Household Textiles 1660-1935: hidden items of material culture

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Abstract

This study seeks to demonstrate through an examination of its contribution to comfort, sociability and status that household linen played a more important role in the country house habitus than its practical functions might suggest. This research is sited within the broader investigations of country house consumption where these items, bed linen, table linen and the many textiles underpinning the elite lifestyle remain largely absent from the literature and indeed from the houses themselves.

Using original, unpublished archival research and testing the findings against historical and recent studies, the interdisciplinary approaches in this thesis will analyse the role these items played in the lived environment of the country house and assesses the contribution they made to the communication of the wealth, prestige and taste of the owner through consideration of the values and meanings placed upon them by contemporaries. Interrogating inventories, household accounts and sales catalogues together with contemporary literature it provides evidence for the range of household textiles in use during the period 1660-1939. It examines their acquisition, management and maintenance. The investigation explores the link between the acquisition of household textiles and life-cycle events and the degree to which such items demonstrate consumer choice and fashion. Through the selection of relevant sources consideration has also been given to questions of regional and temporal difference in these quotidian items together with the extent to which external events such as prolonged periods of war, economic slump or changes in taxation might affect acquisition.

The inclusion of extant examples of household textiles enables the study to understand the construction and subsequent maintenance of these objects adding a further dimension to the understanding of the country house economy. This research places these hitherto neglected textiles within the everyday spending patterns of the country house. It demonstrates that their practical functions were linked to sociability, comfort and hygiene whilst signalling status through their owners' display of culturally appropriate goods.

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Archival Abbreviations

BHRS **Bedfordshire Historical Records Society,** *Inventories of Bedfordshire Country Houses 1714-1830*

BO **Bodleian Library**

DRO **Derbyshire Record Office**

HALS **Hertfordshire Archives & Local Studies**

LLC **Lisburn Linen Centre**

NCL **Northampton Central Library**

NRO **Norfolk Record Office**

NUSC **Nottingham University Manuscripts and Special Collections**

NYAS **North Yorkshire Archive Service**

PRONI **Public Records Office Northern Ireland**

SCLA **Shakespeare Central Library and Archive**

SRS **Suffolk Records Society,** *Inventories of Helmington Hall*

SWH **Devon Heritage Centre**

WHS **Worcestershire Historical Society,** *Inventories of Worcestershire Landed Gentry 1537-1786*

WRO **Warwickshire Record Office**

WYAS **West Yorkshire Archive Service**

Glossary

Baize: a heavy woollen cloth raised and napped on both sides, commonly used as a table or carpet covering.

Bird's eye: indicates a fabric woven in a design consisting of a small diamond with a centre dot

Bleaching: the process of achieving a full white in fabric either using lye or buttermilk and sunlight or chemical solutions such as chlorine from the mid eighteenth century

Calico: a plain woven textile made from unbleached and often partially processed cotton. It may contain unseparated husk parts giving it a flecked appearance.

Cambric: a closely woven firm fabric with a slightly glossy surface originally from Cambrai in France.

Damask: a woven fabric with patterns created by a long floats of warp and weft threads causing soft highlights which reflect light differently

Diaper: a small geometric or floral pattern made by the constant repetition of one or more evenly spaced, simple units of design

Doiley: a small decorative mat of cloth usually placed under a plate, dish or glass to protect the surface beneath

Dowlas: a coarse linen produced with the outer fibres from flax or hemp

Duck: a heavy, plain fabric woven with two yarns together in the warp and a single yarn in the weft, derived from the Dutch 'doek' meaning canvas or cloth

Ell: a standard measure of length employed for textiles. It might vary depending on country of origin but was approximately 41 inches (104cm)

Flax: herbaceous plant *linum usitissimum* cultivated for the textile fibres made from its stalks. Textiles made from flax are usually referred to as linen

Hards: the refuse or coarser parts of flax or hemp separated in the hackling process; sometimes referred to as tow

Hemp: fibre obtained from the plant *cannabis sativa*

Holland: a fine quality linen cloth, originally imported from Holland but later denoting any finely woven plain linen. It could be brown and unbleached or the more expensive bleached white

Huckaback: a weave with weft yarns loosely twisted making the fabric have a good absorbency

Hurden: a course quality linen made from the outer fibres of flax

Lye: a solution made from ashes used to soak washing or cloth during the bleaching process

Nail: measurement equal to 1/16 of a yard

Piece: refers to the length of cloth from a loom which was usually 42 yards

Silesia: linen produced in central Germany, popular in earlier periods of the study

Slub: a lump or thick place in a yarn or thread

Swanskin: a fine thick type of wool flannel used for lining ironing tables

Tabby: weave where each weft thread crosses over and under each warp thread

Twill: a textile weave with a diagonal pattern created by offset rows of weft

Yard: unit of linear measurement of three feet or approximately 0.9 metre

Chapter One

Introduction

Context

Thomas Babington Macauley, in his *History of England* published in 1848 wrote:

> Readers who take an interest in the progress of civilisation and of the useful arts will be grateful to the humble topographer who has recorded these facts [about the meanness of the lodgings of those taking the waters at Bath, early in the eighteenth century], and will perhaps wish that historians had sometimes spared a few pages from military evolutions and political intrigues, for the purpose of letting us know how the parlours and bedchambers of our ancestors looked.[1]

This study focusses on the household textiles within the country house that performed practical functions linked to sociability, comfort and hygiene. It seeks to identify the household textiles utilised and the values and meanings placed upon them by contemporaries. It ascertains the range of such textiles available to the country house consumer, their ways of acquiring them whilst considering the extent to which they demonstrated consumer choice and fashion. It establishes the mechanics of how they were used, maintained and stored to consider how they were perceived and valued by their owners. In examining extant examples of these household textiles, the study sheds light on their construction, subsequent maintenance and indeed the lived everyday practices of expenditure. This study will contribute to bridging the divide between studies of consumption and investigations of country house life through its rigorous use of original archival sources and its inclusion of surviving examples of linen.

This chapter begins with a review of current literature on the 'bedchambers of our ancestors' addressing four main themes relevant to a study of household textiles, namely consumption, comfort, gender and habitus. Exploring this within a privileged context required consideration of the broader issues of luxury, taste and the growing concern for both physical and social comfort within the elite lifestyle epitomised by the country house. The review also touches on issues of gender within spending and the elite household. It looks next at the role of textiles within the country house as exclusive signifiers and is aware that although more recent studies have begun to investigate the country house as an environment with utilitarian functions as well as an assemblage of objects expressing wealth and status, household textiles have received scant attention. These topics are

[1] P. Thornton, *Authentic Décor: the Domestic Interior 1620-1920*(London, Weidenfield & Nicholson, 1984) p.8

followed by a survey of quantitative studies where household textiles were used as a measure of spending offering opportunities for comparison with findings made here. The chapter will then discuss the availability of fabric for household textiles before moving to considering their maintenance and afterlife. Finally, the review will identify the absence of these quotidian commodities from most literature. It concludes with a rationale of the sources used to address these key questions.

Literary Review

Since Macauley's time much attention has been given to recording and analysing the changing fashions in furniture and tastes in decorative textiles much of it focussed on the elite end of the social spectrum.[2] Contemporary comment on fashionable interiors has been studied from letters and diaries, and surviving items in country houses and museum collections have been carefully analysed. More recently historical focus has moved toward monitoring and understanding the rise in material culture and investigations of who chose these items and how they were used.[3] Individual items, families and places have been studied through the lens of theories about elite and plebeian expenditure, luxury and emulation.[4] At the same time there has been an increased public interest in tracing ancestors.[5] Many of those investigating their backgrounds had relations involved behind the scenes in elite households, supporting the life-style of the country house where service areas are now routinely displayed alongside the parlours and bedchambers, and the daily lives of servants are highlighted together with their employers.[6] These interlocking fields of consumption, material culture and plebeian and elite domesticity might seem a particularly crowded historiographical sphere, yet this study of household textiles will add a further facet to the investigation of the country house as a lived space providing an added dimension to earlier work on consumption amongst the elite.

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[2] G. Beard, *The National Trust Book of the English House Interior* (London, Penguin, 1990); C. Christie, *The British Country House in the 18th Century,* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000); M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, Yale, 1978); M. Snodin, J. Styles, *Design and the Decorative Arts: Georgian Britain 1714-1837* (London, Victoria & Albert Publications, 2004)

[3] C. Richardson, T. Hamling, D. Gaimster (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern England* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2007); J. Stobart, A. Hann, *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption* (Swindon, Historic England, 2016); D. Hussey, M. Ponsonby (eds), *Buying for the Home: Shopping for the Domestic from the 17th Century to the Present* (Aldershot, Routledge, 2008); D. Goodman, K. Norberg, *Furnishing the 18th Century: What Furniture can tell us about the European and American Past* (New York & London, Yale, 2007)

[4] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016); J. Stobart, A. Hann (eds), *The Country House*

[5] Family history has become big business. One web based platform, *Ancestry* sold 75% of its shares in 2020 for $4.7m; The National Archives has created a separate platform to assist members of the public at https://media.nationalarchives.gov.uk/index.php/category/family-history/ (Accessed: 20.10.2021)

[6] P.A. Sambrook, *The Servants' Story: Managing a Great Country House* (Stroud, Amberley Publishing, 2016)

This study, tightly focussed on household textiles, has a lengthy time frame. Much has been written about the rise and decline, over roughly the same period, of the elite households that possessed them.[7] Cannadine suggested that in the late nineteenth century over half the land in the British Isles was owned by approximately eleven thousand families.[8] These were united by patterns of education and leisure pursuits though their wealth varied considerably. He estimated roughly six thousand families had estates between 1,000 and 10, 000 acres, although Bateman subdivided this group into those with 1,000 to 3,000 acres whom he called the squirearchy and others the parish gentry and those with 3,000 to 10,000 whom he designated lesser gentry.[9] Cannadine estimated a further 750 families owned 10,000 to 30,000 acres, whom Bateman identified as greater gentry whilst some 250 families were landed magnates with more than 30,000 acres. Many of these magnates were peers, some tracing their origin back to the Norman Conquest. Their numbers had increased from 145 at the Restoration to 300 by 1830 and 722 by the end of the period covered here. The gentry were a more fluid group. Education, wealth or exceptional service provided entry qualifications as well as birth whilst some of the greater gentry were wealthier than the less affluent peers. Yet this led to difficulties of identification as '"Gentlemen" have been a problematic group …not least because they often elude easy definition' comprising as they did both title holders and 'mere gentry'.[10] However, they were characterised by drawing much of their income from the rents of farmland.

Mingay suggested they benefitted from the sale of church and crown lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and from steadily rising prices for wool, timber and agricultural products in the same period.[11] Despite pressure on estates from a slump in prices occasioned by changes in weather patterns, stagnating population growth and increased taxation from the Restoration to the 1730s many families not only survived but increased the amount of land brought into cultivation through the adoption of improved farming practices.[12] Generally the period from 1750-1870 saw rents rising and the prolonged wars with France ending in 1815, enhanced the profits from agricultural produce. Some profited from the industrial exploitation of whatever additional assets the estate might render or from involvement in transport infrastructure; others were less astute and

[7] D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1990); H. J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership 1650-1950* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1994); G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (London, Longman, 1976)
[8] D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall*, p. 9
[9] J. Bateman, *The Acre-ocracy of England: A List of Owners of Three Thousand Acres and Upwards*
[10] H. French, 'Gentlemen': Remaking the English Ruling Class pp. 269-289 in K. Wrightson (ed) *A Social History of England 1500-1750* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017) p. 269; D. W. Allen, 'A Theory of the pre-modern British aristocracy' *Explorations in Economic History* 43:3 (2009) p. 301
[11] G. E. Mingay, *The Gentry* pp. 39-79
[12] W.A. Armstrong, Landownership and Estate Management pp. 545-640 in G.E. Mingay (ed) *Agrarian History of England and Wales VI* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989)

lost money through speculative investments or in the various banking crises to affect the period. This halcyon period for many estates came to an end with the importation of meat and wheat from the Americas, Canada and Australia. The price of wheat was halved between 1840s and 1890s and the value of land fell from 30-40 years income to 20-25 years with disastrous effects on the ability of landowners to raise mortgages or service existing debts.[13] This, coupled with increases in the tax on land and the introduction of death duties on estates led to an upsurge in the amount of land being offered for sale and the transfer of funds into paper assets.[14] Cannadine suggested retrenchment followed for many with the sale of assets such as paintings and libraries and for the wealthier families, London houses but that the economic climate affected minor landowners more. By 1937 over one third of the entries in Burke's *Landed Gentry* no longer had any land; by the 1952 edition this had risen to a half and it had become 'more and more a history book rather than a record of estates'.[15] Corroborating this, a sample of 500 landowning families taken a hundred years later, identified that of estates with 10,000 acres and above, 41% were still in the same hands as they had been in 1880; 26% of estates of 3,000 – 10,000 and 30% of those 1,000 -3,000 acres had also been retained.[16]

However, more recent studies have suggested 'some of the generalisations made by leading historians in the field are open to challenges'.[17] A detailed study of Northamptonshire identified that the retention there had been higher. Here 16 principal estates were sold 1880 to 1914 with three quarters sold as entire estates and almost half had been sold at least once since 1800. Amongst the greater gentry sized estates again half had changed hands at least once since 1700 whilst in the lesser gentry category the figure rose to two thirds. Amongst the sales of estates smaller than 1,000 acres, only one had been in the same family for more than three generations. This finding echoes those reached in a study of gentry in the seventeenth century where the turnover of smaller estates was also rapid suggesting that those with less land were more vulnerable to variations in the economic climate.[18] At the other end of the scale, the detailed analysis of the fortunes of the Campbells of Cawdor from the seventeenth century to the present day shows the adaptability of a family that rose through the exploitation of coal and lead to become the second largest landholder

[13] D. Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall* pp. 90-96, p.642
[14] M. Rothery, 'The wealth of the English landed gentry, 1870-1935' *Agricultural History Review* 55:1 (2007) pp.251-268
[15] J. Raven, *Lost Mansions: Essays in the Destruction of the Country House* (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2015) p. 18
[16] H. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates* (London, Croom Helm, 1982) p. 120
[17] N. Lyon, *'Useless Anachronisms?' A Study of the Country Houses and Landed Estates of Northamptonshire since 1880*, Victor Hatley Memorial Series 5 (Northampton, Northamptonshire Records Society, 2018) p. 77
[18] W.A. Armstrong, referencing A. Everitt, *Changes in the Provinces in the Seventeenth Century* in *Agrarian History* p. 553

in Wales and subsequently sold these secondary estates to concentrate on their thriving agricultural estates in Scotland.[19]

Whilst economic challenges might lead to the rise of some families and the decay of others, demographic factors might also have their effect. Colley suggested that many landowners in the later seventeenth century either did not marry or failed to produce male heirs.[20] Many estates sought to retain their integrity through settlements that enforced patrilineal inheritance, but many did not. Estates might be sold and families become extinct. On the other hand, marriage settlements might unite estates or provide cash enabling more land to be purchased, certainly some of those in upper bands of Bateman's *Acreocracy* had benefitted from these trends. Whatever the fate of the landowning families might be, if they possessed a country house, they also possessed household linen.

The sheets, pillowcases, table linen and towels that were part of the everyday experience of everyone including the indigent, are by their very nature, transitory and difficult to find in the historical or surviving material record. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, they were made of linen.[21] This could be from flax or hemp; home produced or imported. Only linen could withstand the rigours of the washing methods in use until relatively recently and since a wide variety of qualities were available, it was the fabric of choice for all.[22] Yet few examples of these commonplace goods are available in country houses and museum collections or even deemed worthy of cataloguing where they do exist and as the following review reveals they rarely appear in the literature.

Consumption has become a key theme within historical enquiry together with investigations of the material culture accumulated within the process.[23] Girouard stated that 'basically people did not live in country houses unless they either possessed power, or, by setting up in a country house, were making a bid to possess it'.[24] Consequently these houses were important sites for the acquisition, use and disposal of a wide variety of goods designed to enhance and promote their prestige which this thesis argues included household textiles. Veblen agreed that 'the leisured classes'

[19] J.E. Davies, *The changing fortunes of a British aristocratic family 1689-1976: the Campbells of Cawdor and their Welsh estates* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2019)
[20] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1992) p. 158-164
[21] J. Styles, What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution? pp. 307-329 in (eds) G. Riello, P. Parthasarathi, *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009) p.326
[22] Laundry methods are considered in Chapter Six: the care and maintenance of household linen
[23] F. Trentmann, Introduction, pp.1-22 in F. Trentmann (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012)
[24] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House,* p.2

communicated their status through conspicuous and profligate utilization of goods with country houses offering opportunities both in architecture and furnishing for displays of opulence and magnificence that de Vries classified as 'old luxury' associated with the *ancien régime*.[25] This he contrasted with the 'new luxury' associated initially with a range of imported foodstuffs, china and textiles predominantly from the East and eagerly accepted as *conveniences* and even *necessities* as they became more readily available. Berg recognised their importance in stimulating a rethinking of features of consumer goods that were emulative or imitative of these products and which themselves became part of the new luxury.[26] However, others have questioned the usefulness of old and new luxury as analytical tools and have demonstrated the commitment of the elite to the ideas and practices associated with new luxury which offered the potential for further displays of wealth and distinction in similar ways to that of old luxury.[27] Yet alongside these prestigious items was a steady flow of more mundane commodities of everyday usage such as household textiles which, thus far, have attracted little consideration.

Earlier studies of consumption focussed on identifying its origins leading theorists to classify eighteenth century England as a nascent consumer culture. Evidence of material possessions recorded in contemporary documents such as probate inventories suggested the origins of a change in patterns of spending could be pushed further back in time in some regions whereas in others it occurred later.[28] These surveys did not include the wealthier gentry or aristocracy, the focus of this research and whose possessions might show similar characteristics. Another key aspect of these studies was an attempt to identify consumer motivations which provoked much speculation. Simmel's ideas that fashion and therefore choice were governed by two impulses namely to imitate the behaviours of those considered superior in status and to distance oneself from those thought inferior, were espoused and developed by McKendrick. Grieg too demonstrated that copying was a phenomenon even amongst the elite.[29] Other such as Berg stated emphatically: 'But social

[25] T. Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisured Class: an Economic Study of Institutions* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1912) quoted in J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* p.8; J. de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behaviour and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008) pp.44-5

[26] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007) pp.42-44

[27] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*; J. Stobart & A. Hann (eds)*The Country House*

[28] J-C. Agnew, Coming up for air: consumer culture in historical context pp.19-38 and J.de Vries, Between purchasing power and the world of goods: understanding the household economy in early modern Europe pp. 85-132 in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, Routledge, 1993); N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, J.H. Plumb (eds) *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (London, Harper Collins, 1984). L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London, Routledge, 1996); C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1990)

emulation is a facile behavioural explanation' and suggested that a similar object could have different meanings and significance across different social groups. Campbell also thought more practically that many goods would be desired for their own sakes and De Vries suggested that increases in some categories of material goods such as those used by Weatherill and Shammas may have represented changing demand and reallocation of resources from other previous and possibly more ephemeral expenditure such as leisure, though his ideas were not universally accepted.[30]

Contemporaries were keenly aware of the increase in the variety and quantity of goods available and concern was expressed about the effects of their possession. Luxury long associated with prodigality and vice was condemned in both classical writing and Christian theology. Appadurai offered a definition of luxury, summarised by Berg as something restricted by price or laws to elites; having a complexity of acquisition; possessing semiotic virtues; requiring specialist knowledge as a prerequisite for appropriate utilization and demonstrating a high degree of linkage of consumption to the body, person and ultimately identity.[31] However, sumptuary laws had been abandoned in England in the early seventeenth century and whilst prohibitive import duties had attempted to control the flow of foreign luxuries, Levy Peck suggested that attitudes to spending had already changed. She also identified the active promotion of prestige industries in England and the development of elite retail areas such as London's New Exchange in The Strand as providing the market for them.[32] Appleby suggested the developing desire in England to consume was fuelled by the population at large, though still suffering chronic malnourishment, moving beyond the threat of famine yet as intimated by Berg and Eger, the divide between needs and desires, necessities and luxuries remained problematical.[33] Nicholas Barbon in the late seventeenth century was suggesting 'The Wants of the Mind are infinite' showing how language relating to opulence was evolving so that *excess* could be redefined as *surplus* or *variety* thus enabling Bernard Mandeville in his controversial

[16]H. Grieg, Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London's Beau Monde pp.293-314 in J. Styles, A. Vickery (eds) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2006); M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure,* p.206

[30] C. Campbell, Understanding traditional and modern patterns of consumption in eighteenth-century England: a character-action approach pp.44-57 in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods*; J.de Vries, Between purchasing power and the world of goods: understanding the household economy in early modern Europe pp. 85-132 in J. Brewer , R. Porter(eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods* ; Y. Kuiper, The rise of the country house in the Dutch Republic: beyond Johan Huizinga's narrative of Dutch civilisation in the 17thcentury pp.11-23 in J. Stobart, A. Hann, *The Country House*

[31] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure,* pp.28-9

[32] L. Levy Peck, 'Luxury and War: Reconsidering Luxury Consumption in Seventeenth-Century England', *Albion* 34:1 (2002) pp.1-23

[33] J. Appleby, Consumption in early modern social thought pp.162-173 in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods*; M. Berg, E. Eger, The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debate pp.7-27 in M. Berg, E. Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

Fable of the Bees to claim that personal indulgence was a public benefit because it provided work for the poor. By the 1750s an element of entitlement was being claimed. 'Every Man has a *natural Right* to enjoy the fruit of his own Labour, both as to the *Conveniencies*, and *Comforts*, as well as the *Necessaries* of Life…the Poor ought to be *allow'd* to use them as freely as the Rich'.[34] These views were still condemned by some but the implied moral virtue in the needs of *decencies* and *conveniences* shifted the debate into areas of self-identity and luxury became associated with progress and commerce.[35]

In the eighteenth century the economist David Hume reinforced this new morality with his views that superfluous spending led to the expansion of commerce and made available to everyone the conveniences and not just the necessities of life. His contemporary Malacky Postlethwayt, acknowledged there were different types of consumer and advised 'To tempt and please them all, it is proper to offer them assortments of every kind proportioned to their different abilities in point of purchase'. Daniel Defoe used household textiles as an example of the different consumer groups in society in part anticipating the findings of this study, associating the gentry with purchases of finest Hollands, cambrics and muslins and tradespeople taking vast quantities of linens of other kinds from Ireland, France, Russia, Poland and Germany.[36] Defoe in his listing recognized that goods such as finest Hollands signalled wealth and status and as Postlethwayt also accepted, some goods would be beyond the purchasing power of some consumers. Certainly, one way to define luxury is by the cost of the item and the narrow proportion of consumers that can afford to buy it and even within the quotidian commodities of household linen some items signalled a clear social distinction.

Despite the economic endorsements of luxury outlined above, the association of it with excess and moral corruption was renewed particularly in the period of the French Revolution where aristocratic profligacy was contrasted unfavourably with the moderate desires for necessities and conveniences exhibited by other social groups. Concern was expressed for the effect that its pursuit might have upon the moral welfare of the poor with writers prophesying indolence and crime. Women were feared to be especially receptive to its allure and were depicted as rapacious shoppers giving full rein to their sensual natures.[37] The association of luxury with sensuality was taken up again by Sombart in

[34] Quoted in T. H. Breen, The meaning of things: interpreting the consumer economy in the eighteenth century pp. 249-260 in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods,* p.258
[35]P. Sack, 'The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the late seventeenth century', *English Historical Review* Vol.122 No. 497 (2007) pp.609-631
[36]M. Postlethwayt, *Britain's Interest Explained and Improved* (London, 1757); D. Defoe, *A Plan for English Commerce* (London, 1731) both quoted in M. Berg, E. Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century,* p.13
[37] M. Berg, E. Eger, The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debate, pp. 7-72 in M. Berg, E. Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth-Century* p.19; J. Illmakunnas, J. Stobart (eds) *A Taste for Luxury in early modern Europe: Display, Acquisition and Boundaries* (London, New York, Yale, 2017) p.3

the early twentieth century, clearly influenced by the ideas of Freud to suggest 'Indubitably the primary cause of the development of any kind of luxury is most often sought in consciously or unconsciously operative sex impulses'.[38] Like Elias and Bordieu he saw its pursuit as emulation of the lifestyle of particular social groups.[39] Much has been written regarding lifestyle.[40] Appleby recognized that '…the study of consumption gives us a window on the elaboration of personal identity. Consumption offers people objects to incorporate into their lives and their presentation of self.'[41]

By the eighteenth century most elite families enjoyed a distinctive lifestyle based on a shared patronage of arts and architecture informed by education and reinforced by the Grand Tour in effect the *habitus* of the country house elite. Here 'Your gentility was judged by whether you owned the right items, whether they were sufficiently genteel in their design and whether you were capable of using them in the right way.'[42] Subsequent layers of products derived from growing overseas trade were accommodated in country houses that increasingly reflected the eclectic architectural styles plundered from earlier historical periods and building materials derived from the industrial developments of the nineteenth century.[43] This environment or *habitus* reflected the relationship between social structures such as class and gender and the individual choices expressed through acquisition and manifested in the materiality of the domestic environment of the country house. Through these developments, the selection of goods and their integration into the existing material culture demonstrated the wealth and status of the elite owners and signalled their discernment and taste.

Luxury was pivotal in the material culture of the country house as it was to the lifestyle and identity of its owners. Yet it seems that it had an acceptable face if combined with *taste.* The concept of taste was much discussed in the eighteenth century with one writer proposing 'Of all our favourite Words lately none has been more in Vogue, nor so long held its Esteem, as that of TASTE.' [44] Possession of

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[38] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure,* p.38
[39] J. Illmakunnas, J. Stobart (eds) *A Taste for Luxury*, p3; J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House,* p.11
[40] D. Hussey, M. Ponsonby (eds) *Buying for the Home,* p.76
[41] J. Appleby, Consumption in early modern social thought, pp. 162-173 in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods,* p.172
[42] J. Styles, Georgian Britain 1714-1837: Introduction in M. Snodin, J. Styles, *Design and the Decorative Arts in Britain,* p.159
[43] C. Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* (New Haven, London, Yale, 1982); J. Franklin, *The Gentleman's House and its Plan 1835-1914* (London, Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1981); M. Girouard, *The Victorian Country House* (London & New Haven, Yale, 1979); F.M.L. Thompson, *The rise of respectable society: a social history of Victorian Britain 1830-1900* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1988) pp. 152-196; J. Flanders, *The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed* (London, Harpur Collins, 2003)
[44] H. Stonecastle, *The Universal Spectator* (London, 1747) quoted in J. Styles, A. Vickery *(eds) Gender, Taste and Material Culture,* p.14

taste rather than wealth had become the defining attribute of rank, distinguishing the elite from the rest of society. Lord Chesterfield had characterized taste as 'je ne scay quoy [*sic*]…which other people of fashion acknowledge' indicating that it was an innate characteristic of rank.[45] Although Vickery acknowledged that 'the capacity to claim good taste was built on the privileges of rank' it seems likely it could be acquired through education and observation. This was recognized by Smith whilst Berg detected that new wealth 'had to be educated, and the choice, display, and use of the variety of goods had to be cultivated'.[46] Vickery also made the comment that taste became a useful adjective for retailers, a point taken up by Stobart. He pinpointed within the language of sales catalogues linkages made between luxurious items and refined and polite taste. The association of ideas of politeness and respectability, of moderation coupled with discernment were employed to emphasise the desirability of the elite goods offered for sale whilst at the same time playing down the hedonistic nature of the articles.[47] It was perceived that taste could simultaneously refine and moderate profligate ostentation and protect against the decadent indulgence of the senses.

Appleby wrote of consumption as 'the active seeking of personal gratification through material goods' quoting Barbon's opinion that '[Man's] Senses grow more refined, and more capable of Delight…for everything that is rare, can gratify his Senses…and promote the Ease, Pleasure and Pomp of Life'.[48] Berg acknowledged that the physical characteristics of luxuries have visceral qualities referring both to the mid eighteenth century Hume, 'Thus [through trade and manufacture] men become acquainted with the pleasures of luxury,' and to Nef in the mid twentieth who proposed that sumptuousness, surprise and pleasure were necessary components of spending.[49] It would seem that the purchase and use of fine household linens might combine all these requirements. These writers all suggested that consumption engages the senses and by inference the emotions.

Several recent exhibitions have highlighted the power of textiles to convey memory and emotion.[50] These exhibitions focussed on textiles associated with life-cycle events, with loss and with religious

[45] J. Illmakunnas, J. Stobart, (eds) *A Taste for Luxury,* p.4

[46] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2009) pp.18-9, p144; W. D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability* (New York, London, Yale, 2002) pp.81-2; M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure,* p.41

[47] J. Stobart, 'The language of luxury goods: consumption and the English country house, c.1760-1830' *Virtus: Yearbook of the History of the Nobility* 18, pp.89-104

[48] Quoted in J. Appleby, Consumption in early modern social thought in J. Brewer, R. Porter (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods,* p.65

[49] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure,* pp.37-8

[50] Exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum included *Quilts: 1700-2010* (2010); *Wedding Dresses: 1775-2014* (2014-15); *Opus Anglicorum: Masterpieces of English Medieval Embroidery* (2016), and at The Foundlings Hospital, *Threads of Feeling* (2010-2011)

practice and in the case of *Quilts* often a deliberate use of textiles which already had personal association and memories for the maker. In all of these, the potential for an emotional response to the textiles was relatively straightforward. The possibilities for emotions analysis offered by garments, accessories and decorative textiles were recognized by Holloway who suggested the time taken in creating such items would invest them with particular emotional value. [51] Vickery has discussed the role women's handicrafts, predominantly textiles, played within the Georgian period.[52] She argued 'The survival of decorative work argues at the very least that families valued women's objects enough to preserve them for posterity. In some families they were revered like relics.'[53]

However, these views relate specifically to textiles that were decorative or garments that were worn predominantly by loved ones. Such items often featured as gifts. Textile gifts were used to convey emotional messages or to celebrate life-cycle events such as betrothal, marriage, births and even deaths. [54] Amongst the items interrogated in *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women's Lives* by Burman and Fennetaux is a unique pocket stitched in human hair with the motto 'forGet Me not' by an inmate of a prison in Glasgow and given to the prison governor's wife. The authors suggested that the use of hair and the evocation to memory creates 'a unique material register of self'.[55] Holloway too thought that 'textiles objects … provided a fertile site for the negotiation of emotions' and Handley chronicled the emotions invested in an early modern bedsheet transformed from an ordinary household object into an emotive textile. Again, embroidered with human hair, this item was used in the ultimately unsuccessful campaign waged by Ann, Countess of Derwentwater to achieve canonisation for her husband, executed for his involvement in the Jacobite Rebellion of 1715.[56] It is evident that textiles could be important vehicles for emotionally charged memories, but it is less clear in the case of household textiles which have received little consideration in this respect although bed-sheets were certainly closely associated with the major life-cycle events of birth, marriage and death and might offer not only physical but possibly psychological comfort.

The theme of comfort is an important one in the literature of country houses. Crowley associated textiles with comfort: 'The fabrics in beds and clothing provided psychological and physical satisfaction: they asserted status, displayed wealth and provided protection from the elements.

[51] S. Holloway, Textiles pp.161-165 in S. Broomhall, (ed) *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017)
[52] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp.231-257
[53] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.235
[54] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp.240-241
[55] B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women's Lives* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2019) pp.213-215
[56] S. Holloway, Textiles in S. Broomhall (ed) *Early Modern Emotions*, p. 161; S. Handley, 'Objects, Emotions and an Early Modern Bed-sheet' *History Workshop Journal* 85, pp.169-194

From the twelfth to the seventeenth century the crucial household amenity was bedding'.[57] In a later essay he suggested:

> Physical comfort – self-conscious satisfaction with the relationship between one's body and its immediate physical environment – was an innovative aspect of eighteenth-century Anglo-American culture, one that had to be taught and learned.[58]

Crowley went on to explain that the concept of comfort was changing during the period covered by his study implying relief from distress or a spiritual solace in the seventeenth century but evolving to physical convenience a century later. This theme was taken up by Odile-Bernez. She cited an early reference to 'creature-comforts' as marking this change from moral solace to physical well-being although it was not used in the early economic arguments for luxury which focussed on *conveniencies* and *decencies*.[59] Thomas Malthus at the beginning of the nineteenth century spoke of the poor as 'possessing the necessaries, and even the comforts of life, almost in as great plenty as their masters'. Odile-Bernez also recognized that contemporary novelists imbued comfort not only with physical and material characteristics but also with emotional and moral values, a theme taken up by Stobart.[60] Finn stated when Charlotte Lucas in *Pride and Prejudice* justified her acceptance of Mr. Collins's proposal of marriage with ' I ask only a comfortable home', Jane Austen showed recognition of the appeal of comfortable domesticity.'[61] However, Crowley investigated advances in comfort brought by improvements to lighting and heating and Franklin's survey of gentlemen's houses added plumbing to her 'innovations of modern comfort'; neither work included the contribution of household textiles.[62]

Stobart in his introduction to *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe* asserted that although the idea of emotional succour was still an important aspect of comfort, there was an increasing emphasis on the physical comfort to be obtained through improvements in the design of amenities and furniture within the country house setting and with the concept of social comfort.[63] This latter was linked both to rank and to self-image and was demonstrated through the disposition of material

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[57] J. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in early modern Britain and early America* (Baltimore & London, The John Hopkins University, 2001) p.7
[58] J. Crowley, From Luxury to Comfort and Back Again: Landscape Architecture and the Cottage in Britain and America, pp. 134-147 in M. Berg, E. Eger (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*, p.135
[59] M. Odile-Bernez, 'Comfort, the Acceptable Face of Luxury: An Eighteenth-Century Cultural Etymology', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 14:2 (2014) pp.3-21
[60] J. Stobart (ed) *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe 1700-1900* (London, Bloomsbury,2020) p. vii
[61] M. Finn, The Homes of England in Romantic Literature, pp. 293-313 in J. Chandler (ed) *The Cambridge History of Romantic Literature* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009) p.313
[62] J. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort*; J. Franklin, *The Gentleman's House and its Plan 1835-1914* (London, Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1981)
[63] J. Stobart (ed) *The Comforts of Home*, p. ix

possessions and the polite, informal and tasteful way in which they were used and positioned particularly in contexts of hospitality. However, amongst the varied illustrations of comfort examined by contributors to the text, household textiles remained absent.

A rise in the expectation of physical comfort was also discussed by Edwards in *Turning Houses into Homes.* He referred to a description given in 1688 of 'things useful about a bed and bed chamber', a comprehensive list of some thirty items yet there is no mention of the sheets that might be expected to contribute to the ensemble. [64] Edwards also cited examples of bed furniture being purchased from itinerant salesmen. A clergyman in Kent noted the purchase of bed curtains, blankets and pillows from an itinerant upholsterer in his diary for 1656. [65] Possibly he purchased sheeting from another such itinerant salesman. Certainly, Spufford in her work on the growth in the sale of clothing during the seventeenth century identified pack men regularly travelling their trading circuits with large quantities of cloth including linen which Styles named as the preferred material for household textiles as well as intimate apparel.[66]

Alongside the interest in such patterns of expenditure have been parallel enquiries into retailing practice. Packmen and other traditional forms of vending such as producer-retailers, markets and fairs and purchasing goods at second-hand venues continued to provide access to a range of commodities from the Restoration through to the twentieth century. Even so, Celia Fiennes had noted on her visit to Newcastle at the end of the seventeenth century that 'their shops are good and are of distinct trades, not selling many things of one shop as is the custom in most towns and cittys'.[67] Borsay had recognized retailing as a contributory factor in the urban renaissance he investigated.[68] Regional studies of the shops and services available showed early modern retailing was a dynamic and sophisticated sector and that shopping had become a leisure activity amongst some sections of society presaging the advertising campaign of 'Shopping at Selfridge's – A Pleasure –A Pastime – A Recreation' by more than a century. [69] Berry suggested that consumables that were bought rarely would involve pleasure in their selection but that mundane and repeat purchases

[64] C. Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes: A History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishings* (Aldershot, Routledge, 2005) pp.18-19
[65]C. Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes,* p.35
[66] J. Styles, What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution? in G. Riello, P. Parthasarathi, (eds) *The Spinning World*, p.326
[67] I. Mitchell, *Tradition and Innovation in English Retailing 1700-1850: Narratives of Consumption* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2014); C. Morris (ed) *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes c1682-c1712* (Exeter, Webb & Bower,1982) p.176
[68] P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1989); J. Stobart, 'Leisure and Shopping in Small Towns of Georgian England: A Regional Approach' *Journal of Urban History* 31:4 (2005) pp.479-503
[69] E. K. Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London's West End* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001) p.168

might be delegated to servants.[70] It is possible that the purchase of household textiles might be divided thus between items used in sociability and conspicuous display like napery where taste and discrimination could be exercised by the customer, as may have been the case when the Duchess of Leinster asked her husband to look out for table cloths with a bird's eye pattern on his visit to London and purchases of bed linen that might be assigned to others.[71] There have, however, been no substantial or systematic studies of such retailing and shopping practices.

Walsh has shown that shop design as well as merchandise was pitched at different social levels in the eighteenth century with the decorative structures of exclusive London shops echoing the architectural features of elite houses.[72] These fixtures and fittings demonstrated the financial standing of the tradesman, indicating access to quality and variety of goods and the ability to manage long-term credit. The verbal exchange between shopkeeper and customer also added to the sociability of the shopping experience. Her research shows such establishments were dramatic, fashionable, class specific and frequently updated features she averred were inaccurately claimed for the later department stores.[73] Writing of the practice of shopping in *Buyers and Sellers*, Walsh elaborated on the skills required of the experienced shopper of this period where only patent medicines were sold as proprietary brands and there was little standardization of quality.[74] The development of these skills was taken up again by Blondé and Stobart.[75] Shoppers took pains to compare goods, weighing up quality and vogue against price and deploying information elicited from friends, family members, advice manuals and the retailers themselves in making purchases in the browse-bargain process described by Berry.

Many shops in urban areas were highly specialised with a low turnover of stock, high margins on goods and heavy overheads. Their clientele were mainly elite, paying high prices for goods and expecting extended credit. A few shops offered fixed price goods and for cash only such as Jackson's

[70] H. Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (2002) p.379
[71] *Leinster Correspondence*, 20 Nov. 1762, vol.1 pp.138-9, quoted in C. Walsh The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England pp. 331-347 in B. Blondé, P. Stabel, J. Stobart, I. Van Damme, (eds) *Buyers & Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in medieval and early modern Europe* (Brussels, Brepols, 2006) p.342
[72] C. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-Century London' *Journal of Design History* 8:3 (1995) pp.157-176
[73] C. Walsh, The newness of department stores: a view from the eighteenth-century pp.46-96 in G. Crossick, S. Jaumain (eds) *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999)
[74] C. Walsh, The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England pp.331-349 in B. Blondé et al(eds), *Buyers and Sellers*
[75] B. Blondé, J. Stobart, Introduction: Selling Textiles in the Eighteenth Century: Perspectives on Consumer and Retail Change pp.1-12 in (eds) J. Stobart, B. Blonde, Bruno Blondé, *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives for Western Europe* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

linen drapery offering 'low prices for ready money'.[76] By the middle of the nineteenth cities like Manchester and Newcastle as well as London had large shops operating on fixed price goods for cash payments. In London a number of these had developed from drapery businesses such as Swan & Edgar which opened in Piccadilly in 1812; Dickens & Jones on the newly built Regent Street in 1835; Marshall & Snellgrove in Vere Street in 1837. All were greatly expanded in the later nineteenth century and "served the well-healed clientele of imperial London" yet they retained aspects of earlier shopping in that transactions still took place over a counter served by knowledgeable assistants.[77] In addition, several of these stores had offered an extensive postal catalogue service to out of town or even out of country customers. The Army & Navy Stores were offering a range of goods covering one thousand pages of their annual catalogue by 1887 and employing a large staff in their mail order department; Selfridges were the first store to offer a telephone ordering service; mail order may have accounted for up to 25% of London department stores' business up to 1914.[78] However, such stores probably accounted for less than 10% of the total retail turnover with the smaller independent retailer with an established clientele, still an important figure in the shopping process.

Smith has argued that the senses played a key part in this process of shopping in the eighteenth century and that browsing was portrayed as thoughtful meditative work. This is in stark contrast to the contemporary criticism expressed by William Gilpin of women spending their mornings flitting from shop to shop.[79] Smith identifies that browsing, practiced by both women and, as Finn's work has shown by men, accumulated valuable information about the quality of goods through the experience of the senses.[80] Sight and touch were particularly important in most transactions and whilst Smith referred specifically to ceramics, these senses would be essential for textiles too, building up a somatic memory and allowing shoppers to perceive the world through previous interactions with objects. Such interactions were part of the recognized sociability of shopping but might equally take place in the context of a country house sale where a variety of goods including textiles would be offered for sale second-hand and could be viewed and handled in situ.[81] The market for second-hand textiles whether clothing or household, was widespread both socially and

[76] H-C. Mui, L. H. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth Century England* (Montreal, McGill-Queens University Press, 1989) p.235
[77] B. Lancaster, *The Department Store: A Social History* (London, Leicester University Press, 1995) p.37
[78] H. Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its origins, Evolution and Economics* (London, Newman Publishing, 1954) p.36
[79] K. Smith, 'Sensing Design and Workmanship: The Haptic Skills of Eighteenth-Century Shoppers' *Journal of Design History* 25:1 (2012) pp.1-10
[80] M. Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine Possessions in the Consumer Revolution' *Social History* 25: 2 (2000) pp.133-155
[81] Country house sales are considered more fully in Chapter Two: Methodology

geographically. Significant work has been done recently on the circulation of textiles within Britain and Europe.[82] However much of this has addressed textiles as clothing or the range of cotton goods either imported from the East or developed as import substitutes particularly in Britain and is consequently outside the remit of this study as linen remained the preferred fabric for household textiles into the late nineteenth century.

Gilpin's criticism of female shoppers was by no means unique and indeed was reiterated in relation to department stores in the late nineteenth century and this review turns briefly to some considerations of gender both within consumption and the elite household.[83] Kowaleski-Wallace recognized that 'women were assumed to be hungry for things…for all commodities that indulged the body and enhanced physical life'.[84] This image was in large part derived from the conduct literature and sermons that proliferated in the eighteenth century with the explosion of print culture and which were addressed predominantly to women. These tracts drew on older ideas of bodily humours derived from classical medicine that categorized women as being predominantly cold and moist and implying they were ruled by ungovernable appetites. To counteract these urges the writers exhorted women to be modest, chaste, pious and passively domestic. Empirical science in the seventeenth century had modified ideas about physiognomy, yet the message from improving literature, penned by male and female alike, remained constant.

Considerable research has been undertaken on gender within early modern society and whilst much of this is outside the remit of this study, the role of women within the household is germane.[85] Davidoff and Hall's *Family Fortunes,* a seminal text in class and gender history, cast new light on perceptions of middle-class society and gender relations. As the authors indicated in their introduction to the revised edition, 'Central to our argument is the language of public and private spheres, a language which comes from the tracts, poems, letters and diaries of the men and women whose stories we were telling'.[86] Those critical of the validity of separate spheres included Vickery

[82] B. Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800* (London, Oxford University Press, 1992); J. Stobart, B. Blonde, B. Blondé, *Selling Textiles*

[83] G. Crossick, S. Jaumain, The world of the department store: distribution, culture and social change, pp. 1-45 in G. Crossick, S. Jaumain (eds) *Cathedrals of Consumption: The European Department Store 1850-1939* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 1999) p.31

[84] E. Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1997) p.5

[85] R. Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great Ladies and Grand Houses* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2003); L. Davidoff, C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, revised 2002); K. Harvey, *The Little Republic: Masculinity and Domestic Authority in 18th Century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); J. S. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women & the 18th Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48:1 (2009) pp.336-363; J. Martin, *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (London, Hambledon & London, 2004)

[86] L. Davidoff, C. Hall, *Family Fortunes,* p. xv

who questioned whether the concept could be applied outside the narrow social groups so minutely investigated in *Family Fortunes*.[87] Her own work *The Gentleman's Daughter* is one of the few systematic surveys of the domestic experience of women drawn from the lesser gentry identifying a web of inter-related social networks and spending patterns and demonstrating that whilst conscious of their roles within the family network, these were by no means the limits of their social or intellectual worlds.[88] Tillyard's detailed study of the Lennox sisters' letters indicated that at the highest level of society the boundaries between the separate spheres were permeable and fluid; others such as Klein and later Harvey suggested a gap between what was prescriptive and what was lived experience. [89] That lived experience was analysed through Burman and Fennetaux's study of extant pockets and associated documents leading the authors to suggest that 'women were increasingly trespassing into male territories, both indoors and outdoors…[and] could navigate a variety of social spaces'.[90]

Arnold stated over twenty years ago the role of women in the country house had been 'marginalized or associated with sub-groups, such as servants or children rather than presented as part of the mainstream history which remains a male preserve' and relatively little has appeared in print that modifies this situation.[91] The Yorkshire Country House Partnership promoted research into the lives of women in seven country houses in their region culminating in exhibitions and the publication of a collection of essays.[92] From that research it was clear that far from conforming to Mary Wollstonecraft's indictment ' Women in particular all want to be ladies, which is simply to have nothing to do, but listlessly to go they scarcely care where for they cannot tell what', these elite women took an active interest in running their households. They kept digests of the household accounts, collected and shared recipes not only for cooking but also for medicines, supervised interior decoration schemes, redesigned gardens and planned modifications to the architecture of their houses in line with other women of their period.[93] Whittle and Griffiths, using the extensive

[87] A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History' *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (1993) pp.383-414
[88] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*: *Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1998)
[89] S. Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox 1740-1832* (London, Chatto, 1994); L. E. Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some questions about evidence and analytical procedure' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 29:1 (1995) pp.97-109; K. Harvey, 'Oeconomy and the Eighteenth Century House: A Cultural History of Social Practice' *Home Cultures* 11:3 (2014) pp.375-389
[90] B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p.143
[91] D. Arnold (ed), *The Georgian House: Architecture, Landscape and Society* (Stroud, Sutton, 1998) p.79
[92] R. M. Larsen (ed), *Maids & Mistresses: Celebrating 300 years of Women and Yorkshire Country Houses* (York, Yorkshire Country House Partnership, 2004)
[93] A. Boyington, *Hidden Patrons: Women and Architectural Patronage in Georgian Britain* (London, Bloomsbury, 2023)

records kept by the women of the Le Strange family in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries analysed the ongoing areas of consumption and use in a wealthy gentry estate. Here male spending expressed status whilst female purchases related to children and household provisioning. Although Alice Le Strange kept the accounts not only for the household but for the extensive estate her husband retained overall decision making, though he valued his wife ' her price is above pearls'.[94] Vickery concurred from her research that a century and a half later, after marriage it was still normal for 'the administration of the household, the management of servants, the guardianship of material culture and the organisation of family consumption' to fall to the woman whilst her husband assumed a managerial role over the estate as a whole.[95]

The male managerial role was more clearly delineated and whether executive decisions were made personally or through the agency of stewards, they were predominantly expressions of masculine resolve. Developments within gender studies have lately turned the focus on masculinity, seeking to identify what this signified within different periods of history.[96] Emerging from this is French and Rothery's *Man's Estate*, a sustained analysis of landed masculinities.[97] This research posited that fundamental values of virtue, authority and self-command were reinforced through male experiences at each stage of development. These learned ideal masculine characteristics arose from a blend of family heritage, dynastic tradition and desire for the future security of patrimony and remained core values in the face of both technological and political changes until the watershed of the First World War. Begiato's study suggested that whilst the physical image of masculinity mutated with the requirements of the day, these core values were retained.[98] Other researchers have endeavoured to identify how masculinity might impact on consumption.[99] Vickery identified a division of consumer responsibility along gender lines with men overseeing major household

[94] J. Whittle, E. Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the early seventeenth century Household* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); *'Her Price is Above Pearls': Family and Farming Records of Alice Le Strange, 1617-1656* (Norwich, Norfolk Record Society, 2015)

[95] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1998) p.8

[96] J. Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: bodies, emotion and material culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020); G. Williamson, *British masculinity in the 'Gentleman's Magazine', 1731-1815: Genders and Sexualities in History* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); J. H. Arnold, S. Brady (eds) *What is Masculinity?: historical dynamics from antiquity to the contemporary world* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

[97] H. French, M. Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1600-1900* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012)

[98] J. Begiato, 'Between poise and power: embodied manliness in eighteenth and nineteenth century British culture' *TRHS 6th Series* 26 (2016) pp.125-147

[99] M. Finn, 'Men's Things: Masculine Possessions in the Consumer Revolution' *Social History* 25:2 (2000) pp.133-155; K. Harvey, 'Oeconomy in the Eighteenth-Century House: A cultural history of social practice' *Home Cultures* 11:3 (2014) pp.375-389

refurbishments, paying taxes, tithes, rents, annuities and male servants' wages, purchasing wine and exotic foods and settling bills for the stables.[100]

Clearly this arrangement might be typical of married couples, but many households were headed by the unmarried or widowed where such generalised divisions would break down as Stobart has shown in his study of Mary Leigh's expenditure at Stoneleigh Abbey.[101] However, Stobart and Rothery in *Consumption and the Country House* have analysed accounts to show that masculine identities could be expressed through a variety of practices of consumption to fulfil personal interests and create complex domestic spaces that communicated taste, discernment and comfort.[102]

Textiles played an important role in creating this identity. Several influential works on decorative textiles were published shortly after the seminal exhibition *The Destruction of the English Country House* was held at the V&A Museum in 1974. Eighteenth century interiors were extensively covered by Fowler and Cornforth.[103] Cornforth's *English Interiors 1790-1848: The Quest for Comfort*, and *Early Georgian Interiors*, examined the role textiles played in the enhancement of interiors, but again these were status fabrics not the household textiles that must have contributed in no small way to the material comfort of those in the spaces described.[104] Jackson-Stops produced *The English Country House: A Grand Tour*, with a chapter devoted to bedchambers.[105] Lavishly illustrated, it described the changes in usage of these areas , their furnishings and decorative textiles. Thornton in *Authentic Décor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920* provided details of fabrics for wall hanging, for curtains and floor coverings as well as for upholstery.[106] Such textiles were also the subject of a study entitled *'Ways of Seeing the English Domestic Interior, 1500-1700: the Case of Decorative Textiles'* conducted in 2012. It explored the significance of these textiles for both historic and modern perceptions of the domestic interior working to rectify the problem that 'comparatively little is known about the ways in which they functioned in their original spatial and material context'.[107] It would be fair to say that even less is known of household textiles.

[100] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp.12-13
[101] J. Stobart, 'Status, gender and life cycle in the consumption practices of the English elite: the case of Mary Leigh, 1736-1806' *Social History* 40:1 (2011) pp.82-103
[102] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, pp. 109-139
[103] J. Fowler, J. Cornforth, *English Decoration in the 18th Century* (London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1978)
[104] J. Cornforth, *English Interiors 1790-1848: The Quest for Comfort* (London, Barrie & Jenkins, 1978)
[105] G. Jackson-Stops, J. Pipkin, *The English Country House: A Grand Tour* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1985) pp.158-180
[106] P. Thornton, *Authentic Décor*
[107] C. Richardson, T. Hamling, 'Ways of Seeing Early Modern Decorative Textiles' *Textile History* 47:1 (2016) pp.4-26

McCarthy in her elegant work on Irish country houses paid considerable attention to their furnishings and fabrics yet references to household linen were confined to its use as loose covers and blinds with passing indications that it could be moved amongst residences and left as bequests to servants. Only with Sir Edward O'Brien of Drumoland Castle was there a direct mention in 'I propose buying Silver and dishes, Candlesticks, Linen, everything wanted for a Table of 18 persons to dine' of the role they played in the sociability of these houses.[108] Aslet chronicled the influence of American money on the country house and Tinniswood, painted an evocative picture of them between the world wars but none of these publications addressed the important contribution of household textiles to the country house.[109] Clabburn in *The NT Book of Furnishing Textiles* had a chapter on household linen though including blankets, rugs and counterpanes left just over four pages for sheets, table linen and towels. She suggested that sheets were kept in significant quantities, possibly to deal with large influxes of visitors or the less frequent washing of linen, yet she did not identify the evidence for her statement. She noted too that they were rarely discarded occasioning references such as *'sore worn'* and *'old and torn'* in inventories and household accounts indicating that such items were still being stored. Tellingly, Clabburn admitted that 'very little research has been done in either of these matters and the interpretation of entries often leaves areas of doubt' although Sambrook a decade later had some discussion of the linen held in the country house in her investigation of the work of its servants. [110] Only Mitchell appeared to have made an in-depth study of household textiles in his investigation of elite table linen in an unpublished doctoral thesis. This thoughtful combination of material from inventories and contemporary literature together with examination of surviving textiles analysed changes in hospitality and dining against a background of social, political and economic change for the period 1450 to 1750. The recent appearance of Inder's study of British seamstresses has brought some incidental attention to bed linen.[111]

However, several researchers have used household textiles as a category in their investigations of a perceived upward trend in acquisition of goods with much subsequent work focussed specifically on the 'middling classes'. Borsay's work on towns highlighted the emergence of social groups possessed

[108] P. McCarthy, *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2016) p.150
[109] C. Aslet, *An Exuberant Catalogue of Dreams: The Americans who revived the Country House in Britain* (London, Aurum Press, 2013); A. Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House between the Wars* (London, Vintage Press, 2018)
[110] P. Clabburn, *The NT Book of Furnishing Textiles* (London, Penguin, 1988) p.117; P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) pp.106-116
[111] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine table linen in England, 1450-1750: The supply, ownership and use of a luxury commodity' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 1999); P. Inder, *Shirts, Shifts and Sheets of Fine Linen: British Seamstresses from the 17th to the 19th century* (London, Bloomsbury, 2024)

of 'surplus wealth' including not only gentry but a 'rapid expansion of "middling" groups in society'. Earle, perhaps thinking of the maxim delivered by E.P. Thompson that a middle class 'did not begin to discover itself (except perhaps in London) until the last three decades of the [eighteenth] century', produced *The Making of the English Middle Class* pushing their emergence back at least to the Restoration.[112] Dealing initially with the economy of London, Earle's third section covered more personal aspects of family and social life. He found that on average these households owned 36 sheets, 89 napkins and 15 table cloths in addition to yards of Holland, diaper, huckaback and damask not yet made up and with valuations for household linen of between £10 and £15.[113] He drew heavily on material in the post-mortem inventories drawn up for the London Court of Orphans documents also used by Weatherill in her analysis of consumer possessions and trends. So, whilst there is a growing body of research into households of the middle class and indeed the working classes, relatively little has, as yet, investigated those of the elite.[114]

Weatherill and Shammas, as referenced earlier, conducted quantitative analyses using probate inventories finding increases in the range and sophistication of household possessions across a wide section of English and Atlantic American society. These studies showed the possession of household textiles and although their findings did not relate specifically to the gentry, and their analysis was quantitative rather than qualitative, they did provide some indication of the numbers of domestic textiles that a country house might possess.[115] Weatherill, using 2,902 inventories from England for the period 1675-1725, selected table linen as one of her consumer commodities. 42% of her sample possessed table linen rather than goods described as either linen or sheets.[116] Only 122 inventories in her survey related to the gentry with 60% possessing items recorded as table linen, though the other 40% may also have possessed such goods within the broader valuations of linen. Weatherill's sample did not include the wealthier gentry, since their inventories were proved at the superior courts of York and the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.[117] These provide interesting pointers towards the prevalence of household textiles. Weatherill's work highlighted the difficulty of using probate inventories to identify such goods and suggested 'Beds and bedding, whilst not the main

[112] P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London 1660-1730* (London, Methuen, 1989); P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1989)
[113] P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p.298
[114] L. L. Peck, *Consuming Splendour: society and culture in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005); A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*
[115] G. Riello, "Things Seen and Unseen" :The material culture of early modern inventories and their representation of domestic interiors pp.125-151 in P. Finden (ed), *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories 1500-1800* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013)
[116] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture,* p.193
[117] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture,* p.194

subject of this book, are a substantial subject in their own right and warrant a study themselves.'[118] This investigation contributes towards fulfilling this suggestion.

Shammas, also analysing inventories in England and in America, detected a decline in the relative importance of household linen across the period of her study although she estimated that 20-25% of total household investment went into bedding in the period 1550-1774.[119] Her figures record household linen comprising 14.9% of the total value of consumer goods in Oxfordshire 1550-1590; 7.9% in South Worcestershire 1669-70 and including figures for Virginia and Maryland, the percentage declines further to 4.0% by 1774.[120] She put forward the suggestion that the relative costs of those goods may have declined and that the total amounts of household linen may have remained the same or indeed increased.[121] Spufford on the other hand, in her investigations found that only some of the cheaper linens reduced in price over this period whereas the finer qualities retained their market values.[122] A later study by Overton et al referred to Richard Carew's 1602 *Survey of Cornwall* which detailed improvements in household bedding though not linen specifically.[123] Their own findings suggested that better quality linen began to be acquired from the late sixteenth century though recording of it in probate inventories declined over the period they had studied. Their investigation saw a rise in possession of items of household linen across the seventeenth century with some regional variations in quantities.

Overton found that the earliest Kent households had sufficient sheets to have one set on each bed, one being laundered and two spare sheets in store. Over the period studied the median number of beds per household rose to four and that of sheets to twenty-five suggesting a much larger stock. Trinder and Cox in their study in the Telford area found a similar rise in numbers of sheets from 1.4 in the period 1660-69 to 4.8 by 1740-49.[124] All the studies suggested a rise in material possessions across many households during the period studied with a consequent rise in the quantities of textiles. Yet, few of these inventories related to the gentry and subsequent studies of consumption have mainly focussed on the rising middle classes and the urban working classes. These figures might imply that those with higher disposable income such as owners of country houses would possess

[118] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture,* p.161
[119] C. Shammas, 'The domestic environment in early modern England and America', *Journal of Social History* 14 (1980) pp.1-24, p.10
[120] C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990) Table 6.3, p.170
[121] C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer,* p.295
[122] M. Spufford, 'Fabric for 17th century Children and Adolescents', *Textile History* 34 (2003) p.47-53, p.51
[123] M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.108
[124] B. Trinder, J. Cox, *Yeoman and Colliers in Telford: probate inventories for Dawley, Lilleshall, Wellington & Wrockwardine 1660-1750* (London, Phillimore, 1980) pp.36-7

similar, if not greater, quantities of linen something this study hopes to determine. These findings are also indicative of an increase in domestic comfort as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Turning next to the literature on the availability of linen fabric indicated that a bewildering number of types were in use during this period and that making purchases for household textiles would require the expert knowledge Walsh and Smith attributed to shoppers. Spufford listed eight different sorts in one chapman's stock together with hollands priced from 1s to 2s.9d per ell; another had hollands varying from 1s.3d to 4s.[125] As the term *hollands* implies, much linen was originally imported into England. Harte stated that twenty thousand yards of linen was being imported, accounting for 15% of total value of imports in 1700, second only to imports of foodstuffs and that the 1660 Book of Rates listed over fifty different tariffs for the varying types.[126] Imports had fallen dramatically by 1800 due to punitive taxation with a corresponding rise in production within the British Isles to meet the increasing demands from consumers.[127] Lemire too referred to the quantity of fabrics being brought into England and to the level of skill required to shop wisely for textiles without wasting money.[128] She wrote about the role these new textiles had in contributing to the growing expectations of comfort and on their implications for maintenance and domestic management. These concepts of consumption, comfort and cleanliness hold true across all textiles, including the linen products preferred for household use that this study examines. Stobart and Rothery's investigations of expenditure patterns for three Midland country houses found a variety of goods were obtained from provincial traders as well as regular supplies from London. They mentioned the purchase of table linen for Stoneleigh Abbey to the value of £355 from a London draper.[129] This sum is indicative of the quality of goods available for a country house as well as the quantities felt necessary. This study will, to some extent, ascertain whether this expenditure on table linen was typical of such establishments.

Edwards pointed to an awareness of quality in lodgings in Bath in John Wood's *A Description of Bath*, 1765 where he commented that the furnishing 'was more fit for the gentlemen's capital seats' and the linen 'suitable even for people of the highest rank'.[130] It showed not only expectations of

[125] M. Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the 17th Century* (London, Hambledon, 1984) p.92
[126] N. B. Harte, The Rise and Protection of the English Linen Trade, 1690-1790, pp. 74-106 in *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1973) p.74
[127] A.J. Durie, 'The Fine Linen Industry in Scotland, 1707-1822' *Textile History* 7 (1976) pp.173-85; Stobart, J., *The First Industrial Region* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004) pp.68-71, p.79
[128] B. Lemire, An Education in Comfort: Indian Textiles and the Remaking of English Homes over the Long Eighteenth Century, pp.13-29 in J. Stobart, B. Blonde, B. Blondé, (eds) *Selling Textiles*
[129] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House,* p.42
[130] C. Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes,* p.83

comfort had risen as discussed above but also that Wood and his contemporaries believed that choice of goods should reflect social standing whilst Sheraton's *Cabinet Dictionary* of 1803 advised against gentlemen ordering furnishings 'superior to his fortune and rank'.[131] Vickery investigated this abiding concern with the appropriate use of goods, closely allied to the demonstration of *good taste* although in relation to wallpaper in *Behind Closed Doors*. Wood's comment shows an understanding of the different qualities of household textiles and their appropriate allocation, an attitude reinforced by this request from a bachelor setting up house in 1749: 'Pray let me know what Bedding I must buy for those two beds and what for servts – ask Mother' reinforcing the long-held view that matters of domestic economy were within the remit of the females of any establishment, as discussed above.[132]

Certainly, much advice on running the household was addressed to women readers. Hardyment referred to more than twenty such manuals spanning several centuries in her investigation of domestic arrangements in country houses. Many are concerned with foodstuffs yet some offer advice on textiles.[133] Sambrook recognized in a larger establishment the housekeeper would be responsible for the care and maintenance of textiles and suggested she would keep an annual inventory of furniture, fittings and linen, a strategy often suggested in advice manuals.[134] These documents are mentioned in Barnard's investigation of country house life in Ireland and in Stobart's article on the role of a housekeeper but their contents are not explored for references to household textiles as is the intention here.[135]

Cleanliness was an important commodity much stressed in these manuals.[136] Joseph Addison wrote in the *Spectator* in 1714 'It is evident that Cleanliness, if it cannot be called one of the Virtues, must ever rank very near them: from age to age it has ever been admitted that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness", it is a mark of politeness'.[137] It was also associated with status. The ability to change the personal linens of shirts and shifts was an important part of demonstrating gentility. It removed some of the body odour and visible dirt associated with those who performed manual labour. The frequency of replenishing these items also demonstrated wealth, both in the numbers of items available but also the cost of laundering. Medical treatises suggested frequently changing linen was

[131] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, pp.179-80
[132] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.121
[133] C. Hardyment, *Behind the Scenes: Domestic Arrangements in Historic Houses* (London, Penguin, 1992)
[134]P. A. Sambrook, *The Servants' Story,* p.89
[135] T. Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: Lives and Possessions in Ireland 1641-1770* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2014) p.259; J. Stobart, 'Housekeeper, Correspondent and Confidante: The Under-Told Story of Mrs. Hayes of Charlecote Park 1744-73', *Family & Community History* 11:1 (2018) p.98
[136] Further consideration of cleanliness is given in Chapter Three: Bed Linen
[137] V. Smith, *Clean*: *A History of Personal Hygiene and Purity* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007) p.226

necessary for health too. William Buchan in *Domestic Medicine of* 1769 stated 'The Continual discharge from our bodies by perspiration renders frequent change of apparel necessary'.[138] This echoed the ideas put forward by Thomas Tryon in 1671 that 'Cleanliness in Houses, especially in Beds, is a great Preserver of Health… every one that can [should] have plentiful Changes…of Linen'.[139] North's recent study into personal cleanliness in early modern England has demonstrated that the pursuit of it for bodies, personal linen and indeed bed linen was of paramount importance across all levels of society, not just the upper classes.[140]

A major aspect of cleanliness and the maintenance of textiles involved laundering. [141] This aspect of the care and maintenance of household linen is discussed in Chapter Six. Finn drew attention to the disruption caused by laundering within a small household in Letitia Barbauld's poem *Washing Day*, 'Washing, rinsing, wringing, folding and starching "chase…the very cat,/ From the wet kitchen scared'.[142] The lengthy mechanics of the procedure have been researched by Hardyment, Sambrook and Malcolmson amongst others and examples of surviving equipment reviewed by Palmer and West.[143] Most country houses had dedicated rooms for washing linen which became increasingly sophisticated from the eighteenth century. These were usually in the service areas away from the family as the processes were malodorous. Several country house laundry complexes have been restored and are on show to the public although many of the household textiles they serviced have largely vanished and are absent from the literature relating to the English country house.[144]

This review has identified the paucity of information dealing with the everyday consumption practices of the country house particularly household textiles within the current literature. It was also clear that unlike the role of the 'new' textiles in domestic use, that of traditional linens had received little attention beyond considerations of trade and the development of technology. Some of these threads will be central to this study; others will remain peripheral. The key questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter remain unanswered within the existing literature. This has

[138] R. L. Bushman, C. Bushman, 'The Early History of Cleanliness in America', *Journal of American History* 74:4 (1988) p.1223
[139] N. Korda, E. Lowe, In Praise of Clean Linen, pp.306-321 in (eds) Richardson, Hamling & Gaimster, *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture,* p.308
[140] S. North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020)
[141] Further consideration is given to laundering in Chapter Six: the care and maintenance of household linen
[142] M. Finn, *The Cambridge History of Romantic Literature,* p.310
[143] C. Hardyment, *Behind the Scenes*, pp221-30; P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999); P. E. Malcolmson, *English Laundresses: A Social History 1850-1930* (Urbana & Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1986) pp.4-33; M. Palmer, I. West, *Technology and the Country House* (Swindon, Historic England, 2016) pp.70-73
[144] Kelmarsh Hall includes a new heritage lottery funded project *Tunnelling Through the Past* showing the working lives of servants within the Basement rooms, Hidden Tunnel and Laundry Rooms.

necessitated the effective selection of appropriate evidence from a wide range of potential sources. Central to this selection has been the pursuit of extant items of household linen to facilitate investigation of their construction and after care and the documentary sources that might record their presence in the country house. A rationale of these choices and their implications in practice are outlined next.

Sources and Methodology

This study has a lengthy time frame and there is a discrepancy in the coverage across the period with fewer documents supporting it from the mid nineteenth century. Taking the period from the start of the study to the mid-eighteenth-century probate inventories proved the most numerous documents although household inventories are also present. Fewer probate inventories were found after 1782 when they ceased to be a legal requirement. The sales catalogues noted in the mid period covered relate principally to papers held by Northampton Central Library. It was hoped that others would be in either local or national archives, particularly for the twentieth century which anecdotally saw the retrenchment of country estates, but this was not the case as explained below. The household textiles recorded from these documents for the first two tranches of the study are of comparable size; the final period is under-represented in comparison (See Table 1.1 below).

