

**'A MODERN-BUILT HOUSE ...fit for a Gentleman':
elites, material culture and social strategy in Britain, 1680-1770**

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D.Phil., History
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Short Abstract

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A 1755 advert in the *Gloucester Journal* listed for sale, 'A MODERN-BUILT HOUSE, with four rooms on a floor, fit for a gentleman'. In the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'gentlemen's houses' like the one described evolved as a cultural norm. This thesis offers a social and cultural reading of an under-studied group of small free-standing classical houses built in the west of England between 1680 and 1770. By developing a profile of eighty-one gentlemen's houses and one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners, this study unites subjects such as the history of architecture, landscapes, domestic interiors, objects and social development that are often treated separately.

The design, spatial arrangement, and furnishings of gentlemen's houses precisely defined the position of their builders and owners in the social hierarchy. The 1720s marked an important shift in the location and meaning of building that corresponded to an alteration in the background of builders. Small classical houses moved from a relatively novel form of building for the gentry to a conventional choice made by newcomers often from commercial and professional backgrounds. Gentlemen's houses projected status in a range of settings for both landed and non-landed elites, highlighting the house as a form of status-enhancing property rather than land. Moreover, gentlemen's houses had adaptable interior spaces and were furnished with an array of objects that differed in number and quality from those lower and higher in society.

The connections between gentlemen's houses and important processes of social change in Britain are striking. House-building and furnishing were measured strategic activities that calibrated social status and illustrated mobility. This thesis demonstrates that gentlemen's houses are one key to understanding the permeability of the English elite as well as the combination of dynamism and stability that characterized eighteenth-century English society.

Long Abstract

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A 1755 advert in the *Gloucester Journal* listed for sale, 'A MODERN-BUILT HOUSE, with four rooms on a floor, fit for a gentleman'. Throughout Britain and its colonies in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, 'gentlemen's houses' like the one described evolved as a cultural norm. Such small free-standing classical houses united by size, architectural form, scale, and design pretensions are at the core of this study. Through their architecture, arrangement of space, and furnishings, small classical houses exhibited carefully coded meanings that established their owners' position in the social hierarchy. Examining the gentleman's house highlights precise strategic actions, including house-building, that finely calibrated social status and mobility in eighteenth-century England. In this way, these houses are a key to understanding the permeability of the English elite and the stability of eighteenth-century English society.

This thesis examines a largely neglected group of eighty-one small classical houses constructed in the west of England between 1680 and 1770. Most historians identify the century after 1680 as a time of profound change for Britain. The remaking of the political system, the creation of new financial institutions, British imperial growth and trade expansion, a 'consumer revolution', and the dramatic reshaping of England's towns in an urban renaissance served to transform British society. Historians disagree, however, about how these developments unfolded and their implications for Britain's social structure.

The connections between gentlemen's houses and these important social processes are striking. Often viewed as commonplace small classical boxes, gentlemen's houses represented a specific material claim to gentility that confirmed their owners as members of the British elite. By associating houses with one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners this thesis argues that gentlemen – and in some cases gentlewomen - employed their houses and possessions in precise ways in a range of settings to project power and status.

This social and cultural reading combines the history of architecture, landscapes, domestic interiors, objects and social development in an effort to unite subjects often treated separately. The first chapter introduces the thesis and highlights the field of material culture studies, which emphasises objects and their agency, as a substantial influence on the methodology. The approach positions small classical houses at the centre of analysis in the first instance rather than people, asking not what sort of dwelling did a certain group possess, but rather: what sort of owner did a particular type of house acquire? The introduction also surveys several overlapping bodies of literature related to architecture, consumption, and social status. Despite the 'material turn', historians of consumption have largely ignored houses as a significant material choice, whilst architectural historians have neglected this particular building type. Surprisingly little literature integrates houses and material culture into accounts of social change, although the social and cultural meaning of buildings has emerged as an important avenue of investigation in architectural history. By drawing on these various fields, this thesis enables a reconsideration of Lawrence and Jeanne Fawtier Stone's *An open elite?*, suggesting that their provocative argument about the strict limits on social mobility should be revised in light of evidence offered by gentlemen's houses. Finally, the chapter establishes the rationale for a regional study of Gloucestershire, arguing that excellent

primary and secondary materials and considerable geographic, social and economic diversity make it a highly appropriate basis for a study of small classical houses.

Chapter 2, *Gentlemen's houses and their builders and owners*, examines in greater detail the eighty-one houses at the core of this thesis. It establishes where these houses were built and when. The investigation reveals a critical shift in the 1720s in the location of gentlemen's houses, as well as a surge of gentlemanly house-building during the second quarter of the eighteenth century at a time of declining construction of larger country houses. Following from these findings, it introduces three general groups of houses - the 'Cotswold gentry house', 'the 'Bristolian gentleman's house', and the 'Gentleman clothier's house' - which help to organize discussion in the remainder of the study. The chapter goes on to establish the link between artefact and person by constructing a profile of one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners associated with 'gentlemen's houses'. Simultaneous chronological and geographic changes in the 1720s corresponded to an alteration in the background of builders and owners. This transition was characterized by a shift from mostly gentry builders and owners to men from commercial and professional backgrounds. Builders, particularly new men, tended to construct these houses later in life after status was earned or accorded in other ways and for other reasons. Hence, I argue that gentlemen's houses confirmed their owners as members of Britain's governing class rather than serving as a mark of aspiration.

Chapter 3, *Building status*, turns to focus explicitly on architecture. This chapter documents the process of building, describing the choice of style, the design process, the costs associated with construction, and the meanings embodied by this form of architecture. Building was a significant and carefully measured act. Although sharing similar size, scale, and design features, gentlemen's houses were built in an array of broadly classical styles set off with architectural details and ornamentation. They were

compact, economical and adaptable. For both minor gentry and new men these houses were a major expenditure, yet one that represented an appropriate dwelling for lesser elite families. Available evidence suggests that few ‘gentlemen’s houses’ were designed by architects, and asserts that provincial designs were effective as markers of status.

Gentlemen builders rarely sought to emulate the larger country houses of the greater gentry and aristocracy, whilst their small classical boxes were also distinct from dwellings of the middling sort. The watershed in the 1720s also highlighted changed meaning in architecture. Before about 1720, small compact houses were a relatively novel form of building that represented a fashionable choice for an established group of landed gentry builders. After that, however, professional and commercial men frequently adopted the compact classical house, suggesting it had become a conventional choice made by newcomers often from non-landed backgrounds. As a result, gentlemen’s houses illustrate the slow, incremental nature of cultural change and social mobility, while also serving as a significant step that confirmed status in polite society.

From the buildings, examination turns to location, setting, and landscape in chapter 4, *Situating status*. Drawing upon visual sources, estate plans, terriers, and contemporary descriptions, this chapter compares topography, estate size and income, landscapes, and gardens to understand better the function of these houses. Despite early critiques that the small classical house was inappropriate for a country seat, Cotswold gentry houses were built at the centre of landed estates throughout the period, but particularly between 1680 and 1720. With the shift from the 1720s, however, ‘gentlemen’s houses’ less frequently stood as the centrepiece of large estates. Gentlemen builders and owners, particularly around Bristol and in the cloth manufacturing districts near Stroud, increasingly employed resources from trade and commerce to construct houses that have often been described as villas. This chapter, however, problematizes categories like villa, country house, and

house in the country, suggesting that until the late-eighteenth century, ‘gentlemen’s houses’ often served as a primary residence, rather than representing a villa retreat. Some small compact boxes were country houses with landed estates, whilst others resembled houses in the country. Despite this diversity, the construction of classical houses in a range of settings still confirmed gentility. Gentlemen’s houses had the capacity to project status in myriad situations for both landed and non-landed elites, placing renewed emphasis on the house as a form of property rather than land.

Because the small classical house was built in a range of settings, interiors and furnishings had enhanced importance as status markers. Chapter 5, *Arranging status*, explores spatial arrangement and interior finishes. Despite the importance of the interaction between space and object, these two components of the domestic interior have often been decoupled. This chapter evaluates how size, interior ornamentation, and room arrangement and use conveyed important signals about social status. This analysis demonstrates that spaces were less differentiated than in larger houses, but that compact, double-pile plan houses were flexible, affording ample capacity for public, private and service functions suitable to genteel status.

Against a background of scholarly research related to consumption, decorative arts and the domestic interior, Chapter 6, *Furnishing status*, considers the objects that populated gentlemen’s houses. Such objects offered finely-graded signifiers in the construction of eighteenth-century social status. This chapter uses probate inventories, account books, extant interiors and furnishings, library catalogues, auction records, drawings, and visitor descriptions to reconstruct the environment of gentlemen’s houses. It focuses on five houses where evidence is especially revealing about house furnishings across the chronological sweep and categories of gentlemen’s house established in chapter 2. Assessment of genteel house interiors and furnishings demonstrates that owners

equipped their houses with an array of objects that were different in number and quality from those lower and higher in society. Gentlemen builders and owners collected fashionable goods in a measured way and integrated them into older decor. Analysis of material possessions suggests that gentlemen carefully positioned themselves within the genteel class but without extensive pretensions to elevated status, even where financial resources might have allowed for greater material consumption.

Gentlemen's houses served as theatres for status construction and as places of everyday life. Chapter 7 *Enacting status* illustrates that houses, objects and people interacted to create and declare status in what I refer to as enactments. Genteel households served as arenas for social enactments, reinforced by the interior spaces and furnishings that governed interactions. Once a gentleman's house was built, its space became the scene of constant, repeated, varied routines and activities that reinforced claims to status and gentility. The chapter considers household structures that enabled social activity to be carried out in order to develop a better understanding of the functioning of these houses. Evaluating efforts to enact status in the domestic setting develops a more finely calibrated sense of genteel owners' position. Gentlemen's houses were hubs for the community, playing important roles at the centre of the local administration, economy and society. It was in the spaces of these houses that men and women delineated their standing in English society through actions that tied together material culture, domestic space and individuals.

The final chapter, *Social strategies and gentlemanly networks* considers how the domestic setting empowered gentlemen builders and owners to enact precise roles in an overlapping series of social, economic and political spheres. Action in the household and in relation to gentlemanly networks highlights the precision required in building status. Efforts to construct and maintain relationships represented the outward manifestation of the gentleman's efforts to stake out position in the social order. The gentlemen builders

and owners in this study developed household, local and regional power bases, although they had connections beyond that, most frequently with London, either in commerce, kin networks, government service, or politics. Such strategies transformed houses and possessions into power and influence in eighteenth-century England. Houses played a central role in how others perceived them and how they interacted with social equals, inferiors and betters. This chapter suggests that the relationship between the house, its occupants and the external world enabled social action to take place at an acceptable pace for all concerned. A key factor in gentlemen's success, indeed in their ability to participate in these networks at all, was possession of a small classical house.

The thesis concludes by setting out the main findings related to elites, material culture and social strategy. Largely overlooked by historians, small classical houses are a material key to understanding the permeability and dynamism of the eighteenth-century English elite. First built by established landed families, 'gentlemen's houses' later acquired owners whose sources of wealth derived from involvement in the professions and trade. This transition, which coincided with a peak of building activity, recast smaller classical houses from a new fashion in architecture to a conventional choice for new men. Although land remained the foundation of elite society, property in the form of a gentleman's house and furnishings reinforced fine gradations of architecture and status. Moreover, built later in the life of their owners, these houses confirmed status; they were not the cause of social mobility, but a near certain indicator that social mobility had occurred. But the simple act of building was not wholly sufficient and gentlemen's houses became the scenes of on-going and repetitive enactments of social status. They were the focal nodes of status construction and scenes of social mobility.

A material culture approach focused on houses presents a more nuanced and richer picture of social mobility in eighteenth-century England. It was not the tale of linear social

development sometimes recounted by historians, nor a process of emulation of the upper reaches of British society. This thesis makes evident that the Stones ignored the most logical, realistic and significant arena for mobility: the small polite house. This form of architecture embodied the more typical experience of social change. Ownership of ‘gentlemen’s houses’ was not restricted to the landed elite, but represented several levels on the social scale that included businessmen, merchants, early industrialists, professionals, and lesser landed gentry.

As a result, gentlemen’s houses illustrate the permeability of social and cultural boundaries for the English elite. Gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire and their builders and owners provide evidence of a carefully attuned social system. The real process of integration of commercial and landed elites, and hence social mobility, can be sketched out through their common material choices and shared connections. In this picture, new men could compile a modest fortune, develop a range of networks over time, pick the right moment to rein in or retire from their business activities, purchase a small estate or piece of property, and build a small but polite house that was economical to construct and maintain. That house had the space to accommodate a household with a handful of servants, and could be furnished accordingly with selected new and fashionable objects to complement older pieces. As a main arena of life, gentlemen’s houses were centres for the conduct of sociable routines that reinforced and developed further networks. They embodied many of the processes that enabled Britain’s dramatic growth and prosperity and their study helps make sense of the stability of English society in the eighteenth century.

Preface

Research related to this thesis began over a decade ago when I became director of an historic house museum called Stenton in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This double-pile, hipped-roof, brick house was built between 1723 and 1730 by James Logan, a colonial administrator and merchant. Arriving with academic training in British history, I was struck by Stenton's similarity to small elite houses in other parts of the British world. Immersing myself in the history and objects at the site, it seemed to me that there were several scholarly holes to fill. Early American historiography had rarely situated Stenton in the broader context of the British empire or the Atlantic world even though it was the home of an important colonial leader. The extraordinary eighteenth-century collections provided an unsurpassed opportunity to connect a number of themes linking history and material culture. As a remarkably early (for Americans) and well-preserved building, Stenton's architecture had been analysed in detail. When compared with British domestic architecture, however, it had invariably been related to larger English country houses. These exciting issues were the result of various historiographies – British and American, as well as architectural, political, economic, social, and cultural history – overlapping but not necessarily communicating.

When I arrived in Oxford it was with the intention of undertaking a comparative thesis that placed houses like Stenton into a larger British framework. It became evident early on that such a transatlantic survey would be ambitious for doctoral work. Moreover, initial investigations suggested that little research had been done on this sort of house in Britain. Here there seemed room to develop a study that crossed disciplinary as well as national boundaries. This thesis represents the results of that specific project. It examines a group of small classical houses and their owners in the west of England in order to explore architecture, material culture and social status in the eighteenth century.

Such an undertaking would not have been possible without the assistance of large numbers of people. I am grateful first and foremost to Dr. Perry Gauci, who has supervised this thesis with interest and great cheerfulness. He has been extraordinarily supportive, informed and efficient – a treat to work with all along the way. In Oxford, I am grateful to many friends and colleagues associated with the Long Eighteenth Century seminar for discussing my work and for generously sharing their own: Philip Aspin, Belinda Beaton, Erica Charters, Oliver Cox, Huw David, Gabriel Glickman, Aaron Graham, Ken Owen, Graciela Iglesias Rogers, Harry Smith and Susan Whyman. Special thanks to Julie Farguson and Benjamin Heller, who offered much good advice and many helpful suggestions along the way. The Oxford Architectural History seminar convened by Dr. Geoffrey Tyack has been a welcome home for those interested in buildings.

Bob Harris offered trenchant commentary at a key moment that improved this thesis considerably. Paul Slack, Joanna Innes, Anne Keene, Ben Heller, and Harry Smith kindly read drafts of several chapters. Laura Keim read most of it and had many useful thoughts and insights. Mike Weaver introduced me to the world of Paul Strand – a far cry from houses in Gloucestershire – whilst offering always convivial encouragement and support. Anne Keene has been a great friend throughout. The OULTC and its indomitable President, Dr. David Stocker, have helped to keep me sane during long stretches away from home and family. Michael Bockett, Derek Soden and their wonderful staff have sustained me throughout the course of this degree.

Outside of Oxford I have been equally fortunate. Nicholas Kingsley was tremendously helpful in offering advice at the start of this project. James and Annabel Ayres kindly offered accommodation and were happy to discuss my work, suggesting many good insights and asking penetrating questions. Professor Roger Leech has shared generously of his own work. Other who have contributed to my thinking over the course of

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The many generous owners who kindly gave me access, showed me their properties, and answered my many questions have been at the core of this project's success. I should like to thank Rev. Dr. Colin Bully, Annie Burnside, Mandy Coxon, Lord Dickinson, Andy Doel, David Fisher, Royston Griffey, Chris and Alison Hobson, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hopkinson, Sue Horseywell, Robin Johnston, Michael Little and Robert Little, John and Caroline Milne, Tina Morton, Steve Nicholson of Nuffield Health, Anne and Andrew Nisbet, Crispin Odey and Nichola Pease, Richard Paice, the Residents' Association at Sandywell Park, John and Audrey Roberts, Nick Sandford, Catherine Spalding, Jonathon Stebbing at the Ernest Cook Trust, Mr. and Mrs. John Stranger, Dr. Patrick Tierney at The Chantry (Jenner Museum), and Victor White.

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Archivists, librarians and museum curators are a blessing to every scholar, and I thank the staffs at all the institutions I visited, most particularly the Gloucestershire Archives, especially Vicky Thorpe, the Bristol Record Office, Hannah Lowery at the University of Bristol Special Collections, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Jesus College, Oxford, New College, Oxford, and Paul Driscoll at South Gloucestershire Council. David Mullin was especially helpful with advice and furnishing images of objects in the collections of the Museum in the Park, Stroud. In Philadelphia, Jim Green and Connie King stand out for making the Library Company of Philadelphia a welcome research space.

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*Oxford
2011*

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Abbreviations

Atkyns	Sir Robert Atkyns <i>The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire</i> (London, 1712).
BCGAM	Bristol City Gallery and Museum
BCL	Bristol Central Library
Bigland	<i>Historical, monumental and genealogical collections toward a history of Gloucestershire</i> , 3 vols, (London, 1789-1887, reprint Gloucester, 1989-1995).
BRO	Bristol Record Office
BRS	Bristol Record Society
BoE: C	<i>The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds</i> (London, 2002).
BoE: VF	<i>The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire II: The Vale and the Forest of Dean</i> (London, 2002).
CHG I	N. Kingsley, <i>The country houses of Gloucestershire: volume one 1500-1660</i> (Cheltenham, 1989).
CHG II	N. Kingsley, <i>The country houses of Gloucestershire: volume two 1660-1830</i> (Chichester, 1992).
Colvin	H. M. Colvin, <i>A biographical dictionary of British architects, 1600-1840</i> , 4 th edition (New Haven and London, 2008).
GA	Gloucestershire Archives
IoE	Images of England, English Heritage (http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/)
NMR	National Monuments Record
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
PAGB	Andrew Foyle, <i>Pevsner Architectural Guide: Bristol</i> (New Haven and London, 2004).
PHG	W. R. Williams, <i>The Parliamentary history of the county of Gloucester</i> (Hereford, 1898).
Rudder	Samuel Rudder, <i>A New History of Gloucestershire</i> (Cirencester, 1779)
TBGAS	<i>Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society</i>
VCH: G	<i>Victoria Country History: a history of the county of Gloucester</i> , 9 volumes to date (1907-2010).

Note on illustrations: Images are by the author unless otherwise credited.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Shortly after William Townsend died in 1754, an advert appeared in the *Gloucester Journal* for a house that he owned known as Paradise:

To be Sold in the county of Gloucester A MODERN-BUILT HOUSE, with four rooms on a floor, fit for a Gentleman, with all the convenient Offices and Outhouses, at Paradise, about a Mile from Painswick, and five from Gloucester, pleasantly situated on the Side of a Hill, which affords beautiful prospects; with 34 acres of Arable, Pasture and Wood Lands, the greatest Part adjoining to the House, and 50 Sheep Commons on Painswick Hill; all Freehold, and the Lands of the Yearly Value of about 35L. For particulars enquire of Mr Townsend, at Steanbridge, near Painswick.¹

This intriguing description offers a great deal of information about this ‘modern-built house...fit for a gentleman’. The recently constructed house, probably completed in the 1730s, had eight principal rooms, four per floor. It stood close to a prosperous village and not distant from a thriving commercial centre, the seat of the diocese. It benefitted from a pleasant situation, enjoyed a beautiful prospect, and stood amidst a small estate of farm land, pasture and woods. An unnamed but implied group of labourers largely accomplished the work of the house and small estate in a range of service buildings. The property, however, produced a relatively meagre income of £35, hardly enough for a gentleman to live on, suggesting that the estate owner had secured his living in another way.

Throughout Britain and its colonies in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, ‘gentlemen’s houses’ like Paradise evolved as a cultural norm.² Such small free-standing classical houses are at the core of this study. These compact boxes united by size,

¹ *Gloucester Journal*, 11 February 1755.

² Arising from the sales advert from which this thesis takes its title I refer to these houses as ‘gentlemen’s houses’ throughout. This designation implies the mix of architecture and social status that this thesis explores.

architectural form, scale, and design pretensions conform to several basic criteria. They exhibit classical symmetry with five or seven bays and dimensions of between 45 and 70 feet on their main façade. In most instances the houses have some variation of double-pile (or two room deep) floor plan, suggesting a basic arrangement of four rooms on the ground floor, four on the first floor, with ancillary rooms in the attic or garrets. Most stand two storeys tall, although occasionally a third storey appears.

Paradise offers a telling example of the small classical type. It has five bays set off by a segmental pediment and *oeil-de-boeuf* window over the central three bays.³ Its forty-five foot wide façade has been described as a fine example of West Country ‘mason’s Baroque’.⁴ Like many houses in this study, it is uncertain who designed and constructed it; one historian suggests a local mason, another opts for a regional architect.⁵ Despite its description as a house with four rooms to a floor, physical evidence indicates that the classical façade was added to part of an earlier structure, a feature found in many similar houses.⁶

³ D. Verrey and A. Brooks, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds* (London, 2002), 555.

⁴ C. Woodward, ‘Castle Godwyn’, *Country Life* (27 September 2007), 130-135, at 131. The house became known as Castle Godwyn in the later eighteenth century.

⁵ J. Milne and T. Mowl, *Castle Godwyn: a guide and an architectural history* (Painswick, 1996), 6-7 suggests mason John Bryan. Dan Cruikshank posits architect John Strahan in Woodward, ‘Castle Godwyn’, *Country Life* (27 September 2007), 130-135, at 132.

⁶ N. Kingsley, *The country houses of Gloucestershire: volume two 1660-1830* (Chichester, 1992), 279.



Fig 1.1: Paradise, (now Castle Godwyn), c. 1730s, near Painswick, Gloucestershire

The connections between gentlemen's houses and important social processes are too striking to ignore. Most historians identify the century after 1680 as a time of profound change for Britain. This period witnessed the remaking of the political system, the creation of new financial institutions, British imperial growth, an expansion of trade creating wider availability of goods, a 'consumer revolution' that saw people purchasing and using those goods, the dramatic reshaping of England's towns in an urban renaissance, and the rise of polite culture. Historians disagree, however, about how these developments unfolded and their implications for Britain's social structure.⁷

To enter the gentleman's house is to penetrate the complex lives of people like William Townsend who lived through these great changes. Townsend, a 'gentleman clothier' who had created a fortune manufacturing cloth in the Stroudwater valleys of central Gloucestershire, occupied a contested social borderland between rising middling

⁷ For example P. Langford, *A polite and commercial people: England 1727-1783* (Oxford, 1989) emphasizes change and the middle class. An alternate view is J. C. D. Clark, *English society 1660-1832: religion, ideology and politics during the Ancien Régime*, (Cambridge, 2000), who advocates seeing Britain as an *ancien régime* confessional state with emphasis on aristocratic rule.

sorts and the landed gentry of England. Gentlemen builders and owners employed their houses in precise ways in a range of settings to project power and status.⁸ Examining the gentleman's house highlights precise strategic actions, including house-building, that finely calibrated social status and mobility in eighteenth-century England. Surely a buyer had an idea of what was meant by 'a modern-built house...fit for gentleman'. Reconstructing that meaning and how it was conveyed is the point of this study.

This thesis examines a largely neglected group of small classical houses in the west of England built between 1680 and 1770. Often viewed as commonplace small classical boxes,⁹ houses like Paradise represented a specific material claim to gentility that confirmed owners as members of the British elite. Consideration of architecture, interior spatial arrangement, furnishings, and landscapes and topography positions small classical houses at the centre of analysis in the first instance rather than people. Adopting such an approach uncovers the meaning of buildings and the identity of owners, highlighting the important connection between material goods and social status.

The field of material culture studies, which emphasises objects and their agency, substantially influences this study.¹⁰ An object-driven approach employs artefacts like houses and furnishings to examine their meanings with an aim toward understanding

⁸ Some terminology should be made clear at the outset. Reference to 'builders', 'owners', and 'builders and owners' have specific meanings. *Builder* denotes the person, almost always a man, who was financially responsible for construction of a small classical house. The term *owner* signifies those who owned these houses during the period, although not those who actually built the new structure. These could include family who inherited new-built houses, or purchasers. Where I discuss these two as a group the reference will be to *builders and owners*. The architect (where known) or the craftsman responsible for erecting the structure are referred to as architects or craftsman.

⁹ See N. Cooper, *The houses of the gentry, 1480-1680* (London and New Haven, 1999), 244; G. Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain: the heroic age*, (New Haven and London, 1995). Cooper calls rectangular, hipped-roof houses for the gentry 'ubiquitous' by the end of the seventeenth century.

¹⁰ See for example K. Harvey, (ed.), *History and material culture: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources* (London, 2009), which focuses on how historians can utilise material culture. For essays on material culture more broadly, see D. Hicks and M. C. Beaudry, (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of material culture studies* (Oxford, 2010); R. Blair St George, (ed.), *Material life in America, 1600-1860* (Boston, 1988); A classic and accessible work in this area is J. Deetz, *In small things forgotten: the archaeology of early American life*, revised edition (New York, 1996).

human behaviour.¹¹ For historians, thinking of buildings as agents that convey meaning, ask questions, acquire builders and construct status turns normal ways of treating evidence on their head.¹² Making the inanimate animate may appear counter-intuitive, but buildings, space, and objects structure activities and symbolically represent the actions of those who own and inhabit them. Like any historical evidence, these objects are subtle and complex signifiers of the world in which they were created and put to use. Exploring how a group of houses performed on both functional and symbolic levels reveals the fine gradations of status that historians see as a distinctive character of English society. The methodology that underpins this study has the advantage of approaching social structure from a different vantage point, enabling re-evaluation of relatively static social categories such as 'the gentry' and 'the middling sort'. The material world both reflects and structures the social world and presents an enriching perspective on a complicated process of identity formation.

Buildings: country houses, villas and the 'gentleman's house'

This social and cultural reading combines the history of architecture, landscape, and objects in an effort to unite subjects often treated separately. The approach foregrounds architecture in two critical ways. First, by associating buildings with owners it creates a sample with which to evaluate questions of social status. Possessing a gentleman's house was an enormously important symbolic gesture. Emphasizing house construction and acquisition highlights those actions as pivotal moments in the lifecycle of

¹¹ K. Harvey, 'Introduction' in Harvey, (ed.), *History and material culture: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources*, 2-3. B. L. Herman, *The stolen house* (Charlottesville, VA, 1992), 3-14.

¹² See A. Laurence, 'Using buildings to understand social history: Britain and Ireland in the seventeenth century', in Harvey, (ed.), *History and material culture*, 103-122; B. L. Herman, *Town house: architecture and material life in the early American city, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005) especially chapter 1. Also B. L. Herman, 'Tabletop conversations: material culture and everyday life in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World', in J. Styles and A. Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830* (New Haven and London, 2006), 37-59.

builders and owners. Secondly, houses become important theatres for the enactment of status. As places of shelter and community, they served as focal points for activities and interactions that defined, shaped and expressed individual and group identity and relationships. The spaces and furnishings of the house largely governed those dynamics through their plans and placement.

Architectural historians have mostly sought to define and study housing types such as the country house or the suburban villa. The history of eighteenth-century domestic building has focused overwhelmingly on the country house.¹³ Much of this work has been concerned with assessing style, attributing buildings to architects, and tracing architectural influence, producing a, ‘teleology out of the work of named and known architects to the neglect of the broader sweep of architectural change’.¹⁴ Seminal treatments of gentry houses and the development of the compact plan place emphasis on larger dwellings of landed elites.¹⁵ Small houses are most frequently discussed in relation to colonial building practices, especially in North America, drawing less attention in Britain as a result.¹⁶

Small classical houses have been most extensively treated in discussions of the villa.¹⁷ Near London, villas that catered ‘for a range of social types and architectural

¹³ A substantial literature on country houses exists. Amongst the more helpful titles are M. Girouard, *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history*, (New Haven and London, 1978), which continues to set a high scholarly standard for understanding the country house; J. Summerson, ‘The classical country house in 18th-century England’, in *The unromantic castle and other essays* (London, 1990), 79-120; H. Clemenson, *English country houses and landed estates* (London, 1982); C. Saumarez Smith, ‘Supply and demand in English country house building, 1660-1740’, *The Oxford Art Journal*, 11:2 (1988); Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*; C. Christie, *The British country house in the eighteenth century* (Manchester, 2000); D. Arnold, *The Georgian country house: architecture, landscape and society* (Stroud, 2003); R. Wilson and A. Mackley, *Creating paradise: the building of the English country house, 1660-1880*, (London, 2000). All remain, however, primarily concerned with larger country houses.

¹⁴ Saumarez Smith, ‘Supply and demand in English country house building’, 4; See also P. Borsay, ‘Why are houses interesting?’ *Urban History*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2007), 338-346, 343

¹⁵ Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*; A. Gomme and A. Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house: from castle donjons to Palladian boxes* (New Haven and London, 2008).

¹⁶ G. Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain: the heroic age*, (New Haven and London, 1995), 169-173; D. Reiff, *Small Georgian houses in England and Virginia: origins and development through the 1750s* (London, 1986).

¹⁷ J. S. Ackerman, *The villa: form and ideology of country houses* (Princeton, 1995); Summerson, ‘The classical country house in 18th-century England’, 79-120, especially 106-120; M. Airs and G. Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain, 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007), especially N. Cooper, ‘The English villa: sources, forms and functions’, 9-24; D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian villa* (Stroud, 1998); B. Arciszewska,

ambitions' were well-established before the Regency.¹⁸ Yet the Georgian villa type implies 'a uniformity of form and function that may not be wholly accurate'.¹⁹ This study argues that many small classical houses functioned in ways different from a villa retreat and suggests the need for a re-consideration of how historians employ the concept of the eighteenth-century villa.

From the other end of the spectrum, vernacular architecture studies, which consider buildings constructed using local and traditional methods, can contribute to understanding small classical houses.²⁰ Some of those examining vernacular buildings in the early modern period have also interrogated social status.²¹ Aligning his work similarly, Nigel Wright evaluated gentry houses in East Anglia.²² Writing on vernacular architecture has less to say about the eighteenth century, although some examples have emphasized the important role of craftsmen in construction processes.²³ Peter Guillery's study of small houses in London offers an exquisite guide to what can be accomplished in looking at houses well below the level of the elite.²⁴ Although the methodology of vernacular studies is useful, it infrequently engages with houses like the ones covered here, seeing them as above a 'polite threshold'.²⁵ In the overall sweep of seventeenth and eighteenth-century housing, gentlemen's houses were very large indeed. As a result, they have been of less interest to those studying vernacular architecture in Britain.

(ed.), *The baroque villa: suburban and country residences, c.1600-1800* (Wilanow, Poland, 2009), especially E. McKellar, 'The suburban villa tradition in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London', 197-208; J. Archer, *The literature of British domestic architecture, 1715-1842* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1985), especially 59-67 and J. Archer, *Architecture and suburbia: from English villa to American dream House, 1690-2000* (Minneapolis and London, 2005). See also L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), 403-5.

¹⁸ E. McKellar, 'The suburban villa tradition', 198.

¹⁹ D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian villa* (Stroud, 1998), ix-x.

²⁰ R. W. Brunskill, *Vernacular architecture: An illustrated handbook* (London, 2000), 27-30.

²¹ L. Hall, 'Yeoman or gentleman? Problems in defining social status in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Gloucestershire,' *Vernacular Architecture*, v. 20 (1991), 2-19. L. Hall, *The rural houses of North Avon and South Gloucestershire, 1400-1720* (Bristol, 1983).

²² N. Wright, 'The gentry and their houses in Norfolk and Suffolk, c.1550-1850', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of East Anglia, 1990), especially chapter 2.

²³ J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian city* (New Haven and London, 1998).

²⁴ P. Guillery, *The small house in eighteenth-century London* (New Haven and London, 2004).

²⁵ Brunskill, *Vernacular architecture*, 27.

Surprisingly little literature integrates houses and material culture into accounts of social change, although the social and cultural meaning of buildings has emerged as an important avenue of investigation in architectural history.²⁶ As Guillery suggests, ‘houses are principally interesting because people lived in them’.²⁷ Mark Girouard’s classic *Life in the English Country House* demonstrated that architecture and social history could be mutually supportive, although his focus was larger country houses. Other historians have adopted this approach. Rachel Stewart, for instance, employed, ‘social history as a basis for exploring architectural history,’ whilst another volume of essays proposed treating classicism in this period not stylistically but ‘as a cultural and social phenomenon’.²⁸ The metaphorical function of the country house as a ‘symbol of the power and wealth of the landowner’ emphasized its ‘cultural hegemony’ as the ‘physical embodiment of governmental and social systems’.²⁹ These efforts point to the utility of integrating buildings into wider historical accounts.

Sympathetic to efforts to explore social and cultural facets of buildings, this thesis seeks a broader treatment of architecture, space and material possessions than architectural historians have generally adopted, arguing that objects can help to reveal the coded and negotiable nature of social status during a formative period for Britain. How people lived and worked in houses and how their social relationships developed in relation to space remains ‘largely unexplored territory’.³⁰ Combining material culture and social and cultural history offers an integrated reading, and more deeply contextualised

²⁶ R. J. Lawrence, ‘Integrating architectural, social and housing history’, *Urban History*, 19, 1 (1992), 39-63.

²⁷ Guillery *The small house in eighteenth-century London*, 10; P. Borsay, ‘Why are houses interesting?’, 338.

²⁸ R. Stewart, *The town house in Georgian London* (London and New Haven, 2009), 11; E. McKellar and B. Arciszewska, (eds.), *Articulating British classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (Aldershot, 2004), xx.

²⁹ D. Arnold, ‘The country house: form, function and meaning,’ in D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian country house: architecture, landscape and society* (Stroud, 1998), 16-18.

³⁰ Borsay, ‘Why are houses interesting?’, 346.

understanding, of underused evidence, and deploys it in a way and for a purpose different from previous studies.

Houses represented a significant investment of wealth and a physical embodiment of power and status for owners. This thesis will demonstrate how architecture expressed social strategy by considering 'building status' in two senses. First, it investigates how buildings conveyed meanings, and what those meanings were; that is, the status of buildings.³¹ Secondly, it explores how the individuals associated with these buildings used them as a strategy to construct social position and identity; in other words, the building of status.

Investing in property, constructing houses, and furnishing interiors were three of the most significant acts of consumption amongst eighteenth-century elites. As Campbell has it, 'the self is built through consumption [and] consumption expresses self.'³² Few works, however, seriously engage with consumption as it relates to building.³³ Choices about committing resources to build, house type, decorative style, and furnishing were key indicators of status. Richard Wilson and Alan Mackley addressed the implications of country house building: who built them, where, what efforts did it take, and how was it funded? This economic and social perspective emphasized that building efforts represented specific strategies that expressed and illuminated social position and

³¹ See W. Whyte, 'How do buildings mean? Some issues of interpretation in the history of architecture', *History and Theory*, 45 (May 2006), 153-177.

³² C. Campbell, *The romantic ethic and the spirit of modern consumerism* (Oxford, 1987), 288, quoted in J. Stobart, A. Hann and V. Morgan, *Spaces of consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c. 1680-1830* (London, 2007), 10.

³³ For the literature on consumption, see J. White, 'A world of goods? The consumption turn and eighteenth-century British history', *Cultural and Social History* Vol. 3 (2006), 93-104. On consumption: N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The birth of consumer society: the commercialization of eighteenth-century England* (London, 1982), especially the introduction by N. McKendrick; L. L. Peck, *Consuming splendor: society and culture in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, 2005); J. Brewer and R. Porter, (eds.), *Consumption and the world of goods* (London, 1993); A. Bermingham and J. Brewer, (eds.), *The consumption of culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text*, (London, 1995); H. Berry and J. Gregory, (eds.), *Creating and consuming culture in north-east England, 1660-1830* (Aldershot, 2004), especially 1-3; C. Shamma, *The pre-industrial consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990); L. Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture 1660-1760* (London, 1996), 2nd edition; M. Berg and E. Eger, (eds.), *Luxury in the eighteenth century: debates, desires and delectable goods* (Basingstoke, 2003); M. Berg, *Luxury and pleasure in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2005).

aspirations.³⁴ Assessing gentlemen's houses as an aspect of the 'consumer revolution' reveals their pivotal role in status construction.

Social and economic historians have adopted other approaches to buildings, people and status. More than twenty-five years ago, Lawrence and Jeanne Stone's brilliant but flawed study *An open elite?* assessed a sample of larger country houses, arguing that the level of social mobility in England had been exaggerated.³⁵ Critics pointed out that their work neglected smaller houses that were a more likely arena for movement between urban merchants, professional men, and landed elites.³⁶ Indeed the Stones admitted that further research might 'succeed in saving the theory of an open gentry in England' although indications were that the urban patriciate 'mostly confined themselves to aping genteel culture and building themselves villas within commuting distance of their place of work in the city.'³⁷ This study is an effort to explore the Stones' challenge.

The importance of smaller classical houses has therefore been underplayed in several ways.³⁸ They came in many varieties, distinguished by their size, scale, style and ornamentation. From the mid-seventeenth century onward elites increasingly adopted classicism in their building choices, creating a distinction between elite houses that presented a classical face to the world and those that did not.³⁹ Building a classical house visibly established social status locally, and often beyond. Existing literature often casts

³⁴ R. Wilson and A. Mackley, *Creating paradise: the building of the English country house, 1660-1880* (London, 2000).

³⁵ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984), especially Tables 2.6 and 2.7. Taken with Jonathan Clark's *English Society* (1985) and John Cannon's *Aristocratic century* (1984) all suggested that landed elites were 'more powerful, and less open, than we had thought', Clark, *English society* (1985), 421.

³⁶ See, for example, E. Spring and D. Spring, 'The English landed elite, 1540-1879: a review' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer 1985), 149-166, especially 151.

³⁷ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, 403-4

³⁸ C. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century decoration: design and the domestic interior in England* (New York, 1993), 75, rightly notes that, 'the increase in building projects was not simply a proliferation of grandiose villas or pseudo-country houses into an extended metropolitan area.'

³⁹ J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, 9th edition (New Haven and London, 1993). Also, Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain*; Cooper, *Houses of the gentry*. For a contribution on the development of classical models in another English county, see P. M. Hunneyball, *Architecture and image-building in seventeenth-century Hertfordshire* (Oxford, 2004); Arciszewska and McKellar, (eds). *Articulating British classicism*.

gentlemen's houses as rather modest boxes, constructed without the guidance of an architect and of limited architectural interest. This view fails to account for the form's inherent flexibility and does little to address the pivotal strategic role it played for those on the cusp of elite status in Britain and its colonies.

Situation: settings, estates, and landscapes

Taking small classical houses as a group it is possible to assess what distinguished them from other housing choices and what this can say about elite status. Discussion of country houses and villas highlight situation as a key variable in building status. Situation describes how houses were positioned in the landscape, what sort of property they occupied, and the land and gardens that surrounded them. Looking at small classical houses not as abstract concepts but as real social spaces suggests they do not fit into neat conceptualizations of the country house or villa. Gentlemen's houses sometimes functioned as small country houses, but often did not.⁴⁰ A few were rural retreats, but most filled distinct roles separate from the stereotype of the villa. It is evident that the range of settings in which small classical houses were built signified their adaptability whilst highlighting the importance of this particular form in building status.

Historians of landed society have approached this topic from several angles, identifying estate ownership as the primary criterion for membership in the elite.⁴¹ Before 1700, 'the iconic status of the country estate and its associated ties and symbols remained

⁴⁰ The debate about what constituted a country house has been longstanding and never fully resolved. Most agree that it is a house that served as a primary seat for an estate of over 1,000 acres that provided an adequate income to keep it up. See Girouard, *Life in the English country house*; F. M. L. Thompson, *English landed society in the nineteenth century* (London, 1963), 109-118; Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 5-9. Defining country houses on the basis of size also has its proponents, e.g. L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, 10-11, Tables 2.6 and 2.7, and appendix II.1.

⁴¹ See, for example, J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, debt, and the estate system: English landownership 1650-1950* (Oxford, 1994), especially chap. 6; L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*; F. Heal and C. Holmes, *The gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Stanford, 1994); Mingay, *English landed society in the Eighteenth Century*; J. Rosenheim, *The emergence of a ruling order: English landed society 1650-1750* (London, 1998); J. V. Beckett, *The aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986).

the chief basis of elite identity'.⁴² Although the proportion of land held by great landlords increased in the eighteenth century,⁴³ this did not preclude propertied men who held modest amounts of land from joining the governing class of Georgian Britain. The eighteenth century, therefore, saw the breakdown of land as the absolute measure by which an individual could lay claim to genteel status.⁴⁴ One avenue to membership was construction of an appropriate house, even without vast acres.

Gentlemen's houses appeared in an array of situations. Elite landscapes were a way of projecting power and authority.⁴⁵ The immediate surroundings of the gentlemen's house, somewhat by contrast, usually displayed a mixture of the ornamental and functional.⁴⁶ The variable situations in which 'gentlemen's houses' appeared raise interesting issues about interactions between urban and rural geographies. The relationship between Bristol, a prosperous provincial city, and rural Gloucestershire, for example, are central to this thesis. Peter Borsay has written compellingly about the 'urban renaissance' that took place in England in the century after 1660. In a major revisionist study centred on Bristol, Carl Estabrook has argued vigorously that, 'the evidence for the city of Bristol and the villages in its rural environs points to the persistence of a great gulf between urban and rural society for nearly a century following the Restoration.' He contends that, 'the influence of urbanity on rural dwellings was significantly delayed and very limited,' and if anything, 'urban dwellers may have got some of their notions from the

⁴² I. Warren, 'The English landed elite and the social environment of London c. 1580-1700: The cradle of an aristocratic culture?', *English Historical Review* cxxvi, 518 (2011), 44-74, quote on 74.

⁴³ Mingay, *English landed society*, 25.

⁴⁴ P. Langford, *Public life and the propertied Englishman 1689-1798* (Oxford, 1991), especially 58-70.

⁴⁵ T. Williamson, *Polite landscapes: gardens and society in eighteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995) is especially helpful. Other important works on eighteenth-century landscape and gardens, again biased toward larger landscapes, include: J. Dixon Hunt and P. Willis, (eds.), *The genius of the place: the English landscape garden, 1620-1820* (Cambridge, MA, 1988); T. Mowl, *Gentleman and players: gardeners of the English landscape* (Stroud, 2000); T. Richardson, *Arcadian friends: inventing the English landscape garden* (London, 2007).

⁴⁶ Williamson has noted this in relation to larger estates, see T. Williamson, 'Archaeological perspectives on landed estates: research agendas' in J. Finch and K. Giles, (eds.), *Estate landscapes: design, improvement and power in the Post-Medieval Landscape* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2007), 1-16.

country homes of the gentry and applied them to their own urban aims.’⁴⁷ Little influence went either way until the growth of ‘suburbia’ in the late eighteenth century. Likewise, Lorna Weatherill has suggested that material evidence refutes the idea that most people of middling rank wanted to be like the gentry.⁴⁸

Cultural transmission and influence in the urban-rural and class-status relationships of eighteenth-century England are key issues and the arguments of Estabrook and Weatherill are revisited in this study. Although Estabrook contends that ‘ambitious Bristolians, in their urban homes’ experienced a ‘conversion to the rustic’ by trying to ‘achieve the effect of the manor house’, the interchange between Bristol and these houses – building materials, architectural knowledge, people, and regular commerce – points to more robust contacts than Estabrook admits.⁴⁹ Other scholars have traced networks near Bristol and elsewhere that suggest a more cyclical process was at work.⁵⁰ In Gloucestershire, gentlemen builders and owners adopted ideas and practices from the gentry, incorporated them into their more urban or town-centred lives, and then re-directed those influences back out into rural areas. This emphasizes the interaction between, even the inseparability of, lesser gentry and provincial urban elites as a salient aspect of social change.

Found in town, village, and country settings alike, ‘gentlemen’s houses’ embodied connections between town-centred commerce and the landed life of lesser elites, encouraging us to explore the influences between a provincial port city like Bristol and the countryside. Scholars have assumed, for logical reasons, a distinction between the ‘country

⁴⁷ C. B. Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England: cultural ties and social spheres in the provinces, 1660-1780* (Manchester, 1998), 3, 152.

⁴⁸ Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture*, 194-196.

⁴⁹ Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 259.

⁵⁰ See for example, P. Jenkins, *The making of a ruling class: the Glamorgan gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983), which Estabrook does not list in his bibliography. S. Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart London: the cultural world of the Verneys, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999), 87-99.

house', the 'house in the country', and other forms of housing such as the villa.⁵¹ Yet this begs the question: if similar houses were built in a range of settings, what does this say about those who built them, their motivations, their social status, and their mode of living? This thesis proposes that building a 'gentleman's house' and then using it as the basis for polite sociability were key strategies in achieving genteel status regardless of setting.

Objects: consumption, interiors and furnishings

Because the small classical house was built in a range of settings, which places more emphasis on the house and its contents, interiors and furnishings take on enhanced importance as status markers that illustrate how gentlemen displayed and enacted status. The 'material turn' provides an impetus to examine 'gentlemen's houses' not only in a socio-economic context but also as arenas for cultural production. This means applying the methods of cultural history to see how houses enabled their occupants to seek status through interior decoration, furnishings and the performance of daily life. Despite the importance of the interaction between space and object, these two components of the domestic interior have often been decoupled. Even where objects have been treated as actors, such analysis often fails to probe the settings in which they were used.

For the houses in this study, the interrelationship between spatial organization, interior finish, furnishing arrangement, and people signalled strategies for establishing social status. Floor plans and spatial arrangement largely preoccupy architectural historians.⁵² Meanwhile, the literature dealing with domestic interiors has fallen into two basic areas. What might be termed the high-style approach has focused on noteworthy

⁵¹ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 8-9.

⁵² Girouard, *Life in the English country house*; Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*; S. West, 'Social Space and the English Country House' in S. Tarlow and S. West, (eds.), *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of later historical Britain* (London and New York, 1999), 103-122. None of the essays in D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian country house*, engage seriously with furnishings. Christie, *The British country house in the eighteenth century*, usefully devotes a chapter to furnishings.

interiors, great country and town houses, and outstanding objects.⁵³ In this vein, object-focused writing by decorative arts scholars and curators has been weighted toward connoisseurship studies.⁵⁴ Such specialist literature presents methodological challenges. As Lorna Weatherill has argued, ‘the intentions of those who study the objects themselves are so different from the intentions of the economic and social historians that it takes considerable imagination to bridge the gap and see any relevance in their work for the study of consumption’.⁵⁵

This observation suggests the second approach, which instead emphasizes smaller buildings, traditional craftsmanship, and interiors and material goods in middling households.⁵⁶ Work on consumption has primarily evaluated objects with little consideration for their social and cultural meaning beyond representation as exemplars of increased demand for goods. In her analysis of consumer behaviour and material culture, for instance, Weatherill devotes little time to the issue of buildings and their rooms, quickly moving on to discuss the objects within those rooms.⁵⁷ Although inventory studies

⁵³ See, for example, J. Fowler and J. Cornforth, *English decoration in the eighteenth century* (London, 1978); P. Thornton, *Authentic décor: the domestic interior, 1620-1920* (London, 1984); Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-century decoration*; I. Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors, 1615 – 1840* (New Haven and London, 1996); J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors* (London and New Haven, 2004). M. Berg, *Luxury and pleasure* contributes to this discussion. For an interesting perspective from France, see K. Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and social spaces in early eighteenth-century Paris* (New Haven and London, 1995).

⁵⁴ For objects, A. Bowett, *English furniture 1660-1714: Charles II to Queen Anne* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2002) and *Early Georgian furniture 1715-1740* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2009); C. Edwards, *Eighteenth-century furniture* (Manchester, 1996); S. Richards, *Eighteenth-century ceramics: products for a civilized society* (Manchester, 1999); D. S. Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, vol. I, (London, 1974) and vol. II (London, 2004). P. Glanville, *Silver in England* (London, 1986). A huge specialist literature exists beyond these few examples. This it is fair to say emphasizes the outstanding and beautiful rather than the quotidian.

⁵⁵ Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture*, 21.

⁵⁶ J. Ayres, *Domestic interiors: the British tradition 1500-1850* (New Haven and London, 2003); Herman, *Town house*; P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989); Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture 1660-1760* (London, 1996), 2nd edition; L. Weatherill, ‘The meaning of consumer behaviour in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England’, in J. Brewer and R. Porter, (eds.), *Consumption and the world of goods* (London, 1993), 206-227. On the issue of comfort and how it shaped technological development see J. Crowley, *The invention of comfort: sensibilities & design in early modern Britain & America* (Baltimore, 2001).

⁵⁷ Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture*, 6.

have examined the grandest houses,⁵⁸ more often their focus is on relatively modest ones.⁵⁹ The study of material goods need not only be about counting objects and determining what percentage of the populace owned pewter, books, forks, or clocks, important though this approach is.⁶⁰ As Amanda Vickery has argued, scholars have insufficiently examined ‘taste’ as a component of consumer practices.⁶¹ In a broader sense this suggests that they have not fully addressed the *qualitative* as opposed to the *quantitative* measurements of material possessions. Qualitative analysis of objects may yield important meaning about their place in the home. A singular object, after all, may have greater presence than a host of pedestrian ones. Naturally, the reverse can also be true. An additional problem with inventory studies is that they do not closely consider the nature of objects. Therefore, there is room to bring social and economic historians together with curators and decorative arts scholars, drawing upon the strengths of each field.

Recent research has pushed thinking on interiors forward.⁶² Much of this valuable literature has addressed the issue of gender within middling and elite households, focusing on the agency of women and the gendered meaning of objects and interiors.⁶³

⁵⁸ T. Murdoch, (ed.), *Noble households: eighteenth-century inventories of great English households: a tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, 2006); J. Collett-White, (ed.), *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses, 1714-1830* Publications of the Bedfordshire Record Society, vol. 74 (Bedford, 1995).

⁵⁹ Shammass, *The pre-industrial consumer in England and America*; Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour & material culture*; M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, & A. Hann, *Production and consumption in English households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004); P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989); Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, especially chapter 6.

⁶⁰ D. Goodman and K. Norberg, (eds.), *Furnishing the eighteenth century: what furniture can tell us about the European and American past* (New York and London, 2007), for example, emphasizes the socio-cultural context of furniture.

⁶¹ A. Vickery, *Behind closed doors: at home in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 2009), chapter 6, especially 167.

⁶² See, for example, A. Vickery and J. Styles, (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture in Britain and North America 1700 -1830* (New Haven and London, 2006); Special issue on Georgian interiors in *Journal of Design History*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Winter 2007); K. Harvey, ‘Barbarity in a Tea Cup? Punch, domesticity and gender in the eighteenth century’ *Journal of Design History*, vol. 21, no 3, (autumn 2008), 205-221; D. Goodman and K. Norberg, (eds.), *Furnishing the eighteenth century*; A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*.

⁶³ H. Barker and E. Chalus, *Gender in eighteenth-century England: roles, representations and responsibilities* (London, 1997); A. Vickery, *The gentleman’s daughter: women’s lives in Georgian England* (New Haven and London, 1998) and *Behind closed doors*; N. Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England: household, kinship and patronage* (Cambridge, 2000); H. Greig, ‘Leading the fashion: the material culture of London’s beau monde’, in Vickery and Styles, (eds.), *Gender, taste, and*

Nevertheless, the role of men in the household has been recently reconsidered.⁶⁴ This thesis supports these efforts by suggesting that men played prominent roles in fashioning domestic space, from architecture to interiors to furnishings, and used it to project identity for themselves and their households.

Although all these studies contribute to understanding of spatial arrangement and furnishing, there is no detailed consideration of the gentleman's house interior. An effort to correct this through the deep reading and analysis of several inventories, supplemented with account books, receipts and scrutiny of surviving objects, comprises a key chapter of this study. Uniting objects and people sets in motion a complex process of interaction repeated in different ways in a range of contexts. Such analysis suggests that gentlemen furnished their houses in comfortable, occasionally sumptuous, ways. Their possessions distinguished them from even moderately prosperous middling members of society; at the same time they did not emulate the aristocracy. Instead, gentlemen builder-owners set themselves off as genteel not only in the form of their house but also in how it was arranged, finished, and furnished.

Owners: gentlemen and social status

Investigating gentlemen's houses categorizes and evaluates a social and cultural group according to their major material choices. On multiple levels, this thesis argues that small classical houses enabled builders and owners to participate in the ruling elite by

material culture, 295-310; A. Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 2007); J. Lewis, 'When a house is not a home: elite English women and the eighteenth-century country house,' *Journal of British Studies* 48 (April 2009), 336-363.

⁶⁴ K. Harvey, 'Barbarity in a teacup?', especially 217-218. Although see M. Finn, 'Men's things: masculine possession in the Consumer Revolution', *Social History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (May 2000), 133-155, quote on 135. K. Harvey and A. Shepard, 'What have historians done with masculinity? Reflections on five centuries of British history, circa 1500-1950', introduction to a Special Feature on Masculinities in *The Journal of British Studies*, 44, 2 (2005), 274-80; K. Harvey, 'Men making home: masculinity and domesticity in eighteenth-century Britain', *Gender & History*, Vol. 21 No.3 (November 2009), 520-540; J. Styles and A. Vickery (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture*, 4-6; B. Heller, 'Leisure and the use of domestic space in Georgian London', *The Historical Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3 (2010), 623-645, 624.

specifically calibrating their status using material objects. Taken together, house, situation, interiors and furnishings offer a social and cultural reading that integrates the built environment and material culture, giving objects agency and enabling them to pose questions. For this study, a key question these artefacts ask is: what sort of owner did this particular type of house acquire?

A primary interest of this study is how genteel builders and owners – in some cases women – projected power and status through choices made related to their houses and possessions. Eighteenth-century England was a hierarchical and patriarchal society and in most instances the houses in this study were regarded as primarily the dwellings of their male owners. With the exception of a handful of women, the documented owners of these houses were described, either by themselves or others, as gentlemen. The functioning of domestic space, however, had important gendered components.⁶⁵ In gentlemen's households both men and women shaped efforts to define and convey status. Women, as well as other kin and household relations, were included in the definition of a 'house fit for a gentleman'.⁶⁶ At points in time, gentlewomen owned gentlemen's houses, were actively engaged in furnishing them, and conducted the sociable routines that were part of putting them into action. The complex interaction between men and women in the domestic setting, contingent on time, space and status, has become the accepted paradigm in discussions of the domestic interior.⁶⁷ Viewing gentlemen's households as arenas for social enactments and the exercise of power reasserts the masculine presence in the domestic setting, whilst recognising the complexities of household interaction.

⁶⁵ The extensive literature includes: A. Vickery, 'Golden age to separate spheres: A review of the categories and chronology of English women's history', *Historical Journal* 36 (June 1993), 383-414, which dealt a critical blow to the Habermasian notion of the feminine 'private sphere'; Barker and Chalus, *Gender in eighteenth-century England*; Vickery, *The gentleman's Daughter*; Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England*; Flather *Gender and space in early modern England*; J. Lewis, 'When a house is not a home'; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*.

⁶⁶ For a broad definition of household, see N. Tadmor, 'The concept of the household-family in eighteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, vol. 151, no. 1 (May 1996), 111-140. See also Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England*.

⁶⁷ Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, especially chapter 2. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*.

Beyond households, discussions of social status and class have typically emphasized the pre-eminence of the larger land-owning elite.⁶⁸ More recent historiography has examined the ‘middling sort’ and their important role in eighteenth-century society.⁶⁹ Commercial and professional elites, dependent as they were on wealth not based in property, formed a ‘pseudo-gentry’ or ‘urban gentry’, not culturally altogether distinct from their landed gentry counterparts.⁷⁰ The boundary between the upper middle and upper reaches of society was a permeable one. The nature of this permeability has been explained from several perspectives. The Stones examined larger houses of the gentry and aristocracy. Small groups of elites have offered insights into facets of the negotiated authority between the gentry and upper middle class.⁷¹ Henry French has highlighted parochial hierarchies.⁷² Other studies point to similar processes at different stages throughout Britain.⁷³ Susan Whyman teased out the subtle interaction of commercial and

⁶⁸ Mingay, *English landed society in the eighteenth century*, and *The gentry: the rise and fall of a ruling class* (London, 1976); Rosenheim, *The emergence of a ruling order*; Cannon, *Aristocratic century*; Habakkuk, *Marriage, debt and the estate system* (Oxford, 1998); *idem*, ‘The rise and fall of English landed families, 1600-1800’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, xxix (1979), 187-207, and xxx (1980), 199-221.

⁶⁹ See especially, J. Barry and C. Brooks, (eds.), *The middling sort of people: culture, society and politics in England, 1550-1800* (Basingstoke, 1994), M. R. Hunt, *The middling sort: commerce, gender and the family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley, CA and London, 1996); H. R. French, *The middle sort of people in provincial England 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007). Helpful historiographical essays are H. R. French ‘The search for the middle sort of people in England, 1600-1800’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 43, no. 1 (2000), 277-293, and P. Gauci, ‘Finding the middle ground: The middling sort in the eighteenth century’ *The History Compass*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Feb 2006), 228-234.

⁷⁰ A. Everitt, ‘Social mobility in early modern England,’ *Past and Present*, xxxiii, (1966), 56-73; F-J. Ruggi, ‘The urban gentry in England, 1660-1780: a French approach’, in *Historical Research*, vol. 74, no. 185 (August 2001), 249 -270. On professions, see G. Holmes, *Augustan England: professions, state and society, 1680-1730* (London, 1982) and P. J. Corfield, *Power and the professions in Britain, 1700-1850* (London, 1995).

⁷¹ N. Rogers. ‘Money, land and lineage: the big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London’, *Social History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (October 1979), 437-454; D. T. Andrew, ‘Aldermen and big bourgeoisie of London reconsidered’, *Social History*, vol. 6, no. 3 (October 1981), 359-364, and Rogers’ response, 365-369; H. Horwitz, ‘The mess of the middle class revisited: the case of the ‘big bourgeoisie’ of Augustan London’, *Continuity and Change*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1987), 263-296, taking as its point of departure the original ‘mess of the middle class’ essay written by K. G. Davies as a review of J. H. Hexter’s 1961 piece in *Reappraisals in History*. See I. Christie, *British “Non-Elite” MPs 1715-1820* (Oxford, 1995), especially Appendix A, 206.

⁷² H. F. French, “‘Ingenious & Learned Gentlemen’: social perceptions and self-fashioning among parish elites in Essex, 1680-1740’, *Social History*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Jan. 2000), 44-66.

⁷³ See R. G. Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants: the merchant community in Leeds, 1700-1830* (Manchester, 1971); T. M. Devine, *The tobacco lords: a study of the tobacco merchants of Glasgow and their trading activities, c. 1740 -90* (Edinburgh, 1975); P. Jenkins, *The making of a ruling class: The Glamorgan gentry 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983); J. Longmore ‘Rural retreats: Liverpool merchants and the British country

landed life in one family, emphasizing the substantial cultural independence of merchant elites.⁷⁴ Amanda Vickery identified the critical issue of the gentry/middling sort divide in her study of the provincial women of ‘the moors and valleys of the Pennine north’, dismissing ‘the image of a profound cultural gulf yawning between the local elites of land and trade.’⁷⁵ Similarly, Richard Wilson described the:

‘openness’ that existed at the lower levels of landed society, with obvious close links of material culture between them and the trading and professional elites. Socially, this phenomenon was extremely important in the early stages of Britain’s industrialization, for by and large its landed classes condoned the momentous changes that took place.⁷⁶

The ‘polite’ collaboration between the landed gentry and the upper elements of bourgeois society formed, ‘the closest thing to a governing class in Georgian England.’⁷⁷ Politeness was a unifying and explanatory force for a host of topics in the eighteenth century: manners, social interaction, deportment, material and visual culture, organization of space, intellectual and artistic life, social and political identity, and institutional structures.⁷⁸ The ‘polite’ was not co-terminus with elites; firm boundaries within the social hierarchy became porous during the eighteenth century, as suggested by the idea

house’ (unpublished paper, Slavery and the English country house conference, London School of Economics, November 2009).

⁷⁴ Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart London*.

⁷⁵ Vickery, *The Gentleman’s daughter*, 14.

⁷⁶ R. G. Wilson, ‘The landed elite,’ in H. T. Dickinson, (ed.), *A companion to eighteenth-century Britain*, (Oxford, 2002), 158-171, 168.

⁷⁷ Langford, *A polite and commercial people*, 76.

⁷⁸ L. E. Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 45, no.4 (Dec. 2002), 869-898, 870. See also K. Harvey, ‘The history of masculinity, circa 1650-18000’, *Journal of British Studies* vol. 44, no. 2 (April 2005), 296-311, 307; L. E. Klein, ‘Politeness for plebes: consumption and social identity in early eighteenth-century England’ in A. Bermingham and J. Brewer, (eds.), *The consumption of culture 1600-1800: image, object, text*, (London, 1995), 362-382; L. E. Klein, *Shaftesbury and the culture of politeness: moral discourse and cultural politics in early eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1994); P. Langford, ‘The uses of eighteenth-century politeness,’ *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), 311-331. On politeness and gentry manners, especially the change from civility to politeness: G. E. Mingay, *The gentry*, 153-8, and A. Bryson, *From courtesy to civility: changing codes of conduct in early modern England* (Oxford, 1998).

that the elusive term ‘gentleman’ ‘sagged into semantic limpness during this period.’⁷⁹

Langford argues that this, ‘debasement of gentility is one of the clearest signs of social change in the eighteenth century.’⁸⁰

This thesis suggests that small classical houses served as significant conduits for the transmission of aspects of polite culture, both for their inhabitants and for those around them. Associating houses with owners develops a more nuanced picture of this social stratum in eighteenth-century England. Although polite architecture could not ‘be defined in terms of a distinct social group’, by adopting a form of ‘polite’ architecture, gentlemen-builders were laying material claim to some degree of politeness.⁸¹ Re-constructing the social, political, economic and cultural networks of the group of builder-owners positions them within the social hierarchy of eighteenth-century England. Such an effort assesses their roles and relationships to each other, and to those higher and lower in the social order. Small classical houses offer a fresh stage for understanding social identity and mobility in the eighteenth century.

Material culture evidence can be used to enhance our understanding of the boundary between the ‘middling sort’ and the lesser landed gentry in rural and urban provincial England. Scholars have proposed two basic models for understanding the nature of the collaboration between these groups. For some, emulation served as the basis for the relationship, with those lower down the social scale seeking to ape those higher up in important ways.⁸² The work of Pierre Bourdieu, however, has suggested a measure of differentiation, where different social ranks exhibited consumption practices in specific

⁷⁹ Klein, ‘Politeness for plebes’, 364. See also P. J. Corfield, ‘The rivals: landed and other gentlemen’, in N. Harte and R. Quinault, (eds.), *Land and society in Britain, 1700-1914* (Manchester, 1996), 1-33.

⁸⁰ Langford, *A polite and commercial people*, 66.

⁸¹ E. McKellar, *The birth of modern London: the development and design of the city, 1660-1720* (Manchester, 1999), 3.

⁸² This tends to be the more usual line taken by architectural historians. The idea draws largely on Thorstein Veblen, *The theory of the leisure class: An economic study of institutions* (New York, 1899).

ways unrelated to a concept of ‘taste’ from above.⁸³ These contrasting views have structured much of the writing about society and the mechanisms of change in the eighteenth century.

Strategies related to domestic architecture and material culture are often neglected in narratives of social change.⁸⁴ For men and women, ‘consumption and the construction of an appropriate material culture...were essential in distinguishing their status as polite.’⁸⁵ ‘Modern-built houses...fit for gentlemen’ conveyed important signals about their owner’s position in the world. Wilson and Mackley highlight the problem by asking: after the 1690s, did new men deriving their income from finance, trade or industry buy estates and country houses or were they content with a few hundred acres and country life in miniature?⁸⁶ In arguing that strict limits existed for social mobility, the Stones warned that, ‘most of the provincial – and even London – men of business made no attempt to purchase a country estate and seat and join the landed elite as rulers of the county.’⁸⁷ By contrast, Girouard implicitly suggested some degree of frequency for such a process, arguing that, ‘when a new man bought an estate and built on it, the kind of house which he built showed exactly what level of power he was aiming at’.⁸⁸ Similarly David Hancock’s account of London transatlantic merchants described a straightforward ‘ascent into the realm of the gentleman’. The process he traced echoes Girouard’s pattern of linear

⁸³ P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste* (London, 1984). See for example M. R. Hunt, *The middling sort*.

⁸⁴ Vickery, *The gentleman’s daughter*, discusses houses primarily in chapter 1, and *Behind closed doors*; L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*; Borsay, *The English urban renaissance* emphasizes public buildings. Studies such as H. Horwitz, ‘The mess of the middle class revisited’; Ruggui, ‘The urban gentry in England’; and A. Everitt, ‘Social mobility in early modern England’, make little mention of material culture.

⁸⁵ J. Stobart, A. Hann and V. Morgan, *Spaces of consumption: leisure and shopping in the English town, c. 1680-1830* (London, 2007), 5.

⁸⁶ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 7.

⁸⁷ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1995, abridged edition with a new forward), x.

⁸⁸ M. Girouard, ‘The power house’, in G. Jackson-Stops, *The treasure houses of Britain: five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting* (New Haven, 1985), 23.

development.⁸⁹ It is, however, *whether* and *how* this process unfolded that is perhaps most open to question.

By extending the Stones' methodology, it is possible to test propositions about social mobility.⁹⁰ On the basis of evidence from the west of England, this thesis demonstrates that social strategies were intensely precise. Many 'new' men did not set up as 'country gentlemen' in the sense of having a lifestyle supported primarily by a landed estate. There was circular cultural transmission between urban and rural areas, and commerce and land.⁹¹ 'Gentlemen's houses' served as material social strategies for their builder-owners, accommodated considerable mobility, and served as apposite settings for various social ranks. Built by members of polite society, 'gentlemen's houses' reveal the openness of the British elite far more adequately than the Stones' analysis of larger gentry houses.

'Gentlemen's houses' in Gloucestershire

Identified through a combination of size, style and plan, the gentleman's house can be used to assess social mobility in the eighteenth century. This thesis accomplishes this task by examining small classical houses in a representative English county, Gloucestershire. Although several of these houses have been covered in works documenting the social history and architecture of Gloucestershire, few have been evaluated with an eye principally toward their social and cultural meaning and many have

⁸⁹ D. Hancock, *Citizens of the world: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735-1785* (Cambridge, 1995).

⁹⁰ Although less ambitious in scope than the Stones' undertaking this thesis nevertheless fills a gap left open for a quarter century. By comparison with the Stones 2,246 owners and 362 houses in three counties over three hundred and forty years, this thesis chronicles one hundred and thirty-four owners and eighty-one houses in a single county over one century.

⁹¹ Particularly interesting on this point are several essays in M. Galinou, (ed.), *City merchants and the arts* (London, 2004). In the aftermath of the Great Fire rising merchant elites built 'houses of the Greatest Bigness', often in an architectural *métier* similar to those included here.

not been covered at all.⁹² A study of small classical houses and their builder-owners help to reconstruct how houses shaped social existence in eighteenth-century England.

Gloucestershire emerged as particularly apt due to its excellent primary and secondary literatures and the rich archives to be found in Gloucester and Bristol.⁹³ An initial survey of several counties suggested that the building phenomenon of small classical houses was not restricted to one part of England.⁹⁴ Because of the level of documentation, other historians have examined house-building in the county.⁹⁵ Two early county historians, Sir Robert Atkyns and Samuel Rudder, published volumes that provide useful comparison at either end of the period under consideration, providing a basis for assessing change during the course of the eighteenth century.⁹⁶ Volumes by Ralph

⁹² The essential survey for country houses is N. Kingsley, *The country houses of Gloucestershire: volume two 1660-1830* (Chichester, 1992); for vernacular architecture L. J. Hall, *The rural houses of north Avon and south Gloucestershire, 1400-1720* (Bristol, 1983); D. Verey and A. Brook, *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds* (London, 2002) and *The Buildings of England: Gloucestershire II: The Vale and the Forest of Dean* (London, 2002) [hereafter *BoE: C* and *BoE: VF*]; for Bristol, A. Gomme, M. Jenner, and B. Little, *Bristol: an architectural history* (London, 1979), with the relevant chapters for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Michael Jenner, and A. Foyle, *Pevsner architectural guides: Bristol* (London, 2004) [hereafter *PAGB*].

⁹³ Both Gloucestershire and Bristol benefit from an extensive literature and the fine work of numerous local historians. My enormous debt to them will be apparent throughout. Among the key secondary sources are: B. Smith and E. Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 3rd edition (Chichester, 1996); despite its age, H. P. R. Finberg, (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester, 1957) is still a useful volume of essays. Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*. For the gentry see J. Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry* (Gloucester, 1989), which whilst helpful has its limits. The nine volumes to date of the *Victoria County Histories: Gloucestershire* [hereafter *VCH: G*] are an invaluable resource for scholars. The many published volumes put out by the Bristol Record Society also contain vast amounts of useful information. The *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* [hereafter *TBGAS*] have presented research on topics of regional note for well over one hundred years.

⁹⁴ Surveys of Berkshire, Kent, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Warwickshire and Yorkshire included trolls through *Buildings of England*, the Images of England website, relevant *Victoria County History* volumes, the National Monuments Record, Swindon, and contemporary sources such as Johannes Kip, *Britannia illustrata* (London, 1720). A brief survey of a Yorkshire sketchbook from the 1720s, for example, identified at least thirty houses of this type there. See Samuel Buck's *Yorkshire sketchbook reproduced in facsimile from Lansdowne MS. 914 in the British Library* (Wakefield, 1979). This implied that widespread efforts at building small classical houses could be usefully illuminated through the study of a particular county.

⁹⁵ Kingsley, *CHG II*; Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*.

⁹⁶ R. Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire* (London, 1712). His monumental work documents the county, describes its administrative structures, and offers a detailed parish by parish analysis at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Samuel Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (Cirencester, 1779). Both volumes feature illustrations by Kip and Knyff, although visually the Rudder volume is somewhat disappointing. Several of the Kip prints originally done in 1709 are reused, and only a handful of new prints, most showing country houses from about 1770, are included. These, however, help to illustrate architectural and landscape changes that took place over the intervening seventy years.

Bigland, Thomas Rudge, and J. N. Brewer offer further information from an early nineteenth-century vantage point.⁹⁷

This range of sources was matched by Gloucestershire's geographic, economic and social diversity. Samuel Rudder noted the county's remarkable variety of landscapes, with 'three grand divisions of Coteswold, Vale, and Forest.'⁹⁸ We can follow Rudder's advice when he tells us, 'Nature having thus divided the county into three parts, let us take her for our guide'.⁹⁹ Social and economic conditions reflected processes at work throughout the British Isles: the continued prevalence of agriculture balanced by early industry and textile manufacturing, domestic and international trade, political diversity, and the relations between a few great landowners, the gentry, and commercial elites. Caution is always needed in undertaking a regional study, and Gloucestershire is not meant as stand-in for the entirety of England. Equally, however, eighteenth-century Gloucestershire exhibits a number of characteristics that make it both interesting and representative.

The sample includes small classical houses built in Gloucestershire between 1680 and 1770. The first small classical house, Lower Slaughter Manor, appeared in Gloucestershire in 1658. From then until 1770, at least eighty-one houses were built in Gloucestershire and around Bristol that resemble the Paradise sales advert. For these eighty-one houses, it is possible to trace one hundred and thirty-four gentlemen builders and owners over the course of the period.¹⁰⁰ The analysis that follows articulates in greater detail how a 'modern-built house...fit for a gentleman' functioned as an arena for changing forms of politeness, gentility, and sociability. The discussion explores links

⁹⁷ R. Bigland, *Historical, monumental and genealogical collections toward a history of Gloucestershire*, 3 vols. (originally published 1789-1887, reprint Gloucester, 1989-1995); T. Rudge, *The History of the county of Gloucester, brought down to 1803*, 2 vols. (Gloucester, 1803); J. N. Brewer, *Delineations of Gloucestershire: Views of the Principal Seats of Nobility & Gentry* (Stroud, 2005), originally published 1825.

⁹⁸ Rudder, v.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁰⁰ Lists are in Appendix I and Appendix II.

between land and commerce, between the major city of Bristol, the cloth manufacturing districts near Stroud, and the countryside, and even between Britain and its colonies overseas. The ensuing chapters describe the process of people and houses interacting to determine and confirm status and explore how it unfolded. Such a focus on ‘modern-built’ houses emphasises change, although that change, as will be seen, was qualified and complex. How gentlemanly building functioned as a process of creation and display of status is a primary theme. As a result, this study of gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire augments our understanding of social and cultural change in English society.

Elites, material culture and social strategy

Through their architecture, arrangement of space, and furnishings, small classical houses exhibited carefully coded meanings that established their owners’ position in the social hierarchy. Counterpoised against studies that emphasize the country house or the suburban villa, or examine particular social groups such as the aristocracy, the gentry or the middling sort, this thesis provides a detailed reading of a particular type of house for what it says about social structure. Despite these houses being relatively neglected by social and architectural historians alike, they played an essential role in representing and projecting power and status. It argues that these buildings helped to confirm their owners as members of Britain’s governing class. The ‘gentleman’s house’ was balanced between dynamism and stability, typifying moderate and incremental social mobility in eighteenth-century England.

Chapter 2 describes the Gloucestershire ‘gentleman’s house’ and its group of builders and owners. It reveals where these houses were built and when. Simultaneous chronological and geographic changes coincided with an alteration in the background of builders and owners. The evolution of this building form and its social meaning is

characterized by a shift in the 1720s from ownership by gentry families to ownership reflecting a larger percentage of men from commercial and professional backgrounds. For both groups, this demonstrates a process not so much of ‘aspiring’ as ‘confirming’, an issue that is explored in subsequent chapters.

As will be shown in chapter 3, the act of building was significant and carefully calibrated. Although sharing similar size, scale, and design features, gentlemen’s houses were built in an array of broadly classical styles set off with architectural details and ornamentation. They were compact, economical and adaptable. Gentlemen builder-owners rarely sought to emulate the larger country houses of the greater gentry and aristocracy, whilst their small classical boxes were also distinct from most dwellings of the middling sort. For both minor gentry and new men these houses were a major expenditure, yet one that represented an appropriate dwelling for lesser elite families. The gentleman’s house occupied a particular place in the architectural hierarchy, reflected an incremental form of social mobility, and served as a particularly significant step in this social process.

The interplay between buildings and situation is assessed in chapter 4. This account reveals the important role these houses played for their owners. Although gentlemen-builders constructed houses on landed estates after 1730, new men built in a wider range of places, relying on a variety of income sources to support their mode of living. Indeed the construction of a house appropriate to a gentleman, rather than acquisition of an estate, increasingly became a decisive act in confirming status. This shift in who was building and in what locations destabilizes the distinction between rural and urban, suggesting that gentlemen’s houses helped to bridge the gap between these environments. Rather than serving as a periodic villa retreat, many gentlemen’s houses were substantial, full-time residences.

Chapters 5 and 6 set out how spatial arrangements, interior finishes and furnishings constructed the stage set that enabled builders and owners to play roles in genteel life. Entering the gentleman's house reveals a further range of finely-attuned clues about gentlemen-owners' efforts to establish their position in the social hierarchy. As trade expanded, consumption practices changed, and more goods became available, gentlemen owners collected fashionable goods in a measured way. Careful assessment of their house interiors and furnishings demonstrates that genteel families furnished their houses with an array of objects that were different in number and quality from those lower and higher in society.

Gentlemen's houses served as centerpieces of display and as theatres for status construction. Chapter 7 will illustrate that these houses were complex organisms where objects and people interacted to define social status. Gentlemen's households served as essential arenas for social enactments, reinforced by the interior spaces and furnishings that governed interactions. Finally chapter 8 will consider how the domestic setting empowered gentlemen-owners to enact precise roles in an overlapping series of social, economic and political spheres. The relationship between the house, its occupants and the external world enabled social action to take place at an acceptable pace for all concerned. Action in the household and in relation to gentlemanly networks highlights the precision required in building social status.

Largely overlooked by historians, small classical houses are a material key to understanding the permeability and dynamism of the eighteenth-century English elite. This study of gentlemen's houses indicates that social mobility increased in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Gentlemen's houses were not smaller versions of bigger houses but an adaptable entity in their own right. Although land still served as the foundation for elite society, property in the form of a gentleman's house and furnishings

reinforced hierarchy in material terms, marking out fine gradations of status. But the simple act of building was not wholly sufficient, and gentlemen's houses became the scenes of on-going and repetitive enactments of status. The specific processes of locating, building, furnishing and living in a 'gentleman's house' emphasize how far these houses stood at the forefront of social change in eighteenth-century English society.

