenth century.<sup>144</sup> Amanda Vickery challenged that chronology but not the relationship, stressing that the differentiation of gender roles in relation to the home was long-standing.<sup>145</sup> Others have focused on returning men to the domestic sphere and an involvement with domestic goods. John Tosh argues that ideas of masculinity involved the maintenance and enjoyment of a family home, especially in the first three quarters of the nineteenth century.<sup>146</sup> Jane Hamlett has focused on gendered identity and relationships as expressed in and formed by the nineteenth-century home.<sup>147</sup>

Much scholarship has addressed gender differences in relation to domestic goods. For the eighteenth century, Vickery finds that gender played a part in their acquisition, with men choosing transport-related goods and larger pieces of furniture while the female remit related to textiles, female and children's clothing

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<sup>142</sup> Sweet, R. (1999) *The English town 1680-1840: government, society and culture* Harlow: Pearson, 257-264.

<sup>143</sup> For a review of the historiography see Vickery, A. (1993b) 'Golden age to separate spheres: a review of the categories and chronology of English women's history' *The Historical Journal* 36: 2: 383-414.

<sup>144</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987).

<sup>145</sup> Vickery (1993b).

<sup>146</sup> Tosh (1999).

<sup>147</sup> Hamlett (2005).

and smaller items of equipment.<sup>148</sup> Margot Finn argues that male participation in household provisioning and personal purchasing has been unduly discounted.<sup>149</sup> And Deborah Cohen maintains that historians of the nineteenth-century home have wrongly assumed that women were primarily responsible for its decoration before the last quarter of the century.<sup>150</sup> Several studies also indicate that women had a special relationship with their domestic goods. Vickery, examining eighteenth-century middling-sort women's diaries, finds that they often took great pride in household goods and in their skill in looking after them.<sup>151</sup> Maxine Berg has found that, in their wills, women paid more attention than men to the detail of their possessions, especially clothing, tea utensils and decorative furnishings, and attached emotional significance to them.<sup>152</sup>

A large body of work thus demonstrates that domestic material culture was inextricably bound up with gender roles and gender relations and that male and female experiences and expectations were different. And yet when Lorna Weatherill studied almost 3,000 inventories for the period 1660-1740 she found that the differences in possessions between men and women were not, on the whole, very great.<sup>153</sup> The same was the case with Carole Shammas's larger study.<sup>154</sup> This is because inventories, although listing an individual's goods, relate to the domestic culture of the whole household. In the case of married or widowed people, the possessions were probably acquired in a joint project of household formation.<sup>155</sup> As Berg's discussion of Shammas's work shows, it was not differences in the ownership of goods that were gendered but differences in attitudes.<sup>156</sup> We might therefore expect to find that gender is submerged in the present aggregate analysis of ownership although it is likely to be more visible in the qualitative reading of individual inventories. Additionally, since it is the household that is investigated here it is not only the gender of the owner and other residents that is relevant but

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<sup>148</sup> Vickery (2009), 106-128.

<sup>149</sup> Finn, M. (2000) 'Men's things: masculine possession in the consumer revolution' *Social History* 25: 2: 133-155.

<sup>150</sup> Cohen (2006); Logan (2001).

<sup>151</sup> Vickery (1993b); Vickery (1998).

<sup>152</sup> Berg, M. (1996) 'Women's consumption and the industrial classes of eighteenth-century England' *Journal of Social History* 30: 2: 415-434.

<sup>153</sup> Weatherill, L. (1986) 'A possession of one's own: women and consumer behaviour in England, 1660-1740' *Journal of British Studies* 25: 131-156.

<sup>154</sup> Shammas (1990), discussed in Berg (1996), 415.

<sup>155</sup> It might be thought that the goods of people who were never married might be more reflective of gendered preferences, but they might have taken on the household goods of their parents; see Chapter 4, 185-190 for an example.

<sup>156</sup> Berg (1996).

also their ages (or life stages) and relationships. One might refer to research on the taking in of lodgers which shows that it was often undertaken by widowed or single women as a source of income; it would surely have had an effect on the ownership of goods and the arrangement of household space.<sup>157</sup>

### **Differences over time**

This project uses about half of the approximately one thousand inventories available in the IR19 series, which runs in totality from 1796 to 1903. For both practical and historiographical reasons only those inventories relating to people who died during the period 1841 to 1881 are examined here. 1881 is the end date because the supply of inventories dries up. 1841 is the start date partly because this is when the census began recording details about individuals and the availability of contextual information about particular households is important for the project. It should be noted, though, that most inventories can be seen as relating to somewhat earlier domestic practices, since many of the people concerned had probably acquired the majority of their possessions some time before their death. In the historiography of the home, no part of the nineteenth century has been left untouched. Some thematic studies, most notably Deborah Cohen's investigation of changing attitudes to consumption for the home and Peter Tosh's examination of masculinity and domesticity, have ranged across the whole century.<sup>158</sup> And many of the more descriptive studies have also covered the whole period.<sup>159</sup> But other significant studies have tended to focus either on the thirty years at the beginning of the century or the thirty years at the end. The former are those concerned with the origins and development of a specifically middle-class domesticity.<sup>160</sup> The latter respond in various ways to the effects of rising standards of living and developments in housing provision, mass production, retailing, advertising and publishing (particularly the increasing number of decorative advice books).<sup>161</sup> There is no complete gap but the coverage is thinner for the middle years.

The 40 years covered by this thesis provide rather too short a span to reveal major changes over time and this is not one of the major themes discussed.

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<sup>157</sup> Davidoff (1979); Kay, A. (2003) 'A little enterprise of her own: lodging-house keeping and the accommodation business in nineteenth-century London' *London Journal* 28: 2: 41-53.

<sup>158</sup> Cohen (2006); Tosh (1999).

<sup>159</sup> For example, Gere (1989) and Muthesius (1982).

<sup>160</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987); Ponsonby (2007); Young (2003).

<sup>161</sup> For example, Daunton (1983); Hamlett (2005); Keeble (2004) and Neiswander, J. (2008) *The cosmopolitan interior: Liberalism and the British home 1870-1914* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Nevertheless, some new goods do appear, giving the opportunity to consider the contexts of their introduction. In studies of earlier periods, new types of goods have often been examined in terms of luxury, novelty, display or comfort, seen as drivers of consumption.<sup>162</sup> In the nineteenth century we might be considering issues of new technologies, increasing markets, changes in retailing or concerns with health and comfort.<sup>163</sup> Such issues are discussed as they arise in the course of the substantive chapters.

## Specialisation, segregation and differentiation

There was, it has been said, a 'pervasive move towards professionalization and specialization in all aspects of nineteenth-century thought and activity'.<sup>164</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the development of the medical profession, in social surveys, and in the census and civil registration that gathered and analysed information about society and classified its members.<sup>165</sup> Classification, of people and things, manufactures and reinforces difference. And a distinctive move towards specialisation and classification in spatial arrangements has also been identified at this period.<sup>166</sup> It is exemplified in the provision of new types of buildings, such as lunatic asylums, with their classificatory internal spatial arrangements.<sup>167</sup> It can also be seen more broadly, especially in the great, rapidly expanding, cities. Donald Olsen had noted that London was systematically sorted out into 'single-purpose, homogenous, specialized neighbourhoods'.<sup>168</sup> There were areas specialising in shopping or theatres or business and there were new forms of building to house these activities. Simon Gunn has demonstrated how new public spaces of

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<sup>162</sup> Weatherill (1988).

<sup>163</sup> Respectively: Kirkham, P. (1987) *Furnishing the world: the East London furniture trade, 1830-1980* London: Journeyman; Fraser, W.H. (1981) *The coming of the mass market 1850-1914* London: Macmillan; Edwards, C. (2005) *Turning houses into homes* Aldershot: Ashgate; Neiswander (2008); Crowley (2000).

<sup>164</sup> Olsen, D. (1974) 'Victorian London: specialization, segregation, and privacy' *Victorian Studies* March: 265-278, 268.

<sup>165</sup> Driver (1988); Foucault, M. (1973) *The birth of the clinic: an archaeology of medical perception* London: Tavistock Publications; Higgs, E. (2005) *Making sense of the census revisited: census records for England and Wales 1801-1901* London: Institute of Historical Research; Yeo, E. (1991) 'The social survey in social perspective, 1830-1930' in Bulmer, M., Bales, K. and K. Sklar, eds. *The social survey in historical perspective 1880-1940* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>166</sup> Dennis (2008); Olsen (1974).

<sup>167</sup> Taylor, J. (1991) *Hospital and asylum architecture in England 1840-1914: building for health care* London: Mansell.

<sup>168</sup> Olsen (1974), 267.



consumption, leisure and procession allowed the performance of middle-class power in the provincial cities of the second half of the century.<sup>169</sup> Lynda Nead and Richard Dennis have discussed the imposition of spatial order and segregation as a crucial aspect of the modernity of later-nineteenth- and twentieth-century cities but both have also demonstrated that it was a partial project and that, in any case, people's use and experience of space often deviated from the plan.<sup>170</sup> Nonetheless it is clear that some residential areas did become more specialised and socially segregated, with different areas housing different social classes. The factors that produced residential segregation were complicated and differed for different groups – some people chose segregation; others had it forced upon them.<sup>171</sup> But there was undoubtedly, in the cities, a great expansion of class-specific suburban development which gathered pace throughout the century, aided by new forms of transport links – the omnibus, the railway and, in London, the later development of the underground railway.<sup>172</sup> For the middle classes and the skilled working class, these segregated residential areas served the needs of privacy in a particular nineteenth-century inflection of the term,<sup>173</sup> which meant the freedom from indiscriminate, unsolicited and unwanted contact with 'others' – that is with people of a lower class.<sup>174</sup> The suburbs promised this at the level of the neighbourhood and the individual houses in these suburbs also served or fostered privacy in the sense with which we are now more familiar. They were designed for single household occupation; unlike the large old houses in the inner cities, which had become multi-occupied, they offered the ability to withdraw into a space which allowed control over access by outsiders.<sup>175</sup> It is suggested that residential suburbs

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<sup>169</sup>Gunn (2000), 28-29.

<sup>170</sup>Dennis (2008); Nead, L. (2000) *Victorian Babylon: people, streets, and images in nineteenth-century London* and New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>171</sup> For a discussion of how this worked in Liverpool and Leeds, see Pooley, C. (1984) 'Residential differentiation in Victorian cities: a reassessment' *Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers* N.S. 9: 131-144. For the self-segregation of the skilled urban working class towards the end of the century see Crossick (1976).

<sup>172</sup> Dennis (2008), chapter 7. Muthesius (1982), 38-39; Thompson, F.M.L. (1982) 'Introduction: the rise of suburbia' in Thompson, F.M.L., ed. *The rise of suburbia* Leicester: Leicester University Press.

<sup>173</sup> Olsen (1974), 272-274; Thompson (1988), 182.

<sup>174</sup> For a clear contemporary discussion of this meaning of the term in the context of architectural planning, see Kerr, R. (1871, first edition 1864, reprinted 1972) *The gentleman's house* London: John Murray, 67.

<sup>175</sup> Thompson (1982). For discussion of privacy as control over access see Melville (1999) and Vickery (2009), 25-48.

also supported the middle-class desire to make a physical as well as a conceptual separation between income-producing activities and family-based life at home.<sup>176</sup>

A specialisation and segregation similar to that seen in the nineteenth-century city has also been identified in the plans and representations of the internal spatial arrangements of nineteenth-century houses. Olsen refers to the minimum requirements set out by an architect in the 1870s: 'The three sections of an ordinary house – the dining and reception rooms; the bed-rooms; the kitchen and domestic offices – must be distinct in themselves, and shut off from each other.'<sup>177</sup> The architect is proposing both specialisation, which classifies and separates activities, and segregation, which separates different sorts of people. He classifies the activities which took place in a bed-room as distinct from day-time activities such as eating, leisure and entertaining; and both were distinct from cleaning, washing, cooking, food preparation and storage. Segregation was aimed at by keeping the servants, understood as occupying the kitchen and domestic office, as separate as possible from the family and their guests. Privacy, in the sense of controlling contact with the working class – the servants – was a central requirement here too.<sup>178</sup> What is clear from the architect's quote, above, is that there is no provision for economically productive work in this residence. As will be discussed in Chapter 5, there was certainly a circulating ideal of the home as a haven from the world of work. This segregation of the two spheres was most fully achieved by a suburban residence physically distant from the workplace. But, when as continued to be the case quite often, work and home continued to share a building, it has been said that, at least for the middle classes, the requirements of private, familial domesticity allocated work and home distinct spaces.<sup>179</sup>

Not that any of this was entirely new. Historians have acknowledged the increasing specialisation of residential space from as far back as the sixteenth century, mostly involving splitting off service rooms and workshops from rooms furnished and named for eating and leisure.<sup>180</sup> By the late eighteenth century – for the middling sort and up – there was a widespread acceptance of the specialised functions of bed-rooms; they excluded, for the most part, cooking, eating and

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<sup>176</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 368-9; Thompson (1988), 166-173.

<sup>177</sup> William H. White writing in *The Builder* (1876) 34, 291, quoted in Olsen (1974), 272.

<sup>178</sup> Olsen (1974), 271.

<sup>179</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 364-367; Thompson (1988), 176.

<sup>180</sup> There is a very large literature relating to both specialisation and segregation. On specialisation see, for example Johnson (1993); Whittle, J. (2011, forthcoming) 'The house as a place of work in early modern rural England' *Home Cultures*.

formal socialising.<sup>181</sup> The spatial separation of privileged household members, generally family, from servants and other employees has been identified as a factor in residential organisation from at least the sixteenth century, although scholars continue to debate about the extent and chronology of its introduction and whether or not privacy (meaning the withdrawal of the core familial household) was a dominant consideration.<sup>182</sup> Larger mid-eighteenth-century houses certainly had increased numbers of passages and stairs and entrances, allowing for the more effective segregation of occupants.<sup>183</sup>

But this is all seen as more fundamental and more extensively adopted in the Victorian period. It can certainly be identified in the great new mid-century country houses of the super wealthy where 'the essence of Victorian planning was segregation and specialisation'<sup>184</sup> and where 'it was considered undesirable for children, servants and parents to see smell or hear each other except at certain recognized times and places.'<sup>185</sup> In these great houses, the aim was that the core family should be able to avoid indiscriminate, unsanctioned, mixing with servants and, to a lesser extent, with other categories – the children, less privileged family members, guests, business contacts, employees and tradesmen.<sup>186</sup> There was also some segregation by sex. Apart from married couples and small children, bedrooms were single sex. And for the servants and for the unmarried guests, men and women were put to sleep in separate parts of the house. A somewhat different distinction was made in the gendering of spaces. Certain rooms were considered to be either more masculine (dining-rooms, billiards-rooms, probably libraries and studies) or more feminine (drawing-rooms, boudoirs, and perhaps morning-rooms). These rooms were used routinely by members of both sexes but they were understood as being more under the sway of one or other of the sexes and it was advised that they be furnished and decorated accordingly.<sup>187</sup> With regard to specialisation, in the country house, 'each room was designed to fit a single,

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<sup>181</sup> Cruickshank, D. and N. Burton (1990) *Life in the Georgian city* London: Viking.

<sup>182</sup> John (2008); Johnson (1993); Meldrum (1999), 27-39; McKeon (2005) chapter 5; Melville (1999); Orlin, L.C. (2007) *Locating privacy in Tudor London* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Stone, L. (1977) *The family, sex and marriage in England 1500-1800* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson; Vickery (2009), 26-27.

<sup>183</sup> McKeon (2005), 252-6.

<sup>184</sup> Franklin, J. (1981) *The gentleman's country house and its plan 1835-1914* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 39.

<sup>185</sup> Girouard, M. (1979) *The Victorian country house* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 28.

<sup>186</sup> Kerr, R. (1871), especially 67.

<sup>187</sup> Franklin (1981), 43-62; Kinchin (1996); Walker, L. (2002) 'Home making: an architectural perspective' in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 27:3: 823-835.

precise function.<sup>188</sup> There were always several day-rooms and the furnishing and equipment of each marked them out as housing particular activities: conversation and light refreshments, music, dining, breakfasting, smoking, reading, letter-writing and so on.

It has been argued that, as in the city, specialisation and segregation in houses facilitated efficiency and control.<sup>189</sup> In the big houses, given the large numbers of servants involved, the more their activities and the spaces that contained them were specialised, the easier they were to monitor and supervise. Leonore Davidoff has also seen multiplication of spaces in élite households as an aid to control in the context of social relationships between the household and its potential guests. The specialised entertaining rooms were the stage for an elaborate and expensive system of etiquette. Access was restricted, generally to those with wealth, of acceptable birth, and with the knowledge of behaviour appropriate to each of the rooms. These hurdles were used to police the borders of élite society at a time of increasing social mobility. And once inside, allowing or managing access to different rooms enabled the marking of further social distinctions.<sup>190</sup>

At a very different point on the social scale, Martin Daunton has identified spatial specialisation as a feature of working-class homes at the end of the century. Here, what has been called 'parlour culture' required a best room, furnished and equipped to a high standard, with, as for the élite, an etiquette of use.<sup>191</sup> Daunton sees this as part of a whole shift inwards, away from the semi-public spaces of the neighbourhood, in an increasingly atomised private and 'respectable' domesticity.

The architectural historian Stefan Muthesius is in no doubt that specialisation applied throughout society: 'The overriding principle in the planning of a nineteenth-century house whether country mansion or cottage was the same: the differentiation of functions, the allocation of a separate room for each and every purpose'.<sup>192</sup> He bases this on a scholarly examination of many plans and texts such as architectural pattern books and domestic manuals.<sup>193</sup> These make it clear that different specialisations and segregations were considered appropriate for different types of household, according primarily to income but also to status or occupation.

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<sup>188</sup> Franklin (1981), 39.

<sup>189</sup> Olsen (1974), 276.

<sup>190</sup> Davidoff (1973), 41-49.

<sup>191</sup> Daunton (1983), 277-280.

<sup>192</sup> Muthesius (1982), 45.

<sup>193</sup> Burnett (1978) makes a similarly thorough study.

Income, of course, had an effect on the amount of space that people could be expected to afford. But the differences proposed in these texts are not just to do with the number of rooms. Different types of room were advocated for different groups on the spectrum between working-class parlour house and élite country pile. And the way that activities, especially those relating to cooking and eating, were grouped and classified can also be seen to vary.

Although Muthesius is clear that a separate room was allocated for each and every purpose, we can see that such plans and prescriptions are full of contradictions. Ideas about what constitutes an identifiable single function are not fixed; they change over time and doubtless differ from group to group. Cooking and eating, which the Victorian middle class was advised, as we have just seen, to keep separate, these days routinely share space, even with formal entertaining. These are matters of specific, contemporary classification. Nor were the separations and specialisations suggested by the room names actually achievable in the practical working out of the plans. Even with all the space afforded in the giant houses of the super rich, total 'privacy' was an impossible ideal. The élite way of life depended on the employment of servants, their permanent accommodation within the house, their presence close at hand and their visibility as a status symbol. They could not actually be kept out of sight, although timetabling and rules regulating the interactions between servants and employers or guests emphasised the difference between them.<sup>194</sup> Nor did the proliferation of rooms and passages for servants necessarily facilitate their surveillance and control; warrens of stairs and corridors might have made supervision more difficult. In smaller houses, without back stairs and attics, the servant could not possibly have been effectively segregated. With the thin walls and floors of most new houses the possibility of any of the occupants maintaining much privacy was limited. As Dennis discusses with regard to plans for end-of-the-century flats, there were acute difficulties in actually achieving adequately segregated and specialised arrangements.<sup>195</sup>

And if advice texts and plans are often internally inconsistent, they are also inadequate, on their own, as a guide to what ordinary people were really doing.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Davidoff (1973), 88; Donald, M. (1999) 'Tranquil havens? Critiquing the idea of home as the middle-class sanctuary' in Bryden, I. and J. Floyd, eds. *Domestic space: reading the nineteenth-century interior* Manchester: Manchester University Press; Girouard, M. (1978) *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 275 and 285; Ponsonby (2007), 113.

<sup>195</sup> Dennis (2008), 259-260.

<sup>196</sup> Ferry (2009), 20-23; Lees-Maffei (2003). See Chapter 3 for further discussion.

Many people did not live in the new houses or in the urban environments that are most frequently represented in plans or advice literature. In any case, we cannot assume that people ever used the built structure of their homes in exactly the (intentionally or unintentionally) prescriptive way intended.<sup>197</sup> Apart from cultural considerations, the number of rooms available and the number and status of the occupants must have affected how the space was divided and used. In Victorian London many houses which had originally been apparently designed for single occupancy were subdivided or accommodated lodgers.<sup>198</sup> This applied particularly to larger, older houses in the central areas and inner suburbs but taking in a lodger or two was also common practice in the newer lower middle-class suburbs and, at least by the end of the century, occurred even in newer and higher quality suburbs farther out. As the fictional examples discussed by Dennis and the contemporary criticisms of 'parlour culture' both make plain, different people had different standards of suitable or comfortable amounts and arrangements of domestic space.<sup>199</sup>

The social historians of the country house have investigated use alongside plans but at a less elevated social level we have rather limited knowledge of actual practices of domestic spatial differentiation. Much research on the Victorian domestic sphere has, as previously noted, depended on published textual representations, visual images or personal papers and there have been very few attempts to undertake broad empirical study.<sup>200</sup> But two recent studies do address the differentiation of domestic space. Jane Hamlett has used a number of middle-class inventories from the later part of the century to test whether dining-rooms were as single-purpose and as predominantly male gendered as advice texts

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<sup>197</sup> Madigan, R. and M. Munro (1999) 'The more we are together: domestic space, gender and privacy', in Chapman, T. and J. Hockey, eds. *Ideal homes? Social change and domestic life* London and New York: Routledge: 61-72, 62. Judy Attfield has described how the residents of Harlow New Town in the 1950s found the layout of their carefully designed new homes unsuited to the existing patterns of their way of life; they used a variety of structural and decorative modifications to bring them into line; see Attfield, J. (1999) 'Bringing modernity home: open plan in the British domestic interior' in Cieraad, I., ed. *At home: an anthropology of domestic space*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

<sup>198</sup> Dennis (2008), 221-223.

<sup>199</sup> Daunt (1983), 279-282; Dennis (2008), 109-110.

<sup>200</sup> Gordon, E. and G. Nair (2003) *Public lives: women, family and society in Victorian Britain* New Haven & London: Yale University Press; Hamlett, J. (2009b) "'The dining room should be the man's paradise, as the drawing room is the woman's': gender and middle-class domestic space in England, 1850-190' *Gender & History* 21: 3: 576-591; Nenadic, S. (1994) 'Middle-rank consumers and domestic culture in Edinburgh and Glasgow, 1720-1840' *Past and Present*: 122-156; Ponsonby (2007) and Young (2003).

suggested they should be; she found that they were not.<sup>201</sup> Margaret Ponsonby's work, which relates to the late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries, is very suggestive in this respect, although necessarily somewhat limited in coverage.<sup>202</sup> She has read about 60 individual inventories for their spatial use and looks at the ways that, for example, working goods were incorporated into the domestic landscape or how individual households organised themselves when they needed to take in lodgers. These two studies are both very useful in the present context, but the inventory series analysed in this thesis provides the opportunity for a more extensive empirical investigation. The names of rooms, their combinations, and their furniture and equipment reveal the way that household space was differentiated. The inventories allow an examination of the segregations and specialisations that people did – or did not – put into practice and of whether different practices were associated with different types of household. And, more conceptually, they allow us to consider the broader principles and the strategies that underlay this. Was rigid specialisation as dominant or as widespread an organising method as has been suggested? Was there, perhaps, an alternative? Extensive scholarship has demonstrated that the ideal of 'separate spheres' of gender activity in the nineteenth-century was both inherently contradictory and much bent or contravened in practice. What about the separation of domestic space?

## Conclusion

The aim of this project is to add to our knowledge and understanding of nineteenth-century domestic cultures by using a large group of household inventories. This is a type of evidence at a scale which has not been previously available and which enables an unprecedented empirical investigation of domestic material culture across a broad social and geographical spectrum. The investigation focuses on how people actually behaved in order to complement the extensive scholarship that examines and analyses the texts, images and discourses that are such a remarkable feature of the nineteenth century. It develops a method, discussed in the next chapter, for using these inventories, drawing on material culture studies

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<sup>201</sup> Hamlett (2009b);

<sup>202</sup> Ponsonby (2007), especially chapter 4.

and historical archaeology, which employs a twofold approach to the material, folding together individual cases with general patterns of behaviour, highlighting individual choice and intention in the context of accepted norms.

The thesis focuses on two broad themes – differences between households and differentiation of domestic space – which are fundamental to our current understanding. The empirical descriptive aims are to establish patterns in the possession of domestic goods, or types of rooms, or groups of rooms and to discern associations with different types of household; class is in the foreground but other factors – occupation, gender or household composition, geographical location, and change over time – are also considered. With regard to the differentiation of space, I look to find out how people in this sample actually divided up their domestic spaces and domestic activities. Which divisions were most widely adopted? Which were dispensable or apparently of little importance? How widespread were any of them? Did different types of household make different arrangements? Do the principles of specialisation and segregation appear to have been as fundamental as has been suggested? Or are other principles of spatial structuring visible? More conceptually, what were the broader principles and the strategies that underlay this? What needs did they answer? And then – or rather at the same time – I consider how these questions worked out in particular cases, highlighting the complexity of individual practice in the face of personal circumstances.

Different aspects of these broad themes are addressed in four studies. The first (Chapter 3) is primarily an empirical aggregate analysis of day-rooms, establishing which were most common, in what combinations, where and for whom. It looks at what these rooms contained and their purposes. This is largely a descriptive account, which can be used to calibrate contemporary prescriptive literature and current descriptive histories. It also begins to question the extent of functional specialisation as an organising factor. This is developed in Chapter 4, where the focus is narrowed down to day-rooms in their relation to hospitality, which has been seen as a dominant specialisation of nineteenth-century house plans. Five single inventories are interpreted in depth in order to try to understand how and why the people concerned arranged their rooms in this respect. I look at their personal circumstances and try to evaluate their individual choices against the broad narrative offered by the previous chapter. This close examination also allows a more detailed consideration of whether we might pay more attention to the



pragmatic and flexible elements of domestic spatial organisation that have been hidden by the focus on specialisation. Chapter 5 addresses another specialisation – the separation of work from home – which has been seen as central to middle-class domestic organisation. Focusing on four cases where work and home shared a site, it shows how complicated and incomplete such segregation actually was and highlights the effects of occupation, marital status, class and geographical location. Chapter 6, returns to aggregate analysis, this time of bed-rooms. Nineteenth-century architectural and domestic manuals took it for granted that bed-rooms should be distinct from accommodation for day-time activities. The chapter briefly investigates whether this was actually the case in the inventory sample before moving on to examine the nature of these functionally specialised rooms – something which has previously been largely overlooked. This is done by tracking the meanings of significant items of bed-room equipment through advice texts and novels. As a result, this chapter is brought up against contemporary ideas of cleanliness, class, convenience and health and the relationship of the home to the public sphere. It provides an opportunity for considering the extent to which inventories can be used to investigate nineteenth-century ideas about modernity and comfort. Mapping the incidence of bed-room goods against different categories of household provides evidence not only for the take-up of goods discussed in the prescriptive literature but also throws some empirical light on the take-up of meanings.<sup>203</sup>

The chapters were not actually written in this order. I worked on several of them at the same time and ideas and findings from one would inform another. And it was an exploratory project. As is doubtless the case for virtually all pieces of research outside the realm of science it did not set out to substantiate any particular ‘hunch’. So, while working on the project it was a journey with an unknown destination; I just hoped it was going somewhere interesting. And the process of the journey was engrossing, as one find led to another. But, as with most research projects, that is not the way it is written. Of course that has to be the case; readers are interested in the findings and the supporting evidence, not in the researcher’s experience. But there are some traces of the journey itself in this thesis, especially in the way that findings from the aggregate analysis are followed

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<sup>203</sup> In addition to the main chapters, appendices hold detailed background information and an example of the process of aggregate analysis. This extensive additional information is provided here partly as a resource for the CASE partner, The Geffrye, when it uses the thesis and the database for future research.

up in terms of meanings and concepts and in the interpretation of individual inventories, where the routes to my conclusions are left clear to encourage readers to make their own interpretations.

This thesis presents examples of how inventories can further our understanding of domestic cultures. It shows that they are more helpful in some areas than others. In order to focus on the potential of inventories themselves, I have used them here with a pre-defined range of supporting sources but, clearly, they could fruitfully be used alongside other types of evidence. The inventories have, as part of the present project, been transcribed into a database which it is hoped that The Geffrye will be able to make available to future scholars. If, counter to some claims to the contrary, inventories now appear to be a rich source for helping to understand nineteenth-century home life, this series offers enormous potential for future research since it is in no way exhausted by the focused investigations of the present project.

# Chapter 2

## Sources and methods of analysis and interpretation

### Introduction

This thesis investigates nineteenth-century domestic life through its material culture, understood as the mutual relationships between people and their things in the context of social relations and cultural behaviour (as discussed above, 17-22). Its distinctive approach is that it brings together analysis of the main source – the series of household inventories – at two scales, corresponding approximately with a quantitative and a qualitative approach; in both cases findings are contextualised and interpreted by a qualitative interpretation of additional source material. Quantitatively, general patterns of ownership of goods, rooms and goods-in-rooms are investigated for changes over time and association with different categories of owner. Qualitatively, material culture is investigated through individual case studies, considering individual agency in the light of broader patterns and circulated norms.

As described below, with the method of aggregate analysis outlined before that of interpretation, the process appears more linear than it actually was. But the two approaches are iterative and mutually informative, both with regard to raising questions and doing the research. For example, the study of individual inventories in the context of hospitable locations (Chapter 4) suggested that hierarchical differentiation – a flexible and useful division of space in which one room is ‘better’ than another – was as much, if not more, in play than specialisation by function. That suggestion was then pursued in aggregate analysis by considering the prevalence of goods which facilitated flexibility, such as trays, or spatial specialisation, such as sideboards. Similarly, the investigation developed by moving backwards and forwards between the inventories and other sources, particularly, as will be discussed below, advice books and novels, which provide very clear discursive meanings.

Before discussing the methods and additional sources used in these two approaches I offer a description of the main source for both and a discussion of the nature of the sample and its relationship to broader populations. All sources can

only provide certain kinds of evidence and all sources have their advantages and disadvantages; some of those relating to inventories have already been alluded to (Chapter 1, 14-15) but others are addressed more systematically here.

## The nineteenth-century Legacy Duty Residuary Account inventories

Historians of the sixteenth, seventeenth and, to a lesser extent, the eighteenth centuries have made extensive use of the very large numbers of probate inventories that exist in archives around the country. Probate inventories are lists of the personal moveable possessions (excluding real estate) of a deceased person; they were produced as part of the process of valuing an estate and managing its distribution.<sup>1</sup> However, while probate inventories continued to be made in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it appears that, for England and Wales, they were no longer systematically kept by the probate courts.<sup>2</sup> Scholars studying English and Welsh domestic life in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have not thus far had the benefit of an accessible and extensive series of inventories as a source. Some have turned to the scattered probate inventories that are to be found in collections of personal and family papers. Such inventories have the considerable advantage of associated contextual information but they are hard to locate and somewhat limited in number.<sup>3</sup> Also available are the catalogues of household sales that were published in newspaper advertisements or in booklet form, to accompany the dispersal of household possessions on bankruptcy, death or relocation.<sup>4</sup> While inventories of this sort are rather more accessible and have a wide geographical spread, their social coverage is limited by the fact that the goods

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<sup>1</sup> Cox, J. and N. Cox (2000) 'Probate 1500-1800: a system in transition' in Arkell, T., Evans, N. and N. Goose, eds. *When death us do part; understanding and interpreting probate records in early modern England* Oxford: Leopard's Head, 25.

<sup>2</sup> Moore, J. (1985) 'Probate inventories – problems and prospects' in Riden, P., ed. *Probate records and the local community* Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 19. The situation is different for Scotland where confirmation inventories (the equivalent of probate inventories) continued to be collected although they ceased to provide detailed lists of goods; additionally there are systematic archive collections of nineteenth-century sequestration (bankruptcy) inventories in Scotland that give detailed records of household goods; see Nenadic (1994), 130. These Scottish sources have been used in investigations of domestic life by Nenadic (1994) and Young (2003).

<sup>3</sup> They have been used to good effect by Ponsonby (2007); Hamlett (2005); Hamlett (2009b).

<sup>4</sup> Hamlett (2005 and 2009b) and Ponsonby (2007). They have been used in the Australian context by Avery, T. (2007) 'Furniture design and colonialism: negotiating relationships between Britain and Australia, 1880-1901' *Home Cultures* 4: 1: 69-92.

to be sold had to be of a sufficient quality and quantity to make publication worthwhile. Additionally, the newspaper listings frequently do not give any personal details about the household concerned. But the recent discovery of inventories within the 'Specimens of death duty accounts of the Legacy Duty Office and its successors' in The National Archives (hereafter TNA) at Kew has changed this situation.<sup>5</sup> They provide a source which has several advantages for the study of domestic cultures: briefly (and discussed in more detail below) they are available for the first 80 years of the century in reasonable numbers (approximately 1,000 altogether); they were all taken for the same purpose and are thus comparable; that purpose was centrally administered taxation which presupposes a certain degree of consistency;<sup>6</sup> they cover a wide range of wealth and status groups; their geographical coverage of England and Wales had no apparent bias; they are associated with a large amount of contextual personal information, which is both valuable in its own right and which makes record linkage relatively straightforward; and they are publicly and easily accessible.<sup>7</sup>

## The legal context of the inventories

The Legacy Duty was a death tax, applying in Great Britain from 1796 and modified several times during the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The duty was levied on all individual legacies worth more than £20 and was payable by the persons receiving the legacies.<sup>9</sup> The amount of the duty varied according to the closeness of the relationship of the legatee to the dead person (spouses were exempt); the rates

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<sup>5</sup> These inventories attracted the attention of Dr. Alastair Owens who was researching Inland Revenue papers in the course of his collaborative investigation into nineteenth-century wealth holding; Owens, A., Green, D., Bailey, C. and A. Kay (2006) 'A measure of worth: probate valuations, personal wealth and indebtedness in England, 1810-40' *Historical Research* 79: 205: 383-403, 390.

<sup>6</sup> It is suggested that, as today, valuations for probate and Legacy Duty were lower than market value; Mandler, P. (2001) 'Art, death and taxes: the taxation of works of art in Britain, 1796-1914' *Historical Research*, 74: 185: 271-297, 277. This may have been the case, but presumably applied across the board.

<sup>7</sup> Until 1962 they were kept by the Inland Revenue; they were then transferred to TNA and are now publicly accessible; Swan, C. (2006) 'Possible methods of sample selection for the IR19 series', unpublished note for *Women Investors in England and Wales, 1870-1930*, ESRC study: RES-000-23-1435.

<sup>8</sup> Information about the Legacy Duty is drawn from Buxton, S. and G. Barnes (1890) *A handbook to the death duties* London: John Murray; Daunton, M. (2001) *Trusting Leviathan: the politics of taxation in Britain, 1799-1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and *A collection of acts ... relating to the Death Duties ... from the Legacy Duty Act 1796 ... to the Finance Act, 1924* (1925) London: Stationery Office.

<sup>9</sup> In 1880 the law was changed so that only estates worth £100 or more were liable for Legacy Duty and in 1881 this was raised to £300; however, at this point all legacies, not just those over £20, became liable.

were adjusted several times in the early years. Legacy Duty applied only to 'personal estates' thus excluding real estate (land and buildings) and settled possessions (land or goods which were passed on in trust rather than given outright).<sup>10</sup> In 1853, real estate also became subject to a death duty, but this was collected and administered separately as Succession Duty. Legacy Duty continued as before, except that leaseholds were now dealt with under Succession Duty rather than Legacy Duty. In 1883 and 1894 the duties were further reorganised but the details are not relevant to this project.<sup>11</sup>

Any personal property that was not specifically bequeathed by the deceased was called the residue and it passed to the residuary legatees named in the will or to kin if the deceased was intestate.<sup>12</sup> Legacy Duty was payable on residuary legacies as well as on specified bequests. It is the Accounts that relate to residuary legacies that contain the household inventories under discussion. However, the Residuary Accounts give details of the whole estate (including that bequeathed), not just of the residue. The Accounts are part of TNA's holdings (in the IR19 series) that relate to the records of the Boards of Stamps, Taxes, Excise, Stamps and Taxes, and Inland Revenue. There are an estimated 3,400 sets of Residuary Accounts for the period 1841-1881, although only about sixteen or seventeen percent of them include an inventory.<sup>13</sup>

## The form and content of the inventories

The collection of the Legacy Duty was administered by the Commissioners of Stamps and Taxes, reconstituted as the Commissioners of Inland Revenue in 1849.<sup>14</sup> For the residuary legacies, detailed Accounts of the estate had to be provided so that the offices of the Commissioners could calculate the residue and the amount of duty owing. The Accounts were submitted on standardised printed forms, which did not change greatly during the period (see Illustration 2.1 for a form used in 1840, valid until 1852, and Illustrations 2.2.1-4 for the form used between 1853 and 1882).

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<sup>10</sup> Mandler (2001), 272-273.

<sup>11</sup> Daunton (2001), chapter 8 for further details.

<sup>12</sup> Umlin, R.D. (1888) *Wills probate and administration* London: Deacon & Co., 61.

<sup>13</sup> In fifteen boxes from the period 1810 to 1881 I found an average of 43 sets of Accounts per box; for 1841-1881, there are two boxes per year. Green, D.R., Owens, A., Maltby, J. and J. Rutterford (2009) 'Lives in the balance? Gender, age and assets in late-nineteenth-century England and Wales' *Continuity and Change* 24: 307-335, 315 find a similar number annually for the period 1870-1902. See pages 71-73, below, for the number of inventories.

<sup>14</sup> *A collection of acts* (1925), xiii and xv.

Each Account includes a valuation of personal goods, listed under the headings: 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments'; 'Wine and other Liquors'; 'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry'; 'Stock in Trade'; and 'Good Will &c of Trade or Business'. All other personal assets had to be listed and the Accounts include details of cash in hand or at the bank, the value of debts and interest owed to the deceased and the value of any mortgages, stocks and shares owned. The total of this property is the decedent's gross wealth.

The outgoings from the estate were also noted, with a list of the pecuniary or other bequests, a statement of the debts (often itemised) owed by the deceased and of the cost of the funeral and the expenses of the administration process. These outgoings were deducted from the gross wealth to give the net value of the residue on which Legacy Duty was payable.

The forms also included personal details, such as the name of the decedent and, often, his or her marital status, title, occupation, date of death, and approximate address; also included were the names of executors or administrators, the name of the court and the date that it granted probate, and the names and relationship to the deceased of residuary legatees. This helps to provide a context for the deceased's domestic culture and offers leads for gathering further information from, for example, census enumerators' books.

The Accounts did not necessarily have to be supported by additional documentation but, in practice, some of the valuations were accompanied by an inventory and appraisal of goods.<sup>15</sup> The inventories were almost always made by a licensed valuer or appraiser (or in some cases by a builder or joiner), who would be expected to know the value of household goods.<sup>16</sup> Inventories are present for Accounts from 1796 to about 1880 but thereafter detailed appraisals and valuations become scarce, being replaced, if at all, by outline summary valuations.

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<sup>15</sup> *Legacy Duty act* (1796). George III, 36, cap. 52, xxii.

<sup>16</sup> At least 381 of the 494 inventories used in this project were compiled by professional appraisers.

**Illustration 2.1 Front page of a Legacy Duty Residuary Account form, 1852**  
 Source: TNA IR 19/99

No. 3. **RESIDUARY ACCOUNT.—INLAND REVENUE.**

FORM of Account to be delivered (in Duplicate) of Personal Estate, and of Monies arising from Real Estate, devised to be Sold, &c. for the purpose of having the Legacy and Residue Duties charged and assessed pursuant to the Acts of 36 Geo. III. c. 52, and 45 Geo. III. c. 28, and 55 Geo. III. c. 184.

DIRECTIONS.

1. Executors and Administrators, before the Retainer of any part of the Property to their own use, are to deliver the particulars thereof at the Legacy Duty Office, in London, or to the Distributor in whose District they reside, and pay the Duty thereon within 14 Days after, under the penalty of treble the value of the Duty.
2. All Rents, Dividends, Interest, and Profits arising from the Personal Estate of the deceased or Real Estate, directed to be Sold, subsequent to the time of his or her death, and all accumulations thereof, down to the time of delivering the Account and offering to pay the Duty on the Residue, must be considered as part of the Estate, and be accounted for accordingly.
3. Any Account transmitted by Post, or left under cover at the Office, will either be returned to the Parties, or thrown aside unnoticed.

No. 1 REGISTER No. 5 1852 Folio. 523

An Account of the Personal Estate, and of Monies arising out of the Real Estate of *the late Thomas Holburn of*  
*Widow in the Parish of Beddewell in the County of Gloucestershire*  
 who died on the *19<sup>th</sup>* day of *July* *1852* One Thousand Eight Hundred and *fifty two* exhibited by  
*James Lloyd*

the Executor or Administrator of the Deceased, or Trustee of the Real Estate, directed by the Will to be Sold, &c., acting under the Will,  
 or Letters of Administration of the Effects of the Deceased, proved in, or granted by, the *Consistory* Court  
 of *Beddewell* on the *12<sup>th</sup>* day of *August* 18*52*

	No. 1.		No. 2.	
	Date of Sales, if Sold.	Money received and Property converted into Money.	Value of Property not converted into Money.	
Cash in the House .....		102 5 0		
Cash at the Bankers.....				
*Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, } Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments..... }			236 12 1	
*Wine and other Liquors.....			24 9 8	
*Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements } of Husbandry .....			85 4 0	
*Stock in Trade .....			59 0 5	
*Good Will, &c. of Trade or Business .....				
†Leasehold Estates at				
Life Assurance Policies .....				
Rents due at the Death of the Deceased .....				
Mortgages and Interest due at the Death .....				
Bonds, Bills, Notes, and Interest due at the Death .....				
Book and other Debts.....		493 5 6		
Canal Shares, viz.....				
Railway Shares, viz.....				
Other Shares, viz.....				
Ships, or Shares of Ships .....				
Carried forward.....		695 18 6	355 5 6	

Money and Property converted into Money are to be inserted in Column No. 1, and the date when converted ascertained.

\* Property not converted into Money is to be valued at the time the Account is rendered, and inserted in Column No. 2, and Inventories and proper Valuations must be produced.

† The unexpired Term of Years, the Number and Age of the Lives, the Terms of Renewal, and the clear net Rent reserved, should be stated in a Schedule annexed.



**Illustration 2.2.1 Front page of a Legacy Duty Residuary Account form, 1875**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/155**

Here state Name and Address of the Person who forwards this Account. *Thomas Hamlin, Solicitor, Northampton East Somerset*

N.B.—This Form is for Property chargeable under the Legacy Duty Acts, and should be delivered in duplicate either personally or by an agent at the Legacy Duty Office, Somerset House, London, or if the accountable persons reside in the Country, it may be sent by post addressed to "The Controller of Legacy and Succession Duties, Somerset House, London," when Instructions will be given as to the Payment of the Duty. 31779

A separate Form is supplied for Property chargeable under the Succession Duty Act.

**No. 3. RESIDUARY ACCOUNT.—INLAND REVENUE.**

FORM OF ACCOUNT of Personal Estate, and of Moneys arising from the sale, mortgage, or other disposition of Real Estate directed by Will to be sold, &c., for the purpose of having the Legacy and Residue Duties charged and assessed pursuant to the Acts of 36 Geo. III, c. 52, and 45 Geo. III, c. 28, and 55 Geo. III, c. 184. *See Register No. 2 1875 Folio 384*

**DIRECTIONS.**

- Executors and Administrators, before the Retainer of any part of the Property to their own use, are to deliver the particulars thereof, and pay the duty thereon within 14 Days after, under the Penalty of treble the value of the Duty.
- All Rents, Dividends, Interests, and Profits arising from the Personal Estate of the Deceased, or from the Real Estate directed by Will to be sold, &c., subsequently to the time of the death, and all accumulations thereof down to the time of delivering the Account and offering to pay the Duty on the Residue, must be considered as part of the Estate, and be accounted for accordingly.

REGISTER No. 18 Folio

An Account of the Personal Estate, and of Moneys arising out of the Real Estate of *Thomas Hamlin late of Baltimore Maryland in the United States of America Merchant deceased*

who died on the *7<sup>th</sup>* day of *October* One Thousand Eight Hundred and *Eighty one* at *Baltimore* *procurator exhibit*  
*John High the lawful Attorney of the said Hamlin (now residing at Baltimore) procurator of the Personal Estate of the said Hamlin, appointed by the Probate Court of Baltimore aforesaid being the first of the Executors of the said deceased for the use and benefit of the said Hamlin's Wife*

\* Here state the Name and Address of the Executor or Administrator. *procurator exhibit*

the Executor or Administrator of the Deceased, or Trustee of the Real Estate directed by the Will to be sold, &c., acting under the Will or Letters of Administration of the effects of the Deceased, proved in, or granted by, the *Procurator* *Registry in Her Majesty's* Registry of the Probate Division of the High Court of Justice, on the *eight* day of *December* 18*75*

N.B.—It is desirable that the original Grant of Probate or Administration should be produced at the time of presenting this Account, in order that a note may be made on the Official Register of the amount of the Stamp which it bears, so as to furnish evidence of the fact which may be acted upon by the Office, if necessary, in the event of the Grant being afterwards lost, or mislaid.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY	Date of Sale, if Sold.	No. 1.		No. 2.	
		Money received and Property converted into Money.	Value of Property not converted into Money.	Money received and Property converted into Money.	Value of Property not converted into Money.
Cash in the House.....					
Cash at the Bankers.....					
† Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, } Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments... }					
† Wine and other Liquors.....					
† Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and } Implements of Husbandry..... }					
† Stock in Trade.....					
† Goodwill, &c., of Trade or Business.....					
Life Assurance Policies.....					
Rents due at the Death of the Deceased.....					
Mortgages and Interest due at the Death.....					
Bonds, Bills, Notes, and Interest due at the Death					
Book and other Debts.....					
Canal Shares, viz.....					
Railway Shares, viz.....					
Other Shares, viz.....					
The Stocks or other Securities of British } Colonies, viz..... }					
Ships, or Shares of Ships.....					
Carried forward.....					

† Property not converted into Money is to be valued at the time the Account is rendered, and inserted in Column No. 2, and Inventories and proper Valuations must be produced.

The Shares not converted into Money are to be valued at the medium price of the day on which the Account is dated. If there be Shares in many Companies it may be convenient to insert the total amount or value in this Account, and annex a Schedule of the particular Shares.

M.C. & Co. 25,000 4 1/2



**Illustration 2.2.3 Page three of a Legacy Duty Residuary Account form, 1875**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/155**

No. 3.

Net amount of Property brought forward.....£ 47 11 8

**ACCUMULATIONS OF INTEREST, DIVIDENDS, RENTS, &c.**

Rents of Real and Leasehold Estates directed to be Sold to the time of Sale, if Sold; if not, to the Date of this Account .....

Dividend on the Stocks and Funds Sold to the time of Sale and of those remaining Unsold, including the last Dividends .....

Interest on Exchequer Bills Sold or Paid off to the time of Sale or Payment, and of those remaining Unsold, to the date of this Account .....

Interest on Bonds, Mortgages, and other Securities Paid off, to the Day of Payment, and of those outstanding, to the Date of this Account .....

Interest at 4 per Cent. on £ being the Balance of Cash in Hand as on the other side, to the date of this Account.....

Income of Canal, Railway, and other Shares, to the time of Sale, and of those remaining Unsold, and on other Property, yielding an Income not included in any of the above Items, to the Date of this Account .....

The value of the Benefit accruing to the Executor or other Person entitled to the Residue from the Interest of Money or Dividends of Stock retained to answer vested or contingent Legacies payable at a future day without the intermediate Interest or Dividends .....

Total.....£

---

**PAYMENTS OUT OF INTEREST, &c.**

	£	s.	d.
Interest on Mortgages, Bonds, and other Securities, due from the Estate .....			
Interest on Pecuniary Legacies .....			
Payments on account of Annuities .....			
Other Payments, if any, viz.....			

(Deduct the Total Amount of these Payments from the preceding Total).....£

Balance.....£

---

**DEDUCTIONS FROM RESIDUE**

	£	s.	d.
Debts still due from the Estate .....			
Retained to pay Outstanding Legacies .....			

Total Deductions.....£

Net Residue.....£ 47 11 8

Deduct any Portion of the Residue not liable to Duty, or for which Duty is paid on separate Receipts, viz.....

Residue on which Duty is chargeable .....£ 47 11 8

DECLARATION.

I do declare that the foregoing is a just and true Account. And I offer to pay the Sum of £ 1. 8. 6 for the Duty, after the Rate of 3 per Cent. upon the sum of £ 47. 11. 8 being the whole of the said Residue and Moneys to which I am entitled and intended to retain to my own use, and for the use of the said Widow, Mrs. Walker, the Administrators of the said Thomas Robert deacons in Trust for William, Mat. Brent, Samuel Brent, Rebecca Brent, Jacobus, Richard, Charlotte, Maria and Susan, all of them being of the Deceased.

Dated this 27th day of November 1878

(Here sign the Account) John Light



**Illustration 2.2.4 Page four of a Legacy Duty Residuary Account form, 1875**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/155**

*Rates of Duty payable on Legacies, Annuities, Residues, &c., of the Amount or Value of £20 and upwards,  
 by Stat. 55 Geo. III., c. 184.*

Description of the Residuary Legatee, or next of Kin, to be in the following words of the Act.	On Real or Personal Estate, if the Deceased died after the 5th April, 1856.
To Children of the Deceased, and their Descendants, or to the Father or Mother, or any Lineal Ancestor of the Deceased, or to the Husbands or Wives of any such Persons .....	£1 per Cent.
To Brothers and Sisters of the Deceased, and their Descendants, or to the Husbands or Wives of any such Persons .....	£3 do.
To Brothers and Sisters of the Father or Mother of the Deceased, and their Descendants, or to the Husbands or Wives of any such Persons .....	£5 do.
To Brothers and Sisters of a Grandfather or Grandmother of the Deceased, and their Descendants, or to the Husbands or Wives of any such Persons .....	£6 do.
To any Person in any other Degree of Collateral Consanguinity, or to Strangers in Blood to the Deceased.....	£10 do.

Where any Legatee shall take Two or more distinct Legacies or Benefits under any Will or Testamentary Instrument, which shall together be of the Amount or Value of £20, each shall be charged with Duty, although each or either may be separately under that Amount or Value.

*The Husband or Wife are not subject to the Duties on Legacies, Annuities, and Residues.*

Postage Free.

On Her Majesty's Service.

831878  
 Paid. 7.5.1875  
 A. Webb

**The Controller of Legacy and Succession Duties,**

**Somerset House,**

**London,**

**W.C.**

**ASSESSMENT.**

The Duty on the within-mentioned Sum of £ *100* is assessed after the Rate of *10* per Centum,  
 at the Sum of £ *10* By the Commissioners.

---

**RECEIPT.**

Received on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 187\_\_\_\_, the Sum of \_\_\_\_\_  
 for the Duty assessed as above.

Registered. \_\_\_\_\_ Comptrolled. \_\_\_\_\_

Pro Acc<sup>t</sup> and Compt<sup>r</sup>-Gen<sup>l</sup>  
of Inland Revenue.

Pro Receiver-General  
of Inland Revenue.

There is considerable variation in the organisation of these inventories (see Illustrations 2.3 and 2.4 for examples). Some provided an undifferentiated list of the decedent's personal possessions. Others grouped the goods according to their named locations; this was not necessary for tax purposes but appraisers found it a useful way of keeping track during the process of recording items.

Contemporary manuals for appraisers suggested working systematically through the premises and round each room.<sup>17</sup> This would have been more necessary in the case of large premises, with many rooms and a large number of contents, than where only one or two rooms were occupied or where there were few goods.<sup>18</sup> Some inventories grouped at least some goods by category, typically 'plate', 'linen', 'china and glass' and 'stock in trade'. Where items were listed in a category they were not generally assigned to a location in the premises. There is considerable variation in the detail of the valuations. Some inventories give a valuation for each individual item; some for each line in the inventory, thus giving a combined value for juxtaposed items; some value a whole room; some value categories; and some give just one single total.

Throughout this study, for brevity, I refer to these inventories and the associated documentation together as 'the inventory sample'. This combination of documents with its enumeration of goods, wealth in various forms, expenses, debts and legatees is similar to the full probate accounts, sometimes linked to inventories and wills, that were produced in some cases in the sixteenth and seventeenth and, to a much lesser extent, the eighteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup> These complex Accounts offer a far richer source for the study of social and cultural life than the stand-alone newspaper sale advertisements of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>17</sup> For example, Wheeler, J., Valuer (1854) *The appraiser, auctioneer, house-agent, and house-broker's pocket assistant* ... London: John Weale; and Wheeler, J. (1871) *The appraiser, auctioneer, broker, house and estate agent, and valuer's pocket assistant* London: Lockwood & Co.

<sup>18</sup> The mean count of entries in inventories in the sample without room names is 43; for inventories with room names it is 175. This is entries, not items, and is a very broad brush indicator since shop stock and farm goods, which often appeared in large numbers, are included.

<sup>19</sup> Grannum, K. and N. Taylor (2004) *Wills and other probate records* Kew: The National Archives, 98-102. For a discussion of the circumstances in which they were produced see Mortimer, I. (2006) 'Why were probate accounts made? Methodological issues concerning the historical use of administrators' and executors' accounts' *Archives* 31: 114: 2-17.

Illustration 2.3 Complete inventory of Benjamin Hill, 1857  
Source: TNA IR 19/108

12

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Register H. S. of the year 1856 folio 259.

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Re Benjamin Hill deceased.

Inventory and Valuation of Furniture and Effects  
consisting of three Tables, one Cupboard, four Chairs, one  
Screen, five sets of Bedsteads, one Bench, and two Boxes,  
belonging to the deceased. Two pounds and ten shillings

£ 2-10-0

Inventory and Valuation of  
Stock in Trade consisting of.

One pair of Bellows -  
one pound } 1-0-0

Four Anvils and Hammer  
one pound and ten shillings } 1-10-0

2-10-0

belonging to the deceased.

£ 5-0-0

John Tench Valuer

Dated this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July 1857.



Illustration 2.4 First page of the three-page inventory of William Otter, 1861

Source: TNA IR 19/127

(Copy.)

Inventory and Valuation of Household Goods, Trade and other Pictures &c. &c., belonging to the late William Otter, taken and made by me this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 1861.

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House - Top floor Camp bedstead and Moreen hangings -  
West End Chamber Mattress & feather bed, Bolster, pillows & shams  
& 1 set drawers, 1 Wash table & utensils, 1 Dressing table  
and glass, 6 cane seated chairs, 1 Towel horse, Window  
Curtains & Sun & other blinds, a small table, Carpet.

Middle Chamber - Camp bedstead & hangings & Bed &c. &c.,  
a Dressing Table, 1 Chair, Sun Blind & roller & other blinds,  
Carpet, Curtains.

East End Chamber. Four post Bedstead & bedding complete,  
Birch Wash stand, Dressing Table & covers, Washing utensils,  
Looking glass, Towel horse, 6 cane seated chairs, 1 set  
painted Drawers, Sun & other blinds & rollers, Curtains  
to window & Carpet.

South East Chamber. Bedstead and hangings with Bed &c. &c. complete  
1 set Mahogany Drawers 1 Wash table & utensils, 3 chairs 1 Towel  
horse, Sun & other blinds & rollers, carpet.

South West Chamber. Childs Cot & bedding - a small stand - Sun  
Blind & curtain - Carpet.

First floor West end chamber 4 post Bed & hangings & Bedding complete - Painted  
Dressing table & looking glasses & cover, Painted wash  
stand & cover, Mahogany Drawers - night commode - Towel  
horse - 4 chairs - Book shelves - Sun & other Blinds & roller -  
Curtains to window - Carpet & hearth rug.

Middle Room - Small Bed & bedding complete - Towel horse - 4 chairs -  
Sun & other blinds & roller - Curtains - Carpet.

Drawing Room. Carpet. 1 hearth rug - Fender & Ash pan & fire  
horns - Chimney Glass - Hair seated Sofa - six & two arm hair  
seated chairs - moreen covered easy chair - 2 table covers -  
2 hassocks - 8 prints & frames.

Landing and Stairs. 8 days Clock - Carpet & rods.

Kitchen Chamber Small bed & bedding complete - nest of drawers  
painted - painted Dressing table - 1 Chair - Carpet - Sun  
& other blinds -

## Caveats in using the IR19 inventories as a source for the study of domestic practices

Care has to be taken over what these inventories actually represent as well as how they can be interpreted. This is an issue addressed by any scholar using inventories as a source and there is consequently a rich literature on the problems of their use.<sup>20</sup> Some problems apply more or less regardless of the particularity of the investigation but, as Moore points out, each topic for which inventories are called as witness has its own special problems and dangers of interpretation.<sup>21</sup> The main issues which need to be taken into account when analysing and interpreting inventories are outlined in the following section.

### Variation in format and detail

As already noted, there is considerable variation in format and amount of detail in the Residuary Account inventories. This is in spite of their use for a single purpose and their production by, often, professional appraisers who had the possibility of consulting a pocket book on procedures. This makes comparison difficult.

### Omissions and absences

Inventories are not a complete record of a person's possessions or of the contents of his or her house. There are many possible reasons for items which actually were in a house not being listed.<sup>22</sup> It is important to remember that, in the case of these Residuary Account inventories, they were produced as an estimate of what the goods would have achieved if sold. This means that many small or inconsequential

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Arkell, T., Evans, N. and N. Goose, eds. (2000) *When death us do part; understanding and interpreting probate records in early modern England* Oxford: Leopard's Head; Bedell, J. (2000) 'Archaeology and probate inventories in the study of eighteenth-century life' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 31: 2: 223-245; Cox and Cox (2000); Erickson, A. (2007) '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: 369-385; Finn, M. (2006) 'Colonial gifts: family politics and the exchange of goods in British India, c.1780-1820' *Modern Asian Studies* 40: 1: 203-231; Garrard, R.P. (1980) 'English probate inventories and their use in studying the significance of the domestic interior, 1570-1700' in Van der Woude, A. and A. Schuurman, eds. *Probate inventories: afdeling agrarische geschiedenis: bijdragen* 23: 55-82; Lindert, P. H. (1981) 'An algorithm for probate sampling' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 11: 4: 649-668; Moore (1985); Overton *et al.* (2004); Priestly and Corfield (1982); and Vaisey, D.G. (1985) 'Probate inventories and provincial retailers in the seventeenth century' in Riden, P., ed. *Probate records and the local community* Gloucester: Alan Sutton. Riello (2003) gives a comprehensive review of uses, problems and the nature of the representation.

<sup>21</sup> Moore (1985), 11.

<sup>22</sup> Overton *et al.* (2004), 15-17, suggest a range of reasons for the possible non-inclusion of articles that were actually present, all of which could apply to the IR19 series.



items with little or no resale value were not included. Inexpensive, broken, ephemeral or very personal items such as food for immediate use, sewing thread, knitting needles, medicines, clay pipes, and shaving kit almost never make an appearance. In a non-detailed inventory, goods were sometimes grouped together in a catch-all phrase, such as 'sundries'. Certain types of belongings make only rare appearances in inventories although other evidence points to their presence in large numbers; it has been noted that there were plenty of sheep in seventeenth-century inventories, but no sheep-dogs.<sup>23</sup> Dogs are extremely scarce in the present inventories and there are no cats at all.

Although it was doubtless the case that most of the deceased's effects played a part in the life of the whole household, any possessions in the household that did not belong to the deceased were not listed. In the inventory of the mistress, the servant's or lodger's goods would not appear. Even some items which legally belonged to the deceased might have been left out on the grounds that they didn't 'really' belong to him or her.<sup>24</sup> This applied particularly where the deceased's wife was alive.<sup>25</sup> Until the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 (unless special arrangements had been made), a wife's goods legally belonged to her husband; but in practice people probably behaved as though married women did own goods and so those goods would not be included in the husband's inventory. In any case there were certain items, such as personal clothing, known as 'paraphernalia' which counted as belonging to the wife (or child) and not to the husband or father.<sup>26</sup>

Any legacies and bequests made in a will had to be accounted for in the Legacy Duty Accounts and this certainly seems to have been the case; items mentioned in wills show up in the inventories as do the bequeathed items that are sometimes listed in the Residuary Account papers. However, there was nothing to stop people (at least until the imposition of the Account Duty Act of 1881 made some attempt to plug the loophole) giving items away as *inter vivos* gifts, without including them in a will, before they died. Such items would not be available to appear in the inventory and it is not possible to know the extent of this practice.

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<sup>23</sup> Vaisey (1985), 100.

<sup>24</sup> Vaisey (1985), 101.

<sup>25</sup> Erickson (2006), 371.

<sup>26</sup> Holcombe, L. (1983) *Wives and property: reform of the married women's property law in nineteenth-century England* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 23; Overton *et al.* (2004), 16.

Listing goods according to room was a convenience for the appraiser, not a legal necessity. Although more than 70 percent of the inventories in the sample are organised by room or other location, this is no guarantee that all the rooms in each dwelling are mentioned; some types of room (such as bathrooms or WCs) generally included few or no moveable possessions and therefore would not have appeared in the inventory. Nor have appraisers been found to be completely reliable; one study which matched inventories to extant buildings and to architectural plans and drawings, found considerable discrepancies.<sup>27</sup> Nor is the recording of an item in a particular room a sure indicator that this was where it was placed in life.

For both items and rooms, the internal logic of the inventory can give clues as to possible omissions. In the case of rooms, there might be groupings of contents which appear to signal a change of function; or a room name, such as 'chamber over parlour', can suggest the presence of a room not actually listed; sometimes an appraiser moves straight from the third floor to the first without any mention of the second; some floors have many more rooms than another. In the case of items, tracking omissions is more difficult; it is necessary to look out for the absence of expected or typical possessions of the time.

So, while it is justifiable to rely on the appearance of an item or a room in an inventory as evidence for its presence, it is not logically justifiable to rely on its non-appearance as direct evidence for its absence. This has been a major concern for scholars studying early modern room use and it applies just as much to the present investigation.<sup>28</sup> For the larger extensive study presented in this thesis, some reliance on absence is unavoidable. If, for example, it is generally the case that where a dining-room is present there is rarely a parlour, it might reasonably be assumed that all those parlours are absent rather than omitted. To confine discussion only to present items would exclude exploration of important relationships of change and difference. In the case of new technologies, for example, it is interesting to note that the people who had metal bedsteads did *not* apparently have bed hangings. So, in the extensive analysis below, an assumption is made that, within the limits expected in an inventory of this type at this date, items that are not listed are absent rather than omitted. In the interpretation of individual cases it is possible to work with absences and omissions in more detail. There is no cooking equipment – perhaps the deceased was a lodger. There is no

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<sup>27</sup> Alcock, N.W. (1993) *People at home* Chichester: Phillimore, 12-19, discussed in Arkell, T. (2000) 'Interpreting probate inventories' in Arkell *et al.*, 87.

<sup>28</sup> Buxton (2002); Garrard (1980); and Priestly and Corfield (1982).

second floor – perhaps the deceased let it to a lodger. It is helpful in such cases to read an inventory in association with other sources, such as a census enumerator's book.<sup>29</sup>

## Language

The language of inventories is not transparent.<sup>30</sup> In the present study, some of the terms used (such as a 'winter hedge' – a clothes horse) have passed out of currency; others have shifted their meaning (a nineteenth-century bed was part of what we would now call bedding). Additional information is needed to illuminate the definition of the words and the use of the item.

More difficult to pinpoint is that an inventory is an artefact formed by the appraiser in accordance with both legal requirements but also local or personal custom; it is not formed solely by the goods represented or by the practice of the household represented.<sup>31</sup> Considerable weight is placed on terminology in this thesis and it has to be recognised that the terms used might have been those preferred by the appraiser rather than those used by the household; either way, though, they can be considered to have been in contemporary use.

The IR19 inventories only rarely make use of terms like 'handsome' or 'fine', which appear frequently in sale lists or catalogues, but they do regularly characterise items as 'old', 'faulty' or, occasionally, 'best'. These terms are relevant to the resale value of an item in the view of the appraiser rather than to their value in the eyes and lives of their users.

## Wealth

The Residuary Account papers provide a rounded picture of an estate at death because they include a detailed breakdown of the different elements and because, unlike probate valuations, they include debts owed by the deceased.<sup>32</sup> The detailed breakdowns of the Account papers, in many cases, also allow for the computation of valuations of household goods, separate from stock and equipment. It is often possible, then, to consider domestic culture in relation to different kinds of wealth,

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<sup>29</sup> As Vaisey (1985), 100, suggests.

<sup>30</sup> As discussed in relation to the early modern period by Trinder, B. (2000) 'The wooden horse in the cellar: words and contexts in Shropshire probate inventories' in Arkell *et al.*

<sup>31</sup> Trinder (2000).

<sup>32</sup> A problem discussed by Collinge, M. (1987) 'Probate valuations and the Death Duty registers: some comments' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 60: 240-245; English, B. (1984) 'Probate valuations and the Death Duty registers' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 57: 80-91; and Owens *et al.* (2006). The much rarer Probate Accounts do include debts; Mortimer (2006).

rather than just one blanket sum. However, the Legacy Duty Accounts (like probate valuations) do not include either real estate or, after 1853, leasehold property unless it was directed to be sold and therefore converted into pecuniary estate. The possession of real estate would have contributed not only to the financial status of the owner but also to his or her social status and sense of identity, which in turn might have affected attitudes to domestic lifestyle. Green *et al.* have recently discovered that it is possible to track down the value of the real estate owned by individual decedents in the Death Duty Registers preserved in the IR26 series in TNA.<sup>33</sup> They have done this for a very large sample but it is a complicated and laborious process and to pursue such matters on an extensive scale is beyond the scope of the present study. Nor do the Residuary Accounts provide comprehensive information about income. Stock is listed, but there is no information about disposable income, wages or salaries or returns from the enterprise. Again, it is to be imagined that such matters would have an effect on household life. These issues are reserved for the individual case studies, where biographical information of this kind is sought.

### **Inventories as snapshots**

On their own inventories cannot provide evidence for change and fluidity in households, home life and attitudes. They offer evidence for a person's possessions at a particular moment – in this case death. It has been shown that people's economic strategies varied according to their life stage.<sup>34</sup> It is likely that domestic practices and equipment also varied. This issue is addressed in individual case studies by taking into account the age of the deceased and of household members and the composition of the households concerned.

## **Sampling**

By no means all of the remaining Residuary Accounts include a household inventory. During a preliminary survey at TNA, in sixteen boxes (they are arranged approximately by year of probate) drawn from the period 1800-1881 and dating from around the turn of each decade there were 701 sets of papers, of which only about seventeen percent contained an inventory. This can be explained in various ways. In the many cases where household furniture and other goods had been sold

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<sup>33</sup> Green *et al.* (2009).

<sup>34</sup> Green *et al.* (2009); Morris (2005).

before the Accounts were drawn up, only the amount achieved in the sale was entered in the Accounts. In some cases a 'stamped' or certified valuation was given and this did not require an inventory. Some people owned so few goods, even though they might have been quite well off, that they were not worth listing; servants, minors, lodgers and people who lived with relatives would fall into this group. Some Account forms refer to an attached inventory but none is present; presumably these have been lost.

From this existing cache, for both historiographical and practical reasons, as already discussed (Chapter 1, 42-43), only inventories which related to people who died in the period 1841 to 1881 were included in my sample. This provided a pool of about 520 from which some further exclusions were made. Those for which no address was given or findable through a census search were excluded, as were any where the date of death was not available. Inventories which include very little furniture were rejected. This was a difficult distinction to make systematically but since the project focuses on household goods and household organisation, I attempted to exclude cases where the goods did not support a household. This would apply, for example, to lodgers, servants or people who lived in a relative's house. The presence of at least one bedstead was established as a criterion, on the basis that providing one's own bed indicated at least a major contribution to the organisation of the household furniture. Nor were inventories included where there was evidence (from a note of sale in the Account form) that a significant portion of the household goods had already been sold. However, at this stage, I did not debar inventories which related to premises that were used for commercial purposes as long as they also housed the decedent and household nor did I exclude those which did not include named rooms. These exclusions have been instituted by many scholars using inventories in the context of domestic life but I preferred to keep avenues of investigation open for as long as possible and to use sub-samples for exclusions.<sup>35</sup> The inclusion of inventories without named rooms gives a much larger sample for mapping ownership of different types of items against other variables. In the event, inventories organised predominantly as commercial premises, mainly inns, were rarely used in the analysis but such premises would be an interesting study in their own right and the data will be readily available for the future at The Geffrye.

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<sup>35</sup> For example, Buxton (2002); Priestly and Corfield (1982); Weatherill (1988). For my sub-samples, see Appendix 2.

After these exclusions had been made, there was a sample of 494 inventories for the period 1841-1881 (although there were only two for 1881); this is called 'the inventory sample'. They related to 491 decedents, since three people each owned two premises.

## Who were the decedents of the Residuary Account inventories?

The Residuary Account papers that now comprise the complete IR19 series (called from now on 'the parent sample') are themselves a sample drawn from what would have been a vast collection of Legacy Duty Residuary Account papers. It is likely that when they were deposited at TNA, sometime in the early to mid-twentieth century, they were selected on the basis of an alphabetical criterion and there is no evidence that these were in any way special or contested cases.<sup>36</sup> (There is an additional group of Legacy Duty papers relating to famous people held in IR59 at TNA.) Neither the parent sample nor the inventory sample is representative of the population at large but it is possible to give some sense of their position by comparing them with national data relating to probated estates.<sup>37</sup>

All estates liable for Legacy Duty required probate, which was necessary when an individual died leaving any personal estate to be distributed by will or, if intestate, by administration.<sup>38</sup> The Registrar General reported that, for 1858, only about 14.6 percent of those over the age of 21 who died left property which was susceptible to probate.<sup>39</sup> Subsequent reports indicate a similar figure.<sup>40</sup> But some probated estates must have been too small to attract Legacy Duty, which applied only to legacies of £20 and over.<sup>41</sup> This implies that Legacy Duty applied to less than about 14.6 percent of the population.

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<sup>36</sup> Green *et al.* (2009), 333, n.23; Owens *et al.* (2006), 392.

<sup>37</sup> Detailed national figures relating to probates are given in the *Twenty-second annual report of the Registrar-General for 1858* (1859), London: General Register Office, 173-181; figures are also given in the Registrar-General's reports for 1869-1878. They are available in *Return of judicial statistics of England and Wales* PP (1878) 2418: LXXVI.1 and thereafter annually.

<sup>38</sup> Rubinstein, W.D. (1977a) 'Wealth, elites and the class structure of modern Britain' *Past and Present* 76: 1: 99-126, 100.

<sup>39</sup> *Twenty-second annual report of the Registrar-General for 1858* (1859), xlvii.

<sup>40</sup> Registrar-Generals' *Annual reports for 1872-1878*.

<sup>41</sup> £20 was the lowest annual rent for a house that would qualify as middle-class according to Thompson (1988), 172. The annual income of an agricultural labourer in 1855 is given as about £31 in Pitney, A. (late pupil teacher) (1855) *Cottage economy, by a cottager in three lectures addressed to the girls of the Westbourne National School* London: Joseph Masters, 5-6.

Existing research on the parent sample of IR19 papers for periods at the beginning and end of the century indicates that the estates concerned were similar to all probated estates with regard to size.<sup>42</sup> For 1810-1840 the geographical distribution of the parent IR19 cases and the probated cases was similar.<sup>43</sup> The gender ratio in the figures for national probates and the parent IR19 papers, as seen in Table 2.1, is also similar at about 30 percent female to 70 percent male.<sup>44</sup> The percentage of female probates is smaller than the percentage of female deaths because of the legal, cultural and economic constraints on married female property ownership and will-making; until the Married Women's Property Act of 1882, a married woman did not usually legally own enough goods for a will or administration to be required.<sup>45</sup> Probates were therefore predominantly for male estates and for unmarried or widowed women. It would appear, then, that the decedents represented in the complete IR19 series were broadly similar to the national probated population.

**Table 2.1 Proportion of male and female estates in all deaths, in all probates for 1858, in the 'parent' IR19 sample for 1841-1881, and in the inventory sample, 1841-1881**

**Sources: TNA IR 19; Twenty-second annual report of the Registrar-General for 1858**

	All deaths, England & Wales, 1858 <sup>46</sup> Total: 210972	All probates, England & Wales, 1858 <sup>47</sup> Total: 30823	IR19 parent sample, England & Wales, 1841-1881 Total: 1225	Inventory sample, England & Wales, 1841-1881 Total: 491
<b>M</b>	48%	70%	68%	79%
<b>F</b>	52%	30%	32%	21%

However, there are differences between the parent sample and the inventory samples of the IR19 series in respect of gender balance and estate size. With regard to the former it can be seen from Table 2.1 that although the gender balance of the IR19 parent sample for 1841-1881 approximates well to that of all probated estates for 1858, in the inventory sample, female estates form a considerably lower percentage – only about two in every ten, rather than three in

<sup>42</sup> For 1810-1840 see Owens *et al.* (2006), 392-6. For 1870-1902, Residuary Account IR19 estates have been estimated to be slightly smaller than those of all probated estates; Green *et al.* (2009), 320.

<sup>43</sup> Owens *et al.* (2006), 392-6.

<sup>44</sup> Owens *et al.* (2006), 392-6.

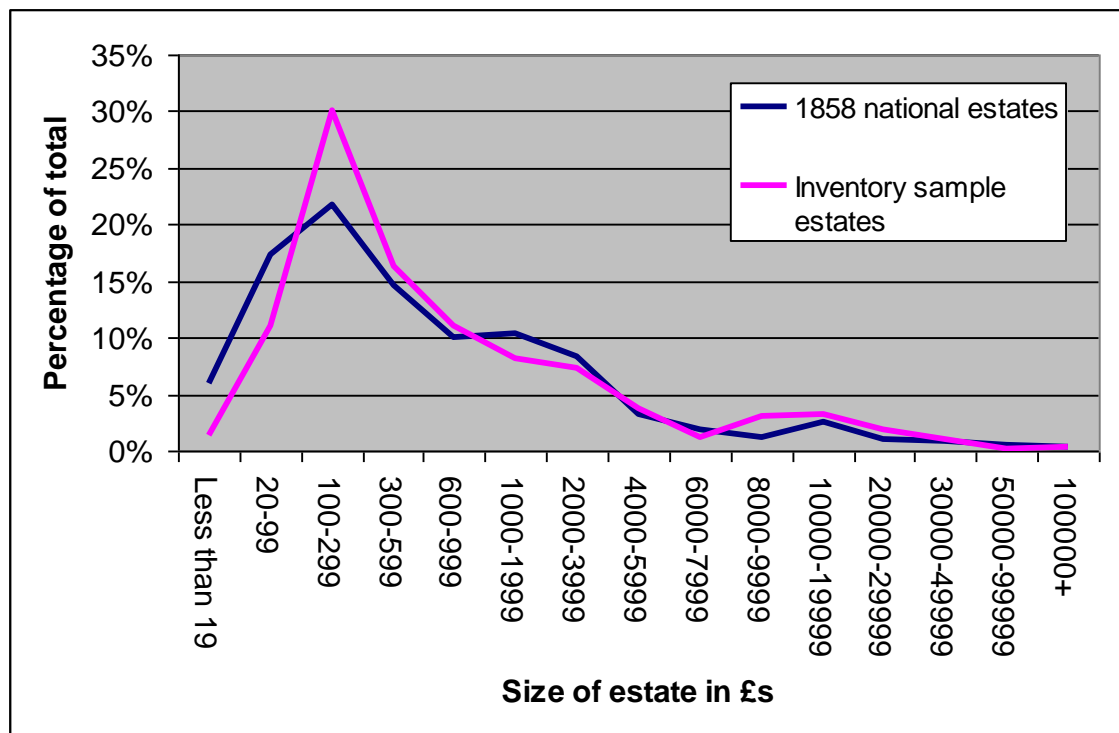
<sup>45</sup> Erickson (2006), 370; and Holcombe (1983), 18-25.

<sup>46</sup> *Twenty-second annual report of the Registrar-General*, xlv-l and 173-181.

<sup>47</sup> *Idem.*

ten. In other words, the women in the parent sample were less likely to be represented by an inventory than the men.<sup>48</sup> This is probably because unmarried women were more likely than men to live in a household belonging to someone else and to have, in these cases, insufficient personal goods for their inventories to have been selected for this sample. This supposition is supported by the fact that in the inventory sample only 27 percent of the women were unmarried compared with 40 percent of the parent sample and 37 percent of the national probate sample for 1858.

**Figure 2.1 Distribution of estates by size in the inventory sample (n=491) and national probates for 1858 (n=21,060)**  
**Source: Twenty-second annual report of the Registrar-General for 1858, 173-181**



With regard to size of estates, the mean value of gross estates in the inventory sample is higher (£1371) than the national mean probate valuation (£759) for 1858. However, Figure 2.1 indicates that it was at the lower end of the scale that the inventory sample generally exceeded the national average. Only twelve percent

<sup>48</sup> Green, D. R. and A. Owens (1997) 'Metropolitan estates of the middle class 1800-50: probates and death duties revisited' *Historical Research* 70: 173: 294-311, 310 found that in London about 3 out of 10 probated *estates* were female. In a national study for the period 1810-1840 almost 4 in 10 were found to be female; see Owens *et al.* (2006) 396. But Riello (2003), 16, notes that for an earlier period women's share of all surviving *inventories* does not exceed 20% of the total.



of the inventory sample gross estates were £99 or under, compared with 23 percent of national probated estates in 1858. Almost a third (30 percent) of the inventory sample fell into the range £100-£299 compared with 22 percent of probated estates. Above this level, the proportions were similar.

In terms of geographical distribution, the 494 inventories are spread unevenly across England and Wales.<sup>49</sup> For some counties (Rutland for example) there are no inventories at all, while in others, notably Middlesex, there are substantial numbers. For a comparison with national statistics they have been organised into the eleven registration divisions that were used in the census reports of 1851, 1861 and 1871.<sup>50</sup> Information as to the geographical distribution of all probated estates is not readily available but the geographical distribution of all registered deaths for 1851-1860 correlates well with the location of the inventories in the sample.<sup>51</sup>

In summary: the inventory sample was not geographically skewed compared with the dying population; the inventory sample included fewer estates of under £100 than the national probates and more in the £100-£600 band (especially at the lower end) but above that they were comparable; fewer female estates (and especially those of single women) featured inventories than would be expected if they represented the probated population at large. Decedents with estates liable to Probate and Legacy Duty were wealthier than many but by no means all of them were the nation's 'fat cats'. The really wealthy were, for the most part, people with real estate and land.<sup>52</sup> Although land was subject neither to Probate nor to Legacy Duty, those with large landed wealth also generally held large amounts of personal property which would be liable for those duties.<sup>53</sup> However, it is by no means the case that all those susceptible to the Duties owned land. It seems probable that the probated and Legacy Duty population over-represented those whose livelihood involved the ownership of stock-in-trade or equipment, compared with those whose

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<sup>49</sup> Three individuals had two inventories; in two cases they were both within the same region; in the other case, the primary residence was used for the comparison.

<sup>50</sup> These divisions are defined in *Census of England and Wales, 1871, Preliminary report, and tables of the population and the houses enumerated in England and Wales, and in the Islands in the British Seas on 3rd April 1871* (1871) London: HMSO, iv-xx.

<sup>51</sup> Figures taken from the *Twenty-third annual report of the Registrar-General for 1850* (1860), London: General Register Office, 218-9; the national figures are for deaths at all ages, including children, whereas all the deceased in the inventory sample were over 21. According to a Spearman's rho test on the two sets of numbers, before conversion to percentages, there is a significant correlation:  $r=.870$ ,  $df=9$ ,  $p=<.001$ .

<sup>52</sup> Rubinstein (1977a), 103-104.

<sup>53</sup> Rubinstein (1977a), 103.

income was drawn from salaries (which did not appear directly in the valuation of their estate, although wages owing at the time of death were included). And for people such as small farmers or shopkeepers the value of their enterprise assets could take them into Legacy Duty territory although their day-to-day disposable income might have been quite small. For some others, the bulk of their wealth was made up of debts owed to them. Indeed many of the inventories and valuations reveal that some of the deceased were living in impoverished day-to-day circumstances and the inventory sample certainly provides rare evidence for the possessions and residential organisation of many people who fell economically, geographically, socially and culturally outside the middle classes, who have been the focus to date of the majority of studies of the Victorian home.

## Methods

The inventory sample is the basis for both parts of this study – the aggregate and the interpretive analyses. The methods used for each are different but in both the inventories are examined for their *content* – for the existence of the material contents of the residences of the deceased – rather than as cultural or material artefacts themselves.<sup>54</sup>

### Aggregate analysis

The aggregate analysis, searching for patterns of ownership, was undertaken using a database and interpreted by a qualitative reading of contemporary texts.<sup>55</sup> A decision had to be made about whether to favour a source-oriented or method-oriented approach.<sup>56</sup> These two systems have been presented as alternatives, although they are in practice two ends of a continuum. A source-oriented approach stores or transcribes the material as closely as possible to the original so that it remains open to further interpretations; it aims to interpret the material without changing the source in any way and any coding is kept separate from the source; interpretations and hypotheses can be continually developed and refined.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Riello (2003) for a discussion of considering inventories as representations.

<sup>55</sup> Greenstein, D. (1994) *A historian's guide to computing* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press; Harvey and Press (1996); and Mawdsley, E. and T. Munck (1993) *Computing for historians: an introductory guide* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>56</sup> Greenstein (1994); Harvey and Press (1996), 11-12.

<sup>57</sup> The very large-scale quantitative analysis and interpretation of 8,103 early-modern inventories by Overton *et al.* (2004) is source-oriented. It involved the development of a

Method-oriented work extracts data from the source and organises it in such a way that it can be readily sorted. The selection and organisation of the material is based on pre-existing hypotheses with the intention of answering specific research questions; the standardisation of spelling and the entry of coded rather than 'raw' data are common techniques.<sup>58</sup> In practice, there is often not an absolute distinction between these two approaches since the requirement for standardisation for searching and sorting even in source-oriented models involves a translation or transcription of the original source and therefore some loss.

The open-ended research aims of my project required an approach towards the source-oriented end of the continuum. Since the aim was to understand domestic cultures using household possessions as the principal evidence, it was necessary to keep as much evidence for those possessions as possible with a view to leaving analysis and interpretation open, partly as a result of immersion in the contents of the inventories, partly in response to other contemporary sources and partly in response to existing interpretations. Additionally, the database (or a variant on it) was intended for future, but somewhat unspecified, research and educational use by The Geffrye; discussion with Geffrye staff suggested that they would find a standardised transcription of the inventories, retaining all household contents, most useful. As a result the intention for the database was to remain close to the inventories and to gather and transcribe most of the content presented in them. The initial transcription involved a certain amount of coding (for example in noting gender) but it was kept to a minimum; coded fields were added later, during the analytical stage. Photographs of each of the inventories allow for a return to the original if desirable. The Residuary Account forms, however, were treated much more selectively; only biographical data which it was thought would serve as useful correlative variables were extracted. Items of biographical data from other sources were similarly pre-selected.

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computer programme which allowed for the harvesting of virtually *all* the inventory information with the intention of leaving open possibilities of discovery rather than letting theory or hypothesis predetermine the questions and limit the data; see Overton, M. (1995) 'A computer management system for probate inventories' *History and computing* 7: 3: 135-142.

<sup>58</sup> Weatherill's (1988) study exemplifies the method-oriented approach. As outlined on 203-205, she extracted only certain items of information from the inventories examined, in order to answer very specific research questions about motivations (such as luxury, comfort, display and emulation) for consumption.

## **Choice of database management system**

The main function of the database was to accept transcriptions of most of the information from the inventory and selected information from the Residuary Account forms in order to search, sort and count on words, values and fields with a view to discerning patterns of the presence of items or rooms and to cross-tabulate those with a range of variables. For example: how many people had a piano? Did this proportion change over time? Which rooms were the pianos located in? What was the gender or age of the owners? What was their wealth or occupation? How many rooms did their residences comprise? This kind of cross-tabulation is best achieved through a relational database. The database management system had to be sufficiently flexible to be modified during use, most importantly by the addition of extra fields and extra tables (for additional data from other sources and for coding). *Microsoft Access 2003* answered these needs.<sup>59</sup> It provides a reasonably robust relational database package, with sufficient flexibility to develop the structure while in use. It is usable by non-experts, having a built-in front end whose procedures are similar to those of *Microsoft Office*. A cleaned-up version of the final database (including coding) will be submitted to The Geffrye as an outcome of the CASE studentship. The museum will consider whether to adapt it for public use, by designing a simpler front end and by restricting the fields shown.

