

Introduction

In the years between 1782 and 1820, Catharine Cappe and Faith Gray, with the help of an extended kinship and social network of middle-class women, created and managed a number of philanthropic organisations in York, England. The most notable of their management achievements, The York Female Friendly Society, prospered and survived until the late 20th century. Their management of the Grey Coat School for Girls, which they operated on a sub-contracted basis for the city corporation, was in place for nearly 50 years. Cappe and Gray have featured in published work in other historical fields such as the general histories of the development of the middle class, accounts of the role of evangelical and non-conformist religions in institutional reform, and in the history of education.¹ But their management of the social enterprises² they created have not previously been considered in relation to business history.

Gender is a useful category within business history but as Joan Scott has noted *using* it is no easy matter.³ It is clear that the management histories of women in business *supplement* existing business history⁴; less clear is how a focus on gender substantially *changes* it. Emancipatory analyses that document women's exclusion from business activities and their agency in resisting this exclusion are not sufficient to shift the focus of business history from the assumed progressive development of the firm e.g. from small to large, inefficient to efficient.⁵ Justifying the choice of a particular business on the grounds that it had women owners and/or managers may help feminist historians to highlight the insufficiency of the field's existing approach, but it does not help to correct it. However, an analysis of how certain practices helped define gendered experiences of management in particular historical contexts, or how power relationships (that do not always involve gender) reinforced beliefs about the gendered division of labour, the operation of labour markets, or other forms of support that enabled economic

activity *does* help business history evolve. It is the investigation of those larger questions of practice that enable us to bring previously excluded groups and ‘messy arrangements’ currently outside much of business history, including organisations originatibe in the civic sphere and populated by women and ethnic minority groups, that will enlarge the scope of business history.⁶

The aim of this study of the management of the York Female Friendly Society and the Grey Coat School is therefore not to focus on Gray and Cappe et al simply as ‘women worthies’ but to use their experiences of managing inside, and outside, of parochial peer networks to illustrate a particular route into business by women in the 18th and 19th centuries.⁷ I argue that the parochial realm,⁸ i.e. a network of individuals located within a specific community that is linked to a task or geographical location, enabled individuals – and, importantly, middle class women – to accrue considerable authority through philanthropy, economic status, local print culture, family connections and political activism. Parochial networks allowed middle-class women to contribute to economic and social development in their local areas. The status of individuals in the parochial realm was an important factor in obtaining credit for business, start-up capital and for trade partnerships⁹ but the parochial was also the site of enterprises that were both shaped by and serviced the emergent public welfare agenda. Parochial networks provided women with access to knowledge and experience, and sympathetic male trustees, from within those networks to build organisations and offer services. The York Female Friendly Society and the Grey Coat School provide us with an opportunity to examine the importance of the parochial realm in the formation, support and operation of early social enterprises and services.

Cappe and Gray faced two main gendered constraints in forming and operating social enterprises using a women-only administration i.e. how to access the knowledge

and experience needed to manage, and how to acquire and manage money despite the legal restrictions on married members¹⁰. Married women were, under English common law, prevented from owning real and personal property (land, rents, cash, mortgage income, stocks and shares etc.) nor could they enter contracts. Unmarried women and widows owned property and contracted on the same terms as men. Married middle class women who were involved in community services that involved investing surplus funds in stocks, banking commercially or contracting for services could not do so without male trustees.

In the first section of the paper I describe in more detail the concept of the parochial, and the particular social context of Cappe and Gray's philanthropic endeavours. This includes the importance of the evangelical establishment and non-conformist philanthropic alliance and the interlocking networks that created such a robust social group in York at that time. I then outline the rise of the subscription society model in this time period, and its use in relation to friendly societies. The two case study organisations are then presented and considered in terms of the positioning of the women managers in relation to the service users, and the differing behaviour of men in respect of supporting or challenging the two institutional forms.

The parochial realm in the late Georgian Period

The parochial is a concept borrowed from the sociology of cities. History has been interested in the interplay between space, institutional forms and gender since the overall 'spatial turn' in the humanities and social sciences in the 1980s.¹¹ There was a similar spatial turn in organisational studies at this time,¹² but it took a different form to the spaces that historical studies are normally interested in such as place, time and context. The parochial sits mid-way between the private (i.e. the realm of the household

and personal networks that are marked by ties of intimacy) and the public (i.e. the world of strangers and the street where you interact with others as ‘types’ and not individuals). The sense that the parochial is a space where individuals are encountered as individuals, people with whom you are on ‘nodding terms’ or acknowledge as part of your known world, explains the word’s origins in the concept of ‘the parish’. Whilst the rural parish might map neatly on to the associational world of the parochial, urban spaces have parochial realms that exceed the boundaries of wards, mores or town parishes. The urban parochial encompasses the commonality of acquaintances and neighbours in interpersonal networks that are located within specific geographical, or more commonly, task communities.¹³

Cappe and Gray’s parochial realm consisted of a number of different interpersonal networks. The parochial networks of Cappe and Gray’s time were created around *activity* and helped create and shape the local civic arena by linking individuals and family groups and, through those wider connections of friends and acquaintances, giving access to roles in official municipal bodies and/or semi-official and/or voluntary associations.¹⁴ Some networks comprised only men or women only, but familial ties created multiple complex networks of inter-generational mixed groups, as did religious worship, political and philosophical interests and charitable endeavours.

The parochial was also a realm where women were supposed to be *naturally* (i.e. providentially) active and influential. Hannah More, a noted evangelical tract writer, moral fiction author and member of Cappe and Gray’s wider religious and political network stated the case for women having a natural i.e. God given, range of natural influence and organisational role:

[We should] consider our own parish as our more appropriate field of [professional activity and action] where Providence, by “fixing the bounds of our habitation,” seems to have made us peculiarly responsible for the comfort of those whom he has doubtless placed around us for that purpose.¹⁵

Cappe was conventionally conservative in her thoughts on women’s public and political role on the national and international stage, but did not see this as contradictory to the idea of women exercising parochial influence. Her view that women should be active in their local parochial realm, and those of Hannah More, who perhaps had more of a bounded geographically defined notion of a parish, are entirely congruent with their social class and historical context. But it is important to note that in Cappe’s conception of the parochial women’s local focus was not equated with a lack of wider purpose or importance.

Our sex ... are happily exempt from the ceaseless anxieties of the conscientious legislator; the great fatigues and multiplied dangers of the military commander, the temptations, inquietudes, and degrading compliances of the ambitious statesman. – Our lot is happily cast in the more sequestered vales of life ... But does it follow, that we have no important duties to fulfil, no subordinate part to act in the great universal drama?¹⁶

Cappe’s reference to the “more sequestered vales of life” echoes More’s reference to bounded habitation. Her view of the contribution that women can make is couched in the language of household management and care extended to include the society, not only the specific urban setting, in which she lived.

Upon whom, if not upon us, depends the proper arrangement of the whole of domestic economy in all its various branches...? And further, upon whom, if not upon us, must in many instances devolve the still more extensive concern of preserving and improving the pecuniary resources of every branch of the whole family with whom we are connected?¹⁷

Women and men have previously been considered to inhabit the social space of philanthropy and social enterprise differently. For example, in his study of the leadership of charities in Manchester in the 19th Century, Shapely stresses ‘the value of charitable association as a mechanism for acquiring and maintaining status and leadership’ - but only for men.¹⁸ He uses the records of management committee membership as evidence that leadership of charities became ‘essential’ for men to underpin their existing status (in business or politics) or to acquire it if they were entering the community.¹⁹ This was, he argues, ‘a predominantly male preserve’: women were present on charity committees, but only in small numbers (fewer than 20% of serving members), in ways that were ‘compatible with their domestic role and ...their position as spiritual leaders’, and according to his research, only after the 1850s.²⁰ Similarly, Gorsky sees women’s work in Bristol in the mid-nineteenth century as ‘not instrumental and creative but instead a necessary part of structures *conceived by men*’.²¹

These studies of women and philanthropy from the mid-nineteenth century have come to dominate our understanding of women’s different position in relation to philanthropy in the earlier period when Cappe and Gray were active. Men could undoubtedly use their parochial capital to leverage custom and financial support to make forays into the public arena of politics or commerce. Women, by comparison, had

limited access to the public arena but the ability to move more freely in the parochial sphere. Cappe emphasises in her writing how parochial activism can transform local, domestic environments in the service of the wider public political or economic agenda. Women's positive moral influence and care for the wider civic 'family' was vital for the health of the nation, societal cohesion and positive inter-class relationships in a time of war and social unrest.²² Women like More and Cappe were able to amplify and direct gains made from their parochial capital²³ to achieve wider social influence through pamphlets, moral tracts or social improvement texts that built their reputational capital and impact at a national level.