Analysis of documents and outcomes used in constructing database			
	1660-1760	1761-1860	1861-1939
Probate inventories	92	34	9
Household inventories	27	24	14
Sales	4	30	0
Household accounts	2	0	0
Number of household textiles recorded	32,244	47,623	15,638
Number of domestic textiles recorded	1,490	6,875	7,059

Table 1.1: Analysis of documents

These records were to some extent self-selected in that lists of linen had survived within the archives visited or the printed collections reviewed. A tentative classification of the families represented in the thesis is shown in Table 1:2 where some families appear in more than one period.[145]Additional information regarding the survival of the family or the extent of its landholding is elusive. Where three or more documents survive an attempt has been made to sketch in the family background

[145] G.E.Mingay, *The Gentry: the Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (London, Longman, 1976) p.13

where feasible (See Appendix 1, pp197-207). In the case of Warwick Castle and Calke Abbey in Derbyshire, where there was a range of documents across a period, it has been possible to make a case study of the household textiles fitting it within the context of the family's history (See Appendix 2, pp. 209-222).

Potential classification of families included in the thesis			
	1660-1760	1761-1860	1861-1939
Peers	28	28	6
Greater Gentry	43	23	12
Lesser Gentry	30	14	3
Local Gentry	13	21	0

Table 1:2: Classification of Families

The range of documents shown in Table 1.1 formed the quantitative basis of this study whilst additional insight was supplied from a variety of sources. Probate inventories have been used for the details of linen recorded amongst the household goods and chattels rather than the wills they originally supplemented. Wills recorded the intentions of the testator in the disposition of goods from an estate. McCarthy referenced earlier, said that servants might receive bequests in their employers' wills 'These varied from employer's clothes or linen to sums of money'.[146] The 1734 will of Penelope Combes offered some idea of the linen her servant Ellen would receive recording 'twelve diaper napkins and a fine diaper table cloathe' though there is no indication of the fate of the rest of her household linen.[147] Consequently they form the bulk of the documentary sources here from 1660 to the end of the eighteenth century although detailed probate inventories were still being used in the twentieth century for some elite estates.[148]

Probate inventories have been used elsewhere to investigate many areas from changes in agriculture and architecture to urban occupations and the spread of literacy but particularly as an indicator of household wealth and changing patterns of consumption as discussed above.[149] Despite their popularity as an accessible and seemingly objective source, historians such as Spufford and Orlin have pointed out their limitations and inconsistencies.[150] Certainly of the probate inventories

[146] P. McCarthy, *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2016) p.217
[147] DHC 5242/Box 30/3 Probate copy will Penelope Combes, Porlock, 1734
[148] DRO D518M/F/190 Probate Inventory 8th Earl of Harrington, Elvaston Castle, 1920
[149] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture*; M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption*
[150] M. Spufford, The limitations of the probate inventory pp.139-74 in J. Chartres, D. Hay (eds) *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990); L.C. Orlin,

consulted in this study just over half included lists of household linen, approximately one fifth had a total valuation for linen and roughly the same fraction made no mention of linen at all. The exclusion of linen may be due to the practice of *bona paraphernalia*.[151] Items and 'divers things necessary for their own person' were left out of probate inventories to ensure that a widow was not left destitute and in addition to her apparel and jewels 'convenient to her degree' often including household linen, as was the case in George Courtney's will of 1787. It specified that 'Elizabeth Courtney to have and use all and singular my said household goods… linen… During the term of her natural life'.[152]

Whilst approximately 41 million wills remain in various repositories in the United Kingdom Arkell indicated only 20-30% of the probate inventories originally recorded have survived.[153] George Fursden in his will of 1773 left instruction 'That a Particular Inventory of such my Plate Household Goods Furniture and utensils be taken within one Month next after my Death or as soon after as conveniently maybe', but his probate inventory has not survived.[154] Although probate was a legal requirement little formal guidance was given with the act. Several popular handbooks offered advice to appraisers but left the organisation of items to them. Some suggested recording 'as it stands in every Room'; others 'to sort all thinges of one kind togeather'.[155] The placing of the linen within some inventories may indicate that a particular space or room was designated for its storage whilst in others linen was a category at the end of the inventory like plate, china or glass.

Orlin warned that the value assigned to items might not be a reliable indicator of its second-hand value.[156] However amongst the probate inventories here, the range of descriptions used indicates the quality of linen was being carefully assessed as in the case of Hasells Hall, Bedfordshire.[157] Here the estate was valued at £2472.15s.6d with plate valued at £235.19s yet the linen described as 'pretty much worn' and 'indifferent and much worn' amounted to just £58.2s. suggesting an

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Fictions in the Early Modern English Probate Inventory pp.51-84 in H.S. Turner (ed) *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York, Routledge, 2002)

[151] N. Cox, J. Cox, 'Probate Inventories: the legal background; Part 2' *The Local Historian* 14:2 (1984) pp.217-223

[152] DHC 1508M/O/F/W/12 Will of George Courtney of Powderham Castle, 1787

[153] https://www.familyhistory.co.uk; T. Arkell, Interpreting Probate Inventories pp.72-102 in T. Arkell, N. Evans, N. Goose (eds) *When Death Us Do Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* (Oxford, Leopard Head Press, 2000)

[154] DHC 5242M/Box 28/14 Will of George Fursden of Cadbury, 1773; DHC 5242/Box 30/4 William Culling of Woodland, 1682-1731

[155] L.C. Orlin, Fictions in the Early Modern English Probate Inventory, p.51; Quoted in D. Spaeth, '"Orderly made": re-appraising household inventories in Seventeenth Century England' *Social History* 41: 4 (2016) pp.417-435, p.421

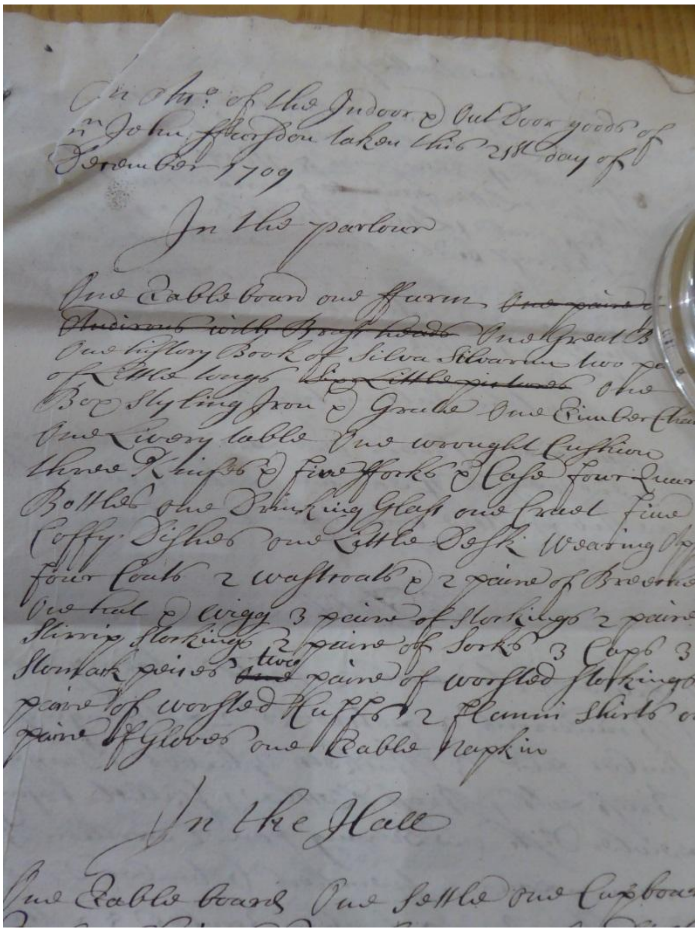
[156] L.C. Orlin, Fictions in the Early Modern English Probate Inventory, p.54

[157] Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, *Inventories of Bedfordshire Country Houses 1714-1830*, (ed) J. Collett-White, (Bedford, 1995) p.86

accurate assessment of the condition and possible re-sale value of these items as Overton found.[158] Spaeth too wrote of a 'culture of appraisal' and suggested appraisers were accustomed to knowing the value of goods from their general experience of purchasing or dealing in commodities. This is in line with suggestions that consumers built up a 'material literacy', a concept investigated by Pennell and by Dyer and Wigston-Smith.[159] Shephard also wrote from her extensive study of depositions in court cases in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that 'The assessment of moveable property was … intrinsic to routine processes of social estimation owing to the fact that the vast majority of [commercial] transactions were based on credit'.[160]

Two copies of the inventory were required: one for the court and the other for the executor whilst a rough copy was compiled as the assessors walked through the property. Within the Fursdon archive relating to the death of John Fursdon in 1709 are three copies of the inventory carried out for probate. There appears to be a rough copy dated 21 December 1709 shown below (Fig.1:1) where various corrections have been made, a final draft of 1st May 1710 and a sales copy of 4th May 1710. Only five napkins appear in the first two although other items of linen were indicated as sold in the last, exemplifying the difficulty of collecting evidence for this study.[161]

[158] M. Overton, Prices from Probate Inventories pp.120-141 in T. Arkell, N. Evans, N. Goose (eds) *When Death Us Do Part,*
[159] S. Pennell, Making the Bed in Later Stuart and Georgian England, pp.30-45 in J. Stobart, B. Blonde, Bruno Blondé (eds), *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives from Western Europe* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p.34; S. Dyer, C. Wigston-Smith (eds) *Material Literacy in Eighteenth Century Britain: A Nation of Makers* (London, Bloomsbury, 2020)
[160] A. Shephard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015) p.45
[161] DHC 5242M/Box 29/16 Probate Inventory John Fursdon, Cadbury 1709



An Inv. of the Indoor & Out Door goods of
... John ffursdon taken this 21st day of
December 1709

In the parlour

One Table board one fform ~~one paire of Andirons with Brass heads~~ One Greatt ...
One History Book of Silva Silvarum two ...
of Little ... ~~[illegible]~~ One
Box Slyting Iron & Grate One Timber Cha...
One Livery table One wrought Cushion
three Knifes & five Forks & Case four Quar...
Bottles one Drinking Glass one Cruet five
Coffy Dishes one Little Desk Wearing App...
four Coats 2 wastcoats & 2 paire of Breeches
One hatt & wigg 3 paire of Stockings 2 paire
Stirrip Stockings 2 paire of Socks 3 Caps 3
Stomach peices two paire of worsted stockings
paire of worsted Cuffs 2 flannin Shirts ...
paire of Gloves one Table Napkin

In the Hall

One Table board One Settle one Cupboar...

Figure 1:1: Rough Copy of Probate, John Fursdon 1709

The probate inventories used here cover a range of households between 1661 and 1920. It was no longer compulsory for executors or administrators to present an inventory to the probate court after 1782 and only 33 of the 135 used are from the period after 1782. Those consulted all relate to landed gentry drawing income from estates rather than engaged directly in farming and they range from local gentry to those with widespread estates and several properties. A tentative classification of the families included in the database of 234 entries has been made (See Table 1.1 above). As indicated, there was an expectation an inventory be made yet their survival is patchy. William Culling's estate 'P^{d} 10s.6d for an Inventory of Mr Cullings His Goodes'. One itemising plate has survived but there is no record of his household linen or indeed any other household goods.[162] Some posed other questions relating to the use of household linen such as the probate inventory for Warwick Castle for 1806 which appears to have been lost, yet the preliminary itemising of goods room by room survives.[163] It contains a detailed listing of household linen although this has been crossed out. Did the probate inventory omit the household linen? Was it by reason of bona

[162] DHC 5242/Box 30/4 Misc. William Culling of Woodland, 1682-1731
[163] WRO CR1886/TN1053 Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1806

paraphernalia? And was it by negotiation between the assessors and executors as Smeath suggests? By contrast, detailed lists of the household linen were made in the probate inventory occasioned by the death of the Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull in 1725 yet there is also a note: 'All the above mentioned Linnen in this House is me Lady Dutchesses, so must not be charged at anything in this Inventory'.[164] Three probate inventories survive for Sir Ralph Hare of Stow Hall in Norfolk. There, 17 entries relate to household linen on the first draft; a further 5 are included in the second copy and yet another appears in the final one.[165] It is impossible to estimate how much household linen was missed from such inventories and the quantities were most likely considerably more than the surviving evidence suggests.

Household textiles have also been found in the sales catalogues accompanying auctions of goods in country houses. The earliest such document in this study is that of Horton Hall, Northamptonshire in 1772; the latest is for Maxstoke Castle, Warwickshire in 1854.[166] The British Sales Catalogues Project recorded approximately nine thousand surviving catalogues from 1681 to 1850 detailing sales of artworks.[167] A corresponding database recording book sales has also been compiled. Catalogues for other goods have not received similar attention. Whilst there are significant collections held in the British Library, the Wallace Collection and the Courtauld Institute, they deal exclusively with book and art sales and those held by Historic England relate to sales of property. Enquiries made to six regional auction houses established in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were unsuccessful. Consequently, details from 34 sales offering household linen have been used in this study.

The arrangement of goods in the sales catalogues in a room-by-room configuration strongly resembles the format of probate inventories. Auctions were part of a network of second-hand circulation of goods occasioned by bankruptcy, death or the need to raise cash in economic stress. Sales were promoted through newspaper advertisements and the wording from these often reappeared in the same format on the front of the sales catalogue. Advertisements indicated catalogues were available not only from the auctioneer but often through newspaper offices, booksellers and even local hostelries. Such catalogues, printed on poor quality paper, described real objects that were available for inspection usually in situ in the case of country house sales and where the previous owner was readily identified. Indeed the auctioneers were diligent in advising potential

[164] NUSC Ma 488/3 Appraisment of Household Goods for Duke of Kingston, 1726
[165] NRO HARE 5671/ 225x3 Probate Inventories Sir Ralph Hare, 1732
[166] NCL M0005647NL/6 Sales Catalogue, Horton Hall, 1772; WRO CR 4253/5/7/1 Sales Catalogue, Maxstoke Castle, 1854
[167] M. Lincoln, A. Fox, 'The Temporal Dimensions of the London Art Auction 1750-1835' *British Art Studies* 4: Autumn (2016) Paul Mellon Centre, London

customers of the circumstances of the sale and that the goods were authentic giving an indication on the frontispiece of the scope of the goods, the reason for their sale together with its time and place as in the case of the country house sale at Rollaston Hall (See Fig. 1:2) occasioned by the death of the previous owner and at the decision of the executrix, probably his widow to sell the 'Genuine, Handsome, Genteel, and Useful Household Furniture' followed by descriptions of the lots offered.

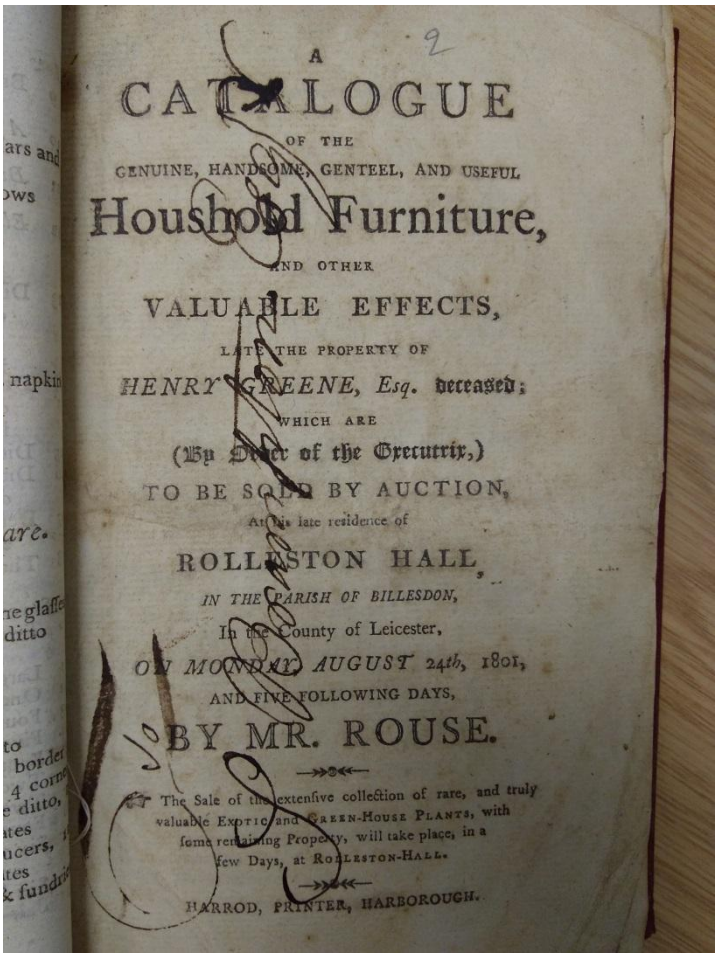

A
CATALOGUE
OF THE
GENUINE, HANDSOME, GENTEEL, AND USEFUL
Household Furniture,
AND OTHER
VALUABLE EFFECTS,
LATE THE PROPERTY OF
HENRY GREENE, Esq. deceased;
WHICH ARE
(By Order of the Executrix,)
TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,
At his late residence of
ROLLESTON HALL,
IN THE PARISH OF BILLESDON,
In the County of Leicester,
ON MONDAY, AUGUST 24th, 1801,
AND FIVE FOLLOWING DAYS,
BY MR. ROUSE.
☞ The Sale of the extensive collection of rare, and truly valuable Exotic and Green-House Plants, with some remaining Property, will take place, in a few Days, at Rollesron-Hall.
HARROD, PRINTER, HARBOROUGH.

Figure 1:2: Sales Catalogue for Rollaston Hall, Leicestershire, 1801

Goods usually itemised room by room were probably sold in that same order. Household textiles however, are commonly listed near the ends of catalogues, and it is often unclear where they would be displayed. They were not the main attraction of the sales and indeed were included in less than half the catalogues studied. Nevertheless, the descriptions of items intended to attract purchasers have proved valuable in identifying the range of household textiles used. More recent sales catalogues provide a wealth of detail giving descriptions of patterns, size, provenance, where known, and condition and indeed often with illustrations as these items are now recognized as collectable antiques.

In England, records of sales catalogues are mostly from the period after 1780. The original act governing auctions mandated licensure of all auctioneers through the London Excise Office and payment of duty on the sales of items. An amendment in 1779 required two days' notice of any sale and within twenty-four hours of it to furnish 'a written or printed catalogue [which]… enumerated every article, lot, parcel, and thing intended to be sold at auction'.[168]Unfortunately, an enquiry directed to The National Archives elicited the reply that these documents have either not survived or not been selected for permanent preservation and accounts of sales pertaining to the London Excise Office refer only to those of seized contraband. However, work by Pennell shows the considerable popularity of sales of household goods prior to these acts and indeed a temporary decline in the number held as a result of the imposition of levies on them.[169] Using London newspapers for the month of April in 1730, 1750 and 1770 Pennell noted 11 sales advertised in 1730, 10 of which listed bed linens; for 1750, 7 with all offering bed linen; and for 1770 an increase to 27 but with bed linen featuring in fewer than half echoing the experience of this study.

The prevalence of advertisements for sales witnesses the sustained popularity of auctions amongst consumers and makes it particularly frustrating that so few catalogues listing household linen have been found for this investigation, yet this was only one of the methods of obtaining second hand goods. Lemire, in a study of second-hand clothing encompassing the eighteenth century, a period designated as a nascent consumer economy, thought that the volume of second-hand trading in that period was comparable to that in new goods.[170] Do the listings of household textiles within the sales catalogues suggest similar comparisons might be made? van Damme too stated that purchasing second-hand was not merely a survival strategy but that 're-use of older products was not confined to the poor and weak. Second-hand consumption was intrinsically linked to daily life in the ancient regime'.[171] Pennell likewise suggested that although some might be constrained through necessity to purchase textiles smelling 'as rankly … as the bedding to be sold at the Ditchside near Fleetbridge smells of the bawdy house and brandy', even royal household textiles were sold on to other users.[172] The Lucy family of Charlecote Park in Warwickshire secured the purchase of table linen to the value of £53 from the royal household, clearly thinking the cachet worth the cost.[173] Stobart's research

[168] M. Lincoln, A. Fox,' London Art Auction 1750-1835', p.4
[169] S. Pennell, Making the Bed in Later Stuart and Georgian England pp.30-45 in J. Stobart, B. Blonde, Bruno Blondé (eds), *Selling Textiles,* p.38
[170] B. Lemire, 'Consumerism in Pre-Industrial and Early Industrial England: The Trade in Second-Hand Clothes' *Journal of British Studies* 27:1 (1988) pp.1-24
[171] I. van Damme, R. Vermoesen, 'Second-hand Consumption as a way of Life: Public Auctions in the Surroundings of Alost in the late 18th Century' *Continuity and Change* 24: 2 (2009) pp.275-305
[172] S. Pennell, Making the Bed, p.36
[173] WRO CR00307 L06/1118 Bill, George Lucy, 1836

reviewed above, showed that furniture and household goods could be purchased second hand from shopkeepers who often carried a mix of new and used goods as well as from pawnbrokers disposing of unredeemed pledges.[174] Like van Damme he believed that the earlier views of a two tier system of consumption based on McKendrick's emulation theories were too simplistic and have been revised by later investigations. Furthermore, Stobart felt that purchasers were motivated by a desire for social respectability that might be enforced by financial necessity, but also by the desire to 'capture value' by using their knowledge of materials and skills of discernment to make purchases that reflected the moral values of thrift and good housekeeping. Consumers were also likely to reinforce their social identity through purchases that demonstrated taste rather than cost, and many of the goods were pre-owned by social equals thus negating the idea of emulation or kudos. As fashions in household goods moved at a far slower rate than in clothing, furniture including bedding and household textiles, representing as they did a considerable initial financial commitment whatever the socio-economic level of the purchaser, retained their commercial value and could hold significant re-sale value.[175]

For the buyer auctions represented an opportunity to purchase items of known provenance, unlike the risks of acquiring stolen goods inherent in street markets and purchases from pawnbrokers, and in the case of country house sales, the items might have an economic value greater than their purchase price. Purchasers assessed the items in advance of the sale through the custom of allowing access to the goods in situ upon purchase of a catalogue. In the case of notorious sales such as that of the contents of Fonthill Abbey in 1822, tickets to view were required in addition to the catalogues already priced at one guinea, yet thousands went despite the cost to look over the contents of this house that had rarely been open to the public.[176] Circumstances had forced William Beckford to hire Christie's auction house to manage the sale. However, the house and the thousand lots categorised by Christie, none of which were household linen, were sold as a going concern to a gunpowder manufacturer and not broken up. Yet a year later Phillips the auctioneer included 155 damask table cloths, forty-eight dozen napkins but only nine pairs of sheets in the subsequent sale, demonstrating again the limitations of sales catalogues as indicative of the quantities of household textiles in circulation when the property was fully functional.[177] In this sale the household textiles were laid out

[174] J. Stobart, Clothes, cabinets and carriages: second-hand dealing in Eighteenth Century England, pp.225-244 in B. Blondé, P. Stabel, J. Stobart, I. van Damme, (eds) *Buyers and Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in medieval and modern Europe* (Turnhout, Belgium, 2006)
[175] S. Pennell, Making the Bed, p.41
[176] A. N. Richter 'Spectacle, Exoticism and Display in the Gentleman's House: The Fonthill Auction of 1822' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 41:4 (2008) pp.543-563, p.544
[177] Fonthill Abbey Sale Catalogue 23 Sept. 1823 Available from: https://welcomecollection.org/works/dpxktea8 (Accessed: 29.12.2023)

for inspection in Rooms 44 and 45 within the property with the first batch sold on the fifteenth day of the sale and the remainder the next day. Following these lots were 'Stores from the Housekeeper's Room to be viewed in the Anti-Chamber and Dressing Room No. 44 & 45' indicating that in this sale and possibly others household textiles were placed in relatively sparsely furnished areas for the convenience of viewing the lots. Unfortunately, the original owner of this copy of the sales catalogue recorded the prices attained by all the lots except the household textiles. As ultimately happened at Fonthill, the country house would be cleared, and collections of items disbanded and reassembled in separate domains. The accounts of the Fursden family of Cadbury for 1814 show use of several auction houses with purchases at Phillips, 'at auction in Harley Street' and at Squills, some of which were household linens and an annotated catalogue for the sale of Annesley Hall in 1849 shows one bidder making extensive acquisitions totalling £407.10s.[178] Such sales might be occasioned by the death of the owner and the disposal of their goods by executors. They might be used by heirs to raise revenue from unwanted possessions or could represent the abandonment of a property in favour of another family seat.[179] Indeed, Wall states 'The catalog both captures and contains the visible disintegration of a collection, a house, an estate, a family.'[180] As the case of Fonthill demonstrates, the goods offered might not represent the quantity or indeed the quality of items originally in the household. In Stobart's analysis of second-hand textiles sold at Northamptonshire country house sales between 1761 and 1836, all 21 offered beds, blankets and quilts but only 9 of the sales included sheets, which might imply these had been absorbed elsewhere whereas the remaining lots were surplus to the requirements of those instigating the sale.[181] However, it might also mean that the household linen had been 'patched and repaired until mechanical damage reduced them to a collection of rags' as identified later in this chapter. [182]

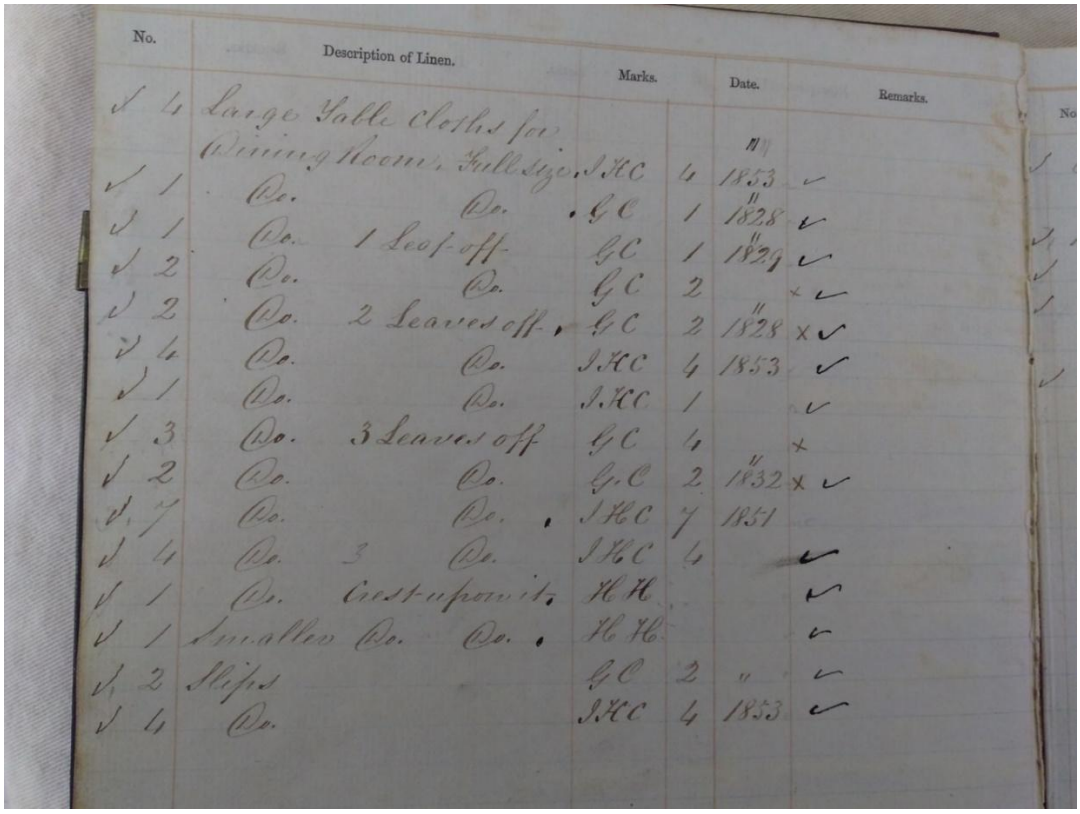
Sales catalogues and probate inventories are the main categories of primary sources used here but it has also been possible to identify household textiles in additional contemporary documents. Amongst the supplementary sources studied, 65 household inventories have proved particularly useful in addressing the questions of quantity of textiles held and providing a glimpse not only at the way in which status was reflected in these items but also into the areas of consumer choice and

[178] DHC 5242M/Box 21/7 Fursdon of Cadbury, Accounts, 1797-1801; NUSC ChM/I/2 Sale at Annesley Hall, 1849
[179] R. MacArthur, J. Stobart Going for a Song? Country House Sales in Georgian England, pp. 175-195 in J. Stobart, I. Van Damme (eds) *Modernity and the Second-Hand Trade: European Cultures and Practices 1700-1900* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) p.175
[180] C. Wall, 'The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31:1 (1997) pp.1-25
[181] J. Stobart, 'Domestic textiles and country house sales in Georgian England' *Business History* 61:1 (2019) pp.17-37
[182] J.W.S. Hearle, B. Lomas, W.D. Cooke, *Atlas of Fibre Fracture and Damage to Textiles* (Cambridge, Woodhead, 1998) p.377

fashion. The earliest of these household inventories found in this study was from the archives of Stoneleigh and dated 1637.[183] Some of these give a snap-shot of the linen held at a particular point in the life of a household, often without any indication of the reason for its compilation, such as the list of linen sent by his wife to John Radcliffe of Hitchin Priory in 1734.[184] There is no indication of where this was sent, nor why, nor what proportion of the household linen it represented. Others like the Inventory Book for Serlby Hall identify stocks of linen and their management from 1735 to 1775.[185] Where such inventories were sustained an attempt has been made within the database to identify different generations of user creating separate entries for known changes in ownership.

The housekeeper to George Lucy at Charlecote Park also maintained records of various aspects of household management including where she purchased items.[186] A record of household linen was also kept at Calke Abbey.[187] Two volumes, the first beginning in 1855 (See Fig. 1:3) indicate such books were available commercially by that date and suggesting there was a reasonable demand for them, even if relatively few have survived. They had pre-printed headings probably following recognised practice in such audits allowing a description and a date of purchase but also the shorthand information distinguishing pieces under the heading 'Marks' and any comments about condition. These had been updated at intervals as the ink and pencil ticks in the journal show and continued into a second volume with the final entry in 1941. These household inventories have provided valuable information about the procurement and subsequent management of linen addressed in subsequent chapters. It has also been possible to identify to some extent the intervals at which items were replaced and the re-purposing of others.

[183] SCLA DR18/4/25 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1637
[184] HALS D/ER/F114 Inventory of Linen, John Radcliffe, Hitchin Priory, 1734
[185] NUSC Ga/12701 Inventory Book, Serlby Hall, 1735-75
[186] WRO L6/1746 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[187] DRO D2375/H/F/4/1 Volume of list of linen at Calke Abbey, 1855-1931; DRO D2375/H/F/4/3 Linen Book Calke Abbey, 1894-1939



No.	Description of Linen.		Marks.		Date.	Remarks.
4	Large Table cloths for Dining Room, Full Size		J.K.C	4	1853	✓
1	Do.		Do.	1	1828	✓
1	Do.	1 Leaf off	G.C	1	1829	✓
2	Do.		Do.	2		× ✓
2	Do.	2 Leaves off	G.C	2	1828	× ✓
4	Do.		Do.	J.K.C	4	1853 ✓
1	Do.		Do.	J.K.C	1	✓
3	Do.	3 Leaves off	G.C	4		×
2	Do.		Do.	G.C	2	1832 × ✓
1	Do.		Do.	J.K.C	1	1851
4	Do.	3	Do.	J.K.C	4	✓
1	Do.	Crest upon it		H.H.		✓
1	Smaller	Do.	Do.	H.H.		✓
2	Slips			G.C	2	" ✓
4	Do.			J.K.C	4	1853 ✓

Figure 1:3: Volume of Linen, Calke Abbey, Derbyshire, 1855-1931

It would seem from the 1637 example that such practices were well established by the beginning of the period covered here. Prescriptive literature offering advice on household management has a long pedigree. Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* published in 1557 advised that a quarterly audit be made of servants' bedclothes and that sheets and blankets should be marked for identification. Tusser and Gervase Markham, whose *English Hus-wife* was published in 1615, were both younger sons of gentry families and may well have been drawing on established and familiar patterns of resource management as well as earlier texts such as *How the Good Wife Taught her Daughter*. [188] Tusser's book went through more than a dozen editions by 1600; Markham's nine editions between 1615 and 1683. However, although popular, was the advice implemented? It would appear from the following that Tusser failed to profit from it.

> Tusser, they tell me, when thou wert alive,
> Thou, teaching thrift, thyself couldst never thrive;
> So, like the whetstone, many men are wont,
> To sharpen others when they themselves are blunt.
>
> Henry Peacham 1612 [189]

[188] M. Roberts, '"To bridle the falsehood of unconscionable workmen, and for her own satisfaction"; what the Jacobean housewife needed to know about men's work, and why' *Labour History Review* 68:1 (1998) pp.4-30
[189] Available from: http://www.gardenhistoryinfo.com/gardenpages/tusser.html (Accessed: 20.10.2023)

Abridged versions of Markham's work were produced as chapbooks in the seventeenth century along with a substantial proportion of published didactic material in standardised simple bindings such as those advertised by George Conyers of Ludgate Hill.[190] Sadly the attrition rate amongst such cheap and possibly heavily used books has meant they have all but disappeared and can only be traced through secondary sources and chance survivals. One such is *The merchant's ware-house laid open: or the plain dealing linnen-draper* containing 'perfect and plain instruction' for the purchaser who would thus be able to purchase linen with confidence.[191] The existence of such manuals was discussed by Klein and referenced below in Chapters Four and Five. This extant pamphlet ends with a list of advertisements for three other instructive books in the series that have either not survived or not yet been uncovered. Eliza Smith's *The Complete Housewife: or Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion* published in 1727, promised 'a Manual, that shall neither burden the hands to hold, the Eyes in reading, nor the Mind in conceiving' clearly indicating it was designed for a handy and practical reference book. It proved very popular with purchasers going into eighteen editions with minor alterations and changes to illustrations in its first fifty years. Manuals like this and the later ones, such as that of Hannah Glasse of 1760 and Samuel and Sarah Adams of 1825, assured their purchasers that they were experienced practitioners of the advice they were offering which may indeed represent contemporary 'best practice'. Yet *The Domestic Encyclopaedia* of 1802 advised that 'a rapid succession of Cyclopaedias and Encyclopaedias which have appeared within the last twenty years [were] often distinguished more by their alluring title pages than by their intrinsic merit', and more recently Strasser warned 'I used advice literature carefully, mindful that it is intended to prescribe not describe'.[192] Nevertheless, such works have provided a valuable insight into the potential use of some of the items of household linen listed in the sources.

Household accounts have also been studied where available. These are less likely to survive in archives than estate accounts. Texts on accounting were very popular, often running to many reprints indicating the desire of households to monitor their expenditure. Stephen Monteage published *Instructions for Rent Gatherers, Accompts and Advice to the women and Maidens of London…to apply themselves to the right understanding and practice of keeping Books of Accompts* in 1683 implying that accounts should be kept by both men and women which was certainly the case

[190] S. Pennell, N. Glaisyer (eds) *Didactic Literature in England 1500-1800: Expertise Constructed* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2003)
[191] Available from: https://ota.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/repository/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12024/A85116/A85116.html?sequence=5 (Accessed: 20.10.2023)
[192] Quoted in G. Lees-Maffei 'Accommodating 'Mrs. Three-in-One': Homemaking, Home Entertaining and Domestic Advice Literature in Post-War Britain' *Women's History Review* 16:5 (2007) pp.723-754

in the Le Strange family.[193] Whilst Hunt accepted that the spread of accountancy skills amongst women is virtually impossible to quantify, Vickery suggested that the 'pocket-sized memorandum books survive in virtually every English archive, packed with notes and accounts' although this has not been the case in the archives consulted here.[194] Steedman referred to her study of the account books of a widow, Frances Hamilton who drew income from three farms she held in Devon. Mrs Hamilton was a member of the Taunton Book Society and had borrowed and read, according to the notes in her journal, several books on accounting yet these were the counsel of perfection, and her own accounts might be interrupted by lists of other books borrowed or notes on sermons.[195]

This idiosyncratic style reinforces advice that household accounts were written in a variety of styles and were meant for private use rather than to be read by others.[196] Accounts may not be maintained for very long or may not have survived in long runs but they provide a vivid snapshot of expenditure for a particular period. Where they are available, such as the House Book of the Mellish family of Hodsock Priory covering the period 1781-1816, they offered answers to the question of whether prolonged periods of warfare might affect supplies of household linens.[197] Tebeaux suggested that accounts required clarity of text using verb or gerund phrases.[198] More formal accounts for larger households may have been divided into categories and were often checked and signed at intervals. All these conventions are seen in the accounts for Warwick Castle for 1665:

Item 183 ells ¼ of flaxen cloath for Sheets	018:17:09
'' 40 ells of hempen '' '' ''	002:15:01
'' for making Sheets	000:14:08
'' To Mr Thorowgood Linnen Draper his bill	055:00:00[199]

Accounts such as these provide some understanding of the intervals between acquisitions of household linen together with an indication of costs although their incomplete nature makes the establishment of patterns of expenditure difficult.

[193] E. Tebeaux, 'Visual Texts: Format and the evolution of English Accounting Texts, 1100-1700' *Journal of Technical Writing & Commerce* 30:4 (2000) pp.307-341
[194] M. Hunt and A. Vickery quoted in L.M. Kirkham & A. Loft, 'Lady and the Accounts: Missing from accounting history?' *Accounting Historians Journal* 28:1 (2001) pp.1-25; J. Whittle, E. Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender*
[195] C. Steedman, 'Intimacy in research: accounting for it' *History of the Human Sciences* 22:4 (2008) pp.17-33
[196] https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/researchguidance/accounting/introduction.aspx
[197] NUSC Me H1 & H2/1-8 House Book, Mellish household, 1781-86 & 1800-1816
[198] E. Tebeaux, 'Visual Texts: Format and the evolution of English Accounting Texts, 1100-1700' *Journal of Technical Writing & Commerce* 30:4 (2000) pp.307-341
[199] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1665)

Use has also been made of contemporary literary sources. References in poems, plays, and novels have provided information not only about usage of linen but also attitudes and values. Whilst these are works of imagination, Myers suggested 'Literary and historical texts might expand our knowledge [of early modern architecture] in another way, contributing not so much to our knowledge of [its] design or construction as to our sense of how it was valued and understood.'[200] Hudspith pointed out a reappraisal of the value of novels as historical sources took place in the second half of the twentieth century and advised that fiction constructs imaginary worlds but anchors them in a verifiable reality as Reid endorsed writing specifically about nineteenth-century novels.[201]. She highlighted that contemporary authors were aware of the significant shift in the construction of novels compared to earlier works of fiction, quoting from an essay of 1785 stating that' The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written…[it] gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes. Widdowson believed it was impossible to study English literature effectively without an understanding of the historical and cultural context that influenced it whilst Sutherland also thought that many novels from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries presented surface details and common actions that were familiar to their readers and addressed issues of interest to them.[202] This view, developed by Pasco suggested that 'within the work's context, the attitudes, the background, the hopes and fears and considerable detail often give every indication of being the stuff of customary life', further suggesting that 'no well-trained historian or critic would today deny that creative works form a significant, well-integrated part of the tapestry created by a period's economic, social and political beliefs and values'.[203]

At the same time that novels were growing in number and popularity a variety of periodicals appeared on the market. One of the best-selling was the monthly *The Lady's Magazine*: founded in 1770, re-launched in 1818 it remained in publication until it merged with one of its rivals in 1832. Targeted at a female readership it offered a miscellany of essays on a wide range of topics, short stories, advice, together with song sheets and puzzles, fashion plates and embroidery patterns and

[200] A.M. Myers, *Literature and Architecture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2013) p.4
[201] S. Hudspith, 'It's only a story': What value are novels as a historical source? pp.74-91 in G. George (ed) *Reading Russian Sources: A student's guide to text and visual sources from Russian history* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2020); J. Reid, Novels pp.159-177 in M. Dobson, B. Ziemann (eds) *Reading Primary Sources: Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009)
[202] P. Widdowson, *The Palgrave Guide to English Literature and its Contexts 1500-2000* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); K. Sutherland, 'Jane Austen: social realism and the novel', https://www-upgrade.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/jane-austens-social-realism-and-the-novel#
[203] A. Pasco, 'Literature as historical archive' *New Literary History* 35:3 (2004) pp.373-394

all for 6d per month.[204] Although aimed at a predominantly middle class, its format was reproduced most faithfully by *Ackermann's Repository* a similar monthly published for twenty years from 1809. This production retailing at 4s per copy was aimed at an elite market with a paper and print quality superior to its rivals. Both these popular magazines were intended to be kept and included instructions for professional binding. Their content helped to frame fashionable taste in the early nineteenth century and their format was the blueprint for later generations of magazines aimed at a predominantly female readership. Other ephemera such as handbills, invoices, vouchers and receipts were occasionally found amongst the documents and where appropriate they too have contributed to the study.

The details of household linen and domestic textiles used in the maintenance of the country house were abstracted from this range of documents identified above and placed on a database. This required decisions regarding categories which were created using the most frequently applied terms with considerable recourse to footnotes for the individualistic language and comments found in some listings. The database made it possible to count the numbers of items recorded. Trends in fabric choice and provenance could be recognized. In probate inventories where valuations for linen, plate and whole estate were given, calculations about the relative expenditure on household textiles could be made and compared against the findings of other surveys. Where rooms and contents could be distinguished tentative estimates could be made regarding the numbers of pairs of sheets available per bed and weighed against other findings, such as those made by Trinder and Cox referenced above. Yet probate inventories can offer more than a simple list of individual objects; careful attention has been paid to the linguistics of the entry to provide an idea of the distinctions the appraisers identified as significant. They were aware of materials, manufacture, quality and condition; such references assist in moving beyond the quantitative towards reconstructing wider concepts about the relationship between these objects and status, tastes and trends, issues taken up in more detail in the following chapters. Approximately three hundred probate inventories were studied. Roughly half this number included lists of household linen. A further fifth gave a valuation for the total amount of linen without itemising it and about the same number had no reference to linen whatsoever. This yielded 135 probate inventories with data for inclusion in the study, comparable with the numbers of gentry included in the database used by Weatherill or Shammas

[204] J. Batchelor, *The Lady's Magazine (1770-1832) and the Making of Literary History* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2022)

whose much larger study sampled across society; consequently, these findings have been used in their entirety rather than sampling across time intervals.[205]

For those sales catalogues located, the process of extracting details of household textiles from them is laborious and slow, frequently showing a discrepancy between the goods advertised on the frontispiece of the catalogue and the actual lots listed. The information from these sources has extended the quantitative data obtained and the language deployed in advertising the individual items offered for sale has been used to analyse the values espoused amongst the potential purchasers and are discussed further in the following chapters. Like the probate inventories, not all sales catalogues provided information about household linen. For example, amongst a collection of 81 sales catalogues at one location, only 21 related to sales from country houses and of these only 14 offered household textiles. One advertised 'Also a large Quantity of TABLE LINEN which will be divided into Twenty Lots'; having highlighted that this would be of interest to potential purchasers, no details of these lots were given in the catalogue though all the other goods were itemised down to 'Lot 231: coalscuttle and three tin lids'.[206]

Household accounts have also given some indication of the expenditure on household linen and even frequency of purchase where they were kept or have survived for an extended period such as the House Books kept by the Mellish family between 1781 and 1816.[207] Where the total expenditure on household goods has been noted it has been possible to identify the proportion of spending on household textiles though comparisons across time have been tentative. The idiosyncratic styles of accountancy employed in some 40 sets of accounts have been challenging whilst offering an insight into a range of other expenditure beyond that of this study.

Central to this study was the decision to incorporate extant examples of household textiles. Riello recognized that 'Central to the history of consumption has been an interest in the very material objects that were produced, bought and consumed to satisfy people's physical, but also relational, psychological and moral needs' though he also suggested a lack of interest amongst historians about the *histories of things*, meaning a study of the artefact in its own right.[208] The long eighteenth century was a period of rapidly emerging consumerism, yet Trentmann, assessing studies of material culture from the period, stated 'The historical embrace of things…has been partial' and observed

[205] Weatherill's survey alone covered 3,202 probate inventories from 1675-1725 of which 120 were identified as gentry
[206] NCL M005644NL Sales Catalogue, Cottingham Hall, 1761
[207] NUSC Me H1 House Book, 1781-86; NUSC Me H2 House Book, 1800-1816
[208] G. Riello, Things that Shape History: Material culture and historical narratives pp.24-47 in K. Harvey, (ed) *History and Material Culture: A student's guide to approaching alternative sources* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009) p.32

that writers have been more interested in culture than material.[209] A notable exception to this was Gerritsen's investigation, 'The Global Life of a Soya Bottle'.[210] Here the focus on a particular object was enlarged to encompass its multiple meanings, origins and movements and its relationship with people, places and technologies. A similar approach has been attempted in this study of household textiles.

Incorporating such artefacts into this study required an awareness of the developments in approaches to the material world within the study of history. Object centred disciplines like anthropology, archaeology and art history have redefined understandings of commodities. Appadurai gave these entities a central role, insisting 'We have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories' and that 'human actors encode things with significance'.[211] Hamling and Richardson suggested 'The study of an environment of materiality … sits awkwardly within traditional academic disciplines' although studies by De Jean and Retford have demonstrated a shift to more social historical approaches.[212] Richardson also recognized that there must be an awareness not only of the social, economic and cultural significance of an object but also its potential affective and devotional meaning.[213]

Object-centred scholarship has previously focussed on the more durable contents of the country house using a connoisseurial approach. New insights into aspects of the quotidian spending of the country house will be available through the tracing and inclusion of extant examples of household textiles affording opportunities for analysis rooted in a fusion of the archival and the material, though this is likely to be more feasible for later periods of the study. Their materiality embodies everyday practices of consumption and ownership, offering insight into the routine management of the country house and the skills of its various communities. Burman and Fennetaux as acknowledged earlier have recently demonstrated through what they identify as 'object-attentive

[209]N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of the Consumer Society: the Commercialization of the 18th Century* (London, Harpur Collins, 1984); M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in 18th Century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005); F. Trentmann, (ed) *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumerism* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); F. Trentmann, 'Materiality in the Future of History: Things, practices, and politics', *Journal of British Studies* 42:2 (2009) p.286, p.288

[210] T. Hamling, C. Richardson, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2010) pp.74-75

[211] A. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Social Perspective* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986) quoted in L. Hannan, S. Longair, *History Through Material Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017) p.24

[212] T. Hamling, C. Richardson, *Everyday Objects* p.9; J. DeJean, *The Age of Comfort* (New York, Bloomsbury, 2009); K. Retford, *Placing Faces: The Portrait in the English Country House in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2013)

[213] C. Richardson, T. Hamling, D. Gainster, *The Routledge Handbook of Material Culture* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017) pp.4-5

scholarship' how social and cultural practices are embedded within the materiality of the objects themselves. Their approach indicated that '[the pocket] merits a close-up study in itself because what is small can recalibrate our vision of the large.'[214] It is intended that a study of extant household textiles will be similarly enlightening. Their study of pockets, like this, covered an extended period traditionally associated with dramatic change. Technological innovations within textile production, the spread of cotton and the advent of the sewing machine might be expected to impact on these everyday items. Yet like pockets, household textiles, primarily fulfilling a particular practical function, may also demonstrate considerable resistance to such changes. The *'Pockets of History'* project collated a data base of over 390 examples of extant women's pockets enabling the nature of the cloth itself, its construction and stitching, wear and tear and repairs to be an integral part of the study.[215] Burman and Fennetaux also demonstrated how cloth can carry meaning and shape human relationships and practices. Borkopp-Restle highlighted that the sensory qualities of textiles had played an important role in the appeal they held (and still hold) for consumers and that it was appropriate for historians who wished to consider the status and economic value or related issues of textiles to develop an understanding of those same qualities.[216] She further suggested other characteristics such as fineness, durability and quality of workmanship, together with considerations of how or indeed why such textiles have been preserved, may all leave traces within the textile that practitioners wishing to discuss an 'object biography' must learn to read. Through careful observation of extant examples of household textiles, it will be possible to address issues around the haptic qualities of textiles raised by these authors.

Mida and Kim also advised considering the sensual properties of the object, its sounds, smells and textures.[217] In the case of household textiles these would have been part of the psychological as well as physical comfort they offered to the user. They identified that items [of clothing] look very different in situ than in collection storage, and the same holds true for these textiles that were intimately connected to people whether on beds or tables. In interrogating extant examples this study is cognisant of the developments in object-based research methods developed by several

[214] B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women's Lives* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2019) pp.14-15

[215] Digital photographs of over 300 pockets are available at https://www.vads.ac.uk/digital/collection/POCKETS

[216] B. Borkopp-Restle in 'Museums and the Making off Textile Histories: Past, Present, and Future': a discussion with B. Berkopp-Restle, P. McNeil, S. Marinetti, G. Riello, moderated by L. Miller, *Perspective* [Online] 1 (2016) pp.43-60

[217] I. Mida, A. Kim, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion* (London, Bloomsbury, 2015)

fashion historians.[218] Guidelines recommended by Mida and Kim were used in relation to household textiles. They too cautioned about the issue of survival bias and the problems of drawing conclusions about the representativeness of extant objects. Their approach to textiles proposed gleaning information from a method they call 'the slow approach to seeing'. This involves recording through drawing and photography as well as observational notes, supported with documentary sources where available in interpretation and analysis.[219]

Remarks from other investigations into historic textiles have provided useful areas for consideration of the materiality of household textiles. Baumgarten has worked extensively on costumes from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and ascertained that garments required differing stitch techniques. Apparently, outer garments might seem to be stitched with larger, looser and less skilled stitches, using approximately eight stitches to the inch to accommodate the reworking of the fabric later. In contrast, the stitches of personal garments like shirts and shifts, subject to regular and vigorous cleaning, had smaller, more regular stitches with raw edges neatened in a number of different ways.[220] Woodyard also understood that within historic mantua and millinery sewing techniques, some garments might demonstrate twenty stitches to the inch, indicating a link between construction and intended aftercare of the item.[221] Might household linen share these characteristics? Again, close observation and analysis of extant examples has offered comparable opportunities for interpretation. Similarly, Sykas, discussing 'investigative methodologies' for textiles, suggested there was a decrease in the yardage used for garments in the period 1809-1815 caused by a shortage in fabric.[222] Could this also be observed in household textiles? Or might it be reflected in changes in the frequency with which household textiles were replaced, whether in the aforementioned extended period of widespread warfare, or in later conflicts?

In learning to read textiles some observations made by Hearle on the nature of linen from the *Atlas of Fibre Fracture and Damage* have provided valuable instruction.[223] The linen fabrics discussed there were known to be approximately forty years old and had remained strong and supple with no

[218] A. Palmer, Looking at Fashion: The Material Object as Subject pp.268-300 in (eds) S. Black et al, *The Handbook of Fashion Studies* (London, Bloomsbury, 2013)
[219] I. Mida, A. Kim, *The Dress Detective*, p.13
[220] L. Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America* (Williamsburg, V A, Yale, 2002) p.40
[221] S. E. Woodyard, 'Martha's Mob Cap? A Milliner's Hand-sewn Inquiry into Eighteenth Century Caps c. 1770-1800' (unpublished MA Thesis, Material Culture, University of Albert, 2017) p.97 *https://era.library.ualberta.ca/items_Woodyard_Sarah_E_201703_MA.pdf* (Accessed 02.05.21)
[222] P.A. Sykas, Investigative Methodologies: Understanding the Fabric of Fashion pp.241-274 in S. Black et al (eds) *The Handbook of Fashion Studies* (London & New York, Bloomsbury, 2013)
[223] J.W.S. Hearle, B. Lomas, W.D. Cooke, *Atlas of Fibre Fracture and Damage to Textiles* (Cambridge, Woodhead, 1998) p.23, p.382

immediately visible evidence of fibre shredding. However, microscopic examination revealed complex changes in both the yarn and fibre structure resulting from the effects of washing and wear. His recommendations that all such textiles be examined under good lighting and all aspects recorded, such as appearance of damage together with its location, details of wear and any instances of discolouration, soiling or colour changes have been useful guidelines. Hearle also warned that the vast majority of surviving historic textiles were subject to severe and continuous use, with items modified 'patched and repaired until mechanical damage reduced them to a collection of rags', an observation consistent with the difficulty of tracing extant examples of household textiles for this study.[224]

North encountered similar difficulties with including historical garments in her study of cleanliness. She found a scarcity of surviving linens within museum collections with sixty museums surveyed yielding only 25 items of personal linen for the period she studied. The Victoria and Albert Museum holds more than 400 male outer garments but 6 examples of shirts and drawers and 3 women's shifts compared to 170 gowns.[225] A search of their online collection for household textiles highlighted 3 pillowslips from the seventeenth century and 6 sheets, 4 of them from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and a similar paucity of table linen from Britain. The small number of extant items of household textiles viewed during this study is in no way comparable to the surveys conducted by Burman and Fenneteaux or by North, nonetheless their contribution to an appreciation of their role within the country house has been significant, although the numbers lack statistical validity.

As indicated above, identifying extant items of household textiles was the first challenge. The online collections of the National Trust with its custodianship of many country houses in England appeared a logical starting point, and indeed a basic search on bed sheets produced a notional listing of nearly 500 items. Narrowing the search to those with images revealed that many of the 'finds' were not in fact household textiles but relating to bed hangings or dolls houses or in many cases had no perceived connection with bed sheets whatsoever. The information available with the online pieces was minimal but suggested as anticipated, that most of the items were, where any period had been assigned to them, from the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. However, widening the search to other items of household textiles produced a list of properties that were then contacted to discuss the feasibility of visiting and viewing items from their collections. To widen the search, online

[224] J.W.S. Hearle, B. Lomas, W.D. Cooke, *Atlas of Fibre Fracture* p.377
[225] S. North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020) p.21, pp.295-298

collections of museums that had yielded examples in the *Pockets of History* project were consulted but without success. Email enquiries to others were similarly fruitless.

Once traced and where such examination was permitted, there were many aspects of the textiles to be considered. The location of the item, catalogue number and any details included with it were noted. In some cases, the dimensions of the item had already been ascertained when it was catalogued but where this was not the case measurements were taken. It is usual practice now to use a metric scale however it was helpful to convert this later to imperial to consider the item in relation to its original construction and application. These sizes were then compared to those obtained from the documentary sources which used both imperial measurements and the older notation of quarters and nails. Wherever possible items were photographed. Distinguishing marks denoting ownership, date of acquisition or numbers in the series, whether already registered in the catalogue or by observation, were also recorded. Items were classified as either hand or machine made, giving some indication of their relative age and construction methods were scrutinised. Where items had seams the techniques used were described together with the types of stitches or whether the piece had retained a selvedge without added stitching. Bearing in mind the significance of the stitches as an indication of the aftercare the item would receive, where feasible the number of stitches per inch was counted with the aid of a pick glass. Attention was paid to how the seam had been aligned with the fabric grain and whether it was a uniform depth, factors which also gave an indication of the skill of the maker. Where feasible the gauge of the fabric was ascertained, again using a pick glass. The weft and warp threads were counted at three separate places at least 30cms away from the edge of the piece and then averaged out, giving an approximate indication for the whole piece, and the basic weave was ascertained together with any design elements in the case of table linen. Where possible the item was then examined looking for signs of any damage. Tears, holes, abrasions, instances of discolouration, soiling and stains, together with their relative position, were carefully logged as were any remedial strategies applied in their use and maintenance. In many cases catalogued items lacked information about material content. This was more difficult to ascertain by observation, relying as it did on personal experience rather than formal training.

Items of household textile have been largely missing from earlier studies. In seeking to incorporate them this investigation faces the problem of dealing with the modern absence of items that were universal and the significance that may be given to the examples within collections. Their very survival would indicate they had a different post-purchase and afterlife from the majority of such items, though few can have had a biography like the sheet belonging to Anna Maria Radcliffe,

Countess of Derwentwater, investigated by Handley.[226] As the literature referenced suggested, most textiles were used to exhaustion and the bulk of the examples found are from the latter end of the period of this study. However, being able to study examples of such textiles, however infrequent or problematic, in conjunction with other forms of evidence has contributed to a greater appreciation of the interaction between domestic textiles and the household within the country house as well as its wider networks.

This study has been restricted to England rather than Britain due to considerations of the availability of evidence and feasibility of travel, time and costs associated with such an extension, although several regions supplying England with linen lie outside its borders. The findings presented here do not imply any radically different regimes elsewhere in Britain, as Swain's study of a Scottish household's linen production referenced earlier indicates.[227] One of the key questions this study sought to answer was whether there were regional differences across England in the consumption of household textiles and this has influenced the selection of evidence. Making use of the regional divisions employed in the *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, the sources from Yorkshire represented the north; Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire covered the midlands; Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire the south east, Devon and Gloucestershire the southwest and Norfolk the east with some of the printed sources used falling outside these counties.[228] Quantitative inferences from these sources will allow comparison with findings from the earlier surveys discussed in the literature review, however the discrepancy in the size of the sample used here will make them tentative.

As the analysis of documents used in compiling a database for the study (See Table 1.1) shows, the evidence of items of household linen uncovered from this range of sources is disparate. Changes in legislation on the estates of the deceased in 1782 meant that probate inventories were less readily available for later periods. It had been expected at the commencement of this study that sales catalogues, being required by the London Excise Office from 1779 would supply similar amounts of detail from that date. However, few such catalogues have survived. Conversely, the number of extant textiles viewed, is weighted towards the last period of the study. Where there has been a range of documents for a particular country house across a period, as in the case of Warwick Castle and Calke Abbey in Derbyshire, it has been possible to make a case study of the household textiles.

[226] S. Handley, 'Objects, Emotions and an Early Modern Bed-sheet', *History Workshop Journal* 85 (2019) pp.169-194
[227] M. Swain, 'The Linen Supply of a Scottish Household, 1777-1810: Extracts from the Accounts of Thomas Hog of Newliston', *Textile History* 13:1, (1982) pp.77-89
[228] Regional divisions employed in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain vol. 2 1540-1840* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000)

These appear in Appendix 2. For the next three chapters, household textiles have been separated into Bed Linen, Table Linen and Domestic Textiles, the miscellaneous textiles dismissed by Sarah, dowager duchess of Marlborough as 'Linnen for the Kitchen House Maid Butler & Housekeeper the particulars not worth putting down', these latter being items usually associated with the menial tasks of cleaning and food preparation.[229] The processes and practices involved in the management and maintenance of linen are considered in the penultimate chapter. In each of these chapters an overview of the area is followed by discussion of the available evidence and its significance together with the description and exposition of surviving examples of household textiles. The role of these textiles within the environment of the country house is addressed next. Each chapter concludes with a synthesis of the evidence and exploratory conclusions. These are taken forward into the final chapter where observations on the contribution of household textiles to the lived experience of the country house are summarized and the implications of the study's evidence considered.

[229] T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) p.282

Chapter Two

Bed Linen: the pursuit of comfort

Context

Chapter Two examines how bed linen was important to the well-furnished household, providing practical purposes linked to comfort and hygiene whilst signifying status in a show of plentiful, appropriate and clean supplies. Towels too conveyed the social and symbolic meanings of cleanliness that separated the elite from those who laboured. Their possession also demonstrated developing ideas about the promotion of health. [1] It begins by outlining the provision of linen across the country before examining how bed linen was acquired by the country house using household accounts, receipts and records such as the housekeeper's book from Charlecote Park. These sources provide an indication of the types and quantities of bed linen in English country houses and allow comparisons with the findings of earlier work on pre-industrial consumption as discussed above. They also assist identification of any discernible regional or temporal variations or if acquisition was affected by external events. Close reading of the sources allows consideration of whether bed linen was used to demonstrate status. Reflection follows on the association of purchases of household linen with life-cycle shifts such as marriage or inheritance of property and finally, these and other sources such as contemporary literature support suggestions on the contribution bed linen made to the comfort, well-being and status of the country house.

Bed linen was one of the everyday commodities contributing to the increasing comfort of all households including country houses during the period covered by this study. Crowley in his investigations stated 'The fabrics in beds and clothing provided psychological and physical satisfaction: they asserted status, displayed wealth …'[2] Textiles are ephemeral commodities yet compared to decorative textiles in country houses, household textiles are very rare. Much of the literature on textiles in the country house has focused on the decorative and costly fabrics used in upholstery and hangings. Yet as Stobart and Rothery have stated, country houses were centres of both conspicuous and everyday expenditure, and little attention has been given to these more mundane commodities. [3]

[1] K. M. Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness and the making of the Modern Body* (New Haven, Yale, 2009) p.27
[2] J. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in early modern Britain and early America* (Baltimore & London, The John Hopkins University, 2001) p.7
[3] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016) p.83

Weatherill, Shammas and Overton reviewed in Chapter One recognized a significant increase in the possession of household linen across their samples, and Trinder and Cox found the ratio of sheets to beds in the Telford region rose from 1.4 in the period 1660-69 to 4.8 by 1740-49.[4] Few included in these samples were members of the gentry yet it might be supposed that groups with more disposable income could afford to have at least a similar and possibly greater number of sheets in proportion to beds. Regardless of the number of items of bed linen a country house possessed, the issue of the supply remains unclear. Cornforth discussed the role of the upholsterer in the supply of furniture and fittings for elite establishments involving large amounts of fabric but there is no suggestion that the linen to put on the bed was included with the velvets and silks for its hangings.[5] Stobart and Hann investigated the geographies of supply for two Midland country houses and found that London dominated in terms of numbers of suppliers and amounts of transactions, and in qualitative terms luxuries tended to be obtained in London whilst mundane items were purchased locally.[6] This study has gone some way towards identifying where bed linen fits within this pattern.

It is also possible the extent of home production of linen in England has been underestimated. Everitt proposed that one third of the labouring population was employed in spinning or weaving flax or hemp in the long sixteenth century.[7] If this is so, it is possible that such involvement continued into some of the period covered by this study. Clarkson too suggests the development of the linen industry has been overlooked by historians in favour of the woollen trade.[8] Harte states there was a decline in linen production for household or localised utilization by the middle of the eighteenth century in favour of commercial enterprises spread across many regions.[9] Stobart certainly detected a concentration of linen textile processes within the north-west of England in the eighteenth century where spinning and weaving was widespread though finishing processes were concentrated within

[4] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London, Routledge, 1996) p.193; C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990) p.170; M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2004) p108; B. Trinder, J. Cox,*Yeoman and Colliers in Telford: probate inventories for Dawley, Lilleshall, Wellington & Wrockwardine 1660-1750* (London, Phillimore, 1980) pp.36-7

[5] J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2004) pp.83-96

[6] J. Stobart, A. Hann, *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption* (Swindon, Historic England, 2016) pp.43-46

[7] A. Everitt, A. Farm Labourers, pp.396-465 in J. Thirsk (ed) *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. 4, 1500-1640* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967) p.426

[8] L. Clarkson, The Linen Industry in Early Modern Europe pp.476-482 in D. Jenkins (ed) *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.473

[9] N. B. Harte, The rise and protection of the English Linen Trade 1690-1790 pp.74-106 in *Textile History and Economic History Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacey Mann* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1973) p.102

urban areas, particularly around Manchester.[10] However, Evans' study of linen production in East Anglia concluded that it was 'catering for a local demand for household linens' rather than producing quantities of cloth for export from the region. Swain researching the accounts of a Scottish landed family 1777-1810, also found regular payments for a variety of home-produced linen. [11] Quantities of sheeting, 'Cheir Slips', towelling and table cloths were itemised together with purchases of flax and the costs of sending linen for bleaching were recorded. Swain's conclusions on how typical this was were tentative in the absence of comparative accounts. Identifying the sources of supply for household textiles will help to ascertain the extent of this trend, although the findings for English country houses may not hold true for other regions of the British Isles nor for the whole of the period encompassed by this study.

Bed linen remains a generic term even today when the fibre content is likely to be cotton or a mixture of cotton with a man-made fibre. Whilst a variety of cotton coverlets and quilts were being purchased, the preferred fibre for sheets during most of the period of this study was linen whether from flax or hemp.[12] Linen is a labour-intensive fabric to produce. It requires more man-hours to cultivate than other crops and must be grown in rotation as it exhausts the soil. If not harvested at a precise time in its life cycle it will not produce good quality fibres. Once harvested there are five separate processes required before spinning. After weaving the fabric is still in its natural shades of pale brown. To produce the most sought-after white the fabric requires a lengthy bleaching process.[13] Notwithstanding, large quantities of linen were consumed.