## **Database design**

The final populated database is effectively a transcription of most of the text of the inventories, with additional biographical information, organised into an easily sortable and searchable format.<sup>60</sup> It offers a powerful tool for a range of analyses from the simple production of lists, such as a glossary of mid-nineteenth-century furnishing terms, through to complex queries. The potential uses of the data far exceed the research questions addressed in this thesis.

Designing the database was a challenging process, due largely to having to find a structure to encompass the variation in organisation of the inventories themselves. Appendix 1 gives a full description of the structure and contents of the database, showing the tables, their relationships and the fields. Criteria (also outlined in Appendix 1) were established for data entry, in order to standardise

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<sup>59</sup> The Institute for Historical Research uses *Microsoft Access* for its short courses *Databases for Historians*. I attended one of these courses before setting up the database.

<sup>60</sup> There were 67,737 entries for inventory items as well as a substantial amount of biographical data.

inclusions and format. Here I outline some issues encountered in designing the structure and detail of the database.

## **Data entry**

### *Goods*

All of the household contents were transcribed, with original spelling or abbreviations and with their qualifying adjectives. Quantities or numbers of items were extracted and recorded separately in standardised formats. Goods were linked to locations and categories, if given. Goods were entered into the database in the same order in which they were listed in the inventory, preserving the order by means of automatically generated numerical identifiers.

Since one of the substantive questions to be addressed concerns the relationship between work and home (Chapter 5), it was important to include any stock or equipment that was located at the same address as the residence. Inventories where this was the case were annotated with the intention of forming sub-samples. It would have been difficult, in any case, to exclude such items because some appraisers did not separate them out into clear categories and to make the distinction myself would have meant pre-judging the distinction between domestic and non-domestic items.

There were various problems to contend with. The way that items were grouped in the inventories varied considerably. In some cases, line length was a determining factor and the appraiser, for convenience of recording, had clearly grouped together two or more items that were not functionally linked. In other cases, particularly with bedding, a series of entries comprised what was effectively a composite item, the most common example being 'a feather bed, bolster and 2 pillows'. This functional, common-practice grouping was of interest and so it was decided to record such items as a single unit in the database. However, although common practice and punctuation gave some lead in making a decision, a judgement was required in many cases and complete standardisation proved impossible.

Variation in appraisers' practice means that it was not possible to enter accurate numbers of items; for example, one inventory might have listed 'Various volumes of books' while another gave individual titles. Similarly, sometimes the number of pieces in a dinner service was given, whereas in other cases it was not. In the end, the variations in the source mean that accurate comparable

computations of numbers of possessions or inventory entries is not possible. Different appraisal practices with regard to valuations also needed to be accommodated. All the inventories provided a total valuation for all the contents and some also provided separate valuations for individual categories or individual locations or individual items; these were all recorded. But where a single value was given for two or more unrelated items, it was not recorded.

### *Rooms*

Any names of rooms or other spaces (such as barns or fields) in which items were listed were recorded as given in the inventory. The order in which these spaces were listed was added as a code with the intention of helping to understand the spatial layout of the residence.

### *Owners and their households*

Specified items of biographical information about the deceased were extracted, where available, from the Residuary Account forms and the preamble to the inventories. These were: name, address, date of death, gender, marital status, social status, title, occupation, gross and net (gross minus debts and bequests) wealth, cost of funeral, and certain property valuations (for checking inventory valuations). Names and addresses of legatees, executors and appraisers were recorded for potential record-linking purposes. Names and occupations of the deceased were transcribed accurately; other items were standardised. Gender was inferred. Where county of residence or place of inventory was missing, this was supplied by reference to *Genuki Gazetteer*.<sup>61</sup> Census enumerators' books (for the census closest to the date of death) and registers of deaths were the source for age at death. The census books also provided information about occupation and marital status which, together with the existing information, was used for further coding. The source of information was noted in the database.

### **Coding and annotating**

Coding was used to group data into useful categories which each contain sufficient numbers to be subject to statistical testing. Interpretative pre-coding of the inventories was, to a great extent, limited to elements which required little judgement, such as noting an item as being a book. Some coding is reasonably transparent and uncontentious, such as annotating all inventories with a total

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/Gazetteer> (accessed 17.9.2010).

valuation of above a particular sum or grouping them by the decade in which the decedent died. However some annotations were more difficult, such as deciding whether or not economically productive activities took place in the residence. The more interpretation is involved the more the analyst's judgements are imposed on the material; care has to be taken to avoid imposing unjustified anachronistic or culturally and socially inappropriate understandings and interpretations. The coded fields used, rationales and the criteria for putting them into practice are given in Appendix 1 and are highlighted in the relevant substantive chapters. Here I draw attention to some of the more significant decisions.

### *Room names and goods*

Coding for room names and goods was not added until after data entry was complete and analysis had begun in order to get a feel for suitable categories since even something as apparently straightforward as this involves judgement. Some scholars using inventories have coded goods by function, such as sleeping, dining, sitting, cooking, and working.<sup>62</sup> I used this system to an extent but it is hard exhaustively to determine the functions of most items and, on the whole, I grouped goods into similar types, such as chairs and sofa-like items (sofas, couches and settees). For rooms, I relied mostly on standardising the names given but other codings were also necessary. Certain kinds of spaces were designated as thoroughfares; any room which contained a bedstead was coded as a bedstead-room; rooms named as kitchens were divided into kitchen-service rooms or kitchen-living rooms depending on the equipment they contained; rooms with names such as wash-house were coded as service rooms.

### *Geography*

Geographically, the sample is too small to allow for analysis by county. For the purposes of comparison with national statistics, the inventories were grouped into the eleven registration divisions that were used in the contemporary Registrar-Generals' reports.<sup>63</sup> But the numbers in some divisions were still too small to allow for statistically significant comparisons and so the divisions were combined into what I have called six regions (see Figure 2.2).<sup>64</sup> Four of the six regions were

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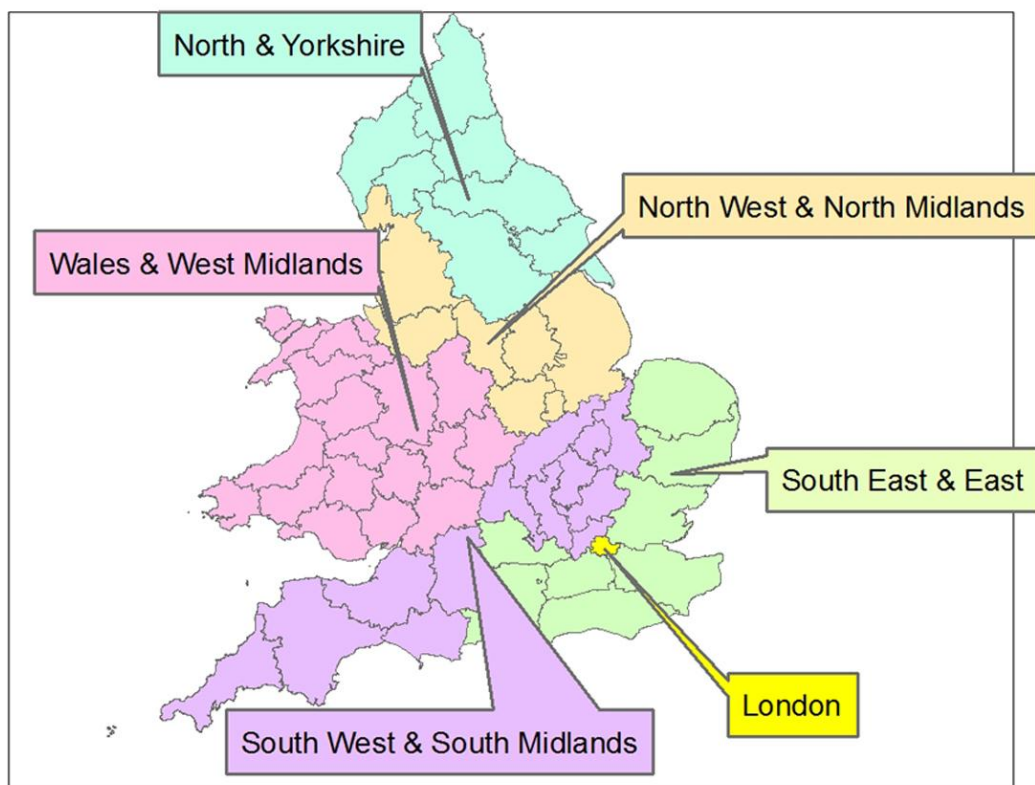
<sup>62</sup> For example, Priestley and Corfield (1982).

<sup>63</sup> *Census of England and Wales, 1871, Preliminary report* (1871), iv-xx. This includes a detailed definition of London, which includes some addresses in Middlesex, Surrey and Kent.

<sup>64</sup> This is just one, broad brush, geographical coding. Other codings would be possible at some future time.

composed of contiguous divisions; London was large enough to comprise a region on its own; the remaining region combines the South Midlands and the South West; this is not a very satisfactory combination since the geographical contiguity is weak and the cultural contiguity is not likely to be strong. However, overall, this grouping seemed the least bad of those that were trialled. The divisions were retained as a coding so that regional associations could be investigated at divisional level and from time to time alternative combinations were used.

**Figure 2.2 Regions used in the analysis**



### *Class or social status*

The relationship between social difference and domestic cultures is a central question in this project although, as already discussed, definitions of class, whether contemporary or analytical, are contentious. The inventory sample provides several items of information which relate to the social status or class of the decedents: wealth, occupation and status or honorific titles. These were recorded as given but were also combined and manipulated to give several variables for use in analysis.



Personal wealth is listed or calculable for all decedents. But it has to be remembered that this relates only to the decedent's personal assets; it does not include real estate or settled property, which for some people could be very extensive. However, it might be supposed that those wealthy in land and real estate would also be wealthy in personal possessions. Nor is personal wealth an indicator of disposable income. Some people had a large proportion of their total personal wealth tied up in stock and equipment, while for others their assets might have been more accessible. Personal wealth (from hereon referred to simply as 'wealth') was shown as both gross and net but, for the most part the analysis uses gross wealth.<sup>65</sup> There is a very large spread of gross wealth, from £4 to £211,458; this has been dealt with in two ways: firstly by dividing decedents into quartile categories according to the amount of their gross wealth; secondly, for calculations involving actual amounts (scale values), using log<sub>10</sub> gross wealth makes the large range more manageable.

The occupations listed for decedents have been transcribed. But occupation is not listed for everyone in the Residuary Account papers or inventories. Only one of the 104 female decedents is noted as having an occupation although the inventory contents show that several were running a business; the middle-class ideology of non-working women had its effect on the recording of occupations in the census and similarly in the Legacy Duty papers.<sup>66</sup> But many of the men are not listed as having an occupation either, perhaps because they had retired from active business or were otherwise independent and able to live off their means. It was possible to supplement occupational information for both men and women using the census enumerators' books.<sup>67</sup> The enumerators' books also specify economic independence (fundholder, independent, landowner, proprietor of houses or annuitant) as an occupation.<sup>68</sup> Using this additional information it was possible to attribute an occupation to 403 of the 491 deceased.<sup>69</sup> However, it is often hard to know what the terms meant, either practically or socially and the spread of

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<sup>65</sup> There is a strong positive correlation between net and gross wealth: on a Spearman's rho test  $r=.886$ ,  $n=491$ ,  $p<.001$ .

<sup>66</sup> Higgs, E. (1987), 'Women, occupation and work in the nineteenth century censuses' *History Workshop Journal* 23:1: 59-80.

<sup>67</sup> For a decedent to be identified in a census enumerator's book, three matching pieces of personal information were required, including their name. Only the census closest in date to the death was used.

<sup>68</sup> Higgs (2005).

<sup>69</sup> The source of the information was noted; census data was used only if it was absent from the Residuary Account papers. The information on the Account form took precedence over that in the inventory preamble.

occupations (with the exception of farmers, themselves a diverse group) throughout the sample is too thin for satisfactory statistical analysis.

Some of the decedents were attributed status or honorific titles in the Residuary Account forms and the inventory preambles. Some of these are coded as prestige titles: gentleman, esquire, dame and knight. However, these are almost all male titles and there was no equivalent for women. This gender difference makes it infeasible to use titles on their own as a marker variable. An additional difficulty in using these terms as a social indicator is that we are not sure quite what they meant at the time. This is especially the case for 'gentleman',<sup>70</sup> which was apparently used as a term of 'general social standing and respect',<sup>71</sup> but which was also used to indicate men who had retired and were able to live off their means or who were otherwise financially independent.<sup>72</sup> Additionally, it was sometimes used to indicate that someone was a cultured person, while in the middle of the century it became essentially a term of social approval and moral approbation.<sup>73</sup> Perhaps, in the context of the Residuary Accounts, its financial meaning predominated. But, alternatively, the title may have been copied from the self description in the deceased's will, while the social standing of the decedent might have been a concern of the executor or administrator, who was usually a family member.

I have attempted to deal with the difficulties of lack of overall coverage of these different measures by bringing them together using broadly-based standardised occupational and social stratification coding systems, namely HISCO and HIS-CAM. HISCO – an historical international classification of occupations – is a standardised coding system; it is employed here as being widely accepted although it is not entirely ideal for this project because its codes are mostly based on occupational sector rather than type of work or position within that sector.<sup>74</sup> However, in some cases it was possible to code individuals as 'manager' or 'proprietor'.<sup>75</sup> It also provides a code for 'prestige title' and a 'financially independent'. HIS-CAM (which is an historical version of CAMSIS – Cambridge

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<sup>70</sup> Crossick (1991).

<sup>71</sup> HISCO or the History Of Work Information System. The website offers manual or semi-automatic coding and a guide book is available: Leeuwen, M., Maas, I. and A. Miles (2002) *Historical international standard classification of occupations* Leuven: University Press. [http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/detail\\_page.php?act\\_id=28771&lang=](http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/detail_page.php?act_id=28771&lang=) (accessed 9.5.2010).

<sup>72</sup> Morris (2005), 82.

<sup>73</sup> Crossick (1991), 163-4. The ambiguity of the term and whether it has a social, cultural or characterological meaning is one of the themes in Gaskell, E. (1995, first published 1854-5) *North and South* London: Penguin.

<sup>74</sup> HISCO <http://historyofwork.iisg.nl> (accessed 18.9.2010).

<sup>75</sup> See [http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/list\\_pub.php?categories=hstructure](http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/list_pub.php?categories=hstructure) for the coding structure.

Social Interaction and Stratification) is a system which translates the HISCO codes (and therefore is subject to exactly the same problems) into social stratification numerical codes on a scale of 1-99 (although it does not code the 'independents').<sup>76</sup> The HIS-CAM system was derived from studying the social networks of an enormous number of people based on their occupations. The occupations of people who are likely to be socially connected are given numbers close together; those who are unlikely to have these connections are far apart. There is a social status element to the scale because professions are grouped together at the top end (in the 90s) while those with the maximum social distance from them are at the bottom. 334 of the 491 decedents have been given a HIS-CAM code.

I have brought these together so that anyone with a prestige title or of independent financial status or with an occupational stratification coding of over 77 (which includes the professions, managers, working proprietors of wholesale or retail businesses, clerics, teachers and military officers) is coded as 'higher status'; those for whom none of these pieces of information is available are coded as 'not known'; the rest are coded as 'lower status'.<sup>77</sup> It must be stressed that these are analytical terms only; they do not reflect contemporary usage. The original data remain, however, and are returned to where useful. There is a very strong association between increased wealth (by quartile) and 'higher status'.<sup>78</sup> These 'status' groups are not the exact equivalent of any of the various class groupings used by economic or social historians. The 'higher status' coding used here, unlike Rubinstein's tax-paying middle classes, excludes the lower middle classes.<sup>79</sup> It is not dissimilar to the professional middle and upper middle classes which some social historians distinguish from the white-collar and petty-bourgeois lower middle classes.<sup>80</sup> The 'lower status' group is a catch-all; there is not enough reliable occupational information to establish different categories for manual workers or for white collar employees and small businessmen. The aggregate analysis is

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<sup>76</sup> See <http://www.camsis.stir.ac.uk/hiscam/> The codings, provided on the website, relate to 1800-1934 and are nationally specific; this project uses HIS-CAM scale (version 1.1.GB).

<sup>77</sup> The cut-off point of a HIS-CAM coding of 77 was instituted after testing other scores for producing statistically significant associations with various rooms and goods. It excludes the shop keepers and lower clerks that Rubinstein (1988) included as middle-class and whom others, such as Muthesius (1982), 44-45, have characterised as lower-middle-class.

<sup>78</sup> Chi-square=77.497, df=6, n=491, p=<.001.

<sup>79</sup> Rubinstein (1988) and above, page 29.

<sup>80</sup> Crossick (1977).

therefore limited in this respect although these distinctions are investigated in the case studies.

### **Sub-samples**

The whole sample consists of 491 decedents and their 494 inventories. Sub-samples are used for analysis where appropriate. Often, for example, analysis is limited to those inventories where named rooms were listed. Almost always inventories which were primarily organised around an enterprise (such as inns) are excluded. Where a consideration of household composition was important a sub-sample of inventories which relate to deaths which occurred within three years after a census was established. Three years is an arbitrary cut-off point, but is chosen because the household composition shown in the census would possibly still be relevant. However, since not all decedents could be located in the enumerators' books, this sub-sample was of only 95 cases. The composition of the various sub-samples is given in Appendix 2.

### **Quantitative methods**

The quantitative analysis is descriptive, providing counts, ranges, distributions, averages, correlations and cross-tabulations.<sup>81</sup> Statistical tests are undertaken using SPSS. The most commonly used is the chi-square test for association between categorical (or nominal) variables (such as gender, geographical location, and possession/not of a particular item). In order to use them in chi-square tests, scale variables (for example age at death or wealth) are converted into categorical variables (decade of death or wealth quartile). The higher the chi-square figure the more marked the association. Independent t-tests are used to compare means (for example of the gross wealth of male and female decedents). Correlations are used to establish associations between scale variables. In all cases I report probabilities of  $p < .05$ ,  $< .01$ ,  $< .001$  as statistically significant; the smaller the probability number the more likely it is that the results are *not* a matter of chance. These probability measures are adopted here because they are commonly used.<sup>82</sup> The main text of the thesis reports the tests in ordinary English but I use the word 'significant' to mean statistically significant, not 'important'; test results are given as footnotes.

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<sup>81</sup> This is standard for smaller samples; complex statistical analysis (such as multivariate regressions) require large samples. See Mawdsley and Munck (1993).

<sup>82</sup> See, for example, Howitt, D. and D. Cramer (2008) *Introduction to SPSS in psychology* Harlow: Pearson Education. The probability of the association being a result of chance is shown as:  $p < .001$  (less than 1 in 1000);  $p < .01$  (less than 1 in 100);  $p < .05$  (less than 1 in 20).

Appendix 4 presents, as an example, the process of statistical analysis for Chapter 3, where this method is particularly dominant.

The relationships between variables reported here are descriptive of the sample, rather than predictive. This is because the inventory sample is not a random sample of a known larger population (although its relationship to the whole probated population has been loosely established). So, the significant associations found in the inventory sample will not necessarily have been repeated elsewhere.

It is impossible definitively to separate out some of the variables. For example, it is found that the ownership of certain new types of goods is associated with people who lived in London. It is also found that the ownership of these goods is associated with wealthier people. But people who lived in London were often wealthier than people who did not live in London and there is no way of knowing whether it is their wealth or their address that is more telling or whether their wealth depended on their living in London or vice versa.

### **Interpretation of the quantitative analysis**

The aggregate analysis is informed by, and interpreted with reference to, a pre-selected sample of domestic advice literature and domestically located contemporary fiction. These sources provide contemporary visions of home or home life, often depicted and discussed by the authors in some detail. In novels, by the early nineteenth century the identification of character and interior was already a narrative given.<sup>83</sup> By the middle of the century, as Philippa Tristram discusses, this had intensified, partly because there was now so much choice available to consumers, fictional as well as real. The house and its interiors had moved from the background into the foreground and, at the same time the social reach of the novel extended and took the reader into the houses of all sorts of people – the poor, the shabby and the newly rich as well as the established well-to-do.<sup>84</sup>

Direct advice concerning the house and home is found in books and articles relating to architectural planning, domestic economy, etiquette, cookery, household management, furnishing and interior decoration. From the 1870s onwards the new practice of displaying goods in ‘room sets’, rather than typologically, at exhibitions and in department stores can also be included in ‘advice’, as can furnishing

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<sup>83</sup> Grant, C. (2005) ‘Reading the house of fiction: from object to interior 1720-1920’ *Home Cultures* 2: 3: 233-250, 239-41.

<sup>84</sup> Tristram, P. (1989) *Living space in fact and fiction* Routledge: London and New York, 16-23.

advertisements and catalogues.<sup>85</sup> There was a shift in the balance of the types produced over the century: books for professionals, such as architects and decorators, dominated in the first decades; in the mid century there were manuals of domestic management and domestic economy; both of these forms continued but from the late 1860s a new genre of advice appeared, in magazines as well as books, that concentrated specifically on the aesthetics of furnishing and decorating.<sup>86</sup> Although each type focused on its particular topic, they all made broader assumptions about house, home and domestic life and they all, in effect, gave general advice on how to live and behave as well as encouraging the consumption of household goods.

Both fiction and advice are set in the general growth in the production and consumption of popular printed matter during the century.<sup>87</sup> There was a certain convergence of form between the two types since advice literature, especially that of the last quarter of the century, sometimes drew on the literary techniques of novels, employing devices such as characterisation, anecdote and dialogue.<sup>88</sup> Jane Hamlett notes that 'in the sense that both types of text were narrative constructs of the imagined domestic interior, both of these texts were fictions' and that both types can be considered as prescriptive since they both offered positive (or sometimes negative) representations of the way to live at home.<sup>89</sup> But there were fundamental differences between them. Representation of the domestic in advice literature was the point of the narrative; the images were specific, detailed and almost always positive (although counter examples were sometimes given to educate the reader). Novels, on the other hand, represented home and domestic goods and practices in fragments, as required by the narrative and domestic arrangements were often used as a negative indicator of character or situation.

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<sup>85</sup> Aynsley, J. and F. Berry (2005) 'Introduction: publishing the modern home. Magazines and the domestic interior 1870-1965' *Journal of Design History* 18: 1: 1-5; Cohen (2006); Collard, F. (2003) 'Historical revivals, commercial enterprise and public confusion: negotiating taste 1860-1890' *Journal of Design History* 16: 1: 35-48; Edwards (2005); Grier (1988); Lees-Maffei (2003); McLaugherty, M.C. (1983) 'Household art: creating the artistic home, 1868-1893' *Winterthur Portfolio* 18: 1: 1-26. For a bibliographic overview see Attar, D. (1987) *Household books published in Britain 1800-1914* London: Prospect Books.

<sup>86</sup> Attar (1987), 1-3; Ferry (2007); Neiswander (2008), 11-22.

<sup>87</sup> Bennett, S. (1982) 'Revolutions in thought: serial publication and the mass market for reading' in Shattock, J. and M. Wolff, eds. *The Victorian periodical press: samplings and soundings* Leicester: Leicester University Press.

<sup>88</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 2.

<sup>89</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 2. Indeed, writing of *any* kind, including every single one of the sources used here from the census to the novel and the historical literature can be seen as fictions; Marcus, S (1975) *Representations* New York: Random House, vx.

The relationship of the representations of interiors in both genres to what people actually did is, as discussed in Chapter 1, page 26, vexed.<sup>90</sup> The verbal and visual pictures these books provide are often used in discussions of the nineteenth-century home as examples of 'how it was'. This can certainly produce vivid illustrations, but taking extracts out of context tends to suggest that they are transparent representations. The gap that cannot be jumped without further evidence is between the representations in the texts and the practices of the contemporary population. The present study builds up a body of evidence for actual ownership against which the prescriptions can be calibrated.<sup>91</sup>

Additionally, the present project treats advice and novels as 'an auxiliary source',<sup>92</sup> drawing on them to provide some quite straightforward information about terminology, goods and rooms: What, for example, were the components of a bed? What was 'millpuff'?<sup>93</sup> What was a 'houseplace?' How much did a walnut sideboard cost in 1856? Further, these texts are very free with their value judgements and they are interrogated for authorial ideas about, for example, the right way to furnish bed-rooms or what constituted decoration appropriate to a particular social or economic status. They were often informed by contemporary public debates that had a wider reach, such as national or sectional commercial interest, industrialisation, morality, domesticity, design, nationalism, race, health and personality.<sup>94</sup> These judgements have been dismissed as not necessarily representative; but it should be recognised that they are 'real' but they belong to the authors or the publishing imperatives, not necessarily to the readers.<sup>95</sup> Ferry's investigations of the authorial biography and publishing context of advice texts is an essential corrective to the way in which household advice is frequently quoted without reference to context.<sup>96</sup> The ideas propounded in these texts did become part of the circulating language but it can only be said that the texts are evidence for the reflection or formation of more broadly held ideas if they were published and

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<sup>90</sup> Lees-Maffei, (2003).

<sup>91</sup> Hamlett has undertaken this on a smaller scale in considering the gendering of middle-class reception rooms, which is a clear theme of the prescriptive literature; see Hamlett (2009b).

<sup>92</sup> Lees-Maffei (2003), 3.

<sup>93</sup> Answer: a filling material for beds or mattresses, made from the chopped up waste from wool production; see Webster, T. assisted by the late Mrs. Parkes (1844) *An encyclopaedia of domestic economy* London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 270.

<sup>94</sup> See especially Cohen (2006) but also, among many others: Anderson, A. (2005) "'Doing as we like": Grant Allen, Harry Quilter and Aesthetic dogma' *Journal of Design History* 18: 4: 335-355; and Logan (2001).

<sup>95</sup> Lees-Maffei (2003), 4.

<sup>96</sup> Ferry (2003), (2006) and (2007).

sold or read in considerable numbers.<sup>97</sup> Attention to the cost and sales of books is useful.<sup>98</sup> Some advice literature is specifically addressed to particular readers;<sup>99</sup> however, whether that was actually the readership and whether they put the ideas into practice is another question,<sup>100</sup> on which the present study is able to throw some light.

### *Sampling*

For manageability, sixteen books of advice, five builders' pattern books and fourteen novels were selected. An annotated list of the chosen books is given in Appendix 3. The main sources for selection of advice texts were *Household books published in Britain 1800-1914* and *Home Economics Archive: Research, Tradition and History (HEARTH)*.<sup>101</sup> Some evidence about sales was found in Martha McClaugherty's article.<sup>102</sup> The selection was made on a judgement of usefulness (rather than random selection) but a spread of the main different types was included. The architectural manuals and pattern books are useful for their house plans, which allow an understanding of the physical and conceptual relationships between different internal spaces. These texts are also often very closely argued, giving clear evidence for authorial views about the nature of desirable domestic arrangements. The household management and domestic economy manuals often deal with their subject in detail, providing descriptions or illustrations of equipment and furniture which is useful for understanding the inventories; they sometimes give prices. They do not, on the whole, discuss matters of taste or style (which is not something that inventories generally reflect either) but they do discuss other functional imperatives such as hygiene and differentiation according to income. Judging from the text and the price, if known, most are apparently addressed to an affluent readership, but there are some for the less well off. Two editions of the same manual are included in order to track change over time. The later books, which concern themselves primarily with the aesthetics of furnishing and decoration

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<sup>97</sup> Mandler, P. (2004) 'The problem with cultural history' *Cultural and Social History* 1: 1: 94-117.

<sup>98</sup> For general information about the Victorian publishing trade and the price and readership of novels, see Eliot, S. (2001) 'The business of Victorian publishing' in David, D., ed. *The Cambridge companion to the Victorian novel* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; McClaugherty (1983).

<sup>99</sup> Neiswander (2008), 21.

<sup>100</sup> Lees-Maffei (2003), 6.

<sup>101</sup> Attar (1987); HEARTH, located at Cornell University, is a core electronic collection of books and journals in Home Economics and related disciplines: <http://hearth.library.cornell.edu> (accessed 18.9.2010).

<sup>102</sup> McClaugherty (1983).



have already been thoroughly mined by previous scholars; they also mostly fall outside the central period of this study, especially when it is taken into account that household furnishing was generally undertaken at marriage (that is some years before death). However, three of the earlier examples of these books have been included. There is further discussion of these texts in Chapter 3, especially 110-114.

The novels were selected from the Chadwyck Healey electronic *Nineteenth-century fiction* collection.<sup>103</sup> This contains 250 British and Irish novels from the period 1782 to 1903; it includes major novels alongside popular romances, sensation fiction, colonial adventure novels and children's literature. Those selected were written between 1840-1880 (although several of them depict earlier nineteenth-century homes) and were chosen as containing extended depictions of domestic interiors, preferably as a key element in the narrative. In the event some were more useful than others and I relied most heavily on those where contrasts of character, politics, and social, cultural and economic relations are clearly reflected in the different interiors depicted. Amongst these, the novels by Mrs. Gaskell and George Eliot also had the advantage of presenting houses and home life that had been thoroughly researched by the authors.<sup>104</sup> In addition, two works which are more properly journalism than fiction are included here for convenience. The selection includes some popular titles as well as canonical texts.<sup>105</sup>

## Interpretive analysis

The interpretive analysis has already been discussed in Chapter 1, 18-25. Here I recap the method and outline the sources used. The interpretive analysis borrows from the methods of historical archaeology: empirical data relating to broad patterns of ownership provide an informing context for an investigation focusing on the relationship between people and things in day-to-day life with a view to revealing individual agency.<sup>106</sup> It involves a close reading of an individual inventory that attends to all of the contents listed in a property (including outhouses, shops and fields) and to the grouping and placement of goods. Although all the items from

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<sup>103</sup> [http://collections.chadwyck.co.uk/marketing/c19f/about\\_ilc.jsp](http://collections.chadwyck.co.uk/marketing/c19f/about_ilc.jsp) (accessed 14.5.2010).

<sup>104</sup> See Appendix 3.

<sup>105</sup> Guided by Webb, R. (1982) 'The Victorian reading public' in *From Dickens to Hardy, the New Pelican Guide to English Literature, vol. 6*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>106</sup> Hicks and Beaudry, eds. (2006) gives an overview.

the inventories were entered into the database, it is the nature of database searches that they extract a small number of items at any one time; they concentrate on particular items and their association with different types of people, or rooms, or with other items of equipment. But looking at an inventory in its entirety makes it possible to see the goods and spaces relative to each other.<sup>107</sup> The aggregate analysis might reveal, for example, that, generally speaking, floor cloth was used more often in lesser status areas such as hallways and kitchens, whereas carpet – a more expensive item – was used in reception rooms. But in a particular individual inventory most of the floors might be bare with a floor cloth marking out a best room. An individual's ownership and arrangement of goods is interpreted in the context of biographical information about the deceased and his or her household in the attempt to understand why the domestic arrangements were thus. Was this a poor household that would have wanted carpet but could not afford it? Or did they have other priorities? Was it common behaviour in that particular occupation? Or that particular region? The sources called upon for biographical information are predominantly wills, directories, census enumerators' books and local histories.<sup>108</sup> The previously outlined set of advice texts and novels, along with specialist secondary literature, is also used to illuminate practical considerations such as prices and circulated ideas about the goods concerned. The ownership and disposition of goods are thus interpreted as a motivated functional strategy of the household or owner in its particular circumstances. This close attention to the contents of the whole house is the method that Margaret Ponsonby has used effectively in her recent book.<sup>109</sup> But, whereas she was obliged to take norms on trust, this study is able to ground the cases in relation to broad patterns of ownership and meaning established empirically by aggregate analysis.

Goods are ambiguous; they have multiple meanings and uses. And things do not speak directly for the people who owned or used them. Their uses and meanings cannot be comprehended simply through empathy.<sup>110</sup> Interpretation provides a plausible explanation of the found evidence, whether that is

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<sup>107</sup> Qualitative databases, such as NVivo, are available. These were investigated and it was decided that they could not adequately handle the intended quantitative searches. Since the number of individual cases studies is relatively limited, a qualitative database was not considered necessary.

<sup>108</sup> The ideology and practices behind such records must be taken into account; see Ogborn, M. (2003) 'Knowledge is power: using archival research to interpret state formation' in Blunt, A., Gruffudd, P., May, J., Ogborn, M. and D. Pinder, eds. *Cultural geography in practice* London: Arnold.

<sup>109</sup> Ponsonby (2007).

<sup>110</sup> Mayne (2008), 117.

archaeological artefacts or the words in an inventory, and the explanation becomes more plausible the more different sources are brought to bear. Historical archaeologists accept these interpretations as stories and their own role as storytellers. As Alan Mayne has written: 'It is surely the archaeologist's voice – rather than a genie-type voice from the past – that explains the otherwise unknowable fragments uncovered in an excavation pit.'<sup>111</sup> As practiced by Rebecca Yamin this is not an apology for storytelling and it is more than a recognition of the status of all narratives. Yamin deliberately employs the devices of story line and plot to bring archaeology to life for a non-specialist audience.<sup>112</sup> She has even told her stories in the first person voice of historical subjects, whose experiences have previously always been represented from the outside in denigratory terms, in order to allow them a solid presence and to recognise them as active participants in their lives and not simply as playing out roles determined by circumstances. These tales are fictions but they are grounded in something real: 'The narrative vignettes ... are no more real than Charles Dickens' mid-nineteenth-century description ... but they begin and end with the real stuff of everyday life.'<sup>113</sup> This is an open-ended form of interpretation that invites response and amendment.<sup>114</sup> Here, in the present project, interpretations or 'narrative vignettes' are delivered in my voice, in its anonymous authorial guise. But I stress that these are my stories of the individuals concerned. I consider them plausible but not conclusive. I include the evidence on which they are based so that readers have the opportunity to respond and make their own interpretations.

## Conclusion

One aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that inventories and their associated documentation can, contrary to some current views, be used as a primary resource to answer a broad range of questions, both descriptive and conceptual, about residential circumstances and residential practices. The limitations of inventories as descriptive representations are well known and the fortuitous nature of their survival even in a series such as IR19 means that care has to be taken about whom they represent. These issues have been borne in mind in developing a method which,

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<sup>111</sup> Mayne, A. (2007) 'Review essay: Tall tales but true?: New York's "Five Points" slum' *Journal of Urban History* 33: 2: 320-331, 324.

<sup>112</sup> Yamin (2001).

<sup>113</sup> Yamin (2001), 167.

<sup>114</sup> Mayne (2008), 114.

on the one hand, for the first time brings large-scale empirical evidence to bear on the discussion of the material contents and material culture of nineteenth-century homes and, on the other, makes a qualitative interpretation of particular cases, drawing on personal circumstances with the intention of highlighting personal choices in the face of broader norms. The distinctiveness of the method is that the two approaches are not stand-alone but are used in a mutually informative manner.

The present study uses a pre-defined range of additional sources, partly to highlight the richness of inventories as evidence but also partly for manageability. Further development of the method would extend those additional sources, particularly into material which could throw light on experience and practice. Most enticing in this respect are court records, which although they have been exploited by historians of earlier centuries have hardly been used in investigations of domestic life in the nineteenth century. The Old Bailey records for the nineteenth century, which came online during the course of the present project, offer an ideal opportunity.<sup>115</sup>

The database is a key tool of the investigation. It has been carefully designed to capture the content of the inventories in a form approximating to the original in order to maximise the possibilities of its future use. Extensive and heavily populated, with a copy lodged at The Geffrye and the potential for wider dissemination, it is a significant output of the project in its own right.

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<sup>115</sup> [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org) (accessed 11.9.2010).

# Chapter 3

## Day-rooms: difference, distinction and differentiation

### Introduction

This chapter is concerned with difference and differentiation. Were there clear differences in the way that different types of people organised their homes? If so, what were those differences? Were they in the amount and quality or type of the goods? Were they in the terms used? Were they in the way that space was organised? Did – and do – these differences matter? Did they mark or make meaningful differences between people? With regard to differentiation, when people had more than one day-room, how did they divide up the functions between them? Which activities were compatible and which incompatible? What activities were barred from which day-rooms? To what extent was it actually the case that, as many scholars have argued, specialisation of functions, a rigid demarcation of space, and the separation of activities was a fundamental organising principle in domestic life, as it has been seen to be in other areas of life? Did different categories of people behave differently in this respect?

The chapter focuses on day-rooms because this is where both contemporaries and historians have seen striking differences in practice between different groups of people. 'Day-room' is a contemporary term used, for example, by Robert Kerr in his 1871 book, *The gentleman's house*, which discussed the planning of very large houses. Kerr's list of day-rooms included dining-room, parlour-dining-room, morning-room, breakfast or luncheon-room, drawing-room, boudoir, and library; day-rooms were distinct from sleeping-rooms, children's rooms, thoroughfares, cloak-rooms, W.Cs., bath-rooms and the many rooms in the servants' department. But, in the present set of inventories, other terms, notably parlour, also appear frequently. These varied expressions provide a convenient starting point for investigating difference. Were the room names meaningful? Did differently named day-rooms contain different things and have different functions? Or was it just a matter of alternative terms for the same kind of space? Considering these questions extends our surprisingly limited knowledge of what these different

rooms were actually like. And it moves away from the concentration on the drawing-rooms and dining-rooms that, as we will see, were the prerogative of only a relatively small group of privileged people but which have been the focus of so much historical writing about Victorian homes. With one noteworthy exception<sup>1</sup>, less attention has been given to parlours and very little to the kitchen-living-rooms that this investigation shows to have been a feature of many homes. Judith Flanders, for example mentions the living-room function of kitchens for the 'less prosperous' and remarks that it was often a bedroom for the servant or servants but does not go into further detail.<sup>2</sup>

Almost all commentators, both contemporary and historical, have agreed that class was the category that determined differences in domestic organisation. However, those commentators have used two different (but not entirely discrete) approaches to understanding class. Some have focused on income and occupation, suggesting that the more available money people had, the more space they could afford.<sup>3</sup> But these commentators also found a relationship between socio-economic position and types of rooms and ways of using them – issues that were not directly a matter of the ability to afford space. Other scholars have argued that class was constituted not just by socio-economic position but also by domestic material culture or way of life.<sup>4</sup> Linda Young argues that membership of the middle classes required the ownership of certain rooms, certain goods and the knowledge and ability to use these goods and rooms correctly but, more than that, middle-class status was constituted by the ownership and correct use of these goods.<sup>5</sup> However what Young has not done, and what other life-style interpretations of class do not do, is to demonstrate that this material culture actually was distinctive and that there were alternative domestic cultures, marking or constituting other classes. In addition, as Wahrman has pointed out, we need to know that the adoption of this apparently class-conferring material culture was correlated with something else distinctive of that class.<sup>6</sup> Without this external corroboration it has to be taken on trust that the possession of, say, a marrow spoon both marked and made the 'middle-classness' of its owner. The social scope of the present inventory sample gives the opportunity to pursue these issues. Firstly, is it possible to see the 'edges'

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<sup>1</sup> Daunton (1983).

<sup>2</sup> Flanders (2003), 63-64.

<sup>3</sup> Burnett (1978); Muthesius (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987); Young (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Young (2003), 9-23, 173-187 and 20.

<sup>6</sup> Wahrman (1993), 396-432.

of the middle-class culture described by Young? Secondly, can those distinct cultures be seen to be associated with discrete socio-economic positions? The aim here is to bring 'way-of-life' and socio-economic readings into alignment with each other.

Pierre Bourdieu argued that different class fragments manifest distinct and distinctive (that is distinction-conferring) preferences (which I read in this context as cultures or life-styles).<sup>7</sup> He undertook a large-scale empirical study that found statistically significant associations between preferences and socio-economic position. In the present chapter I approach the inventory material in a similar way, mapping differences in the way that people named their rooms and organised their homes (understood as their preferences) against differences in the nature of the households concerned in order to establish which groups of people shared a domestic culture and where the differences lay.

But there are limitations. In the present study, the differences that do appear are between those of quite an elevated socio-economic level and the rest; below that, clear-cut differences in domestic cultures are not visible. Of course, as might be expected, people with less wealth owned fewer goods and, especially, they owned fewer expensive goods. But lack, or the inability to acquire, cannot be taken on its own as a difference in culture. It is necessary to focus on goods that were present and to locate *different* preferences and these are only visible between the higher status and wealthy groups and the rest. This does not necessarily mean that other differences did not exist; it might well be that they are not revealed by the kind of un-nuanced and basic description of goods given in the inventories.

Additionally, the appearance of broad patterns is not taken to mean that all individual households abided by the rules. John Field's meticulous micro-study of the middle class of Portsmouth, 1800-1875, offers a potent warning against such a tendency.<sup>8</sup> He found that people who might be expected from their socio-economic position to employ servants – generally considered a cultural marker of middle-class status – did not do so if they lived in plebeian areas and were serving plebeian customers; their neighbourhood relationships had a strong impact on their class behaviour.

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<sup>7</sup> Bourdieu (1984), especially 169-225.

<sup>8</sup> Field, J. (1986) 'Wealth, styles of life and social tone amongst Portsmouth's middle class, 1800-1875' in Morris, R., ed. *Class, power and social structure in British nineteenth-century towns* Leicester: Leicester University Press.

This kind of mapping has not been undertaken for nineteenth-century Britain but Maurice Barley has done something similar for an earlier period arguing that ‘a study of [room] names and their distribution, and comparison of the functions served by different rooms of the same name, or of the differently named rooms with the same domestic purpose, throws light on the distribution patterns of popular culture.’<sup>9</sup> He found associations between particular terms and status positions but also with geographical locations and with date. In the present study, social status (addressed here as ‘status’, through honorific titles, occupational status and source of income, as discussed in Chapter 2, 83-87) is a primary concern because of its importance in both contemporary literature and the historiography, but other variables – gender, change over time and geographical location – are also assessed. There are limitations to the mapping possible here, nonetheless it produces significant empirical results that are used to position both historical accounts and contemporary representations, testing the reliability of advice literature as a source and highlighting differences within that literature.

In brief, this chapter first tracks the incidence of different day-rooms. Then, by looking at the combinations in which they were found and their contents, it assesses their functions and considers the ways that domestic day space was divided up. An aggregate analysis asks whether distinct tastes and priorities, behaviours and ideas can be identified and aligned with differences in status. And conversely, do the groups who might be identified as of different status appear to have distinct material cultures? Are differences all socio-economically aligned or are other factors – such as geography or the gender of the decedent – discernible? This first part of the chapter is based on many descriptive statistical tests. These are not included here in full because they would interrupt the flow of the narrative; I have simply footnoted significant test results and make the detail available in Appendix 4. The second part of the chapter focuses on individual inventories in order to consider whether, in the case of parlours and kitchen-living-rooms, specialisation of function was as pervasive as it has been suggested to be; this also gives the opportunity to consider the nature of the kitchen-living-room.

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<sup>9</sup> Barley, M. (1963) ‘A glossary of names for rooms in houses of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’ in Foster, I.L. and L. Alcock, eds. *Culture and environment* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 479.



## Room names

The main sub-sample analysed in this section comprises the 337 inventories not organised primarily as businesses and which were arranged by room name (see Appendix 2 for sub-samples). Appraisers used room names to help keep their inventory lists under control. Where there were few goods or few rooms this would not have been necessary, so inventories with room names belonged in general to the wealthier section of the whole sample. The terms might have been those used by a deceased's household or they might have been those used by the appraiser but, in either case, they reflect contemporary usage.

In order to make groups large enough for statistical analysis the terms used in the inventories have been simplified (for example, 'front parlour' has been simplified to 'parlour') or, in some cases, coded. There were some rooms named by their position, for example 'first floor front room'. These were scanned for their contents and relationship to other rooms in the inventory and, if clearly day-rooms of some sort, were coded as 'other day-rooms'. They are not analysed as named rooms but are used in the discussion of the number and combination of day-rooms that people had. Secondly, about 60 percent of all the rooms named as a kitchen of some sort (kitchen, front kitchen, back kitchen and so on) contained goods that indicate a living-room function. A set of criteria was developed (see Appendix 1, 324-325) for coding such rooms as 'kitchen-living-rooms' (which was not a term used in the inventories themselves). Thirdly the few halls which appeared to be day-rooms rather than thoroughfares have been included. Rooms which were named as bed-rooms are not included here; the limited extent to which bed-rooms were used as sitting-rooms is discussed in Chapter 6.

## Incidence of room names

Table 3.1 shows the incidence of the names used. Coded terms are given in italics. Studies and libraries were similarly furnished, so they have been grouped together for further analysis.<sup>10</sup> Judging by their contents (see Table 3.3, 119-120) the kitchen-living-room and the house-place or house were very different from all the

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<sup>10</sup> Muthesius (1982), 45, suggests that studies were more common than libraries, but the reverse is the case in the present sample.

other rooms;<sup>11</sup> they are therefore discussed separately. Other terms appear so infrequently that they are not susceptible to analysis.

**Table 3.1 Day-rooms appearing in the inventory sample**  
**Total number of inventories=337. Total number of rooms=776**  
**Highlighted rooms are the basis of the aggregate analysis**

Named room	Number of such rooms	As % of all rooms	Number of inventories including such rooms	As % of all inventories (number=337)
<i>Kitchen-living-room</i>	188	24.2%	183	54.3%
Parlour	186	24.0%	153	45.4%
Drawing-room	91	11.7%	87	25.8%
Sitting-room	89	11.5%	83	24.6%
Dining-room	75	9.7%	73	21.7%
<i>Other day-room</i>	43	5.5%	32	9.5%
House	33	4.3%	32	9.5%
Library	23	3.0%	22	6.5%
Breakfast room	21	2.7%	21	6.2%
Study	9	1.2%	9	2.7%
Keeping-room	6	0.8%	6	1.8%
<i>Hall (as day-room)</i>	3	0.4%	3	0.9%
Morning-room	2	0.3%	2	0.6%
Conservatory	2	0.3%	2	0.6%
Living-room	2	0.3%	2	0.6%
Boudoir	1	0.1%	1	0.3%
Smoking-room	1	0.1%	1	0.3%
Billiard-room	1	0.1%	1	0.3%
<b>All rooms</b>	<b>776</b>	<b>100.0%</b>		

The most frequently used day-room names were, in order: parlour, drawing-room, sitting-room, dining-room, house, library, breakfast-room and study. Together with the coded kitchen-living-room, they form the basis for the aggregate investigation of day-rooms and their social location.<sup>12</sup>

Figure 3.1 shows that about 40 percent of inventories had two day-rooms; about a fifth of them had one and another fifth had three; a fifth had four or more.

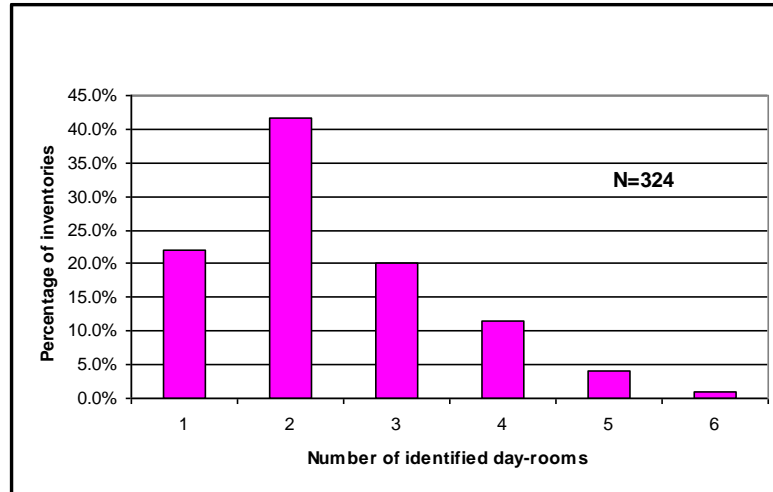
<sup>11</sup> I use the term 'house-place' to include 'house'; there appears to be no difference between the two.

<sup>12</sup> Some of the day-rooms which are found minimally in the present sample – keeping-rooms, living-rooms and halls – are barely discussed in either the contemporary prescriptive or historical literature. It is probable, judging by their contents, that they were all general kitchen-living-rooms, similar to the house or house-place that was a more common term. In Dickens, C. (1978, first published 1864-5) *Our Mutual Friend* New York: Bounty Books, 635, the 'keeping-room' is used about a lowly clerk's family living-room or front kitchen in the North London suburbs.

**Figure 3.1 *Distribution of numbers of day-rooms***

**N= 324 because no day-room could be identified for 13 of the 337 inventories in the sample**

**NB This sample includes kitchen-living-rooms and house-places**



## The social location of room names

Historical descriptions of nineteenth-century homes very often draw a social distinction between the possession of a drawing-room and possession of a parlour. Generally speaking, especially in books for a popular readership, it is asserted that the middle classes had a pair of day-rooms – a drawing-room and a dining-room – plus, if they could afford it, one or more subsidiary rooms while the working classes had one or more parlours. There are too many of these books to itemise but *Victorian interior style* is a good serious example; it explains that the drawing-room ‘... was the most important and prestigious room in the Victorian middle-class house’.<sup>13</sup> Judith Flanders makes the distinction in terms of size of house rather than class: ‘In smaller terraced houses, the front door opened on to a passageway which in turn led to two rooms .... The back room was used regularly by the family for eating and family leisure, women’s daily activities and household routine. The front room was kept for best .... Rarely did these rooms have names that rose above ‘front room’ and ‘back room’, although sometimes the front room was called the parlour. In larger houses the drawing room was usually located on the first floor ... while the two rooms on the ground floor were a morning room and a dining room.

<sup>13</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991), 38 and 35.

The staircase thus allowed the pageant of guests processing down, in carefully graded order of precedence, to dinner.<sup>14</sup>

For Young, as already outlined, class was predominantly a cultural matter although, of course, a certain financial capacity was necessary. She argues that the middle class of the early nineteenth century was constituted by its material culture and that 'The drawing room was crucial to the practice of gentility' and was 'the defining element of genteel house space.' 'A correctly furnished drawing room was visible proof of the family's refinement, a demonstration that they understood how to be polite'; 'Its function was leisure in the form of entertainment, implying the luxury of idle time ...'.<sup>15</sup> She sees the drawing-room and its particular contents as essential to the middle class (and the upper class). She acknowledges that the middle class was composed of layers of distinction but she stresses that it shared a basic culture.<sup>16</sup> The implication is that the possession of a drawing-room was necessary for middle-class identity and belonging and that not having such a room indicated an alternative status.

Stefan Muthesius makes a more precise link between the possession of particular rooms and the size of house, the income, occupation and class of the householder.<sup>17</sup> Writing about the middle and later century, he notes that households which had more than seven rooms (excluding kitchens) would have had three or more living-rooms, two of which were named the drawing-room and the dining-room. People who could afford this kind of accommodation ranged from lower paid professionals (higher clerks earning about £350 per annum) through upper professionals, such as successful lawyers and doctors, through to the rich (lawyers, merchants and upper civil servants) to the very wealthy (judges, knights, merchants, peers) with an annual income of £3,000-5,000. Although, he notes, there were very considerable differences in the way these people lived their daily lives, they all shared a need for a drawing-room for formal entertaining and leisure activities, a dining-room for eating on at least formal occasions, whether with the family or with guests, and a more informal room which might house eating, family activities and administrative work. Muthesius located parlours (or alternatively named rooms) in the household arrangements of those earning less than about £200, whether manual or non-manual workers. The lower middle class – that is

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<sup>14</sup> Flanders (2003), 137.

<sup>15</sup> Young (2003), 176-7.

<sup>16</sup> Young (2003), 14.

<sup>17</sup> Muthesius (1982), 38-48.

non-manual workers, such as lower paid clerks and shopkeepers, earning from about £100-£200 – could afford a house with five or six rooms, including bedrooms, and they had a parlour or parlours not a drawing-room. If there were two such rooms, one was for ordinary living and one for best. The accommodation of the better-off, skilled, working class (about £115 per annum) was similar.

Muthesius, then, sees a distinction in this respect not between the middle classes and the working classes but between the upper and middle middle classes on the one hand and the lower middle and the better off working classes on the other.

Many novels of the period allude to a social and economic difference similar to that delineated by Muthesius and in *Miss Marjoribanks*, by Margaret Oliphant, it is spelled out particularly clearly as part of the plot.<sup>18</sup> The Marjoribanks – a widowed doctor and his daughter – are part of ‘society’ in a country town which is highly socially segregated. Lucilla Marjoribanks determines to reform and rejuvenate ‘society’ by having ‘evenings’ and the first step in this plan is to refurbish her drawing-room, which she does in great style and at great expense to her father. The drawing-room and her ‘evenings’ are a triumph and everybody in Carlingford ‘society’ attends. The success of the ‘evenings’ is also due to the diversions Lucilla provides, which includes inviting the daughters of a local drawing master to sing and show their drawings. But these young women, educated though they were and proud of their artistic status, are invited for their entertainment value; Lucilla most definitely does not see them as her social equals. They live amongst the ‘profaner public’ on the ‘plebeian side’ of their street – and they have a parlour.

There is a general agreement, then, that there was a class difference relating to these rooms, although there is not general agreement about the exact positioning of that difference. It has been said that Victorians found the naming of these rooms a ‘social minefield’.<sup>19</sup> This is because it is an expression and a tool, if we follow Bourdieu’s *Distinction*, of naturalised power relations.<sup>20</sup> But it should be mentioned that not everyone agrees. Thad Logan understands the parlour as the prime location of family life and togetherness, of the leisure that was facilitated by middle-class incomes and middle-class working patterns, and of the display of consumer goods. She studies Victorian culture through an analysis of this room, seeing it as a central site of the domesticity, consumption and gendered practices

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<sup>18</sup> Oliphant, M. (1998, first published 1866) *Miss Marjoribanks* London: Penguin.

<sup>19</sup> Barrett, H. and J. Phillips (1993) *Suburban style: the British home, 1840-1960* London: Little, Brown and Company, 57.

<sup>20</sup> Chapter 1, 33-37; Bourdieu (1984).

that marked the construction of bourgeois life at this period.<sup>21</sup> Her investigation is, then, like many others, framed by the development of the nineteenth-century middle class. But hers is the only one of which I am aware that considers that differences of terminology had, and have, no practical, symbolic or analytical utility, arguing that ‘while there are distinctions that could be made between the terms *parlour*, *sitting room*, and *drawing room* ... they are not important for the purposes of this study’. And, in any case, she writes, ‘... the class distinction between the terms, in British nineteenth-century practice, was not in fact strongly marked.’<sup>22</sup> This is a brave statement, in view of the other work just noted and it suggests that room names are not in themselves very meaningful. The present study assumes the reverse, that room names are themselves ‘things’ which have meanings. This is readily tested: if statistically significant differences appear in the terms used in this inventory sample then the terms can be seen to be meaningful. So where *do* the fault lines lie in the present sample?

### **Drawing-rooms and dining-rooms**

In this sample drawing-rooms and dining-rooms were found predominantly in the large houses of people of higher status and wealth.

About a third of the 337 inventories included at least one or other of a drawing- or dining-room. Drawing-rooms were slightly more common than dining-rooms (see Table 3.1, 101). The two rooms were quite often paired, with almost one in five of the inventories having both. About 70 percent of the inventories with a drawing-room also had a dining-room and more than 80 percent of those with a dining-room had a drawing-room as well.

About a third of the 86 drawing-room owners were financially independent (meaning that their incomes derived from funds or land or houses). Almost another third were of high occupational status – merchants, manufacturers, engineers, accountants, lawyers, medical men and clergymen.<sup>23</sup> All of the seven inventories relating to clergymen had drawing- and/or dining-rooms. Although almost a fifth of the people who owned drawing-rooms or dining-rooms are not coded as being of higher status, most of these people were in the top wealth quartile.

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<sup>21</sup> Logan, T. (2001) *The Victorian parlour* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, xiii.

<sup>22</sup> Logan (2001), 12.

<sup>23</sup> All of these occupations score 77 or above on the HIS-CAM scale, as discussed in Chapter 2, 85-86. There were there 13 (15%) drawing-room owners for whom no occupational information is available.

**Table 3.2 Percentage of inventories including drawing- and/or dining-rooms, parlours and sitting-rooms by number of named day-rooms present Total 289 (from named-room, non-commercial sub-sample of 337, see Appendix 2)**  
**NB Kitchens and house-places are not included here**

Number of day rooms named: Parlour, drawing-room, dining- room, sitting-room breakfast- room, library or study, 'other' day-room.	Number of inventories	Inventories including drawing-room		Inventories including dining-room		Inventories including both drawing- and dining-room		Inventories including parlour		Inventories including sitting-room	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>4+</b>	16	15	93.8	14	87.5	14	87.5	3	18.8	3	18.8
<b>3</b>	45	35	77.8	30	66.7	28	62.2	14	31.1	6	13.3
<b>2</b>	99	30	30.3	26	26.3	19	19.2	62	62.6	42	42.4
<b>1</b>	129	7	5.4	3	2.3	-	-	74	57.4	32	24.8
<b>Total</b>	289	87	30.1	73	25.3	61	21.1	153	52.9	83	28.7

When these rooms appeared as a pair the association with higher status, wealth and large houses was even more marked: the drawing-room-dining-room couplet was almost universal in houses with four or five day-rooms (excluding kitchens and house-places) but dropped to about twenty percent in houses with only two day-rooms (Table 3.2).

But it should also be noted that a large minority – 45 percent – of the people coded as of higher status did *not* have a drawing-room and/or dining-room; in most (65 percent) of these cases there was a parlour. A similar situation applies with regard to the people in the topmost wealth quartile. In other words, while it was largely only people of wealth and higher status who had drawing- or dining-rooms, the possession of these rooms does not seem to have been necessary as a status marker.

### **Parlours**

'Parlour' was the single most commonly used term for day-rooms, appearing in 45 percent of the inventories. Parlours appear to have been alternatives rather than additional to drawing- and dining-rooms: only six percent (twenty) of the 337 inventories had both. Parlours were much more frequent in houses with only one or two day-rooms than in larger houses. They increased in frequency through the first three wealth quartiles but dropped off in the topmost. This suggests that they were something to be aimed at as funds became available – but only up to a point; they were less desirable to people with a lot of money. However, status did not make a significant difference. The percentage of parlour owners was not significantly higher amongst those coded as of lower status: 41 percent of the higher status people were parlour owners compared with 52 percent of lower status people. And parlours appeared throughout the occupational status scale, except at the topmost levels. However, farmers were a little more likely than non-farmers to have a parlour and all six of the blacksmiths had parlours. It can be said that although drawing-rooms and dining-rooms were only associated with the upper reaches of the sample, parlours were rather more widely spread. And although their incidence dropped off at the top of the socio-economic scales, they were nonetheless present instead of, rather than alongside, drawing- and dining-rooms, in about a quarter of the higher status inventories.



### **Sitting-rooms**

Sitting-rooms appear in their contents to be similar to parlours (Table 3.3, 119-120) but they are not much discussed in historical narratives and in the inventory sample they appear rather indeterminately placed. Proportionately more lower status people had such a room. But ownership of a sitting-room was not significantly associated with wealth quartile and owners covered the whole gamut of occupational stratification. Nor was there a clear-cut association with number of rooms in the house. There was a small increase in the incidence of sitting-rooms over time.

### **No drawing-room, dining-room, library, study, parlour or sitting-room**

Nineteen percent (63) of the 337 inventories had none of the rooms just discussed. They were significantly associated with lower status and with the lower wealth quartiles.

Thirteen of these inventories did not have any identifiable day-room at all. In the 50 cases where a day-room of sorts could be identified, a large majority (78 percent) had only one such room and this was most often a kitchen-living-room or house/place. Eighteen percent had two day-rooms and only four percent had three.

### **Kitchen-living-room or house-place**

Table 3.1 (page 101) shows that over half of the inventories had a kitchen-living-room and if kitchen-living-rooms and house/places are seen as similar (Table 3.3, 119-120) then 70 percent of the inventories include such a room. It is certainly the intention to bring these rooms into the present discussion (although, as is explained below, a different method is required).

### **The social location of room names: summary**

The combinations of rooms found in the sample varied enormously with only five combinations appearing in more than five percent of the whole group (Table Appendix 4.6, page 362). But if house-places and kitchen-living-rooms are considered to be similar and parlours and sitting-rooms likewise, then a kitchen-living-room plus parlour combination appears in 21 percent of the sample. Nonetheless this variety immediately departs from the orderly, if minefield-like, historical depictions which suggest that there were really two main options – either a drawing-room and a dining-room plus subsidiary rooms *or* a parlour or parlours. In reality, there was a more fluid use of terms than we might have expected and it

would not be possible to locate someone's class simply by the room names they used.

However, the present analysis has found that there *are* some statistically significant associations between different room names and people of different status or wealth, suggesting that these terms did have social meaning; they were not simply interchangeable alternatives. But the key difference is around drawing-rooms and dining-rooms rather than parlours. While parlours were most common in smaller houses and most uncommon amongst the wealthiest group, they appeared across a broader social range than just the lower middle and working classes proposed by Muthesius. Some writers have noted a middle-class use of 'parlour', pointing out that for people with large houses and a drawing-room, it meant 'a second sitting-room, for use by the family and close friends'.<sup>24</sup> There is some evidence of this usage in the present sample: in fourteen of the 51 higher status inventories with parlours, the parlour was in addition to a drawing-room and/or a dining-room. But, at the same time, this means that 37 higher status parlours were not subsidiary rooms. Logan is, then, to an extent correct: the term parlour is not a particularly strong status marker.

On the other hand, drawing-rooms and dining-rooms *are*. The present analysis serves to sharpen up the meaning of an unspecified 'middle-class' when it is used in discussion of the shape of the home. The findings regarding the ownership of these rooms support the fault line identified by Muthesius as running between the lower middle classes and the middle- or upper-middle class groups. It can be seen that the kind of drawing-room culture Young delineates as 'middle-class' applies only to the more elevated segments. But although having a drawing-room must have suggested that someone was of higher status it was not a necessary requirement.

However, it might have been the case, as asserted by Logan, that although the words did have some differentiated connotations, parlours and drawing-rooms were sufficiently similar in their functions, their contents and in the behaviours associated with them to be considered as one type of space. This is addressed later in the present chapter, in the investigation of the contents of these rooms.

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<sup>24</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991), 41.

## The contemporary advice literature

Before that, the way that these rooms were presented in contemporary advice literature is reviewed, both as background to considering their functions as seen in the inventory sample but also to come to some conclusions about the nature of these texts as historical evidence. As previously discussed (Chapter 2, 88-92), I have used a defined selection of texts for analysis.<sup>25</sup> They fall into two groups: firstly domestic manuals and architectural pattern books; secondly a small number of the advice books about decoration and furnishing which first appeared as a genre in the late 1860s and which continued through until the early twentieth century.

Books in the first group tend to make specific differentiations regarding the social, economic and cultural positioning of different day-rooms. *The gentleman's house*, for example, by Robert Kerr concerns itself only with large or very large houses; the least expensive, costing £1250 in London or £850-£1250 in the country, has thirteen family rooms (including passages and staircases) and thirteen rooms in the servants' department.<sup>26</sup> Kerr dealt with cultural as well as economic differentiation; he concerned himself with providing plans for 'refined persons', whatever size of house they could afford (above a minimum limit). For him a drawing-room and a dining-room (and servants' quarters and, if possible, additional day-rooms) were not just desirable, they were necessary to a gentlemanly way of life.<sup>27</sup> He remarked that the planning of cottages, farm-houses or the houses of tradesmen followed different rules, suggesting that such people had a fundamentally different domestic culture.<sup>28</sup> All of the plans in his book, have at the very least a drawing-room and a dining-room. As the cost of the house rises, so do the number of additional day-rooms of an increasingly specialised sort. The inventory sample does include a few of these very specialised day-rooms – boudoirs, smoking-rooms and billiard-rooms – but they each appear in less than five percent of the inventories and are almost always (in thirteen out of fourteen cases) found alongside drawing-rooms or dining-rooms, in inventories belonging to the wealthiest quartile of decedents. Their incidence is so small that they are not used for further aggregate analysis. Conservatories also appear very infrequently in

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 3 for an annotated list.

<sup>26</sup> Kerr (1871), 394.

<sup>27</sup> Kerr (1871), 63.

<sup>28</sup> Kerr (1871), 64.

the inventories although it is possible that they were sometimes not recorded because they did not contain movable goods with a resale value. Morning-rooms, breakfast-rooms, studies and libraries are a little more common, any one of them occurring in thirteen percent of the 337 inventories. Studies and libraries almost always only appear in association with a drawing- or dining-room.

In the many plans shown in J.C. Loudon's enormous *Cottage, farm, and villa architecture and furniture*, drawing- and dining-rooms, often with an ancillary room, appear only in the plans for 'villas'; and none of Loudon's English villas have a parlour of any sort.<sup>29</sup> Walsh's *Manual of domestic economy* sets budgets according to annual spending; in the 1879 edition families with £300 a year and upwards have a drawing-room and a dining-room but families on £150 a year do not.<sup>30</sup> Drawing-rooms, then, are presented in these books as the recourse of the well-to-do.

There is rather more complexity, however, regarding parlours. In Loudon's encyclopaedia, cottages (if they have anything more than a kitchen-living-room) have a parlour or a living-room or a sitting-room (the terminology is fluid) and prosperous farmers have parlours not drawing-rooms. In the inventory sample there is a small but significant association between larger farmers and the possession of a parlour; and there is slightly stronger negative association between farmers and drawing-rooms or dining-rooms. In Walsh's 1879 *Manual* the £150-a-year household has a single parlour. For Kerr, parlours are informal, multi-purpose family rooms, apparently with something of an eating-room about them. For him the term 'sitting-room' was more vulgar than 'parlour' although in the inventory sample sitting-rooms are found at all status and wealth levels.<sup>31</sup> Brooks's 1860 design for a semi-detached house shows bell pulls for servants, a dressing room and three reception rooms but calls those rooms 'breakfast-room', 'parlour' and 'dining-room' or 'front parlour'.<sup>32</sup>

While these discriminations cannot be precisely aligned with the empirical findings, there is sufficient similarity to suggest that the recommendations in this group of manuals do have a useful relationship to actual practice. However, specific

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<sup>29</sup> Loudon, J.C. (c.1865, new edition, edited by Mrs. Loudon. First edition 1833) *Cottage, farm, and villa architecture and furniture* London: Frederick Warne and Co. Loudon was a Scot and his encyclopaedia includes a number of designs for Scottish houses of various kinds; the Scottish houses feature different room names than the English.

<sup>30</sup> Walsh, J.H. (1879) *A manual of domestic economy suited to families spending from £150 to £1500 a year* London: George Routledge and Sons.

<sup>31</sup> Kerr (1871), 100.

<sup>32</sup> Brooks, Samuel H. (1860) *Rudimentary treatise on the erection of dwelling-houses; or the builder's comprehensive director, etc.* London: John Weale.

differences according to income or house size are not apparent in the later group of decorating and furnishing texts.<sup>33</sup> These books are less concerned with management and budgets and present socially and financially undifferentiated visions of the arrangement of the house that includes, as a matter of course, a drawing-room, a dining-room and generally a third subsidiary day-room. They (and all the other well-known books of the late 1860s, 1870s and early 1880s) do not – unlike the inventory sample – use the term parlour. These books offer detailed suggestions about furnishing and decoration as well as very forceful supporting arguments, framed in terms of morality, aesthetics and taste. Some of the books went into multiple editions suggesting an extensive readership.<sup>34</sup> They are therefore very rich texts and have been a source for much writing about the Victorian interior. But there has always been a more or less explicit anxiety about the extent to which they represented actual practice.<sup>35</sup> Judith Neiswander notes that, although addressing people of ‘moderate means’, their advice would have required substantial resources to put into practice. She concludes that they were actually intended for only the very wealthy middle classes.<sup>36</sup> Emma Ferry has an alternative argument. She notes that the four volumes of *The art at home* series dealing with furnishing and decoration were intended to be priced at a 1/- a copy, which she equates to £3 in today’s money, and which would have been affordable by the lower middle classes.<sup>37</sup> (When they came out, they actually cost 2/6d each.<sup>38</sup>) Ferry suggests that they were indeed written for the lower middle classes but the writers were upper-middle-class people who were presenting their own taste as models. Both Neiswander and Ferry in effect suggest that these books represent upper-middle-class practices, possibly somewhat modulated for the less well off.

However, some of the suggestions need not have been costly – for example, calling a parlour a drawing-room – and if such books had been effective as training manuals we might see an increase in the prevalence of ‘drawing-rooms’ in the very late part of the inventory series and a matching decrease in ‘parlours’.

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<sup>33</sup> See Neiswander (2008), 11-22, for a discussion of this change.

<sup>34</sup> Attar (1987); Ferry (2007); McClaugherty (1983).

<sup>35</sup> For example, Hoskins, L. (2000) ‘The Aesthetic interior’ in Gere, C. *The house beautiful: Oscar Wilde and the aesthetic interior* London: Lund Humphries, 109-114, and Kinchin (1996) both make this explicit. The whole matter is discussed critically by Lees-Maffei (2003).

<sup>36</sup> Neiswander (2008), 22.

<sup>37</sup> Ferry (2007), 151.

<sup>38</sup> The advertisements at the back of Barker, Lady (1878) *The bed room and boudoir* London: Macmillan & Co, give the prices for all four of these volumes. The copy I used (<http://www.archive.org/details/bedroomboudoir00barkuoft>, accessed 30.6.2010) was part of the printing of the fifth thousand.

There are some glimpses in other contemporary texts that parlours were old-fashioned. *The gentleman's house* calls 'parlour' a 'good old English word'.<sup>39</sup> George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, published in 1860, is set in Lincolnshire, in a rural area in close contact with a major trading town on the coast, in the 1830s and early 1840s.<sup>40</sup> A major theme is the disappearance of rooted traditional culture in the face of modern sophistication. The traditional culture is upheld by three sisters, who are married to prosperous husbands (though one falls on hard times); they encompass farming, milling and business in both town and country. For these women the traditions are manifested and maintained through material possessions (linen, china, preserves, wine and so on). All three have houses with parlours. But a fourth sister, married to a successful employee and subsequently partner in a trading firm, turned away from the home-produced goods and traditional material practices of her family; she bought new and fashionable goods, ready made. She had a new house with a drawing-room. The other two drawing-rooms in the book belong to parvenus – a clergyman struggling for economic and career success and the wealthy owner of the largest trading company in the town. The parlours and the drawing-rooms are emblematic of different sets of values – old ways and new ways. But the inventory sample does not show an increase in the use of 'drawing-room' as a term, although there is a slight fall in the incidence of 'parlours'. This is not conclusive evidence – perhaps a change came later, especially as the inventories, representing homes that had been set up some years previously, probably do not reflect the latest ideas. Jane Hamlett, surveying 200 middle-class inventories for the period 1850-1910, found that 70 percent of her sample had a drawing-room and a dining-room although she notes that 'smaller homes, on the fringes of the lower middle classes, belonging to farmers and shopkeepers, were less likely to label their two main reception rooms in this way, and tended to feature sitting rooms or parlours.' But she does also note that with regard to the third room, which was a common feature of these advice books, 'the size of many houses meant that the third sitting room was rarer than advice manuals suggest.'<sup>41</sup>

This all goes to suggest that these later advice texts cannot be relied on as actually reflecting broad middle-class practice, certainly not at the level of the lower

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<sup>39</sup> Kerr (1871), 100.

<sup>40</sup> Eliot, G. (1985, first published in 1860) *The Mill on the Floss* London: Penguin Classics.

<sup>41</sup> Hamlett (2009b). Hamlett's sample is substantially composed of inventories published as advertisements and catalogues for sales and so would favour homes with more and higher value goods: personal communication.

middle classes at whom they were apparently aimed. Ferry has cogently demonstrated how the prescriptions of the *Art at home* series were constrained by the needs of the publishing industry.<sup>42</sup> This must apply to some extent to all of these texts – manuals and decorating advice alike – which can be seen as representing the views of the author and the publisher. They therefore represent somebody's ideas; they are a discourse for study.<sup>43</sup> But while the manuals and pattern books are specific and suggest differentiations which show a similar pattern of socio-economic association to the sample, it is not tenable to suggest that the later decorating advice reflects middle-class practice, except perhaps for a narrow segment of the group.

## The geography of room names

The findings so far have served to refine existing narratives and to calibrate the contemporary literature with reference to social position. But the analysis reveals a further significant factor which hardly appears in either of these kinds of texts. Geographical location cuts across patterns associated with wealth and status.<sup>44</sup>

Londoners, and, to a lesser extent, people in the South East significantly more often had drawing- and dining-rooms than their equivalents in other parts of the country.<sup>45</sup> Here, William Rubinstein's arguments and hypothesis are useful. He studied income tax records to demonstrate that, in the mid nineteenth century, there were, absolutely and proportionally, more wealthy and middle-class people in London than in other cities.<sup>46</sup> He argues that early in the century almost half of income-taxable incomes were generated in London and the Home Counties; this fell to about a third in 1851-2 but rose again thereafter.<sup>47</sup> In his analysis, the middle class is composed of people who met two criteria: firstly they paid income tax, meaning that they had an income of more than £150 (1842-1853 and 1876 onwards) or £100 (1854-1875); secondly the tax was paid on income that was derived from businesses or professions or from posts in government and public

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<sup>42</sup> Ferry (2007).

<sup>43</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 2; Lees-Maffei (2003), 6.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 2, 82-83, for a discussion of the regional groupings used in this project.

<sup>45</sup> 46.6% of London inventories contained a drawing- and/or dining-room compared with 26.2% in those of the rest of the country. Chi-square=9.563, df=1, n=337, p=<.01.

<sup>46</sup> Rubinstein (1988).

<sup>47</sup> Rubinstein, W.D. (2000) 'The role of London in Britain's wealth structure' in Stobart, J and A. Owens, eds. *Urban fortunes: property and inheritance in the town, 1700-1900* Aldershot: Ashgate, 131-148, 138.

corporations. Rubinstein's middle class therefore includes people who would be considered by Crossick, Muthesius and others to be occupationally lower-middle-class – shopkeepers and lower clerks – and perhaps also some skilled manual workers.<sup>48</sup> Rubinstein's criteria are not transposable to the present study which does not have access to data about income; the coding of 'higher status' used here starts at a higher occupational level and is therefore more exclusive. However, this difference aside, the proportion of all the deceased classified as 'higher status' is somewhat higher in London than in any other region and London has more very wealthy people and fewer of the least wealthy than the rest of the country.<sup>49</sup>

Rubinstein makes a further point, however, suggesting that there were two middle-class cultures: commercial (London) and manufacturing (industrial cities).<sup>50</sup> He proposes that the middle class in London was more aligned with 'old money' and the élite. The distinctive nature of London would account for the very high proportion (around 77 percent) of well-to-do Londoners in the present sample having the drawing-rooms and/or dining-rooms described by Leonore Davidoff as essential to élite social life and the relatively lower proportion (around 52 percent) outside London.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, there were relatively higher rates of drawing-room ownership in London (and, to a lesser extent the South East and East) among even the less wealthy (bottom three quartiles), which suggests that London was more broadly suffused by élite-related middle-class culture than the rest of the country.

Generally speaking, however, parlour ownership was similar in London to the rest of the country, at around 45%. But there was one region which was notably different. In the present sub-sample, for Wales and the West Midlands, people at all wealth and status levels had a preference for parlours. And of the fifteen people classified as of higher status, only four had a drawing-room while ten had a parlour. On this reading, the well-to-do parlour owners of the West Midlands and Wales were middle-class economically and occupationally but culturally different.

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<sup>48</sup> See Chapter 1, 29-30.

<sup>49</sup> For both of these differences, the significance is at the lowest level. In London 40.3% of the whole sample of deceased is coded as 'higher-status' compared with 23.9% in the rest of the country (chi-square=7.208, df=2, n=491, p<.05); the overall proportion for the whole sample is 30.1%. 33.8% of London's population falls into the top wealth quartile compared with 23.2% in the rest of the country; and only 13% in London fall into the bottom category compared with 27.3% elsewhere (chi-square=8.440, df=3, n=491, p<.05).

<sup>50</sup> Rubinstein (1977b), 619-621.

<sup>51</sup> Davidoff (1973), 43-47. 78.3% of London's wealth-quartile-4 inventories and 76.9% of its higher-status inventories included a drawing/dining-room; the respective percentages outside London were 54.9% and 49%. These are significant differences but only at the level of p<.05.



But although London was in some respects different, it is often taken as the pattern for normal. Many of the contemporary texts which this project and other scholars have used in their discussions of the Victorian home emanated from London. London was the centre of the publishing trade and the domestic and architectural manuals and the furnishing advice books were all published there, written mostly by London-based authors, recommending London goods and referring to London prices. This London-based literature dominates our view of nineteenth-century homes, blinding us to the geographical differences that did exist. This is a long-reaching example of the cultural dominance of London which Peter Borsay saw as operating in the early nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup> The distinctiveness of London in terms of domestic consumption is demonstrated further in Chapters 4 and 6, but its innovation and ascendance should not be allowed to obliterate extra-London practices. Rosemary Sweet has found that, as other nineteenth-century towns grew in size and wealth, there was an increase in local civic pride which can be read as provincial resistance to London's pre-eminence.<sup>53</sup> And while Rubinstein argues that London's commercial-based culture continued dominant throughout the century, he posits an alternative, though less powerful, manufacturing-based middle-class culture, located in the industrial cities of the North and Midlands. This is perhaps what is seen here in the preference of the West Midlands for parlours not drawing-rooms.

Another geographical difference appears in the incidence of the 'house' or 'house-place'. This term indicates a kitchen-living-room and its use is significantly associated, in the present sample, with people of lower wealth and lower status. Elizabeth Gaskell, who paid close attention to local language, depicts the industrial working class of Manchester in the 1830s and 1840s as using this term.<sup>54</sup> There are not many house-places in the present sample – only 32 of the 337 inventories include one – but there is a marked clustering in the central Pennines. There are many more than expected in the 'North and Yorkshire'<sup>55</sup> and in the 'North West and North Midlands'.<sup>56</sup> The term is known from inventories of the sixteenth and

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<sup>52</sup> Borsay (2001).

<sup>53</sup> Sweet (1999), 257-264.

<sup>54</sup> Gaskell, E. (2006, first published 1848, this edition based on the revised edition of 1854) *Mary Barton* Oxford: Oxford University Press. See Uglow, J. (1993) *Elizabeth Gaskell* London: Faber and Faber, 72.

<sup>55</sup> Chi-square=10.215, df=1, n=337, p=<.01. The term occurs in 21% of the 58 inventories for this region.

<sup>56</sup> Chi-square=20.2, df=1, n=337, p=<.001. It appears in 26% of the 54 inventories.

seventeenth centuries for a similar region.<sup>57</sup> There were hardly any in the other regions, with none at all in London and the East and South East. It has been suggested that this was a term that was going out of use and that it was 'old-fashioned'.<sup>58</sup> The inventory sample does not demonstrate a significant decline in incidence over time nor were the people with a house-place, on average, particularly old at death. But, even if it was on its way out, it was a term still actively in use and indicative of geographical differences.

The evidence relating to room names, then, suggests that it is important not to assume that there was a national culture that blotted out geographical differences or that class was always an overriding consideration.

## Gender and room names

Given the importance of gender in historical discussions of the nineteenth-century home, we might expect to find statistical evidence for differences in the rooms that belonged to men and to women. Margaret Ponsonby has found that in the inventories for six middle-class single women in Chichester in the 1840s, five of them did not have a named dining-room. She finds that these women were equipped to give tea and card parties rather than formal dinners and she suggests that this was a form of entertaining preferable for single women.<sup>59</sup> This is a well-argued and convincing interpretation. However, neither this particular distinction nor anything similar appears in the present aggregate analysis, which shows no significant association between the ownership of a dining-room (or any other room) and gender and/or marital status. As previously discussed (Chapter 1, 40-43) it has been argued that inventories in aggregate are not ideal for showing up gender differences, since those differences are more to do with attitudes than with the fact of ownership. Nevertheless, this study remains alert to the issue, in various topics and in different approaches, leading finally (page 288) to an assessment of the utility of inventory studies in the study of gender and domestic culture.

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<sup>57</sup> Barley (1963), 491-492.

<sup>58</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 13, 105 and 136.

<sup>59</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 142-148. However, there is diary evidence to show, that a little later, single middle-class women did invite people – men – to dinner: Keeble (2007), 83.

## Room use and differentiation

The findings thus far suggest that there were differences in the connotations of at least some of the room names discussed. The rest of this chapter develops this by comparing the functions of different types of rooms. The aim here is to begin considering the differentiation of space: What were the functional differences between day-rooms? How were the functions and the rooms combined? What considerations had an effect on how they were combined? And were specialisation and segregation as visible as expected? Two methods are used: firstly, a broad comparison between named rooms through an aggregate survey of their contents; secondly, a close focus on particular examples in order to understand the relative use of different day-rooms within the same residence, with particular reference to parlours and kitchen-living-rooms.

The contents of all of the main named day-rooms were coded into basic types.<sup>60</sup> Table 3.3, which provides the building blocks of the first part of the discussion, shows what percentage of each named day-room contained at least one of the coded items, thereby providing an outline comparison between the contents of different named day-rooms and giving a broad indication of their functions. The table has been coloured to highlight differences but the cut points used are arbitrary and the table is indicative only. The table does not show the number of such items in any one room nor does it give any further description of the items. It can show only the contents that were listed – there would undoubtedly have been other items in the rooms. The numbers of house-places, libraries/studies and breakfast-rooms are small and generalisations about these rooms are on less firm ground.

### Aggregate analysis

#### All rooms

All of these day-rooms were equipped with tables and chairs and most of them contained fire goods. The tables range from small stands to large dining- or centre tables; the chairs indicated in this category are upright seats with a back and sometimes with arms but they do not include easy or rocking chairs or stools or

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<sup>60</sup> The coding of items is outlined in Appendix 1, 326-328. The necessarily somewhat arbitrary nature of coding is compensated for in the investigations of individual rooms later in the chapter.

**Table 3.3 Percentage of named day-rooms containing particular items of furniture and equipment<sup>61</sup>**  
**Total sample is 715 rooms in 337 named-room non-commercial inventories**

	% of drawing-rooms containing item. Total 91	% of dining-rooms containing item. Total 75	% of breakfast-rooms containing item. Total 21	% of parlours containing item. Total 186	% of sitting-rooms containing item. Total 89	% of libraries/studies containing item. Total 32	% of houseplaces containing item. Total 33	% of kitchen-living-rooms containing item. Total 188
Table	97	95	90	94	96	84	94	98
Chair	92	91	90	93	94	81	91	97
FireGoods	96	92	81	88	89	66	88	88
Carpet	89	89	86	64	67	53	21	22
Rug	75	75	71	60	60	47	9	15
WindowCovering	85	89	81	47	46	66	15	16
Mirror	73	48	62	52	55	31	36	23
Ornament	79	64	62	61	54	44	18	11
SofaCouchSettee	80	44	48	45	58	25	36	15
Picture	58	68	67	58	48	66	33	15
EasyChair	57	39	29	23	22	22	0	3
ReadingWriting	54	59	71	44	55	84	45	24
Lighting	46	49	57	25	25	16	67	60
TableCover	43	44	57	35	43	44	12	3
Cheffonier	36	16	33	8	21	6	0	0
Ottoman	26	5	5	2	2	6	0	0
Music	26	20	10	13	17	6	6	0
EatingDrinking	23	52	57	56	48	22	79	86
FloorCovering	24	28	33	26	29	28	15	32

<sup>61</sup> See Appendix 1, pages 326-328 for coding of items.

	% of drawing-rooms containing item. Total 91	% of dining-rooms containing item. Total 75	% of breakfast-rooms containing item. Total 21	% of parlours containing item. Total 186	% of sitting-rooms containing item. Total 89	% of libraries/studies containing item. Total 32	% of houseplaces containing item. Total 33	% of kitchen-living-rooms containing item. Total 188
Clock	25	31	19	23	37	25	76	63
Sideboard	7	61	29	10	3	0	3	2
WagonBuffetDumbWaiter	4	27	10	3	3	6	9	3
Cupboard	0	4	14	12	10	13	48	25
Cooking	2	0	5	4	13	3	64	79
Dresser	0	1	0	1	2	6	30	27
Laundry	0	0	0	0	4	6	48	39
Barometer	0	9	0	12	15	9	24	8
Sewing	24	20	19	10	16	3	3	1
ChestDrawers	2	1	10	9	3	13	18	10
WhatNot	20	12	5	3	3	13	0	0
Games	14	8	5	4	3	13	0	1
Cabinet	12	4	10	0	0	6	0	0
VisitingCard	10	3	5	0	0	3	0	0
ServantsBell	10	11	19	5	3	3	0	2
WorkingItem	1	0	0	3	3	6	3	7
Science	5	4	10	1	2	19	0	0
Animal	2	1	5	0	4	6	3	3

Colour code	0-24% of rooms	25-50% of rooms	51-69% of rooms	70-100% of rooms
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Table 3.3 continued

sofas and so on. There are clearly enormous potential differences within these categories but something to sit on and something to put things down on are the basic elements of all day-rooms and, as will be seen, bed-rooms (Chapter 6). Fire goods, as coded here, range from fenders, bellows and fire irons to fire screens – anything that indicates the possible presence of a lit fire. Although some fire goods, such as fenders and fire irons, probably remained in place others, such as coal chutes and bellows, could be easily moved from room to room and it was not necessary to have one for each room; there were doubtless more potential fires than the fire goods would suggest. The fires in the house-places and kitchen-living-rooms were for cooking as well as warmth since a high proportion of these rooms have cooking equipment but in the other rooms cooking equipment was very uncommon.