The concept of the parochial has been useful in raising challenges to the 'separate spheres' thesis in 18th and 19th Century women's history²⁴, although only Kathryn Gleadle makes explicit use of the term.²⁵ Gleadle has written about the contribution that women such as Anna Gurney made to their local communities. In Gurney's case it was in terms of providing transport and other infrastructure to enable trade and local businesses to grow, but many other examples of women exercising parochial power are given.²⁶ Jane Rendell prefers the term 'multiple publics' to account for the many recorded examples of women speaking out at local public meetings and protests in the 19th century.²⁷ Mary Clare Martin, examining the same area of enterprise formation as this study, has written about how women in Leyton and Walthamstow also used their extended networks to facilitate the provision of female education and friendly societies.²⁸ As the many documented studies of women's philanthropic enterprise formation show,²⁹ women were active in educational services and financial services, not least because barriers to entry in forming social enterprises in education and income support for women were low, and support from their religious or social peers for projects in these areas high.³⁰ We have – thanks to the work of historians like Gleadle,

Rendell, Martin and others – many examples of middle-class women acting in their local communities with what we might consider surprising freedom and support, given the legal and financial constraints upon them. The management history of Cappe and Gray suggest that it is the strength and extent of the parochial networks within which women are positioned that creates the opportunities for women to build stable managerial identities and behaviours in this period.

The parochial networks in the City of York, England 1780-1820

York in the late Georgian period was a small regional city of just over 16,000 inhabitants boasting an improving urban landscape of paved streets, lighting and civil amenities. The city remained largely within its walled medieval footprint of just over one square mile, with a number of outlying villages acting as proto-suburbs. The professional, merchant and ecclesiastical classes lived in a small area around the Minster and principal commercial streets in the northern quarter of the city. York's civic and historic urban landscape allowed the city to compete in material attractions against other fashionable county, spa or cathedral towns and was a destination for gentry looking for luxury items and entertainments.³¹

Religion, specifically the relationship between non-conformists and evangelicals in the city, is the key to understanding the social dynamics behind institutional formation in the 1780-1820 period by the different religious communities represented in Cappe and Gray's parochial network. By the late Georgian period York had attracted a significant minority population of non-conformists. A prominent and respected Quaker community was already established with Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Unitarians all adding to the numbers of the population associated with the 'old dissent'.

Methodists and other evangelical Anglican citizens were representatives of the 'new dissent'.³² Evangelicals were originally followers of John Wesley, but as the Methodists drifted away from the Church of England, those members who preferred to stay within the Church and work for the revitalisation of the institution and for 'heart religion' became known as evangelicals.³³

Catharine Cappe (née Harrison) was the daughter of an Anglican clergyman and connected to minor Yorkshire aristocracy through her mother's family. After a childhood spent in the Dales, she and her mother moved to Catterick after the death of her father. She converted to Unitarianism after befriending Theophilus Lindsey who had the living of Catterick whilst he was actively promoting reform within the Anglican Church prior to his resignation and establishment of a politically and religiously significant Unitarian chapel in London. Catharine's friendship with both Theophilus and Hannah Lindsey was important in terms of directing her religious *and* philanthropic energies. Hannah Lindsey was responsible for setting up the dispensary in Catterick, run on the committee model of management and also had an interest in female friendly societies. Catharine and her mother moved again in the early 1780s, to live near Barwick in Elmet, midway between Leeds and York.

It was at a hotel in Thorp Arch, not far from Barwick, that Cappe and Gray met in early 1782. Gray and her party were touring the countryside; Cappe and her mother were guests of Cappe's aunts on the unhappy occasion of having had to move out of Catharine's brother's house and oversee its sales to offset debt. Shortly after the meeting Cappe settled in York with her mother, drawn by the prospect of joining its growing Unitarian community. With Faith and William Gray close neighbours of Catharine in York, Catherine and Faith's plans to reform York's 'Spinning School' and the wider industrial education of girls in York, apparently discussed at their first

meeting in Thorp Arch, were soon quickly progressed.³⁴ Neither Catharine Cappe nor Faith Gray suggested in their published diaries or correspondence that their first meeting in 1782 was anything other than chance, but their wider network ties – they both had connections to the locally prominent Strickland family – facilitated the acceptance of Cappe into the parochial network of York's middling sort.³⁵

Faith's ties into the parochial network were through the congregation of St. Michael le Belfry, the principal evangelical church in York. They were further strengthened with her marriage to fellow evangelist William Gray, an early-career solicitor and clerk to the Yorkshire Association. The Yorkshire Association was a well-supported, regional protest movement that initially petitioned for economic reform in the 1780s and thereafter for reform of the parliamentary system.³⁶ Through the Yorkshire Association, and the parliamentary elections of the 1780s and 1790s, the Gray family became well connected to William Wilberforce.³⁷ William Gray and Newcome Cappe were both influential in the strategy group that ran the Yorkshire Association, and through the organisation were also well connected to opposition MPs, many of whom were connected in turn to Theophilus Lindsey's Unitarian chapel in London. Lindsey and Christopher Wyvill, the leader of the Yorkshire Association, had worked together previously in the cause of Anglican reform. Lindsey and Wyvill, in turn, were both close to Sir George Savil the Whig MP for Yorkshire, and also Wilberforce, who succeeded him as MP for the area.

Wilberforce also appointed one of the key evangelical figures in York in this period, William Richardson, and through him reinforced the network of the Grays. Prominent supporters and strategists of the Yorkshire Association also included John Fountayne the Dean of York Minster, Robert Croft and Dr Hunter. Hunter, through his association with the York Asylum – founded by members of the local

Whig aristocracy such as Sir Thomas Frankland - was also connected to members of its Board of Governors, Thomas Withers and Allen Swainston. The wives of Sir Thomas Frankland, Thomas Withers, Allen Swainston, John Fountayne, Robert Croft and Dr Hunter are recorded as founding members of the York Female Friendly Society and Grey Coat School and served on their committees for many years.

Catharine, as mentioned above, was connected to the Unitarian network, and national politics, via her friendship with the Lindseys that predates her connections to York. She became additionally tied into the political and religious networks of York in this period after her marriage to Newcome Cappe, York's Unitarian minister, renowned sermon writer and favourite of opponents of Lord North, in 1788. It is likely that she became connected to William Wilberforce through her husband's involvement in the Yorkshire Association and through her network ties to the Grays. Wilberforce also had connections to other prominent evangelical women reformers nationally such as Hannah More. Cappe dedicated her 1814 pamphlet on how to manage charitable and social institutions to Wilberforce. The parochial networks and political allegiances – as well as wider information networks, family and peer networks, press contacts and political tactics – of the Yorkshire Association formed the basis of Cappe and Gray's female parochial network.

Civic improvement and parochial activism

In turning their attention to their city and to the improvements that could be made to its moral fabric, the reform minded citizens of York were acting out contemporary political and religious ideas of policing the environment. The ideal modern state of this period

rested on the twin uses of the word 'policing'. One use was associated with the administration of towns through policing public order and public health e.g. inspection of butchers, lighting of streets, sanitation and control of public spaces. This was the concern of the City Corporation, or town council. The second use of the word described 'preventative policing' through various forms of social assistance and the maintenance of institutions such as poorhouses, prisons and hospitals.³⁸ Social assistance also encompassed the idea of initiatives for the promotion of good behaviour amongst the lower classes. These campaigns for the reformation of manners and behaviour—sometimes ad hoc and local, often reproduced on a national level—drew in a wide range of amateur social engineers from across religious and social groups. They were not *exclusively* evangelical in this period although evangelical groups did dominate reform associations in the mid to late 19th century.³⁹

City corporations had overview and control of historic charitable bequests that funded social assistance projects e.g. almshouses or 'hospitals' for the old or those suffering with mental illness. However, the corporations were more interested in how to *maintain* their existing responsibilities on the small income city administrations received from rents and fines. Expanding provision and social care and/or reform were not part of the administrative remit of the corporation. As a result, there were opportunities *beyond* the tightly controlled institutional space of local governance to create new institutions aimed at social assistance and reform. These spaces of opportunities were especially attractive to groups otherwise excluded from traditional routes of influence by the Tests and Corporation Acts, such as York's non-conformist communities. These new associations employed a managerial template that was suited to chapels, clubs and associations of all types and were later transferred into working class communal organisations such as trade unions.⁴⁰

It is likely that a common associational form, that eventually found its expression in the subscription society model, evolved through a complex historical route through monastic governance, royal counsel, parliamentary procedure and corporate charters. Committee based management forms survived and prospered because they were useful, especially where networks of trust needed to be established and maintained, continuity valued, and functional hierarchies important. By 1780 there was already evidence of a shared ideal of the principles of good administration of public institutions, associations and societies: namely the publication of rules, lists and official duties to encourage public accountability, the need for precision and clarity in administrative arrangements, the separation of the rights of individuals from the rights, obligations and continuity of the office, the central receipt of information and the desirability of collective responsibility and rational decision making and detailed specifications of reporting formats.⁴¹ These elements had made their way into several influential published and practised schemes for reform across Europe in this period such as the Prussian General Directory, the reports of the Commissioners for examining the Public Accounts, Howard's study of English prisons, the work of Necker on the critique of French administration, the critique of the English Excise administration and the reform of the English Royal Household.⁴² In 1774, and in the interests of public accountability, the English government passed legislation allowing magistrates to inspect asylums, which opened the door (sometimes literally) to the phalanx of reform-minded local citizens who applied the same administrative principles to their new civic 'policing' activities.