Chapter 2

Gentlemen's houses and their builders and owners

Small classical houses and the owners they acquired illustrate how buildings shaped social existence in eighteenth-century England. Such an analysis amplifies conventional ideas about social distinctions by looking at the reality of life in a group of houses in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Before embarking on a detailed analysis of the material culture of gentlemen and investigating the strategies they employed to build their status, it is first necessary to describe the buildings and people who are at the core of this study. Eighty-one houses built in Gloucestershire between 1680 and 1770 and one hundred thirty-four builders and owners are represented in the sample on which this study is based.¹ Identifying some of the basic characteristics of each establishes the outline of their development and begins to reveal important trends that will be considered further in ensuing chapters.

On the basis of these eighty-one houses, this chapter accomplishes four tasks. First, it discusses Gloucestershire as a regional study, highlighting its geography and socio-economic diversity. Secondly, the sample of houses is discussed in greater detail. The third section sets out a chronology of the construction of 'gentlemen's houses' and maps their distribution over the county. Doing this positions the eighty-one houses at the core of this thesis across time and space by documenting when and where they were built during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The final section develops the link between artefact and person to establish a profile of the one hundred thirty-four builders and owners associated with 'gentlemen's houses', describing their backgrounds, life-cycle, professional and business activities, office-holding and religious affiliation. By describing

¹ See Appendices I and II.

and analysing the cohort of houses, patterns emerge that begin to yield important insights into the interplay between architecture and social status.

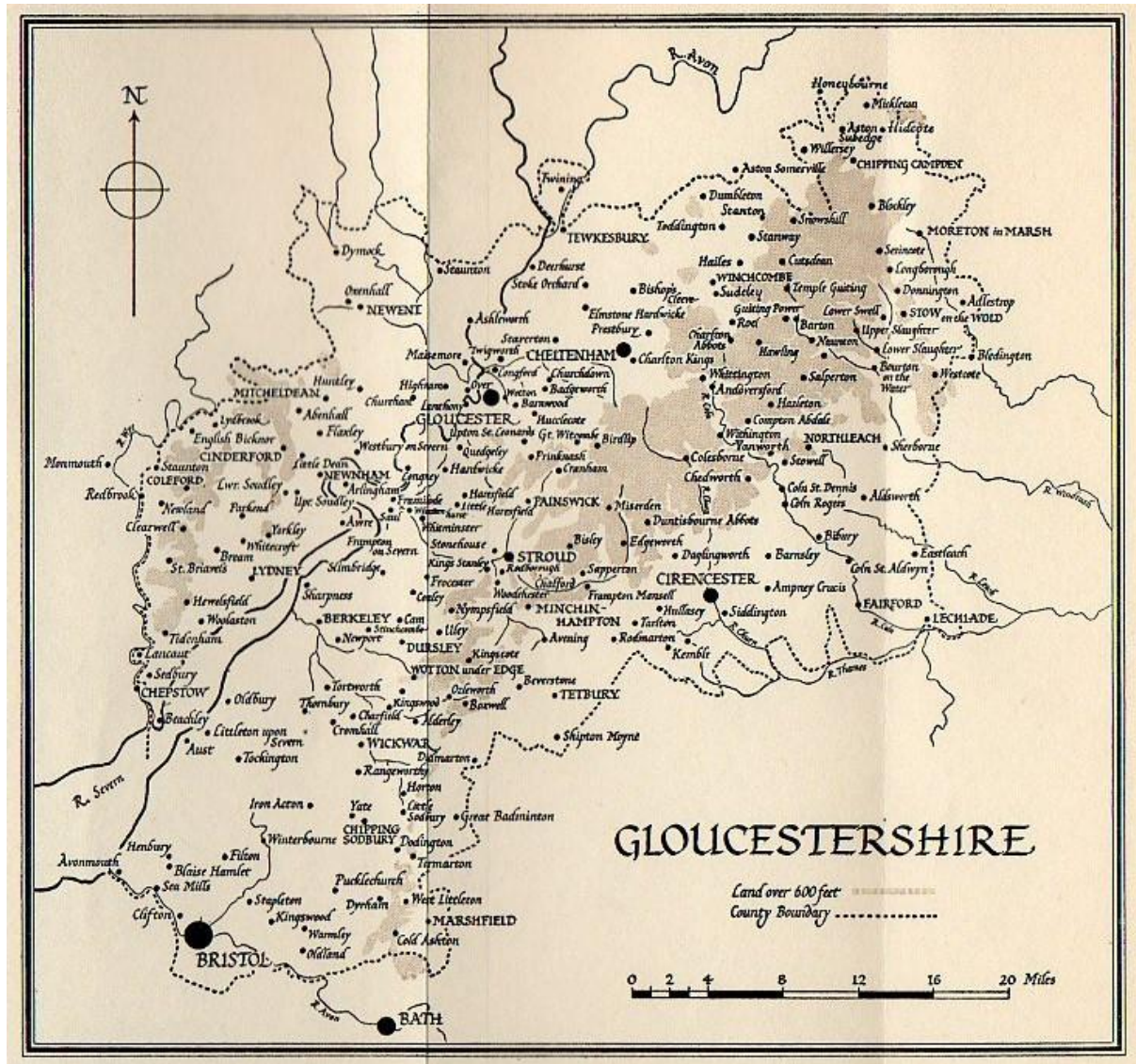
This discussion reveals that early builders were almost exclusively from the lesser landed gentry. A shift in the number of building campaigns, the location of these houses and the owners who built them began in the 1720s. The increase was marked by construction particularly around Bristol and in the cloth manufacturing district of the Stroudwater Valleys. After the 1720s, the builders and owners of gentlemen's houses came from an increasing mix of gentry, professional and commercial backgrounds and comprised a flexible and dynamic part of society. This shift signals heightened social mobility from the second quarter of the eighteenth century for those who built houses of this sort. These findings articulate with greater specificity the permeable boundary between the gentry and commercial and professional worlds and provide a basis for analysing the qualities and interactions of these houses and their owners in subsequent chapters.

Geography

The geographic, social, and economic diversity of Gloucestershire make it a noteworthy focus for study. The county served as a point of intersection in the west of England, as it borders eight other counties and stretches from the Midlands in the north to the West Country in the south, and nearly links the Home Counties to Wales from east to west.² The Cotswold hills run from north east to south west, dominating much of the landscape of the county, with a sharp escarpment on their western edge. Beyond this escarpment, the Vale is the low-lying area focused around the River Severn. In the western reaches of the county, nestled between the Severn and the River Wye, is the Forest

² Verey and Brooks, *BoE: VF*, 23.

of Dean, often seen as a distinct region more closely associated with Wales than with England.



Map 2.1: Gloucestershire, from Finberg.

The social composition of the county differed by region. Between 1550 and 1800 Gloucestershire's population roughly tripled, about average for England and Wales. Between the Restoration and the late-eighteenth century it rose from perhaps 120,000 to

161,000.³ By the late-seventeenth century, three major aristocratic landlords, the Berkeleys, Beauforts and Bathursts, were concentrated in the south of the county. Despite these aristocratic landowners, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries Gloucestershire was one of the most gentrified areas of the country.⁴ Although Rudder noted that the Cotswolds and the Vale were ‘the residence of many of the nobility and gentry’, the Forest of Dean and the Vale above Gloucester, had fewer large landowners and more yeomen farmers.⁵ Both areas saw few gentlemen’s houses built during this period.

Although Gloucestershire was largely a rural county, important centres of economic activity existed by 1680: the north Cotswolds, with a traditional focus on sheep and wool, the largely agricultural Vale of Severn, the early industrial Forest, the cloth producing areas of the Stroudwater valleys, and the commercial centre of Bristol.⁶ In agriculture, grain was the chief article of produce, with much of it shipped to Bristol. Cheese was also a noteworthy commodity.⁷ The Forest of Dean relied heavily on its coal and iron production as well as timber.⁸ Most importantly, cloth making was central to Gloucestershire and brought more wealth to the county than any other source in the early modern period.⁹ In the eighteenth century, textile manufacturing around Stroud was particularly important; by 1712, as much as 60% of Gloucestershire’s population may have been employed in some aspect of its work.¹⁰ By the 1770s, the value of the cloth trade to the county was on the order of £600,000 per annum.¹¹ The population of the Stroudwater

³ D. Rollison, *The local origins of modern society: Gloucestershire 1500-1800* (London, 1992), 3.

⁴ Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry*, 4. Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 204. Their numbers, which draw upon F. M. L. Thompson, *English landed society*, highlight that a larger percentage of land in Gloucestershire was owned by the greater gentry (that is, estates of 3,000-10,000 acres) than by aristocratic landowners.

⁵ Rudder, 21, 25. B. Smith and E. Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 79.

⁶ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: VF*, 96.

⁷ Rudder, 64.

⁸ Smith and Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 73-77.

⁹ Rollison, *The local origins of modern society*, 27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22. The calculations are based on Atkyns’ numbers in *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire*.

¹¹ Rudder, 61.

Valleys doubled between 1676 and 1779, reflecting as well as driving the robust growth of cloth manufacturing.¹² In 1757 Bishop Pococke noted that Stroud was, ‘a sort of capital to the clothing villages’.¹³ Indeed, Rollison argues that by the mid-eighteenth century, ‘Gloucestershire was for all practical purposes Stroud-centred’.¹⁴ Although this may somewhat exaggerate the case, on the basis of gentlemanly-building patterns this view has much to recommend it.

Communication and transportation networks facilitated the economic and cultural interchange between different parts of the county and beyond. The eighteenth century saw substantial growth in this arena, although for much of the century travel remained an arduous, even dangerous, business.¹⁵ Since the Middle Ages Gloucestershire’s axis west of the Cotswolds was largely north-south.¹⁶ This mirrors both the course of the Severn and the Cotswolds. Late-seventeenth-century Gloucestershire roads were limited in scope and difficult to negotiate, and not until the end of the eighteenth century did turnpike roads provide access to all of the small market towns, connecting them with larger urban areas and London, although this process began a century before.¹⁷ By 1779, the Cotswolds operated much more along an east-west axis, yet it was still impossible to travel along this axis without the difficulty of negotiating the Cotswold Edge.¹⁸ Bristol was better served than most places, with trunk roads leading to Bath and thence London and the road to Gloucester turnpiked by 1727.¹⁹

¹² Rollison, *The local origins of modern society*, 29-30, Table 1.2; 42.

¹³ Quoted in J. D. L. Mann, *The cloth industry in the west of England from 1640 to 1880* (Oxford, 1971), 227.

¹⁴ Rollison, *The local origins of modern society*, 55.

¹⁵ N. Herbert, *Road travel and transport in Georgian Gloucestershire* (Ross-on-Wye, 2009); Smith and Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 104-107.

¹⁶ Rollison, *The local origins of modern society*, 47.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, chapter 2 ‘Trails of Progress’, especially 57-60.

¹⁸ Rudder, 21.

¹⁹ Smith and Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 106, Image 121: Turnpike Roads. Also, P. T. Marcy, ‘Bristol’s Roads and Communications on the Eve of the Industrial Revolution’, *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 87 (1968), 158.

Water transport, too, had its challenges but provided conduits for trade and travel. Bristol was at the centre of a regional system that linked the ports of the Bristol Channel and Severn Valley with southwest England, the central and west Midlands, the Welsh Borderlands and south Wales. This network of coastal and river trade has been largely obscured by the focus on overseas trade.²⁰ Improvements to water transport opened new possibilities.²¹ Frampton Court, Richard Clutterbuck's new mansion built between 1731 and 1733, benefitted from the River Avon having been made navigable to Bath in 1727, allowing elegant Bath stone to travel up the Avon and Severn to Frampton.²² Such connective tissues slowly unified the county's socio-economic system, which stretched from London to Wales.

Although focused on Gloucestershire, this thesis is in some ways a wider regional study. Whilst the county provides structure, Gloucestershire had several sub-regions associated with other counties. In that respect this research agrees with Nigel Wright's contention that county boundaries are artificial, and nods toward his preference for 'socio-economic regions'.²³ The county was naturally porous; people, including builders, architects and craftsmen, traversed boundaries and influences quite easily shifted across them. Around the fringe this porosity meant that gentlemen could easily look beyond the county in constructing networks. Cultural fashions and influences did not stop at the county's borders. In the north Cotswolds, distinct building practices emanated from Warwickshire.²⁴ In the seventeenth century Roger Pratt's Coleshill (then in Berkshire, now in Oxfordshire) served as a model for several early Gloucestershire houses. Bristol and its

²⁰ D. Hussey, *Coastal and river trade in pre-Industrial England: Bristol and its Region, 1680-1730* (Exeter, 2000).

²¹ Herbert, *Road travel and transport in Georgian Gloucestershire*, chapter 8; Verey and Brooks, *BoE: VF*, 98; Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry*, 162.

²² GA/D149/A8: 1731-1733, 'Estimates and vouchers of Rich. Clutterbuck for stonework during construction of Frampton Court'.

²³ N. Wright, 'The gentry and their houses in Norfolk and Suffolk, c.1550-1850' (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of East Anglia, 1990), 11.

²⁴ See, for instance, A. Gomme, *Smith of Warwick: Francis Smith, architect and master-builder* (Stamford, 2000); G. Tyack, *Warwickshire country houses* (Chichester, 1994).

environs included substantial portions of both Gloucestershire and Somerset.²⁵ Despite being within the boundaries of Gloucestershire, the village of Poulton was part of Wiltshire until the nineteenth century.²⁶ Although few gentlemen erected houses in the Forest of Dean, one who did, James Rooke of Bigsweir, had larger estates in Monmouthshire than in his own county.²⁷ The access Gloucestershire enjoyed to the South West, Wales, the Midlands, and the Thames Valley could also from time to time exacerbate problems with homelessness, poverty, and unemployment, particularly affecting the work of Justices of the Peace (not to mention those who were poor and without job or home).²⁸

As England's second city, the influence of Bristolian riches and culture stretched widely. The eighteenth century was a period of substantial growth, and within this study of gentlemen's houses Bristol holds a distinctly important position.²⁹ Bristol's population in 1670 was about 20,000; not quite a century later it had more than doubled to perhaps 50,000 people. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century it moved from the third to the second largest city in England.³⁰ This growth took place when Britain generally was

²⁵ B. Donn, *This Map of the Country 11 Miles round the City of Bristol* (London, 1769), also found at BRO/Bristol Plan 232c/30120(3).

²⁶ M. Binney, 'Poulton Manor', *Country Life* (27 May 1976), 1398-1400, 1400.

²⁷ GA/D1833/E1 (1-8): c.1770-1797, 'Survey of estates of Jas. Rooke of Bigsweir'.

²⁸ Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry*, 145.

²⁹ Amongst the more helpful volumes on Bristol's history are: J. Latimer, *The annals of Bristol: The eighteenth century* (Originally published 1893, reprinted with an introduction by P. McGrath 1970), a classic work; C. M. MacInnes, *A gateway of empire* (Bristol, 1939), which emphasises Bristol's pivotal role in the empire; the collection of essays in P. McGrath, (ed.), *Bristol in the eighteenth century* (London, 1972); B. Little, *The city and county of Bristol: A study in Atlantic civilisation* (London, 1954), very much a post-second world war product emphasizing Bristol as part of an Anglo-Saxon Atlantic world; Smith and Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, one of the few volumes to connect explicitly the city and county. D. H. Sacks, *The widening gate: Bristol and the Atlantic economy, 1450-1700* (Berkeley and Oxford, 1991), focuses on Bristol's early modern growth and a centre of trade and commerce; K. Morgan, *Bristol & the Atlantic trade in the eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 1993); Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England*. The best works on Bristol's architecture are W. Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol* (Bristol, 1952), Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, and Foyle, *PAGB*. The many published volumes put out by the Bristol Record Society also contain vast amounts of useful information. P. Aughton, *Bristol: A people's history* (Lancaster, 2000) is the most recent modern effort.

³⁰ R. Sweet, *The English town: government, society and culture, 1680-1840* (Harlow, 1999), Table 1, 3. Foyle suggests Bristol's population was 'c. 16,000 by the 1670s,' while, 'At the start of the C18, the population was about 25,000', and by '1735 that may have increased to c. 35,000, by 1750 to nearly 50,000.' See Foyle, *PAGB*, 12, 16.

experiencing demographic stagnation, a testament to the robustness of Bristol's economic and social life.

This expansion was undoubtedly due to Bristol's position in trade and commerce, centred in coastal and overseas trade. Although some contemporary observers opined that 'Bristol exhibited little taste or sophistication',³¹ visitor impressions of Bristol were mixed, and Defoe and others particularly noted its energetic mercantile activity.³² During the eighteenth century it became what historian W. E. Minchinton called the 'metropolis of the west'.³³ As a major port city, Bristol drew much of the county into a web of trading activity that stretched to the shores of Africa, the West Indies and North America. This expansion was driven in part by Bristol's increased role in the Atlantic slave trade following the loss of monopoly by the Royal African Company in 1698.³⁴ The amount of wealth employed in house-building from slave trading sources is difficult to determine, but slavery underpinned or supplemented a number of families and their economic resources in some way.³⁵

This expansive period lasted only a short time for Bristol; industries such as sugar refining, glass, and metals flourished before 1800, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century there were no new developments in the city's industrial base or hinterland to

³¹ Quoted in Foyle, *PAGB*, 20.

³² P. T. Marcy, 'Eighteenth-century views of Bristol and Bristolians,' in McGrath, (ed.), *Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, (Newton Abbot, 1972), 11-40; J. H. Bettey, *Bristol observed: visitors' impressions of the city from Domesday to the Blitz* (Bristol, 1986). Alexander Pope commented, 'The City of Bristol itself is very unpleasant and no civilized company in it. Only the Collector of the Customs would have brought me acquainted with the Merchants, of whom I hear no great character.' Quoted by Bettey, 69.

³³ W. E. Minchinton, 'Bristol: metropolis of the west', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 4 (1954), 69-89; W. E. Minchinton, *The trade of Bristol in the eighteenth century*, Bristol Record Society, vol. xx (1957).

³⁴ D. Richardson, (ed.), *Bristol, Africa and the eighteenth-century slave trade to America*, Bristol Record Society, vols. 38, 39, 42, 47. Morgan, *Bristol & the Atlantic trade in the Eighteenth Century*; C. M. MacInnes, *A Gateway of Empire*; M. Dresser, *Slavery obscured: the social history of the slave trade in Bristol* (Bristol, 2007).

³⁵ Dresser, *Slavery obscured*, especially chapter 3. For an earlier account, see M. Dresser, 'Squares of distinction, webs of interest: gentility, urban development and the slave trade in Bristol c.1673-1820', *Slavery & Abolition*, 21: 3 (December 2000), 21-47.

stimulate more overseas trade.³⁶ Nevertheless, by 1760 the picture of Bristol looked quite different from a century before; despite the on-going Seven Years' War, the city was seemingly awash in prosperity.

Bristol's growth as a commercial port drove its concomitant architectural development in many ways. Yet Timothy Mowl has commented that Bristol remained somewhat backward-looking when it came to architectural fashion.³⁷ This attitude highlights the conservatism of many mercantile and professional elites. As will become clear in subsequent chapters, such a staid approach to building had implications for many gentlemen's houses throughout Gloucestershire.

Much of the county enjoyed especially close links to Bristol, an important hub connecting Gloucestershire and the outside world. At the same time, Gloucestershire had important links to London, especially through the Stroudwater Valleys cloth trade that grew substantially during this period.³⁸ Both these areas play important roles in this account. Gloucestershire's socio-economic diversity and connections beyond the county allow insights into commercial and landed efforts at building status. In this way, the county presents a broad canvas on which to paint a picture of 'gentlemen's houses' and their genteel builders and owners. The engines that drove economic development in Gloucestershire and Bristol helped to provide the wherewithal for gentlemanly construction.

Gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire: the sample

This study explores small, freestanding houses built or remodelled in a classical style in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth century. These can be described generically as five-bay, two and one half storey houses with double-pile floor plans that are between

³⁶ Morgan, *Bristol & the Atlantic trade in the Eighteenth Century*, 220.

³⁷ Mowl, *To build the second city: architects and craftsmen of Georgian Bristol* (Bristol, 1991), 9.

³⁸ Smith and Ralph, *A history of Bristol and Gloucestershire*, 83-7.

forty-five and seventy feet wide on their main façade. I used these basic criteria to identify a sample of houses built in Gloucestershire during the period. The extraordinary physical, visual, material and documentary evidence available for the county resulted in a substantial sample for investigation.

Forty-one houses assessed here were covered by Kingsley, which presented a valuable starting point.³⁹ This study builds on his invaluable work by considering a number of houses that were not country houses and extending the investigation to the material culture and sociability of those who built gentlemen's houses. During the course of research, well over a hundred houses identified from a range of written and visual sources were considered for inclusion.⁴⁰ References were cross-checked with contemporary accounts such as Atkyns or Rudder.

The result was a final list of eighty-one small classical houses.⁴¹ Eleven have been demolished or destroyed, leaving seventy houses (86%) extant. Of these, four have been substantially altered, although some eighteenth-century architectural features remain. Of the extant houses, I conducted interior or exterior surveys of fifty-seven (81%).⁴² This research facilitated the construction of a database to track key information about each house, such as the early and late dates of construction/major remodelling, building dimensions, area, National Grid reference coordinates, National Monuments Record file numbers, Images of England number, estate size, visual representations, and owner data.

³⁹ For Gloucestershire country houses, Nicholas Kingsley documents one hundred and sixty buildings out of three hundred and seventy-six building campaigns that can be closely dated between 1660 and 1830. See Kingsley, *CHG II*, 9, 296-7. The choice of which houses he included seems to have been made largely on aesthetic grounds that valued buildings of high architectural merit, even when they might not be considered country houses at all.

⁴⁰ For example, <http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/>; Kingsley, *CHG II*; Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C* and *BoE: VF*; *Victoria Country History: a history of the county of Gloucester*, 9 volumes to date (1907-2010).

⁴¹ See Appendix I.

⁴² Today, some of these houses are in private ownership, although many are institutional, including schools, hospitals, residential care facilities, and hotels. The owners, whether public or private, were mostly responsive to my research queries.

There are naturally limitations on the sample. Despite extensive efforts to identify and track examples, some houses may have been missed. Others have been changed beyond recognition or demolished. A few others were virtually undocumented, with scant evidence about the structure and style of the buildings. Finally, upon further investigation, several were clearly too large or small to be included. As will be seen in the next chapter, there were numerous permutations of the small classical compact box. In selecting houses I have tended to err on the side of inclusiveness.

The sample also omits dwellings that would be worthy of further study. Houses of a similar size but built in other styles are not included. Moreover, a significant number of Gloucestershire gentlemen were content with domestic life in an older house that was not 'modern-built'. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider why owners chose not to build in this period, although this is an interesting question. I also do not consider individuals who purchased houses other than the small classical houses described here. Again, tracing the acquisition of other types of houses might reveal a number of noteworthy processes.

The strengths of the sample are nonetheless evident. Individually, many of these houses have not been studied extensively, while as a group they have not been assessed at all. There is also, as shall be seen, considerable and largely unexplored documentary and material evidence to reward their study amply. Despite limitations, this thesis breaks new ground by investigating a significant number of hitherto neglected houses. It examines these houses in a novel way in order to explore how the materiality of people's worlds shaped their social interaction.

When were they built?

On the basis of architectural style, physical examination and documentary evidence, it is possible to date sixty-nine of eighty-one houses (85%) comfortably within a decade of construction.⁴³ Occasionally, even assigning houses to a decade presented challenges. The remaining twelve of eighty-one houses (15%) have been assigned to the most likely decade of building; most of these, however, were almost certainly built in the last few decades of the seventeenth or the first two decades of the eighteenth. Even if construction dates vary from the assigned decade, therefore, they do not significantly affect the overall building pattern for small classical houses in the county seen below.

Gentlemanly house-building campaigns can be compared with studies of country house construction to understand how gentlemen's houses fit into the overall picture of elite building patterns. A seminal essay originally published over fifty years ago asked how many country houses were built in the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Subsequent work has explored this issue further, developing similar but slightly different accounts. The numbers of country houses built and their chronology varied by region.⁴⁵ Charles Saumarez Smith noted a decline in country house building in the 1690s, although other studies, such as the research of Clemenson, Kingsley, and Wilson and Mackley have suggested more robust building patterns in the last decade of the seventeenth century. More importantly, Saumarez Smith identified the 1720s as a peak period of new building for large country houses, with a steep drop-off in the 1730s followed by an even greater

⁴³ See Appendix I.

⁴⁴ The essay is from 1959, reprinted as J. Summerson, 'The classical country house in 18th-century England', in *The unromantic castle and other essays* (London, 1990), 79-120.

⁴⁵ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 201, and Appendix 1; L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, especially 384, Table 11.9.

fall in the 1740s. Wilson and Mackley echo these findings for the 1720s and 1730s, although their study suggests a slight recovery in the 1740s.⁴⁶

The pattern of Gloucestershire country house building outlined by Kingsley ‘mirrors that collected by other writers for the country as a whole’, despite his numbers being somewhat at odds with Summerson and Saumarez Smith. Moreover, because Kingsley does not include a table for building campaigns, trends and numbers must be extrapolated from his description.⁴⁷

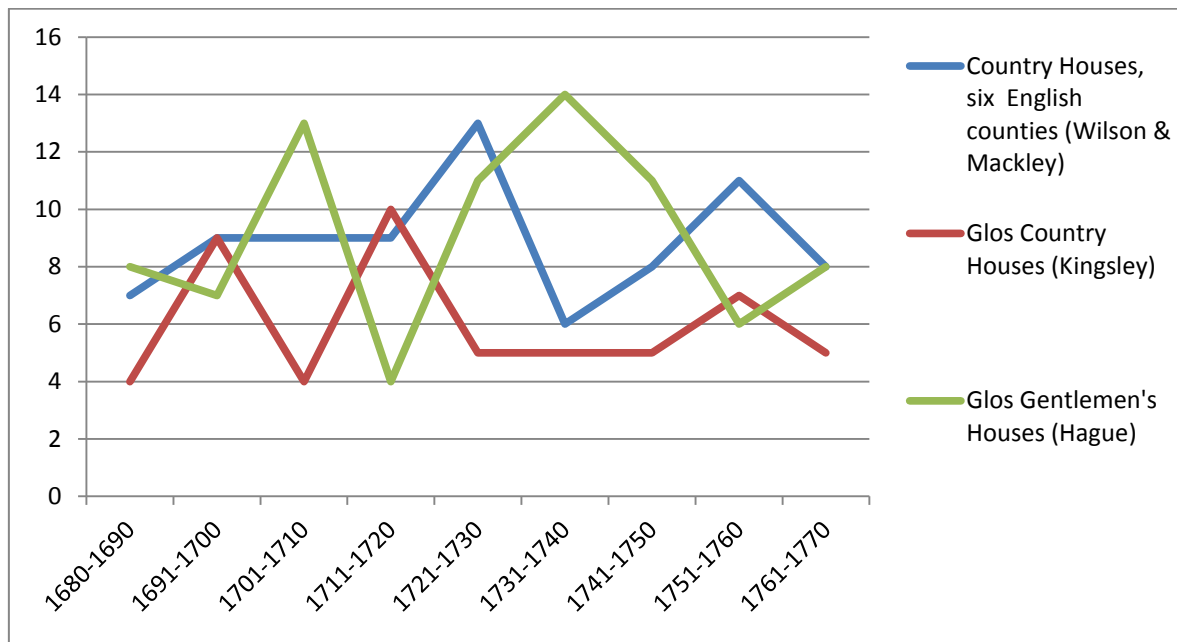
The following graph compares country house building by decade with the construction of gentlemen’s houses. It draws on figures for Wilson and Mackley’s sample of six English counties,⁴⁸ and extrapolated numbers from Kingsley for country house building in Gloucestershire. These are compared with figures for the eighty-one small classical houses in Gloucestershire identified for this study.

⁴⁶ Saumarez Smith, ‘Supply and demand in English country house building’, 3. Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 205, Figure 2; H. Clemenson, *English country house and landed estates* (London, 1982), 49, Fig. 3.1; M. W. Barley also suggests a decline in gentry and aristocratic house-building in the two decades 1730-50 in ‘Rural Building in England’, in J. Thirsk, (ed.), *The agrarian history of England and Wales, V.II, 1640-1750: Agrarian Change* (Cambridge, 1985), 590.

⁴⁷ Kingsley, *CHG II* (Chichester, 1992), 8.

⁴⁸ Cheshire, Gloucestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Suffolk, and Yorkshire.

Figure 2.1: Trends in country house and gentlemen's house building, by decade



Source: Calculated from author's figures; Wilson and Mackley, Figure 2 and Table 4; and extrapolated from Kingsley, 8.⁴⁹

This graph demonstrates a robust period of gentlemanly house-building focused in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. This is significantly different from the findings of Saumarez Smith, Clemenson, and Wilson and Mackley for country houses. These results from Gloucestershire signal an important process at work in terms of the kinds of houses being built and the identity of builders. Wilson and Mackley point to 'many shadings of rank and wealth' whilst reinforcing the 'highly emulative social structures' of landed and mercantile elites alike.⁵⁰ Kingsley in turn suggested that fortunes made in Bristol and the Stroud valleys from about 1730 provided income for country house construction in the county.⁵¹ His statistics, however, reflect a marked decline in

⁴⁹ Several notes should be made. Kingsley does not provide numbers related to building construction, hence this graph reflects the overall trends he identifies rather than reflecting actual building campaigns. Also, I have included two houses in my figures for 1680-1690, Lower Slaughter Manor and Fairford Park, which were completed before that decade.

⁵⁰ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 236.

⁵¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 3-6; for building figures, 7-8.

building campaigns in the immediate decades after 1730, somewhat at odds with the idea of new men purchasing estates and building country houses.

The critical spike in gentlemanly house-building in the 1730s offers new evidence to support Kingsley's argument and provides a timeline that highlights the dynamism of rising commercial elites and their efforts to confirm status in material terms distinct from those further up the social hierarchy. The pattern of gentlemanly building practices in Gloucestershire suggests that it may be necessary to temper the idea of emulation when assessing how status was constructed by builders and owners of small classical houses. When overlaid with the geographic location of gentlemanly building and an analysis of owners, a refined picture of building and social status begins to emerge.

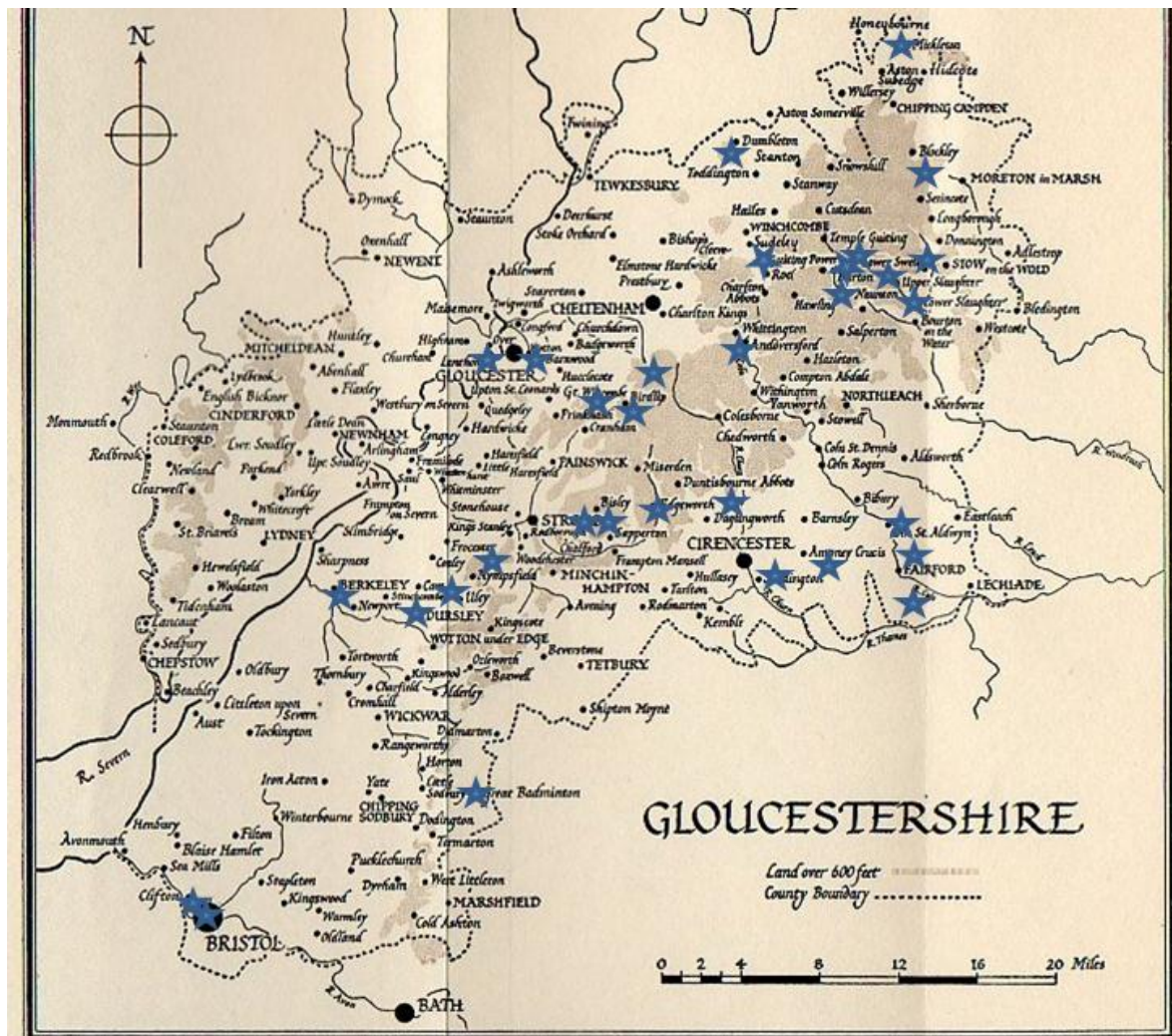
The uptick in gentlemen's houses at the end of the period signals another important moment. The proliferation of classical forms by 1770 made them something of an architectural norm, commonly built in urban, suburban and rural settings.⁵² Cities like Bristol had begun building classical townhouses early in the eighteenth century.⁵³ As the century progressed, examples of sizeable Georgian houses were built, for instance, in towns such as Cirencester, Chipping Camden, Painswick and elsewhere. The small classical houses considered in this study were built in a range of situations over the course of the period. By the late eighteenth century, two developments - one urban, the other largely rural - were united by classical architectural form. Gentlemen's houses might be seen therefore as a complementary English 'rural renaissance' to match the English urban renaissance. The interrelationship between city and country will be explored further in chapter 4.

⁵² Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 95-97.

⁵³ Mowl, *To build the second city*, chapter 1; Borsay, *English urban renaissance*.

Where were they built?

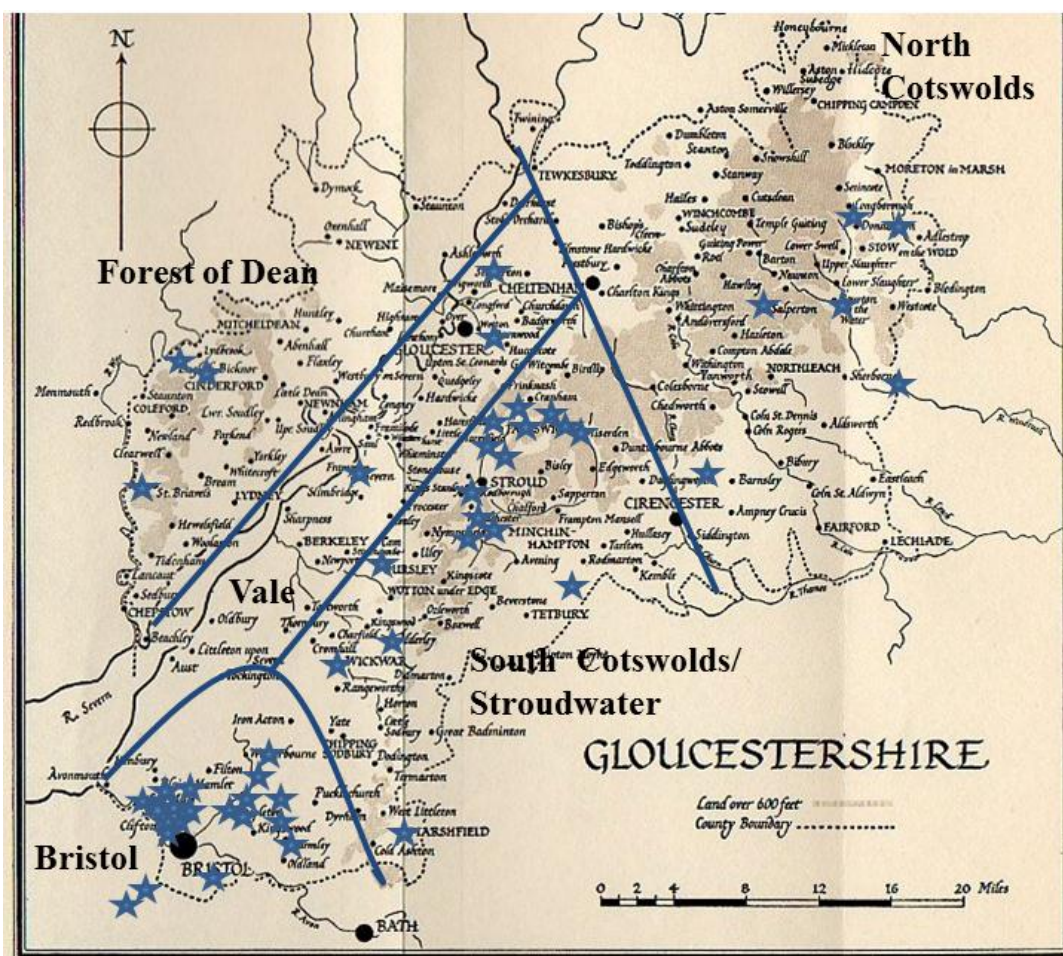
In mapping house construction, a dramatic shift is evident in the location of gentlemanly building projects over the period. Map 2.2 shows the distribution of gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire between the construction of Lower Slaughter Manor in the late 1650s and c.1720.



Map 2.2: Building projects, 1658-c.1720

Houses built between c.1720 and c.1770 are shown on Map 2.3. Although Gloucestershire is typically divided into three regions – the Cotswolds, the Vale of Severn, and the Forest of Dean – in order to develop greater specificity this map and the following

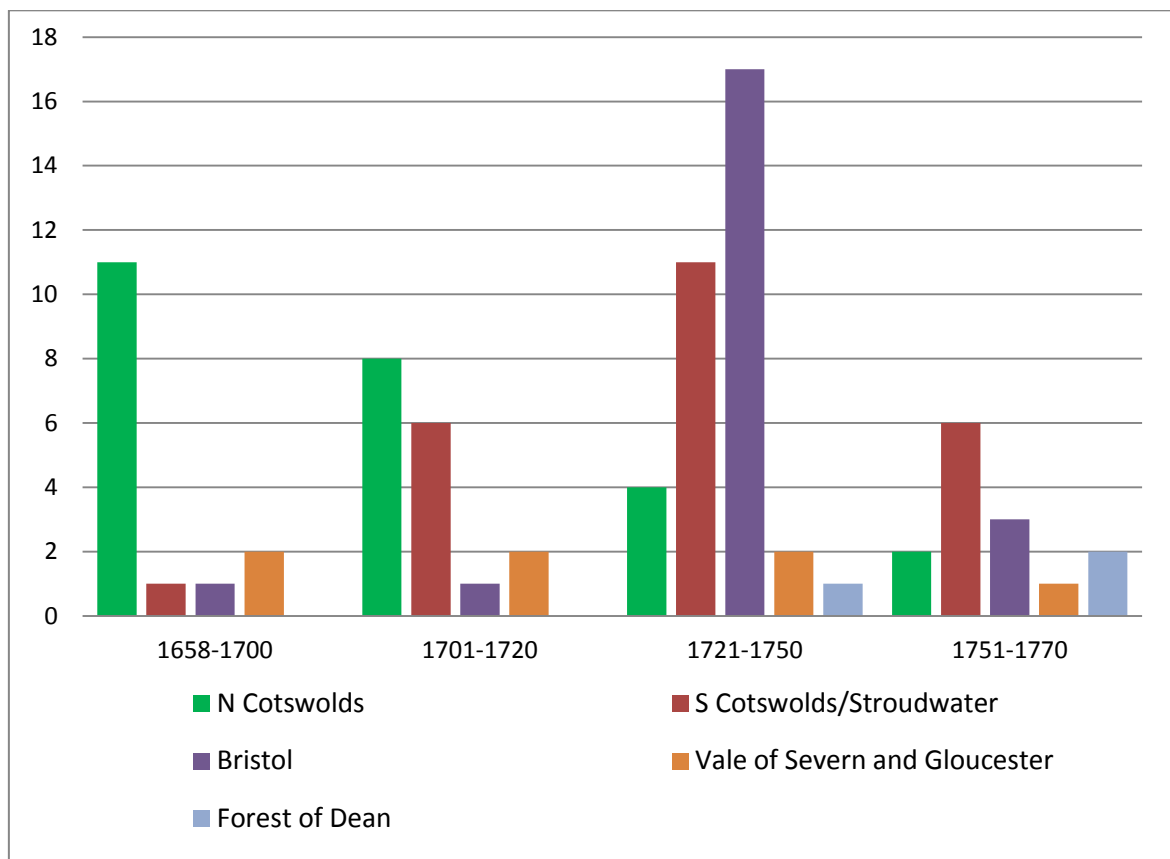
graph divide the county into five areas to illustrate the geographic distribution of houses over time. The North Cotswolds signify the areas north and east of the line running from Tewkesbury through Cheltenham and on to Cirencester. The South Cotswolds/Stroudwater corresponds to central Gloucestershire centred on Stroud, and includes the wolds as they stretch south and west towards Bristol. Bristol includes the city and its immediate environs, whilst the Vale of Severn includes Gloucester. Three houses were located in the Forest.



Map 2.3: Building projects, c.1720-c.1770

The trends in building by location are also graphically illustrated in Fig. 2.2. This graph breaks down the location of houses into short periods, so that developments over time can be discerned.

Figure 2.2: Gentlemen's houses by location



Mapping location and chronology together reveals several important findings. Most importantly, geographic distribution over time identifies a critical shift in the 1720s. Before the 1720s, gentlemanly building was concentrated in the north and eastern sections of Gloucestershire, particularly around Stow on the Wold, where at least seven houses appeared between about 1658 and 1700. From the 1720s, however, a major move occurred south and west, with building especially prominent around Bristol and in the Stroudwater valleys. This coincides with the chronological shift seen in Figure 2.1.

On the basis of these complementary findings, three groups of houses can be identified that will be discussed in the remainder of this thesis. The first group, mostly situated in the north Cotswolds, can be termed the *Cotswold gentry house*. As a group,

these houses appeared earlier than in other areas of the county, with almost all being substantially built by 1720 with fortunes accumulated by several generations of gentry families. Three small classical houses in the Forest of Dean were built by ‘The gentry of the forest’⁵⁴ between 1740 and 1770, making them similar to the Cotswold gentry houses. The Forest of Dean houses are included in this group.

A second group takes in the houses of the central and south Cotswolds concentrated mostly although not exclusively in the Stroudwater Valleys. Houses built by ‘gentlemen clothiers’ comprise much of this type: Ebworth Park, Bownham Park, Pitchcombe House, Paradise, Dudbridge House, Brownhill Court, and Hill House in Rodborough. A few families like the Hyetts, who bought an estate and established a seat near Painswick in the 1730s, were lawyers and public servants from Gloucester. One of the southernmost houses in this group, William Springett’s West End House (Alderley Grange), has clear Bristol connections through his involvement as a merchant. Frampton Court, built by Richard Clutterbuck in the Vale of Severn, looked both towards the cloth producing areas around Stroud – his grandfather had been a clothier – and toward Bristol, where Clutterbuck served as a prominent Customs official. These *Gentlemen clothier’s houses* nearly all arose after 1730, part of the expansion of gentlemanly housing funded through a combination of the cloth trade, professional earnings, and investment in land.

The centripetal influence of Bristol organizes the third group, the *Bristolian gentlemen’s houses*. From 1720 to 1750, there was a veritable explosion of classical gentlemen’s houses around Bristol. Houses in the village of Clifton built by Nehemiah Champion, Thomas Goldney II, Robert Smith and Paul Fisher are telling examples of classical houses built by merchant families. Custom officer John Elbridge’s Cote, which will be discussed in greater detail, is a well-documented but largely ignored house. Others,

⁵⁴ Rudder, 37.

such as Hill House in Mangotsfield, Cleve Hill House, Redland Court, and William Champion's Warmley illustrate the interrelationship between commerce and gentlemanly building, particularly highlighting the important period of the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

Although not all the houses in this study fit neatly into one or another of the groups, these groups organize how we can understand the development of the gentleman's house type over the period between 1680 and 1770. When looking at building by date and location, the conclusions are marked: before the 1720s, builders constructed houses in the north and east of the county. After the 1720s, houses appeared far more frequently in the south of Gloucestershire and around Bristol. The second and third groups share several characteristics: they were built in the south part of the county later than the Cotswold gentry houses close to areas with substantial mercantile activity. These chronological and regional variations also correspond to differences in situation and the social background of owners, points to be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

The gentlemen who owned them

Having established a timeline for building and mapped the location of eighty-one gentlemen's houses, the final section of this chapter will investigate the one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners that these houses acquired. Architecture and people are largely inseparable, in the way that stage sets without actors have little meaning. The cross-section of individuals in this study is united by one basic fact: sometime in the late seventeenth century or eighteenth century they either undertook to build or acquire a 'modern-built house...fit for a gentleman.' Using this housing form to classify builders and owners produces compelling results. What emerges is a picture that refocuses

attention on the gentleman's house as an arena for social construction, brings greater specificity to the timeline for social mobility, and elucidates how this process played out.

Categorized according to their houses, these owners comprise a range of people hovering between the middle and upper strata of society.⁵⁵ Many were merchants or had mercantile connections; a number were members of the landed gentry; a very few were peers. Frequently, they encompass more than one of these categories, depending on lifecycle. Thus the form of building chosen helps to assess in greater detail *who* was operating in this interstitial place and *how* they performed their social, cultural and material roles.

For the eighty-one houses, likely builders for sixty-eight have been identified. These builders provide a useful cross-section that allows investigation of the backgrounds of those who undertook to build a small classical house. It is possible to differentiate between builders coming primarily from landed backgrounds and those who were involved in the professions or commercial activity in most instances (57 of 68, or 84%) and assign them to one of four categories: peers, gentry, professions or mercantile.⁵⁶ The results are seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Builders by background

	<u>Pre-1720</u>	<u>Post-1720</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gentry	13	8	21
Professions	5	8	13
Mercantile	2	18	20
Peers	2	1	3
TOTAL	22	35	57

The chronological and geographic break evidenced in house-building trends indicates that before the 1720s, members of the landed gentry built the majority of

⁵⁵ See Appendix II.

⁵⁶ A database with biographical information culled from a range of sources has enabled these determinations to be made. Professions are taken to include law, government service, and the clergy. Mercantile represent those who primarily subsisted on income from trade or business.

gentlemen's houses (13 of 22, or 59%), with smaller numbers coming from the professions or commerce. Between about 1720 and 1770, a majority of builders (18 of 35, or 51%) came from mercantile backgrounds. When combined with professional men, this rises to 26 of 35 (74%). The aristocracy only rarely built houses of this type, and in the three instances of peers undertaking construction only one house, Barrington Park (1736-8), was intended as a primary residence, and this for a son.⁵⁷

Over the entire period, the gentry still provided the greatest number of builders (21), followed closely by those from mercantile backgrounds (20), and superseded by them from the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Using small classical houses as a marker of elite status, this data indicates a substantial degree of social mobility after the 1720s amongst builders of small classical houses.

Life cycle and gentlemen builders and owners

The point in their lives when gentlemen built their houses is an important factor in understanding this process. Several life moments have been accepted as particularly important for gentlemen, including marriage, inheritance, and retirement.⁵⁸ Marriage or inheritance could be key moments that shaped the household, providing resources to build or rebuild a house. Martha Vandewall, née Goldney, brought recently acquired property to her marriage to Nehemiah Champion in 1742.⁵⁹ Shortly thereafter they began building a new house, Clifton Court.⁶⁰ Inheritance enabled the construction of small classical houses,

⁵⁷ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 68.

⁵⁸ See, *inter alia*, Stones, *An open elite?*, 142-147, 191; Habakkuk, *Marriage, debt, and the estates system*, especially chapters 1 to 3; Rogers, 'Big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', 444-445; Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, 89, 133; Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*, 211-212.

⁵⁹ Nuffield Health, St Mary's Hospital archive: Indenture, 17 August 1742; P. K. Stembridge, *The Goldney family: a Bristol merchant dynasty* (Bristol Record Society 49, 1998), 154, quoting Thomas Goldney Record Book, UBL DM1398. 'Nehem: Champion Sen:r to my Sister VandeWall, 7:br 16th 1742 [16 Sept 1742]

⁶⁰ Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, 151; Beacon Planning, 'Chesterfield, No 3 Clifton Hill, Clifton, Bristol: Historic Building Assessment' (unpublished report, October 2010), 5. See also Bristol and Region Archaeological Services, 'Archaeological desk-based assessment of land at Chesterfield

with 43% of identified builders inheriting the property they built on. An overemphasis on marriage and inheritance, however, might underplay initiatives taken later in life by members of the gentle classes.

Building a house was a key moment for gentlemen but in the case of builders it was not always linked to marriage or inheritance. The age of builders at the time they constructed their houses can be determined with some certainty in twenty-nine instances. Assigning these building projects to a particular decade of life develops a picture of when in the life-cycle gentlemen built their houses (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Builders by age and background across the period⁶¹

Age, by decade, of builder	Number of Builders	Background
20-29	2	1 G, 1 M
30-39	6	4G, 1 Pr, 1M
40-49	6	4G, 2M
50-59	12	3G, 4Pr, 5M
60-69	2	2M
70 +	1	1Pr
Total	29	

Key: G = Gentry, Pr = Professional, M= Mercantile

Gentlemen's houses were generally built later in the life-cycle. Nearly three-quarters of gentlemen builders commenced construction after the age of forty, at an average age of about forty-six. Although this did not preclude the infusion of money as a result of marriage, wedlock seems not to have played as significant a part as seen elsewhere. Second or later marriages could sometimes be important in this context, as

Hospital, Clifton Hill, Clifton, Bristol for Nuffield Health', Report No.2206/2209 (unpublished report, October 2009). Many thanks to Steve Nicholson of Nuffield Health for kindly sharing these reports.

⁶¹ These have been calculated where birth dates are known and where the construction date of the house is fairly precise, allowing for estimation of which decade of life builders undertook construction. One house, Cote, is treated as built by John Elbridge in his late 50s, although it is possible that Thomas Moore constructed it in his early 70s. Either way, the general trend remains the same. The three peers who built these houses are not included. Lord Talbot constructed Barrington Park for his son in his early fifties; the Duke of Shrewsbury constructed his small house, Eyford Park, in his thirties. On these see Kingsley, *CHG II*, 68 and 283-4. The 2nd Duke of Beaufort was likely in his twenties when Essex House was built, see Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 388.

with the Champions. Retirement from active engagement in trade or public affairs served as a major impetus.⁶² Paul Fisher, for example, built Clifton Hill House about the time of retiring and at least seven builders were at that life stage.

Breaking these figures down by background indicates that on balance gentry undertook building somewhat earlier in life, whilst professionals and especially merchants waited until later. Exceptions naturally occur. One of the two builders in their twenties was Henry Brett, a member of a Warwickshire gentry family who commenced construction of Sandywell Park around 1704, but the other was Joseph Harford, scion of a Quaker merchant family, who began Stapleton Grove near Bristol in 1764 at the age of 23, albeit funded by a generous inheritance.⁶³ Septuagenarian James Rooke of Bigsweir House was a retired military officer who had come into the estate upon marrying his third wife, a member of local gentry family. This suggests that builders waited until somewhat later in their lifecycle before undertaking expensive and time-consuming construction projects, first building the real, social and cultural capital that enabled them to achieve success. This deferred process of house-building suggests that a gentleman's house served as a marker that visibly declared status in society. The act of building at a late point in the lifecycle was a conservative undertaking that was both achievable and responsible.

When moving beyond building to ownership more generally, a total of one hundred and thirty-four gentlemen owners have been identified during the period, including the sixty-eight builders above. Tracing ownership reveals who lived in these houses when, how often the houses changed hands, whether this was through sale or inheritance, and what this says about evolving social status. Gender overwhelmingly determined ownership: only eight of the 134 owners (6%) during this period were women; 94% were

⁶² Summerson, 'The classical country house in 18th-century England', 86. The Stones noted but did not particularly emphasize this trend. Stones, *An open elite?*, 191-192.

⁶³ A. Harford, *Annals of the Harford family* (London, 1909), 33-34, 161.

men. With one unusual exception, Ann Hort of Cote, women's ownership resulted from being widowed and was relatively short-lived.⁶⁴

Of the one hundred and thirty-four changes in ownership, how the change took place - through inheritance or purchase - can be traced in one hundred and twenty-two instances. Of these, seventy-eight transfers were made through inheritance (63%), and forty-six through purchase (37%). Related to purchase, there are few examples of these houses being sold as a result of acute financial problems. For example, the sale of Paradise took place in 1755 immediately following the death of clothier William Townshend. In this instance, the family seems to have disposed of it as an unnecessary secondary house.⁶⁵ The owners of Sandywell Park and Williamstrip Park were not desperately in need of money when they sold to soon-to-be MPs, Thomas Tracy and Samuel Blackwell, in 1748 and 1759 respectively.⁶⁶ The few transfers by sale indicate that a fairly high degree of stability characterized the owners of this style and size house, at least for several decades after ownership was secured.

Social status for gentlemen builders and owners

Gentlemen builders and owners for the most part made measured choices in their acquisition of small classical houses. Material possessions were one marker of status but there were others that help to illuminate their backgrounds and activities. Further indications of where gentlemen builders and owners fit into the social hierarchy can be learnt from looking at their involvement in public life, economic means, religious affiliation, and cultural values. This section considers a few of the most important variables related to gentlemen, setting the stage for further evaluation of social status.

⁶⁴ Aspects of Mrs. Hort's nearly forty year tenure will be considered in Chapter 7.

⁶⁵ *Gloucester Journal*, 11 February 1755; J. Milne and T. Mowl, *Castle Godwyn*, 9-10.

⁶⁶ GA/PA117/1: *A short history of Sandywell Park* (Cirencester, n.d. c 1966), 5; Kingsley, *CHG II*, 264.

Eighteenth-century England was a finely attuned social system. From Gregory King in the late seventeenth century, efforts have been made to describe social groups and their related income.⁶⁷ Economic, social and political factors distinguished the landholding gentry. Fine gradations are evident amongst the builders and owners in this study. Over the first four decades covered, builders and owners stood in the ranks of the landed elite. After the 1720s more builders and owners came from professional and mercantile backgrounds. Their integration into the social hierarchy helps to calibrate precisely how status was constructed.

Peers stood at the top of landed society, but they built only three compact, classical houses in Gloucestershire. Charles Talbot, 1st baron Talbot of Hensol, who served as George II's Lord Chancellor, built Barrington Park between 1736-8 for.⁶⁸ Another Charles Talbot, the 1st duke of Shrewsbury, built Eyford Park by 1695, although with little land it served as a place of retirement rather than a country house. Shrewsbury referred to it as, 'this cold melancholy cottage', and within a decade or so embarked upon a grand Baroque palace, Heythrop, in Oxfordshire.⁶⁹ The duke of Beaufort built Essex House, close to the gates of his seat at Badminton, sometime after 1700 as a dower house.⁷⁰ A fourth peer engaged in a major renovation project. Francis Seymour-Conway, 1st baron Conway of Ragley, purchased Sandywell Park in 1720, adding baroque wings to make it a more fitting

⁶⁷ P. Mathias, 'The social structure in the eighteenth century', *Economic History Review*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1957), 30-45; G Holmes, 'Gregory King and the social structure of pre-industrial England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth series: vol. 27 (1977), 41-68; P. H. Lindert and J. G. Williamson, 'Revising the Social Tables for England and Wales, 1688-1812', *Explorations in Economic History*, xix (1982), 385-408.

⁶⁸ M. Macnair, 'Talbot, Charles, first Baron Talbot of Hensol (bap. 1685, d. 1737)', *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁹ See Kingsley, *CHG II*, 283; S. Handley, 'Talbot, Charles, duke of Shrewsbury (1660-1718)', *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004), quoting *Private and original correspondence of Charles Talbot, duke of Shrewsbury*, ed. W. Coxe (1821), 330.

⁷⁰ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 388. The 2nd Duke of Beaufort may have built Essex House as a dower house after inheriting the title, although relations with his grandmother were unhappy and it does not seem that the Dowager Duchess ever lived there, see M. McClain, *Beaufort: The Duke and his Duchess 1657-1715* (New Haven and London, 2001), 205-208.

seat, seemingly whilst waiting for the completion of the endless building project that was Ragley Hall.⁷¹ Overall, peers played a limited role in the erection of gentlemen's houses.

The level of engagement with public life helped to denote status and most owners of gentlemen's houses played limited and episodic roles at the national level. Some landholders like the Whitmores, Sir Richard Cocks, and Sir Robert Atkyns occupied positions solidly in the middle of the gentry. They were members of the Commons, magistrates and holders of county offices, with contacts beyond the county. Membership of the House of Commons served as one indicator of social standing. There was a 'relatively large degree of social mobility' exhibited by membership of the House of Commons with non-elite MPs drawn from, 'the echelons of those who made a living by business and the professions'.⁷² Such inclusion may have represented a co-opting of particularly high-achieving middling sorts.⁷³ Throughout the period, few truly self-made men were able to enter parliament; most, 'had been climbing steadily in degree of materials resources and social status', for two or three generations, testing their and their family's suitability to enter the ruling elite.⁷⁴ Gloucestershire's gentlemen infrequently ascended to high political circles. Of the 134 known Gloucestershire builders and owners, only twelve were elected Members of Parliament (9%).⁷⁵ Six of the twelve were father and son: Charles and John Coxe of Nether Lypiatt, Charles and Benjamin Hyett of Painswick House, and the William Whitmores, father and son, of Lower Slaughter Manor, who sat for Bridgnorth in Shropshire. Another, Henry Ireton, served briefly as MP for Cirencester at about the same time he must have been remodelling Williamstrip Park in the

⁷¹ See G. Tyack, *Warwickshire country houses* (Chichester, 1994), 167-173.

⁷² See I. Christie, *British "Non-Elite" MPs 1715-1820* (Oxford, 1995), especially Appendix A, 206. Quotes on 6 and 38.

⁷³ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, 246, 273-4, 289-90.

⁷⁴ Christie, *British "Non-Elite" MPs*, 18.

⁷⁵ See W. R. Williams, *PHG; History of Parliament Trust: the House of Commons* on CD-ROM, volumes for 1660-1690, 1715-1754, 1754-1790. E. Cruickshanks, S. Handley, and D. W. Hayton, (eds.), *The House of Commons, 1690-1715*, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 2002).

early eighteenth-century.⁷⁶ A later owner of Williamstrip, Samuel Blackwell, also served as MP for Cirencester.⁷⁷ None of these members served with particular distinction or held high office. If they appeared at the national level at all, gentlemen builders and owners tended to sit on the bottom rung of the political ladder.

A number of other builders and owners were lesser gentry or country gentlemen. They exercised power locally and within the county, living on between £250 and £1,000 per year.⁷⁸ Gentlemen builders and owners played more active roles in the administration of the county. Over the course of the period, nine gentlemen, a mere 7%, served in the office of High Sheriff, mostly avoiding what was considered an onerous post.⁷⁹ An important marker of county-level standing was service as a county magistrate. This period saw an expansion of the number of justices appointed, and there was frequently overt politicization. The number of justices appointed for Gloucestershire more than doubled between 1680 and 1702, and had quadrupled by 1761.⁸⁰ At least twenty-eight builders and owners served as Justices of the Peace (21%). Records are, however, incomplete and this figure should undoubtedly be higher. For instance, a further twenty-nine owners of small classical houses were almost certainly JPs, had close family associations with justices, or occupied other prominent positions on the county level. This further group of twenty-nine includes four peers, two MPs, several knights and baronets, and sons and nephews of JPs. One gentle lady owner was the wife of a JP whose son later served on the Commission.⁸¹ Taken together, those named in commissions, those who almost certainly served, and those who had close family or friendship connections with JPs accounted for at least fifty-seven

⁷⁶ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 264.

⁷⁷ Rudder, 385.

⁷⁸ Mingay, *The gentry* (London, 1976), 13-15.

⁷⁹ Eight served as High Sheriff of Gloucestershire and one, Joseph Harford, as High Sheriff of Bristol. Rudder, 54; Harford, *Annals of the Harford family*, 33.

⁸⁰ N. Landau, *The Justices of the Peace, 1679-1760* (Berkeley, 1984), Appendix A.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Whitmore, whose husband was William was MP for Bridgnorth in Shropshire from 1705-1710, and then again from 1713-1725. Their third (and second surviving) son, William, who inherited Lower Slaughter Manor, sat for Bridgnorth from 1741-1747 and then again from 1754-1771. *History of Parliament Trust: the House of Commons* on CD-ROM, volume for 1715-1754.

of one hundred thirty-four builders and owners of gentlemen's houses (43%). In addition, many JPs who did not own small classical houses had close associations with gentlemen builders and owners who did. There are also a number of instances where the Commission included close relatives of builders and owners or members of their immediate social networks.

Between 1736 and 1762, about two hundred individuals were listed in Commissions of the Peace on five separate occasions.⁸² On each occasion identified gentlemen builders and owners constituted a modest proportion of the Commission, as seen in Table 2.3:

Table 2.3: Gentlemen builder and owner JPs, 1736-1762⁸³

Year	Number of Gentleman Owner JPs
1736	10
1740	4
1746	12
1754	12
1762	12

Examining the year 1746 in more detail, seven of twelve gentlemen builder-owners JPs hailed from minor gentry families, although several, like Richard Clutterbuck of Frampton Court, had mercantile and professional associations in their background. Two JPs were sons of gentlemen house-builders who had been a lawyer and a merchant, one was Dean of Bristol with gentry family connections, and two more were fairly grand merchants. This suggests that there was still a bias toward land-owning JPs, although it was certainly possible to hold such a post without being a member of the gentry. By

⁸² It is worth noting that of the persons listed in each commission, a number were perfunctory appointments of Privy Councilors and other government officials with few or no local connections, see L. K. J. Glassey, *Politics and the appointment of the Justices of the Peace 1675-1720* (Oxford, 1979), 4.

⁸³ See Commissions of the Peace, GA/CMS/202: Justices of the Peace of 1736 [Transcription of GA/Q/JC/3], GA/Q/JC/4, 1740; GA/Q/JC/5, 1746; GA/Q/JC/6, 1754; GA/Q/JC/7, 1762.

comparison with the seventeenth century, the position of JP was relatively more open in the eighteenth century, and not entirely the province of landed elites.⁸⁴

The position of Justice of the Peace was an important reflector of status in the county. A little less than half of known gentlemen builders and owners served as JPs. As many as 57% of identified owners were not magistrates, but it is apparent that Gloucestershire gentlemen who possessed small classical houses were engaged in important ways in county-level service. Involvement in county affairs offers further evidence that helps to calibrate where gentlemen builders and owners stood in society.

Many gentlemen builders and owners who did not serve as magistrates played significant roles at the local level, or claimed status in ways that were not strictly based in the institutions of county government and the judiciary. For those not listed in Commissions of the Peace, other avenues for exerting social position and authority were available. Local affairs attracted Thomas Goldney, Paul Fisher and John Hodges, for example, who played active roles in the administration of St Andrews' parish, Clifton, near Bristol. Quaker wine merchant John Andrews of Hill House paid rates there and was also noted by a county political operative as being 'the head of the Quakers at Bristol'.⁸⁵ Andrews, Fisher, Goldney, and John Elbridge played formative roles in the creation of the Bristol Infirmary in the 1730s.⁸⁶ Those who were substantial local landowners, which included a high percentage of gentlemen-owners before 1720, exercised persuasive power and authority over tenants. At the lower end of the spectrum a few, like the owners of Poulton Manor or Bagendon Manor, were minor gentry focused on the parish.⁸⁷ The

⁸⁴ Landau, *The Justices of the Peace*; Glassey, *Politics and the appointment of the Justices of the Peace*, 15-17; French, *The middle sort of people*, 18, suggests that the JP, 'was restricted to the landed gentry' in the late-seventeenth century, citing A. Fletcher, *Reform in the provinces: The government of Stuart England* (New Haven, 1986).

⁸⁵ GA/D678/1 F12/1/87: 18 Sept 1739, Revd Thomas Baker, Bibury, to Sir John Dutton.

⁸⁶ BRO/35893/1/a: Bristol Royal Infirmary Minute Book, 1736-1772.

⁸⁷ Mingay, *English landed society*, 8. See also French, "'Ingenious and Learned Gentlemen': social perceptions and self-fashioning among parish elites in Essex, 1680-1740", *Social History*, 25 (2000), 44-66.

occupants of three gentlemen's house served as clergymen. Given the relative frequency of church monuments, which indicate a level of parochial prominence, most gentlemen-owners were actively involved at the parish level. Where office-holding does not delineate social standing, the interface between houses, owners, and status within the parish and county becomes more important as an indicator of status.

Economic factors played a substantial role in determining who built a gentleman's house. Erecting or purchasing a house of this kind entailed a substantial but not exorbitant expenditure. Although building records are scarce, most builders expended something between £2,000 and perhaps £5,000 in constructing a gentleman's house.⁸⁸ There was then the additional cost of furnishing, which seems to have run into the hundreds of pounds, and expenses to maintain and operate the house once it was built and accoutred. Given the incomes of many builders and owners, erecting or acquiring a gentleman's house represented a substantial commitment of resources. An important and attractive feature of these houses, however, was that they were not inordinately expensive to build. Their compact form and, in most cases, limited exterior and interior ornamentation struck a balance between an impressive architectural display and a reasonably affordable and easy to maintain structure.

Most builders and owners, particularly around Bristol and in the Stroudwater Valleys after the 1720s, relied upon resources derived largely from mercantile or professional activity to finance their gentlemen's houses. The demographic and economic development of the city was closely linked to the construction of Bristol's 'gentleman's houses'. Although Bristol, 'produced many successful merchants whose wealth enabled them to buy or build a large house outside the city,'⁸⁹ historians have less fully explored

⁸⁸ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, chapter 7, especially 290-92. Costs for Gloucestershire gentlemen's houses support these figures. The economic implications of building will be explored further in the next chapter.

⁸⁹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 5.

the connections between Bristol's commercial growth, the acquisition of property, the building of individual houses, and the related social strategies employed by leading Bristolians to build their social status.⁹⁰

New men from Bristol and other commercial areas like Stroud helped to account for the roughly 40% of the major country house building campaigns in Gloucestershire between 1660 and 1830 that were carried out by men who purchased their estate rather than inherited.⁹¹ Evaluation of Gloucestershire gentlemen's houses pushes this conclusion further. Of the fifty-six cases where it is known whether gentlemen builders purchased or inherited their property, thirty-two (57%) were acquisitions through purchase. This figure is even higher for Bristol. Before 1700, inheritors outnumbered purchasers, but afterwards the reverse was true. In the period 1720 to 1750, for example, eleven gentlemen inherited, whilst fourteen purchased. Gentlemen builders across the period were therefore more likely to buy rather than inherit the property on which they constructed their gentleman's house. This suggests that gentlemen's houses, rather than country houses, were a more likely site for commercial and professional men to deploy their resources.

Whilst participation in public affairs and economics were clearly important indicators of status other factors were less important considerations for those building gentlemen's houses. Religious affiliation seems to have had little influence on house design or the accumulation of possessions. The majority of gentlemen-owners were practicing members of the Church of England, with indications of regular attendance at church and burial according to its rites. Eleven (8%) can be identified as non-conformists: one Presbyterian, James Lambe of Fairford Park,⁹² and ten Quaker merchants from Bristol. Beginning in the 1720s, commercial and early industrial developments were

⁹⁰ See Dresser, *Slavery obscured*, for one example. A brief essay is H. G. M. Leighton, 'Country houses acquired with Bristol wealth', *TBGAS*, 123 (2005), 9-16.

⁹¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 3, 5-6.

⁹² C. Hobson, *The Raymond Barkers of Fairford Park*, Fairford History Society Monograph 3 (November 2007), 13.

important factors in building gentleman's houses for Quaker mercantile elites. The Champion family and Thomas Goldney, for example, were investors in the early metal manufacturing processes at Coalbrookdale as well as in brass mills near Bristol.⁹³ These activities relate gentlemen builders and owners, house-building, technological development and industrialization in interesting ways. Yet this most visible sub-group of non-conformists, members of the Society of Friends around Bristol, exhibit no substantive difference in their houses from Anglicans. Religious denomination had little influence on the design of houses, and there is no great distinction between gentlemen's houses on the basis of religious belief.

Religion played a more significant role in the construction of social networks, especially for Quakers.⁹⁴ Much of their interaction took place within kin networks and the Society. Thomas Goldney II, from a line of Quaker grocers, engaged in activities that brought the censure of the Quaker community.⁹⁵ Other Quakers who established handsome lifestyles as gentlemen in the second quarter of the eighteenth-century included Nehemiah Champion, Thomas Goldney II, John Andrews at Hill House in Mangotsfield, Joseph Beck at Frenchay Manor, Joseph Harford at Stapleton Grove, and William Champion at Warmley.⁹⁶ These relationships were often based on family connections and

⁹³ J. Day, *Bristol brass: a history of the industry* (Newton Abbot, 1973); A. Raistrick, *Quakers in science and industry: being an account of the Quaker contributions to science and industry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries* (New York, 1968); P. K. Stemberge, *The Goldney family: A Bristol merchant dynasty* (Bristol, 1998); H. Lloyd, *The Quaker Lloyds in the industrial revolution* (London, 1975); G. Cantor, *Quakers, Jews and science: religious responses to modernity and the sciences in Britain, 1650-1900* (Oxford, 2005); R. C. Allen, *The British industrial revolution in global perspective* (Cambridge, 2009), 222, 264, 269.

⁹⁴ For Quakers in the Bristol region, see Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 239-244.

⁹⁵ Stemberge, *The Goldney family*, especially 14-16. Thomas Goldney II was imprisoned for a time as a result of his association with Carleton Vanbrugh, a London merchant and brother of architect John Vanbrugh, and John Sansom, the Customs official whose mess John Elbridge was engaged to clean up in 1708, see 'Warrant Books: August 1708, 16-20', *Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 22: 1708* (1952), pp. 365-371, 20 August 1708 and 'Warrant Books: December 1708, 1-10', *Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 22: 1708* (1952), pp. 451-458, 8 December 1708.

⁹⁶ For Warmley, see Atkins Heritage, 'Champion's Brassworks & Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (unpublished report, January 2007).

Quakers were simultaneously somewhat insular and worldly.⁹⁷ At the same time, many Friends became more active in public life in Bristol, which coincides with their construction of small classical houses as markers of status. Their houses demonstrate that members of the Society of Friends did not differ markedly from non-Quaker gentlemen. Despite purportedly deep differences in outlook, gentlemen conformists and non-conformists were remarkably similar in their material possessions. Economic success enabled Quaker gentlemen to build small classical houses and engage in material display on a significant scale. That a number choose to do so indicated their desire to confirm their status in a visible way.

Gentlemen builder-owners used a shared material culture to delineate their position in society. This brief description of one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners has probed the associations between house and inhabitant and suggested other ways that gentlemen laid claim to status. Such a process reflects a negotiation between house, owner, and social structure. This negotiation will be explored in this thesis to develop a more refined sense of how builders and owners of small classical houses laid claim to social position in eighteenth-century English society.

Conclusion

This chapter has described small classical houses and their owners to develop a picture of when they were built, where they were located, and who owned them. The discussion of gentlemen's houses and their owners leads to several findings that form the basis for further analysis. First, a clear shift in geography from the north and east of the county to the south and west took place over time. Secondly, the three decades from the 1720s marked a substantial increase in the number of gentlemen's houses built. Thirdly,

⁹⁷ Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 239-244.

these geographic and chronological data indicate an association with two areas, Bristol and the Stroudwater Valleys, which emphasize the role of commerce and trade in this process. These results enable the development of three groups of houses: the Cotswold Gentry house, the Gentleman clothier's house, and the Bristolian gentleman's house.

The association of these houses with their builders and owners enriches understanding of the people who inhabited these houses. This chapter has established that builders undertook construction of gentlemen's houses quite late in their lifecycle and that ownership of a gentleman's house indicated at least local prominence and enabled many owners to cut across parish boundaries to play significant roles at the county level. In a few instances, gentlemen builders and owners engaged in social and political life at the national level. Combining temporal and geographic data about small classical houses with analysis of the backgrounds, activities, and lifecycles of gentlemen builders and owners brings greater definition to social categories. As the largest material choice that most owners would make, a gentleman's house was a serious and expensive undertaking that was symbolic on a number of levels. The interplay between the timing and location of house-building and the status of owners opens several avenues for investigation in this thesis, presenting new ways to look at these houses and the associated process of status construction.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, it is possible to advance two arguments that will be developed more fully in subsequent chapters. From the 1720s, new men, often regarded by historians as aspirational, began to build these houses with increased frequency. But many gentlemen from the commercial and professional world of Bristol and the clothing districts of the Stroudwater Valleys were not necessarily aspiring to an increased level of status; rather they sought to confirm their status within an established hierarchy through construction or acquisition of a 'house fit for a gentleman'. It follows

that these houses are best characterized as *confirmational*, built not so much as an effort to seek status but rather as a strategic move to confirm, display and reinforce status already conferred. The difference here was between, ‘I want to arrive and this will help me’ and ‘I have arrived and this reinforces the point.’ Most gentlemen’s houses were built not as a way of aspiring to an augmented social role but as a way of confirming status already gained.

Focusing on the gentlemen’s house as a confirmational tool points toward another, explicitly architectural, line of analysis. Between 1680 and the 1720s, Cotswold gentry houses were mostly built by established gentry families supported by landed estates. The construction of such a house, criticized in some circles as inappropriate for a country seat, represented a somewhat innovative choice by traditional land-owning elites. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, gentlemen from more varied backgrounds constructed small classical houses. Built somewhat later in the lifecycle of this group, such houses represented a safe choice of dwelling in an uncontroversial architectural language that confirmed their owners’ position in the social hierarchy. A shift therefore took place that converted compact classical houses from the pioneering choice of an established group to a more conservative choice for a range of owners drawn from newer, non-landed backgrounds.

In short, there was a move from gentleman’s houses built almost exclusively by landed gentry in the northern part of the county before the 1720s to a hybrid model that relied significantly on established mercantile and professional wealth in the southern part of Gloucestershire in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. As a result, especially after the 1720s, an analysis of the gentleman’s house problematizes social categories and begins to reveal the dynamic nature of British society during the period. Such evidence

provides important information to situate builders and owners in the social, cultural and political make-up of eighteenth-century England.

Chapter 3

Building Status

In 1656 Richard Whitmore signed an agreement with master-builder Valentine Strong to construct a manor house in the village of Lower Slaughter, unwittingly putting in motion an architectural and social process that would have far-reaching effects over the next century.¹ The five-bay coursed-stone manor house on a raised basement had corner quoins, with a hipped roof and three dormers, all surmounted by a turret or lantern (Fig 3.1). It displayed little ornamentation save for a broken pediment over a first floor centre door. Like so many similar small classical houses to come, the interior arrangement contained four rooms on the ground floor and bedchambers above, a straightforward double-pile plan.

It is not clear who was responsible for the design; the contract records that the house was built in line with ‘one moddell or platfforme by him lately received from the said Mr. Whitmore.’² More than likely, Whitmore and Strong collaborated on the design and construction. The resulting manor house was a statement of Whitmore’s status that exhibited all of the features that distinguished gentry houses from those of yeomen.³

¹ GA/D45/E17: Articles of Agreement, Richard Whitmore and Valentine Strong, 23 January 1655/6. See also National Monuments Record 87132; NMR Images of England 129913; Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 47-8; Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry*, 66-7; Kingsley, *CHG I*, 139-141. Kingsley notes that Whitmore’s cousin was Sir George Whitmore, who built a slightly earlier five-bay hipped roof house, Balmes house, in Hackney near London, which may have served as a model. On Balmes, see C. Knight, *London’s country houses* (Chichester, 2009), 159-160.

² GA/D45/E17: Articles of Agreement, Richard Whitmore and Valentine Strong.

³ L. Hall, ‘Yeoman or gentleman?’, 2-19.