### **Drawing- and dining-rooms**

Although drawing-rooms are found in the sample to be more frequent than expected in London, there was hardly any regional difference in their contents. A drawing-room was a drawing-room wherever it was.

The inventories provide good evidence that drawing- and dining-rooms were actually equipped to function as described in contemporary texts and historical representations. As already seen, these rooms belonged to the more elevated middle classes and Banham *et al.* note that ‘having a separate dining-room for social eating was an important distinction for this social group’.<sup>62</sup> Young, too, writes that having a separate room for dining was ‘the threshold of middle class distinction’ although ‘where cultural capital exceeded financial resources, it was a compromise in the face of necessity to eat in the parlour ...’<sup>63</sup> If it was important to separate dining from drawing-room activities (conversation, reading, sewing, music, and so on, which for the sake of brevity I call ‘sitting’), it was even more essential to separate dining from food preparation; this, notes Young, had occurred by the mid eighteenth century for the middling sort and by the turn of the nineteenth century it was a baseline for gentility.<sup>64</sup> For this group, then, it is understood that it was important to separate eating from sitting and cooking from both.

In the present sample, both drawing- and dining-rooms were similarly well furnished with carpets, rugs, window coverings and fire goods but, as expected, the

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<sup>62</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991), 35.

<sup>63</sup> Young (2003), 175 and 180.

<sup>64</sup> Young (2003), 180.

formal area for 'sitting' leisure and sociability was separated from the space for main meals. Only five percent of drawing-rooms included a dining-table (so named) compared with 64 percent of dining-rooms. Very few drawing-rooms included a sideboard or other piece of furniture for serving food. More dining-rooms than drawing-rooms included eating and drinking equipment; and on closer inspection the equipment in drawing-rooms was for drinking rather than eating.<sup>65</sup> Dining-rooms were indeed equipped for eating and drawing-rooms for 'sitting'. However, it should be noted that drawing-rooms were more specialised than dining-rooms: the former only rarely included equipment for dining whereas some dining-rooms included 'sitting' equipment such as musical instruments, sewing goods and sofas. This supports Robert Kerr's observation that in 'smaller houses, and indeed in many of considerable size, the Dining-room is used as a family sitting-room ...'<sup>66</sup> The presence of a sofa, couch or settee suggests this usage; a very large proportion (80 percent) of drawing-rooms contained at least one such item but while the figure was much smaller for dining-rooms it was nonetheless 44 percent – a large minority.

Sofas facilitated the grouping and regrouping of polite conversation and sociability. This was not their only function; there are indications that they were considered useful for people who were unwell.<sup>67</sup> But, as seen in more or less any nineteenth-century domestic novel, they were especially associated with women. A particularly rich and clearly differentiated example occurs in *Our Mutual Friend* in a passage in which the sofa, the drawing-room and feminine fashionability are drawn together in contrast with the masculine comfort of a space that makes reference to both dining-room and public house.<sup>68</sup> Noddy Boffin is a barely literate but good-hearted dustman, who came into an unexpected and substantial inheritance. Charles Dickens gives a detailed picture of the Boffins's new living-room. I am not taking this picture as a straightforward description of typical practice – one would never do that with Dickens – but it does provide a wonderfully clear set of meanings and differences.

It was the queerest of rooms, fitted and furnished more like a luxurious amateur tap-room than anything else within the ken of Silas Wegg. There were two wooden settles by the fire, one on

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<sup>65</sup> However, inventories which had a dining- or drawing-room were also likely (67 out of 100 cases) to have plate, china and glass recorded as a separate category and not given as located in a particular room, making it hard to assess where such equipment was kept or used.

<sup>66</sup> Kerr (1871), 99.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, *How to furnish a house and make it a home* (c1855), 39-43 and 73.

<sup>68</sup> Dickens (1978), 57-58.

either side of it, with a corresponding table before each. On one of these tables ... certain squat case-bottles of inviting appearance seemed to stand on tiptoe to exchange glances with Mr Wegg over a front row of tumblers and a basin of white sugar. On the hob, a kettle steamed; on the hearth, a cat reposed. Facing the fire between the settles, a sofa, a footstool, and a little table, formed a centrepiece devoted to Mrs Boffin. They were garish in taste and colour, but were expensive articles of drawing-room furniture that had a very odd look beside the settles and the flaring gaslight pendent from the ceiling. There was a flowery carpet on the floor; but, instead of reaching to the fireside, its glowing vegetation stopped short at Mrs Boffin's footstool, and gave place to a region of sand and sawdust. Mr Wegg also noticed, with admiring eyes, that, while the flowery land displayed such hollow ornamentation as stuffed birds and waxen fruits under glass-shades, there were, in the territory where vegetation ceased, compensatory shelves on which the best part of a large pie and likewise of a cold joint were plainly discernible among other solids.

Dickens has Mr. Boffin articulate the reasons and meanings of this arrangement:

'These arrangements is made by mutual consent between Mrs Boffin and me. Mrs Boffin, as I've mentioned, is a highflyer at Fashion; at present I'm not. I don't go higher than comfort, and comfort of the sort that I'm equal to the enjoyment of. Well then. Where would be the good of Mrs Boffin and me quarrelling over it? We never did quarrel, before we come into Boffin's Bower as a property; why quarrel when we HAVE come into Boffin's Bower as a property? So Mrs Boffin, she keeps up her part of the room, in her way; I keep up my part of the room in mine. In consequence of which we have at once, Sociability (I should go melancholy mad without Mrs Boffin), Fashion, and Comfort. If I get by degrees to be a higher-flyer at Fashion, then Mrs Boffin will by degrees come for'arder. If Mrs Boffin should ever be less of a dab at Fashion than she is at the present time, then Mrs Boffin's carpet would go back'arder.'<sup>69</sup>

Mr. Boffin's part of the room has connotations of a dining-room but, with its gas light, sand and sawdust on the floor and wooden settles, it is more like the tap room of a tavern.<sup>70</sup> It is his very heaven of comfort – not the upholstered comfort which some commentators have seen as epitomising the Victorian interior but the comfort of warmth and plentiful food and drink.<sup>71</sup> Mrs. Boffin's area, in contrast, is driven by fashion (as understood by herself and Mr. Boffin) which requires that she has a drawing-room. Her space is marked out by the flowery carpet and there are key

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<sup>69</sup> Dickens (1978), 58.

<sup>70</sup> Girouard, M. (1975) *Victorian pubs* London: Studio Vista, 27-32.

<sup>71</sup> Comfort is a concept which warrants further exploration than it has yet received; see Crowley (2000); Gloag, J. (1961) *Victorian Comfort. A social history of design, 1830-1900*. London: Adam and Charles Black; Grier (1988). Chapter 6, 268-271 includes some further discussion.



items of furnishing that make it a drawing-room. The central element is the sofa, containing Mrs. Boffin herself, flanked by a footstool and a little table; also present as part of this 'paraphrase' of a drawing-room are stuffed birds and waxen fruits under glass-shades.<sup>72</sup> Dickens, as narrator, mocks Mrs. Boffin's side of the room a little – the sofa, footstool and table were 'garish in taste and colour' – but her otherwise sterling qualities make this an unsophisticated feminine foible rather than a sin.

Contemporary domestic advice literature similarly presented these two rooms as symbolically and practically gendered. Juliet Kinchin has analysed many of these texts to show that the drawing-room was the female domain. It was where the women of the family spent much of their time and where hosting was predominantly female. Kinchin identifies the terms used to describe the ambience and contents of drawing-rooms (and their adjuncts such as boudoirs) right through the century: they included 'elegant', 'glittering', 'gay', 'cheerful', 'light' and 'delicate'. The drawing-room could be full of ornaments, textiles and light-looking furniture. The dining-room by contrast was serious and dignified, with darker colours and heavy or massive and durable furniture, with few ornaments beyond the display on the sideboard.<sup>73</sup> As Kinchin points out, her analysis is based entirely on texts and some recent writers have debated the extent and nature of this gendering of space in everyday practice.<sup>74</sup>

Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair aim to contest a simplistic view of the home as divided into masculine/feminine and public/private spaces.<sup>75</sup> Their reading of middle-class inventories from Glasgow and Edinburgh found little difference between dining- and drawing-rooms; they were both equally cluttered and employed a similar range of ornaments, paintings and colours. They concluded that 'there was no apparent gendering of domestic space in the home, either in the physical sense of carefully delineated areas designated "feminine" or "masculine" or even in the metaphorical sense of particular domestic spaces being associated with either gender.'<sup>76</sup> However, Hamlett finds, in her analysis of 200 inventories for

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<sup>72</sup> Grier (1988), 17 uses the notion of the 'paraphrase' to indicate the use of items which are employed to suggest the nature of a space although it is not fully furnished as such.

<sup>73</sup> Kinchin (1996).

<sup>74</sup> Hamlett (2009), 576.

<sup>75</sup> Gordon, E. and G. Nair (2003) *Public lives: women, family and society in Victorian Britain* Yale University Press: New Haven & London. The kind of reading they are contesting can be seen in Walker (2002).

<sup>76</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 125.

1850-1910, that drawing-rooms and dining-rooms *were* often furnished differently.<sup>77</sup> And it can be clearly seen from Tables 3.3 (page 119-120) and 3.4 in the present analysis that there are some differences in equipment and finishes between the two rooms that can readily be interpreted as gendered and that do not relate only to the practicalities of dining as opposed to sitting. The drawing-rooms in the present sample feature lustres and mirrors – light and sparkle – rosewood, damask and Brussels carpets. Rosewood was actually dark in colour but it was exotic and shiny; it was a drawing-room wood and occurred less often in dining-rooms which, at this period were predominantly furnished with mahogany. Damask was often a shiny fabric and Brussels carpets were highly patterned. The horse-hair and leather of the dining-room were less colourful and more ‘masculine’ as well as more practical.

These drawing-rooms contain more ornaments although pictures (considered a more serious form of decorative art) predominate slightly in the dining-rooms. A small study of the wallpapers installed by one decorating firm in elite London homes in the 1860s indicates that drawing-rooms were papered in pale colours and floral or textile patterns while dining-rooms were either painted or papered with more formal geometric patterns, often in darker colours.<sup>78</sup> The drawing-rooms in the present study do appear to match the advice literature and usefully put flesh on the bones of our understanding of what actually constituted the feminine in terms of decoration.<sup>79</sup>

Gordon and Nair find, through reading diaries, that there was mixed sex use of the two rooms.<sup>80</sup> And Hamlett also finds, from her inventory study, that the contents of both rooms suggest mixed or family usage – for example sewing machines in dining-rooms: ‘gendered segregation simply does not seem to have been a priority in many homes.’<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hamlett (2009), 583.

<sup>78</sup> Hoskins, L. (2006) ‘Making for home: a social, cultural and affective geography of the later 19<sup>th</sup>-century elite London house’ MSc dissertation, Queen Mary, University of London.

<sup>79</sup> The difference between the findings in the present study and those of Gordon and Nair might be variously accounted for. The present sample represents a slightly earlier period (1840-1880 rather than 1851-1891); perhaps such distinctions were more marked in the earlier period, an impression also given in the wallpaper orders just mentioned. Or perhaps practice in Scotland was different; Nenadic (1994) shows that for the middling-ranks in Edinburgh and Glasgow at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century the dining-room was often a multi-purpose formal entertaining room. On the other hand Kinchin (1996) shows that at the beginning of the twentieth century these distinctions were in place in the Scottish architectural schemes of Mackintosh.

<sup>80</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 124-7.

<sup>81</sup> Hamlett (2009), 583.

**Table 3.4 Percentage of day-rooms containing particular materials**  
**Total sample of 715 day-rooms in 337 named-room non-commercial inventories**

	% of drawing-rooms containing item. Total 91	% of breakfast-rooms containing item. Total 21	% of dining-rooms containing item. Total 75	% of libraries/studies containing item. Total 32	% of parlours containing item. Total 186	% of sitting-rooms containing item. Total 89	% of houseplaces containing item. Total 33	% of kitchen-living-rooms containing item. Total 188
Mahogany	59	76	80	69	65	57	24	31
Gilt	47	38	43	25	19	16	0	1
Brussels carpet	54	29	36	28	11	12	0	3
Rosewood	54	33	24	19	10	9	3	0
Damask	34	19	27	22	6	8	0	1
Lustres	22	5	7	3	5	4	0	0
Horsehair	15	14	25	13	19	16	0	3
Leather	8	14	28	10	8	9	0	1
Oak	8	5	11	31	9	22	30	21

<b>Colour code</b>	65%+ of rooms	46-64% of rooms	31-45% of rooms	19-30% of rooms	0-18% of rooms
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This mixed sex use also appears in the present sample; almost as many dining-rooms have some sewing equipment as drawing-rooms while music-making equipment appears at a not dissimilar level in both. But actual mixed use does not necessarily contradict symbolic gendering; the point in these rooms was not sexual segregation but a symbolic differentiation which reflected broader gender roles. The practicalities of the symbolic differentiation, as discussed in Davidoff's study of élite social life, both facilitated and controlled courtship.<sup>82</sup> It was achieved both by rules of use but also through distinctive furnishing; and it could be maintained in the face of shared or even contrary use. The symbolic, rather than the segregative, function of gendered domestic decoration and space was something that both sexes participated in – it was a shared endeavour – which would help to explain why, in the present sample, there is no significant sign of gendered possession of, for example, the female-inflected sofa.

### **Libraries and studies**

Libraries and studies were found only in wealthy, high status homes, as supplements to drawing- or dining-rooms. Their furnishings indicate that they were hierarchically subordinate to those main rooms and that they were functional spaces rather than additional rooms for socialising. They less often contained fire goods, probably because these rooms were not in constant use. While almost 90 percent of drawing- and dining-rooms had carpet on the floor, the figure is only 53 percent for libraries or studies; almost twenty percent of the libraries/studies relied on a cheaper alternative (drugget, oil cloth, matting). A high proportion of them were, as expected, equipped with reading or writing equipment – books or book cases, desks, bureaux and so on – and it was in this room that science-related items (for example fossils and telescopes) were most often located. But they were poorly equipped for formal entertaining (sofas, music-making items) and for eating or drinking.

Not only were their furnishings inferior to those of the drawing- and dining-rooms that they accompanied, but libraries/studies appear to be less fully furnished than parlours and sitting-rooms in some respects. Fewer libraries or studies had fire goods, carpets and rugs, mirrors, ornaments and sofas than the parlours and sitting-rooms. Apart from items which can be seen as functionally specific to a library/study, they only exceeded parlours and sitting-rooms in window coverings

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<sup>82</sup> Davidoff (1973), 47-48.

(curtains and blinds of various kinds) and pictures. They were high-status rooms in the sense that they belonged only to those of wealth or elevated social status but the rooms themselves did not compete as sociable spaces. The gendered position of the library/study is harder to interpret. In prescriptive literature these rooms are coded masculine and are to be furnished rather like dining-rooms. It is true that, here, they are not furnished much like drawing-rooms but it might be that their lack of the expensive drawing-room extras is as much to do with their subsidiary status and their more general lack of furnishing (as seen in Table 3.3) as with their gendering.

### **Breakfast-rooms**

The number of breakfast-rooms in the present sample is only 21 and so is not susceptible to statistically significant analysis. But, bearing that in mind, the breakfast-rooms appear in these cases to be, on the whole, more like dining-rooms than drawing-rooms. The relatively high inclusion of reading or writing equipment suggests that they were multi-purpose rooms, probably less formal than either of the other two and provided with equipment for everyday living, including correspondence.

### **Parlours and sitting-rooms**

Table 3.3 (pages 119-120) indicates that parlours and sitting-rooms were similar in their contents and they are discussed together here. The differences just considered above are between rooms, as it were, intra-house. But what kind of differences can be seen between parlours or sitting-rooms and drawing-rooms or dining-rooms?<sup>83</sup> Were parlours and sitting-rooms merely drawing-rooms or dining-rooms in a different register? Or were they substantively different? I address this by considering the presence or absence and type of several key items.

Starting with flooring, while almost nine out of ten drawing- and dining-rooms contained carpet, for parlours and sitting-rooms the proportion was around two-thirds. It was available in a wide range of qualities and prices. In the 1879 edition of the *Manual of domestic economy*, £35.0.0 is allocated for a Wilton drawing-room carpet in the furnishing budget for people with an annual expenditure of £1,500 while £3.0.0 is set aside for a parlour carpet and rug for those on £150.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> A parlour only appears alongside a drawing-room in 4% of the 337 inventories, and even more rarely alongside dining-rooms.

<sup>84</sup> Walsh (1879), 195-205.

Carpets could be had even more cheaply second-hand.<sup>85</sup> But it would appear that this expenditure was not possible or desirable for about a third of parlour or sitting-room owners, who often substituted other, less expensive, forms of floor covering (oil cloth, drugget, felt carpet, matting or mats). 64 percent of parlours included carpeting but 78 percent had *some* form of floor covering. In drawing- and dining-rooms, however, druggets and oil cloths and mats were not generally a substitute; they were mostly used in addition to the carpet, either to protect it or to provide a border or background to it.<sup>86</sup>

Some form of window covering (indicated by curtains, blinds, cornices or window poles) was almost standard in drawing-, breakfast- and dining-rooms but it was rather less common in parlours and sitting-rooms. Blinds and, particularly, curtains have been seen as an important component of the 'idea' of the bourgeois nineteenth-century interior: they protected the once-in-a-lifetime purchases of furniture and furnishings;<sup>87</sup> they contributed to the domestic privacy that has been considered so important at this period;<sup>88</sup> they could provide a display of wealth or taste; they and other textiles were a prime example of the impact of mass production on domestic interiors;<sup>89</sup> their materiality and tactility was a pleasurable and sensual engagement with consumption;<sup>90</sup> and they contributed to the muffled, feminised, womb-like inward-looking bourgeois interior.<sup>91</sup> Such interpretations could possibly be applied to most of the high-status rooms but to only half, at most, of the parlours and sitting-rooms listed here. 'At most', because a higher proportion of window coverings for parlours were blinds (44 percent) than for drawing- and dining-room (25 percent);<sup>92</sup> blinds keep out the sun and prying eyes but they are less effective for tactile muffling and grand display. Window coverings, according to the *Manual of domestic economy*, could be had more cheaply than carpet.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Buying furnishings second-hand at auction or from brokers was a feature at all levels of the market. Edwards, C. and M. Ponsonby (2008) 'Desirable commodity or practical necessity? The sale and consumption of second-hand furniture, 1750-1900' in Hussey, D. and M. Ponsonby, eds. *Buying for the home: shopping for the domestic from the seventeenth century to the present* Aldershot: Ashgate, 122-131.

<sup>86</sup> 89% of drawing- and dining-rooms had carpeting; this only rose to 93% when other forms of floor covering were considered as well.

<sup>87</sup> Logan (2001), 109.

<sup>88</sup> Williams (1987), 191.

<sup>89</sup> Muthesius, S. (2009) *The poetic home: designing the 19<sup>th</sup>-century domestic interior* London: Thames and Hudson, 80-95.

<sup>90</sup> Muthesius (2009), 80-95.

<sup>91</sup> Sparke (2008), 23.

<sup>92</sup> 21 (24%) of 87 parlours with window coverings had only blinds; 6 (8%) of 77 drawing-rooms had only blinds.

<sup>93</sup> Walsh (1879), 195-205.

However, these parlour and sitting-room owners appear to have prioritised spending on the floor rather than on the windows.

It appears that the relative lack of both window and floor covering in parlours was related to economic ability since there was a significant association between their presence and higher wealth quartiles. If ownership rose in association with the wealth quartile of the room owner, it might be supposed that these were desirable items that people acquired if they could afford them. There was also a positive association with the status of the rooms' owners but the strong link between wealth and status means that it is not possible to isolate their effects.<sup>94</sup> There was also a small significant association, in the case of window coverings, with London: 60 percent of London parlours had window coverings compared with 41 percent elsewhere (and London does not have disproportionately wealthy parlour owners).<sup>95</sup> Perhaps there was a greater (perceived or 'real') need for privacy in London or perhaps this is another example of Londoners' propensity to consumption.

There were some items, however, whose presence in parlours and sitting-rooms increased significantly according to the wealth quartile of the owner but which showed no association with status. The presence of an easy chair is one such.<sup>96</sup> So were ornaments and pictures, although the association was less marked.<sup>97</sup> This suggests that these items were desirable regardless of status.

Within ornaments, it is possible to find some of the few instances where parlours had more of particular items than the high-status rooms (carpet substitutes were, as we have just seen, another). 28 percent of the parlours include 'chimney ornaments' compared with twenty percent of the drawing-rooms and seventeen percent of the dining-rooms. 'Chimney ornaments' were probably cheaper than pieces that were individually specified as, for example, lustres or wax flowers under glass shades.<sup>98</sup> Trays also were more frequent in parlours than in drawing-rooms or

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<sup>94</sup> Ownership was highest in wealth quartile 3 but was also quite high in quartile 4: chi-square=15.018, df=3, n=275, p<.01. 65% of the higher status parlours had window coverings compared with 41% of the lower status rooms: chi-square=12.086, df=3, n=275, p<.01. The sample size here is 275 because that is the total number of parlours and sitting-rooms.

<sup>95</sup> Chi-square=3.915, df=1, n=275, p<.05.

<sup>96</sup> The association of easy chair presence with wealth rises steadily by wealth quartile from 6% to 34%; chi-square=16.924, df=3, n=275, p<.01.

<sup>97</sup> The association with wealth quartile is, for pictures, chi-square=10.029, df=3, n=275, p<.05; for ornaments chi-square=8.418, df=3, n=275, p<.05.

<sup>98</sup> 34% of drawing-rooms have decorative items under glass shades compared with 12% of parlours and only 8% of dining-rooms. Chi-square test for association with parlours and

dining-rooms.<sup>99</sup> They were functional objects but, available at relatively little cost in decorative finishes, they could also be used ornamentally.<sup>100</sup> The following extract from Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* relates to a kitchen-living-room, not a parlour, in Manchester around 1840 but it demonstrates the use of functional or semi-functional objects as ornaments:

In the corner between the window and the fireside was a cupboard, apparently full of plates and dishes, cups and saucers, and some more nondescript articles, for which one would have fancied their possessors could find no use – such as triangular pieces of glass to save carving knives and forks from dirtying table-cloths. However, it was evident Mrs. Barton was proud of her crockery and glass, for she left her cupboard door open, with a glance round of satisfaction and pleasure. ... Opposite the fire-place was a table, which I should call a Pembroke, only that it was made of deal, and I cannot tell how far such a name may be applied to such humble material. On it, resting against the wall, was a bright green japanned tea-tray, having a couple of scarlet lovers embracing in the middle. The fire-light danced merrily on this, and really (setting all taste but that of a child's aside) it gave a richness of colouring to that side of the room. It was in some measure propped up by a crimson tea-caddy, also of japan ware.<sup>101</sup>

This passage is written in the author's voice; she makes this a cosy, colourful, enticing room in which the tray plays an important part. But in her parenthesis she distances her own taste (and by implication that of her middle-class readers) from that of the occupants, which she likens to that of a child. In the high-status houses in the present sample trays were not kept in the formal rooms but were treated for their use function and stored elsewhere, in the kitchen or pantry.

For the items just discussed, it might be that it was lack of money that prevented parlour owners from having the same kind of goods as drawing- and dining-room owners. But some more fundamental differences between the rooms can be identified. Parlours, viewed in aggregate, had a dining function, which drawing-rooms did not. Although it was perfectly possible to eat main meals at many kinds of table, 31 percent of the parlours and 25 percent of the sitting-rooms had a specified dining-table; although this is not as many as the 64 percent of

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drawing-rooms: chi-square=18.334, df=1, n=277, p<.001. N=277 because that is the total number of drawing-rooms and parlours.

<sup>99</sup> This excludes bread-, cheese-, knife- and snuffer-trays. 19% of parlours contained one or more; 11% of dining-rooms; and only 5% of drawing-rooms.

<sup>100</sup> John, W.D. (1964) *English decorated trays, 1550-1850* Newport: Ceramic Book Co.; Logan (2001), 110-112.

<sup>101</sup> Gaskell, E. (2006), 14-15.



dining-rooms it is significantly more than the five percent of drawing-rooms. And there was no significant difference between parlours and dining-rooms with regard to the inclusion of eating or drinking equipment, sofas or mirrors. On the other hand, only 45 percent of parlours contained a sofa, couch or settee compared with 80 percent of the drawing-rooms. And since the proportion did not rise significantly according to wealth quartile it is possible that sofas were not as essential in a parlour as in a drawing-room. Something similar applies for mirrors: there was no increase associated with wealth, status or over time. Parlours, then, as a whole, appear to be more similar to dining-rooms than drawing-rooms. This, as much as cost, might explain the lack of gilt and lustres, rosewood and damask which were 'feminine' features of drawing-rooms. As with drawing-rooms, geography does not appear to make a difference to the contents of parlours. This is true even for those in Wales and the West Midlands, where it has been seen that they were more common than drawing-rooms at all wealth and status levels and where they might therefore be thought to be drawing-rooms by another name.

However, there might have been different types of parlour, perhaps within the same house, which the aggregate analysis of rooms by name has submerged because they were not differentiated by name. This makes it impossible, using the present method to ask questions such as: Did people keep separate parlours for formal eating and formal 'sitting'? Or did they make alternative differentiations? Can we see gendering at work? To be able to consider such questions, I shortly move away from the aggregate analysis to a more detailed consideration of individual cases in order to investigate the relative use of similarly named rooms within the same house.

### **Kitchen-living-rooms and house-places**

Table 3.3 (pages 119-120) shows that house-places and rooms coded as kitchen-living-rooms had much in common with each other and that both were markedly different from all the other day-rooms. Although the absolute numbers are rather small, it appears that house-places were more definitely living-rooms than some of these kitchens, as indicated by the relatively higher incidence of mirrors, sofas, pictures and reading or writing equipment. The kitchen-living-room pictured in *Mary Barton* (just cited, page 131), was actually called a house-place; it was a multi-purpose room where the family spent their leisure time, cooked, entertained visitors, ate and did some contracted sewing work. But there was also, in the *Mary*

*Barton* example, a separate room which was 'a sort of little back kitchen, where dirty work, such as washing up dishes, might be done, and whose shelves served as larder, and pantry, and storeroom, and all'.<sup>102</sup>

It is not surprising that these rooms included cooking equipment but it is worth noticing how little cooking equipment was kept in the other day-rooms, indicating a very high degree of specialisation of this particular function. While we might not expect cooking to go on in a drawing-room or dining-room, it is interesting to find that the presence of cooking goods apparently prevented a room from being considered as a parlour. Certain items were stored in the kitchen but probably not used there. This was undoubtedly the case for many of the candlesticks or lamps and it probably often applied to the eating or drinking equipment (largely cutlery and crockery) which shows up in about 80 percent of these rooms. The latter might have been used *in situ* but, often, it would have been taken into another room for meals.

How these rooms were used probably related to the number of other rooms available and the composition of the household. There were 324 inventories with identifiable day-rooms; in 28 of those inventories the house-place or a kitchen-living-room was the only day-room, in which cooking, eating and sitting must all have gone on. The group is too small for statistical analysis but it can be observed that only one was in the top wealth quartile and none were in London; only three were coded as of higher status.

But where there was more than one day-room it is not possible to make assumptions about the role of the kitchen-living-room or house-place. There were 82 inventories where a kitchen-living-room or house-place was one of two day-rooms. According to Muthesius, in such cases, working-class people would use their kitchen as a living-room; the less well-off working classes would have one all-purpose living room. He notes that the ability to maintain a parlour, separate from the kitchen-living-room, was a social signifier.<sup>103</sup> Daunton takes this up in his detailed discussion of working-class homes in the later part of the century: if there were two ground-floor rooms one was generally kept as an all-purpose living space, including cooking and informal meals, and one as a special best room or parlour, furnished with items of state.<sup>104</sup> Banham *et al.* note that 'in the working-class home,

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<sup>102</sup> Gaskell (2006), 14-15.

<sup>103</sup> Muthesius (1982), 48.

<sup>104</sup> Daunton (1983), 272-283.

dining took place in the kitchen'.<sup>105</sup> But in houses with three or more day-rooms (where there were more likely to be servants), many of which included a kitchen-living-room, was the kitchen-living-room furnished for the servants to use as their day-room as well as their working space? Was its use confined to the servants? Or did the family and the servants share it? How, in cases with two or more day-rooms, did people divide up functions between the kitchen-living-room and the rest? Is there any evidence as to whether they chose to sit, work and eat in the same room as the cooking? And under what circumstances? Did different types of household arrange matters differently?

In order to consider these questions and those relating to the relative use of multiple parlours, I now move on to the examination of some individual cases.

## Individual cases

In these individual cases, the contents of the different day-rooms are read relative to each other, taking into account the availability of differentiable spaces and the size and nature of the household to be accommodated. This is a bridge between the method used in the first part of this chapter and the very close interpretation of a small number of individual cases, which is used in the next.

**Table 3.5 Number of inventories with parlours (alongside kitchens or house-places) as the only day-rooms**

Number of inventories	Number of parlours
18	1 parlour alone
38	1 parlour and 1 kitchen-living-room
11	1 parlour and 1 house-place
2	1 parlour and 1 house-place and 1 kitchen-living-room
11	2 parlours alone
10	2 parlours and 1 kitchen-living-room
1	3 parlours
1	4 parlours
<b>Total 92</b>	

For the sake of simplicity, I concentrate on inventories with parlours (rather than sitting-rooms). There were 92 inventories where a parlour or parlours were, apart from kitchen-living-rooms and house-places, the only day-rooms (Table 3.5).

<sup>105</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991), 38.

Three cases are examined: two parlours; two parlours with a kitchen-living-room; and one parlour with a kitchen-living-room. These examples are not presented as norms, although they are not obviously unusual.

### *Two parlours*

The possession of two or more parlours provided the opportunity for differentiating them according to specialised function, as with drawing- and dining-rooms. But, in my judgement, in only five of 23 cases can such a functional split be seen. A particularly clear example of the functional split can be found in the inventory of William Price of Fareham, Hampshire, who died aged 70 in 1850 (see Table 3.6; the contents of his kitchen are also shown to demonstrate that it was not set up as a day-room). In 1841 Mr. Price shared his home with his unmarried sister and two young men, probably lodgers.<sup>106</sup>

Mr. Price's front parlour, containing a dining table, a sideboard and a set of eight dining chairs, was probably the room for main meals, at least on formal occasions. The back parlour was furnished for 'sitting' or small meals and was perhaps hierarchically superior: there were more chairs, more pictures and a better quality floor covering than in the front room. But although there appears to be an arrangement for the separation of dining and sitting leisure, there is no obvious gendered distinction in ambience; both rooms had japanned and mahogany items and had mirrors.

Although Mr. Price's inventory can be interpreted as demonstrating the dining/sitting specialisation associated with higher status, he himself is coded as of lower status. He was a hairdresser at a time when they were decidedly lowly.<sup>107</sup> And he was in the lowest wealth quartile of the sample. But Fareham itself was a prosperous market town with a sizable genteel population; there were about 130 names listed under the category of 'nobility, gentry and clergy' in a directory of 1844.<sup>108</sup> There is no indication in his inventory of where he performed his hairdressing – at home, in separate premises, or in the homes of clients.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Census enumerator's book for 1841 (HO107, 389, 13, 3, 4).

<sup>107</sup> Herzog, D. (1996) 'The trouble with hairdressers' *Representations* 53: Winter: 21-43. Hairdressers are scored quite low (48 on a range of 1-99) on the HIS-CAM occupational stratification scale.

<sup>108</sup> Pigot and Co. (1844) *Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography of the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cornwall, Devonshire, Dorsetshire, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Oxfordshire, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and North and South Wales ....* London & Manchester: Slater.

<sup>109</sup> Herzog (1996), 26.

**Table 3.6 Contents of the parlours and kitchen of William Price, hairdresser, of Fareham, Hampshire, 1850**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/93**

<b>Front parlour</b>		<b>Back parlour</b>		<b>Kitchen</b>	
1	Sideboard	1	Mah[ogan]y card table	4	Iron saucepans
1	Mah[ogan]y dining table	1	Oil painting	1	Frying pan
6	Chairs	1	Set of 4 framed prints	1	Warming pan
2	Elbow chairs	1	Odd framed print	Sundry	Flat irons
1	Mah[ogan]y waiter	9	Chairs	Sundry	Requisites
1	Looking glass	2	Elbow chairs		
1	Jap[anne]d tea tray	1	Carpet		
1	Tea cady	1	Hearth rug		
2	Framed prints	1	Mah[ogan]y waiter		
1	Druget	1	Mah[ogan]y waiter		
1	Hearth rug	1	Fender & fire irons		
[Some]	Chimney ornaments	1	Jap[anne]d tray		
1	Fender & fire irons	1	Looking glass		
		1	Mah[ogan]y round tea table		
		[Some]	Chimney ornaments		
		1	Corner cupboard		
		1	Copper coal scuttle		

But perhaps it was professionally advantageous for a hairdresser to demonstrate a knowledge of upper status fashion in all areas of life. (The impact of professional needs on domestic arrangements is one of the considerations of the following two chapters.)

### *Two parlours with a kitchen-living-room*

However, a more usual arrangement, seen in thirteen of the 23 cases with two or more parlours, was hierarchical differentiation. This is indicated by the quality and number of goods, rather than specialisation of function. It is demonstrated by the inventory of Edward Giles, shopkeeper or master baker of Tilehurst in Berkshire, who died in 1878, aged 58.<sup>110</sup>

Table 3.7 shows the contents listed for the three day-rooms – a kitchen, a back parlour and a front parlour. Although only in the second lowest gross wealth quartile, Mr. Giles had apparently commodious premises, with a well equipped shop, a dairy, a washhouse and ‘out of doors’ as well as four bedrooms and a bathroom.

The household’s two parlours were both well and formally furnished. Each room had a certain amount of dining equipment – salts and tumblers – though the back room perhaps had more. Both were furnished with glass shades, ornaments, gilt-framed chimney glasses, and various other tables and sofas. Although the front parlour had the dining table, its chairs were mismatched and were fewer than in the back room. On the other hand, the front parlour had damask curtains and the back had none; this might have been a matter of privacy from the street or it might indicate hierarchical positioning. On the whole, I read the back parlour, with its greater array of ornaments and its matching chairs, as in general superior but not as functionally distinct; both eating and ‘sitting’ could have been accommodated in either room. This offers the possibility of a flexible use of space, with the occupants able to use the two rooms to modulate interactions, both within the household and with others from outside.

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<sup>110</sup> Edward Giles’s Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/55.

**Table 3.7 Contents of the parlours and kitchen of Edward Giles, shopkeeper or master baker, of Tilehurst, Berkshire, 1878**

Source: TNA IR 19/155

<b>Back parlour</b>	
1	Cast fender and set of fire irons
1	Chimney glass in gilt frame
2	Glass baskets
2	Glass candlesticks
2	China ornaments
1	Other china ornaments
1	Japanned coal scuttle and shovel
2	Decanters
4	Wine glasses
3	Tumblers
2	Glass dishes
4	Salts
1	China plate
1	Tea tray and a waiter
1	Wax flowers in vase with stand and glass shade
1	Set of 3 water jugs
6	Cane seated chairs with cushion
1	Felt carpet as planned and a woollen hearth rug
1	Mahogany 2 flap table and a cloth
1	Mahogany framed sofa with squab & bolster
6	Framed prints
1	Mahogany supper tray
1	Stuffed hawk and pheasant in glazed case
1	Metal teapot
1	Tea tray
1	[...] tray
1	Mahogany round table and cloth
1	Upright clock (not going)
5	Slip mats on landing

<b>Front parlour</b>	
1	Cast fender and set of fire irons
1	The felt drugget as planned and a woollen hearth rug
1	Mahogany dining table
3	Cane seated chairs with cushions
1	Arm chair
1	Other chair
1	Small round table
1	Curtain pole and pair of damask curtains
4	Framed prints
2	Cases of butterflies
1	Square rosewood card table
1	Mahogany framed sofa with hair covered squab & bolster
1	Chimney glass in gilt frame
1	Parafin lamp
4	China candlesticks
4	Hyacinth glasses
4	Tumblers
2	Sugar glasses
1	Metal teapot
2	Glass salts
1	Metal cruet frame and 3 cruets
1	China toast rack
2	Japanned trays
<b>Kitchen</b>	
1	Fender and set of fire irons
1	Piece of oilcloth &c
4	Windsor chairs
1	Easy chair
1	Deal table with 1 flap
1	Small chimney glass
3	Prints
1	8 day time piece
1	Set of bookshelves
[Some]	Roller blinds to the windows

**Table 3.7 continued**

The kitchen, with its chimney glass and three pictures, was also set up as a living-room, for eating, sitting and reading. Indeed, it did not contain any cooking equipment, which is listed in the dairy and the washhouse. But, without any mahogany, rosewood, or gilt, it was hierarchically inferior to the other two rooms. It was probably a family space since, at the time of the 1871 census, Mr. and Mrs. Giles were listed at this address, with four children, but no servants.<sup>111</sup>

In neither Mr. Price's home nor Mr. Giles's is it possible to discern gendered differentiation; 'feminine' items and finishes appear in all the parlours, although at a

<sup>111</sup> Census enumerator's book for 1871 (RG10, 1277, 90, 48).



much lower level than for the high-status rooms. Of course, it might be that there are distinctions which fall below the radar of the inventory but in terms of gilt and lustres and mirrors there appears no difference. In Mr. Giles's case, and in most of the two-parlour inventories, even though it would have been possible, there does not seem to have been any desire to segregate formal dining from other forms of sociability and 'sitting' leisure. William Thackeray's *A shabby genteel story* (one of the many fictions of the period in which the social position of the protagonists is one of the writer's major concerns<sup>112</sup>) suggests that flexible differentiation of parlours was considered more appropriate to those of lower status than making a functional distinction.<sup>113</sup> Thackeray ridicules the Gann family as pretentious for using their two parlours like a drawing-room and a dining-room, and insisting on making the formal dinner procession between two spaces which are only inches apart. The Ganns' social position is very insecure; they have known better times and are unrelenting in telling people about it. They were once wealthy and were used to giving formal dinners with a dining-room and a drawing-room. But now, having lost their money, they have to take in boarders. They were, as Thackeray produces them, always vulgar but at least their previous way of life was appropriate to their means. But now the insecure gentility that they try to hold on to is presented as doubly ridiculous. They would get more respect from Thackeray if they would lay aside their pretensions and live according to their circumstances without aping genteel differentiations of space.

### *One parlour and a kitchen-living-room*

One parlour and one kitchen or house-place was the single most common combination of day-rooms in the inventory sample, found in 49 inventories (Table Appendix 4.6, page 362). As might be expected, the furnishings in these cases suggest that the kitchen was an inferior space but it was one which often provided opportunities for eating and sitting and in some cases appears to have offered considerable comfort; it would have been warm since this is where cooking took place. This is the situation revealed in the inventory of William Whitfield (see Table 3.8).

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<sup>112</sup> Class as a persistent theme in fictions of this period is discussed in Adams, J.E. (2005) "The boundaries of social intercourse": class in the Victorian novel' in O'Gorman, F., ed. *A concise companion to the Victorian novel* Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 48.

<sup>113</sup> Thackeray, W. (1993, first published 1840) 'A shabby genteel story' in *A shabby genteel story and other writings* London: Dent.

**Table 3.8 The contents of the parlour and kitchen of William Whitfield, farmer, of Poole Keynes, Wiltshire, 1871**

Source: TNA IR 19/153

<b>Parlour</b>			<b>Kitchen</b>		
1	Mahogany loo table	1		Mahogany bureau and bookcase	
6	Mahogany hair seat chairs	1		Copper warming pan	
2	Arm chairs	5		Chairs	
1	Easy chair	1		Large arm chair	
1	Mahogany cheffioneer	1		Oak 2 leaf table & cover	
1	Round stand	1		30 hour clock in oak case	
1	Lamp and 2 trays	1		Single barrel gun	
1	Carpetting & rug	1		Corner cupboard	
1	Fender and fire irons	1		Cocoa nut matting & rug	
1	Chimney glass	Sundry		Glass	
[Some]	Chimney ornaments	2		Cruet stands	
1	Sofa in hair	1		Old sofa	
2	Curtain poles and rings	1		Barometer	
[Some]	Tea china	1		Copper coal scuttle	
Sundry	Glass	[Some]		Brass candlesticks	
3	Pictures	[Some]		Sundries	
		1		Roasting jack & tin	

Mr. Whitfield was a prosperous (topmost wealth quartile) farmer of Poole Keynes in Wiltshire. He died in 1876, aged 59.<sup>114</sup> He was unmarried and on census night in 1871 he was sharing his house with his mother and one young female servant.<sup>115</sup>

His parlour, with its mahogany furniture, its carpet and rug, its curtain poles and chimney glass, was clearly the smart room. The loo table could have been used for meals as well as sewing, writing and similar activities. But the furnishings of the kitchen – the mahogany bureau and bookcase, the copper warming pan and coal scuttle, the sundry glass and the oak case clock – were of much more than strict utility, while its large table and substantial amount of seating, including an old sofa and a large armchair, suggest that it could have been used for sitting and eating.

85 percent of all the 494 inventories included at least one clock and it can be seen from Table 3.3 (pages 119-120) that they were often placed in kitchens and house-places. In the 49 inventories where there was only a kitchen and a parlour, 38 of the 45 clocks were located in the kitchen. Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift have recently argued that the use of ‘clock time’ was of much longer standing

<sup>114</sup> Legacy Duty papers for William Whitfield, TNA IR 19/153.

<sup>115</sup> Census enumerator’s book for 1871 (RG10, 2646, 17, 1).

and much more widespread than previously thought.<sup>116</sup> They find that the most usual place for a household clock in the early eighteenth century was, as in the present inventory group, in the kitchen.<sup>117</sup> This is because, although they were undoubtedly often decorative, they were functional objects that were most usefully positioned there. Cooking was one reason for its location.<sup>118</sup> New ranges were developed that allowed for different modes of cooking (such as roasting, baking, frying and simmering), more precise moderation of heat and more precise timings.<sup>119</sup> Domestic manuals and cookery books routinely used clock time in recipes. *The encyclopaedia of domestic economy* in 1844 noted that ‘a clock should never be omitted in a kitchen.’<sup>120</sup> Nineteenth-century household management books, which generally assume the employment of servants, stress the importance of schedules and regularity for efficient household functioning. Clocks were not the only way of telling the time and some people had personal watches, but the frequent positioning of clocks in kitchens is an argument for the centrality of the kitchen as a space of high domestic footfall, whether or not servants were employed. The Whitfields’ kitchen had a barometer as well as a clock. Although these items also appear in urban homes they had particular utility for farmers and Table 3.3 shows that they were most frequent in house-places. With its bookcase, gun, clock and barometer, the Whitfields’ kitchen was probably the centre of operations for the farm and was thus also a place of work (an issue that is developed in Chapter 5).

It was Loudon’s view that prosperous farmers should separate themselves and their families from the farm servants:

... for a farm of 300 acres or upwards, of good productive soil, there ought to be in the dwelling house, at least two good sitting-rooms, and a small library or office for business; besides three or four bedrooms, and a nursery. In farm houses where it is the custom to board and lodge the out-door labourers, a larger kitchen will be required for them to dine in, and a larger kitchen range to cook their food. More bed-chambers will also be necessary, and these should always have a separate staircase from that leading to the better rooms.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Glennie, P. and N. Thrift (2009) *Shaping the day: a history of timekeeping in England and Wales 1300-1800* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 165-177.

<sup>117</sup> Glennie and Thrift (2009), 174.

<sup>118</sup> Although the inventory sample would provide a valuable source for investigating the relatively little-known area of mid-nineteenth-century practices of cooking, cleaning and other housework, it is a vast topic not addressed here.

<sup>119</sup> Flanders (2003), 67-69.

<sup>120</sup> Webster (1844), 849.

<sup>121</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 355.

The Whitfield farm was a little smaller than this; it was 228 acres and, in 1871, three men and four boys were employed.<sup>122</sup> They were not present on the night of the census but there were many agricultural workers and their families living in separate houses nearby. This was a common arrangement in the south and east of England in the second part of the century.<sup>123</sup> Did both the Whitfields and the workers use the kitchen? The bookcase and gun indicate that it was used by Mr. Whitfield but there were certainly more chairs than necessary for just the family. Perhaps it was a shared space, with the kind of arrangement so disapproved of by Loudon: 'In some parts of Britain where the farmer and his out-door labourers are nearly on a par in point of intelligence and manners, they continue to dine at the same table in the kitchen'.<sup>124</sup> Alun Howkins suggests that shared eating, where the labourers did not live in, was not the practice although he does stress the variability of arrangements.<sup>125</sup>

This is a problem of interpretation that goes beyond farming households. If there were no servants and the kitchen was equipped as a living-room it might be assumed that it was used by the family. But where there were servants, it is not possible to know whether use was shared or exclusive. Either way, though, these kitchen-living-rooms were multi-functional spaces containing equipment for leisure, eating, cooking, socialising and some work. They had considerable decorative possibilities; although they did not feature lustres or wax flowers under glass shades, there were functional items – copper warming pans and saucepans, candlesticks and ceramics, clocks and glassware – which had the potential for visual display. Kitchens probably functioned as family living-rooms much more often than has generally been recognised. Nonetheless the kitchen was always hierarchically inferior if there was another day-room. It contained functions – certainly cooking, often ironing, sometimes cleaning and washing – which were not acceptable in parlours. In a parlour it was possible to heat up dishes, to make tea or other hot drinks and toast but frying, roasting and boiling were kept out of the leisure spaces of the home. Cooking was confined to the kitchen or house-place and although these rooms were clearly sometimes used as household or family living-rooms they were not called parlours.

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<sup>122</sup> Census enumerator's book for 1871 (RG10, 2646, 17, 1).

<sup>123</sup> Howkins, A. (2000) 'Social, cultural and domestic life' in Collins, E., ed. *The agrarian history of England and Wales, Volume VII, 1850-1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1386.

<sup>124</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 355.

<sup>125</sup> Howkins (2000), 1393.

## Summary and conclusions

Unlike drawing-rooms, parlours were often multi-purpose, combining the functions of dining and 'sitting'. Instead of specialisation, there is evidence that, where there were two or more parlours, there was hierarchical differentiation – in other words one room was 'better' than the other. Nor is there evidence for gendered ambience. Parlours, then, were different; they were not just unsatisfactory drawing-rooms.

The analysis clarifies the many accounts which suggest that having a drawing- and/or dining-room was a class matter. In the present sample the ownership of these rooms was significantly associated with people coded as being of higher status – in this respect concurring with Stefan Muthesius, whose arguments relied largely on prescriptive literature.<sup>126</sup> This finding helps to refine and position Linda Young's argument about middle-class material culture, which she argues was shared by a wide range of people and which was manifested in a variety of registers according to available resources.<sup>127</sup> But the culture she delineates as relating to the whole of the middle class,<sup>128</sup> did not, on present evidence, generally extend to the lower middle classes. Further, the present findings show that, while a drawing-room was often related to an elevated middle-class position, parlours were, contrary to the previous consensus, found across almost all of the social range. Having a parlour did not disbar people from a higher status position. We cannot read class off *all* room names.

This is especially so because there was, in this sample, a geographical factor. Londoners had drawing-rooms more often than people in other parts of the country; London was suffused by middle-class or higher-status culture. Londoners also, as we will see in subsequent chapters, had more goods and more new types of goods than people elsewhere. London was different. Additionally, there is some suggestion here that the well-to-do in the West Midlands preferred parlours. This gives support to William Rubinstein's hypothesis that middle-class culture in London was aligned to élite practices and was different in nature from that of the newer manufacturing and industrial cities.<sup>129</sup>

Confirmation that drawing-rooms and dining-rooms were a feature of life for only an elevated portion of the middle-class population and were a particularly

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<sup>126</sup> Muthesius (1982), 44-45.

<sup>127</sup> Young (2003), 175.

<sup>128</sup> Young (2003), 175-176.

<sup>129</sup> Rubinstein (1977b), 619-621.

metropolitan phenomenon also serves to position the various contemporary advice literatures. Domestic and architectural manuals represent something like this social distinction but the decorating advice books of the latter part of the century, which present drawing-rooms as standard, cannot be seen as a reliable source for actual practice – although interesting and useful in other ways. The present study also highlights the generally narrow social focus of the history of nineteenth-century interiors, which has largely concentrated on the numerically small segment of drawing-room owners. The inventory sample, while relating only to that part of the population which was sufficiently well-off to be liable for Legacy Duty, has nevertheless provided the opportunity to consider the material culture of some of the unsung ‘rest’ and to pay attention to the way that parlours worked.

The study also shows that kitchen-living-rooms were very common. These are rooms that have hitherto been received little attention and, when they have been addressed, have usually been considered to have been either the province of servants or an all-purpose room in working-class homes. They were probably used differently in different types of household but it appears that some families used their kitchens as living-rooms, even when they were not obliged to do so by lack of space. They might even have shared them with the servants. The contemporary architectural manuals suggest that this was common, if not desirable, in farming households<sup>130</sup> and Robert Kerr’s comment that ‘In dwellings of inferior class, such as Farm-houses and the houses of tradesmen, this separation [between the family department and the servants’ department] is not so distinct’ implies that it was conceivable for tradesmen as well.<sup>131</sup> Although kitchen-living-rooms could be fully and comfortably furnished, they were hierarchically inferior to other day-rooms in the same house; they were distinct because they housed cooking, which was outlawed from parlours, drawing-rooms and dining-rooms. They often also contained ironing equipment (which would be heated up on the kitchen fire) and even though it was preferable not to, they sometimes held equipment for wet, steamy or dirty work like washing and brewing. But there was a particular functional specialisation that was found across all of these room types: it was not usual for any of them to include a bedstead (this is discussed further in Chapter 6).

But there were many in the population at large for whom none of these specialisations and distinctions applied. Perhaps they were included among the

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<sup>130</sup> Loudon (c1865), 355.

<sup>131</sup> Kerr (1871), 64.

decedents whose inventories were not arranged room by room; it is not possible to tell. However, they can be glimpsed in one of the inventories in the current sub-sample. Henry Nicholson, who died in 1872 at the age of 52, ran a large common lodging house in Manchester, in a poor area notorious for its lodging houses.<sup>132</sup> His enterprise extended over six adjoining properties and, on census night 1871, Nicholson, with his wife and one female servant, was living in one of them along with three separate tenant households.<sup>133</sup> Mr. and Mrs. Nicholson had two rooms: one, called a sitting-room by the appraiser, was furnished solely as a bed-room; the other – the ‘kitchen’ – was a comfortable and solid living room, with plenty of seating, tables, a chimney glass in a rosewood frame, some old carpet on the floor, a parrot in a cage and plenty of equipment for cooking and eating. It was, I imagine, their choice to live in one day-room since they could have expanded into other rooms in the house. The other three couples, two of them with one child, each lived, slept, cooked, and ate in a single room; there was no specialisation for the lodgers.

Extreme functional specialisation of domestic space, rather than a fundamental organising principle of all Victorian homes, was variably adopted. There is obviously an economic issue here but it is also possible to speculate that there is a related cultural one. Bourdieu, in theorising the results of *Distinction’s* sociological survey, uses the idea of distance from necessity.<sup>134</sup> He explains the working-class preference for filling, fatty foods in France in the 1960s as based in necessity – the need to build muscle. Similar needs, he argues, underlie the way food is cooked, presented and eaten: people with little money, little security and little spare time aestheticise food less than those with more wealth or time; they employ less formality and less specialised routines. Extreme specialisation is unnecessary and unpragmatic; it is a distinctive luxury. In the present case, parlours were multi-functional spaces, perhaps out of immediate necessity but perhaps also out of the cultural preferences that Bourdieu traces back to material conditions and power relations. The specialisation of space for ‘sitting leisure’ (and cooking and sleeping) was a distinctive luxury made feasible by distance from necessity. Using hierarchy rather than fixed function to differentiate space was

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<sup>132</sup> Henry Nicholson’s Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/144. <sup>132</sup> [Reach, A.B.] (1849) ‘Labour and the poor. The manufacturing districts (from our special correspondent). Oldham and the low lodging-houses of Manchester’ *The Morning Chronicle* 12<sup>th</sup> November, 4-5.

<sup>133</sup> Census enumerator’s book (RG10, 4052, 7, 8).

<sup>134</sup> Bourdieu (1984), 169-225.

more flexible and more pragmatic. It was also more economical as it did not necessarily require so many rooms or so much specialised equipment. This issue is taken forward into the following chapter, which develops the present work on day-rooms by focusing on the particular area of hospitable provision.



# Chapter 4

## Difference and differentiation in spaces of hospitality

### Introduction

In this chapter the broad analysis of day-rooms is narrowed to focus on the provision of hospitality. This particular theme has been selected because historians have identified the provision of functionally specialised spaces for entertaining visitors as a dominant factor in the organisation of houses at this period. In the previous chapter, however, we have seen that specialisation of space by function was not as widespread or as standardised in format as has been suggested and that differentiation by hierarchy was often adopted. But if specialisation was not as dominant as has been thought, how was hospitable provision actually organised? Which rooms or parts of the house were set up for hospitality? What other types of activity shared – or did not share – these spaces? Hospitality, which brings outsiders into the home, also gives the opportunity to consider the historical appropriateness or conceptual usefulness of analysing the internal space of nineteenth-century homes in terms of private and public space.

These issues are addressed, in a method which builds on the work of the previous chapter, through the detailed interpretation of a small number of whole inventories in an attempt to understand how particular people managed their hospitable provision and why they organised it as they did. This highlights the role of household or individual strategies relative to the general patterns seen in the quantitative analysis and in circulating ideals. The background to this is provided by outlining existing accounts of mid-nineteenth-century hospitable practices, amplified by recourse to prescriptive literature and novels.

# Narratives of hospitality

## Practices

A contemporary dictionary defined 'hospitable' as 'receiving and entertaining strangers; liberal, kind, to strangers, to visitors'.<sup>1</sup> Ben Heller, writing recently on the subject of late-Georgian visiting, notes that visiting (or receiving hospitality) included calling, dining, attending parties and making longer stays. He also emphasises that hospitality and visiting were not just, or always, matters of friendship. For his subjects – the propertied diarists of London – motivations also included business or obligation while the amount and type of hospitality offered and received varied according to the life stage and gender of both parties, as well as the material circumstances of the host.<sup>2</sup>

Eighteenth-century hospitality, both within and outside the home, has been framed most often within debates about consumption, gender and home life.<sup>3</sup> Amanda Vickery finds that formal visiting (rather than just dropping in) was a new, and initially élite, mode of sociability that appeared as an urban phenomenon in the late seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> Élite women in the later eighteenth century spent much of their time in visiting and hosting.<sup>5</sup> But Vickery argues that visiting extended its social reach throughout the 1700s, contributing to a growing market in goods of self-presentation, such as furnishings and clothing. Many visits focused on tea, which was especially associated with female hosts and visitors. 'Tea' concludes Vickery 'was the catalyst of a momentous reconfiguration of domestic space.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson, C. (1844, second edition) *A new dictionary of the English language* London: William Pickering.

<sup>2</sup> Heller, B. (2010) 'Leisure and the use of domestic space in Georgian London' *Historical Journal* 53: 3: 623-645.

<sup>3</sup> For example McKendrick, N., Brewer, J. and J.H. Plumb (1982) *The birth of a consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth-century England* London: Europa; Stobart, J., Hann, A. and V. Morgan (2007) *Spaces of consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c.1680-1830* London & New York: Routledge; Weatherill, L. (1988) *Consumer behaviour and material culture in Britain, 1660-1760* London: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Vickery (2009), 14-16.

<sup>5</sup> Heller, B. (2009) 'Visiting and social cohesion in London, 1700-1820' (unpublished paper given at *Visiting rites: accessing the English home, c.1650-1850*, conference at University of Northampton).

<sup>6</sup> Vickery (2009), 274. For a detailed history of the tea in contexts from the global to the local see Ellis, M., ed. (2010) *Tea and the tea-table in eighteenth-century England* London: Pickering & Chatto.

For the nineteenth century, hospitality itself has rarely been the main focus of enquiry.<sup>7</sup> It has been mostly addressed in terms of gendered consumption or the display of cultural, social and economic capital, often as part of a broader debate about the nature of domesticity.<sup>8</sup> John Tosh argues that, compared with the eighteenth century, the first half of the nineteenth century saw 'a definite reduction in venues [such as assemblies and theatres] where middle-class couples could socialize freely. The result was more entertaining at home.'<sup>9</sup> But this is not uncontentious. As just outlined, formal visiting was already an important feature of eighteenth-century polite society. And it has also been demonstrated that there were manifold nineteenth-century opportunities for sociable meetings outside the home.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it has been argued that public association and public sociability were essential components of middle-class identity at this period.<sup>11</sup> Whether there was actually *more* home-based entertaining in the nineteenth century than previously is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate but it seems reasonable to suppose that the centrality of the ideal of domesticity for the middle classes put a great emphasis on sociability in the home. As well as short tea-drinking visits, dinners appear to have become more common. By the 1820s and 1830s wealthy provincial families were giving dinner parties for maybe a dozen guests. These parties were by invitation only and tended to replace the earlier practice of 'dropping in'.<sup>12</sup> Larger establishments might give several dinners a month but as the practice spread to the less wealthy parts of the middle classes it is estimated that once a month was more likely.<sup>13</sup> However, for the Glasgow middle classes in the second half of the century, there was apparently a constant whirl of dinner parties

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<sup>7</sup> The two works of which I am aware that focus on visiting rather than home are Davidoff (1973) and Heller (2010); the former discusses elite practices and the latter covers only the early decades of the century. Gordon and Nair (2003) address the debate about gendered, private, domesticity and devote chapter 4 to social life.

<sup>8</sup> Daunton (1983); Davidoff and Hall (1987); Keeble (2007); Logan (2001); Muthesius (1982); Ponsonby (2007); Tosh (1999); and Young (2003). For a contrary view to Logan's on the female domination of this consumption see Cohen (2006).

<sup>9</sup> Tosh (1999), 124. Gordon and Nair (2003), chapter 4, certainly found a great deal.

<sup>10</sup> Rappaport, E. (2000) *Shopping for pleasure: women in the making of London's West End* Princeton: Princeton University Press discusses the development of spaces for female public sociability later in the century. Clubs for men are discussed in Milne-Smith, A. (2006) 'A flight to domesticity?: making a home in the gentlemen's clubs of London, 1880-1914' *Journal of British Studies*, 45: 4: 796-818 and Rendell, J. (1999) 'The clubs of St. James's: places of public patriarchy – exclusivity, domesticity and secrecy' *The Journal of Architecture* 4: Summer: 167-189.

<sup>11</sup> See Gunn (2000) and Morris (1990).

<sup>12</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 385.

<sup>13</sup> Tosh (1999), 124.

at a range of scales.<sup>14</sup> Domestic manuals suggest that these formal dinners could be a source of anxiety; it was a common theme that people should not be tempted into giving expensive entertainments that they could not afford in order to impress.<sup>15</sup>

It has also been said that, in the context of middle-class domesticity, hospitality at home took on particular characteristics. Firstly, it became more feminised. While women had previously devoted more time than men to visiting, the increasing emphasis on the role of wives and mothers in the home had an effect on what had previously been more male-oriented events. In the middle-class trading circles of Glasgow and Edinburgh, for example, there was a shift from the male-dominated, business-oriented, alcohol-fuelled dinners of the mid eighteenth century to, by the early nineteenth century, female-centred entertainments, which often focused on the piano and which provided a space for courtship at a time when female opportunities for mixing with the other sex outside the home diminished.<sup>16</sup> However, although there was apparently a general feminisation of hospitality amongst the middle classes, different types of event were differently gendered. Margaret Ponsonby argues that, in Chichester in the 1840s, giving dinners required a male head of household or a suitable substitute and that female hospitality was more likely, as in the eighteenth century, to have centred on tea, supper and cards.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, Trevor Keeble finds diary evidence a little later in the century that shows a pair of single, high-status women, happily hosting their own dinner parties.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, domestic hospitality became more formal. It has been argued that from about the 1820s and throughout the century, certainly in the upper and upper-middle classes and increasingly in the bulk of the middle classes, rituals of hospitality and the rules of etiquette were deployed in the interests of managing social exclusion and inclusion at a time of increasing social mobility.<sup>19</sup> While all forms of hospitality offered the opportunity of making social distinctions between the people taking part, the management of precedence at elaborate formal dinners

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<sup>14</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), chapter 4.

<sup>15</sup> Cobbett, A. (1842, third edition) *The English housekeeper or manual of domestic management* London: A. Cobbett, 1-5.

<sup>16</sup> Nenadic (1994), 145.

<sup>17</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 142-9.

<sup>18</sup> Keeble (2007).

<sup>19</sup> Davidoff (1973).

manifested this particularly clearly.<sup>20</sup> The previous chapter has shown that, in the present sample, ownership of the drawing-rooms and the dining-rooms that facilitated this exclusivity were not as widespread as has often been suggested. And Gordon and Nair emphasise that, in the middle-class Scottish sociable interactions they investigated, sentiment, pleasure and altruism, for example, motivated hospitality more than the desire for social control.<sup>21</sup> However, dinners must always have been formal events in the sense that an invitation was required and so inclusion and exclusion were necessarily involved. This can be seen in mid-century working-class practices too. According to Thomas Wright, who was a rare inside observer of skilled working-class life in London in the 1860s, there were often guests at Sunday dinner, the most formal meal of the week – but only by invitation; ‘dropping in’ at this time was severely discouraged.<sup>22</sup>

There was also a range of less formal possibilities, with explicit or implicit invitations given to friends and acquaintances to visit for tea, for particular evenings or for short afternoon calls. Gordon and Nair found that in middle-class Glasgow in the second half of the century most visiting was informal; friends or family might drop in, unannounced and unexpected, for an hour or two.<sup>23</sup> But although these were certainly more relaxed interactions there were doubtless still rules to be observed concerning admittance, timing and behaviour. An advice manual of 1845 for people on small budgets notes that ‘You must always be prepared for friends who “drop in” by making sure that the sideboard has something to offer them.’<sup>24</sup> Etiquette books made much of the complicated procedures of middle-class ‘calling’.<sup>25</sup> But there were also less visible rules; Thomas Wright described how working-class Sunday tea was much less restrictive by way of invitation than Sunday dinner but that it was nonetheless understood to be a special occasion and, generally speaking, only people sure of, or hoping for, a welcome would try it on.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Davidoff (1973), 13-21, 47.

<sup>21</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 118.

<sup>22</sup> Wright, T. A journeyman engineer (1867) ‘Working men’s Sundays’ in *Some habits and customs of the working classes* London: Tinsley Brothers: 204-261, 215.

<sup>23</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 116-8.

<sup>24</sup> *Economy for the single and married or the young wife and bachelor’s guide to income and expenditure on £50 per annum ..... by one who ‘makes ends meet’* (c.1845) London: C. Mitchell, 45.

<sup>25</sup> As described in Davidoff (1973), 42-45.

<sup>26</sup> Wright (1867), 215.

## Locations

The history of early-modern British residential space has been written in terms of increasing functional specialisation and social segregation, especially for the gentry and nobility but also for the middling sort.<sup>27</sup> Controlling access to space by 'outsiders' of different sorts has been seen as part of the development of a culture of familial privacy.<sup>28</sup> In mid-seventeenth-century London, for example, parlours and dining-rooms, furnished specifically for the family and guests to gather and eat in, replaced the earlier, probably more socially inclusive, hall.<sup>29</sup> In the houses of the gentry and nobility, eighteenth-century layouts reveal extensive specialisation and the importance of formal sociability,<sup>30</sup> although in more modest town houses the provision of a fixed room for dining appears to have been less common.<sup>31</sup> But it has been argued that, by the nineteenth century, at almost all social levels, the provision of rooms earmarked for hospitable purposes had become a crucial factor in the architecture of new houses in towns,<sup>32</sup> with the functional specialisation of those spaces an increasing phenomenon.<sup>33</sup> Robert Kerr, writing about house plans in the mid century, made it plain that provision for formal sociability should be a paramount consideration: the most important quality of a gentleman's house is 'quiet comfort for his family and guests'.<sup>34</sup> This was to be provided in a series of well-serviced rooms, which always included at least the couplet of dining-room and drawing-room. As we have seen in the previous chapter, this kind of room provision was actually restricted to a small social group and even the grandiose Kerr recognised that some people would use their formal rooms (especially the dining-room) as everyday living-rooms; one reason for this was the desire to keep the drawing-room as a ceremonial space or, as Kerr terms it, with some disapproval,

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<sup>27</sup> As discussed by McKeon (2005), chapter 5 and Orlin (2007), 4-5.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Brown, F. (1986) 'Continuity and change in the urban house: developments in domestic space organisation in seventeenth-century London' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28: 3: 558-590, 584.

<sup>29</sup> John (2008).

<sup>30</sup> As discussed in McKeon (2005), 242.

<sup>31</sup> Cruickshank and Burton (1990), 54-56.

<sup>32</sup> According to Muthesius (1982), 43 and 45, this can be inferred from the fact that the proportion of rooms for hospitality was greater in houses with fewer rooms than in those with more.

<sup>33</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 367-7 and 383; Logan (2001), 26-27; Young (2003), 180.

<sup>34</sup> Kerr (1871), 66. This did not apply to children or servants. I am not suggesting a technical or highly defined meaning for the word 'ceremonial'; I use it to describe rooms furnished with higher quality goods, relative to other locations, and with items which have a large component of display function. I use it to suggest that such a room would probably have been the setting for formal hospitality.

'preserved'.<sup>35</sup> The practice of 'preserving' was sufficiently widespread to warrant a certain amount of criticism in print. In *North and South* Elizabeth Gaskell, an always judgemental narrator, describes a highly decorated drawing-room as 'a weariness to the eye' for her cultivated heroine.<sup>36</sup> Used only for special visits, it is contrasted with the heroine's drawing-room, which is in everyday as well as formal use and where the furniture is old but has a family history. This contrast is presented as just one example of the cultural difference between the north and south, manufacturing and gentility. Preserving also applied to parlours and the working classes: 'The parlour habit spread vigorously in the second half of the nineteenth century, growing on those habits of keeping best rooms with cherished possessions of cased clocks and a few books which had already been observed among some artisans and better paid millworkers in the 1830s and 1840s.'<sup>37</sup> The parlour was not a place for relaxation but was a controlled and formal social environment. Visitors entered by invitation and special behaviour was required.<sup>38</sup> By the end of the century even in small houses, with only one parlour, 'preserving' appears to have become a common part of the spatial organisation, even in the face of considerable daily overcrowding elsewhere in the house.<sup>39</sup> We have just seen that parlours were often not distinguished by the functional specialisation of eating and 'sitting', but a 'preserved' parlour could be kept for special social occasions and uses, such as Christmas and courting. The contemporary literature of housing reform criticised what it presented as an irrational and wasteful use of space which resulted in the household spending their everyday time in a cramped and crowded all-purpose kitchen-living-eating room.<sup>40</sup> Whether this situation existed earlier in the century is rather less clear.

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the importance of a well-furnished parlour as a signifier of respectability reflected the reorientation of working-class culture to the home rather than to work or the street.

The concentration, in the secondary literature, on drawing-rooms, dining-rooms and, to an extent, parlours has not left us with any clear idea of whether other spaces were used for hospitality. As previously discussed, kitchens were often living-rooms. Where there was no other room available, the 'kitchen-living-

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<sup>35</sup> Kerr (1871), 99.

<sup>36</sup> Gaskell (1995), 211-2.

<sup>37</sup> Thompson (1988), 195.

<sup>38</sup> Daunton (1983), 263-285.

<sup>39</sup> Daunton (1983), 277-283.

<sup>40</sup> Daunton (1983), 279.

room' must have been used for hospitality; this was the case with the house-place in *Mary Barton*, discussed in the previous chapter, page 131. It should be noted, though, that in this case the service functions were in a separate room, the back kitchen. And it was Loudon's view that service functions should not be visible, even in a rural working context: '... the back-kitchen, ... as it contains the cooking utensils and washing-apparatus, can never be fit for being passed through by a stranger, or even the master of the family, where proper regard is had by the mistress to cleanliness and delicacy.'<sup>41</sup> It was only on particularly large estates that service rooms, such as model dairies or the stables, were considered suitable for visitors to see.

If there was a choice, was the kitchen used as a setting for invited guests? In *North and South*, in the genteel clergyman's house, the kitchen is the usual place for the reception of working-class visitors and it much disgruntles the servant when a working man befriended by the clergyman's daughter is invited into the drawing-room:

'Why master and you must always be asking the lower classes up-stairs, since we came to Milton, I cannot understand. Folk at Helstone were never brought higher than the kitchen; and I've let one or two of them know before now that they might think it an honour to be even there.'<sup>42</sup>

But according to Thomas Wright, in a working-class household, although the parlour was the main location for entertaining guests, certain close female visitors could be invited into the kitchen with female household members for the more informal parts of their visits.<sup>43</sup>

Did bed-rooms have a hospitable role? They are not described in the contemporary prescriptive literature as spaces of entertainment, although, for privileged members of élite or wealthy households, they were ideally furnished as private sitting-rooms – spaces for personal withdrawal – for both women and for single men.<sup>44</sup> The female 'nest' presented in *The bedroom and boudoir* allowed for cosy gossip but it is not clear whether this was with outsiders.<sup>45</sup> Many memoirs of upper-middle-class childhood recall visiting a mother in her bed-room but there is

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<sup>41</sup> Loudon (c1865), 1130.

<sup>42</sup> Gaskell (1995), 399.

<sup>43</sup> Wright (1867).

<sup>44</sup> Kerr (1871) 135. Throughout his book, he uses the term 'private' in several senses; here it relates to personal withdrawal; elsewhere it is used to indicate the separation of hosts and guests from the servants and children.

<sup>45</sup> Barker (1878), 57-60.



no suggestion that it was generally open to less intimate visitors.<sup>46</sup> When a bedroom was in use as a sick-room, visitors could be permitted.<sup>47</sup> Early nineteenth-century London diaries show that, among the propertied, access to sick rooms was limited to intimates and that the gender of the visitor was an issue.<sup>48</sup> Many novels feature death-bed scenes with lawyers, doctors, nurses, servants and family members present. The sick-room is often discussed in the prescriptive literature of household management and decoration, but the equipment suggested is for the efficient treatment of the invalid not for the reception of his or her visitors.<sup>49</sup> But lodgers did receive visits in their bed-rooms if no other room was available as doubtless also did people who lived in single rooms.<sup>50</sup> Census studies, for various parts of the country and for different social groups, have shown that overnight (or longer) visiting was common.<sup>51</sup> In large residences, there were sometimes bed-rooms available specifically for guests. But in many cases there was not enough space to provide a special guest's bed-room and the presence of a long-term visitor would cause the resident household to shift round to accommodate them.<sup>52</sup> The guest might even share a bed-room or bed with a household member.

Advice literature presented thoroughfares as playing a part in hospitality, particularly in large houses.<sup>53</sup> Entrance halls and passages could function as holding areas that allowed the hosts to prepare themselves for their guests and *vice versa*. In very large houses thoroughfares served to segregate categories of people (family and guests from servants, customers, and business contacts). Country houses and big town houses had been 'networked' since the eighteenth century with separate systems of thoroughfares for servants allowing them to move around the house without being too visible to employers and other privileged inhabitants.<sup>54</sup> Prescriptive literature often emphasised the need for the entrance hall and passage to make a good first impression on visitors of all sorts and it was recommended that they be furnished with impressive items, such as pictures and statues; they should also have some functional or semi-functional items which would be useful for visitors, such as hat and umbrella stands and uncomfortable

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<sup>46</sup> Hamlett (2005), 149 for memoirs of such visits.

<sup>47</sup> Flanders (2003), 19-20.

<sup>48</sup> Heller (2010).

<sup>49</sup> Barker (1878), 94-106.

<sup>50</sup> Heller (2010).

<sup>51</sup> Anderson (1971), 44-55; Davidoff and Hall (1987), 321; Gordon and Nair (2003), 116-7.

<sup>52</sup> Gaskell, E. (2003, first published 1866) *Wives and Daughters* London: Penguin, chapter 25, shows the inconvenience of this for an inhospitable woman.

<sup>53</sup> Kerr (1871), 155-179.

<sup>54</sup> Compare with the networked modern city as discussed by Dennis (2008), 322-349.

chairs for the lower orders to wait on.<sup>55</sup> They could also have a ceremonial role as the setting for the (ideally impressive) dinner procession from the drawing-room to the dining-room.<sup>56</sup>

But to what extent was this advice put into practice? How much time and money did their owners spend on furnishing these spaces? What was their place in the provision of hospitality? Generally, as a category, thoroughfares had an ambiguous status; for a much earlier period they have been described as 'transitional' spaces.<sup>57</sup> Some were not visible to outsiders; visitors would generally have no need to go up the stairs to the top bed-room floors. Back stairs and servants' corridors were not widespread and, even in single household residences, thoroughfares, especially those giving access to the outside, must have been indiscriminately used.

## Privacy

Some scholars have seen hospitality in terms of concepts of private and public. Jennifer Melville writes that 'Hospitality, here defined as the inviting of guests into one's home, was another ambiguous activity which was at once public and private.'<sup>58</sup> Hospitality, she argues, was (generally speaking) private because the householder or someone with deputed powers could control entry to the house and could control the nature of the activities within the house; but, at the same time, spaces of hospitality were public areas within the (more or less) private home because they accepted outsiders. Vickery makes a similar distinction.<sup>59</sup> As did Kerr, in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>60</sup> He described rooms for entertaining (drawing-rooms, dining-rooms and so on) as public rooms, in contrast to the private family apartments. It was accepted that guests would not generally expect to enter the private apartments. Within the public rooms, Kerr understands the drawing-room as being more public than the dining-room because access was less closely controlled. He seems to suggest that women in the drawing-room were almost powerless to repel visitors. The private nature of the space, then, increases as

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<sup>55</sup> Discussed in Young (2003), 176.

<sup>56</sup> Kerr (1871), 98.

<sup>57</sup> Brown (1986), 570, uses this term in his attempt to classify domestic layouts and monitor changes over time.

<sup>58</sup> Melville (1999), 138.

<sup>59</sup> Vickery, A. (2008) 'An Englishman's home is his castle? Thresholds, boundaries and privacies in the eighteenth-century London house' *Past and Present* 199, 147-173.

<sup>60</sup> Kerr (1871), 112.

invitation to it becomes more restricted;<sup>61</sup> the smaller the guest footfall the more private the space. Stobart *et al.* take a similar approach in their discussion of spaces of retailing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>62</sup> They understand the shop as the most public area since it was where the shopkeeper exercised least control over access (although by no means everyone had the right of entry). Particular customers might be invited into inner areas where access was more restricted, sometimes even into the shopkeeper's own domestic areas. On this model, there is not a sharp divide between public and private or between retailing and domestic life, but a series of graduated spaces.

## Inventories and locations for hospitality

This chapter now moves on to use the present series of inventories to provide an empirical development of, and response to, this narrative. It asks how people actually managed their hospitable provision and how they negotiated constraints and imperatives – at both a collective and a personal scale.

Hospitable interactions ranged then, as now, from very formal, planned and managed events to *ad hoc* activities. The vast majority of these interactions were facilitated by the use of rooms or spaces, objects, furnishings and equipment – some of which it is possible to track in inventories. While it is not evidence for actual hospitable activity, the presence in an inventory of certain equipment, such as dinner services and tea sets, suggests *provision* for (or perhaps the display of provision for) hospitality, largely of a formal sort. The same goes for the presence of certain named rooms, which were known as locations of specialised, often formal, hospitality. The positioning of objects – especially the less movable ones like pianos and sofas – can suggest a habitual location for hospitality.

At this point it would be useful to explain how I am using and understanding the term 'space' in this thesis. 'Space' is not an absolute static dimension but involves time, use and social relations. 'The spatial is an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification.'<sup>63</sup> Control over access affects the nature of a space;<sup>64</sup> a servant's experience of and freedom to use the drawing-room was very

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<sup>61</sup> Andersson, G. (2006) 'A mirror of oneself: possessions and the manifestation of status among a local Swedish elite, 1650-1770' *Cultural and Social History* 3: 1: 21-44.

<sup>62</sup> Stobart *et al.* (2007), 112-8.

<sup>63</sup> Massey, D. (1994) *Space, place, and gender* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Heller (2010); Melville (1999), 126-147; Vickery (2008).

different from that of her master.<sup>65</sup> The same locations might have different uses at different times, either routinely or occasionally.<sup>66</sup> Hamlett maps Victorian emotional and social relationships onto household locations in her investigation of the emotional space of the household.<sup>67</sup> But inventories are not very revealing, especially in aggregate studies, about such elements of space. They do not reveal who actually used the rooms or when. But what they *do* provide good evidence for is the locational framework for those flexible, relational and temporal elements. And this framework is productive, not simply passive or neutral. Rooms are sometimes given names on plans or in advertisements and their use is to an extent determined by the architectural shell and by technology, but they are also named, furnished and equipped, intentionally, by some member or members of the household.<sup>68</sup> For this reason, whereas room names in plans and advice texts can be seen as prescriptions or 'representations of space', the room names in inventories can be understood as space in everyday use or as a form of 'spatial practice', perhaps partly, but not necessarily, responsive to the representations.<sup>69</sup>

The use of rooms has rarely been entirely undifferentiated; the actual names adopted and the equipment installed give a guide to intentional provision for functional use. In his study of the domestic spaces of late-Georgian visiting, Heller notes that 'different areas of the home have habitual uses or significance, but that the presence of specific people or objects can temporarily change the significance of those spaces. The significance of locations within the home is created by a combination of the time of day, the activities being undertaken, the objects that were present, and the identities of the people involved.'<sup>70</sup> He is drawing on Giddens' notion of 'locales' to understand locations as providing the setting for flexible interactions and relationships; but the habitual usage of the locale and its equipment is not just a background, it is a constitutive element in the nature of that space at different times and for different people.<sup>71</sup> Inventories are good at indicating this locational element of space and I adopt Heller's formulation here, using the terms 'room' and 'location' in this sense. But I further stress that the habitual use of

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<sup>65</sup> Donald (1999).

<sup>66</sup> Melville (1999), 135-138.

<sup>67</sup> Hamlett (2005).

<sup>68</sup> Cieraad, I. (1999) 'Introduction' in Cieraad, I., ed. *At home: an anthropology of domestic space* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 5.

<sup>69</sup> This Lefebvrian understanding of space is discussed by Dennis (2009), 2, referring to Lefebvre, H. (1991) *The production of space* Oxford: Blackwell.

<sup>70</sup> Heller (2010), 628-629.

<sup>71</sup> Giddens, A. (1986) *The constitution of society* Berkley: University of California Press, 118-9 and 132-3, cited in Heller (2010), 628.

a room can be seen in the sense of material culture, as an artefact which people could bring into play, alongside other artefacts (goods and equipment), as a tool in their social relations.

Locations for hospitality are susceptible to aggregate analysis and findings of this kind from the last chapter are brought in, alongside additional analysis. But the predominant method used in this chapter is the interpretive investigation of five individual inventories. This method is more suitable for the present topic for two reasons. Firstly, many hospitable interactions must have involved everyday items and spaces rather than specialised equipment; provision for that kind of interaction cannot, by and large, be identified in quantitative investigation but can sometimes be retrieved by considering the contents of different rooms in relation to each other. Using full inventories, rather than tracking rooms or items, provides the opportunity to consider the spatial differentiations and organisation of a residence as a whole, identifying locations which were *not* apparently intended for hospitality as well as those that were. This allows a judgement to be made about the relative importance of hospitality in that individual's residence. Secondly, this close attention allows a consideration of people together with their things in their particular circumstances. It allows us to think about a person's motivations and agency. 'Typical behaviour' (for example, that of a precariously positioned middle-class professional) is called upon in interpretation, but the result is intended as an explication of individual – though not especially unusual – cases rather than as typical examples.

This chapter does not focus on particular pieces of equipment or items of furnishing but since a piano features in several of the case studies, it has been thought useful to provide some background information about production, costs, distribution and attitudes. However, rather than interrupt the interpretation of the individual cases studies, this information has been presented in a separate 'box', rather like an extended footnote, after the first case study.

## **The case studies**

The case studies were selected by a 'snowballing' approach – each one was chosen in order to be compared to the others in specific respects. The findings of the previous chapter with regard to the differentiation and use of day-room space were borne in mind when making the choices, in order to get a spread of types of spatial organisation. The starting case was the very detailed inventory of a London

dentist – a member of what was a somewhat shaky middle-class profession at the time.<sup>72</sup> The second inventory relates to a neighbour of his who was of a different occupational class – a small master. The third example was another Londoner – a merchant in the City. He was wealthier than the other two; an important reason for selecting his inventory was that, unlike the others, who were both married with families at home, he was a bachelor. All three were self-employed and lived over or close to their businesses. In contrast, the remaining two were from outside London. One, living in a small provincial market town was, like the City merchant, middle-class, well-to-do and never-married. Her sex was an important factor since gendered modes of hospitality and attitudes to possessions are issues for investigation.<sup>73</sup> The final case is that of a prosperous businessman and landlord in a manufacturing town of the West Midlands. His inventory provides the chance to pursue the suggestion of the previous chapter that in this region even the wealthy and middle-class did not follow the drawing- and dining-room mode of household organisation that was often found in London middle-class homes. For easy reference Table 4.1 lists the rooms and other locations listed in each inventory as well as key factors in the individuals' circumstances.

### **Married male professional living in London**

Henry Orme was a dentist who died, intestate, in 1850. His inventory presents a residence which accords well with standard ideas of specialised middle-class domestic space. But also, when seen in the context of his particular circumstances, we can see that it is not *just* 'typical', that it does not *just* match prescription, but that it relates to his particular circumstances and was a strategic demonstration of his status as much as a reflection of it.

Dentistry was at this date a relatively new, expanding, sector offering exciting entrepreneurial possibilities.<sup>74</sup> There was considerable money to be made in this business and dentists at this period were better off than the average medical man. Their socio-economic standing was on a par with qualified surgeons and, as a group, they did not enjoy the lowly status often ascribed to them.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> This inventory is also discussed in the following chapter in the context of the spatial organisation of work and home.

<sup>73</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 95.

<sup>74</sup> Hillam, C. (1988) 'The development of dental practice before 1850' *Medical Historian* 1: July 1988: 10-16; *Oral Histories: a pictorial history of dentistry from the BDA Museum collections* (2002) London: British Dental Association, electronic resource.

<sup>75</sup> Hillam (1988), 15.

**Table 4.1 Biographical and household details of the five cases**

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Huddleston</b>	<b>Orme</b>	<b>Atkinson</b>
Occupation	Chair & cabinet maker	Dentist	Stuff merchant & warehouseman
Place of residence	London	London	City of London
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Marital status	Married	Married	Bachelor
Date of death	1849	1850	1852
Age at death	58	About 50	51
Gross wealth <sup>76</sup>	£767	£162	£13,383
Net wealth	£339	£44	£12,134
Wealth quartile (4=high)	3	2	4
Additional real estate	Probably not	Probably not	Yes
HIS-CAM score <sup>77</sup>	58	99	71
Funeral expenses <sup>78</sup>	£14	£11	£50
Household size <sup>79</sup>	4/5	8-11	3/4
Live-in servants	0	1-2, plus possibly an assistant	1, plus possibly a sister
Value of furnishings	£59	£162 – includes business furnishings	£178 – includes business furnishings
Residential rooms	4	11 plus hall & stairs	6
Bed-rooms	2	6	4
Named drawing-room	No	Yes	No
Named dining-room	No	No	Yes
Named parlour	Yes	No	No
Named sitting-room	No	No	No
Coded kitchen-living-room	No	No	Yes
Other service areas	Yes	Yes	No
More than 1 day-room	Yes	Yes	No
Kitchen used as family living-room	Maybe	No	Maybe
Hospitable rooms	1/2	2	1
Main room for hospitality	Parlour	Drawing-room	Dining-room
Secondary room for provision of hospitality	Kitchen?	Back-room 1 <sup>st</sup> floor	
Bed-room for hospitality	No	No	No

<sup>76</sup> The median and mean gross wealth for the 335 individuals whose inventories showed named rooms were: £664 and £4,463 (the minimum was £12 and the maximum £211,446, standard deviation 14839.634). The mean size of probated estates nationwide in 1858 was £2,331; *Twenty-second Annual report of the registrar-general (1859)* PP 1861 XVIII (2897) 173-181.