In York, the non-conformist members⁴³ of Cappe and Gray's parochial network were not eligible to be members of the city corporation. Those who were outside the established church had to use their membership of the myriad volunteer societies that

‘policed’ the city to gain and exercise influence.⁴⁴ Evangelical, as a result of their belief in individual works being the key to salvation, Unitarian and Quaker families, as a result of their legal exclusion from other areas of public life, were present in large numbers in the subscription organizations formed in York in the period 1780-1820, including those formed by Cappe and Gray at this time. For example, male *and* female members of the network were instrumental in the formation of the Anti-Slavery Society, the Auxiliary Bible Society, the Missionary and Religious Tract Society, the Society for the Prevention and Discouragement of Vice and Profaneness, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the York Dispensary, the York County Hospital and York Savings Bank. Almost without exception they turned to the same institutional form of the subscription society in order to pursue their aims.⁴⁵

The interlocking and overlapping membership of Cappe and Gray’s parochial network provided the necessary pre-conditions for the exploitation of the flexible associational and bureaucratic form of the subscription society. Subscription societies were ideal vehicles with which to capture all the resources needed to form institutions to provide new (albeit often socially conservative and coercive) services such as the ‘The Society for Preventing Crime by Prosecuting Swindlers, Shapers and Cheats’ or ‘The Asylum for the Reception of Penitent Females’⁴⁶ alongside the more conventional friendly societies and health and welfare services. Reform minded citizens – in York’s case the parochial network of evangelical and non-conformist families - also sought to take over the administration of existing services, running charitable enterprises using the subscription society model where they saw opportunities to add value, and moral fibre and purpose. The women in the parochial network took a special interest in the education of girls and, alongside their existing interest in a Spinning School⁴⁷, also took on York’s Grey Coat School as one of their projects; the men attempted to introduce the

subscription model of management to a similarly poorly run enterprise i.e. the York Asylum in the 1780s, and again in the 1810s.⁴⁸ This early expression of what is now referred to as a ‘more than profit’⁴⁹ orientation in the provision of products and services by social enterprise is the key to understanding the problems Cappe and Gray had in managing outside of the parochial realm where this distinction was taken for granted.

To form a subscription society interested parties made an initial donation that provided the starting capital of the organisation, the aims of which were outlined in a short document of aims and principles of the new society. Honorary membership (in effect a mechanism for buying a position on the management committee and directing strategy) was purchased by a minimum annual subscription. In setting a minimum level for management access and rights the societies encouraged the participation of the middle and professional classes, as well as allowing for generous annual gifts by wealthier patrons. Studies of subscription societies in Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and Sheffield⁵⁰ suggest that by 1800 subscription organizations had become a significant provincial movement in social reform and governance⁵¹ and the formation of social enterprises.

The Institutions Formed and Managed By Cappe And Gray

In this section I examine the two organisations most associated with the management histories of Catharine Cappe and Faith Gray. The York Female Friendly Society continued on from its founding period under the management of Cappe and Gray’s parochial network until the 1980s, and the Grey Coat School was operated under the aegis of its all women management committee from the 1787 until 1829. As the above sections have made clear, Cappe and Gray did not form these institutions in order to progress gender equality in public life, nor did they create a new institutional form.

Instead, the women acted within the logic of their religious beliefs in pursuing specific social outcomes through a commonly used and understood managerial and institutional template. However, the extent to which the women only group were able to freely operate as managers was dependent on the support in terms of knowledge and experience and non-interference of male trustees from within their wider parochial network of kin and social connections. This was shown clearly in the example of their management of Grey Coat School when the influence of the parochial network eroded over time and the women were left exposed to the social constraints in operation outside of the network.

Female friendly societies were a form of mutual aid, founded by women and for women that provided sickness benefits for their members. Female societies never existed in the numbers that male friendly societies did, but where they did exist they represented a conscious attempt to serve the needs of women. Cordery suggests that more female friendly societies were in existence in 1800 than at any other time in the 1700s or 1800s, and yet even at this peak it is estimated women made up less than 5% of total friendly society membership.⁵² Reader's survey of female friendly societies, notwithstanding the considerable methodological problems with establishing a secure estimate, suggests that the peak in membership was between 1790 and 1820. Membership was highest during the Napoleonic Wars, in proto-industrial areas and where Poor Law spending was lowest suggesting that women's mutuality was linked to the protection of family income.⁵³ There were wide variations in the type and prevalence of female friendly societies across the country. Yorkshire was comparatively well served as a result of its textile industry in the West Riding but the highest concentration of female mutuality was in the cotton districts of Lancashire.⁵⁴ The York

Female Friendly Society was created in order to support single *and* married women but was unusual in that the majority of its members were domestic servants. The labour of married women needed to be insured because their income from paid work undertaken outside or inside the home contributed to the family income. However, there was also the cost of replacing childcare and other essential households tasks if the woman was ill and could not undertake her usual work, which was specifically allowed for in some society rules.⁵⁵ Maternity provision was included in the benefits offered to married members from the start of the society.

As mentioned above, in this period the form that friendly societies took was wide and varied. However, in a self-governing society every member was eligible for benefits and to hold administrative office. Members became office holders either by election or rotation of roles and were responsible for all aspects of management from holding the meetings, collecting membership fees, banking and distribution of benefits.⁵⁶ In her published work on friendly societies, Cappe credits working class communities in Cumbria with creating this type of self-managing enterprise in the 1740s. However, and in keeping with her views on the lack of financial prudence amongst working class women, Cappe suggested that self-managed societies were more prone to financial failure because of their habit of dividing the fund amongst the members once it reached a certain sum, and also the other ‘ruinous practice’ of holding meetings in public houses.⁵⁷

In suggesting that self-management was a less desirable form of mutuality Cappe was, of course, attempting to present her own preferred form of friendly society – the so-called “patronised society” – in a more favourable light. Not all self-governing societies were dividing societies⁵⁸ but whether Cappe was unaware of this, or knew it and chose not to acknowledge it because it did not accord with her view of the working

class needing the assistance of middle-class women, cannot be known. Cappe's preferred patronised society model was run on the lines of a subscription society but where the act of a set minimum and continuing donation entitled the donor to take a managing role in the enterprise⁵⁹. This separate category of honorary members was not eligible for benefits. The system of honorary membership created an independent management committee of middle-class women that excluded working class women – the service users – from the involvement that they would have had in a self-managing fund.

The York Female Friendly Society was a patronised society.⁶⁰ Honorary members – all drawn from Cappe and Gray's parochial networks – purchased the right to run meetings, bank money and make strategic decisions free from internal or external interference, only co-opting 'ordinary members' i.e. the working class service users, to fulfil minor roles at meetings. In 1790 honorary members became such on the payment of no less than 6 shillings per annum, general members paid an entry fee of 2s 6d and thereafter 1s 6d per quarter to remain in the fund. By 1800 the quarterly fee for ordinary members was 3s per quarter; honorary members continued to pay 6s but received no benefits. The income from all subscriptions in the first year of the fund (1790) was £10, in 1800 it was £64 and rose to £150 in 1810 before falling back to £84 in 1820. Surplus funds were used to buy consols until the establishment of the York Savings Bank in 1816 at which point the funds of the York Female Friendly Society were transferred to the bank. In 1820 the accounts declare that there was £1580 in the savings bank account.⁶¹

The York Female Friendly Society

The York Female Friendly Society was based on a set of rules created in 1788, amended in 1807⁶² and subjected to further revision in 1832, 1896 and 1908. The rules of 1807 are, in effect, a statement of the custom and practice that had been established in the society's management from 1788 onwards. The 1807 rules stipulated the need for a management committee, which operated as a standing committee consisting of a minimum of eleven honorary members. In the event that eleven honorary members were not in attendance at the annual meeting the committee had the power to co-opt general (working-class) members to the management committee. The management committee had the power, and indeed needed, to appoint a clerk and four male Trustees who would act on behalf of the married women in respect of any financial transactions and contracting required. The trustees were appointed by the management committee and continued in office 'until death, resignation or incapacity to act' at which point the committee chose a replacement.⁶³ The trustees in the period 1788-1820 were selected from the founding women's parochial and kin network – either spouses, such as William Gray, or local influential clergy, such as George Markham who was Dean of York Minster.

The main administrative work was done at the quarterly meetings of the Society, with the day-to-day tasks falling to two rotating office-holders known as 'senior stewardesses' drawn from the honorary members.⁶⁴ Stewardesses, drawn from the general working class members, collected the fees at the quarterly meetings and visited the sick. A Senior Stewardess undertook the recording of the receipt of funds and safeguarding of the cash until it could be banked. In addition to the administrative work the Society also undertook *symbolic* work, via the public celebration of the Annual Meeting. On that day the Society held a procession of members, attended a special sermon and church service and staged a celebratory 'feast' after the meeting, as was

common practice around annual meetings of many female friendly societies in this period.⁶⁵

In her writing on the subject Cappe considered patronised societies as having the greatest chance of survival. Patronised societies avoided the two main alleged causes of insolvency: overpayments to members and mismanagement evidenced by e.g. meetings in public houses,⁶⁶ but patronised societies were also better placed by dint of the management committee not being in receipt of benefits to make objective decisions that ensured the continuation of the enterprise. For example, Cappe wrote of the dangers of continuing sickness payments after the member reached 65 years of age. She cited actuarial tables in claiming that after this age illness was likely to be chronic, and would deplete the fund. In order to support women in old age Cappe recommended the creation of a separate annuity fund, or the consolidation of the sickness and annuity funds. Cappe also counselled against providing annuities for members who were afflicted by blindness or lameness, suggesting that because these misfortunes often happened to young women the payment of annuities across the lifetimes of those who were blind or lame would be a drain on the general funds and threaten the financial viability of the fund.