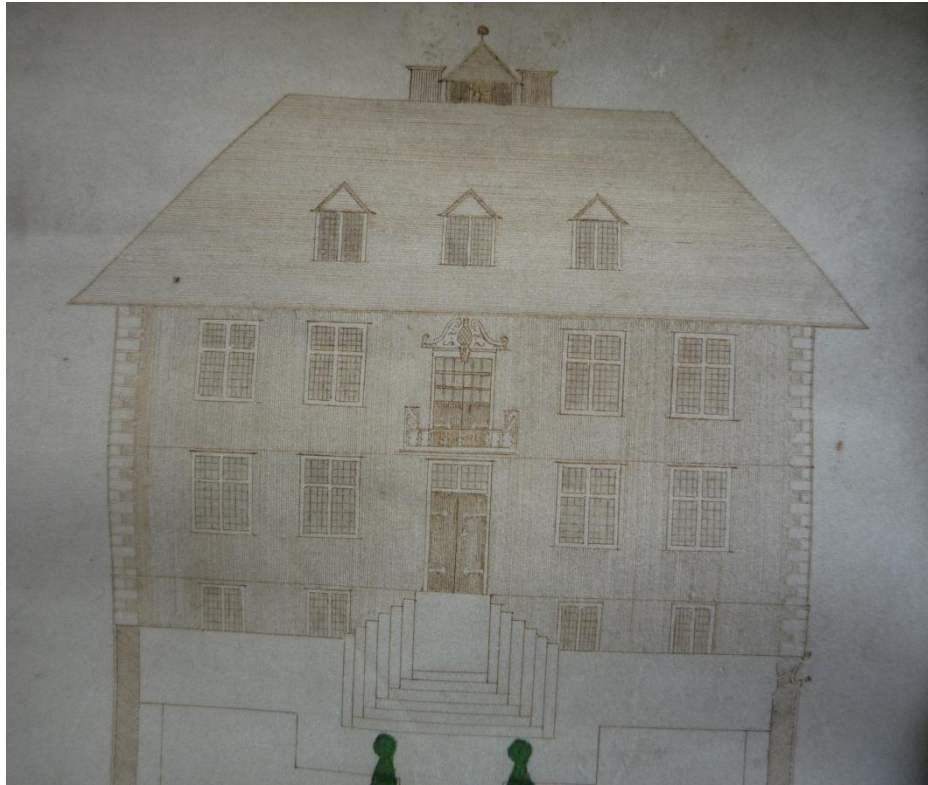


Fig 3.1: Lower Slaughter Manor, 1656-1658, from a 1731 plan.⁴

Nicholas Cooper suggests that small compact boxes like Lower Slaughter may have originated as a metropolitan form, but it is apparent that with his new house Richard Whitmore made his mark on the county of Gloucestershire.⁵ There was nothing else like it by 1660, and it represented a bold, innovative step by someone confident of his social position, and assured in his taste. Described by Atkyns as ‘a neat handsome Seat’, Lower Slaughter Manor served throughout this period as the house of a substantial gentry family who had ‘very great Estates in Glostershire, Shropshire, and other Counties.’⁶ It took some time for small classical houses to become an obvious choice for Gloucestershire gentlemen, but many would eventually follow Whitmore’s lead. By 1680, Gloucestershire

⁴ GA/D45/P2

⁵ Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 48; N. Cooper, ‘Rank, manners and display: the gentlemanly house, 1500-1750’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), 291-310, 301.

⁶ Atkyns, 655.

began to see more frequent construction of the classical, double-pile house that carried on for the next century and beyond as a suitable residence for a gentleman and his family.

Building a gentleman's house was a momentous strategic choice. At a basic and practical level, these houses provided shelter and comfort. At an important secondary level, however, they conveyed signals about the status of the owner and his position in the world. Choosing a type of house, deciding on a style, committing the resources to construct it, and seeing through the sometimes lengthy building process pointed toward a complex undertaking that delineated social status. To understand how building a gentleman's house functioned as a social strategy, it is necessary to consider both the status these buildings held as a particular architectural form as well as how the construction of such a house reinforced status.

This chapter documents the process of building, describing architectural styles, the processes of design and construction, the economic implications associated with building a gentleman's house, and the interpretation of what these buildings meant. It is based substantially on physical examination of fifty-seven of the seventy extant houses (81%) that comprise the sample.⁷ Developing points raised in chapter 2, the shift in geographic location and owner background over time is related directly to building efforts. This transition illustrates that the small classical house after 1730 was a socially-safe, traditional choice made by newcomers often from non-landed backgrounds.

⁷Through careful study, buildings reveal clues about their design, situation, construction methods and materials, interior finishes, space usage and evolution over time, even where inevitable changes have occurred that are a natural course of events with old buildings. An early twenty-first century house is likely to function somewhat differently than its eighteenth-century predecessor. Rooms names may have changed, interiors and exteriors may have been remodelled, staffing arrangements have likely altered, and the addition of ancillary spaces and buildings may have transformed the patterns of social flow and interaction. I am naturally very grateful to the many private owners who have kindly allowed access to their properties.

Architecture: form and style

Gentlemen in Gloucestershire built in several classical styles between 1680 and 1770: William and Mary, Queen Anne, Baroque, Georgian, and Palladian. These overlapped in duration and within the classical vocabulary. Classical architecture was linked with the idea of politeness, hence polite architecture was classical in form.⁸ Architecture, however, has played less of a role in accounts of ‘the rise of polite society’ than it might have done.⁹ Architectural historians have traditionally identified classicism with Palladianism from the 1710s until at least the 1750s.¹⁰ Recent scholars, however, have recast Classicism as a ‘pluralist not a singular phenomenon’, suggesting multiple possible trajectories and destabilising accepted boundaries.¹¹ The blurring of boundaries was part of this process. Medford House, built c. 1694, represented the ‘textbook example of the slow transition from the vernacular Tudor Cotswold style to Queen Anne classical.’¹² Such a shift to classical architecture involved ‘a substantial overhaul of building practice and craftsmanship, and a major reassessment by patrons of their social and cultural priorities’.¹³

Examining gentlemen’s houses as a group encourages a more inclusive reading of style. An early house like Poulton Manor (c.1690), with the segmental pediment over the door, or Dutch influence apparent in its sprocketed roof line, was decidedly old-fashioned by the time that William Champion built Warmley House, a standard Palladian house with a few baroque details in about 1750 (Figs 3.2 and 3.3). But they largely share a common

⁸ Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, 886.

⁹ M. Craske, ‘From Burlington Gate to Billingsgate: James Ralph’s attempt to impose Burlingtonian classicism as a canon of public taste,’ in Arciszewska and McKellar, eds. *Articulating British classicism*, 97-118, especially 97.

¹⁰ For instance, Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, and Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain*.

¹¹ P. Borsay, ‘Why are houses interesting?’, 343. Also, Arciszewska and McKellar, (eds.) *Articulating British classicism*, preface.

¹² Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 477.

¹³ P. M. Hunneyball, *Architecture and image-building in seventeenth-century Hertfordshire* (Oxford, 2004), 1.

vocabulary. The accounts of Borsay and Peck, which emphasise the introduction of classical style in towns, had a counterpart therefore in rural areas in the form of gentlemen's houses.¹⁴



Fig 3.2: Poulton Manor, c. 1690.



Fig 3.3: Warmley house, c. 1750.

Many gentlemen's houses displayed and combined vernacular or provincial expressions of style. Well into the eighteenth century, builders and craftsmen continued to construct older fashioned buildings, although these became increasingly less common higher up the social order. Gentlemen's houses, especially early in the period, sometimes incorporated vernacular elements and many demonstrate localized building characteristics. In the seventeenth century, cross windows, for example, were one of the first 'polite' elements to enter the vernacular sphere.¹⁵ The introduction of sash windows occurred from the late part of the century, and they were common in gentlemen's houses by the early eighteenth century. This feature seemed to spread downward, but did not reach smaller cottages until the 1770s. Nevertheless, genteel houses such as Barton House (Fig.

¹⁴ Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*, 49-59, 289-291; L. L. Peck, *Consuming splendor: society and culture in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge, 2005), 188-229.

¹⁵ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 93.

3.4), mixed sash and cross-window fenestration, a compromise that evolved as owners upgraded.¹⁶



Fig 3.4: Barton House, c. 1700

Distinguishing between a gentleman's house and that of a yeoman was not always easy. However, architectural features offered indications of status.¹⁷ Overall size, a double-pile floor plan, high ceiling heights, and 'superior' features like multiple parlours, some heated second floor chambers, moulded stone for mullioned windows, doorways and fireplaces, panelling, and grand staircases all indicated higher levels of status.¹⁸ These criteria differentiated gentlemen's houses in architectural terms from houses lower down the scale and placed them above the 'polite threshold'.¹⁹ Small classical houses expressed a level of architectural sophistication that readily communicated their builders' efforts to construct social status in line with the skills and capabilities of their master craftsmen.

¹⁶ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 96, 684.

¹⁷ Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 18.

¹⁸ L. Hall, 'Yeoman or Gentleman?', 18.

¹⁹ Brunskill, *Vernacular architecture*, 27-8.

The Cotswold gentry house to the 1720s

Cotswold gentry houses built between 1660 and 1720 generally exhibited characteristics such as hipped roofs, raised basements, segmental pediments over doors, and transitional fenestration from cross mullioned windows to sash. Twenty-five houses can be described in this way; nearly all were completed before 1720 when other variations on the classical architectural style began to supplant it.

Poulton Manor (c. 1690) about five miles east of Cirencester is one representative version of the five-bay, double-pile structure that emerged as housing for lesser elites in England after the Restoration. The Manor is situated perpendicular to the road at a wide curve, and its substantial presence dominated the centre of this small village. The house displays classical interior ornamentation whilst drawing upon earlier building techniques in the exposed summer beams found in all the rooms, whether public or private spaces. A subtle building error on the facade - the quoins just below the belt course moulding are distinctly different sizes – indicates that the builder was not quite accurate with his measurements. Dating from the late seventeenth century, Poulton Manor was most likely built by Thomas Bedwell, who died in 1691 and is commemorated as ‘Thomas Bedwell Gent’ in nearby St Michael’s church.²⁰ Yet architectural historian Marcus Binney has remarked that Poulton in some ways ‘speaks more of an exalted yeoman than of the lord of the manor’.²¹ Although almost nothing is known about its builder, Poulton Manor represented an early and visible construction project that was an effort by that builder to lay claim to considerable status.

Several other houses illustrate further variations of the form. Wotton, near Gloucester, is an unusual example of brick construction in the county, built in about 1707

²⁰ See memorial tablet, St Michael’s Church, Poulton. Kingsley, *CHG II*, 3 and 296-7. Kingsley misidentifies Bedwell as John Bedwell.

²¹ M. Binney, ‘Poulton Manor’, *Country Life*, (27 May 1976), 1400.

(Fig. 3.5).²² A handsome seven-bay house with modillioned cornice, Wotton had two flanking outbuildings that created a forecourt, and several ancillary structures.²³ Other examples housed members of the gentry, such as at Woodhouse and Barton House, both near Temple Guiting in the north Cotswolds. Cowley Manor, built about 1695 either by the Henry Brett of Sandywell Park or his father, is illustrated in an early drawing.²⁴

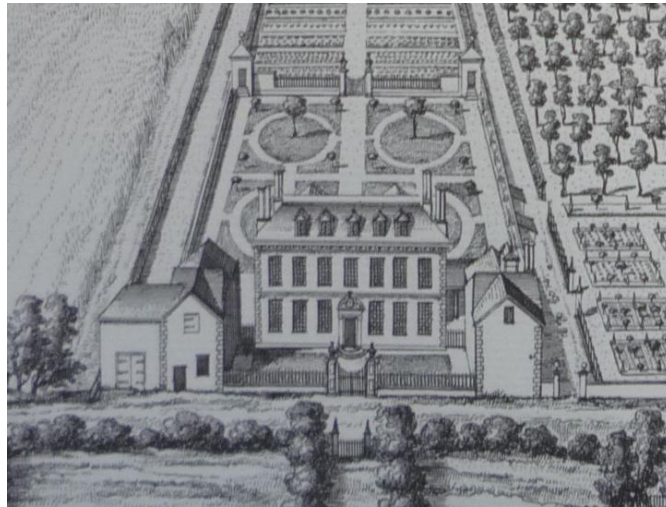


Fig 3.5: Detail of Wotton, c. 1707, from Atkyns (1712).

Nether Lypiatt (Fig. 3.6), a dramatically vertical forty-six foot square box with hipped roof and five bays on a raised basement, was completed by 1717 near Stroud by Charles Coxe, MP for Cirencester and Gloucester.²⁵ The manor, described as ‘(locally) very advanced’, was a likely inspiration for the penchant of master clothiers to build in this style.²⁶ A variation of the form was seen at Bagendon Manor, which may have been built by Sir John Thynne, who erected Longleat house where the Stronges also worked.

²² This date is found on a rainwater-head on the building.

²³ Atkyns, 307.

²⁴ GA/DC/E88/13 drawing of house about 1790.

²⁵ TNA/PROB11/629 (12 May 1729); *VCH: G*, vol.11, Bisley and Longtree Hundreds (1976), 111-119.

²⁶ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 94.

Bagendon was refaced in Georgian style in the first few decades of the eighteenth century, confirming the gentry status of the Haines family.²⁷



Fig 3.6: Nether Lypiatt, c. 1710.

The double-pile, hipped roof form continued to be built in a few isolated instances into the 1750s and by others than the gentry. Pitchcombe House (Fig 3.7) dates to the 1740s and was completed by Thomas Palling of a Stroud clothing family that also owned Brownshill Court.



Fig 3.7: Pitchcombe House, c. 1743.

²⁷ G. E. Rees, *The history of Bagendon* (Cheltenham, 1932), 14, 100-102.

Late in life Major James Rooke, a retired member of a noted military family (a relation, Admiral Sir George Rooke, had been the captor of Gibraltar in 1704), built Bigsweir House (Fig 3.8) on the Welsh border overlooking the River Wye, probably in the 1750s.²⁸ Rooke had married a member of the locally noteworthy Catchmay family, through which he inherited the estate.²⁹ This example of a substantial building campaign in an out of the way corner of Gloucestershire by a retired soldier at the age of 70 in a style quite out of date is curious indeed, and the latest example of this type in the county.



Fig 3.8: Bigsweir House, c. 1755.

Sandywell Park (fig 3.9) displayed this architectural form whilst also demonstrating the potential for remodelling in newer or more elaborate styles. Johannes Kip illustrated a five-bay, hipped-roof house surmounted by a balustrade and cupola, five dormers, and four corner chimneys, accompanied by an impressive landscape, with allees, pools, parterres, and a gated forecourt.³⁰ Henry Bret (or Brett), ‘descended from the

²⁸ The date for Bigsweir is somewhat open to question. Rudge specifically notes rebuilding in 1755, T. Rudge, *The history of Gloucestershire; brought down to the year 1803* 2 vols. (Gloucester, 1803), ii, 109. Kingsley uses this date. The *Victoria County History* says ‘early 18th century’ but with no reference, see ‘St. Briavels’, A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 5: Bledisloe Hundred, St. Briavels Hundred, The Forest of Dean (1996), 247-271. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=23262> Date accessed: 13 February 2009. A 1930 report from estate agents suggests 1702, see GA/D2299/4342: 1930 Bruton, Knowles and Co, Gloucester, estate agents, Bigsweir House, St. Briavels, Report Correspondence.

²⁹ Bigland, 236.

³⁰ Atkyns, between 400 and 401.

ancient Family of Brets of Bret-Hall in Warwickshire, which Family was Owner of that Place in the Reign of King Henry the Third,' purchased the Sandywell property in 1704, with the new house completed in time for Kip to draw it four years later. As Atkyns says, Brett had 'a neat pleasant seat at *Sandywell*, and a new built house, with pleasant Gardens, and a Park.'³¹



Fig 3.9: Sandywell, c. 1704, with 1720s wings.

As initially built, Sandywell was on an architectural scale with other five-bay, hipped roof houses in Gloucestershire. By 1712, Brett had sold the house to another resident of Warwickshire, Francis Seymour-Conway (1679-1732), 1st baron Conway of Ragley Hall. Lord Conway substantially enlarged the house, adding two-bay, three-story wings to either side of the existing structure to create a nine-bay composition distinctly different from but incorporating the symmetrical façade of the Brett house as its core. In turn, Lord Conway's son sold the house and estate in 1748 to Thomas Tracy. The Tracys

³¹ Atkyns, 400.

were an old Gloucestershire family and Thomas was MP for Gloucester from 1763-1770.³² Thus over the course of the eighteenth century, Sandywell transformed from the house of an old gentry family, to the grand seat of the peerage, and then on to the greater gentry, an interesting architectural metaphor for the social and cultural processes that took place in relation to houses of this size.³³

In the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century builders of Cotswold gentry houses came from the ranks of both county and parish gentry.³⁴ Richard Whitmore, the son of an MP with estates in Shropshire, came from a background that positioned him well to adopt this new style for his manor house at Lower Slaughter.³⁵ Andrew Barker, builder of Fairford Park in the early 1660s, was summoned by the Heralds in 1682/83, held a prominent position in county society, and had close attachments to London.³⁶ Both Lower Slaughter Manor and Fairford utilized the Strong family as builders, and Fairford Park particularly may have drawn on Roger Pratt's nearby Coleshill. Bourton House was completed by a kinsman of Lord Conway who was also a descendant of a Cromwellian General. Dumbleton Hall was the seat of Sir Richard Cocks, MP for Gloucester from 1698 to 1702 and noted for his independent, even eccentric, personality.³⁷ Wotton was the seat of Thomas Horton, esq., who owned an estate near Elkstone. Horton's father-in-law, John Blanche, was MP for Gloucester from 1710 to 1713.³⁸ All represent families of the lesser gentry or above, whose main reliance was on landed income. Additional houses about

³² L. B. Namier, 'Three eighteenth-century politicians', *English Historical Review*, vol. 42, no. 167 (July, 1927), 408-413; Williams, *PHG*, 66. See also Rudder, 817.

³³ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 218-221 and Plate II. See also GA/PA117/1.

³⁴ L. and J. F. Stone, *An Open Elite?*, 6-8; G. Mingay, *The gentry: the rise and fall of a ruling class* (London, 1976).

³⁵ *VCH: G*, vol. 6, 'Lower Slaughter', 128-134.

³⁶ Hobson, *The Raymond Barkers of Fairford Park*, 2-4, 6-7; N. Kingsley, *CHG I*, 94-5; Kip illustration in Atkyns, 226.

³⁷ See D. Hayton, 'Sir Richard Cocks: The political anatomy of a Country Whig' *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 1988), 221-246. Hayton memorably described Cocks as, 'a rare bird among the crook-taloned specimens perched on the back benches of King William III's House of Commons', 221. See also Atkyns, 406 and image between 406 and 407.

³⁸ *VCH: G*, vol. 4, 'Gloucester: Outlying hamlets', 398; Williams, *PHG*, 207.

which little is known, such as Kempsford Manor, may have been small-scale efforts by those on the cusp of local gentry status to build in a fashionable idiom. An exception beyond the Cotswolds in this early period was the earliest surviving small classical house just outside Bristol, Manor House on St Michael's Hill. The house was built about 1690 overlooking the city, probably by a well-to-do merchant.³⁹

As a relatively new and even somewhat controversial effort at building status, Cotswold gentry houses represented a fashionable choice for a relatively traditional group of elites. In choosing to construct compact boxes, builders were going somewhat against the grain. Roger North had regretted that 'not only in the city and townes, a compact model is used, but in all country seats of late built...to the abolishing of grandure and statlyness'.⁴⁰ Despite his view, this indicates something about the form's importance, location and chronology. Referencing these houses as 'late built'⁴¹ indicates that the compact box was still considered a new form, and that it was being employed for 'country seats'. Between 1680 and the 1720s established gentry families chose to build in classical styles using plans that were 'locally very advanced' or architecturally novel. Confident in their position within the county, the Cotswold gentry houses adopted a somewhat innovative option that reinforced their already established position.

Gloucestershire gentlemen's houses from the 1720s

From the 1720s, a more diverse group of gentlemen-builders began to construct small classical houses in locations in the south and western parts of county particularly around Bristol and in the Stroud cloth-making district. The building trends detailed in the previous chapter suggest that small classical houses were built in the middle decades of the

³⁹ R. Leech, *The St Michael's Hill precinct of the University of Bristol: medieval and early modern topography*, Bristol Record Society, no. 52 (Bristol, 2000), 24, 98-99.

⁴⁰ R. North, *Of building*, ed. H. Colvin and J. Newman (Oxford, 1981), 62.

⁴¹ Reinforced, it should be added, by myriad references in Atkyns to descriptors like 'new-built'.

century with more frequency than larger country houses, which declined between 1730 and the 1750. These houses served as elite housing for the rural country gentleman or the prosperous merchant. The flexibility of the form suggested the elastic social status of their builders and owners.

Building near Bristol comprised a focus of these efforts. Bristol was part of the urban renaissance during the late Stuart and early Hanoverian period that saw towns become centres of more leisurely activity and more luxurious consumption, not to mention architectural facelifts.⁴² From 1700 developments such as Queen's Square, begun in 1699, St James's Square, Dowry Square and houses along Prince Street set the standard of brick urban planning and classical design.⁴³ These urban efforts soon had their equivalent in the villages and countryside outside the city.

At least twenty-one small classical houses were built near Bristol between 1680 and 1770, all but two after 1720. Amongst the builders were Bristol merchants and professional men, including six Quakers. A copiously-documented but almost entirely ignored example of the Bristolian gentleman's house is Cote in Westbury upon Trym.⁴⁴ The house typifies the chronological transition in the 1720s, the geographic shift from building in the northeast of Gloucestershire to southwest, and the changing status of builders and owners from gentry to mercantile and professional men. As Cote and its owners will appear repeatedly throughout the remainder of this thesis, a brief sketch is warranted.

⁴² Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*. For an unsuccessful challenge to Borsay's thesis, see A. McInnes, 'The emergence of a leisure town: Shrewsbury 1660-1760', *Past & Present*, cxx (1988), 53-87.

⁴³ See Foyle, *PAGB*, 19, 154-168; Mowl, *To build the second city*, chapter 1; Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, 94-105.

⁴⁴ The name is alternately spelled Coat and Coate.



Fig. 3.10: Cote, c. 1720.

In 1705 Thomas Moore, a leading Customs official, bought ‘the Cote house + lands’ situated some two and a half miles from the centre of Bristol for £615.⁴⁵ After securing the property, Moore set about building a substantial new house (Fig 3.10). The date of the house is uncertain. It is likely that it post-dates 1712, as there is no mention of it in Atkyns and similar houses invariably drew comment.⁴⁶ The two-storey house is of Pennant rubble stone with a hipped roof, two chimney stacks, and five bays, with a deep modillioned cornice and flush sash boxes, two distinctive features prohibited by the 1707 and 1709 Building Acts in London but slow to be introduced elsewhere.⁴⁷ The raised parapet, however, suggests an early deference to another provision of the 1707 Act. The segmental stone arches over the windows also indicate an early-eighteenth-century date. If Moore built the new house at Cote, he probably did so before 1721, when his wife

⁴⁵ BRO/SMV/4/6/1/40: Charities, St. Monica Home, Cote Deeds explained, n.d., probably c 1930.

⁴⁶ Atkyns, 804-5

⁴⁷ Ayres, *Building the Georgian city*, 230-1. Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, 100-101.

Rebecca died. This also points to an earlier date for the house. The new double-pile floor plan offered a commodious dwelling that nevertheless allowed for controlled circulation through the house for Moore, his family, visitors, servants, and workmen. Although other gentlemen building or renovating houses at this time made use of the existing structure, in this instance it is likely that any surviving building was removed and a new service wing built.⁴⁸

Cote offers a particularly rich entree into the complicated acquisition, construction, and maintenance of a gentleman's house. John Elbridge, a leading Customs official, inherited the house from his cousin Moore in 1728.⁴⁹ Thomas Moore and John Elbridge seem to have had an unusually close partnership; John is recorded as living with Thomas and his wife in 1696,⁵⁰ and also erected a splendid monument in St. Peter's Church to Moore after his death.⁵¹ It is possible that Elbridge was responsible for the new building; before 1739 he had given up his house nearer to Bristol and 'moved into the splendid house at Cote which he had rebuilt.'⁵² Elbridge, a colonial son of a merchant, worked diligently in professional service, acquired a gentleman's house, and lived handsomely but not extravagantly despite great wealth. In this way, Cote and Elbridge typify gentlemen's houses and their owners.

⁴⁸ This conclusion is based on physical examination of the buildings at Cote. I am grateful to Professor Roger Leech, Dr. James Ayres and Laura Keim for their expertise in evaluating Cote. Elisabeth Robinson, 'Some Notes about Cote' (Unpublished MS, April, 1971), typescript on file at Cote House, relates that the service wing was an older structure, but without firm evidence. Ms. Robinson's parents acquired Cote in 1919.

⁴⁹ BRO/AC/WO/10/4: 3 March 1724/5, Copy will of Thomas Moore; BRO/SMV/4/6/1/40: Charities, St. Monica Home, Cote Deeds explained, n.d..

⁵⁰ E. Ralph and M. Williams, (ed.), *Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, BRS vol. XXV (1968), 125.

⁵¹ BRO/AC/WO/10/22: 'This monumt was erected by Mr John Elbridge 1732 to the Memory of Mr Tho. Moore of this City Gentm. whose mother was an Elbridge. He was buried 29 March 1728 agd 80 Rebecca his wife 23 May 1721 70'.

⁵² See BRO/34328/a: D. Jones, 'The Elbridge, Woolnough and Smyth Families of Bristol, in the eighteenth century: with special reference to the Spring plantation, Jamaica' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 1972), 45. It should be noted, however, that Jones wrongly recorded Thomas Moore's death date as 1724, when in fact Moore did not die until 1728. Given that Elbridge therefore did not inherit Cote until 1728, it seems less likely that he was responsible for construction.

Elsewhere near Bristol gentleman deployed their commercial resources in the construction of small classical houses. The village of Clifton, was a focus for gentlemanly building between 1711 and 1760. The poet Henry Jones wrote in 1767 of these houses, ‘There, princely piles in classic taste express’d/In *Grecian* garb, *Roman* grandeur dress’d/A line of palaces o’erlook the town/That with a jealous pride the prospect crown.’⁵³ Bishop’s House (1711), of limestone ashlar with a one-bay banded frontispiece, segmental portico and balustraded parapet, is the earliest gentleman’s house in Clifton (Fig 3.11).⁵⁴ Several similar buildings were constructed in Clifton between 1720 and 1750, including Clifton Wood House for Robert Smith (1722-1728), Goldney House for Thomas Goldney II between 1720 and 1730, Clifton Court for Nehemiah Champion (1742-1743) and Clifton Hill House for Paul Fisher (1746-50). Architect Isaac Ware remarked that Fisher’s house would be ‘handsome though not pompous’ and built for ‘convenience rather than magnificence’.⁵⁵ These attributes could be ascribed to most gentlemen’s houses.⁵⁶

⁵³ The second canto of ‘Clifton’ is reproduced in Rudder, 380-381. On Jones, see W. J. Christmas, ‘Jones, Henry (1721–1770)’, *ODNB*, online edition, (Oxford, 2004); T. Gogarty, ‘Henry Jones, Bricklayer and Poet’, *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, vol. 2, no. 4 (Nov., 1911), 363-374.

⁵⁴ K. Ross, ‘Report on Bishop’s House Clifton Hill Bristol’, (unpublished report, n.d. 2004?), 24-25. Many thanks to Kay Ross of McLaughlin Ross, The House Historians for kindly sharing this report with me. Mowl, *To build the second city*, 13-14, argues strongly for John Strahan as the architect, but this seems unlikely given its early date. Another possibility is George Townesend of Bristol, a member of the illustrious Oxford family of masons, see Colvin, 1045.

⁵⁵ I. Ware, *A complete body of architecture* (London, 1756), 405-6.

⁵⁶ Cote and the gentlemen’s houses in Clifton demonstrate the complicated relationship between urban, suburban and rural environments that characterize the building of gentlemen’s houses beginning about 1720. Closer evaluation of Bristolian gentlemen’s houses in the next chapter will explore the distinctions between country houses, the suburban villa, and the gentlemen’s houses in this study. The analysis will focus on identifying the motivations of builders in undertaking construction projects in particular places.



Fig. 3.11: Bishop's House, 1711.

The geographic shift in building in Gloucestershire coincided with the stylistic changes throughout England. Vernacular features in gentlemen's houses largely disappeared. Buildings in Gloucestershire began to balance baroque ornament and details with Palladian ideas and by 1730, Bristol had developed its own brand of provincial architecture that melded baroque form and ornamentation and Palladian design.⁵⁷

Architecturally, Bristol 'marked time while the rest of the country was exploring Palladian grandiosity.'⁵⁸ Such marking of time, however, had the result of producing a range of houses 'fit for gentlemen', suggesting that provincial interpretations of national architectural styles could be effective in building status in local and regional locations.

This combination of baroque and Palladian style emanating from Bristol influenced the design of several gentlemen's houses in the southern part of the county. Two gentlemen's houses from the 1730s exemplify this trend: Frampton Court (fig 3.12), built for customs official Richard Clutterbuck, and Redland Court (fig 3.13), for retired London grocer John Cossins. In about 1730, Richard Clutterbuck asked almost unknown architect

⁵⁷ Mowl, *To build the second city*, chapter 1; Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, 133-4.

⁵⁸ Mowl, *To build the second city*, 9.

Thomas Fassett to draw up plans for a new house in Frampton-on-Severn. One drawing of an uncomplicated five-bay, hipped roof house clearly did not suit Clutterbuck's taste and Fassett drew up a grander Palladian design, complete with attached outbuildings and connecting arcades.⁵⁹ The end result, however, was something of a compromise of Palladian form with baroque elements. This final design was likely by a Bristol architect.



Fig 3.12: Frampton Court, 1731-1733.

Frampton Court is remarkably similar in design to Redland Court outside Bristol, the only documented house completed by John Strahan, the leading practitioner of the provincial mix of baroque and Palladian that rival architect John Wood referred to as 'Piratical Architecture'.⁶⁰ By 1735, retired London grocer John Cossins had erected Redland Court on a small estate outside Bristol.⁶¹ A link between the two houses can be established through the figure of John Elbridge, Controller of Customs at the Port of Bristol. Richard Clutterbuck served apprentice to Elbridge in the early 1720s and took on the post of Searcher of the Port, whilst Cossins was one of the executors of Elbridge's

⁵⁹ GA/D149/P18: Thomas Fassett plans.

⁶⁰ Colvin, 992.

⁶¹ J. Charlton and D. M. Milton, *Redland 791 to 1800* (Bristol, 1951), 40-41. E. Shiercliff, *Bristol & Hotwells Guide* (Bristol, 1789) states that Strahan, was 'the architect who built Redland-Court House, and many other capital mansions in and near Bristol.' In addition, a drawing in the British Library of Redland Court lists Strahan as the architect; see *King's Maps* xiii, 77. 3b as noted in Colvin, 992.

will.⁶² This makes it circumstantially likely that John Strahan may have played some part in the design of Frampton Court. That Strahan's designs might be seen as backward-looking emphasises these houses as local efforts to balance the fashionable and the traditional.⁶³ They confirmed the status of owners like Clutterbuck and Cossins, at the same time that they hinted at a degree of aesthetic and social uncertainty.

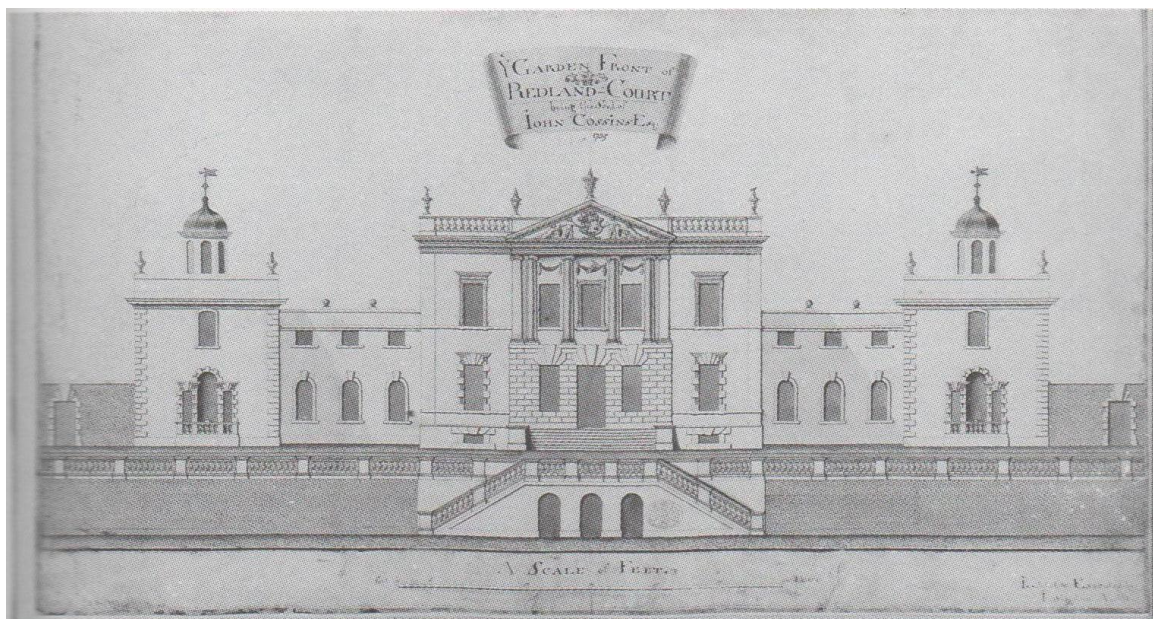


Fig 3.13: Redland Court, 1732-1735, from Mowl, *To build a second city*, 35.

Houses exhibiting a blend of classical styles began to be sprinkled throughout the county, suggesting that by 1730 consensus had been reached about the size and scale suitable for a gentleman's house, whilst demonstrating the stylistic flexibility of the compact box. The following decades saw gentlemen's houses constructed in a range of styles, from hipped roof houses like Cherington Park to Gibbsian classical facades such as at Winson Manor, Broadwell Manor, and Alderley Grange. From the second quarter of the

⁶² See GA/D149/F21 and BRO/AC/WO/17/3 and AC/WO/20/1.

⁶³ See Mowl, *To build the second city*, 17.

eighteenth century, gentlemen clothiers in the Stroudwater Valleys indulged in construction of classical houses to reinforce their status. Thomas Palling, of a rich cloth-manufacturing family, completed the hipped-roof Pitchcombe House in the mid-1740s, whilst his brother undertook a similar project fifteen years later. William Townsend's Paradise, Dudbridge House for Richard Hawker, and Onesiphorus Paul's Hill House further illustrate the growth of clothier's fortunes and the concomitant building campaigns.

By the middle of the century, a few examples of more fully fledged Palladian buildings appeared, although many gentlemen stuck to designs with a provincial flair that had worked for a quarter century or more, as at Warmley House, Nibley House, Salperton, and Eastbach Court. Other gentleman throughout Gloucestershire built architecturally comparable houses during the 1730s and 1740s. Houses such as Hazle House, Paradise, Hill House (Mangotsfield), Marshfield House, and Painswick House echoed the stylistic changes of buildings in and around Bristol. Painswick House, possibly designed by Strahan, and built by lawyer-turned-MP Charles Hyett, established his family as members of the lesser gentry. Although utilizing a slightly different design vocabulary than the earlier houses, these houses are again united by their size, scale and design pretensions.

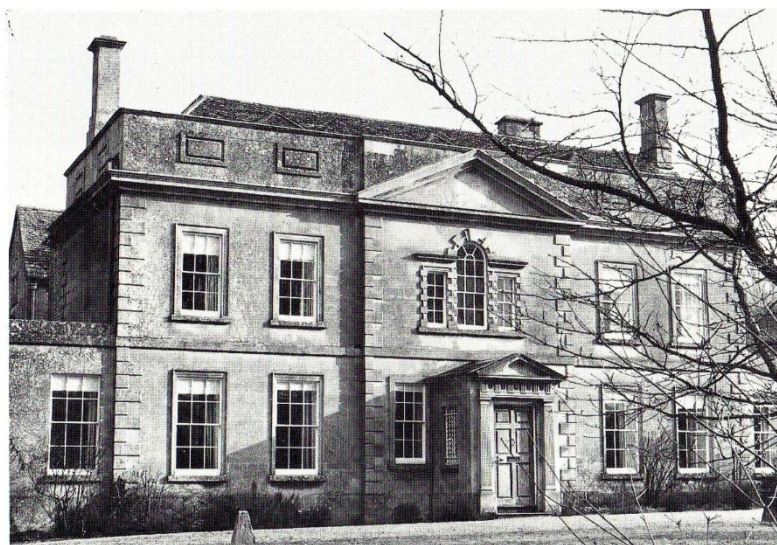


Fig 3.14: Alderley Grange, c. 1744, from Kingsley, *CHG II*, 50.

Alderley Grange (fig 3.14), not far from Wotton-under-Edge, brought together developing architectural styles and new wealth generated by the growth of Bristol. The oldest sections date to 1608, but the classical structure arose about 1744 with the arrival of William Springett, an entrepreneurial Quaker merchant from Bristol. Securing an advantageous marriage to the daughter of Richard Osborne of nearby Wortley House, William Springett set about building an appropriately-scaled country house suited to his position as a Bristol merchant seeking to establish himself as a country gentleman.⁶⁴

Alderley Grange in many ways typifies this new architectural fashion and updated vocabulary. Its two-story height produces a consistent sense of massing, but its hipped roof is largely concealed behind a parapet. Most striking is the introduction of a Serlian window in the central projecting bay, a clear indication of fashionable taste in architecture. Nevertheless, Springett's house, perhaps designed by a Bristol architect, strikes a similar note to earlier gentry houses. Its five-bay façade is more stylish but its proportions are comparable. Built in the country with commercial wealth abetted by a clever connubial alliance, it is one version of the Gloucestershire gentleman's house that illustrates the archetypal interpretation of new men making a linear move from trade to land.

Throughout the eighteenth century, gentry owners who were already socially secure continued to build small classical houses. George Whyrall, descendant of a landed family, added a classical front to an older house in English Bicknor in the mid-eighteenth century following a fire.⁶⁵ Thomas Chamberlayne, who became Dean of Bristol in 1739, remodelled Broadwell Manor (fig 3.15) in the north Cotswolds, probably in the 1740s.⁶⁶ Chamberlayne married Mary Hodges, daughter of Danvers Hodges of Broadwell, a

⁶⁴ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 5.

⁶⁵ GA/D3921/III/5, 1950-1954, Notes concerning the history of English Bicknor compiled by H. A. Machen, 5. Images of England 353720.

⁶⁶ Rudder, 312.

‘country gentleman of substantial property’. Only a few small classical house were built as domiciles for the clergy however. Church House (later Bishops House) in Clifton, the Old Rectory Elkstone (c. 1720), and the Old Vicarage in Marshfield are the only three of eighty-one houses with clear ecclesiastical associations. Although this evidence is limited, it suggests that at least in terms of architecture, the idea that the rector and the local squire were hardly distinguishable may be overstated.⁶⁷ Gloucestershire’s gentry produced relatively few military and naval families.⁶⁸ As with the clergy, only a handful of houses had military associations, such as Richard Howes, retired Surgeon General to the Army, who built Winson Manor about 1740.⁶⁹



Fig 3.15: Broadwell Manor, c. 1730-1757.

From the 1720s, gentlemen’s houses more often acquired owners who have frequently been portrayed as up and coming, merchants and professional men who had money to spend but not much taste. As Mowl said about Bristol: ‘It was prosperous but

⁶⁷ Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, 890.

⁶⁸ Johnson, *Gloucestershire Gentry*, 151.

⁶⁹ See IoE 127503. Richard Howse remain something of a mystery. Many thanks to Dr. Erica Charters for her efforts to try to identify Howse.

unsophisticated.’⁷⁰ Although there may be some truth to these accounts, a close examination of gentlemen’s houses suggests a somewhat different picture.⁷¹ By the mid-eighteenth century, the choice of a compact house had become a commonplace choice for gentlemen builders. They could be dressed up in various guises, but their form conveyed a sense of restraint and solidity. By building houses like those above, new men were selecting a conventional form of house that largely helped them to avoid critique as the *nouveau riche*. Some gentlemen builders may have been showing off, but most were doing so after they had already reached a stage where success in their activities had been secured. Instead of seeing this range of classical styles as provincial and sub-par, they should be understood as conservative choices that confirmed status for genteel owners. Examining the intersection of architecture and status carefully makes it apparent that genteel builders were exercising restraint and taste in their construction efforts.

The building process for gentlemen’s houses

This survey of gentlemanly building campaigns across Gloucestershire indicates that the process of building warrants closer investigation. Erecting a gentleman’s house was one of the most significant acts of consumption undertaken by gentlemen. The process usually took a matter of years. At the minimum a year or two was required and in some cases building went on for even longer. Frampton Court, for example, took two years between 1731 and 1733.⁷² Accounts record the first payments for stone for the new house at Frampton Court in November 1731, although building (or at least demolition of the previous structure) must have commenced earlier that year. The last recorded payments made to a range of workmen in 1733 and a rainwater head with the same date suggest that

⁷⁰ Mowl, *To build the second city*, 40.

⁷¹ Summerson, ‘The classical country house in 18th-century England’, 86.

⁷² GA/D149/A8, 1731-1733, ‘Estimates and vouchers of Rich. Clutterbuck for stonework during construction of Frampton Court’.

the house was largely completed in that year.⁷³ This instance was fairly efficient; Clifton Hill House near Bristol commenced in 1746 but was still being finished, at least on the interior, in the early 1750s.⁷⁴ This was less time than it took to construct a grander country house but nevertheless a serious commitment of time and energy.⁷⁵

In building their houses, gentlemen typically incorporated existing structures, built on previous foundations or cellars, and reused building materials.⁷⁶ Bourton House features recycled sixteenth-century panelling and doors, likely from an earlier house on the site.⁷⁷ Economies were often employed with an eye toward saving on costs but presenting an appropriate image. A house as elegant as Frampton Court was built largely of locally-produced brick, probably reused from the earlier building. The main block was then faced in elegant Bath stone, with the two wings rendered and scored to simulate stone.⁷⁸ This economy achieved the desired outcome as one visitor remarked, ‘The building is of stone, is rather heavy, but has a magnificent appearance.’⁷⁹ Richard Clutterbuck also recycled panelling from his father’s house, albeit in tertiary spaces on the first floor. When he built his new stables at Lower Slaughter Manor, General William Whitmore received a £7.10 deduction for ‘Old Stones’.⁸⁰

Sometimes a constant process of building, rebuilding and altering was evident. Brownshill Court was built in 1760, and then an entirely new entrance front created by

⁷³ GA/D149/A8.

⁷⁴ BRO/09467/12/a: ‘Notes and Receipts for House Building at Clifton 1746-47-48-49 + 1750 +c’.

⁷⁵ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, especially chapter 8.

⁷⁶ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 156. Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 185-6.

⁷⁷ IoE 128691; Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 187-8.

⁷⁸ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, chapter 5 offers a useful discussion of construction.

⁷⁹ E. Clutterbuck, *The Clutterbuck diaries, being the journey with my wife and daughter Sally into Gloucestershire on a visit to my cousin Clutterbuck at King Stanley*, with notes by The Rev. Robert Nott and T. E. Sanders, (Stroud, 1935). Photocopy at Frampton Court, 6. Entry for Wednesday, July 14, 1773.

⁸⁰ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), ‘An Estimate for Stables for the Honbl Genl Whitmore at his Sete at Slaughter March ye 11th 1765’.

about 1790.⁸¹ A similar course took place at Hill House in Rodborough, the ‘beautiful villa or seat...erected a few years ago,’ by Sir Onesiphorus Paul soon after his acquisition of the estate in 1757.⁸² Between 1784 and 1792, Paul’s son made substantial additions to the house, including two-storey wings and canted bays, which cost the considerable sum of £7,185 5s 8d.⁸³ Indeed whole houses might be used in this way. Lord Conway’s work at Sandywell Park incorporated the earlier five-bay, hipped roof house into a significantly larger composition through the addition of baroque wings in the 1720s.

These gentlemanly design and building processes involved several individuals. Until the late eighteenth century, provincial architects and the master craftsmen were responsible for most of the gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire. Only one gentleman’s house was designed by an architect accorded national recognition, Clifton Hill House by Isaac Ware. Despite the lack of a national architect, the other eighty gentlemen’s houses were equally successful in enabling owners to build status. Perhaps a dozen can be plausibly attributed to provincial architects. As socio-cultural rather than architectural statements, these too were effective in highlighting their builder’s position.

Many gentlemen’s houses were likely designed not by an architect but under the direction of an informed builder owner or master craftsman.⁸⁴ For much of this period the distinction between the two was somewhat fuzzy. Valentine Strong, from a family of builders in east Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire, possibly undertook the design as well as masonry at Lower Slaughter Manor, and worked at Fairford Park just before his death in

⁸¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 92-93. GA/Palling-Carruthers Papers/Bundle 55: Accounts of materials for building, 1788-1790.

⁸² Rudder, 629. See also *VCH: G*, Vol 11, (1976), 224.

⁸³ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 212-214. These can be seen in an image of the house in S. Lysons, *An account of Roman antiquities discovered at Woodchester*, (London, 1797), Plates II and III. GA/ D589, accounts of Sir G. O. Paul, 1767-1813.

⁸⁴ See Ayres, *Building the Georgian city*, especially chapter 1. The interplay between client, architect and craftsman is captured in an account from Norfolk, Virginia in B. L. Herman, *Town House: architecture and material life in the early American city, 1780-1830* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005), 51-3.

1662.⁸⁵ John Bryan, a mason from Painswick principally noted for tombs and church memorials, has been credited with the main façade of Paradise.⁸⁶ Thomas Paty, from a family of Bristol masons and architects, worked on Clifton Hill House and Royal Fort primarily as a carver but also as an architect.⁸⁷ The work of designers may have been transmitted further by local craftsmen. A handful of men were paid sums ranging from £13 to £102.18.8 ½ for work at Frampton Court in 1733 and family tradition has it that the exquisite joinery in the house was the work of Bristol craftsmen.⁸⁸ Visual comparisons suggest that the staircase at Frampton Court, for example, is strikingly similar to one at Eastbach Court in English Bicknor. The anonymous nature of many master craftsmen and workmen should not obscure their obvious important role in fashioning and erecting gentlemen's houses. Great architecture they might not be, but compact classical boxes still stood out as houses fit for gentlemen.

For gentlemen builders, provincial urban centres provided inspiration and expertise. Architects and craftsmen from Warwick and Bristol designed several of the larger and more significant houses, and other houses display details illustrating influence emanating from these regional centres.⁸⁹ Geography contributed to this process, as did personal connections. The north Cotswolds particularly saw influence from Warwick, especially the Smith family of architect-mason-bricklayers. Lord Conway's work at Sandywell in the 1720s was accomplished by the Smiths, who also built Barrington Park of 1737 for Lord Talbot.⁹⁰ Bourton House, for Alexander Popham, may have been the

⁸⁵ See GA/D45/E17; Colvin, 995.

⁸⁶ J. Milne and T. Mowl, *Castle Godwyn*, 6.

⁸⁷ G. Priest, *The Paty family: makers of eighteenth century Bristol* (Bristol, 2003). Henry Jones described Paty's importance in 'Clifton', reproduced in Rudder, 380-381. 'These domes discretion decks, and fancy cheers/*Palladio's* stile in *Patty's* plans appears/Himself a master with the first to stand/For *Clifton* owes her beauties to his hand.' Colvin, 789 describes Paty as 'no more than a competent provincial' architect.

⁸⁸ GA/D149/A8.

⁸⁹ Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840*, 4th edition (New Haven and London, 2008) is invaluable as it comprehensively documents actual and attributed work for this period.

⁹⁰ See A. Gomme, *Smith of Warwick: Francis Smith, architect and master-builder* (Stamford, 2000); Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 390.

product of Warwick builder-architects, although this is perhaps not surprising given that Popham was a kinsman of the Conways.⁹¹ Further Conway connections are possible in the attribution of Dumbleton Hall to Roger or William Hurlbutt, master carpenters of Warwickshire, who also worked at Ragley Hall about 1680.⁹²

Bristol architects and craftsmen created the provincial combination of Palladian design with baroque detail and ornamentation already mentioned. John Strahan's work at Redland Court is one of several houses he may have had a hand in designing. Painswick House, built in the mid-1730s for Charles Hyett, has also been attributed to John Strahan on the basis of style,⁹³ as has Frenchay Manor, although George Tully has also been credited with the latter. Tully likely designed Hill House in Mangotsfield for John Andrews.⁹⁴ An associate of Strahans, William Halfpenny, made a name as a second-rate architect based in Bristol by about 1730.⁹⁵ Best known for publishing a slew of architectural pattern books and manuals, he willingly mixed styles and became something of a figure of architectural mockery.⁹⁶ Although little actual work can be attributed to Halfpenny, he was involved in the construction of Redland Chapel, picking up the work after Strahan died, and may also have designed Clifton Court and the Gothick orangery at Frampton Court.⁹⁷ Unnamed architects working in a Bristol medium may have played a

⁹¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 10 and 82-83.

⁹² Kingsley, *CHG II*, 127, and Colvin, 548-9. Colvin calls the Hurlbutts, 'among the most important provincial builder-architects of late seventeenth-century England', 549. Kingsley also suggests a Ross or Monmouth architect for the design of Bicknor Court but cites no evidence, 278.

⁹³ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 198; Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 552.

⁹⁴ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 291. Tully designed Andrews' house at Hotwells and was a trustee of a bequest to Andrews' daughter in 1743. Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol*, (London, 1952), 47-8; BRO/AC/AS/57/3: Copy Will of John Andrews.

⁹⁵ Colvin, 467-9.

⁹⁶ Poet Robert Lloyd wrote: 'With angles, curves, and zigzag lines/from Halfpenny's exact designs' in 'The Cit's country Box, 1757', see W. Kenrick, *The poetical works of Robert Lloyd*, 2 vols. (London, 1774), I, 41-46. Mowl terms Halfpenny's work 'bizarre but lively', Mowl, *To build the second city*, 41. An unexecuted Halfpenny design for the Exchange in Bristol is described as 'a poor composition in a pseudo-Palladian manner', Ison, *Georgian buildings of Bristol*, 96.

⁹⁷ Colvin, 468.

role at Alderley Grange,⁹⁸ Bownham Park, Norton Court, and possibly Warmley House for another member of the Champion family.

Architectural pattern books and building manuals had some influence at this level of building, although the evidence that survives from subscription lists and gentlemanly libraries does not indicate that gentlemen builders owned copies.⁹⁹ Most of the well-known pattern books were not available until well into the eighteenth century. Halfpenny's first book, for example, appeared in 1724.¹⁰⁰ Some houses built after 1730, such as Broadwell Manor and Winson Manor, clearly drew upon James Gibbs's *A book of architecture* (1728).¹⁰¹ Gibbs's work may have been especially useful as a source for disseminating floor plans to gentlemen-builders, with much of the book devoted to elevations and plans 'of what one may call the middling-gentry size, more often than not seven bays wide'.¹⁰² But Gibbs did not write until the late 1720s, by which time many of the houses in this study were already built and could serve as practical models for others wishing to construct similar houses.¹⁰³

Few architectural plans survive for small classical houses and although their design, level of sophisticated detail and overall craftsmanship argues in favour of a reasonable level of knowledge employed in the direction of the building works, it is unlikely that an architect had an active hand in more than a quarter of the gentlemen's houses of Gloucestershire. The remainder drew upon the expertise of master craftsmen, possibly although not conclusively utilising pattern books or builder's manuals.

Gentlemen builders in Gloucestershire lacked a detailed knowledge of building practices.

⁹⁸ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 51, offers circumstantial evidence for either Michael Sidnell or Thomas Paty.

⁹⁹ E. Harris, *British architectural books and writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge, 1990); Archer, *The literature of British domestic architecture, 1715-1842* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1985). For gentlemanly libraries, see chapter 6.

¹⁰⁰ W. Halfpenny, *Practical architecture, or a sure guide to the true working according to the rules of that science* (London, c. 1724).

¹⁰¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 278 and 304.

¹⁰² Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 289.

¹⁰³ Nevertheless, gentlemanly building may have had an influence on the perceived market for pattern books and design manuals. The relationship between the two is an area for further detailed research.

Although they may have had views on the appearance of their house, as evidenced by Richard Clutterbuck, it was primarily left to them to exercise economic control over the building process.

The economics of building

Taking into account the demands of geography, the penchant for style, and the practicalities of running a household, building a gentleman's house was a costly proposition and a major investment of resources.¹⁰⁴ Although the expenditures incurred in building a gentleman's house bear little comparison with the sums spent by larger landowners on their country houses, they far exceeded the capital available to most in British society.¹⁰⁵

The previous chapter noted that gentlemen might expect to spend between £2,000 and £5,000 on a small classical house.¹⁰⁶ On a scale similar to the gentlemen's houses of Gloucestershire, Ryston in Norfolk, a 5100 square foot house built in the 1670s, cost £2,800, or 3.4d. per cubic foot. In the 1770s, Heacham Hall (2700 square feet) also in Norfolk, cost £4,128, or 12.2.d. per cubic foot.¹⁰⁷ By comparison, at the higher end of gentlemanly house building, Crowcombe Court, a seven-bay house with fine interiors in nearby Somerset, was built in two stages, 1724-28 and 1736-46. The total expenditures from both campaigns totalled £5,913.¹⁰⁸ Further indications of cost are provided by architect William Halfpenny. Since he lived and worked in and around Bristol for much of his career, his pattern books offer a useful guide, although his books set out estimates that

¹⁰⁴ Wilson and Mackley have extensively evaluated the cost of country house building in this period. Their work is a major contribution that forms the basis of discussion in this section. See Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 240.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 247.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, chapter 7.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 290, Table 15. For costs per cubic foot, see also Fig 4 and 5, 291.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 244. No calculation of cost per cubic foot is included for Crowcombe.

are surprisingly modest.¹⁰⁹ Several five-bay houses without office wings are listed at between £511 and £910.¹¹⁰ Another plan ‘for a house 56 feet in the front, with proper offices’ totalled £2,598. Although it is necessary to be wary of the calculations of architects, especially those of an active self-promoter like Halfpenny, these costs indicate what a gentleman builder might expect to spend when undertaking new construction.

Building activities in Gloucestershire reflect expenditures similar to both Halfpenny’s estimates and figures calculated by Wilson and Mackley, although records are rare and incomplete. Richard Whitmore agreed to pay Strong £200 for work at Lower Slaughter, although it is unclear exactly what work was included in this sum.¹¹¹ The partial building accounts from Frampton Court present some construction costs. On 25 November 1731, a trow full of stone arrived at Frampton-on-Severn. Eleven deliveries of stone over the next year, shipped by William Bradley from Bath, totalled £120.8.6.¹¹² In 1733, Richard Clutterbuck paid a total of £193.18.8 to several named workman as well as ‘pitmen’ and ‘carprs’. Building records provide per foot charges for masonry work. One account records that £13 was paid to a ‘freemason’, or skilled mason. The accounts for Frampton Court are missing for the entirety of 1732; given that stone began to arrive at the end of 1731 and finishing work was being paid in 1733, the bulk of the cost of building was likely incurred during the middle year. Still, these accounts provide information about details of the building process.

Two further examples outline expenditures on gentlemen’s houses. One of the largest houses in this study was Clifton Hill House (1746-1751). The house cost linen

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, W. Halfpenny, *A new and complete system of architecture* (London, 1749).

¹¹⁰ Ibid., plates 13, 14 and 16.

¹¹¹ D45/E17: Articles of Agreement, Richard Whitmore and Valentine Strong, 23 Jan. 1656. Kingsley, *CHG I*, 139-40.

¹¹² Payment was received at Frampton by Bradley’s sister, Mary, an interesting example of a woman involved in the building trades. James Ayres has said it was not uncommon, especially for widows, but comments, ‘Women were sometimes in building work as labourers or as employers, but in general their role was peripheral.’ See Ayres, *Building the Georgian city*, 7.

draper Paul Fisher at least £4,204.¹¹³ The list of ‘Notes + Receipts for House Building at Clifton’ do not list architect Isaac Ware, but Fisher made payments of £286.10.0, £560.2.8, and £1129.9.2 to ‘Thomas Patty’, who must have overseen the work.¹¹⁴ Carpenter Samuel Glascodine and plasterer Joseph Thomas were also paid several hundred pounds.¹¹⁵ In the 1760s, Edward Machen spent £2,500 to either refront or rebuild Eastbach Court in English Bicknor after a fire.¹¹⁶ Such bills help to chart costs, providing a better idea of gentlemanly investment in houses.

Maintaining a gentleman’s house also required regular expenditures, and there were occasional upgrades. After her husband’s death in 1725, Elizabeth Whitmore embarked on maintenance work in the following years. A 1729 bill, for example, charges for ‘Amending ye stables...and ye dogkenell wall’. In 1730, Lady Whitmore spent £150.19.11 on a range of repairs, including £30.10.0 for ‘Slatting the House’ and £49.0.0 for ‘the plumers bill’.¹¹⁷ Almost thirty years later the roof was again under repair, as a bill records, ‘For Repairing the Roof of the Great House and taking Down old Cealings and the old Plastering of the Walls and Riding out the Same and Stoping Hols in the Barn and Stables and taking Down the Old Landrey and Work at Mr Marshals’.¹¹⁸ Elizabeth’s son, General William Whitmore, undertook reconfiguration of both the back and best staircases in the manor house, the former done in a combination of oak and deal, the latter solely in

¹¹³ BRO/09467/12/a: ‘Notes and Receipts for House Building at Clifton 1746-47-48-49 + 1750 +c’.

¹¹⁴ Priest, *The Paty family*, 51. Thomas Paty was from a prominent family of Bristol mason-architects.

¹¹⁵ A. Burnside, *A Palladian villa in Bristol*, 7-10.

¹¹⁶ GA/D3921/III/5, 1950-1954, Notes concerning the history of English Bicknor compiled by H. A. Machen, 5. In the 1950s the building accounts were in the possession of the family and were consulted by Machen, but these are now missing.

¹¹⁷ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), Account for ‘Materials Bout & Repairs done at Slaughter House...in the year 1730’. See also, for example, 19 September 1730 carpenter’s bill from John Collett, a wide range of ‘mending’ items from William Day for £2.8.8 on 19 September 1730.

¹¹⁸ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), Bill from Samuel Archer, 1759.

‘Flanders oak’.¹¹⁹ Outbuildings also demanded attention, and Whitmore built new stables in the 1760s, which cost £493.18.10.¹²⁰ John Cossins kept up a steady stream of work in the 1730s and 1740s, first building Redland Court, then a handsome chapel costing about £1,610.5.9½, and then moving back to add small wings to the house.¹²¹

How to pay for such projects was a central question for builder-owners. Sources of income combined estate rents with proceeds from trade and office-holding. Although it is difficult to calculate the income enjoyed by gentlemen, it was substantial by many measures. The Whitmore estates at Slaughter and Norton near Cheltenham, were valued at £321.16.1, but were only part of their extensive landholdings.¹²² Charles Hyett had income as a lawyer, held the Constablenesship of Gloucester Castle worth £109.16.0, and had property in Gloucester and in the county. By 1780, the Hyetts held estates valued at £1120.6.6. Resources from a profession, office-holding and property had enabled the family incrementally to acquire a small estate, build a gentleman’s house, create a noteworthy garden, and continue to develop their estate further.¹²³ Richard Clutterbuck had an estate as well as salary and fees as Searcher of the port of Bristol.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), ‘A Estimate for Alterations at Gen; Whitmores’ Letter describing the work. Detailed bill from Thomas Collett for work, including panelling and staircase. For discussion of timber construction, carpentry and joinery, see J. Ayres, *Building the Georgian city* (London and New Haven, 1998), chapter 6, especially 122-124 for oak and 152-156 for staircase construction.

¹²⁰ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), ‘1765 ‘A Bill of timber for the Honble Genl Whitmores Stables March ye 5th 1765’. 1765 ‘An Estimate for Stables for the Honbl Genl Whitmore at his Sate at Slaughter March ye 11th 1765’. ‘The Honble Genl Whitmore to Thos Collett for Work and Materials at His New Stables 1766’, ‘The Honble Genl Whitmore to Thos Andrews for Work at His Stables 1766’. ‘The Honble Genl Whitmore to George Laurence for Freestone Usd at His Stables 1766’.

¹²¹ J. Charlton and D. M. Milton, *Redland 791 to 1800* (Bristol, 1951), especially Appendix II, 61-75. Kingsley, *CHG II*, 203.

¹²² GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), 1st October 1761, ‘A Particular of the Mannor of Slaughter and Norton’.

¹²³ See F. A. Hyett, *The Hyetts of Painswick* (1907, Transcript in GA), 31. Also GA/D6/E1: Estate Accounts of Nicholas Hyett; GA/D6/E4: Survey of Certain Estates belonging to Benjamin Hyett, Esq. in the county of Gloucester 1780; For rental values, see GA/D6/E6: Ben. Hyett’s estates, miscellaneous, including summary statement of acreage, c. 1780.

¹²⁴ For example, his father William Clutterbuck made a modest salary as Searcher, and Richard succeeded him in the post in 1724. In addition, custom officials made substantial sums from fees garnered as part of their work, sometimes ten times the salary. See Hoon, *The Organization of the English Customs System, 1696-1786*, (reprinted with a new introduction by Rupert C. Jarvis, New York, 1968), 13, and entry of

New men built gentlemen's houses from business proceeds. In Bristol, the Goldneys, Champions, Fishers, Andrews and others first made money in trade and then deployed it for a suitable gentleman's house. The small estate at Paradise produced only £35 per annum, making it clear that the buyer would need other resources. It is also possible that merchants were more cognizant of building costs than landowners as a result of their business background, which may have prompted them to wait before investing in a gentleman's house.¹²⁵ A number of gentlemen's houses were built largely or in part as a result of involvement in the slave trade.¹²⁶ For example, John Elbridge, Deputy Comptroller of Customs and owner of a gentleman's house near Bristol, amassed a fortune of some £80,000 by his death in 1739, with a portion of that coming from a moderate-sized sugar plantation in Jamaica.¹²⁷ Other Bristol gentlemen were involved in the slave trade directly or through investments they had in sugar plantations, activities utilizing enslaved labour, or the provision of goods to the Africa trade.¹²⁸

Those from commerce and the professions were more apt to undertake construction later in life, an indication that once they made that choice they were doing so from a position of financial responsibility. William Palling, who rebuilt his house at Brownhill Court in about 1760, offers a final glimpse at the income available to a prospective builder. Palling, from a Painswick family that had been engaged in the cloth trade for several generations, made careful records of the value of his estate for several years. This figure went up consistently between 1755, when he set the value of his whole estate at £4,387

August 24, 1694: Treasury warrant dormant to the Customs Cashier to pay the fee or salary of £34 per an. to William Clutterbuck as searcher of Bristol port. Money Book XIV, p. 419. From: 'Warrants etc: August 1699, 21-25', Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 15: 1699-1700 (1933), pp. 133-138. URL: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=83226> Date accessed: 27 March 2009.

¹²⁵ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 248.

¹²⁶ M. Dresser, *Slavery obscured: the social history of the slave trade in Bristol* (Bristol, 2007), 108-116.

¹²⁷ See D. Jones, 'The Elbridge, Woolnough and Smyth Families of Bristol, in the Eighteenth Century: With Special Reference to the Spring Plantation' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 1972).

¹²⁸ Gentlemen-owners associated with the slave trade in some way include the Charles Bragge, the Champions, John Cossins, John Elbridge, Isaac Elton, Paul Fisher, and the Thomas Goldneys; no doubt there are others. See Dresser, *Slavery obscured*.

and 1763, when he set the value at £5,520.¹²⁹ For a gentlemen-clothier like William Palling, who was also noted as having an estate of about ‘eight hundred pounds per annum’,¹³⁰ in 1760, an investment of a few thousand pounds to build a small classical house does not seem to have caused any extraordinary financial hardship.

Such an undertaking seems to be in keeping with other gentlemen-builders. Few gentlemen builders experienced economic distress related to house cost, or sold up as a result of over expenditure. Although examining a lower social scale in general, this thesis broadly agrees with Wilson and Mackley’s findings that the amount of debt and its deleterious effects on building and estate ownership has been overstated.¹³¹ The economics of gentlemanly construction offer another indication that gentlemen were making considered decisions in building using this flexible, economical style.

Interpretation of meanings: gentlemen’s houses as architecture

In their size, scale, and design, gentlemen’s houses differed significantly from grander houses built in the county and indeed throughout England during this period. Such larger projects occasionally inspired gentlemen’s houses but architectural emulation was limited. Although Roger Pratt’s Coleshill almost certainly provided a guide for early small classical houses like Fairford Park and Lower Slaughter Manor, Pratt’s nine-bay composition was substantially larger. Other major building projects, such as William Blathwayt’s Dyrham Park, Barnsley Park for Brereton Bouchier who married the sister of the 1st duke of Chandos, or even Edward Southwell’s Kings Weston near Bristol represented more ambitious undertakings altogether. As shall be seen in this and in

¹²⁹ GA/Palling/Carruthers Papers, Bundle 61 [MF1443].

¹³⁰ See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol. cxvii) appearing as Appendix 5 in Christopher Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Painswick, Gloucestershire Final Documentary Report’ (unpublished report for the Stroudend Tithing Educational Trust, 2010), 162. I am grateful to Mr. Michael Little for making available his copy of this report.

¹³¹ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 298.

subsequent chapters, significant differences between gentlemen's houses and greater houses caution against too close comparisons with more substantial building projects. The distinctions between these housing forms clarify precisely the social space that gentlemen occupied.

Many larger country houses are especially well-documented. Architectural and decorative arts historians have extensively chronicled their interiors and elaborate furnishings. In this way the large country house has ill-advisedly become almost a normative model. In the seventeenth century, innovations in the decoration of gentry houses or house plans first occurred amongst the higher gentry, 'and even these might take their cue from the class above them.'¹³² Other scholars highlight 'highly emulative social structures' that saw those lower on the social scale looking upward for inspiration.¹³³ Evidence from Gloucestershire modifies our understanding of gentlemanly building practices. As Nicholas Mander points out, during the eighteenth century compact, symmetrical houses with double-pile floor plans were built with increasing frequency in the Cotswolds and yet these houses of gentleman bore little resemblance to the largest and most noteworthy building projects at Badminton, Dyrham and Cirencester.¹³⁴ The building of gentleman's houses was not a process of re-creating grander country houses on a smaller scale. Although small classical houses took cues from the great houses, they form an important and distinctive category of their own, a significant indicator that the people who inhabited them did as well.

Brief comparison with two larger country houses in Gloucestershire, Dyrham Park and Kings Weston, illustrate some of the substantive differences between these grand residences and those of the gentlemen in this study. Dyrham, the seat of William Blathwayt, was one of the largest building projects undertaken in Gloucestershire between

¹³² Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 18.

¹³³ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 236. See also Girouard, *Life in the English country house*.

¹³⁴ Mander, *Country houses of the Cotswolds*, 97.

1680 and 1770. Rudder provided a fulsome description of Dyrham Park, the work of ‘the ingenious Mr Talmen’, noting that it was on another scale altogether from the smaller gentlemen’s houses in this study: ‘The principal story is large and convenient, with a variety of very good apartments.’¹³⁵ The garden front extended one hundred thirty feet, more than double the width of most gentlemen’s houses. In effect, the main block consisted of two separate single-pile fronts, one fifteen and the other thirteen bays wide, built ten years apart, designed by different architects, and comprising two nearly distinct ranges of rooms. The interior was highly decorated, with numerous rooms adorned with carving and gilding, panelling, gilded leather, textile wall coverings, and japanning. In turn, the number, quality and cost of the elaborate furnishings far outstripped those possessed by owners of smaller classical houses.¹³⁶ All this ‘notwithstanding the happy Possessor bears no higher Character than that of a private Gentleman’.¹³⁷ Blathwayt may only have been a gentleman in the eyes of some, but he far surpassed gentlemen builders described in this study.

The eighteenth-century house in Gloucestershire that has garnered the most attention as a model to be emulated by other local architects-builders was Edward Southwell’s Kings Weston near Bristol.¹³⁸ Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, the scale of this seven-bay compact house is also beyond the small classical houses in this study.¹³⁹ The influence of Kings Weston has been identified with several Bristol architects such as John Stahan, who in turn spread their ideas beyond the city through work at several

¹³⁵ Rudder, 427.

¹³⁶ On Dyrham, see N. Mander, *Country houses of the Cotswolds* (London, 2008), 112-117; Kingsley, *CHG II*, 128-133; *Dyrham Park* (London, 2002).

¹³⁷ S. Switzer, *Ichnographia Rustica: or, the nobleman, gentleman, and gardener’s recreation*, 2nd edition, 3 vols. (London, 1743), III, 113.

¹³⁸ On Kings Weston see Kingsley, *CHG II*, 167-70; Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an Architectural History* (London, 1979), 107; Foyle, *Pevsner Architectural Guides: Bristol*, 291-2; J. Musson, *The country houses of John Vanbrugh* (London, 2008). Interestingly, Southwell’s father-in-law was Blathwayt. D. W. Hayton, ‘Southwell, Edward (1671–1730)’, *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004).

¹³⁹ See original floor plan in C. Campbell, *Vitruvius Britannicus*, vol. 1 (1715), 47-48.

houses.¹⁴⁰ Yet Nikolaus Pevsner in the 1950s and more recently Timothy Mowl have argued that Vanbrugh's effect on Bristol's architecture has been overstated. Mowl argues that merchants might look to smaller gentry houses for building examples, 'but not to a gargantuan villa breathing "expense" from every massive architrave and ponderous cornice.'¹⁴¹ Bishopsworth Manor (c. 1720), located five miles from Bristol, exhibits some direct influence from Kings Weston. A small hipped roof house, Bishopsworth (fig. 3.16) was built for Anne Smyth, an unmarried daughter of the Smyth family of Ashton Court.¹⁴² The house is modest in size and was built onto an older structure. What is more, it incorporates an older kitchen into the main new block of the house. Although displaying handsome proportions, some baroque ornamentation, and adorned with Vanbrughesque chimney stacks, Bishopsworth Manor is far from being a work of homage to Vanbrugh. Beyond Bishopsworth, no other house signals direct influence from Kings Weston. Nicholas Kingsley makes the point that 'Southwell had neither the means nor, perhaps, the desire, to build a monumental house in the tradition of Castle Howard or Blenheim.'¹⁴³ The same might be said of most Bristolian gentlemen about King's Weston.

¹⁴⁰ Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history* (London, 1979), 115.

¹⁴¹ N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: North Somerset and Bristol* (Harmondsworth, 1958), 362-363; Mowl, *To build the second city*, 14.

¹⁴² A. Bantock, *The earlier Smyths of Ashton Court from their letters, 1545-1741* (Bristol, 1982), 256-7. NMR IoE, 379164.

¹⁴³ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 167.



Fig 3.16: Bishopsworth Manor, c. 1720.

Whilst a useful starting point for contextualising gentlemen's houses, comparisons between country houses like Dyrham and Kings Weston and the small classical houses at the centre of this study are a reminder that large country houses and their grand occupants were extraordinarily unusual and rarefied. Most gentlemen builders and owners after about 1730 seemed basically uninterested in aspiring to higher status, but rather more intent upon consolidating their standing with a new, elegant house 'fit' as it were 'for a gentleman.'

Emulation went only so far, and gentlemen sought to build in a style and on a scale that was deemed appropriate for them and by them, on the basis of cultural and economic choices. Indeed the concept of emulation is slightly misleading; most men of gentlemanly status could not hope to construct a vast pile like the aristocracy. The reverse was also true. Melton Constable in Norfolk, a house of the rectangular, hipped roof form but on

quite a grand scale, was criticized as ‘suburban’ and unsuited as the principal seat of a large landed estate.¹⁴⁴ By the late seventeenth century it was becoming clear that the style, scale, and plan of buildings suggested status with great specificity.

Some gentleman’s houses combined high style designs or ornamentation with vernacular features that demonstrated cost-saving measures or the limits of design by master builders. Parapets on several of the houses do not do what they are supposed to do architecturally, namely to conceal the roof, for example at Eastbach Court and Marshfield House. Nevertheless, small compact cottages and farmhouses bear closer resemblance to the compact, classical boxes of gentlemen in many respects than gentlemen’s houses bear to grand country houses. Instead, gentleman owners in late-seventeenth and eighteenth-century Britain built as they were able, elaborating where they could but following form, plan and style that fitted into the established hierarchy.

Contemporary chroniclers like Sir Robert Atkyns and Samuel Rudder, an amateur architect and critic like Roger North, visitors, poets and others offer intriguing references to the sorts of small classical houses covered in this study. Although these buildings did not draw the attention that larger houses did, what people said or wrote about them indicated their importance. Before investing too much stake in North’s complaints about the compact model, they should be compared with repeated descriptions of these houses, written by Sir Robert Atkyns and read by a larger number of people, using such terms as ‘handsome’, ‘neat’, ‘new built’, and ‘good’. Later in the century, Samuel Rudder employed similar language to describe small seats of gentlemen-owners. Cote was, ‘a good house, with suitable estate, pleasantly situated,’ whilst Redland Court was, ‘one of the most elegant houses in this part of the country.’¹⁴⁵ In 1825, J. N. Brewer called Redland Court, ‘a mansion’ and ‘a spacious and handsome building,’ and yet another

¹⁴⁴ Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 246.

¹⁴⁵ Rudder, 796.

house, Cleve Hill, was an, 'agreeable memorial to the habits of English gentility, in the early part of the eighteenth century.'¹⁴⁶

This is not to say that new men were unaware of lineage and claims to higher status. In finishing their houses and memorializing for posterity, a number of gentlemen explicitly made claims to gentility through display of coats of arms on the physical structure.¹⁴⁷ This attempt to suggest status akin to the aristocratic landed elites was employed by those at the upper end of the gentlemanly class or those perhaps looking to attain decidedly higher status. John Cossins had his coat of arms placed in the tympanum of the south side of his new house, as well as on the main gate and side gate to the estate. The house faces downhill toward Bristol, a striking, visible and symbolic act of status definition. Clifton Hill House had a cypher and its date of construction in the tympanum on one side, the coat of arms of the Fisher family on the other. Richard Clutterbuck had a grand coat of arms emblazoned on Frampton Court as the culmination of construction. For some gentlemen, the coat of arms was an overt statement of position and lineage.¹⁴⁸ Onesiphorus Paul, one of the 'gentlemen clothiers' who 'now pass for gentry',¹⁴⁹ also incorporated his coat of arms into his new gentleman's house near Stroud. Bigsweir, the Rooke family house in St Briavels on the River Wye, lacks a pedimented front, but the Rooke coat of arms is carved into the over mantel of the fireplace in the hall, a central conduit governing movement to other parts of the house and thus an appropriate venue for an overt display of such a status symbol.

¹⁴⁶ J. N. Brewer, *Delineations of the Gloucestershire: views of the principal seats of the nobility and gentry* (originally published 1825; Stroud, 2005), 46 and 149. It should be noted that Brewer, as with Atkyns and Rudder, is primarily interested in larger houses but makes commentary about several that are included in this study.

¹⁴⁷ J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors* (London and New Haven, 2004), 8.

¹⁴⁸ Several other houses in my sample exhibited coats of arms, at least one on the exterior and two over fireplaces.

¹⁴⁹ D. Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain*, vol. I (London, 1724), 281.

Over the course of this period, houses of this type went from being thought inadequate for a country seat by Roger North to being mocked as a pretentious ‘Cit’s country box’ by poet Robert Lloyd.¹⁵⁰ These interpretations of the compact box design must be measured against reality. In examining small classical houses built in Gloucestershire it is evident that some of the more disparaging claims about such houses (and their owners) were overdrawn.

Conclusion

The construction of gentlemen’s houses embodied a series of choices made by English elites about taste, investment, and claims to authority.¹⁵¹ There were eighty-one campaigns to build or rebuild small houses in classical style in Gloucestershire between 1680 and 1770. The pluralism of the classical tradition was on full view in these provincial buildings. Gentlemen’s houses occupied a space between the grander houses of the gentry and aristocracy and more vernacular houses. A large number were likely the product of collaboration between builder and craftsmen, whilst a few regional architects like Halfpenny or Strahan, fairly or unfairly considered second-rate, designed a handful. Pattern books and builder’s manuals contributed something to the process but their importance is unclear. In this way, gentlemen builders frequently took a vernacular approach to their projects, relying on skilled craftsmen to erect their houses fit for gentlemen. While not altogether uncommon, it is a reminder that the genteel built environment did not originate with the architectural profession alone.

Changes in the location of building were tied closely to the social composition of builders. Compact boxes were initially a choice of landed elites in the Cotswolds. Later

¹⁵⁰ ‘The Cit’s country Box, 1757’, in Kenrick, *The poetical works of Robert Lloyd*, I, 41-46.

¹⁵¹ See Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 240; Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, especially 886-8; R. Bushman, *The refinement of America: persons, houses, cities* (New York, 1992).

new men from Bristol and the textile regions of the Stroudwater adopted the compact classical house. They did this because the compact classical box was adaptable, convenient and economical. The construction of a 'house fit for a gentleman' represented a sober response by new-comers to the needs of status. As a result, the building of a gentleman's house was one important step in a slow, incremental process of social mobility.