<sup>77</sup> See Chapter 2, 85-86, for HIS-CAM system and scores.

<sup>78</sup> Funeral costs are closely correlated with wealth and coded status. The median, mean and modal funeral expenses for this sample of 335 individuals was: £25; £40; and £15.

<sup>79</sup> Household size and composition is estimated from the census nearest the decease.

<b>Surname</b>	<b>Astley</b>	<b>Woodall</b>
Occupation	NA	Boiler maker (retired)
Place of residence	Cheadle, Staffordshire (market town)	Netherton, Worcestershire (small manufacturing town)
Gender	Female	Male
Marital status	Spinster	Married
Date of death	1847	1858
Age at death	48	61
Gross wealth	£1,425	£987
Net wealth	£1,319	£961
Wealth quartile (4=high)	3	3
Additional real estate	Yes	Yes
HIS-CAM score	NA	87
Funeral expenses	£87	£40
Household size	2?	4?
Live-in servants	1?	0
Value of furnishings	£99	Not known
Residential rooms	9 plus passage	6
Bed-rooms	3	3
Named drawing-room	No	No
Named dining-room	No	No
Named parlour	Yes	Yes
Named sitting-room	Yes	Yes
Coded kitchen-living-room	Yes	Yes
Other service areas	Yes	No
More than 1 day-room	Yes	Yes
Kitchen used as family living-room	No	Yes
Hospitable rooms	2 for head of household. 1 for servants.	3
Main room for provision of hospitality	Front parlour	Parlour
Secondary room for provision of hospitality	Sitting room	Sitting-room. Kitchen?
Bed-room for hospitality	Guest room?	No

**Table 4.1 continued**



But it was rather a risky business and there was a very high drop-out rate. Dentists would doubtless, like doctors, have been more successful at attracting and keeping wealthy and genteel patients if they were able to manifest an air of knowledge, substance and gentility.<sup>80</sup> Simon Szreter argues that whereas the manufacturers or retailers of goods were judged by their products, professionals relied on ‘metonymic signalling’ because their clients could not judge their services in advance.<sup>81</sup>

Orme (whom we meet again in Chapter 5, 211-215, where the arrangements of his dental practice are discussed) lived and had his surgery in Charles Street (now part of Mortimer Street), adjacent to the Middlesex Hospital in central London.<sup>82</sup> He also worked with John Wilment Holmes, a dentist who had his practice at 61 St. Martin’s Lane.<sup>83</sup> At his death, Henry Orme owed rent on St. Martin’s Lane and £30 to Mr. Holmes. He seems to have been reasonably successful; he certainly was not one of those whose business failed since he was practising at the same address since at least 1841.<sup>84</sup> But he did not die a very wealthy man; he left a gross wealth of only £162 (the median gross wealth for the 335 individuals in the sample who had named-room inventories was £664), which comprised his household and surgery possessions, the value of the lease on the 5 Charles Street and the goodwill of 61 St. Martin’s Lane.<sup>85</sup> Once his debts of £118.8.0 (about half of which related to his business) had been deducted he left a net wealth of only £44. However, he was able to maintain a well-furnished establishment in a tradesmen’s neighbourhood. He and his wife were about 50; there were three young adult daughters, maybe three younger boys, and one or two female servants. In the census taken six months after his death, a young dental

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<sup>80</sup> Digby, A. (1994) *Making a medical living: doctors and patients in the English market for medicine, 1720-1911* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>81</sup> Szreter, S. (1996) *Fertility, class and gender in Britain, 1860-1940* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 472-474.

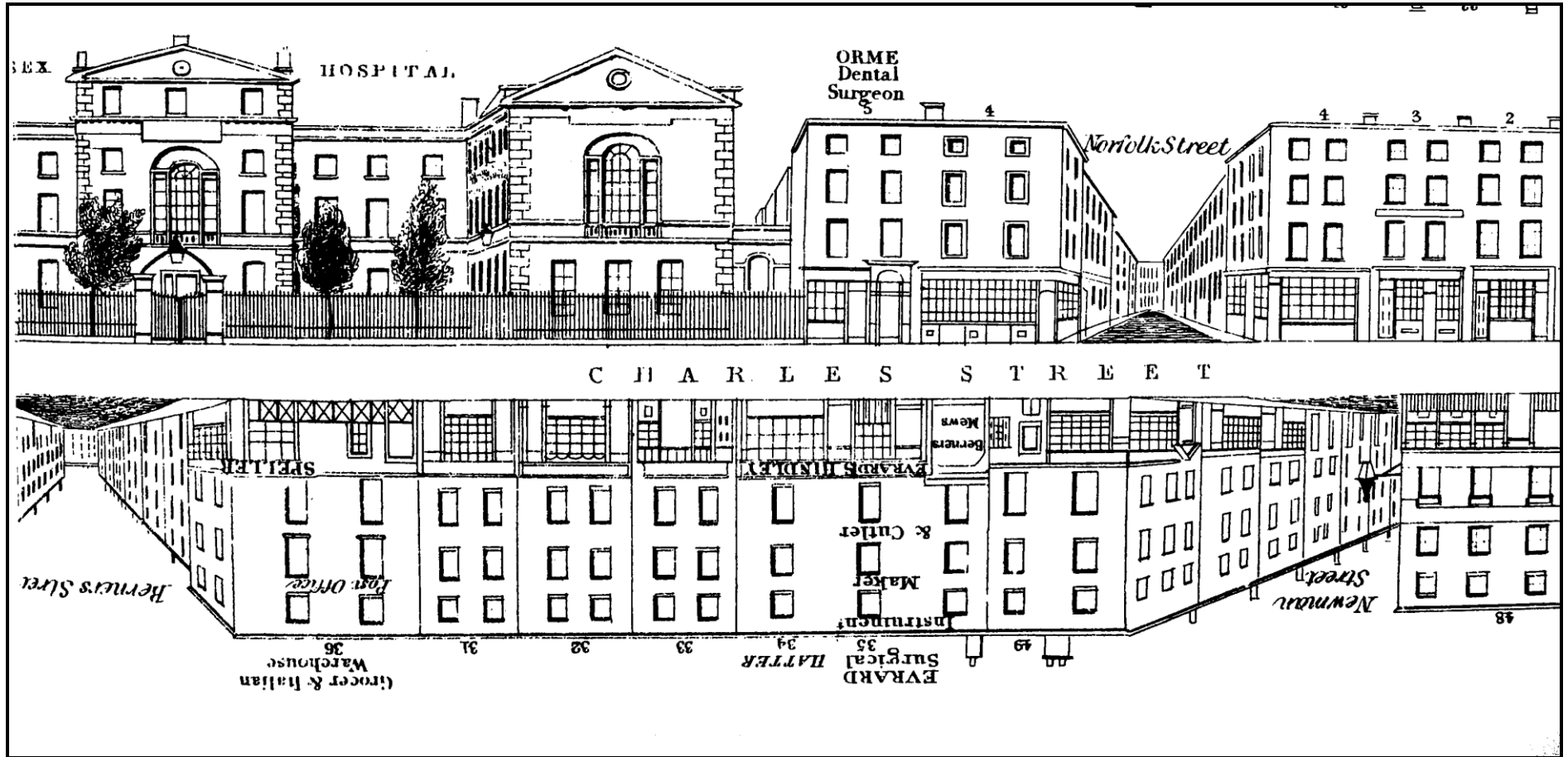
<sup>82</sup> Henry Orme’s Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/96.

<sup>83</sup> *The Post Office London Directory*, small edition (1848).

<sup>84</sup> *The Post Office London Directory (Part 1: Street, Commercial, & Trades Directories)* (1841).

<sup>85</sup> Sources relating to inheritance tax do not throw light on whether Mr. Orme owned real property since real estate only became susceptible to death duty taxes in 1853; Green *et al.* (2009), 316. The sewer rate records (Rate Books, vol. 10: Eastern division of Westminster, October 1850. LMA MCS/381) show that he was the occupier but not the owner of 5 Charles Street; the other households in the house were his tenants. His debts at death, recorded in the Legacy Duty papers, show him owing rent on 61 St Martin’s Lane. The census for 1851 (HO107, 1482, 37-40) shows this as a house in multi occupation but it is not clear whether he rented the whole house or just the dental surgery.

Illustration 4.1 Page from John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-1840 showing Henry Orme's premises  
 Source: Jackson, P. (2002) *John Tallis's London Street Views 1838-1840* London: London Topographical Society



assistant is listed as resident; if he was there while Orme was alive his position is likely to have been equivocal between servant and family member.<sup>86</sup>

There were four floors in the Ormes' house (see Illustration 4.1). The dental practice was on the ground floor in its own suite of rooms and there was a tobacconist's shop on the ground floor front.<sup>87</sup> The room names, furnishings and equipment listed in the inventory make it clear that different areas were intended for different categories of people and different types of interaction. There was a drawing-room on the first floor, doubtless on the front, with two windows. It was highly furnished (Table 4.2) with the expensive, visually expressive 'feminine' items, found in the quantitative analysis to be typical of this room and generally associated with people of wealth or high status: a fitted Brussels carpet and a hearth rug; rosewood furniture; a couch which, together with the set of chairs, provided enough seating for visitors as well as adult family members; the chiffoniers were substantial pieces of decorative furniture in their own right and they provided storage for other items as well as a display area on the top; and there were a *lot* of ornaments and pictures.

Ornamental items doubtless provided talking points and produced a pleasurable (and appropriate or impressive?) material environment for guests. With its glass girandole, its four-light glass chandelier, its copper coal scuttle and bronze fender and its glass shades, this was a sparkly, shiny room. If kept competently it would have demonstrated cleanliness, which was extremely important in middle-class culture, serving as a differentiation from those who could not or would not maintain such standards.<sup>88</sup> The piano, in a family anxious to demonstrate its social status and with marriageable daughters, also marks this room out as a location of formal entertainment. Although pianos were used for personal enjoyment and for informal sociability, their cost meant that they were not acquired lightly (see below, 172-175). Piano playing was a requisite middle-class female (but not only female)

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<sup>86</sup> Derived from the census enumerators' books for 1841 (HO107, 675, 7, 26, 44) and 1851 (HO107, 1486, 546, 4).

<sup>87</sup> The census for 1851 (HO107, 1486, 546, 4) shows there to have been two other, probably single-person, households in number 5.

<sup>88</sup> As demonstrated in *North and South* (1995), 149-50: 'Everything reflected light, nothing absorbed it. The whole room had a painfully spotted, spangled, speckled look about it, which impressed Margaret so unpleasantly that she was hardly conscious of the peculiar cleanliness required to keep everything so white and pure in such an atmosphere, or of the trouble that must be willingly expended to secure that effect of icy, snowy discomfort.' For a discussion of sparkle, shine, patina and class see Kelley, V. (forthcoming) 'Housekeeping: shine, polish, gloss and glaze as surface strategies in the domestic interior' in McMahon D. and J. Myers, eds. *Material possessions: the objects and textures of everyday life in imperial Britain*.

skill which oiled the wheels of social intercourse and which displayed the cultural and economic capital of the family as well as the charms of the performer. Although there were books and an inkstand, most of the contents and the name of the room suggest that it made ceremonial provision for company.

**Table 4.2 Contents of Henry Orme's drawing-room, London, 1850**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/96**

1	Pianoforte and music stool
1	4 light glass chandelier
1	Chimney glass
3	Ornaments in glass shades
1	Brussels carpet as planned and rug
1	Rosewood chiffonier
1	Mahogany chiffonier
8	Mahogany chairs
[Some]	Damask curtains to 2 windows
[Some]	Pole brackets &c
1	Mahogany table with 3 drawers
1	Wax fruit and glass shade
1	Flower stand
Sundry	Ornaments
Sundry	Loose music
1	Rosewood loo table
1	Rosewood couch
1	Bronze fender and irons
1	Copper coal scuttle & scoop
2	China vases & sundry china ornaments
1	Time piece and glass shade
1	Glass girandole and small globe
Sundry	China ornaments
3	Portraits in gilt frames
1	Oil painting
1	Drawing in maple frame
4	Drawings in gilt frames
5	Drawings in gilt frames
1	Portrait of a lady in gilt frame
Sundry	Books
1	Inkstand
1	Shell basket

This was a very demonstrative room and, probably, display of some sort was a motive for the Ormes. But display is complicated, as Trevor Keeble shows in his analysis of the diaries and correspondence of several nineteenth-century women.<sup>89</sup> They and their social connections were concerned to display, through their decoration and furnishing, their cultural capital, or their wealth, or both. But

<sup>89</sup> Keeble (2007).

what his diarists and correspondents also reveal is that display was not only a direct assertion of status before others, it was also for their own pleasure. We might read this in Bourdieuan terms; it was part of their *habitus* and an indirect rather than strategic claim to a status position. Keeble's article also demonstrates that the complications of 'display' are best appreciated through personal testimony. This cannot easily be read from inventory lists and this thesis does not attempt to do so; it is merely recognised that display of some sort is one potential motive for possession.

It is possible that the drawing-room was 'preserved', since the adjacent 'back room', which was probably a smaller room opening directly off the drawing-room, appears to have been equipped for more informal everyday use (Table 4.3).<sup>90</sup> Although it had a mahogany dining table and sideboard, which were key items of what were called 'dining-rooms' in the inventory sample, this room was not given the formal title.<sup>91</sup> It was not arranged for large formal dinner parties and the inventory does not contain any sets of wine glasses or dining china – only 'crocker', kept in the kitchen. The child's chair suggests that the room was, or had been at some time, set up for family eating.

The furnishings were inferior to those in the drawing-room: although there was a pier glass and thirteen pictures, the material of the frames did not warrant mention; there were some china ornaments – but no wax flowers or glass shades; the carpet was apparently not Brussels; the fender and fire irons were iron rather than bronze[d]; there were fewer chairs than in the drawing-room and they were cane – less expensive than mahogany. The work box, little boxes and the mahogany desk suggest that it was used as a family living-room. The copper and iron tea kettles are a homely touch; these are items which in the inventory sample are more often found in kitchens than dining-rooms, where the preparation of food or drink was not considered appropriate.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Burton, N. and P. Guillery (2006) *Behind the façade: London house plans, 1660-1840* Reading: Spire Books.

<sup>91</sup> 79% of named 'dining-rooms' included at least one of these items.

<sup>92</sup> Of a total of 442 kettles in the 337 inventories, only 24 were listed in parlours, sitting-rooms, dining-rooms or 'other day-rooms'; there were none in the drawing-rooms.

**Table 4.3 Contents of 'back room 1<sup>st</sup> floor no 1' in Henry Orme's house, London, 1850**

1	Mahogany pedestal sideboard
1	Mahogany dining table
1	3 plate chimney glass
1	Pier glass
6	Cane chairs
1	Childs chair
1	Carpet and rug
1	Iron fender & irons
1	Copper tea kettle
1	Iron tea kettle
1	Mahogany Canterbury and loose music
1	Mahogany chest of 3 drawers
1	Couch covered in chintz
1	Plated 4 light candelabra
1	Plated cruet stand
1	Barometer
3	China vases
1	Time piece
[Some]	China ornaments
Sundry	Cut glass on sideboard
4	Plated decanter stands
1	Mahogany desk
1	Work box
4	Little boxes
1	Gas burner & consumer
1	Portrait of a lady
1	Oil painting
11	Prints framed
1	Copper scuttle

The hall was the sole entrance to the house from the street,<sup>93</sup> so it and the imposing central doorway would have been used by everyone coming in – patients, servants, trades people, family, guests, and the tenant or tenants of the third floor (although the tobacconist's shop had its own doorway). The hall was impressively furnished, with plaster figures and two special hall chairs, probably referring to the grand vestibules of classical country seats, seen also in certain 'domesticated' public spaces, such as clubs.<sup>94</sup> But other thoroughfares were less well dressed; the stairs were merely furnished with stair carpets.

<sup>93</sup> Horwood, R. (1792-1799) *Plan of the cities of London and Westminster, the borough of Southwark and parts adjoining, shewing every house* London <http://www.oldlondonmaps.com/horwoodpages/horwood10402.html> (accessed 30.3.2010).

<sup>94</sup> Rendell (1999).

There do not appear to be any other locations for hospitality in the domestic part of the house. The bed-rooms show no special sign of this and neither the kitchen nor the wash-house offer suitable facilities for the Ormes' guests.

**Table 4.4 Contents of Henry Orme's kitchen, London, 1850**

1	Return fender and part irons
3	Dish covers
1	Plate cover
6	Dish covers
7	Tin plates
1	Bronze tea urn
Sundry	Crockery
2	Metal tea pots
1	Metal coffee pot
1	Naptha lamp
1	Plate rack
3	Chairs
1	Wainscot table

The contents of the kitchen (Table 4.4) do not qualify it to be coded as a kitchen-living-room. In a household of this size, with just one or two servants, it is very likely that there were some interactions in the kitchen between the servants and the children and that Mrs. Orme probably took part in the housework.<sup>95</sup> And it is quite likely that the servants extended hospitality there, to friends and tradespeople, but it is most unlikely that the Ormes themselves would have entertained there.

We can see, then, that the Ormes' residence offered the kind of highly differentiated provision for visitors suggested by Kerr and described in many narratives of middle-class *mores*. There was a well furnished drawing-room for formal entertaining. Drawing-room events, rather than dinners, might appear to have been favoured in the Orme household. Calls and evenings were less expensive than dinners and Mr. Orme did not have a great deal of spare money. He had a quiverful of children to provide for; without a lot of money to leave, the daughters would be best provided for by marriage and they could be shown off in the drawing-room. A room with this name suggests a certain formality of approach to entertaining. But, as previously discussed, the ownership of such a room was closely associated with high wealth and with middle-class status and Mr. Orme was well below the median on the monetary indicator on both gross and net measures

<sup>95</sup> Draznin, Y. (2001) *Victorian London's middle-class housewife: what she did all day* London: Greenwood, 47-69.

(see Table 4.1, page 162). This discrepancy can be partly accounted for by the fact that he was a Londoner and Londoners were more likely than people from the rest of the country to have a drawing-room, even if they did not score highly on wealth. But it is probably also accounted for by his professional need to maintain a good middle-class front for attracting patients. It is unlikely that he socialised with his patients but they might have heard the piano tinkling away upstairs. As we will see in the next chapter, his waiting-room, modelled on his drawing-room, told his patients that he was a proper middle-class man. However, his middle-class 'front' was not, as Erving Goffman seems to suggest,<sup>96</sup> only put on in the immediate performance before his patients; he could be more convincingly middle-class to them if he also behaved that way elsewhere – if his 'dispositions' were congruent in all areas of his life.<sup>97</sup> The maintenance of this front can be seen, partly, as a contribution to the business, like the advertisement he took out in Tallis's guide and the impressive furnishing of the hall. A somewhat tenuous grip on middle-class culture is also indicated in the extreme sparkliness of the drawing-room decoration. Although, as discussed in Chapter 3, drawing-rooms were conventionally furnished in a feminine manner, which involved the use of shiny materials and light colours, a common trope in novels suggests that too much sparkle or shine was indicative of recent or insecure elevation to the middle class; long standing members of the middle class were represented as preferring the gentle polish and patina of older furniture, with associations of memory and suggestions of inheritance.<sup>98</sup> The possibility that the drawing-room was 'preserved' for special occasions, with the back room used for every-day sociability and perhaps for intimate or casual entertaining also supports this.

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<sup>96</sup> Goffman, E. (1990, first published 1959) *The presentation of self in everyday life* London: Penguin, 28-82.

<sup>97</sup> Bourdieu (1984).

<sup>98</sup> MacCracken, G. (1988) *Culture and consumption* Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, chapter 2; this argues that patina was replaced as a status marker by fashion in the eighteenth century. However Ponsonby (2007), 97, argues against this and there is plenty of fictional evidence that it still retained its hold. Mrs. Gaskell's (1995) *North and South* (again!), 104-5, provides an example by comparing the Hales's (genteel) drawing-room with that of the (manufacturing well-to-do) Thorntons': 'Here were no mirrors, not even a scrap of glass to reflect the light, and answer the same purpose as water in a landscape; no gilding; a warm, sober breadth of colouring, well relieved by the dear old Helstone chintz-curtains and chair covers'. For the continuation of the different values associated with patina and shine see Kelley, (forthcoming) and Kelley V. (2010) *Soap and water: cleanliness, dirt and the working classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* London: I.B. Tauris, which argues, page 73, that the working classes valued the appearance of newness as the cheaper goods they could afford did not age well.



## Pianos<sup>99</sup>

In Britain, pianos were first produced in the 1760s. By 1851 it is estimated that 15,000-20,000 instruments were being produced each year by a small number of makers, almost entirely based in London. Initially they had been 'squares', but they were soon joined by grands and then uprights. A contemporary account in the mid century estimated the trade to be five to ten percent grands, five to ten percent squares and 80 to 90 percent uprights.

A piano is often thought of as a typical component of the Victorian middle-class home. Linda Young remarks that they appear frequently in novels.<sup>100</sup> But in her survey of approximately 100 middle-class inventories for the early and mid nineteenth century (from Scotland, the United States and Australia) she found that they were present in only about a quarter of cases. And in the present, socially broader and somewhat later, study only nineteen percent of the 475 non-commercial inventories included a piano or pianos.

Cost was an important factor. In the 1850s and 60s a new square by Broadwood or Stodart cost 60 or 70 guineas; an upright might have been 50 to 100 guineas; a grand would have been more. Less expensive instruments were available (from about twenty or 25 guineas upwards) but even this was a substantial sum. Prices were kept high by a twenty-percent import tax, which restricted foreign competition, and by the practice of selling pianos through professors of music who received a twenty to 25-percent commission, borne by the customer.<sup>101</sup> However, there was a respectable and thriving second-hand (if not third-hand) market in which a piano could be acquired for as little as two pounds. The twelve pianos in the inventory sample for which an individual valuation was given ranged from three to twenty pounds.

Their cost was understood to restrict social penetration. E.F. Rimbault in 1860 noted that it was '[the] man, engaged in commercial and other active pursuits, [who] finds the chief charm of his drawing-room in the intellectual enjoyment

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<sup>99</sup> Unless otherwise stated, information on the history of the piano industry is drawn from Ehrlich, C. (1975) 'Social emulation and industrial progress – the Victorian piano' an inaugural lecture Queens' University of Belfast 5.2.1975 and Ehrlich, C. (1990, revised edition) *The piano: a history* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

<sup>100</sup> Young (2003), 179.

<sup>101</sup> *Select committee on import duties. Report, minutes of evidence, appendix, index* PP (1840) 601: V: 99: pages 37-41.

afforded by the piano.’<sup>102</sup> He considered that the piano fulfilled educational as well as social needs, since studying the finest compositions improved the general education, habits and tastes of piano students. Mr. William Bressom, a loom-broker of Spitalfields seems to have concurred; he was asked in 1838 by the commission enquiring into the condition of the hand-loom weavers: ‘Did you never contemplate bringing up your son and daughter to some other branch of industry?’ He replied: ‘Yes, on account of the fluctuations to which the trade has always been liable. This led me to take great pains with their education; and thinking a little musical talent might be turned to account, I had my son to play the violin when a child, and my daughter the piano. As they grew up, however, I could never discover any means of bettering their condition by getting them into other trades.’<sup>103</sup>

This class bias is clearly visible in the present inventory sample: 34 percent of inventories belonging to people coded as higher status included a piano compared with eleven percent of those coded as of lower status.<sup>104</sup> But wealth was even more important. The proportion of inventories including a piano rose by wealth quartile<sup>105</sup> but the biggest difference occurred between those in the top quartile and all the rest.<sup>106</sup> In Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*, the Hale family managed to maintain middle-class *mores* when Mr. Hale ceased to be a clergyman and became a teacher but the piano was one of the things that had to go.<sup>107</sup>

Pianos were more common in London inventories (33 percent) than in those from the rest of the country (sixteen percent).<sup>108</sup> This is perhaps partly because most manufacture took place in London and problems of maintaining stock of such expensive items meant that distribution was somewhat restricted.<sup>109</sup> Nonetheless trade directories show that there were plenty of retailers or distributors outside London, often dealing in second-hand pianos. The concentration of piano ownership in London can be seen as another example of its distinctive culture (as discussed in Chapter 3).

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<sup>102</sup> Rimbault, E.F. (1860) *The pianoforte, its origin, progress and construction* London: Cocks, 159-160.

<sup>103</sup> *Royal Commission on hand-loom weavers. Report by Mr. Hickson on condition of hand-loom weavers* PP (1840) 639: XXIV: 639: page 77.

<sup>104</sup> Chi-square=32.847, df=1, n=387, p=<.001. N=387 because it excludes those who were coded as ‘not known’ for status.

<sup>105</sup> Chi-square= 84.783, df=3, n=475, p=<.001.

<sup>106</sup> Ownership in the top quartile reached 46% but in the bottom three it ranged from 5% to 14%.

<sup>107</sup> Gaskell, E. (1995), 128.

<sup>108</sup> Chi-square=12.375, df=1, n=475, p=<.001.

<sup>109</sup> Ehrlich (1990), 39.

In the mid century pianos began come down in price, which Rimbault thought would extend their social reach.<sup>110</sup> In the inventory sample there was small significant increase in ownership between the periods 1841 to 1860 and 1861 to 1881, but the increase was more marked (from 27 percent to 44 percent) amongst those coded as of higher status than amongst those coded as of lower status (from nine to thirteen percent). And ownership increased in London (from about a quarter to almost half) more than in the rest of the country. At this stage, then, the lowering of prices does not seem to have greatly extended the piano's social spread.

However the period of the inventory sample pre-dates the very rapid increase in piano ownership that has been identified from the 1870s onwards and which has been attributed to the import of cheaper models made by new American and German production technology, to new spectacular advertising methods and to the advent of the hire purchase system. It was these factors which made possible the 'golden age of the piano', which Ehrlich locates around 1910, when he estimates that there was one instrument for every ten to twenty people. An observer, writing just before cheap pianos had made their mark, noted that the demands of social status had made it necessary for a section of the community to provide themselves with music in the home 'and had led the poorer classes in emulation to possess that highly respectable piece of furniture.'<sup>111</sup>

Piano playing was considered to be particularly a female accomplishment and there was a notion that female children had to learn music as a fashionable branch of education. A social historian of music quotes from the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1868: 'One of the considerations which mainly influence parents of the middle class in selecting a school for their daughters is that instrumental music is to be the leading subject of instruction for women except in the lowest ranks of life'.<sup>112</sup> In novels, the piano often forms a location for romance and flirtation.<sup>113</sup> And a study of early nineteenth-century Scottish middle-class homes has found it to be part of the provision for managed courtship.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Rimbault (1860), 159-160.

<sup>111</sup> Crowest, F. (1881) *Phases of musical England* London: Remington and Co, 191.

<sup>112</sup> Mackerness, E.D. (1964) *A social history of music* London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 173.

<sup>113</sup> There are many examples such as Eliot, G. (1985, first published in three volumes 1860) *The Mill on the Floss* London: Penguin Classics.

<sup>114</sup> Nenadic (1994).

We have already seen that pianos were associated with wealth, higher status and London inventories. It is no surprise, then, that they were also associated with inventories that included a drawing-room (which, as we have seen in Chapter 3, were similarly associated with those variables). 54 percent of drawing-room inventories include a piano, whereas the figure drops to fifteen percent for all those inventories which were organised by location but which did *not* have a drawing-room.<sup>115</sup> Parlours and sitting-rooms were neutral in this respect. And Table 4.5 shows that more drawing-rooms contained a piano than the other main named day-rooms.

**Table 4.5 Percentage of the main day-rooms that contained a piano<sup>116</sup>**

Room name	Number of rooms	Number containing piano	% containing a piano
Drawing-room	91	35	38.5%
Dining-room	75	13	17.3%
Sitting-room	89	12	13.5%
Parlour	186	19	10.2%

In summary, pianos, for the period covered by these inventories, were generally owned by people of wealth, often those coded as of higher status. They were more common in London than in other parts of the country. They were, generally speaking, drawing-room items, associated with feminine skills, and they probably conferred some status since not only were they expensive but it took time and money to learn how to play.

### **A London small master**

James Huddleston lived on the same block as Mr. Orme, at the same time, but in a smaller house in one of the narrower side streets. He died in 1849, aged 58. He was a skilled man, described as a chair maker and/or cabinet maker.<sup>117</sup> His

<sup>115</sup> Chi-square=53.060, df=1, n=337, p=<.001.

<sup>116</sup> Using the sample of 337 non-commercial named-room inventories, see Appendix 2.

<sup>117</sup> Biographical information is derived from: TNA IR 19/100; 1841 census enumerators' book (HO107, 675, 7, 34, 60); 1851 census enumerators' book (HO107, 1486, 550, 13); Sun Insurance index, Guildhall Library Manuscripts section, located at London Metropolitan Archives, MS 11936/504/1029703, 4 May 1825 and MS 11936/515/1063873, 17 August 1827; *The Post Office London Directory* (1841) London: Kelly, Part 1: Street, Commercial, & Trades Directories; *The small edition of the Post Office London directory, 1852* (1851) London: Kelly.

neighbours included a jewellery case maker, a solicitor and his milliner wife, an architectural artist and a substantial ginger beer manufacturer. His was a family business; he had been at the same address since at least 1825, initially with another Huddleston, and his son Thomas continued as a cabinet maker at the same address after his father's death. The trade directory and insurance records indicate that Huddleston's workshop (the contents of which were sold separately for £237) was on the same site as his residence. Although James Huddleston was a master it is not known whether he employed others although, in the 1841 census, his son was listed, at the same address as an upholsterer, doubtless working with his father. David Green, using the 1851 census, finds the great majority of London workshops were small, employing no more than four men and often without any employees at all.<sup>118</sup> Green's discussion of the furniture trade strongly suggests that Thomas Huddleston was one of the many small masters in the vicinity of the Tottenham Court Road who were subcontracted by the large furniture stores.<sup>119</sup> Green also notes that by the 1840s these makers were coming under severe pressure from the growing furniture trade of the East End, which used cheaper labour and a greater division of labour to undercut West-End makers. That this was the case with the Huddlestons is suggested by the fact that although Thomas Huddleston initially continued his father's business, by the time of the 1861 census he had moved out of the Nassau Street workshop and was listed as an upholsterer in nearby Berners Street, with no indication that he was an employer.

There were many similarities between Huddleston and Orme: they both died intestate; they both lived in multi-occupied houses, of which they were the landlord;<sup>120</sup> they both had wives and daughters of marriageable age living at home; they both owned and worked in their own businesses. However, James Huddleston, with a gross wealth of £767 (including £400 of debts owing to him) and a net wealth of £339, was wealthier than Orme. But the two men were in different social groups. There has been considerable, though not entirely conclusive, discussion about the social position of artisans and small masters. Geoffrey Crossick found a hardening, as the century went on, of an attitudinal division between manual and mental – or white-collar – workers. Although there might have

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<sup>118</sup> Green, D.R. (1995) *From artisans to paupers: economic change and poverty in London, 1790-1870* Aldershot: Scolar Press, 29.

<sup>119</sup> Green (1995), 173-175.

<sup>120</sup> The sewer rate records (Rate Books, vol. 10: Eastern division of Westminster, October 1850. LMA MCS/381).

been little difference in income between better paid skilled manual workers and the lower middle classes there was a distinction, on both sides, in attitudes and self definition.<sup>121</sup> It has been suggested that small masters retained their attachment to the manual side of the division.<sup>122</sup> The HIS-CAM social stratification scale (while perhaps overestimating Orme's position) puts them a very long way apart (Table 4.1). For these reasons I read this inventory in the light of Thomas Wright's contemporary description of a typical Sunday for a typical skilled working man in London in the 1860s,<sup>123</sup> bearing in mind that the Huddlestons were better off than Wright's generic Jones family: James Huddleston was a master rather than an employee; and unlike the Jones girls, who were in service, the Huddleston women did not apparently have paid employment.<sup>124</sup>

The inventory was made, unusually, three years after the death and would have reflected the arrangements of the bereaved family.<sup>125</sup> It lists furniture in five locations: parlor (sic); back bed room; front bed room; kitchen; store closet. It appears to offer a more than usually incomplete list of household goods and no pictures or ornaments are mentioned. It is not possible to get a clear picture of the layout of the house from the inventory or to work out which parts were occupied by the Huddlestons and which by tenants. Their parlour had two windows and was therefore probably on the first floor. There was a front and back area (with water butts and a copper). There were two bed-rooms for four adults – three women and one single male; the bed-rooms, as in the previous example, do not appear to offer provision for formal social visiting. Which leaves the parlor and the kitchen.

This parlor (Table 4.6) contained many items that were typical of drawing-rooms: the rosewood easy chair, the couch (rather than a sofa), the carpet and hearth rug, and the chiffonier. There was a piano, already noted to have been an expensive item and one which contemporary commentators considered out of the reach of the 'needy clerk, the poor teacher and the upper-class mechanic',<sup>126</sup> – a category which might be thought to include James Huddleston. This piano, in its

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<sup>121</sup> Crossick (1977).

<sup>122</sup> Crossick (1976), 305; Crossick (1977), 35; Protheroe, I.J. (1979) *Artisans and politics in early nineteenth-century London* Folkestone: Dawson, 4-5.

<sup>123</sup> Wright (1867).

<sup>124</sup> According to the 1851 census. However, this is not entirely reliable evidence; see Higgs (1987).

<sup>125</sup> Delayed probate often resulted from the death of a legatee but this has not been traced in the present case.

<sup>126</sup> Rimbault (1860), 159-160.

mahogany case, was a 'square'; it was an older form but was still being made in large numbers throughout the first half of the century.

**Table 4.6 Contents of James Huddleston's parlor and store closet, London, 1852**

**Source: TNA IR 19/100**

Parlor		Store closet	
1	Mahogany couch covered in hair cloth	8	China cups and saucers
1	Rosewood easy chair	3	Plates
1	M[a]h[ogan]y chiffonier	1	Bason
1	Square pianoforte in mah[ogan]y case	1	Delf dinner service 36 pieces
1	Mah[ogan]y Pembroke table	12	Tumblers
1	Mah[ogan]y glazed bookcase	10	Wines
1	Work table on pillar and claw	4	Decanters
7	Chairs various	1	Cruet stand
1	Kidderminster carpet	8	Plated spoons
1	Hearth rug	11	Silver tea spoons
1	Fender and fire irons	2	Table spoons

The store closet (Table 4.6) included specialised items suitable for the provision of formal hospitality. The tea things were marked out as being china and there was a large dinner service. Dinner ware specifically noted as being in a set or a service occurred in only eighteen percent of all the non-commercial inventories and was very highly associated with people in the topmost wealth quartile, who were coded as of higher status and who lived in the south (London, the South East and East or the South Midlands and South West).<sup>127</sup> A dinner service, rather than just plates or ware, suggests some ceremony in eating. This service was 'delf', which although not as expensive as china, was a cut above plain earthenware.<sup>128</sup> It was probably the highly decorative blue-and-white ware that was very popular and very common at this time.<sup>129</sup> There were specialised drinking items, too – decanters and glasses for different drinks. And there were a reasonable number of silver or plated spoons. These goods allowed for the entertainment, feeding and watering of several guests and they indicate the possibility of specialised formality and distance from necessity.

<sup>127</sup> On a chi-square test,  $p < .001$  on all these variables.

<sup>128</sup> Copeland, R. (1994) *Blue and white transfer-printed pottery* Princes Risborough: Shire Publications.

<sup>129</sup> Jeffries, N., Owens, A., Hicks, D., Featherby, R. and K. Wehner (2009) 'Rematerialising metropolitan histories? People, places and things in modern London' in Horning, A. and M. Palmer, eds. *Crossing paths or sharing tracks: future directions in the archaeological study of post-1550 Britain and Ireland* Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 335-336.

This was a well furnished parlour. Huddleston, as a cabinet maker and chair maker in the West End would surely have been aware of current usage and fashions and would have had easy access to furniture, possibly at a discount, whether new or second-hand.<sup>130</sup> And his location in London made him more likely to own such goods. But the 'register' of his goods was different from that associated with drawing-and dining-rooms: a Kidderminster rather than a Brussels carpet; unmatched chairs rather than a set; and delf rather than china dinner ware. But the Huddlestons must have used their nicely equipped parlor for everyday family activities – sitting, sewing, reading, chatting, playing cards, music, eating (at the Pembroke table) and drinking – as well as for hosting formal visits because the kitchen (Table 4.7) was equipped only for somewhat minimal everyday use and not for formal ceremonial hosting.<sup>131</sup>

The Huddlestons did not employ live-in servants, making it likely that they would have used the kitchen themselves, for housework and perhaps for leisure. The four chairs were enough seats for the family – after James's death – and there was the usual deal kitchen table and a nice copper kettle. But there were none of the elements of ceremonial sociability, such as a sofa or a floor covering. And although the copper, with its steam and associations with dirty washing and cleaning, was safely out of the way in the back area, there were three tubs in the kitchen, clearly marking out its service use. Then there were the candles, soap and coal – presumably for sale. Perhaps the deal partition marked off part of the room as a shop. Shops were, certainly at an earlier date and probably still at this period, places for treating some customers hospitably.<sup>132</sup> The four chairs and the table could have been used for this, for some family sociability and perhaps for informal hospitality but the dinner tray and stand, the two tea trays and the dish covers suggest that food and drink would be carried from the kitchen into the parlour for more formal occasions.

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<sup>130</sup> For the strength of the second-hand market in the 19<sup>th</sup> century see Edwards and Ponsonby (2008).

<sup>131</sup> There is a lot 'missing' from this kitchen. There are no knives and forks or cooking equipment apart from the very ample supply of saucepans and a kettle. It was not coded as a kitchen-living-room.

<sup>132</sup> Stobart *et al.* (2007), 118. Although new shopping practices were developing, which involved less close interactions between customer and shopkeeper, older methods of retailing continued at the same time; see Finn, M. (2003) *The character of credit: personal debt in English culture, 1740 -1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 91; Glennie, P. (1995) 'Consumption within historical studies' in Miller, D. ed. *Acknowledging consumption: a review of new studies* London: Routledge: 164- 201, 185-6; Rappaport (2000).



**Table 4.7 Contents of James Huddleston's kitchen, London, 1852**

1	Deal table
4	Chairs
1	Copper tea kettle
7	Saucepans
1	Copper coal scuttle
1	Dinner tray & stand
2	Tea trays
6	Dish covers
3	Tubs
12 doz lbs	Candles
56lbs	Soap
2 tons of	Coal
Plus, as fixtures:	
1	34" elliptic stove
1	Deal partition across the kitchen
1	Deal dresser and shelves

In Thomas Wright's description of the Joneses' Sunday, their house, like the Huddlestons', appears to include a parlour, a kitchen and a wash house and/or yard.<sup>133</sup> The Joneses used their parlour for everyday activities of certain kinds – it was where Mr. Jones read the paper – but it was also brought into play as a formal space at particular times (notably Sunday dinner and Sunday tea, but also other special festivities such as Christmas), by the use of special equipment (tablecloth), by special manners (clothes and politeness in talking and eating), by special etiquette (invitation only), and by special food (extra courses). Wright highlights the courting that took place in the parlour as part of the formal visits; the Huddleston family included three young adults of, or approaching, marriageable age and the piano would have helped along this kind of sociability. The kitchen, in Wright's description, is used as a family space and for the young children to eat their formal meals, but it is also where female visitors could go for more informal parts of their visits with the female household members.

Living in London, working in the furniture trade and being comfortably off, the Huddlestons had a well furnished parlour, with the possibility of providing ceremonial hospitality. They had some of the same type of goods as the Ormes but they did not have a 'drawing-room'. They could offer ceremonial hospitality in this parlour but they did not separate out eating from sitting. The nature of the kitchen suggests that the parlour was used for everyday purposes as well as special

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<sup>133</sup> Wright (1867).

occasions and did not function only as the best room of late-century 'parlour culture'. Formal hospitality was delineated by the use of goods and behaviours rather than by a specialised room. We cannot tell how ceremonially the Huddlestons lived on a day-to-day basis – whether, for example, they used the dinner service daily or kept it for best. They rented the whole house and so could have used more rooms themselves but, in spite of their savings in the bank, they chose not to. Perhaps they had more rooms when Mr. Huddleston was alive and earning; many women let out rooms after their husbands' deaths to help make up for the loss of his income.<sup>134</sup> But, as it stood when the inventory was taken, this residence made good provision for hospitality but did not prioritise or specialise it locationally.

### **A bachelor City merchant**

The third Londoner is the unmarried James Simmons Atkinson.<sup>135</sup> He died in 1852 aged 51. At the time of his death he was very wealthy: his gross wealth was £13,383 which puts him into the topmost eight percent of people with named-room domestic inventories.<sup>136</sup> His funeral cost £50 – in the top eighteen percent of expenditure in the sample. His economic background is not known but in the early 1830s he was working for his living as a clerk in a carpet warehouse in Regent Street in London.<sup>137</sup> By 1840 he was in partnership as a stuff (that is woollen goods) and blanket warehouseman in Friday Street in the City.<sup>138</sup> When he died, the business was his own to dispose of.<sup>139</sup> He had been born in Seaford in Sussex and he retained strong links with his native town.<sup>140</sup> He was one of the notables of the place, as were other family members; he and one of his brothers were freemen of the Corporation of the town in 1851.<sup>141</sup> He stayed in Seaford during his final

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<sup>134</sup> Widows often took in lodgers of one sort or another; see Kay (2003). This is discussed further in Chapter 5, 216.

<sup>135</sup> James Simmons Atkinson's Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/101.

<sup>136</sup> The mean probated wealth nationally in 1858 was £2,331; see notes to Table 4.1.

<sup>137</sup> *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* July 1833, trial of James Scott (t18330704-119) [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org) (accessed 31.3.2010). Mr. Atkinson's handkerchief was stolen; the thief, aged 20, was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years.

<sup>138</sup> *Manchester Times & Gazette* 19.12.1840: Atkinson and Poynder were petitioning as creditors in a bankruptcy case; *Post Office London Directory* (1841) London: Kelly, part 1: Street, Commercial, & Trades Directories; Census enumerator's book for 1841 (HO107 722 15).

<sup>139</sup> Will of James Simmons Atkinson (1852), TNA, PROB 11/2161; census enumerator's book 1851 (HO 107, 1530).

<sup>140</sup> A stained glass window in his memory was erected in the local church in the 1860s: *The Post Office directory of Sussex* (1866) London: Kelly.

<sup>141</sup> *Post Office directory of the six Home Counties, viz., Essex, Herts, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey and Sussex* (1851) London: Kelly.

illness and died there.<sup>142</sup> He had a freehold property there (house, garden, warehouse, yard adjoining and appurtenances but no furniture) but Mr. Atkinson's own residence, as noted in the Legacy Duty papers and in his will, was 65 Friday Street, in the City of London. His business had been in Friday Street since at least 1840 and he was living there at the time of both the 1841 and 1851 censuses. James Simmons Atkinson was, then, a wealthy man of high civic status. He was also a man of business. Like many business men, he left almost all of his assets to male relatives (in this case his brothers); this was a common inheritance strategy to ensure that the men of the family could continue the business.<sup>143</sup> His sisters were bequeathed only £100 each, and then only if the estate realised more than the amount set aside for the brothers. His servant of nigh on twenty years was left a mere five pounds.

Atkinson's domestic establishment was small for a wealthy man. Eighteen months before he died, on census night 1851, there were four residents: himself; his 47-year-old widowed sister, Jane Allwork, described as a visitor; Thomas J. Simmons his brother, 20 years younger than himself, described as a warehouseman; and Rebecca Stephens, a female servant. Atkinson lived over the business premises. According to the inventory, the basement, ground and first floors were given over to storage, a warehouse, an office and probably a showroom. The household lived on the second and third floors (although the kitchen and the room behind might have been downstairs). The inventory shows six rooms with domestic furniture: back room on the second floor, dining room, front room on the third floor, small attic, kitchen, room at back (presumably behind the kitchen). All but the dining-room and the kitchen contained a bedstead. None of the four bed-rooms were furnished as sitting-rooms and none offered facilities for entertainment, although the visitor on census night 1851 must have occupied one of them. This leaves only two possible rooms for the provision of hospitality to guests: the dining-room and the kitchen (Table 4.8).

Having a dining-room was associated with wealth and high socio-economic status. The furniture of Atkinson's dining-room conforms to prescription and to the way that such rooms were generally equipped in the inventories as a whole. The furniture was good: a set of chairs, a large dining-table and a large sideboard, all in mahogany. The carpet was the very expensive kind recommended for dining-rooms

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<sup>142</sup> Will of James Simmons Atkinson (1852).

<sup>143</sup> Owens, A. (2001) 'Property, gender and the life course: inheritance and family welfare provision in early nineteenth-century England' *Social History*: 26: 3: 297–315.

in advice books. The three blinds indicate that this was a large room. But it does not appear to have been a glittering centre of entertainment; it was rather sober. Although there was a dessert service and a china breakfast and tea set (in the attic bed-room), the plate was modest and similar to that owned by the Ormes and the Huddlestons. But there was also some tea making equipment and a portable desk, suggesting that there was some everyday activity in the room. Indeed, where else could this have been? Unless it was in the kitchen – and that is hard to call.

**Table 4.8 Contents of James Simmons Atkinson's dining-room and kitchen, London, 1852**

<b>Dining room</b>		<b>Kitchen</b>	
1	Stove as set	1	Range as fixed
3	Roller blinds	1	Roller blind
1	Fender and set of fire irons	1	Plate rack
1	Turkey carpet	1	Fender and set of fire irons
8	Mahogany framed chairs finished in leather	2	Deal tables
1	Set of dining tables 7' x 3' 9"	1	Pillar and claw table
1	7' mahogany pedestal sideboard	1	Oil cloth on floor
1	Tea chest	8	Dish covers
1	Portable desk	1	Bottle jack
1	Japan'd cannister	4	Table candlesticks
1	Print	3	Jap[anne]d bed room candlesticks
4	Silver table spoons	1	Snuffer and tray
6	Tea spoons	1	Dredger
2	Salt spoons	1	Butlers tray and stand
1	Basket cruett frame	10	Knives
2	Pair of plated nutcrackers	15	Forks
		1	Knife box
		1	Carver and fork
			Blue and white ware various
		5	Iron saucepans
		2	Frying pans
		1	Grid iron
			Brushes and brooms
		1	Weighing machine

The kitchen was, like the rest of the accommodation, well equipped; the range, weighing machine and cooking utensils could have produced quite complicated meals, which using the eight dish covers and two pairs of table candlesticks, could have been taken into the dining-room.<sup>144</sup> The kitchen also held brushes and brooms. But was it just a service room, inhabited by the servant, who probably slept in the 'room at back', just behind? There was an oil cloth on the floor.

<sup>144</sup> Flanders (2003), 68-9.

This was relatively inexpensive and washable but it could add pattern and colour to a room. Apart from the Turkey carpet, it was the only floor covering listed on the premises. And, in addition to the two deal tables (typical of service kitchens), there was a pillar and claw table – a type of table found most often in living-rooms. Maybe the kitchen was also an everyday eating room; maybe it was where the ‘blue and white ware various’ was used. There is, however, a strange lack of chairs, even for cooking and certainly for ‘living’. Altogether, Mr. Atkinson’s inventory shows more ‘missing’ things than many. There is no sign of a dinner service, or glasses or pictures or the plate that might be expected of a wealthy man. Perhaps the pictures, glassware and plate had already been passed on, as was perfectly legal at this time.<sup>145</sup> But surely not the kitchen chairs?

Mr. Atkinson’s inventory is surprising. He was far wealthier but he had no more hospitable spaces than Mr. Huddleston. He could easily have afforded a drawing-room but he chose not to have one. Rather, the inventory of his London premises can be read as evidencing a business-centred way of life. He had worked his way up the ladder. He lived in the City, away from the continual consumption and centres of entertainment of the West End, in an area of warehouses, up several flights of stairs, over his business.<sup>146</sup> The business parts of the premises, especially those open to customers, were furnished with handsome, substantial and high quality equipment. And so was his dining-room, which was solid and efficient but did not sparkle. It seems unlikely that there was any other room for entertaining, although it is not out of the question that the kitchen might have been used for everyday sociability. Perhaps Atkinson entertained customers and suppliers but these would have been male contacts for whom dinners, not drawing-room events, would have sufficed. The widowed Dr. Marjoribanks is presented in a similar way in the 1866 novel, *Miss Marjoribanks*: he gave excellent dinners to his male colleagues and friends but he had no desire for the female presence and drawing-room entertainments that were forced on him by his daughter.<sup>147</sup> Or perhaps Mr. Atkinson found a social life elsewhere, either in the West End clubs which provided ‘public domesticity’ for wealthy bachelors<sup>148</sup> or with his married brother in Seaford at weekends. The absence of a wife and family must have been an important factor in the arrangement of his Friday Street accommodation. He was

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<sup>145</sup> Rubinstein (1977), 603.

<sup>146</sup> Rappaport (2000), 8.

<sup>147</sup> Oliphant (1998).

<sup>148</sup> Milne-Smith (2006); Rendell (1999).

in many respects a thorough-going middle-class citizen but he was not the husband and father of ideal middle-class domesticity. R.J. Morris has pointed out that this was the case for many middle-class people.<sup>149</sup> So, he had no practical need for an everyday space for the normative middle-class feminine 'work' of leisure.

Something similar can be seen to apply in the case of an unmarried doctor whom we will meet in the next chapter. Perhaps Mr. Atkinson's wealth and the security of his civic and social position gave him enough confidence to be able to disregard the rules of middle-class prescription. Or perhaps the norms of middle-class household space were not as binding as we have thought.

### **A well-to do spinster in a provincial market town**

If marital status was relevant in the organisation of hospitable domestic space for these three men, did it have an effect on a female space? Miss Mary Ann Astley, who died in 1847 aged 48, had never married.<sup>150</sup> And if living in the metropolis was associated with the ownership of more, and more 'élite', goods, was her residence in Cheadle, a 'small but neat market town' in Staffordshire, reflected in her possessions?<sup>151</sup> This part of the country retained the old term 'house' or 'house-place', which perhaps suggests the continuation of older domestic spatial practices. Miss Astley was one of the local élite, taking her place among the 30 'nobility, gentry and clergy' of the town and environs.<sup>152</sup> She was nowhere near as wealthy as Mr. Atkinson but her gross personal wealth was larger than Mr. Orme's and Mr. Huddleston's; in addition she had a small piece of agricultural land in a neighbouring village. Does her inventory reflect her gender and marital status? Does it reflect local practice rather than the innovation associated with London? Or did her wealth and status cut across regionality?

Miss Astley had numerous friends, family and other contacts. She left a marvellously detailed will which provides some sense of her networks and therefore of her possible visitors.<sup>153</sup> Many of those named in the will were professional or commercial people who lived some distance away and she doubtless kept in touch

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<sup>149</sup> Morris (2005), 37.

<sup>150</sup> Death registered at Newcastle-under-Lyme. *Staffordshire births, marriages and deaths on the internet* <http://www.bmsgb.org/cgi/deathind.cgi> (accessed 20.11.09). Legacy Duty papers TNA IR 19/91.

<sup>151</sup> *The History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (1834).

<sup>152</sup> *Pigot & Cos Directory of Derbys., Dorset ....*(1842).

<sup>153</sup> Will TNA PROB 11/2067.

by writing and probably by exchanging visits.<sup>154</sup> But she also had strong local connections. Her books show her to have had religious interests and she had a reserved pew in the gallery of her parish church; she was probably an active member of the congregation. Miss Astley lived in one of the three smaller main thoroughfares of the town; she had probably lived there with her mother, until the latter's death in 1839 at the age of 80.<sup>155</sup> She might have made changes but she continued to live in the house which had been her mother's and which perhaps had been her mother's and father's together. Although, in general, fashion was gaining ground as a motivation for furnishing, there is plenty of evidence that people held on to their furniture rather than changed it frequently.<sup>156</sup> The careful bequests in Miss Astley's will, as in many female wills, showed that her possessions had meanings and associations beyond their monetary worth.<sup>157</sup> It is likely, then, that she retained at least some of her mother's furnishings and arrangements. This marks a significant difference, in terms of setting up home, from Mr. Atkinson, who had established his own accommodation in Friday Street, organising it to suit his own practical needs.

Miss Astley's house (the layout of which is not known) appears to have made ample provision for sociable visits. There were ten rooms named in the inventory (Table 4.9). The front parlour and the sitting room show the most equipment for hospitality, with a differentiation in provision between the two rooms (Table 4.10).

**Table 4.9 Locations of goods listed in Miss Mary Ann Astley's inventory, Cheadle, 1847**

**Source: TNA IR 19/91**

1	Houseplace	6	Passage
2	Pantry	7	Sitting room
3	Back kitchen	8	Attic No 1
4	Front parlour	9	Attic No 2
5	Bed room No 1	10	Cellars

<sup>154</sup> Census enumerators' books for 1841-1861 enabled many of the legatees to be located.

<sup>155</sup> Death registered at Newcastle-under-Lyme. *Staffordshire births, marriages and deaths on the internet* <http://www.bmsg.org/cgi/deathind.cgi> (accessed 20.11.09); *The History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire* (1834).

<sup>156</sup> Edwards and Ponsonby (2008), 121.

<sup>157</sup> Berg (1996); Ponsonby (2007), 95.

**Table 4.10 *The contents of Miss Astley's parlour and sitting room, Cheadle, 1847***

Front parlour	Sitting room
1 Square table	1 Easy chair
7 Chairs	8 Chairs
1 Sewing table	1 Set window curtains
1 Sofa & cover	1 Sofa & cover
1 Portable desk	1 Wire fender
1 Floor carpet	4 Flower pots
1 Bronze fender	1 Mahog[an]y stand
1 Set fire irons	[Some] Glass ornaments
1 Brass stand	2 Fire screens
1 Ash pan	2 Foot stools
1 Side shelf	1 Carpet
12 Plated forks	1 Drugget
3 Silver spoons	1 Stair carpet & rods
3 Silver salt spoons	2 Hearth rugs
1 Small bell	Sundry Bedside carpeting
[Some] Chimney ornaments	1 Piano forte
1 Pembroke table	[Some] Writing and work boxes
1 Cardavine	1 Leg rest
3 Spirit bottles	Sundry Books
4 Decanters	
[Some] Writing appendages	
1 Set window curtains	
8 Flower pots	
1 Set book shelves	
2 Books	
6 Tea spoons	

The front parlour must have been the formal eating room. Although there was no 'dining table' or sideboard there were two tables and seven chairs. The cardavine (a cellaret for holding wine bottles), which was a sophisticated piece of cabinet work, indicates that the room was high in the furnishing hierarchy within the house and also that it was a location for the provision of alcohol, as confirmed by the presence of spirit bottles and decanters. Some spoons and tea spoons were kept there too but the knives and forks were stored in the nearby bed-room and a quantity of china in the houseplace. Tea cups and silver tea goods and a card table were among the, clearly special, items that Miss Astley had earmarked for specific legatees. She certainly had the equipment for the tea and card parties that it has been suggested were particularly appropriate for single women's hospitality.<sup>158</sup> But she also had the material capacity to give dinners and if it was difficult for a single woman to act as host she could have called on one of her male friends. However

<sup>158</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 143-149.



we don't know whether she actually did so or whether, perhaps, she simply maintained her parents' arrangements.

If the parlour had dining-room aspects, the other main entertaining room, the sitting room, was more akin to a drawing-room; it was where the piano was kept; there was plenty of seating with eight chairs alongside a sofa. Of the two, the parlour was more formal – it had the only bell in the house – but both rooms contained equipment for everyday activities as well, such as sewing, writing and reading. In the late eighteenth century both guests and hosts might have sewed or read during visits and Mrs. Gaskell's novels show women sewing as a matter of course while visitors were present.<sup>159</sup>

Miss Astley also had a house-place and this room, too, made provision for hospitality (Table 4.11). As already discussed (Chapter 3, 116-117) 'house-place' was a regionally specific term for a kitchen-living-room. Much of the equipment in the present case was for cooking and serving food and drink; the pantry, doubtless adjacent, held more cooking equipment and the back kitchen was the standard service room with equipment for washing and cleaning and some more storage for odds and ends. But the house-place also seems to have served for sociability; it had five chairs, an oak stand and – an unusual item in a domestic residence – a spittoon. It appears to have been a solidly furnished room and the china, glassware and earthenware, probably displayed on the dresser, would have given it a decorative aspect. This house-place, then, was organised as a kitchen-living-room. But its furniture was vernacular – made, probably locally, of oak and rush – and low in the polite hierarchy.<sup>160</sup> It is likely that this was a living and working space for the servant or servants. It also contained a dressing table and a looking glass, perhaps for the daily use of the servant, although there is nothing to suggest that anyone actually slept here. In her will, Miss Astley left Mary Slaney, her servant, ten pounds; she also left five pounds each to Margaret and Hannah Slaney, who were probably related to Mary.<sup>161</sup> If Miss Astley was looking after her servant and servant's family like this, perhaps she allowed Mary Slaney her own visitors in the houseplace.

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<sup>159</sup> Gaskell (1995), 127; Heller (2010).

<sup>160</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 25-6. Great quantities of rush-seated chairs were produced in the North West during the nineteenth century; Cotton, B. (1990) *The English regional chair* Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 17.

<sup>161</sup> The census for 1841 shows a family with three women with these names living in Cheadle (HO 107, 1006, 8, 37, 11).

**Table 4.11 Contents of the houseplace as listed in Miss Astley's inventory, Cheadle, 1847**

1	Dresser with drawers	1	Spice can
1	Oak stand	5	Candlesticks
1	Oak dressing table	1	Tin bonnett
5	R[ush].B[ottom]. chairs	1	Snuffers & tray
1	Spittoon	4	Glass sugar basons
1	Pr scales	5	Goblets
1	Looking glass	1	Glass bason & stand
3	Tea trays	Sundry	Glass's
1	Iron stand	6	Half pint glass's
1	Iron fender	1	Pr sugar nippers
1	Pr tongs & poker	Quantity	Earthenware
1	Coal box	Quantity	China
1	Pudding mould and dripping pan		

There were three bed-rooms. That with the least favoured name, 'attic no 2', was less well furnished than the others; it was perhaps the servant's room. The other two were furnished as sleeping-rooms but also as sitting-rooms, with pictures (including portraits), books and ornaments. One of them included a wardrobe and Miss Astley's clothes; the other housed the linen, a sewing table and four chairs. In this case, after her mother's death, there could easily have been a spare room for guests but it is also possible that both rooms were somewhat 'public'.

This inventory was selected as a counterpart to Mr. Atkinson's and it certainly shows a very different approach. As a middle-class, well-to-do woman Miss Astley's doubtless spent much of her time in her well-furnished home. The material arrangements suggest a pleasure in home-making – even the passage was enlivened by flower pots. And she appears to have placed a moral value on home life since her books included volumes by Hannah Moore and Elizabeth Charlotte, writers who stressed the importance of family and home and homemaking for women. And she cared enough about these books to bequeath them specifically. It has been suggested that the maintenance of family and social networks was especially a task for unmarried women who, without their own husbands and children, were perceived as having the time to devote to it.<sup>162</sup> Miss Astley certainly appears to have been active in this respect and hospitality was clearly an important element of her household organisation; she could welcome visitors in a variety of settings including a pair of rooms that had similarities to

<sup>162</sup> Morris (2005), introduction.

(though not the names of) dining-and drawing-rooms. But although they did have specialised functions, it appears that these two rooms were both also equipped for everyday, less specialised use; they could be either specialised or flexible as circumstances required. The impression I take from Mr. Atkinson's inventory is that his Friday Street home and the hospitality it could provide was secondary to his business; for Miss Astley hospitality was her business.

### **A West Midlands small businessman**

Thomas Woodall, like Miss Astley and Mr. Huddleston, was quite well off, falling into the third most wealthy quartile. When he died, aged 61, in 1858 he left a gross personal estate of £987, of which more than £700 was made up of mortgages owing to him.<sup>163</sup> He had been a skilled boiler-maker and iron boat maker.<sup>164</sup> He also owned eighteen freehold properties, mostly dwelling houses.<sup>165</sup> He let out canal boats and was proprietor of the Spread Eagle Inn in Netherton.<sup>166</sup> From at least 1841 to 1861 the Woodall family lived in the same central area of Netherton, 'an extensive and populous manufacturing district', twelve miles from Birmingham and one and half from Dudley.<sup>167</sup> Dudley was at that time reported to be 'one of the unhealthiest places in the kingdom' with appalling sanitary conditions and a dreadful lack of water; Netherton was no better.<sup>168</sup> And Thomas Woodall was singled out as a landlord:

... Mr. Thomas Woodall's buildings – Drainage very horrible, with privies and piggeries as usual, and no pavement. Procure water from a horse-pit nearly half a mile, and it has to be carried all up hill, mostly by girls, in little pails of about three gallons on their heads. This was a bad place for cholera.<sup>169</sup>

It is difficult to estimate his social position compared with the individuals already discussed.<sup>170</sup> He appears to have retired from active work to live on rents

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<sup>163</sup> Legacy Duty papers TNA IR 19/113.

<sup>164</sup> 1841 and 1851 census enumerators' books (HO107, 1196, 15, 44, 45; HO107,2033, 369, 42).

<sup>165</sup> Will of Thomas Woodall, 1855, London Probate Department.

<sup>166</sup> *Bentley's History and Guide to Dudley* .... (n.d.) Birmingham; Will of Thomas Woodall, 1855.

<sup>167</sup> Lee, W. (1852) *Report to the General Board of Health in a preliminary enquiry into the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, and of the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the parish of Dudley in the county of Worcester*, 87; *Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire & Worcestershire* (1850) London: Kelly.

<sup>168</sup> Lee (1852). 9-12, 87. This was a not uncommon charge about many places; the reports were intended to reveal insanitary conditions.

<sup>169</sup> Lee (1852), 87.

<sup>170</sup> The HIS-CAM occupational stratification scale is not very helpful about his social position. If he is classified as a manager he much outstrips Mr. Atkinson; if as an engineer then his position is similar to that of Mr. Huddleston. But as a slum landlord?

and investments in the early 1850s. It was at this point that he would have become the gentleman that he was termed in his will (made in November 1855) and in the Legacy Duty papers. At the same time his social position in the street directories changed; he had previously been listed in the trades sections but in 1855 he is named as among the notables of Netherton.<sup>171</sup> But Dudley's middle-class contingent was reported to be small<sup>172</sup> and Netherton's was even smaller – only two other notables were listed in 1855. The Woodalls lived amongst working people, mostly miners and nailers.

In 1851, his household had included his wife, two unmarried daughters in their twenties and a two-year-old grandson.<sup>173</sup> Another daughter and her family lived close by. Neither the 1841 or the 1851 census show any servants. Mr. Woodall's inventory lists six rooms (in the order given): sitting room; parlour; kitchen; chamber no 1; [chamber] no 2; [chamber] no 3.

The sitting room, parlour and kitchen were each equipped as living-rooms. Each of them, even the kitchen, included a sofa. Sofas had a variety of functions but they had ceremonial connotations and it was unusual to have so many in a single inventory.<sup>174</sup> A hierarchy, indicated by the amount and type of the furnishings, is clearly visible from Table 4.12.

The parlour was undoubtedly the 'best' room. Here was the most mahogany, the hearth rug and the only picture mentioned – an oil painting. There were eight matching mahogany chairs as well as the sofa. It would have been possible to eat in this room, at the mahogany centre table, using the mahogany sideboard, although the dining table was in the sitting-room. The piano – a 'square' like Mr. Huddleston's – was here too. Like Orme and Huddleston, Woodall had a wife and daughters of marriageable age. One of his daughters had married a professor of music.<sup>175</sup> We can speculate about whether the piano was instrumental in facilitating the courtship or whether the discount available to music teachers eased its acquisition (see page 172, above).

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<sup>171</sup> *Pigot & Co's Directory of Derbys, Dorset ...*(1842); *Post Office Directory of Birmingham, Staffordshire & Worcestershire* (1850); *Billing's Directory & Gazetteer of Worcestershire* (1855).

<sup>172</sup> Lee (1852), 29.

<sup>173</sup> Census enumerator's book 1851 (HO107, 2033, 369, 42).

<sup>174</sup> There were 3 or more in only 8% of the whole sample of 494 inventories.

<sup>175</sup> Census enumerator's book 1851 (HO107, 2033, 369, 42-3).

**Table 4.12 Contents of Thomas Woodall's day-rooms, Netherton, 1858**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/113**

Sitting room	Parlour	Kitchen
1 Sofa	1 Fender & fire irons	1 Round table
1 Mahogany Pembroke table	1 Carpet	1 Sofa
6 Windsor chairs	1 Hearth rug	1 Deal leaf table
1 8 day clock	1 Mahogany sofa	1 Copper tea kettle
1 Carpeting	1 Mahogany stand table	1 Italian iron
1 Pier glass	6 Mahogany chairs	1 Coffee mill
1 Barometer	2 Elbow chairs	1 Desk
1 Mahogany dining table & cover	1 Mahogany centre table	3 Windsor chairs
Lot of Books	1 Stand table	1 Fender & fire irons
1 Fender	1 Square piano forte	[Some] Tin ware
1 Set of fire irons	1 Mahogany side board	[Some] Cullinary articles
	Lot of Glass	1 Tea service
	[Some] Decanters	[Some] Earthenware
	[Some] &c	
	1 Oil painting	

The sitting-room was less fully and expensively furnished, with considerably less mahogany. The Windsor chairs, the clock and the barometer are all items associated, in general, with kitchen-living-rooms or house-places (Chapter 3, 141-142). It was probably an informal living-room as well an eating space; this is where the books were listed. But it still had plenty of chairs – enough for guests as well as the core household. Woodall's married daughter lived nearby and her older child stayed at her father's house when she had a new baby; it is likely that there was a lot of familial sociability.

The kitchen also served as a living-room although it had fewer seats and there was no mahogany. The presence of a desk suggests it as a space for writing, whether business, household or other. There was equipment for cooking and ironing and this is where the tea service and earthenware was kept but there is no indication of 'back kitchen' functions.

All of Mr. Woodall's three day rooms had facilities for offering hospitality depending on the degree of formality required. The kitchen was markedly inferior and was functionally distinct but the other two appear to be differentiated more by formality and ceremonial than by function. If he had lived in London, we might expect Mr. Woodall to have had a 'drawing-room'; he had as many day-rooms as Mr. Orme and considerably more money. But drawing-rooms were not common in the West Midlands even amongst people of wealth and higher status (Chapter 3, 115). Was this parlour a matter of clinging to an older usage? After all the Woodalls (or the appraiser) used the term chamber rather than bed-room, which was also a geographically specific retention of an older term.<sup>176</sup> They also had a linen chest in one of their bed-rooms and that too was a piece of furniture that was going out of use (Chapter 6, 246). But the Woodalls were not *just* old-fashioned. Their Windsor chairs, for example, although cheaper than, and hierarchically inferior to, the mahogany parlour chairs, were a relatively new style in the West Midlands, replacing traditional locally made models; they were made for a market of increasingly affluent factory workers who wanted fashionable rather than traditional goods. An 1832 advertisement for a chair manufacturer in Dudley High Street offers 'All kinds of Fancy & Windsor Chairs in the *most modern style of workmanship* [my italics]'.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> 29% of the inventories in Wales and the West Midlands had a chamber or chambers compared with 15% in the rest of the country; chi-square=5.615, df=1, n=337, p<.05.

<sup>177</sup> Cotton (1990), 288-290.

I read this inventory as that of wealthy erstwhile working people, who lived in a working town, among working people. Mr. Woodall had some expensive goods; he could have afforded live-in servants and could have afforded a functionally specialised dining- and drawing-room. But he was not an Orme-like recruit to the middle classes. And anyway there was not really a middle class in Nether-ton for the Woodalls to join. John Field's detailed study of Portsmouth shows even wealthy businessmen tended not to have servants if they lived in plebeian areas.<sup>178</sup> And, as in the case of the Huddlestons, not having servants opened up the kitchen for family and perhaps even informal hospitable use.

## Conclusions

The interpretation of these five inventories has shown up differences that aggregate analysis smooths over. The cases were chosen for their heterogeneity so that the relationship of people's particular circumstances to the way that they organised their hospitable provision would be thrown into relief. These people had some choice about how they spent their money and how they organised their residences; they organised their hospitable space strategically to suit their particular needs and circumstances – which included social and cultural norms.

There were some similarities throughout. Bed-rooms were not used for large-scale hospitality although in three of the inventories (Orme, Woodall and Astley) there was at least one bed-room furnished as a sitting-room, where there was the possibility of intimate socialising. And in all cases, service functions such as washing and cleaning were kept separate from living-rooms and hospitality, even of a less formal kind. The thoroughfares appear, on the whole, to have been rather bare (though wall treatments would not be included in an inventory); it was only Mr. Orme's hall that was furnished to impress and that might have been intended more for his patients than his guests. The separation of cooking from household sociability and formal hospitality is clearly seen in the inventories of Mr. Orme and Miss Astley and probably of Mr. Atkinson but it did not apply for the prosperous working-class businessman Mr. Woodall. The use of the kitchen probably related to whether or not servants were employed. It is hard to know how the Huddlestons managed their kitchen and this is a particularly clear example of

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<sup>178</sup> Field (1986), 91-3.

the limitation of inventory evidence. Appraisers' lists miss out the small items of everyday life which would give further clues about use of space. To develop this study further it would be necessary to move to other sources, such as court records, which provide incidental evidence about how people actually were using their domestic spaces.

At a more conceptual level, gender and marital situation can be seen to have played an important part in all of these arrangements. Culturally dominant female roles prioritised 'leisure' and hospitality and, here, both the spinster and the family households had more, and more feminised, hospitable provision than the bachelor with his sole gloomy dining-room.

In these particular inventories there was much less functional specialisation of hospitable spaces than has generally been figured in either narratives of middle-class domestic organisation or of working-class parlour culture. It is most apparent in Mr. Orme's drawing-room, which did not contain dining facilities, and perhaps in Miss Astley's front parlour and sitting room, where the former was the space for formal dining. But none of the inventories actually presents a dining-room (whatever it was called) used *only* for dining. Prescription suggested, and a recent investigation has shown, that middle-class households tended to double-up their dining-rooms as everyday living-rooms.<sup>179</sup> However, in the present cases, it was not just the dining-rooms that were multifunctional; most of the hospitable rooms contained goods for everyday activities as well for formal entertaining.

What is suggested by these inventories, and by those discussed at the end of the previous chapter (137-143), is that there was often a continuum between hospitable rooms rather than a sharp distinction in function. The term 'best room' (seen for example in Loudon's discussion of farmhouses<sup>180</sup>) suggests a relative or hierarchical differentiation of rooms; the hierarchy is expressed in the ceremonial capacity of the locations, in the quality of the furnishing and decoration. There was more elasticity in hospitable locations than we have been accustomed to attribute to the Victorian house, where segregation and specialisation are held to have ruled. Relative or hierarchical differentiation offers a flexibility that can be related to the complexity of hospitality. Hospitality is an interaction that makes or reinforces and marks a relationship between the participants. But that relationship, as Heller has

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<sup>179</sup> Hamlett (2009), 583; Kerr (1871), 99.

<sup>180</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 355.



suggested, can be of many kinds.<sup>181</sup> Gordon and Nair have resisted seeing motives of social exclusion and inclusion as dominant.<sup>182</sup> Hospitality can forge and signal, for example, intimacy or friendship or family ties; it can show respect, confer privilege, maintain distance or insist on superiority; it can foster business relations or courtship. Heller found that hosts granted access to different spaces according to the relationship between the participants – their gender, their wealth, their life stage, their social position and so on. He also noted that the same location could be given a different significance at different times, especially where hosts had little available space.<sup>183</sup> But the assignment of different significance to a location would surely have been useful, even when there was no apparent shortage of rooms. Because the relationships of hospitality were so varied, a host's ability to manipulate the meaning of an event by a complicated combination of behaviour, goods and rooms was a positive and functional advantage rather than a needs-must adaptation to a shortage of locations.

Thomas Wright's description of the various social events that took place on a working man's Sunday shows how this worked in practice.<sup>184</sup> His fictional but typical Jones family had two rooms available for hospitality: the parlour and the kitchen. He describes three main hospitable events, each fostering predominantly different types of relationship and each utilising different equipment or the same equipment in different ways; in this sense the two locations were 'equipment'. Sunday dinner was served in the best room or parlour using best goods, clothes, food and manners; it was concerned with familial relationships; limited invitations marked the recipient out as closely related or otherwise important; the extreme formality of the proceedings marked the importance of the occasion and the privilege of the participants. Sunday tea also took place in the parlour using good equipment but the food was less special; it was an event opened to a wider network of friends, family and neighbours and behaviour was less formal. When Mrs. Jones took the fiancée of a favourite nephew from the formal event in the parlour into the informal locale of the kitchen, granting access to everyday space and activities (chatting and washing up), in what was possibly a less open part of the house, she marked the young woman as a welcomed family member. Gender was an important element of this exchange; the same move would not have been made

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<sup>181</sup> Heller (2009).

<sup>182</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 118.

<sup>183</sup> Heller (2009).

<sup>184</sup> Wright (1867).

with a young man. In this case, it can be seen that the parlour and the kitchen had a habitual significance which was not determinant but which could be manipulated, alongside the deployment of ceremonial or everyday behaviour and equipment, to contribute to the nature of particular hospitable events.

Is the idea of privacy useful in considering hospitality? If privacy was a matter of restricted access, as suggested by Melville and Stobart *et al.*, it is difficult to investigate through inventories, since it is rules more than goods that institute those restrictions.<sup>185</sup> But there are, in any case, distinct problems with using ideas of privacy to understand hospitality since locations were 'off bounds' in different ways. We have seen that service areas were certainly not equipped for hospitality; they were surely off-bounds for formal visitors.<sup>186</sup> But they were different in quality from the bed-rooms, which were also private. And it is sometimes hard to say which spaces would be, in this sense, more private than others. Returning to the Joneses, was their parlour at Sunday tea more public than their parlour at Sunday dinner? Was their kitchen the least public space because access was most restricted? Is this the same as saying that it was the most private? Even if it is possible to agree that this was the case, what are the implications for the relationships of hospitality? It cannot have been the case that the privacy of a hospitable location or event always bore the same meaning. A small exclusive formal dinner might have betokened intimate friendship but it is also possible to imagine that it might have served a whole range of other relationships such as business or patronage. The privacy or publicity of the location or the occasion did not have a fixed meaning by itself but it could be deployed by the host, alongside ceremonial or everyday equipment and locations (and doubtless other factors, such as warmth or cheerfulness), to make the meanings of that particular hospitable event.

Hamlett, in her discussion of marital and family relationships writes that 'Rather than creating 'private' spaces, the structure of the home fostered different kinds of intimacies, ...'.<sup>187</sup> One could equally say that hospitality, as a particular form of behavioural, material and spatial manipulation, structures relationships.

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<sup>185</sup> Melville (1999), 126-9; Stobart *et al.* (2007), 112-8.

<sup>186</sup> Water closets only rarely appear in these inventories because they only rarely contained saleable pieces of furniture or equipment. The inventories do not throw any light on the question of what toilet facilities were available to which visitors and where. It is quite possible that outsiders had to go into or through 'private' areas, whether spaces of personal withdrawal or service areas. Again, a different source of evidence is needed.

<sup>187</sup> Hamlett (2005), 49.

# Chapter 5

## Work and home: specialisation and segregation

### Introduction

This chapter examines a further residential specialisation which has been represented as formative of nineteenth-century domestic culture.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that in the nineteenth century there was a widely circulated vision of 'home' which involved a family-centred household life, defended against incursions of the outside world, including 'work'. But, in spite of extensive scholarly investigations, the extent to which an imaginary of home without paid or obvious work was adopted or how it was negotiated in the face of competing ideals and practical constraints remains the subject of debate.

As in the previous chapter, the method used is an interpretive analysis of individual inventories; a close focus on items together with their owners brings a new dimension to discussions of the relationship between work and home, helping to establish the complexity of that relationship, the variability of normative ideas and the individual specificity of responses to such norms. Four inventories were chosen which referred to people whose residences were the base for their economically productive work, so that the nature of the relationship between the two categories would be evident: can we see a distinction between home and work and, if so, what form did it take and how was it negotiated with other imperatives and constraints?

But before moving on to the interpretive analysis, I outline the existing narratives. As for the organisation of domestic space into hospitable spaces, the narratives are predominantly class-related and I follow that arrangement here.

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<sup>1</sup> An essay, drawn from this chapter will be published in a themed issue of *Home Cultures* (Berg) in 2011. This special issue – *Home/Work* –, edited by myself and Dr. Jane Hamlett, is based on a collection of papers presented at a symposium 'Home-work – work in and at home from the sixteenth century to the present', co-organised by the editors, and held in March 2009 under the aegis of The Geffrye's Histories of the Home Subject Specialist Network.

# Narratives of home and work

## The middle classes

The work/home distinction of the nineteenth century has been discussed most extensively in relation to the middle classes. Davidoff and Hall, in 1987, influentially made the case that an attitudinal and practical distinction between 'work' (meaning income-producing business, commerce or manufacturing) and 'home' was an important component of the development of a new middle-class culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. And many subsequent historical writings about the nineteenth-century middle-class home have taken the valorisation of domesticity and its implicit difference from work as central. Tosh writes of domesticity that: 'Its defining attributes are privacy and comfort, separation from the workplace, and the merging of domestic space and family members into a single commanding concept (in English, 'home').'<sup>2</sup> In this scenario the home was represented as a pure and peaceful haven from the harsh and competitive arena of making money.<sup>3</sup> Not that home and work were actually independent of each other; it has been well noted that business or manufacturing enterprises relied on a whole range of home-based infrastructural activities such as entertaining and shirt ironing.<sup>4</sup>

Davidoff and Hall's formulation originally argued that home was ideally (though not always in practice) considered the woman's place and family-oriented, while the world of work belonged to men. Other scholars have argued that such a gendered division was not new, either to the middling sort or to the late eighteenth century.<sup>5</sup> From another perspective, the separate spheres thesis has been nuanced by the argument that men and masculinity were fundamentally reliant on, and involved in, the 'home'.<sup>6</sup> But as Morris writes in his discussion of middle-class economic practices in the first half of the nineteenth century: 'Whatever the origins, extent and nature of diffusion might have been, the compulsive demands of this

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<sup>2</sup> Tosh (1999), 4. See also Logan (2001), 24-5; Morris (2005), 26-30; Ponsonby (2007), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Tosh (1999), 27-50; rituals of homecoming for the weary male worker are discussed on page 84. The labour (paid and unpaid) that took place in the home to maintain the home and to support breadwinning was categorised as different in quality from the economically productive work of the market; see Donald (1999).

<sup>4</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 279-282; Vickery (1993b), 409-10.

<sup>5</sup> Vickery (1993a), 383-414.

<sup>6</sup> Tosh (1999); Cohen (2006).

ideology and practice of gender and domesticity were absent from very few decisions in the years after 1800.<sup>7</sup>

Davidoff and Hall argue that, from the later eighteenth century into the nineteenth, the middle-classes increasingly allocated different material spaces for economically productive work and for family life. This was most effectively managed by living in a residential suburb away from the work place.<sup>8</sup> This physical separation was most readily achieved by middle-class employees or owners of businesses. But there were many cases where such distance was neither possible, desirable or conventional. Professional men, such as doctors and clergymen, continued throughout the nineteenth century to practice from their residences; farmers and shopkeepers, even of the wealthier sort, often remained on site; and many other self-employed people found it useful to be close at hand to supervise their businesses.<sup>9</sup> Indeed it has been argued that, rather than the industrial revolution moving all work out of the home into factories or large workshops, there were many cases where it actually fostered residential enterprise since increasing consumption at this period supported an increasing number of small retail businesses, many of them home-based.<sup>10</sup> And gradualist interpretations of the industrial revolution have stressed that industrial development involved small workshops as well as factory production; the former, with its location in or near the residence, was a significant productive factor alongside increasing growth of factories.<sup>11</sup>

Davidoff and Hall note that in cases where the enterprise was based in the dwelling, the residence was segregated internally to separate the economically productive working areas from the living areas of the core family and its household. They argue that building and alterations produced homes that 'were designed to enhance privacy and respectability even when next to or part of the enterprise'.<sup>12</sup> 'Privacy' in this formulation, as in the previous chapter (157-158 and 187), is

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<sup>7</sup> Morris (2005), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 364-369. Morris (2005), 14-15 and 29, makes the point that moving away from the enterprise to a residential property was also a financial strategy, providing a useful alternative form of investment in property as well as offering a 'work-free' home.

<sup>9</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 364-366; Finn (2003), 91; Hamlett (2005), 48-57.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 112-3.

<sup>11</sup> Berg, M. and Hudson, P. (1992) 'Rehabilitating the industrial revolution' *The Economic History Review* New series 45: 1; 24-50. In the introduction to the 2002 edition of their book (*Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850* London: Routledge, xv), perhaps in response to suggestions that they had overstated the extent of the change from home to factory production, Davidoff and Hall more forcefully reiterate the point that many middle-class people did not move away from their businesses.

<sup>12</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 364.

understood in the sense of restrictions on people's access to the residence or parts of the residence, whereby family and household generally had privileged (but varying) rights, with others, such as guests, customers, colleagues, employees and trades people, allowed at particular times into particular spaces.<sup>13</sup> In their recent study of small tradesmen's premises in Liverpool and Manchester between 1760 and 1820, Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett find that the 'household family' – that is the nuclear family plus its various employees and other co-residents<sup>14</sup> – shared the residential quarters and that access to particular areas within the domestic space was restricted according to the status of the person concerned, with nuclear family members generally accorded highest status.<sup>15</sup> And having an enterprise which shared space with household living quarters obviously increased the likelihood of the presence of other 'outsiders'. In many areas of retailing, for example, (in spite of the growth of impersonal strictly cash-based shopping techniques in the nineteenth century) personal relationships were important and valuable customers could be invited into inner and even domestic spaces.<sup>16</sup> Barker and Hamlett find that inventory evidence and personal accounts support the existence of a basic differentiation between the enterprise and household-family space but that the needs of the business often compromised the desirable organisation in cases where room was limited.<sup>17</sup> Other historians of the late eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries have found that enterprise goods were often stored in bedrooms and living rooms and that enterprise-related activities took place in the apparently domestic regions of the residence.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, working spaces could be used for family activities; nineteenth-century vicarages, for example, contained studies that were physically bounded, appropriately equipped, working spaces but which were also a traditional setting for advising or chastising children.<sup>19</sup> Residentially based work could affect the household's freedom of action: lambing sheep could need attention at more or less any time; nineteenth-century

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<sup>13</sup> Andersson (2006); McKeon (2005); Melville (1999); Stobart *et al.* (2007), 111-121; Vickery (2008).

<sup>14</sup> Tadmor, N. (1996) 'The concept of the family household in eighteenth-century England' *Past and Present* 151: 1: 111-140.

<sup>15</sup> Barker H. and J. Hamlett (2010) 'Living above the shop: home, business and family in the English industrial revolution' *Journal of Family History* October, 35: 311-328.

<sup>16</sup> Finn, M. (2003), 89-95.

<sup>17</sup> Barker and Hamlett (2010).

<sup>18</sup> Ponsonby (2007), 106-7; Stobart *et al.* (2007), 117.

<sup>19</sup> Hamlett, J. (2009c) "'Tiresome trips downstairs": middle-class domestic space and family relationships in England, 1850-1910' in Delap, L., Griffin, B. and A. Wills, eds. *The politics of domestic authority in Britain since 1800* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 118-119.

doctors had to keep up a genteel front to support their professional practice;<sup>20</sup> while clergymen required the other members of the family and household to moderate their noise and behaviour.<sup>21</sup>

## The working classes

The form of domesticity discussed above has been presented as a constitutive feature of the middle classes.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that the working classes either did not espouse such an ideal or that they took on a different and distinctive form of domesticity. The nature of working-class ideas and practices of home life has not received a great deal of attention and, generally speaking, housing has been more of a concern than home (Chapter 1, 30-31) but historians have identified the gendered ideal of 'the breadwinner' – the male head of household who would earn enough to relieve his wife of the necessity of going out to work, enabling her to stay at home, looking after the children and the house.<sup>23</sup> It had previously been thought that the beginnings of this ideal developed in the 1830s and only pervaded working men's discourse in the later 1870s.<sup>24</sup> F.M.L. Thompson emphasised that throughout the century the 'separate spheres' ideology of non-working women remained more of an aspiration than a reality.<sup>25</sup> However Jane Humphries' recent study, drawing on over 600 working-class autobiographies of childhood of people born between the sixteenth century and 1850, finds that the breadwinner ideal was in existence from at least the middle of the eighteenth century and that in the experience of her autobiographers 'fathering was identified with providing economically, while mothering involved caring and domestic tasks'.<sup>26</sup> In Humphries' study, less than half the sample of working-class mothers augmented family incomes, and then often only spasmodically or in response to crisis.<sup>27</sup> When they did undertake economically productive work, it was most often the sort that could be done at home. It included laundry, taking in lodgers, outworking and, as officially recognised in the census enumerators' instructions, contributing to certain family businesses,

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<sup>20</sup> Digby (1994), 6.