Although Cappe saw the benefits of the patronised society model, she was careful to stress the need for the fund to be viable without relying on the contribution of the honorary members. The annual payment of the honorary member was in exchange for the right to make decisions and a seat at the management table, not to prop up the main sickness fund. Where possible the honorary member contributions were used to defray the administrative costs of the enterprise such as the costs of room hire for meetings, the payment of the (professional and male) clerk, stationery, printing and refreshments for the meetings only.⁶⁷

The committee meeting minutes and correspondence of the York Female Friendly Society reveal how deliberate, and careful, the women were to manage ‘correctly’. At the beginning of their managerial careers neither Cappe nor Gray were confident about the formalities of committee management or the financial decisions they were making. The women wrote to actuaries and other Friendly Society fund managers asking for advice as to how to set up their society on a steady financial footing. They looked for additional guidance, and support, by appointing male trustees from within their familial and social networks in order to access managerial knowledge, legal advice and experience. The sudden improvement in the minutes and the layout of the minute book in the first year of the Society is indicative of Cappe and Gray receiving specific guidance on this aspect of their administration, probably from William Gray, as there is evidence of him looking at the minutes in his role as trustee. In her memoirs Cappe recounts that in the period prior to her marriage she ‘generally consulted Mr Cappe, before I brought forward to our committee, any proposed alteration’ and that William Gray gave occasional guidance by letter to the management committee.^{68 69}

Cappe believed that patronised societies were more viable because a certain level of education was needed in order to manage and administer such social enterprises. The ‘less informed sisterhood’ needed the input of better-educated middle-class women who contributed skills in writing, arithmetic and bookkeeping.⁷⁰ However, even where working class women *did* have the required skills Cappe was persuaded that honorary members were still a necessity – their ‘greater decency of manners, and a higher tone of mental and moral attainments, must be the result of more affluent circumstances, and of a superior education’.⁷¹ The YFFS needed the honorary members – drawn exclusively from their parochial network – for their initial financial support.

Without the financial support of the honorary members such as Lady Frankland, Mrs Withers, Mrs Swainston, Mrs Fountayne, Mrs Croft and Mrs Hunter and their kin and friendship connections, and the creation of a special fund controlled by the committee in the early years to support the activities of the Society, it is unlikely to have survived infancy. And given the number of projects that the network were involved in supporting alongside their male kin there was also the need for many of the women to be actively involved in the management and conduct of the quarterly meetings, even if on a rotational basis.

Cappe and Gray's female parochial network wanted to be involved in the *active* practice of management as their fathers, husbands and sons were elsewhere in the community. And there was surely pleasure to be had in the homosocial world of committee meetings, routine and ritual – 'all that libidinal energy' of women in groups.⁷² The enjoyment resided in following the schedule of inspection routines, the preparation of accounts, the possession of specialist roles, pro-forma reporting mechanisms and the presumption that any of the women could, where circumstances required it, act as *prima inter pares*.

Their parochial network not only supported Cappe and Gray's efforts to direct the impulses of the lower classes from sensuality to sense, but also believed in the concepts of 'public probity and national honour, based on the demonstration of managerial and financial competence, bolstered by the administrative input from the more experienced male members of their network.'⁷³ Once settled in their roles and confident of their contribution Cappe and Gray oversaw⁷⁴ a steady production line of books and pamphlets and magazine articles advertising their skills of organizational order and managerial competence to the local community *and* to a wider national public.⁷⁵

The women also saw their work in religious terms, especially those whose network ties were formed via their worship at St. Michael le Belfry. The Society targeted young women on the cusp of employment and an independent life, initially those who were leaving the Spinning and Grey Coats Schools that the women oversaw, bound for domestic service. Without supervision and correction Cappe and Gray believed it was likely that these young women, in common with the natural tendency of humankind, would surrender to the sensual, and the generally low and grovelling taste for the immediately gratifying.⁷⁶ In 1807 the Society published a handbill addressed to the ‘younger members’ that articulated this need for them to turn away from immediate gratification of the material (ribbons were singled out as a persistent distraction to young women) in order to cultivate foresight and prudence:

‘have you never seen the brightest hopes disappointed? Have you never seen the youthful, as well as the aged, attacked by disease, and reduced to the greatest distress? And when this happens, who do you think will have acted the wiser part; she who having regularly paid her Quarterly Subscription ... or she who has spent all her little earnings in foolish finery...?’⁷⁷

Given the often judgemental and moralistic rhetoric that the committee women employed when talking about the women who used the services of the York Female Friendly Society, it is clear that the service users were *not* seen as potential partners in the management of the society. For example in 1806, in a debate about whether to award a ‘long service’ bonus the women noted their disapproval of women ‘of an unsteady, roving disposition, a temper so fatal to prosperity of the individual herself as well as the regularity and comfort of the family in which she is a servant’.⁷⁸ But Cappe

and Gray et al did not desire gender solidarity or social justice or any analogous mission of a social enterprise formed in this century; their aim was social influence and an acknowledged role within their community. Their management had the effect of writing other women with whom they interacted in their managerial capacity into particular roles, always subordinate and rarely afforded agency. This was a social division that was taken for granted and that management masked only to the extent that it was normalised, and therefore became the object of the women's philanthropic attentions. If ordinary YFFS members were aware of their positioning by the committee women or resisted it then it was not to an extent to which it impinged on Cappe and Gray et al's ability to continue to manage in a way that had peer approval.

The Grey Coat School

Charity schools for both girls and boys were founded in York in 1705, part of a wider national movement for the establishment of such institutions. Again, as was common for charities in the 18th century, they were also based on the subscription model, supplemented periodically by bequests and the proceeds of charity sermons and investments. In her account of the women's involvement in the School, Cappe was keen to stress that it had been under the control of a Ladies Committee of subscribers at its inception:

the Girls School was originally begun by ladies, and was for some time solely under their management and control ...when it was again intrusted to them .. in the years 1786, and 1787, far from this being an innovation, it merely reverted

back again to the circumstances in which it was first placed by the pious and excellent founders.⁷⁹

However, for most of the schools' first 75 years both the girls and boys schools – and funds – had been jointly managed by a committee of male subscribers and city councillors known collectively as the Gentlemen's Committee, with the assistance of an employed steward.⁸⁰ However, the decision in the mid 1750s to subcontract the day to day running of the schools to a Master and Mistress for a fixed payment per pupil led to a series of (predictable) profiteering scandals. After a long period of negotiation, and in recognition of the good management that Cappe and Gray's 'Ladies Committee' had brought to the operation of the Spinning School, responsibility for operating the school was given to the same parochial network of women in 1787.

The relationship of the 'Ladies Committee' to the Gentlemen's Committee, who retained overall control of the funds of both schools, was complex and the space that the women managed within became increasingly constrained. Cappe states in her account of the women's involvement with the school⁸¹ that the terms under which her parochial network agreed to manage it were clear and agreed prior to the women starting work.⁸² These terms stated that although the matron should receive wages as 'agent or servant' of the governors i.e. the Gentlemen's Committee, the internal governance of the institution in all other respects would be the responsibility of a superintending member of the women's network acting in accordance to written regulations. Additional terms were that the female apprenticeships would be abolished and instead the girls would be hired as domestic servants on graduation.⁸³ The women felt that the term 'apprenticeship' when applied to girls was quite misleading. According to Cappe there was a fundamental difference between placing a boy with a master to learn a trade and

fill a similar station in time on an equal footing, and a girl who is often placed in a menial occupation in conditions of near slavery with no prospect of advancement. The Gentlemen's Committee only ceded the final point when it became clear this was a non-negotiable outcome for the women and central to their parochial 'more than profit' orientation to the organisations they managed.⁸⁴

The women carried into the management of Grey Coat School the broad operating structure of their Spinning School and Friendly Society i.e. a set of operating rules, recurrent cycles of quarterly meetings, the rota for taking up specific roles and regulated reporting mechanisms.⁸⁵ Cappe and Gray were determined to deliver a qualitatively better experience of schooling and work training than the girls had received to date (the women wished to appoint a writing master, for example), and also to deliver a quantifiably more efficient model of running the school. The women's plan was to change the formerly ad hoc industrial training offered and to introduce wool spinning, on the grounds that it would generate additional income for the school as well as train the students in a useful occupation they could pursue after marriage to supplement the family income.

The business case for worsted wool spinning in this period was a convincing one, but not one that proved to be sustainable. The demand for worsted wool soared in the decade after the signing of the peace treaty with the newly independent United States in 1783 and markets reopened. The demand for labour was high.⁸⁶ As a result manufacturing agents looked outside of the traditional wool spinning areas of West Yorkshire, willing to transport wool as far as York in order to be spun. Industrialisation of the industry was slow to establish, although successful milling techniques had been discovered in the 1780s. However, as the decade progressed piece rates fell and agents became less willing to transport wool long distance to hand spinners, such as the Grey

Coat School. The women's plan for a steady income for the School came under sustained pressure during their management period, especially from the 1790s onwards as a combined result of the reduced availability of wool, lower prices for the spun product alongside increased food costs due to wartime inflation and successive harvest failures that blighted the early 1800s.