The beauty of Georgian society was its ability to move forward while standing still. House-building was a visible, symbolic, and calculated act undertaken in a measured way. New men were not challenging large landowners, or seeking to build large country houses. They quite reasonably constructed dwellings that made clear their genteel position without incurring financial hardship, without seeking to emulate the greater gentry or the aristocracy, and without looking for substantial aggrandizement. These houses allowed gentlemen to build status step by step, brick by brick, or stone by stone.

Chapter 4

Situating Status

Building a house fit for a gentleman presupposed land for it to sit on. The example of Paradise near Painswick highlights important issues related to the settings of individual houses, their connections with urban and rural environments, and the character of their immediate landscapes and gardens. As a property, Paradise did not serve as a country house subsisting on rents from land. Its income of £35 per annum was insufficient to guarantee the independent existence of the gentleman it sought for an owner. At the same time, the house resulted from William Townsend's manufacturing of cloth, a trade centred in the Stroudwater valleys but which had important, indeed necessary, links with the great commercial centre of London.¹ Without these links and the resulting financial resources, the house would not have existed. Paradise had its aesthetic merits as well. The house's 'West Country baroque' architecture likely took its cue from Bristol. It was 'pleasantly situated' with a 'beautiful prospect', providing an agreeable place of residence for a genteel owner. Factors of location, property, setting, and urban connection all helped to make Paradise 'fit for a gentleman'.

Gentlemen's houses were geographically spread throughout Gloucestershire, expressing an appropriate yet flexible architectural language and scale. The last chapter considered the buildings themselves and the process associated with their creation. This chapter turns to examine their settings. Maps, contemporary images, prints, and estate plans complement documentary materials such as terriers, account books, and contemporary descriptions to establish how the gentlemen's house stood in the landscape of England between 1680 and 1770. Mining this range of sources develops an

¹ Rollison, *The local origins of modern society*, 55.

interpretation of how small classical houses related to space, topography, and the built environment.

Three themes structure the chapter. The first, change over time, suggests that the chronological and regional variations outlined in the previous two chapters corresponded to differences in situation. Over the period, the setting of gentlemen's houses changed dramatically. Early in the period most Cotswold gentry houses were situated on and supported by landed estates. Later, a greater variety of settings were to be found, particularly near Bristol and in the Stroud valleys. In those areas, 'Gentlemen clothier's houses' and 'Bristolian gentleman's houses', although more geographically concentrated, were situated in more diverse locations.

Following from this, the second theme addresses the functions of gentlemen's houses. Small classical houses were situated across rural, village and suburban settings. The settings of gentlemen's houses brought together urban and rural environments.² It was in cities, for instance, that observers found the 'prime location of polite society.'³ For lesser elites, this process worked in two directions, as classical forms of architecture were built on small landed estates, and then closer to towns. Historians differ on what was acceptable to contemporaries in the situation of a genteel house. In the seventeenth century, it was thought that 'the smaller double-pile house was appropriate as the centre of a small or suburban estate'.⁴ There were, for instance, differences between 'the true country house and the house in the country'.⁵ Samuel Rudder, however, did not much distinguish between estates and houses. Other contemporary authors described the villa as a seasonal residence, the 'little House of Pleasure and Retreat, where Gentlemen and

² Especially influential works on urban development include P. J. Corfield, *The impact of English towns, 1700-1800* (Oxford, 1982); Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*; M. Ogborn, *Spaces of modernity: London's geographies, 1680-1780* (London, 1998); R. H. Sweet, *The English town, 1680-1840: government, society and culture* (Harlow, 1999).

³ R. H. Sweet, 'Topographies of politeness', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 12 (2002), 356.

⁴ Cooper, *The Houses of the Gentry*, 249.

⁵ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 8.

Citizens betake themselves in Summer'.⁶ Evaluating how builders and owners used these houses problematizes categories like villa, country houses, and house in the country. The settings of gentlemen's houses displayed flexibility that multiplied over time.

The immediate surroundings of gentlemen's houses constitute the third theme. Throughout the period, builders and owners erected houses on land ranging from sizeable estates with quite elaborate gardens to a few acres with a well-kept landscape. An attractive setting was important. But a house, even without significant acreage, could still function as a seat of power. A gentlemen's house was a visible marker of status in a way that even land was not. Although an increased desire for isolation characterised the elite in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this was not a course taken by many gentlemen builders and owners.⁷ Gentlemen's houses, particularly those built for new elites, were often incorporated into the built environment in ways that emphasised their prominence but also their interrelationship with other structures and people. Several stood in prominent locations in villages. Others were contiguous to places of work. These specific settings, and the landscapes and gardens around them, offer indications of function and status.

The construction of small classical houses in urban, suburban and rural settings demonstrated their capacity to project status in a range of places for both landed and non-landed elites. The situation of the gentleman's house was important, conveyed meaning, but was highly variable. Land very much mattered, and was a virtual *sine qua non* for social and political power at the highest echelon.⁸ Nevertheless, this did not preclude those propertied men who held smaller estates, or little land at all, from joining the governing

⁶ T. Nourse, *Campagna Felix* (London, 1700), 297. It should perhaps be noted that Nourse retired to a house in Newent, Gloucestershire in 1673, where he composed this work and died in 1699, see D. Souden, 'Nourse, Timothy (c.1636–1699)', *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004).

⁷ Stones, *An open elite?*, 329-330.

⁸ Mingay, *English landed society*, 25. See also J. Rosenheim, *The emergence of a ruling order: English landed society 1650-1750* (London, 1998); J. V. Beckett, *The aristocracy in England, 1660-1914* (Oxford, 1986) and J. Cannon, *Aristocratic century: the peerage of eighteenth-century England* (Cambridge, 1984).

class of Georgian Britain on something like their own terms.⁹ Possession of a landed estate was not essential to acceptance into gentlemanly ranks. Throughout the British world, a house of this sort, whether at the centre of a large estate or located closer to a city, town or village was a signal feature of genteel status, and a key strategy for acceptance as a gentleman. At the boundaries of elite status, consumption in the form of an appropriate house increasingly confirmed membership in the governing class.¹⁰

The diversity of situations: change over time

The emphasis on the ‘geographies’ of the eighteenth century has driven scholarly inquiry in a number of directions. Attention to the geographies of empire, the Enlightenment, cultural development, the agricultural revolution, the British state, urban spaces, and consumption has prompted reconsideration of space, place, and landscape.¹¹ Space has increasingly come to be accepted as socially-produced, which is to say that it is created and imbued with meaning through the social practices of the people who use and encounter it.¹² Specifically, the situation of the houses in this study affected the people who interacted with them and conveyed social and cultural meaning.

In the more geographically-confined built environment of eighteenth-century Britain, even a small gentleman’s house was a significant physical presence that might dominate the local landscape (Fig 4.1). Indeed, a defining characteristic of gentry houses was that they were meant to stand out in the landscape whereas yeomen’s houses blended

⁹ P. Langford, *Public life and the propertied Englishman 1689-1798* (Oxford, 1991).

¹⁰ Wilson and Mackley note that historians of landownership such as J. V. Beckett have paid comparatively little attention to the actual building of houses and their landscapes, see Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 247, fn 20.

¹¹ M. Ogborn and C. Withers, (eds.), *Georgian geographies: essays on space, place and landscape in the eighteenth century* (Manchester, 2004), 1-3.

¹² H. Lefebvre, *The production of space* (Oxford, 1991, originally published 1974) is a key text. See also Stobart, Hann and Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption*, 2.

into their surroundings.¹³ This emphasizes the importance of topography and the relationship of small elite houses to location and setting.¹⁴

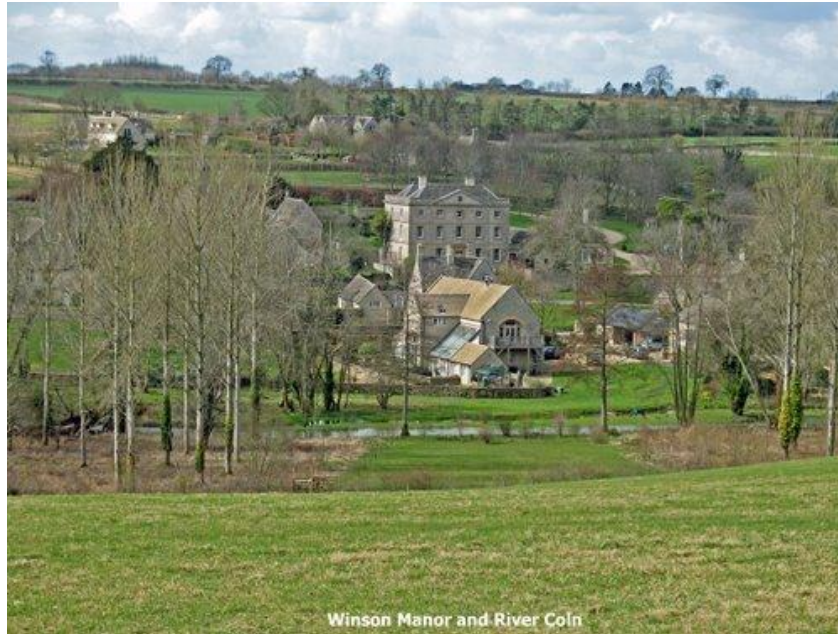


Fig 4.1: Winson Manor, c. 1740. Photo by Collin West.

Although gentlemen's houses were modest by comparison with the larger houses of the aristocracy and greater gentry, they nevertheless often appear in contemporary written and visual depictions. Both Robert Atkyns and Samuel Rudder offered comments on gentlemen's houses and estates throughout Gloucestershire generally as 'handsome' or 'good'. Such county histories tended to emphasize the county structure, lending support to traditional landholders through prints of their country seats.¹⁵ The occasional but infrequent appearance of visual images of gentlemen's houses in contemporary histories and other books provides further indication of their level of status. According to John Harris, only fourteen of the eighty-one houses in the study (17%) were depicted in the

¹³ Hall, 'Yeoman or gentleman?', 8.

¹⁴ Rudder described Winson Manor as 'Mr Howse has a good estate here', 286.

¹⁵ Clayton, 'Publishing houses', 48.

volumes he assessed.¹⁶ Atkyns's *Ancient and Present State of Glostershire* incorporated many of Leonard Knyff's and Johannes Kip's drawings of country seats, including seven compact boxes treated here, as well as four older houses that were replaced with gentlemen's houses during this period.¹⁷

Views like those of Kip and Knyff confirmed the centrality of houses in a physical and ideological sense.¹⁸ At the time Atkyns wrote, such compact houses were relatively innovative dwellings built by landowning gentry families. The published eighteenth-century views of gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire nearly all show substantial landed estates, with ample gardens. Comparison of the drawings in Atkyns with the Rudder views illustrate changing fashions in landscape: Kip and Knyff depict extensive formal gardens with parterres and allees, whilst in Rudder's views of Barrington, Sandywell, Nibley and Williamstrip any formality has been swept away, replaced by an undulating naturalistic landscape.

Other ways of illustrating houses and landscapes were available. Mapping gentlemen's houses helps to interrogate eighteenth-century ideas about space, distance and topography. Maps were a form of knowledge through which people experienced and represented their world. The period covered by this thesis saw dramatic changes in the accuracy of cartographic practice.¹⁹ In situating gentlemen's houses, four eighteenth-century maps of Gloucestershire and Bristol are central: James Millerd (Bristol, 1671),

¹⁶ See J. Harris, *A country house index* (London, 1979).

¹⁷ Seven Kip and Knyff engravings appear in Atkyns *The Ancient and Present state of Glostershire* (London, 1712). The new houses depicted are: Dumbleton Hall, Fairford, Sandywell, Swell, Williamstrip, Witcombe Park, and Wotton. Older houses replaced during the eighteenth century were: Barrington, Broadwell, Cleve Hill, and Nibley. Rudder, *A New History of Gloucestershire* (Cirencester, 1779) illustrates four houses: Barrington, Nibley, Sandywell, and Williamstrip.

¹⁸ Cooper, 'Rank, manners and display: The gentlemanly house, 1500-1750', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 12 (2002), 308.

¹⁹ J. Varley, 'John Rocque: engraver, surveyor, cartographer and map-seller', *Imago Mundi*, 5 (1948), 83-91. Matthew Edney argues that 'Cartography's image as an intellectually coherent discipline was thus an illusion created by the period's social ideology', see M. H. Edney, 'Mathematical Cartography and the social ideology of British Cartography', *Imago Mundi*, 46 (1994), 101-116, 101; M. Bruckner, *The geographic revolution in early America: maps, literacy, and natural identity* (Chapel Hill, 2006).

John Rocque (Bristol, 1742), Benjamin Donne (Bristol and its environs, 1769) and Isaac Taylor (Gloucestershire, 1777).²⁰ These maps provide a guide to changing built and natural environments during our period.

Estate surveys could be aesthetically pleasing as well as functional, suggesting these were meant to be seen, even displayed, at least to those who had an interest in the property concerned: stewards, tenants, or other landowners. Witness the examples of estate maps for Lower Slaughter, Bigsweir and Painswick, and Frampton Court, which illustrate houses (in the case of Lower Slaughter Manor), landscapes and gardens, and the wider distribution of landholdings. Images of estates could even literally be illustrated in conjunction with urban environments: a label inside the marbled front cover of the Bigsweir estate survey notes, 'Made and Sold by Jonan Long, Book-Binder, on Tower Hill, Bristol.'²¹

Surveys documented the acres that supported these houses, an important purpose for the many gentlemen's houses situated on estates. The relationship between house and setting was highly dependent on the amount of land on which the house sat. Throughout the period, landed estates remained a main source of income for gentlemen builders and owners in Gloucestershire. Such landholdings provided income to sustain a genteel lifestyle. Landed estates were the norm for Cotswold gentry houses until the 1720s. Indeed before 1730, only a handful of small classical houses were *not* built on a landed estate by established members of the gentry.

Most Cotswold gentry houses were modest estates. One thousand acres and the income that went with them, often made up from farming, rents and other investments was

²⁰ J. Millerd, *An exact delineation of the famous cittie of Bristoll and suburbs therof* (Bristol, 1671); J Rocque, *A Collection of Plans of Principal Cities of Great Britain and Ireland with Maps of the Coast of said Kingdoms* (London, 1764). For the Donn map see Benjamin Donn[e], *This Map of the Country 11 Miles round the City of Bristol* (London, 1769), also found at BRO/Bristol Plan232c/30120(3); Isaac Taylor, *The county of Gloucester* (London, 1800).

²¹ GA/D1833/E1: 'A Survey of the Estates of Jam.s Rooke, Esq. of Bigsweir in the County of Gloucester &c.', c. 1770-1797.

usually a minimum threshold for a country house of the lesser gentry.²² Throughout the entire period of this study, few estates of small classical house owners seem to have numbered much over that number. One exception, the Whitmores of Lower Slaughter Manor, had ‘very great Estates in Glostershire, Shropshire, and other Counties.’²³ In 1704, Henry Brett purchased the Sandywell estate of indeterminate size, but probably not more than a few hundred acres, and quickly built a house.²⁴ Perhaps as a result, the estate was mortgaged for £1,300 in 1708 and then sold to Lord Conway in 1712, who added additional property.²⁵ In 1748 Thomas Tracy bought Sandywell for £17,250.²⁶

Although country houses were often ‘too big for their estates’, this seems not to have been a problem for builders and owners of small classical houses.²⁷ A 1768 survey of the Frampton Court estate shows land in Frampton parish totalling a little more than 345 acres, and it seems unlikely their total landholdings amounted to much more than 1,000 acres in the eighteenth century.²⁸ Estate income, however, combined with salary and fees from his customs post allowed Richard Clutterbuck to build a new house, do some reshaping of the landscape, and enjoy a handsome style of life.²⁹

Other families were able to acquire enough property to settle comfortably as minor gentry. A family history of the Hyetts records self-effacingly, ‘All that can be claimed for them is that for almost two centuries they have occupied a respectable position in the Gloucestershire Squirearchy.’³⁰ Charles Hyett, a Gloucester attorney, purchased the

²² Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 7; Thompson, *English landed society in the nineteenth century*, 109-118.

²³ Atkyns, 655.

²⁴ Atkyns, 400.

²⁵ *VCH: G*, volume 9, ‘Dowdeswell’, 42-69.

²⁶ ‘The Jewel in the Crown: Sandywell Park’, in *Andoversford Village: 2000 years in the making* (Andoversford, 2000).

²⁷ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 297.

²⁸ GA/D149/E6: June 1768 survey of estate; 1768 estate map and Enclosure Map, 1815, Frampton Court collection. See also R. Hewlett and J. Speed, *Frampton on Severn: An Illustrated History* (Nailsworth, Gloucestershire, 2007), 107.

²⁹ Frampton Court collection, Richard Clutterbuck account book, 1768-1772.

³⁰ F. A. Hyett, *The Hyetts of Painswick* (1907, Transcript in GA), 1.

Painswick estate in 1733, and died in 1738, completing the house in the interim. By about 1730, the Hyetts owned several hundred acres in the county and Charles played an active role in county affairs as Constable of Gloucester Castle, MP for Gloucester from 1722 to 1727, as well as serving as a JP, including chairman of the Quarter sessions nineteen times.³¹ Hyett originally called his Painswick property ‘Buenos Ayres’ on account of its purportedly salubrious air, although he did not buy more than about 60 acres in the parish of Painswick.³² Charles, and then his sons Benjamin and Nicholas, held similarly small but widespread landholdings. A survey of 1780 records eighteen small estates, and the tithes of Hasefield.³³ Rents were valued at £1278.19.8. By the end of the eighteenth-century, the Hyetts were reaping enough income from their estates to have solidified their position amongst the gentry of the county.³⁴ Similarly, the Bigsweir estate in Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire numbered just under 1000 acres in 1787.³⁵

By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, small classical houses were less frequently constructed as the centrepiece of landed estates. The period between 1690 and 1740 saw the breakdown of land as the absolute criteria by which an individual could lay claim to genteel status, accompanied by a ‘modification of the previous stark clash of values’ between land and trade.³⁶ Penelope Corfield noted the mistake many historians have made in classifying all gentlemen as landowners.³⁷ Many gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire that appeared after the 1720s were neither supported by a landed estate, nor even located at the centre of a significant piece of property. These owners increasingly drew upon substantial resources related to trade and commerce to support their building

³¹ Ibid., 31.

³² Ibid., 76.

³³ D6/E4: ‘Survey of Certain Estates belonging to Benjamin Hyett, Esq. in the county of Gloucester’, 1780.

³⁴ D6/E6: ‘A Rental of the Estates of Benjamin Hyett Esqr. which have been measured mapped and surveyed distinguishing the present Rents and the Valuation of each Estate as sett by Mr Stone’.

³⁵ GA/D1833/E1: ‘A Survey of the Estates of Jam.s Rooke, Esq. of Bigsweir in the County of Gloucester &c.’, c. 1770-1797.

³⁶ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, 22.

³⁷ P. J. Corfield, ‘The rivals’, 18.

efforts. Land remained important,³⁸ but merchants sought out diversification, with land being an obvious choice amongst several options.³⁹ Gentlemen merchants in Leeds, for example, acquired estates piecemeal for economic reasons rather than social and political advancement.⁴⁰ Only occasionally when acquiring land did new men build on it. Most often it was let to produce income.⁴¹ New men spearheaded a process in Gloucestershire where estates with gentlemen's houses were balanced by Gloucestershire gentlemen who did not buy and build on an estate, illustrating the diversity of choices available to genteel families.

Much of the change after about 1730 can be attributed to increased construction of small classical houses by clothiers in the Stroudwater valleys and building around Bristol. Visitors encountered the natural and built environment of Gloucestershire in different ways. In 1681, one traveller noted about the Stroudwater Valleys, 'Here at this town, you begin to enter the land of the clothiers, who in these bourns [are] building fair houses because of the conveniency of water.'⁴² A century later, Rudder noted that Stroud was 'in the midst of the principal clothing country of Gloucestershire' but had little traffic through it, 'because of the steep hills that encompass it on almost every side.'⁴³ In the Stroudwater Valleys, houses erected by clothiers illustrate a relationship between work, home, and status. Some were built in close proximity to woollen mills in and around Stroud, as millhouses, 'often combined within the same building a mill and a clothier's residence.'⁴⁴ Many clothiers elected to retain their domicile near their work. It was only the most

³⁸ Johnson, *The Gloucestershire gentry*, 3.

³⁹ N. Roger, 'Money, land, and lineage: the big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London,' *Social History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (October 1979), 437-454, 452.

⁴⁰ Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*, 223.

⁴¹ See, for example, AC/WO/12 Elbridge Papers: Stainer estate; AC/WO/13 Elbridge Papers: Estate of Christopher Cole; AC/WO/14 Elbridge Papers: Stephen's estate, Horsley and Eastington, Glos.; AC/WO/20 Elbridge Papers: Hanham, Glos..

⁴² Quoted in Phillpotts, 'Stroudend Tithing Report', 95, from *Historical Manuscripts Commission – Portland* ii 304.

⁴³ Rudder, 711.

⁴⁴ E. A. L. Moir, 'The gentlemen clothiers: a study of the Organization of the Gloucestershire cloth industry, 1750-1835' in H. P. R. Finberg, (ed.), *Gloucestershire Studies* (Leicester, 1957), 240. Rudder, 711.

successful clothiers, such as William Townsend, Richard Hawker or Onesiphorus Paul who moved to a literal and metaphorical status elevated above their mills.

One such family of ‘gentlemen-clothiers’ were brothers William and Thomas Palling, who each built a ‘gentleman’s house’ near Painswick between 1740 and 1760. By the early-eighteenth century the family’s cloth business in London paid handsomely, and ‘most of their money was made here, rather than from their lands in Painswick’.⁴⁵ Over the course of the eighteenth century, however, they acquired additional property, seemingly from declining clothier and farming families. William, the elder, eventually came into much of the estate through inheritance from his uncle, whilst Thomas went on to build Pitchcombe House.⁴⁶ By the early 1760s, William Palling of Brownshill valued his assets at £5,520, reaping handsome income from the cloth trade and land rents.⁴⁷ The Pallings and other gentlemen clothiers established themselves, in Josiah Tucker’s description, as ‘placed so high above the condition of the Journeymen [that] their conditions approach much nearer to that of a Planter and a Slave in our American colonies’.⁴⁸ Although unusual, their experience of removal from mill site to small estate showed that mobility in situation was possible, and that erection of a small classical house had implications for social mobility as well.

The influx of new money like the Palling cloth fortunes changed the dynamic of gentlemanly building campaigns. As a setting for a gentleman’s house, a landed estate was important but no longer preeminent for those hoping to situate their status amongst the governing class. As Henry French has noted, ‘Emulations of gentility did not require the wholesale appropriation by another group of the definitions, determinants and tokens of

⁴⁵ Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 78-9 and Appendix 4.

⁴⁶ E. C. Little, *Our family history* (1892), 14; Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 80.

⁴⁷ GA/Palling-Carruthers papers, Bundle 61 (MF1443). Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 79.

⁴⁸ J. Tucker, *Instructions for travellers* (London, 1757), 25.

landed gentility.⁴⁹ This emphasises an important point: gentility in the form of a house did not necessarily require the acquisition of substantial landholdings. Landed and commercial elites could come together to form ‘polite society’ but new men staked out their position in ways that suited their incomes, experience, and modes of living.

The function of gentlemen’s houses: a ‘beautiful villa or seat’?

The significant changes that took place between the 1720s and 1770 signalled the social strategies of urban-centred propertied men who were increasingly prominent in the eighteenth century. Provincial cities like Bristol, sought to appropriate politeness as a balance to the competing claims of commercial and manufacturing activity.⁵⁰ Because of its robust trade and proximity to Bath, some accounts of Bristol were not favourable to the city, especially juxtaposed with the new building and lovely landscape of Bath. Pope and Horace Walpole emphasized the dirty, uncouth and commercial nature of the city, but others were kinder.⁵¹ In the 1710s, John Macky described a pleasant city, with ‘a fine Stone Bridge’, ‘a very noble Square’, and the ‘little Country Seats’ of the city’s merchants ‘in the adjacent eminences.’⁵² Later in the century, one visitor remarked that Bristol was not, ‘near so bad a place as report has taught me to expect it.’⁵³

An urban/rural dichotomy often obscured, ‘the important inter-linkages which existed between town and country.’⁵⁴ Carl Estabrook, for example, has argued that an urban-centred perspective inaccurately views rural communities as existing largely to

⁴⁹ French, “‘Ingenious & Learned Gentlemen’”, 45. Italics in original.

⁵⁰ Sweet, ‘Topographies of Politeness’, 355-374.

⁵¹ P. T. Marcy, ‘Eighteenth-century views of Bristol and Bristolians,’ in P. McGrath, ed., *Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, (Newton Abbot, 1972), 11-40.

⁵² J. Macky, *A journey through England. In familiar letters from a gentleman here, to his friend abroad*. (London, 1722), Vol. II., 134. Note that Marcy misquotes Macky as saying ‘little County seats’, whereas it is ‘country’ in the original. P. T. Marcy, ‘Eighteenth-century views of Bristol and Bristolians’, 23-24.

⁵³ Quoted in R. Sweet, ‘Topographies of politeness’, 364.

⁵⁴ Stobart, Hann and Morgan, *Spaces of consumption*, 4.

support urban areas, whilst slowly, if begrudgingly, adopting urban values.⁵⁵ Instead, he suggests that there was little interaction between the city of Bristol and its rural hinterland, contending that rural communities, based around parishes, were resistant to urban values and clung tenaciously to customs and traditions.⁵⁶ The point of increased interchange occurred, according to Estabrook, in the 1760s. This study suggests it was evident at least a generation earlier.

These geographic and social transitions can be associated with changes in function of the sorts of houses covered in this study. But how best to describe the small classical houses that gentlemen built near Bristol? Did they function as country houses, houses in the country, or villas? The distinctions between these ideas are highly complex and notoriously inexact.⁵⁷ ‘Villa’ has both architectural and social meaning. The first identifies the building in terms of size, scale, and design, the second how it was used. Most accounts described a villa as a place of ‘retreat or retirement’, or ‘a house that mediated between town and country and excluded all that was displeasing of either.’⁵⁸ There was, for

⁵⁵ For example, see P. J. Corfield’s exploration of Norwich as a developing ‘provincial capital’ in P. Clark and P. A. Slack, (eds.), *Crisis and order in English towns 1500-1700* (London, 1972), 263-310.

⁵⁶ Estabrook, *Urbane and Rustic England*, 3-5,

⁵⁷ J. S. Ackerman, *The villa: form and ideology of country houses* (Princeton, 1995); D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian villa* (Stroud, 1998); J. Archer, *Architecture and suburbia: From English villa to American dream house, 1690-2000* (Minneapolis and London, 2005); M. Airs and G. Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain, 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007), especially N. Cooper, ‘The English villa: sources, forms and functions’, 9-24; E. McKellar, ‘The suburban villa tradition in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London’, in B. Arciszewska, (ed.), *The Baroque villa: suburban and country residences, c.1600-1800* (Wilanow, Poland, 2009) 197-208; D. Gerhold, ‘London’s suburban villas and mansions, 1660–1830’, *The London Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 3, (November 2009), 233-263. T. R. Slater, ‘Family, society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 4:2 (April 1978), 129-144.

⁵⁸ N. Cooper, ‘The English villa: sources, forms and functions’, in Airs and Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain, 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007), 15 and 24. Note that Cooper’s essay ends at 1700 and thus the focus is largely on London, although mention is made of houses in the Royal Fort in Bristol that Cooper wishes to ascribe as a form of ‘villa’, 19. The term is one that can occasionally be stretched almost beyond recognition; hence a recent volume on the villa includes an essay on Tyttenhanger in Hertfordshire, surely more than a villa, and Winslow Hall, Buckinghamshire described by the author as an ‘unexpected’ inclusion. See essays by E. Harwood, ‘Forty Hall and Tyttenhanger’, 206-222 and P. Smith, ‘Winslow Hall’, 223-246, in Airs and Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain, 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007). Villas near London were ‘a substantial house within easy reach of the city, normally occupied by someone who also has a city residence and that is not the centre of a large estate’, see Gerhold, ‘London’s suburban villas and mansions’, 234; McKellar, ‘The suburban villa tradition’. During the course of the eighteenth century, John Archer contends, the villa became associated with the development of ‘bourgeois selfhood’, see Archer, *Architecture and suburbia*, 45ff.

example, a ‘marked variation’ from the early-eighteenth to the early-nineteenth century, when the villa shifted from an ‘aristocratic diversion’ to a ‘family home in continual occupancy’.⁵⁹ Moreover, Roger North noted the distinction between, ‘The country model, and that of a suburb villa.’⁶⁰ Diarists in London, however, occasionally referred to their dwellings as ‘country houses’, even when they lived in relatively close proximity to the metropolis.⁶¹ There was also a purportedly clear distinction between the country house and the house in the country, which did not to break down until the mid-nineteenth century when ‘new money flowed into the countryside’.⁶² In Gloucestershire, however, indications of this process began as early as the 1720s.

This debate highlights the underappreciated fluidity of small classical houses. Consideration of gentlemen’s houses built by new men develops a somewhat different picture of how these houses were used and what they meant. Topography and setting provide keys to understanding their relationship to Bristol and the surrounding countryside and region. Bristol in the eighteenth century occupied much less land than it does now, and from the early years of the eighteenth century successful merchants and city leaders began to construct noteworthy houses in nearby hamlets and villages.⁶³ A large percentage of the gentlemen’s houses in this study - twenty-one of eighty-one (26%) - were situated in the eleven miles considered Bristol’s environs.⁶⁴ This concentration of Bristol elite houses forms a specific sub-group. Within it, six houses were located in Clifton only a mile or two distant from eighteenth-century Bristol, and another five were clustered near the villages of Stapleton and Frenchay northeast of the city. This level of building reinforced the wealth

⁵⁹ D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian villa* (Stroud, 1998), ix-x.

⁶⁰ R. North, *Of building*, (ed.) Howard Colvin and John Newman (Oxford, 1981), 62, quoted in L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, 404.

⁶¹ B. Heller, ‘Leisure and pleasure in London society, 1760-1820: an agent-centred approach’, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2009), 77, 80.

⁶² Wilson and Mackley, *Creating paradise*, 8. See also Mingay, *English landed society in the eighteenth century*, 20-23.

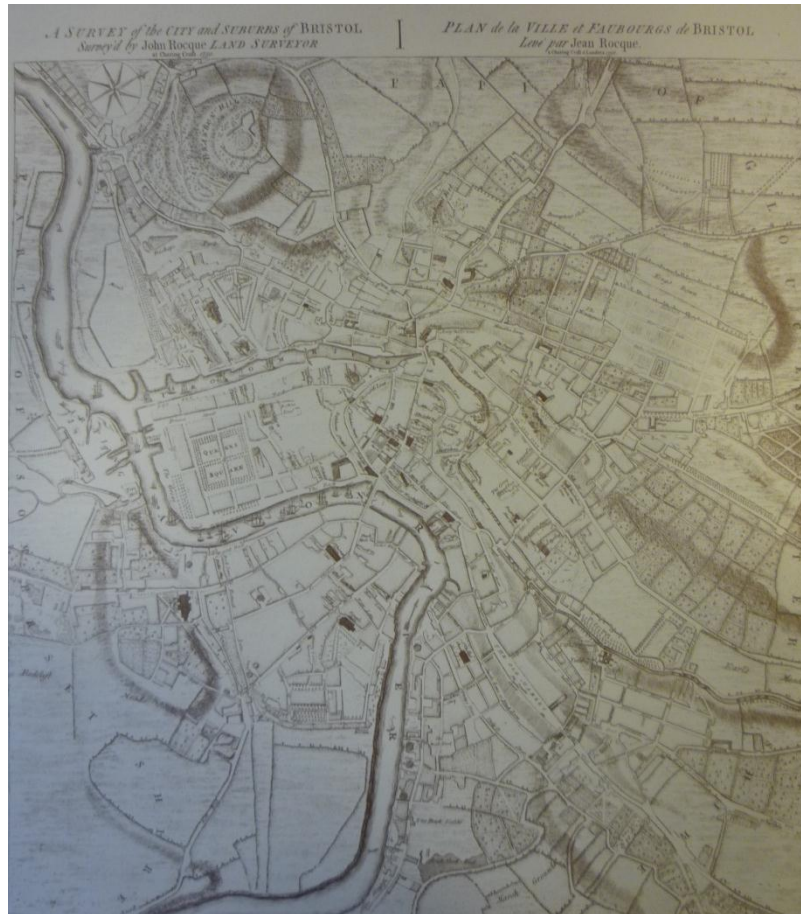
⁶³ See discussion in Foyle, *PAGB*, 208-217.

⁶⁴ See Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 6-7, and the map by Benjamin Donne, *This Map of the Country 11 Miles round the City of Bristol* (London, 1769).

available in Bristol in the eighteenth century, and illustrates the range of building choices made in a relatively confined geographic area.

Bristol's population growth resulted in a slow expansion of the amount of land area occupied by the city. The Millerd map, which covers only the city of Bristol and a very small part of its surroundings in 1671, shows that the medieval centre still formed the core, although building had spread beyond the old city walls. In 1742 John Rocque mapped 'the City and Suburbs of Bristol' but his map explicitly excluded Clifton and other nearby villages (Map 4.1).⁶⁵ In this way the site of a number of gentlemen's houses was specifically omitted from the category of 'suburb', an important distinction about the relationship of the rural environment to the city that has largely been ignored by historians.

⁶⁵ Rocque was a cartographer well-known for his surveying skills and particularly his map of London. See Varley, 'John Rocque: engraver, surveyor, cartographer and map-seller', *Imago Mundi*, 5 (1948), 83–91, 89; also P. Laxton, 'Rocque, John (1704?–1762)', *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004); H. Philips, 'John Rocque's career', *London Topographical Record*, 20 (1952), 9–25.



Map 4.1: John Rocque, map of Bristol, 1742, BRO.

Twenty-five years after Rocque, Benjamin Donn surveyed and published his map of Bristol and its environs. Most striking is how limited the built-up area of the city remained in 1769.⁶⁶ Although the city had grown, by the third quarter of the eighteenth century Bristol's urban concentration had only just begun to climb the hills north and west of the city.⁶⁷ A village like Clifton, the site of several gentlemen's houses, remained well outside the urban fabric of Bristol and at a markedly higher elevation, with a road leading nowhere – an isolated settlement that was close to but distinctly separate from the urban fabric of Bristol.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ On Donn, see E. Baigent, 'Donn, Benjamin (1729–1798)', *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004).

⁶⁷ B. Donn, *This Map of the Country 11 Miles round the City of Bristol* (London, 1769).

⁶⁸ See for example a letter of 1767 addressed from William Champion in London to 'Mr Tho Goldney at Clifton near Bristol', emphasizing that Clifton is near but not part of Bristol, GA/D421/B, 12 June 1767. On

Clifton is situated on a high rise, with two substantial climbs from the city. As late as 1779 Rudder noted its location on cliffs, calling it ‘one of the most agreeable villages in the kingdom’ and commented that, ‘it commands a very pleasing prospect’ over the city of Bristol. That feature, noted Rudder, combined with ‘the fine air, have induced many gentlemen to build and reside there’; their houses, ‘grace the summit of the hill’.⁶⁹

Visual images also help to re-create the physical and mental landscapes of the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ One painting showed large amounts of green space that separated the development at the base of Clifton Hill from the substantial houses above (Fig 4.2).⁷¹ This emphasizes the separateness of such houses, but also their propinquity to the city. The view has been described, ‘as a sublimation of commercial satisfaction’.⁷² Although only a mile or so distant from Bristol, Clifton’s elevation separated it from the city; although not insurmountable, the topographical impedimenta between Bristol and Clifton created a barrier despite proximity. Hence, those who built houses there were not settling in suburbia, but were choosing something rather different.

Clifton, see D. Jones, *A history of Clifton* (Chichester, 1992); BRO/SMV/6/5/4/3: Jacob de Wilstar, ‘A Survey of the Mannor of Clifton in the County of Gloucester Being part of the Estates belonging to the Merchants Hall at Bristol’ (1746).

⁶⁹ Rudder, 375, 377.

⁷⁰ T. Clayton, ‘Publishing Houses: Prints of Country Seats,’ in D. Arnold, (ed.), *The Georgian country house: architecture, landscape and society* (Stroud, 1998), 43-60.

⁷¹ ‘View of Clifton from Rownhan Meads’, c. 1785, BCGAM. Granby Hill, Clifton, from the west’, 1822, BCGAM, K101, in R. Leech, ‘Richmond House and the Manor of Clifton’ in M. Crossley-Evans, (ed.), *A Grand City’ – ‘Life, Movement and Work’, Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, essays in honour of Gerard Leighton, FSA* (Bristol, 2010), 42.

⁷² D. Lambert, ‘The Prospect of Trade: The merchant gardeners of Bristol in the second half of the eighteenth century’ in M. Conan, (ed.), *Bourgeois and aristocratic encounters in garden art, 1550-1850*, vol. 23 (Washington, D. C., 2002), 123-45, 129.

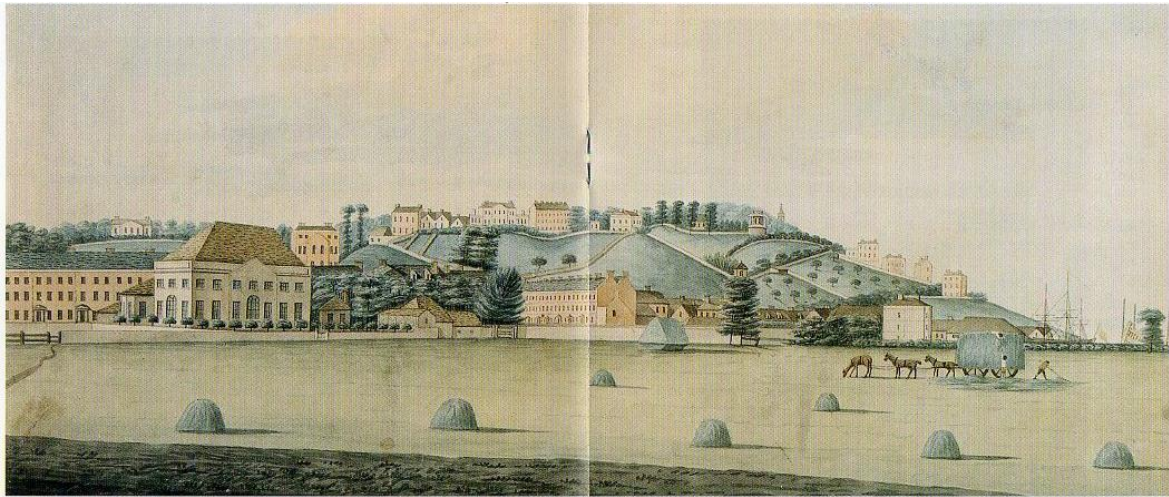


Fig 4.2: ‘View of Clifton from Rownham Meads’, c. 1785, BCGAM.⁷³

Donn’s map identified a number of Seats and Noted Houses around the city, including over a quarter of the Bristolian gentlemen’s houses in this study (Map 4.2). The houses built in Clifton between 1711 and 1760 displayed the wealth generated by Bristol whilst illustrating efforts by wealthy merchants to remove themselves in some way from the City.⁷⁴ Rudder described the ‘very handsome houses, with freestone fronts and proper offices, upon Clifton Hill’. Thomas Goldney III had ‘a handsome house here, with fine gardens, a grotto of shell-work and a canal with fountains supply’d with water by a fire engine...’⁷⁵ Henry Jones particularly admired Goldney’s landscape and garden: ‘a minor *Stow* on *Clifton*’s crown we find’. Clifton was able to avoid the aspersions cast on commercial Bristol, being a place ‘Where art, where nature leads the soul along/And taste and commerce crown the copious song.’⁷⁶ Although quite close to the city, Clifton functioned as a separate village, albeit with a concentration of gentlemen’s houses that distinguished it from other villages in and around Bristol. This process of removal, of

⁷³ From Stembridge, *Thomas Goldney’s garden*, 14-15.

⁷⁴ BRO/SMV/6/5/4/3: de Wilstar, ‘A Survey of the Mannor of Clifton’ (1746), 29 and 31.

⁷⁵ Rudder, 377.

⁷⁶ The second canto of ‘Clifton’ is reproduced in Rudder, 380-381.

engaging with but separating from the world of trade, made Clifton particularly noteworthy.



Map 4.2: Detail of Benjamin Donn, ‘Bristol and its environs’, BRO, showing the location of three houses mentioned in the text.

Yet these houses did not function as villas, part-time residences, or retreats.

Thomas Goldney II and III, for instance, made their house in Clifton their primary dwelling, despite owning property elsewhere in the city.⁷⁷ Nearby, Paul Fisher’s Clifton

⁷⁷ A recent article has conjectured that Goldney’s new house, constructed in the 1720s, was smaller than generally assumed and used largely as a ‘garden house’, or second residence. See R. H. Leech, ‘Richmond House and the Manor of Clifton’ in M. Crossley-Evans, (ed.), *‘A Grand City’ – ‘Life, Movement and Work’, Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Essays in Honour of Gerard Leighton, FSA* (Bristol, 2010), 27-46, 36-8. Physical and documentary evidence raises doubt about this. Thomas Goldney II recorded the births of his children there, suggesting much more than a garden house retreat. Stemberge, *The Goldney Family*, 87-89. Thomas Goldney III is listed as ‘of Clifton’ in a range of documents and seems to have used Goldney House as his primary residence. On garden houses, see R. H. Leech, ‘The garden house: merchant culture and identity in the early modern city’, in S. Lawrence, (ed.), *Archaeologies of the British:*

Hill House, designed by Isaac Ware, is most often described as a ‘Palladian villa’.⁷⁸ But like many gentlemen’s houses, Clifton Hill House was not a semi-rural retreat for its builder. Completed only a year or two before Fisher’s sixtieth birthday, it was intended to be his main residence. After building and furnishing Clifton Hill House, Fisher lived there from the early 1750s until his death in 1762.⁷⁹ Naturally, the house allowed access to the city, where Fisher kept a hand in his business and public affairs. But when architect Isaac Ware’s *A complete body of architecture* featured elevations and plans of the house, it was described not as a villa but as a ‘Country Seat without columns’.⁸⁰ In setting up house, becoming active in local parish affairs and charitable activities like the Bristol Infirmary, and reducing his role in business, Paul Fisher had reached a point in his life where such a house confirmed status.

This process was repeated by other gentleman builders and owners who undertook to solidify their social standing. Nehemiah Champion, a leading figure from a noteworthy Quaker family of metal manufacturers, and his third wife, Martha, daughter of Thomas Goldney II and sister of Thomas Goldney III, built Clifton Court soon after their marriage in 1742.⁸¹ Nehemiah and Martha Champion likely resided at Clifton Court, across the village green from Fisher, in the few short years between its completion and Nehemiah’s death.⁸² The Champion’s house, probably designed by William Halfpenny, the lightly-regarded Bristol architect who indulged in buildings and books on the Gothic and

explorations of identity in Great Britain and its colonies, 1600-1945, One World Archaeology Series, 46, (2003), 76-86.

⁷⁸ A. Burnside, *A Palladian villa in Bristol: Clifton Hill House and the people who lived there* (Bristol, 2009).

⁷⁹ TNA/PROB11/884; Burnside, *A Palladian villa in Bristol*, 19-21; A. Burnside and S. B. Brennan, ‘Paul Fisher, linen-draper and merchant, of Clifton Hill House.’ in M. Crossley-Evans, (ed.), ‘*A Grand City*’ – *‘Life, Movement and Work’*, *Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Essays in Honour of Gerard Leighton*, FSA (Bristol, 2010), 47-62.

⁸⁰ Ware, *Complete Body of Architecture*, 405.

⁸¹ See J. Day, “The Champion Family (per 1670 -1794)” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition (Oxford, 2004); NMR IoE, 379234. See also Stembridge, *The Goldney family*, 22; Martha had acquired the property shortly before their marriage, see Nuffield Health, St Mary’s Hospital archives, Indenture, 17 August 1742. Champion and Martha married in September 1742, Thomas Goldney Record Book, UBL/DM1398: ‘Nehem: Champion Sen:r to my Sister VandeWall, 7:br 16th 1742 [16 Sept 1742]

⁸² BRO/SMV/6/5/4/3: de Wilstar survey (1746). 32.

chinoiserie, can be juxtaposed with the more correct Palladian rectitude of Fisher's Clifton Hill House designed by Isaac Ware. Yet architectural historian Michael Jenner has argued that, 'Clifton Court was trying to be a country house,' whilst suggesting that Clifton Hill House, 'aimed to be something less grand.'⁸³ These houses were separated by a few hundred metres of distance and built perhaps five years apart. Drawing a distinction between them, therefore, is difficult on the basis of architectural style alone. In terms of function, these houses were remarkably similar, and it was how they were used that distinguished them both as gentlemen's houses.

Few small classical gentlemen's houses near Bristol were centrepieces of a large estate designed to provide income. Most were more akin to 'houses in the country'. The Cote estate a few miles from Bristol illustrates the interplay between a small estate, a gentleman's house, and various sources of income. By 1706 Thomas Moore had invested a total of £2,470 in an estate of unknown size.⁸⁴ Cote was frequently referred to as the house 'over the Down', signifying distance and removal from the environs of the City.⁸⁵ Moore's heir, John Elbridge, was a substantial landowner with a diversified portfolio of investments. These included a house in Kings Street around the corner from the Custom House, a house in the Royal Fort, a plantation on Jamaica, and lands in Hanham, Oldland and Bitton in Gloucestershire.⁸⁶ Elbridge had an interest in several other estates and carried numerous mortgages for others.⁸⁷

⁸³ Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history* (London, 1979), 152.

⁸⁴ SMV/4/6/1/40: Charities, St Monica Home, Cote Deeds explained, n.d. probably c. 1930.

⁸⁵ See for example BRO/AC/WO/10/18: March 1738/9, Inventory and Appraisalment of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill; BRO/AC/WO/11/1/a: 9th April 1739 'Case on the Will of John Elbridge Esq. deceased on behalf of Henry Woolnough and Rebecca his wife'; BCL/No. B19716, Letter from Customhouse, Bristol, 26 March 1739.

⁸⁶ BRO1608/8/b: Counterpart of the lease to JE 18 Dec 1729, and the Surrender BRO/1608/a. See also the contract BRO/2055/6. For the Royal Fort House, see R. Leech, *The St Michael's Hill precinct of the University of Bristol: medieval and early modern topography*, Bristol Record Society, no 52 (Bristol, 2000), 61. BRO/AC/WO/20/1: Elbridge Papers: Hanham, Gloc.

⁸⁷ See BRO/AC/WO/10/15 and BRO/AC/WO/12-20.

Other gentlemen's houses stood separate from the City, an important factor in the creation of a sense of space and distance. A little more than a mile from the burgeoning commercial port, the Redland Court estate had produced just enough to sustain a minor gentry family into the early-eighteenth century. The house and estate was sold in 1732 to Johns Cossins, a wealthy London grocer who typified the interwoven nature of landed and commercial riches. From the 1730s the estate, 'ceased to be regarded as a source of income',⁸⁸ although almost immediately Cossins diverted his grocer's fortune into a small but elegant gentleman's house designed by architect John Strahan, which had a long tree-lined drive perhaps a quarter mile long.⁸⁹ The estate was still substantial until sold in 1799 by order of the Court of Chancery, but it had not for some time functioned as a proper country house.⁹⁰

Bristol merchants made varying choices in situating their houses. John Andrews, a wealthy Quaker wine merchant, purchased an estate and built Hill House near Mangotsfield four miles from Bristol. He became one of the 'principal Proprietors of Lands in this Parish,'⁹¹ supported in part by estate holdings in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Somerset, the rents of which totalled £470.⁹² Despite having a small estate and house in the country, John Andrews retained a residence in Bristol.⁹³ His son Edward inherited in 1743 and seems to have lived at Hill House.⁹⁴ Joseph Beck, one of the John Andrews' trustees, acquired a small piece of property near Frenchay and built a quirky but elegant

⁸⁸ Charlton and Milton, *Redland*, 38.

⁸⁹ See B. Donn, *This Map of the Country 11 Miles round the City of Bristol* (London, 1769); 'Plan of the Redland Court Estate, 1811', Collection of the Redland High School for Girls.

⁹⁰ TNA/C12/679/15 Daubeny v. Baker; TNA/C12/980/25 Daubeny v. Baker; *The London Gazette* May 11th - 14th, 1799, quoted in J. Charlton and D. M. Milton, *Redland 1791 to 1800* (Bristol, 1951), 55-57.

⁹¹ R. Bigland, part 2, vol. 3, 833.

⁹² BRO/AC/AS/57/3: Copy Will of John Andrews, drawn up on 10 June 1743 with a codicil of 3 December 1743.

⁹³ R. Mortimer, (ed.), *Minute Book of the Men's Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686-1704*, Bristol Record Society, vol. xxx (Bristol, 1977), 233: John Andrews (d. 1743, of Castle Precincts) merchant.

⁹⁴ Edward was recorded as paying poor rates on the estate of £14.9. 4 ½, and died in the parish. A. E. Jones, *History of Mangotsfield and Downend* (Bristol, 1899), 192. The Hill House estate remained substantial until the late nineteenth-century, see BRO/14581/HA/D/313: Particulars & Conditions of Sale, Hill House, Mangotsfield, 9 April 1874.

house which may have served him primarily as a part-time residence, one of the few instances of a small classical house built for such a purpose.

The question of how small classical houses functioned for gentlemen builders and owners was evident in other parts of the county. Rudder could not decide the distinction when he referred to the house built by Stroud clothier Onesiphorus Paul as a ‘beautiful villa or seat’, pointing directly to the malleability of both the concept and the house form.⁹⁵ After a long career in trade, Paul purchased the small estate in 1757 as a place to reside,⁹⁶ swiftly followed by his elevation to a knighthood (1760) and then a baronetcy (1762).⁹⁷ His son, Sir George Onesiphorus Paul used the house as a country house and primary residence. He increasingly devoted his time and energy to Gloucestershire affairs, where he became a noted prison reformer.⁹⁸

In this context, how small classical houses are understood can be refined.⁹⁹ A study of the building patterns and use of gentlemen’s houses suggests that they fulfilled specific functions for gentlemen builders and owners. Small estates close to Bristol and in the Stroudwater provided several needs but they were not merely villas. Erected later in life by gentlemanly builders, gentlemen’s houses were often a central investment that served as a primary residence or as a small country seat, rather than a site of retreat. Rarely is the term villa encountered in reference to the houses in this study. More frequently, they are termed ‘mansion’ or simply ‘house’ usually with an adjective like ‘handsome’.¹⁰⁰ As one study of Highgate near London confirms, the sort of small classical house considered here - ‘we would label it a villa’ - was called a mansion.¹⁰¹ In only a few

⁹⁵ Rudder, 629.

⁹⁶ GA/D25/2/18: Deeds of Hill House estate and GA/D67/Z/28: Digest of Deed of Hill House Estate lists the estate as 51 acres.

⁹⁷ Rudder, 629.

⁹⁸ Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’, 195-224.

⁹⁹ T. R. Slater, ‘Family, Society and the ornamental villa on the fringes of English country towns’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 4:2 (April 1978), 129-144, 131.

¹⁰⁰ See Rudder, Atkyns, and the de Wilstar survey.

¹⁰¹ McKellar, ‘The suburban villa tradition’, 207.

cases, such as Frenchay Manor, did gentlemen's houses function as villas during this period. For most Bristolian gentlemen, these houses were not a retreat from the city, but a removal that retained proximity.

Small classical houses crossed boundaries. Estabrook contends that, if anything, 'urban dwellers may have got some of their notions from the country homes of the gentry and applied them to their own urban aims.'¹⁰² But the interchange between urban and rural situations seen in these houses suggests a much more circular process. Many were small country houses. Several small estates, such as Cote, Redland Court, or Paradise, were essentially houses in the country. A number were residences in villages not far from Bristol. A few small classical houses served in part as retreats from the urban environment. Indeed, it was the proximity to Bristol that made all these locations attractive. In whatever situation they occupied, gentlemen's houses were primarily about confirming status and serving as residences: they provided a genteel, adaptable house in rural or semi-rural environments in which to live, allowed the display of architectural and decorative taste, and enabled sociability. Although the villa became increasingly common after 1770, during the middle of the eighteenth century the houses built by new men were often neither villa nor country house. They were in many ways an amalgamation of the two, much like the owners themselves.

The surroundings of a gentleman's house

The immediate settings of gentlemen's houses provide further indications of practical and status-building functions.¹⁰³ Gentlemanly landscapes and gardens displayed

¹⁰² Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 152.

¹⁰³ Important works on eighteenth-century landscape and gardens, again biased toward larger landscapes, include: T. Williamson, *Polite landscapes: gardens and society in eighteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995); J. Dixon Hunt and P. Willis, (eds.), *The genius of the place: the English landscape garden, 1620-1820* (Cambridge, MA, 1988); T. Richardson, *Arcadian friends: inventing the English landscape garden* (London, 2007); T. Mowl, *Gentleman and players: gardeners of the English landscape* (Stroud, 2000).

a mixture of the ornamental and functional.¹⁰⁴ Although Girouard has commented that ‘a close connection between house and farm was entirely at variance with the English tradition’ his stricture applies to larger country houses.¹⁰⁵ Most gentlemen’s houses had some form of shaped landscape or ornamental garden, but many also stood in close proximity to farming or other work activity. This section explores the range of immediate surroundings of gentlemen’s houses.

The relationship of gentlemen’s houses to their local landscape varied greatly in much the same way as their situation. Major efforts to shape the grounds and gardens around a gentleman’s house indicated some combination of interest, taste, wealth, and a wish to project power. Cotswold gentry houses depicted by Kip, such as Sandywell, Williamstrip, and Fairford (Fig. 4.3), exhibited extensive formal gardens.



Fig: 4.3: Fairford Park as depicted in Atkyns (1712).

¹⁰⁴ Williamson has noted this in relation to larger estates, T. Williamson, ‘Archaeological Perspectives on Landed Estates’ Research Agendas’ in J. Finch and K. Giles, (eds.), *Estate Landscapes: Design, Improvement and Power in the Post-Medieval Landscape* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2007), 1-16.

¹⁰⁵ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 151.

Throughout the eighteenth century some owners undertook development of their gardens. At Fairford Park, the Lambes remade the parkland in the mid-eighteenth century. In 1733, James Lambe and his wife were prevented from going down to Fairford Park for the summer on account of her illness, indicating its use at least some of the time as a country house.¹⁰⁶ According to Rudder, ‘Mrs Lamb’s seat’ at Fairford had been ‘modernized and much improved by the late Mr. Lamb’, and included a deer-park, well-laid-out gardens, pleasant serpentine walks, viewing openings from several seats and buildings, and a vista terminated by an obelisk.¹⁰⁷ By the mid-eighteenth century the earl of Talbot’s ‘small park’ at Barrington Park included, ‘an elegant three-arch stone bridge, a Gothick Temple with ogee arches, a domed pigeon house, and a circular Roman Doric temple.’¹⁰⁸ Likewise, new owner John Dolphin transformed the landscape at Eyford House after he purchased it in 1766.¹⁰⁹

More typical of gentlemanly landscapes was Pitchcombe House (Fig. 4.4). An early-nineteenth-century painting of the house depicts a service yard cordoned off from the main house by a low wall. A handsome Chinese-style fence defines the front of the house and a dovecote stands behind. The grounds are simple, tidy, and pleasant but certainly not elaborate, and there do not appear to be any formal gardens.¹¹⁰ Situated in a small village, Pitchcombe reflected Tom Williamson’s contention that, ‘the gentleman’s mansion was, in many ways, a yeoman’s farm writ large.’¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ D678/1 F12/1/15: 21 July 1733, James Lambe [of Fairford Park], Hackney, to John Dutton.

¹⁰⁷ Rudder, 442. Hobson, *The Raymond Barkers of Fairford Park*, 14-15.

¹⁰⁸ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 68.

¹⁰⁹ Rudder, 667.

¹¹⁰ Painting of Pitchcombe, House, private collection.

¹¹¹ Williamson, ‘Archaeological perspectives on landed estates: research agendas’, 9.



Fig 4.4: Pitchcombe House, early-nineteenth century. Private collection.

Elsewhere, Poulton Manor (c. 1690) was surrounded by a wall with piers at its entrance, its garden opens into fields; ‘beyond this the house never appears to have had any more elaborate gardens.’¹¹² The gardens at Redland Court, one of the houses at the higher end of the spectrum examined here, had gardens that were well-kept but neither large nor elaborate, ‘kept in excellent order, and the green-house is stored with a well chosen variety of curious exotics.’¹¹³ Paradise (Fig. 4.5) is depicted in a 1741 plan as having only a small formal forecourt garden, although it was ‘pleasantly situated on the Side of a Hill, which affords beautiful prospects.’¹¹⁴

¹¹² Binney, ‘Poulton Manor’, *Country Life*, (26 May 1976), 1400.

¹¹³ Rudder, 796.

¹¹⁴ Map, drawn from a missing original by Ellis Marsden, 1918, in W. St. Clair Baddeley, *A Cotteswold manor: being the history of Painswick*, (Gloucester, 1929), 34; *Gloucester Journal*, Tuesday, 11 February 1755.

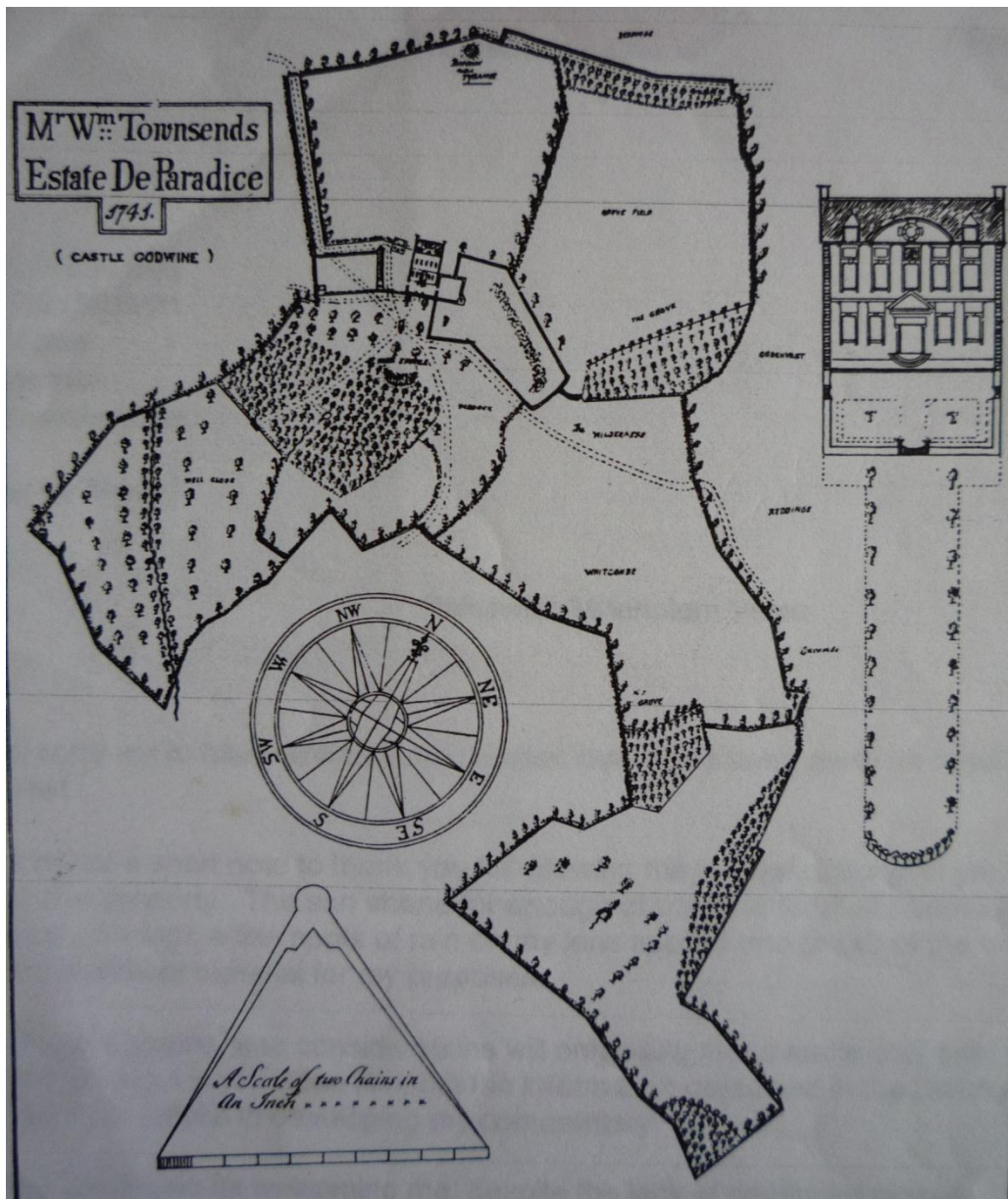


Fig 4.5: Paradise [Castle Godwin], c. 1741.

Houses like the old and new Frampton Courts offered an impressive exterior face to their village. William Clutterbuck's country seat built in the 1650s, old Frampton Court,¹¹⁵ was surrounded by an ample forecourt, high walls and an imposing gate. Large,

¹¹⁵ The house is listed as Frampton House in a drawing done in 1730, before it was demolished, although it is also referred to elsewhere as Frampton Court.

strikingly vertical trees perhaps forty years old and just coming into maturity, highlight and frame the façade.¹¹⁶ (Fig 4.6) The plan shows several adjacent service buildings.

Outbuildings contributed to the architectural composition of the gentleman's house not to mention its operation. These buildings were critical to providing for a range of needs. They accommodated the functions that enabled displays of social status to be carried out. Servants were often housed in the garrets of these houses, with storage and some work spaces in the cellars. Proximity to important outbuildings like stables are a relatively forgotten feature of the house setting.¹¹⁷ The arrangement of service space changed as well. Earlier houses characteristically had ancillary spaces behind and in some instances detached from the main house, with a somewhat irregular plan for kitchens, laundries, stables and barns. Frampton House of 1650 had small service extensions behind, as well as a 'kitchen court', a 'coal house' and a 'Little house', possibly a necessary or storage. The barn and stable asymmetrically flanked the 'Outward Court' at the front of the house.¹¹⁸ Although symmetry was sought on the main façade, less attention was paid to symmetrical arrangements on the sides and at the backs of houses.

This arrangement is markedly different from the attached, balanced service wings at Richard Clutterbuck's new Frampton Court. More emphasis on the landscape meant an architectural transition in importance from one to two facades, reserving the prospect over the landscape for the owner. The exterior therefore affected the peopling of interior spaces, a point to be explored more fully in the next chapter. During the eighteenth century, Palladian designs introduced symmetrical service wings (or offices). At Frampton Court the landscape was remade when the old house was torn down and the new house built, eventually incorporating a Gothick orangery as a focal point but without elaborate

¹¹⁶ GA/D149/Z1. The landscape is illustrated on a plan drawn in 1730, presumably to document the existing condition of the estate before Richard's major renovations. See GA/D149/P17.

¹¹⁷ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 23. G. Worsley, *The British stable* (New Haven and London, 2004).

¹¹⁸ See GA/D149/P17. I am especially grateful to Rose Hewlett for her insights into the location and development of the two houses.

gardens.¹¹⁹ Despite this, in the late-eighteenth century Bigland described the Frampton landscape as ‘very regular and neat, in the old Style of Gardening.’¹²⁰

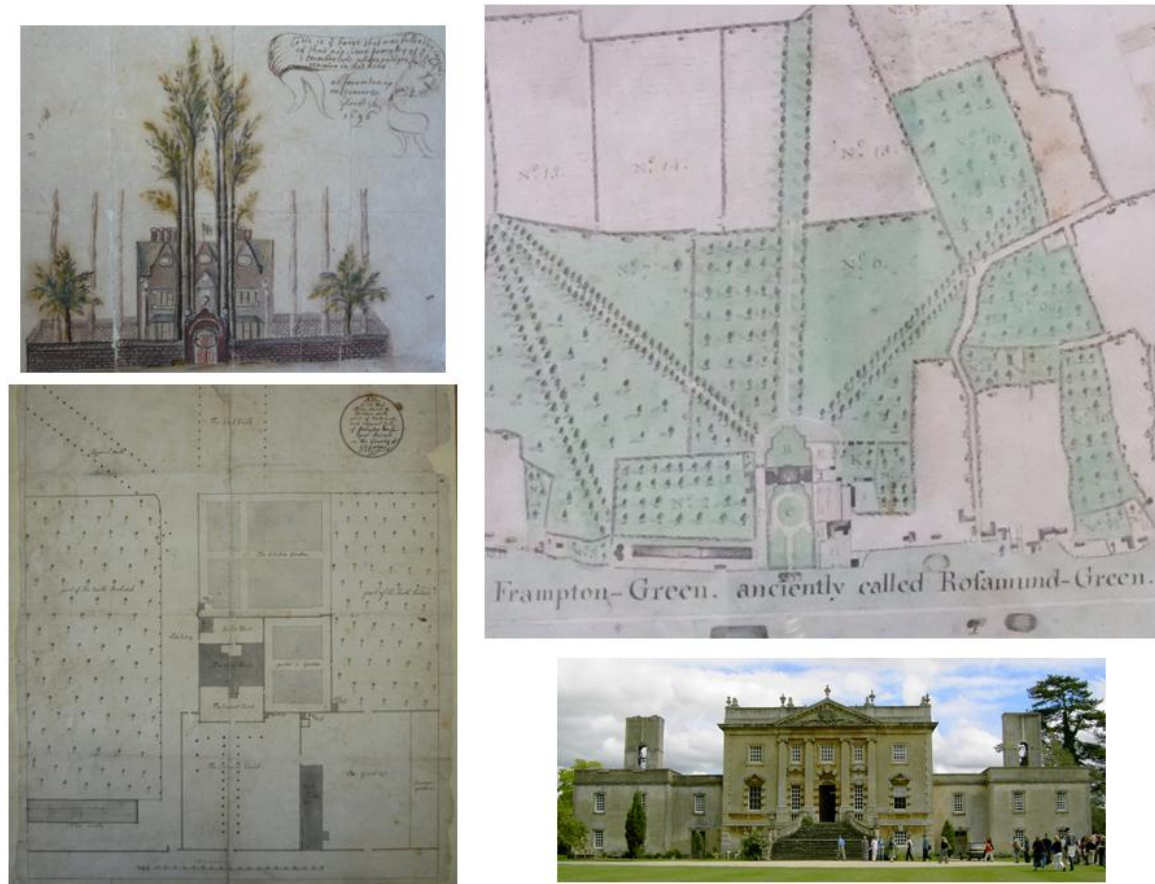


Figure 4.6: Frampton House (left) and Frampton Court (right) – house and landscapes.

In a few instances after the 1720s, gentlemen’s houses had gardens that were more elaborate. Painswick garden, one of the finest mid-eighteenth-century landscapes in the country, was the creation of a Tory family of Gloucester attorneys who provided two Members of Parliament between 1722 and 1742. Designed between 1738 and 1762, the garden of Benjamin Hyett departed from the sober provincial Classicism typified by the

¹¹⁹ Compare GA/D149/P17, Plan of Frampton House, 1730, and the 1768 estate map, Frampton Court collection, with accompanying terrier, GA/D149/E6. See the *Clutterbuck Diary* for Wednesday, July 14, 1773, describing a visit to Frampton Court and describing the greenhouse, plants in it, and the use of various parts of the house.

¹²⁰ Bigland, part 2, vol. 3, 618.

house built by his father to a more light-hearted landscape in the rococo style.¹²¹ In 1748 Thomas Robins painted the house and garden, which shows a striking composition of walks and buildings (Fig. 4.7). Bishop Pococke commented in 1757 that it was ‘a very pretty garden ... on an hanging ground from the house in a vale, and on a rising ground on the other side and at the end; all are cut into walks through wood and adorn'd with water and buildings, and in one part is the kitchen garden’¹²² Rudder drew attention to Hyett’s Painswick House, but not Paradise, an illustration of the distinction between a family seat of the now minor landed gentry and a clothier’s house that may have been let, or was possibly even unoccupied at the time.¹²³ The sophisticated Painswick garden seems to have been about playfulness, even debauchery, but in social terms the process of its creation helped to confirm the Hyetts as not only owners but shapers of the Gloucestershire landscape.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 198; T. Mowl and R. White, ‘Thomas Robins at Painswick,’ *Journal of Garden Design*, iv: 2, 163-178. See also M. Richards, ‘Two eighteenth-century Gloucester gardens’, *TBGAS*, xcix (1981), 123-126.

¹²² J. J. Cartwright, (ed.), *The Travels through England of Dr Richard Pococke, successively Bishop of Meath and of Ossory during 1750, 1751, and later years*, 2 vols, (London, 1888-9), II, 270.

¹²³ Milne and Mowl, *Castle Godwyn*, 9-10. See also C. Woodward, ‘Castle Godwyn’, *Country Life* (27 September 2007), 130-135.

¹²⁴ See also T. Mowl, *Historic gardens of Gloucestershire* (Stroud, 2002), 83-8.

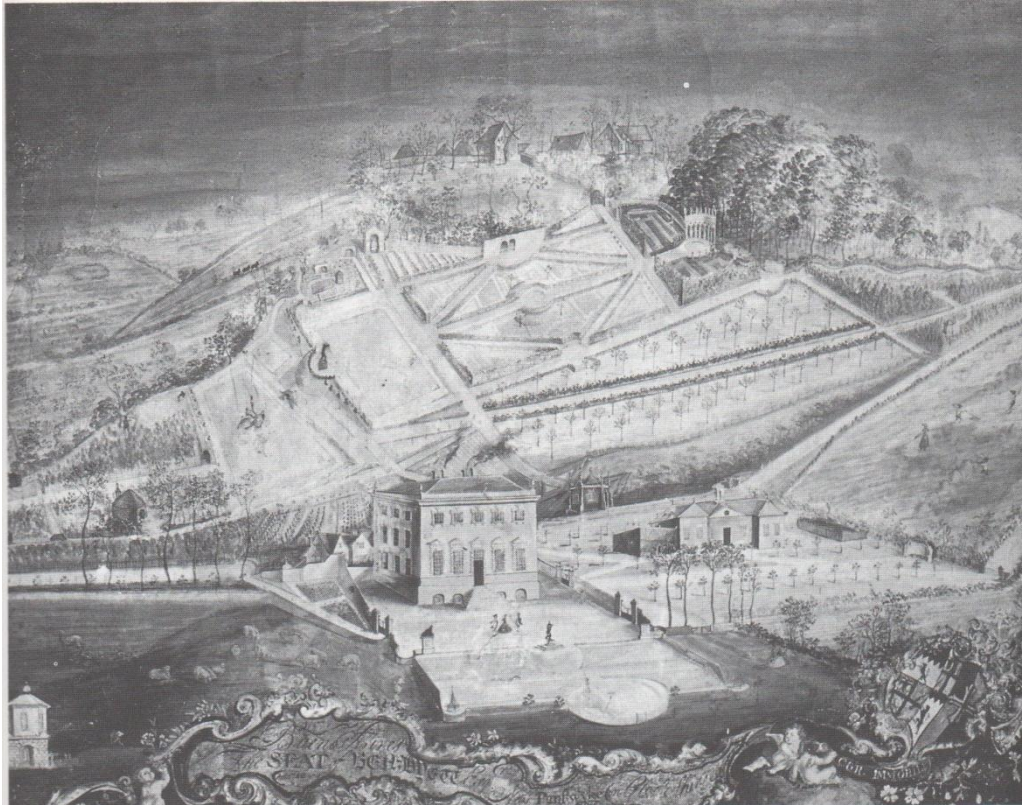


Fig. 4.7: Painswick garden by Thomas Robins, from Kingsley, *CHG II*, 197.

Like architecture, gardens and landscapes might have political dimensions.¹²⁵

David Lambert has argued that by the second half of the eighteenth century a Whig merchant aesthetic emerged at odds with the Whig aristocratic tradition of landscapes typified by Capability Brown and then Humphry Repton.¹²⁶ Linking this especially to the sense of betrayal felt by Bristolians over the American War, Lambert compares Whig aristocratic creations like Ralph Allen's Prior Park outside Bath with the work of 'Merchant-Gardeners' in Bristol. He suggests that Whiggish symbols in a number of gardens created by Bristolian gentlemen, including Thomas Goldney and William Champion, staked out political independence from the Whig aristocracy and reinforced a gentlemanly owner's sense of place, in both social and landscape terms.

¹²⁵ See especially Richardson, *Arcadian friends*.

¹²⁶ D. Lambert, 'The prospect of trade: the merchant gardeners of Bristol in the second half of the eighteenth century' in M. Conan, (ed.), *Bourgeois and aristocratic encounters in garden art, 1550-1850*, vol. 23 (Washington, D. C., 2002), 123-145.

Modest formal gardens were planted on the small plots of Clifton mansions (Fig. 4.8).¹²⁷ One major exception was Goldney's outstanding garden (marked X on Fig. 4.8), which was described as a 'minor Stowe on Clifton's crown'. Various visitors enthused over the garden. In the 1760s, the duchess of Northumberland praised Goldney's efforts whilst noting that they were 'formal but not ugly.' Mrs. Delany particularly admired the view from the terrace, from which 'we saw everything in the utmost perfection.'¹²⁸ The grotto at Goldney's House exerted a powerful influence on shell work and garden design, including a visit from the literary sophisticate Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson of Pennsylvania.¹²⁹ Goldney, however, seemed motivated more by science and aesthetics than politics in creating his garden over a period of more than thirty years.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ BRO/SMV/6/5/4/3: de Wilstar survey (1746).

¹²⁸ Quoted in Stembridge, *Thomas Goldney's garden*, 26.

¹²⁹ *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: A commonplace book from Revolutionary America*, ed. C. L. Blecki and K. A. Wulf (University Park, PA, 1997), 208-209.

¹³⁰ Stembridge, *Thomas Goldney's garden*. He was likely inspired by his father's interest in botany, see for example, James Logan Letterbooks, Box 2, B1, 86-7, JL to Thomas Goldney, 23 Oct 1727; Box 2, B2, 86, James Logan to Thomas Goldney, 30 June 1730. Copies at Stenton. Originals at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Figure 4.8: Detail of de Wilstar survey, 1746, BRO.

One final landscape brought together work and beauty: William Champion's Warmley, with its curious mixture of aesthetics, status, manufacturing and industry. William, son of Nehemiah Champion of Clifton Court and hence related by marriage to the Goldneys and other Quaker families, acquired a small property five miles from Bristol as a commercial investment and erected his house, gardens and mills at Warmley in perhaps the most unique setting in Gloucestershire.¹³¹ The large complex he established was a science and technology marvel in the processing of zinc, the smelting of copper and the

¹³¹ See Atkins Heritage, 'Champion's Brassworks & Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (unpublished report, January 2007), Figure 2 and especially 28-34. This is a useful recent report incorporating physical and archival research. I am most grateful to Paul Driscoll of South Gloucestershire Council for kindly sharing this report. On the Champion family see Day, 'Champion family (per. C. 1670-1794)', *ODNB*; for the brass industry Day, *Bristol brass: a history of the industry* (Newton Abbot, 1973) and A. Raistrick, *Quakers in science and technology* (London, 1950).

manufacture of brass goods. This integration of production on one site was a novel step, and included '15 copper furnaces, 12 brass furnaces, 4 spelter or zinc furnaces, a bater [battery] mill, or small mill for kettles, rolling mills for making plates, and cutting mills for wire'.¹³²

Immediately adjacent to the manufacturing works Champion built a five-bay, three-storey residence. As one clandestine visitor noted, 'The spelter works was built right in front of Mr Champion's windows... He is so fiery in his surveillance that the workers will hardly whisper his name.'¹³³ The house faced north overlooking a pleasure garden that included a 13-acre lake with an enormous statue of Neptune, an echo pond, boathouse, Gothic summerhouse, walled garden, and a substantial grotto. Although thoroughly dedicated to his role as an entrepreneurial man of science Champion created an attractive symbol of status in his house, where the manufacturing parts of the estate served as an expansive 'service yard' to the south and behind the house.

Proximity of work and domesticity was not a new concept, but Champion's innovative development at Warmley took the idea in a new direction and on a substantially greater level. Indeed, his mills may have held attraction on account of their ingenuity, rather than disgust at their noise and filth. 'Mr Champion's copper-works are well worth seeing', Arthur Young commented in 1768.¹³⁴ The garden physically and metaphorically brought together Champion's roles as inventor and gentleman. Thus allied, the site comprised an unusual example of industry, landscape and architecture, a 'utilitarian arcadia'.¹³⁵ Such an industrial aesthetic or 'art industrial' landscape brings into sharp relief the multiple identities of a man like Champion. Humphrey Repton's later remark

¹³² All this in 1754 according to Swedish industrial spy Reinhold Angerstein, quoted in Atkins Heritage, 'Champion's Brassworks & Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (unpublished report, January 2007), 21.

¹³³ *Ferner's Journal, 1759–1760: An Industrial Spy in Bath and Bristol*, ed. by A. P. Woolrich (Eindhoven, 1986), 32.