<sup>21</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 5.

<sup>22</sup> Young (2003), 20.

<sup>23</sup> Rose (1992), chapter 6.

<sup>24</sup> Rose (1992), chapter 6.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson (1988), 197.

<sup>26</sup> Humphries, J. (2010) *Childhood and child labour in the British industrial revolution* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 96-121; quotation, 118.

<sup>27</sup> Humphries (2010), 104-106. The use of autobiographies adds usefully to Higgs' (1987) discussion of the difficulties of using census data to assess the extent of women's work.

such as butchery, lodging- and beer-house keeping, inn-keeping and farming. Working at home meant that married women could continue to manage the household, care for the children and actually get assistance from the children. It was mostly only in response to crisis or to particular local conditions that married women with living co-resident husbands went out to work.

But even if, as Humphries finds, only about half of working-class mothers undertook paid work in the mid nineteenth century, this still means that about half of working-class homes did include work. This proportion might well have been even higher since domestic production for both sexes continued to exist right through the nineteenth century in some industries and some regions.<sup>28</sup> So, how did the pervasive breadwinner ideal, which made an implicit distinction between at least some forms of 'work' and 'home', translate into material culture? And how was work at home negotiated in the context of the culture of 'respectability' and a growing emphasis on domestic life, which has been identified from at least the 1860s and which gained considerable purchase throughout the working classes by the end of the century?<sup>29</sup> Daunton's 1983 study still provides the most materially detailed and convincing description of working-class domestic cultures, especially concerning the demarcation and use of residential space, although it relates largely to the 1870s onwards. He argued that new forms of housing built for working-class occupancy, with individual entrances and individual back yards, made increasing provision for household privacy. At the same time a climate of rising real wages, a decline in casual labour and an increase in regular factory work encouraged a culture of household atomisation and an intensification of home-based consumption and domesticity. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the importance of a well-furnished ceremonial parlour as a signifier of respectability reflected the reorientation of working-class culture to the home rather than to work or the street.<sup>30</sup> But it is not clear how work at home was conceived in this scenario, either ideally or in practice. How did it fit with the increasing atomisation of the

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<sup>28</sup> Anderson (1971), 32; August, A. (1999) *Poor women's lives: gender, work, and poverty in late-Victorian London* London: Associated University Presses; Berg and Hudson (1992), 24-50; Chapman, T. (2004) *Gender and domestic life: changing practices in families and households* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan; Rose (1992), 20.

<sup>29</sup> Crossick (1976); Thompson (1988), 192-195; Williams (1987), 154-204; Young (2003), 59-6. The term 'respectable' was used by the working classes themselves, but its meaning and its relationship to terms such as 'skilled worker', 'artisan' and 'labourer' varied by context; see Reid, A. (1983) 'The essays of Thomas Wright' in Winter, J. ed. *The working class in modern British history: essays in honour of Henry Pelling* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>30</sup> Daunton (1983), especially 11-12 and 263-285.



home and with the values of parlour culture? Were these elements seen as compatible? If so, how were they negotiated?

To sum up, a differentiation between the categories of work and home has been widely accepted as an important attitudinal feature of nineteenth-century middle-class culture, associated with an increased idealisation of familial and domestic privacy. The argument for the existence of this ideal draws heavily on various prescriptive sources. However, as Morris has pointed out, not only were these prescriptions sometimes mutually incompatible but demographics also meant that many households did not match the basic 'ideal' family shape of two parents and living children.<sup>31</sup> So, how extensively was this ideal adopted? Did people actually manifest the need for distinct attitudinal and practical spaces for work and home and, if so, how did they achieve this in the context of the realities of their particular lives? Barker and Hamlett's recent work on this extends only to 1820. For the larger part of the nineteenth century we have rather little knowledge how such a distinction worked out in detail.<sup>32</sup> And was such a differentiation specific to the middle-classes? Or did working-class domestic cultures also make a similar distinction?

## Inventories, work and home

The inventory sample cannot provide answers to the national extent or nature of a home/work distinction because, as previously discussed (Chapter 2, 73-77), it is not representative of the nation as a whole. But within the sample itself a large minority – 38 percent – of the 494 inventories list goods which suggest that economically productive work took place in or very close to the residence. However, it is probable that the population subject to Legacy Duty would have over-represented those whose livelihood involved the ownership of stock-in-trade or equipment, compared with those whose income was drawn from salaries (which did not appear directly in the valuation of their estate). Further, the variability in the occupations of the deceased does not allow for quantitative comparisons between or within occupational groups.

It is possible, however, to offer a few general observations based on the whole sample. Residence-based occupation was, in general, under-recorded in the

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<sup>31</sup> Morris (2005), 33 and 37.

<sup>32</sup> Specific cases are discussed by Davidoff and Hall (1987); Hamlett (2005), chapter 5; and Ponsonby (2007), 106 and 112.

Legacy Duty forms. 49 of the 186 people whose inventories showed residence-based enterprise goods were not attributed an occupational title in the forms. Perhaps some of them were no longer working but had retained some tools or equipment, although only six of them were called 'gentleman' or 'esquire' a term which in the early nineteenth-century indicated retirement from active involvement in enterprise and living off investments or property.<sup>33</sup>

Only seventeen of the 186 people with residence-based enterprise goods were women. There were possibly other women whose work at home is not visible in their inventories, because it used existing household equipment (such as taking in lodgers or laundry). However, only one of the seventeen women was attributed an occupation in the Legacy Duty papers.<sup>34</sup> This in itself indicates that, in this particular legal context (as in the making of wills), the ideal of women as 'non-working' was dominant even to the extent of not recording work that is evidenced in the inventories or reported in census returns.<sup>35</sup> Manuals which gave advice to the public and to solicitors on completing Legacy Duty paperwork did not give instructions about *not* noting female occupations;<sup>36</sup> rather it would appear that this was a well understood practice which suggests the widespread adoption, at least in these official contexts, of a belief in a separation of the feminised home from the masculine world of work. But it also should be noted that while women made up twenty-one percent of the whole sample of the deceased, only nine percent of the residentially-based enterprises belonged to women – the non-working woman was not *only* a fiction.

The rest of the chapter now focuses closely on the inventories of four people whose economically productive work was based in their residences. Their working and domestic goods and spaces are considered in order to make a judgement about the relative place of work in each individual's residence. Their personal circumstances and the more general social and cultural background are examined in order to reach a plausible interpretation of: whether they distinguished between home and work; the nature of that distinction (or distinctions); the manifestations of

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<sup>33</sup> Crossick (1991), 163; Morris (2005) 80-2.

<sup>34</sup> 257 of the 491 deceased had an occupation (other than 'gentleman' or 'esquire') recorded in the Legacy Duty papers.

<sup>35</sup> Morris (2005), 79. Of the 17, 12 have been identified in census enumerators' books and 9 of them were attributed occupations.

<sup>36</sup> *The practitioner's guide to the duties of executors and administrators from death to distribution* (1897) Somerset House London: Waterlow; Hanson, A. (1876, third edition) *The acts relating to probate, legacy and succession duties* London: Stevens and Haynes; Shelford, L. (1855) *The law relating to the probate, legacy and succession duties* London: Butterworths.

that distinction; and the reasons for their arrangements. The larger scale quantitative analysis of rooms and objects is available to contextualise the individual cases.

## The case studies

In order to throw their differences into relief, the four cases have been chosen as coming from different social groups and different occupations and as having different household formations and resources. One was a surgeon in Monmouthshire – a successful professional single man, integrated into the professional and upper status social life of the neighbourhood, who ran a predominantly male household. This gives the opportunity of investigating a middle-class household which deviates from the ideal of the marital unit that has been the focus of most previous work on domesticity. Considered rather more briefly, but in direct comparison, is the London-based dentist whom we met in the last chapter; he was similarly professional but married, with a family. The third was a skilled engineer in Manchester who kept a lodging house, probably under his wife's management, giving an opportunity for considering the attitudes of a respectable working-class household. In this case the facilities and services of the lodging house depended on domestic equipment and skills with a potential conflation of work and home. The fourth study is that of a widow and small-scale farmer in the West Riding of Yorkshire, an area where there was a continuing practice of rural industrial home-working.

### An unmarried professional man

Thomas Felton, surgeon, died in 1852, at the age of 39, after a protracted illness. Born in Pembroke, he lived, from at least 1841, in the small miners' village of Blackwood in Monmouthshire, close to the new and rapidly expanding industrial market town of Tredegar.<sup>37</sup> The period 1815 to 1850 was a very competitive time for medical practitioners; one contemporary reckoned that there were 1000 new licensed entrants each year with openings only for 500.<sup>38</sup> In addition a range of unlicensed practitioners, such as chemists, druggists, herbalists, midwives and

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<sup>37</sup> *The Bristol Mercury and Western Counties Advertiser* Saturday July 24, 1852; Thomas Felton's Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/99; census enumerators' books for 1841 (HO107, 750, 6, 46, 20) and 1851 (HO107, 2448, 910, 5); *The medical directory of Great Britain and Ireland* (1845), 154.

<sup>38</sup> All general information on medical practice is drawn from Digby (1994).

other vernacular healers competed to offer therapeutic services. There were many failures and general practitioners adopted various strategies to achieve success. One was the taking on of institutional posts, which did not pay very well but which brought the post-holder to the attention of potential private patients. Felton held a number of these paid posts.<sup>39</sup> Another strategy was self-presentation, which aimed at attracting wealthy private patients. The social status of surgeons and general practitioners at this time was uncertain and there was the danger that they could be seen as allied to tradesmen rather than professionals. (Physicians, with university degrees, did not suffer in this respect). Advertising for patients, charging cash (rather than sending out annual bills), working on contract and selling drugs all had elements of trade. These practices were dying out but medical practitioners' social status remained ambiguous. Anne Digby notes that 'To counteract this [touch of trade], both medical education and medical etiquette emphasised the importance of social aspects of practice, with appropriate demeanour, appearance and behaviour befitting not just professional but, crucially, genteel status.'<sup>40</sup> In *Wives and Daughters*, the social status of Dr. Gibson is much debated when he first arrives in the small town of Hollingford; he never explains his antecedents but his manners, education and appearance are sufficient to convince people of his standing and for the local aristocracy to adopt him as their doctor.<sup>41</sup> And there was also a 'medical' reason for keeping up a good front. General practice relied more on comforting patients and relieving their anxiety through a show of care and authority in the bedside manner than on medical interventions. An appearance of gentility, with its implied educational, social and financial components, tended to reinforce medical authority and to compensate for lack of therapeutic success. It also gave the comforting impression that professional duty rather than money was the practitioner's motive.

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<sup>39</sup> In 1841 he was probably surgeon to the Court-y-Bella and Mammoo Collieries; in 1845 and 1848 he was a Poor Law Medical Officer in the parish of Bedwelty; at the time of his death he was surgeon to the large and growing Tredegar Iron-works; it is possible that he was a medical officer for one or more of the several benefit societies in the neighbourhood. In 1841 he had given evidence to the Royal Commission on Children's Employment in Mines and Manufactories on the quality of the colliers' housing and the health risks of their work. *The medical directory of Great Britain and Ireland* (1845), 499; *London and provincial medical directory* (1848) London: John Churchill, 409; *The Bristol Mercury* Saturday July 24, 1852; *Royal Commission on children's employment in mines and manufactories. First report (mines and collieries)* PP (1842) 380-382: XV-XV11: pages 485, 490, 541.

<sup>40</sup> Digby (1994) 6; Szreter (1996), 472-474.

<sup>41</sup> Gaskell (1996), 30-31.

It is to be expected then that many general practitioners at this period would lay claim to middle-class social status. This claim was made on Thomas Felton's behalf by the use of the title 'esquire' on his inventory. He owned an unusually large and varied amount of clothes. He had the doctor's 'uniform' of frock coat and trousers.<sup>42</sup> He had plenty of warm and waterproof gear for going out on call. And he also had a range of clothing that could take him to formal parties and social gatherings. He left a bequest of money and some of his best furniture to the West End born wife of his employer, Samuel Homfray, the wealthy local ironmaster, whose father had been an MP and who was himself a major figure in the area.<sup>43</sup> Felton evidently moved in the higher status social circles of the neighbourhood. It might be expected then, that his residence would show the middle-class work/home separation.

In many respects it did. The majority of medical men based their practice in their residence; they often 'saw patients and mixed drugs in their front rooms and boarded their apprentice assistants in the house'.<sup>44</sup> The inventory of Henry Shaw, a Liverpool surgeon who died in 1849, suggests that he dispensed in his back parlour and probably consulted in his other parlour; with no further living rooms apart from the kitchen, the only separation he could have managed would have been achieved by timetabling not spatial segregation.<sup>45</sup> He would appear to have been one of those who rather struggled to maintain genteel status. But Thomas Felton esquire seems to have been able to keep his patients and his dispensing at a physical distance from the domestic parts of his residence. His inventory gives room names (see Table 5.1) and the order in which they were listed suggests that not only did he have a separate drugs room and surgery but that they were located away from the 'domestic' parts of the residence, maybe even in a separate building. Felton's gross estate was valued at £980.19.0 (similar to that of Mr. Huddleston and Mr. Woodall in the previous chapter); he was a wealthier man than Shaw (£369.10.0) and could afford the extra space.

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<sup>42</sup> Cunnington, P. and C. Lucas (1967) *Occupational costume in England from the eleventh century to 1914* London: Adam and Charles Black, 806.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Felton's will, National Library of Wales LL/1852/36 W. Information on Mrs. Homfray is drawn from 1851 census enumerator's book (HO107, 2448, 4, 1). *The Bristol Mercury* frequently reported the social and political activities of Samuel Homfray Esquire.

<sup>44</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 366.

<sup>45</sup> Henry Shaw Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/98.

**Table 5.1 Locations listed in Thomas Felton's inventory, Tredegar, 1852**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/99**

1	Drawing room	9	Bedroom no 1
2	Parlour	10	Bedroom no 2
3	Passage stairs and landing	11	Bedroom no 3
4	Kitchen	12	Bedroom no 4
5	Back room	13	Surgery
6	Pantry and cellar	14	Drugs room
7	Closet under stairs	15	Stable and rick yard
8	Yard and back kitchen	16	Garden

But although the drugs and bottles, the instruments and old papers, the Bibles and prayer books, the barometer and the skeleton were confined to their proper places in the drugs room and surgery, some other items of equipment were scattered through the domestic area. Whips, harness, a carpet bag, horse cloths and a 'fearnot' (probably a waterproof coat) were in the bedrooms; these were all things that would have had both personal and professional uses. They crossed the boundary between the work space and the home space mapped out in his room names, as did much of Felton's other clothing. But this was a trivial crossing, whereas the furnishing of his living rooms offers evidence for an alternative map.

Felton had a drawing-room and a room for dining (the parlour) in accordance with what has been described as the minimum requirements of gentility and appropriately gendered domesticity.<sup>46</sup> A comparison of the furnishings of these two rooms (Table 5.2) suggests that the parlour was a warmer, more decorated space. It contained pictures, a carpet and hearth rug, bell pulls, and a clock as well as dining furniture and a sofa. The occupants of this convivial parlour could eat well. Mr. Felton's kitchen was equipped with a good range of cooking utensils; he kept a large stock of alcohol, especially porter and sherry but also ales, some cider, whisky and champagne. There were substantial bills to a variety of butchers and grocers. He had plenty of eating ware, but his inventory does not give a picture of elaborate formal dining; he had a tea service but not the matching dinner set that would have been a requirement for genteel dinner parties.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Halttunen, K. (1982) *Confidence men and painted women* New Haven: Yale University Press, 59-60; Kinchin (1996); Young (2003) 176.

<sup>47</sup> Ponsonby (2007) 119-25; Young (2003) 182-4.

**Table 5.2 Contents of Thomas Felton's drawing-room and parlour, Tredegar, 1852**

<b>Drawing room:</b>	<b>Parlour:</b>
1 Mahogany Pembroke table	1 Mahogany dining table
7 Mahogany hair seat chairs	1 Mahogany side board
2 Broken chairs	1 Birch sofa
1 Oak couch with millpuff seat	5 Mahogany hair seat chairs
1 Mahogany watnot	1 Broken mahogany hair seat chair
1 Small mahogany table	1 Iron fender
1 Steel fender	1 Set fire irons
[Some] Window blinds	2 Pictures in maple frames
[Some] Chimney ornaments	4 Pictures in rosewood frames
1 Loo table	1 Tea caddy
	1 Time piece
	2 Bronze candlesticks
	[Some] Chimney ornaments
	1 Hearth rug
	1 Carpet
	2 Bell pulls
	2 Setts window blinds

When the nature of Felton's household is taken into account, the parlour can be read as the male-oriented, collegial, central space of his home. In the 1841 census, he was listed as a medical professional, heading a household of two other male medical professionals and a female servant. In the 1851 census, his household comprised a 24-year-old medical assistant, his 27-year-old male cousin, whose occupation was given as 'groom', and one 27-year-old female servant.<sup>48</sup> The wages that he owed when he died suggest further changes – there was a different medical assistant, a male servant and perhaps another intermittently employed female servant.<sup>49</sup> But whatever the exact composition, it was a male-dominated household with a strong professional character. Felton's will indicates his relationship with several other local doctors.<sup>50</sup> There was always at least one male assistant living in. Assistants were generally either newly qualified practitioners or medical students; they were a step up from apprentices or pupils but they undertook the more routine or unpleasant elements of the practice; some lodged out and some lived with their employer; in the latter case their presence would have to be negotiated as a part of the household. Felton's cousin, James Lloyd, probably had the duties of dealing with the transport necessary for undertaking a dispersed medical practice. Lloyd was the executor of the will and a pecuniary and residuary

<sup>48</sup> 1841 (HO107, 750, 6, 46, 20) and 1851 (HO107, 2448, 910, 5).

<sup>49</sup> Debt schedule included in his Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR19/99.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas Felton's will, National Library of Wales LL/1852/36 W.

legatee. As a trusted relative, he would likely have been considered part of the core household.

Felton was not married; he did not have to reserve spaces for nuclear family life or confine his male employees and assistants to their bedrooms.<sup>51</sup> Indeed it would appear that it was he who retreated to his own bedroom, which was furnished as a sitting-room as well as a bed-room (see Table 5.3). In spite of his adherence to certain forms of middle-class *mores* – maintaining a drawing room, having the ‘right’ clothes, socialising with the local *élite* – he could organise his domestic space conveniently around a male conviviality that was centred on professional relationships rather than around the family unit of ideal domesticity. In this sense, ‘work’ was the dominant organising factor of Felton’s ‘home’.

**Table 5.3 Contents of Thomas Felton’s ‘Bedroom no1’, Tredegar, 1852**

1	Four post birch bedstead with chintz hangings
1	Circular front chest of drawers and cover, ‘Mahogy’
2	Deal wash stands with one set of blue ware
1	Mahogany dressing glass
1	Small deal table
4	Rush seat chairs
1	Mahogany Morocco covered easy chair
1	Mahogany wardrobe
1	Straw pallias
1	Mahogany commode
1	Flower stand
2	Glass candlesticks
1	Chamber candlestick
1	Stuffed bird in glass case
1	Feather bed bolster and two pillows
1	Iron fender
1	Pair card tables
1	Small picture

### **A married professional man**

Henry Orme’s economic situation, household composition and domestic organisation have been discussed in the previous chapter, 161-171. As a dentist, his professional position was not dissimilar to that of Thomas Felton but as a married man, living in London, he organised the relationship between work and home very differently.

<sup>51</sup> A young medical assistant in Aylesbury in the 1860s kept a diary which records that his room was right at the top of the house; referenced in Digby (1994), 130.



Dentistry at this date was a relatively easy profession to enter since, unlike medicine, which required a lengthy and expensive training, there was no regulated course of dental study.<sup>52</sup> Treatment in the first half of the century was expensive (a set of dentures might cost as much as twenty guineas) and dentists set up where they could be reached by a wealthy population. Patients came to the dental surgery for treatment and elite diaries make frequent references to trips to the dentist, often combined with shopping or social events, either in London or a nearby town.<sup>53</sup> But, although the rewards could be high, so were the risks. It has already been suggested that the maintenance of a middle-class front in order to attract patients was a factor in the arrangements of the residential part of Mr. Orme's house. But he also needed to provide a surgery setting which would be acceptable to wealthy clients and which would make the pain and unpleasantness of the treatments in the days before anaesthesia and electric drills more bearable.

The inventory indicates that the dental practice was located on the ground floor. There is no evidence that the upper rooms were directly used for work purposes, although if there was an assistant he would have had one of the bedrooms and it is possible that some hospitality was professionally related. The practice shared the main entrance to the house but otherwise it was based in three spatially distinct rooms – a 'parlour', a 'work room' and a 'room adjoining [the work room]'.<sup>54</sup> But although these three rooms were physically separate they were differentiated and furnished in a manner which mirrored the Ormes' domestic spaces.

Judging by its contents (see Table 5.4) the 'parlour' was the waiting room. It was furnished and decorated very like the Ormes' drawing-room upstairs (166-168, in Chapter 4).<sup>55</sup> There was a plethora of decorative objects, many of them under glass shades. The eight framed prints, the two wax flower arrangements, the stuffed squirrel, the three plaster figures, the model of a hand and the plaster bust on a pillar and plinth, contributed to the domesticity of the setting but might also

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<sup>52</sup> Information about the history of the dental profession is drawn from Hiram (1988) and *Oral Histories* (2002). A training and a registration scheme was instigated in the late 1850s in order to professionalise the career.

<sup>53</sup> For example, the diaries of Henrietta Thornhill 1864-1875, Lambeth Archives Department, IV/81.

<sup>54</sup> We don't know whether these were the terms used by a household member, showing the appraiser around the premises, or the appraiser's own terms.

<sup>55</sup> It might be thought that the referent was another public 'domestic' environment such as the clubs described by Rendell (1999). However, the close similarity between the furnishing of the parlour here and the drawing-room of the same house underlines the domestic as a common source.

have offered a variety of talking points to distract from the forthcoming unpleasantness. As in the drawing-room there was the opportunity for individual distraction and withdrawal in a crowd. For those visitors who preferred to read to take their mind off the ordeal or to pass the time while waiting for someone there was a bookcase and small library of books. The large numbers of chairs – cane as in the Ormes’ dining-room – can probably be accounted for by Orme’s appointment system. And the ‘marble-topped mahogany table with fittings’ and the ‘sundry glass &c for the use of patients’ presumably had more direct dental uses.

**Table 5.4 Contents of Henry Orme’s parlour (or waiting-room), London, 1850**

1	Bookcase
Small library of	Books
12	Cane seated chairs & cushions
1	Mahogany easy chair
1	Mahogany table with marble top and fittings
Sundry	Glass &c for the use of patients
1	3 plate pier glass in gilt frame
4	Prints framed
4	Coloured prints framed
1	Time piece on alabaster stand with glass shade
1	Wax flowers in glass shade
1	Wax flowers in glass shade
1	Fire guard fire irons & coal hod
1	Stuffed squirrel in case
3	Plaster figures
2	Card tables and covers
1	Brass bound writing desk
1	Mahogany pier table
2	Cornucopias
1	Model of a hand in glass shade
1	Plaster bust on pillar and plinth

Katherine Grier, discussing American public leisure venues such as photographers’ waiting rooms and hotel reception rooms, argues that such ‘commercial parlours’ were dressed to impress, modelled on the domestic interiors of the wealthy, and that customers and clients were flattered to be in such spaces and took what they learned back into their own domestic practice.<sup>56</sup> But in the present case, the patients were likely to have been wealthier and more fashionable than the dentist, whose aim was probably to make them feel secure and at ease and to offer them distraction rather than to impress them with the suavity of the surroundings.

<sup>56</sup> Grier (1988), 28-53.

The 'work room' offered no facilities for the reception of patients since the only seating provided was two stools. This appears to have been a utilitarian room for the dentist himself and perhaps his assistant. There were nests of drawers and shelving, suggesting an ordered working environment; the tools, the gas fitting and the models of teeth indicate that this is where dentures were made. There was an oil cloth, rather than a carpet, on the floor giving a functional but respectable surface. Unexpectedly, no table is listed – perhaps there was a built-in bench. This room is a service room, like the kitchen and wash-house of the domestic quarters.

The room adjoining this one appears to have been the surgery, where consultations and treatment took place (Table 5.5).

**Table 5.5 Contents of Henry Orme's 'room adjoining [the work room]', London, 1850**

1	Gas branch
1	Brussels carpet
1	Filter & stand
4	Chairs
1	Fountain
1	Kneehole dressing table
11	Prints framed and glazed
1	Japanned stand for [?]sponging the mouth

Most of the contents of this room, while not necessarily specialised equipment, had a straightforwardly functional dental use. The four chairs suggest that provision was made for a patient to be supported by a companion or two. But the Brussels carpet (as in the drawing-room upstairs) and the eleven glazed and framed prints on the walls reflected the decoration of domestic ceremonial living-rooms. In the early days of professional dentistry, a surgery was often in the front room of a respectable house; in the 1850s specialised equipment and furniture became available but it was finished and deployed in a manner which was reminiscent of the equipment of domestic living-rooms. It was not until the later nineteenth century that dental surgeries were presented as hygienic, scientific, unhomelike spaces.<sup>57</sup>

In the Orme residence, then, there was a clear spatial distinction between work and home. In London, middle-class *mores* were more prevalent than elsewhere and as a married man with a family, Orme provided the requisite

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<sup>57</sup> *Oral Histories* (2002).

separate female and family areas. Additionally, he needed to maintain a middle-class front in the interests of his business. In keeping with this, the working area was kept as separate from the domestic region as the layout of the house would allow. But while the two elements were kept apart, the working area itself was 'domesticated'; it was organised on the principles of domestic spatial differentiation and its furnishing and decoration aped that of the spaces upstairs. It enabled the patients to feel at home.

### **A skilled-working-class family business**

John Mabon, unlike the two previous individuals, was a member of the skilled working classes; there has been less historical attention to the domestic attitudes of people in his position and it is rather harder to interpret his inventory.

Mr. Mabon died, without having made a will, in 1868 at the age of about 44.<sup>58</sup> His wife was five years younger than him. The couple had young children, although how many were living, and living with them, at the time of Mabon's death is not clear. When Sarah Mabon had the Legacy Duty paperwork completed, she described her husband as an 'engine fitter'. In the 1861 census he had chosen to be categorised as a 'machinist (operative)'. These are both skilled occupations and so discussions of 'respectable' working-class culture will be used as a reference point. But, on the inventory of Mabon's household goods, taken shortly after his death and presumably also organised by his wife, he was described as 'lodging house keeper'. The move from operative to engine fitter might have reflected ascent on the occupational scale or perhaps a different self-representation. But 'lodging house keeper' is in a different occupational category and it is possible that it was undertaken to supplement or replace Mabon's usual wages in a time of failure of engineering opportunities. The 'cotton famine' of 1861-5 caused acute difficulty in Manchester and it was during this time that Mabon set up his lodging house.<sup>59</sup> Or perhaps his health might have prompted the move to an alternative source of income, in which his wife would probably have contributed much of the management and labour; perhaps it was essentially her business, running under his name.

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<sup>58</sup> Biographical information is taken from Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/138, and census enumerator's book 1861 (RG9, 2944, 77, 20).

<sup>59</sup> Kidd, A. (1993) *Manchester Keele*: Keele University Press, 118.

Taking in lodgers, boarders or visitors was a common working- and lower-middle-class practice.<sup>60</sup> The spectrum ranged from people who boarded individuals in their homes as household members to establishments which offered shelter and sometimes food on a more impersonal or more temporary basis. The nature of the business ranged from small-scale capitalist enterprises involving investment to more opportunistic endeavours requiring little start-up capital and relying on existing facilities and the skills required for looking after a home. The latter was often a means of economic support for single women. Even where lodging-house keepers were male it was probably the case that their wives and daughters undertook at least the domestic aspects of the management. There is, however, some disagreement on how people who took in lodgers valued the activity. Scholars who focus on it as an area of female economic production have seen it positively as a kind of subsistence employment – a way of life as much as a way of making a living – and as a flexible, life-stage-sensitive option for women that did not require them to work outside the home but gave them an extended social network, increased their household resources and space and gave them a sense of empowerment through running a small business.<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, it has been suggested that it was an unsatisfactory needs-must response to economic necessity, which introduced the cash nexus and unwelcome outsiders into the private familial space of the home and possibly involved some sacrifice of respectability or gentility.<sup>62</sup> However, it was certainly the case that taking in lodgers was an entirely ordinary and, presumably, acceptable activity in the Mabons' neighbourhood. Lodging was especially common in large cities such as Manchester, with its sizeable population of immigrants and people involved in commercial travelling. In the 1861 census enumeration eleven of the thirteen residential houses (excluding cellar dwellings) on their side of the road had lodgers amongst their occupants.

It seems likely that, as the project shows signs of planning, capital input and advertising, the Mabons' business was a combination of subsistence employment and capitalist enterprise. Sometime between 1861 and 1863, they moved from a self-contained house a couple of streets away into number 10 Shepley Street, near

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<sup>60</sup> See Anderson (1971) 44-47; Davidoff (1979); Kay (2003); Trinder, B. (2001) *The market town lodging house in Victorian England* Leicester: Friends of the Centre for English Local History.

<sup>61</sup> Davidoff (1979); Kay (2003).

<sup>62</sup> Daunton (1983), 273-6.

Victoria Station, which had previously been used as a lodging house.<sup>63</sup> The inventory of Mabon's household goods gives valuations by room and category (see Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6 Valuations given in John Mabon's inventory, Manchester, 1868**  
**Source: TNA IR 19/138**

Room name	Valuation
Parlor	£5. 16. 6
[Hall]	£0. 7. 6
Kitchen and yard	£2. 6. 6
[Stairs]	£0. 6. 6
Front bed room	£5. 10. 6
Back room	£2. 13. 0
Attics	£7. 16. 0
Bed linen &c	£7. 18. 6
The deceased apparel	£3. 10. 0

The single most highly valued element was the 'bed linen &c', at £7.18.6. This comprised: 8[...]; 14 blankets; 16 sheets; 21 bolster and pillow cases; 8 toilet covers; 23 towels; 2 tablecovers; and 2 table cloths. All this bed-linen reflects the equipment of the lodging house. There are many more sheets, bolster and pillow cases and towels than a family of two adults and two or three children would strictly need.

The next most highly valued element was the attics, which probably extended over two rooms on the top floor of the house. This and the back bed-room were equipped with standard groups of bed-room furniture (as discussed in Chapter 6): French bedstead and bedding (three in the attics and one in the back bedroom); two chairs per bedstead; table, rail, washstand and toilet ware (two in the attics and one in the back bedroom); one looking glass for each bedstead; some pieces of carpet; and a blind for each window. This suggests that the attics and the back bed-room were the primary lodging rooms. With another bedstead in the front bed-room (which was more fully and expensively equipped and was probably the main family bed-room), there were far more bedsteads and items for personal hygiene than required for a small family. This house was set up to provide clean and comfortable facilities for lodgers; it was not just using existing facilities. The value of the attics, the back bedroom and the linen is about half of the total

<sup>63</sup> 1861 census enumerator's book (RG9 2944, 96-101).

value of the household possessions. Even granted that some of this was for family use, it represents a substantial capital investment in the business.

The Mabons' lodging house was close to one of the biggest passenger stations in Britain, with services to and from London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. It was a good spot for a lodging house. John Mabon must have been hoping to attract respectable, literate travellers since he took out listings in several Manchester directories.<sup>64</sup> These directories did not offer a 'lodging house' category (perhaps because of the evil reputation of common lodging houses at the time) and Mabon chose initially to be listed as a coffee house proprietor (in the Temperance Hotels and Coffee Rooms group) and then as both proprietor of coffee rooms and a boarding house. There is no indication in Mabon's inventory as to whether he was actually in the temperance movement, which was strong in Manchester at this period, but perhaps choosing to be listed in the Temperance Hotel category said something about the tone and facilities of the establishment – it would certainly not be a beerhouse.<sup>65</sup> This lodging house offered very high standards of cleanliness. Not only were there adequate facilities for the customers' personal hygiene but there were sufficient sheets and towels and so on to ensure fresh linen for each customer (by no means the case, apparently, in common lodging houses). The dolly and tub in the back yard indicates that Mrs. Mabon did the laundry. Barry Trinder has argued that people who ran lodging houses usually ran them for customers with similar requirements to their own.<sup>66</sup> This was a respectable lodging house, run by respectable owners, for respectable customers.

But did this respectability involve a distinction between work and home? What was the effect of the business on the use of space? This house had a cellar, probably with its own entrance, occupied by a separate household. The main house had a passage, parlour, kitchen and yard on the ground floor; this means that the lodgers would not have to enter the parlour or kitchen to reach the lodging-rooms. The layout offered the possibility of the familial atomisation identified by Daunton as increasingly important in later century working-class respectable domesticity.<sup>67</sup> The kitchen was a multi-purpose living room; it had an area with an oil cloth on the floor

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<sup>64</sup> *Slater's Directory of Manchester and Salford 1863, Alphabetical Directory and Trade Directory; The Business Directory of Manchester 1868-9, Commercial directory Street Directory.* In the case of London, lodging houses with directory entries have been shown to be for larger establishments in the better parts of town; Kay (2003), 46.

<sup>65</sup> The labour aristocrats of Kentish London were apparently decidedly not temperance men; Crossick (1976).

<sup>66</sup> Trinder (2001), 34-5.

<sup>67</sup> Daunton (1983), 263-85.

and a rug, a sofa, four pictures and a [looking] glass, as well as equipment for cooking and eating. The parlour was, after the attics, the most valuably furnished room in the house; it included a large number of decorative items, including ten pictures, a case of birds, 21 pieces of glass ware as well as a couch, a table with cover, some hassocks and two chairs. This is clearly the formal, ceremonial room of 'parlour culture'. But the contents of these rooms do not give clues as to whether or not they were accessible to the lodgers. Wright's detailed description of a London skilled working man's Sunday, shows the parlour as open to lodgers and others by invitation; the non-family member who is given most access is a long-term lodger, a young man in a quasi-filial relationship to the household who calls the householder's wife 'mother'.<sup>68</sup> The Mabon's passing-trade lodgers, arriving at the station and solicited by directory, would be less likely to take up this relationship. Moreover, there are not enough chairs, tables and table-linen to suggest that the lodgers sat down to table.

There was one item in the parlour which perhaps suggests an uneasy relationship between the demands of the business and the cultural standards of skilled-working-class domesticity. This is a press bedstead – a fold-up bed which was 'made to shut up, when not in use, into a press which is generally low, and sometimes made to imitate a chest of drawers, or a cabinet'.<sup>69</sup> This was not the usual place for such an item. In the inventory sample as a whole, only six fold-up bedsteads of any sort have been identified in a formal living-room. The fact that this bed was in disguise suggests that it infringed acceptable standards of accommodation by indicating what one commentator called 'a deficiency of bedrooms'.<sup>70</sup> There is no way of knowing how often or under what circumstances the press bedstead was used but, given the small size of the family, it was probably intended for overflow sleeping, when there were a lot of lodgers. It was probably for family use since the light-fingered lodger was a common trope and this parlour contained many easily removable items.<sup>71</sup>

This was a fairly small-scale enterprise. It seems likely to have been a fall-back venture at a time of economic stress or illness that required an amount of start-up capital which the Mabons could afford without eating too far into savings for

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<sup>68</sup> Wright (1867).

<sup>69</sup> Webster (1844), 268.

<sup>70</sup> Loudon (c1865), 329-330.

<sup>71</sup> Dickens, C. (2005, first published, 1863, as *Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings*) *Mrs. Lirriper* London: Hesperus.



old age or widowhood. Taking in lodgers in a semi-subsistence manner necessarily conflated work and home. But was this a positive opportunity for them? Or was it something they did in response to difficult circumstances? It meant that Mrs. Mabon could contribute to the family economy at a difficult time but could remain at home, looking after the house and children, in accordance with the breadwinner ideal. There would have been no opprobrium from the neighbours since taking lodgers was the common culture of Shepley Street. They did have a choice; they could have made do with cheaper accommodation with fewer rooms. Instead they opted for a larger establishment which offered an enhanced standard of living. We can't tell whether they saw strangers in their house as an advantage which expanded their domestic horizons or as an intrusion.<sup>72</sup> They were able to maintain, if they so wished, a certain degree of spatial separation from the lodgers. The passage entrance allowed for defence of the parlour by invitation. The equipment of the bedrooms suggests segregation. But anticipation of a good business did require a somewhat compromised parlour. It is plausible to suggest that there were two contrary constraints at work here. The lodging-house business required flexibility of the interior spaces of the residence in order to capitalise on the fluid day-to-day demands of passing trade but this compromised the specialisation of space, in the form of a dedicated, highly decorative and formally furnished parlour, that was culturally desirable.<sup>73</sup> The needs of the business took precedence – but there was an attempt to disguise the intrusion.

### **Rural industrial life**

Mary Whitwam was about 51 when she died in 1877. Aged 25 she had moved a couple of miles to join her new husband in a hamlet on the outskirts of the small town of Golcar in the West Riding of Yorkshire. They both remained there until they died. It was a close-knit community. When her daughters married, they stayed within walking distance.<sup>74</sup> On a more extended family scale, there had been Whitwams in the vicinity since the late seventeenth century and by the end of the

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<sup>72</sup> For the positive interpretation on this question see Davidoff (1979), 87-89.

<sup>73</sup> Barker and Hamlett (2010) found something similar in their study of small tradesmen for an earlier period.

<sup>74</sup> Biographical information about Mary Whitwam is, unless otherwise noted, drawn from the census enumerators' books of 1841-1881 (HO107, 1275, 1 40, 11; HO107, 2296, 359, 27; RG9, 3271, 88, 32; RG10, 4378, 17, 28; RG11, 4390, 96, 25) and her Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/155.

nineteenth century it was an extremely common local surname.<sup>75</sup> In 1866, the township of Golcar, including its hamlets, had 5,110 inhabitants; it was a satellite of Huddersfield, about three miles away, which had a range of shops, services and institutions that Golcar itself could not provide.<sup>76</sup> Golcar was a weaving town. In the eighteenth century, spinning and weaving had been done in small workshops or in the workers' own residences. In the nineteenth century all cloth production processes were increasingly moved into large mills and factories, although handloom weaving and some cottage production continued alongside power weaving up until at least the 1890s. Handloom weaving was seasonal work and many weavers and clothiers also undertook small-scale farming.<sup>77</sup>

So, Mary Whitwam was embedded in a rural area of industrialised but not entirely factory-based woollen cloth production. Many of her neighbours in 1861 were handloom weavers.<sup>78</sup> Her husband had been a woollen waste dealer and, like others in this industry, had taken on a small farm (of fourteen acres), which she continued to run after his death in 1863 until her own fourteen years later. But while the inventory of her possessions and the census of 1871 both showed that she was a farmer, her Legacy Duty papers do not specify an occupation, suggesting that, in this context, her son-in-law (who was the administrator of her estate) or the lawyer adopted the notion of the non-working woman. But actually, on a small farm like this, where there is no evidence that she employed any labourers, the work of farming single-handed must have dominated her day-to-day life both physically and economically. The value of the farming stock and goods (largely cows and hay) in her barn and mistal (animal house) comprised three quarters of the value of her goods and chattels and 42 percent of her gross wealth (a little over £288).

As the inventory shows (Illustrations 5.1 and 5.2), apart from the barn and the mistal, Mary Whitwam had three rooms: the house, the chamber and the kitching. The kitching (in Illustration 5.2) held goods, such as pots and plates, general earthenware, a whitening brush and a coffee kettle, for ordinary household use. It was also where she kept her cutlery, including her two silver teaspoons. It was also where she processed farm produce, as shown by the churn, a couple of

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<sup>75</sup> By 1901 400 of Golcar's 11,000 inhabitants had the surname Whitwam. Personal communication from Steve Whitwam, local historian, <http://www.whitwam.co.uk>

<sup>76</sup> William White (1866) *Directory of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax .... and all the parishes and villages in and near those populous districts of the West Riding*, 368.

<sup>77</sup> Crump, W. and G. Ghorbal (1935) *History of the Huddersfield woollen industry* Huddersfield: Tolson Memorial Museum.

<sup>78</sup> They were specified as 'handloom weavers' in the 1861 census enumerators' book but in 1871 they were simply called 'woollen weavers'.

milking cans and a butter bowl and print. Here too was equipment for washing, brewing and cleaning. It was in the kitching, then, that wet, steamy or dirty work took place. The general term for it at the time would have been 'back kitchen'. Architectural manuals advised separating the back kitchen from the other specialised service areas, such as the dairy, the brew house and the wash house, but it was recognised that they all housed similar activities and could, if necessary, be combined.<sup>79</sup> The processing aspect of farm work (whether for home consumption or for sale) was conceptualised as similar to certain kinds of what we might think of as more domestic work, namely those involving water, steam and dirt. In the whole inventory sample, the contents of the dairies, brew houses and wash houses were categorised by the appraisers as household goods not as farming equipment.<sup>80</sup> In Mary Whitwam's kitching, activities were grouped together, conceptually and spatially, according to their physical nature not according to a distinction between economic production and the immediate maintenance of the house and household.

There were no chairs or tables in the kitching; it was not a place for eating or socialising. These activities were catered for in Mary Whitwam's other two rooms (see Illustration 5.1 for the full list of contents). Her 'house' (a regional term specific, in the present sample, to the Pennines as discussed in Chapter 3, 116-117) was a multi-purpose kitchen-living room. There was seating and tables, a warm hearth and cooking facilities. The irons show that household work went on in this room. The barometer and the clock were functional pieces, useful for a farm and day-to-day life, but they were also decorative, like the pictures and vases. There was a cradle and a child's chair (by the time of her death Mary Whitwam was a grandmother). The '3 funeral cards in frames' were probably highly meaningful personal items. Mary Whitwam was a member of Golcar's thriving Baptist community. This was not a casual or simply social matter; it involved active participation and the maintenance of strict standards of behaviour under the surveillance of other members of the community.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See Loudon (c1865) for example 9-20.

<sup>80</sup> Of the 63 dairies, milk-houses and cheese rooms, 31 were included in the category of household goods or similar; none were included with farming goods. The rest were not categorised.

<sup>81</sup> West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees: KC1033 10/1 for history of Baptists in Golcar; KC1033/7/6/2, 5 and 8 for pew rents; KC1033/3/1-2 Golcar Baptist Chapel minutes; KC 1033/7/5/4 Baptist Chapel subscription book; Whitwam, S. (1978-9) 'Golcar Baptist Graveyard Stone Inscriptions' unpublished manuscript, Huddersfield Local History Library.

Illustration 5.1 First page of the inventory of Mary Whitwam's household goods, Golcar, 1877  
 Source: TNA IR 19/155

Inventory and Valuation of  
 the personal Estate of the Late Mary  
 Whitwam of Lower Haughs Golcar  
 in the County of York

House

Turnup Bed <sup>10</sup> Rocking Chair & Cushion <sup>10</sup>	3	0	0
Deal Table, with three Drawers, Looking Glass <sup>10</sup>	"	17	0
Spindle back arm Chair & Cushion <sup>10</sup> 2 wood bedstead Chairs <sup>10</sup>		19	0
Jones' Sewing Machine <sup>10</sup> 3 Funeral boards in Frames <sup>10</sup>	3	16	0
Painted Clothes Press with four Drawers	3	10	0
Needlework in Rosewood Frame	"	10	0
24 Hours clock <sup>10</sup> Wheel Barometer <sup>10</sup>	2	10	0
Square Mahogany Table, Round Table, Bradle <sup>10</sup>		12	0
Childs Chair <sup>10</sup> Box Iron, 2 Hat Irons, 2 Waiters <sup>10</sup>		4	0
Small Box, 2 Blue Vases, Paraffine Lamp <sup>10</sup>		2	6
Two Iron Sandstretches <sup>10</sup> Iron Ashes Guard <sup>10</sup>		2	8
Three pieces of Fire Irons <sup>10</sup> Black Lead Fender <sup>10</sup>		6	6
Little Red Riding Hood in Frame <sup>10</sup> Arm Chair <sup>10</sup>		8	6
<u>Chamber</u>			
Half Headed Bed <sup>10</sup> Two Flock Beds <sup>20</sup>	1	2	6
3 Blankets, 2 Long Pillow <sup>10</sup> 2 short Pillow <sup>10</sup> Coverlet <sup>10</sup>	1	10	0
Querry Weights & 4 Iron weights <sup>10</sup> 6 Clothes Horse <sup>10</sup>	"	14	0
2 Jumble Glasses & other pieces of Glass		2	4
2 Dry Gilt & White China <sup>10</sup> 3 Dry China a		7	0
2 glass plates, Jugs, Basins, Pots &c		9	4
Oak Corner Cupboard <sup>10</sup> New Blanket <sup>10</sup>	1	0	6
Three Blankets <sup>20</sup> Cloth Hearth Rug <sup>10</sup>	1	11	6
Chest of Mahogany Drawers, 7 1/2 polished Ash Chairs <sup>10</sup>	4	2	0
Square Stand Mahogany Top, Small Chest of Mahogany Drawers <sup>10</sup>	2	0	0
Sea Tray, Family Bible & Books, 2 Jumble Glasses <sup>10</sup>		17	2
Ornamental Tobacco pot, 2 1/2 Hours clock in oak case <sup>10</sup>	1	2	0
Pair of Pictures, Picture in Frame & Crust & 4 Bottles		12	0
Jug, Swing Looking glass <sup>10</sup> Black Lead Fender <sup>10</sup>		13	6
Wool Hearth Rug		5	0
Carried Forth			
		<u>33</u>	<u>7</u> <u>0</u>



Illustration 5.2 Second page of the inventory of Mary Whitwam's household goods, Golcar, 1877

40. 16. 78

Brought Forth		£	s	d
<u>Kitching</u>		53	7	0
Churn & Washing Machine	60	3	10	0
Pots, Plates, Jugs & general Earthen ware	26	1	8	0
2 Long Cans, Lading can, Sile, Milking can & old one		7	9	
Trivet & Lid & Tin Sauce pan & Kettle		2	3	
Whitening Brush, Roller Bowl & Print		4	6	
Brewing Tub & Barrel, 8/8 Eight Milk Bowls		8	0	
5 Muffin Tins & Long Brush & Baskets & coffee Kettle		5	9	
Iron Broom & Lantern & Buffett Shovel & Hand brush		3	5	
1/2 doz Tea spoons & Three Metal Table Spoons		4	6	
3 Decent Spoons & Two Silver Tea spoons		11	3	
1/2 doz knives & forks & Toney Basket & Coal Skp 1/2		7	3	
<u>Mistal</u>				
Spotted Calf	2. 0. 0			
White Do	1. 10. 0			
Year old Calf	4. 0. 0			
Spotted Cow	14. 10. 0			
Round Heifer	11. 0. 0			
Red Round Cow	13. 0. 0			
White Cow with Red Neck newly calv'd	19. 0. 0			
		65	0	0
<u>Barn</u>				
Mow of Hay containing 163 cubic yds Hay		52	14	6
Hay Knife & Hay Fork & short & 2/2 Hay Rakes		15	0	
Hay Stangs Ladder & Two wood spails & Galvanized Do		7	9	
Drick Fork & Hack & Walling Hammer & 3 Shades & stools		5	2	
Broom & Manure Fork & Coal Rake & Wheel Barrow		13	8	
Old Cart Body & Wheel &c		2	0	0
		£162	10	9
James Bottomley Auctioneer &c Marsden n Huddersfield				

Her three sons, who had died in infancy, were buried in the Baptist graveyard. Perhaps these three funeral cards, which she kept, permanently, in frames, were for her three dead sons. They were personally, religiously and socially meaningful items and they had a place in her house or living room – alongside her sewing machine. Andrew Godley has argued that most sewing machines in England at this time were not primarily for family sewing but were sold mostly to domestic outworkers in the ready-to-wear clothing industry, which had its main bases in London and Leeds.<sup>82</sup> In the 1871 census, Mary Whitwam's eldest daughter, who was living with her mother, gave her occupation as 'dressmaker'; in the 1881 census, the other two daughters were named as a 'dress maker' and a 'dress and mantle maker'. The term 'dressmaker' covered a variety of employment practices, from sweated labour to self-employment.<sup>83</sup> It is not known where Mary Whitwam's daughters were located in the range but, wherever, it would appear that this sewing machine was a piece of economically-productive equipment (although there was nothing to stop it being used for domestic dressmaking as well). It was very probably a highly decorated item, with gold detailing on a black enamelled body, but it was clearly a piece of machinery, which took its place in the living-room alongside the daily activities of cooking, eating, ironing and sitting and also alongside items of personal and emotional significance.<sup>84</sup> This room was not a formal space like the Mabons' parlour and the presence of a turn-up bed here does not disrupt its multifarious uses. Sewing was clean, dry, outwork and, for Mary Whitwam, there is no sign that it offered any disruption to her family living space.

Mrs. Whitwam also had a chamber. Judging by its contents it too was a multi-purpose room. It was a bed-room, containing the usual bedstead and bedding, washstand and ware, and storage furniture. But it was probably also a 'best room' used for day-time living and perhaps sociability. It had a fireplace with a hearthrug and fender (the latter item suggesting that a fire was lit at least occasionally). There was a set of ash chairs; there was some china and glassware, a tea tray and a cruet and four bottles; there were pictures and ornaments and the

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<sup>82</sup> Godley, A. (1999) 'Homeworking and the sewing machine in the British clothing industry 1850-1905' in Burman, B., ed. *The culture of sewing: gender, consumption and home dressmaking* Berg: Oxford & New York, 261.

<sup>83</sup> August (c1999); Higgs (2005), 101.

<sup>84</sup> Nicholas Oddy has argued that its decoration was not feminised, as might be expected for a domestic item, but owed more to the styling of precision machinery at this period; Oddy, N. (1999) 'A beautiful ornament in the parlour or boudoir: the domestication of the sewing machine' in Burman, B., ed. *The culture of sewing: gender, consumption and home dressmaking* Berg: Oxford & New York.

family bible. Apart from a clock, there was only one item which probably had an economically productive purpose – a set of Avery scales, which might have been intended for weighing butter. But for the most part this was a work-free room.

Mary Whitwam's inventory can be compared with that of a small clothier in nearby Honley, taken almost 100 years earlier. There were differences: his premises were larger; his chambers contained working equipment (for carding and weaving) as well as beds; and his 'house' appears to have been solely a household living room or kitchen. But his parlour was furnished very much like her chamber: 'The parlour, as usual, contained the best bed, a small table, six chairs with bass bottoms and three oak ones; the "large bibell" was on the table and two pictures and a map of America hung on the wall.'<sup>85</sup> In Mary Whitwam's residence farming and paid work were accommodated as part of domestic family life as they had been for many years for people like her in this part of the country. She had adapted to changed practices in the woollen industry, with dress-making taking the place of weaving or spinning, but the adaptation was modelled on a long-standing spatial organisation.<sup>86</sup> Howkins notes that for the small tenant farmer, the farm work-force and the family were the same thing and that for farm labourers outworking was widespread throughout rural England;<sup>87</sup> the implication is that the home, work and family were not distinct categories. But Mary Whitwam did make distinctions; work that was clean and dry, whether it was for pay, for domestic production, or for household maintenance, shared space with household living quarters; work that was wet and dirty was segregated into a special service room. And, like the clothier of the previous century, she seems to have set one room aside as a space free from work of all kinds.

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<sup>85</sup> Crump and Ghorbal (1935) 66-7.

<sup>86</sup> Mary Whitwam's inventory shows 'the rural' as both traditional and innovative. She lived surrounded by fields and she continued a long-standing use of residential space, particular to the economic basis of this area, but she also adopted new and expensive technology – the sewing machine and the washing machine in the kitching. She came from a hamlet on the outskirts of a small town and she probably bought such goods in Huddersfield. But the sewing machine in particular linked her into American technological development, into modern American production outsourced to Britain, into American marketing methods and into the new economic transaction of hire purchase. But that is another story .....

<sup>87</sup> Howkins (2000), 1380-1383 and 1395.

## Conclusions

Three of these four inventories – the skilled working-class case as well as the two professional households – evidence a desire to separate work from family or household life. But they also demonstrate that the categories were interconnected, due partly to the nature of the work and partly to individual circumstances.

The dentist's inventory shows the clearest work/home division but even here there are two-way connections. He kept a distinct work-place and it would have been perfectly possible for him to escape upstairs to the family after a day of seeing patients and making dentures. He probably wanted, anyway, to organise his residential space and household life in accordance with the norms of idealised middle-class domesticity. But his way of life can also be read as a strategy driven by the needs of his profession, which can also be seen as a reason for his working space being modelled on his domestic area.

The doctor, with his separate drugs room and surgery, kept his patients well away from the apparently domestic part of his residence. But his central domestic space – the parlour – was enjoyed by a group of professionally associated males. If Felton had had the wife and children of idealised domesticity they might well have been more dominant in the arrangement of his home than professional conviviality. As it was, the 'home as a haven' was reduced to his personal, private, bedroom.

In the lodging house, certain areas were dedicated to the business. The layout gave the option of defending the parlour and the kitchen against the direct incursions of lodgers. But the fold-up bed was perhaps an encroachment on the desired nature of the parlour. However, by using the space and labour of home for work purposes, the family could afford to *have* a parlour and for Mrs. Mabon to stay at home – apparently a marker of working class respectability – at the same time as making provision for an uncertain future.

Mary Whitwam's inventory, on the other hand, certainly shows distinctions related to work but they were of a different nature. Paid industrial home-work was a long-standing feature of the area in which she lived. As a farmer and mother of home-working dress makers, her domestic life appears to have coexisted with, and to have even included, work; work was labour, whether domestic or economically productive. She organised and spatially segregated the labours of the household, not by notions of 'home' and 'work', or paid and unpaid, but by ideas which included



a distinction between clean and dirty. She had a work-free best room but there is no indication that this was more 'home' than other parts of her residence.

We have learned by now, especially from the extensive scholarship investigating the gendered distinctions of 'separate spheres', that ideal or normative distinctions are never entirely clear-cut. The metaphor of the boundary can be useful but not if we imagine a 'Berlin wall', crossed only either by transgression or by demolition. A more useful image might be that of a breakwater, which marks a division but over which the sea flows back and forth.

# Chapter 6

## Meanings and difference in the bed-room

### Introduction

The final investigation of this thesis returns to a discussion of rooms, room functions and meanings, and social and geographical differences. The focus is on bed-rooms, which have been much neglected, both thematically and descriptively, in historical investigations.

For nineteenth-century writers, bed-rooms were freighted with meaning. Sleeping arrangements and everyday domestic objects such as four-posters, feather beds and slop pails were discussed in terms which stretched far beyond the walls of the chamber itself. Concerns with health, cleanliness, disease, morality, privacy, class, status, comfort and convenience as well as economy and style permeated the advice on bed-rooms offered in manuals of domestic economy, architectural planning texts and books on furnishing and decorating. Sleeping arrangements, interpreted in relation to physical and moral health or disease, were a crucial focus in the huge literature on the condition of the labouring classes and the health of the population. And yet, in spite of the richness of these sources, there has hitherto been little interest in the specific material culture of nineteenth-century bed-rooms. Stefan Muthesius went so far as to remark that 'about the other half of the house, the bedrooms, little needs to be said'.<sup>1</sup> Tom Crook offers a useful overview of the varied contemporary concerns that focused on sleeping bodies and highlights the way that spatial arrangements were deployed to manage behaviour. He outlines how the bed-room was presented as a physical and psychological retreat and as a space of medical and moral management but, as he acknowledges, his account has a broad sweep and necessarily leaves room for detailed explication.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary social investigations and their outcomes have been the subject of a large amount of scholarly research and theoretical debate, which often touches on sleeping arrangements but only in relation to the working

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<sup>1</sup> Muthesius (1982), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Crook, T. (2008a) 'Norms, forms and beds: spatializing sleep in Victorian Britain' *Body & Society* 14: 4: 15-35.

classes and the poor.<sup>3</sup> Alison Bashford clearly demonstrates the discursive link between public health and middle-class domestic ideals but does not discuss the practical implications or any focus on bed-rooms.<sup>4</sup> Ideas about cleanliness were often expressed in relation to bed-rooms but recent studies of the subject do not address bed-rooms in particular.<sup>5</sup> There has been interest in particular functions or aspects of bed-rooms, especially in relation to the middle classes: as a sick-room;<sup>6</sup> as a space for the representation and practice of familial intimacy;<sup>7</sup> and as a location for visiting.<sup>8</sup> But with regard to broader or descriptive studies of bed-rooms, particularly for the middle part of the century there is very little. Judith Flanders gives the lengthiest and most useful description, taking in illness and lying-in as well as bed-bugs, washing and dressing.<sup>9</sup> However, it is hard to disentangle prescription from practice in her narrative. Judith Neiswander investigates the discourse of science and health within the home, noting that it was particularly applicable to bed-rooms, but she confines her discussion to advice literature and to the period of the later 1870s onwards.<sup>10</sup> Hilary Hinds finds that the promotion of twin beds in the very late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries drew on domestic sanitarian ideas but again does not move into questions of practice.<sup>11</sup> We do not confidently know, then, what was in bed-rooms at this time, what ideas underpinned their furnishing, equipment and functions and whether these ideas were taken up. The present chapter contributes to filling this gap.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For example, Driver, F. (1988) 'Moral geographies: social science and the urban environment in mid-nineteenth century England' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* New Series: 13: 3: 275-287; Mort, F. (1987) *Dangerous sexualities: medico-moral politics in England since 1830* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

<sup>4</sup> Bashford, A. (1998) *Purity and pollution: gender, embodiment, and Victorian medicine* Basingstoke: Macmillan, chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> Kelley (2010); Smith, V. (2007) *Clean: a history of personal hygiene and purity* Oxford: Oxford University Press; Tomes, N. (1990) 'The private side of public health: sanitary science, domestic hygiene, and the germ theory, 1870-1900' in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 64: 509-539.

<sup>6</sup> Bailin, M. (1994) *The sickroom in Victorian fiction: the art of being ill* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Hepworth, M. (1999) 'Privacy, security and respectability: the ideal Victorian home' in Chapman, T. and J. Hockey, eds. *Ideal homes? Social change and domestic life* London: Routledge, 17-29.

<sup>7</sup> Hamlett (2005), especially chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> Heller (2010).

<sup>9</sup> Flanders (2003), chapter 1.

<sup>10</sup> Neiswander (2008), 56-81.

<sup>11</sup> Hinds, H. (2010) 'Together and apart: twin beds, domestic hygiene and modern marriage, 1890-1945' *Journal of Design History* 23: 3: 275-304.

<sup>12</sup> As does Vicky Holmes's recent paper 'My side of the bed: Victorian marriage in the working-class home' given 17.11.2010, in 'The body in bed', seminar series, History Department, Royal Holloway University of London.

The first section briefly discusses specialisation of functions, sharing arrangements and intra-household differentiations. This serves as a general descriptive introduction to the second and main part of the chapter, which moves away from the rooms to focus on their contents: What bed-room equipment did the people in the inventory sample have? What items appear to have been ubiquitous? Which were more optional? Did ownership of particular items differ according to wealth, status, gender or geography? Can we see any changes over time? How far does this correspond with contemporary prescriptive or fictional representations? At the same time, developing the method used in Chapter 3, the descriptive study extends into the realm of discursive meaning through close attention to the way that these things are described and illustrated. Highlighting the circulated meanings of goods is a long-standing design historical approach.<sup>13</sup> Here, the inventory evidence allows attention to textual meaning to be combined with a systematic aggregate analysis of ownership in a way that has not so far been undertaken in that discipline.<sup>14</sup> Of course, the ownership of an item to which a particular meaning has been attributed in a particular text is not evidence either that the owner adopted that particular meaning or that it was the only available meaning. However, it is argued here that an individual's ownership of a *group* of items with a similar attributed meaning can be seen as suggestive of the adoption of that meaning.

## Method for this chapter

The method used is to tack between aggregate analysis and a qualitative reading of the pre-selected sample of contemporary texts.<sup>15</sup> Illustrative interpretations of two individual inventories are presented in 'boxes' to distinguish them from the main analysis.<sup>16</sup>

The aggregate analysis involved coding. It was not possible to simply rely on the terms 'bed-room' or 'chamber' as given in the inventories since many rooms which contained a full complement of what was clearly bed-room equipment were

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<sup>13</sup> Forty (1986) was a very influential study in this respect.

<sup>14</sup> Both Nenadic (1994) and Young (2003) combine evidence from a series of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century inventories with analysis of textual meanings (though not particularly with reference to bed-rooms) but neither of them had the advantage of access to large numbers of inventories.

<sup>15</sup> For a full annotated list of the contemporary texts, see Appendix 3.

<sup>16</sup> One of the case-study inventories was chosen for investigation because of the unusually large number of metal bedsteads it contained – metal bedsteads being a substantive issue of the chapter. The other was chosen as an example of an earlier inventory with enough bedstead-rooms to allow discussion of internal hierarchies.

not given a specific name. I decided therefore to code any room that contained one or more bedsteads as a 'bedstead-room', regardless of the name given by the appraiser. This has led to the inclusion of some rooms which were probably not predominantly bed-rooms; there were doubtless cases where, for example, a bedstead was moved into a living-room for the convenience of an elderly or ill person. Equally, this decision meant ignoring the few rooms which were called bed-rooms but which did not contain a bedstead. However, since this coding method resulted in 1098 'bedstead-rooms' I considered the small number of anomalies to be acceptable.

The contents of these rooms were coded into item types, a process which was aided by a concurrent intensive study of about ten individual inventories for other chapters of this thesis as well as by reference to contemporary domestic manuals and encyclopaedias, several of which explained items and provided some illustrations. The list of coded items (which also applies for Chapter 3) and criteria is given in Appendix 1, 326-328. Some of the categories are more robust than others; there was not much doubt or judgement involved in coding an item as, say, a washstand but it was necessary to rely on context and quantity to decide whether to code a cup and saucer as an eating/drinking item or as an ornament. For the most part, the analysis focuses on the more robust categories.

It was then possible to run a series of exploratory tests to reveal the incidence of ownership of the coded items, by inventory and by bedstead-room, and to cross-tabulate ownership with the usual variables relating to the deceased, highlighting any statistically significant associations through the use of a chi-square test. It was also possible to cross-tabulate the co-presence of different coded items, again in the exploratory pursuit of significant associations.

For the most part, the sub-sample of 337 'domestic inventories with named rooms' is used. From time to time different sub-samples are appropriate; this is noted in the analysis. (See Appendix 2 for a description of the different sub-samples.)

The findings from this analysis provided a solid base for a discussion of practice in bed-room furnishing and functions. Secondly, they suggested particular items which, whether because of their ubiquity or because of changes over time or because of their association with particular groups of people, appeared fruitful

subjects for further investigation. This is an exploratory approach.<sup>17</sup> The themes which I address – primarily health, cleanliness, class and convenience – developed as a result of reading in the contemporary literature about items which were chosen as a result of the initial analysis. Neither the items nor the themes were pre-determined (nor are they intended to exhaust the meanings associated with bedrooms). To an extent, the structure of this chapter reflects and represents that process of exploration. In the context of demonstrating the potential of inventories, it seems appropriate to foreground the process even if – as will be seen in the concluding case study – limitations of the method are exposed.

## The specialisation of bed-room functions

Allowing for geographical variation, there was an overall increasing removal of bedsteads from parlours and halls from the seventeenth century onwards and by the late eighteenth century this appears to have been very common, especially in London.<sup>18</sup> Only five percent of the drawing-rooms, sitting-rooms and parlours in the present sample contained a bedstead. By the time of the present study all the manuals consulted here make the assumption of the absolute desirability of separate sleeping- and living-rooms. The topic is only raised in discussing the arrangements for people who could not afford to make the distinction. Loudon criticised a design for a labourer's cottage because 'the room ... having a bed in it, can never be considered, by an English labourer, as a comfortable sitting-room.'<sup>19</sup> Another manual, of 1855, aimed at least partly at those with small means, was aware that less well-off people or those with a big family or living in lodgings might be obliged to use one of their sitting-rooms as a bed-room but noted that

It is bad practice, and should be avoided whenever possible; for it is not only prejudicial to health, but there is something unpleasant in the idea of sitting down to meals in an apartment in which people have been sleeping, closely shut up for several hours.<sup>20</sup>

This squeamishness at the bodily functions associated with bed-rooms taps into health concerns – an important issue relating to bed-rooms, discussed below. Felix

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<sup>17</sup> This open-ended exploratory approach is different from inventory analyses which track items chosen in advance for their relevance to a particular theme as in Weatherill (1988).

<sup>18</sup> John, E. (2008); Cruickshank and Burton (1990), 51-73.

<sup>19</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 81.

<sup>20</sup> *How to furnish a house and make it a home* (c.1855), 20.

Driver, discussing the moral discourses of Victorian social science, analyses an image used to illustrate an environment considered to cause juvenile delinquency (Illustration 6.1).<sup>21</sup> He points out the absence of a father figure, poverty, idleness, and the lack of segregation between the activities of individuals. This last point could be expanded to include the ineffectiveness of the attempt to separate off the sleeping area in the one-room garret.

But positive representations of one-room living can be found. In *Mary Barton*, Elizabeth Gaskell gave an affirming picture of working-class life, based on her experience in Manchester in the 1840s. 'Old Alice's' single room was

...the perfection of cleanliness; in one corner stood the modest-looking bed, with a check curtain at the head, the whitewashed wall filling up the place where the corresponding one should have been. The floor was bricked and scrupulously clean ... In one corner was a sort of broad hanging shelf, made of old planks, where some old hoards of Alice's were kept. Her little bit of crockery-ware was ranged on the mantelpiece, where also stood her candlestick and box of matches. A small cupboard contained at the bottom coals, and at the top her bread and basin of oatmeal, her frying-pan, teapot, and a small tin saucepan, which served as a kettle, as well as for cooking ...<sup>22</sup>

In Gaskell's image, although living and sleeping functions share the same room, they are separated out spatially into different areas and the immaculate cleanliness of the room is highlighted as a counter to the filth and squalor which were a focus of most social investigations.<sup>23</sup> The inventory sample does not include such poor people but it is quite possible that, among the 158 inventories that were *not* organised by room name, there were cases where the household lived in one room only. We caught a glimpse of one such case in the common-lodging-house rooms mentioned briefly at the end of Chapter 3 (146). And Mary Whitwam's chamber was, as we saw in the last chapter (225-226), apparently her best living-room as well as her bed-room. However, for the most part the bed-rooms examined here were – judging by the relative lack of cooking, drinking and eating equipment,

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<sup>21</sup> Driver (1988), 283-284.

<sup>22</sup> Gaskell, E. (2006), 16.

<sup>23</sup> There were many of these but Kay, J.P. (1832) *The moral and physical condition of the working classes employed in the cotton manufacture in Manchester* London: James Ridway, 19-21, is a good example of descriptions of Manchester; see Wohl, A. (1977) *The eternal slum: housing and social policy in Victorian London* London: Edward Arnold. For a discussion of the contradictory symbolic power of the idea of dirt at this time see Crook, T. (2008b) 'Putting matter in its right place: dirt, time and regeneration in mid-Victorian Britain' *Journal of Victorian Culture* 13: 2: 200-222.

Illustration 6.1 One of the 'Scenes in the history of a ragged boy'

Source: *Ragged School Union Magazine* (1850) 2: 16, 89, <http://pao.chadwyck.com> (accessed 14.11.2010)



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**Table 6.1 *Incidence of items most commonly found in bedstead-rooms***  
**1098 rooms in the 337 'domestic inventories with named rooms'**  
**The most commonly occurring items are highlighted**

<b>Presence of at least one of:</b>	<b>Number, all bedstead-rooms.Total1098</b>	<b>Percentage of all bedstead-rooms.</b>
Bedstead	1098	100.0%
Chair/easy chair	891	81.1%
Carpet/rug/floor covering	758	69.0%
Mirror	732	66.7%
Washstand	688	62.7%
Chest of drawers	652	59.4%
Dressing table	490	44.6%
Bedhangings	481	43.8%
Towel rail	416	37.9%
Fire goods	399	36.3%
Window coverings	406	37.0%
Table	359	32.7%
Other	274	25.0%
Chamber ware	269	24.5%
Convenience	228	20.8%
Picture	210	19.1%
Ornament	172	15.7%
Reading writing equipment	160	14.6%
Box	159	14.5%
Wardrobe	131	11.9%
Eating drinking	128	11.7%
Chest	114	10.4%
Bath	104	9.5%
Lighting	99	9.0%
Picture and ornament	90	8.2%
Clock	96	8.7%
Cupboard	77	7.0%
Stool	50	4.6%
Bedsteps	48	4.4%
Sofa	47	4.3%
Bidet	43	3.9%
Laundry item	42	3.8%
Furniture (other than the above)	32	2.9%
Cooking goods	26	2.4%
Working items	26	2.4%
Servants bell	22	2.0%
Sewing goods	13	1.2%
Music	10	0.9%

pictures, ornaments, and reading and writing equipment – mostly not multi-purpose living-rooms.

Table 6.1 shows the incidence of the types of item most commonly found in the 1098 bedstead-rooms. For simplicity, it charts cases where there is at least one

of the items found in a room with a bedstead; it does not count the number of such items in each room. It can be seen that, as well as activities facilitated by a bedstead – including sleeping, sex, illness, childbirth and lying in, and death – bed-rooms mostly contained equipment which supported washing, bathing, excreting, dressing, undressing, grooming, and the storage of clothes and personal or household linen. This accords reasonably well with contemporary discussions of bed-room furniture, although they varied somewhat according to the intended readership and the date. The items listed in Walsh's *Manual of Domestic Economy* (1856) are: bedsteads; bedding and bed furniture (hangings); chests of drawers; washstands and toilette tables (dressing tables); dressing and cheval mirrors; toilet services (chamber ware); towel-horses; commode-chairs; night-commodes; bed-steps; bidets; wardrobes; and bed-room chairs.<sup>24</sup> The functions of bed-rooms appear to have crystallised by our period and neither the inventories nor the texts offer evidence of functional change over time.

The specialisation of bed-rooms was marked by their decoration. Some builders' pattern books of the mid century specified the quality of papers and paints to be used throughout a house; the finishes in the bed-rooms were always less expensive than those for the day-rooms.<sup>25</sup> A catalogue of 1847 for a grand sale of wall-coverings differentiated bed-room papers as a specific type; they were generally described as 'neat' (that is as modest and serviceable) rather than the 'handsome' that was applied to dining-room, drawing-room and hall papers.<sup>26</sup> The wallpaper sales records of a London decorating company catering to the élite show that bed-room wallpapers were of a lower quality and cost and that they were stylistically distinct.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Walsh (1856), 196-203.

<sup>25</sup> *The freehold builder's guide containing plans, elevations, sections, perspective view and details for the erection of houses & cottages by an eminent architect* (1852) London: C.G. Sidey, nos 1-6.

<sup>26</sup> *A catalogue of the sale of 3,000 pieces of paper comprising fancy bed-room papers, Gothic, hall, & staircase papers, drawing and dining room flock and satin, and other papers to be sold by auction, by Mr. J.W. Spokes, no 393 Strand on Tuesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1847.* See Vickery, A. (2006) 'Neat and not too showy: words and wallpaper in Regency England', in Vickery, A. and J. Styles, eds. *Gender, taste and material culture in Britain and North America* New Haven: Yale University Press, for the use of terms to describe wallpapers around the turn of the nineteenth century.

<sup>27</sup> Messrs. Cowtan & Sons wallpaper order books, 1824-1938, held at the V&A, Books and Prints Collection, E 1862-1885-1946.

## Bed-rooms as private

The bed-room often appears in fiction as a defensible personal space; sometimes there is a lock on the door; sometimes people knock before entering.<sup>28</sup> People – usually the young female characters – withdraw to their bed-rooms to share confidences or express feelings that are not permissible or appropriate in the shared parts of the house.<sup>29</sup> This is a useful narrative device, allowing the reader access to the thoughts and feelings of protagonists but there is also some evidence that it actually happened.<sup>30</sup> Bed-rooms were often spaces of personal emotion or of intimacy, and not just for couples.<sup>31</sup> Sharing a bed-room, which was frequent, does not absolutely preclude this withdrawal function; timetabling could allow individual use or the sharing of emotions with intimates. Young women are often represented as taking pleasure in having a bed-room of their own.<sup>32</sup> And the bed itself was even more a space of individual privacy, both in terms of retreat from others but also as a space of dreaming and reverie.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, Crook points out that segregated bed-rooms, especially for children, could be a source of parental anxiety as their occupants were beyond immediate supervision.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the prescriptive literature proposed that a bed-room might also be a private sitting-room for personal or restricted use (Chapter 4, 155). People did receive visitors in bed-rooms under certain circumstances, particularly at times of illness, and around death or lying-in.<sup>35</sup> Table 6.1 shows that items which suggest a sitting-room function – pictures, ornaments, reading and writing equipment, and easy chairs – were present (easy chairs apart) in about fifteen to nineteen percent of the bedstead-rooms in the present sample. However, there is little evidence, either in the texts or in the inventories, for the provision of open hospitality or of extensive everyday living. Very few of the inventoried bedstead-rooms contained substantial items of furniture other than typical bed-room equipment. But the question of chairs should be raised at this point. At least one chair of some sort was present in 81 percent of the bedstead-rooms. The number of chairs per room varied

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<sup>28</sup> For example Trollope, A. (1991, first published 1858) *Dr. Thorne* London: Penguin, 509 'Such a visit as this from Lady Arabella [his mother] was very unusual; so much so, that he had probably not seen her in his own room since the day when he first left school.'

<sup>29</sup> Gaskell, (1996), 463, is just one of many examples.

<sup>30</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003), 126.

<sup>31</sup> Hamlett (2005), 150, for daughters visiting their mothers' bed-rooms.

<sup>32</sup> Barker (1878), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Crook (2008a), 25-26.

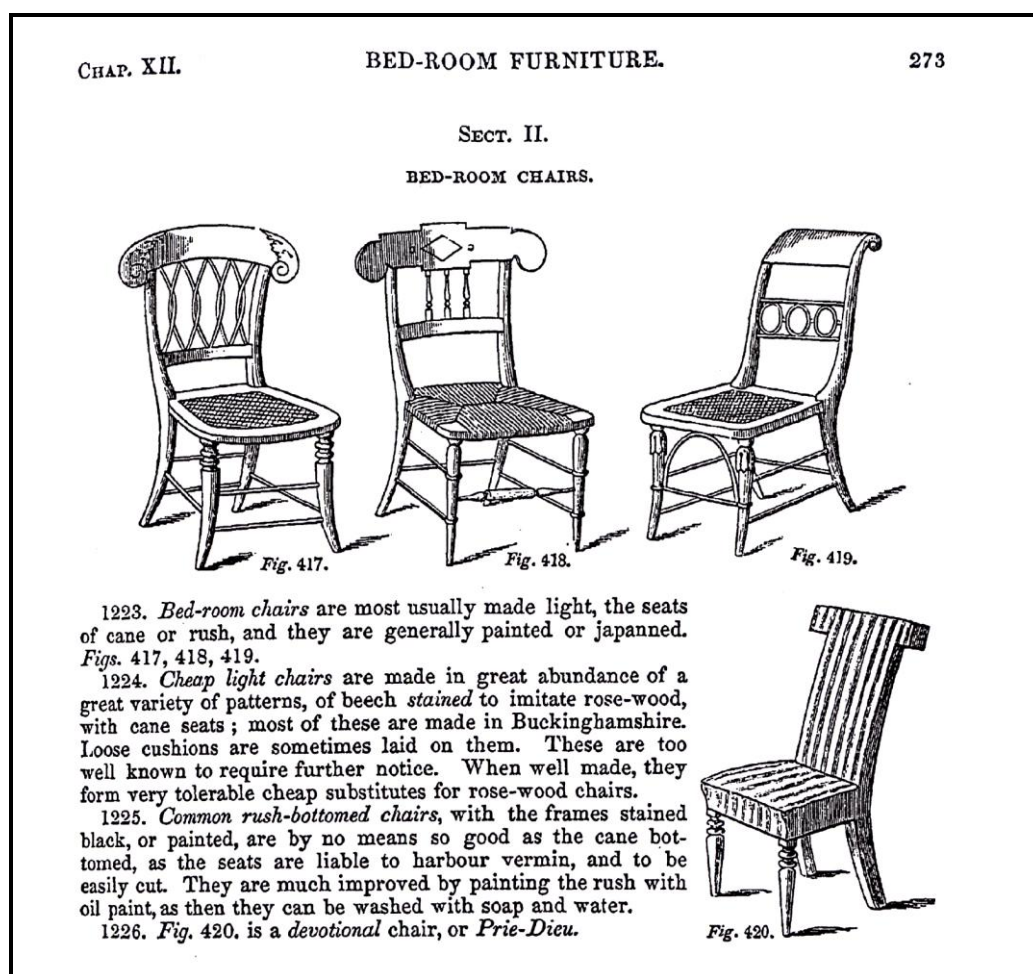
<sup>34</sup> Crook (2008a), 29.

<sup>35</sup> Heller (2010).

considerably – between none and eighteen.<sup>36</sup> Certain types of lightweight chair were sold specifically for bed-rooms (see Illustration 6.2).<sup>37</sup> Chairs were part of the standard bed-room kit presented in Walsh's *Manual of Domestic Economy*; the 1856 edition provided lists for households on four different budgets: for people on the lowest budget, it suggested nine bed-room chairs and three bedsteads; for the largest budget there were eight bedsteads and forty-two bed-room chairs!<sup>38</sup>

**Illustration 6.2 *Bed-room chairs illustrated in An encyclopaedia of domestic economy, 1844***

Image courtesy of the Geffrye Museum



What were all these bed-room chairs for? Being lightweight, they might have been moved into other rooms when required but I am doubtful that they supported large-scale sociability in the face of lack of evidence from the textual sources or

<sup>36</sup> Mean=3.7; median=3; mode=2. These are likely to be underestimates of actual practice because, if the exact number of chairs (plural) was not given in an inventory, 2 was used as default for entry in the database.

<sup>37</sup> Webster (1844), 273

<sup>38</sup> Walsh (1856), 211.

studies of hospitality. People probably used them to lay their clothes on. Wardrobes, as will be discussed below, were not very common; bulky garments were crushed in chests of drawers and chests but could be hung out over a chair back. Lady Barker wrote of her experience when visiting: 'I have had to keep my draperies on all the available chairs in the room because I was afraid to open and shut the diminutive drawers of an exquisite, aged coffre which was provided for their reception'.<sup>39</sup> Walsh's budget provided servants and the least well-off householders with chairs but no wardrobes or chests of drawers.

## Sharing beds and bed-rooms

Contemporary normative literature of all sorts suggests that sharing bed-rooms and beds was perfectly acceptable – provided it was not 'indiscriminate'. This appears to have been taken for granted in domestic manuals and decorating advice but, in reforming writing about the condition of the labouring classes and the poor, where people slept and with whom was a recurrent theme, and had been so since at least the later eighteenth century.<sup>40</sup> The ratio of beds to inhabitants was a commonly highlighted statistic.<sup>41</sup> This extract, written by Friedrich Engels in the 1840s, is typical of the way such depictions were framed:

Five to seven beds in each room lie on the floor – without bedsteads, and on these sleep, mixed indiscriminately, as many persons as apply. What physical and moral atmosphere reigns in these holes I need not state.<sup>42</sup>

Different writers, at different times, laid the blame for such conditions on different factors – some blamed the poor themselves, others the physical environment, others the economic and political structure<sup>43</sup> – but in all this literature, 'indiscriminate mixing' in sleeping arrangements was associated with dirt and moral degradation. It was also associated, through overcrowding particularly but also through sexual promiscuity, with disease.<sup>44</sup>

But the sharing of bed-rooms and beds was common and perfectly acceptable for all classes, provided that it did not foster sexual relations between

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<sup>39</sup> Barker (1878), 113.

<sup>40</sup> McKeon (2005), 259.

<sup>41</sup> Crook (2008), 20.

<sup>42</sup> Engels F. (1993) *The condition of the working class in England* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 77; it was first published in German 1844. Engels acknowledged drawing on existing publications; see, for example, page 74.

<sup>43</sup> Dennis (2008), 34.

<sup>44</sup> Mort (1987).

incompatible categories of people. *The gentleman's house* discusses the complex segregations by sex, age, class and marital relationship that were possible in very large houses with many rooms. But in manuals aimed at middle-class households with fewer possibilities for separation, the norms were so much taken for granted that they were not often explicitly expressed. In Walsh's 1873 *Manual*, servants' (his plural) bed-rooms and nurseries or children's rooms (included in all but the lowest budget) are separately named but the family bed-rooms, though hierarchically furnished, are not distinguished by occupant.<sup>45</sup> The standards are more clearly laid out in prescription for less well-off households, where the achievement of the ideal was more difficult. Loudon, in 1842, recommended the minimum of accommodation (for agricultural labourers and mechanics) as being three bed-rooms;<sup>46</sup> this would have allowed the parents and small children to share one room and for the older children to be divided by sex. Augusta Pitney, who was unusual in writing for agricultural labourers while coming from that background herself, provided a budget which allowed an agricultural labourer's family to rent a cottage with two rooms downstairs and three upstairs.<sup>47</sup> But *How to furnish a house* recognised that this was not always achievable, noting that 'for a family, consisting of a man and wife, with four children, a house with not less than four rooms is necessary: one as a sitting-room; another as a kitchen; a chamber for the parents, and one for the children is absolutely necessary.' The author thought that this standard of accommodation could be obtained by a mechanic or clerk.<sup>48</sup> And, in spite of the continuing reforming rhetoric of the need for three bed-rooms to provide for the required segregation, even byelaw type housing in the later century often provided only two.<sup>49</sup>

Clearly, people must have had a view on what the desirable 'discriminating' arrangements were, but they must also have been constrained by their resources. Unfortunately, the inventory evidence can only throw limited light on the extent of sharing of bedstead-rooms and bedsteads because reliable evidence about household sizes is not available for most of the inventories and because, even then, there is no evidence for who slept where. In this context, then, I simply provide some overview figures drawn from aggregate analysis. The mean, median

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<sup>45</sup> Walsh (1879), 195-215.

<sup>46</sup> Loudon (c1865), 1130.

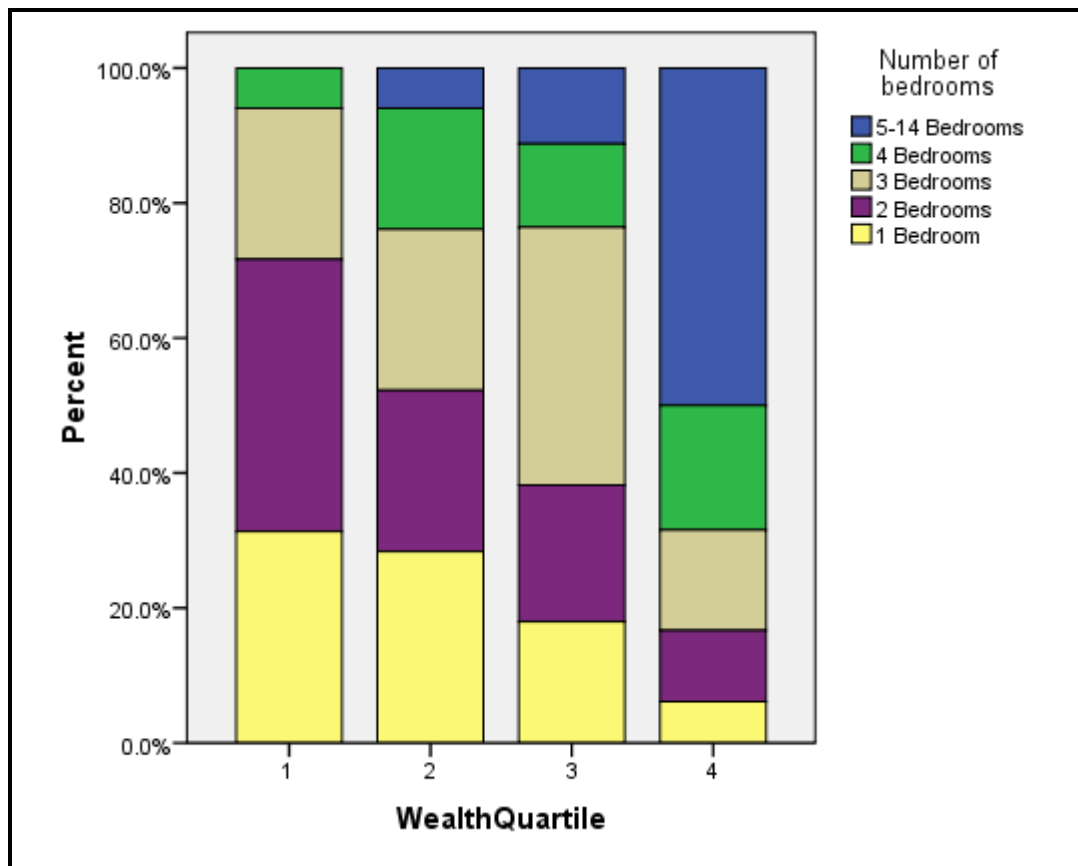
<sup>47</sup> Pitney, A. (late pupil teacher) (1855) *Cottage economy, by a cottager in three lectures addressed to the Girls of the Westbourne National School* London: Joseph Masters, 18.