The women presumed that they would be left alone to manage the institution and its challenges. They considered themselves competent managers and bitterly resented, and resisted, operational interference that the Gentleman's Committee budgetary oversight afforded the men. Although men *and* women contributed through subscriptions to one or both of the schools according to preference, a committee drawn from the list of *male* subscribers had overall control and management of the funds. The women were, over the course of their term of management, put in the position of having to 'prove' their financial competence to the Gentlemen. In 1799, for example, the gentlemen sent 'their' version of expenditure and income to the women, who corrected it and sent it back to the Gentlemen's Committee with a terse note of where their figures had been incorrect. The Gentlemen contended that, based on the period 1796-1799, the 'estimate of the expense of the Grey Coat Girls School under the ladies' management' was that the women had admitted 12 girls in that time, would replace the students in the school on a 10.25 year cycle, at an annual cost per student of £11 4s 7d, and at a total cost of £115 1s 11 3/5d. The women countered with their own figures of: 20 girls admitted (12 sent to service, 8 expelled near to the end of their time at the school), that they turned over the students in the school every 6.5 years, at an annual cost per student of £10 0 0 (but with additional overheads and estate costs of £1 4s 7d), and a total cost per student over the lifetime of their schooling to the age of 16 (later than the boys) of £72 19s 9 1/2d.⁸⁷ In 1810, in a similar disputed set of accounts the women calculated that

the difference between the two sets of accounts and far from signalling their incompetence in book-keeping, was 8s 5d.⁸⁸ They also pointed out that they estimated that had Alderman Ellis, one of the gentlemen of the committee disputing their accounts, had been able to supply the wool for spinning as promised they would have earned an additional £20 in 1809.

Cappe complained in her account of the school that there was little continuity in the Gentlemen's Committee.⁸⁹ Membership of the Gentlemen's Committee fluctuated. It is not clear from the minutes of that committee whether members were co-opted, volunteered or were drawn by ballot from the list of male subscribers. At some points more than 20 men were in attendance at meetings, with the Chair appearing to rotate at each meeting, and at other periods a sub-committee of five men negotiated with the women. Cappe clearly saw this as an issue. The women's committee was a constant and known quantity from within their parochial network, the gentlemen's was not. Occasionally, the women could rely on their husbands or sons or evangelical clergymen to temper the Gentlemen's Committee behaviour, but it could never be assumed that men representing the women's parochial ties would be in the majority.⁹⁰

Cappe wrote of her frustrations at:

every new contributor having a right to give his opinion and his vote, how little soever he might understand the subject... a select number [only should be] appointed to that office; and, indeed, without some such regulation it is quite impossible for any subordinate authority ever to organize and carry into execution any important improvement.⁹¹

The women were used to the principle that subscription purchased a vote and managerial authority. Yet despite being subscribers AND in possession of a clear operating agreement in respect of the running of the school, they were not left to manage. The Gentlemen's Committee did not act as if subscription bought the women the right to exercise their management prerogative without challenge. The 1804 minutes note their protests regarding the undermining of their authority by the actions of the new Gentlemen's steward, Mr Jameson, who would visit the school without giving notice and 'scolding the Matron without the least provocation and finding fault with the quantity and quality of their meat, although ordered by the Ladies and approved by the Gentlemen's committee'.⁹² A likely source of the Gentlemen's dissatisfaction was not only the comparison between the boys and girls school but their awareness of other charity schools in the region, comparators for their own claims to be effective administrators in the public realm. For example, Ackworth School in nearby Wakefield was operated as an outpost of London's Foundling Hospital from 1757-1773. Ackworth also reportedly once sent 166 children out for apprenticeship in one day.⁹³

Catharine Cappe was probably responsible for the keeping of the school accounts in this period. Her memoirs state that it was her practice to compile, and arrange for the printing of, the annual accounts for both the Spinning and the Grey Coat School.⁹⁴ Cappe appeared to enjoy this aspect of the work (she was, for example, the person who corresponded with the actuaries and who took the greatest interest in the accounts of the Friendly Society). Middle-class women were expected to have computational ability and many felt empowered by keeping records⁹⁵ – Faith Gray was a prodigious household account keeper and had been encouraged to be so by her mother.⁹⁶ The involvement of Gray's female children and Cappe's female step-children in helping to run the schools and the Friendly Society into the mid-19th century also

suggests a concern with inter-generational skill transfer within established parochial networks.

Accounts were more than an internal note of money in and money out. As Reid notes accounts were published primarily as a public relations exercise for the subscription society or charity.⁹⁷ As most of the institutions of this type relied heavily on donations, fundraising calls and regular subscriptions, the annual accounts were a way of communicating with supporters and ensuring donations and subscriptions continued. The reputation of the women within their community was based on their competence in matters of 'oeconomy, frugality, professionalism, and financial rectitude'⁹⁸ as was, by extension, their claim to piety. The women's continued ability to raise funds for *all* of their charitable institutions would be threatened by poor accounting and housekeeping, so the stakes were high in this otherwise minor accounting dispute.

In 1810, the Gentlemen issued a printed note that was to be put in the city newspapers, posted to all citizens and parish churches asking for additional financial support from the community for the Schools – the expenditure for 50 boys and 44 girls having exceeded the charity's income by some £650 8 5. The men were anxious about their public standing, which was connected to the financial success of the schools. The women suspected, with some justification, that the Gentlemen were willing to publicly blame the women for the financial over-run. In their own meeting called after the Gentlemen's proclamation the women noted that the cost per annum to keep a girl was £17 10 6.5, and a boy £17 11 7.5. However, the girls earned income from textile production that could be set against that cost, the boys did not.⁹⁹ The Gentlemen's Committee persisted in making unfavourable comparisons with the cost per head of keeping a student at the girls' school against that of the boys' school, despite the women

pointing out that the two institutions were not similar because the girl's school had an income stream that the boy's did not. As a result of the 1810 dispute Cappe and Gray announced their intention to step down, citing the pressure of other duties but making clear the continued injustice of having their managerial competence questioned. Their other social assistance projects were time-consuming, but there was the distinct risk that if the men were going to continue to question their accounts that Cappe and Gray's 'parochial capital' and social influence would be destroyed. Nine other women resigned alongside them.

The Gentlemen's Committee backed down. The Ladies Committee negotiated a public apology from the Gentlemen – one which stressed that the women exercised a 'very proper and laudable economy', had acted with 'ability, attention and prudence' over the previous 24 years, and that the women were being asked to renew their patronage of the schools. The apology was published in all three York newspapers.¹⁰⁰ However, Cappe appeared to be unsure as to whether or not the damage to the parochial networks' social capital had been sufficiently contained. At the end of 1810 she published an account of the women's work at Grey Coat School addressed 'to her fellow citizens'.¹⁰¹ Although Cappe wrote a number of instructional accounts based on the institutions she helped found and operate for national circulation, the account of the Grey Coat School is different in tone and approach. The frontispiece states her intention to respond to 'suspicions entertained, and the misrepresentations industriously circulated' of the women's management record.¹⁰²

The additional support that Cappe and Gray drew on in relation to Grey Coat School was the willingness of their wider evangelical/political group to protect their interests from within the wider subscriber group. In the period from 1788 until 1810 there was a considerable overlap of the familial and political networks of the Ladies and

Gentlemen's committees. William Gray, for example, was a signatory to a letter sent to Faith Gray and Catharine Cappe confirming arrangements regarding student retention in June 1810. However, after that date the only members of the Gentlemen's Committee listed in the minutes who are known members of Cappe and Gray's network are William Richardson and John Graham. Without the support of their parochial peers the women were increasingly vulnerable to being positioned as incompetent amateurs.

After the deaths of both Cappe and Gray in the 1820s a committee of women continued to operate the school, subject to the same persistent criticisms from the Gentlemen's Committee. A dispute over membership of the Ladies Committee prompted more resignations in 1824.¹⁰³ An uneasy truce remained between the committees but in 1829 the Ladies Committee was disbanded and a regime of visiting the school, along the lines of prison or asylum visiting, was implemented with all control being transferred back to the Gentlemen's Committee.

Discussion

The experiences of Cappe and Gray in founding the York Female Friendly Society, and their management contract at Grey Coat School show the importance of the parochial realm in the founding of social enterprise and educational services in the late Georgian period. The parochial realm structured the space within which women could create social enterprises and exercise social influence. Cappe and Gray's experience of running the Grey Coat School, however, also suggests that the extent to which these social enterprises were created and managed within the parochial network was an important factor in women's ability to manage without interference. For example, Cappe and Gray's parochial and familial networks provided the start-up capital for the York Female Friendly Society through becoming honorary members and providing

additional funds and then serving as active members of the committee. The women were also able to rely upon the administrative support of their more experienced – and supportive - male peers in learning how to operate the society. The shared institutional model created a community of practice amongst volunteers across a number of semi-official and volunteer enterprises; the networked membership of the non-conformist and evangelical members in the period 1780-1820 reinforced commitment and a sense of belonging.¹⁰⁴

The Friendly Society was able to use the financial resources of its parochial network of non-conformist and evangelical families¹⁰⁵ to protect and nurture the society until such time as the fund was fully secure. The long period of support it received from the parochial members enabled the institution to survive its initial period of vulnerability as the funds built up, and then to grow to the point where it was self-supporting in terms of resources and survived as an independent financial service to the women of York for two centuries. Yet, in terms of contribution, it should be noted that the women chose to target financial and educational services for women as a distinct market segment and specialism. They did not attempt to cross the gender line and offer the same financial services to male workers, nor did they interest themselves in the education of boys.