¹³⁴ A. Young, *A six weeks tour through the southern counties of England and Wales* (London, 1768), 150.

¹³⁵ Atkins Heritage, 'Champion's Brassworks & Gardens Conservation Management Plan', 22.

about ‘exposing the *Genius of the place* to all the horrors of fire and steam, and the clangour of iron chains and forcing pumps,’ captures the contested nature of many gentlemen’s landscapes.¹³⁶ In gardens, too, gentlemen owners staked out their own adaptable position in Britain’s hierarchy.

Conclusion

In an extreme fashion, Warmley displays many aspects of location that characterised gentlemen’s houses. The setting on a small estate combined work and politeness. There were gardens that ornamented the landscape, but the setting was particularly highlighted by a compact classical box that served as the primary residence of the owner. The situation of gentlemen’s houses reinforced their functions and helped to construct and express status.

Over the period, changes took place in the situation of gentlemen’s houses. Cotswold gentry houses on small estates predominated until about 1720. As Gordon Mingay argues, ‘Landed property was the foundation of eighteenth-century society’; it was, as he says, ‘supreme.’¹³⁷ Over time the relationship between land, building and social status shifted. Land remained important, but this chapter has illustrated that after the 1720s clothiers, merchants, government officials, professionals, linen-drapers, lawyers, and an occasional military officer undertook building projects in a range of situations. Gentlemen’s houses stood on enough land to provide physical distance between houses and their occupants and the rest of society, but this varied considerably. Many minor gentry continued to build small classical houses, drawing on income from their estates, and occasionally surrounding them with shaped landscapes and fashionable gardens. Increasingly, however, houses of this type were sited on smaller landholdings, sometimes

¹³⁶ Quoted in Lambert, ‘The prospect of trade’, 137.

¹³⁷ Mingay, *English landed society in the eighteenth century*, 1.

incorporated into village settings, as seen in Clifton. They should not, however, be interpreted as villas. In their function as primary residences they drew together urban and rural environments. Nascent industry, small estates, and polite life often came together closely, as at Warmley and in the Stroudwater valleys. In these venues new men carved out their place not by acquiring land but by constructing ‘modern-built houses’.

Late-eighteenth-century writers and surveyors like Rudder, Donn and Taylor discussed and depicted the houses and estates of gentlemen (or in some cases gentlewomen), with little distinction about estate size. The Donn and Taylor maps mostly delineate houses, not estates. The houses were the important distinction for gentlemen, whether situated on large estates or only a handful of acres. This suggestion reasserts architecture as a critical form of property and has important implications related to landed society and social mobility. It reinforces the social strategy of house-building and furnishing. The eighteenth century may have been an age of aristocracy, but through their houses, people both polite and commercial played a significant, and growing, social role. Having assessed the houses themselves, where they were built and what this tells us, we can move inside the houses to explore the production of space once the privileged threshold between interior and exterior was crossed.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ See A. Vickery, ‘An Englishman’s home is his castle? Thresholds, boundaries and privacies in the eighteenth-century London house’, *Past and Present*, no. 199 (May 2008), 153-158.

Chapter 5

Arranging Status

The architecture, cost, exterior decoration, and situation of gentlemen's houses all conveyed significant messages about their residents, but it was on the interior that some of the most important aspects of status played out. The next two chapters move inside the houses in this study to develop a better understanding of how they were laid out, what rooms they contained, how those layouts and rooms changed over the course of the period and, perhaps most importantly, how they were furnished with objects that constructed everyday life and social behavior.

Entering houses presents challenges and opportunities. Whereas the buildings themselves may survive in some form, owners frequently remade or substantially altered interiors, making identification of period features a thorny problem. It is also very rare indeed to find furnishings in anything like their original arrangement. Yet evidence from surviving interiors, floor plans, inventories, receipts, account books, and extant furnishings illuminates how gentlemen arranged and finished their houses. Careful reconstruction of interiors provides critical information about how the physical surroundings of gentlemen builders and owners defined their status and shaped their mode of living.

Study of domestic interiors reinforces that gentlemen's houses had multiple functions. As centers of domestic life, showpieces of display, and theatres for status construction, gentlemen's houses put objects into action repeatedly to reinforce social status. Spatial organization and floor plan are keys to this process. Space reflects social organization but also provides the 'medium through which society is reproduced.'¹ The interrelationship between spatial organization, interior finish, furnishing arrangement, and

¹ A. Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 2007), 2.

the ways people interacted with these spaces represented strategies that helped to define social status.

This chapter develops the theme of building and finishing a house as a key social strategy by examining how gentlemen-owners constructed, arranged and decorated their interiors. First, the chapter assesses the size of ‘gentleman’s houses’ in more detail. Secondly, an analysis of floor plans describes the arrangement of space within these houses, considering how people conceptualised and used space in this particular size of dwelling. Finally, it explores ways in which interior appearance and the hierarchy of finish level conveyed important messages about the value of each room. Locations, access, and interior finishes helped to establish the hierarchy of spaces.²

The space of their houses defined gentlemen. Brief glimpses at grander country houses and houses lower on the social scale reveal that gentlemen’s houses were distinct in their size, plan, arrangement, and finishing of space. The great success of this architectural form was its inherent flexibility. Gentlemen builder-owners adapted the compact floor-plan of their ‘modern-built’ houses to meet their specific needs. These houses had four rooms per floor, which meant that the arrangement of space remained largely constant over the period. Several variations of floor plan, however, signaled that even this basic plan could be flexible and adapted in different ways. There was no linear evolution from one plan of gentleman’s house to another, although how rooms were used did vary.

Size, arrangement and finish precisely articulated social messages. These houses combine generic adaptability with individual choices made by genteel builder-owners. This adaptability enabled the social functions of houses to change and shift over time. In this way, spaces shaped social behaviours at the same time that objects, and the sociability they enabled, gave meaning to spaces. By mining interiors for their meaning and coded

² See J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*; J. Ayres, *Domestic interiors*; A. Gomme and A. Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house: from castle donjons to Palladian boxes* (New Haven and London, 2008).

values, this chapter situates the ‘gentleman’s house’ within the broader context of ideas about spatial arrangement in eighteenth-century England. This in turn sets the stage for further consideration of furnishings and social action in the next chapters

The size of gentlemen’s houses

Building size and arrangement is one measurement of elite housing and in this regard small classical houses bear little resemblance to large country houses. During the eighteenth century, compact, symmetrical houses differed greatly from larger houses with long ranges of rooms.³ The greater number and variety of rooms in larger country houses reflected a grander scale and more elaborate finishing. Gentlemen were not eager to replicate larger houses. By almost every measurable – cost, size, volume, number of spaces, use of space, or decoration – the gentleman’s house stands above the threshold needed to maintain a genteel life but well below the level of the Berkeleys, Bathursts, and Blathways. Although occasionally and in specific ways, such as decoration in a parlour, gentlemen builder-owners might seek to replicate aristocratic or greater gentry interiors, in the main they displayed a consciousness of their position, fitting out their interiors in ways that conveyed gentility but were for the most part not elaborate or highly decorative.

The calculations employed by Lawrence and Jeanne Stone provide a method for linking domestic space with social status. The Stones used a formula that assigned one unit to every 100 square feet of floor space for *living quarters*.⁴ They assigned one-third of the total floor space in most houses to the offices or service spaces, which were not included in their calculations. They made small allocations for living space in attics and low third floors: one-tenth of a unit for attics and one-half a unit for low third floors. On this basis, the Stones included houses of 50 units or greater in their analysis. Most of the

³ Mander, *Country houses of the Cotswolds*, 97.

⁴ For discussion of their methodology, see L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, Appendix II, 437-458.

houses they assessed were significantly larger than this, reaching into the hundreds of units.⁵ Fewer than 20% of country houses they studied were between 50 and 59 units in measurement.⁶ As an investigation into social mobility, their study set the bar rather high.

By comparison, a relatively typical gentleman's house was a rectangular box of 50 feet by 40 feet, equalling 2,000 square feet per floor. Including a basement and garrets or attic spaces, the average gentleman's house contained perhaps 6,000 square feet within its main block. Allocating space for service functions yields a total of 4,000 square feet, or 40 Stone units, making the average gentleman's house a good deal smaller than the most modest that the Stones considered. Another feature of space almost entirely neglected is that of volume. Rooms with similar dimensions in plan could vary considerably in their height.⁷ This approach to space in three dimensions offers another way of characterizing how rooms conveyed status. No 'gentlemen's houses' in this study had, for instance, double-height halls or saloons, as found in larger houses. This meant lower cost for gentlemanly builders accompanied by a concomitant lack of grandeur.

Using the Stones' calculations, most of the 'gentleman's houses' in Gloucestershire are between thirty and sixty-five units. The majority fall between forty and fifty. Of the houses in Gloucestershire and Bristol, the largest in 'Stone units' include Bourton House (c. 1710) in Bourton on the Hill, containing sixty-eight units and the Isaac Ware-designed Clifton Hill House (1747) in Clifton near Bristol with sixty-two. Frampton Court (1731-3) contained fifty-nine units of living space. Wotton, a seven-bay house near Gloucester built in 1707, has forty-seven, whilst Nether Lypiatt Manor (c. 1717) contained forty-four units. The smallest and one of the earliest houses, Poulton Manor, (c. 1690) had no offices or attached outbuildings, and contained twenty-nine units. Their size combined relative

⁵ L. and J. F. Stone, *An open elite?*, especially Tables 2.6 and 2.7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 378 – 380, Figs. 11.5-11.7.

⁷ See, for example, the comparison of double and single-storey entrance halls in Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 23-38.

affordability with enough space to differentiate function, achieve higher degrees of room specialization, accommodate a range of consumer goods and furnishings, host servants to do work, and remove kitchen smells and the threat of fire. In other words, they achieved a size that enabled genteel displays of status for a combination of wealthy merchants, professional men, and landed elites.

Floor plans and the arrangement of space

How that space was arranged was critical. Building plans signal the importance of rooms and how they were meant to be used. The relationship between exterior appearance and interior arrangement in symmetrical Georgian buildings is not entirely clear. Ayres states that, 'The regular and inscrutable facades of the eighteenth century masked a consistency of plan but a great diversity of interior treatment.'⁸ Bernard Herman, meanwhile, suggests that exteriors reflected local conditions whilst interiors were relatively generic throughout the British Atlantic World.⁹ These ideas, which highlight the interchange between external appearance, construction material, floor plans, and interior finish, are not wholly incompatible and it is possible to test and develop them in relation to gentlemen's houses.

Most eighteenth-century houses grew out of their plans.¹⁰ Girouard traced dramatic changes in floor plans from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries in larger country houses. By the mid-eighteenth century, the 'formal house', characterized by a series of sequential, increasingly private chambers that created an enfilade emanating from a centrally-located salon, was supplanted by the 'social house'.¹¹ With rooms organized

⁸ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, viii.

⁹ Herman, *Town House*, 39.

¹⁰ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 3.

¹¹ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, chapters 5 'The Formal House' and 7 'The Social House', especially 123-128, 144.

around a central staircase, the ‘social house’ allowed more flexible social entertaining.¹² By about 1770, this transformation had replaced an axial or linear concept of space with one based on circular movement. Klein sees this as a move away from ‘ceremoniousness, formality and grandeur’ and toward ‘comfort, convenience, and accessibility.’¹³

Although some of these changes permeated other housing forms, direct comparison between larger country houses and small classical houses can easily be overstated. Amongst Gloucestershire gentlemen’s houses the amount of floor space and the limited number of rooms makes distinguishing a ‘formal house’ difficult. Girouard highlighted Nether Lypiatt Manor, with ‘matching sets of apartments’, as a small example despite the lack of a central hall and saloon.¹⁴ Nether Lypiatt’s modest size and room arrangement, however, stretches the definition of the ‘formal’ house nearly beyond recognition (See Fig. 5.1). With entry directly into a heated hall, it hearkened back to an earlier spatial arrangement, whilst accommodating four reception rooms on the ground floor and four main chambers on the first floor, which suggested a forward-looking flexibility of spatial organization. Not unusually in gentlemen’s houses, two first-floor chambers contained small closets as more private spaces, and primary access to each of the chambers was from a landing at the top of the stairs, with secondary access to two chambers from the back stairs. Comparing Nether Lypiatt to a larger house hosting multiple apartments in enfilade fails to account adequately for the individual character, spatial arrangement, and inherent flexibility of smaller houses and their plans.

The compact plan typical of gentlemen’s houses appeared in a range of variations, and this study builds on much valuable work that has focused on larger examples.¹⁵ In

¹² Ibid., 194.

¹³ Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, 887.

¹⁴ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 151.

¹⁵ The compact floor plan has received its fullest treatment in Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*. See also Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 150-151; Worsley, *Classical architecture in Britain: the heroic age*, 10-19, 21-31; Cooper, *The houses of the gentry*, 244-249; J. Bold,

their recent study charting the development of ‘compact country-house planning’, Andor Gomme and Alison Maguire suggested that the ‘plan of six rooms on a floor’ highlighted in James Gibbs’s *The book of architecture* was ‘adopted, with minor variations, in many hundreds of houses built country-wide throughout the eighteenth century’.¹⁶ This is still larger, however, than the houses considered here. The compact, double-pile plans of Gloucestershire gentlemen’s houses most closely approximate what Gomme and Maguire call the ‘square pile’.¹⁷ In America, more study has been given over to ‘the classic Georgian plan of four rooms on a floor divided by a stair passage from front to back,’ but far less attention has been paid to this plan in Britain.¹⁸

Until the late eighteenth century, the compact double-pile plan was used almost exclusively by the gentry.¹⁹ Physical and documentary evidence combine to outline the spatial arrangement of a ‘gentleman’s house’. Between 1650 and 1750, the number and kinds of rooms, as well as specific building features, differentiated gentry houses from those of yeomen in Gloucestershire. The gentry had an average of 12 rooms and yeomen 7.5.²⁰ By comparison, data from Glamorganshire indicates that ‘secondary’ gentry families lived in houses with an average of 9.43 hearths, whilst ‘tertiary’ gentry families owned houses averaging 5.55 hearths.²¹

‘The design of a house for a merchant, 1724’ *Architectural History*, vol. 33 (1990), 75-82 is a useful consideration of a merchant’s house in Bristol; for the evolution of floor plans of ‘villas’ see especially P. Smith, ‘Plain English or Anglo-Palladian? Seventeenth-century country villa plans’ in Airs and Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain 1500-1700*, 89-110.

¹⁶ Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 73, 289-290.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 282.

¹⁸ Research from Britain’s colonies is invaluable in thinking about a layout of two piles, with a row of rooms at front and back, and an arrangement of four main spaces on each floor. See Bushman, *The refinement of America*, 7. See also D. Reiff, *Small Georgian houses in England and Virginia: origins and development through the 1750s* (London, 1986); B. B. Moody, *Prodigy houses of Virginia: architecture and the native elite* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008).

¹⁹ Hall, ‘Yeoman or Gentleman?’, 8.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5. It should be noted that Hall’s sample is not restricted to classical houses. Rooms and room use are also explored in Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, chapter 6.

²¹ My calculations based on Philip Jenkins, *The making of a ruling class: the Glamorgan gentry, 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983), Appendices 2 and 3, 292-293.

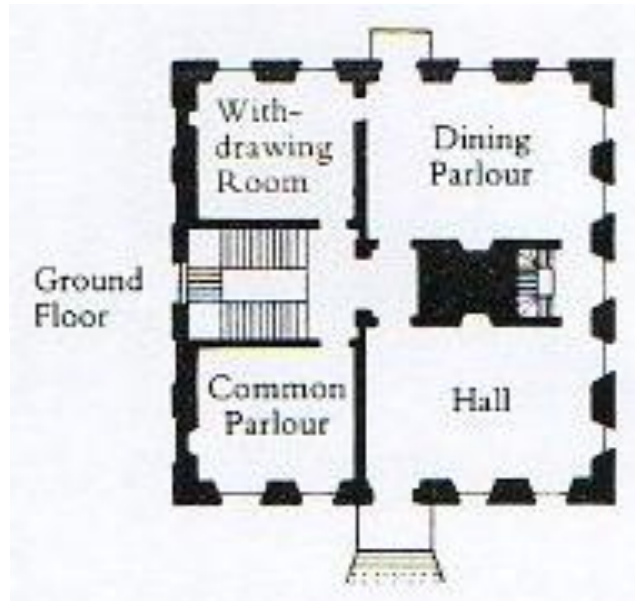
The more accurate description of a typical ‘gentlemen’s houses’ would have been four *primary* rooms on the ground floor. In addition to four main rooms, many houses in this study had several smaller ancillary spaces. The floor plan usually included a hall for entry, a space for a stair enabling vertical access, and at least three further rooms intended for a range of sociable or household functions. As many as five or six spaces might normally be contained in the main block on the ground floor of the typical ‘gentlemen’s houses’, with perhaps fifteen to twenty spaces in total, including chambers and garret spaces above the ground floor. The basement or attached offices or wings accommodated additional rooms for storage and service functions.

In practice, gentlemen’s houses varied in how their space was laid out. Many house plans resulted from being built around or incorporating part of an earlier building, as at Clifton Wood House, Bigsweir house, Bicknor Court and even, perhaps surprisingly, Paradise. Houses designed by architects, such as Frampton Court, Redland Court, and Clifton Hill had more regular plans.

Twenty-eight floor plans that can be reliably reconstructed suggest several variations. The hall was a universal feature governing access, and its location and relation to other spaces made a difference to how people experienced and moved through space. Its development in many ways demonstrated the reluctance of English gentlemen to give up the idea of the Great Hall.²² Four houses had heated halls entered directly from the exterior, a throwback to older plans. Three were built before 1720, such as Nether Lypiatt (Fig. 5.1), although the fourth – Bigsweir house – was probably built in the 1750s.

²² Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 23.

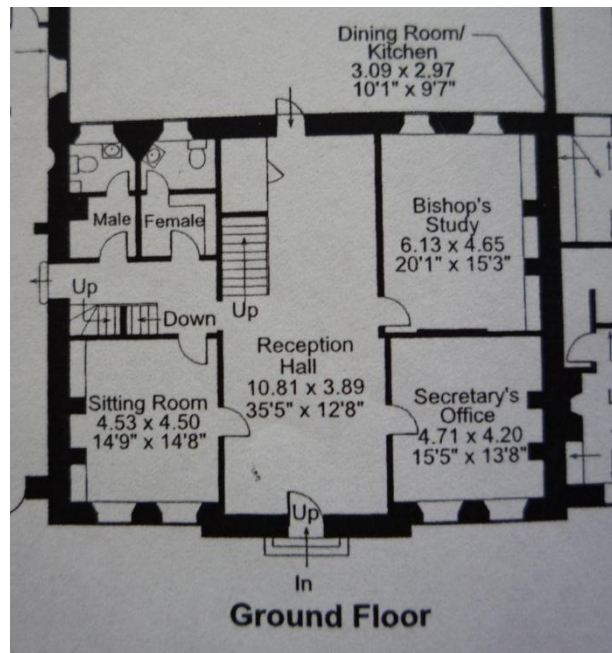
Fig 5.1: Nether Lypiatt, c. 1710. Hall directly entered with stairs offset. From Girouard, *Life in the ECH*, 151.



Six further houses had central halls that functioned as both a room and passage. In the main hall at Wotton (1707), highlighted by a stone floor, one immediately encountered a panelled staircase with an open string and turned balusters, although no fireplace, making it unlikely that this space was intended to function as a place of frequent sociability. A combined stair and hall feature, usually unheated, is shared with Hill House (probably 1730s) in Mangotsfield near Bristol.²³ Seventeen had a centre hall that served primarily as a passage, as appeared at Bishop's House (Fig 5.2).

²³ BRO/14581/HA/D/313: Particulars & Conditions of Sale, Hill House, Mangotsfield, 9 April 1874. The floor plan shows the main house from the 1730s as about 45' x 40', with later additions. The description of the estate emphasizes its rural situation nearly one hundred and fifty years after it was built.

Fig 5.2: Bishop's House, 1711. Centre hall serving primarily as a passage with stairs to rear. The most common floor plan. Courtesy of owner.



A later house of the early 1760s that points toward the suburban villa, Royal Fort near Bristol, has a floor plan that might be expected to appear in a larger house: an entrance hall and large centred saloon behind, with drawing room and parlour on one side of the hall, and another parlour and staircase on the other side adjacent to the service wing (Fig. 5.3).

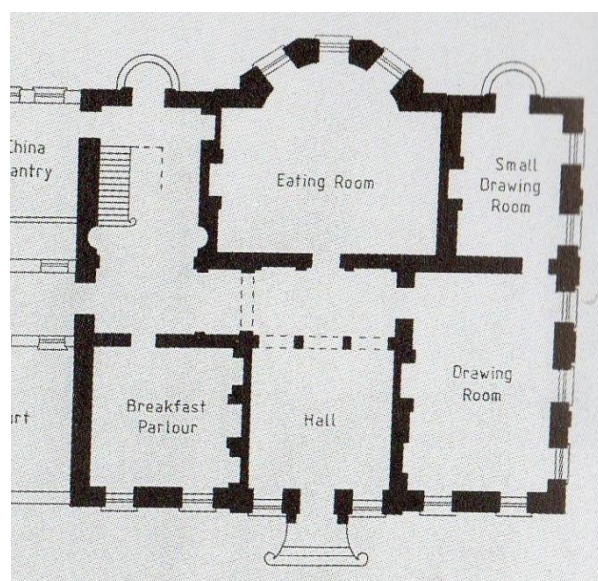


Fig 5.3: Royal Fort, 1758-1761. Hall as passage with stair in separate space. From Ison, *Georgian buildings of Bristol*, 192.

The location of the stairs was an impressive and important feature of these houses. Dog leg stairs or stairs rising around three sides of a well, like those found in all gentleman's houses, took up three to five times as much space as the spiral stairs found in the dwellings of much of the population.²⁴ Stair location within houses varied and there was no clear pattern of arrangement over time or location. Centre halls with stairs directly to the rear, most often set off by the visual divider of an arch, were most common, although stairs set off to the side were also not unusual. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, several houses began to have stairs in spaces separate from the hall, such as at Royal Fort. Beyond the central feature of the hall and stair, the remaining spaces on the ground floor were intended to fulfil various functions, usually including one highly finished room for fashionable sociability, a second room for more private interaction, and a third space of variable use.

The compact double-pile plan offered an arrangement that was economical and flexible. Although 'ready access and an easy flow through the house are the characteristic marks of the planning of houses of this type', such floor plans presented an ample opportunity for segregating and governing movement through space.²⁵ Smaller early examples such as Poulton Manor (c. 1690) and the Chantry (c. 1707) had only a front entrance and back entrance. Wotton had front and garden entrances as well as a long service tunnel into the basement, whilst Bishop's House in Clifton had front, back, and side service entrances. By comparison with smaller, more vernacular buildings, the number of spaces allowed for ingress and egress dependent on function, as well as room

²⁴ Ayres, *Building the Georgian city*, 120.

²⁵ A. Gomme, 'Halls into Vestibules', in Airs and Tyack, (eds.), *The Renaissance villa in Britain 1500-1700* (Reading, 2007), 38-63, quote on 40. Cornforth argues that in larger country houses, the main door was seldom used, with the preference for side entrances. The number of entrances in compact plans tended to be rather smaller, suggesting that this practice was less likely to have been true of gentlemen's houses. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 19-20.

specialization that created multiple levels of segregation. Equally, such arrangements created a sense of permeability.

Uniting exterior and interior, the arrangement of windows was an important feature that defined the symmetrical appearance of these buildings and dramatically affected practical conditions such as light and air.²⁶ Fenestration in the eighteenth century was largely about light and sight: how light entered rooms in the day hours and illuminated spaces for work or recreation, and how an individual could see out from their house, for a range of practical and aesthetic reasons. In the early part of the period internal space often dictated window positioning. Houses built before about 1720 exhibit regular arrangements of windows on the main or show façade but often a rather more haphazard arrangement on the other facades, as seen at Stapleton Court (fig. 5.4). The fenestration is disrupted on the rear facade by diagonally arranged windows located to provide light and a pleasing internal arrangement for the main staircase in the house. Sandywell Park also had an asymmetrical rear façade, which is unsurprising given that the service area was located behind the house and was walled off from the remainder of the quite elaborate pleasure gardens and containing a series of service outbuildings.²⁷

²⁶ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, chapter 5.

²⁷ Although the windows may have been re-arranged when the large wings were added in the 1720s, physical evidence suggests that the windows were not aligned in a regular pattern even when the house was initially built.



Fig. 5.4: Stapleton Court, early-eighteenth century.

As the symbolic importance and fashion of a symmetrical façade increased, floor plans came increasingly to accommodate the regular exterior arrangement of windows. By the mid-eighteenth century, polite architecture demanded greater regularity. Beginning especially after 1730, architect-designed houses such as Frampton Court, Redland Court, and Clifton Hill House displayed greater degrees of symmetry. This was in keeping with reigning Palladian design ideas and also highlights one difference between architect and craftsmen designed houses. As Gomme and Maguire point out, ‘once classical design required total symmetry on each façade, the exterior imposed considerable restrictions on the disposition within.’²⁸ The kinds of windows were also an indicator of status, particularly as sash windows relatively quickly replaced casement windows around 1700.²⁹ Some houses continued to combine window types, with sash installed on some facades whilst retaining casement or cross mullioned windows elsewhere.³⁰

²⁸ Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 3.

²⁹ Ayres, *Building the Georgian city*, 145.

³⁰ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 75-78. Ayres notes on 78 that sash are often found on principal elevations in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but casement in other areas. Nether Lypiatt, for instance, has cross-mullioned windows on the north side, and sash windows on the front, which Kingsley suggests may have been installed after John Coxe inherited the house in 1728. Kingsley, *CHG II*, 182.



Fig 5.5: Wotton, c. 1707, from Atkyns (1712).

Landscapes and gardens affected space arrangement, and views sometimes defined a room's place in the spatial hierarchy. Best rooms tended to be located to take advantage of prospects, whether those overlooked a small country estate or the city and quays of Bristol, whilst consciously avoiding service areas. The most finely-finished room at Wotton house, unusually located on the first floor at the rear of the house, afforded views over formal gardens to the city of Gloucester with its striking cathedral, an interesting example of the rural incorporating the urban (Fig 5.5).³¹ The best bedchambers at Frampton Court faced the garden and wider parkland, rather than the village and its green. At Goldney House in Clifton, the 'Best Room southwards' overlooked Thomas Goldney's famous garden and the view over Bristol beyond.³² Although these houses may not have been associated with large estates, their use of borrowed landscapes was a clever and sensitive response to their environment.

Taking in surroundings and situation associated internal display with external performance. At Poulton, the fully-panelled southwest room was likely the parlour.

³¹ Atkyns, between 428 and 429.

³² UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

Although the fireplace has rather crude Doric pilasters and an exposed summer beam bisects the room, this was clearly the best finished space in the house. Likely a secondary parlour stood opposite on the front façade with an interior kitchen behind.³³ Hence a front and back distinction existed. The Chantry in Berkeley (c. 1707) likewise had a rather narrow centre hall, with the best rooms to the south facing the gardens, church and Berkeley castle.³⁴ Sandywell Park's interior, which may have been reconfigured and changed when large wings were added in the 1720s, had a substantial entrance hall, likely with the better rooms facing the front. Bishop's House in Clifton, Cote, Goldney Hall, Bishopsworth Manor, and Clifton Court had the best rooms to one side of the hall, whilst Pitchcombe House, Warmley House, Bicknor Court, Eastbach Court, Hill House in Rodborough had best rooms occupying the front of dwelling on either side of the hall. The Old Vicarage (1734) contains a large, off-centre entry hall with a drawing room or parlour at the front and a back parlour behind.

Despite being even smaller than the Gibbs ideal, gentlemen's houses with four rooms on a floor could signify ample status. Notions about arrangement of space in the small classical house were central to how they functioned on both a practical, day to day level and as a symbolic manifestation of social position. The plans of 'gentlemen's houses' should not be seen as a linear model. They were large enough to allow for a considerable degree of room specialization, although households tended to use individual rooms throughout the period for a range of overlapping functions. Their adaptable basic layout provided a number of rooms but without the high degree of specialization found in larger houses. These flexible houses reflected the flexible status of their owners.

³³ Poulton Manor floor plans, courtesy of the owner.

³⁴ Conjectural 1707 floor plans by Dr. Patrick Tierney, The Jenner Museum. Many thanks to Dr. Tierney for kindly sharing his work with me.

Interiors and spatial hierarchies

If the architectural plan of rooms governed how a gentleman's household interacted with space, how the rooms were used and what his house looked like on the interior provided further indicators of social status.³⁵ The natural changes in room function over time render determining the use of spaces or even room names with certainty a difficult process. Architectural evidence such as the position of a room within the building and its aspect, the level of interior finish, and its interaction with other spaces allow exploration of a room's intended use. These feature also guide our understanding of how people used a room on a daily basis. An analysis of floor plans helps to construct a general hierarchy of rooms and outline how space functioned. Households expressed status spatially and access to personal space and the ability to govern such spaces related directly to position within the domestic hierarchy.³⁶

The sales advert from 1755 describing, 'A MODERN-BUILT HOUSE, with four rooms on a floor, fit for a Gentleman, with all the convenient Offices and Outhouses,' presents questions about the arrangement of the typical gentleman's house. What were the four rooms on each floor? Where were they located and how did they interrelate? What were the 'Offices and Outhouses' mentioned, and what was their relationship to other parts of the main house? At the beginning of the period, the four main rooms in small classical houses most often included a hall and two parlours. For example in 1688, Lower Slaughter Manor had a 'Hall', 'Great Parlour', and a 'Little Parlour'.³⁷ The fourth space varied: sometimes a 'buttery', or service room such as a kitchen. Later, when the hall developed into more of a passage, it was often not counted as a separate room, even though it functioned as an important space governing vertical and horizontal movement through the

³⁵ Eighteenth-century architectural books 'emphasize the symmetry and geometry of the house but seldom explain how they worked.' Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 275.

³⁶ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 203.

³⁷ GA/D45/F2: Inventory and valuation of goods of Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 31 January 1687/8.

house.³⁸ On the ground floor, in addition to the Hall, there might be two or three parlours, with perhaps a dining room or kitchen occupying the fourth space. Although this totals five rooms, the number of principal ground floor rooms remained the same: four.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, the typical gentlemen's house contained a hall and stair, a best parlour, a common parlour, and a final space, occasionally a third parlour, study or other room. Throughout the period, the four main rooms on the first floor invariably served as bedchambers. In the late-seventeenth century, chambers were often named in relation to the ground floor room that they stood above, as in the 'Parlor Chamber', 'Passage chamber' and Hall chamber' at Frampton house.³⁹ Bedchambers frequently included subdivided smaller rooms such as closets or cabinets that meant that more than four individual spaces existed.⁴⁰ These were particularly noteworthy as private spaces within the household.⁴¹ Second storeys or garrets, in most instances the domain of the servants rooms, were smaller, tucked under the eaves, and more numerous. Sometimes these rooms served as chambers for children, other members of the family or visitors.

Two spaces in particular defined a genteel house and set it off from those lower down the social scale: grand staircases and parlours.⁴² Every gentleman's house invariably included a main staircase. The size of the staircase, the amount of space it took up in a dwelling, and its construction and ornamentation all set it apart as a status symbol that governed movement through spaces, especially vertically. Stairs of this sort were comparatively difficult to heat and expensive to build. Most often, they were

³⁸ At Paradise, for instance, there are four main rooms on the ground floor, not including the hall/passage.

³⁹ GA/D149/F7: 1683 Note of personal estate of John Clifford, with inventory of goods.

⁴⁰ See for example, R. B. St. George, 'Reading spaces in eighteenth-century New England', 90-103 and K. Lipsedge, "'Enter into thy closet": women, closet culture, and the eighteenth-century novel', 107-122, especially 109-112, in Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste, and material culture*; J. Bold, 'The design of a house for a merchant, 1724,' *Architectural History*, vol. 33 (1990), 75-82, 80.

⁴¹ Vickery, 'An Englishman's home is his castle?', 147-173.

⁴² Hall, 'Yeoman or Gentleman?', 2-19; On stairs, Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 152-172. See also Bushman, *The refinement of America*, 114, 118-122.

complemented by secondary staircases that could be used for service functions or personal access by members of the household.

Staircases framed by arches are a central feature in many gentlemen's houses, emphasising their importance. Large arches defining halls are a main characteristic of the interiors of nearly all of these houses, usually in line with the lateral load-bearing wall that separated the two piles of the double-pile plan.⁴³ Houses could be updated to accommodate fashion and introduce the functions of primary and secondary staircases. At Lower Slaughter, William Whitmore undertook building work to modernize the interior, including the installation of a new staircase.⁴⁴ Ornamentation of a staircase could add to its impressiveness. At Clifton Wood House, 'the finish of the main stairs, with marquetry inlays, and the provision of a separate servants' stair, set this house apart from almost all others built in Bristol in the first half of the eighteenth century.'⁴⁵ The amount of floor space occupied by staircases, the obvious effort that went into creating them, their ornamentation, and their visible position in most gentlemen's houses combined to make them a central feature of genteel dwellings.

As an important space of civility, the parlour allowed owners to set themselves apart from their social inferiors by their architectural detail and finish. Earlier lower status inventories frequently list beds along with other furniture, but this practice was less common after 1700, and there is no surviving record of such an arrangement in houses in this study.⁴⁶ Houses owned by gentlemen made this transition more quickly, and it is

⁴³ Only one house designed by John Strahan, Redland Court, treats the staircases very differently. Two staircases, both fairly substantial, are tucked on either side of the stone-floored entrance hall. Although one of these staircases was likely altered later in the eighteenth-century, such a double main staircase design - neither suggests a secondary or service stair - seems highly irregular. Kingsley calls this floor plan by John Strahan, 'fairly advanced for its date.' Kingsley, *CHG II*, 205; Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol*, 165, 170.

⁴⁴ GA/D45/E14: Bill of Thomas and Samuel Collett, 'From ye 1st of March 1759 to the 25th of December 1760 My Self 45 days Drawing Defining and Making Moulds for Masons and Attending the Workmen'.

⁴⁵ R. Leech, 'Clifton Wood House, Randall Road, Clifton, Bristol: An archaeological desk-based assessment' (unpublished report, 2003), 17. Many thanks to Dr. Leech for kindly sharing this report.

⁴⁶ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 11-13.

unlikely that gentlemen had beds in parlours. John Clifford at Frampton House had a ‘parlor chamber’ in 1683, although this was almost certainly the chamber over the parlour. Beds are found in every room listed as ‘chamber’, including the ‘passage chamber’, ‘little chamber’, ‘ye hall chamber’, ‘the Brewhouse chamber’, ‘my owne lodging chamber’, ‘ye childrens cockloft’ and ‘ye mens cockloft’. All these rooms, however, were likely on the first floor, and Clifford also had a ‘greate parlor’ and ‘Little parlor’ without beds on the ground floor.⁴⁷

Several parlours might therefore be found in the gentleman’s house, which highlights the range of daily activities that took place. Thomas Goldney’s inventory, for instance, lists a ‘Common Best sitting Parlour’ and a ‘Common sitting small parlour’ to go with the handsomely finished ‘Mahogany parlour’.⁴⁸ In the eighteenth century, Great Parlours, often with the house’s most elaborate decoration, transitioned from multi-use rooms – main meals, for instance, being taken there – to being almost exclusively about show, display and sociability. Parlours might be still be used for meals, especially the fashionable service of tea, as depicted in contemporary illustrations.⁴⁹ Other parlours, sometimes referred to as ‘common’, ‘little’ or ‘back’, were for everyday use.⁵⁰

Parlour spaces throughout the period were most often fully panelled, although this began to change after about 1740. Fireplaces in such public rooms, highlighted by columns, panelling, overmantel pictures and marble surrounds, served as important focal points and emphasized the social hierarchy of spaces.⁵¹ Pilasters particularly accentuated fireplaces in houses, as can be seen in an early, somewhat crude example at Poulton, and later in houses built before 1740 such as Cote (fig 5.6), Frampton Court, and Redland

⁴⁷ GA/D149/TRS80, Household inventory of John Clifford, c. 1683.

⁴⁸ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

⁴⁹ See for example, Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century decoration*, plates 37, 73, 76, 81, 89, 90, 105, 106, 133, 137, 138, 157

⁵⁰ Cornforth argues that because of the use of the Common Parlour for a range of daily activities, it should attract more attention as a room of key importance. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 38-40.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 121, notes the importance of marble for chimneypieces.

Court. These could be further emphasized by figured tiles, such as the floral arrangement comprised of Bristol tile at Frampton Court.⁵² Such decoration offered indications of intended use and where and how status was meant to be conveyed. Parlours, as evidenced by the frequency of decorative buffets cupboards often with shell motifs and fitted ledges meant for display of valuable objects, conveyed ideas of politeness and civility.⁵³



Fig 5.6: Cote, chimneypiece with pilasters.

The evolution of rooms meant the removal of practical functions to other parts of the house. Service spaces formed a critical part of gentleman's house design. In larger houses, there seems to have been no predominant place for location of the kitchen, and

⁵² Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 195 and fig. 259. At Frampton Court tiles appear in fireplaces on the ground and first floor. The best room has coloured tiles, the rest blue and white. Cornforth's figure 259 misidentifies the tiles as in the drawing room; they are in fact in the southeast bedchamber on the first floor, where the fireplace is framed by floor to ceiling ionic pilasters. This nevertheless offers a guide to the rank of individual rooms. Similar tiles are found in the Mahogany parlour at Goldney House, but not elsewhere. It is very possible that more examples existed but no others have survived in the Gloucestershire gentleman's houses surveyed.

⁵³ Buffet cupboards of this sort are found in at least twenty of the houses for which interior surveys have been conducted as part of this project. For discussion of the buffet and its importance for the display of plate, see Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 49-50.

within the compact plan over time it moved around from basements to external structures to attached pavilions.⁵⁴ Girouard comments that ‘the 1680s saw the beginning of the practice of moving the kitchen out of the main block and putting it in a separate pavilion’.⁵⁵ For various reasons, early in the period a few gentlemen’s houses contain kitchens in the main block.⁵⁶ Despite basements being used for other service functions there is little indication that they housed cooking facilities. In only two instances did kitchens exist in basements: Lower Slaughter Manor and Bourton House. Smaller houses like Poulton Manor and The Chantry had kitchens designed as an integral part of construction, as did Bishopsworth Manor. Sometimes this resulted from the classical part of the house being added to an existing building, as at Bicknor Court, where a fire prompted rebuilding of part of the house and a classical refronting for the whole, probably in the 1750s.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, as late as the 1740s a house like Pitchcombe still had a kitchen incorporated into the design for a new house. Despite this relatively late example, increasingly kitchens resided in detached service buildings, wings or offices.

Kitchens in service buildings (some the remnants of earlier buildings) became the norm for most gentlemen’s houses during this period, as seen at Nether Lypiatt, Cote, and Goldney house. Wotton’s service buildings were located on either side of the front courtyard.⁵⁸ The architectural arrangement of service buildings that reached a sophisticated form in the Palladian composition of main block, attached offices and linking hyphens multiplied the possible ways in and out of the building. Frampton Court has well-designed wings, or offices, to accommodate service functions, meaning that the ‘service areas’ of the property could be tidied up and located in the offices, allowing the back

⁵⁴ Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 185.

⁵⁵ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 151.

⁵⁶ The presence of a separate kitchen was an important shift in late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, see Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 266.

⁵⁷ Information from physical examination and from owner.

⁵⁸ See Figure 5.5.

façade of the house to overlook a new landscape.⁵⁹ Redland Court also had entrance and garden facades. These designs at once attempted to create status by segregating service functions at the same time that they opened many more possibilities for entry and ceded some control over access.

In providing for the service needs of gentlemen's households, the introduction of back stairs in larger houses was an important change in the late seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Gentlemen owners adopted this innovation somewhat languidly. Early houses such as Lower Slaughter Manor and Poulton did not include a service stair in their design. Bishopsworth Manor (c. 1720), while exhibiting an elegant façade, included a kitchen in the main block and no service stair, an indication of its modest intended use as house for a single daughter of the Smyth family.⁶¹ By 1720 nearly all gentlemen's houses incorporated a back stair, whether as part of a design for a new house or adapted from an older house. The presence of back stairs emphasizes the importance of service functions even in houses of relatively modest size and reinforces a shift in standards of gentility characterized by greater formal separation between family and servants.⁶² Although this growing divide can be overstated, as will be discussed in chapter 7, such architectural features are important indicators of social attitudes.

Other service spaces enabled the smooth functioning of a 'gentleman's house'. Physical evidence and reference to cellars in inventories indicate owners mostly used them for storage.⁶³ Servants Halls provided space separate from the family for servants, whilst kitchen 'garrats' were sleeping quarters for servants.⁶⁴ Brewhouses were common until

⁵⁹ See D149/E6 and map in Frampton Court collection, June 1768.

⁶⁰ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 138, 151.

⁶¹ Bantock, *The earlier Smyths of Ashton Court*, 256-7.

⁶² Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 140-143, 206-208.

⁶³ Physical inspection of nearly sixty houses suggest that basement spaces rarely contained fireplaces necessary for cooking, and extant inventories from Frampton House, Lower Slaughter Manor, Cote and Goldney House list cellars and kitchens separately.

⁶⁴ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, [Cote House].

the early-eighteenth century, when they tend to disappear. Frampton House in 1730 had Little houses – likely privies – and a coal house. Storehouses, woodhouses, summerhouses, coach houses, and garden houses also appear, demonstrating some of the spaces desired or required by gentlemen and their households. Such structures enabled the storage of food and fuel, sociability out of doors, the maintenance of gardens, even the storage of the high status coach.⁶⁵ They comprised the ‘convenient Offices and Outhouses’ where the work necessary to support the gentleman’s house took place.

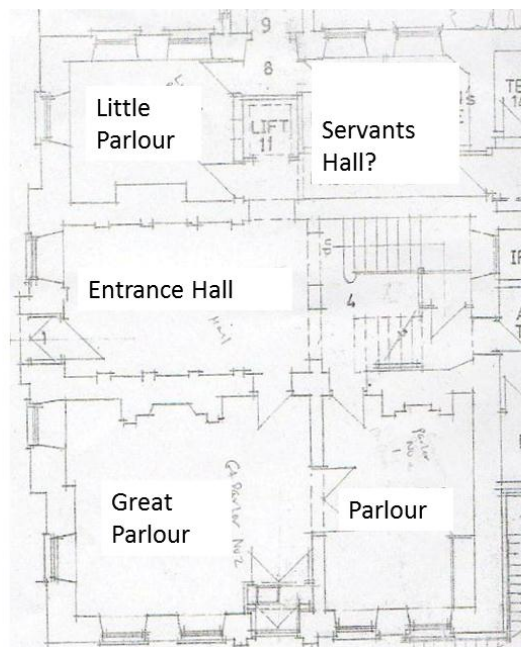


Fig 5.7: Cote plan, c. 1720. Courtesy of the Society of Merchant Venturers.

A brief tour of one house illuminates how space was arranged and how rooms were used (Fig 5.7).⁶⁶ At Cote, the Hall (fig 5.8), unpainted but fully-panelled in handsome oak wainscot, governed entry to the house. A set of double arches set off the stair, while

⁶⁵ See Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart England*, especially 100-107.

⁶⁶ This account is based on BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House) and E. Robinson, ‘Some Notes about Cote’ (Unpublished MS at Cote, April, 1971), and physical examination of the surviving house.

various routes moved visitors horizontally or vertically from public to more private spaces. Initial movement on the ground floor might have been from the Hall to the 'Great Parlour', where there was 'dark panelling like the hall'.⁶⁷ The oak panelling of this room was highlighted by large ionic pilasters and heavily figured marble around the fireplace, complemented by flanking cupboards at either side of the chimney breast. The 'Parlour' behind was less formal. On the ground floor, a third room, the 'Little Parlour', also had panelling floor to ceiling. Two routes were available to the first floor. The main stair from the hall led to a landing with a symmetrical arrangement of four doors to several bedchambers. Adjacent to the best bedchamber was a 'Closet', a smaller room used as private space. Alternately, a steeper climb up the back stair led eventually to the garrets, where five chambers housed members of the household or perhaps visitors. At the bottom of the back stair, access to the service wing was easy. A 'Servants Hall', 'Best Kitchen' and 'Back Kitchen' with three 'Garrats over ye Kitchen' enabled the work of cooking and cleaning to go on without interruption to the master of the house. The two cellars contained ample storerooms for food, work implements, and various liquids: 'syder', beer, and wine. Immediately adjacent to the service wing, a Coach house stood in a small service yard framed by walls and gates. In its arrangement, the areas for service mirrored the compact, efficient arrangement of the grander spaces of the 'gentleman's house'.

⁶⁷ Robinson, 'Some Notes about Cote', 7.



Fig 5.8: The hall at Cote.

Interior finishes

Interior finishes conveyed important meanings for gentlemen and their audiences. Although interior finishes are well-documented for many larger houses, and offer some guidance to gentleman's houses, studies of smaller houses are lacking. Because few are publicly owned or have had extensive research, technical investigation that can yield interesting results is virtually unknown for these gentlemanly houses in Britain.⁶⁸ Although extant indications of finish choices for 'gentlemen's houses' are scarce, documentation can be pieced together with surviving physical evidence to provide insights into decorative choices made by gentlemen builders and owners.

Decorative treatments evolved over the course of the period, and colour and texture could be achieved in various ways: wood panelling or joinery, painted walls, tapestry

⁶⁸ Despite Ian Bristow's work cited below, paint analysis is lacking for British interiors especially at the level of housing considered here. This is an area where more technical investigation could yield rich research results. See H. Hughes, (ed.), *Layers of understanding: setting standards for architectural paint research* (London, 2002); M. A. Jablonski and C. R. Matsen, (eds.), *Architectural finishes in the built environment* (London, 2009).

hangings, other textiles and wallpaper all contributed to colour schemes in rooms. A combination of these decorative features created colour and pattern on floors, walls and ceilings. Although artists frequently recorded decorative schemes done for larger houses, and some of these finishes have been explored in depth, little attention has been paid to more modest houses. Entry into gentlemen's houses was usually through the hall that was often floored with stone but occasionally with wood.⁶⁹ Stone flooring does not seem to have put eighteenth-century people off taking meals in their halls on occasion.⁷⁰ Wood flooring was typical of other rooms in these houses. Painted and decorated floors were virtually unknown in Britain and do not seem to have featured in gentlemen's houses.⁷¹ Parquet flooring was used in houses like Frampton Court and Clifton Wood House on the stairs, but this was uncommon.⁷²

Ian Bristow has led the way in reconstructing the use of colour in domestic spaces from the late seventeenth through the eighteenth century.⁷³ Neutral house-paint was the norm in the post-Restoration interior, and interiors often reflected what Roger Pratt called the 'natural colour' of building materials like stone and timber.⁷⁴ The result generally was a 'white ceiling being set above a white, stone colour, drab, brown or occasionally marbled wainscot'.⁷⁵ In country houses like Dyrham Park, the cheapest paint was used in common areas, with the more expensive decoration in bedchambers, and the most lavish finishes in closets.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ On stone floors, see Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 86-88.

⁷⁰ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 48.

⁷¹ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 90.

⁷² On floors, see C. Gilbert, J. Lomax, and A. Wells-Cole, *Country house floors, 1660-1850* (Leeds, 1987). Leech, 'Clifton Wood House', 17.

⁷³ I. Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors, 1615 – 1840* (New Haven and London, 1996). Descriptions of painting techniques and materials can be found in Ian Bristow, *Interior house-painting colours and technology, 1615-1840* (New Haven and London, 1996).

⁷⁴ Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 48.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

Into the eighteenth century, paint colours might be bold, but because few original paint schemes survive in gentlemen's houses it is difficult to say with any certainty how exactly paint colour was employed. William Salmon listed paint colours and prices in 1734, offering guidance about what was both costly and fashionable.⁷⁷ These paints cover a spectrum from off-whites and cream, stone, oak to deeper (and more expensive) browns. Most costly were golds, olives, blues, reds and then finally green. Insights into possible gentlemanly colour choices can be drawn from similar houses in North America, where paint analysis has identified interior colours from the first half of the eighteenth century.⁷⁸ Stenton, a small brick Georgian mansion in Pennsylvania from 1730, had a hall dado painted butter yellow. The fully-panelled great parlour was a medium grey, as was the partly-panelled common parlour behind. Such colours are reflected by contemporary conversation pieces depicting English interiors, although these pictures tend to reflect a somewhat higher level of interior finish than that found in gentleman's houses.⁷⁹

Wood panelling was common to better rooms in most grand houses until about 1750.⁸⁰ Gentlemen's houses invariably had at least one panelled parlour, although subsequent decorating campaigns have obscured whether panelling in most houses was originally painted and, if so, what colour.⁸¹ In a few cases the wainscoting remains unpainted, although panelling was likely not as dark as experienced today.⁸² The buffet cupboard at Frampton Court, exposed to limited oxidation as well as not having fallen prey

⁷⁷ W. Salmon, *Palladio Londinensis* (London, 1734), 57-58. Prices ranged from 'best white lead' at 4d. per pound to 2s. 6d. per pound for 'fine deep green'. Paint costs drawn from surviving accounts can be found in Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 35, and *Interior house-painting colours and technology*, Appendix A.

⁷⁸ See, for example, L. C. Keim, 'Stenton Room Furnishings Study' (MS report, 2010, on file at Stenton), M. Mosca, 'Stenton Paint Analysis' (unpublished report, 2000, on file at Stenton); J. G. Volk, (ed.), *The Warner House: a rich and colorful history* (Portsmouth, NH, 2006), highlights bold colour choice in an early American interior, see chapter 2, Fig. 2.7. Paint analysis largely originated in work at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia and has been utilized extensively there, W. Graham, 'Architectural paint research at American museums: an appeal for standards' in Jablonski and Matsen, (eds.), *Architectural finishes in the built environment* (London, 2009), 3-18.

⁷⁹ Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century decoration*, for example plates 80 81 90, 96, and 97.

⁸⁰ Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 53.

⁸¹ Surviving wainscot can be seen at Cote, Goldney House, Frampton Court and Eastbach Court.

⁸² Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 113.

to Victorian staining, retains a lighter and warmer tone compared with other wainscoting in the house. By the early-eighteenth century when Cote was built, oak panelling was common in better spaces, and left unpainted.⁸³ Cote exhibits a range of panelling, from relatively provincial panelling in the hall, with no frieze supported by the capitals, to well-built in the Great Parlour, with the presence of a drip on the cornice, a small feature denoting a high level of craftsmanship.⁸⁴

In the seventeenth century wainscoting was sometimes grained,⁸⁵ although when left unpainted, as seems to have been the case frequently in gentleman's houses, the choice of wood was important as a way of highlighting the natural grain. Gentlemen's house interiors occasionally incorporated re-used panelling and materials. Eastbach Court has decorative panelling from the sixteenth or seventeenth century in what was likely a back parlour, and panelling from the previous house can be seen in first floor closet spaces at Frampton Court. Bourton House has sixteenth-century panelling in several first floor rooms and the attics.⁸⁶ Panelling in gentlemen's interiors could be striking, as seen at Goldney house in Clifton. Thomas Goldney II likely installed a 'Mahogany Parlour' in the 1720s when he noted his house at Clifton was 'now standing and growing'.⁸⁷ Examination of the room shows it to be a fully panelled space with elaborate Grinling Gibbons-style carving over the fireplace, which was probably taken from another building and installed here when the room was built. If indeed this room dates to the 1720s it represents a fairly early use of mahogany, perhaps a testament to Bristol's role in the transatlantic trade and

⁸³ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 54. Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 38.

⁸⁴ I am particularly grateful to James Ayres for his observations about these features.

⁸⁵ Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 1, 11-12, 31-34.

⁸⁶ Kingsley, *CHG II*, 83.

⁸⁷ Will of Thomas Goldney II, quoted in Stembridge, *The Goldney family*, 111. See listing of the room in BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

Goldney's ready access to such goods.⁸⁸ Only the finest gentlemen's houses had paintings inserted into overmantels.⁸⁹

Panelling slowly declined in the eighteenth century on the basis of status and geography.⁹⁰ First, oak was superseded by painted softwoods, followed by a change in preference to stucco for grander rooms.⁹¹ In gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire, evidence suggests that this decline began about 1750. Although Isaac Ware discussed the relative merits of stuccoed, wainscoted and hung walls in *The complete book of architecture*,⁹² it does not seem that workmen erected any panelling at Clifton Hill House in the late 1740s.⁹³ Late in the period under consideration, more elaborate interior decoration appeared that reflected rococo fashion, such as plasterwork at Clifton Hill House (1746-52), Nibley House (1760s) and especially stunningly at Royal Fort (1758-1761). These houses begin to mark a stylistic change and significant departure in genteel attitudes to interiors.

Although there was no universal standard for colour symbolism, a hierarchy of colour originating in Stuart heraldic standards placed red or crimson as the highest colour, followed by green and then blue.⁹⁴ Owners utilised yellow fabrics, but yellow painted rooms appeared rarely before 1740.⁹⁵ Although such a hierarchy existed in grander houses, gentlemen's houses did not adhere strictly to this schema. Rooms listed in inventories were sometimes delineated according to paint colour, as was likely the case

⁸⁸ A. Bowett, 'The commercial introduction of mahogany and the Naval Stores Act of 1721', *Furniture History*, xxx (1994), 116-123. C. Edwards, *Eighteenth-century furniture* (Manchester, 1996), 77-78.

⁸⁹ Examples may be seen at Frampton Court and Goldney house.

⁹⁰ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 57.

⁹¹ Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 53. Cornforth notes that there a major change in the way houses were painted between 1700 and 1740 coincided with a move away from wood paneling left in its natural state. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 114.

⁹² Ware, *The complete body of architecture*, 469.

⁹³ BRO/09467/12/a: 'Notes and Receipts for House Building at Clifton 1746-47-48-49 + 1750 +c'.

⁹⁴ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 113-121; Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 173-175. Blue particularly became more popular during the eighteenth century, Cornforth, 120.

⁹⁵ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 121.

with the ‘Stone Parlour’ at John Elbridge’s St Michael’s Hill house near Bristol.⁹⁶

Elbridge’s bedchambers there, however, derived their room names from the fabric of their bed hangings, tapestries, and curtains.

This suggests that textiles played a particularly noteworthy role in colour schemes. As the most expensive category of domestic good after precious metals, textiles constituted a visible way of adorning a room with colour at the same time that they conveyed messages about the intended importance of the space.⁹⁷ Before mechanization, a relatively small privileged group were able to use fabric to any degree for decoration.⁹⁸ In the seventeenth century, hung textiles provided colour and pattern to walls. At Lower Slaughter Manor, Richard Whitmore had a ‘Purple Cloath bed imbroidered wth Slipp’s’, an elaborate and highly unusual use of textiles.⁹⁹ In the early 1730s, Richard Clutterbuck adorned the walls of a bedchamber at Frampton Court with tapestry hangings, possibly those left to him by his father.¹⁰⁰ James Rooke seems to have hung tapestries in the hall at Bigsweir House as late as the 1750s.¹⁰¹

Fabric used for bedhangings and window curtains constituted an expensive display.¹⁰² At Cote, for instance, four of five bedchambers on the first floor had window curtains. These can be ranked according to their fabric and colour, as suggested by

⁹⁶ BRO/AC/WO/10/18: March 1738/9, Inventory and Appraisal of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill. This might possibly refer to a stuccoed room, but this seems unlikely, see Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors*, 54.

⁹⁷ E. S. Cooke, Jr., (ed.), *Upholstery in America and Europe from the seventeenth century to World War I* (New York and London, 1987); P. Thornton, *Authentic décor: the domestic interior, 1660- 1920* (New York, 1984), especially 57 and 100 for window curtains. F. Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1840* (New York, 1984) has much to say of relevance to England.

⁹⁸ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 125.

⁹⁹ GA/D45/F2: Inventory and valuation of goods of Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 31 January 1687/8. For slips, see M. M. Brooks, *English embroideries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the collection of the Ashmolean Museum* (London, 2004), 94.

¹⁰⁰ GA/D149/F18 – draft will of Wm Clutterbuck, gent. (1726) and PROB11/623(1 July 1728). William’s final will leaves the ‘hangings and chairs in the Parlour Chamber’ specifically to Richard.

¹⁰¹ Surviving tapestries at Bigswier seem to have been fitted into the wall.

¹⁰² Thornton comments that, ‘The windows in most rooms of any importance were furnished with curtains by 1720,’ but this is based on study of grander interiors. Thornton, *Authentic décor*, 100 for window curtains.

inventory values.¹⁰³ In 1739 at Elbridge's Cote house, for example, the most expensively furnished bedchamber had a mix of colourful textiles, including a bed with 'Chint Furniture and with yellow Thrid Satin', '7 Setts Yellow Ditto window Curtains Valleons Cornishes', another bed with a 'Chint quilt Lined with Green Silk', a 'Guilt Leather screen', and ten fashionable 'India Back Chairs with Workd Seats', or needle worked embroidery. The predominant colours were yellow and green.¹⁰⁴ The second most expensive bedchamber details a room decorated in crimson throughout. Elbridge's 'Parlour' and 'Great Parlour' are furnished with chairs upholstered in 'blew Leather' and 'Black leathr' respectively.¹⁰⁵ It is unknown what colour Thomas Goldney's 'upper Yellow Room' was painted, but it took its name from the yellow worsted bedhangings and curtains.¹⁰⁶

During the eighteenth century the upholster or upholsterer became a major figure in interior decoration in grander houses, but, as was the case with architects, it is unclear what relationship gentlemen builders and owners had with this burgeoning profession.¹⁰⁷ It is possible to speculate that providing expensive cloth to customers enabled 'gentlemen clothiers' like Thomas and William Palling, Richard Hawker and Onesiphorus Paul, or a linen draper like Paul Fisher, to employ costly textiles to adorn rooms in houses as a mark of status. Since many gentlemen builder-owners in Gloucestershire relied on wealth generated in the textile trade, they may have been especially conscious with respect to such a status display.

¹⁰³ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House). The best bedchamber had seven sets of yellow satin window curtains, followed by '2 Setts Crimson Camblet' in the second chamber, a set of green curtains in the third most valuable chamber. The final room had two sets of 'Linnen' curtains.

¹⁰⁴ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 120, suggests that green was sometime thought 'a more agreeable colour for furnishing' and often chosen for best beds.

¹⁰⁵ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House)

¹⁰⁶ BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

¹⁰⁷ G. Beard, *Upholsterers and interior furnishings in England 1530-1840* (New Haven and London, 1997).

Wallpaper increased in fashion throughout the eighteenth century, although how quickly it became widespread remains a subject of debate.¹⁰⁸ In the period between 1720 and 1770, wallpapers generally imitated textiles.¹⁰⁹ There is little to suggest, however, that gentlemen's walls were adorned with it. This may be a result of poor survival rates, but the lack of evidence points to the broader conclusion that wallpaper was not often hung by gentlemen-owners before the mid-eighteenth century.¹¹⁰ Although paper would have been available to most builder-owners in this study, their preference seems to have been for more conservative taste in interiors.¹¹¹ Not until 1771, for example, did Richard Clutterbuck record wallpaper in his account book.¹¹² Gentlemanly taste seemed to have included a continued predilection for panelled walls and textile hangings.

Until well into the eighteenth century, ceilings were not lavishly adorned.¹¹³ Exceptions do occur. The ceiling in what was likely the Great Parlour at Lower Slaughter

¹⁰⁸ On wallpaper, see G. Saunders, *Wallpaper in interior decoration* (London, 2002); L. Hoskins, (ed.), *The papered wall: history, pattern, technique* (New York, 1994), especially chapters 2, 3 and 7 [also new and expanded edition, 2005]; R. C. Nylander, *Wallpapers for historic buildings* (Washington, D.C., 2nd edition); Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 160-162. Ayres comments that taxation may have resulted in high cost hence low use of wallpaper, 160; Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, chapter 6. Vickery suggests that Ayres has offered 'too pessimistic an assessment of the dissemination of paper', 168, fn 5. The accounts on which her chapter is based, however, are from 1797 to 1808, by which time wallpaper was much more commonly available. See also C. Taylor, "'Figured paper for hanging Rooms': The manufacture, design and consumption of wallpapers for English Domestic interiors, c.1740-c.1800' (unpublished PhD thesis, The Open University, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Thornton, *Authentic décor*, 99.

¹¹⁰ One house in Gloucestershire, Berkeley House, a seventeenth-century structure in Wotton-under-edge, had hand-painted Chinese-style wallpaper dating from 1740-1760, which is now housed in the Victoria & Albert Museum. This remarkable survival demonstrates that at least some wealthy merchants had access to this form of adornment, although it may have been comparatively unusual, much like the Chinese armourial porcelain discussed below in chapter 6. See G. Saunders, 'The China trade: oriental painted panels' in L. Hoskins, (ed.), *The papered wall: history, pattern, technique* (London, 2005), new and revised edition, 42-55, who dates the paper to c. 1740, see 55. IoE 128159 and Victoria and Albert Museum No W.93-1924 Berkeley House. Also see G. Saunders, *Wallpaper in interior decoration* (London, 2002), 41, plate 31. This image of the Dutton family of Sherborne Park, Gloucestershire, by Zoffany depicts them in the Drawing Room hung with green wallpaper. Ironically, these two examples of wallpaper in the county are from slightly lower and slightly higher on the social scale than the gentlemen's houses, suggesting that gentlemen could have secured paper had they wanted it.

¹¹¹ This despite that wallpaper seems to have been first adopted in town houses of the merchant class to replace tapestry and other textiles beginning around 1700. Saunders, *Wallpaper in interior decoration*, 11. Hence fashion cut across traditional taste.

¹¹² Frampton Court collection, Richard Clutterbuck account book, 1768-1772.

¹¹³ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 123, mentions some recent evidence for tinted as opposed to white ceilings but this is fragmentary and requires further substantiation, especially as applies to gentlemen's houses.

Manor is a remarkable piece of craftsmanship, but similar examples in gentlemen's houses are rare. This may be a result of elaborate decorative ceilings becoming less common in the late-seventeenth century. Most were smoothly plastered with little ornamentation. In several instances, builder-owners took no effort to conceal structural timbers such as summer beams.¹¹⁴ By 1750, applied plaster decoration began to re-emerge as a feature in new houses. Nibley House, rebuilt by George Smyth, has plasterwork from the 1760s. Redland Court and Clifton Hill House had work done by Thomas Paty of Bristol, and plasterer Thomas Stocking was responsible for fine rococo decoration at Royal Fort.¹¹⁵

Special decorative schemes such as japanning, graining, marbling and gilding appeared frequently in larger houses, but not in small classical houses. A large house like Dyrham Park, for instance, had a closet with woodwork that was entirely decorated with japanning.¹¹⁶ Such finishes were rare in the small classical houses until well into the eighteenth century, and emphasises the restrained taste of gentlemen. Although handsome parquetry and inlaid staircases were seen at Frampton Court, Eastbach Court and Clifton Wood House, and in the parlour at Goldney House, no gentlemen's houses surveyed display evidence of japanning or gilding. Subsequent decorating campaign may have obscured examples, but it is highly unlikely that gentlemen builders and owners employed such finishes for entire rooms with any frequency. To add such elements to their interiors gentlemen builders and owners opted instead for individual exotic furnishings. This was likely a factor of both cost and status, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Gilt leather screens, japanned chests and other individual objects were the province of gentlemen.

¹¹⁴ They appear at Poulton Manor and Bishopsworth Manor, but had become unsightly and were not seen in new houses after about 1720. Similarly, the Chantry also had exposed joists in at least one room, although the interior has been heavily re-worked, making it possible other rooms exhibited similar construction.

¹¹⁵ G. Priest, *The Paty Family: makers of eighteenth-century Bristol* (Bristol, 2003), 51-60; BRO/09467/12/a: 'Notes and Receipts for House Building at Clifton 1746-47-48-49 + 1750 +c'; Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol :An Architectural History*, 174. Mowl, *To build the second city*, 64 FN10, 71-73, cautions against the Stocking attribution at Royal Fort.

¹¹⁶ Bristow, *Architectural colour in British interiors, 1615 – 1840*, 26.

The themes of spatial arrangement and interior finish between 1680 and 1770 are illustrated by the interior decoration at Frampton Court, which serves as something of an exception that helps to prove the rule. In 1730, Richard Clutterbuck demolished the house where he had grown up and where his father had lived. The old Frampton House, included a 'great parlor', 'Little Parlor', a 'little buttery within ye little parlor' and 'the hall'. The hall, with a 'long table & frame', sixteen chairs and ten stools, likely served a central function for entertaining in a traditional communal way. The 'great Parlour' must have occupied a good deal of space, given that it contained no less than twenty-six chairs and stools. Five chambers occupied the upper floors, with three lofts serving as sleeping spaces for 'children' and 'men' as well as storage.

The new Frampton Court (Fig. 5.9) displayed Palladian planning, with a main block, hyphens and wings housing offices. On the interior, the domestic spaces on the ground floor are hierarchically arranged and exhibit craftsmanship of high quality. The stone-floored centre hall with a fireplace served as a space for segregating and directing encounters in the house. In the hall, the walls have deal wainscoting, while two rooms that likely functioned as parlours have exquisitely joined oak panelling decorated with ionic and Corinthian pilasters.¹¹⁷ The ground floor rooms are ranked according to the classical orders, which visitors encountered when moving from the hall to the other public chambers on the ground floor. The panelling and joinery in these rooms is particularly fine, and indicates a major effort to display and impress. Skilled joiners from Bristol were likely employed in its construction, implying substantial urban and rural interaction.¹¹⁸ A small study or library was situated off the Hall in the design of the new house. This had

¹¹⁷ The hall may have been painted originally and was certainly painted by the early nineteenth century, before having the paint removed in the late twentieth century. The two parlours have never been painted, although they seem to have had a dark stain applied to them in the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁸ Family tradition claims that shipwrights from Bristol were involved in this work but there is no documentary evidence to support this. Visual connections with Bristol work at such houses as Goldney House lend support.

built-in shelving, which seems to have been part of the original fabric of the room. A c. 1840 drawing of the room - the earliest reference - confirms that the shelving cupboards were extant by that time and lists the room as ‘The Study’.¹¹⁹ Books were comparatively rare, even in houses of higher status, and interior spaces set aside for their storage and use were most often only found in larger country houses with greater room specialization. This distinction was between larger country houses, which increasingly had libraries, and gentlemen’s houses, which did not. In this case, Frampton Court reflected a step toward the larger country house.¹²⁰

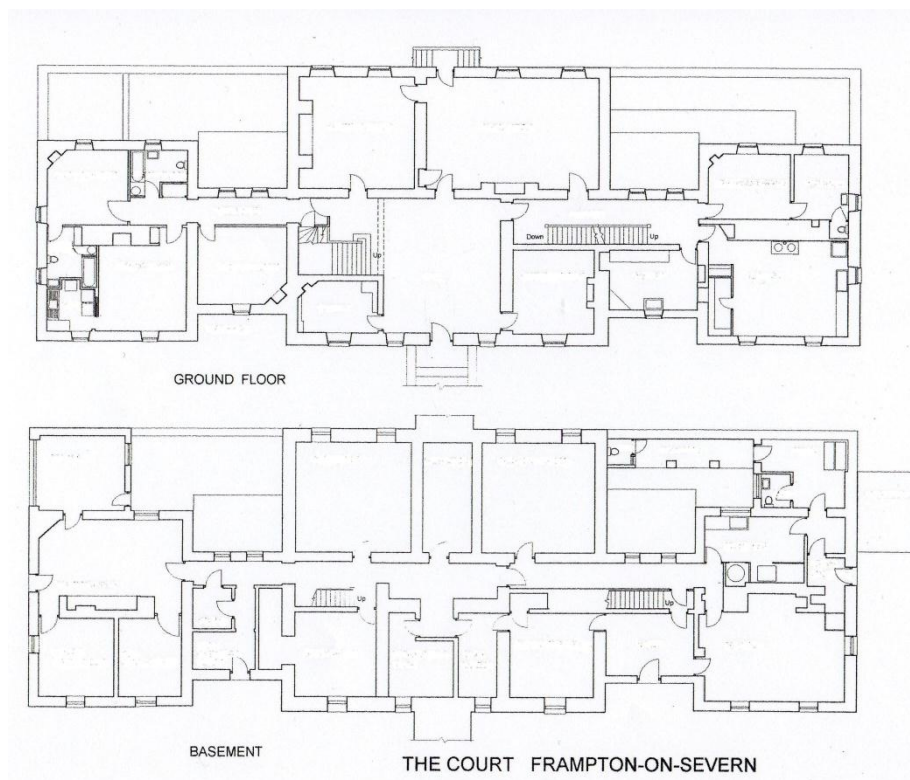


Fig 5.9: Frampton Court, 1731-1733. Basement and ground floor plans. Courtesy of the owners.

Off the hall, inlaid stairs provided vertical access. In several closets on the first floor, workman reused seventeenth-century panelling from the previous house. The best

¹¹⁹ ‘The Study at Frampton Court’, Frampton Court collection, Image 41, c. 1840s. Physical examination of this small and asymmetrical room indicates that the shelving is likely original, with cornices, paneling and chimney surround consistent with eighteenth century practice and no evident changes. I am grateful to Dr. Susie West for her thoughts on this subject, personal communication, 21 May 2010.

¹²⁰ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 169. See Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, Chapter 7; Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, especially tables 8.1 and 8.2.

rooms on the ground and first floors overlook the gardens. The offices included a kitchen in one wing, where the service stair climbed from the basement to the first floor, with a winding stair up to the garrets. The other wing housed the laundry, baking facilities and possibly an apartment. Taken as a whole, Frampton Court exhibited an effort at display that was at once confident, bold and attractive, but also ostentatious. As will be discussed further, Frampton Court was at the higher end of the spectrum of gentlemanly building, and suggested a show mounted by a builder not entirely certain about his status.

Conclusion

Throughout Gloucestershire, men like Richard Clutterbuck used architecture and interiors to reshape their status at the same time that they were structuring houses to be lived in. Major construction projects structured moderately-sized houses in a way that achieved the segregation of space necessary to sustain the role of a gentleman. The compact, double-pile plan held wide appeal for a range of builder-owners and remained relatively consistent during the period. It served as a standard but flexible form used by rising commercial men and lesser landed gentry alike to establish or sustain status and provide a striking, commodious house for their everyday activities. Moreover, these houses were used not simply as dwellings but as seats of personal power. Although their spaces were less differentiated than those in larger houses, compact plan houses were flexible, affording space for public, private and service functions.¹²¹ Ample space accommodated work and ‘convenient Offices and Outhouses’ were critical to a genteel way of life.

By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, public rooms of the ground floor were increasingly prominent, and typically included a hall, several parlours of greater or

¹²¹ See especially Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 140-147.

lesser degrees of refinement, and perhaps a pantry or service passage. Decoration and architectural finishes introduced new fashions and urban craftsmen into an environment that could retain conservative features such as wood panelling. Occasional ostentation that appeared in the form of overmantel paintings and pilasters were offset by plainer finishes in most rooms, with no clear nod to fashion in features like consistent colour usage. By about 1750, interior decoration became somewhat more elaborate, although gentlemen-owners undertook few extensive decorating schemes until quite late in the eighteenth-century. When genteel owners wanted to add something exotic to their household, they did not create a japanned room. More likely, they acquired a japanned piece of furniture, or, in the case of Richard Clutterbuck, a set of Chinese armorial porcelain. The site of considerable change in the presentation of gentlemen's houses was in the selection and arrangement of furnishings.

Chapter 6

Furnishing Status

The legal battle over John Elbridge's will opened with a contretemps about furnishings.¹ According to its provisions Elbridge's niece, Rebecca, received £10,000 and was named a joint residuary legatee of the estate. Despite this extraordinary legacy, Rebecca and her husband Henry Woolnough accused the executors of illicitly looking to sell the possessions of Elbridge's Cote house 'over the Downs'. One of the executors had asked Rebecca to allow her cousin, Thomas Elbridge, to have the goods, whilst she would be compensated with furnishings from Elbridge's other house in the Royal Fort. Rebecca Woolnough rejected the suggestion out of hand, claiming that 'the Goods over the Down were formerly her Sister's since purchased by her Uncle who intended her a share of them.' Although Mrs. Woolnough was willing to accommodate her cousin Thomas to a degree, there were 'some few pieces of furniture' which she was bent on having for herself. Frustrated in their efforts to settle the estate, the executors ordered an inventory and appraisal of the possessions at the two houses.

Once the appraisals were complete, Henry Woolnough was asked 'whether he would Give an Advanced price for the Goods.' Although the household contents at Cote and the Royal Fort were worth similar values - £290.8.10 and £303.12.8 respectively - the Woolnoughs insisted that 'the furniture over the Down are of much greater Value.' The Woolnough's legal counsel advised that the Executors had the right to sell the goods, although not 'in a Clandestine way' to Thomas Elbridge. The Cote inventory, the lawyer agreed, was 'an Imperfect Schedule of Such Goods, by reason many of them (and those the best) are huddled together in Gross Sums which is Certainly Wrong and I believe

¹For the following account see BRO/AC/WO/11/1/a: 9th April 1739 'Case on the Will of John Elbridge Esq. deceased on behalf of Henry Woolnough and Rebecca his wife'.

unprecedented'. The 'Imperfect Schedule' for Cote, which aggregated several of the best rooms on the ground floor rather than valuing individual objects, was at the core of a clash that would run in Chancery Court for years.

Furnishings mattered. Their coded cultural and monetary values provided precise indications of their importance. Rebecca Woolnough displayed both emotional attachment to the goods at Cote house, which had been her sisters, and a keen sense of their worth. In her desire to lay claim to 'some few pieces of furniture' she highlighted how individual pieces could be pivotal within the domestic setting. Such multi-layered reactions to the objects at Cote indicate that furnishings displayed status for genteel people.

Furnishings and evidence

This chapter seeks to populate the spaces discussed in the last chapter with objects, using inventories and other records to reconstruct genteel owners' furnishing patterns. Detailed analyses of gentlemen's houses are lacking, but account books, probate records, receipts, letters, and drawings open possibilities to investigate their furnishing.² Surviving objects and collections also yield substantive information. These documents comprise the source materials for this chapter, and a deep reading and analysis of several inventories and extant furnishings are at its core. The analysis asserts the primacy of objects and their ability to reveal the subtle and evolving refinement of social status.

Examining interior spaces, arrangements, and function is important to develop a more nuanced understanding of gentlemen's flexible identity. The interplay of space and interior finishes with furnishings conveyed signs to those interacting with spaces. Too

² These include John Clifford's inventory from Frampton House (c. 1683), three detailed inventories from the Whitmore family of Lower Slaughter Manor (1688, 1725 and 1735), John Elbridge's inventories (1739), furniture and book receipts for Paul Fisher at Clifton Hill House (1744-52), and Thomas Goldney III's inventory at Goldney House (1768).

often interior decoration and planning are treated separately.³ Furnishings were mobile and, by comparison with building renovations, relatively affordable, meaning that they could be frequently changed or acquired over time. This enabled owners to keep up with fashion more easily, although they did not always do so. Drawing together these features probes further into the gentleman's environments, identifying the objects that peopled gentleman's houses, which offered complex signifiers that constructed eighteenth-century social status.

Investigation of the domestic interior has advanced in several directions.⁴ A number of excellent studies have analysed household possessions, mostly aggregating larger numbers of inventories to assess percentages of objects owned by certain people and how this changed over time.⁵ Social historians have employed material culture to understand facets of urban and middling life.⁶ The literature on consumption has emphasised the economic processes of increased demand for goods.⁷ Decorative arts scholars, meanwhile, have 'remained preoccupied with the realm of the isolated, elite

³ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, x.

⁴ See, for example, Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture*; Special issue on Georgian interiors in *Journal of Design History*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Winter 2007); K. Harvey, 'Barbarity in a Tea Cup? Punch, Domesticity and Gender in the Eighteenth Century' *Journal of Design History*, vol. 21, no. 3, (autumn 2008), 205-221; D. Goodman and K. Norberg, (eds.), *Furnishing the eighteenth century: what furniture can tell us about the European and American past* (New York and London, 2007); Vickery, *Behind closed doors*.

⁵ See the especially valuable work of Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*; Shammas, *The pre-industrial consumer in England and America*, and M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, & A. Hann, *Production and consumption in English households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004). For Bristol, Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, has used inventories extensively, especially chapter 6. Roger Leech pointed out that Estabrook leaves out high status inventories in his review in *Vernacular Architecture* (1999), 133-134. E. and S. George, (eds.), *Bristol probate inventories, Part II: 1657-1689* (Bristol, 2005); E. and S. George, (eds.), *Bristol probate inventories, Part III: 1690 -1804* (Bristol, 2008); J. S. Moore, (ed.), *Clifton and Westbury probate inventories, 1609-1761* (Bristol, 1981)

⁶ For examples, see French, *The middle sort of people*, especially chapter 3; P. Earle, *The making of the English middle class: business, society and family life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1989), chapter 8.