<sup>48</sup> *How to furnish a house ...* (c.1855), 2.

<sup>49</sup> Muthesius (1982), 97.

and modal number of bedstead-rooms per inventory was three; almost two thirds of the group had between one and three although the largest number in a single inventory was fourteen.<sup>50</sup> Unsurprisingly, there was a strongly marked significant association between wealth quartile and number of bedstead-rooms, as demonstrated in Figure 6.1.<sup>51</sup> Similarly people coded as of higher status (who tended to be wealthier) also had more bedstead-rooms.<sup>52</sup> And, using all of the 475 domestic inventories, there is the expected association between wealth or higher status and numbers of bedsteads owned.<sup>53</sup>

**Figure 6.1 Percentage of inventories in each wealth quartile according to number of bed-rooms owned**  
Number=337



<sup>50</sup> This uses the subset of 337 'domestic inventories with named rooms'.

<sup>51</sup> Chi-square=123.738, df=12, n=337, p<.001.

<sup>52</sup> Chi-square=39.959, df=8, n=337, p<.001. 54.2% of 'higher status' inventories had 4 or more bedstead-rooms, compared with 25.1% of 'lower status' inventories.

<sup>53</sup> See sub-sample 3, Appendix 2; this is all the inventories in the sample except for those that were organised primarily for commercial purposes. Spearman's rho correlation between log10 wealth and number of bedsteads:  $r=.502$ ,  $n=475$ ,  $p<.001$ . Chi-square test for association between higher/lower status and number of bedsteads: chi-square=40.045, df=4,  $n=475$ ,  $p<.001$ .

The number of bed-rooms might be expected to relate to the life-stage and composition of the household, but the potential combinations are so many and the cases for which reliable evidence about composition is available are so few that the inventory sample is not helpful. The most that can be said is that, using a sub-sample of 72 inventories for which relevant census information could be found, there was a weak positive correlation between size of household and number of bedstead-rooms.<sup>54</sup> In about two thirds of these 72 households, some bed-room sharing was necessary.<sup>55</sup> And in about half of them, there would have been some sharing of bedsteads.<sup>56</sup>

Returning to the main sample of bedstead-rooms, in a very large majority (79 percent) of cases, there was only one bedstead per room; seventeen percent of rooms contained two.<sup>57</sup> It might be expected that servants shared – bedsteads and bedstead-rooms – more than the rest of the household. Although it is not generally possible to identify the occupants of different sleeping-rooms there are 88 bedstead-rooms which are specifically named as servants' rooms of one sort or another. More of these servants' rooms contained multiple bedsteads than the whole sample; almost 30 percent of them had two bedsteads (compared with seventeen percent for the whole sample) but in only three cases were there three bedsteads. The servants in this sample seem to have been doubled up but not quite to the extent sometimes suggested, although it is not possible to know whether they shared bedsteads.<sup>58</sup> The inventory sample, however, probably does not often feature households with large numbers of servants.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See sub-sample 9, Appendix 2. Spearman's rho correlation:  $r=.241$ ,  $n=72$ ,  $p<.05$ .

<sup>55</sup> 35% had enough bedstead-rooms to obviate the need for sharing; for 46% the number of bedstead-rooms suggests that at least two people (often three, four or five – and sometimes many more) would have shared each bedstead-room.

<sup>56</sup> For about a quarter of cases the ratio of people to bedsteads indicated some sharing, but not more than two to a bed; for another quarter the number per bedstead was calculated as exceeding two.

<sup>57</sup> There are 1093 bedstead-rooms where it is possible to calculate the number of bedsteads.

<sup>58</sup> By, for example, Flanders (2003), 2.

<sup>59</sup> Using the census sub-sample of 91 cases (sub-sample 8, Appendix 2), almost two-thirds of the households included servants but most of them employed only one and very few employed more than three.



## Case study 1: prioritising day-rooms over bed-rooms

William Gladding was 49 when he died in 1853.<sup>60</sup> He left a wife and eight children, aged eighteen and under. None of the children was married; in 1851, when the youngest was not yet born, they all lived at home, in Bethnal Green in London, with their parents as well as a young female lodger. There were, then, ten people in his house. Mr. Gladding was not well-off (lowest wealth quartile); the census listed him as a brick maker but his inventory shows him (or his wife) to have run a shop on the premises, selling groceries, tobacco and general goods. He lived close to a squalid and insanitary neighbourhood but his own house was probably in one of the new wider roads, near to Victoria Park, that retained their relatively respectable reputation until the 1890s.<sup>61</sup> His house was single-occupied and had two reasonably furnished living-rooms and a kitchen.

But there were only two bedsteads, plus one crib and one mahogany-framed sofa bedstead for all ten occupants. This must have necessitated quite a bit of sharing. And there were only two dedicated bed-rooms since the sofa bedstead was in the 'upstairs front room' which, apart from the bedstead itself, contained only living-room furniture and no bed-room equipment. So, the segregation of the older children by sex could have been accommodated – just – but only if the lodger did not have her own sleeping room. The two bed-rooms were not very well equipped; they had bedding for each bedstead; there was a chest of drawers and a dressing table and mirror and a Dutch clock in the main bed-room and a small chest of drawers in the inferior room. But there is no mention of washstands, floor coverings, window curtains, bed-room chairs or chamber ware. The appraiser might have thought the chamber ware was not valuable enough to be worth listing but is less likely to have omitted the larger items on this basis.

So, Mr. Gladding's sleeping arrangements were certainly quite crowded and

<sup>60</sup> William Gladding's Legacy Duty papers, TNA IR 19/109; census enumerator's book for 1851 (HO107, 1540, 10, 13).

<sup>61</sup> Charles Booth online archive, Cranbrook Street <http://booth.lse.ac.uk> (accessed 4.10.2010); Gavin, H. (1848) *Sanitary ramblings, being sketches and illustrations of Bethnal Green* London: John Churchill, 10 and map; *Map of London ... from an actual survey made in the years 1824, 1825 and 1826* (1827) London: Greenwood, Pringle & Co. <http://www.oldlondonmaps.com/greenwoodpages/greenwoodnorth05a.html> (accessed 4.10.2010); Stanford, E. (c1872) *The school-board map of London* <http://www.oldlondonmaps.com/stanfordpages/hackney06a.html> (accessed 4.10.2010).

his bed-room equipment was limited. It appears that, on a limited budget, Mr. Gladding put more premium on providing two well-furnished living-rooms than on having bed-rooms which met the prescriptive standards we have been considering. Indeed, so concerned was he about his living-rooms being proper that the signs of the upper front room being used as a bed-room were concealed.

## Bed-room equipment

The next, and main, part of this chapter turns to the contents of the bedstead-rooms. Table 6.2 shows the presence/absence of items identified as being particularly common in the bedstead-rooms of the present sample, cross-tabulated and tested for statistical significance with a range of variables related to the deceased.<sup>62</sup> It makes obvious the relative frequency of different items and highlights those where differentiated ownership was most marked, giving a picture of how this sample furnished its bed-rooms. A number of these items were selected for investigation of how they were discussed in contemporary literature. It becomes apparent that bed-room equipment and bed-rooms were important sites in a range of contemporary concerns about cleanliness, health, convenience, comfort and class. Not only does the inventory evidence allow an investigation of the extent to which actual ownership accorded with the precepts of advice but it also provides a way in to a consideration of whether the ideas associated with the goods in question were actually taken up by the households concerned.

The discussion begins with cleanliness because this was such a dominant concern in the period of the inventory sample. Cleanliness, as its specialist historians make plain, is a complicated matter, understood and practiced differently, at different times, by different people and it has a range of different connotations or meanings.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The sample here is all 1098 bedstead-rooms. The variables are: the date of the death of the owner (by 20-year period –1841-1860 and 1861-1881); the geographical location of the inventory; and the gender, higher/lower status and gross wealth of the deceased. Two occupational groups – farmers (at all scales, from small-holders to those employing numbers of labourers) and merchants (wholesalers and wholesaler/retailers) – for which there are sufficient numbers in the sample to allow for statistical testing were also included.

<sup>63</sup> Kelley (2005); Smith (2007); and Vigarello, G. (1988) *Concepts of cleanliness: changing attitudes in France since the Middle Ages* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Table 6.2 Statistical significance of association between presence of an item in a bedstead-room and factors relating to the decedents**

The sample is 1098 bedstead-rooms located in 337 'domestic inventories with named rooms'<sup>64</sup>

At least one item present in a bedstead-room	Total 1098	Percentage of all bedstead-rooms	Increased incidence over period	Regional difference	Difference by gender	Difference by higher/lower status	Association with merchants	Association with farmers	Association with wealth quartile
Washstand/ ChestDrawers/ DressingTable/Table	974	88.7%	p<=.05	p<=.01	p<=.05 F	p<=.01		p<=.01	
Chair/easy chair	891	81.1%	p<=.05	p<=.01		p<=.01		p<=.01	p<=.001
Carpet/rug/floor covering	758	69.0%	p<=.001	p<=.001	p<=.05 F	p<=.01		p<=.001	p<=.001
Mirror	732	66.7%	p<=.05	p<=.001	p<=.05 F			p<=.01	p<=.01
Washstand	688	62.7%	p<=.01	p<=.001	p<=.05 F	p<=.001	p<=.01	p<=.01	p<=.001
Chest of drawers	652	59.4%		p<=.001	p<=.05 F			p<=.001	
Dressing table	490	44.6%	p<=.05			p<=.05			p<=.01
Table	359	32.7%		p<=.01		p<=.05		p<=.05	
Towel rail	416	37.9%	p<=.001	p<=.001	p<=.001 F	p<=.001		p<=.001	p<=.001
Fire goods	399	36.3%		p<=.001	p<=.01 F	p<=.001		p<=.001	p<=.001
Bedhangings	481	43.8%	p<=.001	p<=.01	p<=.01 F	p<=.001	p<=.05	p<=.05	p<=.001
Window coverings	406	37.0%		p<=.001	p<=.05 F	p<=.01			p<=.001
Ware	269	24.5%	p<=.001			p<=.001			
Convenience	228	20.8%		p<=.05		p<=.05			
Metal bedstead	212	19.3%	p<=.001	p<=.001		p<=.001	p<=.001	p<=.001	p<=.001
Picture	210	19.1%	p<=.01	p<=.001	p<=.05 F		p<=.05	p<=.001	
Wardrobe	131	11.9%		p<=.05	p<=.05 F	p<=.001		p<=.01	p<=.001
Chest	114	10.4%	p<=.001	p<=.01			p<=.05	p<=.001	
Bath	104	9.5%	p<=.01	p<=.001	p<=.001 F	p<=.001		p<=.01	p<=.001
Clock	96	8.7%	p<=.05	p<=.05					
Bidet	43	3.9%		p<=.001	p<=.05 F	p<=.01	No Test	p<=.01	p<=.01

<sup>64</sup> A chi-square test for significance was used. Positive associations are marked in red; negative associations in blue. The probability of the association being a result of chance is shown as: p<=.001 (less than 1 in 1000); p<=.01 (less than 1 in 100); p<=.05 (less than 1 in 20). There is no entry if there is no statistically significant association. The association for gender is marked F or M.

Certain facets of cleanliness – personal, domestic and public – were often, in nineteenth-century Britain, discussed in the context of disease and physical or moral health.<sup>65</sup> The extent of the incursion of this discourse into the private areas of the homes of the well-to-do has hardly previously been noticed for the early mid century but it can be traced in the bed-rooms of the present sample. Bed-room equipment was also contextualised in terms of science and improvement, pleasure, comfort, aesthetics, and social status. Sometimes a particular piece of equipment bore several sets of meanings and, for this reason, the discussion is initially structured around a range of key items.

As has been the case throughout this thesis, wealth and status are seen to be important factors in the differential ownership of goods; they are addressed here within the studies of individual items. But another recurrent factor – geographical location – is discussed in a short section of its own, in order to assess its impact.

## **Washstands: personal cleanliness and class**

Personal bodily cleanliness had long been a requirement and demonstration of refinement and high status. But the manner of achieving it varied enormously at different times and in different places.<sup>66</sup> In early nineteenth-century Britain, according to Virginia Smith, washing the body with water had become the most important method. Regular washing was linked to an aesthetic of visible, personal, soap-and-water cleanliness as opposed to the cosmetic powders-and-potions cleanliness of the eighteenth century.<sup>67</sup> Early nineteenth-century health advice advocated it and the increasing availability of plumbing and piped water, especially in London, made it feasible.<sup>68</sup> At this time washstands became larger, with increased facilities for thorough bodily washing (see Illustration 6.3).<sup>69</sup> Washing was also believed to help prevent skin diseases and to aid health by unblocking the pores and allowing free perspiration.<sup>70</sup>

In the domestic manuals studied here, washstands were always accommodated in the bed-room, which was presented as the main site for the production of personal cleanliness. Bathrooms were beginning to appear in new

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<sup>65</sup> Smith (2007), 264-306.

<sup>66</sup> Vigarello (1988), 2 and 17.

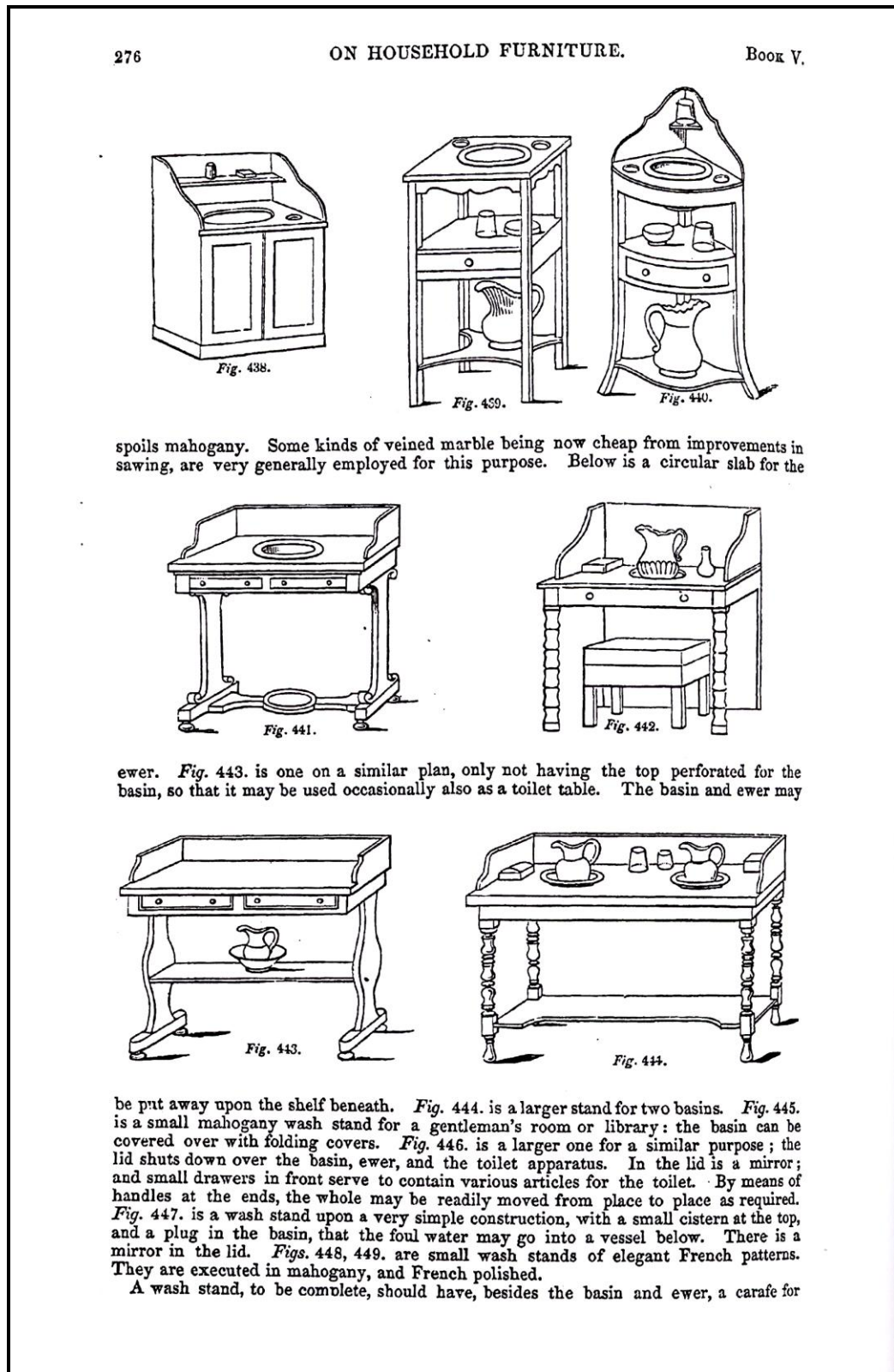
<sup>67</sup> Smith (2007), 289-291.

<sup>68</sup> Smith (2007), 288.

<sup>69</sup> Young (2003), 98.

<sup>70</sup> Nightingale, F. (1860) *Notes on nursing* London: Harrison, 65.

Illustration 6.3 *Washstands as illustrated in An encyclopaedia of domestic economy, 1844*<sup>71</sup>  
 Image courtesy of the Geffrye Museum



<sup>71</sup> Webster (1844), 276.

middle-class housing by the mid century, but they were by no means standard and they were not a regular feature of even improved working-class housing until after World War One.<sup>72</sup> In any case, bathrooms (which are barely visible in these inventories because their contents were mostly fixtures) were for bathing not ordinary washing; according to Smith, strip washing in the bed-room remained the cheapest and most convenient option.<sup>73</sup>

But washing with a washstand turns out to have been a practice of the privileged. Linda Young notes that bed-rooms, with their provision for personal cleanliness, were as central as the drawing-room for the adoption of the gentility that was a marker of middle-class belonging.<sup>74</sup> When the upper-class John Perceval was incarcerated in a lunatic asylum in the early 1830s, one of his most bitter complaints was that he was denied the clean water, clean towels and private facilities for washing his hands, face, feet and mouth that were an essential part of a gentleman's way of life.<sup>75</sup> His description of his bed-room in a subsequent asylum indicates that a washstand was one of the items necessary for him to consider it respectable:

My bedroom up-stairs, was ... cheerful, airy, and respectable; the walls were papered, ... – a chest of drawers stood in it, with a looking-glass, a washhand-stand and basins, &c. &c.; only the beds were without curtains or hangings of any description.<sup>76</sup>

By the mid century, washing was necessary and standard for the middle classes and, as Table 6.2 indicates, washstands were quite common, appearing in about two thirds of all the bedstead-rooms. But the table also shows that incidence was markedly differentiated by status and by wealth. And in the 475 'domestic inventories' the 28 percent which did not include even a single washstand were strongly associated with people in the lower wealth quartiles and coded as of lower status. Even though there was a rise in the percentage of bedstead-rooms with a washstand over time, the inventory sample shows little evidence of ownership increasing in social spread; the increase was not significantly located in any

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<sup>72</sup> Muthesius (1982), 62; Ravetz, A. (1995) *The place of home: English domestic environments, 1914-2000* London: E & F.N. Spon, 134; Smith (2007), 289.

<sup>73</sup> Smith (2007), 288.

<sup>74</sup> Young (2003), 96-105 and 187.

<sup>75</sup> Bateson G., ed. (1962) *Perceval's narrative: a patient's account of his psychosis 1830-1832* London: The Hogarth Press, vi-vii; Perceval, J. (1840) *A narrative of the treatment experienced by a gentleman during a state of mental derangement*; ... London: Effingham Wilson, 17-22.

<sup>76</sup> Perceval (1840), 92

particular wealth quartile and the increased incidence in lower status bedstead-rooms was not very marked.<sup>77</sup>

But this is not to say that people without a washstand did not wash. They might have put their basin and jug on some other surface; 89 percent of all bedstead-rooms included at least one of a washstand, dressing table, table or chest of drawers. Or people might have washed where water was available with less effort. Although piped water was brought into most new working-class houses from the 1860s, many older houses were still without.<sup>78</sup> Even in London, where piped water began to be systematically introduced in the 1860s, until the 1880s people drew water from wells, pumps and the limited piped supplies provided mostly by private companies.<sup>79</sup> Even in middle-class housing, running water was not laid on to bed-rooms, although it would be piped to the bathroom upstairs if there was one.<sup>80</sup> Water had to be carried to the bed-room, usually from the kitchen or perhaps from a bathroom. This was a servant's task. But where there were no servants, or for inferior members of a household, one might think that the privilege of washing in a bed-room was quite an effort. A personal recollection of a working-class Edmonton household at the beginning of the twentieth century suggests that even by this late date washing was easier in the scullery and that the ownership of a washstand was a matter of display:

There was also a washstand with a marble top on which resided a large toilet jug and bowl-cum-basin, a soap dish and a vase-like thing for toothbrushes. These items were for display only and for the occasional use by guests, because my parents always washed themselves downstairs in the scullery.<sup>81</sup>

William Gladding, the Bethnal Green shopkeeper and brick maker (244-245, above) was not so poor that he could not maintain two well-furnished day-rooms but, according to his inventory, he had not chosen to acquire any washstands.

Thomas Wright gives several descriptions of working-class personal washing, making it plain that it was an important matter of self-respect and pleasure. Men washed their hands before leaving the workshop on a Saturday half day; then after Saturday dinner they had "a good wash" (his inverted commas) and

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<sup>77</sup> From 48.9% to 58.5%; chi-square=4.546, df=1, n=521, p<.05.

<sup>78</sup> Thompson (1988), 192-193.

<sup>79</sup> Trentmann, F. and V. Taylor (2005) 'From users to consumers: water politics in nineteenth-century London' in Trentmann, F. ed. *The making of the consumer: knowledge, power and identity in the modern world* Oxford: Berg, 54-55.

<sup>80</sup> Muthesius (1982), 61.

<sup>81</sup> Cryer, P. 'Join me in the 1900s' <http://www.1900s.org.uk/1900s-bedroom.htm> (accessed 4.10.2010).

clean clothes;<sup>82</sup> they went to the barber's for a shave and gossip on Saturday or Sunday, or even both.<sup>83</sup> Thorough washing appears to have been a weekly not a daily matter and the clean clothes the men put on for the weekend were worn to work throughout the week. Wright mentions 'a cold splash' in the wash-house<sup>84</sup> and the weekly use of the public baths<sup>85</sup> – but he makes no mention of washstands.

Nonetheless, it was a commonplace of the time that the working classes (and not just the poor of the social investigations) were dirty.<sup>86</sup> Even Thomas Wright, who had described these working-class washing practices, used the common phrase 'the great unwashed' as the title of one of his collections of essays, proposing that it embodied the 'working-class idea of themselves'.<sup>87</sup> Social investigators and sanitary reformers found that the poor were personally dirty and that they lived in dirty surroundings, both within and out of doors. They argued that cleanliness amongst the poor would improve the health of the whole nation since, according to the miasma theory that was the dominant explanation for disease in the mid century, filth and odour were prime causal factors in the generation of disease and death.<sup>88</sup> But the cleanliness of the poor was presented not simply as a physical matter; it was also a 'moral' issue.<sup>89</sup> Chadwick's report, *The Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population*, of 1842 identified cleanliness as the central agent of the civilizing process.<sup>90</sup> Personal cleanliness was part of, and encouraged, a package of associated desirable behaviours, including sobriety, honesty, providence and domesticity.<sup>91</sup> The ideas of the 'sanitary movement' resulted in major projects of public health and sanitation, the establishment in 1848 of a national public health authority, and a series of central and local government interventions in the living environments of the poor and the labouring classes.<sup>92</sup> It was in this context that the movement for the provision of public baths, with support from within as well as outside the working classes, was active in the 1830s and 1840s, and again in the 1870s.<sup>93</sup> Attempts to encourage personal cleanliness

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<sup>82</sup> Wright, (1867), 188-189.

<sup>83</sup> Wright (1867), 219-224.

<sup>84</sup> Wright (1867), 215.

<sup>85</sup> Wright (1867), 188-189.

<sup>86</sup> Smith (2007), 279-280.

<sup>87</sup> Wright, T. (1868) *The great unwashed* London: Tinsley Brothers, vii.

<sup>88</sup> Bashford (1998), chapter 1; Driver (1988), 278.

<sup>89</sup> Bashford (1998), chapter 1; Driver (1988).

<sup>90</sup> Smith (2007), 281.

<sup>91</sup> Bashford (1998), chapter 1; Crook (2008b), 213-215; Smith (2007), 284.

<sup>92</sup> Smith (2007), 264-306.

<sup>93</sup> Smith (2007), 280-290.



amongst the lower classes, then, in the absence of adequate water supplies, were directed to public rather than private provision.

So, while bodily washing, with its associations of personal pride, respectability, health and pleasure, could be achieved by various means, a washstand had additional meanings of status and privilege, linked to the possibility of achieving regular personal cleanliness in the privacy of a bed-room in circumstances where there was ready access to clean water.

## **Metal bedsteads: health and class**

Metal bedsteads were not especially common items, appearing in only nineteen percent of the bedstead-rooms (Table 6.2, page 246) and in just under a quarter of all 475 domestic inventories.<sup>94</sup> But, unlike washstands, they were much discussed in the advice books, where they were associated with class, cleanliness, health and science.

The bedstead was the frame of what we would now call a bed. It came in a large number of formats. The appraisers frequently did not specify the type but the most frequently noted in the present sample are (in order): four-posters; French; tent; stump, half-tester; Arabian; camp; and press (see Illustrations 6.4-6.7 for the most common types). At this period most bedsteads were wooden but they could also be metal. I have coded any bedstead that was named as 'iron', 'brass' (very few of them) or 'japanned' as a 'metal bedstead'. (It was possible to japan wood, but it appears from catalogues of the period that japanned bedsteads were generally iron.) The appraisers did not note the material of most of the bedsteads and it is likely that some of the unspecified items were metal; the incidence of metal bedsteads recorded above is therefore likely to be an underestimate.

Prices seem to have fallen over time. Loudon, writing in the early 1830s, had noted that a particular iron stump cost 23s.; the architect who, sometime after 1878, minutely annotated the copy that I have been using, remarked that 'they may now be had at about 12/6 each'.<sup>95</sup> It is difficult to estimate the comparative value of metal and wooden bedsteads. Much depended on size, quality and finish. An elaborate brass model could be very costly<sup>96</sup> but Walsh's *Manual* of 1856 shows

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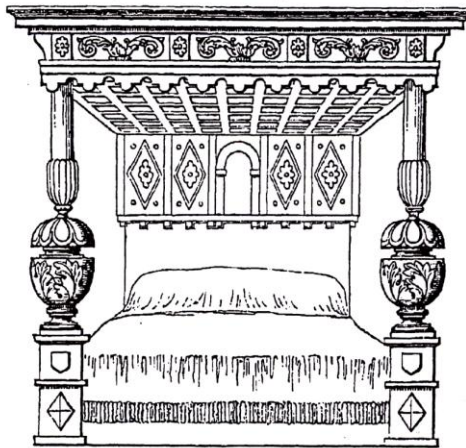
<sup>94</sup> See Appendix 2, sub-sample 3 for the constitution of the sample.

<sup>95</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 329. The copy I used is from the London Library.

<sup>96</sup> Peyton & Peyton (c.1856) *Improved patent metallic bedsteads patent dovetail joints & patent sacking* Birmingham, trade catalogue; Room and Morton (1854) *Pattern book of improved metallic bedsteads and other metallic furniture* Birmingham, trade catalogue.

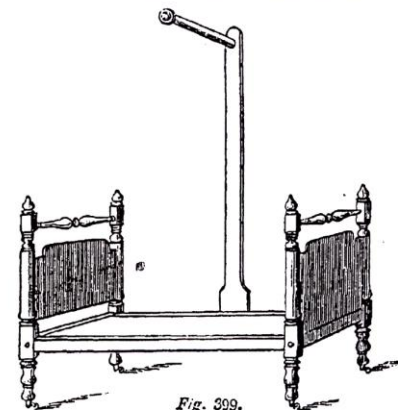
**Illustration 6.4 Four poster and French bedsteads, illustrated in Webster's An encyclopaedia of domestic economy, 1844**  
 Image courtesy of The Geffrye

1191. *Fig. 398.* is an example of a four-post bedstead in the Elizabethan style. The whole is of oak, ceiling and head included, which are pannelled and enriched with carving. The curtains are omitted to shew the design better.



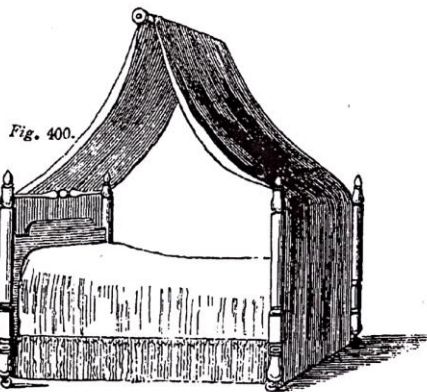
*Fig. 398.*

The cottage French pole-bed, *fig. 399.*, is of very simple construction, and is now much used in this country as an economical piece of furniture. One of its great conveniences is the manner in which the curtain is contrived. This consists merely of a piece of drapery thrown over a pole which is generally fixed to the wall at the place where the bed is to stand; it can be taken down with the utmost facility, and the usual expense of making up attending other curtains is here saved. In places where the pole cannot be conveniently fixed to the wall, it may be attached to an upright piece forming part of the bed, as in the wood cut. *Fig. 400.* shows the bed, with the furniture and bedding complete. Some object to the curtain reaching so low at the head; in consequence of which one cannot well sit upright in bed, and the air is too much confined near the face.

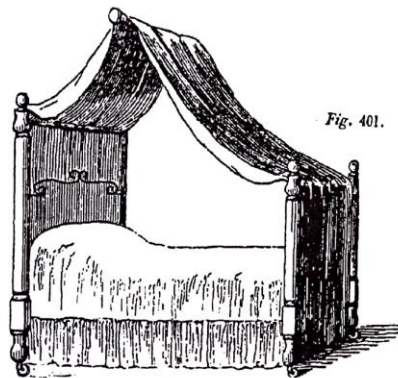


*Fig. 399.*

This inconvenience may be removed by hanging the curtains as in *fig. 401.*, though by the sacrifice of some uniformity. Many persons use them without curtains, and in small rooms they are better without; particularly for young people. Their being easily moved, and taken to pieces, is one of their principal advantages. The curtains are certainly more elegant than those of the tent bed, *fig. 403.*, and less apt to collect dust; but they are not so convenient, as those of tent beds may be, if hung with rings upon a rod at the top of the upright posts in *fig. 406.*, which will open by drawing aside. They are usually painted in imitation of some expensive wood.

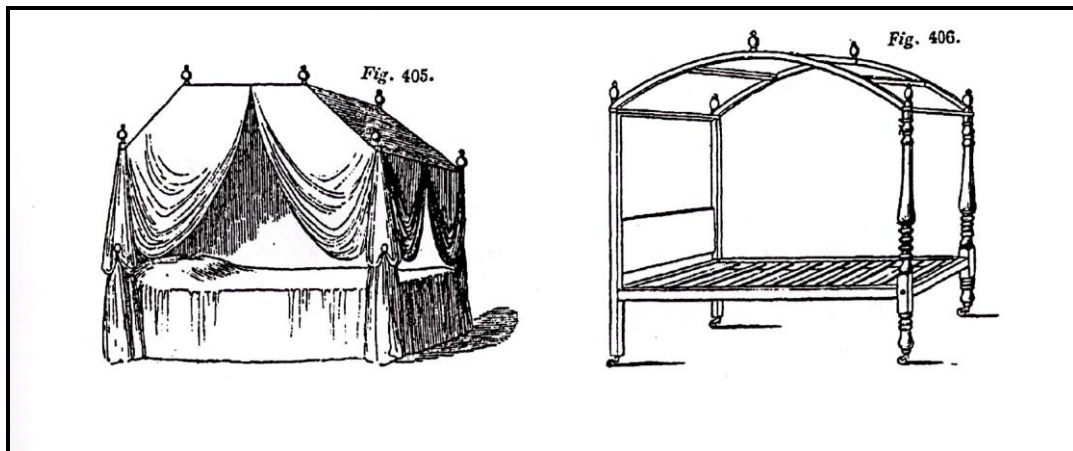


*Fig. 400.*



*Fig. 401.*

**Illustration 6.5 *Wooden tent bedsteads illustrated in Webster's An encyclopaedia of domestic economy, 1844, page 267***  
Image courtesy of The Geffrye



**Illustration 6.6 *Arabian or half-tester bedsteads illustrated in Cassell's household guide: being a complete encyclopaedia of domestic and social economy and forming a guide to every department of practical life, 1869, Volume 1, page 184***

<http://www.archive.org/details/cassellshouseho101londonoft>

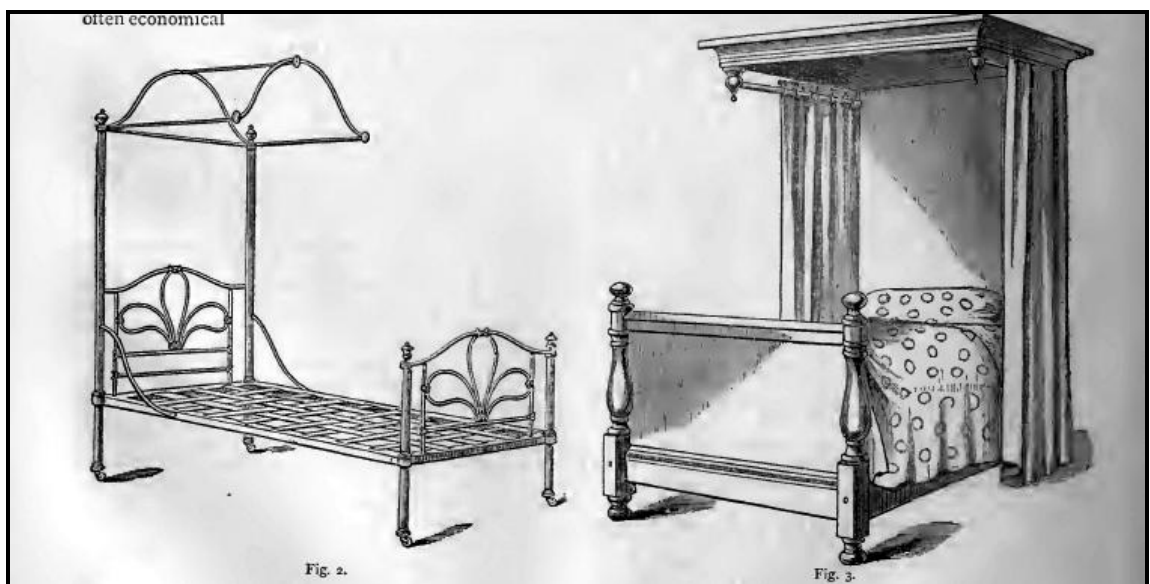


Fig. 2 is a metal bedstead.



**Illustration 6.7 Furniture for a servant's room, as shown in Cassell's household guide: being a complete encyclopaedia of domestic and social economy and forming a guide to every department of practical life, 1869, Volume 1, page 185**

<http://www.archive.org/details/cassellshousehol01londuoft>

the screws, so that the glasses swing without check. Common looking-glasses have for their backs a thin veneer of wood, set in with brads. Those of a better kind are made with backs to slide in like the sliding lid of a box, and are then fixed with a screw. It is best to give a high price, and have the frames of the glass better finished. It is true that at first the screws appear firm, but in a short time a slight rattle is heard between the glass and the wood at the back, occasioned by the nuts of the screws falling off. It may seem easy enough to put these on again, and it certainly is so with proper tools; but these are not always at hand, and the work requires the most delicate handling, to prevent the nuts from scratching, or the finger tips from rubbing off the quick-silver. Some glasses are fastened in such a way that only a cabinet-maker can remedy their defects. Many schemes have been adopted for the greater perfection of this fastening, but none are wholly successful in glasses of moderate cost; but, as looking-glasses are rarely purchased more than once in a lifetime, the price for a good article should not be an object. Oval looking-glasses have one defect, they show only the face and head, the remaining part of the figure being cut off; therefore, however handsome they look, they are not desirable for persons with small means, who cannot afford a cheval glass.

There are a great variety of toilette-tables, from the simple table with one drawer, to the duchess table with many drawers and with swing-glass fixed and standing on pedestals, which are really small nests of drawers. Others have, in addition, from three to five drawers below the top of the table on each side; this style is termed knee-hole drawers, and is most useful. A japanned toilette-table with one drawer can be had for 9s. One unpainted, without drawers, but with turned legs, oval-shaped in front, and four feet long, may be had for the same price; the one requires only a toilette-cloth over the top, the last must have pink cambric surrounding it, and be covered again with book muslin gathered like a full skirt round the table; or with dimity, bordered with one stripe of coloured bordering taken from the coloured striped dimity. This is a cheap and excellent method of bordering curtains hung before a recess to simulate a wardrobe, or for the coverings of a toilette-table. Three yards of coloured striped dimity cost 3s., and from this twenty-one yards of bordering can be rent.

It must be recollected that, inexpensive as these tables and coverings appear to be, they are ultimately rendered

very dear by the cost of washing the coverings. Moreover, there is something to be considered in their great danger of taking fire.

A mahogany toilette-table, a yard long, surrounded by a rim, and having two drawers, can be purchased for 24s.; one four feet long—and this is of ample size for any ordinary room—for 38s.; but with an increased number of drawers, seven instead of two, and arranged on each side, to leave a vacant space in the centre, thus forming a knee-hole table, it will cost from 90s. to £6 or £8. Every toilette-table should move on casters; the cheap ones are without them, and their addition increases the expense, unless the matter be arranged between the intending buyer and seller, before purchasing. Marble-topped tables are not desirable. Articles of glass and china may be placed on them with careless hands, and in a hurry such wares are often broken.

A servant's bed-room should have as few articles in it as are consistent with comfort. A bed and bedstead, with two soft mattresses, a pillow, three blankets, two soft unbleached sheets and pillow-slip, a soft and inexpensive coloured counterpane, a chest of drawers, a looking-glass, wash-stand, with the usual requisites of white ware, and a chair, are all that is needed. One of the most comfortable bedsteads is the truckle or cross bedstead. These have gone very much out of fashion,

but they are portable, inexpensive, and desirable to sleep on. The next in point of comfort is the iron bedstead, because the interlacing laths are flexible. In the matter of cleanliness, wood and iron bedsteads are equal; the latter do not prevent bed insects from congregating, but the iron is easily cleaned and painted. From wooden bedsteads insects may also be wholly extirpated by washing in strong brine and boiling water. The skirtings and cracks in the walls, doors, and window-frames, also need the same process. Figs. 4, 5, 6, and 7, are patterns of furniture for a servant's room.

The less carpet laid on the floor of a servant's room, the healthier and freer from dirt it will be. Once a week, the boards should be washed with salt and water, in winter and summer. A clock is essential in the bedroom, but it should be an eight-day brass clock, which is inexpensive, and this clock should be locked in a box having a glass cover, the box being placed so that the cover opens like a cupboard door. An alarm clock is useless; the sleeper, after a morning or two, gets accustomed to the sound, and sleeps on regardless of her excellent friend.



Fig. 4.

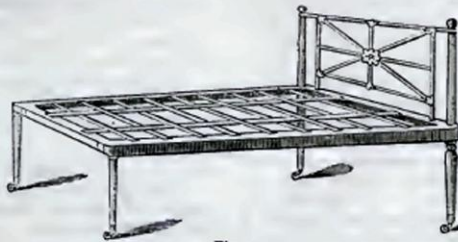


Fig. 5.

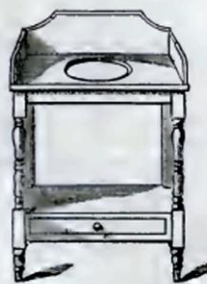


Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.

The metal bedstead is a 'stump' type.

that, while some metal bedsteads could be more expensive than wooden models, mahogany was the most expensive and certain types of iron – the stumps, single French and half-testers – were cheapest.<sup>97</sup> The inventories do not offer a great deal of evidence on this point because of the scantiness of valuations and variability in the way they were valued.

As Table 6.2 (page 246) shows, bedstead-rooms with metal bedsteads in them belonged disproportionately to wealthier people and to those of 'higher status'. Farmers were under-represented as owners, while merchants (wholesalers or wholesaler/retailers) were over-represented. Of course, higher wealth gives greater opportunities for acquisition. But there are other issues at play here. Every room in this sample contained at least one bedstead and metal bedsteads were not generally more expensive than wooden ones. This is not a case of owning *more* things because one was wealthy, or of owning more *expensive* things because one was wealthy. These bedsteads had something else about them that attracted the wealthy and people of higher status but repelled farmers.

Mass manufacture began in the early decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>98</sup> By 1850 5,000-6,000 metal bedsteads were being produced in Birmingham (the centre of production) each week.<sup>99</sup> They became significantly more common in the inventory sample as time went on. Only eleven percent of the inventories for people who died between 1841 and 1860 contained an iron bedstead; for the period 1861-1881, this had risen to 44 percent.<sup>100</sup> There was also a very significant rise over time in the proportion of individual bedstead-rooms with metal bedsteads; nine percent included one in the period 1841-1860 compared with 32 percent subsequently.<sup>101</sup> Their increasing popularity probably owed something to falling prices.

Because they were relatively new items at this time, their features were not yet taken for granted and advertisements and domestic manuals drew attention to their selling points. Loudon, writing in the 1830s, advocated them on two main grounds: their cheapness and the fact that they did not harbour vermin (by which

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<sup>97</sup> Walsh (1856), 203-208.

<sup>98</sup> Himmelheber, G. (1996) *Cast-iron furniture and all other forms of iron furniture* London: Philip Wilson, 18; Loudon (c.1865), 329.

<sup>99</sup> Himmelheber (1996), 21.

<sup>100</sup> Chi-square=67.671, df=1, n=475, p=<.001.

<sup>101</sup> Chi-square=94.639, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001. There is doubtless a time lag built in to the inventories, since people would generally have acquired their bedsteads some decades before their death, so the chronology of the inventories would be expected to follow but not match changes in production and sales.

he meant bed-bugs, lice and fleas).<sup>102</sup> They had woven iron hooping bases, rather than sacking, and their smooth surfaces were easier to wash down than wooden models. He illustrated several types, suggesting that they were suitable for cottages but none were proposed for the middle-class villas of the well-to-do. Cheapness and bed-bugs – Loudon’s metal bedsteads were for the working classes.

Advertising and later manuals moderated this. In Peyton and Peyton’s catalogue it was only the stump bedsteads in plain colours that were specifically aimed at workhouses, hospitals, asylums and servants.<sup>103</sup> Frederick Sutton was an ironmonger in Hull, with an iron bedstead depot, which he assiduously promoted in the local paper. The advertisement shown in Illustration 6.8 demonstrates a class hierarchy of metal bedstead types: the common stump is suitable for unions, schools, asylums, public institutions and servants. But more complicated and elaborate types of iron bedstead were apparently suitable for, as Frederick Sutton put it, ‘genteel families’. Walsh’s 1856 *Manual* made a similar distinction.<sup>104</sup> After all, even the most careful middle-class family could suffer from bed-bugs.<sup>105</sup> If metal bedsteads were less susceptible to infestation, this would appeal to everyone, whatever their class, and the ‘patent dovetail joints’ advertised by Peyton and Peyton and Sutton would make any necessary dismantling much easier.

But in addition to the bed-bug issue, metal bedsteads were presented in the same context of miasmatic theories about health and disease that applied to personal washing. Public health initiatives and middle-class health-related interventions in working-class life have been much discussed but it has hardly been appreciated that, at this point in the early mid century, the ideas of the sanitary movement were also brought into discussions of the private middle-class home and even into its most intimate of areas, the bed-room. Almost all writers concerned with the domestic have positioned a new attention to, and aesthetic of, domestic cleanliness in the late-nineteenth-century, relating it to the replacement of miasma theory by germ theory, in which everything that might be described as dirt could carry germs.<sup>106</sup> Judith Neiswander, for example, has identified the development of domestic sanitarian literature in the 1880s, as well as a considerable interest in the

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<sup>102</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 329 and 334.

<sup>103</sup> Peyton & Peyton (c.1856).

<sup>104</sup> Walsh (1856), 203.

<sup>105</sup> Jane Carlyle describes fighting an infestation: Froude, J., ed. (1883) *Letters and memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle* London: Longmans, vol 1, 241-242, cited in Flanders (2003), 13.

<sup>106</sup> Forty (1986), 156-181, especially 159-60; Kelley (2010).

Illustration 6.8 Advertisement for Frederick Sutton's Iron Bedstead Depot, Hull, 1849  
Source: *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, Friday, May 18, 1849

**OPENING OF A NEW IRON BEDSTEAD, CHILDREN'S CRIB, STOVE,  
AND SHOWER BATH DEPOT.**

**F**REDERICK SUTTON, IRONMONGER, 43, QUEEN-STREET, HULL,  
has, in addition to his present Establishment, opened a Commodious Warehouse for the Sale of  
**IRON BEDSTEADS, CHILDREN'S CRIBS, SHOWER, HIP, AND SPONGING BATHS,**  
52, QUEEN STREET,

Where a Stock of Winfield's Patent Dovetail Jointed Bedsteads are constantly fixed up, to which F. S. invites  
Inspection. The Dovetail Bedsteads are equal in firmness to any that can be produced; the old rickety plan of  
screwing together is avoided; the Iron Lath Sackings are firm but elastic, also cleanly and portable; Construc-  
tion so simple that a Bedstead may be set up in a few minutes, without the use of any Implement.

IRON BEDSTEADS, from the Common Stump suitable for Unions, Servants, Schools, Asylums, and Public  
Institutions; also TENT HALF TESTER and FOUR-POST, suitable for Genteel Families, are made with  
highly polished Pillars, richly-japanned Mahogany or Rosewood, to suit any class of Furniture, having an elegant  
appearance, and moderate in Price.

**THE STOVE DEPARTMENT**

Consists of REGISTER STOVES, in large variety, suitable for Lodging, Breakfast, Dining, and Drawing Rooms.  
Also an Assortment of COLLEGE REGISTERS, fitted with Fire Lamps, from 16s. each.

**OVENS, GRATES, AND BOILERS, SHAM STOVES, &c.**

Also KITCHEN RANGES, fitted up with Roasting Ovens, and L Boilers with wind-up Chucks, fitted up  
to Steam, if required. These Ranges are very economical in the Consumption of Coal. A large Family, in  
one year, would save the Cost of the Range in Coal.

**WEIGHING MACHINES AND SACK BARROWS.**

**WIRE FLOWER STANDS AND GARDEN CHAIRS; ASH PANS; WIRE BLINDS** made to order.  
JAPANNED TRAVELLING TRUNKS AND LADIES' CAP AND BONNET BOXES.  
FIRE BRICKS AND QUARRIES,

**AN APPRENTICE WANTED IMMEDIATELY.**

matter by writers on interior decoration from the late 1870s onwards.<sup>107</sup> She notes that the 1884 International Health Exhibition, which showed a great variety of hygienic devices for domestic use, attracted over four million visitors; it popularised hygienic reforms for interior decoration.<sup>108</sup> Clearly, there was a surge of interest in the later part of the century but the focus on germ theory overlooks the importance of 'dirt' in the preceding miasma theory and the earlier incursion of this discourse into the private space of the home. Some medical historians have drawn attention to this, but their interventions have not thus far been taken up in the literature of domesticity. Nancy Tomes argues that in the United States the sanitary reformers' 'strenuous attempts to revolutionize ... the "private side" of public health have gone virtually unacknowledged and unexplored by both social and medical historians.'<sup>109</sup> She finds that, even before germ theory, 'domestic sanitarians' brought the early sanitary movement's concern with pure air and pure water into the private arena. She traces this back to the 1860s, as exemplified in Florence Nightingale's *Notes on nursing*, which was a 'deliberate attempt to take the lessons of the hospital into the home.'<sup>110</sup> Literature like this, she argues, paved the way for the subsequent rapid popular acceptance of germ theory because, as far as the lay public was concerned, there was little practical difference between the two theories and the home was pathologised in both cases. Alison Bashford highlights the importance of the domestic in attempts to improve public health, arguing that, in the miasmatically based sanitary reform movement of the 1830s onwards, the ideas and practices of middle-class domesticity were held up as a model for the working classes; by the late 1850s middle-class women were recruited as sanitary 'missionaries' to spread the gospel of domestic cleanliness.<sup>111</sup> The implication of this argument is that sanitarian ideas – or at least practices that supported sanitarian ideas – already formed part of middle-class domesticity. Virginia Smith has even traced similar practical precepts back to the bed-rooms of late eighteenth-century health manuals, suggesting that domestic practices influenced institutions such as hospitals, rather than *vice versa*.<sup>112</sup> These insights from medical history are now pursued further into

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<sup>107</sup> Neiswander (2008), 58-67.

<sup>108</sup> Neiswander (2008), 67.

<sup>109</sup> Tomes (1990), 512.

<sup>110</sup> Tomes (1990), 523.

<sup>111</sup> Bashford (1998), chapter 1.

<sup>112</sup> Smith, V. (1985) 'Cleanliness: idea and practice in Britain, 1770-1850' PhD thesis, London School of Economics, University of London, 153 and 158.



the domestic context and specifically into the bed-room, which was a key site for ideas about both public and private health.

Nightingale's *Notes on nursing* of 1860 is a very clear explication of the need for cleanliness in the context of health.<sup>113</sup> The book was intended primarily for lay readers who were nursing the sick at home – at this time almost everybody was nursed at home. But Nightingale was also outlining 'everyday sanitary knowledge' or broad rules for maintaining health. *Notes on nursing* sold very well, remaining in print for over half a century.<sup>114</sup> Her first chapter was on ventilation and warming and she was absolutely firm that the 'first rule of nursing, almost the only rule of nursing is *to keep the air he breathes as pure as the external air without chilling him* [her emphasis]'.<sup>115</sup> Ventilation – the continuous provision of new clean air – was the be-all and end-all of health. But air, she thought, was easily polluted. Within the house, pollutants included fumes from gas, dinners, sinks and sewers, ordinary household dirt and – a particularly potent source – the human body itself, with its exhalations and excretions. Bed-rooms were a focus of more anxiety than other parts of the house for Nightingale because, when a sleeping room had been closed up all night, the air in the morning was always 'unwholesomely close and foul'. But also, she wrote, 'During sleep, the human body, even when in health, is far more injured by the influence of foul air than when awake'.<sup>116</sup> All these dangers had to be kept at bay by constant attention to cleanliness; cleanliness was part of good ventilation. Nightingale's book was not a solitary or even *avant garde* voice in this matter. Indeed, Smith notes of late eighteenth-century health manuals that they focused on 'the management of the bedroom, as the room most intimately connected with all bodily excretions. The prime necessity was the ventilation of the room, and its bedding, and the dispersal of all the noxious exhalations of the body ...'.<sup>117</sup> Nightingale recommended sleeping equipment that would support ventilation and cleanliness: 'The best bedding, either for sick or well, is an iron bedstead ...'.<sup>118</sup>

An obsession with ventilation and cleanliness in the bed-room can be seen in domestic manuals of the period. Webster's *Encyclopaedia* of 1844 and Walsh's *Manual* of 1856 both have early chapters devoted to the subject. Webster noted that 'iron bedsteads have now become very general, and are much more easily

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<sup>113</sup> Nightingale (1860).

<sup>114</sup> Correspondence in *London Review of Books* (2008) 30:24; (2009) 31:1; and (2009) 31:2.

<sup>115</sup> Nightingale (1860), 7.

<sup>116</sup> Nightingale (1860), 9.

<sup>117</sup> Smith (1985), 153.

<sup>118</sup> Nightingale (1860), 56.

kept clean than those of wood'.<sup>119</sup> Both of these books were written by men with a scientific background. Webster was a geologist and architect by training.<sup>120</sup> He had worked with and for Count Rumford (who set up the Royal Institution and who was very active in researching heat and developing more efficient methods of heating<sup>121</sup>), developing Rumford's theories on heating, ventilation, and lighting. In the preface to the *Encyclopaedia* Webster refers to his background and stresses the importance of a theoretical and scientific understanding relating to domestic matters.<sup>122</sup> Walsh had trained and practiced as a doctor although by the 1850s he had turned to sports journalism and writing on cookery.<sup>123</sup> Loudon, too, a horticulturalist by training, an inventor and a prolific writer and editor, had a passionate interest in inventions and improvements. He had met his wife because he was so impressed by her science fiction novel – *The mummy! A tale of the twenty-second century* (1827) – which featured technological innovations such as a steam mowing device, and the telegraph.<sup>124</sup> These male writers were part of the intellectual scientific élite of the period and their promotion of ventilation and cleanliness in the domestic environment can be seen in this context.

But these ideas were not confined to just that community. Frederick Sutton, the Hull ironmonger with the iron bedstead depot, also sold other iron goods. One of these items was 'Dr. Arnott's Ventilating Chimney Valve'. The advertisement for this valve (Illustration 6.9), quotes Dr. Arnott, its inventor, at length, from his seminal work of 1838 on ventilating and warming.<sup>125</sup> Arnott was a prominent figure in the public health movement of the 1830s, 40s and 50s, doing much to promote the acceptance of miasma theory.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Webster (1844), 269.

<sup>120</sup> Edwards, N. (2004) 'Webster, Thomas (1772–1844)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, Oxford University Press

[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28945](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28945) accessed 27.7.2010.

<sup>121</sup> Knight, D. (2008) 'Thompson, Sir Benjamin, Count Rumford in the nobility of the Holy Roman empire (1753–1814)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press

[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/27255](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/27255) accessed 27.7.2010.

<sup>122</sup> Webster (1844), v.

<sup>123</sup> Boase, G.C. (revised Lock, J.) (2004) 'Walsh, John Henry (1810–1888)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press

[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28614](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28614), accessed 27.10.2010.

<sup>124</sup> Elliott, B. (2004) 'Loudon, John Claudius 1783–1843' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Oxford University Press

[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/17031](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/17031) accessed 27.7.2010.

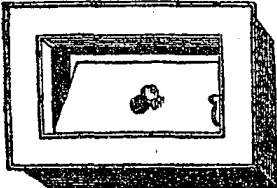
<sup>125</sup> Arnott, N. (1838) *On warming and ventilating, with directions for making and using the thermometer-stove, and other new apparatus* London: Longman & Co.

<sup>126</sup> Luckin, B. (2004) 'Arnott, Neil (1788–1874)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography*, Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/694](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/694) accessed 27.7.2010.

Illustration 6.9 Advertisement for Frederick Sutton's Iron Bedstead Depot, Hull, 1849  
 Source: *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, Friday, December 14, 1849

**D** R . A R N O T T ' S  
 VENTILATING CHIMNEY VALVE.

NOT A LUXURY, BUT



AN ABSOLUTE NECESSITY.

**FOR CARRYING OFF HEATED AND IMPURE AIR.**

Dr. ARNOTT, in his admirable work on Ventilating and Warming, justly observes that "In Sitting-Rooms, Bed-Rooms, Museums, Offices, and Smoke-Rooms in Hotels, and enclosed places generally, where People assemble, the impure air of the breath, the burned air from lights, the odour of dishes, &c., because heated, and therefore specifically light, all ascend first towards the ceiling, but as no opening exists there, in ordinary Rooms, for escape, (for an open window top in a room which has an open fire-place, only admits the cold air,) they soon contaminate the whole air of the room about the level of the chimney mouth, through which only can any portion ultimately pass away. Who has not experienced the excessive and disagreeable closeness of a Bed Chamber when first awaking in the morning—who has not on a cold winter's evening, before a cheerful fire, lighted lamp, closed doors and shutters, felt an oppressiveness that lulls to an uncomfortable doze, when disturbed, resulting, perhaps, in a head-ache, &c."

**WASHING, WRINGING, AND MANGLING MACHINES.**  
**IRON BEDSTEADS.**  
**HOT AIR STOVES,**  
 Suitable for Churches, Chapels, Entrance Halls, Shops, Offices, Schools, Vineries, &c. Any Building requiring warmth, by sending F. S. the size of the Room will be sufficient to guarantee for a Stove of proper size.

**TINDALL'S PATENT MANGLE,**  
 Very portable, very cheap, and very efficient, Price 50s.  
**ASH PANS AND WIRE BLINDS MADE TO ORDER.**  
**RODGERS AND SONS' CELEBRATED CUTLERY, BRONZED TEA URNS, KETTLES, &c.**  
 With Fenders, Fire Irons, and economical Steam Cooking Apparatus, with a general Stock of  
**TIN GOODS AND IRONMONGERY,**  
**AT FREDERICK SUTTON'S**  
**IRON BEDSTEAD AND STOVE DEPOTS,**  
**43 & 52, QUEEN-STREET, HULL.**

Arnott was admired by Loudon and Walsh; Nightingale refers to his ventilator. But he was also drafted in by a retailer in Hull to sell iron goods. Science, inventions and theories of ventilation went beyond a scientific coterie into advertising for ordinary homes.

Later on, these ideas were incorporated into a different publishing context. *The bedroom and boudoir* of 1878 was one of the *Art at home* series of books, which focused predominantly on the stylistic aspects of decorating the middle-class home.<sup>127</sup> Its author, Lady Barker, had no scientific background and her authority to pontificate on bed-rooms was derived from her publishing connections, her social status and her personal experience of travelling and setting up home in a variety of environments.<sup>128</sup> She is one of the first writers on home decoration to turn her personal taste and experiences into a desirable image, enticing to the reader. But even she starts her book with a chapter on ventilation, reiterating its 'laws' and the need for 'fresh and sweet' air. For sake of freshness, she wrote, certain 'sanitary rules' must be carried out; she even refers to Miss Nightingale's suggestions on dusting. Lady Barker had imbibed the sanitary dogma and attempted to meld it with her fashionable aesthetic. Here she had some difficulty for, although she was able to follow the sanitary line in her attitude to the 'awful' wooden four-posters of the past, she was aesthetically equivocal about metal bedsteads, which were 'frightful and vulgar' and 'ludicrously out of place' in the Queen Anne style which she espoused. The best that she could say was that 'the cheap common iron or brass bedstead of the present day has at least the merit of simplicity'.<sup>129</sup>

In the 1879 edition of Walsh's *Manual*, ventilation was still an important element but the iron bedstead was not so prominent in the lists of bed-room furniture. It remained a servants' item but appears to be a cheaper and less desirable feature for family bed-rooms, suited to those on lower budgets. It is possible that the heyday of the iron bedstead had passed. This is not visible in the inventory sample because of the time-lag effect; many of the deceased would have acquired their bedsteads years before they died. The inventory sample finishes in the early 1880s, probably reflecting the acquisition practices of some 20 or 30 years earlier.

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<sup>127</sup> Barker (1878); see Appendix 3 for more detail.

<sup>128</sup> Ferry (2007).

<sup>129</sup> Barker (1878), chapter on 'Beds and bedding', 26-43.

Nancy Tomes raises the question of whether ideas about everyday sanitary knowledge were actually taken up by consumers.<sup>130</sup> She notes that, in the United States, from the 1870s but particularly in the 1880s and 90s, there was a proliferation of (and, it is to be assumed, a concomitant demand for) so-called sanitary goods such as sewer traps and window ventilators, whose advertising played on 'sanitary' arguments. The present investigation shows evidence, not just for increased production, but for an increase in metal bedstead ownership, earlier than this, at the same time as the circulation of this discourse of health and the promotion of iron bedsteads in the prescriptive literature. But even this, in itself, does not confirm 'health' as a motivation for individual acquisition. However, in the following sections, this question is further addressed by investigating the coincidence of the ownership of metal bedsteads with other goods that were discussed positively in terms of health or, conversely, by a negative association between metal bedstead ownership and ownership of 'unhealthy' items.

## **Bed-hangings, baths and feather beds: health and comfort**

Bed-hangings were discussed negatively in the context of health. They, it was said, collected dust and dirt; they inhibited ventilation by preventing the flow of fresh air over the face of the bed's occupant; heavy woollen hangings, such as moreen, attracted moths and were, in any case, old-fashioned.<sup>131</sup> The present inventory sample corroborates the declining use of moreen; only twenty of the 491 deceased had inventories which specifically mentioned moreen bed-hangings and seventeen of them died before 1862. And the incidence of all bed-hangings dropped markedly over time: they appeared in 54 percent of all bedstead-rooms between 1841 and 1860 but in only 31 percent between 1861 and 1881.<sup>132</sup>

Problems with ventilation were said to be most acute with four-poster beds, where the curtains would be pulled all the way around to make, effectively, an airless little room within a room. 'I need scarcely say that the old four-post bed with curtains is bad, whether for sick or well' wrote Florence Nightingale.<sup>133</sup> But the

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<sup>130</sup> Tomes (1990), 530-3.

<sup>131</sup> Webster (1844), 265; Loudon (c1865), 1080.

<sup>132</sup> Chi-square=53.587, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001. It is quite possible that appraisers did not always note the presence of bed-hangings. The coding only reflects those cases where they are specifically mentioned; the figures probably under-represent their incidence but there is no reason to suppose that this was more acute in one period than another.

<sup>133</sup> Nightingale (1860), 56.

health argument was counterbalanced by the warmth, privacy and status that even the prescriptive writers recognised that they offered.<sup>134</sup> Loudon opined that four-post bedsteads were suitable for villas but not for cottages; he thought that cottagers spent too much on their bed-rooms and suggested that as ‘... the bed-room of a cottager is seldom entered by a stranger, we think it would be a wiser economy to have the bed plain, though, in all respects, comfortable, and to expend any surplus money ... on the furniture of the parlour ...’<sup>135</sup> A class link was also made in *How to furnish a house*: ‘... a four-post bedstead is nearly always found in the best rooms of the upper and middle classes, and occasionally in those of well-to-do mechanics.’ But while this book suggested that a four-poster needed a large room, it did not quibble in principle with a mechanic owning one.<sup>136</sup> A publication of 1869 recognised the satisfactions of hangings and accepted the kind of compromise advocated years before by Loudon and Webster: ‘The Arabians ... are excellent substitutes for four-post bedsteads, as they admit of curtains without entirely excluding the air.’<sup>137</sup> But by the late 1870s the fashionable Lady Barker could scorn the ‘awful four-posters’ of 40 or 50 years ago and she did not find it necessary to waste much ink on even discussing bed-hangings: ‘Instead of curtains, which the modern form of bedstead renders incongruous and impossible, screens on either side of the bed are a much prettier and more healthy substitute.’<sup>138</sup> The inventory sample shows a declining incidence of four-posters, in all groups: they appeared in 31 percent of bedstead-rooms in the first part of the period but in only 21 percent in the second.<sup>139</sup>

Feather beds were similarly under attack: ‘Never use a feather bed, either for sick or well.’<sup>140</sup> The bed was a stuffed fabric envelope which was laid over the base of the bedstead or a mattress; covered with a sheet, it was the layer on which people slept. Feathers were the most desirable filling because they were warm, easy to shake, and therefore less lumpy, but they were expensive. Cheaper

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<sup>134</sup> Barker (1878), 2 and 4; Loudon (c1865), 1080.

<sup>135</sup> Loudon (c1865), 334 and 326.

<sup>136</sup> *How to furnish a house ...* (c1855), 11.

<sup>137</sup> *Cassell's household guide: being a complete encyclopaedia of domestic and social economy and forming a guide to every department of practical life* (1869), Volume I, 183.

<sup>138</sup> Barker (1878), 26 and 40.

<sup>139</sup> Chi-square=13.501, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001. The numbers are probably an under-representation since appraisers often did not specify the type of bedstead. There was no significant association with any of the other standard variables, even wealth, suggesting that four-posters had been a widely adopted item.

<sup>140</sup> Nightingale(1860), 56.

alternatives included flock (chopped wool fragments), seaweed and chaff.<sup>141</sup> But Nightingale advocated a horse-hair mattress and no feather bed largely because a mattress was cooler; feather beds encouraged sweating, leading to the bed becoming damp, chilling and dirty. The author of *How to furnish a house* thought that feather beds encouraged indolence, late sleeping and illness.<sup>142</sup> Here, too there was a significant drop in incidence over time: in the period 1841-1860, 60 percent of bedstead-rooms included a feather bed; in the following twenty years this dropped to 49 percent.<sup>143</sup>

This analysis provides new empirical evidence that four-post bedsteads, bed-hangings and feather beds declined in incidence over the forty years of this study, in parallel with prescriptive advice, which described them as unhealthy. In addition, further analysis shows that rooms which contained 'healthy' iron bedsteads significantly lacked 'unhealthy' bed-hangings.<sup>144</sup> Proportionally more rooms with metal bedsteads had a 'healthy' hair mattress than those without.<sup>145</sup> There was also an association between a room having a metal bedstead and its not containing an 'unhealthy' feather bed, but this association was much less marked, presumably because warmth and softness remained desirable.<sup>146</sup>

This clustering might suggest that ideas of health motivated consumption choices; alternatively it might have been the case that, as metal bedsteads were often hierarchically inferior, they would not deserve expensive hangings or feather beds. However, in favour of the first suggestion, it can be seen that people who had a 'healthy' metal bedstead also, disproportionately often, had equipment for personal cleanliness. Sixteen percent of all the 'domestic inventories' included a bath. This related only to moveable baths since fixed, plumbed-in baths would have been a landlord's fixture and so not (on the whole) included in the valuations. The domestic manuals are not very forthcoming about practices of bathing. Walsh, in both the 1856 and 1879 editions, merely noted that baths were fixed in most 'good houses'

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<sup>141</sup> Webster (1844), 270-272. Flock appears regularly in the inventories, chaff rarely and seaweed not at all.

<sup>142</sup> *How to furnish a house* ... (c.1855), 29-30.

<sup>143</sup> Chi-square=12.320, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001.

<sup>144</sup> Only 11% of the bed-rooms where bed-hangings were noted had a metal bedstead compared with 26% of rooms without bed-hangings. Chi-square=39.667, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001. It is likely, though, that not all bed-hangings were noted; an appraiser, in listing a four-post bedstead might have taken its hangings for granted.

<sup>145</sup> There was a horse-hair mattress in 17% of the rooms with a metal bedstead, but they appeared in only 5% of rooms with another sort of bedstead; chi-square=32.377, df=1, n=1098, p=<.001.

<sup>146</sup> Chi-square=5.477, df=1, n=1098, p=<.05.

of the present time.<sup>147</sup> He provided a longer section on bathing as medical treatment, discussing, among others, hot baths, vapour baths, cold baths, shower baths, sponging baths and hip or sitz baths.<sup>148</sup> The baths in the inventory sample included some of these but were predominantly foot baths, which since the eighteenth century had been part of the prescriptions for preventive washing.<sup>149</sup> A cross-tabulation shows that there was a significant association between ownership of a bath and ownership of a metal bedstead;<sup>150</sup> and while only seven percent of bedstead-rooms without a metal bedstead included a bath, this rose to twenty percent for rooms with one.<sup>151</sup> Similarly with bidets: nineteen percent of those inventories with a metal bedstead included a bidet compared with only three percent in the non-metal-bedstead group.<sup>152</sup> Looking at other equipment for personal cleanliness, there was also an association at both the inventory and (to a lesser extent) at the individual room level between metal bedsteads and washstands<sup>153</sup> and rooms with metal bedsteads were more likely to contain a towel rail or chamber-ware than rooms without.<sup>154</sup> Further, while there was a significant co-occurrence of these health-related items, cross tabulations showed no, or only a very slight, significant association between a metal bedstead in a room and the following not-health-related goods: bedsteps, box, chair, chest of drawers, clock, convenience, cupboard, dressing table, easy chair, fire goods, floor covering, non-bed-room furniture (such as cheffoniers), games, lighting, looking glass, ornament, picture, reading/writing equipment, servants' bell, sofa, table or window curtains.

The significant co-occurrence of health-related items in some inventories suggests that some people took the health discourse seriously and offers an answer to Nancy Tomes's question of whether the ideas were taken on along with the goods. I would argue that we can empirically trace a link between the ownership of iron bedsteads and a consciousness of health issues.

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<sup>147</sup> Walsh (1879), 63.

<sup>148</sup> Walsh (1879), 734-9.

<sup>149</sup> Smith (1985), 175.

<sup>150</sup> 64.5% of inventories which included a bath also included an iron bedstead compared with only 16.5% of inventories without a bath; chi-square=79.935, df=1, n=475, p<.001.

<sup>151</sup> Chi-square=32.756, df=1, n=1098, p<.001.

<sup>152</sup> Chi-square=37.095, df=1, n=475, p<.001.

<sup>153</sup> 90% of inventories with at least one iron bedstead included at least one washstand, compared with 66% of inventories without a metal bedstead; chi-square =23.674, df=1, n=475, p<.001. 73% of rooms with an iron bedstead included a washstand, compared with 60% for the rest of the group; chi-square=12.271, df=1, n=1098, p<.001.

<sup>154</sup> 49% of rooms with a metal bedstead had a towel rail compared with 35% of those that did not; chi-square=12.777, df=1, n=1098, p<.001. 35% of rooms with a metal bedstead included chamber-ware compared with 22% of rooms without; chi-square= 16.808, df=1, n=1098, p<.001.



## Wardrobes and chests of drawers: convenience, comfort and improvement

But metal bedsteads were not only associated with healthy items. There was a strong association between them and wardrobes<sup>155</sup> – which were presented as items of convenience. Wardrobes were sufficiently new or unusual to warrant lengthy explanations in the domestic manuals of the 1830s, '40s and '50s.<sup>156</sup> They were generally described as having a full-length compartment for hanging dresses or cloaks and a series of sliding trays or drawers for folded or smaller items and as superseding earlier arrangements in the storage of clothing: 'Wardrobes are far more convenient for keeping apparel than the chests of drawers formerly in general use.'<sup>157</sup> The convenience lay in ease of use and effectiveness: hanging rather than folding some garments was an advantage; as was being able to see the contents at a glance rather than unpacking each drawer. Several manuals noted the convenience of only having to unlock one or two doors in order to see the contents.<sup>158</sup> *The bedroom and boudoir* suggested that wardrobes were necessary as women had more clothes than previously.<sup>159</sup> *How to furnish a house* took the history of this improvement even further back, arguing that chests of drawers were themselves 'supremely useful' relative to chests, since they held so much and kept items separate; it was not necessary to get everything out when looking for a particular garment or item.<sup>160</sup>

Convenience was a term much used in discussions of the planning of houses and their furnishing at this time; it refers to the avoidance of useless labour, having things to hand, and equipment fulfilling its function well. Robert Kerr, as so often, explains it clearly. He made it the third of his twelve principles of planning a gentleman's house.<sup>161</sup> For him convenience was:

that characteristic which results from an arrangement of the various departments, and their various component parts, in such relation to each other as shall enable all the uses and purposes of

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<sup>155</sup> 48% of metal bedstead owners also had a wardrobe compared with only 17% of people without metal bedsteads; 42.3% of wardrobe owners had a metal bedstead compared with 14% of people who did not have a wardrobe; chi-square=41.695, df=1, n=475, p=<.001.

<sup>156</sup> *How to furnish a house ...* (c.1855), 44-60; Loudon (c.1865), 303-305 and 1083-1084; and Webster (1844), 278-279.

<sup>157</sup> Webster (1844), 278.

<sup>158</sup> This argument was put forward in *How to furnish a house ...* (c.1855), 60, Loudon (c.1865), 305 and Webster (1844), 278

<sup>159</sup> Barker (1878),47.

<sup>160</sup> *How to furnish a house ...* (c.1855), 44-5

<sup>161</sup> The first two were privacy and comfort; Kerr (1871), 67.

the establishment to be carried out in perfect harmony, – with a place for everything and everything in its place, – with no deficiency, no superfluity, no awkwardness, no doubtfulness, – with one obvious way of accomplishing an object, and that the right way.<sup>162</sup>

He conceptualised convenience and comfort as closely related, the difference being that convenience is active and comfort is passive. Convenience was the practical aspect of comfort; but it was ideas about what a house should be like that set the standards of comfort:

... the comfortableness of a house indicates exemption from all such evils as draughts, smoky chimneys, kitchen smells, damp, vermin, noise, and dust ... . But in its larger sense comfort includes the idea that every room in the house, according to its purpose, shall be for that purpose satisfactorily contrived ...<sup>163</sup>

Loudon's introduction to his *Cottage, villa and farm architecture and furniture* makes the link between convenience and comfort several times:

The accommodation and arrangements of these designs [for working-men's cottages and their furnishings] are presented as the *beau ideal* of what we think every married couple, having children of both sexes, and living in the country, should possess; while, at the same time, we have included in them all that is essentially requisite for health, comfort, and convenience, to even the most luxurious of mankind...<sup>164</sup>

People, he wrote, can only use one room at a time

and that room can only be rendered comfortable by being warm, dry, light, well ventilated, and convenient ...<sup>165</sup>

John Crowley, in his history of the shifting meanings of comfort, has traced the linkage of convenience and comfort to the eighteenth century when comfort came to be seen as the middle ground between (shifting and relative) needs and luxuries.<sup>166</sup> Crowley highlights Robert Southey's early nineteenth-century comment which links the idea of comfort with the idea of home:

There are two words in their language on which these people pride themselves, and which they say cannot be translated. *Home* is the

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<sup>162</sup> Kerr (1871), 71.

<sup>163</sup> Kerr (1871) 69-70.

<sup>164</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 8.

<sup>165</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 8.

<sup>166</sup> Crowley, J. (2000) *The invention of comfort* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 151 ff.

one, by which an Englishman means his house ... The other word is *comfort*; it means all the enjoyments and privileges of home ...<sup>167</sup>

Kerr also saw this linkage of comfort and home as being essentially English:

What we call in England a comfortable house is a thing so intimately identified with English customs as to make us apt to say that in no country other than our own is this element of comfort fully understood ... a comfortable home [is] perhaps the most cherished possession of an Englishman.<sup>168</sup>

In the nineteenth-century rhetoric of sanitary reform, comfort was closely linked with health (moral and physical) and decency.<sup>169</sup> A comfortable home, then, was efficient or convenient and appropriately decent. In her brilliant study of nineteenth-century comfort and the American parlour, Katherine Grier proposes a tension between, on the one hand, ideas of domestic comfort, which valorised simplicity, moderation and sincerity and, on the other, ideas of culture, which involved fashion and consumption.<sup>170</sup> Crowley's reading of two nineteenth-century American advice books also finds that they both, in their different ways, emphasise the unpretentiousness of the comfortable home. Grier makes the point that comfort included, but was much more than, physical ease; it did not focus particularly on softness for the reception of the body. She notes that the popular elaborate buttoning and pleating techniques for upholstery did not produce an especially soft surface. In the British manuals, comfort was sometimes used in terms of physical ease but it was not a major pre-occupation. In his three-page discussion of beds and mattresses, Webster only once makes reference to comfort and then without defining it. He explains at some length how spring mattresses support the body without finding it necessary to mention comfort.<sup>171</sup> Presumably it was, as Lady Barker later noted, a personal preference: 'We will take it for granted that a point of equal importance with the form of the bedstead is its comfort but this must always be left to the decision of its occupant. Some people prefer beds and pillows of an adamant hardness, others of a luxurious softness.'<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> Southey R. (1807) *Letters from England: by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella* London, 1: 180, quoted in Crowley (2000), 170.

<sup>168</sup> Kerr (1871), 69.

<sup>169</sup> For example in *Report to Board of Health in reference to sanitary condition of Agar-Town, St. Pancras, and other parts of the Metropolis* (1851) PP 388: XXIII: 1 the word 'comfort' is used six times always in close association with 'health' and twice also invoking 'decency'.

<sup>170</sup> Grier (1988), throughout but see viii.

<sup>171</sup> Webster (1944), 270-272.

<sup>172</sup> Barker (1878), 35.

The many details which make Grier's study so convincing also suggest that it would be unwise to apply her American findings, untested, to the British context. However, it is an appealing thesis which has some parallels with Deborah Cohen's argument about the changing nature of the philosophical underpinning of domestic furnishing and decoration in nineteenth-century Britain.<sup>173</sup> Cohen tracks a chronological trajectory from a religiously inflected idealisation of austerity and restraint, through the moralisation of domestic furnishing, to a positive embrace of self-expression in decoration and display. Might shifting ideas of comfort have played a part in these changes? This has been a detour away from wardrobes but it is intended to flag up the need for further research into the ideas and practices of comfort in the British nineteenth-century home in addition to the focus on bodily ease, on which the few existing studies have centred.<sup>174</sup>

But before returning to the wardrobe itself, there is another digression: we might consider the wardrobe as a 'modern item', a technical improvement on the past which created and met new needs; it was a further specialisation of furniture types and it provided the means to categorise, separate and contain its contents. But the manuals viewed here (even those of Loudon, Webster and Walsh, which highlight science, inventions and improvements) do not use 'modern' in this sense, whether about wardrobes or other domestic items. Indeed the term had little currency in any sense. Loudon uses 'modern' of furniture to denote a style; it is interchangeable with 'Grecian' but he does not attach value judgements to the word or associate it with improvements.<sup>175</sup> Emma Ferry's systematic study of the use of 'modern' in furnishing advice texts of the 1870s and 1880s finds that it was generally used to describe the contemporary or the new – houses, floors, fireplaces – and that it related particularly to appearance. It was often a term of condemnation, with overtones of the commonplace, suggesting a lack of the personal taste that these texts encouraged.<sup>176</sup> It appears in this sense even in *Decoration and furniture of town houses* of 1881, which promoted an aesthetic that was directly responsive to the scientific requirements of germ theory.<sup>177</sup> Trevor Keeble shows that, in texts from the later part of the century, the products of

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<sup>173</sup> Cohen (2006).

<sup>174</sup> Cornforth, J. (1977) *English interiors 1790-1848: the quest for comfort* London: Barrie & Jenkins; Gloag, J. (1973, first published 1961) *Victorian comfort: a social history of design from 1830-1900* Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

<sup>175</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 1039.

<sup>176</sup> Ferry (2009), 13-15.

<sup>177</sup> Edis, R. (1881) *Decoration and furniture of town houses* London: C. Kegan Paul & Co., 51.

'modern' technological progress could be presented as unsatisfactory in the domestic context, where cosiness was desirable.<sup>178</sup> Judith Neiswander has identified liberal, progressive, scientific and individualistic values in the decorating advice literature of the 1870s and 80s.<sup>179</sup> But these values were not expressed in a scientific aesthetic since the styles which these later texts advocated almost all looked to the past, either formally or in terms of craftsmanship. The term 'modern' never appears as a descriptive term in the present inventory sample (although it should also be noted that the appraisers were always sparing with their adjectives).

It is possible that inventory evidence could at some point contribute to the continuing complex debate about the ontological status and analytical utility of the concept of modernity,<sup>180</sup> especially since the domestic has been brought decisively into that discussion through its involvement with modern processes and structures: consumption (and thus production), self-expression, fashion, entertainment, the mass media, and public interiors.<sup>181</sup> Inventories could help to throw light on the material and experiential transformations of everyday life which scholars such as Miles Ogborn and Richard Dennis have seen as elements of modernity.<sup>182</sup> And they could contribute to the understanding of changes in the culture of commodity consumption, which Keeble, Penny Sparke and Cohen have identified as a crucial element of late nineteenth-century Western modernity.<sup>183</sup> But such a contribution to the elucidation of modernity or even its use as an explanatory framework is well beyond the scope of the present thesis.

Finally, then, returning to wardrobes, the manual writers were keen supporters of their convenience, with Loudon suggesting that they were essential in a cottage bed-room and Webster stating that they were superseding chests of

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<sup>178</sup> Keeble, T. (2009) "'Plate glass and progress': Victorian modernity at home' in Sparke, P., Massey, A., Keeble, T. and B. Martin *Designing the modern interior from the Victorians to today* Oxford & New York: Berg, 37.

<sup>179</sup> Neiswander (2008) 57-81.

<sup>180</sup> See, for example: Dennis (2008), 1-3; Ogborn, M. (1998) *Spaces of modernity: London's geographies, 1680-1780* New York and London: Guilford Press; Rieger B. and M. Daunton (2001) 'Introduction' in Daunton, M and B. Rieger, eds. *Meanings of modernity: Britain from the late-Victorian era to World War II* Oxford and New York: Berg.

<sup>181</sup> Felski, R. (1995) *The gender of modernity* Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press; Giles, J. (2004) *The parlour and the suburb. Domestic identities, class, femininity and. modernity* Oxford: Berg, throughout but especially 'Introduction'; Keeble (2004); Reed, C. (1996) 'Introduction' in Reed, C., ed. *Not at home: the suppression of domesticity in modern art and architecture* London: Thames and Hudson; Ryan, D.S. (1997) *The ideal home through the 20th century* London: Hazar; Sparke, P. (2008) *The modern interior* London: Reaktion Books; and Sparke, P. (2009) 'General introduction' in Sparke, P., Massey, A., Keeble, T. and B. Martin *Designing the modern interior from the Victorians to today* Oxford & New York: Berg.

<sup>182</sup> As discussed for different periods: Dennis (2008); Ogborn (1998).

<sup>183</sup> Cohen, D. (2006), chapter 5; Keeble (2004); Sparke (2008).

drawers.<sup>184</sup> But Table 6.2 (page 246) tells a rather different story of what was actually happening, even amongst this relatively privileged group of Legacy Duty decedents. These inventories do not show that wardrobes increased significantly over time or that the incidence of chests of drawers decreased. While the incidence of chests of drawers was slightly lower in rooms that contained a wardrobe, the difference is not significant. Almost 90 percent of all domestic inventories included at least one chest of drawers and there was one such piece in nearly 60 percent of the bedstead-rooms, regardless of wealth or status. These were commonly owned items. Wardrobes were present in only about a quarter of the 475 domestic inventories and their incidence was markedly associated with wealth and higher status.<sup>185</sup> Very few of those in wealth quartiles one and two or who have been coded as of lower status owned such a convenience. There is a strong association between inventories which included a wardrobe and those which included a drawing-room or a dining-room.<sup>186</sup> They were higher status goods for higher status people. And only about twelve percent of all the bedstead-rooms had a wardrobe, which means that even the people that did have them did not have them in each of their rooms.

One reason for the lack of spread of wardrobes must have been their cost. Loudon in the early 1830s wrote that they could be had for £3-£5 in London (he was writing about cottage furniture at this point) where a chest of drawers could be had for £3-£4. The 1856 Heal and Son bed-room furniture catalogue used in Walsh's *Manual* quoted chests of drawers ranging from £1.3.6 to £5.5.0; the wardrobes ran from £4.0.0 to £24.0.0. In the 1879 version, the latter had risen to between £4.15.0 to £35.0.0. This edition is useful because it provides lists of furniture presented as suitable for households on four different annual incomes. For the two wealthiest, each family bed-room contained a wardrobe but generally not a chest of drawers; the servants' rooms were provided with neither – just two chairs. Servants would have brought their own boxes with them.<sup>187</sup> The family bed-rooms for those on the lowest annual budget (about £150) were furnished identically to the

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<sup>184</sup> Loudon (c.1865), 302-305; Webster (1844), 278.

<sup>185</sup> 4.9% of inventories belonging to people in the bottom wealth quartile included a wardrobe compared with 52.5% of those for the top quartile; chi-square=88.135, df=3, n=475, p<.001. 43% of people coded as of higher status had a wardrobe compared with 13.5% of those coded as of lower; chi-square=41.518, df=2, n=475, p<.001.

<sup>186</sup> 63% of inventories which included a wardrobe in at least one bedstead-room also had a drawing-room, compared with only 12% of those without a wardrobe; chi-square=85.666, df=1, n=337, p<.001. There is a very similar result for dining-rooms.

<sup>187</sup> For the eighteenth-century see Vickery (2008), 163-166.

servants' rooms of the wealthiest (annual expenditure of about £1,500), with a washstand and dressing table but no wardrobe and no chest of drawers. But it was not the case in the present sample that rooms without wardrobes compensated with more chairs: the average number of chairs in a room without a wardrobe was 3.5; in rooms with it was 4.5.