In the late seventeenth century European manufacturers dominated the market. Harte estimated linens valued at c. £846,000 per annum comprised 15% of imports through London until the middle of the eighteenth century and suggested this was nearly doubled by supplies from Ireland and Scotland. He recorded a decline to only 5% of total imports by 1800, attributed to punitive taxes directed particularly at the French and their allies during a succession of European wars.[14] Addressing Parliament in 1738 an anonymous merchant estimated each adult in England required 5 ells of linen per annum. This figure included personal clothing like shirts or shifts, bedding and table

[10] J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004) pp.91-3
[11] N. Evans, *The East Anglian Linen Industry 1500-1800* (Aldershot, Gower for The Pasold Research Fund, 1985) p100; M. Swain, 'The Linen Supply of a Scottish Household, 1777-1810: Extracts from the Accounts of Thomas Hog of Newliston', *Textile History* 13:1, (1982) pp.77-89
[12] B. Lemire, An Education in Comfort: Indian Textiles and the Remaking of English Homes over the Long Eighteenth Century, pp.13-29 in Stobart, J., B. Blonde, B. Blondé (eds) *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); J. Styles, What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution? pp.307-329 in G. Riello , P. Parthasarathi, (eds) *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009) p.326
[13] L. Clarkson, *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2*, pp.476-82
[14] N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.74

linen and also sacking for wrapping or storing goods. A further petition in 1756 suggested the requirement had risen to 10½ ells, which might support the increased possession of household linen from surveys of probate inventories discussed in Chapter One. [15]

Demand had increased; imports had fallen, and the shortfall was made up from linen from England, Scotland and Ireland. Domestic flax and hemp were supplemented by large imports from northern Europe, particularly the Baltic, to be processed in Britain. Wrightson thought that European wars disrupted this trade and Rule suggested that linen production in England rose fourfold from 1720 to 1750 and that by 1774 linen comprised over 8% of exports. [16] An Irish linen manufacturer stated in 1737:

> …let not gentlemen be surprised to hear that we are now surpassed in England in many branches of the manufacture; for instance in huckaback table linen in Yorkshire; good sheeting in Lancashire and in three-quarters and half-wide linens called dowlas in Somersetshire and in Devonshire; and if they go on increasing their linen manufactures with the same rapidity as of late, it is to be feared that in a few years time they will want but little from us…[17]

Fifty years later Lord Sheffield commenting on the Irish linen trade remarked 'Not withstanding we hear so little of the English linen manufacture, it is said to be nearly equal to that of Ireland and Scotland.'[18] These statements seem to be borne out by a household inventory completed for Rev John Forth and his wife Elizabeth in 1791:

> 2 pair of sheets and 4 pillow slips Cleveland Cloths for the best garret
> 4 pairs of sheets and 6 pillow slips Knaresborough Cloths for servants [worn out][19]

Likewise, an inventory of 1806 for Stoneleigh Abbey lists 45 pairs of Yorkshire sheets.[20] As no servants' sheets are included within the Stoneleigh inventory these Yorkshire ones, like the Knaresborough Cloths, may also have been for them. '8 pair Lancashire sheets and one single' are listed in a household inventory in Surrey alongside '4 pair holland sheets' and '3 pair Rushey

[15] L. Clarkson, *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2,* p.474
[16] K. Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain 1470-1750* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2000) p.259; J. Rule, *The Vital Century: England's Developing Economy 1714-1815* (Harlow, Longman, 1992) p.105
[17] R. Stephenson, An Inquiry into the State and Progress of the Linen Manufacture of Ireland (Dublin, 1738) quoted in N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.102
[18] N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.98
[19] Domestic Interiors Database: York City Archives, 54:1 1796-1806: Household inventory of furnishing of Rev John Forth at Slingsby and Ganthorpe
[20] SCLA DR18/4/59 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806

[Russian] sheets', indicating the range of choice available to the purchaser, as noted by Harte from import duties and Spufford from the probate inventories of itinerant tradesmen. Similarly an advertisement in the *Gazette & Daily Advertiser* in 1772 shows shops such as Bromley's Original Irish Linen & Muslin Warehouse in Charing Cross offering Holland, Russia, Irish and Lancashire sheeting together with a large choice of table linen 'of the newest patterns'. [21] By the early twentieth century cotton sheets manufactured in Wigan, hemmed and ready for use were offered alongside Irish linen sheeting of 'superior make and grass bleached' with Russian diaper and Barnsley crash available for towels.[22]

The finest, whitest linens were originally from The Netherlands and known as Hollands. This became a generic name for finer, white linens regardless of origin. Reference to 'Holland Sheets' in contemporary literature suggests these were synonymous with luxury. A French prisoner, detained in England following the Battle of Blenheim recorded:

> The Name of a Tavern reviv'd me, and I jumped off from the Fifteenth Edition of the third part of a Blanket with as much Agility, as if I had lain in a Feather-bed all Night, or between the Good Holland Sheets[23]

Similarly, an early translation of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* also pinpoints the opulence attached to these textiles, linking them with other costly items: 'I walked upon Turky Carpets; I lay in Holland Sheets; I was lighted with nothing but Flambeaus of Silver'.[24] Although *The Merchant's Ware-House* advised the buyer that eight different types of linen were suitable for sheets, several of them have not appeared in the sources used here where they were variously described as flax, hemp, hurden, dowlas and home-spun but also linen, Irish, Holland and Russian, suggesting either buyers could distinguish the characteristics of these fabrics or terms were interchangeable, as was the case with hollands.[25] Towels were also categorized in this way with diaper, flax and huckaback the most usual fabrics. Some of these were designated by usage, such as hand towels or even the 'five damask face

[21] DRO D239/M/E/13938 Inventory Tanhurst, Wootton, Surrey, 1801; N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.77; M. Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the 17th Century* (London, Hambledon, 1984) p.92

[22] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)

[23] *The French Wanderer or The Straggler from Mareschal Taland, Detain'd by the city mermidons,* (London, 1705) ECCO CW 14145322

[24] *A* collection *of select novels, Written Originally in Castillian by Don M. Cervantes Saavedra…Made English by Henry Bridges Esq. Under the Protection of His Excellency, John, Lord Carteret, Lord Lieutenant of the Kingdom on Ireland* (Bristol, 1728) ECCO CW3315705063

[25] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open: or the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* (London, 1696) from Folger Shakespeare Library, EEBO

towells' listed in the Hanbury Hall inventory of 1721.[26] In addition both sheets and towels might be referred to as coarse, common or indeed fine suggesting a range of qualities even within one type. Occasionally they are specifically designated, as the reference in the 1746 Montagu House inventory to '4 pair of Holland sheets for her Graces Bed' and from the Charlecote Park Household Book '2 pair Mr Lucy uses when he is at home', both suggesting a superior fabric, as does reference to '27 paire of Gentlemens sheets 6 paire Ditto' in the 1709 probate inventory of Ralph, 1st Duke of Montagu for Montagu House, Bloomsbury.[27] Towels too were differentiated in quality, like the 15 diaper towels signified as 'for His Grace's Use' in the inventory for Montagu House in 1733 or the 48 bath towels 'for servants' at Thoresby Hall in 1907.[28] These references indicate bed linen did indeed reflect social standing and throughout the period of this study.

Visualising Bed Linen

As outlined above, linen was both produced within the British Isles and imported but how was the country house's requirement for bed linen serviced? Evidence of the production of linen for household use has been found across all the regions encompassed by this study. In Worcestershire 19% of the inventories covering a period from 1661 to 1727 contain references to flax production with valuations for flax and hurden yarns, such as Heigham Coke who had '48lb flax unspun 15s' and 'flax spun £2.11s.4d' assessed in 1719, indicating that household production was a regular occurrence there and at that time. Harte suggested that domestic production declined in the mid-eighteenth century which might be borne out by these entries yet references elsewhere suggest a longer usage.[29] The household accounts of Sir Edward Boughton of Brownsover in Warwickshire show references to both spinning and weaving linen. March 7th 1765 records 'weaving 25 ells and half of flax at 5d an ell by 2 nails wide, 10s. 6d'.[30] Boughton recorded in December 1766 'P'd Amos Lander for weaving 16 ells and ½ of 12 flax 12s; for thread and spinning to make it sufficient 1s.3d'with further payments in 1768 and 1770.[31] Local purchases of linen and flax are also recorded. A new hand, presumed to be his widow itemised funeral expenses in May 1772 and the linen production continued. In October she recorded 'p^{d} for weaving 23 ells of 12 penny flax at nine pence the ell, £1. 6s' and 'p^{d} for weaving 13 ells of 10 penny flax at 7 pence per ell spowling and warping'. In 1776 she paid Mary Morris £3.5s for a year's wages and the next 'Hired Mary Morris for another year

[26] Worcestershire Historical Society, *Inventories of Worcestershire Landed Gentry 1537-1786*, M. Wanklyn (ed) (Worcester, 1998), Probate Inventory (108): Thomas Vernon, Hanbury, c1721
[27] T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) p.23, p.160
[28] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households,* p.45; NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, Notts
[29] WHS Probate Inventory (107): Heigham Coke, Suckley, 1719
[30] WRO CR 1747/2 Accounts, Boughton of Brownsover, vol. 2
[31] WRO CR 1747/3 Accounts, Boughton of Brownsover, vol. 3

from y^{e} 10 of October 1777 at 3 pound 10 shilling Wages and She to Spin her Six pound of 8 penny flax'. The higher the number of the flax recorded here, the more yardage and the finer the resulting cloth so that these figures indicate fairly coarse linen.

These entries showed a household servicing at least some of its requirements for linen through the employment of local spinners and weavers. Whilst it is not possible to identify the end usage of this linen there are very few purchases of household textiles recorded. In 1759 Boughton bought 7½ yards of Irish Holland for 16s 3d and in June 1767 he paid £1 6s 9½d for '11 y of Irish Cloath'. Each purchase represents a quality fabric, sufficient for a pair of sheets though equally for several shirts or shifts. The 5 yards of servants' towelling for 1s 8d in 1759 and a further 10 yards in 1771 have a much clearer end usage. Apart from these items there were half-yearly settlings of accounts with local tradesmen, but none are itemised, and the only tradesmen specified are the mantua maker, music master and the bookseller, so this could mask any further purchases of household textiles. Unfortunately, no inventories for this household have survived that might have shown the proportions of home-produced to bought wares.

Another series of Warwickshire household accounts is that of the Newdigates of Arbury Hall.[32] They were buying quantities of linen including:

1687	Oct 18	for 32 ells of flaxen Cloth	02: 02: 00
	Oct 24	for 4½ ells of fine Holland	02: 05: 00
	Oct 24	for 25 yds of Course Holland	01: 18: 00

indicative of the price differential between 'fine Holland' and other fabrics. They also purchased eight hundred tenter hooks at a cost of £4, paid Widow Beighton and Goody Bolt for spinning quantities of flax throughout the year and in July 1689 paid 14s.4d for weaving forty yards of flaxen cloth. This home production of linen continued for many years. The Housekeeper's Accounts, 1766-1774 still contained regular payments for cloth production.[33] During 1771 one of nine named spinsters, Mary Floyd received payments of either 4s or 6s on January 23rd, June 15th, August 15th, October 11th, November 4th and 23rd and December 21st. Regular payments for weaving were also made. On December 6th 1766, £2.6s.0d was disbursed followed by payments of £1.14s.0d in February 1767, £4.2s.4d in November, £1.19s.6d in January 1768 and £2.5s.6d in October.[34]

[32] WRO CR 136/1/30 Newdigate Accounts, 1686-93
[33] WRO CR 1841/10 Housekeeper's Accounts, Newdigate, 1770-1774
[34] WRO CR 1841/14 Housekeeper's Accounts, Newdigate, 1766-70

Unfortunately, there is no indication of the quality or quantity of the fabric, though the contemporary Brownsover accounts paid 12s.0d for 16 ells of linen, indicating these payments represent large quantities. There are also payments for 'Cloath Whiting', presumably bleaching, although less frequently. At about the same time in Nottinghamshire there were references in the Inventory Book for Serlby Hall (see Fig. 3:1) to '4 dozen 10d flax to be weaved and whitened' in Pontefract at a cost of £4 in 1756.[35] This may imply the flax was to be processed in a more specialised way than was available locally. Although this was the only reference to the use of commercial services found in this study, this may have been part of a more widespread trend using specialist firms, such as those investigated by Stobart, as part of the quest for increased physical comfort and the improvements in quality noted by Edwards in *Turning Houses into Homes*.[36]

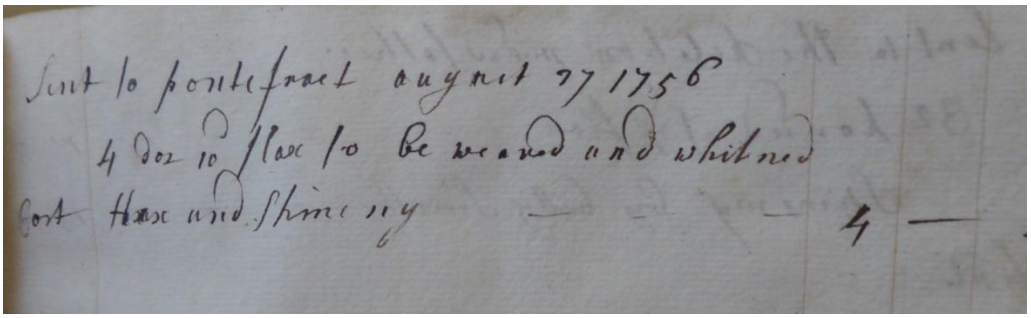


Figure 2:1 Payments for processing flax, Serlby Hall, Nottinghamshire, 1756

The de Grey family of Walsingham in Norfolk had payments in their household accounts for spinning flax, weaving and bleaching although they also purchased a variety of household materials including '1760 Dec 29 More Holland for my Sheet 7s.0d'.[37] Comparable payments for processing flax were shown in the Sutherland accounts at Trentham in Staffordshire at the same period. They too were purchasing linen and appear to be servicing all their requirements that way by the end of the eighteenth century.[38] Certainly these sources suggest the use of locally manufactured linen was not uncommon. Later references were found amongst the accounts of households in Derbyshire and Yorkshire.[39] The Harpur-Crewes of Calke Abbey paid £9.12s.6d to twelve women for spinning flax and hards from November 1815 to February 1816, with a further reference to '167 y^{ds} of sheeting; 3dozen spun flax; 1 dozen spun flax to[o]thin' in a household inventory of 1839. The FitzHerberts of

[35] NUSC Ga 12701 Inventory Book, Serlby, 1735-75
[36] J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region* (Manchester University Press, 2004); C. Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes: A History of the Retailing and Consumption of Domestic Furnishing* (Aldershot, Routledge, 2005)
[37] NRO WLS XIV/17 409x7 Household Accounts 1759-1778, Walsingham (Merton) Collection
[38] Quoted in P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) pp.108-9
[39] DRO D2375/H/D/1/1Housekeeping payments, Calke Abbey; DRO D2375/H/F/1/2 Inventory of goods c.1839, Calke Abbey; DRO D239/M/E/2185 & 2295 19th Century Bills & Vouchers, Tissington Hall; NYAS ZK Kirkleatham Accounts 1784-1808

Tissington Hall also paid several spinners in 1821. Some of this flax was knitted into thirty-six pairs of stockings, but in 1820 Joseph Hall was paid a total of £6.11s.9d for 'warping and winding' and for weaving a total of 227 yards of linen, though there is no indication of its ultimate usage. The Turners at Kirkleatham in Yorkshire paid £69.1s.1d to Elizabeth Lefebure between 1806 and 1808 for weaving 3 webs of sheeting, 6 webs of linen cloth and a web of huckaback for tablecloths representing a considerable undertaking at a far later date than inferred by Harte.

The households investigated in this study were unlikely to be engaged directly in growing flax or hemp, yet there were some references to cultivation. An entry in the Stanhope accounts for Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire '1713 18 Jan. lent for flaxlands £4' may indicate the advance of money secured against land used for flax.[40] In Devon at a similar date Sir Philip Sydenham received £10 'for Flax G^{d}', and amongst the debts to be settled from his estate in 1716 was one 'To Mr Sherry for flaxseed £03.08.00'.[41] Similarly it was noted in Staffordshire 'There is no considerable public management of linen, but a good deal of hurden, hempen and flaxen cloth got up in private families'.[42] As this was written in the last years of the eighteenth century it would seem that Harte's estimate of the state of household production may require revising and that Clarkson's admission noted in Chapter One, that the linen industry had been little researched compared to that of wool and cotton, is due for more attention.

References in other documents also indicate local manufacture of sheeting. A mixture of flax, hemp and homespun sheets were offered from a selection of 'elegant, genteel and useful' goods in 1790 and 31 pairs of homespun flaxen sheets were included within 'modern and genteel' household effects offered for sale in 1833, both at sales in Northamptonshire.[43] These epithets imply that these locally manufactured sheets were acceptable goods to the substantial households now being dispersed by auction. Indeed, 16% (1499 pairs) of the pairs of sheets recorded between 1660 and 1863 were identified as flax, hemp or hurden and presumably locally produced.

Bed linen was also acquired from a wide variety of providers. The accounts for Warwick Castle of 1665 show the purchase of both flax and hemp cloth for sheets. Though not specifying the source, this may have been bought locally as may purchases two years later naming 'Mr Thorowgood Linnen

[40] DRO D518/M/F/27 Indentures, Elvaston Castle
[41] DHC 5242M/Box 20/4 Accounts, Sir Philip Sydenham; DHC 5254/Box 20/12 Accounts, Fursdon of Cadbury, 1715-19
[42] William Pitt, *Account of the Agriculture of the County of Staffordshire* (1796) p.237
[43] NCL M0000541NL Sales Catalogue, Joseph Wright Esq 1833; NCL M0005645NL Sales Catalogue, Rev Zacharias Rose, 1790

Draper' and 'Mr Prieulx for 2 bills for Hollands for sheets'.[44] The Household Book kept by Mrs Hayes, housekeeper at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire has been a valuable source not only for the linen recorded there but also indications of its provenance. One of her regular suppliers was 'Parker' though references to linen 'sent by Parker' could imply any distance. Another entry recorded '2 pair of sheets for Mr Lucy's own bed bought of Mr Twicross at Warwick'. It has not been possible to trace any of these tradesmen through local sources. Mrs Hayes bought servants' sheets locally at Warwick fair and 'bought of a woman at Loxley [six miles from Charlecote Park]4 pairs Servts sheets' and 'bought 3 pair of ell wide strong flaxen sheets of Alice Cornish'.[45] These later purchases may indicate that there remained a local linen manufacturing industry within Warwickshire into the late eighteenth century. There may also be indications of locally produced linen in the entries of the household accounts of both the Vernons of Sudbury who purchased 'A peace of Cloth of go[ood]e dale for Sheets: £1.10s' and the Cottons of Etwall in Derbyshire; 'To Cash p'd for Linnen at Swarkston 15s' and 'Linnen for sheets b^{t} at Ashbourne £1.0s.7d'.[46]

As the nobility and many of the gentry might visit London either for parliamentary business or social activities it is probable linen was purchased there. Certainly possession of 'one [pair] of cambrick [cambric] sheets' by Thomas Savage, JP for Worcestershire and sheriff in the 1680s suggests access to sophisticated markets as does the reference to 'Six Paire fine austria D^{o} [sheets]' in items sent from Hopton Hall in Derbyshire.[47] Amongst the bills recorded in the Seymour accounts of Ragley Hall in Warwickshire is the purchase in 1776 of '23½yds Hempen Rusia @ 5^{d} 9s.9½d' and '27 yds ell wide Irish Cloth @ 1/6^{d} £1.16s.0d' though the supplier is not named and no corresponding invoice was found. These quantities and amounts most likely indicate linen from a variety of sources was readily available for different qualities of sheets. Whilst Durie considered that Scottish linen production increased considerably, especially during the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, and Habib and Clarke have shown large quantities of table linen being sent to London in the eighteenth century, few references have been found here to Scottish linen.[48] However, the bill shown below (Fig. 3:3) from the online collection of the Museum of London shows Scotch sheeting was available for sale in London in 1791. Edmund Rolfe of Heacham Hall in Norfolk purchased Scotch Holland to the value of £5 in 1804 though as most of the entries in his accounts are for personal

[44] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts 1665-1740 (1665)
[45] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[46] DRO D410/H/I/1-2 Vernons of Sudbury Accounts, 1682-5; DRO D286M/E/1 Cottons of Etwall, Accounts, 1714/15, p.17, p.31
[47] WHS Probate Inventory (93): Thomas Savage of Elmley Castle, 1699; DRO D239/M/F/10699 Items from Hopton to Tissington, 1791
[48] A. J. Durie, *The Scottish Linen Industry in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh, John Donald, 1979) p.126; V. Habib, H. Clarke, 'Linen Weavers of Edinburgh' *Proc. Soc. Antiquaries of Scotland,* 132 (2002) pp 529-553

rather than household goods, this may have been for shirts rather than sheets.[49] Harrods household linen department was offering customers Scotch fine linen in 1912 and there may have been more of it in circulation than these sources suggest.[50]

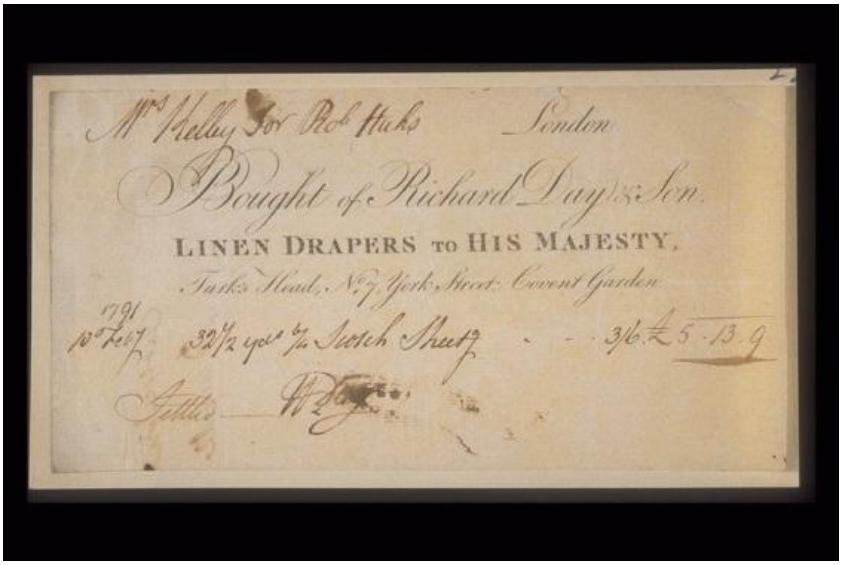


Figure 2:2: Bill for Scottish sheeting, Museum of London Collection

The Marquess of Hertford purchased 75 yards of linen from Robert Jameson of Ironmonger Lane in London although this appears from other receipts to have been for shirts.[51] Nonetheless, these sources indicate that linen could be purchased both locally to the country house and from suppliers in London. The likelihood was that higher quality purchases would be made there, while linen for 'second sheets', as the 6 pairs thus designated at Wrest Park, or servants' sheets might be purchased locally. Lemire referred to a London businesswoman who at the same time as specialising as a shirtmaker, also offered 'Household and all other necessary Linen for Families…ready made' and moreover offered 'the Goods sent to any Part of England, Carriage free'. Moving into the early twentieth century Pasdermadjian estimated that twenty-five percent of sales by department stores in London were mail order though the types of goods cannot be ascertained. Harrods catalogue for 1912 included nineteen pages of goods from its household linens department and offered 'household linens Hemmed and Marked in Ink free of charge at a few hours' notice …Coronet, Crest or Monogram Embroidered or Woven in at Moderate Charges'. [52] Unfortunately the '6p^{r} hemstitched

[49] NRO GUN 121-122, 625x6 Edmund Rolfe, Personal & household accounts, 1794-1817
[50] Museum of London Collection, A8601/17; *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[51] WRO CR114A/255 Household Accounts Seymour Family, Ragley Hall
[52] B. Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997) p.32; H. Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution and*

1935' recorded at Thoresby Hall give no indication of their fibre content or origin.[53] Additionally, as the sales catalogues used as sources in this study identify, bed linen could be obtained second-hand.

Sheets	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Flax*	543	319	467	139	31	0	0
Linen	37	137	170	243	939	198	12
Holland	113	206	241	226	28	0	0
Irish	0	8	31	95	56	0	0
Russia	0	0	4	103	52	0	0
Sheets	277	503	401	699	512	317	184
Servants'	26	384	366	268	529	223	351

* flax, hemp, hurden, dowlas (except those identified as 'servants'')

Table 2:1 Sheets

The sheets in the sources between 1660 and 1939 were essentially of linen, however, it was noticeable that there were changes in the preferred type of fabric across the period studied (See Table 3:1) which mirrors developments specified by Harte and referenced earlier in this chapter. In the first 40 years of the data, flax and its variants accounted for 54% of total listed. Its use declined over the next 120 years to just 7% although it may have been disguised in the various 'coarse' sheets where the fabric was unspecified. Although the distinctions of 'hemp', hurden' and 'dowlais' are rare after the middle of the eighteenth century, 27 pairs of hempen sheets are recorded in the household inventory at Felbrigg in 1863.[54] The earliest sales catalogue studied is that of Horton Hall, 1772, the property of the deceased Earl of Halifax. 53% of its sheets were listed as flax; 31% 'fine Holland'; 16% were 'fine Irish'.[55] Hollands represents 18% of sheets noted in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with that for Ditchley of 1743 including '6 fine new Dutch linnen', and although a number are in the inventories of Stoneleigh Abbey in 1806, Temple Newsam in 1808 and Castle Howard in 1825, no more are to be found in the later sources studied. A household inventory for Thoresby Hall listed 24 yards of holland in 1920 suggesting either that it was still on the market or had remained in store from an earlier period. They comprise less than 10% of the total sheets, perhaps indicating their

Economics (London, Newman Press, 1954) p.32; *Harrods For Everything,* Catalogue 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)

[53] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907

[54] NRO WKC 6/480 464x Inventory of Household Linen, Felbrigg, 1863

[55] NCL M0005647NL/6 Sales Catalogue, Rushton, 1798; NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston, 1805; NCL M0005644NL/8 Sales Catalogue, Geddington House, 1823; NCL M0005644NL/9 Sales Catalogue, Stamford Baron, 1823

earlier luxury status but the nomenclature may have changed as the frequency of 'fine linen' sheets coincides with the decline in listings of 'holland'.[56] Irish linen comprises 9% of sales but less than 2% of inventoried sheets with the earliest entries not appearing until 1740.[57] This appears to tally with Harte's findings that whereas European imports fell across the eighteenth century, linen production in both Ireland and Scotland was specifically promoted by the government through the establishment of Linen Boards in 1711 and 1727 respectively.[58] It seems feasible therefore that sheets woven in Ireland are hidden within the entries of 'sheets' in later inventories. The *Merchant's Warehouse Laid Open* was already recommending in 1696: 'Irish 3 ^{yds} wide and very fine…useful for sheets'. Irish 'grass bleached' linen sheeting was still being offered for sale in the early twentieth century despite the widespread use of chemical bleaches in use since the late eighteenth century.[59] Russia sheets are rare in the documents studied although parliament was regulating the duties on imported linen cloth from Russia in 1766, which implies that a steady quantity was reaching the English market. The earliest references are the 16 Russia sheets recorded in the Inventory Book for Serlby Hall in 1735 and the Ditchley inventory for 1772 with 'a pair of large Russia sheets'.[60] A further 8 pairs of Russia sheets were listed in 1798 and 2 pairs each from Wollaston Hall's sale in 1805, and the Geddington House and Stamford Barons sales of 1823, all in Northampton. The inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire of 1806 records 23 pairs; that of Salcombe Park in Hertfordshire 1825 has 44 pairs.[61] Overall, Russian sheets comprise less than 2% of the total number of sheets. Solar found that Russia's linen production was devastated by the Napoleonic wars and it was struggling to produce sufficient fine linen to export. Knight, quoting from Thomas Tooke's *High and Low Prices* of 1823, also recognized that Napoleon's Continental System and his changing relationship with Russia affected the trade in commodities through the Baltic causing price instability. 'In 1808 and 1809 a ton of St. Petersburg clean hemp doubled in price from 68/- to 118/- and flax from 80/- to 140/-'.[62] At later dates both the Crimean War and the Russian Revolution also caused

[56] T Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.150; SCLA DR 18/4/59 Probate Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806; WRO CR 114/2/1 Temple Newsam Sales Inventory, 1808; Howard Archive MS H2/11/1 Vol 1 Probate Inventory, Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle 1825; NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall 1907
[57] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.287
[58] N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.93
[59] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023); W. H. Crawford, *The Domestic Linen Industry in Ulster* (Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 2021) p. 31; J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open: or the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* (London, 1696) p.13 from Folger Shakespeare Library, EEBO
[60] NUSC Ga1 12701 Inventory Book Serlby Hall, 1735-75; T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.160
[61] NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston Hall, 1805; NCL M0005644NL/8 Sales Catalogue, Geddeston House, 1823; NCL M0005644NL/9 Sales Catalogue, Stamford Barons, 1823; SCLA DR18/4/59 Probate Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806; HALS D/ESh/F19 Sale: Inventory and Valuation, Salcombe Park, 1825
[62] P. Solar, The Linen Industry in Early Modern Europe, pp.809-823 in D. Jenkins, (ed) *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.813; R. Knight, *Convoys: The British Struggle against Napoleonic Europe and America* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2022) pp.222-3

disruption to the supply of flax particularly to the Scottish linen industry. Russian flax increased from around £30 per ton in 1914 to an incredible £400 in 1920 causing a short-lived incentive for Scottish farmers to grow flax.[63] These problems for the industry do not seem to have affected the purchases of linen in the country houses whose documents are represented here. The changes in choice of fabric across the period of the study do however indicate a growing engagement with the requirements of physical comfort as consumers sought the improved quality of fabric achieved by commercial linen manufacturers. Crowley suggested this pragmatism was complemented by a structural shift in mind-set as comfort became a central objective for elite households by the closing decades of the eighteenth century and presumably beyond. [64] Notwithstanding the fabric of the sheets, the question of whether they were purchased as ready-made items or as lengths of cloth is only hinted at by the evidence and is considered at greater length in Chapter Five.

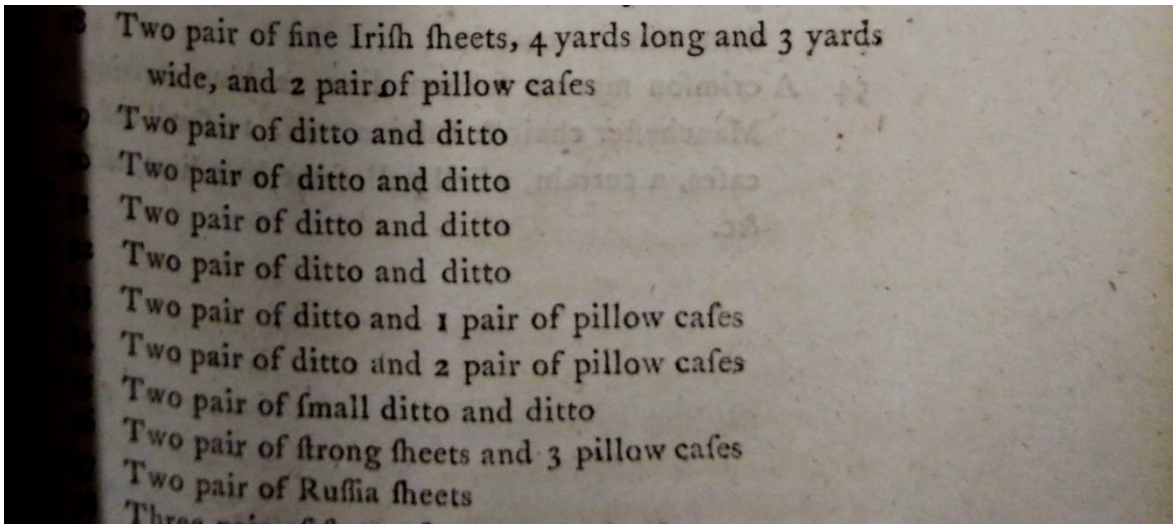

Two pair of fine Iriſh ſheets, 4 yards long and 3 yards wide, and 2 pair of pillow caſes
Two pair of ditto and ditto
Two pair of ditto and ditto
Two pair of ditto and ditto
Two pair of ditto and ditto
Two pair of ditto and 1 pair of pillow caſes
Two pair of ditto and 2 pair of pillow caſes
Two pair of ſmall ditto and ditto
Two pair of ſtrong ſheets and 3 pillow caſes
Two pair of Ruſſia ſheets

Figure 2:3: Dimensions of sheets, sales catalogue, Wollaston Hall, Northamptonshire, 1805

Dimensions for sheets are rarely given. An exception is the sales catalogue for Wollaston Hall of 1805 (See Fig 2:3) where 'Two pair of fine Irish sheets, 4yards long and 3yards wide and 2 pairs of pillow cases' were itemised making them considerably larger than most modern sheets.[65] It incidentally shows the range of linen fabrics in use for sheets with not only Irish but also Russia and 'strong', though where that originated is unclear. Several other sources make some references to differences in size as well as in quality. Richard Vernon's inventory of 1679 listed 'Linning of broad sheets flaxen, 12 pare, £8.0s.0d; Eight pare narrow, £6.0s.0d' and large and narrow were used to describe the

[63] W.H.K.Turner, 'Flax Cultivation in Scotland: An Historical Geography' *Trans. Institute of British Geographers* 55:2 (1972) pp.127-143
[64] Crowley, J., *The Invention of Comfort*, p.147
[65] NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston Hall, 1805

flaxen and hempen sheets in the 1689 inventory of Sir John Pakington.[66] Warwick Castle inventory of 1756 included 6 pairs of ell wide fine flaxen sheets and a further 10 pairs a yard wide. There were also 6 pairs of Holland sheets 'very fine 3 breadth' which seems to make this somewhat wider than current king sized [110"/275cm] sheets.[67] Houghton House inventory of 1767 also listed 3 pairs of Holland sheets of this size along with 3 pairs of 2 breadth, which is approximately a current double bed sheet. The 1806 inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey recorded 1 old pair of Holland sheets 'very wide without seam' implying that sheeting, like table linen, could be woven on a wider loom than usual, though this is the only reference to such items.[68] However it serves to reinforce the conclusion that constructing sheets involved a considerable amount of sewing. It is noticeable that these wide sheets are also either 'fine flaxen' or Holland quality sheets, implying those on the servants' beds were narrower. Indeed, reference in the Household Book at Charlecote Park to '5 pair of 2y^{d} wide sheets for Tradesmen or better servants' seems to confirm this.[69]

Different qualities of sheets were found in the sources. This clearly reflects the contemporary belief investigated by Vickery amongst others that choice of goods should reflect social standing. Lord Lyttleton recollected:

> …but the best bed was prepared for me, and the fine Holland sheets, which, probably, had not been taken out of the sweet-scented press for many a month, were prepared for my repose: nor would my slumbers have been suspended for a moment if the linnen not produced so strong an effluvia of rosemary, that I almost fancied myself in a coffin, and was wrapped in a winding sheet.[70]

This reveals his awareness of this display of deference in the sociability of his hosts. Amongst the inventory of linen taken at Castle Howard in 1825 were '4 Pairs of fine sheet sheets for his late Lordship's use, 6 Pairs for upper servants Beds and 12 Pairs of Coarse D^{o} for under servants D^{o}' clearly showing the hierarchical qualities of bed linen in that establishment.[71] Servants' sheets are specifically mentioned in 6 of the 23 [26%] Northamptonshire sales catalogues studied and in 30% of the inventories where linen was listed. Elsewhere reference to 'common' sheets and 'coarse' sheets together with 'hempen' and 'hurden' may indicate sheets for servants. Servants were ranked

[66] WHS Probate Inventory (74): Richard Vernon of Hanbury, 1679; WHS Probate Inventory (86): Sir John Packington of Westwood, 1689
[67] WRO CR 1886/TN926 Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1756
[68]BHRS Probate Inventory, Marquis of Tavistock, Houghton House, 1767; SCLA DR18/4/59 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806
[69] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[70] *Letters of the late Lord Lyttleton, Vol II* (London, 1782) ECCO CW3315205238
[71] MS H2/11/1 Vol 1 Inventory of Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle, Castle Howard, 1825

according to experience and differentiated by the work they did and the areas of the country house to which they had access. Upper servants could expect a separate bedroom unlike the lower servants and better-quality bed linen. In the Household Book at Charlecote Park is reference to '2 pairs [sheets] for Mr. Gladen [the butler appointed 1749] ' and '5 pair of 2 yd wide sheets for Tradesmen or better servants with 6 pr of pillow cases'.[72] The 1746 linen inventory at Montagu House records a set of pillow cases 'for the house keepers Bed' but no accompanying sheets, similarly, the 1772 inventory for Ditchley Park lists '19 New Upper Servants Pillow Cases 12 old Dº'.[73] As late as 1907 there appears to be some difference in the quality of bed linen reflected in the entries of men's, maids' and stable sheets at Thoresby Hall, though another interpretation might indicate their location.[74] Harrods catalogue for 1912 however shows this distinction persisted, offering cotton sheets for servants' beds at a range of prices from 4s.11d to 12s.9d per pair with pillowcases from 1s.6d per pair: linen was recommended for family and guests.[75]

There are several literary references in the early seventeenth century to specially purposed child-bed linen with lace decoration. A play of 1722 refers to sheets with lace:

> Moth: And then, Son, for the Day of the Child's Christen'd on, there must be a large Pair of fine Holland Sheets, with a deep Flanders Lace: Or let me see – suppose it was fine Honiton Lace (for I am for encouraging our Country Manufacture, and for putting you to as little Charge as I can besides) and so I think that shall e'en serve[76]

Defoe in *The Life of Moll Flanders* also makes reference to child-bed linen with lace when Moll is presented with three options for her lying in:

1st	For a nurse for the month and use of child-bed linen	£1.10s.0d
2nd	For a nurse for the month and the use of linen and lace	£2.10s.0d
3rd	For a nurse for the month and the finest suit of child-bed linen and	

[72] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[73] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.111
[74] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[75] *Harrods For Everything,* Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[76] *The Obliging husband and the imperious wife: A west country Clothier undone by a Peacock* (London, 1722) p.87, ECCO CW 3315705063

feast to celebrate the birth £4.4s.0d[77]

This practice of 'lying-in' may have been the reason for the display of decorated linen. The only reference to child-bed linen is in the Account Book for the Holbech family of Farnborough Hall dated February 22 1774 'To Mrs S[tone?] for child bed linnen £27.11s' - a large sum of money for what appears to be one consignment of household linen. [78] However, entries in an inventory of 1637 amongst the Leigh family archive, record the layette for a baby as 'child-bed linen', so there may be some flexibility within the term.[79] Beyond this, few of the sources studied reference decorated sheets. Lot 499 'Two pairs Ditto [fine pillow cases] with point lace seams' were offered in the sale at Rolleston Hall in 1801 and 2 'trimmed' pillowcases in the 1809 inventory for Warwick Castle and several homespun sheets were described as 'open work at ends' in an inventory made in 1867.[80] Harrods were offering customers Irish linen sheets with hand embroidered borders and matching pillowslips in their 1912 catalogue though such items are not specified in any of the later household inventories here.[81]

Other items of linen	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Pillowcases							
Linen	509	993	860	1425	1329	873	356
Servants'	0	0	99	181	587	268	501
Towels							
Towels	476	1436	1248	1980	2814	1648	1326
Flax	42	193	18	0	0	0	0
Damask	14	289	296	126	56	54	0
Diaper	84	246	551	422	321	292	180
Huckaback	12	233	703	1149	804	556	12
Chamber*	11	66	134	704	675	501	796
Round	11	171	254	560	471	228	577

* or Hand

Table 2:2 Other items of bed linen

[77] D. Defoe, *The Life of Moll Flanders* (London, 1723) pp.102-3, ECCO CW 3309411303
[78] NCR CR1799/1, Household Accounts, Holbech family of Farnborough, 1771-82
[79] SCLA DR18/4/25 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1637
[80] NCL M0005647NL/2, Sales Catalogue, Rolleston Hall, 1801; WRO CR 1886/TN 1053 Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1809; HALS D/EWs/ F3 Inventory & Valuation, Mr. Wilshere (deceased) The Frythe, Welwyn, 1867
[81] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)

Pillowcases were present in smaller quantities than sheets. A total of 9496 pairs of sheets were found across the sources studied and approximately half that number of pillowcases. Few had any form of description relating to fabric or quality beyond the epithets fine, flax, Holland or coarse, with just over a fifth designated for servants. Only one reference gave an indication of construction with the descriptor '8 fine pillowbiers with buttons'.[82] Towels were recorded in greater numbers with 1,170 offered at auction and over 16,000 listed in the inventories. 40% of these were simply designated as towels although their fabric might be classified like Robert Wylde's inventory of 1684 that listed 14 towels including 'Two French diaper towels, 2s.4d. Two slezey [Silesian] diaper towells old, 1s.6d.'[83] Huckaback became more prevalent from the mid eighteenth century and accounts for 15% of the total though diaper and damask remained popular throughout the period of the study. 13% were listed as 'round' towels, presumably roller towels usually associated with communal usage in service areas. Warwick Castle inventory of 1809 also listed '37 yds round towelin' together with '1 piece Russian towelin'.[84] Differentiation was shown in these items too. The Wrest Park inventory of 1740 listed 171 towels of which 18 were for servants, 94 for 'Head Servants' and 36 were old. There were also 8 yards of fine diaper to make towels.[85] The Warwick Castle inventory for 1806 had 6 towels for the steward's room; entries for Hassop Hall, Derbyshire in 1870 had 48 as 'fine', 48 as 'servants' and the rest as 'old'.[86] Thoresby Hall's linen of 1907 included 48 bath towels for servants and 36 for visitors, showing that this discrimination continued into the twentieth century.[87]

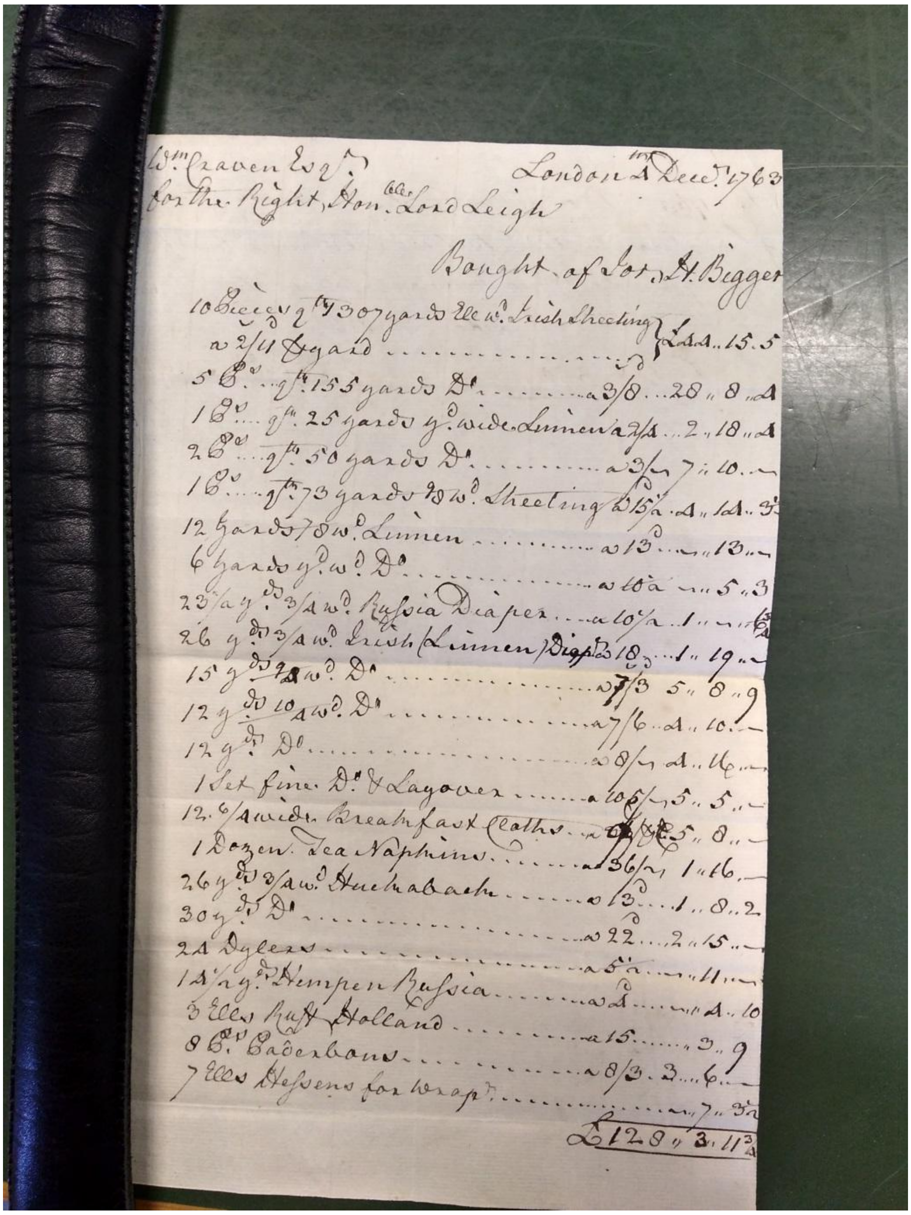
Associating the acquisition of linen with life-cycle events such as marriage or inheritance has proved elusive. However, Francis Seymour-Conway, 2nd Marquess of Hertford married his second wife in 1776, the year in which new sheets were required at Ragley Hall.[88] The 1817 inventory for Melchbourne House refers to quantities of table linen, as 'All in the year 1780' implying the year of purchase. This was the year Henry Beachamp St.John, 12th Baron St.John of Bletsoe married Emma, the daughter of Samuel Whitbread, the famous brewer.[89] It is possible quantities of bed linen were procured at the same time, but sustaining more wear than table linen, they had subsequently been replaced. Similarly, a bill for linen purchased for Stoneleigh Abbey in 1763 (see Fig. 3:4) listed 360 yards of Irish fabric of two different qualities for sheeting costing £58.10s. Other fabrics such as

[82] DRO D2375/F/F/1/9 Household Inventory Calke Abbey, 1748
[83] WHS Probate Inventory (82): Robert Wylde Junior, The Commandery, Worcester, 1684
[84] WRO CR 1886/TN 1053 Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1809
[85] BHRS Probate Inventory, Henry, Duke of Kent, Wrest Park, 1740
[86] WRO CR 1886/TN 1053 Inventory Warwick Castle, 1806; DRO D7676/Bag C/3461 Inventory Hassop Hall, 1870
[87] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[88] WRO CR114A/220 Household Accounts, Ragley Hall, 1742-1763
[89] BHRS Bedford Library L 942/565 MEL Probate Inventory, Lord St.John, Melchbourne House, 1817

Russian and Irish diaper and huckaback suggest towels were bought as was table linen, all indicating a major replacement or supplement to the linen stock.[90] Edward, 5th Lord Leigh came of age in 1763 and began the refurbishment of the West Range at Stoneleigh Abbey. One reading of these examples is that they represent a material manifestation of a life-cycle change.

William Earle Bulwar inherited Heydon Hall in Norfolk in 1797 and had an inventory of its contents, including its household linen, made the following year.[91] This recorded a meagre 24 pairs of sheets and 9 pillowcases mostly designated as 'coarse'. As he made extensive modifications to the house, gardens and park, it is tempting to suppose he would have purchased new household linen but unfortunately there is no record of it. Edmund Rolfe of Heacham Hall in Norfolk kept a set of green leather notebooks from 1764 to 1801. They began 'March y^{e} 23rd 1764 An account of my Expenses since that time being the day of my Marriage' where he estimated his household goods value at £1365.15s and his stables at £458.10s. [92] These records may be taken to demonstrate his role as head of the household exhibiting the required masculine virtue of self-control through management of his finances. However, household expenses are given as a total and expenditure on individual items cannot be tracked through these documents and the more detailed household accounts from which they were likely derived have not survived. The household accounts kept for the Weyland family of Woodeaton Hall in Oxfordshire between 1783 and 1808 show a considerable increase in expenditure in 1797.[93] The total expenditure was recorded yearly and was consistent at around £500 until it increased to £1142.9s.1d in 1797. Thereafter it remained at approximately £2,000 until the records ceased. Attempting to identify a life-cycle event has proved elusive although a brother who was a merchant in London and on the Board of the Bank of England died in 1797. Sadly, the accounts do not indicate any exceptional bills for household linen in that year but modest payments of £1.19s for Yorkshire Sheeting and £5.15s.6d against 4 pairs of servants' sheets.

[90] SCLA DR18/5/4028 Bill, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1764
[91] HALS K480 Inventory Heydon Hall, Norfolk, 1798
[92] NRO GUN 123-6 625x5 Edmund Rolfe, Personal & household accounts, 1794-1801
[93] HALS DE/V/F445 Household Accounts, Weyland Family, 1783-1808



Wm Craven Esqr. London 1st Decr. 1763
for the Right Honble. Lord Leigh

Bought of Jos. H. Bigger

10 Pieces qty 307 yards Ell wd. Irish Sheeting a 2/11 per yard ... £44..15..5
5 Do. ... qty 155 yards Do. ... a 3/8 ... 28..8..4
1 Do. ... qty 25 yards yd. wide Linnen a 2/4 ... 2..18..4
2 Do. ... qty 50 yards Do. ... a 3/- 7..10..-
1 Do. ... qty 73 yards 9/8 wd. Sheeting a 15d ... 4..11..3
12 yards 7/8 wd. Linnen ... a 13d ... -..13..-
6 yards yd. wd. Do. ... a 10½ ... -..5..3
23½ yds 3/4 wd. Russia Diaper ... a 10½ ... 1..-..1¾
26 yds 3/4 wd. Irish (Linnen) Diaper a 18d ... 1..19..-
15 yds 9/4 wd. Do. ... a 7/3 5..8..9
12 yds 10/4 wd. Do. ... a 7/6 ... 4..10..-
12 yds Do. ... a 8/- 4..16..-
1 Set fine Do. & Layover ... a 105/- 5..5..-
12. 6/4 wide Breakfast Cloths ... 5..8..-
1 Dozen Tea Napkins ... a 36/- 1..16..-
26 yds 3/4 wd. Huckaback ... a 13d ... 1..8..2
30 yds Do. ... a 22d ... 2..15..-
24 Dylers ... a 5½ ... -..11..-
14½ yds Hempen Russia ... a 4d ... -..4..10
3 Ells Huff Holland ... a 15 ... -..3..9
8 Do. Baderbans ... a 8/3 3..6..-
7 Ells Hessens for Wrapr. ... -..7..3½
£128..3..11¾

Figure 2:4: Bill for linen for Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, 1763

As the conclusions to this thesis outline, household textiles are largely absent objects. The few items that have survived have had a very different afterlife from most of their contemporaries. This is certainly the case of the bed sheet that forms the backing to a coverlet in the Quilters' Guild Collection. This item, the Mary Armitage Coverlet was completed in 1787 as the cross-stitched name and date on the top centre front proclaim.[94] Nothing is known about the maker or her family.

[94] The Quilters' Guild: Quilt Collection 2020-9-A, Mary Armitage Coverlet, 1787

Figure 2:5: Coverlet using linen sheet, author's photograph

This sheet measures 2750 x2820mm or 108 x 111 inches and comprises three widths of approximately yard wide, fine bleached linen using a tabby weave. The yarn appears to be of a regular thickness and there are no slubs. As the item was displayed in an exhibition, it was not possible to make a thread count and this had apparently not been done during conservation. It was joined along the selvedge with a whip stitch that enclosed the edges. There are no signs of wear although the linen has become discoloured in places. It seems likely that the coverlet has been laundered at some stage as the red dye in the cross stitch has run into the fabric. This suggests it was not the same quality thread that was usually employed for marking household linens although the style of lettering appears to be.

Figure 2:6: Coverlet reverse showing sheet, author's photograph

The diagonal line of stitching running from top left to bottom right shows the whipped selvedge. The line of stitch running from side to side is the back of the stitches used to attach the printed cotton pieces to the front of the sheet. As the design was outlined in cotton triangles with the points facing into the design, this sheet does not have any hem stitch on the cut edges of the linen. The stitching is regular and there are approximately 18 stitches to the inch. The regularity of spacing and stitch

size both on the selvedge and in the applique, together with the even working and small size of the cross-stitched name and date, give some idea of the nature of what was expected of 'plain sewing' during the earlier periods covered by this study.

Figure 2:7: Linen sheet, Calke Abbey, 1885, author's photograph

This standard was apparently still upheld in the linen sheet dated 1885 from Calke Abbey.[95] The sheet measured 2950 x 3120mm or 116 x 123 inches. It was made of bleached white linen of a regular yarn with no slubs and in a tabby weave. The thread count was relatively low at 46 warp and 42 weft. The sheet comprised two widths of fabric, joined here with a flat fell seam, like the seams used in men's shirts today. This enclosed the selvedge making a secure fastening along the centre of the sheet. The hem was 1½ inches deep with ½ inch turned under. The line of the weft had been used to ensure the hem was straight along the width of the sheet. The stitching and spacing were regular with 10 stitches to the inch. According to the red, cross-stitched mark, worked over 2 threads in each direction, in the top left corner, it had been purchased by Sir Vauncey Harper-Crewe in 1885 and was one of four in the set. Although Sir Vauncey did not inherit the title until the following year, he and his wife had lived at Calke Abbey throughout their married life. The addition of the letter 'N' may have indicated the bed the sheet was made for, in the format that Mary Young explained although none of the current room designations begin with the letter.[96] A further 6 sheets of the same quality had been added to the stock in 1900 also bearing the mark 'VHC'.[97]

[95] NT 293877 Sheet, Calke Abbey, 1885
[96] See Marking and Mending, Chapter Six
[97] NT 293879 Sheet, Calke Abbey, 1900

Figure 2:8: Linen mark, author's photograph

A further sheet, also purchased by Sir Vauncey Harper-Crewe may be interpreted as showing the hierarchical qualities of bed linen discussed above.[98] This item, measuring 1640 x 2640mm or 64 x 103 inches was of cotton twill and was marked not in cross stitch but in indelible ink. There were 16 of these sheets in this consignment. The addition of 'W' above the initials may indicate these were for the beds of the women servants at Calke Abbey at that time. The sheets, which were machine stitched, did not carry a maker's label, so they may have been made up from fabric on site or by needlewomen living nearby, as had been done during the tenure of Sir Vauncey's father, Sir John.[99]

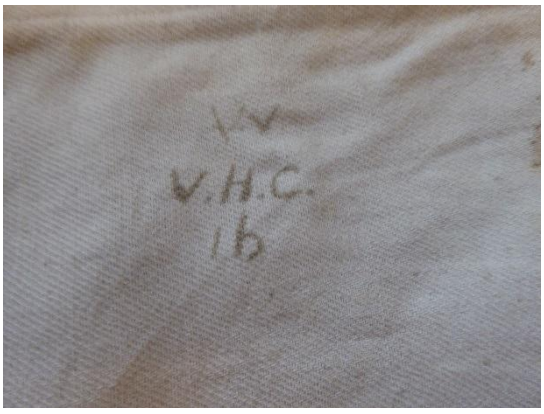


Figure 2:9: Cotton twill sheet, Calke Abbey, author's photograph

No pillowcases were found amongst the linen it was possible to view for this study. However, a few towels from the early twentieth century had survived. Some of these had been given an earlier date in the catalogue but there is some discrepancy between the dates suggested for the articles and the

[98] NT 293871 Sheet, Calke Abbey, date unknown
[99] See Sewing, Chapter Six

lifetime of the people represented on the item labels. A case in point is the linen diaper towel (see Fig 2:10).[100] It measures 960 x 880mm or 38 x 35 inches and has a thread count of 96 warp and 73 weft. It has been hemmed on two sides with stitches of regular sized and spacing. There are approximately 14 stitches to the inch along the hems with the tape loops attached with back stitch where 14 stitches cover the ¾ inch width of the tape.

Figure 2:10: Hand towel, disputed date, author's photograph

This towel carries the initials 'OHR' referring to Olive Hamilton-Russell, aunt of Lady Labouchere, who with her husband Sir George, bequeathed Dudmaston to the National Trust. As she lived from 1879-1967 it is unlikely she would have needed to purchase towels in 1900, so whilst the item is at least fifty years old, it demonstrates the difficulty of identifying household textiles with any certainty unless they have their dates upon them. In a similar way, a roller or round towel that is a rare example of the towels routinely provided in the service areas of country houses (see Table 3:2) cannot be from 1830 as identified in the catalogue because it is clearly labelled 'FGHR' for Frederick Gustavus Hamilton-Russell, 1867-1941. A likely explanation is that he has been mistaken for his father, Gustavus Frederick Hamilton-Russell, although he was only born in 1830, or for his grand-father of the same name, 7th Viscount Boyne who lived 1798-1872. The round towel is at least eighty years old and it is quite remarkable that it should have been preserved in such good condition. In pristine condition were three identical red and white bathmats with 'MHR 12 09' stamped in indelible ink on an attached tape.[101]

[100] NT DUD/T/112 Hand towel, Dudmaston, 1900
[101] NT DUD/T/051/A Bathmat, Dudmaston, 1909

Figure 2:11: Bathmat, 1909, author's photograph

Again, it is likely it had a very different afterlife from its contemporaries. One possible reason for so many of the towels in the collection at Dudmaston appearing unused is that such items were usually commissioned in batches with some 'in use' and others in storage ready to replace any worn items. These items may have been preserved by virtue of being 'in store' at the point where the house and contents were transferred to the National Trust.

The Role of Bed Linen

The terse language of the main sources used in this study offers no hint of 'the latent emotionality that early modern bedding textiles could carry' distinguished by Handley, yet sheets were sometimes referred to in an affective way as Lord Lyttleton's comment demonstrates.[102] His reference to being in a winding sheet conveys popular connections between sheets, death and burial. Earlier writers had emphasised these links. Bayly, a Welsh bishop and writer of devotional literature urged his readers in 1613 to 'Let therefore thy bed-clothes represent unto thee the mould of the earth that shall cover thee: thy sheetes, thy winding sheete; thy sleepe, thy death: thy waking, thy resurrection' similarly Sir Thomas Browne writing half a century later highlighted that 'Half our dayes wee passe in the shadowe of the earth and the brother of death exacteth a third part of our lives'.[103] This connection persisted with the use of linen as shrouds for burial. Despite laws in the seventeenth century designed to protect the woollen industry insisting all should be buried in wool, these were widely flouted and exemption could be obtained for a fee of £5.[104] However, from the eighteenth century it is more likely elite corpses would be buried in funerary sheets supplied by the undertaker than in a

[102] S. Handley, 'Objects, Emotions and an Early Modern Bed-sheet', *History Workshop Journal* 85 (2019) pp.169-194

[103] T. Hamling, C. Richardson, *At Home in Early Modern England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2017) p.239; A. R. Ekirch, *At Day's Close: Night Time in Times Past,* (New York, Norton, 2005) p.261

[104] WYAS 27D75A/1/30/2 Misc. documents of Henry Hemingsway of Boldsay Hall, Bradford; WYAS QS1/18/1/8/6 Fine paid by Richard Hutton, 1679

household one and by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries funerary clothes were the more usual custom.[105] Certainly, beds and the sheets upon them were witness to the major life-cycle events of birth, marriage and death. Large scale purchases of bed linen usually marked important events in the lives of country house owners, inheritance and marriage being obvious ones and whilst this study has found no evidence of bed linen as trousseaux, the acquisition of amounts of prestigious linen in 1780 is indicated in the inventory for Melchbourne House, the year its owner married the daughter of Samuel Whitbread, the brewer.[106] Similarly, large quantities of fine Irish linen were purchased for the refurbishment of Stoneleigh Abbey on the majority of the 5th Lord Leigh.[107]

Lord Lyttleton's comment is a humorous recollection, but it also offers an insight into how linen was perceived and used. The best bed would be prepared for guests, especially higher status ones and the finest sheets brought out of storage. This concept is still evident in the early twentieth century. Harrods Catalogue for 1912 recommended linen sheets at 24s.9d per pair for the householder with pillowcases priced at 3s.6d per pair and for the guests' beds sheets at 25s 9d and pillowcases at 5s.11d.[108] In Lord Lyttleton's experience such linen was pungent with the smell of herbs. This was in part occasioned by disguising the smell left by the laundering process since until the late nineteenth century the soaps used were generally of animal fats. While drying outdoors would mitigate this, powders made from cloves, lavender and in Lord Lytton's case, rosemary were also used. This practice both added a sweeter scent and deterred insects and vermin, indicating not only the value of the commodity but also demonstrating good housekeeping. One eighteenth-century manual directed:

> To keep Linnen not used from receiving any Damage.
>
> When you have washed and well dried it, fold it up, and scatter in the folding the powder of cedar-wood or cedar small ground, having first perfumed your chest with storax by which means not only dampness is prevented but worms, moths etc [109]

[105]Article includes the bill for a funeral in 1790; the 'superfine sheet, shroud & pillow: £1.15s' https://englishhistoryauthors.blogspot.com/2013/02/death-in-eighteenth-century.html (Accessed: 13.09.19)
[106] BHRS Bedford Library L 942/565 MEL Probate Inventory Lord St.John, Melchbourne House, 1817
[107] SCLA DR18/5/4028 Bill, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1764
[108] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[109] Barker, A. *The Complete Servant Maid: or young Woman's best Companion* (London, c 1762)

Household manuals routinely contained recipes, some of them highly toxic and rarely effective for combatting this problem.[110] Fleas, lice and especially bed-bugs were rife in the earlier period of the study with infestations leaving visible signs on the skin of those unfortunate enough to experience them.[111] These manifestations were equated with poor housekeeping and by implication with a lack of morality as dirt and sin were still closely linked.[112] Symbolic acts of cleansing such as baptism reminded the faithful that sin might be purged and souls restored to a state of purity. Multiple references in the King James Bible, familiar to all literate people throughout the period covered by this study, associated white and cleanliness with purity. Psalm 51:7 pleads 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow'. John Taylor, the 'Water Poet' had voiced these ideas in his lines 'In Praise of Cleane Linnen' in 1624:

> To the word cal'd Cleane, it is allotted
> The admirable Epithite Unspotted
> From whence all soyl'd pollutions is exiled,
> And therefore Cleane is called undefiled[113]

The increase in the number of towels, both individual and the communal 'round towels' (see Table 2:2 p. 78) may show the awareness of cleaning the body that North investigated.[114]

Clean linen was also an important outward show of the wealth and efficiency of a household as acknowledged in the works of Smith and more recently North in Chapter One. Lady Grisell Baillie instructed her housekeeper to' help to sheet and make the straingers beds, that the beds and sheets be dry and well aird' and similarly an early eighteenth-century housekeeper appraised her mistress Lady Mordaunt of the readiness of her house to receive guests in her letter:

> The hous and all things is in order all the beds hath ben clene and all the Rooms are verey well…the diper [diaper table linen] is shrunk the cors cloth [?] is pritey whit and the sheets shall be mad.[115]

[110] L. T. Sarasohn, '" That Nauseous Venomous Insect": Bed bugs in Early Modern England', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 26:4, (2013) pp. 513-30
[111] L. O. J. Boynton, 'The Bed Bug and the "Age of Elegance"', *Furniture History* vol 1 (1965) pp.15-31
[112] L. Brunt, B. Steger, *Worlds of Sleep* (Berlin, 2008) p.81
[113] Quoted in T. Hamling & C. Richardson, *At Home*, p.269
[114] S. North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020)
[115] R. Scott-Moncrieff, (ed) *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie 1692-173*3 https://archive.org/details/householdbookofl00bailrich (Accessed: 08.02.2023) ; P. A. Sambrook, *Keeping Their Place*: *Domestic Service in the Country House* (Stroud, History Press, 2005) pp.67-8

Lesley Lewis reminiscing on her childhood at Pilgrim Hall in Essex in the 1920s showed little had changed in the intervening period:

> Unexpected guests were not approved of …probably because mattresses really did need airing…The room would therefore be opened up at least two days before, a fire lit in winter and two or three stone hot-water bottles put amongst the mattresses and blankets. Beds were never left made up so sheets and pillowcases came ready aired from the linen cupboard.[116]

Keeping the sheets clean represented a major body of work usually undertaken within the country house itself and is addressed in Chapter Five. Maintaining the cleanliness of bed linen was not only associated with upholding the status of the household, but it was also an important aspect of securing restful sleep. This was valued for refreshing not only the body, mind and soul but as John Locke advocated, was also necessary for maintaining the intellectual and nervous facilities in good order.[117] Hannah Glasse in her manual of 1760 advised the chambermaid to:

> 'throw open all the Windows to air the Rooms, and uncovering the Beds to sweeten and air them; besides it is good for the Health to air the Bedding, and sweet to sleep in when fresh Air has had Access to them, and a great help against Bugs and Fleas'.[118]

The sheets that lay closest to the body were probably also prized for the physical sensation they elicited. Mida and Kim, amongst others identified that sensual aspects of fabric are central to their appeal as consumer items.[119] Lying on clean, smooth sheets such as the 'two pair of fine Holland sheets' with their 'two pair pillow cases' offered in the sale at Stanford Hall in 1792 or between the 'large and handsome sheets' at Colworth House in 1816 would be prized as much for the visceral pleasure they afforded as for the trouble-free and healthy sleep they offered. Whether the same could be said of the '4 pair of coarse sheets' valued at just 6s in an inventory of 1723 or the pair of Russia dowlas [coarse linen] at auction in 1809 is doubtful.[120] Had anything changed by the later years of this investigation? There were 12 pairs of fine linen sheets at Harrington House in 1881 and

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[116] L. Lewis, *The Private Life of a Country House* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1997) p.175

[117] S. Handley, Sleep-piety and healthy sleep in the early modern English household, pp.185-210 in L. Astbury, H. Newton, T. Storey, D. Cantor (eds) *Conserving Health in Early Modern Culture: Bodies & Environment in Italy & England* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017) p.189

[118] Glasse, H., *The Servants Directory* (London, 1760) https://data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk p.32

[119] I. Mida, A. Kim, *The Dress Detective: A Practical Guide to Object-Based Research in Fashion* (London, Bloomsbury, 2015); B. Borkopp-Restle in 'Museums and the Making off Textile Histories: Past, Present, and Future': a discussion with B. Berkopp-Restle, P. McNeil, S. Marinetti, G. Riello, moderated by L. Miller, *Perspective* [Online] 1 (2016) pp.43-60

[120] BHRS Probate Inventory, William Lee Antonie of Colworth House, 1816; NCL M0005645NL/11 Sales Catalogue, Stanford Hall, 1792; WHS Probate Inventory (110): John Sutton of Russel's Hall, 1723; NCL M0005647NL/8 Sales Catalogue, Bethan, Peterborough, 1809

one might assume that sleep was a different experience between them compared to the '18p^{r} men's calico' also listed. Likewise placing one's head on one of the 24 'frilled and hemstitched' pillowcases at Thoresby Hall in 1938 and lying between the matching hemstitched sheets purchased in 1935 might invoke sensations quite unlike those serviced by the 'twill' items also listed there.[121] Clean bed linen was one of the many items within the country house that contributed significantly to the growing expectations of physical comfort as witnessed by Stobart in his investigations, at the same time as it continued to be used to indicate social rank.[122]

Conclusions

This study has considered bed linen in both a quantitative and qualitative manner and where possible interpreted this material in the light of evidence from other sources. It has used information extracted from sales catalogues and inventories from 234 different gentry households, 10 of which are represented with data from different generations. Valuations for flax, hemp and hurden yarns in inventories, together with sheets made from these fibres, have been triangulated against payments for spinning and weaving in household accounts revealing a more widespread production and use of homespun cloth than the current historiography suggests. It was also possible to identify changes in the types of fabrics used for bed linen within the time frame of the study. Flax continued to be the most frequently listed sheet fabric into the nineteenth century although hemp and hurden disappear from the sources in the late eighteenth century. Holland declined against the introduction of sheets categorized as fine linen in the sources, possibly indicative of a change in nomenclature as the term had become a general one for fine linen. These fabrics may have been manufactured anywhere in the British Isles yet the presence of Yorkshire and Lancashire sheets in some sources confirms a commercial presence in these regions such as suggested by Harte and reviewed earlier. Indeed, a search through the online catalogue of the West Yorkshire Archive Service found 125 references to the linen trade. 22% of these were described as manufacturers including one 'bleacher' and several spinning companies. 17% were described as 'websters' and the remainder weavers. The largest proportion of them were within an eight-mile radius of Knaresborough with 26% of the entries 1660-1826 giving substance to the identification of Knaresborough cloth in the household inventory of Rev. John Forth cited earlier. Several documents in the archive pertain to the period before this study and the highest numbers are eighteenth century. One reading of this is that there was a thriving linen manufacture in the Yorkshire area, possibly supplementing a pastoral economy, tailing off into the nineteenth century. At the same time references to factory concentrations especially in the Leeds

[121] DRO D518M/F189 Probate 7th Earl of Harrington, 1881; NUSC Ma 2 I/2 Inventory of Linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907

[122] J. Stobart (ed) *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe 1700-1900* (London, Bloomsbury, 2020)

area suggest a move towards industrialisation like John Marshall's Mills on Water Lane in Leeds that united all processes of linen manufacture in one complex.[123] Harrods catalogue for 1912 was still offering Bolton sheeting to its customers alongside Irish linen indicating a later commercial continuation in the area like that of Castle Mills in Waterside, Knaresborough operating from 1770 to 1972.[124]

Calico accounts for 1% of the sheets here with the earliest reference in 1684. Sambrook suggested such sheets were given to children or invalids because it was warmer to the touch than linen. Inder referred to its use for cot sheets and this may account for the earlier small quantities within inventories. However, the largest numbers of calico sheets appear in the late nineteenth century where they are labelled for servants' use. At Gawthorpe Hall in the 1880s, the maids were supplied with linen sheets whereas the men servants had calico and twill, which may also have been of cotton although this was not specified.[125] Changes in choice of fabric across the period of the study not only indicate a growing engagement with the requirements of physical comfort as consumers sought the improved quality of fabric achieved by commercial linen manufacturers but also that purchasers would require the expert knowledge attributed to them by Walsh.[126] There are relatively few references to cotton sheets indicating the ability of linen fibres to withstand the rigours of the laundering methods compared to those of cotton.