In the case of the Grey Coat School the women had great difficulty in using their own preferred institutional form. Cappe and Gray attempted to co-opt the existing space for their preferred institutional model, whilst simultaneously prying existing financial resource¹⁰⁶ from the Gentlemen's Committee in order to use it differently. However, there was never an agreement between the two committees as to what the extent of the women's management freedom would be. The women, in line with their wider parochial network, worked in ways that valued welfare, industrial training and moral

development¹⁰⁷ *in addition* to financial efficiency. The Gentlemen outside of their network focused on the bottom line. The women only ever managed to borrow space from, rather than defeat the older institutional form of sub-contracting ‘care’ on a cost-per-child basis that the Gentlemen were more comfortable with and that fitted well with the men’s values as corporation office holders of delivering financial value only.¹⁰⁸

Cappe and Gray et al’s experience of founding and operating these early forms of social enterprises shows the complex way that gender and management was shaped within the parochial and the public realms at this time. The management team they represented acted in order to save the service users from their own class-based, human frailties that would lead them away from a good and well-maintained life. A concern with correction ran through the management practices of both enterprises. For example, the penalty for leaving school without matron’s permission on three occasions was to be handcuffed and locked in the garret for 3 days on bread and water.¹⁰⁹

Cappe and Gray et al did not embark on their enterprise building in order to pursue gender solidarity or social justice; their desire was for social influence and the expression of their wider religious beliefs and a women-only focus allowed them space within their more constrained society to pursue both aims. Yet, they were still vulnerable to the impression that they were managerially incompetent. Their relationship with the Gentlemen’s Committee may have started out as one that was contracted in the assumption they would enjoy the same freedoms as within their own parochial network, but over time the gulf between the women’s committee of extended family, friends and fellow worshippers and a male committee drawn from the wider, and less connected, male citizenry widened and exposed the women to threats to their social standing. The women could not rely on a shared understanding of managerial prerogative that was purchased by their subscriptions, nor on the protection or support

of their male network ties. The majority of the Gentlemen's Committee were, by 1810, no longer members of the women's parochial networks of non-conformists and political reformers. Instead, their relationship to men outwith their parochial network was marked by a series of accounting disputes, increasingly played out in public and for high social stakes. When the women were deferred, or apologised, to the apologies increasingly carried the impression that it was the women's membership of a general social class that was being acknowledged, and not their managerial competence.

Cappe and Gray exercised social power as part of an elite social group within the City, not as women. As women there were clear limits placed upon their power yet there were still opportunities to pursue managerial and organisational aims within the logic of their parochial networks. The claim that Cappe and Gray were agents of enterprise in the parochial realm acting alongside their male kin, and being supported by them financially and in respect of skills development and knowledge transfer, does not mean that Cappe and Gray were acting in non-gendered ways nor they they escaped being positioned as gendered actors. However, an appreciation of the possibilities of the parochial enables us to see their enterprises as both challenging *and* reinforcing the period's understanding of women's employment, contribution to family income and education and training for work.¹¹⁰

Conclusion

In framing this paper I referred to Joan Scott's observation that focusing on women owners might help feminist historians to draw attention to the insufficiency of the field's coverage of gender issues, but not to correct it. The gender of Cappe and Gray and the women who worked alongside them in managing the schools and friendly society is not useful to business history's development per se. What would be needed, in

Scott's view, to bring gender into focus in business history would be examples of how business practices help to define gender, how power relationships reinforce gendered divisions of labour, or the specific operation of labour markets or creation of products and their markets. Scott encouraged us to look at larger questions of practice in order to bring bring previously excluded groups and other organisational types, such as businesses that started as charities and subscription societies, into the scope of business history.¹¹¹

Cappe and Gray's management experiences belong to business history. The York Female Friendly Society developed into a recognisable insurance provider as the 19th Century progressed, and remained so until its closure in 1984. In light of the UK's experiments with free schools and academies operated by management companies, the ways in which schooling is operated have a distinct claim to being considered part of business history. Cappe and Gray provide an insight into the historical antecedents of philanthrocapitalism, social enterprises and not-for-profit community provision of welfare services and their gendered, and gender reinforcing, practices. The experiences of Cappe and Gray's managerial group also allow us to see the ways in which parochial interest groups provide the framework for the types of enterprises that are formed. But mostly they show us how their own management practices were shaped by gender – as was the tenor of the relationships with their own female peers, female service users and gentlemen of the public sphere.

The paper used the concept of the parochial to reveal the civic realm as a site of business activity by women in the late Georgian period. Specifically, it demonstrated that the parochial provides a useful framework for the study of women's involvement in small and medium sized enterprises, especially in relation to those that serviced specific communities or neighbourhoods in social welfare enterprises and not-for-profits in the

18th and 19th centuries. The idea of the parochial encourages us to consider *communities*, whether they are political, religious or interest based, as an important unit of analysis when studying the genesis of institutions. In the case of Catharine Cappe and Faith Gray their institution building and management activity were an expression of the logic of their parochial networks, which were both religious and political.

A focus on the parochial realm specifically allows us to see how women used their parochial contacts to capture resources, knowledge and skills from existing male networks and to put them to use in their own women-only enterprises. Although the parochial realm is a social space, not a geographically or physically enclosed one¹¹² it does reflect the social structures and histories of specific locations. The paper showed this in relation to York in this period where a peer group formed around a shared experience of religious revivalism, and political dissent used the existing subscription society format to leverage social influence, notably so in a period when non-conformists such as Unitarians were not permitted to hold public office.

When working with men and women in their parochial network Cappe and Gray were subscribers to and members of a wide range of philanthropic societies and enterprises that served men *and* women. However, it was when they worked with the women of their parochial network they focused their attentions on female-only opportunities and services, and created women-only enterprises. The space to practice *as managers* was restricted to women-only settings in the parochial realm such as the friendly society, and to girls' industrial schools. Operating in a restricted parochial space did not equate to being denied entry into the wider *public* realm of female philanthropic knowledge networks. In return, and via the expository texts they published about their York enterprises, Cappe and Gray et al received recognition in their local community and their wider religious networks.

Cappe and Gray's experiences at the Grey Coat School, however, also suggest that outside of the parochial network women were vulnerable to judgements about management competence based on the delivering services at the lowest possible cost to the charitable subscriber and city administration. In order for the women to be successful managers they felt that the school should be run efficiently, for funds to be used with economy and care but, in addition, the girls needed to be educated to an appropriate standard, prepared for domestic service, and skilled in jobs that could supplement the income of the families they would eventually establish. The gentlemen, in contrast, appeared only to be interested in quantitative terms – first comparing it to the costs of running the boys' school, and then again when comparing both their schools to those in the wider (male) public realm. Here then is the source of the persistent questioning of costs, apprenticeships and outputs, perhaps fuelled by high benchmarks of success and the achievements of previous generations of public men e.g. Ackworth's record of sending out 166 apprentices in one day. Judgements regarding economy, frugality, and financial rectitude might appear to be neutral; Cappe and Gray's experience in managing Grey Coat School suggests the 'bottom line' was also gendered.

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Notes

¹ Cf. Hunt, *The Middling Sort*, 167-170; Goodman, “Question of management Style”, 150; “Disposed to Take Charge”, 59.

² Although the term ‘social enterprise’ is a product of the 1990s, there are clear parallels to earlier organisational forms that share similar goals visible in the historical record. The trend throughout the 1990s was for third sector organisations, such as charities and philanthropic endeavours, to be drawn into the provision of services for, and on behalf of, government. In periods prior to the central state providing welfare and basic sickness insurance cover, it was the philanthropic sector that took the lead in establishing schemes for the working classes and the direction of travel in many Western, industrial nations is towards a non-state model with social enterprises filling the gaps left by government provision. Whilst there are a range of possible definitions of a social enterprise, the main differences between them in the early literature largely focused on the extent to which profit can or cannot be made, the conditions around and recipients of the redistribution of excess funds, and the involvement of service users or workers in decision making. More recent contributions to the debate have suggested that a less fraught way of thinking about social enterprises involves focusing on their distinct governance structures, one strand of which is firmly rooted in voluntary associations, and the role of social capital and social rationality. Looked at from this perspective Cappe and Gray’s organisations fit much more firmly into a conception of social enterprise as an endeavour that operates from socially rational perspectives to serve wider socio-emotional purposes. For more discussion see, Ridley-Duff, ‘Social Enterprise’, 302; Becchetti and Borganza, ‘Introduction’, 3-9; Defourny and Nyssens, ‘Defining Social Enterprise’, 3-5; Ridley-Duff and Bill, *Understanding Social Enterprise*, 13-15; Evers, ‘Significance of Social Capital’, 296-311

³ Scott, “Conceptualising gender”, 242.