Bedstead-rooms owned by farmers were less likely than the rest to include either a wardrobe or a chest of drawers but, in a marked reversal of the usual trend, were more likely to include a chest. The chests as coded for Table 6.2 (246) were for storage of all kinds of items – corn as well as clothing – and it was not possible to identify those that were only for clothing or linen. However, it might be said that farmers clung to this older form of storage, which, as the manuals suggest and the table shows, was generally declining in use over the period. Judging by Table 6.2, farmers generally appear to a significant extent to have had less fully equipped bedstead-rooms than the rest of the sample and they do not appear to have participated in the general increase in ownership of most of the items seen over time. Interestingly, the only items which farmers' bedstead-rooms included significantly more often than the rest of the sample were chests and bed-hangings – both items which were generally declining in use. And this is not because farmers were less wealthy than others; there was no significant association between being a farmer and wealth quartile. As we have seen in the previous chapters, farmers' households were often arranged differently with less specialisation of function. It appears here that they went in for more basic and less equipment and were in no hurry to adopt newer items or trends.

For Linda Young, wardrobes were part of the equipment that demonstrated middle-class gentility and belonging. This was partly a functional matter, since they enabled the personal presentation in the matter of clothing that was so important. But she points out that they were also the opportunity for the display of fine cabinet work – although the display was not, generally, to outsiders.<sup>188</sup> They were part of the middle-class performance that was most effective when it also took place, as it were, off-stage. In the inventory sample, although this was predominantly associated with higher status inventories, it did extend further into the lower status group than did drawing- and dining-rooms. Nonetheless, wardrobes might have been convenient but they were not, in fact, universal necessities.

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<sup>188</sup> Young (2003), 185-186.

## Geographical location

The bedstead-rooms of London were better equipped than those elsewhere. Table 6.3 shows that most of the listed items were particularly prevalent in London.<sup>189</sup>

This was not just because Londoners were wealthier or of higher status – although they were slightly. Further analysis shows that London's dominance in ownership was generally seen within both status and all wealth groups except, in some cases, the bottom-most level. Londoners, judged by their ownership of goods, had a higher standard of living. For example, proportionally more bedstead-rooms in London had a washstand than those in the rest of the country. And this was also the case when only rooms belonging to lower status people were considered.<sup>190</sup> This accords with the suggestion made in Chapter 3 (pages 114-117) in relation to day-rooms that domestic practices associated with the middle-class were more prevalent there than elsewhere.

And in matters of change, London was in the lead. Chests were said to be going out of use; this certainly appeared to be the case in the whole inventory sample (with the exception of farmers) but it was in London that they were least prevalent. And with the new metal bedsteads Londoners' ownership was very much higher than elsewhere in the country.<sup>191</sup> Even at the lower wealth levels a larger proportion of Londoners owned metal bedsteads than did non-Londoners. Although there continued to be a significant difference throughout the period, it was most marked earlier on; ownership rose everywhere over time, but it rose more steeply outside London.<sup>192</sup> Londoners, then, in respect of metal bedstead ownership fit into a narrative of metropolitan early adoption that has been applied to historical consumption practices since the early eighteenth century.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> As for Table 6.2, chi-square tests and standard ratings of significance have been used. The items selected for analysis are mainly those which Table 6.2 (page 246) shows as having a significant regional association.

<sup>190</sup> 65% in London; 51% elsewhere. Chi-square=4.483, df=1, n=521, p=<.05.

<sup>191</sup> The region with the fewest was Wales & West Midlands, where only 13% of inventories included one, compared with 26% in the rest of the country; this is a significant association although much less marked than that for London; chi-square=6.598, df=1, n=475, p=<.05.

<sup>192</sup> The rise between 1841-61 and 1862-82 in London was from 42% to 83%: chi-square=11.179, df=1, n=76, p=<.01; but it was more marked in the rest of the country, from 5% to 38%: chi-square=69.311, df=1, n=399, p=<.001.

<sup>193</sup> Weatherill (1988), 50-51.



**Table 6.3 Comparison of incidence of items in metropolitan and non-metropolitan bedstead-rooms**  
The sample is 1098 bedstead-rooms located in 337 'domestic inventories with named rooms'  
Shading indicates the degree of statistical significance of the difference between London and the rest of the country

At least one item present in a bedstead-room	Number (total sample 1098)	Percentage of all bedstead-rooms	% London bed-rooms	% non-London bed-rooms	Significant difference on chi-square test
Washstand/ChestDrawers/DressingTable/Table	974	88.7	96.4	87.0	p=<.001
Carpet/rug/floor covering	758	69.0	80.5	66.6	p=<.001
Mirror	732	66.7	80.5	63.7	p=<.001
Washstand	688	62.7	74.4	60.1	p=<.001
Fire goods	399	36.3	56.4	32.0	p=<.001
Towel rail	416	37.9	50.8	35.1	p=<.001
Metal bedstead	212	19.3	43.1	14.2	p=<.001
Picture	210	19.1	33.8	15.9	p=<.001
Ornament	172	15.7	25.1	13.6	p=<.001
Horse-hair mattress	84	7.7	19.5	5.1	p=<.001
Bath	104	9.5	17.9	7.6	p=<.001
Bidet	43	3.9	9.2	2.8	p=<.001
Chest	114	10.4	3.1	12.0	p=<.001
Chest of drawers	652	59.4	70.3	57.0	p=<.01
Feather bed	602	54.8	64.6	52.7	p=<.01
Window coverings	406	37.0	46.7	34.9	p=<.01
Wardrobe	131	11.9	17.4	10.7	p=<.01
Chair/easy chair	891	81.1	86.2	80.1	p=<.05
Reading/writing	160	14.6	19.5	13.5	p=<.05
Dressing table	490	44.6	46.2	44.3	
Bed-hangings	481	43.8	41.5	44.3	
Four poster	289	26.3	27.7	26.0	

Some of those narratives have suggested that London's consumption of novelties was related to the availability of goods<sup>194</sup> but this cannot account wholly for these bedsteads because they were mostly made in Birmingham.<sup>195</sup> Frederick Sutton, with his 'iron bedstead depot' in Hull, claimed in 1850 to 'have the largest stock of iron bedsteads outside London', thereby implying that London was the centre of the trade.<sup>196</sup> Even at a time of increasing mass manufacture, of mass distribution through markedly improved transport networks, of the growth of provincial towns and cities, and of the mass availability of goods at all levels of the market (new and second-hand), London was ahead both in consumption and fashion. But while London generally predominated and the 'South East and East' often came second in bed-room equipment, there was not one geographical region which was always or even predominantly the least well equipped. Even dividing the country into North and South did not result in a clear-cut division.

## **Case study 2: health, cleanliness and hierarchy in an Anglo-Indian household**

Mrs. Louisa Caroline Tobin Shakespear was a wealthy woman.<sup>197</sup> At the time of her death in 1867 she lived in a large house in Barnes, just outside London, which had four floors each with four rooms (Illustration 6.10). The whole house was well and expensively furnished and the widowed Mrs. Shakespear maintained a dining-room, drawing-room and library. The inventory of her household goods illustrates some of the themes just discussed. But it also demonstrates how the meanings indicated in prescriptive literature are not exhaustive.

There were seven bed-rooms, at least one WC and a dressing-room on the top floors. All the bed-rooms were well equipped but there was a hierarchy, with inferior rooms on the upper floor. All of the bed-rooms, even the servants' rooms, show a marked commitment to matters of personal hygiene. Very unusually in this

<sup>194</sup> Bowett, A. (2008) 'Furniture woods in London and provincial furniture, 1700-1800' *Regional Furniture* 22: 83-113; Weatherill (1988), 50-51.

<sup>195</sup> Himmelheber (1996), 36-7.

<sup>196</sup> *The Hull Packet and East Riding Times*, Friday, October 11, 1850.

<sup>197</sup> Legacy Duty papers for Mrs. Shakespear TNA IR 19/132. Her gross personal wealth was £11263.6.0.

series of inventories, six of the seven bed-rooms included at least one bath or bidet. All except one of the bedsteads were iron, ranging from simple stumps to French and half-testers. The exception was in the best bed-chamber on the first-floor front, obviously Mrs. Shakespear's own room, which contained a four-foot mahogany Arabian bedstead with chintz furniture and which was furnished with sitting-room elements as well as with all the high quality furniture needed for the most expensive of bed-rooms.

**Illustration 6.10 *Modern photograph of Mrs. Shakespear's house in Barnes***  
**Author's own photograph**



Mrs. Shakespear's attention to cleanliness might well have drawn on the discourse discussed above and to have been related to her location close to London. But there was an additional source. Elizabeth Collingham argues that British people working and living in India in the early nineteenth century adopted high – and new – standards of personal cleanliness, partly for reasons of health

and comfort, but largely to conform to what they perceived as Indian notions of how a ruling body should look and behave.<sup>198</sup> Eighteenth-century reports noted that Hindus considered Europeans to be dirty and ritually impure. At that point in Britain, the achievement of personal cleanliness largely relied on frequent changes of personal linen, which was considered to clean the body by absorbing dirt and sweat. But elite Indians considered daily cold baths to be necessary and the British in India adopted this practice in order to meet Indian standards; it was a strategy of rule. Additionally, cold baths were taken up by the British in India for medical reasons; they were already used in Britain both as a treatment for illness and as a prophylactic, which made it easy for the Anglo-Indians to incorporate them into their own routine. And bathing and washing were not just a strategy for survival and rule, they were adopted enthusiastically; acceptable standards of personal hygiene rose and British habits were seen as inadequate. 'It can therefore be argued that the Anglo-Indians were one of the first sections of British society to define cleanliness as being thoroughly washed and scrubbed.'<sup>199</sup> Margot Finn's database of 1135 inventories of Anglo-Indians for the period 1780-1848 reveals a high level of items for personal hygiene.<sup>200</sup> Retired Anglo-Indians, argues Collingham, brought these practices home, playing a role in introducing the pleasures of personal cleanliness to the middle class in the metropole.

Mrs. Shakespear, born in Surrey in 1794, was an Anglo-Indian. Her husband had been a civil servant serving in India; the couple had married in Calcutta in 1812.<sup>201</sup> Several items in her inventory can be seen as relating to her life abroad. Her many iron bedsteads might have been partly accounted for by their appeal to travellers: they were often sold with rails for mosquito nets; they would not be susceptible to attack by insects; and they could be easily taken down, transported and reassembled.<sup>202</sup> Other bed-room goods were japanned or of metal,

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<sup>198</sup> This discussion of Anglo-Indian bathing practices is drawn from Collingham, E. (2001) *Imperial bodies: the physical experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* Oxford: Polity, 7-48.

<sup>199</sup> Collingham (2001), 46.

<sup>200</sup> Finn, M. and Adams, M. (2005) *Colonial possession: personal property and social identity in British India, 1780-1848* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor]: SN: 5254.

<sup>201</sup> India Office Family History Search <http://indiafamily.bl.uk/UI/FullDisplay.aspx?RecordId=014-000199389> (accessed 12.8.2010). <http://search.ancestry.co.uk> search on Louisa Caroline Tobin Muirson (accessed 20.3.11). <http://www.merchantnetworks.com.au/genealogy/web/claiborne/pafg12.htm#44825> (accessed 20.3.11).

<sup>202</sup> Peyton & Peyton (c.1856).

rendering them waterproof and easy to clean. There were also, on the upper floor, some teak washstands, commodes and chests of drawers. Teak was not that common in the Britain at this time but it was much used in India, where its ability to withstand heat, damp and insects was valuable.

So, while Mrs. Shakespear's bed-rooms were perhaps influenced by the arguments for domestic cleanliness that were circulating in the British sanitary movement of the time, their unusually high provision for washing and bathing also corroborates the argument that new ideas about bodily cleanliness were influenced by practices imported from India. This serves as an alert to the breadth of influences that might be reflected in inventories, perhaps especially those in London, a central nexus of global flows.

## Conclusions

By this period bed-rooms were, ideally, distinct from day-rooms. This norm appears to have been widely adopted by those people in the present sample who had enough property to require an inventory organised by room. Some of these specialised bed-rooms had sitting-room elements but there is no evidence here to suggest that they were anything other than the private spaces delineated in fiction and advice texts.

Unsurprisingly, the number of bed-rooms and the presence of most items increased with wealth and status. The inventory of William Gladding suggests that the furnishing of bed-rooms was less of a priority than the day-rooms. But the analysis also shows up some deviations from the general rule. Farmers, while no less wealthy, on the whole, than their peers, had bed-rooms that were, in aggregate analysis, less fully equipped. There are several possible explanations. One is that farmers were culturally distinct and led simpler lives, clinging on to older ways and goods, such as chests and bed-hangings. Alternatively, perhaps they pursued a more rigorous policy of hierarchical provision, equipping some rooms – those of the farm servants, for example – especially poorly. For although farmers' individual bedstead-rooms disproportionately lacked washstands, this was not the case in farmers' whole inventories. On the other hand, even in their whole inventories, there was a significant lack of bidets and metal bedsteads.

The other significant divergence from the general pattern with regard to wealth and status is seen in those inventories located in London. Londoners' ownership patterns in the bed-room (as we have also seen for the day-rooms) can be seen to reflect the kind of culture associated more generally with those of higher status, approximating to the professional middle class and above. And the case study of the metal bedstead indicates that Londoners were at the forefront of the take-up of new goods. London is known to have long been in the vanguard with regard to the ownership of imported or luxury goods. The metal bedstead was not exactly a luxury but it was certainly a novelty, which was embraced in London before the rest of the country. The pattern of London as distinctive appears to have continued into the nineteenth century, in spite of the development of transport links to other parts of the country, which might have been thought to lessen its predominance as a location of consumption. Asa Briggs proposed that the railway network had exactly the opposite effect at the end of the century, with London's position as a national transport hub re-establishing a centrality which the growth of the provincial industrial cities in the first half of the century had somewhat diminished.<sup>203</sup>

Although somewhat hidden from view, bed-rooms were a site for the performance of gentility. This is seen here most clearly with regard to washstands. While personal cleanliness could be achieved in various ways, for example through the use of public baths or the scullery tap, gentility required that it be produced in private (although the presence of servants was acceptable), in the bed-room, with a washstand – all of which required resources. The early twentieth-century reminiscence quoted above (page 250) shows that status value inhered in a washstand even if it was not actually used to achieve cleanliness. In that case the washstand was a 'front-stage' item on intermittent display to visitors. For someone like John Perceval (page 249) it can be seen as also a 'backstage' item that helped him prepare for a public performance of status.<sup>204</sup> But for him it was not just a 'prop'; his genteel 'disposition' found it a necessity.<sup>205</sup>

In the middle part of the century, the bed-room was the main domestic focus of health concerns – both physical and moral; it was not until the late 1870s that these concerns impinged on day-rooms and the effect on service rooms came even

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<sup>203</sup> Briggs, A. (1968) *Victorian cities* Harmondsworth: Penguin, 318.

<sup>204</sup> Goffman (1990), especially Chapter 1, 'Performances'.

<sup>205</sup> Bourdieu (1984), 'The aristocracy of culture', 11-63.

later.<sup>206</sup> Throughout the period there was great anxiety about disease, with scientific attempts to understand its aetiology focusing on dirt, initially in miasma theory and subsequently in germ theory. In both cases, measures to combat disease promoted various aspects of cleanliness. Personal cleanliness was one element, although, as just noted, its tie to the bed-room was class-specific; working-class personal cleanliness was addressed through public provision of utilities and persuasion. Bed-rooms and sleeping arrangements were a particular focus of discussions about health both because sleeping bodies were thought to be especially vulnerable but also because bed-rooms, closed up and inhabited uninterruptedly for hours on end, were considered to be a particularly active site of the production of pollutants that spoiled fresh air and caused disease. Although dirty houses and dirty people were themselves subject to disease, polluted air spread and affected others. Thus personal and domestic cleanliness was a public matter. Because the poor and the working classes were believed to be especially dirty, there was increasing intervention in the public sphere – improving sanitation and water supplies and setting standards of domestic ventilation – much of which was aimed at making the working classes cleaner. Public sanitation projects affected the middle classes too but intervention into their private homes was indirect and reliant on private, individual compliance not imposition. The present case study of metal bedsteads allows us to see that there was a voluntary domestic take-up of the ideal of cleanliness and that it started decades earlier than the advent of the germ theory with which it has previously been associated. Metal bedsteads were presented as a weapon in the fight against bed-room dirt and it can be seen in the present sample that their use increased during the period when they were being promoted in this way. And, in support of the hypothesis that cleanliness and public health was one reason for their adoption, it can be seen that people who had one such health-related item were likely to equip their bed-rooms with other health-related goods or to eschew items which were presented as harbouring dirt and dust. Here, then, by using inventories as a source of evidence alongside advice literature not only can we consider the extent to which the advice related to ownership but we can also, in some cases, find evidence to suggest that the terms in which it was written were taken up along with the goods described.

Ventilation or the supply of clean air was positioned in the context of science and so bed-rooms were a site of science as well as privacy. They were also, as

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<sup>206</sup> Neiswander (2008), 59-71.

were other parts of the house, a place where convenience was an issue. Convenience was an important principle in planning and advice texts throughout this period; it was a complicated principle because it took in ideas of science and of improvement (which we might now understand as modernity) while also being constrained by ideas of homeliness, decency, comfort and appropriateness. As only briefly indicated here, these inter-related concepts were important in contemporary texts relating to domestic life; a future project would usefully develop an investigation of their meanings and their practice in both domestic and non-domestic contexts.

Although some avenues of interpretation – the gentility of washstands and the influence of Indian practices of cleanliness – were suggested by sources outside the core selection of texts used in this thesis, the method of moving between aggregate analysis, a qualitative reading of contemporary texts and the occasional interpretation of individual inventories has provided both a more grounded description of the arrangements of mid-nineteenth-century bed-rooms than has previously been available and has demonstrated that the bed-room was a potent domestic space – a site of multifarious meanings which were sometimes contradictory, and which were often moderated by social status but also by geography and occupation. It was, on the one hand, a private space but, at the same time, it was a location for a complicated intersection with the public sphere largely through discourses of physical and moral health.



# Chapter 7

## Conclusions

For those who are interested in the interplay between material goods and domestic life, any household inventory is rich material. That on the following page (Illustration 7.1) is just one example.<sup>1</sup> At first glance we can see that Mrs. Hartley, who died in Manningham, near Bradford, in 1857, had four rooms: a house (combining the functions of living-room, kitchen, service room and shop) and three chambers. We can see that her possessions included seven 'show glasses', a clock in an oak case and five silver teaspoons. The inventory suggests all sorts of questions about how Mrs. Hartley lived and the world that she lived in: how, for example, when, and with whom, did she use her five silver teaspoons? Where did she acquire them? Who made them? What did they mean to her? We might not be able definitively to answer all those questions but this thesis has shown that a close focus on inventories, even when drawing on only a defined and limited range of additional sources, makes it possible to provide responses to important questions such as: how typical were Mrs. Hartley's household arrangements of her time or her place or her wealth or her social position? In what ways did they differ from those of her contemporaries? Do those arrangements tally with contemporary representations or historical accounts? What influenced her (or people like her) to have such goods and to arrange her house in this way? What kind of home was she trying to make with her ornaments on the chamber mantelpiece or the rocking chairs in the houseplace? Was she following rules, consciously or unconsciously? How did she negotiate those rules if they did not suit her circumstances?

These questions all relate to what real people did; this is an area about which there has been great uncertainty, since historians of the nineteenth-century house and home have largely relied either on representations that had been produced with a view to influencing behaviour or on the empirical evidence of personal accounts of one sort or another, the typicality of which it is often hard to assess. But, here, investigation of a series of inventories relating to a substantial group of people in the middle of the nineteenth century provides descriptive narratives that can be used to contextualise or calibrate existing accounts. And this project moves beyond a simple description of things and ownership into the area of

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<sup>1</sup> Legacy Duty papers TNA IR 19/108.

material culture – the mutual relationships between people and their things in the context of social relations and cultural behaviour.

Illustration 7.1 Inventory of Mrs. Betty Hartley of Manningham, July 1857  
Source: TNA IR19/108

Inventory and Valuation of the  
Household Furniture, and Other Effects  
of the Late Betty Hartley, Shopkeeper  
of No 48 Arcadia Street Manningham  
Who died on or about the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of  
March 1857 Taken by me this  
4<sup>th</sup> Day of July 1857

In the House  
Deal Counter, Oak Chest, Flour Scales & Weights  
2 Pairs Copper Scales, tin Scales, 2 Canisters,  
2 Rocking Chairs, 1 Arm Chair, 2 Kitchen Dr  
Round Stands, Deal Table, Candlesticks,  
Fender & fire iron, Bellows & Salt Box,  
Lundry Tubs in Cupboard, Tegy & tub, Pipes & stoves,  
7 Snow glasses, Coffee mill, Lundry Books,  
The Stock of Spice & other Sundries, 2 Slips Carpets,  
Chamber No 1,  
Shut up Bedstead, 1 Bed, 1 Bolster 2 Pillows,  
Clock in oak Case, Chest Drawers & Cupboard,  
Round Table, 3 Chairs, Carpet, fender & ash Pan,  
Deal Cupboard, Sea Tray, Amusing Ornaments,  
Chamber No 2,  
Bedstead, Hook Bed & Bedding, oak Drawers,  
Wash Stand & tub, oak Corner Cupboard, Looking Glass,  
1 Carpets, Work Box, Sundries,  
Chamber No 3,  
Shut up Bedstead, Bed & Bedding, 1 Chair, 1 Clothes Horse,  
Craddle, 1 Silver Watch, 5 Silver Tea Spoons,  
1 Table Spoon, 1 Cream Jug,  
Wearing Apparel,  
3 Gowns, 3 Shawles, 3 Pairs Stockings, 2 Pairs Boots,  
4 Betty Coats, 3 Skirts, 7 Caps, 4 Linnes, 2 Bonnets,  
8 Handkerchiefs, 4 Aprons, 1 Pair Stays, 7 Night Gowns,  
Total Value — 26. 3. 6

The Total Valuation of the Before  
mentioned Effects, of Value at the time  
of twenty six pounds, three shillings & sixpence  
Witness my Hand George Toole, Valuer,  
Bradford

A focus on material culture has been evident across disciplines for some time;<sup>2</sup> in relation to histories of the home it is an alternative to the recent concern with the nature of representations.<sup>3</sup> Inventories are an obvious source for pursuing this interest but it was thought that they were not available in useful numbers for nineteenth-century England and Wales.<sup>4</sup> Scotland was a different matter and Eleanor Gordon and Gwyneth Nair, Linda Young and Stana Nenadic have undertaken small-scale analyses of Scottish inventories.<sup>5</sup> Lack of numbers was not a problem for Margaret Ponsonby, who has taken the novel approach of focusing on a small number of English cases, found mostly among personal and business papers in local archives, in order to consider how and why the individuals concerned arranged their houses.<sup>6</sup> And Jane Hamlett, by assiduous searching, has managed to gather about 200 individual middle-class examples, which she has analysed quantitatively to provide a background to her qualitative study of gendered domestic space.<sup>7</sup>

But if using inventories in relation to understanding the material culture of the nineteenth-century home is uncommon but not unheard of, this thesis demonstrates that they can offer more than they have done previously. This is partly due to the unprecedentedly large (for the nineteenth century) size of the present sample, which facilitates an innovative, empirically confident, mutually supportive use of qualitative readings and quantitative analyses and which allows substantive issues to arise iteratively from within the source material. It is also due to the broad social coverage of this particular group of inventories which enables the investigation to move beyond the middle-class home that has been the focus of so much work on nineteenth-century domestic cultures. This has made it possible to address spaces such as parlours and kitchen-living-rooms, which were actually very common but which have been neglected in favour of the drawing-rooms that have been understood as essential elements of middle-class domestic life. While the sample does not relate to the poor, it does include people who lived in somewhat meagre material circumstances. Historical archaeologists have recently been demonstrating that archaeological fragments can be interpreted as speaking

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<sup>2</sup> See Hicks, D. and M. Beaudry, eds. (2010) *The Oxford handbook of material culture studies* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>3</sup> Hamlett (2009a).

<sup>4</sup> Riello (2003).

<sup>5</sup> Gordon and Nair (2003); Nenadic (1994); Young (2003).

<sup>6</sup> Ponsonby (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Hamlett (2009b).

about the lives of people whose voices were not more conventionally recorded.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, using direct evidence for their household goods, this thesis has been able to pay attention to the homes of some types of people who have previously been considered to have left very little first-hand or relatively unmediated evidence of their domestic lives. Reports of criminal cases have been much used for investigating the domestic circumstances and behaviours of the unsung of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries although such studies have hardly yet touched the nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> During the course of the research for this thesis the Old Bailey records for the nineteenth century were put online; this was too late for the present investigation but there is now every opportunity to bring such sources together with inventories in future work.<sup>10</sup>

The scale and the reach of the sample is used to establish differences in the ways that different categories of people organised and equipped their dwellings, moving away from *the* mid-Victorian home to mid-Victorian homes (plural). Three mutually informing methods have been used: aggregate analysis; interpretation of individual cases; and tracking of meanings in contemporary texts. They have been brought to bear on the substantive issues of class and other differences in domestic cultures, on the differentiation of internal spaces, and on meanings in the bedroom. Difference is pursued both in aggregate, looking for broad patterns of ownership and arrangements, but also through setting particular cases against those general patterns and circulated norms, considering in detail how and why individuals diverged from the general schemas that, as aggregate members, they are shown as following.

Broad patterns of difference are established by the social scientific method of 'mapping', whereby statistically significant associations are identified between the ownership, on the one hand, of particular items or types of room and, on the other, variables related to the owners: their wealth, location, gender, size of house and, especially, measures that relate to what we now call social class – occupation, source of income, and honorific titles.<sup>11</sup> Class has been a dominant theme in

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffries *et al.* (2009); Owens, A., Jeffries, N., Wehner, K. and R. Featherby (2010) 'Fragments of the modern city: material culture and the rhythms of everyday life in Victorian London', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15: 2: 212-225.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Styles, J. (2008) *The dress of the people: everyday fashion in eighteenth-century England* New Haven: Yale University Press and Vickery (2009), throughout but, for example, 38-39. For the nineteenth century Holmes (in progress) throws light on the household practices of the working class in and around Norwich.

<sup>10</sup> [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org) (accessed 11.9.2010).

<sup>11</sup> The inspiration here is Bourdieu (1984).

virtually all accounts of the Victorian home, which have either argued directly or taken for granted that different classes or class fragments had different types of home. The social scope of the inventories has made it possible empirically to investigate those differences and to establish a very strong correlation between certain spatial arrangements or the possession of certain types of goods and the coded 'status' of their owners.<sup>12</sup> 'Higher status' approximates to the professional middle classes and above but does not imply or refer to any contemporary use of the term. What has become clear, within the sample studied here, is that there was a significant visible break in domestic culture, not between the occupationally defined middle and working classes, but between the lower middle class and the segment of the middle class who were professionals or of independent means ('higher status').<sup>13</sup> This is a very useful finding. Firstly, it positions existing accounts of class-differentiated domestic culture. Secondly, it anchors the cultural (in the sense of life-style) definition of the early nineteenth-century middle class most recently presented by Young, who argues that the middle classes as a whole, while diverse, necessarily shared a material culture.<sup>14</sup> The present empirical study has been able to break into this somewhat circular argument to show that the kind of domestic culture that Young considers to have constituted middle-class identity was restricted to the section 'above' the lower middle class. But it should also be noted that although 'drawing-room culture' was largely confined to those of wealth or higher status, plenty of people of wealth or higher status, throughout the country, had the parlours that have previously been seen as the province solely of the working and lower middle classes.

Mapping was also employed in relation to other variables. Not that it always threw up significant findings. There is hardly any significant association between ownership of different objects or rooms and marital status and/or gender. This is, at first glance, disappointing and surprising in view of the many studies that have demonstrated gender differences in legal ownership, in acquisition, and in attitudes to possessions.<sup>15</sup> However, the negative findings in the present case do not actually counter those other studies; rather they highlight that the home life illuminated by inventories relates to the home life of the household rather than of

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<sup>12</sup> Status – higher, lower and not known – is a coding devised from a combination of occupation, source of income, and honorific titles, as outlined in Chapter 2, 83-87.

<sup>13</sup> For this delineation of class and class fragments see Crossick (1977).

<sup>14</sup> Muthesisus (1982), 44-48; Young (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Berg (1996); Ponsonby (2007), 95; Vickery (1993a).

the individual. This was the conclusion that Lorna Weatherill came to when she found a similar lack of relationship between ownership of inventoried goods and gender in the early modern period.<sup>16</sup> As Daniel Miller argues for the present day, consumption practices are not just an individual matter but often involve the moral economy of the household.<sup>17</sup> Even when the deceased was single or widowed, household arrangements must often have borne the imprint of previous less lonely states.

However, mapping ownership onto geographical location *has* produced significant positive results. The ‘house-place’, which seems to have reflected a particular use of domestic space, in this sample was particularly associated with the Pennines. But it is in relation to London that difference is most marked and most broadly applicable. Patterns of possession and room use in London, and to an extent in the (coded) region of the South East and East, were often different from those in the rest of England and Wales. For example, the formal, gendered, specialised drawing-room of élite sociability was predominantly restricted to people of higher status and high wealth but it was more common amongst higher-status and wealthy Londoners than amongst higher-status and wealthy people in the rest of the country. And drawing-rooms were also more common amongst the less wealthy in London than elsewhere. There were proportionally more wealthy and higher status people in London than elsewhere,<sup>18</sup> but also London can be seen to be broadly suffused by higher-status practices. This supports William Rubinstein’s suggestion that there were two middle-class cultures: the élite-oriented style of commercial London and that of the manufacturing cities where, as Simon Gunn has suggested, the public performance of status was a particularly important element.<sup>19</sup>

The case study of the metal bedstead suggests that Londoners were also more inclined to the early adoption of new goods than their provincial contemporaries. The nineteenth-century West End had a unique prestige as the centre of power, wealth and pleasure, not only for the country but for the empire, and London has been noted as an outstanding centre of innovation and of innovative consumption since the early modern period.<sup>20</sup> What is interesting about

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<sup>16</sup> Weatherill (1986), 155.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, D. (1995a) ‘Consumption as the vanguard of history: a polemic by way of an introduction’ in Miller, D., ed. *Acknowledging consumption: a review of new studies* London: Routledge, 31.

<sup>18</sup> This applies to the present sample but also more generally; see Rubinstein (1988), 78-79.

<sup>19</sup> Gunn (2000); Rubinstein (1977).

<sup>20</sup> Borsay (2001); Rappaport (2000), 9; Weatherill (1988), 50-51.



the case of the metal bedstead is that while production was based in Birmingham, it was London that was ahead in consumption. The new railway links facilitated distribution into London as much out of it.<sup>21</sup> London, then, was different. And we should remember that it is this 'different' domestic culture that is largely represented in the contemporary advice texts on which we often rely; many of these books were published in London and written by London-based authors, with reference to London shops, London goods and London prices – they represent a metropolitan middle class. It has been suggested that such texts were part of a publishing expansion which contributed to a national standardising of London-based taste and practices but the evidence here shows that significant differences remained.<sup>22</sup>

The geography of possession and of domestic practices is an area for considerable further development. The present investigation has confined itself to mapping onto admittedly rather crude and ahistorical regions, established to facilitate analysis rather than developing out of contemporary views. It has not addressed the potential of using other categories of location, such as town size, rural/urban distinctions or relationship to transport networks. It would not be a simple matter to establish such categories but the process as well as the results would be likely to add significantly to ongoing debates about regionalism and geographical difference.<sup>23</sup> The restriction of the sample size is one reason for the less than satisfactory geographical categories in the present investigation. However, the IR19 series contains something like another 500 inventories, for the period 1796 to 1840; adding these to the sample would allow more sophisticated geographical categories to be established as well as more fully populating those that already exist. The present study has usefully addressed a period, 1841-1881, that has been somewhat neglected in the historiography. However, forty years is rather too short a time to reveal developments in domestic practices and the inclusion of another forty years' worth of inventories would allow a better focus on change over time.

Similarly, a larger and longer sample would enable a more thorough investigation of the domestic culture of farmers, which the present study has shown

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<sup>21</sup> Briggs, A. (1968), 318. The sheer size of London as a market and a work-place drew people and goods into its orbit; see Wrigley, E. (1967) 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy 1650-1750' *Past and Present* 37: 1: 44-70.

<sup>22</sup> As discussed by Keeble (2004), 109.

<sup>23</sup> Stobart (2001), 1305-1309, for an overview of the debate.

also to be 'different' from the rest of the population and certainly from the London-based model with which we are familiar. Although the rural population was in decline, farmers remained a substantial part of the nineteenth-century population but their domestic arrangements have not received a proportionate amount of attention.<sup>24</sup> Should we consider their domestic arrangements – their kitchen-living-rooms, bed-hangings and storage chests – to be 'old-fashioned' or is there a more complicated way of thinking about them which recognizes the continuation of certain long-standing practices alongside the adoption of newer arrangements, as in the case of Mary Whitwam and her sewing machine (Chapter 5, 220-226)?

The specialisation of space is the second substantive concern of the thesis, which considers whether it was as fundamental to Victorian domestic organisation as has been suggested and how it actually worked, compared with the ideal arrangements that were promulgated at the time.<sup>25</sup> Specialisation in general (for example in professionalisation or in fields of knowledge) has been seen as a feature of the nineteenth century and increasing spatial specialisation and segregation have been identified as modern means of ordering and controlling people (and of inducing self-ordering) at a variety of scales.<sup>26</sup> But, in the present sample, it appears that parlours, which were widespread, did not embody functional specialisation to the same extent as drawing- and dining-rooms; they did not, for the most part, separate eating from 'sitting leisure'. In this respect, it appears that differentiation (within the same dwelling) between parlours (and other day-rooms) was made on the basis of hierarchy – one room being 'better' than another. In the context of hospitality, hierarchy is a more flexible principle of spatial differentiation than functional specialisation since it allows the nature of a space to be readily modulated by the adoption of different kinds of behaviour. Eating, for example, might have taken place in any one of several rooms; the hierarchical furnishing of those rooms would have contributed to the nature of the event, which would have been additionally moderated by, for example, the use of particular utensils and the adoption of more or less polite behaviour. This flexible hierarchical differentiation of space was, then, just as common as the functional specialisation which has been presented as crucial to Victorian domestic arrangements but which, in respect of

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<sup>24</sup> As Howkins (2000) shows, there were very considerable differences between different classes of farmer and between different parts of the country; detailed studies are generally locally focused. However, Horn, P. (1976) *Labouring life in the Victorian countryside* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, offers a broader sweep, although focusing on the agricultural labourer.

<sup>25</sup> Franklin (1981), 39; Muthesius (1982), 42.

<sup>26</sup> Dennis (2008); Olsen (1974).



hospitable provision, was closely associated only with the upper part of the middle classes. Similarly, in the city at large, while there were numerous highly visible projects intended to order and specialise public spaces, Lynda Nead demonstrates how the modernising project was only partial and that numerous small, crowded, multi-functional streets continued to exist.<sup>27</sup>

When domestic specialisation and segregation did occur, it was often not entirely straightforward.<sup>28</sup> Even though there was a strong presumption in favour of the separation of work from home as part of the domesticity that was fundamental to the developing middle class of the period, economically productive work always relied on the infrastructure provided at home; and the home was supported by the economic activities of work.<sup>29</sup> The cases examined here further show the complexity of the relationship between the two categories and demonstrate how the relationship was moderated according to circumstances. The middle-class 'domestic ideal' valorised a family-based household, centred on parents and their children. But several of the case studies in this thesis serve as a reminder that this ideal demographic structure was not actually the reality for many middle-class householders, for shorter or longer periods of their lives, and that living space and living practices took the reality as well as the ideal into account.

But there were some marked functional specialisations: parlours, sitting-rooms, drawing-rooms, dining-rooms and the like only rarely made provision for cooking or service activities such as laundry work. And the present sample provides definite evidence that by this date, as generally assumed, the specialisation of bed-rooms and the separation of their functions from living-rooms was widely manifested, although Mary Whitwam's chamber (Chapter 5, 225-226) was an exception and so, perhaps, was the 'Chamber no 1' seen in Mrs. Hartley's inventory, on page 285 above. Nonetheless, in general, few rooms here showed the combination of living-room and bed-room functions that had been apparent in earlier centuries. It appears for the most part to be the case that, where people had a choice, they made this functional specialisation. However, contemporary social investigations amongst the poor and the labouring classes indicate that, contrary to the often expressed disapprobation of commentators, mixed-use rooms most

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<sup>27</sup> Nead (2000), 161-187.

<sup>28</sup> Dennis (2008), 259-260.

<sup>29</sup> Davidoff and Hall (1987), 364-369. All the scholarship shows that 'separate spheres', in whatever field, were never truly separate; there is a vast literature but Gordon and Nair (2003) might be taken as an example of a study which demonstrates the interdependence of private/public, home/work and gender roles related to those spheres.

certainly still existed. And it is quite possible that those inventories which did not specify named rooms (because there were not enough rooms or not enough goods to warrant it) included dwellings where there was only one mixed-use room. The case of Mr. Nicholson's common lodging house (Chapter 3, 146) is revealing in this respect: each lodging family had only one room for all functions, but Mr. Nicholson, while not pursuing specialisation as far as he could, nevertheless separated his bed-room from his living-room. This suggests that it was a desirable specialisation that the lodgers were unable to achieve.

There has been an historiographical taking-for-granted of the bed-room, which has meant that its importance as a site of meaning in the nineteenth-century home has been somewhat – and, as is shown here, unjustifiably – overlooked. As the location for a particular means of achieving personal cleanliness, it was crucial for the performance of gentility, even though there was often no immediate audience. Issues of convenience, comfort, science and progress were no less important – indeed, they were perhaps more important – in bed-rooms than in other parts of the house. These were significant contemporary concerns in texts related to the home and they would benefit from further investigation, especially in relation to the current interest in nineteenth-century domestic modernity.<sup>30</sup> It also transpires that bed-rooms were a specific locus of concern about health and disease much earlier than previously thought.<sup>31</sup> At a time when disease was largely laid at the door of public conditions, and while funds and legislation were channelled towards public health measures, these inventories show that ideas about public health were being voluntarily adopted in the most private reaches of the private home. This thesis does not owe allegiance to any one particular discipline and the case of the bed-room uses methods from different fields. The tracking of the meanings of objects in contemporary texts – as for the metal bedstead – is often undertaken in design history but it is the empirical 'mapping' of social science that provides evidence that those meanings were actually taken up, bridging the gap between representation and practice that has been found so hard to cross.

This thesis, then, has extended our knowledge of the material make-up and conceptual understanding of Victorian homes. The empirical basis of the investigation allows more confident assertions about how people, in general, arranged their homes than reliance on advice literature has allowed. But the thesis

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<sup>30</sup> Ferry (2009); Keeble (2009); Sparke (2008); Sparke (2009).

<sup>31</sup>Forty (1986); Kelley (forthcoming); Neiswander (2008), 56-81; Tomes (1990).

also fully recognises that those general patterns are made up of the actions of individuals; individual cases are examined to reveal intention, motivation and agency rather than just as examples of norms in action. Indeed, the individual 'stories' suggest a complicated relationship to circulated or accepted norms: sometimes there appears to be contravention, sometimes failed aspiration but sometimes, and probably more often than we have previously recognised, different standards. This is the case for Mary Whitwam. Her residence, with its arrangements for home-working, did not manifest the 'standard' separation of work from home but this was common and acceptable for people like her and indeed for almost all farmers.

This thesis demonstrates that contrary to some recent critiques, inventory studies can illuminate not only the material but the material culture of the home. Inventories can do much more than simply backing up narratives based on other sources. They can speak for those who have not previously had their own voice – the privileged as well as the underprivileged. In the present case this has been achieved by recourse to only a pre-defined range of additional sources. Bringing in additional sources and extending the size of the present sample would fruitfully develop the present study. But it should also be noted that the potential of the existing material has been in no way exhausted. The database containing the present sample will be lodged at The Geffrye, where it will be a resource for the further development of inventory studies of the nineteenth-century domestic.

# Appendix 1

## Database structure and design

The software used is Microsoft Access 2003.

The database holds data drawn mostly from 491 sets of Legacy Duty Residuary Account papers (LD papers) held in the IR19 series in the National Archives at Kew as part of the records of the Boards of Stamps, Taxes, Excise, Stamps and Taxes, and Inland Revenue. The Residuary Accounts include a form (LD form) and, often, associated papers, sometimes incorporating an inventory (LD inventory). For the composition of the sample see Chapter 2, 71-73. Some data are taken from the census enumerators' books for 1841-1881, available at [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) (accessed 23.8.2010).

The database is relational and the data are held in 22 tables:

- 11 main data entry tables, holding basic data. Data are largely transcribed as given but some minor standardisation is adopted.
- 3 manipulated data tables i.e. coded subsets. The data in these tables are drawn entirely from the 11 data entry tables.
- 8 look-up tables for standardising entry or coding.

Table Appendix 1.1 gives a brief outline of the contents and sources for each of the tables. Throughout, 'LD' stands for 'Legacy Duty'.

The original inventory in The National Archives (TNA) can be traced from the ImageRef field in the INVENTORY table. The ImageRef entry is composed of:

TNA box number e.g IR19.88

Followed by an identifying serial number generated by the author for each of the inventories in each TNA box e.g 4

Followed by a range of numbers, e.g. 3-11, indicating how many pages are in the inventory

The resulting ImageRef entry in this case would be IR19.88.4.3-11.

The relationships between tables are shown in Figure Appendix 1.1, on page 299. For detail of tables, contents and sources, see below.

It is made clear which fields involve coding. The criteria for coding are largely given in the comments column of the table under discussion. Occasionally, mostly in the coding of room names, criteria were complex and are given additional discussion (see tables ROOMNAMELOOKUP and ITEMLOOKUP).

Further tables and fields can be added as required, either for additional data or for coding.

**Table Appendix 1.1 *Outline of tables, contents and sources for the database***

	<b>TABLE NAME</b>	<b>MAIN CONTENTS</b>	<b>SOURCES</b>
<b>A. MAIN DATA ENTRY TABLES</b>			
1	<b>DECEASED</b>	Personal & financial information about deceased	LD papers. Census for age at death
2	<b>INVENTORY</b>	Address and date of inventory plus coded region	LD papers
3	<b>CATEGORY</b>	Grouping of goods used by appraiser	LD papers
4	<b>LOCATIONOFITEM</b>	Room or location name, plus order in which entered in inventory, plus valuation	LD papers
5	<b>POSSESSIONUNIT</b>	Name, number/quantity, and value of items as given.	LD papers
6	<b>MARITALSTATUS</b>	Additional standardised descriptions and coding of items Marital status of deceased	LD papers, supplemented by census
7	<b>OCCUPATION&amp;STATUS</b>	Occupation as given. Plus codings based on occupations, titles & status	LD papers, supplemented by census
8	<b>CENSUSDECEASED</b>	Biographical information about deceased and his/her household composition	Census
9	<b>HOUSEHOLDMEMBERS</b>	Minimal biographical information about household members. Limited sub-sample only	Census
10	<b>APPRAISERS</b>	Details about appraiser: name, address and whether professional	LD papers
11	<b>VALUATIONS</b>	Total valuation of inventory goods (household goods & stock noted separately if available)	LD papers

<b>B. MANIPULATED DATA TABLES</b>			
<b>12</b>	<b>ITEMPRESENCE</b>	Inventory annotated for inclusion/absence of particular items or types of room	Coding using above
<b>13</b>	<b>DAYROOMCONTENTS</b>	Subset of locations coded as particular day-rooms, with annotation of presence/absence of selected coded items	Coding using above
<b>14</b>	<b>BEDROOMCONTENTS</b>	Subset of locations coded as bedstead-rooms, with annotation of presence/absence of selected coded items	Coding using above
<b>C. LOOK-UP TABLES FOR STANDARDISING DATA ENTRY</b>			
<b>15</b>	<b>TITLELOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list for standardising title of deceased	Derived from LD papers
<b>16</b>	<b>SOCIALSTATUSLOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list for standardising social status of deceased	Derived from LD papers
<b>17</b>	<b>COUNTYLOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list for standardising county where inventory located	Derived from <a href="http://www.ancestry.co.uk">www.ancestry.co.uk</a> list of counties
<b>18</b>	<b>ENTERPRISETYPE</b>	Drop-down list for coding type of enterprise when its goods are included in domestic inventory	Derived from LD inventories
<b>18</b>	<b>ROOMNAME LOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list of coded room names	Derived from LD inventories
<b>20</b>	<b>QUANTITYLOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list for standardising quantity of items	Derived from LD inventories
<b>21</b>	<b>MATERIALLOOKUP</b>	Drop-down list for standardising material of items	Derived from LD inventories
<b>22</b>	<b>ITEMLOOKUP</b>	Coded item names	Derived from LD inventories

Table Appendix 1.1 continued *Outline of tables, contents and sources for the database*





# Tables

## A. Main data entry tables

### *General comments*

- Data was entered in forms.
- £.S.D used throughout; enter separately into fields for £., S., and D. Automatically converted to D (old pennies). ½d rounded up to 1d.
- Entry into each text field is initially capitalised. Titles and proper names are capitalised.
- Square brackets: [xxx] indicates the insertion of authorial text. Used where a term is implied. For example, where 'First floor' is written in an inventory, followed by several room names, followed by 'Ground floor', followed by several room names, the location name is recorded in the database as '[First floor] Back bedroom'.

[...] indicates missing or illegible word or part of word

[?] indicates concern over accuracy of transcription.

- Numbers are entered as figures not text. Commas not used in thousands or above.
- Throughout, the NotesToSelf field is for author's own use and contains jottings and thoughts that might be followed up, either factually or in the interpretation.

### **1. DECEASED**

This is the primary table, to which all others link back.

Contains information about the biography and wealth of the deceased person. All of the information is taken from the Legacy Duty (LD) forms except where, as noted below, it is derived from the inventory, census enumerators' books or registration of deaths.

Only one field – WealthQuartile – contains coded data.

There is a very large number of fields in order to capture the many variant presentations of valuations on the original forms.

Size: 491 entries

## DECEASED TABLE

Field name	Data	Source and other comments
DeceasedNo	Primary key	Automatically generated
IR19Ref	Legacy Duty account number	Reference number given by the Inland Revenue; appears on LD form. Not always provided
EstateAdministered	Tick box. Only enter if 'yes'	LD form. Estates were administered if no will was made or if the nominated executors were unable to perform their duty
DayDied		LD form
MonthDied		LD form
YearDied		LD form
AgeAtDeath		Derived from census enumerators' books or from <i>England &amp; Wales, Free BMD Death Index: 1837-1915</i> . Both available through <a href="http://www.ancestry.com">www.ancestry.com</a> Can be approximate
CensusSample	Tick box. Only enter if 'yes'	Marked 'yes' if date of death falls within 3 years of date of preceding census
ForenamesForm	Forenames as given	LD form
SurnamesForm	Surnames as given	LD form
TitleForm	Title as given on LD form, for example Mrs., Sir.	LD form. Standardised spelling derived from TITLE drop-down list. Open-ended list built up from common terms in LD papers
OccupationForm	Occupation as given	LD form
SocialStatusForm	Social status, for example, Gentleman, Esquire, Yeoman	LD form. Standardised spelling derived from STATUS drop-down list
Gender	Male/Female/NotKnown	Inferred from title, status and sometimes gender of executor if spouse. LD form and inventory.
MaritalStatusAtDeath	Married/Widow/Widower/ NeverMarried/NotKnown/ Has Children	Inferred from title and information about executor or legatees. HasChildren entered if uncertain but has children. NotKnown entered if there is uncertainty. LD form.
Name of spouse	Forename(s) and surname	LD form
1st residuary legatee	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship	Such as are given on LD form

Field name	Data	Source and other comments
2nd residuary legatee	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship	Such as are given on LD form
3rd residuary legatee	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship	Such as are given on LD form. If any further residuary legatees are named, this is noted in comments field
FuneralCost£	Amount given in £	LD form
FuneralCostS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
FuneralCostD	Amount given in pence	LD form
FuneralCostInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
CashInHouse£	Amount given in £	LD form
CashInHouseS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
CashInHouseD	Amount given in pence	LD form
CashInHouseInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
CashInBank£	Amount given in £	LD form
CashInBankS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
CashInBankD	Amount given in pence	LD form
CashInBankInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
HouseholdValue£	= 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' Amount given in £	LD form
HouseholdValueS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
HouseholdValueD	Amount given in pence	LD form
HouseholdValueInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
HorsesValueSold£	= 'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry' Amount given in £	LD form
HorsesValueSoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
HorsesValueSoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
HorsesValueSoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
HorsesValueUnsold£	Amount given in £	LD form
HorsesValueUnsoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
HorsesValueUnsoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
HorsesValueUnsoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
WineValueSold£	= 'Wine and other Liquors' Amount given in £	LD form
WineValueSoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
WineValueSoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
WineValueSoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
WineValueUnsold£	Amount given in £	LD form

DECEASED TABLE continued

Field name	Data	Source and other comments
WineValueUnsoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
WineValueUnsoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
WineValueUnsoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
TradeStockValueSold£	= 'Stock in Trade' Amount given in £	LD form
TradeStockValueSoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
TradeStockValueSoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
TradeStockValueSoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
TradeStockValueUnsold£	Amount given in £	LD form
TradeStockValueUnsoldS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
TradeStockValueUnsoldD	Amount given in pence	LD form
TradeStockValueUnsoldInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
FurnWineHorses£	= 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' + 'Wine and other Liquors' + 'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry' Amount given in £	LD form
FurnWineHorsesS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
FurnWineHorsesD	Amount given in pence	LD form
FurnWineHorsesInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
FurnWine£	= 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' + 'Wine and other Liquors' Amount given in £	LD form
FurnWineS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
FurnWineD	Amount given in pence	LD form
FurnWineInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
FurnWineHorseStock£	= 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' + 'Wine and other Liquors' + 'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry' + 'Stock in Trade' Amount given in £	LD form
FurnWineHorsesStockS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
FurnWineHorsesStockD	Amount given in pence	LD form
FurnWineHorsesStockInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above

DECEASED TABLE continued

Field name	Data	Source and other comments
CashFurnWineHorsesStock &c£	=Cash in House or Bank + 'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' + 'Wine and other Liquors' + 'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry' + 'Stock in Trade' Amount given in £	LD form
CashFurnWineHorsesStock &cS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
CashFurnWineHorsesStock &cD	Amount given in pence	LD form
CashFurnWineHorsesStock &cInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
HorsesStock£	'Horses and Carriages, Farming Stock, and Implements of Husbandry' + 'Stock in Trade' Amount given in £	LD form
HorsesStockS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
HorsesStockD	Amount given in pence	LD form
HorsesStockInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
FurnStock£	'Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Books, Pictures, Wearing Apparel, Jewels, and Ornaments.' + 'Stock in Trade' Amount given in £	LD form
FurnStockS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
FurnStockD	Amount given in pence	LD form
FurnStockInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
SimpleDebts£	Amount given in £	LD form
SimpleDebtsS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
SimpleDebtsD	Amount given in pence	LD form
SimpleDebtsInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
MortgageDebts£	Amount given in £	LD form
MortgageDebtsS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
MortgageDebtsD	Amount given in pence	LD form
MortgageDebtsInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
BondsDebts£	Amount given in £	LD form
BondsDebtsS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
BondsDebtsD	Amount given in pence	LD form
BondsDebtsInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above

DECEASED TABLE continued

Field name	Data	Source and other comments
UsefulDebtSchedule	Yes/no tick box	Judgement of whether valuable additional information
GrossWealth£	= 'Total of Property' at time of death. Amount given in £	LD form
GrossWealthS	Amount given in shillings	LD form
GrossWealthD	Amount given in pence	LD form
GrossWealthInD	Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
WealthQuartile	1,2,3 or 4	The gross wealth of all decedents in the group is coded in quartiles, 1 being low and 4 being high
NetWealthInD	= 'Total of Property' at time of death, minus 'Debts' at time of death. Total amount calculated in pence	Calculated from the above
ExecutorName1	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship and address.	As given on LD form
ExecutorName2	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship and address	As given on LD form
ExecutorName3	Title, forename(s), surname, relationship and address	As given on LD form
IlliterateExecutor	Tick box. Only enter if 'yes'	'Yes' entered if executor made mark rather than signed. LD form
ForenamesInventory	Only enter if information differs from that on LD form	LD inventory
SurnamesInventory	Only enter if information differs from that on LD form	LD inventory
TitleInventory	Only enter if information differs from that on LD form	LD inventory. Standardised spelling derived from TITLE drop-down list.
OccupationInventory	Only enter if information differs from that on LD form	LD inventory
SocialStatusInventory	Only enter if information differs from that on LD form	LD inventory. Standardised spelling derived from STATUS drop-down list.
Comments	For example, if there is other paperwork in the LD file. Notes of any problems, uncertainties, oddities.	Free text. Author.
NotesToSelf	Points of interest, themes to follow up	Author. For own use.

DECEASED TABLE continued

## 2. INVENTORY

This links to the DECEASED table.

Contains information about the date of the inventory and location of the inventoried property.

Reference numbers for research-quality digital images of the inventory are given.

The images are stored on disc. There is not a direct link because of the complexity of linking several images to one inventory.

Coding of data is presented in fields giving geographical co-ordinates and assigning inventories to divisions and regions.

Size: 494 entries

### INVENTORY TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
InventoryNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
DeceasedNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
ImageRef	Refers to my digital image	Generated by author. Derives from the IR19 reference number
DayTaken		LD inventory
MonthTaken		LD inventory
YearTaken		LD inventory
House	Name or number. If not clear that it applies to house, enter under 'town'.	As given on LD inventory or LD form
Street	If not clear that it applies to street, enter under 'town'.	As given on LD inventory or LD form
Parish	If not clear that it is parish, enter under 'town'.	As given on LD inventory or LD form
Town		As given on LD inventory or LD form
County	County name	As given on LD inventory or derived from address using the Gazetteer in <i>Genuki: UK &amp; Ireland Genealogy</i> <a href="http://www.genuki.org.uk/contents/#Search">http://www.genuki.org.uk/contents/#Search</a> , accessed 17.8.2010
Value£	Value of inventoried goods. Amount given in £	LD inventory
ValueS	Value of inventoried goods. Amount given in shillings	LD inventory
ValueD	Value of inventoried goods. Amount given in pence	LD inventory
ValueInD	Value of inventoried goods. Total amount calculated in pence	LD inventory

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
EconomicActivity	Yes/no tick box.	This is an author's inference, from the contents of the inventory, about the presence of commercial or economically productive work taking place in the address inventoried.
Comments	Notes of problems, uncertainties.	Author
NotesToSelf	Points of interest, themes to follow up.	Author. For own use.
XCoord	Ordnance Survey X (Eastings) co-ordinate	Derived from <a href="http://streetmap.co.uk">http://streetmap.co.uk</a> , using address as above. Often approximate.
YCoord	Ordnance Survey Y (Northings) co-ordinate	Derived from <a href="http://streetmap.co.uk">http://streetmap.co.uk</a> , using address as above. Often approximate.
Division	Geographical location of inventory	Derived from the 11 registration divisions used in contemporary Registrar-Generals' reports. <i>Census of England and Wales, 1871, Preliminary report, and tables of the population and the houses enumerated in England and Wales, and in the Islands in the British Seas on 3rd April 1871 (1871)</i> London: HMSO, iv-xx. This includes a detailed definition of London, which includes some addresses in Middlesex, Surrey and Kent.
Region	Geographical location of inventory	Coded grouping of divisions into 6 regions (see Chapter 2, pages 82-83)
Region2	Geographical location of inventory	Alternative coded grouping of divisions into 6 regions (see Chapter 2, 82-83)

INVENTORY TABLE continued

### 3. CATEGORY

Links to the INVENTORY table.

'Category' refers to the grouping of goods established by the appraiser (but excludes the general preamble to the inventory). Categories are, for example, linen; plate; wearing apparel and livestock. The use of categories is not standardised. Not all inventories use categories, in which case 'None' is entered for the CategoryName. Some lists are only partly categorised. Occasionally inventories are organised with major categories and minor categories within them (for example, 'linen' as part of a larger category called 'household goods'); in this case the minor category is entered in the database and a note is added in the comments field.

Size: 1529 entries



## CATEGORY TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
CategoryNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
InventoryNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
CategoryName	Name of category of goods	Transcribed as given in inventory. Enter 'none' if not given but an item is present.
Value£	Value of category in £	Taken from inventory if given. Can be null.
ValueS	Value of category in shillings	Taken from inventory if given. Can be null.
ValueD	Value of category in pence	Taken from inventory if given. Can be null.
ValueinD	Total value of category calculated in pence	Automatically calculated. Can be null.
Comments	Notes of any problems, uncertainties	Author
NotesToSelf	Points of interest, themes to follow up	Author. For own use

### 4. LOCATIONOFITEM

This table links back to *both* INVENTORY and CATEGORY (a room *can* be in a category; but a category is never, in practice, in a room). If there are no locations in an inventory, there will be a 'None' entry in this table.

The location name is transcribed as given. Internal evidence as to the use of a room or its present equivalent is added in the NotesToSelf field.

Transcribed room names are subsequently grouped into coded room terms for aggregate analysis. See ROOMNAMELOOKUP, pages 324-325, for criteria for this coding.

Size: 4,839 entries

## LOCATIONOFITEM TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
LocationNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
CategoryNo	Foreign key.	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
InventoryNo	Foreign key.	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
LocationName	Name of place in which item is located.	Transcribed as given in inventory. Not necessarily a room (could be, for example, a barn). Enter 'none' if not given but an item is present.
OrderInList	Order in which room is listed	Derived from inventory
Value£	Value of contents of room in £	Taken from inventory if given.
ValueS	Value of contents of room in shillings	Taken from inventory if given.
ValueD	Value of contents of room in pence	Taken from inventory if given.
ValueInD	Total value of contents of room calculated in pence	Automatically calculated.
ValueCalculated/Given	Drop-down alternatives.	Marked 'given' if location value given in inventory; 'calculated' if value is result of manual addition of value of items.
Comments	Notes of any problems, uncertainties	Author
NotesToSelf	Points of interest, themes to follow up. To include comments on the nature, style and use of the room.	Author. For own use.
CodedRoomFunction	Room use indicated by presence of items.	In practice, coding used only to identify 'bedstead-rooms' i.e. rooms which contain a bedstead.
CodedRoomName1	Coded room name.	Entries chosen from ROOMNAMELOOKUP look-up table, established after reviewing complete entered data.
CodedRoomName2	Additional coded room name.	Used only occasionally, for rooms named as composites in the inventory, such as 'parlour sitting-room'.

## 5. POSSESSIONUNIT

Links to all of CATEGORY and LOCATION and INVENTORY.

DeceasedNo in the DECEASED table is the first in the chain of relationships and PossessionUnitNo in POSSESSIONUNIT table is the last.

A 'possession unit' is a single entry, made by the appraiser, of possessions in the inventory; it could be 'table and chair'; 'chair'; 'set of knives' and so on. There is a

matter of judgement about what constitutes a 'unit'; punctuation of the inventory is used as an indicator.

Difficulties and decisions are noted in the comments field.

'Part of set' is an annotation to indicate en suite furniture or sets of dinnerware or chamber ware and so on. This will not always be clear from the inventory.

Items called a 'pair' in the inventory were entered as '2' in the NumberOfUnits field (except for special cases such as pair of trousers or pair of sugar tongs) and were noted as being a pair.

'Material' is what the item is made of (for example, 'mahogany' or 'oak'). If there is more than one material per item, they are noted as 1 and 2 in the order given. If there are additional materials, they will be noted in the comments column. An ongoing drop-down list with standardised spellings was developed during data entry. 'Quality' (taken to mean words such as 'old', 'new', 'broken', 'handsome'), and 'style' (taken to mean descriptions such as 'French', 'Tudor' etc.) were copied directly from the original. 'Colour' (meaning colour and/or pattern) was also copied from the original; composite terms, such as 'blue and white' were used if found in the original. There are only entries in these fields if they are directly given in the inventory.

Size: 67,737 entries

#### POSSESSIONUNIT TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
PossessionUnitNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access. Gives accurate order of entry of items and reflects (for most part) order of items in inventory.
OldPossessionUnitNo	Number	A superseded automatic number, replaced by PossessionUnitNo after database crash and re-instatement. Kept as a record of order of entry of items pre-crash.
CategoryNo	Foreign key.	Must be given. Automatically generated by Microsoft Access.
LocationNo	Foreign key.	Must be given. Automatically generated by Microsoft Access.

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
InventoryNo	Foreign key.	Must be given. Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
NumberOfUnits	Number of items	Taken from inventory if clearly given or readily derived.
Quantity	Amount of goods	For example: [Some], Sundry, 24 yards. Taken or derived from inventory if given. Look-up table, QUANTITY, used to assist data entry.
PossessionUnitName	Name of unit	Derived from inventory by author. Entered in full, including descriptive terms.
CodedItem1	Type of item.	For example, 'Windsor chair' coded as 'chair'. Chosen from CODEDITEMLOOKUP table. Options established after completion of data entry in the light of research issues.
CodedItem2	As above.	As above. Used where one item composed of two elements, for example 'clock and barometer'.
PartOfSet	Yes/no/not known	Annotation, derived from inventory.
Pair	Yes/no/not known	Annotation, derived from inventory.
UnitValue£	Value of unit in £	Taken from inventory if given.
UnitValueS	Value of unit in shillings	Taken from inventory if given.
UnitValueD	Value of unit in pence	Taken from inventory if given.
UnitValueInD	Total value of unit calculated in pence	Automatically calculated.
ItemMaterial1	Material of object, listed first	Standardised term, entry assisted by drop-down MATERIALLOOKUP list, built up during inputting.
ItemMaterial2	Material of object, listed second	Standardised term, entry assisted by drop-down MATERIALLOOKUP list, built up during inputting
ItemQuality1	Quality of object, listed first	For example, 'old' or 'new'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName.
ItemQuality2	Quality of object, listed second	For example, 'old' or 'new'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName.
ItemStyle1	Style of object, listed first	For example, 'French' or 'Tudor'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName.
ItemStyle2	Style of object, listed second	For example, 'French' or 'Tudor'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName
ItemColour1	Colour of object, listed first	For example, 'red' or 'brown'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName.
ItemColour2	Colour of object, listed second	For example, 'red' or 'brown'. Extracted from full PossessionUnitName.

POSSESSIONUNIT TABLE continued

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
BookPictureTitle	Title of book or picture	Transcribed from inventory
BookPictureSubject	Type of subject of book or picture	Taken, if given, from inventory (i.e. not coded)
Author	Author, artist or maker	Extracted from inventory.
Comments	Notes of any problems, uncertainties, oddities	Author
NotesToSelf	Points of interest, themes to follow up. Notes of any implications of the object.	Author. For own use.

POSSESSIONUNIT TABLE continued

## 6. MARITALSTATUS

Links only to DECEASED table.

Size: 491 entries

MARITALSTATUS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
MaritalStatusNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
DeceasedNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
MaritalStatus	Marital status	M: married; NM: never married; W: widow; Wr: widower; HC: has children; NK: not known. All derived from LD papers. PM: probably has married (derived from widow/er or married in census)
ProbablyHasMarried	Yes/No	Yes= M or W or Wr or HC or PM from above field. No=NK or NM

## 7. OCCUPATION&STATUS

Coding table. No additional data.

Size: 491 entries

## OCCUPATION&STATUS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
StatusNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
DeceasedNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
Title	Prestige; honorific; none.	Author's coded grouping of personal titles Prestige: 'gentleman', esquire, the honourable, knight, dame, reverend, officer. Honorific: Mr., Mrs., none, None: none given. Source: DECEASED table
FuneralCostBand	Numerical code1-8	The population, when ranked by funeral expenses, is divided into eight equal sized groups; lowest is 1; highest is 8. Source: DECEASED table.
HiscoOccupationCode	Numerical coding for occupations	Standardised semi-automatic national occupational coding system, available at History Of Work Information System, <a href="http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/">http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/</a> (accessed 17.8.2010) Occupational data taken from DECEASED and CENSUSDECEASED tables. Where various occupations are given, only one is entered taken first from LD form; then, if not on LD form, from LD inventory; then from census; then from other sources e.g. newspaper.
HiscoStatusCode	Numerical coding for status: 52, 11 or null	Derived from History Of Work Information System, <a href="http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/">http://historyofwork.iisg.nl/</a> (accessed 17.8.2010). 52 = Prestige titles denoting general social standing and respect, e.g. gentleman, esquire, the honourable, knight, dame, 11 = Owner, proprietor Source: DECEASED and CENSUSDECEASED tables.
SourceForOccCoding	Source of information about occupation	1=LD form, 2=LD inventory, 3= census, 4=other. If more than one source available, the information is taken from the source with the lowest number.
CamsisCode	Social stratification code 1-99	Conversion of HiscoOccupationCode in the present table into a social stratification code using the HIS-CAM system. The codings relate to 1800-1934 and are nationally specific; this project uses HIS-CAM scale (version 1.1.GB) available at <a href="http://www.camsis.stir.ac.uk/hiscam/">http://www.camsis.stir.ac.uk/hiscam/</a> (accessed 18.8.2010)
Status	Social status coding: Higher; Lower; NK	Author's own coding; source: present table. Higher=deceased coded as 'prestige' from Title OR CamsisCode of =>77 OR HiscoSatusCode of 52, 11 or -1 (of independent means). Lower=none of the above NK=null values in all of the above. NB this is not a historical definition of status.
Comments	Notes of any problems, uncertainties, oddities	Author

## 8. CENSUSDECEASED

Information about the deceased and his/her household composition, taken (unless otherwise noted) from the census prior to the decease.

Three items of data in addition to surname were required to confirm identification of deceased, e.g. address, occupation, and spouse's name.

Household relationships were not given in the 1841 census but inferences have been drawn from surnames and ages.

It is recognised that the rules governing the entry of census information varied from time to time.<sup>1</sup> However, since the data in this table was used for holding biographical information about individuals, not for analysis of large populations, this variation is not a problem.

Size: 491 entries

### CENSUSDECEASED TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
CensusNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
DeceasedNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
CensusYear	Year of census. 0 (nil) entered if deceased not identified.	Census prior to decease
NameFromCensus	As given, forenames and surname	Census prior to decease
AddressFromCensus	As given	Census prior to decease
Occupation	As given	Census prior to decease
MaritalStatus	Married; unmarried, widow/er; not known	Census prior to decease
RelationToHead	As given	Census prior to decease
WhereBorn	As given	Census prior to decease
NameOfSpouse	As given	Census prior to decease
AgeOfSpouse	As given	Census prior to decease
SonsUnder15	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
SonsOver15	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
DaughtersUnder15	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
DaughtersOver15	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
Relatives	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
Lodgers	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
Visitors	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
ApprenticesAssistants&c	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
FemaleServants	Number calculated	Census prior to decease

<sup>1</sup> Higgs (2005).

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
MaleServants	Number calculated	Census prior to decease
Match	Sure; possible; null entry	Author's estimation of correctness of match
Comments	Notes of any problems, uncertainties. 'Not found' entered if null entry in CensusYear field.	Author

CENSUSDECEASED TABLE continued

## 9. HOUSEHOLDMEMBERS

Minimal biographical information about household members, excluding the deceased him/herself, drawn from census' enumerators' books.

Sub-sample limited to those deceased who died within three years of a census. Used to provide an indication of household composition at death. Data drawn only from the census immediately preceding death.

Relates immediately to CENSUSDECEASED table and thence to DECEASED.

Entries only made for cases where CensusSample = Yes in DECEASED table and where CensusYear = not 0 in CENSUSDECEASED table.

Size: 441 entries

## HOUSEHOLDMEMBERS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
HouseholdMemberNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
CensusNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
Name	As given	Census prior to decease
RelationToHead	As given	Census prior to decease
Gender	As given	Census prior to decease
Age	As given	Census prior to decease
MaritalStatus	As given	Census prior to decease
Occupation	As given	Census prior to decease
Where born	As given	Census prior to decease



## 10. APPRAISERS

Links to INVENTORY table. Holds data about the person or persons who made each inventory.

Size: 494 entries

### APPRAISERS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
AppraiserNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
InventoryNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
Appraiser1Forenames	First appraiser's names. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Appraiser1Surnames	First appraiser's name. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Appraiser2Forenames	Second appraiser's names. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Appraiser2Surnames	Second appraiser's name. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Appraiser3Forenames	Third appraiser's names. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Appraiser3Surnames	Third appraiser's name. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
StreetName	Address of appraiser. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
Town	Address of appraiser. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
County	Address of appraiser. Null entry if not given.	LD inventory
ProfessionalAppraiser	Yes; no; not known.	Inferred from LD inventory e.g. from use of title 'Appraiser and Valuer'.

## 11. VALUATIONS

Links to INVENTORY table. Holds data about the total valuation given in the inventory.

Source is the LD inventory, with LD form used for corroboration.

Size: 494 entries

## VALUATIONS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
ValuationNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
InventoryNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
TotalIncludesStock	Yes/no	LD inventory
TotalValue£		LD inventory
TotalValueS		LD inventory
TotalValueD		LD inventory
TotalValueInD		LD inventory
TotalValueSource	Given/calculated	LD inventory. 'Calculated' if inventory gives valuation of stock and household goods separately. 'Given' if the total is provided in the inventory.
SeparateValuationStockGiven	Y; N; NA.	'Y[es]' if appraiser has listed stock separately; 'N[o]' if appraiser gives one figure for both stock and household goods; N[ot]A[pplicable] where there is no stock to be valued.
StockValue£		LD inventory
StockValueS		LD inventory
StockValueD		LD inventory
StockValueInD		LD inventory
StockType	Type of stock or equipment.	Coding derived from LD inventory. Taken from lookup list in ENTERPRISE table developed after initial data entry.

## B. Manipulated data tables

Built up using coding and queries on the tables above; they do not include any further data.

Used to produce robust sub-samples for further querying.

All link back to INVENTORY table.

### 12. ITEM PRESENCE

Used firstly to exclude inventories that were not domestically organised and that did not show the location of items.

All other fields added in pursuit of particular questions. Some required coding.

## ITEMPRESENCE TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
InventoryNo		Queried from INVENTORY table.
CommercialSpatialOrganisation	Yes/no.	Coded 'yes' where author considers inventory to be arranged predominantly in the service of the enterprise & where it is not clear where the household lived. This applies mostly to inns.
NamedRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory provided a location for some or all of the goods listed.
BathroomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room with a name like this.
BoudoirPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
BreakfastRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
ChamberPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
CouchPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included an item with a name like this
DiningFurniturePresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a dining table and/or sideboard.
DrawingRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
DressingRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
DiningRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
Hall/ParlourPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
HousePresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
KeepingRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
LibraryPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)

<b>Field Name</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Source and other comments</b>
MorningRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
NilSofaCouchSettee	Yes/no	'Yes' when the inventory included neither a sofa nor a couch nor a settee.
NurseryPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room with a name like this.
ParlourPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
PersonsRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room allocated by the appraiser to a named person.
PianoPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included such an item.
ServantsRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room allocated by the appraiser to a servant or servants of any type.
SetteePresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included such an item.
SittingRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
SofaPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included such an item.
StudyPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
StuffedBirdsPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included such an item.
WinterHedgePresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included such an item.
NoneOfAbove	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included none of the rooms listed in ROOMNAMELOOKUP
KitchenLivingRoomPresent	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)
OtherDayRoom	Yes/no	'Yes' where the inventory included a room so coded (see ROOMNAMELOOKUP)

ITEMPRESENCE TABLE continued

### 13. DAYROOMCONTENTS

Links to LOCATIONS table

Subset of locations (in inventories coded as non-commercial) coded as particular day-rooms, with annotation of presence/absence of selected coded items.

It is formed firstly by coding individual rooms as types of day-rooms (as per ROOMNAMELOOKUP table). Then queries determined the presence/absence of types of items (as per ITEMLOOKUP table) in those rooms.

This is a coding and querying table; no new data are added.

#### DAYROOMCONTENTS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
DayRoomNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
LocationNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
DayRoomType	1-22	Defined list of 22 day or service room names established after data entry and held in ROOMNAMELOOKUPTABLE.
WindowCovering	Yes/no	'Yes' where the room included an item coded as this. Lookup list of coded items provided in ITEMLOOKUP table.
Carpet	Yes/no	Ditto
FloorCovering	Yes/no	Ditto
Mirror	Yes/no	Ditto
Ornament	Yes/no	Ditto
SofaCouchSettee	Yes/no	Ditto
Sofa	Yes/no	Ditto
Couch	Yes/no	Ditto
Settee	Yes/no	Ditto
Ottoman	Yes/no	Ditto
Picture	Yes/no	Ditto
EasyChair	Yes/no	Ditto
ReadingWriting	Yes/no	Ditto
EatingDrinking	Yes/no	Ditto
Sideboard	Yes/no	Ditto
Clock	Yes/no	Ditto
DinnerWagon	Yes/no	Ditto
Cheffonier	Yes/no	Ditto
WhatNot	Yes/no	Ditto
GlassShade	Yes/no	Ditto

## 14. BEDROOMCONTENTS

Links to LOCATIONS table.

Subset of locations (in inventories coded as non-commercial) coded as bedroom-rooms (that is containing a bedroom), with annotation of presence/absence of selected coded items. The items were coded by reference to CODEDITEMLOOKUP table.

This is a coding and querying table; no new data are added.

### BEDROOMCONTENTS TABLE

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
BedsteadRoomNo	Primary key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
LocationNo	Foreign key	Automatically generated by Microsoft Access
BedsteadRoomName	Name of room as given	LD inventory
Bedstead	Yes/no	'Yes' where the room included an item coded as this. Lookup list of coded items provided in ITEMLOOKUP table.
Washstand	Yes/no	Ditto
DressingTable	Yes/no	Ditto
ChestDrawers	Yes/no	Ditto
Wardrobe	Yes/no	Ditto
Bath	Yes/no	Ditto
Bidet	Yes/no	Ditto
Picture	Yes/no	Ditto
Clock	Yes/no	Ditto
BeddingLinen	Yes/no	Ditto
BedHangings	Yes/no	Ditto
Box	Yes/no	Ditto
Table	Yes/no	Ditto
Chest	Yes/no	Ditto
Ornament	Yes/no	Ditto
Clothing	Yes/no	Ditto
Convenience	Yes/no	Ditto
Carpet	Yes/no	Ditto
Towel rail	Yes/no	Ditto
FloorCovering	Yes/no	Ditto
Rug	Yes/no	Ditto
WindowCurtains	Yes/no	Ditto
Other	Yes/no	Ditto
Mirror	Yes/no	Ditto
Chair	Yes/no	Ditto
EasyChair	Yes/no	Ditto
Sofa	Yes/no	Ditto
FireGoods	Yes/no	Ditto
ServantsBell	Yes/no	Ditto

Field Name	Information	Source and other comments
ReadingWriting	Yes/no	Ditto
EatingDrinking	Yes/no	Ditto
Cupboard	Yes/no	Ditto
Bedsteps	Yes/no	Ditto
Chamberware	Yes/no	Ditto
Sewing	Yes/no	Ditto
Furniture	Yes/no	Ditto
WorkingItem	Yes/no	Ditto
Ottoman	Yes/no	Ditto
Music	Yes/no	Ditto
Laundry	Yes/no	Ditto
Lighting	Yes/no	Ditto
Games	Yes/no	Ditto
Dresser	Yes/no	Ditto
Cover	Yes/no	Ditto
Cooking	Yes/no	Ditto
Animal	Yes/no	Ditto
Stool	Yes/no	Ditto
IronBedstead	Yes/no	Ditto
FeatherBed	Yes/no	Ditto
StrawMattress	Yes/no	Ditto
HorsehairMattress	Yes/no	Ditto

BEDROOMCONTENTS TABLE continued

## C. Look-up tables for standardising data entry

### 15. TITLELOOKUP

Standardisation of titles as given in LD papers. Used to enter data in DECEASED table.

The 'No additional information' is used only for the TitleInventory field in that table, to indicate that the same title was given on the inventory as on the LD form.

#### TITLELOOKUP TABLE

Mr
Mrs
Lady
Miss
Master
Lord
Doctor
Not given
No additional information
Rev

## 16. SOCIALSTATUSLOOKUP

Standardisation of social status terms as applied in LD papers. Used to enter data in DECEASED table.

The 'No additional information' is used only for the SocialStatusInventory field in that table, to indicate that the same term was given on the inventory as on the LD form.

### SOCIALSTATUSLOOKUP TABLE

Yeoman	Husbandman
Esquire	Not given
Gentleman	No additional information
Gentlewoman	

## 17. COUNTYLOOKUP

Drop-down list for standardising county where inventory located

Derived from [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk) list of counties

## 18. ENTERPRISETYPE

Look-up list of types of enterprise stock and/or equipment included in an inventory.

The list was established as an author's category during initial data entry to enable add-on coding.

### ENTERPRISETYPE LOOKUP TABLE

Farming stock & equipment
Retail stock & equipment
Production stock & equipment
Farming & sales
Production & sales
Retail/wholesale stock & equipment
Professional stock & equipment
Service equipment
Service equipment & stock



## 19. ROOMNAMELOOKUP

A look-up list established after data entry, providing a defined list of standardised and coded room names.

They were used as additional coding, not as replacement for original terms.

Most of the terms are standardisations of those used in the inventories (for example 'front parlour' is coded as 'Parlour') but those shown in the table below in italics required formalised coding criteria.

*Thoroughfare*: includes 'passage', 'hall' (if contents indicate it was not a room), 'stairs' and similar.

*Hall*: where the contents of a 'hall' suggest it was a living-room rather than a thoroughfare.

*OtherDayRoom*: any named room with an apparent living-room function but WITHOUT a bedstead and not codable as any of the other rooms in the list. For example, 'first floor front'.

*Service*: includes 'scullery', 'washhouse', 'cheesehouse', 'cellar' and so on. But does not include any rooms named as a 'kitchen' because they were separately coded.

*KitchenLiving* and *KitchenService*: all rooms named as a 'kitchen' of any sort (for example, 'front' or 'back') were coded either as a living room or a service room. There are 325 such rooms in the sample (of 337 named-room non-commercial inventories). One room was named as 'sitting room or kitchen';<sup>2</sup> this provided a contemporary example of a kitchen-living-room that was used to develop criteria for identifying other kitchen-living-rooms. After trialling, a 'kitchen' was coded as 'KitchenLiving' if it included any one of the following:

- 6+ chairs
- Arm or elbow or rocking chair
- Chair with cushion

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<sup>2</sup> In the inventory of Joseph Brown, carpenter, of Birmingham, who died in 1863; Legacy Duty papers TNA IR19/122.

- 3+ chairs AND 1+ tables AND 1 other living-room item such as floor covering, cradle, table cover, sofa. Clocks were not used as marker items because they were standard kitchen items (see Chapter 3, 141-142).

Any 'kitchen' which did not meet these criteria was coded as *KitchenService*.

#### ROOMNAMELOOKUP TABLE

BilliardRoom	Library
Boudoir	LivingRoom
BreakfastRoom	MorningRoom
Conservatory	<i>OtherDayRoom</i>
DiningRoom	Parlour
DrawingRoom	<i>Service</i>
<i>Hall</i>	SittingRoom
House	SmokingRoom
KeepingRoom	Study
<i>KitchenLiving</i>	<i>Thoroughfare</i>
<i>KitchenService</i>	Library

#### 20. QUANTITYLOOKUP

Predictive text to help with data entry. Not a closed list; other terms accepted.

#### QUANTITYLOOKUP TABLE

Sundry
[Some]
Quantity
Mow
Rick

#### 21. MATERIALLOOKUP

Standardisation of terms used in inventories. List built up during data entry.

Predictive text to help with entry. This is for an additional annotated field Material1 and Material2 in POSSESSIONUNIT table. The original format was kept in NameOfUnit.

#### MATERIALLOOKUP TABLE

Alabaster
Ash
Birch

Bohemian glass
Brass
Bronze

Brussels
Calico
Cane

Carved gilt
Cast iron
Chaff
China
Chintz
Copper
Cotton
Crochet
Cut
Cut glass
Damask
Deal
Dimity
Dutch
Earthenware
Feather
Felt
Flock
Gilt
Glass
Gold
Hair
Holland
Inlay
Iron
Japanned
Kidderminster
Knotted
Linen
Mahogany
Maple
Marble
Metal
Muslin
Needlework

Oak
Painted
Papier mache
Plated
Printed
Rope
Rosewood
Rush
Rush-seated
Silver
Silver gilt
Silver plate
Slate
Stained
Steel
Stone
Stone china
Straw
Tin
Walnut
White
Wicker
Wire
Wood
Wool
Worsted
Zinc
Pewter
Bronzed
Wood-bottomed
Pierced steel
Printed cotton
Moreen
Bone
Slab

Bronzed
Marseilles
Crockery
Striped
Venetian (carpet)
Ivory
Leather
Coloured
Wainscot
Figured
Lead
Tortoise shell
Imitation rosewood
Carved
Brownware
Patchwork
Cocoa
Sprung
Axminster
American leather
Turkey
Rep
Utrecht velvet
Bamboo
German silver
Electro plate
Parian
Drugget
Plate
Book
Silk
Ormolu

## MATERIALLOOKUP TABLE continued

### 22. ITEMLOOKUP

The original name of the item is kept and coding, using this look-up list, is added in separate fields (CodedItem1 and CodedItem2) in the POSSESSIONUNIT table.

Individual items named in the inventories are grouped into larger categories. For the most part, the coding was a simplification of terms used by the appraiser. For example, all chairs except easy chairs – whether wing-, kitchen-, dining-, sweep-backed and so on, were coded as Chair.

But in some cases a judgement had to be made. This applied most in the categories of Ornament and EatingDrinking equipment. Items such as cups and

saucers might have actually fallen into either or both categories. They were coded as only one or the other on a contextual judgement by the author. For example, a single cup, especially if listed alongside other more obviously ornamental items such as wax flowers, was coded as an ornament. But six cups and saucers were coded as EatingDrinking items. The weakness of these categories is recognised in the analysis.

The categories are flexible and could be further divided.

#### ITEMLOOKUP TABLE

<b>CodedItem</b>	<b>Guidance for coding</b>
Ware	Chamber ware, such as basin and ewer
WindowCovering	Curtains, blinds, curtain poles &c
Ornament	
BeddingLinen	
ReadingWriting	Books, bookcases, desks, pens, inkstands
Games	
Table	Of any kind, including 'dining'
Chair	All except easy chairs
Convenience	Chamber pot, night stand, commode
Cupboard	
Mirror	
BedHangings	
FireGoods	Any item relating to a fire
Chest	Of all sorts
FloorCovering	All floor coverings except those named as carpet or rugs
Carpet	
Rug	
ChestDrawers	
DressingTable	
WashStand	
Bidet	
Bath	
Box	Of all kinds
Clock	
Bedstead	
Wardrobe	
Other	Small items not otherwise accounted for
EatingDrinking	Cutlery, crockery, tea ware &c, cruets, decanters
Clothing	
TowelRail	
Sofa	
Picture	Of all media
TableCover	
WorkingItem	Goods related to enterprise e.g. carpenter's tools
Cooking	Kettles, pans, roasting jacks, pastry boards &c
Laundry	Irons, clothes baskets &c
Furniture	Other substantial piece of furniture or equipment such as shelves; not small items
Dresser	
Lighting	Lamps, candlesticks, gas fitting &c
Stool	

Music	Piano, piano stool, violin, sheet music &c
Ottoman	
Animal	Including birds. Not stuffed.
EasyChair	
Sewing	Sewing box, sewing table.
Bedsteps	
ServantsBell	
ChildsBedstead	
Form	
Barometer	
Cheffonier	
Sideboard	
Cabinet	
WhatNot	
Screen	
VistingCard	Card box, card rack
CushionsChairCovers	
Science	Telescope, fossils &c
UmbrellaHatStand	
WagonBuffetDumbWaiter	

ITEMLOOKUP TABLE continued

# Appendix 2

## Sample and sub-samples used in the analysis

The composition of the main sample, called ‘the inventory sample’, is discussed in Chapter 2, 71-73.

In the analysis it was appropriate to establish different sub-samples to answer particular questions; the discussion always specifies briefly which sample or sub-sample was used. The table below gives fuller details of the composition of each sub-sample.

**Table Appendix 2.1 *Names and composition of samples and sub-samples***

	<b>Sample name</b>	<b>Number in sample</b>	<b>Composition and use of sample</b>
<b>1</b>	The inventory sample	494	All 494 inventories, belonging to 491 deceased. This sample is used to analyse the ownership of items, relative to variables related to the inventories, such as geographical location, household value, date of the inventory, and items within the inventories.
<b>2</b>	Whole deceased sample	491	Relates to the 491 deceased who owned the goods listed in the 494 inventories. Three of the deceased each owned two inventoried properties. Allows analysis according to biographical variables such as age at death, wealth (gross and net), occupation, gender, socio-economic status, marital status.
<b>3</b>	Domestic inventories	475	As 1 above, but excluding those inventories for residences which, in author’s judgement, were predominantly organised to cater for business purposes. The inventories excluded are mostly those of inns.
<b>4</b>	Deceased with domestic inventories	472	Relates to the 472 deceased who owned the goods listed in the 475 ‘domestic inventories’ (as per 3 above).