⁷ See Shammas, *The pre-industrial consumer*; M. Berg, *Luxury and pleasure in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2005); Weatherill offers something of a corrective to the bifurcation of 'luxury' and 'necessity' in *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 14-16; L. Weatherill, 'The meaning of consumer behaviour in late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century England', in J. Brewer and R. Porter, (eds.), *Consumption and the world of goods* (London, 1993), 206-227.

country seat.’⁸ Along these lines, scholars of interiors have focused on well-documented and visually significant high-style interiors.⁹ Few have examined traditional craftsmanship and the interiors of smaller dwellings.¹⁰

Although these studies have charted consumption patterns and the availability of goods to people in England, analysis of objects in the household can be pushed further.¹¹ The dispute about John Elbridge’s will highlights, for example, the interplay between men and women as they furnished domestic space. Although the ‘house over the Downs’ belonged to Elbridge, it was telling that some of the objects were acquired by and associated with a woman. As Vickery argues ‘the history of architecture is proudly masculine in subject matter and tone’ but ‘interior decoration fell to the distaff’.¹² The role that men played in shaping domestic space is undergoing reappraisal.¹³ Margot Finn suggests that, ‘the Hanoverian consumer market included highly acquisitive men as well as compulsively possessive women.’¹⁴ The penchant for acquisition and display amongst gentlemen in Gloucestershire supports this view. As will be seen in this chapter, men as well as women did much to fashion domestic space.

⁸ See H. Greig and G. Riello, ‘Eighteenth-century interiors – redesigning the Georgian: introduction’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 2007), 279. Peter Earle commented that a huge literature on the decorative arts exists, but ‘addressed mainly to art historians, collectors and restorers rather than the social historian.’ Earle, *The making of the English middle class*, 292 fn 39.

⁹ J. Fowler and J. Cornforth, *English decoration in the eighteenth century* (London, 1978); P. Thornton, *Authentic décor: the domestic interior, 1620-1920* (London, 1984); Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-century decoration*; Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*; T. Murdoch, (ed.), *Noble households: eighteenth-century inventories of great English households: a tribute to John Cornforth* (Cambridge, 2006); J. Collett-White, ed., *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses, 1714-1830* Publications of the Bedfordshire Record Society, vol. 74 (Bedford, 1995).

¹⁰ J. Ayres, *Domestic interiors: the British tradition 1500-1850* (New Haven and London, 2003).

¹¹ Weatherill comments that ‘Measurement of frequency also obscures some of the differences in quality and quantity’, an important point. Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 170.

¹² Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 130. Also, Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture*, 14-21.

¹³ As suggested by K. Harvey and A. Shepard, ‘What have historians done with masculinity? Reflections on five centuries of British history, circa 1500-1950’, introduction to a special feature on masculinities in *The Journal of British Studies*, 44, 2 (2005), 274-80; B. Heller, ‘Leisure and the Use of Domestic Space in Georgian London’, *The Historical Journal*, vol. 53, no. 3 (2010), 623-645, 624.

¹⁴ M. Finn, ‘Men’s things: masculine possession in the Consumer Revolution’, *Social History*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (May 2000), 133-155, quote on 135. K. Harvey, ‘Men making home: masculinity and domesticity in eighteenth-century Britain’, *Gender & History*, Vol.21 No.3 (November 2009), 520-540.

Five gentlemen's houses with especially revealing records chronicle furnishing activities across the categories established in chapter 2. Any one of the inventories and related documentary sources could constitute an important analysis by itself.¹⁵ In the first half of the period, the Whitmores at Lower Slaughter Manor were a Cotswold gentry family of long-standing residence. In the 1730s, John Elbridge's Cote displayed the furnishing choices of a Bristolian gentlemen who had a range of investments. Two examples from mid-eighteenth-century Clifton, Thomas Goldney III and Paul Fisher, illuminate the interaction between interior space, furnishings, and wealth radiating from commercial pursuits in Bristol. At Frampton Court, Richard Clutterbuck's account book and surviving objects map furnishings acquired after the construction of the new Frampton Court in the early 1730s, highlighting the role that fashionable objects played. Each of these houses helps to illustrate various aspects of the gentleman's house, whilst contributing to a broader understanding of the changes in the gentlemanly household during the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Gentlemen builder-owners set themselves off as genteel not only in the form, arrangement, and finish of their house, but most especially by precisely how it was furnished. As Amanda Vickery has put it, 'gentility found its richest expression in objects.'¹⁶ Gentlemen furnished their houses in comfortable, occasionally sumptuous, ways. There was also a clear sense of what were 'best' objects, as Rebecca Woolnough demonstrated with her precise desire for a few specific pieces of furniture. Genteel households injected both fashionable and conservative elements by mixing newly acquired

¹⁵ On the use of probate records, see T. Arkell, N. Evans, and N. Goose, *When death do us part: understanding and interpreting the probate records of early modern England* (Oxford, 2000); M. Spufford, 'The limitations of the probate inventory', in J. Chartres and D. Hey. (eds.), *English rural society, 1500-1800: Essays in honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, 1990), 139-174; S. Swynfren Jervis, *British and Irish Inventories: a list and bibliography of published transcriptions of secular inventories* (Hayward Heath, West Sussex, 2010); M. Howard, 'Inventories, surveys and the history of great houses 1480-1640', *Architectural History*, 41 (1998), 14-29.

¹⁶ Vickery, *The Gentleman's daughter*, 229.

goods with older furnishings. Genteel owners adapted their houses to suit altered living patterns, most often by changing or updating furnishings. Without pushing the analogy too far, possessions were mobile in a way that reflected the mobility of gentlemen. This was in keeping with gentlemen's status. The number and quality of their possessions distinguished them from even moderately prosperous middling members of society; at the same time they made little effort to acquire and display furnishings in the way or at the level of the aristocracy. Instead, furnishings represented a central strategy for genteel owners to calibrate and display their status.

Gentlemanly displays

Genteel people furnishing houses had many motives, including display, sociability, comfort, security, knowledge and even political statement. The possession of household goods increased dramatically over the course of this period, although substantial variety still occurred between households.¹⁷ Several kinds of objects held particular status for gentlemen and their families. These included silver or plate, linen and other textiles, wearing apparel, paintings and prints, and books.

Precious metals, especially silver, set gentlemen apart from those beneath them. Invariably, silver and precious metal formed the most valuable component of a gentleman or woman's personal possessions, although significant numbers of such possessions were restricted to the very wealthy.¹⁸ John Elbridge owned £218 of plate, equal to about three-quarters of the value of all the other personal possessions at his Cote house.¹⁹ Thomas Goldney had numerous pieces engraved with his monogram. Precious metals could be about display, but were also a personal and guarded commodity. William Whitmore, for instance, kept a number of silver and gold objects in his 'Closett' at Lower Slaughter

¹⁷ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 6.

¹⁸ Shamma, *The pre-industrial consumer*, 179.

¹⁹ BRO/AC/WO/10/16: Valuation of plate for John Elbridge, 12 March 1739.

Manor.²⁰ Elizabeth Whitmore had a silver coffeepot and other silver. Precious metals were frequently enumerated in wills with specific instructions about the recipient.

The importance of textiles has already been mentioned. These were the most costly goods in gentlemen's houses with the exception of precious metals.²¹ In particular the period under consideration stood out as a time of transition and growth in the textile industry.²² In Bristol and especially in the Stroudwater Valleys, considerable fortunes were made in the eighteenth century from the production and distribution of cloth. The clothes people wore should also be borne in mind. For example, careful records were kept of linen and clothing in gentlemanly households.²³

Pictures were important material indicators. Between 1675 and 1725, households of the gentry and higher status trades and professions were only about one-third likely to have owned pictures.²⁴ John Clifford's inventory of Frampton House (1683) mentions maps, prints and pictures.²⁵ There were sixteen pictures and prints worth £1.10 at Cote, accounted for separately not as part of any room. Their descriptions indicate some limitations in Elbridge's aesthetic taste, but provide guidance to the sorts of adornment on gentlemen's walls. Portraits could also visibly advance status. Houses could not buy lineage and connections, but gentlemen recognised that family identity was important.²⁶ This was somewhat more measured than in large and older dynastic families. Relatively few portraits are extant, but a number of gentlemen owners in Gloucestershire are known

²⁰ GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

²¹ Cornforth calls this the 'primacy of upholstery', see Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 75.

²² D. Jenkins, (ed.), *The Cambridge history of western textiles*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2003), I, 396.

²³ See, for example, GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

²⁴ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, tables 8.1 and 8.2. Weatherill includes all pictures and prints in her account, but makes no distinction between, for example, a fine portrait and cheaper prints, 207.

²⁵ GA/D149/TRS80: Household inventory of John Clifford, c. 1683. See also JC will.

²⁶ K. Retford, *The art of domestic life: family portraiture in eighteenth-century England* (New Haven and London, 2006); K. Retford, 'Patrilineal portraiture? Gender and genealogy in the eighteenth-century country house', in Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste, and material culture*, 323-52; D. Johnson, 'Living in the light: Quakerism and colonial portraiture' in E. J. Lapsansky and A. Verplanck, (eds.), *Quaker aesthetics: reflections on a Quaker ethic in American design and consumption* (Philadelphia, 2003), 122-146.

to have had them painted. Leading gentry families like the Bathhursts or the Duttons were painted by Godfrey Kneller or Johann Zoffany. The miniatures in Mr. Whitmore's closet at Lower Slaughter were by the noted miniaturist Bernard Lens.²⁷ Redland Court owners John and Martha Cossins had portraits painted by John Vanderbank.²⁸ Most gentlemen, when they opted for this form of display, had portraits executed by serviceable but not first-rate artists. Portraits of William Clutterbuck and his wife are now attributed simply to 'English School, early 18th Century'. A portrait of John Elbridge by an unknown artist hung in the Bristol Infirmary, and another was sent to relatives in New England. Leading Quakers like the Goldneys had their images prominently displayed.²⁹ When in Rome on his grand tour, Benjamin Hyett, sat for the little-known Raimondo Ghelli.³⁰

The possession of books also marked status. In the period between 1675 and 1725, even for relatively prosperous individuals with inventories over £500, only 46% owned books, and the average number of books was quite small.³¹ In Bristol, only 10% of extant inventories between 1700 and 1740 record books.³² Over time, the size of libraries grew as their content changed. In the 1680s, for instance, Richard Whitmore owned a handful of books stored in a closet. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, gentry families like the Whitmores had acquired more books: inventories in 1725 and 1735 list 'a few old books' probably stored in the same 'Clossett', as well as two other lots containing forty titles valued at £5 and fifteen titles worth £3.4.0.³³ In 1728, William Clutterbuck left his son, 'all my Lawebookes, Manuscripts & papers...and all other my Books whatsoever' with the exception of books that 'I have more than one of', indicating a sizeable collection

²⁷ Johnson, *Gloucestershire gentry*, 182.

²⁸ Charlton and Milton, *Redland, 791 to 1800* (Bristol, 1951), 46. The portraits are at Redland School for Girls.

²⁹ BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

³⁰ GA/b325/51387: F A Hyett, *The Hyetts of Painswick* (1907, Transcript in GA), 48.

³¹ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, Table 5.1.

³² Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 168, Table 7.1.

³³ GA/D45/F3: Inventory and copy will of William Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 1724-25; GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

with duplicate copies.³⁴ Later in the eighteenth century, Thomas Goldney III had 327 volumes and Paul Fisher at least 131 titles in 246 volumes.³⁵ By 1794 Sir G. O. Paul owned a substantial library, some of which may have been collected by his father.³⁶

Some historians have traced a shift from the seventeenth-century gentleman interested in history, politics, religion and natural philosophy to literary and artistic interests exhibited by eighteenth-century gentleman. In their book collecting, gentlemen-owners retained a strong interest in earlier traditions of politics, history and religion, whilst also incorporating newer subjects.³⁷ Furniture design manuals and pattern books have been credited with cultural transmission, but the libraries of some of the richest, most fashion-conscious of the Gloucestershire gentlemen owners display limited evidence of either furniture design manuals or architectural pattern books, and relatively few instances of conduct literature.³⁸ Paul Fisher, noted for having a particularly fashionable Palladian house designed by Isaac Ware, owned only two books related to architecture: 'Palladio's Architecture' and 'Salmons Architect'. A copy of Isaac Ware's own book seems not to have been part of Fisher's collection.³⁹ These libraries suggest that gentlemen such as Elbridge, Goldney and Fisher were moderately knowledgeable about arts and architecture, but not in the category of gentlemen-scholar amateur architects.

Reflecting the continued conservatism of many gentlemen's houses, display of arms and armour were not uncommon, such as at Frampton House, where John Clifford

³⁴ GA/D149/T358 - will of Wm Clutterbuck, gent. (1726). William's final will leaves the 'hangings and chairs' in the Parlour to Richard.

³⁵ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768; Bristol Central Library/23274: List of Books donated to Bristol Library by Paul Fisher 1763.

³⁶ D589/F/Box 94916: Sir George O. Paul family papers, 'Inventory of my Books Taken 1794'.

³⁷ For example, K. Wrightson, *English society, 1580-1680* (London, 1982) emphasizes the shift, whilst Klein stresses continuity. See discussion in Klein, 'Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century', 889.

³⁸ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 21; E. Harris, *British architectural books and writers 1556-1785* (Cambridge, 1990).

³⁹ BCL/23274: 'List of Books donated to Bristol Library by Paul Fisher 1763'. William Salmon published three practical guides to architecture between 1734 and 1755. This volume is likely *The country builder's estimator, or, The architect's companion...* first published in 1737 or *The London and country builder's vade mecum, or, The compleat and universal architect's assistant...* (London, 1745).

had ‘3 carbines; 2 dragoone muskets; 1 old pistol; 1 payer of holsters; 1 halberd’ in the Hall. Additionally in the kitchen he kept ‘1 Birding peece, with my arms on it in silver’.⁴⁰ Such martial displays continued into the eighteenth century. John Elbridge had a ‘Pyke’ in his Hall. William Palling of Brownhill Court had an arsenal of weapons stockpiled at his house. In 1758, a government official tasked to investigate noted ‘a great Number of Arms for such a Place, and very clean and ranged in good Order,’ including long guns, Blunderbusses, and various pole arms.⁴¹ Even by the end of our period, older forms of display, with overtones of power and control, remained aspects of domestic space in gentlemen’s houses.

Over the period between 1680 and 1770 possessions increased in number, highlighted by certain kinds of goods. Households served as settings for display as well as places to live, incorporating new and old furnishings together. Gentlemanly interiors offer a guide to these changes, which reflect consumption patterns, taste, and fashion. It is also possible to gain a better understanding of expenses related to interiors and objects. By investigating several houses in depth, the next few sections explore these ideas in more detail.

The gentry at Lower Slaughter Manor

Lower Slaughter Manor’s furnishings reflected the standing of a prominent gentry family over time. Richard Whitmore’s 1688 inventory offers a look into the house of a member of the minor landed gentry in the late seventeenth century.⁴² Bedrooms were central to domestic display. The inventory takers began their work on the first floor in the ‘Best Chamber’. This room was indeed splendid; amongst its furnishings was a bed

⁴⁰ GA/D149/TRS80: Household inventory of John Clifford, c. 1683.

⁴¹ See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol cxvii) appearing as Appendix 5 in Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’.

⁴² The following descriptions are in GA/D45/F2: Inventory and valuation of goods of Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 31 January 1687/8.

arrayed in purple cloth embroidered with slippings.⁴³ On the walls hung tapestries depicting ‘the Story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba’. A set of chairs, one with arms, a couch, and curtain on the windows completed the ensemble. Valued at £60 by the appraisers, Whitmore’s best chamber must have been a staggering space for a late-seventeenth-century figure. The other bedchambers, visited next, were less valuable. The appraiser’s initial emphasis on the bedchambers, however, is an indication of their importance in the overall value of the household.

Despite having four main spaces on the ground floor, Lower Slaughter Manor contained only three identifiable public rooms: the ‘Little Parlour’, ‘Hall’ and ‘Great Parlour’. By comparison with the bedchambers these rooms housed relatively low value objects. The exception was the Great Parlour, which contained fourteen chairs covered with turkey work, as well as three ‘Turkey Carpetts’, a looking glass and silver toasting fork.⁴⁴ The fourth room may have been one of the ‘chambers’ listed,⁴⁵ possibly the ‘Chamber over the Kitchen’ (which was in the basement) noted in a 1725 inventory of the manor house.⁴⁶ The presence of a bed chamber on the ground floor was a practice that would change completely in gentlemen’s houses over the ensuing century.

Inventories conducted in 1725 and again in 1735 exhibited important changes from fifty years before. The inventory takers in 1725 began their survey in the Hall, perhaps reflecting a different mindset about the relative importance of spaces.⁴⁷ The ground floor rooms displayed many of the same furnishings, but generally appraised at lower values. The same fourteen chairs and couch stood in the ‘Bigg Parlour’, although the minimal

⁴³ Slippings were embroidered elements applied to textiles. Purple was an unusual choice of colour.

⁴⁴ It is unclear whether the carpets were on furniture, as often depicted in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, or on the floor. See Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-century decoration*, plates 15 and 38.

⁴⁵ As suggested by Gomme and Maguire, *Design and plan in the country house*, 213, plan 159.

⁴⁶ GA/D45/F3: Inventory and copy will of William Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 1724-25.

⁴⁷ GA/D45/F3: Inventory and copy will of William Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 1724-25.

values assigned to these reflected their out-dated nature.⁴⁸ In the same room, however, appeared ‘One stand, Tea table, one Hand tea table, & a Sett of China’, an indication that the Whitmores were one of the few gentry families to acquire China and utensils for hot drinks by 1725.⁴⁹ Besides these new wares, the room contained a paltry £2.4.0 of household goods, by comparison with the £15 there in 1688. The bedchambers remained the most valuable rooms in the house, although these too had declined in value. The ‘Bedstead Curtains etc’ in the former ‘Best Chamber’ was valued at £5, a steep drop, and a ‘Bedstead with Cloth Curtains lined with silk’ was worth only £3.10.0.

Private space at Lower Slaughter offers further insight into the interests and preoccupations of an owner of a gentleman’s house. Closets have attracted scholarly attention of late and their shifting function is of interest, although the focus has been on exploring women’s relationship to such spaces.⁵⁰ Men also utilized closets throughout this period as spaces for contemplation, business, or reading. Mr. Whitmore’s ‘Closett’ was lavishly adorned and evinced a devotion to monarch and family. Sixteen miniature pictures included ‘one of the late King’ and fifteen ‘of Mr Whitmore’s family’. The small room contained silver and gold medals of Queen Anne and the late King, as well as silver medals of the ‘present King and Queen’. One object had the ‘family arms Engraved and let in gold’, whilst three snuff boxes, one of gold, another of tortoiseshell with a gold rim, and a silver rim’d one, stood next to a toothpick case. Money, ‘six gold rings’ a ‘side saddle’

⁴⁸ The fourteen chairs are valued at £1.1.0. The couch is 3s..

⁴⁹ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, Table 8.1 indicates that only 6% of gentry families owned china and 7% utensils for hot drinks in the 1675-1725 period. Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, Table A4.1, 192, states that between 1700 and 1740, only 20% of Cornish gentlemen and 23.1% of Kentish gentlemen possessed material goods related to hot drinks.

⁵⁰ K. Lipsedge, “‘Enter into thy closet’: women, closet culture, and the eighteenth-century novel”, in Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste, and material culture*, 107-122. See R. B. St. George, ‘Reading spaces in eighteenth-century New England’, in *Ibid.*, 90-103.

and a 'Sable Muff and Tippet' rounded out the intimately ostentatious display, the latter two objects suggesting the space may have been shared with Mrs. Whitmore.⁵¹

The 1725 inventory conveys the impression of a relatively conservative member of the squirearchy. By the 1730s, however, this gentry family had adapted the use of their rooms by acquiring a number of new furnishings. The key to this household refurbishment seems to have been the strong presence of Elizabeth Whitmore. After her husband's death in 1725, Elizabeth Whitmore spent time and money at Lower Slaughter, repairing the manor and acquiring stylish objects not found in the house during William's time, including several tables made of mahogany, a newly-fashionable wood. One of the ground floor rooms had changed substantially. Whereas William retained this space as a bedchamber, his widow removed the bed and installed a 'burrow and book case' valued at substantial sum of £10, as well as an easy chair, indicating a space of study and comfort.⁵² Other bedrooms were slated for refurbishment, as indicated by a £40 'worked bed and quilt with two pieces of damask to line the same Unfinished & not Sett up'. The furnishing of houses was a complex interplay between husbands and wives, trades people and purveyors, and other economic forces. This account offers further evidence to support the importance of women's roles in furnishing the domestic interior.⁵³

Buying new possessions rather than rebuilding a house was both affordable and had immediate visible impact. This was a major attraction for genteel owners. The increased presence of china indicates a turning point in display and dining habits, where

⁵¹ GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

⁵² This room almost certainly functioned as a personal informal sitting area. Its easy chair (but no other chairs), burrow and bookcase, 'writing table' and the personal touch of 'seven small pictures' indicate a largely private space. Cornforth, for instance, notes that comfortable seating furniture, such as easy chairs, only began to appear in parlours from the 1730s. J. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors* (London and New Haven, 2004), 42. See also Crowley, *The invention of comfort*, 145-6.

⁵³ Vickery asserts the importance of feminine intervention in the domestic interior, suggesting 'evidence of female designs and patronage dates from 1600 at least.' Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 131. Cornforth and Saumarez Smith see the eighteenth century as the period when ladies became central to interior decoration, although Cornforth argues this occurred in the 1720s whilst Saumarez Smith contends it was not until the 1760. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 206; Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-century decoration*, 233.

William's pewter was supplanted by Elizabeth's china. Three dozen knives and forks appeared in the 'Butler's Pantry'. Easy chairs were found in two rooms, including the 'Little Parlour'. The 'Great Parlour' now contained an 'India Japan'd Chest', coffee mugs, and a 'TeaPott' of 'blew and white China' for use in formal entertaining.⁵⁴

The transformation at Lower Slaughter Manor undertaken by Elizabeth Whitmore, with pewter and cane chairs out, blue and white china and mahogany in, mirrors a broader change taking place in many genteel houses throughout the country.⁵⁵ Upon his mother's death in 1735, William Whitmore paid his older brother Thomas £436.1.6 for the goods and chattels at Lower Slaughter, including about £200 for household goods and furniture.⁵⁶ William, a distinguished soldier who sat as an MP, continued his mother's efforts of incremental improvement, remaking the staircase in the 1750s and building a 'splendid but rather old-fashioned stable block' in the 1760s.⁵⁷ In this way, Lower Slaughter illustrates the careful balance between building and furnishing, à la mode and old-fashioned, which was characteristic of small classical houses and their genteel owners.

A Bristolian gentleman at Cote

Thanks to the inventory that so exercised the Woolnoughs, the most copiously documented gentleman's house in Gloucestershire is John Elbridge's Cote.⁵⁸ This house offers a matchless opportunity to understand the furnishings of a Bristolian gentleman and

⁵⁴ GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

⁵⁵ Cane chairs were out of fashion by about 1720, but they were still in widespread use by gentlemanly owners for many years afterward, see P. Thornton, *Authentic décor*, 102.

⁵⁶ GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735.

⁵⁷ GA/D45/E14: 'Bills for carpenter's work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782)'. Quote in Kingsley, *CHG I*, 141

⁵⁸ Records relating to the Cote house have remained virtually unexplored. A 1972 doctoral thesis by Donald Jones mined some of the papers, but very much more with an eye on Elbridge's plantation in Jamaica. See BRO/34328/a: Donald Jones, 'The Elbridge, Woolnough and Smyth Families of Bristol, in the eighteenth century: with special reference to the Spring plantation, Jamiaca' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1972).

leading government official with wide-ranging investments. As we have seen, objects had considerable meaning for the family, emphasizing the importance of decorating domestic space. Elbridge's cousin Thomas Moore left him specific objects, including an 'East India Cabinett', a 'Tortoiseshell Cabinett and all that is in them', 'two Tortoiseshell powder boxes', a third portion of 'Plate[,] Rugs & Jewels', and 'so many of my pictures in my now dwelling House on St Michael's Hill as he shall have a mind & liking to'.⁵⁹ The specificity of these bequests reinforced the precise and loaded value of the gift.

The 1739 Cote inventory, which lists every space with detailed description of the contents and their values, can be matched with the existing house to reconstruct how the rooms were furnished (Fig. 6.1). Moreover, Elbridge's furnishings can be evaluated to suggest how rooms were used, what signals each space and its associated objects conveyed, who used which spaces, and how spaces and objects together structured the lives of gentlemen owners and their households.⁶⁰ This provides a well-developed view of the way that rooms were used, by whom, and for what purposes.

On the ground floor, the dark wood panelled Hall served as an impressive entrance to the house. This room governing entry and access had a 'Large Mahogany Round Table' and '8 Turkey Worked Chairs', a durable fabric which had its peak popularity in the late-seventeenth century for middling rank homes.⁶¹ These rather old-fashioned chairs designated a respectable but somewhat utilitarian space.

⁵⁹ BRO/AC/WO/10/4: 3 March 1724/5, Copy will of Thomas Moore. Probated 30 April 1728, see NA/PROB11/621.

⁶⁰ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House).

⁶¹ P. Thornton, *Authentic décor*, 24, 59; Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-century decoration*, 175, plate 163. This is plate 6 from Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode*, and notes that the overturned turkey worked chair represents 'the plainer furnishing' from the upbringing of the Countess. Bowett comments that, 'colour, durability and affordability ensured that Turkey-work was the single most common upholstery material in middle-class homes up to 1700' as borne out in inventories. A. Bowett, *English furniture*, 77. Turkey work chairs are discussed on 76-79.

The first room on the right, which corresponds to the Great Parlour on the Elbridge inventory, had ‘dark panelling like the hall’.⁶² The room’s furniture included several sconces, one of glass the other of inlaid walnut, a ‘Marble Table with Mahogany frame’, ‘1 Mahogany Oval Table’, ‘12 Virginia Walnut Black leather Seate Chairs’, and a ‘writing desk’. Three tables and twelve chairs made from various woods combined with handsomely-decorated lighting fixtures and a writing desk to create a room that was a centre of sociability and perhaps some business.⁶³ Pictures, listed separately on the inventory, also likely hung here. Valued at £20.17.6, this was the most expensively furnished room on the ground floor.

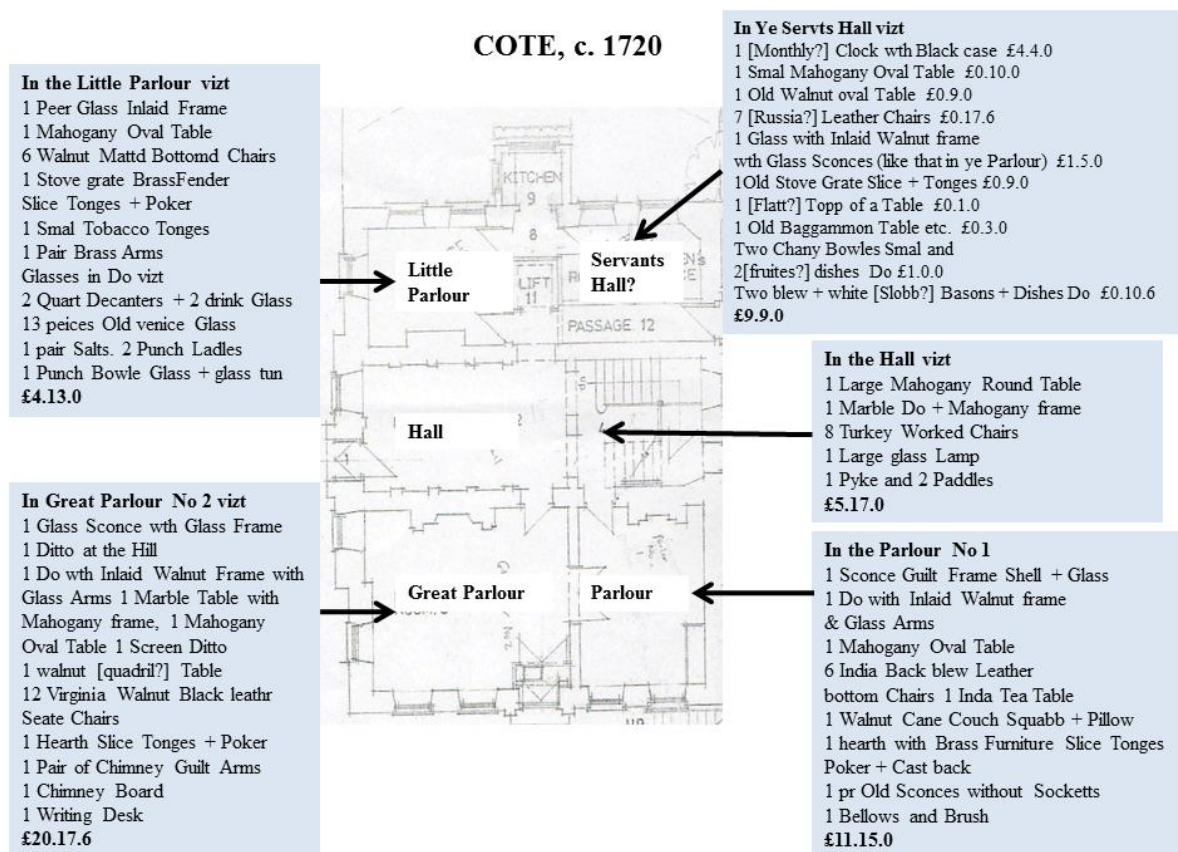


Fig. 6.1: Cote (c. 1720), ground floor, with inventoried contents, 1739.

⁶² E. Robinson, ‘Some Notes about Cote’ (unpublished MS, April, 1971), 7.

⁶³ Both Virginia walnut and mahogany became much more readily available after the passing of the Naval Stores Act in 1721. See A. Bowett, ‘The Commercial Introduction of Mahogany and the Naval Stores Act of 1721’, *Furniture History*, xxx (1994), 43-57 and A. Bowett, ‘After the Naval Stores Act: some implications for English walnut furniture’, *Furniture History*, xxxi (1995), 116-123.

The 'Parlour' was located behind. This room contained a 'Walnut Cane Couch'(or daybed),⁶⁴ '1 India Tea Table', a single 'Mahogany Oval Table' and 6 'India Back' chairs with 'blew [blue] Leather' bottoms, that is slip seats. Injecting ornamentation was a 'Guilt frame Shell + Glass'. This presence of fashionable India back chairs with a day bed indicated use for both repose and polite entertainment, a space of less formality but more privilege. In addition, leather served as upholstery in these two ground floor rooms. Because meals were likely taken in one or both of these rooms, this was a practical alternative for more stylish chairs. Across the Hall, the 'Little Parlour' had one table and seating furniture covered in even plainer matte bottoms, whilst its equipment of 'tobacco tongs', decanters, glasses and punchbowl suggest a room used for intimate male sociability.⁶⁵

The fourth space on the ground floor at Cote was likely 'Ye Servts Hall'.⁶⁶ This room, heated with a small corner fireplace, was well-furnished for the use of Elbridge's staff. A looking glass with sconce arms is especially noted as being 'like that in ye Parlour', an indication of the relative ranking of objects in the house. Several objects are noted as being 'old', perhaps cast-offs previously used in other parts of the house. A costly 'Monthly Clock wth Black case' regimented the time, which the servants might have spent at the 'Old Baggagamon Table'.

Five bedrooms occupied the first floor. Because upholstery was a sign of wealth bedchambers were typically the most finely decorated rooms in late-seventeenth and early-

⁶⁴ Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture 1715-1740*, 187.

⁶⁵ Bowett, *English furniture, 1660-1714*, 80-83, discusses leather. Matted bottoms are mentioned on 272. Common parlours had usually had chairs with cane or rush seats until about 1725, but leather more often after that. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 40.

⁶⁶ This on the basis of physical assessment and the Cote inventory.

eighteenth-century England.⁶⁷ In genteel households, the best bed was the most important and expensive object, not on account of its wood but because of the fabric that adorned it and this was true at Cote.⁶⁸ Additionally, for much of the eighteenth century, inventory samples from England and North America suggest that bedding often constituted the largest category of expenditure in any house.⁶⁹

Architectural features such as panelling and deep cornices suggest that the two finest rooms were located directly above the Great Parlour and Parlour.⁷⁰ The most highly decorated room was 'Room No 2 First Story'. This room was located at the front of the house and enjoyed ready access to the main stair. Its furnishings were appraised at a substantial £50. The bed was adorned with chintz fabric with yellow satin which was replicated in the elaborate window curtains. Additional furnishings, including a 'Chint[z] Quilt Lined with green silk', 2 dressing tables, a 'Double Jappan case Drawers' and '10 India Back Chairs with Workd Seats', indicated that this space easily served to entertain - and impress - visitors. The presence of chintz is particularly intriguing. By the eighteenth century East Indian fabrics, especially calicoes and chintzes, had caught the fancy of Europeans and challenged the products of European woollen manufactures.⁷¹ In England, this 'calico craze' resulted in an almost complete ban on East Indian fabrics in 1721, a

⁶⁷ Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 82, and G. Beard, *Upholsterers and interior furnishings in England 1530-1840* (New Haven and London, 1997).

⁶⁸ N. Rothstein and S. M. Levy, 'Furnishings, c. 1500-1780', in D. Jenkins, (ed.), *The Cambridge history of western textiles*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2003), vol. I, 631- 658, 633. For comparative bed values, see Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 91-92. Cornforth notes how rare were survivals of 'simple beds hung in woollen materials and cotton.'

⁶⁹ Shammass, *The pre-industrial consumer in England and America*, 169-170, Table 6.3. It should be noted that Shammass' sample represented only a small percentage of wealthier households where plate would have been most in evidence and most valuable.

⁷⁰ These rooms currently comprise one large room, although it is almost certain that a wall has been removed. This is supported by the Elisabeth Robinson's recollection that, 'In about 1930 mother had a legacy...but it enabled her to knock these two rooms together'. Elisabeth Robinson, 'Some notes about Cote' (Unpublished MS, April, 1971), 8. Typescript on file at Cote House.

⁷¹ B. Lemire, 'Fashioning cottons: Asian trade, domestic industry and consumer demand, 1660-1780' in D. Jenkins, (ed.), *The Cambridge history of western textiles*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 2003), I, 493-512. Idem, *Fashion's favourite: the cotton trade and the consumer in Britain 1660-1800* (Oxford, 1991), 12-42.

victory for the wool trade.⁷² Curiously at Cote, chintz, illegal to import, served as a fashion statement for one of Bristol's leading Customs officials.

The second next most expensively furnished space was also a bedchamber on the first floor. This chamber, fully-panelled, probably in oak,⁷³ contained a bed with a Crimson silk counterpane, two 'setts of Crimson Camblet window vallions Cornishes + 2 squabbs',⁷⁴ a 'walnut case Drawers', 6 fashionable 'India Back chaires with Camblet Seats and 2 Elbow Ditto', and three pictures, valued at £38 8s. 6d.. The eight chairs had crimson seat upholstery matching the windows, whereas a somewhat outmoded 'sett of Guilt Leather hangings' costing £5 5s. adorned the walls.⁷⁵

The furnishings suggest that Elbridge's bedchambers probably served as an occasional focus of sociability, evoking interplay between public and private space.⁷⁶ These two rooms could be seen; although removed from the main floor rooms designed for reception, privileged visitors might be shown up the staircase and into one of the bedchambers, there to be dazzled by the architectural features, the range of goods on exhibition, the sumptuous textiles at the windows and on the beds, and the ample furniture to accommodate chosen people of significance or import. Whilst ascending to these rooms, visitors and servants alike would pass the 'Eight-day Clock with fine Japan Case + Glass Front,' worth £9 that stood in the staircase, at once one of the most visible and most expensive single items in the house.

Adjoining 'Room No 2 First Story' was a 'Closet' containing '1 Walnut Desk and Bookcase'. This £5.5 object seemingly stood alone in the room. By comparison, desk and

⁷² Lemire, *Fashion's favourite*, 41. The restrictions were ineffective, however, and by the 1730s cotton manufacturing had resumed in Britain. Lemire, 'Fashioning cottons', in Jenkins, (ed.), *The Cambridge history of western textiles*, I, 504; G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, (eds.), *The spinning world: a global history of cotton textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford, 2009), especially chapters 10, 11, and 13.

⁷³ As suggested by Elisabeth Robinson's recollection that, at the top of the stairs, 'the first door on the left was...panelled in dark oak.' Robinson, 'Some Notes about Cote', 8: Laura Keim pointed out that the unfinished inside of cupboards in this room is oak.

⁷⁴ Likely cushions for window seats in this room.

⁷⁵ On gilt leather hangings, see G. Saunders, *Wallpaper in interior decoration* (London, 2002), 121-123.

⁷⁶ See Thornton, *Authentic décor*, 51.

bookcases listed in inventories from larger country houses at Erddig and Cannons were valued at between £7 and £25.⁷⁷ The form of the desk and bookcase suggests books, of which Elbridge had a modest collection. Between his two houses at Cote and in St Michael's Hill, Elbridge owned seventy volumes valued at a relatively modest £5.10. The collection displays a combination of religious and instructional literature, together with some history, poetry, and plays. These include *The Whole Duty of Man*, *The Gentleman's Calling*, and *The Gentleman Instructed*, which was 'written for the instruction of a young nobleman'.⁷⁸ The books offer a guide to gentlemanly reading habits and assert the closet as a private space for combined writing and study for the customs official.

Cote typifies gentlemen's houses in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The rooms and objects indicate how these houses functioned as social spaces. For a person with a fortune of nearly £80,000, John Elbridge owned a house that was handsomely but not ostentatiously decorated. He kept furnishings relatively up to date, possibly due to his niece's influence, but there was no attempt to refurbish the house completely. A range of fabrics, including fashionable but illegal chintz, offer coded clues that suggest Elbridge saw his bedchambers as places to display his taste. No carpets or curtains are recorded on the ground floor, indicating the greatest efforts at display were to be seen in the bedchambers above.⁷⁹ He was not bound, however, by formulaic colour hierarchies. In several cases, the best furnishings were restricted to privileged visitors. Of the three sets of 'India Back' chairs, purchased within the decade prior to Elbridge's death, two were in the best bedchambers and one was in the 'Parlour'. The presence of imported wood such

⁷⁷ The Cote example may have been similar to ones illustrated in Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture*, chapter 2; for Erddig and Cannons, see 54.

⁷⁸ BRO/AC/WO/10/18: Inventory and Appraisement of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill, March 1738/9; W. D. [William Darrell], *The gentleman instructed, in the conduct of a virtuous and happy life*. [Dublin], 1725. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online, accessed 4 June 2010.

⁷⁹ Floor coverings such as carpets and floor cloths were unusual in genteel houses until well into the eighteenth century rare. Ayres, *Domestic interiors*, 93. On carpets see S. Sherrill, *Carpets and rugs of Europe and North America* (New York, 1996).

as walnut from Virginia, mahogany from the Caribbean, and oak from the Baltic, as well as illegal chintz textiles, highlighted Elbridge's connections with overseas trade. As at Lower Slaughter, where the Whitmores had an 'India Japann'd Chest' in the Great Parlour,⁸⁰ the staid possessions of a gentleman had a spice of the exotic.

Furnishings for gentlemen in Clifton

Comparisons with other Bristolian gentlemen yield further quantitative and qualitative information about the material objects to be found in small classical houses. Records from two Clifton residences offer benchmarks about the costs of furnishings in relation to building and the range of goods gentlemen possessed at the end of our period. Linen draper Paul Fisher spent over £325 furnishing his new house in the late 1740s.⁸¹ The notes and receipts for Fisher's Clifton Hill House run from 1744 to 1752 and list the supplier, date, and cost of the goods.⁸² Since Fisher spent a little over £4,200 on his house, the furnishings amounted to roughly 8% of building costs.⁸³ This admittedly crude measurement provides a guideline to gentlemanly investments in both furnishings and houses. For comparison, Table 6.1 lists inventory values for household goods as well as the number of spaces appraised.

⁸⁰ GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735. This object was valued at £1.1.0., indicating a modestly priced piece with an exotic flavor.

⁸¹ BRO/09467/12/b: 'Notes and Rects for Mr P Fishers Private Affairs/Bundle No 12/1729' and 'Notes + Receipts for Furniture +c at Clifton (Bundle 13)'.

⁸² Fisher paid substantial bills to one identified supplier, Ash & Hutton, a firm of Bristol pewterers, on three occasions. The invoices are: 24 May 1750 for £24.4.1; June 1752 for £25.15.5; and 20 Aug 1752 for £16.8.7. The timing of the purchases may indicate important stages in the completion of the new house or other life events that required additional service or everyday dishes. See H. H. Cotterell, *Old pewter: its makers and marks in England, Scotland & Ireland* (London, 1929, reprinted 1963), 149-50 and 239. A forthcoming book by Michael and Alyson Marsden will do much to document pewterers in Bristol. Their advice on this subject has been helpful.

⁸³ BRO/09467/12/a: 'Notes and Receipts for House Building at Clifton 1746-47-48-49 + 1750 +c'.

Table 6.1: Comparative values of household furnishings, £, and inventoried spaces⁸⁴

	John Clifford, 1683 Frampton House	Richard Whitmore, 1688, Lower Slaughter Manor	William Whitmore, 1725, Lower Slaughter Manor	Elizabeth Whitmore, 1735, Lower Slaughter Manor	John Elbridge, 1739, Cote	John Elbridge, 1739, The Fort house	Paul Fisher, 1744-1752, Clifton Hill House	Thomas Goldney, 1768, Goldney House
Value	Few values listed	274.16.8 ^a	260.10.6 ^a	199.17.0	290.8.10	303.12.8	326.17.11	No values
No. of spaces listed ^b	19	23	21	15	24	23	N/A	25

^a = Silver included in calculation

^b = Excluding outbuildings

Source: GA/D149/TRS80 and F7: Household inventory of John Clifford, c. 1683; GA/D45/F2: Inventory and valuation of goods of Richard Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 31 January 1687/8; GA/D45/F3: Inventory and copy will of William Whitmore of Lower Slaughter, 1724-25; GA/D45/F4: Inventories of goods, linen, etc. belonging to Elizabeth Whitmore of Slaughter House, 1724-1735; BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House); BRO/09467/12/b: 'Notes + Receipts for Furniture +c at Clifton, 1744-1752, (Bundle 13)'; BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768'.

These figures indicate that the scale of furnishings in gentlemen's houses with four rooms on a floor was fairly consistent between the 1680s and 1760s. Despite changes in values, the availability of goods, and the number of furnishings, a gentleman might expect to furnish his house with objects costing a few hundred pounds. This amounted to about ten per cent of building costs. The number and value of furnishings might be somewhat higher for those near urban areas, as in the case of Elbridge and Fisher, but this might be a matter of individual choice rather than geography. Other genteel owners might occasionally spend less, but only on rare occasions significantly more than these figures reflect.

A 1768 inventory of Thomas Goldney III's 'dwellinghouse Outhouses and Gardens at Clifton' opens further avenues for analysis. Goldney, who inherited the Clifton house from his father, is most noted for creating an outstanding garden but the house has been less thoroughly explored. The inventory references 'the new part' and 'the old part' of the

⁸⁴ It is interesting how inventory takers examining the same house at Lower Slaughter Manor might delineate certain spaces separately, which accounts for the variation in number across the three Whitmore inventories.

building.⁸⁵ The 'new' building was two and one half storeys, with four rooms per floor in the new wing and a total of twelve spaces.

The Goldney inventory provides detailed descriptions of furnishings, although no values. In the 'Best Room Southwards', a bedchamber that overlooked the garden, there is a 'Mahogany Bedstead Fluted Pillars half silk yellow damask furniture feather Bed', an extravagant assemblage, side by side with five chairs with checked coverings. Such informal fabric coverings are oddly juxtaposed with expensive silk, although they might have been a utilitarian covering for the silk underneath. Between the time of Elbridge's inventory in 1739 and Goldney's thirty years later there had been a marked evolution in the use of the bedchamber for sociable purposes. For Elbridge, born in the seventeenth century, the bedchamber still fulfilled a public function; for the eighteenth-century man, Goldney, it did rather less so.

Part of this may have been related to the cost of textiles and their display. At Cote, the most expensively furnished rooms were highlighted by beds and windows with expansive and costly fabrics.⁸⁶ As textiles became more widely available, by the middle of the eighteenth century beds functioned less as showpieces.⁸⁷ Textile shift was not only a factor of price but also changing fashion.⁸⁸ By the 1760s, for example, Goldney had carpets on the floors of at least some rooms, including two bedchambers and three parlours.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768

⁸⁶ Only 13% of the sample in Weathrill had window curtains, although this rises to 81 % amongst wealthier London tradesmen. Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 8.

⁸⁷ They could still be expensively adorned, however. Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 88-89, 92. N. Rothstein and S. M. Levy, 'Furnishings, c. 1500-1780', in D. Jenkins, (ed.), *The Cambridge history of western textiles*, I, 653. For textile prices, see C. Shamma, 'The Decline of Textile Prices in England and British America Prior to Industrialization', *Economic History Review*, vol. 47, no. 3 (1994), 483-507.

⁸⁸ R. S. DuPlessis, 'Cotton Consumption in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Atlantic', in G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, (eds.), *The spinning world: a global history of cotton textiles, 1200-1850* (Oxford, 2009), 227-246.

⁸⁹ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

Sociability had migrated to other rooms. Thirteen spaces in the ‘Old part of the Building’ were private rooms, such as ‘the Study’, and service spaces. The ‘Study’ contained objects that suggested a focus on private interaction with companions interested in learning and the natural world: a mahogany writing desk, a pair of globes, several pieces of ‘Virginia Walnut’ furniture, several ‘Landskip’ paintings, numerous prints, ‘1 Large Box for viewing pictures perspectively’, probably some form of zograscope, and a ‘Camera Obscura’.⁹⁰ A group of visitors in 1764 mentioned the Camera Obscura, which clearly gave them pleasure as it allowed a view of ‘the whole Country & the Objects around’.

In the new building, the principal rooms on the ground floor included ‘the Common Best sitting parlour’, ‘the common sitting small parlour fronting the north’ a ‘Hall’ and ‘best Stair case’, and the magnificent, and still intact, ‘Mahogany parlour’. The ‘Mahogany parlour’ not only displayed an impressive tea table, but richly carved panelling and fine joinery, ‘10 Half Crimson silk armed Chairs’, ‘2 White Marble tables and carved Gilt frames’, ‘2 pier Glasses in carved Gilt frames’, several items of silver and portraits of Mr Thomas Goldney and his father. This room was a splendid exhibition for a Bristolian gentleman.

Although his family had been Quakers since the 1670s, Goldney’s inventory reinforces other evidence, such as parish rate books, that suggest Goldney had drifted away from his forebear’s religion.⁹¹ Indeed, the range and quality of Thomas Goldney III’s possessions illustrated the elevated material status of commercial elites who by 1770 had become an established part of British genteel society.

⁹⁰ For discussion of scientific instruments in the domestic setting see Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 261-265.

⁹¹ See BUL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768 and BRO/P/St.A/OP/1(b): Overseers to Clifton Parish 1732 to 1749. St. Andrews Ratebook, 233, where Goldney is listed as a member of the vestry in 1743.

The Cliffords and Clutterbucks of Frampton on Severn

Furnishing a 'modern-built house...fit for a gentleman' could be a major undertaking, although few owners seem to have replaced furniture entirely after erecting a new building. Furnishing campaigns were done in stages, where old and new furniture was combined over time. Household furnishings reveal their meaning through intensive interrogation. This is especially true of those that in the eighteenth century could be associated with the concept of 'taste'.⁹² What they were, how they were arranged and their relationship to other objects are important factors in assessing them. Certain domestic objects were particularly significant because of their finely attuned meanings. Going beyond statistical analysis, individual furnishings provide precise clues to how status was displayed.

Richard Clutterbuck's Frampton Court housed a series of individual objects that served as signifiers of his status. Material evidence suggests that Clutterbuck likely bought new furniture in the early 1730s to adorn his substantial new house. In the Frampton Court collection are a set of ten side chairs and two matching settees, with compass seats, India backs and cabriole front and back legs all terminating in claw and ball feet (Fig 6.2). Furniture contains carefully coded vocabulary. Using analysis employed by decorative arts scholars, it is possible to refine the dating of these chairs, reinforcing the case that they comprised pivotal objects acquired by Richard Clutterbuck.

⁹² Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, chapter 6, especially 167.



Fig 6.2: India-back chair, early 1730s, Frampton Court collection.

Although chairs were prevalent in all households by the mid-eighteenth century, their number, form and value mattered.⁹³ There is no direct documentary evidence linking the chairs with the construction of Frampton Court, but family tradition holds that they were acquired by Richard Clutterbuck. Previously the Frampton chairs have been dated to the period of George I.⁹⁴ Recent scholarship, however, makes it nearly certain that these India-back compass seat chairs were contemporary with the construction of the new Frampton Court in the early 1730s. The first recorded instance of the compass or rounded seat is found in an inventory of a State Bed Chamber at Erddig in 1726. In addition, shell carving at the knees was first documented on a chair leg in a furniture bill of November 1728, but ‘soon achieved near universal popularity’.⁹⁵ The Frampton chairs also exhibit the claw and ball foot, a motif introduced about this time.⁹⁶ This type of foot appears on

⁹³ See L. Hall, ‘Yeoman or gentleman?’, 6; Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, 90-93. Weatherill’s study does not consider chairs extensively.

⁹⁴ Christie’s Report (November 2003), Frampton Court collection.

⁹⁵ Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture*, 171 - 175.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.

all four legs, indicating the chair's high level of status. Taken together, these stylistic details confirm a date of construction in the early 1730s and present strong circumstantial evidence for their being acquired for the new Frampton Court. Whilst not the finest or most decorative chairs available in the second quarter of the eighteenth century they were distinguished by their figurative wood and new form.⁹⁷

Dating these chairs effectively and exploring their provenance marks them as material representations of Richard Clutterbuck's efforts to display status and illustrates the consumption behaviours of gentlemen builders and owners.⁹⁸ Moreover, these chairs can be compared in terms of cost, quality, and numbers with examples found in larger houses. In 1728, Sir Robert Walpole ordered lavish examples at the substantial cost of 50 shillings per chair, which included damask upholstery.⁹⁹ By comparison John Elbridge's 1739 inventory values a 'round Back Leather seated Chair', possibly similar, at 6s. and a set of '6 India Back blew Leather bottom Chairs', which almost certainly cost much less than Sir Robert's chairs.¹⁰⁰ If as seems probable Richard Clutterbuck acquired these chairs for his new house, it demonstrates the fashionable acquisition of up to date furniture.

This type of chair introduced around 1730 was representative of the mercantile influence on furnishings. Based on surviving examples, this form was, 'made in very large numbers by both metropolitan and provincial chair-makers' and available throughout

⁹⁷ Ibid., especially 178-180, and A. Bowett, 'The India-back chair, 1715-1740', *Apollo* (January 2003), 3-9.

⁹⁸ Frampton Court collection, especially drawings 35-49. Later generations of the Clifford family clearly valued these chairs. A series of watercolours executed in the 1840s and 1850s by several female members of the Clifford family depict many of the rooms at Frampton Court. The set of India back compass seat chairs stood at that time in the Hall. Richard Clutterbuck owned Frampton Court until his death in 1775, at which time it passed to his niece Elizabeth Phillips and then to a great-nephew, Nathaniel Winchcombe, who changed his name to Clifford in 1801. It seems highly unlikely that these chairs should have entered the Frampton Court collection between the time of Richard's death and the completion of the drawings. Although these images were made one hundred years or more after Richard Clutterbuck built the new house, they offer guidance about room use and furnishing.

⁹⁹ Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture*, 171.

¹⁰⁰ BRO/AC/WO/10/18: Inventory and Appraisalment of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill, March 1738/9 and BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House).

provincial England, Wales and the British colonies.¹⁰¹ In this way, these chairs represent a furnishings shift about 1730 that coincided with the architectural transition that announced merchants and professional men as owners of small classical houses in Gloucestershire.

Other objects with utilitarian and decorative functions reinforced this point. Richard Clutterbuck stayed abreast of fashion. Specific instructions are recorded for a bookcase to be built in 1771.¹⁰² Like other gentlemen's houses, however, the furnishings of Frampton Court were not wholly *au courant*. An older chest with the initials 'RC', and date '1639' suggested Richard's Clifford lineage whilst displaying out-dated taste. One bedchamber had walls covered with a late-seventeenth- or early-eighteenth-century Aubusson tapestry, an older form of décor.¹⁰³ A set of Chinese armorial porcelain, which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter, was complemented by a range of quotidian pewter dishes and serving pieces, made in Bristol and London in the 1740s and 1750s.¹⁰⁴ This indicated that despite the acquisition of fine porcelain, Clutterbuck and his household frequently took meals off far more commonplace objects. In another material manifestation of the status of the gentlemen, however, even on these pewter dishes one finds the Clutterbuck crest. The show created by new furnishings was counter-balanced by older pieces of furniture.¹⁰⁵ The portability and relative ease of acquisition of furnishings combined with specific design details to enable gentlemen to convey value and status.

¹⁰¹ Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture*, 171.

¹⁰² Frampton Court collection, Richard Clutterbuck account book, 24 December 1771.

¹⁰³ Description from Frampton Court files, 2003. GA/D149/F18 – draft will of Wm Clutterbuck, gent. (1726) and PROB11/623(1 July 1728). William's final will leaves the 'hangings and chairs in the Parlour Chamber' specifically to Richard.

¹⁰⁴ This despite the fact that pewter was 'gradually being usurped by earthenware and china' and gradually moved to the 'backstage' of the house, see Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, 135. Objects from private collection, Frampton Court, include pewter by John Griffith, Bristol, working 1740-1755, personal communication from Alyson Marsden, 2 May 2009.

¹⁰⁵ A 1766 inventory of Hinwick House, Bedfordshire, similarly 'shows a conservative addition of pieces to the furnishings rather than wholesale replacement under the pressures of changing fashions'. Collett-White, (ed.), *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses*, 93. Similarly, Collett-White notes that Sharnbrook house, fitted out in the late 1740s or early 1750s, shows a similar mix in the principal rooms, 205.

Gloucestershire gentlemen's furnishings in context

How do the furnishings of gentlemen's houses compare to other houses in England? The room arrangements, interior finishes and furnishings at Lower Slaughter Manor, Cote, Goldney House, Clifton Hill House, and Frampton Court indicate that genteel owners in Gloucestershire stood very high in the socio-economic hierarchy, likely in the top ten per cent of wealth in the population.¹⁰⁶ Between 1675 and 1725, the mean inventory values for the gentry were £320 and £193 for trades of high status, including clergy and professions.¹⁰⁷ The findings presented in this chapter are in line with these values and indicate that builders and owners who possessed small classical houses equipped them with a range of handsome goods that reinforced their genteel status.

Despite overall growth in the possession of goods, higher status objects such as books, clocks, pictures, window curtains and china were relatively uncommon and slow to spread.¹⁰⁸ Ownership of high status objects increased in many categories, but it was still the case that large numbers of people did not own such possessions, including many gentry and high status tradespeople (Table 6.2).

¹⁰⁶ In their study of Cornwall and Kent, for example, 'gentlemen' and 'esquire' made up less than 6% of the sample between 1700 and 1749. Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, 22, Table 2.2.

¹⁰⁷ Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 168, Table 8.1.

¹⁰⁸ See especially Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*; Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, Table 2.1. Interesting comparisons may be drawn with London in Table 2.2. On clocks, M. Donald, 'The greatest necessity for every rank of men: gender, clocks, and watches,' in M. Donald and L. Hurcombe, (eds.), *Gender and material culture in historical perspective* (Basingstoke, 2000), 54-75; Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 263-265.

Table 6.2 Percentages (%) of goods owned by gentry and high status tradesmen in England

<i>Social Status</i>	<i>Books</i>	<i>Clocks</i>	<i>Pictures</i>	<i>China</i>	<i>Utensils for hot drinks</i>
Gentry (1675-1725)	39	51	33	6	7
Trades of high status, clergy, professions (1675-1725)	45	34	35	11	7
Gentlemen (Kent 1700-1749)	46.2	69.2	n/a	n/a	23.1
Gentlemen (Cornwall 1700-1749)	26.7	33.3	n/a	n/a	20

Source: Weatherill, Table 8.1; Overton et al, Table A4.1

The owners considered here possessed objects in all these categories, with the exception that John Clifford and Richard Whitmore, both of whom died in the 1690s, did not own china or utensils for hot drinks.¹⁰⁹ On the basis of other evidence, such as objects listed in wills, owners of other small classical houses were likely to have engaged in similar buying practices.

Yet if this is a reminder of how many material possessions belonged to gentlemen-owners in Gloucestershire, there was still a substantial gap with country houses of the greater gentry and aristocracy. Larger houses with more rooms to fill naturally contained more objects. Moreover, the quality of furnishings, and hence their cost, often far surpassed those of gentlemen-owners.¹¹⁰ Although the 2nd earl of Lichfield socialized with at least one gentlemanly family in Gloucestershire, the Rookes, his domestic possessions far outstripped anything they had. A 1743 inventory of Ditchley Park completed after the death of Lord Lichfield lists forty-one rooms as well as a dozen or more ancillary spaces. The contents, excluding silver, were valued at £1489.5.0, or nearly

¹⁰⁹ Clock, books and pictures are all mentioned by John Clifford. See GA/D149/TRS80 and F7: Household inventory of John Clifford, c. 1683 and GA/D149/A26 – 1674-1679: Personal account book of John Clifford. Entries for 11 Oct 1677 and 10 May 1678 [Clocks]. Clifford records book purchases on at least a dozen occasions. The inventory records ‘1 clock & a wainscot case to it’ and several pictures, including one of ‘ye Lady Rosamd (given me by my Lady Downe)’.

¹¹⁰ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*; T. Murdoch, (ed.), *Noble households*; Collett-White, (ed.), *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses*.

five times as much as a gentleman's house like Cote.¹¹¹ The most expensively furnished bedchamber was valued at £137.5.0; seven bedrooms contained furnishings worth between £30 and £52, comparable to John Elbridge's best bedroom. On the ground floor, the comparison becomes even more stark, where Lichfield's Drawing Room had furnishings worth £143.13.0 and his Great Room £195.10.6. The parlours of gentlemen simply could not hold their own against such spaces. With the plate included, the contents totalled a staggering £3,000, or about ten times as valuable as a gentleman's possessions.¹¹²

The difference in the number and overall level of furnishing between gentlemen's houses and country houses of the gentry was apparent in other ways. Another great house, Kiveton in Yorkshire, inventoried in 1727, had two apartments 'more for shew than conveniency'.¹¹³ Gentlemen, by contrast, had less room to spare for rooms and furnishings simply about 'shew'. Other comparisons measure gentlemen's level of material possessions. Small country houses elsewhere in England were more comparable in their size, arrangement and furnishings, but even these often had more possessions and higher values.¹¹⁴ The wealthiest merchants, such as South Sea Company officials, had significantly higher numbers of goods worth more.¹¹⁵ Individual objects told similar stories. On one occasion, Lady Elizabeth Germain purchased a fine inlaid desk in France 'from the Dauphin for 100 guineas' for Drayton House, Northamptonshire.¹¹⁶ Compared to Lady Betty's buying binge, Elizabeth Whitmore's efforts at Lower Slaughter seem positively staid.

¹¹¹ Murdoch, *Noble households*, 143-165.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹¹⁴ Collett-White, (ed.), *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses*. Some of the smaller houses described include Colworth House (1723, £365) and Hinwick House (1766, £570).

¹¹⁵ G. and P. Glanville, 'The Art Market and Merchant Patronage in London 1680 to 1720', in M. Galinou, (ed.) *City Merchants and the Arts* (London, 2004), 11-24, especially 11-12.

¹¹⁶ Murdoch, *Noble households*, 119. What is more is that the Drayton House inventory lists 82 separate spaces, more than three times the number of spaces in gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire.

Gentlemen had handsome furnishings by comparison with their contemporaries, but in most instances there was little effort to replicate the consumption practices of the aristocracy. As Deborah Cohen noted for the nineteenth century, ‘Aristocrats, though often conspicuous consumers, did not secure their status by their household possessions.’¹¹⁷ Possessions meant more to the genteel. Objects enabled them to participate in genteel society, inject taste into the domestic environment, and display their fashion sense in a way that was relatively economical. Their choices were not always governed by resources. Sometime it was a matter of taste and preference. John Elbridge had the means to furnish to a higher standard, but his two houses near Bristol were accoutred with a range of objects that did not cost vast sums of money.¹¹⁸

At the same time, gentlemen’s personal possessions outstripped most of the other residents of Gloucestershire, and there was greater distinction with those lower down the social strata. Gentlemen’s houses were filled with many more things than the abode of the average middling sort. Elbridge, for example, lived a comfortable, even sumptuous life, with a range of possessions that were practical and laden with prestige. His possessions set him apart from even moderately prosperous middling members of society. Genteel owners differentiated themselves with those lower down the social strata through their furnishings, although to some degree this was happenstance that came with accumulated wealth, a bigger house, and the resulting material possessions.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ D. Cohen, *Household gods: the British and their possessions* (New Haven, 2006), 86.

¹¹⁸ See BRO/AC/WO/10/18: Inventory and Appraisement of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill, March 1738/9 and BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House).

¹¹⁹ See Hunt, *The middling sort: commerce, gender and the family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996), especially 2-5.

Conclusion

Assessing architectural finishes and room furnishings provides multiple additional layers for understanding the lives of those who lived in these houses. The eighteenth century saw a dramatic transformation of the geography of domestic space toward more fulsome description of interiors for audiences that had become increasingly sensitive to the coded signals conveyed by space and objects.¹²⁰ Genteel owners throughout the period furnished these houses with an array of objects distinct in its composition from those lower and higher in society. They were aware of fashion and collected new luxury goods, while often simultaneously retaining older objects and some traditional forms of social interaction.

As with their building campaigns, gentlemen furnished their houses in measured and economical ways. The availability, number and types of possession people owned changed between 1680 and 1770. Gentlemen did not normally acquire the most magnificent, beautiful, or costly objects available. Instead, their furnishings reflected a level appropriate to their status, although there was considerable variation in the range, cost, and style of objects within each house. Genteel owners acquired new objects that were signifiers of fashion, especially it seems after about 1730. Elizabeth Whitmore bought china and mahogany furniture. Richard Clutterbuck acquired handsome India back chairs and an exquisite set of Chinese armorial porcelain. Men of new money, such as Bristolian gentlemen Thomas Goldney and Paul Fisher, sought to participate in this genteel world. Fisher's house was the height of Palladian fashion, but the amount that he spent furnishing it suggests décor in line with other gentlemen. Although it is not clear how much Thomas Goldney's possessions were worth, qualitatively it was equipped to a

¹²⁰ C. Wall, 'A geography of Georgian narrative space,' in M. Ogborn and C. Withers, (eds.), *Georgian geographies: essays on space, place and landscape in the eighteenth century* (Manchester, 2004), 114-130.

high standard, with an impressive array of objects, not to mention the *piece de resistance* of his garden.

Newer objects were frequently mixed with old objects. Even in country houses, ‘insufficient attention has been devoted to the strong thread of conservatism’ in decorating.¹²¹ Genteel owners exhibited a willingness to acquire possessions over time, incrementally inserting appropriate objects into their domestic surroundings. The result was a mixture of fine furnishings, often situated in public spaces, with older, less stylish objects usually found in back rooms. Fashionable India Back chairs could co-exist with a walnut cane couch, or a handsome green bed might stand in the same room with an ‘old’ case of drawers and dressing box, and ‘old’ quilts and blankets.¹²² Amanda Vickery described such individuals as, ‘poised between past and present,’ in their equipment and furnishings.¹²³

The influences on gentlemen owners’ taste remains to be explored in greater detail. Gentry families like the Whitmores had longstanding metropolitan connections, which might explain their access to and proclivity for fashionable goods. Richard Clutterbuck’s networks in Bristol seem likely to have influenced his furnishing choices. Bristol was omnipresent for Elbridge, Goldney, and Fisher as well. Less is known about the possessions of other builders and owners in Gloucestershire, but their houses indicate an awareness of taste and fashion. It stands to reason, therefore, that owners inclined to build small classical houses would also seek fashionable furnishings. These twin themes represent an important development in the eighteenth century.

¹²¹ Cornforth, *Early Georgian interiors*, 8; Collett-White, (ed.), *Inventories of Bedfordshire country houses*, 93, 207.

¹²² BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House).

¹²³ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 212.

Chapter 7

Enacting Status

In 1723, William Clutterbuck of Frampton House in the county of Gloucestershire folded a piece of paper, melted a dab of red wax onto its back, and sealed it with an impression of his family coat of arms.¹ A decade later, a stone mason, perched high on scaffolding, carved the same coat of arms in the tympanum of a new, fashionable house recently constructed and renamed Frampton Court by William's son Richard. In about 1750, a Chinese painter held a piece of porcelain in his hand, stroke by careful brush stroke applying the Clutterbuck arms onto a tea pot. That serving vessel together with at least a hundred other similarly painted objects would shortly make a voyage half way around the world to grace the tables and cupboards at Frampton Court.

These three actions and the objects associated with them represent important attempts to enact status in eighteenth-century England. The most prosaic of these, the sealing of a letter, played an important role as an oft-repeated practice in knowledge and status communication.² It was a personal act of security and privacy almost certainly conducted in the confines of William's study or closet. The building of a house was an omnipresent assertion of status and power. Embellishing it with the family coat of arms was a final visible reminder of family lineage and authority. The acquisition of porcelain

¹ The arms of Clutterbuck, azure a lion rampant argent in a chief three escallops of the second quartering Clifford chequy azure and or on a bend gules three lions passant of the second; crest a buck sejant between two laurel Branches proper.

² On letters, letter-writing and communication see, S. Whyman, *The pen and the people: English letter writers, 1660-1800* (Oxford, 2009); Whyman also mined the extensive cache of letters for the Verney family to trace family and mercantile connections, suggesting that even amongst an aristocratic family business ties were important, S. Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart England: the cultural world of the Verneys 1660-1720* (Oxford, 1999); Amanda Vickery made good use of letters in her ground-breaking work *The gentleman's daughter* (London, 1998); See also, R. Earle, (ed.), *Epistolary selves: letters and letter-writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot, 1999); C. Brant, *Eighteenth-century letters and British culture*, (Basingstoke, 2006); I. K. Steele, *The English Atlantic 1675-1740: an exploration of communication and community* (Oxford, 1986); S. M. S. Pearsall, *Atlantic families: lives and letters in the later-eighteenth century* (Oxford, 2008); K. Dierks, *In my power: letter writing and communications in early America* (Philadelphia, 2009).

signified participation in a global consumer network and a fashionable world of goods, but it was also a tangible representation that could be closely admired and even touched for those privileged to come within the setting of the gentleman's house. Possession or lack of such a material good constituted a distinct marker of status.

It was through object-actions like these that people laid claim to gentility, acted out their status, and shaped their identities. Houses, landscapes, interiors and furnishings allowed genteel owners to put social practices in motion. 'Space,' as Amanda Flather writes, 'is an arena for social action.'³ In other words, these houses served as vehicles for a range of activities, displays and symbols that conveyed ideas of status within and especially beyond the household.

The last four chapters have considered in turn the architecture of gentlemen's houses, their situation, the arrangement and decoration of interior space, and their furnishing. But theatres, sets and props without the action of the play are hollow. With the stage set, how genteel owners enacted the drama of status becomes the central question. From the kitchens and parlours of their own houses in this chapter, to involvement in local affairs and county and national endeavours in the next, gentlemen owners employed strategies that defined status and identity for their families, and within wider networks.

Activity in the domestic environment of the gentleman's house involved social and cultural interactions between and within families, friends, visitors and servants. A range of social dynamics took place in small classical houses. These actions carefully positioned gentlemen-owners within the social hierarchy. The act of building a gentlemen's house most often confirmed status, but the performance of status was a recurring process.

The analysis returns to several houses examined in the last chapter, supplemented with illustrations from other houses. Cotswold gentry houses such as Lower Slaughter

³ A. Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, 2.

Manor demonstrate how elements of fashion could be injected into traditional landed life. Members of society from the commercial and professional worlds of Bristol or the clothing districts of the Stroudwater Valleys confirmed their status within an established hierarchy through a series of measured choices. John Elbridge's Cote and Thomas Goldney III's Goldney House provide accounts of Bristolian gentlemen and their efforts to validate their position in society. This process, however, could have decidedly different manifestations. In the Stroudwater, William Palling's Brownhill Court and Sir Onesiphorus Paul's Hill House offer two contrasting examples of the gentlemen-clothier's house and how it played a central role in the enactments of status. Richard Clutterbuck's Frampton Court offers a somewhat different picture. His efforts to enact status in his small but grand country house displayed a sense of aggrandizement seen infrequently in gentlemen's houses. The character of Clutterbuck's choices point to some of the normative activities of other genteel owners.

Enacting status and the genteel household

The enactment of status could be a repetitive act, a specific event or an everyday occurrence. They might be recorded in a letter or diary, referenced in an account book, or represented by an object whose use can be explored. Most telling are those enactments that highlight how genteel owners grappled with status within the domestic setting. These activities help to trace social strategies over time and geography, particularly identifying what is distinctive about genteel individuals and their environments.

Social status for those on the cusp of elite status was both privileged and contested. Gentility had a 'deeper cultural power' as '*the* most potent and important available symbol of social autonomy, authority and (paradoxically) equality'.⁴ During this period, the

⁴ French, *The middle sort of people*, 265.

concept of politeness emerged as a central force in the construction of genteel status. The strength and reach of polite culture extended well down the social scale, and could be articulated as sociable, refined and genteel, but also in opposition to vulgar, rustic, barbarous, even useful.⁵ Looking forward from the seventeenth century, as French does, gentility was the key variable in status construction for ‘the middle sort’. Margaret Hunt avers that politeness and good breeding were ideas landed families sought to convey to their children, but were not vital to middling male socialization compared to traits like thrift, hard work and business-related skills.⁶ Instead, middling ‘prudential virtue’ emphasized rational self-discipline over refinement.

One of the forces of change in gentlemanly houses was the ability of genteel owners to express both ideas. There was no necessary incompatibility between politeness and hard work and business acumen. Putting together house and objects enabled forms of sociability that were genteel and most gentlemen and their families abided by polite codes of conduct. But the construction of gentlemen’s houses after the 1720s resulted from unity of polite intention and thrifty acumen. At the same time, this was not universal. In what follows, it will be evident that owners of these houses straddled a line between different social strata, urban and rural environments, and polite and impolite.

Examining status enactments strikes a balance between a celebration of polite ideals and the contested reality of life within personal and family networks. Houses and possessions combined with people to put politeness in action. These houses were largely about conveying a sense of status, but behaviour even in gentleman’s houses was not always shaped according to polite strictures. It is here then that we see both the importance of gentility in the form of house, possessions and the behaviour that they help to construct, as well as the field of play where the concept of gentility became more malleable over

⁵ On this point, see L. E. Klein, ‘Politeness for plebes’, in Bermingham and Brewer, (eds.), *The consumption of culture 1600-1800: Image, Object, Text* (London, 1995), 362-382.

⁶ Hunt, *The middling sort*, 47-48.

time. As Langford reminds us, most people were neither polite nor commercial, although for propertied members of society, polite living and commercial consumption characterised the eighteenth century.⁷ How that process played out in the domestic setting is the topic of this chapter.

Greater country houses fulfilled several basic functions for the landed elite. They served as centres of administration for estates, focal points for the display of power, and places of hospitality, leisure and sport.⁸ To that end, grander houses of the aristocracy had, ‘a titanic social capacity’.⁹ Gentlemen’s houses fulfilled many of these functions as well but in a different way and on a less elevated social level. Gentlemen also exerted power through their control of space. Administration of estates or small property was necessary, but the possession of large estates was rare for gentlemen. Nevertheless, their involvement in public affairs necessitated using their houses as a focal point for administrative activity.

Gentleman’s households functioned as the main venue for their enactments of status. Some builders and owners, especially the gentry, may have relocated on a more frequent basis. Charles Coxe, for example, seems not to have inhabited Nether Lypiatt consistently, but spent a good deal of time in London and travelling his judicial circuit.¹⁰ The Whitmores made regular visits to London, as did other gentlemen-owners involved in political life. John Cossins of Redland Court spent significant time in London.¹¹ In contrast, a smaller house located at the centre of a village such as Poulton Manor seems to

⁷ Langford, *A polite and commercial people*, 6.

⁸ Stones, *An open elite?*, 298-322. Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 2-3. See also M. Girouard, ‘The Power House’, in *The treasure houses of Britain: five hundred years of private patronage and art collecting*, (New Haven, 1985), 22-27, 22.

⁹ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 146.

¹⁰ TNA/PROB11/629 (12 May 1729), where Coxe’s will identifies him as ‘of Lincolns Inn in the County of Middlesex’.

¹¹ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/p: 3 June 1740. ‘The joint & separate answers of John Scrope and John Cossins Esqr’.

have been the only residence for the Bedwells recorded in a monument in the parish church.¹²

More often for gentleman owners after about 1730, these houses served as year-round residences, or at least the primary location of their domestic life. A number of the ‘new men’ who bought or built houses later in life intended them to become their main domicile. The regular presence of gentlemen enabled them to play a more active role in local affairs and administration. Even where they might have multiple residences, as was the case with some Bristolian gentlemen, the scale of distance and time was much smaller than if they had been travelling to London. On one occasion, John Elbridge expressed extreme reluctance to leave Bristol to travel to London, despite pressing business in the capital.¹³

Particularly for those who retained their primary power base locally, a gentleman’s house as a primary residence made sense, both socially and economically. How then did the status of these owners play out on a daily basis; in other words, how did gentlemen enact their status?

The structure of the gentleman’s household

The houses are guides to the structure of households.¹⁴ As spatial position, architectural finish, inventories, and other records indicate, a hierarchy of rooms within the gentleman’s house existed which shaped experience for the owner, his family, other members of the household such as servants, and visitors. A wide range of people interacted with the interiors of these houses, although gaining access to the house itself and

¹² Thomas Bedwell, who died in 1691, is commemorated as ‘Thomas Bedwell Gent’ in St Michael’s church, Poulton together with his son Thomas, the only tributes to these members of a once locally noteworthy family.

¹³ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/f-m: Woolnough v. Scrope.

¹⁴ S. West, ‘Social space and the English country house’ in S. Tarlow and S. West, (eds.), *The familiar past?*, 104.

individual spaces varied according to station, relationship to the owner, purpose of the visit, timing and other factors.

Houses were organized on multiple levels: as homes for families, as places of business transaction, as locations of sociability, and as complicated symbols of power and hierarchy. As Amanda Vickery argues, 'It was through space that superiors exerted their most smothering power'.¹⁵ Recent work suggests the need for 'different approaches to the use of domestic space'.¹⁶ The domestic setting was private, but within it space was fluid and privacy relational, based on such factors as who controlled the space, at what times, and in what circumstances.¹⁷

Hierarchy was the 'skeleton that structured households, as natural as landscape'.¹⁸ The 'household family' included all persons living under the same roof, whether relations, servants or others.¹⁹ The gentleman-owner and his family stood at the top of the pyramid.²⁰ Servants were an omnipresent group for genteel owners,²¹ and may have seen most of the house as they traversed space in performance of their duties.²² The four rooms per floor of a gentlemen's house accommodated a range of ancillary spaces in attics, basements, attached offices or outbuildings that accommodated people and the activities that they undertook. Their floor plans suggest that separation of servants and masters took

¹⁵ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 306.

¹⁶ B. Heller, 'Leisure and the use of domestic space in Georgian London', 627.

¹⁷ Ibid.. See also J. Melville, 'The use and organisation of domestic space in late seventeenth-century London' (University of Cambridge Ph.D. thesis, 1999); A. Vickery, 'An Englishman's home is his castle?', see especially 153-158.

¹⁸ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 201.

¹⁹ N. Tadmor, 'The concept of the household-family in eighteenth-century England', *Past and Present*, vol. 151 (1996), 111-140. On servants see also R. C. Richardson, *Household servants in early modern England* (Manchester, 2010).

²⁰ Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, 55.

²¹ Richardson, *Household servants*, 63. The numbers of servants in gentlemanly households do not compare with many gentry and aristocratic households which often had ten or more, 65.

²² Access tools have helped to illustrate how spaces interconnected and interacted. B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The social logic of space* (Cambridge, 1984). See also West, 'Social space and the English country house', especially 108-109. S. Pennell, 'Pots and pans history: the material culture of the kitchen in early modern England', *Journal of Design History*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1998), 201-216.

place at an earlier date than is sometime suggested.²³ Back stairs went some way toward enforcing segregation. The ample space available for servants in genteel houses meant that there was a capacity to maintain physical distance and separation between family and servants.²⁴ A 'modern built house' allowed modern forms of social organisation.

Control of space was 'a complex interrelation of age, status and sex.'²⁵ As will be seen, men and women of varying status could control access to and within the household. The gendered nature of the household is due for reconsideration.²⁶ The male presence dramatically shaped relationships within these houses and between the house, its occupants and the external world. Although Judith Lewis argues that 'only a woman can turn a house into a home'²⁷ men controlled the money that built these houses, and much of the action that went on within them. Male consumption practices, 'attest to a confluence of factors - including the prevalence of gifting, the cultural meanings with which exchange was habitually freighted and the forms of sociability that underpinned daily commercial transactions - which together militated against the primacy of purely monetary contracts in eighteenth-century consumer relations.'²⁸ Accounts of domestic space in the gentleman's house help to trace the transition from 'rough-and-ready seventeenth-century man' to 'refined eighteenth-century man'.²⁹

²³ T. Meldrum, 'Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth-century metropolitan household', *Urban History*, 26, 1 (1999), 27-39, especially 34.