There are similarities between the findings of this much smaller database with those quantitative surveys discussed in the literature review. Overton et al saw an overall rise in the ratio of sheets to beds and Trinder and Cox found a rise of from 1.4 in the period 1660-69 to 4.8 by 1740-49. Using available figures for only these two periods, the ratio of sheets to beds from this database remains virtually static, viz 2.14 for the sample 1660-69 and 2.2 for 1740-49. It is clear however that with such a small sample any deficiency in the accuracy of the sources will be critical and some of the listings of linen are very limited, such as Henry Townshend whose 1663 inventory contained 15 beds but whose linen contained just 2 pairs of flaxen sheets. However, counting across all sources between 1660 and 1749 gives a figure of 4.1 sheets per bed, much closer to the figure obtained by Trinder and Cox. Breaking this down further provides figures of 2.8 sheets per bed for servants assuming 'flax, hemp, homespun' as well as 'servants' sheets' are included. Allocating beds to gentry from the descriptions

[123] WYAS WYHER/12643 Insurance Survey Marshall's Mill, Water Lane, Holbeck

[124] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023); NYAS BU04862AA4, Photograph Collection of Bertram Unné, Castle Mill, Knaresborough

[125] P.A. Sambrook, *A Country House Servant*, p.112; DRO D518M/F189 Probate Inventory 7th Earl of Harrington, 1881

[126] C. Walsh The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England, pp. 331-347 in Blondé et al, (eds) *Buyers & Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in medieval and early modern Europe* (Brussels, Brepols, 2006)

in the sources is likely to be fallible but allows for an approximate figure of 7.2 sheets per bed assuming all other categories of sheet were for their use. This certainly suggests that gentry households were prepared to spend more on the acquisition of bed linen for their own beds and as part of the sociability extended to guests. The evidence suggests this difference extended to the quality of sheet also. Harrods catalogue for 1912 contained a suggested purchase for setting up house that included linen sheets for the family, superior quality linen for guests, and cotton sheets for the servants, as those examined at Calke appear to confirm, so it appears this differentiation remained in place throughout the period of this study.[127]

There was a contemporary expectation that goods should reflect social standing, noted in the work of Edwards and Vickery referenced earlier, and this difference in quality was clear from close analysis of the sources used. What was also evident was that distinctions of rank within the servant population were reflected in the provision of bed linen with items regularly designated for the use of upper servants like stewards and housekeepers commensurate with their supervisory roles within the household. The housekeepers may have been directly responsible for these purchases and the differentiation, as the Household Book for Charlecote Park implies, although it should be noted that Stobart recognized that Mrs Hayes appeared to have had considerable independence due to the bachelor status and frequent absences of her employer, George Lucy.[128] Her records and other household accounts showed that bed linen was purchased both locally and in London. The example of the purchase of quantities of sheets for Stoneleigh Abbey on the majority of Edward, 5th Lord Leigh confirms the concept of consumption being linked with life-cycle events and that prestigious qualities of linen were purchased in the capital.

It is clear from the attention given to the management and maintenance of bed linen referenced in Chapter Five that it was an important indicator of a well-run establishment and that it spoke of wealth and adherence to proper social standards along with contributing to the growing expectation of physical comfort to be derived from such an establishment. It was surprising that proportionately the quantities recorded were not substantially more for these gentry households than those for other social groups, as discovered by earlier and more extensive surveys. However, most of the inventories and sales catalogues showed the presence of laundry facilities ensuring supplies of clean bed linen could be maintained without difficulty and contributing greatly to the comfort and well-being of the household. Likewise, several household accounts referenced bills paid for laundering household linens.

[127] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[128] J. Stobart, 'Housekeeper, correspondent and confidante: the under-told story of Mrs Hayes of Charlecote Park 1744-73', *Family & Community History* 21:2 pp.96-111

Whilst the household inventories have provided a snapshot of the linen within the country house at the time they were compiled, clearly the quantities of bed linen contained within sales catalogues and probate inventories may not represent all the items that were in the households before these documents were compiled and this may have an impact on some of the conclusions. It is reasonable to suppose that the same proviso must hold for the table linen that is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Table Linen: sociability and status

Context

Girouard outlined the importance of the rituals of dining as a mark of sociability indicating they were reflected in changing architecture by the early eighteenth century.[1] Table linen was part of the conspicuous outlay of the country house designed to complement the displays of food used while entertaining friends, neighbours and potential patrons and supporters. Such hospitality was an integral part of the social, political and commercial networking that underpinned aristocratic and gentry society. Chapter Three considers the role table linen played within this process and how such displays were equated with status in a manner akin to ceramics and plate demonstrating their owners access to elite social networks and shared values. It also demonstrates how damask table linen gives an indication of consumer choice and fashion. This chapter will investigate the provision of table linen through quantitative analysis as outlined in Chapter One, enabling comparisons between earlier studies and that typical of the English country house.[2] Qualitative analysis will identify any changes in the styles of table linen as dining became less formal. The role table linen played within this process is also considered together with the value placed upon it. Observation of extant pieces of table linen will be triangulated against these findings.

New fashions brought changes to the processes of entertaining during the period covered by this study. Many of the formal dining occasions involving processions of food carried by gentlemen retainers had disappeared with the English Civil War whilst reduction in the size of many households made such formal events less frequent. Lavish ceremony still pertained to the reception of foreign dignitaries such as the entertainment of the Duke of Lorraine, husband of the Empress Maria Theresa, by Sir Robert Walpole at Houghton in 1731 where 'the consumption both from the larder and the cellar was prodigious. They dined in the hall which was lighted by fifty wax candles'.[3] However, many members of the gentry would be more familiar with the sentiments of Mrs. Bennet describing her circle to the Netherfield house party in *Pride and Prejudice*

[1] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, Yale, 1978) pp.203-5
[2] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London, Routledge, 1996) p.193
[3] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House,* p.162

> Certainly, my dear, nobody said there were [as many acquaintances as in London]; but as to not meeting with many people in this neighbourhood, I believe there are few neighbourhoods larger. I know we dine with four and twenty families.[4]

The most popular varieties of table linen listed in the documents used for this study are described generically as damask, diaper or huckaback. These terms denoted different methods of manufacture, presented different appearances and were of differing costs. The most usual of weaves is tabby where one weft thread [threads running across the width of the fabric] passes alternately under and over the warp [threads running the length of the fabric]. A variant on this produces the fabric called huckaback. This is still used for some fabrics such as tea towels and has a waffle-like appearance. Both damask and diaper are woven with either warp or weft 'floating' free over two or more warp or weft threads 'catching' the light and revealing the pattern of the weave. Diaper is a twill weave. Twill is a type of textile weave with a pattern of diagonal parallel ribs. This is done by passing the weft thread over one or more warp threads then under two or more warp threads and so on, with a "step," or offset, between rows to create the characteristic diagonal pattern. Variations of this process produce geometric patterns of differing complexity.[5]

Damask is produced on a more complex loom called a draw loom. Multiple combinations of warp threads are held above the loom frame and manipulated by a 'draw-boy' with the weaver responsible for the complexities of the weft threads. Fine, closely set warp threads produce a shiny face to the cloth with the weft, being slightly heavier and of a duller appearance, providing the contrast. This process is used to produce figurative images and is reversible. As a result of its complexity, it was usually more expensive than diaper and both were more expensive than huckaback. The introduction of the Jacquard system from the 1820s replaced the 'draw' element of the loom with a system of punched cards controlling the actions of the loom, allowing automatic production of intricate woven patterns and reducing the cost of the items.[6] Indeed, *Ackermann's Repository of Arts* advised readers in 1821:

> 'the loom of our country is now in that state of advanced perfection, that damask of the most magnificent kind ... and richness of patterns are manufactured at prices that permit their free use in well furnished apartments'.[7]

[4] J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (London, 1813) Vol 1:9 p.43, Penguin edn. 1996
[5] D. K. Burnham, *Warp and Weft: A Textile Terminology* (London, Routledge & Keegan-Paul, 1980)
[6] P. Solar, The Linen Industry in Early Modern Europe, pp.809-823 in D. Jenkins (ed) *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.815
[7] Quoted in M. Schoeser, C. Rufey, *English and American Textiles: from 1790 to the present* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1989) p.66

A variety of table linen was produced using these weaving patterns throughout the period covered here with the prevailing fashions of eating determining its format. Most are described as either tablecloths or napkins, although with many variations. Mitchell related that prior to the Restoration inventories included, in addition, long towels for hand washing at table, coverpanes to overlay place settings and cupboard cloths for serving areas adjacent to the main tables.[8] Such prestigious items were recorded in an inventory of 1638 within the papers relating to Stoneleigh Abbey as 'Item 1 damask bord cloth 4 damask napkins wth d^{o} Cupboard cloth and d^{o} towell' valued then at £5.6s.8d.[9]

> He [the yeoman of the ewery] shall then laye the table cloth fayre upon both his armes and goe…to the table of my dyett making two curtesies thereto…and there kissing ytt…after the yeoman of my pantrye hath placed the saltes and layde myne, and my wifes trenchers, manchettes, knyves and spoones, he shall…coverre them with napkyns.

These instructions indicate the formality of dining in a great household around 1600.[10] A vestige of the importance of these male retainers was implicit in the instructions in *The Complete Servant* where 'the footman lays the cloth for dinner, and the knives and forks and glasses'.[11] Although the Duke of Chandos had each course processed into the hall as late as the 1720s, such formal dining was generally retained only for corporation and celebratory feasts with linens to match the occasion.[12] Lewis described one such surviving cloth found amongst the regalia of the Guildhall in Winchester in 1981.[13] Designed in three sections with a border around it and approximately nine feet wide, it shows the coronation procession of George II and was a commissioned piece woven in the 1720s. No such pieces have been discovered in this study.

Charles II and exiled royalists returning in the 1660s introduced new styles of eating from France with dishes arranged symmetrically over the tablecloth and served *á la française* where guests helped each other from an array of dishes positioned within easy reach.[14] The first course was removed to be replaced by somewhat lighter dishes together with some sweet ones before the final *'desservir'* or clearing, when cheeses, sweetmeats and fruits, later called 'dessert' were placed on the table. Saumarez-Smith quoted Defoe's heroine Roxana 'I made provision of about twelve Dozen of fine

[8] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine table linen in England, 1450-1750: The supply, ownership and use of a luxury commodity' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 1999) pp.59-72
[9] SCLA DR18/4/13 Inventory, William Poulett, 1638; Equivalent value today using inflation calculator available from www.bankofengland.co.uk is £869.42p
[10] *The Household Book of Anthony Browne, 2nd Viscount Montague*, 1595, quoted in P. Glanville, H. Young (eds) *Elegant Eating: Four hundred years of dining in style* (London, Victoria & Albert Publications, 2002) p.52
[11] S. Adams, S. Adams, The Complete Servant (1825), A. Haly (ed) (Lewes, Southover Press, 1989) p. 144
[12] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.139
[13] E. Lewis, 'An 18th Century Linen Damask Tablecloth from Ireland', *Textile History* 15:2 (1984), pp.235-244
[14] P. Glanville, H. Young (eds) *Elegant Eating*, p.48

Damask Napkins, and Table-cloaths of the same, sufficient to cover all the Tables, with three Table-cloaths upon every Table' suggesting the possibility of the removal of the top cloth with each course.[15] These new fashions in dining brought changes to table linen and the items recorded in the majority of the sources show the relative simplification of dining as an activity after the Civil War. Nevertheless, William Lygon of Madresfield, representing a greater gentry family, subsequently ennobled, had 'two suites of table linen of damaske' together with 'three suites of diaper table linnen' recorded in 1681, whilst Thomas Savage of Great Malvern, whose probate valuation totalled £778, places him in the lesser gentry class also had 'Foure shuites of damaske' in 1699.[16] Whether these refer simply to tablecloths with matching napkins or were more extensive is unclear. These households may have been slow to follow the new fashions or may have retained older sets of linen in deference to their value.

Until the mid-seventeenth century most food was eaten with fingers and napkins were essential items. After the introduction of forks Paston-Williams says napkins in elite houses were ornamental items sculpted or 'pinched' into decorative shapes as the reproduction created for English Heritage for the seventeenth century dining room at Bolsover Castle demonstrates (See Fig. 3:1). These creations might be saved from one occasion to the next although the numbers of napkins included in sources studied indicate more extensive usage. Pepys, impressed by this ostentation hired a professional 'to lay the cloth and fold the napkins'. Returning to his house 'I there found one laying of my napkins against tomorrow, in figures of all sorts, which is mighty pretty, and it seems, is his trade, and he gets much money by it'. Instructions for these decorations did not appear in English until *A Perfect School of Instructions for Officers of the Mouth* was published in 1682.[17] Whether these were for use or decoration, the Accounts for Warwick Castle for 1665 show 'Item: 6 dozen of flaxen napkins: 003:17:03'.[18] Reference to them as flaxen may imply these were of local production.

[15] C. Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1993) p.80

[16] WHS Probate Inventory (79): William Lygon of Madresfield, 1681; WHS Probate Inventory (93): Thomas Savage of Elmley Castle, 1699

[17] S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining: A History of Cooking and Eating* (London, National Trust, 1993) p.188

[18] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1665)

Figure 3:1: Pinched napkin, author's photograph, Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire

As the entry from Warwick Castle suggests, some table linen might be of local manufacture, but significant quantities were also imported. During the seventeenth century patterned damask table linen was imported from the Low Countries and particularly Kortrik [French Courtrai] in Flanders but religious persecution led some Protestant linen manufacturers to emigrate to Haarlem in Holland and to St Quentin in France. All three centres then exported figured damask to England. Louis XIV's persecution of the French Huguenots led Louis Crommelin to emigrate to Lisburn near Belfast in the 1690s. Mitchell suggests that with assistance from William III he was instrumental in establishing the production of damask in Ireland, although research into Quaker records in Lisburn has ascertained there were already specialist damask weavers in the area. A probate inventory of 1699 for Montague Drake of Shardelowes House in Buckinghamshire, listing 2 dozen Irish damask napkins, indicates that such wares were being imported into England.[19] Indeed *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open; or, the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* published in 1696 advised that Dublin linens woven three yards wide

[19] D.M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', pp.27-30; B. J. Mackey, Centres of draw-loom damask linen weaving in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, pp.98-118 in *Leinendamaste* (Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, 1999) p.100

were most suitable for sheets, although linens from the north of Ireland were narrow and only suitable for shirts and shifts, but with no reference to table linen.[20]

Despite the imposition of punitive import duties on linens from France and its allies during the succession of wars against Louis XVI, it is estimated that nearly one third of the linen being sold in England originated in Holland or France. Some was smuggled into England with other highly taxed goods, as a contemporary Joshua Gee observed in his survey of 1729 *The Trade and Navigation of Great Britain Consider'd*:

> Their [French] Linnens are run in upon us in very great Quantities as are their Wine and Brandy from Lands End even to the Downs. England takes from Holland great Quantities of fine Holland Linnen, Threads, Tapes and Incles [braids].[21]

Thomas Vernon of Hanbury Hall had 12 new French diaper tablecloths and 6 new French diaper side board covers recorded in his probate inventory of 1721 despite the government's efforts to discourage such purchases.[22] Other linen was disguised as imports from other countries such as Silesia [in Germany].[23] Linen produced in Silesia was also readily available in England. Robert Wylde of The Commandery in Worcester had 'Two dozen of napkins slezy [Silesian] diaper' recorded in his probate inventory in 1684 and in two household inventories Edward Mellish of Blythe Hall in Nottinghamshire listed 'Twelve Sleazy Dyap napkins' and 'Two Silsia [Silesian] Diaper table cloathes' despite *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open; or, the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* warning that:

> Sleasie Damask…is not so fine nor of such curious work as [Holland damask] it being usually wrought all in Flowers and with this farther difference, that it will not wear so white after washed[24]

It must have been purchased in sufficient quantities for the word sleazy to become associated with poor or suspect quality. However, there are just two references to Silesian linens in the sources studied. One reading of this might be that as poor quality they were of short duration in the linen

[20] J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open: or the Plain Dealing Linnen-Draper* (London, 1696), p.10 from Folger Shakespeare Library, EEBO
[21] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.109
[22] WHS Probate Inventory (108): Thomas Vernon of Hanbury, c1721
[23] N. B. Harte, The Rise and Protection of the English Linen Trade, 1690-1790, pp.74-106 in *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1973) p.80
[24] WHS Probate Inventory (82): Robert Wylde junior of The Commandery, Worcester, 1684; NUSC Me/In/6 Household Inventory Edward Mellish early 18th c; NUSC Me/In/10 Goods for London, 1720; J.F., *The Merchant's Ware-House Laid Open*

store. Recent research, however, has shown its export to West Africa where it was perceived as a desirable fabric.[25]

In a more positive move the government established The Board of Trustees of Linen & Hempen Manufactures in Ireland in 1711 and in Scotland in 1728. Irish producers had sold to England since William III's reign without incurring duties and exported directly to America exempt from the Navigation Acts requiring the use of English vessels. Harte, however, ascribed a marginal influence to these measures compared to the cheap labour costs in Ireland and an English market eager for its goods. He noted a rise in imports of Irish linen from 6.4 million yards in 1740 to almost 33 million by 1800.[26] The Board of Trustees regulated all aspects of production from the quality of the seed to the efficacy of the bleaching until 1823 when it was disbanded. Linen approved for export carried an official seal. Manufacturers who consistently maintained the required quality were allowed to attach the requisite seals on behalf of the Board so that production was not held up by inspections. In 1737 the royal household of George II decided to purchase all its table linen from Irish manufacturers providing a further stimulus to the production of quality table linen.[27]Repeat orders were still being placed with the Coulson firm in Queen Victoria's reign.[28]

Despite the number of sheets being described as Irish within this study, references to Irish table linen are infrequent. However, it seems likely that there were more items of Irish provenance in use than are acknowledged since such items were produced and exported in large quantities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[29] Amongst the 'Linnen from Dublin' in the Inventory Book for Serlby Hall in 1735 were 10 tablecloths including one 'large and fine' and several dozen napkins. The sales catalogue of 1772 for Horton Hall (See Fig. 3:2) offered three lots featuring Irish table cloths, two accompanied by a dozen napkins whilst the 1806 inventory for Warwick Castle recorded 8 Irish damask table cloths. [30] The 1st Earl of Hertford owned land around Lisburn and actively promoted the linen trade by granting a lease of land to William Coulson in 1766 for the construction of a weaving shed. One of his English residences was Ragley Hall in Warwickshire where the only reference found to Irish linen was the purchase in 1776 of 27 yards of ell wide Irish cloth at 1s.6d per

[25] A. Steffan, 'A cloth that binds: new perspectives on the 18th century Prussian economy', *Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies* 42:1 (2021) pp. 105-129
[26] N. B. Harte, The English Linen Trade, p.92
[27] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.126
[28] PRONI D2360/2/1 William Coulson Order Book 1887
[29] C. Rynne, Linen and Woollen Industries in Britain and Ireland pp.188-210 in E. Casella, M. Nevell, H. Steyne (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Industrial Archaeology* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2022) p.198
[30] NUSC Ga 1270 I Inventory Book 1735-75, Serlby Hall; NCL M0005647NL/6, Sales Catalogue, Horton Hall, 1772; WRO CR1886/TN 1053, Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1806

yard.[31] The Prince of Wales, later Prince Regent, was a friend of his son, the 2nd Marquis and a frequent visitor to his properties. Possibly influenced by the quality of linen he had seen in the Marquis's possession, in 1805 the prince ordered two suites of Coulson's superfine damask table linen with his coat of arms demonstrating his patrimonial inheritance in the centre at a cost of £93.9s per set. The total bill from Coulson's for table linen supplied to his household that year was £417.18s.[32]

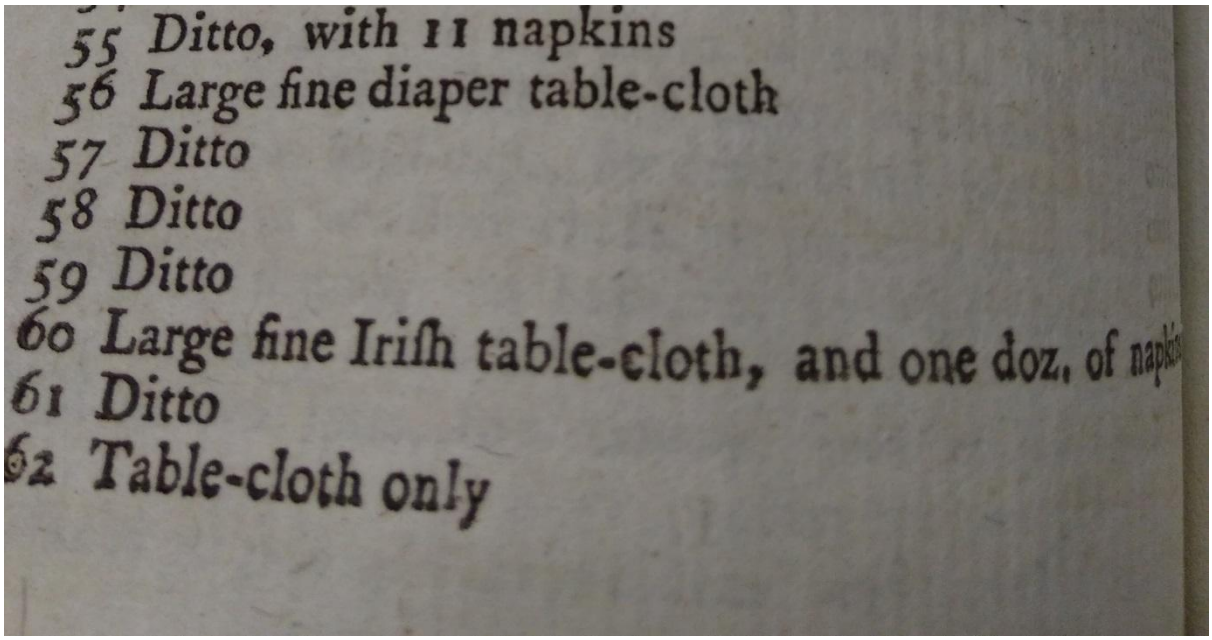
55 Ditto, with 11 napkins
56 Large fine diaper table-cloth
57 Ditto
58 Ditto
59 Ditto
60 Large fine Iriſh table-cloth, and one doz. of napk
61 Ditto
62 Table-cloth only

Figure 3:2: Irish linen, sales catalogue, Horton Hall, Northamptonshire, 1772

A more recent catalogue of 1997 itemising the sale of contents from Syon Park, Middlesex listed 7 Irish damask table cloths including one ascribed to Coulson. There were also various incomplete sets of napkins ranging in dates from 1787 to 1836 together with two sets of napkins designated as Scottish dating from 1736.[33] Amongst the table linen in an inventory for Moor Park, one of properties belonging to the Dundas family, 24 Table cloths and 16 dozen napkins were recorded as 'Scotch Linen'.[34] However, only two other references to Scottish linen, that of ' 1 Table Cloth Scotch linen with 12 napkins' and another for Scottish Holland have been found in this study despite the apparent quantities of Scottish linen being shipped to London.[35]

[31] WRO CR 114A/220/1/170 Ragley Hall, Household Accounts
[32] B. J. Mackey, Centres of draw-loom damask linen weaving in Ireland, p.100
[33] WRO 018 SOT, Sales Catalogue, Syon Park, Middlesex, 1997
[34] NYAS ZNK XI Miscellaneous records Dundas Estate; Inventory of Plate, China, Linen etc 1781
[35] HALS K480 Inventory of Linen in Use, Heydon Hall, Norfolk, 1798; NRO GUN 121-122, 625x6 Edmund Rolfe, Personal & household accounts, 1794-1817; V. Habib, H. Clarke, 'Linen Weavers of Edinburgh' *Proc. of Soc. of Antiquarians of Scotland* 32 (2002) pp. 529-553

Visualising Table Linen

Over 13,000 tablecloths of various types have been counted from documentary sources during this study with the caveat that some in continuing household inventories may appear more than once. It is likely that even amongst the country houses included here this staggering number represents a fraction of the table linen circulating through establishments. Roughly half the probate inventories list household linen and it is evident that even where present in sales catalogues, not all the linen originally in the houses was being offered at auction. While the Pychley Hall sale of 1813 did not include bed linen it did include 35 damask tablecloths, 2 huckaback ones and 143 assorted napkins.[36] Napkins were usually purchased new in sets of one dozen; none of these represent a full set. It would appear the sale was disposing of the least valuable linen or that now surplus to requirements and this may be the case with other sales too. So, although the sales catalogues yield valuable descriptions of such items and at least some indication of the extent of linen held, they, like the inventories, most likely offer only a partial indication of what was originally in the house. This must have been the case for Sir Herbert Pakington's inventory in 1786. Here, the contents of seventy-nine rooms, featured several linen presses although the linen itself comprises '2 pare of sheets for Mr Pakington, 3 pillow cases, 6 huckaback tablecloths, 6 towells ditto, and 6 Servants Hall ditto'.[37]

Table cloths	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Flax	308	34	59	0	0	0	4
Damask	192	802	1663	1408	1303	618	278
Diaper	149	512	553	985	459	39	10
Huckaback	12	212	250	281	227	3	0
Breakfast	0	11	249	389	314	161	93
Servants'	45	273	257	327	425	205	204

Table 3:1 Tablecloths from documents

Across all the sources, table cloths categorized as damask were the most popular (See Table 3:1). The 34 sales catalogues record 572 damask cloths with a further 184 described as 'fine' damask. Within the inventories that itemise linen, there are 2769 damask cloths and a further 393 'fine' damask cloths. The 65 household inventories add a further 1006 damask and 325 'fine' damask. Those creating the lists would be familiar with both damask and diaper and unlikely to confuse them or

[36] NCL M0005664NL/15 Sales Catalogue, Pychley Hall, 1816
[37] WHS Probate Inventory (86): Sir Herbert Packington of Westwood, 1786

their quality as Walsh's work confirmed. This suggests damask represents 42% of all tablecloths represented in the data. Many breakfast cloths were also listed as damask, and so its use was in fact much greater. The Household Book for Charlecote Park begins with the heading 'Table Linnen etc.' and starts '3 large Damask Table cloaths bought of Parker mark'd FL and 12 napkins to each'. A further 21 damask cloths including one described as 'Fine old Damask' and another as 'coarse' were listed together with assorted napkins but only 14 diaper table cloths.[38] The figures are weighted by the numbers some places possessed. Blenheim Palace (1740) had 93 all of them classified as being 'fine damask' by the Dowager Duchess Sarah; Grove Park (1819) 146 damask cloths; Heydon Hall (1894) 82 and Thoresby Hall (1907) 125, again all 'fine' with an additional 14 that were for the schoolroom and the 'shooting party'.[39] All these country houses were the principal seats of members of the peerage.

It is amongst the damask table linen particularly that the sources give some indication of consumer choice and fashion. Whilst the changes in dress design have been minutely catalogued by fashion historians and those in architecture and furnishings have been extensively analysed, the quotidian domestic sphere has received relatively little attention. Schoeser suggested in her survey of textiles that changing fashions 'in interior decoration... accelerated from about a thirty-year lifespan in the late seventeenth century to about seven years two centuries later'.[40] Certainly the advertisement in the *Gazetteer & New Daily Advertiser* for Bromley's Original Irish Linen and Muslin Warehouse situated in Charing Cross made it clear that customers would find there 'a large choice of damask and diaper table linen of the newest patterns' indicating that their patrons desired variety.[41] It is unlikely they were forced, like the silk merchants S. Cole & Sons, to offer 'a quantity of flowered and striped [dress] silk of last year's pattern will be sold extremely low', yet consumers would be aware of fashions in interior decoration and be discerning and knowledgeable shoppers, as the work by Berry and Walsh has indicated.[42] There was fierce competition amongst producers of table linen and designs were jealously guarded. Coulson prosecuted a rival producer for attempting to entice some of his apprentices to join his firm taking copies of their weaving patterns. He presented the

[38] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes

[39] T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) pp.282-3; WRO CR 595/49 (Ragley) Probate Inventory, Grove Park, 1819; NRO BUL 11/278 617x2 Household Inventory Heydon Hall, 1894; NUSC Ma2/I/2 Linen Book Thoresby Hall, 1907

[40] M. Schoeser, C. Rufey, *English and American Textiles*, p.10

[41] *The Gazetteer & New Daily Advertiser*, Feb 22, 1772, 17th & 18th Century Burney Collection

[42] *Public Advertiser*, Feb 18 1769, 17th & 18th Century Burney Collection; H. Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in the Eighteenth Century in England' *TRHS* 12 (2002) pp.375-394; C.Walsh, The Social Relations of Shopping in early modern England pp. 157-176 in (eds) B. Blondé et al *Buyers and Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in early modern Europe*

magistrate who found in his favour a set of table linen with the acanthus and vine pattern he had included in the Prince of Wales' order and the dedication:

> This specimen of Irish damask is respectfully presented to the active magistrate William Hawkshaw Esq. As a token of gratitude from John William Walter Coulson for his zealous exertions in protecting from piracy their manufacture, 1815[43]

As these advertisements imply, merchants could reach a wide audience through the proliferation of newspapers and consumers could inform and educate themselves on a myriad of topics through the upsurge in books, pamphlets and magazines from the eighteenth century onwards. Technological improvements in printing itself, paper production and new distribution networks meant that publications like *Ackermann's Repository of the Arts*, published between 1809 and 1828 and *The Lady's Magazine* from 1770 to 1832, the latter with a circulation of fifteen thousand at its height, could inform readers on fashion as well as politics, travel and the arts generally. By the end of the period covered by this study a wide range of publications informed and advertised the latest word in domestic style that might also be seen in films at the cinema.

Household inventories often appear to differentiate between table cloths by their size or the marks placed on them as the listing at Tissington Hall of 1848 (See Fig. 3:3) exemplifies where only one design 'spotted damask border cut off' is referenced. The entries record the initials of the purchaser, as marked on the items, and date of acquisition showing that some of the cloths, like those of 1826 were in use for many years.

[43] B. J. Mackey, Centres of draw-loom damask linen weaving in Ireland, p.111

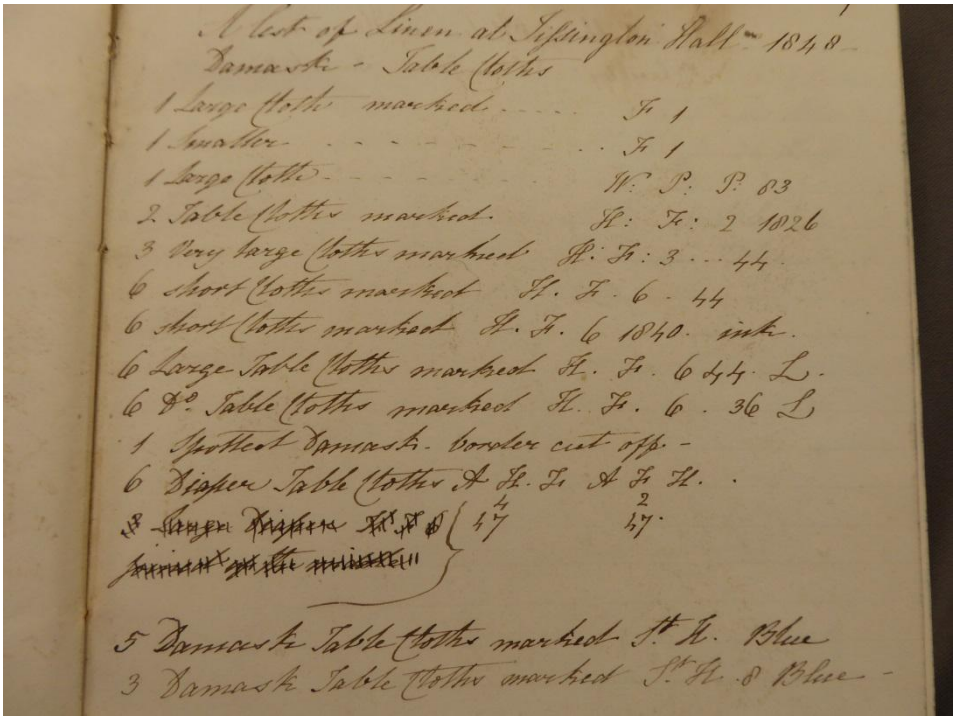

Figure 3:3: Notebook & list of linen, Tissington Hall 1848

From the mid eighteenth century many dining tables had intervening leaves so that the table could be extended or reduced according to the number of diners to be accomodated.[44] The table cloths at Elvaston Castle were distinguished by their length ranging from '7 lge linen damask tablecloths 5½ y^{ds}' to '6 linen damask 2½ y^{ds}'.[45] However, there are some indications of damask designs. The probate inventory compiled for the Duke of Kingston-upon-Hull in 1726, listing the linen across four of his properties, included just one reference to design in 'Two large fine Rose Table Cloaths' and '10doz. of rose Napkins of the fine Sort' presumably indicating that amongst his myriad items of linen, these were of special note.[46] A 'Flower-Pot' design featured on 2 damask cloths together with 2 dozen matching napkins in an inventory for Warwick Castle in 1756, also one 'Sprigged' with 'twelve napkins D^{o}'and a set with 'Palm Tree'.[47] The Ditchley inventory of 1772 gave more detail; a 'Flower-Pot Pattern', 'Mosaic Pattern', a tablecloth with 'the Lichfield Arms Pattern', 'the Kings Arms Pattern', 'Oak Leaf Pattern', 'Star Pattern' and 'Apostle Pattern'. This last, is referred to as 'An old Table Cloth & 11 Napkins, Apostle Pattern, worn out'.[48] Mitchell suggested that biblical subjects were no longer fashionable in linen as early as the 1630s so this may represent a very old set still being stored

[44] R. Fastnedge, *English Furniture Styles 1500-1830* (London, Penguin, 1955), p.171
[45] DRO D518M/F190 Probate 8th Earl of Harrington, 1920
[46] NUSC Ma 488/3 Appraisement for the Duke of Kingston, Household Goods, 1726
[47] WRO CR 1886/TN 926 Inventory Warwick Castle, 1756
[48] T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households*, p.160

perhaps as an heirloom though no longer in use.[49] At a later date, brief descriptions of designs appeared in an inventory of furniture at Stanton Hall, Derbyshire; a table cloth and a set of napkins were enigmatically referred to as 'cannonball design'; other napkins included the more prosaic 'running sprig & floral' and 'bordered floral pattern'.[50] In the inventory of linen begun in 1907 at Thorsesby Hall the table cloths were delineated again by size and date of acquisition but some indication of patterns was given in descriptions of other items such as napkins and doilies; 'pheasant', 'spotted', 'snowdrop', 'shamrock' and 'stag' all appear and were probably bought as sets with matching tablecloths.[51] Similarly an inventory of 1867 giving the pattern of just 1 table cloth as 'fern border' recorded a variety of designs for napkins. They were 'checked', 'oval pattern', 'flower border', 'rose and bud cornered', 'acorn and leaves', 'grapes and vine', 'a vase' and 'convulvulus'. Amongst these predominantly floral designs were also 'pheasants' and 'birds in corner'.[52]

Descriptions in the 1997 sales catalogue as noted earlier, for the damask table linen from Syon Park originating 'from the Linen Room at Alnwick Castle', both houses belonging to the Duke of Northumberland, suggested several tiers of patterning placed so that both the table top and the side drape would have been decorated.[53] Lot 1195N, 'Damask tablecloth, probably Irish c1787' was 'striped lenthwise' and decorated with 'sprigs of flowers with bobble chain interlaced border and geometric key pattern and further beribboned sprigs'. Lot 1197N, Irish and of 1796 had a 'central display flowers in campana urn with baskets of fruit, sprigs of flowers, interlaced outer border with twisted vine'. Another, Lot 1199N was tentatively labelled as the work of a particular linen manufacturer, Coulson and dated 1796. William Coulson set up a damask linen weaving company in Lisburn in 1764 and various combinations of descendants continued producing fine linens for royalty and the nobility until the twentieth century.[54] This example featured 'central urn, flowers, garlands, rope twist border, urn each corner'. Its dimensions were seven feet by twelve feet five inches and it would have been a luxury item.

Floral designs had long been suitable subjects for fabrics though as Lemire remarked ' floral motifs were not static commodities'.[55] The 'Two large fine Rose Table Cloaths' and '10doz. of rose Napkins of the fine Sort' in the Duke of Kingston's possession may have owed their design to new cultivars of

[49] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.288
[50] DRO D882/2F/2 Inventory of furniture etc. Stanton Hall, 1880s
[51] NUSC Ma 2 I/2 Inventory of Linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907
[52] HALS D/EWs F3 Inventory for Mr Wilshere, The Frythe, Welwyn, 1867
[53] WRO C/018/SOT Sales Catalogue, Syon Park, Middlesex, 1997
[54] Available from: https://www.lisburnmuseum.com/collections/the-coulsons-of-lisburn-damask-manufacturers/ (Accessed: 14.07.2019)
[55] B. Lemire, 'Domesticating the Exotic: Floral Culture and the East India Calico Trade with England, c. 1600-1800' *Textile*:1(2004) pp.65-85, p.71

this popular flower such as the moss and the cabbage rose introduced into England during the seventeenth century and a popular motif in still life paintings such as those of Jan van Huysum. Engravings of these were often copied by designers of both printed and woven textiles. Roses continued to be a popular design for table linen stimulated by the detailed botanical studies of the French rose gardens of Queen Marie Antoinette and later Empress Josephine by Pierre-Joseph Redouté. The preponderance of floral designs mirrors interests amongst the gentry both in gardening and in contemporary scientific study and discovery. From the Restoration onwards gardening and plant collecting were favourite interests and a variety of books were published on these subjects. With the accession of the Hanoverians there was a move towards more naturalistic arrangements as a gesture against the perceived absolutism of French designs and influential writers like Addison called for 'the natural embroidery of the Meadows'. At the same time as overseas trade and exploration introduced thousands of new varieties of plant to British gardeners.[56] The work of Linnaeus provided a framework for classification and botany became a popular and acceptable hobby for young ladies. Indeed Queen Charlotte, wife of George III was a serious collector of botanical specimens, as were members of the Court circle such as the Duchess of Portland and Mary Delany. Understandably these enthusiasms were transferred to textile design linking scientific knowledge to consumption, as Spary in her discussion of the connection between conchology and design indicates:

> Natural history books and collections were a category of luxury good, highly visible in the domestic interior, and artists were involved in their production as they also generated designs for objects such as fans, furniture, fashions and firescreens. [57]

Floral designs remained popular throughout the period of this study. The list of items dispatched from Coulson's to their London establishment in 1837 (See Fig. 3:4) shows the overwhelming popularity of floral designs incorporated in nine of the fifteen listed and vines and grapes accounting for five others. The remaining design is listed as 'Union' and may well have included the floral emblems traditionally associated with the regions of the British Isles. Harrods catalogue for 1912 offered customers thirty-five different designs for damask tablecloths with twenty of them featuring floral motifs showing their continuing popularity.[58]

[56] Quoted in J. Uglow, *A Little History of British Gardening* (London, Chatto & Windus, 2004) p.128
[57] E. Spary, 'Scientific Symmetries' *History of Science* 42:1 (2004) pp.1-46, p.14
[58] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023); LLC 2001/00037/00028 Coulson Order Book No 10 1826-1912

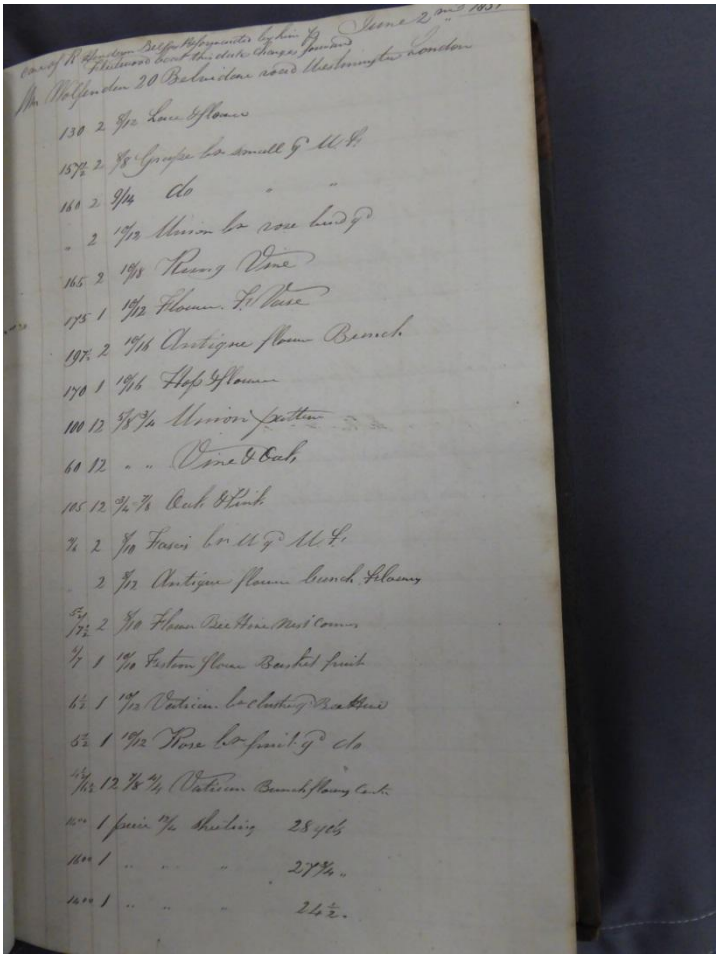

Figure 3:4: Coulson Order Book 1826-1912

However, as the list of linen at Calke Abbey shows (See Fig. 3:5) exotic locations were also admired. Widespread import of goods from the Far East and the publication of several books of engravings of Chinese items led to the enduring popularity of Chinese designs on a variety of artefacts including table linen.[59] The interest in things Egyptian originally spurred by the Napoleonic campaigns there and boosted by construction of the Suez Canal and further excavations of Egyptian sites in the 1920s may account for the purchase of 'Egyptian' and 'Pyramid & Stars'. Certainly the eighteenth century excavations at Pompeii and Herculaneum and the publication of Robert Adam's works on Greek architecture led to the widespread use of classical motifs in architecture and interior decoration. Although the initial cost of such publications was high there were many cheaper versions which provided inspiration for designs such as George Smith's *A Collection of Ornamental Designs after the Manner of the Antique* published in 1812 declaring:

[59] D. Schaëfer, Patterns in Qing China and Britain during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, pp.107-118 in M. Berg, F. Gottman, H. Hodacs, C. Nierstrsz (eds) *Goods from the East, 1600-1800: trading Eurasia* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2015)

> Many works have been published exhibiting faithful copies of the remains of the grandeur of ancient Architecture, as well as Ornament yet… most of such publications are of great cost, and consequently not within the reach of general inspection.[60]

Even *The Ladies Magazine* was offering its readers an Etruscan pattern to embroider onto a cap in its February 1808 volume. Greek Key, urns and swags remained popular motifs into the twentieth century and were amongst those offered in Harrods selection for their 1912 catalogue.[61]

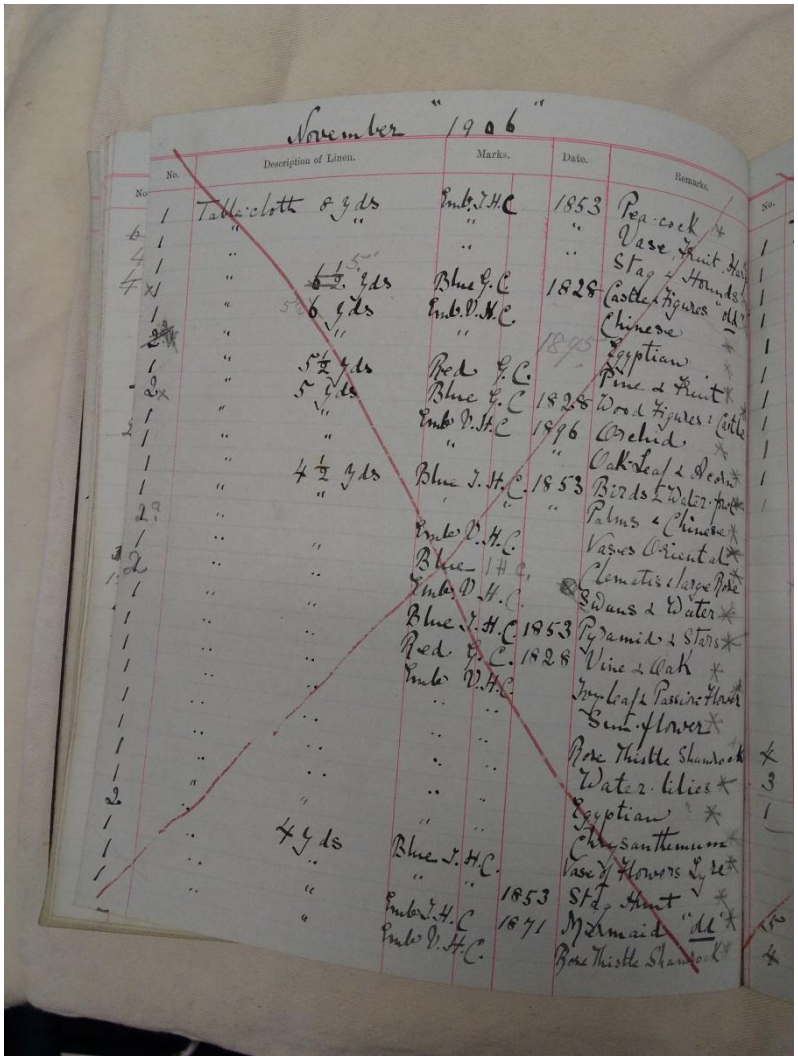

Figure 3:5: Volume of Linen, Calke Abbey

[60] M. Schoeser, C. Rufey, *English and American Textiles,* p.42

[61] J. Batchelor, A. Larkin, *Jane Austen Embroidery*, (London, Pavilion Books, 2020) p.132; *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue 1912, https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)

Amongst the inventories represented were several references to table linen bearing coats of arms. Inscribing goods with these insignia showed distinction, setting them apart from even the wealthiest of the growing mercantile and industrial groups in society and identify these products as luxuries as discussed in Chapter One and Lewis has shown how central concepts of pedigree were to masculinity and to social comfort.[62] Whilst none of the inventories identify the designs on listed plate, the extensive use of heraldry as ornament on silverware has been investigated by Glanville.[63] Its use on table linen which was also designed for display has received little attention due to its ephemeral nature compared to plate.[64] In the 1740s the Newdigates of Arbury Hall had their arms applied to several pieces of silver but if they also had it woven into their table linen there is no trace of it anywhere today.[65] At Melchbourne House, the St John family owned an 'Indian breakfast service with arms' and a 'white and gold Worcester [dinner service] with Crest'; so it may have appeared on their table linen too but none is listed in their inventory, similarly the Hon. Charles Leigh Standing at Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House had 'four dozen Good Plates with a Crest' listed in his probate yet no sign of it on his linen either. [66] Table linen incorporating armorial devices was bespoke and cost considerably more than the usual designs produced in larger quantities. Reference to 'the Lichfield Arms Pattern' in the Ditchley inventory indicated a desire to assert family and pedigree. Listed on the second shelf of the linen closet at Heydon Hall when William Earle Bulwer inherited it were 'Two Table Cloths Earles Arms' and 24 napkins belonging to his wife, Mary Earle's family. An inventory for Catton Hall in Derbyshire contained a set of table linen comprising table cloth, 18 napkins and 6 slips referred to as 'boar's head linen'. This device forms part of the coat of arms of the Wilmot-Horton family who held the estate.[67] That such items carried considerable prestige and personal value is shown in the exclusion from auction of 'One set of table linen with Mellish Arms' and the listing at Calke Abbey of a set with 'Crest upon it. Use only by order'.[68] This particular set had no date ascribed to it but was marked 'HH'. Due to the repetition of names between generations in the Harpur family this could refer to the 5th, 6th or 7th baronet. As the 5th inherited the title in 1741 and the 7th died in 1819 the suite was at least seventy-odd years old indicating it still had value to the household because of the cachet the design carried. The probate inventory for the 8th Earl of Harrington who

[62] H. French, M. Rothery, Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities 1600-1900 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); J. S. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009) pp. 336-363
[63] P. Glanville, *Silver in England* (London, Unwin Hyman, 1987) pp.197-211
[64] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.290
[65] P. Glanville, *Silver in England*, p.215
[66] BHRS Probate Inventory, Charles Leigh, Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House, 1749
[67] DRO D3155/WH/1928 Inventory Catton Hall, c1880
[68] NUSC Me 4E 5 Items not to be sold to deal with the debts of Col. H.F. Mellish; DRO D2375/H/F/4/1 Volume of list of linen, Calke Abbey, 1855-1931

died in 1920 listed 1 large table cloth with a coat of arms and 4 similar smaller ones. Although there was no indication of when the cloths were acquired, it is clear that such items were still valued as these are at the top of the extensive list of table linen.[69] Amongst the linen of the late Duke of Leeds were 6 table cloths of different sizes incorporating a design of Hornby Castle his ancestral home.[70] There was no indication of the date these items were acquired and even though this work would have required expert draughtsmanship and considerable skill on the part of the weavers that would have been reflected in the costs of the items, they were not placed at the top of the list of table cloths. This position went to a set of 10 assorted cloths 'woven of a Coronet' possibly implying the Hornby Castle ones were older and no longer in regular use. It is possible the ' Four livery cloths' valued at 5s amongst the linen in the inventory of Grace Fursdon (neé Lovell) of Fursdon House, Devon may have referred to a coat of arms or family insignia, though equally it may denote a servant's coat.[71] Her inventory recorded large numbers of bonds and debts sperate indicating she died a wealthy woman and within a few years of her death, her descendants had remodelled the house, though if they replenished the linen on the same scale or displayed armorial devices on it, no record of it survives.

Incorporating such devices into a weave pattern was specialist work. A newspaper advertisement taken out by John Greer of Waringstown, Ireland in 1766 advised that he could weave armorial damask tablecloths up to three yards wide indicating the availability of such items.[72] The Coulson firm of Lisburn were also producing armorial linen and had catered for royalty since George II's reign. Queen Victoria's household placed large orders for table linen with the firm in October of the year 1889 and at two year intervals throughout the next decade with the terse 'as usual' against the first order suggesting the design required remained unchanged. Amongst their other patrons in the later nineteenth century were the Duke of Marlborough, the Earl of Jersey, the Marchioness of Landsdowne, the Earl of Ormond and the Prince of Wales all of whom ordered tablecloths and napkins with crests and mottos.[73] Many were repeat orders as the Earl of Jersey's entry 'Coat of Arms at corners, Cloths as last' indicates; some specified the background designs such as 'fern spot filling', 'oak and laurel' and a few were rush orders like the Earl of Shrewsbury's. The order book gives the names of the weavers to be assigned this job and promises them special bonuses if the work is completed in time. This was highly skilled work and must have gone to the most experienced of their

[69] DRO D 518M/F190 Probate Inventory 8th Earl of Harrington, 1920
[70] NYAS ZSQ 2 An Inventory and valuation, late Duke of Leeds, 1838
[71] DHC 5242/M/Box 29/12 Probate of Grace Fursdon of Cadbury, 1693
[72] B. J. Mackey, Centres of draw-loom damask linen weaving in Ireland, p.107
[73] PRONI D2360/2/4 Coulson Order Book 5; PRONI D2350/2/5 Coulson Order Book 6; PRONI D2360/3/1 Coulson Despatch Book 1

weavers, but mistakes could still be made as the error in Mrs. Byron's order of 1891 indicates (See Fig. 3:6). This was a repeat order and it is likely that the design had been sketched out, transferred to point paper and cards punched to reproduce the design ready for weaving using the Jacquard method in the same way as the design for Duke of Hamilton's was prepared in 1817 (See Fig. 3:7).

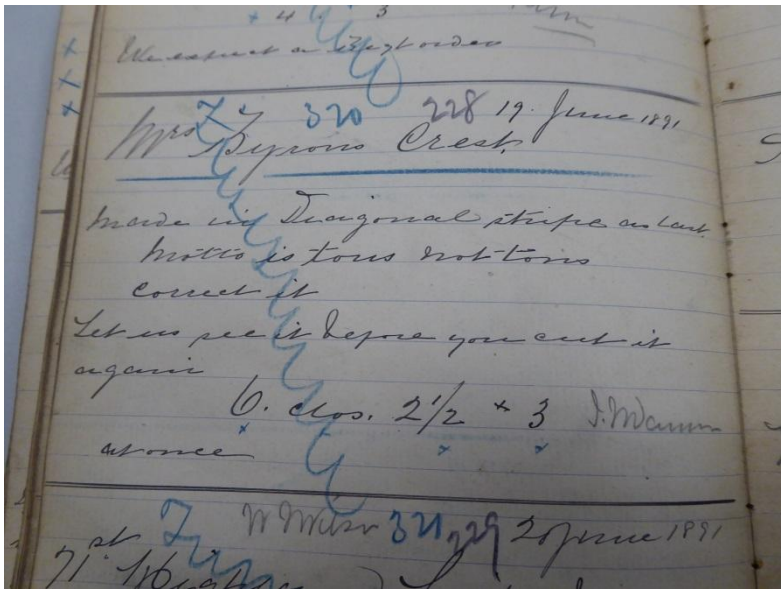

Figure 3:6: Weaving error in a coat of arms

The Jacquard method of creating designs in damask had originally been applied to handloom weaving, however, by the second half of the nineteenth century power looms were also being used for linen. Industrial wet spinning processes had begun to replace traditional hand spinning too, yet wages remained lower in Ireland than in England and Scotland and hand woven items were still being made. However, by the end of the century more than 65% of orders for armorial linen produced by Coulson's were for hotels; 25% were for clubs; 8% were military and only 2% were from private individuals.

Figure 3:7: Point Paper design for Duke of Hamilton, 1817, author's photograph[74]

Almost equally popular with damask in the sources studied (See Table 3:1) were diaper tablecloths with 292 of the 2707 designated 'fine diaper'. Both French and Hamburg diaper are recorded in the earlier inventories. In 1698 Edward Mellish of Blythe Hall, bought 4 French diaper tablecloths each 1½ yards, a relatively small size, at £1.10s each and paid a further 18s for 12 napkins to match. Very few contemporary costs for new items have been found and the National Archives currency converter suggests this was in excess of £800, clearly identifying these items as luxury goods. When Mellish died in 1703, his probate valuation was £2,757, indicating an inclusion for him in the greater gentry category although his father had been a successful London merchant. His heir, Joseph Mellish had 4 suites of Hamburg diaper amongst goods transported from Blythe Hall to London in 1720. Sadly neither document hints at the patterns of the items.[75] The Montagu House inventories of 1733 and 1746 refer to 'bird's eye' diaper as does that of Warwick Castle, 1806. That this was a popular design is suggested by this instruction from the Duchess of Leinster from their estate in Ireland to her husband in London:

> We want small tablecloths…but [those available] are all those ugly sort of patterns in squares without meaning that we both hate; no birds-eye pattern to be got, nor has

[74] PRONI D 1492/1/A-R Coat of Arms Templates
[75] NUSC Me/In/2 Invoice of goods bought by Edward Mellish, 1684; NUSC Me/In/10 Invoice 'Things for London' Joseph Mellish,1720

there been any they say in Dublin these eight years. I fancy you could get them in London…[76]

The sales catalogues listed a variety of available patterns and also implied that buyers were interested in novelty in the reference to 'Lot 518 Eight-quarter *New Pattern* Diaper Table Cloth' in the sale of 'elegant, genteel and useful' household effects at Broughton Rectory in 1790.[77] The Stanford Hall sale included a 'spot' diaper table cloth and that at Rolleston Hall offered 'large square', 'shagreen' combined with a striped border, 'quarter-foil' and an unspecified 'large pattern' in addition to 'bird's eye'. The Household Book for Charlecote Park included 'One very fine Rose Diaper Table Cloth' together with diamonds, crosses and 'Medlar', [presumably blossom, similar to apple].[78] These references to patterns give a rare glimpse of the role of personal preference within consumption. However amongst the records seen, diaper seems to have lost its popularity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although 167 are listed in the probate for Admiral Windham at Felbrigg in 1833 with shell and diamond patterns on them other inventories of the same period have very few and only 18 are in the household inventory carried out there in 1872.[79] There are none in the inventories at Calke Abbey in 1855 or the probate of George Stanhope, 7th Earl of Harington in 1881 or the linen book at Thoresby in 1907 although 'bleached table diaper' in three widths was available in Harrods catalogue in 1912.[80]

A third type of fabric used for table linen across the sources studied is huckaback. Huckaback accounted for 8% of the tablecloths found although there may have been others designated as servants' tablecloths, since it appears to have been used in this capacity. The earliest referencs to huckaback tablecloths are in inventories of 1692 where 7 tablecloths are listed, and 1700 where 'two duzen of huckabuck napkins and one table cloth' are recorded.[81] Mitchell identified that English huckabacks began to compete with the Silesian linens, which were the cheaper end of the table linens, in the eighteenth century.[82] The relative cost of this fabric can be gauged from the value of 10½ yards of huckaback costing 12s and a dozen napkins at 4d each listed in Edward Mellish's house

[76] *Leinster Correspondence*, 20 Nov. 1762, vol.1 pp.138-9, quoted in C. Walsh, The Social Relations of Shopping in Early Modern England, pp. 331-347 in Blondé et al, (eds) *Buyers & Sellers: Retail circuits and practices in medieval and early modern Europe* (Brussels, Brepols, 2006) p.342
[77] NCL M005645NL/9 Sales Catalogue, Rev. Z. Rose, Broughton & Drayton, 1790
[78] NCL M005644NL/11 Sales Catalogue, Stanford Hall, 1792; NCL M0005647NL/2 Sales Catalogue, Rolleston Hall, 1801; WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[79] NRO WKC 6/471 464x4 Probate Inventory Admiral Windham, 1833: NRO WKC 6/474 Household Inventory, Felbrigg Hall, 1872
[80] DRO D518M/F189 Probate Inventory 7th Earl of Harrington, 1881: NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907; *Harrods For Everything,* Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[81] WHS Probate Inventory (95): John Stanhope, Elvaston Castle, 1692
[82] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.333

whose French diaper cloths cost £1 per yard.[83] Of the inventories, only Ditchley Park, the residence of the Earl of Lichfield at the time, recorded any huckaback as 'very old fine huckaback' and it may have been 'much worn' like the 7 dozen huckaback napkins listed with it.[84] An inventory for Hanbury Hall listed 9 huckaback tablecloths for the servants' hall in 1721 and the Warwick Castle inventory of 1806 suggests huckaback continued the fabric of choice for servants' tablecloths listing '4 Huckerback Kitchen Cloths and 5 coarser for Servants Hall' together with 17 others whose use was not specified.[85] Although 18 huckaback table cloths of different sizes were offered in the Hazelbech Hall sale in 1802, they were not designated as servants' linen.[86] However, servants' tablecloths represent just 9% of the table linen at auction, 12% of the items in probate inventories compared to 20% of that listed in household ones, suggesting there may well have been more in use than the first figures indicate. Further demarcations of quality appeared possible in this category as they were in bedlinen, since several inventories specified cloths either for the steward's room or the servants' hall, while Temple Newsam's inventory listed 4 new diaper tablecloths for the steward's room and 10 common ones for the servants' hall.[87] All the servants' table linen at Tissington Hall in 1848 was huckaback except for 3 large diaper tablecloths 'joined up the middle' indicating they had been remade from other cloths.[88] Just one further entry of 3 table cloths showed its decline in favour for this purpose although huckaback continued to be used for towels to the end of the period. Amongst the table cloths in the Housekeeper's Account for Charlecote Park was 'a very large Huckaback Table Cloth for y^{r} Tenants Feast' and in 1755 an entry recorded 'y^{r} addition of a new Huckaback Table Cloth for y^{r} Womens Table at y^{r} Tennants Feast'. This annual event offered hospitality to tenant farmers and an opportunity to reinforce the social, political and economic ties between the country house and its neighbourhood.

Prior to 1700 alongside listings of damask and diaper, there were references to flaxen tablecloths with one inventory listing 'three long flaxen tablecloaths, three hempen table cloathes, and three hurden table cloathes'.[89] These may all be locally produced items as was the case with bed linen discussed in Chapter Two, indicating different qualities of cloth perhaps to be used by the different status groups represented within the country house. Flax was the most expensive. Hemp, a member of the cannabis family, produces a coarser yarn and hurden is made from the coarser fibres removed

[83] NUSC Me/In/5 Invoice of goods, plate, linen in Edward Mellish's house, 1689,
[84] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.160
[85] WRO CR 1886/TN 1053, Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1806
[86] NCL M0005647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbech Hall, 1802
[87] WRO CR 114/2/1 Sales Contract, Temple Newsam, 1808
[88] DRO D239/M/E/5102 Notebook & List of Linen, 1839-64
[89] WHS Probate Inventory (61): John Fincher of Shelve, 1662

in the process of preparing the longest flax fibres for spinning.[90] Here, the last references to flax tablecloths and napkins was the Stoneleigh Abbey inventory of 1749 where roughly equal numbers of flaxen and huckaback tablecloths are recorded and the 5 flaxen tablecloths listed at the Serlby Hall in 1774.[91]

Whereas the probate inventories described tablecloths as large or small, many of the sales catalogues contained their dimensions as did some household inventories. As the Horton Hall sale of 1772 (See Fig. 3:8) showed, these were given in ells, the traditional measures for cloth, as well as yards.[92]

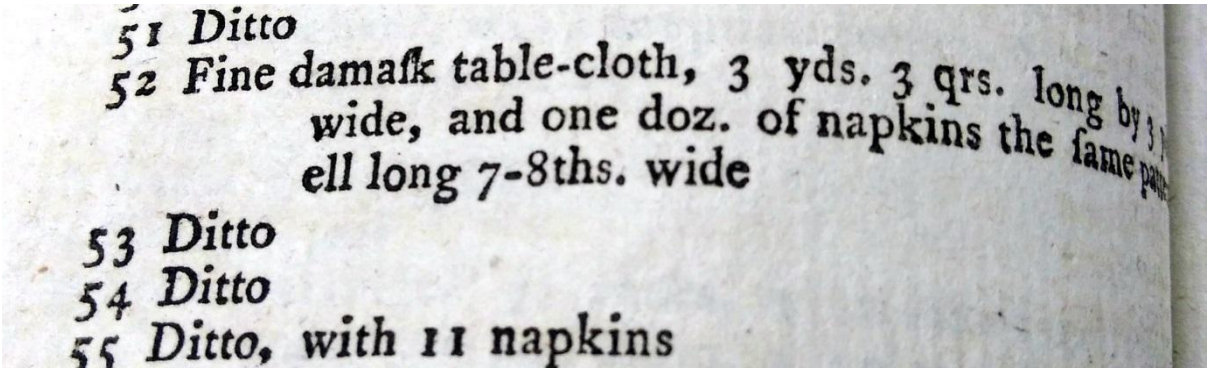
51 Ditto
52 Fine damask table-cloth, 3 yds. 3 qrs. long by 3
wide, and one doz. of napkins the same
ell long 7-8ths. wide
53 Ditto
54 Ditto
55 Ditto, with 11 napkins

Figure 3:8: Dimensions of table linen, sales catalogue, Horton Hall, 1772

Dimensions were given for about 100 cloths variously described as damask, diaper or huckaback in the sales catalogues, the majority itemised as so many quarters long by wide. There were five quarters to the ell. The most popular size appeared to be fourteen quarters long by the usual nine quarters wide giving dimensions of 3½ yards long by 2¼ wide [3.2 x 2 m]. Within the household inventories tablecloths of this size were also the most prevalent, indicating the usual size for family dining.[93] This pattern persisted into the twentieth century. Most of the cloths listed in the household inventory of Thoresby Hall in 1913 and the probate inventory for Elvaston Castle in 1920 were between 2½ and 3 yards long with seven tablecloths in each being of 5½ and 6 yards.[94] Nearly a quarter of auctioned cloths with dimensions were of similar sizes. The 10 longest cloths were described as damask which given the complexity of the designs in the few available descriptions would have been more expensive than diaper. These longer cloths were in the sales at Geddington

[90] L. Clarkson, *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles, vol. 2,* p.478, p.482
[91] SCLA DR18/4/20 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1749; NUSC Ga/12701 Inventory Book Serlby Hall, 1735-1775
[92] NCL M0005647NL/6 Sales Catalogue, Horton Hall, 1772
[93] NUSC Ma 2 I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907, nearly half the cloths listed were under 4yds long
[94] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907; DRO D518M/F/190 Probate Inventory, 8th Earl of Harrington, Elvaston Castle, 1920

House, Welton Place and Stamford Hall.[95] However, the largest 'Lot 74 A large damask tablecloth about 6 yards long *nearly new*' was sold on the sixth day of the sale at Crick Rectory in 1836.[96]

Several of the smaller cloths in the Hazelbech Hall sale were described as breakfast cloths with a size of seven quarters by six implying breakfast in some country houses would be taken at a different table and possibly in a different room, from dinner.[97] Benjamin Franklin, visiting London in 1758 wrote back to his wife that diaper tablecloths '…are to be spread on the Tea Table, for nobody breakfasts here on a naked Table, but on the Cloth set a large Tea Board with the Cups'.[98] The poet Southey wrote some years later in *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella* in 1807 also identifying a new fashion in dining:

> Our breakfast table is oval, large enough for eight or nine persons yet supported on one claw in the centre. This is the newest fashion and fashions change so often in these things as well as in everything else, that it is easy to know how long it is since a house has been fitted up by the shape of the furniture. [99]

Smith suggested that the new fashion of eating breakfast had its origins in medical works but became a justifiable opportunity to consume exotic foodstuffs as well as acquiring a range of specific accessories to support them.[100] Across 8 sales catalogues 103 breakfast cloths were represented making them 12% of the tablecloths auctioned. Over 800 appear within the inventories and accounts studied representing 8% of the tablecloths. At Ditchley in 1772, 6 of the 17 listed were described as 'new' and a surprising 65 are in the Grove Park inventory of 1819.[101] There are 6 dozen breakfast napkins recorded at Temple Newsam, although no breakfast cloths are mentioned.[102] The earliest reference to a breakfast cloth found was in 1744 and their absence from earlier inventories suggests that breakfast cloths either were not yet fashionable when they were written or were disguised within the smaller cloths in other categories.[103]

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[95] NCL M0005644NL/8 Sales Catalogue, Geddington House, 1823; NCL M0005644NL/13 Sales Catalogue Welton Place, 1830; NCL M0005646NL/11 Sales Catalogue, Stamford Hall, 1792
[96] NCL M0005644NL/4 Sales Catalogue, Crick Rectory, 1836
[97] NCL M0005647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbech Hall, 1802
[98] Quoted in G. Riello, Fabricating the Domestic: The Material Culture of Textiles and the Social Life of the Home in Early Modern England, pp.41-67 in B. Lemire, (ed) *The Force of Fashion in Politics and Society: Global Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times* (Farnham, Routledge, 2010) p.49
[99] Quoted in C. Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, p.310
[100] W. D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability 1600-1800* (London, Routledge, 2002) pp.183-187
[101] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households,* p.160
[102] WRO CR595/49 Inventory, Grove Park, 1819; WRO CR114/2/1 Sales Contract, Temple Newsam, 1808
[103] DRO D 2375/F/E/2/6/1 Probate Lady Catherine Harpur, 1744

Doilies appeared in large numbers in the later sources (See Table 3:2), the earliest reference to them being the inventory for Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House in 1749.[104] The origins of these small cloths seem obscure yet 240 were offered at auction across 11 of the 24 Northamptonshire sales catalogues. A further 547 were represented within just 10 inventories, those at Houghton in 1792 being referred to as '3 Doz & 11 New D'oyleys…3 Dozen old D'oyleys'.[105] Doyleys was a linen draper in The Strand from the time of Queen Anne until the mid nineteenth century.[106] This may have been the source of the original articles which seem to have been used under glasses and bottles to protect the surface of tables. Swift in *The Journal of Stella* mentions their usage 'after dinner we had coarse D'Oyly napkins fringed at each end upon the table to drink with'.[107] Certainly the 'Eighteen oilcloth d°.[doilies]' in a sale of 1806 would have afforded more protection than most.[108]

Napkins	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Flax	3379	1097	252	0	0	0	0
Huckaback	95	770	253	31	36	0	0
Damask	761	4148	2940	6447	3797	1037	108
Diaper	1084	2962	2524	2766	1514	17	0
Dinner*	0	508	694	1089	2619	1773	1002
Doilies	0	3	75	972	836	381	143
Tray cloths	0	0	24	17	218	53	86

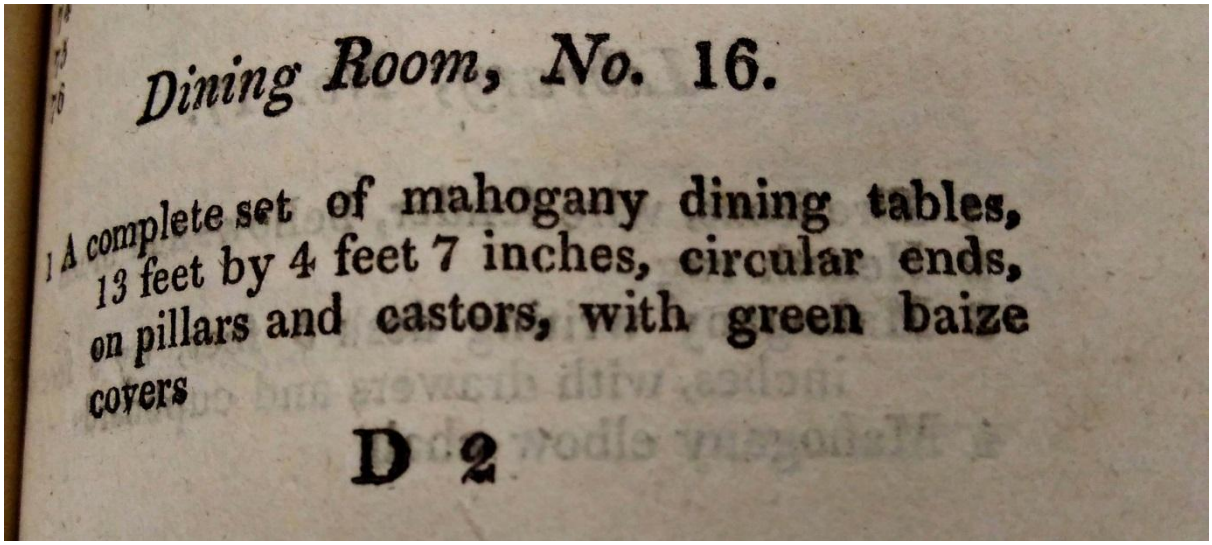
*** napkins identified by function/meal**

Table 3:2 Doileys, tray cloths and napkins

It seems likely that the highly polished surface of the mainly mahogany dining tables that were fashionable from the middle of the eighteenth century were protected when in use by more than a linen tablecloth.[109] Paston-Williams referred to a 'silence cloth' underneath the tablecloth that was held in place with a draw string and protected the table surface.[110] Sadly, no such item has been found here, although reference to '2 table covers: 5s. 5d' and 'table covers: 15s. 7d' purchased in the spring of 1841 in the household accounts for Sherbourne Park may have been of this nature.[111]

[104] BHRS Probate Inventory: Charles Leigh, Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House, 1749
[105] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.203
[106] Available from: https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_q=Doyleys%2C+the+strand (Accessed: 15.07.2021) Five documents 1716-1835 identifying a warehouse in The Strand
[107] Quoted in S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining*, p.261
[108] NCL M0000531NL/ Sales Catalogue, Jas. Benton Kettering, 1806
[109] R. Fastnedge, *English Furniture Styles*, p.108
[110] S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining*, p.261
[111] WRO CRO972 Account Book, Sherbourne Park, 1832-41

Similarly, '2 Dimity [type of cotton] Cloths to lye under Table Cloths' was found in the Montagu House inventory for 1746.[112] Samuel and Sarah Adam's instruction manual, *The Complete Servant* advised that in large establishments 'the Footman lays the green cloth on the table, then the table cloth'.[113] The dining table in the sale of 'modern and genteel household furniture' previously belonging to the unfortunate Joseph Rickett, a provincial banker declared bankrupt in 1813 in one of the numerous banking crises to plague the period, was sold complete with green baize cover (See Fig.3:9) that probably protected the table when not in use and may have been left beneath the tablecloth during dining.[114]


Dining Room, No. 16.