	<b>Sample name</b>	<b>Number in sample</b>	<b>Composition and use of sample</b>
<b>5</b>	Domestic inventories with named rooms	337	Those 'domestic inventories', as in 3 above, which were organised by room name or location of goods.
<b>6</b>	Deceased with domestic inventories with named rooms	335	Relates to the deceased owners of 'domestic inventories with named rooms', as per 5 above. Two of the deceased each owned two inventoried properties.
<b>7</b>	Inventories for which household composition available	95	Inventories where the owner died within three years of the preceding census and where the household could be identified in the census enumerators' books. <sup>1</sup> Cut-off date chosen so that census information might be expected to still be relevant. Used for discussions of household composition.
<b>8</b>	Domestic inventories for which household composition available	91	As 7 above, but relating only to 'domestic inventories' (as defined in 3 above).
<b>9</b>	Domestic inventories with named rooms for which household composition available	72	As 7 above, but relating only to 'domestic inventories with named rooms' (as in 5 above).

**Table Appendix 2.1 continued *Names and composition of samples and sub-samples***

<sup>1</sup> Three items of data in addition to surname were required to confirm identification of deceased, e.g. address, occupation, and spouse's name.

# Appendix 3

## Annotated list of texts used

### Advice literature

#### Domestic manuals, architectural manuals and builders' pattern books

**Brooks, Samuel H. (1860) *Rudimentary treatise on the erection of dwelling-houses; or the builder's comprehensive director, etc.* London: John Weale**

Three editions (1860, 1868 and 1874) identified in COPAC;<sup>1</sup> Long finds a late 1890s edition with a new frontispiece. Price 2s.6d.

This is a manual more than a pattern book, aimed specifically at the young builder. It provides a design for just one pair of semi-detached houses, giving full explanations and instructions for specifying, estimating and building. Its straightforward approach earned it enduring popularity.<sup>2</sup>

***Economy for the single and married or the young wife and bachelor's guide to income and expenditure on £50 per annum ..... by one who 'makes ends meet'* (c.1845) London: C. Mitchell**

Two editions, both thought to be 1845, identified in COPAC.<sup>3</sup> Priced at 1/-.

Offers advice, sometimes humorously presented, as to what kind of accommodation and what kind of life style can be afforded on different budgets and in different household circumstances. Little discussion of furniture or equipment but offers hints and tips for cleaning and so on.

***How to furnish a house and make it a home* (c.1855) London: Groombridge & Sons. The Economic Library**

One edition only, price 2s.<sup>4</sup> Went into at least a second thousand.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Copac National, Academic, and Specialist Library Catalogue, <http://copac.ac.uk> accessed 7.11.2010.

<sup>2</sup> Long, H. (2002) *Victorian houses and their details: the role of publications in their building and decoration* Oxford: Architectural Press, 49.

<sup>3</sup> <http://copac.ac.uk> accessed 7.11.2010.



Provides room-by-room detailed advice on furnishing and includes comments on taste. While domestic economy is a component this is not a household management book and it includes no recipes. It betrays no immediate borrowings from the earlier compendiums and might be seen as a precursor of the furnishing advice books of the late 1860s onwards. The reader addressed changes during the course of the book, which initially appears to be directed at the working man or clerk but about half way through refers to drawing-rooms and, later, servants.

**Kerr, R. (1871, first edition 1864, reprinted 1972) *The gentleman's house or, how to plan English residences from the parsonage to the palace* London: John Murray<sup>6</sup>**

Three editions: 1864, 1865 and, considerably enlarged, 1871.

This large book provides a detailed discussion of how to plan a house for the wealthy middle and upper classes. It provides 'the most lucid account available of mid-Victorian domestic planning'<sup>7</sup> and is a valuable text because, although directly applicable to only an élite, Robert Kerr explains the principles behind his advised spatial arrangements. *The gentleman's house* presents an extreme vision of the specialisation and segregation of the internal spaces of large country houses, adopted by architects such as William Burn. Kerr himself was a trained architect and was much involved in the education of architects and the profession's organisations but he was more effective as a writer and lecturer than as a practicing architect.

**Loudon, J.C. (c.1865, new edition, edited by Mrs. Loudon. First edition 1833) *Cottage, farm, and villa architecture and furniture* London: Frederick Warne and Co.**

At least fourteen editions or impressions were produced until at least 1883. Price £3.3.0.<sup>8</sup>

John Claudius Loudon was a horticulturalist by training, an inventor and a prolific writer and editor on architecture and gardens.<sup>9</sup> This book is an enormous

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<sup>4</sup> Attar (1987), 141.

<sup>5</sup> <http://copac.ac.uk> accessed 7.11.2010.

<sup>6</sup> Information taken from Mordaunt Crook, J. (1972) 'Introduction' to reprint of third edition Kerr, R. (1871) *The gentleman's house* New York and London: Johnson Reprint Company.

<sup>7</sup> Waterhouse, P. (2004) 'Kerr, Robert 1823–1904,' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/34304](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/34304) accessed 2.11. 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Long (2002), 36; <http://copac.ac.uk> accessed 7.11.2010.

compendium or encyclopaedia of detailed plans for houses of varying sizes and criticisms thereof. It includes discussion and illustrations of designs for furniture. It contains over 1,000 pages and more than 2,000 wood engravings. It was aimed at 'men of wealth' rather than builders and was 'a landmark in nineteenth-century architectural and building publications'.<sup>10</sup> The copy used here (from the London Library) is annotated by an architect some time after 1878. Loudon also ran the *Architectural magazine* from 1834-1839, material from which was incorporated into later editions of the book.

**Nightingale, F. (1860) *Notes on nursing London: Harrison***

Thirteen editions between 1859 and 1980, seven of them before 1924.<sup>11</sup>

This was the most popular of Nightingale's works, selling 15,000 copies within a month of publication at a cost of 5s. It was reprinted in cheaper editions and translated into French, German and Italian. It was aimed at lay as much as professional readers; Nightingale notes in the preface that it was hints for women who have personal charge of the health of others: 'every woman is a nurse'.

***Original designs for English cottages, containing views, elevations, plans ... and estimates for the erection of the same. Being healthy homes for the working man. By a practical surveyor and builder (1866) London: Atchley and Co.***

Only one edition located.<sup>12</sup>

Atchley was a specialist publisher of technical pattern books. In the 1850s and 1860s there was a move away from setting designs in the landscape and more emphasis on publishing working pattern books or manuals of instruction primarily for builders. This book is an example of the shift.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Long (2002), 36-37; Elliott, B. (2004) 'Loudon, John Claudius 1783–1843' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Oxford University Press  
[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrfs.lon.ac.uk/view/article/17031](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrfs.lon.ac.uk/view/article/17031) accessed 27.7.2010.

<sup>10</sup> Long (2002), 37.

<sup>11</sup> Attar (1987), 326-328; correspondence in *London Review of Books* (2008) 30:24; (2009) 31:1; and (2009) 31:2.

<sup>12</sup> <http://copac.ac.uk> accessed 7.11.2010.

<sup>13</sup> Long (2002), 13, 42-43.

**Pitney, A. (late pupil teacher) (1855) *Cottage economy, by a cottager in three lectures addressed to the Girls of the Westbourne National School* London: Joseph Masters**

Only one edition located.

It is a rare example of a work aimed at the rural working classes by someone with the same experience.<sup>14</sup> It is concerned with budgeting and is very detailed, as would have been necessary for people with very restricted resources. There is a chapter on food but little detail on furnishing

**Rogers, F. (1866) *English mansions, lodges, villas, etc. being a series of original designs, with plans, specifications, and estimates, illustrating the requirements of modern architecture* London: Atchley and Co.**

One edition only located.

A series of plans without textual explication. Also published by Atchley.

***The family hand-book or practical information in domestic economy including cookery, household management, and all other subjects connected with the health, comfort and expenditure of a family; with a collection of choice receipts and valuable hints* (1845, second, revised, edition) London: John W. Parker**

First edition 1838.

A collection of recipes and procedures for household maintenance.

***The freehold builder's guide containing plans, elevations, sections, perspective view and details for the erection of houses & cottages by an eminent architect* (1852) London: C.G. Sidey, nos 1-6**

This is a part work, each part containing one design. The designs are for third- and fourth-rate (that is smaller, inexpensive) houses and cottages. It is included in a bibliography of unfinished books, which suggests that it was intended as a longer series.<sup>15</sup> It was a pattern book for the speculative small-scale developer who could use it to show a builder what s/he wanted. It gives specifications for the decorative finishes and the text is useful for contemporary hierarchies and terminology.

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<sup>14</sup> Attar (1987), 29 and 184.

<sup>15</sup> Corns, A and A. Sparke (1915) *A bibliography of unfinished books in the English language* London: Bernard Quaritch.

**Walsh, J.H. (1856) *A manual of domestic economy suited to families spending from £100 to £1000 per year* London: Routledge & Co.**

**Walsh, J.H. (1879) *A manual of domestic economy suited to families spending from £150 to £1500 a year* London: George Routledge and Sons**

Attar lists six editions between 1856 and 1890.<sup>16</sup>

This is what Attar calls a compendium; it is a comprehensive and detailed book of household management covering domestic economy, house building and renting, furnishing, servants, etiquette, the domestic treatment of disease, provisioning and cooking. There are some illustrations but not as many as in Webster's earlier book (see below) or as in the later *Cassell's Household Guides*. However, the several editions of *A manual of domestic economy* show it to have been popular; the text and layout was updated between editions, most notably to take account of the changing cost of living. Its author (or perhaps editor), John Walsh, qualified and practiced as a surgeon. He turned to journalism, editing *The Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* from 1849 to 1852. He was passionate about field sports, running *The coursing calendar* from 1856 and *The Field* from 1857 and writing numerous other books on the subject.<sup>17</sup>

**Webster, T. assisted by the late Mrs. Parkes (1844) *An encyclopaedia of domestic economy* London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans**

Attar finds four British editions (1844, 1847, 1852 and 1861) and at least two American editions. The 1847 edition cost 50s. and the 1861 edition £1.11.6.<sup>18</sup>

This is an extensive compendium of domestic management; it is well illustrated with engravings, particularly of furniture and household equipment. There are many similarities in text and illustration with J.C. Loudon's *Cottage, farm, and villa architecture and furniture*; according to Alison Ravetz, Webster took over editing the *Encyclopaedia of domestic economy* from Loudon.<sup>19</sup> Webster was an artist,

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<sup>16</sup> Attar (1987), 209-211

<sup>17</sup> Boase, G.C. (revised Lock, J.) (2004) 'Walsh, John Henry (1810–1888)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press  
[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28614](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28614), accessed 27.10.2010.

<sup>18</sup> Attar (1987), 216-217.

<sup>19</sup> Ravetz, A. (1968) 'The Victorian coal kitchen and its reformers' *Victorian Studies*: 11: 4: 435-460, 443.

architect and geologist; he had worked with Count Rumford at the Royal Institution on developing heating, lighting and ventilating systems.<sup>20</sup>

## Decoration and furnishing advice

**Barker, Lady Mary Anne (1878) *The bedroom and boudoir* London: Macmillan & Co.**

Attar notes only one edition, costing 2/6.<sup>21</sup> The copy used here is noted as being in its fifth thousand.<sup>22</sup>

According to Attar, Lady Barker also wrote a book called *Houses and housekeeping. A fireside gossip upon home and its comforts* in 1876, which included personal anecdotes.<sup>23</sup> *The bedroom and boudoir* was one of the twelve books in *The art at home* series, published by Macmillan between 1876 and 1883. It was one of four in the series, all issued between 1876 and 1878, that dealt with aspects of the domestic interior. They have been much used by historians, not least because they were relatively cheap and therefore have been thought to relate to a broad middle-class readership. Emma Ferry has recently made a thorough study of the genesis of these four books, and the notes below rely on her work.<sup>24</sup> The individual authors owed their commissions in part to their social or publishing connections. Lady Barker was an established and popular writer, known for publications that described her experiences of life in the colonies, and she was editor of *Evening hours*, a Church of England family magazine. She got a larger fee for her contribution than other, less well-known, authors in *The art at home* series. She wrote *The bedroom and boudoir* quickly and based some of it on articles she had previously written for *Evening hours*.

Ferry has found that this book was written around a series of bought-in illustrations that had been produced for articles and a book – *The house beautiful*, of 1877 – by the American designer Clarence Cook. Lady Barker was allotted her particular illustrations not because of their suitability for bed-rooms but because

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<sup>20</sup> Edwards, N. (2004) 'Webster, Thomas (1772–1844)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press

[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrsl.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28945](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrsl.lon.ac.uk/view/article/28945) accessed 27.7.2010.

<sup>21</sup> Attar (1987) 84.

<sup>22</sup> [www.archive.org/details/bedroomboudoir00barkuoft](http://www.archive.org/details/bedroomboudoir00barkuoft).

<sup>23</sup> Attar (1987), 84.

<sup>24</sup> Ferry, E. (2007) "'... information for the ignorant and aid for the advancing ...'" Macmillan's 'Art at Home Series', 1876-1883' in Aynsley J. and K. Forde *Design and the Modern Magazine* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

they showed non-European furniture, which the publisher thought Barker's experience equipped her to deal with. And not only did Barker not choose her own pictures, she did not even write all of the book. One of the chapters has been identified as closely based on a previously published magazine article written by the wife of the series editor.

There was some coherence to the series, which was conceived as a whole by the Reverend W.J. Loftie to advocate 'inconspicuous consumption' and to promote 'an upper-middle class view of how lower-middle class aspirants should decorate'. But the hodge-podge nature of three of the four interiors books (*House furniture and decoration* by Agnes and Rhoda Garrett was the only one featuring the authors' own illustrations) and the variety in positions of the authors mean that they should be understood, as Ferry remarks, as offering 'more information about the expedient world of nineteenth-century publishing practices than ... about the Victorian interior.'<sup>25</sup>

**Eastlake, C.L. (1869, second edition) *Hints on household taste in furniture, upholstery and other details* London: Longmans, Green & Co.**

According to Attar there were four British editions, published between 1868 and 1878.<sup>26</sup> The sixth American edition was published in 1881. Cost 16/-.

This book was the first for a lay readership to deal solely with taste in furnishing and decorating. It took a directive line and is considered to have been very influential both on its readers (consumers, designers and manufacturers) and on other publications. Eastlake had trained as an architect, painter and sculptor. His uncle was president of the Royal Academy and first director of the National Gallery. Eastlake himself later became keeper at the National Gallery. Throughout his career he was a freelance journalist. *Hints on household taste, in furniture, upholstery and other details* was his first and best-known book. It was based on a series of controversial articles originally published in *The Queen*, which in turn developed from an article in the *Cornhill Magazine*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ferry (2007), 151.

<sup>26</sup> Attar (1987), 117-118.

<sup>27</sup> Gibson, F.W. (2004), 'Eastlake, Charles Locke (1833–1906)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/32959](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/32959) accessed 6. 11. 2010; Keeble (2004), 107.

**Edis, R. (1881) *The decoration and furniture of town houses* London: C. Kegan Paul & Co.**

Attar lists two editions plus an American version, all in 1881.<sup>28</sup>

This book is clearly influenced by *Hints on household taste* in tone and format. It propounded a Queen-Anne-style aesthetic at the same time as stressing the importance of personal expression in decoration. The book is based on a series of lectures given at the Royal Society of Arts in 1880. Edis subsequently published *Healthy Furniture and Decoration* at the time of the International Health Exhibition in 1884. He was a professional architect, in his early years moving with the artistic élite of architecture, but was a populariser rather than an innovator.<sup>29</sup>

## Novels and journalism

**Dickens, C. (1978, first published 1864-5) *Our Mutual Friend* New York: Bounty Books**

Published initially in nineteen monthly instalments. The first eighteen cost 1/- each; the last, double, issue cost 2/-. 30,000 copies of part one were sold within three days.<sup>30</sup> However, sales declined after the first issue and only 19,000 of the concluding number were sold.<sup>31</sup>

At Dickens' funeral it was said that 'He ... occupied a greater space than any other writer in the minds of Englishmen during the last thirty-five years.'<sup>32</sup> Although he is famous for making use of keen first-hand observation of people and places, Dickens so transformed them that they cannot be used as transparent representations. It is the vividly realised symbolic values with which the locations and objects are imbued that make this book useful for the present project.

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<sup>28</sup> Attar (1987), 119.

<sup>29</sup> Powers, A. (2004) 'Edis, Sir Robert William (1839–1927)' *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press  
[www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulr/lon.ac.uk/view/article/63284](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulr/lon.ac.uk/view/article/63284) accessed 6.11.2010.

<sup>30</sup> Flint, K. (2001) 'The Victorian novel and its readers' in David, D., ed. *The Cambridge companion to the Victorian novel* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>31</sup> Ackroyd, P. (1990) *Dickens* New York: Harper Collins, 952.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Bratlinger, P. (2010) 'Empire and nationalism' in Shattock, J., ed. *The Cambridge companion to English literature 1830-1914* 265.

**Eliot, G. (1985, first published in three volumes 1860) *The Mill on the Floss*  
London: Penguin Classics**

George Eliot's first novel, *Adam Bede*, sold 10,000 copies in its first year and established her as a best-selling author.<sup>33</sup> *The Mill on the Floss* was her second and sold 4,600 copies within four days of publication even though it was issued in the three-volume format, which was priced at 31s .6d. (the equivalent of a comfortable working-class weekly wage).<sup>34</sup>

George Eliot's three early books of fiction are characterised as 'natural histories' in which she deliberately used specific observation rather than generalisations.<sup>35</sup> 'It is not ... fanciful to suppose that George Eliot, in *The Mill on the Floss* more than in any of her other books, saw herself engaged in an ... effort to record local particularities of speech, landscape, custom and morality.'<sup>36</sup> Eliot drew on people and places she had known as a child to establish the culture and development typical of rural English society. *The Mill on the Floss* is set in the 1830s and early 1840s in a rural area of Lincolnshire in close contact with a major trading town on the coast. One of the themes of the novel is the change from a traditional way of life, with strong rural roots, to a newer world of commerce and international trade. The opposing cultures are exemplified in the material culture of four married sisters.

**Gaskell, E. (2006, first published 1848, this edition based on the revised edition of 1854) *Mary Barton* Oxford: Oxford University Press**

This novel was an immediate best seller.<sup>37</sup> Set largely amongst the working classes of the later 1830s and early 40s in Manchester, it uses a documentary style and has an obsession for domestic detail that is also found in Elizabeth Gaskell's letters and other fiction.<sup>38</sup> Gaskell herself lived in Manchester from 1832 and *Mary Barton* certainly drew on the personal observations that she would have made as the wife

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<sup>33</sup> The biographical information in this paragraph is from Ashton, R. (2004) 'Evans, Marian [George Eliot] (1819–1880)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrsl.lon.ac.uk/view/article/6794](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue/ulrsl.lon.ac.uk/view/article/6794), accessed 1.6.2010. The bibliographical information is from Webb, R. (1982) 'The Victorian reading public' in *From Dickens to Hardy, the New Pelican guide to English Literature, vol. 6* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

<sup>34</sup> Eliot, S. (2001) 'The business of Victorian publishing' in David, D., ed. *The Cambridge companion to the Victorian novel* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>35</sup> The literary history in this paragraph is taken from Byatt, A.S. (1985) 'Introduction' in Eliot, G. *The Mill on the Floss* London: Penguin Classics.

<sup>36</sup> Byatt (1985), xvii.

<sup>37</sup> Uglow, J. (1993b) 'Introduction' in *Mary Barton* London: Everyman's Library, ix.

<sup>38</sup> See Guy, J. (1996) *The Victorian social-problem novel: the market, the individual and communal life* Basingstoke: Macmillan Press.



of a Unitarian minister and one of the founders of the Manchester Domestic Mission, which organised home visits to the poor. Gaskell would have been familiar with existing descriptive investigations of working-class life produced for reforming purposes; in some passages she quoted almost verbatim from the reports of the Mission to the Poor.<sup>39</sup> And her work can be seen to have informed subsequent 'factual' reports: her depiction of a comfortable working-class interior is closely echoed in Auguste Bethune Reach's journalistic impression of the following year.<sup>40</sup> Samuel Bamford, the working-class reformer and writer, complimented Mrs. Gaskell on her fidelity in describing the dwellings of the poor and their manners.<sup>41</sup> But, as Carolyn Steedman points out, the domestic settings in *Mary Barton* are not 'real'; they answer needs – in the structure of the novel and in the desires of both Mrs. Gaskell herself and in the reader.<sup>42</sup>

**Gaskell, E. (1995, first published 1854-5) *North and South* London: Penguin**

The success of *Mary Barton* led Charles Dickens to invite Elizabeth Gaskell to contribute to his weekly magazine *Household Words*, in which *North and South* was published as a serial in 1854-1855.<sup>43</sup> Magazine publication, especially in a weekly, which like *Household Words*, cost only two pence an issue, was a guarantee of wide readership.<sup>44</sup> *North and South* was published in expanded book form shortly afterwards and was so successful that a second edition was issued within a couple of months.

*North and South* is based predominantly in Manchester (although under a fictional name) but the action also takes place in élite London, the rural South of England and, briefly, a Northern seaside town. However, the narrative is less place-specific than that of *Mary Barton*. The highly detailed depictions of interiors and domestic life relate in this case largely to the middle-class and they are used to reflect the differing, and ostensibly clashing, cultures that are one of the themes of the book.<sup>45</sup> The North and South of the title are not simply geographical regions; they represent the attitudes of the Thorntons, a northern self-made manufacturing

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<sup>39</sup> Uglow, (1993), xix.

<sup>40</sup> Shelston, A. (1989) 'Elizabeth Gaskell's Manchester' *The Gaskell Society Journal* 3 (1989) <http://forums.skadi.net/showthread.php?t=32584> accessed 24.5.2010.

<sup>41</sup> Sharps, J.G. (1970) *Mrs. Gaskell's observation and invention: a study of her non biographic works* Fontwell: Linden Press, 60.

<sup>42</sup> Steedman (1999).

<sup>43</sup> Guy (1996), 121; Hughes, L. and M. Lund (1999) *Victorian publishing and Mrs. Gaskell's work* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 96.

<sup>44</sup> Eliot (2001).

<sup>45</sup> Sharps (1970), 236-9.

family, and the Hales, the family of a clergyman which has links to the gentry and to upper-middle-class London. As before, Elizabeth Gaskell had opportunities to use personal observation in her depictions; various possible prototypes for Mr. Thornton have been suggested amongst the Manchester mill owners with whom she was socially connected.<sup>46</sup>

**Gaskell, E. (1996, first published 1866) *Wives and Daughters* London: Penguin**

*Wives and Daughters* was the most popular of Gaskell's novels apart from *Cranford*.<sup>47</sup> It was published initially as a monthly serial, illustrated by du Maurier, in the *Cornhill* magazine.

If *Mary Barton* was a social problem novel, *Wives and Daughters* is a social novel. It is set in the small country town of Hollingford in the late 1820s, which is based on Knutsford in Cheshire where Elizabeth Gaskell spent her girlhood in the 1820s.<sup>48</sup> The milieu is, at the very least, genteel and takes in the squirearchy and the aristocracy as well as the middling sort. As in *North and South*, what we would call 'class' substantially drives the plot. Social position is understood by the characters as deriving from birth but also as evidenced by an apparently natural expression of taste and knowledge, much of it relating to material goods. Elizabeth Gaskell, as narrator, appears to concur in these judgements.

**Oliphant, M. (1998, first published 1866) *Miss Marjoribanks* London: Penguin**

Margaret Oliphant started writing when she was only seventeen and was able to use family connections to the Blackwood family in Edinburgh to start her literary career as a novelist and journalist.<sup>49</sup> She was a best-selling author, producing more than 120 books between 1849 and 1887 (including *Dress*, 1878, in the *Art at home* series). Her methods and output were criticised by both Anthony Trollope and Henry James but her work was popularly successful and she made enough money from it, after her husband's death, to put her three sons through Eton and to maintain a large and comfortable household in Windsor.

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<sup>46</sup> Sharps (1970), 232.

<sup>47</sup> Sharps (1970), 472.

<sup>48</sup> Uglow (1993), 603.

<sup>49</sup> The information about Margaret Oliphant is drawn from Jay, E. (1995) *Mrs Oliphant: 'a fiction to herself'. A literary life* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 11-24.

*Miss Marjoribanks* is one of the *Chronicles of Carlingford* series, which was set in a contemporary, highly socially segregated, provincial town. *Miss Marjoribanks* is located amongst the exclusive élite of that town. Although Mrs. Oliphant later settled into a solid middle-class or élite provincial society (even having tea with Queen Victoria, who enjoyed her novels) she herself came from what was probably a lower middle-class background. She married an artist and moved for some time in artistic, literary and sometimes Bohemian circles. Her representation of 'society' life in Carlingford is detailed but has a distancing edge of irony.

**Thackeray, W (1993, first published 1840) 'A shabby genteel story' in *A shabby genteel story and other writings* London: Dent<sup>50</sup>**

'A shabby genteel story' is a long short story, published originally in *Fraser's Magazine*, which was a Tory journal aimed at a general middle-class readership and employing a witty confrontational style. Thackeray wrote the story during his great period as a journalist and sketch-writer, which lasted from about 1840 to 1848. Nearly all of his fictional work at this time, written at a period of widespread social mobility and upheaval, was concerned with the theme of social status and D.J. Taylor remarks that '... Thackeray is at his best when observing social distinctions ... and their corollary, the dreadful sham of "keeping up appearances"';<sup>51</sup> he notes that Thackeray achieved his vivid satirical effects partly through an intense comic specificity and attention to material detail.

**Trollope, A. (1991, first published 1858) *Dr. Thorne* London: Penguin**

Set in rural society, the plot of this novel centres on the love affair between a young landed gentleman and the illegitimate niece of the local doctor. The affair is thwarted because the young man is expected to marry wealth and status. The young woman has true gentility of character though not of birth; this is contrasted with the bad behaviour of the aristocratic family. This novel is, then, contextualised in the anxieties about social mobility of the period and is similar in this way and its location to Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*. But whereas Gaskell focused on material culture as an expression of this social anxiety and meaning, Trollope's visualisations are less fully realised.

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<sup>50</sup> All information taken from Taylor, D.J. (1993) 'Introduction' in *A shabby genteel story and other writings* London: Dent.

<sup>51</sup> Taylor (1993), 8.

**Wright, T. The journeyman engineer (1867) *Some habits and customs of the working classes* London: Tinsley Brothers**

**Wright, T. The journeyman engineer (1868) *The great unwashed* London: Tinsley Brothers**

Thomas Wright, who published under the pseudonym of 'The Journeyman Engineer', was unusual as a social commentator because he wrote about the working classes from within.<sup>52</sup> He was himself a skilled engineer and while writing his earlier pieces continued to live in Deptford and to work in the blacksmith's shop of a medium-sized engineering firm in Gravesend. He began by writing anecdotal pieces about the working-class life that he knew, covering home life as well as work. The earlier pieces were published in journals such as the *Cornhill Magazine* and *Fraser's Magazine*. Later he produced more substantial pieces for, among others, the liberal and social-reforming *Contemporary Review*. Most of his essays were immediately collected into three substantial volumes: *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes* (1867), *The Great Unwashed* (1868), and *Our New Masters* (1873).<sup>53</sup>

## **Books informing the thesis but not directly referenced**

**Broughton, R. (1993, first published 1867) *Not wisely but too well* Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing**

This was Rhoda Broughton's first novel, published in the Dublin University magazine. Her early novels, written while she herself was a young woman were rather racy, featuring young independently-minded women who deplored mid-Victorian stuffiness. They were best sellers.<sup>54</sup> This book is set largely in a loosely sketched upper-middle-class or gentry milieu. Although Broughton herself associated with such society, her descriptions lack specificity.

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<sup>52</sup> Reid, A. (2004) 'Wright, Thomas (1839–1909)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/47426](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/47426) accessed 2.6.2010.

<sup>53</sup> Reid (1983).

<sup>54</sup> Flint, K. (2004) 'Broughton, Rhoda (1840–1920)' in *Oxford dictionary of national biography* Oxford University Press [www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/32102](http://www.oxforddnb.com/catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/32102) accessed 6.12.2010.

**Eliot, G. (1986, first published 1876) *Daniel Deronda* London: Penguin**

Eliot's last novel contains meticulous descriptions of Jewish life and religious practices amongst poor Jews in Germany and London. Other sites include the home of the widow of an engraver, the home of a somewhat impoverished middle-class family and an aristocratic household. Eliot's realist techniques have been likened to painting and she has been said to make meaning out of the most contingent visual detail.<sup>55</sup>

**Tremaine, B. (1881) *Washing and cleaning: a manual for domestic use* London: Frederick Warne and Co.**

Attar lists only one edition.<sup>56</sup>

The author also wrote *Laundry Hints* and contributed to *Sylvia's Home Journal*, a magazine which consistently addressed middle-class readers.<sup>57</sup>

This book provides instructions for laundering at home, detailing huge amounts of linen of various kinds, all of which require individual processes. Tremaine indicates that the reader will have a staff of three servants as well as the weekly washerwoman.

**Trollope, A. (2001, first published 1874-1875) *The way we live now* Ware: Wordsworth Editions**

A 'state of the nation' novel set largely amongst the élite and wealthy of contemporary London but making occasional excursions to lodgings in Islington and a more old-fashioned rural society. Detailed descriptions of characters and interiors mirror society and its failings. It must have sold well for it was produced in several formats for different readerships. It was initially produced in twenty monthly parts; in 1875 it was issued as a two-volume book, each costing half a guinea. Later in 1875 it was issued as a 6/- single-volume edition and in 1879 there was a cheap 2/- yellow-back version sold at railway stations.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Plunkett, J. (2010) 'Visual culture' in Shattock, J., ed. *The Cambridge companion to English literature 1830-1914* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 229 ff..

<sup>56</sup> Attar (1987), 207.

<sup>57</sup> Hughes, L. (1996) 'A female aesthete at the helm: "Sylvia's Journal" and "Graham R. Tomson", 1893-1894' *Victorian Periodicals Review* 29: 2: 173-192, 174.

<sup>58</sup> Super, R.H. (1984) 'Was *The way we live now* a commercial success?' *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 39: 2: 202-210.

# Appendix 4

## The incidence of named day-rooms and their association with variables related to the decedents

The subsample used was 337 non-commercial named-room inventories, 1841-1881 (see Appendix 2).

The named or coded day-rooms investigated are: drawing-room, dining-room, parlour, sitting-room, house-place and kitchen-living-room.

The software programme used for analysis was SPSS 16.0 for Windows.

The statistics are descriptive not predictive. They relate to the sample only, not to the population of Britain at large. For the relationship of this sample to the tax records from which it was drawn, see Chapter 2, 73-77.

The results relate primarily to Chapter 3, 'Day-rooms: difference, differentiation and distinction' but are also referred to elsewhere.

## Drawing-rooms and dining-rooms

### Incidence

29.7% (100 of the 337) inventories included one or both of a drawing- or a dining-room. 17.8% (60 of 337) had both. 11.9% had just one of the two rooms.

69% (60 of the 87) of inventories which had a drawing-room also had a dining-room and 82.2% (60 of 73) inventories with a dining-room also included a drawing-room.

### Wealth

The presence of a drawing-room or a dining-room, or even more so both, was markedly associated with the wealthiest 25% of the deceased. 53.5% of inventories belonging to the wealthiest quartile of the sample included a drawing-room, whereas for the rest the percentage was between 9% and 13.4%.<sup>1</sup> For dining-rooms the association was similar.

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<sup>1</sup> Chi-square=69.375, df=3, n=337, p=<.001.

The difference was between the wealthiest group and the rest as shown in Table Appendix 4.1. There was not much difference in the generally low rates of ownership for the inventories coded as in the lower three wealth quartiles. There was a very significant difference between the 59.6% of inventories in the top wealth quartile that included drawing/dining-rooms and the 14.3% overall in the lower three.<sup>2</sup> However, it should be noted that although the possession of a drawing- or dining-room was highly associated with wealth quartile 4, even in that quartile 40.4% did *not* have such a room.

The median gross wealth of people who had a drawing-room or a dining-room was very much higher than those who owned a sitting-room or a parlour (Table Appendix 4.2). It should be noted, though, that there is a very large range; for drawing-room owners the gross wealth ranged from £49 to £211,458, standard deviation=27080.662.

**Table Appendix 4.1 Percentage of inventories in each wealth quartile that do or do not include one or both of a dining- or drawing-room**  
Total 337<sup>3</sup>

Wealth quartile	Number	Has drawing/dining-room	Does not have drawing/dining room
1	67	11.9%	88.1%
2	67	14.9%	85.2%
3	89	15.7%	84.3%
4	114	59.6%	40.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>337</b>		

**Table Appendix 4.2 Median gross wealth of people with parlours, drawing-rooms, dining-rooms and sitting-rooms**

Room name	Median gross wealth in £s of deceased owning such a room
Parlour	568
Sitting-room	799
Drawing-room	3804
Dining-room	3991
Drawing-and dining-room	5371

<sup>2</sup> Chi-square=74.178, n=337, df=1, p= <. 001.

<sup>3</sup> There are differing numbers in each quartile because the 494 inventories for the whole sample were assigned quartile positions; the less wealthy inventories tend not to be organised by room and so are not included in this sub sample.

## **‘Status’ and occupation<sup>4</sup>**

The different indicators used here are all highly correlated but all are shown to illustrate their relationship.

On a test for association of drawing-room ownership with ‘higher status’ coding there is a marked relationship. 54.8% of inventories coded as belonging to a ‘higher status’ person included a drawing-room and/or dining-room, compared with only 10.5% of those coded as not so belonging (and 28.6% of those whose status is not known).<sup>5</sup>

Ownership of a drawing-room was significantly associated with individuals who have been coded as having a prestige title. While 50% of the 66 inventories belonging to people with a prestige title included a drawing room, this fell to 19.9% of people without. The association is almost the same for dining-rooms.

HIS-CAM occupational stratification codes have been derived for 231 of the 335 people in this sub-sample; they are predominantly men because of the relative lack of occupational data for women and they exclude people who lived independently of an occupation and who tended to be wealthier. Inventories with drawing-rooms or dining-rooms belonged to individuals with a much higher mean HIS-CAM occupational stratification score than inventories containing parlours or sitting-rooms (see Table Appendix 4.3). The individual HIS-CAM scores for owners of these rooms ranged from 51-99; there were no drawing- or dining-room owners for those in the sample who scored between 27-50.

**Table Appendix 4.3 Mean HIS-CAM scores for people owning particular day-rooms**

<b>Name of room</b>	<b>Mean HIS-CAM score of people who owned such a room</b>
<b>Drawing-room</b>	77
<b>Dining-room</b>	76
<b>Parlour</b>	63
<b>Sitting-room</b>	62
<b>Any of these rooms</b>	64

In terms of actual occupations, the inventory sample is hard to analyse because of the wide variety of occupations given and the small numbers which share any one occupation. Farmers form the largest group; within the present sub-sample of 337 domestic named-room inventories there are 68 inventories relating

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter 2, 83-87, for coding system.

<sup>5</sup> Chi-square=66.589, df=2, n=337, p=<.001.



to farmers at all scales. Only 10.3% of farmers had a drawing-room compared with 29.7% of non-farmers.<sup>6</sup> The same applies for dining-rooms. Merchants (that is working proprietors in the wholesale trade and wholesale or retail trade) formed a group of 29 people altogether; but they were neither more nor less associated with any of these rooms than other people. There are six ministers of religion in the sample (one with two houses). This is far too small a group for statistical significance but it can be noted that all six of them had a drawing-room and/or dining-room and none of them a parlour.

## **Size of house**

19.2% of the 99 inventories that included only two named day-rooms (excluding kitchens and house-places) included both a drawing-room and a dining-room. The percentage rose as the number of day-rooms rose. In houses with four or more of the named day-rooms, 93.8% had a drawing-room and 87.5% had both a drawing-room and a dining-room. See Table Appendix 4.4.

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<sup>6</sup> Chi-square=10.717, df=1, n=337, p<.01.

**Table Appendix 4.4 Percentage of inventories including drawing- and/or dining-rooms, parlours and sitting-rooms by number of named day-rooms present Total 289 (from named-room, non-commercial sub-sample of 337, see Appendix 2)**

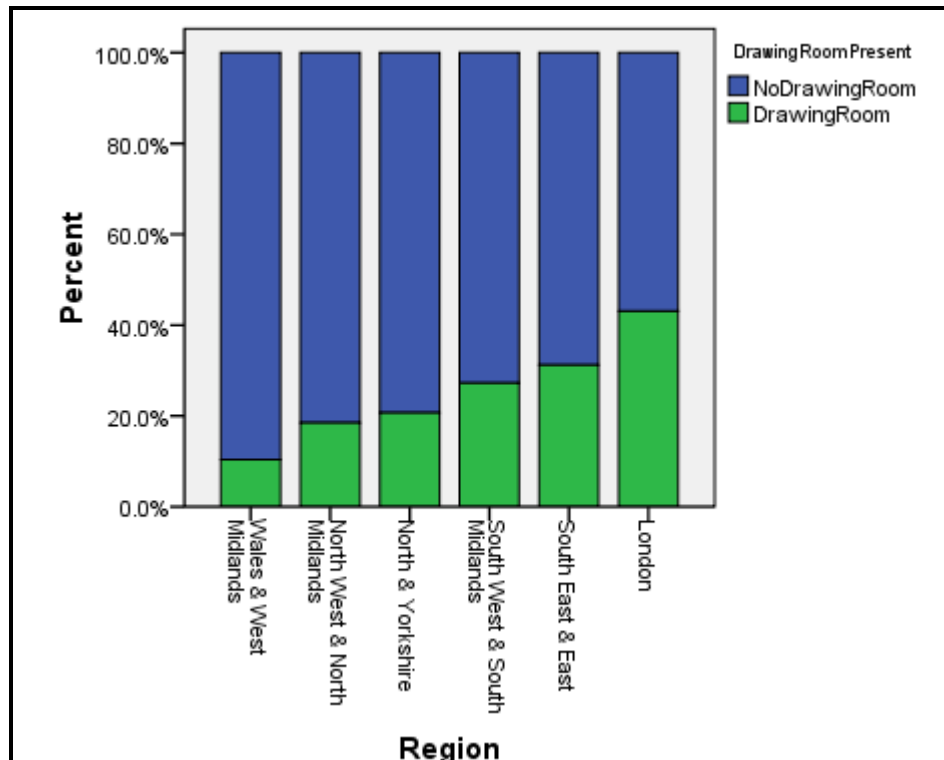
**NB Kitchens and house-places are not included here**

Number of day rooms named: Parlour, drawing-room, dining- room, sitting-room breakfast- room, library or study, 'other' day-room.	Number of inventories	Inventories including drawing-room in each group		Inventories including dining-room in each group		Inventories including both drawing- and dining-room in each group		Inventories including parlour in each group		Inventories including sitting-room in each group	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>4+</b>	16	15	93.8	14	87.5	14	87.5	3	18.8	3	18.8
<b>3</b>	45	35	77.8	30	66.7	28	62.2	14	31.1	6	13.3
<b>2</b>	99	30	30.3	26	26.3	19	19.2	62	62.6	42	42.4
<b>1</b>	129	7	5.4	3	2.3	-	-	74	57.4	32	24.8
<b>Total</b>	289	87	30.1	73	25.3	61	21.1	153	52.9	83	28.7

## Geography

Figure Appendix 4.1 indicates that London had the largest proportion of drawing-room inventories (43.1%) and Wales and the West Midlands the smallest (10.4%). These differences are statistically significant.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure Appendix 4.1 Percentage of inventories in each region containing a drawing-room**  
Total 337



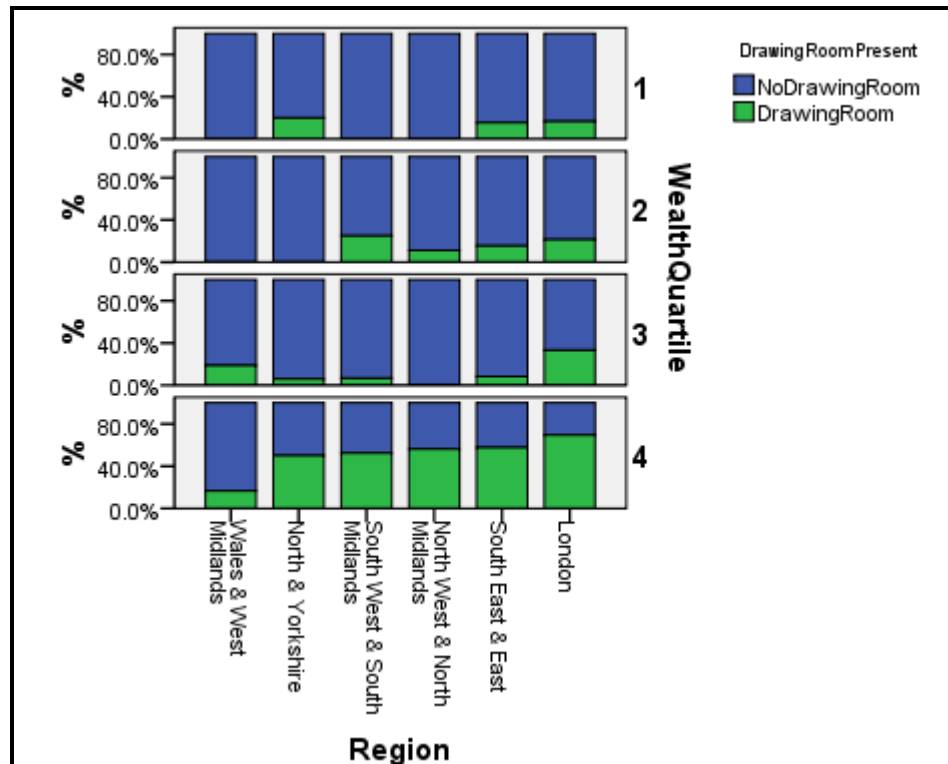
Compared with the rest of the country, London inventories belonged more often than expected to people in the top quartile of wealth and less often than expected to those in the bottom quartile, although the chi-square shows the association to be not very marked.<sup>8</sup> It might be thought, then, that the dominance of London in drawing-room ownership derived from its wealthier population. However, Figure Appendix 4.2 shows that London inventories included drawing-rooms at all wealth quartiles, suggesting (although the numbers are too small for statistical testing) that living in London was an association that operated independently of

<sup>7</sup> For London compared with the rest of the country, chi-square=10.932, df=1, n=337, p<.01. For Wales and the West Midlands compared with rest of the country chi-square=6.931, df=1, n=337, p<.01.

<sup>8</sup> Chi-square=8.44, df=3, n=491, p<.05.

wealth. Similarly, it can be seen that Wales and the West Midlands had few drawing-rooms, even amongst those in the wealthiest quartile.

**Figure Appendix 4.2 Percentage of inventories in each wealth quartile with/without a drawing-room, by region**  
Total 337



In London, 78.3% of the wealthiest had a dining- and/or drawing-room; outside London that proportion was 54.9%. This is a significant difference but only at the lowest level.<sup>9</sup> At the lower wealth level (quartiles 1-3), London also preponderates to the same degree of significance, with 25.7% of its inventories having a dining-and/or drawing-room compared with 12.2% outside the capital.<sup>10</sup>

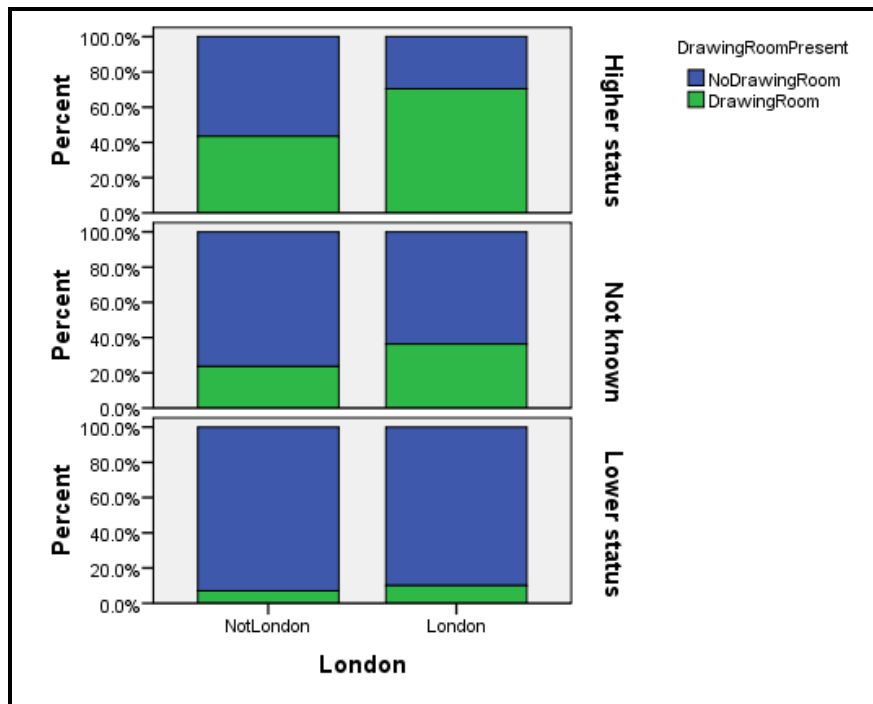
The same applies to 'status'. For the whole sample of 491 deceased, a higher proportion (40.3%) of those in London are coded as 'higher status' than for the rest of the country (28.3%); this is a significant difference but only at the lowest level.<sup>11</sup> But it can be seen (Figure Appendix 4.3) that Londoners have more drawing-rooms at all status positions, but especially in the higher status group, where the difference is significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

<sup>9</sup> Chi-square=4.147, df=1, n=114,  $p < .05$ .

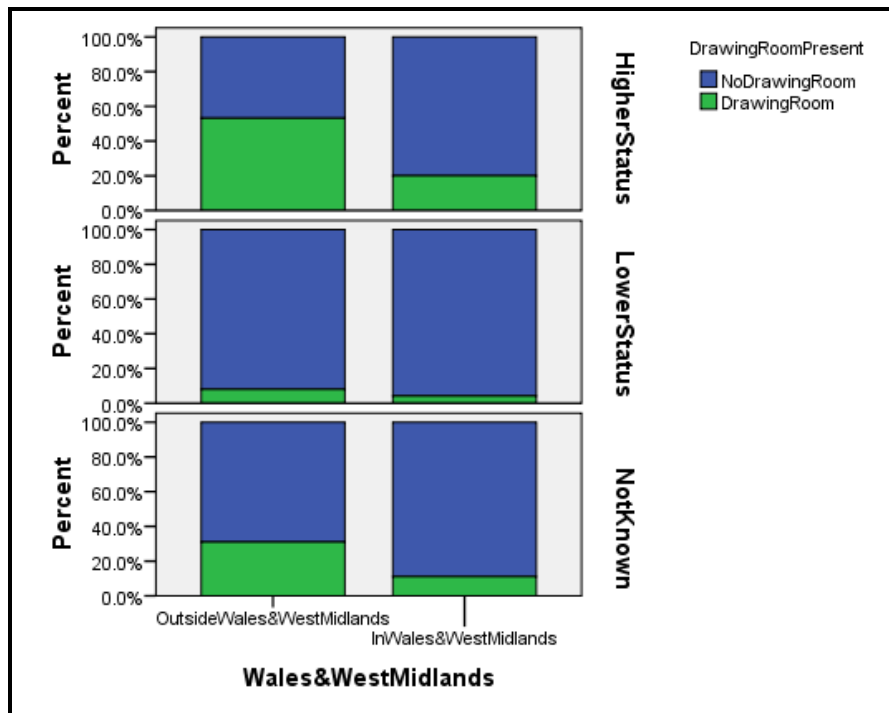
<sup>10</sup> Chi-square=4.363, df=1, n=223,  $p < .05$ .

<sup>11</sup> Chi-square=7.208, df=2, n=491,  $p < .05$ .

**Figure Appendix 4.3 Percentage of inventories with/without drawing-rooms at different status levels, comparing London with the rest of the country**  
 Total 337



**Figure Appendix 4.4 Percentage of inventories with/without drawing-rooms at different status levels, comparing Wales and West Midlands with the rest of the country**  
 Total 337



In the higher-status group, 73.1% of London inventories had a drawing-room, compared with 42.9% of inventories outside London. The numbers are too small to run a chi-square test for the other status groups. Similarly Figure Appendix 4.4 indicates (although the numbers are too small for statistical testing) that Wales and West Midlands had fewer drawing-rooms at all status levels than the rest of the country.

## Gender and marital status of owners

There was no significant association of drawing-room or dining-ownership with the gender or marital status of the deceased. Women known to have never been married did not have significantly fewer dining-rooms than once married women or than males of any marital status.

## Change over time

There was no significant change in the incidence of drawing- or dining-rooms over time.

# Parlours

## Incidence

**Table Appendix 4.5 *Incidence of parlours and their combination with other named rooms***

**Total number of inventories 337**

	<b>Number of inventories</b>	<b>% of 337 inventories</b>
<b>Parlour/s (plus any or no other rooms)</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>45.4%</b>
Parlour/s plus sitting-room/s (and any or no other rooms)	31	9.2%
Parlour/s plus drawing-room/s (and any or no other rooms)	15	4.5%
Parlour/s plus dining-rooms (and any or no other rooms)	7	2.1%
Parlour/s plus drawing- AND dining-room/s (and any or no other rooms)	2	0.6%

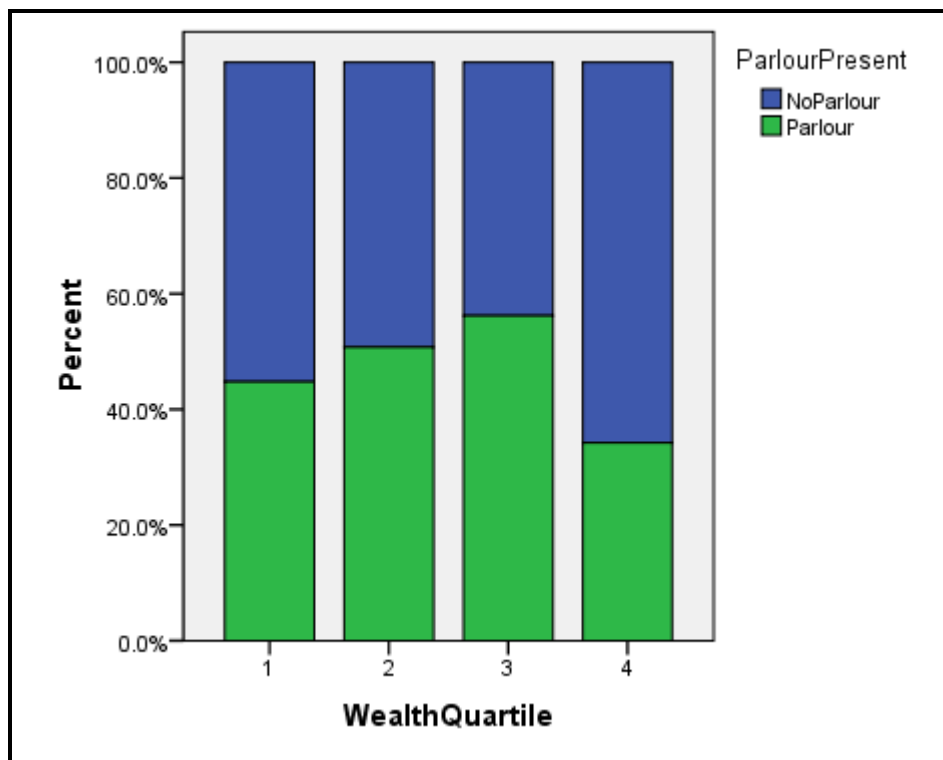
153 of the 337 (45.4%) inventories included a parlour. This was the most common named day-room. Inventories with a parlour were not very likely to have a drawing-room and/or dining-room as well. 13.1% of the parlour-inventories also included a

drawing- and/or dining-room. Out of the whole sample of 337 inventories, only 20 or 6% had both.

## Wealth

For parlours the direction of association with wealth was reversed; only 34% of people in the top gross wealth quartile owned a parlour, compared with between 45% and 56% of the rest; this was a significant association although much less marked than for drawing-rooms and dining-rooms.<sup>12</sup> As Figure Appendix 4.5 shows, parlour ownership rose from the first to the third quartile and only dropped off at the top level.

**Figure Appendix 4.5 Percentage of inventories in each wealth quartile with/without a parlour**  
Total 337



## 'Status' and occupation

As seen in Table Appendix 4.3 (page 347, above) the mean HIS-CAM score for parlour owners was lower than that for drawing- or dining-room owners and the same as for sitting-room owners. The scores ranged from 42-99, taking in lower scorers than the drawing-room owners but not the very lowest in the sample (27).

<sup>12</sup> Chi-square=10.713, df=3, n=337, p=<.05.

Parlour owners, however, did reach to the very top of the scale. Farmers were a little more likely than the non-farmers to have a parlour.<sup>13</sup> 6 of the 7 blacksmiths in the group had a parlour and none of them had a drawing-room or a dining-room. But while there was a somewhat larger proportion (51.9%) of lower status inventories with parlours than higher status ones (40.3%), the difference is not large enough to be statistically significant.

## Size of house

Table Appendix 4.4 (page 349, above) shows that parlours were more common in houses with only 1 or 2 of the named day-rooms (excluding kitchen-living-rooms and house-places) than in bigger houses. In houses with only one day-room, 'parlour' was more common than all the other names combined.

## Geography

There was a significant regional variation, as shown in Figure Appendix 4.6.<sup>14</sup> Wales and the West Midlands had the highest percentage of parlours.<sup>15</sup> Wales and the West Midlands also had the smallest percentage of drawing-rooms (Figure Appendix 4.1, page 350). And, it can be seen in Figure Appendix 4.7 that parlours (occurring without a drawing-or dining-room) were more common in Wales and West Midlands, at all status levels, than in the rest of the country as a whole. However, there was not a consistent regional 'either/or situation'; although London had the highest proportion of drawing-room inventories, its position with regard to parlours was not significantly different from most other regions except at the topmost wealth level, where ownership of a parlour (without a drawing-room or dining-room) was lower than elsewhere. The preference for parlours in Wales and the West Midlands remained even at the topmost wealth level (Figure Appendix 4.8), whereas in other regions this was where it dropped off.

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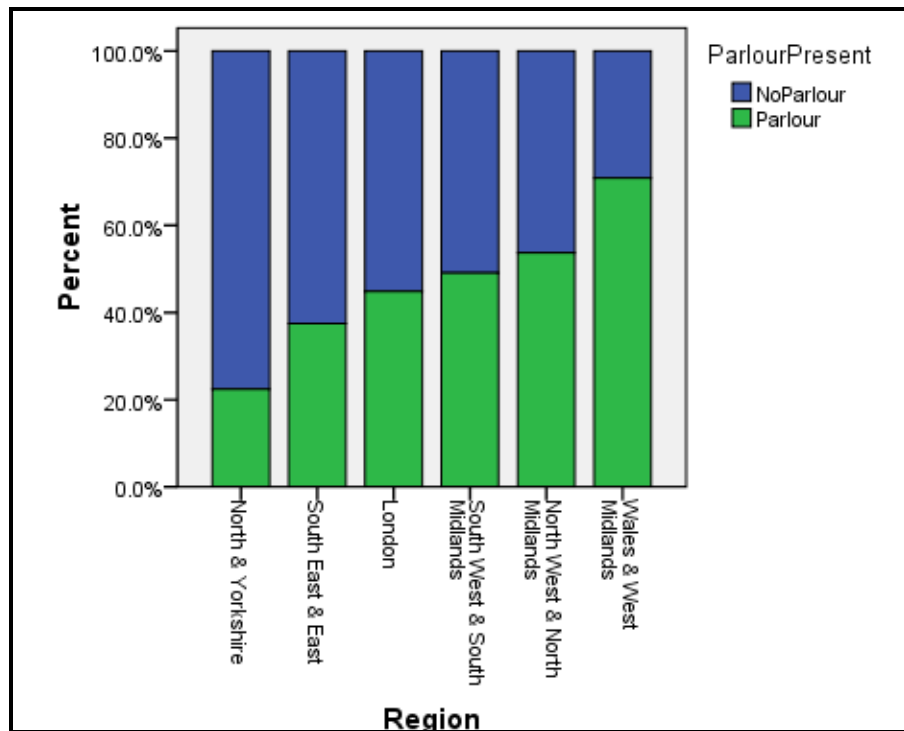
<sup>13</sup> 56% of farmers had a parlour, compared with 43% of the rest. This is just outside the area of significance; chi-square=3.776 df=1, n=337, p=<.052.

<sup>14</sup> Chi-square=28.312, df=5, n=337, p=<.001.

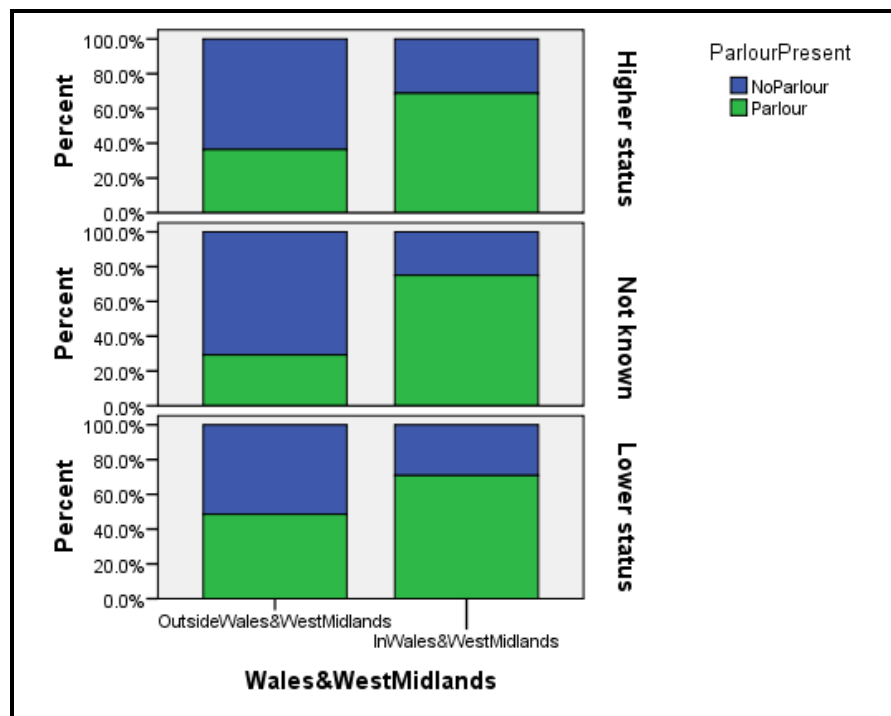
<sup>15</sup> 71% of inventories in Wales and the West Midlands included a parlour compared with 41% of inventories in the rest of the country; chi-square=14.605, df=1, n=337, p=<.001.



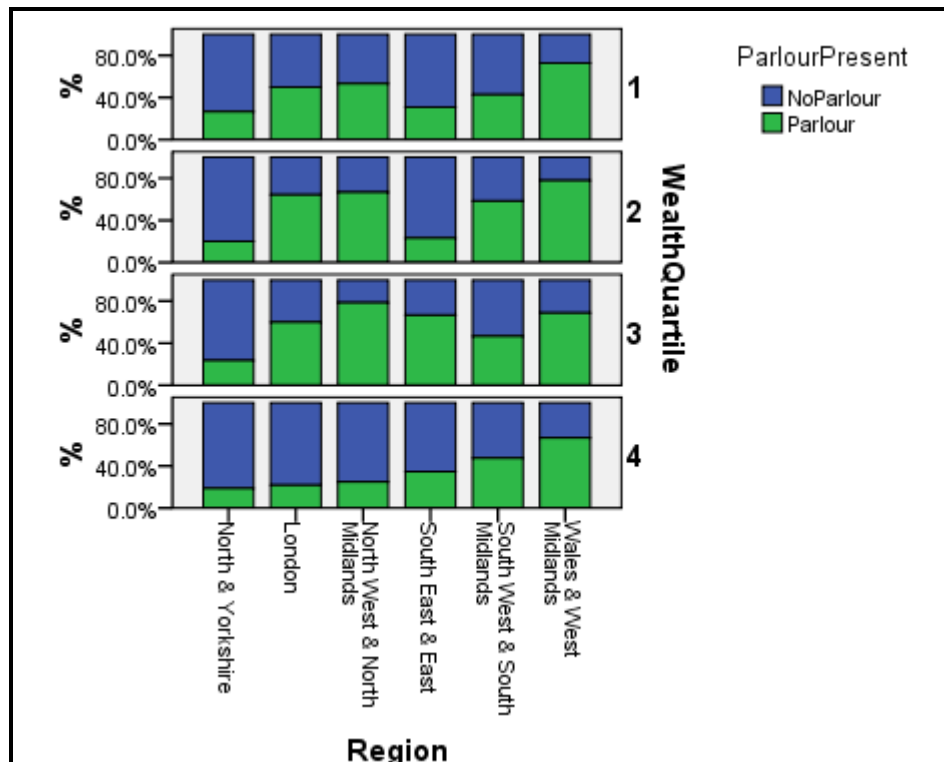
**Figure Appendix 4.6 Percentage of inventories in each region containing a parlour**  
**Total 337**



**Figure Appendix 4.7 Percentage of inventories with parlours (without drawing-rooms or dining-rooms) at different status levels, comparing Wales and West Midlands with the rest of the country**  
**Total 337**



**Figure Appendix 4.8 Percentage of inventories in each region containing a parlour, by wealth quartile**  
**Total 337**

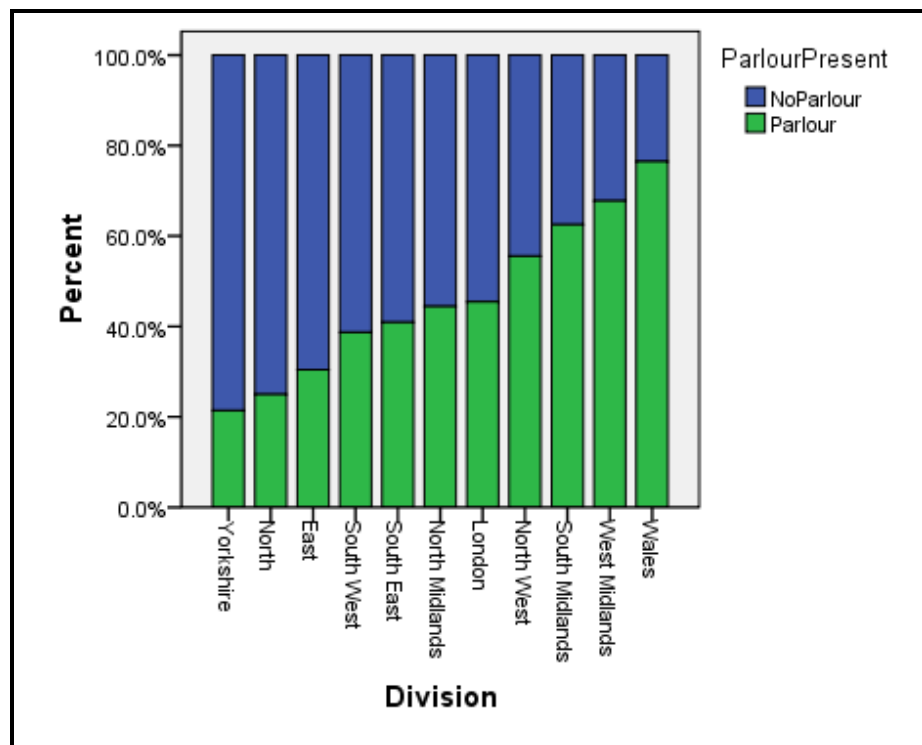


As discussed (in Chapter 2, 82-83) the regional groupings are arbitrary. It is worth looking at the divisional figures, although they are too small for statistical testing (Figures Appendix 4.9 and 4.10). The West Midlands has dramatically few drawing-rooms but a lot of parlours; there is a similar but less marked relationship for Wales.

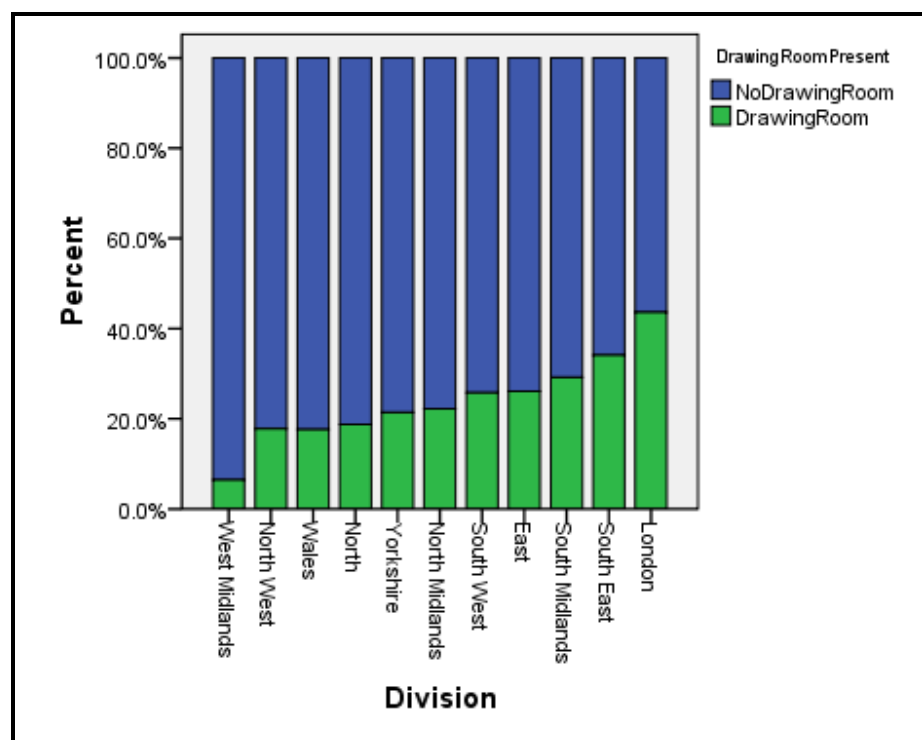
While it is possible to make a grouping (London, the South East and the South Midlands) of 'the South', for which there is a very strong association with drawing-room ownership<sup>16</sup>, the same grouping does not produce a significant association for parlours.

<sup>16</sup> Chi-square=13.568, df=1, n=337, p=<.001.

**Figure Appendix 4.9 Percentage of inventories in each division with/without parlours**  
**Total 337**



**Figure Appendix 4.10 Percentage of inventories in each division with/without drawing-rooms**  
**Total 337**



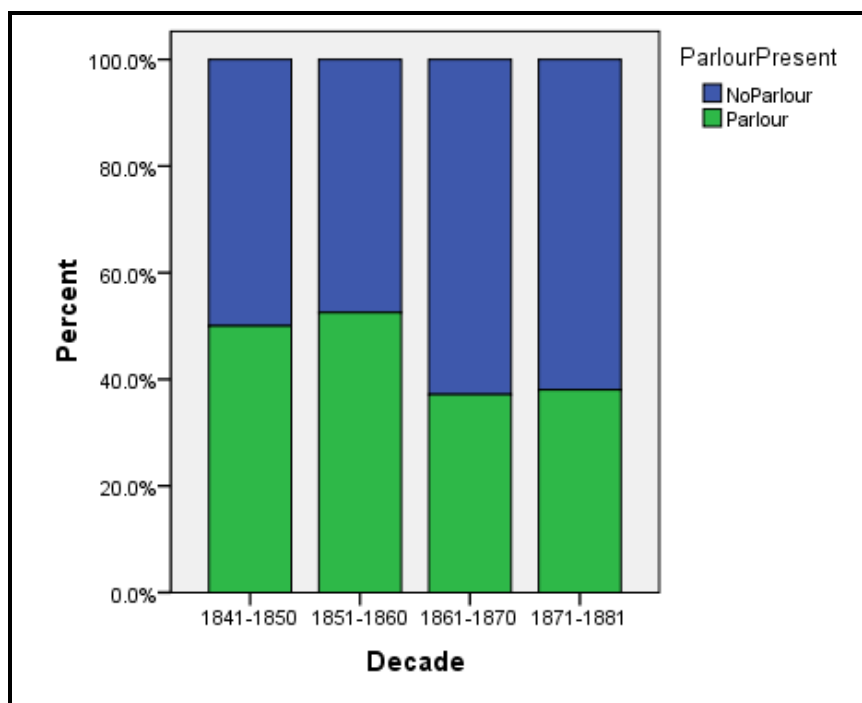
## Gender and marital status

For parlours, as with drawing-rooms, there was no significant association between ownership and gender or marital status.

## Change over time

The inventory sample shows a small statistically significant decrease in the incidence of inventories with parlours, from 51.6% in the period 1841-1860 to 37.6% in the period 1861-1881 (and see Figure Appendix 4.11).<sup>17</sup>

**Figure Appendix 4.11 Percentage of inventories in each decade with/out parlours**  
Total 337



## Sitting-rooms

The median gross wealth of sitting-room owners was very much lower than that of drawing- and dining-room owners (Table Appendix 4.2, page 346). There is a small but significant association with status if those whose status is not known are excluded from the sample, leaving a group of 288 inventories: only 17.5% of those categorised as 'higher status' had a sitting-room compared with 28% of those of

<sup>17</sup> Chi-square=7.039 df=1, n=337, p<.<.05.

lower status.<sup>18</sup> But the inclusion or not of a sitting-room in an inventory was not significantly associated with wealth or with gender or marital status. The mean HIS-CAM score for owners was slightly lower than for parlour owners and lower than for drawing-room or dining-room owners but the range covered was the whole gamut, from 27-99. Nor was there a clear-cut association with number of rooms in the house (Table Appendix 4.4, page 349). There was little geographical variation, the only significant association being that fewer London inventories included a sitting-room than the rest of the country.<sup>19</sup> There was a small but significant rise in the use of the term over time. From 1841-1861, 20% of named-room inventories included a sitting-room; from 1862-1882, 32% did.<sup>20</sup>

## **None of parlours, sitting-rooms, drawing-rooms and dining-rooms**

But almost one in five (18.7%; 63) of these 337 inventories had neither parlours, sitting-rooms, drawing-rooms nor dining-rooms. Having none of these rooms was significantly associated with lower status and with lower wealth quartiles. There was no significant association with gender or region and there was no significant change over time.

Of the 50 cases where a day-room of sorts could be identified, a large majority (39 or 78%) had only one day-room; 18% had two and only 4% had three.

15 of those 63 (23.8%) had one or two which were coded as 'other day-rooms', that is they were named as, for example, 'front room'.

33 of the 63 (52.4%), comprising about 10% of the whole sample of 337, had only one or more kitchen-living-rooms or house-places as dayrooms. Of this 33, 23 (69.7%) were in the bottom two wealth quartiles; 24 of the 33 (72.7%) were classified as of lower status and only two as higher status, the rest were 'not known'. None of them were in London and only four were in the South East and East.

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<sup>18</sup> Chi-square=4.699, df=1, n=288, p=<.05.

<sup>19</sup> Only 10% of London inventories included a sitting-room compared with the rest of the country; chi-square=7.7, df=1, n=337, p=<.01.

<sup>20</sup> Chi-square=6.8021, df=1, n=338, p=<.01.

13 of the 63 (20.6%) did not have any coded day-room at all, including kitchen-living-rooms. This does not necessarily mean that there was no such room, just that it could not be identified.

## **Combinations of rooms**

Table Appendix 4.6 indicates that, in this sample, no very clear pattern of room combinations or terms can be discerned. With such a large number of variables, a larger sample would be necessary. The most common combination is of a parlour and a kitchen-living-room, but even that only comprises about 12% of the sample.

# Combinations of day-rooms

**Table Appendix 4.6 Combinations of day-rooms (including kitchen-living-rooms and house-places) found in the sample of 337 inventories**

The total number of inventories here is 324 since 13 cases listed none of these rooms

NB. The totals differ from those in Table Appendix 4.4 because this table includes *all* living-rooms.

	Number	% of group total	% of all 337 inventories
<b>One room</b>			
Parlour	18	25%	6%
Kitchen-living-room	16	23%	5%
Sitting-room	12	17%	4%
House-place	12	17%	4%
Other	9	13%	3%
Drawing-room	2	3%	1%
Keeping-room	2	3%	1%
<b>Total of inventories with one of the day-rooms</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Two rooms</b>			
Kitchen-living-room + parlour	38	28%	12%
Kitchen-living-room + sitting-room	19	14%	6%
Parlour + sitting-room	15	11%	5%
House-place + parlour	11	8%	3%
Parlour + parlour	11	8%	3%
Dining-room + drawing-room	8	6%	2%
Sitting-room + sitting-room	3	2%	1%
Kitchen-living-room + other	3	2%	1%
Kitchen-living-room + drawing-room	3	2%	1%
Kitchen-living-room + dining-room	3	2%	1%

	Number	% of group total	% of all inventories
Parlour + other	3	2%	1%
Other + other	2	1%	1%
Drawing-room + sitting-room	2	1%	1%
Keeping-room + parlour	2	1%	1%
House + sitting-room	1	1%	0%
Kitchen-living-room +hall	1	1%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + keeping-room	1	1%	0%
House + house	1	1%	0%
House + kitchen-living-room	1	1%	0%
Drawing-room + parlour	1	1%	0%
Hall + parlour	1	1%	0%
Breakfast-room + parlour	1	1%	0%
Breakfast-room + drawing-room	1	1%	0%
Breakfast-room + sitting-room	1	1%	0%
Other + sitting-room	1	1%	0%
Dining-room + sitting-room	1	1%	0%
<b>Total of inventories with two of the day-rooms</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Three rooms</b>			
Kitchen-living-room + parlour+ sitting-room	11	17%	3%
Kitchen-living-room + dining-room + drawing-room	10	15%	3%
Kitchen-living-room + parlour + parlour	10	15%	3%
Kitchen-living-room + drawing-room + parlour	5	8%	2%
Kitchen-living-room + dining-room + parlour	3	5%	1%
Dining-room + drawing-room + study	3	5%	1%
House-place + parlour + sitting-room	2	3%	1%
Kitchen-living-room + house-place + parlour	2	3%	1%
Parlour + parlour + other	2	3%	1%
Kitchen-living-room + kitchen-living-room + house	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + hall + parlour	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + drawing-room + other	1	2%	0%



	Number	% of group total	% of all inventories
Kitchen-living-room + sitting-room + other	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + sitting-room + sitting-room	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + drawing-room + sitting-room	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + drawing-room + parlour	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + sitting-room + dining-room	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + kitchen-living-room + other	1	2%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + dining-room + study	1	2%	0%
Drawing-room + keeping-room + kitchen-living-room	1	2%	0%
Parlour + sitting-room + sitting- room	1	2%	0%
Parlour + dining-room + dining-room	1	2%	0%
Parlour + drawing-room + other	1	2%	0%
Parlour + parlour + parlour	1	2%	0%
Drawing-room + other + study	1	2%	0%
Breakfast-room + dining-room + study	1	2%	0%
<b>Total of inventories with three of the day-rooms</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Four rooms</b>			
Drawing-room + Dining-room + study+ kitchen-living-room	10	27%	3%
Drawing-room + Dining-room + breakfast-room + kitchen-living-room	9	24%	3%
Drawing-room + Dining-room + other + kitchen-living-room	2	5%	1%
Drawing-room + parlour + parlour + kitchen-living-room	2	5%	1%
Drawing-room + dining-room + Sitting-room + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + dining-room +Parlour+ kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + Morning-room + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + dining-room +Sitting-room + study	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + parlour + sitting-room + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + parlour + study + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + sitting-room + sitting-room + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Drawing-room + breakfast-room + study+ kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Sitting-room + parlour + parlour+ kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Parlour + parlour + study + kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%

	Number	% of group total	% of all inventories
Sitting-room + other + kitchen-living-room + kitchen-living-room +	1	3%	0%
Kitchen-living-room + kitchen-living-room + sitting-room + dining-room	1	3%	0%
Sitting-room + sitting-room + other + Kitchen-living-room	1	3%	0%
Parlour + parlour + parlour + parlour	1	3%	0%
<b>Total of inventories with four of the day-rooms</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Five rooms</b>			
Drawing-room + dining-room + study + Breakfast-room + kitchen-living-room	4		1%
Drawing-room + dining-room + sitting-room + breakfast-room + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + morning-room + breakfast-room + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + study + study + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + drawing-room + study + study	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + drawing-room + study + boudoir	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + drawing-room + parlour +other	1		0%
Drawing-room + dining-room + drawing-room + dining-room + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
Drawing-room + parlour + parlour +other + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
Dining-room + house-place + other + parlour + kitchen-living-room	1		0%
<b>Total of inventories with five of the day-rooms</b>	<b>13</b>		<b>4%</b>
<b>Total of inventories with six or more of the day-rooms</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>1%</b>
<b>Total of all inventories with these named day-rooms</b>	<b>324</b>		<b>100%</b>

# Appendix 5

## Contemporary terms for bedrooms

### Bed-room

The advice text sample (Appendix 3) almost always termed sleeping rooms as 'bed-rooms' (or 'bedrooms'). This was also the most common term employed in the inventory sample, although it was used for only just over a half of the bedstead-rooms.

### Chamber

'Chamber' was the second most frequent term amongst the 1098 bedstead-rooms, although falling a long way behind 'bed-room'.<sup>1</sup> It was probably a term going out of use since there was a small but significant decline in its incidence between the first and second half of the period covered in this study.<sup>2</sup> There was no significant association between 'chamber' and wealth, gender or status but there was a regional connection; it was more commonly used in the North and Yorkshire and Wales and the West Midlands than in other parts of the country.<sup>3</sup> The most significant association was with the presence of a 'house-place', which in the sample was regionally specific to the Pennines (Chapter 3, 116-117).<sup>4</sup> Seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century chambers had probably been used as sitting-rooms as well as sleeping-rooms (perhaps like Mrs. Whitwam's chamber in Chapter 5, 225-226) but, in general, cross-tabulations in the inventory sample do not show any major functional difference between the contents of bed-rooms and chambers.<sup>5</sup> Fictional use suggests slight differences in nuance. In *Wives and Daughters*, published in 1866 but set in the late 1820s, 'chamber' sometimes appears to be used as an alternative to 'bed-room', merely to avoid repetition.<sup>6</sup> But

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<sup>1</sup> It was used for ten percent of the rooms containing bedsteads.

<sup>2</sup> Between 1841-1860, 21% of inventories included a chamber, compared with only 11.5% in 1861-1881; chi-square= 5.394, df=1, n=337, p<.05. Between 1871 and 1881 only 6% of the 72 inventories used the term.

<sup>3</sup> Chi-square=14.491, df=5, n=337, p<.05.

<sup>4</sup> 37.5% of inventories with a house-place included a chamber, compared with 15.1% of those without; chi-square=10.215, df=1, n=337, p<.01.

<sup>5</sup> John (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Gaskell (1996), 210.

on other occasions in the same book it refers to bed-rooms in old-fashioned but traditional and substantial houses.<sup>7</sup>

### **Attic or garret**

Attics or garrets feature in tall terraced houses but not smaller urban or later-nineteenth-century houses.<sup>8</sup> They were inferior spaces, with low ceilings and small windows, and historians have noted that, in family houses or part houses, they were sleeping rooms for servants or children.<sup>9</sup> They were slightly less common in the inventories than chambers. An appraiser would not have needed to distinguish between floors for people inhabiting *only* an attic or maybe the floor below as well and so attics were named only in larger homes. The percentage of houses where attics were named rose as the number of bed-rooms rose<sup>10</sup> and attic ownership was associated with inventories belonging to people in the top wealth quartile.<sup>11</sup> In the present sample, three quarters of the 102 rooms named as attics or garrets were bedstead-rooms but it is not possible to identify their occupants. There is some indication that the people whose houses included attic rooms generally employed servants.<sup>12</sup> Although these attic bed-rooms were less well furnished than those lower down the house, the difference was not as extreme as their association with servants might lead us to expect.<sup>13</sup> Nor did they appear to contain any more old-fashioned or vernacular items than bed-rooms elsewhere (see Illustration Appendix 5.1).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gaskell (1996), 69 and 154.

<sup>8</sup> Muthesius (1982) does not discuss attics but the plans shown in his book indicate this development, 79-100.

<sup>9</sup> For eighteenth-century servants, see Cruickshank and Burton (1990), 58; although Vickery (2008) has found evidence that servants were actually scattered throughout the house, wherever there was space. For nineteenth-century children, see Flanders (2003), li.

<sup>10</sup> Chi-square=37.506, df=4, n=337, p=<.001.

<sup>11</sup> Chi-square=19.677, df=3, n=337, p=<.001.

<sup>12</sup> There were 72 domestic inventories with named rooms for which data about household composition is available (see Appendix 2); 13 of the 72 inventories included attics and 11 of those 13 related to households that included servants. Using the same sub-set, only 2 of the 25 people without servants had an attic.

<sup>13</sup> Of the 77 attic bedstead-rooms, 35% included some mahogany items; this compares with 44% for the whole bedstead-room sample of 1098 rooms. The average number of items listed in attic and garret bedrooms was 12; in non-attic bed-rooms it was a little higher at 15. About 2% of the items in attics bed-rooms were noted as being old or faulty or inferior compared with about 1% in the other bedstead-rooms. But attic bedstead-rooms were as often equipped with a washstand or a feather bed as other rooms lower down the house: 58% of attic bedstead-rooms had a washstand, compared with 57% of the others; 59% contained a feather bed compared with 51% of the other bedstead-rooms.

<sup>14</sup> 6% of the attic rooms contained some oak compared with 8% of the others.

Illustration Appendix 5.1 'Young woman reading in an attic bedroom', watercolour by Alice Squire, 1861  
Copyright Geffrye Museum



This painting shows an attic room with quite a lot of furniture and decorative items although some of the furniture is old and broken.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Banham *et al.* (1991), 42-43.

### **Named or specified occupant**

Sometimes appraisers distinguished bed-rooms by occupant. Occasionally this was a named person (for example, 'Mr. Bennett's room') but much more often it was a 'servant's room' of one sort or another. About twenty percent of the inventories included at least one such servant's room. They occurred most frequently in inventories belonging to the wealthy<sup>16</sup> or people coded as of 'higher status'.<sup>17</sup> Just over half of the inventories with a drawing-room included a named servant's room compared with only about ten percent of those without.<sup>18</sup>

### **Dressing room**

As would be expected, the inclusion of a dressing-room in an inventory is associated with the owners being wealthy, having a drawing-room and being of higher status.<sup>19</sup> But dressing-rooms were not common in this inventory sample, occurring in only eleven percent of the 337 inventories.<sup>20</sup> They were not usually bed-rooms, in the sense that only thirteen percent of the 47 whose contents could be isolated included a bedstead.<sup>21</sup> However they took on some of the other functions of bed-rooms, such as personal hygiene and clothes storage. Jane Hamlett has discussed these rooms at some length, arguing that they were multi-functional rooms, sometimes used as personal space and allowing some relief from the pressures of the shared marital bed-room. They were, she argues, more often male rooms, leaving the bed-room itself to female requirements, including lying-in.<sup>22</sup>

### **Kitchen**

The inventory sample shows only eleven bedsteads in kitchens or equivalents; seven of these were some form of fold-up or hideaway bedstead, suggesting that sleeping in the kitchen was neither common nor desirable. There is no evidence (such as a mattress or bedding in a nearby store room) that mattresses were brought in for the kitchen floor. It appears that, in this sample, it was less common

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<sup>16</sup> Chi-square=66.579, df=3, n=337, p=<.001.

<sup>17</sup> Chi-square=13.337, df=2, n=337, p=<.01.

<sup>18</sup> Chi-square=70.334, df=1, n=337, p=<.001.

<sup>19</sup> The association is highly significant in each case with p=<.001.

<sup>20</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 3, found that 30% of the 80 inventories with named rooms included a dressing-room; the sample used for her study relates to middle-class homes only.

<sup>21</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapter 3, estimated that a fifth of the dressing-rooms in her sample included a bedstead of some sort.

<sup>22</sup> Hamlett (2005), chapters 2 and 3.

than Flanders has suggested for servants to be put to sleep in the kitchen (unless their bedding was minimal or their own property).<sup>23</sup>

### **Living-room**

There was a similarly small number of parlours, sitting-rooms or drawing-rooms that contained bedsteads (eighteen such rooms out of a total of 366). However, only four or five of these bedsteads were fold-up or otherwise disguised. Looking at the individual cases, it appears feasible to conclude that sometimes a bedstead had been brought into a regularly furnished drawing-room or parlour, perhaps to accommodate illness, but in other cases it appears that the parlour was also a bedroom as a matter of course.

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<sup>23</sup> Flanders (2003), 2-3.

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