²⁴ One late-seventeenth-century gentry household is chronicled in S. Hindle, 'Below stairs at Arbury Hall: Sir Richard Newdigate and his household staff, c. 1670-1710', *Historical Research*, no 84 (on-line 17 May 2011), 1-18.

²⁵ Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, 44.

²⁶ Harvey, 'Barbarity in a teacup?', especially 217-218. Also, M. Finn, 'Men's things: masculine possession in the consumer revolution', *Social History*, vol. 25, no. 2 (May 2000), 133-155; Harvey and Shepard, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?'; Harvey, 'Men making home: masculinity and domesticity in eighteenth-century Britain', *Gender & History*, vol. 21 no. 3 (November 2009), 520-540; Styles and Vickery, (eds.), *Gender, taste and material culture*, 4-6; Heller, 'Leisure and the Use of Domestic Space in Georgian London', 624, suggests 'the relative under-representation of men in historians' analyses of domestic space is problematic'.

²⁷ J. Lewis, 'When a house is not a home', 363.

²⁸ Finn, 'Men's things', 136.

²⁹ K. Harvey, 'The history of masculinity, circa 1650-1800', 305.

Social and gender hierarchies shaped sleeping arrangements and seating plans at meals. Until the mid-seventeenth century, separate bedchambers for servants were highly unusual, although that had changed in gentlemen's houses by the early-eighteenth century.³⁰ As an example, Cote had five garret rooms in the main house, with room furnishings ranging in value from £2.4.6 to £7.13.0. This indicates good but not lavish furnishings in each. Elbridge maintained ample space for a number of servants. Service spaces included a 'Servts Hall', 'Best Kitchen', 'Back Kitchen + Cellars', a separate 'Cyder Cellar', a 'Woodhouse', and 'Coach house'.³¹ The three 'Garrets over ye Kitchen' were almost certainly for servants – all are relatively low value rooms and two contain multiple beds, including an 'Old Turn up Bedstead'. The Servants Hall contained a monthly clock, walnut and mahogany oval tables, and seven leather chairs, an indication of the number of servants. The display of fashionable goods was less important in what Weatherill calls 'back-stage' or service spaces.³² In these rooms individuals encountered varying levels of furnishing, with many objects described as 'old' and much lower associated values. Nevertheless, the ample provision of space and equipment for use by servants set gentlemen's houses apart from most of English society.

Kitchens led the way in domestic technological innovations in the eighteenth century and the service areas of gentlemen's houses were well-equipped.³³ The kitchen was also a primary centre of household activity. Entry into the privileged arena of the kitchen enables us to gauge sociability in these households through the objects used there.³⁴ John Elbridge's kitchen displays a range of utensils. The array of jacks, kettles, saucepans, stewpanns, roasting racks, chafing dishes, and even a 'chease toaster' suggest a

³⁰ A. Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, 60-74. Richardson, *Household servants*, 97-101.

³¹ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House).

³² Weatherill, *Consumer behavior & material culture*, 9-11.

³³ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 265.

³⁴ See Pennell, 'Pots and pans history'.

good diet and ample staff to prepare it.³⁵ Thomas Goldney's kitchen in 1768, located in the older part of the building, contained a 'double flap't table', leather, wooden and cane bottomed chairs, a common jack, and considerable amounts of pewter. In perhaps the most telling change from earlier inventories, Goldney also owned a vast quantity of porcelain and other ceramic table wares and service pieces. As shall be shown, this provides guidance to the style and frequency of Goldney's sociable activity.³⁶ Such wares for preparing, serving and consuming food articulate the level of potential sociability in genteel households.

Within households, servants were omnipresent and had close and complicated relations with their masters. In most instances, it seems that a few trusted servants were intimately involved in the operation of the gentlemen's houses, supplemented by kin or friendship networks. Regular bequests to servants indicated their importance and the mutually dependent relationship between master (or mistress) and servants.³⁷ Quaker wine merchant John Andrews gave five and ten guineas apiece to his servants Thomas Jeff and Francis Cowles. Charles Coxe of Nether Lypiatt made provision for his 'Domestick servants who shall live with me at the time of my decease', as well as defining his household broadly by leaving an annuity to the wife of one of his executors 'in Consideration of her Service and Attendance on me during my frequent Indispositions'.³⁸ William Springett of Westend House provided for his servant 'so long...as he shall live and behave dutiful and Obedient to my said wife', as did William Clutterbuck. Richard Clutterbuck left annuities of £10 to two servants, as well as a year's wages to other

³⁵ BRO/AC/WO/10/19: 2 April 1739, Inventory of the goods of John Elbridge at his house at Stoke, Westbury, (Cote House). On kitchens and their equipment see Pennell, 'Pots and pans history'; S. Pennell, 'The material culture of food in early modern England, c. 1650-1750' in S. Tarlow and S. West, (ed.), *The familiar past? Archaeologies of later historical Britain* (London and New York, 1999). Also, S. Pennell, 'The material culture of food in early modern England, circa 1650-1750', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1997).

³⁶ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

³⁷ Richardson, *Household servants*, 79.

³⁸ TNA/PROB11/629, Will of Charles Coxe.

servants living with him at his death.³⁹ Beyond these few primary servants with some individual identity, there was a supporting cast of unnamed servants, as well as a host of occasional contracted labour and short-term staff.

Employing servants in some number to engage in work was an important enactment that carefully calibrated gentlemanly status. Government spy Nathan Carrington found that William Palling of Brownhill kept only three servants, 'two maids and a man'.⁴⁰ In his will, Elbridge left money to three servants: 'my servant Anne Evans' received £100, 'my servant George Avery' received £30 and 'my other servt Richard Drew' received ten pounds. All of these servants likely lived with Elbridge at the time of his death, given that he specifically noted the Royal Fort house in St Michael's Hill was 'now in the possession of Mrs Hames'.⁴¹ In the Royal Fort house, two rooms - the 'Man's Room' and the 'Maid's Room' - specifically suggested the presence of servants. By comparison with rooms at Cote, these two rooms had furnishings valued at £1.16.0 and £3.12.0 respectively, although the Maid was saddled with a 'Green staid rugg' and 'Two motheaten spotted Ruggs'.⁴² Thomas Goldney had two chambers specifically for servants. One contained a bed and '6 old chairs' and an 'old' table and stool. The other had two beds, suggesting the total number of servants to be at least three.⁴³

These accounts construct a picture of the gentlemen's household. Amanda Vickery, Bridget Hill, Tim Meldrum and others have investigated the important issues of privacy and relationship to servants.⁴⁴ Despite Mark Girouard's quip about the

³⁹ BRO/AC/AS/57/3: Copy Will of John Andrews; TNA/PROB11/629, Will of Charles Coxe; TNA/PROB 11/808, Will of William Springett; GA/D149/T358, Will of William Clutterbuck, 1726; GA/D149/T1134, Will of Richard Clutterbuck.

⁴⁰ See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol. cxvii) appearing as Appendix 5 in Phillpotts, 'Stroudend Tithing Report', 162-165.

⁴¹ BRO/AC/WO/10/14/b-d: Copy wills of John Elbridge.

⁴² BRO/AC/WO/10/18: March 1738/9, Inventory and Appraisement of Royal Fort, St Michaels Hill.

⁴³ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

⁴⁴ Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, 27. See also Richardson, *Household servants*, 79; T. Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender, 1660-1750: life and work in the London household* (Harlow, 2000); T. Meldrum,

introduction of back stairs from the late-seventeenth century meaning the gentry walking up stairs need not meet last night's faeces coming down – and it should be said that nearly all classical 'gentlemen's houses' have a secondary staircase – this underplays the close interaction between all people in the household.⁴⁵ The number of rooms available in the gentleman's house made some semblance of privacy possible, particularly in small rooms like closets, but genteel families and servants working for them alike had limits on their recourse to private space and activities.⁴⁶ The complex dynamics of the genteel household were keys to how status was enacted.

'The Gentlewoman who is Housekeeper'

Status was created in many ways. Landed gentry families with small estates of course played main roles in their immediate community. Even their relatively modest houses stood out in the landscape and presented a focal point for local activity and action. Between the time that Lower Slaughter Manor was built and 1720, at least nineteen small classical houses were erected in the county, most in the north Cotswolds by landowning families. Landed gentry living off small estates were the first to build small classical houses and it is important to consider the way that they performed their social position.

The Whitmores at Lower Slaughter were unusual for their continued occupation throughout the period. Richard Whitmore's lavishly furnished house, and the surviving evidence of an ornate plaster ceiling in what was likely the Great Parlour, attests to the significant status the family claimed from an early date by building and furnishing innovatively. Gentry families like the Whitmores were not immune to change and indeed could follow fashion as well as seeking improvement in living space. Despite the family's

'Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth-century metropolitan household', *Urban History*, 26, 1 (1999), 27-39; B. Hill, *Servants: English domestics in the eighteenth century* (Oxford, 1996).

⁴⁵ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 138.

⁴⁶ See especially Vickery, *Behind closed doors*, chapter 1.

ancestral base in Shropshire, their efforts to maintain and enhance Lower Slaughter Manor were achieved through building works, stair renovation and refurnishing. Large numbers of individuals were employed in lengthy building works that projected their power and status to the populace. As we have seen, Elizabeth Whitmore took a robust tack in redecoration of the manor. Household accounts offer an additional look at goods acquired and expenditures made at Lower Slaughter in the middle of the eighteenth century. After the death of her husband in 1725, Elizabeth Whitmore particularly endeavoured to repair, update and modernize the manor house and its décor. A bevy of workmen made repairs to the stable, barn, mansion windows, and ‘ye dogkenell wall’. Mrs Whitmore spent £150.19.11 for such items as ‘Slatting the house’ and ‘the plumers bill’, and ‘Collering’ or painting various elements. Such activities placed Elizabeth Whitmore in an important position, the ‘Lady of the Mannor’, as she is referred to in several accounts, as well as ‘Madam Whitmore’ and ‘my Lan Lady’.⁴⁷

Gentry landowners may have spent more time away from their country houses than commercial and professional owners.⁴⁸ William Whitmore, an army officer, was frequently absent from the Lower Slaughter estate in the middle years of the eighteenth century, often leaving it in the good care of his lawyer friend, Richard Jervis. Whitmore, for instance, kept a house in London, and was frequently abroad with his regiment.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Whitmore found time to undertake significant upgrades at Lower Slaughter, including the creation of a new staircase and the building of a new stable block.

⁴⁷ See GA/D45/E14: ‘Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782)’, including 7 May, 1729, Bill from John Collett for ‘repareing ye stables’; May and August 1729 from Giles [Laurence?] for work on the Stables and ‘ye dogkennel wall’; ‘A particular of the Materials Bout & repairs done at Slaughter House... in the Year 1730’; ‘Work done for Mrs Whitmore 1730’.

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Gloucestershire gentry*, 153.

⁴⁹ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter’s work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782), Letter, 25 May 1756, William Whitmore to Richard Jervis.

As a result, the Whitmores were substantial patrons and employers in Lower Slaughter, imposing their presence on the locality. Numerous servants are listed in family records. In 1760-1, for example, at least eight servants were paid 'wages'. In 1756 William Whitmore wrote to his friend remarking on 'the number of Servants which in my uncertain situation I know not well how to lessen.'⁵⁰ A payment on 10 September 1749: 'To Molly for Housekeeping £9.4.6' was an example of recurring payment for keeping up Lower Slaughter.⁵¹ In the 1740s and 1750s, William Whitmore was usually spending between £500 and £600 per annum on expenses to maintain the house and estate.⁵²

There was a hierarchy within the Lower Slaughter Manor entourage. Richard Jervis served as the Whitmore's attorney, general factotum and friend for many years, handling much of the business of the estate.⁵³ The subtle relationship of local tradesmen to the local seat of power was reflected in the letter written by John Pittman to 'the Gentlewoman who is Housekeeper att George Whitmore's Esqr, Slaughter'. Pittman, who seems to have been a grocer or dry goods dealer, notes that, 'I shall be glad to obey any Commission in serving the family with anything in my way whenever called upon.'⁵⁴ In their capacity as a leading family, they expected deference, even obedience. In one letter related to elections, William made clear that he expected his wishes to be followed, with

⁵⁰ D45/E14: Bills for carpenter's work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782): 25 May 1756, William Whitmore to Richard Jervis. Servants' wages are discussed in Richardson, *Household Servants*, 83-85.

⁵¹ GA/D45/F15: Household Accounts at Lower Slaughter, 1744-1764.

⁵² Ibid..

⁵³ GA/D45/E6: Cash accounts of Richard Jervis, steward to William Whitmore (1735-1773); GA/D45/E13: Estate papers, 1674-1837, Farm accounts (1741-1774). On 19 March 1735, William Whitmore appointed his brother and 'my Trusty friend Richard Jervis of Lower Slaughter aforesaid Gentleman My Joint Attorneys for Me.' GA/D45/F8: Bills of books, clothing, harness, household, etc. of Whitmore family, 1673-1796, a letter of 16 November 1754 notes 'Mr Jervis an Attorney at Law at Broadwell near Stow'. He also served the Hodges family of Broadwell Manor as attorney.

⁵⁴ D45/F8: Bills of books, clothing, harness, household, etc. of Whitmore family, 1673-1796. Slaughter-Bills -1773-1782 - Household Accounts-Bread, Meat, Coal, Candles, Tea, Wines, etc., 7 February 1775.

an unspoken but implied threat: ‘I shall very much resent if any person that I have an interest in should vote against you.’⁵⁵

In the early 1770s the Whitmores had their servants in livery, although it is not clear how early this practice began, or how typical this was of gentlemanly owners.⁵⁶ By that time as well, there was more intercourse between Lower Slaughter and London. In the 1770s, bills from London stationers, jewellers and goldsmiths, and musical instrument-makers reflect heightened levels of fashionable consumption.⁵⁷ A prominent gentry family in Gloucestershire and involved in national affairs in London, they represent one end of the spectrum of gentlemen builder-owners in Gloucestershire. Their enactments of status illustrate some of the trends seen amongst the Cotswold gentry: early projects to build small classical houses, involvement in local affairs, some connections to the metropole, and efforts to keep up with material changes.

Dining at Table and drinking chocolate

Henry French has suggested that, ‘while urban and rural ‘gentry’ might espouse a common social identity, each might define and manifest it in a different way’.⁵⁸ This thesis argues that in one critical way - the construction of a small classical house - lesser elites not only espoused a common social identity but crossed the boundaries that existed between rural and urban environments. W. E. Minchinton, meanwhile, maintained that merchants often were “commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen”, not of

⁵⁵ Quoted in Johnson, *Gloucestershire gentry*, 141.

⁵⁶ GA/D45/F8: Bills of books, clothing, harness, household, etc. of Whitmore family, 1673-1796. Slaughter – Bills - 1774-1782 – Clothing – including jewellery, tailor, gloves, boots, shoes, weaving, Haberdashery, etc.; A 1774 bill records ‘Making the Butler a Livery 0.12.0’ and ‘Making the Groom a Livery 0.12.0’. For discussion of livery, which seems to have largely been the province of much larger households, see Richardson, *Household servants*, 107-109.

⁵⁷ D45/F8: Bills of books, clothing, harness, household, etc. of Whitmore family, 1673-1796. Slaughter - Bills -1774-1782-Clothing- including jewellery, tailor, gloves, boots, shoes, weaving, Haberdashery, etc.; Slaughter - Bills - 1775-1781 - Books and Binding; Slaughter - Bills - 1728-1796 - Miscellaneous - Shot, Timber, Hops, Malting, Medicine, Musical Instruments, Shaving, Seeds, Veterinary fees Impounding, Legal Charges’.

⁵⁸ French, “‘Ingenious & Learned Gentlemen’”, 46.

perpetuating their businesses.’⁵⁹ Yet the motivations of those engaged in mercantile pursuit were complex, and it is evident that many did not choose one over the other. Some merchants wanted only to make money, others to enter the world of the genteel. Only a few truly sought to become country gentleman. In many instances, these motives were combined in some way.

Bristolian gentlemen’s houses largely typify a mix of business and countrified pursuits, although in a significantly different way than Minchinton and others have described. Often these activities were combined, and various aspects of each could quite reasonably be undertaken. These houses, built mostly after the 1720s, represent the new wave of social growth seen amongst commercial and professional elites in the eighteenth century. Few merchants in Bristol completely abandoned their business or removed themselves entirely from the city to a country house. On the contrary, the individuals in this study sought a compromise that has been overlooked by many social and architectural historians. Gentlemen’s houses, especially after the 1720s, brought together urbane and rustic environments. In their domestic spaces middling and gentry values and identity met and interacted.

Complex social interactions unfolded in John Elbridge’s houses near Bristol. Elbridge had distinguished himself as a capable official, admired in London for his acumen in tidying up a mess made by his predecessor.⁶⁰ As we have seen, he remained involved in the professional and commercial worlds of Bristol until the time of his death in 1739. Elbridge’s penchant for hard-work, diligence, and competence made him a leading figure in Bristol.

⁵⁹ W. E. Minchinton, ‘The merchants in England in the eighteenth century’, *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History*, X (1957), 62-71, 69.

⁶⁰ ‘Warrant Books: December 1708, 1-10’, *Calendar of Treasury Books*, Volume 22: 1708 (1952), 8 December 1708. ‘By his personal unwearied care and great skill the said Elbridge hath carried on the accounts of the said port of Bristol which were left by the late Collector in the utmost confusion’.

In his domestic sphere, concepts such as service and gentility combined with objects to cross various thresholds in a complicated web of personal relationships. A particularly revealing case was that of Elbridge's servant Henry Bodman. Bodman, the son of a pilot, became apprentice to Elbridge in 1718.⁶¹ After his term expired, he first worked as Elbridge's Clerk at the Custom House and in Elbridge's private affairs. He then remained one of Elbridge's most trusted lieutenants until 1738 'when by the favour and recommendation of the said Mr Elbridge to some friend or friends' Bodman was appointed as Deputy Customer at Bristol. Despite this new office, Bodman continued to live with Elbridge and 'assisted him in the nature of a Clerk and Cash keeper in the Business of his offices and his private affairs to the time of his decease.'⁶² When Elbridge died in 1739, some Bristolians were astonished to find that he had left a substantial sum to Henry Bodman. An anonymous letter written from the Custom House records Elbridge's bequests, which totalled £53,340, as well as astonishment: 'I am now determined to inform you what I am sure will amaze you. In short, it is the manner Mr Elbridge (of whose death I don't question but you have heard) disposed of his fortune.' The letter noted the glaring omission of Thomas Elbridge, John's nephew, from the list: 'you'll think I have omitted T[homas] E[lbridge], but he has only left him the house and Estate over the Down (which he promised to Mrs Hort before her Daughters Marriage) and joint residuary Legatee with Mrs Woolnough,' a seemingly stunning blow to his closest male relation.⁶³

Although the bequest amazed some, it illustrated the complex relations within the domestic setting. Several deponents in the chancery case resulting from the disputed will averred that Elbridge had 'a Great Value for' Bodman. Apprentices added words of praise,

⁶¹ BRO/04356/9: Apprentice Book, 1709-1719, 112, May 1718, no. 139. Henry Bodman fils Abraham Bodman pilot of Shirehampton, for 7 years. BRO/AC/WO/11/2/l: 1740[?]. Henry Bodman Answer.

⁶² BRO/AC/WO/11/2/l: [1740?]. Henry Bodman Answer. The Customer was another ancient patent office whose duties had largely been superseded by the office of Collector by the eighteenth century. See E. E. Hoon, *The organization of the English customs system* (originally published 1938, with a new introduction by R. C. Jarvis, 1968), 5-6.

⁶³ Bristol Central Reference Library, No. B19716, Letter from Custom House, 26 March 1739.

commenting that Elbridge had treated Bodman, ‘as if he had been a child of his own’. One deponent stated that Bodman served as Elbridge’s ‘Companion rather than his Servant in somuch that he always dined with him at his Table and drank Chocolate with him in the morning before he went to the Custom house.’ Another suggested that during the latter part of Elbridge’s life he made Bodman ‘his principal Companion’.⁶⁴ Conversely, a parenthetical note on a draft of Elbridge’s will acidly articulated his view of Thomas: ‘Must limit it to Trustees (which is purely matter of form) or the Nephew may destroy the remainder.’⁶⁵

The fine gradations of the social hierarchy were apparent. Bodman’s role in the household and Custom House was not enough to be accepted as an equal or gentleman in some circles. John Elbridge’s slighted nephew, Thomas Elbridge, made clear his feelings about Bodman’s status and role. When Bodman first came to live with Elbridge, Thomas claimed, he ‘was a Ladd or youth’ employed ‘in going on Errands and other Servile offices in his Family.’ Only later did John Elbridge take him on ‘in the Capacity of one of his Clerks there for many years and to the time of his Death under a yearly Salary of Thirty Pounds.’⁶⁶ Some of the most disparaging comments about Bodman came from the lower orders. Elizabeth Williams, who had been a servant to John Elbridge’s brother Thomas for twenty-five years, remarked that Bodman, ‘did use to attend to him to and from the Custom house with a Candle and Lanthorne Clean his Shoes and waite at Table’ but claimed that Elbridge, ‘never Shewed him...any other or Greater degree or Marks of favour Than are usually Shown by humane Masters to Wiling Servants.’⁶⁷ Several other servants from Thomas Elbridge’s household echoed these stories. Thomas Rothley, the son of a distiller apprenticed in 1724, recalled that Bodman ‘occasionally waited and

⁶⁴ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/v: Jan 1740/1, Depositions.

⁶⁵ BRO/AC/WO/10/14/a: Draft will of John Elbridge, before 1737.

⁶⁶ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/n: n.d. [likely 1740] Thomas Elbridge Answer.

⁶⁷ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/x: Depositions in favour of Henry and Rebecca Woolnough.

attended on the said Mr Elbridge when he had company at his Table in the nature of a Servant and used Sometimes to ride out with his said Master and carry his Great Coat and do little offices abt the house.’⁶⁸

Domestic space was an important setting for social interaction on multiple levels, and Bodman’s relationship illustrates the interplay that sometimes existed in gentlemen’s houses between servants and their masters. By the early-eighteenth century, a shift in social attitudes meant that ‘it had become demeaning for a gentleman to be a servant.’⁶⁹ At the same time, however, it had become increasingly possible that a servant like Bodman might become a gentleman. Apprentices from the Custom House might be on a par, but factors such as family attachment, social background, and personal relations made a significant difference to the social rise of a gentleman.

Although Bodman never achieved the glittering success or wealth acquired by the Elbridges or the Woolnoughs he nevertheless illustrates the contested identity of the provincial gentleman.⁷⁰ Bodman lived with Elbridge, inhabited close personal space and undertook a range of functions that subtly shifted over time.⁷¹ It may have been the case that in the absence of a clear heterosocial household, status was disrupted. Living in his house, being treated like a favoured child, serving as a cash keeper, being listed as a friend, dining at his table, even sharing a morning pot of chocolate, were all coded actions that defined Henry Bodman and created his status.

‘Most genteel and hospitable receptions’

Other calibrated actions played out in gentlemen’s houses, where people might interact more on terms of social equality. Shared codes of genteel behaviour were

⁶⁸ BRO/AC/WO/11/2/x: Depositions in favour of Henry and Rebecca Woolnough.

⁶⁹ Girouard, *Life in the English country house*, 143.

⁷⁰ BRO/09474/1: Copy will of Henry Bodman, 4 June 1768.

⁷¹ As agreed by numerous deponents on both sides of the Chancery Court case related to Elbridge’s will. See BRO/AC/WO/11/2/v, x, and y: Jan 1740/1, Depositions.

especially important in enacting status. Some Gloucestershire gentlemen embraced intellectual and cultural pursuits that informed and shaped identity. Gentlemen's reading and travel experiences contributed to and reflected their understanding of taste and style. A few gentlemen owners, such as Benjamin Hyett, G. O. Paul, and Thomas Goldney II left travel journals or accounts recording their European tours. The travel journal of Thomas Goldney II offers various insights into his thinking about architecture and furnishings. Thomas Goldney II was a man with wide-ranging interests who had travelled to the continent, recorded his impressions of art and architecture, and had a strong interest in science.⁷² In 1725 Goldney undertook a month and a half tour on the continent, visiting the Austrian Netherlands, the Spanish Netherlands, Holland, France, and several German cities. Three themes emerge from his journal: an interest in religion, art and architecture, and food and drink. Throughout his journey he remarked extensively about the buildings that he saw, commenting in some detail about the style, materials, craftsmanship and design. At the same time, his lengthy journal entries do not exhibit a great deal of technical knowledge about architecture or furnishings. Nevertheless, it is clear that his attention to aesthetics and cultural life positioned his family to participate in genteel life and rituals. Goldney noted, for instance the 'Blew Tyles' in Holland similar to ones that adorn fireplace surrounds in his Clifton house.⁷³

When his son Thomas Goldney III inherited the house in 1731, it served as a focal point for genteel sociability. The gardens - Goldney's 'minor *Stow* on *Clifton's* crown' - have been discussed previously; they attracted much comment at the time and have drawn

⁷² UBL/1466/11: 'Journal of a Tour of Europe'; For Goldney correspondence with James Logan of Philadelphia see, for example, James Logan Letterbooks, Box 2, B1, 86-7, James Logan to Thomas Goldney, 23 Oct 1727; James Logan Letterbooks, Box 2, B2, 86, James Logan to Thomas Goldney, 30 June 1730. Copies at Stenton, originals at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

⁷³ Stembridge, *The Goldney family: a Bristol merchant dynasty* (Bristol, 1998), 21.

the attention of subsequent historians.⁷⁴ But polite display extended beyond the garden alone. Elizabeth Graeme Ferguson, a visitor from Pennsylvania, described a 1764 visit to Thomas Goldney's house at Clifton:

‘Lady Charlotte Finch and Lady Juliana Penn, called on me to go & breakfast with one Mr Goldney, an eminent Quaker of an antient Family, his house is on Clifton Hill, about a mile from the Hot-wells, & is allowed to be one of the finest Views in Engld. – we breakfasted with great elegance & had a most genteel and hospitable Reception.’⁷⁵

Ferguson's description of her visit can be matched with objects recorded in Goldney's house to reconstruct her procession around the house and grounds.⁷⁶ As with most visitors, the garden formed the highlight. Even as a bachelor gentleman with ‘two maiden Sisters’, however, Goldney knew how to entertain. The new section of Goldney House was the focus for sociability. In the house, Ferguson traversed the Hall, with its ‘Derbyshire marble’ and ‘Italian composition’ tables, as well as a ‘pillar Dutch tea table History painted’, on her way to the ‘Mahogany Parlour’, the likely site of breakfast. Here Goldney's things dazzled her, as they were meant to do: her description of ‘a very fine Sett of english China on a Silver Tea Table’ accords with Goldney's inventory of a ‘Silver tea table on a carved Mahogany stand with a fine Sett of Worster China’. As they ate and drank, ‘two fine fruit pieces by a celebrated Hand’ drew Ferguson's attention. These fruit paintings by Tobias Stranover (1684-1756), a celebrated decorative painter in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, merited particular comment and aesthetic judgment.⁷⁷ It is even possible that Ferguson and her friends gained admittance to Goldney's study, a

⁷⁴ Stembridge, *Thomas Goldney's garden*; D. Lambert, ‘The prospect of trade: the merchant gardeners of Bristol in the second half of the eighteenth century’ in M. Conan, (ed.), *Bourgeois and aristocratic encounters in garden art, 1550-1850*, vol. 23 (Washington, D. C., 2002), 123-145.

⁷⁵ *Milcah Martha Moore's Book: a commonplace book from Revolutionary America*, ed. C. L. Blecki and K. A. Wulf (University Park, PA, 1997), 208-209.

⁷⁶ UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768

⁷⁷ See UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768. Also, BL/DM1398: Memorandum Book kept by Thomas Goldney III, entry for Deaths 1756, ‘Mr Stranover, the Painter, at Bath, Feby 22nd 1756’, quoted in Stembridge, *The Goldney Family*, 157.

more private chamber where the ‘Camera Obscura’ she mentions was stored.⁷⁸ Ferguson went away impressed by her ‘polite Treatment’ having spent a ‘most agreeable Morning.’⁷⁹ Thomas Goldney III had flawlessly enacted his status.

Bristolian gentlemen built small classical houses in villages near Bristol, which enabled them to enact status in similar ways. Their houses were designed for just these purposes. Until later in the eighteenth century, these were not the villa of common conception, but rather houses that combined aspects of the rural and urban environments. Houses like those in Clifton – Goldney House, Clifton Court, Clifton Hill House, Clifton Wood House – served as primary residences for their owners, not occasional retreats.⁸⁰ Gentlemen owners handsomely furnished them and combined personal and business affairs in their houses. Paul Fisher, for example, lived at Clifton Hill House whilst remaining involved in business.⁸¹ Further afield but still within Bristol’s environs, Bristolian gentlemen’s houses such as Redland Court, Hill House in Mangotsfield, Oldbury Court and Cleve Hill House illustrated the on-going interrelationship between commerce and gentlemanly building, particularly highlighting the important period of the second quarter of the eighteenth century.

‘Devil Palling’ and ‘his Kitchen where he generally sits’

The mix of business and gentility was a significant characteristic of these houses in mid-eighteenth-century Gloucestershire, and the intermingling could take varying forms.

⁷⁸ Amanda Vickery discusses scientific instruments and the sex of objects in *Behind closed doors*, chapter 10.

⁷⁹ *Milcah Martha Moore’s Book*, 208-209.

⁸⁰ Thomas Goldney bought Clifton Wood House from Robert Smith in 1748, and it was leased in the 1750s to Selina Countess of Huntingdon and after 1757 to Bristol merchant Richard Farr. See Roger Leech, ‘Clifton Wood House, Randall Road, Clifton, Bristol: an archaeological desk-based assessment’ (unpublished report, 2003), 11, 13. Many thanks to Dr. Leech for kindly sharing this report.

⁸¹ Burnside, *A Palladian villa in Bristol*, 20. Several things point to Clifton Hill House being a main residence from about 1750 onwards: Fisher purchased the land on Clifton Hill 1735, the same year he bought a pew in St Andrew’s, the Parish Church of Clifton. Building work was completed by 1750, Mrs. Fisher died ‘of Clifton’ on 11 January 1755, their grandson Benjamin drowned in 1758 in Clifton, and Fisher is listed as dying at Clifton on 4 December 1762.

In his description of the parish of Painswick, Samuel Rudder noted that clothing manufacture was ‘still considered as a lucrative and genteel employment’ in 1779.⁸² From the 1720s, gentlemen-clothiers in the Stroudwater Valleys indulged in construction of these houses as well. William Townsend built our prototypical ‘gentleman’s house’, Paradise, in the 1730s. Thomas Palling, of a rich cloth-manufacturing family, completed Pitchcombe House in the mid-1740s. His older brother, William, constructed Brownhill Court by 1760, and other houses such as Ebworth Park, Bownham Park, Uley House, Dudbridge house, Charles Sheppard’s Paradise House, and Onesiphorus Paul’s Hill House represent efforts by clothiers to build houses befitting their status as the area’s leading elites. Such building efforts at once removed them from the immediate surroundings of their mills, but maintained a measure of proximity.

William Palling of Brownhill represented one version of the varied performance of status enacted by gentlemen-clothiers of the Stroudwater Valleys. For Palling the domestic setting was a venue for exercising authority over tenants, family, and friends. Despite most of their money being made in the cloth trade, land helped to provide the Pallings ‘status and stability’.⁸³ William Palling seems to have been an unpopular landlord and neighbour, referred to as, ‘Devil Palling, as a Distinction from his other brothers’.⁸⁴ This was not his only sobriquet. One contentious tenant, Thomas Merrett, referred to William as ‘the Golden Palling’ in a letter that highlights his house as a nexus of power that gave authority over others:

‘The reson I did not come to your house last night was, a while ago you ask’d me several times to go to your house, and I did not go then. Tother day I swore over and over that I wou’d never go to your house till I had the money to bring with me’.⁸⁵

⁸² Rudder, 592.

⁸³ Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 79.

⁸⁴ See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol. cxvii) ff289-289v, 10 May 1758, appearing as Appendix 5 in Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 162-165.

⁸⁵ GA/MF1443: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 59, Thomas Merrett to William Palling, n. d., [possibly 1746].

In this way, avoidance of Palling's house staved off the inevitability of paying money owed, although Merrett still associated the notion of obligation with the place of payment. Another tenant received notice that Palling would distrain his goods for failure to pay rent, unless 'you immediately wait on him'.⁸⁶ Such accounts emphasize not only the importance of the house as a point of contact, but also the personal nature of relations between gentlemen and those around them. It is this continued sense of physicality, simultaneously separate and close, that typified gentlemen's houses in particular.

Family and gender relations at Brownshill were also fraught with turmoil. After his mother's death, it fell to William to provide for the schooling of his two sisters, as well as doctor's visits and other care and upkeep, with the expenses paid 'out of their fortunes'.⁸⁷ This later proved contentious, as his sisters Sarah and Mary, and their respective husbands, brought a Chancery case against William. Amongst the claims they made was that William had kept Mary 'as a Meniall Servant and constantly employed by him in the lowest and most servile offices'.⁸⁸ For his part, William argued that Mary's husband was nothing but a fortune hunter eager to take her away from Brownshill. The family conflict indicated that polite behaviour was not necessarily the driving force for William's conduct.

Despite substantial wealth and investments in land, Palling made only intermittent efforts at gentility in his domestic affairs. Polite sociability 'made a range of demands on the spatial organization of life'⁸⁹ but politeness was not the only factor in structuring the

⁸⁶ GA/MF1443: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 59, Edmund Clutterbuck to John Wathen, 14 October 1754.

⁸⁷ GA/MF1442: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 54, 'Memorandum my sister Sarah Palling tabl'd with me 2 years and a Quarter' and 'my sister Mary Palling tabl'd with me 2 years and 6 weeks'. GA/MF1442, Palling Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 57, 'February 3d 1737/8...to put his two Sisters Sarah Palling and Mary Palling to School'.

⁸⁸ GA/MF1443: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 65; GA/MF1445: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 70.

⁸⁹ Klein, 'Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century', 886.

household. Even in these classical arenas of politeness, older modes of interaction could carry on and overlap with newer polite forms of sociability. Shortly after he inherited from his father, William commissioned a piece of furniture from Henry Viner. This piece, recorded in a description and sketch made by Viner, was a ‘chest of drawers’ made of Bannut tree, a local name for walnut.⁹⁰ Such a piece indicated a knowledge of current style and an effort to secure new furnishings. But this form of furniture was unpopular in London, illustrating a balance between fashion and provincial craftsmanship reflected in other gentlemen’s houses.⁹¹

Most interestingly, a government report about Palling’s activities provides an extraordinary description of his household and personal activities. In May 1758, a letter sent to the Excise Office in London noted that Palling had ‘Conceal’d in his Dwelling House’ a large quantity of guns, gunpowder and other weapons and was ‘said to be a man of bad Principle, tho Vast Rich’.⁹² The government evinced enough concern about this cache of weapons that they despatched a spy, Nathan Carrington, to investigate the report. Carrington found Palling, ‘the greatest Oddity that ever existed’, farming his own land about his House and keeping only three servants. Palling limited his social network, keeping ‘no Gentlemen company’, not even his brothers, with whom there was ‘no great harmony’. Perhaps wary of tenants like Thomas Merrett, when travelling ‘to Gloucester or elsewhere on business, He always walks there with his Man Servant, who carries along with him a Brace of Pistolls, or a Blunderbuss, nay sometimes both.’⁹³

⁹⁰ GA/MF1442: Palling-Caruthers (Smith) Papers, Bundle 57, 16 February 1733/4. Connections to both furniture-making and Bristol is likely suggested in GA/D1815/Box 12/1: 6 May 1746: Bond of Indenture between ‘John Viner of the City of Bristol Joyner & Cabinetmaker’ and ‘Edward Palling of Pitchcombe in the parish of Standish Gent’.

⁹¹ Bowett, *Early Georgian furniture*, 116-117. See for example a set of elm Chippendale-style chairs at Frampton Court.

⁹² See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol. cxvii), in Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, Appendix 5, 162.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 163.

Carrington reported that whilst Palling ‘drinks a great deal at particular times...when he has Company (which is never more than three at a time)’ he amply provided for those he entertained, laying on ‘two Legges of Mutton, two Rumps of Beef, and two large puddings or two large Apple Pies. And all sorts of Liquor in great plenty.’ Palling’s hospitality to a select few, however, did not extend to overnight stays, as ‘He suffers Nobody to lie in his House, but himself, his Man and two Maids.’ What was more, Palling clearly kept careful guard on his house and his belongings, ‘even the Maids he does not trust with the Keyes of any of his Rooms (which are generally kept locked)’.⁹⁴

On the pretence that he knew a distant Palling relation in Barbados, Palling invited Carrington into ‘his Kitchen where he generally sits,’ an indication that the Kitchen, normally associated with service functions, could function as a space of sociability for at least some people of gentlemanly status. Here Carrington noted ‘a great Number of Arms for such a Place, and very clean and ranged in good Order,’ including long guns, Blunderbusses, and various pole arms. Another guest on the occasion mentioned that Carrington, ‘had not seen a Tenth Part of ‘em, for that he had two or three Rooms above Stairs, which were as full as they could hold with all sorts of Arms and Ammunition.’ This confirmed that indeed Palling had a huge store of weapons, a collection that adorned several rooms in his house and reinforced his reputation as a reclusive figure. Although Carrington noted that ‘He and all his Family were always look’d upon, as very well affected to the present Establishment,’ he concluded his report that ‘the greatest Part of the Parish are Papists’ and ‘Gloucester being so near, can not say How far it may be judg’d right for such a Number of arms and offensive Weapons to lie together.’⁹⁵ Although Palling seems to have quite openly collected the arms and that, ‘He was never reckoned to

⁹⁴ See Melville, ‘The use and organisation of domestic space’, 176-182 about keys. Locked rooms are in Flather, *Gender and space in early modern England*, 46-47.

⁹⁵ See Report from the Egerton MS 3440 (Leeds Papers vol. cxvii) in Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, Appendix 5.

meddle with Politicks, nor has he Capacity, nor is his Head at all turned that Way,' it is possible his collecting may have been an overtly political statement about his continued concerns about Jacobitism and papists.

Nothing seems to have been done about the collection. Carrington reported that Palling's house was, 'situated in a very retired Place in a Valley, and is Nothing better than a good Farm House.' But within two years, William Palling was at work constructing a substantial but slightly old-fashioned classical dwelling.⁹⁶ What prompted this construction is unclear but the new house provided ample storage for his weapons, and further family accounts describe the rebuilding of the house and the display of arms into the nineteenth century.⁹⁷ William Palling's curious mix of classical architecture, provincial furnishing, arms collecting, and old-fashioned kitchen sociability offer another complicated version of how gentlemen owners enacted status.

'The finest couple that has ever been seen'

Another Stroudwater gentleman-clothier offers a decidedly different view of the gentleman's house and its owner, a reminder that within this group of houses individual circumstances could differ substantially. Not many miles distant from Brownhill Court, the small estate of Hill House near Rodborough was acquired by Onesiphorus Paul in 1757. It was clothiers like Paul that Defoe had in mind when he described as 'no extraordinary thing to have clothiers in that country worth from £10,000 to £40,000 a man, and many of the great families who now pass for gentry.'⁹⁸ Paul's social trajectory was steep, and he became one of the grandest gentlemen covered in this study. Paul typified

⁹⁶ Physical exterior survey, 22 November 2010. A handsome Rococo chimneypiece inscribed 'William Palling, Brownhill, MDCCLX' provides the date for reconstruction. Kingsley, *CHG II*, 92.

⁹⁷ GA/B673/19132GS: E. C. Little, *Our family history* (1892), plus Corrections in, with Additions to, "Our Family History" by E. Caruthers Little, 26-27. At least thirty-six firearms from the collection eventually made their way to the Museum in the Park, Stroud, where a number have stock plates marked 'William Palling' and the year. Museum in the Park, Stroud, Wathen donation, 1987.327-362.

⁹⁸ D. Defoe, *A tour through England and Wales*, 2 vol. (London and New York, 1928), I, 281.

the rise ‘from counting house to court house to gentleman.’⁹⁹ It is how this process was accomplished that warrants consideration here.

Like many other gentlemen after 1730, for a long period Paul actively engaged in the cloth trade, securing a patent for ‘A method of preparing cloths intended to be dyed scarlet, so as more effectually to ground the said colors and preserve their beauty’.¹⁰⁰ In 1750, Paul took breakfast with the Prince and Princess of Wales during their visit to Stroud.¹⁰¹ About the time that he served as High Sheriff and was knighted in 1760, he constructed a ‘gentleman’s house’ in Rodborough,¹⁰² which Rudder described as ‘a beautiful villa or seat... situated on an eminence... with a pleasant prospect of the river’.¹⁰³ The timing of Paul’s purchase suggests he was using a gentleman’s residence as a way of certifying status, helped in his case by a formal title.

This was not always an uncontested process. Not content only with building a house, Paul sought to convey his status in other ways. Shortly after he was created a baronet in 1762, for example, the London wit, George Augustus Selwyn, commented that ‘Sir Onesiphorus Paul and his Lady are the finest couple that has ever been seen here since Bath was built. They have bespoke two whole-length pictures, which some time or another will divert us. His dress and manner are beyond my painting; however, they may come within Mr Gainsborough’s.’¹⁰⁴ This sarcasm may have been encouraged by the fact that both Selwyn and Paul were from Gloucestershire with varying ideas about how government should run: Selwyn was a decided ministerial place man, whilst Paul was a Whig clothier, albeit one who seemed to enjoy favour of sorts from the King. Selwyn’s

⁹⁹ A. Randall, ‘Paul, Sir Onesiphorus, first baronet (*bap.* 1706, *d.* 1774)’, *ODNB*, online edition (Oxford, 2004).

¹⁰⁰ Patent 1748/no. 630: ‘Preparation of Cloth for Dying’, Museum in the Park, Stroud.

¹⁰¹ *Gentleman’s magazine*, 1st ser., 20, (20 July 1750), 331; E. A. L. Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’, 196.

¹⁰² GA/D67/Z/28: Digest of Deed of Hill House Estate.

¹⁰³ Rudder, 629.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’, 196. J. Heneage Jesse, *George Selwyn and his contemporaries*, 4 vols. (London, 1882), I, 312-3.

comment does give some indication of a gentleman's efforts to portray himself socially and artistically as a fashionable member of genteel society.

Paul expressed status in other ways. He left his wife, 'my best Chaise and such three of my horses as she shall make,' suggesting the presence of more than one chaise.¹⁰⁵ He sent his son, who became Sir George Onesiphorus Paul, to Oxford and then on the grand tour. Accounts from the early 1770s show the expense Paul incurred for Hill House, as well as illustrating his son's somewhat profligate lifestyle. In 1769-1770, G. O. Paul received an annual allowance of £1000 per annum. The following year he paid expenses such as for his London club, Boodles, of £4.4.0, his 'Taylor in full of all Demands 65.17.0' and 'Lost on the Turf' at Cirencester £11.11.0. In early 1771, G. O. Paul 'Entered into Agreement with my Father to receive £1000 pr Ann for all Expences'.¹⁰⁶ By 1775, G. O. Paul noted his annual income to be a very substantial £2107.17. There was £130 spent on a Townhouse, no doubt in London, and purchases of 'pictures' and 'plate' cost £140.5.0 and £190.2.0 respectively. 'Servants Wages' totalled £198.7.0, a considerable sum indicating a bevy of servants. 'Other Current Expences' were not itemised, but came to £1367.15.10. Expenses for that year included £180.18.0 for 'Funeral Expences' presumably for his father.¹⁰⁷

After his father's death in September 1774, however, G. O. Paul became more careful about calculating his total income annually, as well as tracking expenses. His expenditures became less frivolous. Indeed, Sir George Paul became a leading member of

¹⁰⁵ PROB11/1002: Will of Sir Onesiphorus Paul, Bart.

¹⁰⁶ GA/D589/F/Box 94916: Sir George Onesiphorus Paul family papers, Day Book, 1767 - 1803 [George] O. Paul

¹⁰⁷ Funerals were a particularly public and final form of enacting status. William Moore of Harrington House was said to have had an enormous funeral attended by 2,000 people as a result of his role as a leading gentleman in Bourton on the Water, see GA/P224 IN 1/2 Naunton Parish Records: Baptisms, marriages and burials, 1743-1812.

the county, a J. P., and a prison reformer of national note.¹⁰⁸ After his death, the President of the Board of Trade remarked, ‘I do not know any individual who gave me a better idea of a respectable English country gentleman.’¹⁰⁹ In the course of two generations, the Pauls had gone from clothiers to parvenus mocked by Selwyn to respectable country gents, along the way breakfasting with the Prince of Wales and building a gentleman’s house for their enactments of status.

‘Suitable to the fortune and dignity of a Nobleman’

The uncertainty of status evidenced in the example of the Pauls confronted many gentlemen builders and owners. The specific tactics and strategies that opened this chapter were intended by the Clutterbucks to enhance their standing and exert their authority. Despite his small landed estate and privileged professional position, William Clutterbuck experienced a sense of the vulnerability endemic to middling families.¹¹⁰ Clutterbuck looked both towards the cloth-producing areas around Stroud – his maternal grandfather had been a clothier – and toward Bristol, where he served as a prominent Customs official. Within a few years of his father’s death in early 1728, Richard Clutterbuck largely abandoned the professional and business worlds of Bristol to undertake the wholesale reconstruction of his father’s house and persona. Whilst retaining his post as Searcher and the income that went with it, by 1731 Richard undertook an investment of real as well as emotional capital by building his new house at Frampton-on Severn. Given the architecture of the house and the furnishings that Clutterbuck acquired, it is perhaps little

¹⁰⁸ Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’. Nicholas Herbert described him as ‘one who came close to the ideal for a county JP in Georgian England’, in ‘Paul, Sir George Onesiphorus, second baronet (1746–1820)’, *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁹ John Sinclair, quoted in E. A. L. Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’, 195–224, 224.

¹¹⁰ Hunt, *The middling sort*, 216. William’s concerns are rife throughout his correspondence, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

surprise that in 1779 Samuel Rudder noted that Frampton Court was 'suitable to the fortune and dignity of a nobleman'.¹¹¹

On the interior, Richard worked hard to create this sense, as evidenced by his set of Chinese armorial porcelain. The beautiful and useful hard-paste porcelain objects that carried English coats of arms originated several thousand miles away from Gloucestershire. Between 1695 and 1820, Chinese artists turned out perhaps 6,000 sets of Chinese armorial porcelain; 3,325 sets have been firmly identified.¹¹² Purchasing armorial porcelain was a major endeavour and only those granted coats of arms were apt to invest in this way. At least two years were required between placing an order and receipt of the finished objects. Ownership of such material symbols of status was highly unusual for gentlemen owners in Gloucestershire, and only a very few invested in sets of armorial porcelain.¹¹³ The Clutterbuck set probably dates from about 1750, just prior to the peak decade in the form's production, an indication that Richard was both indulging in as well as following fashion.¹¹⁴ Sets of ceramics were not only about dining, but about show, housed in elaborate arch-top buffet cupboards as well as adorning tables.¹¹⁵ An elaborate

¹¹¹ Rudder, 452.

¹¹² See D. S. Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, vol. I (London, 1974) and vol. II (London, 2004), especially 9 and 815 for numbers produced. Of the services produced, 45.5% were made for landed families, and 14.1%, many from before 1730, were made for the East and West India trades. 11.1% were for royalty and the nobility. Only 5.5% were made for members of the professions. Howard, II, 815-816. In total twenty-eight sets of Chinese armorial porcelain are recorded as belonging to Gloucestershire families. Only four were made before 1750, with fifteen sets dated between 1750 and 1780. See Howard, II, 818.

¹¹³ Because of the technical difficulties in tracing ownership and ascertaining which branch of a family a set might belong to research by D. S. Howard indicates that no more than ten of the one hundred thirty-four identified builder-owners in Gloucestershire owned a set of armorial porcelain. At least two were peers, and three others are fairly certain attributions. See Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, vol. I (London, 1974) and vol. II (London, 2004).

¹¹⁴ Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, I, 375, with another set carrying the Clifford coat of arms on 479. Although D. S. Howard initially dated the set to c. 1755 during the peak decade in the form's production, (Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, I, 31), further study suggests a date 'five or six years earlier', see personal correspondence, 21 November 2005, Angela Howard to Jean Speed, Frampton Court Archives.

¹¹⁵ Many gentlemen's interiors in this study included such cupboards. Inventories at Cote, for example, list other ceramics in Buffets, which was fairly typical.

set of Chinese armorial porcelain was one of Richard Clutterbuck's dramatic and visible attempts to display and enhance his intended status.¹¹⁶



Fig 7.1: Chinese armorial teapot, c. 1750.
Frampton Court collection.

Entertainment at Frampton could be on a substantial scale, and Richard Clutterbuck spent generously but not extravagantly on food, drink, and material goods. He also continued to acquire objects for Frampton Court. Over the mantle in the Hall a painting purchased in 1772 and recorded in a small daybook as 'The Maid of the Mill' records a knowledge of fashionable opera. It is listed together with a 'Book of Architecture', an indication of a continued interest in building.¹¹⁷ A 1741 portrait hung in the stair hall at Frampton Court reinforced Rudder's impression in a significant visual form. The portrait itself as well as its representation of what Richard wore and his personal objects offers subtle indicators of efforts to enact status. The dashing portrait compares with the more sombre portrait of his father that was also a fixture at Frampton Court. In the three-quarter length portrait, Richard Clutterbuck is garbed in handsome patterned red coat, his face

¹¹⁶ Cornforth links the fashion for Chinese armorial porcelain with the development of the Dining Room, although no clear connection exists at Frampton Court. Cornforth, *Early Georgian Interiors*, 49.

¹¹⁷ Frampton Court collection, Richard Clutterbuck Account Book.

slightly full but confident. His colourful and elaborately embroidered waistcoat highlights the white cuffs and ruffled cravat of his shirt. In his right hand he gently holds a pinchbeck-pommel Malacca cane with mythological figures, which still survives in the Frampton Court collection. Pinchbeck, a brass alloy invented in the eighteenth century, was mixed to resemble gold closely, and it seems somewhat characteristic of Richard Clutterbuck to have chosen the flash without the cost.¹¹⁸



Fig 7.2: Richard Clutterbuck, by Samuel Besly, 1741.
Frampton Court collection.

¹¹⁸ Frampton Court collection, portrait by Samuel Besly, 1741 and cane.

Such efforts at display, at once conspicuous and measured, said a great deal about Richard Clutterbuck's claim to status. Clutterbuck also altered the altered the property surrounding Frampton Court; an older existing scheme with a rectilinear forecourt, orchards, and small formal garden was replaced by a circular approach to the house. But there was no effort to create an expansive, English landscape garden. As a sop to fashion, an eye-catching, gothick orangery was added at the end of the old moat, but even long vistas were retained from the previous seventeenth-century formal landscape scheme. Like most gentlemen-owners his house combined old and new furnishings, materials, and modes of living. His elegant but provincial-styled house, handsome furnishings, remade landscape and decorative outbuildings all make this clear.

One final account illustrates some of these themes. In 1773, Edmund Clutterbuck, a distant relation from Islington, Middlesex, paid a visit to Frampton on Severn, where he and his companions 'walked in the Gardens of Mr Richard Clutterbuck's mansion at that place,' especially admiring the Gothick greenhouse. Family ties, however, did not gain them entry into the mansion itself, as 'There happened to be company in the house on a visit, so it was not convenient for us to see the apartments'. As distant cousins their access to the mansion was limited. They could however view Frampton Court, with its provincial mix of baroque and Palladian elements that Edmund Clutterbuck considered 'rather heavy, but has a magnificent appearance.'¹¹⁹

In enacting status, Richard Clutterbuck clearly sought to depart from his father's preoccupation with the business of the Bristol Custom house and set himself up as a country gentleman. His experience combining fashion and tradition, economy and expenditure positioned him at the forefront of gentlemanly owners, but also reflected their

¹¹⁹ E. Clutterbuck, *The Clutterbuck diary*, entry for Wednesday 14 July 1773.

particular ways of staking out their position in eighteenth-century society. Only on occasion did a gentleman like Richard Clutterbuck go further in asserting his personal sense of taste and style, impressing cousins and country historians with his effort to live ‘suitable to the fortune and dignity of a nobleman’.¹²⁰

Conclusion

The emphasis on movable goods highlights a metaphoric association between the mobility of gentleman and their status. By comparison with elaborate interior finishes, goods could be bought and sold, added and taken away. This feature points to the importance of movable objects for gentlemen owners. Gentlemen could employ objects to signify their taste and position, whether Thomas Goldney’s silver tea table, William Palling’s arms, or Richard Clutterbuck’s pinchbeck cane. Objects signalled a mentality that placed relatively more premium on mercantile exchange. In the homes of gentlemen, status equalled mobility.

Gentlemen’s houses were built as a strategy that confirmed status already conferred. Once the house was built, its space then became the scene of constant, repeated, varied routines and activities that reinforced claims to gentility. Houses, objects and people interacted to create and declare status in what I refer to as enactments. Evaluating their efforts to enact status in the domestic setting develops a more finely calibrated sense of gentlemanly-owners’ position. Genteel households were about the physical manifestation of the power in a period where hierarchies were universal and closely delineated.¹²¹ Gentlemen’s households included wives, sisters, sons and daughters, as well as a handful of servants, a few of whom held special status. Gentlemen’s houses were

¹²⁰ Rudder, 452.

¹²¹ Vickery hints at this in the case of James and Mary Hewitt, when she suggests that, ‘Power, not domestic happiness, was Hewitt’s primary objective’. Yet Vickery conflates the Hewitts’ process of house decorating with the resistance of Mary Hewitt to moving to the provincial town of Coventry, where she has no friends or relations, two decidedly different issues, *Behind closed doors*, 94.

important hubs for the community, playing important roles at the centre of local administration, economy and society. It is in the spaces of these houses that men and women delineated their standing in English society through actions that tied together material culture, domestic space and individuals. Some of these efforts demonstrated a concern with the polite: a hospitable reception with a silver tea table, the construction of a new more fashionable staircase to govern movement through a house, or the purchase of a set of fine china adorned with a family coat of arms. Politeness was not, however, all that these houses were about. Other actions demonstrated little regard for gentility, such as drunkenness in a kitchen or the alleged treatment of a sister like a menial servant. These enactments demonstrate that gentlemen builders and owners were on the cusp of elite status, separated from those lower down the social scale first by their houses, next by their material goods, then by their behaviours and finally by their networks.

A house, possessions and actions had distinctive meanings for a gentleman builder-owner. But social definitions were constructed in relation to others. Naturally, these definitions were dependent on internal and external evaluation, what the builders and owners considered their place in society and what others thought about hierarchy and rank in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England.¹²² The next chapter develops the relationship of owners to those levels of hierarchy, underscoring the ways in which people who encountered these houses, objects and actions acknowledged the owner, and engaged with his display of status. Close analysis of the involvement of gentlemen builder-owners in local, regional and national affairs is the final step in uncovering how a ‘modern-built

¹²² On efforts to delineate class, see P. J Corfield, ‘Class by name and number in eighteenth century Britain’, in Corfield, (ed.), *Language, history and class* (Oxford, 1991), 101-130 and Keith Wrightson’s essay in the same volume, ‘Estates, degrees and sorts: changing perceptions of society in Tudor and Stuart England’, 30-52. See also K. Wrightson, ‘Sorts of people in Tudor and Stuart England’, in J. Barry and C. Brooks, (eds.), *The middling sort of people: culture, society and politics in England, 1550-1800* (Basingstoke, 1994), 28-51; H. French, *The middle sort of people in provincial England 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007).

house fit for a gentlemen' helped owners to articulate status precisely in the changing social landscape of eighteenth-century England.

Chapter 8

Social strategies and gentlemanly networks

At first glance it is easy to miss a flash of social status, a fleeting moment of reflected glimmer. In picking up and examining the letter more carefully, it becomes evident that the duke of Beaufort's writing paper was gilt-edged. A number of letters from the duke reside in the Rooke family papers, but only in reviewing a large cache of correspondence is one apt to notice such a fine detail. The Rookes, a gentry family with a house at Bigsweir on the River Wye and estates in Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, maintained relations in high circles through frequent interchanges with the duke of Cleveland, the earl of Bath, Lord Paget, Lord Craven, the marquess of Carmarthen and Lord Lichfield.¹ Their relationship with the dukes of Beaufort at Badminton was especially close, and their correspondence is filled with accounts of shared sporting and country pursuits, family activities, and health matters.² The Rooke papers display a higher degree of intimacy with one of the great peers of the realm than those of other gentlemen in Gloucestershire. Such a relationship between a gentry family and the aristocracy did not alter the hierarchy of eighteenth-century England. Rather it demonstrates the system's complexities. Gilt-edged writing paper was a small and subtle show of magnificence. Such an object and its contents illustrated that the distinction between grand peer and gentleman was substantial, although the two groups increasingly co-existed in the upper tier of English society.

Gentlemen's houses provided a centre of power that enabled development of strategic networks that delineated their position within British society. Domestic networks

¹ See correspondence in GA/D1833/F1-F3: Rooke Family papers.

² For example, GA/D1833/F1/19/1-3, 1752-1753 Letters from the Duke of Beaufort to Brudenell Rooke, referring to deer hunting and thanking him for presents of birds and dogs; GA/D1833/F2/1: Duke of Beaufort, Badminton, to Brudenell Rooke, 2 Sept 1744.

were important, but connections beyond the domestic transformed houses and possessions into power and influence in eighteenth-century England. Members of the Rooke family frequently visited Badminton as well as the earl of Lichfield's house at Ditchley, but there is no indication of return visits to Bigsweir. Genteel families like the Rookes operated within a range of overlapping networks, from the domestic setting of their house, to local and regional communities, seats of the aristocracy, provincial urban centres like Bristol, and the capital of London. Efforts to construct and maintain relationships represented the outward manifestation of the gentleman's efforts to stake out position in the social order. These activities place gentlemen's houses in a broader context, emphasising their important role in facilitating these networks.

This chapter re-constructs some of the networks within which gentlemen builders and owners operated. Placing them within a broader context of social development in Britain accomplishes two objectives. First, it demonstrates the interrelationship between the layers of British society. Secondly, it offers guidance about the likelihood and extent of movement into the elite reaches of society. By considering various networks in which builders and owners of small classical houses interacted, this investigation amplifies the fine gradations of the social order of eighteenth-century England. It argues that a clear chronological demarcation is evident in the entry of new men into the ranks of the genteel from the 1720s, when their accelerated participation in elite networks marked a significant change. Although gentlemen without possession of a small classical house could play a role in power networks, those with a house were virtually certain to do so. Their houses allowed them to function firmly within the ranks of the polite, enacting status through setting, plan, and furnishing. A gentleman's house was a passport to elite society, but had its limits. Personal and kinship connections, professional affiliation, politics, religion, and economic interchange influenced networks that drew together upper middling sorts from

the urban environment of Bristol and gentry landholders in the county. As shall be seen, relations were incredibly finely calibrated. Actions and communications were strategic and well-planned.

By uniting material culture and social history, this chapter suggests a new paradigm for understanding and defining social mobility in the eighteenth century. Building and furnishing a gentleman's house marked acceptance into the ranks of the genteel. By the late-eighteenth century, relations between the lesser gentry and commercial families had accelerated, becoming 'teaming interactions of the marriage market and the dining-room.'³ Using one type of house as a bellwether suggests that the decades following the 1720s were a period of social transition that saw the interplay between these two levels of society deepen. When status markers such as office holding are supplemented with cultural factors such as buildings and possessions, social distinctions come more clearly into focus. The nature of status was malleable but also carefully attuned through actions. What emerges is an account of a social system that was incremental, measured, contested, and exclusive, but ultimately relatively open.

Gentlemen and the structure of society

To understand this process requires further consideration of the question posed earlier – what kind of owner did this type of house acquire? The one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners described in chapter 2 offer a dialogue between house, inhabitants, and social structure that displays the benefits of bringing together different approaches to social and cultural history. The material lives of gentlemen owners bring greater definition to social categories, highlighting a large degree of interchange between landed and mercantile elites and between urban and rural environments. Very little set the

³ Vickery, *Gentleman's daughter*, 14.

genteel off like their house could. A gentleman's house constrained and elevated his ability to interact with others, served as a key factor in how others perceived him, and governed how he interacted with social equals, inferiors and betters. In local settings this was especially the case, as the material object - the house - served as a constant physical reminder of the gentleman-owner.

Several studies have brought greater definition to the close cultural relationship between the upper middling sort and lesser landed gentry in the eighteenth century. Considerable interchange developed between the gentry and commercial and professional elites in the West Riding of Yorkshire, north-east Lancashire, South Wales, and London and Buckinghamshire.⁴ How well-to-do middling sorts such as the 'big bourgeoisie' of London related to landed elites has been the source of extensive discussion.⁵ Nevertheless, the elusive relationship between upper middling and lesser landed society has continued to interest historians. Questions remain about how emulative this behaviour was for newer or middling families and how much social mobility existed within British society. Before 1780, Richard Wilson argued, 'there was one ideal pattern of living, that manifested by the aristocracy.'⁶ Historians who have examined the middling sort have highlighted efforts to stake out a separate and different mode of life from those above.⁷ This study has argued that by looking at gentlemen's houses, it is not necessary to see social identity as a case of either 'emulation' or 'differentiation'. The sample of genteel owners considered here

⁴ See, for example, Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*; Jenkins, *The making of a ruling class: the Glamorgan gentry, 1640-1790* (Cambridge, 1983); Vickery, *The Gentleman's daughter*; Whyman, *Sociability and power in late-Stuart England*.

⁵ N. Rogers, 'Money, land and lineage: the big bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London', *Social History*, vol. 4, no. 3 (October 1979), 437-454; D. T. Andrew, 'Aldermen and big bourgeoisie of London reconsidered', *Social History*, vol. 6, no. 3 (October 1981), 359-364, and Rogers' response, 365-369; H. Horwitz, 'The mess of the middle class revisited: the case of the 'big bourgeoisie' of Augustan London', *Continuity and Change*, vol. 2, no 2 (1987), 263-296. See I. Christie, *British "Non-Elite" MPs 1715-1820* (Oxford, 1995), especially Appendix A, 206

⁶ Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*, 213.

⁷ Hunt, *The middling sort*; J. Smail, *The origins of middle class culture: Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660-1780* (Ithaca and London, 1994). M. Mascuch, 'Social mobility and middling self-identity: the ethos of British autobiographers, 1600-1750', *Social History*, vol. 20, no. 1 (January 1995), 45-61 problematizes the issue of social mobility.

suggests the need to move beyond these models to examine status-building processes in greater detail and in other ways.

Gentlemen builders and owners held a complicated place in the social hierarchy, and this is particularly evident in relationship to the aristocracy. Great estates formed centres of gravity in the county. At the Duke of Beaufort's seat at Badminton House, the five-bay Essex House filled a secondary role as a dowager house. In 1707, Charles Weston, descended from Shropshire gentry, built a house called the Chantry almost literally in the shadow of Berkeley Castle.⁸ Weston seems to have been a key functionary of the Berkeley family. In 1715, he was recorded as 'Charles Weston of Berkeley, Esq.' and a few years later was appointed Deputy Warden of the Forest Dean by the earl of Berkeley.⁹ The Chantry represents Charles Weston's effort to confirm a degree of intimacy with a leading landed family. By the later part of the eighteenth century the same house was the comfortable residence of noted doctor Edwin Jenner, reflecting the evolution of relationships between larger landowners and those further down the social scale as well as a change in housing as a marker of social status. The Berkeley family retained their immense and ancient seat at the castle next door, but the status of secondary inhabitants of the parish underwent subtle but important changes. Unlike the Rookes, most gentlemen builders and owners in the eighteenth century did not have close intercourse with leading peers, largely as result of the influx of new men who did not have established relationships with noble landowners.

Gentleman carved out social space for themselves in specific ways and specific places. The primary structure of local authority, the parish, served as the focal point for

⁸ I am grateful to Dr. Patrick Tierney of the Jenner Museum for kindly sharing his research and thoughts on the evolution of the Chantry. His ongoing study promises to yield further useful information.

⁹ In the church, which physically stands between the Chantry and the castle, of 'Several memorials for the Westons, descended from a knightly family, of Weston-hall in Shropshire', see Rudder, 281. GA/Q/SO/4/3: 'The names of those who took the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to His Majesty King George'; GA/D446/F3: 1717, Appointment of Captain Chas. Weston, Esq., by the Earl of Berkeley, as Deputy Warden of the Forest of Dean.

the ‘middle sort’ in seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century provincial England.¹⁰ Status was largely defined within the ‘borders of the social territory of the parish’, although the key concept of gentility ‘breached these borders’ for parochial ‘chief inhabitants’.¹¹ Yet these ‘chief inhabitants’ were inherently inward-looking, ‘directed towards hierarchies and determinants that were restricted to the parish and its hinterland.’¹²

Gentlemen builders and owners played active roles in parish affairs.¹³ They were often significant landowners and filled parish offices. Thomas Goldney, a Quaker no less, served as Churchwarden and on the Vestry for St. Andrews Parish, Clifton, as did Paul Fisher of Clifton Hill House.¹⁴ William Clutterbuck, for example, was deeply enmeshed in the selection of a new candidate for the living at Frampton on Severn,¹⁵ and his son Richard was credited with a major public works project, helping to drain the village green in Frampton-on-Severn.¹⁶ Nonetheless, figures such as Richard Clutterbuck still encountered little local difficulties, as when he received a letter from a neighbouring landowner complaining: ‘There is another thing Which Im not approved of, and that Is the bridge built over Into Nethermoore, to turn the Road Where it never was till of late, by doing so you have gained a fine piece of Land.’¹⁷

The parish allowed a point of entry; as Vickery notes, ‘the realistic outsider from trade probably aimed initially to penetrate the “parish gentry”, leaving it to later generations to advance to county or national level’.¹⁸ This claim overemphasises the linearity of the process at the same time that it undersells the permeability of these

¹⁰ French, *The middle sort of people*, 19-20.

¹¹ French, *The middle sort of people*, 29. ‘Chief Inhabitants’ are discussed in more detail, 93-95.

¹² French, “‘Ingenious & Learned Gentlemen’”, 48.

¹³ Nearly all, for instance, had monuments in parish church interiors. A few, such as Thomas Palling, had ornately carved exterior tombs, as at the Church of St John the Baptist, Pitchcombe.

¹⁴ See BRO/P/St.A/OP/1 (a): Overseers to Clifton Parish 1708 to 1732 and BRO/P/St.A/OP/1 (b): Overseers to Clifton Parish 1732 to 1749.

¹⁵ GA/D149/F19.

¹⁶ Rudder, 452.

¹⁷ GA/D149/M15 – Rental with letter complaining of encroachments and road diversions and solicitor’s reply, 1772-73. ‘Frampton 16th April 1773, Richard Davis to Richard Clutterbuck, esq.’

¹⁸ Vickery, *Gentleman’s daughter*, 298, fn 4.

categories. Gentlemen builder-owners in Gloucestershire mostly transcended the role of ‘chief inhabitant’ and breached parochial borders by employing a genteel house to solidify claims to gentility. This placed gentlemen owners on the rung of the social ladder that might be termed supra-parochial.

Beyond the parish, gentlemen builder-owners played important roles at the county and even national level. Probably one in five served as a Justice of the Peace, nine served as High Sheriffs, and twelve were Members of Parliament. Even militia rank, for example, served as an indicator of status for some: Captain William Clutterbuck, for instance, served under major landowner Colonel Colchester in a clearly delineated chain of command. The tone and content of correspondence with ‘Major Bragge’, a key investor in the Warmly Company and owner of Cleve Hill, provided a further signal of status arrangements.¹⁹ Several gentlemen builders and owners held important roles in the Customs service, whilst a number of others had investments extending throughout the county and beyond, or were engaged in trade with contacts and networks in London and in Britain’s colonies overseas.

Although gentlemanly life might be based in the parish, these involvements indicate a high degree of participation beyond its borders. This evidence destabilises the distinction made by Lawrence and Jeanne Stone between ‘parish gentry’ and ‘county gentry’ and also between the gentry and new men of business and the professions.²⁰ Given their commercial involvements, professional service and engagement in politics it would be inaccurate to reduce inhabitants of small classical houses to mere parish gentry. Richard Clutterbuck’s connections, for example, stretched throughout the county, to Bristol and on to the capital. Owners of gentlemen’s houses were largely ignored by the

¹⁹ See GA/D149/F18: 10 Nov 1702, Coll. Colchester to WC, and GA/D421/B1.

²⁰ L. and J. F. Stone, *An Open Elite?*, 6-9. The individuals that French calls the ‘Chief Inhabitants’ are not altogether different from the Stones’ ‘parish gentry’, further illustrating the challenge of finding appropriate language to describe these social groups.

Stones and yet by most criteria and in the eyes of contemporaries, gentlemen builders and owners occupied positions that transcended the parish.

Gentlemen negotiated multiple different locales, including the countryside, villages and provincial urban centres like Bristol. Peter Borsay argued that it was provincial urban environments that defined the competitive social development of the middle ranks, suggesting that ‘the village could hardly provide this competition’.²¹ The village was not the limit of a gentleman’s horizons. Social, religious, professional and business networks occasionally took them beyond the county boundaries to London and even beyond the shores of the British Isles. In operating beyond parish boundaries, gentlemen owners displayed an ability to cross the divide between rural and urban settings. In this way, they present a profound challenge to neat distinctions between the urbane and the rural. Estabrook, for instance, sees rural and urban environments coming together after 1760, whilst this study suggests more interchange at least a generation earlier.²² Gentlemen builders and owners, especially after the 1720s, crossed societal thresholds such as parish/county and rural/urban in new ways.

Evaluating how gentlemen fit into the structure of society reinforces the close relationships between the urban or pseudo-gentry and their landed gentry counterparts. Architectural and material objects were key signifiers of status that helped to construct social categories. The inclusiveness of genteel society did not mean that hierarchy disappeared; far from it. The reality was that although there was commonality there was still, ‘minute discrimination within the local elite itself’.²³ Exploring these networks more fully provides a better understanding of how social processes unfolded. In doing this, it is clear that the social interchange of gentlemen builders and owners largely characterised the dynamic social mobility of Georgian England.

²¹ Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*, 176-177.

²² Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, chapter 10.

²³ Vickery, *Gentleman’s daughter*, 32.

New men and their networks: intersections of land, commerce and professional service

The investigation of gentlemen's houses and their owners allows more precision to be brought to the interrelationship between landed gentry and commercial elites. Until the second quarter of the eighteenth century, owners of small classical houses mostly comprised landed gentry; indeed, they included three peers, and several baronets and knights. Sir Michael Hickes, builder of Witcomb Park, and Sir Richard Cocks of Dumbleton Hall represented prominent gentry and political families. Gentry builders often had estates in other counties, such as the Whitmores from Shropshire and the Warwickshire family, the Bretts of Sandywell and Cowley Manor. The Barkers, who built Fairford Park, were originally gentry from Shropshire, although via a generation of mercantile activity in Bristol. Minor gentry families like the Bedwells built Poulton Manor and lived life in the mode of the parish gentry. Only in a few instances before about 1720 did rich merchants like clothier Nathaniel Ridler undertake construction of a gentleman's house. Until the early-eighteenth century, the networks that linked gentlemen's houses were those of traditional landed society.

When the building of gentlemen's houses is linked to social status, a significant change is evident in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. After the 1720s, men whose income came from the professions, government service or commerce increasingly built small classical houses. The eighteenth century was not only concerned with the possession of wealth, but how that wealth was obtained, invested, and displayed. In 1711, Jonathon Swift identified, 'a moneyed interest that might in time vie with the landed.'²⁴ Yet as late as 1814, Robert Southey, wrote that, 'The commercial system has long been undermining the distinctions of rank in society. Mushrooms are everyday starting up from

²⁴ J. Swift, *The conduct of the allies* (1711), quoted in J. Black, *Eighteenth-century Britain, 1688-1783* (Basingstoke, 2008, 2nd edition), 95.

the dunghill of trade.’²⁵ The figure of ‘the wealthy Cit, grown old in trade’ who ‘now wishes for the rural shade’ was the subject of considerable satire in the middle of the eighteenth century, and it would be easy to see some gentlemen owners fitting this image.²⁶ As Penelope Corfield pointed out, satirists directed most of their jibes at the vulgar displays of wealth of ‘ultra-rich India “nabobs” and overseas merchants’.²⁷

Although this caricature primarily mocked prosperous London merchants it has some significance when applied to Gloucestershire. Gentlemen builders and owners largely avoided such stigmatization, although figures like Sir Onesiphorus Paul came in for occasional ridicule. Other merchants were criticized not so much for vulgar displays as for simple vulgarity. The 1742 edition of Defoe’s *Tour* argued that merchants of Bristol ‘tho’ very rich, are not like the Merchants of London’.²⁸ Bristolians had ‘inbib’d the Manners of those rough Gentleman’ who frequented the city, like shipmasters, as result of which there was little gentility. Nevertheless, of thirty-five identified gentlemen builders from 1720 onward, almost three quarters came from these backgrounds. Most small classical house owners offered a counter-point to the idea of ‘rough Gentlemen’ and were examples of sobriety, responsibility and modest taste.

For new men who built or acquired small classical houses in the eighteenth century, financial and business connections were particularly important in defining networks and delineating status. As a result, these networks became part of the wider range of relationships of gentlemen builders and owners. This is particularly noteworthy in the case of Bristolian gentlemen and the gentlemen-clothiers of the Stroudwater Valleys, who had closely intertwined connections within the county and beyond its borders. How

²⁵ Quoted in I. Christie, *British “Non-Elite” MPs 1715-1820* (Oxford, 1995), 4.

²⁶ W. Kenrick, *The poetical works of Robert Lloyd*, 2 vols. (London, 1774), ‘The Cit’s Country Box’, i: 41-46.

²⁷ Corfield, ‘The rivals’, 17.

²⁸ Quoted in P. T. Marcy, ‘Eighteenth-century views of Bristol and Bristolians,’ in P. McGrath, (ed.), *Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, (Newton Abbot, 1972), 29.

far these networks stretched and in what ways can be assessed by examining some of the relationships they constructed.

Contacts for Stroudwater clothiers ran a gamut of associations. Some gentleman clothiers, as Josiah Tucker noted, rose to great heights.²⁹ Onesiphorus Paul secured a patent for processing cloth that helped to make him exceedingly wealthy, and enabled him to send his son to Oxford, breakfast with the Prince of Wales, and take the waters at Bath.³⁰ But as Phillpotts argues, ‘The contacts between the clothier families and the world beyond the Stroud valleys appear to have been largely limited to their correspondence with the London cloth factors.’³¹ William Palling, as we have seen, despite being a rich clothier who built a gentleman’s house, had few connections and lived a rather rough and reclusive life.

Networks evolved in several ways for gentlemen owners after about 1730, including their religious connections. In Bristol particularly, members of the Society of Friends engaged in gentlemanly building after 1720. During the eighteenth century, religious dissenters became a more accepted part of society, and prominent Quakers balanced their evolving religious convictions with economic and social success. Thus, Thomas Goldney II of the prominent Quaker family, whose mother had been a ‘sufferer’ and whose father had been a particularly devout member of the society in the 1670s, strayed significantly from Quaker ideals.³² Goldney was a Quaker who built a handsome house, acquired many fine things, and invested in the Woodes Rogers expedition of 1708-1711, an endeavour that provoked the disapprobation of the Meeting. He also spent time in prison as a result of troubles that arose from financial mismanagement in the Customs

²⁹ J. Tucker, *Instructions for travellers* (London, 1757), 25.

³⁰ Moir, ‘Sir George Onesiphorus Paul’, 196.

³¹ Phillpotts, ‘Stroudend Tithing Report’, 90.

³² R. Mortimer, (ed.), *Minute Book of the Men’s Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686-1704* BRS, vol. xxx (1977), 244-245; Stemberge, *The Goldney family*, 6.

house.³³ He is recorded as buying expensive gifts in London, took a grand tour in the 1720s, kept a coach and horses and likely rebuilt Goldney House, which included a magnificent panelled and carved Mahogany parlour.³⁴ His son, Thomas Goldney III, lived a privileged, even opulent, lifestyle, indulging in an extravagant garden, lavish interiors, and expensive furnishings.³⁵ Across Clifton Green, Thomas Goldney III's sister and brother-in-law, Martha and Nehemiah Champion, constructed a substantial building, Clifton Court, in the 1740s. Quaker merchant John Andrews built Hill House in Mangotsfield, whilst Joseph Beck engaged George Tully, a Quaker, or possibly John Strahan, a non-Quaker, to design and build Frenchay Manor in the Quaker settlement of Frenchay in 1736. Soon after starting his Warmly Company works, William Champion, the son of Nehemiah Champion, erected Warmly House as a centrepiece of his estate, dominated on one side by a growing and impressive industrial concern and on the other by a garden featuring a grotto, echoing pool, lake and statue of Neptune.³⁶

In the area of science and early industry, Quaker gentlemen engaged in mercantile activity contributed to the wider, urban-dominated network of knowledge. The Goldneys and Champions were involved in Abraham Darby's innovative iron works at Coalbrookdale, and contributed significantly to experimentation in metals.³⁷ The Harfords had substantial interest in iron production.³⁸ The Goldneys also had a strong scientific

³³ Stembridge, *The Goldney family*, 14-16.