1 A complete set of mahogany dining tables, 13 feet by 4 feet 7 inches, circular ends, on pillars and castors, with green baize covers

D 2

Figure 3:9: Dining table, sales catalogue, Joseph Rickett, 1813

Napkins are by far the most numerous items of table linen recorded in the sources studied and were usually purchased in dozens, however since sets were often incomplete, they have been listed in Table 3:3 as individual items. During the sixteenth century they were worn over the shoulder by men and on the lap by women and used to wipe fingers before the introduction of forks which were rare outside court circles before the Restoration but in widespread use amongst the gentry by the 1720s.[115] Later napkins were draped across the lap by both sexes and as skirts became wider, so did napkins.[116] The only dimensions discovered for napkins were in recent sales like that at Kinross House 2011. These dated from 1736 to 1798 and ranged in size from 31 x 28" to 43 x 36". Over 300 dozen were found in the sales catalogues and just over 800 dozen, in household inventories and a

[112] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.111; WRO CR 114/2 Sales Contract, Temple Newsam, 1808
[113] Haly, A., (ed) *Samuel & Sarah Adams: The Complete Servant (1825)* (Lewes, Southover Press, 1989) p.127
[114] NCL M0005647NL/10 Sales Catalogue, Joseph Rickett, 1813
[115] P. Glanville, *Silver in England*, p.65
[116] P. Glanville, H. Young (eds) *Elegant Eating*, p.52

staggering 2,564 dozen in probates. Napkins were usually recorded in units of a dozen, often specifically linked with a cloth and probably echoing its design. Defoe in Roxana writes 'I made provision of about twelve Dozen of fine Damask Napkins, and Table Cloaths of the same'.[117] The items 'A damask table cloth and 12 napkins' from the sale at Wollaston Hall, 1805 and the '12 fine damask napkins and cloth wth sideboard' valued at £3.4s in an inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey in 1738 also indicate matching sets of napery.[118] Napkins were variously described by function and fabric, with damask most popular and representing 43% of all napkins. 'Fine damask' napkins were auctioned at Horton Hall 1772, Stamford Hall 1792 and at Rolleston Hall 1801 and 48 dozen were included in the sale of Fonthill Abbey in 1823.[119] Large quantities of napkins appeared regularly within the inventories studied. Lady Susanna Harpur making an inventory in 1664 listed a total of 719 both as parts of sets of napery and as 'drincking cloaths'.[120] Montagu House had 11 dozen categorized as fine damask and a further 11 dozen simply as damask in 1709; Marlborough House in 1740 had 'fine Napkins fourteen Dozen, Courser Napkins twelve Dozen' and Shugborough had a staggering 96 dozen table and a further 29 dozen tea napkins in 1792.[121] Elvaston Castle still had 48 dozen napkins in 1881 but only three dozen damask napkins in 1920.[122] Thoresby Hall had 48 dozen in 1907 though by 1938 this too had reduced to 9 dozen.[123] The word napkin whatever the fabric included ones designated for breakfast, dinner, tea, supper and dessert, fish and pastry which may imply different sizes as well as usage. All these items were 'indispensable props in genteel performance' as noted by Styles and discussed in Chapter One.[124]

Napkins were amongst the table linen featured in the Syon Park sale of 1997.[125] They were incomplete sets but may originally have accompanied table cloths of the same design. Whilst floral designs and swags would appear to be popular some napkins featured different subjects. Lot 1203N, 8 napkins probably Irish from 1836, had a garden urn with acanthus border but also 'hearts aflame in medallion surmounted by pagoda'. Lot 1202N of 1812 was the most ambitious, having 'central

[117] Quoted in C. Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, p.80
[118] NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston Hall 1805; SCLA DR18/4/9 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1738
[119] NCL M0005647NL/6 Sales Catalogue, Horton Hall, 1772; NCL M005644NL/9 Sales Catalogue, Stamford Hall, 1823; NCL M0005647NL/2 Sales Catalogue, Rolleston Hall, 1801; Fonthill Abbey Sale Catalogue, 23 Sept. 1823 Available from: https://welcomecollection.org/works/dpxktea8 (Accessed: 29.12.2023)
[120] DRO D2375/F/C/2/1 Household Inventory, Lady Susanna Harpur, 1664
[121] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, pp.22-3, p.287; C. Hardyment, *Home Comforts: A History of Domestic Arrangements* (London, Viking, 1992) pp.185-6
[122] DRO D518M/F189&190 Probate Inventories 7th Earl Harrington 1881, & 8th Earl 1920
[123] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, 1907
[124] J. Styles, Georgian Britain 1715-1837: Introduction in M. Snodin, J. Styles, *Design and the Decorative Arts in Britain* (London, V & A Publications, 2001)
[125] WRO 018 SOT Sales Catalogue Syon Park Middlesex, 1997

trophy of war with palm tree encircled by flaming cannon balls with plain geometric swags and further trophies of war, ruined buildings and oak leaves'. 1812 was midway through the Napoleonic wars and oak leaves were a popular reference to the British navy. The year also saw Napoleon's disastrous defeat in Russia but the palm tree might link it with celebration of Wellington's Peninsula War victories at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz and Salamanca.[126] This suggests table linen might be purchased to demonstrate patriotism and at the least to generate topics for conversation at dinner. The set of 13 napkins (See Fig. 3:10) comprised Lot 131 in the sale at Kinross House in Scotland in 2011.[127] They were described as 'Woven with a central cartouche with crossed staves and oak leaves, with a royal coat-of-arms to each corner, within a foliate border, marked 'James Montgomery, No. 10' in black ink' and visible beneath the coat of arms are martial items. Lot 132 had 'ribbon tied floral bunch within floral garland borders with rearing unicorn in each corner'. Two further lots had 'pillars of meandering floral vines, within floral borders', 'floral spot motif' and 'elaborate flower filled vase and scrolling borders'. They were all roughly similar in size ranging between 31 x 28" to 40 x 38". They had belonged originally to Margaret Montgomery, the wife of 1st Baronet Stanhope and to Ann Templar who inherited Kinross House on the death of her father in 1819. Two sets of napkins and most likely their accompanying tablecloths were dated 1789, indicating that all these elaborate designs were woven before the introduction of the Jacquard mechanism and before the use of power looms. Indeed, the finest table linen continued to be woven by hand into the twentieth century with Harrods offering customers a choice of 'Irish Hand Loom Double Damask Cloths and Serviettes to Match'.[128]

[126] Hon. Henry Percy (1785-1825) served with 7th Foot Regiment in the Peninsular War, acting as aide de camp to Sir John Moore 1808-9. He later joined 14th Dragoons and was captured in 1812 during the retreat from Burgos, spending two years as a prisoner of war in France. Released in 1815, he was Wellington's aide de camp at Waterloo and brought the news of the victory back to London.

[127] https://www.christies.com/en/auction/kinross-house-scotland-and-property-removed-from-the-london-residence-of-mrs-winston-spencer-churchill-23201/ (Accessed: 17.01.2023)

[128] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue 1912, https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)

Figure 3:10: Napkins from sale of items at Kinross House

The astonishing quantity of napkins and indeed tablecloths suggests there was an imperative to present clean and matching sets of napery at every possible occasion across the period of this study as this letter from 1911 reveals:

> My Lord has a clean table cloth for every meal. Is it not ridiculous? Sometimes when he is alone we have twenty-three table cloths in the wash in a week and when he has a lot of company we have anywhere from thirty-six to forty…The sideboard cloths are changed three or four times a week and my Lord has a clean cloth, on every tray taken up to him.[129]

This would require management and maintenance, and the care with which it was addressed would seem to shed light on the value placed upon its possession. These aspects are considered below in Chapter Five.

The various napkins within the collection of textiles at Dudmaston Hall in Shropshire all have a chequered band woven around the perimeter of the napkin. This is close to the selvedge, showing the napkin width was woven to the size required, and approximately half an inch beyond the extent of the woven border on the length of the piece. This may imply that the border was included as a marker along the length of the piece where the fabric should be cut and hemmed to create the finished article. Several of the inventories indicated lengths of linen that would ultimately be made

[129] Quoted in P.A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) p.127

into new items of household linen. The accounts for Warwick Castle for 1704 show the purchase of a piece of damask for napkins.[130] The chequered band on the extant napkins may have been included in the weave of these earlier items too.

Figure 3.11: Edge of napkin, author's photograph

All the napkins viewed were hemmed with a ¼ inch seam on the two sides whilst the other two sides were the unhemmed selvedge. This and the other napkins viewed had been stitched by hand in a hem stitch. The regularity of the stitch size and the intervals between them giving 12 stitches to the inch showed the maker was a competent and experienced seamstress.

The design in this damask napkin was a complicated one.[131] The central area comprised fruits and flowers and was surrounded by a border of flowering lilies with an outer edge of scrolling leaves before the chequered band delineating the item. This napkin was originally one of a set of twenty-four as the blue cross-stitched mark in the corner showed. This suggests that the set could have been used to entertain a large group with a full table setting and would most likely have had a tablecloth with the same design elements woven into it. If this was the case, the cloth may have been up to 7 yards long. The napkin itself measured 890 x 760 mm or 35 x 30 inches. It was impossible to estimate the thread count on this and on several other items as they were particularly fine and had been extensively laundered with the mangling process creating a glassy finish where

[130] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1704)
[131] NT DUD/T/044/A Damask napkin, 1824

the threads had been compressed into each other. The set had been bought in 1824 by William Wolryche-Whitmore who had inherited Dudmaston on the death of his father in 1815. Three of the napkins remain in the collection.

Figure 3.12: Napkin, 1824, Dudmaston, Shropshire, author's photograph

The napkin is now kept flat in archival conditions, but the folds created in the laundering process are still visible. Napkins and tablecloths were usually placed in a press with a weight screwed down onto them in the final process before being stored. A fold on this napkin had been worn through and the weakened areas darned. This workmanship is not the same quality as the original possibly corroborating the suggestion that by the later period of the study, fewer female servants were skilled needlewomen.

Figure 3:13 Darn, author's photograph

Figure 3:14: Armorial napkin, Dudmaston, 1826, author's photograph

The falcon in the centre of this napkin is the crest of the Whitmore family.[132] William Whitmore upon inheriting the property took the name Wolryche from whom the Whitmores were descended, and the napkin is marked WWW 26 in the corner in blue cross stitch. The napkin measures 920 x 780mm or 36 x 31 inches. The linen was of such a fine quality, it was almost transparent. Again, it was impossible to identify the thread count and the stitched mark in the corner had all but fused into the fabric with the laundering it had received. The design is of great sophistication with the falcon surrounded by a floral wreath. Scattered clover leaves fill the area before the scrolling outer border with each corner being a fluted urn on a pediment. This example of armorial linen was a statement piece of conspicuous expenditure designed to show the present wealth and taste of the owner, emphasising his patrilineal heritage and confirm the continuity of his family within the social framework of the county. Curiously William's views were far from traditional. As MP for Bridgenorth, he espoused Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the Corn Laws and in 1832 stood as MP for the newly enfranchised Wolverhampton.

The Wolryche crest was an oak tree and a napkin from 1850, one of an original set of twelve, measuring 940 x 850mm or 37 x 33 inches displays an oak tree in its centre, surrounded by sprigs of

[132] NT DUD/T/047/A Damask napkin, 1826

oak and acorns.[133] The tree is flanked on two sides by lion footed urns with flowers in them and on the others by swags of fruit and flowers. There is a pheasant in each of the corners. Again, the linen is very fine, the design complex and the message of the family's continuity celebrated in items designed to be displayed in rituals of hospitality and valued in posterity.

The Role of Table Linen

So, if table linen required such careful maintenance what was its role within the life of the country house? This extract from a contemporary novel characterizes the associations arising from the use of table linen: 'Coming down in the morning, I found breakfast on the table, linen white as snow, a large fire - everything that speaks cleanliness, content, and plenty-…'[134] Whatman's instructions to the Laundry Maid included injunctions on the washing of mangling cloths [secured around the rollers to protect washing]:

The cloths should hardly ever be washed, because they are long in acquiring that *shining* polish which makes linen look so well…The difference between proper mangling and careless makes as much difference as between fine linen and coarse, and as table linen is worn round in turns, it may be a considerable time before any mischief is perceived in the Parlour[135]

This shining aspect to table linen would be enhanced by the advance in the hour for dining, acknowledged by various commentators during the Georgian period and the use of candlesticks along the centre of the table.[136] Pools of candle light would pick out the designs woven into the damask cloths or the slightly raised diaper patterns even as the bright white of the bleached and polished linen would throw reflections onto the china and glassware set upon it. As descriptions in inventories and sales catalogues suggest, those viewing the table linen were aware of the various qualities available. Items like the '86 table cloths of w^{ch} 26 from Hamburg of the finest sort…39 doz & 7 Napkins of w^{ch} 12 doz from Hamburg of the finest sort' at Kelmarsh Hall, or the napkins previously owned by an Ambassador and offered in the sale at Rolleston Hall in 1801 (See Fig. 3:15) would be part of the panoply of entertaining designed to impress those bidden to the table with the status, taste and refinement of their hosts.[137]

[133] NT DUD/T/046 Damask napkin, 1850
[134] S. Gunning, *Barford Abbey; a novel; in a series of letters,* (Dublin, 1768) p.8, ECCO CB 3331250752
[135] C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman* (London, Pimlico, 1987) pp.47-8
[136] S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining*, pp.244-5
[137] R. MacArthur, Settling into the Country House: the Hanburys at Kelmarsh Hall, pp.135-144 in J. Stobart, A. Hann (eds) *The Country House*, p.141; NCL M0005647NL/2 Sales Catalogue, Rolleston Hall, 1801

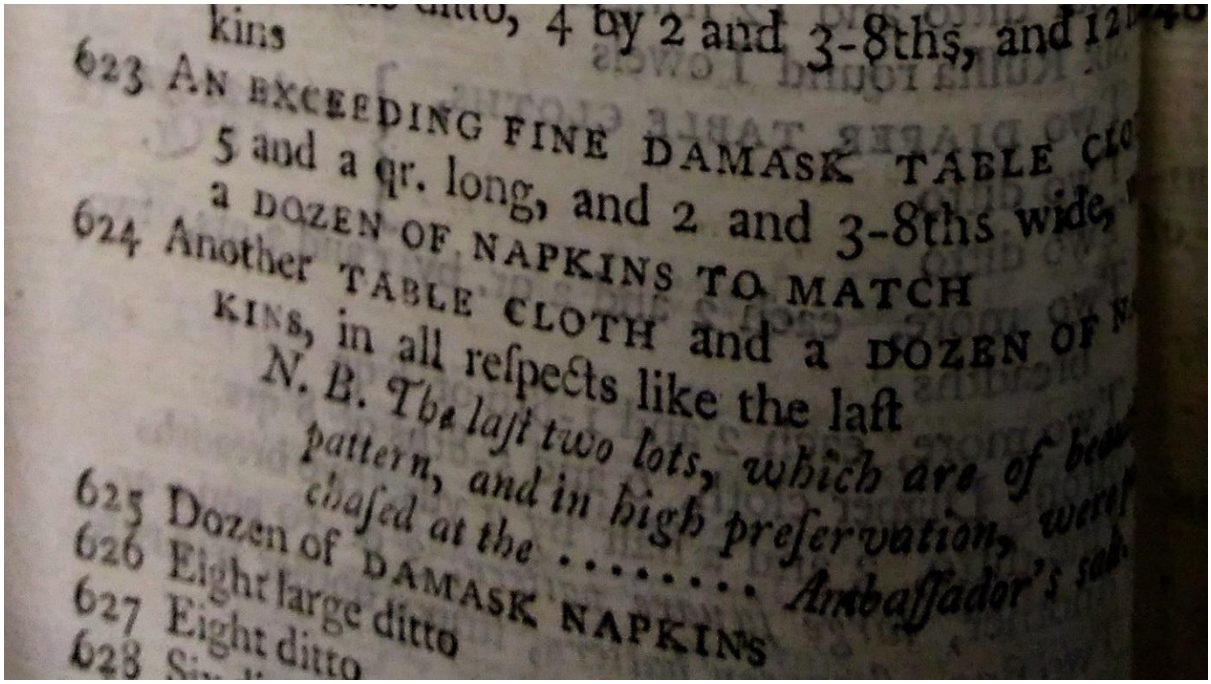
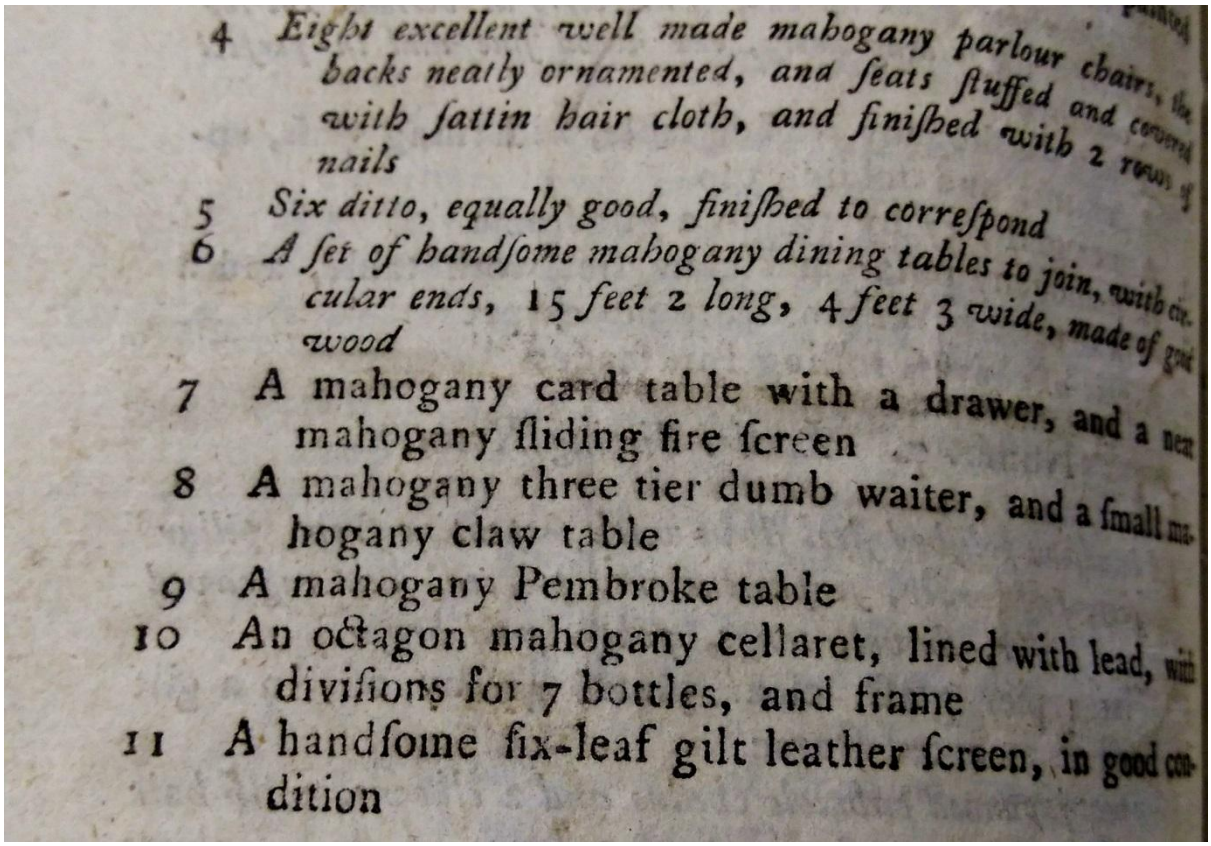

kins
623 An exceeding fine damask table cl
5 and a qr. long, and 2 and 3-8ths wide,
a dozen of napkins to match
624 Another table cloth and a dozen of n
kins, in all respects like the laft
N. B. The laft two lots, which are of beau
pattern, and in high preservation, were
chafed at the ..... Ambaſſador's sale
625 Dozen of damask napkins
626 Eight large ditto
627 Eight ditto
628

Figure 3:15: Sales catalogue, Rollaston Hall, 1801

These artefacts were not consumed in a vacuum but were part of sets of goods reliant on placement and function for their combined effect. Table linen was the setting for the other items of conspicuous expenditure seen both within the inventories and the sales catalogues. Berg identified that in the mid- eighteenth century the greatest value within a household was invested in the dining room's fixtures and fittings.[138] The prestigious dining furniture offered in the sale at Stanford Hall in 1792 (See Fig. 3:16) offers a matching suite of furnishings in mahogany wood.[139] The dumb waiter was used for the dessert dishes, enabling guests to serve themselves at this final course with the advantage 'conversation was not under any restraint by ye Servants being in ye room' although there are no dessert napkins offered in the sale.[140] The absence of the servants would add to the social comfort of the guests who were increasingly searching for privacy within the patterns of life in the country house.[141] The cellaret held the wines to be offered to diners who may have used the doilies that were included to protect the table from bottle rings while the screen would shield the footman from view as he rinsed glasses and cutlery using the knife and glass cloths also in the sale ready to replenish the supplies on the table. The size of the table itself, at over fifteen feet long and four feet wide, indicates why so many of the tablecloths were of large dimension. Elizabeth Dryden,

[138] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press 2007) pp.228-229
[139] NCL M0005646NL/15 Sales Catalogue, Stanford Hall, 1792
[140] Mary Hamilton, *Diary* (1784) quoted in R. Fastnedge, *English Furniture Styles*, p.145
[141] J. Stobart, Afterthoughts in J. Stobart (ed) *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe 1700-1900* (London, Bloomsbury, 2020) pp. 139-245

writing from Canons Ashby in Northamptonshire in 1815 to her sister-in-law, who had recently sent her a parcel of table linen remarked, 'not one cloth is large enough for our Table, so different are modern dining tables from ancient'.[142] The remark could also be interpreted to imply that she was making her sister-in-law aware that she had only sent her old-fashioned table linen.



4 *Eight excellent well made mahogany parlour chairs, the backs neatly ornamented, and ſeats ſtuffed and covered with ſattin hair cloth, and finiſhed with 2 rows of nails*

5 *Six ditto, equally good, finiſhed to correſpond*

6 *A ſet of handſome mahogany dining tables to join, with circular ends, 15 feet 2 long, 4 feet 3 wide, made of good wood*

7 A mahogany card table with a drawer, and a neat mahogany ſliding fire ſcreen

8 A mahogany three tier dumb waiter, and a ſmall mahogany claw table

9 A mahogany Pembroke table

10 An octagon mahogany cellaret, lined with lead, with diviſions for 7 bottles, and frame

11 A handſome ſix-leaf gilt leather ſcreen, in good condition

Figure 3:16: Dining suite, sales catalogue, Stanford Hall, Northamptonshire, 1792

Silver would play a major part in this display of material possessions and wherever possible table linen as well as plate would display family coats of arms or emblems. Reference in the Ditchley inventory of 1772 to 'A large old D°[damask cloth], wth the Lichfield Arms Pattern' shows a specially commissioned item in the same way as the cloth from Chatsworth House, (See Fig. 3:17) displays the Devonshire emblem of a twisted serpent together with a ducal coronet.[143] Marking elite status in these ways equates with the statement made by Riello, writing of the role of textiles:

[142] Quoted in J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p.164
[143] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.160

[Textile] Objects act as articulation of personal and social identity, and were used to pursue strategies of cultural, social and economic advancement. They were at the same time, tokens of belonging to specific social groups that share collective values, principles and ideas.[144]

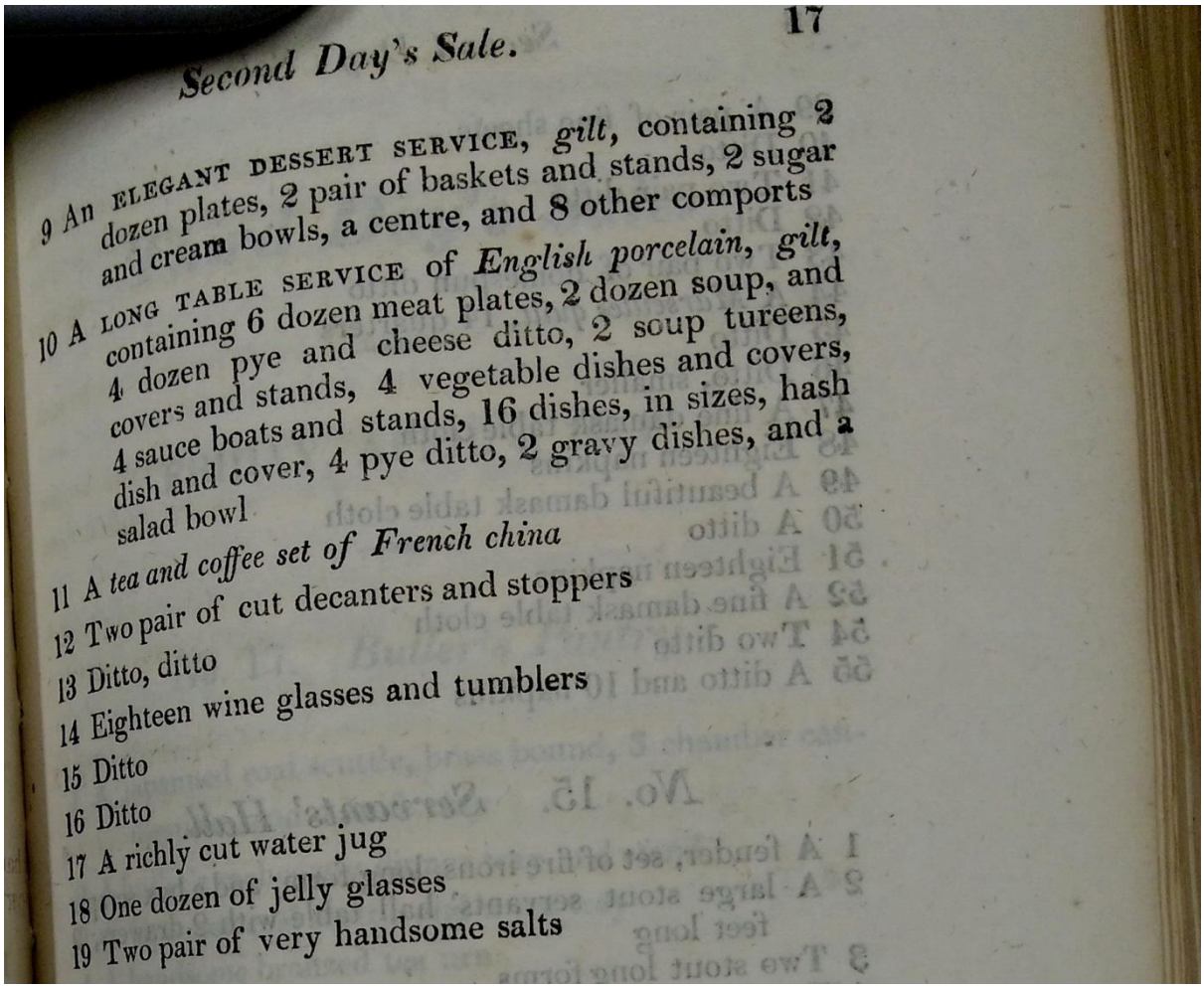
Whilst there are some examples pinpointed in this study, the amounts of surviving silverware and china bearing such insignia means there is good reason to assume that table linen also was used to reinforce social identity in these establishments, as it demonstrated difference through inherited status rather than simply wealth.

Figure 3:17: Damask cloth, Chatsworth House, author's photograph

Dining with full sets of silver was being superseded, even in households that could afford this, by matching sets of chinaware that Berg suggested symbolised ethics, harmony, virtue, elegance and

[144] G. Riello, in B. Lemire (ed), *The Force of Fashion,* p.57

refinement.[145] White table linen was the backdrop for displays of matching table ware such as those offered for sale at Wollaston Hall (See Fig. 3:18) in 1805.



Second Day's Sale. 17

9 An ELEGANT DESSERT SERVICE, *gilt*, containing 2 dozen plates, 2 pair of baskets and stands, 2 sugar and cream bowls, a centre, and 8 other comports

10 A LONG TABLE SERVICE of *English porcelain, gilt*, containing 6 dozen meat plates, 2 dozen soup, and 4 dozen pye and cheese ditto, 2 soup tureens, covers and stands, 4 vegetable dishes and covers, 4 sauce boats and stands, 16 dishes, in sizes, hash dish and cover, 4 pye ditto, 2 gravy dishes, and a salad bowl

11 A *tea and coffee set of French china*

12 Two pair of cut decanters and stoppers

13 Ditto, ditto

14 Eighteen wine glasses and tumblers

15 Ditto

16 Ditto

17 A richly cut water jug

18 One dozen of jelly glasses

19 Two pair of very handsome salts

Figure 3:18: China, sales catalogue, Wollaston Hall, 1805

The ownership of these accoutrements to dining and entertaining, together with the table linen on which they were presented, demonstrates the role of material objects in defining behaviour and establishing ritual and meaning in social customs and encounters.[146] As Grieg suggested in her study of London society, these goods, despite the fact they were luxurious, were more important in demonstrating access to social networks and shared values.[147]

[145] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, p.51

[146] M. Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, p.205, p.230

[147] H, Greig, Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London's Beau Monde in J. Styles, A. Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1837* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2006) pp.293-314

Conclusions

Despite the relative decline in the importance of table linen since the seventeenth century noted by Mitchell, large quantities of tablecloths and napkins were present in most of the sales catalogues and inventories comprising the basis of this study.[148] Weatherill found that 74% of households with goods valued at £100 or more possessed items listed as table linen. In this smaller sample of inventories, ranging across the spectrum of gentry (See Table 1.2 p. 38) all the valuations were above £100 and all contained items designated as table linen. Shammas noted a decline in the relative values of household linen across her survey from 14.9% for the period 1550-90 to 4.0% by 1774. Using the inventories where valuations for linen were available this more limited survey yielded the results shown in the table below (See Table 3:3). From the data collected for this study, the percentage value of linen against the total valuations was 4.3% for 1660-1700; 4.3% for 1701-1740; 4.4% for 1741-1780. With only two inventories with valuations, the figure for 1781-1820 rose to 6.4%, giving a slight distortion as one of the probate inventories was for an estate valued at just £229, of which linen comprised £19.11s.3d; from 1821-1860 only three valuations were available giving an average of 3.7%, which is more in line with the earlier figures. Only one set of valuations was available for 1861-1900 showing linen valued at 2.5% of the estate and there were no valuations available in the data for the period 1901-1939. A random sample of ten inventories covering Shammas's earliest period of 1550-1590 also produced a figure of 4.3% suggesting very little movement in the percentage value of household linens in this study.

	1550-1590	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1820-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Shammas's relative values*	14.9%	8.1%	6.4%	5.3%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Study relative values	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%	4.4%	8.2%	4.7%	2.7%+	N/A
Study average total valuations	N/A	£1,167	£1,424 **	£1,557	N/A	£3,469	£2,394	N/A
Study average items of napery	N/A	185	300	284	467	367	265	320

* averaged figures[149] * * valuations for over £10,000 not included + only one valuation

Table 3:3 Analysis of table linen

[148] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen', p.336

[149] Figures taken from C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990) Table 6.3, p.170

Identifying the average number of items held by each household gave the figures shown above (See Table 4:3) although those for 1901-1939 may be distorted by being the napery of just two households across several inventory entries. This evidence can be read in several ways. The average total valuation of inventories from 1660-1700 was £1,167 whereas the next tranche yielded £1,434 offering opportunities for greater levels of consumption. The slight rise in average valuation to £1,557 in the period 1741-1780, together with a drop in items, may suggest prices of linen remained constant although a sample of 33 households makes this assumption tenuous. Again, it may be that Shammas is correct in assuming the price of linen fell during this period allowing for larger numbers of items to be purchased. However, it is equally possible that the other consumer goods itemised within the inventories also increased in number and the proportion spent on linen remained constant. The periods 1660-1780 were ones of relative price stability, so this explanation offers potential. The further increase in items from 1781-1820 may show that although it was a period of rapid inflation, the value of land also rose, increasing profits from rents for the landowners represented in this study. It may too be an indication that there was no shortage of linen despite the period being one of almost continuous warfare, although the decision of William Coulson to delay his request for a grant from the Irish Linen Board to purchase more looms in 1813 because of a decline in demand suggests a different conclusion might be reached with a wider field of evidence.[150] Looking at those households having more than one thousand items of napery strongly suggests there was a firm link between wealth and quantities of linen, not a surprising assumption. This category includes Sir Ralph Hare of Stow Hall, Norfolk (1672), representing the greater gentry, and Henry Grey, Duke of Kent at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire (1740), Thomas Anson, 1st Viscount Lichfield at Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire (1792), Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle at Castle Howard, Cumbria (1823) and Charles Pierrepoint, 5th Earl Manvers of Thoresby Hall, Nottinghamshire (1907) all members of the peerage. This indicates that quantities of linen were commensurate with status and show no discernible regional variations. The findings in Table 4:3 may be distorted by anomalous quantities such as these, yet they indicate that such stores of napery signified culturally appropriate goods.

Within the listed entries, as was the case with bed linen, flax together with hemp and hurden featured as fabric for both tablecloths and napkins though it appears to become less frequent by the end of the seventeenth century. The inventory of John Stanhope in 1692 is the earliest reference to huckaback items.[151] Mitchell stated that English huckaback came to replace the cheaper Silesian

[150] B. Collins, P. Ollerenshaw, T. Parkhill (eds), *Industry, Trade and People in Ireland 1650-1950* (Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 2005) p. 121

[151] DRO D 518M/F/187 Probate Inventory John Stanhope, Elvaston Castle, 1692

linens, however in this limited sample few references to this have been found and it is the flax, hemp and hurden that appear to be replaced. Damask and diaper are recorded from the earliest inventory of 1661 through to the twentieth century household inventory of Thoresby Hall.[152] Its lasting appeal shows it retained cultural currency and probably economic value. The ubiquity of damask and diaper indicates the ways in which such items demonstrated practical functions linked to both status and sociability.

Careful attention to the preparation and presentation of table linen, as discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, signalled status through displays of plentiful clean linen. Clean tablecloths and clean napkins at each meal remained a requirement into the twentieth century.[153] Changing fashions in eating led to changes in table linen too. Tablecloths and napkins were adapted to facilitate new patterns of eating such as breakfast, supper and dessert and to accompany rituals around new exotic foodstuffs such as tea. This may indicate a willingness to purchase items simply to demonstrate awareness of fashion and provide an opportunity to express wealth and social prestige. Certainly, the complexity of designs in napery indicated through from the Ditchley inventory of 1743 to the Thoresby listing in 1907 and the descriptions in the sales catalogues shows there were opportunities with these items to show gentility and taste, family pedigree and status and even novelty.

[152] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907

[153] Quoted in P.A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant*, p.127; L. Lewis, *The Private Life of a Country House* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1997) p.50

Chapter Four

'Linnen for the Kitchen House Maid Butler & Housekeeper': the lived experience of the country house

Context

Chapter Four focuses on the importance of domestic textiles in the upkeep of the elite habitus. Whilst absent from most of the earlier sources used in this study, they are referenced in instructions to servants. Correct usage of these domestic materials was vital to the image of the well-run household communicating quality both of possessions and of services. The chapter also argues that these items were as important for the social comfort of the country house elite through the maintenance of their positional goods as they were for physical comfort. It will identify the range of functional domestic textiles that enabled the upkeep of lifestyles embodied in the country house whilst ascertaining how they were used in the pursuit of cleanliness and comfort and the projection of the social standards expected from such establishments. Whilst there are several informative studies of the servants of the country house these were concerned with recruitment, conditions and remuneration; the tasks routinely performed, and the textiles used for them have received little attention.

Few of these items are included in the probate inventories for the earlier period of the study although Lady Grisel Baillie in the later Stuart period and Philippa Hayes in her Household Book at Charlecote Park in the mid eighteenth century begin to give an idea of their variety and usage. By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they can be seen in large quantities although their inclusion in the sources used here remained haphazard with many establishments apparently adhering to Sarah Churchill's opinion of them. The Dowager Duchess of Marlborough did not include them in her inventories of Blenheim Palace or Marlborough House in 1740. She deemed them 'Linnen for the Kitchen House Maid Butler & Housekeeper the particulars not worth putting down'.[1] Yet this 'Linnen' at Blenheim and elsewhere played a crucial part in the appearance of the elite habitus.

[1] Sarah, Dowager Duchess of Marlborough noted 'Linnen for the Kitchen House Maid Butler & Housekeeper the particulars not worth putting down' in her account of linen at Blenheim Palace, 1740 quoted in T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) p.282

Visitors to England often remarked on the cleanliness of houses. In 1784 the Duc de La Rochefoucauld wrote to his family in France that 'The cleanliness which pervades everything is a perpetual source of satisfaction'.[2] Half a century later Charlotte Brontë had Jane Eyre declare:

> My first aim will be to *clean down* (do you comprehend the full force of the expression?) – *clean down* Moor House from chamber to cellar; my next to rub it up with beeswax, oil and an indefinite number of cloths, till it glitters again;[3]

Such standards were the hallmark of good housekeeping and owed much to an array of different textiles used behind the scenes in cleaning, cooking and maintenance. Examples of the copper pans, glasses and furniture maintained by these cloths are still on display though the cloths themselves were ephemeral. Cornforth, mentioned in Chapter One, included a quotation from instructions given by Lord Nottingham to his groom of chambers, 'You must be carefull of the furniture, brushing and cleaning every morning that which is in constant use, and the rest also once in the week or oftener if need be…' indicating the sort of regular routine cleaning expected within an elite household though no further information is offered.[4] Davidson, although her survey of women's work dealt predominantly with working class contexts, suggested that households cleaned hearths, washed floors, dusted, scoured pots and pans daily and less frequently polished furniture; this routine would be applicable to gentry households too.[5] In addition to these tasks, the country house would contain quantities of glass and chinaware, silver and cutlery that required specialist cleaning after use together with both fashionable furniture and heirlooms. Hardyment and Sambrook indicated that the quantities of linen usually laundered on site also had back-stage textiles associated with their upkeep such as mangling cloths.[6] Cooking too, whether to maintain the domestic staff in the absence of the family, or entertaining on a grander scale, required numerous items of a textile nature throughout the period either in the storage and preparation of the food or its transition from the kitchen to the dining room. Once the guests had departed, rooms not in frequent use would be shrouded in more cloths to keep the furniture and carpets free from dust and prevent damage from sunlight as Mr Sponge from Leech's *Sporting Tour* published in 1863 ordered, '…he had the house put away in

[2] Francois, Duc de La Rochefoucauld quoted in C. Saumarez-Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1993) p.309
[3] Charlotte Brontë quoted in C. Hardyment, *Home Comfort: A History of Domestic Arrangements* (London, Viking,1992) p.37
[4] Quoted in J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2004) p.82
[5] C. Davidson, *A Woman's Work is Never Done; A History of Housework in the British Isles 1650-1950* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1982) p.121
[6] C. Hardyment, *Behind the Scenes: Domestic arrangements in historic houses* (London, Penguin, 1997) p.230; P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) pp.168-179

Brown Holland, the carpets rolled up, the pictures covered and statues shrouded in muslin'.[7] It is these inconspicuous items of domestic textile that are considered here.

Susanna Whatman's handwritten instructions to her servants set out a framework for regular routines of housework. That she felt this to be a necessary step was occasioned by her desire for continuity of good practice amidst the rapid turnover of menial servants, something Vickery noted in her investigations of the lives of Georgian women.[8] The numbers of indoor servants employed clearly varied according not only to the size of establishment but also the revenue from the estate and the perceived requirements of the owner. Samuel and Sarah Adams in *The Complete Servant* suggested a sliding scale of the numbers of male and female servants according to annual income, ranging from £1,000 supporting four females and three men to £4,000 employing eleven female and thirteen men and then proceeded to outline the duties expected of them.[9] More recent studies into the work of servants in country houses have detected little change from the routines set out by Whatman and Adams across the period of this study. The detailed timetables referenced by Sambrook from the twentieth century would be equally familiar to servants in Whatman's employ. Both detail the schedule for daily cleaning and the orderly progression of weekly and seasonal tasks, creating 'something resembling a well-oiled machine whose rhythm and motion ran smoothly like a clock'.[10] Only with the introduction of electricity into country houses was the reliance on the manual dexterity obtained through the rigorous years of on-the-job training replaced in some measure by technology.

Whatman's Housekeeping Book gives some indication of the tasks, although there were limited references to the domestic textiles that would be involved in them. Hardyment speculated in her introduction to *The Housekeeping Book of Susannah Whatman* that household advice manuals were probably in general circulation before the publication of Hannah Glasse's *Servant's Directory* in 1760. They were in all probability cheaply produced, unlikely to be found on the shelves of country house libraries and have either not survived or not been discovered yet.[11] Klein described 'very useful manuals' or informative instructional books published between the 1680s and 1740s.[12] These cost between 1s and 1s.6d and so were more expensive than chapbooks or almanacs but not volumes

[7] Quoted in C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman* (London, Pimlico, 1987) p.24
[8] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1998) p.135
[9] A. Haly, (ed) Samuel and Sarah Adams, *The Complete Servant* (1825) (Lewes, Southover Press, 1989) pp.16-17
[10] P.A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant*, p.76
[11] C. Hardyment (ed), *The Housekeeping Book*, p.8
[12] L. E. Klein, Politeness for Plebs: consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England pp.354-378 in A. Bermingham, J. Brewer (eds), *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, Routledge, 1995) pp.369-373

destined for library collections. It is possible the format was similar to that of J.F., *The merchant's ware-house laid open: or the plain dealing linnen-draper* published in London in 1696 which itself contained four advertisements for other vanished volumes produced by the same publisher. Certainly, for the satirical parody *Directions to Servants* written by Swift in 1745 to be appreciated by his audience, it would require prior knowledge of the format of advice books for servants and the preferred usage of the various textiles Swift lampoons.

Whatman's instructions required the housemaid to use both dry cloths for dusting and oiled cloths for polishing. The laundry maid was issued with mangling cloths and an ironing flannel, even as in the kitchen 'The Cook should have all proper kitchen linen and keep it good and mended…and the [dishes] bottoms wiped that they may not dirty the table cloth…'[13] Subsequent manuals and schedules listed tasks and occasionally hinted at the tools required to carry them out.[14] Many of these chores necessitated household textiles that were short-lived even while in use though some can still be traced through the sales catalogues, inventories and other sources used here.

Visualising Domestic Linen

Most of these items must have been relatively cheap and in the earlier sources were either omitted or dismissed as 'other old linen' as the 1681 inventory of William Lygon of Madresfield, categorised in this study as greater gentry, (see Table 1.2 p. 38) concludes.[15] Sambrook erroneously thought that inventories from the late-medieval period like the one compiled for Hardwick Hall on the death of Elizabeth Shrewsbury excluded even the bedlinen because it was mostly home-produced. She cites the earliest examples of domestic textiles in a Hardwick inventory as 1782 and that the Dunham Massey inventories conformed to that pattern with the earliest mention of such items in 1819.[16] Certainly the majority of the items of domestic linen found here are from the mid-eighteenth century onwards and it is clear that while many shared Sarah Churchill's opinion that such items were not worth recording, nonetheless such items were in use as the diaper china cloths, butler's glass cloths, knife cloths and rubbers listed in the probate inventory for Evelyn Pierrepont, 1st Duke

[13] C. Hardyment (ed), *The Housekeeping Book*, p.44
[14] *The Housekeeper's Oracle*, 1812 quoted in C. Hardyment, *Home Comforts,* p.50; *Mrs Beeton's Household Management, 1861*; Available from https://archive.org/details/b20392758/page/986/mode/2up (Accessed: 08.02.2024); K. Smallshaw, *How To Run Your Home Without Servants* (London, Persephone Books, 2005) pp.49-69
[15] WHS Probate Inventory (79): William Lygon, Madresfield, 1681
[16] P. A. Sambrook, *A Country House at Work*: *Three Centuries of Dunham Massey* (London, National Trust, 2003) pp.50-51; See L. Boynton, *The Hardwick Hall Inventories of 1601* (London, The Furniture History Society, 1971) p.39 for reference to Cambrick, holland and lynnen sheetes and their pillowbiers

of Kingston, written in 1726, witness.[17] As these were spread across his London residence and three country houses this level of specialisation of such items would seem already well established. Mrs Hayes housekeeper to George Lucy owning a small estate in Warwickshire and at the other end of the spectrum represented in this study, recorded regular purchases of knife cloths, dusters, rubbers and 'a piece for Dish Cloaths' in her Household Book at Charlecote Park in the mid eighteenth century.[18] However, such items remained largely unrecognised with 11 of 23 of the Northamptonshire sales catalogues offering fewer than a dozen lots of household textiles, and 6 had none whatsoever. The sale at Hazlebeach Hall in 1802 (See Fig. 4:1) was one of the few in which a range of domestic textiles were offered and indicates most of the items included in Table 4:1 had been deployed in this country house. In addition, were round towels used in communal areas and discussed in Chapter Two, whilst the juxtaposition of huckaback tablecloths with these backstage textiles, may imply that these were for use in the servants' hall as indicated in Chapter Three.

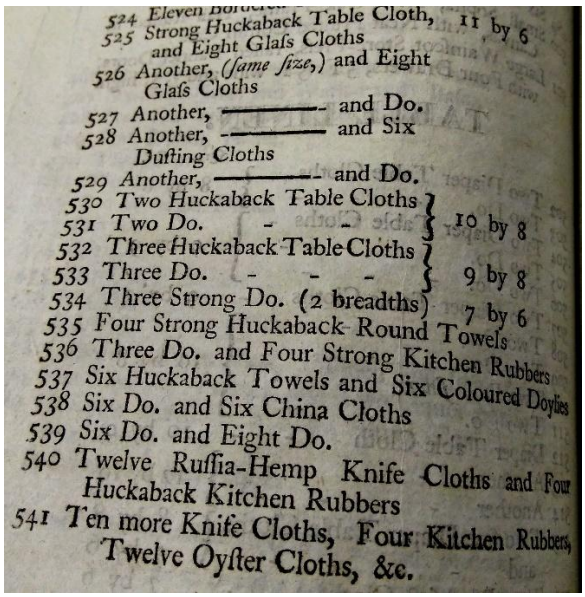

524 Eleven Border[illegible] Table Cloth, 11 by 6
525 Strong Huckaback Table Cloth and Eight Glaſs Cloths
526 Another, (*ſame ſize,*) and Eight Glaſs Cloths
527 Another, ——— and Do.
528 Another, ——— and Six Dufting Cloths
529 Another, ——— and Do.
530 Two Huckaback Table Cloths
531 Two Do. - - } 10 by 8
532 Three Huckaback Table Cloths
533 Three Do. - - - } 9 by 8
534 Three Strong Do. (2 breadths) 7 by 6
535 Four Strong Huckaback Round Towels
536 Three Do. and Four Strong Kitchen Rubbers
537 Six Huckaback Towels and Six Coloured Doyles
538 Six Do. and Six China Cloths
539 Six Do. and Eight Do.
540 Twelve Ruſſia-Hemp Knife Cloths and Four Huckaback Kitchen Rubbers
541 Ten more Knife Cloths, Four Kitchen Rubbers, Twelve Oyſter Cloths, &c.

Figure 4:1: Domestic textiles listed in Hazlebeach Hall sale, 1802

Such domestic textiles become far more prevalent in the latter quarter of the eighteenth century (See Table 4:1) and are present in quite staggering quantities by the end of the period covered, although here too, it seems they are not always recorded. Where these textiles are present it becomes clear that there was considerable variety involved in the daily maintenance of the country house and like the more expensive bed and table linen, they were carefully husbanded. By the later end of the study, large quantities of them appear to be purchased annually.

[17] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households* p.282; NUSC Ma/488 Appraisment of Household Goods for Duke of Kingston, 1726
[18] WRO L6/1476 Mrs Hayes Household Book

Domestic textiles	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Knife	0	12	111	457	983	147	234
Glass	0	22	74	300	579	454	408
China	0	34	44	364	866	376	798
Rubbers	28	218	223	114	349	210	702
Dusters	0	0	6	203	540	303	1464
Cloths	25	122	89	548	534	306	1008
Pantry	0	61	107	126	230	187	0
Lamp	0	0	0	0	52	18	96
Grate	0	0	0	0	34	6	194
Covers	0	83	108	24	113	52	6

Table 4:1 Domestic textiles

Amongst the household textiles being offered for sale in the mid-nineteenth century the most frequently listed were knife cloths with 273, making 29% of the total number of domestic textiles listed; however, they formed 13% across all sources in the study. Some knife cloths were categorized as 'diaper' in the Stoneleigh inventory of 1749 or 'Russia cloth' in the Hazelbech Hall sale of 1802.[19] It is possible some of these might have been used in the dining room where it was the practice for the footman or butler to wash knives and replace them on the table during meals as additional dishes were presented to diners like Lady Grisell Baillie who instructed her butler 'and when you take away a dirty plate take also the dirty knife and fork and give all clean'.[20] The hot water urn (See Fig.4:2) lined with lead was originally fitted with a brass spigot and was positioned behind a large screen at one end of the dining room specifically for this purpose.[21] Other knife cloths are distinguished as 'coarse' and may have been used in the service areas of the country house. Knife blades were made of steel but it was not until the last quarter of the nineteenth century that stainless steel was available; consequently blades required scouring with sand or Bath Brick to remove stains and were then polished to a high finish by the footmen.[22] In later household

[19] SCLA DR18/4/20 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1749; NCL M0005647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbech Hall, 1802

[20] Scott-Moncrieff, R. (ed), *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie 1692-173*3 https://archive.org/details/householdbookofl00bailrich (Accessed: 08.02.2023)

[21] One of a pair of wooden urns at Berrington Hall, Herefordshire

[22] Bath Brick was patented in 1827 by John Browne. Extensively used for cleaning metal, it was issued to the Army until the 1920s and used in the household as a forerunner to products such as Vim and Ajax.

inventories the most usual qualifying description for knife cloths is ‘pantry’, indicating they are no longer part of the routine and ritual of the dining room. Felbrigg Hall had over 300 of them on the shelves of its linen closet in 1872.[23] This may indicate either they were in store because no longer in daily use or that such cloths were required in number as part of routine cleaning. They could still be obtained from Harrods in 1912 and although it is unclear where Thoresby Hall in Nottinghamshire obtained its knife cloths, repeat purchases of 3 dozen were listed for 1911, 1912 and 1913 in the Inventory of Linen with the last recorded batch of 6 in 1935.[24]

Figure 4:2: Hot water urn, author's photograph, Berrington Hall, Herefordshire

Glassware too was the responsibility of the male servants. Glass items were rarely sent to the scullery. This area was associated with food preparation where grease might impair the polish required on them. Glassware was washed in the pantry, often referred to as the butler’s pantry, within the service area of the house and close to where it would be stored. Glass cloths account for just 6% of the items offered at auction and 12% of all cloths. The development of lead crystal in the 1670s made wine glasses increasingly popular. The earliest glass cloths in this study are recorded in 1709; those in the Duke of Kingston’s probate inventory are listed as ‘butler’s glass cloths’, similarly, in the Marquess of Tavistock’s household the 20 glass cloths were marked ‘P’ for the butler’s pantry

[23] NRO WKC 6/474 Inventory, Felbrigg Hall, 1872
[24] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up; NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, 1907

to distinguish them from the 10 china cloths marked 'S' for use in the scullery.[25] A similar delineation can be seen a century and a half later in the Thoresby Hall linen book listing china cloths for the still room, glass and plate cloths for the pantry, china cloths for both the servants' hall and for the housemaids' room.[26] Paston-Williams quotes from an advice manual for servants, Trussler's *Rules for Waiting at Table* of 1788 that implies the earlier use of glass cloths:

> To give the plates etc perfectly clean and free from dust, and never give a second glass of wine, in a glass that has been once used. If there is not a sufficient change of glasses, he should have a vessel of water under the sideboard, to dip them in, and wipe them bright.[27]

As wine glasses had a much smaller capacity in the eighteenth and nineteenth century and were usually replaced clean with each refilling it is likely there were many more glass cloths than the earlier sources suggest. Within this category of glass cloths, 5 in the Montagu House inventory of 1746 were described as 'Cloths to cover Glasses…To the Butler who has them always in keeping'. This may indicate that some of these were used to protect glasses from dust and damage during storage rather than to dry and polish them after use. [28] In the 1806 inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey 8 of the glass cloths were referred to as 'decanter cloths' which may indicate a similar function, protecting the ornate containers into which wines might be decanted for presentation at table. [29] The only indication found of the type of fabric used for glass cloths was a reference to ' six new huckerback glass cloths' at Knebworth House in 1808 though china cloths were of huckaback in one inventory but of diaper in another, and so it seems likely that these fabrics were interchangeable.[30] By the twentieth century linen or cotton huckaback was still available as were plain weave linens and cottons.

With the gleaming cutlery and glassware, it was essential that dishes sent up from the kitchen should be carefully presented. Whatman's instructions to her cook direct '…and the [dishes] bottoms wiped that they may not dirty the table cloth…Indeed, if a dresser cloth is used, they cannot well come up soiled'.[31] There are more than 500 dresser cloths listed within the inventories studied that

[25] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households,* p.22-3; NUSC Ma/4883 Appraisment of Household Goods Duke of Kingston, 1726; BHRS Probate Inventory, Marquis of Tavistock, Houghton House, 1767
[26] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, 1907
[27] Quoted in S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining: A History of Cooking and Eating* (London, National Trust, 1993) p.256
[28] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.111
[29] SCLA DR18/4/59 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806
[30] HALS K57425 Inventory of plate, china, linen Knebworth, 1808; DRO D239/M/F/10699 Items taken from Hopton Hall to Tissington Hall, 1791; NUSC Ma 488/3 Appraisement of Household Goods for Duke of Kingston, 1726
[31] C. Hardyment, (ed), *The Housekeeping Book*, p.44

were presumably used in this way. Kitchen 'rubbers' were frequently named amongst both sale and inventory items. Hazelbech Hall had '12 strong kitchen rubbers' listed and the inventory for Montagu House, the property of the 2nd Duke of Buccleuch, dated 1746 had three different sets of rubbers: '22 plate Rubbers of Russian Diaper' in the butler's possession; '18 Rubbers and 4 Dresser Cloths. The kitchen Maid had these'; in addition to the '12 plain Russia Cloths for Footmen to wait with' and '7 yards of Russia Diaper for Butlers plate rubbers'.[32] Kitchen rubbers were available in the Harrods catalogue in 1912 and were still being recorded in 1938 at Thoresby Hall where 24 had been replaced four years earlier.[33] Over 1800 rubbers were counted in the sources here. Evidently much attention was given to protecting the table linen from food spilt in the service areas and it was one that Swift in his *Directions to Servants* chose to lampoon:

> Instructions to Butlers
>
> Clean your Plate, wipe your Knives, and rub the foul Tables with the Napkins and Table-cloth used that Day; for, it is but one washing, and besides, you save wearing out the coarse Rubbers; in Reward of which good Husbandry, my Judgement is, that you may lawfully make use of fine Damask Napkins to be Night-Caps for yourself.[34]

China cloths and tea cloths feature in both sales catalogues and inventories though in smaller numbers than knife and glass cloths until the later period of the study. In the sales catalogue at Hazelbech Hall 14 china cloths were noted and 24 were in the inventory for Temple Newsam though these numbers were not matched elsewhere in the early eighteenth century.[35] There were large amounts of chinaware in both the sales catalogues and the inventories but few china cloths, so it must be supposed either that glass cloths were suitable for china too or like many of the other textiles servicing the country house they were either used to exhaustion or not recorded. The Charlecote Park Household Book recorded the purchase of 'a piece of Dish Cloaths' in 1753 together with 'a dozen of dusters for the House Maid; 13 coarse knife cloths for the footmen in the pantry' and the following year 'Mar 2nd bought at Warwick Fair 2 doz. Pantry Cloaths …3 pieces for Dishcloaths, knife cloaths etc'. Another '1 dzn and 10 Rubers for the Footmen in the Pantry' were purchased in 1755, suggesting the widespread use of such items.[36] Rather surprisingly, this is the only reference found to 'Dishcloaths' and yet it is likely that the glass and china cloths used for drying these items were supported with dish cloths for washing them unless brushes were used, or

[32] NCL M5647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbech Hall, 1802; T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.111
[33] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912; NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[34] V. Rumbold (ed), *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift: Parodies, Hoaxes, Mock Treaties* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) p.464
[35] NCL M5647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbech Hall, 1802; WRO CR114/2/1 Inventory, Temple Newsam, 1808
[36] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes

alternatively, Mrs Hayes may be referring to cloths for drying. The amount of washing up in a household that entertained could be phenomenal. A retired footman estimated a dinner party for ten people in the early twentieth century required 324 items of silver, glass and china not counting the preparatory items in the kitchen.[37] Thoresby Hall's linen book itemising purchases from 1914 had 312 drying cloths in 1920; dividing them into china cloths in the still room, glass cloths in the glass pantry and the remainder in the plate pantry; this was in addition to the 72 knife cloths recorded.[38] These purchases show careful monitoring and regular replacement of items worn out in routine housework.

Surprisingly, dusters were included in very few of the sales catalogues or inventories until the mid-nineteenth century though the instruction from Lady Grisell Bailie to her housekeeper to 'See that all the maids keep their dusters and washing clouts dry and in order, and not let them ly about in hols wet, which soon rots and makes an end of them' implies the existence of them in practice. [39] Indeed, early references to 12 dusters is found in the Household Book at Charlecote Park in 1752 and '12 dusters and 12 older d^{o}' were noted at Doddington Hall in 1760.[40] 48 were present in the 1786 inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey of which 20 were in the laundry when the inventory was taken and 'brown dusters' were represented in one sales catalogue around the same period.[41] However by 1825 '58 housemaid's dusters' were noted in the probate inventory for Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle although his father's probate in 1759 made no mention of any domestic textiles.[42] It appears from the later inventories that dusters might be white, blue, checked, coloured, blue- edged or muslin. At Thoresby Hall an incredible 468 were purchased and used between 1914 and 1920 with an additional 48 for the Groom of the Chambers and 36 motor cloths for the stables that presumably now housed motor vehicles.[43] Overall, they represent 16% of the domestic textiles with a heavy weighting to the later centuries suggesting that earlier ones were repurposed old household textiles, as the reference to '19 p^{r} of sheets and Bundle white rags' and '3 old table cloths and bundle white

[37] Albert Thomas, *Wait and See* (London, Michael Joseph, 1944) quoted in P.A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant*, p.34
[38] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[39] R. Scott-Moncrieff (ed), *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie*; BO MS Top. Lincs c13, ff1-8 Household Inventory, Doddington Hall, 1760
[40] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes; BO MS Top Lincs CB ff1-8 Household Inventory, Doddington Hall, 1760
[41] SCLA DR18/4/69 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey 1786; NCL M0005647NL/10 Sales Catalogue, Joseph Rickett, Oundle 1813
[42] MS H1/F4/1 Probate Inventory, Henry Howard 4th Earl of Carlisle, 1759; MS H2/11/1 Vol 1 Probate Inventory, Frederick Howard 5th Earl of Carlisle, 1825
[43] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907

rags' listed at Colwick Hall in Yorkshire in 1813 may imply.[44] Perhaps once they were purchased specifically as dusters, their monetary value was clearer and they merited being recorded.

Ironing cloths were recorded at Boughton House in 1709 and Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House in 1749 and mangling cloths listed in the Stoneleigh Abbey inventory of 1806 and at Hassop Hall in 1870.[45] Colwick Hall had '4 y^{d} smoothing blanket' in the closet in the housekeeper's room which may have been destined for the same purpose.[46] Elsewhere within the sales catalogues and inventories were a number of other types of domestic textiles where the usage is less clear. 'Oyster cloths' appear in several sources. 4 dozen are noted in the inventory for Montagu House of 1709, and they appear also in the inventories of Boughton House in 1709 and 1718, in that of Ditchley for 1772 and Stoneleigh Abbey for 1786.[47] The only sales catalogue to offer them for sale is Hazelbech Hall.[48] Paston-Williams noted oysters were a favourite food appearing in numerous cookery books during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and said that the housekeeper at Saltram House near Plymouth recorded purchases of 'Hundred of Oysters for 1s on January 1st 1781' with similar quantities on a regular basis.[49] These cloths may have been used for opening the shellfish though whether this was in the kitchen or the dining room is unclear. Cook's meat cloths, pudding cloths, venison cloths, jelly bags, basket cloths, wrapping and packing cloths are all represented within the sources studied identifying a range of household tasks and food preparation procedures that have disappeared from present usage. Reference to '36 p^{r} different sorts powdering sheets; 15 p^{r} old ditto' appears in the inventory for Temple Newsam when it was sold to the Marquis of Hertford for £13,569 in 1808.[50] Reference to powdering tubs for salting meat have been found in several of the earlier inventories but this seems to be a large number of cloths for the process, and they are more likely cloths used in powdering the wigs of footmen. The only other reference to such cloths was the more modest 7 recorded in the 1816 inventory for Colworth House.[51]

More unusual were the '4 flaxen spitting sheets, 1 calleco one, 13s.0d' within the inventory of Sir John Pakington in 1689, even more so for the absence of any spittoon within the listing.[52] Pepys

[44] NYAS ZDS IV 11/5/4 Household Inventory, Colwick Hall, 1813
[45] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.59; BHRS Probate Inventory, Charles Leigh, Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House, 1749; SCLA DR 18/4/59 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806; DRO D7676/Bag C/3461 Household Inventory, Hassop Hall, 1870
[46] NYAS ZDS IV 11/5/4 Household Inventory, Colwick Hall, 1813
[47] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households*, p.23, p.59, p.69, p.160; SCLA DR18/4/69 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1786
[48] NCL M0005647NL/7 Sales Catalogue, Hazelbeach Hall, 1802
[49] S. Paston-Williams, *The Art of Dining*, p.211
[50] WRO CR 114/2/1, Sales Contract, Temple Newsam, 1808
[51] BHRS Probate Inventory, William Lee Antonie, Colworth House, 1816
[52] WHS Probate Inventory (86): Sir John Packington, Westwood, 1689

makes reference to using one: 'At night to supper and to bed-this night having first put up a spitting-sheet, which I find most convenient'.[53] The inventory also listed '6 closs stoole clothes'. There appear to be two close stools so this would imply the covers could be laundered and replaced as required. Sambrook equated the disappearance of these items from the Dunham Massey inventories after 1693-4 as part of the progress of technology with the widespread adoption of chamber pots.[54] Very few country houses had any provision for water supplies above the ground floor or basement before the second half of the nineteenth century and supplies of hot and cold running water were not achieved until even later.[55] Consequently, supplies were carried in cans and dirty water removed in slop buckets, occasioning the proliferation of 'basin' and 'slop' cloths in the Linen Book at Thoresby Hall and presumably elsewhere.[56] It may also account for the toilet covers (See Table 4:1) which may have been placed beneath the basins and ewers in bedrooms. The bathroom as a separate entity remained a rarity in country houses, perhaps deferred for some time after they were technologically possible by the availability of servants until the staff shortages of the twentieth century. Other evidence of the changing technology within the country house comes from the introduction of grate cloths necessary to remove the coal soot from the fireirons and grates and of lamp cloths as lighting increasingly used oil in many areas of the house.