⁴ The history of women and management in Britain, as opposed to the history of women and business or the history of women and labour, has largely been written outside of the specialist business history journals. What we know of women's practice of management is often gleaned from general histories on the middle classes, specific urban environments, the family, non-conformist religion, philanthropy or education e.g. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*; Watts, *Gender, Power and the Unitarians*; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*; Hunt, *Middling Sort*; Twells, *Civilising Mission*; Goodman, "Disposed to take charge". More recently, i.e. 2010, there has been a Special Issue of Management and Organisation History on the topic of gender and management. The history of women and business in the UK has concentrated on women's ownership of small business and entrepreneurship, e.g. the monographs by Barker, *The Business of Women*; and Kay, *The Foundations of Female Entrepreneurship*, and articles by Honeyman e.g. "Female Entrepreneurship", "Doing Business" and Sharpe "Gender in the economy". The US, in comparison, has a more substantial record on women and business research e.g. the work of Kwolek-Folland "Gender and Business History", "the Service Sector", "Women in the Service", "Life Insurance", *Engendering Business*, "Customers and neighbours"; Gamber's "Gendered Concerns", "A Gendered Enterprise", "The Boardinghouse" and *The Female Economy*, and Gerson and Peiss's "Boundaries, Negotiations", Peiss's "Vital Industry", "On Beauty" and *Hope in a Jar*, and on the topic of women in management consultancy e.g. Yaeger "Mavericks and Mavens". In terms of the history of women in the labour market the UK has a substantial record of scholarship (see, as a sample, Holloway, *Women and Work*, Simonton, *European*

Women's Work).

⁵ Scott, "Conceptualising gender", 242-249.

⁶ Scott, "Conceptualising gender", 248-249.

⁷ Phillips and Rippin, "Striving to uncover", 285

⁸ Lofland, *The Public Realm*, 10.

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- ⁹ Cull et al, “Historical Financing”, 3028-3031; Collier, “Family Economy”, 27; Pollard, “Fixed Capital”, 309.
- ¹⁰ Laurence et al, “Introduction”, 2
- ¹¹ E.g. Beebe et al, “Space, Place”, 523-532; Goyens, “Social Space’, 439-457; Kümin and Usborne, “At Home”, 305-318; Robert, “Constructions”, 319-343.
- ¹² See Taylor and Spicer, “Time for Space”, 325-346 for a summary.
- ¹³ Lofland, *The Public Realm*, 10.
- ¹⁴ Moore, “A Notable Personality”, 240.
- ¹⁵ More, *Coelebs*, 10 as cited in Mearns, *Appropriate Fields*, 30.
- ¹⁶ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 99.
- ¹⁷ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 100-101.
- ¹⁸ Shapely, “Charity, Status and Leadership”, 157.
- ¹⁹ Shapely, “Charity, Status and Leadership”, 157.
- ²⁰ Shapely, “Charity, Status and Leadership”, 160-1.
- ²¹ Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy*. Emphasis added.
- ²² Mearns, *Appropriate Fields*, 35
- ²³ The application of the term ‘capital’ to any number of attributes held by the individual and important to the understanding of how they are deployed in networked relationships is a feature of social science writing since the widespread use of ‘social capital’ and ‘human capital’ since the 1970s and 1980s. Recent variations include ‘gender capital’ e.g. Huppertz, *Gender Capital at Work*, and ‘civic capital’ e.g. Evers, Significance of Social Capital, 299. I use ‘reputational capital’ here in the same sense, as an attribute held by the individual and traded upon in terms of trust in social networks.
- ²⁴ For the seminal critique of the concept see Vickery, “Separate spheres”, 383 - 414
- ²⁵ Gleadle’s *Borderline Citizens* makes extensive use of the term, and Lofland’s definitions, in considering women’s ‘political’ roles in the 18th and 19th century.
- ²⁶ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, 10.

²⁷ Rendell, "Public Sphere", 478.

²⁸ Martin, "Women and Philanthropy", 119-150.

²⁹ See Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy*.

³⁰ Gleadle, *Borderline Citizens*, 123-156.

³¹ Borsay, "Politeness and Elegance", 3.

³² Reid, "Rational Dissent", 97.

³³ Atkins, *Wilberforce and his Milieu*, 16; Temperley, *Jonathan Gray*, 9.

³⁴ Cappe, *Memoirs*, 197. Within months of Catherine Cappe settling in York in 1782 she and Faith Gray had persuaded the proprietor of a city hemp factory, alleged to be the source of a great deal of female licentiousness and depravity e.g. casual prostitution, to allow them to teach the girls employed there to read. The women soon concluded that the only guarantee of the girls' moral and general welfare was to remove them completely from the factory environment and proposed setting up a school under their control where education and hemp spinning for profit would co-exist.³⁴ Day to day running of their Spinning School was superintended by Cappe and managed by a committee of concerned women citizens, known as the Ladies Committee. It was the success of the Ladies Committee that first brought Cappe and Gray to the attention of the governors of the city's Grey Coat charity school. See also note 47.

³⁵ Her family, who removed all entries that commented on her contemporaries for fear it may cause offence, edited Faith Gray's diaries after her death. The abridged diary published in 1926 as part of a wider collection of family papers across the generations also removed the bulk of Gray's voice in respect of her parochial network in preference for detailing her support of her husband's activities, and her family. See Gray, *Papers*, 13.

³⁶ Christie, "The Yorkshire Association", 144-161.

³⁷ Cappe's 1814 *Thoughts on various charitable and other important institutions* was dedicated to Wilberforce.

³⁸ Hume, *Bentham and Bureaucracy*, 33.

³⁹ Dickey, "Going About", 40.

⁴⁰ Dickey, "Going About", 40.

⁴¹ Hume, *Bentham and Bureaucracy*, 47-51.

⁴² Hume, *Bentham and Bureaucracy*, 49.

⁴³ Non-conformists were not able to take part in municipal government until the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act in 1828. The Corporations Act of 1661 decreed that mayors and all municipal officials had to receive Holy Communion in accordance with the rites of the Church of England. This effectively barred some religious faiths from holding public office.

⁴⁴ Royle, *Religion in York*, 70-82.

⁴⁵ Twells, *Civilising mission*, 63.

⁴⁶ Brown, *Fathers of the Victorians*, 333.

⁴⁷ In 1783 York's largest employer was Hooker's hemp manufactory, which produced sacking for upholstery and wool sheeting. It employed about 60 children in unsatisfactory working and moral conditions. The plan of a small parochial network of women that included Cappe and Gray was to establish a school attached to Hooker's where the children could be educated in the evening. The scheme failed because the children were too tired to concentrate after a full day's work. As an alternative, the women decided to establish a school that would, as part of its educational activities, teach children spin flax, and younger children to knit. Rules were drawn up, probably based on a similar enterprise – the Blue Coat Girls School in Greenwich, established in 1700 and run by a committee of women. At York's new Spinning School a matron was appointed who operated under the direct control of a Ladies Committee. The Ladies Committee pitched this successful model to the Gentlemen of Grey Coat School as evidence of their competence and the approach's

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- viability. The Spinning School closed in 1858 and its surplus funds transferred to the Grey Coat School. See Taylor, *Blue Coat: Grey Coat*, 52-53
- ⁴⁸ Brown, "Asylum Reform", 429-431.
- ⁴⁹ Ridley-Duff, 292.
- ⁵⁰ E.g. Brown, "Doctor's Club"; Gorsky, *Patterns of philosophy*; Gunn, "Civilising mission"; Morris, "Clubs, societies and associations"; Roach, "Sheffield schools", 1999; Shapely, "Manchester Man".
- ⁵¹ Twells, *Civilising Mission*, 51.
- ⁵² Cordery, *British friendly societies*, 24-25; Rusnock and Dietz, "Defining women's sickness", 62.
- ⁵³ Reader, *Female friendly societies*, 97, 107, 117
- ⁵⁴ Reader, *Female friendly societies*, 69-75.
- ⁵⁵ Rusnock and Dietz, "Defining women's sickness", 72.
- ⁵⁶ Rusnock and Dietz, "Defining women's sickness", 66
- ⁵⁷ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 66. Although this was a common criticism of friendly societies. For example, Brown, "Present Position", 19-22.
- ⁵⁸ Although dividing societies did attract official criticism and concern. See, *Fourth report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into friendly and benefit building societies. Part I. Report of the commissioners, with appendix*. C.961, C.961-1. 1874, xxxii
- ⁵⁹ Honorary members who contributed to the administration of societies, without becoming eligible for benefits, were a feature of early 19th century schemes, even where in all other respects the societies were self-governing. This arrangement became less common as the century progressed. Weinbren, "Supporting Self Help", 75
- ⁶⁰ For other later examples see Weinbren, "Fraternity", 200-222; Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy*, 211-212.
- ⁶¹ The York Female Friendly Society covered its costs using a combination of subscriptions, dividends and (later) interest payments on the general fund every year that Cappe and Gray

administered the funds, apart from 1822, which saw sickness payments soar as a result of a very bad winter. Honorary members made up approximately 47% of the total members in 1790 and 54% in 1820, although the percentage was as low as 38% in 1810. Reader's survey of female friendly societies suggests that most societies averaged 70 members each. The YFFS was comfortably in excess of this and, at its peak during the Cappe and Gray years, had 126 general members. Reader, *Female Friendly Societies*, 79.