³⁴ Stembridge, *The Goldney family*, 17; UBL/DM1466/11: Journal of a Tour of Europe, 1725; UBL/DM1499/9: Account Book of Thomas Goldney, 1708-1713, 14th 8br 1710; Survey of Goldney House, Clifton, Bristol.

³⁵ Stembridge, *Thomas Goldney's garden: The creation of an eighteenth century garden* (Bristol, 1996); UBL/DM1398/A: Copy Inventory of furniture and effects at Goldney House, 1768.

³⁶ On the Champion family see J. Day, 'Champion family (per. C. 1670-1794)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); for the brass industry J. Day, *Bristol brass: a history of the industry* (Newton Abbot, 1973) and A. Raistrick, *Quakers in science and industry* (London, 1950); a useful recent report on the Warmly gardens and works incorporating physical and archival research is Atkins Heritage, 'Champion's Brassworks & Gardens Conservation Management Plan' (unpublished report, January 2007).

³⁷ Stembridge, *The Goldney family*, 16-20, 101-104; Day, *Bristol brass*; Raistrick, *Quakers in science and industry*; Allen, *The British industrial revolution in global perspective*, 269.

³⁸ W. E. Minchinton, 'Bristol: metropolis of the west', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, vol. 4 (1954), 69-89, 84.

interest in botany and gardening.³⁹ Additionally, the Goldneys became actively involved with banking, as did the Tyndalls.

Business partnerships drew together mercantile elites and landed gentry, although within these arrangements hierarchy was evident. William Champion, founder of the Warmly Company near Bristol, secured funding for his operation from Norborne Berkeley (latterly Lord Botetourt) and Charles Bragge of Cleve Hill. This somewhat unholy alliance between a Quaker commercial man and staunch Tory Berkeley suggests that economics could trump politics and religion in the construction of networks. The company caused bad feelings within Champion's family and with fellow Quakers. In one meeting, Champion's cousin, who operated the rival Bristol Brass and Battery Company, 'was so very angry' that he could he could hardly contain himself, 'without being in a violent Passion, and behaving Ungentlemen like.'⁴⁰ With the company beset by funding problems Berkeley intervened at the highest levels of government for the company, to little avail.⁴¹ Although Champion's Warmley works lasted only a short time because of financial difficulties, their letters richly document the multi-layered mixture of business, social standing and politics.

Mercantile and professional networks collided in the Custom house in Bristol, the nexus for a web of merchants, professionals, and even landed gentry. The Customs service in the eighteenth century was a source of patronage and frequent corruption but accounted for something on the order of 20 to 25% of the state's income in the period between 1700 and 1760.⁴² Three major offices balanced the collection and administration of Customs

³⁹ Stembbridge, *Thomas Goldney's garden*.

⁴⁰ GA/ D421/B1: 19 June 1761, Charles Whittuck to [Charles Bragge?].

⁴¹ GA/ D421/B1: 20 and 26 October 1767, Letters from Lord Botetourt.

⁴² Hoon, *The organization of the English customs system* emphasizes the corrupt aspects. For percentage of revenue, see J. Brewer, *The sinews of power: war, money and the English state, 1688-1783* (London, 1989), Figure 4.3, 98.

duties: the Collector, responsible for collecting monies, the Controller⁴³ generally supervised the port, and the Searcher who oversaw exports. The Controller and Searcher were sinecure posts held by royal patent, whilst the Collector was appointed by the Board of Customs Commissioners. In each case, much of the actual work was done in the port by a deputy. All were compensated through a system of salaries and fees chargeable on the public purse, making employment in the Custom house a potentially lucrative place for a rising man.⁴⁴

John Elbridge connected individuals from a broad spectrum of economic, political, religious and social backgrounds. He was a member of the influential Society of Merchant Venturers, held the post of Deputy Controller of the Port of Bristol, owned part of a large sugar plantation in Jamaica, served as a Justice of the Peace, and became a major benefactor in Bristol. As a Customs official, he was widely regarded for his efficiency in seeing that England's second largest port city ran well.⁴⁵ His position as Deputy Controller of Customs at Bristol put him at the centre of activities related to the port of Bristol, although this role alone does not necessarily explain his wide-ranging and nuanced contacts. Several members of Elbridge's circle invested in his personal possessions at the auction following his death. Henry Bodman, Elbridge's trusted underling, acquired '1 Doz. Pewter plates' and a 'pair of brass candlesticks'. 'Mr Fane', likely attorney Thomas Fane, who acted as solicitor on behalf of Elbridge's executors, acquired a 'Silver knife fork

⁴³ This office is sometimes listed as Comptroller.

⁴⁴ Hoon, *The organization of the English customs system*, 6-11.

⁴⁵ See BRO/AC/WO, Administrative History, Woolnough Family. GA/CMS/202: Justices of the Peace of 1736 [Transcription of GA/Q/JC/3]; 'Warrant Books: December 1708, 1-10', Calendar of Treasury Books, Volume 22: 1708 (1952), 451-458. 'Dec. 8. By his personal unwearied care and great skill the said Elbridge hath carried on the accounts of the said port of Bristol which were left by the late Collector in the utmost confusion and could not be adjusted without the help of the said Elbridge from his own books. He was also instrumental in making known some of the [said late] Collector's failures of duty and his great arrears in cash.' BRO/Apprentice Books 1684-1699, fol. 10, 10 September 1685. P McGrath, *Records relating to the Society of Merchant Venturers of the city of Bristol in the seventeenth century*, BRS vol. xvii, (1952), 33.

spoon & case.’ John Andrews, a Quaker merchant who knew Elbridge, purchased a ‘Horn tipt with Silver’ for £1.⁴⁶

That John Andrews should purchase a small piece of John Elbridge’s estate is a not surprising coincidence. Andrews and Elbridge were contemporaries who had widespread social and economic connections in Bristol and beyond. Elbridge was an Anglican colonial from New England with Bristol connections, while Andrews was a vintner and Quaker merchant. Despite their differences by the early-eighteenth century both were actively involved in the mercantile gentleman’s world of Bristol.

John Andrews played a pivotal role in civic and religious affairs and economic life. As early as 1706 he became one of the partners in Abraham Darby’s Bristol Brass Works.⁴⁷ In addition, over the years Andrews served in various capacities in the Society of Friends, including Clerk of the Bristol Yearly Meeting in 1712, and was involved with the Pennsylvania mortgage in 1713.⁴⁸ Although a Quaker, he worked closely with John Elbridge. The two men are listed as co-mortgagees on a lease in the 1720s.⁴⁹ Andrews followed Elbridge as Treasurer of the Bristol Royal Infirmary, one of the major initiatives that brought together members of the Church of England with non-conformists. Indeed, Andrews and Elbridge, together with Elbridge’s executor Samuel Creswick, formed part of the small initial committee that met in December 1736 to discuss its organization.⁵⁰

John Andrew’s connections and trading networks included the North American colonies.⁵¹ Utilizing his Quaker contacts not only in Bristol but with the colony of Pennsylvania, Andrews corresponded with James Logan, the influential proprietary

⁴⁶ BRO/AC/WO/11/4/k: Results from auction of Elbridge goods.

⁴⁷ Day, *Bristol brass*, 37.

⁴⁸ R. Mortimer, (ed.), *Minute Book of the Men’s Meeting of the Society of Friends in Bristol, 1686-1704*, Bristol Record Society, vol. xxx (1977), 233.

⁴⁹ See BRO/00485/21-22, Related to the mortgage of Rummers Tavern.

⁵⁰ G. Munro Smith, *A history of the Bristol Royal Infirmary* (Bristol, 1917), 9.

⁵¹ See for example Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP)/James Logan Ledger, 1720-1727, Collection 379, vol. 10, 268: ‘1726 12 Mo 27 To Jno Andrews Sterl Accot for wines.....£8.6.2’.

representative. Their close relationship was based on shared business interests and personal connection. Logan relied on Andrews for shipments of wine, for handling some of his bills of exchange in Britain, and for offering credit assessments of potential business associates. One such figure, Robert Eagles, a purveyor of Stroud cloth that was highly important in the North America Indian trade, was unknown to Logan. In 1719, Logan wrote to take Andrews, 'Pray favour me with some Accot of him.'⁵² The interactions of many gentlemen reinforce the importance of honesty, worth, and credit arising from engagement in business activities and public affairs.⁵³

Like many gentlemen builder-owners, Andrews diversified his investments. Andrews had purchased an estate in nearby Pucklechurch called Leigh or Lye Farm in 1723, which in 1743 produced a 'yearly rent of £140 or thereabouts.'⁵⁴ About the same time, Andrews undertook to build Hillhouse near Mangotsfield, five miles northeast of Bristol on the estate he had placed in trust in the 1690s.⁵⁵ Although Andrews may have remained a merchant in Bristol, he sunk some of the product of commercial labour into income-producing land. By building Hill House, John Andrews positioned his son Edward to settle as a minor member of the landed gentry. By the 1790s the Andrews, having returned to the Church of England, were listed as one of the leading families in the parish, ensconced in a gentleman's house in the countryside.⁵⁶

⁵² HSP/James Logan Letterbook 1717-1731, 87: 15th 8br 1719, James Logan Phila to John Andrews.

⁵³ C. Muldrew, *The economy of obligation: the culture of credit and social relations in early modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998); M. Finn, *The character of credit: personal debt in English culture, 1740-1914* (Cambridge, 2003). For credit related to the West Country textile industry, see J. Smail, 'The Culture of Credit in Eighteenth-Century Commerce: The English Textile Industry', *Enterprise & Society* 4 (June 2003), 299-325.

⁵⁴ BRO/AC/AS/57/5: Abstract of Title, Celia White for Leigh Farm at Pucklechurch.

⁵⁵ Kingsley, 291. It is unclear on what basis, however, Kingsley makes this claim. A. E. Jones, *History of Mangotsfield and Downend* (Bristol, 1899), 175. BRO/AC/AS/57/3: Copy Will of John Andrews. Andrews also identifies himself as 'of Bristol, merchant' and indication that his primary residence was within the City.

⁵⁶ Bigland, part 2, vol. 3, 833-834: 'To the Memory of an humble but sincere Member of the Established Church Edward Andrews, Esq. of Hillhouse, in this County, who died the 18th of July, 1758, aged 49'.

This multigenerational transit from commerce to land is one path taken by the gentlemen of Gloucestershire, although the typicality of this process has been overstated. More often it was not quite so straightforward. New men certainly acquired property and estates, built houses, and sometimes adopted the lifestyle of the country gentry, but most often their efforts to construct status were an unusually complex process that mixed a range of interests and worked itself out over time. The next section illustrates how exact such efforts could be.

The calibration of social status

The process of negotiating gentlemanly networks required incredibly precise and calculated social communication. Although these networks enabled commercial and landed elites to interact in a number of ways, each participating in the governing class, this did not mean that there were no impediments to social intercourse. Whereas the interface between these groups has been seen by some historians as a yawning gap and others as a zone of happy camaraderie, the reality was finely tuned in every detail.

The interplay between gentlemen-owners can be especially revealing, testing the nuance of relationships within genteel society. In the Customs house and elsewhere, the apprenticeship system offered the opportunity to gain experience, develop contacts, and establish, or assert, social position. As Deputy Controller of the Customs, Elbridge took in numerous apprentices over the next three decades, ranging from the sons of minor landed gentry to the sons of butchers, distillers and ropemakers.⁵⁷ Family connections were important. The apprenticeship system also played a significant role in creating and maintaining relations, and securing rises in social status across a range of social strata. Sometimes these factors could be closely intertwined. Rural villages supplied

⁵⁷ Jones, 'The Elbridge, Woolnough and Smyth families of Bristol', 42.

comparatively few apprentices and ‘migrants from remote areas contributed far more than local villagers did to Bristol’s urbanisation’.⁵⁸ The system nevertheless yielded a number of gentlemen who were able through a combination of connections and perseverance to climb the social ladder. Charles Carkesse, Inspector General of Imports and Exports and secretary to the Commissioners of the Customs in London, apprenticed his son to Elbridge, as did Nathaniel Stephens, a substantial Gloucestershire landowner.⁵⁹

One apprentice in John Elbridge’s office was Richard Clutterbuck, the young son of William Clutterbuck, Searcher of the port of Bristol.⁶⁰ The relationships between the Clutterbucks and Elbridge demonstrate all the complexities and refinement of landed status, government office, and commercial money linked in Bristol. In seeking his own patent as Searcher, William had expressed an awareness of carefully defined status, saying he had a ‘friend in ye Treasury’ but, ‘I’m unwilling to trouble people of that Quality abt such a trifle.’⁶¹ By the early 1720s William, Searcher for nearly thirty years, was a wily operator with a detailed understanding of how to work the system.

Letters written by William Clutterbuck from his country seat at Frampton House to his son, Richard, introduced a series of strategic manoeuvres that record a multi-layered campaign to win favour and secure position. Not unusually for a patented Customs official and like many other commercial gentlemen, William had semi-retired to Frampton House, where his frequent instructions reveal the range of tactics he employed to get ahead in the hierarchy of eighteenth-century England. The Clutterbucks cultivated a range of people in order to build status, including the influential Elbridge. The desire to keep the good will of Mr Elbridge runs throughout the letters; William frequently reminded Richard of what might be said to Elbridge and what was best left unsaid, ‘If you think best to say any thing

⁵⁸ Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, 123.

⁵⁹ BRO/04356/9: Apprentice Book, 1709-1719, 131, November 1716, Nathaniel Stephens of Eastington to John Elbridge.

⁶⁰ See table of apprentices in Jones, ‘The Elbridge, Woolnough and Smyth Families of Bristol’, 42.

⁶¹ GA/D149/ F19: 22 May 1711, William Clutterbuck [WC] to John Chamberlyne.

to Mr Elbr. be sure say nothing to him how you know of it.’⁶² He was also not beyond subterfuge in the conduct of his business dealings. The importance of sealing wax is made clear in another letter to Richard, ‘I have enclosed a letter for Mr El open, wch (if you approve) you may seal with a wafer but not your owne seal that he may not suspect you have seene it.’⁶³

William frequently reinforced that every detail mattered in this game of commerce and manipulation: ‘altho’ it is but a small matter, yet ‘twas ye saying of a wise man He that despises little things shall perish by little & little’. Richard Clutterbuck eventually left Elbridge’s employ to become deputy to his father at the Custom house in Bristol. Balancing the exactitude of legal requirements, business, family status and geography, William instructed Richard, ‘When you take ye Oathes write your self of ye City of Bristol gent. For soe ‘tis in strictness tho’ possibly it may doe well enough if of Frampton.’⁶⁴

In late winter of 1724, Richard set out for London to secure his Patent as Searcher of the Port of Bristol, the culmination of William’s grand strategy. William was particularly keen to impart guidance on dealing with Charles Carkesse, the head of the Custom service. Encounters with this formidable figure required subtlety, and William’s richly detailed draft, including phrases stricken out, offered precise instructions to manage the affair:

if you have not already spoken with him your best way is to goe in an afternoon, when you may speak with him in private or to his house soon after dinner & ask him whither your Patent shd pass through his office or not, if he tells you it shd then ask him his fee & ~~tell him~~ thank him for his last kindness to you ... & that now since you have ye Patent you must desire that he will ~~let you have your favour~~ give you leave to write to him when you have occasion & that he will please to oblige you with his Favour & then put 5 Guin in his hand & desire him to accept of that small present.⁶⁵

⁶² GA/D149/F21: WC to Richard Clutterbuck [RC], 19 October 1723.

⁶³ GA/D149/F21: WC to RC, June 1725.

⁶⁴ GA/D149/F21: WC to RC, 23 November 1723.

⁶⁵ GA/D149/F21: WC to RC, [probably March] 1725. Strikeouts in the original.

In an effort to assure status, William Clutterbuck weighed every word so as to convey the correct meaning and set the ideal scene for the transaction. It links place, timing, and action: Richard was to visit Mr Carkesse in the most propitious place at the most opportune time, probably at ‘his house after dinner’; Carkesse was not to be told, but rather thanked; his favour was not to be demanded but given with leave; then he was to be given a ‘small present’ to ensure success. Learning of Richard’s failure to accomplish the task of meeting Mr. Carkesse and offering the required monetary token of esteem, William drafted a letter of thanks for Richard to copy out and send to Carkesse, a reminder that little things matter.⁶⁶

Even after Richard had received the patent, William continued to devise ways of securing advantage, although his advice was less direct. In a draft of a proposed letter to be sent by Richard, William opened a letter to the Commissioners of Customs in London, ‘Hon^d. Sirs.’ William noted, however, that, ‘I know not whither this form or yours be best I mean Hon^r or Hoble but you know best how Mr El was wont to write & you had best to doe ye like.’⁶⁷ These few lines suggest the complexity and nuance of the relationship between father and son, between the Commissioners and their Customs agents, and between the wise, powerful, and influential former employer Elbridge and his clerk made good.

William Clutterbuck even sought to ensure that guidance was provided to Richard beyond the grave by stipulating that his executors, sister-in-laws Rebecca and Sarah Clutterbuck, Walter Marshall and Jasper Selwyn should ‘continue their friendship in advising & assisting my son about letting & managing his Estate & other interests as they may have opportunity.’⁶⁸ This acknowledged that Richard, having mastered the world of commerce, would be faced with the appropriate management of the landholdings in

⁶⁶ GA/D149/F21: WC to RC, 5 April 1725.

⁶⁷ GA/D149/F21: WC to RC, June 1725.

⁶⁸ GA/D149/F20, William Clutterbuck will, 20 July 1724.

Frampton. In this way, the interchange between land and commerce and rural and urban attitudes played out in a range of venues.

Gentlemanly networks and the public sphere

The political sphere in Gloucestershire was especially expressive of varying degrees of hierarchy. The metaphor of architecture in politics is a useful one; as Sir George O. Paul commented in relation to parliamentary reform, 'Before I begin to pull down my house, I will have fully considered and fixed on a plan for a new one'.⁶⁹ The building of houses was both a literal and figurative act that emphasized power that could be put into play in the political arena. The plain style of house adopted by numerous merchants and the gentlemen of this study stands in contrast to the far grander Palladian style that prevailed in aristocratic Whig circles during the period especially between 1720 and 1760. If Houghton represented the Whig oligarchs like Sir Robert Walpole - massive, expensive, and opulent - gentleman's houses reflected an altogether more sober and industrious manifestation of architecture and politics.

In politics as in society, the aristocratic magnates of the county like the dukes of Beaufort, the earls of Berkeley, and Lord Bathurst stood at the highest level. Further down, greater gentry families such as the Duttons, Tracys, Leighs and Guises played substantial roles throughout the century. On the third and fourth tiers of the political world, gentlemen fulfilled key roles in the mechanisms of political life.⁷⁰ Although the aristocratic and greater landed families dominated, they did so with the support and involvement of gentlemen.

⁶⁹ GA/D589/30 April 1809, Sir George O. Paul to Sir B. W. Guise.

⁷⁰ See especially Johnson, *The Gloucestershire Gentry*, chapter 9. F. O. Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The unreformed electorate of Hanoverian England, 1734-1832* (Oxford, 1989); N. Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989) has much to say about Bristol.

Despite infrequently standing for or being elected to Parliament, gentlemen took an active interest in parliamentary affairs and frequently played a role in parliamentary elections and national politics. During the eighteenth century, Gloucestershire tended to be dominated by the Whig party, with seats in the county as well as Bristol generally held by Whigs, but with several strong Tory interests. Sir George O. Paul spoke for a number of Gloucestershire gentlemen when he declared in 1809 ‘I was by birth and education a Whig (altho’ of the old school)’.⁷¹ The city of Gloucester was generally split between Whigs and Tories, Benjamin Bathurst serving for a lengthy period, and Benjamin Hyett of Painswick House being elected in 1741 as a ‘pure’ Tory opposed to conciliation with the Whigs.⁷² John Webb of Norton Court was elected in 1780 as MP for the city.⁷³ Cirencester, the seat of Lord Bathurst, was a Tory stronghold throughout the period.⁷⁴

Gentlemen owners did not drive the political machine, certainly at the county and national level. Instead they frequently exercised small nodes of ‘interest’, although they could influence those above them through the allocation of their opinions, support and votes. The complex nature of politics in Gloucestershire is borne out by the correspondence of the Dutton family of Sherborne House, which provides precise indications of standing within gentlemanly ranks.⁷⁵ In 1739, William Bell, Richard Clutterbuck’s brother-in-law, asked Sir John Dutton, a leading Whig political figure, to serve as chairman of a newly formed Commission of Sewers and expressed his ‘great pleasure’ in ‘the Whig Interest reviving.’⁷⁶ Quaker merchant John Andrews of Hill House,

⁷¹ GA/D589/30 April 1809, Sir George O. Paul to Sir B. W. Guise.

⁷² See ‘Gloucester, 1720-1835: Parliamentary representation’, *VCH: G*, vol. 4, ‘The City of Gloucester’ (1988), 152-154.

⁷³ E. A. L. Moir, ‘The Gloucestershire Association for Parliamentary Reform, 1780’, *TBGAS*, lxxv, (1956), 171-192, 184.

⁷⁴ Williams, *PHG*, 163-169. R. Sedgwick, (ed.), *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, vol. I (London, 1970), 245-6.

⁷⁵ GA/D678/1 F12/1/1-452: Sir John Dutton, 2nd Baronet: political and other correspondence and accounts, 1718-1743. Although Dutton was owner of Sherborne Park, a large country house, he was politically active and had extensive communication with a number of individuals in this study.

⁷⁶ GA/D678/1 F12/1/100-101: William Bell to Sir John Dutton [JD], 11 July 1739 and 22 September 1739.

Mangotsfield, was prominent enough to be canvassed for political support by Dutton in 1739.⁷⁷ On at least two occasions, Dutton was warned to beware of Thomas Chamberlyne, Dean of Bristol and of Broadswell Manor, who had a foot in both Whig and Tory camps.⁷⁸ James Lambe of Fairford promised his support in the Whig interest.⁷⁹ Three gentlemen listed in 1733 as wielding political influence in Frampton on Severn included Richard Clutterbuck and Jasper Selwyn.⁸⁰ As an indication of the gradations of power, Sir William Codrington of Doddington offered Dutton eighty votes at Marshfield and seventy votes at Sodbury but reserved his other votes for Lord Bathurst's son.⁸¹

It was natural for gentlemen to be canvassed for support during parliamentary elections. Maynard Colchester, MP for Gloucester, asked William Clutterbuck's advice about political matters, 'I wish youd give me your thoughts abt. ye Bill wch is to be brought in'.⁸² To Maynard's son, Henry, who looked to stand in 1717, William Clutterbuck wrote, 'ye Gentl (our sort of friends) are most inclined for you but they are unwilling to oppose ye Earl of B who is engaged for another Gentl'. Nevertheless, Clutterbuck opined, 'you may depend (I believe) upon Mr Stephens & Mr De la bere for fast friends upon ye Clothiers abt Stroud & generally ye old Whig Interest'.⁸³ In 1720, Henry Berkeley, standing for one of the Gloucester seats, also asked for Clutterbuck's support.⁸⁴ Just two months later a by-election prompted another call for Clutterbuck's

⁷⁷ GA/D678/1 F12/1/87: 18 September 1739, Revd Thomas Baker, Bibury to JD.

⁷⁸ D678/1 F12/1/172: 12 January 1739/40, Samuel Creswicke to JD and D678/1 F12/1/175: 28 June 1740, Samuel Creswicke to JD.

⁷⁹ D678/1 F12/1/235: 12 September 1739, James Lambe to JD.

⁸⁰ D678/1 F12/1/23: 20 July 1733, John Small to JD.

⁸¹ D678/1 F12/1/8: 12 August 1733, Sir William Codrington to JD.

⁸² GA/D149/F18: 10 Nov 1702, 'Coll. Colchester to WC, To Capt. Clutterbuck', with William Clutterbuck's lengthy response; see also 2 December 1710, Col. M[atthew] Ducie Morton to William Clutterbuck, and WC's response.

⁸³ GA/D149/F18: 11 October 1716, Henry Colchester to William Clutterbuck and quote in October 1716, WC to Henry Colchester about Colchester standing. See related correspondence: 26 April 1717, Coll. Matthew Ducie Morton to WC, To Capt. Clutterbuck, and May 2d. 1717, Henry Colchester to WC.

⁸⁴ GA/D149/F18: 21 March 1719/20, Henry Berkeley to WC. Berkeley won the election held on 30 March 1720 as a Whig over Thomas Gage (also a Whig) 2245 to 1721. See Williams, *PHG*. Edmund Reginald Bray (1678-1725) stood during a by-election when Matthew Ducie Morton was made a Peer and served for

approval, 'Mr Bray standing for the County of Gloucester upon Coll. Morton's promotion I request your Interest for him, he being sett up by the Interest & likewise Brother in Law to Governour Harrison, a very good Friend & near Neighbour of mine in ye true Interest'.⁸⁵

As with many gentlemen looking to gain favour and position, William Clutterbuck exercised his influence to benefit himself and his family. In 1727 he wrote to Kinard De La Bere, MP for Gloucestershire, on behalf of his son-in-law, William Bell, following a similar contact by Colonel John Selwyn, who would later serve as MP for Gloucester from 1734 to 1751.⁸⁶ While assuring Clutterbuck that he would indeed have favoured Bell had he known earlier, De La Bere added hopefully, 'Mr Bell will have it or Mr Marshall be continued'. Nevertheless, the regional politics involved could be highly problematic for a gentleman of Clutterbuck's position. Colonel Selwyn's intervention on Bell's behalf was, 'not very pleasing as I am told Ld B[erkele?]y & Ld D[uce?]y & others who are angry that Col. S[elwy]n does these things wth out their privity or counsel'.⁸⁷

Power and influence could be exercised in different ways. Gift-giving remained an important form of social reproduction that helped to build and consolidate personal, political and business relationships.⁸⁸ To curry favour, William Clutterbuck often dispatched gifts to noteworthy neighbours. In response to some fish sent to Lord Ducie, Lady Ducie opened her letter of thanks with, 'My Lord loves salmon'.⁸⁹ William recognized the importance of gift-giving in lubricating the socio-economic gears of office-

Gloucestershire June 1720-1722. His eldest son later sold the manor of Barrington to Lord Talbot about 1734. Williams, *PHG*, 64.

⁸⁵ GA/D149/F18: 12 June 1720, [Sir?] Thomas Clarke to WC.

⁸⁶ R. Sedgwick, (ed.), *The House of Commons, 1715-1754*, vol. I (London, 1970), 246-247.

⁸⁷ GA/D149/F18: 25 February 1726/7, Kinard De La Bere to WC.

⁸⁸ I. Krausman Ben-Amos, *The culture of giving: informal support and gift-exchange in early modern England* (Cambridge, 2008) has highlighted the importance of gift-giving and informal charity into the eighteenth century; F. Heal, *Hospitality in early modern England* (Oxford, 1990); F. Heal, 'Gifts and gift-exchange in the great household: 1500-1650', *Past and Present* 199:1 (2008), 41-70.

⁸⁹ See GA/D149/F18: 18 May 1722, Lady Ducie to WC. Rudder notes that the salmon of the River Severn, 'of which there is great plenty, is truly excellent', Rudder, 46.

holding when he instructed Richard to provide a ‘small present’ when soliciting the post of Searcher at Bristol.⁹⁰ In turn, William received presents as well, such as the ‘keg of sturgeon and two Sugar-loafs, tis a small present I desire you to accept of for your many favours I have received from you.’⁹¹ Frequent exchanges of venison, salmon, fruit and other goods are noted between the Rookes and their aristocratic friends.⁹² New men readily adopted this form of relationship-building. Daniel Packer, a Stroudwater clothier related to several families in this study, regularly dispatched gifts such as cheeses to his factors in London, a custom followed after his death by his wife Mary.⁹³

Many of the networks gentlemen participated in were intertwined. In particular, the interplay of politics, religion, and business could be powerful for gentlemen. In response to a widow’s request for him to serve as pallbearer for his ‘good friend Mr Wintle’, William Clutterbuck wrote that ‘being informd that he is not to be interr’d according to ye Usage of ye xch of Engd... it may affect me in respect of my Office (for I never saw ye Act of Parlt) & therefore beg my Cozen to excuse me. I heartily sympathize with her’.⁹⁴ William Clutterbuck also conducted a long-running debate with a Dr. Cradock about a new vicar at Frampton-upon-Severn.⁹⁵ Cradock had written to William as ‘the Chiefest Person of the place’ and a ‘Gentleman of Learning’ to have his son appointed to the living. After a number of imploring letters, Clutterbuck had to write finally in exasperation, ‘I humbly desire that henceforwd you will not give your self ye trouble of writing anything more upon this subject, for my eyesight is not soe good as yours or at least expect none from me.’⁹⁶

⁹⁰ See GA/D149/F21: 5 April 1725, WC to RC.

⁹¹ GA/D149/F18: [Edward?] Clifford to WC, 31 March 1705, and WC’s response.

⁹² See for example, GA/D1833/F1/13; GA/D1833/F1/19/1-3; GA/D1833/F3/4; GA/D1833/F3/6.

⁹³ See GA/D149/F113-114: Letterbooks of Daniel Packer, 1760-61 and 1768-1791.

⁹⁴ GA/D149/F18: 23 June 1714, Mr Joseph Denham to WC, and WC’s response.

⁹⁵ GA/D149/F18: 4 November 1720 and 29 November 1720, Dr. William Cradock to WC. On advowsons, see Johnson, *Gloucestershire gentry*, 147-148.

⁹⁶ GA/D149/F18: 12 November 1720, WC to Dr. William Cradock.

Public affairs also saw Gloucestershire gentlemen from both gentry and mercantile groups involved in charitable causes. Providing philanthropic leadership reinforced John Elbridge's social standing. Elbridge donated a brass chandelier and an oil portrait of himself to a church in Marblehead, Massachusetts.⁹⁷ As a philanthropist, Elbridge established a charity school for impoverished young women and took a lead role in provision of medical care for the poor of the city by helping to set up the Bristol Infirmary.⁹⁸ One minute book records that he covered, 'at his sole expense for all the Materials, workmanship linen and Furniture of the house, and fitting up and providing the medicine for the Apothecary's Shop.'⁹⁹ Another minute documents that he continued to invest monies and paid for a new ward on the Infirmary himself.¹⁰⁰ He was joined in this endeavour by a number of Bristolian gentlemen: Paul Fisher, John Andrews, Nehemiah Champion, and Thomas Goldney.¹⁰¹ Richard Clutterbuck contributed 21 Guineas to become a Life Member in 1751 and renovated the green at Frampton on Severn.¹⁰² In the 1770s, several gentlemen supported the Gloucester Infirmary.¹⁰³ William Harrington founded a hospital in Bourton on the Water. The performance of these sorts of public charitable functions reinforced that gentlemen owners played influential roles in both urban and rural affairs. This ability to negotiate multiple settings was one of their great strengths as a group.

⁹⁷ See BRO/34328/b: Photocopies, correspondence and notes used by Donald Jones in his thesis. Letter from Pauline King, Librarian, New England Genealogical Society, 18 Mar 1970 notes that in S. Roads, *The History and Traditions of Marblehead* (New York?, 1880), 'we find a reference to John Elbridge, Esq., collector of the port of Bristol, England; he presented a brass chandelier and an oil portrait of himself to the church,' possibly St. Michael's Episcopal Church, founded in 1714. There is also a portrait of John Elbridge at the Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA, Gift of Stephen Salisbury III (1901.26).

⁹⁸ BRO/28049 (25) a (i): n.d. [early C20?] 'Certain Extracts & Abridgements of the Will of John Elbridge Esqr, deceased, together with a Set of Orders & Regulations for the well governing of the Charity School on St Michaels Hill by him lately founded for ye instruction of twenty four poor Girls'; *Bristol Infirmary Minute Book*, for 1736 ff. Elbridge was appointed Treasurer on 7 January 1736/7.

⁹⁹ BRO/35893/1/a: Bristol Infirmary Minute Book, 1736-1772, Minute of 6 January 1737/8.

¹⁰⁰ BRO/35893/1/a: Bristol Infirmary Minute Book, 1736-1772, Minute of 12 December 1738.

¹⁰¹ BRO/35893/1/a: Bristol Infirmary Minute Book, 1736-1772.

¹⁰² BRO/35893/21/a: Various, including accounts, officers, etc. 1742-1805, for 1751-1775. Rudder, 452.

¹⁰³ GA/D1815/Box 16: Edward Caruthers Little of Field place, Stroud, 'State of the Gloucester Infirmary for the Year 1775' [Amongst misc. papers in bundle]. Subscribers included Richard Clutterbuck, Nicholas Hyett, Sir Onesiphorus Paul, Thomas Palling, and Charles Sheppard.

Mercantile values and property rights

Despite their adaptability, genteel owners did not always have a smooth transition when moving between environments. The ownership of land carried with it rights, responsibilities, and problems. The minor gentry held small estates and most new men invested in property in some form. Estate ownership presented a series of connections that both elevated status and challenged property owners. In 1767, William Whitmore had an exchange through his friend and attorney Richard Jervis about purchase of some property. John Dolphin, the new owner of Eyford House in Upper Slaughter, wrote to Jervis, 'He [Whitmore] has given so much Trouble, & seems so stiff...' Whitmore quickly retorted, 'In response to a Very Extraordinary letter of Mr Dolphin's which you showed me yesterday I desire you will please to acquaint him, as he has the character of a Gentleman I would not think him capable of breaking his word'.¹⁰⁴ Clothier and landowner William Palling of Brownshill did battle repeatedly with tenants and neighbours. Land ownership was fraught with such headaches, and gentlemen often had to deal with them on a personal level.

Such problems were not restricted to the minor gentry, and new men and indeed ladies from commercial backgrounds became enmeshed in land ownership issues. Five years after John Elbridge's death, Cote came into the possession of Ann Hort, who went on to own the small estate for nearly forty years, not dying until 1782.¹⁰⁵ As joint-inheritors of Elbridge's fortune, Mrs. Hort and Rebecca Woolnough, whose husband Henry Woolnough died suddenly in 1746,¹⁰⁶ were together left responsible for administering the

¹⁰⁴ GA/D45/E14: Bills for carpenter's work, rates, repairs and legal proceedings (1707-1726), building repairs, etc. (1728-1782) 4 April 1767, John Dolphin to William Whitmore, and Whitmore's response.

¹⁰⁵ Hort was Thomas Elbridge's mother in law. BRO/5535/28: Copy will of Ann Hort, 3 March 1766 [Proved 26 Jan 1782].

¹⁰⁶ BRO/AC/WO/1/28: 17 April 1746, Grant of Administration to Rebecca Woolnough [RW] for Henry Woolnough, Esq..

estates that were settled as part of the claims. Until Rebecca died in 1761, they were two wealthy single women holding substantial property and functioning as prominent female players in the construction of social identity.¹⁰⁷

The affairs related to the estate remained very messy and demonstrate that the genteel status of wealthy widows or even landed gentry did not always insulate them from legal and social challenges, sometimes from below. Thrust into the role of landowners, Ann Hort and Rebecca Woolnough encountered a range of difficulties. After years of legal dispute, acquiring property at Horsley and Eastington from the locally noteworthy Stephens family, who could not pay the mortgage held by Elbridge estate, was only the beginning of the issue. A great deal of wrangling ensued over the estates, involving local agents, other gentlemen, the populace at large, and even the Vicar. In order to establish themselves as not only the legal owners of the estate but the moral and social owners as well, the Woolnoughs and Mrs. Hort had to engage local agents to survey and oversee the properties successfully. Their status as newcomers, almost violently displacing long-standing, seemingly popular, and still prominent local landowners, ensured that resentment was high and acceptance of their new status begrudging. The Woolnoughs issued instructions for the ejectment of tenants, including a member of the Stephens family.¹⁰⁸ Although it made sense that they should not want Stephens as a tenant, a wholesale removal of the tenants of the estate must have been highly disruptive, caused anxiety and anger amongst the rural populace, and undermined the Woolnough's status in the area.

¹⁰⁷ Rebecca inherited the house in the Royal Fort from Elbridge, and Ann Hort later owned the sixteenth-century Red Lodge. This prominent house in Bristol also illustrates the tangled nature of the network. Mary Henley inherited a life interest in the house, which her husband left to his cousin John Day, who had married another John Elbridge niece, Frances, and intended to leave the house to his sister, Mrs. Hort. Mary Henley remarried Dean Samuel Creswick, moved to Wells when he became Dean there, outlived Day, and left Mrs. Hort in possession. See S. Levitt, *The Red Lodge* (Bristol, 1986), 24.

¹⁰⁸ See BRO/AC/WO/14/8: 15 Oct 1744. Declaration of Ejectment; BRO/AC/WO/14/10/a: no date [prob. October 1744], Henry Woolnough to John Baker.

The conflict highlighted urban and rural values in the form of local lineage, ancient ritual, the threat of the unknown, and distaste for something new.

For several decades, debate continued about the status of the new owners and their social responsibilities and obligations. The local inhabitants were clearly in a position to undermine the authority of the Woolnoughs and Mrs. Hort, exploiting their knowledge of the local landscape in acts of resistance to owners that they might consider to be acting illegitimately. In 1747, seemingly in the absence of informal or moral authority, the new owners had to take measures to exert their formal control, circulating a series of notices against the illicit cutting of timber on their estates.¹⁰⁹ In 1749, Rebecca Woolnough received a letter from the vicar of Horsley church, claiming his right to four loads of firewood. He implored Mrs. Woolnough, ‘That you would not debar me of that small addition to my small income, which I earn as hard as any labourer, the Duty being very great, and the clear value of my vicarage under 30L per Ann,’ following this up a year later with a statement signed by three Witnesses saying that ministers of Horsley had always been entitled to firewood.¹¹⁰ Responding with a lack of sympathy perhaps engendered by a decade of fierce struggle over estate issues, Rebecca Woolnough wrote her London solicitor for advice, arguing that, ‘we were not obliged to let him have any’, commenting that, ‘You are sensible what great sufferers we are already’.¹¹¹

It is not known whether the wood was granted or not, but such small but important rights and responsibilities did not go away and the uncertainty of local status remained an issue. By the 1770s, John Hugh Smyth of Ashton Court, one of the largest landowners in the region, had inherited the estates through his marriage to Elizabeth Woolnough. Even with this ostensible upward move in status, the mixture of commercial attitudes, legal

¹⁰⁹ BRO/AC/WO/14/16: 1747, Advertisement concerning Cutting or Stealing of Wood.

¹¹⁰ BRO/AC/WO/14/19/a: Richard Wallington to RW, 20 July 1749; BRO/AC/WO/14/19/c: 20 July 1750.

¹¹¹ BRO/AC/WO/14/19/b: 20 July 1750, RW to David Thomas; BRO/AC/WO/14/19/d: 7 April 1753, David Thomas to RW.

wrangling, and estate acquisition was not completely overcome in the minds of local people. In 1776, another Vicar renewed the claim for the four loads of firewood, writing to the venerable Mrs. Hort about it, who had no objection if Smyth did not. Invoking the responsibilities of land ownership and the charity expected, the Vicar noted, 'The claim is trifling & insignificant to you – but important to me, the Living being so small.'¹¹² After some thought, and consultation with Mrs. Hort, Smyth wrote back to say that they could find no 'Deeds or papers we have that our Woods ever belong'd to the priory of Bruton, + therefore cannot admit yr Claim.' Abandoning strict legal interpretation and yielding to the social and moral appeal of the vicar, Smyth nevertheless informed him that, 'from the Character we have of you + the living being small,' he and Mrs. Hort had decided to pay him, 'two Guineas upon New Years day, + we intend to continue the same.'¹¹³ Nothing more is recorded from the vicar, perhaps a suggestion that at last after a quarter century, local obligation had been fulfilled.

Conclusion: the possibilities and limits of gentlemen

From the woods of rural Gloucestershire to the mills of the Stroudwater and the halls of the Bristol Custom house, gentlemen grappled with status concerns. This chapter has moved beyond the gentleman's house to consider the networks created by these builders and owners. A key factor in their success, indeed in their ability to participate in these networks at all, was possession of a small classical house. The strategies that gentlemen employed to negotiate these networks delineate the fine gradations of social status and identity.

How complete was the melding of commercial and landed society in eighteenth-century Gloucestershire? How possible was it for someone who made a respectable fortune

¹¹² BRO/AC/WO/14/19/d: 28 Nov 1776, Richard Davies to [John Hugh] Smyth Esqr at Ashton Court.

¹¹³ BRO/AC/WO/14/19/d: 23 Dec 1776, John Hugh Smyth to Richard Davies.

in business to move with some success into the genteel governing class? Where did owners of small classical houses stand in the social scale? Gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire and their owners provide evidence of a carefully calibrated social system. Vickery noted that the social cohesion of landed, professional and commercial families has not been of great concern to most historians, and that 'the case studies that would settle the issue are scarce.'¹¹⁴ By approaching the issue from a material culture perspective, this is one effort at 'settling the issue'. Elsewhere in England, joint economic and political participation tied wealthier merchants with local landed gentry: provision of loans and mortgages, shared business interests, the burden of county administration, and marriage connections.¹¹⁵ To this might be added the cultural commonality of a compact, four rooms per floor house and furnishings.

This approach focused on houses presents a more nuanced and richer picture of social mobility in eighteenth-century England. The 'social cohesion of landed, professional and gentry families' can be overstated but was overlapping and multivalent.¹¹⁶ The on-the-ground experience for gentlemen builders and owners was often contested, but the interchange between the mercantile world and the lesser landed gentry was frequent and on-going. Gentlemen owners largely moved back and forth between urban and rural society, drawing together the urban renaissance in the form of their small classical houses while serving as landlords and local officials. Mobility was possible, but it is the nature and character of that mobility that is set out in this thesis. It is not the tale of linear social development sometimes recounted by historians.¹¹⁷ Nor was it a process of emulation of the upper reaches of British society. The process was incremental, measured and shifted

¹¹⁴ Vickery, *Gentleman's daughter*, 32.

¹¹⁵ Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*, 231.

¹¹⁶ Vickery, *Gentleman's daughter*, 35.

¹¹⁷ See for example D. Hancock, *Citizens of the world: London merchants and the integration of the British Atlantic community, 1735 – 1785* (Cambridge, 1995); Girouard, 'The power house', 23; Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*, chapter 10, offers a range of motivations for estate purchases.

over time. The end result was neither assumed nor desired to be a landed estate. Gentlemen in this study evinced limited interest in a large country house and estate. Instead, they opted for a smaller house, plain, simple, fashionable enough but not flashy. It was not a minor facsimile of larger houses but very much on its own scale and terms. A Gibbsian surround here, a bit of baroque ornamentation there, did the trick. Social tension where it occurred was for the most part not the mockery of parvenus often portrayed but much subtler and more finely graded. That is not to say that the Stones were correct in their assertion that social mobility in England was circumscribed. Their account largely ignored the most realistic and significant arena for mobility: the small polite house.

The gentlemen described here built on household, local and regional power bases, although they had connections beyond that, most frequently with London, either in commerce, kin networks, government service, or politics. How they exercised power in each of these arenas provides specific indications of their status within society. On a practical level, the real process of social mobility and integration of commercial and landed elites can be sketched out through their shared connections and common material choices. In this picture, new men could compile a modest fortune, develop a range of networks over time, pick the right moment to rein in or retire from their business activities, purchase a small estate or piece of property, and build a compact but polite house that was economical to construct and maintain. That house had the space to accommodate a household with a handful of servants, and could be furnished accordingly with selected new and fashionable objects to complement older pieces. As a main arena of life, the houses were centres for the conduct of sociable routines that reinforced and developed further networks. In material terms, this picture of a house rather than the Stones' grand vision represented the mix of dynamism and stasis that worked so well in eighteenth-century England.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

By the 1760s when Thomas Tyndall, son of a wealthy Bristol merchant and banker, built Royal Fort house on the outskirts of the city, development had climbed St. Michael's Hill.¹ On each of its facades Tyndall's house exhibited a different style - Baroque, Palladian and Rococo - an overview of architectural development in eighteenth-century England. The mixture of styles and exuberant ornamentation may be read as the sort of architectural amalgamation increasingly mocked by contemporary commentators.² Tyndall's new house drew verse in a local paper that gently ridiculed his efforts and the design:

Till gen'rous Tyndal, sir'd with Sense and Taste
Saw here Confusion, - Ruin there, - and Waste
Resolved at once to take the Rubbish down,
And raise a Palace there to grace the Town
For Aid, - he, Jones, - Palladio, - Vanbrugh viewed;
Or Wallis, - Bridges, - Patty's Plans pursued;
No Matter which, - the Fabric soon uprose,
And all its various Beauties did disclose.³

This poem and surviving evidence suggests that Royal Fort differed from other gentlemen's houses in key respects. Thomas Tyndall erected his showpiece to designs by perhaps three different architects, highly unusual up to that time for small classical boxes.⁴

¹ J. Bettey, *The Royal Fort and Tyndall's Park: the development of a Bristol landscape* (Bristol, 1997), 8-11; R. Leech, *The St Michael's Hill precinct of the University of Bristol: medieval and early modern topography*, Bristol Record Society, no. 52 (Bristol, 2000); M. J. H. Liversidge, 'Blotting out Bristol: Humphrey Repton's Royal Fort Red Book', in M. Crossley-Evans, (ed.), *'A Grand City' – 'Life, Movement and Work', Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, essays in honour of Gerard Leighton, FSA* (Bristol, 2010), 168-184. Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: an architectural history*, 155-9.

² Such as Robert Lloyd, *The Cit's Country Box* (1757). Architectural historians offer contrasting views of the house. Andrew Foyle suggests that 'the relationship of the three facades is not entirely successful, yet the whole is undeniably pleasing' in *PAGB*, 244. Tim Mowl, however, calls it, 'a masterpiece and certainly the most complete and enchanting Rococo house in Britain.' T. Mowl, *To build the second city*, 62.

³ Verse from 1767, quoted in Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol*, 190.

⁴ Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol*, (London, 1952), 191; Foyle, *PAGB*, 244; Mowl, *To build the second city*, 71.

In contrast to many gentlemen builders in this study, Tyndall was relatively young and constructed Royal Fort almost immediately after inheriting a substantial commercial fortune. He chose to situate his 'Palace' to 'grace the Town' rather than building in a village setting like Clifton or erecting a country seat. Moreover, the interiors display lavish plasterwork. But whereas similar rococo decoration was 'rigidly contained' at Clifton Hill House, it was 'spectacularly free-flowing' at Royal Fort.⁵ One of the rare sets of Chinese armorial porcelain owned by Gloucestershire gentlemen graced the tables and cupboards of Tyndall's house.⁶ In the process of building Royal Fort, Tyndall demolished a house previously owned by John Elbridge, a striking metaphor for the transition from the gentlemen's houses and owners described in this thesis to the suburban villa built by the bourgeoisie in greater numbers after the accession of George III.⁷

By 1770, the classical box had established its staying power at most levels of propertied society. By the early-nineteenth century, villas that catered 'for a range of social types and architectural ambitions' were to be found outside London and other provincial cities.⁸ In the later eighteenth century as well, many farmhouses in Gloucestershire were rebuilt, or freshly constructed as a response to enclosure, in simple classical style with a 'central doorway and usually one window on either side', a vernacular echo of the gentleman's house.⁹ The compact box had become a common, elegant, ordered form of dwelling prevalent across the social spectrum.

This thesis has maintained that the small compact classical box has not been adequately studied. Social and architectural historians have largely examined other topics,

⁵ A. Foyle, *PAGB*, 22-23.

⁶ Howard, *Chinese armorial porcelain*, vol. I, 572.

⁷ Bettey, *The Royal Fort and Tyndall's Park*, 9. Archer associates this with the development of 'bourgeois selfhood', in Archer, *Architecture and Suburbia*, 45ff. See also McKellar, 'The suburban villa tradition in seventeenth and eighteenth-century London'. Tyndall sold Royal Fort in 1791 but it was reacquired by his son a few years later. Ison, *The Georgian buildings of Bristol*, 190-191. Tyndall was listed in his 1794 will as of 'the parish of Saint Augustine Bristol esquire', see TNA/PROB11/1246.

⁸ McKellar, 'The suburban villa tradition', 198.

⁹ Verey and Brooks, *BoE: C*, 96-97.

seeking to define and evaluate larger country houses, restricting their gaze to the suburban villa, or examining a particular social or economic group. By considering modern-built houses, ‘with four rooms on a floor, fit for a gentleman’ in the first instance, this study has mined a particular type of house for what it says about social structure in eighteenth-century England. The eighty-one small classical houses and one hundred and thirty-four builders and owners considered here offer an alternative method for categorising social groups and calibrating social status. Although politeness cannot be aligned with neat social boundaries, examining material objects helps to develop greater specificity about how social groups participated in the world of the polite.¹⁰ This thesis has argued that in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, small classical ‘gentlemen’s houses’ were significant and specific factors in establishing and maintaining status for owners who played pivotal roles in Britain’s growth during this period.

This social and cultural reading of gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire yields several key findings. Gentlemen built and owned houses in an effort to confirm their gentility. Over the course of the period, small classical houses served as primary sites of social change and transformation of the elite. Architecture was at the forefront of a realignment of society, as small classical houses became arenas for social mobility in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Gentlemen’s houses in Gloucestershire fell into two basic groups according to when and where they were built and in relation to the social status of their inhabitants. Before the 1720s, gentlemen builders and owners were most often already members of the landed elite. Their ‘Cotswold gentry houses’ were a compact form criticized by some as inappropriate for a country seat. The construction of a small classical house between 1680 and 1720 therefore constituted a somewhat innovative choice by an established group of elite owners.

¹⁰ L. Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, 896.

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century, however, building status shifted dramatically. From about 1730, small classical houses began to acquire owners who reflected a more diverse pattern of wealth accumulation, including substantial funds from professional service and trade. Two important transitions accompanied this chronological turning point. The first was a geographic reorientation that saw these houses increasingly built near commercial centres such as the Stroudwater cloth district and the port of Bristol. The second was a peak of building activity, with a significant increase in the number of gentlemen's houses built between 1730 and 1750 when far fewer larger country houses were under construction. Erected later in the life of their builders, gentlemen's houses served as a significant step that confirmed status in genteel society; they were not the cause of social mobility, but a near certain indicator that social mobility had occurred. These related shifts signalled a cultural change. They recast smaller classical houses from a new fashion in architecture to a socially-safe, conventional choice attractive to newcomers from non-landed backgrounds.

Small classical 'gentlemen's houses' were a distinctive form that enabled builders and owners to stake out a specific position in society. The five-bay compact box simultaneously displayed characteristics of conservatism and continuity that echoed the restrained dynamism of their builders and owners. These houses combined fashionable and vernacular elements of design, and displayed basic but flexible floor plans that allowed for differentiation of space and considerable sociability. In short, before the 1720s, few new elites engaged in building small classical houses. Afterwards, many more did as a way of confirming their status.

The construction of gentlemen's houses projected status in urban, suburban, and rural settings for both landed and non-landed elites. Possession of an estate in the eighteenth century remained important and represented a claim to significant status, but the

flexibility of this house form built in various locales suggests that acquisition of a large country house and estate was not necessary for an owner to play a significant role in polite society and its related power networks.¹¹ A much smaller house would do. After 1730, some builders situated their houses on country estates, but new construction took place in a wider range of situations. These frequently mixed aesthetics with practicality, as seen most tellingly at Warmley, where William Champion's gentleman's house and pleasure garden stood contiguous to his manufacturing complex. A decisive factor increasingly became the possession of a house appropriate to status as gentlemen, rather than the amount of land per se. Gentlemen's houses without estates served as important markers of status. They did not challenge or undermine the primacy of landholding but offered an alternate route into the ruling elite. Indeed, constructing a small classical house played a significant role in achieving such ends in the absence of a landed estate.

Gentlemen builders and owners used their houses to bridge urban and rural divides. Some compact classical boxes served as country seats, and others could be characterized as villas. Caution should be exercised when ascribing the concept of villa to small classical houses, however, and I argue for a new framework for understanding them, particularly outside the environs of London. The most oft-cited example of a 'Palladian villa', Clifton Hill House, was designed by a nationally-known architect in a village about a mile distant from the Bristol.¹² However, like many campaigns that gentleman-builders undertook to solidify their social standing, Clifton Hill House was completed late in life and intended as a primary residence for its builder, Paul Fisher. Until the late-eighteenth century, gentlemen's houses were a central investment that often served as a year-round dwelling rather than a suburban retreat.

¹¹ These findings support those in Wright, 'The gentry and their houses'.

¹² Burnside, *A Palladian villa in Bristol*.

Once constructed, gentlemen's houses were a forum for the display and enactment of status. Such functions were governed by the floor plan, room use, and furnishings. This study breaks new ground by incorporating material goods into the broader picture of gentlemen's housing. Gentlemen in these houses occupied a particular niche in the social hierarchy, setting themselves apart through material goods, adapting and re-fashioning the cultural traits of others.¹³ Too often treated separately, the careful coding of interiors and objects are critical to understanding better how genteel households fashioned power and status.¹⁴ Spatial arrangement, decoration and furnishing combined display with restraint. By comparison with middling homes, gentlemen's houses were lavishly furnished in terms of the number, cost and quality of their possessions. In turn, however, gentlemen for the most part did not, and in most cases could not, seek to emulate the greater gentry or aristocracy. More frequently, they decorated their houses and acquired goods that suited their position, only occasionally purchasing objects similar to those higher up the social scale.

The houses inhabited by gentlemen provided a visible indicator of status and a centre of power that enabled them to develop important networks that confirmed their position within British society. Although the concept of the gentleman was more ambiguous by 1770,¹⁵ as Penelope Corfield argues, such a latitudinarian view 'does not make the concept of gentility any less "real" or less culturally important.'¹⁶ Small classical houses were a material form that signalled status in specific ways. They enabled gentlemen builders and owners to employ remarkably precise but flexible social strategies in a range of capacities, settings and venues whilst remaining above the all-important threshold of the genteel. Their involvement in local and county affairs was extensive. Social, religious,

¹³ Overton et al, *Production and consumption in English households*, 8.

¹⁴ Several historians, especially Amanda Vickery, have made efforts along these lines recently, e.g. *Behind closed doors* (London and New Haven, 2009)

¹⁵ Klein, 'Politeness for plebes', 364.

¹⁶ Corfield, 'The rivals', 21.

professional and business networks not infrequently took them beyond the county boundaries to London and even beyond the shores of the British Isles. A few gentlemen were involved in national affairs as MPs or in government service. Relations within genteel networks were precisely coded and could be contested, as witnessed by Rebecca Woolnough's on-going difficulties with estate management and Henry Bodman's disputed claims to gentility whilst sharing domestic space and sociability with John Elbridge. Nevertheless, buildings, landscapes, interiors and furnishings allowed owners to put social practices in motion, transforming houses and possessions into power and influence in eighteenth-century England.

Traditional approaches to social and material life combined with newer sensibilities. The sophisticated Thomas Goldney III deployed his inherited mercantile wealth to create a splendid garden. At the same time, clothier William Palling secretly collected weaponry, entertained in his kitchen, but then, toward the end of his life, opted to rebuild his house in a classical style as a mark of gentility. Richard Clutterbuck tore down his father's house to construct a new one that was at once a backward architectural glance at the baroque and a fashionable employment of Palladian form. He reaped the profits of professional office as Searcher of the port of Bristol, invested in Chinese armorial porcelain and fine walnut furniture, erected a Gothick orangery, whilst undertaking the significant public works project of draining the green at Frampton upon Severn. Precision combined with flexibility and adaptability were key features of the houses and gentlemen in this study, indeed their distinctive characteristics.

By exploring material culture this study of gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire has aimed to develop a more holistic account of the social borderland between the middling sort and the lesser gentry in rural and urban provincial England. As the Stones rightly pointed out, few gentlemen went from trade and commerce to large country

house.¹⁷ This thesis builds on their work by constructing a timeline for social mobility, outlining how it took place, and charting a more realistic process. Rather than being linear and flashy – new men buying estates and building large houses – social mobility was most often cloaked in restrained garb.¹⁸ New men in particular were conservative in their efforts. Gentlemen's houses adhered to a uniform style and basic plan, simple and straightforward in their architecture, spatial arrangement and interior decoration. Inventories and other records demonstrate that gentlemen builders and owners combined fashionable furnishings with older objects, only occasionally refurnishing or undertaking interior construction. Gentlemen spent considerable but not colossal sums on their material goods, generally acquiring a handful of high status objects that enabled them to display polite taste and engage in genteel sociability.

Building status was an incremental, step by step process taken by those whose lives reflected a conjunction of wealth, age, position, inclination, and taste. The 'gentleman's house' in England represented one of the largest and most significant of those steps to be taken during a lifetime. This was the true character of social mobility in action. Looking at houses a step down the architectural ladder from the Stones – in some case, several steps – demonstrates that social mobility was possible, and that these houses were a primary venue.

Associating houses with owners develops a carefully calibrated picture of elusive social strata. Furthermore, establishing the gentleman's house as a category highlights several directions for further research. Methodologically, this investigation suggests that incorporating social, cultural and architectural history with material culture studies harbours great potential. It demonstrates that interdisciplinary work can be brought to bear

¹⁷ L. and J. F. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1995, abridged edition), x; see also, P. Gauci, *The politics of trade: The overseas merchant in state and society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 90-93.

¹⁸ See for example D. Hancock, *Citizens of the world*. Hancock nevertheless recognized that 'for every merchant building fabulous piles, there were at least three merchants who fit Isaac Ware's generic description of the gentleman', 343.

on related concerns from different fields. Moreover, this account of one group of houses and associated builders and owners highlights processes that need to be studied in greater detail. Historians continue to grapple with the nature of the social structure and the character, location, and pace of social change in eighteenth-century Britain. This regional study of Gloucestershire offers a deep reading of one important region in the eighteenth century, and should be tested by comparisons with other parts of Britain to develop the case studies that Vickery proposed.¹⁹ In this way, this work complements provincial studies that have explored these issues from other vantage points.²⁰

There is also room to map gentlemanly networks further to refine understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and political ties that mobilized the elite. Ownership of ‘gentlemen’s houses’ was not restricted to the landed gentry, but represented fine gradations on the social scale that included businessmen, merchants, early industrialists, professionals, and lesser landed gentry. In the critical period between 1720 and 1770, nearly three-quarters of those who built small classical houses in Gloucestershire hailed from commercial or professional backgrounds. This study is limited to those who built a certain kind of house, and other genteel owners and their material culture warrant investigation as well. Amanda Vickery has argued that previous studies, ‘have too often taken for granted a crude distinction between the upper landed classes and a middle class of professionals and businessmen’.²¹ Tracing these connections could help historians to move beyond established social categories such as high, middle and low and open new avenues of inquiry.

The dynamism evident in these houses after about 1730 challenges the neat boundaries between geographies in the eighteenth century. Many gentlemen’s houses were

¹⁹ Vickery, *Gentleman’s daughter*, 32.

²⁰ E.g., Wilson, *Gentlemen merchants*; T. M. Devine, *The tobacco lords*; Vickery, *Gentleman’s daughter*; Whyman, *Sociability and power*; H. French, “‘Ingenious & Learned Gentlemen’”; Longmore ‘Rural retreats’.

²¹ Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter*, 352.

built in rural or semi-rural locations, raising important questions about the interchange between urban and rural provincial Britain. It has been argued that the 1760s witnessed the burgeoning of suburban attitudes and development, but the account presented here of gentlemen's houses in Gloucestershire between 1680 and 1770 undermines a clear bifurcation between rural and urban environments.²² This is encouragement to revisit thinking about the villa, a category which might be re-evaluated by looking at how people actually lived in and used houses. Geographic comparison should be extended in other ways. This approach could be beneficially applied to Britain's colonies, where similar patterns might be traced.²³ These directions emphasize the importance of houses as settings for social change in the eighteenth-century British world and the possibilities of using material culture as evidence.

Entering gentlemen's houses helps us make more sense of the sales advert for William Townsend's Paradise. This thesis has explained why a house with four rooms to a floor was suitable for a gentleman. The design and construction of such a house has been considered, highlighting its cost and the messages it conveyed about its builders and owners. Establishing how the situation of a house in an attractive setting was an important factor, we have also seen how a small estate producing only £35 per annum could still suit a gentleman whose income derived from other sources. The investigation has demonstrated how such a house might be furnished, and the specific character of objects that conveyed meaning. What is more, the approach has put objects into action to show how gentlemen's houses were used, reconstructing the networks in which gentlemanly builders and owners participated and which precisely delineated their status.

In the final estimation, this study has utilized material culture to re-evaluate social categories and enhance our understanding of an important segment of eighteenth-century

²² Estabrook, *Urbane and rustic England*, especially chapter 10.

²³ T. Burnard, *Creole gentlemen: the Maryland elite 1691-1776* (New York and London, 2002); B. B. Mooney, *Prodigy houses of Virginia: architecture and the native elite* (Charlottesville, VA, 2008).

English society. These overlooked 'gentlemen's houses' illustrate the permeability of social and cultural boundaries for the English elite. They embodied many of the processes that enabled Britain's dramatic growth and prosperity and are one key to understanding the stability of English society in the eighteenth century.

Appendix I

Small classical houses in Gloucestershire

This listing is compiled from the vast number of sources consulted over the course of this research. Primary and secondary sources have suggested dates for houses. These ranged from detailed building accounts to references such as ‘mid C18’ in Pevsner. Physical investigation, where possible, has helped to refine dating. The houses have been assigned to what I consider the most likely decade of construction. Builders are shown where known.

	Early Date	Late Date	Builder
<u>1656 to 1689</u>			
Manor House Lower Slaughter	1656	1658	Richard Whitmore
Fairford	1661	1662	Andrew Barker
Swell Bowl	1671	1683	Sir Robert Atkyns
Barton House, Temple Guiting (Barton)	1680	1710	Unknown
Driffield Manor	1680	1700	Unknown
Hempsted Court	1680	1690	Daniel Lysons
Poultton Manor	1680	1700	Thomas Bedwell (d 1691) or John Paget
Edgeworth Manor	1685		Nathaniel Ridler
<u>1690 to 1699</u>			
Dumbleton Hall	1685	1695	Sir Richard Cocks
Eyford Park	1690	1695	Charles Talbot, 1st duke of Shrewsbury
Guiting Grange	1690	1710	William Gardner's grandson William
Manor House, Bristol Park Lane	1691	1700	Unknown
Medford House	1694		Samuel Medford
Cowley Manor	1695		Henry Brett
Witcombe Park	1697	1704	Sir Michael Hikes

<u>1700 to 1709</u>			
Bagendon Manor	1700	1725	Haines family?
Essex House, Badminton	1700	1710	2 nd duke of Beaufort
Kempsford Manor	1700	1725	Unknown
Uley House, Uley	1700	1730	William Holbrow
Williamstrip	1700	1712	Henry and Catherine Ireton
Wood House, Guiting Power	1700	1750	Unknown
Sandywell Park	1704	1708	Henry Brett
Wadfield House	1705		Unknown
Kingshill House	1706		Thomas Purnell
The Chantry	1707		Charles Weston
Wotton	1707	1712	Thomas Horton
Bourton House	1708	1710	Alexander or Edward Popham
Nether Lypiatt	1708	1709	Charles Cox
<u>1710 to 1719</u>			
Old Rectory, Elkstone	1710	1725	Unknown
Spring Hill House	1710	1720	Unknown
Bishop's House Bristol	1711	1711	John Hodges
Jaynes Court	1715		William or Thomas Jayne
<u>1720 to 1729</u>			
Cleve Hill	1717	1735	Thomas Player
Beaufort House, 52 Park Rd	1720	1740	Unknown
Chestnut Court	1720	1740	Mr. Whippie or Whippy?
Bishopsworth Manor	1720	1730	Smyth family
Castle Farm (Wickwar)	1720	1730	Unknown
Cote	1720	1728	Thomas Moore or John Elbridge
Goldney House	1720	1730	Thomas Goldney
Oldbury Court	1720		Winstone family
Stapleton Court	1720	1740	Unknown
Clifton Wood House	1722	1728	Robert Smith
Fairfold House	1727		Unknown

1730 to 1739

Ebworth Park	1729	1731	Thomas Cooke
Hill House (Mangotsfield)	1730	1745	John Andrews
Broadwell Manor	1730	1757	Thomas Chamberlayne
Paradise (later Castle Godwyn)	1730	1740	William Townsend
Church Hill House	1730		Unknown
Harrington House	1730	1740	William Moore
Hazle House (Manor)	1730		William Mills
Marshfield House (Old Vicarage)	1730	1740	Mrs Dionysia Long, New College Oxford (John Carey, Vicar)
Miserden House	1730	1760	Unknown
Frampton Court	1731	1733	Richard Clutterbuck
Redland Court	1732	1735	John Cossins
Painswick	1733	1738	Charles Hyett
Barrington Park	1736	1738	Charles Talbot, 1st baron Talbot
Frenchay Manor	1736	1736	Joseph Beck

1740 to 1749

Bownham Park	1740	1745	Winchcombe family?
Cherington Park	1740	1741	John Neale
Manor House, Barnwood Rd Gloucester	1740		Bubb family
Winson Manor	1740	1740	Richard Howes
Clifton Court	1742	1743	Nehemiah Champion
Pitchcombe House	1743		Thomas Palling
Alderley Grange	1744		William Springett
Bicknor Court	1744	1775	George Wyrhall
Clifton Hill House	1746	1750	Paul Fisher
Warmley House	1748	1755	William Champion

1750 to 1759

Woodchester	1750	1760	Unknown
Mortimer House	1750	1760	Edward Parker or Isaac Elton
Banks Fee	1753	1753	John Scott
Bigswear House	1755	1755	James Rooke

Dudbridge House	1755	1780	Richard Hawker
Hill House (Rodborough Manor)	1757		Onesiphorus Paul
Royal Fort	1758	1761	Thomas Tyndall
<u>1760 to 1770</u>			
Brownshill Court	1760	1780	Palling family
Eastbach Court	1760	1767	Edward Tomkins Machen
Salperton Park	1760	1770	Thomas Browne
Norton Court	1762		John Webb
Nibley House	1763	1770	George Smythe
Stapleton Grove	1764		Joseph Harford
Paradise House	1770	1779	Charles Sheppard

Appendix II

Gentlemen builders and owners

The list presented here includes both builders and owners of the small classical houses. As with Appendix I, the list of builders and owners has been compiled from a large number of primary and secondary sources. As a result, it relies heavily on the painstaking research of many others who have traced genealogical data and conducted deed research. Of particular note are the *Victoria County History* volumes for Gloucestershire. Although coverage of the county is not yet complete, it has been an invaluable guide to areas covered by published volumes.

In some instances it has been possible to determine very precisely birth and death dates, and dates of ownership. Individuals are listed by surname, with birth and death dates where known, the house that they built or owned, and dates of residence, when these could be ascertained with some degree of reliability. Names, of both owners and houses, were frequently spelt in different ways and I have attempted to use what appeared to be the most frequent variation.

Surname	First	Birth	Death	House Name	From	To
Andrews	John		1743	Hill House (Mangotsfield)	1699	1743
Andrews	Edward	1709	1758	Hill House (Mangotsfield)	1743	1758
Atkyns	Sir Robert	1620	1710	Swell Bowl	1671	1710
Atkyns	Sir Robert	1647	1711	Swell Bowl	1710	1711
Atkyns	Robert		1753	Swell Bowl	1711	1753
Barker	Andrew	1629	1700	Fairford	1661	1700
Barker	Samuel	1659	1708	Fairford	1704	1708
Bateson	William			Bourton House		
Beaufort	2 nd duke of	1684	1714	Essex House	1700	1714
Beck	Joseph			Frenchay Manor		
Bedwell	Thomas		1691	Poulton Manor	c. 1680	1691
Bowles	Mr and Mrs			Bagendon Manor		

Bragge	Charles			Cleve Hill	1736	1780s
Bragge (Bathurst)	Charles	1754	1831	Cleve Hill	1780s	1790
Brereton	Rev. Richard		1801	Wotton	1763	1801
Brett	Henry		1724	Cowley Manor	1695	1724
Brett	Henry		1724	Sandywell Park	1704	1712
Browne	Thomas	1713	1788	Salperton Park		1788
Browne	John	1736	1782	Salperton Park		1782
Bubb				Manor House, Barnwood Rd Gloucester		
Cary [vicar]	John		1762	Marshfield House (Old Vicarage)	1720	1756
Chamberlyne	Mary Hodges	1701	1757	Broadwell Manor	1721	1757
Chamberlyne	Thomas	1683	1757	Broadwell Manor		1757
Champion	Nehemiah	1678	1747	Clifton Court	1742	1747
Champion	Martha	1692	1762	Clifton Court	1742	1762
Champion	William	1710	1789	Warmley House	c1750	1769
Clutterbuck	Richard	1703	1775	Frampton Court	1728	1775
Cocks	Rev. Robert		1736	Dumbleton Hall	1726	1736
Cocks	Robert		1765	Dumbleton Hall	1736	1765
Cocks, Bt	Sir Richard	1659c.	1726	Dumbleton Hall	1684	1726
Conway	Francis, 1 st baron	1679	1732	Sandywell Park	1712	1732
Conway	Francis, 2 nd baron	1718	1794	Sandywell Park	1732	1748
Cooke	Stephen		1730	Ebworth Park	1729	1730
Cooke	Thomas			Ebworth Park	1730	1756
Cossins	John	1682	1759	Redland Court	1732	1759
Cossins, nee Innys	Martha			Redland Court	1759	1762
Coxe	Charles	1661	1728	Nether Lypiatt	1708	1728
Coxe	John	1695?	1783	Nether Lypiatt	1728	1783
Cripps				Poulton Manor	1705	
Dolphin	John		1782	Eyford Park	1766	1782
Elbridge	John	1668?	1739	Cote	1728	1739
Elbridge	Thomas	1711	1743	Cote	1739	1743

Elton	Isaac	1711	1776	Mortimer House	1750	1776
Fisher	Paul	1692	1762	Clifton Hill House	1735	1762
Gardener	William			Guiting Grange	1700?	1720?
Goldney III	Thomas	1696	1768	Clifton Wood House	1748	1768
Goldney II	Thomas	1664	1731	Goldney House		1731
Goldney III	Thomas	1696	1768	Goldney House	1731	1768
Harford	Joseph	1741	1802	Stapleton Grove		
Hawker	Richard			Dudbridge House		
Ireton	Henry	c1652	1711	Williamstrip	1700	1711
Hickes	Sir Michael	1645	1710	Witcombe Park	1697	1710
Hickes	Howe	1690	1728	Witcombe Park	1710	1728
Hickes	Sir Howe	1721	1801	Witcombe Park	1728	1801
Hodges	John			Bishop's House	1711	
Hodges	Danvers	1653	1721	Broadwell Manor		1721
Hodges	Henry Danver Doughty		1777	Broadwell Manor	1759	1777
Holbrow?	William			Uley House		
Hort	Ann		1782	Cote	1743	1782
Horton	Thomas		1755	Wotton	1727	1755
Horton	Thomas		1727	Wotton	1707	1727
Howes	Richard			Winson Manor		
Hyett	Charles	1677	1738	Painswick	1733	1738
Hyett	Benjamin	1708	1762	Painswick	1738	1762
Hyett	Nicholas	1709	1777	Painswick	1762	1777
Innys	Jeremy			Redland Court	1762 (leased from 1755)	1764
Innys	John		1778	Redland Court	1764?	1778
Jayne	Thomas or William			Jaynes Court		
Jenner	Edward	1749	1823	The Chantry	1785	1823
Lambe	James		1761	Fairford	1730	1761
Leigh	Egerton			Broadwell Manor	1777	1970

Long	Mrs Dionysia Long, [New College Oxford]			Marshfield House, Marshfield (Old Vicarage)		
Lysons	Daniel		1681	Hempstead Court		1681?
Lysons	Daniel		1736	Hempstead Court		1736?
Lysons	Daniel		1773	Hempstead Court		1773?
Lysons	Daniel	1727	1800	Hempstead Court		
Machen	Edward	1706	1778	Eastbach Court	1740	1778
Medford	Samuel			Medford House	1694	
Mills	William		1776	Hazle House (Manor)	1730	1776
Moore	Thomas	1648?	1728	Cote	1706	1728
Moore	William		1768	Harrington House	1730	1768
Neale	John		1746	Cherington Park	1724	1746
Palling	William		1732	Brownshill Court	1665	1732
Palling	William		1769	Brownshill Court	1732	1769
Palling	Thomas	1713	1777	Brownshill Court	1769	1777
Palling	Thomas	1713	1777	Pitchcombe House	1743	1777
Parker	Edward			Mortimer House	1736	1746
Paul	Onesiphorus	1706	1774	Hill House (Rodborough Manor)	1757	1774
Paul	George Onesiphorus	1746	1821	Hill House (Rodborough Manor)	1774	1821
Player	Thomas		1736	Cleve Hill		1736
Popham	Alexander			Bourton House	1680	
Popham	Edward			Bourton House	1712	1727
Praed	Humphrey Mackworth			Williamstrip	1751	1759
Purnell	Thomas		1729	Kingshill House		
Purnell	John?			Kingshill House		
Ridler	Nathaniel			Edgeworth Manor	1650	
Rooke	James	1684?	1773	Bigswear House	1743	1773
Blackwell	Samuel		1785	Williamstrip	1759	1785
Scott	John			Banks Fee	1753	1796?
Sheppard	Charles			Paradise	c. 1770	

Shuckborough	Sir Charles			Banks Fee		
Smith	Robert			Clifton Wood House	1722	1748
Smith	George			Nibley House	c. 1763	
Smyth	Ann			Bishopsworth Manor		
Smyth	Nicholas			Nibley House	1779	
Smythe	George			Nibley House	1712	
Snell	John			Guiting Grange	1720	c. 1735
Snell	Powell		1767	Guiting Grange	c. 1735	1767
Snell	Powell	Late 1730s?		Guiting Grange	1767	?
Springett	William		1777	Alderley Grange	1744	1777
Talbot	George	1716	1785	Barton House, Temple Guiting (Barton)	1750	?
Talbot	Charles, 1 st baron	1685	1737 14 Feb	Barrington Park	1736	1737
Talbot, 1 st duke of Shrewsbury	Charles	1660	1718	Eyford Park		
Townsend	Henry	1724	1775	Paradise (now Castle Godwyn)	1754	1775?
Townsend	William	1701	1754	Paradise (now Castle Godwyn)	1730	1754
Tracy	Thomas	1716?	1770	Sandywell Park	1748	1770
Turner, Bt.	Sir John			Cherington Park	1746	1766
Tyndall	Thomas		1794	Royal Fort	1794	1794
Webb	John	1730	4 Feb 1795	Norton Court	1762	
Weston	Charles	1660	1724	The Chantry	1707	1724
Weston	Webb	1717	1775	The Chantry	1742	1775
Weston	Mary Smith		1784	The Chantry	1775	1784
Whippie or Whippy	Mr.			Chestnut Court		
Whitmore	Richard	1614	1667	Lower Slaughter Manor	1649	1667
Whitmore	Richard		1691	Lower Slaughter Manor	1667	1691
Whitmore	William		1725	Lower Slaughter Manor	1691?	1725
Whitmore	Elizabeth		1736	Lower Slaughter Manor	1725	1736
Whitmore	William	1714	1771	Lower Slaughter Manor	1735	1771
Winchcombe	James			Bownham Park	1740?	1780?

Winstone	Robert		Oldbury Court	1667	c. 1695
Winstone	Thomas		Oldbury Court	c. 1695	c. 1720
Winstone	Thomas	1760	Oldbury Court		1760
Wood	Roland	1729	Ebworth Park	1675	1729
Wyrhall	George	1808	Bicknor Court	1745	1808

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 D589: Paul family of Minchinhampton and Tetbury.
 D610: Hodges and Leigh families of Broadwell.
 D637/II/6: Vizard + son of Monmouth, solicitors, [Machen family].
 D678/1/F12/1: Sir John Dutton correspondence.
 D873/T54: Copy will of Sir Onesiphorus Paul, 1773, proved 1774.
 D873/T74-T75: Related to Dudbridge house and land.
 D1156: Eyres-Mansell, Cocks and Holland families of Dumbleton, 1559-1832.
 D1241/Box 14/Bundle 4: Ebworth estate.
 D1347: Winterbotham, Ball and Gadsden, solicitors papers [including Palling-Caruthers family of Painswick: deeds and copyhold; copy will of Charles Cox].
 D1456: 3 bundles of MS and typed notes compiled by Rev. G. E. Rees while compiling *The history of Bagendon*.
 D1610/P334: Estate map of Marshfield.
 D1806/F203: William Springett letter.
 D1806/T13: Alderley Grange and park, 1864.
 D1815/19: Little and Hutton of Stroud, solicitors [related to Pitchcombe house].
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