Figure 4:3 Lamp Room, author's photograph, Calke Abbey, Derbyshire

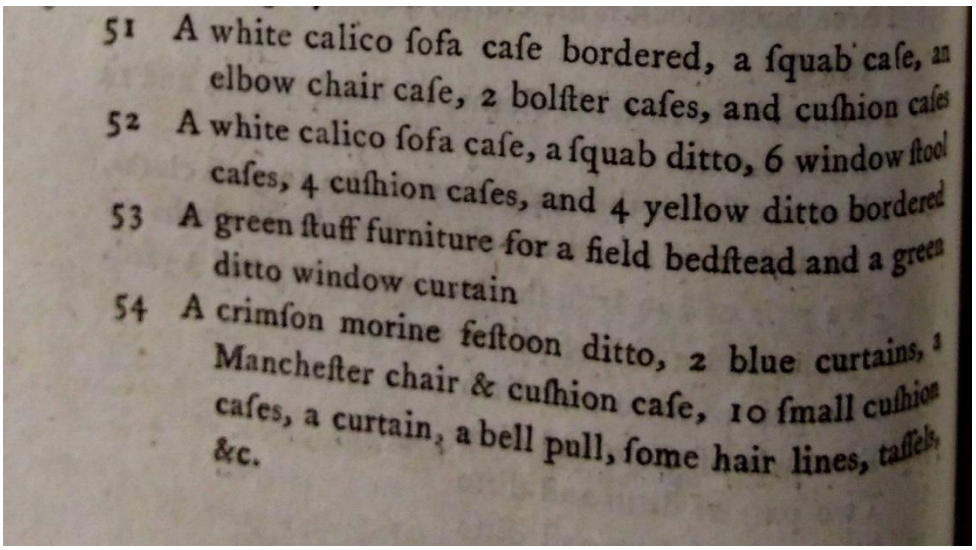
[53] J. Flanders, *The Making of Home* (London, Atlantic, 2014) p.13
[54] P. A. Sambrook, *A Country House at Work*, p.51
[55] M. Palmer & I. West, *Technology in the Country House* (Swindon, Historic England, 2016) p.55; A. Wilson, *Comfort, Pleasure and Prestige: Country-House Technology in West Wales 1750-1930* (Kibworth Beauchamp, Matador, 2016)
[56] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, 1907

The earliest reference to lamp cloths is in 1839 at Calke Abbey and although there are no lamp cloths recorded in the 1896 inventory, it was not until 1962 that electricity was introduced into some areas of the house, so lamps must have remained in use for some considerable time.[57] Certainly the Lamp Room there shows a variety of oil lamps at the time of the handover of the house to the National Trust in 1985. Lamps burning oil were more common in England in the eighteenth century with the arrival of whale oil, but efficient and elegant lamps were introduced into England in 1783 when their Swiss inventor Ami Argand went into partnership with Boulton and Watt in Birmingham.[58] Thoresby Hall had 30 lamp cloths recorded as late as 1938 though it is unclear whether they were still in use or merely being stored.[59] The absence of lamp cloths at Calke Abbey in 1896 indicates again the random nature of recording domestic textiles.[60]

One of the few items of household textiles on view within the family and public rooms was the slipcover. Cornforth, mentioned earlier, explained that many costly textiles used in upholstery were only on view when prestigious gatherings were held. The rest of the time, they were protected with case covers usually of linen and either a plain colour to tone with the décor or in checked pattern, with green and white being popular. Sometimes two sets were ordered, one for summer and another for winter.[61] The inventory of 1760 for Holkham lists '12 check'd false covers' in Lady Leicester's dressing room with a further '2 setts of false check covers' in the Ladies closet, and the entry '6 arm'd Chairs mahogany frames Gilt coverd wth the same as the beds 12 check'd covers' implying two fitting sets for these chairs although Lord Delaval's household inventory at Doddington Hall had just one 'old sofey cover'.[62] Several sets were offered at the sale of Wollaston Hall in 1805 (See Fig. 4:4).[63] Here the cases were of white calico and made to measure the items they protected. As these were plain, rather than the checked and coloured items mentioned in some documents, they may have been used when the family was not in residence. Such slips offered semi-permanent protection for upholstery and when the family was not in residence at a country house, it was usual to swathe the furniture and fittings such as lights and mirrors in dust covers usually of unbleached linen cloth. Those used at Dunham Massey were 'cut and sewn to fit each individual piece [of furniture] even the window drapery and pelmets'.[64] At Colworth House, the property of the steward

[57] DRO D2375/H/F/1/2 Household Inventory, Calke Abbey,1839; DRO D2375/H/F/3 Household Inventory, Calke Abbey, 1896
[58] M. Palmer, I. West, *Technology in the Country House,* p.76-7
[59] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen Thoresby Hall, 1907
[60] DRO D2375/H/F/3 Household Inventory, Calke Abbey, 1896
[61] J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors,* p.97
[62] T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households*, p.211; BO MS Top Lincs CB ff1-8 Household Inventory Doddington Hall, 1760
[63] NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Woollaston Hall, 1805
[64] P. A. Sambrook, *A Country House at Work*, p.30

to the Montagu estate, Mark Antoine, whose probate valuation of £6586 placed him with the greater gentry, 3 'muslin covers for chandeliers' performed this task in 1816.[65] At Felbrigg Hall '9 Bird's Eye pieces to pin upon Bed Curtains' showed how domestic linen was used to protect prestigious textiles, with 25 'old linen servants' sheets for covering beds etc' similarly employed at Catton Hall in 1880.[66] The household accounts for Sherbourne Park in Warwickshire include '1 Harris oil cloth cover furniture in Lobby: 17s.1d' bought in November 1832 and several purchases of brown Holland during the next two years that may have been used in a similar capacity.[67] Clabburn suggested that respectable country house visitors shown round by the housekeeper when the family was not in residence would have seen very little of the elite textiles shrouded in their covers. Certainly, Celia Fiennes visiting Ashtead Park near Epsom in 1712 saw 'good damaske beds and hangings…so neatly kept folded up in sheetes inn'd about the beds and hangings'.[68] Doubtless the practical Ms Fiennes would have complemented the housekeeper on her work.



51 A white calico ſofa caſe bordered, a ſquab caſe, an elbow chair caſe, 2 bolſter caſes, and cuſhion caſes
52 A white calico ſofa caſe, a ſquab ditto, 6 window ſtool caſes, 4 cuſhion caſes, and 4 yellow ditto bordered
53 A green ſtuff furniture for a field bedſtead and a green ditto window curtain
54 A crimſon morine feſtoon ditto, 2 blue curtains, a Manchester chair & cuſhion caſe, 10 ſmall cuſhion caſes, a curtain, a bell pull, ſome hair lines, taſſels, &c.

Figure 4:4: Case covers, sales catalogue, Wollaston Hall, Northamptonshire, 1805

All these domestic textiles involved in preserving and protecting more costly objects within the elite household were themselves carefully husbanded. A bill for laundering linen presented at Ragley Hall in 1782 lists a comprehensive range of such household textiles in use and being regularly washed.[69]

[65] BHRS Probate Inventory, Colworth House, 1816
[66] NRO WKC 6/463 464x4 Inventory of Household Linen Felbrigg Hall, 1771; DRO D3155/WH/1928 Household Inventory Catton Hall, 1880
[67] WRO CR0972 Account Book, Sherbourne Park, 1832-41
[68] P. Clabburn, *The NT Book of Furnishing Textiles* (London, Penguin, 1988) p.175; C. Morris, (ed) *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes c1682-c1712* (Exeter, Webb & Bower,1982) p.232
[69] WRO CR114A/218 Bill, Ragley Hall, 1782

On December 27th, 1781, the household celebrating Christmas and probably entertaining guests sent the following to be laundered:

> '11 Tablecloths at 3s.8d, 3Doz & 3 Napkins at 4s.3d, 26 towells at 2s.2d
> 4 Round Towells at 8d, 7 Glass Cloths at 7d, 2 Dresser Cloths at 4d, 1 Tea Ditto, 3 China Cloths at 4½d, 6 knife Ditto at 3d, 14 Dusters at 10½d'

Similar quantities were laundered again on December 31st, and on January 7th, 8th and 11th. In total the bill itemised laundering of 118 tablecloths, 35 dozen napkins, 24 dozen and 8 towels, 12 round towels, 57 glass cloths, 16 dresser cloths, 14 china cloths, 1 tea cloth, 75 dusters, 24 knife cloths and 4 venison cloths. Elizabeth Hunt the laundress, was paid £6.5s.4¼d. This offers an idea of the numbers of such items that were in service when the household was functioning as laundering usually took five or six days to accomplish. It is unclear why these items were sent out to be laundered since Ragley possessed its own facilities. One likely explanation is that these were all items used within the service areas of the house, including the table linen that may have been from the servants' hall. Possibly the laundry at Ragley Hall was already working to capacity over this period. These items may not have required the high standard of finishing expected from linen used by family and guests. Nonetheless these everyday domestic textiles may have been marked for identification like those itemised in the bill from Stoneleigh Abbey paid to Ann Newcombe in 1763 (See Fig. 4:5). Along with sheets and pillow cases, she marked 36 knife cloths, 2 dozen rubbers, 2 dozen tea cloths and 2 dozen glass cloths, being paid ½d for each item.[70] This attention to identifying even the mundane items of household textiles ensured the smooth and efficient management of the household, as expected in Lady Grisell Baillie's instruction to her butler: 'Be exact in giving your pantry cloaths to wash, and in getting them back and keeping them together'. [71] It indicates the importance of their role in the backstage management of the country house.

[70] SCLA DR18/4/4074 Bill, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1763
[71] R. Scott-Moncrieff (ed), *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie*

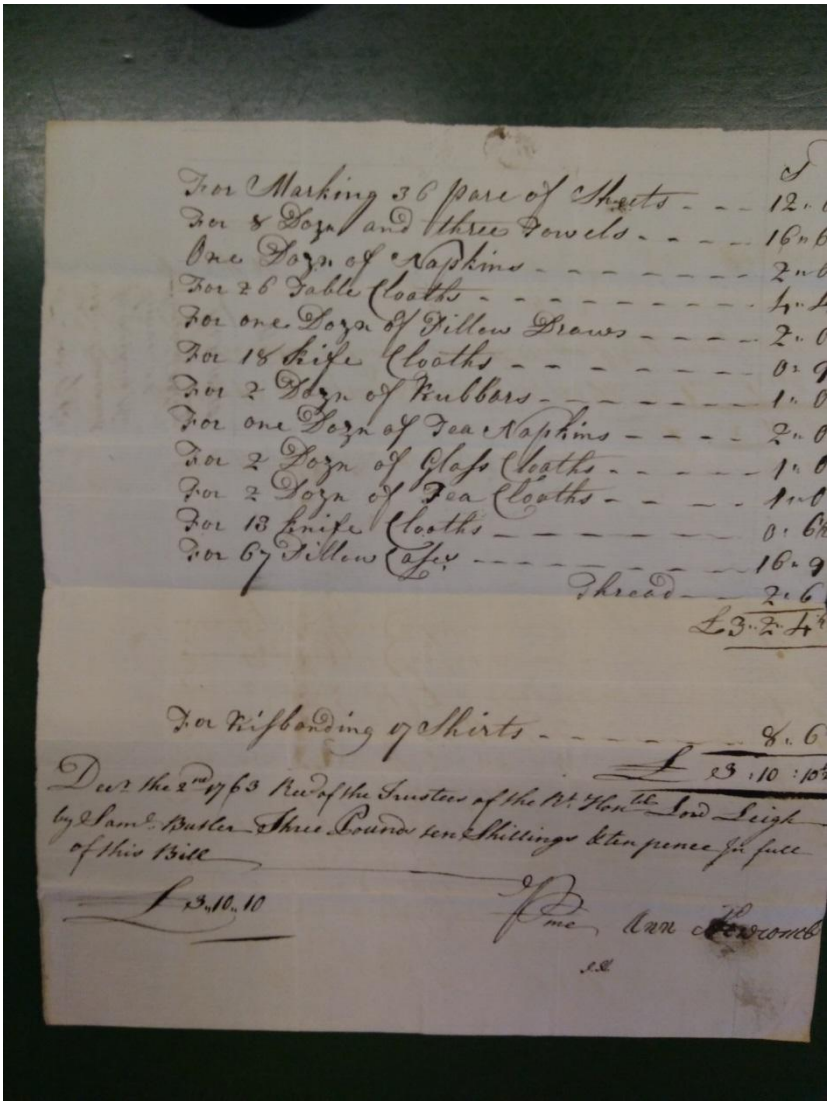


Figure 4:5: Bill for marking linen, Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, 1763

As Table 4:1 indicates, by far the largest number of domestic textiles appear in the sources from 1901 to 1939. These cloths were replaced on a regular basis in the households reviewed and must have been used to destruction. It is surprising that any have survived the routines of cleaning required to maintain the standards that were the hallmark of the country house. The survivors viewed are all from the twentieth century. By this time, the items had their function woven into the border of the fabric which must have made cleaning with the appropriate cloth easier. A knife cloth, measuring 530 x 510mm or 21 x 20 inches was either stamped or stencilled with the owner's name and the date of purchase in indelible ink.[72] The item was of smooth tabby woven linen and purchased as one of a batch of 24 in 1909.

[72] NT DUD/T/057/2 Knife cloth, 1909

Figure 4:6: Knife cloth, author's photograph, Dudmaston, Shropshire, 1909,

The basin towel, used for wiping the basin, ewer and soap dishes that were provided in the bedrooms was in the same type of linen as the knife cloth, with the words Basin Towel woven into the border.[73] It also carried the words, 'All Linen' and 'Made in Ireland' and the marks MHR 24-31 had been machine embroidered into the corner, a service available in the Harrods catalogue of 1912 and presumably many other places. Both knife cloth and basin towel had two selvedges and two machined hems. The third cloth was a slop cloth.[74] This was a coarse twill weave linen, quite different from the other two cloths. A slop bucket carried the wastewater from the bedrooms. The slop cloth cleaned the chamber pots after they had been emptied and rinsed with wastewater. These cloths had belonged to Maude Hamilton-Russell, daughter of the 8th Viscount Boyne and aunt of Lady Labouchere, who with her husband gave Dudmaston to the National Trust in 1978.

The Role of Domestic Textiles

This careful management of commonplace textiles seemed to be a uniform feature of the English country house and exemplifies why identifying material culture solely with luxury is misleading, as Stobart and Rothery suggested.[75] The conspicuous consumption of the public areas of the country house needs to be seen against the careful maintenance that went into upholding the standards of hospitality and comfort that were the hallmark of such establishments. The mundane spending on domestic textiles involved in the preparation of foodstuffs, the cleaning and polishing of wood, glass, ceramics and silver and the laundering of linen was a vital contribution to the support of elite

[73] NT DUD/T/057/3 Basin towel, 1931
[74] NT DUD/T/057/1 Slop cloth, 1955
[75] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016) p.83

lifestyles. Although such textiles could be dismissed with a reference to 'Fourty one Towells and a parcell of old rubbers' as they were at Northill Manor in the inventory of 1731, that they had some value even second hand is evident in the sale of an assortment of such items at Wollaston Hall.[76] Behind the increasingly informal elegance of the country house was an intricate web of domestic management often embedded in the architectural arrangements of the building. Whilst the social house analysed by Girouard was its public face, roughly a third part of most country houses was devoted to the servicing of the lifestyle of family and guests creating what Sambrook described as 'the tripartite structure of the classic country house: family, management and workers'.[77] Towards the end of the period covered by this study, the service areas of the country house had often been extended or rebuilt into a complex of areas each with its own routine and its own domestic textiles. Whitley Court in Worcestershire was rebuilt in 1860 and its service area comprised the still room where items such as tray cloths and china cloths might be used; a knife room with its cloths; a shoe room no doubt with dusters as well as brushes; a lamp room and a china closet with separate specialist cloths; the pantry with glass cloths; the kitchen with dresser cloths, rubbers, oven cloths, and a variety of others such as the fish cloths, larder cloths, pudding cloths and meat bags as those also enumerated at Heacham Hall in the same period. Furthermore, the laundry at Whitley had been sub-divided into five distinct processes each with its own area and no doubt furnished with its mangling cloths, ironing blankets, swanskins and linen bags.[78] Even *The House Desirable* published in 1929, 'rendered comfortable by the installation of electric lighting, central heating, modern bathrooms and kitchen' would require domestic textiles.[79] Smallshaw, advising the servant-less, in addition to her suggestions for brooms, mechanical cleaners and cleaning materials provided a daunting list of dusters and cloths:

> Dusters, plain and impregnated with furniture oil if liked; floor-cloths; separate cloths for each of the following: bath, lavatory, paintwork, also for applying metal and silver polish, furniture polish, furniture-cream, cleaner for mirrors; clean cloths for 'rubbing up'; …linen scrim for windows; dust-sheets.[80]

Amongst the most obvious of the service areas was the kitchen whose equipment was dealt with equally thoroughly by Smallshaw. Whatman almost two hundred years earlier had insisted: 'The Cook should have all proper kitchen linen and keep it good and mended' which would contribute to

[76] BHRS Probate Inventory, Owen Bromsall, Northill Manor,1731; NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston Hall, 1805
[77] P. A. Sambrook, *A Country House at Work*, p.16
[78] NRO GUN 14 362x6 Household Inventory Heacham Hall, 1837
[79] P. A. Barron, *The House Desirable* (London, Methuen, 1929) p.2 quoted in C. Aslet, *The Last Country Houses* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1982) p.79
[80] K. Smallshaw, *How To Run Your Home Without Servants*, p.25

food preparation and storage.[81] As hospitality usually involved the offering of refreshment to guests and was expected to be both lavish and elegant the proper preparation of food was crucial to the reputation of the household. The care of prestigious china, glass and silver involved in the presentation of this hospitality was also dependent on these utilitarian items. The table linen itself, on which the refreshment was placed, owed its impact in large measure to the correct use of mangling cloths that imparted the high sheen to its surface, even as the public areas of the house where this entertainment was enacted were subject to regular regimes of cleaning in which these domestic textiles were prominent. Correct usage of these domestic materials as outlined in the handwritten instructions left by women like Lady Grisell Baillie, Susanna Whatman and Anne Fellowes and repeated in other household manuals during the period covered by this study, created a milieu that communicated wealth and observance of proper social standards.

These routines, designed to display the gentility and material wealth of the household to advantage, also contributed greatly to the physical comfort and convenience of its elite. The defining feature of this environment was quality both of possessions and of services. The hierarchical structure of servants within the country house and the seemingly uniform practices they followed ensured this quality. The young indoor servants first learned the correct ways to perform these tasks and their temporal organisation by executing them for more senior servants away from the public areas of the house. In time either through promotion or changing employer, their skills in the use of these domestic textiles and other utensils would be available in the public areas of the establishment. This expertise and scrupulous attention to detail contributed to the apparently relaxed atmosphere that became admired as 'English comfort' and remained a hallmark of country houses into the twentieth century.

Conclusions

As discussed in Chapter One, the concept of comfort had widened across the period covered here from its original spiritual succour to include physical comfort.[82] Technological advances made the English country house warmer, lighter and improved water supplies and drainage. This growing physical comfort whilst expensive to achieve, again allowed what were in effect luxuries to be presented as conveniences and morally acceptable rather than hedonistic. At the same time changes in architectural plans saw a greater separation of the service areas from the lived spaces of the elite.

[81] C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book,* p.44

[82] J. Crowley, From Luxury to Comfort and Back Again: Landscape Architecture and the Cottage in Britain and America pp.134-147 in M. Berg, E. Eger, (eds) *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003) p.135; J. Stobart, C. Prytz, 'Comfort in English and Swedish country houses, c. 1760-1820', *Social History* 43:2 (2018) pp.234-258

Routines of housework, while still rooted in displaying status and respectability through cleanliness were now performed around the daily life of the family and guests, ensuring minimum contact between them and the servants using the domestic textiles. The American Washington Irving visiting Aston Hall near Birmingham in 1821 wrote:

> You are not persecuted by the process of making you comfortable; yet everything is done well. The work of the house is performed as if by magic, but it is the magic of a system…The whole goes on like well-oiled clockwork, where there is no noise nor jarring in its operations[83]

These routines were supported by a wide range of specialist domestic textiles found particularly amongst the later inventories and sales catalogues. Their use was enshrined in routines that enabled the owners of the country house to project a domestic environment that was both showcase of status and power and comfortable home. This growing desire for a more relaxed lifestyle was recognised by Girouard as 'the arrival of informality' which he placed between 1770 and 1830, although DeJean highlighted this trend in France at an earlier date.[84] Both writers recognised this informality was accompanied by not only a quest for more physical comfort but also for more privacy. The separation of service areas and the introduction of systems of bells to summon more distant servants and the conviction that they should not be seen performing their elaborate routines of housework were a mark of this.

Vickery notes the desire for more intimate and relaxed surroundings achieved by Lord Shelbourne and his wife, referring to Lady Shelbourne's diary entry in 1767, 'spent the whole evening Tete a Tete in my dressing room writing letters and talking', and to Hester Hoare at Stourhead in search of 'snugitude'.[85] Jane Austen's mother, writing to Mary Lloyd, then her daughter-in-law, from Stoneleigh Abbey in 1806 described the state rooms as 'rather gloomy, Brown wainscoat & dark Crimson furniture, so we never use them but to walk thro' them to the old picture Gallery'.[86] Perhaps this area had been rendered more informal in the manner described in 1778 by Mrs Lybbe Powys at Middleton Park in Oxfordshire as 'a most excellent library …besides a good collection of books there is every other kind of amusement, as billiards and other tables'.[87] The country house, though still resplendent and marking the power and status of its owners through the organisation of its rooms

[83] W. Irving, *Bracebridge Hall* (London, John Murray, 1822) p. 28 Available: https://archive.org/details/bracebridgehall0000wash/page/28/mode/2up (Accessed: 09.02.2024)
[84] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, Yale, 1978) pp.214-244; J. DeJoan, *The Age of Comfort* (New York & London, Bloomsbury, 2009) p.4
[85] A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2009) p.147
[86] D. Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* 2nd edn (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004) p.155
[87] M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, p.234

and furniture, was becoming a place to live, yet this lifestyle was still supported by older traditions of service that rendered the house warm, light and clean and promoted the health and well-being of its inhabitants. In pursuit of such goals domestic textiles were an important factor.

These domestic textiles also preserved and enhanced the positional goods within the country house, creating the orderly setting for the display of exclusive items proclaiming pedigree and status. The mundane, everyday tasks performed with these domestic textiles not only secured the comfort of the present occupants but also ensured the contents of the country house were preserved for future generations. This in turn increased the psychological ease of the elite by connecting them with their prestigious past and focussing on the continuance of their role into the future as Lewis recognised.[88] This quality of service, increasingly invisible to the elite occupants, eased everyday life and created the ambience of informality that was the hallmark of 'English comfort' until the changing circumstances of the inter-war years threatened it. Whilst domestic textiles are an aspect of the household economy that has been seldom visited, these everyday practices formed part of the expenditure of the country house and underpinned its social structure.

[88] J. S. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009) pp.336-363

Chapter Five

"…a constant care and attention is required": the care and maintenance of household linen

Context

Chapter Five explores the care and maintenance of household linen and finds these processes exemplified the status of the country house. The production and upkeep of these materials were indicative of the levels of skill within the household whilst the routines of care embodied concepts of respectability and morality. The prudent management of these resources demonstrated models of thrift. It was a deep-seated belief amongst the landed elite that their inherited estates were held in trust for future generations and it was their responsibility to husband and if possible improve their condition.[1] Consequently amongst females, in addition to accomplishments, it was considered an advantage to have some practical skill in the domestic sphere to ensure the smooth running of the household, upholding the status of the family and seeing that due economy was observed. [2] *Domestic Economy,* a household advice manual published in 1815, aspired 'to unite in the female character, cultivation of talents and habits of economy and usefulness; particularly domestic habits.'[3] Sambrook discussed how the apparently effortless quality of goods and services that defined the country house were achieved through professional management 'which aimed to curb waste and excess'.[4] However, as Susanna Whatman wrote in her *Housekeeping Book,* 'The mistress of a large family can neither afford the time, nor have it in her power, to see what her servants are about, she must depend upon a Housekeeper to see all her orders are enforced and every rule kept.'[5] Some housekeepers like Mrs Philippa Hayes enjoyed considerable freedom in her running of Charlecote Park as her employer George Lucy remained unmarried and was frequently absent; others like Hester Davis who served for many years in Susanna Whatman's household worked more closely with their mistress.[6] The housekeeper was usually in charge of the female servants, whose number varied not only according to the size and disposable income of the house but also across the

[1] J. Stobart & M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p.148; J. V. Beckett, 'Patterns of Landownership in England and Wales 1660-1880' *The Economic History Review* 37:1 (1984) pp.1-22, p7
[2] R. Baird, *Mistress of the House: Great ladies and grand houses* (London, Phoenix, 2004) pp.30-46
[3] *Domestic Economy* (Liverpool, Nuttall, Fisher & Dixon, 1815) p. iii
[4] P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) p.4
[5] S. Whatman, *Housekeeping Book*, 1776 quoted in C. Hardyment, *Home Comforts: A History of Domestic Arrangements* (London, Viking, 1992) p.37
[6] J. Stobart, 'Housekeeper, correspondent and confidant: The untold story of Mrs. Hayes of Charlecote Park 1744-73' *Family & Community History* 21:2 (2018) pp.96-111; C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book of Susanna Whatman* (London, Pimlico, 1987) p.4

period of this study.[7] A house such as Shugborough in Staffordshire regularly employed eight housemaids in addition to laundry maids and female kitchen staff from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, reducing to four in the 1930s with the introduction of electricity.[8] It was amongst this female staff that the skills required for the successful management and maintenance of the household linen were to be found.

This chapter covers five inter-related aspects of the care and maintenance of the articles of household linen exemplified in the previous chapters. Much of the evidence for their presence in the country house has come from the lists compiled either for probate at the death of the owner or for its management during their lifetime, consequently the audit and storage of linen is dealt with first. Until the adoption of sewing machines in the late nineteenth century, all these items would have been sewn by hand and the construction of items, either within the country house or externally is considered next. The construction of new pieces of household linen required skill in 'plain sewing' - basically in hemming and in back stitch. Additional techniques were required for marking and repairing them, consequently these aspects are examined together. The system of marking which appears standardised across the sources seen, enabled staff to keep track of the many articles of linen in circulation or storage at the same time as ensuring the rotation of items for optimum wear and their progress through laundering.

These procedures, exemplified in the earlier records such as the inventory of linen dated 1637 amongst papers from Stoneleigh and listing childbed linen, pre-date the extant household manuals and advice that became popular from the eighteenth century onwards, showing that the routines advocated within these publications were rooted in the good practice of traditional establishments. [9] Those handwritten household manuals, such as Susanna Whatman's outlining the duties and routines required of different servants, have also shed light on the procedures and strategies involved in the successful management of household linen addressed here and clearly demonstrate the enduring importance of these commodities, as Lily Frazer's *First Aid to the Servantless* stressed in 1913.[10]

[7] T. Boase, *The Housekeeper's Tale: The women who really ran the English country house* (London, Aurum Press, 2015)
[8] P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant*, p.74
[9] SCLA DR 18/4/25 Inventory [Stoneleigh Abbey?] 1637
[10] L. Delap, *Knowing Their Place: Domestic service in twentieth-century Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014) pp.98-155

Visualising Care and Maintenance

The careful maintenance of household linen usually fell within the remit of the housekeeper. Tusser, writing in 1557 advised the housewife to make a quarterly audit of her servants' bedclothes and that all the sheets and blankets should be labelled for identification. His *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* went through twenty-three editions before 1638. The advice in it may have had its roots in earlier publications or in the personal experience of Tusser himself the younger son of a gentry family.[11] Swift's satirical *Directions to Servants* published in 1745 and referenced in Chapter Four, lampoons household instruction manuals suggesting these items, though familiar to his readers have either not survived or not yet been uncovered. It is likely they contained similar advice to later surviving volumes like Hannah Glasse's *Servant's Directory or Housekeeper's Companion* published in 1760 that recommended regular inventories of household equipment including linen to check for depreciation.

Barnard, mentioned in the literature review refers to three linen inventories in his survey of Irish country house life and this practice was certainly followed by housekeepers like Mrs Philippa Hayes at Charlecote Park.[12] She first reviewed the linen in August 1752 recording it within a new parchment bound book. Different sections detail linen for the household or for servants and she revisited it alternately approximately every six months, recording her progress thus: '1755 April y^{r} 24 Looked over all y^{r} Linnen, all right, no addition here' or '1756 Oct 27 looked over sheets all right here except one pair w^{h} Rich'd took to Naples'. Hayes recorded the type and origin of purchases and indicated distinguishing marks such as initials and numbers, a practice addressed later in this chapter. These would presumably assist in tracking laundered items and ensure they were rotated to even out their wear. The book also lists 'Sheets for Common Use' and beneath this a mixture of sheets both for her employer's bed and for servants presumably with the remaining linen in storage. Table linen was reviewed in the same fashion.

Several other linen books were used during this study. The Inventory Book for Serlby Hall, Nottinghamshire was maintained for forty years in the eighteenth century giving valuable insight into the continuity of the daily routines of the lived environment of a country house across several generations.[13] Life-cycle events may have occasioned the formal inventories of linen taken in 1735,

[11] M. Roberts, '"To bridle the falsehood of unconscionable workmen, and for her own satisfaction": what the Jacobean housewife needed to know about men's work, and why' *Labour History Review* 63:1 (1998) pp.4-30
[12] T. Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure: Lives and Possessions in Ireland 1641-1770* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2014) p.259; WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[13] NUSC Ga1/12701 Inventory Book, Serlby Hall, 1735-75

1742, 1751 and 1772 with various updates in the intervening years. Serlby was purchased by John Monckton in 1727 when he was created Viscount Galway. The first entry of 1735 probably marked the arrival of his second wife whom he married in 1734. She was from an Irish estate and the 'Linnen from Dublin' including '21 new p^{r} Servants sheets m^{kd} G with coronet' in that first inventory might have been purchased through her or may indeed have been either wedding gifts or goods stored against setting up a household, though this is speculation. The inventory in 1751 was probably occasioned by the death of the first viscount, that of 1772 by the accession to the title of the third. Some of the intervening entries give insight into the management of the resources there as well as regard for economy. One dozen small napkins listed in 1751 were noted 'taken as towels 1756'; one ell of large check linen from the linen press was made into chair covers, possibly to protect more prestigious decorative textiles as Cornforth stated and discussed in Chapter Five. The entry in 1762 'cut off the piece of huckerback 22 y^{ds} for 6 table cloths for London for the childrens Table' indicates the flow of household linen between country and town house referenced by McCarthy in Chapter One.[14] It is difficult to identify the precise replacement of items within such linen books but an entry in 1751 listing '10 p^{r} of Parsons Sheets old and mended' must link to one of 1756 viz. '7 p^{r} y^{d} wide of homespun sheets for Parsons Bed'.

Other household records of linen were of shorter duration, such as that of Hassop Hall, Derbyshire containing a listing for 1860 and an update in 1867.[15] This may indicate a change in housekeepers, as Lady Mary Eyre who inherited Hassop Hall died in 1853 and her husband, who lived to 1870, did not remarry. It is also a reminder that the exhortations of perfection advocated in the household manuals were not always achieved. Another reading of it may be that such documents were less likely to be retained amongst family papers, unlike estate records, and have therefore not survived. Tissington Hall had a similar book though this too contains a full listing only for 1848.[16] However it also attests to the careful management of linen as a resource and points to habits of economy, since it included three large diaper tablecloths used by servants that were 'joined up the middle'. All the linen was marked in the usual way as discussed below. Initials indicated that the linen was mainly purchased by Henry Fitzherbert who was the third baronet but some of the table linen purchased by his father and grandfather was still in use. The linen inventory for Thoresby Hall, principal house of the Earls Manvers in Nottinghamshire, is dated 1907 yet contained several tablecloths from the early nineteenth century and sheets from the 1880s.[17] This inventory was maintained with a record of new

[14] J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2004) p.97; P. McCarthy, *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2016) p.150
[15] DRO D7676/Bag C/372B Housekeeper's Inventory, Hassop Hall, 1860
[16] DRO D239/M/E/5102 Notebook & list of linen, 1839-64
[17] NUSC Ma2 I/2 Inventory of linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907

purchases until a final entry in 1937. In this, sheets marked 1895 were described as 'very thin' in 1907 as were others of 1902 itemised 'very thin; out of stock 1915', and 12 brown bath towels of 1918 ended 'taken for Doggie 1931'. The care and attention given to reviewing linen and to its upkeep reflects not only the monetary value of the commodity but also its moral significance as evidence of a well-ordered household, as Lady Grisell Baillie insisted in her instructions to her housekeeper: '…a constant care and attention is required to every thing that there be no waste nor anything neglected that should be don'.[18]

The household inventories such as these seem to indicate that although blankets, counterpanes and pillows were stored in situ, most linen was either being laundered or kept in storage until required. Whilst no reference has been found to confirm this supposition, only one inventory in the sources consulted included reference to 'the sheets upon the beds' within the household items being listed.[19] Hayes' Household Book for Charlecote Park gave information on its careful storage quite incidentally, as her account began 'In the Black Trunck in y^{r} Linnen Garrett'; similarly an inventory for 1637 for Stoneleigh Abbey began 'In the Chest wth Iron Band' [?].[20] Locating where the linen was stored in the other sources used has not been so straightforward. In some probate inventories the positioning of the list of linen may indicate the locality of its storage; in others it is appended together with lists of copper, pewter and brass. In the sales catalogues, although sales took place in situ, the linen often featured within the catalogue at the end of a day of sales rather than in its original location. In only 4 of 23 Northampton sales catalogues does the linen appear to have been within or next door to the housekeeper's room. At Geddington House, linen listed immediately after a 'Housemaid's Closet' possibly had its own closet and at Stamford Baron the linen was immediately after a 'Small Bedroom'. [21]

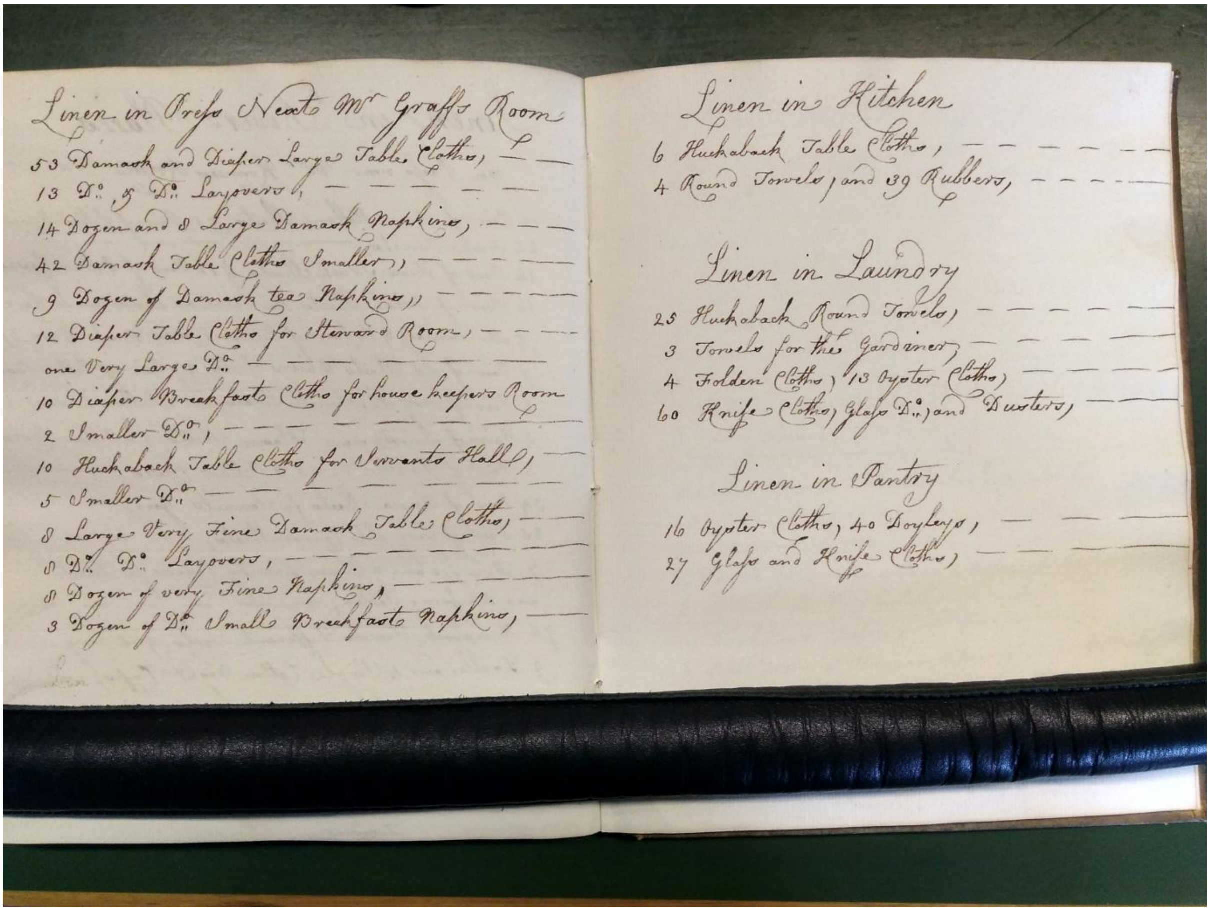
This may imply there was no uniform place for the storage of linen. In the Montagu inventories, linen was listed at Montagu House in 1709 immediately after the service areas and before the stable yard. The implication is that the linen was stored in that area possibly near to a laundry and drying area which was often at the edge of households, as were stables. However in 1733 at the same house, the linen was in Room 99, designated as the housekeeper's room and the same storage arrangement was shown that year at the new Montagu House in Whitehall.[22] The inventory for

[18]R. Scott-Moncrieff, (ed) *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie 1692-173*3 https://archive.org/details/householdbookofl00bailrich (Accessed: 08.02.2023)
[19] WHS Probate Inventory (116): Sir John Dineley Goodere of Charlton, 1741
[20] SCLA DR18/4/25 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1637
[21] NCL M0005645NL/10 Sales Catalogue, Geddington House, 1828
[22] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) p.22, p.45, p.59

Warwick Castle for 1806 recorded a store room and a still room with the list of linen immediately following, so it may have been adjacent to these.[23] Linen appeared to be in a store closet on the ground floor at Temple Newsam when it was purchased by the Earl of Hertford in 1808 and at Grove Park, property of Lord Dormer, the linen was in a store room along the passage from the housekeeper's room in numbered trunks.[24] At Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk in 1863 the linen was itemised shelf by shelf in several presses with seven shelves in each. A further listing in the same document named a 'kitchen landing press', again with multiple shelves that appeared to be full of servants' sheets and domestic linen such as round towels, rubbers and glass cloths. This may indicate such items were stored readily to hand in other inventories that are not so specific in their designations.[25]

Robert Kerr in his influential mid-nineteenth century *The Gentleman's House* advised that roughly half the total floor space would be required for domestic offices; 'Every servant, every operation, every utensil, every fixture should have a right place and no right place but one' implying well designed houses would have an optimum space for everything including linen storage. His near contemporary J.J. Stevenson however, lamented such purpose-built spaces 'if they increase the facility of doing the work, they increase the labour of the house and necessitate a greater number of servants'.[26] At Calke Abbey the 'laundry stairs' stretch from the wash house and laundry to the second floor. At the top of them and alongside the principal bedrooms where clean sheets and towels would be required frequently by family and visitors is a small unidentified room. Could that have been the linen store?[27] Wherever it was stored, linen needed to be dry and secure from vermin and insects; it might also be warm as was the early twentieth century linen cupboard haunt of the Mitford sisters.[28] The identification of a designated space within the country house is again evidence of the importance of household linen, along with the other collections of objects that demonstrated the taste, wealth and status of the owner such as plate, china and glassware. However, the absence of such an area, as at Stoneleigh Abbey, does not imply the linen store was negligible. Here the linen listed in the 1806 inventory (See Fig. 5:1) begins 'Linen in Divers Places' and starts with that 'In the Press near Mrs Kineer's [?] Room', before moving to 'The Press Nexte Mr Graff's Room' and ending with 'Linnen in Kitchen', the laundry and the pantry. It included over 1700 items.[29]

[23] WRO CR 1886/TN 1053 Inventory, Warwick Castle, 1806
[24] WRO CR 114/2/1 Sales Contract, Temple Newsam, 1808; WRO CR 595/49 Inventory, Grove Park, 1819
[25] NRO WKC 6/480 464x Felbrigg Inventory, 1863
[26] Quoted in C. Hardyment, *Home Comforts*, p.15
[27] H. Colvin, *Calke Abbey, Derbyshire: A Hidden House Revealed* (London, Antler Books, 1985) p.115
[28] N. Mitford, *The Pursuit of Love* (London, Penguin, reissue 2015) p.13
[29] SCLA DR18/4/59 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1806



Linen in Press Next to Mr Graffs Room
53 Damask and Diaper Large Table Cloths,
13 Do. & Do. Layovers,
14 Dozen and 8 Large Damask Napkins,
42 Damask Table Cloths Smaller,
9 Dozen of Damask tea Napkins,
12 Diaper Table Cloths for Steward Room,
one Very Large Do.
10 Diaper Breakfasts Cloths for house keepers Room
2 Smaller Do.,
10 Huckaback Table Cloths for Servants Hall,
5 Smaller Do.
8 Large Very Fine Damask Table Cloths,
8 Do. Do. Layovers,
8 Dozen of very Fine Napkins,
3 Dozen of Do. Small Breakfasts Napkins,

Linen in Kitchen
6 Huckaback Table Cloths,
4 Round Towels, and 39 Rubbers,

Linen in Laundry
25 Huckaback Round Towels,
3 Towels for the Gardiner,
4 Folden Cloths, 13 Oyster Cloths,
60 Knife Cloths, Glass Do., and Dusters,

Linen in Pantry
16 Oyster Cloths, 40 Doyleys,
27 Glass and Knife Cloths,

Figure 5:1: Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, Warwickshire, 1806

Wherever the linen was stored, it appears from the format of the listing in both sales catalogues and inventories to have been in bundles as the description of ’linen in use’ recorded at Heydon Hall, Norfolk confirms.[30] Here each shelf within the linen store is pinpointed with its contents. Tablecloths with their napkins are listed in the ‘first partition’ whereas all the sheets and items described as ‘bedding’ were stacked on the eight shelves within the ‘second partition’ of the store. At Knebworth House, the items were stored in trunks and chests rather than a press, each bundle wrapped for protection like ‘six fine huckerback towels folded in an old one’, itself within ‘one course sheet the linin in Trunk is put inside’.[31] The marked preference for trunks, chests and presses may reflect a need to protect it from vermin.[32] Reference to the strong smell of sheets brought out of storage described here by Lord Lyttleton, may also indicate this:

> …but the best bed was prepared for me, and the fine Holland sheets, which,
> probably, had not been taken out of the sweet-scented press for many a month,

[30] HALS K480 Inventory Heydon, Norfolk, 1798
[31] HALS 57425 Inventory of Plate, China, Linen, Knebworth House, 1808
[32] T. Barnard, *Making the Grand Figure*, p.298

were prepared for my repose: nor would my slumbers have been suspended for a moment if the linnen had not produced so strong an effluvia of rosemary, that I almost fancied myself in a coffin, and was wrapped in a winding sheet.[33]

The extract also provides an indication of the meanings placed on bed linen and particularly sheets within the context of the country house which was discussed in Chapter Two.

Most of the items audited and stored in the country house would have been made by hand certainly until the early twentieth century. References to pieces of fabric were found within probate and household inventories and sales catalogues alongside the other items of household linen and household accounts noted purchases of cloth. Anne Parkyns, the spinster sister of Sir Thomas Parkyns of Bunny in Nottinghamshire, left '13 ells of fine holland, 9 ells of holland in remnants' and 'nine yards of homespun Cloath and coarse' amongst her household linen in the inventory made at her death in 1711.[34] Other inventories listing lengths of cloth include Boughton's of 1709 with 10 yards of new flaxen cloth and its 1718 inventory with six yards. Montagu House had 6 yards 'new second sheeting cloth' and 21 yards 'new cloth for servants pillow beers'. Houghton's inventory of 1792 includes 21 yards fine and 20 yards of coarse cloth. Cloth was included in the sale of Pitchley Hall in 1816 where 17 yards of bleached Russia duck was listed and more extensively in the sale of Ashford Hall where 135 yards of fabric and 'remnants of sundries' were offered.[35]

These quantities suggest fabric was bought in lengths and subsequently cut and sewn into the required items. The 1738 inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey included lengths of linen of different qualities totalling 85 yards prior to listing the sheets, implying the fabric was intended for that purpose whilst a nineteenth century inventory for Calke Abbey had a total of 167 yards of sheeting in addition to its astonishing 484 sheets and 76 servants' sheets. The inventory for Colwick Hall, the property of Lord Downe, made in 1813 included in excess of 500 yards of fabric, some purchased like the '3 webs of Irish Cloth 33 y^{ds} each', some like '18½ y^{ds} of Common Homespun Table cloth' identified as locally produced.[36] More specifically references in the Inventory Book of Serlby Hall recorded 'Linnen from Dublin' including 'not made up, 1 pr fine sheets; 3pr not so fine' and '3 pr course' and that of Loco Park of 1782 listed '3 pair coarse D^{o} [sheets] unmade' and the Stanford Hall sale of 1792 offered as Lot 16 'Three pair of Ditto, [strong sheets] two pair unmade'.[37] Lot 27 in the

[33] *Letters of the late Lord Lyttleton, Vol II* (London, 1782) ECCO CW3315205238
[34] NUSC Pa F 29 Inventory Anne Parkyns, 1711
[35] M000564NL/15 Sale catalogue Pychley Hall, 1816; DRO D7674B/4/2/9 Sale of Ashford Hall, 1817
[36] NYAS ZDS IV 11/5/4 Household Inventory, Colwick Hall, 1813
[37] NUSC Ga/12701 Inventory Book Serlby Hall, 1735-75; SCLA DR18/4/9 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1738; NUSC Dr H6-8 Inventory of Linnen of R^{d} Lowe Esq. 1782; NCL M0005646NL, Sales Catalogue, Stamford Hall, 1792; DRO D2375/H/F/1/2 Inventory of household goods, Calke Abbey, c1839

sale of Wollaston Hall in Northampton in 1805 offered 'Two pair of fine Irish sheets, 4 yards long and 3 yards wide and 2 pair of pillow cases'.

This would seem to require fifty-six yards of hemming and thirty-two yards of backstitch for these sheets alone and the sale offered 14 identical lots before moving on to the 31 pairs of other sheets without specified dimensions.[38] Inder said it was estimated that a seamstress could create thirty-five stitches per minute, though she doesn't specify what type of stitch, so these two pairs of 'fine Irish sheets' might have required over one hundred hours of work.[39] Table cloths could be up to seven and a half yards long and three wide with one or two dozen napkins up to a yard square in a set. The listing of '2 piece Birds Eye for napkins unmade 22 y^{ds} each' together with '1 piece diaper for tablecloths 14y^{ds}' and '2 pieces for napkins 25y^{ds} each' represents some 104 yards of diaper fabric awaiting sewing with a further '1d^{zn} fine half diamond damask napkins not made up'.[40]Although it is clear from some sources that extensive refurbishments of linen accompanied life-cycle events such as inheritance of an estate rather than being a regular occurrence, this projected table linen and the replacement of items such as '7 p^{r} y^{d} wide of homespun [sheets] for Parson's bed' would have represented considerable undertakings.[41]

It was still possible to obtain five different types of fabric for sheeting in varying widths and qualities, as well as 'dresser cloth' in 36yd lengths from Harrods catalogue in 1912 ranging in price from 1s. 1/½d. to 2s. 5d per yard, indicating that some customers still preferred to make up their own household linen rather than purchase the range of ready-made items offered alongside.[42] By this time, it is likely that such items were hemmed with a sewing machine rather than by hand, as the first practical Singer machine was patented in 1885 although few references to such equipment have been found in this study.[43] An exception was found in the accounts for Otterington Hall in Yorkshire where there were records of the purchase of machine needles at 1s a packet and for the servicing of a sewing machine in 1939, possibly indicating a shortage of servants with sewing skills by that time.[44] A household inventory at Thoresby Hall listed 24 y^{ds} of linen and the same of calico in 1920 suggesting sheets were still being made on site. Amongst its sheets were '12 p^{r} hemstitched'. This previously laborious hand technique could be achieved by industrial machines by this date though it

[38] NCL M0005644NL/5 Sales Catalogue, Wollaston Hall, 1805
[39] P. Inder, *Shirts, Shifts and Sheets of Fine Linen: British Seamstresses from the 17th to the 19th Centuries* (London, Bloomsbury, 2024) p. 166
[40] DRO D258/45/37/2 Inventory of Goods at Bannercross, 1765
[41] NUSC Ga1/12701 Inventory Serlby Hall, 1735-75
[42] *Harrods For Everything*, Catalogue, 1912 https://archive.org/details/harrods-for-everything-images/page/1498/mode/2up (Accessed: 13.08.2023)
[43] T. Boase, *The Housekeeper's Tale*, p.50
[44] NYAS ZFN 2/5 Housekeeping Book, Otterington Hall, 1933-73

is not possible from the entry to ascertain how these particular items had been made.[45] However, entries in Warwick Castle's Household Accounts for February 1665 not only showed the purchase of fabric but also included payments for making sheets and an early reference to ready-made items.

Item	183 ells ¼ of Flaxen cloath for Sheets	018:17:09
Item	40 ells of Hempen cloath for Sheets	002:15:01
Item	for making Sheets	000:14:08

Further entries in 1667 refer to bed linen:

Item	To Mr Thorowgood Linnen Draper his Bill	055:00:00
Item	for 2 pre of Sheets 2 pillow Beres and 2 Towells	002:10:00
Item	To Mr Prieulx for 2 Bills for Holland for Sheets	033:12:06
Item	For making 36 pares of Sheets	003:00:06 [46]

Sewing sheets must have come within the activities described by Weatherill in her investigation of patterns of consumption referenced in Chapter One as 'numerous, time-consuming and arduous activities necessarily undertaken in all households'.[47] That upper class women began sewing at an early age is evident not only from the extant stitched samplers but also from written records. Burman and Fennetaux included this note of 1786 from Charlotte Papendiek, companion to Queen Charlotte, recalling her four-year-old daughter's early education: 'She could stitch a pocket, she read prettily, and now began to write'. They go on to affirm:

> Elite and gentry girls were often part of an industrious and visible culture of needlework among their mothers and other relatives, who also employed their servants to undertake sewing on a regular basis and even extra occasional hands as needed.[48]

It is unclear whether work of this type would be undertaken by the females of elite families, as this extract from an advice manual published in 1792 admonished:

> The intention of your being taught needle-work, knitting and such like, is not on account of the intrinsic value of all you can do with your hands, which is trifling, but

[45] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[46] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1667)
[47] L. Weatherill, The Meaning of Consumer Behaviour in later Seventeenth and early Eighteenth-Century England pp.206-227 in R. Porter, J. Brewer (eds) *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, Routledge, 1993) p.214
[48] B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket: A Hidden History of Women's Lives* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2019) p.67

> to enable you to judge more perfectly of that kind of work, and to direct the execution of it in others.[49]

Whilst this supports the premise that work such as making up sheets would be supervised by the mistress of a household rather than undertaken by her, participation may have been determined by factors such as the size of estate and income supporting the household. Certainly Hester Chapone, in her work of 1793, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Lady*, indicated that 'plain work' had its benefits:

> Ladies who are fond of needlework, generally choose to consider that as a principal part of good housewifery: and, though I cannot look upon it as of equal importance with the due regulation of a family, yet, in a middling rank, and with a moderate fortune, it is a necessary part of a woman's duty, and a considerable article in expense is saved by it.[50]

Long, on the other hand, in her investigation of the experiences of needlewomen in the eighteenth century acknowledged that very few women who kept diaries made reference to their sewing activities; thus, despite it being repeatedly invoked by contemporary authors as a domestic activity embodying an acceptable image of femininity, it is difficult to identify the types of sewing undertaken or their duration.[51] There are many examples of stitched chair covers, cushions and embroidered pictures undertaken by elite women but their involvement in 'plain work' is more difficult to substantiate.

Conversely, there were a number of references to the inclusion of plain sewing as a desirable skill in working-class women, large numbers of whom found employment as household servants at some point in their lives into the twentieth century.[52] In 1732, the Countess of Shrewsbury established a school in Hatfield for forty poor girls to be taught 'to Read, Sew, Knit and Mark [linen] in order to fit them for service'.[53] A number of similar schools were set up in the eighteenth century specifically to offer instruction in textiles to poor girls. Hill quotes an eighteenth-century essay outlining the

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[49] Dr Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London, 1792) quoted in B. Long, '" Regular Progressive Work Occupies My Mind Best": Needlework as a Source of Entertainment, Consolation and Reflection' *Textil*e:14:2 (2016) pp.176-187

[50] Quoted in N. Pohl," To embroider what is wanting": Making, consuming and mending textiles in the lives of the Bluestockings pp.67-82 in S. Dyer, C. Wigston-Smith (eds), *Material Literacy in Eighteenth Century Britain: A Nation of Makers* (London, Bloomsbury, 2020) p.69

[51] B. Long, '" Regular Progressive Work Occupies My Mind Best": Needlework as a Source of Entertainment, Consolation and Reflection' *Textile*:14:2 (2016) pp.176-187

[52] L. Schwarz, 'English servants and their employers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' *Economic History Review 52:2* (1999) pp.236 -256; S. Todd, 'Domestic Service and Class Relations in Britain 1900-1950' *Past & Present* 203:2 (2009) pp. 181-204; A. Light, *Mrs. Woolf and the Servants* (London, Penguin Books, 2008)

[53] Quoted in B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p.96

required education for the female labouring poor. 'In addition to reading' she [Priscilla Wakefield] included 'Plain work, Knitting, marking, cutting-out, and mending linen'.[54] Sarah Trimmer set up an industrial school in Brentford in 1786 and although it was ultimately unsuccessful, her ideas on a suitable curriculum were published in *The Economy of Charity*. Trimmer advocated that the rudiments of literacy be mixed with 'industrial training' in spinning and needlework, the produce of which should render the schools self-financing, emphasising that 'no *Charity Girl* can be deemed properly educated who has not attained to a tolerable proficiency at her needle'. [55]

An Irish charitable institute, the Kildare Society, published manuals to standardise the teaching of 'plain work' in its schools. In the first class, girls were taught what length of thread to cut and how to sew back stitch, working first on paper and then on samples of fabric. They progressed to common tasks associated with garment construction before finally being instructed in darning damask and ways of finishing raw edges.[56] This idea had also been developed by Mary and Sarah Lancaster, sisters of the better-known Joseph, whose monitorial system offered accessible education to poor pupils. Girl pupil monitors supervised sewing lessons that were graded into eleven numbered lessons, including hemming and seaming, darning and marking so that girls 'will be proficient in all kinds of work'.[57] A number of other such schools were established, some of which generated the expected income from their 'plain work'.[58] The Female Orphan Asylum and School of Industry in Cheltenham which is currently being studied by Teague, was established under the patronage of Queen Charlotte in 1806 and taught a range of plain sewing to the girls including garment construction, enabling some to work as ladies' maids.[59] They also offered a sewing service for a range of personal linen and for household textiles, charging 8d to 1s.0d per pair for coarse sheets and 1s.0d to 1s.4d for fine ones, in order to provide practice for the girls and revenue for the orphanage.[60] This range in prices reflected the number of stitches required per inch as the finer the fabric, the higher the stitch count.[61] Dolan related that girls in The Foundling Hospital were expected to learn plain sewing. Indeed, in a twelve-month period from June 1750, in addition to constructing about 1,300

[54] B. Hill, *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1996) p.146
[55] V. Richmond, *Clothing the Poor* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) p.98
[56] Royal School of Needlework Collection Online Talk: *Embroidery and Needlework in Education*, A. Hare, (24.02.2021)
[57] B. Long, 'Anonymous Needlework: Uncovering British Patchwork 1680-1820' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2014) p.159
[58] M.A. Garry, '" After they went I worked": Mrs Larpent and her Needlework, 1790-1800' *Costume* 39:1 (2005) pp. 91-9
[59] J. Teague 'The life of a lady's maid' *Embroidery* Vol 75:1 (2024) pp.50- 51
[60] Exhibition: *Making, Mending, Marking,* Holst's Victorian House, Cheltenham Nov 2023 –Feb 2024
[61] P. Inder, *Shirts, Shifts and Sheets of Fine Linen* (London, Bloomsbury, 2024) p.11

garments for other Foundlings, they sewed 40 pairs of sheets and 'turned and mended' 18 other pairs.[62]

Such instruction as was available apparently did not prevent 'a constant source of complaint that servants know not how to work well at their needle' being voiced in 1861.[63] However, plain work was being taught in the elementary school system to those girls who were able to attend. A directive in 1862 stated that although needlework was not to be examined, the grant for achievement in the tested subjects must be 'withheld altogether …if the girls in the school be not taught plain needlework as part of the ordinary course of instruction'. This gave the subject a status it retained into the new curricula after the establishment of local board schools in the late nineteenth century. Looking back at her childhood at the turn of the twentieth century, Flora Thompson recalled 'plain sewing was still looked upon as an important part of a girl's education'.[64] So, whether they were taught at home or in classes, female servants with the requisite skills would have plenty of sewing required of them amongst the household linen of a country house in the earlier period of the study, but did this remain a constant throughout it?

Some references to the tasks of sewing household linen have been found within the sources studied particularly household accounts. A serving woman called Magdalene appears in the seventeenth century accounts of Anne, Lady Brooke, mistress of Warwick Castle tasked with various duties [probably at their London house]:

To Magdalene for cleaning the house 1 y^{r}	000:15:00
To her for washing sheets & towels and making beds for the Accomptant, 1y^{r} to Xmas 68	000:17:06
To Magdalene for making 2 py^{s} of sheetes	000:00:08 [65]

At about the same time an entry in the accounts of Mary, Countess Cowper shows half a year's wages being paid to a woman for stitching table linen, although sadly no indication of what the amount was, although later in the accounts there is reference to 'Marking linen for all demands ½ years wages £11.2s.0d'.[66] *The Complete Servant* written in 1825 recognized sewing as a task for the housemaid; 'In most families she has the care of all the household linen, bed and table linen,

[62] A. Dolan, 'The Fabric of Life: Linen and Life-Cycle' (unpublished PhD. Thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2015) https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.686161 (Accessed: 08.02.21) p.178
[63] Quoted from A Lady, *A Method for Teaching Plain Needlework* (London, 1861) in V. Richmond, *Clothing the Poor* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) p.99
[64] F. Thompson, *Lark Rise to Candleford* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963) p.334
[65] WRO MI/ 297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1668)
[66] HALS D/EP/A7 Accounts Mary, Countess Cowper, 1702-10

napkins, towels etc. which she also makes and keeps in repair…under the direction of the housekeeper'.[67] In Sambrook's study of country house servants she noted that housemaids in the 1920s were expected to assist in whatever sewing or mending was required once their cleaning duties were completed. This situation had changed little since *The Housekeepers Oracle* of 1812 outlined the schedule for a housemaid: 'Dust and lay all smooth by One. Clean yourself ready for Needlework or whatever may be required by half past'.[68]

A search through *The Times* digital archive indicated that advertisements for domestic servants were placed less frequently in the earlier copies of the newspaper. Amongst situations either sought or offered for the period from 1st January 1815 to 31st December 1819 were just over 200 insertions relating to housemaids rather than kitchen or nursery staff. Of these 61% either offered or were required to 'work well at her needle'. In contrast, an advertisement for October 27th, 1818, specified that even though she 'can get up small linen and laces in the neatest manner required' she 'will undertake no needlework', implying this was frequently expected in such a position.[69] Half a century later, advertisements for situations vacant and wanted were a regular feature in the paper and not just for the London area. These were now for housemaids and parlour maids specifying duties such as waiting at table and answering the door. Just one year, 1874, yielded a similar number of advertisements to the first sample but only 8% of positions required or offered needlework skills. One such in January specified the applicant 'must be good plain needlewoman' and offered £14 per annum and another on 11th May 1874 required 'a trained under housemaid and good needlewoman. Wages £12: tea, sugar, beer, washing all found'. [70] For the year of 1935 towards the end of the period covered in this study only 2% of the 800 advertisements, including that of Lady Hoare at Stourhead in Wiltshire and Lady Ferguson-Davis of Bittescombe Manor in Somerset, required a needlewoman, yet an advertisement seeking a position as 'head housemaid: experienced; care of linen, old furniture: excellent needlewoman: 10 years' experience: £50' indicated that such skills were still in demand and might be adequately remunerated. [71]

A few references to sewing equipment have been found suggesting such work at an earlier period. The Newdigate accounts of 1688 itemized 'For halfe a hundred of Needles: 08d' and 'a thimble: 01.06s'. Warwick Castle accounts showed a Mrs Smith being paid 6s.1½d for thread in 1717 and

[67] *A.* Haly (ed), Samuel and Sarah Adams, *The Complete Servant* (1825) (Lewes, Southover Press, 1989) p.97
[68] Margaret Thomas (1956) said 'They [maids] all did sewing' quoted in P. A. Sambrook, *Keeping Their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House* (Stroud, History Press, 2005) p.64; C. Hardyment, *Home Comfort*, p.50
[69] *The Times* Digital Archive: September 29th 1818; October 27th 1818
[70] *The Times* Digital Archive: 20th January 1874; 11th May 1874
[71] *The Times* Digital Archive: 21st February 1935; 20th March 1935; 19th March 1935

those of George and Grace Fursden listed the purchase of '100 Whitechapel needles' in 1801.[72] Whilst routine sewing may have been undertaken within the household it is possible that when a major refurbishment of linen took place additional help was required and the work out-sourced, demonstrating once more the economic links between the country house and its environs and reinforcing how readily accessible such skills were for much of the period covered by this study. Sambrook noted payments to two sewing women amongst the housekeeper's accounts for Dunham Massey in 1822 and several household accounts in this study refer to payments both for making items of household linen as well as marking them. The household accounts of Sir Philip Sydenham show Goody Sweet received 6d for needlework sewing pillowcases; a century later 8 pairs of sheets were made by Eliza Swan for Calke Abbey in 1873 for which she was paid 9d per pair, showing that there was a continuing tendency to buy in these services where required.[73]

Might it also be possible that when a major refurbishment of linen took place items were purchased already made up? In 1670 Warwick Castle purchased ready-made sheets, as 'To Mr Tueford p'd his Bill for Sheets' indicates. Whilst referring to ready-made clothes, Lemire's comment that such work was undertaken by an 'obscured workforce and its products at once commonplace and concealed [making apparel] unremarkable and ephemeral in duration, neither fashionable nor noteworthy to the contemporary observer' could equally refer to ready-made sheets.[74] Offering a reason for this obscurity Lemire considered that 'many elements of this field [ready-made garments] were not readily apparent. This industry lacked the visible distinguishing context of shipyard, factory, mine or smoke-filled workshop'.[75] Both suggestions could equally apply to the production of household textiles. Very little equipment was required for working in this way, as Crowston explained in her study of seamstresses in Paris. She quotes a Royal Academie investigation into garment trades in 1769, 'The Seamstress has no particular instrument. A thimble, thread, silk, scissors and an iron are sufficient for operating' although an engraving of 1765 shows an atelier with six women working together.[76] However, a reference in the eighteenth-century novel *The Immigrant, a Tale* suggests there were sewing workshops producing a variety of items, 'As the people who employed our young

[72] WRO CR 764/97 Newdigate Accounts, 1686-93; WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740; SWR 5242M/Box 21/5 Household Accounts George & Grace Fursdon, 1770-1806
[73] HALS 5242M/Box 20/5 Household Accounts Sir Philip Sydenham 1738-9; DRO D2375/H/D/I/14-15 Account Book, bills and vouchers 1873
[74] B. Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660-1800* (London, Macmillan, 1997) pp.43-4
[75] B. Lemire, '" In the Hands of Workwomen": English Markets, Cheap Clothing and Female Labour, 1650-1800' *Costume,* 33 (1999) pp.23-35
[76] C. Haru Crowston, *Fabricating Women: The Seamstresses of Old Regime France, 1675-1791* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2001) p.116

work-woman dealt in ready-made linen of all kinds, their work was occasionally varied'.[77] Mary Woolstoncraft similarly referred to such an establishment in her didactic novel of 1798, *The Wrongs of Women*. Her protagonist Jemima regrets 'not having been taught early and my hands being rendered clumsy by hard work, I did not sufficiently excel to be employed in the ready-made linen shops'.[78] The London shirtmaker whose bill head is included in Lemire's *Dress, Culture and Commerce*, despite indicating her main business is in shirts and shifts, also offered ready-made household linen.[79] References to the purchase of ready-made bed linen in the Household Book for Charlecote Park show this may not be unusual:

> 1753 March 10 bought at Warwick Fair 8 pair of Servts sheets
> 1760 December 17 3 pair of fine Holland Sheets bought at Warwick & 3 pair of pillow cases marked GL and numbered
> 1762 June 29 8 pairs of New Servts sheets bought at Snitterfield
> 1763 April 26 2 pair of sheets for Mr Lucy's own bed bought of Mr Twicross[80]

That such work was likely to be poorly paid is borne out by the rates charged for plain sewing in 1826 with ½d to 1d per yard for hemming; backstitching ¾ d to 1½d; marking, per letter ¼ d. Hannah Robertson had observed bitterly in her *The Young Ladies School of Arts* of 1766, 'It is too well known how small a value is set on women's work, so that the cleverest at the needle can scarcely earn subsistence'.[81] Yet these strategies concerned with the management, maintenance and care of household linen would seem to shed light on the value placed upon its possession.