⁶² Amended Rules, 1807, as enrolled at Quarter Sessions, 3 May 1808 (printed copy), Records of the York Female Friendly Society, York City Archives, Accession 50.46.

⁶³ Amended Rules, 1807.

⁶⁴ Before 1832, when the terminology was officially altered, the society's rules (although not its minutes) referred to its male Trustees as 'treasurers' and its 'senior stewardesses' as 'Trustees'.

⁶⁵ These celebrations were common practice for friendly societies of all types and were carefully planned and choreographed by the honorary members. Meeting minutes include a line drawing showing where, and in what order, the students of the Spinning and Grey Coat Schools should stand to cheer on the procession as it left the School forecourt for the women to walk in line to the church service. Ribbons and sashes were purchased in the colours of the Society to help distinguish the women as they paraded through York. Weinbren, "All-seeing eye", 169, sees their purpose as reinforcing a commodified and structured sociability that reinforced ideas of mutuality. This element transferred across to many later working class movements, hence the elaborate banners of trade union branches and social clubs. See also; Lowe, *A Sermon*.

⁶⁶ See also Brown, "Present Position", 19-22.

⁶⁷ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 70.

⁶⁸ Cappe, *Memoirs*, 202.

⁶⁹ Cappe came to regional prominence with his written defence of Theophilus Lindsey in 1773, and further established nationally with a sermon preached on the likely loss of the American

Colonies in 1776. Cappe's own parochial network was based in his congregation and through the literary club that he founded in 1771, of which Dr Hunter and Dr Swainston were members as was Henry Goodricke, the noted astronomer. He also had links to the medical profession through his two sons who were both doctors, one of whom was involved with the York Dispensary – also a subscription charity. Both Cappe and Gray acted as key nodes in the parochial network. Gray resigned from the practice of law in 1805 to concentrate on his philanthropic projects, which included the Church Missionary Society, Bible Society, York Dispensary and York County Hospital. In common with his wife, William Gray was an assiduous bookkeeper in respect of his business and household expenditure, and very able clerk and secretary. See Davies, *Memoir*, 296-297; New Oxford DNB (<http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/105372?docPos=3>)

⁷⁰ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 69.

⁷¹ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 69.

⁷² Scott, *Fantasy*, 31, Scott credits Carol Smith-Rosenberg with the idea of 'homosocial' pleasure.

⁷³ Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 7.

⁷⁴ Gray appears to have used her contacts, including her connection through her husband to William Wilberforce, to gain permissions for dedications and to facilitate distribution of the tracts. Cappe, in her capacity as domestic secretary to her husband, a prolific and noted sermon writer appears to have taken on the responsibility for the writing and research.

⁷⁵ For example, Sarah Trimmer, author of *The Economy of Charity*, philanthropist and educationalist, was in correspondence with Faith Gray and knew of their school management. In 1799 she asks if they have an individual who might be suitable to serve as Mistress of an industrial school in Dublin. Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1799.

⁷⁶ Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 81.

⁷⁷ York Female Friendly Society, *Address to the Younger Members 1807*, York Female Friendly Society Records, 50.47 Miscellaneous Files, Correspondence, Etc, York City Archives

⁷⁸ Minute Book Concerning Private Funds, Meeting 1806, Records of the York Female Friendly Society, York City Archives, Accession 50.17

⁷⁹ Cappe, *Some Account*, 5.

⁸⁰ Taylor, *Blue Coat: Grey Coat*, 9.

⁸¹ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 12.

⁸² In being very careful that the agreement was written and agreed formally I would speculate that Cappe and Gray were aware of the potential dangers in working outside of the more supportive space of their network.

⁸³ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 12.

⁸⁴ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 55. The women felt that the apprenticeship of girls to tavern owners and other low employment represented a significant moral and physical hazard to the girls. Although it is never explicitly stated, there was an obvious implied concern that such arrangements amounted to girls being ‘sold’ into prostitution.

⁸⁵ Cappe, *Some Account*, lists the Ladies Committee as comprising ‘* (Lady Anderson, Mrs Swainston, The Lady of the late Dr Withers, Mrs Fountayne, Mrs Cheap, Mrs Hunter, Mrs Bedingfield, Mrs Ellis, Mrs Deighton) ... (Lady Frankland, Mrs Withers, Mrs Eyre) (left York), Mrs R Croft (when in residence), (Mrs Salmond, Mrs Gray) (unremitting in their attendance through the whole period), Mrs Sawyer (returned after an absence of many years), Mrs Cappe. The following Ladies afterwards became members:- (Mrs Finche, Mrs Preston, Miss Hassell, Mrs Marwood) (Deceased), Lady Strickland, Miss Strickland, Miss Caroline Strickland) (left York), (Miss Woodcock, Mrs J Eyre, Miss Swainston, Miss Place) (when in York), Mrs Dodsworth, Miss Gray, Miss Lucy Grey.’ The Ladies Committee represented two-thirds of the core membership of the Ladies Committee that managed the Spinning School, which they operated alongside Grey Coat and on a similar basis.

⁸⁶ Soderland, “Resistance”, 238.

⁸⁷ Note of correspondence between Gentlemen's Committee and the Ladies Committee. Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, July 1799.

⁸⁸ Cappe clearly believed the men were guilty of selective accounting. In her defence/promotion of the running of the School published in 1810 she mentions the figures of 53 girls have gone into service between 1801-1810, that 40 girls were still being schooled, and that on average 6 girls were sent out each year. There were some expulsions for poor behaviour, a death and one instance where a girl was returned to her parents suffering fits. In addition, one or two of the girls were retained as wool mistresses. Cappe, *Some Account*, 20.

⁸⁹ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 20.

⁹⁰ For example, at the time of the 1810 dispute, the Gentlemen's Committee comprised Rev. J Graham, Rev Wm Richardson, Thomas Wilson, Edward Prest, G L Thompson, D Russell, R Townsend, John Roper, Rev G Brown, Mr R Spence, Mr J Oldfield, Mr J Foyer, Mr O Allen, Mr W Jameson, Mr Brown, Mr J Mills, Mr Thomas Brookes, Mr G Hotham, Mr E Wallis. Only Graham and Richardson were connected to the parochial network of Cappe and Gray, their committee still comprised the core of the families associated with the Yorkshire Association and social reform of the previous generation i.e. Mrs Salmond, Mrs Cappe, Mrs Gray, Mrs Sawyer, Mrs Norcliffe, Miss Royds, Miss Ewbank, Miss Ann Wickham, Mrs Allen, Mrs Robinson and Mrs Walker. Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1810.

⁹¹ Cappe, *Various Thoughts*, 20.

⁹² Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1807.

⁹³ Taylor, *Blue Coat: Grey Coat*, 49.

⁹⁴ Cappe, *Memoirs*, 202.

⁹⁵ Vickery, *Gentlemen's Daughter*, 9; Kirkham and Loft, *Lady and Accounts*, 67-88.

⁹⁶ Gray, *Papers*, 86.

⁹⁷ Reid, "Dissenting academies", 105.

⁹⁸ As previously Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 7

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- ⁹⁹ Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1810
- ¹⁰⁰ Note of correspondence between Gentlemen's Committee and the Ladies Committee. Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, April, 1810.
- ¹⁰¹ Cappe, *Some Account*, 1.
- ¹⁰² Cappe, *Some Account*, 19.
- ¹⁰³ Letter to the Gentleman's Committee from the Ladies Committee dated York, March 16th 1824. Minute Book of the Ladies Committee 1814-1879, Borthwick Institute for Archives, YCT/GCS/1/1/2.
- ¹⁰⁴ Handley et al, "Communities of practice", 642.
- ¹⁰⁵ The late Georgian period was one where the non-conformist and evangelical communities had close connections. The relationship between the two expressions of Protestantism drifted further apart as the century progressed. It is tempting to see this drift as starting with the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act, where non-conformists were able to act within the existing political system rather than outside of it and needing to cultivate meaningful and productive alliances with other 'new' religious sects. Communicated in an email to the author by Andrew Hill, former Unitarian minister and member of the York Congregation, 20th January 2015.
- ¹⁰⁶ Rao et al, "Power plays", 240.
- ¹⁰⁷ Any discussion of qualitative differences in attitude to 'care' of the schoolgirls is necessarily a relative, historical judgement. It was not until 1799 that the girls were permitted to sit for the whole duration of dinner. Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1790 and 1799.
- ¹⁰⁸ Minute Book of the Ladies Committee 1796 (sic)-1813, Borthwick Institute for Archives, YCT/GCS/1/1/1.
- ¹⁰⁹ Minute book of the Grey Coat School Ladies Committee 1796-1813, YCT/GCS/1/1/1, 1790 and 1799.
- ¹¹⁰ Scott, "Conceptualising gender", 242.

¹¹¹ Scott, “Conceptualising gender”, 248-249.

¹¹² Lofland, *The Public Realm*, 11.