Alongside the plain work many girls learnt were the techniques required for marking and mending linen. Susanna Whatman in handwritten instructions dated 1776 directed her servants: 'All linen should be marked according to its purpose, its number and the year besides the name. This saves a great deal of trouble with house linen.'[82] Hers is one of the first manuals identifying a regular routine for household management that has survived, yet Klein referred to cheap instructional manuals similar to *The merchant's ware-house laid open; or the plain dealing linnen-draper* being published between the 1680s and 1740s These may also have suggested a methodical approach to the care and

[77] Lucy Peacock, *The Little Emigrant, a Tale,* (London, 1799) p.141, ECCO CW 3313370744
[78] N. Pohl," To embroider what is wanting" in S. Dyer, C. Wigston-Smith (eds) *Material Literacy,* p.70
[79] B. Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce*, p.32
[80] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[81] C. Wigston-Smith, Domestic Crafts and The School of Art pp.51-66 in S. Dyer, C. Wigston-Smith (eds) *Material Literacy,* p.59; GHH CW/BOX G/ PR99.111 CE.S.PH52.111 Tariff for Cheltenham Female Orphan Asylum in *Griffiths New Historical Description of Cheltenham 1826,* p.56
[82] C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book*, p.45

management of household textiles.[83] The popular manual *The Instructor: or Young Man's Best Companion* by George Fisher, published at regular intervals between 1727 and mid nineteenth century, included a section for young women in its 1742 edition with instructions for the marking of linen using cross–stitch. Marking linen was also a skill recommended in the education of the female poor as discussed earlier in this chapter.[84]

In 1763 payment of £3.2s.4d was authorised by Ragley Hall, the Marquis of Hertford's house, 'For Marking 36 pare of Sheets…' and 421 other items to one Ann Newcombe, roughly ½d per item and similar to the rates indicated above. [85] How much information these particular marks conveyed was not specified, though it appears from the surviving examples from the period, like the Syon House table linen and the later example from Chatsworth House (See Fig.5:2), to include initials, dates, number of items in the set and where appropriate insignia. Here the ducal coronet is the top mark and the initials 'D D' may indicate Duke of Devonshire. '1891' marked the inheritance of the title by Spencer Compton Cavendish who became 8th duke on the demise of his father. These tablecloths, numbering at least three in the set, may represent another example of linen marking a life-cycle event.

[83] L. E. Klein, Politeness for Plebs: consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England pp.354-378 in A. Bermingham, J. Brewer, (eds) *The Consumption of Culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, Routledge, 1995) pp.369-373

[84]George Fisher, *The Instructor: or, Young Man's Best Companion* (1742) ECCO CW3312306555; B. Hill, *Servants*, p.146

[85] WRO C114A/220 Household Accounts, Ragley Hall, 1742-63

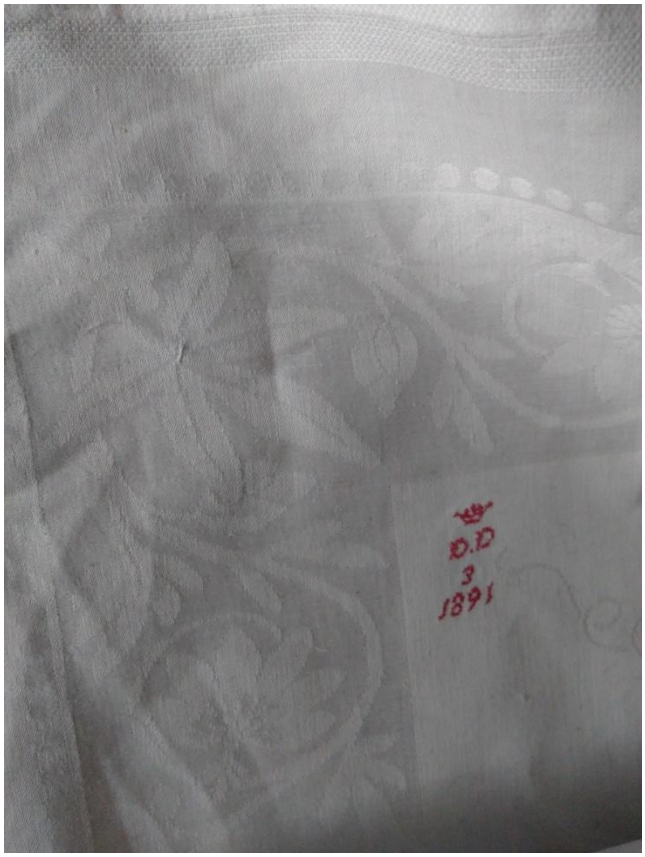


Figure 5:2: Linen mark, Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, author's photograph

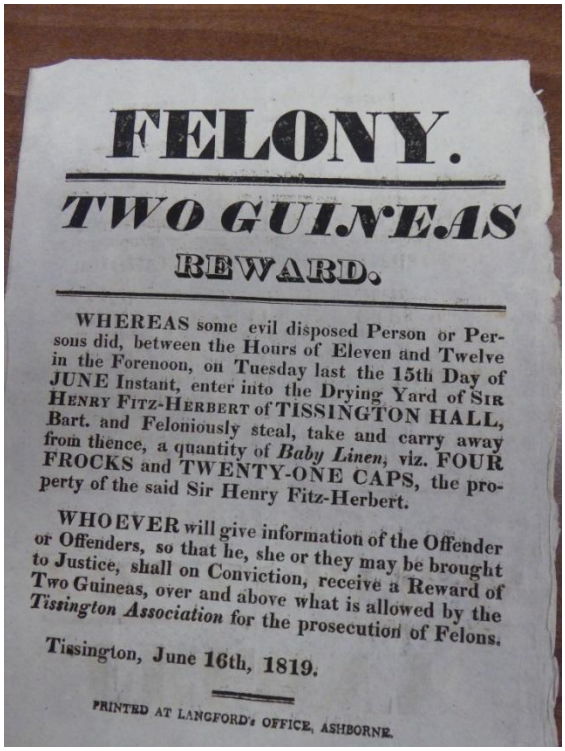
Marking linen appears to have been the practice at Charlecote Park where Mrs Hayes recorded tablecloths marked 'FL' that may have belonged to her employer's father or indeed grand-father, both Fulke Lucy.[86] Mary Young, affluent wife of an MP for a London ward in the mid-nineteenth century, annotated her 1830s inventory of household linen indicating: 'Every P^{r} of Sheets and Pillow Cases is marked with a letter to denote the bed they belong to and particulars of the date when they were purchased kept in a small red book in the linen press'.[87] The Ditchley inventory of 1772 provides further examples with 'Two Damask Table Cloths & 25 Napkins marked L (with coronet above) N^{o}. 4 & 5' and '5 small Damask Breakfast Cloths, N^{o}. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.' Similarly, the table linen, property of the Duke of Northumberland, in the Syon Park, sale of 1997 showed notations like the damask tablecloth, probably Irish c1787, 'with coronet in corner and N/87/1'. It seems likely that the linen elsewhere in the sources would have similar markings. The inclusion of 'Thirty six not marked' amongst the 217 napkins recorded in the 1816 Colworth House inventory may imply that this was unusual and a departure from usual practice.[88]

[86] WRO CR l6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes
[87] B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket*, p.95
[88] BHRS Probate Inventory, William Lee Antonie of Colworth House, 1816

Mitchell, whose work on table linen was discussed in Chapter One, recorded this practice of marking linen too.[89] He also found that styles of marking changed over the period he studied which ran from 1450 -1750. Earlier linen was marked with parallel lines of running stitches often in blue linen thread or 'Coventry blue' as the dye remained fast. He found later linen was marked in red cross-stitch as Fisher advised. The tablecloth displayed in the dining room at Chatsworth House (See Fig. 6:2) employed cross stitch and notations advocated by the household manuals. Linen might also be marked with ink as were some of the twentieth-century items included in this study. A recipe for an indelible laundry ink was included in a household manual of 1823 although there seemed to be a preference for stitched marks in this study. [90]

Styles in his study of working-class consumption referred to such identification marks as being frequently cited in cases of stolen linen in the records of the Old Bailey.[91] The seemingly widespread use of marks and periodic audits of linen would probably deter internal pilfering, but theft of linen from country houses was not unknown. Susanna Whatman instructed her laundry maid 'not to leave the linen in the drying ground at night, as it has been stolen'.[92] Drying grounds were often enclosed, as at Dunham Massey, Calke Abbey and Saltram or close to the service areas of the house, yet the Fitzherberts of Tissington Hall offered a two guinea reward (see Fig.5:3) for information leading to the apprehension of the thief who stole linen from their drying ground in broad daylight .[93]

[89] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine table linen in England, 1450-1750: The supply, ownership and use of a luxury commodity' (unpublished PhD thesis, University College London, 1999)
[90] NYAS ZSQ 6 1823 Recipe Book, p30
[91] J. Styles, Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and their Furnishings in 18th Century London pp.61-80 in J. Styles, A. Vickery (eds), *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2006) p.73
[92] C. Hardyment (ed), *The Housekeeping Book*, p.59
[93] DRO D239/M/F/10699 Items transferred from Hopton to Tissington, 1791 (other items in folder)



FELONY.

TWO GUINEAS

REWARD.

WHEREAS some evil disposed Person or Persons did, between the Hours of Eleven and Twelve in the Forenoon, on Tuesday last the 15th Day of JUNE Instant, enter into the Drying Yard of SIR HENRY FITZ-HERBERT of TISSINGTON HALL, Bart. and Feloniously steal, take and carry away from thence, a quantity of *Baby Linen*, viz. FOUR FROCKS and TWENTY-ONE CAPS, the property of the said Sir Henry Fitz-Herbert.

WHOEVER will give information of the Offender or Offenders, so that he, she or they may be brought to Justice, shall on Conviction, receive a Reward of Two Guineas, over and above what is allowed by the *Tissington Association* for the prosecution of Felons.

Tissington, June 16th, 1819.

PRINTED AT LANGFORD's OFFICE, ASHBORNE.

Figure 5:3: Theft of Linen from Tissington Hall, 1819

Marking linen ensured the correct items were allocated to specific rooms or persons and assisted the monitoring of wear. Anne Fellows insisted in her Memorandum 'everything should be properly marked and paired and everything should be kept in regular order'. Some remarks in household inventories point to maintenance as 'Aug 14 1752 1 pair of sheets y^{t} hath been turned and mended for common use'.[94] The centres of sheets wear out before the sides which have less contact with sleepers. Either splitting the sheet down the centre, or taking out the original centre seam, depending on the width of linen, and joining the two long, less worn side edges together would extend the life of the sheet though this pair was re-assigned as for 'common use'. Mrs Beeton instructed readers of her *Household Management:* 'sheets should be turned "sides to middle" before they are allowed to get very thin. Otherwise, patching, which is uneconomical from the time it consumes, and is unsightly in point of appearance will have to be resorted to'.[95]

The descriptions of table linen in the Syon Park sale indicated repair. Several of the tablecloths and napkins had small tears and had been darned as had 12 damask napkins identified as 'Scottish c1736' showing 'much repair' - a description that may imply mending over a lengthy period. Darning damask was amongst the advanced needlework skills taught in the programme for the education of poor girls

[94] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes; NRO FEL 626 554 x2 Anne Fellowes, Memorandum 1784

[95] Mrs. Beeton's *Household Management,* 1861 p.102 Available from: https://www.exclassics.com/beeton/beetpdf1.pdf (Accessed 10.11.23)

devised by the Irish Kildare Place Society.[96] Evidence of somewhat inexpert darning was found on a nineteenth-century napkin included in Chapter Four, possibly indicating a decline in the availability of staff with such skills as revealed by the advertisements for housemaids in The Times discussed above. Whatman's instructions covered the mending of linen and although she specified that of bed linen, the darns there and in the linen from Syon Park showed such routine repairs were carried out on table linen also.

> If the Housemaid perceives that any stitches are wanting in sheets or pillow bears when she puts them to the fire [airs them], she should return them to the Housekeeper, unless she chooses to mend them herself, which is not required of her. If any mending is necessary before they go to the wash, they should be taken to the storeroom.[97]

She further explained in the instructions to the Housekeeper:

> There should be a large table in the Storeroom for the maids to mend sheets or anything that requires pressing, for, although the Housekeeper sets out all this kind of work, yet, unless it is tacked on upon a flat surface, it will seldom lay smooth, and occasions in the end more work by tearing out [unpicking].[98]

Anne Fellowes specified that her laundry maid 'mends and makes all the table linen, fine sheets and fine towels, the Dairy Maid the common servants sheets and the cook the kitchen linen' reinforcing the sewing skills expected of the female servant.[99] Similarly, a nineteenth century writer on domestic management thought a live-in housemaid with some needlework skill could deal with the household's mending: 'it is her business to make whatever repairs may be required, and to inform you [the mistress] when so worn out as to be past mending, that new articles may be procured, and the stock kept up'. It is therefore hardly surprising that 61% of newspaper advertisements for housemaids seeking placements in the early nineteenth century referenced their sewing skills.[100] Although many inventories referred to items of table linen as 'much worn' 'old' and 'bad' none described mended items like those of the Syon Park sale or Lewis' description of the Winchester Guildhall cloth that also highlighted small darns, yet from these material objects it seems clear that

[96] Royal School of Needlework Collection Online Talk: *Embroidery and Needlework in Education*, A. Hare, (24.02.2021)
[97] C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book*, p.39
[98] C. Hardyment, (ed) *The Housekeeping Book*, p.51
[99] NRO FEL 626 554 x2 Anne Fellowes Memorandum, 1784
[100] *The Home Book: or Young Housekeeper's Assistant* (1829) quoted in B. Burman, A. Fennetaux, *The Pocket,* p.99; *The Times* Digital Archive: September 29th 1818; October 27th 1818

table linen was sufficiently valuable and indeed valued for repairs to be a routine part of the maintenance cycle in the same way that sheets might be patched or turned.[101]

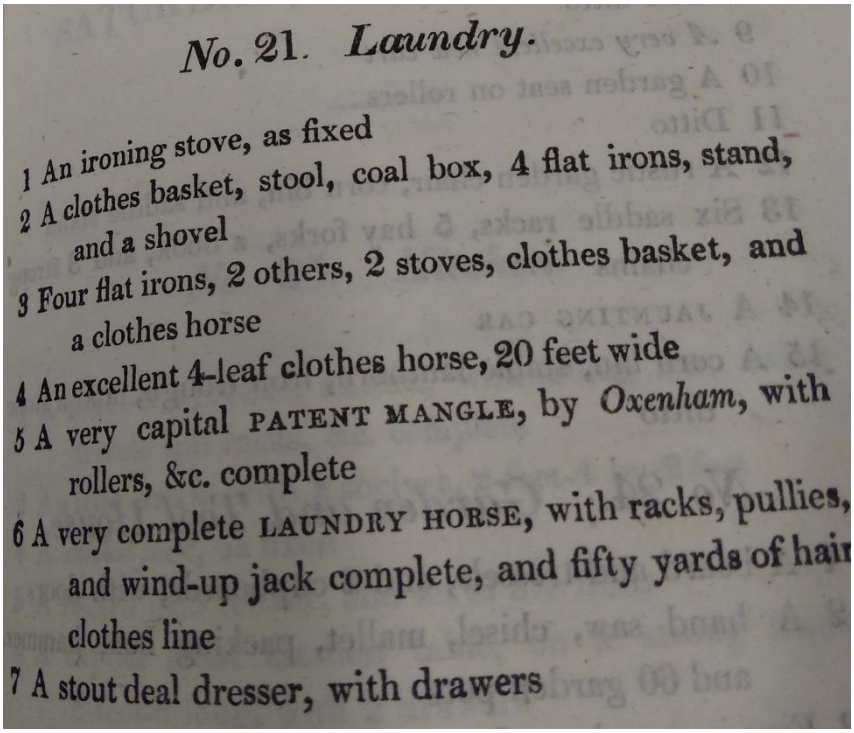
Marking linen not only facilitated the monitoring of depreciation, but it also enabled items to be tracked through laundry processes. Keeping the household linen clean was not only a moral obligation, as discussed in Chapter Three, but also represented a major body of work. This was usually undertaken within the country house itself until the use of professional laundries in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries became a more economical alternative for many households. Both inventories and sales catalogues frequently offer information about laundry facilities in use at the time of the household linen recorded in them and consequently have been used as the basis of these observations rather than extant house plans. The earliest reference to a laundry as a separate space within the sources studied is in 1689 in the inventory of Sir John Pakington, although items of laundry equipment such as [horse] hair lines and irons in earlier inventories and accounts indicate washing activities were taking place within the household.[102] Laundries appear to be a regular feature of country houses by the eighteenth century, being present in 79% of the inventories after 1689 and in all the households represented by the sales catalogues. Lady Grisell Baillie gave an idea of their requirements when setting up a laundry at her London house in 1715:

For a new wash tub 5s.6d a second hand tub 3s.6d	00.09.00
For a laundry grate and grate for heating yrons	02.08.00
For a smoothing table 8s, a long bord for washing On starch 8s	00.16.00
A Horse for drying linnins	00.07.00
For a coper for washing	03.00.00[103]

The size of laundries varied from a single wash house to a suite of rooms, though the most usual arrangement seems to be a wash house, drying area and the laundry itself where the final stages of mangling and ironing took place. Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk had a drying area described as 'the bleach' denoting the use of sunlight in the drying process, while a painting of Dunham Massey from the mid eighteenth century shows an enclosed grassy area planted with low clipped hedges where linen could be spread out, with a similar arrangement shown in this garden 'cluttered up by a Quick Hedge

[101] WRO C/018/SOT Sales Catalogue Syon Park, 1997; E. Lewis, 'An 18th Century Linen Damask Tablecloth from Ireland', *Textile History* 15:2 (1984) pp.235-244
[102] WHS Probate Inventory (86): Sir John Packington of Westwood, 1689; WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1665)
[103] R. Scott-Moncrieff (ed), *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie*

of Quadrangular Form [which] served no other purpose than to dry Linnen on'.[104] Hassop Hall, a property owned by greater gentry, had a wash house, mangling room and an ironing room in an inventory of 1852 perhaps indicating that these facilities changed little over the period of the study.[105] Such provision required investment in buildings and also equipment such as boiling coppers and mangles, demonstrating the importance attached to maintaining a supply of clean linen. The sale at Geddington House included the contents of its wash house, featuring 'Lot 8: A Capital new 28-inch copper, as fixed in iron work, lead kerb, and wood cover' and from its laundry Lot 5 (See Fig. 5:4) was 'A capital PATENT MANGLE by *Oxenham*, with rollers etc complete'.[106] This indicates the increasing sophistication of the equipment from that of the earlier facilities although the processes seem little changed.



No. 21. Laundry.

1 An ironing stove, as fixed
2 A clothes basket, stool, coal box, 4 flat irons, stand, and a shovel
3 Four flat irons, 2 others, 2 stoves, clothes basket, and a clothes horse
4 An excellent 4-leaf clothes horse, 20 feet wide
5 A very capital PATENT MANGLE, by *Oxenham*, with rollers, &c. complete
6 A very complete LAUNDRY HORSE, with racks, pullies, and wind-up jack complete, and fifty yards of hai clothes line
7 A stout deal dresser, with drawers

Figure 5:4: Sales catalogue, Geddington House, Northamptonshire, 1823

On top of this would be the ongoing costs of fuel to heat gallons of water and of soap which was heavily taxed until the mid-nineteenth century. In 1667 the household bills for Warwick Castle included:

For one dozen and one firkin of soape	003:07:00
For ½ pound of white starch & ½ pound of blew	000:09:05 [107]

[104] C. Hardyment, *Home Comfort*, p.179; P.A. Sambrook, *A Country House at Work: Three Centuries of Dunham Massey* (London, National Trust, 2003) p.49; Quoted in S. North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in Early Modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020) p. 222
[105] DRO D7676/Box C/ 372A Inventory of Francis Eyre, 1852
[106] NCL M005644/NL/8 Sale Catalogue, Geddington House, 1823
[107] WRO MI/297 Accounts Warwick Castle 1666-1740 (1667)

These were not inconsiderable amounts and Lady Grisell Baillie instructed her housekeeper to weigh out the soap to the laundry maids and check that only the authorised items of laundry were being processed there. She specified: 'One week the body linnin is washt, the second week table and bed linnin and always bouckt [repeated soaking in lye] when the weather will alow of it'.[108] She further specified that servants' sheets would be washed once a month. Anne Fellowes was equally firm about the laundry processes in her household which numbered seven family and seven maids. It was done by the laundry maid assisted by the dairy maid, starting at three in the morning until six or seven at night every Tuesday. She also kept a careful tally of the soap and starch used amongst her household accounts.[109] The processes of soaking, washing, rinsing, drying, preferably in sunlight to bleach the linen, and then mangling would take the best part of a week but was necessary to produce the crisp white sheets and gleaming table linen synonymous with gentility. Mangling cloths and ironing cloths, dealt with in more detail in Chapter Five, are frequently listed both within later inventories and amongst household accounts together with several intriguing references to swanskin, though upon investigation this appears to be a close woven woollen twill flannel used to cover ironing tables.[110]

By the middle of the nineteenth century a variety of machines that agitated the washing using hand operated gearing mechanisms were on the market, but they were tiring to use.[111] Problems of drying clothes through the winter months had been addressed in some country houses such as Berrington Hall with the introduction of racks of drying frames in closets over a network of hot pipes. Here the system ran on iron rails enabling the racks to be loaded more easily. Specialist laundry stoves for heating flat irons were available too. The application of electricity to laundry began with electric irons available from the 1880s with a lightweight version available in the Army and Navy Stores catalogue of 1907, but their take up was hampered by the relatively slow introduction of electricity to country houses.[112] At the same time new soap products aimed at the laundry were being manufactured. Sunlight soap produced by Levers Brothers was the first to be sold in uniform blocks and wrapped in paper, but this still required grating and dissolving before use. Soap flakes and powders were

[108] R. Scott-Moncrieff (ed) *The Household Book of Lady Grisell Baillie*
[109] NRO FEL 626 554 x2 Anne Fellowes Memorandum, 1784; NRO FEL 618 554 x2 Fellowes Household Account Book, 1777-1793
[110] HALS K480 Inventory for Heydon Hall, Norfolk, 1798; WRO MI/297 Accounts Warwick Castle 1665-1740 (1717)
[111] A. MacClain, 'Through the Wringer: laundry in the late 19th century' *Smithsonian Libraries & Archives* (2019). Available at: https://blog.library.si.edu/blog/2019/08/29/through-the-wringer-laundry-in-the-late-19th-century/ (Accessed 08.11.2023); P. Malcolmson, *English Laundresses: A Social History* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1986)
[112] *Yesterday's Shopping: The Army & Navy Stores Catalogue 1907* (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1969)

available by the First World War.[113] Despite the efficiency of the routines established in country house laundries, commercial establishments multiplied rapidly in the early twentieth century and the 1911 census shows a sharp decline in the number of females classified as laundry maids.[114] Whilst laundries are often a feature of the visitor experience at country houses now, many were mothballed with the reduction in numbers of staff in the twentieth century.

Conclusions

Household linen was deemed a necessity in all social groups and however limited it would require upkeep.[115] Substantial time and effort was allocated to the care and maintenance of the sizeable store of household linen associated with country houses. This involved a proportion of the female staff in significant hours of work, although at a time when wages were relatively low, and servants lived in this may not have been of primary consideration. Consequently, these items acquired routines of housekeeping that appear to have been formulated before the period covered in this study and to have persisted throughout it with little emendation. Linen was stored carefully, monitored regularly, laundered frequently, repaired and replaced as required. That these routines were well established by the mid-seventeenth century seems to be borne out by the references in the earliest inventories and the detail in instructions directed firstly to servants in the earlier written instructions of mistresses like Susanna Whatman and Anne Fellowes, and later in the extant published manuals of ex-servants such as Hannah Glasse and Sarah Adams. It was repeated in Mrs. Beeton's *Household Management* into the twentieth century and appeared with few changes in a chapter in *How to Run Your Home without Help* in 1949. Such onerous regimes were justified by the kudos plentiful supplies of household linen bestowed on the elite country house; a phenomenon recognised by William Hazlitt as associated with consumption:

> 'The more any one finds himself clinging to material objects for existence or gratification, the more he will take a personal interest in them, and the more he will clean, repair, polish, scrub, scour, and tug at them without end, as if it were his own soul that he was keeping clear from spot or blemish'. [116]

[113] V. Kelly, *Soap and Water: cleanliness, dirt and the working classes in Victorian and Edwardian Britain* (London, Bloomsbury, 2010) p.129
[114] C. Hardyment, *Behind the Scenes: Domestic arrangements in historic houses* (London, Penguin, 1997) p.235
[115] J. Styles, What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution? pp.307-329 in G. Riello, P. Parthasarathi (eds), *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200-1850* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009) p.326
[116] Quoted in K. Thomas, Cleanliness and Godliness in Early Modern England, pp.56-84 in A. Fletcher, P. Roberts (eds), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in honour of Patrick Collinson* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994) p.80

These routines were part of the rhythm of the year in country houses. In those household inventories that were maintained for a number of years, such as that of the housekeeper at Charlecote Park, the linen was reviewed at six-monthly intervals beginning in 1752, similarly, lists of new linen were made regularly in the Linen Book at Calke from the 1850s to 1941, indicative of a regular monitoring and upgrading of the stock.[117] This balancing of existing stock with future requirements is evidence of the wealth of knowledge of the fabrics accrued within the household. These processes had implications too for the spatial organisation of the country house and investment in its infrastructure and equipment for storage and maintenance, as reference to 'y^{r} Linnen Garrett' at Charlecote Park indicate, or the six linen presses at Felbrigg Hall in 1872, each with multiple shelves, and the prevalence of laundry facilities. It is also clear such regimes relied heavily on a high level of manual skill. It seems evident that the female staff of the country house would spend a proportion of their working day stitching, although some items could be introduced into the existing stock ready-made and outsourcing the work also seems to have been a fairly common practice across the period. The accounts for Warwick Castle show payments for making up sheets in 1665; Ragley Hall paid for the marking of linen in 1763 and the Harpur Crewe family remunerated one of the inmates of their alms houses for making pillowcases in 1873.[118]

That such items were not only sewn but also routinely mended and indeed repurposed to less prestigious uses are indicative of the value of the fabric itself and the careful husbandry of this resource. In a post-industrialized period, fabric has become ubiquitous and inexpensive, and its laborious processes are often remote from its ultimate market.[119] In the earlier years covered by this study linen might be produced on the estates or purchased locally and was still being manufactured within the British Isles at its conclusion. That it was valued even second hand is clear in the appraisals of it in probate inventories and descriptors in sales catalogues. Country houses were indeed centres of conspicuous consumption, but the virtues of self-restraint and rigorous economic management investigated by writers such as Vickery, Stobart and Rothery are discernible in the care and maintenance given to the household linen in the establishments investigated.[120] Proper management and sound economy are evident in the audit of household linen. The routine overseeing of the stock and the comments noted regarding its state of preservation point to

[117] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes; DRO D 2375/H/F/4/1 Volume of list of Linen at Calke Abbey, 1855-1931

[118] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1665); WRO C114A/220 Household Accounts Ragley Hall, 1742-63; DRO D2375/H/D/I/14-15 Account Book, bills and vouchers, Calke Abbey, 1873

[119] B. Gordon, *Textiles: the whole story* (London, Thames & Hudson, 2011) pp.6-14

[120] A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, Yale, 1998); J. Stobart & M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016)

progressive renewal of the domestic supply rather than profligacy demonstrating the restrained husbanding of resources noted in studies of consumer behaviour and referenced in Chapter One.

This 'everyday discretionary spending' referred to by Stobart and Rothery is clearly visible in the purchases of household linen in some of the accounts studied here.[121] Those for Felbrigg Hall listed purchase of a piece of diaper at 11s.0d in 1674 with payment to 'the linin woman' of £4.17s.0d in the same year, although this may have been for shirts or shifts. Less ambiguous are purchases of '4p^{r} Hempen sheets £4.13s.0d; 2p^{r} sheets £2.3s; Diaper towels 12s and 4p^{r} Servants sheets £4.5s.0d' in 1727.[122] These entries can be seen as the thoughtful replacement of items deemed beyond their useful life. Similarly, the Mellish Household Book maintained from 1784 to 1816 shows modest outgoings for linen in half those years of less than ten pounds. Only in five years did this expenditure exceed twenty pounds and this despite the annual accounts amounting to between £500 and £1,000.[123] The linen book for Thoresby Hall shows similar careful accounting of the items held with '48 Best Chamber Towels' purchased in 1902 'very thin; taken out' in 1910.[124] Clearly items in constant use would wear out despite the regimes of maintenance outlined here, yet the survival of so few items would seem to indicate they were used to destruction.

However, a proportion of the items in country houses were costly and of high quality particularly in the case of table linen. These marked the rank of the owner and thus conveyed social position in a visual manner. The upkeep of these material possessions was of paramount importance to the integrity and status of the elite household. These everyday routines embodied concepts of the respectability of cleanliness and the morality that implied but also contributed to the durability of prestige items such as armorial table linen. These items carefully noted in inventories, signalled difference and offered prestige alongside the emotional comfort of upholding titled privilege. These repeated cycles of care and maintenance are evidence of the importance of household linen in demonstrating the taste, wealth and status of the owners of the country houses and at the same time, contributing in a significant way to their comfort.

[121] J. Stobart & M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House*, p.9
[122] NRO WKC 6/13 401 x5 Domestic Accounts Felbrigg, 1671-1705; NRO WKC 6/17 401 x5 Domestic Accounts Felbrigg, 1710-29
[123] NUSC Me H1 House Book, 1781-1786; NUSC Me H2/1-8 House Book, 1800-1816
[124] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Inventory of Linen, Thoresby Hall, 1907

Chapter Six

Conclusions

Chapter Six reviews the evidence from the thesis, drawing together and highlighting the findings into a new community of interpretation. These arguments confirm that the importance of household textiles has hitherto been underestimated. The chapter shows the gradual changes in preferred fabric across the period of the study occasioned both by technological changes and the pursuit of physical comfort. It suggests, unsurprisingly, that the quantities of linen within the country house were determined by wealth rather than regional or temporal variations and that external events appear, contrary to expectations, to have had a limited effect. The chapter reinforces that these items demonstrated social worth and taste, contributing both to physical and social comfort and continued to play a more important role in the country house habitus than their practical functions would suggest.

Many studies have focussed on the magnificence of country houses and the conspicuous consumption of elite items including the decorative textiles presented within them, but as Chapter One has indicated, these stopped short of textiles in closest contact with the residents of these establishments. This study set out to investigate the more functional textiles that also featured in their expenditure. Although table linen was part of the image projected through sociability it has not received much attention since Mitchell's work in 1999, and household linen has made but a brief appearance in two recent studies, the one on personal hygiene; the other on seamstresses.[1] At the core of the investigation lay the apparent absence of a commodity that should have been present in abundance. This thesis has to some extent reinstated household textiles through both documentary evidence and by the integration of extant items of household textiles into Chapters Three, Four and Five. Their inclusion has brought an additional dimension to the enquiry enabling their materiality to enhance an understanding of everyday practices of usage and possession that has hitherto been neglected. Whilst any sort of data sampling may distort quantitative findings in addressing the issues raised in the key questions underpinning this research, this thesis has contributed to the more

[1] D. M. Mitchell, 'Fine Table Linen in England 1450-1750: The supply, ownership and use of a luxury commodity', (unpublished PhD. Thesis, University College, London, 1999); S. North, *Sweet and Clean? Bodies and Clothes in early modern England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2020); P. Inder, *Shirts, Shifts and Sheets of Fine Linen; British Seamstresses from the 17th to the 19th century* (London, Bloomsbury, 2024)

nuanced picture of the English country house as a dynamic site of consumption that is emerging from more recent work.[2]

Framed against this perceived lacuna this chapter first outlines the range and quantity of household textiles a country house possessed, considers findings on temporal or regional differences, how supplies were obtained and to what extent they were influenced by life-cycle events. Suggestions on the effect of external events on these commodities such as war, economic slump and changes in taxation follow. Conjectures on consumer choice and changes in fashion as demonstrated by household textiles are presented next together with interpretations of the role these items played in maintaining the status of the country house elite.

This study set out to examine the range and numbers of items that were to be found within the household linen possessed by the gentry and to consider where possible the issues raised above. It became clear from the sales catalogues and probate inventories that were studied that the amount of household linen they included might not represent the entirety of the supplies held by country houses.

	1660-1700	1701-1740	1741-1780	1781-1820	1821-1860	1861-1900	1901-1939
Sheets p^{r}	33	43	56	53	65	43	91
Pillowcases	16	27	32	42	58	67	142
Towels	17	53	78	102	144	173	451
Tablecloth	23	53	68	93	77	60	97
Napkins d^{n}	14.5	22	19	29.5	21	15	15
Cloths	7.5	20	30	57	131	124	511

Table 6:1 Average pieces of household linen

As noted previously, just half the probate inventories listed household linen; a further fifth gave valuations but no indication of the items; the remainder made no reference to household linen at all. Of the catalogues for sales at country houses, again less than half included household linen although beds and other textiles were being offered for auction. Household inventories would appear to give more accurate records of the items held, although identifying definitive dates at which they were counted was rarely straightforward. Nevertheless, all the listings included in the database refer to

[2] P. Sambrook, *The Country House at Work: Three Centuries of Dunham Massey* (London, National Trust, 2003); J. Stobart, A. Hann (eds) *The Country House: Material Culture and Consumption* (Swindon, Historic England, 2016); J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016)

gentry households where a distinctive elite identity might be expected to demonstrate at least the levels of household textiles noted by earlier quantitative surveys.[3]

These findings (See Table 6:1 above) offer several interpretations. The gradual increase in numbers of items suggests that fabric of all kinds was becoming easier to obtain, although it has been ascertained that many of these gentry had access to markets both around their country house and in London. As the conclusions in Chapter Two indicate, there was a gradual move away from estate produced flax products towards items identified as linen across the eighteenth century although these were still hand woven and may have been of English manufacture. An increase in the average numbers of sheets from the first period to that of 1701-40 may be accounted for by an increase in the numbers provided for servants, although they may have been sleeping on those of hurden, dowlais and hemp listed until the middle of the eighteenth century, and 27 pairs of hempen sheets were recorded in the household inventory at Felbrigg as late as 1863.[4] Overton et al noted an increase in the ratio of sheets to beds in their survey covering the 1660s, as did Trinder and Cox, rising to 4.8 for the period 1740-49.[5] Using figures from this study's database offer a figure of 4.1 sheets per bed across the period of the study. Attempting to separate figures for servants compared to members of the gentry implies that the ratio for servants was only 2.8 sheets per bed compared with 7.2 for the gentry though this is based on a very subjective reading of the descriptions and values within the available sources. It is possible too that the availability of laundries, shown in 79% of inventories after 1689 and all the sales catalogues, encouraged more regular changing of bed linen within the household. Certainly, the increase in the numbers of towels available would suggest a growing engagement with hygiene and the increase in round towels for communal use indicates this extended also to the servant population.

The data showed a general increase in the number and variety of tablecloths across the period covered. Within the listed entries as was the case with bed linen, flax together with hemp and hurden featured as fabric for both tablecloths and napkins, becoming less frequent by the end of the seventeenth century, although a late example appears in the Linen Book for Thoresby Hall listing '4 extra large home spun tablecloths 1820 (Steward's Room list) taken out of service 1910'[6]. Previous

[3] L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760* (2nd edn. London, Routledge, 1996); C. Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, Oxford University Press,1990); M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2004)
[4] NRO WKC 6/480 464x Inventory of Household Linen, Felbrigg, 1863
[5] M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.108; B. Trinder, J. Cox, *Yeoman and Colliers in Telford: probate inventories for Dawley, Lilleshall, Wellington & Wrockwardine 1660-1750* (London, Phillimore, 1980) pp.36-7
[6] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Linen Book, Thoresby Hall, 1907

quantitative enquiries outlined in Chapter One used possession of household linen and more specifically table linen as a category of consumer goods. A comparison between the study undertaken by Shammas and the napery sample used in this thesis (See Table 3:3) showed considerable variation between the findings. The database used here, derived from sources across twelve English counties and across a longer timeframe produced a fairly consistent relative value of 4.3% and 4.4% for household linen against the total valuation of an estate until the period 1781-1820 where only one probate inventory gave a total assessment of £229.19s.6d and a separate value for linen of £19.11s.3d both of which were very modest.[7] This gave a figure of 8.2% similar to figures occurring elsewhere in the data where valuations were low. The figures for the later period of this study dropped again to 4.7% 1820-1860 and 2.7% 1861-1900 with few sources in these periods offering appraisals; no valuations were found for the final period 1901-1939. If these figures are averaged out, they produce estimations for the value of linen of 4.5% across the period as a whole or 3.9% if extended to 1939. One interpretation of this might be that a consistent proportion of household income was allocated to linen regardless of the wealth of the estate rather than such linen showing regional or temporal differences as was the case in earlier surveys. Given the increase in numbers of items held this may equate with Shammas's assertion that the price of linen dropped although this has been challenged by others; or it may indicate that some items such as table cloths and napkins might be in service for a considerable length of time, as was the case with items at Tissington Hall that had been bought two generations earlier and were still in use alongside more recent purchases.[8]

Problematic aspects of practice such as identifying major patterns of purchases against life-cycle events has been possible in several cases. The table linen purchased at the marriage of Henry 12th Baron St John of Bletsoe to the daughter of Samuel Whitbread the brewer in 1740 was recorded in his probate inventory many years later, although no mention was made of the bed linen which had probably been replaced many times.[9] Similarly, 'linen from Dublin' accompanied the installation of the 1st Viscount Galway's new wife at Serlby in 1735, and new sheets were purchased at Ragley Hall in 1776 on the marriage of the Marquess to his second.[10] Likewise Edmund Rolfe of Heacham Hall began a set of notebooks 'March ye 23rd 1764 An account of my Expenses since that time being the day of my Marriage', but as these contain the totals for expenditure rather than the particulars, his

[7] WHS Probate Inventory (118): James Newport of Handley William, 1785
[8] M. Spufford, 'Fabric for 17thcentury Children and Adolescents', *Textile History* 34 (2003) pp.47-53, p.51; DRO D239/M/E/5102 Notebook & list of linen, 1839-64
[9] BHRS Probate Inventory, Lord St.John, Melchbourne House, 1817
[10] NUSC Ga/12701 Inventory Book, Serlby Hall, 1735-75; WRO CR114A/255 Household Accounts Seymour Family, Ragley Hall

spending on household linen remains speculation.[11] Inheritance of property was another occasion for stock taking and most likely the wholesale purchase of new items. The Serlby linen book shows such events in 1751 and again in 1772 although no bills for household linen were found. However, at Stoneleigh on the majority of the 5th Lord Leigh, the major refurbishment undertaken by him is shown in the quantities and qualities of fabric for bed linen purchased in London (See Fig 2:5) and of luxury items of table linen two years later (See Fig 6:1).[12] Understandable though this desire to mark such events with acquisitions is, there may have been more urgent considerations for some heirs, as George Courtney's will suggests, his son will not have the 'use all and singular my said household goods, furniture or Implements of household plate, China, linnen and woollen' until his widow Elizabeth had died, and notes in the probate of the 1st Duke of Kingston show that 'All the above mentioned Linnen in this House is me Lady Dutchesses'.[13] In such circumstances, new purchases would be necessary but like much else connected with these aspects of consumption, difficult to trace.

[11] NRO GUN 123-6 625x5 Edmund Rolfe, Personal & household accounts, 1794-1801
[12] SCLA DR18/5/4028 Bill, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1764
[13]DHC 1508M/O/F/W/12 Will of George Courtney of Powderham Castle, 1787; NUSC Ma 488/3 Appraisment of Household Goods for Duke of Kingston, 1726

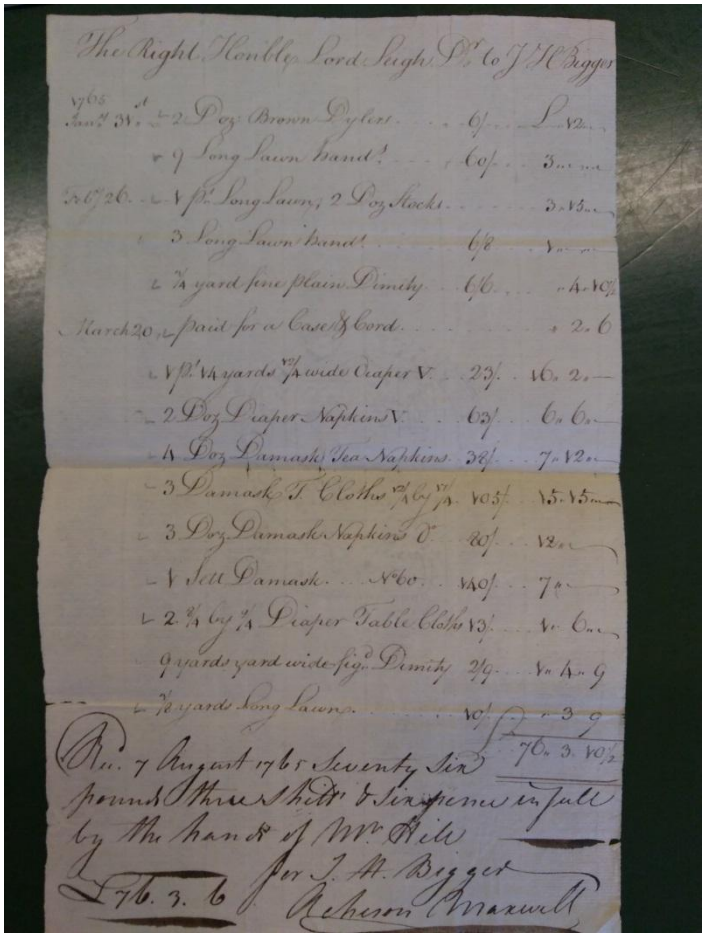


Figure 6:1: Bill, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1765

Similarly difficult to trace was the question of whether consumption of commodities like household linen was conditioned by external events such as prolonged periods of war or economic slump or changes in inheritance tax. This data has been derived from documents relating to a class of people who drew their income from a variety of sources. Whilst their power was predominantly land-based for most of the period, many had additional interests in mineral extraction, loaned money at interest to family and friends, held government bonds, were engaged in infrastructure projects or owned stocks and shares. All these enterprises might generate income or, like the South Sea Bubble of 1720 end in spectacular bankruptcies. Without detailed information about the individual circumstances of the estates included speculation on this aspect of the enquiry remains just that, although the data does support some general observations. The increase in the average numbers of items of household linen between 1660 and 1740 might be attributed to better agricultural productivity reflected in higher rentable values and increased spending power. The 'Little Ice Age' at the turn of the seventeenth century required an increase in organic matter in the soil to compensate for the reduction in bacterial activity, slower release of nitrogen and the shortening of the growing period. The rise in temperatures in the later seventeenth century reaped the rewards in terms of greater

productivity.[14] The classic period of the agricultural revolution may similarly account for the steady rise in most commodities of linen, as the artificially high price of wheat maintained under the Corn Laws until their repeal in 1846 may have assisted the upward trend into the period beginning 1821. The depression in agricultural prices and the import of wheat and meat from overseas led to a fall in the price of agricultural land values and may similarly suggest a reason for the decline in numbers of some items shown in the period 1861 to 1900 although it could equally be equated with the fact that fewer listings of linen were available for that period creating a possible distortion in the figures.[15]

There were many wars over the extended period of this study. Earlier wars against the Dutch soon after the Restoration were superseded by a succession of conflicts against France and yet there are several references in these earlier probate inventories to linen from both countries.[16] These wars were fought not only in Europe but increasingly in India and the Americas and all involved not only some dislocation of trade, as did the War of American Independence, but also led to the introduction of a variety of additional taxes as the government of the day sought to finance their armed forces and bolster their alliances. Taxes on land were increased and additional levies put on a variety of things including male servants and hair powder, candles and glass, which affected the upper classes as well as tobacco, soap and coal leading to hardship amongst the increasing numbers of workers reliant on a wage economy.[17] The accounts surviving from the Norfolk landowner Edmund Rolfe, suggest consciousness of the situation and of the additional costs of defence placed on landowners:

16th Mar 1796 Potatoes for the Poor £2.10s.0d
26th Feb 1797 To Burrell for a substitute for the extra Militia £1.1s.0d
11th May 1804 Comforts for the Poor £1.1s.0d

Yet at the same time, purchases for Holland, Scotch Holland and 'Irish for Shirts' were also regularly noted in his accounts, suggesting that supplies remained unaffected by the conflict. However, as Coulson delayed his request for a loan to install more looms at his damask weaving sheds in Lisburn,

[14] E. Tello, 'The onset of the English agricultural revolution: climate factors and soil nutrients' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 47:4 (2017) pp. 445-474
[15] M. Overton, *The Agricultural Revolution in England: the transformation of the agricultural economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996)
[16] NUSC Me/In/5 Invoice of goods, plate and linen in Edward Mellish's house, 1698; BUL 11/278 617x2 Household Inventory, Heydon Hall
[17] D. Hay, 'War, dearth and theft in the eighteenth century' *Past & Present* 95 (1982) pp. 117-160; B. Waddell, 'The Economic Crisis of the 1690s in England' *Historical Journal* 66:2 (2022) pp. 281-302

this implies that his order books suffered from decreased sales.[18] After a period of peace following Waterloo, the end of the nineteenth century saw the build-up of tension again culminating in the First World War. The sources covering this conflict are sparse but at Thoresby Hall, the only items listed with dates from that period are towels and domestic textiles with other purchases being made from 1918 onwards.[19] This evidence supports only tentative conclusions that war may not have affected purchases of linen amongst the land-owning classes.

Against this background of intermittent conflict, the general upward trends of the economy were punctuated by a series of economic crises. The Bank of England, initially set up to enable William III to borrow money easily to finance the war in Europe, had assumed a more modern function as a central bank by the French Revolutionary Wars, and its staff increased still further from 300 in 1792 to 900 in 1813 as the government's loans, bonds and overseas business expanded. Alongside it several private banks were established, such as Child's, Coutts, Hoare's and Drummonds which were cautious but very profitable from their dealings with cash deposits, loans and mortgages. The number of country banks, themselves banking with these London based enterprises numbered about 120 in 1784 but expanded rapidly in the next decade. These banks, unlike the Bank of England, were not joint stock enterprises. When a shortage of currency led to the Bank Restriction Act suspending payment in specie in 1797 the number of banks mushroomed and a variety of bank notes were printed that lacked adequate funds to support them.[20] Somewhat predictably vicissitudes in the war, poor harvests or trade slumps in urban areas led to runs on the banks and many went bankrupt. One estimate of the numbers of bank failures suggests there were 343 between 1750 and 1830 with clusters of bankruptcies around 1814-16 and 1825-6.[21] Better regulation followed but there were at least four further serious crises across the nineteenth century caused by mismanagement of risk, fraud or endogenous causes such as trade depressions.[22] These may have affected any of the estates represented in the data although some at least were banking with the established London houses like the FitzHerberts at Tissington Hall who banked with Hoare's. However, one of the sales catalogues dealt with the auction of 'modern and genteel household furniture' belonging to the unfortunate Joseph Rickett, a provincial banker from

[18] NRO GUN 121-122 625x6 Edmund Rolfe Personal & Household Accounts, 1794-1817; B. Collins, P. Ollerenshaw, T. Parkhill, (eds) *Industry, Trade and People in Ireland 1650-1950* (Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 2005), p.121

[19] NUSC Ma 2 I/2 Inventory of Linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907

[20] E. J. Clery, *Jane Austen the Banker's Sister* (London, Biteback Publications, 2017)

[21] J. A. James, 'Panics, payment disruptions and the Bank of England before 1825' *Financial History Review* 19:3 (2012) pp. 289-309

[22] S. Kenny, J. Lennard, J.D. Turner, 'The macroeconomic effects of banking crises: evidence from the United Kingdom 1750-1938' *Explorations in Economic History* 79 (2021) LSE Research Online

Northampton declared bankrupt in 1813. This misfortune and others like it may have had an impact on local gentry investors and depositors.[23]

Evidence of more personal economic disasters came from the accounts of the Mellish family (See Appendix 1). A run of accounts from 1784 to 1817 afforded additional information about the purchase of linen across this period, although giving only the yardage meant that it could be for either personal or household usage. Their purchases were modest between 1784 and 1787, spending less than 0.5% of the annual household budget on it. There were no entries for linen again until 1792, although it may have been subsumed into other payments. However, William Mellish died in that year and his son Charles inherited the estate. Between 1793 and 1797 Charles spent £88 or 2% of his budget on linen probably replacing old stock, although his annual household budget was twice that of his father. Charles died half way through 1797 and was succeeded by his younger brother Henry. Both annual budget and spending on linen decreased slightly from then until 1806 when the estate at Blythe and much of the contents had to be sold to pay Colonel Henry Mellish's gambling debts. Much of the linen must have gone in this sale, although a note in the archive stated the sale was to exclude 'one set of Tablelinen with the Mellish Arms'.[24] There are no entries from 1807 to 1811 when the Colonel was serving in the Peninsular War. When they resume in 1812, the proportion spent on linen remained at 2% until the accounts cease with his death in 1817 and the remainder of the estates passed to his sister.[25] Again, there is no evidence here to suggest that war prevented the regular purchase or the refurbishment of the linen stock of a country house.

At the outset of this research, it had been expected that there would be evidence of the effect changes in taxation in the twentieth century and the general slump in the economy following the First World War had on country houses through the sale of such establishments and their contents. However, whilst the literature supports this, there is a dearth of evidence about the fate of the household linen as any sales catalogues encountered were for the sale of land, libraries, art collections and antiques.

This study also shines further light on the extent to which household textiles demonstrated consumer choice and fashion. One of the more obvious manifestations of this was the change in fabrics. While linen remained the preferred fabric across most of the period the composition varied. Items of flax, hurden and hemp appear for both bed and table linen in the inventories in the period up to the end of the seventeenth century and flax continues to be recorded for sheets, pillowcases

[23] NCL M0005647NL/10 Sales Catalogue, Joseph Rickett, 1813
[24] NUSC Me 4E 5 Items not to be sold to deal with the debts of Col. H.F. Mellish
[25] NUSC Me H1 & H2/1-8 House Book, Mellish household, 1781-86 & 1800-1816

and towels until the twentieth (See Table 2:1). Its use for table linen however, was superseded by huckaback by the end of the eighteenth (See Table 3:1). It would appear also that the extent of home-produced linen in circulation may have been underestimated although the sample for suggesting this is small and limited geographically to the twelve counties surveyed. Fine quality sheets were listed as Holland although even here some were evidently of higher quality than others according to the descriptions offered by contemporaries. Rare references such as 'Dutch' linen in the Ditchley inventory of 1743 appears to identify the origin of the fabric. The other items of Holland may well have been manufactured in the British Isles. As references to Holland disappear from the sources, increasing numbers of 'fine linen' sheets are recorded which may be the same quality of linen under a different name. Brown Holland, unbleached cloth, was still available in the twentieth century. Priced from 4d to 1s.6d per yard it would be a coarse cloth and was being sold as dust sheets. References to Russian linen for sheets or for domestic textiles such as rubbers were found from the mid eighteenth century but were not listed after 1900, although Russian diapers were available in Harrods catalogue in 1912 and references in the secondary sources show imports of Russian flax being affected by the civil war there in the 1920s.[26] Irish linen for sheets was also present from the mid eighteenth century, although the *Merchant's Warehouse Laid Open* was recommending 'Irish 3 [yds] wide and very fine…useful for sheets' from 1696. Very few references to table linen of Irish origin were recorded although the imports analysed by Harte indicated there might have been a greater proportion to be found.[27] Although the only reference to Irish linen at Ragley Hall found in this study was a bill most likely for shirts, the Earl of Hertford rented land in Ireland to William Coulson, who specialised in fine damask, for the erection of a weaving shed and may well have purchased items from him; certainly, the Prince of Wales ordered a set of table linen from Coulson in 1805 stipulating the same design he had seen at Ragley.[28] Despite the lack of evidence of Irish linen as napery in the sources studied, Coulson was selling sufficient table linen in England to set up a receiving office in London and he was one of several Irish damask companies catering for the upper end of the market.[29] Both damask and diaper fabrics were present as table linen throughout the sources from the earliest references, indicating the popularity of these fabrics with early listings of diaper having occasional references to provenance such as 'French' or 'slezey' [Silesian]. Damask remained the most popular fabric for table linen throughout the period of the

[26] R. Knight, *Convoys: The British Struggle against Napoleonic Europe and America* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2022) pp.222-3
[27] N. B. Harte, The Rise and Protection of the English Linen Trade, 1690-1790 in *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann* (Manchester, Manchester University Press 1973) p.74
[28] B. J. Mackey, Centres of draw-loom damask linen weaving in Ireland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in *Leinendamaste* (Riggisberg, Abegg-Stiftung, 1999) p.100
[29] W. H. Crawford, *The Domestic Linen Industry in Ulster* (Belfast, Ulster Historical Foundation, 2021)

study, yet references to diaper reduced considerably in the mid nineteenth century. It retained its popularity for towels alongside huckaback whereas damask for this purpose seems to have declined at the end of the eighteenth century.

Designs within both diaper and damask were sometimes identified in the inventories and sales catalogues. Diaper weave produced a geometric pattern with variations such as Bird's Eye, which remained popular, and other diamond and lattice variations were available. However, it was in damask that greater variety was to be found with patterns changing frequently and as Coulson's successful prosecution of industrial espionage reveals, jealously guarded. The predominance of floral designs reflects interests amongst the gentry both in gardening and in contemporary scientific study and discovery. A variety of books were published on these subjects, providing continuing inspiration for textile designers - an idea acknowledged by Lemire's statement ' floral motifs were not static commodities'.[30] Details of these designs were occasionally noted as a means of distinguishing napery in household inventories and sales catalogues. This example, which featured in the sale of eighteenth-century napery from Syon House, indicates the sophisticated integration of design elements of 'central urn, flowers, garlands, rope twist border, urn each corner'.[31] Its dimensions were seven feet by twelve feet five inches and it would represent a luxury product in its complexity and size. Table linen incorporating 'flower border', 'rose and bud cornered', 'acorn and leaves', 'grapes and vine', 'a vase' and 'convolvulous' was listed amongst the designs in Thoresby Hall in 1907 showing the continuing popularity of such motifs; the 'pheasants'and 'stags' represented on napkins may have accompanied tablecloths classified as for 'shooting party' referencing another elite leisure pursuit.[32] This enquiry has also shown that interest in explorations in Egypt and Greece in the nineteenth centuries was mirrored in the patterns in damask along with a lasting interest in designs from Chinese imports, thus recognizing that household linen, like the more intensively researched decorative textiles reflected changes in fashion and national experience.

Another key strand of the study was whether household textiles were used to exhibit status. This thesis demonstrated that not only did the display of armorial linen show distinction but it set those commissioning it apart from even the wealthiest of the growing mercantile and industrial groups in society. As the opportunities to amass fortunes from trade and speculation increased, demonstrating difference through the display of family coats of arms became incorporated into architecture and artifacts, but whereas buildings, engraved silver and decorated ceramics have

[30] B. Lemire, 'Domesticating the Exotic: Floral Culture and the East India Calico Trade with England, c. 1600-1800' *Textile*:1(2004) pp.65-85, p.71
[31] WRO C/018/SOT Sales Catalogue, Syon Park, Middlesex, 1997
[32] NUSC Ma 2 I/2 Inventory of Linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907

survived, few examples of their use on linen have. However, they can be traced through examples in household inventories and the order books of those supplying the service. Table linen incorporating armorial devices was bespoke and cost considerably more than the usual designs produced in larger quantities. Reference to 'the Lichfield Arms Pattern' in the Ditchley inventory indicated a desire to assert family and pedigree, as does an inventory for Catton Hall in Derbyshire that contained a set of table linen comprising table cloth, eighteen napkins and six slips referred to as 'boar's head linen'. [33] This device forms part of the coat of arms of the Wilmot-Horton family who held the estate. Incorporating a device into such bespoke linen was another way of signalling status as the serpent from the Devonshire crest (See Fig 3:15) demonstrates. The probate inventory for the 8th Earl of Harrington who died in 1920 listed a large table cloth with a coat of arms and four similar smaller ones. Although there was no indication of when the cloths were acquired, it is clear that such items were still valued highly since these are at the top of the extensive list of table linen.[34] It seems no coincidence that the earliest surviving items of household linen from Dudmaston are napkins displaying family emblems.[35]

Household linen was used in other ways to denote status. It is obvious from the listing of inventories and sales catalogues that specific types of linen were considered appropriate for different social groups. This clearly reflected a long-held belief that choice of goods should reflect social standing. Amongst the inventory of linen taken at Castle Howard in 1825 were '4 Pairs of fine sheet sheets for his late Lordship's use, 6 Pairs for upper servants Beds and 12 Pairs of Coarse Do for under servants Do', effectively demonstrating the hierarchical qualities of bed linen in that establishment.[36] The surviving sheets from Calke Abbey presented in Chapter Two show these practices still pertained there in the late nineteenth-century. Indeed from one of the earliest household inventory studied, that of Lady Susanna Harpur of 1664, whilst no mention is made of items for the use of servants, the inclusion of sheets of flax, holland and canvas and the reservation of 'and for my Lady [Susanna's mother-in-law] Beaumontes bed iii paier of flaxen sheetes ii paier of pillowbeers' would imply some difference in the quality, the implications of which would be understood by contemporaries. It is quite likely the best of the sheets, probably those designated 'holland' in her inventory were kept especially for guests, a distinction retained into the twentieth century as this recollection of life at Pilgrim's Hall reveals:

[33] T. Murdoch (ed), *Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006) p.160; DRO D3155/WH/1928 Inventory Catton Hall, c1880
[34] DRO D 518M/F190 Probate Inventory 8th Earl of Harrington, 1920
[35] NT DUD/T/047/A Napkin, 1824; NT DUD/T/048/B Napkin, 1826
[36] MS H2/11/1 Vol 1 Inventory of Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle, Castle Howard, 1825

> Parents, the governess and visitors had unmended linen ones [sheets]; children had cotton or linen ones that had been turned sides to middle as they became worn; the maids and the footmen had cotton.[37]

This recollection that sheets were used to the limits of wear brings the study back to the difficulties inherent within it.

Household Textiles: absent objects?

This study began with the observation that household textiles were rarely to be seen in country houses. Some of the reasons for their absence have become apparent through the available documentary sources. Items in inventories were, as Clabburn suggested, described as 'sore worn' or 'old and torn'.[38] Household textiles were frequently used to exhaustion. In the Wrest Park inventory '18 pieces of old sheets to mend others' were recorded, and 16 of the 28 Irish sheets in the inventory for Stoneleigh Abbey for 1786 were described as 'very worn and turned'.[39] This practice of 'turning' the relatively unused sides of the sheet to the centre was also referred to in the Household Book at Charlecote Park where another pair, presumably beyond this strategy, were 'cut for cleaning windows', equally '3 pair of Sheets cut up for Dusters' were recorded in the Montagu House inventory of 1746.[40] Items in these inventories were frequently described as 'old' or 'indifferent'. Occasionally the appraisers offered more drastic descriptions as with the Northwick Park linen. Here, in addition to Holland and servants' sheets being 'good and bad', were '3 doson and 3 towells meer raggs' and an inventory at Felbrigg listed assorted items in a trunk in the garret as 'too old to be used but will be of service to the poor'; similarly, 12 brown bath towels bought at Thoresby Hall in 1918 ended up 'taken for Doggie 1931'. Careful management required the clearing out of items unfit for use.[41] Linen could be sold on, as the sales catalogues identify, but in those studied the items offered appear to be at least serviceable or from the descriptions highly desirable. The final outlet for old linen might be the regular collection of rags for manufacturing paper as acknowledged in an article from 1696: 'Wherever there were mills, not a house in 30 or 40 miles radius but was called upon once a week'.[42] Addison's essay on paper recognized that 'The finest Pieces of Holland when worn to tatters, assume a new Whiteness more beautiful than their first, and often return in the shape of

[37] L. Lewis, *The Private Life of a Country House: 1912-1939* (Stroud, Sutton Press, 1997) p. 92
[38] P. Clabburn, *The NT Book of Furnishing Textiles* (London, Penguin, 1988) p.117
[39]BHRS Probate Inventory, Henry, Duke of Kent, Wrest Park, 1740; SCLA DR 18/4/69 Inventory, Stoneleigh Abbey, 1786
[40] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes; T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households*, pp.111-2
[41] WHS Probate Inventory (99): Sir James Rushout, Northwick Park, 1705; NRO WKC 6/463 464x4 Felbrigg Inventory, 1771; NUSC Ma2 I/2 Inventory of linen at Thoresby Hall, 1907
[42] Quoted in D. Woodward, '" Swords into Ploughshares"; Recycling in pre-industrial England', *Economic History Review* 38:2, p.187

Letters to their Native Country'.[43] Very few pieces like the Duchess of Derwentwater's sheet mentioned earlier or the sheet used to back Mary Armitage's coverlet survive unscathed. For whatever reasons, household linen, once present in large quantities, is now rare. The reuse and reshaping into other items above all else go a long way to understanding why many articles have not survived. They have simply morphed into other forms until totally worn out and thrown away and it is rare to find survivors such as '4 extra large home spun tablecloths 1820 (Steward's Room list) taken out of service 1910'.[44] Nevertheless, displays of plentiful clean linen once added distinction, demonstrated aspects of taste and facilitated rituals of hospitality centred on the table as the armorial napkins surviving at Dudmaston illustrate. These goods had a utilitarian function contributing as they did to the comfort and well-being of the household, and this gave them value in the same way as more clearly symbolic consumer goods that have received greater attention.

Observations

This research is sited within the broader investigations of country house culture and consumption. Using original, unpublished archival research it has shown that household linen played a more important role in the country house habitus than its practical functions might suggest. This environment has long been viewed as a showcase for power and prestige as Chapter One acknowledged, but it is increasingly being seen as a domestic environment too, albeit an elaborate one.[45] The recognition that goods demonstrate meaning as well as utility has been at the core of studies of material culture and this enquiry has shed new light on the significance as well as the functions and practices associated with these utilitarian commodities. Additionally, their utility is intimately connected to recent research into changing perceptions of comfort.[46] At the same time it has added to the knowledge of the ongoing cycle and interrelated processes of acquisition, use and disposal inherent in the everyday discretionary spending of the elite household.[47] This has not only highlighted that previous estimates of the state of household production of linen may require revising, but also feeds into the growing body of evidence relating to the circulation of second-hand

[43] Quoted in C. Wigston-Smith, *Women, Work and Clothes in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013) p.52
[44] NUSC Ma2/I/2 Linen Book, Thoresby Hall, 1907
[45] J. S. Lewis, 'When a House is not a Home: Elite English Women and the Eighteenth-Century Country House', *Journal of British Studies* 48 (2009) pp.336-363
[46] J. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in early modern Britain and early America* (Baltimore & London, The Johns Hopkins University, 2001) J. Stobart, C. Prytz, 'Comfort in English and Swedish country houses, c. 1760-1820', *Social History* 43:2 (2018) pp.234-258
[47] A. Fennetaux, A. Junqua, S. Vasset, *The Afterlife of Things: Recycling in the Long Eighteenth Century* (New York, Routledge, 2014)

goods communicating thrift and careful management of resources.[48] It has also signalled the ways that napery particularly acted as a marker of status in the complexity of its designs, the fineness of fabric and the careful maintenance it received ensuring it was seen to best advantage in rituals of sociability. This taps into the much wider field of consumption literature contributing to the discussion of taste and luxury, consumer choice and the role of fashion in the acquisition of household goods and the creation of the elite identity.[49]

This thesis has highlighted the connection of household linen with various ongoing threads of research, many of which have suggested further avenues of enquiry. In finding out about the production of linen it became apparent that Harte's estimate of the state of household production may require revision and that Clarkson's admission, noted in Chapter One, that the linen industry had been little researched compared with that of wool and cotton, is due for more attention; both are massive undertakings. A similarly herculean task that would render considerable assistance to future researchers into this area of textile history would be the production of a volume like Hudson's *The West Riding Wool Textile Industry: A Catalogue of Business Records* identifying those involved in linen manufacture. The process of investigating consumption and the acquisition of household linen revealed glimpses of the network of suppliers between the manufacturers and the ultimate purchasers through bill heads, trade directories and the increasing use of advertising. An investigation of it would add to the growing literature of shopping and to the understanding of retailing in a proto-industrial age. Several studies of single commodities made in recent years and the thorough investigation of the introduction of new textiles suggest a similar focus on linen would add to an understanding of its continuing popularity in the face of competition from cotton, and a timeframe for its gradual fall from favour with consumers.[50] The difficulties in tracking down surviving items of household linen brought into focus the practices of reuse and recycling inherent in the management of resources in an earlier period. Whilst there are some suggestions addressed in the section above, much more needs to be found out about whether the processes so ably investigated for the long eighteenth century, transferred to an industrial age or were superseded as technology elsewhere in the economy transformed practices. Earlier on in the research for this

[48] J. Stobart, B. Blond, B. Blondé (eds) *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century: Comparative Perspectives for Western Europe* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

[49] H. Grieg, Leading the Fashion: The Material Culture of London's Beau Monde pp.293-314 in J. Styles, A. Vickery (eds) *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2006)

[50] G. Riello, *Cotton: The fabric that made the modern world* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013); M. Ellis, R. Coulton, M. Mauger, *Empire of Tea: The Asian leaf that conquered the world* (London, Reaktion Press, 2015); J. Stobart, B. Blonde, Bruno Blondé (eds) *Selling Textiles in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)

thesis, there had been little recent work on sewing and seamstresses and such questions as they arose had to be answered intuitively and from a study of their work in Paris that had some similarities with conditions in England. The recent publication of a volume on British seamstresses has provided much needed information on their role in the production of household linen, yet there remain some areas such as the training offered by institutions that might still repay investigation. As with any such limited study, the validity of these findings may be enhanced or indeed refuted by further investigations both within the regions touched upon here and by extension beyond. There might also be scope for the investigation, where the sources both documentary and material are available for an in-depth review of the household linen of a particular estate, expanding on the more limited outlines sketched here for Warwick Castle and Calke Abbey.

Appendix 1

Biographical Information

There follows a brief biographical survey of families that have more than three documents relating to supplies of household linen that have appeared in the database used for this study.

Bulwer-Lytton

The Earle family held the estate in Norfolk, living at Heydon Hall from 1640 when it was purchased by Erasmus Earle a successful lawyer at Lincoln's Inn. The house, an Elizabethan brick building was altered and updated by Matthew Brettingham the Elder in the 1740s. He was responsible for houses such as Holkham Hall and Kedleston suggesting the estate was thriving and able to support his services. The Earle line continued at Heydon until the death of Augustus Earle in 1762. In the same year, Mary Earle, heiress to the estate, married William Bulwer. A painting by Mary Earle from this period shows a complex arrangement of walled gardens around the Hall.[1] By 1776 these had been swept away to make space for a landscape park. William Earle Bulwer inherited in 1797 an inventory was made of the household effects including the linen which has been incorporated into this study. He undertook extensions to the Hall and began a programme of expansion of the park by planting belts of trees around the arable periphery. Their son married the heiress of the Knebworth estate of Lord Lytton and the Lytton name was incorporated. Their eldest son William inherited the estate.

The Hall was let briefly in the early C19 until William Earle Lytton Bulwer married and returned in 1827, beginning another period of change to the Hall and embellishment of the landscape. His two brothers had entered the diplomatic corps and served in Europe, the Ottoman Empire and in the United States. His youngest brother, Edward combined that with being popular novelist.[2] This tradition of diplomatic and political service was continued by Edward's son, who served as Viceroy to India for four years. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £10,885, placing them in the greater gentry category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38). During the C20 the park has contracted slightly from the northern boundary whilst the core has remained little altered. The gardens were restored in 1972, and the Hall remains with the family. The remaining estate is farmed by a consortium on their behalf.

[1] https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000187?section=official-list-entry
[2] https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1820-1832/member/bulwer-edward-1803-1873

Dawney

The Dawneys originating in France, serving various royal houses from Edward III to Charles I and held estates in Yorkshire. In 1680 John Dawney was rewarded for his loyalty to the Stuarts with the title Viscount Downe. The title Baron Dawney of Danby – a principal element of the Yorkshire estate- was created in 1899. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they appear to have been involved in mineral extraction, agricultural enclosure and local transport improvements with interests in turnpikes, canals and railways.[3] Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £45,050. Their titles placed them in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

Featherstone-Dilke

Maxstoke Castle was built in the early fourteenth century and had licence to crenelate the moated site in 1345.[4] The Dilke family purchased it in 1599 and have been in possession of it since then. During the English Civil War William Dilke allowed the Parliamentarian Lord Brooke of Warwick Castle to place a garrison in it and pledged £2,000 that it would not be occupied by Royalists. This sum would be based on the rentable value of the estate held by the Dilke's at that point. The castle was nor slighted but a fire in 1762 destroyed part of the medieval structure. A Georgian extension replaced the damaged section. The castle was used by the Red Cross as a hospital in WWI and as a store for aircraft parts for the Spitfire factory in nearby Castle Bromwich in WWII. Bateman's *Acreocracy* did not include their estate, suggesting it was less than three thousand acres. A probate valuation of £3,295 in 1877, might place them just inside the lesser gentry category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

Fitzherbert

The Fitzherberts are or Norman origin and can be traced to a small estate near Derby in 1125.[5] They purchased the estate at Tissington in 1444. Marriage to a local heiress in 1465 increased their holdings. In 1609 they were sufficiently wealthy to replace the earlier moated site with the current house and soon after to have the gardens restyled. The marriage to Sarah Perrin in 1777 brought five estates in Jamaica into their portfolio and in 1784 they were created baronets. They banked with Hoare's which implies there was a reasonable amount of profit from the estate in this period. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £14,199. They were placed in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

[3] NYAS ZDS Dawney
[4] WRO CR4253; https://www.maxstokecastle.com
[5] M. Craven, M. Stanley, *The Derbyshire Country House* (Ashbourne, Landmark Publishing, 2004) pp. 223-4; DRO D239

Hare

Sir Nicholas Hare, briefly Speaker of the House of Commons 1539-40, already owned property in Suffolk when he purchased the former monastic estate at Stow Bardolf in 1553.[6] There was probably a brick dwelling there although he did not live on the estate. Medieval bricks were found during the demolition in 1994 of the last version of Stow Hall completed in 1873.[7] His grandson, also Nicholas, was a successful lawyer. On inheriting the estate, he built another brick house, around 1589 which was said to cost £40,000. The discovery of earthworks in an ariel survey of the area may indicate a pale and lends credence to the idea that there was also a deer park.

The death of a great-uncle, Hugh Hare of the Inner Temple in 1620, without issue, added £20,000 in cash to the fortunes of John Hare who inherited Stow Hall and its estates in 1623. The estate was providing an annual rental of £4,000 by then, making him one of the richest landholders in East Anglia. John had a large family of six sons and seven daughters. The eldest, Ralph, born in 1623 succeeded his father in 1637; his younger brothers all had land bought for them and more than £17,000 was allocated to the daughters in marriage settlements. When he died, £1,880 in cash and £1,230 in debts sperate were listed in his probate inventory. Ralph was made a baronet in 1641 but spent much of the civil war abroad and held only local offices during the Interregnum. At the Restoration he became an MP for the county. His probate inventory of 1672 with 1,319 pieces of household linen valued at £128.16s.5d was included in this survey, together with those of his three immediate successors.

Sir Thomas, inheriting the estate in 1672 hired a gardener in 1692 to maintain the courtyards, orchards, kitchen gardens and walks giving some idea of the immediate surroundings to Stow Hall but Sir Thomas died the following year. His successor, another Ralph, added a 'wilderness' to the attractions in 1712 and a reference to a park was made in 1734, the year Ralph died. A survey made in 1748 showed the park covered 105 acres. A new layout to the gardens was devised by John Kennedy of Hammersmith in 1794 and a new hall completed two years later. The gardens continued to be stocked from London based nurseries until 1820. These modifications indicate that the estate continued to support an elite lifestyle. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £14, 971. They are in the greater gentry category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

[6] https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/hare-sir-john-1603-1637 ; https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/hare-sir-ralph-1623-72

[7] https://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/ Norfolk Heritage Explorer NHER 30524

Leigh

The Stoneleigh Abbey estate was purchased in 1571 by Thomas Leigh a successful London merchant.[8] In 1611 his son had been made a baronet, and this had been elevated to Baron by the third generation in 1643. Supporting the Crown in the Civil War the estate had to compound with the parliamentary commission for nearly five thousand pounds, a sum comparable to that paid by the Harpur family in Derbyshire. A series of successful marriages increased the value of the estate which by 1749 was worth £6,975 per annum. The long minority of Edward, 5th Lord Leigh ended in 1763. His fitting out of the west wing built by his father Thomas, provided useful evidence for this study. At Edward's death the estate, worth £13,000, was inherited by his spinster sister and at her death in 1806 was settled on a junior branch of the family, the Leighs of Adlestrop. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £32,097. They are in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

Mellish

The Mellish family were originally merchant tailors from London.[9] In 1635 John Mellish purchased several small estates in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and the Blyth estate in north Nottinghamshire, and as he was buried in North Willington in Lincolnshire, probably retired there. He was succeeded by his eldest son Edward Mellish, at one time merchant at Oporto, Portugal. Amongst the archive for the family are several letter books from the seventeenth century, and evidence of the continued connection of the family with mercantile and professional legal interests in London. In connection with the family's own business interests, a considerable number of letters relate to the navigation of the River Dun.

Edward Mellish rebuilt Blyth Hall in the 1680s. Inventories for both Blythe Hall and Spittal House, another property, have been incorporated in this study as have details of purchases of linen. He died unmarried in 1703 leaving goods valued at £2,757 and his estate at Blyth to Joseph Mellish, the son of his cousin Samuel Mellish. Joseph's eldest son had been educated at Eton and Cambridge and in 1729-30 went of the Grand Tour indicating family had adapted to the expected lifestyle of the landed gentry. However, Edward died without issue and the estate went to his younger brother William. William was briefly MP for East Retford in Nottinghamshire but resigned his seat in favour of the salaried post of Commissioner of Excise, which he held from 1751 until 1760. He was Receiver General of Customs from 1760 to 1763 and again from 1765 to 1786 and served as Joint Secretary to the Treasury in 1765. He was described by Lord Egmont in 1749-50 as one of 'the most obnoxious men of an inferior degree' suggesting the family had not yet gained universal acceptance. His

[8] J. Stobart, M. Rothery, *Consumption and the Country House* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016) pp. 19-20
[9] https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/mellish/biographies/biographyofedwardmellish(d1626).aspx

younger brother Joseph had joined the Gore family mercantile and banking business in Bishopsgate Street, London, under John Gore who later became his father-in-law. He had also obtained government contracts to supply money to Germany, was a member of the Russia Company and had business interests in Portugal. These banking interests were successfully continued by his nephew and demonstrate the close association of the gentry and the world of commerce, acknowledged by Mingay.[10]

When William Mellish inherited the estate in 1757, he undertook extensive work on the house at Blyth and the estates. In the 1760s William sold some small estates to consolidate their holdings in north Nottinghamshire, purchasing Hodsock Priory and its estate in 1765. On his death in 1771, the estates passed to his son Charles. Charles had been M.P. for Pontefract on behalf of the Galway interest in 1774 (his half-sister Elizabeth having married the 2nd Viscount Galway, whose Inventory Book was used in this study). In 1780 he was placed instead, by the Duke of Newcastle, as M.P. for Aldborough. His political career ended in 1784 when he disagreed with Newcastle and was asked to resign. He disinherited his elder son Joseph for extravagance, settling the estate on his second son Henry Francis Mellish though this proved far from successful. Henry became Lieutenant Colonel and aide-de-camp to General Ferguson during the Peninsular War. He was noted for his interests in horse racing and gambling. His horses won the St Leger in 1804 and 1805, but he was forced to sell the Blyth estate in 1806 to settle his gambling debts. Hodsock became the main family residence and was inherited on Henry's death in 1817 by his sister Anne.

Anne had married William Chambers who also died in 1817, so she inherited some of the Chambers property in Derbyshire too. She improved Hodsock Priory in 1829-1833 by building a new south wing and Italian terrace in the Gothic Revival style. Both her sons predeceased her, so on her death in 1855 the estates passed to her cousin William Leigh Mellish and through him to the Buchanan family. There is no reference to either family in Bateman's *Acerocracy.* They are in the local gentry category on Table 1.2 (see p. 38)

Monckton-Arundell

The Monckton family traces its lineage back to the fourteenth century and Simon Monckton of the lordship of Monckton in the North Riding of Yorkshire.[11] Successive family members married into local landed families, consolidating their estate. From 1617, three successive male heirs were knighted and served as members of parliament. Robert, the son of the last knight, was an active

[10] G.E. Mingay, The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class (London, Longman, 1976) pp. 106-7

[11] https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/galway/galwayfamilyhistory.aspx

supporter of King William III and Mary. Robert's only surviving son, John (1695-1751), succeeded to the family estates in 1722, purchased Serlby Hall and the estate of 500 acres in Nottinghamshire in 1725. He was created Viscount Galway in 1727. He married Elizabeth, daughter of the 2nd Earl of Rutland and they had two sons. The heir, William, 2nd Viscount Galway, married the stepdaughter of William Mellish of Blythe Hall, also represented within the study, and he inherited the Arundell family estates from his aunt, Lady Frances, sister to the 3rd Duke of Rutland, adding considerably to their wealth. On the death of Elizabeth, the 1st Viscount married Jane Warner and it was the year after this that the Inventory Book for Serlby began. The book was a working document for the next forty years and has provided a wealth of information for this study.

The 1st Viscount was responsible for the construction of a brand-new mansion a little way away from the old manor house. Work was begun in 1740 by the architect James Paine (c.1716-1789). A great park was laid out, in the process of which the old village of Farworth was demolished. The house was remodelled in 1806 and again by the 7th Viscount in the early twentieth century. There was a military hospital at Serlby in WWI and a prisoner of war camp in the grounds in WWII. The property was sold following the death of the 9th Viscount in 1971 when the title passed to a descendant of the 5th Viscount. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £10,472. They are in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

Montagu

The estate in Northamptonshire was purchased in 1528 by Sir Edward Montagu, Lord Chief Justice and Privy Councillor to Henry VIII and Edward IV.[12] His son, also Edward served as sheriff of the country and made one of the party attending the funeral of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1587. He added several purchases to the original estate and was sufficiently wealthy to give settlements of £3,000 to his two daughters. His son, another Edward was created Baron Montagu in 1621. Despite supporting Parliament during the English Civil War, Edward took no part in the trial of Charles I, welcoming the return of the monarchy in 1660. Both his sons were courtiers, the younger, Ralph, serving as ambassador to France for Charles II and inheriting the property when his elder brother predeceased his father. Ralph extended the Tudor house at Boughton in French style, using many of the Huguenot craftsmen who had fled France after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Surviving the vicissitudes of politics in the later Stuart period, he was created Earl of Montagu by William III and marriages in 1673 and 1690 added significantly to the family's wealth. Ralph's position was further strengthened by his son's marriage with the Duke of Marlborough's daughter, and he was made

[12] T. Murdoch, (ed) *Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006); T. Murdoch, (ed) *Boughton House: The English Versailles* (London, Faber & Faber, 1992)

Duke of Montagu in 1705. At his death in 1709, extensive inventories of his properties were made which have been incorporated in the database supporting this study. His son, John, died in 1749. The estate passed down the female line and the title went to his son-in-law for his lifetime. Extensive household inventories were compiled in 1718, 1730, 1746 and 1772 which have also been included here. They were related by marriage to other families on the database, namely the Rouses of Rous Lench in Worcestershire, the Caves of Stamford Hall in Leicestershire, the Hares of Stow Hall in Norfolk and the Churchills of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire indicative of the networks of connection between elite families. The estates were subsumed into those of Montagu-Douglas-Scott with Boughton now one of the properties owned by the Duke of Buccleuch. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £43,885. They were placed in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38).

Pierrepont

The core of the Pierrepont properties was the Holme Pierrepont estate in south Nottinghamshire, which came into the family in the late thirteenth century.[13] Sir George Pierrepont (d 1564) purchased several former monastic estates in Nottinghamshire following the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. Sir Robert Pierrepont (1584-1643) was created Earl of Kingston-upon-Hull in 1628, and purchased extensive estates in North Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Other lands in Huntingdonshire came to him through his marriage. Following Robert's death, the estates in Nottingham and Huntingdon were inherited by his heir, Henry, created Marquis of Dorchester in 1645, whilst the remainder were settled on his younger brothers. Henry died without issue and the estate and the title of 3rd Earl of Kingston were inherited by a great-nephew.

The original seat at Holme Pierrepont was used either as a house for elder sons or a dower house as the main seat had moved to Thoresby Hall upon its completion in 1683. It was designed by William Talman for the 4th Earl of Kingston. He had little time to enjoy it however as he died in 1690 and was succeeded by his brother who was created Duke of Kingston in 1715. The *Appraisement of his Goods* as his probate was entitled, has been included in this study. His grandson inherited the title and it was he that had the house rebuilt when it burnt down in 1745. He died without heir and the title with him. His nephew, Charles Pierrepont, later 1st Earl Manvers refurbished it on his inheritance of the estates in 1788. He also had the parkland landscaped by Repton. This house too, was demolished and replaced by a Victorian Gothic design by Salvin in 1864.

13 https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/manuscriptsandspecialcollections/collectionsindepth/family/manvers/manversofthoresbyhall.aspx

During the eighteenth century land was both acquired and sold as estates were consolidated and Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £50,161. They were placed in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38). However, as agricultural rents fell in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, large scale sales began. Outlying properties went first but by the 1940s death duties forced the sale of lands in Nottinghamshire too and over five thousand acres and twenty-three farms were sold off, together with the property at Holme Pierrepont. Thoresby Hall, whose Inventory of Linen has also featured in this study, was sold to the National Coal Board in 1980 and later by them to the Warner Leisure Group and became a hotel.

Stanhope

The manor of Elvaston was granted to the Stanhope family by Henry VIII. The Stanhopes had their main estates at Elswick (Northumberland) in the thirteenth century, moving to Nottinghamshire in the fifteenth century.[14] At the dissolution of the monasteries, Michael Stanhope obtained extensive grants of monastic lands, including Shelford, Lenton and Elvaston. Michael was knighted soon after the accession of Edward VI and became a member of the party of the Lord Protector, the Duke of Somerset, who married Michael's half-sister. Stanhope shared in Somerset's fall in 1549, was put on trial for conspiring against the life of the Duke of Northumberland and executed on 26 Feb 1552.

Sir Michael's grandson, Sir John Stanhope (d 1611) married in turn, Cordelia Alington and Catharine Trentham. Sir John's son Philip (created Earl of Chesterfield in 1628) inherited Shelford and Bretby, whilst John's second son, John, inherited Elvaston. He built and a new house at Elvaston that was completed in 1633. He refused to pay Ship Money demanded by Charles I in 1635 and John Gell, then sheriff of Derby requisitioned his cattle, but John sent armed servants to bring them back. During the Civil War Sir John Gell, now supporting Parliament and governor of Derby, sent a force of soldiers to search royalist Elvaston for arms. He also defaced the newly erected and costly alabaster tomb to Sir John who had died in 1638 in Elvaston church. This did not prevent Dame Mary Stanhope marrying Gell five years later in 1648 although it was said he wed her only to destroy the glory of her husband and his house. The marriage was short lived being annulled within the year following a dispute over the marriage settlement.

William Stanhope (d 1756), great grandson of Dame Mary, was created Baron Harrington in 1730, as an acknowledgement of his career as a soldier in the wars against French influence in Europe and for his negotiating skills as ambassador to Spain. In 1742, he was created Viscount Petersham and Earl of Harrington. Charles Stanhope, 3rd Earl of Harrington (1753 - 1829) continued his family's military

[14] https://calmview.derbyshire.gov.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=D664

tradition, serving in the American War of Independence. He was later Ambassador to Berlin and Vienna and Constable of Windsor Castle. He commissioned Wyatt to remodel the house at Elvaston, in the Gothic Revival style. He would have hired 'Capability' Brown to landscape the park but he refused the commission as the area was too flat and lacked 'capability'. The 4th Earl, Charles (1780-1851) attained a reputation as a dandy and Regency buck. He was one of the Prince of Wales circle and renowned for his knowledge of tea and snuff. Developing a passion for a dancer from Covent Garden, they retired from society to create a spectacular garden around Elvaston Castle, employing the gardening expert William Barron for the work. The gardens were opened to the public by the 5th Earl although the charge of three shillings entry regulated the type of visitor admitted. The 5th Earl, Leicester, (1784-1862) had a distinguished military career in India and spent time with Lord Byron in Greece, bringing his body and papers back to England after his death. On his death he was succeeded by a minor who died before attaining his majority and in the absence of a direct heir the title of 7th Earl went to a cousin of the 5th.

The probate inventory for the 7th and 8th Earls have been included in this study. They listed household linen and domestic textiles at their three houses in England, Elvaston Castle, Gawthorpe Hall and their London residence, Harrington House. In addition to Elvaston Castle, the Earls of Harrington held Gawsworth Hall near Macclesfield (Cheshire) and Harrington House, near Charing Cross (London). In 1883 the family estate consisted of 4,569 acres in Derbyshire, 8,138 acres in Cheshire, 196 acres in Durham, 38 acres in Northamptonshire and 3 acres in Leicestershire. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £29,078. They were placed in the peerage category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38). Their income was supplemented by developments of their estate in London.[15] They had owned parts of Kensington drawing rents from the market gardens in the area. The 4th Earl decided to develop some of this area and commissioned Decimus Bruton to design Harrington House, now 13 Kensington Palace Gardens and the residence of the Russian ambassador, for the cost of £15,000. The house was sold after WWI. The finances of the family were reduced and lands from the estate sold piecemeal. Gawsworth Hall was sold in 1935. The Stanhope family and 11th Earl finally left the Derbyshire estate in 1939 at the onset of the war. [16] During the War, Elvaston housed a teacher training college and the contents of Elvaston Castle were sold by Sotherby's in the 1950s. In 1964 the estate was put up for sale and the Harrington family moved to Ireland. The house and grounds were purchased by Needlers (subsequently part of Tarmac Roadstone UK), a mineral extraction company, with the central core of the estate subsequently being sold to Derby Borough

[15] https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1266971
[16] https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/leisure/countryside/countryside-sites/country-parks-and-visitor-centres/elvaston

Council in 1969, saving it from being exploited as a series of gravel pits. In 1970 the park was officially designated a country park and opened to the public.

Windham

John Windham purchased the Felbrigg estate in Norfolk in 1442 but only gained full possession of it on the death of the previous owner's widow in 1461.[17] His son, also John married into the Howard family, powerful dukes of Norfolk. Surviving the fall of Richard III, he was implicated in the de la Pole conspiracy against Henry VII and beheaded in 1502. His successor, Thomas enjoyed a successful naval career with the help of his Howard cousin who was Lord High Admiral. His reputation and fortune were made fighting the French and managing to regain control of the family estate he may have been responsible for the oldest surviving parts of Felbrigg Hall. His son bolstered the estate by adding an adjacent monastic property to it but unfortunately his grandson Roger, inheriting the estate in 1569 wasted his fortune in lawsuits and was forced to mortgage much of the estate to a wealthy cousin.

The death of Roger and his brother within twelve months of each other left the cousin, Sir John Wyndham in possession of the estate. Having an exact inventory made of the contents of the hall, he split them with his second son Thomas who became the new owner of the estate. Thomas married Elizabeth Lytton of Knebworth in 1620 and set about rebuilding the hall, much of which survives today. They had a son, John, but Elizabeth died in childbirth. When the Civil War broke out, Thomas sided with Parliament like many of the Norfolk gentry and in 1644 he married again and had a second son, William. John inherited Felbrigg in 1654 but dying childless, the estate passed to his much younger half-brother William who came of age and into his inheritance in 1668. He married the daughter of a wealthy London merchant and in the next two decades set about extending and modernising Felbrigg Hall. His widow outlived him by twenty years and administered the estate until their son Ashe was of age. Ashe was one of those who invested in the 'South Sea Bubble' and the family was forced to retrench. Matters were made worse by the fall in agricultural returns as a letter to Ashe showed 'a prospect of the price of grain falling yet more'.[18]

Ashe's son, William was educated at home and instead of going to university, went on an extended Grand Tour with his tutor, returning in 1742. When he inherited Felbrigg in 1749 he employed James Paine to update the house and specifically to create space for William to display his drawings and souvenirs from the Grand Tour. He also married Mrs. Sarah Lukin, a widow who already had one son.

[17] J. Maddison, *Felbrigg Hall* (London, National Trust Enterprises, 1995); O. Garnett, *Felbrigg Hall, Gardens and Estate* (Swindon, National Trust Enterprises, 2016)
[18] Quoted in G.E. Mingay, *The Gentry* p.88

William died of tuberculosis in 1761 leaving the estate to his widow for her lifetime and to their eleven-year-old son, also called William. William, unlike his father, went to Eton where he made a firm friendship with the radical Charles James Fox. He too opposed the war with the American colonies, played a leading role in the trial of Warren Hastings and became Secretary of War in William Pitt's cabinet despite an early enthusiasm for the French Revolution.

Spending so much time in national politics took William away from his estates which were ably administrated by his agent, Nathaniel Kent, appointed in 1775. Kent, with a reputation as a pioneering agricultural improver devoted much time to planting new woodland and enclosing common lands. When William died without issue in 1810, the estate passed to Admiral William Lukin the eldest son of his half-brother, who took the name of Windham and the estate in 1820 on the death of William's widow. His son, again named William spent large sums on expanding the estate, putting up new farm buildings and cottages for the workers and introducing the latest improvements in agriculture. He too died young, leaving a minor, William Frederick as his heir.

William Frederick was given the epithet of 'Mad Windham' at Eton and his eccentric, extravagant behaviour and imminent marriage to a high-class courtesan led his uncle, wishing to protect the estate and family from total ruin, to launch a judicial enquiry into his nephew's mental health. The estate was assed as approximately 10,000 acres and valued at £12,350 at the enquiry. The 34-day court case was the sensation of the season in 1861 but resulted in William Frederick being declared sane. William's marriage was a predictable disaster, but produced a son, Frederick. William died in poverty aged just 26. The much-reduced Felbrigg estate, house and its entire contents were sold in 1863 to John Ketton, a Norwich businessman who had grown rich selling oilcake and other cattle foodstuffs. The property passed to his second son Robert William in 1872. He remained a bachelor and increasingly reclusive, handing over the property on the brink of dereliction to his nephew Wyndham Cremer Cremer in 1924. Wyndham and his son Robert Wyndham Ketton-Cremer devoted money and care to repairing the house and replanting the woodland, depleted as part of the war effort in WWI. In 1969 the estate and house were transferred to the National Trust.

A probate inventory of 1833 for Admiral Windham included in this study, lists more than two thousand items of household and domestic linen. A household inventory from 1771 also survives together with one taken when the property was sold in 1863. Bateman's *Acreocracy* valued their estate at £4,209 during the minority of Robert William Ketton. The Windhams were placed in the greater gentry category in Table 1.2 (see p. 38) based on the assessment of the estate at approximately 10,000 acres and a valuation of £12,350 at the enquiry.

Appendix 2

Case Study: Warwick Castle

An inventory of the Castle was made in 1644 on the death of Robert Greville, 2nd Baron Brooke, shot by a sniper during the siege of Lichfield in the Civil War. The inventory is rich in description of the elite textiles in the main apartments that included 'India worke imbroidered' carpets, a bed 'Canopy…imbroidered w'th twist and plate'.[1] Although it falls outside the remit of this study, it nevertheless gives a useful indication of the household linen for comparison with available later information. The household linen was stored in a variety of places at the time of the survey, including a building referred to as 'the plate house'. It was all stored in two chests 'flat chest of reddwood' and 'a great leather trunk' to protect it from the possible ravishes of vermin. All the linen used for tablecloths and towels was described as diaper. There were 40 tablecloths with little indication of size beyond hints at the size of some as 'large', 'long' or 'small'. There were also 11 described as 'calico and flax' although whether this was a linen warp and a cotton weft or a mixed yarn is not clear. There were also 4 flax tablecloths. Accompanying these were just 18 diaper napkins and 3 flax ones, rather fewer that might have been expected. There were 50 diaper towels although as with some of the tablecloths, some were listed as 'old over worne'. In addition, there were 16 flax towels together with 'four towels of Callico'. There were 3 pairs of Holland sheets, 2 pairs of new flaxen sheets and 24 other flaxen sheets, of which the majority were described as 'old'. Supporting these were 16 'pillowbeeres'. The value of the linen amounted to a very modest £43.11s.0d compared to the entire contents which were valued at £2356.9s.11d. Beyond the contents of the chests were: 'More twelve Pares sheetes that are used in the Castle' valued at £1.2s.0d.

With so little household linen available at the Castle, it is unsurprising that a major refurbishment was taking place in 1665. This probably marked the marriage of Fulke Greville to Sarah Dashwood, the daughter of a wealthy London merchant and as such may be another example of the association of household linen with life-cycle events. The 4th Baron Brooke engaged in 'fitting up the state apartment there at considerable expense and in the manner suited to the taste of the time' with payments for beds, mattresses, curtains and bedspreads.[2] The accounts show household linens were part of the refit.

Item: 183 ells ¼ of Flaxen cloath for Sheets 018: 17: 09

[1] WRO CR1886/6739/Z893(SM) Warwick Castle Inventory, 1643/4

[2] J. Edmondson, *An historical and genealogical account of the noble family of Greville* (1766) available at https://archive.org/details/historicalgeneal00edmouoft/page/94/mode/2up (accessed: 25.10.22)

Item: 40 ells of Hempen cloath for Sheets 002:15:01

Item: for making Sheets 000:14:08[3]

Further payments were made that year for razor cloths, towels, oyster napkins and knife cloths. Ironing cloths and payments for 'one dozen and one firkins of soape, £3:07s' and '½ lb of white starch and ½ lb of blew, 9s:05d' is indicative that linen was laundered on site and 'mending Linnen' also suggests a thorough regime of domestic economy. Two years later payments were made to two linen drapers, Mr Thorowgood being paid his bill of £55 and Mr Prieulx £33.12s.6d for two bills for holland for sheets with a further £5.0s.6d paid for making thirty-six pairs of sheets. Further payments of £57.10s to Thoroughgood in 1669 followed by a bill of £6.13s.6d for 'making and washing that linnen' and one of £11:17s to a Mr Tueford for sheets in 1670 suggests a regular review and reordering of household linen being undertaken, borne out by similar entries at regular intervals.

A further major refit appears to have taken place in the 1670s. Fifty yards of damask were purchased at the end of 1669 and a few months later £29.5s.10d was paid for diaper, both of these linens being used either for table linen or for towels although this is not specified within the accounts. Amongst these higher end linens are references to '2 ells of linen for the laundry' and '14 yards of Cloath for the kitchen' a reminder that large quantities of fabric were used throughout the household.[4] In amongst items purchased are indications that the household also made use of home-produced fabric. Payment was made in 1678 to one Quin for 'weaving 60 ells of flaxen cloath: £2:02s' and further payment of £2:06s for '4 yds ½ of flaxen; 13 ells ¾ Hurden cloath; 14 ells of flaxen; 7yds Lord's [?]; 5 ells [strong?] cloath'.[5] These terms all denote coarser fabrics than many of the bought pieces.

The accounts for 1703 show additional purchases of large quantities of holland and diaper at £40.9s, three further bills for diaper totalling £14.15s and 11s.6d for threads. This suggests work on these fabrics was being done by the household servants rather than outsourced as in earlier entries or bought in as the specialist work 'for altering a bed quilt: 9s' indicates. The following year, thirty-nine yards of damask was purchased for napkins and no indication of payment was found for the sewing involved, again indicating that this 'plain sewing' was probably done by women in the Brookes' employ. In total, £423.12s.8d was allocated in the accounts between 1701 and 1710 for fabric and thread that was probably used for household textiles. Other sums for holland and cambric,

[3] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts 1665-1740 (1665)
[4] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts 1665-1740 (1670)
[5] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1680)

accompanied by payment for embroidery, were discounted as wearing apparel and indicate the difficulty of identifying these hidden items of material culture. Over the same time period entries were found for seven women being paid a total of £72.10s.9d for laundry work. This must have included the household textiles although that is not specified and there was expenditure on soap, starch and blue for whitening linen. In 1702 there were also repairs to the equipment in the laundry itemised as 'two Washtubs: 14s, Mending the Copper: £4:10s'. Clearly household linen was maintained and replaced as part of the hidden items of expenditure of the household. These figures are relatively modest for a household whose income had been supplemented by dividends accrued from investment in both the East India Company and the Royal African Company through the Dashwood connection and over the same period, the gardens of the castle were being redeveloped at a cost of £1162.6s.5d![6]

Fulke Greville, 5th Baron Brooke, died in 1710 and his son and successor died at Oxford the following year. However, there do not appear to be any extant inventories to identify the extent of household linens held at Warwick, whilst in the accounts there are no household items recorded until an entry was made for 1715 thus: 'To the Hon. Dodington Grevile for the Hon. Algernon Grevile and himself for the Goods at the Castle 6th December 1715: £250; Household Goods: £260:15s'.[7] The import of this is unclear although William Greville inherited the title on the death of his brother and married Mary Thynne, daughter of the 1st Viscount Weymouth in 1715. These life-cycle events were accompanied by a major overhaul of the establishment. In the following year five bills were paid to a Mr Wingfield, linen draper totalling £337, as well as purchases of blankets and quantities of feathers, and a payment of £500 to Mr Wood an upholsterer, indicating a general refurbishment of the bed chambers was being undertaken again. The scale of the undertaking can be glimpsed with the payments of £15.4.6d to six named women, one Jane Bittsor, described as a seamstress receiving £2.17s.10d and Mrs Clarke, being paid 5s for marking linen. Work was continuing in 1717 with Susan Williams being paid £2.12.2d for making and marking linen and Mary Gale receiving £2.2s for the same. This level of activity and expenditure is surely indicative of this life event.

An inventory listing the linen stored 'In Mr Legoe's Roome' for 1722 offers a snapshot of the types of household linens at the castle, if not the quantity there might have been. There were 41 tablecloths; 10 were of damask and 10 described as flaxen, which might indicate they were from domestic sources. The remaining 14 were of diaper and of two different sizes. There were 5 dozen napkins, which from their position in the list were probably damask, and a further 3 dozen that were classed

[6] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1701-1707)
[7] WRO MI/297 Warwick Castle Accounts, 1665-1740 (1715)

as diaper. Also listed were 6 pairs of 'Holland sheets' and 18 'Holland pillow beers', as were '2 Callico sheets' which may have been either for children or in case of sickness, as calico was considered warmer than linen. Linen was next recorded in a household inventory in 1756, and it provides some indication of the quantities likely to have been held in such an establishment.[8] Curiously, the number of tablecloths remains virtually unchanged with 47 damask or diaper but with the addition of 14 categorized as either for the housekeeper or for the servants' hall and no reference to flaxen ones. The number of napkins had increased from 8 dozen to over 14, but it is the amount of bed linen recorded that indicates the 1722 inventory was not providing a complete picture of holdings. There are now 43 pairs of sheets; 6 of these are holland 'three breadths wide'; 34 pairs are flaxen and may be of local production although of these, 6 pairs are 'ell wide fine flaxen', a further 10 pairs are 'yard wide fine' and 3 of 'Dowlas': 3 pairs are listed as Russian**.** There are 97 towels recorded, absent from the first list. Of these 12 are round towels usually for servants in communal areas; 2 dozen are diaper and 'My Lord's', whilst 28 were 'coarser purchased in 1754'.

Warwick Castle had passed to Francis Greville in 1727 and in 1742 he married Elizabeth Hamilton. He spent large amounts on additions to the state apartments at the Castle and 'Capability' Brown to redesign the ground then commissioning Canaletto to paint five views of it. His son George made further improvements and purchased many items of furniture for the new rooms but there do not appear to be any records of the household linen until the household inventory of 1806. This inventory implies that linen was stored in both a storeroom and in the still room and whilst all the bed linen was in the storeroom, table linen, towels and domestic linen was present in both.[9] There were 101 pairs of sheets, presumably of different types, though the list says only that they are of different sizes. There are 4 dozen 'fine' pillowcases and 1 dozen 'coarser'. Reading through the inventory in its entirety it was possible to estimate from the furnishings that there were just over 20 beds available for family or guests and about the same for servants with others who may have lived in the town. Although blankets and coverlets were associated with beds, like the vast majority of inventories, sheets actually on the beds are not mentioned. Assuming then the sheets listed represented the total available this would give a ratio of 4.6 sheets per bed, making it roughly in line with the figure of 4.8 in Trinder and Cox's findings.[10] With the lack of further detail it is not possible to speculate whether the ratio was different for the beds of servants compared to gentry at Warwick Castle.

[8] WRO CR 1886/TN 926 Warwick Castle Inventory, 1756
[9] WRO CR 1886/TN 1053 Warwick Castle Inventory, 1806
[10] B. Trinder, & J. Cox, *Yeoman and Colliers*, pp.36-7

Tablecloths in both damask and diaper were present in both stores. The wording '8 Damask table Clothes; 4 dozen and five Napkins to match' implies different designs and sets of matching napkins although only a bird's eye diaper is specifically mentioned. In all, 141 tablecloths are itemised, some of them for the use of servants. Amongst them are 8 Irish damask ones. It is likely that Irish linen was being used in many country houses by this time, but apart from 'three large Damask table Cloathes linnen from Dublin marked G' recorded in 1735 in the possession of John Monkton, 1st Viscount Galway, at Serlby Hall in Nottinghamshire, they remain largely invisible in the sources despite the numbers known to be imported into England. Similarly, Irish sheets are found in only 8 entries, compared to 9 for Russian sheets. The 1806 Warwick inventory has a remarkable number of towels, 357, of which over 200 are round towels presumably for the use of servants in communal areas, but apart from 12 glass cloths, little indication is given of the domestic linen being used to maintain the lifestyle of the Grevilles and their guests, though the total valuation of the contents of the establishment was given as £11,588.9s.10d.

Just three years later another comprehensive survey of the Castle's contents was made.[11] Here linen was in the store and still rooms but also in a chest and a press. In terms of household linen there seem to have been minor fluctuations in most categories. The 111 pairs of sheets were listed more specifically with 18 flaxen, 38 of fine linen and 22 as Russian. The number of tablecloths for servants had increased showing differentiation between upper servants, who presumably dined in the steward's room with its 14 cloths, and those in the servants' hall. There were also cloths designated for Tenants for those occasions when hospitality was offered. Quantities of hand towels remained similar though designated 'new', indicating a recent replenishment. Of the round towels from 1806, 47 remained, together with '37 yards of round towelin' and 'one piece Russia towelin' which could have been up to 33 yards if it was a complete bolt of cloth. Some of the textiles used in routine household maintenance were included this time with 'three dozen and nine China cloths', 'four dozen Kitchen cloths', twelve glass cloths and fourteen knife cloths.

Four decades later an 'Inventory and Valuation' was made on the death of Henry, Earl Brooke in 1853.[12] There were two large linen chest recorded in the Chapel Passage, but the only linen recorded appears to have been in the Still Room. Here were a relatively modest 47 tablecloths, 18 of which were described as 'old'. There were a further 24 designated as for the servants' hall and the kitchen but there were 296 dinner napkins and a further 77 'breakfast' napkins which suggests there ought to have been more tablecloths. None of the tablecloths were described as 'breakfast' and only 3 as

[11] WRO CR 1886/ Box 466 Warwick Castle Inventory, 1809
[12] WRO CR 1886/783/16 Inventory and valuation on the death of Henry Richard, Earl Brooke, 1853

'small' and yet in addition to the dining room, there was a breakfast room with a table and 10 chairs. Reading through the document and looking at the furnishing and valuation of the bedrooms there appeared to be 14 rooms that might have been used by family or guests with as many beds; a further 28 beds, sometimes in shared rooms, might have been allocated to the servants who lived in the Castle. There were 24 pairs of fine sheets and just 24 fine pillowcases, although a further 34 were described as 'old', to accompany them. The servants had 38 pairs of sheets and 40 pillowcases, again quite a modest number even with a well-appointed wash house and laundry on site. In addition, there were 188 chamber towels and a further 36 for servants. There were also 34 round towels that would have been used in the service areas of the Castle. Whilst this quantity is rather modest, the same Still Room store had a variety of domestic textiles that follows the patterns found across the study that the later records give a clearer indication of the variety of cloths that now supported the maintenance of the country house habitus. In all 277 cloths were listed. There were plate, glass, china and tea cloths but the largest number were the 54 knife cloths and 48 kitchen rubbers. The Castle had a Lamp Room by the time of the inventory and 12 lamp cloths were recorded along with just 4 hearth cloths although much of the Castle was still heated by coal fires.

This is the final record of linen to be found in the Warwick Records Office. The Castle continued to offer hospitality on a grand scale despite a devastating fire there in 1871 but beneath the glamour, outlying property was being sold off.[13] By the twentieth century, heirlooms, books and then the Castle itself were sold off. Finally in 1978, after a public appeal and a court order to prevent it passing out of the country, their extensive archive was deposited in the country records office providing the information for this case study.

[13] A. Busiakiewicz, A. Manning, 'Daisy, the Countess of Warwick' podcast June 9th, 2018 https://adamfineart.wordpress.com

Case Study: Calke Abbey

The Harpurs had originally lived at Swarkeston close to the bridge over the Trent and on the main route south. They were Protestants and supporters of the crown holding a variety of offices in Derbyshire and steadily building up their estates by a series of careful marriages with other families in the surrounding counties. Henry Harpur, had purchased the Calke estate soon after his marriage to the widow of Henry Beaumont, leaving his brother in possession of Swarkeston, and purchased a baronetcy a few years later. When the Civil War broke out the next generation of Harpurs found themselves in opposition to the Parliamentary faction headed by the Gell family and after failing to stop the bridge at Swarkeston from falling into their hands, the manor house there was abandoned. Sir John Harpur was forced to compound for his estates at Swarkeston and eventually paid £4,583 over to the parliamentary commission, protesting that his 'houses, personal estate and woods' had suffered damage to the extent of £8,000 from parliamentary agents and he would have to sell land to raise money for the fine.[1] However, his nephew inheriting Calke and of undoubted royalist sympathies finally paid just under £600 to the Committee for Compounding in 1649, a sum that probably amounted to one year's income from his estates.

Sir John (the Harpurs were very conservative in their choice of Christian names) had married Susan West probably in 1640, the year after he inherited the Calke estates and it is from her household inventory taken in 1664 that their linen can be identified, and it was extensive.[2] Some of it was stored in her own chamber in two 'standards', 'in the wooden coffer next to the two standards' and in a 'Cipres Chest'; yet more was 'in the great Chest in the staier head Chamber next unto the privie'. Other items were entrusted to three named women, Margaret Clarke, Anne Waines and Ell[ie or y] Sachenell. In all there were over 100 sheets and roughly half that number of pillowcases, more than 60 tablecloths and cupboard cloths [used on side tables] and over 30 dozen napkins. Since this is a household inventory, no values are ascribed to the pieces, nor is there any indication of their age as there is no mention of distinguishing marks on them, yet this represents a considerable supply. A comparable probate inventory might be that of Sir John Packington of Worcester who died in 1689 leaving 70 sheets, 40 tablecloths and 39 dozen napkins. His linen was valued at £153.18s or 5.1% of his total estate. Whilst this valuation is more than twenty years after Lady Susanna's inventory, inflation was not a major problem at this period and whilst the cost of living was rising, so too were land values.

[1] H. Colvin, *Calke Abbey, Derbyshire: A Hidden House Revealed* (London, George Philip, 1985) p. 32
[2] DRO D2375/F/C/2/1 Inventory of goods of Lady Susanna Harpur 1664

It is not clear how many of Lady Susanna's sheets were of holland linen as the list refers to 'xxx paire of holland and flaxen sheetes' yet there is clearly a distinction in the types of fabric identified here. These sheets and other items are in one cupboard in Lady Susanna's chamber together with 5 sets of table linen, with cupboard cloths, towels and napkins, indicating these are sets of matching items 'for liveryes'. This style of formal dining was going out of fashion after the Restoration but had previously represented a serious investment designed to impress guests partaking of the hospitality of the establishment. It is possible the holland sheets were also reserved for important guests. Interestingly, Lady Susanna's record of 'for my owne Bedd ii paier of flaxen sheetes ii pair of flaxen pillowbeers' shows she was not sleeping in the holland sheets, nor was her mother-in-law Lady Beaumontes who similarly had flaxen bed linen. There were also 50 pairs of canvas sheets both in the 'great Chest' and entrusted to Anne Waines. These may have represented sheets available for the Harpur's own servants and possibly those travelling with guests. Such quantities of linen may also indicate that the establishment was washing linen seasonally. Sambrook gave a number of examples of households where 'quarterly orgies of washing of huge stocks of dirty linen' were customary for the sixteenth century but suggested by the seventeenth when this inventory was taken, that some elite households were washing more frequently.[3] Indeed in this study 79% of inventories and sales catalogues include evidence of laundries, suggesting more frequent washing of linen, although it is not possible to equate quantities of linen to washing practices with any certainty.

On the death of Sir John Harpur of Swarkeston without issue, Lady Susanna's son Sir John Harpur 3rd Baronet added his estates to his own at Calke and became one of the richest men in Derbyshire, with land in four adjacent counties and a rent-roll of over £3,000 a year. However, he did not enjoy this position for long, dying in 1681 at the age of thirty-six and leaving two infant children. It is surprising to see that the linen in his probate inventory is nowhere near as extensive as that of his mother's listing not twenty years earlier, comprising a modest 15 pairs of sheets, 8 pillowcases, 17 towels, 8 tablecloths, 2 sets of table linen with dresser and cupboard cloths and 7 dozen napkins. The whole of the linen was appraised at £21.17s.10d, a relatively low valuation for someone with such an annual income and £4.10s of that was the suggested value for just one set of matching damask table linen in what Mitchell identified as the older formal style with napkins, cloths and towels.[4] The inventory does give a clear indication of the relative values of different types of linen, as 'six paire of flaxon sheets' were appraised at £4.00s.00d and 'six paire of dowles [dowlas] sheets' at £2.08s whilst just '3 holland sheets' were £4.10s.

[3] P. A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Stroud, Sutton Publishing, 1999) pp. 120-127
[4] D. M. Mitchell, '"By Your Leave My Masters": British Taste in Table Linen in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries' *Textile History* 20:1 (1989) pp.49-77

When the heir achieved his majority in 1701, he had, in addition to the regular income from rents of between £2,000 and £3,000 per annum, some £40,000 his guardians had carefully husbanded during the years of his minority. Sir John Harpur 4th Baronet, who married Catherine Crewe with a dowry of £12,000 the following year, then rebuilt Calke on a scale commensurate with his wealth and standing in the county and furnished it in the latest style. Unfortunately, although he purchased silver from a leading maker in London and stocked his garden with plants supplied by London and Wise the foremost nurserymen of the period, there are no records of his purchases of household linen. At his demise, however, the probate began with the comment 'In the Linen Room – A large Deal Linnin Press with Shelves' before enumerating the items, many of which were described as 'very old' and 'much worn' and the whole valued at a mere £13.18s.06d.[5] However, there were linen covers on the chairs in the dining room and the housekeeper's stores included 25 yards of check linen and 35 yards of blue and white check that may have been for similar items. The inventory was drawn up by one Henry Harpur described as 'upholsterer' of Hatton, London. Whilst it is not a particularly common name it has not been possible to identify whether this name was coincidental or represents a distant family member. The next indication of the Harpur linen is the probate for Sir John's widow who survived him by four years; however, as she went to live in a property in Rutland, the inventory may be for that house rather than Calke.[6] The list included a new pair of holland sheets valued at £1.05s and 12 new holland pillowcases worth £1.10s. There were both servants' and flaxen sheets amongst the bed linen and evidence of careful usage of fabric in 'five paire old sheets and some pieces…10s' indicating these still had value either to mend other items, preserve elite bed hanging from fading and dust when not in use or even as rags for cleaning, as these 'cut for cleaning windows' at Charlecote Park or '3 pair of Sheets cut up for dusters' at Montague House signpost.[7] There were pillowcases of 'Irish cloath' and both huckaback and damask towels and 'Bird's Eye' diaper giving some indication of the other fabrics in use in the household. Some tablecloths were specifically for the servants as were the round towels. There may have been other items missed in this study as the document was disintegrating badly along its folds.

Sir John and Lady Catherine 's son, Henry Harpur 5th Baronet married the Duke of Rutland's daughter, an indication of the wealth and standing the Harpur family had accrued in the last few generations. When he died in 1748 an inventory of goods was made again referring to the linen closet with its deal press. This was more extensive than that of the 1741 list with 14 pairs of fine

[5] DRO D2375/F/E/1/24 Inventory of household goods for probate Sir John Harpur d. 1741
[6] DRO D2375/F/E/2/6/1 Probate Inventory Lady Catherine Harpur 1744/5
[7] WRO L6/1476 Household Book of Mrs Hayes; T. Murdoch (ed*), Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses: A Tribute to John Cornforth (Cambridge, John Adamson, 2006)* pp.111-2

sheets and a further 5 pairs 'for Master' indicating their quality, though again the 'fine' ones may have been reserved for guests. The 6 pairs of coarse sheets seem insufficient for the number of beds that must have been allocated to servants in the house. Whilst such identification must remain speculation, the furnishings suggest there were some 9 rooms likely to sleep family or guests and at least 30 beds, though not rooms for servants, suggesting a very inadequate supply of bed linen despite the nearly 60 assorted pillowcases. It is possible linen was carried between residences as suggested by McCarthy, or like many other inventory listings, that there were 'small things forgotten'.[8] There were 9 damask and 23 diaper tablecloths together with over 30 dozen assorted napkins, but many of these items were described as 'useless', 'very old' and in two cases 'thrown by' suggesting they were no longer carefully placed in the linen chests and cupboards. In the housekeeper's closet there was 'a linnen quilt made out of 2 old sheets' intimating some element of re-use or thrift, although '14 y^{ds} damask for table linnen in two remnants' suggests some of the worn out items could have been replaced and there is nothing to suggest that the Harpurs had been spending beyond their income. It may be that Calke had become less important as a residence, since Sir Henry had a position at the court of George II and was an MP from 1744 until his death. As his widowed mother had been left the use of their town house in St. James's Place for life, he had bought another in Upper Grosvenor Street.

Sir Henry was succeeded by his son, also Henry though usually referred to as Harry by contemporaries. Both were enthusiastic owners and breeders of racehorses and although the stables and a riding school were added at Calke, little work was done on the house itself. Sir Harry had married Lady Frances Greville, the Earl of Warwick's daughter. 'Capability' Brown was supervising changes to the grounds around Warwick Castle, and it may have been this that persuaded Sir Harry to begin the landscaping of the park around Calke. These were all luxuries the Harpurs could afford as their annual income was now over £7,000 a year; there is no indication in the archives of the everyday household expenditure that supported their lifestyle. Their eldest son, educated at Oxford and on a carefully planned Grand Tour inherited the property in 1789 as Sir Henry, 7th Baronet but no probate or household inventory was found to hint at his possessions. To his mother's horror, as she was a zealous evangelical, he formed a liaison with a lady's maid and after the birth of their first child, married her and installed her at Calke. It was during his renovations to the house that the name was changed to Calke Abbey, although there was no attempt to

[8] P. McCarthy, *Life in the Country house in Georgian Ireland* (New Haven & London, Yale, 2016); J. Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten; and archaeology of early American life* (2nd edn) (New York, Anchor, 1996)

introduce any of the fashionable Gothic elements to the building and it was in 1808 during his unsuccessful attempt to achieve a peerage that the family name became Harpur Crewe.

It was also during this period that surviving housekeeping accounts for 1816 indicate the Harpurs were paying for the processing of flax. A spinning account shows twelve different women received regular amounts varying from 1s.6d to 2s.4d for spinning flax or 'hards'.[9] It is likely that this involvement was present at earlier periods and that some of the flaxen and dowlas items in Lady Susanna's inventory of 1664 and Sir John's probate inventory of 1681 were estate or locally produced. This speculation could also be extended to the 'six pieces old flaxen sheets' in Sir John's probate of 1741 and the 'six p^{r} course sheets' and 'forty-four coarse pillowboers most of them very old' in the inventory of 1748. Sir Henry Harpur Crewe died in 1819 but there is no inventory of goods from which any of the produce from the flax can be traced. However, the inventory made on the death of his son Sir George in 1844 does include '3 dozen spun flax' and '1 dzn D^{o} to[o?] thin'.[10]

This inventory has a detailed listing of household linen beginning on page 26 of the 'goods and chattels' at Calke Abbey. Whilst the list begins with the table linen that included 42 tablecloths and a further 65 for servants, it contains a staggering number of sheets: 484 linen sheets and a further 76 for servants and nearly 300 pillowcases. There is no indication of the condition of any of these items and there is no separate valuation given for the linen, so it is difficult to see whether all these sheets were fit for use or had been retained to be repurposed as was often the case with older linen. In addition to these there were 167 yards of sheeting listed above the spun flax. It is tempting to think this might have been locally produced but there is nothing to indicate this is the case. This list, unlike earlier ones, does include the domestic textiles involved in the routine maintenance of the house and its elite lifestyle. Kitchen cloths, china, plate and glass cloths, knife cloths and lamp cloths were counted and listed, as were round towels for the service areas and ironing blankets, folding sheets and mangling cloths for the laundry. Elsewhere in the inventory there is reference to 'four poster bedstead with embroidered hangings and loose brown holland covers' showing how these household textiles were used to protect the expensive decorative textiles elsewhere in the property from damage and sunlight.

Calke at this point was the epitome of an English country house. It was generating an ample income from the careful management of the estates and exploitation of resources such as limestone and brick clay. Its owner played an integral part in the economic, social and political life of the area but Sir John Harpur Crewe 9th Baronet from 1844 to 1886, although serving as High Sheriff in 1853, was

[9] DRO D2375/H/D/1/1 Housekeeping Payments Nov. 1815-June 1816
[10] DRO D2375/F/J/1/13/4 Probate Inventory Sir George Crewe 1844

more interested in shooting game and breeding longhorn cattle and the long decline of the house began during his forty-two years of tenure. However, it is for this period of relative regression and eventual decay that there is a detailed record of the household linen.[11] The linen was recorded in pre-printed books allowing columns for numbers of items, description, marks, date and remarks, following the format in earlier handwritten ledgers. The first entries were made in 1855 and may have carried on from earlier records that have not survived; Sir John Harper Crewe had been married and in possession of Calke Abbey for ten years when this record began. The dates and marks recorded in the book show that regular purchases of table linen and bed linen for the household and for the servants had been made in the preceding years. The entries also suggest that items might be repurposed or described as 'worn' after about ten years, presumably succumbing to the regular vigour of the laundry methods available at the time, like the 6 tablecloths for the housekeeper's room and 4 for the housemaids' room dated 1846 and noted as 'worn out', possibly in 1855 when the book was begun. The uncertainty is compounded by the book being a working document with ticks placed next to items at later dates, in different inks or in pencil but without any clarity about the date of the review. It seems clear that when the record commenced there were still pairs of fine linen sheets dating back to 1833 in store although some had been cut up for cot sheets. Others had been added the year following the 9th Baronet's marriage like the 6 pairs for 'bachelors' beds', 14 pairs for women servants and 6 pairs for men. A regular rolling programme of purchases continued to be made through the 1890s and 1900s adding to the stock with remarks concerning the condition and possible reuse, such as 'sent to Dairy', though whether for domestic textiles or bedding for the dairymaids is not clarified. As with household accounts, these documents were idiosyncratic working documents.

Table linen was listed first in both linen books including several items of significant age. The entry for 1855 included '1[tablecloth] crest upon it', '1 smaller, crest upon it' and '12 dinner napkins with crest upon them'. All these items are marked 'HH' but undated. With the Harpur tendency to use limited Christian names these could have been purchased by the 5th, 6th or 7th Baronet any time between 1741 and 1819. Appearing in the entries for 1855 were 16 tablecloths dating from the 1820s; some were still listed in the new book begun in 1907: a matching pair of 6½ yards long and another 5 yards with a design of 'Castle & Figures'; another of 4½ yards had a 'Vine and Oak' design. Alongside these veterans were other cloths from the 1850s the designs suggested by the descriptions given to sets of napkins such as 'Egyptian pattern', 'water lily' and 'spider web'. By the 1890s these designs had been augmented with 'grapes', 'mermaid', 'floral, scroll & birds' and 'oak

[11] DRO D2375/H/F/4/1 Volume of list of linen at Calke Abbey 1855-1931

leaves' amongst others. Humbler items such as 'bleached calico dustcovers for best beds' and a variety of domestic textiles were itemised in the 1850s and 1860s, linked to different service areas such as kitchen, pantry and nursery. Round towels were purchased for the gardeners, and for use in the slaughterhouse, bake house, dairy and stables as well as the servants' hall. Curiously '4 Dog cloths' and '8 Golosh cloths' were also allocated to the servants' hall indicating some of the less usual aspects of cleaning. A pocketbook of payments to Mrs. Pye for laundry, though undated, shows these items as well as bed and table linen were laundered frequently, although whether items were sent out to Mrs Pye, or she came to the laundry at Calke and was paid by the item is not clear.[12] These payments and others for stitching sheets, napkins and table cloths would have been authorised by the housekeeper of the time; Harriet Phillips was in post in the 1860s and Harriett French in the 1890s.[13]

There continued to be regular purchases of all types of household linen in the second book through to 1900 when there is a considerable hiatus until 1931. It is possible another linen book was being used during the intervening period that has not survived or that the routines of the household were gradually abandoned during the twentieth century, although there were twenty-seven servants there in 1910. Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe, who inherited the estates in 1886, had been educated at home and was a determined recluse in adulthood - his aunt lamenting 'How completely he is losing or rather has lost all position in the country'.[14] He was also losing land. Falling rent rolls led to sales between 1919 and 1923 and in 1921 he panicked about the financial situation and dismissed nearly all the estate and household staff, who were out of work and unpaid for six weeks until most of them were taken back on.[15] Had his son, Richard, lived to succeed his father Calke might have been more successful in adapting to the twentieth century but he died in 1921 and the burden of a neglected estate passed to his elder sister who had married a partner in the firm of lawyers who acted for the estates. They sold a considerable collection of the stuffed birds, eggs and ornithological books Sir Vauncey had amassed to pay death duties and reduced the staff to half a dozen. It is tempting to speculate that the entries for 1931 were in the same hand as those of 1906 although elementary handwriting exercises tended to produce similar styles. They noted the removal of several tablecloths purchased during Sir Vauncey's time, but also that of 1828 with the design of

[12] DRO D2375/H/A/2/41 Pocket account book for laundry
[13] DRO D2375/H/D/1/14-15 Account book with bills and vouchers, Mrs Phillips 1873; K. Kreft, 'The Housekeeper', *Ticknall Life Community Magazine*, 4th September 2020, https//www.ticknalllife.co.uk
[14] H. Colvin, *A Hidden House Revealed*, p. 71
[15] H. Colvin, *A Hidden House Revealed*, p. 96

'Castle and Figures' together with its napkins. The final entry itemised these rather mundane articles:

1 dzn kitchen cloths
1dzn pantry d^{o}
8 roller towels
1 dzn & ½ knife
½ dzn glass (for house maids)[16]

Sir George Harpur Crewe had had bathrooms installed at Calke Abbey including one for the servants, and 30 bath towels appeared in the 1894 list with 12 'worn'. Hilda Mosley introduced the telephone in the 1920s but it was not until 1962 that Calke had electricity and it is tempting to agree with Hardyment that 'the Harpur-Crewes of Calke lived on eccentrically in the gathering dust, finally making over their home to the National Trust in a state of decay which earlier generations would have regarded as unthinkable and immoral', yet it has proved to be a fascinating and popular curiosity to the visiting public.[17]

[16] DRO D2375/H/F/4/3 List of linen at Calke Abbey 1894-1939
[17] C. Hardyment, *Home Comforts: A History of Domestic Arrangements* (London, Viking, 1992) p. 201

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QS1/16/3/5/1 Traverse of case against Joseph Marshall, Doncaster, linen webster, 1677
QS1/16/9/2/7 Traverse of case against Jas. Saville of Quarmby, linen weaver, 1677
QS1/17/6/6/5 Traverse of case against Samuel Hocart, Sheffield, Joseph Soresby & W^{m} Daniel, Rotherham, linen weavers, 1678
QS1/18/1/8/6 Deposition regarding burial in linen, 1679
QS1/18/1/8/7 Deposition regarding burial in linen, 1679
QS1/20/8/1/5 Indictment, John Kitchen, Skipton, linen weaver, 1681
QS1/20/8/1/9 Indictment, John Kay, Skipton, linen weaver, 1681
QS1/20/10/5/3 Traverse of case against Thos. Roades, Ecclesfield, Sheffield, linen weaver, 1681
QS1/57/8 Petition by 26 linen weavers for act to punish stealing cloth & yard more severely, 1718
QS1/113/6 Petition for protection of linen trade, 1774
RD/AP1/4/3 Inventory, John Askwith, Bradford, linen weaver, 1663
RD/AP1/15/4 Will, Ed. Barnett, Boroughbridge, nr. Knaresborough, 1666
RD/AP1/17/87 Inventory, Thos. Bruton, Aiskew, nr. Bedale, 1681
RD/AP1/18/13 Will, Michael Brown, nr. Bedale, 1685
RD/AP1/19/24 Inventory, Peter Banks, Wath, nr. Bedale, linen weaver, 1693
RD/AP1/35/32 Inventory, Henry Emonson, Knaresborough, linen webster, 1628
RD/AP1/37/121 Will, Guy Forster, Nun Monkton, linen weaver, 1670
RD/AP1/71/4 Inventory, John Peckett, Nun Monkton, linen weaver, 1671
RD/Ap1/80/51/3 Will, John Ryder, Coverdale, nr. Bedale, linen weaver, 1675
RD/AP1/104/5 Inventory, W^{m} Walburne, West Tanfield, Bedale, linen weaver, 1695
RD/AP1/127/19 Inventory, John Dixon, Scotton, nr. Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1735
RD/AP1/127/27 Inventory, Thos. Dawson, Whixley, nr. Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1737
RD/AP1/136/74 Will, W^{m} Calvery, Marton cum Grafton, nr. Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1751
RD/AP1/155/152 Inventory, W^{m} Firby, Bedale, linen weaver, 1792

RD/AP1/162/42 Admon, Geo. Marshall, Ferensby, nr. Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1809
RDP100/44 Release, Michael Wro, Colton in Whitchurch, Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1679
RP: 1355 Draft Assignment, Francis Dodgson, Pontefract, linen weaver, 1774
RP:2215 Bond of indemnity for £4,000, John Jackson, W^{m} Sykes, Richard Rushforth, Manchester 'Irish Merchants' & manufacturers, 1792
RU: 590 Lease, Thos. Moore, Horton in Ribblesdale, linen weaver, 1736
SPL: 108/708/719 Indenture, Chas. Haigh, Barnsley, linen weaver, 1814
SpSt/4/11/2/8 Lease, Peter Holmes, Addingham, nr. Skipton, 1692
STST/2/136 Conveyance, John Berry, Eccleshall, Sheffield, linen webster, 1666
STST/2/210 Conveyance, Jonathan Rhodes, Bradford, linen weaver, 1701
Tong/12a/62 Agreement, Ed. Royston & Joseph Greenough, Wakefield, linen websters, 1748
WDP20/9/8/3/1 Lease, W^{m} Cooke, Wakefield, linen weaver, 1720
WYC: 1089/224 Lease Alan Edmundson, Barnoldswick, linen weaver, 1698
WYHER/3727 Plans, Castleton Mills, Wortley, Leeds. Steam powered flax mill (1830s), weaving shed (1850s), linen weaving sheds and warehouses
WYHER/3728 Plans, Balm Road Mills, Hunslet, flax spinning & weaving sheds (1826), Italianate 5 storey mill with boiler house & warehouses, 1880s
WYHER/6868, Plans, Byron Street Mills, Leeds. Cloth dressing (1823) purchased by flax spinner, 1834. Extensions (1839), 6K spindles in operation. Linen manufacture with 170 workers. 1883 converted to woollen manufactory
WYHER/10360 Plans, Hunslet Linen Works, Leeds, 1845
WYHER/12643 Plans, Marshall's Mill, Water Lane, Leeds, 1791
WYLI Archive, John Wilson & Sons, Linen Manufacturer, Leeds, 1754-1838
WYL35/R/2 Conveyance, Joseph Chewlers, Hoperton, nr. Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1707
WYL130/26 Bill for Linen from Chas. Pegler & Co, Leeds. Possibly large quantity purchased for Harewood House at time of marriage, 1869
WYL132/66 Mortgage, W^{m} Daniel, Scriven, Knaresborough, linen weaver, 1775
WYL132/72 Bond, Martin Cass, linen manufacturer, Knaresborough, 1802
WYL132/89 Mortgage, Wm Barker, Ellinthorpe, linen weaver, 1795
WYL132/94 Mortgage, Robt. Keighley, Knaresborough, linen manufacturer, 1795
WYL140 Will, Thos. Akers, Holbeck, nr. Clowne (?), linen weaver, 1819

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The Times Digital Archive: September 29th 1818; October 27th 1818
The Times Digital Archive: 20th January 1874; 11th May 1874
The Times Digital Archive: 21st February 1935; 20th March 1935; 19th March 1935

Surviving material culture

Museum of London Collection
A8601/17 Bill for Scottish sheeting, 1791

National Trust Collection
NT 293871 Sheet, Calke Abbey, date unknown
NT 293877 Sheet, Calke Abbey, 1885
NT 293879 Sheet, Calke Abbey, 1900
NT DUD/T/044/A Damask napkin, Dudmaston, 1824
NT DUD/T/046 Damask napkin, Dudmaston, 1850
NT DUD/T/047/A Damask napkin, Dudmaston, 1826
NT DUD/T/051/A Bath mat, Dudmaston, 1909
NT DUD/T/057/1 Slop cloth, Dudmaston 1955

NT DUD/T/057/2 Knife cloth, Dudmaston, 1909
NT DUD/T/057/3 Basin cloth, Dudmaston, 1931
NT DUD/T/112 Hand towel, Dudmaston, 1900

The Quilters' Guild Collection
QC 2020-9-A The Mary Armitage Coverlet, 1787

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BHRS
Sales Inventory, Colworth House, Sharnbrook, 1723
Probate Inventory, Owen Bromsall, Northill Manor, 1731
Sales Inventory, Ampthill Park House, 1737
Probate Inventory, Henry Brandreth, Houghton Manor House, 1740
Probate Inventory, Henry, Duke of Kent, Wrest Park, 1740
Probate Inventory, Charles Leigh, Leighton Buzzard Prebendal House, 1749
Probate Inventory, Elizabeth Kingsley, Hasells Hall, Sandy, 1761
Probate Inventory, John Orlebar, Hinwick House, Podington, 1766
Probate Inventory, Marquis of Tavistock, Houghton House, 1767
Sales Inventory, Colworth House, Sharnbrook, 1771
Probate Inventory, William Lee Antonie of Colworth House, Sharnbrook, 1816
Probate Inventory, Lord St.John, Melchbourne House, 1817
Lease Inventory, Ickwell Bury, Northill, 1823

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GRO D1799/E255 Household Inventory, Dyrham Park, 1710

Howard Archive
MS H2/11/1 Vol 1 Inventory of Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle, Castle Howard, 1825
MS H1/F4/1 Probate Inventory, Henry Howard 4th Earl of Carlisle, Castle Howard, 1759

SRS
Inventory, Helmington Hall, 1701

WHS
Probate Inventory (60): Thomas Hall JP of Hallow, 1661
Probate Inventory (61): John Fincher of Shelve, 1662
Probate Inventory (62): Thomas Russell, Hanley Castle, 1662
Probate Inventory (63): Henry Townshend MP, Elmley Lovett, 1663
Probate Inventory (64): Nicholas Acton, Bocklington, 1664
Probate Inventory (65): John Egioke JP, MP of Feckenham, 1665
Probate Inventory (66): Henry Bromley, Upton-on-Severn, 1667
Probate Inventory (67): Sir John Blount, Sodington, 1668
Probate Inventory (68): William Baldwyn, Longdon Travers, 1668
Probate Inventory (69): Herbert Wallwyn, Upper Wick, 1668
Probate Inventory (70): Richard Bourne, Acton Hall, Ombersley, 1669
Probate Inventory (71): Thomas Wylde, The Commandery, Worcester, 1670
Probate Inventory (72): Edward Pitts, Kyle Wyard, 1672
Probate Inventory (73): Phillip Brace, Doverdale, 1673
Probate Inventory (74): Richard Vernon of Hanbury, 1679
Probate Inventory (75): William Acton, Lower Wolverton, 1679

Probate Inventory (76): Walter Hanford, Woollas Hall, Eckington, 1679
Probate Inventory (78): Sir Thomas Rous, Rous Lench, 1679
Probate Inventory (79): Ann Dowdeswell, Pull Court, Bushley, 1681
Probate Inventory (80): William Lygon, Madresfield, 1681
Probate Inventory (81): Robert Wylde Junior of The Commandery, Worcester, 1684
Probate Inventory (82): William Dowdeswell, Pull Court, Bushley, 1684
Probate Inventory (83): Henry Winford, Astley, 1685
Probate Inventory (84): Sir Francis Rous, Rous Lench, 1687
Probate Inventory (86): Sir John Pakington, Westwood, 1689
Probate Inventory (90): Dame Mary Wintour, Huddington, 1697
Probate Inventory (91): George Walsh, Holt Castle, 1698
Probate Inventory (93): Thomas Savage of Elmley Castle, 1699
Probate Inventory (94): John Bearcroft, Mere Green, Hanbury, 1700
Probate Inventory (95): Edward Baldwyn, Longdon in Tredington, 1700
Probate Inventory (96): John Russell, Little Malvern, 1701
Probate Inventory (97): Sir John Barneby, St. Johns, Worcester, 1702
Probate Inventory (98): Thomas Nott, Hobden in Dodderhill, 1704
Probate Inventory (99): Sir James Rushout, Northwick Park, 1705
Probate Inventory (101): Humphrey Soley, Upton-on-Severn, 1707
Probate Inventory (102): Henry Townshend JP, Elmley Lovett, 1707
Probate Inventory (104): Thomas Stevens, Woodhall, Norton, 1711
Probate Inventory (105): John Bourne, Acton Hall, 1714
Probate Inventory (107): Heigham Coke, Suckley, 1719
Probate Inventory (108): Thomas Vernon, Hanbury, c1721
Probate Inventory (109): Edward Hancock, Hall Court, Bredon, 1722
Probate Inventory (110): John Sutton, Russell's Hall, Dudley, 1723
Probate Inventory (111): Robert Gage, Woodend, 1723
Probate Inventory (112): John Bearcroft, Mere Green, Hanbury, 1724
Probate Inventory (113): Humphrey Lowe, Bromsgrove, 1727
Probate Inventory (114) Talbot Jewkes, Wolverley, 1730
Probate Inventory (115): Thomas Haslewood, Lower Wick, 1733
Probate Inventory (116): Sir John Dineley Goodere of Charlton, 1741
Probate Inventory (117): Richard Grevis, Mosley Hall, 1759
Probate Inventory (118): James Newport of Handley William, 1785

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